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NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

# National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Bethel Presbyterian Church

other names/site number

## 2. Location

street & number 7132 Old St. Marys Pike ☐ not for publication

city or town Waverly ☐ vicinity

state West Virginia code WV county Wood code 107 zip code 26184

## 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Susan Pierce Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer 2/4/14
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
- ☒ entered in the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:)

for Edson W. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action 3.31.14

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**

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

**Category of Property**

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | buildings |
| 1 | 0 | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 2 | 1 | Total |

**Name of related multiple property listing**

N/A

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

RELIGION: religious facility-church
FUNERARY: cemetery

**Current Functions**

RELIGION: religious facility-church
FUNERARY: cemetery

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

Gothic Revival

**Materials**

foundation Sandstone
walls Brick
roof Asphalt
other Sandstone, brick, slate

**Narrative Description**

See Continuation Sheets

## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

Property is:

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

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

☐ **C**. birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

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

☐ **F** a commemorative property

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

**Levels of Significance** (local, state, national)
local

**Areas of Significance**
Architecture

**Period of Significance**
1904

**Significant Dates**
1904

**Significant Persons**
n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**
n/a

**Architect/Builder**
unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance:**
See Continuation sheets

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography**

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State Agency
☐ Federal Agency
☐ Local Government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository:

Record # _____

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 3.26 acres

**UTM References**

| Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|
| 17 | 463645 | 4353770 |

**Verbal Boundary Description**
See Continuation Sheets

**Boundary Justification**
See Continuation Sheets

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title The Session of the Waverly-Bethel Presbyterian Church with Erin Riebe (National Register Coordinator)
organization Waverly-Bethel Presbyterian Church date Fall 2013
street & number PO Box 7 telephone (304) 916-3844
city or town Waverly state WV zip code 26184

**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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number **7** Page **1**

## LOCATION and SETTING

The Bethel Presbyterian Church is located near Waverly in north-west West Virginia along the Ohio River. The terrain is rolling and the once-rural area is now dotted with small housing developments. The church is perched on a small ridge on the south side of a narrow, rural lane – Old St. Marys Pike. The 3.26 acre lot includes a small, paved parking lot along the road and a narrow dirt and gravel U-shape drive that circles the church building. A sidewalk leads from the parking lot to the front and side of the building. A small signboard, constructed of brick, is positioned next to the sidewalk. The building faces north and is situated on the eastern half of the parcel along with a noncontributing annex building located approximately five yards southeast. An open cemetery, void of any trees or vegetation with the exception of its perimeter, is situated on much of the western half of the parcel.

*Descriptions*

The front-gable church building is rectangular in shape, measuring approximately 33’ across by 41’ long. It is constructed of brick, laid in the running bond pattern, and is supported by a rock-faced sandstone foundation. Due to a slight slope in the property, two rows of sandstone are visible on the east elevation and a portion of the rear (south) elevation. The original slate roof has been replaced with asphalt shingles.

The main façade of the building, facing north, features a tiered entrance vestibule with a bell tower that rises above the roofline. The bottom tier, the widest, includes the main entrance which is reached by a set of four sandstone steps. The entrance includes replacement double doors and an arched transom window with brick lintel. Each side of the vestibule has a single, pointed-arch window opening with sandstone sill and brick lintel with triangular sandstone keystone. The two-over-two, double-hung sash windows are topped with a pointed transom window with Gothic-style tracery. All of the building’s windows are protected by modern storm windows. The two outside corners of this tier each has a simple low-relief, brick pilaster topped with a rock-faced sandstone.

The middle tier, void of any openings, features front corner pilasters topped with acorn-style stone finials. It has smooth sandstone coping and a modern street lamp projecting from the front. The uppermost tier, which sits mostly above the gable peak of the roofline, has an arched opening on each the front and two sides and houses the functioning church bell. This tier has four brick corner pilasters that are topped with a flat, rock-faced stone. A stepped parapet surrounds the pyramidal bell-tower roof with a simple finial. The bell-tower roof is covered with slate shingles.

