

ORDINANCE 22-21

**TO AMEND TITLE 8 OF THE BLOOMINGTON MUNICIPAL CODE, ENTITLED
“HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION”
TO ESTABLISH A HISTORIC DISTRICT –
Re: BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH AND PARSONAGE
(BETHEL A.M.E., Owner and Petitioner)**

- WHEREAS, the Common Council adopted Ordinance 95-20 which created a Historic Preservation Commission (“Commission”) and established procedures for designating historic districts in the City of Bloomington; and
- WHEREAS, on July 14, 2022, the Commission held a public hearing for the purpose of allowing discussion and public comment on the proposed historic designation of the Bethel A.M.E Church and Parsonage located at 302 and 308 N. Rogers Street; and
- WHEREAS, at the same hearing, the Commission found that the building has historic and architectural significance that merits the protection of the property as a historic district; and
- WHEREAS, at the same hearing, the Commission approved a map and written report which accompanies the map and validates the proposed district by addressing the criteria outlined in Bloomington Municipal Code 8.08.010; and
- WHEREAS, at the same hearing the Commission voted to submit the map and report which recommend local historic designation of said properties to the Common Council; and
- WHEREAS, the report considered by the Commission at this hearing notes that this property consists of two structures. The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) was built in 1922 as a permanent and dedicated home to the Bethel A.M.E. congregation. The architect John Nichols, known for designing many of Bloomington’s notable buildings, designed the church in the classical revival, Tudor style (SHAARD 2014). The parsonage consists of a bungalow style cottage and is dated to 1925.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA, THAT:

SECTION 1. The map setting forth the proposed historic district for the site is hereby approved by the Common Council, and said historic district is hereby established. A copy of the map and report submitted by the Commission are attached to this ordinance and incorporated herein by reference and two copies of them are on file in the Office of the Clerk for public inspection.

The legal description of this property is further described as:

013-50530-00 ORIG PLATS 289 & 290 in the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana.

SECTION 2. The property at “302 and 308 N Rogers Street.” shall be classified as “Outstanding”.

SECTION 3. Chapter 8.20 of the Bloomington Municipal Code, entitled “List of Designated Historic and Conservation Districts,” is hereby amended to insert “The Bethel A.M.E. Church and Parsonage” and such entry shall read as follows:

The Bethel A.M.E. Church and Parsonage

302 and 308 N. Rogers Street

SECTION 4. If any section, sentence, or provision of this ordinance, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances shall be declared invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any of the other sections, sentences, provisions, or applications of this ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are declared to be severable.

SECTION 5. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington and approval of the Mayor.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 17 day of August, 2022.



SUSAN SANDBERG, President
City of Bloomington

ATTEST:



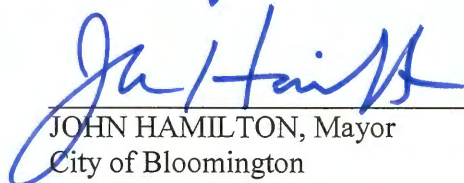
NICOLE BOLDEN, Clerk
City of Bloomington

PRESENTED by me to the Mayor of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 22 day of August, 2022.



NICOLE BOLDEN, Clerk
City of Bloomington

SIGNED and APPROVED by me upon this 22^d day of August, 2022.



JOHN HAMILTON, Mayor
City of Bloomington

SYNOPSIS

This ordinance amends Chapter 8.20 of the Bloomington Municipal Code entitled "The List of Designated Historic Districts" in order to designate the Bethel A.M.E. Church and Parsonage as a historic district. The owner and petitioner, Bethel A.M.E., sought this action and the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission, after a public hearing on July 14, 2022, recommended that the structure be designated historic with a rating as "Outstanding." This rating was based upon certain historic and architectural criteria set forth in BMC 8.08.101 (e) entitled "Historic District Criteria." Local designation will provide the protection needed to ensure that this property is preserved.

Distributed to: Clerk, Council, Legal, Mayor, HAND, Planning & Transportation



TO: Common Council
FROM: Gloria M. Colom Braña, Historic Preservation Program
Manager
RE: Historic District Nomination for the Bethel A.M.E. Church and
Parsonage located at 302 and 308 N Rogers Street
DATE: July 19, 2022

At the July 14, 2022 meeting, the Historic Preservation Commission voted to recommend historic designation for the Bethel A.M.E. Church and Parsonage with a vote 8-0 based on the following criteria:

- (1) Historic:
 - a) Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or nation; or is associated with a person who played a significant role in local, state, or national history; or
 - c) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historic heritage of the community.

