

District #1-Congressman Mendel J. Davis

Theme #8 The Contemplative Society

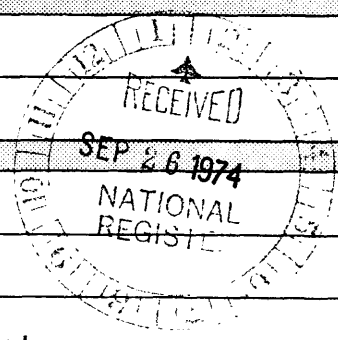
Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: South Carolina	
COUNTY: Charleston	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	NOV 20 1974



**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Bethel Methodist Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
57 Pitt Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Charleston

STATE: South Carolina	CODE: 045	COUNTY: Charleston	CODE: 019
--------------------------	--------------	-----------------------	--------------

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Bethel Methodist Church

STREET AND NUMBER:  
57 Pitt Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Charleston

STATE:  
South Carolina

CODE:  
045

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Charleston County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Courthouse Square

CITY OR TOWN:  
Charleston

STATE:  
South Carolina

CODE:  
045

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE OF SURVEY: 1973  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
South Carolina Department of Archives and History

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1430 Senate Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Columbia

STATE:  
South Carolina

CODE:  
045

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:  
COUNTY:  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE  
FOR NPS USE ONLY

NOV 20 1974

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

EXTERIOR

Bethel Methodist Church, built 1853-1854, is an example of Greek Doric temple architecture used in antebellum churches. Of stuccoed brick painted white, the building has a massive hexastyle Doric portico with a simple Doric pediment and entablature. Designed by a Mr. Curtis, Bethel Church has pilastered walls, and there is one tier of large windows on each side of the structure; the building has a gabled roof and a main entrance which is pedimented with consoles. The roof is more steeply-pitched than is usual in a Doric temple to allow rainwater to drain more quickly, thus helping to eliminate the possibility of leaks.

INTERIOR

The auditorium-plan interior has a cove ceiling. There have been interior alterations.

SURROUNDINGS

Bethel Church is located on Pitt and Calhoun streets in Charleston and is bordered on the south by the Charleston Historic District. Fronting on Pitt Street, the church has a cemetery with crape myrtles on the north (Calhoun Street) side.

Originally purchased in 1795, the church property was located in the extreme northwest part of the corporate limits of the city of Charleston. A prior Bethel Methodist Church, erected on this site in 1797, is the oldest Methodist church building in Charleston. Attended by both black and white members until the early 1840s when the two groups split, the original church building was later moved down the street to its present site at 222 Calhoun Street where it currently is used by a black congregation.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |                                        |                                       |                                                  |                                       |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1853-1854**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |                                                  |                                                 |                                              |                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |                                              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |                                                 |                                              | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

**ARCHITECTURE**

Bethel Methodist Church, located on the site of Charleston's first Methodist church building, is an exceptional example of antebellum Greek revival ecclesiastical architecture. Except for a rather steeply-pitched roof, the church is one of the better examples of Greek Doric temple architecture in the state. The massive, giant-order hexastyle portico withstood the 1886 earthquake intact and stands today unaltered. The Methodist Advocate in 1852 records the laying of the cornerstone and states that the "Church will be 61 X 88 feet, with portico, to cost \$18,000. Mr. Curtis, architect, and Rebb & Busby, contractors." Ravenel's Architects of Charleston lists several architects named Curtis who worked in antebellum Charleston and on nearby Edisto Island.

In the architectural survey of Charleston, a jury composed of Dr. William Murtagh, Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, Professor Bernard Lemann, Tulane School of Architecture, Mr. Carl Feiss and Mr. Russell Wright, consultants to the city, noted this structure as exceptional. This notation indicates that the building is of the highest architectural design quality, well-proportioned, and architecturally sophisticated. Windows, classical orders or other period designs, chimneys, verandahs, massing, materials, textures, refined detail, and craftsmanship are all elegant and innovative.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Betts, Albert Deems. HISTORY OF SOUTH CAROLINA METHODISM, Columbia, S.C.: The Advocate Press, 1952. p. 265 & 266.  
 Chreitzberg, A.M. EARLY METHODISM IN THE CAROLINAS, Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1897. p. 160.  
 McKee, Harley J. (compiler) HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY: RECORDS OF BUILDINGS IN CHARLESTON AND THE SOUTH CAROLINA LOW COUNTRY, p. 2.  
 NEWS AND COURIER (Charleston, S.C.) "Refurbishing to Begin on Old Bethel Church" August 12, 1974.  
 (see continuation sheet)

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

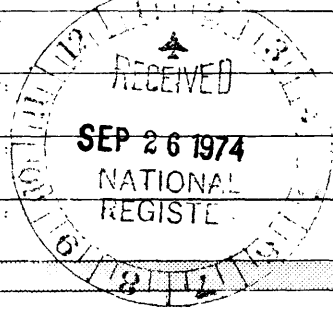
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	32	47	02
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	79	56	29
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

UTM  
17/599140  
3627620  
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1.5 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Nonie Dixon, Tray Stephenson, Bernard Kearse Historic Preservation Division

ORGANIZATION: South Carolina Department of Archives & History DATE: 8/30/74

STREET AND NUMBER: 1430 Senate Street Box 11669 Capitol Station 29211

CITY OR TOWN: Columbia STATE: South Carolina CODE: 045

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Charles E. Lee  
 Title State Historic Preservation Officer  
 Date September 5, 1974

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

AP Wortman  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 11/20/74

ATTEST: [Signature]  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 11-20-74

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

*(Continuation Sheet)*

STATE	
South Carolina	
COUNTY	
Charleston	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	NOV 20 1974

*(Number all entries)*

Bethel Methodist Church

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Ravenel, Beatrice St. Julien, THE ARCHITECTS OF CHARLESTON, Charleston: Carolina Art Association, 1964. p. 166 & 170.
- Simons, Albert and W.H.J. Thomas. AN ARCHITECTURAL GUIDE TO CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 1700-1900 (unpublished manuscript) Charleston: Historic Charleston Foundation, 1972.
- Watson, E.O. BUILDERS, SKETCHES, METHODIST PREACHERS IN SOUTH CAROLINA WITH HISTORICAL DATA. Columbia, S.C.: Southern Christian Advocate, 1932.p. 265.

