



ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS & HERITAGE NOMINATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: MOUNT ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

and/or Common Name: _____

Preferred name for Certificate: Historic Name or Common Name

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 2616 Lee Road 243

City: Smiths Station

State: Alabama

County: Lee

Zip: 36877-0205

Is the property located within the city limits? Yes No

Latitude: N32.53458°

Longitude: W85.09077°

Township: 18N Range: 29E Section: 24

USGS Quad Map: (See Attachment 7)

3. CLASSIFICATION

Category: Building(s) District Structure Site Object

Ownership: Public Private Both

Status: Occupied Unoccupied Work in progress

Accessible: No Yes: restricted Yes: unrestricted

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: MOUNT ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Address: 2616 Lee Road 243

City: Smiths Station

State: AL

Zip: 36877-0205

Telephone: (334) 298-4337

Email: mzionumc@gmail.com

5. FLOOR PLAN & SITE PLAN

Attach sketched floor plan. If the property includes more than one building, submit a site plan showing the locations, dates of construction, and uses of the buildings.

(See Attachment 1)

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION See Instructions for more information.

Construction date:	1908	Source:	Mt. Zion Archival Records
Alteration date:	1953	Source:	Mt. Zion Archival Records
Architect/Builder:		Contractor:	
Physical condition: (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Ruinous)	Excellent	Remaining historic fabric: (High, Medium, Low)	High
No. of stories:	Sanctuary (One) Education Building (Two)		
Historic use of property:	Church		
Current use of property:	Church		
Architectural style category:	Late 19th & Early 20th Century	Architectural style sub-category:	Late Gothic Revival
Basic typology:	Other/Rectangular	Basic shape:	Square
Basic floor plan:	Nave & Chancel	Historic Construction material(s):	Wood
Current exterior wall material(s):	White Frame w/Vinyl Siding	Roof finish material(s):	Composition Shingle
Main roof configuration:	Steep Gable	Foundation material:	Brick
Porch type:	Stoop		
Window type and materials:	Fixed/Wood/Arched		
Describe alterations:	(See Attachment 4)		
Number and type of all outbuildings on the property: Church Parsonage (if significant, fill out separate survey form)			
<p>Exterior Architectural Description:</p> <p>Mount Zion United Methodist Church's sanctuary is a Gothic style square church building set with pointed arch window construction on three sides with steep roof gables. The present sanctuary was built in 1908 with a Late Gothic Revival architectural style merged with High Victorian Gothic period elements to a lesser degree. Today, it remains essentially unchanged as originally constructed excepting the tall bell steeple was replaced with a smaller one resultant of the Spring 1953 tornado that passed through Smiths Station. (See Attachment 2)</p>			
<p>Description of Setting:</p> <p>Mount Zion UMC is located in an attractive residential neighborhood in the small town setting of Smiths Station, Lee County, Alabama 36877. The church's property address is 2616 Lee County Road 243 at triangle convergence with the south terminus of Lee County Road 317 also known as Mt. Zion Church Road.</p>			

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria (check all that apply and explain below). See Instructions for more information.

Criterion A: Associated with historical events and activities relating to the property that are important to the history of the community, state, or nation.

Criterion B: Person or group with whom the property is associated is important to the history of the community, state, or nation.

Criterion C: Type, period, or method of construction represents architectural features that are significant in the development of the community, state, or nation.

Criterion D: Property has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in Alabama's history or prehistory (archaeological component).

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (check all that apply and explain below)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history |
| <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> funerary art | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

For each area of significance checked above, explain why this property is important. Use additional sheets as necessary.

Mount Zion United Methodist Church is significant not only for its religious associations but also for its influence on the historic cultural events in east central Alabama and far beyond. From its early beginning in 1831, Mount Zion's congregations have greatly impacted our local Smiths Station Community, state, and nation.

From the beginning, our church's outlook on evangelizing the lost to the saving grace on our Lord Jesus Christ has ever been our highest priority and remains so today. Mount Zion has given ten (10) licensed pastors to go forth "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Writing from personal eye-witness knowledge of Mount Zion's earliest achievements, Reverend Francis Lafayette Cherry, noted Methodist preacher and author, composed, in 1886, a most memorable tribute to the dedication and strength of the church, then named Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church, South, when he wrote:

(See Attachment 3)

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Use attached sheets as necessary

1. *The Windows of Mt. Zion, 1831-1981: One Hundred-Fifty Years of Serving Christ and Community*; Mount Zion United Methodist Church, P. O. Box 205, Smiths Station, AL., 1981.
2. West, Anson, D.D., *A History of Methodism in Alabama. Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, TN, 1893.
3. *Minutes of Annual Conferences, Methodist Episcopal Church, 1829-1839, Volume II*, Publishers: T, Mason and G. Lane, New York, NY., 1840. (See Attachment 6)

9. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of nominated property: Ten (10) Acres (Est.)

