

Anglican Roots of Christ Church, Frederica

When the first English settlers arrived on Saint Simons Island on February 11, 1736, they brought with them the roots of Anglicanism which they quickly planted in island soil. General James Oglethorpe, of neighboring Orange Hall, who had been charged with securing the coastal area between Savannah and Saint Mary's for England, had as his Chaplain and Secretary for Indian Affairs, The Rev. Charles Wesley. Charles entered into his ministry to the Fort and town of Frederica on March 9, 1736.

After his brief stay on the island, Charles' ministry was continued during the years 1736-1766 by John Wesley, George Whitfield and other clergy, all ordained clergymen of the Church of England by whom the Episcopal Church in The United States was planted and nurtured in this country. Georgia became a Royal Colony in 1752, and in 1758, the province was divided into parishes with Frederica and Saint Simons Island designated as Saint James Parish.

These early Anglican beginnings were strengthened following the Revolutionary War, when plantation families from England, Scotland, the Carolinas and Virginia won incorporation and were given land for The Episcopal Church in the Town of Frederica called Christ Church in 1808. It is there we begin our Archival Display and narrative history of Christ Church, Frederica which continues to flourish today.



An Image of the First Christ Church, Frederica
Rendering of the First Church, Built in 1820
“Drawn from Memory” by Thomas F. Hazzard in 1856



Present-day Christ Church, Frederica – c.1895



**Postcard c.1920 of the road past Christ Church, Frederica
showing fence to keep livestock out of cemetery grounds**

The Stained Glass Windows of Christ Church, Frederica

The Narthex -

The Dodge Windows, originally in the Nave, were reworked by The Willet Studio in Philadelphia and installed in the narthex in 1969.

1 - The Church – This window depicts the original Christ Church, Frederica which was severely damaged during the Civil War. Below it is the present church which was completed in 1885.

2 - The Dodge Home – The window shows the Rev. Anson Dodge with his arm around a young boy representing the Dodge Home for Boys which he and his wife Anna established on the island in 1895. Side panel images share the Gospel of Matthew – feed the hungry, bring drink to the thirsty, take in strangers, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and help the prisoner.

The Nave, to the right - Windows 3-5 were made by The Willet Studio in Philadelphia and installed in the church for Easter 1969.

3 – The Feeding of the 5,000 – Jesus, standing on the hillside, meets a boy who has a basket with the seven loaves and a fish. Nearby are the three disciples who brought the boy to Jesus. The multitudes, soon to be miraculously fed, wait on the hillside. The window was given by the Episcopal Churchwomen of Christ Church, Frederica.

4 – The Oglethorpe Window – This window commemorates the founding of the colony of Georgia. General Oglethorpe is shown with Chief Tomochichi at Ft. Frederica. The two held a strong friendship which proved helpful when Oglethorpe's army came into conflict with the Spanish.

5 – The Wesley Window – The scene depicts the ministry at Frederica of John and Charles Wesley. Here the brothers are shown preaching under the giant live oaks in 1736, while the ship that brought John from Savannah waits at anchor.

Back of the Church

6 – The Confession of Saint Peter – Created by the Franz Mayer Company in Munich, Germany and installed in the church in 1899, the window is in memory of The Rev. Dodge who died in 1898. The bust beneath the window is of Anson as a child.

Continuing up the Nave

7 – The Sermon on the Mount – Jesus is shown seated, as a Jewish rabbi would have while teaching. Peter and John stand close by while the crowd presses forward. The city in the background represents the many cities from whence they have come. The window was completed by The Willet Studio in Philadelphia and installed in 1969.

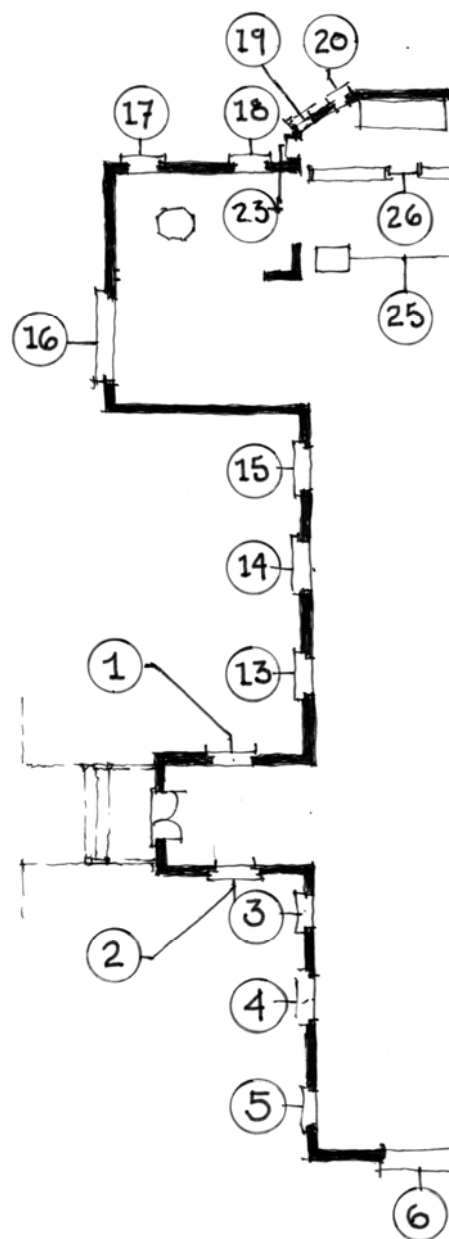
8 – The Couper and Wylly Window – This window, French in style but probably American made, was given to the church sometime in the 1960s by a descendent of the Hamilton family. The Hamiltons, Coupers and Wyllys were prominent plantation families on the island prior to the Civil War. A visitor from the National Historic Trust told us this is our most “important” window because the pink color is very hard to achieve, and the window is full of symbolism representing resurrection and eternal life.

