NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Benedict's Church

other names/site number 043-0000-200

2. Location

street & number R.R. 1, Box91 ☐ not for publication

city or town Bendena ☒ vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Doniphan code 043 zip code 66008

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this XX nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D Pankratz DSHPO 2/27/98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

St. Benedict's Church
Name of Property

Doniphan County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion: Religious Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion: Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Gothic;
Second Gothic Revival;
Romanesque: Romanesque Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: Limestone
walls Brick
roof Other: Composition; Metal: Tin
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

St. Benedict's Church
Name of Property

Doniphan County, Kansas
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☒ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1903

Significant Dates

1903

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Waitz, Joseph - Architect

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

St. Benedict's Church
Name of Property

Doniphan County, Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	308750	4398720
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sister Marie Louise Krenner, O.S.B.

organization Mt. St. Scholastica date

street & number 801 South Eighth telephone

city or town Atchison state KS zip code 66002

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

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

Property Owner

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

name Father Pat Jerome, Catholic Church Offices, Archdiocese of Kansas City

street & number 12615 Parallel Parkway telephone

city or town Kansas City state KS zip code 66109

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

St. Benedict's Church is located about five miles southwest of Bendena in Doniphan County, Kansas. The property stands on the SW4, SW4, SE4, NE4, S12, T4S, R19E in Union Township. The red brick, Gothic Romanesque Revival church was constructed in 1903 and stands on the same limestone block foundation as the 1895 church that it replaced. The church maintains a southern facade orientation and is dimensioned ninety feet from north to south and fifty-one feet from east to west. A one hundred and one foot tower graces the center of the southern facade, dimensioned fifteen feet from east to west and eleven feet from north to south.

The gable fronted building is punctuated by a tall bell tower containing the arched doorway into the church. The tower's body is accentuated by recessed panels that are given further dimension by dentilled and corbelled courses which grace the entablature of each panel. An attenuated arched stained glass window fenestrates the southern plane of the tower above the entry door. It sits on a limestone sill. The double doorway is housed in an arched, wooden surround. Several arches of descending proportion form the surround. A five-paned, teardrop fanlight surmounts the double door. A rosette stained glass window housed in a decorated square frame fenestrates the succeeding panel. A small, arched stained glass window underscored by a limestone sill fenestrates the vestibule level wall plane of the east and west elevations of the tower. The body of the tower is capped with an open arcade that terminates in a pyramidal roof. A cross surmounts the peak of the tower. Metal sheets cover the tower roof and the corner turrets.

The gable facade has a parapet that rises above the roofline. The raking cornice is decorated with repetitive corbelled courses that descend toward a course of corbelled dentils. The course of arched, corbelled dentils frames the upper level of the two recessed panels that form the wall plane for the gable facade. Each wall plane is fenestrated by an attenuated, arched stained glass window. These windows sit on limestone sills.

The east and west elevations of the church are identical in nature. A cross gabled roof intersects the building midway on both the east and west elevations, allowing a gabled pediment containing a rondel stained glass window to subsist. Each gable peak is surmounted by a cross. Small, hipped roofed turrets flank the gabled cross sections, continuing down the body of the building as false buttresses. While the building does not contain a transept the roof configuration belies this impression. Each elevation is fenestrated by six arched, attenuated stained glass windows. These windows are surmounted by round arch lintels and underscored by limestone sills. Two sets of recessed panels containing one window each flank the center gable. A set of larger, arched stained glass windows each surmounted by a rondel stained glass window provides the fenestration for the center bay. The windows are separated by a false buttress.

The building's north elevation is an uninterrupted gable plane. A small chimney rises from the apex of the roof structure.

In 1994, five layers of shingles including the original wooden shingles, were removed from the roof. The new roof shingles are made of composite material. The gutters and downspouts were also replaced at this time.

The church stands on nine concrete piers that were added in 1958 to help repair a massive settling problem. These piers extend some twenty-five to twenty-seven feet deep and rest on a limestone ledge. The building was tuck pointed between 1953 and 1955.

The interior of the church is an open space with the apse at the northern end and the mezzanine at the southern end. The apse is contained within the rectangular plane of the church and therefore does not project. The sacristy and vestry flank the apse.