Attach a map showing the location of the property. (See Attachment 7)

10. Person Applying for Historic Register Designation

Name: JAMES C. GIBSON, JR., Church Historian
Address: 508 Lee Road 279
City: Salem State: AL Zip: 36874-4723
Telephone: (334) 297-8536
Email: N/A

11. PHOTOGRAPHS: (See Attachment 8)

Images are essential to the review process. Submit current, good quality digital images on a CD/DVD. Interior and exterior photos are required. Good quality 4" x 6" photos will be accepted, but do NOT staple or tape photographs. All images will become the property of the AHC and will not be returned.

12. REMINDER:

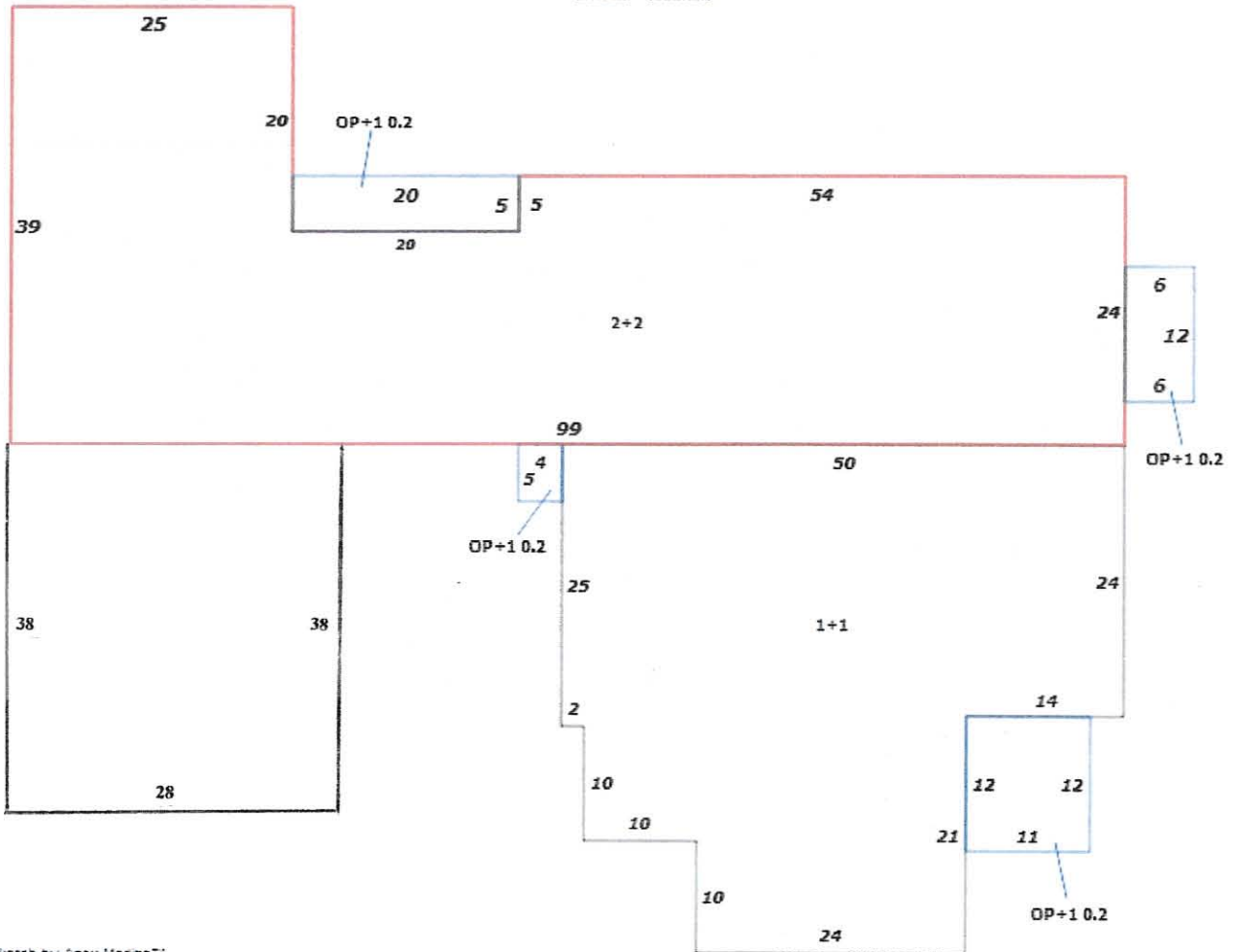
Along with this completed application, include attachments for Items 5, 9 and 11 and send them to:

