NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

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: Oak Forest United Methodist Church

Other names/site number: Site #PU8478

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: 2415 Fair Park Boulevard

City or town: Little Rock State: AR County: Pulaski

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐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 ___statewide _X_local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B _X_C ___D

11-18-20

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property _ meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	X
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	X
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
RELIGION/Religious Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
RELIGION/Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
LATE 19TH CENTURY AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Late Gothic Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Field stone
Foundation: Fieldstone
Walls: Fieldstone
Roof: Tile
Other: N/A

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.)

Summary Paragraph

The Oak Forest United Methodist Church was completed in 1951 and still operates as a church to this day. The church was designed by local architect John Parks Almand and is a significant example of the Late Gothic Revival style. The original Church and the later Education Wing, also designed by John Parks Almand and completed in 1961, are located along Fair Park Boulevard in the Oak Forest Neighborhood of Little Rock. Its prominent location atop a hill along Fair Park Boulevard and its striking native stone veneer has given it the nickname by some locals as the "Stone Church"

Narrative Description

Elaboration

In the Summer of 1943, Rev. John McCormack of the Scott Street Methodist Church (originally the Main Street Methodist Church and later relocated to the Broadmoor neighborhood as St Luke's Methodist Church) was visiting some church members who lived in the new Oak Forest Neighborhood. While leaving the neighborhood after his visit he saw two small boys playing in the dirt. He stopped and asked the boys if they attended Sunday School but the boys replied there was no church nearby for them to attend. He asked the boys if they would come to Sunday school class if he started one and they replied they would. So started the efforts by the Scott Street Methodist Church to build a new church in the Oak Forest neighborhood. Between 1943 and 1944 the congregation met at tent services or at members houses until a small building known as "the basement church" was completed in Fall of 1944. This building was located at the south end of the current parking lot, east of the existing church. It was later torn down and covered over by the existing parking lot. In March of 1946 Rev. Dean Mouzon Mann, a former Navy Chaplain, was assigned to be the pastor at Oak Forest. He quickly grew the congregation by going out into the surrounding Oak Forest neighborhood and inviting people to the church. At the end of 1946 the growing congregation had reached over 150 members and it was evident a more adequate facility would be needed.

In 1947, the church acquired two lots at the northeast corner of the intersection at Fair Park Boulevard and 25th Street. Architect John Parks Almand who was a member at First Methodist Church in Little Rock drew the plans for the new church. Over the next few years money was raised, materials were acquired and the groundbreaking for the church was held on April 23, 1948, and the cornerstone was laid on May 20th, 1948. Construction was halted in 1950 due to lack of funds, however it resumed again the following year and the church was formally opened on October 21, 1951.

Floor Plan

The asymmetrical plan consists of the main sanctuary laid out along the east-west access with the altar and choir loft at the east end and an entry vestibule at the west end. A smaller chapel is located to the south and is oriented along the north-south access with the altar at the south end. Both the sanctuary and the chapel are connected by the foyer which is also the bell tower above and can be accessed from an exterior stone courtyard to the west. To the east of the chapel is the church office and former classroom space that is also connected to the foyer.

Exterior

The exterior of the main building is built from native fieldstone which was hauled to the site from property at today's Walton Heights neighborhood. The stone was laid in regular courses with only weathered surfaces exposed. The stone veneer is laid on load bearing hollow clay tile block walls. The stone was laid by a local mason named Dewey Breadon who was noted as an

artist and whose work "had character." He was helped in part by another local, Jeff Davidson. The roof is covered with red clay interlocking tiles, possibly from the Ludowici–Celadon Company. The stone walls and the steep pitch red tile clay roof create a striking effect for people traveling up and down Fair Park Boulevard.

West Elevation (front)

The front of the building faces west toward Fair Park Boulevard. The main sanctuary protrudes out the furthest from the rest of the building towards the street. The façade is all stone veneer except for the center entry piece at the main sanctuary which is recessed in the wall. The entry is an unglazed terra cotta veneer that lines the faces of the recessed Gothic arch entry piece. A stained-glass panel fills the upper portion and a pair of arched solid oak doors are at the entry to the vestibule. The entry is flush with the flagstone walkway. This was at the request of the minister at the time of construction, Brother Dean Mouzon Mann, who thought the entrance should be accessible to the few elderly members at the time. Just to the south of the main entry façade, at the back wall of the sanctuary is located the cornerstone laid in 1948, which is also a time capsule.

A flagstone courtyard is edged by the sanctuary to the north and the bell tower and chapel to the east. The bell tower acts as a sort of keystone, tying the sanctuary, the chapel and the admin area all together. The bell tower has a pair of solid oak doors that are Gothic arch shaped and similar to the front doors. A tall skinny wood louver is located above the doors in the center of the tower and the bell at the top of the bell tower is thought to have been donated by John Parks Almand himself. A stainless-steel spire rises above the tower. The walls are stepped at the top and are capped by a cut stone parapet cap, possibly limestone. The southwest corner of the bell tower has a large stone buttress that is diagonal to the corner with three large flat sandstone caps that slope away from the building.