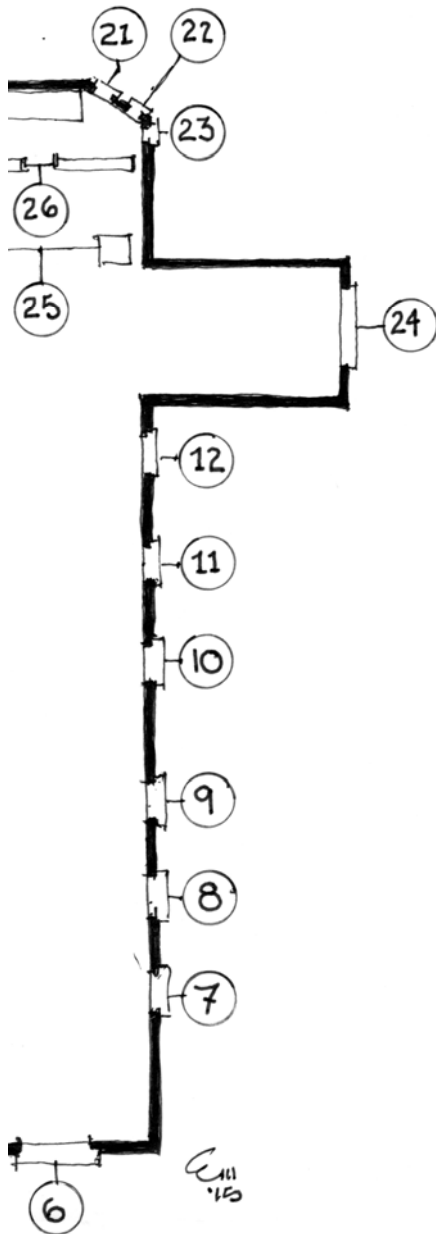
9 – Her Children Rise Up and Call Her Blessed, by Tiffany Studios – Taken from Proverbs 31, the good wife is shown providing for the needs of her household and receiving the praise of her family. The window is unsigned because Tiffany was not attendant at its installation.

The next three windows are English and were installed in 1885.

10 – Woman Why Weepest Thou? – The window depicts a woman at the empty tomb. At first she does not recognize Jesus, believing him to be the gardener. When he speaks her name, “Mary”, she responds “Rabbani” or Master.

11 – Saint John and Saint George – Saint John is pictured holding a red book representing the Gospel. In the other hand is a goblet with a griffin emerging from it, symbolizing those who oppress Christians. Saint George is depicted as a young knight clad in armor, his lance pinning down the dragon that had terrorized the community. The scene personifies good over evil.





12 – Saint Martin of Tours – The window depicts Saint Martin preparing to give half of his cloak, which he has cut in two, to a beggar. Saint Martin wanted to be a priest but his father insisted on the military. Later he would leave the military, join the priesthood and found the first monastery in France.

13 – Lo, I am with you always – This window, completed by a New York studio, shows Jesus with five of his eleven disciples, instructing them to go and teach and baptize all nations, while reminding them he will be with them always.

14 – This Woman was Full of Good Works – The scene shows women weeping and displaying garments made by Dorcas, a disciple of Jesus and a woman of charity. Peter, who would raise Dorcas from the dead, is shown with the nimbus to which he is entitled as an Apostle. The window is English and was installed in 1885.

15 – The Good Samaritan – The scene shows a wounded man being assisted and treated with healing oils by the Samaritan, one of a race traditionally looked down upon, his basket and donkey beside him showing the interruption of his travels. A priest is shown busily reading with his eyes averted, and the Levite, likewise passing on the “other side.” The window is English and was installed in 1885.

