

**NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT**  
**PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)

**1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE** (must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)

Street address: **1020-24 Christian Street**

**BRT/OPA Acct. No. 771082000**

Postal code: **19147**

Councilmanic District: 1

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: **Protestant Episcopal Italian Mission & Church of L'Emmanuello**

Current Name: **Christian Street Baptist Church**

**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Building

Structure

Site

Object

**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Condition:  excellent  good  fair  poor  ruins

Occupancy:  occupied  vacant  under construction  unknown

Current use: **House of Worship**

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Please attach a plot plan and written description of the boundary. **SEE ATTACHED SHEET.**

**6. DESCRIPTION**

**SEE ATTACHED SHEET.**

Please attach a description of the historic resource and supplement with current photographs.

**7. SIGNIFICANCE**

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

[See Attached Sheet]

Period of Significance (from year to year): from

**1890 to 1929**

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration:

**Parish House (1890) / Chapel (1891)**

Architect, engineer, and/or designer:

**Frank R. Watson**

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan:

**Unknown**

Original owner:

**Protestant Episcopal Church**

Other significant persons:

**NA**

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- X (a) **Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,**
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- X (j) **Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.**

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Please attach a bibliography.

**SEE ATTACHED SHEET.**

**9. NOMINATOR: KEEPING SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA**

Name with Title	<b>Oscar Beisert, Historian</b>	Email	Oscar.Beisert@gmail.com
Organization	<b>Keeping Society of Philadelphia</b>	Date	<b>8 June 2017.</b>
Street Address	<b>P.O. Box 31927</b>	Telephone	<b>(717) 602-5002</b>
City, State, and Postal Code:	<b>Philadelphia, PA 19104</b>	Nominators are not the property owners.	

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 9 June 2017

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: 13 June 2017

Date of Notice Issuance: 13 June 2017

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: Christian Street Baptist Church Inc.

Address: 1020-24 Christian Street

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19147

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Designated  Rejected

**Nomination**  
for the  
**Philadelphia Register of Historic Places**

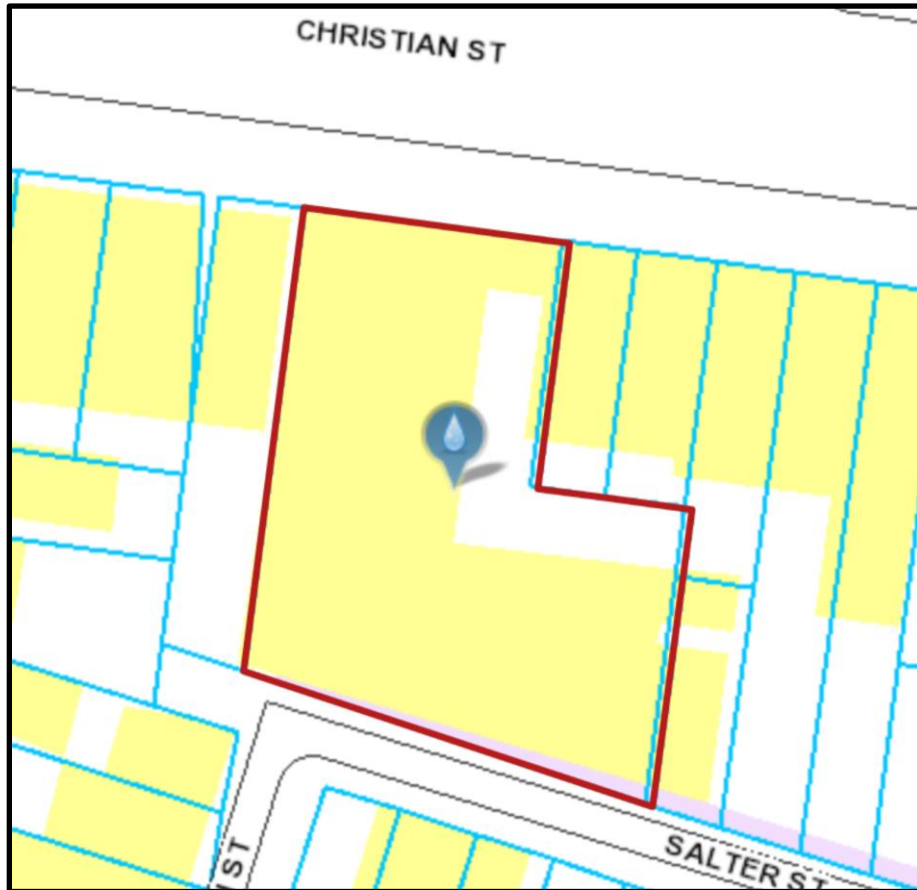


Looking south. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

**Protestant Episcopal Italian Mission &  
Church of L'Emmanuello  
1020-24 Christian Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary description of the proposed designation is as follows:



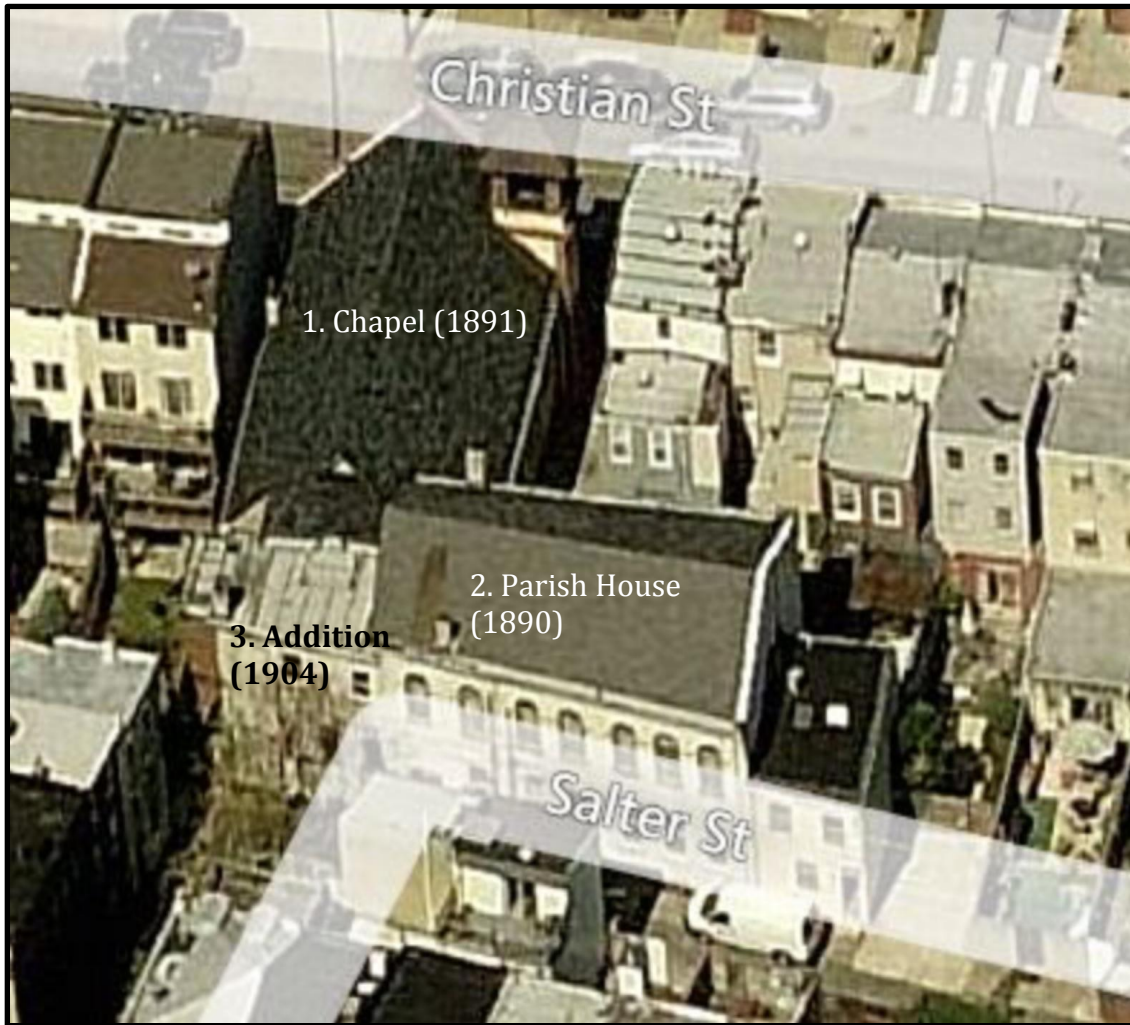
The boundary for the subject property is in red. Courtesy Philadelphia Water.

ALL THOSE TWO CERTAIN lots or pieces of ground with the buildings and improvements thereupon erected, SITUATE in the second ward of the city of Philadelphia, ONE THEREO BEGINNING at the point on the Southside of Christian Street at the distance of two hundred and fifty feet, six inches measured westward from the west side of Tenth Street, CONTAINING in front or breath on the said Christian Street thirty-two feet and extending in length or depth southward between parallel lines at right angles to the said Christian Street, on the east line there of ninety-three feet, six inches more or less to a certain twelve foot wide street called Salter Street (late Donley Street) leading eastward into Tenth Street, BOUNDED Eastward by ground late of Casper Miller, southward by said twelve foot wide street, Westward by the parcel of 1030 Christian Street and northward by said Christian Street.

AND THE REMAINING OTHER THEREOF BEGINNING at a point on the south side of Christian Street at the distance of two hundred and thirty-three feet measured Westward from the west line of Tenth Street; thence extending Westward along the south side of Christian Street seventeenth feet, six inches; thence extending Southward on the line at right angles to said Christian Street ninety-four feet more or less to the Northside

of the said twelve foot wide street leading Eastwardly into said Tenth Street, then extending Eastwardly along the north side of the said twelve foot wide street, forty-seven feet, six inches more or less; thence extending Northward along said ground on a line at right angles to the said Christian Street fifty-six feet, four inches to a point; thence extending Westwardly along a line parallel with the said Christian Street and along the rear ends of lots at 1016 and 1018 Christian Street.

Tax Account No. **013-23060-01020-001**  
OPA/BRT Account No. **771082000**



Site Plan. Source: Bing.





Looking south. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

## **6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Known today as the Christian Street Baptist Church, the former Protestant Episcopal Italian Mission and Church of L'Emmanuello (P.E. Italian Mission and Church of L'Emmanuello) at 1020-24 Christian Street in South Philadelphia is a complex of buildings constructed between 1891 and 1904. The subject property is best defined by its three built sections—the Chapel (1892), the Parish House (1891), and the addition (1904). Created by the procurement of two lots, the buildings are situated on an L-shaped parcel, the narrow portion of which contains the Chapel on the south side of Christian Street. A large iron gate at the east of the Chapel leads to the Parish House and the addition, which are at the rear of the property fronting on Salter Street, a ubiquitous Philadelphia alley.

### **1. Chapel (1891)**

The Chapel was completed in 1891 for the P.E. Italian Mission and Church of L'Emmanuello, designed in the “Italian Renaissance” style by Philadelphia’s own Frank R. Watson, a prosperous ecclesiastical architect. Constructed almost entirely of load-bearing, red brick masonry, the Chapel is comprised of a two-and-one-half-story nave flanked by one-and-one-half-story side aisles.



Looking south. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

The primary elevation is roughcast with red brick and stone trim. This façade is divided into three sections, each delineated by vertical bands of corbeled, red brick quoins, east and west sections recessed from the larger center section. Emulating a typical Lombard-style gable-front façade, the tower with open belfry is at the east; the central portion of the gable-front contains the double entry doors recessed within a decorative terra cotta, pedimented surround; and the continuation of the gabled roofline is at the west. The arrangement of these stylistic components are familiar in Italian ecclesiastical architecture, as interpreted and executed in an American urban format. The central section is two-and-one-half stages, featuring a central entrance, flanked by two windows within the first stage; a continuation of the door surround flanked by paired, arched windows in the second stage; and a large circular aperture, now partly blind, but apparently filled, located between the second and third, half-story stages of the façade. All windows feature corbeled, red brick architraves that delineate both the circular and round-arched window openings. These windows feature variations of colored and/or stained glass and stone sills.





