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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Presbyterian Church Complex

other name/site number United Presbyterian Church

2. Location

street & town 23 Church Street not for publication

city or town City of Cortland vicinity

state New York code NY county Cortland code 023 zip code 13045

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

M. Carter, SAPO 1/12/02
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 3/6/02

First Presbyterian Church Complex
Name of Property

Cortland County, New York
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- public-local
- private
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	2	Total

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 Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious Facility

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Gothic, Queen Anne
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Late Gothic
Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls STONE
roof ASPHALT
other WOOD, GLASS, BRICK

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets-

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Location *City of Cortland, Cortland County, New York*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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7. Narrative Description

The First Presbyterian Church Complex is situated on a rectangular-shaped parcel at the northeast corner of Church Street and Central Avenue, one block east of U.S. Route 11 (Main Street), in the City of Cortland, Cortland County, New York. The church, a large limestone building completed in 1890, is oriented to face west toward Church Street. Immediately to the south of the church is the manse, a contributing component of the nomination. Setback from Church Street, it is fronted by a small grassy parcel and enclosed on two sides by an iron fence. Further south, beyond the manse, is Courthouse Park, and beyond the park the Cortland County Courthouse. North of the church, opposite Central Avenue, is the Baptist Church. The east side of the church is bounded by an addition added in the 1920s, a contributing component of the nomination, a subsequent non-contributing addition added 1958, and an asphalt-covered parking lot. Deciduous trees and decorative shrubbery are present on the south, west, and north sides of the church. The nomination includes the church, the manse, a non-contributing shed, and approximately one acre of land.

The First Presbyterian Church, built between 1889-1890 and designed by Samuel Burrage Reed, is a solidly massed masonry building, comprised of a central hip-roofed block fronted by steeply pitched gabled projections on the south, west, and north sides. The façade elevation is highlighted by a tall multi-stage tower rising from the northwest corner of the building, and a smaller tower opposite the center gable projection of the buildings southwest corner. The original edifice received a major addition in 1922, when a two-story wing was added to the building's east side; a subsequent addition was added to this block in 1958. Both the original church and the 1922 addition are constructed of quarry-faced limestone laid in random-range ashlar with smooth-faced limestone trim. The 1958 addition is constructed of yellow brick laid up in running bond. The original church and the 1922 block exhibit Gothic vocabulary, the 1890s work an eclectic Victorian interpretation of the style, the 1920s work a distinctly Late Gothic character. The First Presbyterian Church retains a substantially intact sanctuary that dates to the building's completion in 1890, based on the circular auditorium plans popular with many Protestant congregations during the post-Civil War period.

The façade of the First Presbyterian Church is asymmetrical in profile, comprised of a steeply pitched center gable and two towers of varying height. The limestone ashlar walls are handsomely textured and rise above a slightly above-grade foundation of smooth-faced limestone with quarry-faced granite below. The center gable is punctuated by three symmetrically arranged pointed arch windows, a large window rising approximately twenty feet in height flanked by smaller windows of a similar shape. The stone tracery of the center

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window is composed of three slender lancets, with a circular geometric form rising above the center lancet at the arch's head. The tracery of the smaller window is composed of paired lancets with a trefoil at the head. A belt-course of smooth-faced limestone runs the length of the façade at the impost level of the two smaller windows. Above the generous center window, near the gable peak, is a tripartite Gothic window with small, square-shaped panes. A stone crocket rises from the gable's crest.

The northwest corner of the church is highlighted by a stout, multi-stage bell tower, in which is situated one of two entrances to the building's interior from the west side. This entrance is slightly recessed and enriched by a compound Gothic arch, carried by engaged colonettes set within the jamb. The door is comprised of two leafs with thin vertical oak panels, thin glazed lancets, and iron strap hinges. Surmounting the doorway is a pointed arch toplight with simple tracery comprised of two double-arched Gothic heads, corresponding with the doors below, with a quatrefoil above. The entrance is reached by a flight of three polished granite steps. The corners of the tower are fronted by stepped buttresses that rise to the termination of the first-stage, articulated by a boldly projecting cornice. At the base of the buttresses north of the wall is the building's corner stone, which reads "Presbyterian Church, Erected AD 1889." Two large paired lancet windows pierce the upper part of the tower's first stage, while three smaller lancets light the stair inside the tower; all are fitted with small square-shaped panes. The bell-stage of the tower is octagonal in shape, with tall louvered openings set within steeply pitched gablets flanked by crocketed pinnacles. The four thousand pound bell was cast by Meneely and Company of Troy, New York, at the cost of one-thousand dollars. Rising from the bell stage is a tall steeple, sheathed in black asphalt shingles like the remained of the church's roof; the original roof was sheathed in polychrome slate. A prominent cross surmounts the spire.