Entering the Transept, to the Left

16 – The Saint Mark Resurrection Window – The story is depicted according to the Gospel of Mark, showing Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and the girl Salome as they went to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body. Finding the stone rolled away and a young man dressed in a white robe, they were amazed. He said, “You seek Jesus of Nazareth. He has risen, he is not here.” The window is English and was installed in 1885.

Entering the Baptistry

The baptismal font was given to the church by The Rev. Anson Dodge’s Connecticut Sunday School class.

17, 18 – The Baptistry Windows – These windows were installed following World War II and dedicated to two soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice. One depicts Jesus as a boy of twelve in the temple with the elders, showing his parents coming in to look. The other represents the Sermon on the Mount.

Continuing through the Chancel

19, 20, 21, 22 – The Apse Windows behind the Altar – These are very old American windows, probably restructured from a former placement together. They were installed in 1885 and represent Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as well as the Lamb of God and the Holy Spirit. The inscription running along the bottom of the windows is a dedication in memory of The Reverend Edmund Matthews, sometime Rector of the Parish who died December 1, 1827.

23 – The Clerestory Windows – Above, in the rafters are the Clerestory Windows which were reworked from an earlier side window in the nave by The Willet Studio in Philadelphia and installed in 1969.

Returning to the Transept

24 – The Nativity Window – The window depicts the nativity story according to Saint Luke. It shows the infant Jesus with Mary and Joseph. Nearby are three angels, holding musical instruments which signify the praises they sing to God. The window is English and was installed in the church in 1885.

25 – Needlepoint Hangings – The needlepoint hangings at the altar, pulpit and lectern were created by Mrs. William “Marguerite” Chisholm who began them at age 76 and completed them just before her death at age 89. She designed them to include the liturgical colors for all of the seasons except Lent.

26 – Needlepoint Kneelers – The kneelers were completed by the women of Christ Church under the tutelage of Mrs. Chisholm.

Designated Graves of Christ Church, Frederica

A

Anna Matilda Page King grew up on Retreat Plantation (site of Sea Island Golf Club). An only child, she inherited the plantation at her father's death, an unusual situation for a female in the 19th century. Anna was very active in the management of the plantation. She lived there with her husband (frequently away on business and politics) and children until she died in 1859. Only one of her 10 children preceded her in death, a very unusual occurrence in the first half of the 19th century.

B

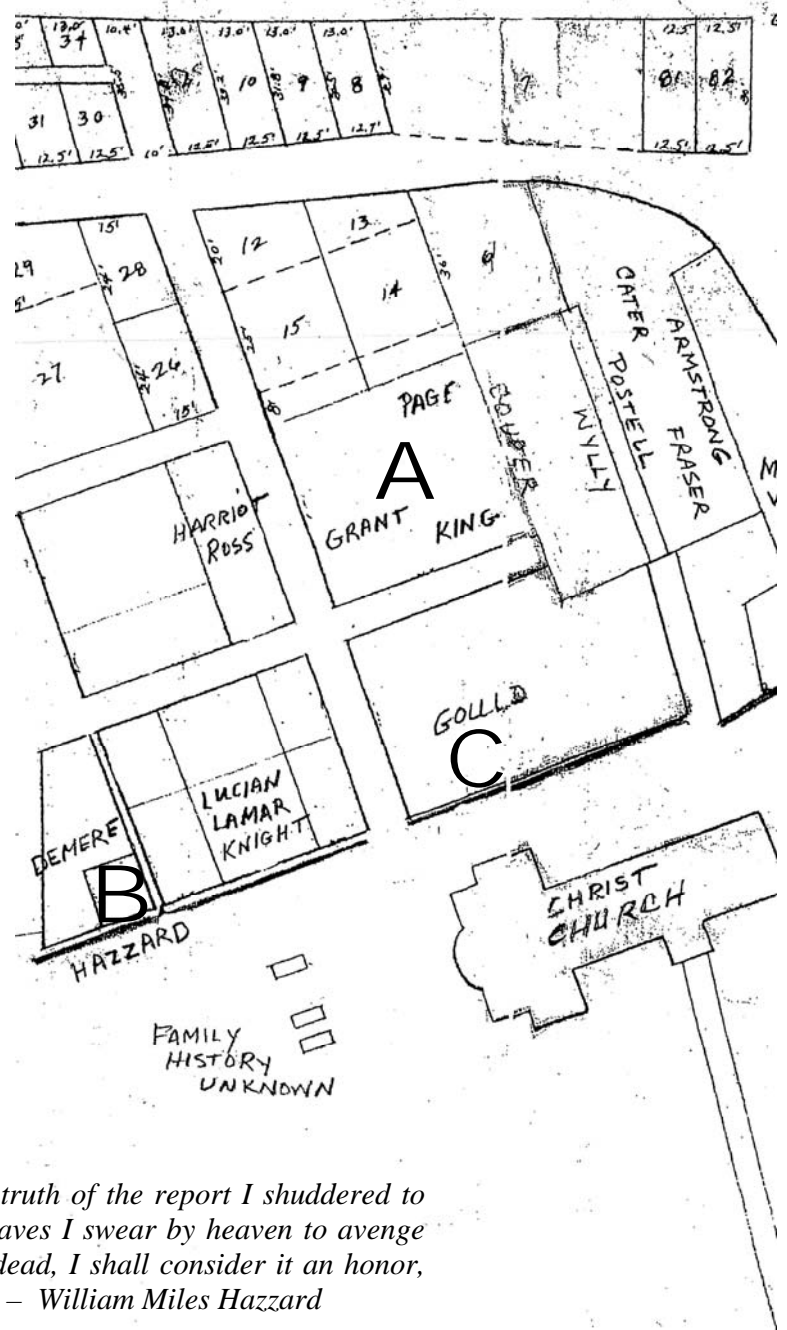
In the early 1800's Col. William Wigg Hazzard and his brother Dr. Thomas Hazzard were successful planters and devout members of Christ Church. This vault, built in 1813 of brick and tabby, contained the remains of the Hazzard families until it was desecrated during the Civil War. A descendent, Capt. William Miles Hazzard, checked on the vault and found it in ruins. He wrote a letter of outrage to the commander of the Federal forces which found its way to President Lincoln to which he later received a letter of apology from the President:

Sir:

I have more than once been informed...that the graves of our family...and a friend had been desecrated by your forces....This rumor I could not believe, as the custom, even of the savage, has been to respect the home of the dead. But the sight which I now behold convinces me of the truth of the report I shuddered to think of....Let me tell you, sir, that beside these graves I swear by heaven to avenge their desecration. If it is honorable to disturb the dead, I shall consider it an honor, and will make it my ambition to disturb your living. — William Miles Hazzard

C

The Gould family was active in both the early years of Christ Church and the development of Saint Simons Island. James Gould built the island's first lighthouse, owned Black Banks and New Saint Clair plantations, and served many times as Christ Church, Frederica Senior Warden. His son, Horace Bunch Gould, held services at Black Banks following the destruction of the 1820 church in the Civil War, and his daughter Mary ran New Saint Clair and grew lovely roses, a passion which is reflected in the rose on her tombstone. James' granddaughter, Anna would marry Anson Dodge and assist him in his ministry and the establishment of the Dodge Home for Boys.





LYCHGATE

D

Eugenia Price discovered Saint Simons Island by happenstance in the early 1960's. Already a well known author, she moved to the Island and wrote a historical fiction trilogy that introduced many people throughout the country to the Golden Isles. Her grave is the most frequently visited in Christ Church cemetery.

E

The Reverend Anson Greene Phelps Dodge, heir to northern industrial wealth, discovered the post Civil War ruins of Christ Church on a visit to Saint Simons as a young man. This experience greatly influenced him, and he became an Episcopal priest. Anson moved to the island and became rector of Christ Church in the 1880's. Rev. Dodge rebuilt the church with his wealth and his first wife Ellen's inheritance. After Ellen's death, he married Anna Gould, granddaughter of a local plantation owner. Upon Anson's death, Anna ran the Dodge Home for Boys until she retired in 1925. Reverend Dodge, Ellen, Anna, Anson III and Reverend Dodge's mother are all buried in the Dodge plot.

F

John Chisholm Forsyth (1848-1890)

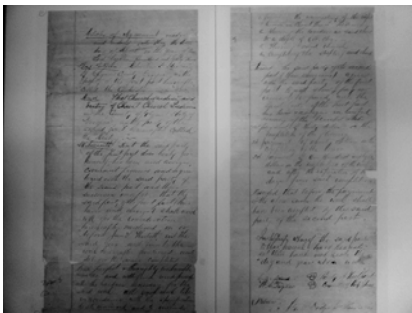
and several family members are interred in this plot. A native of Inverness, Scotland, John was an employee of the Dodge Lumber Company. He was in charge of extensive timber holdings in the vicinity of Lumber City, Georgia. While evicting squatters on these timberlands for the company, John Forsyth was shot and killed. Daughter Helen Forsyth married Ernest Dart, a member of a prominent early Brunswick family. Forsyth siblings Helen and Donald and members of the Dart family are buried in this family plot.

The Christ Church, Frederica Archival Exhibit – Vestry Room in Parish Hall

We are indebted to members and friends of the parish who have shared the artifacts displayed in our exhibit. This is not intended to be a complete history of Christ Church, Frederica, but rather a display of selected available items reflecting various eras in the church's growth and development.

