

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. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a)

1. Name of Property

Historic name First Baptist Church
Other names/site number First General Baptist Church
Name of related Multiple Property Listing n/a

2. Location

Street & number 200 Broadway Street
City or town Cape Girardeau
State Missouri Code MO County Cape Girardeau Code 031 Zip code 63701

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

Signature of certifying official/Title: Joni M. Drawl, Deputy SAPO
Date: 5/23/23

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
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

First Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Cape Girardeau, MO  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

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

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

EDUCATION/School

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

DOMESTIC/Apartment

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian: Gothic

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone

walls: Brick

roof: Asphalt

other: Wood

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES

First Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Cape Girardeau, MO  
County and State

**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.)

Property is:

- 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.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGE

**Areas of Significance**

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1893 and 1896

**Significant Dates**

1893

1896

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Daues & Schrader: Brick Masons

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

**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): \_\_\_\_\_

First Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Cape Girardeau County, MO  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** Less than one acre

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 37.306248 -89.519340 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

2 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

\_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1927 or \_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1983

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (On continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (On continuation sheet)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Debbie Sheals and Joshua Amelunke  
organization Building Preservation, LLC date February 13, 2023  
street & number 29 North Ninth St., Ste. 210 telephone 573-874-3779  
city or town Columbia state MO zip code 65201  
e-mail Debsheals@gmail.com

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

**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 18 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.

First Baptist Church

Cape Girardeau County, MO

Name of Property

County and State

### Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

1. Aerial photo map from Google Earth, with a scale bar. Accessed October 2022.
2. Aerial photo map of the area, from Google Earth with Coordinates. Accessed October 2022.
3. Site Plan, with roof plan of front section. Base drawing by Zahner & Associates, courtesy of Boulder Construction, Cape Girardeau. Roof plan by Deb Sheals, 2022.
4. Construction Episode Diagram by Deb Sheals, October 2022
5. Top: Photo Taken During 1957 Remodeling Project. Newspaper Clipping from Kent Library Vertical File Southeast Missouri Box 1701, Folder 15. Bottom: Church at the Completion of the Remodeling Project, ca. 1958. Fred Lynch, "Restored General Baptist Church," Southeast Missourian Blog, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://www.semissourian.com/blogs/flynch/entry/58415>.
6. Datestone. Photos by Deb Sheals August 2022.
7. Photos taken when the spire was being painted in 1967. Ken Steinhoff, "Cape's Alice's Restaurant," Cape Girardeau History and Photographs, Oct. 11, 2010, accessed September 2022, <https://www.capecentralhigh.com/cape-photos/broadway/capes-alices-restaurant/>.
8. Spire Types and Steeple Parts. Spire diagram from John, Fleming, et al. *The Penguin of Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture* (New York: Penguin Group, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 1999), 544. Splayed-foot spire illustration from "Looking At Buildings: Glossary," *Pevsner Architectural Guides*, <http://www.lookingatbuildings.org.uk/index.html>, 2023.
9. Current Plans: First Floor and Front of Second Floor. Base drawing by Zahner & Associates, courtesy of Boulder Construction, Cape Girardeau.
10. Current Plans: Lower Level and Back of Second Floor. Base drawing by Zahner & Associates, courtesy of Boulder Construction, Cape Girardeau.
11. Top Left: Likely appearance in 1893, based on physical characteristics of the current building and historical references. (2022 Sketch by Josh Amelunke is based on the 1965 drawing to the right.); Top Right: 1896 sketch from *History of Cape Girardeau First Baptist Church*. (S. D. Aubuchon, *The History of the First Baptist Church: Cape Girardeau, Missouri*. Cape Girardeau: First Baptist Church, 1965, cover.); Bottom: Pattern Book plan for a central tower church comparable to First Baptist in 1893. (Rev A. J. Kynett, D.D. *Catalogue of Architectural Plans for Churches and Parsonages* Philadelphia: Church Extension office, 1889, 28.)
12. Abbey of Saint-Germain Auxerre, France, 12<sup>th</sup> Century Tower. Abbey of Saint-Germain d'Auxerre, "Wikimedia," accessed November 15, 2022.
13. Colonial Churches with Neoclassical Steeples. Jeffery Howe, *Houses of Worship: An Identification Guide to History and Styles of American Religious Architecture*, (San Diego: Thunder Bay Press 2003), 125.
14. Top: Pugin's Ideal Church. (Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*. London: John Weale, 1841, 50.); Bottom Left: Richard Upjohn's Trinity Church. (Phoebe Stanton, *The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture: An Episode in Taste 1840-1856*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1997, 63.); Bottom Right: James Renwick's Grace Church. (Grace Church, Manhattan, "Wikipedia," accessed November 15, 2022.)
15. Pattern book design of a frame church. Upjohn, Richard. *Upjohn's Rural Architecture*. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1975.)
16. Victorian Gothic Church Example: The Church of the Nativity, Menlo Park, CA. Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture*, (New York: The New American Library), 1980, 150.
17. Victorian Gothic Churches. Top Right: First Baptist Church, (NR 09/12/1982) Lynchburg, VA, 1886. Allen Chambers, Richard Clark, *The First Baptist Church, Lynchburg, VA*, National Register of Historic Places, August 12, 1980, Photograph 1 of 3. Bottom: Pattern Book Church Plans. Rev A. J. Kynett, D.D. *Catalogue of Architectural Plans for Churches and Parsonages*, Philadelphia: (Church Extension office, 1889), 29, 33.
18. Aerial Photo Map of Churches in Cape Girardeau, November 2022. (Base map from Google Earth.)
19. Other historic Downtown Cape Girardeau churches, in date order. Photos from Google maps. Accessed October 2022
20. Photo Key

**First Baptist Church**  
Name of Property

**Cape Girardeau County, MO**  
County and State

## 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 Baptist Church**

City or Vicinity: **Cape Girardeau**

County: **Cape Girardeau County** State: **Missouri**

Photographer: **1-2: Anna Kangas, 3-22: Deb Sheals**

Date

Photographed: **1-2: December 2022, 3-22: August, 2022**

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

- 1 of 22: Front corner, looking northwest.
- 2 of 22: Front corner, looking northeast.
- 3 of 22: Front corner, looking northeast.
- 4 of 22: Front, looking north.
- 5 of 22: West side, looking east.
- 6 of 22: Back corner, looking southeast.
- 7 of 22: Back corner looking southwest.
- 8 of 22: East side, looking northwest.
- 9 of 22: Front corner stairs and entry courtyard, looking northwest.
- 10 of 22: Front corner, looking north to steeple.
- 11 of 22: First floor, front corner stairs, looking north.
- 12 of 22: First floor sanctuary, looking northwest.
- 13 of 22: First floor sanctuary, looking south.
- 14 of 22: First floor sanctuary, looking west.
- 15 of 22: First floor sanctuary, looking south into alcove.
- 16 of 22: First floor alcove, looking south to base of 1896 window.
- 17 of 22: First floor annex, looking southwest.
- 18 of 22: Second floor stairwell, looking east.
- 19 of 22: Second floor front, looking south to top of 1896 window.
- 20 of 22: Second floor annex, apartment, looking northeast.
- 21 of 22: Lower level annex, looking east.
- 22 of 22: Lower level church, meeting room, looking south.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 1

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Summary:**

The First Baptist Church building, at 200 Broadway in Cape Girardeau, occupies a small corner lot on the north edge of the historic commercial core of the community. It sits at the intersection of Spanish Street and Broadway, facing south to Broadway. It is the only resource on the property. The one and one-half story red brick church building has an irregular form, with a front-facing gable roof, a tall steeple, and simple Victorian Gothic styling. The church was built in two stages in 1893 and 1896, and a rear annex was added in 1957. There are two periods of significance, which correspond to the two construction phases for the church, 1893 and 1896. The original rectangular core of the church was completed in 1893. The steeple is centered on the front wall of that section. The second stage was completed in 1896. That section wraps around the south and west walls of the original building, with a projecting front gable end that features a large original pointed-arched window.<sup>1</sup> Both front sections have brick exterior walls that are topped with dogtooth cornices. The sanctuary of the church occupies the entire first floor of the front section. It has a vaulted ceiling in the 1893 section and a flat ceiling in the 1896 addition. A two-story annex was constructed on the back wall of the church in 1957; it has a flat roof and red brick walls. Later in the twentieth century, many of the window sashes in the sanctuary of the church were replaced, possibly after a fire that took place ca. 1984. The original pointed window openings were not altered when the sashes were replaced. Overall, the church looks much as it did in the 1890s, and the exterior features of the original front sections are intact and in good condition. The building retains most historic original character-defining features and clearly reflects a sense of its time and place.

**Character Defining Features**

The church building retains many character-defining features:

- Steeple, including the spire and intersecting gable roofs at the top edge of the tower. (Photos 1, 5, 10)
- Pointed-arch door and window openings. (Photos 1-5, 8-10, 12-16, 19)
- Historic window sashes on the south wall and near the main entrance. (Photos 1-5, 12-16, 19)
- Brick walls, with stone accents, dogtooth cornices and other ornamental brickwork. (Photos 3-5, 9-10)
- Buttresses on the east wall. (Photos 1, 8)
- Open sanctuary, with vaulted ceiling and alcove. (Photos 12-15)

<sup>1</sup> Resources and materials are described here as original—built in 1893 or 1896, and non-historic—built after those two periods of significance.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 2

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Elaboration:**

**Setting and Site**

The property is located one and one half blocks west of the Mississippi River, on the north edge of the historic commercial center of Cape Girardeau. It is on the northwest corner of the intersection of Broadway and Spanish Street. (Figure 1.) The properties immediately west and north of the building are vacant, with an open grass field to the north and paved parking to the west. Neither of those lots are part of the church property. There is a small park directly across the street to the south that is associated with the First Presbyterian Church, located one block west at Broadway and Lorimer. (Figure 2.) Across Spanish Street to the east is a small brick building that dates to the 1800s. (Visible in the background of Photos 2 and 3.) The area to the southeast contains closely spaced commercial buildings, most of which are more than 50 years old and one to three stories tall. (Figure 2.) Those blocks are part of the Cape Girardeau Commercial Historic District, which was listed in the National Register in 2000 and last expanded in 2008.<sup>2</sup>

The building occupies a rectangular lot that is 75 feet wide and 115 feet deep. (Site Plan, Figure 3.) It is the only resource on the property. It sits at the front edge of the lot, immediately adjacent to the public sidewalk next to Broadway. (Photos 2 and 3.) The west side of the property adjoins a paved parking lot that is part of a large commercial property to the west. (Figures 1 and 2.) There is approximately 20 feet of open land between the west wall of the church and the west property line. That land has a small, paved driveway at the front of the lot (Photo 3.) and a grass lawn at the back. (Photo 6.) Large trees near the northwest corner of the lot are part of the adjacent property.

The north boundary of the lot is edged with a short modern concrete retaining wall that sits about six feet from the back wall of the annex. (Photo 7.) A small modern covered walkway encloses part of the area between the building and the retaining wall. The east edge of the lot is bounded by Spanish Street, which dead ends near the north end of the property. A narrow strip of land between the building and Spanish Street has trees and other landscaping at the front, and a modern light-colored brick sidewalk at the back. (Photos 1 and 7.) The original boundaries of the property are not known. Church records show that the initial purchase of land encompassed "fifty foot of ground at the corner of Spanish and Broadway," which presumably was used for the first section of the building.<sup>3</sup> That lot was clearly expanded to make way for the 1896 addition, and later congregations are known to have owned land to the north of this parcel as well.

<sup>2</sup> Phillip Thomason, "Cape Girardeau Commercial Historic District," (National Register Nomination, Washington, D. C.: National Park Service, NRIS #00000820, listed July 20, 2000.)

<sup>3</sup> S. D. Aubuchon, *The History of the First Baptist Church: Cape Girardeau, Missouri* (Cape Girardeau: First Baptist Church, 1965), 15.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 3

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Exterior**

NOTE: Resources and materials are described below as original—built in 1893 or 1896, and non-historic—built after those two periods of significance.

**Construction Sequence**

The front (south) part of the building, which is the church, was built in 1893 and 1896. It is one and one-half stories over a partial basement, with a roughly rectangular plan and a projecting front bay. (Photo 1) The building is approximately 50 feet wide and 70 feet deep. The exterior walls of the front section are constructed of red brick, with buff-colored limestone or sandstone accents. The oldest part of the church measures roughly 36 feet wide by 50 feet deep. It was built in 1893 with a steep front-facing gable roof and a centered front steeple and entrance. (See Figure 4 for a diagram of construction phases.) That modest building was expanded to the west and south three years later, with an L-shaped addition that runs along the west side wall of the original building and extends south to form a large front gable end. Each of the early sections of the building has a gabled roof, which has resulted in a complex roofline with parallel ridges running north south, and a large cricket between. (See Figure 3 for a roof plan.) The original steeple was also raised in 1896, probably via a new spire.

The projecting front bay, which is topped with a high front-facing gable roof, is part of the 1896 addition. That addition also includes a one-story entrance vestibule in front of the original steeple that has a flat roof. (See Photo 1. The steeple and gable to the right in that photo were built in 1893, the vestibule and cross gable to the left were built in 1896.) A photo of the church taken in 1957 shows that the higher east doorway was reached via stairs that ran along the east side of the vestibule at that time. (See Figure 5.) It is likely that those stairs were installed when the building was enlarged in 1896.

Because the east doorway is larger and closer to the sanctuary, it most likely became the primary entrance in 1896. The narrower south doorway probably served as a secondary entrance, possibly for direct access to a meeting room in the lower level of the church. By 1958, the east stairs had been replaced with a raised patio that is accessed by stairs that lead up from the sidewalk on the east side of the property. (See Figure 5.) That patio is still in place; it is now edged with a modern ashlar stone veneer.

The back part of the building, generally referred to as the annex, was added in 1957 to house Sunday School and other support functions.<sup>4</sup> (See Figure 4 for a diagram of construction episodes.) The annex is approximately 45 feet deep and 50 feet wide, with a flat roof and brick walls. It is two stories with a basement. The annex was remodeled in the late 1900s, probably

<sup>4</sup> "General Baptists Restoring Downtown Cape Girardeau Church," July 18, 1957 (newspaper clipping), Glenn House Collection, Box 3015, Folder 15. Kent Library, Southeast Missouri University, Cape Girardeau, MO.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 4

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

the 1980s or 90s. That project included a small rooftop addition and other exterior changes, as well as reconfiguring the upper floor for use as an apartment. (See Photos 6 and 7. The light stuccoed areas were added in the late 1900s.)

### Front (South) Walls

The south elevation has two walls—moving left to right facing the front of the church is the large gable end of the 1896 addition, which includes the flat-roofed south wall of the entry vestibule, and another half gable wall, which sits back from the street facing south. (Left to right in photo 1.) The half gable wall that sits back from the street is part of the original front wall of the 1893 section.

#### 1896 Gable End Wall

The gable end wall of the 1896 section (far left in Photo 1) is a one and one half-story brick wall that sits above a raised basement. Its steep gabled roof is edged with a dogtooth brick cornice, and short brick cornice returns. (See Photos 3 and 4.) The dogtooth cornice is comprised of a sloped band of brick, one projecting band of brick, a row of dogtooth brick, and three more bands of brick in a running bond. (See Photos for a detail of the cornice.)

The basement level of that wall is faced with non-historic ashlar stone that was added after 1967.<sup>5</sup> The ashlar stone wall extends east to support the edges of the non-historic raised entrance patio, which is accessed by a wide set of stairs that were also added after 1957. (See Photo 9.) Those stairs are edged with a slender pipe railing that was added sometime after 1957. Because the lot slopes down to the east, the ashlar wall is taller at the east part of the property.

A nine-foot wide pointed-arch window is centered in the front gabled wall. It appears to have been installed in 1896. (Photo 4.) The tall window opening extends up into the gable end, above the first floor ceiling line. (Photo 15.) The top edge of the masonry opening for the window has a pointed rowlock arch, and the lower edge has a flat hand-tooled stone sill that has some spalled sections. The window features Victorian Gothic style tracery, with three hung windows that have pointed-arch tops that overlap to form intersecting arches. The wood and art glass window sashes are edged with small square panes of multi-colored art glass, which surround larger center panes of clear textured glass. (See Photo 3.)

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<sup>5</sup> A photo included in a 1967 newspaper article shows concrete parging on the foundation. Ken Steinhoff, "Cape's Alice's Restaurant," Cape Girardeau History and Photographs, Oct. 11, 2010. <https://www.capecentralhigh.com/cape-photos/broadway/capes-alices-restaurant/>, Accessed September 2022.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 5

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Three small rectangular windows are centered at the basement level of the front gabled wall. They are edged with the modern stone veneer wall, and each has a segmental brick rowlock arched top. They have 1/1 wood sashes that are historic, and possibly original.

