

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Tuxedo Park Christian Church  
other names/site number Christ the King Covenant Church; Church of the Lutheran Confession; Chinese Gospel Church; Jubilee Church.

2. Location

street & number 700 Tuxedo Boulevard [ n/a ] not for publication  
city or town Webster Groves [n/a] vicinity  
state Missouri code MO county St. Louis code 189 zip code 63119

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )



22 Sept 2006

Signature of certifying official/Title

Mark A. Miles / Deputy SHPO

Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].

determined eligible for the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register

other, explain see continuation sheet [ ].

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
 Tuxedo Park Christian Church  
 St. Louis County, Missouri

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0 building
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site		_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		_____ objects
		1	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing.  
 N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register. 0

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Function

RELIGION/religious facility  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions

RELIGION/religious facility  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

OTHER: Akron Plan Church Building

Materials

foundation limestone  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 walls limestone  
aluminum  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 roof composite  
 other \_\_\_\_\_

see continuation sheet [ ].

see continuation sheet [ ].

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

See continuation sheet [x]

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

- 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**

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

ARCHITECTURE

**Periods of Significance**

1895-1909

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person(s)**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Lynch, J. Hal (architect)

Horspool Brothers (builder)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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
- # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository: Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone 15	Easting 731 500	Northing 4275 900	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Allen/Researcher

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date April 24, 2006

street & number 917 Locust Street, 7th floor telephone 314-421-6474

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Tuxedo Park Christian Church  
St. Louis County, Missouri

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### Summary

The Tuxedo Park Christian Church at the southeast corner of Bompert Avenue and Tuxedo Boulevard in Webster Groves, MO was built in two phases in a Shingle Style. The original portion, whose architect is unknown, dates to 1895 and makes some use of the Akron Plan in its composition. It consists of a curved open meeting room facing Bompert that gives the building a striking shape; the curved roof pitch down to the first-floor wall has no dormers. This auditorium meets a rectangular portion to the southeast with a roofline punctuated by gabled dormers. The rectangular sanctuary, completed in 1909 and designed by St. Louis architect J. Hal Lynch, carries a gambrel roof. The irregularly-shaped building is built of rough limestone and originally had roof and gables clad in wooden shingles. Today's building is sheathed with aluminum siding dating to the 1980s above its limestone walls. Ornament beyond the stained glass windows on both buildings is scarce, giving the church a severe appearance. The building has an open interior plan that is largely original. While the sanctuary clearly defines the church entrance through double doors on its west elevation facing Bompert, visually the combined buildings share common elements. Although the wooden shingles are gone, the Tuxedo Park Christian Church substantially retains its historic appearance including its unusual floor plan, complex roofline and stonework.

### Site

The location has maintained a consistent character since 1895. While additional buildings have been built in the area, the setting is still suburban with many old trees, narrow streets and single-family homes set on large lawns as defining features. Most of the buildings are single-family houses built between 1890 and 1930; few buildings have been built in this area since the 1930s.

### Exterior

The church is constructed of coursed rubble limestone foundation and squared rubble limestone walls, with a rectangular sanctuary or auditorium joined to an older portion of an irregular shape that is the result of the street's angle as well as the curved-wall, modified Akron Plan auditorium in that portion. The later sanctuary is a rectilinear, symmetrical building topped by a gambrel roof running the length of the building. The

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walls are of similar coursed irregular limestone blocks as the southern portion of the church; however, the blocks here have been cut slightly smoother and the wall has beaded mortar joints. All windowsills are of finely-cut limestone, while lintels are of the same finish as the coursed blocks in the wall. The primary elevation faces west onto Bompart, consisting of a central doorway on the first floor flanked by two center-pivot stained-glass windows (see photograph #1). Projecting out from the entrance is a later vestibule, reached by three concrete steps, with limestone walls that blend seamlessly into the sanctuary. The vestibule has a low-pitched roof with the aluminum-siding-clad gable facing Bompart. On the west side, the vestibule consists of a recessed, non-historic center door and sidelight windows that start at waist height. This entrance once was finished with double doors. On the north and south walls, fixed wooden sixteen-pane windows sit at a sill height level to the windows on the front elevation of the sanctuary. The first floor terminates in a projecting eave ornamented with widely-spaced dentil brackets. This eave runs above the entire perimeter of the sanctuary's walls. Originally clad in wood but now covered in aluminum siding, the gable is punctuated by a centered stained glass window in an arch shape. The window is divided by tracery into four large arched panes topped by eight smaller panes, all constrained to fit the shape of the window opening.