The Early Years

Following the Revolutionary War, the descendants of early settlers petitioned for a charter and won incorporation by act of the State Legislature on December 22, 1808 as *The Episcopal Church in the town of Frederica called Christ Church*. Town land was granted for use by the church which became the second oldest Episcopal Church in Georgia after Christ Church, Savannah. Members of plantation families on the island were instrumental in the construction of the first church on the site in 1820. In 1823, Christ Church, Frederica, Christ Church, Savannah and Saint Paul's, Augusta formed the first Episcopal Diocese in Georgia. Small but faithful numbers of parishioners worshipped at Christ Church, Frederica until the outbreak of the Civil War, including African Americans who worshipped in an addition to the church completed in 1840. Following the War, parishioners returned to the island to find their church desecrated and damaged beyond repair and money they had put aside in a Savannah bank for construction of a new church gone in the failure of the bank.



Articles of Incorporation – 1808

Passed by the Georgia Legislature as Act 33, H.B. 79, signed by Governor Jared Irwin.



Altar Cloth

Decorating the Altar during the Ministry of Rev. Edmund Palmer Brown, Rector 1844-1868. A Gift from His Grandchildren.



An Image of the First Christ Church, Frederica

Rendering of the First Church, Built in 1820, "Drawn from Memory" by Thomas F. Hazzard in 1856. At this time, there is no other known visual representation of the building before its destruction during the Civil War.



Christ Church, Frederica, circa 1880

Ruins of the Original Church following the Civil War.
Courtesy of Coastal Georgia Historical Society

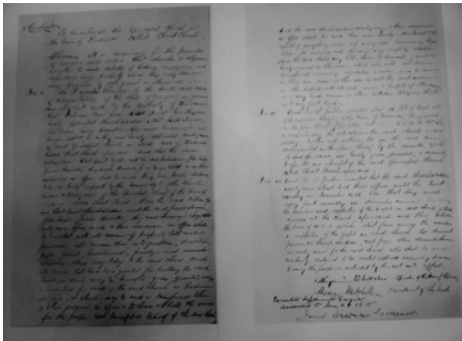
The Dodge Years

As the island moved into the late 19th Century, timber mills began appearing, offering jobs to former plantation workers, management positions for planter families and income for mill owners. Georgia pine and oak would boost the local economy at a time when planters were struggling to hold on. It is to the son of one of those mill owners we owe deep gratitude for the church in which we worship today. Anson Greene Phelps Dodge, Jr. came to Saint Simons to visit his father, met the plantation families and visited their heavily damaged church. He pledged to become a priest, rebuild the church and become its Rector. The church was completed in 1885, endowed by his and his late wife Ellen's fortunes, and dedicated to the memory of Ellen whom he lost on their honeymoon.



The Rebuilding of Christ Church, Frederica

Begun by Anson G. P. Dodge, Jr., in 1884, and completed in 1885. The architect was James Charles Chapman of Kent, England, who became a Christ Church Lay Reader and resided at West Point Plantation.



Contract for the Completion of Christ Church, Frederica

Signed by Anson G.P. Dodge, Charles G. Stevens and William C. Taylor in April 1885. Descendants of Mr. Stevens and Mr. Taylor are members of Christ Church, Frederica today.



Christ Church, Frederica, Completed

View from the West of the Newly Built Church circa 1885.
Courtesy of Tyler E. Bagwell



The Wesley Oak

View of the New Church from the East including the Wesley Oak, badly damaged by a Hurricane in the 20th century. Note the bentwood gate and the barbed wire to keep livestock out.

The new church was consecrated in 1886 on the Feast of the Epiphany by the Rev. J. W. Beckwith, DD, Bishop of Georgia.

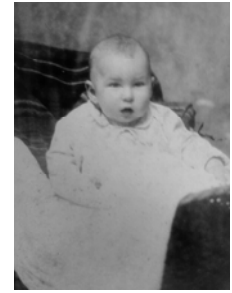
The Dodge Family of Christ Church, Frederica



Anna Gould Dodge
1856-1927



The Rev. Anson G. P. Dodge, Jr.
1860-1898



Anson G. P. Dodge, III
1891-1894

Courtesy: Coastal Georgia Historical Society

Rev. Dodge revitalized the parish, built four other churches on the island including Saint Ignatius on Demere Road for former slaves who frequently had their own African American minister and teacher. Today, Saint Ignatius is an active part of Christ Church Parish. With his second wife, Anna, Dodge opened the Dodge Home for Orphan Boys. Subsequent ministries kept the home going following Anna's death in 1927, and the home operated until 1956.



Consecration Document for Saint Ignatius Church, 1898

Built as a mission church for African-American Episcopalians by Anson Dodge in 1886, it was destroyed by a cyclone in 1897 and immediately rebuilt by its members. Services continue there today.



The Dodge Home for Orphan Boys

The Anson Dodge Home was founded in 1895 by the Dodges in memory of their son. Anson Dodge III died in a tragic carriage accident at age three.



There are ten children listed in the Family section of the Parochial Register, Vol II, under the names of Anna and Anson Dodge, believed to be the first ten residents of the Dodge Home.



