

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: First Congregational Church, Vermillion

Other names/site number: United Church of Christ, Congregational; University Congregational Church

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 226 East Main Street

City or town: Vermillion State: SD County: Clay

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

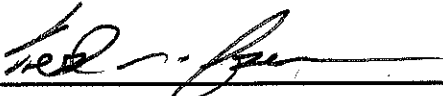
I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national X statewide     local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

    A     B X C     D

		<u>5-14-2021</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>South Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer</u>		<u>Officer</u>
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		
In my opinion, the property <u>   </u> meets <u>   </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.		
Signature of commenting official:		Date
Title :		State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<b>Total</b>

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

BRICK

CONCRETE

METAL/Tin

METAL/Copper

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The First Congregational Church in Vermillion is on a corner lot on the west side N. Harvard Street facing south onto E. Main Street. The church yard includes concrete sidewalks, lawn to the south and east, a parking lot to the north, and a driveway along the west side. The two-story Colonial Revival brick church, built in 1928, has a gabled clay tile roof and a concrete foundation. The church structure is supported by steel girders and truss systems with poured concrete slab floors. The structure has five bays across the façade, eight bays down the east and west elevations, and six bays across the rear north elevation. It has a pedimented façade supported by four Classical columns, dentiled metal cornices, a square brick steeple tower with an octagonal domed cupola, and five tall round-arched multi-light windows down either side of the sanctuary. The church interior features a narthex leading into a Colonial-style sanctuary with three-quarter squared balcony, molded wood cornice and trim, altar and choir loft, and a decorative wood organ screen. The rest of the upper floors include classrooms, offices, a study/library, and choir room. The basement level of the church includes classrooms, kitchen, a main fellowship hall called "Pilgrim Hall," and a gathering space called the "Mayflower Room."

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The primary changes to the structure include a small one-story elevator addition with a compatible design off the southwest corner of the building, and some re-arrangement of interior office and classroom spaces. The church displays excellent integrity to represent as a state level the use of Colonial Revival architecture for second-generation Protestant churches in South Dakota.

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## **Narrative Description**

The First Congregational Church in Vermillion is on a corner lot on the west side N. Harvard Street facing south onto E. Main Street. The church is set back about twenty feet from the sidewalk. Narrow concrete sidewalks run along Main, Harvard, and National Streets on the south, east, and north sides of the church's property. The church is on a slightly raised grade and wide sets of concrete steps lead up from the sidewalk along Main towards the church's portico. There are narrow sets of concrete steps leading to the two lower entrance doors on the east elevation. Each flight of steps has short simple black metal railings. Concrete driveways from Main and Harvard lead to a paved parking lot to the north of the church building. There are a half-dozen parking spaces along the west part of the driveway as well. There is a short concrete retaining wall along the west side of the parking lot; adjoining residential lots are at a slightly higher grade. A hedge runs along the west edge of the driveway on the west side of the church. There are currently vacant lots adjoining the church property to the west, now owned by the church.

The church's landscaping is simple, with a tall pine tree off its southwest corner, deciduous trees along the streets to the southeast and east (as are through much of the older residential area of the city), and low shrubs planted in ground-level beds near the church on its southwest, southeast, and northeast corners. The northeast planting bed has a short wall of small concrete blocks. On the edge of the southeastern planting bed, the church has a brick sign with a framed panel for changeable lettering and concrete base, cap, and nameplate reading "UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST."<sup>1</sup>

The church is part of the transitional edge east of downtown where residential neighborhoods started. Directly east of the church across Harvard Street is a three-story apartment building from approximately the 1960s or 1970s. Along Main Street to the east, there are a few institutional properties including two other churches, the historic university president's house, and a former fraternity/sorority being remodeled for a bed and breakfast. Further down Main, about five blocks, are Prentis Park on the north side and the city's hospital on the south. Most of the rest of the area surrounding the church to the north, south, and east is single-family residential housing, including the University Historic District (NRIS # 75001714) to the north and the Forest Avenue Historic District (NRIS # 79002400) to the south. The University of South Dakota's properties start two blocks north of the church and extend north to the edge of the city. The city's downtown commercial area starts within a block west of the church and extends another four to five blocks to the county courthouse.

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<sup>1</sup> The church officially adopted the change of name in 1969.

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*South Façade*

First Congregational Church is a rectangular building oriented to E. Main Street to the south. The church has a projecting portico on the façade, an eighty-foot bell tower rising from the roof ridge near the south end, and a small one-story elevator addition near the south end of the west elevation. The church is two-stories with a raised basement. It has brick veneer walls in common bond and a pedimented gable roof with clay tile roofing.

The church façade is dominated by a two-story pedimented Classical portico that extends from a projecting section of the building. Wide concrete steps, flanked by thick concrete-capped brick knee walls, lead up to the concrete portico floor with brick tile pavers. The two exterior portico columns sit on the brick walls, while the center columns are set on stone blocks projecting from the top three steps. The portico columns have molded bases (torus, scotia, torus) on square plinths, fluted shafts, Tower of the Winds-style capitals (flared at the top and circled by tall palm and shorter acanthus leaf moldings), and molded abaci. The exterior and interior of the portico entablature, including along the wall of the church, features an architrave with multiple levels of molding, a simple frieze board, and a molded cornice. The architrave has beaded molding near the bottom, a thin band of lamb's tongue molding, and at the top, beaded molding below a taller ogee lamb's tongue molding. The portico also features square fluted pilasters with Tower of the Winds capitals supporting the two ends where the entablature meets the building wall. The pediment over the portico has an unadorned frieze panel.

The cornice of the entire building, including the portico entablature, has a beaded molding set below egg-and-dart molding below scrolled modillions along the soffit. The modillions are carved with acanthus leaves, and along their sides, rosettes in the scrolls. Around the building, the centers of the brick walls at the first and second floors are subtly inset and are framed by: the basement wall, five-course-tall brick quoins of alternating lengths at the corners, a five-course band of brick at the height just above the first-floor windows, and an eight-course band at the top of the walls.

The south façade wall under the portico is three bays. The center bay has a double-leaf entrance below a large arched multi-light window. The entrance doors each have twelve square beveled inset panels (six high, two wide), the top four of which have beveled glass windows. The doors have metal kickplates at their base and metal strap handles. The doors are set in a simple wide wood surround with a molded edge. Above the door is a cornice with six block modillions. The round-arched window above the door has a central six-over-six wood sash window with ogee lugs and top rail in a segmental arch shape. This is flanked by two four-light sidelights that are curved at the top to form the overall round arch shape. The full door and arched window is set in a brick surround with a narrow concrete voussoir at the key of the arch. To either side of the door, there are metal light sconces with a curved arm and a hexagonal lantern shade featuring pointed finials from points around the cap. The side bays under the portico have single six-over-six sash wood windows set into each floor. The first-floor windows have concrete lug sills and soldier-brick lintels. The second-floor windows have concrete lug sills but no lintels. These and most of the rectangular windows around the building have aluminum storm/screen windows. All windows around the historic building are wood and set one-and-a-half brick headers deep into

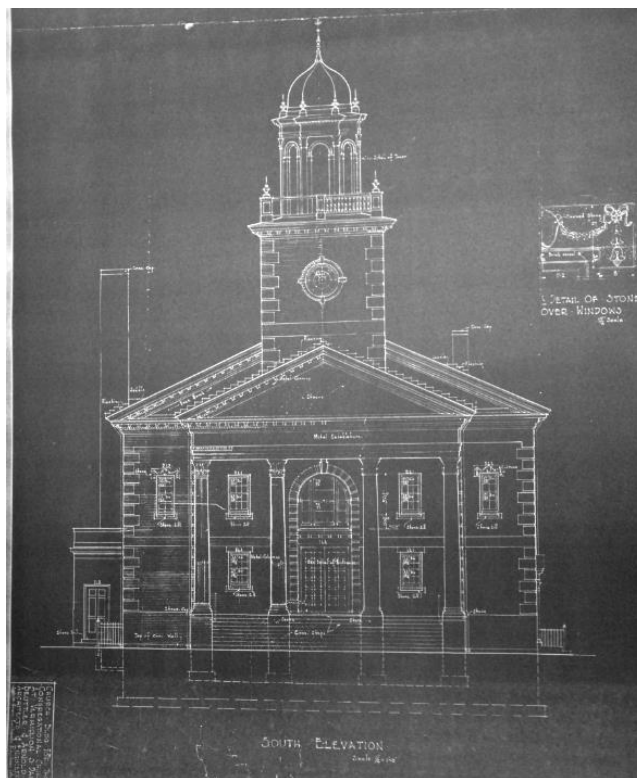
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the wall. The side walls of the projection feature single four-over-four sash windows on each floor, the first-floor windows having soldier-brick lintels.

The main roof of the church, behind the portico projection, is also pedimented. The wall space between the main and portico roofs features five courses of brick laid diagonally to match the slope of the roofs. The south façade walls of the main building volume, visible to either side of the portico projection, feature single windows on the second floor. The four-over-four sash windows have projecting rectangular lug sills and lintel blocks with carvings of a simple cartouche flanked by classical festoon garlands.

The wide square tower on the south end of the main roof ridge has brick walls with quoins and a cornice with moldings matching the other roof lines. Each elevation of the tower has a circular oculus multi-light wood window in header brick surrounds with four concrete key blocks at the top, bottom, and sides. The east and west elevations also have large metal vents below the windows. The tower roof has a balustrade with turned spindles and paneled square pedestals. The corner pedestals have pointed finials. The octagonal cupola lantern on the tower has arched openings with molded surrounds and key blocks. The four planes of the cupola on the north, south, east, and west project slightly and have narrow square fluted pilasters with Tower of the Winds capitals. The church bell is mounted within the cupola. The cupola has a molded architrave, wide frieze, and cornice with egg-and-dart molding and simpler modillions. The cupola's ogee dome roof has copper sheet roofing and a tall finial with a ball end. A gutter pipe runs down the west end of the north elevation.



“South elevation,” detail of building plans, in Vermillion UCC’s collections.

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Off the west side of the projecting portico walls, there is a small one-story addition between the narthex and basement levels that was built c.1991 for an elevator. The addition was architect-designed to be compatible with the main building. The addition has brick veneer walls. The south elevation has a main core for the elevator shaft, a projecting lobby, and a canopy over the entrance porch. The elevator core has five-course brick quoins and no fenestration. The lobby volume on the west end has a single-leaf door with multi-light window panels and a round-arch fanlight, and on the south elevation has an eight-over-eight sash window with a round arch fanlight. The windows have concrete lug sills, and the windows and doors each have soldier-brick arch surrounds with concrete end blocks and key blocks. It is a small addition, designed and placed well so it does not distract from the historic integrity of the building. The addition has a pilaster at the juncture of the lobby and main volumes and two columns supporting the canopy roof. The narrow pilaster and columns are fluted with short Tower of the Winds capitals. The ceiling of the canopy has a central bowl light fixture and vents. The north wall of the addition is a flat wall with no fenestration. The roof entablature features an architrave with a band of egg-and-dart molding, a wide frieze board, and a cornice that includes multiple moldings and dentil band. On the roof, there is a balustrade with turned spindles and paneled square pedestals. Some of the church utilities are set on the addition's roof.

#### *East Elevation*

The east elevation of the main volume of the church is eight bays long. The first and seventh bays have entrance doors with concrete steps and simple metal railings. Both single-leaf doors are six-paneled with the two, short top panels having glass windows. The doors have metal strap handles. The wood door surrounds have fluted pilasters with Tower of the Winds capitals, a simple entablature and a pediment with no carved moldings. On the wall to the inside of each door, there is a lantern-shaped light sconce on curved arms, and the gutter pipes run to the inside of those from the cornice down the wall to drains under grade. The second-floor four-over-four window in the first bay has a concrete lug sill and a carved lintel with cartouche and festoon garland. The smaller windows in the eighth bay and the second floor of the seventh bay are six-over-six with concrete lug sills. The first-floor window in the eighth bay also has a soldier-brick lintel.

The second through the sixth bays (correlating with the main sanctuary and fellowship hall) have a window well running along the basement level. The window well has concrete walls and ties, and an iron railing. The basement windows in the well are eight-over-eight wood sash windows with concrete sills. The first-floor windows are shorter eight-over-eight windows with concrete lug sills and slightly inset soldier brick surrounds and lintels. The large second-floor windows have a ten-light lower sash and the upper sash combines ten lights with a round-arch fanlight. The second-floor windows have a narrower concrete slip sill, and brick arches over the windows with concrete end and key blocks. The second-floor windows have wood storm windows built to match the configuration of the historic window muntins; these were built in 2018-2019.

A small, narrow brick chimney with a concrete cap is set midway up the east roof slope near the north end of the building.

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### *North Elevation*

The north elevation of the church has six bays and a gabled cornice with returns. All windows are wood in mainly six-over-six configurations with concrete lug sills and no surrounds or windows. The basement level has a concrete window well with metal railing. From east to west, there are only single windows in the first, fifth, and six bays. In the center bays, there are a pair of windows flanked by single windows. The first floor features smaller windows in the first and second bays, tall single windows in the fifth and six bays, and in the center bays, there is a pair of tall windows flanked by single eight-over-eight windows. The second floor has single windows in each bay. In the gable end, there is a central, circular brick panel filled with herringbone-bonded brick in a surround matching the circular windows on the bell tower. Also in the gable end, there are two large metal vents aligned with the second and fifth window bays.

