

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 23

Item number 7/8

Page 24

1. Historic Name: First Baptist Church of Detroit  
Common Name: Peoples Community Church
2. Location: 8601 Woodward Avenue (~~at Pingree~~)  
Detroit
3. Category: building  
Ownership: private  
Status: occupied  
Use: religious
4. Owner: Reverend Darneau V. Stewart and the Deacon Board of Peoples Community Church  
8601 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, MI. 48202
7. Description:  
Condition: good  
Altered  
Original site

The structure, measuring 120 feet long by 110 feet wide, is located on the northwest corner of Woodward Avenue and Pingree Street in Detroit. The First Baptist Church (now Peoples Community Church) is a rockfaced, limestone, Gothic-style church. It subscribes to the standard elevation treatment for Gothic-style churches begun in the mid-nineteenth century. A gabled facade dominated by a massive, Gothic-arched traceried window is balanced by a large, square, buttressed corner tower with a louvered belfry. The Gothic-arched main entrance to the church is located in the base of the tower. Adjacent to the south side of the flat-roofed tower is the educational wing, which is similar in design to the church in that it is a rockfaced, limestone structure with Gothic arched windows and corner buttresses. First Baptist Church is notable for its extreme simplicity and lack of carved ornament, depending more for its impact on its bold detailing and massive proportions.

The spectacular interior conforms to the Akron Plan, auditorium-church type with a large, square, central space containing wooden pews arranged in a semi-circle focusing on a raised sanctuary platform on an interior wall. In the case of this church, a broad, curving balcony completely encompasses the partially circular, barrel-vaulted room, with the portion over the sanctuary containing the choir loft and the exposed organ pipes. The low sanctuary area under the balcony choir loft is backed by Gothic arcading painted cream and gilded like the rest of the architectural detailing in the church, except for the dark oak wainscoting which encompasses the room. The curving balcony front is panelled with a Gothic arch motif in high relief. The transepts are fitted out as classrooms on both the main floor and balcony level, but can be opened to the auditorium by the use of sliding, glazed partitions to provide overflow seating space if necessary. In the center of the curving ceiling is a large, ocular, leaded glass skylight.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 24

Item number 7/8

Page 25

8. Significance:

Period: 1900-

Areas of significance: architecture

Specific dates: 1909-1910

Architect: Guy J. Vinton (1859-1910) of Detroit, Michigan

First Baptist Church (now of Southfield, Michigan) was founded by Baptists from New York and New England on October 20, 1827 under the leadership of Reverend Henry Davis. A frame building at Fort and Griswold streets was erected in 1831 and remained in use until replaced by a spacious brick meeting house which, surmounted by a classic cupola, was dedicated on January 11, 1835. The church built larger structures in 1859-63 and 1871-75. The movement of members from the downtown area resulted in the construction of the present random ashlar, Gothic structure, dedicated on May 8, 1910. Guy J. Vinton (1859-1910), more prominently known as a builder in Detroit, was the architect of the structure. In 1957, faced with a dwindling membership, the congregation sold the building to the Peoples Community Church, an east-side Detroit black congregation. First Baptist then erected a modern new sanctuary in Southfield, Michigan, which was dedicated in June 1965. The 1909-1910 First Baptist Church is notable for its broad auditorium in which the gallery entirely encircles the room and the choir and organ are centrally located in the gallery above and behind the pulpit.

9. Bibliography:

Farmer, Silas. History of Detroit and Michigan (1884), pp. 605-607; Detroit News, May 1, 1910; Heritage of Faith: Detroit's Religious Communities (1976), pp. 55-56.

