Maryland Historical Trust/
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. For instructions, see the Trust publication National Register Application Guidelines. Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name   St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

other names

2. Location

street & number   S. Potomac Street   □ not for publication

city, town   Hagerstown   □ vicinity

state Maryland   code   county Washington   code   zip

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
⊠ private	⊠ building(s)	1	_____	buildings
□ public-local	□ district	_____	_____	sites
□ public-State	□ site	_____	_____	structures
□ public-Federal	□ structure	_____	_____	objects
	□ object	1	_____	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: □

_____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

4. Ownership

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

□ See Continuation Sheet.

5. Reserved (leave this space blank)

Submit completed applications to:

National Register Administration
Maryland Historical Trust
100 Community Place
Crownsville, Maryland 21032-2023

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

<u>Religion/Religious Structure</u>

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

<u>Religion/Religious Structure</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classifications (enter categories from instructions)

<u>Vernacular</u>

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundations <u>brick</u>

walls <u>brick</u>

roof

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

<u>DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:</u>

St. John's Lutheran Church is a large brick building, facing north on South Potomac Street. Although later buildings have infilled to nearly the front of the church, it earlier appeared as a companion to the south facing German Reformed Church on North Potomac Street. With its cornerstone laid in 1795, it is among the oldest brick buildings in Hagerstown. Flemish bond brickwork attests to the age of the original walls. The church is gable fronted, with its main entrance in the north gable elevation. The facade presented to South Potomac Street is the side wall with five window bays. The windows are round arched and filled with stained glass panels. These windows which include two by Tiffany were placed in the 1890s. Corbeled brick pilasters separate the window bays. Decorative brackets at the cornice appear to be part of the 1870 renovation. There is also additional corbeling suggesting a frieze area. A 1900 addition to the south end of the building has grouped round arched windows and shows Romanesque design influence. The exterior of the building is dominated by a tall graceful spire atop an arcaded belfry, resting on a square tower.

The church underwent extensive remodeling in 1870, renovations in the 1890s and in 1900 and again in 1970 after a devastating fire which destroyed the roof and ceilings. The educational building of yellow brick added to the rear and west of the sanctuary was constructed in 1922. The use of yellow brick was prominent in Hagerstown in the 1920s.

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Registration Form

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Name of Property

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Registration Form, page 3 | MHT Inventory No.:

8. Statement of Significance

the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

□ national   □ statewide   ⊠ local

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)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1795-1946	1795
Religion		

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.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

Lutherans were among the earliest settlers of America. As early as 1624, German and Scandinavians sailed to New Netherlands (New York). Seeking religious freedom, most of the German Lutheran immigrants moved to Pennsylvania in response to William Penn's tolerance of religion, after he established that colony in 1681.

In 1742, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, destined to become the patriarch of American Lutheranism, came to Pennsylvania. Under his influence, the gospel was spread and the ministry was organized to serve German Lutherans who lived along the mountain ranges that stretched through Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Early historical records indicate that pastoral acts were performed in what was then called Elizabethtown (Hagerstown) in 1759, probably by itinerant Lutheran preachers. In 1770, St. John's was organized and called its first pastor, Reverend Wildbahn. The cornerstone of the sanctuary was laid in

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Registration Form**

WA-HAG-79
MHT Inventory No.

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Name of Property

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1795 and dedicated in 1806. This congregation has played a significant role in the founding of the General Synod, formation of the Gettysburg Seminary, and the founding of Wittenburg University in Ohio.

The original log church, begun in 1769, served the congregation until 1795, when the present brick building was begun. It took eleven years to complete the church building. It was constructed of brick with four entrances, two on South Potomac Street, one under the tower and one at the south end. All aisles converged at the alter which was centered between the second and third windows on the west side. On the north, east and south sides were large galleries. Box pews which were a low step higher than the aisles, were enclosed with doors. In 1806, the new church was dedicated. Also in that year, the St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church became the official name of the congregation.

In 1867, the congregation planned extensive alterations to the brick church. However, dissention over the remodeling plans and inability to raise the money to carry them out led a group of nearly 100 members, including most of the council, the entire choir, and the organist-choir director to withdraw and form another congregation.

