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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property  
   historic name: St. Matthew's Lutheran Church  
   other names/site number

2. Location  
   street & number: 307 W. Court Street  
   city, town: Marion  
   state: North Carolina  
   code: NC  
   county: McDowell  
   code: 111  
   zip code: 28752

3. Classification  
   Ownership of Property:  
   - [X] private  
   - [ ] public-local  
   - [ ] public-State  
   - [ ] public-Federal  
   
   Category of Property:  
   - [X] building(s)  
   - [ ] district  
   - [ ] site  
   - [ ] structure  
   - [ ] object

   Number of Resources within Property:  
   - [ ] contributing buildings  
   - [ ] noncontributing buildings  
   - [ ] contributing sites  
   - [ ] noncontributing sites  
   - [ ] contributing structures  
   - [ ] noncontributing structures  
   - [ ] contributing objects  
   - [ ] noncontributing objects  
   Total

   Name of related multiple property listing:  
   Historic and Architectural Resources in Downtown Marion, North Carolina

4. State/Federal Agency Certification  
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. [ ] See continuation sheet.  
   Signature of certifying official: ________________________________  
   Date: 2-4-91

   In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [X] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.  
   Signature of commenting or other official: ________________________________  
   Date: ________________________________

5. National Park Service Certification  
   I, hereby certify that this property is:  
   [ ] entered in the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.  
   [ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.  
   [ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.  
   [ ] removed from the National Register.  
   [ ] other, (explain:) ________________________________

   Signature of the Keeper: ________________________________  
   Date of Action: ________________________________
### 6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)</th>
<th>Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong>: religious structure</td>
<td><strong>Religion</strong>: religious structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7. Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)</th>
<th>Materials (enter categories from instructions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong>: vernacular late Gothic Revival</td>
<td><strong>foundation</strong> <em>concrete</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>walls</strong> <em>stone</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>roof</strong> <em>asphalt shingle</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>other</strong> <em>wood</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

[X] See continuation sheet
DESCRIPTION
Located on a grassy site which slopes slightly south away from West Court Street, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church is an excellent example of a late Gothic Revival-inspired vernacular structure. While employing many of the features of the Gothic Revival such as lancet windows and buttresses, the building, in its simple form and design, is also a fine representation of local craftsmanship, particularly in terms of its masonry. The front or north side of the building is three bays wide with one lancet window on either side of the doorway. The roofline here is a very simple gabled parapet which is slightly taller and more flat at the apex. There are three lancet windows just below the apex of the parapet above the centrally located doorway. Completed in 1935, the entire building is constructed of river rock, smooth and yellow in color, brought from the nearby Catawba River. The east and west sides of the building have shallow stepped buttresses, another element of the Gothic Revival style. Windows on these sides are one-over-one double hung with a muntin pattern of a single lancet arch in each upper sash. Lintels on these windows are demarcated through the use of stones placed vertically. The rear of the building is wood construction covered with asbestos siding which appears to be original. There is a half-lancet window on this facade with a rectangular vent above. A tall chimney, also of river rock, rises up at the southwest corner of the building.

Inside, the simplicity of the rectangularly shaped building continues. Upon entering the church, the eye is drawn down the central aisle to the altar which contains the only stained glass in the building as a backdrop. The pews are simple oak fixtures, with gothic arches as a motif on the sides. To either side of the altar are the choir rooms. Rear stairs lead down from the southeast corner of the building to the basement which contains a concrete slab floor, some classrooms, and mechanical equipment. Stairs here are simpler than the ones at the front of the building, with square caps on the newel posts, and 1 x 1 balusters. In contrast, the front stairs, located to the left upon entering the building, and which also go to the basement, are somewhat more elaborate in detail. Newel posts are turned, capped by round knobs. Balusters are also 1 x 1, and the banister is raised and grooved to fit the palm of the hand. All woodwork, including the wood floors and five-panel doors, is stained dark. Overall, the building represents fine local craftsmanship and materials, and retains its architectural integrity.
8. Statement of Significance
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
- [ ] nationally
- [ ] statewide
- [x] locally

Applicable National Register Criteria
- [ ] A
- [ ] B
- [x] C
- [ ] D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)
- [x] A
- [ ] B
- [ ] C
- [ ] D
- [ ] E
- [ ] F
- [ ] G

### Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Period of Significance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**Cultural Affiliation**

- N/A

**Significant Person**

- N/A

**Architect/Builder**

- Williams, Pink builder
- Herman, Q.E. architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
SUMMARY
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as an example of a vernacular building, executed with local materials and craftsmanship. It is significant in the area of architecture as being the only intact example of this type of vernacular architecture based on the Late Gothic Revival style in Marion.