The two side elevations of the building have three pairs of windows each topped with a Gothic Revival style tripartite transom window with intersecting tracery. Like those on the bell tower, each window is two-over-two, double-hung sash with modern storm windows. An exterior brick chimney pierces the roofline on each elevation between the northern-most and center window. The rear elevation has two symmetrically placed

windows similar to those on the lowest tier of the bell tower. A rectangular opening with stone sill is situated in the gable peak. It is enclosed with a wood plank, louvered for attic ventilation.

The building's interior is simple. The vestibule opens into the sanctuary through a double-door entry with two five-panel doors and a rectangular transom window. Pews are arranged with a center isle which leads to the pulpit and Table at the rear of the church. The pulpit platform has been carpeted, as has the rest of the church. The sides of the platform have been covered with modern paneling.

In addition to the paneled doors and hinges, other original features of the interior include the oak woodwork surrounding the doors and windows, as well as the baseboard. Smooth plaster walls have been painted. The cove ceiling features pressed tin panels with a grapevine motif. Original heating elements have been removed and replaced with modern equipment.

The cemetery associated with the church includes approximately 350 interments, of which 132 date to the nineteenth century. Gravestones are made out of marble, granite, sandstone, or fieldstone and display funerary art and design dating from the antebellum period to modern day. Of particular interest are a number of Victorian-era and early twentieth century headstones and monuments. The cemetery is an important part of the historic setting for the church.

The parcel also includes a small shed as well as a wood frame fellowship hall annex building. The annex was built c.1990 as a separate building from the brick church. It is a one-story, side-gable building with aluminum siding and a low-pitched roof with asphalt shingles. The interior includes a large open room, kitchen, and restrooms. It is considered noncontributing.

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## STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE

Bethel Presbyterian Church is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under *Criterion C: Architecture* as a significant local representative of the Late Gothic Revival style of architecture and as an important rural church complex in the Wood County area. It also meets *Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties* as it derives its primary significance from architectural importance. The period of significance is 1904, the building's date of construction.

*History*

Bethel Presbyterian Church was officially established on April 17, 1845 when William McKinney was ordained at his home during a service that included 10 other founding members and three area ministers. For at least a couple of months, services were held at McKinney's house, located on the banks of the Ohio River in what is now the community of Waverly. A deed dated June 1845 indicates that the congregation moved to a location near the mouth of the Bull Creek. They worshiped in a brick building here until it flooded in 1852. At that point, they moved church services to a log building owned by the Mount Vernon Baptist church whose congregation moved to nearby Williamstown.

In a second deed dated February 21, 1857, William and Martha Ann Hunter deeded property to the church "for the purpose of having an Old School Presbyterian Church built thereon." The property was located along St. Marys Pike, away from the flood-prone river area. A large white frame church was constructed on the lot and was dedicated in 1859. It served the congregation for nearly a half century. Though it is unclear why a new building was needed, the congregation overwhelmingly supported the construction of a new church in the early twentieth century. The church minutes state the following:

> A motion was made to proceed at once to rebuild the church. After much favorable discussion, the motion was placed before the house and carried unanimously. In order to carry out the motion, the following committees were appointed: Building Committee: R.H. Burk, James Hunter, Arthur Ingraham, J.M. Smith, R. U. Corbitt, J.P. Sharpe Soliciting Committee: Miss Charlott Wylie, Miss Chella Ogdin, Mrs. Emma Ingraham, Mrs. Lutz, and Mr. Louis Eppelein.[1]

The new brick building was constructed in 1904 and was prepared for service by the following spring. The building was dedicated on May 28, 1905 during a service in which Reverend C. Ely delivered a sermon from a new pulpit, handmade by parishioner Emmett Whitlach. The pulpit, along with wicker furniture and a pump organ used on dedication day, is still in the church today.

The property for the adjacent cemetery was donated by church member, Robert Pollack, around the same time as the frame church was constructed. The cemetery includes at least one grave that predates the existence of the church – that of William Rolston, Jr. whose death is recorded as October 6, 1823. The

[1] "Bethel Church Minutes," NP.

cemetery, which also includes some graves from the 1840s, likely began as a small family cemetery until it was deeded to the church and interments took place more often. The cemetery includes the graves of many local citizens and church members including Robert Henry Burk and William F. Henry, who were both delegates to the First Wheeling Convention in 1861, and Noah Ogdin, an early Ogdin settler. The cemetery also includes a number of Civil War and World War II veterans.

