

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 31 1979
DATE ENTERED JUL 10 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Bethlehem Baptist Church

AND/OR COMMON Bethlehem Baptist Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Corner of Wall Street and Gilmore Street

CITY, TOWN Barnwell VICINITY OF #2

STATE South Carolina CODE 045 COUNTY Barnwell CODE 011

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Bethlehem Baptist Church

STREET & NUMBER Wall and Gilmore Streets

CITY, TOWN Barnwell VICINITY OF STATE South Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Barnwell County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER Main Street

CITY, TOWN Barnwell STATE South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE 1973 (update) FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS South Carolina Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN Columbia STATE South Carolina

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Bethlehem Baptist Church, located within the city limits of Barnwell, South Carolina, is believed to have been designed and constructed by members of the congregation circa 1898 to 1899. It is thought that some of the building materials used came from an earlier church which previously occupied the site. An eclectic structure which is a vernacular example of the Victorian ecclesiastical architecture of the 1880s and 1890s, Bethlehem Baptist Church features both Queen Anne elements and Gothic detail.

Exterior: A modified T with projecting chancel, the church is set on raised brick piers which have been infilled with cement blocks to create a solid foundation. Brickwork is American Common Bond. The frame structure is faced with clapboard siding and features a steep cross gabled roof. Each gable end contains a vent and is framed by a deep boxed cornice with return; the cornice also extends around the remainder of the roof line. The present roof has been covered with tin; the original shingle roof is intact beneath. 6/6 Gothic center pointed windows are featured on all facades.

The front facade is characterized by a central projecting gable end wall with chamfered corners, flanked by a square tower at both right and left. Windows in the middle section are arranged in two bays on the gable end wall and in one bay on each chamfered corner. The left tower is one story and features a steep, flaring hipped roof. The right tower consists of a vented and pedimented attic story with French Empire block above and is capped by a vented octagonal cupola. The cupola originally featured a steep, tent-roofed spire; however, it was removed during the 1940s, and the present roof was subsequently installed. The first story of each tower has narrow double doors with Gothic center pointed transom on the front-facing elevation and a window on the side-facing elevation. The central projecting gable end wall of each side facade is divided into three bays and each rear-facing elevation contains a single bay. The rear facade consists of a projecting gable end wall arranged in three bays, with a single bay featured in each side-facing elevation. A large 6/6 Gothic center pointed window dominates the middle bay of the rear facade. Bathrooms have been added at the juncture of the side and rear facades; they are located at ground level and are constructed of cement blocks.

The church is distinguished by several elements reflective of the Queen Anne style. These include the asymmetrical massing of the towers and the complex massing within the right tower itself; the steep, multi-gabled roof; the chamfered corners of the front facade gable end wall; and the use of small-scale classical detail. Gothic detail is evidenced by the 6/6 center pointed windows.

Interior: Symmetrical in plan, the church is exemplary of the auditorium form which was derived during the 1880s and 1890s to meet the needs of American Protestant worship. It is comprised of wide, short nave and transept and projecting chancel. The chancel features a raised platform which extends forward into the crossing and beneath which is located the baptismal. Two small square rooms created by the interior of the towers serve as vestibules, each providing access to both the nave and transept. An additional pair of small square rooms flank the chancel and serve as a vestry for the choir and as the pastor's study.

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 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 checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bethlehem Baptist Church, located in Barnwell, South Carolina, is a vernacular interpretation of the Victorian ecclesiastical architecture of the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The eclectic structure also features both Queen Anne elements and Gothic detail. Exemplary of the widespread growth of independent black churches which occurred in the South during the post-Civil War era, Bethlehem Baptist Church has played an important part in the religious and educational life of the black community of Barnwell.

The congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church was created circa 1868 as an offshoot of the Barnwell Baptist Church. At that time, the Barnwell Baptist Church was an 1829 structure located on the site of the present Bethlehem Baptist Church. Originally, the Barnwell Baptist Church had both black and white members. Both free blacks and slaves played a role in the congregation as early as 1830. Black church members were given permission to preach, and by 1833, the church had established a separate conference for them. Circa 1850, the Barnwell Baptist Church constructed a new church building at a different site. At that time, black members of the congregation requested that they be allowed to use the old church to hold meetings and worship. The congregation permitted this use but retained control of the structure itself. An overwhelming majority of the black church members chose to use the old church and circa 1867 to 1868, the black members of the congregation petitioned for letters of dismissal from the Barnwell Baptist Church in order to organize an independent congregation. By 1868, the congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church had been formed. The old church building was subsequently sold to the new black congregation, although they did not receive title to the land until 1876. Following the cave-in of the floor circa 1898, the original church building was demolished, as repairs could not be made to the 1829 structure. It is believed that the present church was subsequently constructed by members of the congregation using materials from the old church building.

Promoting the education of blacks was an early concern of the Bethlehem Baptist Church. According to church tradition, the congregation led in organizing the Bethlehem Association, the first black Baptist educational association in the vicinity. This association continues to provide funds for Baptist colleges and to give college scholarships. Tradition also indicates that in conjunction with the other black Baptist educational associations in the area, the Bethlehem Association, under the auspices of Bethlehem Baptist Church, assisted both in founding Morris College (located in Sumter, South Carolina) and in establishing a black high school in Barnwell.

Architecture: Bethlehem Baptist Church is an eclectic example of the vernacular Victorian ecclesiastical architecture of the 1880s and 1890s. Erected circa 1898 to 1899 by members of the congregation, the church features Queen Anne elements and Gothic

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Belcher, Posey. "A History of the First Baptist Church of Barnwell, South Carolina, 1802-1962." Dedication of the First Baptist Church of Barnwell, South Carolina, October 1962.

continued.....

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 1/2 acre

UTM REFERENCES Longitude W 81 21' 55" Latitude N 33 14' 44"

A	_____	_____	_____	B	_____	_____	_____
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the SW corner of the right of way of Gilmore and Wall Streets; then proceeding west for approximately 125 feet along the southern boundary of the right of way of Gilmore Street; then turning south and continuing for approximately 150 feet; then turning east and continuing in a line parallel to Gilmore Street for approximately 150 feet until reaching the western boundary of the right of way of Wall Street; thence proceeding NW along the western boundary of the right of way of Wall Street for approximately 150 feet until reaching the southern boundary of the

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE	Michele Barovsky Historic Preservation Division	Lottie B. Givens Margaret Marion, Lower Savannah Council of Governments
ORGANIZATION	S.C. Department of Archives and History	DATE April 30, 1979
STREET & NUMBER	Post Office 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *Charles E. Lee*
 TITLE Charles E. Lee State Historic Preservation Officer DATE 5/23/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ATTEST: <i>Charles E. Lee</i>	DATE 7-10-79
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE 6/21/79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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The interior contains the original wood flooring, wide panelled baseboards, vertical tongue and groove wainscoting and chair rail, with plaster walls above. Narrow tongue and groove boards are featured on the deep coved ceiling. A semi-elliptical arch edged with wood and flanked by engaged panelled pilasters frames the chancel. The original balustrade with turned balusters and newel posts remains. Pews are also original and are believed to have been made by members of the congregation.

Surroundings: Bethlehem Baptist Church is located in a residential/commercial setting. Situated on a corner lot, the church is flanked by streets to the front and right. The church rectory, a building of early construction which has been brick veneered but is not considered architecturally significant, is included within the nominated acreage and flanks the church to the left. A vacant, wooded lot adjoins the church to the rear. No other structures are located on the site.

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detail. Architectural features of note include the steep, cross gabled roof with boxed cornice and return; the asymmetrical massing of the towers; the 6/6 Gothic center pointed windows; the auditorium plan; and the tongue and grooved deep coved ceiling of the interior. The church, which presently serves a congregation of 125, has been in continuous use since its construction and has been conscientiously maintained.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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_____. The One Hundred Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the First Baptist Church of Barnwell, South Carolina, 29-30 October 1977.

Divided We Stand, the Baptists in American Life. Durham, N.C.: Moore Publishing Company, 1974, pp. 159-177.

