

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name (former) Grace Reformed Church

other names/site number Calvary Baptist Church

2. Location

street & number 201-211 S. Main Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Newton

N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC

county Catawba

code 035

zip code 28658

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	0
Total	

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic & Architectural Resources of Catawba
County, N.C.

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

William S. Rain, Jr.
Signature of certifying official

5-23-90
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

wood

roof metal

other stucco

glass

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The former Grace Reformed Church (Calvary Baptist Church since 1959) in Newton, which was built in 1887-88, is the most accomplished example of the Gothic Revival style surviving in Catawba County. Despite some alterations to the church since its construction, it has retained its overall architectural integrity over the past century.

Facing west on the southeast corner of South Main Avenue and East C Street, the former Grace Reformed Church is located on the southern edge of Newton's commercial center. While commercial structures occupy the other three corners of the intersection and are the rule to the north of the church along Main Avenue, a residential neighborhood is found in the blocks just south and east of the church.

Although alterations since the original 1887-1888 construction date have modified some of the details of the church, the overall appearance remains little changed from when the church was first built. These alterations include a large stained glass window in the west facade where divided muntins had once been, some impressive stained glass windows on the east and west facades, a metal-enclosed belfry where it was once open, the removal of interior wall-mounted gas lamps when the ceiling electroliers were added, and frescoed walls which have since been painted white. A brick Sunday School building was added to the rear (east) of the church in 1927-28. Despite this addition to the church, it does not interfere with the front (west) and side facades of the church. Construction methods of the Sunday School addition include brick of similar color and size as well as structural massing similar to the church and is a sympathetic addition to the overall structure.

The former Grace Reformed Church is Gothic Revival style, with characteristics such as the cruciform plan, the steeply pitched gable roof, the front corner towers of unequal height and design, the brick buttresses with stuccoed caps, the lancet arched doors and windows, and the stained glass windows -- some which feature a simple border of small colored panes, while

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others boast more elaborate stained glass scenes (installed primarily between 1904-1910). Additional features of the exterior design include the stepped brick corbeling outlining the gables, the louvered triangular opening under each gable peak, the sawtooth string courses of the facade and towers, and the projecting brick labels which outline the arches of the facade and towers. Although the common bond brickwork was originally left bare, it has been painted red on several occasions since the first decade of this century.

The facade of Grace Church displays a large stained glass lancet window in the gabled center bay. Originally this window was divided by muntins which gave the appearance of two slender lancet windows. Flanking the center bay are corner towers. In the first two stages, the towers are identical. Each has double-leaf paneled door at the base, headed by a lancet transom. The second stage of each tower, which features a lancet window on front and side, is separated from the first stage by a sawtooth brick string course. Above the second stage the towers differ. The north tower has a steep pyramidal roof of double pitch. Originally this roof had tiny projecting gables on each side, but these were removed in 1932. The walls of the south tower rise to include three-part lancet openings (now enclosed by vented metal sheets) crowned by steeply pitched gables on each side. From the gables rises a truncated pyramidal roof, separated from its cap by what was originally an open belfry, but which is now enclosed by metal sheets with louvered vents.

The slightly projecting transept walls are defined by three slender lancet windows. The center window is taller, emphasizing the high pitch of the gable above.

The interior of the church has undergone more alterations than the exterior. Perhaps the most interesting detail of the side-aisled, symmetrically arranged sanctuary is the ceiling, which is composed of beaded boards set within a framework of dark wood ribs. The ceiling takes the shape of a truncated gable. Although the sanctuary was originally lit by gas or oil lamps attached by brackets to the walls next to the windows, these were replaced between 1904 and 1909 by multi-globed brass and glass electroliers which still hang from the ceiling. The plastered walls which rise above a beaded board wainscot are now painted white, but during the remodeling of 1904-1909 they had been frescoed in some manner. Also during this remodeling the ceiling and woodwork had been painted and grained in golden oak, and

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carpeting and central heat were installed. The interior has been repainted several times since then, and the carpet and pews which now decorate the sanctuary were installed in 1976. The chancel is raised on a platform. Its carved pulpit and pastors' chairs are typical of the late nineteenth century and may be original. Behind these, a paneled enclosure hides the seating for the choir. At the rear of the chancel a large arch filled with a wood traceried grille, once enframed a pipe organ, but now houses the baptistry. At the front of the church (rear of the sanctuary), massive six-panel doors lead to the towers.

During 1927 and 1928, a brick Sunday School building with two stories, basement, and gable roof was added to the rear of the church. While it does not continue the rich detailing of the church, the general form and use of materials of the addition are sympathetic to the older structure. Projecting from each side of the church, it gives somewhat the appearance of a second transept. The Sunday School addition houses classrooms (with large glass and paneled doors leading to each), a dining room/fellowship hall, and a kitchen. This building replaced a separate frame Sunday School "hut" that had been built on the property in 1922.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1887-1888

Significant Dates
1887-1888

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

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

Summary

The former Grace Reformed Church in Newton, built 1887-1888, a locally significant resource in the Property Type "Religious Buildings and Sites in Catawba County: Churches," meets the registration requirements for that property type under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as the best example of Gothic Revival style known to remain in Catawba County. The church is also eligible under Criteria Consideration A, as a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural distinction. Grace Reformed Church is also related to the Historic Contexts "Religion in Catawba County: 1747-1941," as an example of the Reformed faith development in Catawba County and "The Development of Catawba County's Seat, Newton: 1842-1939" as a representative of the social and religious development of Newton.

