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. BRIDGET CHURCH

other names/site number ST. BRIDGET MISSION CATHOLIC CHURCH 117-0330-0004

2. Location

street & number R. R. 2 ☐ not for publication

city or town AXTELL ☒ vicinity

state KANSAS code KS county MARSHALL code 117 zip code 66403

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D Pankratz D-SHPO, AUGUST 12, 1996
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. BRIDGET CHURCH
Name of Property

MARSHALL COUNTY, KS
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [XX] 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; church

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility; church

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Gothic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone
walls BRICK
roof METAL: tin
other GLASS

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

ST. BRIDGET CHURCH
Name of Property

MARSHALL JNTY, KS
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

1908- 1946

Significant Dates

1908

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

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:

ST. BRIDGET HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ST. BRIDGET CHURCH
Name of Property

MARSHALL COUNTY, KS
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.55 ACRES

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	733740	4427370
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 CHERI JOHNSON-REYNOLDS and REV. THOMAS H. DOLGEL

organization ST. BRIDGET HISTORICAL SOCIETY date MAY 1995

street & number R.R. 1, BOX 56 telephone 402-248-6243

city or town SUMMERFIELD state KS zip code 66541

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 MR. LEO GLYNN, SEC. TRES., ST. BRIDGETTHISTORICAL SOCIETY

street & number R. R. 1, BOX 56 telephone 402-248-6243

city or town SUMMERFIELD state KS zip code 66541

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. Bridget Church is located six and one-half miles due north of Axtell, Kansas and six miles southeast of Summerfield, Kansas, in St. Bridget Township. Technically, the property is located in Section 14, on T1S, R10E, Marshall county, Kansas. The parcel is identified as a tract in the Northeast Quarter, beginning 25' West of the Southeast Corner of the West Half of the Northeast Quarter, then West 635', North 432', East 635', and South 432' to the point of beginning. the property includes one building, St. Bridget Church. It is the Mother Church of Marshall County and nourished the faith of those Catholic families who would eventually help establish the Catholic parishes of Axtell, Beattie, and Summerfield, Kansas. (Dolezal, Reverend Thomas H. History of St. Bridget Parish, 1862-1967. Mar. 1995, p. 1.)

St. Bridget Church is one of the oldest Gothic structures remaining in northeast Kansas. Building began in April of 1902, with the construction of the limestone foundation. On June 20, 1905, the cornerstone of the new church was laid and the red brick church was completed in 1908. The cost of construction for the fifty by one hundred feet brick building was $25,000.00 - $30,000.00. This was the fifth and last church building erected by the parish.

A metal cast bell was purchased by the parish during Father Timothy Luber's pastorate (1876-1883). It occupies the bell tower of the present church. The bell is inscribed "In Honor of St. Bridget, October 12, 1880, H.Y. Stuckstede, St. Louis, Mo.

St. Bridget Church is an excellent example of Gothic Architecture. The overall design is outstanding. The suspended vault ceiling is supported by hand hewn beams arranged in a magnificent manner. The skeleton of the building is the first example of quality craftsmanship. This building was built to endure Midwestern weather extremes. It is built of high quality material and built to last.

Exquisite patterns subtly emerge from the brickwork and frame the windows and doors of St. Bridget Church. Stepped buttresses are accented with white cement caps. The steeple atop the main tower of the church was never completed. (Dolezal, p. 10). The main tower houses the vestibule, bell tower, and niche for St. Bridget's Statue, is reminiscent of Early Gothic Architecture. The brickwork and placement of windows suggest nave, gallery, trifolium, and clerestory, four levels characteristic of Early Gothic. The brick masonry is in original form and in need of re-pointing.

