

# Old McKendree Chapel

Hours: Open every day of the year during daylight hours and there is no charge for admission.

Directions: From North or Southbound on Interstate 55, take the Jackson/Cape Girardeau (Highway 61) Exit (# 99), North towards Jackson. At approximately 3 miles, watch for signs on the right to Old McKendree. Follow the signs.



**O**ld McKendree Chapel was built during the year 1819 and was completed on September 14, on which date the first known service was conducted – the first session of the Missouri Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to be held west of the Mississippi. The two acres of the original church yard were given by William Williams, one of the founders of the church. A huge grove of trees with a sweet spring at the base of the slope made an ideal place for camp meetings. The Chapel was built by skilled workmen, of hand hewn poplar logs, some of them 30” in diameter. McKendree Church was organized in July of 1809 and regular camp meetings were held there until the Church was built. It is thought that the Church was named after William McKendree, a Bishop who visited there and may have given the impulse to build it.

For 83 years regular services were held at the church, but the coming of the Civil War brought the split in the membership – the Methodist Church South and the Methodist Church North. After the division the chapel was gradually deserted, the road closed and Old McKendree numbered among forgotten and past things. A new interest in the neglected chapel was born in 1926 when Rev. W. J. Stewart, pastor of New McKendree Methodist Church in Jackson, Missouri, raised a determined voice that Old McKendree Chapel must be saved. Since that time the formation of the Old McKendree Memorial Association has led to the complete restoration and upkeep of the Chapel. Many improvements have been made. Ample parking for large gatherings, restroom facilities, running water, enclosed eating areas and, in 1986, a new building called the Williams House Museum was built from logs of the old original Williams homestead.

Today Old McKendree is widely used by various groups. Each year sees lovely weddings in the Old Chapel; Annual Easter Sunrise Services are widely attended; Old McKendree Day Church Services are reminiscent of early times when hundreds of families gathered for preachin’, singing and family dinner on the grounds.

## Old McKendree Cemetary

Directly across the road from the lane leading to the Chapel is the Cemetery where lie several hundred early day church members. The elaborate markers attest to the faith of those laid there more than a hundred years ago. The cemetery is maintained by the Chapel with volunteer help. It is open to the public during daylight hours.

Old McKendree Chapel is supported entirely by the United Methodist Church and contributions from its friends. Your support is sincerely appreciated. We welcome you most heartily to come spend a quiet time where “The Faith Of Our Fathers” flourished and grew in the early days of our country.

**Old McKendree Chapel, Inc.**  
**PO Box 352, Jackson, Missouri 63755**