Centered on the north elevation, three bays contain windows at the basement and first floor levels (see photograph #3). A basement door with stairwell is at the left. The basement windows are wooden one-over-one windows while first floor windows are center-pivot, single-sash stained glass windows. On the second story, a centered, gabled dormer comes down to the eave and contains five double-hung, wood-framed stained glass windows with tracery in the corners of each upper sash. Aluminum siding now covers original wooden siding on the dormer. The east elevation is divided much like the west elevation. Instead of an entrance, the center is marked by three wooden basement windows. On the first floor above that, two stained glass windows are completely covered by louvered wooden grilles; the original windows can be seen from the interior, though. The second floor gable carries a stained glass window that matches the one on the west elevation. This elevation carries the plane of a wall of the older building; to the left of the sanctuary elevation is a short wall carrying a double-hung one-over-one wooden window. Above that window, but with its center to the left of the window's, is a gabled dormer that sits high on the pitched roof. The dormer retains paired one-over-one windows.

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The east wall is at the rear of the oddly-shaped original auditorium, adjacent to the rectangular two-story wing that sits back further than the auditorium. The auditorium's primary elevation, facing Bompert Avenue, makes a sharp curve between the sanctuary wall and the two-story wing (see photograph #2). It has the same steep-pitched roofline as its rear wall, and bears no dormers. The first floor is divided into five bays. The left bay is a doorway with an original wooden door bearing five panels arranged vertically. The remaining bays contain four one-over-one double-hung windows with leaded glass inserts.

To the right of the curve starts the two-story wing that originally housed the classrooms and parsonage. This wing has limestone walls and a mansard-profile roof, in which the second floor sits. The roof originally was clad in wooden shingles and its dormers in wooden siding, but now both are covered in aluminum siding. The roof base projects only slightly over the first floor, with no ornamentation marking the division. The main elevation is divided into two bays, with a doorway to the left and a double-hung one-over-one window to the left. Centered above these openings are tall gabled dormers bearing one-over-one double-hung windows. The dormer and window on the left are narrower, scaled to the proportions of the door. Historically, this wing only had a crawl-space basement, and the doorway sits almost at street level. The south elevation is divided into four bays. On the first floor, these bays contain one-over-one windows, except for the second bay from the left, which contains a doorway. Dormers sit above the three leftmost bays and bear one-over-one windows, with the middle dormer's window being smaller and sitting higher than the other two. The east elevation is divided into two bays. The left bay contains a one-over-one window on the first floor, and the right bay contains a second-floor dormer and one-over-one window like those on the other sides of the building. To the right of the dormer is a brick chimney that rises from the limestone wall to slightly higher than the top of the roof slope (see photograph #3). The top of this section of the building is a flat asphalt roof.

**Interior**

The interior of the sanctuary is open, joined to the auditorium through a large opening. The flooring is of tongue-and-groove yellow pine. At the east end of the room is a shallow stage that runs the entire length of the eastern wall (see photograph #4). The

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auditorium's walls have bead-board wainscoting running the perimeter, including the stage area, which raises the wainscoting to start at stage level. A crown molding runs at the top of the wall along the perimeter of the room. The ceiling follows the shape of the gambrel roof. The stained glass windows are framed by simple casement and trim. Along the length of the room are two massive carved wooden trusses, consisting of two parallel beams joined by triangular brackets that form a pattern of N-shapes. The open triangles formed by these brackets are trimmed in decorative tracery, suggesting a Gothic style. Pendant light fixtures hang at intervals from both of these trusses. The trusses join the end walls with tall, triangular brackets that extend to terminate at the crown mold. The open triangles in these brackets are trimmed the same way as those in the trusses. Two large brass light fixtures are suspended from the center of the ceiling. The sanctuary suffered a fire in 1920, but records indicate that a restoration brought the room back to its original appearance.

On the south wall—the original end wall for the southern portion of the church—a large wood-encased rectangular opening runs almost the entire length, with separate smaller-sized opening at both sides (visible at the left of photograph #5). Above this opening are two roll-up windows overlooking the sanctuary. Behind these today are two closets, but originally they may have created a balcony for the sanctuary. The auditorium space continues the floor level of the sanctuary, although the ceiling height is much shorter (see photograph #6). Wainscoting runs at windowsill level along the curved wall. The ceiling consists of patterned beaded wood that is likely not original. Most likely, the ceiling was open to make the auditorium a two-story space with perimeter balcony. The second floor above the auditorium has a lower level than a narrow ring around that section, which is almost a foot higher. Inside of a closet on the second floor is evidence of a removed staircase that would have connected the auditorium below to the second level. One set of original sliding doors connecting the auditorium to a classroom is visible through a doorway on a later partition (see Figure #1).

The rest of the original building is divided into a series of rooms on a traditional rectilinear plan. The first floor contains three large former classrooms; the second floor is divided into a series of rooms altered through the creation of new partitions and the likely later construction of a floor across the open auditorium. However, almost all original millwork, doors and transom windows remain in place. An upstairs room retains an original wooden mantel. Inside of a more recent closet under the sloped, curved