Lofty walls of deep reddish brick rest on a solid native limestone foundation. Delicate patterns emerge from the placement of brick as it frames the windows and doors, reflective of the Gothic style of architecture integral to the whole structure. Stepped buttresses rise at the corners and between windows to form the support of towering rows of brick. Each side buttress is capped with greyish-white concrete slabs at each of two steps. The buttresses at each corner are set diagonally to the main body of the church. The facade corner buttresses rise to form the base for metal spires, which are no longer in existence. The spires can be seen in a photograph in History of St. Bridget Parish, 1862-1967, written by the Reverend Thomas H. Dolezal, Mar. 1995, page 9. Shaped metal molding, which is painted white, outlines the roof and forms a peak over the main entrance. A cast statue of St. Bridget rests in a niche in the bell tower, above the main entrance of the east facing facade.

One of the most architecturally significant Gothic features of St. Bridget's Church is the vaulting system. The entire system of vaults is suspended by heavy, hand hewn beams. The side vaults are lower than the nave vaults. This architectural feature gives the structure the feeling of having side aisles. The suspended vault system leaves the floor completely open to placement of pews. The ribs (groins) of the vaults are finished with plaster (Gothic cross barrel groin vaults), rather than having visible supports.

The interior of the structure is finished with plaster. There are no visible ribs, only the junction of vault planes terminating in a clean crisp line formed by finished plaster. This allows for the purest of Gothic lines, crisp and clean delineations between vaults. Light entering from the windows has a vast opportunity to create a masterpiece of shadow and light as it plays on the surface of the intersecting vaults. The suggestion of side aisles is achieved by the lowering of the ceilings. This variance in height is in proportion to the overall scale and dimension of the building. The impression is one of openness, stability, and tranquility; mass encompassing vast space, precisely divided by the planes of intersecting vaults and walls. Each vault rests on Corinthian style capitals.

St. Bridget Church's facade faces east, toward the rising sun. Single pointed arched windows grace the south and north interior walls of the open nave. Scenes depicting Catholic belief are the theme in each of the eight major windows. Beginning on the south side of the nave, from west to east, the windows contain the scene of Sacred Heart Appearing to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, St. Patrick of Ireland, The Resurrection of Jesus, and The Assumption of Mary.

Beginning on the north side of the nave, from west to east, the windows contain the scene of The Annunciation, St. Francis of Assisi, The Baptism of Jesus, and St. Martin of Tours. St. Patrick of Ireland's window has the inscription of "Ford Bros. Glass Co. . . Minneapolis".

The windows in the church are stained glass. During the pastorate of Father Hurley (1884-1896) stained glass windows were purchased. Originally, they were installed in the stone church (the fourth church constructed). According to an article taken from The Axtel Anchor, December 12, 1885, "Ten beautiful windows have been placed in the church at St. Bridgets, the donors being Patrick McGrath, Thomas Smith, Frank Riley, Michael Shaughnessy, Thomas Nestor, Bernard Hoffman, Patrick Glynn, Sylvester Crevan, Patrick Riley and Bridget Corcoran. The names of two donors were inadvertently omitted: John Clark and Michael Hughes. the article went on to say, "They (the windows) are costly and varied in design and add much to the appearance of the church". (Dolezal, p. 8). They were installed in the present building prior to the dedication of the church in 1908.

The windows are of exquisite design, following the Gothic style characterized by pointed arches. Protective outer glass windows were installed to lessen the chance of damage. There are eight large stained glass windows, four on each side of the nave. Each of these depicts a scene from Catholic Belief. St. Patrick's Window, one of four windows on the south wall, bears the signature of Ford Brothers Studio in Minneapolis, Minnesota. All other windows are constructed of "art glass" and are of geometric design, some containing symbolic emblems of Catholic belief as the theme.

The swinging doors between the vestibule and nave are unique solid core doors with etched inset glass panes. It is believed the designs etched into the beveled glass are symbolic of St. Christopher, thus called St. Christopher doors.

The pointed arch theme is maintained throughout the interior of St. Bridget Church. It is present in the woodwork comprising the balcony rail, main altar rail, main altar, side altars, confessional, and the pews. Much of the wood is dark oak.