10. Geographical data:

Acreage: less than one acre

Quadrangle name: Highland Park

Quadrangle scale: 1:24000

UTM Reference: 17 328780 4693720

Verbal boundary description and justification:

Lot 1, Anderson and McKay's Subdivision

This includes all of the church property.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 4

Page 1 of 2

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Religious Structures of Woodward Avenue Thematic Resources  
State Michigan

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- |     |   |   |                  |   |
|-----|---|---|------------------|---|
| 1.  | Cathedral Church of St. Paul<br>Complex                   | <b>Substantive Review</b>                   | Keeper<br>Attest | <u>Barbara Mc Boyd 8-3-82</u><br><u>Emma Jane Saxe 8-2-82</u> |
| 2.  | Cathedral of the Most Blessed<br>Sacrament                | <b>Entered in the<br/>National Register</b> | Keeper<br>Attest | <u>Deloris Byers 8/3/82</u><br>_____                          |
| 3.  | Central United Methodist<br>Church                        | <b>Entered in the<br/>National Register</b> | Keeper<br>Attest | <u>Deloris Byers 8/3/82</u><br>_____                          |
| 4.  | Central Woodward Christian<br>Church                      | <b>Entered in the<br/>National Register</b> | Keeper<br>Attest | <u>Deloris Byers 8/3/82</u><br>_____                          |
| 5.  | First Baptist Church of<br>Detroit                        | <b>Entered in the<br/>National Register</b> | Keeper<br>Attest | <u>Deloris Byers 8/3/82</u><br>_____                          |
| 6.  | First Unitarian Church of<br>Detroit                      | <b>Substantive Review</b>                   | Keeper<br>Attest | <u>Barbara Mc Boyd 8-3-82</u><br><u>Emma Jane Saxe 8-2-82</u> |
| 7.  | Metropolitan United Methodist<br>Church                   | <b>Entered in the<br/>National Register</b> | Keeper<br>Attest | <u>Deloris Byers 8/3/82</u><br>_____                          |
| 8.  | North Woodward Congregational<br>Church                   | <b>Entered in the<br/>National Register</b> | Keeper<br>Attest | <u>Deloris Byers 8/3/82</u><br>_____                          |
| 9.  | St. John's Episcopal Church<br>(Woodward at E. Fisher FW) | <b>Entered in the<br/>National Register</b> | Keeper<br>Attest | <u>Deloris Byers 8/3/82</u><br>_____                          |
| 10. | St. Joseph's Episcopal Church<br>(5930 Woodward)          | <b>Entered in the<br/>National Register</b> | Keeper<br>Attest | <u>Deloris Byers 8/3/82</u><br>_____                          |

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

First Baptist Church of Detroit (Religious Structures  
of Woodward Ave. TR), Wayne County, MICHIGAN,

Working No. 6/28/82-1861  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.1.83  
Date Due: 7/29/82 - 8/12/82  
Action:  ACCEPT 8/3/82  
 RETURN  
 REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Entered in the  
National Register

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for:  technical corrections cited below  
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category      Ownership      Status      Present Use  
                  Public Acquisition      Accessible

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition      Check one      Check one  
 excellent       deteriorated       unaltered       original site  
 good             ruins             altered         moved      date \_\_\_\_\_  
 fair              unexposed

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

## 8. Significance

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- \_\_\_\_\_ summary paragraph
- \_\_\_\_\_ completeness
- \_\_\_\_\_ clarity
- \_\_\_\_\_ applicable criteria
- \_\_\_\_\_ justification of areas checked
- \_\_\_\_\_ relating significance to the resource
- \_\_\_\_\_ context
- \_\_\_\_\_ relationship of integrity to significance
- \_\_\_\_\_ justification of exception
- \_\_\_\_\_ other

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UMT References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. Form Prepared By

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

## 13. Other

- \_\_\_\_\_ Maps
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photographs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF DETROIT  
(Peoples Community Church)  
8601 Woodward Avenue  
Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

PHOTOGRAPHER: Leslie J. Vollmert  
DATE: November, 1980  
NEGATIVE: Michigan History Division  
Michigan Dept. of State  
Lansing, Michigan 48918  
VIEW: Camera facing WSW  
PHOTO: No. 31 of 53



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF DETROIT  
(Peoples Community Church)  
8601 Woodward Avenue  
Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

