

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

DRAFT

# 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 Presbyterian Church, Jamestown, New York

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

name of related multiple property listing \_\_\_\_\_

## Location

street & number 509 Prendergast Avenue  not for publication

city or town Jamestown  vicinity

state New York code 36 county Chautauqua code 013 zip code 14701

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  
\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_ statewide      X local

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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 Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**  
 Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**  
 County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
 (Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |              |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1            | 0               | buildings    |
|              |                 | sites        |
|              |                 | structures   |
|              |                 | objects      |
| 1            | 0               | <b>Total</b> |

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

N/A

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

N/A

**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.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS  
 Other: Byzantine and Romanesque Revival  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Brick, Stone, Concrete, Concrete  
 foundation: Block  
 walls: Brick, Concrete Block  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 roof: Slate, Asphalt, Metal Roofing Panels  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State

---

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Paragraph**

First Presbyterian Church, located at 509 Prendergast Avenue in Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York, is a unified building constructed in stages in the city's historic center, three blocks east of North Main Street and five blocks north of the Chadakoin River. The complex was constructed during four building campaigns between 1896 and 1992, and includes the sanctuary, chapel, parish house, annex, education building, and cloister. The sanctuary and chapel are two outstanding examples of Neo-Byzantine-Romanesque architecture from the twentieth century, each with a high degree of architectural integrity. In 1924, Ralph Adams Cram and Frank W. Ferguson, partners of the renowned architecture firm from Boston, designed the sanctuary in the style of an early medieval Italian basilica. Built between 1925 and 1926, the three-aisle, brick and stone edifice features a five-story transept tower, polychromed roof trusses, and windows produced in the studios of Harry Wright Goodhue, Gabriel Loire, and the firm of Otto Heinigke and Thorton Smith. Associated architects Ellis W. Beck and Norman M. Tinkham of Jamestown supervised the sanctuary's construction. In 1961, Beck and Tinkham prepared plans for a one-story, aisleless chapel with a square-ended apse. Completed in 1963, the chapel has a loggia along the north and south elevations, polychromed roof trusses, and a white Carrera marble altar and reredos, carved in Italy according to the architects' design. Loire created all twelve of the chapel's colorful dalle de verre windows. In addition to the chapel, Beck and Tinkham designed the parish house, annex, and education building. In 1992, Habiterra Architecture and Landscape Architecture added the cloister, re-ordered the east end of the sanctuary, and enhanced the landscaping surrounding the complex.

---

**Narrative Description**

**Location and Site Plan**

First Presbyterian Church is located in Jamestown, a small city at the southeastern end of Chautauqua Lake, in the southwest region of New York State. Jamestown is fifty miles west of Erie, Pennsylvania, and seventy miles southwest of Buffalo, New York. Jamestown's historic center is situated on a steep hillside along the north bank of the Chadakoin River. First Presbyterian Church sits at the top of the hill, occupying the eastern half of the square city block bounded by Prendergast Avenue to the east, Fifth Street to the south, Spring Street to the west, and Sixth Street to the north. Prendergast Avenue is a major north-south thoroughfare, approximately one mile in length, which stretches from downtown, at Second Street, to Lake View Cemetery on the city's north side.

The building sections form a complex tightly grouped at the south end of the rectangular-shaped lot, facing east toward Prendergast Avenue (Figure 1). The unique massing of each section of the building gives the complex a highly irregular ground plan and profile. Shared features, including buff brick cladding, round arches, and Classical details, help unify the complex's overall appearance [Photo 1]. On the north end of the lot is a parking lot and a small, square yard at the corner of Prendergast Avenue and Sixth Street. The parking lot has thirteen parking bays and street entrances on the north and east sides. In 2014, a stone cross and pedestal were installed in a small garden located on the chapel's north side. A narrow alley, a remnant of the former Stillers Alley that once bisected the block east and west, stretches from Sixth Street to the rear of the parish house. The alley terminates at a playground and small garden located at the rear of the annex and sanctuary.

First Presbyterian Church is surrounded by a mix of land uses, building types, and architectural styles (Figure 2). First Covenant Church, a Colonial Revival church and school building from 1952, occupies the western half of the block it shares with First Presbyterian Church. The block directly south of the church is part of the National Register's Jamestown Downtown Historic District and includes two contributing resources: the Jamestown Telephone Company, an Art Deco office building from 1930, and the Pennsylvania Gas Company, a Prairie-style office building from 1955. The block also

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State

includes multiple additions to the Jamestown Telephone Company and an expansive surface parking lot. The Robert H. Jackson Center is a National Register eligible resource, located at the southeast corner of Prendergast Avenue and Fifth Street. The center includes the former Kent Mansion, an Italianate brick house from 1859, and an auditorium built by the Scottish Rite Masons. The area directly north and east of the church remains a residential neighborhood, with houses dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the west side of Prendergast Avenue, directly across the street from the church, two-story, wood-frame houses are closely set on narrow lots. A four-story brick apartment building stands at the northeast corner of Prendergast Avenue and Fifth Street, directly across the street from the sanctuary. The church owns the parking lot at the northwest corner of Prendergast Avenue and Sixth Street.

The National Register's Lakeview Historic District, two blocks east of the church, lists numerous homes representing the work of several prominent architects. Both the Jamestown Downtown Historic District and the Lakeview Historic District include multiple institutional and residential buildings designed by architects Beck and Tinkham. Their work within the boundaries of these districts includes the First National Bank Building, the Board of Education Building, the W. F. Leidblad House, and the J. Carter Lyman House. Beck and Tinkham designed other noteworthy buildings in Jamestown, including the Jamestown Senior High School, the Samuel G. Love Elementary School, the former Westminster Presbyterian Church, and the 1963 addition to the Prendergast Library.

## Sanctuary

### Exterior

The sanctuary, constructed from 1925 to 1926, is a two-story, Neo-Byzantine-Romanesque style church building, with a poured concrete foundation and five-story bell tower located on the south elevation. Originally designed as a free-standing building, the sanctuary has two main entrances, one facing east toward Prendergast Avenue and the other facing south toward Fifth Street (Figure 3). The building is characterized by its asymmetrical floor plan, irregular massing, and structural polychrome (Figure 4). Cram and Ferguson's design is a twentieth century interpretation of an early medieval Christian basilica. The plan is composed of interconnected rooms, starting with a large, two-story audience hall or nave in the center, surrounded by subsidiary rooms, including a raised chancel, semicircular apse, bell tower, baptistery, and side aisles. The sanctuary was built with medieval construction techniques, including load-bearing masonry walls; columns and piers; engaged buttresses; timber roofs; barrel and groin vaults; and semicircular arches for windows, doors, and decorative arcades. Assorted roof forms (e.g., gable, shed, conical, and pyramidal) and window styles (e.g., semicircular, bifora, and ocular) amplify the building's picturesque charm. The building is highly embellished with limestone details, including Classical moldings, dentils, cornices, scrolls, and column capitals. Brick and limestone are used in combination to create decorative stripes and counterchange patterns on the surface of the walls. Blocks of limestone laid in an asymmetrical pattern, and bas-reliefs of Christians symbols decorate the street-facing elevations.

The façade (west elevation) is divided vertically into three sections, corresponding to the nave and side aisles [Photo 2]. The gabled nave facade is higher and wider than the side aisles and is organized into three parts. The first is a projection comprised of three integrated components: a barrel-vaulted porch, a portal, and two buttresses. The porch's barrel vault is raised on two slender columns and covered by a gable roof. The column capitals are carved with lion heads on each corner and four pairs of birds standing on orbs with their tail feathers crossed. The face of the porch is decorated with rosettes and an Agnus Dei, a lamb with a halo bearing a cross and banner that symbolizes Christ and his sacrifice. The portal consists of a center set of wood paneled doors, a blank tympanum, two narrow windows, and a dwarf gallery. Gabled buttresses that taper as they rise from the portal are decorated with scrolls and medallions of early Christian symbols: an anchor, crown, ship, and lily on the south buttress, and a dove with an olive branch, lion, cornucopia, and "pelican in her piety" on the north buttress. Located directly above the door is a magnificent wheel-style window with plate tracery and colonettes for spokes. The window is surrounded by a tetramorph, the symbolic representation of the four gospel writers: an angel for Saint Matthew, a lion for Saint Mark, an ox for Saint Luke, and an eagle for Saint John. Above the window, a limestone band stretches across the breadth of the gable. A cross medallion in the gable depicts four symbols of the Virgin Mary: a pomegranate, a rose, a fleur-de-lys, and a moon and star. A pinecone sits on the roof ridge.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State

The side aisles are set back from the nave wall. Their facades are similarly adorned with two limestone bands and a medallion depicting peacocks drinking from the Fountain of Life. At the opposite end of the building, the sanctuary's west elevation consists of a semicircular apse with two arched windows and a conical roof.

The baptistery, transept tower, south vestibule, side aisle, and narthex projection are arranged along the sanctuary's south elevation [Photo 3]. The tall, "Lombard" style bell tower has a square plan and walls rising straight up from the foundation for five stories.<sup>1</sup> The tower is surmounted by a heavy cornice, two windowless attics, and a pyramidal roof. A seven-foot bronze cross rests on the tower's roof ridge. Each of the tower's five stories is decorated with a unique structural polychrome pattern. Haphazard and irregular bands of limestone decorate the second story, for example, and bands of brick and limestone counterchange decorate the third story and lower attic. Arched window openings increase in number with the height of the tower. The top two stories are open belfries with three- and four-light window openings, or biforas, divided vertically by colonettes. The tower base is flanked by the baptistery and the south vestibule. The south vestibule has a set of wood paneled doors surmounted by a relieving arch decorated with rosettes and a Christogram. The tympanum is filled with brick and limestone counterchange. At the other end of the building, scrolls decorate the inverted corners of the gabled narthex projection. A bifora window lights the stairwell inside. Limestone-capped wall buttresses are centered between each side-aisle window, and the clerestory windows are visible above the shed-style roof of the side aisle. On the north elevation, the side aisle, clerestory, and narthex projection are similarly arranged. The gable roof covering a two-story projection, comprised of the pastor's room, north vestibule, and organ loft, was extended over the annex [Photo 4].

### Interior

The sanctuary's interior consists of a wide center aisle or nave and two narrow side aisles, each covered by an open timber roof [Photo 5]. Seven wood trusses divide the nave into eight bays, and each bay has a semicircular arch dividing the nave from the side aisle. The roof trusses, purlins, and braces are stenciled in bright colors, and the walls throughout are plastered and painted [Photo 6]. The clerestory over the nave has six round arch windows on the north side and five on the south side. Two rows of brass light fixtures, decorated with crosses, arches, and a winged eagle and ox, hang from the roof trusses. Round light bulbs have been replaced with flame-shaped light bulbs. An enclosed narthex, spanning the breadth of the sanctuary's east end, contains two sets of switchback stairs leading to the gallery above the narthex [Photo 7]. A wood narthex screen, with glazed windows and doors, divides the narthex from the nave [Photo 8]. The side of the screen facing the nave is intricately carved with rows of close-set rosettes in plan, pilasters, Corinthian capitals, and a guilloche pattern encircling rosettes [Photo 9]. In 1992, the narthex wall was moved west approximately seven feet in order to connect the sanctuary to the new cloister addition through an existing door in the north side aisle (Figure 5). The gallery above the narthex was also extended. The original narthex screen, paneled side-aisle doors, and balustrade were reinstalled in their new locations. At this same time, the original black and white checkered floor tiles were removed, the sanctuary floor repaired, and white marble floor tiles installed throughout. Above the gallery, the wheel window and stained glass by Loire feature prominently on the interior of the east elevation.

