

1914

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration FormNATIONAL
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Luke's Church and Cemetery
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 303-321 North Cedar Street; 322 East McBee Street N/A not for publication
city, town Lincolnton N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Lincoln code NC 109 zip code 28092

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>4</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 90.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date 11-8-91

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.☐ other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action 1/14/92

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious structure

church-related dwelling

Funerary/cemetery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious structure

church-related dwelling

Funerary/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival

Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

Stucco/pebble-dash

roof Asphalt

other glass

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet.

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Part 7: Architectural Description

The property being nominated as St. Luke's Church and Cemetery consists of four principal contributing resources and St. Luke's House, a non-contributing building. All are located in the eastern half of the block bounded by Cedar Street on the east, Pine Street on the south, Poplar Street on the west, and McBee Street on the north. The church property is in a residential neighborhood of mostly early twentieth-century houses: it comprises all of the west side of the 300 block of North Cedar Street and is two blocks north of the intersection of Cedar and West Main streets. St. Luke's Church stands neatly at the northwest corner of Pine and North Cedar streets with 303 North Cedar Street as its address. It has principal entrances through the south transept bell tower and the west porch and a third entrance off Cedar Street through the sacristy in the north transept. The cemetery surrounds the church on the north and west; the church and cemetery together occupy approximately one-half of the half-block church property. The parish hall, the rectory, and St. Luke's House occupy the remaining northern half of the half-block tract. The parish hall stands at 315 North Cedar Street, just to the north of the center of the block front. The rectory stands further to the north at 321 North Cedar Street with shallow lawns at the front and sides of the house. The grassy rear yard of the rectory continues to the west and merges with the side yard of St. Luke's House that stands at 322 McBee Street. The entire property is planted with grass. A variety of deciduous and evergreen trees are planted about the property; there are plantings of various shrubs about all four buildings. There are two brick retaining walls enclosing the north and south sides of the cemetery. The common bond brick wall on the south side is parallel to the sidewalk and Pine Street; it was made necessary when the grade of the street was lowered several feet. On the north side there is a simple common bond brick retaining wall along a line parallel to the south wall of the parish hall.

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH

St. Luke's Church, standing on an east/west axis, is of brick-veneered frame with an asphalt shingle gable-front roof. Three bays wide and seven bays deep, it is a simple rectangular building with appendages on the south, west, and north elevations. All window and door openings have a lancet-arch shape. The existing church building dates from three principal building programs. The oldest part of the church is said to be the bell tower that forms the south transept of the church; according to church tradition it was the entrance tower of the congregation's original 1843 building. The steeple of that tower was rebuilt in 1859 and there was clearly some rebuilding of the tower and steeple when the brick veneer was added in 1922-1923; thus, the question of the tower's date is somewhat unresolved. There is no question, however, about the church that was erected by the congregation in 1885-1886. It is that frame building's interior that has survived to the present as the most important Victorian church interior in Lincoln County and one of a larger group of related Episcopal church

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interiors, dating from the 1880s and 1890s, in the Diocese of Western North Carolina.

The handsome frame church stood unaltered from its completion in 1886 until early in 1917 when a covering of pebble-dash was added to its exterior elevations. It failed and proved to be a mistake. To rectify the matter the church considered two options: wood shingles and brick veneer. The congregation chose brick veneer. During 1922 and 1923 the common bond red brick veneer was added to the church and a brick porch was erected at the west entrance of the nave. A documentary photograph shows that the brick veneer was first laid up only to the sill of the chancel windows in the east gable end; the triangular gable-end was covered with wood shingles. Apparently the brick veneer was soon added over the entire east gable end as there are no discernible ghost marks in the brick and mortar along the elevation. The bays of the building and the corners are marked by buttresses of brick that rise in two stages from the ground to just below the eave lines of the roof. When the church was covered with brick veneer, the carpenters and masons retained the molded eaves and shaped purloin ends of the 1886 church in the gable ends of the remodeled building. Along the north and south sides of the nave and the chancel, it appears that the original (1886) shallow eaves had to be extended; here the newer rafter ends are connected by an eave board. There are crosses set on the ridge line at the east, north, and west gable ends of the asphalt-shingle roof.

The west front gable-end of the church has a three-part division with a projecting brick porch set in the center bay. The porch has enclosed sides and a broad lancet-arch opening on the west that accentuates the like lancet-arch opening for the double-leaf door into the church. A flight of eight poured concrete steps, flanked by three-stage brick ends, rises from the ground to the porch; simple wrought iron railings carry along this rise, inside the brick ends. The porch has a flush board ceiling. There is an entrance into the cellar under the church immediately north of the porch.

The south elevation of the church, parallel with Pine Street, is seven bays in width. The westernmost four bays hold stained glass windows that illuminate the nave: the easternmost two windows illuminate the chancel area. The projecting bell tower forming the south transept is set in the third bay from the east end of the church and visually separates the nave from the chancel. The tower has a three-level arrangement with a flat parapet top; the octagonal steeple, clad in metal (copper?) sheets and terminating in a cross, rises from behind the parapet walls. The corners of the tower are marked by angle buttresses that rise in a three-stage arrangement reflecting the three levels. The east and west sides of the tower have a blind first story and recessed rectangular splayed openings for louvered vents on the second level. The third level, housing the church bells, has large lancet-arch openings on the east, west, and south elevations. Here, splayed reveals enframe the double rank of louvers fitted with ornamental tops. The first and second levels of the south side of the tower are treated as one

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tall lancet-arch opening. At the base a flight of four steps rises to the double-leaf board and batten pine doors set in a secondary lancet-arch opening; the face of the tower, above the doors, is flush and fitted with a Gothic Revival style wall-mounted light. The top of this first level is straight and serves as the base for a large three-part window in the upper half of the dominant lancet arch. The window is fitted with intersecting tracery and lattice glass.

The east gable end of the church has individual stained glass windows fitted close to the corner angle buttresses on the first level; they illuminate the choirs flanking the chancel. A three-part window is set in the upper gable end; its straight sill is parallel to the top of the reredos at the back of the altar inside the church. The outer bays of the window flank a taller center window.

The north side of the church is largely identical to the south side except that here the larger north transept, containing the sacristy and the robing room, occupies the second and third bays from the east end of the church. There is a single leaf door in the center of the east elevation of the transept that opens directly into the sacristy in the east half of the transept. The north gable-end of the transept has a two-bay division with lancet-arch openings fitted with nineteenth-century stained glass windows with quatrefoil designs. On the west wall of the transept there is a single opening of like proportions also fitted with stained glass.

The only exterior clue to the handsome interior of St. Luke's Church is the series of lancet-arch stained glass windows. Their richly colored hues illuminate and enhance the natural finish of the woods--mostly pine, oak, and chestnut--used for the sheathing and architectural fittings of the interior. These wood surfaces were mostly left unstained or simply varnished, and during the one hundred and five years since their installation they have mellowed to soft nutty brown tones. The effect of the wood finishes and colored glass in combination with an impressive array of memorial furnishings in the chancel result in a program of interior decoration of remarkable beauty. The nave and chancel have pine floors. However, the flooring is covered completely with a deep cherry red carpet except under the pews.

There are two principal areas to the interior. The first is the nave that extends from the west entrance to the crossing where paired entrances open on either side into the north and south transepts. The chancel--occupying the two easternmost bays--is east of the crossing and separated from the nave by a carved rood screen. The walls of the nave and chancel are sheathed with beaded flush pine boards. These are applied vertically below a continuous molded chair rail that also serves as the sills for the windows. The walls above the chair rail are divided into bays by molded pilasters and sheathed in diagonally nailed beaded boards. The inside of the three sets of double-leaf doors in the west, south, and north elevations are likewise sheathed in diagonally applied boards. These doors retain their original Victorian hardware. The doors and windows are

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set in molded surrounds that are surmounted by drip-molds around the arched upper section. The top of the walls are finished with a picture rail and a simple cornice that acts as a base for the sheathed underside of the roof that forms the ceiling of the church. Here pine boards rise with the pitch of the roof to its apex. A series of decorative purloins are overlaid on the sheathing and create a paneled effect. The principal rafters are complemented by secondary scissor braces whose obtuse angles occur below the acute angles at the apex of the ceiling. This arrangement provides a visual complexity to the ceiling while also giving the effect of greater height. The nave follows a center aisle plan with ranks of sixteen pews to either side. The outer ends of the pews directly abut the north and south walls of the church. Their inner, aisle ends have applied cusp-arch panels with quatrefoil cutouts. The tops of the pews are finished with a two-part rolled molding.

The chancel of the church is set off from the nave by a carved rood screen that has a broad central cusp-arch opening set inside a pointed-arch framework. It is flanked on either side by lower, less-wide secondary cusp-arch openings. This motif--the cusp arch inside a lancet or pointed arch--recurs throughout the chancel and sanctuary. These three arched openings spring from a pair of molded columns that are topped with pointed terminals. The columns form, in turn, the west end of the pair of choir screens (of columns and arches) that extend in a perpendicular fashion to the east end of the chancel. The elements forming the main cusp arch and the spandrels of the secondary cusp arches are enhanced with applied panels of foliate carving that also incorporate emblems of religious significance. The frieze across the parapet tops of the side arches feature quatrefoil designs. The frieze band of the main pointed arch, finished with crockets and a cross at the apex, is inscribed "O Magnify the Lord and Fall Down Before His Footstool."

In the center of the main cusp-arch opening there is a pair of steps that marks the rise from the nave to the chancel. They are flanked on the right (south) by the Victorian oak lectern and on the left (north) by the marble baptismal font that was given in memory of Catherine Lafayette Shipp by her children. The Gothic Revival style oak pulpit, with lancet-arch recessed panels, is set in the center of the left (north) secondary arch and dates to ca. 1940. The space in the north choir behind (east of) the pulpit is occupied in part by the modern organ; in the east end there are pews (for extra members of the choir). The pendant arch to the south is open and the space behind (east of) it is occupied by the choir. The ends of a double file of pews, set perpendicular to the pews in the nave, are visible through the arch. The front (west) half of the chancel--between the north and south choirs--is open and contains a pair of prayer kneelers of differing dates and a pair of Victorian chairs.

The sanctuary, enclosed by a carved oak communion rail similar in design to the lectern, occupies an elevated platform in the eastern half of the chancel. The focus here, liturgically and architecturally, is on the carved altar and reredos

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that are surmounted by the tripartite stained glass window. The altar is located on a platform three steps above the sanctuary level. It is flanked by the elaborately carved bishop's chair to the north and a wall-mounted credence table and cabinet to the south. The west front of the altar has a three-part division with lancet arches rising from a quartet of truncated columns in a vaguely Romanesque fashion. Cusp arches are recessed within the lancet arches; the face of each is carved with Christian symbols. The left panel holds a carving of a stylized "A" symbolizing the alpha. The right panel is carved with the symbol of the omega. Both symbols are framed by vertical rows of Greek Crosses and are surmounted by larger Greek Crosses. The center panel contains a cross interlaced with "IHS." The outer spandrels are carved with wheat (left) and grapes (right) that commemorate the bread and wine of communion; the inner spandrels hold Greek Crosses. A shallow frieze across the top of the arches on the altar has the carved inscription "THIS IS MY BODY THIS IS MY BLOOD." There are memorial panels in the base of the reredos, recessed behind the altar on the left (north) and right (south). The left panel bears the inscription "In Memoriam Malinda and Jane Children of V. A. & M. E. McBee." The right panel is carved with the inscription "In Memoriam Malinda Summer and Lucy Lee Children of Silas and M. E. McBee."