To the south of the bell tower, the west façade of the chapel building has three Gothic arch three-lite, steel-casement window pairs with a fixed four-lite transom above, recessed into the stone veneer walls. The sills at each are a single piece of sloped flagstone. At the south end of the west elevation, the walls protrude out some allowing the clay tile roof to continue down further and curve out at the eaves, typical to the Tudor Revival style. The red clay tile roof on the steep pitch dominates most of the elevation. Copper gutters at the eave remain, some of the downspouts, however, have been replaced with prefinished metal. Below the gutters, there are twelve (nine at the high eave and three at the lower eave) false exposed rafter tails noted as "lookouts" in the drawings. These "lookouts" were roughly 6" x 8" and made of cypress. They were noted to be "Approx. 2'-6" on center so as to let arches fall between "lookouts" They also supported the copper gutters above.

South Elevation

The south wall of the sanctuary is at the west end of the south elevation, set back from the street at the edge of the stone courtyard. The stone courtyard is roughly 50 ft by 40 ft. Again, the steeply sloped red clay tile roof is the dominating feature. The roof at the entry vestibule at the

west end expands further down at the sanctuary where the footprint gets wider. The south elevation of the sanctuary has four Gothic arch three-lite, steel-casement window pairs with a fixed four-lite transom above and four stone buttresses with a layered sandstone cap at each buttress. At the vestibule, two narrow steel-casement windows, one above the other, are recessed into the stone veneer and provide light into the stair that leads from the entry vestibule to the balcony directly above. Nineteen cypress "lookouts" line the eave space evenly between the windows and buttresses and support a copper gutter above. To the east of the sanctuary's south façade, the chapel façade is a solid stone veneer wall located almost in line with the lot line and with a single tall and skinny Gothic arched stained-glass window in the center. The stained-glass in this window is original to the building and reflects the stained-glass design that was originally in the three windows at the east end of the main sanctuary as well. The eaves at either side of the roof flair out in a Tudor Revival style. To the east of the chapel, the façade steps back. The stone veneer walls have two more Gothic arch three-lite, steel-casement window pairs with a fixed four-lite transom above and nine cypress "lookouts" supporting a copper gutter. The red clay tile roof above this section slopes up, but rather than coming to a ridge, stops to create a flat roof above.

North Elevation

The North elevation of the sanctuary is similar to the south elevation, except there are five buttresses, five windows and 21 "lookouts." A small stained-glass window at the west end in the entry vestibule is dedicated to J. Harold Goodfellow. To the east, the façade is fully covered by the education wing addition. A small portion of admin wing to the east of the sanctuary has a two four-lite, metal-casement window pairs with a stationary two-lite transom above and six "lookouts."

East Elevation (Rear)

The east elevation faces the parking lot. There is one entrance at this side of the building. A pair of wood half lite doors with six lites in each door serve as the entry to the office and admin. wing. Because of the grade change, the entry is accessible by a set of steps that can be accessed from either the north or south side. These stairs replaced the original set of steps which led directly down from the door to the east and into the parking lot and flared out on the sides. These steps provided no landing at the top and were thought to be dangerous. A metal awning over the doorway was also later installed to protect the door from rain. To the south of the doors is a three-lite single steel-casement window with a single-lite transom above. The glass has been replaced in this window to secure the view into what is now a bathroom. To the north of the doors are two four-lite metal casement window pairs with a stationary two-lite transom above. Fifteen "lookouts" support another gutter at the eave of the clay tile roof. The red clay tile roof above this section slopes up, but rather than coming to a ridge, stops to create a flat roof above.

Above the admin. wing, the bell tower roof has a four-lite single-hung metal window with a hopper window below. The red tile of roof of the admin. wing runs into the stone veneer wall of the bell tower and has stepped copper flashing. The top of the bell tower and the bell are also visible at this elevation.

To the north of the admin. wing, the east wall of the sanctuary steps back to the west leaving a small grassy courtyard area surrounded on three sides by the admin. wing, the sanctuary and the education wing. This area has been obscured by a wooden privacy fence and is where most of the mechanical units for the building are located. The east elevation of the sanctuary has a large triangular shaped wooden louver at the top of the stone veneer wall. Three skinny Gothic arch windows are centered in the façade. The original stained-glass in these windows were replaced with memorial windows in 1970. Also, at the south end of this elevation is a single set of eight-lite, steel-casement window pairs with a stationary four-lite transom above.

Education Wing 1961 John Parks Almand

The Education wing was added to the north side of the original church in 1961. The addition has an L-shape floor plan which creates a lawn surrounded on three sides and that faces Fair Park Boulevard. Much of the stone also came from the same location in Walton Heights as the main church stone. The roof was originally a flat roof; however, it has since been covered over by a low pitch asphalt shingle roof. The wing consists of a partial basement with one story above. Plans for an additional story were never designed; however, a rendering by the architect illustrates the proposal.

West Elevation (front)

The northern end of the wing makes the leg of the L and protrudes to the west. The stone walls have three single-hung steel windows. The six-over-six windows have single-pane glass. The ridge of the low-pitch shingle roof is visible at this side and a metal gutter runs the length of the façade. The remainder of the west façade steps back. At the north end there is a pair of wood five panel doors at the top of concrete steps. A recessed stone Gothic arch frames the door with a stone face in the arch above the door. In the center of the elevation is a bay window with three, six-over-six steel single-hung windows in the center and one four-over-four steel single-hung windows on each side. The bay has cedar siding and a pitched roof with asphalt shingles. On either side of the bay window is a single six-over-six single-hung steel windows. At the far south end of the west elevation a small portion of the stone wall juts out from the rest of the wall about five feet and has another pair of five panel doors in a recessed Gothic arch.

