

A Pictorial History of Saint Andrew's Parish Church

Volume II Interior



PAUL PORWOLL

Image credits:

Charleston Evening Post: 13.

Charleston News and Courier: 15 (all), 16 (middle), 18 (top).

John Dunn: 22 (all).

Bill Fitzpatrick: 34 (bottom).

Historic American Buildings Survey: 8 (all), 9 (top), 10–12 (all).

Howard Rivers Jacobs Jr.: 17 (bottom), 18 (middle).

Jeanette Younkin Kleier: 21 (top).

Brad Nettles Sr.: 34 (top and middle).

Old St. Andrew's: cover (top), 3 (sketch), 4, 6 (stone floor), 7 (postcard), 14 (top), 16 (top and bottom), 17 (top left), 18 (bottom), 19–20 (all), 21 (top), 23–26 (all), 27 (all but speaker box), 28 (all but top right and bottom right), 29 (top), 30 (all), 31 (top left and bottom left), 32 (top left and top right), 34 (top and middle).

Matt Porwoll: cover (bottom), 6 (pulpit and desk), 32 (bottom), 33 (all).

Paul Porwoll: 3 (all photos), 4 (all), 5 (all), 6 (all but stone floor and pulpit and desk), 7 (all photos), 9 (bottom), 14 (tablets), 16 (inset), 17 (top right), 21 (bottom), 27 (speaker box), 28 (top right and bottom right), 29 (middle and bottom two photos), 31 (top right, middle, and bottom right), 35 (all).

Richard Marks Restorations: 3 (sketch), 24–26 (all), 27 (all but speaker box), 28 (all but top right and bottom right), 29 (top), 30 (all), 31 (top left and bottom left), 32 (top left and top right).

Text credit (in the Preface):

Louis B. Nelson, "The Material World: Anglican Visual Culture in Colonial South Carolina" (PhD diss, University of Delaware, 2001), 1:31–34.

PREFACE

This pictorial history of the interior of Saint Andrew's Parish Church is volume two of the series. Volume one focuses on the church's exterior, and volume three on the historic graveyard.

The interior of Old St. Andrew's, as the church is commonly called, is a masterpiece of design. It is simple and elegant without being severe. Everything is in its place and in proper proportion. The brown accent colors add just enough interest to enhance the white of the walls, ceiling and pews. The visual effect can vary dramatically depending on where you sit: in the front, middle, or back of the nave; in the transept; or in the balcony.

Architectural historian Louis Nelson conjectured the effect of the cruciform interior on colonial parishioner Edward Brailsford. "Once inside," Nelson wrote, "the lofty vaulted ceiling lifted Edward's spirit; it seemed to him to be the cope of heaven itself. . . . For Brailsford, this building demanded pause and reverence as no other building in the colony could."

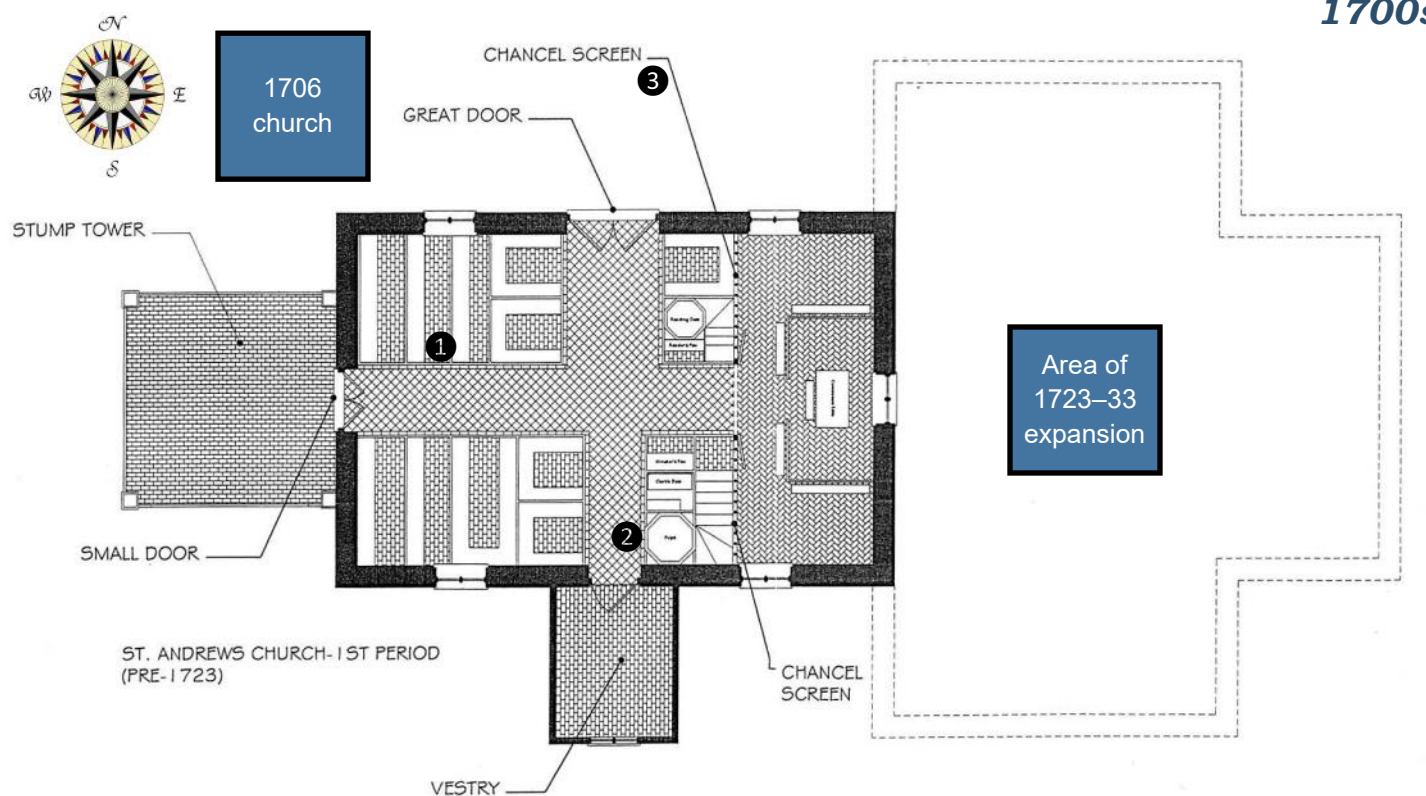
The exterior of the church has captured the attention of artists for centuries, but the interior is less well documented. While the first known image of the exterior dates to 1800, the first of the interior isn't found until the first decade of the twentieth century. Over its 315-year history, the church has been dormant for long periods of time. In fact, for 30 percent of its life, Old St. Andrew's has been unoccupied and vacant. Even today access to the inside of the church for the casual visitor can be difficult, since it's generally closed during the week. In the first half of the twentieth century, a "no trespassing" notice was prominently affixed to the west door in an attempt to deter the curious of both good and ill intent.