A smaller tower abuts the southwest side of the building, rising from a square base with beveled corners to an eight-sided turret with a conical roof. A second entrance is situated at the base of this tower, similar in conception to the opposite entrance, though it lacks the compound arch enrichment. The angled walls of the tower's upper stage are each punctuated by a single lancet window with glazing similar to that of the other lancets. Above the lancets is a projecting stone cornice, which gives way to a roof with a flared base. An ornate metal pinnacle crowns roof.

Both the north and south sides of the original 1890 church are similar in form and treatment, and are dominated by a front-facing gable identical to that on the primary elevation.

As completed in 1890, the First Presbyterian Church included a chapel abutting the east elevation. Although the initial plans of the 1920s expansion called for an addition to the chapel, it was eventually decided to dismantle the original chapel in preparation for the construction of the

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"church house" wing in 1922. This wing, two stories in height, begins immediately east of the gabled north elevation of the church. Built of quarry-faced limestone laid in random range ashlar, the wing is asymmetrically composed and displays a restrained Late Gothic vocabulary. Projecting from the building is a porte cochere with buttressed corners and cast stone details. Fenestration consists of window bands with cast stone trim, inset Gothic tracery, and windows with diamond pane glazing. Situated inconspicuously behind the church house wing is the 1958 Sunday School addition, also two stories in height, constructed of yellow brick with rectangular window bands lighting the classrooms.

Immediately south of the church is the manse, completed in 1903. This Queen Anne style residence, built with a wood frame sheathed in Roman brick, features a prominent front-facing gable highlighted by decorative half-timbering and stucco. The corners of the building are articulated by pilasters and the flared projecting eaves by modillions; a full-length porch fronts the manse on the west elevation.

Access to the worship space of the church was provided by two entrances on the west facade, situated in the corresponding towers of that elevation. Each leads into a small, square-shaped vestibule with doors to the auditorium straight and to the sides. The walls of the vestibules are finished in plaster with paneled wainscoting below; the doors to the auditorium are framed by thin colonettes rising to a Gothic arch, with a blind paneled treatment in each head. The Gothic heads of the exterior doors have simple stone tracery and stained glass.

The auditorium or worship space is roughly square in shape, lighted on the north and south sides by the tall Gothic windows and the smaller windows flanking them. The pulpit platform is centered against the east wall, and projects into the auditorium from a recessed Gothic arch, which follows the scale and form of the two primary windows on the north and south walls. Above the platform, and set largely within the plane of the arched recession, is a cantilevered semi-circular choir loft, designed to carry the organ before its relocation in the gallery opposite. The face of the choir loft is articulated by recessed square panels with simple moldings and a heavy rail carried by spiral-turned balusters. Flanking the tall recessed arch are two smaller and shallow Tudor arched recessions. The walls of the auditorium are finished in plaster with wainscoting below, formed by vertical bead board terminated by a horizontal course with recessed rectangular panels. A heavy plaster cornice encircles most of the worship space, excepting where the tall Gothic windows of the north and south wall and the pulpit platform interrupt its course, at which point groin vaults rise to the ceiling. These vaults and the walls curve gently inward from the cornice and rise to a flat t-shaped ceiling. Articulated by a rectilinear pattern of wood ribs, the center of the ceiling features a tripartite stained glass skylight.

The floor of the auditorium, laid in medium width plank running north to south, rises gently towards the west wall, the pews arranged in concentric circles with four aisles radiating outwards from the

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pulpit platform. The aisles are carpeted, as is the pulpit platform and the space between it and the first row of pews. The pews are embellished with angular armrests, with sides highlighted by carved blind Gothic arches. Artificial lighting is provided by period wall sconces at both the primary and gallery levels, and hanging fixtures of a similar character suspended from the ceiling. Situated on the platform is a Scotch Oak baptismal font, presented to the congregation in 1896, intricately carved with Gaelic designs and fitted with a silver bowl in the form of a Scottish loving cup.

The signature feature of the auditorium is the semi-circular gallery supported by unfluted colonettes with consoled Neoclassical capitals. The gallery is accessed by two open stairs against the west wall, situated against the wall of each entrance vestibule. Each stair has a heavy turned newel and handrail carried by turned balusters and is lighted by lancet windows. The treatment of the gallery is identical to the choir loft, with recessed square panels on its face and a heavy rail carried by spiral-turned balusters. The majority of the gallery space is given over to a massive organ, which replaced the original organ situated in the loft above the pulpit platform.

The original interior of the 1890 church is separated from the 1922 and 1958 wings by a long corridor that runs north to south from a porte cochere entrance projecting from the north elevation. The primary story of the 1922 wing is constructed around the chapel, which takes most of the space of this floor. The chapel, which rises to the second story level above, is oriented on an east-west axis with a recessed niche situated against the west wall. This recession, from which projects a small speaking platform, is articulated by a compound Tudor arch. Flanking the chapel on the south side is a row of offices; on the north side is a reception area, which can be opened to the chapel space by means of sliding doors. The second story of the wing features a balcony overlooking the chapel, with a recreation area on the south side and multi-use areas on the north side. The basement of the addition is given over almost entirely to a large multi-purpose- dining area, and also includes a kitchen and a library.

