

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 09000537

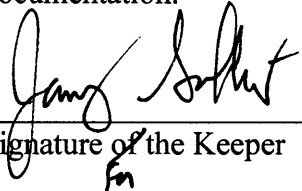
Date Listed: 7/7/09

Property Name: Trinity United Methodist Church

County: McMinn

State: TN

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper  
fn

7/9/2009  
Date of Action

-----  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Period of Significance

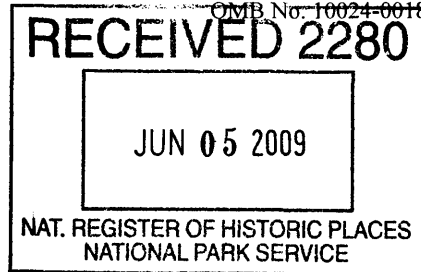
The Period of Significance is hereby amended to read: 1910

The building's significance lies in its design elements related to the late Gothic Revival style and the use of the Akron Plan. The attached education wing, constructed in 1962, does not contribute to the design significance of the church and is considered a non-contributing element of the building.

-----  
The Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**



United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

537

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Trinity United Methodist Church

other names/site number Methodist Episcopal Church, First Methodist Episcopal Church, Trinity Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number 100 E. College Street N/A [ ] not for publication

city or town Athens N/A [ ] vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county McMinn code 107 zip code 37303

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [x] locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.) E. Patrick McHugh, Jr. 6-3-09 Signature of certifying official/Title Date State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ( [ ] See Continuation sheet for additional comments.) Signature of certifying official/Title Date State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is: [x] entered in the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet [ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet [ ] determined not eligible for the National Register. [ ] removed from the National Register. [ ] other, (explain:) Signature of the Keeper Date of Action Jim Fulmer 7/7/2009

Trinity United Methodist Church  
Name of Property

McMinn County, TN  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS: church building  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS: church building  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone  
walls Brick, Dressed Stone, Plaster  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Asphalt  
other Stained Glass, Wood  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1910-1962

Significant Dates

1910

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Badgley, Sidney and Nicklas, William

Galloway, George and Guthrey, Charles

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register (church)
Previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository: Trinity United Methodist Church; McMinn County, TN Historical Society

Trinity United Methodist Church  
Name of Property

McMinn County, TN  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre Athens, TN 125 NE

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>718386</u>	<u>3925053</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul Archambault/Historic Preservation Planner  
organization Southeast Tennessee Development District date February 2009  
street & number P.O. Box 4757 telephone 423.424.4266  
city or town Chattanooga state TN zip code 37402

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

##### Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

##### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

##### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church, Cleveland, TN District c/o Mike Travis  
street & number P.O. Box 3382 telephone 423.476.8221  
city or town Cleveland state TN zip code 37320

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

## VII. Description

The Trinity United Methodist Church is located in Athens (pop. 13,334), McMinn County, Tennessee at 100 E. College Street near the intersection of North Jackson Street and East College Street. The church faces south towards Athens's courthouse and is adjacent to the Tennessee Wesleyan College campus. Trinity United Methodist Church, designed by Badgley & Nicklas Architects of Cleveland, Ohio and constructed in 1909-1910, is representative of late Gothic Revival architecture that was prevalent among many church edifices in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The church is covered with brick, features two corner towers on the south façade, a T-gabled shingle roof, and a two story brick, 1962 addition connected to the rear of the original church building. The building's exterior features tracery window frames with multiple muntins and dressed stone; pointed and segmental arched, stained glass windows covered with plexiglass; and recessed, brick arches in each gable field. The building's interior features a modified Akron Style floor plan with original pews, doors, balusters, and wood floors.<sup>1</sup>

### Exterior

The entrance to the church is well landscaped with shrubs and trees. Short walks from the sidewalk on East College Street lead to wide, concrete steps bordered by solid, stone decorative railings. Both entrances on the south façade feature wood, replacement doors with transoms featuring tri-formed stone tracery windows and decorative brick headers. The southwest entrance features a cornerstone block with the date of construction (1909) for the church.

The south façade of Trinity United Methodist Church faces the intersection of East College Street and North Jackson Street and features corner towers of uneven height sheltering matching square reception areas. Between the towers is a slightly projecting bay with a large, pointed arch stained glass window unit containing stone tracery and outlined with brick headers underneath a front gabled roof.

The southwest tower, the higher of the two towers, shelters the church bell, bell operation room, and narthex reception area. The tower is comprised of three sections separated with dressed stone belt courses. The lower section includes the entrance door and the middle section houses the bell's operation room and features a central, stained glass window with a brick header above it. The upper section of the tower features a set of two, long and narrow dressed stone tracery window frames on all four sides. The window frames do not contain stained glass but were sealed with plexiglass circa 1995. Four pinnacles capped with stone and a set of six recessed, brick arches adorn the top of the tower on all four elevations.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Southern Blow Pipe & Roofing Company Letter to Trinity Methodist Church, 2 March 1950. Note: The church originally featured a slate tile roof. The slate was replaced with an asbestos roof circa 1940. Also, John Proffitt, interviewed by Paul Archambault, 21 January 2009. Note: The plexiglass was installed and the exterior bricks were re-pointed in 1995-1996.