This pictorial history affords us an opportunity to include many of the excellent photographs taken by Richard Marks Restorations of Charleston in 2004-5, when it catalogued its comprehensive refurbishment of the church. These images are the most detailed look at any of the many restorations undertaken during the church's long life.

The Old St. Andrew's archives contains a number of wonderful period pieces, in black and white and color, in good and not-so-good condition, and with and without dates. Despite these challenges, this volume should be a desirable companion piece to the exterior pictorial history.

Those looking for more detail on certain features of the church should consult two e-books that can be found on the church website (oldstandrews.org): *Yesterday and Today: Four Centuries of Change at Old St. Andrew's* and *Surprises at Every Turn: An Architectural Tour of Old St. Andrew's*.

Paul Porwoll
Parish Historian



① Example of colonial high-backed pews, St. Michael's, Charleston



② Example of a colonial pulpit and sounding board, Pompion Hill Chapel, Huger, SC



③ Example of a colonial chancel screen, St. Luke's, Smithfield, VA



No visual depiction of the interior of St. Andrew's Parish Church exists until the early twentieth century. As part of a major restoration undertaken in 2004-5, Richard Marks Restorations (RMR) of Charleston developed a conjectural drawing of the interior of the early church. Built in 1706, the forty foot long, twenty-five foot wide structure featured high box pews, a pulpit with sounding board, five small square windows, and two entryways: a "great" door facing north toward the Ashley River and a "small" door to the west. RMR discovered evidence that a chancel screen might have been part of the early interior, and a wooden vestry might have been attached to the south wall, accessible from the interior.

Beginning in 1723 and lasting a decade or more, the church was expanded into its current cruciform shape. The east chancel wall was taken down to open up the space for a new transept and relocated chancel. A soaring, barrel-vaulted ceiling sat atop the crossing of the aisles. Large compass headed windows, including one on the east wall behind the altar, replaced the small rectangular ones. The two doors were replaced with three of equal size, on the north, south, and west ends. Molded plaster ornamentation embellished the wall and window jamb edges.

The church suffered from a devastating fire that occurred in the 1760s. It was quickly rebuilt within the existing walls and conforms to what we see today, with three enhancements. First, the large east end window was not replaced. The small semicircular window at the top of the wall remained but the wall below it was bricked in, and a magnificent reredos or altarpiece added behind the altar. Second, a gallery or balcony was installed at the opposite end of the church for people who could not afford to buy their seating, as was the convention. This area was later used to seat enslaved worshippers. Third, the tan and red floor tiles in the altar area likely are of Dutch origin and date to this restoration.

Features of the 1723 Expansion

Prominent features of the 1723 restoration are shown in these modern photos:



Transept and relocated chancel (*left to right: north, east, and south ends*).



Barrel-vaulted ceiling above the crossing of the aisles.

Compass headed windows recessed on the walls; semi-circular windows above the doors (*below*).



Three equal-size doors (*left to right: north, west, and south ends*).



Features of the 1764 Restoration

Main features of the postfire restoration of the mid-1760s are show below. The decorative cherub and grapevines above the reredos and semicircular window were added later.



Reredos at the east end

A large vertical, rectangular window was set below the semicircular window until the fire destroyed it. Rather than replace it, restorers bricked in that section of wall and added the magnificent reredos to it. Without knowing the origin of the fire and reredos, the small window at the top of the wall seems out of place.



Dutch floor tiles in the altar area.



Balcony at the west end. It is unknown whether a royal court of arms was a feature of the colonial church, as it is in St. James, Goose Creek. Ours dates to 2005.

Stone and brick flooring in the nave and transept; the Cross of St. Andrew dates to a 1969 restoration.

Features of Col. Bull's 1855 Restoration

In 1855 prominent parishioner Col. William Izard Bull of Ashley Hall plantation supervised a thorough restoration of a "very dilapidated" church. Much of today's interior retains the look and feel of that restoration, as these photos reveal.



The high-backed colonial pews had deteriorated past the point of saving and were replaced by these more fashionable, lower-backed pews. Bull used the wall along the north side of the nave as his work area, etching his new pew plan in the plaster. Bull's plan wasn't discovered until 1950, when it was promptly covered with a memorial tablet dedicated to Drayton Franklin Hastie, a vestry member who fought to keep the church open until his death in 1916. The plan was rediscovered in the 2004-5 restoration, this time cleaned and preserved for viewing behind Plexiglas.



Top right: Pulpit and reading desk.

Middle right: Cast iron railing around the pulpit, desk, and altar, likely to match the style of the pedestal of the baptismal font, which had been added in 1841.

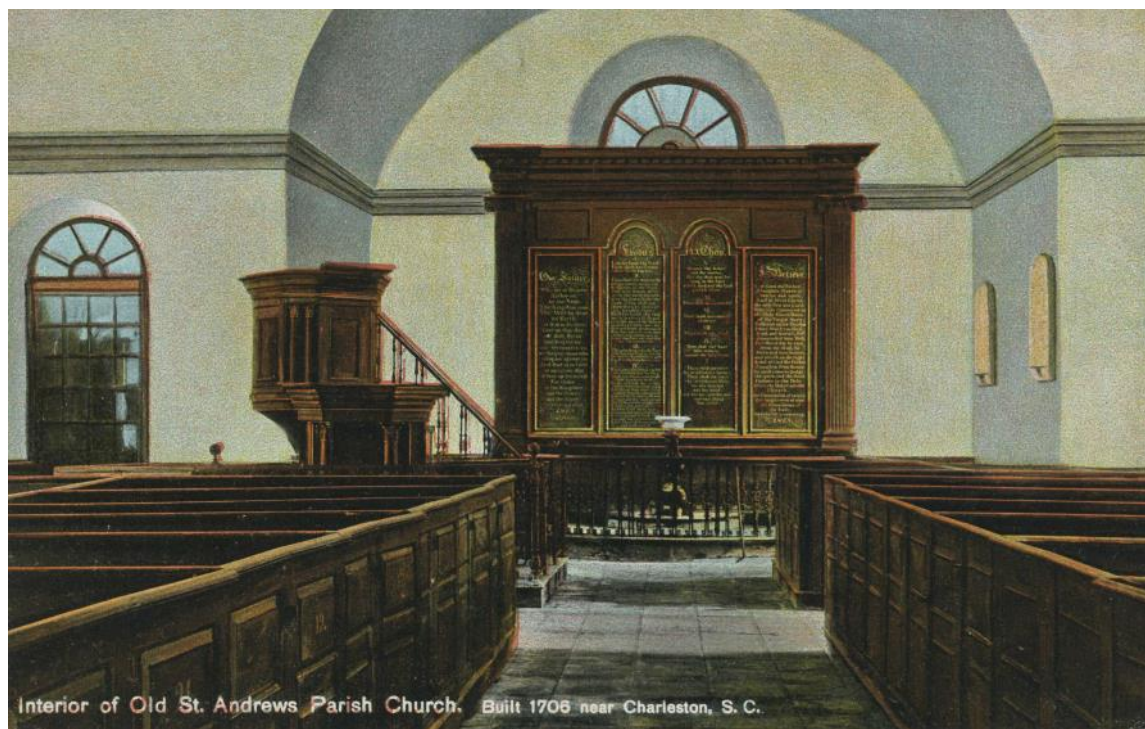


Flagstone replaced the colonial stone and brick floor; the original floor wasn't discovered until a restoration in 1969, buried in the dirt under the existing floor.

