NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 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 Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church

other names/site number Windthorst Catholic Church/St. Mary's Catholic Church

2. Location

street & number SW¼, SW¼, SW¼, NE/SE 1/4, S.17 T26S-R21W ☐ not for publication

city, town Windthorst Spearville ☒ vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Ford code 057 zip code 67876

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
☒ private	☒ building(s)	1	____ buildings
☐ public-local	☐ district	____	____ sites
☐ public-State	☐ site	____	____ structures
☐ public-Federal	☐ structure	____	____ objects
	☐ object	1	____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

Ramon Powers — October 29, 1988

Signature of certifying official — Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Kansas State Historical Society

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Religion; Religious Structure;
Church

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Religion; Religious Structure;
Church

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals;
Gothic Romanesque Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Brick
roof Asphalt
other Wood, Glass, Concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church (c. 1911-1913) is located in Windthorst, Wheatland Township, Ford County, Kansas (pop. 150) on the SW¼, SW¼, SW¼, NE¼/SE¼, S17-T26S-R21W. Windthorst is an unincorporated community some twenty odd miles northeast of Dodge City, Kansas. The church is the core of a religious complex that includes one school, a rectory, and a teacher's house. The church stands as a "Cathedral of the Plains", visible for miles around in this fairly flat and sparsely populated area of the state.

The Gothic Romanesque Revival church is a red brick building that stands on a smooth faced, coursed ashlar limestone foundation, yellow brick and limestone block striations marks the building's body. The building exhibits a gable facade fronted by a projecting steeple, with a western facade orientation. Buttresses support the north and south elevations. Limestone capping runs atop the buttress steps and the gable walls. The building's water table is formed by a smooth faced, coursed ashlar limestone block course, surmounted by seven courses of yellow brick and capped with an angled course of limestone blocks. Some of the brick faces have spalled, but this does not seem to be a widespread problem. For the most part the red and yellow brick coursing is comprised of five rows of stretchers laid in common bond for every one row of headers. The church measures approximately fifty-four feet from north to south and one hundred and fifty feet from east to west. The center steeple stands approximately one hundred and twenty-five feet tall. The building has been in active use since its construction and except for the replacement of the slate roof with asphalt shingles and the painting over of the 1928-1943 stencilling in 1974, the church maintains a very high degree of integrity.

XX See continuation sheet

The facade of the church is comprised of a center steeple, flanked by recessed gable walls and by the one-story baptistry and prayer room that project from the gable walls. A one-story, gable roofed entry porch projects from the steeple, with arched doorways on the west, north, and south elevations. The entry porch stands on a smooth faced, coursed ashlar limestone block foundation with a moulded top. Concrete steps lead up to the porch on all elevations. Limestone impost stringcourses, attenuated voussoirs, and keystones mark the arched doorways. The doorway surrounds are corbelled. The impost stringcourse continues onto the steeple, marking the lancet arched doorway into the church. The doorway surround is corbelled. It is filled with a double wooden door and surmounted by a stained glass transom, comprised of a circular center with panel of St. Mary, flanked by two spandrel pieces. A limestone stringcourse runs horizontally across the porch's upper gable. Limestone capping outlines the gable. A limestone date stone bearing the inscription "H L Herz Maria A.D. 1912" and a cross in the center marks the northwest corner of the steeple's facade. A limestone panel bearing the inscription of a cross abuts the facade panel, standing on the northwestern corner of the steeple's northern wall. A limestone panel bearing the inscription of a cross stands in a symmetrical location on the southwestern corner of the steeple's facade wall, with an identical panel abutting it on the steeple's southern wall. The panels are cracked in the center.

The steeple's tower continues above the first story level, divided by several rows of limestone stringcourses. Niches mark each of the tower's four elevations midway. A limestone keystone marks the western niche, a statue of St. Mary stands in this niche. A limestone impost stringcourse runs between all of the niches. Stepped pilasters project from all corners of the steeple. The first break is delineated by three rows of limestone courses, the upper two courses continue across the recessed wall space as stringcourses. A yellow brick course of sailors surmounts this grouping. Three niches delineate each elevation of the tower's upper section, a limestone course concludes this unit. The steeple's lantern is marked by two arched louvered vents on each of the four elevations. The flanking corner pilasters undulate and are marked by three rows of yellow brick coursing, capped with a limestone course. Limestone water spouts project from this course. The lantern is completed with three more steps, each capped with limestone. The lantern concludes in a gable front, capped with a limestone course. A yellow brick Bontonée cross rises from the center of the louvers, its presentation emphasized by the gable walls. The eight sided spire is topped by gold metal Bontonée cross.