The original Dodge Home was destroyed by fire two months after the death of Anna Dodge in 1927.

A smaller replacement facility nearby operated until 1956.

Early Twentieth Century

After surviving a hurricane in October 1898, Christ Church, Frederica began losing membership with the closure of the Hilton-Dodge Lumber Company's large saw mills at Hamilton in 1906. When the Rev. D. Watson Winn took charge of the parish in 1898 following Anson's death, it was decided to hold church only twice a month. However, never losing sight of Dodge's commitment to mission, the church regularly sent in its portion for Diocesan Missions and the Dodge Home of Orphan Boys continued to operate.



Interior at Easter with Rev. D. Watson Winn, Rector 1898-1926. Rev. Winn was a descendant of Nancy Wesley, sister of John and Charles Wesley.



Church outing with Rev. Winn, possibly at Frederica.



President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, followed by Mr. and Mrs. Howard Coffin, leaving services at Christ Church in December, 1928. *Courtesy of Tyler E. Bagwell*



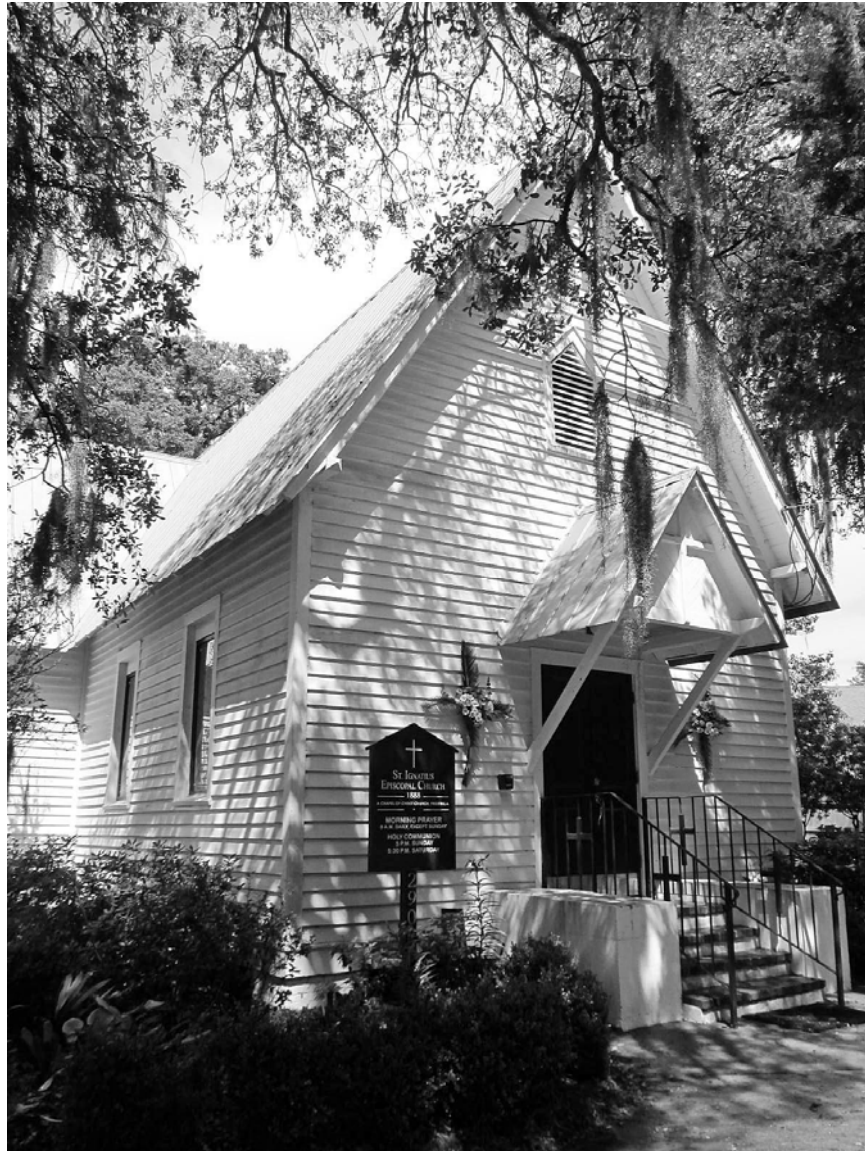
The Christ Church, Frederica Choir with Rev. Charles Lee in the 1930s.

Today we are an active Parish of 900 members, with a lively Sunday School, a vibrant music program, a continuing commitment to mission, and an energetic sense of fellowship and pastoral care. All are welcome at Christ Church, Frederica!

