

NR

11-4-86

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 409 South Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Brinkley N/A vicinity of

state Arkansas code 05 county Monroe code 095

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church

street & number 409 South Main Street

city, town Brinkley N/A vicinity of state Arkansas 72021

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Monroe County Courthouse

street & number Madison Street

city, town Clarendon state Arkansas 72029

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date After 1909

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

Mount Zion Baptist Church is an unusual red-brick example of the traditional front-gable house of worship which is typical of turn-of-the-century vernacular religious architecture. Constructed in 1909, its simple rectangular design is augmented by Gothic fenestration and simple brick corbelling, along with a dual-tower-and-arcade treatment of the facade.

ELABORATION

The principal elevation of Mount Zion Baptist Church faces west along one of Brinkley's major thoroughfares. The gabled facade is fronted by two square towers of different heights, each of which is accentuated with a one-over-one double-hung window with fixed arch sash above. The south tower rises to a height nearly equal to that of the gable peak while its counterpart is approximately ten feet shorter, giving the church an asymmetrical facade. Originally the north tower was taller, but deterioration of the belfry walls necessitated removal of the upper part of this tower in 1983. However, asymmetry was maintained by reduction of the north tower to an extent that it became the shorter of the two.

The two towers are connected by a covered porch with three flat-arched openings. Modest brick corbelling graces the cornice of the arcade as it does the edges of the front gable, which is dominated by a large painted-glass, pointed-arch window. The porch leads to a centered double door with transom and to doors right and left which give access to each of the two towers.

The north and south, or side, elevations of the church are identical. Each is lined with six one-over-one double-hung windows with fixed arch sash which are identical to the tower windows on the facade. At the back, or east, end of each side elevation is a small hipped-roof, ear-like projection with its own arched window and single door facing west.

A cinder-block structure designed to serve as a fellowship hall was added to the rear, or east, elevation of the church in 1981. The original east elevation is visible from its interior and the addition has little impact on the original building as it is recessed behind the rear projection and not noticeable from the street elevation.

The gabled roof of the church is covered with metal shingles, with exposed rafters visible under the eaves on the north and south.

The interior of Mount Zion Baptist Church is generally unaltered, with a rectangular sanctuary forming the basic plan. Entry is gained through the center exterior doors or from a single door which leads from the south tower. A main center aisle and two side aisles lead to the chancel at the west end of the sanctuary which is elevated, approximately two feet above the nave. A large painted-glass pointed-arch window, identical to that on the west end which is visible from the facade, dominates the wall behind the pulpit. Doors at the northeast and southeast corners lead to a choir room

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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and what was originally a pastor's study, which are in evidence in the projections at the rear of the building.

The ceiling reflects the gabled roofline, and is covered with beaded board applied in an unusual diagonal manner which echoes the Gothic suggestions of the church's window treatment. Walls are plaster, with a recent wainscoting of veneer paneling. Suspended globed chandeliers are original to the building, as is the pulpit furniture.

Access to a balcony at the west end of the sanctuary is facilitated by a staircase which is housed in the north tower. **The balcony is supported by turned posts and its balustrade is covered with the same diagonal beaded board as the ceiling.**

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1909

Builder/Architect C. A. Gettis

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY

Mount Zion Baptist Church is a key institution in the history of the black community in Brinkley, Arkansas. The Gothic influences evident in the design of the church, as well as the construction of a brick edifice at a time when the majority of its contemporaries were frame, reflect an optimism and prosperity on the part of Mount Zion's founders.

ELABORATION

The congregation was formed in 1886 and a frame structure was erected on a site donated by the "Father of Brinkley," Major William Black. In 1909 this building was destroyed by a tornado and construction on the present church was begun at the same location. C. A. Gettis, from one of its principal founding families, served as architect and carpenter. The Gettis and other church members were actively involved in the commercial and educational development of the local black community. C. A.'s brothers, for example, were a mortician, a barber, and a printer.

Mount Zion membership was also instrumental in the formation and growth of the Consolidated White River Academy, which provided religious and academic training for black youth of the area until 1955. J. D. Humphrey, the church's first pastor, had formed the Academy in 1893 and its first classes were held in the original church sanctuary. C. A. Gettis was principal of the school for twenty-two years, and was also architect and general contractor for its Boys Dormitory.

The four Gettis brothers, along with other Mount Zion members, also contributed to the music/development of the church, as well as that of their community. In 1915 they formed Brinkley's Big Brass Band, which became known throughout the area for its lively performances. One of several post-World War I additions to the band was Louis Jordan, who went on to become a band leader of some national renown.