- (2) Architectural:
 - b) Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the community; or
 - g) Exemplifies the built environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style

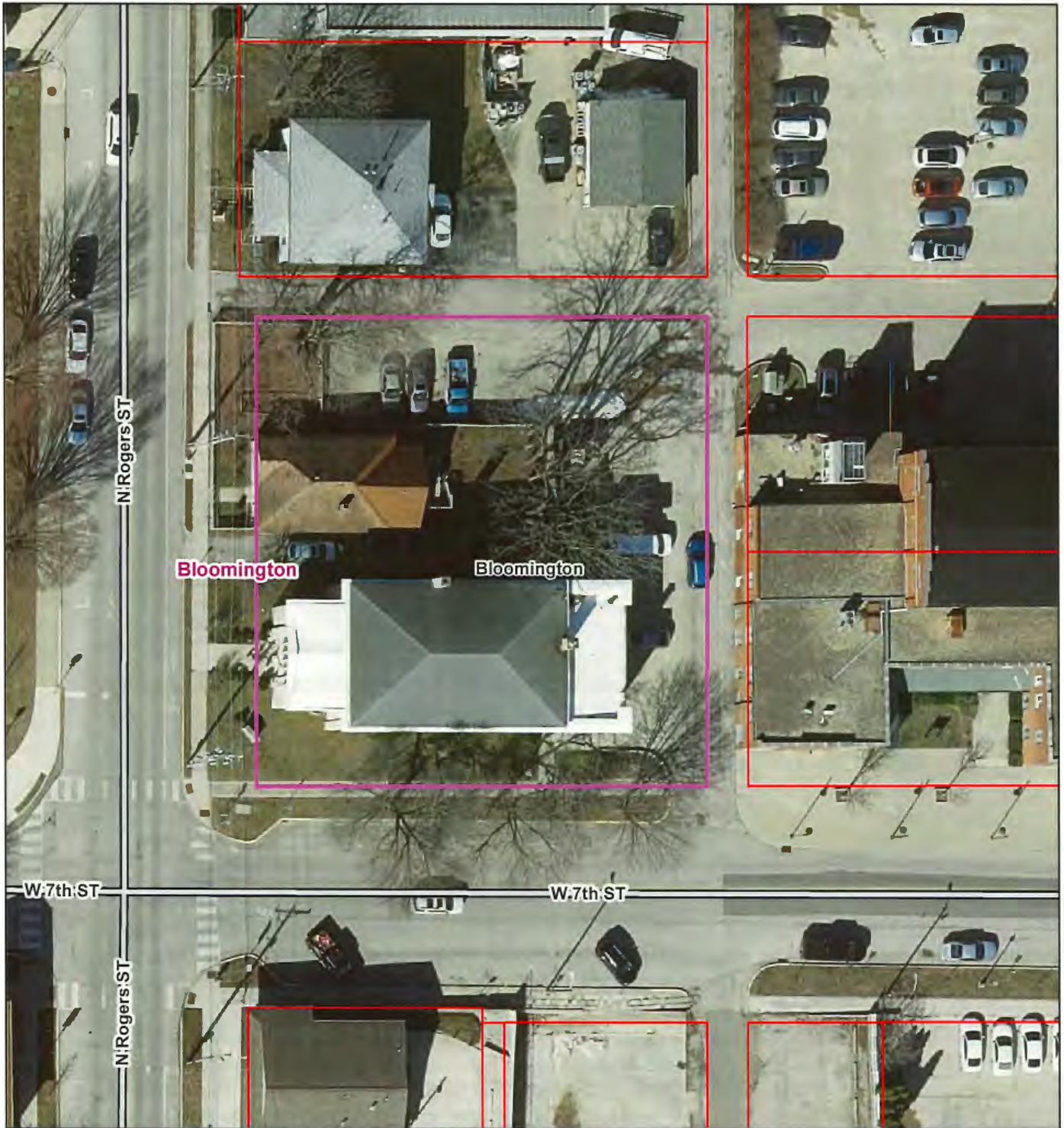
Synopsis

The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) was built in 1922 as a permanent and dedicated home to the Bethel A.M.E. congregation. The architect John Nichols, known for designing many of Bloomington's notable buildings designed the church in the classical revival, Tudor style (SHAARD 2014). The parsonage consists of a bungalow style cottage and is dated to 1925.