The 1958 Sunday School addition is connected to the east side of the 1922 wing. Both the primary and second story consist of multiple education rooms; the basement is given over now to a choir practice room and the sexton's office.

8. 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1889- 1922

Significant Dates

1889, 1890, 1903, 1922

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Reed, Samuel Burrage (church); Conable, George (manse)

Hopkins, L.R. (contractor); Crabtree, William (stonemason)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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:

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

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The First Presbyterian Church, located on Church Street in the City of Cortland, satisfies National Register Criterion C as an intact and distinctive example of Late Victorian era religious design. Built between 1889 and 1890, the church was designed by the New York City-based architect Samuel Burrage Reed, who during the same period was responsible for the design of the Chester Wickwire House, also in Cortland. The First Presbyterian Church displays an eclectic interpretation of the Gothic style characteristic of the late-1880s and 1890s, and is highlighted by a highly intact and well-conceived circular auditorium reflecting trends in late nineteenth century church planning. The church, the adjoining church house, and the manse form a cohesive and substantially intact collection of architectural resources recalling the growth and prosperity of the city's oldest congregation.

The City of Cortland, situated at the foot of a hill near the forks of the Tioughnioga River, was first settled in 1798 by Jonathan Hubbard. Originally known as Hubbard's Corners, it was a relatively undistinguished central New York settlement until chosen as the seat of newly established Cortland County in 1810. Initially, the hamlet was a small market town and agrarian service center for the surrounding agricultural area, before the emergence of small industry in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Paper, wool-carding and cloth-dressing mills were among the village's early significant industries. In 1835, Cortland became an incorporated village, and in 1900, an incorporated city.

The First Presbyterian Church was founded in 1825 in what was then the Town of Homer, the southern section of which was partitioned in 1829 to become the Town of Cortlandville. The First Presbyterian Church was the fourth denomination to form in the original Town of Homer, following Congregational and Baptist churches in 1801, and the Methodist Episcopal church, 1821.¹ The first recorded meeting making mention of the establishment of the First Presbyterian Church occurred in November 1824, a which time "the male citizens of Cortland village and vicinity convened at the court house...for the purpose of forming a Presbyterian church and Society."

On motion of John A. Freer, it was resolved that Salmon Jewett, Prosper Cravath, Lemuel Dada, Anthony Freer and David Joline be a committee to notify the citizens of this vicinity of the proceedings had herein and to request their attendance at the next meeting.²

¹ *First Presbyterian Church, Cortland, New York, 1825-1950: One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Anniversary* (May 1950). Unpaginated.

² *Ibid.*

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In February 1825, amid efforts to raise pledges for financial support, negotiations were opened with Reverend William Bacon of Saratoga to become pastor of the new church, an offer Bacon accepted. By 1827, under the leadership of Bacon, the congregation had grown to nearly one hundred forty members, and conducted religious services in the courthouse and a local schoolhouse.³ In April 1826, at a meeting of the church and society, plans were forwarded for the construction of a meeting house. A building committee comprised of Samuel Gaylord, Henry Stephens and William Elder engaged one of the village's leading builders, Simeon Rouse, for plans for the new church. In June a site was chosen- the same location where the current edifice is situated- and Rouse was directed to proceed with construction.

On New Year's Day 1828 the First Presbyterian Church was dedicated. This building, like the current church, was located on Church Street, a significant village thoroughfare lined with numerous religious buildings. Historic views indicate that the old Presbyterian Church was a handsome wood frame building of the conventional meeting house type, built in a vernacular interpretation of the prevailing Federal taste. The building was highlighted by a delicate three-stage bell tower, a pilastered façade with half-round entrances, and pointed arch Gothic windows along the side elevations. The worship space featured a tall pulpit, situated between the doors accessing the auditorium from the vestibule, rising to nearly the gallery level. The church received significant modifications in the 1860s, at which time the sloping floor was leveled, new pews were inserted and the pulpit re-located to the far wall opposite the entrances. Although two fires threatened to destroy this building during its use, it survived into the 1880s, at which time plans were drawn for its replacement.

The first mention made of the need for a new edifice was apparently made in a sermon at the church in March 1888, followed shortly thereafter by an announcement in the *Cortland Democrat* that the Presbyterian Church was meeting to discuss the possibility of erecting a new building.⁴ The new church was erected during the pastorate of Reverend J.L. Robertson, which spanned nearly fourteen years beginning in 1882. Under Robertson's leadership, ninety-five members were added to the church in 1889 alone; upwards of four hundred sixty were welcomed during his fourteen-year tenure.⁵

At the meeting conducted on April 9, 1888, preliminary steps were taken towards the erection of a new edifice. A planning committee was formed, comprised of H.F. Benton, T.H.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Michael Tomlan, "A Report of the Construction of the Chester F. Wickwire Residence (1888-1891). Prepared for The 1890 House Museum and Center for the Arts, Cortland, New York (August, 1982), 10.