Saint Ignatius Church

2906 Demere Road
Saint Simons Island, GA 31522

SAINT IGNATIUS CHURCH was built in 1886, as a Mission of Christ Church, Frederica, for the African-Americans living on Saint Simons Island. Anson Dodge had Saint Ignatius and three other mission churches built on the island and, under his direction other Episcopal missions were built on the mainland. The hurricane of 1897 – recorded at the time as a cyclone – almost destroyed the little church, and it was rebuilt. Originally located off a little lane leading to Union Memorial (aka Stranger's) Cemetery and facing East, St. Ignatius was rebuilt in 1898 on Demere Road, facing South. It is built in the traditional cruciform, of heart pine, which inside naturally aged to its present color, the same as Christ Church, Frederica.



Saint Ignatius Church – 2015

THE ORGAN was originally in Christ Church, Frederica; a gift of the Berolzheimer family of Little Saint Simons Island and Stockton, California. It is a reed action pump organ. The original pump handle can still be seen on its side. When electricity came to the north end of the island the organ was electrified. It was placed in Saint Ignatius in 1959.

THE LECTERN, BISHOP'S CHAIR, and PRIEST'S CHAIR were from the Union/Saint James Church at the mill-site. They were placed here when that church was de-consecrated and used as a recreation center. That building has been re-consecrated and is now Lovely Lane Chapel at Epworth-by-the Sea Conference Center.

THE ALTAR RAIL is hand carved.



Saint Ignatius Church Altar – 2014



Susan Shipman

Festival Co-Chair, CCF Senior Warden and Head of Festival Flower Design for Saint Ignatius Church



L to R: Josephine Follins Porter, Mary Beth Keys, Janice Walker, Buck Buchanan, and Celia Buchanan – longtime Saint Simons Island residents who were baptized at Saint Ignatius, with Christ Church parishioners who serve as St. Ignatius docents.

The Stained Glass Windows of Saint Ignatius Church

The windows behind the altar were made by Willetts of Philadelphia and placed in 1968. Those gracing the chapel were designed by parishioner Mary Beth Keys, crafted by Wippell and Company of Exeter, England, and placed in November 2000.

As viewed from the left front door in a clockwise direction

1 – The Great Blue Heron – The shorebirds which inhabit our marshes are wonders to behold. Whether standing in a tidal creek, or winging across the sky, the herons and egrets are never alone. They are always placed within a greater picture, and so, by the grace of God, are we.

2 – A “Fisher of Men” with a Cast Net – Jesus used the nets of fishermen Peter, James, John, and Andrew as symbols of their new vocation of proclaiming the Good News and gathering God’s people to share in the kingdom. When the net is drawn in, it is always a moment of possibility, an opportunity for a miracle, as we never know what, or in the case of the Gospel, “who” will appear.

3 – “Lift Every Voice” – The musical notes of this window commemorate the Negro National Anthem, Lift Every Voice. During a February, 1900 celebration of Abraham Lincoln’s birthday, a children’s choir in Jacksonville, Florida introduced the hymn by brothers James Weldon Johnson, lyrics, and J. Rosamond Johnson, music. The song has become a hymn of praise, thanksgiving and hope for all peoples.

4 – Resurrection Lily – Tradition has it that the Easter lily originated in the Garden of Eden by the teardrops of repentance that Eve spread while leaving the Garden of Eden. For many, the beautiful trumpet-shaped white flowers symbolize purity, virtue, innocence, hope and life—the spiritual essence of Easter. This window also features resurrection fern and a palm branch from the gardens at Saint Ignatius.

5 – Saint Ignatius – *Gospel side, left of the Altar* – Ignatius, the second Bishop of Antioch, used his superior intellect and profound faith in Jesus Christ to struggle to maintain the unity of the Church and to maintain the truth of its teaching. He was arrested and taken to Rome, where he was martyred in 115 AD when he was thrown to the lions. During his journey to Rome Ignatius authored seven letters which said that the Church’s unity comes through Baptism, the Eucharist, and priests and bishops who join us all one to another.

6 – The Trinity – The Hand depicts God the Father, the Lamb depicts God the Son, and the Dove depicts the Holy Spirit. Given by Mrs. Malcolm McKinnon and daughter Mrs. Glen A. Wilkinson in memory of Malcolm B. McKinnon, namesake for Saint Simons’ McKinnon Airport, the windows were made in Philadelphia by the Willet Company and placed in 1968.

