

56-859



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Other names/site number Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Church; Colored Methodist Episcopal Church

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

2. Location

Street & Number: 478 Scott Street

City or town: Memphis State: TN County: Shelby

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A Zip: 38112

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Claudia J. Hays 2/22/17
 Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
 Date
 State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

 Signature of Commenting Official: _____ Date _____

 Title: _____ State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register

other (explain) _____

[Handwritten Signature]
 Signature of the Keeper

4-10-2017
 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:

BRICK; CONCRETE; ASPHALT; METAL; GLASS:
stained glass

Narrative Description

Constructed in 1955, the Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church is located at the northeast intersection of Scott Street and Princeton Avenue in the Binghamton (also Binghamton) community of Memphis (2013 pop. 653,450), Shelby County, Tennessee. The Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church is located approximately 4.7 miles east of downtown Memphis, about sixty feet south of Sam Cooper Boulevard. The church is a frame with brick veneer, two-story over half-raised basement, Neoclassical-style building with a front gable roof, centered classical steeple and center-aisle plan.

Site

The Rock of Ages C.M.E. Church is located along a north-south corridor that is surrounded by medium-density residential and commercial development that primarily dates to the early- to mid-20th century. The church façade faces west and is separated by a ten foot setback and a fourteen-foot-high, sixteen-step stairway, with masonry-capped concrete buttresses on both sides of the entrance portico. A wide parking lot for the congregation is located just off Scott Street between the bridge abutment for Sam Cooper Boulevard and the church building. Behind the Scott Street public sidewalk and to the north of the entry stairs is a pole marquee sign, erected in 1996.

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Exterior

The church displays brick veneer walls and a concrete foundation. The building's west façade is dominated by its exterior projecting stairway and pedestrian entrance. On the façade, there is a projecting, rectangular distyle-in-antis brick portico with a flat roof and parapet wall that is a modern concrete interpretation of a triglyph frieze. Below the parapet, there are three openings into the portico, defined by two modern concrete support columns with squared fluting. The portico entrance retains a simply-stylized surround with graduated concrete moldings. The primary staircase consists of gray-painted concrete steps and solid brick side walls with concrete caps. The three double doors with large transoms above are anodized aluminum with single-pane black glass and standard hardware. Located above the concrete parapet in the center of the gable is a vent opening that has been filled with white concrete. Typical of the period, the gable has a one inch overhang with a small eave painted white. The church steeple is set back a few feet from the front gable, centered on the ridge, and is composed of two square boxes; the first box of plain flat wooden sides with a raking cyma cornice, and a second square box slightly smaller in width with housing louvers centered on all four sides with identical trim. A four-sided pyramid steeple rests on the louvered box with a black cross on each of the four sides. The steeple rises twenty-four feet above the crest of the gable roof. The west façade is wider by approximately one foot greater than the main body of the building and is approximately twelve feet in depth. One of the concrete corner stones for the church is located at the bottom right or northwest corner of the church façade.

The south elevation, starting from the southwest corner of the façade's projecting bay has two levels of windows that are a combination of fixed and awning windows. The lintel at the bottom of the first bay window is in line with the bottom of the rest of the window at this side elevation. In the second bay of the south elevation at the basement level, there is a metal door leading into the basement with an awning that extends to the public sidewalk along Princeton Avenue. At the level where the top of the awning meets the brick wall, the brick chamfer creates the main body of the four bays. There are three pilasters with concrete white capitals equally spaced along the south elevation.

In each bay, there is a centered tri-part window in a vertical line above the door in the first of the inset bay sections of the body of the church building. The window is a two-part combination of a fixed and horizontal window with a one-third divider lintel over a two-third section of the main windows configuration. In the next three inset bays, there is a window at the basement level which is a combination of fixed and horizontal awning windows and is vertical in line with the windows in the sanctuary. In the last bay, which projects one foot south from the inset section of the building, are two doors, one at the basement level on the west side of the basement section of the bay and another at the sanctuary level of the bay.

The lower door has a projected awning and two typical windows above (main floor lintel in horizontal line with the rest of the window lintels). The second door is on the sanctuary level with an iron railing around the porch of the floor which is even with the flat projecting roof of the basement door. The sanctuary door has a metal shed awning. There are eight concrete steps with an iron railing along the steps which descend towards the rear of the building at the rear parking area. The windows in this last (southeast) bay are positioned two above the basement door and one above the sanctuary level door. All three of the windows are the same size as the two in the southwest projecting bay.

The east (rear) elevation of the building is solid brick with an off-centered circular louver near the gable peak. The cornice treatment is the same as the façade of the building. On both the north and south sides of this elevation, the basement concrete wall is exposed. There is a large mound of dirt with grass between the two areas where the basement wall is exposed. At the top of the mound are mechanical units for the building.

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At the southeast corner of the building, the depth of the basement wall is higher than the northeast corner of the building. The chamfer section of brick is above the concrete section of the basement wall.

The north elevation is similar to the south elevation; however, it has four pilasters in the middle section with no projecting east bay. Beginning at the northwest corner of the building's façade projecting bay and at sidewalk level, there are two earlier concrete cornerstones of the prior building that housed the church building constructed in 1916 and later remodeled in 1930. Above the cornerstones, there are two levels of windows that are a combination of fixed and horizontal awning windows. The lintel at the bottom of the first bay window is in line with the bottom of the rest of the window at this side. In the second bay of the north elevation and at the basement level, there is a foundation level window into the basement. The brick siding is flat and then chamfers into creating the pilaster and windows section—the main body of the four bays. The last bay on this elevation aligns with the main body (south elevation extends one foot further to the south than the main bay). In the mid-1990s, an ADA-accessible ramp was added to the north elevation.

The third bay from the northwest corner and the beginning of the ADA-accessible ramp begins its slope up from the northwest section of the parking lot. The ramp is made of concrete and has a tubular double railing with a sloping flat roof above. The sloping roof begins at the bottom at the center of the sanctuary window in the third bay and ends in the last bay (northwest) which contains the last pilaster—the only chimney in line with the pilaster on the roof. A rear access door to the sanctuary is two feet to the east of the pilaster. A metal door is painted white with a transom window painted white above it. The rest of the east bay of the north elevation has two windows to match the projecting bay windows on this façade and at the same level as two half-wide windows.

Interior

The interior of the two-story sanctuary retains the majority of its integrity, including sanctuary furnishings. The stained glass windows are viewed as one continuous window which contains a large cross at the center and appears red from the inside of the building. Each window in the sanctuary is dedicated by or to a member of the congregation. The walls are plaster with a paneled chair rail running along the interior walls up to and through the pulpit area. The floors are original wood with carpet on the aisles, altar area, the narthex, stairs and balcony.

The main entrance into the sanctuary is located along the west wall. This area contains inset exterior doors, interior doors to the sanctuary, and stairs to the balcony on both sides of the main entrance doors. The stairwells have been reduced in size to make room for restrooms on the main floor of the church. At the east end of the sanctuary, there is a raised altar area with recessed choir alcove located behind a communion rail that is three feet in height. The two sections of wood pews line the hall on the ground floor. Immediately to the right of the altar is a small room which originally functioned as the pastor's study; this area has been converted into an ADA-accessible entrance. The five long hanging historic light fixtures are still in place. The pews with padding on the seats and backs, altar furniture, and three, hanging electric candelabras are cosmetic changes dating to the 1950s. The original ceiling in the main sanctuary was covered with acoustical tile to assist in accommodating the HVAC and electrical wiring.

In the narthex at the rear of the sanctuary, twin original plaster walls and narrow staircases lead up to an original, three-sided balcony overhanging the sanctuary floor. Some of the historic pews are still in use in the balcony and original support columns are evident. When not needed, circa 1960s folding panels close off the balcony. Recessed exterior modern charcoaled colored glass doors open into the narthex. At each side of the narthex, rooms have been created in existing space to accommodate an ADA-accessible bathroom and a

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small kitchen for communion. This mandates the use of the historic wooden middle interior sanctuary doors for egress.

The basement of the sanctuary serves as the Reverend Ben Brown Fellowship Hall with a full kitchen and Sunday school rooms. The original bathrooms are also located in the fellowship hall area. This area retains its original rectangular wood paneled support columns. Folding panel walls, dating to circa 1950s, have been installed to provide several Sunday school rooms. The folding panel wall run both east and west (along two major walls) and north and south to create six to eight rooms.

Church Renovations, c. 1949-1955

According to church records, there was an older Rock of Ages C.M.E. church building on the present site that was remodeled; Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicate a church in this location by 1927. Interviews with church members and records from the *McKissack & McKissack Architectural and Engineering Firm Collection, 1915-1959* (Fisk University Special Collections and Archives) indicate that a church building fund from 1944-1955 allowed for a major remodel of the older edifice, which occurred circa 1949-1955.¹ Financial records and daily job reports in the archival collection from summer 1951 indicate substantial remodeling was underway, which included a new basement (dug out from beneath the older church, brick piers installed), new steel-reinforced concrete foundation walls, and interior plaster installation.² The current fixed stained glass windows were also installed during this time, replacing the original white frosted glass.³ Pews on the first floor date to the c. 1950 renovations, while those located in the balcony are some of the original pews from the older church. Basement bathrooms were also installed during the aforementioned renovations.

¹ Margaret Dodson, *Oral History of Rock of Ages C.M.E.*, Personal interview with Dr. Peatchola Jones-Cole, February 5, 2017.

² "Subseries XV: Rock of Ages C.M.E. Church, 1949-1951," McKissack and McKissack Architectural Firm Records, Fisk University Special Collections and Archives, Nashville, TN.