Decorative woodwork is found throughout the church. The balcony rail is faced with finely crafted woodwork patterns that are reflective of Gothic ornament. This style of ornament is used throughout the furnishing; ends of pews, front altar rail, sacristy doors (off either side of the apse), and altar details. The original pump organ is still functioning and in place toward the west end of the nave.

Most doorways and doors have insets at the top shaped in the pointed arch fashion. The doorways to the side chambers on either side of the apse have clear glass lights. The sacristies have storage cabinets and closets. The sacristy to the north of the apse has a substantial cabinet from the storage of ecclesiastical linens and closets for the storage of ecclesiastical attire and furnishings. Much of the line, furnishing, and ecclesiastical attire are still stored here. Many pieces of linen were handmade and decorated by women of the parish. Exquisite designs are delicately sewn, embroidered, crocheted, and appliqued on high quality fabric. The craftsmanship of these antiquated pieces is remarkable. Candleholders, chalices, holy water fonts, holy water basins, the Monstrance, and ruby colored sanctuary lamp, and other ecclesiastic furnishings are in the possession of the parish. Two marble holy water basins are placed on either side of the main aisle. Two holy water fonts were found by parishioners, buried in the church yard sometime after the closing of the church. They have been restored and replaced to their original location in the church.

Interior statues of St. Bridget, St. Patrick, St. Columba, St. Joseph, St. Jude, Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Grace, St. Anthony, Four Angels, the Last Supper, the Baptismal and the Nativity were restored in 993 by Johnson Restoration and Graphics, Vermillion, Ks. After carefully uncovering many layers of paint, the original color schemes and decorative ornament were discovered. Each statue was restored to it's original color scheme. All decorative ornament was restored to original location. Deprato Statuary Co. is believed to be the maker of some of these statues. This company is still in operation under the name of Rigali Deprato Statuary Company. It is based in a suburb of Chicago, Illinois.

Stations of the Cross, are on the north and south walls, between the stained glass windows. These depict the Sentencing, Crucifixion, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The stations are in stable condition and have not been restored.

The interior of St. Bridget Church was painted for the first time in 1951. Mulich Brothers, a painting company of Kansas City, Kansas was contracted to do the work. A pastel theme was incorporated throughout the structure. From the floor up to about four feet, a pastel pink band is painted. Oak molding separates the pink from the green. The remainder of the wall space was painted in a pastel green shade. The vaults are painted off white to contrast with the wall color. Stenciled designs form a tracery following the oak molding and surrounding the windows. A cross delineates the center and top of the stained glass windows. The stenciled designs are painted in darker hues of loden green, gold, and mauvish pink to contrast the soft pastel base colors. The original paint is intact. Two hand crafted insignias are painted on the side walls of the apse. They are centrally located on the south-southwest and north-northwest sections of the apse toward the ceiling.

Glass by Fischer, Axtell, Kansas was contracted to restore a window in the server's sacristy in 1993. It had been damaged by hail.

In 1993, lighting was restored to the main altar. Light fixtures at the top of each niche and center front were rewired. The lights illuminate the life sized statues of St. Bridget, St. Patrick, St. Columba, and a plaque illustrating The Last Supper.

St. Bridget Church has a high degree of architectural integrity. It is an excellent example of Gothic Architecture. It is exemplary of superior craftsmanship, design, artistry, and engineering. St. Bridget is unique in its style, design, and tradition. It stands as a monument to the faith, sacrifice, and diligence of the Irish pioneers who braved the breaking of a new frontier, established St. Bridget Settlement, and maintained an active parish for one hundred and five years (1862-1967).