⁵ *First Presbyterian*.

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Wickwire, Harrison Wells, M.H. McGraw, C.P. Walrad, and W.S. Copeland.⁶ According to Michael Tomlan's account of the committee's activities, after completing their first priorities- consideration of designs, specifications and fund-raising- the committee was supposed to meet again to view the project in more concrete terms. Apparently the committee acted slowly, however, and no report was filed in the church recorders for the remainder of 1888.⁷ In February, 1889, however, the church was finally ready to move forward with plans for the new building, at a proposed cost not to exceed forty thousand dollars, thirty thousand of which was meant to be secured through subscription prior to the commencement of the project. Two weeks later, on February 25, the committee reported pledges exceeding thirty thousand dollars and the project was ready to commence.⁸

The first mention of the architect responsible for the design of the new church was made in the December 21, 1888 issue of the *Cortland Standard*, which informed readers that plans had been submitted for the proposed building by the Architect S.B. Rice.⁹ S.B. Rice, in fact, was Samuel Burrage Reed, a New York City-based architect who had just completed designs for the Chester F. Wickwire residence, a Chateausque style mansion on Tompkins Street. It appears that Wickwire, a trustee of the church and a member of the building committee appointed in February 25- which also included C.P. Walrad, D.F. Wallace, S.M. Ballard, W.S. Copeland, C.E Selover, John McFarlan, and Theodore H. Wickwire- was responsible for seeing plans drawn by Reed adopted by the church. Both Chester, a noted manufacturer of wire mesh screening, and his brother Theodore were prominent Cortland citizens and major financial contributors to the church. Following trips to Oneida and Syracuse to view other contemporary religious architecture, the building committee, in late January 1889, approved the plans submitted by Reed with minor modifications. Yet four bids for the erection of the church were rejected "as none of them came within the architect's estimates."¹⁰ This matter was eventually resolved following a visit to the city by Reed:

Mr. S.B. Reed of New York, the architect of the new Presbyterian church, was in Cortland last Thursday night and met the building committee. He had with him a bid from a New York contractor which fell within the estimates heretofore given. Some slight changes in the plans were decided upon, and Mr. Reed took the bid back to be corrected with the changes.¹¹

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Tomlan, "Wickwire Residence," 11

⁸ *First Presbyterian*.

⁹ Tomlan, "Wickwire Residence," 11.

¹⁰ Ibid, 12.

¹¹ Ibid, 13.

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Finally, a month following this meeting, the bid of L.R. Hopkins, a major Cortland contractor, was accepted by the building committee- on June 3rd, contracts were drawn and signed.¹² Later that week the *Standard* took note of the progress:

Mr. S.B. Reed, architect of the new Presbyterian church and of Mr. C.F. Wickwire's house reached Cortland last Monday night at 5 o'clock and spent the evening in consultation with Mr. L.R. Hopkins, the builder, and the building committee of the new church.¹³

Demolition of the 1827 building and excavation for the new church began almost at once. Hopkins was joined on the project by stonemason William Crabtree of Syracuse, who was also responsible for the stone work for the Wickwire residence. By the end of June it was noted in the *Standard* that work was proceeding at a rapid pace and the excavation was almost complete. "It is expected that the walls will be ready for the cut stone in two weeks." the newspaper reported. "Eight carloads of the stone came on the E.C. and N.R.R. [Elmira, Cortland, and Northern Railroad] Monday morning and six carloads had been received before."¹⁴ The stone was Oolitic limestone, brought east from Bedford, Indiana. The cornerstone was laid of July 24th, and with the stonework well along at the Wickwire Residence, Crabtree and his associates were likely ready to commit their full attention to the project. The walls were laid up quickly as the building's roof was slated by mid-October, and the steeple completed by December.¹⁵

With the building enclosed by the winter of 1889-90, attention was focused on the interior and the handsome worship space. In March the chandeliers and gas fixtures arrived and the organ was placed in the loft. In April, the stained glass windows were set in place, and in May the pews were constructed. The Syracuse firm of Henry C. Allewelt and Sons oversaw decorative work on the interior.¹⁶ On May 23rd 1890 the First Presbyterian Church was dedicated. During the course of the project changes were made to the original plans, which brought the final price of construction, including re-grading the parcel and re-laying the stone walks, to over forty seven thousand dollars.¹⁷

In March 1900, the Reverend Robert Clements began his pastorate at the First Presbyterian Church, during which the church embarked on a second smaller building project, the construction of the manse. The church trustees engaged the New York City-based architect

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, 14.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid, 16.

¹⁷ *First Presbyterian.*

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George Conable, formerly of Cortland, to submit plans for the residence. In August 1903 the contract was let to Hopkins and Hall of Cortland.¹⁸ The Queen Anne style building was built with a wood frame sheathed in Roman brick; it is situated on the south side of the church.