### *West Elevation*

The west elevation is similar to the east elevation including being eight bays long. The first bay includes six-over-six windows on the first and second floors and a large square brick-veneered chimney extends through the eave. At the base of the chimney is a small projection with a metal door to the former boiler room. The second bay has two windows, one six-over-six and one four-over-four, on the first floor and a six-over-six window on the second floor. The third bay has the large arched window on the second floor but a small brick bump-out from the first floor. The bump-out has a six-panel door and a lantern-shaped light sconce on the south side, a single six-over-six window with a lug sill on the west side, and a gutter pipe running down the north side. The volume has a square concrete cap and a concrete cornice ten courses of brick below the cap. The fourth through seventh bays have the same configuration as the center bays of the east elevation. Between the fourth and fifth bays at the basement level, there is a circular metal exhaust vent. The eighth bay has single six-over-six windows on the first and second floors. There are gutters running from the cornice on the north and south ends and between the third and fourth bays.

### *Interior*

[Floor plans are part of photo keys later in the nomination.]

Inside the main doors, the church narthex has a laminate tile floor in a black and white checkerboard pattern oriented as diamonds with striped borders, plaster walls, painted wood trim, and a plastered ceiling. The trim pieces include baseboards with molded edges, molded wide door surrounds, rectangular moldings on the walls creating a paneled appearance, and an ornamental crown molding. The crown molding features bands of lamb's tongue and acanthus leaf motifs above a third band that has an elongated pattern of paired vertical chain loops interlocking around a circle; each pair of chains are separated by thin column-like elements. In the center of the ceiling, there is a pendant light fixture on a chain resembling an old gas hall lantern. It has three faux-candle fixtures with flame-shaped bulbs and a cylindrical clear glass shade with brass frame. On the east wall, there is a single paneled wood door into a small storage room. On the west wall, a single door leads into a room converted for a lobby to the elevator. The side rooms have straight checkboard laminate flooring, plaster walls, and painted wood baseboards and window surrounds. On the north wall of the narthex, double-leaf doors

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lead into the sanctuary. The doors are wood with a large central panel. They have handles on the narthex side and a push plate on the sanctuary side.

The church sanctuary has a basilica plan layout with two sets of pews divided by a center aisle with narrower side aisles. The wood pews have rectilinear end pieces with molded edges and no other ornamentation. The altar and pulpit are on a rounded-edge platform at the north end of the room, and the organ and choir loft are in a raised section behind that, accessed only by side doors. Above the choir loft, a ceiling beam creates a segmental arch. Angled walls to either side of the altar platform connect with the northern side walls and a U-shaped box gallery extends from that point down the east and west sides and around the south, rear wall of the sanctuary. The sanctuary floor is carpeted. The plastered walls have painted wood trim that includes baseboards, a chair rail, and molded door and window surrounds on the first level. At the top of the walls, wide crown molding runs around the room to stopping points at the choir loft. The angled walls to either side of the altar platform have slight arched panels topped by decorative molding with a key block. At the top of those angled walls, a paneled appearance is created by molding around all sides of the small top sections of wall and the spandrel front arch. The sanctuary ceiling is flat at the center but coved above the gallery. Along the line of the east and west gallery walls, two trimmed beams run along the ceiling to pilasters on the back wall. Brass chandeliers on pendant chains hang from these beams. The chandeliers have faux-candle fixtures with flame-shaped bulbs supported by curved arms, with twelve lights on the first level and six on the second, a smaller ball ornament at the top of the fixture and a large ball ornament and finial at the base. The sanctuary ceiling is supported by a steel truss network.

The gallery has plate girder joists supporting concrete slab flooring. It is supported at its south wall by round columns with smooth shafts and Tuscan style capitals. It has three rises with sets of pews matching those below. The gallery walls have molded trim at the base and cap, and rectangular molding pieces that create a paneled appearance along the outside edge. The walls are topped by simple, painted, metal railings. Also periodically along the wall caps there are mounted small blocks with four circular cut-outs for communion glasses. Under the gallery, there are mounted grates and HVAC boxes alternating with bowl fixture ceiling lights with semi-opaque glass and brass-colored holders.

Three tiered, wide, carpeted steps lead onto the altar platform. The flooring on the platform is carpeted as well. The platform walls are paneled plaster with base and crown molding. There are wide painted metal vents with decorative geometric patterns at what would be the panel sections on the edges of the steps. The current altar is stained wood, with three panels across the front, a cap carved "This do in remembrance of me," and simple pilasters at the corners with carved crosses at their cap. The console type pulpit is stained wood with arched panels, canton columns at the corners with flared Ionic capitals, and a wide cap with paneled walls.

The choir loft wall behind the altar platform is paneled with a thin rounded cap molding. The organ console and chairs are set in the loft. The wall above is dominated by the organ screen, in front of the organ pipes. The screen is framed in painted wood with base molding, side panels, pilasters separating three panels of turned spindle pieces below the more elaborate upper panels. The center upper panel has a fanlight design with turned spindles and circular elements. To

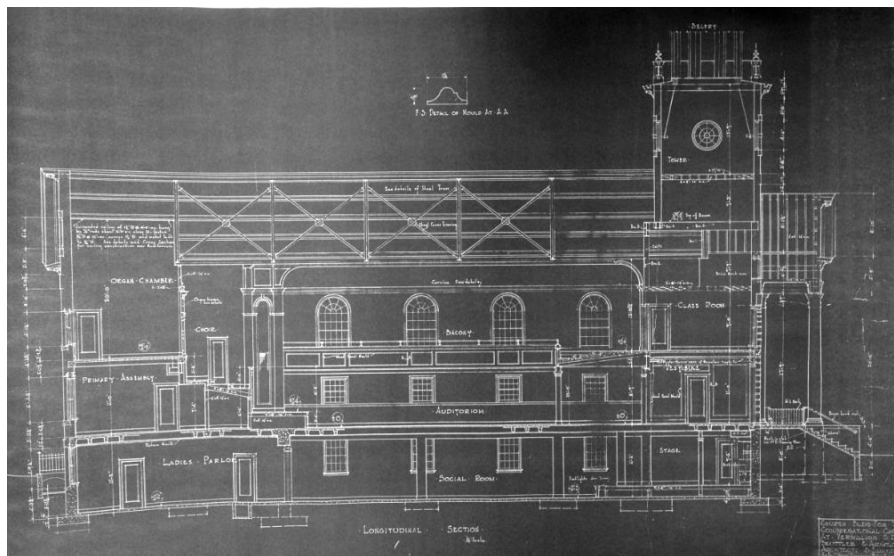
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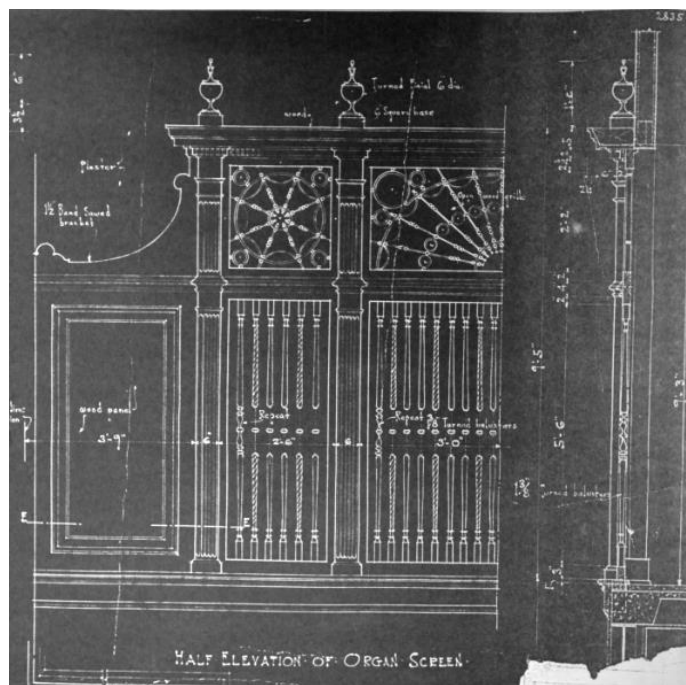
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either side are square panels with turned spindles and circular elements. The top of the screen has a dentil band along under a crown cap. Aligned with each of the four pilasters, there is an urn shaped finial mounted on the screen's cap.



“Longitudinal Section,” detail of building plans, in Vermillion UCC’s collections.



“Half elevation of Organ Screen,” detail of building plans, in Vermillion UCC’s collections.

From the south end of the sanctuary gallery, there are four one-panel wood doors. Next to the first and third are mounted small light sconces with faux-candle fixtures on curved arms. The easternmost opens to a small landing that accesses the stairwell to the east, a small storage room to the south, and a gathering room to the west. The westernmost door leads to the southwest

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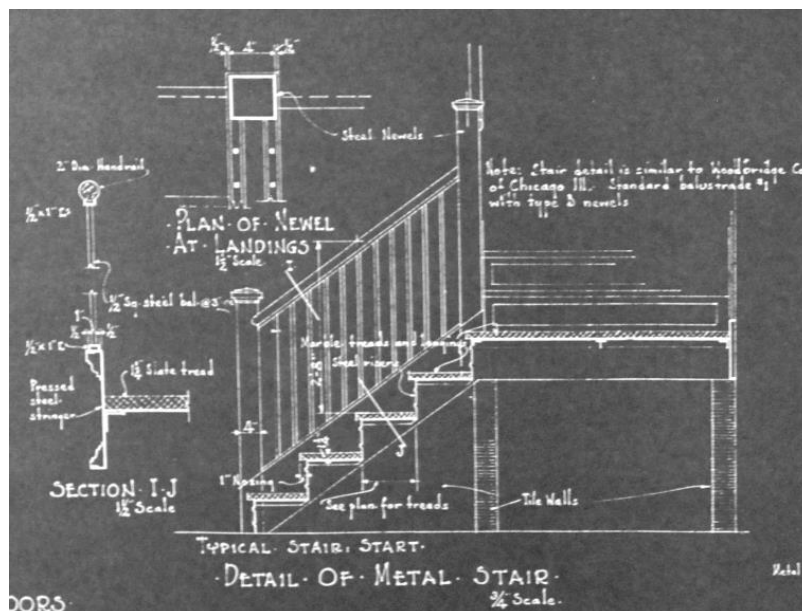
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stairwell. The two center doors open into the gathering room, which has a carpeted floor, plastered walls, dropped ceiling, painted wood baseboards, and molded window and door surrounds. The remaining edges of a partition wall indicate where there formerly was a moveable partition wall.

Behind the sanctuary on the first floor are offices and, on the east end, a study/library room. The three rooms have carpeted flooring and dropped ceilings. The study has built in bookshelves flanking a c.1950s ceramic tile fireplace. On the second floor are a classroom/storage room, the organ at the center, and the choir room on the east end. The classroom and choir room have carpeted flooring, plaster walls and ceilings, and molded window and door surrounds.

On the first-floor south wall of the sanctuary, two single one-panel doors on the east and west ends open to stairwells. On the north wall of the first floor of the sanctuary, doors on both the first and second level lead to stair wells. The church's four corner stairwells mostly have rubbered or carpeted flooring, plaster walls and ceilings, and painted wood baseboards. The brass-finished steel stairs have a closed stringer, square ends, square newel posts with low pyramidal caps, thin square balusters, a stained wood rail, paneled risers, and rubber veneered treads. There are wall-mounted railings along some of the flights of stairs.



“Detail of Metal Stair,” detail of building plans, in Vermillion UCC’s collections.

The northeast stairs down to the basement are carpeted and lead down to the fellowship hall level. The stair landing and fellowship hall have beige and tan checkerboard laminate tile flooring. A one-panel wood door with a molded surround leads into the main fellowship hall. The fellowship hall has painted wood baseboards, plaster walls, and a dropped ceiling. At the points of the exterior windows, the dropped ceiling is stepped back to avoid closing off the top of the windows. On the south end of the fellowship hall, there is a large classroom/nursery with carpeted flooring, painted wood baseboards and door surrounds, and a dropped ceiling. There is

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a folding partition wall on the north wall of the classroom that can be opened into the fellowship hall. Another small classroom nursery space and an accessible bathroom are located to the west.

The church kitchen is along the west wall of the fellowship hall. There are two central entrance doors to the kitchen, one being recessed a couple feet. To either side of the doors, there are pairs of serving windows with painted wood trim and paneled slide-down doors. The kitchen has a laminate tile floor, square ceramic tile on the west wall, paneled cabinets, and cultured-stone countertops. The kitchen was remodeled c.2000. There is a door to the northwest stairwell on the north wall of the kitchen.

On the north end of the fellowship hall is an area that can be closed off with a folded partition wall. This space has carpeted flooring, painted wood baseboards, chair rail moldings, and a dropped ceiling. An alcove in the northwest corner of the building has a fireplace flanked by mid-height built-in bookcases. The fireplace has a brown tile hearth, a brick fireback, and facing of pebble-textured square yellow tile. The wood mantel has fluted pilasters to each side and a squared shelf. The bookcases have three shelves, a paneled back wall, and paneled bases.

