

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City and Parsonage

Other name/site number: Pilgrim Chapel

2. Location

3801-3807 Gillham Road N/A not for publication
Kansas City N/A vicinity
state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64111

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide X locally.

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Claire F. Blackwell 1 March 2000
Signature of certifying official/Claire F. Blackwell/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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register.

 See continuation sheet

 determined eligible for the National Register.

 See continuation sheet

 determined not eligible for the National Register.

 removed from the National Register.

 other, (explain:)

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Property Name Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City and ParsonageCounty and State Jackson County, MissouriPage 2**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u> public-local	<u> </u> district	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u> public-State	<u> </u> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u> public-Federal	<u> </u> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<u> </u> object	<u>2</u> Total	

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a
multiple property listing.)n/aNo. of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register:0**6. Functions or Use**Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)RELIGION:Religious FacilityRELIGION:Church-related ResidenceCurrent Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)RELIGION:Religious FacilityRELIGION:Church-related Residence**7. Description**Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:Late Gothic RevivalMODERN MOVEMENTMaterials
(Enter categories from instructions.)Foundation STONE:LimestoneWalls STONE:LimestoneSTUCCORoof CERAMIC TILEASPHALTOther METAL:CopperBRICKNarrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more
continuation sheets.)

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

Property Name Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City and ParsonageCounty and State Jackson County, MissouriPage 4**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(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

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Specify repository:

KCMO Public Library; Concordia
Historical Institute; Pilgrim Chapel
Collection; Western Historical
Manuscript Collection

10. Geographical DataAcreage of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

1	<u>1/5</u>	<u>3/6/2/2/2/0</u>	<u>4/3/2/4/4/4/0</u>	3	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	4	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>

☐ 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 Elizabeth Rosin and Sally F. Schwenk
organization Historic Preservation Services, LLC date July 15, 1999
street & number 818 Grand Boulevard, Suite 1150 telephone (816) 221-5133
city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64106

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Pilgrim Chapel, Inc.
street & number 3801 Gillham Road telephone (816) 531-5002
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64111

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

Pilgrim Lutheran Chapel for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City and Parsonage
Jackson County, Missouri

SUMMARY

The Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City and Parsonage includes a small church and associated ministerial dwelling constructed in 1941 and 1942 respectively. Architecturally both structures reflect an English design philosophy. With design roots in historic English country churches, the T-shaped, rock-faced random ashlar limestone church incorporates Gothic lancet windows, a flat tile roof, and Gothic ornament. The Minimal Traditional style of the one-story frame parsonage expresses its Tudor roots through the use of stone and brick cladding, a robust shouldered chimney, and simulated half-timbering in the dormers and rear gable. Landscaping of the grassy lot combines deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs with seasonal flowering plants. A concrete walk curves up from the corner to the primary and secondary church entrances. A wrought iron fence and arched gate link the two buildings. The architectural integrity of both buildings remains highly intact.

The two buildings occupy a double lot at the southeast corner of 38th Street and Gillham Road across the street from Hyde Park in the Westport area of Kansas City. This location is approximately three-quarters of a mile northeast of the Westport business and commercial district and three miles south of Kansas City's Central Business District. The property is also at the edge of the National Register-listed *Central Hyde Park Historic District*, which was designated in 1980. The period of significance for this residential district is 1888-1929.

CHURCH

Exterior

The one-story stone church has a T-shaped configuration with the main block oriented east-west, perpendicular to Gillham Road. The north-south block extends from the north side of the main block slightly east of its midpoint. A vestibule containing the main entrance projects from the front (west) of the main block, and a small, flat-roofed one-story block is located at the northeast juncture of the primary and secondary blocks.

Resting on a limestone foundation, the rock-faced, random ashlar Indiana limestone walls are capped by a red ceramic tile roof. Rising from the roof, on the ridge immediately in front of the gable junction is a polygonal fleche with a stucco base, louvered copper belfry, and pointed copper roof crowned by a stainless steel cross. A stone chimney rises at the edge of the eave line at the junction of the primary, secondary and flat-roofed blocks. Attached to the rectangular chimney is a small bell-cote with a sloped stone top, approximately two-thirds as tall as the main stack. A bell, originally housed in the single lancet opening, was stolen in 1975 (KC Star, 1975).

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The south wall of the church forms the top of the "T" -shape. False buttresses divide this wall into four bays each with two, tall narrow lancet windows. Similarly, two bays of two windows separated by a single buttress pierce the north side of the primary block. On this elevation a second buttress is adjacent to the intersecting wall of the secondary block.

The entrance vestibule projects from the west wall of the primary block. Smooth stone coping edges the front (west) wall, which extends above and beyond the side walls. A carved stone cross with Gothic embellishments crowns the gable end of the main block above the vestibule. An arched doorway on axis with the altar fills the west side of this unit, and single lancet window openings pierce the north and south sides. Smooth dressed stone surrounds the door and window openings. Filling the opening are a pair of doors composed of wide, vertical beaded boards. Decorative, wrought iron strap hinges and a brass handle and lock adorn the doors. A polygonal copper and milk glass lantern is centered above the entrance.

A secondary entrance is in the west wall of the secondary block, south of center, near the north wall of the primary block. A broad, smooth stone header caps the entrance. Like the main entrance, wide, vertical beadboard composes the doors. A rectangular window filled with multiple rectangular panes of colored leaded glass pierces each door.

Smooth, carved stone surrounds frame the window and door openings. Centered in the gable of the main block above the entrance is a quatrefoil window, while the sole opening on the east elevation is a cinquefoil window in a pentagonal carved stone surround. Stained glass images depicting religious scenes fill these two windows. During the construction, the architect, F.R. Webber, admonished the pastor to treat windows "as decoration, and not as posters." "Detached symbols are nonsensical, unless it [sic] is an IHC or a cross" (PLCD 1942a). The window installed in the west gable end follows Webber's recommendation for using Isaiah 29:18 "...with a figure of the Lord in the center, and a deaf man kneeling before him and perhaps a blind man coming in the distance to be healed" (Ibid.) The remaining windows are multi-light, single-hung metal sashes with fixed upper panes and movable lower sashes. Rectangular panes of colored glass separated by lead muntins fill all the windows. The color scheme features light purple glass ringed by a band of yellow.

Interior

The main block of the church contains the nave and chancel. The north block houses a secondary vestibule and sacristy on the first floor. A social hall occupies the full basement beneath the sanctuary. Through the main entrance in the west end of the building one enters into the rear of the nave. At the east end the width constricts and the floor rises three steps at the chancel drawing attention to the altar. The design left exposed the limestone walls and the structural elements of the ceiling. The two braced-arch trusses that frame the ceiling spring from stone corbels in the side walls. One truss is located one

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bay west of the chancel (roughly where the primary and secondary blocks of the building join) and the second truss is located at the midpoint of the nave (between the first and second bays). These locations correspond to the placement of buttresses on the exterior of the building. The rafters tie into massive timber plates above the windows, and notch into perpendicular purlins in two locations before the opposing rafters meet at the gable ridgebeam. Heavy iron bolts secure the pieces of the roof structure. Splayed stone surrounds frame the windows. The oak floor of the sanctuary is laid in a basket weave pattern. Carpet covers the aisle and chancel. Suspended above the aisle from the trusses are two three-blade ceiling fans.

The sanctuary retains its original golden oak furnishings. Eight rows of pews flank the central aisle. The chancel floor rises three steps above the floor of the nave. At the front and to the sides of the chancel are a pulpit and lectern. Communion rails on the second step flank the aisle to the altar. At the back of the chancel is the altar behind which hangs a velvet dorsal curtain on a wrought iron rod with circular ends. To either side in front of the altar are a baptismal font and a flower stand. A collection box sits at the front of the nave near the south wall.

Four chandeliers illuminate the sanctuary. Four upright round lanterns surround an oblong bowl hanging at the center of each wrought iron fixture. Sconces of like materials and similar design flank the paired doors at the west end of the room. The glass in the light fixtures has an amber cast.

Two pairs of doors lead from the sanctuary to the secondary block. The main space in the secondary block is a large foyer. This area originally accommodated overflow seating, and the two pairs of doors enhance visibility of the pulpit. At the north end of the space a solid wall of vertical, wide, oak beadboard surrounds the stairwell to the basement. A tripartite casement window in the east wall and a circular window in the north gable end illuminate this space. They feature the same leaded glass pattern and stone surround as the sanctuary windows. A light fixture, similar to those in the sanctuary but simpler in design, hangs from the ceiling near the stairs. The exposed stone walls and parquet floor match those in the sanctuary.

A sacristy office at the southeast corner has doors to the foyer and to the pulpit. A small, wall-mounted sink and tripartite casement window are the prominent features of this room. The finishes of this space also match the sanctuary.

