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NR LISTED 6/30/95

OMB No. 1024-0018

NR LISTED

JUN 30 1995

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

AHPP

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1. Name of Property

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Historic Name: First Christian Church

Other Name/Site Number: LO 0087

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2. Location

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Street & Number: 120 E. Walnut Street

Not for Publication: N/A

City/Town: Paris

Vicinity: N/A

State: AR County: Logan

Code: AR 083

Zip Code: 72855

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**  
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Slaton  
Signature of certifying official

4-25-95  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

=====  
**5. National Park Service Certification**  
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I, hereby certify that this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic: Religion Sub: Religious Facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Current : Religion Sub: Religious Facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification:**

Romanesque  
Late Gothic Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation Stone roof Asbestos  
walls Stone other Concrete, Wood  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

**Summary**

Constructed from 1930 to 1936, the First Christian Church at 120 East Walnut Street in Paris is a one-and-a-half story, T-shaped structure with a full basement. Built of native rough-cut stone and steel-reinforced concrete, the church is covered by two gables with parapets and features two unequal-height towers on the front elevation.

**Elaboration**

Constructed over a six year span from 1930 to 1936 (cornerstone is inscribed 1935), the First Christian Church at 120 East Walnut Street in Paris is a one-and-a-half story, T-shaped structure with a full basement that is mostly above ground. It is built of steel-reinforced concrete and native rough-cut stone laid in irregular courses. The rear of the building comprises the top of the "T" (though offset) and measures 95 by 35 feet, while the stem of the "T" forms the front-elevation sanctuary and measures 53 feet wide and 28 feet in length for a total of 9600 interior square feet. Two parapeted gables comprise the roof and are sheathed with diamond-patterned asbestos shingles. There are two parapeted, flat-roof towers of unequal height flanking the front elevation with the taller tower placed at the east end of the facade. The towers feature corner pilasters (the western tower has only the two front elevation pilasters) that project above the parapet in the manner of battlements and are capped with spherical finials. There is one interior stone chimney at the rear of the church.

The fenestration of the church reflects the Romanesque Revival influence of the building and every window and door opening is formed by either a semi-

circular, segmental, or flat arch that employ *voussoirs* and keystones. In a historic photograph believed to have been taken shortly after construction, the original windows on the front elevation are shown as wood-frame, eight-pane, single-hinged casements. It appears that most were replaced at an unknown date with metal-frame, four-pane (without the vertical muntin, but with colored, yellowish glass), single-hinged casement windows. On the front elevation the original five single-hinged casement windows in the center group were replaced with six of the newer windows.

The front, or northern, elevation features the two entrance towers, both with impressive concrete and stone steps/stoop and semi-circular arched door openings. Although both tower entrances were probably originally open (a historic photograph reveals the eastern tower entrance open and the western tower arch enclosed with wood doors), the doorways are now enclosed on this elevation by aluminum-frame, double-leaf glass doors and stuccoed spandrels. A single segmental-arched casement window is located above the doorway on the second story of both towers, while the taller eastern elevation tower also contains a pair of semi-circular-arched wood louvered vents on a third level.

Both the above-grade basement and first floor walls between the towers are fenestrated with a tripartite group of casement windows; however, the groupings differ in the design of the center window. The basement window is crowned by an almost flat segmental arch, while the first floor center window boasts a taller segmental arch with two smaller segmental arches within the spandrel. The second story contains four symmetrically placed casement windows, and a narrow, arched wood louvered vent is placed above near the peak of the gable end.

The eastern elevation is defined by the tower to the north and a projecting gable wing to the south. The tower contains a semi-circular arched open entrance on the basement level and a similar, but shorter, arched open window on the first story that has since been enclosed with plate glass. Both upper levels are identical to those on the front facade of the tower. The eastern-facing wall between the tower and the projecting wing is fenestrated by a flat-arched window group on the basement level with three modern aluminum-frame, two-over-two (with horizontal muntins) single-hung windows. A comparable window group is located directly above on the first-story level, but with casement windows and a segmental arch. The north-facing wall of the projecting wing has a similar arrangement, though offset and with two-over-two windows exclusively. The east-facing gable end has a pair of large window groups with almost flat arches on the basement level (which appears to be the first story on this elevation). Each group contains two large modern two-over-two windows with a much narrower two-over-two window in between. A somewhat smaller pair of window groups punctuate the first story. The second story is lighted by a group of three segmental-arched, two-over-two windows, and a small rectangular attic vent is placed near the peak.

The rear, or southern, elevation contains an assortment of flat-arched window groups with the modern-type two-over-two windows in addition to a stuccoed gable wall dormer with five one-over-one windows.

