

St. Luke Methodist Church

Reisterstown, Maryland

Private Access

ST LUKE CHURCH, the only black church in Reisterstown, was built in the 1880 in the Gothic-revival style, the most popular ecclesiastical style of the 19th and 20th centuries. The very simple small structure immediately south may be the original church, built immediately after the Civil War. The very simple Community Building west of the church was built in 1898.

There is a possibility that the structure immediately south of the present church structure could be of the Freedmans' Bureau program, a Federal department created after the Civil War (1867?) to help the newly freed black people adjust to their new life? Freedmans' Bureau structures all look like this and they are very rare today. Harford County has one in relatively original condition. Freedmans' Bureau buildings were combined churches, schools and community centers, a function whwch this structure filled.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC Saint Luke Methodist Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Bond Avenue

6th

CITY, TOWN
Reisterstown

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE
Maryland

COUNTY
Baltimore County

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

Local history

NAME c/o Rev. Kenneth Jackson

Telephone #: 833-5246

STREET & NUMBER
52 Bond Avenue

CITY, TOWN
Reisterstown

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code
Md 21136

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Baltimore County Courthouse

Liber #: Jacob Wolf Plat.

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Towson

STATE
Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH is a frame church one storey in height, three bays in length plus a shallow chancel slightly narrower than the nave and one bay in length. The gabled roofs are quite steep and the structure is oriented with its principal entrance centered in the north gable, facing the street. A small frame vestibule has been added at the principal entrance. The marble cornerstone in the stone foundation at the north-east corner is inscribed:

ST. LUKE'S M. E.
CHURCH
BUILT 1880

Presented by Mrs. Minnie Snowden Baker

Exterior walls of the original structure are covered with narrow weatherboards; the walls of the vestibule are covered with German siding. The windows flanking the vestibule, in the north wall of the nave, have pointed-arched heads with intersecting muntins forming tracery. The double-hung sash below, and those of the side windows which do not have the arched heads, are 1/1, filled with obscure glass. Originally the sash probably had muntins describing 6 or 9 lights in each. Louvred blinds flank the windows. A round window filled with richly colored opalescent glass is in the south end of the chancel. The northerly verge board, facing the street, is ornamented with a series of applied crosses. The roofs are covered with standing-seam tin and a patch on either side between the northerly and middle bays indicates the locations of the original chimneys.

Within is a single space having a sloping plastered ceiling following the lower chords of a scissors-truss. The chimneys remain internally, corbled out from the walls near the ceiling. Windows are trimmed with a beaded architrave having a bold backband. The pews are of poplar with walnut trim consisting of a back cap, scrolled arm, applied arched bollection moulding and roundel on the end. Centered in the chancel, behind the pulpit, is a reed-pipe organ with an elaborate oak case made by Seabold Organ Co., Elgin, Ill. From the middle of the nave hangs an electrified gas chandelier having three tiers of lights, sixteen in the top tier, eight in the middle and four in the bottom, all with glass globes. Contemporary spherical white opal glass fixtures supplement the early fixture. Brackets for kerosene lights remain between windows.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			Local History

SPECIFIC DATES 1880 ; 1898

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"In the midst of bondage and involuntary servitude a group of Slaves heard the call of God. This call propelled them to join forces in praising God for their existence. They were strong "dedicated warriors" who refused to curse the Almighty for their predicament.

Somewhere in the presence of their cries and lamentations--God heard their voices and touched the hearts and conscience of their taskmasters. This led to the slaveholders having compassion on the spiritual needs of their Black Brothers in chains.

In a time when our nation was at the brink of civil war... when class consciousness was the order of the day, when fashions were designed to conceal rather than reveal; our forefathers were restricted to the soil which kept them aware of God's impact upon nature.

It was with these circumstances that God planted the seeds of our Church. Just as Christ stated to Peter: "Upon this rock I will build my church and the very gates of hell shall not prevail against it"-- so He built St. Luke Methodist in the hearts of the community."

Quote From: (JEM Community Center Memorial Booklet, St. Luke Meth Church, n.d. p.7)

1834 actually marks the beginning of a spiritual community in the black community of Reisterstown. From the pages of the Class Record Book of the Asbury Chapel (Now Reisterstown United Methodist Church) we find an account of 43 colored slaves asking for and receiving permission to hold Class Meetings in that year. Out of this meeting, St. Luke Methodist was born.