The basement is an open space designed for social activities. The floor is painted concrete and the walls are parged stone. The corrugated metal and small metal trusses that cover the ceiling carry the heating and cooling ductwork. Fluorescent box lights hang from the ceiling. A bathroom is located at the southeast corner. Originally, a second bathroom was located immediately to the north; north of the second bathroom is the mechanical room. The base of the stairs has wide beadboard paneling. A ghost

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in the concrete floor and pipes in the west wall suggest that a partition in this area has been removed. A door adjacent to the mechanical room provides access to the outside. Three-light metal hopper windows filled with clear glass are regularly spaced along the north and south walls.

PARSONAGE

Exterior

The parsonage is a one-story dwelling constructed in a Minimal Traditional design. A side-gabled, attached one-car garage punctuates the south end of the side-gabled main block. The garage is setback from the façade of the dwelling. A gable entrance porch projects from the front (west) façade and two gable dormers rise above the roof. Typical of this style, the façade is asymmetrical. Like the church, the parsonage rests on a limestone foundation. Matching the neighboring church, a rock-faced, random ashlar limestone veneer faces the west (front) and north sides of the platform frame structure. The east (rear) and south elevations and the garage are faced with dark, red and brown brick. Heavily textured stucco and wood boards simulate half-timbering in the dormers and rear porch gable. Composition shingles clad the roof. On the front (west) below the tight eaves, is a brick cornice featuring a course of soldier bricks topped by a course of brick laid in running bond. Triangular areas of brick in the north gable end simulate cornice returns.

Prominently located at the north end of the dwelling, a shouldered exterior stone chimney rises just west of the ridge. The shoulders and chimney cap are brick. Double-hung windows fill openings in the first and attic stories east of the chimney. A single casement window fills an opening in the first story west of the chimney.

On the rear (east) elevation a gabled, screened porch projects from the northeast corner of the dwelling level with the grade. Flanking the back door are a pair of windows in the breakfast room and a single, kitchen window. A shed dormer fills approximately half the width of the rear roof slope and includes a single window at each end.

With the exception of the living room windows, all of the windows of the parsonage are double-hung sash with 4/4 or 6/6 configuration. The exception is the kitchen window, which has a 3/1 light configuration. The living room windows are multi-light casement units. A tall, narrow window is next to the chimney, and a tripartite bay window pierces the main (west) elevation. All of the first story window openings and the window in the attic story north elevation have projecting brick header sills.

A paneled wood overhead door fills the single bay in the front (west) wall of the garage. Double-hung windows are centered in the first and attic stories of the garage's south wall.

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Interior

The interior layout of the parsonage reflects the casual asymmetry of the exterior design. On the first story a large open living room and dining fill the north end of the dwelling. A breakfast room and a kitchen run across the back of the house. Immediately south of the entrance is an office, and a half-bath fills the space between the office and kitchen on the south side of the dwelling. The straight-run stair is located roughly in the center of the dwelling off of the hall that leads from the front door to the kitchen. In the attic story, bedrooms occupy the north and south ends of the dwelling with a linen closet and bathroom placed between them, facing the open stairwell. A second, small office in the upper level of the garage is accessible from the south bedroom.

All of the walls and ceilings are plaster and the floors are narrow oak. In the first floor and south bedroom the floorboards are painted. Wood trim includes baseboards and window and door surrounds throughout the dwelling. The first floor also has crown molding. Eight-paneled doors fill the doorways on the first floor and two-paneled doors fill the openings on the attic floor. The first floor cherry trim is painted only in the office, kitchen and bathroom. All of the trim is painted on the attic story.

The dwelling's architectural details are characteristic of English-influenced, mid-20th century Minimal Traditional architecture. The fireplace features a glazed brick skirt and surround framed by a delicate mantle with dentils and paired slender dowels. The stair features a simple, delicately turned newel post and spindles.

Setting

The church and parsonage occupy a double lot at the southeast corner of 38th Street and Gillham Road across the street from the south end of Hyde Park. The property slopes up from the sidewalk along Gillham Road and the grade rises gradually along 38th Street. A concrete walk curves from the corner of the lot to the primary and secondary church entrances. A second walk leads from Gillham Road to the front of the parsonage on axis with the front door.

Deciduous and evergreen trees punctuate the lot. Evergreen shrubs and seasonal flowers line the foundation of the church, while a looser arrangement of deciduous flowering shrubs and flowers line the foundation of the parsonage. A section of simple wrought iron fence connects the two buildings with an arched gate at the center providing access to the back yard. A matching section of wrought iron fence extends from the northwest corner of the church's secondary block to the 38th Street sidewalk and east along 38th Street. At the east property line, the wrought iron fence meets a solid wood privacy fence, which extends across the back property line.

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Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City and Parsonage
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SUMMARY

The *Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City and Parsonage* is locally significant under National Register **Criteria A** and **C** in the areas of **SOCIAL HISTORY** and **ARCHITECTURE**, respectively. As a religious property, the *Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City and Parsonage* meets the National Register **CRITERIA CONSIDERATION A** because it derives its primary significance from architectural distinction and historical importance. In the area of Social History, Pilgrim Chapel represents a rare example of a religious building constructed by and for a special-needs congregation. The church provided religious services and social opportunities for deaf and hearing-impaired persons who were often ignored by the hearing community. The church design addressed the special needs of the congregation by providing clear sight lines and appropriate lighting that enhanced visibility of the minister conducting services at the altar. Architecturally, Pilgrim Chapel is a seminal expression of the architectural philosophy of its designer, Frederick Roth Webber. From its siting, to its materials, proportions and massing, to its interior ornament, Pilgrim Chapel embodies the tenets Webber espoused in his book *The Small Church*. The design of the adjacent parsonage harmonizes with the Gothic-inspired chapel, presenting a clean modern design in the Minimal Traditional style. Both buildings retain a very high level of integrity. The period of significance begins with the construction of the chapel in 1941 and ends in 1950 with the arbitrary 50-year cutoff date.

ELABORATION

CRITERION A – SOCIAL HISTORY

Under **Criterion A**, the *Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City and Parsonage* is a unique local example of a historic religious building and associated parsonage constructed for a hearing-impaired congregation. At the time of its construction, Pilgrim Chapel was one of less than ten churches constructed nationwide by the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church specifically to serve the deaf community. The Missouri Synod's Deaf Mission trained pastors in sign language to bring worship opportunities to an often disenfranchised, deaf segment of the population. The Mission provided the deaf with a unique and stimulating setting for religious devotion, learning and social interaction that often was not available in the community-at-large. Established for nearly forty years, at the time of the church dedication, the Pilgrim Chapel congregation included nearly 200 individuals.

Special attention given to the design of the church made it user-friendly to its congregation. The design of the nave included sight lines that maximized visibility of the pulpit. When the sanctuary was full, two sets of doors to the north vestibule opened to provide additional worshippers with a clear view of the service. The lighting design also enhanced the experience of worshippers. As the pastor wrote during

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construction, "since our Chapel is the house of worship for DEAF people, the church-messages are received entirely by vision. We usually have the Nave lighted dimly during the sermon, and illuminated more brightly for reading during public worship" (PLCD, 1945a). While good visibility and lighting may not be unique in church design, what is notable are the efforts taken by Rev. Ferber to build a "dignified church" that addressed the special needs of his parishioners.

Introduction

During the 19th century immigration patterns resulted in the presence of an increasing variety of religious denominations in America. Germans came to America and Missouri in great numbers in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, bringing with them a heritage of strong religious convictions. Protestants comprised the majority of German immigrants to the United States, and the majority of the Protestants were Lutheran. Their traditionally varied territorial, national and theological heritage provided neither an administrative nor a doctrinal center in the United States. As a result several different sects developed. Most shared the conservative nature of the immigrants and, particularly in the Midwest and West, produced a strong desire to retain the German language and a distrust of any departure from staunch Lutheranism. Formed in 1847, the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States was the largest of several groups that merged in 1918 to form the United Lutheran Church (Schwenk p. 18-20).

Nevertheless, by the late 19th century, the Missouri Synod began to reflect the trend in Protestantism as it moved from diversity toward commonality. Although after their arrival, Protestant immigrants developed a variety of sects that reflected particular regional beliefs and practices. By the end of the century, common forms of worship, hymns, and ritual processes increasingly linked the sects. Sunday Schools became increasingly common, and an interdenominational committee prepared International Sunday School Lessons, which were widely distributed across the country. Youth organizations and mid-week prayer meetings and missionary work became common (Schwenk p. 14-15).

