

# CITY OF WASHINGTON

## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

301 Walnut St. · Washington, IL 61571

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<http://www.washington-illinois.org>

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman Burdette and Planning and Zoning Commission  
FROM: Jon R. Oliphant, AICP, Planning & Development Director  
SUBJECT: Public Hearing – Variance request by St. Mark’s Lutheran Church to allow an electronic message board in a residential zoning district at 200 S. Main Street  
DATE: July 26, 2023

**Zoning:** R-2 (Multi-Family Residential)

**Comprehensive Plan:** Single- and Two-Family Residential

**Summary:** St. Mark’s Lutheran Church is requesting the allowance of an electronic message board on its church property at 200 S. Main Street. The property is zoned R-2 (Multi-Family Residential). Such signs cannot be located within 100 feet of a residential zoning district. A variance must be approved to allow for the placement of the sign on the church property as well as for the allowance for it to be slightly larger than the maximum allowable percentage of the ground sign area.

**Background:** St. Mark’s would like to add a 29” x 87” message board below its current sign that faces S. Main Street. It would be slightly smaller than the existing ground sign that was installed in 1986. The church would like to use the sign to convey church- and community-related events and an “all are welcome” message. The Washington zoning code allows for electronic message boards that are attached and subordinate to a permitted wall or ground sign. Such signs are not allowed to flash or display video or graphic animation, and not utilize chasing, scintillating, or high intensity lighting. Electronic message boards cannot display any advertising other than references to the business conducted on the premises. Civic announcements, congratulatory remarks, personal salutations, and the time, date, and/or temperature are also allowed. They cannot exceed 60 square feet in area and cannot exceed 40 percent of the total area of the sign. The proposed electronic message board would be about 45 percent of the total area of the sign.

The sign code does not allow for electronic message boards to be located within 100 feet of a residential district, which prohibits them from being located on properties such as St. Mark’s that have a residential zoning classification. Staff is aware of one similar request when a variance was approved in 2010 to allow an electronic message board for Evangelical United Methodist Church at 401 Walnut Street within the existing ground sign.

Electronic message boards have become more common among commercial and institutional uses. The proposed sign would not appear to be detrimental to surrounding property owners or motorists on S. Main. As such, **staff recommends approval of the proposed variance request to allow an electronic message board to be placed on the St. Mark’s property and for it to be about 45 percent of the total sign area.**

A public hearing will be held by the Planning and Zoning Commission at their meeting on Wednesday, August 2, 2023.

# CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS

## APPLICATION FOR VARIANCE

To have a complete application for a variance, you must submit the following:

- Signed and completed application
- Plat showing subject property and proposed site improvements
- Ownership documentation (lease, deed, mortgage, etc.)
- Application fee of \$100 payable to the City of Washington

Name(s) of Applicant(s): St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Phone Number of Applicant: 309-444-4618

Address of Applicant: 200 S Main Street, Washington IL 61571

Owner of Property: St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Address of Owner: 200 S. Main Street, Washington, IL 61571

I would like to receive correspondence by:  Mail  Email      Email Address: operations.director@stmarks.washington.org

Property Tax ID (PIN) number: 02 02 23 214 003

Current zoning classification of the property: R2      Current use of the property: Church

Describe how your property cannot yield a reasonable return, if it is required to be used only under the general conditions of your zoning classification:

~~The residential zoning of the church and surrounding properties do not allow for an electronic messaging board. We would like to use the sign to convey church-related and community-related events along with an "all are welcome" message. The added message board size is 29" x 87".~~

To the best of your knowledge, can you affirm that the hardship described above was not created by an action of anyone having property interests in the land after the Zoning Ordinance became law? Yes  No

If "no," explain why the hardship should not be regarded as self-imposed. (Self-imposed hardships are NOT entitled to variations.)