C. 1850 we have an account of a few slaves gathered to worship in Old Side Church. This was an integrated fellowship for the leader was white. It indicates that the people were growing ever more organized. More converts were being made and the growing congregation moved from place to place as the need for room increased. Usually it was in private homes. (JEM Community Center Booklet, p. 7.)

At about this time, Mr. George Kephart entered the picture, Born in 1811, son of David Kephart and Margaret Reister, daughter of Philip Reister. Kephart had by 1856 purchased 259 acres of the Moale estate (Walnut Grove) and was living there. (HMF 16/479ff) In 1867 he was

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

St. Luke Methodist Church, JEM Community Center Memorial Booklet
 (privately published, n.d.)
 Marks, Lillian B., Reister's Desire (Baltimore, 1975)
 Land Records, Baltimore County Courthouse, Towson, Maryland

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Part of extensive Jacob Wolf Flat

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY James T. Wollon, Jr A.I.A.

NAME / TITLE Cornelia M Ives, Project Coordinator

DATE August, 1978

ORGANIZATION Historic Reisterstown, Inc

TELEPHONE 833-3078 (Ms. Ives)

STREET & NUMBER 430 Main Street

CITY OR TOWN Reisterstown

STATE Md 21136

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
 The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 267-1438

A small cellar has been dug out for a furnace. The floor joists are circular-sawn and they are supported by a large hewn oak girder at mid-span.

Immediately south of the church is a parish hall, possibly the original church, a one-storey frame structure, on a stone foundation, two bays in length, having its principal entrance with five-light transom centered in the north gable end; a single window is on either side of the entrance. All windows have narrow beaded frames with 6/6 sash, formerly flanked by shutters, now missing. The exterior walls are covered with asphalt shingle siding.

Within is a single room having a flat plastered ceiling. Windows are trimmed with a beaded two-plane architrave without backband. A beaded wainscot surrounds the room. A hatch gives access to the attic, not inspected.

West of the church, closely oriented to and having its gable end facing the street is the Community Building, a two storey frame structure three bays in length. Its principal entrance is centered in the north end, sheltered by a bracketed shed-roofed hood. A window is on either side and a double window is above in the second storey. All windows are 4/4 with plain trim. The exterior walls are covered with asphalt shingle siding.

The marble cornerstone in the northeast corner of the stone foundation is inscribed:

Sept. 19,
1898

Within is a small vestibule flanked by an enclosed stair and a small room; a single large room is to the south having a beaded wainscot, plastered walls and acoustic tile ceiling. The second floor was unavailable for inspection.

A well-tended cemetery lies east and south of the church with numerous simple marble and granite markers.

8. Significance, continued

moved to deed a half acre of this land to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Balto. Co. "for a coloured School House and Graveyard" (EHA 61/82-83) (Marks, op.cit. p. 193)

With the schoolbuilding erected and in operation, the slaves then "sought permission to hold religious services in the School" (JEM Booklet, p.7)

In the 1880's, with the congregation ever growing, Rev. Valentine, who led the church at this time, began dreaming of a larger church. There being no ground, the people approached George Kephart once again. He gave them permission to use part of the cemetery to build the church, provided that this shouldn't interfere with the school. (JEM Booklet, p.7) The money for the church was raised through subscription. The church was built in 1880. It was placed in front of the school building. The Bromley 1898 Atlas shows two buildings on the church site.

Between 1922-1949 another building was secured for use by the congregation as a Community Hall. It was secured from the Brothers of Lodge #1489 and had been built by the Odd Fellows of Reisterstown in 1898. It was purchased at public auction in 1941 by Joshua Dett one of the pillars of the church. (JEM Booklet, p. 9.)

St. Luke's Church, the only black church in Reisterstown, was built in 1880 in the Gothic-revival style, the most popular ecclesiastical style of the 19th and 20th centuries. The very simple small structure immediately south may be the original church, built immediately after the Civil War. Could this be a structure of the Freedmans' Bureau, a Federal department created after the Civil War (1867?) to help the newly freed black people adjust to their new life? Freedmans' Bureau structures all look like this and they are very rare today. Harford County has one in relatively original condition. Freedmans' Bureau buildings were combined churches, schools and community centers. The very simple Community Building west of the church was built in 1898.



BA 1255

St Luke Methodist Church

Bond Ave - Reist. Md

Robert Dasch

8-78

N. East



BA 1255

St. Luke Methodist Church - Parish House

Bond Avenue

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
Robert Dasch

8-78

N-East