1896 Entry Vestibule

The 1896 entry vestibule sits between the 1896 gable end wall and the half gable end of the 1893 section. (See Figure 5 and photos 9 and 10; it is in the center in Photo 9.) It is one-story, with a flat roof. (See photo 10.) Early photos show that the roof of the vestibule originally included a small gablet above the main entry; the gablet was removed sometime after 1957. (See Figures 5 and 8.) Each wall of the vestibule is topped with a tall band of elaborate brickwork. Working top to bottom, that band includes a projecting course of curved brick, and a slightly wider band of egg and dart molding constructed of the same material. A roughly two-foot tall frieze panel below features evenly spaced recessed panels that are filled with engaged brick pillars. There is a projecting flat brick band below the frieze, then a final ornamental band that consists of a dogtooth course edged by projecting brick string courses.

The narrow south wall of the vestibule, which faces Broadway, has a datestone and an infilled pointed-arch doorway. The large rectangular white stone datestone, which replaced an earlier stone in 1957, is edged with ornamental terra cotta molding. It reads "FIRST GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCH BUILT 1893 REBUILT 1957."<sup>6</sup> (See Figure 6.) The doorway below the datestone was infilled with brick in 1957. (See Figure 5.) The infill sits back from the face of the wall and is partly covered by a flat modern sign panel. (To the left in Photo 9.) The lower part of that former doorway is covered by the non-historic ashlar stone wall described above.

The east wall of the vestibule contains the primary entrance to the church, which includes a wide doorway topped by a pointed-arch transom. The top edge of that masonry opening is accented with a pointed-brick rowlock arch. (Photo 9.) The doorway is filled with a dark metal and glass door and sidelight that are just a few decades old. The transom sash and frame above the door appear to date to 1896. The transom is similar to the sashes in the large south window of the 1896 gable end, with small multi-color lights around a larger frosted center pane. The doorway is flanked by lantern shaped lights that are several decades old but may not be historic, and there is a modern wall-mounted mailbox to the left of the doorway.

A small triangular window left of that doorway also appears to date to 1896. That masonry opening has a stone sill and is topped with the same kind of pointed brick rowlock arch as the doorway. It is filled with a ca. 1896 window sash that is comparable to the one above the door, with multi-color panes around frosted glass. (Photos 10 and 18.) A flat metal wall sign below the triangular window is modern.

<sup>6</sup> "Church Gets Cornerstone," July 18, 1957 (newspaper clipping), Glenn House Collection, Box 3015, Folder 15. Kent Library, Southeast Missouri University, Cape Girardeau, MO.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 6

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

1893 Half Gable South Wall

The final front wall is on the east (right) side of the façade, facing south to the entrance patio. (On the right in Photo 9.) It is a flat brick wall edged on the east corner by a brick buttress. The buttress is stepped and accented with angled stone caps. (See Photo 8 for a view of comparable buttresses on the east wall.) It includes half of the original front gable end, which has the same type of dogtooth cornice found in the front gable end. There is also a dogtooth cornice band at the top of the first floor.

Newer Window Sashes

There is one large original lancet window opening in the half gable south wall. (Visible to the right in Photo 9.) It has hung wood window sashes that are comparable to those found in the wide window of the large gable end, but they differ in that the square panes around the edges alternate between variegated opaque gold glass and clear glass that has brown variegations. The center light of each sash has matching clear and brown variegated glass. (Photo 14 shows a comparable window, located on the interior west wall.) That window configuration and glass pattern is repeated in all windows on the east and west side walls of the church; all of those sashes are non-historic. They appear to have been installed between 1967 and 1990. (See Photos 4, 15, 16, and 19. Compare the two types of windows in Photo 15.) The older sashes were still in place when the building was photographed in 1967; it is likely that they were replaced after the building was damaged by fire in 1984.<sup>7</sup> (See Figure 7. Photos taken in 1967.)

**Steeple**

The steeple sits back from the street, near the northwest corner of the entrance patio. It is partly covered by the entrance vestibule of the 1896 addition. (Photos 1, 7, 10.) The square steeple is roughly 10 feet square, with brick walls and a steep eight-sided spire. (See Figure 8. Steeple parts.) The spire is sheathed with painted metal panels and topped by a gilded finial, all of which appear to be historic. Each wall of the steeple has a steep cross gable at the base of the spire that is partly filled with ornamental cast iron panels. (Photo 10.) The current spire, and possibly the cross gables, are believed to have been added in 1896; the rest of the steeple dates to 1893.<sup>8</sup> (See Figure 11 for a speculative comparison of church appearance in 1893 and 1896.)

The belfry is just below the spire. It has pointed-arch vents filled with wooden louvers. Those openings are topped with brick rowlock arches. Stone windowsills link with projecting bands of brick to form a string course on all sides of the steeple. (See Photo 10.) The front (south) wall of the steeple has two additional openings that are accented with rowlock brick courses. The first

<sup>7</sup> Steinhoff, "Cape's Alice's Restaurant," and Sharon Sanders, "Centenary UMC Burned a century ago," *Southeast Missourian* Blog, posted Feb. 27, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> The local paper noted the addition of a new spire in 1896. "Extending Steeple Higher," *Cape Girardeau Democrat*, March 14, 1896, 5.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 7

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

is a round window just below the belfry that appears to date to 1893. It has an ornamental wood sash that may be post 1967. (See Photo 10.) The second is a single lancet window just below the round one. It has a pointed-arch top sash that appears to be original; the lower sash is missing or covered by a solid panel. (Photo 9.)

### West Side Wall

The west wall of the church was built in 1896. It is a flat brick wall with dogtooth cornices. Moving from the front of the building to the back, the third bay has a large cross gable that is almost identical to the 1896 front gable end. (Photos 3 and 5.) The cross gable is approximately the same size as the front gable, and it has the same type of brick cornice and cornice returns. It also has a pointed-arch window that is the same size and shape as the large front window. The window opening has a matching stone still and is topped with a pointed brick rowlock arch. The window itself is non-historic. It is similar to the front window, with Victorian Gothic tracery and three main sections, but it was added after 1967. It has the same pattern of lights and glass types found on other post-1967 windows in the sanctuary.

The west wall of the church also has four single lancet window openings, two on each side of the cross gable. Those openings all appear to date to 1896; their sashes are post 1967. The two on the south sit higher in the wall than those north of the cross gable. Each of those has the same type of original masonry opening and non-historic window sash as the smaller south window by the entrance patio that is described above. A small modern opening in the wall below the northernmost window holds an air conditioner that opens to the basement.

A service entrance sits at the north end of that side wall. It is approximately 10 feet wide and 8 feet deep, with red brick walls and a shallow shed roof that has asphalt roofing. It appears to be older than the annex, but newer than the church. (Therefore, it was built between 1896 and 1957.) It contains a double doorway that has a pair of two-panel painted wood doors.

The west wall of the annex was built in 1957 and remodeled in the late 1900s. It is a two-story brick wall topped with a short flat parapet. (Photo 6.) The second floor has four original rectangular window openings that have rowlock brick sills and no headers. They are filled with modern 1x1 aluminum casement windows that probably date to the late 1900s. The first floor has two matching windows, and a small partially enclosed entrance porch that is modern. The porch is covered with an extension of the shed roof on the service entrance. It has a concrete floor and frame walls covered with tan stucco. Two open doorways on the entrance porch lead to annex entrances.

### North (Back) Wall

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 8

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

The two story north wall of the annex was built in 1957 and remodeled in the late 1900s. Like the west side wall of the annex, it is brick with a stone foundation. (Photos 6 and 7.) The east half of the first floor is covered with a modern (ca. 1980s) enclosed porch. The porch has a flat roof and stuccoed walls. It shelters one window and a doorway into the lower level of the annex. There are four windows on the second floor; each opening has a rowlock sill and no header, with a modern casement window. There are two more windows on the first floor, west of the covered entry. They match those on the second floor in size and material. A bank of modern utility connections sits between the first floor windows.

### East Side Wall

The east wall of the church was built in 1893. It is currently obscured from the public right of way by trees. (Photo 7.) It is brick, with four window bays that are divided by brick buttresses. (Photo 8.) The buttresses are stepped and accented with angled stone caps. A short course of stone foundation is exposed between the brick wall and the ground. The top edge of the wall is accented with the same type of dogtooth cornice found on other walls of the building that were constructed in the 1890s. Each bay on the east wall of the church contains a single lancet window that has a stone sill and a pointed brick rowlock arch. Each of those has the same type of non-historic window sash found in other windows in the sanctuary.

The east wall of the annex on the north was built in 1957 and remodeled in the late 1900s. Like the other annex walls, it is a two story brick wall topped with a short flat parapet. (Photo 7.) The concrete wall of the basement is partially above ground; it contains two metal framed windows that may be original to the annex. There are four window bays on each floor, but the center two are covered by a stuccoed bay that extends about four feet from the brick wall. That bay was probably added around 1990. The lower level shelters exterior stairs and the upper level serves as a window bay for the second floor of the annex. It has modern bay windows at the second floor and untrimmed openings at the first floor. Each floor of the bay is flanked by rectangular window openings that have rowlock brick sills and no headers. They are filled with modern aluminum casement windows that probably date to the 1990s.

A small rooftop addition that extends up above the east wall of the annex appears to have been added in the late 1900s. It appears to be the same age as the stuccoed additions elsewhere on the annex. (Photos 7.) The addition has stuccoed walls and an asymmetrical gabled roof. Its east wall is filled with windows, and the north wall contains large sliding patio doors that open to the roof.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 9

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

## Interior

### Sanctuary and Alcove

The main entrance to the church leads to a small vestibule that is flanked by staircases. (Figure 9. Floor Plan.) The stairs to the left (south) lead to the basement and the stairs to the right go through the base of the steeple into the sanctuary. The double doorway into the sanctuary has a pair of four-panel wood doors that appear to date to the 1890s. (Photo 11.)

The sanctuary is an open room that is roughly square, with the pulpit on a raised platform on the north end, opposite the steeple. (Photos 12 and 13.) The wall behind the pulpit has a large recess that is painted white; it is flanked by historic doorways that have gothic arched tops edged with trim that may date to 1896. There are four single windows along the east wall (Photo 14), and two single windows plus a nine-foot wide triple window on the west side. A smaller square alcove off the southwest corner of the sanctuary has two more lancet windows on its west wall (Photo 15) and a large triple window on the south wall. (Photo 16.) Each window opening is edged by wide painted wood trim that appears to date to 1896.

The sanctuary and the alcove both have painted plaster walls that are edged with modern wood wainscoting. Both rooms also have modern carpet. The sanctuary has an unusual ceiling configuration that reflects the two construction phases for the front part of the building. The original part of the sanctuary, which is on the east, has a vaulted ceiling that echoes the line of the gable roof above. (See Photo 13.) The area that was added in 1896, which includes the west side of the sanctuary and the south alcove, has a flat ceiling. The flat ceiling cuts across the tops of the large triple windows on the south and west walls, obscuring the view of the arched top of each window. (See Photos 15 and 19.) Although unusual, that appears to be an original feature; the tops of those windows are exposed in the second floor rooms that are located above the flat parts of the sanctuary ceiling.

A short, paneled beam runs along the junction of the vaulted and flat parts of the ceiling. Both sections of the ceiling have widely spaced beams that are painted a light color. An ornamental beam on the ridge of the vaulted area has scrolled brackets where it meets the ceiling beams. (Photos 12 and 13.) The beams and brackets all appear to be historic. The ceiling surfaces between the beams are covered with textured dark panels that appear to be just a few decades old.

### Second Floor of the Sanctuary and Alcove

A doorway in the southeast corner of the alcove leads to an original staircase to the second floor. The landing of that winding stair is lighted by a small art glass window that appears to date to 1896. (Photo 18, and Figure 9. Second Floor Front Plan.) The stairwell has a mix of bare brick and plastered walls, and painted beadboard paneling. Treads and rises of the stairs are

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 10

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

modern. The second floor contains three small original rooms that may have served as meeting rooms or office space when new.

Each room has plastered walls that have been wallpapered, and wood flooring, all of which is original. The ceilings are covered with modern acoustical tiles. As noted, the tops of the large triple windows are exposed in two of the second floor rooms. (Photo 19.) The upper windows have simple flat casing that matches the flat painted baseboards of the rooms. All three rooms are now used only for storage.

### Front Basement

There is no basement under the 1893 part of the church. (Figure 10. Lower Level Floor Plan.) The basement below the 1896 addition is reached via the stairs in the front entry way, or the basement of the annex. That basement has one large room below the alcove and a narrower section to the north that leads to the annex basement. The room below the alcove serves as a meeting room. (Photo 22.) It has a brick and stone walls, exposed ceiling joists and a concrete floor that bears marks of square tiles that are no longer in place. A modern iron balustrade runs along the interior surface of the walls; it may have been added to keep materials off of damp stone walls. There are three windows in the front wall of the room, and a small window-type air conditioner set high in the west wall.

North of the meeting room, there are two modern restrooms and a wide corridor that leads to the basement of the annex. The corridor has concrete floors and modern wall finishes. The ceiling there has exposed joists.

### Top Floor of Annex

The top floor of the annex contains a large apartment that was added in the 1980s or 90s. (Figure 10, Photo 20.) The two-bedroom apartment has enclosed staircases to east and west exits, as well as a spiral staircase in the living room that leads to a small loft located in the rooftop addition. All or most finishes in the apartment are modern. They include carpet and tile flooring, painted gypboard walls, and gypboard ceilings. Round painted steel support posts in the living room are probably original.

### First Floor of Annex

The middle floor of the annex is current used for meeting rooms for a local religious organization. (Figure 10, Plan and Photo 17.) That area also has mostly modern finishes that include tile and carpeted floors, and painted gypboard walls and ceilings. It is likely that many of the interior walls in that part of the building are original to the annex, since it was used for Sunday School and other support services when new. Like the top floor, that level has round painted steel support posts that are probably original.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 11

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

### Annex Basement

The lowest level of the annex contains a large open hall and a small utility area. (Figure 10, Plan, and Photo 21.) It is accessed via an exterior staircase and a doorway that leads to the basement of the church. The current layout appears to be historic. Most finishes are modern, including carpeted floors, and suspended acoustical tile ceilings. Wall finishes include modern Masonite paneling and historic painted concrete block walls. The hall has exposed original painted steel support posts.

### Integrity

There have naturally been alterations to the building since the church was expanded in 1896. Most of those changes have taken place in relatively out of the way locations, and the front part of the building is notably intact. Although the annex that was added in 1957 is relatively large, it is located at the back of the building, away from public view, and the roofline of that addition is generally lower than that of the historic church. The location and scale of the rear addition minimizes its impact on the historic character of the 1890s church.

The 1957 building project included a few changes at the front of the property as well. A doorway in the south wall of the entry vestibule was infilled with brick, and a narrow sidewalk and stairs that led to the main east entry were replaced with the current entrance patio. (See 1950s photos in Figure 5.) Later in the century, stone veneer was installed along the base of the south wall and the patio and east stairway. Although those changes are publicly visible, they did not include significant alterations to the building itself, and the original 1896 east doorway continues to be the primary public entrance into the sanctuary.

A later renovation that appears to have taken place in the 1980s or early 1990s may have been spurred by a 1984 fire in the church.<sup>9</sup> That project involved changes to the annex, including remodeling the top floor to create an apartment, adding a small rooftop addition, and a modest new entry bay on the east wall of the annex (Photo 7.) Newer ceiling panels and wainscot now in place in the sanctuary (Photos 12 and 13) may also have been added around that same time, and carpeting was also added to the space on recent decades. The character-defining plan and original open configuration of the sanctuary have not been changed, however, and many of the windows and doorways there retain what appears to be historic casing.

The 1984 fire may also have necessitated the installation of new window sashes in the sanctuary. Although all original masonry window openings are intact, one south window and all windows on the east and west walls of the sanctuary contain sashes that were added sometime after 1967. (See Figure 7 for a 1967 photo that shows the original windows on the west wall.) The replacement sashes, which are still in place, are all the same size and shape as the

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<sup>9</sup> Sanders, "Centenary UMC Burned a century ago."

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**Section Number** 7 **Page** 12

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

originals, and they have comparable muntin patterns, but different styles of art glass. Surviving 1890s window sashes have multi-colored panes typical of the Victorian era, while the newer windows feature a simpler palette of brown and cream that reflects aesthetics of the 1980s.

All told, modern changes have been minimal, the historic front part of the building is immediately recognizable to its periods of significance.