In June 1919, a joint meeting of the session, trustees and deacons was held to consider a proposal to erect a church house next to the church to support the activities of the congregation, in response to the increasing spatial needs of the Sunday School and support for social programs. Not until March 1922 were plans allowed to proceed for the new building, which included the dismantling of the chapel adjoining the church. Ground was broken for the new wing in May 1922, and the cornerstone laid on July 26. Coinciding with the erection of chapel and Sunday School wing, minor modifications were made to the auditorium of the church. The choir gallery was lowered slightly, pews and woodwork were refinished, the pulpit platform enlarged, and the side walls and ceiling were also redecorated.¹⁹ A new organ was likewise acquired and installed, moved from its original location above the pulpit platform to the center of the gallery opposite. The total cost of this construction and renovation project was nearly one hundred thirty thousand dollars, of which over one hundred thousand went to the erection of the new wing. A two-story addition was added to the rear of the 1922 wing in 1958.

Stylistically, the First Presbyterian Church embodies many of the distinctive characteristics of American Gothic Revival style ecclesiastical design during the late-1880s and 1890s. Characteristic of the Gothic style in the waning stages of the nineteenth century is a tendency towards eclecticism and originality, evident in designs derived from numerous and at times diverse sources and deviation from the standard medieval-inspired arrangement. The broad front-facing elevation and offset tower in Reed's design is a typical arrangement for Gothic churches during this period, as is the tendency toward enriched surface texture and contrasting treatments (lost with the replacement of the polychrome slate roof). On the interior, Gothic motifs and stained glass windows are mixed freely with Neoclassical elements in an eclectic but nonetheless largely successful composition. Following the earlier, more archaeologically inspired and liturgically "correct" examples of James Renwick and Richard Upjohn, the Gothic of the 1870s and 1880s moved conspicuously away from more literal interpretations of the style and in many instances altered the ritual-based interior arrangement. The church house wing, completed in 1922, reflects a later twentieth century phase of the style, characterized by restrained ornamentation and clean lines.

The most distinctive feature of the First Presbyterian Church is the worship space, which is square in shape with a semi-circular gallery and pew arrangement oriented to face the broad

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

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pulpit platform against the east wall. The "auditorium" plan church, a functional modification of the traditional linear meeting house arrangement, gained substantial popularity in the post-Civil war era, inspired by the new spatial needs of urban congregations and the influence of revivalism. Among the earliest deviations from the traditional plan in America were the auditorium plan churches introduced in the early decades of the nineteenth century by architect Robert Mills, who designed enormous churches like the Sansom Street Baptist Church, Philadelphia, 1812, based on circular plan with ample seating for four thousand. According to architectural historian Talbot Hamlin, Mill's auditorium churches "were novel and successful answers to the new demands made upon church design by the great age of American preaching, and their design profoundly affected the general conception of Protestant churches for many decades afterward."²⁰ The auditorium church, as brought to its fullest development in the Victorian era, provided an alternative to the perceived limitations of the meeting house plan and the liturgically inspired Gothic arrangement.

Among those sources advocating the application of circular interior arrangements in the Victorian era was Lawrence Valk's *The New Form of Plan for Churches*, first published in 1873.²¹ Valk contended that regardless of the style chosen, whether of Gothic, Romanesque, or Renaissance inspiration, the circular plan offered a functionally sound alternative to traditional and ritual-based arrangements. The principal features of this plan, as outlined by Valk, were an inclined floor moving away from the pulpit platform with pews arranged in concentric circles and aisles radiating from the platform. "The immense advantage of this plan over the old," Valk wrote, "should be seen to be appreciated." Among those designs published by Valk was one for the Rondout Presbyterian Church. The plan of the church, as published in Valk's book, bears a considerable resemblance to that utilized by Reed, including a similar entrance configuration and pew and aisle arrangements. Many of the other church designs included in Valk's book were built in Brooklyn and New York and would have easily accessible to Reed.

Also a conspicuous feature of the First Presbyterian Church is the rich decorative effect of the worship space, highlighted by stained glass, handsome fixtures and other decorative features meant to enhance the visual effect of the service. Originally a richly embellished organ rested in the loft behind the pulpit, forming an ornate backdrop to the pulpit platform. These modifications to the traditional Protestant worship space, according to James White, came about as a consequence of the increasing realization of the need for church architecture to create an

²⁰Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America* (New York: Dover, 1944), 52.

²¹Lawrence B. Valk, *The New Form of Plan for Churches* (New York: Holt Brothers, 1873).

Property Name *First Presbyterian Church Complex*
Location *City of Cortland, Cortland County, New York*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number 8 Page 7

ideal "worshipful atmosphere,"²² and signified a significant departure from the earlier austerity of the Reformed Protestant tradition.

The First Presbyterian Church retains a high degree of integrity; alterations to the physical fabric of the church proper have been limited to minor modifications. The only significant changes to the exterior of the building, other than the connection of the 1922 addition, was the replacement of the original polychrome slate roof. Alterations to the interior have been minor and for the most part occurred during the building's period of significance, 1889-1922. The First Presbyterian Church remains a noteworthy example of late nineteenth century ecclesiastical design, displaying the stylistic eclecticism and auditorium-type plan distinctive to the period.