<sup>2</sup> Note: The window openings on the southwest tower (belltower) never included stained glass windows.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   2  

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

The southeast tower shelters the narthex reception area, staircase, and balcony level entrance. Divided into two sections, the lower section includes the narthex entrance door and the upper section features pointed arch, stained glass windows outlined by brick headers on the south façade. Similar to the bell tower, the top of the tower features pinnacles capped with stone and a set of six recessed, brick arches on all four elevations of the tower.

Facing North Jackson Street, the west elevation is comprised of the original church and the 1962 brick addition. The west elevation of the bell tower includes a set of three, small, rectangular stained glass windows with a decorative brick header on its lower section; a small, single rectangular stained glass window on the middle section; and a dressed stone tracery window frame covered with plexiglass on the top section. The section north of the bell tower includes a gabled roof with a large, pointed arch stained glass window with stone tracery. Located on either side of the large window, are long, narrower stained glass windows with stone tracery and segmental arches, outlined with brick headers. A continuous stone belt course runs the length of the elevation.

The rear section of the original church shelters the stairwell and church offices. It features a lower gabled roof with a segmental arch stained glass window and stone tracery centered underneath it. A side entrance door to the stairwell is located south of the window with a separate stained glass window above it. Located to the north of the main window is a long, narrow segmental arched stained glass window. The windows and doorway are outlined with segmental arched brick headers. The basement level of the west elevation features small, stained glass windows that are obscured from view by shrubbery.

The rear elevation of the original church faces the 1962 addition and includes a continuous stone belt course on the base along with five small, square stained glass windows. Directly above, are five, replacement one-over-one rectangular aluminum windows. Three pairs of rectangular stained glass windows are located on the second story where the choir room is located.

Facing the campus of Tennessee Wesleyan College, the east elevation has a projecting central gabled section featuring a large, pointed arch stained glass window with stone tracery outlined with brick headers. A covered side entrance centered between a pair of stained glass windows is located north of the gabled section and leads to the church offices via concrete steps. Directly underneath the side entrance are concrete steps leading to the basement entrance. Located between the gabled section and southeast tower is a long, narrow segmental arched window outlined with brick headers. The tower features three, small stained glass windows on the lower section and a pointed arch, stained glass windows outlined by brick headers. Small, stained glass windows are located on the basement level below a continuous stone belt course.

The 1962 two story, flat roof, brick addition and original 1910 church are connected by a two-story, one bay section that houses the stairwell for the addition. This addition, referred to as the Educational Building, houses all of the Sunday School and nursery rooms. All elevations feature either single or paired, aluminum one-over-one rectangular windows. Entrance doors and stairwells are located on the north and east elevations of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

the building. Viewable at the east elevation between the two buildings is a concrete ADA accessible ramp with metal railings leading to the one bay stairwell connector.<sup>3</sup>

The church's parking lot is located directly north of the addition. On this site originally, was the church's parsonage. The circa 1905 Prairie Style parsonage was purchased by Tennessee Wesleyan College for \$5,000 in 1957 and moved directly north on a small hill overlooking the church grounds. Today the house is used for Tennessee Wesleyan College administration offices.<sup>4</sup>

## Interior

The original church building is divided into two sections following the Akron Style or combination church floor plan. The south section features the sanctuary and the north section features the church offices and library, which originally housed the Sunday School classrooms and pastor's study. The floor in the sanctuary features the original sloped pine floor and curved pew seating on the first floor and balcony. The pews are in three sections with two main aisles. They face northeast toward the altar and pulpit platform with the choir box and organ/organ pipes located along the east wall. The choir box is separated from the main body of the sanctuary by a railing with round wood balusters. The reception parlor and the square narthex areas are located at the south wall of the sanctuary. Large, stained glass windows with tracery are located on the south, west, and east walls.<sup>5</sup>

A prominent element of the sanctuary is the octagonal dome that features a stained glass oculus with decorative wood ornamentation surrounding the glass. The oculus is set in a small dome within the larger domed ceiling. The domed ceiling originally allowed airflow through wood vents located on the roof. The vents deteriorated and were sealed when the roof was repaired in 1975. The ceiling is supported by eight curved, plaster columns extending to the base of the sanctuary floor. Each wall features a vaulted, plaster pointed arch, for a total of eight arches, in keeping with the Gothic Revival style architecture.<sup>6</sup>

The balcony and basement are accessed by original stairwells with round balusters in the southeast tower and in the vestibule area located in the northwest corner of the sanctuary. Entrance doors into the sanctuary and balcony are original oak doors with decorative oak trim around each doorway. The balcony, supported by six wood posts, features an original railing with round wood balusters. The balcony cuts across in front of large stained glass windows in the south and west walls. The entrance to the bell tower is located in the southwest corner of the balcony section.