A groin vaulted ceiling spans the sanctuary. The apse is detailed with a ribbed vaulted ceiling, the ribs terminate in classical columnettes that run to the floor. A modified barrel vault spans the mezzanine. The mezzanine is supported by two sets of columns and accessed by a set of stairs on the western side of the sanctuary.

Religious murals fill the spandrels on each side of the apse. The east and west gable set of tri-partite windows are accentuated by plaster rib arches and very small rondels. These rib arches terminate in a stringcourse that extends the breadth of the building.

In the late 1940s the interior of the church was painted. In 1959, following a storm, the interior was redecorated, the plaster walls were repaired, the floors were refinished, new carpet was installed, the original pews were refinished, the altars and statues were redecorated and new lights were installed. The interior of the church was repainted and new carpet was installed again in 1988.

St. Benedict's Church Bendena, KS

Historic Function

St. Benedict's Church is located about four and one half miles southwest of Bendena, an unincorporated town, in Union Township, Doniphan County, Kansas. It is situated on a ridge near the headwaters of Independence Creek, the creek so-named by Lewis and Clark who camped at its mouth on the Missouri River on the fourth of July, 1804. This area itself remained a rural district. The parish plant, consisting of the church, a rectory, the Unity Center for educational and social functions, and a cemetery, stands alone surrounded by fields and a few scattered farm homes.

Historical Significance

St. Benedict's parish was founded, when in 1857, Henry Lemke, O.S.B. walked the thirteen miles up Independence Creek from Doniphan, Kansas, to celebrate Mass in the Edward Doyle home. Father Henry came once a month. His journeys were always made on foot. His parishioners were few, five or six families and some of them were very poor. They came to Mass on foot and in ox-carts. Father Henry made provision for the future by purchasing 320 acres of land at a cost of $400. Peter Beckman wrote: "(Father Henry) maintained that they had taken up all the vacant claims for five miles around but that few Germans were among them. 'Fritz is always too late.'"(Beckman, 1957, p. 36) Soon the plat for a St. Benedict's Settlement was drawn up and Catholics were solicited to settle there.

Father Henry planned to have a school at Doniphan and a monastery and farm on the claims near Bendena (Albers) and Denton (Dentonville) as they were called at that time. The NE 1/4 12-4-19, on which the present St. Benedict's Church is located, was entered January 14, 1858, by Joseph Gerig, a member of the monastery at that time. Land records indicate that he transferred his title to Prior Augustine Wirth in 1862. A part of the land was at one time divided into town lots, although no town plat was ever filed with the State. This territory was called St. Benedict's Colony (Settlement).

Between 1858 and 1862, the parish had no regular pastor, many different priests serving there during that time, all being sent from St. Benedict's Priory in Atchison to

where the monks had moved from Doniphan. However, in 1860, Father John Meurs, O.S.B. was placed in charge. Early in 1861 plans were drawn up for the construction of a stone church, 70 by 30 feet, and the foundations begun. On March 17, 1861 Prior Augustine Wirth, O.S.B., the superior of the monks, laid the cornerstone. By December 3 Father Augustine could write that the walls were built up ten feet. The Bishop had donated $100 and the parishioners were doing most of the work gratis. In a dissertation Peter Beckman wrote: "...as only the window frames had to be purhased, the hundred dollars donated by Bishop Miege probably covered the expenses." (Beckman, 1943, p. 69) However, poverty and the Civil War delayed the completion of the church.

In 1862, Father Thomas Bartl, O.S.B.became the pastor. He at once undertook to complete the church, but found building in those Civil War days a very slow process. The work was mostly done by members of the congregation, all hands willingly turning to help. Even so, it was 1865 before the church was roofed. On the second Sunday of November of that year, Mass was said for the first time in the church, the entire congregation of 30 Irish and five German families turning out for the occasion. Plastering and other interior finishing were not completed until 1869.

In 1867, a seven-room rectory was constructed. Father Thomas moved into the house on June 22, 1868, and became the first resident pastor. In the spring of 1874., he was replaced by Father Suitbert DeMarteau, O.S.B., who accomplished much in his year and a half as pastor. The old brick flooring in the church was torn up and replaced with pine. The sacristy and belfry were built and a bell installed.

Father Pirmine Koumly, O.S.B. was appointed pastor in October, 1875 and remained until 1886. He not only liquidated the debt on the church but also built a $2,000 church in nearby Severance in 1882.

