

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CHURCH

A docent is present inside the church to guide visitors, share the history of our parish, and answer questions about current church activities during the following hours:

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY

10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Saturday

10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.



WORSHIP SERVICES

- SUNDAY -

8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist/Contemporary Service

- WEDNESDAY -

5:00 p.m. Holy Communion (*1928 Book of Common Prayer*)

- THURSDAY -

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Healing Service

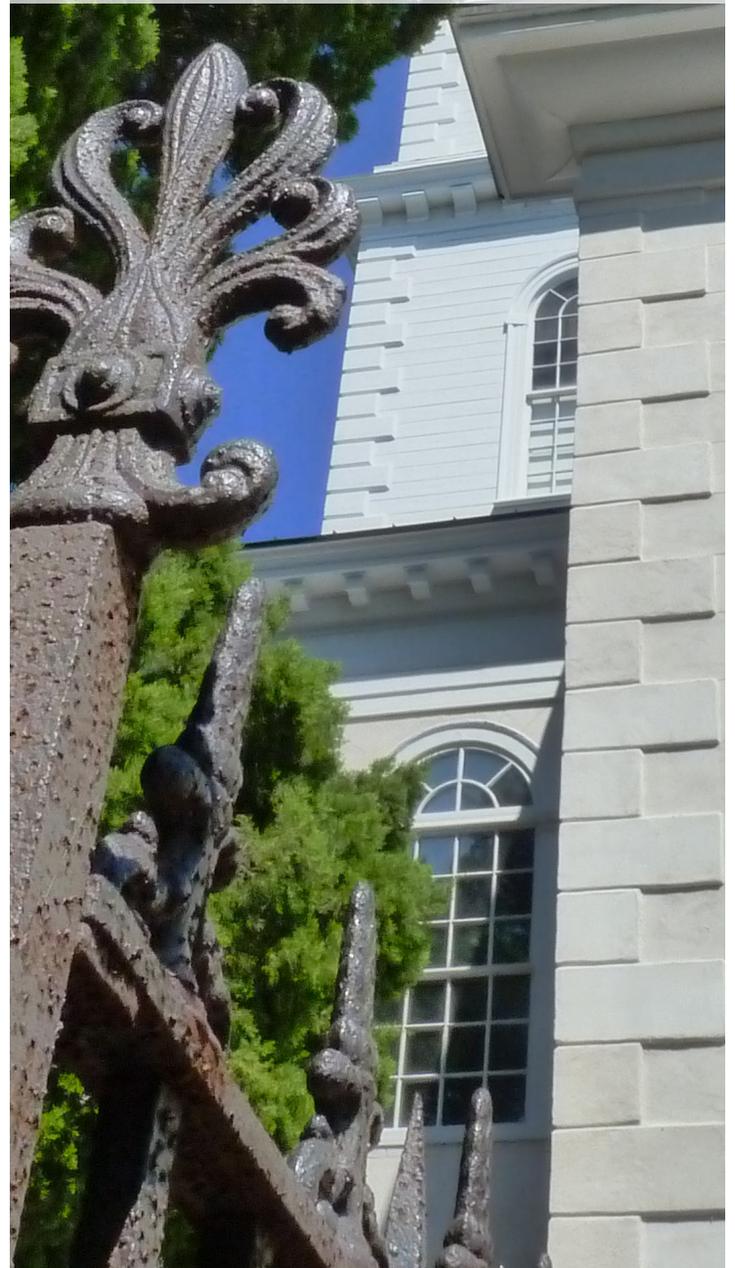


CONTACT US

Church: 505 Church Street • Office: 507 Newcastle Street
P.O. Box 1043 • Beaufort, South Carolina 29901
Phone (843) 522-1712
Visit us on the web at StHelenas1712.org



A Brief History and Map



Welcome to the Parish Church of St. Helena



We are delighted you are here, and we bid you peace and welcome in the name of the risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

Established in 1712 as a colonial parish of the Church of England, St. Helena's is one of the oldest churches in America. The original church was built on the present site in 1724 and appears today as it did in 1842 following its final enlargement.

St. Helena's early development was interrupted by the Yemassee Indian War, which began suddenly and without mercy in the spring of 1715. The Yemassee were driven from South Carolina, and the settlers gradually returned to the parish. In 1734, Captain John Bull gave the church a silver Communion service in memory of his wife who disappeared during the attack. This Communion service is still used today on special occasions.