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On one of the rolling hills in the northeast corner of Marshall County, Kansas stands St. Bridget's Church. On a clear day, you can see her gleaming roof line for miles. You can stand at her front door and gaze eastward all the way to the town of Bern, Kansas. The church proudly stands vigilant over this beautiful farmland that once belonged to her Irish Parish. (Dolezal, Reverend Thomas H. History of St. Bridget Parish, 1862-1967. Mar. 1995, p. 1.)

St. Bridget's Church is a monument to the ancestors who sacrificed so much of themselves. In the words of Father Patrick O'Sullivan, pastor from 1896-1907, "It was a grand generation of heroic mold who amidst hardships, privations, and dangers, broke the prairies, built their homes, and brought religion and civilization to Northeast Kansas." (Dolezal, p. 2). The church was dedicated by the Reverend Bishop Lillis, on September 2, 1908. (Dolezal, p. 12).

The settlement was founded in 1857 by Irish emigrants who were among the first settlers in the territory of Kansas. In May of 1859, Father Edmond Langenfelder, O.S.B., a missionary priest, offered the first Mass in Marshall County, Kansas at the John Coughlin home. The church was officially organized under the direction of Father John Meurs, O.S.B., in 1862.

*In 1862, construction of the **first** church building began. This log structure was destroyed by fire before it was completed.*

*In 1863-1864 a wood framed church was constructed where the cemetery is located. This was the **second** church to be constructed. As Oretha Ruetti writes in the October, 1976 Kanhistique, ". . . in 1864, a frame church was built on the same site (as the log cabin church) despite dissension in the parish over the selection of this site for the church building. The disapproving group favored locating the church a mile farther north. It was this disagreement among the parishioners that spawned the many legends of the "Fighting Irish' of St. Bridget."*

"The dissenting faction, with their Irish definitely 'up', gathered at the church one dark night with their lanterns, oxen teams, and skids. They were going to move the church up the hill to their chosen site! The oxen tired and the moving rig broke down. At daybreak they were discovered at the point midway between the two disputed sites. A compromise was reached which left the

church at this spot, on a ten acre plot donated by patrick McGrath. The original site became the parish cemetery and is still in use today." (Dolezal, p. 2).

*In 1871, Father Suitbert Demarteau, O.S.B., began construction of the stone church (the **third** church). It was completed in 1875. The building could seat over 300 people. In 1889, a lithograph of St. Bridget's Church and Rectory was published in Portrait and Biographical Album of Marshall County, Kansas (page 407). This can also be viewed on page 6 of History of St. Bridget Parish, 1862-1967, by the Reverend Thomas H. Dolezal, march, 1995.*

Father Timothy Luber, O.S.B., and members of the parish . . . erected a twelve room parish house. (Dolezal, p. 6). In 1878, he became the first resident priest of St. Bridget. This structure burned down in 1935. During Father Luber's pastorate, a metal cast bell was purchased. "In honor of St. Bridget, October 12, 1880, H.Y. Stuckstede, St. Louis Mo." is embossed in the metal at the top of the bell.

*During the pastorate of Father John A. Hurley (1884-1896), the **fourth** church was built. When the parish outgrew the stone church, he oversaw the construction of a frame church to be used for church services (until the new brick building could be completed). (Dolezal, p. 8). At this time, ten stained glass windows were purchased. Each window was donated by parishioners. According to the Axtell Anchor, December 12, 1885, "they are costly and varied in design and add much to the appearance of the church". (Dolezal, p. 8.). Although these windows were installed in the third church (the stone church), they were later placed in the new brick building.*

*Father Patrick O'Sullivan O.S.B., was pastor at St. Bridget when construction began on the foundation for the brick building (the **fifth** church building), in April of 1902. On . . . June 20, 1905, the cornerstone of the new church was laid by Bishop Lillis. (Dolezal, p. 10). The church was completed in 1908 and it loomed large as the pride of the parish and a monument to the self-sacrificing pioneers of St. Bridget Parish. (Dolezal, p. 10).*

St. Bridget Church is a standing example of the faith, dedication, persistence, and diligence of Irish emigrants that founded this community.