In 1877 the parish numbered about 500 people. Shortly after buying land south of Atchison in 1883, all but fifteen acres of the land in St. Benedict`s Settlement was sold by the monks of Atchison.

Father Thomas Burk, O.S.B., who became pastor in June of 1891, began to collect funds to build a new and larger church. Though the amount of the subscription was not sufficient for Father Thomas to begin the church himself, he left a fair sum to his successor, Father Augustine Baker, O.S.B., who became pastor on December 10, 1893.

By 1892, the parish population had dropped to 250.

Father Augustine continued solicting for funds. In the summer of 1894, Joseph J. Waitz drew up plans for a brick church, 90 by 50 feet with a 36 foot ceiling and a tower 112 feet high. Excavation was begun but it was not for Father Augustine to finish the work. On December 6, 1894, Father Matthew Bradley, O.S.B., "the church builder," was appointed pastor. A contract was let for $10,300. Building contractors were John Buckley and E. Ryan of Kansas City, KS., the contract being signed December 21, 1894. (Church Committee Minutes, 1894, December 21.) Services were held in the dilapidated "old rock church" for the last time on February 24, 1895. One week later, workmen began to tear down the old church and by March 21, the first foundation stone of the new church was laid. On "April 14, 1895, the cornerstone was solemnly blessed by the Very Rev. Boniface Verheyen, O.S.B., prior of St. Benedict`s Abbey, assisted by Father T. Fitzgerald and Father Aloysius Bradley, O.S.B.

On August 11, 1895, the beautiful new church was formally opened. The celebrant of the Mass was Father Michael Rank, O.S.B., assisted by Father Bernard Ulbrich, O.S.B. as deacon and Father Anthony Baar, O.S.B. as subdeacon. Father Aloysius Bradley, O.S.B., brother of the pastor, spoke on this occasion." ("St. Benedict`s Parish" April 1936) Bishop Louis M. Fink solemnly blessed the church on October 9. After the dedication by the bishop a Solemn High Mass was celebrated by Father A. W. Jennings, assisted by Fathers Charles Stoeckle, O.S.B. and Gregory Neumayr, O.S.B.

Actual cost of the new church was about $15,000, some $4,500 more than was expected. In order to pay off this debt Father Matthew met with members of the parish and decided to raise the pew rent sufficiently to cover all parish expenses, thus eliminating "the odious Sunday collections" and at the same time equalize the burden of church expenses. In January, 1896, this plan was adopted. Four years later Father Matthew could still write, "Since then it has not been necessary to take up a collection for church purposes, the only ones taken up being the Diocesan Collections." ("St. Benedict`s Parish, 1859 - 1899") The debt was entirely cleared in January, 1899.

In November, 1895, two hot air furnaces were placed in the basement of the church for heating the building.

By December 1, 1898 the last note of the church debt was paid and on January 8, 1899, Father Matthew announced to his parishioners the glad news, "Your church is out debt!" In the spring of 1900, the old rectory of 1867 was torn down and a new two-story, ten-room, brick veneer building was erected in its place. This was the people`s gift to their beloved pastor. The Illustrated Doniphan County supplement wrote that the new rectory "was equipped with every manner of modern convenience, and when completed the total cost aggregated $3,500. It is a serviceable building and was designed for essential needs, rather than luxury." (Illustrated Doniphan County, (Supplement to Kansas Chief of Troy) 16 April 1916)

At that time there were 60 families in the parish. Thirty boys and twenty girls attended catechism classes that year and there were twelve baptisms, nine funerals and three marriages.

"At 10:15 on the night of May 25, 1903, a tornado struck and entirely demolished the church. The next morning, as Father Matthew stood by the wreckage, he said, `The will of God be done! With His help we can build again.` Before the sun set, workmen were clearing the wreckage in preparation for a new church." (Eastern Kansas Register 19 February 1943.)