South Elevation

The south elevation of the "leg" has three six-over-six steel single-hung windows.

North Elevation

The south elevation has a half lite steel door that leads to the fellowship hall. To the west of the door there are five one-over-one single-hung steel windows that provide light to the fellowship hall in the basement. Above these windows are six, six-over-six steel single-hung windows, as well as a small four-over-four lite steel single-hung window and a single large fenestration with three, six-over-six steel single-hung windows. The stone at the bottom of this elevation has a

slightly different appearance than the remaining fieldstone on this and the other elevations. A metal gutter runs the length of the façade. The west corner of the roof also has a small plywood gable where the sloped roof was later added.

East Elevation (Rear)

The east elevation faces the parking lot. The long stone façade has 24 fenestrations. There are two pairs of six-lite steel doors, one at the far south end and one in the center. Theses doors provide at-grade access to the two stairs in the education wing at mid-landing. There are eleven, six-over-six single-hung steel windows at the upper level and nine, six-over-six single-hung steel windows on the lower level that are half the height of the ones on the upper level. There are also two smaller four-over-four single-hung windows on the lower level on either side of the central entry doors. A metal louver in the center of the building serves the building's mechanical room in the basement. An exhaust bell is located at the north end of the façade that serves the kitchen's exhaust hood. A metal gutter runs the length of the façade. The south corner of the roof also has a small plywood gable where the sloped roof was later added.

Interior

The original 1951 layout consists of a small central narthex that is connected to the main sanctuary to the north, the smaller chapel to the south and a corridor to the church admin area to the east.

The foyer has a flagstone floor with random-width boards of clear red oak on the walls and a plaster ceiling.

The main sanctuary is covered with the same wood paneling and the beams in the roof are California Redwood. The flooring in the apse are 9 x 9 tiles in a running bond pattern with ceramic tile at the aisles and the front. The ceramic tile was added in the 90s and replaced the previous carpet runners. The apse is at the west end and is framed by a Gothic arch opening. The walls and ceiling are plaster and the walls have a wood wainscot. Three stained-glass windows in the west wall were installed in 1970 as a memorial and replaced the original stained-glass windows. The sanctuary furnishings, including the pews, pulpit, lectern, and altar and choir railing, were made from Juanacosta (pronounced "Wanacosta"). The rear of the church has a wood paneled wall with obscure glass separating the sanctuary from the entry vestibule. The entry vestibule has a flagstone floor and plaster walls. The pair of doors between the sanctuary and the entry vestibule as well as the pair of doors at the southwest and northwest corners of the sanctuary are wood doors with a leather padding. In the entry vestibule, a stair at the south end leads up to a balcony above the entry vestibule.

The chapel also has the same wood paneling and exposed wood beams. The floors are carpeted and the apse is framed by a Gothic arch opening. A single Gothic arch stained-glass window is centered at the back wall. The glass in this window is original and represents the what the glass windows looked like in the main sanctuary prior to 1970. The current communion rail, pulpit and lectern were all installed in 1966.

The admin. wing consists of the pastor's office, the church office, a men's and women's restroom and a bridal suite with an attached bathroom. The plaster walls in the two offices, the corridor and the bridal suite all have a stained wood wainscot; however, it has been painted in the bridal suite. The north south corridor originally ran all the way to the south wall; however, a section of the corridor was enclosed to enlarge the church office in 1965.

The 1961 classroom addition consists of an upper and lower double loaded corridor. The fellowship hall and kitchen are located at the far north end on the lower level. Three classrooms at the upper level and at the lower level were connected to each other and could be separated by accordion walls. However, some of these rooms have been permanently walled over in recent years. The function of the different classrooms has rotated over the years to serve adult and children classrooms, a nursery, choir room, a library, and most recently, a food pantry and eye clinic. The flooring is 9 x 9 tiles, the walls are painted CMU block with a wood base and chair rail and the window sills are marble. At the south end of the upper level, the original stone wall of the main sanctuary is still visible, where the education wing was attached.

Integrity

Overall, the Oak Forest United Methodist Church has excellent integrity from the time of its construction. The largest change to the building has been the construction of the classroom addition in the early 1960s, but it was also designed by Almand and blends in with the original church building. The interior of the building retains its original layout as well as many of the original finishes and design. The area around the church also still reflects the residential character that was present when the Oak Forest United Methodist Church was built.

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.
- [x] 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.)

- [x] 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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1947-1951; 1960-1961

Significant Dates
1947, Beginning of church construction
1951, Formal Opening
1961, Completion of Education Wing

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
John Parks Almand, Architect

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 Oak Forest United Methodist Church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as an excellent example of the Gothic Revival style designed by noted Arkansas architect John Parks Almand. With its steeply-pitched roof, lancet windows, and engaged buttresses, the Oak Forest United Methodist Church is a textbook example of the Gothic Revival style. In addition, the Oak Forest United Methodist Church is a good example of Almand's design work from the 1940s, and is the only ecclesiastical design that he carried out in in the Oak Forest area of Little Rock. The building is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration A** as a religious building.

