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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Parsonage

other names/site number

Name of Multiple Property Listing

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

2. Location

street & number 1124-1134 South Ashland Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Chicago ☐ vicinity

state Illinois county Cook zip code 60607

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 at the following level(s) of significance: ___ **national** ___ **statewide** ___ **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria: ___ **A** ___ **B** ___ **C** ___ **D**

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Illinois Department of Natural Resources - SHPO
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

First Immanuel Lutheran Church
Name of Property

Cook County, Illinois
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	
2	0	buildings
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
2	0	**Total**

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.)

MID-19th CENTURY/Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: limestone
walls: Limestone, brick
roof: Asphalt, bitumen
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary

The First Immanuel Lutheran Church complex at 1124-1134 S. Ashland Avenue in Chicago was designed by architect Frederick Ahlschlager and constructed in 1888. The complex includes a limestone and brick church building and two-story limestone and brick parsonage building. The church building, designed in the Gothic Revival style, presents an imposing rusticated limestone front facing Ashland Avenue. This stone facade is organized into a tripartite design, with a square bell tower at its northeast end, a steeply pitched gable at its center, and shorter tower at its southwest end. The main entrance is set within a substantial limestone pointed arch on the east wall of a projecting gable-roof bay flanked by stone piers topped with heavy pinnacles. Additional entrances mark the north and south ends of the façade. Above the main entrance is an impressive stained-glass rose window, which was restored in the mid-2000s. The northeast and southeast towers are regularly punctuated by pointed-arch and round window openings filled with stained glass. The long north and south elevations of the church are dark brown brick with stone detailing. Pointed-arch stained-glass windows along each façade are separated by substantial brick pier buttresses. A one-story brick addition, completed in 1952, is connected to the church at the north wall of the bell tower and extends west along the north side of the church. The interior of the church is well-preserved and features a long nave with barrel vaulted center ceiling and rib-vaulting above the north and south sides of the upper-level gallery. An elaborate wood reredos and elevated wood pulpit mark are set within a curved niche at the end west end of the nave.

The parsonage building, located directly south of the church, is a two-story residential structure that features a rusticated limestone façade and flat roof with metal cornice. The main entrance to the building is located at the south end of the façade and is set within a segmental arch opening. North of the entry, a grouping of non-historic windows is set within a basket-handle arch opening, and grouped windows set within rectangular openings mark the second story of the façade. The side and rear elevations of the building are Chicago common brick and are irregularly fenestrated.

Narrative Description

Site

The First Immanuel Lutheran Church complex is located on the east side of South Ashland Avenue near the intersection of Roosevelt Road in Chicago's Near West Side community area, approximately 2.5 miles west-southwest of the city's downtown. The property is located in the southeast end of the Illinois Medical District, a district of medical research facilities, four major hospitals, and two medical universities bounded by Ashland Avenue, the Eisenhower Expressway, Ogden Avenue, Western Avenue, and 15th Street—the UIC School of Public Health and the Developmental Disabilities Family Clinic occupy the remainder of the block on which First Immanuel sits. A 1970s low-rise apartment complex occupies the block directly east of the church complex, and the area along Ashland Avenue south of the church contains a mixture of low-rise commercial buildings from the late 19th and early 20th century, late-20th-century strip malls, and surface parking lots. Addams/Medill Park, located behind the street-facing buildings at the southeast corner of Roosevelt Road and Ashland Avenue, is the former site of the Grace Abbott Homes, one of several large public housing developments constructed by the Chicago Housing

Authority (CHA) in the mid-20th century in the Near West Side. The complex was demolished in the mid-2000s as part of the CHA's Plan for Transformation for Public Housing.

The church and parsonage face east onto Ashland Avenue and are both built to the lot line. An asphalt alley runs along the south side of the parsonage and west and north sides of the church building.

Church Building

Exterior

The First Immanuel church building, located at 1124-1132 S. Ashland Avenue, is typical of Victorian Gothic Revival-style Lutheran churches constructed in Chicago in the late 19th century. The building features a longitudinal plan set on a limestone foundation and a front-facing gable roof punctuated by a series of six small gable-roof dormers along its north and south slopes. The front façade of the church is rusticated limestone block, and the side and rear elevations are Chicago common brick laid in common bond with ashlar limestone detailing. A six-story square bell tower is located at the northeast corner of the building. The tower originally culminated in a slender spire surrounded by triangular broaches and corner pinnacles at its base—deterioration of the spire's structural timbers necessitated its removal in 1919, and the spire's base was later replaced with a crenelated concrete parapet. A four-story square tower marks the southeast corner of the building, and originally featured a pyramidal roof that was removed after 1960.

The front (east) façade of the church building features the bell tower at its north end, a gabled center section, and a second, shorter square tower at its south end. The main entrance to the church is located within a one-story gabled bay that projects out slightly from the plane of the façade. Fronting this bay is a wide set of stone steps framed by low stone knee walls. The main entrance is recessed behind a pointed-arch opening framed by a limestone archivolt supported with paired columns with foliate capitals. The shafts of the inner columns are rendered in granite, while the outer columns are limestone. The entrance arch is topped by a steeply pitched parapeted gable filled with small, square, rusticated limestone blocks. Framing the entrance bay are two oversized polygonal piers. Each pier features an ashlar limestone lower shaft and foliate capital that follows the line of the capitals supporting the entrance arch; the upper shaft above this capital is rusticated limestone and is topped by a large limestone pinnacle. The main entrance to the church features historic wood double doors with panels that mimic Gothic tracery; above the doors is a pointed-arch tympanum filled with stained glass windows set in pointed-arch and trefoil wood tracery. Flanking the main entrance bay on the first story of the facade are paired stained glass windows set within pointed arch openings and framed with ashlar limestone surrounds.

A monumental rose window dominates the center section of the front façade above the entrance bay. The original window was destroyed during a storm in the late 1940s, and the opening was infilled with cement blocks. In 2011, a new window, with tracery and stained glass based on the original design, was installed. Short pointed-arch stained-glass windows also punctuate the second story on either side of the entrance bay directly below the rose window. A pointed-arch stained-glass window marks the center of the gable wall above the rose window, and small square rusticated limestone blocks ornament the wall directly above this window. A simple metal cornice with a round finial at its peak caps the gable parapet at this section of the façade.

The northeast bell tower and southeast tower flanking the center section of the facade are nearly identical in design and feature rusticated limestone walls, corner buttresses, and pointed-arch and round window openings. The east elevation of the bell tower features a secondary entrance at its first story set within a

pointed-arch opening; the entrance is filled with double wood doors and a pointed-arch, stained-glass tympanum that echoes the design of the main entrance. Paired, pointed-arch, stained-glass windows with ashlar limestone surrounds mark the second and third stories of the tower, and are separated by an ashlar limestone panel inscribed with the name of the church in German. A small round window opening with ashlar surround is located on the fourth story of the façade—the window opening is currently infilled with wood board. A grouping of three double-hung wooden windows is centered at the fifth story of the facade and is separated from the fourth story by a simple stone stringcourse. A slightly more elaborate cornice marks the separation between the fifth story of the tower and the sixth-story belfry, which features rounded corner piers and paired, pointed arch window openings filled with wood louvers. The tower is topped with a crenelated concrete parapet featuring blind pointed-arch arcades and square corner piers.

The four-story southeast corner tower was designed to mimic the bell tower on a smaller scale and features a secondary entrance in a pointed-arch opening on its first stories, paired stained glass windows in pointed-arch openings on its second and fourth stories, and single round window opening with its original stained glass on the third story.

The north and south elevations of the northeast and southeast towers feature identical treatments on their east elevations. The remaining sections of both the north and south elevations west of the towers are clad in Chicago common brick and are regularly fenestrated with paired stained-glass windows that extend from the first to second stories and divided by metal spandrel panels marked by foliate ornament. The second-floor windows are housed within pointed-arch openings topped with ashlar limestone. The overall design of the windows is relatively simple, consisting of small panes of yellow and white glass edged with bands of red and green glass panes at the perimeter. Alternating windows on the first story of both elevations feature round center crests featuring various biblical symbols. The window openings on both elevations are separated by brick pier buttresses. A corbelled brick cornice spans the sections of each elevation between the buttresses and above the window openings. The northwest and southwest corners feature substantial brick corner buttresses topped with conical metal pinnacles.

The rear elevation of the church features a shallow one-story square bay that projects from the center of the elevation and houses the sacristy. The bay features a steeply pitched hipped roof clad in asphalt shingles and is regularly fenestrated with stained glass windows set within tall, narrow, pointed-arch openings topped with ashlar limestone. The lower portion of the window opening on the south elevation of the bay has been enlarged, and a solid door installed to provide exterior access to the sacristy. Two additional stained-glass windows in pointed-arch openings flank the projecting bay at the north and south ends of the elevation, and two narrow brick chimneys extend up along the juncture of the rear elevation and the north and south walls of the sacristy bay.

A one-story brick parish hall addition, completed in 1952, is located on the north side of the church and connected to the original building along the north elevation of the bell tower, leaving much of the church's north elevation intact. The addition is rectangular in plan and has a flat roof with a low, concrete-capped parapet. The overall design is Mid-century Modern—the building is clad with yellow Roman bricks and features minimal exterior ornamentation. The entry to the parish hall is located at the south end of the façade and is set within a shallowly projecting square bay. The double doors are deeply recessed within the bay, and surrounded by walls clad with square stone panels that angle out toward the street. A narrow glass-block transom extends across the opening above the doors. North of the entrance, a series of three regularly spaced window openings hold fixed single-light aluminum windows with hopper windows below. The windows are visually connected by a simple stone surround. The north and rear (west)

elevations of the addition are Chicago common brick and unfenestrated; a secondary entrance with a solid door at the north end of the rear elevation provides access to the small parking area directly behind the building. A third entrance is located at the west end of the south elevation, and the remainder of the elevation, which faces a narrow grassy area between the addition and the original church, is regularly fenestrated with aluminum windows.

Interior

The interior of the First Immanuel church building is typical of Lutheran and other protestant churches of the late 19th century and provides a stark contrast with the elaborately ornamented interiors of the Catholic churches built in the city during that period. The main entrance to the church opens into the vestibule, which features two stained wood staircases flanking the center entrance to the narthex. Each staircase exhibits heavy carved wood newel posts and railings and leads to the upper gallery level of the nave. The center entrance features a pair of paneled wood doors topped with a tympanum exhibiting the same wood tracery seen on the main door to the church. The north and south ends of the vestibule are accessed through uncased round-arched openings, and lead to the secondary north and south entrances to the narthex, each of which features paneled double doors and stained glass pointed arch tympana. At the north wall of the vestibule is a set of stained wood double-doors that lead to the 1952 addition. Window and door openings in the vestibule are dark stained wood, and board-and-baton wainscotting lines the walls of the space. The floor is carpeted.

The narthex is separated from the nave by a permanent painted wood screen with large, single light glazed upper panels that allow light from the nave to filter into the space. All wood trim in this space is painted, and the floors are covered with dark brown sheet linoleum. Three sets of double doors spaced at the center, north, and south sections of the screen allow access to the nave. Two slender wood columns with marbleized shafts and gilded Corinthian capitals are located on either side of the center entrance to the nave.

The nave of the church is long and relatively narrow, with a high barrel-vaulted ceiling above its center section and rib vaulting at the shallow north and south sides of the upper gallery. The gallery is supported by slender columns with round, marbleized shafts and gilded Corinthian capitals. Corinthian impost blocks also mark the base of the arches along the north and south walls. Apart from the columns, the nave displays minimal decoration, with the exception of a painted stencil border that outlines the window openings and gold stenciling at the top of the sanctuary niche. Above the niche, the words “Immanuel: God is with Us” and “Jesus Returned to the City” are stenciled in gold leaf. On the lower level of the nave, the floor is carpeted, and stained-wood pews are arranged on either side of a central aisle. Hanging light fixtures at the center of the barrel arch ceiling and at the central point of each rib vault above the gallery date from the 1950s remodeling.

The sanctuary at the west end of the nave, set within a curved niche, is the focal point of the space. The sanctuary is separated by a low, curving, stained wood communion rail that was installed in 1944. A simple wood alter table is centered on a rounded wood platform and is backed by an elaborate stained wood reredos with Gothic tracery and spires. The original altar, which featured a simple three-panel wood reredos, was replaced sometime between 1900 and 1910. The statue of Jesus located directly in front of the reredos was also installed during that period. An elevated stained-wood pulpit is set within the north corner of the sanctuary niche, and features pointed-arch panels separated by engaged colonettes. A small pointed-arch doorway with painted wood door allows access to the pulpit from the sacristy and is topped with a stained-wood onion dome canopy. Paneled, painted wood doors set within pointed-arch openings

mark the west wall of the nave directly north and south of the sanctuary niche, and lead to the sacristy at the west end of the building. A narrow, curving staircase at the north end of the sacristy provides access to the pulpit.