A signer of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Heyward Jr. (1746-1809) was St. Helena's most noted parishioner of this period. He was a member of the Second Continental Congress and a signer of the Articles of Confederation. Like his father before him, he was a member of St. Helena's Vestry and owned pew number 16. He is buried in the Heyward family cemetery near Beaufort.

The American Revolution severed St. Helena's colonial ties to the Church of England. Following the American Revolution, St. Helena's and 11 other former Anglican Parishes, founded the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina.

St. Helena's Rector, Rev. Dr. Joseph R. Walker, inspired a spiritual revival that became known as the Great Beaufort Revival of 1831. Ordinary life in Beaufort came to a standstill as the revival spirit swept through the town. This resulted in 39 men from this parish entering the Episcopal ministry. Of this number, six became bishops in the Church including the first Episcopal missionary bishop to China.

During the Civil War, Federal forces invaded and occupied Beaufort and the Sea Islands in November 1861. Federal chaplains conducted services in St. Helena's until 1864 when the church was converted to a convalescent hospital for "colored

troops." All that remained of the prewar furnishings was the small baptismal font found in a rubbish pile in the churchyard at war's end.

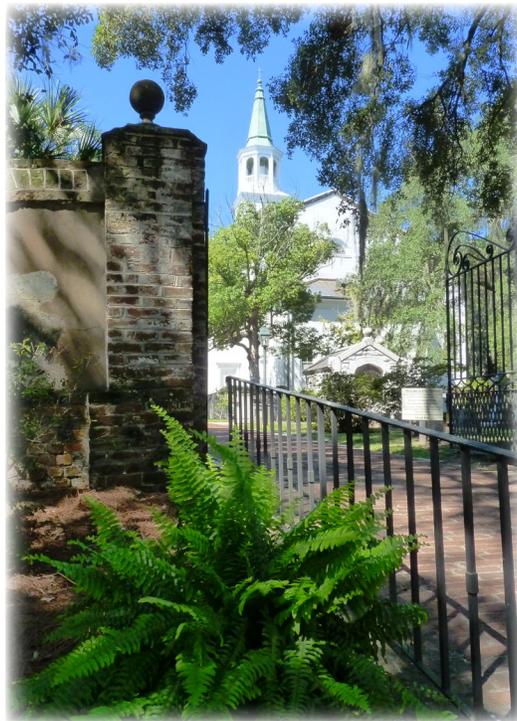
The present altar was carved by the sailors of the *U.S.S. New Hampshire*, which was stationed in Port Royal Sound during Reconstruction and presented by the ship's officers to St. Helena's as a gift of reconciliation.

St. Helena's made a slow recovery during Reconstruction and survived two of the most destructive hurricanes in the 1890s. However, St. Helena's faced its greatest crisis in nearly a century during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Forced to consider

closing the church for lack of funds, St. Helena's nevertheless struggled through the Depression to emerge in the latter half of the 20th century with a growing congregation committed to rebuilding St. Helena's physical and spiritual foundations.

St. Helena's is an Anglican congregation and traces its heritage through the history of the Church of England back to the earliest days of Christianity. We are committed to the faith that God has revealed in Holy Scripture, which we understand to be the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments. We ascribe to the apostolic statement of faith: a belief in God the Father, creator of mankind and all the world; a belief in God the Son, who redeemed us by His death on the cross for our sins; and a belief in God the Holy Spirit, who sustains us and conforms us to the image of Jesus Christ our Lord.

While we are thankful for our deep and rich historic roots, St. Helena's is not a museum. We are a vibrant, worshipping community with over 2,000 members. In 2012, this parish celebrated its 300th anniversary. During the past 300 years, St. Helena's has experienced ebbs and flows in the vitality of its church life. Thankfully, today the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is being faithfully preached by the clergy. Ever mindful of the Great Beaufort Revival of 1831, our congregation is praying for a "Second Spring," another great outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will bear much fruit for the Kingdom of God.



Among the most historic burial grounds in America, St. Helena's Old Churchyard has had 750 burials of record since it was established in 1724 with the interment of Col. John "Tuscarora Jack" Barnwell. The graves of nearly 100 veterans of every major

conflict since 1711 are marked with the flag under which they fought. Notable among these are the graves of nearly 60 veterans who served in the Army or Navy of the Confederate States of America.

St. Helena's gravestone inscriptions were published in the 1931 editions of the South Carolina

Historical and Genealogical Magazine, where it was noted that wooden crosses marked some of the graves. These wooden markers no longer exist.

