

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Wesley Methodist Church
other names/site number Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church; Wesley United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number 1727 Gervais Street N/A not for publication
city or town Columbia N/A vicinity
state South Carolina code SC county Richland code 079 zip code 29201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_ nationally \_ statewide X locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, S.C. Department of Archives and History

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_ meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that the 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:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Wesley Methodist Church	Richland County	South Carolina
Name of Property	County and State	

### 5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	1 buildings
public-local	district	0	0 sites
public-State	structure	0	0 structures
public-Federal	site	0	0 objects
	object	1	1 Total

#### Name of related multiple property listing:

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

Resources Associated with Segregation in  
Columbia, South Carolina, 1880-1960

#### Number of contributing resources

previously listed in the National Register

0

### 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 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVAL/Late Gothic Revival

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other

#### Narrative Description

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

Wesley Methodist Church

Name of Property

Richland County

South Carolina

County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1910-1960

### Significant Dates

1911

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Hamby, Arthur W.

## Narrative Statement of Significance

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

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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

### Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

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

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State Agency
  - Federal Agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: S.C. Dept. of Archives & History



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

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

Wesley Methodist Church  
Property Name  
Richland County, South Carolina  
County and State

Section 7 Page 5

---

Wesley Methodist Church is a one-story Late Gothic Revival church designed by Columbia architect Arthur W. Hamby and constructed in 1910-11. The church is located in downtown Columbia on the corner of Barnwell and Gervais Streets. Set on a partially subterranean basement that is capped with a stone or cast stone water table, Wesley Methodist Church features a solid brick wall foundation and exterior walls. The roof is front-gabled and asphalt shingle-clad. The sanctuary is an example of an alternative and a duplicative space under the National Register Multiple Property Submission "Resources Associated with Segregation in Columbia, South Carolina, 1880-1960."

The primary elevation faces Gervais Street. It has asymmetrical twin towers, with the taller tower being on the east side of the building, at the corner nearest the street intersection. The primary elevation of the building is crenellated with stone and brick battlements along the top of the facade and at the tops of the towers. The shorter tower, on the west side of the building, is accessed by three-sided stone steps of three risers and has pointed-arch, red, wooden, three-panel double doors with a cream-colored sandstone drip mold. Towards the top of the tower are paired, pointed-arch, vented louvers, with a protruding sandstone beltcourse setting apart the upper crenellated section. On the corners of this tower are double-tiered wall buttresses with stone caps. The façade between the two towers has a triple, pointed arch window with tracery, stained glass panels, and a cream-colored limestone drip mold. Two single, pointed-arch stained glass windows with cream-colored sandstone drip molds flank the large central window. Above the central triple window is a circular vented louver with geometric wood tracery overlay, brick drip mold and keystone. The taller tower entrance is accessed by three-sided stone steps of five risers and has pointed-arch, red, wooden, three-panel double-leaf doors with a cream-colored sandstone arched drip mold. To the lower right of this main entry is a cornerstone labeled "Wesley M.E. Church Rebuilt 1911." Above the entry is a circular stained glass window with arched brick surround, surmounted by elongated triple, pointed-arch vented louvers with molded brick surrounds. Additional brick corbelling denotes the upper part of the triple-arched vents and crenellated cap. Triple-tiered wall buttresses with stone caps accentuate the tower's corners on both the Gervais and Barnwell Street elevations. Treatment of the Barnwell Street elevation of the tower is similar to that on Gervais Street with one exception. The first level features a pair of small, pointed arch [lancet] stained-glass windows with cream-colored sandstone drip mold.

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

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

Wesley Methodist Church  
Property Name  
Richland County, South Carolina  
County and State

Section 7 Page 6

---

The secondary elevations consist of the west side of the building, the northern façade at the back of the building, and the east side of the building. The west side of the building has eight pointed-arch stained-glass windows. Near the northern corner of this elevation a metal staircase rises to a door accessing the sacristy and, in addition, serves as a fire escape. From north to south along the west side of the building, there are two pointed-arch stained glass windows with cream-colored sandstone drip molds. A cross-gabled bay projects from the western wall of the building much in the way that a transept wing would project from a Gothic or Gothic Revival church or cathedral. This transept features a large pointed-arch stained-glass window identical to that on the building's facade and a gabled parapet. Above this window is a cream-colored sandstone drip mold. Continuing toward the south, there are four pointed-arch stained glass windows with cream-colored sandstone drip molds. A double-tiered brick buttress is located between the second and third windows along this segment of the western elevation. The final piece of the western elevation is the side of the smaller front tower. It has one pointed-arch [lancet] stained glass window with cream-colored sandstone drip mold and a pair of pointed-arch vented louvers at the second level.