Their request for dismissal granted, the dissenting group continued by amicable agreement to worship with St John's congregation until their new edifice on Franklin Street was completed. On August 20, 1869, the dissenters organized formally as Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. On that same day they called the pastor of St. John's to become their pastor, he having already notified the council of St. John's of his resignation as their pastor, effective September 30th.

As soon as the division had actually occurred, the newly elected council of St. Johns issued a call to the Reverend Doctor Stephen W. Owen to become St. John's 14th pastor. Dr. Owen accepted the call and moved to Hagerstown on November 25, 1869. On the following Sunday he preached his first sermon as pastor of the congregation he was to serve for more than 46 years.

Shortly after Dr. Owen's arrival, plans for remodeling the church were completed. A communication was received from the new Trinity Lutheran Church inviting St. John's members to worship with them during the remodeling period. The council tendered a vote of thanks to Trinity for their kind offer but explained their intention to worship in their lecture room during the months to come.

The work of remodeling commenced on June 1, 1870. The original balconies were removed so that the audience chamber could be divided to make two floors. The street level was to be used as a Sunday School room. Access to the church auditorium on the upper floor was afforded by two spacious stairways. The chancel was placed at the south end of the church. The floor was covered with red carpet and the cushioned seats of the new pews were covered with red damask.

In the 1890s, a number of stained glass windows, including two by Tiffany were placed as memorials. Later, in 1900, the old lecture room was torn down to make room for the new raised recessed chancel added at the south end of the building. A third memorial Tiffany window was placed above the alter. The choir loft and a Moller pipe organ were also placed in the expanded area on the second floor. In 1910, the Kausler memorial mosaics depicting the life of Christ, designed by Hankinson, were placed on either side of the Tiffany window.

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St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
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After the death of Dr. Owen, the reverend Dr. J. Edward Harms became pastor of St. Johns. With the increase of membership under his leadership, the need for a separate educational facility was apparent. The parish cemetery was removed, to make room for the present educational building, completed in 1922.

Plans for a small chapel on the street side of the first floor social hall were approved in 1965 and completed in 1969. Modern stained glass windows each based on a verse from the gospel of St, John, replaced the earlier clear glass windows. The chapel became popular for small weddings, funerals, private baptisms, quiet communion services, summer Sunday school for adults and Bible study.

On July 20, 1969, lightening ignited a fire that threatened to destroy the church building completely. As a result of the fire, the roof system was replaced with steel trusses.

After 200 years of various mergers and coming together of Lutherans throughout North America, St John's today is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the second largest Lutheran body in the world, and the fourth largest non-Roman Catholic communion in this country. In 1970, St. Johns was honored by the Lutheran Brotherhood as a "Landmark Church of Faith" with the presentation of a bronze plaque citing the church as being "distinguished for its significant service" to the Lutheran Church-at-Large in America.

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St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Name of Property

Section Number __8__   Page __3__

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Maryland

Chonological/Developmental Period(s):

      Rural Agrarian Intensification 1680-1815 A.D.
      Agricultural-Industrial Transition 1815-1870 A.D.
      Industrial/Urban Dominance 1870-1930 A.D.

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

      Religion/Church

Resource Type:

      Category: Building

      Historic Environment: Urban

      Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

            Religious structure

      Known Design Source: Vernacular

9. Major Bibliographical References

Information prepared by H. Jane Martin, Hagerstown, MD.

☐ 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 _____

USGS quad __Hagerstown_____

UTM References

A [ ][ ]   [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]   [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]
   Zone   Easting   Northing

B [ ][ ]   [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]   [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]
   Zone   Easting   Northing

C [ ][ ]   [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]   [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

D [ ][ ]   [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]   [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

☐ See Continuation Sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

☒ See Continuation Sheet.