³ Helen White, *Oral History of Rock of Ages C.M.E.*, Personal interview with Dr. Peatchola Jones-Cole, February 5, 2017.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- 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.

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1960-1968

Significant Dates

1960

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

McKissack & McKissack

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 478 Scott Street, Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significant association with African American heritage as it relates to Social History, especially as a strategic meeting center for the African American labor movement and Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The period of significance is defined from 1960, the time when early, organized meetings between sanitation workers and local advocates for unionization were held at the church, to 1968, when congregation members participated in the Memphis Sanitation Strike.

Narrative Statement of Significance

A group of African Americans formed the Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Church congregation circa 1907 (many descendants of these early founders are actively working in the church today). By this date, Jim Crow segregation ruled the streets of Memphis; working- and middle-class African Americans often found that the best opportunities for creating their own safe haven neighborhoods lay on the outskirts of the downtown core. Here too were the types of industrial firms that would hire African American laborers. These companies included the American Founding Company, Nickey Brothers Lumber Company, and the Buckeye Cellulose Oil Company. The industrial developments furnished employment for people who moved to a neighborhood (later known as Binghampton) and they in turn invited others, from such outlying rural counties as Fayette, Hardeman, and Haywood, to come to this new neighborhood.⁴

In 1907, a group of Binghampton residents began holding church services in a tent at the corner of Scott and Broad streets. The tent began to leak, so the church moved into the one room schoolhouse (later known as the Lester Demonstration School), next door to the People's grocery store.⁵ The church was moved to the Little Red School House on Scott Street and from there to its present location at Scott and Princeton streets. In 1916, the church was named the Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church, affiliating with what was then called the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church headquartered in Jackson, Tennessee. In 1919, the City of Memphis annexed the segregated African American neighborhood of Binghampton. In 1944, under a new, younger generation of church leaders (*see Figure 1*), a building fund was started for the construction of a new sanctuary.

In 1948, the Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church congregation came under the leadership of Rev. B. F. Harris, who pastored the church from 1948 to 1952. Reverend Harris was well regarded, having pastored at the Martin Memorial Temple C.M.E. Church in Martin, Tennessee, before accepting the call from Rock of Ages. After his stint in Memphis, Harris pastored the Miles Chapel C.M.E. Church in Ripley, Tennessee. At that time, *Memphis World* (an African American newspaper) noted that Rev. Harris was "highly respected and well known for the many progressive activities of which he is a part."⁶

⁴ Peeples, O. T. & Boyd, W. M. (n. d.). *Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church History*. Accessed from the Rock of Ages C.M. E. commemorative booklet.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Memphis World*, June 1, 1957.

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Under Harris' leadership, church leaders decided to build a new sanctuary and felt confident enough of success that they enlisted the Nashville architectural firm of McKissack and McKissack as the designers (*see Figures 2 and 3*).⁷ The firm of McKissack and McKissack has been noted as "Tennessee's first professional African American architectural firm... [and the] firm's architectural projects were located across the South, with most being African American educational and religious facilities and churches."⁸ By selecting this prominent firm, the only licensed African American architects in the state, the congregation made a statement of empowerment—that it wanted a modern landmark, one that reflected its confidence and its centeredness as a key African American institution in the Binghampton neighborhood.

McKissack and McKissack produced a design in-line with the congregation's aspirations. In the early decades of the firm, the architects had a decided preference in many of their projects for the Classical Revival style. In the post-war period, however, the firm used a more modernist approach to classical style in many of its institutional designs. Rock of Ages C.M.E. Church, with its stripped Classical entrance, reflects the firm's mid-20th century direction that gave the congregation a commanding brick landmark in the midst of the Binghampton neighborhood (*see Figure 4*).

In 1955, the congregation moved into the new church, with a slightly different name. The year prior the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church officially changed its name to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Historian Edward A. Hatfield notes:

The name change, which became official in 1956, not only signaled the church's repudiation of Jim Crow—era racial subordination but also highlighted a more ecumenical emphasis on religious, rather than racial, identity. Thereafter, the church became more active in the Civil Rights Movement.⁹

With its many blue collar workers, the Binghampton neighborhood was a center for labor activism in Memphis. Labor also was the foundation for Civil Rights activism in such working class neighborhoods as Binghampton. Historian Laurie Green explains:

Historians generally have not recognized that Memphis sanitation workers began organizing nearly a decade before the 1968 strike. Their organizing coincided with the student sit-in movement that erupted in 1960. Many workers were migrants from rural southwest Tennessee and Veterans of the Second World War, who had been angered when they returned to Memphis from the armed forces to face jobs with appallingly racist working conditions.¹⁰

⁷ "Subseries XV: Rock of Ages C.M.E. Church, 1949-1951."

⁸ Linda T. Wynn, "McKissack and McKissack Architects," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, electronic edition*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003, <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=871> (accessed November 21, 2016). McKissack & McKissack were also the architects for Memphis' Universal Life Insurance Company (NRHP 07//24/2007).

⁹ Edward A. Hatfield, "Christian Methodist Episcopal Church," *New Georgia Encyclopedia On-line Edition* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004-2016).

¹⁰ Laurie B. Green, *Battling the Plantation Mentality: Memphis and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 224.

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At Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the link between the two movements existed in one of these angered veterans, O.Z. Evers (1925-2001). Evers was an Arkansas native and Navy Veteran who came to Memphis in 1955 and lived in the Binghampton neighborhood. In 1956, he was arrested for refusing to move to the back of a segregated public bus. Evers filed suit in federal court, which ruled in his favor in 1958, a ruling however that cost Evers his job with the U.S. Postal Service. During these years, Evers turned to Civil Rights activism, serving as the president of the Binghampton Civic League, which met at Rock of Ages, and established a local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).¹¹ (The Binghampton Civic League's mission included efforts to "increase the Negroes' interest in civic responsibility and utilize that power of the ballot [and to] promote unity in the Binghampton community.")¹²

In early 1960, Evers received a request from sanitation workers to help end discrimination in that city department. The garbage collectors were not satisfied with their wages and were disgruntled by an alleged announcement that their two-week vacations had been cancelled. William W. Farris, Commissioner of Public Works, pled ignorance about the two-week vacations being cancelled and that they were still in effect. He further stated, "I don't know how this story got started."¹³ Evers responded, "All I know is that, the Negro employees were told that their vacations have been cancelled. They are now wondering what benefits will be cancelled next. If they want to unionize, I'm going to help them." Referring to the collectors' weekly pay, Evers said:

I think it's a shame and a disgrace for a man in this day and age not to be able to take home at least a \$60 per week check. Citizens are anxious to see their garbage collected regularly and efficiently. They are getting good service now and should be willing to pay more for it. There are one thousand and five hundred employees in the sanitation department, and one thousand and two hundred of them are Negroes which is about eighty percent of the workforce. Only Negro employees do the actually handling of the garbage cans.¹⁴

Evers further stated he was "not fooling" in his attempt to get the collectors to unionize. "We're working on it and will make the necessary connections if there is not a reversal in attitude on the part of city officials."¹⁵ City Commissioner William Farris stated, "there will be no union of sanitation employees." Mr. Farris was adamant in his statement on his stance against the unionization of his employees.¹⁶ According to historian Laurie Green:

...the sanitation workers protested deeply rooted racist practices endemic to the sanitation department... Evers, in his public statement on their behalf, also charged that the workers had

¹¹ Miriam DeCosta-Willis, "O.Z. Evers," *Notable Black Memphians* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2008), 116-117; Philip F. Rubio, *There's Always Work at the Post Office: African American Postal Workers and the Fight for Jobs, Justice, and Equality* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 226. Evers actively fought against Jim Crow laws and any other discriminatory measures that impeded on the Negro citizens. Also, as stated in *Notable Black Memphians*, he was instrumental in the desegregation of the Memphis Zoo and the Memphis fairgrounds.

¹² "Civic League in Binghampton Seeks 2,000 New Members," *Memphis World*, September 16, 1959.

¹³ "O.Z. Evers Seeks to Unionize Garbagemen," *Memphis World*, January 16, 1960.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ "Evers, Farris Lock Horns on Union (Sanitation Men Want More Pay)," *Tri-State Defender*, February 6, 1960.

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inadequate protection from leaky tubs of garbage and inclement weather and were at the bottom of the 'payroll totem poll.'¹⁷

With Evers' leadership, the sanitation workers demanded an end to discrimination and an affirmation of their civil rights. Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church was closely associated with this movement, both through its members who were sanitation workers and through the use of the church as a meeting center. According to Rev. Walter Hurt, Jr., pastor of Rock of Ages C.M.E. Church from 2004-2009, "...although some are no longer with us, except Rev. O. B. Boothe, members such as the Long Brothers, Charlie Leggins, Guy Morrow, Leo Dewitt, and O. T. Peebles, were very active in marching during the Sanitation Strike Movement of 1968 and other previous marches in the early 1960s."¹⁸

Evers held his first organizing meeting at the church in March 1960 (*see Figure 5*). An estimated two hundred workers from the city's Sanitation Department weathered a Tuesday night's downpour of rain, to crowd into the Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. The church was less than a mile from the Public Works Department and 0.63 miles from sanitation workers' spokesman, O. Z. Evers' home at 1301 Crystal Avenue. The Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church served as one of the meeting places for non-religious activist-minded leaders and followers interested in bringing about a change in the working conditions of the City of Memphis' sanitation workers. The workers wanted to demonstrate to local Teamsters union representatives that they were anxious to be organized into a local union, despite adverse feelings reportedly generated by the city's Sanitation Department.¹⁹ The crowd cheered each speaker enthusiastically and sprang to his or her feet in a thunderous roar several times when asked: "All men here, who want to be organized into a union, stand on your feet." It was reported at that time that garbage drivers only received \$1.14 per hour and collectors only \$1.00 per hour.²⁰

Evers said he went to work to help the sanitation workers and found the Teamsters ready and willing to lend a hand. At the meeting, and going on the premise that the workers vacations were terminated, Evers asked the men present, "All of you men who were told that your vacations were going to be taken away from you, please stand up."²¹ All of the men stood. After the meeting, Evers said the plans were definitely underway for unionizing the sanitation workers. "These men showed me that they meant business," he said.²²

In March 1960, over 500 members of the Memphis Sanitation Department met with the Teamsters officials at another church in the Binghampton neighborhood. The meeting followed the same pattern of the January meeting previously held plus over seventy workers' wives stomping and cheering wildly at the promises of the union officials.²³ Evers said of Public Works Commissioner William Farris: "He's lining men up at all

¹⁷ Green, 224.