Firsthand accounts by members of the congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church and founding members of the Bethlehem Association.

Givens, Mrs. Lottie. Bethlehem Baptist Church, Barnwell, South Carolina. Interview, 11 December 1978.

Hartley, Don Manville. "Many Buildings Were Left Standing by Sherman, '65." The Barnwell People-Sentinel, Tricentennial Edition, 25 June 1970, pp. 2-4.

Jones, W. M. "History of the Barnwell Baptist Church," 3 May 1926, Baptist Historical Collection, Furman University Library, Greenville, South Carolina.

Records of Mesne Conveyance, Deed Book VVV, p. 31. Barnwell County Clerk of Court, Barnwell County, S. C.

Tindall, George Brown. South Carolina Negroes: 1877-1900. Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1952, p. 186.

Woodward, Kate, ed. Barnwell Baptist Church Minutes 1803-1912. Greenville, S. C.: Furman University Library, WPA Project 65-33-118.

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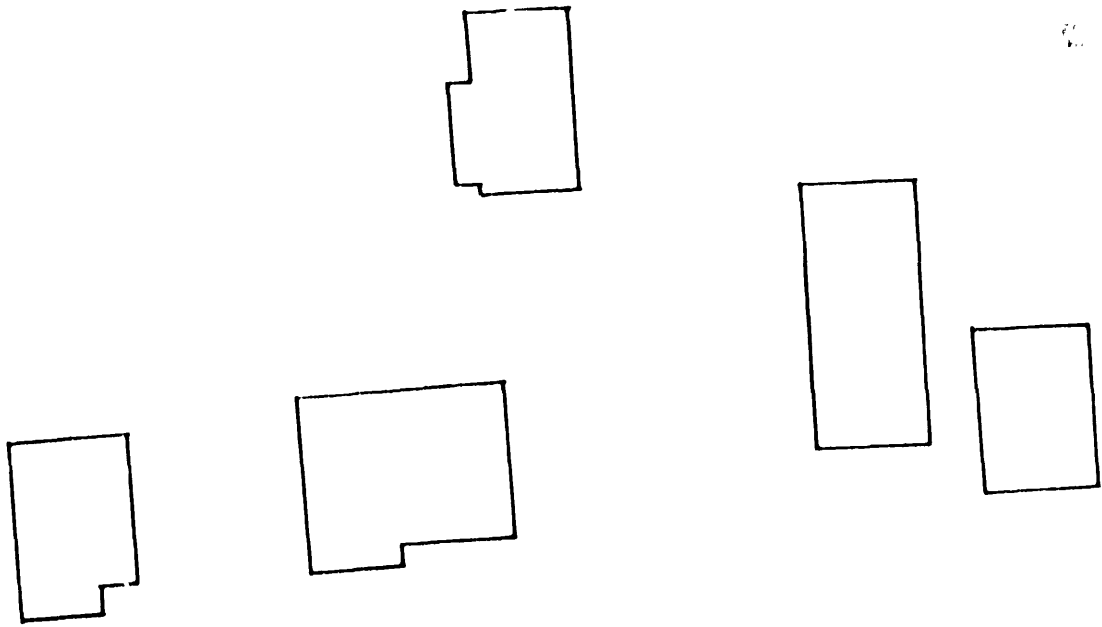
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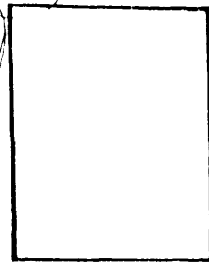
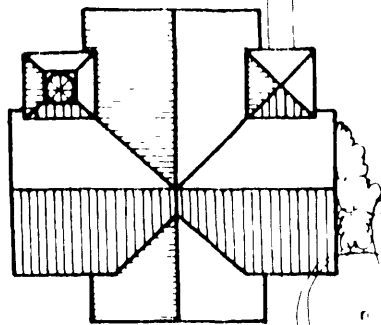
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right of way of Gilmore Street, the point of origin.