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

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

The history of Oak Forest Methodist Church is rooted in mission work, and that legacy continues today. The Oak Forest Methodist Church traces its origin to August 1943, when Rev. John McCormack, pastor of the Scott Street Methodist Church, held open-air services at the corner of 25th and Tyler streets for fifteen days straight.[1]

The Scott Street Methodist Church, then located at the northwest corner of Scott and 14th streets (now Scott Street and Daisy Bates Drive), had been organized just after the Civil War by the northern branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Methodist Church divided into two branches in 1844 over the issue of slavery—the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The branches reunited in 1939 to become The Methodist Church. By the early 1940s, the Scott Street Methodist Church experienced a decline in membership and mounting debt. While some expressed the desire to sell the building at Scott and 14th streets to pay the debt, thereby closing the church indefinitely; others responded to the crisis by donating money and focusing on mission work.[2]

During the summer of 1943, Rev. John McCormack made frequent visits—often by bicycle because gas was rationed during World War II—to members of the Scott Street Methodist Church who lived in the new Oak Forest neighborhood. At that time, the neighborhood had about 550 houses and no churches. On one of these visits, Rev. McCormack encountered two children playing in the dirt. He stopped to talk with them and asked if they attended Sunday School. The children said no, explaining that there wasn't a church nearby. The next Sunday, Rev. McCormack preached to the Scott Street congregation about reaching out to the Oak Forest neighborhood. A number of members responded and helped to organize an open-air revival near the present site of Oak Forest Methodist Church. The revival began on August 8, 1943, and lasted for 15 days. Pews from an abandoned church were brought to the site, and electric lights were hung in the trees. By the end of the revival, ten people came forward to join the church. The congregation of Oak Forest Methodist Church was officially organized on August 29, 1943, with 25 charter members.[3]

Sunday School classes were held in different homes, and open-air church services continued until September 30, 1943, when Sam and Mary Lou Ballou opened a room in their house at 2222 S. Tyler for church services. The room, known as "the chapel," contained folding chairs, a pulpit, and a small organ. Rev. McCormack continued as pastor at Scott Street Methodist and preached

[1] Silva, Rachel. "Sandwiching in History Tour Script: Oak Forest United Methodist Church." In the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2015, and Bowers, Dorothy. "Methodism with a Mission Marches On." *Arkansas Methodist*, 10 August 1944, p. 8-9.
[2] Silva, and Bowers, Dorothy. "Methodism with a Mission Marches On." *Arkansas Methodist*, 10 August 1944, p. 8-9.
[3] Silva, and Bowers, Dorothy. "Methodism with a Mission Marches On." *Arkansas Methodist*, 10 August 1944, p. 8-9.

at Oak Forest on Thursday nights. Retired Methodist minister H. C. Adams preached at Oak Forest on Sunday mornings until 1944, when the Annual Conference appointed Rev. A. H. Dulaney.[4]

In February 1944 the church rented the house at 2302 S. Tyler for the Sunday School. Rent was $42.50/month. By March, church services had outgrown "the chapel" at the Ballou residence and were moved to the Sunday School building. Thanks to generous contributions from the Scott Street Church, the Board of Church Extension at Louisville, Kentucky, and area residents, the lot at the northwest corner of 25th and Tyler was purchased for the construction of the first church building. C. A. Booher served as general contractor on the first building, which was known as the basement church and measured 110 feet by 44 feet. The one-story building had a full basement and sat on the current church parking lot. The first church was dedicated on October 22, 1944.[5]

Little Rock experienced a building boom in the mid-to-late 1940s as soldiers returned from World War II. The Oak Forest neighborhood grew quickly. For example, in 1940 the Little Rock City Directory listed 21 residences on Tyler Street between 12th and 29th streets, and there were only four houses between 16th and 26th streets. By 1949, the same stretch of Tyler Street (between 12th and 29th streets) had 125 buildings listed. The number of buildings on Tyler between 16th and 26th streets had increased from four in 1940 to 81 in 1949.[6]

In March 1946 Rev. Dean Mouzon Mann, who had served as a Navy chaplain during World War II, became pastor at Oak Forest Methodist Church. Rev. Mann was outgoing and energetic. He spent much of his time out in the neighborhood talking to people and inviting them to church. Within a year, the church membership increased from 94 to 152. It quickly became apparent that a larger and more substantial church building was necessary. However, the cost of a new building presented quite a challenge for the congregation, which was largely composed of veterans and young families. At that time, the average age of adult members was 29.[7]

In 1947 the church obtained two lots at the northeast corner of Fair Park and 25th from H. T. Buhler at a reduced price. Architect John Parks Almand, who was a member at First Methodist in Little Rock, drew plans for a new church. John Parks Almand was born in Lithonia, Georgia, in 1885, and was the fourth of eight children. His early education was done in Lithonia before he entered Emory College in Oxford, Georgia, (now Emory University in Atlanta) in 1903. When Almand entered Emory College, he was undecided on whether to pursue a career in medicine or architecture, and it was not until he graduated from Emory in 1907 that he decided to go into