Alabama Historical Commission
Attn: Jennifer Bailey
468 S. Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334.230.2643
Jennifer.Bailey@preserveala.org

5. FLOOR PLAN & SITE PLAN (Attachment 1)

Lee County Alabama - 2014 - Building Sketch - Parcel:1506240000031000 -
Pin:029611

[Print](#) [Close](#)



Sketch by Apex Media™

Sketch 02961101.jpg



6. EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

(Continuation)

(Attachment 2)

Striking sanctuary features include the attractively placed Gothic inspired ornate stained glass arch-shaped windows with high white ceilings and walls. These impressive, beautifully attractive eye-appealing tracery Gothic windows, on the north, west, and south sides of the building were influenced by the Geometrical phase of the medieval Gothic stone window designs. Hence, the construction of Mount Zion's 1908, and still present, sanctuary was characterized also by much creativity as to interior church decorative furnishings such as: the communion rail, pulpit placement, nave entrances, and comfortable congregational pews set in three sections including a separate rear seating area adjacent to the west wall. Today, all of these interior design features remain in use by Mount Zion's congregation.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(Continuation)

(Attachment 3)

“For fifty years, Mt. Zion has been the ‘Mecca’ of Methodism in this portion of Lee County. Her people began to emigrate to the west, but rather increased than declined in her position and strength and today, she is represented in every conference south of her and nearly every state both south and west.

Mt. Zion bounded by her beautiful primeval grove on the north and east and the graves of three generations of her worshipers on the south and west, still stands in beauty, prosperity, and glory:

From whose sacred altar radiates a power for usefulness and a treasury of holy memories which will roll down the ‘Aisles of Time’ until the “Books are Opened.”

Over time, Mount Zion United Methodist Church has remained steadfast in the mission of the United Methodist Church. Though the good and lean years, a positive approach to all conditions and situations has been uppermost in the leadership and membership of the church.

Indicative of the church’s resolve was its quick response to recovery from the April 18, 1953 tornado that struck late on Saturday afternoon. The north wall of the church sanctuary, the beautiful arched imported stained glass windows, and tall steeple were all blown away. The restoration endeavors were accomplished rather quickly over the next few months. During the restoration of the church sanctuary, the congregation met in the Smiths Station High School Auditorium.

In 1954, Mount Zion Methodist Church submitted *“A Report of Progress”* delineating the church’s recovery activities and other projects that “made a better church, a better community, and a better world” to the Town and Country Development Program, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. Mount Zion Methodist Church received the Second Place Award for the Small Church category for that year.

Through the intervening years, Mount Zion United Methodist Church members have remained faithful to the mission of the church and retained a strong commitment to helping make a better world.

HISTORICAL STATEMENT (Attachment 4)

The history of Mount Zion United Methodist Church (UMC) began late in 1831, in the east central Alabama wilderness, when four devout Methodists: Judge Peter Guerry, Mark McCutchen, Joseph Hardis, Goodman Franklin, and their families, realized the pressing need for a local house of worship. Feeling their unfulfilled needs, conscious of their duties and responsibilities, coupled with a bright vision for the future, they began worship services in a small log schoolhouse in what was then known as the Dover Community located in the Creek Indian Nation. From this austere beginning on the last Alabama frontier, Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church has been a most prominent contributor and participant to the local Smiths Station Community, the state, and the nation over the intervening one hundred eighty-four years. Today, Mount Zion's congregation remains ever active with a renewed vision for the church's future in both hearts and minds.

The sanctuaries of Mount Zion UMC were all built out of the surrounding dense pine and oak forests. From the first crude worship structure carved out of the east central Alabama wilderness, wooden worship facilities have personified Mount Zion's various sanctuaries over the years.