<sup>3</sup> "History of the Trinity United Methodist Church, 1824-1983" (Non-published), p. 4, and Ken Elrod and John Proffitt, interviewed by Paul Archambault, 21 January 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ken Elrod, interviewed by Paul Archambault, 21 January 2009. Note: The reception area, located in between the narthex tower entrances, originally featured a wood framed, glass partition between the sanctuary and reception area. The glass partition was removed in the early 1970s.

<sup>6</sup> Methodist Episcopal Church (Athens, TN) Building Prospectus, Badgley & Nicklas Architects, Cleveland, Ohio, 1908-1909; See also, Francis Street First United Methodist Church, St. Joseph, MO website: <http://www.fran1st.com/index.php?pid=6>. Web site accessed 1/26/09 ;Ken Elrod, interviewed by Paul Archambault, 21 Jan 2009.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

Original features of the sanctuary that are non-extant are the decorative wood trim and entrance to the pastor's study behind the pulpit platform, and the sliding partition wall in the sealed archway along the north wall. Part of the Akron Plan, the partition originally opened and closed if additional seating was needed for church service or if Sunday School was in session. The sliding partition is sealed behind the wall and the mechanisms used to operate the door are still visible from the attic. Third, the choir box originally featured a staircase that descended directly below into the basement where the choir gathered before service.<sup>7</sup>

The church offices, located in the north section of the original church building, may be accessed from a hallway that is located in the northwest corner of the sanctuary. The T-shaped carpeted hallway includes a stairwell, a tape ministry room, and restroom along the west wall; a library and music director room along the south wall; and the pastor office, program director office, and church office along the north wall. A secondary entrance door is located along the east wall. The original floor plan featured the main Sunday School room (behind partition) where the library is now located, smaller Sunday School rooms along the west and north walls, and a general department room and pastor's study along the east wall with two side entrance doors. The Sunday School rooms were converted to offices in the early 1960s.

Sections of the primary department room, main Sunday School room, and Bible classroom were converted into a central hallway in 1962. The primary department room is presently the pastor's office, the former pastor's study became the music directory office, the Bible classroom converted into the tape ministry room, the main Sunday School room transformed into the library, and the four classrooms along the north wall became the secretary's office, program director's office, hallway, and a restroom. A plaster wall and doorway were constructed in the main Sunday School room when it converted into the library and a section of the hallway in the 1960s. Most of the original plaster walls, wood doors, and doorways remain intact. Drop ceilings and carpet were added with the renovations in the same decade.

Above the church offices and accessed from the northwest sanctuary's stairwell and the sanctuary's balcony section is the choir room. It features two rooms connected by an open double doorway with three pair of rectangular stained glass windows on the east and north walls and the upper sections of a large, arched stained glass windows on the west wall. The choir room moved from the basement below the sanctuary to its present location in the 1960s. Most of the choir room was originally a section of the balcony and opened with views of the main Sunday School and sanctuary below. Wood flooring was added in the choir room along with dropped ceilings and carpet in the 1960s.

The basement, which is accessed by stairwells in the southeast corner and northwest corner of the sanctuary, features a large multipurpose room and stage in the south section with two storage rooms along the east wall and three meeting rooms along the west wall. The south section originally featured the coal room and choir room along the east wall and the west portion of the space was open with no meetings rooms. The only room

<sup>7</sup> *History of the Trinity United Methodist Church, 1824-1983*, p. 4, and Ken Elrod, interviewed by Paul Archambault, 21 Jan 2009. Note: Major repairs to the sanctuary occurred between 1971-1973.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

located on the west wall was the ante room. Renovations, which included drywall, new tile flooring, and addition of meeting rooms on the west wall, were completed in 2004.<sup>8</sup>

The north section of the basement has kept its original floor plan with a dining room in the center, a kitchen and boiler room along the east wall, and restrooms, storage room, and stairwell along the west wall. Three pairs of small, square stained glass windows are visible on north wall.

Most of the major renovations to the sanctuary occurred between 1971-1973. Work performed during those years included the following: re-plastering the walls, ceiling, and arch supports; repairing the stained glass windows; raising sections of the floor; plastering and sealing the sliding partition; removing a glass door partition that separated the reception parlor from the sanctuary near the main entrances at the south wall; removal of wood trim and sealing of a doorway into the pastor's office behind the pulpit platform. Total cost for the rehabilitation work was approximately \$240,000.<sup>9</sup>

Other notable work performed on the sanctuary's interior includes the following: transformation of the original Sunday School rooms into church offices, library, and restrooms in the 1960s; addition of second story flooring in the balcony section over the original Main Sunday School room; refinishing the original pews in the 1970s and 1990s; brick mortar re-pointing in 1995; repair of the church bell rope wheel in 2002.<sup>10</sup>

The rear addition to the church, referred to as the Educational Building, was completed in 1962. It is two stories (45x100) with a cinder block interior and one-over-one aluminum windows. Built to accommodate a growing congregation, the building includes Sunday School rooms and childcare rooms. The Educational Building is connected to the original church by a one-bay wide stairwell. A central hall with tiles, wood doors, and popcorn plaster ceilings, running east to west, is present on both floors. The double-loaded hallway runs east-west with a youth room on its west end and various classrooms on its north and south sides. The classrooms have cinder block walls, tile floors and plaster on the ceilings, as is found in the hallway.