WALL STREET

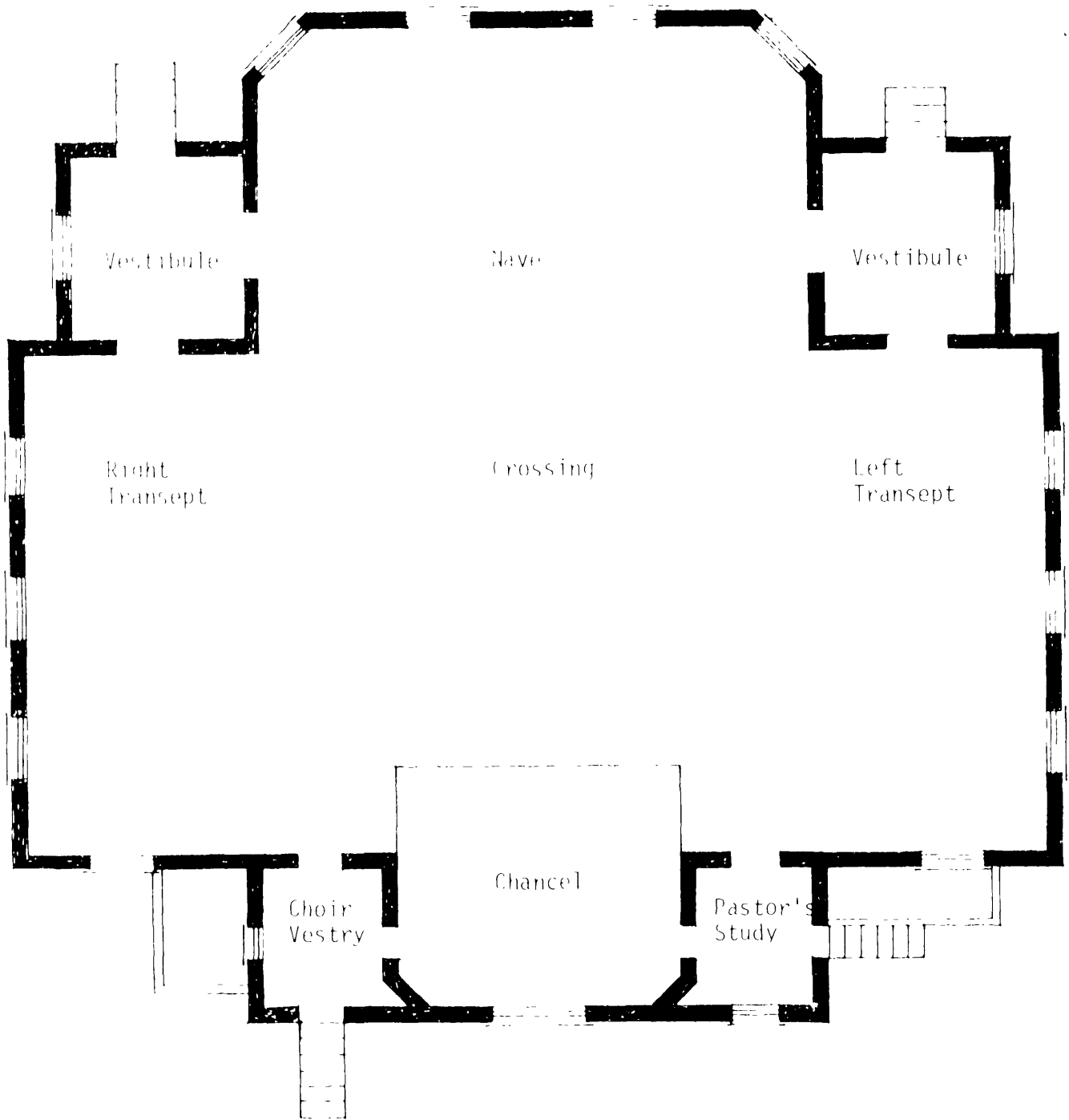
GILMORE STREET



BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH
BARNWELL, S.C.
not to scale



NORTH



**BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH
BARNWELL, S.C.**

not to scale