The first worship services were conducted by those brave pioneer souls amid the resultant tumultuous troubles associated with the Creek Indian land cession to the United States government known to history as the Treaty of Cusseta or the Indian Removal Act of March 24, 1832.

Continuous worship services ensued and in 1838 the Society was formally organized. A larger wooden house of worship, in keeping with the times, was erected in Township Eighteen of the old Dover Community, Range twenty-nine (29), and officially named Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church.

A larger wooden sanctuary was built in 1844 on the same plot of elevated ground, to the northwest of the Dover Community, which served the growing congregation until 1889. At this time, Mount Zion's Church Cemetery was also established on this site adjacent to the house of worship.

Mount Zion's congregation soon outgrew the 1844 house of worship. On November 10, 1888, the Alabama Conference approved the church's petition for removal a site nearer the Smiths Station business district, 1.7 miles to the southeast. Removal and relocation of a new, enlarged church sanctuary was accomplished the following year, 1889.

Three houses of worship have since been constructed at this present church site.

FIRST – This sanctuary was constructed in 1889 following conference approval of the relocation request. This particular house of worship was a very beautiful white wooden structure which served Mount Zion's congregation extremely well for twelve (12) years when it was removed and converted into a school building.

SECOND – In 1891, an even more elegant sanctuary was erected. This house of worship was used for six (6) years until destroyed by fire on Christmas Eve night, December 24, 1907. The church burned completely to the ground. (Photograph attached)

THIRD – The present sanctuary was constructed in 1908 during the ministry of Reverend J. W. Breedlove. Today, Mount Zion's congregation still worship in this highly appealing white frame structure with an interior furnishings that include a large number of beautiful stained arched-windows on three sides. The imposing tall bell tower originally constructed in 1908 was destroyed by the April 18, 1953 tornado that hit the Smiths Station Community late that Saturday afternoon. A smaller bell tower replacement was installed during immediate restoration.

The 1908 house of worship was a beautiful white frame building with the tall, elegant steeple. Three ornate arched-window clusters were installed with imported English stained glass. Interior furnishings included wooden pews, pulpit, and altar rail still in use by today's congregation. Much later in 1966, a choir rail was donated by Mr. & Mrs. D.A. Culpepper and installed behind the pulpit. The church has been modified three times since originally constructed in 1908.

The first modification occurred in 1951 when a large two-story white frame Education Building was added. This educational wing consisted of nine (9) classrooms, pastor's office, business office, library, choir room, spacious Fellowship Hall, kitchen, restrooms, and storage sections. This addition in no way impacted any part of the original 1908 church sanctuary.

The second modification occurred resultant of the tornado that hit on April 18, 1953. These destructive winds ripped through Smiths Station, Alabama. Church sanctuary damages included loss of the tall steeple. It was replaced with the present smaller bell tower. The beautiful arched stained glass windows were broken into many fragments along with collapse of then roof and north wall. Enough pieces of the stained glass were recovered to patch together one window cluster on the west wall. The other two window patterns were replaced with American stained glass. All windows remain in place today in excellent condition. The differences between the quality of the replacements and the original imported windows as apparent but all nonetheless most appealing for the eye to behold. During sanctuary repairs, the congregation meet in the nearby Smiths Station High School auditorium.

The third modification to the church was accomplished in 1990 with addition of a small 38' x 28' two-story frame northwest wing to the Educational Building. The Church Nursery occupies the first floor while our Youth Ministry classroom is upstairs.

CHURCH FACILITY PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES: Mount Zion UMC preservation endeavors have the highest priority concern among all church members, lay leadership, Board of Trustees, and pastor. Preventive maintenance and timely correction of any hazard to church properties is ever practiced by all to maintain our church facilities in the best condition possible.

OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE:

The church's first organ was purchases in 1956 and replaced with a larger and newer model in 1970.

In 1960, Mount Zion's permanent parsonage was constructed on the church parcel slightly northwest of the sanctuary.

A convenient handicap ramp provides easy access to sanctuary worship services for all with this need.

**CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY
MOUNT ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
SMITHS STATION, ALABAMA
1831-2015
(Attachment 5)**

1831 – Founding date; first worship service conducted in a small log schoolhouse located in the Creek Indian Nation of east central Alabama territory.

1832 – Indian Removal Act, March 24, 1832 (Treaty of Cusseta); Last Indian land cession in Alabama.

1836 – Creek Indian Removal.