A yellow brick, Bontonée cross decorates each of the pilaster shafts that terminate the north and south facade gable walls. Limestone capping runs atop the gable walls. A pair of lancet arched stained glass windows fenestrate the facade elevations of the one-story baptistry and prayer rooms. Limestone lug sills underscore the windows and arched brick lintels surmount them. The gables of these units face north and south respectively and are capped with limestone. A large, tripartite stained glass window pierces the gable walls of the baptistry and of the prayer room. Limestone lug sills underscore the windows and arched brick lintels surmount them.

Seven lancet arched stained glass windows pierce the nave on the north and south elevations. Limestone lug sills underscore the windows and arched brick lintels surmount them. Each window is located between a buttress and is comprised of two large elements surmounted four smaller elements. Two smaller stained glass windows pierce the chancel's upper wall on the north and south elevations. Limestone lug sills underscore the windows and arched brick lintels surmount them. The buttresses are comprised of three steps, each step capped with a limestone course. A yellow brick stringcourse runs atop the windows, a yellow brick circle breaks the stringcourse above each window. The yellow brick stringcourse continues across the rear elevation of the church. A yellow brick Bontonée cross breaks the stringcourse in the center, it is flanked by two yellow brick circles.

One-story vestry rooms project from the north and south elevations of the chancel, making the rear elevation of the building as wide as the nave at this level. The limestone water table is eliminated along the foundation for the chancel and vestry rooms and the yellow brick coursing is extended. A 1/1 double hung window pierces the eastern elevation of each vestry room. A double door providing basement access pierces the center of the rear wall, two 1/1 double hung windows flank the door. Four, 1/1 double hung arched windows pierce the northern wall of the northern vestry room, two 1/1 double hung foundation windows stand below. Three, 1/1 double hung arched windows and a single door pierce the southern wall of the southern vestry room. An iron walkway leads south from the door to the rectory. A closed window opening and a door pierce the foundation level of the southern vestry room. Limestone lug sills underscore all of these windows and brick lintels surmount them. A chimney rises from both the northern and southern rear gable walls. A ridge hipped roof covers the chancel. A triangular vent stands in the center of the eastern roof slope. Flat roofs cover the vestry rooms.

The interior of the church is essentially a rectangular space divided longitudinally by two rows of pews. A vestibule with a staircase leading to the choir provides entry into the church's nave. A large, six-sided transluscent glass and burnished metal lantern hangs from the vestibule's ceiling, along with a bell rope. Rib vaulting spans the nave's ceiling. The rib vaulting springs from leafy consoles. The ribs and consoles are picked out in gold; 1943 and 1953 photographs of the interior indicate that rosettes once decorated the ribs as well. The 1953 photograph also indicates that the cream walls were once a darker color, although the ribs, surrounds, and other trim have retained their light color. Three large, six-sided, transluscent glass and burnished metal lanterns hang over each pew grouping, two pairs of lanterns hang over the choir area. Ceiling fans hang suspended above the nave's center aisle. The chancel stands at the east end of the nave and is approached by several steps. In 1918 the ornate high altar and the two side altars were installed. These altars have been marbelized in several different colors. A repeating cross motif is stencilled around each of the side altars. A 1943 photograph of the interior of the church shows ecclesiastical murals painted on the walls behind the main altar and two side altars. These murals were probably painted between 1928 and 1943 and were probably painted over in 1974. Ecclesiastical statuary hangs on the walls between the stained glass windows. The elaborate and colorful stained glass windows depict scenes from the New Testament. The windows are set into niches formed by the rib vaulting. The bottom section of the windows can be opened for ventilation. The windows were designed by Emil Frei Studios and were installed in 1916. In 1915 the Estey pipe organ was installed in the choir. The large lanterns were installed in 1946. The pews, the stations of the cross, the statues, the baptismal font, the Christmas crib, the vestments, the mission cross, and other fixtures were installed in 1913. The interior of the church was first painted in 1928, it was redecorated in 1947 and then redecorated again in 1974. Fiber board insulation was added along the wainscotting during the 1974 project, but the original plaster walls are retained above that. Excepting the loss of the murals and perhaps some other decorative painting, the interior of the church maintains a high degree of integrity.