### **Statement of Integrity**

The First Congregational Church in Vermillion retains excellent integrity to convey its state significance for Colonial Revival architecture. The church retains a high percentage of exterior materials and design including brick walls, Tower of the Wind style columns, Classical moldings, wood multi-light and arched windows, side doors with pedimented surrounds, and bell tower with ocular windows and octagonal cupola. The only substantial exterior alteration is the c.1991 addition of a one-story elevator block on the southern end of the west façade, which was sited and designed to not obstruct key features of the church and be architecturally compatible. On the interior, the historic narthex and sanctuary retain integrity with historic wood trim and moldings, tile flooring in the narthex, pews, gallery boxes and railings, altar platform, organ screen, and choir loft. The minor changes to vents and lighting under the gallery boxes do not significantly impact the integrity of the space. Changes to the arrangement and finishes of secondary spaces of the classroom and fellowship hall from c.1970 do not detract from the overall integrity of the church.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☒ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1928  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1928  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Beuttler and Arnold, Sioux City, IA (architect)  
F.J. Sulzbach, Sioux City, IA (builder)  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The First Congregational Church in Vermillion is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at a state level of significance under Criterion C for its Colonial Revival style architecture. Of the historic churches constructed in South Dakota, relatively few were built in Colonial Revival styles compared to more popular Gothic and Romanesque traditions. While there are a handful of extant South Dakota churches from the first half of the twentieth century that used Colonial elements, this church in Vermillion is significant for its close use of traditional New England church design as influenced by member Margaret Wellington's personal experience in Massachusetts. It was an intentional exhibition of the Colonial heritage and architectural traditions of the Congregational denomination. The period of significance is 1928 to correspond with the date of construction of the church. Its ground-breaking ceremonies were held that spring and was first used for worship services in November 1928. The church meets National Register criteria consideration A as a religious institution because its significance is architectural.

A state level of significance is also supported by the historic integrity of the First Congregational Church in Vermillion. The church retains historic brickwork with corner quoins, arched multi-light windows, pedimented portico with decorative columns and moldings, center bell tower with ocular window and octagonal domed cupola, and the majority of primary interior features in the sanctuary and narthex. The small elevator addition from c.1991 off the portico's side wall, on the south end of the west elevation, was architect-designed to be compatible to the historic architecture of the church. Given its size, placement, and design, the addition has a minimal impact on the historic integrity of the church. On the interior, some of the secondary spaces like offices and around the fellowship hall in the basement have been altered in finish and configuration, but as secondary spaces, these changes do not detract significantly from the integrity of the church as a whole.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Building History of the First Congregational Church in Vermillion**

The First Congregational Church in Vermillion was first organized in 1870 with seven members, including Charles E. Prentis as deacon. A constitution was written and passed in 1872.<sup>2</sup> The first minister to serve the congregation was Rev. Stewart Sheldon, one of the first missionary ministers in the territory. He supplied pastoral care on a circuit basis for churches at Vermillion, Elk Point, Richland, and Bon Homme, and would ride horses between the communities to hold

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<sup>2</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), February 14, 1929; Edward C. Ehrensperger, *History of the United Church of Christ in South Dakota, 1869-1976* (Freeman SD: Pine Hill Press, 1977), 6-8, 106; Edward C. Ehrensperger, *Little Church on the Prairie: A Brief History of United Church of Christ in Vermillion, South Dakota, formerly known as the First Congregational Church* (Vermillion, 1970), 4; Doane Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, vol. 1 (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Co., 1904), 571.

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services.<sup>3</sup> He was the primary minister until 1874 and continued to preach as supply (substitute) until 1882.<sup>4</sup> In 1874, the congregation hired a pastor of their own.<sup>5</sup>

According to an early history of the Congregational church in South Dakota, the Congregational church in Vermillion met in “a little store building, a rickety, tumbled-down schoolhouse, a weather-beaten, deserted house on the outskirts of the town, small halls, and the depot.”<sup>6</sup> One of the sites was the Lee-Prentis Hall (a two-story brick building) and another was a building where Lida Bower ran a select school (a private school with enrollment by teacher selection).<sup>7</sup> In October 1872, the congregation bought land for its first church building on Broadway Street and dedicated it in May 1873.<sup>8</sup> According to Prentis in 1935, recalling memories of the early days, it was a small wood-frame building with a short steeple, gabled entry, and rectangular multi-light windows.<sup>9</sup> It was damaged in the Missouri River flood of 1881, when “the building floated off a distance of 20 rods, then collapsed, and was seen no more. The organ, seats, pulpit, chairs, stove, chandeliers, table, books, and all were lost except 3 seats that were afterward recovered.”<sup>10</sup>

When the residents of Vermillion rebuilt their town up on top of the nearby bluff above the river valley, builder Andrew Pickett (also a church member) and building committee chair C.E. Prentis oversaw the construction of a new church on High Street.<sup>11</sup> It was occupied by November that year, and dedication ceremonies held in April 1882 with sermons by Revs. Sheldon and Ward.<sup>12</sup> They also built a parsonage for the ministers on W. Main Street.<sup>13</sup> Also in November 1881, the congregation had to re-incorporate because original papers had been lost in the flood.<sup>14</sup> In December 1888, the congregation granted the request of a Scandinavian congregation to use the church’s building for services.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 568-579; Herbert S. Schell, *History of Clay County, South Dakota* (1976), 143; Megan Eades, *Churches in South Dakota* (Pierre: South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 571; George W. Kingsbury and George Martin Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3 (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915), 948.

<sup>7</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), February 14, 1929; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 3-4; *History of Southeastern Dakota: Its Settlement and Growth* (Sioux City, Ia., Western Publishing Company, 1881), 212.

<sup>8</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), February 14, 1929; Ehrensperger, *History*, 9, 12; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 4, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, cover, 2-3, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Ehrensperger, *History*, 9, 12; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 8; *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 212.

<sup>11</sup> Pickett was also clerk of the church from 1886 to 1909. Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 8-9; Arthur L. Rusch, “Portrait of a River Town: Vermillion before the Flood of 1881,” *South Dakota History* 40(4) (2010), 361-363.

<sup>12</sup> *Press and Daily Dakotian* (Yankton SD), May 6, 1882; *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), February 14, 1929; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 8.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

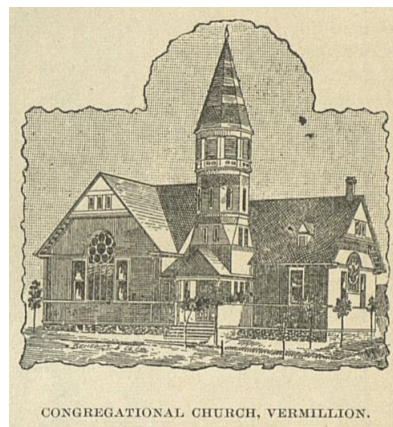
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In 1888-1890, the congregation moved and enlarged their building on a new lot at Dakota and Main streets.<sup>16</sup> The structure had a cross gable roof with elaborate Victorian imbrication and pent eaves in the gables, stained glass rose windows, and a tall polygonal tower steeple in the ell with variegated shingles on its roof.<sup>17</sup>



Jordan, *Vermillion and Vicinity* (1901); *The Volante* 5(1) (September 1891), 27.

In 1922, Dr. Perry A. Sharpe was hired as pastor and the next year the congregation formed a committee to study an expansion for the building.<sup>18</sup> In 1924, member Dr. Freeman Ward announced that with a gift of \$100, he had arranged for Sioux City architects Beuttler & Arnold to draw up preliminary plans for the congregation to review.<sup>19</sup> Because of financial concerns, in March 1924, the church board decided to postpone proceeding with a new building.<sup>20</sup> In 1925, the council formally established a building committee to proceed towards construction, but they delayed two years because of the agricultural recession and competing fundraising by Yankton College for an endowment fund. The committee, chaired by Maurice J. Chaney, included the church's council members and a few additional members, including three women.<sup>21</sup> The church's "colonial style" building plans were finalized at a congregational meeting in October 1927, though a new site at Main & Harvard was selected a few months later and the new lot bought from the local Masonic lodge.<sup>22</sup> In March 1928, the general contract for building the church was awarded to F.J. Sulzbach of Sioux City.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), February 14, 1929; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 11.

<sup>17</sup> George T. Jordan, *Vermillion and Vicinity* (Vermillion: J.E. Jonnason, Dakota Republican, 1901), unpaginated.

<sup>18</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 23, 27.

<sup>19</sup> Ward was the son of Joseph and Sarah Ward, founders of the Congregational church at Yankton and Yankton College. Though he spearheaded fundraising for the new building, he ultimately left Vermillion to head the geology department of Lafayette College in Pennsylvania. *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), February 14 and 21, 1929; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 23.

<sup>20</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), March 13, 1924.

<sup>21</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), May 28, 1925, February 14, 1929; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 23.

<sup>22</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), October 27, 1927 - February 9, 1928.

<sup>23</sup> Frederick J. Sulzbach (1869-1933) was the son of German immigrants. He trained under his father, a stonemason, and initially specialized in brick construction in Sioux City. Eventually he expanded to

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The building was intentionally designed in a Colonial Revival style popular in New England, where the Congregational church had its origins in America.<sup>24</sup> According to a church history published in 1970, a member of the building committee, Margaret C. Wellington, “designed the first rough plans of the new building and [her] artistry has been responsible for many of the beautiful effects of the finished building.”<sup>25</sup> Wellington had come to South Dakota from Massachusetts when the University of South Dakota hired her husband, Raynor G., as a history professor.<sup>26</sup> The Wellingtons were reportedly “enthusiastic about seeing ‘a bit of New England Congregationalism let down in South Dakota’” and believed that “a state which was credited with having the largest percent of Congregationalists per population should preserve some of the best traditions of the denomination.”<sup>27</sup> The Wellingtons also contributed financially to the new structure, especially for interior furnishings, and Margaret proposed the naming of the fellowship room as the Pilgrim Center and the ladies meeting room as the Mayflower Room.<sup>28</sup> At the dedication, newspapers reported that this Vermillion church was based on the “Boston town meeting hall.”<sup>29</sup> This possibly referred to the South Meeting House in Boston, which is brick with a central steeple tower and arched multi-light windows, but does not have a pedimented portico. The North and South churches/meeting houses in Boston inspired many Colonial Revival churches in New England and beyond, including the Congregational churches at Margaret’s town of birth in Salem, Massachusetts, and where the couple had lived in Wellesley, Massachusetts before coming to Vermillion. The Tabernacle Congregational Church in Salem was built in 1922 from a design by Boston architects Philip Horton Smith and Edgar Walker. The Wellesley Congregational Church was designed in 1918-1919 by Carrère and Hastings.<sup>30</sup>

On April 1, 1928, Palm Sunday, the congregation held a ground-breaking ceremony, and the cornerstone was laid in early June 1928. C.E. Prentis, the only charter member still with the congregation, turned the first shovel at the ground-breaking and placed the cornerstone in position.<sup>31</sup> The installation of the organ and finishing of the interior of the sanctuary delayed the completion of the church by a month or so. The last service in the old building was held in early

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general contracting work. *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), March 29, 1928; *Sioux City Journal* (IA), September 19, 1996.

<sup>24</sup> Ehrensperger, *History*, 107.

<sup>25</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 24.

<sup>26</sup> By the time of the 1930 census, the Wellingtons had moved back east to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Raynor was working as an Episcopal pastor. Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 24.

<sup>27</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 24.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), February 14, 1929.

<sup>30</sup> Massachusetts Passenger and Crew Lists, 1820-1963, via Ancestry.com; Derek Strahan, “Tabernacle Congregational Church, Salem, Mass,” December 21, 2018, *Lost New England*, accessed online: <https://lostnewengland.com/2018/12/tabernacle-congregational-church-salem-mass/>; Shary Berg and Gretchen Schuler with Betsy Friedberg, “Wellesley Congregational Church and Cemetery,” Wellesley, Norfolk County, Massachusetts, nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (September 22, 2014), NRIS # 14000696.

<sup>31</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), February 14, 1929; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 25-26.

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November 1928. The dedication of the new church and organ was held on February 17, 1929.<sup>32</sup> The dedication events included an organ recital, banquets, and a sermon by Dr. George Nash, president of Yankton College, on "The Pilgrim Adventure." The Baptist and Methodist congregations joined in the services.<sup>33</sup> As a whole, with furnishings, the church cost \$83,685, financed with donations, as well as \$15,000 split between a grant and a loan from the Congregational Church and Building Society of New York.<sup>34</sup> The electro-pneumatic pipe organ was built and installed by the Moller company of Hagerstown, Maryland; it had three manuals with pedals, eighteen ranks of pipes, and 1,248 pipes, with room for more.<sup>35</sup> The church's bell was brought over from the old building. The sanctuary auditorium was finished in white and could seat 700. It had a semi-circular minister's platform at the center of the front of the sanctuary with a twenty-seven-seat choir loft in a curved gallery behind the platform. The church was built with rooms off both the sanctuary gallery (balcony) and the basement fellowship hall with moveable walls that could be opened to the larger spaces. The fellowship hall also included a low stage platform on one end and a kitchen at the other, in the northwest corner. The church's heating unit was built into an underground concrete room off the north wall of the basement.<sup>36</sup>



First Congregational Church, Vermillion. Used with permission of Jeanette Williams, Vermillion.  
Accessed online: <http://cchpc.org/gallery/nggallery/cchpc/Jeanette-Williams-Gallery/page/7>.

<sup>32</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), November 1, 1928, February 14, 1929; Ehrensperger, *History*, 107; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 24-25.

<sup>33</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), February 14 and 21, 1929.

<sup>34</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 26.

<sup>35</sup> The organ has been used a number of times by the university's music department for performances. *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), February 14 and 21, 1929.

<sup>36</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), November 29, 1928, February 14, 1929.