Mount Zion Baptist Church stands as a reminder not only of the social and economic segregation which typifies the history of small-town eastern Arkansas, but also of the persistent optimism and faith of the black community in Brinkley.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"History of Mount Zion Baptist Church in the State of Arkansas" by Miss Nola A. Gettis,
Mrs. Iola F. Dickson
Souvenir Program, Mount Zion Baptist Church, November 21, 1976.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre
Quadrangle name Brinkley, Arkansas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	6	6	5	0	4	0	3	8	6	1	2	7	5
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D

Zone		Easting						Northing						

E

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H

Zone		Easting						Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 5, Block "U"

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Reverend Levi G. Davis, pastor - Mrs. Iola F. Dickson, clerk

organization Mount Zion Baptist Church date

street & number 409 South Main Street telephone N/A

city or town Brinkley state Arkansas 72021

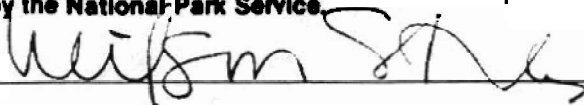
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Arkansas SHPO

date 9-16-86

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

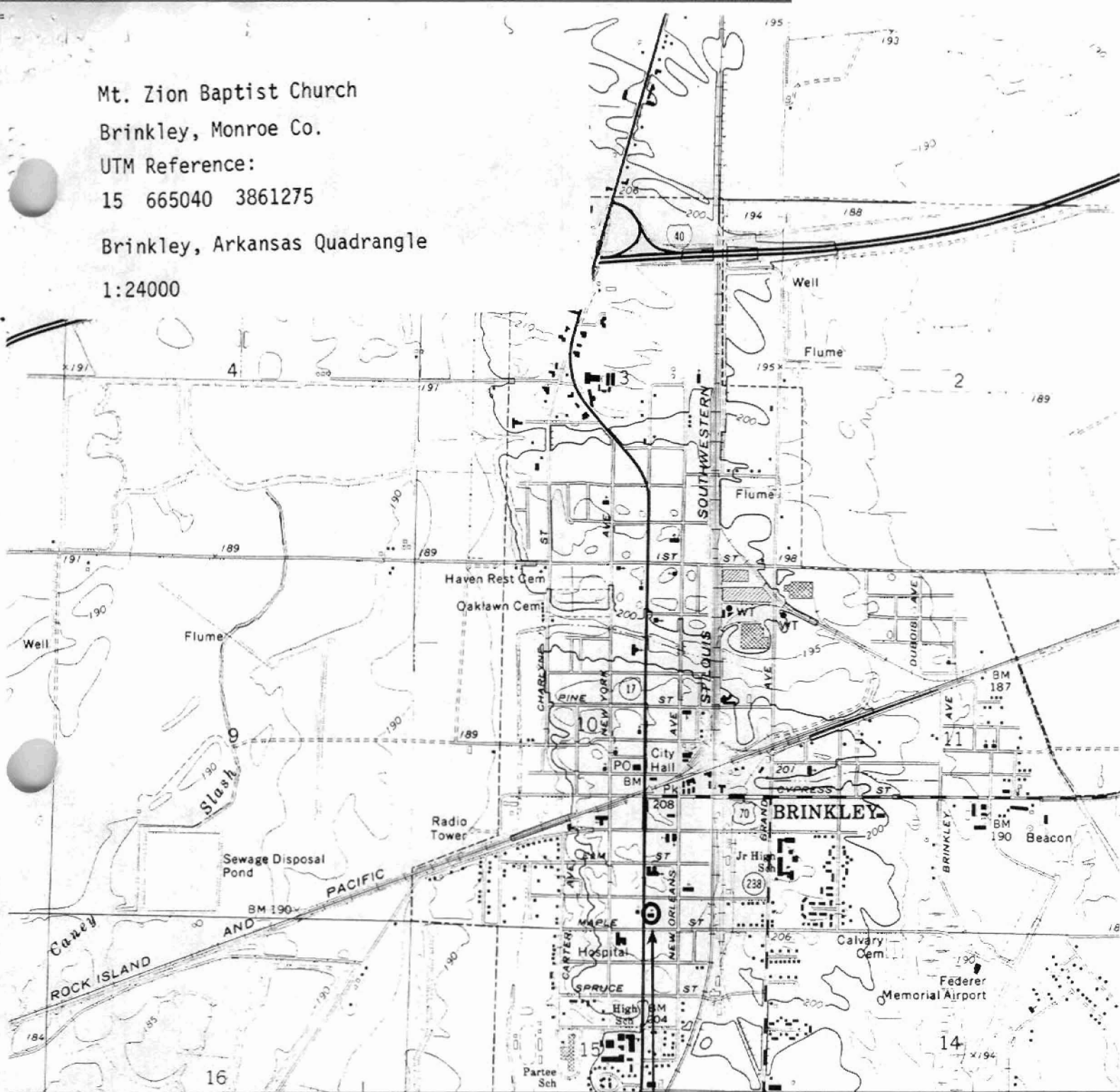
date

Chief of Registration

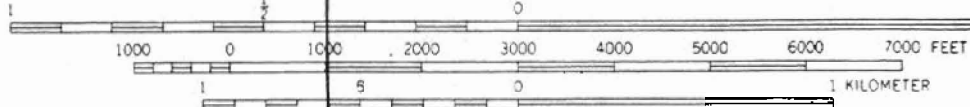
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Brinkley, Monroe Co.