[4] Silva, and Bowers, Dorothy. "Methodism with a Mission Marches On." *Arkansas Methodist*, 10 August 1944, p. 8-9.
[5] Silva, and Bowers, Dorothy. "Methodism with a Mission Marches On." *Arkansas Methodist*, 10 August 1944, p. 8-9.
[6] Silva, and Treadway, Sara, et al. "Oak Forest United Methodist Church: A History of the First Fifty Years." Church committee publication. 1993.
[7] Silva, and Treadway, Sara, et al. "Oak Forest United Methodist Church: A History of the First Fifty Years." Church committee publication. 1993.

architecture. After graduating from Emory, Almand entered Columbia University in New York to pursue a degree in architecture, which he received in 1911.[8]

Although Almand did not graduate from Columbia until 1911, his experience as an architect actually began while he was in school. For a couple of summers, Almand worked as a draftsman from the firm of Hentz, Adler, and Schultz in Atlanta. In addition, while a junior at Columbia, Almand designed a new Methodist church for his hometown of Lithonia, which was built for $12,000 in 1910.[9]

Upon graduation from Columbia, Almand's first job was with the T. L. Hudson Company in Havana, Cuba, although Almand only stayed with the company for a year. Almand learned that Charles Thompson was looking to hire an architect, and he applied and got the position. Almand arrived in Little Rock on July 13, 1912, and was met at the railroad station by Frank Ginocchio of the firm. (Coincidentally, Almand and Ginocchio would both die on the same day – March 24, 1969.) Shortly after arriving in Little Rock, Almand met Miss Frances Reeve Edmondson, and they later married on November 4, 1914.[10]

For the first two and a half years (July 1912 – December 1914) that Almand worked with Charles Thompson, he was a designer and earned $2,000 a year. For the next year, he was promoted to a junior partner with Thompson. However, Almand wanted to go out on his own – he had been in charge of designing some buildings while working with Thompson – and he opened his own office in January 1916 in room 1107 of the State Bank Building (now the Boyle Building).[11]

Although Almand opened his practice during the 1910s, it was not until the 1920s that it really took off. He received many large commissions during the 1920s, including Arkansas Children's Hospital, First Presbyterian Church, and he was also the designing architect of the Little Rock High School (now Central High School). Although a lot of his work was centered in Little Rock, his practice grew to be statewide during the 1920s reaching from Paragould to Texarkana and from Bentonville to Wilmot. He also took on two associates during the 1920s (the only time that he ever would) – Van Valkenberg for a short period in 1925 and Elmer A. Stuck of Jonesboro in 1929 – 1930.[12]

In addition to designing buildings across the state, Almand also took a brief foray into development in the late 1910s. In 1919 Almand bought the land at the northeast corner of Center and 14th streets in Little Rock and built three speculative houses that he sold. He then bought the northeast corner of Spring and 14th streets for the same purpose. However, once the house at 324 W. 14th Street was completed, he decided to move his family in instead.[13]

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[8] Almand, A. J. *John Parks Almand, Architect: A Biography of my Father*. Privately printed, 1976, pp. 2, 25, and 29.
[9] Almand, pp. 30-31.
[10] Almand, pp. 33-34.
[11] Almand, p. 36.
[12] Almand, p. 37.
[13] Almand, p. 45.

As with most Americans, Almand and his family were severely affected by the Depression during the early 1930s. In June 1934, Almand moved to Washington, DC, where he had been hired as an architect in the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department. The office was responsible for designing post offices, customs houses, mints and other federal buildings across the country. Even though Almand was in Washington, he kept a tie to Arkansas, designing the post office in Fort Smith.[14]

Almand returned to Little Rock in April 1936 to take charge of the Resettlement Administration's Inspection Division office, which covered Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. As the director of the office, Almand was responsible for opening the office, organizing the work that the office would do, and he was also in charge of ten assistants. The Resettlement Administration was involved in the construction of dams, farm buildings, utilities, roads, trails and lodges, and projects in Arkansas included Lake Dick (NR-listed July 3, 1975) in Jefferson County and Mount Magazine.[15]

In 1937, Almand was able to return to private practice in Little Rock, something that he truly enjoyed. However, with the onset of World War II in the 1940s, private construction stopped, and Almand was forced once again to look at something other than private practice.[16]

In the fall of 1942, Almand began work as the construction engineer for Naval Air Stations being built in Traverse City, Michigan, and Corpus Christi, Texas. The work with the Navy lasted just over a year, and Almand returned to Little Rock again late in 1943. Although he was able to do some architectural work, the effects of World War II still plagued him. As a result, in order to supplement his family's income, Almand turned to raising broilers. He built a chicken house on the north side of the vacant lot east of his home on 14th Street and raised the chickens for about two years until the effects of World War II eased. Due to growing up on a farm, and also being involved in farming in the 1920s, Almand was able to make enough money from raising broilers to live comfortably.[17]

After World War II, Almand's practice returned to normal. As before the war, Almand's commissions during the 1940s and 1950s encompassed a wide variety of building types including churches, residences, educational buildings, as well as the North Little Rock Funeral Home. Also, as before World War II, Almand ventured a little bit into developing, specifically developing the East Palisades Addition in Little Rock in the mid-1950s. (Almand and his wife would move into a house he designed at 27 East Palisades in 1956.)[18]