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In 1956, the church bought a strip of land along the west side of the church and added a driveway connected to a small parking lot to the north of the church.<sup>37</sup> Over the 1960s, church membership had grown with the postwar growth of the city and university, and the congregation had extensive conversations about building needs including education space, parking space, and maintenance needs. Options included building a wing or separate structure for education space, or rebuilding a new, larger church.<sup>38</sup> In 1968, a new pastor Rev. David W. Cutting brought an interest in ecumenical projects; one of which was a successful Ecumenical Church School in cooperation with the local Baptist, Episcopal, and United Methodist churches. The use of all four churches for classroom space alleviated needs for new construction and opened up the funds that had already been raised to go towards other building work.<sup>39</sup>

In 1970, some interior office and classroom spaces were remodeled, including the pastor's study becoming a library and primary grade classrooms became a secretary's office. Other classrooms were enlarged, and the basement stage became a classroom. A nursery/crib room was added near the kitchen in the basement. There were also projects for the heating plant and the electrical wiring. On the exterior, the concrete front steps and sidewalks were replaced.<sup>40</sup>

In 1976, trees were planted on the east, west, and south side of the building. In 1982, storm windows were built for all exterior windows as one of several projects to improve energy efficiency around the building, others including ceiling fans in the sanctuary and heating systems around the building.<sup>41</sup> In 1981-1992, the congregation led by Board of Trustees chair, Young Moore, raised capital building funds for ongoing maintenance, and they built a small addition on the southwest corner of the building to add an elevator and make the building more accessible. Sandy Dickenson with the firm Koch-Hazard Architects of Sioux Falls designed an elevator addition to blend with the historic aesthetics of the church.<sup>42</sup>

### **Additional History of the First Congregational Church in Vermillion<sup>43</sup>**

The history of the First Congregational Church (United Church of Christ) in Vermillion has been marked by ecumenical work with other churches in the community, work in missions, women's ministry, programming for youth and university students, and engagement with social issues—from early work on temperance and prohibition in the nineteenth century, to refugee resettlement and relief contributions around the time of the Vietnam War.

From its first meetings in the early 1870s, the congregation raised money to send to Home Mission efforts.<sup>44</sup> In December 1879, the church held a "Fore fathers day" celebration, with a

<sup>37</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 36.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 32, 37, 39-41.

<sup>39</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), September 11 and October 30, 1969; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 41-42; Siegrist, *Little Church*, 20, 22-25.

<sup>40</sup> Edith B. Siegrist, *Little Church on the Prairie: First Supplement, 1970-1995* (Vermillion, 1995), 10.

<sup>41</sup> Siegrist, *Little Church*, 11.

<sup>42</sup> Siegrist, *Little Church*, 11-13; Jim Wilson, *Vermillion Architects and Contractors, 1870 to Present* (Vermillion SD: Clay County Historic Preservation Commission, 2013).

<sup>43</sup> Edward C. Ehrensperger in 1970 and Edith B. Siegrist in 1995 have written full church histories of the First Congregational Church in Vermillion. Citations in bibliography.

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sermon “on ‘the Pilgrim fathers and what they bequeathed to us.’”<sup>45</sup> In 1880, a new pastor, Rev. Walker, installed that March, was removed in July for inebriety.<sup>46</sup> His replacement, Rev. J.S. Bascom was an active temperance supporter.<sup>47</sup> In the 1880s, the church’s Ladies’ Aid hosted food stands during the territorial convention in September 1880 and held dime socials to raise funds for mission work.<sup>48</sup> In 1887, the congregation raised money and donated books for the library at Yankton College.<sup>49</sup> In 1891, the first district of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.) held its annual convention at the church.<sup>50</sup> In the 1890s-1900s, the university’s music department and other faculty used the Congregational church for performances, graduation recitals, and lectures.<sup>51</sup>

Church historians also noted that significant contributions from the Ladies Aid often appeared in church reports once they started being recorded in 1891—“again and again there are references to contributions from Ladies’ organization, often rescuing the church from financial embarrassment.”<sup>52</sup> For instance, in December 1892, the Ladies’ Aid report indicated making \$331.85 from suppers, a Mother Goose entertainment, a fair, a Melville entertainment, and special collections, and they expended \$305.68 on an organ, parsonage, church debt (\$220), the pastor’s salary, and choir music.<sup>53</sup> The Ladies’ Aid later changed its name to Women’s Fellowship, and the group continued varied events and services that allowed them to continue to make financial contributions to the church property, programs, and outside missions.<sup>54</sup>

In 1904, church member and 1901 graduate of the University of South Dakota, Jessie Payne, applied to be a missionary teacher in China. She went with financial support from the South Dakota Congregational churches to China for six years as a religious education teacher for the Peking Women’s College. In 1905, the Vermillion congregation gave \$100 towards her salary. Payne returned to China and worked as education secretary for the American Board of Foreign Missions in Peking.<sup>55</sup>

From a peak in membership of 306 in 1906, the church lost members down to 218 until the coming of Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Cromer in 1910 and his revival meetings. Membership loss was attributed to families leaving Vermillion for settlement west of the Missouri River, where the

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<sup>44</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 4.

<sup>45</sup> *Daily Press and Dakotaian* (Yankton SD), December 22, 1879.

<sup>46</sup> Afterwards, Walker set up a short-lived Independent Congregational church. *Daily Press and Dakotaian* (Yankton SD), February 24, 1879 - July 23, 1880.

<sup>47</sup> *Press and Daily Dakotaian* (Yankton SD), September 16, 1882 - August 28, 1886.

<sup>48</sup> *Press and Daily Dakotaian* (Yankton SD), August 21, 1880 - July 15, 1882.

<sup>49</sup> *Press and Daily Dakotaian* (Yankton SD), August 23, 1887.

<sup>50</sup> *Madison Daily Leader* (SD), May 26, 1891.

<sup>51</sup> *The Volante* 6(8) (June 1891), 164 - 20(29) (June 4, 1907), 2.

<sup>52</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 13.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-15.

<sup>54</sup> Siegrist, *Little Church*, 35-39.

<sup>55</sup> *Madison Daily Leader* (SD), March 28, 1904; *Mitchell Capital* (SD), May 27, 1904; *Turner County Herald* (Hurley SD), June 30, 1904; *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), September 8, 1927; Ehrensperger, *History*, 240-241; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 18.

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federal government had broken apart the Great Sioux Reservation. In 1918, the membership had rebounded considerably, to 282.<sup>56</sup> Around this time, the church's regular three services weekly went down to one, with the Sunday evening service shifting to a youth hour in 1918 and the mid-week service being discontinued to save fuel in 1919.<sup>57</sup>

In the 1920s, the church had a discussion group for university-age students, which included topics on "The Problems of the Races" and "Industrial Problems," supported the university YMCA, and had a World Friendship Club, whose programs included hearing from a former missionary to Greece and on U.S. policy in the Caribbean.<sup>58</sup> During the Great Depression, the pastor's annual salary was cut twice, going from \$3,000 to \$1,500.<sup>59</sup> In 1935, after the end of federal prohibition, the church sent a resolution to the state legislature in support of a local option for municipal prohibition.<sup>60</sup> In 1944 (or 1948), organist Jack Noble became the church's music director and served in that role for fifty-one years. Along with adult vocal choir, there were youth and bell choirs organized.<sup>61</sup>

In 1961, the congregation voted to unite with the United Church of Christ (UCC), and in 1969, officially changed the name of the congregation.<sup>62</sup> In 1964, Rev. Thomas S. Butler who emphasized "the social gospel" was hired as pastor. In his first year in Vermillion, Butler went to Mississippi with two other local clergy to register Black voters. In March 1968, Butler resigned to run the VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program in Kentucky. The 1970 church history summed up his tenure and attention to contemporary social issues by saying: "although he may have been criticized for preaching too much on 'Sex, Segregation, and Southeast Asia,' he was not afraid to say what he thought and to follow the dictates of his conscience, no matter what the consequences."<sup>63</sup> In the 1950s to 1970s, a number of university students became collegiate members of the church, some fraternities and sororities attended services with their housemothers, and the church supported on-campus ecumenical ministry work.<sup>64</sup> In 1975, the UCC church worked both with the Lutheran and Methodist churches to sponsor a refugee family from Vietnam and with a host family program for the university's foreign-exchange students.<sup>65</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s, the church had a Social Action Committee that worked on community service efforts. In that period, the UCC church also worked on contributions for flood and drought relief, relief for Cambodia and Vietnam, refugee resettlement, peace offerings, Yankton College, and seminary education, and with the state

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<sup>56</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 18-20; Herbert S. Schell, *Clay County: Chapters of the Past* (Vermillion Area Chamber of Commerce, 1985), 142.

<sup>57</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 5, 21.

<sup>58</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), January 10, 1924 - January 19, 1928; Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 23.

<sup>59</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 27, 29.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>61</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 32, 43; Siegrist, *Little Church*, 27.

<sup>62</sup> Ehrensperger, *Little Church*, 37-38, 43.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>64</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), October 9, 1969; Siegrist, *Little Church*, 18.

<sup>65</sup> Siegrist, *Little Church*, 15-17.

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General Association contributed to relief for the 1972 Rapid City flood and funds in support of black colleges.<sup>66</sup>

### **History of Vermillion and Clay County**

The land that became Clay County was long the home of indigenous tribes. In the early nineteenth century, the Ihanktonwan / Yankton tribes interacted with fur trade companies working along the rivers and encroaching forts of the U.S. military. For example, in about 1827, the Columbia Fur Company had posts at the mouths of the Niobrara, James, and Vermillion Rivers along the Missouri River, and the American Fur Company had a post in Clay County in 1830.<sup>67</sup> American land companies arrived in the late 1850s and pushed for the 1858 Treaty of Washington that opened land east of the Missouri River for settlement and created a reservation for the Yankton. Euro-American settlers came in for squatter and then homestead claims, land purchases, and town platting—many of whom had been living, and waiting, just across the river in Nebraska until the Dakota Territory was opened.<sup>68</sup> In the 1860s, a majority of Clay County's new residents were born in old Northwest Territory states like Wisconsin, Ohio, and Illinois, with some additionally from New England and Mid-Atlantic states. The foreign-born population was largely from Norway, France, or Canada.<sup>69</sup> In the 1860s, only a few hundred non-Indian settlers were living in small settlements in the southeastern part, now Yankton, Clay, Union, Bon Homme, and Minnehaha Counties. They pushed for the creation of Dakota Territory in 1861. In the wake of the 1862 U.S.-Dakota Conflict, the Dakota tribes living in Minnesota were forced out of that state and additional reservations were established for Dakota tribes east of the Missouri River at Crow Creek (1862) and Lake Traverse / Sisseton-Wahpeton (1867). Additionally, a group of Mdewakanton Dakota established a homestead colony at Flandreau in 1869.

Clay County was formed in 1862 by the territorial legislature.<sup>70</sup> The earliest towns in the territory were along the rivers, including Vermillion, Elk Point, Yankton, and Bon Homme in southeastern South Dakota. The county boundaries in this region were chosen so each of these larger settlements would fall in separate counties, to reduce competition between them over being the county seat.<sup>71</sup> Though a smaller county in total area, Clay County was considered “a very important one from its geographical position and fine character of its soil.”<sup>72</sup> At its organization, the county featured about thirty miles of shoreline on the Missouri River along its

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<sup>66</sup> Ehrensperger, *History*, 74-75; Siegrist, *Little Church*, 16-18.

<sup>67</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 40, 126; Harold Edward Briggs, “The Early History of Clay County,” *South Dakota Historical Collections* 13 (1926), 72; Rusch, “Portrait,” 337.

<sup>68</sup> Land west of the Missouri River was made the Great Sioux Reservation for Lakota tribes. Briggs, “The Early History,” 76-77; Harry F. Thompson, ed., *A New South Dakota History*, 2nd ed. (Sioux Falls, SD: Center for Western Studies, 2009), 160-163.

<sup>69</sup> Briggs, “The Early History,” 96.

<sup>70</sup> *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 205-206; *Memorial and Biographical Record of Turner, Lincoln, Union and Clay Counties, South Dakota* (Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle & Co., 1897), 14.

<sup>71</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 185, 190.

<sup>72</sup> *Memorial and Biographical*, 15.

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southern edge, and the Vermillion River emptied into the Missouri near the town that took the name Vermillion.<sup>73</sup>

The earliest settlements in the county started just after the 1858 Treaty along the Vermillion River on the bottomlands (which became the town of Vermillion), on the bluff, and along the Missouri River at “West Vermillion.”<sup>74</sup> One of the earliest were groups of Norwegian immigrants who came in 1859 and 1860 to homestead farms around Gayville, and Scandinavian immigrants continued to settle rural Clay County in high numbers.<sup>75</sup> There was also a concentration of Irish settlers at Lodi.<sup>76</sup> For construction, there was timber around the river but some settlers also started brick-making in the summer of 1861.<sup>77</sup> An early institution was the rope ferry operated by Arthur C. and Mary Aungie Van Meter.<sup>78</sup> The territory’s first land office opened at Vermillion in 1862, the district court met in Vermillion, and it became the county seat—all of which brought people and business to the settlement in its first years.<sup>79</sup> The town got a post office in 1860, and its first newspaper, the *Dakota Republican*, put out its first issue in September 1861.<sup>80</sup> In 1861, “East” Vermillion had 265 residents: 152 white male; 106 white female; and 7 recorded of mixed native ethnicity and “West” Vermillion had 131 white males and 88 white females.<sup>81</sup> When the US-Dakota War started in Minnesota in 1862, settlers and the government in southern Dakota Territory responded by setting up militias and building stockades at Vermillion, Yankton, and Elk Point in anticipation of threats by groups from Dakota or Yankton tribes. A number of other settlers fled temporarily to Nebraska across the river or downriver to Sioux City. At Vermillion, the militia dug fortification ditches and “foxholes,” and used logs from the Presbyterian church to build a stockade. As the U.S. Army enforced control over the region in the mid-1860s, town development resumed in Vermillion and other southern Dakota settlements.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>73</sup> *Daily Press and Dakotian* (Yankton SD), February 20, 1878; *Memorial and Biographical*, 15.

<sup>74</sup> *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 206; Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 80, 103, 187; Briggs, “The Early History,” 78; Schell, *Clay County*, 3; Rusch, “Portrait,” 335, 339.