History of the Deaf Mission of the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod

As part of their mission work, the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church initiated formal programs for work with the hearing-impaired in 1873 when it established an institute for the deaf in association with an existing orphanage near Detroit (Suelflow, p. 6-7). Among the students who graduated from the institute during its early years was cigar maker Edward Pahl. In 1894, at the age of 30, Pahl, frustrated at not being able to participate in regular worship services, sent a letter to the Synod encouraging the establishment of a mission to serve the hearing-impaired community (Ibid., p. 9). Rev. Augustus Reinke, pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Chicago, responded to this call and, only two weeks after Pahl's letter, preached the first Lutheran sermon in sign language (Ibid., p. 10). Within two years Reinke preached to hearing-impaired worshipers throughout the Midwest, attending to congregations in smaller communities in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, as well as to larger groups in

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Milwaukee and Chicago. Interestingly, at a time when most Missouri Synod services were still conducted in German, services for the hearing-impaired were signed in American Sign Language, which was based on English (DeLaney, p. 12).

Having experienced the strong interest in these special services, in 1896 Reinke wrote an eloquent appeal to the Missouri Synod urging the establishment of a mission among the hearing-impaired (Suelflow, p. 11). At the Missouri Synod's convention, Reinke spoke before the floor committee and preached a service for the deaf (DeLaney 17). The floor committee agreed that the Synod "should take advantage of the opportunity which [had] been offered, and should have this work continued in its name and under its supervision" (Ibid.). Perhaps the reason for the establishment of the Mission is best expressed in a letter prepared in 1939 during a fund-raising campaign for Pilgrim Church in Kansas City. It stated, "...the general public considers the Deaf little more than illiterates. Lutherans, however, consider them children of God, having a blood-bought soul which must be brought to the Saviour. To bring them to the Saviour is our only object and the gospel is our only means" (PLCD 1939c).

Before the end of the convention, the Synod established a five-member Deaf Mission Commission to oversee the new program. The Commission, charged with planning and operating the mission, fixed salaries of missionaries at \$50 per month plus rent. Travel allowances provided by the Mission included train fare only, and the ministers depended upon the hospitality of parishioners and pastors in the communities they visited for their lodging (Suelflow, p. 12-13; DeLaney, p. 28).

Within a year after the establishment of the Deaf Mission Commission, Reinke solicited several students at Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis to begin studying sign language in preparation for an assignment ministering to the hearing-impaired (DeLaney, p.14). The Synod assigned three of those students, Herman A. Bentrup, Enno A. Duemmling, and Traugott Wangerin, to serve congregations in Louisville, Kentucky; Detroit, Michigan; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, respectively. As did many of the ministers in the Deaf Mission, these pastors performed their duties in association with a hearing congregation. A newspaper article forty years later described a service in which "a unique sign language [made] it possible for the missionary to preach the Gospel in a very clear and inspiring manner," and for the worshippers to "sing" hymns and offer prayers (*KC Journal Post*, 1937). In many instances spoken services for lip reading worshippers with partial hearing impairment supplemented signed services.

In 1896, the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Church of Our Saviour became the denomination's first church established specifically to serve a hearing impaired congregation. Arthur L. Reinke, son of Augustus Reinke, lead the Chicago congregation (Suelflow, p. 14). Two years later, Wangerin's ministry in Milwaukee established the Synod's second hearing-impaired congregation (DeLaney 24). At its 1899 convention the Missouri Synod admitted the Evangelical Lutheran Emmanuel Congregation of the Deaf "with great joy" (Ibid., 24-25).

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All the ministers trained in sign language traveled regionally to preach to hearing-impaired parishioners in communities without a deaf ministry. From Chicago Reinke served communities in Fort Wayne, Indiana and the Twin Cities. Bentrup, based in Louisville, extended his service to Cincinnati and Dayton, Ohio, and to Indianapolis and Evansville, Indiana. From Milwaukee, Wangerin preached throughout Wisconsin (Suelflow, p. 14).

When the Deaf Mission Commission reported to the Synod at its 1902 convention, there were seven missionaries working among the hearing-impaired. In addition to the first three communities, South Bend, Indiana; St. Louis; Minneapolis-St. Paul; and the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago now had deaf congregations. The missionaries reported that in the intervening six years they preached to 1,500 persons, communed 792, married 23 deaf-mute couples, confirmed 55 adults, baptized nine and buried five. The Mission raised \$7,296.14 and incurred expenses of \$7,256.56 for a net income of \$39.58 (Ibid., p. 15). By 1904 the Mission Board established thirty preaching stations across the country. The Synod hoped that many of these missionaries could perform their work in association with hearing congregations, thereby relieving some of the financial burden on the Mission (Ibid., p. 21).

After this initial burst of activity, over the next six years the work of the Deaf Mission slowed slightly. By 1908 only five full-time salaried missionaries and three part-time workers ministered the Synod's hearing-impaired community. This figure included the missionary established in Kansas City after the 1904 Synod convention. Although few in number, these eight individuals conducted services in approximately 40 communities and at nine state schools for the deaf, providing religious services for nearly 5,000 individuals (Ibid., p. 16).

Because their impairment isolated them to a degree from the general population, the services for the hearing impaired attracted members from a broad cross section of religious sects. Where there were hearing impaired congregations, there were also social activities for the hearing impaired in addition to religious services (*KC Star* 1941b). By 1909, the strong interest among the parishioners spurred the Mission to begin publishing a monthly newsletter, *The Deaf Lutheran* (Suelflow, p. 24).

In 1937, an article in the *Kansas City Journal Post* reported that missionaries from the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church working out of 17 large cities (including Kansas City) currently served the hearing impaired population. Of these, only seven hearing-impaired Lutheran congregations nationwide had their own buildings. These were located in Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Portland, Seattle and Spokane. (*KC Journal Post*, 1937). In 1942 when Pilgrim Chapel was dedicated the Deaf Mission had twelve other congregations. However, only six of these appear to have had their own buildings (Loy, pers. comm., 1999).

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Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City and Parsonage
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History of the Deaf Mission in Kansas City

The history of the Deaf Mission in Kansas City lasted over 75 years. The Missouri Synod's Deaf Mission Board approved a pastorate based in Kansas City in 1904, and in 1906 assigned Rev. N.F. Jenson to lead the congregation and minister to the hearing-impaired of western Missouri, Kansas and Colorado in 1906. The Reverends L. Jagels (1914-18), O.C. Shrader (1918-21), and E.C. Baker (1921-23) succeeded Jenson before Rev. Alfred E. Ferber assumed the mission in 1924. Ferber ministered the congregation of Pilgrim Lutheran Church for 50 years until his retirement in 1974 and oversaw the construction of the chapel and parsonage (*The Deaf Lutheran*, 1993).

The Kansas City congregation initially met for weekly religious services at the Immanuel Lutheran Church at 16th and Cherry streets. They later met at the Y.M.C.A. at 10th and Oak streets before the construction of Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf in 1941 (Hoggins, p. 38.5; *KC Star*, 1967). During his tenure Rev. Ferber also conducted sign language services for the African-American community at the Paseo Y.M.C.A.

Reverend Alfred E. Ferber joined the Lutheran Deaf Ministry in Kansas City in September 1924 a few months after his ordination. In preparation for his mission, Ferber supplemented his theological training at Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota with a year's study of sign language (CHIA, [n.d.]a; *KC Star* 1941b). He performed his first service on October 5th, three weeks after his arrival, preaching a sermon based on the text of Matthew 14:22-23. His log book records \$1.80 in collections for that day (PLCD 1924-34).

Ferber's father and three of his brothers were also Lutheran ministers; two of the brothers also ministered hearing-impaired congregations in Duluth, Minnesota and Los Angeles. Ferber recalled a deaf man who attended worship services at his father's church who, although fully educated, could only communicate with a few individuals. It was this memory, in part, that encouraged Ferber to seek a ministry among the hearing impaired (*KC Journal Post* 1937).

Ferber traveled regularly throughout a territory that included western Missouri, Kansas and Colorado. He ministered to communities outside Kansas City approximately once every six weeks and traveled to Colorado bi-monthly (*KC Star* 1941b). He also performed regular services for hearing-impaired members of the African-American community and, in 1933, established a service for lip readers (*Ibid.*). In 1925 he conducted 116 services. That number increased to 123 services in 1930, reaching a total audience of 827 worshippers. During 1933 Ferber recorded that he traveled over 15,836 miles in his ministering (PLCD 1924-33).