Cherub and grapevines above the reredos.

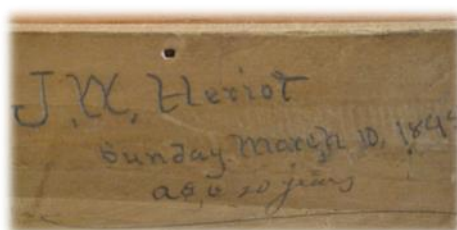


Marble memorial tablets in honor of the colonel's family, the Bulls and the Izards.



This postcard, which we have copies dated 1907-9, is the first known image of the interior. It was made in Germany and printed by The Hugh C. Leighton Co. of Portland, Maine.

When this card was sold, St. Andrew's had been without a rector for nearly twenty years. The Reverend John Grimké Drayton, Magnolia's renowned horticulturalist, had faithfully served as rector from 1851 until his death in 1891, the longest tenure in the church's history. He was not replaced, and the church became dormant for the next fifty-seven years. With the church hidden from view amid a virtual forest, deterioration began to set in, both natural and man-made. For many years the building remained open to human and animal visitors alike. The inside of the reading desk drawer was a favorite place for people to leave their mark, seemingly hidden from view. Only three weeks after Reverend Drayton's death, nine people scribbled their initials there. One prankster left this greeting: "May God be with you till we meet again."



If you know where to look, you can find these marks today. The drawer of the reading desk is covered in pencil graffiti from the late nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth.



1940

St. Andrew's was one of thousands of buildings included in the nation's first federal preservation program, the Historic American Buildings Survey. A team of HABS employees, under the administration of the National Park Service, visited the church in March and April 1940. Nine photographs (five interior and four exterior, by C. O. Greene) and ten architectural drawings (six interior and four exterior) were produced that documented the condition of the church at that time.



Top: East end with reredos, pulpit, reading desk, and barrel vaulted ceiling. Note the missing plaster on the ceiling.



Middle left: Reredos and altar area.



Middle right: Font, desk, and north door.

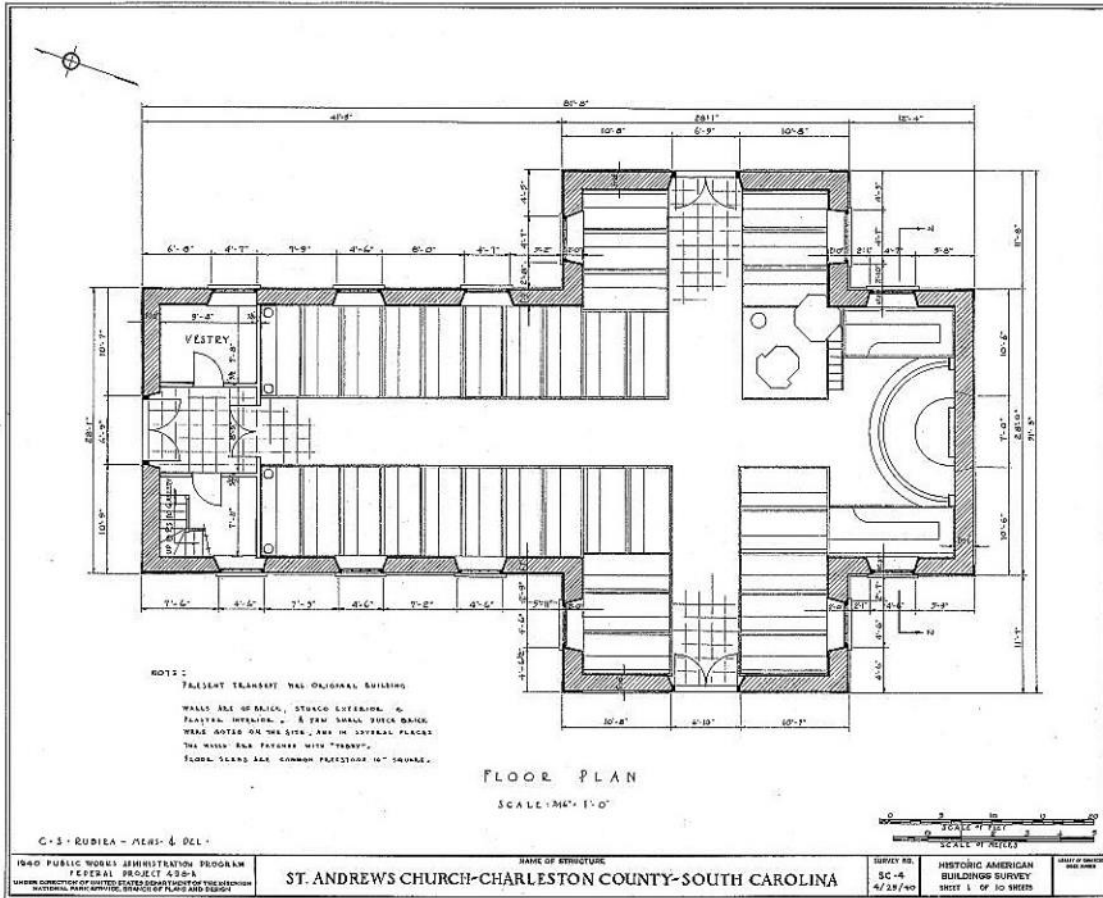


Bottom left: Balcony and west end. Again, plaster is missing on the ceiling.