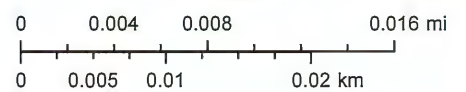
The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal church has existed in Bloomington since September 17, 1870 when it was organized by Reverend John. W. Malone and has served as one of the main religious institutions for Bloomington's Black community since then. The church doubled as a social cultural unifier, providing a space for creativity, social cohesion, and a place where Indiana University's Black students could find community as well. Bloomington's Bethel A.M.E.

The staff report, map, and presentation are included with this memorandum.

302 and 308 N Rogers Street (Bethel AME Church and Parsonage)



1:500



**CITY OF
BLOOMINGTON**
HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

 **Boundary Line**

The property at 302 and 308 N Rogers Street qualifies for local designation under the following highlighted criteria found in Ordinance 95-20 of the Municipal Code (1) a, c // (2) b, g

- 1) Historic:
 - a) Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or nation; or is associated with a person who played a significant role in local, state, or national history; or
 - b) Is the site of an historic event; or
 - c) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historic heritage of the community.

- 2) Architectural:
 - a) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or engineering type;
or
 - b) Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the community; or
 - c) Is the work of a designer of such prominence that such work gains its value from the designer's reputation; or
 - d) Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or
 - e) Contains any architectural style, detail, or other element in danger of being lost; or
 - f) Owing to its unique location or physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the city; or
 - g) Exemplifies the built environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style

Case Background

The proposed district consists of two buildings on the lot legally recorded as 013-50530-00 ORIG PLATS 289 & 290. The area is zoned as Zoning MC-DC Mixed Use Downtown. The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) was built in 1922 as a permanent and dedicated home to the Bethel A.M.E. congregation. The architect John Nichols, known for designing many of Bloomington's notable buildings designed the church in the classical revival, Tudor style (SHAARD 2014). The parsonage consists of a bungalow style cottage and is dated to 1925.

Historic surveys rating and designations:

The two buildings are currently included in the Bloomington West Side Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places. This historic district features a combination of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings that were centered on the Showers Brothers furniture factory. Both the Bethel A.M.E. Church and the Second Baptist Church located across the street towards the north end of the block served and continue to serve Bloomington's Black community, many who lived in the West Side neighborhood and worked at the Showers Brothers Factory, Johnson's Creamery, Indiana University, and other industries. Although the Bethel A.M.E. Church is included in the West Side Historic District (at a federal level), it is not included in any of the local historic districts that currently surround it such as The Near West Side Conservation District, The Showers Brother Factory Historic District, or the Johnson's Creamery Historic District, amongst others.

The main church is listed in both the Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory and the Bloomington Historic Sites and Structures List as "Outstanding." The parish house on the north of the property is listed as "Contributing". Neither of the two buildings within the property are located within a local historic or local conservation district under the jurisdiction of the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission.

Financial Impact Statement:

There is no anticipated fiscal impact associated with this Ordinance.

Historical Significance, 1 (a): Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or nation; or is associated with a person who played a significant role in local, state, or national history

The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal church has existed in Bloomington since September 17, 1870 when it was organized by Reverend John W. Malone and has served as one of the main religious institutions for Bloomington's Black community since then. The church doubled as a social cultural unifier, providing a space for creativity, social cohesion, and a place where Indiana University's Black students could find community as well. Bloomington's Bethel A.M.E. The congregation was originally housed in a former Presbyterian church located on 6th Street just west of the city square (Halsell Gilliam 1985,30). When the congregation grew to about 64 members, they purchased the current lot on the north east corner of 7th and Rogers Street, and hired John L. Nichols, one of Bloomington's early architects to design a new building. The congregation was seeking a new space as the old church suffered from "lack inside plumbing, central heat, and rowdiness in the neighborhood by derelicts (Henning Byfield)." The new building cost \$35,000, measured 42 by 97 feet and was two stories high (Halsell Gilliam 1985,30).