The rear elevation of the building faces to the north, and is plain brick with a water table line indicating the separation between the basement level and the main level. Below the water table line are three boarded over windows that are half visible. In the center of the top part of the wall is a circular louvered vent identical to that on the Gervais Street facade. Near the western corner of the rear elevation is a brick chimney flue.

The eastern side [Barnwell Street elevation] of the building has eight, pointed-arch stained-glass windows with cream-colored sandstone drip molds. Moving from the north to the south, the first section has one pointed-arch, stained-glass window above the water table line and a one-over-one, double-hung window at basement level. The second section has two pointed-arch, stained glass windows, separated from the first section by a double-tiered corner brick buttress. Below the water table line are two standard one-over-one windows in alignment with the windows on the main level. The third section is a projecting cross-gabled transept that features a triple, pointed arch window with tracery and stained glass identical to the main window of the Gervais Street facade and that in the western transept. Below the water table line are three one-over-one standard windows corresponding

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

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

Wesley Methodist Church  
Property Name  
Richland County, South Carolina  
County and State

Section 7 Page 7

---

in alignment with the tripartite window of the main level. The fourth section has four pointed-arch, stained glass windows, with a double-tiered wall buttress between the second and third windows. Below the water table line are three standard one-over-one windows and a white solid door. There is a metal overhang over the area in front of this window and door.

No major alterations have been made to the exterior of the building since its construction in 1910-1911.

The interior spaces maintain their architectural integrity as well. There have been relatively minor changes to the interior. Small square vestibules are located on the principal levels of the two entry towers. Historic lighting fixtures suspend from the ceilings of both vestibules. The sanctuary space is encircled by a stained-wood wainscoting, plaster walls and ceiling. Typical doors have simple mitered surrounds with five horizontal raised panels. From the ceiling are suspended three large brass and crystal chandeliers that appear to be original to the building. A smaller fixture hangs over the pulpit. Three ranks of wooden pews with two aisles constitute a majority of the slanted floor space and lead to an arced and balustraded altar rail. The chancel area is dominated by a triple semielliptical arcaded arrangement, featuring pilasters, cased openings and key blocks. The center arch frames the raised pulpit area and recessed alcove that has a doorway access to the sacristy, while the arch at left is blind but contains some organ pipes. The arch to the right of the pulpit contains the pipe organ and knee-walled choir loft that truncates to a degree the altar rail.

In 1990, the interior was renovated and refurbished. This included rebuilding the stain glass windows and installing new pews, pulpit furniture, carpet, an organ and a piano. From the exterior, a few stained-glass windows have been boarded over; however, this does not detract from the overall integrity of the building.

Historically, there was a church parsonage immediately to the west of the church building; however, it was replaced in 1996 with a church office building and fellowship hall. These changes are typical for churches as they build to meet their growing needs. The church office building, a long rectangular brick and concrete block structure, is located on an adjacent parcel and is not included within the nominated acreage.

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

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

Wesley Methodist Church  
Property Name  
Richland County, South Carolina  
County and State

Section 8 Page 8

---

Wesley Methodist Church, built in 1910-11, illustrates the impact of segregation in the lives of African Americans during the Jim Crow era in Columbia. Because it is a historically African-American church, Wesley Methodist Church helps explain religious segregation, particularly within the Methodist denomination. Wesley Methodist Church is eligible under National Register Criteria Consideration A because it meets National Register Criterion A for its role in religious segregation in Columbia from 1880 to 1960 and meets Criterion C as a good example of Gothic Revival church architecture in Columbia in the early twentieth century, and as an excellent example of the work of Columbia architect Arthur W. Hamby.