Describe how your situation is unique or different from any other property: \_\_\_\_\_

~~The church is not a residence but rather a gathering place for christian worship and other faith-based and community-related activities.~~

Describe the alteration or change, if any, in the basic character of the neighborhood the variation, if granted, would make: \_\_\_\_\_

~~We would be adding an electronic sign with changeable digital messaging board to the existing metal/plastic sign already in place. See the attached photos showing the current sign and what it will look like with a messaging board attached.~~

Describe the nature of the variation you are requesting (attach dimensioned site plan): \_\_\_\_\_

~~Approval to install an electronic sign/messaging board.~~

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Your case will be referred with staff's recommendation to the next regularly scheduled Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) meeting for a public hearing. The PZC meets the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at the Washington District Library meeting room at 380 N. Wilmor Road. At the PZC meeting, you will present your request. A variance cannot be granted by the PZC unless the PZC finds, based upon the application and evidence presented at the public hearing, that a strict application of the terms of the Zoning Ordinance imposes practical difficulties or particular hardship. The following are examples of variances that can be granted:

1. To permit the extension of a district where the boundary line of a district divides a lot in single ownership as shown of record.
2. To permit the reconstruction of a nonconforming building which has been destroyed or damaged to an extent of more than fifty percent (50%) of its value, by fire or act of God, or the public enemy, where the PZC shall find some compelling public necessity requiring a continuance of the nonconforming use, but in no case shall such a permit be issued if its primary function is to continue a monopoly.
3. To make a variance, by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of a specific piece of property of record, or by reason of exceptional topographical conditions the strict application of any provision of this chapter would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties or particular hardship upon the owner of such property, and amount to a practical confiscation of property, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience to such owner, provided such relief can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the general purpose and intent of the comprehensive plan as established by the regulations and provisions contained in the Zoning Ordinance.
4. To interpret the provisions of this chapter where the street layout actually on the ground varies from the street layout as shown on the district map fixing the several districts.
5. To waive the parking requirements in the business or industrial districts whenever the character or use of the building is such as to make unnecessary the full provision of parking facilities or where such regulations would impose an unreasonable hardship upon the use of the lot, as contrasted with merely granting an advantage or convenience.
6. To permit a building to be erected, reconstructed, altered, or enlarged so that the building lines would extend beyond the distance specific in this chapter into side yards or into front yards; provided that such variance may not be granted:
  - a. Unless there is a building in the block that extends beyond the distance from the front street line specified in this chapter, in which case the building line may be permitted to extend as near to the front street line as such nonconforming building;
  - b. Unless the lot is irregular in shape, topography, or size; or
  - c. Unless the street line of the lot is directly opposite the street line of a lot which is irregular in shape, topography, or size.
7. To permit in any district such modifications of the requirements of the regulations of this chapter as the Board may deem necessary to secure all appropriate development of a lot where adjacent to such lot on two or more sides there are buildings that do not conform to the regulations of the district.

**Certification:** *To the best of my knowledge, the information contained herein, and on the attachments, is true, accurate, and correct, and substantially represents the existing features and proposed features. Any error, misstatement, or misrepresentation of material fact or expression of material fact, with or without intention, shall constitute sufficient grounds for the revocation or denial of the proposed Variance.*

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

7-5-23  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Owner

*Finance Chair*

7/5/2023  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

After receiving a completed application, the City Clerk will file notice of your request with the local newspaper and with the adjoining property owners. If you have any questions, please contact Aaron Paque, Planner, at (309) 444-1122.

# Tazewell County, Illinois

generated on 7/27/2023 8:44:34 AM CDT

## Parcel

<b>Parcel ID</b> 02-02-23-214-003	<b>Alt. PIN</b>	<b>Parcel Address</b> 200 S MAIN ST, WASHINGTON	<b>Data as of</b> 7/22/2023
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### Tax Payer Information

<b>Tax Payer</b>	ST MARKS LUTHERAN CHURCH
<b>Tax Payer Address</b>	200 S MAIN ST WASHINGTON IL 615710000
<b>Transfer Date</b>	01/12/1958

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### Location Information

<b>GIS</b>		<b>Section &amp; Plat</b>	
<b>District No.</b>	02027	<b>State Assigned District No.</b>	020
<b>Township No.</b>	002,	<b>Routing No.</b>	
<b>Parcel Address</b>	200 S MAIN ST, WASHINGTON	<b>Legal Desc.</b>	BURTONS ADDN NE 1/4 SEC 23 LOTS 1-2-3 & 4 BLK 1