Chapel entrance. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

The central entrance is accessed by a flight of six brownstone steps within a larger base course of like stone, leading to double, wooden doors with decorative, wrought iron hinges. This aperture features an arched top with a stained glass transom divided by round tracery. Recessed by wood paneling, the door surround is perhaps the most elaborate feature of the building, appearing to be of terra cotta. Emulating an opening of the arch order, the doorway is flanked by Doric pilasters that support an arched molding with a stepped effect and an articulated, leaf-like keystone. This archway is framed by an additional rectangular molding. The body of the Doric pilasters and the door head between the archway and outer molding feature decorative reliefs. A floriated motif climbs both pilasters, terminating with an urn and flame motif. The areas of the door head above the arch contain additional reliefs—both featuring circular medallions with Greek lettering set upon a floriated background. Surmounting the entire door surround is a pediment defined by block modillions with a roughcast infill.





Looking south. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

Floating between the second and third, half-story stages, the circular window features a red brick architrave and terra cotta key blocks. A stained glass window appears at center, but its origin is unknown to the nominator. The gable-end is defined by an inverted corbel gable in the same red brick corbeling. This detailing is set beneath a projecting eave or cornice defined by block modillions. A T-shape finial, likely originally a cross, adorns the crest of the gabled roof.



Looking south. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.



Entrance detail. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.



Entrance transom. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

The Protestant Episcopal Italian Mission and the Church of L'Emmanuello  
1020-24 Christian Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2017–Page 8



Western end of primary elevation. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

The gable-end is continued in the western section of the primary elevation and is one-and-one-half-stories. The first stage features a large, double window with a colonette muntin delineated by a red brick, corbeled architrave and stone sill. Rising above this window is a recessed panel, emulating a plaque or niche. The first and second, half-story stages are delineated by red brick, corbeled coursing. The gable is delineated by the same inverted red brick, corbie gable and a cornice of block modillions.





Chapel tower. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

Emulating a Campanile, the tower is defined by brick corbelling in the form of quoins, situated at the east end of the primary elevation. This component of the building is three full stages of the façade with a large, single window within the first stage and a smaller, single window in the second. The second and third stages of the tower are separated by coursing, which features block modillions. The delineation of the base of the belfry is defined by brick corbelling in the form of quoins. The quoins terminate at a simple course, which defines the open portion of the belfry. The



brickwork continues at each corner in the form of double pilasters, which support its hipped roof structure. The roof is defined by projecting eaves with block modillions, a standing seam metal roof and a finial in the form of a copper cross.



Chapel tower. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.



Granite benitier. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

At the base of the tower is a small granite benitier set upon a smooth-faced granite section of the base course. Below a capped spout, the exterior rim of the basin features the words: “Praise God From Whom All Blessings...” The basin has been filled with concrete.



Granite benitier. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.



Cornerstone for successor congregation. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

Also within the base course is a marble corner and/or date stone bearing the name of the successor congregation.





Iron gate at west end of chapel. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

Flanking the Chapel are matching, decorative iron gates; a single gate is at the west, while a double gate is at the east.





Iron gate at east end of chapel. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.



Looking up at chapel tower. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

The east-facing elevation of the Chapel includes the tower and the east wall of the nave. The tower is fully articulated at this elevation emulating the primary elevation. However, in place of the large double window at the primary elevation is a side



entrance, likewise delineated by corbeled red brick quoins. The elevation of the nave has been painted and features at least three full-length, arched windows, each centrally placed in bays which are delineated by projecting piers and corbeled cornices.



Looking southwest. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.



Looking south through the double door iron gate into the court of the subject building.  
Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

## 2. Parish House (1890)

The Parish House appears to be the oldest building on the site, completed in 1890 for the P.E. Italian Mission and Church of L'Emmanuello. Conforming to the L-shaped lot, the Parish House is a two-story, pitched roof building of load-bearing, red brick masonry construction. Covered almost entirely in stucco, the roughcast covers a redbrick facade. The building fronts a pedestrian court accessed by the east gates. However, the building's form and fenestration feature arched top windows and a pedimented entry surround resemble the same at the church. Aligned with this



gateway is the primary entrance of the Parish House, which features a single door surrounded by a diminutive version of the primary elevation's entry bay. This simple version features an arched aperture, the architrave of which includes Doric pilasters. The fenestration features arched windows that are segmental at the first floor and rounded at the second. The rear of the building faces Salter Street, where the arched openings are topped in the same manner.



Salter Street, looking northeast. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.



Door on Salter Street. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.



Salter Street, looking west. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

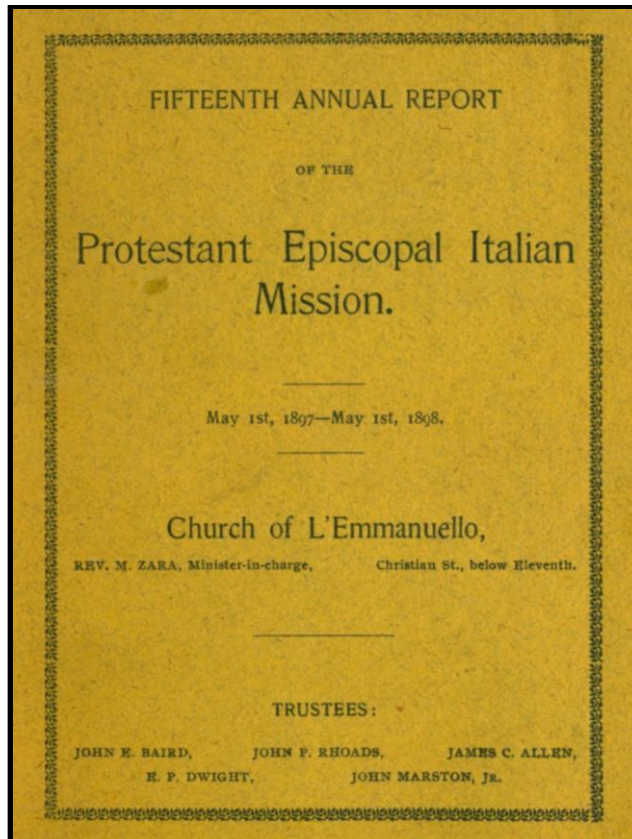




1904 addition on Salter Street, looking north. Courtesy Joseph Celentano.