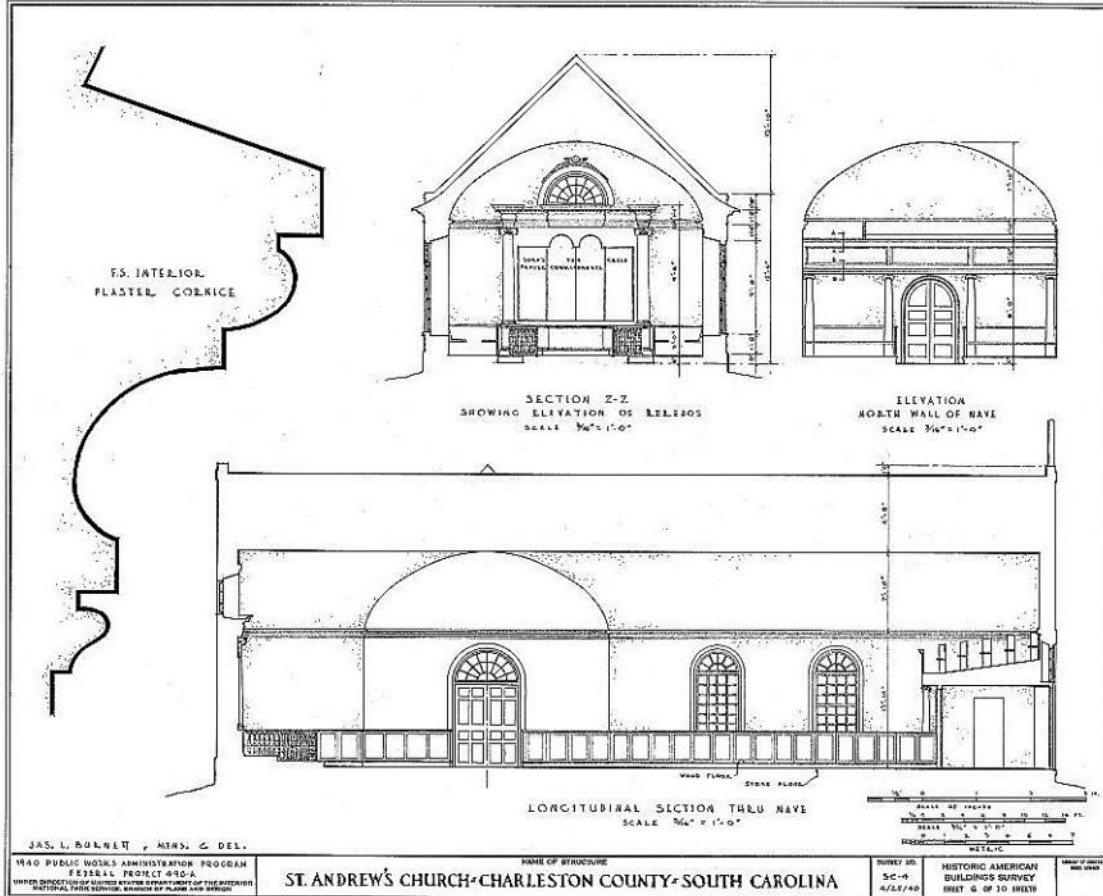


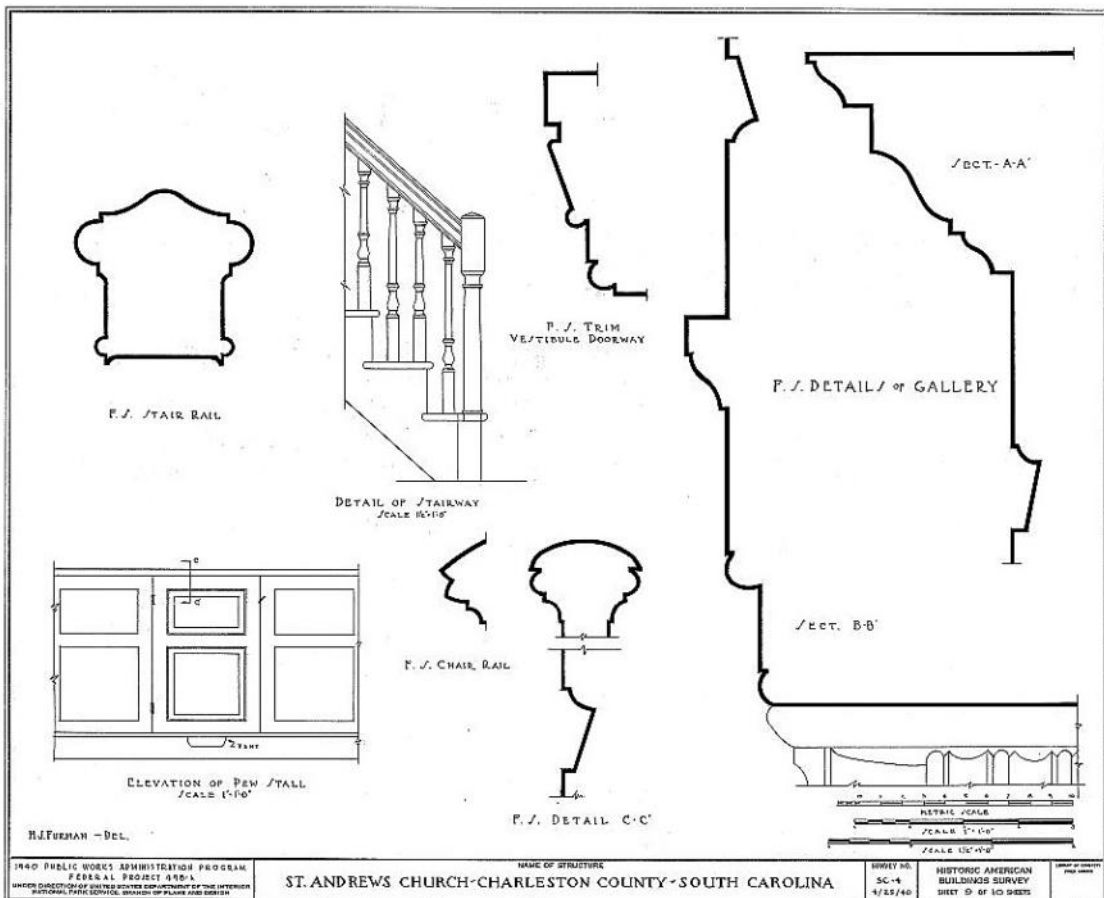
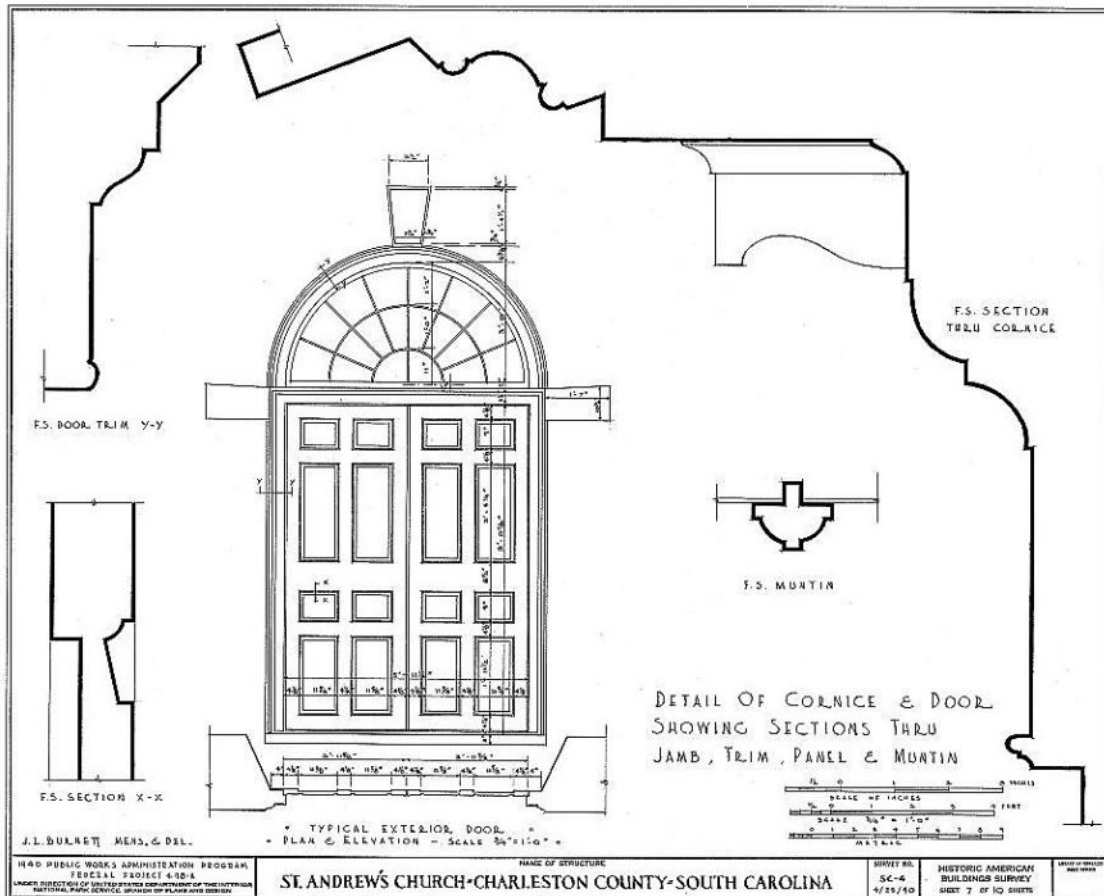
The HABS photograph (*top*) and a more current rendition (*bottom*) capture one of the most beloved features of the church, the winged cherub and decorative grapevines over the semicircular east window and reredos. This ornamentation was first described in an 1876 newspaper account of the reopening of the church after the end of the Civil War. It was likely destroyed in the 1886 earthquake and is not visible in the 1907-9 postcard. The current version was nearly new when this HABS photograph was taken. The cherub and grapevines were a gift from the Hanahan family of Millbrook Plantation to celebrate the May 1937 wedding of Maria Grayson Hanahan and Thomas Heyward Carter (both of whom are buried in the St. Andrew's graveyard).