The reredos is even more elaborately carved than the altar and wider, occupying the space above the altar and the flanking memorial panels. The frieze, across the lower face, carries the inscription "HOLY HOLY HOLY." It has a five-part arrangement and is surmounted by an elaborate altar canopy whose carvings corresponded to the five panels on the face of the reredos and repeat the motif of the cusp arch within the lancet arch. The canopy is carved with a range of religious motives. Its vertical elements, corresponding to the divisions of the five panels on the face of the reredos, have turned pendants at the bottoms and peaked top finials; the center finials are topped by crosses. The friezes above the two outer parts of the canopy are carved with the words "COME UNTO ME." It is the face of the reredos itself for which the finest carving was reserved. The broader center panel, serving as the background for a handsome brass cross, has two inner vertical panels carved with foliate scrollwork; the top of the panel is carved with like foliate scrollwork and flowers. The center panel--the widest of the five--is flanked by two narrow vertical panels. The left (north) one is carved with a sheaf of wheat on its face. The right (south) one features a carved grapevine with three bunches of grapes. The two outer panels are alike and bear memorial inscriptions at their base: the north panel carries the term "IN MEMORIAM" while the right panel has the name "MARY ESTELLE MCBEE." This inscription appears to have been carved after her death in 1891. The lower two-thirds of each panel has an inner division into two vertical fields that feature latticework with fleur-de-lis motives in each square. The arched-top upper third of each panel is carved with foliate and floral motives.

The vestibule in the south transept and the two rooms in the north transept are simply finished. The vestibule is sheathed with vertical pine beaded boards and

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has a pine floor as do the robing room and sacristy. The robing room, directly north of the vestibule, is sheathed with vertical beaded pine boards; it has a molded chair rail like that in the nave. The partition wall between the robing room and the sacristy has been altered and is now fitted with closets for vestments and choir robes; the doors open into the robing room. The sacristy has plaster on its brick outside walls and wood sheathing on the inner walls. A service counter, fitted with a sink and cabinets, carries the full length of the north wall. The exterior door is in the center of the east wall and the connecting opening to the robing room is in the center of the west wall. On the south wall there is a door into the north choir and beside it, to the west, a wall-hung cabinet for communion vessels.

THE CEMETERY

The burying ground at St. Luke's Church occupies the church property to the north and west of the church itself. Altogether the cemetery and the church cover the southern half of the half-block church property. The entire cemetery is covered with mown grass and partially shaded by mostly deciduous trees including oaks and dogwoods. The plant material is not the strength of this cemetery: the most impressive evergreen is a hemlock that was planted in the John F. Phifer family plot. A broad paved brick walk extends from the sidewalk on North Cedar Street westward about mid-point into the cemetery. It is punctuated along its path by cast iron lamp standards. A secondary walk extends from its near-end southward to the front of the church and then around the southwest corner of the church and eastwardly to the entrance in the south transept. There are brick retaining walls along the south and north sides of the cemetery to accommodate the shifts in grade. These were erected by brickmason Ray Hoffman between 1962 and 1965 when Rev. Welch K. Tester was rector. Likewise, there is a low brick wall inside the cemetery parallel with its west boundary that mitigates a shift in grade near its western limit. There are approximately 300 gravestones in the cemetery.

Although the cemetery came into use with the erection of the church here in 1842 the earliest group of about thirty-five surviving gravestones date from the 1850s to 1870. These range in appearance from the luxurious gravestone for Caroline Rebecca Guion (d. 1854) and the handsome white marble obelisk of Andrew Motz (ca. 1796-1851) to simple marble tablets. The three-part composition is made up of at least three types of stone. The rectangular site of the grave--replicating the form of the casket--is covered by a grey granite frame that is surmounted by a white marble ledger. At the west end of the ledger stands a veined marble block--perhaps King of Prussia marble--that serves as the base for a white marble obelisk. The obelisk itself has a three-part composition consisting of a square base, a tapering obelisk shaft, and an urn finial. Carved into the face of an oval on the west side of the base is a recumbent figure that is being summoned to heaven by an angel in the form of a winged babe. A carved inscription bears the following lines:

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Good Mother, I have Come for Thee.
The Spirit and the Bride Say Come
Sweet Babe! All Ready I Am
Surely I Come Quickly. Amen.
And They Departed Together On The
11th of September A.D. 1854.

A rose in full bloom, cut short from the bush, lies along the side of the molded top of the base on which stands the obelisk. The obelisk is a single shaft of marble that tapers upward. The tapering is partially accomplished through the lambs-tongue chamfering of the square base. Midway up on each side of the obelisk is a series of circular medallions that, beginning on the north and moving counter-clockwise, holds the phrase Caroline/Rebecca/Guion/And Her Babe. The top of the truncated column supports an urn of flowers in bloom.

The two adjoining cast iron cemetery fences here appear to date from the later 1860s and enclose the graves of Major General Stephen Dodson Ramseur (1837-1864) and William (1843-1863) and Edward (1844-1864) Phifer, all of whom died in the Civil War. They are at the edge of the cemetery on Cedar Street. The Phifer fence is made up of scroll-shaped open-work panels; the gate for the plot has a wreath below the panel holding the inscription "J. F. Phifer." The Ramsour fence is made up of vertical cutwork panels below a frieze of quatrefoils; the gate, supported by classical columns, repeats this design. The white marble obelisk erected over General Ramseur's grave was destroyed during Hurricane Hugo in 1989. A replica of the obelisk, manufactured by Wiley Brothers, was erected at the grave and dedicated on 1 June 1991.

The later nineteenth century gravestones, approximately sixty-eight dating from 1871 to 1900, here repeat the forms and motives seen elsewhere in North Carolina. The principal forms are tablets with arched tops, obelisks, and crosses and they are carved in white marble or granite. Many are embellished with the sentimental devices and religious symbols seen on Victorian gravestones such as rose buds, lilies-of-the-valley, doves, and crosses either raised or carved into the faces of the monuments. The single example of a table tomb, and retarditane at that, is at the grave of Lorenzo Ferrer (1780-1875), a native of Lyons, France, who long made his home in Lincoln County.

The gravestones of the early twentieth century continue the use of the nineteenth century forms; however, there was an increasing use of large markers, mostly granite, bearing a family's name in the center of individual plots; individual family members have modest single stones--often footstones.

While the granite and marble obelisks are impressive because of their size and form, the most visually pervasive form in the cemetery is the cross. One of the earliest and most handsome is at the grave of Jane Cobb (1850-1881). Following the death of Rev. Mr. Wetmore in 1904 the congregation erected a large grey and white veined marble cross at his grave. Nearly contemporary with it is the large

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Celtic cross erected at the grave of Vardry Alexander McBee (1818-1904) and his wife Mary Elizabeth Sumner (1829-1907). The brownstone memorial rises from a broad three-part base. There is a total of eighteen standing crosses in the cemetery and among the last erected is a small white marble one at the grave of the Rev. John Frazer Chalker (1902-1971) who died while rector of St. Luke's.

THE PARISH HALL

The parish hall, standing at 315 North Cedar Street, was erected in 1907 as a memorial to the Rev. William Robards Wetmore with funds donated by Judge William Preston Bynum. Built for use as a parish school, it quickly came to be used as a parish hall and for Sunday school. About 1965 a brick veneer addition was added to the rear of the parish hall to provide extra Sunday school classrooms and other services. The frame ell on the north side, apparently contemporary with the main building, houses the church office.

Erected in 1907 at a cost of under \$1,500.00 the parish hall is a rectangular frame building--three bays wide and seven bays deep--with a broad gable front facing North Cedar Street. The building achieves some presence on the street through the use of multiple gable front roofs that cover, in turn and in rising height, the porch, the vestibule, and the main block of the parish hall. All three roofs are covered with asphalt shingles. The building was originally covered with weatherboards but in the 1960s or 1970s the weatherboards were covered with wide aluminum siding. The siding also covered the surrounds at the windows that hold nine-over-nine sash. Fortunately, siding was not applied over the exposed rafters and flush sheathing of the eaves and the molded bargeboards that enframe that gable fronts. The building stands on brick piers with cement block infill.

The front (east) elevation of the parish hall is preceded by two symmetrical blocks of diminishing width. The first of these is the porch. It is supported by pairs of square posts that rise to bracketed cutwork panels. The floor of the porch is poured cement; the ceiling is open to the sheathed underside of the roof. Modern double-leaf doors are centered under the porch in the otherwise blind face of the vestibule. The vestibule has nine-over-nine sash windows in the center of its north and south sides. There are taller nine-over-nine sash windows centered in the face of the main block to either side of the vestibule.

The side elevations of the parish hall have an asymmetrical division into seven bays. On the south elevation there are four windows grouped in near-symmetrical fashion toward the front of the building while a door flanked by windows occupies the back one-third of the elevation. On the north elevation paired nine-over-nine sash windows flank the projecting office ell. The ell has a symmetrically paired door and window on the front (east) elevation and single windows in the north and west walls. The five-panel door opens onto a stoop protected by a bracketed hood. The westernmost three bays of the hall's north

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side comprise an exterior door flanked by windows; a flight of eight cement and tile steps descend from the five-panel door to the ground.

The interior of the original parish hall consists today of the vestibule, a large main meeting room, the church office, a kitchen, and a storage room. The floors of the spaces are covered with square (rubber?) tiles and the walls are covered with a range of materials. The ceilings have also been lowered and covered with accoustical tile. The vestibule has a wainscot of manufactured paneling; however, the windows and door surrounds, plain boards with perimeter bands, are original as are the five-panel doors that open into the main meeting room. The meeting room occupies the largest part of the parish hall; it has a tall wainscot of tongue and groove boards of varying design that suggest that this space was once partitioned into smaller rooms. There are two wood columns in the center of the room that rise to the roof.

A five-panel door near the east end of the north wall opens into the church office. It has a carpeted floor, sheetrock on the walls, and a dropped ceiling with celotex tiles. To the left (west) of the door into the office is a recess that contains an altar with a brass cross, urns, and candle stands. The northwest corner of the main hall is partitioned to enclose a kitchen. Its finish is the same as the parish hall except that the floor covering is sheet vinyl. The southeast corner of the partition is anchored by a brick flue that rises through the hall roof. A counter is built into the wall to the west of the flue. In the opposite southwest corner of the parish hall is a storage room that has the same finish as the main hall. At the west rear of the main hall, between the kitchen and storage room, there is a flight of steps that rises to the double doors that open into the main level of the addition.

The addition was designed to house several required functions. On the main level, through the double doors, there is a central lobby area with doors opening into every room around its perimeter. The men's and women's restrooms occupy the northeast corner of the addition. They have ceramic tile floors and wainscots and sheetrock walls. In the northwest corner is a vestry room finished with wood-grain sheet paneling; it has a stone faced fireplace on the west wall. Folding accordion doors on the south wall connect with the library that occupies the space directly west of the lobby. The nursery occupies a large room in the southwest corner of the addition; it has exposed cement blocks on the outside walls and sheetrock on the interior walls. The southeast corner of the addition holds a closet and stair down to the basement level where there are two large Sunday school rooms with painted cement block walls and rubber tile floors.