**Conclusion**

The building retains integrity of design, workmanship, and materials, which are most notable in the prominent steeple and complex massing of the building, well-crafted masonry cornices and buttresses, and the surviving 1890s Victorian Gothic style art glass windows. The interior of the building is also intact, especially in the sanctuary space, which is the most important interior character-defining feature. The entrance into the sanctuary through the base of the steeple is in place and still in use. Location and setting are intact—the building occupies its original lot on the edge of the commercial center of Cape Girardeau, directly adjacent to the National Register-listed Cape Girardeau Commercial Historic District. The property exhibits strong integrity of feeling and association; it evokes a sense of its time and place and looks much as it did in 1896.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Summary Statement of Significance:**

The First Baptist Church at 200 Broadway in Cape Girardeau, Cape Girardeau County, Missouri, is locally significant in the area of Architecture under National Register Criterion C as a very good example of Victorian Gothic styling applied to a church building. Typical Victorian Gothic styling includes a tall steeple, pointed-arch windows, and stepped buttresses.<sup>10</sup> Several of the window openings retain original art glass windows that appear to have been installed in 1896. The church is distinguished by a tall narrow steeple that exemplifies the Victorian Gothic style for church architecture; it is the only Victorian Gothic steeple in Cape Girardeau. Steeples and spires have been prominent features of Christian churches in the United States since the Colonial period and are strongly associated with the Victorian Gothic style, which is the most common style used on historic churches in Cape Girardeau.<sup>11</sup> Although the First Baptist Church is a relatively modest building, it has a complex form and stylistic embellishments typical of professionally designed buildings. The first part of the church was built in 1893 and a major addition was completed just three years later. Newspaper accounts of the time show that both of those construction projects were guided by formal plans.<sup>12</sup> Both sections feature well-crafted red brick walls with ornamental brick cornices and frieze panels that were constructed by the same company, the local masonry firm of Daues & Schrader. The periods of significance correspond to the two construction phases of the church—1893 and 1896. A rear annex, which was added in 1957, outside the period of significance, is located at the back of the lot and has a minimal visual impact on the historic front section. The building has housed church congregations for well over a century and it appears today much as it did in the 1890s. That long tenure supports a prediction made in 1892 that it was expected to be a “public building which will be an honor to our city.”<sup>13</sup>

**Criterion Consideration A**

Under Criterion Consideration A, religious properties are generally not eligible for listing in the National Register on religious merits alone. National Register Bulletin 15 does, however, note that they can be eligible for significance related to “architectural, artistic, or historic grounds.”<sup>14</sup> The First Baptist Church building exhibits significance in the area of Architecture, as a good local example of Victorian Gothic styling that has enhanced the commercial and civic center of Cape Girardeau for twelve decades.

<sup>10</sup> Marcus Wiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969 4<sup>th</sup> Print 1996), 89.

<sup>11</sup> Churches in Cape Girardeau that appear to have been constructed prior to 1970 are described as historic in this document.

<sup>12</sup> “Notice to Contractors,” *Cape Girardeau Democrat*, March 11, 1893, 3; “Call for Bids,” *Cape Girardeau Democrat*, Sept 17, 1895, 5.

<sup>13</sup> “Elder C.T. Daniel, Pastor of Baptist Church,” *The Cape Girardeau Democrat*, 10-29-1892, 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1991), 26.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

## Elaboration

### Early Baptists in Cape Girardeau

The city of Cape Girardeau was born from a small trading post in one of the five Spanish-controlled districts of Louisiana territory over two hundred years ago. Nestled against the banks of the Mississippi River, the town benefitted from steamboat traffic in the early to mid-1800s, which supported its growth and influenced its commerce.<sup>15</sup> When the region was under Spanish control in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Catholicism ruled, and the practice of protestant religions, including Baptist, was forbidden until the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.<sup>16</sup> Baptist settlers were living in the area by the 1790s but worshipped in secrecy to avoid persecution. After the purchase, settlers were allowed the freedom to practice other religions and form new congregations.

The first Baptist congregation in the town of Cape Girardeau, named the First Baptist Church, was organized on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1834. The nine founding members of the First Baptist Church in Cape Girardeau met in a small schoolhouse during their first five years.<sup>17</sup> In May of 1838, they bought a lot on Lorimer Street between Themis and Independence and built the first protestant church building in the area. That small church, which was described as “a neat brick edifice,” was the only non-Catholic religious building in Cape Girardeau for many years.<sup>18</sup> (That building, which was just a few blocks from the nominated building, is no longer extant.)

### Construction of the First Baptist Church

By 1893, membership reached 92, and church leaders made plans to construct a new building. The congregation bought “fifty foot of ground at the corner of Spanish and Broadway” soon after. The decision to build a new church was likely influenced by Pastor C. T. Daniel, a charismatic Civil War veteran who had taken over leadership of the First Baptist Church in December of 1891.<sup>19</sup> Daniel was familiar with that process; he is credited with overseeing the construction of several new church buildings around the state before moving to Cape Girardeau.<sup>20</sup> Daniel may also have received technical assistance for the construction project from the Baptist Association. Convention minutes show the association collected and recorded

<sup>15</sup> “History of Cape Girardeau,” *City of Cape Girardeau*, accessed September 27, 2022, <https://www.cityofcapegirardeau.org/about/history>.

<sup>16</sup> Tom Neumeyer, et al. *Historic Cape Girardeau: An Illustrated History* (San Antonio: Historical Publishing Network, 2004), 18.

<sup>17</sup> “Cornerstone Laying July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1926” (newspaper clipping). Box 3015, Folder 12, Glenn House Collection, Kent Library, Cape Girardeau, MO.

<sup>18</sup> S.D. Aubuchon, *The History of the First Baptist Church: Cape Girardeau Missouri*, Cape Girardeau: First Baptist Church, (Cape Girardeau: First Baptist Church, 1965), 4, 17.

<sup>19</sup> “He Rode With Morgan,” *The Kansas City Times*, December 12, 1899, 5.

<sup>20</sup> “He Rode With Morgan,” 5.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 15

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

“plans of church edifices built.”<sup>21</sup> It is possible that they also shared existing plans or kept architectural plan books on hand to assist congregations in construction planning.

By March 1893, Daniel and other church leaders were in possession of plans and specifications and were ready to begin construction. A notice posted in the local paper on March 11, 1893 stated that “Bids for building the foundation of the First Baptist Church will be received by the committee...Plans and specifications can be seen at the Drug Store of J. Maple Wilson.”<sup>22</sup> The lack of reference to an architect in that notice and other articles about the project and the fact that the plans and specifications were with the church secretary rather than an architect, invites speculation that they were using mass produced architectural plans, which were readily available at that time.

The construction project got off the ground in earnest in the fall of 1893, when the newspaper reported that the contractors for the project “have materials on the ground and...work will be commenced in a very short time.”<sup>23</sup> Daniel continued to raise funds during the construction project. On September 30, 1893, he posted an update in the newspaper and a request for donations: “Give us five hundred dollars or more and see what an object of grace and beauty will adorn the heart of your city. C. T. Daniel.”<sup>24</sup> Daniel was able to deliver on that promise. Less than two months later, on November 25th, 1893, he led the first service in the new church building at 200 Broadway.<sup>25</sup>

Built with red brick walls, limestone-capped buttresses and Gothic arch windows, the completed church featured a vernacular form often referred to as a “Center-Steeple Church.”<sup>26</sup> It is one of eight common church forms identified in a National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) titled “Rural Church Architecture of Missouri: c. 1819 to c. 1945.” That document, which focuses on rural churches, is not strictly applicable to the First Baptist Church, but it does include a good deal of relevant information about modest church forms in the state.

The building completed for First Baptist in 1893 is typical of center-steeple churches described in the MPDF, in that it had a rectangular footprint, with a square steeple centered in the front gable end. (Figure 11. Sketches of the church in the 1890s.) The center-steeple form was also commonly seen in church pattern books that were popular in the nineteenth century. The

<sup>21</sup> *Minutes of the Missouri Baptist General Convention*, 1892, accessed November 15, 2022, <https://mobap-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/executive-office/annuals/1892.PDF>, 71.

<sup>22</sup> “Notice to Contractors,” *Cape Girardeau Democrat*, March 11, 1893, 3.

<sup>23</sup> “Materials on ground” *Cape Girardeau Democrat*, Sept 16, 1893, 3.

<sup>24</sup> “Citizen’s [sic] of Cape Girardeau,” *Cape Girardeau Democrat*, Sept 30, 1893, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Aubuchon, *History of the First Baptist Church*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Tiffany Patterson, “Rural Church Architecture of Missouri: c. 1819 to c. 1945,” Multiple Property Documentation Form, *National Register of Historic Places*, 2010, F.5.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 16

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

*Catalogue of Architectural Plans for Churches and Parsonages of 1889*, for example, includes several center-steeple church plans, most of which feature simple Victorian Gothic styling that includes pointed-arch “Gothic” windows.<sup>27</sup> “Church Plans No. 5” in that publication shows a modest center steeple church that could be built in frame or brick with a variety of minor variations. Option 5E is very much like the church building completed for First Baptist in 1893. (Figure 11. Pattern book plan for a central tower church.) That book also shows how strongly steeples were associated with church architecture of the time; of the 75 church plans depicted there, only four lacked a steeple.

*Church Expansion Project*

Only a few months after the new building was placed in service, Pastor C. F. J. Tate replaced Daniel. A new pastor and a new building helped attract new members. By August of 1895, membership had nearly doubled to 200. That success was a mixed blessing. The new church probably did not seat much more than 200 people, and church leaders were faced with another building campaign just two years after the new building was completed. The local paper reported in August 1895, that “Brother Tate is going to build an addition to the First Baptist Church in the city.”<sup>28</sup>

Tate and other church leaders appear to have followed much the same process as the 1893 project, by raising money and developing plans and specification for the expansion. The first design they come up with may have been too expensive, as a notice was posted in August 1895 that “The Committee of the First Baptist Church rejected all bids and now calls for bids on changed plans and specifications.”<sup>29</sup> The second round of bidding was successful, and work on the addition was soon underway.

Although general contractors have not been identified for either phase of construction, the local paper did post notice of the brick masons chosen to work on the addition—the Daues & Schrader masonry company.<sup>30</sup> Daues and Schrader were well-known in Cape Girardeau, where they worked on residential as well as commercial properties. Some of their larger projects included the Cape Girardeau Brewery, Perryville College, and the Sturdivant Bank building in Cape Girardeau. Anton H. Schrader was a German immigrant that came to Missouri as a child in the early 1850s. He teamed with Fritz Daues sometime before 1891 to form a partnership that lasted into the early twentieth century. The team was large enough to have some laborers, as job posts are found in local newspapers, and they manufactured enough brick to be included in

<sup>27</sup> Rev. A. J. Kynett, D.D. *Catalogue of Architectural Plans for Churches and Parsonages* (Philadelphia: Church Extension office, 1889), 28.

<sup>28</sup> “Build Addition”, *Cape Girardeau Democrat*, Sept 17, 1895, 5.

<sup>29</sup> “Call for Bids,” *Cape Girardeau Democrat*, Sept 17, 1895, 5.

<sup>30</sup> “Brick Work”, *Cape Girardeau Democrat*, Oct 19, 1895, 5.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 17

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

St. Louis business listings as “Brick and Tile Manufacturers.”<sup>31</sup> They also owned and operated a brick kiln. The *Cape Girardeau Democrat* reported in 1895 that “Daues & Schrader finished a brick drying kiln in Brownwood and will soon be running again with full force of hands.”<sup>32</sup> The city of Brownwood, thirty miles from Cape Girardeau, was connected by railroad, and it is assumed the brick used on the First Baptist Church was from that kiln. Because the bricks and the style of masonry of the 1893 and 1896 sections of the First Baptist Church are nearly identical, it is likely that Daues & Schrader worked on the 1893 project as well.

The new addition was completed in 1896, providing the growing congregation with nearly twice the capacity they started with.<sup>33</sup> That project transformed the exterior appearance of the church. The addition expanded the building to the west and added a large front cross-gable filled with a nine-foot wide Gothic window. The addition also partially covers the base of the steeple, which is now off-center on the expanded façade, and set back from the new front gable end. (Figure 11 shows sketches of the building before and after the 1896 addition.)

The steeple is far from obscured however, in part because the project included making it taller. In March 1896, the *Cape Girardeau Democrat* reported that the “First Baptist church people are extending their church steeple higher up in space.”<sup>34</sup> Because no images of the building prior to the addition have been found, it is not clear just what that extension entailed, but it is likely that the additional height was achieved via the construction of a taller new spire. The octagonal spire now on the steeple is approximately 30 feet tall, bringing the overall height of the church to approximately 65 feet.

### Architectural History of the Church Steeple

The steeple is an architectural form that at a minimum includes a tower or some sort of base and a steeply pitched roof or spire; most steeples also have a belfry.<sup>35</sup> Steeples have been one of the most distinctive character-defining features of Christian churches in the United States since the Colonial period. A statement made in a church pattern book of 1854 holds true yet today: “The spire has come to be a recognized sign of religion.”<sup>36</sup> As was the case with many architectural styles and types, designs of early churches in the United States were based upon European precedents. And those precedents invariably included prominent steeples.

<sup>31</sup> *Missouri State Gazetteer and Business Directory*, R. L. Polk & Co., 1893-1894, 1403, accessed October 10, 2022, <https://mdh.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16795coll7/id/47767/>.

<sup>32</sup> “Brick Kiln”, *Cape Girardeau Democrat*, July 20, 1895, 5.

<sup>33</sup> “General Association Notes,” *Word and Way*, Oct 29, 1895, 5.

<sup>34</sup> “Extending Steeple Higher,” *Cape Girardeau Democrat*, March 14, 1896, 5.

<sup>35</sup> John Fleming, et al. *The Penguin of Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture*, (New York: Penguin Group, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 1999), 548.

<sup>36</sup> Congregational Church, *A Book of Plans for Churches and Parsonages* (New York: Daniel Burgess & Co., 1853) Intro, Style Page.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 18

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Steeple first appeared on European churches during the Gothic period (ca. 1200-ca. 1600), and they quickly became a standard feature of Gothic cathedrals. The steeple form has links to the entry towers of ancient walled cities, which spurred Christian iconography of towered entries that served as what one author described as symbolic “gatehouse towers of the heavenly city.”<sup>37</sup> Placed atop towers, steep spires added more height and reinforced the vertical composition of the church, which was meant to lead observer’s eyes to heaven.<sup>38</sup> Early Gothic steeples were built from stone and topped with wooden belfries and four-sided timber pyramidal roofs. Later in the Gothic period, belfries began to be constructed of stone and incorporated into the body of the tower, and roofs were modified to create taller and more narrow spires.

Those taller silhouettes were frequently achieved by using octagonal roofs comparable to the one found on the First Baptist Church. The octagonal roof form was more structurally secure than a pyramidal roof and lent itself to timber construction. The 160-foot spire of Saint-Germain in Auxerre, France (ca. 1140) provides one of the earliest surviving examples of an architectural feature that would be a part of European skylines in the coming centuries. (Figure 12. Saint-Germain.)<sup>39</sup> That twelfth century design served as the basis for great spires over the next four hundred years and made its appearance again in the Gothic Revival of the late 1800s and early 1900s.<sup>40</sup>

Early church builders used a variety of techniques to bridge the transition from a square tower to an octagonal spire. Often, the octagonal tower base sat behind a short parapet that featured small corner pinnacles topped with steep pyramidal or octagonal spires. In some cases, the pinnacles were taller and linked to an intermediate octagonal section of the tower with flying buttresses. One of the simpler compositions featured a tall narrow spire (a needle spire) that was set behind simple flat or battlemented parapets. (See Figure 8, Spire Forms.)

The First Baptist Church in Cape Girardeau’s steeple features a splayed-foot spire, which is a variation on another spire form known as a broach spire. (See Photo 1, and Figure 8.) The *Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture* describes the broach spire as “usually octagonal in plan, placed on a square tower and rising without an intermediate parapet.”<sup>41</sup> The absence of a parapet creates a smoother line between the tower and spire, which reinforces the type of vertical composition common to Gothic churches. The transition points between the

<sup>37</sup> Robert Bork, *Great Spires: Skyscrapers of the New Jerusalem* (Cologne Germany: University of Cologne, 2003), 35.

<sup>38</sup> David England, “The History of the Church Steeple,” *Religious Product News*, March 25, 2019, accessed November 8, 2022, <https://www.religiousproductnews.com/the-history-of-church-steeple/>

<sup>39</sup> Bork, *Great Spires*, 49.

<sup>40</sup> Bork, *Great Spires*, 49.

<sup>41</sup> Fleming, et al. Penguin of Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, 543.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 19

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

square tower and the octagonal roof at the corners of the tower were often bridged by triangular panels—or broaches—at the corners of the tower.<sup>42</sup>

In a splayed-foot spire, the sides that align with the tower walls are splayed out near the base to cover the corners. Most of the splayed sections of the spire on the First Baptist Church are covered by steep cross gables that rise above the top edges of the tower walls. Small triangular sections of the secondary faces of the spire are just visible between the gables. (See Figure 8. Spire Types and Steeple Parts.)

### Neoclassical Steeples

With the beginning of the Renaissance in the 1500s, Gothic verticality, including the use of steeples and spires, was replaced by the use of more horizontal compositions and Classically inspired designs. In the 1600s noted British architect Christopher Wren reintroduced the use of steeples in a series of churches that he designed after the great fire of London.<sup>43</sup> Those new steeples frequently featured a mix of classically derived elements that were stacked together to form a tower. Sir Banister Fletcher described one of Wren's steeples as a "square tower that supports a pyramidal spire in receding stages clothed in classical details."<sup>44</sup> The receding stages and clear division between each portion gave a horizontal element to the steeples that contrasted with the vertical compositions of Gothic steeples.

Neoclassical design also became popular in the American Colonies, aided in part by the rise of books on architecture. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, European architects kept folios of their designs and those of other classical structures to show carpenters, masons, and builders what the final product should resemble. Those books, along with reverence for classically derived architectural style, traveled to the American Colonies, where colonists and their builders adapted the style to fit their needs.<sup>45</sup> That held true for Colonial churches, which frequently featured classical detailing and segmented steeples composed of decreasing blocks topped by spires. (Figure 13. Colonial Steeples.) That basic steeple form has continued to be used for Classically-influenced designs to the present.