As the oldest organized Catholic congregation in Marshall County, the historic church has served as the Mother Church of both Holy Family Church at Summerfield and St. Michael's Church at Axtell. (Dolezal, p. 61).

St. Bridget Church is one of the oldest Gothic structures remaining in northeast Kansas. Building began in April of 1902, with the construction of the limestone foundation. The cost of construction for the fifty by one hundred feet brick building was $25,000.00 - $30,000.00. This was the fifth and last church building erected by the parish. Construction was completed in 1908. (Dolezal, p. 9, 10). The dedication of St. Bridget Church took place on September 2, 1908.

St. Bridget's Church is a red brick structure, fifty by one hundred feet. The foundation is of native limestone. Parishioners furnished the labor and donated much of the materials and furnishings the new church building would need. (Dolezal, p. 10). The original architect or designer of the church is unknown. The cost of construction was $25,000.00 - $30,000.00. (Dolezal, p. 9). The red brick used in the construction of the church and rectory was brought in by railroad flat cars . . . on the old Kansas City, Wyandotte and Northwestern Railroad. It was transported by parishioner with buckboards . . . to the construction site of the church and rectory. (Dolezal, p. 10).

Exquisite patterns subtly emerge from the brickwork and frame the windows and doors of St. Bridget's Church. Stepped buttresses are accented with white cement caps. The steeple atop the main tower of the church was never completed. (Dolezal, p. 10). The main tower houses the vestibule, bell tower, and niche for St. Bridget's Statue, is reminiscent of Early Gothic Architecture. The brickwork and placement of windows suggest nave, gallery, trifolium, and clerestory, four levels characteristic of Early Gothic. The brick masonry is in original form and in need of pointing.

One of the most significant Gothic features of St. Bridget's Church is the vaulting system. the entire system of vaults is suspended; side aisles and nave. The side vaults are lower than the nave vaults. This architectural feature gives the structure the feeling of having side aisles. The suspended vault system leaves the floor completely open to placement of pews. The ribs (groins) of the vaults are finished with plaster (Gothic cross barrel groin vaults), rather than having visible supports. The impression is one of openness, stability, and tranquility.

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They were installed in the present building prior to the dedication of the church in 1908.

The windows are of exquisite design, following the Gothic style characterized by pointed arches. Protective outer glass windows were installed to lessen the chance of damage. There are eight large stained glass windows, four on each side of the nave. Each of these depicts a scene from Catholic Belief. St. patrick's Window, one of four windows on the south wall, bears the signature of Ford Brothers Studio in Minneapolis, Minnesota. All other windows are constructed of "art glass" and are of geometric design, some containing symbolic emblems of Catholic belief as the theme.

The pointed arch theme is maintained throughout the interior of St. Bridget Church. It is present in the woodwork comprising the balcony rail, main altar rail, main altar, side altars, confessional, and the pews. Much of the wood is dark oak. In an effort to supplement the Sunday Collection, Father Patrick Fitzgerald devised the pew rent system. This fee was paid weekly, quarterly, or annually by each family or single member. The pews closest to the altar and to the middle aisle carried the higher rent fee. These were the most prestigious pews to be seen in or occupy. If you sat in someone else' pew, God help you! You could be asked to move or the ushers would escort you to another pew. Each family or single person had their own pew. (Dolezal, p. 63). Some name tags of the original occupants are still in the metal holders at the center aisle end of the pews. A chart showing Pew Rent for 1897 is located on page 59 of History of St. Bridget Parish, 1862-1967, written by the Reverend Thomas H. Dolezal, October 1994.