Wesley Methodist Church was founded in 1869 as the Columbia Mission by the Reverend J.C. Emerson, Presiding Elder of the Florida Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It originally met in an upstairs hall on Main Street between Taylor and Blanding Streets. The first chapel was built between 1870 and 1873 and was later sold when the Columbia Mission purchased property at the corner of Gervais and Barnwell Streets. In 1910, the Columbia Mission was renamed Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>1</sup>

The Methodist family of denominations has split several times over racial issues. The main branch, the Methodist Episcopal Church, split in 1844 over the issue of slavery, forming the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The Methodist Episcopal Church continued as an integrated church until 1939; whereas, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South enforced segregation within its member churches until after the Civil War. In 1866, the Methodist Episcopal Church South placed all of its African-American members into a sub-denomination, known as the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (now the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church). In 1939, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South—along with another Methodist denomination, the Methodist Protestant Church (which had split from the original Methodist Episcopal Church in 1830 over non-racial issues)—reunited, forming the Methodist Church. A key component of the reunification agreement was the creation of the Central Jurisdiction. While the other jurisdictions were organized along geographic lines, the Central Jurisdiction was designed to be just for the Methodist Church's African-American members; however, some African-American congregations in New England, New York, and California remained within their geographic jurisdictions. As a result, the state of South Carolina had a South Carolina Annual Conference of the Central Jurisdiction and a

---

<sup>1</sup> "Wesley United Methodist Church: 'Our Life,'" Annual Bulletin Insert (Columbia: Wesley United Methodist Church).

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

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

Wesley Methodist Church  
Property Name  
Richland County, South Carolina  
County and State

Section 8 Page 9

---

South Carolina Annual Conference of the Southeastern Jurisdiction. In 1969, when the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren denomination united into the United Methodist Church, a key part of the agreement was the end of the Central Jurisdiction. The two South Carolina Annual Conferences—referred to as South Carolina Annual Conference ('85) [the Southeastern Jurisdiction white conference] and South Carolina Annual Conference ('66) [Central Jurisdiction African-American conference]—finally merged in 1972 as the result of this agreement.<sup>2</sup>

On a day-to-day basis in the segregated Methodist Church from 1939 to 1969, African American Methodists and white Methodists had no formal interaction. For example, the largest white Methodist Church in Columbia, Washington Street Methodist Church, had no interaction with the black churches in Columbia, including Wesley Methodist Church. The retired pastor of Wesley Methodist Church, the Rev. James Gadsden, Sr., recalls that as a pastor in Camden he and the white minister had informal communication, but never spoke in public. "If I went to the Post Office, he wouldn't see me," Rev. Gadsden said. According to Rev. Gadsden, there were no formal rules against African Americans in white churches and vice versa, but by custom African Americans did not go into white churches. For special occasions, white Methodists would worship in an African-American church.<sup>3</sup> The *South Carolina Advocate*, the Methodist newspaper, records two instances in 1968-69 where a small number of African-Americans attempted to enter a white Methodist church and were turned away. In one case, the January 9, 1969, *Advocate* records that the Administrative Board of the Bethel United Methodist Church, a white congregation in Charleston, had "affirmed that congregation's intention to live in accord with the Discipline of the United Methodist Church ... following an encounter at the door of Bethel last Sunday morning in which six Negroes were denied admittance to the service of worship."<sup>4</sup> In the other case, a letter to the editor revealed a similar incident in Orangeburg: "Several years ago at St. Paul's Methodist Church in Orangeburg, several Negroes who tried to attend worship services were met at the door of the church and refused entrance."<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> W. Astor Kirk, *Desegregation of the Methodist Church Polity: Reform Movements That Ended Racial Segregation* (Pittsburgh: RoseDog Books, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Reverend James Gadsden, Interview with Author, October 2005.

<sup>4</sup> "News Briefs," *The South Carolina Advocate* (Columbia, S.C.), January 9, 1969, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. James M. Copeland, "Letter to the Editor," *The South Carolina Advocate* (Columbia, S.C.), February 22, 1968, p. 3.