The upper gallery contains three tiers of seating, with wood pews arranged along the north and south sides of the gallery and on either side of the rose window and organ. Painted wood doors set within pointed-arch openings at the north and south ends of the east wall lead to the staircases within the north and south towers. The rose window, centered on the east wall of the nave at the upper gallery, is set within a barrel-vaulted niche that contains the organ. The current organ, 47-rank, 4,000-pipe Allen classical organ, was gifted to the congregation by the Winnetka Congregational Church and installed in 2006.

The 1952 north addition houses the parish hall and office, a small kitchen, and restrooms. The main entrance to the addition leads into a small entry vestibule. A set of steps at the south end of the room leads to the door connecting the addition to the church vestibule, and an opening along the north wall leads to a short, double-loaded corridor that runs west to the parish hall. The office and kitchen are located along the north side of the corridor, and men's and women's restrooms are located along its south side.

The parish hall is a large, open space at the west end of the addition. The hall features painted concrete-block walls, ceramic-tile floors, and exposed roof structure. Two swinging doors at the north and south ends of the west wall lead to storage space and two rear exits.

Parsonage

Exterior

The parsonage, located directly south of the church at 1134 S. Ashland Avenue, is a two-story residential building with a rectangular massing, limestone foundation, and flat roof with a classical metal cornice that runs along the facade. Also designed by Frederick Ahlschlager and completed soon after the church building, the building's rusticated limestone façade harmonizes with the facade of the church building. The main entrance to the building is in the south bay of the façade and is fronted by a set of limestone steps with wrought iron railings. The historic single-light wood doors and single-light transom are set within a segmental-arch opening with rusticated limestone voussoirs topped with a limestone drip mold. Above the entrance, a pair of 1/1 double-hung vinyl windows topped with a rectangular single-light vinyl transom are set within a rectangular opening with a rusticated limestone lintel. The slightly projecting north bay of the façade contains a grouping of three windows and a center transom (all non-historic vinyl replacements) set within a basket-handle arch opening with rusticated limestone voussoirs and a limestone drip mold. At the second story, a three-part window with vinyl 1/1 double-hung windows topped with single-light transoms is set within a rectangular opening with rusticated stone lintel. The windows on the second story of the façade are connected by a simple stone cornice that runs along the lintel-level of the window openings and separates the first and second stories of the façade.

The north, south, and rear elevations of the building are of Chicago common brick laid in common bond and fenestrated with vinyl double-hung replacement windows set within segmental-arch openings with stone sills and rowlock lintels. A small one-story covered porch and staircase allow access from the building's rear entrance to a small rear yard that runs between the church building and the south driveway.
Interior

The interior of the parsonage, which originally served as the residence for First Immanuel's pastors, was later converted into an administrative space with a separate apartment on its second floor. The first floor contains the stair hall at its southeast corner; a long, narrow room at its northeast corner that is now used as a conference room; a kitchen at its northwest corner, and a small office behind the stair hall at the southwest corner of the room. The second floor contains a private apartment that is accessed through a doorway directly west of the staircase landing. A central hallway runs west of the main entrance, and allows access to a bathroom, storage closet, and rear staircase on its south side; a bedroom is located at the west end of the hallway, and a second bedroom is accessed through a door on the north wall of the hallway. The northwest corner of the floor is taken up by the kitchen and living room, and the southeast corner contains a third bedroom.

Although the interior of the parsonage has been remodeled to meet the needs of the congregation, the interior does retain its original staircase and some of its original window and door casings.

Integrity

The First Immanuel Lutheran Church complex retains sufficient integrity to convey its architectural significance. Although the tall spire that originally topped the church's northeast bell tower did contribute to the building's overall sense of verticality, other elements of the design—including the bell tower, steeply-pitched gable roof, and narrow pointed arch windows along the façade and side elevations—also express that vertical emphasis. Further, the loss of spires is a relatively common alteration among historic churches in Chicago. Many other churches in the city—including several of the extant churches designed by Frederick Ahlschlager—are missing this architectural element. The one-story addition to the church was completed outside of the period of significance for the complex, but the overall effect on the building's integrity is minimal because of its relatively small scale, and because the addition is only attached to the church at the north wall of the bell tower, leaving most of the north elevation intact and visible.

Although the parsonage building has been more extensively altered than the church, the principal design elements that link the building to the design of the church—its rusticated stone façade and arched first-floor window and door openings—remain unchanged. Because these features are intact, and because the building is considered a secondary structure within the complex, the alterations to the parsonage do not negatively affect its overall integrity.

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.
- [x] 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:

- [X] 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1888

Significant Dates

1888

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

Architect/Builder

Frederick Ahlschlager

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

First Immanuel Lutheran Church, completed in 1888, is locally significant under National Register Criterion C for architecture as a representative and well-preserved example of late 19th-century Gothic Revival architecture in the Near West Side neighborhood of Chicago. Designed by Chicago architect Frederick Ahlschlager, the church combines the characteristic exterior features of the style with the longitudinal plan and simple, pulpit-focused interior favored by German Lutheran congregations. With its imposing, rusticated limestone front, soaring bell tower, and recently restored rose window, the church is a handsome and distinctive example of Ahlschlager's ecclesiastical work in Chicago.

The parsonage building directly south of the church also contributes to the overall significance of the church complex. Designed by Ahlschlager and completed within a month of the church, the building's rusticated stone façade, simple metal cornice, and arched window openings complement the design of the church.

The period of significance for the complex is 1888, the year that both the church and parsonage were completed. The church and parsonage meet Criteria Consideration A as a religious complex that derives its primary significance from architecture.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Late 19th Century Gothic Church Architecture in Chicago

The Gothic Revival Style was a popular choice for ecclesiastical architecture throughout the United States through much of the 19th century. While churches built in the style in the early and middle part of the century hewed more closely to original Gothic precedents of medieval England, late 19th-century Gothic Revival churches and cathedrals, influenced by the High Victorian Gothic of England and by a growing architectural eclecticism, evolved from purer expressions into a more varied and individualistic mode. Victorian Gothic churches are often characterized by their overall solidity when compared to earlier Gothic examples, and often feature rusticated stone exteriors and heavier detailing. The use of various materials on the exterior to create a polychrome effect was another common design feature of the Victorian Gothic Revival, and was inspired by John Ruskin, who encouraged "constructional coloration" over applied color in his book *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* in 1849.[1]

Even with this increase in variety, most Gothic Revival designs of the period still utilized many of the standard features of Gothic architecture, including an overall emphasis on verticality; pointed-arch window and door openings; stained glass windows set in stone or wood tracery; steeply pitched roofs embellished with pinnacles and finials; bell towers, often topped with narrow, soaring spires; and carved stone ornament. Although they are often derided as less academically "correct" than the late Gothic Revival designs that followed, these Victorian Gothic Revival churches in Chicago were often the first substantial, architect-designed buildings that were erected by many of the city's congregations and represented their growing economic and social status.

The Gothic Revival was a natural choice for Chicago's Catholic parishes and was particularly favored by the city's Irish and German Catholics in the mid-to -late 19th century. Many of the earliest and most architecturally significant examples of the style in the city feature Gothic Revival exteriors paired with traditional cruciform

[1] Marcus Wiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1981), 94.

plans and elaborate, highly ornamented interiors. The Church of the Holy Family, located at Roosevelt Road and Blue Island Avenue near First Immanuel, is the second-oldest Catholic church in the city, and remains one of its most impressive Gothic Revival buildings. Designed by Dillenberg & Zurich, the original brick church was completed in 1860 and expanded over the next decade. The massive corner bell tower, elaborate pinnacled belfry, was erected in 1874, and was the tallest structure in the city until the construction of the Monadnock Building in 1890. Holy Name Cathedral (735 N. Wabash Street), begun just after the Chicago Fire of 1871 destroyed the Irish congregation's first church building, is a stereotypical Victorian Gothic Revival example. Designed by Irish American architect Patrick C. Keely, who designed hundreds of Irish Catholic churches in the late 19th century, the church features a traditional cruciform plan and an asymmetrical tripartite front with a corner bell tower and rose window.

Gothic Revival was also popular among Chicago's Protestant congregations, although the plans and interiors of these churches often differed considerably from the Catholic examples. Another early Gothic Revival church in the Near West side, built on Ashland Avenue across from Union Park (and directly north of First Immanuel), was the Union Park Congregational Church. Founded by abolitionists in 1851, the congregation constructed a small chapel in 1869 and a larger church building in 1871. On the exterior, the design of the church is similar to Holy Name Cathedral or the Cathedral of St. James (65 E. Huron Street, 1870), with an asymmetrical front, corner bell tower, and rusticated limestone exterior. However, in place of the cruciform plan, the interior boasts a square auditorium plan with two levels of seating that curves around the central communion table and raised choir loft behind. This plan was later adopted by many Congregational, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches throughout the country.

German Lutheran congregations that proliferated throughout Chicago in the mid-to-late 19th century largely also chose Gothic Revival as the preferred style for the exteriors of their church buildings, adapting the interiors to suit their liturgical and theological needs. Many Lutheran churches built in Chicago in the mid-to-late 19th century featured a longitudinal plan and simple interior worship space that placed joint focus on the pulpit and communion table/altar. Ornamentation was generally limited to wood trim or interior paneling, although some churches also featured elaborately carved reredoses behind their altars.

Frederick Ahlschlager, Architect of Chicago's Lutheran Churches

One of the most prolific Chicago architects to work with German Lutherans in the late 19th century was Frederick Ahlschlager. Born in Mokena, Illinois on March 24, 1858 to Prussian immigrant parents, Ahlschlager attended college in Valparaiso, Indiana and received a degree in engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1878. After working for two years for an architectural firm in New Orleans, Ahlschlager came to Chicago, where he formed his own architectural firm. Ahlschlager designed a variety of buildings during his career in the city, including industrial warehouses and factories, commercial buildings, and single- and multi-family residential buildings. He was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1889 and continued in his practice until his death in 1905.[2]

Although Frederick Ahlschlager' architectural practice was wide-ranging, he was well-known during his lifetime as the architect of choice for Chicago's German Lutheran congregations. While a complete list of Ahlschlager's church designs has not been compiled—the Chicago Historic Resources Survey gives Ahlschlager as the architect of record for only one religious building, the former Anshe Emet Synagogue (1363

[2] Terry Tatum, "Yondorf Block and Hall, 758 W. North Avenue," Landmark Designation Report submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, February 7, 2001, p. 11; "Mr. Frederick Ahlschlager, F.A.I.A.," *The American Institute of Architects Quarterly Bulletin*, Vol. V1 No. 1 (April. 1905), p. 22.

N. Sedgwick Street)—research suggests that the architect was responsible for the designs of at least 11 extant churches in Chicago, most commissioned by German Lutheran congregations. An article in the November 25, 1888 edition of the *Inter Ocean* reported that Ahlschlager had designed seven churches in Chicago that year alone, and declared the architect "a tower of strength for the Lutheran pastors and church building committees."[3] In the announcement for the construction of First Immanuel's parsonage earlier that year, the paper quipped that Ahlschlager was "getting the retainer for about everything Lutheran."[4]

Ahlschlager's ecclesiastical work ranged from very modest and minimally ornamented churches at the far-flung edges of the city, to more substantial structures for established congregations on its north, west, and southwest sides. Most of his known church designs were rendered in the Gothic Revival with red brick exteriors and limestone detailing, although some churches also blended Gothic and Romanesque elements. First Immanuel Lutheran Church is the only known extant example of Ahlschlager's ecclesiastical work to feature a limestone front. Ahlschlager also designed several frame churches in the city in the late 1880s and early 1890s, although none appear to have survived. His Gothic designs often featured either a single square bell tower centered at the front façade, or two asymmetrical towers divided by a center gable section that contained the main entry.

The ecclesiastical work of Frederick Ahlschlager has been described as indicative of the more modest "off-the-shelf" Gothic Revival churches built by burgeoning congregations who later traded them in for larger, more "academically correct" designs. It was said that Ahlschlager based all his church designs on a single template, and the only question he asked his clients was "How many windows do you want?"[5] There seems to be some truth behind these statements. Ahlschlager, who was accustomed to using cast iron columns, pressed metal cornices, and readily available limestone and brick for his commercial and residential commissions, also used these elements to create ornamental details and interest in his church designs, which was likely appreciated by the working- and middle-class congregations that sought him out. And the interior that Ahlschlager designed for First Immanuel's church in 1888 is also nearly identical to at least two other churches built during that decade. However, the exteriors of these three churches exhibit a variety of forms and decorative elements, proving that Ahlschlager's church designs were not quite as cookie-cutter as the apocryphal story suggests.