<sup>8</sup> Methodist Episcopal Church Building Prospectus, and John Proffitt, interviewed by Paul Archambault, 21 Jan 2009.

<sup>9</sup> *History of the Trinity United Methodist Church, 1824-1983*, p. 4, and Ken Elrod, interviewed by Paul Archambault, 21 Jan 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Ken Elrod and John Proffitt, interviewed by Paul Archambault, 21 Jan 2009.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

## VIII. Statement of Significance

The Trinity United Methodist Church, constructed in 1909-1910, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C because it is a good local representative of the late Gothic Revival Style architecture that was prevalent among Methodist churches in the United States from the 1890s through the 1910s. With its two towers, decorative stained glass windows, and central rotunda, Trinity United Methodist Church, designed by Sidney Badgley and William Nicklas Architects of Cleveland, Ohio, is an architecturally notable church edifice in Athens, Tennessee. The period of significance extends to 1962 to include the education wing which represents the restrained architectural tastes of the time and resulted in spatial changes to the interior of the building.

The church design follows the popular Gothic Revival Style with grand stained glass windows with elaborate stone tracery and prominent corner towers with a central gable housing the sanctuary. Its architecture is similar to the First United Presbyterian Church (NR 7/24/2008), located approximately one-quarter mile north of Trinity United Methodist Church on North Jackson Street. The First United Presbyterian Church, an African American church constructed in 1892, also features a central gable flanked by two brick towers and pointed arch stained glass windows.

Features such as the octagonal domed ceiling and the Akron Style floor plan are prevalent in many of the Badgley and Nicklas designed churches in the Midwest. The former First Methodist Episcopal Church (c.1910), in St. Joseph, Missouri presents many similar style features with the Akron Style floor plan, narthex towers, gabled wings, stained glass window frame design, pulpit/altar, and octagonal domed ceiling.<sup>11</sup> Another Badgley and Nicklas designed church, First Presbyterian Church in Wichita, Kansas, is noted for its symbolic quality of having eight supporting columns representing the eight people who survived the flood in Genesis.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, Trinity United Methodist has eight columns and the octagonal sanctuary has eight pointed arched walls.

Badgley and Nicklas adopted the Akron Style floor plan, also known as the "combination church" plan, for Trinity United Methodist Church's sanctuary. The Akron Style Plan, first used at First Methodist Church in Akron, Ohio, consists of a central open space with smaller classroom spaces attached with movable partitions. This plan allowed for easier transition between the main church service and Sunday School activities, as well as providing increased space in the main sanctuary for special events. The lesson of the day took place in the sanctuary and was discussed afterwards in smaller rooms at different age levels. The Uniform Lesson Plan, as it was known, allowed one activity to blend well with the next activity. By the 1890s, the Akron Plan became a standard for medium to large Methodist Churches.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Francis Street United Methodist Church, St. Joseph, MO website: <http://www.fran1st.com/index.php?pid=7> Note: The First Methodist Episcopal Church merged with the Francis Street United Methodist Church in 1995. The F.M.E. Church building, according to records, is still standing in St. Joseph, MO. Web site accessed 1/26/09.

<sup>12</sup> First Presbyterian Church web site. [www.firstpresbywichita.org/history.htm](http://www.firstpresbywichita.org/history.htm). Web site accessed 1/26/09.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.fran1st.com/index.php?pid=6> Web site accessed 1/26/09.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

The present Trinity United Methodist Church building serves as the fourth home for the congregation. The church has its origins with the First Methodist Episcopal Church, which established its roots in Athens, Tennessee in 1824-1825. A hewn log building, constructed on the corner of West Washington and Church streets, served as the first meeting house for the Methodist Episcopal Church in Athens.<sup>14</sup>

In 1851, a brick, gabled church, located on the same site, was constructed. The edifice, similar to the nearby Mars Hill Presbyterian Church, included seating for African American slaves. The church's first recorded trustees included Nathan Sullins, Henry Rice, John Adair, Andrew Hutsell, William Ballew, E.A. Artre, W.L. Artre, James McSpadden, and William Burns.<sup>15</sup>

In 1864, during the Civil War, the church was acquired by the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In June 1865, the Holston Conference was reorganized in Athens. Under this reorganization, the church was known as the Athens Station Church (1865-1880) with John Mann serving as its first pastor. The congregation remained in this building until it was destroyed by fire in 1870.<sup>16</sup>

For the next forty years, the church held the majority of its services in two buildings on the campus of Grant Memorial University (presently known as Tennessee Wesleyan College), named for General Ulysses S. Grant. The congregation first worshipped in Old College Hall (NR 12/29/1983), located two blocks northeast of the church's original location. The congregation worshipped here until 1885 and in the campus's Gothic Revival Style Methodist Episcopal Chapel (non-extant) until 1910 when the present building was completed. While worshipping on campus, the church changed names twice, referred to as Athens Charge, Athens District (1880-1906) and Methodist Episcopal Church, Athens District (1906-1909).<sup>17</sup>

