

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

History

St. Luke's Church, the "Parish Church of the Mountains", is a part of a world-wide family of Churches which trace their roots to the British Isles. We are a parish within the [Diocese of the South](#) of the Episcopal Missionary Church (EMC). The Rt. Rev. Dr. William W. Millsaps is Bishop of the South. Christ Church, Monteagle, Tennessee, serves as the Cathedral for the diocese.

The EMC, incorporated in 1992, preserves and proclaims the faith of what was known for many years of the "Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States". The new structure was an outgrowth of Forward in Faith (formerly known as the Episcopal Synod of America). The Rt. Rev. A. Donald Davies, retired Bishop of Fort Worth, served as Presiding Bishop until 1989 when he was succeeded by Bishop Millsaps, former Chaplain of the University of the South at Sewanee, Tenn. The Rt. Rev. Council Nedd II, Rector of St. Alban's Anglican Church in Pine Grove Mills, Pa. succeeded Bishop Millsaps as Presiding Bishop in 2010. In 2014, Bishop Millsaps assumed the duties of Presiding Bishop again.

The first permanent settlers to the American continent brought with them the faith of the Church of England, parent of the American Episcopal Church. When the three small ships of men who founded Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607 touched land after their trip across the stormy ocean, their first act was to give thanks to Almighty God for the success of their voyage. They set

up a crude cross and altar and celebrated the Holy Communion at the point of land now known as Cape Henry and marked by a great cross.

At Jamestown the colonists immediately built a place of worship, where they "had daily Common Prayer, morning and evening, every Sunday two sermons, and every three months the Holy Communion." From this very small beginning the rites and worship of the Church of England as found in the Prayer Book spread throughout the colonial states.

After the American Revolution of 1776, the Church of England in America was completely disestablished and had to set about re-organizing its life and structure. Since two-thirds of the men who had signed the Declaration of Independence and most of those who drew up the federal Constitution were Churchmen, it was not strange that many of these same persons helped in this noble task of building into the new American Church their own ideas about democracy.

The first task was to secure bishops for the new church. The Rev. Samuel Seabury of Woodbury, Connecticut, was elected in 1783 as the Episcopal Church's first bishop. He was consecrated in Scotland in 1784, because English law still required him to take an oath of allegiance to the King, which he could not do. With the subsequent election and consecration of two more bishops, the American Episcopate was now firmly established. These three men made up the necessary number for consecrating additional bishops on these shores.

On July 28, 1789, the most important General Convention ever held by the Episcopal Church took

place in Philadelphia. A constitution and a set of canons were adopted, and an American Book of Common Prayer was authorized. The Church also took its official name, the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, at this convention.

Since that time the Episcopal Church has spread out to all parts of the country. St. Luke's was founded in 1987 under the auspices of the Traditional Protestant Episcopal Church Foundation. The Rev. Victor H. Morgan was appointed to serve as Vicar. The first service was held June 7, 1987, in the Blue Ridge City Hall. The congregation continued to meet at this location until the present church was opened Easter Day, 1995.

St. Luke's Churchyard contains the graves of a number of early settlers dating from the turn of the century.

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