The nave consists of a center aisle and two rows of wood pews. On the north side, the nave arches are raised on six cast stone columns. On the south side, the colonnade is interrupted by a pier supporting the northeast corner of the tower. The transept is square in plan and covered by a plastered groin vault. The tower's second stage, located at the clerestory level, contains one of the sanctuary's two organ chambers. The organ chamber is accessed via a spiral staircase located between the baptistery and chancel. Wood grilles decorated with offset rows of arches conceal two arched openings into the organ chamber. An arched doorway in the west wall of the transept leads to a raised, barrel-vaulted baptistery. The original cast stone baptismal font is no longer extant. The south side aisle terminates at an archway leading into the transept. The wood paneled doors connect to the south vestibule [Photo 10].

<sup>1</sup> Northern Italian or Lombard-style bell towers frequently are free standing, but they also may be connected to the church. They are square in plan with walls that rise straight up from the foundation without the support of buttresses. The number of arched window openings regularly increases with the height of the tower, and the upper-most openings in the belfry are unglazed. Typically, the tower is surmounted by a pyramidal roof.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State

At the west end of the nave, a triumphal arch opens to a shallow, barrel-vaulted chancel raised four steps above the nave. Ambones, carved with cherubs and blind arches, are incorporated into wood parapets that partially enclose the chancel. An intricately carved communion table and set of three identical chairs are centered at the rear of the chancel. In the mid 1960s, a wood platform located beneath the communion table and chairs was removed (Figure 6). A columnar choir screen, at the chord of the apse, frames the communion table and partially conceals the choir and organ console. The screen consists of six marble columns raised on pedestals and three quad-matched marble parapet slabs. An intricately carved wood entablature resting on top of the columns is embellished with a guilloche pattern, gilded cross medallions, and gilded rosettes. Two openings at each end of the screen allow passage into the choir loft. The apse is semicircular in plan, covered by a semidome, and furnished with amphitheatrical style seating for the choir. The apse has two arched windows with wide reveals. An organ loft located at the northeast corner of the building, above the pastor's room and north vestibule, opens into the apse, chancel, and north side aisle. The chamber openings in the apse and chancel are concealed by elaborately carved wood screens decorated with Classical details [Photo 11]. Face pipes that once decorated the organ screen in the apse were replaced with fabric panels.

A pastor's room and vestibule are located at the northeast corner of the building. The toilet and sink in the pastor's room were removed. The north vestibule, once an exterior entranceway into the sanctuary, provides access to the annex.

Harry Wright Goodhue created the two stained-glass apse windows, which were installed during the sanctuary's construction. The center window is entitled "Christ in Benediction," and the other apse window is a grisaille window [Photo 12]. Cram and Ferguson designed the remaining windows in the sanctuary, which were manufactured and installed by Hope's Windows of Jamestown. These windows were a simple monochrome cost saving measure intended to serve temporarily until replaced by more ornate stained glass. In 1944, the congregation began replacing the original Hope's windows, starting with the baptistery windows. The themes of the stained-glass windows in the baptistery are mother and her children, Jesus blessing the children, and Madonna and Child. In 1953, Heinigke and Smith created ten stained-glass windows for the side aisles that depict the parables and miracles of Jesus. In about 1961, the congregation replaced the pair of transept windows. One transept window depicts symbols of the Christian tradition and the other depicts symbols of the Presbyterian tradition. In 1966, Gabriel Loire created eleven clerestory windows and the small windows comprising the wheel window at the east end of the sanctuary. Each clerestory window illustrates an attribute associated with one of Jesus' apostles, minus Judas Iscariot. Loire's design for the wheel window was inspired by the poem "Canticle of the Sun," by Saint Francis of Assisi. The window depicts the sun, moon, stars, light, darkness, fire, fish, and water. The remaining windows throughout the sanctuary are the original windows made by Hope's Windows.

## **Chapel**

### **Exterior**

The chapel is a one-story, aisleless, Neo-Byzantine style church building affixed to the east elevation of the education building [Photo 13]. Both additions were designed by Beck and Tinkham and were built simultaneously between 1961 and 1963 [Photo 14]. The chapel is clad in buff brick, with Classical ornamentation and structural polychrome that match the sanctuary. Limestone is used for arches, cornices, and window trim. The chapel has a rectangular plan and a concrete block foundation. At the center of the chapel is an open audience hall or nave, with a shallow, gable-roofed apse at the east end, and loggias along the north and south elevations. A single, low-pitched gable roof covers the full width of the structure, including the nave and loggias. The chapel's main doors are located at the west end of the nave and open to the central hall of the education building.

The chapel's east elevation consists of the gable ends of both the nave and the apse. The exterior wall surfaces of the nave and apse are decorated with limestone blocks arranged in an asymmetrical pattern. A decorative blind arch is the main focal point of the chapel's east elevation. The arch consists of a raised pedestal, three small windows, and a brick and limestone counterchange pattern in the field below the windows. Buttresses are centered between the semicircular

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State

windows on the nave's north and south elevation. The facade of each loggia is set back from the nave wall. The east-facing door opening of the north loggia is surrounded by a limestone arch raised on engaged columns and covered by a small shed roof. This loggia is open to the elements on two sides and leads to a paneled door that opens into the education building. The south loggia is enclosed within the cloister addition and fitted with a handicap-accessible ramp. The paneled door that originally opened into the education building was reinstalled in the loggia's east-facing door opening. An arched window fills the opening above the door. Limestone bands and a brick and limestone counterchange pattern decorate the upper section of the loggias' walls. The side elevations of both loggias consist of arcades raised on columns with cushion capitals.

**Interior**

The chapel is an aisleless nave divided into five bays by four wood roof trusses [Photo 15]. The trusses rest on exterior wall buttresses and are stenciled with gold meandering vines. The floor is marble tiled, the ceiling is wood, and the walls are plastered and painted. Two rows of wood pews flank the center aisle. The pew ends are intricately carved with a rope netting pattern. Meandering vines decorate the brass light fixtures hanging from the ceiling. The center aisle terminates at a raised, barrel-vaulted apse. White marble is used for the apse floor, steps, altar, reredos, and wainscotting. The altar is raised on two columns and affixed to the east wall. A faux tabernacle serves as a pedestal for the cross. The wood arch framing the opening to the apse is carved with interlacing crosses and circles. At the west end of the nave, a wood chapel screen divides the nave from the central hall of the education building [Photo 16]. The screen consists of glazed paneled doors, arched windows, and intricately carved details, including rosettes. Wood window grilles were removed and placed in storage. Gabriel Loire created all twelve of the chapel's dalle de verre windows, which date to the chapel's construction and depict events in the life of Christ, including the nativity [Photo 17].

**Parish House, Annex, and Education Building**

**Exterior**

The parish house, annex, and education building are three sections of an interconnected building designed by Beck and Tinkham and built during two stages, in 1926 and 1961-1963. The sections have buff brick cladding, limestone trim, and semicircular arches that harmonize with the sanctuary.

The flat-roofed, two-story parish house was built in 1926 on the burned ruins of the Martin L. Fenton House, (built 1896), and incorporates a portion of the house's original stone foundation and ground floor plan. Today, the parish house is largely enveloped by the annex, education building, and cloister. A portion of the façade can be seen from Prendergast Avenue, including five pairs of casement windows located above the cloister's shed roof. Each window is enriched with a lintel carved with a semicircular arch. Above the windows, a limestone cornice stretches across the east façade. A large window on the first floor can be seen from inside the cloister. The parish house's front porch was removed in 1991, prior to the addition of the cloister. In 1926, Beck and Tinkham also built a two-story annex between the parish house and the sanctuary on a brick foundation. The gable roof over the annex is an extension of the roof that covers the sanctuary's organ loft. The annex has casement windows on its east and west facades. The two first-floor windows on the east façade are surmounted by a relieving arch filled with stacked bricks to match the windows in the pastor's room of the sanctuary.

In 1961-1962, the education building and chapel were added onto the north side of the parish house. The education building has a concrete block foundation and bands of casement windows with limestone lintels and sills. The education building has three components: the principal, two-story block with a flat roof, a one-story projection on the west side, also with a flat roof, and a stair hall with a shed roof on the east side. The main entrance is on the north elevation, facing the parking lot. The deeply recessed door has a limestone frame, a hipped roof supported by large, wood brackets, and a counterchange decoration. In 2023, the original wood-paneled doors were replaced with a steel-frame door.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State

**Interior**

When Beck and Tinkham built the education building in 1961-1963, they updated the interior floor plans of the annex and parish house to create a cohesive design program that included classrooms, offices, kitchens, and social halls. The designed planned a north-south hallway axis, to include ramps on the first and second floors connecting the parish house to the new addition [Photo 18]. Fellowship Hall is the largest room on the first floor and is located directly across the hall from the chapel [Photo 19]. The hall is a large, oak-paneled social room with a fireplace on the south wall and wood beams on the ceiling. The room is furnished with two built-in buffets on the west wall. A wood-paneled board room, a kitchen, and a storage room are located on the west side of Fellowship Hall [Photo 20]. Classrooms, offices, and a choir rehearsal room are located on the second floor [Photo 21]. The education building was originally designed with one large, open classroom located directly above Fellowship Hall. Accordion room dividers separated the room into four smaller classrooms. These dividers were replaced with permanent framed walls. The basement under the education building and chapel contains a second fellowship hall with a stage, a kitchen, a large storage room, and a recreation area [Photo 22].

A small number of architectural elements from the original 1896 Fenton House survive, including portions of the original ground floor plan, chimneys, and the millwork framing the bay window in the pastor's study [Photo 23]. Three offices on the first floor, including the pastor's study, correspond to the den, sitting room, and drawing room in the Fenton House (Figure 7).

**Cloister**

**Exterior**

In 1992, Habiterra Architects and Landscape Architects added a one-story cloister onto the east facade of the parish house and the south elevation of the chapel. The cloister is clad in buff brick and covered by a shed roof with metal sheeting. The main door, facing east toward Prendergast Avenue, is surmounted by a relieving arch and covered by a gable roof projection. Two large arched windows flank each side of the front door. The cloister's east façade is decorated with limestone blocks laid in an asymmetrical pattern, a limestone band stretching across the face of the building, and limestone keystones in the brick arches over the windows. A short connecting hall, with a flat roof, joins the cloister to the sanctuary's narthex. Two narrow windows in the connecting hall have lintels carved with semicircular arches. The cloister's east elevation is fitted with large, built-in planters, stairs, and a ramp to the front door.

**Interior**

The cloister contains a large reception area, a library, and rest rooms. The reception room has an open wood ceiling, carpeting, and a built-in planter [Photo 24]. The cloister addition envelops the chapel's south cloister, which is fitted with a ramp connecting the cloister to the central hallway in the education building [Photo 25].



**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**  
Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**  
County and State

**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.
- 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:

- 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**

1925-1966

**Significant Dates**

1925-26, 1944, 1953, 1961-62, 1966

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Cram and Ferguson,

architects; Beck and Tinkham, architects

Warren Construction Co., L. H. Ludwig & Co.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance is 1925 to 1966. This forty-one-year time span includes the construction of the sanctuary and concludes with the installation of Gabriel Loire's clerestory and rose windows in the sanctuary.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

[Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.]

First Presbyterian Church meets Criterion C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a significant example of twentieth-century Neo-Byzantine-Romanesque ecclesiastical architecture, exhibiting the work of two important architecture firms: Cram and Ferguson of Boston, a nationally known architecture firm, and prominent local architects Beck and Tinkham. The sanctuary, designated a local landmark by the Jamestown Planning Commission in 1996, is historically significant as the only building associated with master architect Ralph Adams Cram in western New York, and one of only three he designed in the Neo-Byzantine-Romanesque style. The building is also significant for its noteworthy architectural features, including the wood-carved chancel furnishings, narthex screen, and organ screens. The parish house, annex, education building, and chapel are significant for their association with prominent local architects Ellis Beck and Norman Tinkham and their architectural features, including the chapel's wood-carved chancel arch, pew ends, and chapel screen. The building complex retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the period of significance, 1925 to 1966. The original location, design, materials, and craftsmanship remain intact. The First Presbyterian Church complex is representative of the high-quality design and craftsmanship common among Jamestown's wood carvers, architects, and builders in the twentieth century.