Pastors and members of Athens Charge/Methodist Episcopal Church established a bond with Tennessee Wesleyan College (TWC) over the years because of their mutual association with the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and their joint worship every week for forty years. When the Methodist Episcopal Church congregation decided to sell its interest in TWC's chapel (non-extant) in preparation for a new structure in 1909, they envisioned a building that would not only accommodate their members but be open to the students and faculty of TWC. The school was important to the vitality, growth, and prosperity of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

<sup>14</sup> *History of the Trinity United Methodist Church, 1824-1983*, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 9. Notes: In 1874-1875, the congregation worshipped in a building on North Jackson Street, which was later used as a post office in Athens; in 1876-1877, the congregation worshipped on the second floor of the E.B. Madison Building on Main Street (Madison Avenue). Tennessee Wesleyan College was originally known as Athens Female College and East TN Wesleyan College from 1865-1867. It later changed to Grant Memorial from 1867-1889 in honor of Ulysses S. Grant. In 1889, Grant Memorial merged with the University of Chattanooga and changed its name to U.S. Grant University. When Grant University separated from the University of Chattanooga in 1925, the college became known as Tennessee Wesleyan College (TWC). Available at: <http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/imagegallery.php?EntryID=T074>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

In 1902, James W. Fisher of Newport, Tennessee offered the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church a lot at the corner of East Washington and Long streets for a future church building. Five years later, W.G. Foster, owner of a livery stable on the corner of E. College and Jackson streets, offered his lot in exchange for Fisher's lot plus \$2,000 to be provided by the congregation.<sup>18</sup>

Circa 1907, the building committee of John Bayles (Chairman), David Bolton (Secretary), G.F. Lockmiller (Treasurer), William Bovard, and L.H. Southard selected Sidney Badgley and William Nicklas of Cleveland, Ohio to design their new church. In the early 1900s, the architecture firm of Badgley and Nicklas were well known in the Midwestern states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, and Kansas for their design of church buildings. While they are credited with designing numerous churches, only a few are located outside the Midwest. In fact, the Methodist Episcopal Church in Athens is the only known church building designed by Badgley and Nicklas in Tennessee and the southeastern United States.<sup>19</sup>

The Methodist Episcopal Church's (Trinity United Methodist) design in Athens features two sections. The south section includes the sanctuary with a bowled floor, curved pew seating, a balcony, reception parlor, choir box, organ room, altar, and pulpit platform. The north section, divided by a sliding partition, featured one large Sunday School room and five smaller rooms for Sunday's lesson for a total combined capacity of 1,012. Under construction from 1907-1910, the cost of the church was approximately \$30,000.<sup>20</sup>

The Methodist Episcopal Church building opened under the pastorate of Reverend Burton Martin and was officially dedicated by Bishop William F. Anderson on October 16, 1910. Bishop Anderson not only preached, but had the unenviable task of securing \$15,000 from the congregation to pay off the debt for the church. The week of the dedication was celebrated by the hosting of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the Holston Conference.<sup>21</sup>

The church parsonage was located directly behind the Methodist Episcopal Church and used first by Reverend William Dye (1929-1932) in 1932. It housed a total of eight pastors until it was purchased and moved by Tennessee Wesleyan College in 1957. With increasing membership at the church in the 1950s, the church was faced with the challenges of expanding.<sup>22</sup>

After TWC purchased the parsonage for \$5,000 in the late 1950s and moved it directly north of the church onto its campus, the Trinity Methodist congregation began plans for a two story, brick and cinder block educational building that would house their new Sunday School classrooms. The church's building committee

<sup>18</sup> *History of Trinity United Methodist Church, 1824-1983*, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Badgley & Nicklas, Cleveland, OH Architects Building List, 1904-1913. Cleveland Landmarks Commission, Cleveland, OH. <http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/landmark/arch/architects.php> Web site accessed 1/27/09 The two other Badgley & Nicklas designed church buildings outside the Midwest United States were in Salem, Virginia and Spokane, Washington.

<sup>20</sup> Methodist Episcopal Church Building Prospectus, and Trinity United Methodist Church Records Book, p. 249.

<sup>21</sup> Trinity United Methodist Church Records Book, p. 249, and *History of the Trinity United Methodist Church, 1824-1983*, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> *History of the Trinity United Methodist Church, 1824-1983*, pp. 4, 9. Note: TWC purchased the parsonage from the Trinity Methodist Church for \$5,000.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

---

hired George Galloway and Charles Guthrey Architects to design the building and Webb Brothers Construction Company to construct it. The new addition is connected to the original church's north elevation with a one-bay wide stairwell section. The addition, under the pastorate of Wilmer Robbins, was dedicated on May 6, 1962.<sup>23</sup>

Between 1912 and 1968, the Methodist Episcopal Church experienced nineteen pastors and the following name changes: the First Methodist Episcopal Church (1912-1939); First Methodist Church and Trinity Methodist Church (1939); Trinity Methodist Church, Sweetwater District (1939-1968); Trinity United Methodist Church 1968-Present.<sup>24</sup>

Circa 1970, the Trinity United Methodist Church faced potential renovations to their sanctuary due to the road widening of College Street. Architectural plans called for the removal of the curved pew seating and balcony. The new plan placed the pulpit platform along the south wall in place of the reception parlor and for the pews to be aligned vertically facing south. Fortunately for the integrity of the building, the plans to widen College Street were averted. Instead, from 1971-1973, major repairs to the roof, roof supports, ceiling, and sanctuary were performed at a cost of \$240,000.

