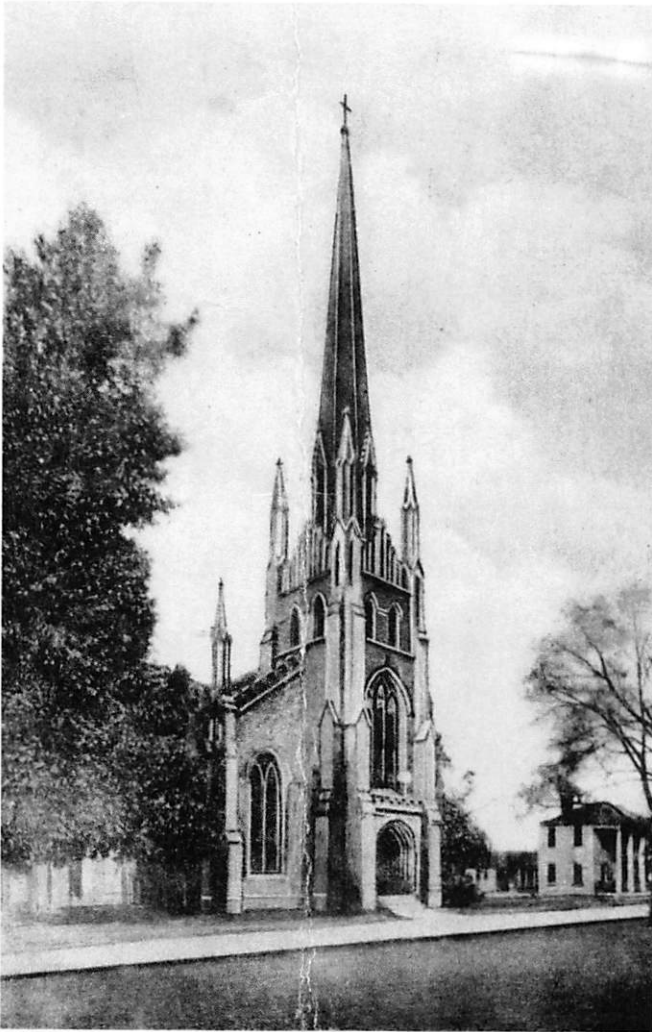


Trinity Episcopal Church

Abbeville, SC

The Right Reverend W. Andrew Waldo, Bishop
The Reverend Father Todd D. Oswald, Priest

Our Mission: To do the work that Christ has given us to do.



A Prayer for Trinity

Eternal God, giver of every good gift, you have called us into a holy fellowship as a Church and a community; Grant us grace to restore this place for your glory, that preserved by the power of your Holy Spirit, we may serve you with one accord all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A History of Trinity

Trinity Episcopal Church dates from 1841, with the construction of a small wooden building. In 1858, the growing and more affluent congregation decided to build a larger and finer structure. The architect, George E. Walker of Columbia, found inspiration for his design in the magnificent Gothic cathedrals of France. This was quite appropriate, since Abbeville was named by John de la Howe for his native home, Abbeville, France. The cornerstone was laid on June 27, 1859, and the church was consecrated on November 4, 1860. The nave is 43 feet wide and 81 feet long; the walls are of solid handmade brick, 3 feet thick for the side walls but thicker under the soaring steeple, which is over 120 feet tall.

Trinity holds a virtual "library" of rare 19th-century American stained glass, including at least eight windows dating to the church's erection in 1859-60. Legend passed down for generations told that the chancel window was of English origin and ran the blockade through Charleston in the Civil War. Believed to be a window intended for a Northern church, the legend told, Trinity's members decided to keep and install the window, altering it to fit the existing space. Historical research in 2014, however, proved the window to be much more valuable and most likely the one originally intended for Trinity. Experts now attribute the chancel window to the New York studio of William Gibson, considered to be the "father of stained glass painting in America." Gibson was also the brother of John and George Gibson, who provided stained glass for the U.S. Capitol building. Stylistic similarities point to Gibson's studio as the source also of the "Suffer Little Children" window and the medallions with symbols of faith adorning the tops of the church's other stained glass windows. The Epiphany window, Trinity's only 20th-century stained glass, was installed in 1941, and was crafted by J&R Lamb studios. It is cunningly situated, as it captures the light in the late morning, during regular Sunday worship.

The steeple bell was the gift of Col. J. Foster Marshall of Abbeville, who was killed at the Second Battle of Manassas in 1862. During the war, a Confederate officer requested that the bell be melted down for the manufacture of a cannon, but fortunately the request was never pursued.

The rare John Baker "tracker" organ was one of the first organs in Abbeville County and was still in use until 2006, when it was dismantled for renovations. The organ is still housed at the church with hopes to soon have the work completed and the organ reassembled and once again used in the regular worship services at Trinity. The chandelier and side lights are the original electric lights installed in 1907, given by the Ladies' Guild from the proceeds of an oyster supper. Pews and other wooden furnishings of the church were all made by one man, the pews all being made of single planks, both seats and backs. The altar is the original and was returned to the church, after a long and mysterious absence in 1979.

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