<sup>75</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 127, 130; Thompson, *A New South Dakota History*, 332.

<sup>76</sup> Elizabeth Theiss Smith, *Historic Vermillion and Clay County* (Charleston SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 11.

<sup>77</sup> David Erpestad and David Wood, *Building South Dakota: A Historical Survey of the State’s Architecture to 1945* (Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997), 24.

<sup>78</sup> Mary’s mother was Ihanktonwan. Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 127; Briggs, “The Early History,” 77; Harry H. Anderson, “The Waldron-Black Tomahawk Controversy and the Status of Mixed Bloods among the Teton Sioux,” *South Dakota History* 21(1) (1991), 73.

<sup>79</sup> Until then, land claims were filed at the surveyor general’s office in Yankton under authority of the General Land Office. The land office was removed from Vermillion to Sioux Falls in 1873. *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 206; Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 180, 216, 685; Briggs, “The Early History,” 98; Thompson, *A New South Dakota History*, 165; Rusch, “Portrait,” 342.

<sup>80</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 129; Briggs, “The Early History,” 95.

<sup>81</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 176; Briggs, “The Early History,” 80.

<sup>82</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 235-240, 366; Briggs, “The Early History,” 87-90; Schell, *Clay County*, 4; Rusch, “Portrait,” 343-344.

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In 1864, a notable quantity of settlers from New York migrated to homesteads and towns in Union, Bon Homme, and Clay Counties.<sup>83</sup> The townsite plat of Vermillion was filed in 1869; the town was organized in 1873 with a board of trustees; and it incorporated as a mayor-led government in 1877 by action of the Legislative Assembly.<sup>84</sup> Much of the town was built up in the bottomlands of the Missouri River, for convenient access to transportation on the river and the water and timber sources in the valley, although a few residences were built on the river bluff to the north.<sup>85</sup> In 1867, Clay County had eleven school districts (seven of which were organized) with ninety-six students enrolled.<sup>86</sup> By 1867, the first railroad had started surveying to build across Clay County, and although initial funding was difficult, eventually the first train service was opened in December 1872.<sup>87</sup> In 1870, Vermillion had a steamboat landing, a flour mill, “two hotels, a sawmill nearby, a number of stores, and a number of lawyers, doctors, and a due proportion of clergymen.”<sup>88</sup>

Diverse agricultural trade was a major focus of the town economy by the late 1870s into the 1880s, especially wheat, oats, barley, rye, flax, butter, cattle, hogs, and wool, with agricultural products hauled with difficulty by wagon or boat to Sioux City until the railroad was built.<sup>89</sup> Wagon trains with supplies also ran through Vermillion and Yankton on the Sioux City to Fort Randall Road, or to the Black Hills during the 1870s mining rush in that region.<sup>90</sup> In 1870 and 1878, Vermillion hosted territorial fairs, which especially advertised agricultural products.<sup>91</sup> Grasshoppers hit Clay County as hard as the rest of the region in 1873, 1874, and 1876, but relief efforts carried settlers through until the agricultural economy rebounded.<sup>92</sup> In 1880, Vermillion business interests reported shipping out over 402,000 lbs. of butter from the county and over 50,000 lbs. of eggs.<sup>93</sup> William G. Bower operated at Vermillion one of the territory’s longest-operating brickyards, which lasted from 1883 to 1907.<sup>94</sup> A telegraph system was built through Vermillion, on a line from Sioux City to Yankton, in the late summer of 1870.<sup>95</sup> In 1870, Clay County was one of the most populated counties in the territory, with 2,623 enumerated residents and 808 buildings. Those recorded were 57% male and 43% female, 29% foreign-born, and

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<sup>83</sup> Briggs, “The Early History,” 96; Schell, *Clay County*, 6.

<sup>84</sup> Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 89; *Memorial and Biographical*, 15; *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 206; Briggs, “The Early History,” 114; Michael P. Conzen, “Understanding Great Plains Urbanization through the Lens of South Dakota Townscapes,” *Journal of Geography* 109 (2010), 5.

<sup>85</sup> *Daily Press and Dakotian* (Yankton SD), February 20, 1878.

<sup>86</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 471.

<sup>87</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 603, 633; Briggs, “The Early History,” 112.

<sup>88</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 537, 603, 671.

<sup>89</sup> *Daily Press and Dakotian* (Yankton SD), February 20, 1878; *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 206; Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 2, 1061; vol. 3, 10; Briggs, “The Early History,” 85, 92, 125, 138, 149-151.

<sup>90</sup> Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 16-17; Briggs, “The Early History,” 92-93; Rusch, “Portrait,” 348.

<sup>91</sup> Briggs, “The Early History,” 113.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 126-133.

<sup>93</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 2, 1163.

<sup>94</sup> *Pierre Weekly Free Press* (SD), July 25, 1907; Schell, *Clay County*, 39, 87; Erpestad and Wood, *Building South Dakota*, 24.

<sup>95</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 540; Briggs, “The Early History,” 101.

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included 2 men and 33 women marked “colored.”<sup>96</sup> In 1880, the county had a recorded population of about 5,000, with about a third being foreign-born, and about 54% male and 46% female, and only 3 individuals recorded as “colored” (including of native ancestry).<sup>97</sup> In the 1880 census, Vermillion had 714 residents.<sup>98</sup>

In January 1875, Vermillion was “practically destroyed by fire,” losing half of its business district, but was rebuilt.<sup>99</sup> In 1881, Vermillion experienced a devastating flood and “ice gorge” that largely destroyed the town over the weeks between the first rising waters on the evening of Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, when the Baptist church bells were rung in alarm, until mid-April. According to an 1881 history of the region, the local *Dakota Herald* newspaper reported on April 9<sup>th</sup> that between Yankton and Vermillion “a thickly settled valley... which two weeks ago presented a rich and flourishing aspect, dotted closely with cozy and comfortable farm houses, is now nothing but a desert of water and ice.”<sup>100</sup> When weather and ice flows permitted, boat crews in Vermillion (as well as Yankton and elsewhere along the river) worked to rescue hundreds of people trapped in the upper levels of buildings and take them up the bluffs, and they tried to recover as much property as they could. Eventually, the waters picked up whole buildings, which were “carried down and smashed to pieces against the ice.”<sup>101</sup> Rural areas between Vermillion and Gayville to the west were “swept clean of everything, with an occasional exception.”<sup>102</sup> When the waters finally drained in April, the old town still had packed ice from one to six feet high. The town of Vermillion had 132 buildings destroyed with many more damaged and an estimated total property loss of around \$140,000—“at Vermillion the destruction was most complete.”<sup>103</sup> A local citizens’ committee and a women’s group organized relief efforts to collect and distribute tents, clothing, blankets, food, and seed grain around the area. The town residents immediately started rebuilding on the bluff “with the aid of carpenters, masons, and professional house movers from as far away as Sioux City and Des Moines,” but they relied on steamboats for supplies until the railroads could be rebuilt.<sup>104</sup>

Despite the flood, the business directory in 1881 included four attorneys, three blacksmiths, three druggists, two hotels, two liverys, three milliners and dress-makers, three meat markets, three stock dealers, a newspaper, photographer, banker, barber, flouring mill, three physicians, a dentist, and several other merchants of different types.<sup>105</sup> In addition to several Protestant churches (discussed below), Vermillion’s profile in a 1881 history also included its public

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<sup>96</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 541.

<sup>97</sup> Perhaps just men were counted for that statistic that year. *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 32.

<sup>98</sup> *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 32.

<sup>99</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 2, 1061; Briggs, “The Early History,” 114; Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 18; Rusch, “Portrait,” 348-350.

<sup>100</sup> *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 253.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>103</sup> Briggs, “The Early History,” 140.

<sup>104</sup> *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 207-211, 253-255; Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 2, 1162; Briggs, “The Early History,” 140-141; Schell, *Clay County*, 30; Rusch, “Portrait,” 360.

<sup>105</sup> *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 214-215.

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school, a masonic lodge, an Odd Fellows lodge, and a cornet band.<sup>106</sup> Vermillion's population approximately doubled between 1878 and 1897.<sup>107</sup> Even as railroads supplanted river transportation, Vermillion still benefitted as a center of trade for an agriculturally prosperous county and as a center for government and education. In 1895, the city approved a telephone franchise by ordinance and entertained proposals for electric lights, which was provided by the water-powered flour mill owned by S.E. Brookman.<sup>108</sup>

City government expenses were largely funded by saloon licenses in early years.<sup>109</sup> Yet, from the 1870s through the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, the prohibition/temperance movement found growing popularity in the city with active support by many churches and local clergy, especially those of the Baptist, Congregational, and Methodist denominations.<sup>110</sup> Many organizations over the city's history worked to maintain and enforce local (and, when enacted, state) prohibition laws.<sup>111</sup> Some of the early support for prohibition came from a desire to watchdog both the city's respectability and the morals of university students. In 1885, the territorial legislature passed a law prohibiting the sale of alcohol within three miles of the university, which included the whole town.<sup>112</sup> Local option prohibition from Vermillion was maintained by a narrow margin at public ballot in 1887.<sup>113</sup> Until the federal repeal of prohibition 1933, the city was "dry" by law—a "unique experience" in South Dakota.<sup>114</sup> Enforcement varied, however, and there were still liquor wholesalers in business. Some individuals also set up temporary saloon shacks on river islands claiming they were in Nebraska, and drug stores sold medicinal liquors that met a degree of market demand. For many years, local politics were divided on "saloon" or "anti-saloon" tickets. From 1897 until 1917, a "local option" law to license saloons was often on the local ballot—"each election was preceded by large rallies in opposition a day or two earlier and, usually, presided over in some church building by C.E. Prentis."<sup>115</sup> Charles E. Prentis, a founding member of the Congregational church, was on the central committee of a Red Ribbon

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<sup>106</sup> *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 213-214.

<sup>107</sup> *Daily Press and Dakotian* (Yankton SD), February 20, 1878; *Memorial and Biographical*, 15.

<sup>108</sup> *Union County Courier* (Elk Point SD), April 4, 1895; *Dakota Farmers' Leader* (Canton SD), April 30, 1897; Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 323; Schell, *Clay County*, 289; Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 89.

<sup>109</sup> *Daily Press and Dakotian* (Yankton SD), February 20, 1878; Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 89.

<sup>110</sup> *Daily Press and Dakotian* (Yankton SD), December 22, 1877 - March 16, 1880; *Press and Daily Dakotian* (Yankton SD), July 13, 1882; *Turner County Herald* (Hurley SD), November 21, 1901; Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 771; Schell, *Clay County*, 289, 291-292; Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 73.

<sup>111</sup> Schell, *Clay County*, 209, 289-290; Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 73.

<sup>112</sup> *Press and Daily Dakotian* (Yankton SD), February 27, 1885; *Turner County Herald* (Hurley SD), March 26, 1885; Briggs, "The Early History," 143; "Early History of the University of South Dakota." *South Dakota Historical Collections* 13 (1926), 238-239; Schell, *Clay County*, 294.

<sup>113</sup> *Custer Chronicle* (SD), November 19, 1887; Schell, *Clay County*, 32, 295.

<sup>114</sup> Schell, *Clay County*, 300.

<sup>115</sup> *Black Hills Union* (Rapid City SD), February 22, 1901; *Madison Daily Leader* (SD), April 8, 1907; Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 73; Schell, *History of Clay County*, 192; Schell, *Clay County*, 32, 293-294, 297.

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group, was founding president of the Vermillion auxiliary to the South Dakota Enforcement League in 1889, and became president of the Civic Federation in 1895.<sup>116</sup>

The biggest institution in Vermillion was and remains the University of South Dakota, which was established by the territorial legislature in 1862 although no appropriations were made to actually start operations.<sup>117</sup> In April 1881, shortly after the flood and threatened with losing the university, Vermillion residents formed a private corporation to gather funds to start construction, which they presented to the legislature at their 1883 session.<sup>118</sup> Classes started meeting in the courthouse in Vermillion for the 1882-83 term.<sup>119</sup> By 1884, the university had the erection of its first buildings underway. Along with offices and classrooms, they included a reference library, a geological specimen cabinet, and science laboratory equipment.<sup>120</sup> In 1893, the main building burned down, a \$100,000 loss, but was rebuilt and remodeled from 1894 to 1899 with funds directly from the city and county.<sup>121</sup> In 1901, the university's schools of law and music were established. The department of engineering started in 1903 and the medical school in 1907.<sup>122</sup> Additional buildings were erected for a Science Hall, dormitories, a gymnasium/armory, and law school building, and the 100-acre grounds were improved with tree plantings and sidewalks.<sup>123</sup> The university added schools of education and business administration in 1927, a graduate school in 1929, and a college of fine arts in 1931.<sup>124</sup> One of the impacts of the university was the music program's faculty and students' participation in arts in the community, including performances at local churches, with the city band, at the opera house, and at the Prentis Park bandshell.<sup>125</sup>

From 1890 to 1900, Vermillion's population grew 46% to 2,183.<sup>126</sup> Although the population to 1910 stayed fairly level, the city experienced a building boom between 1900 and 1910 to catch up with the previous growth.<sup>127</sup> The city worked through various municipal improvements, including taking over management of the light plant in 1915, starting street paving work in 1916,

<sup>116</sup> Schell, *Clay County*, 209, 291, 295-296.

<sup>117</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 2, 1311, v.3, 797; Erpestad and Wood, *Building South Dakota*, 123; Rusch, "Portrait," 341.

<sup>118</sup> Briggs, "The Early History," 146-147; "Early History of the University," 186-187, 194; Schell, *Clay County*, 167; Rusch, "Portrait," 363.

<sup>119</sup> Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 850.

<sup>120</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 2, 1342.