First Immanuel Lutheran Church Design

The design of First Immanuel reflects a particular interpretation of the Gothic Revival style favored by German Lutheran congregations in Chicago in the late 19th century, rendered by their preferred architect. The rusticated stonework, sturdiness of the corner towers and entry bay, along with the thick banding of ashlar stone surrounding the window openings, lend a substantial quality to the overall design that was characteristic of the late-19th century High Victorian Gothic Revival and reminiscent of Richardsonian Romanesque buildings of the same period. Although the front of the church presents a screen of uniform limestone, the granite of the interior columns at the main entrance provides subtle contrast on the façade, and a more pronounced polychrome effect is evident on the building's side and rear elevations, which feature yellow limestone detailing that stands out against the dark brick of the exterior walls.

Like other Victorian Gothic Revival churches built in the 1870s and 1880s in Chicago, First Immanuel displays the distinctive features that defined the Gothic Revival through its many 19th-century iterations. The pointed-arch windows at the façade and along the side and rear elevations are emblematic of the style and reinforce the

[3] "Architects and Agents," *The Inter Ocean* (Chicago), November 25, 1888, p. 18.
[4] "New Churches," *The Inter Ocean* (Chicago), July 29, 1888, p. 10.
[5] Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois, "The Splendor of Chicago's Historic Churches," tour brochure published 1984, located in First Immanuel Lutheran Church archives.

sense of verticality given to the structure by its rising bell tower and steeply pitched gable roof. The ornate center entrance bay contains a profusion of carved stone ornament, and its steep gable and flanking pinnacles draw the eye up to the monumental rose window that is the defining Gothic feature on the church's façade. Although its simplified longitudinal plan lacks the projecting transepts and aisles typical of Catholic Gothic churches in the city, the side elevations are marked with brick pier buttresses, and limestone buttresses reinforce the corners of the northeast and southeast tower.

The interior of the church is simple and minimally ornamented and represents the adaptations that Protestant congregations often made to the Gothic form in the late 19th century. The soaring height of the center barrel-vaulted ceiling again reinforces the vertical emphasis that is the hallmark of Gothic Revival design, and the rib vaulting under the upper gallery is also indicative of the style. As is typical of Lutheran Gothic Revival churches, ornament within the nave is confined to the columns supporting the gallery and the arcaded trim along the gallery walls, allowing the congregants to focus on the elaborate Gothic wood altar and pulpit at the west end of the church.

Other Ahlschlager-Designed Churches in Chicago

First Immanuel Lutheran Church is one of the finest examples of Frederick Ahlschlager's "off-the-shelf" Gothic Revival churches that remain in Chicago, and is the only example that features a monumental, rusticated limestone front that was the hallmark of several of the city's other prominent Gothic Revival churches of the period. Two of Ahlschlager's other prominent church designs—Holy Cross Lutheran Church and St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church—provide an interesting overview of Ahlschlager's work in the mid-to-late 1880s.

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, located at 3116 S. Racine Avenue in the Bridgeport neighborhood, is the earliest extant church building known to have been designed by Ahlschlager. Completed in 1886, the church features a common brick exterior with ashlar limestone detailing, creating a polychrome effect also seen on the side elevations of First Immanuel. The church's front façade is dominated by a center bell tower, which retains its original spire and base. The main entrance at the base of the tower features steeply-pitched gable above—an engraving of the church shows that the entrance originally contained a more elaborate stone surround, but it appears to have either been removed, or the carving on the stone has deteriorated completely. In contrast to the asymmetry of First Immanuel, the façade of Holy Cross is symmetrical, with grouped pointed arch windows flanking the center tower. Although the spire is intact, the church has lost its distinctive metal pinnacles that topped the rounded piers at each corner of the building.

St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, located at the corner of Hoyne Avenue and 21st Street, was completed in 1888, the same year as First Immanuel. Founded in 1871, St. Matthew's was one of several daughter congregations formed out of mission schools planted by First Immanuel in Chicago's west and south side in the mid-to-late 19th century. Although larger, the church features the same central tower and brick exterior seen at Holy Cross. The recessed main entry features a tympanum of brightly colored glass that is repeated on a smaller scale at the east and west end entrance, and the door is flanked by cast iron columns. As with First Immanuel, the original spire that topped the center tower is gone, and a shorter spire has been installed in its place.

The interiors of Holy Cross and St. Matthew's are nearly identical to First Immanual, with a long nave surrounded by upper gallery. Although Holy Cross still retains its Gothic wood altar and pulpit, both have been removed from St. Matthew's.

Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church at 2649 W. Belmont Avenue, completed in 1893, is a slightly later example of Ahlschlager's ecclesiastical work. The exterior features the same arrangement of asymmetrical corner towers flanking a center front gable used on First Immanuel, but the exterior of Concordia exhibits the polychrome combination of brick and limestone seen on Holy Cross and St. Matthew's. In place of a rose window, the center of the façade is marked by a monumental pointed arch window. The plan of the church is cruciform, and the interior is among the most notable of all Ahlschlager's church designs, featuring a series of unsupported hanging arches across the nave, with distinctive foliate ornament at the arch ends. As with First Immanuel, the spire at the bell tower has been replaced with a shorter spire, but the roof and pressed metal base at the smaller tower is largely intact.

History of First Immanuel Lutheran Church

Early History of First Immanuel and the Near West Side

First Immanuel Lutheran Church (originally Emanuel Lutheran Church/Immanuel Lutheran Church), is the second-oldest Lutheran church in Chicago. Founded on March 19, 1854, the church was organized by ten German families living in the Near West Side who were members of St. Pauls' Lutheran Church, which had been established on the north side of the city in 1843. The newly formed congregation constructed a small log-cabin church building at the northwest corner of what is now Roosevelt Road and Blue Island Avenue; the church was formally dedicated on September 10, and its first pastor, George Schick, was installed.[6] Like many of the other Lutheran congregations founded in the mid-to-late 19th century in Chicago, First Immanuel belonged to the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, which had been established in 1847 by representatives of congregations from Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, New York, and Ohio.

In the years following the First Immanuel's founding, Chicago's German population increased rapidly, comprising nearly one-quarter of the city's total population by the turn of the 20th century. Newly arrived German families settled in neighborhoods throughout the city, with the largest concentration initially settling in the north side of the city and expanding into the northwest side by the late 19th century. In contrast to the wealthier neighborhoods around Union Park, the southern and eastern ends of the Near West Side, where First Immanuel was located, served as a port of entry for many European immigrant groups, and the Germans attending First Immanuel in the 1860s and 1870s lived within a diverse, largely working-class neighborhood that included Irish, Czech, Bohemian, and French immigrants.

In 1857, First Immanuel replaced its modest log church building with a more substantial frame structure. That same year, the Church of the Holy Family, founded to serve the large numbers of Irish Catholic residents, began work on its church building, located directly west of First Immanuel along Roosevelt Road. Tensions quickly rose between the two congregations. The Reverend Edward Hoelter recalled that the members of Holy Family "often sought to disturb the services of the hated Lutherans, and that at times, when the enemies were too boisterous in their anti-Lutheran demonstrations, our fathers interrupted their services to sing again and again Luther's anti-Popery battle hymn, 'A mighty fortress is our God,' in German, of course."[7] In 1864, First Immanuel moved its church building north and east to Taylor and Brown (Sangamon) streets, which is now part

[6] "Important Dates in the History of First Immanuel Lutheran Church," unpublished manuscript, First Immanuel Lutheran Church archives.
[7] "Here is Immanuel," First Immanuel Lutheran Church centennial celebration brochure, First Immanuel Lutheran Church archives, not numbered.

of the University of Illinois – Chicago campus. Holy Family purchased the land at Roosevelt and Blue Island from First Immanuel, and in 1869 the parish constructed St. Ignatius College on the site.

Religious education was of paramount importance to German Lutheran congregations and particularly to the Missouri Synod, which saw its parochial schools as "a bulwark against rapid assimilation into American society and the loss of German Lutheran identity."[8] The 1847 constitution of the Missouri-Synod required all its member churches to establish parochial schools, where "instruction was in German and liberally laced with religious teachings."[9] First Immanuel operated its first school out of the log-cabin church building beginning in 1855, with Pastor Schick serving as teacher; by the end of that year, the school had 130 students.[10] By 1865, the congregation had erected a new two-story school building at its new location at Taylor and Sangamon. In addition to its own school, First Immanuel also established over a dozen mission schools throughout the southwest and west sides of Chicago in the mid-to-late 19th century. Many of these schools later grew into separate congregations, including Zion, Trinity, St. Matthew, Holy Cross, Emmaus, and Ebenezer.[11]

The Chicago Fire of 1871 brought a wave of new residents to the Near West side, and First Immanuel continued to grow. In the late 1880s, under the direction of Reverend Louis Hoelter, the congregation purchased land on Ashland Avenue near Roosevelt Road and commissioned Frederick Ahlschlager to design a new church and parsonage. Both buildings were completed in late 1888, and a handsome three-story brick school, also designed by Ahlschlager, was built directly behind the church on Marshfield Avenue the following year. The completion of the new complex marked the height of First Immanuel as a German Lutheran congregation—by the early 1890s, church membership peaked at 3,100, and 565 students were enrolled at its school.[12]

The years following the construction of the new church building marked the beginning of a long period of transition in the Near West Side that would continue through the mid-20th century. Although Ashland Avenue north of Roosevelt Road was still lined with stately homes in the 1890s, many of its original residents had already begun to move out of the area, and its first waves of German and Irish settlers had been largely replaced by Jewish, Italian, and Greek immigrants. When Jewish families began to move west into Lawndale in the 1920s, they were in turn replaced by Black residents coming to the city as part of the Great Migration, and by Mexican immigrants that had been recruited to work on railroad gangs.[13]

As the Near West Side's German residents moved out of the neighborhood in the early decades of the 20th century, First Immanuel saw its congregation precipitously decline. By 1920, the church retained just 820 members, and by 1930 the number had dropped to 600.[14] The congregation remained relatively stable through the 1930s and early 1940s, but membership again began to decline in the years after World War II as congregants moved out of the city to the surrounding suburbs.

By 1948, First Immanuel had reached a crossroads. With its numbers continuing to dwindle, the congregation had made the painful decision to close its school. The number of congregants attending Sunday worship was so

[8] National Register of Historic Places, St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran School, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois, National Register #99001710, Section 8, p. 13.
[9] Ibid, Section 8, p. 14.
[10] "Important Dates in the History of First Immanuel Lutheran Church," Unpublished manuscript, First Immanuel Lutheran Church archives, p. 1.
[11] Geroge Lane, *Chicago Churches and Synagogues: An Architectural Pilgrimage* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1981), 56.
[12] Donald Becker, "A Brief History of First Immanuel Lutheran Church of Chicago," unpublished manuscript, First Immanuel Lutheran Church archives, 4.
[13] Dominic A. Pacyga and Ellen Skerrett, *Chicago, City of Neighborhoods: Histories & Tours* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1986), *205*-207; 212-214.
[14] "Here is Immanuel," (no page number).

small that the balcony of the church was closed, and members were encouraged to sit closer to the front during the services.[15] The pastor tapped to replace Reverend Meizen chose to live in Forest Park instead of in the parsonage beside the church, and the custodian moved into the building in the interim. With most of the remaining members now living in the western suburbs, the First Immanuel appointed a relocation committee to explore the possibility of moving out of the city, as many of the other Lutheran and Jewish congregations in the area had done.[16]

The congregation received two offers for its church building and parsonage. The first was from an African American Baptist Church in the neighborhood. The second was from the Illinois Medical District. Located directly west and north of First Immanuel, the Illinois Medical District had its origins in the establishment of the Chicago College of Pharmacy in 1859. The area had grown rapidly in the early 20th century, and by the early 1930s contained the world's largest concentration of medical institutions, including Rush Medical School, St. Luke's Presbyterian Hospital, Cook County Hospital, and several medical programs tied to the University of Illinois. In 1941, the Illinois Medical District was created through an act of the state legislature and plans to expand and further develop the district were put into place.[17]

Still unsure about its future in Chicago, in May of 1948 First Immanuel called a meeting with leaders of the Missouri Synod and local stakeholders to discuss the relocation plans. Andrew Schulze, a pastor working with the Missouri Synod's mission board in Chicago and an early proponent of integrating the synod's existing congregations, attended the meeting and passionately made the case for the church to remain in the city and minister to the Black population living in the recently completed public housing projects in the neighborhood. A similar appeal was also made by Dr. O.H. Theiss, executive director of the Walther League. Dr. Reuben Hahn, executive secretary of the Lutheran Student Service Commission, and Pastor William Miessler, who served as Lutheran Chaplain at the University of Illinois Hospital, also argued that First Immanuel could serve the student population at the Medical District.[18]

What ultimately swayed the congregation, however, was the statement from the president of the Illinois Medical District. In a reversal of the district's initial offer to purchase the property, he instead joined the calls for First Immanuel to stay in the neighborhood, claiming that "Because of your location you are the envy of other churches. Thousands of people will live here in the future."[19] The Missouri Synod's Mission Board for the Northern Illinois District, which included Chicago, was also eager to engage with the expanding Medical District and promised financial support to the congregation if they stayed.