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)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1911-1913	1911-1913
Social History	1911-1938	

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Preiss and Aimes, Co.
Foley, William
Frei, Emil

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

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church (c. 1911-1913) is being nominated to the National Register under criteria A and C for its historical association with the Windthorst settlement and for its architectural significance as a Gothic Romanesque Revival Church. In 1878 Windthorst was settled by members of the Cincinnati based German Catholic Aurora Homestead Association. The congregation built its first frame church in Spring, 1879, and a new frame church in 1893. The brick church stands as the third generation structure, representing the stature, permanance, and success of the Windthorst settlement. The church is the core of a religious complex that includes one school, a rectory, and a teacher's house; this type of unit marks many rural Catholic settlements in Kansas. In effect, the church stands as a "Cathedral of the Plains," visible for miles around in this fairly flat and sparsely populated area some twenty odd miles northeast of Dodge City.

The German Aurora Homestead Association purchased ten sections in the western third of Wheatland Township, Ford County, Kansas from the Santa Fe Railway Company at ten dollars an acre in Fall, 1877. The company donated eighty acres of land for a church, school, and cemetery and an additional eighty acres for a townsite in Section 17 of the township. The balance of the ten sections was sold at public auction in Cincinnati by the association. The October 5, 1878 issue of the Spearville News notes that "Windthorst eight miles southeast of Spearville, is the proposed town of a German colony numbering upwards of a hundred families." The article continues to focus on the settlement of Ford County, noting that all information regarding the thousands of acres for sale in the county may be obtained from either a land agent for the railroad or the German Immigrant Society, with lands going for between three and ten dollars an acre. The German Immigrant Society was comprised of many of the same people who were involved with the German Aurora Homestead Association.

☒ See continuation sheet

Windthorst was settled by people of primarily German extraction. The 1880 census shows that a significant number of the seventy-nine families living in Wheatland Township were born in Germany, although most of the families had emigrated to Kansas from Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, and Iowa. The 1885 agricultural census indicates that there were three churches in the township. St. Mary's Catholic Church (this parish became known as the Immaculate Heart of Mary after the construction of the 1911-1913 church and was and is also referred to as Windthorst) stood at the center of the Windthorst settlement and was the largest church with one hundred and seventy-five parishioners. St. Joseph's Catholic Church, a mission of St. Mary's, stood in the northeast part of the township and was attended by fifty parishioners. The Zion Lutheran Church, several miles east of Windthorst, was attended by thirty-five parishioners. Five hundred and fifty-two people are listed as living in the township in 1885, with the majority of the population attending either the catholic church at Windthorst or St. Joseph's.

Windthorst served as a mission church from 1879 until 1900 for many of the surrounding counties. The formation of Catholic parishes and the erection of Catholic churches in southwest Kansas is the direct result of Windthorst's missionary activities. In 1882-1885 the missions attended were St. Joseph's, Dodge City, and Fort Dodge in Ford County, Larned and Brown's Grove in Pawnee County, Kinsley in Edward's County, Cimarron in Foote (now Gray) County, Sherlock and Lakin in Sequoyah (now Kearny) County, and Camp Supply in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). Between 1895 and 1900 the missions attended were St. Nicholas in Kinsley, Sts. Peter and Paul in North Kinsley and St. Joseph's in Ford County. Mission duties ceased when the parish was successful enough to warrant a resident pastor.

Between 1900 and 1915 the church congregation of St. Mary's and Wheatland Township grew considerably in population. The 1900 census lists seventy-six families as living in the township, by the 1905 agricultural census, ninety-nine families lived in the township and three hundred of these people attended St. Mary's. In 1910, one hundred and fourteen families lived in the township. This number grew to one hundred and forty families (six hundred and one people) by 1915, three hundred and ninety-five of these people belonged to St. Mary's. These fifteen years mark a very pivotal time for the parish, one of great growth and affluence. This era climaxes most dramatically with the construction of the new St. Mary's church between 1911 and 1913.

The original members of the Windthorst settlement struggled against drought and famine during the first twenty years of settlement. The impact of weather and other unforeseen natural disasters took its toll on the agricultural settlement. Some of Windthorst's original settlers left the area during

these years but by the turn of the century Wheatland Township had become a successful place to farm. Wheat, corn, oats, and barley were the major cash crops of the township in 1905, with wheat gradually overshadowing all other grains during the next twenty years.

The dramatic growth and affluence of the Windthorst settlement during the first ten years of the twentieth century signalled the need for a larger church for St. Mary's parish. A church and building committee was appointed in 1911 and after consultations with the Catholic Diocese of Wichita, the St. Louis, Missouri architectural firm of Preuss and Aimes, Co. was selected to design the church. St. Louis based Emil Frei Studios was selected to design the church's stained glass windows, these windows were installed in 1916. William Foley, an active Dodge City builder, received the contract for the construction of the church. All of the building materials for the church were hauled from the Bellefont Santa Fe Station, some nine miles north of Windthorst, by forty-seven wagons in Winter, 1911 and Spring, 1912.