²²James White, *Protestant Worship and Church Architecture: Theological and Historical Considerations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 125.

Property Name *First Presbyterian Church Complex*
Location *City of Cortland, Cortland County, New York*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 1

9. Major Bibliographical References

First Presbyterian Church, Cortland, New York, 1825-1950: One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Anniversary (May 1950).

Hamlin, Talbot. *Greek Revival Architecture in America* (New York: Dover, 1944).

Tomlan, Michael. "A Report of the Construction of the Chester F. Wickwire Residence (1888-1891). Prepared for The 1890 House Museum and Center for the Arts, Cortland, New York (August, 1982).

Valk, Lawrence B. *The New Form of Plan for Churches* (New York: Holt Brothers, 1873).

White, James. *Protestant Worship and Church Architecture: Theological and Historical Considerations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

First Presbyterian Church Complex
Name of Property

Cortland County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately one acre

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 403358/ 4716750
Zone Easting Northing

2
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

4
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William E. Krattinger
organization NYS OPRHP date October 2001
street & number Post Office Box 219 telephone 518-237-8643 x3265
city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name/title United Presbyterian Church
street & number 23 Church Street telephone _____
city or town City of Cortland state NY zip code 13045

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. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Property Name *First Presbyterian Church Complex*
Location *City of Cortland, Cortland County, New York*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the First Presbyterian Church Complex is formed by Church Street on the west, Central Avenue to the north, and the legal property boundary on the south and east sides.

Boundary Justification

The boundary for the proposed nomination has been drawn to coincide with the current legal lot for the property.

Property Name *First Presbyterian Church Complex*
Location *City of Cortland, Cortland County, New York*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Photographs

Historic Views

Courtesy of the United Presbyterian Church Archives

- 1. View of church following completion, before addition in 1922; note original chapel on far left**
- 2. Same view following 1922 addition/ removal of original chapel**
- 3. View of original auditorium arrangement, with organ in loft behind the pulpit platform**