Throughout his career, Almand was characterized as a very hard worker who demanded hard work from those he worked with. (In fact, on several occasions, he would require contractors to redo work if it did not live up to his standards.) However, in 1962, Almand suffered a slight

[14] Almand, p. 48.
[15] Almand, pp. 49-50.
[16] Almand, pp. 50 and 52.
[17] Almand, pp. 52-53.
[18] Almand, pp. 59-60.

stroke. Although he recovered, he suffered another stroke in mid-1963. He never fully recovered from it, and on March 24, 1969, John Parks Almand passed away as the result of a heart attack. After his funeral at First Methodist Church in Little Rock, he was buried in the Mount Holly Mausoleum. However, his legacy on Arkansas's built environment is significant, spanning a period of time of almost fifty years and reaching all across the state.[19]

Stone for the exterior walls of Oak Forest United Methodist Church's was donated by Little Rock native Frank Pace, Jr., who served as Secretary of the U.S. Army under President Truman and later held numerous prominent positions in business and government. Pace owned land on the north side of Highway 10, west of present-day I-430. The area, now known as Walton Heights, was covered with fieldstone. Pace offered it to the church free of charge, provided they could find a way to haul it to the site at 25th and Fair Park.[20]

Rev. Mann persuaded Atley Davis, who owned Davis Trailer and Equipment, to lend the church a truck. Davis provided a beat-up 1932 Chevrolet flatbed truck. After some new tires, the truck was used to haul loads of rock from the Pace Place to Oak Forest. Men and teenage boys in the congregation often used their own trucks in addition to the old flatbed, and got up at 4 a.m. to load and haul rock before going to their regular jobs.[21]

During the summer of 1947, Rev. Mann left the key to the flatbed truck in a designated spot so that men and boys could get a load of rock in their spare time. The old flatbed often had to be pushed to get it started, sometimes when it was already loaded with rock. And it did not have good brakes. Church member Jerry Hamner, who was a young man at the time, remembered the flatbed truck, saying, "This truck had a hard life, and eventually consisted of northing more than the engine, steering wheel, front seat, flat wooden bed with sideboards, and wheels. Everything else had been removed to make it easier to jump off if the mechanical brakes failed. At that time, University was Hayes Street, was unpaved, and coming down Hayes Street hill with a load of rock was a risky thing. But we loved doing it." When all of the rock had been hauled, the old truck was returned to Mr. Davis. The next time he tried to use it, the transmission fell out.[22]

The rock was piled at the building site until 1948 when the church had raised $2,000. In 1947 the Methodist Orphanage, then-located at 16th and Elm, moved to a new facility on 84 acres at the western edge of Little Rock and changed its name to the Methodist Children's Home. Oak Forest Methodist Church would serve as the home church for the Methodist Children's Home, which was just a few blocks to the northwest at Fillmore and 20th (now Charles Bussey). Because of its association with the Methodist Children's Home, people from all over the state donated money for the construction of the new Oak Forest Methodist Church. The official groundbreaking ceremony took place on April 23, 1948.

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[19] Almand, pp. 56, 62, and 65.
[20] Silva, and Treadway, Sara, et al. "Oak Forest United Methodist Church: A History of the First Fifty Years." Church committee publication. 1993.
[21] Silva, and Treadway, Sara, et al. "Oak Forest United Methodist Church: A History of the First Fifty Years." Church committee publication. 1993.
[22] Silva, and Treadway, Sara, et al. "Oak Forest United Methodist Church: A History of the First Fifty Years." Church committee publication. 1993.

Stone mason Dewey Breadon and his helper, Jeff Davidson, were hired to do the stone work. The cornerstone was laid on May 20, 1949, and reads, "Oak Forest Methodist Church. For the Glory of God and the Service of Man. 1949." Included in the cornerstone is a box with the following items: History of the Church, with names of Bishops, Superintendents, Pastors, Officers, Sunday School members, and Church members; Copies of *Arkansas Methodist*, *The Christian Advocate*, and *The Upper Room*; *Discipline of The Methodist Church*, a *Methodist Hymnal*, and the Holy Bible. (When the church celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1993, the cornerstone was opened and an updated history of the church added to its contents. It was then resealed.)[23]

Construction came to a halt in June 1950 due to a lack of funds. A pledge drive and fundraisers allowed the church to resume construction in early 1951. Although much of the early work was completed by church members and craftsmen hired by the church, in September 1950 architect John Parks Almand advertised for contractors to finish the job. Although the interior was not yet completed, the Easter service was held in the new building in 1951. The church formally opened on October 21, 1951, and drew a crowd of more than 500 people. By that time, the church had about 530 members. In 1954 the church began having two Sunday morning services.[24]

Ground was broken for an education building in November 1960, and the basement and first story were completed in July 1961. According to architect John Parks Almand's plans, a second story was supposed to be added at a later date, but it was never built. In September 1961 the old basement church was demolished, and the debris was pushed into the basement cavity. The asphalt parking lot was then put on top of the site.[25]