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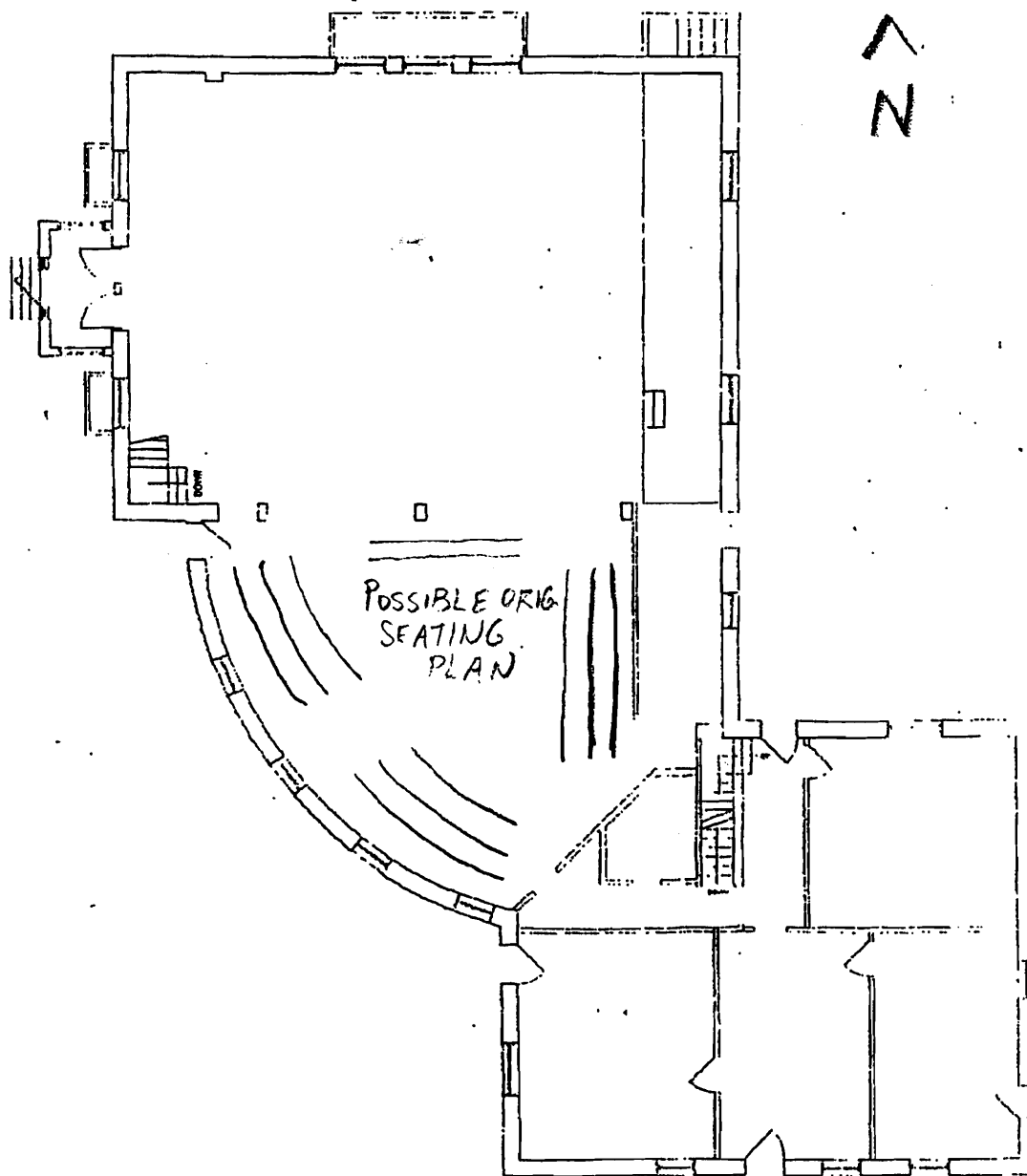
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auditorium roof, an original wooden knee-wall remains. The original portion of the church only had a dirt crawl-space underneath; a later cinder-block-walled kitchen was created in excavated space under the auditorium. Some excavation of the rest of the

Figure 1: Plan of first floor. Source: Claybour Architects.



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crawl space occurred over the years to create storage space, but this space retains a dirt floor. There is a full, finished basement under the auditorium.

**Integrity**

Most of the original features of the church remain today. Notable alterations include restoration of the interior of the sanctuary after a fire, as well as the covering of all shingled roof and dormer areas in aluminum siding in the 1980s. However, the profile of the roof remains a defining feature of the church. A small vestibule added to the front of the sanctuary, probably after the 1920 fire, blends with the church fairly well. All window and door openings remain unaltered, and most windows retain original wooden frames and sashes. At least one original exterior door remains. All stained glass windows retain their original appearance. The interior is largely unaltered, although a partition was added to separate the auditorium in the original building from one of the original classroom, and it is likely that the second floor was continued through the auditorium's open second level. Yet the interior retains original millwork, doors and partitions. Overall the Tuxedo Park Christian Church retains integrity of location, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship and association and retains substantially its historic appearance.