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Rev. Ferber spent the entire 50 years of his pastorate at Pilgrim Chapel. During his tenure he also served as Director of Publicity and Public Relations for the Missouri District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod for 20 years. In the year of his retirement, the Lutheran Friends of the Deaf and Mill Neck Manor Lutheran School for the Deaf awarded Ferber the John of Beverley Medal. This medal recognized Ferber's dedicated service to the Lutheran Deaf Mission and his distinguished pioneering work in ministering to the hearing impaired (CHIA, 1974). Following his retirement in 1974 he continued to minister as an assistant at Calvary Lutheran Church. He died in Kansas City on November 3, 1992 at the age of 93 (*The Deaf Lutheran* 85:1, p.2).

Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf



Letterhead in the PLCD Collection.

Under the leadership of Rev. Ferber, Kansas City's hearing-impaired Lutheran community began a thirteen-year fundraising effort in 1929 to construct their own church. The Missouri Synod approved the construction of the church in 1938, and provided a loan from the Church Extension Fund (*KC Star* 1940a). This loan enabled the congregation to purchase land and to proceed with designing the new edifice. It appears that Rev. Ferber initiated the search for an architect based on this funding. He contacted F.R. Webber in September of 1938, and correspondence suggests that by January 1939 he initiated arrangements for Webber to design the church. By the end of 1940 the Building Committee had complete plans for the chapel and parsonage (PLCD 1938a; 1940c).

The loan from the Synod also lent a renewed effort to the Pilgrim Chapel fundraising effort. Encouraged by three other congregations in the area, in 1939 Rev. Ferber and the Building Committee embarked on a direct mail campaign. In an eloquent letter to "Friends of Pilgrim Chapel-plan," Ferber wrote, "...where other people say: 'Let the Deaf meet in any kind of hall, there you folks say: 'Let's give them a dignified church.' ...Hence I believe you will agree with our humble hope, and fundamental plan" (PLCD, 1939c). The campaign was successful. At the end of 1940, the project needed \$2,500 to begin construction (PLCD, 1940c). By the end of 1941, the campaign raised nearly \$3,500 toward the construction of the chapel (PLCD, 1941d).

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However, the congregation did not acquire the property on which it would build for approximately one year. It is unclear at what point Rev. Ferber identified the parcel at the southeast corner of 38th Street and Gillham Road for the new chapel. On March 18, 1940, Rev. and Mrs. Ferber purchased the vacant lot from Fidelity National Bank and Trust for \$3000 (Deed Book B-3435; p. 394). *The Kansas City Star* announced this purchase one week later on Easter weekend (*KC Star* 1940a). On April 15, 1940, the Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City incorporated, filing Articles of Agreement in Jackson County Circuit Court (Deed Book B-3439, p. 690) and, on May 2 purchased the property from the Ferbers (Deed Book B-3394; p. 189).

Another year passed before Rev. Ferber applied for a building permit for construction of the church on June 17, 1941. The estimated value of the structure was \$9500 (Kansas City BP # 15984). The cornerstone was laid on September 7, 1941 (PLCD Memory Book [n.d.]). In an end-of-the-year accounting, Rev. Ferber tallied nearly \$3,500 in donations toward the construction of the chapel. He notes excitedly, "In addition thereto, a Pittsburgh friend honored us with a \$1,000.00 gift." Three local congregations assisted Pilgrim Church's efforts to raise funds by sending letters to their parishioners soliciting \$10 gifts. This plea resulted in over \$650 in gifts during the month of July. Between fall of 1934 and the end of 1941 Immanuel Lutheran Church, the former home of the Pilgrim congregation, donated over \$1,500 toward the construction of the chapel. Members from other local churches donated an additional \$1,000. During the previous construction season, Ferber related, "...manual labor assistance was received. Lutheran and other friends 162 hours; Deaf members and friends 157 hours..." (PLCD 1941d). Ultimately, over five hundred benefactors from across the country contributed funding for the construction of the church (*KC Star* 1941b).

During construction, the Kansas City press printed nearly a half-dozen stories about the project. An article written shortly after construction began included a perspective rendering of the church and described the amenities of the Gothic style building, including an "educational wing and basement social facilities" (*KC Star* 1941a). The article describes this as one of ten churches serving the hearing impaired erected by the Missouri Synod nationwide. It also refers to the architectural team of F.R. Webber of Boston and his local associate, Clifton Ramey, who undertook the task of designing a church and lighting system to specifically meet the needs of the hearing-impaired.

America's entry into World War II impacted the construction of the church. As Rev. Ferber related in the dedication program, "Our country's needs caused us to defer several phases until later" (PLCD, 1942e). As men enlisted in the military and the war effort appropriated the services of specialty manufacturers, resources for private construction were scarce. Fred Eckhardt, the pulpit maker from Cleveland, wrote to Rev. Ferber in June 1942 acknowledging the order of the altar pulpit and communion rail. Eckhardt stated that the work should be completed by June 27. "We are not able to do this work quicker," he continued, "because the government has taken some of our men and others have

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gone into war work.” (PLCD 1942d). Two years later a lighting manufacturer wrote Ferber, “At the present time we are so busily engaged in the manufacturing of war materials that we could not possibly handle your order” (PLCD 1944). The church ultimately did not receive the chandeliers or exterior, nave and vestibule lights until the end of 1947 despite initiating discussion with the manufacturer in 1944 (PLCD 1946b; PLCD 1947b).

In spite of the war-time shortages, the church was functionally complete less than one year after the start of construction. On July 12, 1942 a crowd of 250 attended a service dedicating the chancel conducted by Rev. John Schumacher of St. Paul, Minnesota, a member of the Lutheran Board of Missions to the Deaf. The Reverend Ernest Mappes, a minister to the hearing impaired of Omaha, signed the service (*KC Star* 1942a). Parishioners filled the church, which seated eighty-eight in the main sanctuary and thirty in the adjoining hall. A public address system broadcast the service to hearing visitors who listened on chairs set on the front lawn, and radio station WDAF rebroadcast the service that evening (*KC Star* 1942b; PLCD 1942e).

At the time of the dedication Rev. Ferber estimated his congregation at about 200. With the church complete, he planned to offer two services each Sunday, one in sign language and one for lip readers, in addition to regular Sunday School classes (*KC Star* 1941b).

Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf served the hearing impaired community of Kansas City for nearly 40 years. The Reverend Walter Uhlig (1974-79) succeeded Rev. Ferber upon his retirement. Rev. Lavern Maas was the final pastor of Pilgrim Church between 1979-87. The church closed in 1987 and sat vacant until purchased by Pilgrim Chapel, Inc. in 1998. It was reopened in 1998 as a non-denominational house of worship.

CRITERION C – ARCHITECTURE

When we build let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for the present delight, nor for present use alone, but let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for. Let us think as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come that those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say as they look upon our labor and the finished substance of them, “See, this is what our fathers did for us.” (John Ruskin quoted by Rev. A.E. Ferber May 5, 1939)

Under Criterion C, *Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City* is a seminal expression of the architectural philosophy of its designer, Frederick Roth Webber. Its siting, its materials, proportions and massing, and its interior ornament embody the tenets Webber espoused in his

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book *The Small Church*. Stemming from the example of historic English churches, Webber's Ruskinian ideas of church design demanded a well built, stylistically true, functional edifice that did not bend to current fashions or secular demands. Webber strove to create a reverential atmosphere, one that "when we enter it, we instinctly [sic] lower our voices and remove our hats" (Webber, p. 21). This quality of design remains palpable in the building today.

Gothic Revival Architecture

Since the development of the pointed arch around the twelfth century, the Gothic architectural style has dominated Christian church design. The pointed arch allowed the weight of a building to be concentrated at specific points and to be transferred to the ground by buttresses. Windows, often with highly ornate stained glass, filled the large wall area between the buttresses. The resulting buildings were taller, thinner walled, and lighter, creating an ethereal atmosphere on the interior. Gothic architecture dominated church building throughout Europe for the next several centuries, and early immigrants brought the style to America (Wolfenbarger and Thomason, p. 46).

A renewed interest in Gothic architecture arose in America during the mid-19th century Romantic Period. During this time, residential, institutional and religious buildings adapted medieval Christian architecture to create the Gothic Revival style. The style commonly featured pointed arched openings, masonry construction, steep gables, and intricate trim. Gothic precedents especially influenced mid to late-19th century American church design as architects became acquainted with the writings of Augustus W.N. Pugin, who touted accurate reconstructions of Gothic churches as the only acceptable model for a Christian house of worship. Later in the century, institutional and civic buildings were constructed in the High Victorian Gothic style, which was heavily influenced by the work of John Ruskin and his advocacy for bolder, less imitative Gothic design. By the end of the century, simple vernacular interpretations of Gothic Revival churches as well as high style examples could be found in communities across the country. While other architectural idioms replaced the Gothic Revival for residential design by this time, Gothic-influenced architecture continued to dominate ecclesiastical design into the 20th century (Poppeliers, et.al., p. 40-41).