<sup>121</sup> *Custer Weekly Chronicle* (SD), January 27, 1894; Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 830; Erpestad and Wood, *Building South Dakota*, 93.

<sup>122</sup> Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 627-628, 851, 892-893; Schell, *History of Clay County*, 193; Schell, *Clay County*, 177-178; Evelyn H. Schlenker, *The Dakota Hospital Association and the Building and Maintenance of the Dakota Hospital in Vermillion, SD* (Vermillion: Clay County Historic Preservation Commission, 2017), 31.

<sup>123</sup> Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 892; Schell, *History of Clay County*, 205; Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 51.

<sup>124</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), June 9, 1927; Schell, *Clay County*, 179.

<sup>125</sup> Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 74.

<sup>126</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken the Year 1910* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), 679.

<sup>127</sup> Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 89.

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and building a new municipal building in 1920.<sup>128</sup> In 1910s and early 1920s, Vermillion also had several women's clubs including the Women's Civic League, Wasesa (Waseca), Nautilus, and Faculty Woman's Study clubs.<sup>129</sup> In 1921, a Civic Improvement Society (later Civic Council) was organized under Margaret Wellington, a member of the Congregational church.<sup>130</sup>

In the 1920s and 1930s, South Dakota faced difficult economic conditions statewide in the midst of a regional and national agricultural crisis and financial depression. In certain ways, Vermillion, as a trade/market center, fared better than more rural places around the state in the late 1920s. Even into the 1930s, no local banks in town failed, the university's enrollment increased, and there were big building projects with churches, university buildings, a post office, a railroad depot, an airport, and a community hospital. Still, there were relief organizations operating locally, including the Red Cross and a welfare division of the Civic Council. Churches also had to cut salaries, city staff agreed to a pay cut, the city reduced electric light rates, and the city actively pursued federal work relief programs when those became available.<sup>131</sup>

After World War II, Vermillion experienced a boost in population as veterans took advantage of the G.I. Bill to attend the University of South Dakota. The university expanded its programming, creating the Nursing School in 1954, the Institute of Indian Studies in 1955, doctorate degrees in 1956, and a computer science degree in 1963. There were also several new buildings and dormitories constructed to accommodate the larger student body.<sup>132</sup> In the 1970s, the university grew again as "baby boomer" generation children born shortly after the war started entering university.<sup>133</sup> The population of Vermillion grew from 2,850 in 1930 to 5,337 in 1950.<sup>134</sup> While the pace of growth slowed in the 1950s, it picked up again in the 1960s, with the population growing to 9,128 by 1970.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Schell, *History of Clay County*, 202-203.

<sup>129</sup> Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 778; Helen M. Winslow, ed., *Official Register and Directory of Women's Clubs in America*, vol. 21 (Shirley MA: Helen M. Winslow, 1919), 196; Helen M. Winslow, ed., *Official Register and Directory of Women's Clubs in America*, vol. 23 (Shirley MA: Helen M. Winslow, 1921), 139; Schell, *Clay County*, 212.

<sup>130</sup> Schell, *History of Clay County*, 264; Schell, *Clay County*, 215.

<sup>131</sup> Allen Schroeder, *Architectural History of Vermillion, South Dakota: A Handbook for Students and Teachers* (Vermillion: Educational Media Center, The University of South Dakota, 1980), 53; Schell, *History of Clay County*, 203, 211, 217-219, 229-230; Smith, *Historic Vermillion*, 35; Schlenker, *The Dakota Hospital Association*, 18.

<sup>132</sup> *Vermillion Plain Talk* (SD), October 9, 1969; S.D. State Historic Preservation Office, survey and architect files, Pierre, South Dakota; Schell, *Clay County*, 257-258; Schlenker, *The Dakota Hospital Association*, 31.

<sup>133</sup> Schell, *History of Clay County*, 257.

<sup>134</sup> Schell, *History of Clay County*, 251.

<sup>135</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Census of Population, PC (V1)-43 South Dakota, Advanced Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1970), 5.

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### *Churches in Vermillion*

Early in the 1860s, Protestant Christian denominations sent missionary clergy to establish churches in southeastern South Dakota. In Vermillion, Presbyterians built a small log church in August 1860, and Methodists held their first services in the settlement that October.<sup>136</sup> In 1861, Presbyterians hosted a union Sabbath school, and, in 1875, Vermillion hosted the territory's first Sunday school convention.<sup>137</sup> The Bruyer settlement east of Vermillion had a Catholic church.<sup>138</sup> By 1878, the town's churches had multiplied, but were all Protestant denominations, including: Methodist, Episcopal, Baptist, Congregational, United Brethren, Scandinavian Methodist, and Scandinavian Lutheran.<sup>139</sup> In the 1880s, there were also Catholic and Swedish Congregational congregations formed in town, though the Swedish church was not regularly active and was disbanded in 1921 in the wave of post-World War I Americanization.<sup>140</sup> Vermillion's churches occasionally worked on cooperative or "union" efforts, such as youth education, holding evening vesper services in rotation at the height of summer in lieu of regular services, or in charitable causes, such as when they gathered shipments of corn to send to India as famine relief in June 1897.<sup>141</sup>

In Vermillion, three churches have previously been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including the First Baptist Church (NRIS # 82003921), the First Methodist Episcopal Church (#03001522), and the old St. Agnes Catholic Church (#95000280, now Washington Street Arts Center). The First Baptist Church has a Romanesque Revival core designed by Sioux Falls architect Wallace Dow in 1890 and a new sanctuary addition designed in 1925 by Beuttler & Arnold of Sioux City (also the architects for the subject of this nomination). The First Methodist Episcopal Church is a brick Late Gothic style built in 1928-1929 in consultation with a Methodist architect from Chicago, Edward F. Jansson. The Old St. Agnes Catholic Church is also a Late Gothic style brick building built in 1906 from a design by Milwaukee architect Anton Dohmen.<sup>142</sup> There was a wave of postwar church building in Vermillion with St. Paul's Episcopal and Concordia Lutheran built in the 1950s, Trinity Lutheran in the 1960s, and Calvary Christian Reformed and the Alliance church in the 1970s.<sup>143</sup> St. Paul's and Concordia were built on E. Main St. just a few blocks east of First Congregational.

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<sup>136</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 545; Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol.1, 128; Briggs, "The Early History," 104.

<sup>137</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 552, 560; Briggs, "The Early History," 105-106.

<sup>138</sup> Rusch, "Portrait," 347.

<sup>139</sup> *Daily Press and Dakotian* (Yankton SD), February 20, 1878; *History of Southeastern Dakota*, 212, 356.

<sup>140</sup> *Press and Daily Dakotian* (SD), December 6, 1884, March 9, 1889; Schell, *History of Clay County* 139; Schell, *Clay County*, 280.

<sup>141</sup> *Union County Courier* (Elk Point SD), June 3, 1897, July 29, 1897; *Saturday News* (Watertown SD), July 9, 1914.

<sup>142</sup> *Guide to National Register of Historic Places in Clay County, South Dakota*. Vermillion SD: Clay County Historic Preservation Commission, 2011.

<sup>143</sup> Schroeder, *Architectural History*.

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The Congregational church in America has “traced its roots back to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English Puritanism and religious separatism” and centralized its story of arriving in the American colonies seeking religious freedoms.<sup>144</sup> The Congregational church in South Dakota was a result of “home missionary” work started from New England in about 1800 as American settlement began spreading west.<sup>145</sup> The American Home Missionary Society oversaw establishing new congregations in white settlements, while the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions oversaw mission work to native tribes in the West.<sup>146</sup> In about 1840, Stephen Riggs visited tribes near fur trading forts on the Missouri River as a missionary of the Congregational church.<sup>147</sup> In the later 1860s, a Mrs. C.H. Wheeler, then a missionary posted in Turkey, and her brother Judge W.W. Brookings, who lived in Yankton, were said to have been the ones who contacted the American Home Missionary Society to send someone to organize a church at Yankton. This was done in the spring of 1868 when Rev. E.W. Cook came from Wisconsin to Yankton. In November 1868, the Rev. Joseph Ward arrived in Yankton from Rhode Island to replace the elderly Rev. Cook and oversee the Congregational church in Yankton. In January 1869, the Ladies Aid of the Yankton church, under president Lillioire Fuller, started weekly meetings to plan concerts, socials, and festivals to raise a building fund. Ward also recruited his wife Sarah’s brother-in-law Rev. Stewart Sheldon to active ministry work in the territory. Sheldon had come from Michigan in the fall of 1869 because of poor health from malaria, and he had filed a homestead claim outside Yankton and bought timbered land on the James River. In the spring of 1870, Ward convinced Sheldon to start organizing church congregations, which he did in Vermillion, Richland, Elk Point, and Bon Homme. Sheldon served those churches until 1874 when he was placed in “general charge of the work throughout the territory,” a position he held through 1885.<sup>148</sup> At the time of his leaving, the denomination had grown to 101 churches with 3,571 members.<sup>149</sup>

The Congregational General Association for Dakota Territory formed in 1871 with a dual focus on evangelism and education, and a Women’s Missionary society formed shortly afterwards.<sup>150</sup> In 1881, “nine young men from Yale Theological Seminary” came to Dakota Territory through the Home Missionary Society and had a tremendous impact on church organization work.<sup>151</sup> In the early 1880s, women’s organizations within the church organized to support home and foreign missionary work, and they were active and autonomous organizations.<sup>152</sup> Church mission work “fit well with women’s traditional roles as moral and cultural standard bearers” in wider society

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<sup>144</sup> Lisa R. Lindell, “‘We Are Laying Foundations’: South Dakota’s First Ordained Women Congregational Ministers,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 36(1) (Winter 2016), 32.

<sup>145</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 568; Lindell, “We Are Laying,” 33.

<sup>146</sup> Lindell, “We Are Laying,” 33.

<sup>147</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 569; Thompson, *A New South Dakota History*, 331.

<sup>148</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 569-571; Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 478-479, vol. 3, 947; Schell, *History of Clay County*, 143; Ehrensperger, *History*, 103, 106; Lindell, “We Are Laying,” 33.

<sup>149</sup> Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 950.

<sup>150</sup> Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 948; Ehrensperger, *History*, 9.

<sup>151</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 574; Ehrensperger, *History*, 13, 112.

<sup>152</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 574; Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 949; Lindell, “We Are Laying,” 43.

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and built up experience in public leadership for many women. The first woman ordained by the Congregational church in South Dakota was Mary Drake in December 1890.<sup>153</sup> The Congregational church in Dakota Territory also prioritized educational institutions from its early history, starting with Rev. Joseph Ward's academy in Yankton that later in 1881 became Yankton College, but also including schools on reservations, academies in Spearfish, Plankinton, and Charles Mix County, and a college in Redfield.<sup>154</sup>

The denomination also continued missions to tribes in Dakota Territory, especially following a major gathering at the Santee Reservation (in northern Nebraska) in 1873 with Revs. A.L. Riggs and Joseph Ward, which was conducted partly in the Dakota language as Riggs had been translating hymns and other church liturgy.<sup>155</sup> In 1887, the general association sent an objection to the president about a new order restricting the language used in Indian schools to English; many of their missionaries found it effective to teach and preach in native languages.<sup>156</sup>

The General Association of Congregational Churches of South Dakota had seven component associations—including Black Hills, Central, Northern, Plankinton, and Yankton, as well as an association for Dakota (Indian) churches and German Congregational Churches.<sup>157</sup> Growth of the Congregational church in the state stagnated in the 1890s and early 1900s, which were hard years amid a national recession, drought, and shifts in populations within South Dakota during the early economic recovery.<sup>158</sup> By 1910, the denomination had 196 churches and 9,713 members.<sup>159</sup> With the expansion of American settlement west of the Missouri River after the Great Sioux Reservation was broken apart, new Northwestern and Rosebud Associations were added to the General Association.<sup>160</sup> In the 1910s and 1920s, the denomination saw many mergers as rural congregations consolidated with the increased use of automobiles and civic programs for improved roads.<sup>161</sup> In 1963, during a movement towards greater ecumenical practice, the Congregational, Evangelical, and Reformed synods voted to join together as the United Church of Christ.<sup>162</sup> Under the UCC umbrella, the state reorganized into the Black Hills, Missouri Valley, Oahe, Prairie Lakes, Sioux Central, and Yankton associations.<sup>163</sup>

In addition to "home missions" in support of new churches within the U.S. and missions to native tribes, the state General Association also supported foreign missionaries, many of whom

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<sup>153</sup> Lindell, "We Are Laying," 32, 42.

<sup>154</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 577-579; Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 951; Thompson, 342.

<sup>155</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 572; Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 1, 781, vol. 3, 948.

<sup>156</sup> Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 2, 1476-1477.

<sup>157</sup> Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 573.

<sup>158</sup> Horace Wells Parsons, *The Development of Congregationalism in South Dakota, 1868-1928*, Dissertation, Chicago Theological Seminary (1937), 102-103, 127-128; Ehrensperger, *History*, 19.

<sup>159</sup> Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 951.

<sup>160</sup> Ehrensperger, *History*, 90.

<sup>161</sup> Parsons, *The Development*, 154, 161; Ehrensperger, *History*, 36.

<sup>162</sup> Ehrensperger, *History*, 62.

<sup>163</sup> Ehrensperger, *History*, 98.