Today, the church has approximately 200 members and is under the pastorate of Joseph Miller. The students and faculty at TWC use the sanctuary on a weekly basis for convocation. The congregation is presently preparing for their year long centennial celebration in 2010. The Trinity United Methodist Church stands as a physical reminder of the growth and prosperity in the early twentieth century in Athens, Tennessee and stands as the only Badgley and Nicklas designed church in Tennessee.

---

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4. Note: Galloway and Guthrey Architects designed the McMinn County Hospital in the mid-1960s. Limited information was available about the architectural firm.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 10

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cleveland Landmarks Commission. "Badgley & Nicklas, Cleveland, OH Architects Building List, 1904-1913." Cleveland, OH. <http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/landmark/arch/architects.php>. Web site accessed 1/27/2009.

Elrod, Ken and Proffitt, John (Trinity United Methodist Church Members). Interviewed by Paul Archambault. 21 January 2009.

Francis Street First United Methodist Church, St. Joseph, MO web site. Available at: <http://www.fran1st.com/index.php?pid=6>. Web site accessed 2/26/09.

"History of Trinity United Methodist Church, 1824-1983" (Non-published). Trinity United Methodist Church, Athens, Tennessee. 1983.

Jenks, Christopher Stephen. "The Akron Plan Sunday School," *Common Bond*. December, 1995. Available at: [sacredplaces.org/PSP-InfoClearingHouse/articles/American%20Religious%20Buildings.htm](http://sacredplaces.org/PSP-InfoClearingHouse/articles/American%20Religious%20Buildings.htm). Website accessed 2/26/09.

"Methodist Episcopal Church Building Prospectus," Badgley & Nicklas Architects, Cleveland, Ohio.

"Tennessee Wesleyan College." *Tennessee Encyclopedia*. Available at: <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/imagegallery.php?EntryID=T074>. Website accessed 1/20/09.

Trinity United Methodist Church Records. Trinity United Methodist Church, Athens, Tennessee.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 11

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal boundary description and boundary justification:

Trinity United Methodist Church is located on College Street next to Tennessee in Athens, Tennessee. It is listed as Parcel 63 on McMinn County Tax Map 56L. The nominated boundaries contain the extant historic church structure, which is located on a less than one acre flat lot.





**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number PHOTOS Page 12

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

---

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photographer: Paul Archambault  
Southeast Tennessee Development District  
1000 Riverfront Parkway  
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402

Date: January, February, March 2009  
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Nashville, Tennessee 37214

Trinity United Methodist Church, South Façade (Facing North)  
1 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, South Façade (Facing Northwest)  
2 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church , West Elevation (Facing East)  
3 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, North Elevation (Facing South)  
4 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, East Elevation (Facing Southwest)  
5 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, East Elevation (Facing West)  
6 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, South Façade Stained Glass Window (Facing Northeast)  
7 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, Southeast Narthex Tower (Facing North)  
8 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, Gothic Vault Ceiling  
9 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, Pulpit Platform (Facing northeast corner of sanctuary)  
10 of 19

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number PHOTOS Page 13

Trinity United Methodist Church  
McMinn County, TN

---

Trinity United Methodist Church, Choir box and stained glass window on east wall  
11 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, Balcony (View from pulpit)  
12 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, Pulpit platform (View from Balcony)  
13 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, (Southeast Narthex Tower Staircase)  
14 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, (Sanctuary North Wall)  
15 of 19