The Illustrated Doniphan County wrote: "Reverend Father Bradley was undismayed by the destruction of his church and, with the hearty co-operation of his parishioners, the work of rebuilding was at once begun. There was not a single day lost in grieving over the disaster. Plans for a larger and finer building were at once formulated. The members of the parish were prompt to respond with financial resources with which to erect a new St. Benedict`s. Before the ruins had settled the day following the destruction of the building, three beautiful altars had been donated by Joseph Richenberger and Joseph Bodart, Mrs. John Kirwan and Mrs. Susan Severin. Donations for the building fund poured in without solicitation from everybody in the parish with such liberality that no time was lost in starting operation on the new St. Benedict`s. The $15,000 structure destroyed was soon to be replaced." The newspaper also commented: " There are sixty families in St. Benedict`s parish, making a total church membership far in excess of four hundred souls." (Illustrated Doniphan County, Supplement to Kansas Chief of Troy) 16 April 1916.)

A few days after the destruction a contract for the clearing up of the wreck was let, then followed, on July 23, the contract for the rebuilding of the church. In December,

The Weekly Kansas Chief wrote: "Within a few weeks St. Benedict's church will be completed. It will be a good, substantial, comfortable building of which the congregation and the country may well be proud. Under the able management of Father Matthew, the St. Benedict congregation has erected three building representing a value of nearly $30,000." (The Weekly Kansas Chief, 3 December 1903)

On the annual financial report for the year ending December 31, 1903, in the ledger for his house accounts, Father Matthew wrote:

Families 60
School children 45
Baptisms 21
Marriages 3
Deaths 4

This farming congregation was still predominately Irish with family names such as Boyle, Corcoran, Cuningham, Dowling, Day, Flynn, Foley, Finnegan, O'Shea, etc.

In many aspects, the new church was similar to that of 1895. The front of the church, the door, windows, particularly the wheel window would indicate the use of the same architect, Joseph Waitz. Also, this third church was erected upon the foundation of the previous one. The same cornerstone was used. The bell tower and Gothic style steeple differ in design and are higher. According to the Church Committee minutes of June 26, 1903, the spire was cut down eleven feet bringing the height 101 feet from ground to the top of the cross. The Illustrated Doniphan County wrote about a "larger" church (Illustrated Doniphan County (Supplement to the Kansas Chief of Troy) 16 April 1916.) However, the church was built on the foundation of its predecessor and therefore its dimensions were the same. The use of buttresses on both sides gave the church exterior an appearance of being larger and extending on the sides somewhat whereas, in reality, it does not.

On December 20, 1903, the bells of the new church rang out for the first time summoning the congregation to a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving. The pastor, Father Matthew Bradley, O.S.B. was celebrant, assisted by his brother, Father Aloysius Bradley, O.S.B. and Father Robert Salmon, O.S.B.

On May 10, 1904, the church was solemnly dedicated by Bishop Cunningham of the Concordia diocese. The Solemn Mass, which followed, was said by Father Aloysius

Bradley, O.S.B., assisted by Fathers Thomas Burk, O.S.B. and Odilo Otott, O.S.B. Father Martin Veth, later abbot of St. Benedict's Abbey, was master of ceremonies. The Rev. T. C, Ahearn, pastor of the Cathedral in St. Joseph, Mo. preached the sermon.

The Severance reported: "The new St. Benedict's Catholic church was dedicated on Tuesday, and as the day was a lovely one there was a large number of people present. The church is built upon the foundation of the one destroyed by a cyclone last year, and while its dimensions are the same, the structure is not as high and is built with more strength than the one that was blown down. The interior decorations are very beautiful. The light falls softly through beautiful stained glass windows upon altars with golden hangings and golden candle sticks upon them. There are seven life size statues representing the Savior, the Virgin Mary, the Madonna and child, St. Benedict, patron saint of this church, and other saints in the church calendar. The organ is a fine one and the music (and a large part of the service on Tuesday was music) was of the highest order of excellence. There were nine priests present besides Bishop Cunningham of Concordia. Father Ahern of St. Joseph, delivered the address which was very fine. The service was largely in Latin and or course was not so easily followed by unaccustomed ears, but was very impressive in its nature. The people of St. Benedict's parish have in their resident priest Father Matthew Bradley, a most excellent teacher and guide in all matters pertaining to both the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church. He is possessed of sound judgment and is held in high esteen by all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance. This new church which has cost in the neighborhood of $25,000, stands as a monument to his untiring energy and zeal which it is but justice to say has been generously assisted by the loyal members of his flock. Long may this beautiful church stand among the green fields and fertile plains of this parish, and may no devastating storm ever mar its beautiful architecture." (The Severance, 13 May 1904.)