After nearly two years of deliberation, First Immanuel made the decision to remain in the Near West Side, basing their decision largely on the hope of becoming "The Medical Center Lutheran Church." To attract the student population there, the congregation sold the school building and its lot behind the church to the Medical District and used the proceeds to redecorate the interior of the church and build a parish hall addition for student activities. In 1952, the year the addition was completed, Pastor Oltroge left First Immanuel as pastor, and the Missouri Synod mission board agreed to subsidize the salary of First Immanuel's next pastor "with the

[15] Becker, "A Brief History of First Immanuel Lutheran Church of Chicago," p. 8.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Fred W. Buettler, *The University of Illinois at Chicago: A Pictorial History* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 16.
[18] Becker, "A Brief History of First Immanuel Lutheran Church of Chicago," p. 8.
[19] Ibid.

understanding that he would spend time working with the ministry to students as well as First Immanuel Church."[20]

First Immanuel Integrates

Ralph Moellering, an energetic young minister who had experience with campus ministry, was offered the pastorate at First Immanuel. Like Andrew Schulze, Moellering was staunchly committed to the full integration of established churches within changing urban neighborhoods and believed that it was the duty of Lutheran churches to actively address the social issues these communities faced.

Moellering was skeptical of the Mission Boards claims that the neighborhood would soon be transformed by the expansion of the Medical District and believed that, in addition to its student outreach, the church should focus on actively ministering to the Black, Mexican, and Puerto Rican communities that surrounded the church. Before accepting the post, he wrote to First Immanuel and asked the direct question, "Will this congregation accept members of another race?" In response, the church passed a resolution stating "We will certainly not refuse anyone of any race or color who would apply for membership."[21]

Although a handful of Chicago's Catholic parishes—including St. Monica's St. Elizabeth, Corpus Christi, and Holy Angels—had begun to serve Black parishioners who had moved into their neighborhoods, most of the city's Catholic and Protestant churches remained segregated, and many of the churches' members in transitioning neighborhoods actively fought to keep Black congregants out. Through the 1940s and early 1950s, even as the Missouri Synod brought existing Black Lutheran congregations into its organization and helped to establish Black churches through its mission board, the organization hesitated to support fully integrating existing White congregations in urban transitional neighborhoods.

In the decades before Moellering's tenure, First Immanuel had been involved in some limited outreach to various immigrant groups that had moved into the Near West Side. It had extended the use of the church to a Polish Lutheran congregation in 1902 and a Latvian Lutheran church in 1906. In the mid-1930s, the Lutheran City Missian Society had hosted Spanish-language services at First Immanuel as part of its outreach to the neighborhood's Mexican community, and Reverend E. H. Meinzen, had arranged for a student from Concordia University in St. Louis to minister to the community through the church in the 1940s.[22] But Moellering's plan was more ambitious, and required that the congregation seek out and actively engage with and support "the community it finds at its door."[23] The new pastor focused much of the church's new outreach program on the public housing developments in the Near West Side. Known collectively as the ABLA Homes, the four separate complexes—the Jane Addams Homes, Robert Brooks Homes, Loomis Courts, and the Grace Abbot Homes—had largely been completed by the mid-1950s.

Although some existing members left the congregation during this period, "no wholesale transferring out occurred" when First Immanuel began the process of integration.[24] The church's first African American members were added in mid-1954, and in October First Immanuel recruited students from Concordia College in River Forst to help in its outreach. In an echo of its earlier emphasis on establishing mission schools, First Immanuel focused much of its early integration program on encouraging neighborhood children to attend its

[20] Ibid, p. 9.
[21] Becker, "A Brief History of First Immanuel Lutheran Church of Chicago, p. 9.
[22] *Here is Immanuel*, p. 12.
[23] Martin E. Marty, "Renewal in the Inner City," *The Christian Century* 73 (December 5, 1956), 1417-1420. Reprinted in Robert Lee, ed., *Cities and Churches: Readings on the Urban Church* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962).
[24] Ibid.

Sunday School. Donald Becker, who served as pastor at First Immanuel from 1958 to 1996, explained that "Before long parents, especially mothers, began to investigate why their children liked the Sunday School that they were attending. Often one or both of the parents took adult instruction classes and joined the church."[25] The Sunday School program was further developed in 1955 by Rita Sadosky, a deaconess from Valparaiso University, and by 1956 nearly 200 children from the surrounding community had been baptized at First Immanuel.[26]

Looking back on his time at church, Moellering wrote that "As we passed through the various stages of racial integration at First Immanuel it was to be expected that there might be some opposition," but that "the difficulties encountered in the congregation. . . appear minor when compared with the adamant resistance and untold heartache experienced in our conversations and negotiations with District officials."[27] Many leaders in the synod's Northern Illinois District believed that First Immanuel should keep its focus on ministering to the Illinois Medical District, and repeated calls from the church for additional funding and staffing for their integration efforts and outreach to the broader community were rebuffed. Nevertheless, the congregation persisted, and as word spread of their activities, other congregations offered money and words of support, and dozens of young students from Concordia College and Valparaiso University volunteered to work in the Sunday School or other church programs. By 1956, First Immanuel began to gain broader recognition in religious publications as the first historically White Missouri Synod church to actively pursue integration.[28]

In 1955, First Immanuel hired Samuel Hoard, a young Black German-speaking seminary student from St. Louis, to serve as vicar for the congregation, and the following year Pastor William Puder was hired to assist with outreach to the Spanish-speaking community surrounding the church. In addition to holding worship services in Spanish for the new Mexican and Puerto-Rican members of First Immanuel, Puder also taught "no strings attached" English classes in the church's parish center.[29] First Immanuel also continued its outreach to the Illinois Medical District during this time, the church hosted Gamma Delta meetings in the parish hall, and members of the church who were associated with the medical colleges taught health classes there.[30]

Under Moellering, First Immanuel became an active member of the Lutheran Human Relations Association of America (LHRAA), an organization founded in 1953 by several Missouri-Synod congregations working to further integration efforts and race relations within the synod. In her biography of Andrew Schulze, Kathryn M. Galchutt writes that, "While the number of active LHRAA supporters only consisted of a few thousand of the nine million Lutherans in America, they were particularly influential in the area of Lutheran race relations."[31] Although the group was not allowed an official role in the Missouri Synod, its work challenged the synod to overcome its sometimes individualistic and insular approach to faith and take a more proactive role in advancing civil rights and addressing social issues. At the Missouri Synod's 1956 convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, First Immanuel introduced a resolution on behalf of the LHRAA stating that the church had a responsibility to "work in the capacity of Christian citizens for the elimination of discrimination based on race

[25] Becker, "A Brief History of First Immanuel Lutheran Church of Chicago, p. 13.
[26] Becker, "A Brief History of First Immanuel Lutheran Church of Chicago," p. 11.
[27] Ralph L. Moellering, "The Beginnings of Racial Integration at First Immanuel Lutheran Church 1954-1958," unpublished manuscript dated 1964, First Immanuel Lutheran Church archives, chapter 2, page 5.
[28] Richard Luecke, "Themes of Lutheran Urban Ministry, 1945-1985," *Churches, Cities, and Human Community: Urban Ministry in the United States, 1945-1985*, ed. Clifford J. Green. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966, p. 142;
[29] Marty, "Renewal in the Inner City," *Cities and Churches: Readings on the Urban Church,* 131; "The Fifth 25 Years, 1954-1959: Mission Redirected," *First Immanuel Lutheran Church of Chicago: 125 Years, 1854-1979*, First Immanuel Lutheran Church archives.
[30] Marty, "Renewal in the Inner City," 132; "The Fifth 25 Years, 1954-1959: Mission Redirected."
[31] Kathryn M. Galchutt, *The Career of Andrew Schulze, 1924-1968: Lutherans and Race in the Civil Rights Era* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), 1.

or ethnic origin, in the home community, the city, the state, and the nation"[32] Members of the LHRAA also submitted a memorial petitioning the church to declare that "congregations operating in so-called 'blighted areas' or changing communities be encouraged to continue operations in those areas, rather than relinquish their properties through sale to other denominations, and that the various District Mission Boards be encouraged to subsidize these congregations when this becomes necessary, so that the souls in those communities, regardless of race or ethnic grouping, may be won and served."[33] This memorial "established policy and set the direction of ethnic ministry in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod from that day until the present."[34]

By 1958, when Ralph Moellering left First Immanuel and Donald Becker became its pastor, "the direction of the congregation's mission was clearly established," and the work of growing the church's diverse membership persisted. By the mid-1960s, "an average Sunday would find more than 200 people at the English worship and 50 at the Spanish." The church had grown to 700 baptized and 400 communicant members, and over 400 children were enrolled in its Sunday School in 1965. That same year, First Immanuel re-opened its school as a pre-school and kindergarten program, marking the first time in nearly 20 years that the congregation was able to support educational efforts beyond its Sunday School program.[35]

Pastor Becker became head of the Chicago chapter of the LHRAA soon after coming to First Immanuel, and he and other members continued to push the larger church on the slow pace of integration within Missouri-Synod churches. After *The Lutheran Witness* published an equivocating article called "Is the Church Retarding Integration?" in its January 1960 edition, Becker and other LHRAA members wrote in to express their disappointment and frustration. In his letter to the editor, Becker "pointed out that the church had a double standard with how it treated the sins of racial discrimination. The church did not treat other social sins with similar patience. As he explained, 'We don't wait until the husbands are ready before we tell them they must be faithful to their wives.'"[36] That same year, the LHRAA began conducting 'kneel-ins' at Lutheran churches that remained segregated, a practice that "began in the border states and spread throughout the South."[37] First Immanuel joined this movement, participating in a 'kneel-in' at Cicero Lutheran Church after the congregation cancelled a Sunday School rally because Black congregants had planned to attend.[38]

First Immanuel Lutheran Church and the Chicago Freedom Movement

In January 1966, Martin Luther King, Jr. and his wife Coretta moved into a rundown tenement in the North Lawndale neighborhood of Chicago, marking the beginning of the Chicago Freedom Movement, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's campaign against discriminatory real estate practices in the city and its first major campaign outside of the Deep South. King had been encouraged to come to Chicago by Albert Raby, head of the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCO), and James Bevel, a young minister working at the West Side Christian Parish across from Union Park, directly north of First Immanuel. Throughout the spring and early summer, King, CCOO, and other Civil Rights activists staged rallies, marches, boycotts, nonviolence workshops, and rent strikes. The Chicago Freedom Movement faced threats of violence

[32] Richard C. Dickinson, *Roses and Thorns: The Centennial Edition of Black Lutheran Mission and Ministry in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), 120.
[33] Ibid, 122.
[34] Ibid.
[35] "The Fifth 25 Years, 1959-1969: Integration Continued," *First Immanuel Lutheran Church of Chicago: 125 Years, 1854-1979*, First Immanuel Lutheran Church archives.
[36] Galchutt, 163.
[37] Ibid, 171.
[38] Becker, "A Brief History of First Immanuel Lutheran Church in Chicago," 18.

from some of the city's white population, and resistance from Mayor Richard J. Daley and some of the city's Black politicians and churches who were closely allied with the administration.[39]

In the months following the launch of the Chicago Freedom Movement, members of First Immanuel participated in many of its rallies and marches. When a local TV station aired an editorial on its show "Standpoint" denouncing Dr. King's efforts in Chicago and suggesting that he should leave the city, Pastor Becker reached out to the station to show his displeasure, and on April 8, 1966, he appeared on the channel to defend King, stating "It is my opinion that the WBBM-TV editorial denouncing Dr. King's supra-legal action with respect to a Chicago slum building shows very little understanding of the dynamics of the slum. By this time our city and nation ought to know that Dr. King is not interested in being personally above the law. He is interested in calling attention to the many ways in which the poor are not protected by the law."[40]