Mrs. Mattie Jacobs Fuller, an accomplished singer and organ player, as well as a founding member of the church, raised money to buy the lot by performing (Image 2). Mrs. Fuller's incessant work and contribution to the community cannot be understated. Playing her portable organ, Mrs. Fuller raised more than \$13,000 that went to the church (Herald Times 2006). Additional money was acquired from selling the old Presbyterian church to the Smallwood Brothers (World Telephone 1945, 1). Stone was donated from several of the local quarries.

The paying off of the mortgage was done through extensive community collaboration, including constant fundraisers through meals and community bonding events. When Reverend J. E. Reddick was appointed to Bethel A.M.E. Church at Bloomington in 1940, the church had a congregation of 102 people and the mortgage debt was \$7,500. Through a consistent campaign, more than half of that money was paid off by 1945. On Sunday July 29, 1945 the congregation raised \$3,515.81 which was enough to pay off the remaining \$2,700 and have money left over to make additional repairs. Paying off the mortgage was a significant event and celebrated by burning the mortgage papers on August 26, 1945 (The World Telephone 1945).

The parsonage located on 308 N Rogers Street, just north of the main church structure is made of wood and was originally built for a foreman who worked for Nurre Glass (Krause 2014, D2). The bungalow is reminiscent in scale and massing to many of the working class homes built at that time in the Near West Side Neighborhood. A huge effort with the collaboration of multiple non-profit organizations and community members was done in 2014 to restore and save the bungalow.

Historical Significance, 1 (c): Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historic heritage of the community

The current Bethel AMC building represents the story of a community, where many members of Bloomington's Black community met to fulfill spiritual needs, but also found community in other ways such as singing, cooking, eating, putting on plays, and hosting Indiana University's small but growing Black student population. Many of the large and small events were recorded on the "Among the Colored People" news section within the *Daily Telephone* newspaper. Members of Bethel A.M.E. worked together with the other two major Black congregations from the Second Baptist Church and Taylor Chapel ME at different times. In 1912 the social announcement for Bethel was canceled when Mrs. William Montgomery, a prominent member of Second Baptist Church died unexpectedly (Daily Telephone 1912). This is just one instance out of a myriad of examples of the close knit community that worked together across denominations within Bloomington's Black community.

Architectural Significance, 2(b): Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the community

John L. Nichols, the architect who designed Bethel A.M.E., was one of Bloomington's earliest prolific trained architects. Nichols designed many of Indiana University's prominent buildings such as Wylie Hall and the observatory as well as over two hundred houses, and institutional buildings. Nichols experimented with the different architectural styles available at the time including neoclassical, Queen Anne, eclectic, and Romanesque amongst others.

Architectural Significance, 2(g): Exemplifies the built environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style

The main church “reflects the Arts and Crafts style and shows Moorish influence in its triangular arched stained glass windows on the second floor and bartered Walls (NRHP Nomination 1997, 14),” using locally sourced Indiana Limestone. With a clean and symmetrical design, the building features a large opening consisting of ten windows on the front elevation. The side elevations each have five bays with original wood windows. The windows conform to the land gradation. Storm windows were installed to protect the stained glass windows.

“The side elevations are composed of five bays. Each of these bays have stained-glass windows placed in triplets with pentagonal windows above. Below, six-over-six wood sash windows vary in size responding to the grade of the land. The rear wing has eight-over-eight wood sash windows on the upper floor and four-over-four wood sash windows on the lower, as well as a pair of replaced doors and a six-paned transom. The side elevations mirror each other, except for the presence of the doors only on the south elevation (SHAARD 2014).”

Recommendation: Approval

Staff recommends property parcel 53-05-32-413-099.000-005 (The Bethel A.M.E. Church and Parsonage) be designated as a local historic district. After careful consideration of the application and review of the Historic District Criteria as found in Ordinance 95-20 of the Municipal Code, staff finds that the property not only meets, but exceeds the minimum criteria listed in the code.

The property meets Criteria 1(a) because the church provided a safe communal space for many members of Bloomington’s Black community in the early twentieth century. Prominent members such as Mrs. Mattie Jacobs Fuller raised a considerable amount of money to make sure that the congregation owned the land and the building.

The property meets Criteria 1(c) because it has served as one of the main socio-cultural hubs for Bloomington’s Black community, as a social hub for congregants and Indiana University students alike.