The Weekly Kansas Chief wrote: "The church at St. Benedict's was well filled Sunday by the regular parishioners and by numerous visitors both Catholic and non-Catholic, the occasion being the opening of the church which has just been completed, and which is pronounced to be not only one of the finest in the state, but one of the finest in the west. The interior view of the church is most pleasing in its artistic arrangement. The statues, paintings, etc., are the work of master hands, their equal being found only in the city churches of the east. But it was the sermon delivered by the Rev. Father Aloysius Bradley that won the hearts of the throng, the non-Catholic visitors being especially pleased with the lucid explanations of certain beliefs of the church; for the sermon was not

only oratorically beautiful, but was also highly instructive and most powerful in its simplicity and clearness. The parishioners may well be proud of their new church reared from the ruins of the old one which was distroyed only a few months ago, and also have cause to be deeply grateful to the self-sacrificing, energetic resident pastor, Father Matthew, for the great and noble work he has done for them." (The Weekly Kansas Chief 24, December 1903.)

The Abbey Student commented, "The new Church surpasses the old one in solidity of structure, and is beautifully furnished, having seven life-sized statues, three altars and a good organ." (The Abbey Student, Vol XIII, No. 5, p. June, 1904, p. 301)

The new church cost about $20,000. On January 1, 1904, a debt of $2,500 was hanging over the church. On the second Sunday of the month the pastor took up a subscription in the church to cover the debt. By December 31, 1904, the entire debt was paid. The expenditures were as follows:

Clearing up Wreck	490.25
Contract for New Church	7,690.00
Extra Work	99.80
Frescoing and Gilding	405.00
Windows	507.50
Furniture	3,094.05
	$12,286.60
Receipts	
Insurance	$6,171.64
Subscriptions	1,298.00
Special Donations for Altars, etc.	2,429.00
	$9,898.64

Father Matthew wrote to his people: "The building of a church is frequently accompanied by grave difficulties, lack of money, unwillingness to give on the part of some, and dissatisfaction on the part of others, but let me say to your credit, my dear people, by your strong faith, earnestness and zeal for your holy religion, you have not only made it possible for us to accomplish so much work in such a short time, but you have made it a work of pleasure. To build and furnish two brick churches and a ten room brick veneer parsonage, and pay for the same in nine years time, in a parish of not more than

fifty families, is a work equaled by few parishes, but surpassed by none. With feelings of gratitude let me repeat, "God bless those who so generously assisted us in our work." (St. Benedict`s Church, No. 3.)

In the month of October, 1905, a beautiful crucifix was erected in the cemetery at a cost of $350.

During the years 1930 - 1931, the Hall was erected. In the late forties the church interior was painted.

In the years 1953 - 1955, the church was tuck-pointed and a new hot water heating system installed.

In 1958 due to shifting underfooting, the church structure began to split. It was necessary to excavate to solid rock, twenty-five to twenty-seven feet below the foundations and pour nine concrete piers extending from the solid rock ledge to the footings of the foundation. This was done at a cost of $7,100.

The church was again extensively damaged by a tornado on the evening of May 18, 1959 at 7:35 p.m. Shingles were torn off the roof, plaster torn off the walls, stained glass windows bulged. This storm also demolished the garage and destroyed many trees on the property. All the storm damage was repaired and a complete redecorating of the interior of the church was made. Floors were refinished, new carpet installed in the sanctuary, pews refinished, altars and statues redecorated, new lights installed. All this work was finished by August 8, 1959. Earlier that year, in April, a new hot water heating system was installed in the rectory.

In 1968 Father Ernest Stallbaumer, O.S.B. built the Unity Center for educational and social functions. This cost was $68,000. (When this was built, the former church hall was torn down.)

In the summer of 1988, the interior of the church was repainted and the entire church carpeted.

Over the years weather and use took its toll of the sidewalks, some dating back to 1909. And so in the spring of 1991 every walk was replaced all the way to the cemetery

at the cost of $22,000. The ramp in front of the church was added at this time. The money used to pay for these improvements came from insurance money collected from hail damage to the roof of the church which was patched.

In the fall of 1992, the aging furnace of 1954 was replaced by a new hot air furnace with air conditioning added at a cost of about $18,000.