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**Summary**

The Tuxedo Park Christian Church, located at the southeast corner of Tuxedo Boulevard and Bompert Avenue in Webster Groves, St. Louis County, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for ARCHITECTURE. Built in two phases, the church demonstrates an unusual application of the so-called Akron Plan for religious assembly space, and the church is believed to have introduced the plan to Webster Groves. In 1895, The Church at Toledo, a new Disciples of Christ congregation, built the oddly-shaped southern part of the church on a lot it owned in the heart of Tuxedo Park, one of the boroughs that became Webster Groves. While the building's limestone walls were in keeping with conventional church construction in the area, its uncommon shape and Shingle style of architecture introduced a rustic quality more often seen in residential buildings. In 1908, the Tuxedo Park Christian Church saw the addition of a more traditional, gambrel-roofed sanctuary with limestone walls that blend with the earlier building. The elaboration on the earlier design, by architect J. Hal Lynch, produced a church building with an unusual but nonetheless balanced composition. Although the original wooden shingles have been replaced with aluminum siding, the church retains its rustic simplicity and is locally significant for its use of the Akron Plan. The Tuxedo Park Christian Church meets Criteria Consideration A and stands as a unique traditional benchmark in the development of the suburban church in St. Louis County. The 1895-1909 period of significance represents the two periods of construction.

**Elaboration**

Like many of the boroughs of the suburban area later incorporated as Webster Groves, Tuxedo Park had its beginning through the subdivision of one of the large estates. When in 1853 a railroad line cut through the farm of Dr. William H. Brown, Brown took advantage of the situation by creating a 56-lot subdivision called Brown's Place.<sup>1</sup> Brown maintained the farm without further development until 1889, when a train struck and killed him. The land and subdivision went to public sale in 1890, and found a purchaser in the Tuxedo Park Lane and Improvement Company. The Tuxedo Park Lane and Improvement Company aimed to develop a residential subdivision that would take advantage of the proximity to the Missouri Pacific railroad. The president of the development company, Lilburn McNair, donated land to the railroad to build a station at

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<sup>1</sup> Clarissa Start, *Webster Groves* (Webster Groves, Mo.: The City of Webster Groves, 1975), p. 87.

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Tuxedo Park that was opened by the end of 1890 and allowed residents to reach downtown St. Louis in 45 minutes.<sup>2</sup> By 1893, Tuxedo Park was home to twenty families.<sup>3</sup> However, urban social institutions like the neighborhood church were few and far between in the burgeoning area. Before 1886, the Webster Groves area had only four churches, too few to support newcomers and their many denominations.<sup>4</sup>

The first step toward establishing a Christian church in Tuxedo Park was an effort to create a Sunday school for children that led to the formation of the non-denominational Tuxedo Park Union Sunday School in 1893.<sup>5</sup> Member families were of various Protestant denominations, including Methodist, Presbyterian and the Disciples of Christ. To remain neutral, the school alternately used the quarterly books of different denominations for several weeks. Soon, the union of Christians became an ad hoc congregation. With the donation of a lot at 667 Atalanta Avenue from the Tuxedo Park and Land Improvement Company, the Sunday School was able to build its own building by September 1894. The volunteer ministers for adult services apparently had clear denominational ties: "The plan was to keep these sessions non-sectarian, but some ministers were willing to donate more time than others."<sup>6</sup> In addition to the ministers' preferences, the population of Tuxedo Park continued growing and more members of each denomination were moving into the area. Within a year, a split emerged in the congregation.

A visit from Reverend O.A. Bartholemew in fall 1894 sparked interest in formation of a church affiliated with the Disciples of Christ denomination. Bartholemew found many members of the Disciples of Christ worshipping at the church on Atalanta, and he sought to organize them into their own congregation. The new congregation called itself the Church at Tuxedo and met on December 24, 1894 to formally organize.<sup>7</sup> The Disciples of Christ denomination has its roots in the preaching of four early American ministers who had left the Presbyterian Church over various disagreements. One of these ministers, Barton Stone, sought to transcend sectarianism and join all American

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<sup>2</sup> Carol Hemphill (editor), *Webster Groves Centennial: 1896-1996; The First 100 Years* (Webster Groves, Mo.: Webster-Kirkwood Times, 1995), p. 9

<sup>3</sup> Start, p. 88

<sup>4</sup> Start, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> Start p. 88.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Davis, p. 6.

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Christians in one union; his followers called themselves simply Christians. Thomas Campbell also wanted to unite Christians by emphasizing four principles: the right of private judgment, the sole authority of the Scriptures, the evil of sectarianism and the basis for unity in exact biblical conformity.<sup>8</sup> In 1832, the followers of Stone and Campbell agreed upon a union officially called Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Disciples of Christ, as the union is more commonly called, was becoming widely known by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Another group within the congregation met on January 3, 1895 to organize the Tuxedo Park Methodist Episcopal Church. While the Sunday school continued as a non-denominational union, the differences proved unsustainable with each group attempting to use the building for separate services. The two groups held an election to determine which would retain ownership of the building at 667 Atalanta, with the Methodists as the winning group. After the deed transfer, the Church at Tuxedo began meeting at the home of W.S. Hull near the corner of Tuxedo and Bompert avenues.