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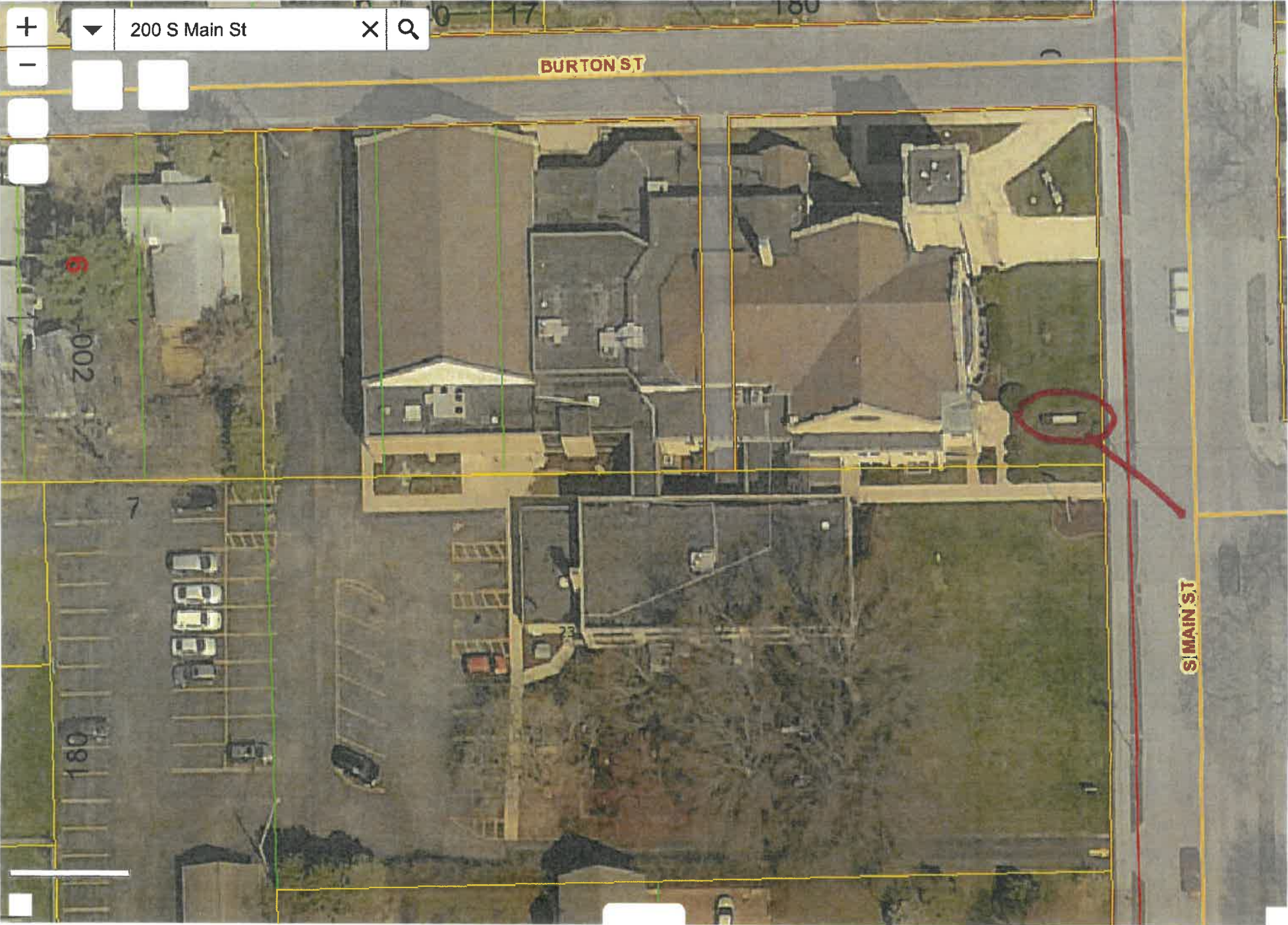
### Parcel Information

### Topography

### Services

<b>Property Class Code</b>	90 TAX EXEMPT	<b>Level</b>	N	<b>Water</b>	
<b>Neighborhood Code</b>	210	<b>High</b>	N	<b>Sewer</b>	
<b>Neighborhood Factor</b>	100.00	<b>Low</b>	N	<b>Gas</b>	
<b>Neighborhood Type</b>		<b>Rolling</b>	N	<b>Electricity</b>	N
<b>Street or Road Code</b>		<b>Swampy</b>	N	<b>Sidewalk</b>	
		<b>Flood Hazard</b>		<b>Alley</b>	N
		<b>Waterfront Property Type</b>			