During the summer of 1966, the movement planned a major rally at Soldier Field for July 10, called "Freedom Sunday." After the rally, King planned to lead a march to City Hall, where he would post the movement's demands on the door of the building, recalling Martin Luther's posting of his *Ninety-five Theses* that marked the beginning of the Reformation. A series of smaller rallies at local churches were also planned in the days leading up to Freedom Sunday, and the West Side Organization (WSO) reached out to Pastor Becker about the possibility of First Immanuel hosting Dr. King. First Immanuel's youth worker, George Smith, regularly attended meetings of the WSO, which was based near the church, and Becker was hopeful that First Immanuel's church council would support the invitation.[41] When the council met, the vote to allow the rally split along racial lines, with five of its Black members voting to hold the rally, and the remaining four White members voting against hosting Dr. King, citing concerns over the possibility of violence. Remembering the vote, Becker's wife Carolyn recalled that the White council members called leaders in the Missouri Synod's Northern Illinois District to stop the rally, but they upheld the vote of the council, and the rally went on as scheduled on July 7, 1966.[42]

Although the rally was one of many that King held in 1966 and 1967 during the Chicago campaign, it marked a turning point for First Immanuel. While the council vote exposed the residual fears and prejudices of some of its White members, it had also empowered its Black members. Carolyn Becker remembered that, in the wake of the rally, "the Black members really felt that they had an ownership in this congregation and that this was their church also." George E. Manning, II, whose family were among the first Black members to join the church in the mid-1950s, echoed this sentiment. In a panel discussion on the history of First Immanuel's integration and Civil Rights activism held at the church in 2021, he recalled receiving a letter from his mother about the rally while he was in Venezuela with the YMCAI and the Peace Corp, telling him that she had been able to fix a meal for Dr. King and his assistant minister at the parsonage before they left. Confirming the impact of King's visit to First Immanuel on its Black members, Manning said, "I knew if King could speak here, I could stay here."[43]

[39] David Bernstein, "Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1966 Chicago Campaign," *Chicago Magazine*, July 25, 2016, accessed 10.27.2023 at https://www.chicagomag.com/chicago-magazine/august-2016/martin-luther-king-chicago-freedom-movement/.
[40] Federal Bureau of Investigations, Martin Luther Kin, Jr. Main File 100-106670 Section 57, p. 124, accessed through The Internet Archive https://archive.org/details/King_Jr._Martin_L.-HQ-57/page/n1/mode/2up.
[41] Becker, "A Brief History of First Immanuel Lutheran Church in Chicago," 18.
[42] First Immanuel Lutheran Church, "First Immanuel Civil Rights THEN and NOW Panel, February 28, 2021," YouTube Video, 1:46:03, March 10, 2021, https://youtu.be/jxzefuVepTw?si=XlMd_k0rAJ54d0Vu (accessed October 27, 2023).
[43] Ibid.

Later History of First Immanuel

The years surrounding Dr. King's rally marked the peak of First Immanuel's evolution into a diverse and fully integrated congregation. Even as the church celebrated its successes, however, the area surrounding it was again undergoing seismic change. Construction of the Eisenhower Expressway to the north, the UIC Circle Campus to the east, and continued expansion of the Illinois Medical District to the west displaced thousands of residents in the Near West Side, and many of First Immanuel's Mexican and Puerto Rican members moved out of the neighborhood. In 1967, the church oversaw the transfer of these members to other Lutheran churches.

With the rise of the Black Power Movement and the King's assassination in 1968, Pastor Becker considered stepping aside to allow for a Black pastor to lead the congregation and expressed concerns to other Black clergy in the community about his position as a White pastor in leading Black congregants. Having witnessed his commitment to the congregation and the Near West Side, however, they urged him to stay, with one pastor jokingly telling him, "Don, I'll tell you when it's time to leave." Instead of replacing Becker, the congregation placed an even greater emphasis on raising Black members into levels of leadership and brought in Black Lutheran pastors to preach at the church on a regular basis.

Beginning in the late 1960s, membership at First Immanuel began to decline again as many of its members moved away from the ABLA projects into their first homes outside of the neighborhood. By 2004, weekly average attendance had dropped to 100. Even with this smaller congregation, First Immanuel has retained many of the original members that first came to the church as part of its integration efforts in the 1950s and remains a vital institution within the Near West Side community.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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First Immanuel Lutheran Church
Name of Property

Cook County, Illinois
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
__X__previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

__X__State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	41.867536 (Latitude)	-87.666673 (Longitude)	3 Latitude	Longitude
2	Latitude	Longitude	4 Latitude	Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is bounded on the east by Ashland Avenue and on the north, west, and south by paved alleys.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries for the property encompass the original church building and parsonage as well as the 1952 addition. Although First Immanuel previously owned additional property directly west and north of the boundary, these adjacent parcels contain no buildings or significant landscape features historically related to the church.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lara Ramsey date 11/15/2023
organization Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc. telephone 312-613-1039
street & number 1105 W. Chicago Avenue, Suite 201 email lara@ramseyhcinc.com
city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60642

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: **First Immanuel Lutheran Church**

City or Vicinity: **Chicago**

County: **Cook** **State:** **IL**

Photographer: **Lara Ramsey and John Cramer**

Date Photographed: **June 5, 2023**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 15: East elevation of church, parsonage, and 1952 addition, looking west

Photo 2 of 15: Detail of primary entrance to church, east elevation, looking west

Photo 3 of 15: East and south elevation of parsonage, looking northwest

Photo 4 of 15: East and north elevation of 1952 addition, with north elevation of church in background, looking southwest

Photo 5 of 15: West and north elevations of church, looking southeast

Photo 6 of 15: West and south elevations of church, looking northeast

Photo 7 of 15: Church vestibule, looking south

Photo 8 of 15: Church narthex, looking south

Photo 9 of 15: Church nave, looking west

Photo 10 of 15: Church nave, looking northwest

Photo 11 of 15: Church altar, looking west

Photo 12 of 15: Looking west through church nave from balcony

Photo 13 of 15: Church balcony, looking southeast

Photo 14 of 15: Parsonage, first floor, looking east to main entrance

Photo 15 of 15: 1952 Parish Hall addition, looking west

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.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

List of Figures
(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.