The 1992 *Survey of Religious Properties in Kansas City* found that nearly half (91) of the 200 religious properties surveyed were constructed in a high style or vernacular interpretation of the Gothic Style. Of these 48 were stone. Kansas City's Gothic Revival churches include grand examples imitative of European cathedrals as well as more modest designs that express their Gothic roots through pointed arched windows and entrances (Ibid., p. 46-50).

The Small Church

The Pilgrim Lutheran Church Building Committee selected architect Frederick Roth Webber after extensive review of small churches throughout the Midwest and correspondence with pastors of recently

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constructed churches. Webber emphasized the importance of the church as a house of God, distinguishing it from a non-ecclesiastical building, and believed that church design should enhance the spirituality of visitors, providing refuge from secular concerns (Webber, p. 1-3). In its massing, scale and proportions, materials, features and setting Pilgrim Chapel is the quintessential expression of the architect's design philosophy.

In addition to his personal architectural philosophy, the work of architect Edward Manfe, who designed at least two churches for the hearing impaired in London, influenced Webber's design for Pilgrim Chapel. In particular, the lighting design, which highlights the pulpit, is derivative of Manfe's work (*KC Star* 1941b). As late as 1967, an article on the 25th anniversary of the church remarked that "Pilgrim Chapel is one of the few nationally whose congregation maintains its own structure designed for fullest illumination as sermons are conveyed in sign language" (*KC Star* 1967).

Webber held strong opinions on church architecture and expressed those opinions freely in his book, *The Small Church: How to Build It and Furnish It*. In this tome, Webber synthesized centuries of church building into a blueprint for modern architects of religious buildings. With the goal of providing, "...a few practical principles by which the prospective church builder may distinguish good work from bad," Webber facilitated the construction of well-built structures that fostered the reverential atmosphere for which they were intended (Webber, p. xvii). Webber believed strongly that churches should be designed by "a trained church architect," if not by an architect with religious training (Ibid., p. 1-3). In *The Small Church* Webber presents both general and specific details that comprise good church design. He specifies materials, proportions, scale, and relationships between building elements that enhance the atmosphere and spiritual quality of religious buildings. Starting with the siting of the building, Webber discusses layout, vertical elevations, structural systems, roof pitches, exterior and interior treatments, windows and furnishings. The level of detail is such that the book could almost be used as a cookbook, providing a definitive formula for church design.

The small church, as defined by Webber, seats between 50 and 400 people. It might be of wood or masonry construction, although Webber strongly encouraged the use of stone to give the building a more solid, permanent appearance. Because funds for church construction were usually limited, Webber urged building committees to focus those funds on the construction of a smaller, solid, well-appointed building – one that might not have amenities for recreational activities often considered a necessity by pastors and congregational leaders (Ibid., p. 6-8). The following discussion of Webber's design philosophy highlights elements that are expressed in Pilgrim Chapel.

The construction of a good church, Webber claimed, started with the selection of an appropriate site and the correct orientation of the building on the site. "...if we have insufficient funds for land," he wrote, "it is better to wait a year or two, rather than ruin a church by locating it poorly" (Ibid., p. 16). In the

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model of historic English churches, Webber recommended siting a church well back from the road on a spacious, landscaped lot and, if possible, with the broad side facing the street. Webber emphasized the importance of orienting the structure on the site so that the altar was located in the east end of the nave. This was for reasons of "tradition, by every liturgical consideration, and even from the practical standpoints of heating, lighting and ventilation" (Ibid., p. 17-19). This orientation captures the morning sun above the altar and southerly summer breezes through the nave. Webber concluded, "neither site nor orientation has the slightest theological value. But, ...every tradition that has persisted will be found to have some reason for its being."

According to Webber, the floor plan was a critical element in the design of a church. "One may start with a good ground-plan," he wrote, "and end up with poor elevations, but it is impossible to begin with an ill-studied, badly arranged, loose-jointed ground-plan and build anything other than an ungainly church" (Ibid., p. 33). In the mode of "form follows function," Webber emphasized that the plan must reflect the ritual of the specific denomination constructing the church and that each element must be distinct and fully functional. The nature of the religious services would dictate the layout and inclusion of specific formal elements. Webber assigned small churches to one of four plan forms: simple rectangles, bipartite forms (divided into a nave and chancel), tripartite forms (divided into nave, choir and chancel) and cruciform (nave and chancel separated by a crossing with a north and south transept). For each of these forms Webber recommended an overall ratio of one-to-three (width-to-height) and presented a specific ratio of proportions for each of the primary elements. For instance, in a bipartite church, such as Pilgrim Chapel, the chancel should occupy one-third of the length and the nave two-thirds. By adding flanking aisles on either side of the nave, the designer could create more complex church forms (Ibid., p. 36-37). Webber cautioned that circulation must allow "communicants [to] approach and leave the rails without interfering with one another" (Ibid., p. 51).

Webber advocated solid stone construction as the most durable and cost effective for a small church. Although the initial cash outlay may be greater, Webber emphasized that a well-built church of high quality stone would last longer and need fewer repairs than a frame or brick veneer church (Ibid., p. 57). Webber strongly disliked frame churches, but understood that budget often dictated a congregation's selection of materials. In an early letter to Rev. Ferber, Webber suggests building a frame, "Cape Cod Colonial type of thing [that] I am trying to induce our men to build, where funds are limited, and where the usual, bone-headed procedure of a flimsy, shabby brick-veneer structure is the alternative" (PLCD 1939b). His feelings on this matter were so strong that Webber dedicated an entire chapter in *The Small Church* to "the Problem of the Frame Chapel."

In adding the third dimension to a church, Webber identifies proportions for wall height and roof pitch based on traditional Norman church designs. "It will be remembered that the typical church of this very interesting period is based upon the following proportions," he wrote, "the interior height of the side

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walls is equal to or a little greater than the interior width of the nave. The roof is slightly steeper than 45 degrees" (Webber, p. 79). The massing of the church should reflect its interior functions. "The chancel ought to be as high as the nave," Webber wrote, "...Sacristies, porches, chapels and projecting wings may well be kept rather low, in order to give scale to the church itself" (Ibid., p. 195). Equally important in the vertical composition was the placement of bays. The bays correspond to the exterior placement of buttresses on masonry buildings and to the placement of interior columns on clerestory churches. Webber recommended a ratio of two chancel bays to four or five nave bays for a small church and three to five or seven bays in a larger church (Ibid., p. 90).

Webber likened exterior cladding to the binding of a book that protects the more ornate interior. "It is a delightful experience," he writes, "to come upon a church whose exterior is simple and dignified, and then to enter its doors and discover that its interior ...offers us much more in the matter of beauty than we expected" (Ibid., p. 182). To create this effect the properly pitched roof should sweep over the chancel and nave in an unbroken line, gables should be slightly parapetted, eave lines tight, and ornament sparse (Ibid, p.184-86). Stone was clearly Webber's building material of choice. Again and again in *The Small Church* he advocates its use, finding it as economical as brick "in localities where good building stone is available" (Ibid., p.193).

The placement of the entry was important. Webber believed the church should be entered at grade with few or no steps to enter the sanctuary, and an entry vestibule, if present "ought to be deeper than its width, if it is to possess dignity," (Ibid., p. 42-3). "Whenever possible," Webber advised, "there ought to be a west doorway, with a center aisle at least five feet wide, leading directly to the altar." Webber recommended a pair of vertical board doors supported on oversized hinges of wrought iron. Ideally the architect would design the hinges to complement the design of the church. A single light above the entry would provide adequate illumination (Ibid., p.197-98).

Webber stressed that building construction dictated window shape. Frame buildings required square windows, while masonry buildings mandated rounded window shapes. "To use [square] windows in a brick or a stone church," Webber wrote, "is a structural lie.... It is as violent a misuse of structural integrity as a patch of boiler iron on the work elbow of a coat" (Ibid., p. 239). Similarly, Gothic architectural features, such as pointed arched windows, had no place in a frame or stucco church, in Webber's view, and should only be used in masonry structures, preferably stone, where they were a structural necessity (Ibid., p. 192). As he does for other building features, Webber provides recommended dimensions for windows and their placement. Windowsills should be at least 4' 6" above the floor, to minimize views of the outside and to maintain light coming in from the overhead (Ibid., p. 241). Webber recommended that unbroken wall area be greater than the area filled by windows. Rather than incorporate elaborate tracery into small windows, Webber advocated simple arched or lancet window frames arranged singly or in pairs with splayed jambs and sills on the interior.

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Webber recognized the importance of roof structure and design. He advocated a roof pitch of 50 degrees or more to "distinguish a church from a residence or a barn" (Ibid., p.223). Webber also preferred roofs clad with slates, varying in both size and color. Wood shingles were appropriate only for "the smallest and most inexpensive chapel," Webber wrote, "At best their life is limited, while they constitute a fire hazard that causes most localities to prohibit them" (Ibid., p. 234-35).