During the summer of 1994 five roofs were removed from the church including a shake shingle roof believed to be the original church roof. The gutters and downspouts were also replaced.

Architectural Significance

"At the end of the century, with the revival of the classical and Gothic styles, a change occurred in English and American religious architecture. Perpetuation of tradition was both less and more important. Classical buildings associated with Roman Christian architecture, addressed contemporary life and secular values. The use of the Gothic style, the preeminent European Christian style, consciously emphasized the history of the church. Both styles offered opportunities for innovation. The classical was at first victorious, producing inventive buildings, while the Gothic satisfied a desire for ritual and the richness in tradition." (Built in the USA, Preservation Press, 1985, p.140)

Architecturally, St. Benedict's Church is a striking example of early twentieth century Gothic Romanesque Revival ecclesiastical design. The design of the church seems to fulfill the perpetuation of tradition discussed in the previous paragraph and is quite similar to many of the Catholic churches that were built in mid-America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The gable fronted red brick building is punctuated by a tall bell tower. The planes of both the tower and building are accentuated by recessed panels that are given further dimension by dentilled and corbelled courses. Attenuated stained glass windows fenestrate the body. False buttresses are used to evoke further traditional opinion when viewing the design. A cross gabled roof intersects the building midway and while the building does not contain a transept, the roof configuration belies this impression. The restrained stylistic interpretation of the Gothic Romanesque Revival makes the St. Benedict's Church an excellent example of a high style building whose clean lines and direct approach clearly recall its antecedents.

Historical Associations

How could a small parish of 50 to 60 families build two churches and a parish house within a span of nine years? --- Good will on the part of both the pastor and parishioners, encouragement, knowledge of human nature, honesty and openness., and generosity. On December 23, 1894, two weeks after his arrival as pastor in the parish, Father Matthew said to the people: "This building of a new church will be an agreeable work for me if I find willing cooperators among you. I will look then for your liberal assistance and hope my expectations of your fervor may not be lessened. I feel the responsibility resting on me as your pastor and am determined to do for you all that I can so that none will even say that our acquaintance is anything but of the most pleasing kind.." On February 3, 1895 his comment was:"This week I will begin to collect for new church unless weather is very cold. Since I do not know where you live, will take one of the Committee with me. Will call on all, and will expect ____" And on February 24: "In my collect so far at places have been pleased, at others displeased. How much should each give Don`t be afraid to give more than your neighbor. Don`t discourage others from giving." And on March 17, 1895: "When new church is done will read you the names of contributors and amount each paid." On April 21: "You will confer a great favor on me by bringing me the subscriptions for the new church. I should remain around new building as much as possible. Try to pay up by May1. I need the money." On May 19: "Last Sunday some did not remain after Mass to subscribe for church furniture. I lack about $100 yet. I ask you to remain today after mass and tell me whether you will give anything or nothing."

Another factor was the stability of the families. All through the ledgers, the same names are represented. Family names, such as: Albers, Alfers, Brentano, Ebner, Emmerich, Finnigan, Foley, Gallagher, Gray, Gronniger, Halling, Joyce, Kirwan, Libel, Lyons, McEnulty, McLaughlin, McSorley, Moser, Myers, O`Grady, O`Shea, Quinn, Severin, Stahlman, and Ward, are mentioned continuously through the years from 1895 to 1919. (Today, the names of Gronniger, Halling, Joyce, Libel, and Severin are still represented among the parishioners of St. Benedict`s, which numbers 65 families of approximately 200 members.)

Gray in Gray`s Doniphan County History, (quoted on the following page) wrote, "Bendena lies in the heart of one of the richest farming tracts in the Missouri valley." These families evidently prospered.

Several factors contributed to the rapid rebuilding of the third church. First, the parish church played an important part in the lives of these people of St. Benedict`s parish. Fulfilling their Sunday obligations of attending Mass would have been uppermost in their minds. Having to go to Severance or some other town would have been somewhat difficult for some of the parishioners. It wasn`t their parish. They missed their own church. Another contributing factor was the rebuilding itself. The foundation was already there. Laying the bricks in the large expanse of the north wall would have gone more quickly than a wall broken by doors and windows. The same cornerstone was used. Then, too, a great deal of the rebuilding went on in the fall months. The farmers would have had their harvests in. They had time to help.