¹⁸ Reverend Walter Hurt, *Oral History of Rock of Ages C.M.E. Members' Role with Civil Rights Movement*, Personal interview with Dr. Peatchola Jones-Cole, February 2010.

¹⁹ "200 Sanitation Men Cheer Union Plans," *Tri-State Defender*, March 19, 1960.

²⁰ "Sanitation Workers meet with Teamsters," *Memphis World*, March 12, 1960.

²¹ "200 Sanitation Men Cheer Union Plans."

²² *Ibid.*

²³ "Sanitation Men Ready Petition," *Tri-State Defender*, April 9, 1960.

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the stations with these petitions and trying to force the men to sign. ‘Sign up or be fired’ is what he’s telling them.”²⁴

“He (Farris) is weakening his position as a future political-leader every time he opens his mouth to attack the union,” Evers added. “When he attacks the union, he attacks labor and a man fighting labor can’t win.” Mr. Evers said the next meeting would be held at Mason Temple and that the entire public would be invited. “It’s going to be a city-wide meeting to let the public know just how bad off the sanitation worker is. We plan to solicit the city’s sympathy behind our movement,” he said.²⁵

This 1960 effort to unionize African American sanitation workers in Memphis was a significant and strategic step towards Civil Rights activism among the city’s working class. While the organization effort failed, leaders soon re-ignited the process through the creation of the Independent Workers Association (IWA) in 1963. The city retaliated by firing thirty-three members who were municipal employees. IWA leadership urged the mayor to reconsider, and enlisted the support of key African American ministers, including Reverend James Lawson of Centenary United Methodist Church. The city offered to re-hire the dismissed workers, but conceded nothing to any organized effort or union.²⁶

It was at this time that Lawson first encountered the activists associated with Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, especially Rev. T. C. Smith, who was pastor from 1963 to 1973 (Lawson arrived in Memphis in 1962). In a 2016 interview, Rev. Lawson recalled the Rock of Ages C.M.E. Church members (such as Rev. Smith) that were part of the Civil Rights activism of the early 1960s and the Sanitation Strike of 1968.²⁷ He also recalled the church as one of the meeting centers for civil rights activists throughout these years. The church was part of the Memphis Area Project-South (MAP-South), an important effort allied with the War on Poverty in the mid-1960s that Rev. Lawson headed during those years.²⁸ The strategy and effectiveness of MAP-South was grounded in “its neighborhood roots and the energizing impact of the freedom movement.”²⁹ Civil rights activities continued to gain broad momentum and Memphis became a focal point during this era; eight years after the sanitation worker meeting was held at Rock of Ages, the first organizing speech of the Sanitation Strike of 1968 was given by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Second Presbyterian Church (Clayborn Temple, NRHP 09/04/1979).

Historian Michael Honey emphasized: “A cohort of sanitation workers joined together in the early 1960s, determined to break arbitrary, personalized, racist oppression [in Memphis].”³⁰ The next step came in 1965-1967 with the creation of neighborhood organizations and grassroots efforts, like that of MAP-South that directly targeted the needs of the working poor of Memphis. MAP-South focused programs “on what it

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Michael E. Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King’s Last Campaign* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007), 66-70.

²⁷ Reverend James Lawson, *Oral History of Rock of Ages C.M.E.*, Personal interview with Dr. Peatchola Jones-Cole, June 2016.

²⁸ Annelise Orleck, et al., eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1970* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 133.

²⁹ Green, 270.

³⁰ Honey, 60.

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termed ‘consciousness’ by confronting derogatory stereotypes of poor people and encouraging respect, self-esteem, and activism,” especially important in neighborhoods such as Binghampton.³¹ This new research on mid-1960s Memphis Civil Rights activism focused on labor, poverty, and respect means that the Sanitation Strike of 1968 was not “a wholly new phenomenon or a return to the militancy of the World War II era... [rather, the strike]...reflected this surge in black working-class agitation and reshaped it by articulating black workers’ concerns through highly public mass protest.”³²

The Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church is a local landmark building significantly associated with these patterns in Memphis social history of the 1960s, and is one of the launching points for the beginning of this Civil Rights struggle of the sanitation workers in the city of Memphis. The church continues to be an important historical site and has been recognized for its ongoing and impactful service to the local community (*see Figure 6*).

³¹ Green, 271.

³² Ibid., 275-276.

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Shelby County, TN
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
 Name of Property

Shelby County, TN
 County and State

“Subseries XV: Rock of Ages C.M.E. Church, 1949-1951.” McKissack and McKissack Architectural Firm Records. Fisk University Archives, Nashville, TN.

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Wynn, Linda T. “McKissack and McKissack Architects.” *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, electronic edition*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003. <http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=871> (accessed November 21, 2016).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):		Primary location of additional data:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	State Historic Preservation Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously listed in the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other State agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously determined eligible by the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	designated a National Historic Landmark	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local government
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	University
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other – Benjamin Hooks Library-Memphis
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository: Rhodes College	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): n/a			

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Shelby County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.1220 acres **USGS Quadrangle** Northeast Memphis (409-NW)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Latitude: 35.145378

Longitude: -89.966946

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 3 and 4 of CRUMP AND PRESCOTT AND TERRY SCOTT AVENUE SUBVISION, according to plat record in Plat Book 5, Page 55. Said Lots 3 and 4 have a total frontage of 59 feet to the East side of Scott Avenue and run back between parallel lines 104 feet. LESSAND EXCEPT the part of Lots 3 and 4 conveyed to the City of Memphis by Warranty Deed recorded in Book 1935, Page 445, of said Register's Office.

PARCEL III:

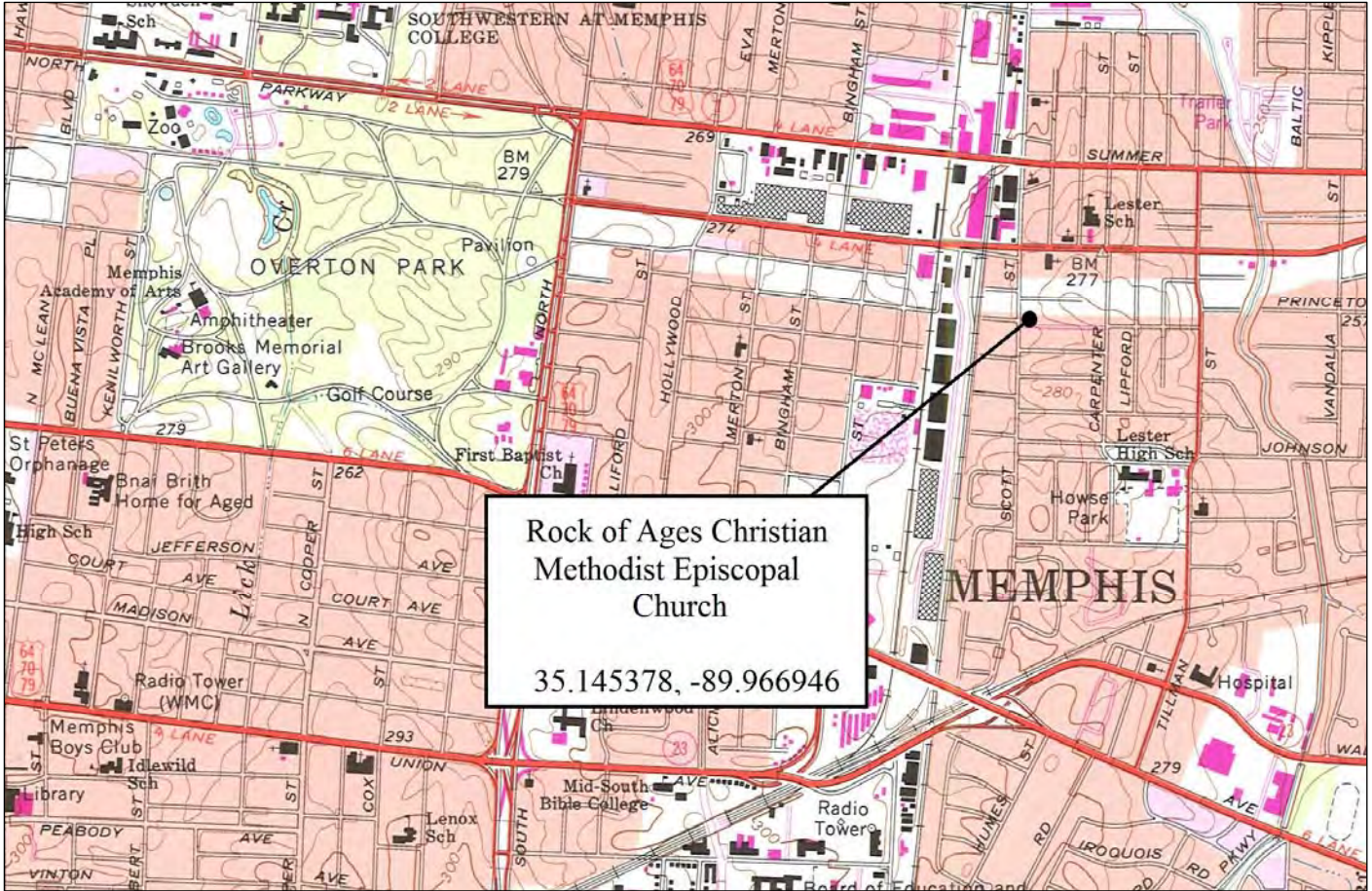
Lots 5 and 6 of CRUMP AND TERRY SCOTT AVENUE SUBVISION, being more particularly described as follows: Said Lot 5 fronts 239 feet on the North side of Princeton Street and runs back between the parallel lines 104 feet. Said Lot 6 fronts 25 feet on the northside of Princeton Street and runs back between parallel lines 104 feet.