THE RECTORY

With the completion of the parish school building in 1907-1908, little time elapsed before the congregation set about another building project. During the long pastorate (1862-1904) of the Rev. Mr. Wetmore, he and his family occupied

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their own substantial two-story frame dwelling at 311 South Cedar Street. It appears likely that his assistant, the Rev. David T. Johnson, who succeeded him as rector, was also occupying private quarters. The Rev. Mr. Johnson resigned in 1908, and it was during the rectorship of his successor, the Rev. W. R. Dye (1909-1913) that the congregation decided to build a rectory. The vestry minutes provide little information on the construction of the rectory; the identity of the contractor remains unknown. The starting date of construction is unknown, but it appears that the structure of the rectory was largely completed in 1911; some finish work occurred in 1912.

The two-story pebble-dash clad rectory is built in a T-form while the interior follows a center-hall plan. The top of the "T" is parallel to McBee Street and contains a two-room block with the rector's study at the east end of the block and the dining room at the west end. The broad stem of the "T" contains a broad center hall at the north end of the stem and a large living room at the south end. A two-room ell extends the top of the "T" westward; it contains a butler's pantry and the kitchen at the west end. Porches at the front and rear completed the house. There is an interior chimney between the study and the dining room and an interior end chimney on the south wall of the living room.

The house was erected on brick piers but these were infilled later with running bond brick. The pebble-dash elevations are set between broad sill boards at the bottom and a wide frieze band at the top. The window and door openings are simply framed with plain boards; the lintels have a narrow projecting fillet across their tops. The eaves of the house are relatively broad and flush sheathed; they are simply molded. The roof is covered with impressed tin shingles. The window sash add a strong visual interest to the elevations; the upper sashes follow a "Queen Anne" arrangement and have eighteen (or thirty) panes, while the lower sash has one single large pane. These mostly eighteen-over-one sash appear in single, paired, and triple windows. In other instances where shorter windows are needed there are eighteen-pane casement windows used single or in pairs. The combined effects of the pebble-dash, the patterned tin shingles, and the multi-pane windows, give the rectory a handsome appearance.

The east North Cedar Street front of the rectory is unified by a one-story hipped roof porch that carries across the complete facade. The front of the porch is straight; however, its depth varies to accommodate the projecting study on the right (north). It has a wood floor and is supported by Tuscan columns. Under the porch there are triple windows set in shallow projecting bays that illuminate the study and the living room. The entrance features a center (replacement) door, twenty-seven pane sidelights above molded raised panels, and a three-part transom consisting of blocks of nine, eighteen, and nine panes. To the right of the main entrance, in the projecting south wall of the study, there is a door opening directly into the study; it has a large glazed upper pane above two horizontal panels. On the second story there are paired windows above the triple windows and a single window over the entrance illuminating the second-story hall.

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The north McBee Street elevation is simpler in its composition. The top of the two-room "T" is two stories in height. To the left (east) there is a pair of windows illuminating the study and to the right a quartet of windows in a one-story bay that illuminates the dining room. On the second story there are two pairs of windows placed above the first-story openings. A brick flue stack of later date rises near-midway along the face of the north side. The slightly recessed rear ell is two stories in height where it abuts the main block and then drops to one story at the west end. There is a pair of casement windows illuminating the pantry, beside the dining room, and a single window in the kitchen at the rear.

The south elevation of the main block has a trio of paired casement windows on the first story with paired sash windows on the second story. The westernmost pair of casement windows are in an inglenook off the west side of the living room that was topped by a shallow sleeping porch on the second story. The L-shaped rear of the house made up of the south side of the kitchen and pantry ell and the west side of the main block has asymmetrical openings that reflect both the original construction and the later enclosure of the service porch for a breakfast room. It would appear that the service porch and the small sleeping porch on the second story were enclosed at the same date since both are covered with wide manufactured siding. The breakfast room has a pair of six-over-six sash windows and a glazed and paneled door on its west end that opens onto a flight of wood steps that descend to the ground.

The flavor of the early-twentieth century Colonial Revival, imparted on the exterior on the front porch, is continued on the interior of the rectory. The plaster walls are enhanced with molded-top baseboards. The door and window surrounds feature symmetrically channeled verticals rising to a lintel with a narrow band across the bottom and a projecting molded top. The doors, all original, have six horizontal panels. This finish continues throughout the house. The wood floors are covered throughout with either carpet or sheet vinyl.

Just inside the east end of the center hall there is a door into the rector's study and further along there are broad flat-arch openings into the living room on the left (south) and the dining room on the right. At the back (west) end of the hall the mostly-enclosed double-run stair begins on the left and rises to the south to the inglenook where it turns back and rises north to the second story. In the house plan it is set between the inglenook off the living room and a small service hall at the west end of the front entrance hall. It is both awkward to describe and awkwardly placed in a house that otherwise has a good, typical early twentieth century plan.

It is likely that the program of interior decoration on the first story was originally more interesting than it exists today. The vestry minutes for 1913 and 1914 recount the controversy that arose in the final months of the Rev. Mr.

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Dye's tenure at St. Luke's. When dissatisfaction with the rector became clear in the late summer and early autumn of 1913, the rector announced that certain fittings including mantels, bookcases, china cabinets, and finally windows and screen doors, were his property and that he would take them with him when he removed from the rectory. The situation festered. Finally, to terminate their association with the Rev. Mr. Dye, the vestry agreed that he could carry away the mantels from his study and living room, bookcases, and a china cabinet. The present plain Colonial Revival mantels in those rooms appear to be the replacements for the original mantels; they consist of molded square columns that rise to a thick mantel shelf and backband. Whether there were bookcases in both the study and living room is not clear; however, the existence of the paired casement windows, high on the south wall of the living room and flanking the fireplace, suggests that there were bookcases below them. There might also have been a bookcase below the like casement window in the inglenook off the living room; a broad flat-arched opening connects the living room with the inglenook. Apparently there was no fireplace in the dining room that, today, is sheathed with manufactured wood grain paneling. A somewhat unsatisfactory cabinet in its northeast corner appears to be a replacement for the original china cabinet. The china cabinet in the butler's pantry that connects the dining room with the kitchen appears to be original. It fully occupies the north end of the pantry, below the casement window, and is fitted with three double-pane glazed doors. The kitchen has been completely remodeled and fitted with replacement cabinets. The finish of the breakfast room and service hall is of modern manufactured materials and of no interest. The lavatory, tucked beside the stair and off the service porch, retains its plaster walls.

The second story of the rectory follows a plan that repeats the room arrangement and architectural woodwork of the first story. The bedroom walls are covered with sheetrock; the hall is sheathed in manufactured wood-grain paneling. The master bedroom, over the living room, has a mantel made up of four thick brackets supporting the mantel shelf. Six-panel doors on the west wall open into a closet and a bathroom enclosed in the former porch. The mantel in the front bedroom, over the study, has a pair of brackets supporting a shelf and backband; it is fitted with a coal grate. The third bedroom, over the dining room, has no fireplace. The space above the butler's pantry (and part of the kitchen) is given over to a dressing room and bathroom, a linen closet, and a small hallway that connects with the main hall.

ST. LUKE'S HOUSE

St. Luke's House, a substantial two-story frame residence, was erected in the early 1970s in the northwest corner of the church property; it stands at 322 McBee Street. It was erected as a house for the Sisters of the Transfiguration who assist in social work in the community and the church. The main part of the house is the four-bay wide, two-bay deep two-story block. A one-story shed carries fully across the McBee Street north front of the house; the off-center

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gable front porch occupies the second bay from the east. There is a brick chimney and a small projecting shed room on the east gable end. The house is covered with manufactured sheet siding with vertical divisions and an asphalt shingle side gable roof. The windows hold one-over-one sash and are framed by openwork blinds on the front elevation. The rear elevation has an asymmetrical arrangement of windows and a service entrance. The interior was not accessible.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☒ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Art

Architecture

Period of Significance

1850-1881; 1886; 1907-1912

Significant Dates

1854

1886

1907

1912

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

McBee, Silas (architect)

Motz, W. W. (builder)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet.

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Minutes of the Vestry of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Lincolnton, North Carolina. This series of bound volumes containing hand-written minutes begin in 1841 and carry forward to the present. They are maintained in the church office.

Sill, James B. HISTORICAL SKETCHES, DIOCESE OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA. Asheville, N.C.: Miller Printing Company, 1955.

ST. LUKE'S PARISH IN LINCOLNTON, N.C. Lincolnton, N.C.: no printer listed, 1941.

☐ See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2.23 acres

UTM References

A

1	7
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4	7	7	0	0	0
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3	9	2	5	4	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property being nominated is outlined on the enclosed Lincoln County Tax Map #108. it is a rectangular tract measuring 250 feet by 390 (& 391) feet and comprising 2.23 acres, identified as lot 1 in block 2 on map 108.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The property being nominated comprised 2.23 acres that was acquired by the church in two transactions in 1842 and 1906; the property being nominated has been in the possession of the church since 1906. The tract on which the church stands was acquired by deed from Col. John Hoke, 2 March 1842, and recorded in Lincoln County Deed Book 39, page 410. The second tract comprising the remainder of the church property was acquired in 1906 from Mrs. McBee and it was here that the parish school building was erected in 1907.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Davyd Foard Hood

organization _____ date 1 September 1991

street & number Isinglass, 6907 Old Shelby Road telephone 704/462-4331

city or town Vale state N.C. zip code 28168

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Luke's Church and Cemetery, including four buildings and the cemetery on a two-and-a-quarter-acre half-block tract, is important in the art and architectural history of Lincolnton and Lincoln County. As a group the church, the parish hall that was built as the parish school, the rectory, and the cemetery form an assemblage of historic religion-based resources that is unrivaled in Lincoln County. Nowhere else in the city of Lincolnton or in Lincoln County does a like trio of historic buildings and cemetery survive on one tract that represents and exemplifies all the functions of a religious body. But the significance of St. Luke's Church and Cemetery does not rest on that qualification alone. The interior of St. Luke's Church, largely surviving as built and consecrated in 1886, is important as the only major intact late-Victorian church interior in Lincoln County and as one of a small group of handsome Gothic Revival style church interiors dating from the later nineteenth century in the Diocese of Western North Carolina. The design of the church and the supervision of the construction was the work of Silas McBee (1853-1924), who also carved the altar and reredos as memorials to members of his family and was responsible for the beautiful group of fourteen stained glass windows that illuminate the wood-paneled interior. This interior is the first known work of McBee, a gifted gentleman architect, who influenced the appearance of other Episcopal churches including the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., and served from 1896 until 1912 as the editor of THE CHURCHMAN, the chief organ of the Episcopal Church in America. In the first decade of the twentieth century when most of the congregations in Lincolnton replaced their old churches with handsome new buildings, the congregation of St. Luke's, 1917, covered their towered Gothic Revival style frame church with an up-to-date stucco finish. That effort was a failure, and in 1922 to 1923 a common bond brick veneer with modest Gothic buttresses was laid over the church's elevations. The historic form and the interior remain unaltered, and the 1923 modifications are in keeping with both late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century interpretations of the Gothic Revival style in Piedmont North Carolina. Surviving in the cemetery are a group of representative stones dating from the second half of the nineteenth century that are the signed work of at least six Piedmont stonecarvers and marble yards. The most important work of art here was created by the well-known Philadelphia marble yard of J. Baird who supplied gravestones for elite members of North Carolina society in the antebellum period; it marks the grave of Caroline Rebecca Guion who died in childbirth on 11 September 1854. The property has three periods of significance: 1850 to 1881, when the signed gravestones were erected in the cemetery; 1886, when the present church was built and consecrated; and 1907 to 1912, during which time the parish school/hall and rectory were erected and the complex of buildings housing the functions of the church was completed.