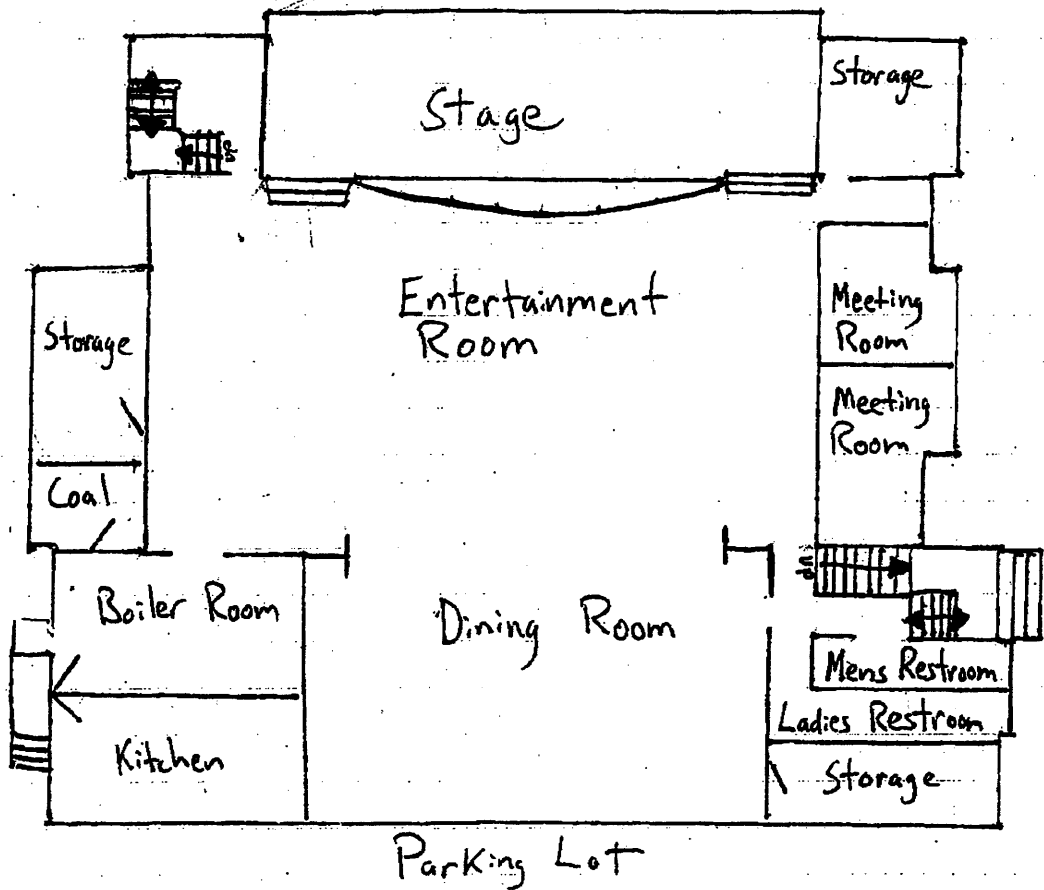
Trinity United Methodist Church, Church Office Hallway  
16 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, Educational Building Stairwell/Connector  
17 of 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, Educational Building, Hallway  
18 of 19

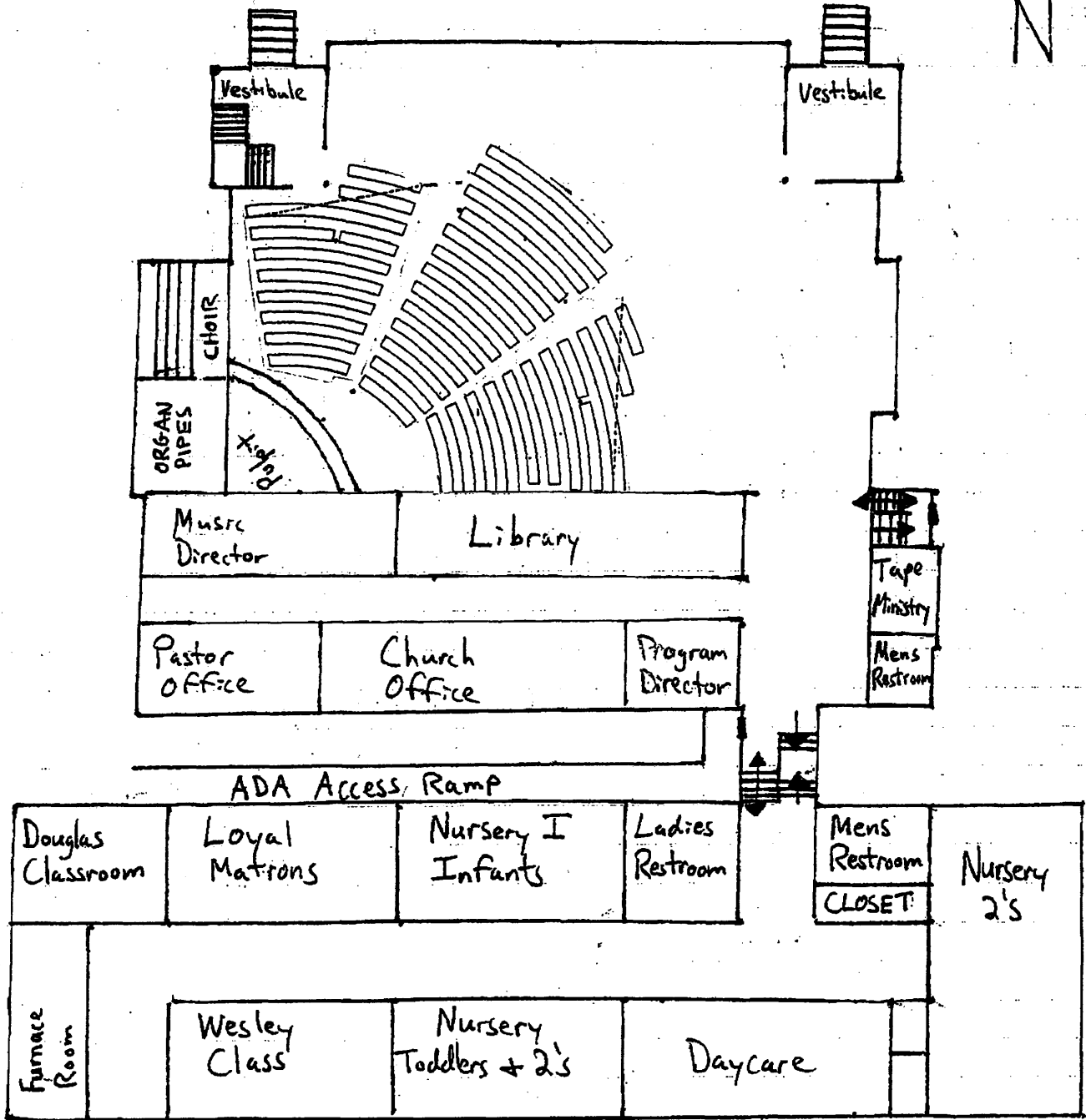
Trinity United Methodist Church, Educational Building, Hallway  
19 of 19