Following traditional Christian practice, graves in the Old Churchyard face east, toward the rising sun.



The gravesites noted are of those who, in their time and in their world, made a lasting impression on the course of events. A record of their lives is included in the annals of this church that have survived through the centuries. Although lesser known, behind every gravestone is a story of a life lived, a passing mourned, and a memory cherished. As stewards of this sacred ground, the Parish Church of St. Helena remembers always that all are equal in the sight of God.

- Two British Officers: Lt. William Calderwood and Ensign John Finley.** Killed during the First Battle of Port Royal Island at Grays Hill in February 1779. Then-Capt. John Barnwell said at their burial service, "We have shown the British we can not only best them in battle, but we can give them a Christian burial."
- Maj. Gen. John Barnwell (1748-1800).** S.C. Militia during the American Revolution. Buried the two British officers.
- Rev. Dr. Joseph R. Walker (1796-1879).** During his 55-year ministry at the Parish Church of St. Helena, he inspired spiritual renewal through the Great Beaufort Revival of 1831 and guided the church through the turbulent years of the Civil War and Reconstruction.
- Dr. Robert R. Gibbs (1836-1877).** Surgeon in Confederate States Navy. Five of his children also are buried here, all 1-4 years of age.
- Capt. Paul Hamilton (1842-1862).** Fought in 20 Civil War battles. Killed at Vicksburg at age 20.
- Hugh Toland Sams (1840-1860).** Citadel Cadet who died on the eve of the Civil War at age 20 while fighting a fire at the Citadel. Gravestone shows palmetto tree with the top cut off, signifying a life cut short.
- Dr. Perry's Brick Mausoleum (d. 1845).** He knew of someone buried alive, so he had buried with him a pickaxe, a jug of water, and a loaf of bread.

- First burial in 1724. Col. John "Tuscarora Jack" Barnwell, (1671-1724).** Born in Ireland, he came to America in 1700. Thought to be buried under the church during expansions of the building in the antebellum era. Actually buried at the gravesite marked with his name and a marker provided by the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of South Carolina.
- Lt. Gen. Richard H. Anderson, C.S.A. (1821-1879).** West Point graduate in the "Generals' Class" of 1842. Of its 37 graduates, 22 became general officers in the Civil War. In February 1862 during the Peninsula Campaign, he earned the sobriquet "Fighting Dick." He was a Corps Commander under Gen. Robert E. Lee and served in all the major battles of the Army of Northern Virginia. Historical marker at the gravesite provided by Camp 47, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Beaufort, S.C.
- William Henry Cory (1831-1893).** Enlisted in the British Army under an alias and participated in the Charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean War. Remember Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem? "Theirs not to reason why; theirs but to do or die; into the valley of death rode the 600." He later came to America and fought in the Confederate States Army, 1862-1865.
- Rev. William Potter (1782-1817).** Inscription reads: "Memorable to the inhabitants of Beaufort,

for the death of nearly one-sixth of the white population." Victim of a yellow fever epidemic.

- Elizabeth Macdonald Wilkinson (1901-1991).** Married in 1923 to English missionary Edward Wilkinson. They were deployed to Nigeria the following year by the Anglican Church Missionary Society. This was the beginning of a nine-year ministry to the Ibo, the largest ethnic group in Africa. Alarmed by high infant mortality in the remote villages of Southern Nigeria, she combined her Gospel message to the Ibo women with lessons on modern sanitation and hygiene. After returning to England in 1933, she wrote *Easy Lessons on the Care of Babies*, thought to be the earliest instructional text written with firsthand knowledge of Ibo customs and culture.
- Brig. Gen. Stephen Elliott, Jr., C.S.A. (1830-1866).** Commanded the defense of Fort Sumter in 1863. Served in the Army of Northern Virginia and occupied "Elliott's Salient" in the defense of Petersburg, Va., in 1864. This position was at the epicenter of the Battle of the Crater, where in spite of heavy losses in the explosion he rallied his remaining troops and mounted a successful counterattack. Historical marker at the gravesite provided by Stephen Elliott Chapter No. 1349, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Beaufort, S.C.



North Street

Please observe the following guidelines to protect our historic cemetery:

- Remain on designated paths.
- Do not walk on grave plots.
- Gravestone rubbings are not permitted.
- Gravestones, tombs, walls, and fences are fragile. Please do not sit or stand on them.