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Historical Background--Part 8

Although there were adherents of the Church of England in pre-Revolutionary piedmont North Carolina, the formal organization of the church ended with the defeat of the British and it was not until the opening years of the nineteenth century that the modern Episcopal church was reborn in North Carolina. The renewal of the church in the western Piedmont--including Lincolnton and Lincoln County--is associated with the missionary efforts of the Rev. Robert Johnstone Miller who, while ordained a Lutheran minister at St. John's Church, Cabarrus County, 20 May 1794, considered himself an Episcopalian. After 1794, Miller held services using the BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER throughout the western Piedmont. While living at White Haven near Lowesville in Lincoln County, he is credited with organizing four churches: St. Peter's and Smyrna, Lincoln County; Christ Church, Rowan County; and St. Michael's Church, Iredell County. Miller left Lincoln County about 1820 and removed to Mary's Grove, a plantation near the present-day city of Lenoir in what was then Burke County, where he lived until his death in 1834. During this later period (1820-1834) he continued his missionary efforts on behalf of the Episcopal Church and, on 1 May 1821, achieved a long-time ambition when he was ordained an Episcopal Priest in Raleigh by Bishop Moore of Virginia. Christ Church, Rowan County, was admitted into the Diocese of North Carolina in 1821; the following year White Haven and Smyrna churches in Lincoln County and St. Michael's, Iredell County, were admitted into the Diocese. A third church in Lincoln County, St. Peter's, was admitted into the Diocese in 1823 when the Convention was held in Salisbury.

The story of the struggle to establish a viable Episcopal Church in Lincoln County--an area that was predominantly German and thus Lutheran and Reformed in its religious convictions--is outside the parameters of this nomination; nevertheless, a few facts confirm some connections between the above-cited efforts of the Rev. Mr. Miller and the establishment of St. Luke's Church in Lincolnton in 1841. In 1819, the Rev. Richard Sharp Mason baptized five children in Lincolnton during a missionary tour. The admission of the three Lincoln County churches to the Diocese of North Carolina in 1822 and 1823 strengthened the cause; however, within a decade it appears that these congregations had either seriously weakened or dissolved.

A series of renewed missionary efforts in Lincoln County (and perhaps the larger Piedmont) in the mid 1830s holds clearer ties with the eventual organization of St. Luke's congregation in 1841. The Rev. Mr. Miller's last act of influence in Lincolnton occurred in 1833, the year before his death, when he married Col. Michael Hoke and Frances Burton, the daughter of Robert Burton, a member of the White Haven Church. In 1834 the Rev. John Morgan held services in Lincolnton. His efforts were succeeded by those of the Rev. Moses Ashley Curtis in 1834/1835; Curtis would later achieve prominence as rector of St. Matthew's Church, Hillsborough. In 1836 Bishop Ives is said to have administered confirmations here; one of those confirmed at this service at Beatties Ford (White Haven?) was

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Malinda McBee of Lincolnton. As will be seen the McBee family was one of the principal supporters of St. Luke's Church.

The Rev. Mr. Curtis was succeeded in the missionary endeavor by the Rev. E. M. Forbes who preached in Lincolnton and can be credited with organizing the congregation of St. Luke's Church in 1841. Forbes' efforts in the community, largely made up of citizens of German ancestry and members of the Lutheran and Reformed churches, proved to be successful and seen, perhaps, as a challenge to the established churches in Lincolnton. Bishop Ives reported at the 1842 convention of the Diocese that he had been called to Lincolnton in August, 1841, where "the public mind had been greatly excited by a violent and unprovoked attack upon the Church." He preached three times to assembled congregations of townsfolk and although he felt that his visit to the county seat had helped allay fears, he departed Lincolnton with the feeling that "the increasing prosperity of our Zion has awakened a spirit of jealousy, and a settled plan of opposition."

The spirit of agitation in Lincolnton in 1841 (and 1842) was not entirely of a religious nature. There were bitter political discussions occupying the voices of the town and county residents, and these would see their end in the formation of Catawba County from Lincoln in 1842 and the subsequent formation of Gaston County in 1846. Clearly there were shifts undermining the political structure of the county and the power held by its prominent and closed circle of leaders. However, within this arena of unrest and controversy, the Rev. Mr. Forbes persevered and succeeded. On the night of 29 November 1841 a group of thirteen citizens of Lincolnton gathered in the Academy Building at the corner of Pine and Academy streets, exactly two blocks west of the present church plant. There they formed themselves into a congregation to be known as St. Luke's. Those men were: D. Reinhardt, James M. Lytle, William Williamson, Leonard E. Thompson, Thomas M. Herndon, Jeremiah W. Murphy, Haywood W. Guion, Vardry Alexander McBee, H. L. Hicks, Michael Hoke, Robert Williamson, Jr., Thomas G. Williamson, and Thomas W. Lytle. While members of the Williamson family comprise at least three of the thirteen founding members, the presence of members of the Reinhardt, Guion, and Hoke families added social weight to the undertaking. It is some sure indication of the early character of the congregation that seven of the thirteen founding members were lawyers.

With the formal organization of the congregation accomplished and a vestry elected, the group set about to erect a church. This first effort in this direction was the purchase of a lot at the corner of Pine and Cedar streets on which the present church stands. It was conveyed on 2 March 1842 by Col. John Hoke to the trustees of St. Luke's Church. One week later, on 9 March 1842, the cornerstone of the first church was laid by the Rev. Mr. Forbes. According to one local historian, the plans for the church were drawn by Haywood W. Guion. He also supervised the construction of the edifice that was completed by 1843 when, on 30 July of that year, it was consecrated by Levi Silliman Ives, the second Bishop of North Carolina. The church was admitted into the Diocese of North

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Carolina at the Convention of 1843. These strong showings of growth were somewhat sapped early the following year when the Rev. Mr. Forbes was forced to resign on 18 February because of poor health.

During the next eighteen years there were at least five rectors of St. Luke's Church. The exact dates of their individual services as rector are not completely known. The first of these was the Rev. Aaron F. Olmstead who was succeeded by the Rev. Joseph C. Huske in May 1847. Huske resigned as rector on 27 June 1851 and eventually relocated in Fayetteville where he long served as rector of St. John's Church. The Rev. Thomas S. W. Mott is said to have assumed the rectorship of St. Luke's on 1 March 1852 in conjunction with his work at St. Peter's Church in Charlotte. Mott remained at St. Luke's for about two years and was succeeded by the Rev. Horatio H. Hewitt who came to St. Luke's as rector on 12 November 1854 and remained until sometime in 1856. On 1 January 1857 the Rev. Charles T. Bland came to St. Luke's and remained here until 1 December 1861.

Of these rectorships, the most is known of activities at St. Luke's during the four years that the Rev. Mr. Bland was rector. At the convention of 1858, Bland reported that a parochial school had been established in Lincolnton. That same year the steeple of the church had become so deteriorated that it had to be removed. Subscriptions were sought and received for a new steeple and it was erected in 1859. In that year a baptismal font was placed in the church. The 1942 centennial publication states that "A donation for this given by Mrs. Mary Brent Smith, the stone by Mr. L. E. Thompson and the marble shaft by Mr. William Tiddy." Tiddy had one of North Carolina's most important marble yards and gravestone businesses in the antebellum period and it is regrettable that the font has been replaced and lost.

There is no little irony to the fact that the man who came as rector to St. Luke's Church in 1862--during the social, economic, and political upheaval of the Civil War--would oversee and shepherd the church during its greatest and longest period of stability and growth. William Robards Wetmore (1834-1904) was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, the son of Ichabod Wetmore (1792-1857), cashier of the Bank of North Carolina, and his wife Elizabeth Ann Badger, sister of Judge George E. Badger. The senior Wetmore removed to Fayetteville with the bank in the early 1840s and there his son grew up and attended the Donaldson Military Academy. Wetmore attended the University of North Carolina and received degrees in 1854 and 1856; having Judge George E. Badger as an uncle, there is little surprise that, like his two elder brothers, he studied law. He was admitted to the bar in 1858 and lived for a time in Livingston, Alabama, where he had a partnership with his brother Col. Thomas B. Wetmore.

At some point in the later 1850s, the practice of law seems to have lost its appeal for Wetmore; Wetmore moved to New York and studied theology at the General Seminary. William Robards Wetmore graduated from the seminary in 1861. He returned to Alabama and was ordained deacon in Trinity Church, Mobile, on 25 June

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1861 by Bishop William Mercer Greene of Mississippi. Wetmore then returned to North Carolina--to New Bern--where he became assistant to the Rev. Alfred Augustin Watson (1818-1905), rector of Christ Church. Watson resigned as rector of Christ Church to serve as chaplain in the Confederate Army; Wetmore continued to serve the congregation and it was in that capacity that he was ejected from the pulpit of Christ Church by the occupying Union Army who replaced him in the sanctuary with a Union chaplain.

Wetmore came to Lincolnton and assumed charge of St. Luke's Church on 5 July 1862. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Thomas Atkinson on St. Matthew's Day, 21 September, of the same year and would thereafter serve as rector of St. Luke's Church and its missions until his death on 24 March 1904. A few sentences in a sketch on the Rev. Mr. Wetmore that appeared in Sill's HISTORICAL SKETCHES: DIOCESE OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA provide insight to the steadfastness of his labors at St. Luke's.

Dr. Wetmore is an example of the blessing that comes to a parish from a long pastorate, where there is an ever-continuing love for the flock of which one is an appointed shepherd, and a continual guidance of all, both young and old, from one generation to another, in the way of the Christian life. To these virtues of his ministry, Dr. Wetmore added a love for the town, the civic community of which his flock was a part Members of prominent families in the community and the state belonged as also those who would be called poor, and those of the negro as well as of the white race. He appealed in his ministrations to all men.

Much could be written about the life of the Rev. Mr. Wetmore and his career in St. Luke's Church and Lincolnton; however, there are three important themes or events that are especially critical to the church and its significance in Lincolnton. These are: his role as a minister through the establishment of mission churches in Lincoln County and the region; his role as an educator in Lincolnton; and the construction of the second church for St. Luke's congregation in 1885-1886.

Wetmore's ministry to the poor, the Negro race, and those of lesser social and economic advantage in Lincolnton, Lincoln County, and the region is one quality of his life as rector of St. Luke's that is cited in nearly every reference to him. Within a month of his ordination as rector in 1862 he began holding services at Phifer's factory and from this effort grew St. Stephen's Mission; a chapel was built in 1872. In November, 1862, he held Sunday school and services for Negroes in Lincolnton at St. Luke's; eventually, in 1886, a separate congregation, St. Cyprian's, was established. St. Paul's Mission was established some three miles from Lincolnton in a farming region and a chapel was built in 1871 on land given for the purpose by Lorenzo Ferrier, a native of Lyons, France, who settled in Lincoln County and died there in 1875. Unfortunately, those three congregations no longer survive; however, the fourth mission Wetmore established,

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the Church of our Savior at Woodside, remains a viable local congregation and now shares the minister with St. Luke's Church. Wetmore also established missions at St. John's, High Shoals and St. Mark's, Gastonia--both in Gaston County--in addition to his work at the Church of the Redeemer in Shelby.

Given his own education and background it was not surprising that the Rev. Mr. Wetmore would be interested in education. He had a fine companion in his efforts in the person of Professor Hosea Hildreth Smith. A native of New Hampshire, Smith removed to Newton, North Carolina where he became the first president of Catawba College. In 1853 he was married to Mary Brent Hoke, the daughter of Michael Hoke, one of the original thirteen founders of the church. Smith also served as a professor at the University of North Carolina in the antebellum period and apparently removed to Lincolnton when the school was closed during the war. In 1869 Wetmore and Smith opened the Lincolnton Male Academy and during its operation they educated the sons of most of Lincolnton's leading families.