This meeting place was used for only nine months. On March 21, 1895, the Church at Tuxedo met to legally establish itself through articles of agreement. The articles of agreement for the new congregation named a board of directors, formally adopted the name "Church at Tuxedo" and stated that the purpose of the organization was to build a church on land at the southeast corner of Tuxedo and Bompert avenues, donated by W.S. Hull.<sup>9</sup> The new congregation began raising funds for a new building to stand on the donated lot, which was directly across Bompert Avenue from Hull's home. Their efforts were successful, and on August 29, 1895, the congregation dedicated its first building to great fanfare:

... F.M. Rains [served] as master of ceremonies. He was the first secretary of the Board of Church Extension. The members of St. Louis churches were invited. The Missouri Pacific Railroad ran a special train from Union Station to the Tuxedo Station, at a cost of 25 cents for a round trip.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, no record exists naming the original architect; St. Louis County did not require building permits in 1895 and the church's records from the period are lost. All

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<sup>8</sup> Davis, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Davis, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Davis, p. 8.

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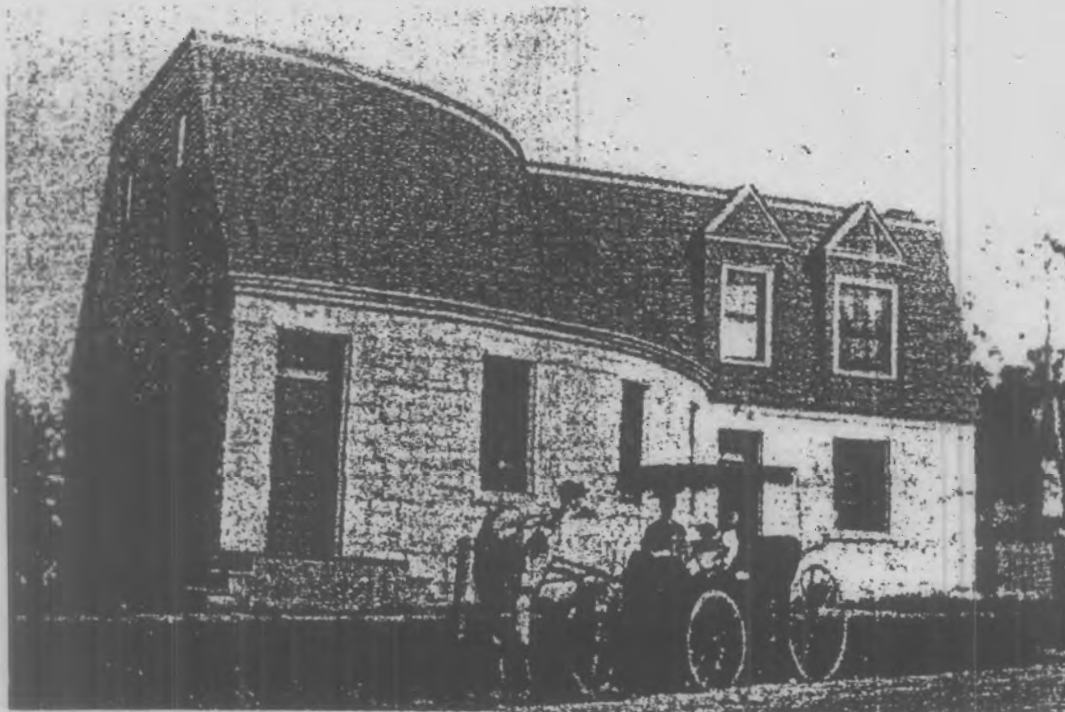
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that is known about the first building comes from a few historic photographs and the remaining building. The new building was two stories in height, with the first floor clad in rough rubble limestone walls and the second floor located under the sloped and shingled roof. Water came from a cistern. The northern part of the building was a projecting, half-curved section housing the main worship and class space, while the southern part of the building was a rectilinear wing housing the kitchen and second-floor parsonage. The north wall is clad in clapboard in a historic photograph [figure #2], suggesting that expansion of the church was built into the original plans. The shape of the building fit the slanted front of the church lot along Bompert Avenue, but gave the church a rather unusual plan.

Figure #2: The church after construction in 1895. Source: Ralph E. Davis, *Webster Groves Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): 100 Years of Service and Witness, 1895-1995*.



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Indeed, the new building was an architectural anomaly in several ways. For one thing, the architect designed the building in the Shingle Style, emphasizing its plain rubble limestone walls and wooden-shingled sloped roof. The Shingle Style, stylistically linked to the better-known Queen Anne style, had been in use in residential construction in the Webster Groves area for a few years prior to 1895. Several houses in the style can be found in Webster Groves, including the George Andrews House at 405 Orchard, built in 1892 in the neighboring borough of Webster Park. Yet it had not been employed in church design before, and was out of keeping with conventions for church design at the time in the St. Louis area. Earlier churches in Webster Groves had employed coursed limestone rubble walls, including the Emanuel Episcopal Church (1866), located at 9 S. Bompert, and the First Congregational Church (1870), located at 10 W. Lockwood in the area's central business district. Limestone was a widely available stone in the area, and conveyed the permanence of the churches without entailing high prices of transporting other stones. Yet these churches were executed in more traditional Gothic Revival styles, with prominent steeples and pronounced entrances. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, St. Louis area churches were almost exclusively in Gothic Revival or Romanesque Revival styles; the Gothic Revival Style in particular was widely seen as the most appropriate style for a church. Yet the Church at Tuxedo had modest financial means and newer theological doctrines, and both factors are reflected in the architecture of the first building.