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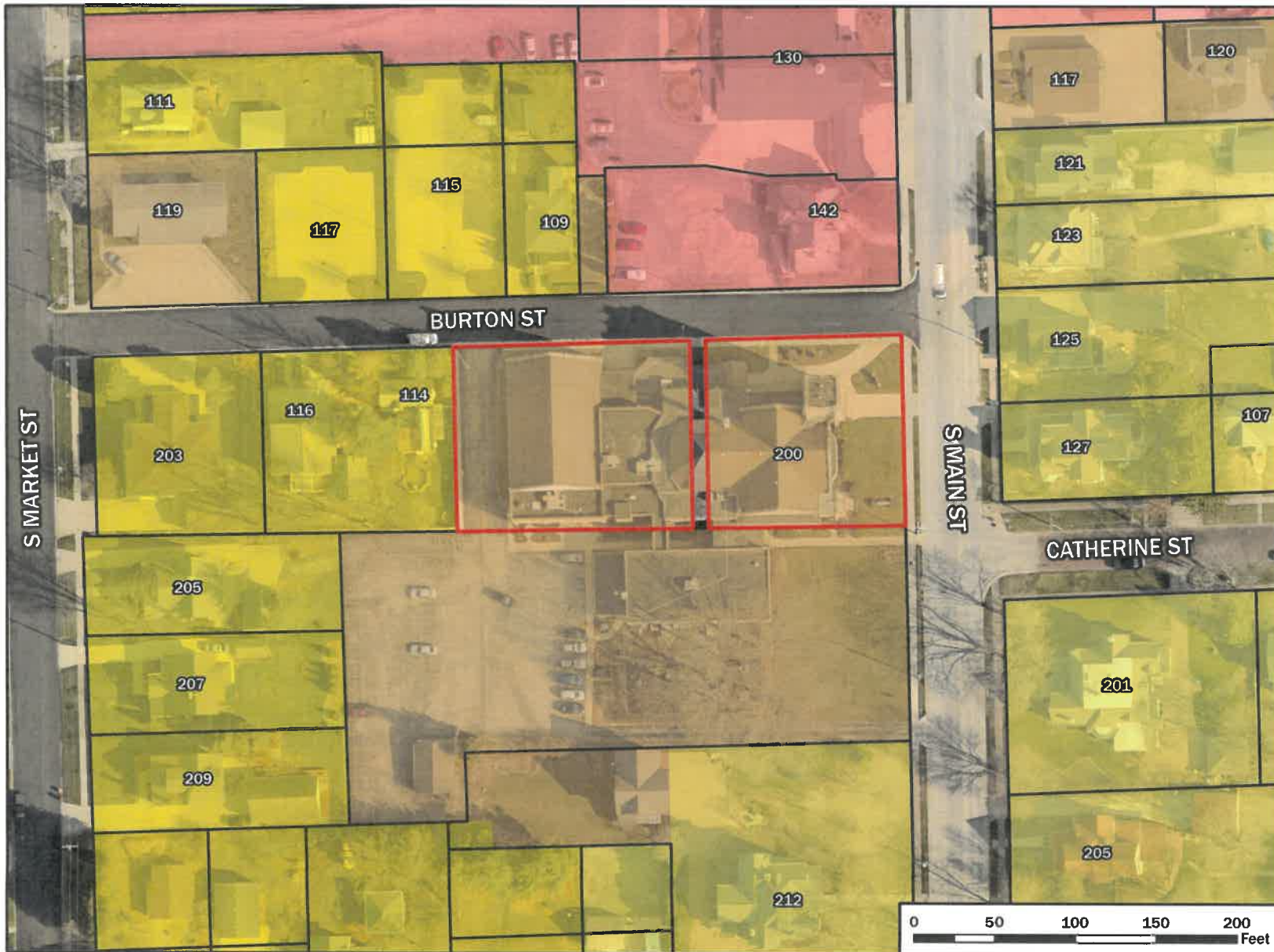
ST. MARK'S  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
1077 WOODBURY AVE. WILMINGTON, DE



ST. MARK'S  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
1077 WOODBURY AVE. WILMINGTON, DE







