

**PUTNAM, TN OLDEST CHURCH CELEBRATES ON MAY 31, 2009**  
**ALGOOD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
135 West Main St., Algood, TN



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**ALGOOD** – On Pentecost Sunday, May 21, Algood United Methodist Church will celebrate its 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary, making it the oldest surviving church in Putnam County.

The morning service will begin at 10:30 a.m. with preaching by the Rev. Charles Vance Johnson, pastor; and the Rev. Susan Gardner, who was pastor of the church from 1989-1994. There will also be performances by Chancel and Children’s Choirs. After the service there will be a dedication of the children’s playground followed by a fellowship meal.

“The member of Algood UMC feel excited about our call to be the people of God in this community at this time,” said Rev. Johnson.

“We are deeply connected with our rich 110-year history of ministry in this place.”

The church was first built in 1899, five years after the first railroad came to Algood, on land deeded to the congregation by Alfred and Henry Algood. The building’s age is apparent in the Victorian-style church structure, distinguished by its front stained-glass window, bell tower and original Gothic pews. The first pastors were Circuit Riders who traveled by buggy or on horseback to preach and serve in multiple churches.

In 1909 a tornado damaged the building, shifting it on its foundation. However the book, “Algood United Methodist Church, 1899-1999,” compiled by the AUMC History

Committee, says that, “the faithful members soon had it ready for worship, fellowship and Bible study again.”

Over the years the church property grew to include a kitchen, classrooms and even the one-room Algood schoolhouse which was transported with the use of mules and logs.

In 1979, Algood United Methodist Church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Over the years several new buildings were dedicated, including the Reverend James Perry Parker Education Building in 1983 and the Pointer-Johnson Family Life Center in 2005 in memory of Will Henry and Jewel Pointer and in honor of Dr. Charles Vance Johnson, a former pastor of the church. A service for the dedication of the Memorial Garden was held this year.

Algood United Methodist Church has been involved in a variety of humanitarian work over the years, including United Methodist Church ministry programs, United Methodist Committee on Relief, Helping Hands of Putnam County, Putnam County Habitat for Humanity, Putnam County Schools, Boyd Scots of America and individual church programs.

Rev. Johnson has served at the church since 1998, and is married to Barbara Sims who frequently presents the children’s sermons during worship services. Additional staff include Sarah McDonald, choir director; Gary Heard, organist; Janet Marshall, pianist; George Brendahl, Family Life Center manager; Cheryl Gardner, secretary; Sylvia Thomas, caretaker; Matt Harrison, youth coordinator; Quentin Westrich, nursery attendant; David Norris, Lay Leader; and Mary Evans, Poet Laureate.

“Come and celebrate with us the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Algood UMC,” said Rev. Johnson.

“Share our joy about the ministry of God”.

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## **HISTORY OF THE CHURCH**

[www.algoodumc.org](http://www.algoodumc.org)

The Algood United Methodist Church has begun its second century as a house of Worship and Christian Mission. This Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was built in 1899 on land donated by Alfred and Henry Algood, sons of a Methodist Circuit Rider.



In England in the late 1730's John Wesley had taken a simple message of hope to people wherever he found them.

He told them they were equal and important in the sight of God and that their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ would bring salvation. This simple message, the basic belief of Methodists, is what the Circuit Riders brought to this area.

This Methodist Church was the first built in Algood. Its position on Main Street made it a focal point for the community. It became a center for religious and community activities. In the early years, other denominations were invited to use the church for their own worship. An early expansion of the church involved moving and attaching a former public school building to the back of the sanctuary. This is the Fellowship Hall. The architecture of this church is carpenter gothic, a style widely used at the turn of the century. It is reminiscent of the small stone Episcopal Churches in rural England.

In 1909 a tornado did extensive damage to the building. The restoration included moving the tower to the right side of the building. A bell, still in use, and the stained glass window were installed following the restoration. The church building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. A determining factor was maintenance of its architectural integrity. The Perry Parker Education was dedicated in 1983.



This church marked its centennial year by several special events, including worship led by Bishop Kenneth Carder. On May 23, the one-hundredth anniversary, Dr. Charles Vance Johnson, several former pastors, and the choir led a great celebratory worship service followed by dinner "on the grounds" for over 300 people. Other events included publication of a church history book, "The First 100 Years" and a centennial

church cookbook. Pictures courtesy of: Marshall Judd.

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