Boundary Justification

All property historically associated with the Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

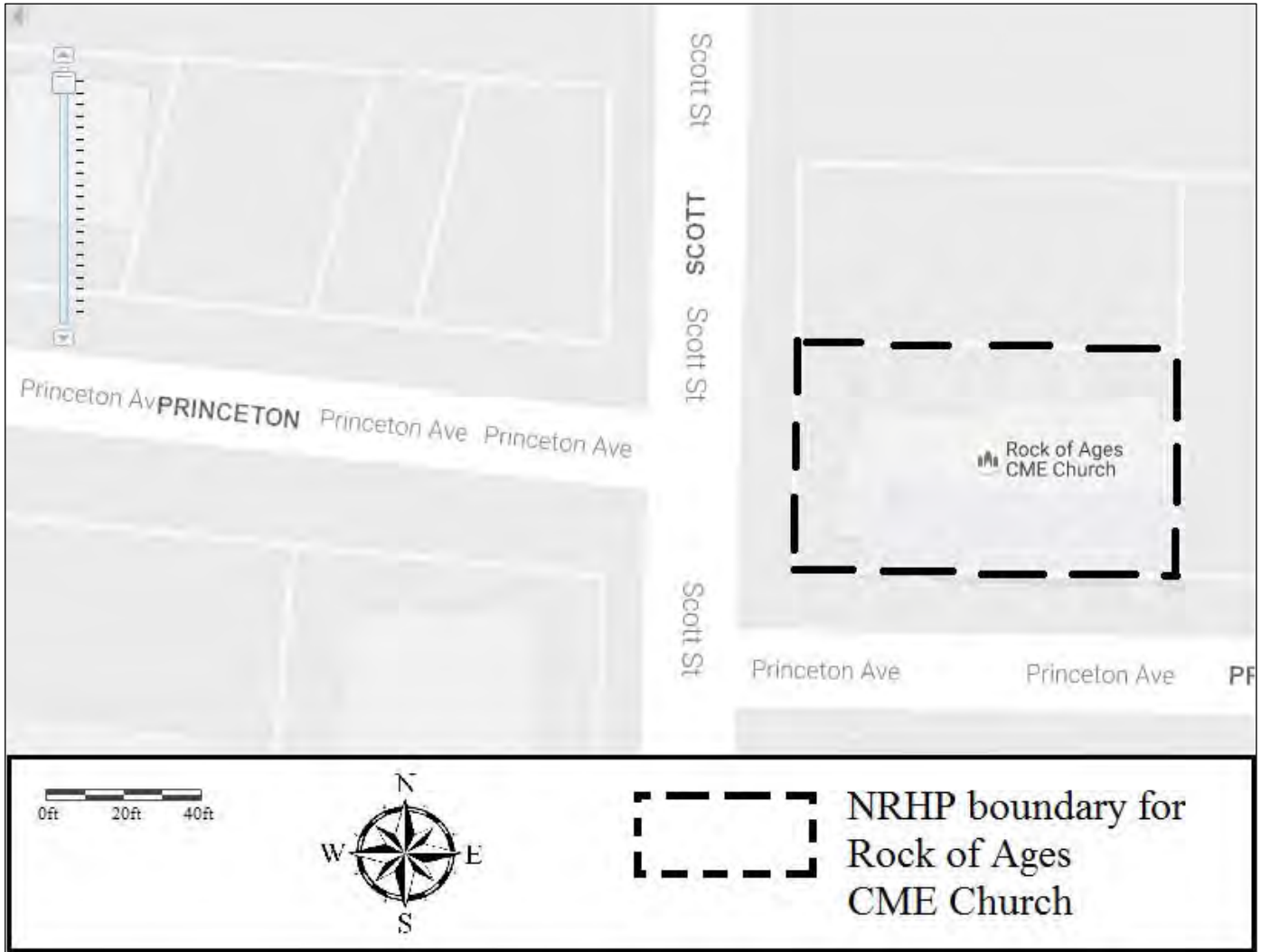
Shelby County, TN
County and State



USGS Topographical Map (Northeast Memphis Quadrangle, 409-NW) showing location of the Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Shelby County, TN
County and State



Parcel map for Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (Parcel # 037020 00071).
Source: Online parcel maps, Assessor of Property, Shelby County, Tennessee.

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Shelby County, TN
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

Name Peatchola Jones-Cole, Malcolm Glover, Jr., Jewell Paige, and Oslo Cole

Organization Rock of Ages CME Church

Street & Number 478 Scott Street Date August 31,2016

City or Town Memphis Telephone 901-323-7029

E-mail Rockofagescme478@yahoo.com State TN Zip Code 38112

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Photographs** (refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints)
- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. should be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps)

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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Shelby County, TN
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Photograph Log

Name of Property: Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Church
City or Vicinity: Memphis
County: Shelby State: TN
Photographer: Nancy Jane Baker
Date Photographed: December 2015

- Photo 1 of 25. Southwest oblique. View to the northeast.
- Photo 2 of 25. View of the west façade. View to the east.
- Photo 3 of 25. Cornerstone on west façade. View to the east.
- Photo 4 of 25. Site and northwest oblique. View to the southeast.
- Photo 5 of 25. View of northwest corner and signage. View to the south.
- Photo 6 of 25. View of the northeast corner. View to the southeast.
- Photo 7 of 25. Northeast oblique. View to the southwest.
- Photo 8 of 25. View of the rear (east) elevation. View to the west.
- Photo 9 of 25. View of the south elevation along Princeton Street. View to the northeast.
- Photo 10 of 25. First floor stained glass window on the south elevation. View to the north.
- Photo 11 of 25. Basement stained glass window on the south elevation. View to the north.
- Photo 12 of 25. View of altar and the choir loft. View to the east.
- Photo 13 of 25. Detail view of altar and choir loft. View to the southeast.
- Photo 14 of 25. View of the altar and choir loft from the balcony. View to the east.
- Photo 15 of 25. View of the stained glass windows on the south elevation. View to the south.
- Photo 16 of 25. View of an interior stained glass first floor window. View to the north
- Photo 17 of 25. View of an interior stained glass first floor window. View to the north.
- Photo 18 of 25. View of central aisle and pews in the congregation area. View to the northeast.