### **3. Addition (1904)**

The Addition is a small two-story building of load-bearing masonry construction that was completed in 1904 for the P.E. Church of L’Emmanuello. Conforming to the space remaining on the subject lot, the Addition is a simple two-story building with a flat roof. The façade is also minimal with arched windows facing onto Salter Street.



**Fifteenth Annual Report of the Protestant Episcopal Italian Mission, c. 1897-98.**  
Source: <https://philadelphiastudies.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/lemmanuello-1a.jpg>

## **7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

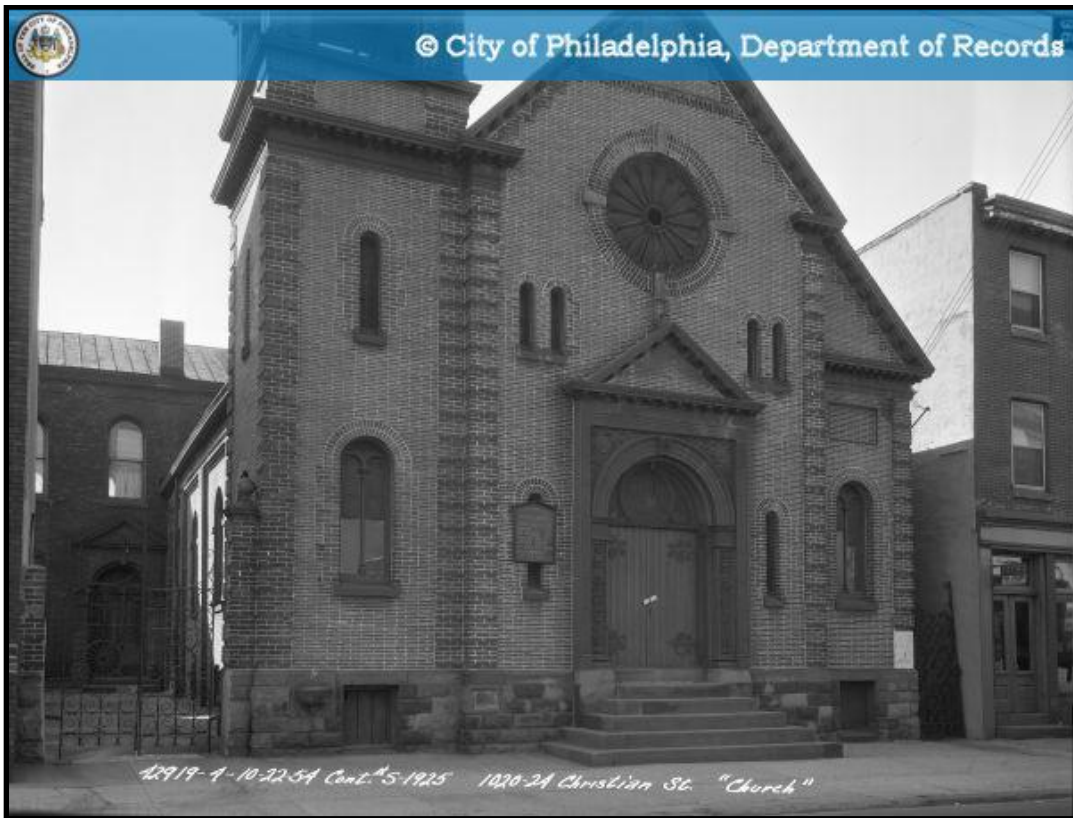
The former P. E. Italian Mission and Church of L'Emmanuello, located at 1020-24 Christian Street, is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The property satisfies the following Criteria for Designation:

- (a) Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

Period of Significance: 1890-1929.

The former P. E. Italian Mission and Church of L'Emmanuello was highlighted in the Philadelphia Historical Commission's South Planning District preservation plan as a good candidate for designation as a "direct link to the various immigrant communities that once populated South Philadelphia.





The P.E. Church of L'Emmanuel—the P.E. Italian Mission, c. 1925.  
Source: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, CAP.

### **Criterion A and J**

Founded as Philadelphia's first and only Protestant Episcopal Italian Mission (P.E. Italian Mission), the subject property is one of the oldest purpose-built Italian missions in Philadelphia. The complex of buildings proposed for designation was constructed specifically as the P.E. Italian Mission and the P.E. Church of L'Emmanuel between 1890 and 1904. After purchasing a lot that is part of the current site in 1883, the P.E. Church of L'Emmanuel used an older building on the site until funds were raised for an improved facility, which would go on to include the Parish House in 1890; the Chapel in 1891; and an Addition to the Parish House in 1904.<sup>1</sup> All of the purpose-built components of the mission congregation survive to-date. The subject property exemplifies the establishment and development of the P.E. Italian Mission, the congregation of the P.E. Church of L'Emmanuel, and, more broadly, Italian and other immigrant missions designed to serve the poor ethnic populations of Philadelphia. Several mainline religious denominations, in this case the Protestant Episcopal Church (P.E. Church), undertook this type of mission work as part of a larger campaign that aimed to achieve several goals: to acculturate and assimilate ethnic immigrant populations; to increase membership within

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<sup>1</sup> Recorded on 7 November 1883 in Philadelphia Deed Book J. O. D. No. 167 p. 162.

their religious denominations; and to provide much needed assistance programs and social services in Philadelphia.<sup>2</sup>

The P.E. Church of L’Emmanuello was established in 1882 as a mission congregation of the P.E. Church of Philadelphia. L’Emmanuello was founded specifically to educate, minister to, and “save” Italian immigrants, converting them to Episcopalian, but allowing them to worship in their native language. The theory was to assimilate and acculturate Italian and other ethnic immigrants in isolation—a convenient model given the economic disparities and social divisions of the period. On a whole, the organization’s founding and early successes are largely due until the relentless work of former Catholic priest Michele Zara (1844-1925), who became Episcopalian after seeking exile in America from theft charges in Italy.

