St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church

13396 River Road, Destrehan, Louisiana

St. Charles Borromeo Church, the first parish on the east bank of the Mississippi south of Baton Rouge, dates back to 1740, when the church moved from the west bank. There, it had been called St. John of the Germans, but a name change accompanied the change in location. Although St. Charles Borromeo was an *Italian* cardinal of the 16th century, this area belonged to the political district of First *German* Coast. The political jurisdiction officially took the name of the church in 1807, becoming St. Charles Parish. The cemetery includes important figures in local history.

The architecture of the church has changed markedly over the years. The first building, a small log chapel dating to 1770, was replaced in 1806 by a frame structure fondly known as the Little Red Church. When that burned in the early 1920s, the contemporary mission-style church succeeded it, incorporating the cypress pews from the Little Red Church in its paneling and balcony railing.

The major stained glass works in the present church date from 1978, when the church was enlarged and renovated, and are by G. Polloni of Florence, Italy, in consultation with the Ars Liturgica Company of New Jersey. These two companies also collaborated at St Ann Catholic Church in Metairie (1976-1977) and the Chapel at Chateau de Notre Dame in New Orleans (1978). Here the artists chose transparent antique-style glass with painted symbols and quotations. Nave windows carry out the theme of the sacraments while the four writers of the gospels, with their symbols and a book, are depicted in the side chapels.

Over the confessionals are two vivid slab glass windows. The lovely decorative round window above the entrance may have been part of the church construction in the 1920s, as it reflects designs popular in the Arts and Crafts movement.

**Windows**

Altar

St. John St. Matthew

St. Luke St. Mark

Confessional Confessional

Eucharist Penance

Confirmation Anointing the sick

Baptism Holy orders

Matrimony

*Visited March 15, 1998*

When citing information from this document, please acknowledge

the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, 2021