42°F 



# 200 S. Main St.

PIN: 02-02-23-214-003

## Legend

-  Parcels
-  200 S Main St
- Zoning**
-  R-1A
-  R-1
-  R-2
-  C-2

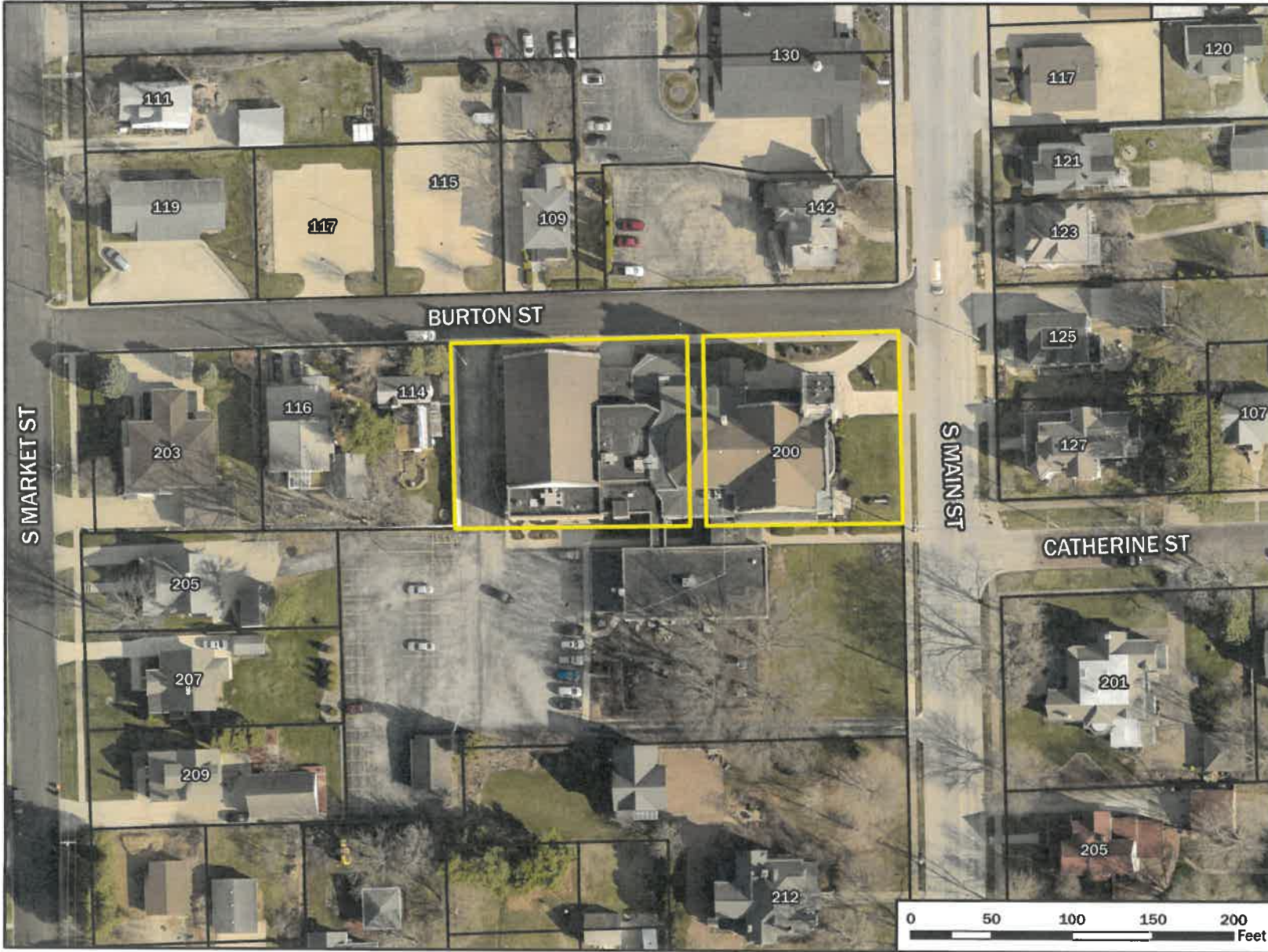


Date: 7/25/2023

*This map indicates approximate data locations and may not be 100% accurate. Parcels are provided and maintained by Tazewell County.*







# 200 S. Main St.

PIN: 02-02-23-214-003

## Legend

-  Parcels
-  200 S Main St



Date: 7/25/2023

This map indicates approximate data locations and may not be 100% accurate. Parcels are provided and maintained by Tazewell County.