Relatively little is known of the first church erected by the St. Luke's congregation in 1842-1843, consecrated on 30 July 1843, and to which Wetmore came in 1862. The cornerstone of the building was laid on 9 March 1842. According to local tradition and a number of secondary sources, the plan of the church was drawn by Haywood W. Guion (d. 1883), an attorney, editor of the WESTERN WHIG BANNER, and one of the founding members of the church. Guion is also said to have superintended the construction of the church.

From the centennial history it is learned that the church steeple had decayed so badly that in the fall of 1858 it was removed and rebuilt in 1859. When the decision was made to build a new church in 1885, the tower and 1859 steeple of the original church, built on a north/south axis, was retained as the south transept and anchor of the new church that was built on an east/west axis. The design of the new church and much of the interior carving were produced by Silas McBee (1853-1924). On 4 January 1886 the vestry passed a motion "That Silas McBee & J. C. Cobb be appointed a building committee to contract for the building of St. Luke's Church & for the materials to be used and to have the general superintendency of the whole work, and to expedite the same as speedily as possible." The cornerstone of the church was laid on 2 February 1886 and it was consecrated by Bishop Lyman on 12 August 1886. In architectural terms the newly-built church could be said to have been the great achievement of the Rev. Mr. Wetmore's ministry in Lincolnton. Wetmore would continue to minister to his congregation in this Gothic Revival style building for the next eighteen years.²

In 1904 the deaths of two men greatly affected the fortunes of St. Luke's Church. The first of these was Vardry Alexander McBee, one of the thirteen original members of the church, who died on 17 February 1904. He was the son of Vardry McBee (1775-1864) and Jane Alexander (1783-1864) and was born to the couple on 17 April 1818 in the house at the corner of Main and Academy streets where he lived all his life and from whence his body would be carried to St. Luke's for interment. The vestry of St. Luke's met on 24 February at the home of the

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rector, Mr. Wetmore, and passed a resolution which includes the following paragraph:

Mr. McBee was present at and took part in the organization of the parish, was a vestryman of the church for more than sixty years, for the greater part of this time secretary of the vestry, and for the past seventeen years senior warden. For this entire period he was attentive to every duty, faithful to every trust, and at all times active and efficient in every work that was given him to do. Verily a prince in Israel has been gathered to his fathers, and we here record our deep sense of loss to the church and our profound personal sorrow for his death.

The Rev. Mr. Wetmore who had presided at the above meeting of the vestry had been too ill to officiate at the funeral of his beloved friend. Thus, it was not unexpected when, on 24 March--exactly one month after the vestry meeting--the Rev. William Robards Wetmore passed away.

The vestry of St. Luke's met again on 1 April 1904 and passed a resolution in memory of their rector; the opening paragraph is quoted below:

Resolved: That, in the death of our beloved pastor, the Rev. W. R. Wetmore, D.D., this parish has sustained a loss that is well-nigh irreparable. Dr. Wetmore will be sorely missed in the community at large, as one who has always stood for righteousness and truth. His loss will be felt far and wide by a large company of men and women who were taught by him to face the world manfully and faithfully, and who owe largely to his instruction the positions of honor and trust which they now hold. But we of St. Luke's church, who were the objects of his particular care and love, feel that the loss to us is greater than to all. We have lost a guide and counsellor, a friend who never failed, a shepherd, who, without thought of self, ever gently and watchfully cared for his flock, and one who lived only for our good and the good of the Kingdom of Christ.

In retrospect, there is perhaps all too much poignancy and too little irony in the description of the Rev. Mr. Wetmore's death as "well-nigh irreparable." A review of the subsequent history of the parish would bear out the truth of this statement. Although there would be periods of accomplishment within the parish and the town, the vision of the church and its presence in Lincolnton would never again enjoy the stature and the long period of stability achieved during the four decades of Wetmore's rectorship. Nevertheless the Christian spirit he instilled in the congregation would continue to motivate them for many years; within the decade following Wetmore's death the church would erect a building to house its parochial school and parish hall and a rectory, both of which still stand and are part of this nomination.

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Rev. Mr. Wetmore was succeeded as rector of St. Luke's by his assistant, the Rev. David T. Johnson, who was ordained in St. Luke's on 16 April 1905. At the congregation's meeting on 24 April 1905 there was discussion of a memorial to commemorate the life and work of the late rector but it did not result in any immediate action. In August 1906 a committee of three--Blair Jenkins, H. E. Reid, and L. R. Richardson--was appointed to confer with the Woman's Guild of the parish on the selection of a "suitable monument" to be erected at the gravesite. A grey and white marble cross would later be erected to the memory of the late rector over his grave near North Cedar Street.

It would appear that St. Luke's was operating a parish school in the early-20th century; however, the history of the school remains to be firmly drawn. At the vestry meeting on 30 January 1905 a committee consisting of Lemuel Wetmore, J. E. Love, and Blair Jenkins was appointed to prepare plans for the enlargement of the parish school and for maintaining and increasing its facilities. Where this school stood is not known but presumably it was in close proximity to the church. Discussion continued into the summer on the project but for some unknown reason the matter was dropped and the committee discharged at the 7 November 1905 meeting of the vestry. The matter was revived in the summer of 1906 at the vestry meeting of 19 July when Judge W. A. Hoke, senior warden, told the assembled group that a letter had been received from Judge William Preston Bynum (1820-1909) "offering to donate \$1500.00 for the building of a Parish School Building on the lot adjoining St. Luke's Church in Lincolnton, N.C. said building to be a memorial to the late Rector, Dr. W. R. Wetmore." Bynum, a former justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court (1873-1879), was the husband of Anna Eliza Shipp, the daughter of Bartlett Shipp and a member of a family prominent in St. Luke's Church and Lincolnton. The vestry voted at the same time to accept the generous offer and resolved that a committee of three should work with the rector to ". . . arrange for the immediate construction and equipment of the building."

The committee wasted no time in moving forward with its responsibility. At the vestry meeting of 30 September 1906, it reported that it had obtained title to the lot adjoining the church property for the site of the building and that it had entered into contract with W. W. Motz for the erection of the "Mission House" at a cost of \$1,150 with construction to begin on 1 January 1907. It would appear that the building was completed in 1907 or early 1908 and that the furnishing of the school and parish hall was accomplished in the first half of 1908. At the meeting of the vestry on 1 June 1908, D. E. Reid, chairman of the Building Committee, reported all work accomplished, all debts paid, and a balance of \$0.12 on hand. Meanwhile the "old Parish Building" was remodeled as a residence. Later in 1908 the Rev. Mr. Johnson resigned as rector.

The second major building project of the first two decades of the twentieth century occurred during the pastorate of the Rev. W. R. Dye who came to St. Luke's as rector in 1909. It would appear that plans for the erection of the

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rectory were discussed shortly after Rev. Mr. Dye came to Lincolnton and that the building was constructed in 1910-1911. At the vestry meeting held following the congregational meeting on 5 June 1911, "It was ordered that the thanks of the Vestry be extended to the Building Committee in charge of the Rectory, for efficient service and the committee be discharged." The two-story frame building, with Colonial Revival details, was covered with pebble-dash. Standing at the corner of Cedar and McBee streets, it was the third of a trio of buildings occupying the west side of the 300 block of North Cedar Street.

At the vestry meeting of 10 July 1912, appreciation was expressed to H. E. Reid for his efforts as secretary and treasurer of the rectory project and to the rector ". . . who has done much by his good taste and personal labor to add to the beauty and comfort of the Rectory." The good relationship between the rector and the vestry did not hold. In fact, they had reached such an impasse that at its meeting on 20 August 1913 the vestry expressed its ". . . conviction that the Rev. W. R. Dye is unsuited for the position of Rector of this Parish," and resolved to request him to resign his position as rector to St. Luke's Parish and Missions. The situation festered through the remainder of 1913 and into 1914. The final stages of the disagreement centered on the rector's right to remove certain bookcases, mantels, and other fittings from the rectory. Then, in the late winter and spring of 1914, the Rev. Mr. Dye was insisting on carting away the screen doors and windows from the rectory. At the vestry meeting of 9 March 1914 it was confirmed that the church was forced ". . . to issue ejection proceedings in order to get Mr. Dye to move his furniture from rectory." In the end Dye did remove the mantels from his study and living room and the bookcases and a china cabinet.

Meanwhile on 1 February 1914 the vestry had voted to accept the offer of John H. Crosby to serve as rector of St. Luke's. He resigned in 1915 and was succeeded by the Rev. C. J. Parker whose tenure as rector lasted but for a brief period in the late winter and spring of 1916. The Rev. R. S. Lassiter served the congregation thereafter. The Rev. Cyril E. Bentley came to St. Luke's in 1916 and was ordained priest in 1917; it was during his period of ministry that yet another building project was initiated; its end result was the covering of brick veneer laid over the church in 1923.

Apparently the appearance of the pebble-dash covering on the newly-built rectory had become so attractive to members of the church in the mid 1910s that in 1917 pebble-dash was added as an exterior sheathing over the original sheathing of the 1886 church. Within two years, and for as yet unknown reasons, the pebble-dash failed to be satisfactory. The pebble-dash was put on in January and February, 1917, and it could have been that the wet cement did not bond well during the cold winter weather. The vestry considered the matter at their meeting on 6 June 1919 when "It was discussed whether or not it would be advisable to repair pebble dash on exterior of church or tear pebble dash off and use other material, was decided to hold congregational meeting to see which should be done." At the

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subsequent congregation meeting on 6 July ". . . the Rector moved that resolutions be printed to state how much it would cost to repair church with Shingles and also brick." The estimated prices suggested at the meeting were to the effect that ". . . it would cost \$900, repair with shingles and \$3,000.00 with brick." Henry Kistler, a contractor, and Harry Page were appointed to obtain estimates of the cost of each. A week later, on 13 July, the minutes recount that ". . . it was motioned by Mr. Harry Page to raise \$2500. for brick. Mrs. John Reese moved to reconsider and use Shingles. Both motions left open. Pastor moved that Vestry report in two weeks what amount could be raised by congregation." In an unrecorded meeting it was apparently decided to proceed with the brick veneer and during the course of 1919 and 1920 there were conscious efforts to raise money for the project but it was curtailed by the resignation of the rector in 1920.

The Rev. Mr. Bentley was succeeded as rector by the Rev. Sanders R. Guignard, who came in mid-1921 to St. Luke's from Christ Church, Mt. Pleasant, S.C., and it was during his rectorship that the brick veneer would be added to the church. At a vestry meeting on 8 March 1922 Harry Page was elected as treasurer of the building fund for the project. The minutes of the meeting also report that "Sometime previous to this meeting Mr. Kistler and Page had measured and made estimate as to cost and material that would be required to brick veneer St. Luke's Church. They reported it would (require) 54,000 brick to do the work including gables, 4000 less to leave off gables, material. Labor, ect. was estimated at \$2500 at present prices and \$500.00 additional if place is to be erected for organ. The Secretary was instructed to thank Mr. Wm. Truesdale on behalf of vestry for \$500.00 which Mr. Truesdale gave to be used to go towards brick veneering St. Luke's Church and for no other purpose." Mr. Kistler, Mr. Page, and the rector were appointed a committee to raise the necessary funds.