Boundary Justification

☒ See Continuation Sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name title __Historic Churches Committee_____

organization __Washington County Historical Society_____   date __11/6/96_____

street & number __135 W. Washington Street_____   telephone __301-797-8782__

city or town __Hagerstown_____ state __Maryland_____ zip code __21740_____

WA - VI WA-HAG-79

Form 10-300
(Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

MD. HISTORICAL TRUST
BOX 1704
ANNAPOLIS, MD. 21404

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
FIELD SHEET
INVENTORY — NOMINATION FORM

STATE:
2204864608

COUNTY:

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Type all entries — complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
St. John's Lutheran Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
South Potomac Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Hagerstown

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Maryland		Washington	

3. CLASSIFICATION

S E E   I N S T R U C T I O N S

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District ☐ Building ☒ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐	Public ☐ Private ☒ Both ☐	Public Acquisition: In Process ☐ Being Considered ☐	Occupied ☒ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress ☐	Yes: Restricted ☒ Unrestricted ☐ No: ☐

PRESENT USE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Agricultural ☐	Government ☐	Park ☐	Transportation ☐	Comments ☐
Commercial ☐	Industrial ☐	Private Residence ☐	Other *(Specify)* ☐	
Educational ☐	Military ☐	Religious ☒		
Entertainment ☐	Museum ☐	Scientific ☐		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
[? St. John's Lutheran Church]

STREET AND NUMBER:
Hagerstown

CITY OR TOWN:
Maryland

STATE: CODE

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE   CODE

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: city lot

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal ☐   State ☐   County ☐   Local ☐

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER   DATE   FOR NPS USE ONLY

8346

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	*(Check One)*
	Excellent ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed ☐

INTEGRITY	*(Check One)*	*(Check One)*
	Altered ☐ Unaltered ☒	Moved ☐ Original Site ☒

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

One of the most imposing buildings in downtown Hagerstown, St. John's Lutheran Church is a large, white brick structure with a Georgian meeting house plan and a tower with steeple [similar to Zion Evangelical on North Potomac Street]. The large auditorium-like nave is divided into five longitudinal bays by simple pilasters. There is an entrance porch on the 'west' end, out of which rises the tall tower with steeple. Set on a square base is an octagonal belfry, and on top of this the spire itself. All of the aforementioned elements are Georgian, however, the detailing of the church is in a mild Romanesque, most notably the octagonal apse at the altar end. This apse area has double round head windows, reminiscent of Romanesque arches.

[The church was locked .... open only for services ?]

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Pre-Columbion ☐	16th Century ☐	18th Century ☒	20th Century ☐
15th Century ☐	17th Century ☐	19th Century ☒	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)*   [1795] 1870

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Aboriginol		Educotion ☐		Political ☐		Urbon Plonning ☐
Prehistoric ☐		Engineering ☐		Religion/Phi-		Other *(Specify)* ☐
Historic ☐		Industry ☐		losophy ☐		architecture
Agriculture ☐		Invention ☐		Science ☐		
Art ☐		Londscape ☐		Sculpture ☐		
Commerce ☐		Architecture ☐		Sociol/Humon-		
Communicotions ☐		Literoture ☐		itorion ☐		
Conservation ☐		Military ☐		Theoter ☐		
		Music ☐		Tronsportotion ☐		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)*

Like its fellow church on North Potomac Street (Zion Evangelical), this church is a post Civil War replacement (or rebuilding, if you will) of an eighteenth century structure. Also, like Zion, the style is a vaguley Romanesque applied to a Georgian plan -- the Romanesque showing current fashion, while the Georgian probably being a close approximation of the earlier church's plan. The tall white spire is something of a landmark and, with its square first stage and octagonal belfry, is quite Gibbsian, being not unlike the spire of St. Michael's, Charleston.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Pastor   Martin Rothenberger

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY		O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE.	
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "
NE	° ' "	° ' "			
SE	° ' "	° ' "			
SW	° ' "	° ' "			

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
William Morgan

ORGANIZATION	DATE
Department of Art History	June 9, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:
University of Delaware

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Newark	Delaware	

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐   State ☐   Local ☐

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

_____
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

_____
Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

WA·HAG·74

WA·HAG·75

WA·HAG·77

WA·HAG·76

WA·H

STREET

EAST

A

WA·HAG·78

POTOMAC

WA·HAG·79

WA·HAG·80

WA·HAG·81

WA·
HAG·
82

SOUTH

WA·HAG·83

EAST

STREET

HAGERSTO

WA-HAG-79
St. John's Lutheran Church
119 S. Potomac St.

WA-HAG-79
St. John's Lutheran Church
119 S. Potomac St.

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WA-HAG-79
St. John's Lutheran Church
119 S. Potomac St.
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WA-HAG-79
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