---

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

**Historical Context**

**Founding of Jamestown**

The origins of the city of Jamestown trace to 1806, when James Prendergast, a practicing physician, left his home in Pittstown, New York, in search of land and financial opportunity. When Prendergast encountered the running water flowing near the outlet of Chautauqua Lake and saw the abundance of trees in the surrounding area, he recognized the potential for a lumbering and milling business.<sup>2</sup> In 1808, he purchased 1000 acres of land surrounding the Chadakoin River, and, in 1811, arrived with his family, built a house, a sawmill, and a dam. Within four years, thirteen families were living in the area, mostly from New England and eastern New York. In 1815, Thomas Bemus, Prendergast's nephew, surveyed the land and established parcels measuring 50 by 120 feet that sold for \$50 each. Thomas Disher subsequently drew a map of the lots surveyed by Bemus.<sup>3</sup> Disher's map established a grid of square blocks, equal in size, and bisected by a north-south alley (Figure 8). The original street grid extended for five blocks from west to east between Washington Street and Prendergast Avenue, and five blocks from north to south between Sixth Street and First Street. First Presbyterian Church sits on the northeastern most block of Disher's original street grid. The community was known as "The Rapids" until the first post office was established in 1817, and the name was changed to Jamestown in honor of James Prendergast. Jamestown was incorporated as a village in 1827 and a city in 1886.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Peter A. Lombardi, *Jamestown, New York: A Guide to the City and its Urban Landscape* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press) 5.

<sup>3</sup> Kathleen Crocker and Jane Currie, *Images of America: Jamestown* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing) 12.

<sup>4</sup> "Chronology of City's History," *The Post-Journal*, 28 September 1971.

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown

Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York

County and State

### Founding of First Presbyterian Church

First Presbyterian Church was organized on February 17, 1834.<sup>5</sup> Prior to this date, there was one Calvinist Protestant church in Jamestown, organized in 1816 by Reverend John Spencer, a Congregational minister and missionary from the Connecticut Missionary Society, and nine members of the Jamestown community. In 1818, this church was received into the Presbytery of Niagara under the 1801 Plan of Union, or accommodation plan.<sup>6</sup> In accordance with the accommodation plan, the church continued operating under its established Congregational form of church government but was overseen by the presbytery. In 1821, the church was registered with the State of New York and named "First Congregational Church of Jamestown." In 1824, Reverend Isaac Eddy, a Congregational minister became the church's first fulltime minister. Reverend Eddy served as minister until September 7, 1830.

In 1830, the Presbytery of Buffalo, organized in 1823, installed Reverend Erastus J. Gillet as pastor. Gillet, an 1829 graduate of Auburn Theological Seminary, arrived in Jamestown after serving as supply pastor of the nearby Gowanda Presbyterian Church from 1829 to 1830. Reverend Gillet was described as a "zealous Presbyterian, seeming to believe that his mission was to presbyterianize the church."<sup>7</sup> Disagreements over church polity led Gillet and fifty-four church members to separate from the Congregational church and form a new Presbyterian church.<sup>8</sup> Reverend Gillet served as minister of the church until 1837. He returned twice as a supply pastor, in 1839 and 1853.

The new community first worshipped on the upper floor of the Trinity building, a wood-framed commercial building at the corner of Second and Spring Streets. In 1834, the congregation began building its first church edifice, a white, wood-framed, Greek Revival style church building with a domed bell tower. In July 1834, they began worshipping in the basement of their new church, and, in August 1835, dedicated the finished building. In 1877, a fire destroyed the church. The following year, the congregation commissioned Buffalo architect Milton Earle Beebe to design a new brick church to be built on the same lot. This neo-Gothic church was dedicated on July 13, 1879. The church was torn down in May 1923.

In the late nineteenth century, First Presbyterian Church established two mission churches to serve Jamestown's growing population. Grace Memorial Chapel was constructed at the corner of Main and Fourteenth Streets and dedicated on November 24, 1887. In 1903, the chapel was sold to Grace Evangelical United Brethren Church. The church building is extant. On May 4, 1887, First Presbyterian Church established a sabbath school, called Palmer Street Sabbath. Palmer Street Sabbath grew into Olivet Chapel. In 1889, Olivet Chapel was located at the corner of Larkin Avenue and Third Street Extension. Olivet Chapel was later renamed Westminster Presbyterian Church. In 1929, Beck and Tinkham built a new church edifice for Westminster Presbyterian Church. The building is extant, but the church is now closed.

### A New Church Edifice

In May 1922, the church's Board of Trustees announced plans to sell the downtown property and build a new church edifice on a new site. There is no record explaining the reasoning behind their decision. However, the city's downtown had become increasingly centralized during the early twentieth century (Figure 9). Industrialization, the railroad, and the introduction of a trolley system brought about a concentration of commercial, industrial, and business activity to downtown Jamestown. By the early 1920s, few Jamestown residents were living near Cherry and Third Streets (Figure 10). Residents were migrating toward larger, newer, and cleaner neighborhoods.<sup>9</sup> Third and Cherry Streets had become one

---

<sup>5</sup> *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Jamestown, New York, and Commemoration of its Seventieth Anniversary* 1.

<sup>6</sup> John Quincy Adams, *A History of Auburn Theological Seminary 1818-1918* (Auburn, New York: Auburn Seminary Press) 15-23. The 1801 Plan of Union was a mutual and joint effort of General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America and the General Association of Congregational Churches of Connecticut to evangelize the rapidly growing number of pioneers moving to settlements in the west, including settlements in western New York.

<sup>7</sup> *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization of the First Congregational Church, of Jamestown, N.Y.* (Democrat Book and Job Office) 32.

<sup>8</sup> Frequent disagreements between ministers and the congregation's church polity eventually led to the dissolution of the 1801 Plan of Union. Presbyterian ministers wished to establish a church governed by a session and Ruling Elders.

<sup>9</sup> Lombardi, *Jamestown, New York*, 14.

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown

Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York

County and State

of the busiest corners in the city. Multiple lines of the Jamestown Street Railway Company converged at this corner and the railroad station was just two blocks south on Cherry Street. At the same time, financial investors, some of whom were members of the newly formed building committee, wished to construct a ten-story hotel on the site of the old church. The Hotel Jamestown would house visitors to the popular furniture expositions held in downtown Jamestown. Constructed in 1923, the Hotel Jamestown still stands on this site.

The church abandoned the downtown property for a more fashionable residential neighborhood uphill, away from Jamestown's industrial and commercial core. Charles W. Herrick, chair of the church's Board of Trustees, was living in a grand house at the corner of Pine and Sixth Streets. Many prominent families had built large homes along Fifth and Sixth Streets. In June 1922, the church purchased the house and a portion of the property belonging to the estate of Martin L. Fenton. Fenton was a local businessman who died the previous February. The lot measured 170 by 120 feet and was located at the corner of Prendergast Avenue and Fifth Street. The Fenton House was a large, three-story Colonial Revival dwelling from 1896, designed by architect Ernest George Washington Dietrich of New York City. Also in 1922, the building committee commissioned Ralph Adams Cram to design a new church building. The cost of the church was \$250,000. Beck and Tinkham were the associated architects, and the Warren Construction Company was the contractor. On May 18, 1925, ground for the new church was broken, and the corner stone was laid on August 2, 1925. The church was dedicated upon its completion on January 2, 1927.

In 1924, a year before construction of the sanctuary began on the south side of the Fenton House, a one-story, brick "Guild Hall" was added onto the north side of the Fenton House (Figure 11). In March 1926, the Fenton House was largely destroyed by a fire caused by an electrical wire running from the basement of the house to the construction site next door. The interior of the Guild Hall was also destroyed. After the fire, the interior of the Guild Hall was refurbished, and a new parish house was constructed on the ruins of the Fenton House. The sanctuary and Fenton House were originally separate buildings, but an annex was added, at the southwest corner of the parish house, connecting the sanctuary directly to the new parish house. The interior of the parish house was, again, largely destroyed by fire in March 1932 and subsequently rebuilt. In December 1961, the Guild Hall was torn down in preparation for the addition of the new education building and chapel (Figure 12).

### **Education Building and Chapel**

By 1956, the church members realized they had outgrown the parish house and required more classroom space to accommodate the growing number of children attending Sunday school. The congregation had experienced tremendous growth during the post WWII years. In 1955, the church had 872 members, and an average Sunday attendance of 292 adults. There were 383 children and teachers participating in the Sunday school. Classes had to meet in the cramped basement of the parish house. In 1959, Reverend Gilbert van Bever announced at the celebration of the church's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary that a capital campaign committee had been formed to raise money for a new facility that would house administrative offices, classrooms, and a chapel. Construction began in December 1961 and the completed building was dedicated on Sunday, May 26, 1963. In 1966 congregants met with noted French artist Gabriel Loire. Loire was renowned in the United States for his stained glass designs for First Presbyterian Church, Stamford, Connecticut. First Presbyterian Church is also called the "Fish Church," was designed by architect Wallace Harrison, who also designed Lincoln Center in Manhattan and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2020. Loire agreed to create eleven clerestory windows and the small windows comprising the wheel window at the east end of the sanctuary. The original pastel windows made by Hope were always intended to serve temporarily until the means was available for permanent stained glass. The Loire stained glass windows were created as memorials dedicated to deceased family members. Their final installation marks the completion of contributing features and the end of the period of significance.

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown

Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York

County and State

## Historical Significance

### Cram and Ferguson, architects

In 1922, the five-member building committee, comprised of Fletcher Goodwill, Mayne Reid Stevenson, Alfred Cookman Davis, Orlando Nelson Rushworth, and Frederick Tinkham, commissioned architects Cram and Ferguson to design a new sanctuary. Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1943), the firm's principal designer, was a prolific American collegiate and ecclesiastical architect in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Born in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, and trained in architecture as an intern in the office of Arthur Rotch and George Tilden, the firm he founded in 1889 designed numerous churches, college campuses, collegiate chapels, libraries, and residences throughout the United States.<sup>10</sup> His work also appears in France, Cuba, Panama, and Canada. In France, Cram designed the American Church in Paris and two cemetery chapels dedicated to American soldiers who died in France during WWI. He designed the campus plans for Princeton University, Wheaton College, Rice University, the United States Military Academy at West Point, and many others. A convert to the Anglo-Catholic Episcopal faith, Cram designed numerous Episcopal churches in New England, as well as St. Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue (NR listed 1980, 90NR00655), and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York.

Cram designed more than a dozen Presbyterian churches located throughout the country. His first Presbyterian church commission came in 1906 from Second Presbyterian Church, Springfield, Illinois. His largest commission was East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, which dates to 1931. Cram also served as consulting architect for several Presbyterian churches, including First Presbyterian Church, Edgewood, Pennsylvania, and Westminster Presbyterian Church, Pasadena, California. In 1927, Cram prepared plans for a National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D. C. The 1929 stock market crash thwarted his proposal to build an enormous Spanish Gothic-style Presbyterian Cathedral.

Cram authored numerous books on architecture and the history of architecture. *Church Building: A Study of the Principles of Architecture in Their Relation to the Church* was a highly influential treatise on the art of designing, furnishing, and decorating ecclesiastical buildings. First published in 1899, with updated editions published in 1914 and 1924, *Church Building* became an important sourcebook for church architects throughout the United States. In addition to his work as an architect, author, and lecturer, Cram helped launch the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts in 1897 and the Medieval Academy of America in 1925. He was a founder, and he was an editor of the journals *Commonweal*, *Speculum*, and *Christian Art*, and was editor of the journal *Architectural Review*. Cram served on the faculty of the Department of Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1914 to 1921 and, in 1914, was appointed the first chairman of Boston's City Planning Board. The Episcopal Church celebrates Cram's contribution to ecclesiastical art and architecture as a feast day on his birth date, December 16. On December 13, 1926, Cram appeared on the cover of *Time Magazine*, just three weeks prior to the dedication of the new sanctuary in Jamestown.