### Gothic Revival Steeples

<sup>42</sup> Fleming, et al. Penguin of Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, 155, 545.

<sup>43</sup> Fleming, et al. Penguin of Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, 627.

<sup>44</sup> Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* (London: Bradbury, Agnew, and Co, 1905), 581.

<sup>45</sup> Janet W. Foster, "Pattern Books Create an American Architecture," *Garden State Legacy*, Issue 9 September 2010, [https://gardenstatelegacy.com/files/Pattern\\_Books\\_Create\\_an\\_American\\_Architecture\\_Foster\\_GSL9.pdf](https://gardenstatelegacy.com/files/Pattern_Books_Create_an_American_Architecture_Foster_GSL9.pdf), 2-3.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 20

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Steeple have continued to be an intrinsic feature for American churches of all styles. From the authors of *Chapel and Church Architecture*, published in 1856: "As a general thing, we urge the erection of spires as fitting Christian symbols of the Christian temple."<sup>46</sup> Steeples were particularly common to Gothic Revival churches, which started appearing in the United States in the mid-1800s. As noted in *A Field Guide to American Architecture*, "The Gothic Revival church, echoing its medieval inspiration, creates a picturesque effect by variety, irregularity, and contrasts...The tower with belfry is important as a symbol and as a design element."<sup>47</sup>

The First Baptist Church features a very good example of a Victorian Gothic steeple. Victorian Gothic steeples are characterized by strong vertical massing, as opposed to the stacked block composition typical of Classically steeples. That characteristic Gothic verticality is generally accomplished via more vertically composed towers, as well as the use of steep spires. Victorian Gothic steeples also tend to have a more distinct tower, while Neoclassical steeples are more often integrated into the main roof of the building. And, as is the case for all Gothic Revival churches, pointed-arch fenestration is almost always present.

### Gothic Revival Style

The Gothic Revival style has been used for Cape Girardeau churches since 1853, when St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, (now Old St. Vincent's) was constructed close to the Mississippi River just south of the commercial district. That brick church, which was listed in the National Register in 1984, is one of the largest and most highly styled churches in Cape Girardeau. It was designed by Irish-born architect Thomas Waryng Walsh, a successful architect from St. Louis.<sup>48</sup> The presence of that prominent, well-crafted example of Gothic Revival styling no doubt influenced local opinions about the associations of Gothic Revival styling and religious buildings.

Gothic Revival architecture is closely tied to religious subjects and draws upon forms found in medieval architecture, especially in medieval cathedrals. The single most recognizable element of Gothic Revival is the use of pointed arches for windows and doorways. Pointed arches came in to use in cathedrals of the later medieval period (1190-1400) because the pointed arch is stronger and allowed builders to use taller openings to bring more light into the interior of the building.<sup>49</sup> Buttresses and ribbed vaults, also common to Gothic and Gothic Revival architecture are also tied to structural issues. Those features allowed early builders to use thinner walls which in turn allowed for larger window openings. As one author put it, "light was an important

<sup>46</sup> Boyer, Chapel & Church Architecture: With Designs for Parsonages, 8.

<sup>47</sup> Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to America Architecture* (New York: The New American Library, 1980), 138.

<sup>48</sup> Noelle Soren, "St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church" *National Register of Historic Places Nomination*, 1980, 8.1.

<sup>49</sup> Jeffery Howe, *Houses of Worship: An Identification Guide to History and Styles of American Religious Architecture*, (San Diego: Thunder Bay Press, 2003), 156.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 21

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

symbol for the immaterial but pervasive presence of God.”<sup>50</sup> Gothic churches also featured steeples, which bolstered an overall verticality of form that was an essential element in medieval church architecture. Most include belfries, and later examples frequently include clocks and lanterns.

The Gothic Revival style found its way to the United States through England in the early to mid-nineteenth century and remained in favor, particularly for churches, into the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>51</sup> The Gothic Revival was a lasting style that evolved throughout its popularity and encompassed three different periods in American architecture. Each period used elements of the Gothic style but with different rules and motivations driving their designs.

As the mid-1800s approached, a renewed admiration of medieval architecture spurred the Gothic Revival in England and the United States. The Gothic Revival came about through a combination of events. Literary works like Victor Hugo’s *Hunchback of Notre Dame* brought attention to the beauty of forgotten Gothic structures.<sup>52</sup> Landscape paintings of Gothic cathedrals with their spires rising into the sky, as depicted in Karl Friedrich Schinkel’s 1813 painting *Gothic Cathedral by a River*, transported images from a lost time to Europeans and Americans.<sup>53</sup> As the Romantic influence increased in America, architects like Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing incorporated picturesque Gothic Revival detailing into house plans. Those designs were published in books that include drawings of houses in rural settings to promote an ideal image of a country home.<sup>54</sup> Residential buildings, however, would not achieve the archaeological perfection demanded of mid-nineteenth century churches.<sup>55</sup>

Early Gothic Revival in the United States: ca. 1840-1870

The Gothic Revival’s links to Medieval Christianity made it exceedingly popular for Christian church buildings. That was due in part to its association with medieval cathedrals rather than pagan temples of the classical era.<sup>56</sup> The Ecclesiological Society in England (formerly known as the Cambridge Society) sought to reform Anglican Church (Church of England) architecture by returning to pre-reformation styles of medieval churches and decorations.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Howe, *Houses of Worship*, 156.

<sup>51</sup> John C. Poppeliers, et al., *What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture*, (Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1983), 40, 41.

<sup>52</sup> Walter Donway, “Victor Hugo’s Spirit of Romanticism Once Heartened Frenchmen to Save Notre Dame Cathedral,” *The Atlas Society*, accessed November 1, 2022, <https://www.atlassociety.org/post/victor-hugos-spirit-of-romanticism-once-heartened-frenchmen-to-save-notre-dame-cathedral>.

<sup>53</sup> Bork, *Great Spires*, 418.

<sup>54</sup> David P. Handlin, *American Architecture* (London: Thames and Handlin, 1985), 94-95.

<sup>55</sup> Poppeliers, et al., *What Style Is It?* 40.

<sup>56</sup> Howe, *Houses of Worship*, 32.

<sup>57</sup> Marian Moffett, et al. *A World History of Architecture*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2008), 58.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 22

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

The Ecclesiological Movement that followed created an examination of Gothic buildings by architects and clerics determined to identify features to develop “liturgical and symbolic functions of the worship service,” as well as a set of rules for “governing church design.”<sup>58</sup> The Ecclesiological Society fought for influence and control over church architectural design inside and outside Britain.<sup>59</sup> The Society’s first example in the United States was the Anglican Church, St. James the Less, in Philadelphia. That church is a near replica of the thirteenth-century parish church, St. Michael Longstanton in Cambridgeshire, England.<sup>60</sup>

English architect A. W. N. Pugin, another Gothic Revival pioneer, strongly influenced American architects.<sup>61</sup> He published several books on the style, including *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* in 1841. Pugin believed, like the Ecclesiological Society, that the traditional Gothic parish church was “one of the most beautiful and appropriate buildings that the mind of man could conceive.”<sup>62</sup>

Pugin also expressed a strong preference for Gothic steeples, particularly when they were compared to Neoclassical steeples. He wrote: “There stood the [Gothic] tower, not formed of detached and misapplied portions of architectural detail stuck over one another to make up a height, but solid buttresses and walls rising from a massive base, and gradually diminishing and enriching as they rise, till they were terminated in a heaven pointing spire.”<sup>63</sup> One author noted that Pugin “believed that spires had been planned for all English Gothic church towers prior to 1400 or so. He therefore used spires as architectural symbols of Christian virtue in his famous publications.”<sup>64</sup> Pugin’s *True Principles* included a drawing of what he considered an ideal cathedral, complete with a steeple three times the height of the cathedral. (Figure 14. Pugin Church.)

Two architects familiar with the works of Pugin and the principles of the Ecclesiological Society helped to define the American Gothic Revival.<sup>65</sup> One of the first great Gothic Revival cathedrals built in the United States, Trinity Church in New York, was designed by American architect Richard Upjohn. That massive church still stands on Wall Street, complete with an original spire that rises 281 feet above the street. It was the tallest structure in Manhattan until 1890.<sup>66</sup> Completed in 1846, just a few years after *True Principles* was published, Trinity Church bears a striking resemblance to Pugin’s ideal church. (Figure 14. Trinity Church.)

<sup>58</sup> Moffett, *A World History of Architecture*, 58.

<sup>59</sup> Stanton, *The Gothic Revival and American Gothic Architecture*, xxii.

<sup>60</sup> Moffett, *A World History of Architecture*, 58.

<sup>61</sup> Poppeliers, et al., *What Style Is It?* 40.

<sup>62</sup> A. W. Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, (London: John Weale, 1841), 42.

<sup>63</sup> Pugin, *True Principles*, 42.

<sup>64</sup> Bork, *Great Spires*, 424.

<sup>65</sup> Stanton, *The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture*, 60.

<sup>66</sup> Howe, *Houses of Worship*, 165.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 23

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

A second major church, also located in New York, was designed around that same time by another American architect, James Renwick. Renwick's Grace Church, which was begun in 1843, also has the same general form as Pugin's ideal church design, including a comparable Gothic style tower accented with pinnacles and topped with a soaring octagonal spire. (Figure 14. Grace Church.) The two church spires towering over New York's buildings gave America a taste of what had filled Europe's skylines in Medieval times and helped establish the Gothic Revival style as a preferred form of American churches.

The growing popularity led to pattern books and professional publications on the intricacies of the style, which in turn put Gothic Revival styling within reach of even modest congregations. One of the most influential early pattern books to feature Gothic Revival details was published in 1852 by Richard Upjohn, the designer of Trinity Church. Upjohn's goal for the book was to provide "designs for cheap but substantial buildings for the use of parishes, schools, etc."<sup>67</sup> That book, titled *Upjohn's Rural Architecture*, included detailed architectural drawings and specifications for a modest frame Gothic Revival style church building that has a single off-center steeple topped by a steep spire. (Figure 15. Upjohn Church) That book and numerous others reinforced the concept that the Gothic Revival style was distinctly suited to religious architecture. For example, the 1856 pattern book *Chapel and Church Architecture* praised the Gothic style for being "perfectly adapted to the purposes of a church building...Gothic is no more costly than others, while it presents advantages which no other style gives for chaste ornament and beautiful effect."<sup>68</sup>

Victorian Gothic in the United States: 1870-1900

Like the Early Gothic Revival, Victorian Gothic in the United States was influenced by trends in England. English architectural theorist John Ruskin had such a strong influence on late Victorian Gothic architecture that the style is sometimes referred to as the Ruskinian Style.<sup>69</sup> Like Pugin during the Early Gothic Revival period, Ruskin published a book, *Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *Stones of Venice*, to outline standards. Howe described Victorian Gothic as, "freedom in applying the Gothic style...after the strict discipline of the ecclesiological Gothic Revival, this modern Gothic was liberating."<sup>70</sup> Ruskin also favored polychromatic wall treatments that were achieved with the use of red and brown brick and light-colored stone. While Early Gothic Revival designs were generally based upon English Gothic models, the Victorian Gothic era saw more borrowing from continental Europe.

The Gothic Revival fell from favor for houses after the Civil War but continued to be used for public buildings, and especially for churches.<sup>71</sup> Victorian Gothic designs featured the same

<sup>67</sup> Richard Upjohn, *Upjohn's Rural Architecture* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1975), Introduction.

<sup>68</sup> George Boyer, *Chapel & Church Architecture: With Designs for Parsonages*, (New York: Sheldon Blakeman & Co., 1856), 11.

<sup>69</sup> Poppeliers, et al., *What Style Is It?* 40.

<sup>70</sup> Wiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 204.

<sup>71</sup> Poppeliers, et al., *What Style Is It?* 40.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 24

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

vocabulary of pointed arches, tall spires, and steep gables of the Early Gothic Revival but those elements were often applied to more original forms. As one historian put it, “less bound to archeological accuracy; the (Victorian) Gothic forms were adapted to new uses and new compositions.”<sup>72</sup> As with Victorian era design in general, those new forms often included irregular massing and asymmetrical compositions. In churches, steeples continued to be prominent features but were often set to one side of the façade, often next to larger gables filled with Gothic arched windows. Historian Carole Rifkind noted that Victorian Gothic church designs were more “imposing, daring, and complicated,” with “exceptionally tall spires, steep roofs, and broad gables.”<sup>73</sup>

Both Rifkind and Poppeliers provide examples of Late Victorian churches. Rifkin’s example is the Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park, CA (NR 10-31-1980). (See Figure 16.) The irregular footprint of the 1877 building, combined with a very tall spire, pointed arch windows, and tracery, makes it an excellent example of a Victorian Gothic church of frame construction. The First Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia (NR 09/11982), shows the ornamentation and irregularity of the Victorian Gothic era design in a high-style church. (See Figure 17.) That church features multiple cross gables, contrasting colors of masonry, projecting surfaces, and various Gothic elements that illustrate the visual exuberance of the Victorian Gothic era.

Victorian Gothic principles made their way to modest churches of the time as well, as seen in several vernacular Missouri church forms identified in the MPDF “Rural Church Architecture of Missouri: c. 1819 to c. 1945.” That document used building shape and steeple/tower placement to categorize several common church forms. Two of those, the Side Steeple and Steepled Ell, feature asymmetrical plans and single steeples or towers.<sup>74</sup> The MPDF, which is based upon evaluation of hundreds of rural Missouri churches, noted that both of those forms came into common use in Missouri in the 1880s and 1890s, which is part of the Victorian Gothic period.<sup>75</sup> The irregular massing and asymmetrical design of those building forms aligned with Late Victorian and Victorian Gothic styles that were popular at the time.

The First Baptist Church in Cape Girardeau is a very good local example of the Victorian Gothic style. It features many original Gothic Revival design elements that were carried into the Victorian Gothic period, as well as principles that came into favor in the last half of the nineteenth century. The use of buttresses and the pointed arches on the church’s windows and doors are strongly associated with all phases of the Gothic Revival in the United States, including Victorian Gothic. The pointed-arch forms, along with steep gable roofs and the

<sup>72</sup> Jeffery Howe, *Houses of Worship*, 204.

<sup>73</sup> Rifkind, *Field Guide to American Architecture*, 147.

<sup>74</sup> Patterson, “Rural Church Architecture of Missouri: c. 1819 to c. 1945,” F.11 and F.22.

<sup>75</sup> Patterson, “Rural Church Architecture of Missouri: c. 1819 to c. 1945,” F.22.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 25

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

dramatic steeple, reflect what Carol Rifkind described as “an insistent verticality” common to Victorian Gothic church design.<sup>76</sup>

The building’s irregular massing, complex rooflines, and systems of ornamentation are also typical of Victorian Gothic churches. Rifkind observed that “ornament is increased in quantity and originality, and materials are varied in quality and texture.”<sup>77</sup> Ornamental systems of the Frist Baptist Church offer varied textures and colors. Decorative brickwork at the eaves and the roofline of the entry vestibule adds textural interest to the red brick walls, and the pale stone windowsills and buttress caps give the exterior masonry a subtle variation in color. The surviving 1890s art glass window sashes have even stronger colors, as well as complex sashes and muntin configurations.

First Baptist is the only church in Cape Girardeau that has a Victorian Gothic steeple. That steeple, constructed in 1893 and brought to its current form in 1896, is an excellent reflection of Victorian Gothic design principles. The square brick tower is ornamented with typically Gothic pointed arched fenestration and topped with a prototypical Victorian Gothic spire. The steep intersecting gable roofs at the base of the spire enhance the overall verticality of that composition.

Late Gothic Revival in the United States: 1900-1940

As the nineteenth century ended, the popularity of the Victorian Gothic’s elaborate decorations faded. This change brought more restrained compositions and a renewed preference for buildings that more closely copied medieval models. Gothic influences were used in commercial design including for some new skyscrapers, as well as educational buildings. Popularity in educational settings led to the term Collegiate Gothic, which was popular from the 1890s into the 1930s.<sup>78</sup> And, as was the case in earlier decades, Gothic styling continued to be used most often for churches. As one history of the movement noted, the Gothic style “remained the most influential style for churches well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>79</sup> That was true of Cape Girardeau as well. Nearly half of all historic churches in the community today feature Gothic Revival styling, and the majority of those were constructed after 1900.

**Other Churches in Cape Girardeau**

A review of religious architecture in the historic core of Cape Girardeau identified 54 church buildings, 13 of which appear to have been constructed before 1970.<sup>80</sup> Those pre-1970

<sup>76</sup> Rifkind, *Field Guide to American Architecture*, 147.

<sup>77</sup> Rifkind, *Field Guide to American Architecture*, 147-148.

<sup>78</sup> Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 173-175.

<sup>79</sup> Poppeliers, et al., *What Style Is It?* 41.

<sup>80</sup> Existing area churches were identified by Cara Luttrell and Deb Sheals in the fall of 2022, using online and archival sources. Construction dates are based on a review of Sanborn Maps and written sources.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 26

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

churches are referred to as “historic” in the following discussion. See Figures 18 and 19 for locations and photos of the churches described below.