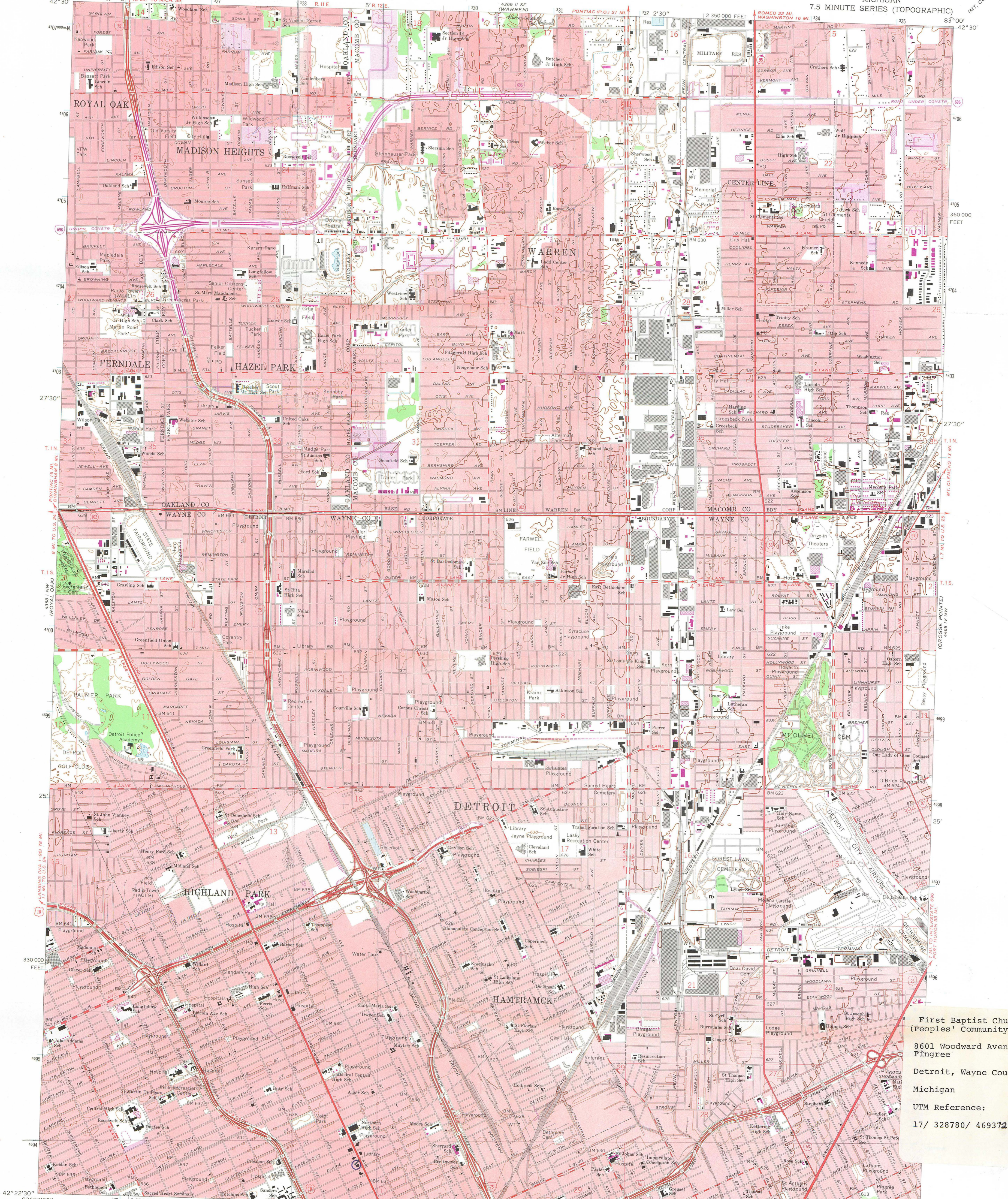
PHOTOGRAPHER: Rev. Darneau Stewart

DATE: September, 1980

NEGATIVE: Peoples Community Church  
8601 Woodward Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan 48202