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were women. Jessie Payne from Vermillion (discussed earlier) was one, going to China in 1904. Others included Agnes Fenenga, Leona Burr, and Grace Elliot. Fenenga was a Dutch immigrant who had come to Dakota Territory with her family as a child and attended Yankton College. She entered mission service in 1901, spending thirty years in Turkey and ten years in Syria before her retirement in 1944.<sup>164</sup> Burr, a Dakota Wesleyan College graduate from Mitchell, worked as a missionary from 1919 to 1953 in China, Japan, and India.<sup>165</sup> Elliot, from Meckling, was a Yankton College graduate who became a missionary in Greece.<sup>166</sup> On return visits to South Dakota, these and other foreign missionaries were popular speakers for a wide variety of church and school groups, speaking on topics of religious work and on foreign cultures. While abroad, Fenenga and Burr both experienced physical threats in the midst of tumultuous political situations in Turkey and China respectively.<sup>167</sup>

As a denomination, the Congregational denomination in South Dakota supported select social-political efforts in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, such as support for prohibition and for restricting legal reasons for divorce.<sup>168</sup> In 1893, the Congregational Missionary and Aid Societies participated in a Woman's State Congress at Yankton that brought together many different religious and secular women's organizations "to secure greater uniformity and effect in the work of each organization by a combination of effort and method."<sup>169</sup> In May 1898, the South Dakota General Congregational Association made a statement in support of a pending state constitutional amendment for women's suffrage, saying:

... as a further mark of our appreciation of their social and moral work, we hereby recognize as noble the desire of these same mothers and sisters for political equality with their husbands, fathers and brothers.

Resolved, That as our Lord gave woman full social freedom, so we, as His professed followers, hereby agree to use all honorable means to release her from

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<sup>164</sup> *Mitchell Capital* (SD), September 27, 1901; *The Citizen-Republican* (Scotland SD), December 30, 1909, January 6, 1910; *Saturday News* (Watertown SD), May 27, 1910; *Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan* (SD), July 25, 1916; quoting *Mitchell Daily Republic* (SD), April 8, 1949 in "Aukje 'Agnes' Fenenga," Find-a-Grave, accessed online, 20 Nov 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/195950080/aukje-fenenga>.

<sup>165</sup> *Mitchell Capital* (SD), May 2, 1918; *Oakland Tribune* (CA), November 6, 1932; quoting *Mitchell Daily Republic* (SD), August 5, 1968 in "Leona Lloyd Burr," Find-a-Grave, accessed online: 20 Nov 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/133904348/leona-lloyd-burr>.

<sup>166</sup> *Argus-Leader* (Sioux Falls, SD), July 12, 1984; Ehrensperger, *History*, 246.

<sup>167</sup> *The Citizen-Republican* (Scotland SD), December 16, 1915 - March 6, 1919; *Oakland Tribune* (CA), November 6, 1932.

<sup>168</sup> South Dakota's divorce laws were more open and had shorter residency requirements for many years, making it a destination for people from around the country who were seeking divorce. Several of the local leaders of a move to tighten up divorce laws were clergy. Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 746, 950; Ehrensperger, *History*, 37; Thompson, *A New South Dakota History*, 334.

<sup>169</sup> Kingsbury and Smith, *History of Dakota Territory*, vol. 3, 769.

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present limitations, and to place her upon a political equality with the other citizens of our State.<sup>170</sup>

In the 1910s, the denomination worked through positions on national issues of “war, a lasting peace, Women’s Suffrage, Prohibition, education of the foreign born, to name a few,” and sent communication to national political offices about these issues.<sup>171</sup> In the 1930s, there was attention given to concern about the state fair (the immorality of Midway shows and rampant gambling), war/peace, liquor laws, and the growing use of drugs/narcotics. In the 1940s, the church worked extensively on war relief globally, and in the 1950s, there was discussion on war, temperance, “the rights of the conscientious objector, self-determination, needs of the aged, and mental health.”<sup>172</sup>

At points in the history of the Congregational church in South Dakota, the colonial national origins of the denomination were called on in reference. The 1977 state history of the church edited by Edward Ehrensperger noted that Joseph and Sarah Ward’s early missionary work for the congregation and college in Yankton and beyond were “true to their Pilgrim New England ancestry and training.”<sup>173</sup> There were also references in naming, such as the Pilgrim Youth Fellowship in the 1930s-40s and the church’s Placerville Camp in Rapid City had a Mayflower Hall.<sup>174</sup>

### **Ecclesiastical Architecture in South Dakota**

When a new town or settlement began in South Dakota, churches were frequently the first and most prominent buildings constructed. The buildings became sources of community pride for their architecture and as social and cultural gathering places.<sup>175</sup> The evolution of ecclesiastical architecture in South Dakota is typically divided into three distinct phases referred to as “generations.” Most congregations/parishes met in the homes of parishioners until they could raise enough money to construct a dedicated church building. “First generation” churches tended to be simple, utilitarian buildings utilizing locally-available construction materials and featuring little exterior or interior ornamentation.<sup>176</sup> These expedient churches were often replaced within a few years by slightly more elaborate structures.<sup>177</sup> These transitional designs were often referred to as “Prairie Gothic,” which were small, frame buildings with gabled roofs typically featuring clapboard cladding and a steeple or bell tower. They were inexpensive to construct and utilized increasingly standardized and common materials. The use of true Gothic Revival style

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<sup>170</sup> *The Woman’s Journal* (Boston MA), June 11, 1898, p.191, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University.

<sup>171</sup> Ehrensperger, *History*, 92.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 93, 96.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 51, 94.

<sup>175</sup> Erpestad and Wood, *Building South Dakota*, 59.

<sup>176</sup> Eades, *Churches in South Dakota*, 17; Erpestad and Wood, *Building South Dakota*, 60.

<sup>177</sup> Eades, *Churches in South Dakota*, 17.

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elements in these churches was limited, but often included lancet arch windows and transept arches in the interior plan.<sup>178</sup>

Second and third generation churches, largely constructed after 1915, were often designed by architects and constructed by trained builders. These professionals utilized more substantial and quality materials and applied greater ornamentation to the interior and exterior of the buildings. Stained glass was frequently installed in elaborate designs and configurations, and the interiors tended to express the identity of individual denominations. Second or third generation churches often expressed specific architectural styles common in ecclesiastical design.<sup>179</sup> According to architectural historian Megan Eades,

[second and third generation churches] typically exhibit an increased focus on stylistic interpretation of religion and a commitment to creating an impressive house of worship. These buildings are often larger in size, scale, and massing than their earlier counterparts and more identifiable as being influenced by Gothic Revival, Romanesque Revival, or Classical Revival styles of ecclesiastical architecture.<sup>180</sup>

In the late 1920s until the late 1940s, church construction in South Dakota slowed, commensurate with most other types of construction, while the state endured an agricultural recession, the Great Depression, and wartime shortages of material and labor. For those built, or at least completed, in that period, architectural styles tended to be Gothic or Georgian/Colonial, with some representing larger architect-designed high style Gothic, Colonial, or Eclectic Revival buildings. In the postwar period, there were fewer churches overall statewide because of consolidation and rural depopulation, but there was a notable wave of new construction with Modern architectural styles but also a few traditional Revival styles like the Colonial Revival-style First Baptist Church in Sioux Falls that was built in 1951.<sup>181</sup>

### **Colonial Revival Architecture in South Dakota**

Colonial architecture has always had a critical place in American architecture since the mid-1800s, with certain waves of higher popularity with the 1876 Philadelphia Exposition, the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, the restoration and reconstruction of Colonial Williamsburg that started in 1927, after World War II, and around the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976.<sup>182</sup> Yet, in South Dakota, Colonial Revival styles of architecture were not constructed in high number. Where the style was used, it was commonly for churches or houses. For houses, there were Colonial Revival elements used on front-gable and foursquare house types in the 1900s-10s while transitioning out of the Victorian styles, American Small Houses in the 1930s-40s, and Ranch houses in the 1950s-70s. Most were wood-frame buildings, though full or partial brick veneer was popular during the Small House and Ranch phases. In the 1930s, 50s, and 70s cycles, Colonial Revival

<sup>178</sup> Eades, *Churches in South Dakota*, 18.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>181</sup> Erpestad and Wood, *Building South Dakota*, 71, 75.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 53, 95.

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features were also used for apartments, post offices, banks, and the occasional eclectic commercial buildings. They often featured overall symmetry, rectilinear lines and boxy massing, hip or mansard roofs, roof dormers, multi-pane windows, faux shutters, smooth or fluted columns or pilasters, pediments, dentil bands, cameo or ocular windows, and emphasis on the main entrance.<sup>183</sup>

In Vermillion, there are notable Colonial Revival style buildings in association with the university. In 1893, the university's main building, formerly a Romanesque Revival style, was substantially rebuilt (after a massive fire) with Colonial features despite continuing the use of heavy textured stone from its High Victorian antecedent. Added to the building was a pediment with dentil bands and frieze, a tall front-center domed cupola bell tower on a square base, two smaller cupolas on the core of the building, and smaller pediments and corner tower cupolas on the east and west wings. "Old Main" was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in March 1973. Slagle Auditorium (1925) and the Student Union (1931) blended Colonial Revival and Beaux-Arts characteristics in exaggerated forms. Two of the university's fraternities/sororities also built Colonial Revival buildings. Both are red brick with white trim. The Kappa Alpha Theta sorority (1925) on Plum St. has a hip roof with gabled dormers, six-over-six windows, and an entry surround with columns and a broken pediment. The other, the Delta Tau Delta house (1938) on Pine St. has a flat parapet roof and a two-story columned portico with roof balustrade. Other South Dakota universities and higher education institutions also used Colonial variations for buildings in small quantities on their campuses, often looking back to more established East Coast campuses for aesthetic inspiration. Most higher education campuses in South Dakota are eclectic mixes of architectural styles. Colonial Revival examples include the Central (1902) and Graham Hall (1904) at Northern Normal and Industrial School in Aberdeen; Winona and Wecota Halls (1909/1915) at State College at Brookings; the Engineering (McLaury) Building (1919) at the School of Mines in Rapid City; and the Freeman Junior College's Music Hall (1903) and Administration Building (1926). At Brookings, Lincoln Library (1927), Coughlin Campanile and Coolidge Sylvan Theater (both 1929) also had features that blended between Colonial Revival and Beaux-Arts traditions.<sup>184</sup>

For churches, Gothic Revival was by far the most common architectural style in South Dakota, but a number of Protestant denominations chose eclectic Colonial Revival compositions. Congregational churches made this choice in higher proportion as built reminders of the historic foundations of their denomination. For instance, the First Congregational Church in the Watertown Commercial Historic District, built in 1916-1917, is brick, has one entrance wing with columns supporting a pediment, arched multi-pane sanctuary windows, side gables with oversized cornice returns, Palladian and ocular windows, a cupola bell tower, and pediment hoods over secondary entrances. In Huron, both the Congregational (1919) and Presbyterian (1925) churches in the Campbell Park Historic District have Colonial Revival features including brick walls with stone trim, ocular windows, and columns/pilasters supporting pediments. The 1914 First Congregational Church in Rapid City (now Faith Temple Church) resembles its

<sup>183</sup> Erpestad and Wood, *Building South Dakota*, 53.

<sup>184</sup> S.D. State Historic Preservation Office, survey and architect files, Pierre, South Dakota; Erpestad and Wood, *Building South Dakota*, 95.

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counterpart in Huron, with brick walls, arched multi-pane windows, dual entrances on the façade, and pilasters supporting a pediment. It also has a boxed three-side balcony like the Congregational church in Vermillion (the subject of this nomination). With First Congregational in Vermillion, these churches are among the best of examples of the Colonial style in the eclectic revival period for South Dakota that are documented in state survey records. Each demonstrate variations in how their architects composed the typical elements of the style. The churches in Huron and Rapid City each have stained glass windows, the Congregational churches in Huron and Rapid City have flat-roofed temple forms without projecting porticos, the Presbyterian church in Huron has a partially-open portico and a low and wide central dome, and the Watertown church has an elongated form with a short, domed steeple on the east end of the gable and a pedimented portico at a mid-point on the south elevation.

Other Colonial Revival churches documented in the state survey records are the First Congregational church in Houghton (which does not appear to be extant), First Baptist churches in Viborg and Sioux Falls, Witten Baptist church, the Free Methodist Evangelical church in Yankton, and Methodist churches in Gettysburg, Iroquois, Beresford, and Seneca. Those in Viborg and Yankton are fair examples but smaller flat-roof buildings with integrated pilasters and lunette windows rather than a full portico. The Sioux Falls example on Covell Ave. was built in c.1951 in a later wave of the style's popularity. Some were blends with other popular Revival styles, or have had large additions or remodeled sanctuaries that impact historic integrity.

The First Congregational Church in Vermillion is one of the best examples of Colonial Revival church architecture in South Dakota for the direct design inspiration brought to the form and style of the church by member Margaret Wellington's personal experience with Colonial-period and revival churches in Massachusetts, and for its high level of integrity on exterior elevations and its sanctuary. The church demonstrates many key aspects of the New England ecclesiastical variation of the Colonial Revival style, including its symmetrical façade, red brick exterior, a tall central cupola bell tower over a gable roof, Classical-motif columns and moldings, arched multi-pane windows, and a rectilinear sanctuary with a flat ceiling, ornamental organ screen, brass-finish chandeliers, and box gallery.