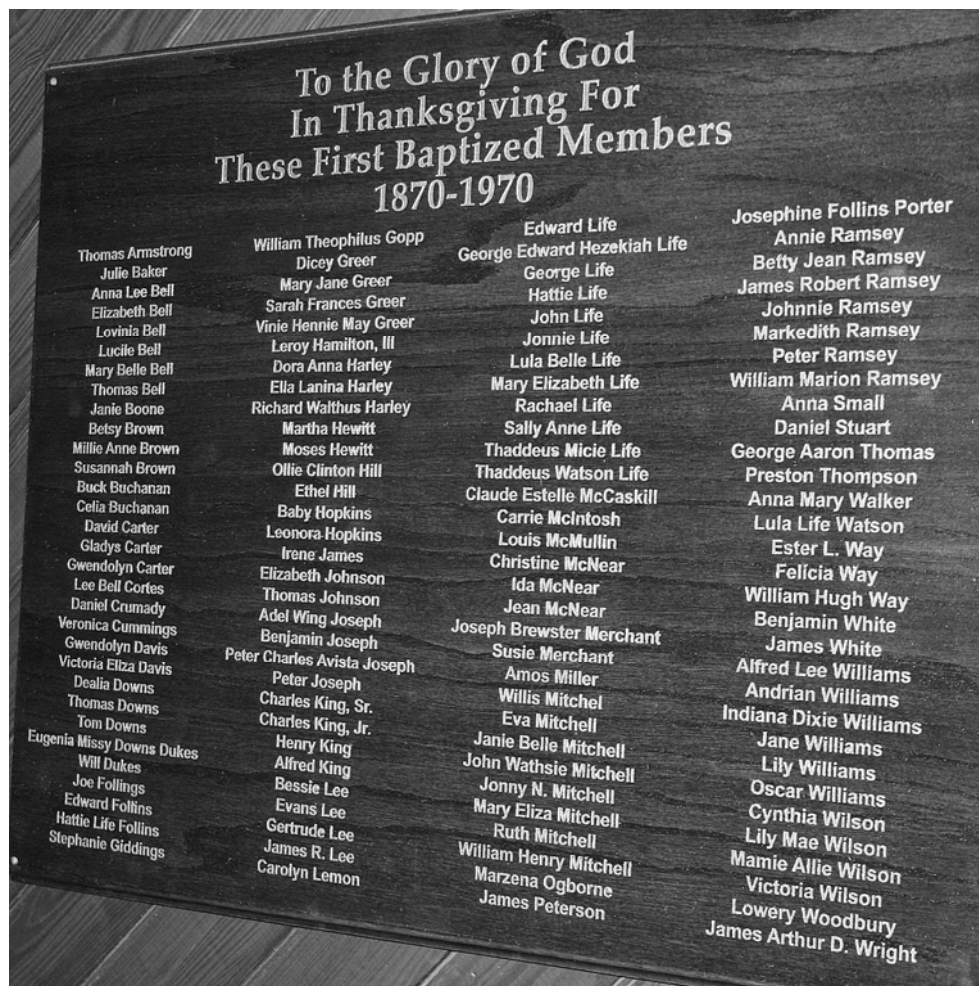
7 – Deaconess Alexander – *Epistle side, right of the Altar* – In 1894, Anna E.B. Alexander, whose parents had been slaves on Saint Simons Island, became the first African-American ordained as a deaconess in the Episcopal Church. Her ministry primarily in Pennick in Glynn County focused on education for both white and African American children and their families. She established Good Shepherd Church, and Episcopal school, and camp programs, which brought the two races together.

8 – Industry & Commerce: A Sawmill and A Ship – Man has enjoyed use of God’s creation in the pursuit of commerce. With the gifts and skills of the artisans who built and were later members of Saint Ignatius Church, and with the lives of those who have worshipped here, we are all beneficiaries of the industry and commerce of this island. The wood for “Old Ironsides” and the Brooklyn Bridge came from Dodge Lumber Mill on Saint Simons Island.

9 – The Live Oak – From the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of the Revelation to John, God graces his people with the gift of trees. Anyone who walks these islands is extravagantly blessed: God’s gift of the “sacrament”, teeming with meaning, is never more than a few yards from us. This live oak stands today in the side yard of Christ Church, Frederica.

10 – Morning Glories – Morning Glory’s expressiveness and its daily cycle of opening in the morning and closing at night commend the flower to us as a sign that God offers to us both constant renewal to meet the tasks of each day as well as a restorative refuge from the struggles and perils of the world. This window honors those who in the past, present, and future adorn the altar with vessels, linens, candles, and flowers.

11 – The Coat of Arms of the Diocese of Georgia – This emblem draws part of its design from the four men who first brought Christianity from England to Georgia: Dr. Thomas Bray, who encouraged the first mission to Georgia (one silver band), Dr. Henry Herbert, the first English priest in Georgia (one silver band), Gen. James Oglethorpe (the boar’s head), and the Right Reverend Stephen Elliott, first Bishop of Georgia (wavy gold bands). The Cherokee rose, the state flower of Georgia, represents truth, honor, and enlightenment. The Bishop’s mitre bathes the entire crest in the light of the life of the Episcopal Church and the faith and teaching of the Apostles.



Plaque in Saint Ignatius Church of Baptisms 1870-1970

Saint Ignatius Church is now considered a chapel of Christ Church, Frederica.

Morning Prayer is read Wednesday thru Friday at 8:00am by a lay person.

The Holy Eucharist is celebrated each Saturday at 5:30pm.