No towns have grown up around in the immediate vicinity of the church of St. Benedict in Doniphan county. It stands alone on a mile and a half length of gravel road south of a main highway. However, when one mentions `St. Benedict`s`, Bendena comes to mind. From Bendena, the spire of St. Benedict`s Church can be seen, four and a half miles away. The town of Denton is also four and a half miles to the northwest of the church.

P. L. Gray in Gray`s Doniphan County History wrote " Bendena lies in the heart of one of the richest farming tracts in the Missouri valley. The townsite is an ideal one, situated as it is on the crest of a range of hills of splendid elevation, and commanding an almost unobstructed view of more than half the county. From the first it has been an enterprising grain and stock market, and now is made up of energetic business men and a good class of citizens." (Gray, Gray`s Doniphan County History, p. 56.)

P. L. Gray also wrote in the above mentioned history: "The Chicago, Kansas and Nebraska railroad was graded through the county in the summer of 1886. Early in the fall track-laying was finished and people began riding on the new road. Three stations were located in Wolf River township - Albers, Denton and Purcell." (Gray, Gray`s Doniphan County History, p. 56.) The first of these received its name from John Albers, who had owned the land where the station, the first building in the area, was built. He later parceled off part of his land near the station into town lots. For a short time only was the town known as Albers. Upon the establishment of a postoffice, the name Albers was rejected for the reason that there were other postoffices in Kansas that might be easily confused with Albers. A young man named Morgan, the first telegraph operator at the

railroad station, named it Bendena for his girlfriend, who later jilted him. The town became Bendena officially on February 20, 1887.

The farming community of Bendena established a post office in 1887, with Victor Ladwig as the first postmaster. Ladwig's father had immigrated from Mechlenburg, Germany in 1852, coming to Wolf River township in Doniphan County in 1862.

The first man to open a store was Bill McLin, of Brenner, who built a small "shack" in the summer of 1886. However, it burned down that fall, ending the business career of Bendena's first merchant.

P. L. Gray also wrote "The next improvement was the erection of scales by J. W. Howard, the pioneer grain man. These scales stood a few rods southwest of the depot. For a time there was not a great quantity of grain shipped, but the scales were not permitted to rust. The boys and girls came up from school every day through the tall grass and weeds of the townsite to be weighed, and they always found Mr. Howard accommodating." (Gray, Gray's Doniphan County History, p. 58.)

In the fall of 1886, Victor E. Ladwig and John B. Severin erected a store and for two years the town prospered. Late in the fall of 1888, they moved their stock to Severance. There was little business in town that winter, the blacksmith shop of Jake Bastian, who had come there in 1887, being the only headquarters for visitors. In 1889, Pat L.Gray put in a stock of goods in the Ladwig and Severin building. That August, 1889, Gray and Morgan, storekeeper and depot agent, established the short-lived Bendena Echo. Gray, a man of all trades, became a writer and printer.

The very first telephone line was one constructed of two cigar boxes and a coil of binder wire connecting the postoffice with the depot. It was put up by Gray and Morgan in 1889 and did very good service.

In 1896, a hotel and creamery were built. The Bendena Dramatic Company presented successful plays. The first telephone line owned by the Northwestern, reached the town that year also. Shares were owned by the merchants and farmers.

The 1880's ushered in the electrical age although Bendena did not get electrical lines until the early 1930's.

In 1894 the Kansas oil and gas fields began producing. The dream of striking it rich with a "gusher" reached fever pitch in Bendena in the late `30`s. An oil test hole was drilled just north of the Ross Elliot farm home west of Bendena. People came from all over to watch the diesel powered rotary drills sink deep in the earth. There was no "gusher" and the oil fever died as quickly as it had come.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is located on the SW4, SW4, SE4, NE4, S12, T4S, R19E in Union Township, Doniphan County, Kansas. It sits on a tract measuring one hundred and ten feet by seventy-one feet, whose northeast corner is fourteen feet directly northeast of the northeast corner of the church's foundation. Beginning at the northeast corner of the parcel the boundary proceeds one hundred and ten feet south, seventy-one feet west, one hundred and ten feet north, and seventy-one feet east to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property stands as the centerpiece of a religious complex that includes a manse, garage, education hall and cemetery in addition to the church itself. Although the larger area is historically associated with the church, these buildings and site are not included in the nomination.