### Architectural Significance

Until the early 1920s, Cram had designed all of his Presbyterian churches in some variant of the Gothic style, the medieval style most closely associated with his architecture firm. First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown, however, is a significant departure from the Gothic style, and is one of only three churches he designed in the Neo-Byzantine-Romanesque style.<sup>11</sup> Cram conceived the Jamestown sanctuary as a modernized Italian basilica, with three aisles, load-bearing masonry walls, semicircular door and window openings, as well as a semicircular apse, clerestory, and wood roof. The plan includes a baptistery and bell tower, two features of Italian Romanesque churches that are typically freestanding

<sup>10</sup> Ralph Adams Cram, *My Life in Architecture*, 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ethan Anthony, *The Architecture of Ralph Adams Cram and His Office* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company) 110, 111, 113, 126, 127. The other churches are First Presbyterian Church, Tacoma, Washington, also commissioned in 1922, and Christ Church, Park Avenue, New York, commissioned in 1929.

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown

Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York

County and State

structures but are sometimes integrated into the basilica.<sup>12</sup> The sources of the design include several important Byzantine and Romanesque basilicas constructed in Italy before the thirteenth century. These buildings are some of the world's most important Christian religious landmarks and they embody a contemporary Arts and Crafts ethos that prioritized honesty in building materials that Cram embraced for the design in Jamestown. The wheel window, front porch, and colorful stenciling are patterned after Santa Maria Maggiore, Tuscania; San Zeno, Verona; and San Miniato al Monte, Florence. The column capitals on the front porch, carved with lion heads and birds, imitate the capitals flanking St. Peter's Door inside the narthex of Saint Mark's Basilica, Venice. The organ screen in the chancel is modeled on the screen enclosing the tomb of Dogaressa Felicita Michiel in the narthex of St. Mark's Basilica. Wide bands of counterchange, like the bands wrapping around the transept tower, are found on the tenth century circular bell tower at Sant'Apollinare in Classe, near Ravenna. The templon and synthronon, chancel furnishings found in Byzantine-style churches, such as St. Mark's Basilica and Torcello Cathedral in Venice, are refashioned as a choir screen and seating for the choir in the apse.<sup>13</sup>

The sanctuary, however, is not a reproduction of a medieval church building. Rather, the sanctuary is an Arts and Crafts church that physically embodies Cram's belief in reviving medieval building methods to combat the negative effects of industrialization and mass production. Cram was part of a social movement that sought to combat the feelings of alienation caused by the division of labor, improve society, and restore the joy of making art by reestablishing the role of skilled craftsmen, including bricklayers, stonemasons, wood carvers, and stained-glass artisans. His plans required highly skilled craftsmen, some of whom were working in Jamestown. He carefully planned every aspect of the building to create a cohesive and unified design, including the doors, windows, furnishings, sculptures, light fixtures, and all the interior finishes for the ceiling, floors, walls, and furniture. Cram valued honesty in construction. He adopted cast stone, a modern building material, but did not try to hide the cast stone or make it look like a more expensive material. Signs of decay, old age, and irregularity were powerful design principles among Arts and Crafts architects. Cram designed an asymmetrical floorplan so that the building appeared to have evolved over time, with multiple alterations, repairs, and additions.<sup>14</sup> The organ case in the apse, for example, suggests there was once a window in that location, but, in fact, there never was. Cram placed the case in that location deliberately to make it appear as if the original building, with three apse windows, had been altered. The asymmetrical blocks and irregular bands of limestone on the sanctuary's exterior implies repairs were made using materials close at hand.

Cram attributed his knowledge and passion for Byzantine and Romanesque churches in Italy to having read John Ruskin's three-volume book *The Stones of Venice* at the age of thirteen. In the book, Ruskin, a highly influential art critic in the nineteenth century, identified and described the Byzantine and Romanesque churches he had encountered on his tours through Italy. Ruskin devoted whole chapters to Saint Mark's Basilica and Torcello Cathedral in Venice and referred to San Zeno in Verona in his text. Cram used Ruskin's book as a travel guide on his own architectural sightseeing journeys to Italy. On Cram's first trip in 1887, he visited Pisa, Lucca, Florence, Siena, Assisi, Orvieto, Ravenna, and Venice. Cram called this trip his "apprenticeship and revelation."<sup>15</sup> Having spent six weeks studying and sketching churches in Venice, he had developed a deep sense of admiration for the eclecticism of Saint Mark's Basilica. In his autobiography, Cram wrote, "St. Mark's, thanks be to God, is all sorts of things assembled and crystallized into a sort of

<sup>12</sup> John Musgrove, *Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture* (London: Butterworths) 312.

<sup>13</sup> Robert G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (New York: Oxford University Press) 41. The templon or chancel barrier separates the altar from the rest of the church, marking the border between the heavenly and the earthly. The templon is a low wall upon which stand columns that support a long beam, with a single entrance in the center. The single door in the center indicates the singular pathway to God. The bishop's throne was positioned at the top, center of the seating arrangement. The bishop would deliver his sermon from the uppermost step, taking advantage of the reflecting sound from the curved walls of the apse and dome. The seating also provided greater visibility for the bishop and the clergy.

<sup>14</sup> Cram, *My Life*, 150. Cram observed, "...Byzantine churches... grew from within out..."

<sup>15</sup> Cram, *My Life*, 64. In his autobiography, Cram wrote, "Frequently, in later years, when architectural students have asked me where they should go and what they should do, I have told them that if they travelled widely, saw the old work clearly, and sketched incessantly, it did not much matter – so long as they ended up with a long stay in Venice."

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown

Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York

County and State

apocalyptic unity in diversity.”<sup>16</sup> His encounter with Venetian architecture inspired him to pursue a career in architecture. Cram returned to Italy again, this time visiting Rome, Sicily, Orvieto, Assisi, Perugia, Siena, Florence, Venice, and Verona. What impressed him most at Monreale Cathedral in Sicily was the combination of styles in a single building.<sup>17</sup> In other works, Cram wrote approvingly of the vitality, inventiveness, eclecticism, and charm of the Romanesque churches in Tuscania, Verona, and Lucca. In a lecture delivered at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1915, Cram observed, “That the early ‘Lombard’ work of the eighth century in Italy, as at Toscanella [Tuscania], is novel and vividly original as well as competent and beautiful, is undeniable, and the peculiar qualities there shown reveal themselves century after century in Normandy, Burgundy, and the Rhine country, as well as in Lombardy itself, until in the twelfth century they come full-flower in Padua, Verona, Pavia, Milan, Lucca, and Pisa. In Italy it is a distinguished and an exquisite style, vital intelligent, quick with invention, and with a certain wild charm that well covers its – sometimes refreshing – naivete and even barbarism.”<sup>18</sup>

First Presbyterian Church is one example of Cram’s post WWI deviations from the Gothic style, which, according to his autobiography, *My Life in Architecture*, was sparked by a “renewed consciousness” of Venice, Sienna, Pisa, Florence, and Sicily.<sup>19</sup> The timing of Cram’s renewed consciousness coincided with the construction of several significant Byzantine-Romanesque churches in the United States, including St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church, New York (National Historic Landmark 2016); St. Catherine of Genoa Roman Catholic Church, Somerville, Massachusetts; the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D. C.; and the St. Louis Roman Catholic Cathedral, St. Louis, Missouri. Cram so admired St. Catherine’s Church and the St. Louis Cathedral that he included photographs of the two churches in the 1924 edition of *Church Building*.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps the church with the single greatest influence on Cram’s sanctuary design was Pierpont and Walter S. Davis’s St. John’s Episcopal Church, Los Angeles, completed in 1924. St. John’s ground plan and details are remarkably similar to Cram’s sanctuary in Jamestown. Located directly across the street from St. Vincent de Paul’s Catholic Church, where Cram was commissioned to design the interior, and constructed simultaneously, St. John’s has a wide nave, narrow side aisles, and shallow transepts, each covered by an open timber roof. Like the Jamestown sanctuary, the stenciling on the roof trusses is patterned on the roof at San Miniato al Monte in Florence, Italy. The arrangement of the nave, side aisle, transept, and baptistery of the two churches is nearly identical. Cast stone columns and piers divide the side aisles from the nave. The façade is modeled on San Pietro’s in Tuscania, Italy. Plans for St. John’s, published in *The Architect and Engineer* in 1922, show a chancel screen patterned on the templon at Saint Mark’s Basilica in Venice. Beginning in the nineteenth century, Protestants in the United States adopted early Christian architecture as a means of revitalizing the church.<sup>21</sup> Romanesque architecture represented a return to a period when the church was undivided, prior to the division between the eastern and western churches. The chancel arrangement, with dual ambones and communion table, reflected a nonhierarchical form of church governance and an emphasis on the spoken word. Cram similarly explained his design choice for Christ Church, Park Avenue, “Let us go back to the first style that was evolved to express the Christian religion, long antedating the Gothic of the Catholic West. A Byzantine basis is what we should use....”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Cram included a photograph of St. Mark’s Basilica in his autobiography on page 65.

<sup>17</sup> Cram included a photograph of Monreale Cathedral’s nave arcade in the 1924 edition of *Church Building* on page 137.

<sup>18</sup> Ralph Adams Cram, Thomas Hastings, and Claude Bragdon, *Six Lectures on Architecture* (Freeport, New York: Book for Libraries Press) 14.

<sup>19</sup> Cram, *My Life*, 131.

<sup>20</sup> Ralph Adams Cram, *Church Building: A Study of the Principles of Architecture in their Relation to the Church* (Boston: Marshall Jones Company) 323.

<sup>21</sup> Kathleen Curran, *The Romanesque Revival: Religion, Politics, and Transnational Exchange* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press) 259-293.

<sup>22</sup> Cram, *My Life*, 246.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State

**Associations with Local Craftsmen, Architects, and Builders**

First Presbyterian Church stands as a testament to the talent and dedication of its church members. Several of the architects and contractors who built First Presbyterian Church were members of the church. Architect Norman Tinkham was a member of the church, as well as Victor Campbell Rogerson, owner of the Warren Construction Company. Charles E. Ludwig, president of L. H. Ludwig & Co., was a church member and the contractor for the education building and chapel.

**First Presbyterian Church and the Architectural Heritage of Western New York**

First Presbyterian Church is a significant contributor to Jamestown's architectural heritage and stands as the only example of Neo-Byzantine-Romanesque architecture in Chautauqua County. The sanctuary is the only example of Cram and Ferguson's work in western New York. First Lutheran Church, located nearby at the corner of Chandler and Center Streets, is a Richardsonian Romanesque style church building. First Lutheran Church is also constructed of masonry with round arch windows and doors. However, Richardsonian Romanesque architecture represents an earlier style of architecture, popular during the late nineteenth century, and named after Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson. First Lutheran Church is clad in heavy, rock-faced Medina sandstone, and it has a steeply pitched roof, and square towers in the front corners of the building. In contrast, First Presbyterian Church, smaller in scale, is built of buff brick and has only one tower located at the rear of the building.

The geographically closest examples of Neo-Byzantine-Romanesque Italian churches are in Buffalo, New York, two of which are Saint John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church and Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church. Saint John the Evangelist Church, now closed, is a limestone-clad, single-aisle church building that dates to 1930. Like First Presbyterian Church, Saint John's has a wheel-style window, front porch, and an elaborately painted wood truss roof. St. John's, however, lacks a bell tower and clerestory. Its façade has a simple outline: an unbroken nave wall with a single, broad gable, like the Romanesque churches with false facades in Pavia and Piacenza, Italy. St. John's features geometric ornamentation of glass tesserae mosaic inlay. Blessed Trinity Church (National Register Listed 1979 90NR01229), begun in 1923 and dedicated in 1928, is a three-aisle basilica constructed of hand-made, red brick. Blessed Trinity features an octagonal lantern surrounding a dome over the crossing and an abundance of colorful terra cotta ornamentation, including window and door frames, columns, and arches. Together, the plans, features, materials, and ornamentation of St. John's, Blessed Trinity, and First Presbyterian Church illustrate the diversity and richness of Italian-inspired churches in the early twentieth century, which contribute significantly to the historic landscape of western New York.