The property meets Criteria 2(b) because this is an exemplary example of John L. Nichols, perhaps Bloomington’s earliest architect of renown’s work.

The property meets Criteria 2(g) because the building itself through its elegant design provides a solid example of the late Classical revival style.

Bibliography

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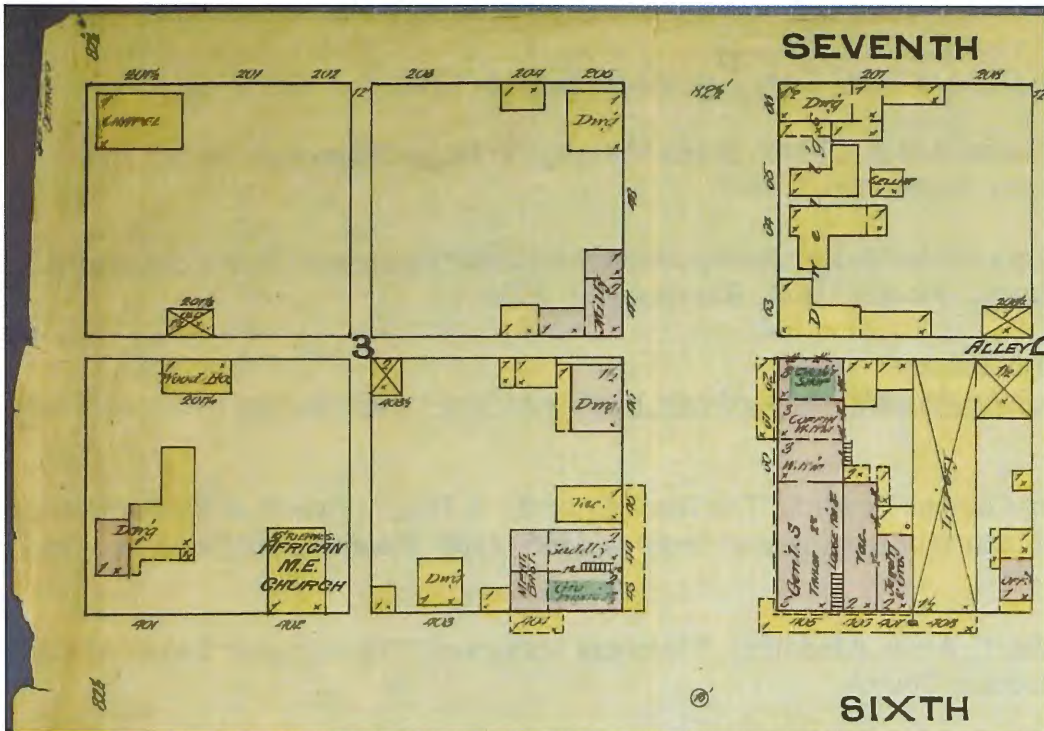


Image 1: Sanborn Map 1833 Original Location of Bethel A.M.E. on 6th Street



Image 2: The steeple of the original Bethel A.M.E. location is visible at the of the row of buildings on the north side of the Square in this undated photo (Courtesy of the Monroe County History Center)



Figure 3: Bethel A.M.E. with the congregation standing in front of the building, (1945?)
(City of Bloomington)



Image 4: Mattie Jacobs Fuller, acclaimed singer and organ player and prominent member of the community helped raise money to buy the land where the current church is located with her musical performances, undated (Courtesy of the Monroe County History Center)



Image 5: "Mortgage Burning for Bethel A.M.E., center left Rev & Mrs. Reddick, center right Rev & Mrs. Porter," Undated although most likely August 26, 1945 (Courtesy of the Monroe County History Center)



Image 6: Front of the church structure facing west, 2022 (photo by staff)



Image 7: Southern facade, showcasing six rows of windows, 2022 (photo by staff)



Image 8: Front of the church structure facing west, stone lintel with the A.M.E. carved, 2022 (photo by staff)



Image 9: Original windows facing southward, 2022 (photo by staff)



Image 10: Back of the church facing eastward, 2022 (photo by staff)



Image 11: Northwest of the parsonage, bungalow, 2022 (photo by staff)



Image 12: West facade with the front entrance of the parsonage, bungalow, 2022 (photo by staff)