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Old Bethel Methodist Church, Golden, Mississippi

Built in 1949, the Old Bethel Methodist Church is located in the south end of Tishomingo County on Route One in Golden, Mississippi. The church lot was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Abel to the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

Members contributed their time and energy to construct the original log church. Logs were hewn out of trees felled by church members. The men of the church constructed the building while the ladies furnished the food during construction.

In 1984, the log church was replaced by the present building. Again, the men left their regular jobs to build a church structure. Old Bethel, the name chosen for the church in 1948, was maintained for the new wood frame structure.

Mr. Marion Waddle, Sr., construction foreman, worked tirelessly supervising the carpenters. Other laborers included "Uncle" Jimmy Montgomery, John Ivey, Brooker Montgomery, "Uncle" Holland Pharr, Jim Pharr, Bill Pharr, Bill Campbell, and other interested citizens.

Deeds and several records of minutes, kept by one of the church's first secretaries, Mr. Silas Wigginton, are still in the files of Mr. G. C. Montgomery, "Uncle Cebie," who served the longest term as church school superintendent—25 years.

At the suggestion of Mrs. G. C. Montgomery, "Aunt Tula," the Reverend W. Bazzle organized the first Sunday school, which met in the afternoons. "Aunt Tulla" began teaching boys and girls in 1920 and continued for 30 years.

"Aunt Effie Northcutt's" class for the beginners has also become an institution in itself for young churchgoers during the past twenty years—and still is.

The Pharr School, organized in 1914, about one mile northeast of Old Bethel on the Red Bud Road was deeded to the stewards of Bethany Church in 1937 by Mrs. Sim Ivy. Betheny functioned as a Methodist Church a few years, but in 1940 the trustees, J. G. Montgomery,

N. S. Reeves, B. S. Pharr, Huston Ivy, and Charlie Kent deeded the land back to Mrs. Sim Ivy. At that time the Bethany congregation combined with Old Bethel's to form the "tie that binds..." still today.

During the pastorate of the Reverend M. N. Hamil the pulpit-alter area was remodeled, new floors installed, and four church schoolrooms added. Since then two extra church school rooms have been built.

Many religious leaders have been born out of the Old Bethel community; Reverend C. L. Ivy, Rev. J. G. Sharp, Rev. V. V. Collier, Miss Vera Montgomery, Rev. Wilburn Sharp, Mrs. Bonnie (Reeves) Townsend, and others equally dedicated who have other vocations.

From the one-roomed log church with no windows of 1849, Old Bethel has evolved to a country haven of worship with seven church school classes, an M Y F and a congregation under the direction of the Reverend Berry G. Whitehurst interested in the total program of God's Church. A membership of 90 with an average congregation of 65 in attendance thank God for his blessings, for the heritage of Old Bethel, and pray that it will be an even greater beacon for his Kingdom on earth.