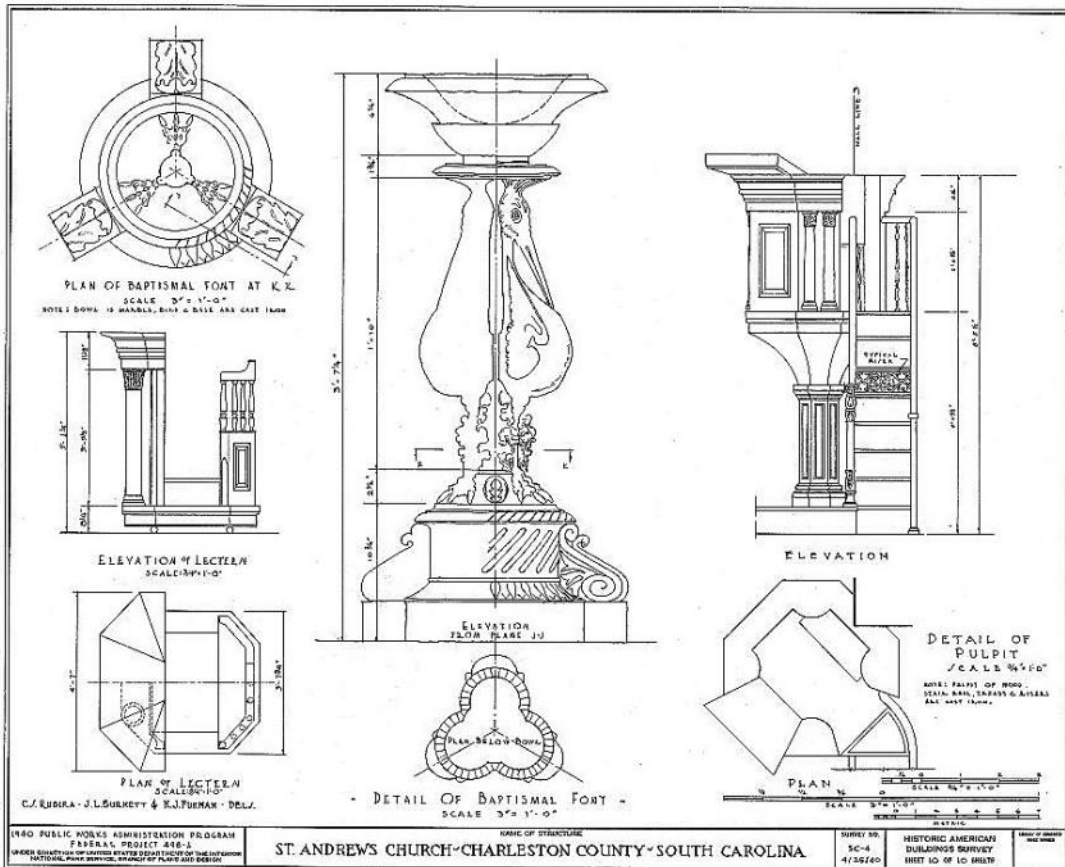
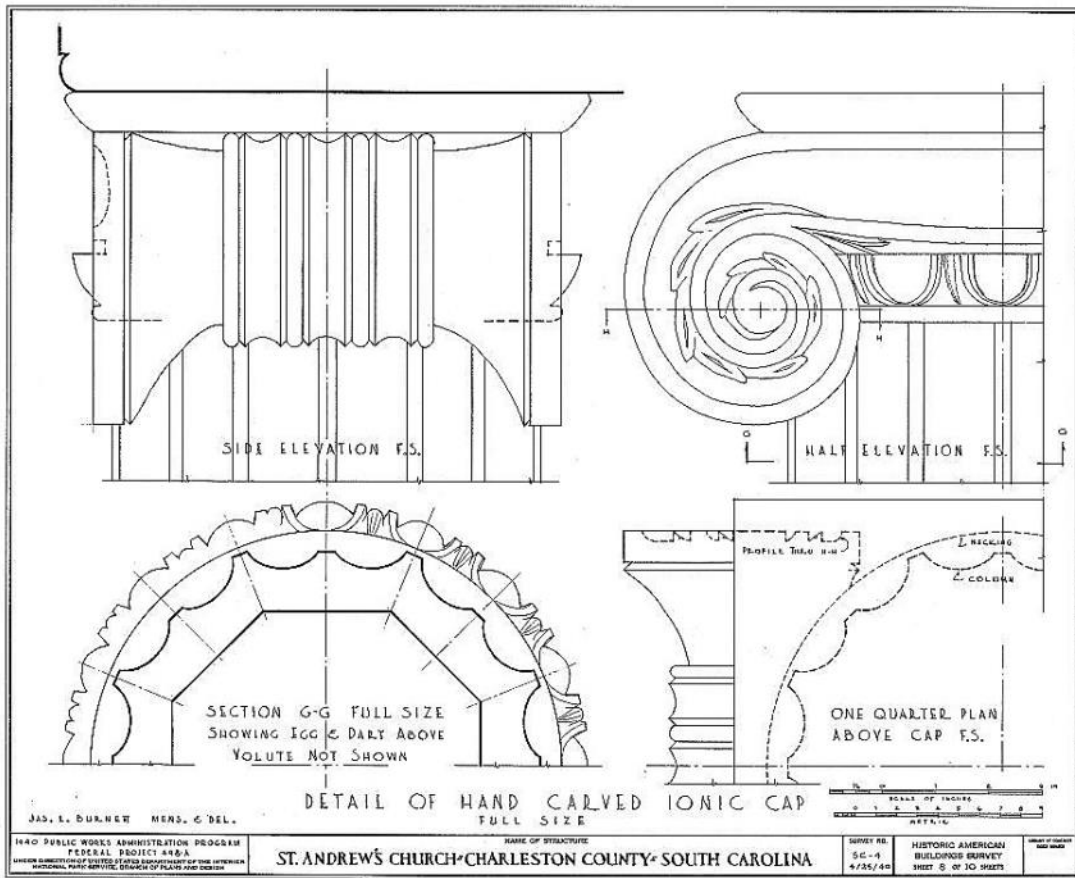