HISTORIC CONTEXT
Architecture
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church is a significant example of a Gothic Revival-inspired vernacular church building. Utilizing river rock from the nearby Catawba River, it was designed by Q. E. Herman and executed in 1935 primarily by a local craftsman, Pink Williams. It remains today as an excellent example in Marion of a vernacular church, in stark contrast to the more high style designs of First Baptist and First Presbyterian. Details such as lancet windows and flying buttresses are well crafted. Important, too, is the fact that this church was built by a small congregation with minimal resources, yet the result is a small, yet finely crafted example of a truly local building style, utilizing indigenous materials, the smooth river rock stones from the nearby Catawba River.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
Traveling south to North Carolina from Pennsylvania, there were Lutherans in New Bern, North Carolina by 1710.¹ By ca. 1750, the southward movement began in earnest, continuing on into the next century. As early as the mid-1800s, Lutherans began settling in western North Carolina, in Boone.² More definitive movement into other parts of western North Carolina began in the early 20th century, including churches established at Lenoir (1908), Hendersonville (1914), Blowing Rock (1922), and Asheville (1923).³ So there were indeed Lutherans in the western part of the state and in Marion at the time the congregation there formed and decided to build a church.

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church was completed in 1935, but the presence of the Lutheran religion had made itself felt in Marion as early as 1905.⁴ For many years, services were
held in the old Methodist Church. Several attempts were made to organize a Lutheran congregation in Marion, once by Reverend S. Keisler of Catawba County, and about twenty years later, in 1925 or so, by Reverend W. D. Peters of Asheville. Finally, in 1931, Reverend Leslie Frerking, who was also serving Rutherfordton at the time, saw a need for establishing a mission in Marion. Reverend Paul A. Boriack took over this prospect in the fall of 1931, and met with several Lutheran families in Marion to see about organizing a church. Lutheran services were held soon after this, on February 14, 1932, in St. John’s Episcopal Church in Marion. Fifty-seven attended. On April 11, 1932, a group of Lutherans met at the home of T. H. L. Miller in Pleasant Garden in McDowell County to organize St. Matthew’s.

Until a church could be built, services were held in the county courthouse. The church applied for $5,000.00 from the Church Extension Fund to go towards building a church. Money was scarce at the time, though, and it wasn’t until two years later that a loan of $3,000.00 was granted to the Lutherans in Marion by the Synodical Board in St. Louis. On April 23, 1934, St. Matthew’s Church bought a lot on West Court Street from C. E. and Edna R. Bolick. Purchase price was $100.00. The cornerstone for the present building was laid on January 13, 1935, and the first services were held on May 19, 26, and June 2, 1935. A thousand people attended the special services held on the church grounds on June 2.

The design of the building is attributed to O. E. Herman of Hickory, and Pink Williams was the builder. Although not fully documented at this time, Mr. Williams, a local stone mason, probably built many other structures in Marion and McDowell County of the same river rock as St. Matthew’s, including numerous retaining walls. These can be seen around First Presbyterian Church, along W. Court Street, in front of the Blanton House on W. Henderson Street, and along numerous other residential streets all over town.

In 1939, additional property was bought by the Church. To the east of the church building, a lot with a house already built on it before the church was built, was purchased as the parsonage. To the rear of the church, a small board and batten hut (fellowship hall) was built in 1939-40. In 1941, the church bought the lot between the church and the parsonage, and in 1977, additional land behind the parsonage was purchased.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources in Downtown Marion, NC: St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
Section number 8 Page 3

FOOTNOTES


3History of the Lutheran Church.


5Ibid.

6McDowell County Deed Book 81, Page 64.

7McDowell County Reconnaissance Survey, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, 1985.

8"Fifty Years of Grace".


10"Fifty Years of Grace".
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 # __________________________
Record # __________________________

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:
Western Office, Archives & History
Asheville, North Carolina

10. Geographical Data
Acreage of property: Less than one acre (approximately .10 acre)

UTM References
A
Zone Easting Northing
[1.7] [410.8] [312.0] [3.9] [4.9] [0.2] [0.0]

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated by the bold line defining the area labeled St. Matthew's Lutheran Church as shown on the accompanying sketch map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the church and sufficient setting within the lot which has been historically associated with the church. It excludes two Non-Contributing properties on the same lot.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sybil Argintar Bowers, Preservation Planning Consultant
organization: Bowers Southeastern Preservation
street & number: P O Box 15722
city or town: Asheville

date: August 31, 1990
telephone: (704) 253-1392
state: NC
zip code: 28813
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


"Lutheran Church Formed at Meeting Last Week". Marion Progress. 21st of April, 1932.

McDowell County Deed Book 81, Page 64.


PHOTO LIST: ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Name of Property ........... St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

City and State ............. Marion, North Carolina
Photographer ............... Ted Alexander, 1985 photos
                      Sybil A. Bowers, 1987-88, 1990 photos

Date taken ................. 1985, except where noted otherwise
                      All 1985 and 1987-88 photos have been
                      field verified in 1990.

Location of original ...... Western Office, Archives & History
                      negative
                      Asheville, North Carolina

Photo A
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church; 307 West Court Street
Looking southwest at front of church.

Photo B
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church; 307 West Court Street
Looking northwest at rear of church.

Photo C
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church; 307 West Court Street
Exterior window detail.

Photo D
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church; 307 West Court Street
Interior sanctuary, looking south.