Another aspect of the new building that gave it a unique character was its adaptation of the Akron Plan. The Akron Plan was a relatively new configuration of religious space typically employed for Sunday schools. The plan was named for the Ohio city where it was developed by architect Jacob Snyder for the First Methodist Episcopal Church, completed in 1870. The defining feature of the Akron Plan is a large open space known as a rotunda, often two levels high, surrounded by classrooms connected to the main room by shutters or folding doors.<sup>11</sup> Akron Plan spaces are mostly round, octagonal or otherwise multi-sided. The spaces are adaptable to a variety of traditional architectural styles, from Carpenter Gothic to Romanesque Revival. Thousands of such spaces were built in churches and Sunday schools between 1870 and around World War I, when the Akron Plan lost popularity.<sup>12</sup> One foundational idea behind the Akron Plan was the Uniform Lesson System developed by mainline Protestant religious leaders. This System sought to improve the popular Sunday Schools by reconciling the need to teach each

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.sacredplaces.org/PSP-InfoClearingHouse/articles/American%20Religious%20Buildings.htm> (February 8, 2006). *American Religious Buildings: Akron Plan Sunday School*.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

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student the same curriculum and the need to provide different instruction to each age group directed at their ability. The System instructed teachers to give all students the same weekly lesson, but in separate classrooms divided by age group. The spatial demands of the system led to the popularity of the Akron Plan, which provided a common space for Sunday worship surrounded by doorways leading to adjacent classrooms. The purpose of the doors was to separate Sunday school classes from the main space, where often all students met together before classes, as well as from each other. Many churches, like Tuxedo, could not afford separate worship and Sunday School auditoriums and thus combined their central meeting space with the worship space. Eventually, the Akron Plan fell out of favor because Christian educators began to favor not only different levels of instruction but different weekly lessons for each age groups. By the end of World War I, most Sunday Schools did not need a common meeting space and the Akron Plan became antiquated.<sup>13</sup>

At Tuxedo in 1895, the classes were separated along gender lines but not yet along age lines. The auditorium at Tuxedo made use of a curved wall and an open, auditorium-style space as well as two classrooms separated by sliding doors (one set is still extant on the first floor). Floor level differences on the second floor of the building suggest that the auditorium, now one story tall, originally may have been two stories tall with a second-floor balcony. Given that the Akron Plan was most often used for Sunday schools separate from church sanctuaries, it is probable that the Church at Tuxedo built the building in this plan with the idea that either the curved section would be expanded for a larger central worship space or that a separate sanctuary would be built. As completed in 1895, the auditorium space was an incomplete adaptation of Akron Plan principles.

However modest, the architecture of the Church at Tuxedo seems to have had some influence in its area. In 1897, the Old Orchard Congregational Church built a new church at 640 Amelia Avenue also located in the Tuxedo Park borough (Webster Groves incorporated in 1896 and its boundaries encompassed the borough). This building shares some striking characteristics with the Church at Tuxedo: irregular plan with a polygonal-sided almost-rounded projection, sparse decoration, extensive use of wooden shingles and the familiar coursed rubble limestone walls. The church exhibits further stylistic refinement—a St. Louis County church survey considers its style “English Arts and Crafts” and it employs a strict Akron Plan—but it takes up the stylistic oddities of the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



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Church at Tuxedo. The Old Orchard Congregational Church was organized in 1890, making it somewhat of a peer in age and size to the Church at Tuxedo.

Expansion or completion of the Church at Tuxedo was given some thought during construction; the church purchased an adjacent corner lot north of the church for \$365 on November 12, 1895. By year's end, Bartholemew turned over the pulpit to his nephew, E.N. Tucker, who served as minister until November 1897. A string of ministers followed; the church gave ministers one-year agreements until 1905 and most often did not renew.<sup>14</sup> Some turmoil came in 1903, when 37 dissidents left the congregation to form the Old Orchard Christian Church and build their own building elsewhere in the area. The split, which would be resolved in 1914 when the Old Orchard Christian Church merged back into the Tuxedo Park Christian Church, created some financial weakness in the congregation. Nonetheless, the congregation made several improvements to the building, connecting the building to the city water system and filling in the cistern in 1905; adding a furnace in 1906; and extending the plumbing to the parsonage and kitchen in 1907. The church would not add a telephone, however, until 1939.<sup>15</sup> A board meeting on February 4, 1906 established membership of the congregation at 65 people.

