

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet Bethel Lutheran Church Item number MD-F1 Page 1

SITE MD-F1  
NAME Bethel Lutheran Church  
LOCATION Northwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Fifth Street, Faith, Meade County (093), South Dakota (046)  
OWNER Bethel Lutheran Church  
Ernest Langness, Pastor  
Faith, South Dakota 57626  
CLASSIFICATION Building, private, NA acquisition, occupied, restricted access, religious  
DESCRIPTION Excellent condition, altered (very slightly), original site

The Bethel Lutheran Church is located at the intersection of Main and Fifth Streets in Faith (1980 population 586), South Dakota. Surrounded by mature trees and evergreens, the site is located in the extreme northeast corner of Meade County.

The church was erected in 1925 and is of frame construction. Stylistically, it is a rural Gothic church, however most of the identifiable architectural detail is absent. A Gothic nave plan, the church has a narthex, nave, choir and apse. Access to the bell tower is gained through the choir loft at the rear of the nave.

The exterior of the church is covered in clapboard painted white with white composition shingles on the roof. Windows in the north and south elevations are stained glass. Entry is gained through a pair of double doors surmounted by a transom and arch. A pair of windows is located in the gable section above the door in the east elevation. The bell tower features four Gothic arched openings beneath the steeply pitched gables with an octagonal steeple. The west elevation has a five-sided apse attached to the rear of the building. A shed roofed addition is attached to the south side of the apse which has two windows in the southeast side and a door with a set of wooden steps in the southwest side.

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The interior of the church remains unaltered with the exception of modern hanging lights which can be easily replaced. The interior woodwork and other details are original and in excellent condition.

SIGNIFICANCE 1900-Present, architecture, and Norwegian ethnic history,

DATE: 1925

BUILDER: Central Lumber Company

The Bethel Lutheran Church is significant to the city of Faith, Meade County and northwestern South Dakota because it represents a form of vernacular architecture associated with the early Norwegian settlement of this part of the state. The number of Scandinavians who emigrated to western South Dakota is large and the number of Norwegian emigrants was substantially larger than the other ethnic groups. Significantly, few Norwegian sites remain relatively intact in the survey area thus enhancing the importance of the Bethel Lutheran Church which was formed during a period when statistically, the organization of Norwegian Lutheran Churches began a decline.

August 5, 1917 is the earliest recorded date that discussion took place in the vicinity to establish a Lutheran Church for the Norwegian settlers. The meeting was held at the Flint Rock School which was located about six miles northwest of Faith. Services in the area were conducted by Pastor A. M. Artzen, who presided at the meeting where the Flint Rock Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church was formed. A number of pastors served the congregation in the years immediately following its founding and on September 23, 1922 Pastor Morris Eggen was ordained and held his first service for the congregation.

In July 1924 the congregation was reorganized and began a search to locate a church site in the city of Faith. Negotiations with the Milwaukee Land Company to acquire city lots for the church were conducted by J.P. Jensen. At this time the congregation reorganized and adopted the name Bethel Lutheran Church.

Bids for the construction of the church were opened in June 10, 1925. The Central Lumber Company of Faith won the bid and built the church. The church was completed in the following months and the first services were held in the building on Christmas Day, 1925. The church was dedicated on June 27, 1926.

The site is in excellent condition and has been meticulously maintained by the congregation since the church was constructed.

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QUADRANGLE NAME Faith, South Dakota UTM REFERENCE 14/733420/4989640

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:2400 ACREAGE Less than one Acre

PHOTO REFERENCE NUMBER

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the site are the lot lines of the property which is located on Lots 11 and 12, Block 18, City of Faith. The site is located in the SE quarter of the NW quarter, Section 10 Township 12 North Range 17 East of Meade County.

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