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

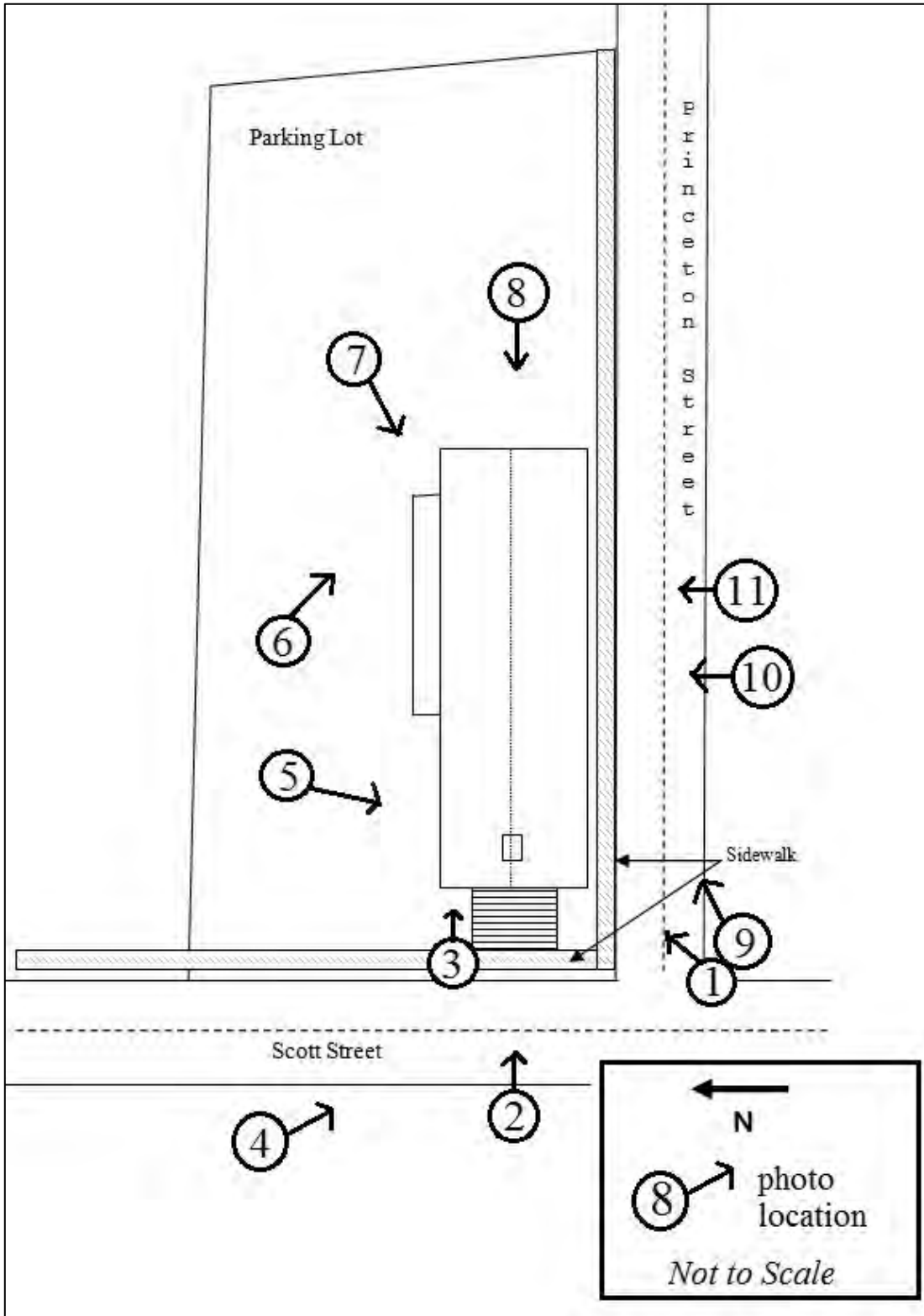
Shelby County, TN
County and State

- Photo 19 of 25. Detail of the historic lighting in the church.
- Photo 20 of 25. View of the balcony. View to the west.
- Photo 21 of 25. Detail of one of the older pews in the balcony. View to the southeast.
- Photo 22 of 25. View of the stairs leading down into the basement.
- Photo 23 of 25. View of Reverend Ben Brown Fellowship Hall in the basement. View to the east.
- Photo 24 of 25. View of Rev. Ben Brown Fellowship Hall in the basement. View to the southeast.
- Photo 25 of 25. View of the accordion walls and the interior of the basement window. View to the southeast.

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Shelby County, TN
County and State

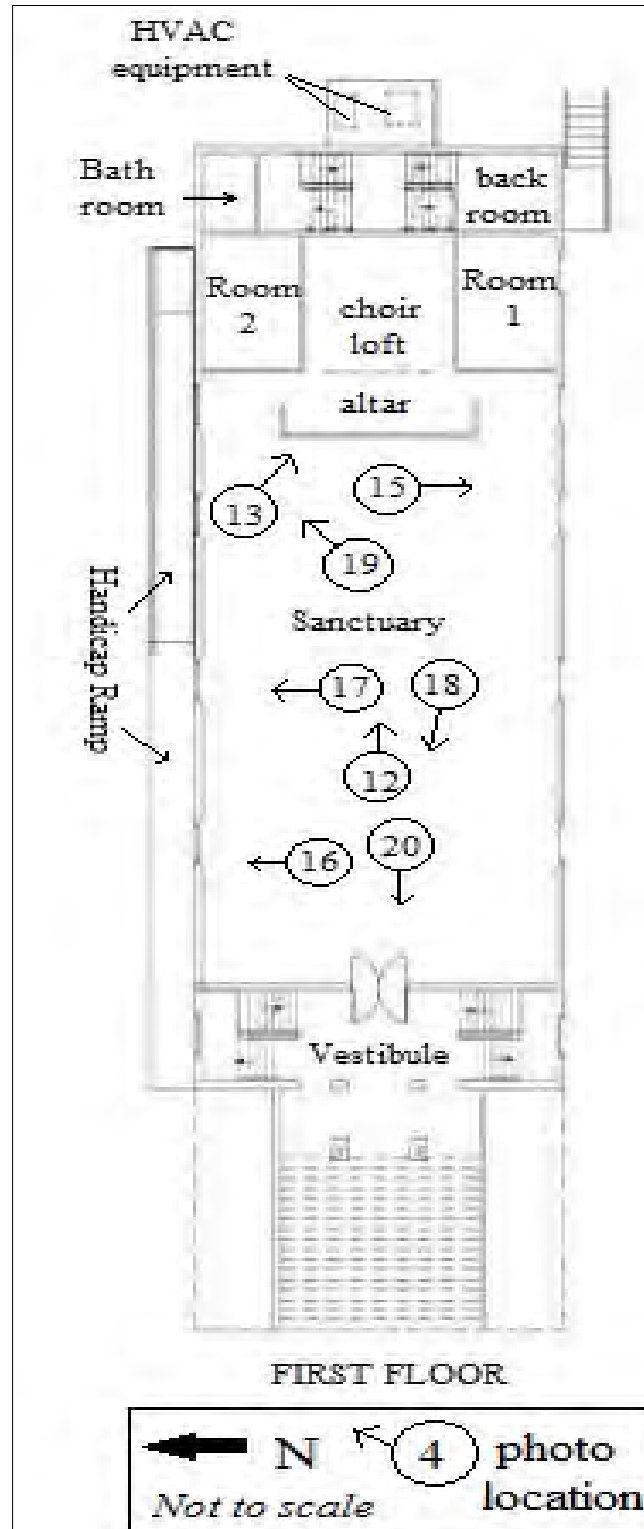
Site Plan with Photo Key



Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Shelby County, TN
County and State

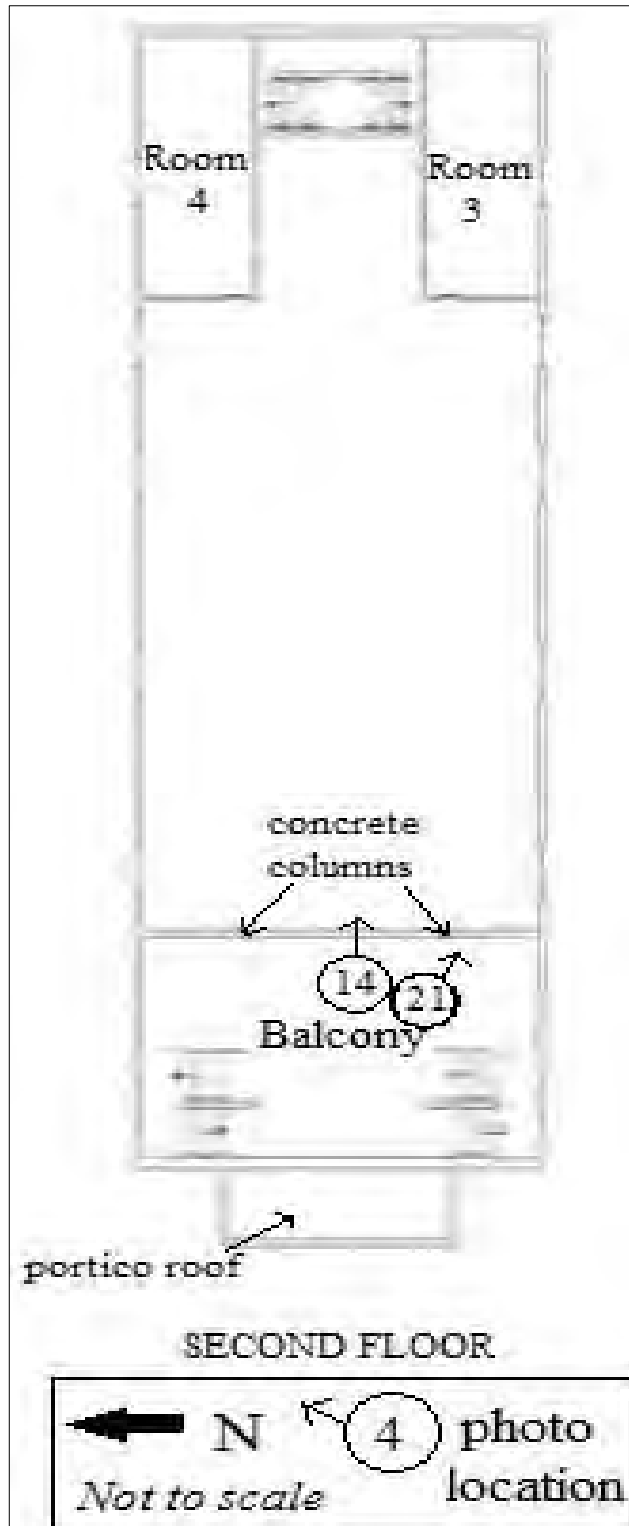
First Floor Plan with Photo Key



Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Shelby County, TN
County and State