**Gothic Revival Style Church Buildings in Cape Girardeau, by date of construction.**

Early Gothic Revival: c. 1840-1870

1. St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, (Old St. Vincent's) 131 S. Main, built in 1853, with numerous alterations to the facade through early the 1900s. It is a large two-story central tower high style Gothic Revival style church. The brick church has an original front tower that received a new belfry and what the National Register nomination for the church described as an “ogival domed roof” in 1912. That modest dome is topped by a small lantern, spire, and cross. The front tower is flush with the front wall and flanked by large window bays topped with ornamental pinnacles. Professionally designed, NR Listed 1984.

Victorian Gothic: c. 1870-1900

2. Christ Episcopal Church, 101 N. Fountain, 1877. Modest one-story Victorian Gothic style side gabled church with a newer large rear addition. It has a rectangular plan with red brick walls, a side-facing gable roof and stepped brick buttresses that are capped with pale stone accents. The gable end walls have corbeled brick cornices. It does not have a steeple or tower.  
A historic image of the church shows that the south the gable end wall was originally filled with three large pointed-arch windows. At some point, those window openings were replaced with a projecting three-sided bay that has stuccoed walls and a polygonal roof.
3. **First Baptist Church, 200 Broadway. 1893 and 1896.** One and one half-story red brick church building with an asymmetrical tower form. Victorian Gothic detailing includes a nine-foot wide art glass window installed ca. 1896 and an original steeple topped with a 30-foot spire. It is the only Victorian Gothic steeple in Cape Girardeau.

Late Gothic Revival: 1900-1940

4. First Presbyterian, 235 Broadway, ca. 1905. Large asymmetrical tower brick church, built between 1900-1908, per Sanborn maps. Covered entrance structures on the street elevations of the church appear to have been added in recent decades. The church has Gothic Revival styling, with dark brick walls and pale stone accents. It has a large rose window in the upper front gable end, and a side tower that has a battlemented parapet, and no spire.
5. Centenary United Methodist, 300 N. Ellis. 1915. A large asymmetrical tower church with a mix of Richardsonian Romanesque and Gothic Revival styling. It has a mix of round-arched and shallow pointed-arch door and window openings. The rough stone walls and round arched openings are typical of Richardsonian Romanesque, while the pointed-arch windows and stone buttresses are characteristic of Gothic Revival. It has a large square entrance tower that has a belfry, but no visible roof.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 27

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

6. Evangelical United, 33 S. Ellis St., ca. 1920s. Large asymmetrical tower church with yellow brick walls and a three-story square tower. Minimal architectural detailing includes some slightly pointed arches and a general vertical composition. The large tower has a flat roof behind a battlemented parapet.

Other Local Historic Church Buildings

7. St. Mary's Cathedral 201 S. Sprig Street, ca. 1868. Large central tower red brick church with simple Romanesque styling. Center steeple is topped with a small pyramidal spire that appears to be a later addition or replacement.
8. St. James AME Church, 516 North Street, 1875, tower added ca. 1892, basement raised ca. 1926. Modest stuccoed central tower vernacular church. It has a tower but no spire. The tower has a flat roof. NR Listed 2014.
9. Emerald Street Church of God, 500 Emerald Street, ca. 1920s. A small central tower church that has round arched windows and vernacular Ozark Rock walls. The central front tower has a round arched entrance and belfry, with a flat roof. Small round finals mark the corners of the tower.
10. Christ Scientist Church, 215 North West End Blvd., ca. 1920s. A modest one-story brick building that may have originally been a residence. It has a cross-gabled roof, brown brick walls, and simple Colonial Revival styling. It does not have a steeple or tower.
11. First Baptist Church Building, 926 Broadway, 1927. Very large temple-front church with Classical Revival Styling. Now the Wehking Alumni Center and Sculpture Gallery, not listed. This building was built to succeed the First Baptist Church building at 200 Broadway. It does not have a tower or a steeple.
12. Cape Community Church, ca. 1940s. Modest buff brick gable-front building. The front wall has a heavy coat of stucco with embossed crosses that appears to have been installed within the last decade. A small, prefabricated spire on the front edge of the roof is about the same age as the stucco. There is no steeple or tower.
13. Trinity Lutheran, 100 N. Frederick St. ca. 1963. Two-story red brick asymmetrical tower church with simple Romanesque Revival styling. It has a tall square brick side steeple that is topped by a needle spire.

How First Baptist Church Compares to Other Historic Churches in Cape Girardeau

First Baptist Church is one of just two Victorian Gothic churches in Cape Girardeau. All told, six historic churches in Cape Girardeau, including the First Baptist Church, utilize Gothic Revival styling in varying degrees. Typical Gothic Revival style elements present in that group include pointed-arch windows and doorways, steep gabled roofs, buttressed walls, and towers or steeples. Construction dates for those six churches range from 1853 to ca. 1963; just two were built during the Victorian Gothic period.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 28

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

It is also one of only four local historic churches with a historic steeple; one other has a rooftop spire that appears to have been added in recent decades. As noted, steeples by definition are church towers that include a spire; some definitions also note the presence of a belfry.<sup>81</sup> Only two other churches built prior to ca. 1970 include spires; both of those have Romanesque Revival styling. (See Figure 19 for photos.) St. Mary's Cathedral, a brick center-steeple church built ca. 1868, has a tall steeple with a belfry that is topped by a small narrow pyramidal spire. That spire appears to be newer than the rest of the church. Trinity Lutheran Church, built ca. 1963, is a side-steepled brick church that includes a small needle spire that is set behind a flat parapet. The fourth is St. Vincent de Paul's steeple added ca. 1912.

The tall spire of the First Baptist Church is unlike any other in Cape Girardeau. It is the oldest and by far the tallest historic church spire in Cape Girardeau, and it tops the only Victorian Gothic steeple in the city.

### Later Owners

The red brick church building at Broadway and Spanish Streets served the needs of the First Baptist congregation for the better part of three decades. By the 1920s, space was again at a premium and the congregation began making plans for yet another building. They bought a lot west of the downtown area at the junction of Broadway and Harmony Street in February 1922 and began construction of a much larger new church building in July 1925.<sup>82</sup> First Baptist's last service at 200 Broadway was on March 23, 1927.<sup>83</sup> The 1927 building is still extant but does not function as a church. It is now the Wehking Alumni Center and Sculpture Gallery on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University.<sup>84</sup>

The newly organized First General Baptist Church purchased the building at 200 Broadway for \$7000 on February 14th, 1927, and probably took possession shortly after First Baptist Church's last service.<sup>85</sup> The building at Broadway and Spanish housed that congregation for the next half-century. The congregation built a new parsonage on Spring Street in 1947, and by the early to mid-1950s they had close to 200 members.<sup>86</sup> A history of the church that was written ca. 1956 noted that church leaders were considering moving to "a more suitable location," which presumably would have included more space. Not long after that was written, church leaders apparently decided to enlarge the building they owned instead of moving.

<sup>81</sup> Fleming, et al. Penguin Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, 548.

<sup>82</sup> Aubuchon, History of the First Baptist Church, 28.

<sup>83</sup> Aubuchon, History of the First Baptist Church, 32.

<sup>84</sup> The First Baptist congregation is still active in Cape Girardeau, they now meet in a late twentieth century building on Lexington Avenue.

<sup>85</sup> "History of the First General Baptist Church of Cape Girardeau," (typescript) 1, ca. 1956. (Kent Collection, Box 3007, Folder 15, Southeast Missouri University Archives, Cape Girardeau, MO.)

<sup>86</sup> "History of the First General Baptist Church," 1.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 29

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Rear Addition

In February 1957, First General Baptist members voted and approved approximately \$50,000 for a major renovation and expansion of the 1890s church building. A two-story brick annex with a full basement was added to the back wall of the church. The new annex, which was designed to be used as an education center, included a kitchen and recreation room in the basement.<sup>87</sup> A newspaper article written at the time noted that the new education center spurred an average increase in Sunday School attendance from 187 to 253.

The 1890s portion of the building also saw extensive work at the time. The exterior walls, which had been painted white at some point, were sandblasted to bring them back to their original appearance, and the exterior masonry was all repointed. Aerial photos taken before the annex was built show the church with white walls. Workers also infilled a door in the lower front wall and built new concrete stairs and a concrete patio to serve as an entrance courtyard.<sup>88</sup> (See Figure 5. Photo of 1957 Renovation.) Exterior work included replacing the existing datestone on the south wall with a new one that reads "FIRST GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCH BUILT 1893, REBUILT 1957." First General Baptist Church occupied the remodeled building until May 1973, when the congregation sold it to the Free Will Baptist Home Mission Board.<sup>89</sup> The First General Baptist Church of Cape Girardeau is still active; the congregation is now based in a 1970s church on St. Croix Road.

The Broadway property has seen several new owners and a few physical alterations since First General Baptist Church left. In 1984, the front part of the building was damaged by fire, which likely spurred changes that took place in the 1980s and 1990.<sup>90</sup> Those changes included an annex renovation, with a small rooftop addition and a modest new entry tower on the east annex wall. In the 1890s part of the building, finishes were updated in the sanctuary and most of the window sashes in the sanctuary were replaced.

The installation of new window sashes in the sanctuary is a notable modern alteration, but all of the historic character-defining pointed-arched masonry openings are intact, and the configuration of the new sashes is comparable to the originals. Additionally, the original 1890s sashes that do survive, including the large triple window in the south gable end, are in highly visible locations at the front of the building.

<sup>87</sup> Fred Lynch, "Restored General Baptist Church," *Southeast Missourian*, accessed September 11, 2022, <http://www.semmissourian.com/blogs/flynech/entry/58415>.

<sup>88</sup> Lynch, "Restored General Baptist Church," *Southeast Missourian*, 2022.

<sup>89</sup> "Old Church Bell Moves Again" news clipping, July 12, 1974, Box 3015, Folder 15, Glenn House Collection, Kent Library, Cape Girardeau, MO.

<sup>90</sup> Sanders, "Centenary UMC Burned a century ago."

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 30

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church currently uses the 1890s church, and the annex contains a vacant apartment and meeting space for the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

**Conclusion**

The First Baptist Church is a very good local example of the Victorian Gothic style in Cape Girardeau. Built from locally manufactured bricks with traditional building methods, it features elements of high style Victorian Gothic architecture found in other churches of the community and in numerous pattern and plan books that were available at the time of its construction. The building retains historic character-defining features that make it a very good example of Victorian Gothic in Cape Girardeau, including pointed-arch doors and windows, steep gable roofs, and a tall steeple. The highly intact steeple is the only Victorian Gothic style steeple in Cape Girardeau. The building has seen only minimal changes to its character-defining features, and it is immediately recognizable to its time and place.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 9 Page 31

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 9 Page 32

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 9 Page 33

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**Section Number 10 Page 34**

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The lot at the northwest corner of Broadway and Spanish Street is 75 feet wide along Broadway, and 115 feet deep along Spanish Street. It is Cape Girardeau Tax Parcel Number 21-107-00-10-005.00-0000.

The boundary is shown as a heavy dashed line in Figure 3.

**Boundary Justification**

The current boundaries encompass all of the land currently associated with the building. It best reflects integrity as associated with Criterion C: Architecture and the period of significance. The nominated parcel includes three known original property borders, the two formed by the public streets on the south and east, and the west boundary, which adjoins property that was not associated with the church in the 1890s. Although later congregations are known to have owned land to the north of the nominated parcel, it is not clear when that land was purchased.

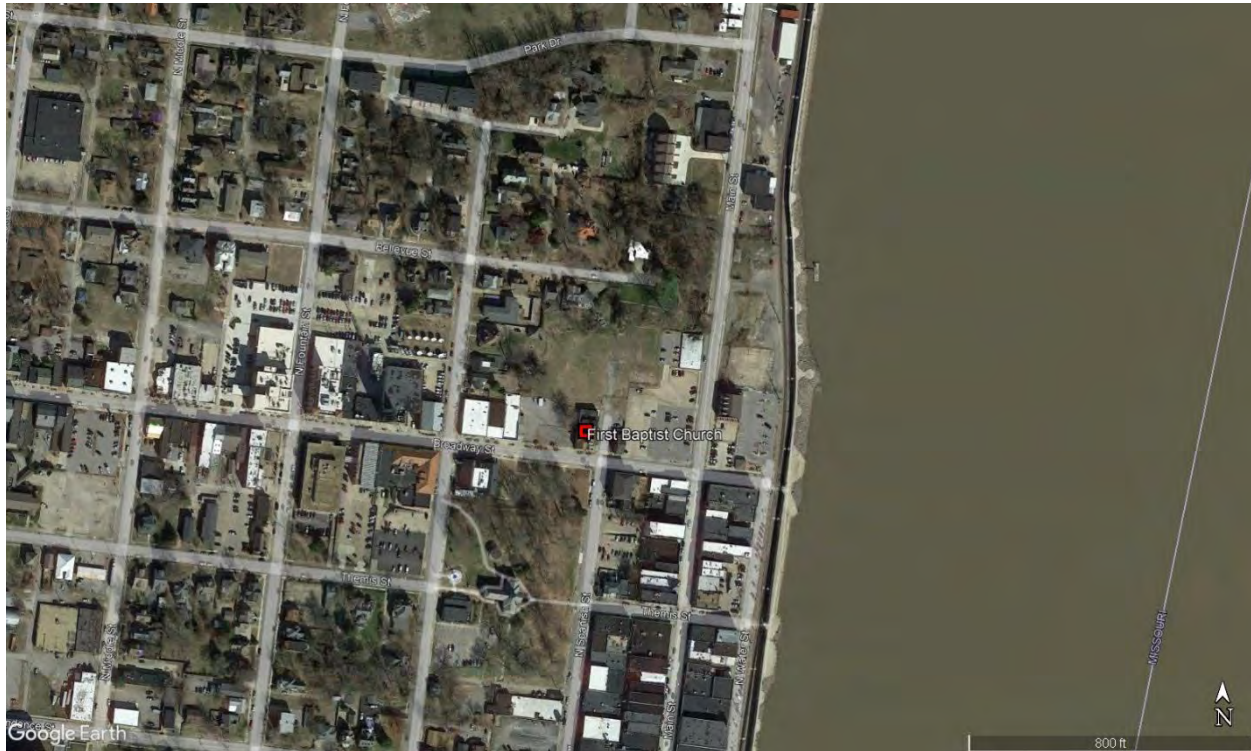


National Register of Historic Places  
*Continuation Sheet*

Section number Figures Page 35

First Baptist Church
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Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 1. Aerial photo map from Google Earth, with a scale bar. Accessed October 2022.



National Register of Historic Places  
*Continuation Sheet*

Section number Figures Page 36

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 2.** Aerial photo map of the area, from Google Earth. Accessed October 2022.  
Coordinates: 37.306248 Latitude/ -89.519340 Longitude.

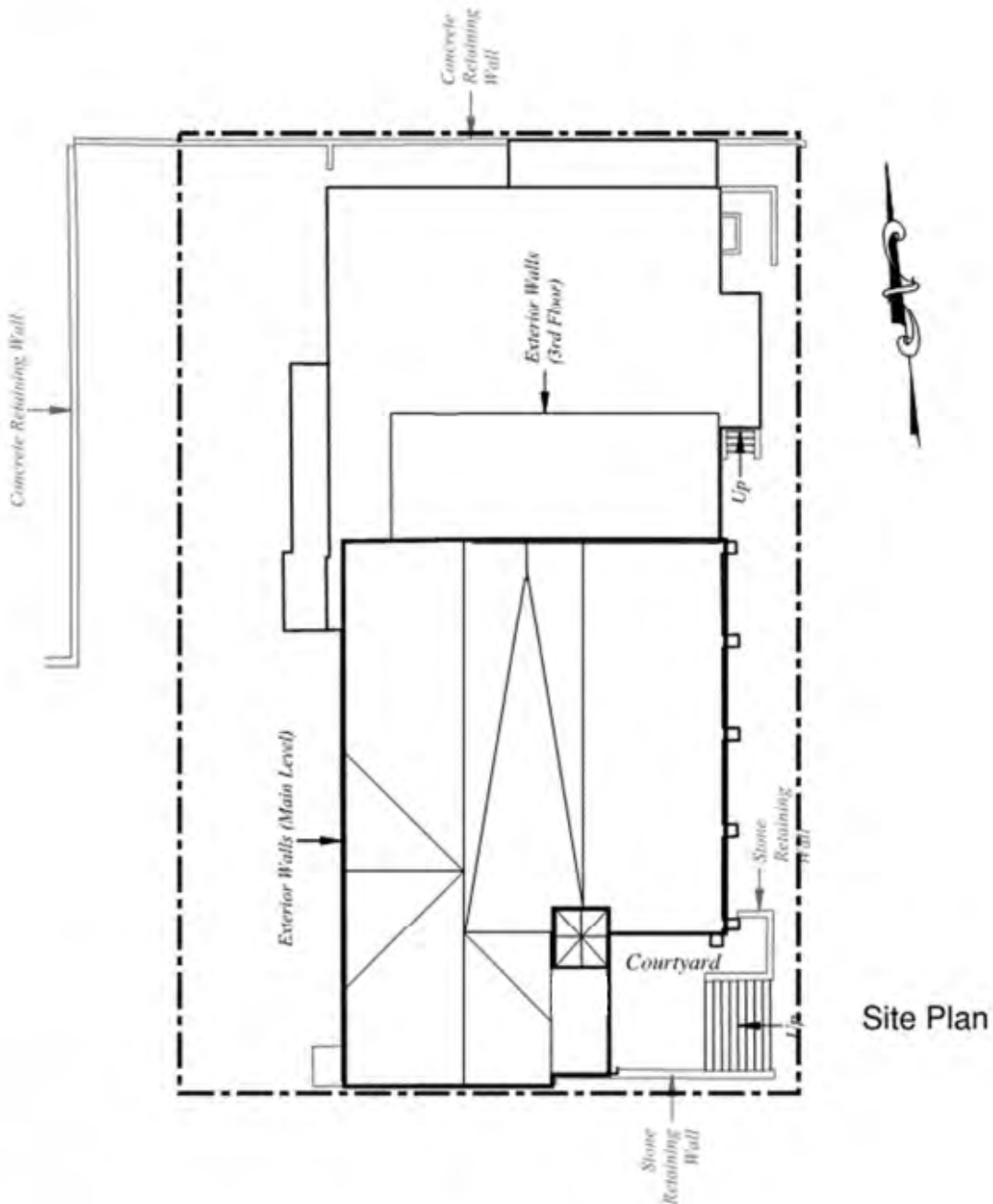


National Register of Historic Places  
*Continuation Sheet*

Section number Figures Page 37

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 3.** Site Plan, with a roof plan of the front section. The heavy dashed line depicts the current property boundaries, which are also the boundaries of the nominated parcel. (Base drawing by Zahner & Associates, courtesy of Boulder Construction, Cape Girardeau. Roof plan by Deb Sheals, 2022.)