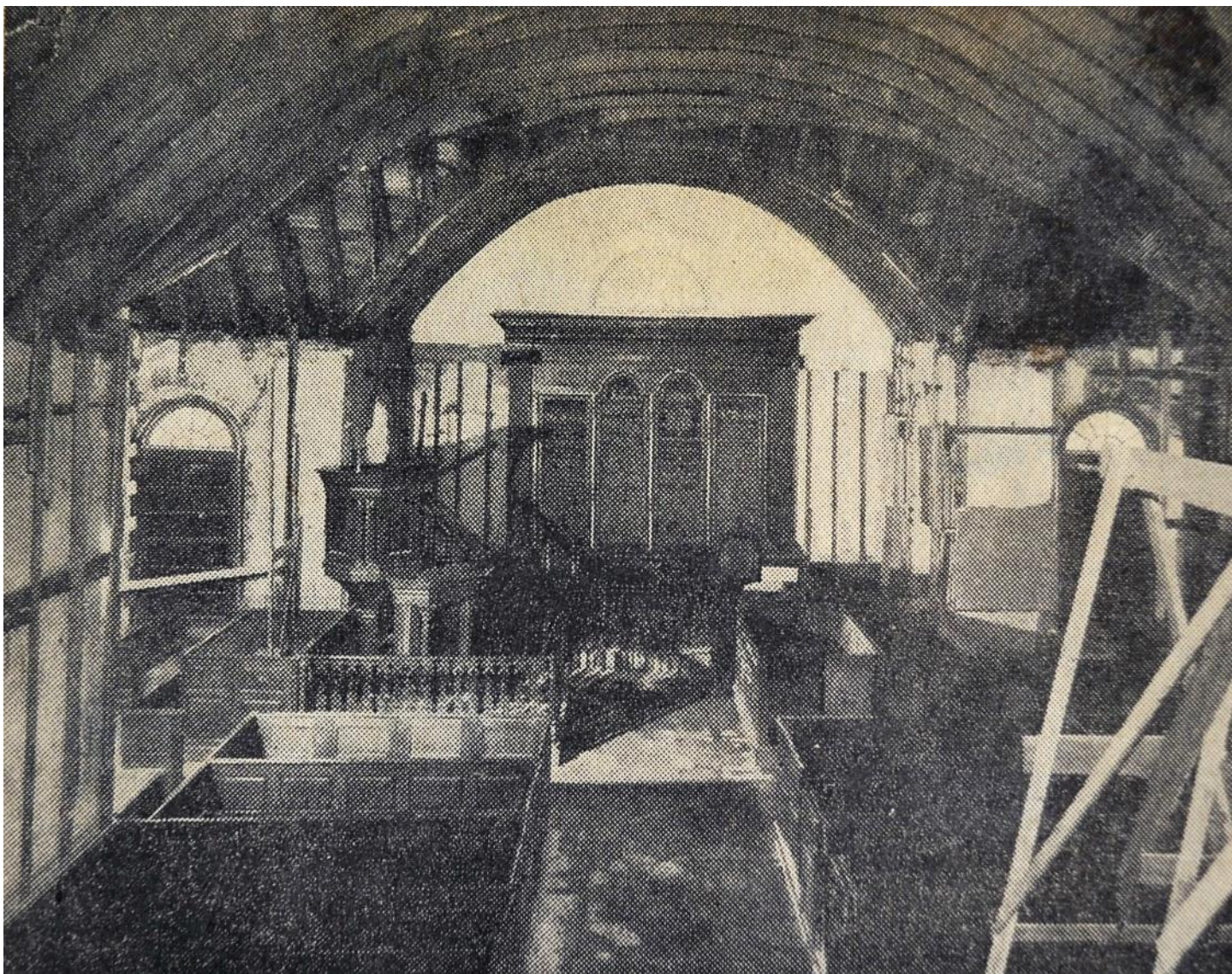


The following three pages include beautiful HABS illustrations of interior features of the church drawn in April 1940.



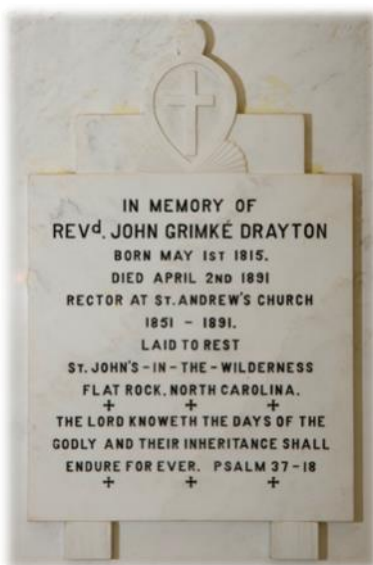






Reopened on Easter Day 1948 after its long period of dormancy, church leaders contracted with Dawson Engineering Company to investigate the scope of repairs needed to restore the long untended building. Dawson found significant and extensive termite damage that forced the church to close in early 1949. The work took about two years to complete. Plastering was removed so that termite-damaged wood in the ceiling trusses and wall studs could be replaced. Parishioner Charles W. Simons Jr. remembered going into the church for the first time and looking up to see the exposed timbers. "It looked like a wooden cathedral," he said, as this photo in the February 3, 1949, issue of the *Charleston Evening Post* attests.