On September 3, 1967 Father Robert Pflumm was authorized by Archbishop Hunkeler to announce the closing of St. Bridget Parish. The last Sunday Mass was held on September 10, 1967. Parishioners could choose to join adjoining parishes. When the parish closed, 1007 children or converts had been baptized, 212 couples pronounced their wedding vows before her altar, and 465 funerals were conducted from the church or at the cemetery. (Dolezal, p. 18). In July of 1969,

Archbishop Hunkeler announced the plan to demolish the church. (Dolezal, p. 20). A meeting was scheduled for July 13, 1969 by and for parishioners to consider alternatives to this plan. (Dolezal, p. 20). A petition was signed to save the church. Eventually, St. Bridget Historical Society was formed through the slow process of incorporation. Due to illness, Archbishop Hunkeler retired. On March 24, 1970 representatives of the steering committee met with the Archbishop Ignatius Strecker. He approved the plan to incorporate the church into the Historical Society and agreed to transfer title to the church, its contents and surrounding 6.5 acres, when they were legally organized. (Dolezal, p. 21). As of now, 135 members belong to St. Bridget Historical Society.

St. Bridget Historical Society was formed in 1970 through incorporation. Archbishop Ignatius Strecker approved the plan to incorporate and agreed to transfer title to the church, its contents and surrounding 6.5 acres, when the society was legally organized. This was carried out in order to stop the plan announced in 1969 to destroy the building. St. Bridget Historical Society remains active in preserving and promoting the historic landmark.

St. Bridget Historical Society began publishing a newsletter in October of 1993. It is mailed out twice a year, in April and October, to keep members aware of events and happenings at St. Bridget. A twenty five year celebration of the founding of St. Bridget Historical Society is planned for June 4, 1995. Archbishop Keleher has been invited to celebrate Mass and a picnic is planned. The proceeds from sales of hickory smoked chicken dinners will go to St. Bridget Historical Society Fund.

The History of St. Bridget Parish, 1862-1967, is a book published, written and edited by the Reverend Thomas H. Dolezal. After many months of research and work, he has compiled the most thorough and encompassing history of St. Bridget ever to be written. Totaling 92 pages, he has gathered information from newspaper articles, parish sacramental records, Official Catholic Directories, County and State Publications, photographs, maps, and personal interviews to complete the book.

Archbishop Keleher has approved marriages and funerals for parishioners if the family has a previous connection with the parish. He also will allow the continuation of the ***Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*** *at the church twice a year.* ***St. Bridget Day*** *is celebrated annually, on the Sunday closest to Memorial Day.*

"Now, one can again glory in the majestic simplicity of the high vaulted ceilings, the stained glass windows . . . and the dark oak pews, some still bearing the names of former occupants. . . . Time has changed St. Bridget's very little." Dolezal, p. 23).

Visitation of St. Bridget Church can be arranged by contacting: The Terry Stallbaumer Family (913) 736-2910.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Axtell Anchor. September 4, 1903; August 25, 1905.

Axtell Standard. September 21, 1905; September 4, 1908.

Catholic Advance. September 12, 1908.

