

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Rutherford	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Trinity Lutheran Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:
St. John's Episcopal Church

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
702 North Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Rutherfordton (Eleventh Congressional District, The Hon. Roy Taylor)

STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37 COUNTY: Rutherford CODE: 161

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church

STREET AND NUMBER:
702 North Main Street

CITY OR TOWN: Rutherfordton STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Rutherford County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Main Street

CITY OR TOWN: Rutherfordton STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Trinity Lutheran Church is a tiny rectangular frame structure, three bays wide and two bays deep, covered with plain lapped siding and situated on a steep hillside. To compensate for the terrain, the front of the church, which is at the top of the slope, rests on a low brick foundation while the rear is supported on thirteen-foot brick piers. The pedimented main facade has a central entrance containing a flat-paneled double door surmounted by a lancet arch filled with geometric tracery. This arch, a later addition, is the only exterior feature of the church which is not of pure Greek Revival design. Both the doorway and the large flanking windows are bordered by heavy symmetrically molded architraves with roundel corner blocks. All the windows on the front and the sides contain twelve-over-twelve sash. Each side of the building is framed by molded pilaster corner posts which terminate in unacademic caps below the wide entablature. The entablature, adorned only with a heavy molding under the deep overhang of the cornice, continues around the church. The rear of the church is not pedimented and has a small twentieth century shed addition which houses the chancel.

Above the flush-sided tympanum of the main facade on the front of the roof is the square belfry. Resting on a low wooden plinth, the belfry features a small rectangular louvered vent on each face surrounded by a molded architrave with plain corner blocks. Pilaster corner posts support an entablature similar to that of the main block. Surmounting the belfry's low pyramidal roof is a simple wooden cross.

Almost all the original interiors remain, including curved-back pews and molded architraves with roundel corner blocks similar to those which surround the windows outside.

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3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

From its earliest days as a missionary station, St. John's Episcopal Church struggled for its survival. Rutherford County, located in a mountainous region, had long been dominated by Baptists and Methodists; further, the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina was hard pressed in the middle and late nineteenth century to provide clergymen to serve the more remote regions of the state.

The first mention of the Episcopal congregation at Rutherfordton is the report of Bishop Silliman Ives to the 1842 diocesan convention of his having preached there. In the following year, a missionary served the small congregation occasionally, and the bishop remarked that "the friends of the church here are few but deserve encouragement." The turnover of missionaries was quite rapid; in 1844 a new one, serving a wide area including Rutherford County, pointed out that the congregations in the region were small "and likely to continue so, till time and a better knowledge of our institutions shall have worn away something of the prejudice which here . . . has been found to exist against them." In 1846 still another missionary reported that "the little Church organized here during the last year will prosper, if it can but be favored with the Services of the Church." In the same year the members of the vestry wrote directly to the bishop, "setting forth the peculiar advantage of effort there in behalf of the Church, at the present time." The efforts of the small but apparently energetic congregation were successful, for yet another missionary, Jarvis Buxton, reported in 1848 that though services previously had been held in the courthouse and the female academy, now the congregation had "organized itself for union with the present Convention [and] have contracted for a Church building, to be finished, it is hoped, in time for consecration at the Bishop's next visitation." In the following year Mr. Buxton triumphantly reported that "the Church is ready for consecration." He related that "the colored people of the village assemble at the Church on Saturday night for worship and familiar instruction." Things went well for a time: the congregation was presented with a silver communion service from "friends in South Carolina," and church attendance was increasing. But in 1852 Buxton left the parish, and again the church was served by a series of missionaries who provided only occasional services. It was on April 23, 1856, that the land where the church had stood for several years was finally officially deeded to the trustees of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of North Carolina, by the heirs of John Bettings. In the same year, however, the newly ordained Bishop Atkinson reported that he "found this parish vacant,

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and consequently languishing." In 1859 the parish was described as "very much reduced by deaths and removals but undiminished in zeal."

Reports are lacking for the Civil War years, and "from 1864 to 1873 no regular services were held and the parish was cut off from its diocesan standing." In 1873 the regional missionary came on the fifth Sunday of the month, when that occurred. Yet the hardy congregation persisted, and in 1875 the parish was readmitted to diocesan standing. Missionaries came and went. One of them, leaving the area in 1881, said

There is perhaps no finer field in the Diocese for missionary work than in Rutherford County. It is occupied by a fine community of intelligent and thrifty farmers, many of whom have no connection with other religious bodies. But the Church is almost entirely unknown in the large and prosperous county.

A long period with very infrequent services continued until 1892, when a new missionary, Mr. Phelps, took charge of the region, remarking that the parish was "in a deplorably run-down condition." Under his leadership the church was refurbished by "repainting, whitening, and varnishing doors and walls and chancel railings, and refitting and repairing lamps, and putting up the fence about the church." In 1894, "through the enterprise and zeal of the ladies of the church here," a new roof was put on. In 1896, in line with long-discussed plans, the western part of the state, including Rutherford County, was placed in what was to be called the Missionary Jurisdiction of Asheville.

Among the members of the growing congregation was Franklin Coxe, a wealthy businessman. By 1898 construction had begun on a new Episcopal church financed by a donation from Mr. Coxe. The new church, much larger than St. John's, was built of stone in the Gothic style. Consecrated on Ascension Day, 1900, it was named after St. Francis in memory of Franklin Coxe's late father, Francis. In the following year, the trustees of the Episcopal Church in the Missionary District of Asheville sold to Franklin Coxe for \$10 the lot where the old St. John's Church stands. During the first third of the twentieth century, the little church was owned by members of Coxe's family and was used at intervals for various church purposes, including a Sunday school. In 1935 Coxe's daughter, Maude, deeded three tracts of land, including the lot where St. John's stands to the officials of St. Francis's parish, for the nominal fee of one dollar. On November 12, 1936, the parish officials sold the old church on its small lot to the Mission Board of the English District of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other states. Since then the building has been known as Trinity Lutheran Church.