Further developments on the project are recorded in the minutes for the vestry meeting of 8 June 1922. "Mr. Page, Treas. of the Building Committee, reported that twenty-seven hundred dollars (\$2700.00) was in sight in deposits and reliable subscriptions, for work on church. It was resolved that in as much as between \$Twenty-five hundred and three thousand dollars was in sight that Mr. Kistler be authorized to secure the services of competent carpenters to do the necessary repairs on wood work and Mr. Haynes be given authority to have sand put on lot." Efforts proceeded apace and at the 29 July meeting the vestry authorized Harry Page ". . . to purchase fifty-thousand brick (50,000) and more if needed." At the next recorded meeting on October 10 the vestry approved the immediate purchase of 30,000 ". . . Cypress hand-drawn heart shingles" with which to reroof the church. More critical to the lasting appearance of the church was their second action. "It was also moved and carried that the Wood Portico which was removed from the West End of church be replaced with one of concrete and brick if such procedure meets the consent of the architect." The "architect" was James S. Salter of Raleigh who designed the Lincoln County court house, then in construction, and who is said to have given advice on the brick veneering of St. Luke's.

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During the course of the project to brick veneer and reroof the church it was also decided to make necessary repairs to the parish hall and rectory and reroof both of those buildings. Mr. Page continued to serve as treasurer of the Building Fund for the duration of the renovation program on the church properties. His typed two-page account of the receipts and expenditures carries into 1927.

It appears that the brick veneering was largely completed during the months of September through November, 1922 when the payroll expenditures were the highest. Another unidentified block of significant work was done in July and August, 1923. The repairs to the parish house and rectory, and their reroofing appear to have been largely completed during the period of 1924 through the winter of 1926/1927. Meanwhile, in 1925, the church was faced with an assessment by the city of Lincolnton for the paving of Cedar Street in the block on which the church, cemetery, parish hall, and rectory were located.

The above work represented a tremendous accomplishment by the congregation of St. Luke's Church; much of the credit owes to the leadership of the rector, Sanders R. Guignard, and the two devoted laymen Harry Page and Henry A. Kistler (1864-1928). It becomes apparent that one of the legacies left to the church by the Rev. Mr. Wetmore at his death in 1904 was a quality and character of lay leadership that would carry the church through the above-chronicled series of building programs during the 1900s, the 1910s, and the 1920s.

At a time when the church might have rested on its laurels it was faced with yet another test in the form of the resignation of the Rev. Mr. Guignard in the summer of 1929. At the vestry meeting of 1 July 1929 the rector reported that he had received \$800 from William H. Truesdale and \$200 from from the "St. Luke's congregations" to be paid on outstanding debts. Of this amount the vestry earmarked \$490 as a payment for "Back salary to Rector." The identity of William H. Truesdale and his relationship to St. Luke's remains to be determined, but it is not idle to speculate that, given his earlier gifts of \$1,550.00 to the church building projects--representing a total twenty-seven percent of the \$5,726.91 raised by the church--that he was a resourceful friend of the rector's. It also appears that the rector was forced to turn to him again in the summer of 1929 to obtain funds with which the church could pay his salary.

The economic effects of the stock market crash did nothing but add to the problems of the church and its finances. Without a rector and no apparent prospects of obtaining (or paying the salary of) one, the vestry apparently decided early in 1930 to rent out the rectory. This was done beginning 1 September 1930 by leasing the rectory for one year at \$25 per month to Mrs. N. M. Coon. During the course of the early 1930s the rectory continued to be rented and a series of ministers was secured to officiate at services at St. Luke's. On 28 October 1934 a fire in the rectory caused considerable damage and on the 30th

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the vestry voted to award a contract to William Lohr for repairs costing \$1,366.00.

In the summer of 1936 a call was issued to the Rev. John C. Grainger to become rector of St. Luke's Church. At the congregational meeting on 11 January 1937 he gave a report on the activities of the past six months, including gifts from Lieut. Col. William E. Shipp and James T. Williams, Jr., the grandson of Vardry A. McBee, were announced. The Rev. Mr. Grainger came to his new position with a great deal of enthusiasm and at a special congregational meeting on 8 September 1937 he announced an ambitious program of initiatives to renew the spirit of the church in Lincolnton; it was entitled "The Forward Movement in St. Luke's Parish, 1937-1938." The extent to which this program was implemented and succeeded is outside the framework of this nomination; however, the resignation of the rector in September 1939 suggests some frustration on his part. Meanwhile, memorial gifts continued to be offered and accepted. James T. Williams, Jr., Vardry McBee Williams, Silas Williams, and Mary Elizabeth Williams presented a set of Eucharistic Vestments in memory of the Rev. William Robards Wetmore that were blessed at the Patronal service on 18 October 1939 by Bishop Griffin. In 1939, the Rev. M. Eugene Heald of Lenoir-Rhyne College, Hickory, N.C., offered to donate a pulpit, ". . . in keeping with the rest of the furnishings of the church," in memory of his mother.

James T. Williams, Jr., of Washington, D.C., attended the annual congregational meeting on 8 January 1940. According to the minutes he:

". . . gave a brief but interesting talk about St. Luke's history, its approaching one hundredth anniversary, and the part it had played in the life of the community. He urged a celebration of this anniversary. Mr. Williams suggested the vestry remain as it is, at least until a rector is secured. He pointed out that the parish is in a critical state, being without a rector, and needs everyone's help. He stated that with the consent of the Vestry, he would like to replace the doors of the church building with new ones of Gothic architecture--the doors at the belfry entrance not being of this style."

Later in 1940 Colin Campbell was sent to St. Luke's by the bishop, but not being an ordained priest he could not preside at Holy Communion. He otherwise ministered to St. Luke's Church, St. Cyprian's and the Church of the Savior at Woodside, and the Church of the Redeemer in Shelby. During his tenure a new church was erected at Woodside. At the vestry meeting of 12 August 1940 he announced that he would be departing Lincolnton in early September for Charleston, S.C., and that the Bishop would like the church to call the Rev. Frank Bloxham as its rector. At this meeting W. E. Grigg ". . . reported the remains of St. Stephen's Church had been sold for \$5.00." Apparently that mission had long since ceased to be functioning. The remains were some scraps of lumber. The call was issued to the Rev. Mr. Bloxham, he accepted it, and removed

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from Franklin to Lincolnton where he presided over his first meeting with the vestry on 8 October 1940. Among the broad range of topics discussed at this meeting was the proposal to close the mission at St. Paul's, but no action was taken.

At his second meeting with the vestry, on 13 November 1940, the rector had an extended discussion with the body on various plans to be considered in celebration of the centennial of St. Luke's Church in 1941. Citing this as ". . . an ideal time to raise money" for repairs to the church, he suggested that an appeal for \$10,000 be made, that a history of the church be published and distributed, and that various events be scheduled throughout the year with the climax of the celebration to be on St. Luke's Day. At its meeting on February 10 1941, the vestry appointed Miss Wilhelmina Rees, Miss Pansy Wood, W. E. Grigg, and Fred Kizer to a committee to oversee the printing of the centennial booklet. On 6-7 May 1941, the annual convention of the Diocese of Western North Carolina was held at St. Luke's Church, honoring St. Luke's as the oldest parish in the diocese. The only real blight on the centennial year was the closing of the defunct St. Paul's mission in September when all the furnishings were removed from the church and it was boarded up. For whatever reason St. Luke's Day, 18 October, was not the date of the banquet and celebration of the centennial; instead, it was scheduled for Saturday evening, 29 November 1941, at the Parish Hall. The Rev. Edward Brailsford Guerry, rector of St. Luke's Church, Salisbury, and the grandson of Vardry A. McBee, gave the centennial address. In the meantime the Rev. Mr. Bloxham resigned as rector of St. Luke's (in November?).

In the half century since the centennial in 1941 the church has been served by a long series of ministers beginning with the Rev. Maxwell Ganter who came to St. Luke's for the Christmas services in 1941. Repairs were made to the rectory, and it was occupied by the rector who presided over the vestry meeting there in June, 1942. During this long period St. Cyprian's Church was closed and St. Luke's connection with the Church of the Redeemer was terminated when it went on its own. St. Luke's continues to share a rector with the Church of our Savior at Woodside. Various repairs have been made to the church, the parish house, and the rectory in the intervening years. The rectory was occupied through the early 1980s by the Rev. Harry Williams who was the last resident rector of St. Luke's Church. It has since been rented. For the most part the exterior appearance of the church and the rectory are much as they were in 1941. In the early 1960s an addition was made onto the rear of the Parish Hall to house Sunday school rooms and restrooms. Then, about 1970, the exterior weatherboarding of the parish house was covered with aluminum siding. Fortunately, in that effort the handsome late Victorian porch and trim along the eaves was retained.

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ART AND ARCHITECTURE CONTEXT

THE BUILDINGS

The architectural significance of the property nominated as St. Luke's Church and Cemetery is two-fold. Considered as a group, the church, the parish hall that was built as a parish school, the rectory, and the cemetery form an assemblage of related historic religious resources at one site that is unrivaled elsewhere in Lincoln County. The architectural significance of the church combines with significance in the field of art when the Victorian interior of the church is considered. The interior of St. Luke's Church, surviving largely as built in 1885-1886, is the only intact vernacular Victorian religious interior in Lincoln County and one of a small group of important Gothic Revival interiors in the western Piedmont.

St. Luke's Church, built in 1885-86, is relatively recent in comparison to the long history of the Lutheran, Reformed, and Presbyterian churches in Lincoln County that dates from the mid-eighteenth century. The oldest surviving church in the county is Machpelah Presbyterian Church erected in plantation-rich eastern Lincoln County in 1848, just seven years after St. Luke's was organized. Salem Lutheran and Reformed Church also dates from 1848. Both are brick churches; however, Salem Church, unlike Machpelah, has been expanded and substantially altered over the years. Machpelah Church, with its companion stone-walled cemetery, has not been used for regular services since the early 1970s.

In addition to St. Luke's Church, there are three known churches in the county that date from the later years of the nineteenth century. The most prepossessing of these is the handsome brick church erected for the congregations of Daniels Reformed and Lutheran churches on the Reepsville Road in western Lincoln County in 1888. The two congregations worshipped in the same building until 1894 when the Reformed congregation erected a new church on their joint holding. That building was destroyed by fire in 1936 and the following year the congregation built a handsome new stone church between the older Lutheran church and the large union cemetery. The pair of churches and their common cemetery hold a unique significance in the county. Two Methodist churches date from the later nineteenth century. Probably the oldest of these is Brevard Chapel, which has a Carpenter Gothic style and is said to have been built for blacks in the 1870s. Laboratory Methodist Church, an impressive but plain frame church, was erected in the mill town south of Lincolnton in 1897.

Excepting Daniels Reformed Church, rebuilt in 1937, one of the last significant churches erected in Lincoln County outside of Lincolnton is St. Matthew's United Church of Christ, a Romanesque Revival style brick church erected just south of the county's border with Catawba County in 1908. The last of the important rural churches, dating to 1938, is Bethpage Lutheran Church, a handsome brick Gothic

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Revival style church that appears as more of an urban building than a rural church. Its design was surely influenced by Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Lincolnton with which it shares a remarkable affinity.

Within the town of Lincolnton, there are five churches that date from the opening decades of the twentieth century that form the immediate context of St. Luke's Church and Cemetery. Each of these churches has a companion educational facility but none of them has a companion cemetery and known rectory/manse on adjoining property. Except for Emanuel Reformed Church, each of the four is a large handsome building that reflects the larger membership of their congregations. These five churches were built within a nine-year span from 1913 to 1922, a period of remarkable growth in the appearance and fabric of Lincolnton. It was also during this period that the former court house was replaced by the massive modern Greek Revival court house.

