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August 4, 2025

Sarah Carroll, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Committee
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York, 10007

Dear Chair Carroll,

I write to express my strong support for the designation of the Most Holy Redeemer Church at 173 East 3rd Street as a New York City landmark. This historic church, founded in 1844 by Redemptorist missionaries, has long stood as a testament to the rich cultural and religious heritage of the city's German-American community. Originally built as a modest house of worship for the city's growing German immigrant population, the church was expanded in 1851 into the impressive structure we know today. Designed in the German Baroque style, it quickly became the showplace of German Catholicism in New York and the most important religious institution in Manhattan's Little Germany. A year after its expansion, it was consecrated by Archbishop John Neumann of Philadelphia, who would later become the first American male saint, further cementing its historical and spiritual significance.

The building has immense architectural value, with a unique blend of Baroque and Romanesque influence. This combination is seen through the building's grandeur and elaborate ornamentation, reminiscent of a Baroque style, as well as robust arches and a barrel-vaulted ceiling, demonstrating its Romanesque nature. This mixture has been refined throughout the centuries of its service. In 1912, the church underwent substantial renovations, including the addition of a new copper dome and a striking gold cross. While the spire was shortened from 250 to 232 feet, it remains the tallest structure in the neighborhood aside from nearby public housing. In 1914, it achieved another historic milestone, becoming the first church in the world to install a fully electric bell-ringing system.

The church continued to serve its community faithfully for decades. In 2015, it merged with the Parish of the Nativity, uniting two parishes in service of the East Village's Catholic community. In 2018, after over 150 years of stewardship, the Redemptorists departed, and the Archdiocese of New York assumed management of the church. Most recently, the Archdiocese announced that Masses would cease after September 1, and a partial roof collapse has since prompted an engineering study to assess the building's condition.

Today, this building stands as not only a place of worship, but as a visible and vital reminder of the neighborhood's layered history of immigration, community-building, architectural beauty, and faith. Its historical, cultural, and architectural significance makes it an essential candidate for landmark status. I respectfully urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission to preserve this irreplaceable piece of New York's heritage.

Sincerely,