

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 1 1975

DATE ENTERED APR 21 1975

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Bethel Methodist Church

AND/OR COMMON

Old Bethel United Methodist Church (preferred name for listing)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

222 Calhoun Street

-- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

STATE

South Carolina

VICINITY OF

CODE  
045

COUNTY

Charleston

CODE

019

**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**

DISTRICT  
 BUILDING(S)  
 STRUCTURE  
 SITE  
 OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

PUBLIC  
 PRIVATE  
 BOTH  
**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**  
 IN PROCESS  
 BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

OCCUPIED  
 UNOCCUPIED  
 WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
 YES: RESTRICTED  
 YES: UNRESTRICTED  
 NO

**PRESENT USE**

AGRICULTURE  MUSEUM  
 COMMERCIAL  PARK  
 EDUCATIONAL  PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
 ENTERTAINMENT  RELIGIOUS  
 GOVERNMENT  SCIENTIFIC  
 INDUSTRIAL  TRANSPORTATION  
 MILITARY  OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Old Bethel Methodist Church, c/o Reverend G.W. Watson, Pastor

STREET &amp; NUMBER

222 Calhoun Street

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

VICINITY OF

STATE

South Carolina

29401

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Mesne Conveyance

STREET &amp; NUMBER

2 Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

STATE

South Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE

1973

-- FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

1430 Senate St., Box 11,669 Capitol Station -- Columbia, South Carolina

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE 1852, 1880

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

EXTERIOR: Begun in 1791 and completed in 1809, Old Bethel Methodist Church is the oldest Methodist church building still standing in Charleston. The church lot, purchased from Thomas and Anna Bennett for one-hundred pounds sterling in 1795 was at that time located in the extreme northwestern part of the city. In 1797, Francis Asbury, the first Bishop of American Methodism, recorded in his journal having "formed a plan to erect a (meeting) house in the west end of the suburbs."1 Asbury wrote of preaching at Bethel Church five times between 1799 and 1815.

Originally located at the corner of Pitt and Calhoun Streets, the church served a congregation of blacks and whites until the 1840s when the blacks seceded. In 1852 the frame church was moved to the western part of the church grounds where it was used by the blacks. A new brick church, Bethel Methodist, constructed on the original site, served an all-white congregation. Old Bethel was again moved in 1880 when the building was given to the black congregation and was rolled across Calhoun Street to the present site at 222 Calhoun Street.

Originally a gabled meeting-house style church, the white clapboard building has been altered by the addition to the facade of a gabled portico supported by four fluted corinthian columns. A central double door is flanked by single doors on either side, and these entrances are surmounted by segmented transoms. The second floor has three windows, eight-over-eight. Steps lead to porch which is surrounded by a wooden balustrade. Within the front gable is a semi-circular louver. On the rear, an educational building of aluminum siding has been added.

Side facades are original with five windows, each twelve-over-twelve. Brick foundations of American bond date from 1880.

INTERIOR: Measuring 60 by 40 feet, the church was dedicated in 1798, prior to installation of the pulpit and plastering of the walls. An account of 1862, however, refers to "galleries, lower floor, chancel, pulpit, steps and all."2

Church has galleries supported by thin fluted corinthian<sup>influenced</sup> columns. Downstairs there are twelve pews on each side of a central aisle. Chancel area at the north end of the church now contains a large pipe organ. Original pulpit and sounding board were probably destroyed in earthquake of 1886. Cast iron ceiling and church furniture (Victorian globe lights and pews) were probably replaced following earthquake damage.

<sup>1</sup> Potts, J. Manning, Clark, Elmer T. and Payton, Jacob S. (editors) The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury, 1958. p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Chreitzberg, A.M. Early Methodism in the Carolinas, 1897. p. 158.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Black History	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

1791-1809

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

1791-1809

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Construction of the original meeting-house style church was planned by Francis Asbury in the 18th Century. The founding of Old Bethel Church by both black and white members was indicative of the Methodist Church philosophy of encouraging black membership in the church. In 1834, however, a schism developed between black and white members. In the late 19th Century the church was given to the blacks and presently serves an all-black congregation.

ARCHITECTURE: Originally a simple frame meeting-house, Old Bethel Methodist Church is the third oldest church building now standing in Charleston. Moved twice and altered by the addition of columns and pediment, the church is a visual document of changing styles -- from a simple meeting house to a building adorned with pediment and corinthian columns.

BLACK HISTORY: The church, which presently serves an all-black congregation of 200, is an architectural reminder of the significant relationship between the Methodist church and blacks. The Methodists conducted the most extensive mission work among blacks in the South Carolina lowcountry and Methodist ministers were persecuted for their suspected abolitionist tendencies. Inclusion of blacks in the Old Bethel congregation applied to both slaves and free blacks, and funds to build the church were raised by black as well as white members. In 1834 a schism arose over whether blacks were to be restricted to sitting in the galleries. Dissension led to the expulsion of nine black members and the withdrawal of 165 others in what was described by one 19th Century observer as "the heaviest blow Methodism ever received in Charleston."<sup>3</sup>

Members and ministers of the black congregation were active in the Methodist church and in fields of education and politics. A black pastor of Bethel, Henry Cardozo, served as County Auditor of Charleston County and as State Senator from Kershaw County from 1870-1874.

<sup>3</sup> Chreitzberg, A.M. Early Methodism in the Carolinas. 1897, p. 160.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Betts, Albert Deems, History of South Carolina Methodism. Columbia, S.C.: The Advocate Press, 1952. p. 73.
- Chreitzberg, A.M. Early Methodism in the Carolinas. Nashville, Tenn.: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1897.
- Lawrence, R.V. The Centenary Souvenir Containing a History of Centenary Church, Charleston. Philadelphia: Collins Printing House, 1855.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	17	59,904,0	3,627,6,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Nonie Dixon Elias B. Bull

ORGANIZATION

South Carolina Department of Archives & History

DATE

February 21, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1430 Senate St., Box 11,669 Capitol Station

TELEPHONE

(803) 758-5816

CITY OR TOWN

Columbia

STATE

South Carolina

## 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

Charles E. Lee  
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

2/27/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/21/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4.17.75

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

1975

DATE ENTERED

APR 21 1975

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (continued)

- Legerton, Clifford L. (compiler) and Lilly, Edward G. (editor). Historic Churches of Charleston, South Carolina. Charleston, S.C.: Legerton and Co., 1966. pp. 46-47.
- News and Courier, Charleston, S.C. "Refurbishing to Begin on Old Bethel Church", August 12, 1974.
- Potts, J. Manning, Clark, Elmer T., and Payton, Jacob S. (editors). The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury. Nashville, Tenn.: Abington Press, 1958.
- Reynolds, Emily Bellinger and Faunt, Joan Reynolds (editors). Biographical Dictionary of the Senate of the State of South Carolina, 1776-1964. Columbia, S.C.: South Carolina Archives Department, 1964, p. 194.
- Stoney, Samuel Gaillard. This is Charleston: A Survey of the Architectural Heritage of a Unique American City. Charleston, S.C.: Carolina Art Association, 1944, p. 20.
- Wallace, D.D. The History of South Carolina. New York City, N.Y.: The American Historical Society, 1934. Volume II, p. 505.