Among the earliest Italian-specific churches and church missions to be established was, naturally, an ethnic Catholic Church—St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, founded in 1852. Naturally, St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi became the principal, unifying religious institution within Philadelphia’s nascent Italian community. However, with the number of immigrants pouring in, other institutions were required. The subject property was established, as previously discussed, and appears to be one of the earliest Italian missions in Philadelphia, becoming, in time, both a Chapel for worship and a Parish House for education. Between 1852 and 1910 no less than twelve congregations and missions were established to serve what was then a growing Italian population in Philadelphia. The P.E. Church appears to be the first of the Protestant denominations to create a mission church with the Methodists following suit in 1889—the Presbyterians in 1903—the Baptists in 1909—the Lutherans in 1910.<sup>3</sup>

<b>Institution Type</b>	<b>Founding Date</b>	<b>Denomination</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
Church	1852	Roman Catholic	St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi	712 Montrose Street, South Philadelphia
Mission	1882	Episcopal	L’Emmanuello	Christian Street, between 10th and 11th Streets, South Philadelphia
Mission	1889	Methodist	Unknown	Catharine Street, South Philadelphia
Church	1894	Roman Catholic	Holy Rosary	Haines Street and Musgrave Street, Germantown

<sup>2</sup> Stefano Villani. “L’Emanuello e la missione protestante episcopale di Filadelfia (1882-1945),” *Altreitalia*, No. 52. (Torino: 2016), p. 1-26.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony A. Roth. *The Episcopal Churches of Philadelphia: A Series of Articles that Appeared in the Church Standard (1899-1900)*. (Philadelphia: 1973). This book appears to have been self-published and is part of the reference collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Interestingly, the book lists many of the other Protestant mission churches beyond the P.E. Church.

Church	1898	Roman Catholic	Our Lady of Good Council	816 Christian Street, South Philadelphia
School	1900	Roman Catholic	School at St. Paul's	Christian Street, between 9th and 10th Streets, South Philadelphia
Mission	1903	Presbyterian	First Italian Presbyterian Church	10th and Kimball Streets, South Philadelphia
Settlement House	1904	Roman Catholic	Madonna House	814 S. 10th Street, South Philadelphia
Mission	1905	Presbyterian	Second Italian Presbyterian Church	Callowhill & Simpson Streets, West Philadelphia
Mission	1906	Presbyterian	Church of the Savior	329 E. Price Street, Germantown
Mission	1909	Baptist	St. John's Baptist Church	1232 Tasker Street, South Philadelphia
Mission	1910	Lutheran	St. Peter's Italian Lutheran Church	Met in two locations, no building

Of the ethnic mission congregations, only about eight congregations occupied purpose-built facilities. This shows that the P.E. Church of L'Emmanuello is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, purpose-built mission churches for Italian immigrants in Philadelphia, setting the stage for what became a larger charitable, cultural, and evangelical movement in Philadelphia.<sup>4</sup> The significance of the L'Emmanuello's mission at the time of its founding and later construction is solidified by the substantial funds raised to construct the Parish House in 1890 and the Chapel in 1891. These funds allowed for the commission of Philadelphia's important ecclesiastical architect—Frank R. Watson (1859-1940).<sup>5</sup> The buildings that comprise the former P.E. Italian Mission and the P.E. Church of L'Emmanuello represent the specific development of the subject mission church, as well as the larger movement in Philadelphia.

*No other agency exists for charitable work among this people.*<sup>6</sup>

In time, the indefatigable Michele Zara ensured that L'Emmanuello became an important community, educational, and religious center for a significant faction of Italians in Philadelphia, an institution that would both prosper and endure from 1882 through 1945. Zara also employed the services of the Churchwomen of Philadelphia, who were also instrumental in carrying out the good works done by the P.E. Italian Mission. By 1883,

<sup>4</sup> Stefano Villani. "L'Emmanuello e la missione protestante episcopale di Filadelfia (1882-1945)," *Altreitalia*, No. 52. (Torino: 2016), p. 1-26.

<sup>5</sup> "With the Bishop's Blessing, The New Episcopal Church L'Emmanuello Dedicated with Ceremony," *Philadelphia Times*. Philadelphia: 13 October 1891.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth M. Roberts. "The Annual Conference of Churchwomen, No. 2—The Italian City Mission," *The Standard*. (Philadelphia: 6 April 1895), 679-80.



not only had the congregation acquired a facility at the subject site, religious services were established in both English and Italian, a school organized that taught English for adults and children, and the inauguration of a Ladies Committee.<sup>7</sup> In 1885, evening classes were established and, by 1891, both the Parish House and Chapel were completed for the congregation. While the Chapel was used to both evangelize and educate the congregants, the Parish House provided a wider range of social services to the community. The Churchwomen of Philadelphia made it their specific mission to provide education to Italian youth that had not yet entered public school.<sup>8</sup>



This photograph was published in *The Standard*, by the P.E. Church, in 1895 and labeled: “Carolina Danella, an Attendant of the Italian Mission.” Source: Anthony A. Roth. *The Episcopal Churches of Philadelphia: A Series of Articles that Appeared in the Church Standard (1899-1900)*. (Philadelphia: 1973).

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<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth M. Roberts. “The Annual Conference of Churchwomen, No. 2—The Italian City Mission,” *The Standard*. (Philadelphia: 6 April 1895), p. 680.

<sup>8</sup> Stefano Villani. “L’Emanuello e la missione protestante episcopale di Filadelfia (1882-1945),” *Altreitalia*, No. 52. (Torino: 2016), p. 1-26.