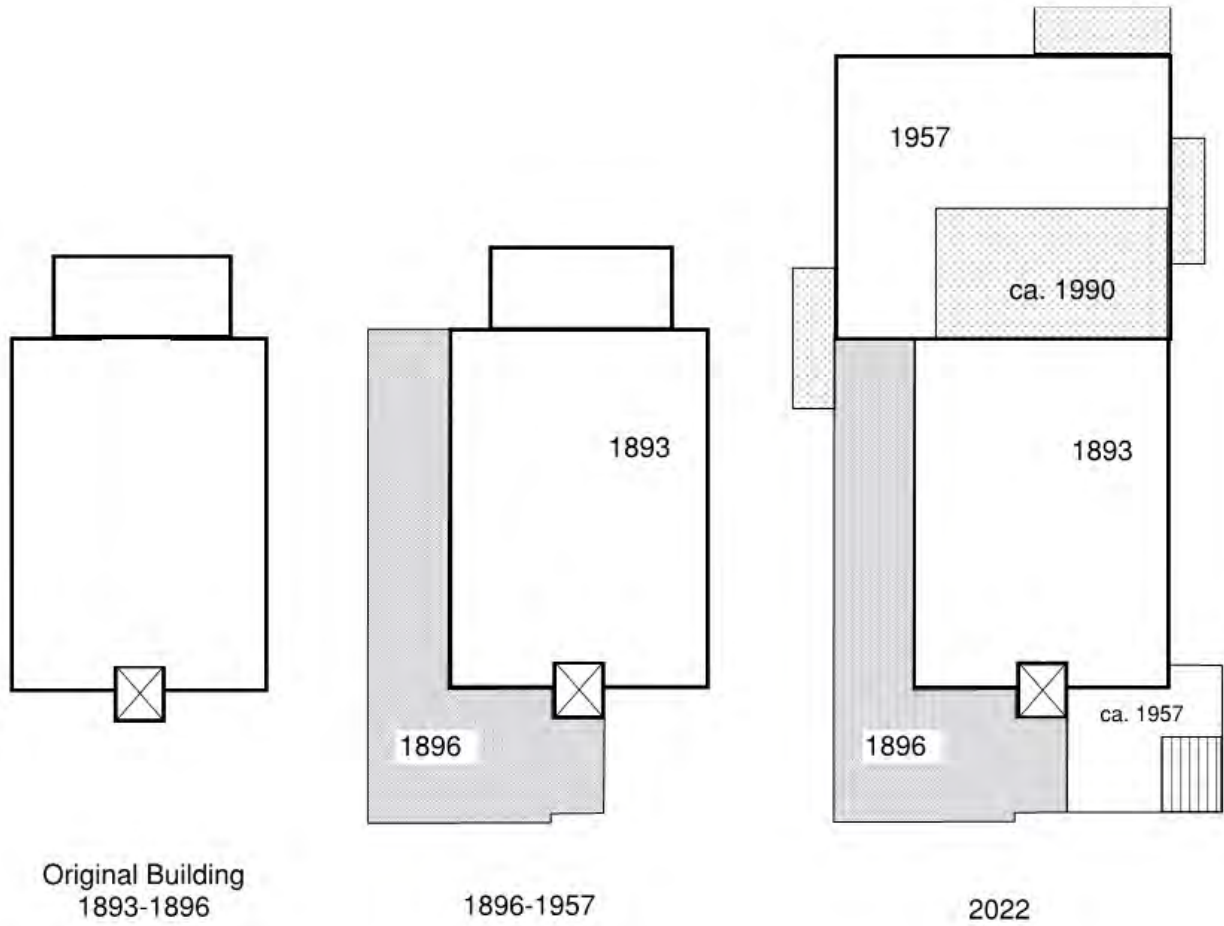


National Register of Historic Places  
*Continuation Sheet*

Section number Figures Page 38

First Baptist Church
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Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

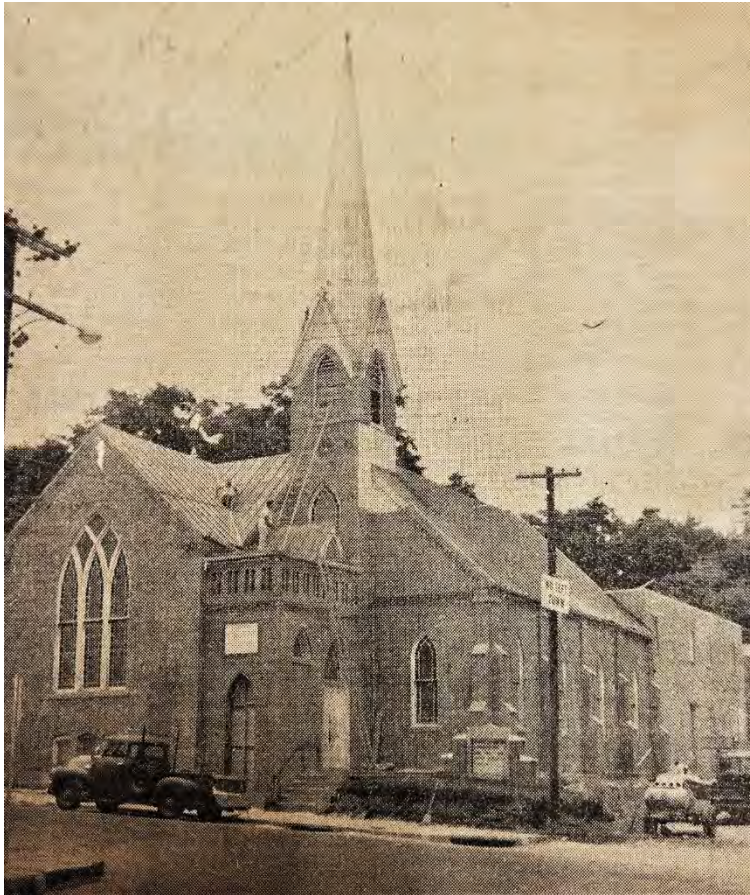
Figure 4. Construction Episode Diagram. (Deb Sheals, October 2022.)



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 39

First Baptist Church
-----
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



**Figure 5.** TOP: Photo Taken During 1957 Remodeling Project. (Newspaper Clipping from Kent Library Vertical File Southeast Missouri Box 1701, Folder 15.)

BOTTOM: Church at the Completion of the Remodeling Project, ca. 1958. (Fred Lynch, "Restored General Baptist Church," Southeast Missourian Blog, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://www.semissourian.com/blogs/flynch/entry/58415>.)



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 40

First Baptist Church
-----
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 6. Datestone Photos. (Deb Sheals August 2022.)



National Register of Historic Places  
*Continuation Sheet*

Section number Figures Page 41

First Baptist Church

Name of Property

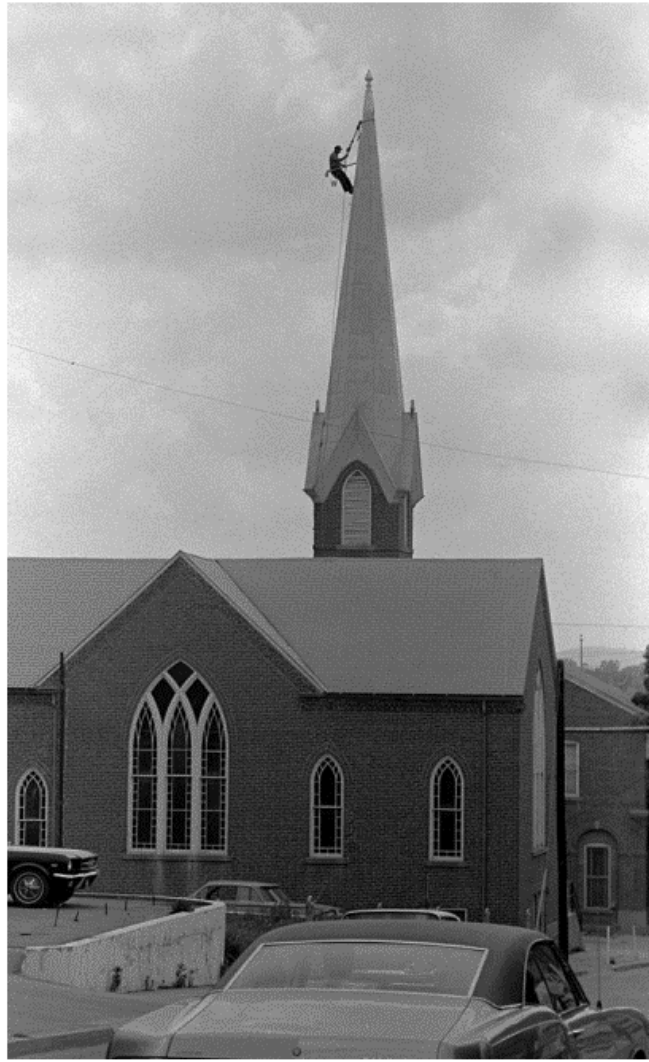
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 7.** Photos taken when the spire was being painted in 1967. (Ken Steinhoff, "Cape's Alice's Restaurant," Cape Girardeau History and Photographs, Oct. 11, 2010, accessed September 2022, <https://www.capecentralhigh.com/cape-photos/broadway/capes-alices-restaurant/>.)

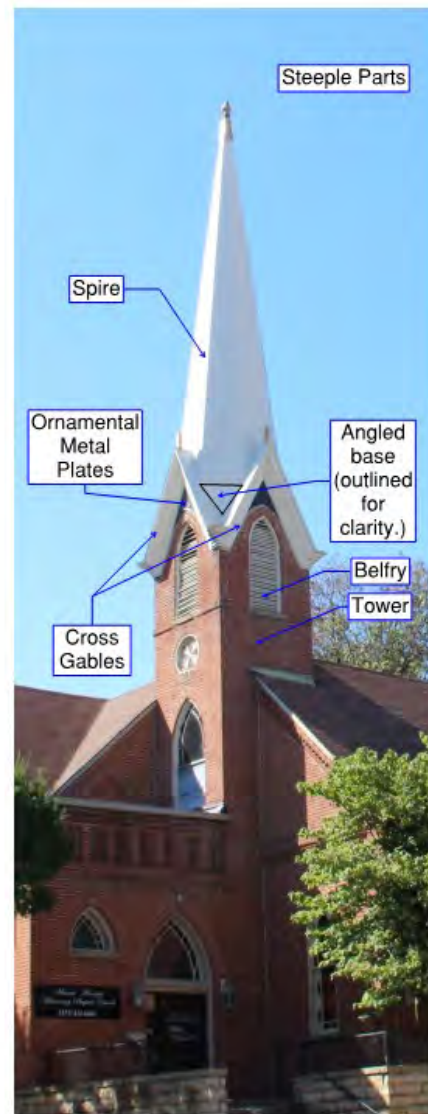
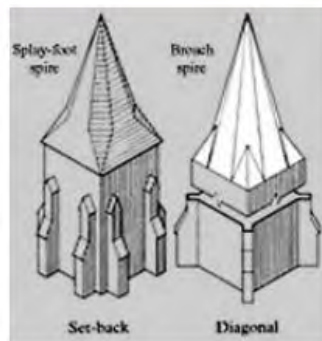
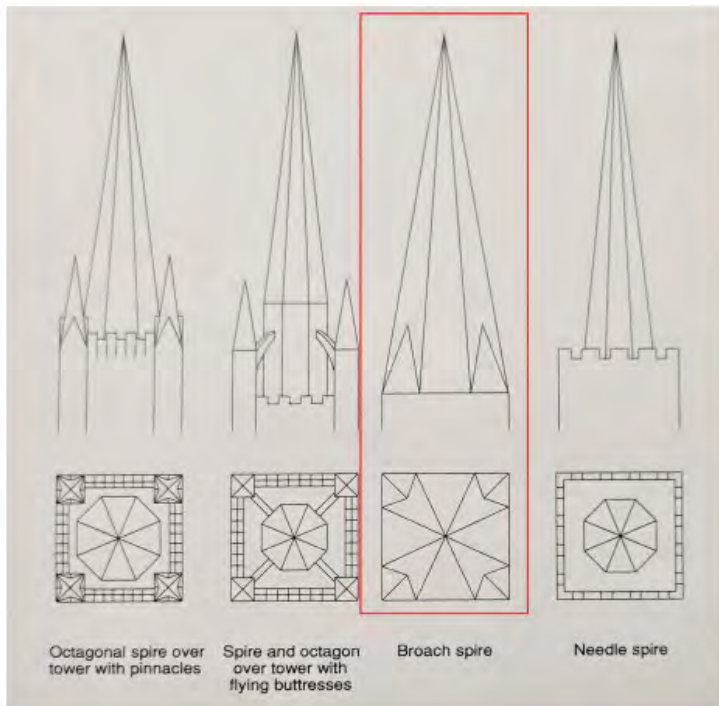


National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 42

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 8.** Spire Types and Steeple Parts. (Spire diagram from John, Fleming, et al. *The Penguin of Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture* New York: Penguin Group, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 1999, 544: Splayed-foot spire illustration from "Looking At Buildings: Glossary," Pevsner Architectural Guides, <http://www.lookingatbuildings.org.uk/index.html>, 2023.



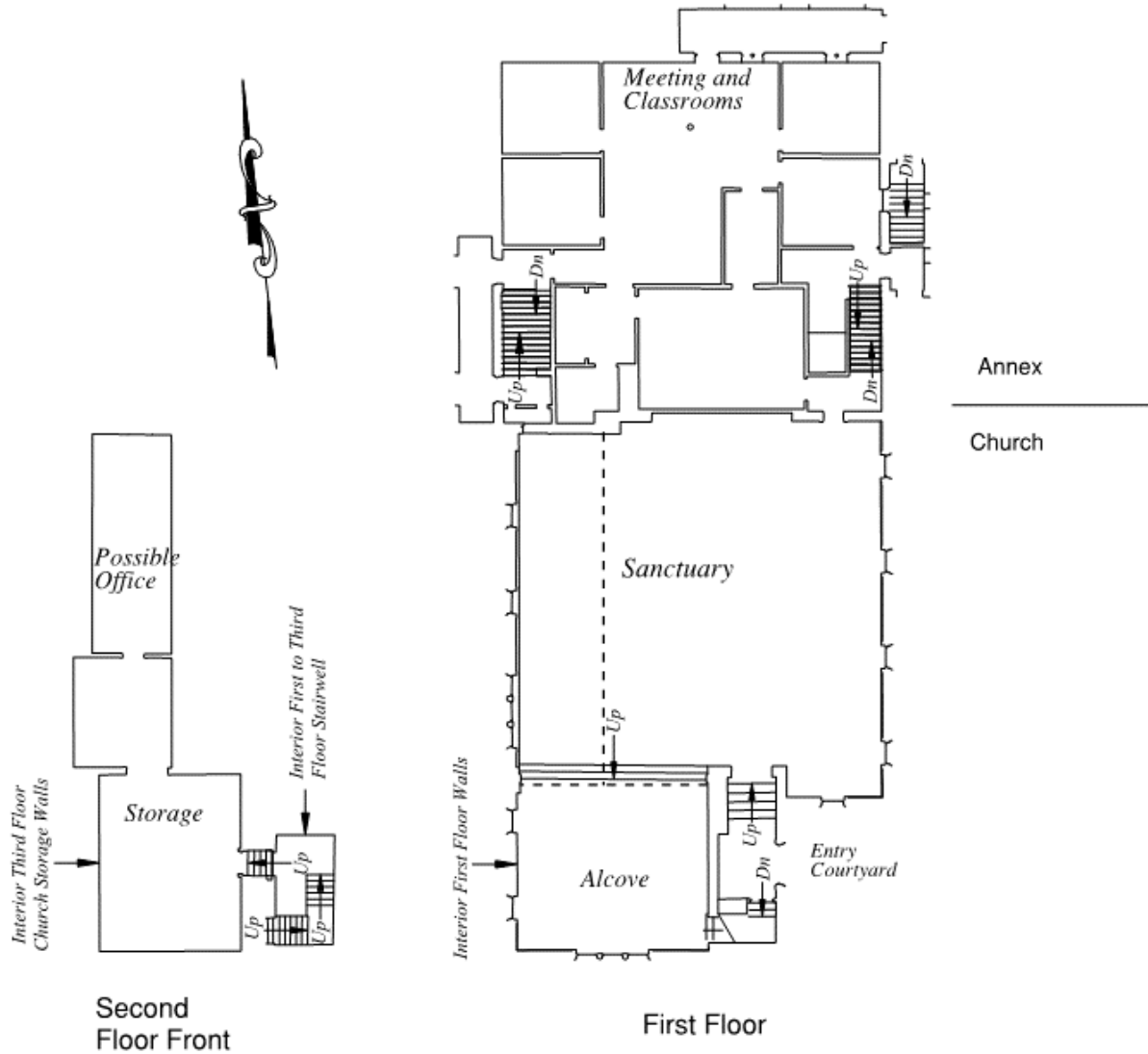


National Register of Historic Places  
*Continuation Sheet*

Section number Figures Page 43

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 9.** Current Plans: First Floor and Front of Second Floor. (Zahner & Associates, courtesy of Boulder Construction, Cape Girardeau.)