UTM Reference:
15 665040 3861275

Brinkley, Arkansas Quadrangle
1:24000



1 MI. TO JUNCTION U.S. 49 & 70
LITTLE ROCK (VIA U.S. 70) 66 MI.
(KEEVIL)
7753 1 SW
SCALE 1:24 000

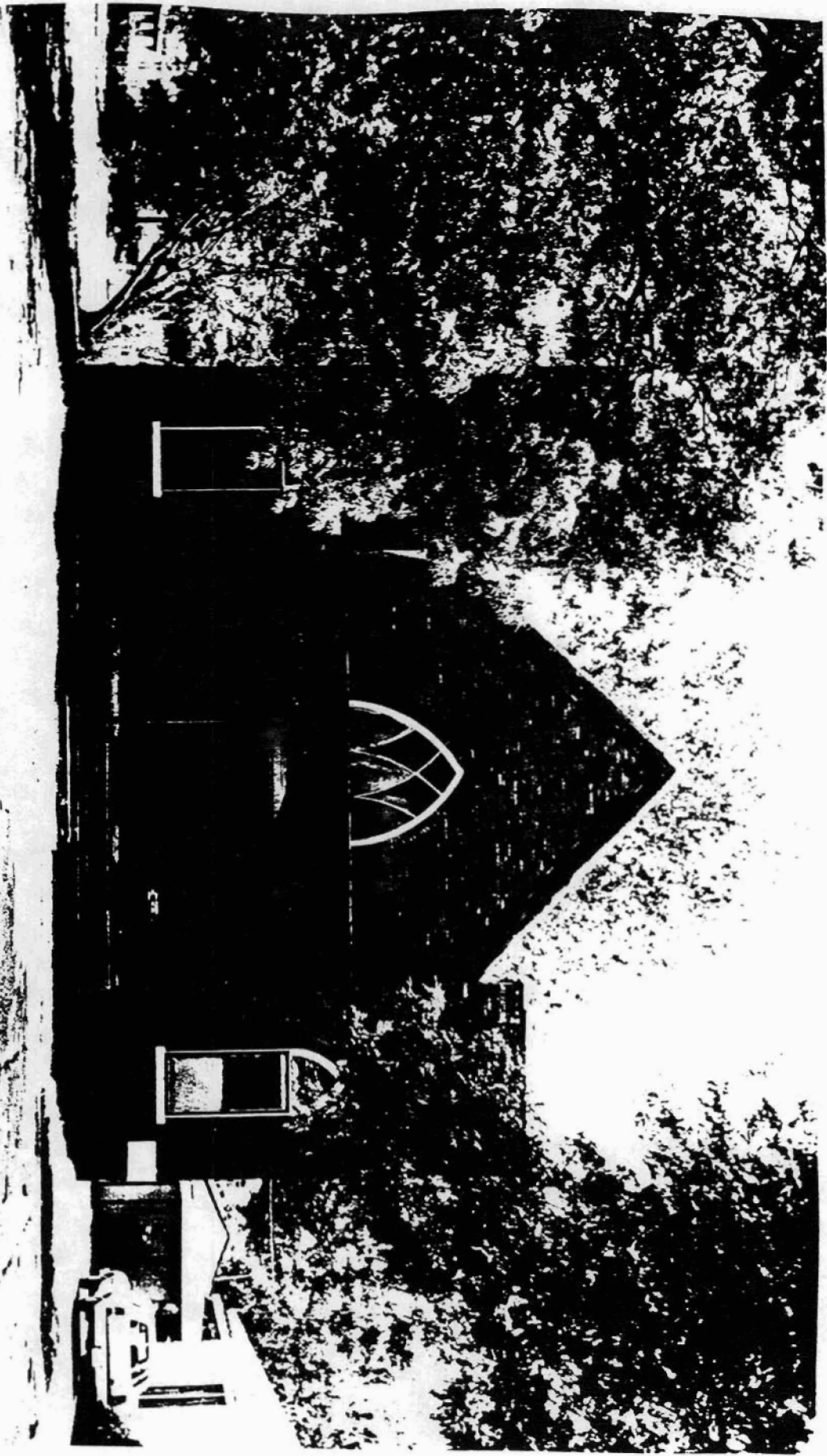


CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church

JTM GRID AND 1971 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D
AND BY THE ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



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