By the turn of the twentieth century, The Standard and the P.E. Church of Philadelphia reported on many of the activities of the P.E. Italian Mission and Church of L'Emmanuelo. After both the Parish House and the Chapel were completed in 1890 and 1891 respectively, the Parish House was used for a wide variety of mission work: a dietary kitchen is established, and daily provisions of soup to 120-165 persons; the distribution of coal for one cent per bucket; and the establishment and operation of a dispensary with limited, but daily hours.<sup>9</sup>

The P.E. Italian Mission and the P.E. Church of L'Emmanuelo served as a Protestant religious center for its Italian immigrant population, but also provided social services, including but not limited to education in the form of pre-school, language, and other forms of adult training; dietary provisions; low-cost resources to improve quality of life; health care; etc. All of these services put the subject property at the very center of this faction of the Italian community, representing the cultural, economic, and historical heritage of immigrant life in Philadelphia.



Italian immigrant children assembled in one of the classrooms of the Parish House.

Source: <https://philadelphiastudies.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/lemmanuelo-1a.jpg>

### **Historic Context: The Establishment and Development History of the P.E. Italian Mission and Church of L'Emmanuelo**

The purpose-built P.E. Italian Mission and Church of L'Emmanuelo, situated on the south side of Christian Street between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets, was erected by the P.E.

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<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth M. Roberts. "The Annual Conference of Churchwomen, No. 2—The Italian City Mission," *The Standard*. (Philadelphia: 6 April 1895), p. 679-80.

Church between 1890 and 1904. Founded in 1882, L’Emmanuello ministered to Italian immigrants, focusing on acculturation and assimilation; and other charitable works.<sup>10</sup>

Shortly after its founding, it was reported:

“During this convention year, there has been established an Italian Mission, which has been placed under the charge of the Rev. Mr. Zara. There dwell in our midst several thousand of Italians, for whose spiritual welfare there is no adequate provision, either for the adults or for the children. In the Providence of God, a suitable person was found who could at once begin his ministerial labors among them in their own language by establishing religious services on Sundays and by opening a weekday school, which is well filled. The enterprise was started last November, and since then has been in successful operation. The work is so peculiar and tentative that we do not look for either very great or very immediate results, yet we thankfully recognize the fact that a lodgement seems to have been effected, which gives promise of ultimate and satisfactory success.”<sup>11</sup>

Originally a Roman Catholic priest, Rev. Michael Zera fled his home, Maglie to escape a theft conviction. At first, L’Emmanuello was supported by two assistants, who helped Rev. Zera to teach English classes on weekday evenings, treasurer John P. Rhoads of 701 Walnut Street, and five trustees (James C. Allen, John E. Baird, E. P. Dwight, John Marston, Jr., and John P. Rhoads).<sup>12</sup> Zera, though, was truly the driving force behind the establishment and prosperity of the mission church. Zera served the congregation from its founding in 1882 until 1908.<sup>13</sup>

Almost immediately after its founding, the P.E. Italian Mission and Church of L’Emmanuello purchased a portion of the subject property at 1020-24 Christian Street, which then housed a more humble edifice—Dupont Hall, which was used as their house of worship and mission for the remainder of the decade. The building was dedicated on December 20, 1883 after “some renovation work.” Previous owners John McGuckin and wife Margaret (along with single James McGuckin) deeded the property to the trustees of the church on November 7, 1883 for the sum of three thousand dollars. The deed describes Dupont Hall as a “two story brick church or chapel.”<sup>14</sup> Religious services were

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<sup>10</sup> “Italian Episcopalians Observe Anniversary, Eighteenth Year of Church of the L’Emmanuello Marked by Interesting Exercises – Services in Other Churches,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia: 19 November 1900.

<sup>11</sup> “Church Council, The Episcopalian Convention, Ninety-Ninth Annual Session – First Day’s Proceedings – Address by Bishop Stevens – Appointment of Standing Committees,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia: 9 May 1893.

<sup>12</sup> “Ecclesiastical, Religious Notes of Interest Concerning the Different Denominations,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia: 15 February 1884.

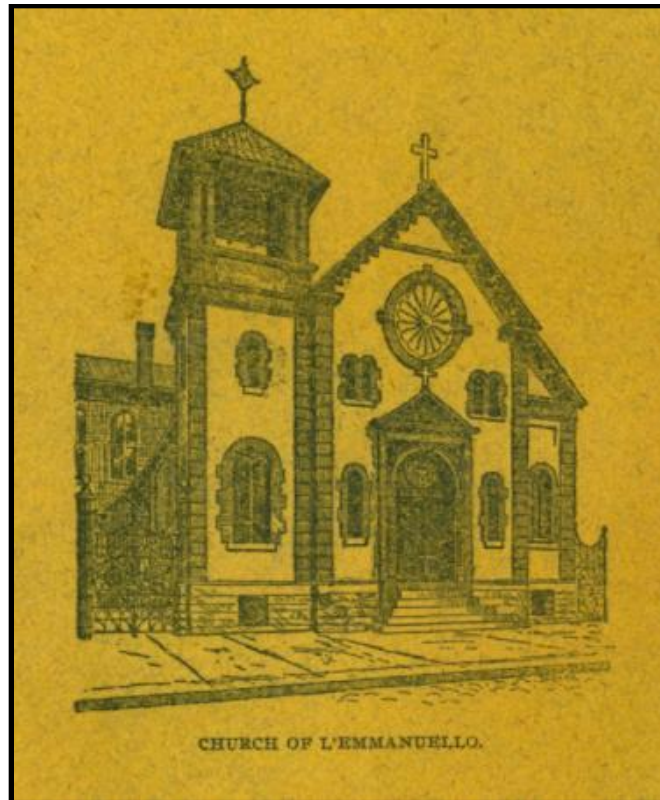
<sup>13</sup> Stefano Villani. “L’Emanuello e la missione protestante episcopale di Filadelfia (1882-1945),” *Altreitalie*, No. 52. (Torino: 2016), p. 1-26.