### **Beuttler & Arnold**

The architectural firm of Beuttler & Arnold was based in Sioux City, Iowa, from 1912 to 1940. William Beuttler (1883-1963), from Missouri, took architectural courses at Washington University in St. Louis from 1909 to 1911 before being hired by W.W. Beach's firm in Sioux City. There he met Ralph Arnold (1889-1961), who was from Illinois and had graduated from the University of Illinois in 1911. Their tenure at Beach's firm was brief and they formed their partnership in 1912. They were in business until 1940 when Arnold moved to Des Moines to work as architect for the State Board of Control. Beuttler continued in private practice until his death, with his son joining him in 1953.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> D. Murphy, "Beuttler & Arnold, Architects," "William Beuttler (1883-1963), Architect," and "Ralph Arnold (1889-1961), Architect," in David Murphy, Edward F. Zimmer, and Lynn Meyer, comps. *Place*

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Over the 1920s-30s, Beuttler & Arnold had a number of prominent projects in Sioux City, including the federal building, the masonic temple, a hospital, several churches, two junior high schools, and buildings at Morningside College.<sup>186</sup> They also designed Carnegie libraries in Nebraska early in their partnership. In South Dakota, commissions included the Carnegie library in Tyndall; stores in Wakonda and Lake Andes; schools in Ravinia, Sioux Falls, Hudson, and Trent, and Lead; and in Vermillion, the Dakota Hospital (design 1931, opened 1935), a house for M.J. Chaney on S. University Ave., and a new sanctuary wing for First Baptist Church (1925).<sup>187</sup> Lead-Deadwood High School, completed in 1940, was one of their last projects as a firm.<sup>188</sup> The firm was versatile, with work that followed popular trends—using Classical, Collegiate Gothic, and Commercial style designs over the 1910s and early 1920s, and shifting into Art Deco and Moderne designs in the 1930s—but could adapt to the situation, such as when they continued the characteristic use of stone for First Baptist in Vermillion.

## Conclusion

The First Congregational Church in Vermillion, built in 1928, is significant at a state level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its Colonial Revival architecture. It reflects both the traditions of the Congregational denomination and the popularity of eclectic historicist revival trends in American architecture. The church design intentionally harkens to the Colonial period meeting houses of Boston in its brick walls, monumental portico with classical columns and dentil cornices, a tall square bell tower with cupola, and arched multi-light windows on the side elevations. It was inspired by member Margaret Wellington's personal familiarity with Colonial Revival ecclesiastical architecture in Massachusetts, and the plans were finished by Sioux City architectural firm of Beuttler & Arnold. While modest changes to the building have included re-arrangement of classroom and office spaces in c.1970 and the c.1991 construction of a small one-story elevator addition in a compatible design, the overall integrity of the church is excellent. The direct relationship of the church's design to New England antecedents and the high level of integrity make this church significant at a state level to the architectural landscape of South Dakota.

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<sup>186</sup> Murphy, "Beuttler & Arnold, Architects," in *Place Makers of Nebraska*.

<sup>187</sup> Chaney was chair of the Congregational Church's building committee. Murphy, "Beuttler & Arnold, Architects," in *Place Makers of Nebraska*; Wilson, *Vermillion Architects*, 1; S.D. State Historic Preservation Office, survey and architect files, Pierre, South Dakota.

<sup>188</sup> *Lead Daily Call* (SD), October 22, 1940.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** CL00000481

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 14	Easting: 669479.2956	Northing: 4738511.2250
2. Zone: 14	Easting: 669513.2311	Northing: 4738512.0589
3. Zone: 14	Easting: 669516.7940	Northing: 4738414.7296
4. Zone: 14	Easting: 669482.2013	Northing: 4738416.7962

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated boundary includes the area defined by the above UTM coordinates, including Lots 1, 2, the east eighteen (18) feet of Lot 3, and approximately the east one hundred ten (110) feet of Lots 11, 12, and 13, on Block 61 (sixty-one), of Bigelow's Addition to the City of Vermillion, Clay County, South Dakota.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nomination boundary includes the church, parking lot, and immediate surroundings corresponding with the UCC Congregational Church of Vermillion on the northwest corner of E. Main and N. Harvard Streets.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Liz Almlie, Historic Preservation Specialist  
organization: SD State Historic Preservation Office  
street & number: 900 Governors Drive  
city or town: Pierre state: SD zip code: 57501  
e-mail: shpo@state.sd.us  
telephone: 605-773-3458  
date: May 14, 2021

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## Additional Documentation




Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)



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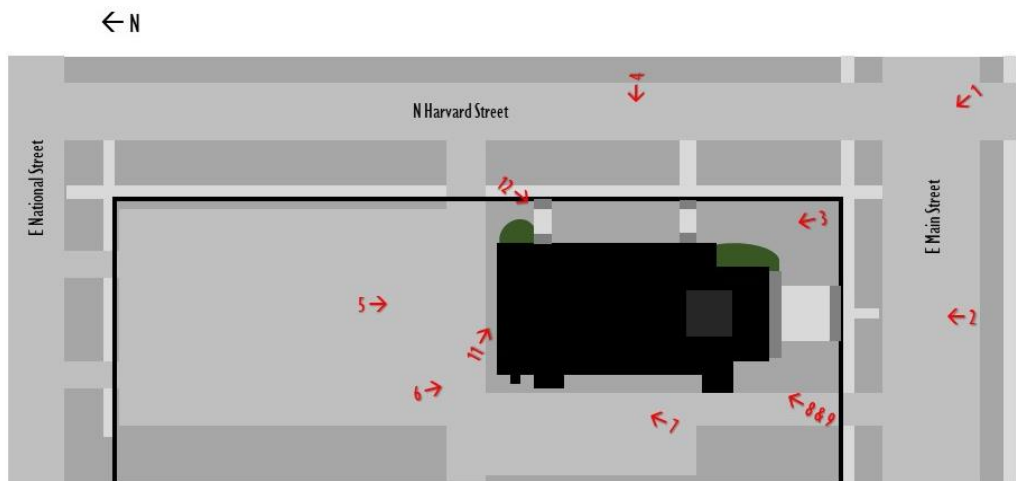
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>National Register of Historic Places Nomination Review Map</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">south dakota STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> National Register Boundary</p> <p><u>NOMINATION FOR:</u>                  First Congregational Church                  226 E Main St                  Vermillion, Clay County, SD</p> <p>UTM Zone 14, NAD 1983                  #1. E: 669479.2956, N: 4738511.2250                  #2. E: 669513.2311, N: 4738512.0589                  #3. E: 669516.7940, N: 4738414.7296                  #4. E: 669482.2013, N: 4738416.7962</p>	<p>SOUTH DAKOTA COUNTIES</p> 
			

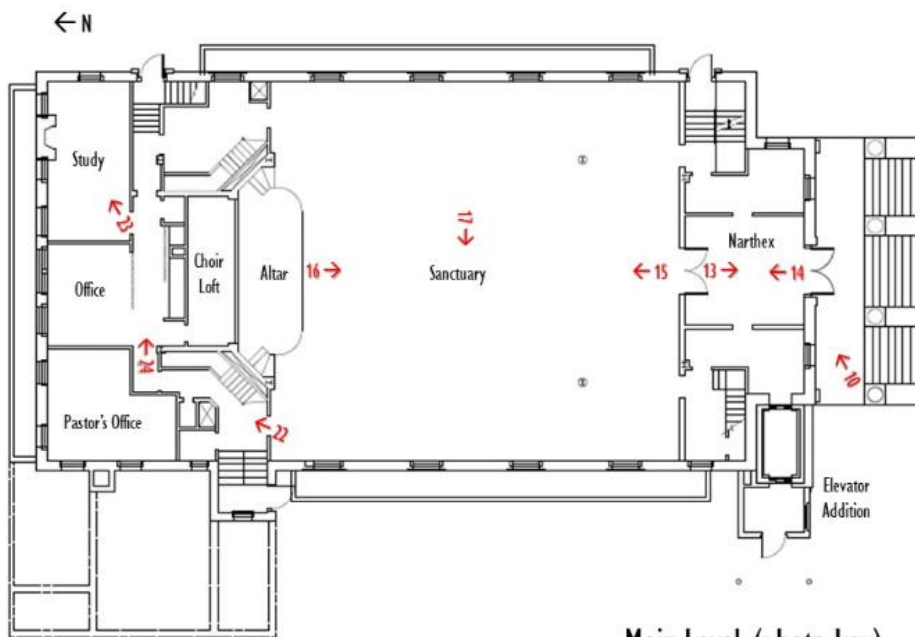
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*The floorplans used in the following photo keys were provided by Sandra Lea Dickenson, AIA Emeritus, as of 1991, from original blueprints. Field checked by SHPO staff, 2020.*



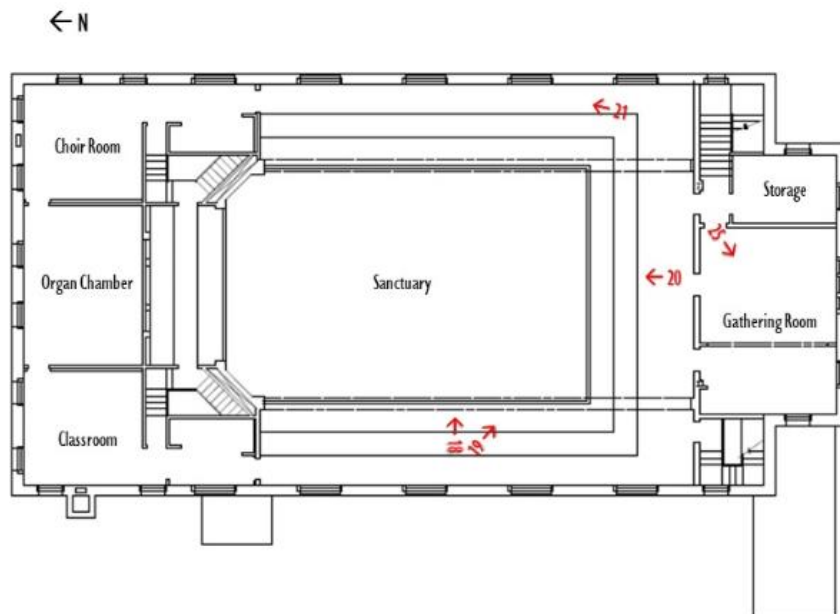
**Site Plan (photo key)**  
First Congregational Church, Vermillion



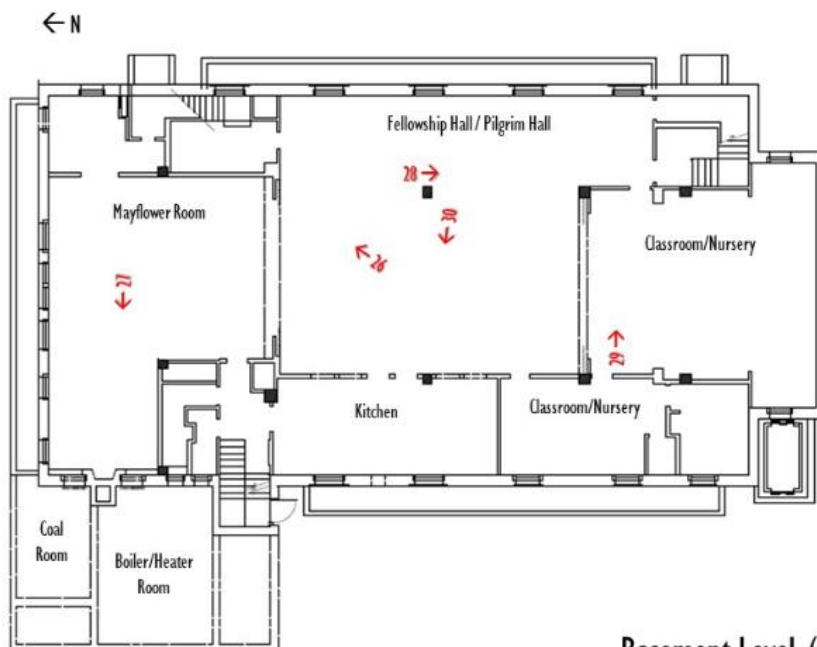
**Main Level (photo key)**  
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**Balcony Level (photo key)**  
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**Basement Level (photo key)**  
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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: First Congregational Church, Vermillion

City or Vicinity: Vermillion

County: Clay

State: SD

Photographer: Liz Almlie

Date Photographed: December 16, 2020 (unless otherwise stated)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0001  
South façade and east elevation, camera facing northwest.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0002  
South façade, camera facing north.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0003  
East elevation, camera facing northwest.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0004  
East elevation, camera facing west.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0005  
North elevation, camera facing south.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0006  
North and west elevations, camera facing southeast.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0007  
West elevation, camera facing northeast.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0008  
West elevation and south façade, with elevator addition, camera facing northeast.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0009  
Detail of pediment, column capitals, bell tower, camera facing northeast.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0010  
Main south entrance on portico, camera facing east.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0011  
Detail of base of north elevation, camera facing east.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0012  
Detail of arch window from exterior, on east elevation, camera facing southwest.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0013  
Narthex and main entrance doors, camera facing south.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0014  
Narthex and sanctuary doors, camera facing north.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0015  
Sanctuary, from first floor entrance, camera facing north.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0016  
Sanctuary from altar, camera facing south.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0017  
Detail of pews and sanctuary wall, camera facing west.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0018  
Detail of chandelier in sanctuary, camera facing east.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0019  
Sanctuary balcony, camera facing southeast.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0020  
Sanctuary from second-floor balcony, camera facing north.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0021  
Sanctuary windows, camera facing northeast.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0022  
Northwest stairwell from first floor, doors to pastor's office and choir loft, camera facing northeast.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0023  
Study/library, camera facing northeast.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0024  
Administrative office, camera facing east.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0025  
Gathering room on south end of second floor, camera facing southwest.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0026  
Pilgrim Hall and Mayflower Room, camera facing northeast.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0027  
Mayflower Room, camera facing west.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0028  
Pilgrim Hall and classroom/nursery, camera facing south.



SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0029  
Classroom/nursery off Pilgrim Hall, camera facing east.

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SD\_ClayCounty\_FirstCongregationalVermillion\_0030  
Pilgrim Hall and kitchen, camera facing west.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.