E. College Street



TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
ATHENS, TENNESSEE  
BASEMENT

E. College Street



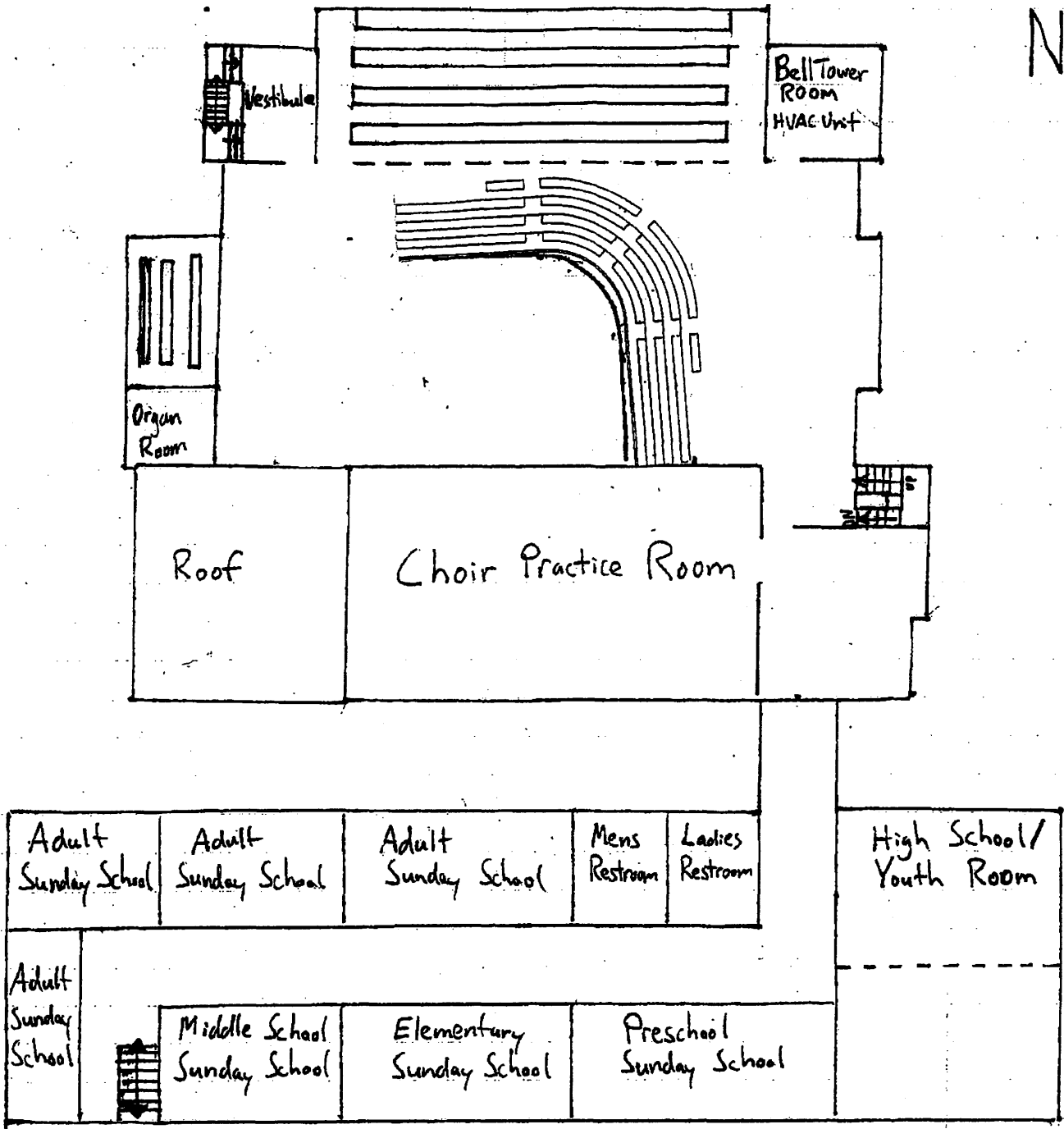
Parking Lot

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ATHENS, TENNESSEE

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

E. College Street



Parking Lot

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ATHENS, TENNESSEE

BALCONY LEVEL

SECOND FLOOR PLAN