In 1992, the Bethel Presbyterian Church was featured in a Parkersburg Sentinel article. Of the church, the author stated the following:

> It is old, like a family heirloom carefully preserved and passed down from one generation to the next. It beckons, like a warm glowing candle in a window on a cold winter's night. It is majestic, a picturesque salute to God prepared by the hands of past and present worshippers. It is Bethel Presbyterian Church. Nestled in the woods on Old St. Marys Pike between Routes 31 and 2, Bethel Presbyterian Church is a *house of worship* as well as a *house of history*.[2] (emphasis added)

*Significance*

Eligible for its local architectural significance, the Bethel Presbyterian Church exhibits excellent qualities of the Gothic Revival style of architecture, is a significant rural church complex, and retains excellent integrity. The Gothic Revival style became popular during the Romantic Movement of the mid-nineteenth century when the style was featured in several contemporary publications which displayed picturesque country cottages and proper church architecture that resembled English parish churches. The style signified the country's displeasure with the restraints of the classical styles popular in the decades earlier as well as romanticism's fascination with the medieval period.[3]

Most notably, the Gothic Revival style is characterized by the pointed arch. Other characteristics of the style include an emphasis on vertical, decorative bargeboards, finials, crenellation, steep gabled roofs, tracery and leaded stained glass windows. While the style's popularity waned following the Civil War, it continued to be displayed in new church buildings well into the twentieth century. Larger churches and public buildings moved on to employ elements of the late nineteenth century High Victorian Gothic style and later, the early twentieth century Late Gothic Revival style. Characteristics of the Gothic Revival style featured in the Bethel Presbyterian Church include the pointed arch windows, tracery, steep gable roof, crenellation, and finials.

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[2] Dawn Gunter, "Standing Long and Strong: Bethel Presbyterian Has Services in Same Church since 1905," *Parkersburg Sentinel*, 11 September 1992, pg. 20.
[3] Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (revised edition, Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1992), 53-60; S. Allen Chambers, Jr., et al, *What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1983), 40-45.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



Of Wood County's rural churches from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bethel Presbyterian Church displays the most high style architecture. In 1990, the Parkersburg Community Foundation conducted a cultural resource survey of Wood County.[4] The survey documented every resource over 50 years old that retained a certain level of historic architectural integrity. Of the 3,019 properties documented, 50 of them were churches constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of these 50 churches, three of them have since been demolished. Of the remaining 47 churches, 28 of them are located in rural areas similar to Bethel Presbyterian Church. The distinction is important since those churches located in larger communities tended to have larger congregations and thus additional funding for larger and high-style buildings. This was the case in Wood County.

The churches constructed in the late nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century in Parkersburg especially were much larger than their rural counterparts, and display high style architecture popular at the time. For examples, see St. Francis Catholic Xavier (WD-0031)[5] and St. Andrews Methodist Churches (WD-0957) in Parkersburg, and First Presbyterian Church of Williamstown (WD-2353). While smaller churches were also constructed in urban areas, they generally still displayed architectural styles and characteristics popular at the time. Examples include Parkersburg churches, Logan Memorial United Methodist (WD-0020) and Lauckport United Methodist (WD-0833).

A review of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century rural churches of Wood County reveals that all but two are simple, front gable buildings with the vast majority featuring a simple steeple at the gable peak or an entrance/bell tower, usually centered on the gable end. Further, unlike the urban areas, where nearly all of the documented churches were constructed of masonry, Wood County's rural church buildings were overwhelmingly constructed of frame with wood siding. Only two of the documented rural churches were constructed of brick. They include Washington United Methodist Church (WD-2943), which has since been demolished, and Bethel Presbyterian Church.