<sup>14</sup> Recorded on 7 November 1883 in Philadelphia Deed Book J. O. D. No. 167 p. 162.



immediately established in both English and Italian, and a school organized that taught English for adults and children. A Ladies Committee was also founded by the Churchwomen of Philadelphia—these generous volunteer ran a pre-school for children.<sup>15</sup>

In 1885, evening classes were established. That same year L’Emmanuelo administered the right of confirmation to thirty-five Italian immigrants. This was the first event of its kind in the City of Philadelphia, which took place on the subject site, in Dupont Hall<sup>16</sup>



A rendering of the subject building, published in the Fifteenth Annual Report of the Protestant Episcopal Italian Mission, c. 1897-98. Source: <https://philadelphiastudies.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/lemmanuelo-1a.jpg>

By 1890, there were tens of thousands of Italian immigrants living in Philadelphia, but only two large ministries: the Roman Catholic parish of St. Mary Magdalene and L’Emmanuelo. In order to support their efforts, L’Emmanuelo occasionally issued public appeals for donations to expand its work with a population that was perceived as potentially threatening to society.

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<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth M. Roberts. “The Annual Conference of Churchwomen, No. 2—The Italian City Mission,” *The Standard*. (Philadelphia: 6 April 1895), p. 680.

<sup>16</sup> “Italian Episcopalians Observe Anniversary, Eighteenth Year of Church of the L’Emmanuelo Marked by Interesting Exercises – Services in Other Churches,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia: 19 November 1900.

The mission [of L’Emmanuello] reports that its work is influencing, directly or indirectly, a thousand people. If an equal number – or three times that number – and no one else claims these figures – receives attention from the Catholic Church, there is still left an army of fifteen thousand at the least who are under no religious or educational advantages of any kind. They seem to be a neglected community in the midst of a large Christian city – a community liable at any moment to become a menace to our laws and institution. They are in most cases the dupes of unprincipled agents who lured them with false promises from their native land to this country... Uneducated, even in their modern tongue, wretchedly housed, and only with a precarious livelihood, they present a spectacle which must touch the hearts of the lovers of humanity.<sup>17</sup>

L’Emmanuello purchased the property immediately to the east of its chapel in 1890. This property was deeded to the trustees of the church on June 23, 1890 by Theresa Burke, et al.<sup>18</sup> As a result of this sale, the trustees agreed to pay yearly ground rent in the sum of one hundred forty dollars to Catharine Allen, et al.<sup>19</sup>

At the time of purchase, it was reported that \$13,000 had already been raised of the \$15,000 required. Upon its newly acquired lot, the congregation erected the Parish House, which was completed in November 1890.<sup>20</sup> The plan was to build both a Parish House and a new Chapel. Once the Parish House was complete, the congregation was able to demolish the pre-existing chapel without a major loss of capacity. The demolition was required because the old building had “...become dilapidated and withal too small for the growing wants of the congregation...”<sup>21</sup>

The cornerstone of the subject Chapel was laid in April 1891 and the building was opened in October 1891. During construction, the church was described in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*:

The new Italian Protestant Episcopal Church of L’Emmanuello will be a revelation to those who see it for the first time, as it is now a model church home and a standing tribute to the energy of Rev. Mr. Zara, rector. It is foreign in general style. The interior is bright with amber colored cathedral glass. The walls and ceiling are of a light terra cotta tint. The furniture is not yet in place.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> “The Italian Mission, An Earnest Appeal for Funds to Carry on the Good Work So Well Begun,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia: 16 February 1889.

<sup>18</sup> Recorded on 23 June 1890 in Philadelphia Deed Book G. G. P. No. 610 p. 549.

<sup>19</sup> Recorded on 30 October 1890 in Philadelphia Deed Book G. G. P. No. 702 p. 253.

<sup>20</sup> “Other Protestant Episcopal News,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia: 18 April 1890. Accessed June 3, 2017, <https://philadelphiastudies.org/category/lemmanuello-italian/>

<sup>21</sup> “With the Bishop’s Blessing, The New Episcopal Church L’Emmanuello Dedicated with Ceremony,” *Philadelphia Times*. Philadelphia: 13 October 1891.

<sup>22</sup> “The New Italian Church of L’Emmanuello,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia: 11 September 1891.

*The Times* describe the Chapel in greater detail following its dedication on October 12, 1891:

The church is 72x36 feet and the parish building 64x36. The main entrance to the church is on Christian Street and opens into a vestibule, over which is the choir and organ loft. The parish house is entered from the yard on the east side of the church, and also from a rear street. It contains two classrooms, a guild room, entertainment hall on the second floor, and baths, and is in every way adapted to the Sunday school and benevolent work of the parish.

The materials used in the construction of the buildings are brick, terracotta, and red sandstone.

The style of the architecture is the Italian Renaissance.

The front of the church is relieved by a tower on the northeast corner, which is surmounted by an open belfry, with tile roof and iron cross.

The interiors of both church and parish house are finished in tinted plaster and natural wood. The windows of the church, which are quite large, are filled with neat stained glass.

The basement of the church is so designed that it may be used in the future for a reading room or other desirable purposes. Frank R. Watson was the architect.<sup>23</sup>

Architect Frank R. Watson (1859-1940), a Philadelphia native—specifically from Frankford, maintained practices in Philadelphia and Atlantic City, NJ. Watson, who specialized in ecclesiastical architecture, established his firm in c. 1882-83, after working under architect Edwin F. Durang for a period of five years. Durang, also an ecclesiastical architect, is best known as the architect of some of Philadelphia's most important Roman Catholic churches.<sup>24</sup> Watson would go on to take a more important role in the design of Main Line protestant churches.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> "With the Bishop's Blessing, The New Episcopal Church L'Emmanuel Dedicated with Ceremony," *Philadelphia Times*. Philadelphia: 13 October 1891.

<sup>24</sup> Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, "Watson, Frank Rushmore (1859-1940)," by Sandra L. Tatam. Accessed June 3, 2017, [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/117215](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/117215)

<sup>25</sup> A number of Watson-designed church buildings are extant, including All Saints Lutheran Church (now New Inspirational Baptist Church), Epiphany of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church, Our Lady of the Rosary Roman Catholic Church (now Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament), St. Anthony of Padua Roman Catholic Church (now Chapel Lofts), St. Leo Roman Catholic Church (now vacant), St. Simeon Episcopal Church (now owned by Church of the Living God, Column and Pillar of Truth, Light of the World), St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Church (now Universal (now Universal Church of the Kingdom of God), and York Street Methodist Episcopal Church (now Emmanuel United Methodist Church). This eclectic selection of projects



By the turn of the twentieth century, the Parish House was used by the P.E. Italian Mission to provide the following social services:

Meals and other dietary provisions:

Here a diet kitchen is established, and seven-five families have been cared for by this agency, the number of persons daily supplied with soup ranging from 120 to 165. ons daily supplied with soup ranging from 120 to 165. ons daily supplied with soup ranging from 120 to 165.