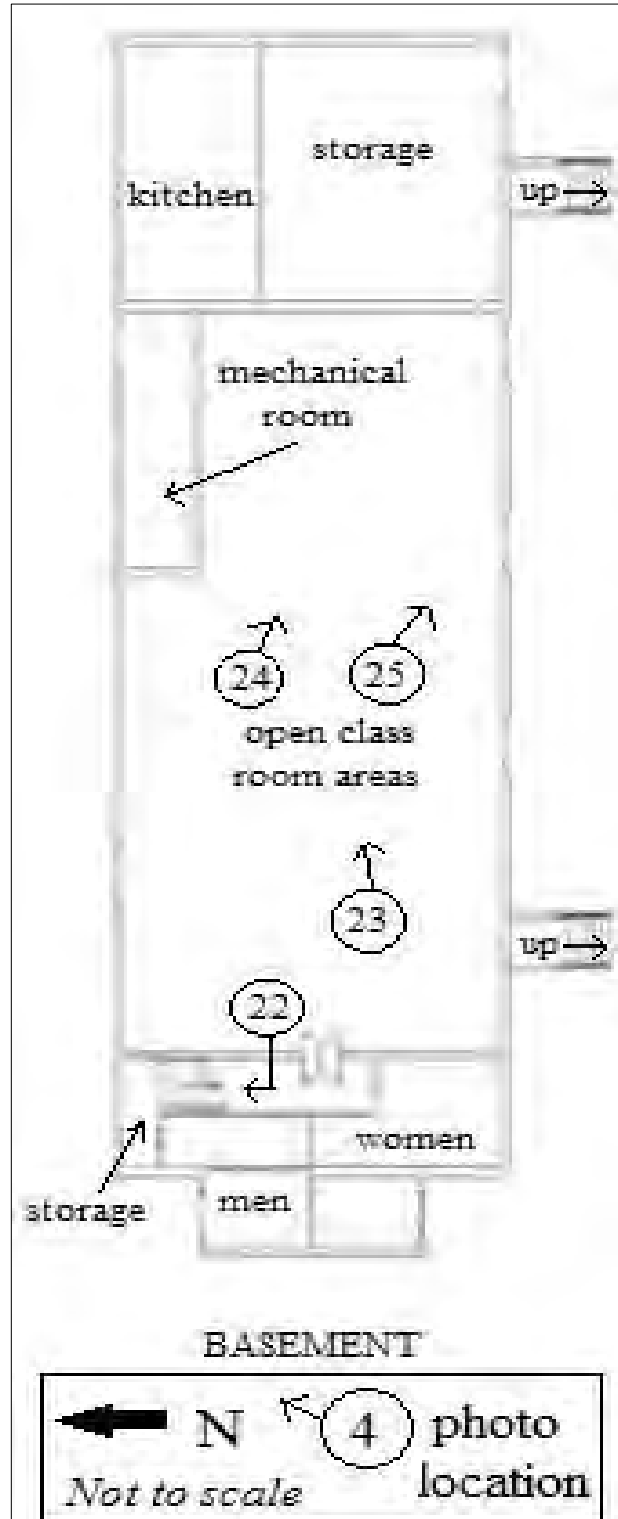
Second Floor Plan with Photo Key



Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Shelby County, TN
County and State

Basement Floor Plan with Photo Key



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number figures Page 26

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist
Episcopal Church

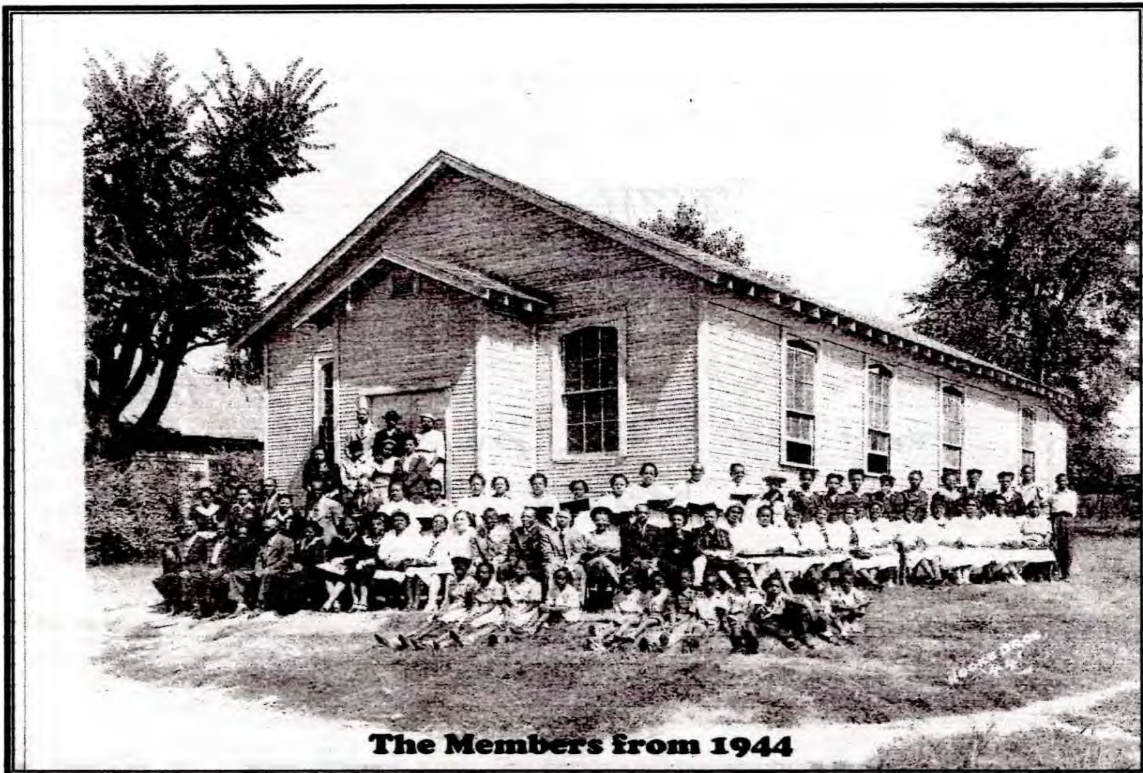
Name of Property

Shelby County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



The Members from 1944

On the grass (From left to right) – Geraldine Carter Mitchell, Sarah Watkins Price, Karen Moten,

1st Row – Mrs. Eugene Carter, Mr. Milton Douglas, Mr. Bankhead, Mr. Ernest Cummings, 5-, Mrs. Alice Jones, Mrs. Levert Leggett, Mrs. Magnolia Jones, Mrs. Alberta Williams, Mrs. Bertice Moore, Rev. O. B. Boothe, Mr. S. W. Larkin, 13-, Mrs. Mullin, Rev. Madison Exum, Mrs. Exum, 17-, 18-, Mrs. Eva Douglas, Mrs. Armitta Green, Mrs. Douglas, 22-, 23-, Mrs. Bankhead, 25-, 26-, Christine; s Mom, 28-, 29-, 30-

2nd Row – Mrs. Lattie Humphreys, Mrs. Beatrice Young, Mr. Atway Taylor, Mrs. Tonia McAdoo, Mr. Thomas Cox, Mr. Charlie Douglas, 7-, Mrs. Bessie Johnson, 9-, 10-, Mrs. Beatrice Douglas, Mrs. Ruby Cox, Mrs. Alice Bailey, Mrs. Emma Gambel, Mr. Will Jones, Mr. Ed Lee Douglas, Mrs. Susie Stout, 18-, 19-, Mrs. Bertice Roberts Hooker, 21-, Dorothy Eva Douglas Brinson, Mrs. Iola Bankhead, 24-, Mrs. Frances Marie Carter, Mr. Mason West, Mr. Walter Bankhead

Standing in the Door (First Row) – 28, 29, 30, 31

Standing in the Door (Second Row) – Mr. O.T. Peeples, 33-, Mrs. Nettie Collins Cross

Figure 1: Rock of Ages Members' Photo of 1944.

Source: Rock of Ages CME Church Library & Mrs. Sarah Price's collection.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number figures Page 27

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist
Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Shelby County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