Two of these churches and their adjoining educational buildings are classical in their appearance. First Methodist Church, standing at the corner of Academy and East Main streets on the site of the life-time home of Vardry Alexander McBee (1818-1904), was designed to take advantage of its corner location. A two-story Corinthian portico surmounted by a dome anchors the composition at the corner and is flanked by a pair of gable front wings that face respectively onto Main and Academy streets; a broad staircase splays out from the portico down to the sidewalk. Two blocks further east on East Main Street, at its junction with Cedar Street, stands the former First Baptist Church. Designed by James M. McMichael of Charlotte, it is a cross-plan building surmounted by a dome with a two-story Ionic portico facing Main Street. Erected in 1922, it was replaced by the congregation with a new suburban church; it was refitted in 1991 as the Lincoln County Cultural Center.

Lincolnton's three important Gothic Revival style brick churches, built anew in the early twentieth century, were erected between 1913 and 1920. Emanuel Reformed Church, the first built and smallest of the trio, also stands on East Main Street at #329, two blocks south of St. Luke's. Designed by Henry E. Bonitz, a Wilmington, N.C. architect, it is a gable-front building with a handsome tower at its southwest front corner containing the entrance and bells. A modest block of Sunday school rooms was added later to its north gable end. Unfortunately, its interior was destroyed by a fire on 20 April 1991; most of the altar furnishings, the pews, and most of the stained glass windows, however, were removed from the burning building and saved while the fire was still confined to the attic of the church. First Presbyterian Church, at 114 West Main Street, is also a gable front church. Here the pointed-arch entrance arcade across the front of the church is flanked by a pair of square towers. It was built in 1917. Three years later the congregation of Emmanuel Lutheran Church erected their church which, costing \$65,000, might well have been the costliest of all five erected in this flush early-twentieth century period. Its thick muscular massing and strong proportions are compromised, however, by door and

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window openings that appear to be too diminutive in scale. It stands at 216 South Aspen Street, diagonally across the street from the old Emanuel Cemetery which was the site of its first church. It is within this context of large, proud, and handsomely detailed churches--all probably boasting a larger congregation than St. Luke's--that the buildings housing the religious functions of St. Luke's achieves and maintains their collective significance.

As noted earlier, the architectural significance of St. Luke's Church also derives from the extraordinary beauty and craftsmanship of its impressive Gothic Revival style interior. While the entire congregation surely took an interest in the appearance of their church--and several members contributed either their individual labor in the carving or the gift of memorials--the overall program of the interior decoration was the work of one man--Silas McBee. McBee (1853-1924), the son of Vardry Alexander McBee, attended Lincolnton Academy and in 1876 he was graduated from the University of the South. On 21 June 1877 he was married to Mary Estelle Sutton (1854-1891). McBee developed a strong interest in church architecture and apparently became something of a gentleman church architect.

In his report to the convention of the Diocese of North Carolina in 1886, the Rev. Mr. Wetmore gave the following account of work toward the new church:

On the Festival of the Epiphany the carpenters began to take down the church building, with a view to erect another upon the same site, according to a plan furnished by Major Silas McBee. On the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the corner stone of the new building (was laid) with religious services by the Rector. The tower of the old church was left standing, and the new edifice has been built to it.

The cost of the new church, including eight memorial windows, will be nearly \$3,000. To the energy of Major McBee and Major J. C. Cobb, who constitute the building committee, the parish is indebted for the work being pushed rapidly forward; and to the good taste of these gentlemen the parish is indebted for one of the handsomest churches to be found in the State.

The Rev. Mr. Wetmore reported at the convention of 1887 that "The church is very much admired by all who see it for the architecture, arrangements and memorial windows." Bishop Lymon came to Lincolnton on Tuesday evening, 10 August, to preside over the consecration of the church on the following Thursday. In his "Episcopal Address" published as part of the proceedings of the diocesan convention of 1887, the bishop recalled the events of Wednesday, the 11th of August:

The next day was spent quietly there, and in making arrangements for the Consecration of the new and beautiful Church so recently completed. I walked up to see the building, and was surprised and deeply gratified by what had been accomplished. It is very striking in its reverent and churchly qualities, and reflects very great credit upon Mr. Silas McBee, who

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so judiciously arranged the plans, while some of the finest work, about the chancel, was done by his own hands, as a labor of love. I was much pleased also with the very tasteful Rood Screen, which was presented by the builder, and which gives to the interior a very fine and striking effect. There are also several Memorial windows which are beautifully executed. No one can enter the building, without being impressed with its sacred character. It is only a frame edifice, and by no means costly, but it conveys a very impressive lesson as to what may be done with limited means, where a refined and cultured taste gives beauty and symmetry to the whole.

McBee's wife died in 1891 and it would appear that he departed Lincolnton within the next few years. From 1896 until 1912 he was the editor of THE CHURCHMAN, the chief publication of the Episcopal Church. In 1912 he founded THE CONSTRUCTIVE QUARTERLY in New York and served as its editor until 1923. He died in 1924 and was buried in the cemetery at the University of the South. In addition to his contributions to St. Luke's Church, William L. Sherrill, in THE ANNALS OF LINCOLN COUNTY (1937), writes that he was involved in architectural matters concerning the Episcopal churches in Waynesboro, N.C., and Florence, S.C., Walsh Memorial Hall at the University of the South, and the altar and reredos erected as a memorial over the grave of Bishop Thomas Atkinson in St. James's Church, Wilmington, N.C. Sherrill also states that McBee delivered a series of lectures urging the construction of a Gothic church for the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. Clearly, McBee was a man with an important voice on church architecture: St. Luke's Church in Lincolnton is the first expression of that talent. In the completion of the wood carving in St. Luke's Church McBee had companion craftsmen. The handsome bishop's chair to the left of the altar was made and carved by John L. Cobb (1854-1926). George Cauble and J. E. Love built the rood screen; the carving was executed by Mr. Love.

As noted earlier, the interior of St. Luke's Church is one of several important interiors in later-nineteenth century Gothic Revival frame churches erected in the Diocese of Western North Carolina. Included in this number are: St. John's Church, Marion; the Church of the Transfiguration, Saluda; and the Church of the Good Shepherd, Cashiers. These three churches--all listed in the National Register--and St. Luke's are finished with a rich vocabulary of Victorian ornament that can best be called "Carpenter Gothic." The interior sheathing and the carved woodwork were usually of local woods that were left unpainted and allowed to age to rich warm tones. The mellow appearance of the interior was further enhanced by groups of memorial stained glass windows. Interestingly enough, the oldest of this quartet of churches, St. John's in Marion, was erected in 1883-1884 while the Rev. Charles Theodore Bland, the last antebellum rector of St. Luke's, was rector of the church. The Church of the Transfiguration, Saluda, was erected in 1889 and contains a stained glass window in memory of Thomas Cogdell Wetmore who ministered to the congregation. The Church of the Good Shepherd at Cashiers--like Saluda a resort community--was built in 1895. While the interior

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of St. Luke's is an important member of this western group of important Gothic Revival style church interiors, it is all the more important in Lincoln County where it is the sole surviving Gothic Revival style interior of the nineteenth century and an important interior in its own right. The interiors of the five major early-twentieth century churches in Lincoln County are largely conventional in their classical and late-Gothic Revival style ornamentation. Of this group Emmanuel Reformed Church's interior was probably the most important but it was lost in the fire of 20 April 1991.

THE CEMETERY

It is likely that the grounds to the north and west of the church began to be used as a burying ground almost concurrently with the erection of the first church in 1842; however, the earliest marked graves date from the 1850s. As was also the practice initially with many other churchyard burying grounds in the nineteenth century, Christians of any denomination could be buried in the churchyard. This practice was discounted after the passage of a resolution of the vestry in February 1882:

"Whereas the liberal use of the grave yard of St. Luke's Church allowed for many years to the general public has resulted in a limited space being left in the more desirable portion of the grounds for the vaults of our congregation. Resolved that hereafter no person outside of our Church shall be buried in any unoccupied part of said St. Luke's burying ground."

During the remainder of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century the vestry minutes record its concern about the upkeep and condition of the burying grounds. Periodically, efforts were made to raise money for upkeep and to clean up the cemetery but there does not appear to have been any sustained activity in this regard until recent years. The vestry minutes suggest that the burying ground was cleaned each year in advance of the Easter services. In 1929 Miss Kate Shipp donated funds for the upkeep of the cemetery and these have been supplemented in the following years. Problems of crowding in the cemetery continued to concern the vestry and on 28 January 1931 they again passed a resolution forbidding persons outside the church from being interred in the churchyard. Their resolution extended a step further and also forbade interments in family plots by persons who could not establish ownership of said plots.

Although the upkeep of the cemetery was a matter of frequent concern to the vestry during the first one hundred years or so, it was fenced enclosures that provoked the most discussion at vestry meetings recorded in the minute books. There remain two very handsome cast iron fenced enclosures marking two family plots. Both appear to have been erected shortly after the Civil War. One encloses the plot of John F. Phifer (1810-1886), his wife Elizabeth C. Ramsour

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St. Luke's Church and Cemetery, Lincoln County, N.C.

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Phifer (1819-1884), and their two sons. William L. Phifer (1843-1863) was killed on 30 September 1863 in the Battle of Chickamauga. Edward Phifer (1844-1864) died on 18 July 1864 of wounds received in battle near Petersburg, Virginia. It seems likely that the fence around the Phifer plot was erected at the close of the war in memory of the couple's two sons. Col. Phifer was one of Lincoln County's wealthiest citizens in his day; this fence reflects his affluence. A related death also occasioned the erection of the second and adjacent fence in the cemetery. It encloses the Jacob A. Ramseur (1808-1880) family plot; however, it was probably erected about the same time that a white marble obelisk was erected over the grave of his son, Confederate Major General Stephen Dodson Ramseur (1837-1864). General Ramseur, a graduate of West Point in 1860, joined the Confederate army in 1861; he was mortally wounded at Cedar Creek and died on 19 October 1864.

It appears that these fences had been erected by 1869 and had become the subject of some debate in the congregation. On 16 July 1869 the vestry passed a resolution that reflected the tenor of that discussion:

"Resolved That whereas it is believed that all persons having relations or friends interred in a Burial ground should feel a common interest in keeping the same properly & securely enclosed. And whereas it is also believed that the Erection of separate enclosures around graves of persons therein buried, tends to lessen that common interest, It is therefore Resolved That hereafter no person shall erect an enclosure around any grave in the graveyard of St. Luke's Church Lincolnton And It is further Resolved That when the enclosures now erected therein are gone to decay, that they are not to be renewed. The above is not to be construed so as to prevent or forbid any person from putting up a monument or curbing around a grave."

It would appear that there were no fences erected in the cemetery at St. Luke's thereafter. Any curbing or other enclosures of family plots would also remain minimal. In or about 1938 the vestry apparently authorized the dismantling of the two rectangular fenced enclosures and the re-erection of the component sections of the fence across the Cedar Street front of the cemetery. Both vocal and written opposition to this action was expressed by descendant members of the Phifer and Ramseur families and by the autumn of 1940 the Bishop of the Diocese of Western North Carolina became involved. Finally, on 10 December 1940, the vestry, heeding the Bishop's advice, voted to restore the fences to their original positions and that the cost of this restoration be borne by members of the families. This was done. Five months later, on 15 April 1941, a new "churchyard committee" was appointed to oversee the maintenance of the burying ground and to secure a new plan of the cemetery.