Figure 1: GIS Location Map

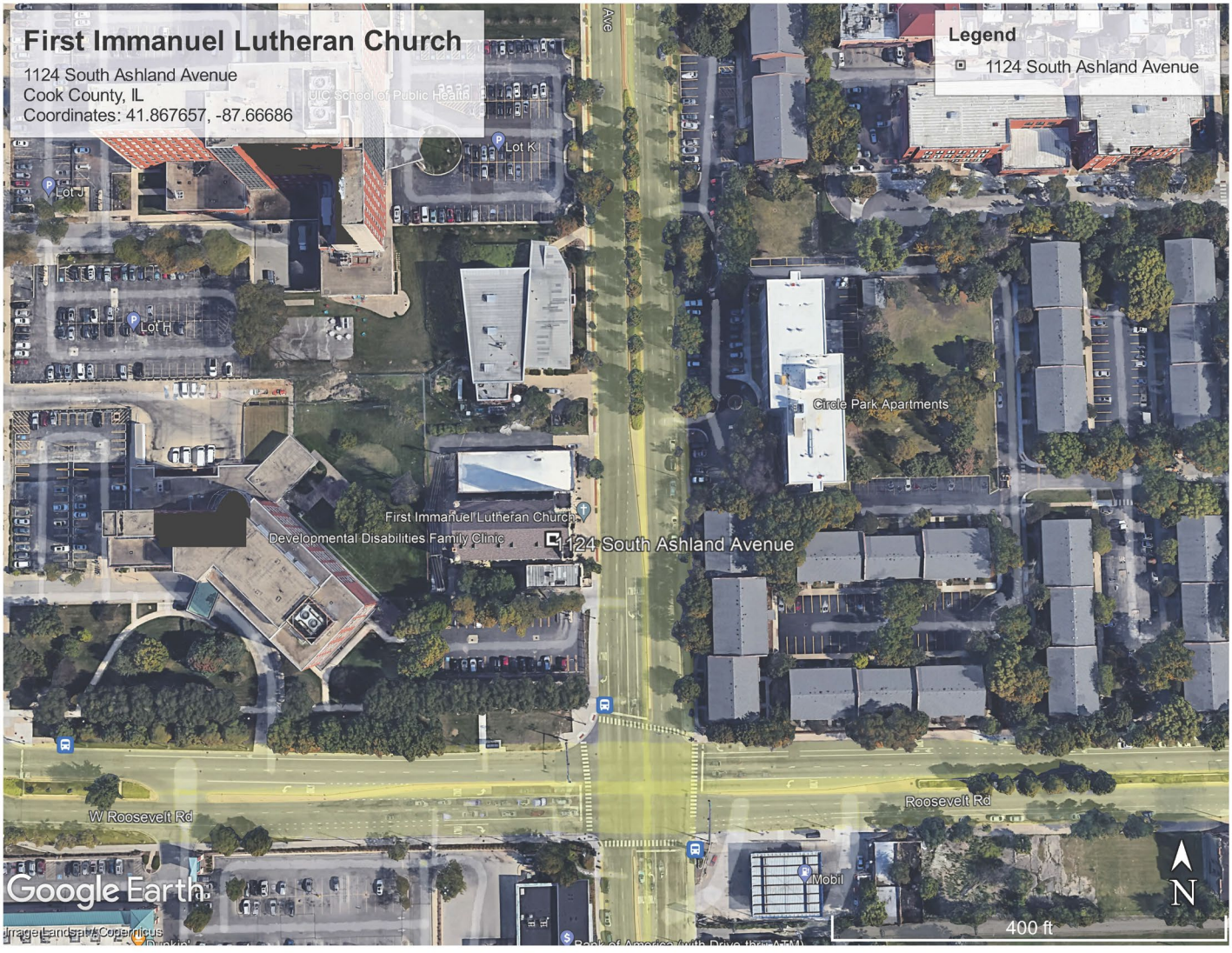


Figure 2: Local Location Map

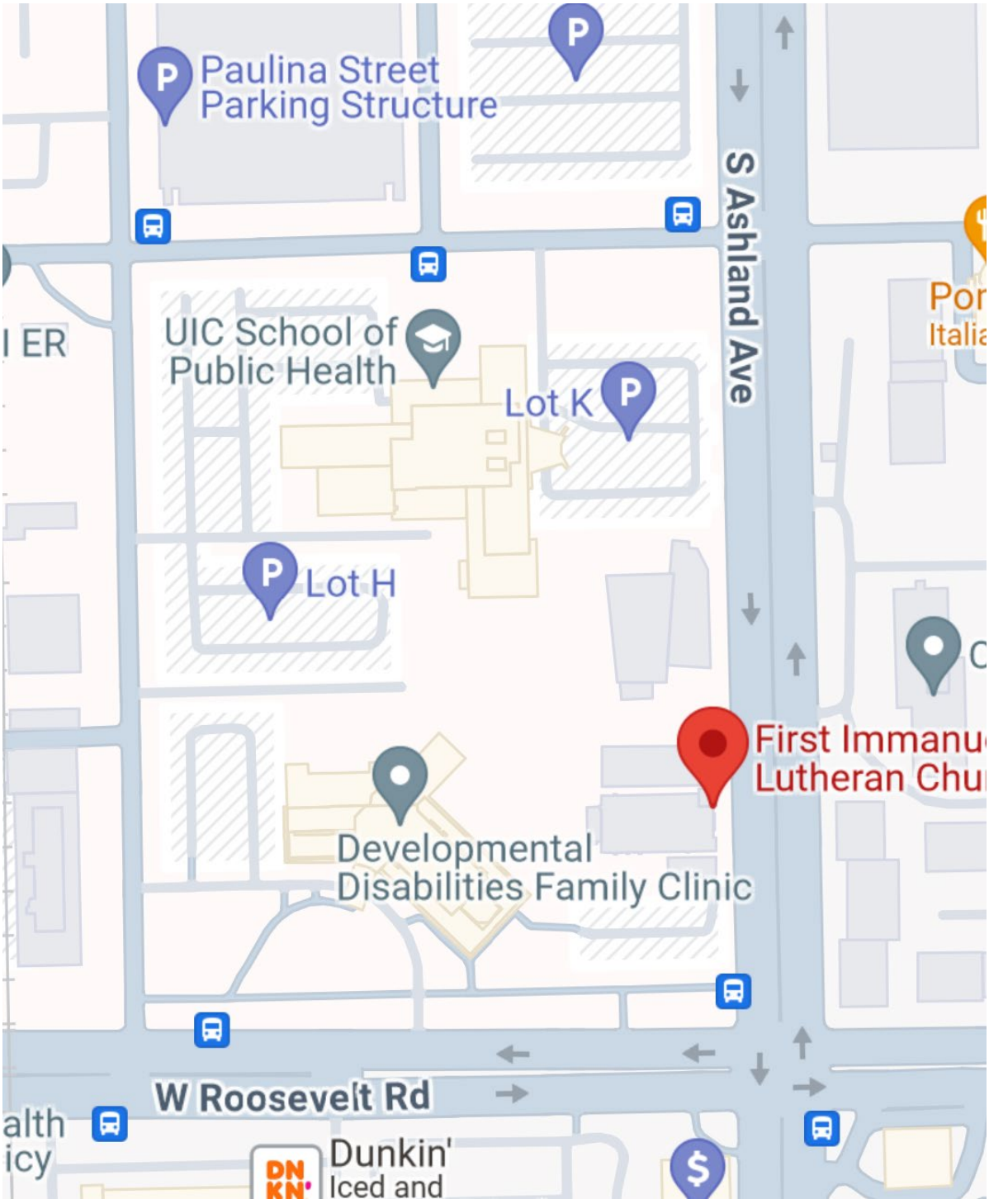


Figure 3: National Register Boundary Map

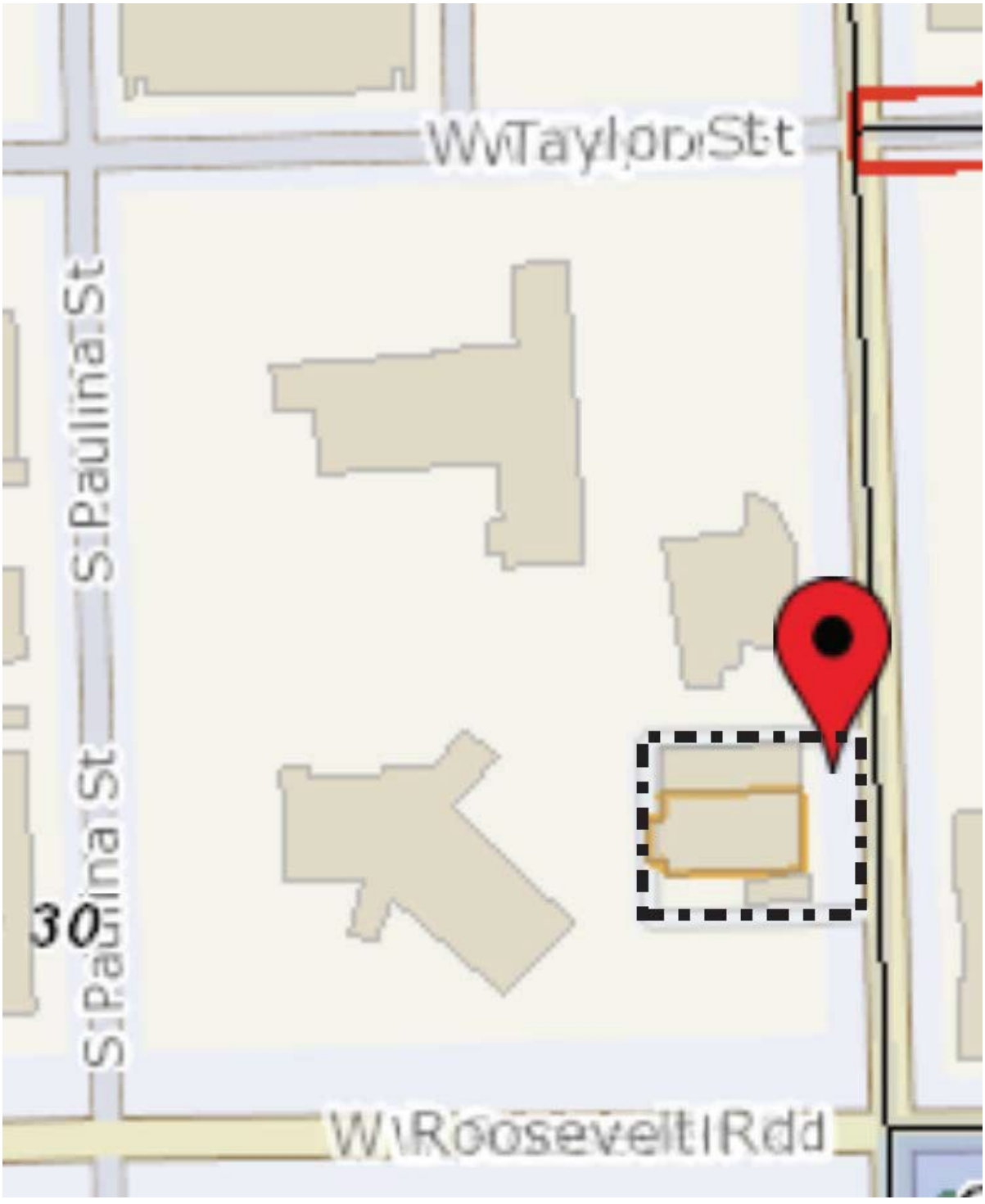


Figure 4: 1893 Atlas of Chicago (Vol. 7 Sheet 787), showing First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Parsonage

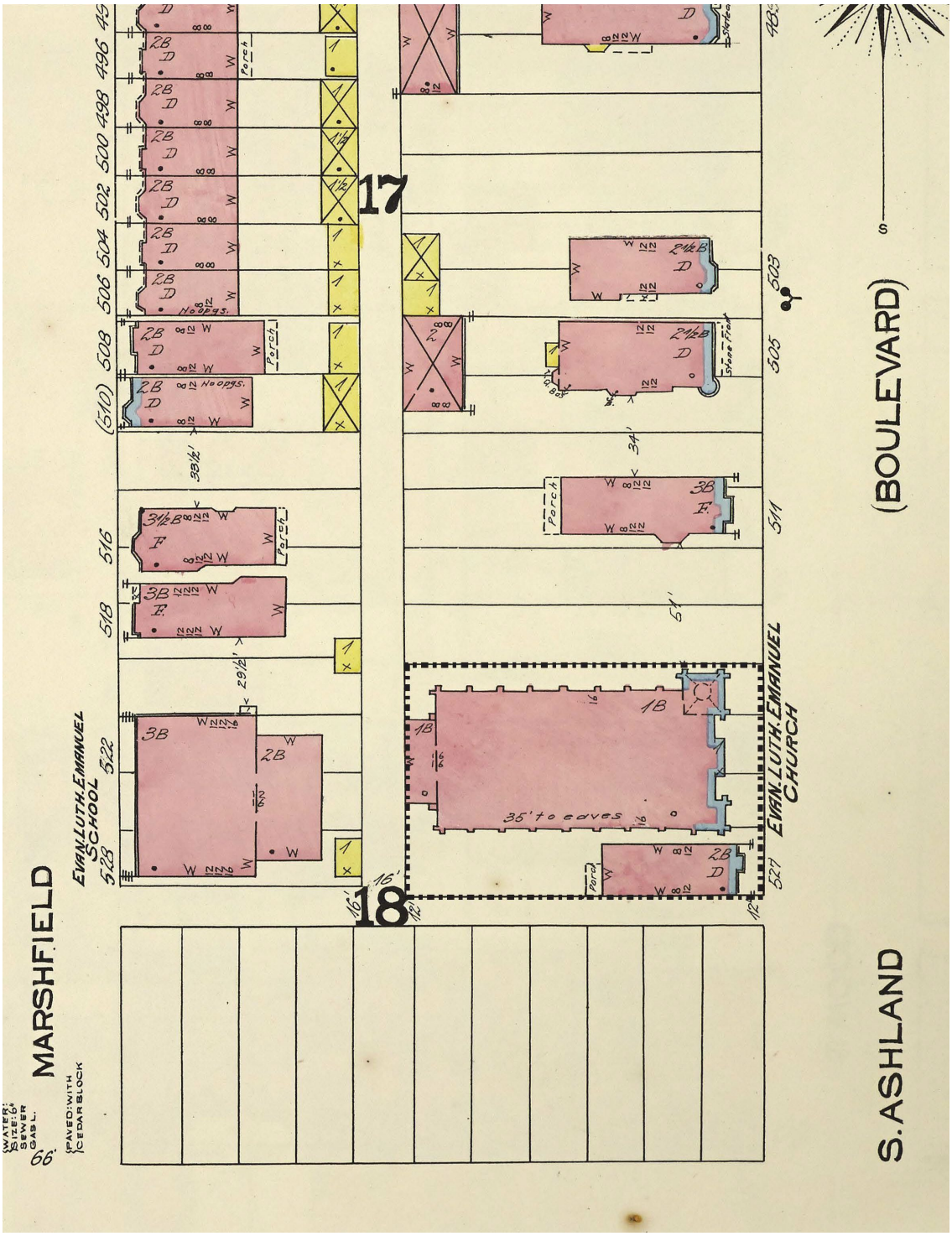


Figure 5: Illustration of First Immanuel, c 1890 (Kurze Chronik)

Figure 6: Photograph of First Immanuel, c. 1900 (First Immanuel archives)

Figure 7: Dr. Louis Hoelter, pastor of First Immanuel from 1878-1922 (First Immanuel archives)

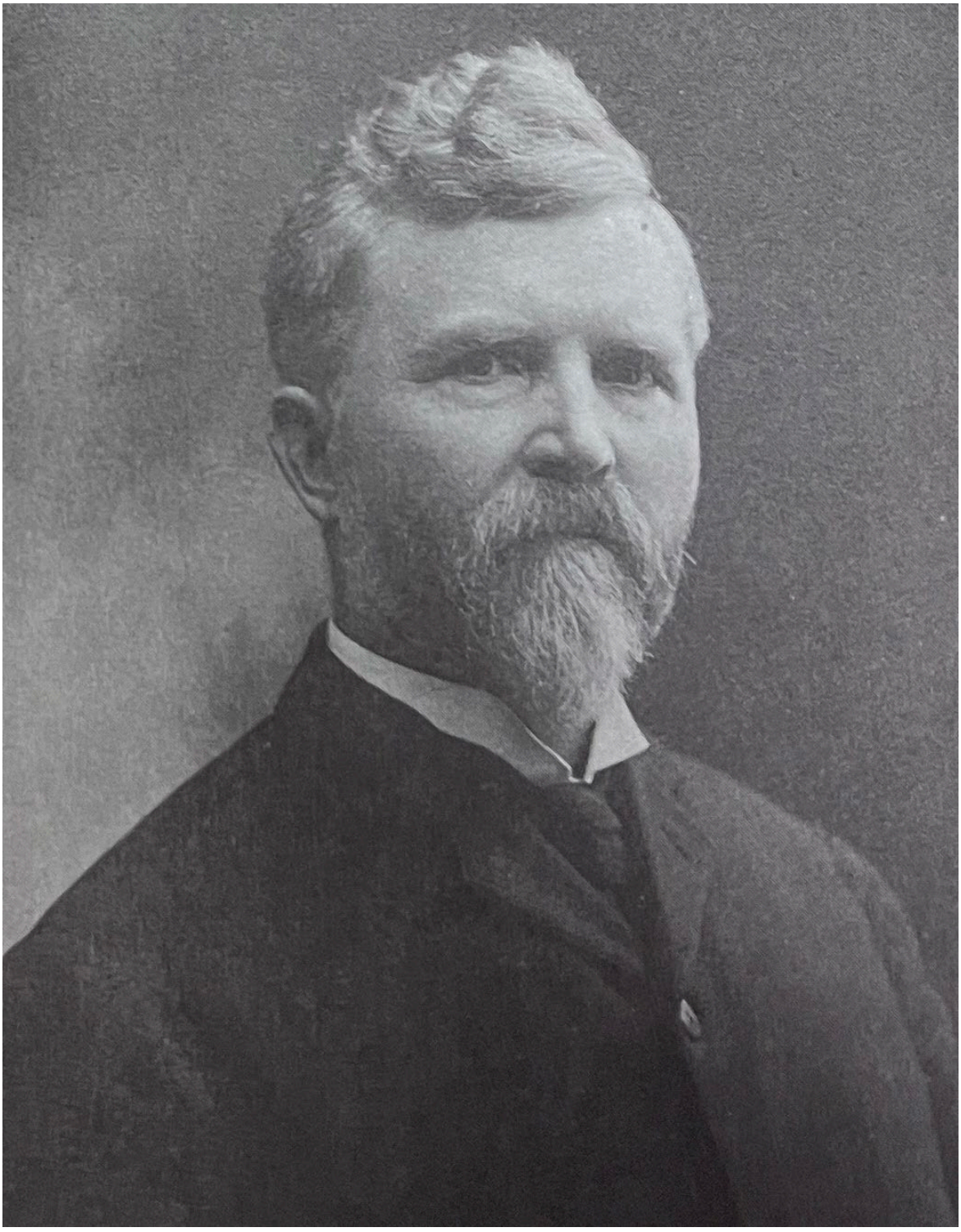


Figure 8: Church interior, c. 1900 (First Immanuel archives)