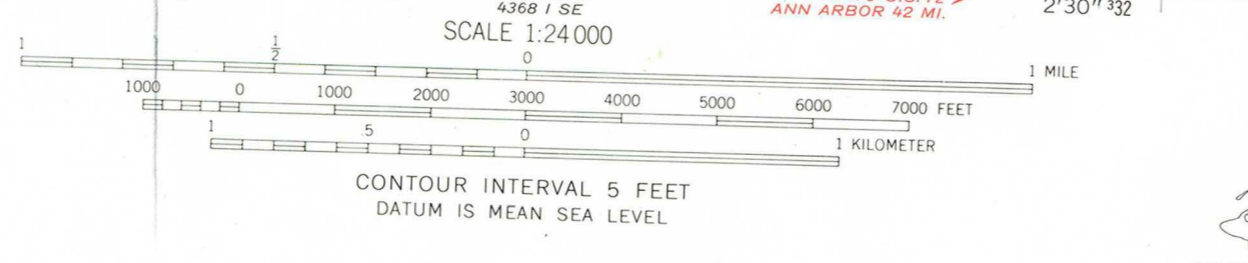
VIEW: Camera facing W towards church  
sanctuary and baptistry

PHOTO: No. 32 of 53



First Baptist Church  
(Peoples' Community Church)  
8601 Woodward Avenue at  
Pingree  
Detroit, Wayne County  
Michigan  
UTM Reference:  
17/ 328780/ 4693720

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with State of Michigan agencies  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and City of Detroit  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
Topography by planimetric surveys 1933. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1967. Field checked 1968  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Michigan coordinate system, south zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1973. This information not field checked  
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, all weather, hard surface	Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface	Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

HIGHLAND PARK, MICH.  
N4225-W8300/7.5

1968  
PHOTOREVISED 1973  
AMS 4381 NE-SERIES V862



# People's Community Church

8601 WOODWARD AVENUE

DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48202

871-4676

FEB 16 1982

MICHIGAN HISTORY DIVISION

DARNEAU V. STEWART  
Minister

MARTIN E. BOLTON  
Assistant Minister

PERCY L. MOORE  
Minister of Education

HEZEKIAH FORD  
Assistant to the Ministers

CHARLES GETER  
Minister of Music

February 9, 1982

Dr. Martha M. Bigelow  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Michigan History Division  
Michigan Department of State  
Lansing, Michigan 48918  
Attn: Kathryn Eckert

Dear Dr. Bigelow:

I must apologize for the delay in returning the attached form.

The original letter was sent to Rev. Darneau V. Stewart, Senior Minister. He expired December 6, 1981 and in the process of catching up, the letter was forwarded to the Steward Board for approval.

We hope we will be in time to be included as we feel it is an honor for our church.

Sincerely,

*Martin E. Bolton*

Martin E. Bolton, Jr.  
Acting Minister

MEB:gr  
Enclosure

Waiver by Property Owner

Dr. Martha M. Bigelow  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Michigan History Division  
Michigan Department of State  
Lansing, Michigan 48918  
Attn: Kathryn Eckert

Dear Dr. Bigelow:

This will confirm that I am fully aware of the effects of listing a property in the National Register of Historic Places. I recognize that, under the National Historic Preservation Act, I am entitled to object to the proposed listing of my property by a notarized, written statement. If I am the sole owner and I object, my property will not be listed. If there are multiple owners of this property and a majority of the owners object, the property will not be listed.

Following is the address of my property:

PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CHURCH

8601 Woodward Avenue at Pingree

Detroit, Michigan 48202

\_\_\_\_\_

I hereby waive my right to object to the proposed listing and notify you that I request that my property be listed in the National Register at the earliest possible date.

Sincerely,

Martha M. Bigelow