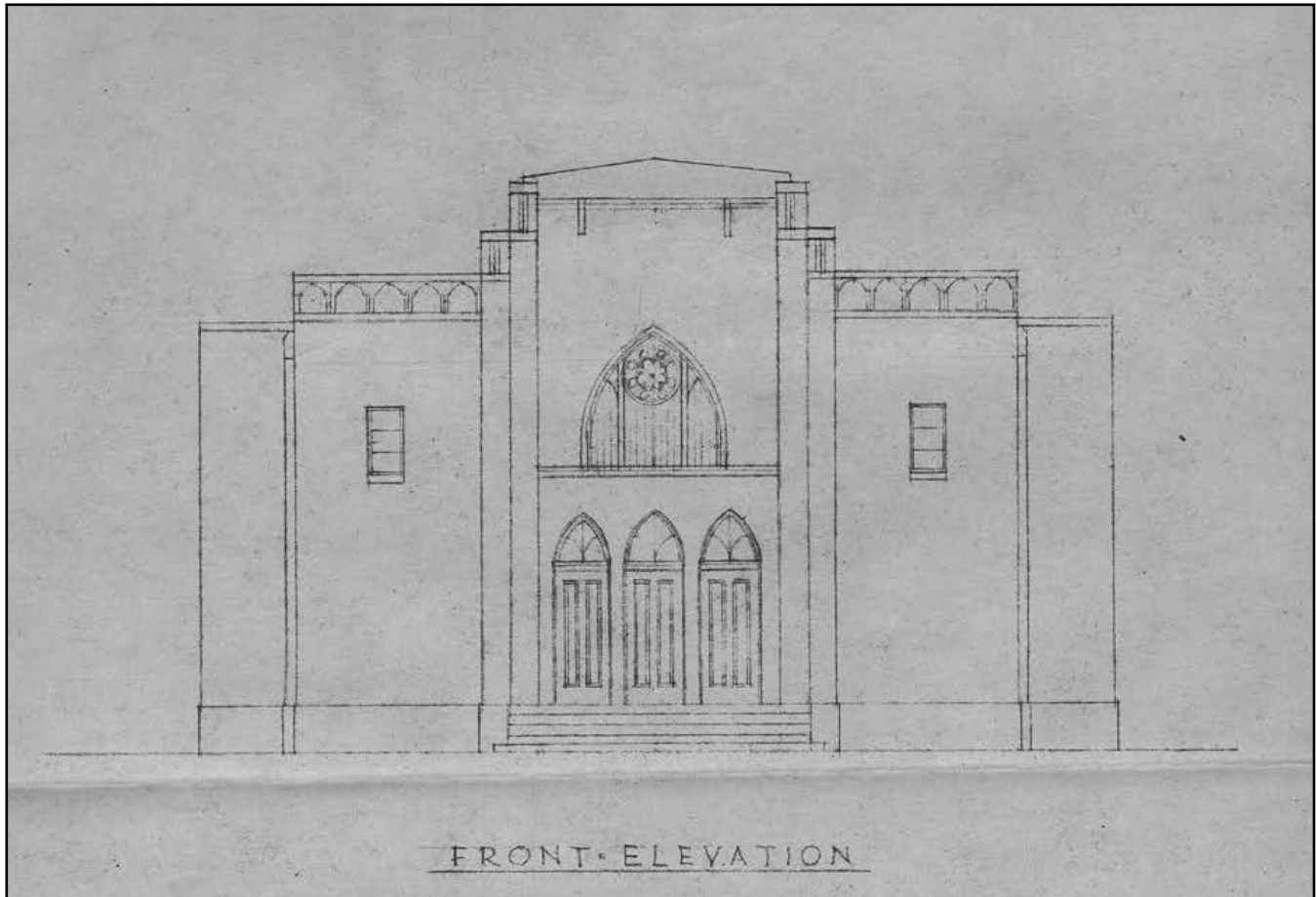


Figure 2: Rock of Ages C.M.E. elevation sketch by McKissack & McKissack, 1949.
Source: Fisk University Special Collections and Archives, McKissack & McKissack Architectural and Engineering Firm Collection, 1915-1959.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number figures Page 28

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist
Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Shelby County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

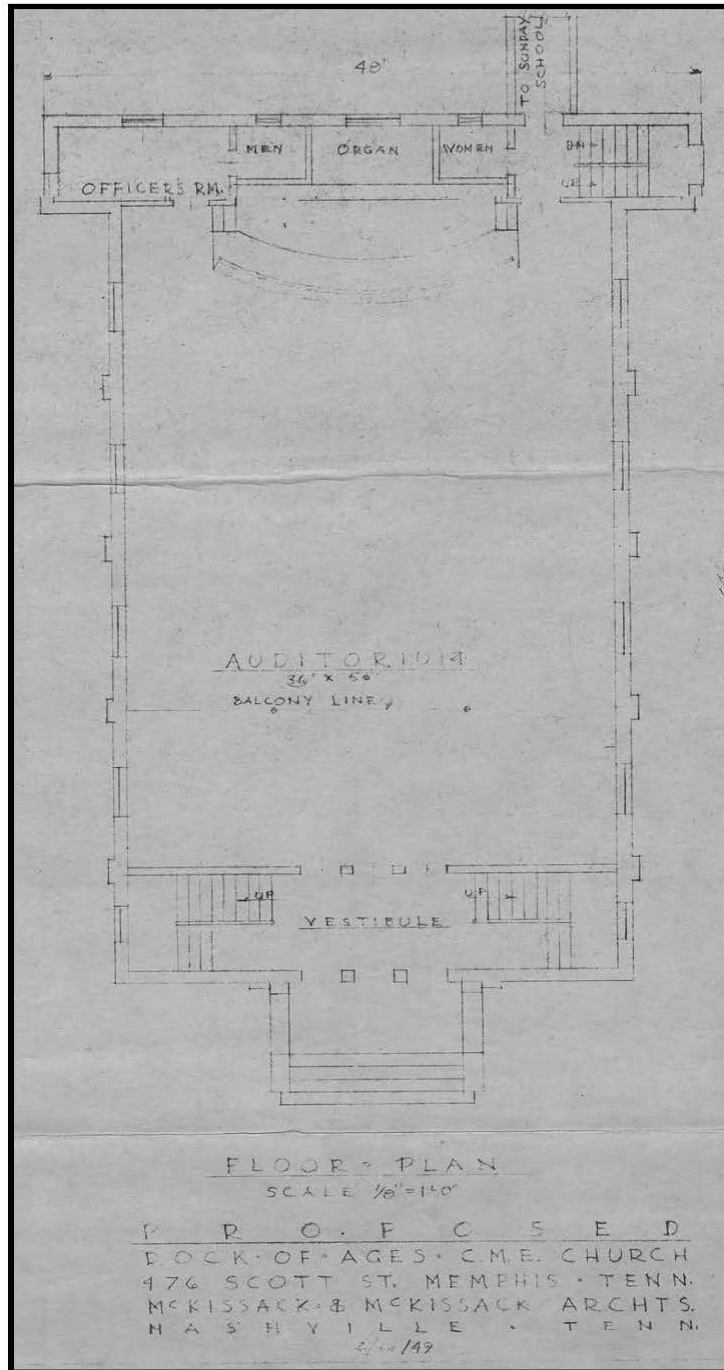


Figure 3: Rock of Ages C.M.E. floor plans by McKissack & McKissack, 1949.

Source: Fisk University Special Collections and Archives, McKissack & McKissack Architectural and Engineering Firm Collection, 1915-1959.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number figures Page 29

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist
Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Shelby County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Figure 4: Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, after renovation circa 1960.
Source: Delta State University, www.deltastate.edu/pages/1170.asp (Hooks Brothers Photography).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number figures Page 30

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist
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Name of Property
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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 1960

SANITATION WORKERS MEET WITH TEAMSTERS

200 WORKERS MEET WITH TEAMSTERS

An estimated 200 workers from the city Sanitation Department weathered Tuesday night's downpour of rain to crowd into the Rock of Ages CME church, 479 Scott Ave. to demonstrate to local Teamsters Union representatives that they were anxious to be organized into a local union, despite adverse feelings reportedly generated by the city Sanitation Department.

The crowd cheered each speaker enthusiastically and sprang to their feet in a thunderous roar several times when they were asked: "All men here who want to be organized into a union, stand on your feet."

Leading the pep-talks were representatives from Memphis Local 984 of the Teamsters Union and Chattanooga, Local Union 515; and O. Z. Evers, 3018 Crystal Ave., who was dismissed from his transportation postal clerk job for participat-

ing in a local political campaign last July. Evers said he has been elected as an organizer by the Sanitation Department workers.

Richard A. Farrell, president of Local Union 984, asked the workers: "Do you want your children and grandchildren to fall into your footsteps? Or do you want better homes, better schools and more education for them?"

He added: "Teamsters don't like to strike at a dropping of a hat as other unions. We use it as a last resort. Nobody gains anything from a strike. However, you are entitled to a just livable wage. And \$1.14 per hour for 44-hour a week is not enough for a man and his wife (not to mention children) to live on."

George E. Hicks, Jr., assistant business manager of the Local Union in Chattanooga said, immediately after the meeting that drivers of garbage trucks in Chattanooga receive \$1.60 an hour and collectors, \$1.35. He said that the sanitation workers had been organized into a union since 1950.

It is reported that drivers in Memphis receive \$1.14 an hour and collectors, \$1.

O. Z. Evers said, "Commissioner Farris said that you men did not want to be organized. If so, stand on your feet." Every man stood up cheering.

Two sanitation workers who requested that their names be withheld said: "We must stand together. We must not be afraid. The cost of living is going up but we received only a two-cent raise."

It was said that a conference will be attempted with Commissioner Farris early next week.



LONDONER VISITS LeMOYNE — Dr. Rosey E. Pool (second from left), author, linguist and teacher of London, England, lectured for two days last week at LeMoyn College on American Negro poetry and music. Dr. Pool is touring American colleges and universities on a Fulbright Fellowship. A native of Amsterdam, Holland, she was a leader of the Dutch underground movement against Nazi rule in Holland during World War II. She was imprisoned in a concentration camp, but escaped and lived in hiding in a loft until the war's end. Dr. Pool is pictured examining the Sweeney Collection in the LeMoyn Library with, left to right: Frances Thomas, a senior; Mrs. Mae Fitzgerald, librarian, and Thelma Townsend, a senior.

Owen Freshmen In Midst Of 'Clothing And Toy' Campaign

former Richard Morris)

The freshman class of Owen College has launched a clothing and toy drive to benefit the children at the Goodwill Home. The Drive will end April 14.