Figure 9: Streetview c. 1920 showing First Immanuel after removal of main steeple (First Immanuel archives)

Figure 10: Church interior, c. 1938 (First Immanuel archives)

Figure 12: Exterior photograph showing 1952 addition and infill at rose window (First Immanuel archives)

Figure 12: Plan for Illinois Medical District, c. 1954, with First Immanuel at lower left

Figure 13: Pastor Donald Becker, First Immanuel pastor from 1958-1996 (First Immanuel archives)

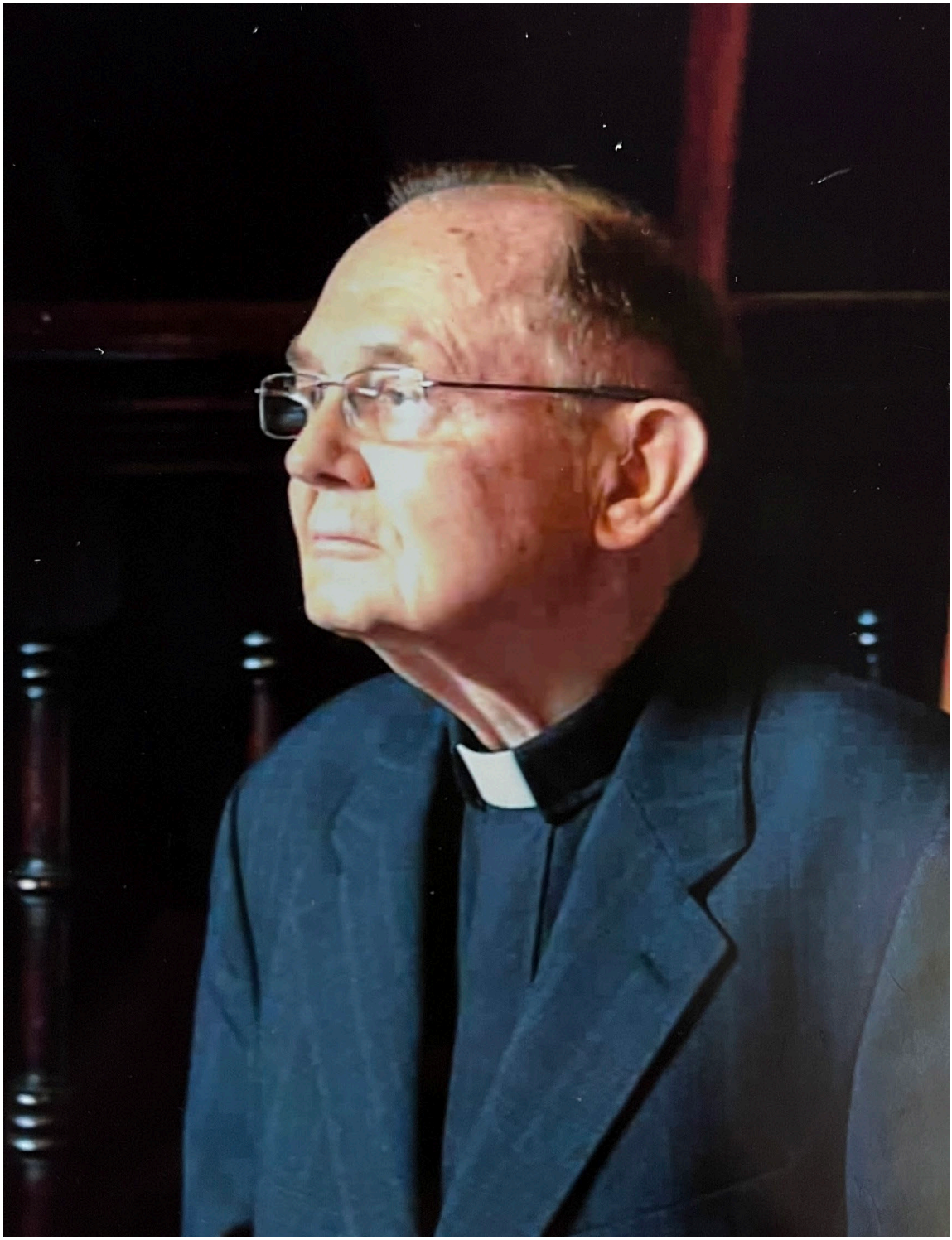


Figure 14: Sunday Bible Class at First Immanuel, c. 1960 (First Immanuel archives)

Figure 15: 1956 Christmas party in 1952 parish hall addition (First Immanuel archive)

Figure 16: Exterior Photo Key

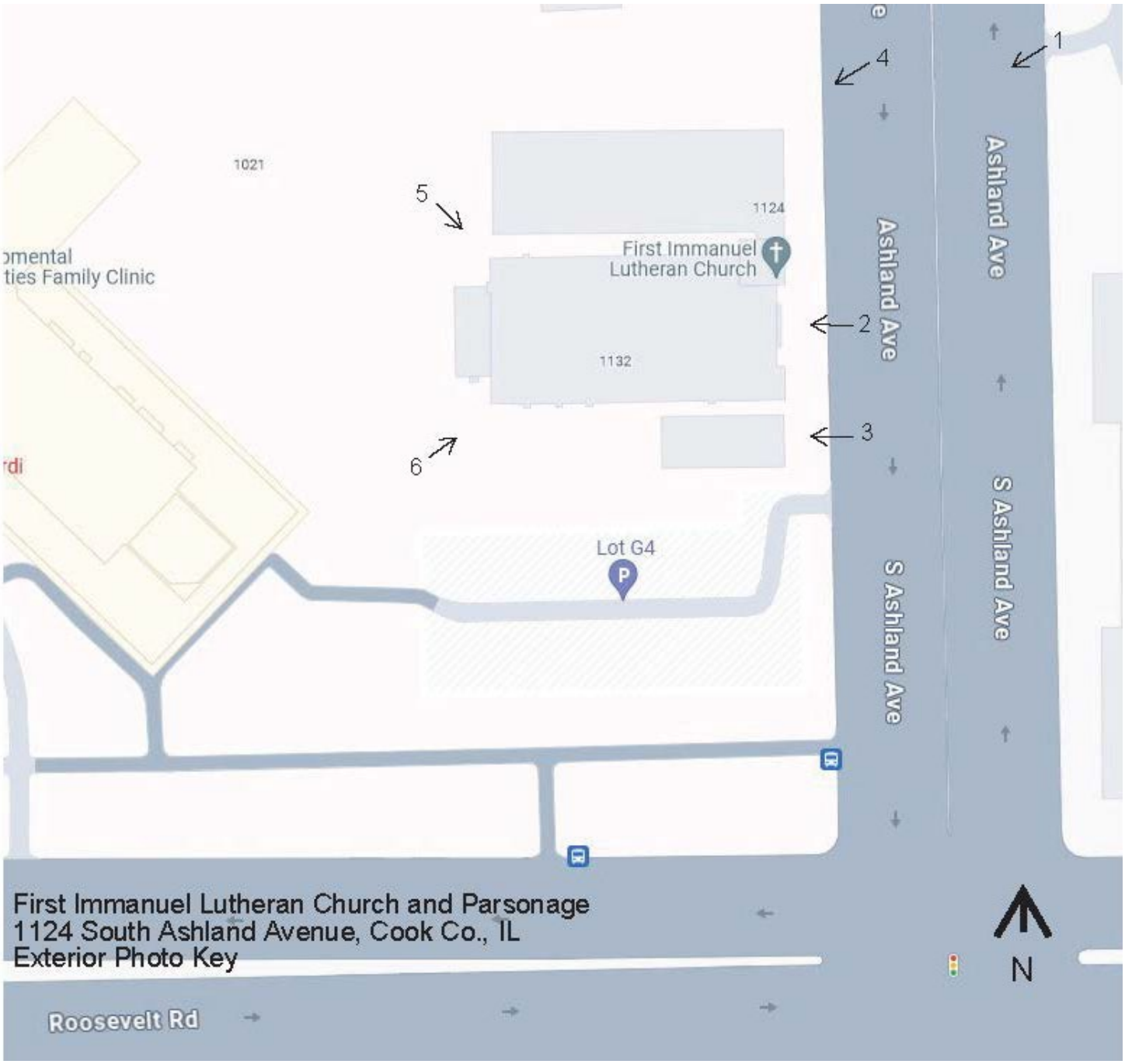
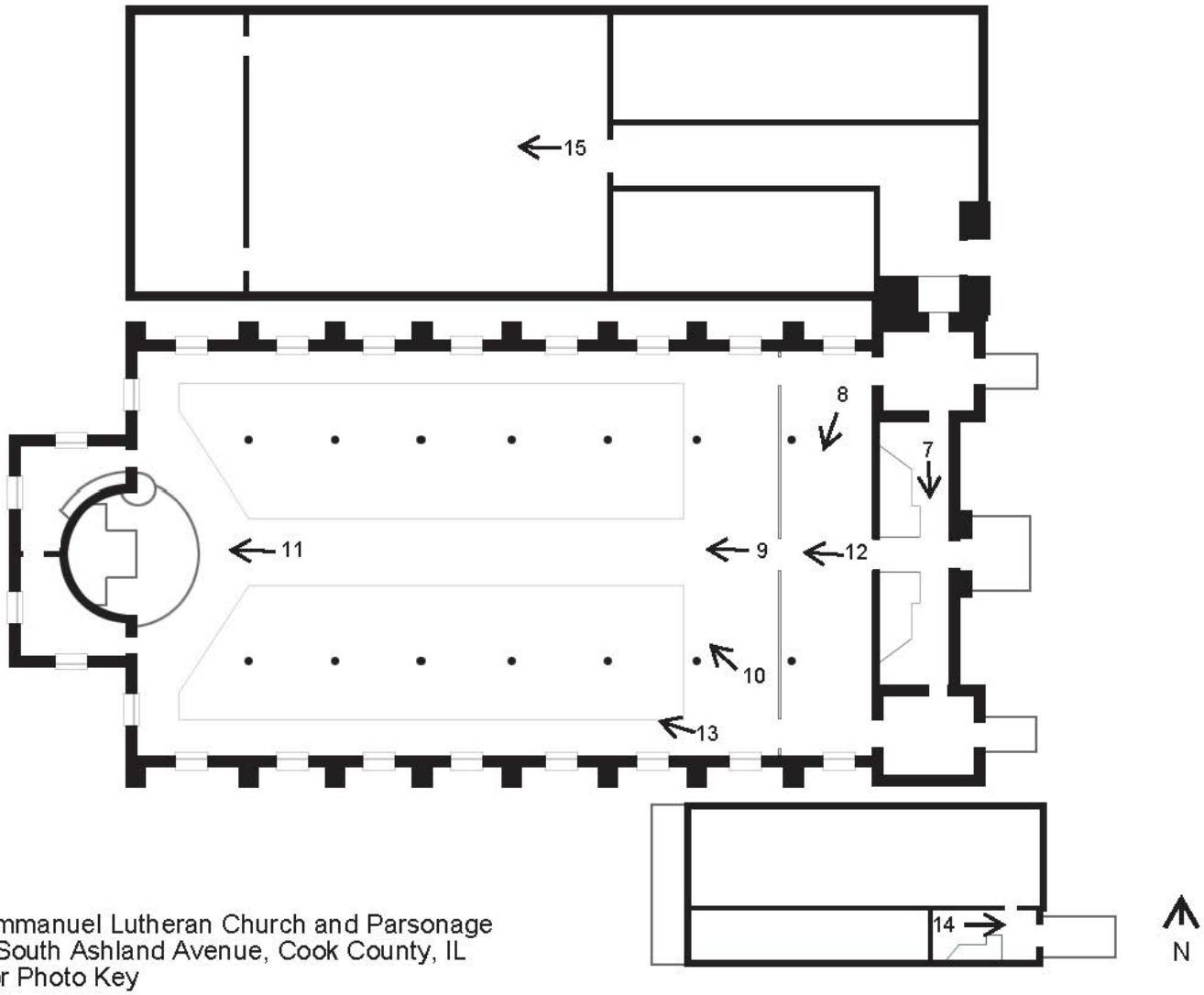
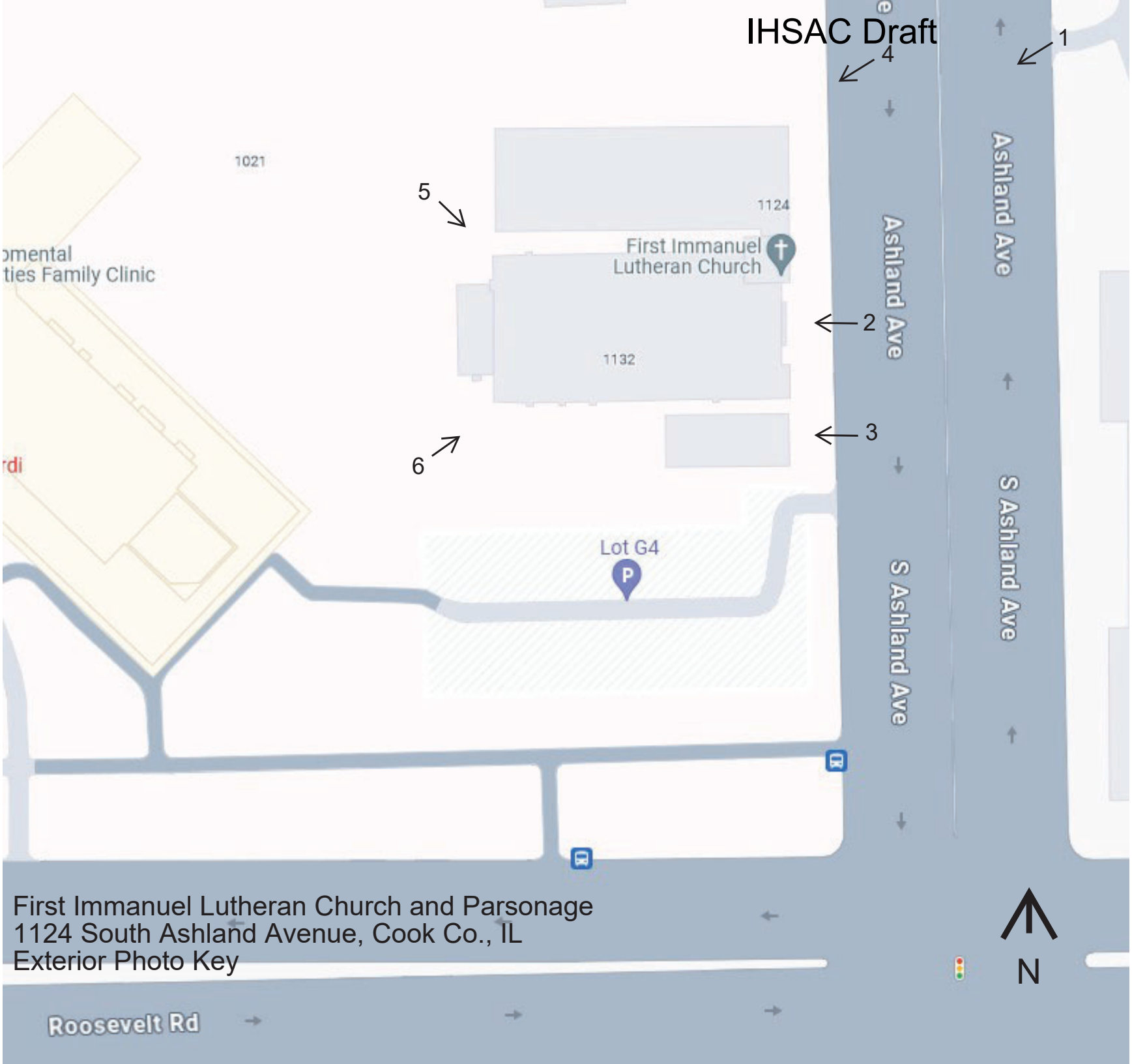