While some Episcopal churchyard burying grounds hold significance because of their plant materials and horticultural importance (Calvary Church, Tarboro) or because of the important ironwork there (Grace Church, Plymouth Historic

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District), neither of these two usual features are of overriding importance at St. Luke's. Clearly it was the intent of the vestry--and the congregation--that a social commonality be honored in the cemetery irrespective of the wealth or social position of a particular family. Likewise, there appears to have been little planting of evergreens or other plants here that would enhance the landscape. The significance of this cemetery is artistic in that it contains a range of representative gravestone types (signed) by at least six Piedmont North Carolina stonecarvers or marble yards and a monument of extraordinary handsomeness erected by J. Baird of Philadelphia about 1854-1855.

The earliest signed gravestones in the cemetery are those from the workshop of the Englishmen, William and Richard Tiddy who operated a marble yard in both Lincolnton and Charlotte in the mid-nineteenth century. Their yard was one of the most prolific in North Carolina in the antebellum period. There are at least five stones signed "TIDDY" for the period 1850-1866, and numerous others of similar design and appearance that are surely from the same hand. The grave of Edmond Castle (1822-1869) is marked by a stone signed "Tiddy & McCoy Charlotte, N.C." This partnership existed for but a short time in the late 1860s as Tiddy turned his business interests to paper manufacturing. Charlotte was also the site of the yard of "J. A. Johnston" who manufactured and signed the stone of Charles H. Show (1860-1861). James A. Johnston's career as a gravestone carver spanned at least a quarter of a century; his "marble and granite works" is last listed in the 1884 edition of Branson's North Carolina Business Directory. Johnston is known to have advertised his shop in the Lincolnton newspaper as late as 1880. J. C. "Rudisill" signed the gravestones he prepared for the graves of William T. Smith (1870) and Dora A. McCoy (1850-1870). He operated a marble yard in Lincolnton into the late 1870s. The local carver J. Thomas "McLean" (d. 1922) carved the gravestone of John F. Hoke (1820-1880) while the contemporary gravestone of Jacob A. Ramseur (1808-1880), the father of the Confederate general and a member of an old and prominent Lincoln County family, was signed by the well known W. G. Berryhill of Charlotte. Of the signed and locally produced gravestones the most impressive is that of Jane Cobb (1850-1881), the wife of Beverly C. Cobb. The handsome white marble Gothic Revival cross stands on a granite base. It was created and signed by "Carolina Marble Works, Lincolnton, N.C." R. H. Templeton was the proprietor of that concern.

It is not surprising that the most handsome and the most important gravestone in the St. Luke's burying ground dates from the 1850s. The antebellum period was one of great affluence for many members of North Carolina society and such was also the case in Lincolnton. The great marble yards and stonecarvers of Philadelphia, New York, and Connecticut supplied the gravestones of the most prominent members of North Carolina society who died in the antebellum period. The Philadelphia members of this group included Struther's, Van Gundgen and Young, and J. Baird. It was the company of J. Baird who produced the gravestone for Caroline Rebecca Guion who died in childbirth on 11 September 1854.

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St. Luke's Church and Cemetery, Lincoln County, N.C.

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FOOTNOTES

1. The Vestry Minutes for St. Luke's Church are the principal source for the history of the congregation and the operations of the church. These minute books comprise a series that begin in 1841 and continue to the present: those for the period from 1841 through 1950 were examined for the preparation of this nomination. They are kept on file in the church office. The only printed source specifically related to the church is the centennial history, ST. LUKE'S PARISH; it is a modest eighteen-page pamphlet. The third important source is "An Appreciation of St. Luke's Church," a typescript sketch of the church prepared by Virginia B. Froneberger and dated January 1952. The church files also contain a series of newspaper clippings that recount aspects of the history of the church. Some bear neither a date nor author; however, one written by Gladys Childs in 1954 was especially useful. For Lincoln County history, the principal source is THE ANNALS OF LINCOLN COUNTY (1937) written by William L. Sherrill, a Methodist minister who had a strong interest in genealogy. A memorial sketch of Vardry Alexander McBee written by Alfred Nixon and dated 22 February 1904 was also valuable. For the history of the congregation and its relationship to the larger history of the Episcopal Church in North Carolina two books proved useful: James B. Sill's HISTORICAL SKETCHES, DIOCESE OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA (Asheville: Miller Printing Company, 1955); and Lawrence Foushee London and Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, eds., THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN NORTH CAROLINA, 1701-1959 (Raleigh: Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, 1987). For the later history of the church the author's interview with Everett Ernest Taylor (born 1918) was beneficial. The author's knowledge of the architectural history of Lincoln County was supplemented by Marvin A. Brown and Maurice C. York's OUR ENDURING PAST (Charlotte: Delmar Company, 1986). Information on the Rev. William Robards Wetmore was supplied to the author by his collateral descendant Thomas Wetmore of Muncie, Indiana.

2. The year 1861 had been a critical one in both Wetmore's spiritual and personal life. In 1861 he was married to Miss Mary Bingham of Mocksville (18__-19__), the daughter of Lemuel Bingham (1795-1885). Her father had a long and important career in both private and public life as a printer and journalist. He was the co-founder, with Jacob Krider, of the WESTERN CAROLINIAN (Salisbury, 1820), the publisher of the CATAWBA JOURNAL (Charlotte, 1824), and the YADKIN AND CATAWBA JOURNAL (Salisbury, date not known). He was appointed Clerk and Master in Equity of Davie County in 1836--when the county was established--and served until 1866.

William Robards and Mary Wetmore were the parents of eight children. Five of them died early and are buried in the churchyard at St. Luke's: William Brandon Wetmore (1864-1883); George Badger Wetmore (1867-1880); Elizabeth Badger Wetmore (1871-1872); Mary Eliza Wetmore (1875-1877); and Philip _____ Wetmore (1878-1879). The second-born son Lemuel Bingham Wetmore (1865-1918) read law under his uncle Judge D. M. Furches of Statesville and was admitted to the bar in 1889; he practiced in Lincolnton until his death. The fourth son was Thomas

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St. Luke's Church and Cemetery, Lincoln County, N.C.

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Cogdell Wetmore (1869-1906); he entered the Episcopal ministry and, upon ordination, became rector of Calvary Church, Fletcher. He followed a second avenue in his father's footsteps, that of being an educator. In 1900 he and his wife Susan Allen, the niece of Mrs. Theodore Benedict Lyman whose husband was Bishop of North Carolina (1873-1893), founded Christ Church at Arden. Silas McBee Wetmore (1877-19__), the youngest surviving son, studied law and had a practice in Florence, South Carolina. After the Rev. Mr. Wetmore's death in 1904 the house he had built and occupied at 311 South Cedar Street continued to be the home of his son Lemuel Bingham Wetmore until his death in 1918. His unmarried daughter Louise made her home in the house until 31 October 1987 when the furnishings were sold at public auction and the house later pulled down.

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St. Luke's Church and Cemetery, Lincolnton, Lincoln County,
NC

Photographs

Section number _____ Page 1

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY: SCHEDULE OF PHOTOGRAPHS

The following lettered list of photographs is a schedule of those photographs included in this nomination. The following information applies to all of the photographs.

Name of Property: St. Luke's Church and Cemetery
303-321 North Cedar Street: 322 East McBee Street
Lincolnton
Lincoln County
North Carolina

Photographer: Davyd Foard Hood

Date of Photographs: 25 July 1991

Location of Original Negatives: Division of Archives and History
109 East Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

- A. St. Luke's Church: Overall landscape view, looking southeast
- B. St. Luke's Church: Overall view, looking northwest
- C. St. Luke's Church: Detail of the Caroline Rebecca Guion Grave Stone, looking east
- D. St. Luke's Church: The Parish School/Hall, looking northwest
- E. St. Luke's Church: The Rectory, looking southwest
- F. St. Luke's Church: St. Luke's House, looking southeast
- G. St. Luke's Church: Interior view, looking east
- H. St. Luke's Church: The Sanctuary and Altar, looking east from the chancel
- I. St. Luke's Church: Detail of the Sanctuary and Altar, looking northeast
- J. St. Luke's Church: The Altar, looking east

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY St. Luke's Church and Cemetery
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NORTH CAROLINA, Lincoln

DATE RECEIVED: 12/02/91 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/16/91
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/01/92 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/16/92
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 91001914

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 1/14/92 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

This church and related cemetery, parish hall + rectory are significant under Criterion C. The church building contains one of the finest, almost entirely undisturbed late Victorian interiors in the state. The cemetery includes an excellent selection of late 19th-century headstones. The complex as a whole exemplifies all of the elements of church-related functions.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept/C
REVIEWER Harper
DISCIPLINE Historian
DATE 1/14/92

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y (N)

CLASSIFICATION

___count ___resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

___historic ___current

DESCRIPTION

___architectural classification
___materials
___descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

___summary paragraph
___completeness
___clarity
___applicable criteria
___justification of areas checked
___relating significance to the resource
___context
___relationship of integrity to significance
___justification of exception
___other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

___acreage ___verbal boundary description
___UTMs ___boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

___sketch maps ___USGS maps ___photographs ___presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



N. 91.8. 178

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY, LINCOLNTON, NC

OVERALL LANDSCAPE VIEW

(A)



N. 9/8.204

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY, LINCOLNTON, NC

OVERALL VIEW

(B)

GOOD MOTHER I HAVE COME FOR THEE
THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY COME



SWEET BABE! ALL READY I AM
SURELY I COME QUICKLY. AMEN.
AND THEY DEPARTED TOGETHER ON THE
11TH OF SEPTEMBER A.D. 1854.

N. 9/18.177

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY, LINCOLNTON, NC

DETAIL OF THE CAROLINE REBECCA GWON

GRAVE STONE

©



N. 918.240

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY, LINCOLNTON, NC

THE PARISH SCHOOL HALL

(D)



N. 91.8.260

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY, LINCOLNTON, NC
THE RECTORY

(E)



N. 91.8.179

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY, LINCOLNTON, NC

ST. LUKE'S HOUSE

(F)



N. 91.8.134

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY, LINCOLNTON, NC

INTERIOR VIEW

(G)



N. 91.8. 149

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY, LINCOLNTON, NC
THE SANCTUARY AND ALTAR

(H)



N. 9/18.159

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY, LINCOLNTON, NC

DETAIL OF SANCTUARY AND ALTAR

①

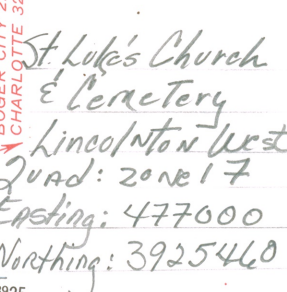


N. 91. 8. 160

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH AND CEMETERY, LINCOLNTON, NC

THE ALTAR

⑤



AMS 4754 IV NE—SERIES V842



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

James G. Martin, Governor
Patric Dorsey, Secretary

Division of Archives and History
William S. Price, Jr., Director

November 25, 1991

Jerry Rogers, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
P O Box 7127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Re: St. Luke's Church and Cemetery, Lincolnton

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Enclosed is the nomination for the above-referenced property to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

We trust you will find the nomination to be in order. If you have any questions, please call us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William S. Price, Jr.".

William S. Price, Jr.
State Historic Preservation Officer

WSP,Jr/mlr

Enclosures