St. James Episcopal Church

205 North 4th Street, Baton Rouge

The oldest Episcopal church in Baton Rouge and the fourth oldest Episcopal church in Louisiana, St. James is proud of its history of sharing.

The parish traces its roots back to 1819, but it didnt obtain a charter from the legislature until 1844. For many years members joined forces with a Presbyterian congregation that continues to flourish a few blocks away. In 1845, Episcopal services were first held in the current location of the church, but the sharing with other downtown houses of worship continues. The two world wars provided opportunities for ecumenical services for the military personnel deployed in the area. During the Katrina diaspora, St. James cooperated with neighboring churches to provide meals, baths, and social services to the many displaced from South Louisiana.

An architectural landmark in the midst of commercial and governmental buildings, St. James brick Gothic Revival cruciform structure dates from 1894, when the flourishing congregation needed more space than the previous clapboard building could provide. In addition to the church building, todays campus houses a chapel, a large program building, and a day school for children through fifth grade. Several miles away is St. James Place, a retirement community sponsored by the church.

The interior of the church creates a serene sense of holiness. The sanctuary focuses on the cross, the altar, and the reredos wall with its triptych portrayal of the Angel of the Resurrection. Stained glass windows, needlepoint pieces, intricately carved wooden screens, and Victorian adornments add to the beauty of services.

Designed and created by the Louis Comfort Tiffany studio, the Angel of the Resurrection window was dedicated Easter Day 1910 and was the only figural window in the church until 1948, when the nave and transept windows were installed. These were designed and executed by the Jacoby Art Glass Company of St. Louis, Missouri. Until then, exterior light came through windows with small yellow diamond-shaped panes (quarries). The Jacoby windows depict scenes from the life and ministry of Jesus.

*Notes based on a presentation by Harriet Murrell*

**Windows of St. James Episcopal**

Angel of the Resurrection

Altar

The Nativity Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

Teaching in the Synagogue Praying in the

Garden of Gethsemane

Baptism in the The Good Shepherd

River Jordan

Healing of the Sick The Transfiguration

West Wall over Church Entrance

The Ascension

*Visited March 2012*

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