Figure 17: Interior Photo Key

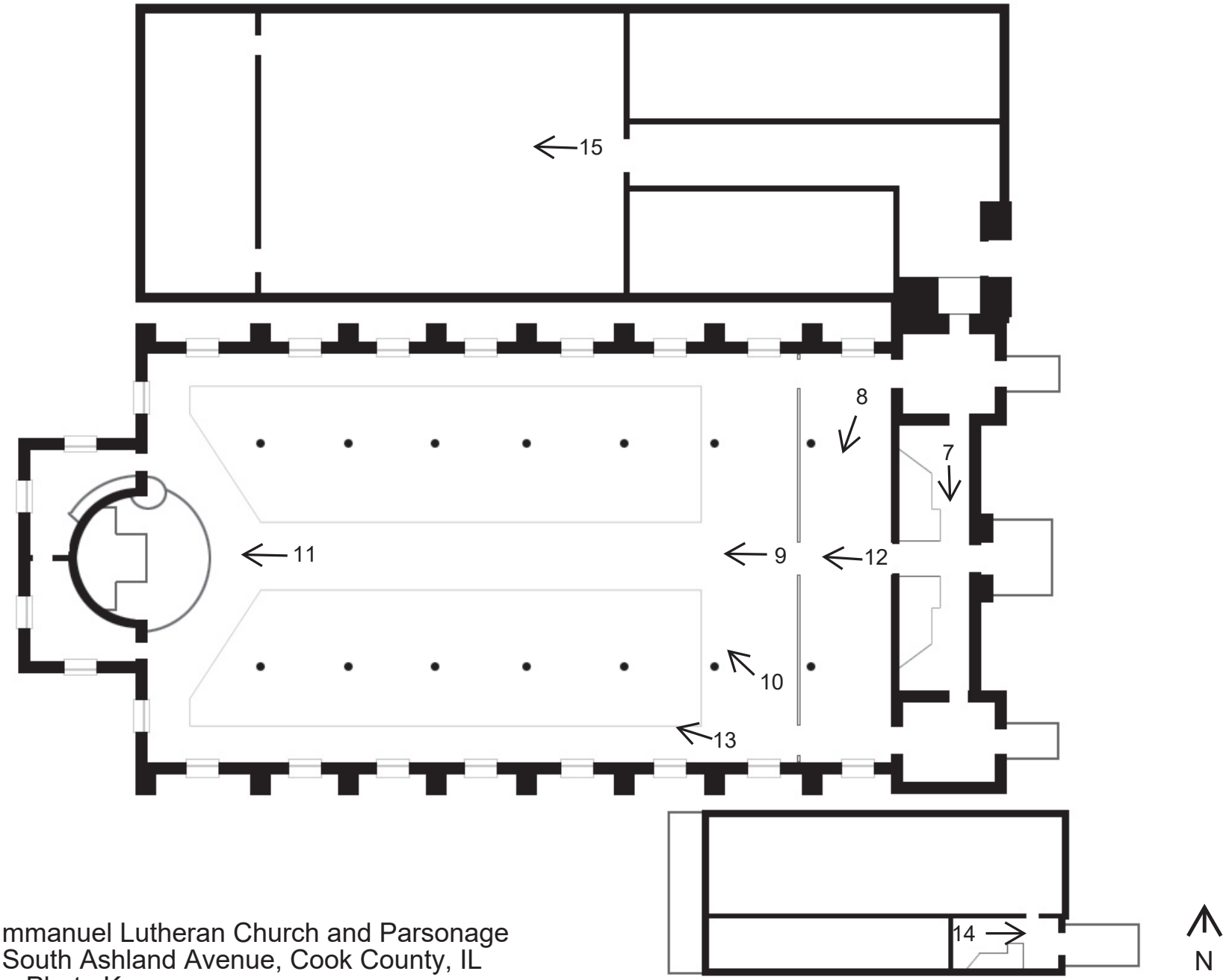


First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Parsonage
1124 South Ashland Avenue, Cook County, IL
Interior Photo Key

IHSAC Draft



First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Parsonage
1124 South Ashland Avenue, Cook Co., IL
Exterior Photo Key



First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Parsonage
1124 South Ashland Avenue, Cook County, IL
Interior Photo Key

National Register Nomination
First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Parsonage
1124 South Ashland Avenue
Chicago, IL 60607

Photo 1. East Elevation of parsonage (left), church (center), and 1952 addition (right), looking west

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First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Parsonage
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Chicago, IL 60607

Photo 2: Detail of primary entrance to church, east elevation, looking west

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Photo 3: East and south elevations of parsonage, looking northwest

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Photo 4: East and north elevation of 1952 addition, with north elevation of church in background, looking southwest

Photo 5: West and north elevations of church, looking southeast

National Register Nomination
First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Parsonage
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Photo 6: West and south elevations of church, looking northeast

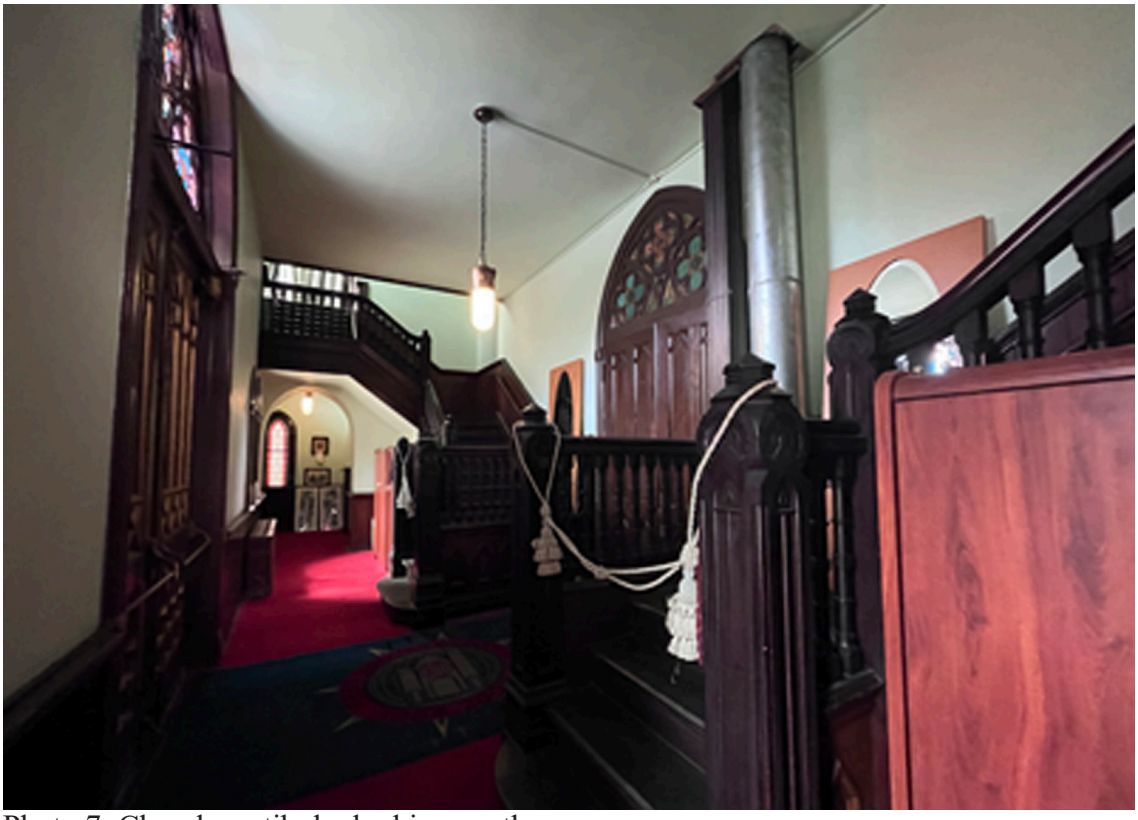

Photo 7: Church vestibule, looking south

National Register Nomination
First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Parsonage
1124 South Ashland Avenue
Chicago, IL 60607

Photo 8: Church narthex, looking south

Photo 9: Church nave, looking west

National Register Nomination
First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Parsonage
1124 South Ashland Avenue
Chicago, IL 60607

Photo 10: Church nave, looking northwest

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First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Parsonage
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Photo 11: Church altar, looking west

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Photo 12: Looking west through church nave from balcony

Photo 13: Church balcony, looking southeast

National Register Nomination
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Photo 14: Parsonage, first floor, looking east to main entrance

Photo 15: 1952 Parish Hall addition, looking west