The cornerstone laying ceremonies for the new church were held on June 10, 1912 with Bishop Hennessy of the Catholic Diocese of Wichita in attendance. The June 6, 1912 edition of the Spearville News noted that the church "will be a land mark that can be seen many miles in every direction." The site choosen for the new church was in the northeast quarter of Section 17, southwest of the 1893 frame church.

With the dedication of the Windthorst Catholic Church one year later on June 12, 1913, the Spearville News called the church "one of the finest buildings in the western part of the state." The building was completed for $37,583.37, money which was raised by the parish. The Catholic Advance, the official Catholic paper of Kansas and Oklahoma, writes in a June 21, 1913 article about the dedication of the "self-sacrificing character of the people at Windthorst, after years of patience and labor." Bishop Hennessy told the congregation "that they had erected one of the grandest tributes of gratitude and faith in the west . . . "

In addition to the construction of the new church, the Windthorst parish built a teacher's house in 1903, a new rectory in 1908, and a new two-room, frame schoolhouse in 1911. In 1927 the parish constructed a brick building to house the grade school and the high school. This last construction ended the building of the Windthorst Catholic Church and school complex.

Following World War I, the church's membership dropped significantly, by 1925 two hundred and sixty-five people belonged to the church, although Wheatland Township's overall population had risen to six hundred and twenty-seven people. It is likely that the character of the community and the church were affected culturally and philosophically by the war because of the strong German heritage of the Windthorst settlement. Although almost everyone in the community spoke English in 1910, German and English curriculums were taught in the Windthorst Catholic School until World War I. The drop in church membership may have been a reaction to changes within the church that were either forced or at the very least perceived as necessary by some members of the parish.

Over the years the population of the township and of the Windthorst parish has declined. Today approximately one hundred and fifty people live in Wheatland Township and sixty-three families belong to the parish, some of these families live in Spearville Township, the next township to the west. The church continues to be used for services each Sunday and is very well maintained. The school was closed in the 1940s. In 1952, the Windthorst Catholic Church acreage was transferred from the Catholic Diocese of Wichita to the newly created Catholic Diocese of Dodge City.

Architecturally, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church is a striking example of early twentieth century Gothic Romanesque Revival ecclesiastical design. Its gabled nave is fronted centrally by a tower which is capped with a simple spire. The red brick building stands on a yellow brick foundation and is marked with yellow brick striations. Buttresses support the church's north and south walls. Wide, rounded lancet arched windows pierce the facade and the north and south walls. Elaborate and colorful stained glass windows depicting scenes from the New Testament fill these openings. A rib vaulted ceiling spans the nave. The chancel stands east of the nave and is approached by several steps, the high altar and the two side altars were installed in 1918. In 1915 an Estey organ from Brattleboro, Vermont was installed in the choir above the narthex. The pews, the stations of the cross, the statues, the baptismal font, the Christmas crib, the vestments, the mission cross, and other fixtures were installed upon the completion of the church in 1913. The Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church is unique to the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City in that it was not stripped of its statuary and ornamentation after the Seond Vatican Council decree of 1963. The restrained stylistic interpretation of the Gothic Romanesque makes the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church an excellent example of a high style building whose clean lines and direct approach clearly recall its antecedants.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Moeder, John Michael. Early Catholicity in Kansas and the History of the Diocese of Wichita. (Wichita, 1937).

Ogle, George, Ford County Atlas, 1905-1906.

Plat Map of Ford County, 1916.

Spearville News; 14 September 1878, 5 October 1878, 6 June1912, 12 June 1913, 25 May 1978.

State of Kansas. Census, 1880, 1885, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1915, 1925.

Torline, Eva and Henry J. Hain. Centennial History of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Windthorst, Kansas, 1978.

[X] 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:

- [X] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Specify repository: Kansas State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	14	443545	4181945
B			
C			
D			

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The nominated property is located on the SW¼, SW¼, SW¼, SE/NE 1/4, S17, T26S, R21W in Ford County on a tract measuring 74' x 170' whose northeast corner is 14.1' directly northeast of the northeast corner of the church's foundation. Beginning at the northeast corner of the parcel the boundary proceeds 74' south, 170' west, 74' north, and 170' east to the point of beginning.