**Conclusion**

As the only example of a Neo-Byzantine-Romanesque style church in Chautauqua County, and the only work by famed architects Cram and Ferguson in western New York, First Presbyterian Church is a significant and highly visible architectural landmark in the city of Jamestown. Both the sanctuary and the chapel, designed by noted local architects Beck and Tinkham, retain their original, character-defining features, including an abundance of locally manufactured, wood-carved ornamentation and furnishings. The stained-glass windows represent the work of several noted artists from the twentieth century. Particularly noteworthy are the two windows in the sanctuary by Harry Wright Goodhue, which represent the limited work of a talented artist who Cram called a "great, unhappy, and unique genius."<sup>23</sup> The interior and exterior physical fabric of the building complex continue to convey the work of the original building campaigns. First Presbyterian Church remains a beloved architectural gem among Jamestown's residents and a popular setting for community musical events because of its fine acoustics.

---

<sup>23</sup> Cram, *My Life*, 242. Harry Wright Goodhue died by suicide in 1931, at the age of 26.



First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown

Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York

County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

---

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

1984 *Directory of First Presbyterian Church*. Olin Mills: Church Directory Division. Columbia, South Carolina. Author's personal collection.

1988 *Directory of First Presbyterian Church*. Olin Mills: Church Directory Division. Chattanooga, Tennessee. Author's personal collection.

"A House at Jamestown, N.Y." *The Art Interchange* 41: 6 (December 1898): 147-148.

Adams, John Quincy. *A History of Auburn Theological Seminary, 1818-1918*. Auburn, New York: Auburn Seminary Press, 1918.

Anthony, Ethan. *The Architecture of Ralph Adams Cram and His Office*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007.

Carlson, Clarence C. *The Jamestown Furniture Industry: History in Wood, 1816-1920*. Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press, 2014.

"Competition for St. John's Church, Lost Angeles." *The Architect and Engineer* 68 (February 1922): 75-97.

Cram, Ralph Adams. *American Church Building of Today: A Selection of Photographs of Exteriors, Interiors, Details and Plans of Churches Recently Erected*. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1929.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Church Building: A Study of the Principles of Architecture in Their Relation to the Church*. Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1924.

\_\_\_\_\_. *My Life in Architecture*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1936.

Cram, Ralph Adams, Thomas Hastings, and Claude Bragdon. *Six Lectures on Architecture*. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1917.

Crocker, Kathleen, and Jane Currie. *Images of America: Jamestown*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2011.

Cummings, Charles Amos. *A History of Architecture in Italy from the Time of Constantine to the Dawn of the Renaissance. Volume 1*. New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1901.

Curran, Kathleen. *The Romanesque Revival: Religion, Politics, and Transnational Exchange*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.

Fernie, Eric. *Romanesque Architecture: The First Style of the European Age*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2014.

*The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization of the First Congregational Church, of Jamestown, N. Y.* Democrat Book and Job Office, 1866.

"Fire Burns Temporary House of Worship of Church in Jamestown." *Binghampton Press and Leader*, 18 March 1926, Evening edition.

*First Presbyterian Church 1834-2009: 175 Years in Community*. Author's personal collection.

Goodwill, Fletcher and Alberta Letters. First Presbyterian Church Archives, Jamestown, New York.

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown

Chautauqua, New York

Name of Property

County and State

*History of the First Presbyterian Church of Jamestown, New York, and Commemoration of its Seventieth Anniversary.*  
First Presbyterian Church Archives, Jamestown, New York.

Howe, Kathleen A., and Margaret M. M. Pickart. *Historical Survey Report, Jamestown, New York, Volume 1.* Rochester, New York: Bero Associates, Preservation Consultants. 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Historical Survey Report, Jamestown, New York, Volume 3.* Rochester, New York: Bero Associates, Architects, 1993.

Knight, Henry Gally. *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Italy from the Time of Constantine to the Fifteenth Century.* 2 vols. London: H. Bohn, 1843.

Livsey, Karen E., and Dorothy E. Levin. *Postcard History Series: Jamestown.* Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2011.

Lombardi, Peter A. *Jamestown, New York: A Guide to the City and its Urban Landscape.* Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2014.

Meister, Maureen. *Arts and Crafts Architecture: History and Heritage in New England.* Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2014.

Musgrove, John. *Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture.* London: Butterworths, 1987.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Ruskin, John. *Modern Painters. Volume 4.* New York: Wiley and Hasted, 1858.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Stones of Venice, Volume 1. The Foundations.* New York: Peter Fenelon Collier and Son, 1900.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Stones of Venice: The Sea Stories.* New York: Peter Fenelon Collier and Son, 1900.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Stones of Venice: The Fall.* New York: Peter Fenelon Collier and Son, 1900.

*Selections from the Work of Ellis W. Beck and Norman M. Tinkham, 1919-1929.* Jamestown, New York: Beck & Tinkham, 1930.

Smith, Christine. *St. Bartholomew's Church in the City of New York.* New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1988.

Street, George E. *Notes of a Tour in Northern Italy.* London: Waterstone, 1855.

Various articles from the *Jamestown Evening Journal*, 1922-1934.

Various articles from the *Jamestown Morning Post*, 1927-1932.

Various articles from the *Jamestown Post-Journal*, 1945-1971.

Tannler, Albert M. "Harry Wright Goodhue: Stained Glass of Unsurpassed Distinction and Rare Beauty." *The Stained Glass Quarterly* 99: 2 (Summer 2004): 134-147.

*The Work of Cram and Ferguson, Architects: Including the Works by Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson.* New York: Pencil Points Press, Inc., 1929.

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown  
Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York  
County and State

**MAPS**

*Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York.* Sanborn Map Company, 1886, 1901, 1909, 1921, 1926, 1981.

*Thomas Disher's Map,* Fenton Historical Center Archives, Jamestown, New York.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** .73  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 42.098818 | Longitude: -79.238704 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

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

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown  
Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York  
County and State

---

### 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title John Patrick Smagner, independent scholar: Daniel H. Boggs, editor NY SHPO  
organization N/A date January 29, 2025  
street & number 1845 W. Eddy Street telephone 3125204657  
city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60657  
e-mail [johnsmag@hotmail.com](mailto:johnsmag@hotmail.com)

---

### Additional Documentation

---

Submit the following items with the completed form:

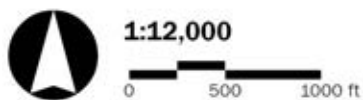
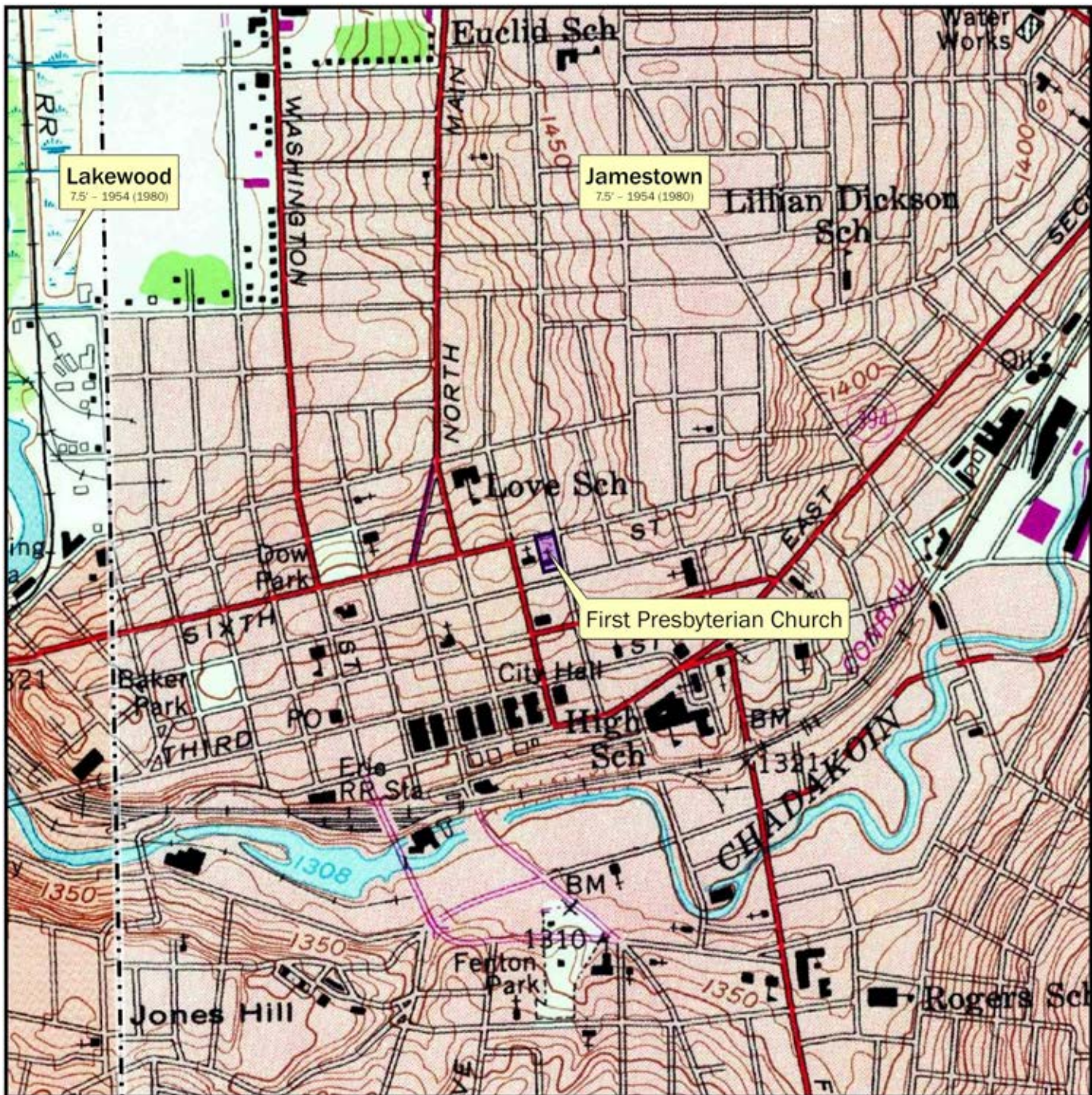
- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown  
Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York  
County and State



 First Presbyterian Church



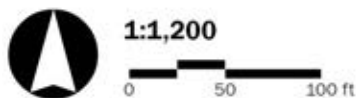
New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 17N

Mapped 02/05/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown  
Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York  
County and State



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 17N

 Nomination Boundary (0.73 ac)

New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2023



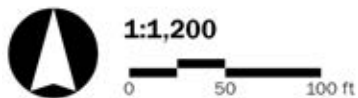
New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

Mapped 02/05/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**  
Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**  
County and State

**Note: The Chautauqua County tax parcel boundaries appear to be inaccurate at this location.  
Parcel 387.33-2-6 has been offset 2.29 m S 22° 58' 8" W to approximate the correct parcel boundary.**



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 17N



Chautauqua County Parcel Year: 2023



New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

Mapped 02/05/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown  
Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York  
County and State



Figure 1: Aerial view of First Presbyterian Church complex



**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**  
Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**  
County and State