By the mid-1960s, Oak Forest Methodist Church had two Sunday morning services with more than 400 people at each service. Sunday night and Wednesday night services were also offered. Membership had grown to more than 1,400. However, membership and average attendance dropped significantly in the mid-to-late-1970s and continued to decline. The current membership is about 230 and average attendance on Sunday mornings is 50.[26]

Oak Forest Methodist was founded as a mission church, and it continues that legacy of mission work today. The church supports free medical and dental clinics, which are located in two houses behind the church. The medical clinic is open the first four Thursdays of each month and is staffed by volunteers from all over the city. The dental clinic is open the first three Tuesdays of each month. A vision clinic is located in the church basement and is open one Monday each

[23] Silva, and Treadway, Sara, et al. "Oak Forest United Methodist Church: A History of the First Fifty Years." Church committee publication. 1993.
[24] Silva, and Treadway, Sara, et al. "Oak Forest United Methodist Church: A History of the First Fifty Years." Church committee publication. 1993.
[25] Silva, and Treadway, Sara, et al. "Oak Forest United Methodist Church: A History of the First Fifty Years." Church committee publication. 1993.
[26] Silva, and Treadway, Sara, et al. "Oak Forest United Methodist Church: A History of the First Fifty Years." Church committee publication. 1993.

month. Oak Forest has a food pantry that is open the first and third Fridays of each month and serves 200 to 300 people every month. The church does a lot of good work in the community.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

The construction and design of the Oak Forest United Methodist Church illustrates the popularity of the Gothic Revival style in Arkansas, even into the middle of the twentieth century. The growth of Little Rock to the west throughout the twentieth century, necessitated new churches for the area's residents, and it allowed residents to hire the era's fashionable architects, such as John Parks Almand, to design high-style churches using the popular architectural styles of the period. The Oak Forest United Methodist Church represents a good, well-detailed example of the Gothic Revival style, especially in the Oak Forest area of Little Rock.

The Oak Forest United Methodist Church is an excellent example of the Gothic Revival style. The church exhibits the identifying features of the style noted by McAlester and McAlester, notably a steeply-pitched roof; wall surfaces extending into the gable without a break; and windows that commonly extend into gables, frequently having a pointed-arch shape.[27] Some of the characteristics of Oak Forest United Methodist Church, specifically the use of fieldstone, was unusual for the Gothic Revival style, but the design is clearly an example of the style. However, employing one style, but using creativity with it, was a characteristic of twentieth-century church design. As Carole Rifkend writes in her book, *A Field Guide to American Architecture*:

> Twentieth-century church design is careful and correct in selecting historical details, and inventive in using them to fulfill modern requirements. The contemporary aesthetic prefers simplicity and crisp surfaces. Proportions are generally horizontal, accentuated by [a] tall tower or high dome.
>
> Ornament is generally selected from a single historical style, mostly Gothic through the 1920s, Georgian and Colonial thereafter. It is reworked in a new design for a quiet, rather than a blatant, originality. …[28]

The Oak Forest United Methodist Church was the only building in the Oak Forest area of Little Rock that Almand designed, although he did execute other church designs in other parts of the city. Because of its significance as an excellent example of the Gothic Revival style in the Oak Forest area of Little Rock by John Parks Almand, the Oak Forest United Methodist Church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C**. The building is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration A** as a religious building.

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[27] McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994, p. 197.

[28] Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to American Architecture*. New York: Plume Books, 1980, p. 158.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Almand, A. J. *John Parks Almand, Architect: A Biography of my Father*. Privately printed, 1976.

Almand, John P. "Specifications for Oak Forest Methodist Church." Architectural Specifications. Owned by Oak Forest United Methodist Church, Little Rock, AR. 1950.

Bowers, Dorothy. "Methodism with a Mission Marches On." *Arkansas Methodist*, 10 August 1944, p. 8-9.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994.

Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to American Architecture*. New York: Plume Books, 1980.

Silva, Rachel. "Sandwiching in History Tour Script: Oak Forest United Methodist Church." In the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2015.

Treadway, Sara, et al. "Oak Forest United Methodist Church: A History of the First Fifty Years." Church committee publication. 1993.

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:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
_X__ Other
Name of repository: _Oak Forest United Methodist Church_____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PU8478

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.12 Acres

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:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

[ ] NAD 1927 or [X] NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15	Easting: 560918	Northing: 3843233
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

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

Lots 4 Thru 10, Block 50; Cherry & Cox Addition to the City of Little Rock.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the parcel historically associated with Oak Forest United Methodist Church.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Mason Ellis, edited by Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 1100 North Street
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code 72201
e-mail: ralph.wilcox@arkansas.gov
telephone: (501) 324-9787
date: September 14, 2020

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.)
- **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: Oak Forest United Methodist Church

City or Vicinity: Little Rock

County: Pulaski County State: Arkansas

Photographer: Ralph S. Wilcox

Date Photographed: September 21, 2020

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

1 of 19. South and west façades of the sanctuary and chapel sections of the building, looking northeast.

2 of 19. West façade of the sanctuary and chapel sections of the church, looking east.

3 of 19. West façade of the education wing of the building, looking east.

4 of 19. West façade of the education wing and north façade of the sanctuary section of the building, looking southeast.