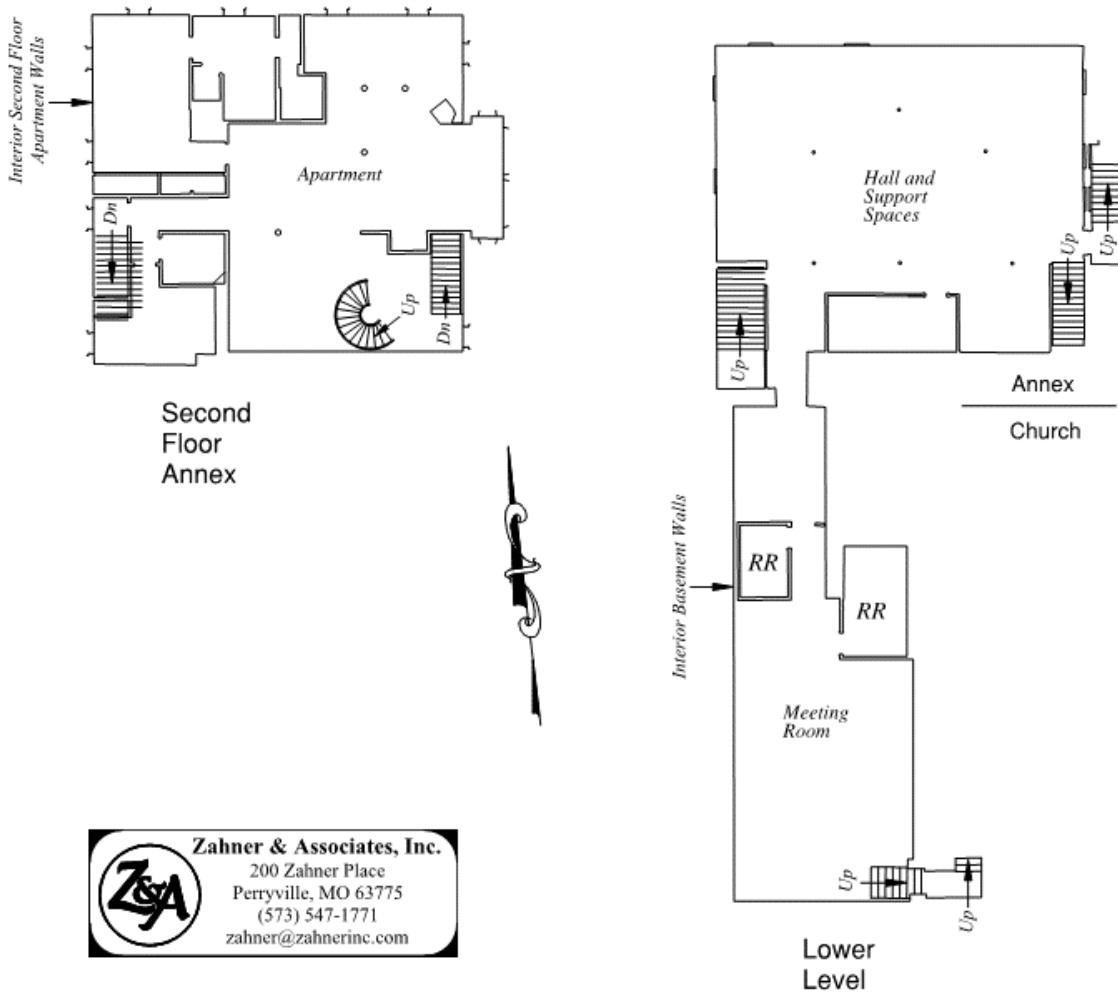


National Register of Historic Places  
*Continuation Sheet*

Section number Figures Page 44

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 10.** Current Plans: Lower Level and Back of Second Floor. (Zahner & Associates, courtesy of Boulder Construction, Cape Girardeau.)



 **Zahner & Associates, Inc.**  
200 Zahner Place  
Perryville, MO 63775  
(573) 547-1771  
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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 45

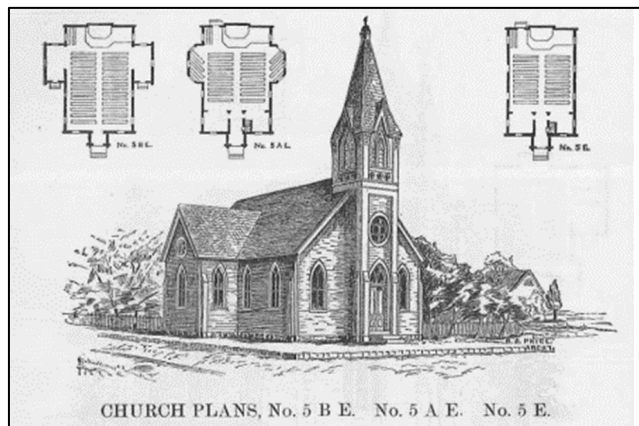
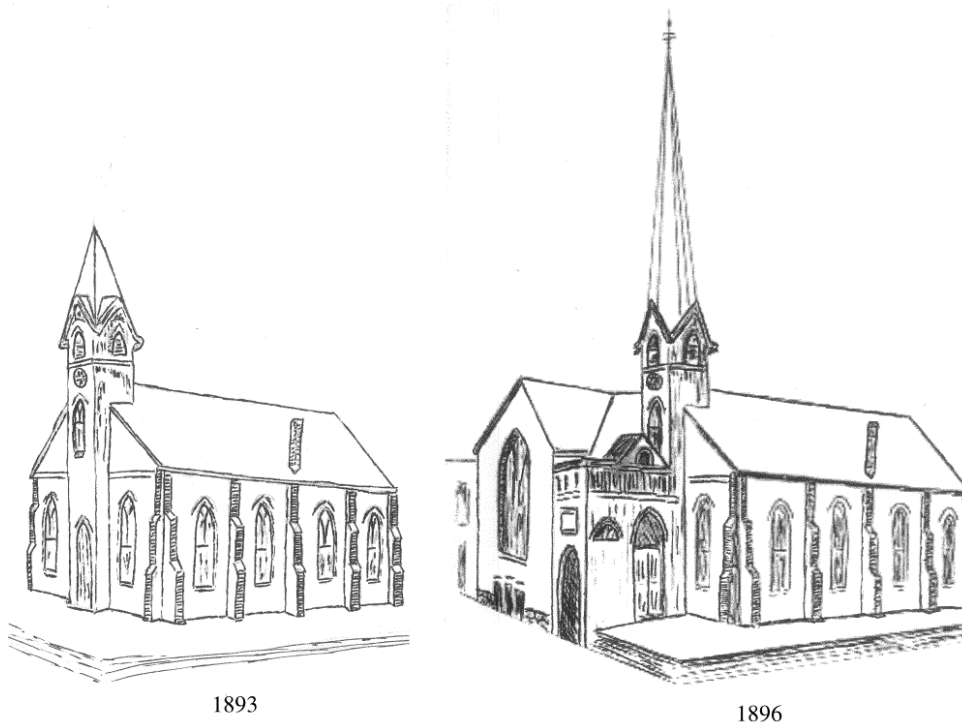
First Baptist Church
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Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 11.**

Top Left: Likely appearance in 1893, based on physical characteristics of the current building and historical references. (2022 Sketch by Josh Amelunke is based on the 1965 drawing to the right.)

Top Right: 1896 sketch from *History of Cape Girardeau First Baptist Church*. (S. D. Aubuchon, *The History of the First Baptist Church: Cape Girardeau, Missouri*. Cape Girardeau: First Baptist Church, 1965, cover.)

Bottom: Pattern Book plan for a central tower church comparable to First Baptist in 1893. (Rev A. J. Kynett, D.D. *Catalogue of Architectural Plans for Churches and Parsonages* Philadelphia: Church Extension office, 1889, 28.)



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 46

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 12.** Abbey of Saint-Germain Auxerre, France, 12<sup>th</sup> Century Tower. (Abbey of Saint-Germain d’Auxerre, “Wikimedia,” accessed November 15, 2022.)



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 47

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 13.** Colonial Churches with Neoclassical Steeples. (Jeffery Howe, *Houses of Worship: An Identification Guide to History and Styles of American Religious Architecture*, San Diego: Thunder Bay Press 2003, 125.)



Above: South Congregational Church, Temple Street, Kennebunkport, ME, 1824.



Above: Solomon Willard: First Baptist Church, Worcester Road and Pleasant Street, Framingham, MA, 1825.



Above: South Congregational Church, 277 Main Street, Hartford, CT, 1827.



Above: Center Congregational Church, 193 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT, 1843.



Above: John D. Towle and Foster: North Congregational Church, Market Square, Portsmouth, NH, 1855.



Above: United Church of Christ (First Congregational Church), Central Square, Keene, NH, 1786.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 48

First Baptist Church

Name of Property

Cape Girardeau County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 14.** Top: Pugin's Ideal Church. (Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*. London: John Weale, 1841, 50.)

Bottom Left: Richard Upjohn's Trinity Church. (Phoebe Stanton, *The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture: An Episode in Taste 1840-1856*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1997, 63.)

Bottom Right: James Renwick's Grace Church. (Grace Church, Manhattan, "Wikipedia," accessed November 15, 2022.)



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 49

First Baptist Church
-----
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 15.** Frame pattern book church with a splayed-foot spire. (Richard Upjohn, *Upjohn's Rural Architecture*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1975, No. 1, PL 3.)

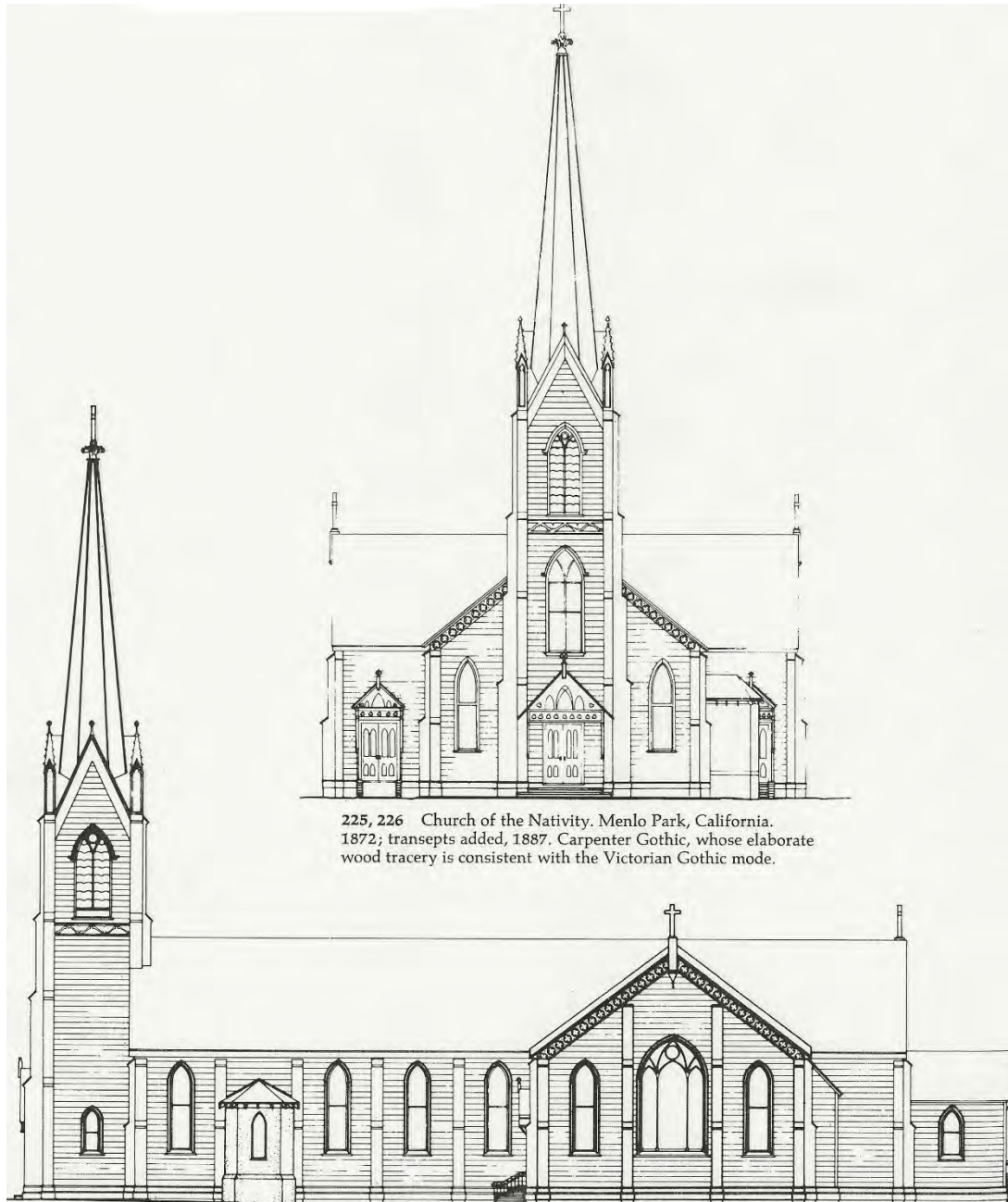


National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 50

First Baptist Church
-----
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 16.** Victorian Gothic Church Example: The Church of the Nativity, Menlo Park, CA. (Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture*, New York: The New American Library, 1980, 150.)





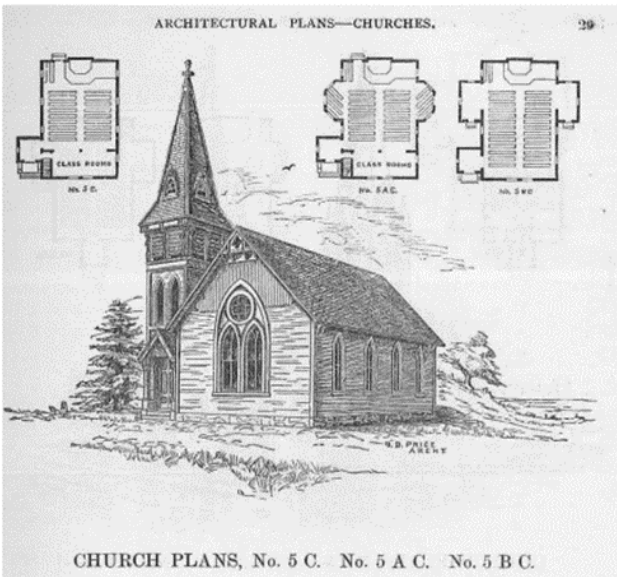
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 51

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 17.** Victorian Gothic Churches.  
Top Right: First Baptist Church, (NR 09/12/1982)  
Lynchburg, VA, 1886. (Allen Chambers, Richard Clark,  
The First Baptist Church, Lynchburg, VA, National  
Register of Historic Places, August 12, 1980,  
Photograph 1 of 3.)

Bottom: Pattern Book Church Plans. (Rev A. J. Kynett,  
D.D. *Catalogue of Architectural Plans for Churches  
and Parsonages*, Philadelphia: Church Extension  
office, 1889, 29, 33.)