Students will canvass their neighborhood. Persons living outside the

Figure 5: Article regarding the Sanitation Strikes and meeting at Rock of Ages C.M.E.
Source: *Memphis World*, March 12, 1960.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number figures Page 31

Rock of Ages Christian Methodist
Episcopal Church

Name of Property
Shelby County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

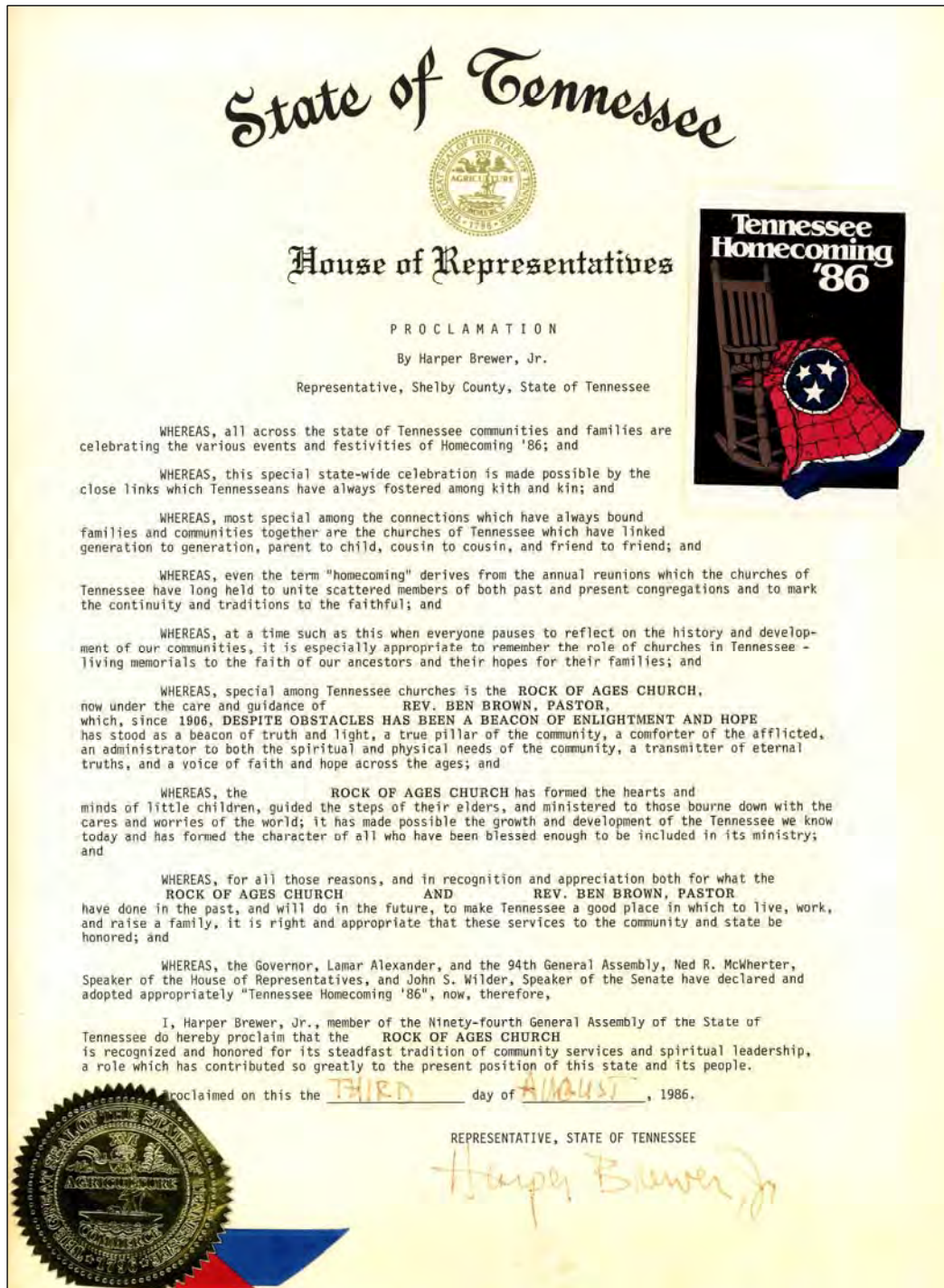


Figure 6: Tennessee House of Representatives Resolution regarding Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Source: Rock of Ages CME Church Library.

Property Owner:

(This information will not be submitted to the National Park Service, but will remain on file at the Tennessee Historical Commission)

Name National Headquarters of Christian Methodist Church
c/o Willie J. Grandberry, Presiding Elder and Henry M. Williamson Sr., Presiding Prelate and
Senior Bishop

Street &
Number 4466 Elvis Presley Blvd., Suite 300 Telephone 901-345-0580

City or Town Memphis State/Zip Tennessee 38116



**Rock of Ages
CME Church**
PASTOR: Dr. Fred Jones Jr.
SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:00 AM
WEDNESDAY WORSHIP: 10:00 AM
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY: 6:00 PM
**SPEAK, LORD.
1 SAMUEL 3:9**

ROCK OF AGES
CME



ROCK OF AGES
C.N.E.
WELLSVILLE, OHIO
12-18-1958

ROCK OF AGES
C.N.E.

ROCK OF AGES C.M.E. CHURCH

ORGANIZED 1907: ERECTED 1955

TRUSTEES

CHAS. DOUGLASS, CHM. O.T. PEEPLES, V.CHM.

JOE GREEN

A.W. TAYLOR

EDDIE DOUGLASS

CHAS. LEGGETT

ERNEST CUMMINGS

THOMAS COX

MRS. ALICE BAILEY, SECRETARY

ADMINISTRATION

REV. B. F. HARRIS

1948 - 1952

REV. H. L. O'LAKE

1952 - 1955

REV. W. T. KEYS

1955

PRESIDING ELDER: PRESIDING BISHOP

REV. J. L. GRIFFIN: THE RT. REV. J. A. HAMLETT

TRUSTEES

EUGENE CARTER

WILL JONES

LAI'D BY REV. T. C. SMITH PASTOR



Bethel Aves
CME Church

SCOTT ST
PRINCETON AVE

With Love And Care



**Rock of Ages
CME Church**
PASTOR: [unreadable]
SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:00 AM
BAPTIST BIBLE STUDY: 10:00 AM
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY: 7:00 PM
**SPEAK, LORD,
1 SAMUEL 9:9**

ALL ARE
WELCOME
♿

♿















EXIT

IN REMEMBRANCE











In Memory of
Lawrence A. &
Corvina Fleming

In Memory of
Stephen A. &
Aggie Forbes



In Memory of
Mrs. Berlice Moor Carter
1880 - 1948











REV. BEN BROWN FELLOWSHIP HALL



Rev. BEN BROWN FELLOWSHIP HALL





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 2/24/2017 Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: 4/10/2017 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 4/10/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW

CLG: Memphis, Tennessee
PROPERTY: Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
ADDRESS: 478 Scott Street, Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee

CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL EVALUATION

NAME OF OFFICIAL:

TITLE:

- ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY OR NON-ELIGIBILITY:

The Memphis Landmarks Commission meet on December 15, 2016, and held a public meeting for the nomination of the Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church which is significant for its African American Ethnic Identity as a cornerstone institution in the Binghampton neighborhood of Memphis and for its association with the early 1960's Labor and Civil Rights Movements. The Landmarks Commission overwhelmingly voted to recommend this nomination for the Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church to the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission commented on the fact that the Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church involvement in both the labor and civil rights movement is a momentous part of Memphis' history that has yet to be explored. I concur with the Landmarks Commission.

SIGNATURE:


TITLE: Jim Strickland, Mayor, City of Memphis, TN

DATE: 1/23/17

THC STAFF EVALUATION

- ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY OR NON-ELIGIBILITY:

The Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 478 Scott Street, Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significant association with African American Ethnic Identity, as a cornerstone institution in the Binghampton neighborhood of Memphis and for its significant association with Social History, especially as a meeting center for the African American labor movement and Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The period of significance is defined from 1955, the time when the congregation moved into this church and became active in the civil rights movement, to 1968, when congregation members participated in the Memphis Sanitation Strike.

SIGNATURE:


TITLE: Caroline Eller, National Register Coordinator-Historic Preservation Specialist **DATE:** November 28, 2016

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN BEFORE: January 23, 2017

RETURN FORM TO:

**CAROLINE ELLER
TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
2941 LEBANON PIKE
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37214**

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW

CLG: Memphis, Tennessee
PROPERTY: Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
ADDRESS: 478 Scott Street, Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION EVALUATION

NAME OF COMMISSION:
DATE OF MEETING:
HOW WAS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED OF THE MEETING?
 ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY OR NON-ELIGIBILITY:

The Memphis Landmarks Commission meet on December 15, 2016, and held a public meeting for the nomination of the Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church which is significant for its African American Ethnic Identity as a cornerstone institution in the Binghampton neighborhood of Memphis and for its association with the early 1960's Labor and Civil Rights Movements. The Landmarks Commission overwhelmingly voted to recommend this nomination for the Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church to the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission commented on the fact that the Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church involvement in both the labor and civil rights movement is a momentous part of Memphis' history that has yet to be explored.

SIGNATURE:
TITLE: Nancy Jane Baker, Certified Local Government **DATE:**

THC STAFF EVALUATION

ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY OR NON-ELIGIBILITY:

The Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 478 Scott Street, Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significant association with African American Ethnic Identity, as a cornerstone institution in the Binghampton neighborhood of Memphis and for its significant association with Social History, especially as a meeting center for the African American labor movement and Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The period of significance is defined from 1955, the time when the congregation moved into this church and became active in the civil rights movement, to 1968, when congregation members participated in the Memphis Sanitation Strike.

SIGNATURE: 
TITLE: Caroline Eller, National Register Coordinator-Historic Preservation Specialist **DATE:** November 28, 2016

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN BEFORE: January 23, 2017

RETURN FORM TO:

**CAROLINE ELLER
TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
2941 LEBANON PIKE
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37214**



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
2941 LEBANON PIKE
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37214
OFFICE: (615) 532-1550
E-mail: Claudette.Stager@tn.gov
(615) 770-1089

February 22, 2017

J. Paul Loether
Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye Street NW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the documentation to nominate the *Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church* to the National Register of Historic Places. The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the listing of the *Rock of Ages Christian Methodist Episcopal Church* to the National Register of Historic Places. Certified Local Government (CLG) notifications were sent out to the CLG Coordinator and the Mayor. Both the CLG Coordinator and the Mayor responded favorably to listing.

If you have any questions or if more information is needed, contact Caroline Eller at (615) 770-1086 or Caroline.Eller@tn.gov.

Sincerely,

Claudette Stager
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

CS:ce

Enclosures(3)