In December 1907, Rev. W.F. Hammann took over as pastor of the congregation. With unpaid bills mounting, Hammann led a fundraising effort that successfully paid off the mortgage of the church. Without debt, the congregation began planning to expand the church building. On July 12, 1908, the congregation's board of directors approved plans for a new auditorium. The board sought and received a \$4,500 loan from the Disciples in Christ Church Extension Office. Additionally, the church building committee raised \$830 by October 1, around the time construction began. The Webster Groves-issued building permit for the new auditorium stated that work would commence on October 5, 1908 and be completed on February 1, 1909; the cost of construction was reported at \$5,700. (Of this amount, \$225 was for the cost of stained glass windows.<sup>16</sup>) The general contractor was the Horspool Brothers and the plumber was William F. Clamp.

To design the new auditorium, the church board chose James Hal Lynch (1860-1953), a St. Louis architect whose letterhead listed his specialties as "special work" and hospitals.

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<sup>14</sup> Davis, p. 9

<sup>15</sup> Davis, p. 18

<sup>16</sup> Davis, p. 20.

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Few identified Lynch buildings stand, and not much is known about his career. Lynch was born in Green Castle, Indiana, and traveled to Mexico as a young man. He practiced architecture and opened a factory in Chihuahua before moving to El Paso, Texas.<sup>17</sup> He first appears in a St. Louis city directory in 1893 in practice with the firm Lynch, Roberts & Evans. In the 1895 city directory, he appears as a principal in the firm Cann and Lynch with offices in the Union Trust Building (NR 06/17/1982). From 1896 until 1917, he is listed in independent practice under the name J. Hal Lynch Architect Company (1913-1917). In 1901, the St. Louis chapter of the American Institute of Architects accepted Lynch as a member. He moved to Clayton in 1905 and became active in politics, serving as an officer of the Clean Election League of St. Louis County.<sup>18</sup>

In 1917, Lynch joined his son Hallowell H.H. Lynch to form J. Hal Lynch and Son Architects, a firm that continued until 1931 with offices in the Dolph Building in downtown St. Louis. After the Tuxedo Park Christian Church, he designed another church for a Disciples of Christ congregation, the Kingshighway Christian Church (1917) at 3000 N. Kingshighway in St. Louis, in addition to the Salem Methodist Episcopal Church (1924) at 1920 N. Kingshighway in St. Louis. He also designed the St. Louis Provident Association Building at 2221 Locust Street in St. Louis (NR 06/20/01). Lynch's other known architectural works include the Blind Girl's Home at 5253 Page Boulevard in St. Louis, built in 1908 (NR 08/23/1984), a Georgian Revival institutional building; a grade school in Manhattan, Kansas built in 1917; collaboration with Barnett, Haynes and Barnett on the Majestic Manufacturing Company's 1895 factory in downtown St. Louis (NR 12/31/1998); and two houses built in the 1920's in University City, Missouri.<sup>19</sup> Lynch seems to have had personal interest in charitable institutions as well as in public health; from 1906-1922 Lynch served as secretary of the St. Louis Tenement House Association, an organization dedicated to giving workers housing "at low rents, clean healthy rooms and a high standard of living conditions."<sup>20</sup> He was also a

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<sup>17</sup> "J.H. Lynch, Veteran St. Louis Architect, Dies at Son's Home" (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 3, 1935).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.ci.manhattan.ks.us/document.asp?ID=583-2004-11-03-55068-24> (February 2, 2006). *Manhattan, Kansas Survey*; <http://www.co.st-louis.mo.us/parks/historical-buildings/University1.html> (February 2, 2006), *University City Historic Buildings Survey*; <http://www.co.st-louis.mo.us/parks/historical-buildings/University2.html> (February 2, 2006). *University City Historic Buildings Survey*; Landmarks Association File: J. Hal Lynch.

<sup>20</sup> Jacob Riis, "The Plight of St. Louis," *St. Louis*. (Glen E. Holt and Selwyn K. Troen, eds.; New York: New Viewpoints, 1977), p. 118-121.