Although it extends a greater length than its eastern elevation counterpart, the western elevation is similarly arranged, differing only in that the first two levels have a pair of single windows as opposed to groups of three. The north-facing wall is punctuated by four various-sized windows on three different levels, but the principal attraction and distinction of this

elevation lies in the single-story porch and staircase situated within the ell. The porch presents a semi-circular arched opening to the west and the north. The staircase is located along the north wall of the gable end and ascends to the top of the porch where a single-leaf entrance allows access to the sanctuary. A segmental-arched casement window is positioned to the north of the doorway. The western elevation of the tower consists of a group of three two-over-two, single-hung windows on the basement level, and identical casement windows on the first and second stories.

The interior of the church was renovated from 1947 to 1948 with new paint, wood, and pews. From 1957 to 1960, a central heating and cooling system was installed, and the fellowship hall and education facilities in the basement were completely remodeled. Otherwise, the significant features of the sanctuary have not compromised since it was constructed.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A

Areas of Significance: Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1930 - 1936

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

## Summary

The First Christian Church is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as a unique example of ecclesiastical design which combines an essentially Collegiate Gothic plan and massing with a robust native fieldstone and arched-opening construction that is more reminiscent of the Romanesque Revival style.

## Elaboration

The First Christian Church is located on part of the R. D. Waddill Addition to the New Town of Paris that was laid out on January 15, 1881. In 1890, trustees for the First Christian Church acquired the current property from Herman Baer and Moses Joel for \$150. A temporary building was at first utilized; however, a public subscription to raise funds was soon initiated under the leadership of Colonel Thomas Whitaker, O. C. Wood, and Colonel J. E. Norfleet. The impressive new two-story, Gothic Revival-styled church was constructed of locally sawn and planed lumber and boasted a tall steeple with a 900 pound bell. The bell was said to have been cast in Europe by a famous bell maker and shipped to an antebellum southern plantation before being purchased by the church in Paris.

After the new church was built, Rev. J. T. Jones of Alma became the first full time pastor and was succeeded by D. P. Abbey on March 25, 1889. The church continued to grow into the next century, and by 1925 the construction of a new church, to be built of brick or native stone, was contemplated. A building committee was selected, among whom were J. C. Berry, chairman, T. B. Harris, W. M. Johns, Robert Norfleet, C. B. Harley and T. E. Gill, secretary. This new committee was not utilized, however, until the existing church was severely damaged by a storm on June 2, 1929 and declared unsafe. Plans for the new church were hastily revived, and services were temporarily held at the court house. In the following year, 1930, the damaged church was sold and construction of the current structure was begun on the original site under the leadership of Dr. F. J. Sisson.

The design and construction of the new church proved to be quite an ambitious project and took six full years to complete. Expenses were defrayed by having much of the labor and materials donated by the congregation and other members of the community. Still, the cost of steel-reinforced construction was high, and one member noted that "it (the construction) started in the middle and grew - and grew some more." When completed in 1936, the approximate cost of construction totaled \$44,846. The congregation was, however, spared the expenditure of a new bell as the "famous" bell was relocated to the new structure.

The First Christian Church is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as a unique example of ecclesiastical design which combines an essentially Collegiate Gothic plan and massing with a robust native fieldstone and arched-opening construction that is more reminiscent of the Romanesque Revival style.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Information submitted by Elizabeth Titsworth, September 1994 based upon the following sources:

- "Christian Church Celebrates Centennial." *Paris Progress*. November 14, 1985.
- Cody, Reverend Charles. "The Story of a Church." 75th Anniversary Booklet, 1960.
- McEver, Reverend Daniel. "100 Years of Service to God and Community." 100th Anniversary Booklet, 1985.
- "Re-dedication for Church." *Paris Express*. February 6, 1944.
- "Sixtieth Anniversary of Christian Church." *Paris Express*. November 29, 1945.
- Titsworth, Elizabeth. *Paris One Hundred Years*. 1979.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- X State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property: Approximately one

UTM References:		Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>15</u>	<u>433800</u>	<u>3905410</u>	B	—	—	—
C	—	—	—	D	—	—	—

Verbal Boundary Description:

Part of the west half of the NE quarter of Section 11, Township 7 North, Range 26 West, and including all of the east half of Block Ten -- being: Lots One, Four, Five and Eight of the Waddill addition to the Town of Paris, Arkansas.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

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**11. Form Prepared By**  
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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: April 24, 1995

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201



First Christian  
Church  
Paris, Logan Co,  
Ark.  
UTM:  
15/433800/  
3905410