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This small church, one of the earliest remaining in the county and the second oldest Episcopal church building in the Diocese of Western North Carolina, is a reminder of the struggles of the early Episcopal congregation which, served only by occasional missionaries, persisted despite continuous difficulties. The well-executed simplicity of its design which is in perfect proportion to the small scale of the building, together with the fine quality of its detail, make this church an especially appealing example of the Greek Revival style.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Journal of Conventions, Protestant Episcopal Church. Various cities: various printers, 1841-1895.

Rutherford County Records, Rutherford County Courthouse, Rutherfordton, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Rutherford County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		35 ° 22 ' 21 "	81 ° 57 ' 19 "	
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: $\frac{1}{4}$ Acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Survey and Planning Unit Staff, John B. Wells, III, Supervisor

ORGANIZATION: State Department of Archives and History DATE: 26 November 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: H. G. Jones
 Title: Director, State Department of Archives and History
 Date: 26 November 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST: _____

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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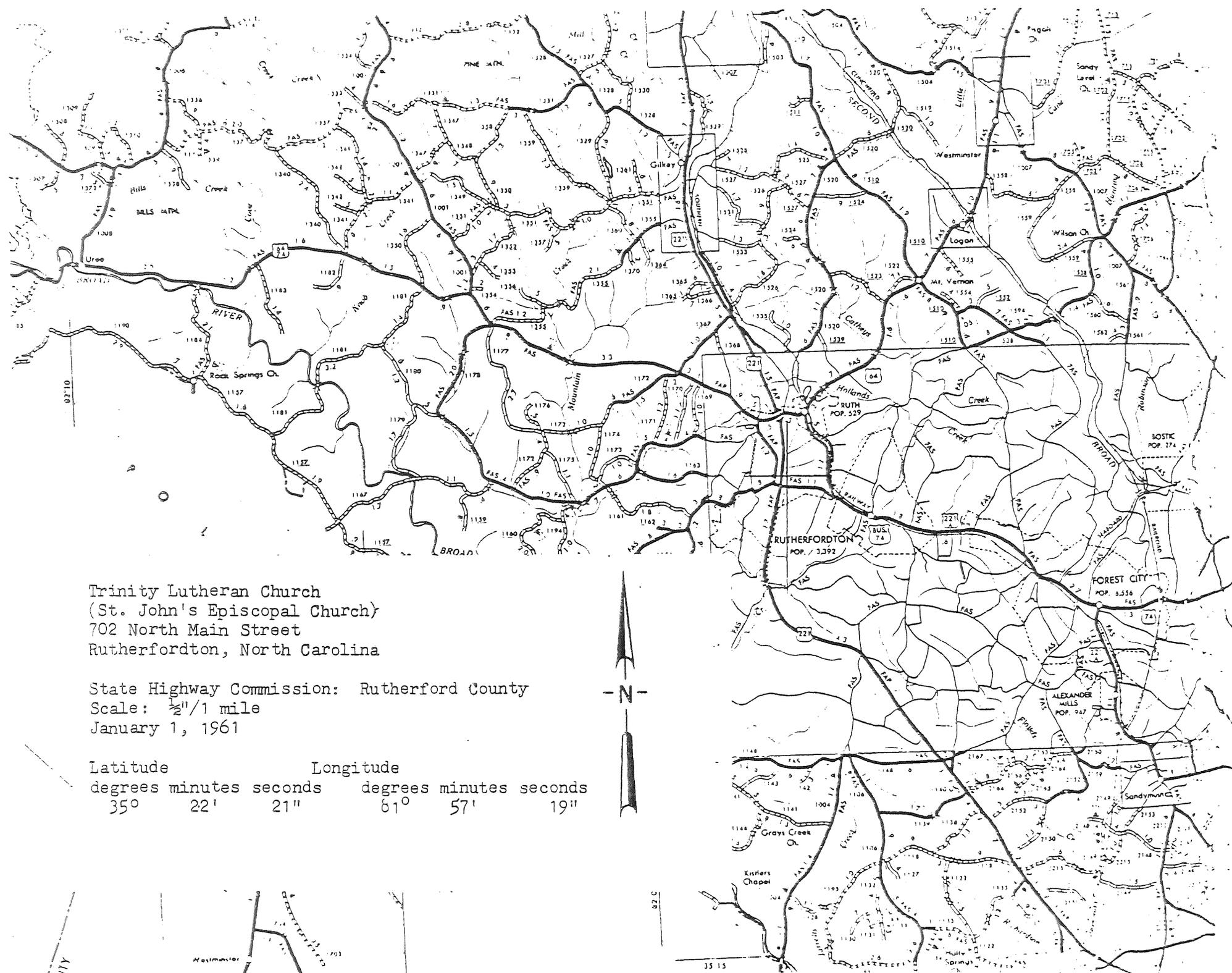
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9.

Sills, James B. Historical Sketches of Churches in the Diocese of Western North Carolina Episcopal Church. Asheville, North Carolina: Publishing Office, Church of the Redeemer, 1955.



Trinity Lutheran Church
 (St. John's Episcopal Church)
 702 North Main Street
 Rutherfordton, North Carolina

State Highway Commission: Rutherford County
 Scale: 1/2" / 1 mile
 January 1, 1961

Latitude				Longitude			
degrees	minutes	seconds		degrees	minutes	seconds	
35°	22'	21"		81°	57'	19"	