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Historical Background

The Reformed faith arrived in Catawba County with the German settlers who migrated to North Carolina in the mid-eighteenth century. Arriving from Pennsylvania via the "Great Wagon Road," those settlers crossed the Catawba River and occupied much of the land forming present Catawba County.¹ For the first century after settlement, the Reformed church was exclusively a rural faith as no sizable communities emerged until late in the ante-bellum period.

Catawba County was formed from the northern part of Lincoln County in 1842. The act creating Catawba authorized a county seat to be called Newton, but the commissioners could not decide upon a location until 1845.² Establishment of the county seat created a new population center and, concurrently, a need for a church to serve that center. The seed of a new congregation in the Newton vicinity had been planted as early as 1842 when some people of the Reformed faith began meeting in the home of Reuben Setzer for informal services.³ Shortly after Newton was founded, the Reverend John H. Crawford, minister of several Reformed churches in the area, took over the pastoral function for the meetings in Setzer's home and by 1846 a congregation had emerged. On August 10, 1846, Reuben Setzer deeded a lot on what is now West C. Street to the newly organized Newton German Reformed Church.⁴

The first house of worship was completed in 1849 and was called "The White Church," presumably because of the color of paint applied to it.⁵ In April of 1849 a meeting of the Classis of North Carolina (state organization of the Reformed Church) met in "The White Church" in Newton and formally placed the congregation in the "Newton Charge" along with St. Paul's, St. John's, and Lyle's Creek Mission.⁶ Although "The White Church" was a popular designation for the structure, the official name was Grace Reformed Church of Newton, North Carolina, and it was the first Reformed church to emerge in an urban community in Catawba County.⁷

The first pastor of Grace Church, the Reverend J.H. Crawford, was also the first chairman of the Board of Trustees of Catawba College, founded by the Classis of North Carolina in 1851. The histories of Grace Church and Catawba College were closely related until the college was moved to Salisbury after the 1922-1923 school year.⁸ In addition to its religious func-

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tion, Grace Church served as a classroom for students at Catawba College in the early years and it was in the church that commencement exercises were held.⁹ The career of the Reverend Jacob C. Clapp best illustrates the interrelationship of the church and the college.

Jacob C. Clapp (1832-1910) served as president of Catawba College from 1861 to 1900 and as pastor of Grace Church from 1869 to 1890. During his tenure the academic level of the college was elevated and women were first admitted (1880) to the previously all-male institution. Several of the faculty members were also ministerial assistants at Grace Church including the Reverend John A. Foil who later served as vice-president of the college and county superintendent of schools.¹⁰ Under Clapp's leadership, the congregation decided to build a new and more modern house of worship. In 1887 the cornerstone of the second Grace Church was laid on land transferred to the church by Clapp and W.H. Williams¹¹ The building was completed in 1888 and the Reverend J. C. Clapp preached the dedicatory sermon. In 1890, Clapp resigned his ministry to devote full time to Catawba College.¹²

Clapp's ministry at Grace Church coincided with a period of significant growth throughout Catawba County. Textile mills in particular had helped bring prosperity to the region and Newton Cotton Mills was in operation by 1884. By 1890 the county seat was in the midst of a growth spurt, moving from a village to a thriving town of 1,038 people.¹³ Within the next two decades it would nearly double again. The period of prosperity afforded the congregation the opportunity to build an elegant new structure, one regarded at the time as "the finest church in the classis."¹⁴

Over the next forty-four years alterations and additions molded Grace Church into its present form. Between 1892 and 1897 a parsonage was built and a church bell acquired. The parsonage was renovated and enlarged in 1922, however the structure was razed in 1987. During the pastorate of Charles E. Wehler (1904-1909) the sanctuary interior was frescoed, the ceiling and woodwork painted and grained in golden oak, and carpeting and central heat installed. The stained glass windows were also added at this time. A hut built in 1922 to house the Sunday School was torn down in 1927 when a brick addition to the sanctuary was begun. Radiators for the new building and other areas of the church came from the old Catawba College buildings then being torn down. It was completed in 1928 and dedicated on May 27.

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The last major change was the slight alteration of the south church tower that gives the church exterior its present appearance.¹⁵

Grace Reformed congregation occupied their second structure until the spring of 1959 when their new church on Brady Avenue was ready for service. The old building was purchased by the Calvary Baptist congregation which was organized on January 12, 1958, and has occupied the structure to the present.¹⁶

FOOTNOTES

¹Hugh T. Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, The History of a Southern State: North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 84, 141; and Charles J. Preslar (ed.), A History of Catawba County (Salisbury: Catawba County Historical Association, 1954), 88.