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

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

Wesley Methodist Church  
Property Name  
Richland County, South Carolina  
County and State

Section 8 Page 10

---

To use the terminology in the multiple property nomination document, Wesley Methodist Church was an alternative and a duplicative space at different points in its history. It was an alternative space before 1939 when it was affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church. Alternative spaces are those created by African Americans to deal with a segregated world; they offered a landscape of options, alternatives, and proactive responses to the spatial strategies of white supremacy.”<sup>6</sup>

With the merger of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Protestant Church, in 1939 however, Wesley Methodist Church became a duplicative space. Duplicative spaces are spatially separate buildings that are designed for the same use, but only for one race or the other. Wesley Methodist Church and other African-American Methodist churches became duplicative because an entirely separate organizational structure was created for African-American Methodist churches. The Central Jurisdiction had its own bishops, its own ministers, and its own jurisdictional organizations. All of the bishops and ministers were African Americans. In a sense, the Methodist Church created “two households.”<sup>7</sup>

Wesley Methodist Church is also eligible for Criterion C under Architecture as an example of Columbia architect Arthur Williams Hamby’s designs. Hamby was active in Columbia from 1897 to 1934. From 1897 to 1904, he worked as a draftsman for the distinguished Columbia and South Carolina architect Charles Coker Wilson. He maintained a private practice from 1905-1907, 1910-1913, and 1914-1934. He worked with his brother Thomas C. Hamby from 1907-1910 and Edwyn Grant Rorke from 1913-1914. Hamby designed churches, hospitals, government buildings, jails, schools, and private residences during the course of his career in Columbia. Wesley Methodist Church is an example of Late Gothic Revival, and Hamby’s “church designs followed the prevailing conservative fashions; the 1911 First Baptist Church in St. Matthews and the 1913 St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church in Columbia are straightforward Gothic Revival compositions.”<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Robert R. Weyeneth, “The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematical Past,” *The Public Historian* 27:4 (Fall 2005), 19.

<sup>7</sup> J. Richard Peck, “Many White Methodists Joined Fight Against Segregated Church,” February 16, 2005, available on-line at <http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=2&mid=6696>, accessed 11 July 2008.

<sup>8</sup> John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The South Carolina Architects, 1885-1935: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1992), pp. 59-61.

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

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

Wesley Methodist Church  
Property Name  
Richland County, South Carolina  
County and State

Section 9 Page 11

---

Select Bibliography

Copeland, James M. "Letter to the Editor." *The South Carolina Advocate* (Columbia, S.C.), February 22, 1968.

Gadsden, Reverend James. Interview with Lindsay C. Maybin, October 2005.

"News Briefs." *The South Carolina Advocate* (Columbia, S.C.), January 9, 1969.

Jenkins, Warren. *Steps Along the Way*. Columbia: The State Printing Company, 1967.

Kirk, W. Astor. *Desegregation of the Methodist Church Polity: Reform Movements That Ended Racial Segregation*. Pittsburgh: RoseDog Books, 2005.

Peck, J. Richard. "Many White Methodists Joined Fight Against Segregated Church," February 16, 2005. Available on-line at <http://www.archives.umc.org>.

Thomas, James S. *Methodist's Racial Dilemma: The Story of the Central Jurisdiction*. Nashville: Abington Press, 1992.

"Wesley United Methodist Church: 'Our Life'." Annual Insert, Wesley United Methodist Church.

Weyeneth, Robert R. "The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematical Past." *The Public Historian* 27:4 (Fall 2005).

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

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

Wesley Methodist Church  
Property Name  
Richland County, South Carolina  
County and State

Section 10 Page 12

---

*Verbal Boundary Description*

The boundaries for the property are the same as shown on Richland County Tax Map # 11405-01-02.

*Boundary Justification*

These boundaries mark the historic property boundaries of Wesley Methodist Church.

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

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

Wesley Methodist Church  
Property Name  
Richland County, South Carolina  
County and State

Section PHOTOS Page 13

---

The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property:	Wesley Methodist Church
Location of Property:	1727 Gervais Street, Columbia Richland County, South Carolina
Photographer:	Lindsay C.M. Weathers
Date of Photographs:	December 2007
Location of Original Digital Images	South Carolina SHPO, South Carolina Department of Archives & History

1. Oblique View from Southeast
2. Facade (Gervais Street Elevation)
3. Circular Stained-Glass Window on Large Tower (Barnwell Street Elevation)
4. Interior View of Circular Window and Paired Lancet Windows, Large Tower (Barnwell Street Elevation)
5. Sanctuary, Looking North Toward Triple Semi-elliptical Arcaded Chancel
6. Sanctuary, Looking Northwest, Transept Window (L) and Triple Semi-elliptical Arcaded Chancel (R)
7. Organ and Choir Loft Alcove
8. Typical Interior Paneled Door