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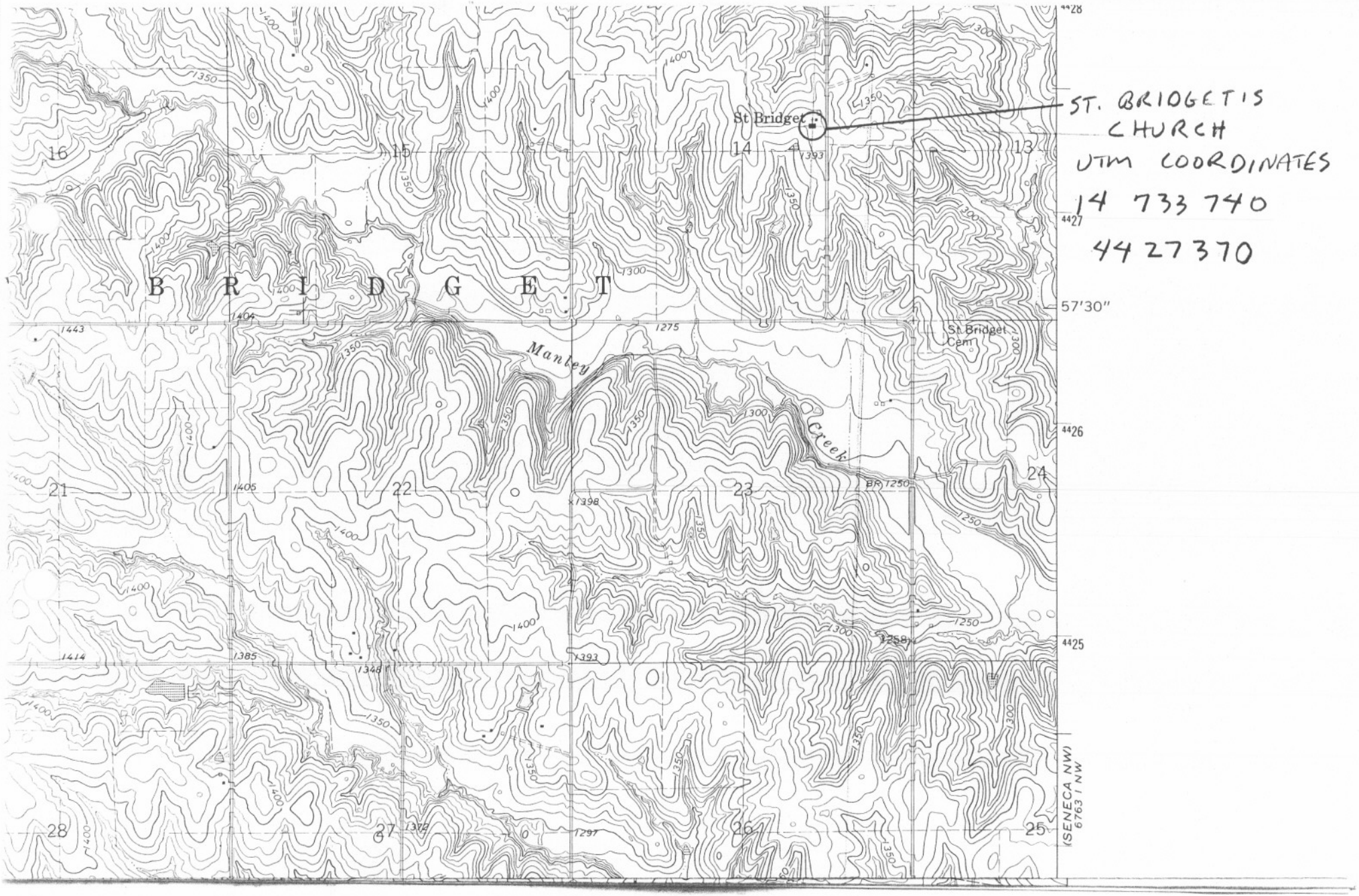
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property in located north of Axtell in St. Bridget Township, Marshall County, Kansas. The property stands on a 6.55 acre tract that begins at the southeast corner of the west half of the northeast quarter of Section 14, Township 1 South, Range 10 East; thence north 432 feet; thence west 660 feet; thence south 432 feet; thence east 660 feet to the point of beginning. The tract is bounded the east by 30th Road and the north, south and west by adjacent property lines.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property contains the St. Bridget Church. In earlier years, when the parish was active, additional structures were associated with the church and the acreage associated with the property was larger. These structures included the original rectory, which became the convent, the parish hall, the new rectory, and a barn. The original rectory and the parish hall have been demolished. The new rectory and the barn are privately owned.


ST. BRIDGET'S
CHURCH
UTM COORDINATES
14 733 740
4427370
St Bridget
St Bridget Cem
B R I D G E T
Manley
Creek
57'30"
4428
4427
4426
4425
(SENECA NW)
6763 I NW