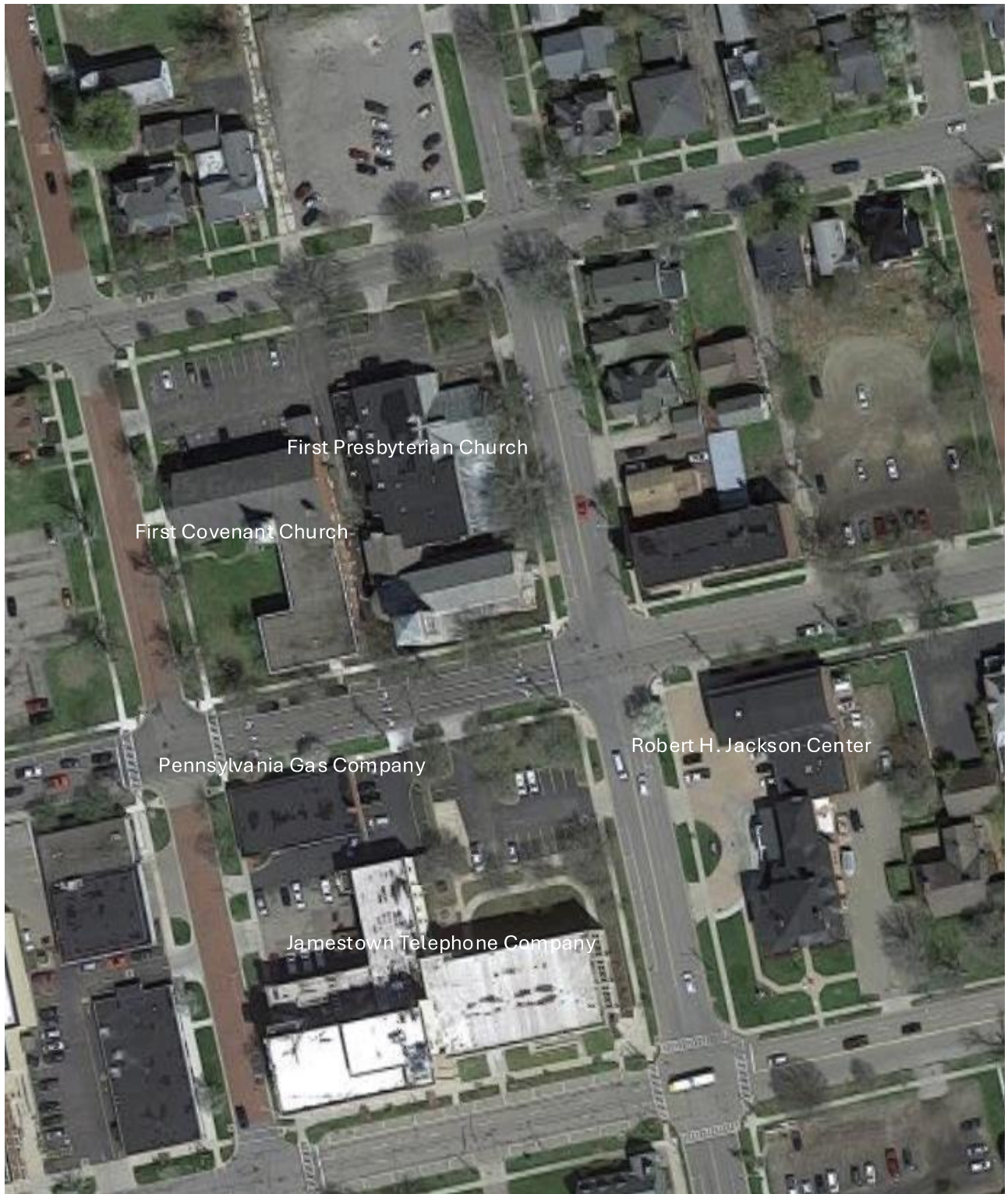


Figure 2: Aerial view of First Presbyterian Church and surrounding area

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State

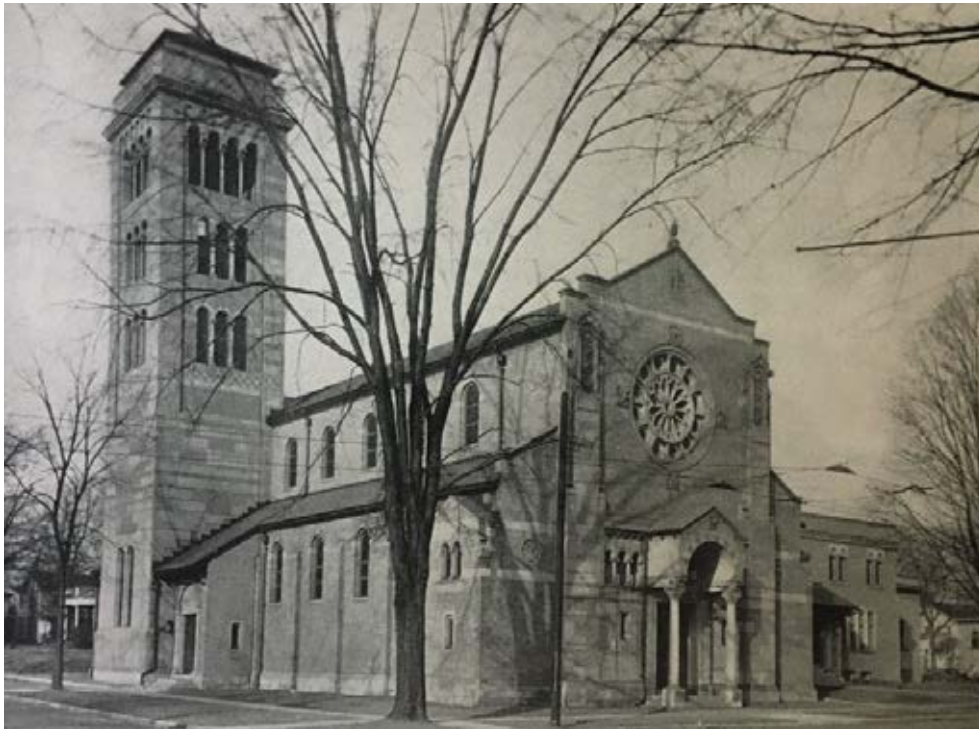


Figure 3: Historic photograph of Sanctuary, Parish House, and Guild Hall

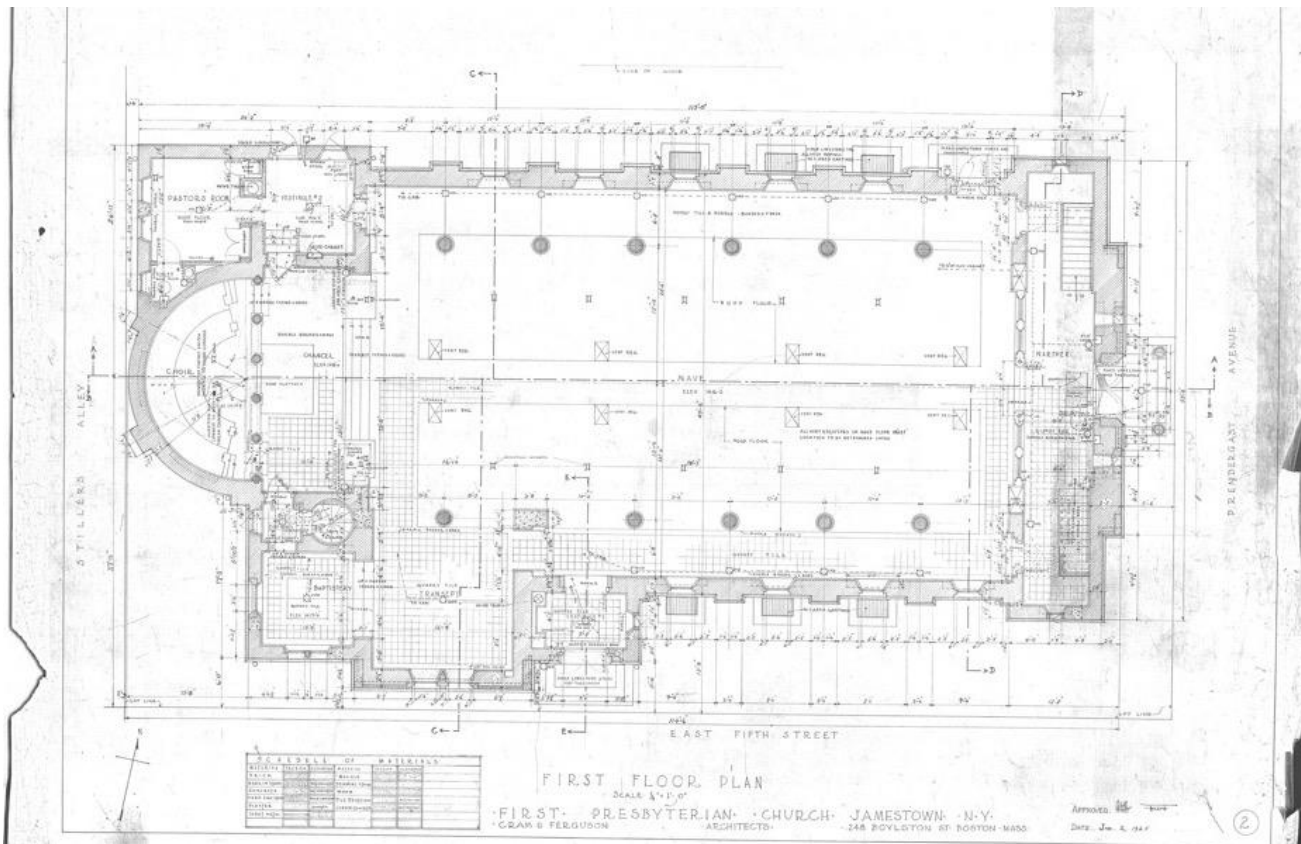


Figure 4: Ground plan of the sanctuary

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**  
Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**  
County and State

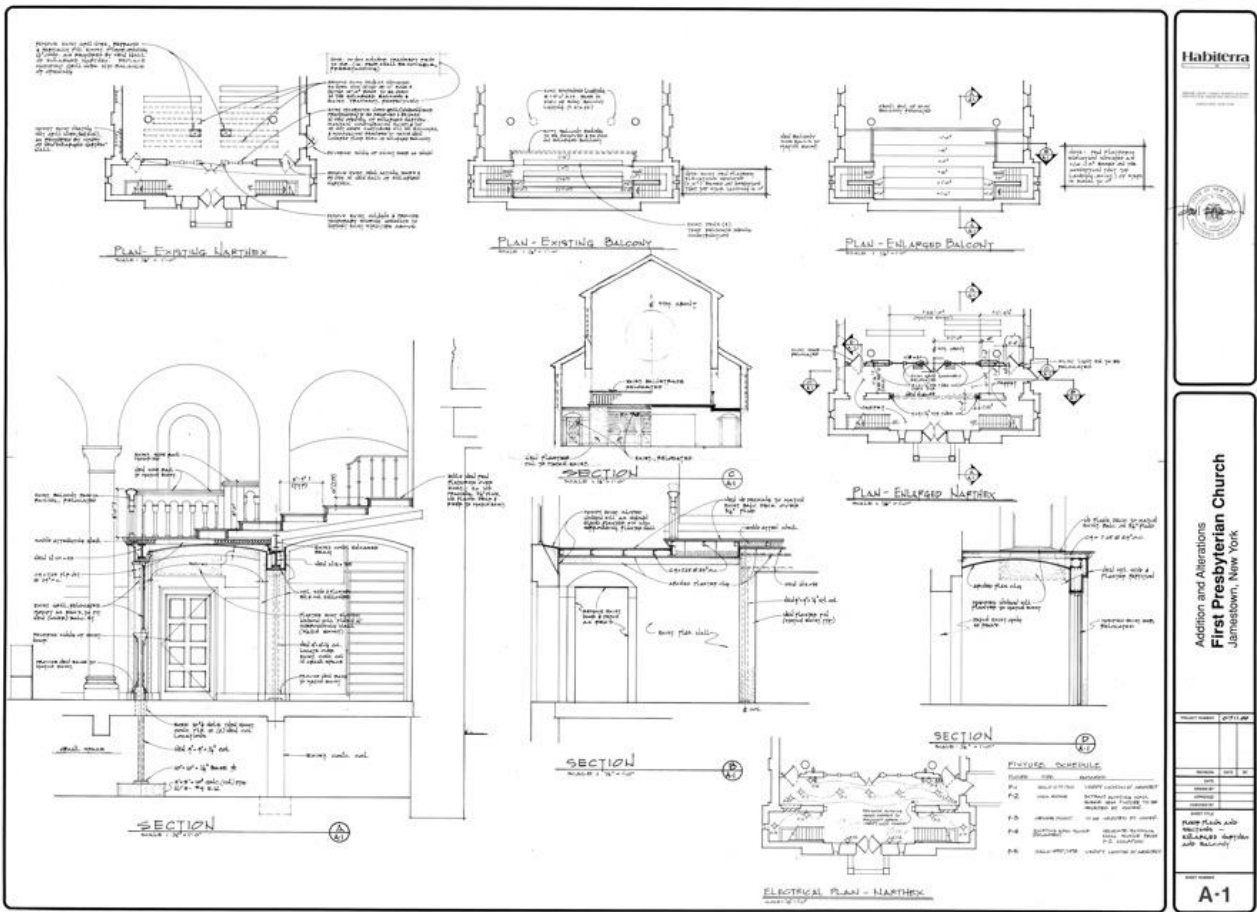


Figure 5: Section drawing of the narthex remodel



Figure 6: Historic photograph of the chancel showing the original linoleum floor tiles and wooden platform under the communion table and chairs