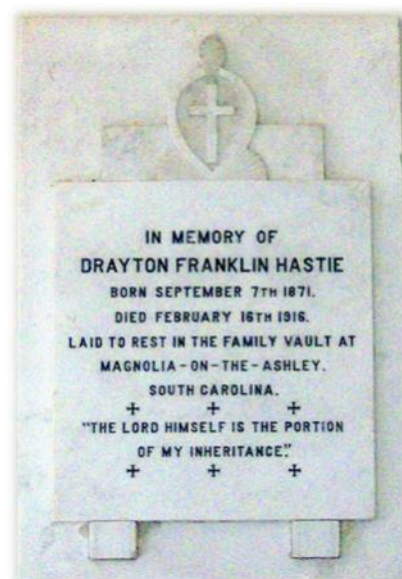
In addition, damaged pews were repaired, spaces between the floor pavers were filled in, window sills and shutters were refurbished, the reredos was cleaned, and an oil heater was installed in the north transept by the door, with the flue sticking out of the building over the door.



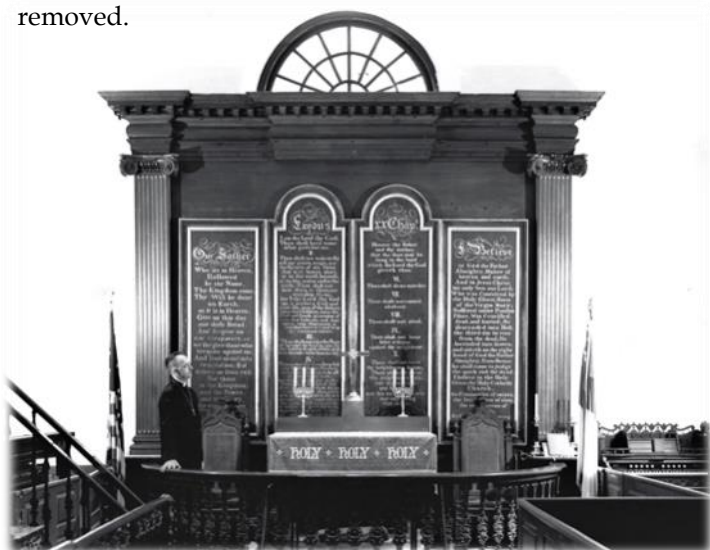
This undated photograph shows a nicely remodeled interior. As part of the restoration, two marble tablets were placed on the walls of the nave, which Bishop Thomas Carruthers dedicated in 1950.

South wall (*left*): The Reverend John Grimké Drayton.

North wall (*right*): Reverend Drayton's grandson Drayton Franklin Hastie, for many years treasurer and vestry member. After his death in 1916, the Diocese of South Carolina took control of the church. The tablet was placed directly over Col. Bull's pew plan but was relocated after the 2004-5 restoration (see page 30).



Reverend Lynwood Magee inside the altar, mid-1950s. Note the box pews on both sides of the chancel, since removed.



Chancel with pulpit and reading desk.



Lillias Anderson (left) and Marjorie McGowan (right) arranging flowers on the altar, March 6, 1956.



Rachel Butt (left) and Lila Searson (right) holding the antebellum parish register. In 2016 this book would be rediscovered at the South Carolina Historical Society and would spur the publication of *"In My Trials, Lord, Walk with Me": What an Antebellum Parish Register Reveals about Race and Reconciliation*.



Women by the pulpit stairs.

1960s

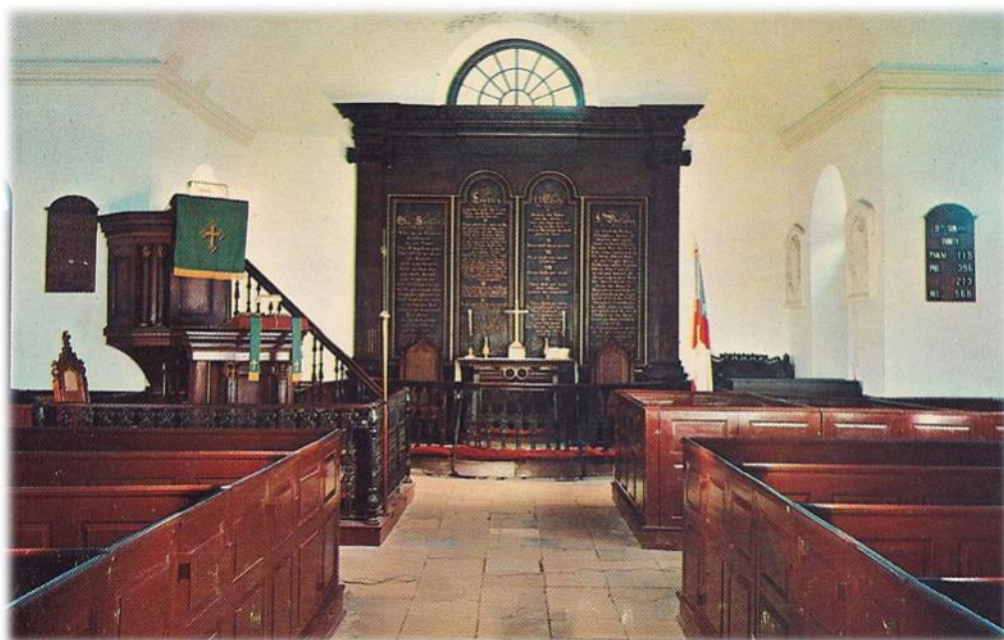


Chancel area in the 1960s. A velvet rope was used a temporary barrier to the chancel, and behind it, a table. Note the flagstone floor pavers and organ on the southeast wall.



The Charleston News and Courier highlighted Easter worship at Old St. Andrew's with this photo on April 23, 1962.

A similar view of the top picture, in color and without the rope and table. Note the hymn boards on the north and south transept walls. These were placed in memory of parishioner Calvin Pigott, who was killed in an auto accident by a drunk driver in 1962.



1969 Restoration

The church received a facelift in 1969, and in the process, made a startling discovery. The sandstone paver floor, as it became increasingly more and more uneven as the years went by, was removed and prepared for leveling. Underneath it in the dirt workers found three layers of stone and brick, which had been the materials previously used. Our best guess is that the stone and brick were of colonial origin and was replaced by Col. William Bull in his 1855 restoration. Thankfully, the old materials weren't thrown away but kept under the new sandstone paver floor. The stone and brick were now reused and mortared in place, with a Cross of St. Andrew laid at the crossing of the aisles and at the west entrance.