[ ] See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The nominated property is located in the center of the Windthorst community as the core of a religious complex that includes a school, a rectory, and a teacher's house. The boundary includes a 74' x 170' parcel which contains the church. Although a larger area is historically associated with the church, these buildings are not included in this nomination.

[ ] See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Hagedorn-Krass, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society date November 14, 1988

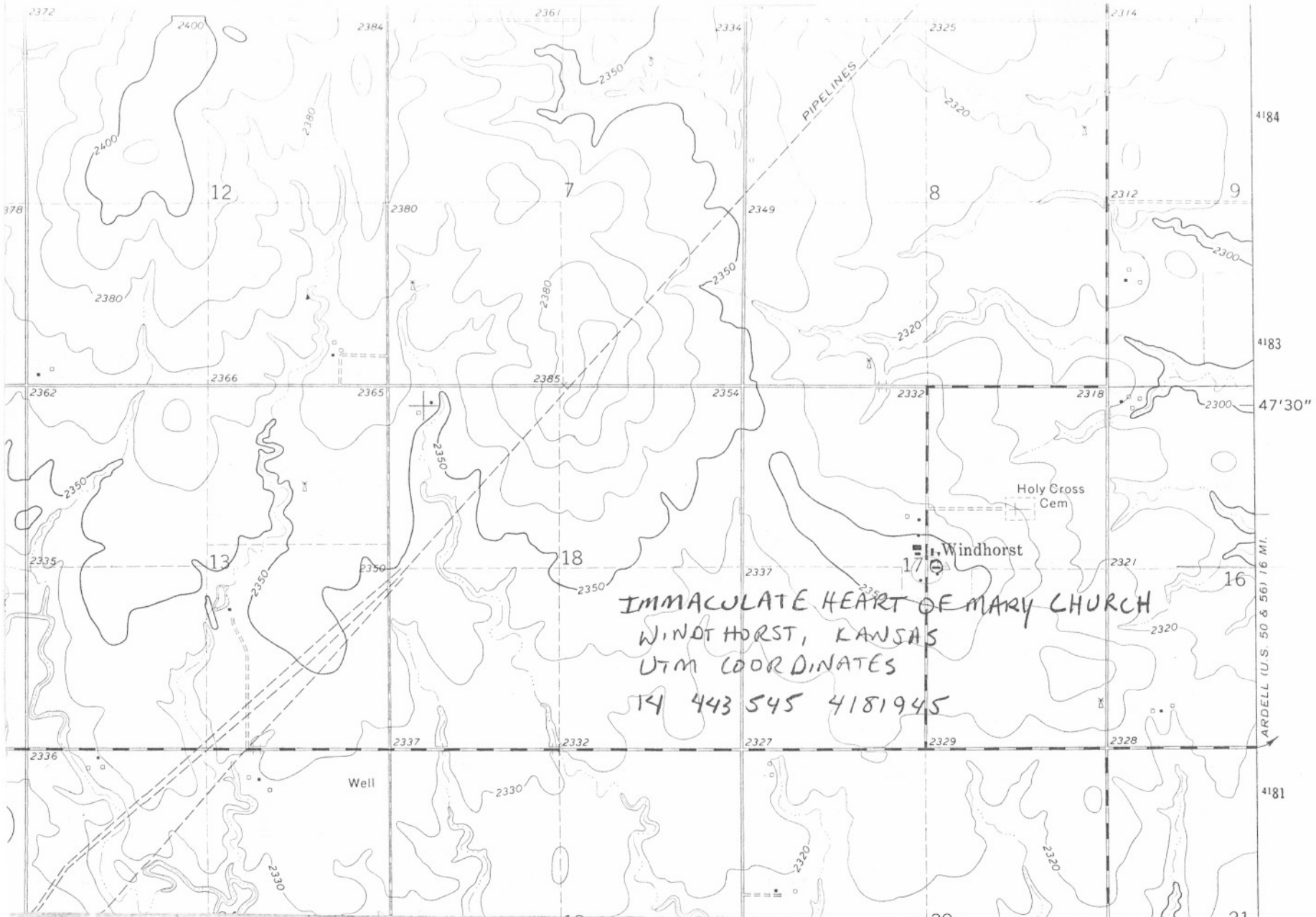
street & number 120 W. Tenth telephone 913-296-5264

city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612

United States Land Office, 1876-1888 land ownership maps for T25-35S, R21-31W, Ford County, Kansas.

Wenzl, Timothy, "Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church." (National Register draft, January, 1985).

Wichita Catholic Advance; 21 June 1913.



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHURCH
WINDTHORST, KANSAS
UTM COORDINATES
14 443 545 4181945

Bellefont Quad