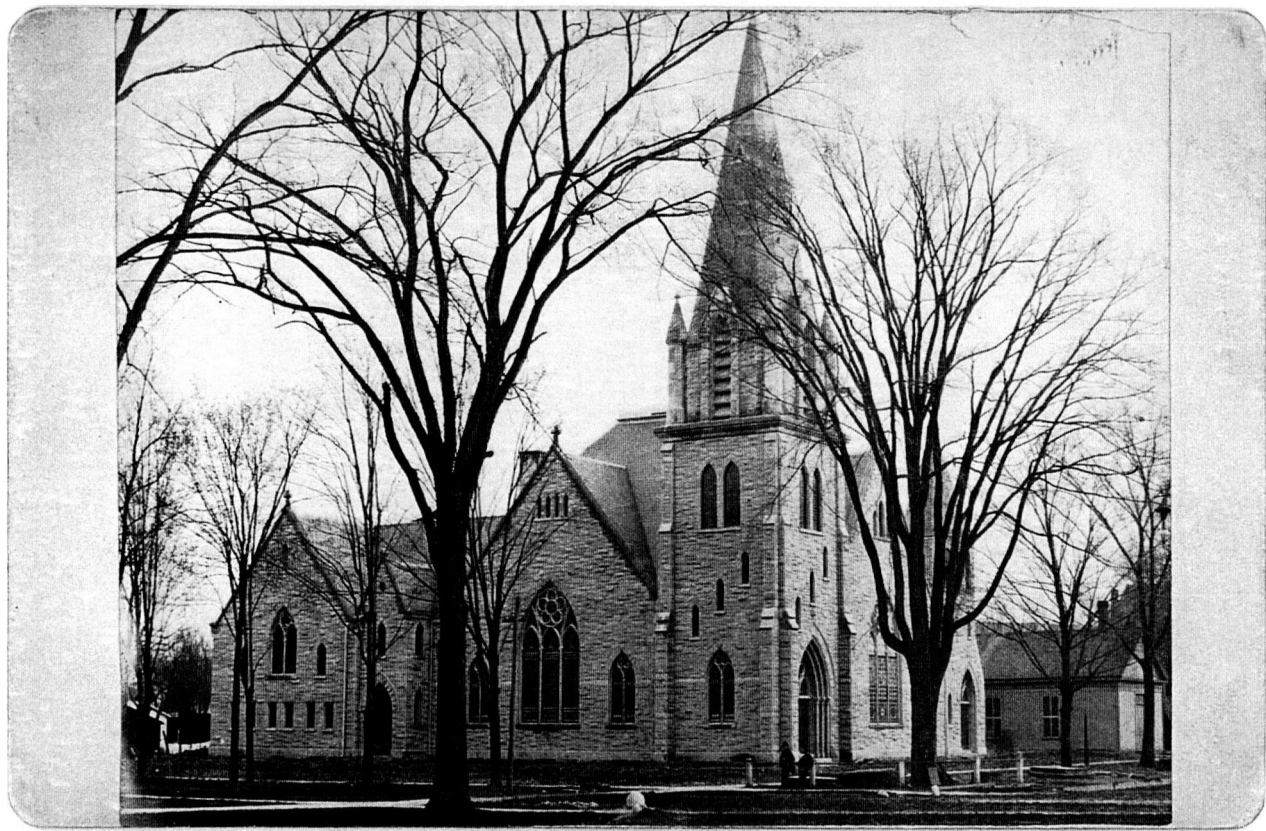
Photograph key

Pictures taken August 2001 and November 2001

Photographers: Bill Krattinger and Mark Peckham

Negatives: NYS OPRHP, Field Services Bureau, Peebles Island, Waterford, New York

- 1. View of west-facing façade**
- 2. View of main tower and north elevation**
- 3. View of west and north elevations of church, north elevation of 1922 "church house" wing**
- 4. View of north elevation, "church house" wing**
- 5. Detail of primary entrance, main tower of west façade**
- 6. West-facing façade of manse, south elevation of church on extreme left**
- 7. Auditorium looking toward south wall**
- 8. Auditorium looking towards pulpit platform, choir loft, against east wall**
- 9. Organ in gallery, against west wall**
- 10. Platform in "Church House" wing, against west wall**







FRONT OF CHURCH
1892 - 1923
NOTE ELEVATED
CHOIR LOFT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY First Presbyterian Church Complex
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Cortland

DATE RECEIVED: 1/25/02 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/13/02
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/01/02 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/12/02
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 02000142

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 3/6/02 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in the
National Register**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



#1

1st. Presbyterian Church
of Cortland Cortland Co.

010 11 00 27.11.01 ELITE PHOTO



#2

1st Presbyterian Church
C/Cortland Cortland Co.

004
NINE
----- 27.11.01 ELITE PHOTO



#3

1st Presbyterian Church
C/Cortland, Cortland Co.

006 033 NMB XX 27.11.01 ELITE PHO



1922

#4

1st Presbyterian Church
of Cortland, Cortland Co.

028 033 NHHB 8 27.11.01 ELITE PHO



1st Presbyterian Church #5
of Cortland, Cortland Co.

02002 HNNB 5 27.11.01 ELITE PHOTO



#6

1st Presbyterian Church
of Cortland Cortland Co.

016 033 NMB 2 27.11.01 ELITE PHOTO



#7

1st. Presbyterian Church
of Cortland Cortland Co.

#8

1st Presbyterian Church
of Cortland Cortland Co.



1st Presbyterian Church #9
of Cortland, Cortland Co.



#10

1st Presbyterian Church
C/Cortland, Cortland Co.

020 041 NNN 19.10.01 ELITE PHOTO

*First Presbyterian Church Complex
 73 Church St. Cortland, Cortland Co. NY
 Cortland Quad 1: 24000
 18/403338/4716750*

424761 DP

NEW YORK STATE
 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



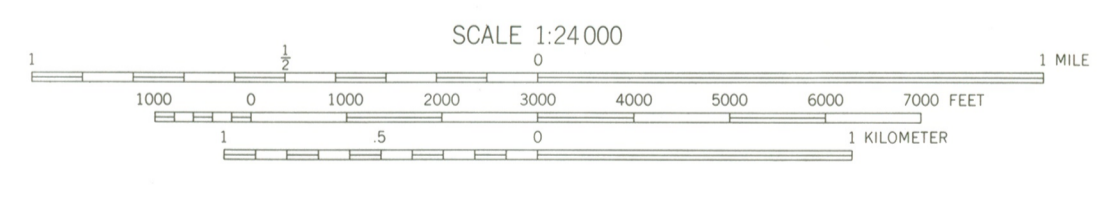
CORTLAND QUADRANGLE
 NEW YORK—CORTLAND CO.
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES PLANIMETRIC
 SW/4 CORTLAND 15' QUADRANGLE



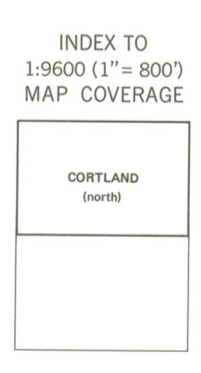
Prepared and published in 1974 by the New York State Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.
 Map base from 1955 U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangle.
 Map revisions made using 1973 aerial photography, construction plans, official records and other sources. Features revised include: highways and other transportation facilities; civil boundaries; recreation sites; hydrography; and buildings. Grey tint indicates intensively developed areas in which only landmark buildings are shown.
 Revisions may not comply with National Map Accuracy Standards.
 Correspondence concerning this and other maps of the Department of Transportation should be directed to: Map Information Unit, New York State Department of Transportation, State Campus, Albany, New York 12232
 1974 revisions by F. G. Califano



QUADRANGLE LOCATION



SCALE 1:24 000
 POLYCONIC PROJECTION, 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM.
 1000-meter ticks based on the New York Transverse Mercator grid.
 Between 72° and 78° West Longitude, this grid is identical to Zone 18 of the Universal Transverse Mercator grid. Areas east of 72° and west of 78° are direct mathematical extensions of Zone 18.
 10,000-foot ticks based on the New York Plane Coordinate grid, Central Zone.
 SPECIAL TOPOGRAPHIC EDITION
 Contours, at 20-foot intervals, shown unrevised from 1955 U.S. Geological Survey map. Datum is mean sea level.