Few of the rural church buildings were constructed with any architectural embellishments. One church, Middle Ridge Baptist Church (WD-2417), was constructed with exposed rafter tails (the eaves have since been enclosed) and three others display pointed arch windows – including Bethel Presbyterian Church. Other than those features, no other significant characteristics were documented. By far, Bethel Presbyterian Church was constructed with and continues to display the most high style architecture of Wood County's rural churches from the time period. It not only has the pointed arch windows, but also displays Gothic Revival style tracery, finials, and brickwork. In addition, Bethel Presbyterian Church retains excellent

[4] Laura L. Sparks, "Mid-Ohio Valley Cultural Resources Survey: Wood County Cultural Resources Survey," August 1990. On file at the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, Charleston, W.Va.
[5] Numbers in parenthesis correspond to WV SHPO survey numbers on file at the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office in Charleston, West Virginia.

integrity, unlike the majority of the other rural churches which have had alterations such as siding, additions, and/or removed or altered bell towers.[6]

Lastly, Bethel Presbyterian Church is one of only nine of the documented rural Wood County churches that includes a churchyard cemetery. Among European Americans and other Christian cultures, churchyard burials were common practice from the Colonial period through the early twentieth century and provide the backdrop and setting for many rural churches. Though many churchyard cemeteries filled quickly and burials at "rural cemeteries" became popular by the mid to late nineteenth century, new interments continue in the Bethel Presbyterian Church Cemetery today.[7]

**SUMMARY**

Bethel Presbyterian Church is a locally significant example of the Gothic Revival style of architecture found in the rural Wood County area. Along with its associated cemetery, it retains excellent historic integrity of location, setting, workmanship, design, feeling, materials, and association.

[6] While nearby Pleasants County has not had a comprehensive architectural survey in order to compare late nineteenth and early twentieth century rural church architecture, a review of recent street view and aerial images of nearby churches labeled on USGS topographical maps reveals a similar pattern – simple gable-front church buildings, lacking architectural style, and having undergone alterations. For example, see Willow Island Baptist Church and Belmont Baptist Church.
[7] National Park Service, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places," National Register Bulletin (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1992), 4-5.

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** *Works cited and referenced*

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Bethel Presbyterian Church Minutes. 1845-present. On file at the Bethel Presbyterian Church, Waverly, West Virginia.

Chambers, S. Allen, Jr., et al, *What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1983.

Gunter, Dawn. "Standing Long and Strong: Bethel Presbyterian Has Services in Same Church since 1905," *Parkersburg Sentinel*, 11 September 1992.

Henderson, Gaylee. Interview by Barry Calebaugh. 18 Oct 2013.

National Park Service, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places," National Register Bulletin, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1992.

Sparks, Laura L. "Mid-Ohio Valley Cultural Resources Survey: Wood County Cultural Resources Survey." August 1990. On file at the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, Charleston, W.Va.

Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*. Revised edition, Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1992.

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Wood County, West Virginia tax map: Union District, Map 120, Parcel C

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The National Register boundary corresponds to the legal parcel of the Bethel Presbyterian Church at the time of construction.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number **Photos** Page **9**

Photographer: Erin Riebe, WV SHPO
Date: 27 August 2013

Photo 1 of 10 Church building with cemetery in background. Facing southwest.

Photo 2 of 10 Main elevation of church building from parking lot. Facing south.

Photo 3 of 10 Main and side elevations. Facing southeast.

Photo 4 of 10 Rear and side elevations. Facing northeast.

Photo 5 of 10 Church interior looking towards Table from entrance. Facing south.

Photo 6 of 10 Church interior showing pews, windows, and pressed tin ceiling. Facing east.