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**  
Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**  
County and State

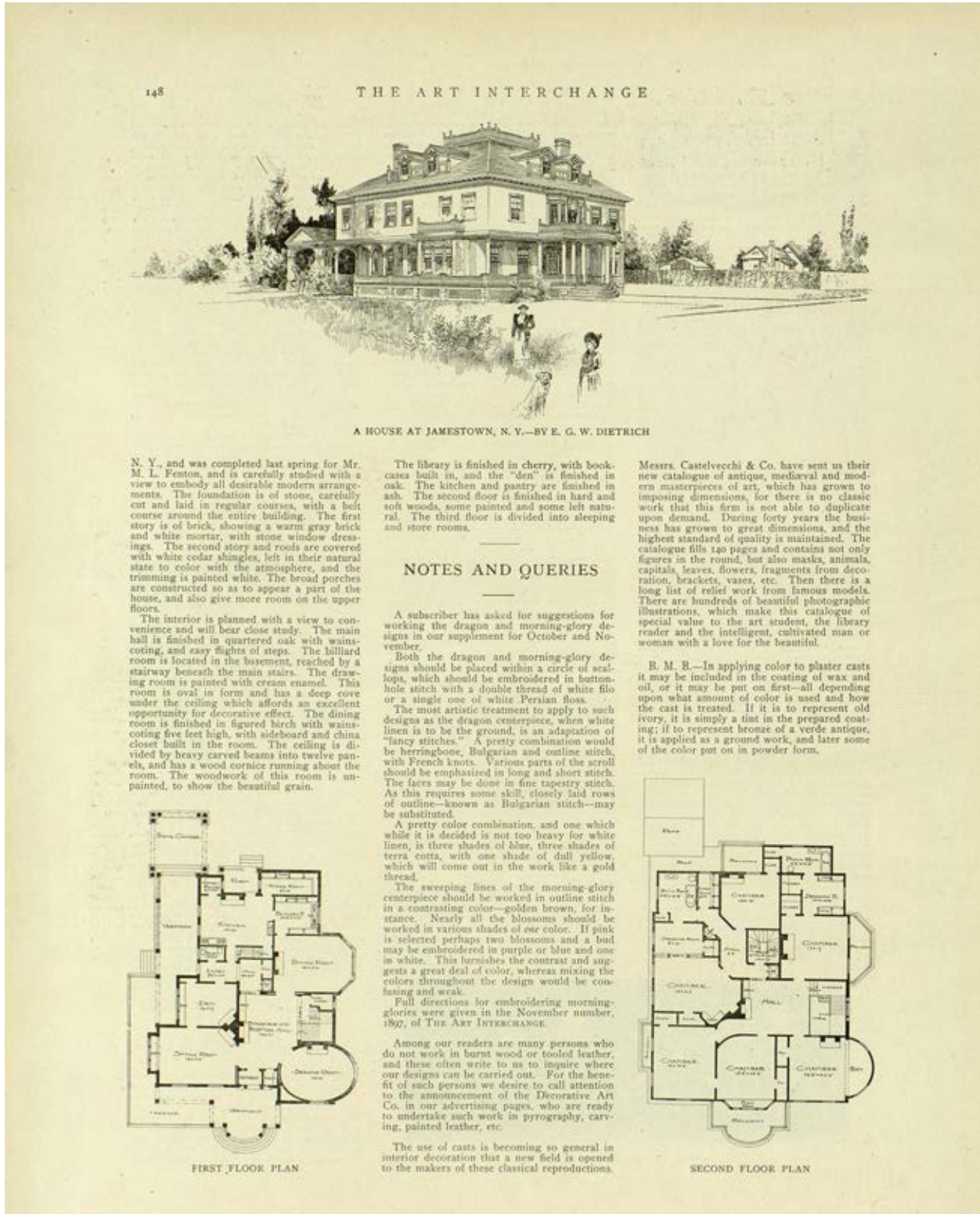


Figure 7: Sketch and floorplan of the M. L. Fenton House

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**  
 Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**  
 County and State

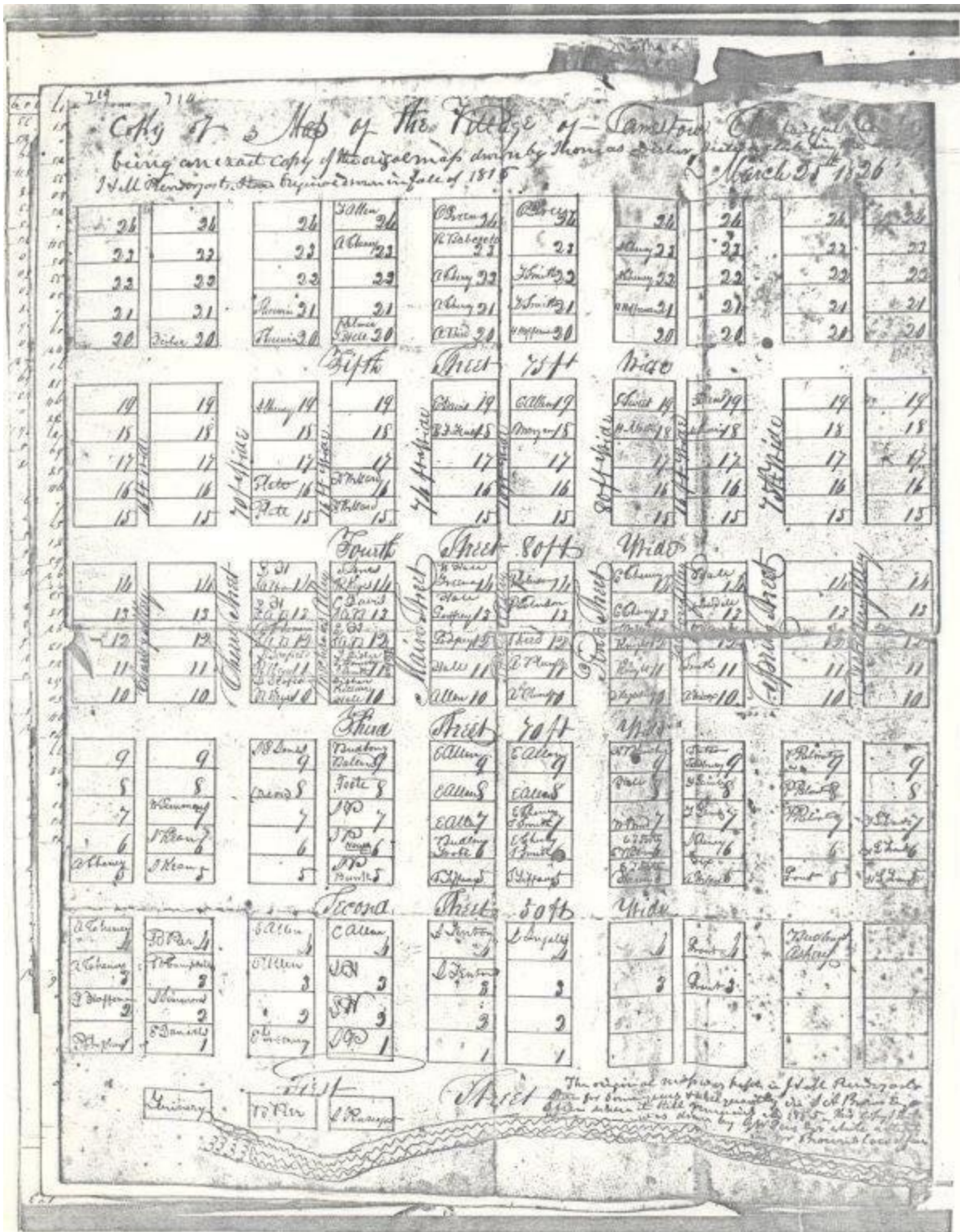


Figure 8: Thomas Disher's Map

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown  
Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York  
County and State

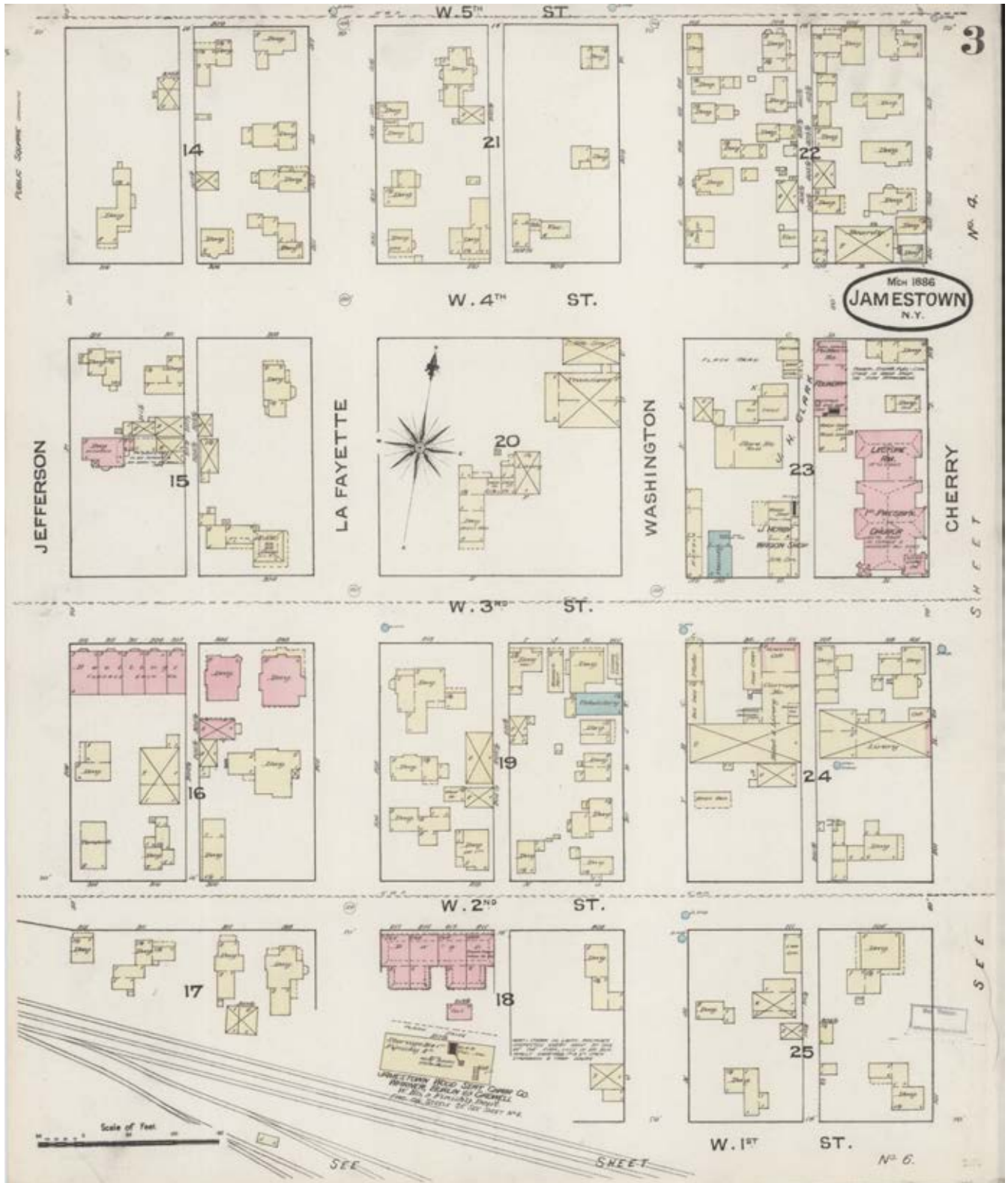


Figure 9: 1886 Sanborn Map showing downtown location of First Presbyterian Church 1834-1924