INDEX TO 1:6000 (1" = 800') MAP COVERAGE

BOUNDARIES:

State.....	-----
County.....	-----
Town or City.....	-----
Incorporated Village.....	-----
Federal-Aid Urban Area.....	-----

ROADS:

Touring Route markers:	Divided highways and streets:
Interstate..... (I)	Wide mall.....
U. S..... (U)	Narrow mall or barrier.....
State..... (S)	Undivided highways and streets:
State Highway number and limit..... (SH)	4 or more lanes.....
County road..... (C)	Less than 4 lanes.....
Interchange number..... (I)	Vehicle track; trail.....



United Presbyterian Church
BILL WHITING, ARCHIVIST

4 November 2001

William Krattinger
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island
P O Box 189
Waterford New York 12188-0189

Dear Mr. Krattinger,

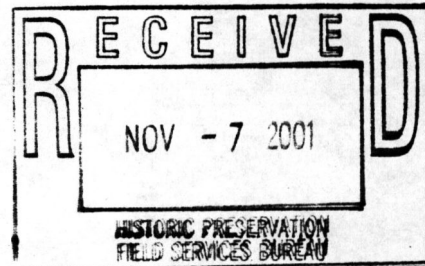
I was pleased to receive a letter from Ruth L Pierpont informing me that the First Presbyterian Church Complex will be considered by the State Review Board at its next meeting for nomination to the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

I need hardly tell you that we are pleased and excited that our church is being considered for this distinction. As our church (and its congregation) grows older, we become more and more aware of the necessity of preserving this beautiful and historic building for the generations yet to come.

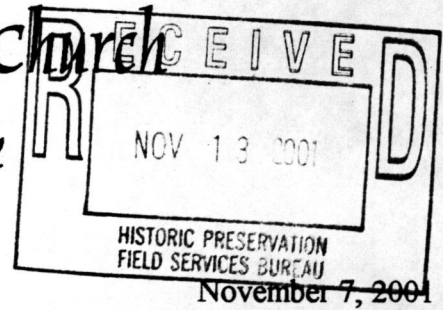
Thank you for your help in bringing this about.

Yours truly,

Bill Whiting



United Presbyterian Church
Cortland, New York



Mr. William Krattinger
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island
PO Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189

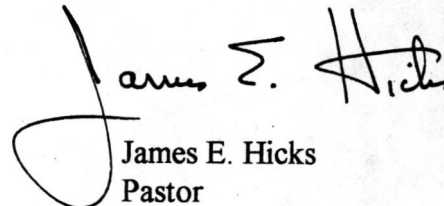
Dear Mr. Krattinger:

The Session of the United Presbyterian Church, formerly First Presbyterian Church, is excited and enthusiastic about the possibility of being designated by the State Review Board for nomination to the National and State Registers of Historic Places. Our present stone sanctuary was built in 1889, close to the same time another well-known historic site in Cortland was constructed, the Wickwire 1890 House on Tompkins Street. The Wickwires were then members of our church and exercised some influence on the construction of our own church ediface.

I personally endorse the submission of our church complex for designation as an historical site, and the United Presbyterian congregation, to my knowledge without exception, also subscribes to this request. We do hope for approval as we seek to preserve our church for the sake of our community and for the meaning it provides to our city.

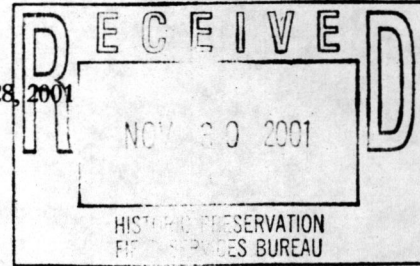
Thank you for your support in this pursuit.

Sincerely yours,


James E. Hicks
Pastor

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

November 28, 2001



Mr. William Krattinger
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island
PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Dear Mr. Krattinger,

I was pleased to see a letter from Ruth L. Pierpont informing Bill Whiting that the United Presbyterian church Complex will be considered by the State Review Board at its' next meeting for nomination to the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Our congregation is very excited and pleased that our Church is being considered for the honored distinction. As our Church (and its' congregation) age, we become more aware of the necessity to preserve the beauty of the historic building for the generations to come.

Thank you for your assistance and consideration in bring this distinct honor to our Church Complex.

God Bless,

Donna D. Southworth

President United Presbyterian Church of Cortland