The Small Church includes an extensive discussion of roof trusses.

A sound truss, suitable for a chapel of 25' span or less, requires four 8" x 8" timbers to each bay," Webber advised, "to substitute trussed rafters ...under the mistaken impression that it is more economical, will require ...almost twice the amount of material and twice the amount of labour. (Ibid., p.223)

Webber specifies a number of different truss designs, including dimensions and simple illustrations for each, including the arch-braced truss used at Pilgrim Chapel. The arched-brace segmental truss has heavy timber members supported by a horizontal tie beam. Webber describes a truss like that a Pilgrim Chapel as "cambered" or raised slightly in the center. This eliminates the visual appearance of sagging associated with a flat-based arch. Stone corbels in the upper wall transfer the weight of the trusses to the exterior buttresses. Heavy iron bolts hold the truss together. To further strengthen the roof, Webber recommended, purlins running the length of the church roof to form a rigid frame. Bolted and perhaps strapped into the trusses, purlins brace the trusses and prevent the roof from sagging inward. The final critical element of roof design was the rafters. Oriented perpendicular to the purlins, Webber advocated that heavy timber (4" x 5") rafters be notched into the purlins at regular intervals. At the top of the wall the rafters are anchored into the wall plate and at the peak are anchored into the ridge beam. Because the roof structure was a visible, integral element of the sanctuary, Webber recommended that the rafters "be framed into the purlins in such a way that their upper surfaces come exactly in line with the upper surfaces of the trusses." Webber advocated that these elements be left visible on the interior. A wooden ceiling," he wrote, "...reduces painting bills astonishingly.... When the church is finished, the trusses, purlins, rafters and ceiling boards are given a coat of stain of a very light grayish brown color," producing a nearly permanent finish (Ibid., p. 225-28; 233-35).

The interior atmosphere of the church was critical. Webber espoused that proper dimensions of length and height were essential in distinguishing the atmosphere of a church from a secular public building, such as a lecture hall or theater. Resonance, light, furnishings, color and tone, and texture also contribute to a building's atmosphere. "Even a small church... whose height is somewhat greater than its interior width, is impressive," Webber advised (Ibid., p. 22). The taller windows permitted by ceiling height allow greater light into the sanctuary, which enhance the spiritual feeling of the space. However,

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too much light, as well as too little, Webber cautioned, can also harm the atmosphere of the church. "If the lighting can be subdued somewhat," he wrote, "...there may be highlights and pockets of purple shadow, [and] a certain effect of mystery is produced" (Ibid., p. 24). Webber recommended that a small masonry church be as narrow and as tall as possible to best capture the natural light.

Windows were an important element in creating atmosphere. They should be filled with "simple rectangular or diamond-shaped panes ...not more than four inches wide by four and three-quarters inches high, set in leads about seven-sixteenths of an inch wide." If a congregation desires decorative windows, Webber recommends simple patterns with limited color on a floral background. This method "screens the light, breaking it up into beautiful patterns, and contributes to the atmosphere of a church" (Ibid., p. 243-45).

While one or two medallions with figurative designs might be acceptable in the windows of the sidewalls, the window above the altar was where Webber preferred to see art glass. "The subjects for stained glass, and their location" Webber wrote, "are thoroughly fixed by tradition. Over the altar we may have but one subject, and that is Our Lord's Sacrifice for the sin of the world" (Ibid., p. 257). This image might be presented in one of several motifs, but "it is entirely improper to fill this altar window with any other subject." Webber continued,

In the west window is generally either a Last Judgement picture, or else a Te Deum, showing medallions representative of the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble army of Martyrs, and the Holy church throughout the world, praising and adoring their Glorified Lord (Ibid., p. 259).

In a letter dated 22 Jan 1942, Webber admonished Ferber that the stained glass windows in the east and west gable ends should be "...treated as decoration, and not as posters. Detached symbols are nonsensical," he continued, "unless it is an IHC or a cross." Instead, for the west windows, Webber recommended using a geometric pattern or "...a scene from Isaiah 29:18 ... with a figure of the Lord in the center, and a deaf man kneeling before him and perhaps a blind man coming in the distance to be healed" (PLCD1942a). Ferber adopted the latter suggestion, and this image can be seen in the west window above the entrance to the nave.

As he did with all elements of building design, if funds were limited, Webber advocated concentrating on just one decorative window. The first effort would go toward the altar window. "It is entirely in the wrong spirit to say: 'We have but \$1,000 available, and ten windows to fill, including those of the chancel. We will allow \$100 for each window.' This will lead to bad results, and none of the windows will be done properly," Webber cautioned (Ibid., p. 255). Instead, his solution was to install good

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temporary glass in the nave windows, replacing them, as funds for decorative windows became available.

Webber also admonished against churches painted in sharply contrasting colors, advocating instead the use of cool "mellow" tones. "Walls must be finished in cool grays or toupes [sic]," he wrote, "Chancel wood-work must have just enough stain to take away its rawness." To complement the exposed roof trusses, Webber advocated hand-finished material (wood, stone) and hand blown window glass (Ibid., p. 21-30).

The proper atmosphere also required the appropriate furnishings. Webber advised that many churches had improved their atmosphere "...by the simple method of obtaining an altar of sufficient size, with its crucifix, candlesticks, coloured paraments, riddle curtains and missal stand. A credence table, clergy seats against the side walls, a communicants' rail, a good window above the altar, a tabernacle, and some good tracery in the reredos will go a long way toward improving the surroundings" (Ibid.). In the chapter "Some Useful Dimensions," Webber provided building committees with dimensions for ritual furnishings appropriate for a small church. The chapter details everything from altars, choir stalls, communicants rails, and pews to chalice cups, pulpits, and candlesticks. *The Small Church* concludes with a "Directory of Ecclesiastical Artists, Craftsman and Equipment," which would facilitate a building committee's procurement of appropriate ornament and furnishings.

Parsonage

The parsonage, a residence provided by a church to house its pastor, typically sat on an adjacent or nearby lot. Often, but not always, a parsonage was in the same architectural style as its associated church (Wolfenbarger and Thomason, p. 83). The building permit for the parsonage at Pilgrim Lutheran church for the Deaf was issued on October 10, 1942, one year after the dedication of the chapel. The building permit listed the construction costs at \$4500 (Kansas City BP # 15997).

While not designed in the Gothic Revival style of the church, the architect, Herbert Duncan, Sr. designed the parsonage in a modern interpretation of traditional English architecture. Tudor architecture gained popularity in the United States following World War I, when modern technology made the application of brick veneer to frame structures economically feasible for middle class home owners. Between the Great Depression and World War II, Tudor residential architecture evolved into the simplified Minimal Traditional style. These houses had forms similar to their predecessors but simplified detailing. Minimal Traditional dwellings retained dominant front gables, massive chimneys and some masonry cladding. However, roof pitches were shallower, and eaves were tight (McAlester & McAlester, p. 477-8). The Pilgrim Chapel parsonage features brick and stone walls and false half-timbering in the gable ends. A large, stone chimney dominates the north gable end. The dwelling also incorporates an attached garage at the south end of the parsonage.

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ARCHITECTS

In his selection of an architect to design Pilgrim Chapel, it appears that Rev. Ferber sought inspiration from other churches that he visited on his travels and from other Lutheran congregations with relatively new buildings. He first contacted Frederick Roth Webber in September 1938. In March 1940, with the final selection of an architect still unresolved, Ferber received a letter from Rev. Arthur F. Katt, pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Shaker Heights, Ohio. Ferber, apparently, contacted Katt for a reference on both Webber and an architect named Fichter. Katt recommended Fichter, who won a design competition for the Shaker Heights church based, in part, upon a recommendation from the Deaf Mission Board (PLCD 1940b). In his letter Katt questioned Webber's architectural abilities asking, "I do not recall any small church that he has built. Has he ever really had charge of constructing a church architecturally, except the one in India? Have you ever seen any church designed by him? I have not." Conversely, in an undated letter, Donald Henning, rector of Christ Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, strongly recommended that Ferber "beg, borrow, or steal that great book on "The Small Church" by the Lutheran, Mr. Webber." He continues,

I regard him as the outstanding authority on church architecture and appointments in this country. By all means get in touch with him personally, too, before you build. Any church built under his direction will be flawless, and that's something in a country of ghastly botches in ecclesiastical architecture. Frankly – and straight from the heart – I believe that to ask anyone other than Mr. Webber (after glancing thru his book) is a waste of time and effort. He knows. (PLCD, [n.d.]b)

Ultimately, Ferber and the Pilgrim Lutheran Church building committee did select Webber to design the chapel. The resulting design is an exquisite manifestation of the design principles Webber espoused in *The Small Chapel*.