The floor as it looks today.



Hugo Tezza laying the new floor. The pattern was designed by Jack Bueller.



Rivers Jacobs captured the pews, balcony, and inside of the doors painted blue; the current white color scheme, with brown top rails, dates to 1991.

1970s



Mary L. Wilson with the new interior, March 1970. Note the numbers on the pew doors and the organ pipes in the south transept. (The console is behind the pulpit). A new Zimmer pipe organ replaced the electric organ in the chancel. It was first used for worship in September 1969 and dedicated three months later.



The Reverend John Gilchrist facing the congregation at worship, 1972. With limited space around the altar, Reverend Gilchrist's attempt at modernizing the worship experience proved impractical.



Youth choir in the south transept.

View from the nave (top left) and balcony (top right).

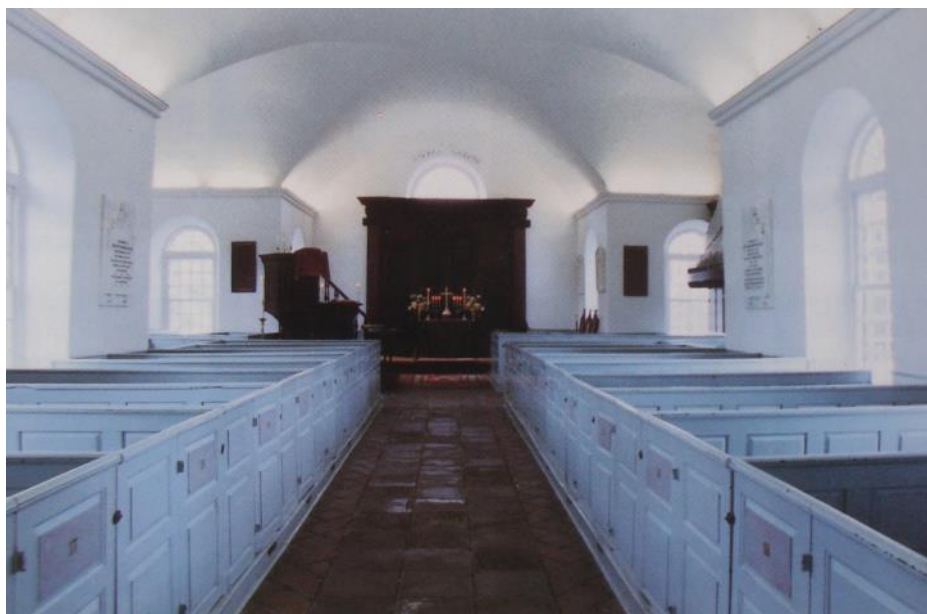


Father George Tompkins in ministry: infant baptism in the south transept (*middle*) and Easter Eucharist (*bottom*).

Note the brown wooden casing around the organ pipes. This was replaced by a new white surround in 2005.



1990s



The “blue” church before the color change, 1991.



The new “white” interior, Christmas Eve 1994.

Note the rectangular heating and air conditioning (HVAC) registers that have been installed in the ceiling just above the walls.

Choirs in the north and south transepts.



1990s



Father George processing out of church at the end of worship, the First Sunday after Christmas, 1994.

Sharon Gilchrist painted this striking screen behind the altar in the Children's Chapel in Magee House.



A series of beautiful interior photos by John Dunn, Christmas 1991.



As Old St. Andrew's prepared for its tercentennial celebration in 2006, church leaders called in structural engineers to give the old building a thorough examination. The results were sobering. Differential building settlement had caused the walls to bow outwards. The collar-tied roof structure was failing, with ties pulled away from many of the rafters. These and a host of other issues caused the church to be closed for ten months in 2004-5.

Stripping the church to make ready for the restoration, April 25, 2004.

Senior warden Bob Fogel carries the cross, and the Reverend Greg Smith, the pulpit Bible (*top*).

Men of the church remove the altar (*bottom*).



These photos from Richard Marks Restorations and Old St. Andrew's provide a detailed look at the work that made the church the beauty of holiness we enjoy today.

Note the center column that supported the weight of the rafters during repair (*at left*).

Note also the 1764 rafters pulled down for repair or discard (*at bottom right*). Parishioner David Seithel later used some of this wood for crosses sold as a fundraiser.



Revealing the valley rafters in the barrel vaulted ceiling.



New roof truss base.



New steel and wood roof truss at the crossing of the aisles.

2000s



New steel lath ready for replastering.



The finished product: newly-repaired barrel vaulted ceiling.



Replastering and repainting of the interior is nearly completed.

2000s



Floor repairs:

After the flooring was removed, an archeological investigation was undertaken that added new information to the church's history.



New HVAC system under the floors. Registers are now in the floors, and not in the ceiling.



New wood flooring under the pews.



Colonial brick was reset in the chancel.

2000s



Interior finishing, before and after the pews were reinstalled.



Pew repairs after reinstallation.



Speaker boxes were added to each pew to enhance the worship experience.



Pulpit repair, including fixing termite damage to the base and adding bolts to affix the top to the wall.



Cleaning and relettering the reredos, with detail (2011).



Top: Repairing the gutter for the cove lighting.

Middle: 2019.



Wall sconces were added to provide additional lighting.



Col. William Izard Bull's pew plan was rediscovered after being covered by the Hastie monument in 1950; before and after refurbishment.



The Hastie monument was moved to the southwest wall of the nave near the balcony. After it proved unstable in that location, it was removed.



2000s



Balcony: before and after,
including flags and royal
coat of arms on the front.



Sacristy: during the
renovation (*left*)
and after (*right*).

The organ case was donated by Marion Puckhaber in memory of her daughter Veronica Puckhaber Condon.



2011

The beautifully restored and decorated-for-Christmas interior,
December 2011.





Three special events inspire us:

Top: The congregation gathers before leaving for Graveyard Walk, 2013.

Middle: Christmas pageant, 2013.

Bottom: Ending procession of Choral Evensong, 2014.



We'll end with our most recent enhancement. The exacting restrictions enacted in response to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) in 2020 and 2021 presented significant challenges to churches across America. States prohibited people from meeting in groups, small or large. Worship services were held by clergy and choir only (no other attendees were allowed) and live streamed to parishioners watching remotely at home. Thanks to Mike Christensen and his technical expertise, the church was equipped with the hardware and software that made live streaming possible. Services are now open to parishioners and restrictions are loosening, but worship can continue to be viewed online.



Cameras and microphones were placed unobtrusively along the walls of the nave and transept (*top*).

Computer and mixer for broadcasting are located in the balcony (*bottom*).