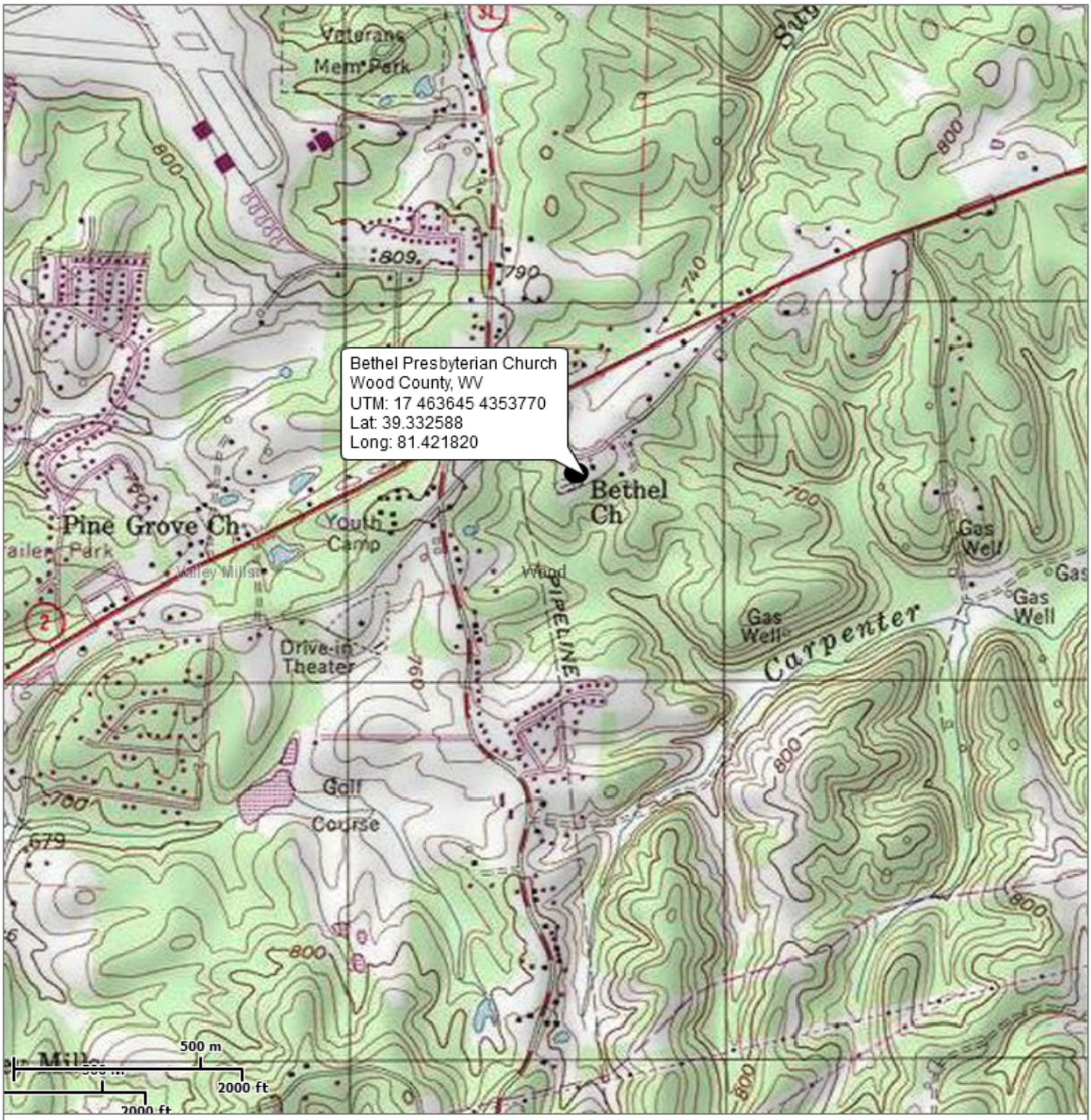
Photo 7 of 10 Church interior from entrance. Facing south

Photo 8 of 10 Cemetery with church in background. Facing northeast.

Photo 9 of 10 Cemetery. Facing southwest.

Photo 10 of 10 Cemetery. Facing southwest.

# Bethel Presbyterian Church, Wood County, WV




This map is created by West Virginia GIS Technical Center for West Virginia SHPO GIS Map Viewer.

**Coordinate System:** WGS 1984 Web Mercator (Auxiliary Sphere)

Map Created on 11/25/2013

Architectural
- Point
- Area

National Register
- Point
- Area

**User Notes:**

USGS 7.5' topographic quadrangles: Valley Mills

UTM: 17 463645 4353770
Lat: 39.332588
Long: 81.421820

**Disclaimer:**

The West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office Interactive Map is designed to provide professional consultants, state/federal agency employees and the public with a means to make informed decisions with regards to the cultural resource location.

