

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUN 18 1984  
date entered JUL 19 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Olivet Methodist Episcopal Church South

and/or common Olivet United Methodist Church, Parsonage and School (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Columbia Pike N/A not for publication

city, town Riversburg vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Giles code 055

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Tennessee Conference, United Methodist Church

Bishop Edward L. Tullis

street & number Scarritt College

city, town Nashville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37203

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Giles County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Pulaski state Tennessee 38478

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Giles County Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37203

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date

1951

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Olivet Methodist Church, on the Old Columbia Pike between Pulaski and Columbia near the community of Riversburg in northern Giles County, is a fine example of Victorian vernacular chapel architecture. The one-room rectangular building is a frame structure covered with weatherboarding and rests on a full basement; the foundation now consists of cinder blocks. Frame parsonage and school buildings are also located on the site.

The front of the church faces west. Its main distinctive features are a rounded arch doorway and two rounded arch windows. The rails and stiles of the double-leaf doors are arranged in the locally-common "Christian door" fashion, featuring a cross over two recessed panels signifying an open Bible. The rounded arch windows on either side have 6/6 lights with narrow surround lights; these windows originally had louvered shutters, but only their hardware remains today. Extending from the central doorway is a low gabled portico supported by six chamfered posts and two chamfered pilasters; there is a quatrefoil cut-out in the center of the gable, and the gable itself is further decorated by an expressed chamfered collar seam and chamfered diagonal wind braces. The tops of the porch posts are joined by a frieze decorated with cut-outs. The main gable of the front of the church has the same expressed collar-beam and wind braces; below this, at ceiling level, is a course of single fishscale shingles with small circular cut-outs; the gable has a large diamond-shaped ventilator near the ridge lines. The eaves are decorated with delicate vergeboards which extend around the entire building.

The parsonage is a c.1900 cross-gable cottage of frame construction. There is a hipped porch across the front of the cottage, and a half-hipped at rear addition. The windows have 6/6 lights, and the mortised panel door has a large single glass pane. The roof is supported by lookout brackets, and the edge of the roof and the porch are decorated with fancy gingerbread vergeboards which extend around the house.

Also on the property is the small Olivet Schoolhouse. This plain frame building, built about 1893, rests on stone piers and has a gabled tin roof, broken only by a small brick flue at the ridge near the front of the building. A door and transom are the only features at the front or west elevation of the schoolhouse. The north and south sides have three 4/4 light windows, and the rear is quite plain.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1871, 1893, c. 1900     **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Olivet United Methodist Church is nominated under National Register criterion C for its local significance to northern Giles County as an outstanding example of rural Victorian vernacular chapel architecture. The 1871 church features some of the best elaborate sawn Victorian "gingerbread" detailing in this part of Tennessee. Similar craftsmanship is exhibited in the frame 1900 parsonage. The Olivet Station School is also located on the property; its small building was constructed in 1893. The three buildings exhibit some of the best Victorian country carpentry in this part of south central Tennessee.

Olivet Methodist Church was organized in 1871 with eighteen charter members. The church house was erected the same year on the pike between Columbia and Pulaski, some two miles north of the Riversburg community. Col. David T. Reynolds, a charter member of the church financed its construction. The land was deeded to the church by Reynolds and Albert Buford. The building was dedicated by Dr. Alexander L. P. Green, and the Rev. J. B. Anderson was the first pastor of the church.

Olivet and Pleasant Valley Churches constituted Pleasant Valley Station from 1871 to 1879, when Olivet Church became a fulltime appointment. Shortly after that, Olivet was placed on the circuit with Lynnville. In 1898 Pleasant Valley was again placed on the same charge. Olivet, Pleasant Valley, Salem (Campbellsville), and Center Grove (Apple Hill) formed the circuit until the early 1920s, when Berea replaced Center Grove on the circuit.

The first District Conference at Olivet was held during the pastorate of R. G. Irvine, 1873-76, with Bishop M. B. Marvin delivering the sermon. Irvine was stricken with blindness while serving the church. Year-round Sunday School began in 1877, under the Rev. J. T. Duncan. An "Epworth League," a youth organization, was organized by 1924. The "Laura Allen Missionary Society" was formed in 1928 after the death of Mrs. A. M. Allen. Ministerial students at the Massey School would use Olivet Church to preach their first sermons.

"Childrens Day" was a big occasion in the early 1920s; there were many children in the Olivet Community, and they would march into the church in long lines singing "Onward Christian Soldiers." Inside, they would perform again, in solos, duets, quartets, class groups, and the like, with songs, recitations, dramas, and pantomines. The ladies of the church decorated with Queen Anne's lace, wild roses, day lilies, wild sweet peas, and asparagus fern.

In 1927, forty feet of the church's front lawn was taken for U. S. Highway 31. Another sixty feet were taken in 1951, and the church was moved back a short distance over a new full basement. The school and parsonage buildings remain on their original foundations.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Carter, T. Cullen. History of Methodist Churches and Institutions.  
 Nashville, Parthenon Press, n.d.  
 Gillespie, Mae. "Olivet Methodist Church," MSS, 1983.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3.5 acres

Quadrangle name Milky Way, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References none available  $35^{\circ} 17' 40''$  North Latitude  
 $87^{\circ} 01' 34''$  West Longitude

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property consists of three and one half acres which is trapezoidal in shape and bounded on the west by Old Columbia Pike (U.S. 31) and on the north, east and south by adjoining property lines. This includes all of the remaining property historically associated with Olivet United Methodist Church.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Richard Quin, Historic Preservation Planner		
	Mrs. Mae Gillespie		
organization	South Central Tennessee Development District	date	February 1984
	Olivet Church		(615) 381-2040
street & number	P.O. Box 1346	telephone	
	Columbia Pike		
city or town	Columbia	state	Tennessee
	Pulaski		Tennessee

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

Deputy  
 State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Herbert L. Hays*

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 6/8/84

**For NPS use only**

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

Entered in the  
 National Register

date 7/19/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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The Olivet United Methodist Church,  
Continuation sheet Parsonage and School Item number 8 Page 2

The church acquired the adjoining Olivet School in the 1950s for use as a community center. The small county schoolhouse was built in 1893, on land purchased that year from Alfred Bayless. It had been abandoned for some time and was renovated by the church.

The parsonage was originally given by David R. Reynolds to the Methodist Episcopal Church South c. 1900. He also gave furniture to the parsonage, along with Rufus Reynolds, Flourney Reynolds, and Jim Sanders, Sr. A bathroom and service ell were added during the pastorate of A.R. Hogan (1949-52).

Architecturally, the church features some of the best sawn carpentry in the area. The eaves of the building are corated by intricate sawn vergeboards which encircle the building, and the small front porch features quatrefoil and four-point cutouts, chamfered posts, and spandrels. A course of decorative fishscale shingles with small round cutouts extends across the front of the building. Decorative vergeboards are also a prominent feature of the neighboring parsonage.

The interior of the church was recently remodeled including the installation of a drop ceiling of acoustical tile and the replacement of the pews. Original features include the alter rail and the window moldings.