Affordable resources to improve quality of life:

Many tons of coal have been distributed, the people being encouraged to keep their self-respect by buying it at one cent a bucket.

Healthcare:

The dispensary is open from three to four o'clock each afternoon. During the past year thousands of prescriptions have been given free. The doctor will visit the sick each day or night.<sup>26</sup>

*The Standard* also justified the need for the P.E. Italian Mission and Church of L'Emmanuello, summarizing the conditions for many such immigrants as they saw it at the time:

They [Italians] are a people who live apart from other foreigners in our city, as well as from our native Americans. They have in Italyville (as some one is pleased to call it) their own stores, banks, and even their own policeman.

Imagine, if you can, forty thousand Italians living in the neighborhood bounded on the east and west by Front and Broad streets, and on the south and north by Washington Avenue and South Street. There will be no less than thirty persons in a house containing only six rooms. Large tenements are filled in the same proportion.<sup>27</sup>

As more Italian immigrants poured into Philadelphia between 1890 and 1900, the services provided by the P.E. Italian Mission and Church of L'Emmanuello continued to be in high demand, only increasing over time.

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is proof of Watson's ability to meet the design needs of Mainline Protestant denominations from Methodist to Roman Catholic. Source: Philadelphia Architects and Buildings.

<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth M. Roberts. "The Annual Conference of Churchwomen, No. 2—The Italian City Mission," *The Standard*. (Philadelphia: 6 April 1895), p. 679-80.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

In 1904, plans calling for “extensive improvements” to the church were completed by Frank R. Watson’s two-year old firm of Watson & Huckel (fl. 1902-1917). The plans, provided for alterations to the interior as well as additions to the property – likely the nearly contemporary row house-sized addition that adjoins the rear of the church (southern façade) and western end of the parish house.<sup>28</sup>

The church membership was never as strong in number as those in need of social services. In 1907, there were two hundred forty-four members, increasing to three hundred by 1908.<sup>29</sup>

The priest that succeeded Zara, Tomaso Edmondo of Cioppa (Rev. T. E. Della Cioppa), immigrated to America under similarly precarious circumstances. In his case, the former Catholic priest left the parish he headed, Falchi di Camigliano, due to suspicions that he had had an affair. Both of these men reinvented themselves in America, becoming the driving forces that grew and sustained L’Emmanuello over six decades.<sup>30</sup> Rev. T. E. Della Cioppa served the congregation from 1908 until its eventual dissolution in 1945.<sup>31</sup>

L’Emmanuello was almost always in need of the financial resources required to continue their work. As early as 1913, the organization struggled to remain solvent, but appears to have ebbed and flowed, as the mission church was entirely dependent upon the donations from the faith community and the public.<sup>32</sup>

In an appeal made to fellow Episcopal churches, Rev. T. E. Della Cioppa wrote, “The Mission has had a hard struggle. The neighborhood is a constantly shifting one; the people are very poor... Certain of our missions are supported, in whole or in part, by collections in our churches at stated times. The Deaf Mutes have the Ash Wednesday, and the Jews the Good Friday collections, for example...”<sup>33</sup>

Despite its dependence on the generosity of others, L’Emmanuello was a vibrant congregation with a strong body of members through the 1920s. Social services continued to be a primary focus, as well as activities for members including music, and sewing. The organization also supported “societies,” such as the Circolo Savanarola and the Circolo Galeazzo. The former was a young men’s social organization and the latter was a beneficial association that provided benefits to members who fell ill and could not

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<sup>28</sup> “Italian Mission Improvements,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia: 26 June 1904.

<sup>29</sup> Stefano Villani, “L’Emanuello e la missione protestante episcopale di Filadelfia (1882-1945).” *Altretalie*, 52 (gennaio-giugno 2016), pp. 51-76.

<sup>30</sup> Stefano Villani, “L’Emanuello e la missione protestante episcopale di Filadelfia (1882-1945).” *Altretalie*, 52 (gennaio-giugno 2016), pp. 51-76.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> The Church of L’Emmanuello. 1913. Appeal insert, collection of The Episcopal Diocese of Philadelphia’s Archives.

work for a period.<sup>34</sup> Some of these activities were recounted in the congregation's magazine, *The Emmanuello Monthly*.<sup>35</sup>

On February 16, 1929, L'Emmanuello closed the Christian Street property – due to changes in immigration laws and The Great Depression. Interestingly, rather than merging into a nearby Episcopal parish, it remained independent, meeting nearby at St. Elisabeth's. It remained there, at 16th and Mifflin Streets in South Philadelphia, until 1940.<sup>36</sup> In 1940, the congregation followed their pastor, Rev. Cioppa, to the Pro-Cathedral of St. Mary at Broad and South Streets. And when he retired in 1945, the congregation dissolved.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Eleventh Annual Report of the Protestant Episcopal Italian Mission, May 1st, 1893–May 1st, 1894. Pamphlet, collection of The Episcopal Diocese of Philadelphia's Archives.

<sup>35</sup> Stefano Villani, "L'Emanuello e la missione protestante episcopale di Filadelfia (1882-1945)." *Altretalie*, 52 (gennaio-giugno 2016), pp. 51-76.

<sup>36</sup> J. Wesley Twelves, *A History of the Diocese of Pennsylvania of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., 1784-1968* (Philadelphia: Diocese of Pennsylvania, 1969), p. 205.

<sup>37</sup> Stefano Villani, "L'Emanuello e la missione protestante episcopale di Filadelfia (1882-1945)." *Altretalie*, 52 (gennaio-giugno 2016), pp. 51-76.



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### **Additional Resources**

The City Archives of Philadelphia

Google Books

Hathi Trust

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia Studies (online)

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