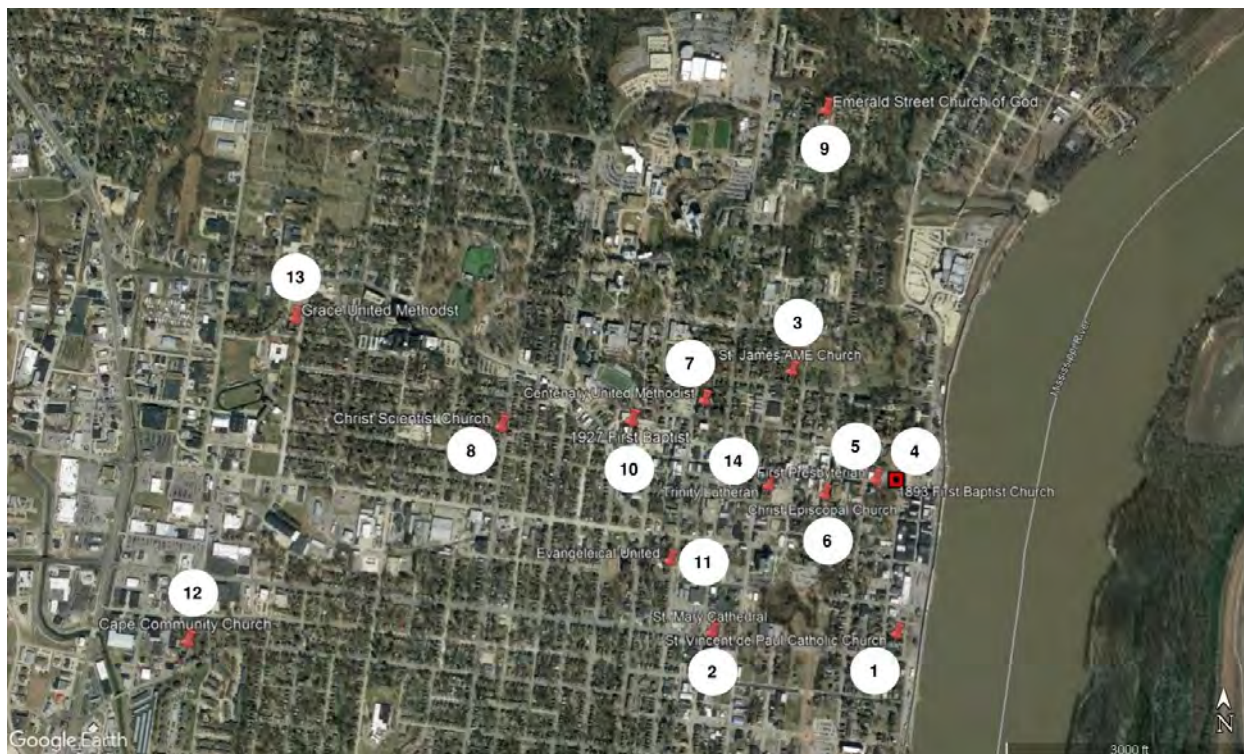


National Register of Historic Places  
*Continuation Sheet*

Section number Figures Page 52

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 18.** Aerial photo map of Cape Girardeau Churches from Google Earth. Accessed October 2022











Church Name	Street Address
Centenary United Methodist	300 N.Ellis
Evangelical United Church	33 S. Ellis St.
Trinity Lutheran Church	100 N Frederick St.
First Baptist Church (1893)	200 Broadway
First Presbyterian Church	235 Broadway
St. Vincent de Paul Catholic	131 S. Main
St. Mary's Cathedral	201 S. Sprigg Street
Emerald Street Church of God	500 Emerald St.
Christ Scientist Church	215 North West End
Cape Community Church	2222 Bloomfield Road
Christ Episcopal Church	101 N. Fountain
St. James AME Church	516 North Street
First Baptist Church Building #2	926 Broadway

National Register of Historic Places  
*Continuation Sheet*

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 53

**Figure 19A.** Other Historic Cape Girardeau Churches, in Date Order. (Photos from Google Earth, October 2022.)

<p><b>St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church</b>                      131 S. Main                       1853                       Style:Gothic Revival                      Steeple Type: Complex</p>		<p><b>St. Mary's Cathedral</b>                       201 S. Sprigg Street                      ca. 1868                       Style:Romanesque Revival                      Steeple Type: Needle on</p>	
<p><b>St. James AME Church</b>                       516 North Street                       1875                       Style:Vernacular Colonial                      Steeple Type: None</p>		<p><b>Christ Episcopal Church</b>                       101 N. Fountain                       1877                       Style:Gothic Revival                      Steeple Type: None</p>	
<p><b>First Baptist Church (1893)</b>                       200 Broadway                       1893                       Style:Gothic Revival                      Steeple Type: Broach</p>		<p><b>First Presbyterian Church</b>                       235 Broadway                       ca. 1900                       Style:Gothic Revival                      Steeple Type: None</p>	
<p><b>Centenary United Methodist</b>                       300 N.Ellis                       1915                       Style:Gothic Revival/ Richardsonian                      Steeple Type: None</p>		<p><b>Christ Scientist Church</b>                       215 North West End Blvd.                      ca. 1920s                       Style:Colonial Revival                      Steeple Type: None</p>	

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 54

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 19B.** Other Historic Cape Girardeau Churches, in Date Order. (Photos from Google Earth, October 2022.)

**Emerald Street Church of God**

500 Emerald St.

ca. 1920s

Style: Vernacular  
Romanesque  
Steeple Type:  
None



**Evangelical United Church**

33 S. Ellis St.

ca. 1920s

Style: Gothic  
Revival  
Steeple Type:  
None



**First Baptist Church Building #2 (1927)**

926 Broadway

1927

Style: Classical  
Revival  
Steeple Type:  
None



**Trinity Lutheran Church**

100 N Frederick St.

ca. 1963

Style: Romanesque  
Revival  
Steeple Type:  
Needle



**Cape Community Church**

2222 Bloomfield Road

ca. 1940s-2000s

Style: None

Steeple Type:  
Modern Spire

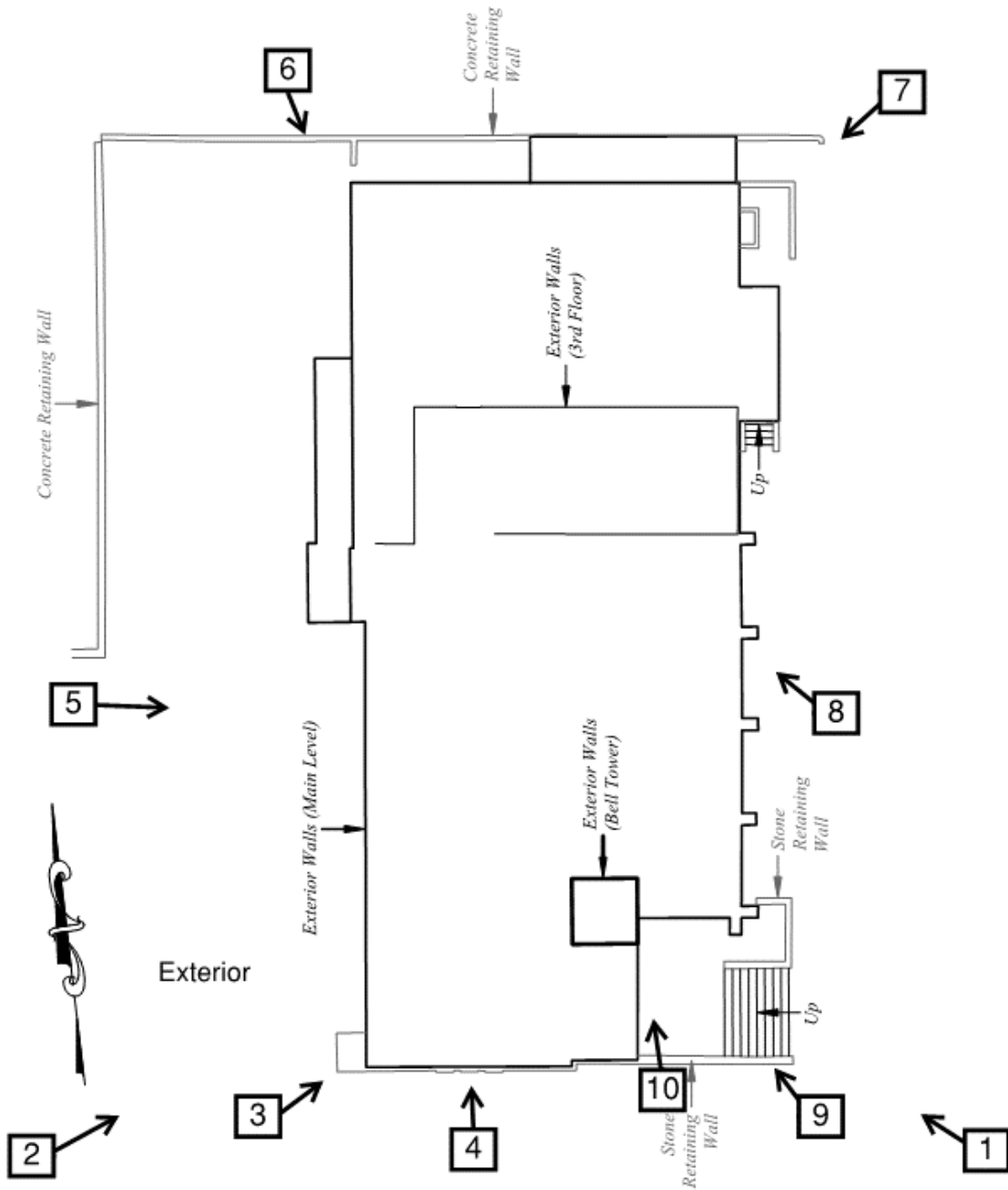


National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 55

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 20A. Photo Key A. Exterior Photos.

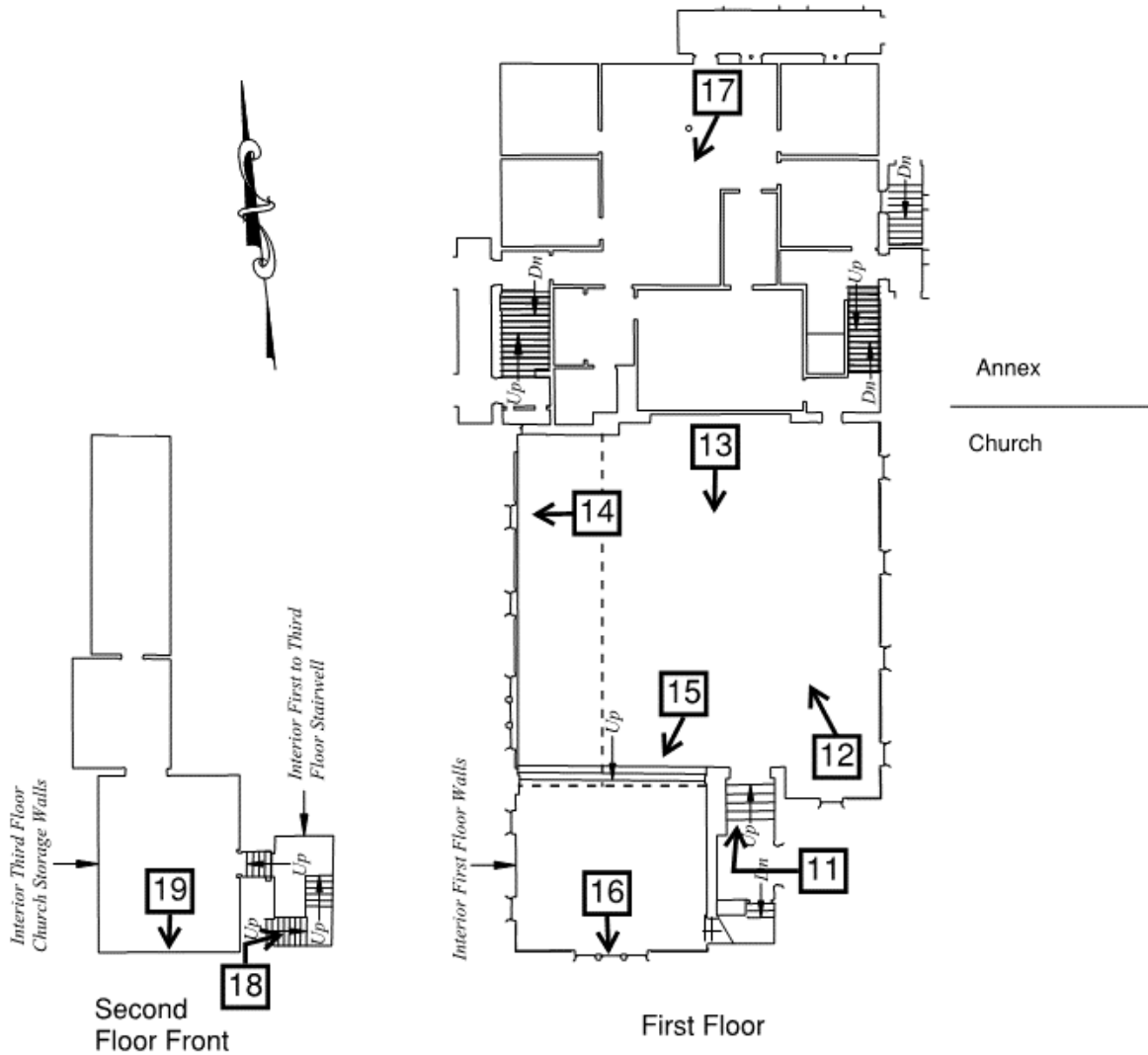


National Register of Historic Places  
*Continuation Sheet*

Section number Figures Page 56

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 20B. Photo Key B. Interior Views, First Floor and Second Floor Front.

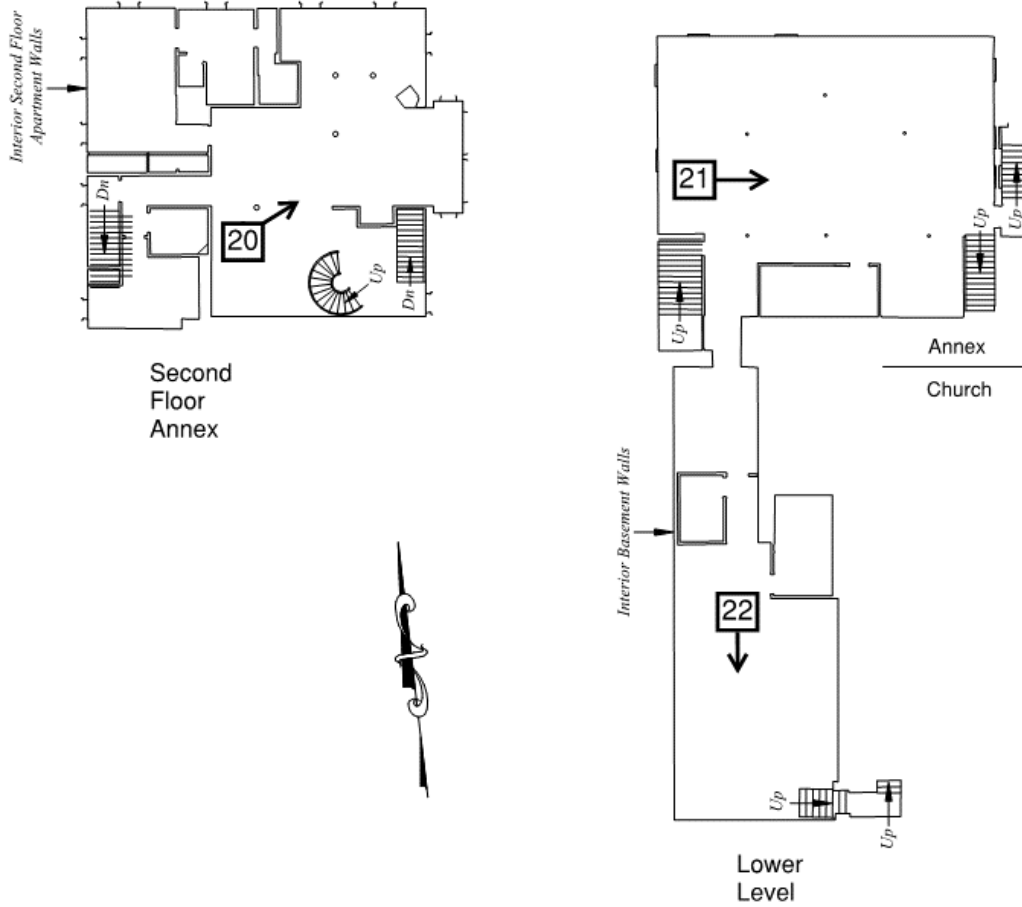


National Register of Historic Places  
*Continuation Sheet*

Section number Figures Page 57

First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 20C. Photo Key C. Interior Views, Lower Level and Second Floor Rear.





Red banner with white text, partially obscured by a snowflake decoration.

Mount Zion Baptist Church  
1798



















Mount Moriah  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
SUNDAY SCHOOL  
SUNDAY WORSHIP  
WEDNESDAY BIBLE  
"Come and join the church."  
771-317-XXXX

Mount Moriah  
Missionary Baptist Church  
(573) 332-8205

Mount Moriah  
Missionary Baptist Church  
SUNDAY SCHOOL  
SUNDAY WORSHIP  
WEDNESDAY BIBLE  
"Come and join the church."  
771-317-XXXX





