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# Bethel Presbyterian Church, Wood County, WV

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Map Created on 11/25/2013

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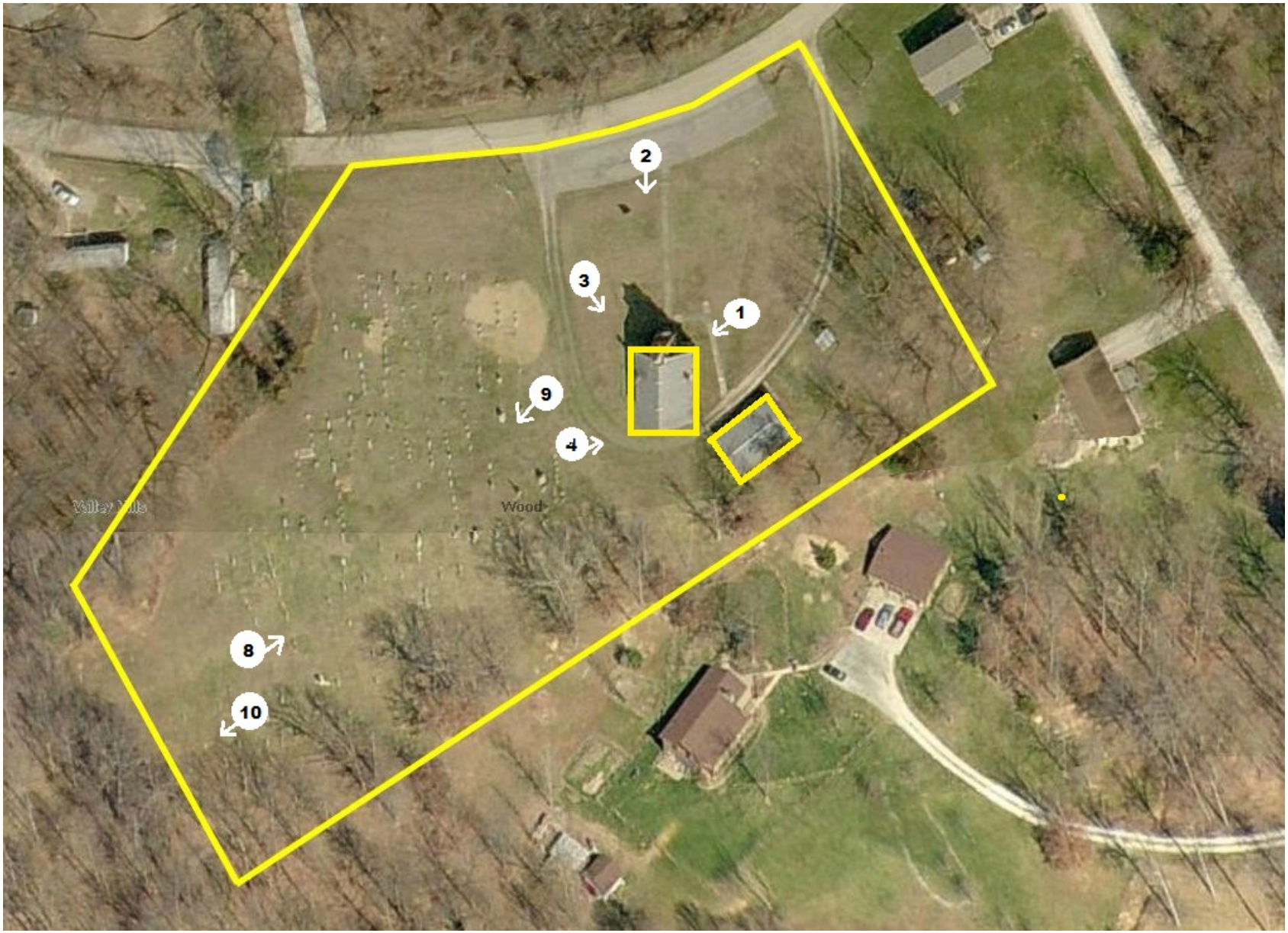
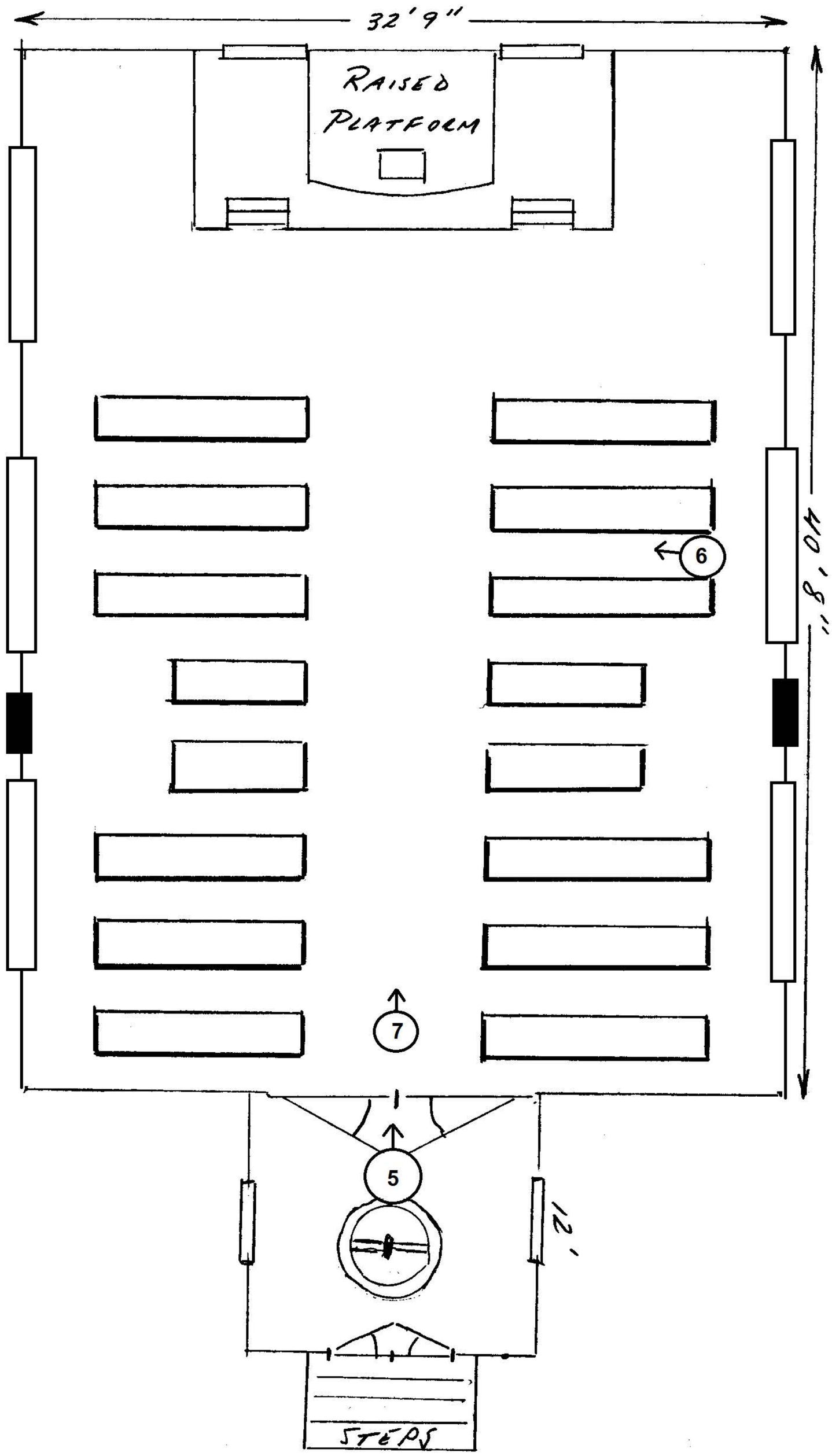
Bethel Presbyterian Church
Wood County, WV
National Register Boundary

1 – church building
2 – cemetery
3 – annex




Bethel Presbyterian Church
Wood County, West Virginia
Photograph vantage points




**Bethel Presbyterian Church**
**Wood County, WV**

5 → **Photo vantage pionts**

221
517

221
517
HOLY

HENRY

SMITH