Frederick Roth Webber

Frederick Roth Webber, was born in 1887 in Decatur, Illinois. He was ordained a Lutheran Minister in 1914 following graduation from the Lutheran School of Theology in Maywood, Illinois. Webber ministered a number of congregations in Wisconsin and Chicago before his assignment to the Faith Lutheran Church in Cleveland, Ohio, where he was pastor from 1919-37 (CHIA, [n.d.]b).

The Reverend Webber is best remembered for his influence on the art and architecture of the Lutheran Church. During his tenure in Cleveland, Rev. Webber served as Secretary of the Synodical Committee on Church Architecture. In this capacity he wrote numerous articles in Lutheran publications about church design, serving as Fine Arts Editor of *American Lutheran* and, beginning in 1922, as editor of *Lutheran Church Art*. In the mid-30s, Rev. Webber left Faith Lutheran to study architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His two most significant publications were *Church Symbolism*,

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published in 1927, and *The Small Church: How to Build and Furnish It*, published in 1937 (Ibid.). The latter greatly influenced the design of Pilgrim Chapel.

When contacted by Rev. Ferber regarding the commission for Pilgrim Chapel, Webber was on a new mission performing missionary work in Cornwall, England at his own expense. Savings and royalties from his two books financed his work (PLCD 1938a). In fact his first response to Ferber contained little discussion of Ferber's inquiry about designing a church and dealt overwhelmingly with Webber's missionary work in Cornwall. However, two days later, Webber wrote a second missive to Ferber. In this letter he says,

Why don't you let me design your proposed chapel for you? ...With my experience of over 16 years in designing churches all over America, one in India and one in London why should our men go to the Philistines for architectural service? I can do the work, and do it well, for I have a good training along that line, and years of experience. (PLCD 1938b).

Webber saw church design as a means of funding his missionary work in Cornwall. In exchange for a \$50 retainer, Webber would provide "a carefully studied ground plan, two or more elevations, a section or two, and if necessary, a perspective. "I'll revise and restudy these a number of times until we get just what will fit your needs and purse." He would furnish specifications for an additional \$200 or, he offered, Ferber could take the plans to a local architect to complete the work. In closing, Webber informed Ferber that he had "studied two of Edward Manfe's Deaf Mute churches in London," and felt he was up to the challenge of the Kansas City project (Ibid.).

Subsequent correspondence suggests that Ferber responded positively to the terms Webber presented in his September 8 letter. (Although another letter written over a year later suggests that a contract had not yet been extended to Webber.) In a letter dated December 15, 1938 Webber offers to spend four to six weeks in Kansas City supervising construction. While he wrote that the \$250 architectural fee would barely cover his costs for the trip and living expenses, he offers to bring with him a slide lecture on his work in Cornwall. "I could give that lecture in and around Kansas City, ...and still find plenty of time to get you well started on your church.... I have just come back from a lecture tour, upon which I spoke 38 times, with that story. Everywhere it was well received." The chance to champion the cause of his Cornwall mission would enable Webber to supervise construction for the original \$250 fee. (PLCD 1938c). Whether or not Webber visited at this time or ever during the construction of the church in Kansas City is unclear from the surviving records. Construction did not begin for two years, and in a postcard written in February 1940, Webber states, "If drawings and specifications are sufficiently detailed, inspection and supervision are a needless expense. I make my drawings so complete that you... could do all the supervision necessary" (PLCD 1940a).

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During World War II, Webber served as director of the Army and Navy Commission Service Center at St. Luke's Church in New York City. Although Rev. Webber retired from the ministry in 1956, he maintained a connection with the Lutheran Parish Center and Bethany Church in Yonkers, New York from 1959 until his death in 1963 at age 76. Interestingly, Webber's official biographic profile, compiled by the Missouri Synod, mentions only that Webber "...was engaged in archeological and antiquarian work in England, on the Norman and Gothic periods during the summers of 1925, 1927, 1928, 1934 and 1935" but does not mention missionary work in Cornwall (CHIA, [n.d.]; *The Lutheran Witness; the Lutheran Layman; New York Times Obituary* 28 Dec 1963).

U. Clifton Ramey

Newspaper articles and archival records name Uel Clifton Ramey as the local architect assisting Webber in the design of Pilgrim Chapel (*KC Star* 1945). Archival research produced little information about Ramey, although he appears several times in the extant Pilgrim Chapel records. In a letter dated January 5, 1939, Ramey, writing to Rev. Ferber on behalf of an architect named "Mr. Caton" in Winfield, estimates the cost of building the chapel to be between \$13,00-18,000 (PLCD 1939a). In that letter, Ramey also recommends the architectural services of Mr. Caton. "You really couldn't choose a more capable architect. He has designed many churches and mosleums [sic]. He has lived and studied Gothic churches in England." Ramey closes with regards to Mrs. Ferber and the Ferber's son, signing off "Your friend." This suggests that he may have had some personal acquaintance with Ferber. One article in the *Kansas City Star* mentions that "U.C. Ramey was the supervising architect" for the project, and he is mentioned several times in correspondence and in the dedication program (*KC Star* 1945). However, the records do not reference the extent of his involvement and neither his name nor his initials appear on any of the surviving plans. A review of city directories found that Clifton Ramey resided in Kansas City between 1938 and 1941. In 1938 the directory lists Ramey's occupation as architect for the Model Homes company, a real estate firm located at 102 East 9th Street. The directories do not provide Ramey's occupation in 1939 or 1940, but in 1941 he appears as a draftsman in the office of architect George B. Franklin. By 1942 Ramey and his wife Margaret lived at 3125 Euclid. The directory lists his occupation as mechanic. He does not appear to be living in Kansas City in subsequent years (Gate City Directory Co., 1939-1945). Uel C. Ramey of Wichita, Kansas is listed in the *Directory and Roster of Registered Architects and Corporations* published in 1970 by the Missouri Board for Architects, Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors.

Herbert E. Duncan, Sr.

Local architect Herbert E. Duncan, Sr. designed the parsonage adjacent to Pilgrim Chapel. Interestingly, like Webber, Duncan was both an architect and a minister. A lifelong Kansas City resident, he graduated from Kansas City College. Subsequently ordained by both the Disciples of Christ and Congregational churches, his early career focused on ministering. He succeeded Rev. Burris Jenkins as

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minister of Community Christian Church. He was also minister at Longview Chapel in Lee's Summit between 1936-40 and served as an army chaplain during World War II (*Kansas City Star*, 1972; *Lee's Summit Journal*, 1964).

Duncan's obituary states that his architectural practice began in 1947; however, the 1939 city directory lists Herbert Duncan as an architect working for the Kroh Brothers real estate company. Kroh Brothers developed many subdivisions in the Kansas City area. Beginning in 1938 the firm was directly involved in the development of the City Leawood, Kansas (*KC Times*, 1970). From this association, Duncan's early architectural work focused on residential design in Kansas City and adjacent suburbs, which continued to boom following World War II. His design for Village Green was one of Kansas City's prototype post-war multi-family housing projects. (*KC Star*, 1972).

Although continuing as president of Herbert E. Duncan Architects, Inc., Duncan returned to the ministry toward the end of his life. He returned to the pastorate of Longview Chapel in 1964, and he served as minister of Westminster Congregational Church at the end of his life. He died in 1972 at the age of 67 (*Kansas City Star*, 1972; *Lee's Summit Journal*, 1964).

INTEGRITY

Very few modifications have been made to either the church or the parsonage since their construction, and both buildings retain a very high degree of architectural integrity. Alterations to the church have been limited to the basement where a ghost on the floor reveals that a partition was removed west of the stairs. The men's bathroom has been converted to storage and several of the fixtures removed. The significant first floor spaces retain intact not only their original appearance, but also original finishes and the majority of their original furnishings. Likewise, changes to the parsonage have been primarily cosmetic. No structural changes have been made to the dwelling.

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APPENDIX

List of Contractors and Suppliers for Church and Parsonage

The following contractors and suppliers were identified through the extant records from the construction of *Pilgrim Lutheran Chapel for the Deaf and Parsonage*. All records are in the collection housed at Pilgrim Chapel.

