

Rural Churches of Baldwin County

#9

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(Thematic Group)

Contact: Bert Tuggle  
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Historic Name: Swift Presbyterian Church

Common Name: Swift Presbyterian Church

Location: End Swift Church Road, south of Barin Field, Miflin

Verbal Boundary Description:

Begin at a point 600 feet north of Wolf Creek at the end of a gravel road off Swift Church Road. Thence proceed north 420 feet to a point, thence east 180 feet to a point, thence south 420 feet to a point and thence west 180 feet to the point of beginning.

Acreage: 1.7

UTM: 16/493/680/3360/360

Date of Construction: 1907

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Statement of Significance

Criterion C-Architecture:

Swift Presbyterian Church is significant as one of three remaining frame Gothic Revival Churches in Baldwin County. It is also significant as the highest architectural expression in the Miflin community, where simple construction was the rule.

Integrity:

The Swift Presbyterian Church retains its integrity of location, materials and design. Exterior integrity is excellent. The rear additions, a one-story frame, classroom building and a pair of somewhat lower wings date from 1960 and 1975 respectively. The only changes to the historic fabric of the church are boarded over windows on the second story of the tower.

Interior integrity is good. Though the ceiling is dropped, the original beaded board is present. The lights and ceiling fans are modern and carpet has been placed down the aisle. The pews have been padded and the pulpit replaced.

Description:

Swift Church sits at the end of a gravel road south and east of Foley. Pine trees and azalea bushes surround the building while beyond the lot scrub woods and fields are the rule. The building itself is a one-story, frame 2x4 bay structure resting on concrete cones. There are a staggered pair of gables

on the facade and a square two-story tower on the southwest corner. A recessed porch abuts the tower and is supported on Tuscan columns. The entrance consists of double wooden doors with six lights each and a transom. There is an entrance to the tower from the west side of the porch and the south face of the tower's first floor has a 2/2 window. A pent extends across the dominant gable and around the tower. The second story of the tower has boarded-up windows and is open at the top revealing the bell. A pyramidal roof with metal spire caps the structure. 2/2 windows are present on each side of the church and a single interior brick chimney is present on the ridge toward the facade.

Two rear additions date from 1960 and 1975 respectively. The oldest rear addition is a one-story frame structure with casement windows and gable roof perpendicular to the church. On either side of this is a slightly smaller gable wing, also frame but with 6/6 aluminum sash windows.

The interior consists of a one-room sanctuary with offices and classrooms in the addition. The sanctuary has beaded board walls with a chair-rail, wooden window surrounds and baseboards. The chimney shaft runs up the center of the south wall and is stuccoed. A panel door leads into the tower which has beaded board walls and serves as storage. Pews are arranged on either side of a central, carpeted aisle and the dropped ceiling is garreted. The pulpit is a recent addition.

#### Historical Summary:

Baldwin County's vast pine forests attracted lumber industries in growing numbers by the turn of the century. These industries in turn bred communities complete with houses, schools and churches. One such community, on the northern reaches of Wolf Bay, was Miflin. By 1905 this rural hamlet had a school and many houses but no church. One of the lumber barons in the area, C. A. Swift, provided the land and lumber for a Presbyterian Church which was begun in 1905. The building was completed in 1907 and formally organized by the Presbytery of Mobile in 1910. Swift himself became an elder and remained a generous contributor. The church was named in his honor in 1924. The congregation was always small, hovering around fifty. The present congregation is constructing a new church to the west but will retain the original.

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|-----------------------|---------------|
| Contributing Building | 1             |
| Contributing Site     | $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Total                 | $\frac{3}{2}$ |