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown  
Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York  
County and State



Figure 10: 1926 Sanborn Map showing location of the Hotel Jamestown and surrounding area

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**  
Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**  
County and State

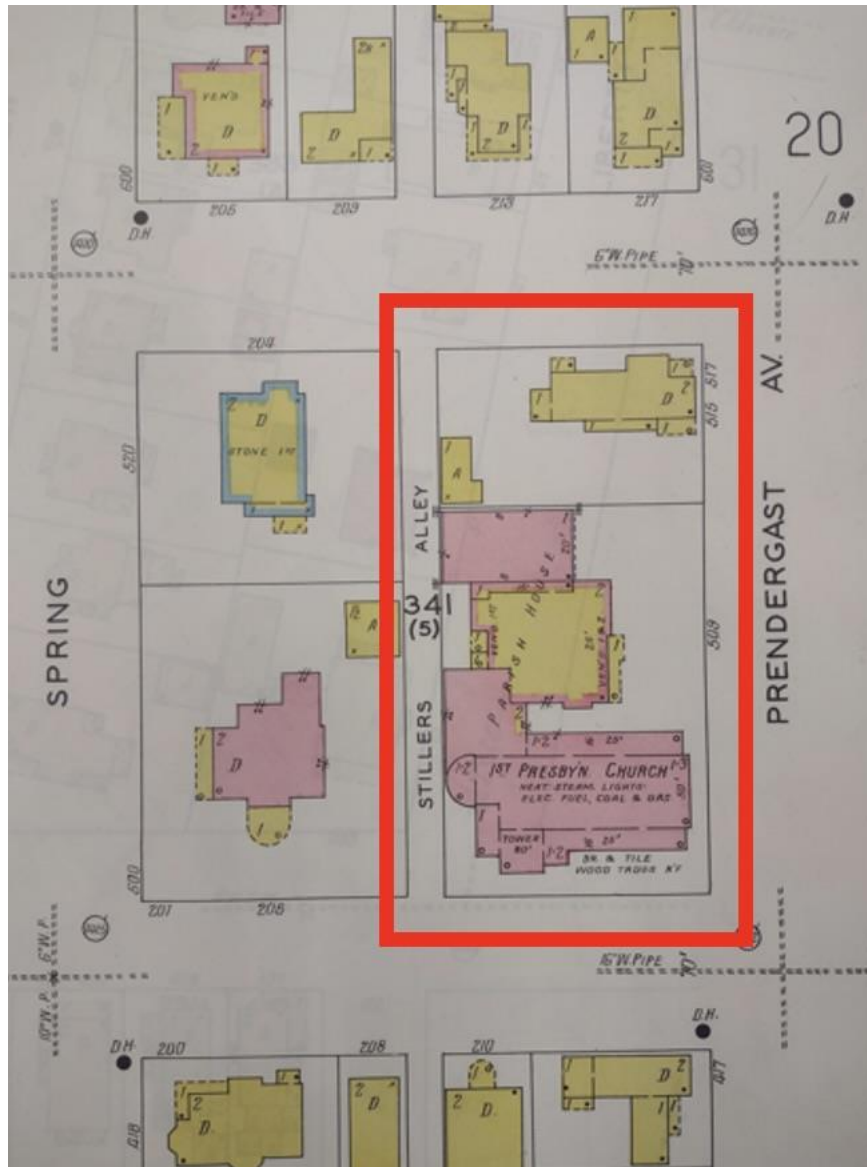


Figure 11: 1926 Sanborn Map showing location of sanctuary, parish house, annex, and Guild Hall



**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State

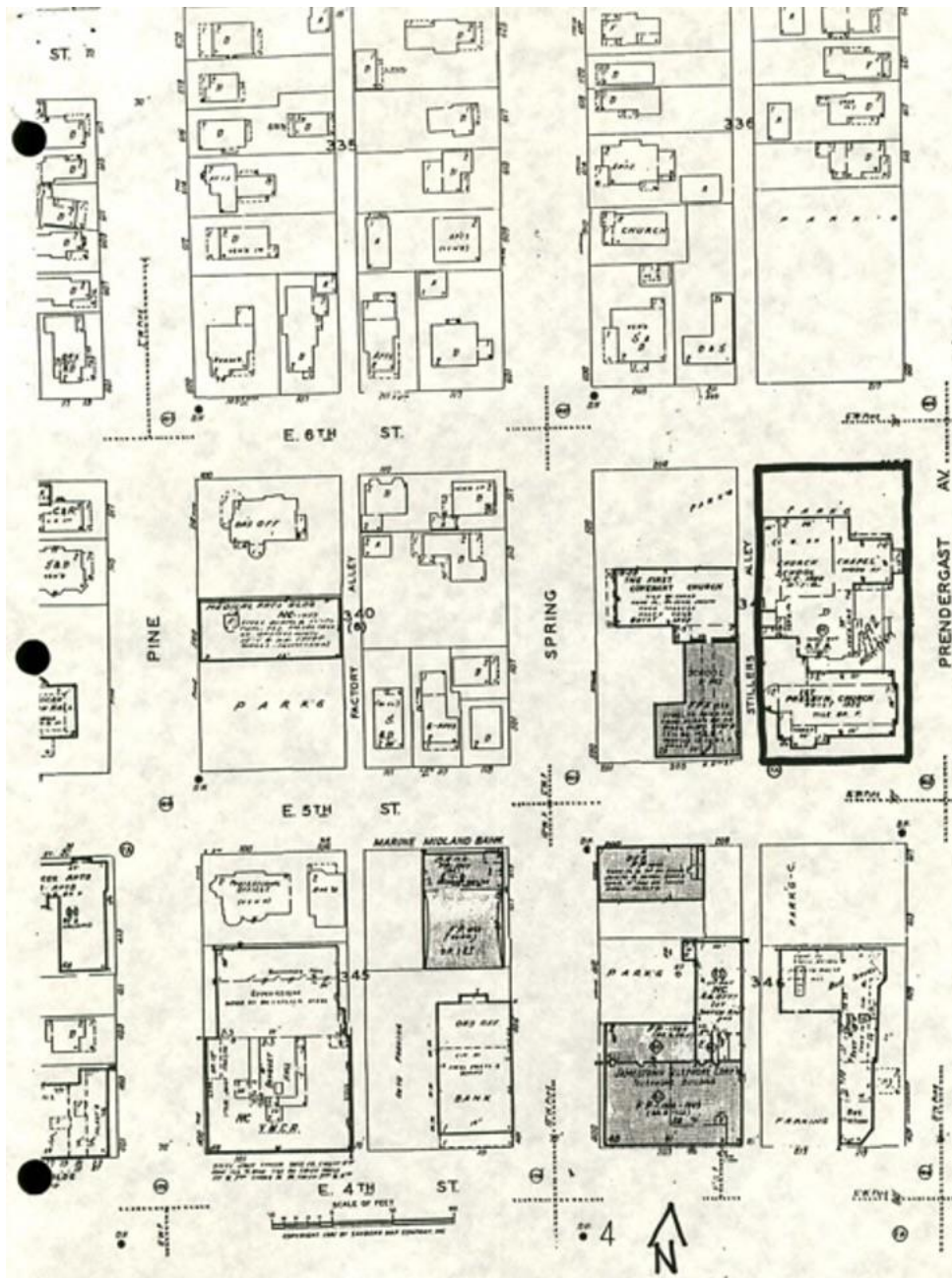


Figure 12: 1981 Sanborn Map showing location of First Presbyterian Church 1922 to present

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State

---

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi [Pixels per inch] or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown

City or Vicinity: Jamestown

County: Chautauqua

State: New York

Photographer: John P. Smagner

Date Photographed: June 29, 2021; September 25, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 0001 of 0025: East elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.
- 0002 of 0025: East elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.
- 0003 of 0025: South elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.
- 0004 of 0025: West elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking east.
- 0005 of 0025: Sanctuary, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.
- 0006 of 0025: Sanctuary ceiling, First Presbyterian Church, view looking up.
- 0007 of 0025: Narthex, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.
- 0008 of 0025: Narthex, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.
- 0009 of 0025: Sanctuary, First Presbyterian Church, view looking east.
- 0010 of 0025: Narthex and baptistery, First Presbyterian Church, view looking southwest.
- 0011 of 0025: Organ screens, First Presbyterian Church, view looking northwest.
- 0012 of 0025: Christ in Benediction Window, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.
- 0013 of 0025: East elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking southwest.
- 0014 of 0025: North elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking south.
- 0015 of 0025: Chapel, First Presbyterian Church, view looking east.
- 0016 of 0025: Chapel, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.
- 0017 of 0025: Gabriel Loire windows, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.
- 0018 of 0025: Main Hall of Education Building, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.
- 0019 of 0025: Fellowship Hall, First Presbyterian Church, view looking south.
- 0020 of 0025: Board Room, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.
- 0021 of 0025: Classroom, First Presbyterian Church, view looking northeast.
- 0022 of 0025: Education Building Basement, First Presbyterian Church, view looking south.
- 0023 of 0025: Minister's Office, First Presbyterian Church, view looking south.
- 0024 of 0025: Cloister, First Presbyterian Church, view looking south.
- 0025 of 0025: Cloister, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State



0001 of 0025: East elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.



0002 of 0025: East elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State



0003 of 0025: South elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.



0004 of 0025: West elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking east.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State



005 of 0025: Sanctuary, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.



006 of 0025: Sanctuary ceiling, First Presbyterian Church, view looking up.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State



0007 of 0025: Narthex, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.



0008 of 0025: Narthex, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State



0009 of 0025: Sanctuary, First Presbyterian Church, view looking east.



0010 of 0025: Narthex and baptistry, First Presbyterian Church, view looking southwest.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State



0011 of 0025: Organ screens, First Presbyterian Church, view looking northwest.



0012 of 0025: Christ in Benediction Window, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.



**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State



0013 of 0025: East elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking southwest.



0014 of 0025: North elevation, First Presbyterian Church, view looking south.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**  
Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**  
County and State



0015 of 0025: Chapel, First Presbyterian Church, view looking east.



0016 of 0025: Chapel, First Presbyterian Church, view looking west.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**  
Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**  
County and State



0017 of 0025: Gabriel Loire windows, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.



0018 of 0025: Main Hall of Education Building, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State



0019 of 0025: Fellowship Hall, First Presbyterian Church, view looking south.



0020 of 0025: Board Room, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State



0021 of 0025: Classroom, First Presbyterian Church, view looking northeast.



0022 of 0025: Education Building Basement, First Presbyterian Church, view looking south.

**First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**

Name of Property

**Chautauqua, New York**

County and State



0023 of 0025: Minister's Office, First Presbyterian Church, view looking south.



0024 of 0025: Cloister, First Presbyterian Church, view looking south.

First Presbyterian Church, Jamestown  
Name of Property

Chautauqua, New York  
County and State



0025 of 0025: Cloister, First Presbyterian Church, view looking north.

---

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name N/A  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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 18 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.