5 of 19. North façade of the sanctuary section of the building, looking southeast.

6 of 19. West façade of the education wing of the building, looking southeast.

7 of 19. North façade of the education wing of the building, looking southwest.

8 of 19. East façade of the education wing of the building, looking west.

9 of 19. East façade of the sanctuary and administration sections of the building, looking southwest.

10 of 19. East façade of the sanctuary and administration sections of the building, looking northwest.

11 of 19. South façade of the chapel section of the building, looking north.

12 of 19. West façade of the chapel section of the building, looking east.

13 of 19. South and west façades of the sanctuary section of the building, looking northeast.

14 of 19. Detail of the "lookouts" on the south side of the sanctuary, looking northeast.

15 of 19. Detail of the main entrance into the sanctuary, looking east.

16 of 19. View of the sanctuary, looking west.

17 of 19. View of the sanctuary, looking east.

18 of 19. View of the original stained-glass windows on the east side of the sanctuary, looking east.

19 of 19. View of the chapel, looking south.

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.

|---------257 feet----------|

Oak Forest United Methodist Church
Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas

UTM: 15 560918E 3843233N

↑
North

|--------1359 feet---------|

Oak Forest United Methodist Church
Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas

UTM: 15 560918E 3843233N

↑
North

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METHODIST CHURCH

OAK FOREST
METHODIST CHURCH

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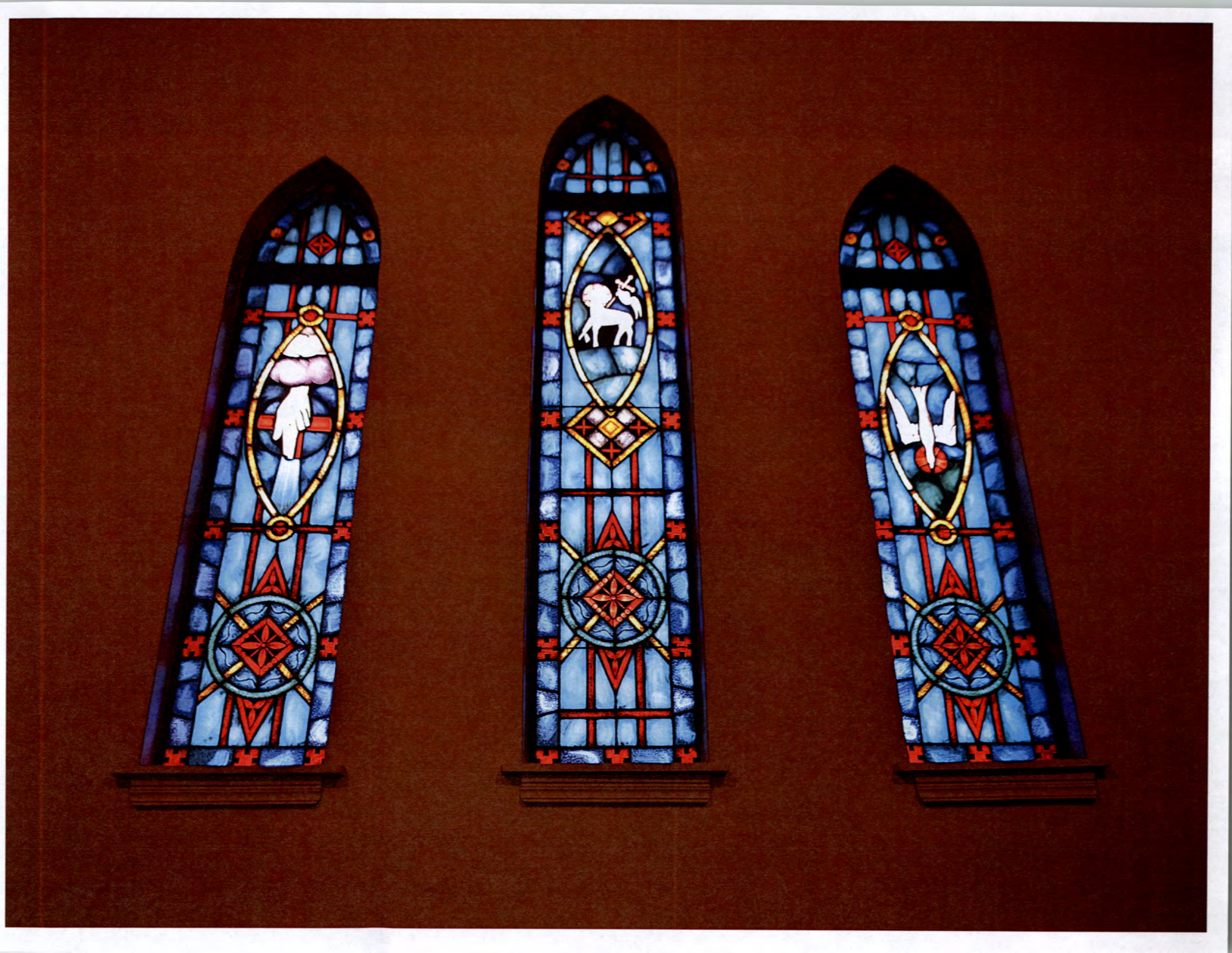
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