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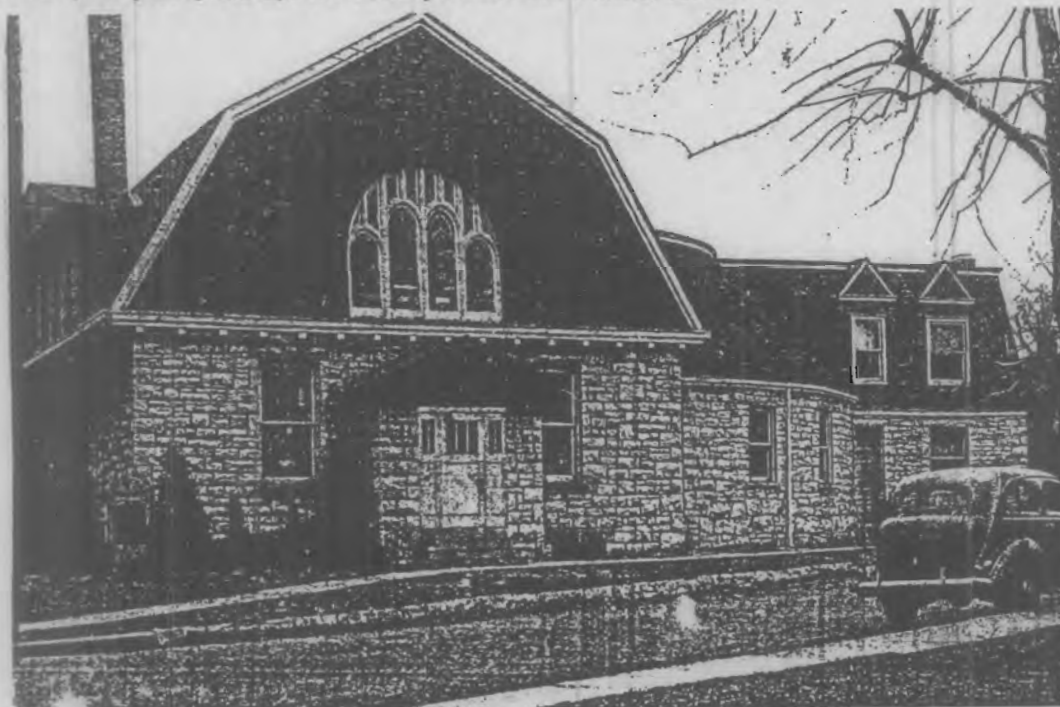
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founder of the St. Louis Tuberculosis and Health Society and was once appointed to the Missouri Tuberculosis Commission.

Lynch's design maintained the style of the original building while joining its odd shape to a solid and conventional form. The rectangular auditorium—only later called a “sanctuary”—addition had a rather conventional plan compared to the 1895 building. It continued the style and materials of the old building, using a front-gabled gambrel roof to distinguish the addition from the rest of the building. Entrance was through a projecting foyer facing Bompert Avenue on one of the gable-end elevations. The interior plan featured pews arranged with a center aisle leading to an elevated area where the pulpit was located. In contrast to the adaptation of the Akron Plan that the original main space featured, the new space was very traditional. In keeping with the Akron Plan style, though, the new auditorium was connected to the old one by a series of overhead-mounted rolling doors. The exterior continued the simplicity of scale and materials exhibited in the original building. However, the addition gives the original building a more balanced appearance, with the curved wall appearing as a connecting element rather than a projecting anomaly.

Figure #3: The church with the 1908 sanctuary. Source: Ralph E. Davis, *Webster Groves Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): 100 Years of Service and Witness, 1895-1995*.



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Rev. Z.T. Sweeney of Columbus, Indiana dedicated the new auditorium in June 1908. Sweeney traveled nationally to dedicate new churches; he would preach for hours and keep the audience until the assembled public had contributed a large amount of money to pay off construction debt. For the Tuxedo Park Christian Church, he raised \$2,400.00 at the dedication, after asking the crowd to raise \$200.<sup>21</sup> The money allowed the church to raise the pay for Rev. Hamann, marking the first time they were able to raise a minister's pay. The demand for the new sanctuary was great by the time it opened; membership reached 183 people by the December 1908 annual meeting. Ten people joined the congregation in January 1909 alone, in contrast to the nine who joined in the entire year of 1908.<sup>22</sup> The next decade was prosperous for the congregation.

The auditorium caught fire on November 14, 1920, and much of it was lost. The congregation's finances had improved to the point where they were able to swiftly restore their worship space, however. By April 28, 1921, the auditorium was rededicated.<sup>23</sup> Apparently, the restoration work employed the original designs and made few alterations. Church records from this period have been mostly lost. In 1925, the congregation took its current name of the Webster Groves Christian Church. The congregation continued to grow over the years, especially under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Raymond McCallister, pastor between 1939 and 1975. Eventually, the church decided to build a larger building in another part of Webster Groves, and on December 19, 1954, the first service took place at the new sanctuary. Until the educational building was complete in 1955, the Sunday School met at the old church at Tuxedo and Bompat.<sup>24</sup> The Webster Groves Christian Church sold the old church to the Orthodox Lutheran Church in August 1955.<sup>25</sup> Since then, four different churches have owned the building. For the past ten years, the evangelical Jubilee Christian Church has occupied the building.

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<sup>21</sup> Davis, p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> Davis, p. 22.

<sup>23</sup> Davis, p. 31-32.

<sup>24</sup> Davis, p. 158.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

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**Boundary Description**

The nominated parcel is located at 700 Tuxedo Boulevard in the city of Webster Groves, Missouri. The site is legally known as Lot One (1) in Block Twelve (12) of the Tuxedo Park Subdivision in the St. Louis County Records. The nominated property is indicated by a dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "Tuxedo Park Christian Church Boundary Map."

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated parcel includes all of the property historically associated with the Tuxedo Park Christian Church.

Tuxedo Park Christian Church Boundary Map

Source: Plan by St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation, 1992.