1838 – Formal Organization of Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church in the old Dover Township. A larger wooden house of worship was constructed along with establishment of adjacent Mount Zion Cemetery.

1844 – A new and much larger church sanctuary was constructed with upstairs and downstairs pew seating. Black church members sat in the upstairs church gallery.

1866 – The local community was formally renamed Smiths Station replacing the previous Dover township designation.

1889 – Mount Zion's sanctuary relocated to present location; 1,7 miles south of the first church located next to Mount Zion Cemetery. This church sanctuary was used by the congregation for twelve (12) years.

1901 – A much larger church sanctuary was constructed in 1901 due to growth of the congregation. Dedicate in 1902, this beautiful sanctuary was used by the congregation for six (6) years until it burned completely to the ground on Christmas Eve night, December 24, 1907. (Picture Attached)

1909 – Present and Third sanctuary constructed on this site. (Picture Attached)

1951 – Church Education Building completed. This addition consists of classrooms, Fellowship Hall, Pastor's Office, Church Office, Library, and Kitchen. (Picture Attached)

1953 – Mount Zion's Church Sanctuary severely damaged by the April 18, 1953 tornado; restored the following year with a much smaller bell tower. (Picture Attached)

1990 – Church Nursery and Youth Ministry classroom wing, 38'x 28,' built, Summer 1990, onto the northwest corner of the Church Education Building. This new addition was constructed by Kenneth E. Vann Construction Co., Inc., P. O. Box 477, Smiths Station, AL 36877. Official dedication service was conducted in the Fall of 1990. (Pictures Attached)

2015 – Mount Zion United Methodist Church remains active today in all her numerous ministries with continued high hopes for a glorious future. (Picture Attached)

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(Continuation)
(Attachment 6)

4. Cherry, Francis Lafayette, *The History of Opelika and Her Agricultural Territory*, Volume 15, Numbers 2, 3, and 4, 1953 Reprint: Owen Marie Bankhead, Editor, The Alabama Historical Quarterly, Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), Montgomery, AL.
5. Cherry, Francis Lafayette, *Personal Notes: Unpublished Writings*, Box 4, Manuscript Collections, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL
6. Howell, Edgar A., "History of Mt. Zion Church, Smiths Station Circuit, Troy District" Alabama Christian Advocate, June 23, 1938, Birmingham, AL.
7. Matthews, Janice and Mike, "A History of Mt. Zion: The Early Years," The Smiths Station News: Then and Now Column, Part I, October 31, 2002.
8. Nunn, Alexander, Editor, *Lee County and Her Forebears*, Herff Jones, Publishers, Montgomery, AL, 1981.

9. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA (MAPS)
(Continuation)
(Attachment 7)

1. CITY MAP OF SMITHS STATION, ALABAMA, showing locations for Mount Zion United Methodist Church (UMC) and Mount Zion Cemetery.
2. USGS QUADRANGLE MAP, Mount Zion United Methodist Church (UMC), Lee County, Alabama: N32.53458° W85.09077°.
3. USGS QUADRANGLE MAP, Smiths Station, Lee County, Alabama: N32.54098° W85.09639°.
4. GOOGLE MAP, Mount Zion United Methodist Church.
5. GOOGLE MAP, Mount Zion United Methodist Church, lower right corner with Mount Zion Cemetery top left corner.
6. PROPERTY RECORD CARD, Lee County, Alabama, Mount Zion United Methodist Church, Parcel 31 with color diagramed map.
7. PARCEL DETAILS SHEET w/MAP, PUBLIC GIS – 2014 – LEE COUNTY, ALABAMA, Mount Zion United Methodist Church: Parcel Number 31.
8. TAX MAP (AERIAL IMAGERY VIEW), LEE COUNTY APPRAISAL DEPARTMENT, Lee County Courthouse, Opelika, AL, for Mount Zion United Methodist Church, Parcel Numbers 31 and 31.001 plus other Mount Zion UMC Parcels: 30, 32, and 1.001 with color diagramed map.

11. PHOTOGRAPHS (Attachment 8)

1. MOUNT ZION UMC – 2015.
2. MOUNT ZION UMC – 1908,
3. MOUNT ZION UMC – 1901.
4. EXTERIOR UMC PHOTOGRAPHS (12).
5. INTERIOR UMC PHOTOGRAPHS (8).
6. ARIEL VIEW OF MOUNT ZION UMC AND PARSONAGE.