Altar, Pulpit, Communion Rail - the Liturgical Arts Guild, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio

Excavator - J.L. McQuaid

General Contractor - O.S. Widener, KCMO

Heating & Cooling - Missouri-Kansas Supply Company, KCMO

Landscaping/Grass - Jackson Landscape Co., KCMO

Light fixtures (Chandeliers) - L.A. Periera & Co., Chicago

Light Fixtures (Nave, Vestibule) - Daprato Studios, Chicago; Rambusch Decorating Co., Designers and Manufacturers, New York

Plumbing - Waldo Plumbing and Heating, KCMO

Stained Glass Windows - Paul H. Wolff, St. Joseph Art Glass Works

Stone Supplier - Sutermeister Stone Co., KCMO

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the Southeast corner of 38th Street and Gillham Road and proceeding East along the South line of 38th Street 135 feet; thence South 125 feet on a line parallel to the East line of Gillham Road; thence West 135 feet on a line parallel to the South line of 38th Street, to the East line of Gillham Road; thence North 125 feet, more or less, along the East line of Gillham Road to the point of beginning, in Kansas City, Missouri.

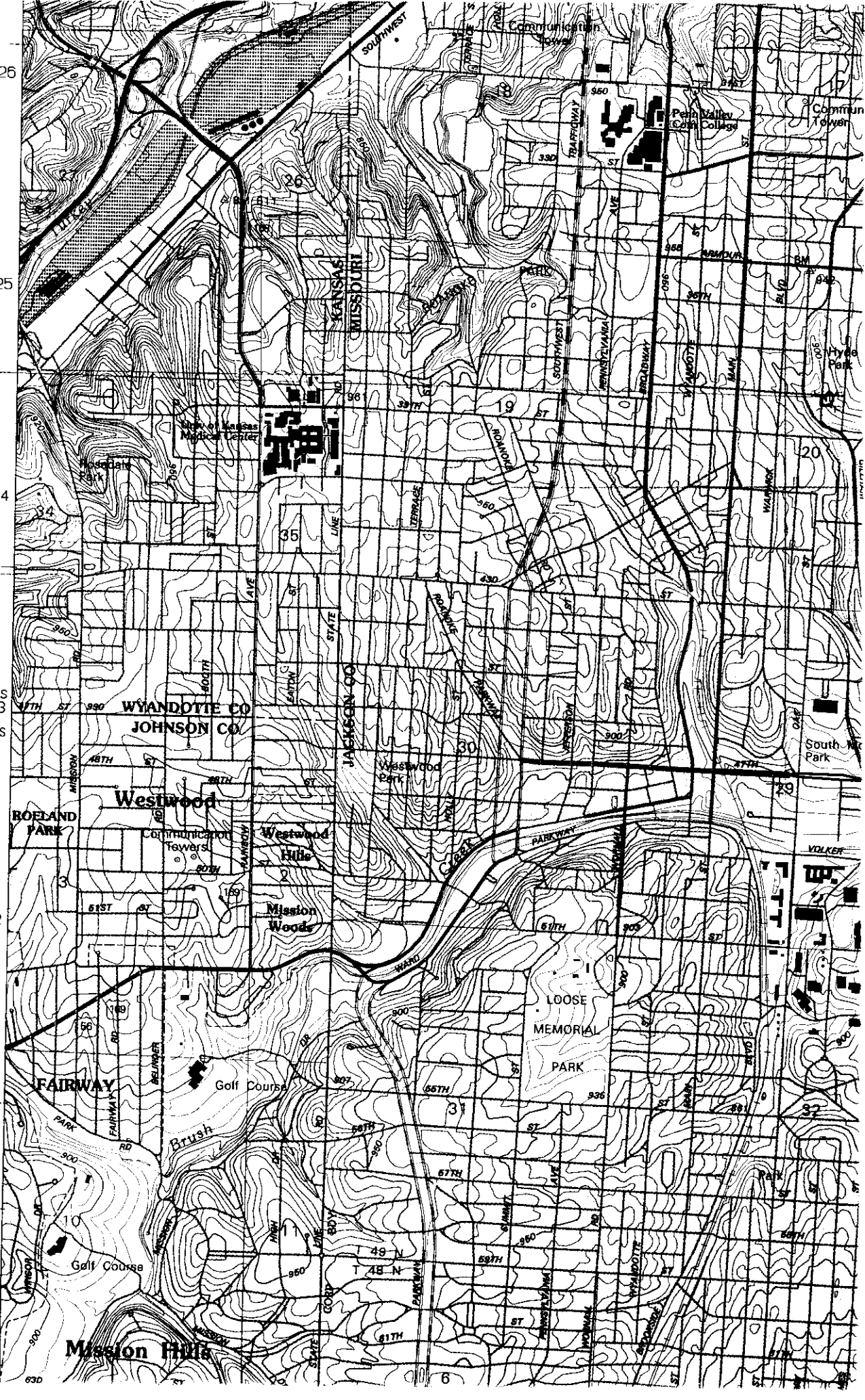
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire parcel of land purchased by Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Greater Kansas City for the construction of the church and parsonage.

Pigeon Lake
Church for the
Deaf + Parsonage
Kansas City,
Jackson Co., Mo

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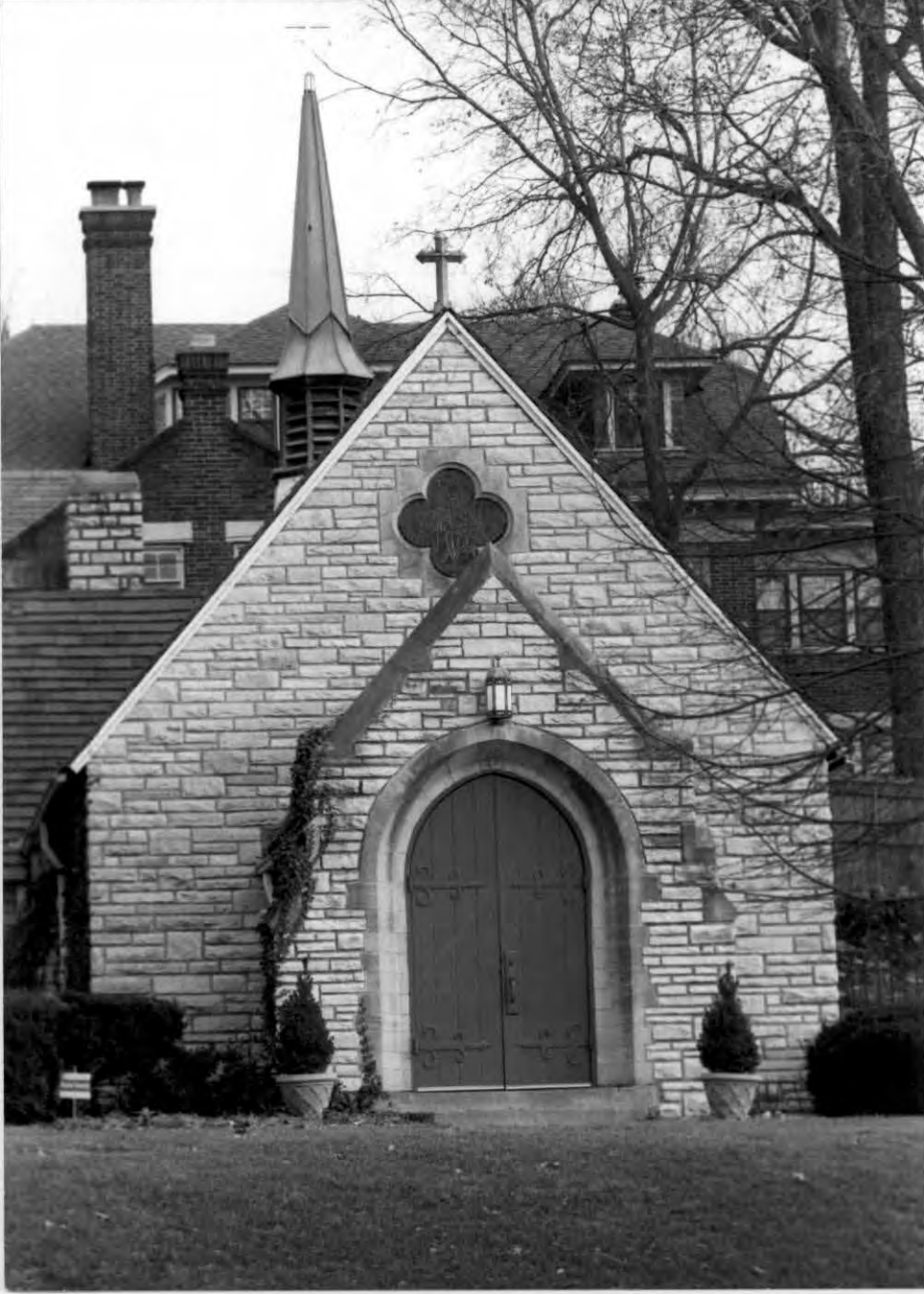


NO
STANDING
OR
PARKING























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