²David Leroy Corbitt, The Formation of the North Carolina Counties 1663-1943 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950), 60.

³Rev. Banks J. Peeler (ed.), A Story of the Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (Philadelphia: Southern Synod, 1968), 264, hereinafter cited as Peeler, Southern Synod.

⁴Catawba County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Catawba County Courthouse, Newton, Deed Book 3, p. 168, hereinafter cited as Catawba County Deed Book. See also Jacob C. Leonard, the Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (Lexington, 1940), 338, hereinafter cited as Leonard, The Evangelical and Reformed Church.

⁵The "White Church" no longer exists, however, according to local people, it once was located approximately one block west of Grace Reformed Church approximately where the Catawba County Public Library now stands.

⁶Frank Clapp, "Historical Sketch of Grace Church" (3-page article abstracted from unidentified source). Copy in files of Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Clapp, "Grace Church." See also Leonard, Evangelical and Reformed Church, 339.

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⁷Clapp, "Grace Church"; and Peeler, Southern Synod, 265.

⁸William S. Powell, Higher Education in North Carolina (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1964), 16.
Footnotes, continued...

⁹Jacob C. Clapp (e.), Historical Sketch of the Reformed Church in North Carolina (1908), 304.

¹⁰Peeler, Southern Synod, 266; and Jacob C. Leonard, History of Catawba College (N.p., n.d.), 109-124.

¹¹Catawba County Deed Book 47, p. 149.

¹²Leonard, Evangelical and Reformed Church, 342.

¹³Levi Branson, Branson's North Carolina Business Directories, 1884, p. 197; 1890, p. 169; and News and Observer (Raleigh); Twelfth Census of the United States. Part I, Population, 1902, I, 288.

¹⁴Clapp, "Grace Church", and Leonard, Evangelical and Reformed Church, 342.

¹⁵Leonard, Evangelical and Reformed Church, 342-345; Peeler, Southern Synod, 267; and Clapp, "Grace Church."

¹⁶Catawba County Deed Book 580, p. 105; Calvary Baptist Church Records, Calvary Baptist Church, Newton; and David Brown, interview with the Reverend Fred Thompson, June 17, 1982, notes on file in Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one (1) acre

UTM References

A

1	7	4	7	9	8	2	0	3	9	4	6	1	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is all of lot 9 in block 3, sheet 8N of Catawba County tax maps.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Remaining parcel historically associated with property. The parsonage was located on Lot 10 but it was demolished in 1987 and this lot is not included in the boundary.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Kooiman, compiler; Laura A. W. Phillips, description; Jerry L. Cross, histor
 organization Catawba County Historical Assn., Inc. date May 25, 1989
 street & number Rt. 1, box 76 AB telephone 704/256-3040
 city or town Conover state N.C. zip code 28613

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Branson, Levi. Branson's North Carolina Business Directories, 1884, 1890.
- Brown, David. Interview with the Reverend Fred Thompson, June 17, 1982.
- Catawba County Deed Books.
- Clapp, Jacob C., ed. Historical Sketch of the Reformed Church in North Carolina. N.p., 1908.
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- Lefler, Hugh Talmage and Newsome, Albert Ray. The History of a Southern State: North Carolina. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973.
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- News and Observer. Raleigh. North Carolina Year Book, 1902.
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- Preslar, Charles J. A History of Catawba County. Salisbury: Catawba County Historical Association, 1954.
- United States Census Office, (Twelfth Census of the United States, Part 1, Population) Washington: United States Census Offices, 2 volumes, 1902.

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The following information pertains to all photos unless otherwise noted:

- 1) (former) Grace Reformed Church
 - 2) Newton, North Carolina
 - 3) Laura Phillips
 - 4) February 1983
 - 5) North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC
-
- A. 6) Church, to east
 - B. 6) Church, to northeast
 - C. 3) Randall Page
4) March 1983
6) Church, to south
 - D. 3) Barbara Kooiman
4) June 1989
6) Sunday School addition, to east
 - E. 6) Church interior, to east
 - F. 6) Church interior, to west

NOTE: Most of the photos used in this nomination were taken in 1983. All resources have been thoroughly field checked by Barbara Kooiman in 1989 and have been determined to be unchanged from their appearance and condition portrayed in photographs taken prior to 1989.

LONG, McCORLE +
MILLER HOUSES
E - 480000
N - 3947880

BOST FAMILY HOUSES
E - 477340
N - 3946940
E - 477470
N - 3946950
E - 477750
N - 3946680
E - 477450
N - 3946440

BOST-BURRIS HOUSE
E - 477050
N - 3946880

FORMER GRACE REFORMED
CHURCH
E - 479820
N - 3946180

SELF-TOTT-BICKETT HOUSE
E - 479850
N - 3945740

SIL-CLINE HOUSE
E - 479660
N - 3945850

700 000
FEET

3948
3946
3945
3944
3943

STARTOWN 1.2 MI

3948
3946
3945
3944
3943

35° 37' 30"

81° 15' 478 479 1 340 000 FEET 481 12' 30"



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Contact: USGS and USGS/CS

