

First Building -- 1826
Ellicott Street



Second Building -- 1850
Ellicott Street



Third Building --1915
E. Main Street



Services and Other Events

Sunday

8:45 a.m. Choir rehearsal
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
 (Nursery facilities are available)
10:00 a.m. Church School
11:15 a.m. Coffee Hour Fellowship

Wednesday

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
12 noon Bible Study

Thursday

9am – 2pm—Thrift Store

Office hours:

Mon—Wed: 9 am – 3:30pm
Thursday: 9 am to 1:30 pm

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Website: www.stjamesbatavia.org



If you don't presently have a church affiliation, please consider becoming a part of the St. James community.
All are welcome!

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Welcome to Historic St. James Episcopal Church 405 E. Main St. Batavia, New York



Founded June 6th, 1815

The Rev. Bonnie F. Morris
Rector

Our Mission is to Feed and be Fed in the Love and Works of Jesus Christ.

All are welcome in God's house and at God's table.

Our Story

On June 6th 1815, a group of eleven men met, for the purpose of incorporating St. James' Parish. Prior to this, the congregation met in Hichox's Inn, a section of Ellicott Hall, Batavia's original Court House. Parishioners would first stop at Richard Smith's house to carry the benches and kneeling cushions to be used for the service. Of the eleven men present, John Hickox and Samuel Benedict were named wardens, the rest vestrymen. A sub-committee of three, Mr. Ross, Mr. Keyes and Mr. Sutherland were elected "...to await the agent (Joseph Ellicott) of the Holland Land Company", to ascertain what aid could be given towards the erection of a Protestant Episcopal Church in the village of Batavia.

Two weeks later the committee reported success in the form of a donation, if built of wood, \$1,000, if by brick, \$1,500. Ground was broken in April of 1816 on Ellicott Street to build a brick church. It took six years to complete. The gray stone foundation was quarried on the Redfield Farm, the red brick was supplied by a local kiln and the walnut window frames and oak floors were hauled from Pine Hill (now Elba). The building stood 50 X 100 feet with walls three feet thick, while the belfry held an 800 lb bell. By 1833 the life of the brick church was ebbing. Its hurried and unstudied construction made repair expenses increasingly excessive with each passing year.

A new stone church was erected on the same site in 1836. This new church was built

in part with the resources from the old church. Enough brick was left over to build a parsonage next to the church. This parsonage was the rector's home for almost 70 years until 1904. (The brick building is still in use as offices, and is located on Ellicott St. just east of the new Genesee County Court building, at the Upton Monument.) In the same year Mrs. Kenny deeded a home at 41 Ross St for the sum of \$100. This was used as the rectory until 1930.

It is interesting to note that during these times, to attend the services, the churches sold the pews. Prices ranged from \$75 to \$350 per pew depending on how close it was to the altar. In 1840 The Rev. Bolles gently advocated a "free church" by means of a Sunday night service open to all and took another step by welcoming into the church those unable to afford permanent seating. In 1880 The Rev. Hitchcock gave notice of a further tax, ranging from \$5 to \$75. Later, rental would be set on the basis of whole pews, half pews, and individual seating. It wasn't until 1921 that the services were "free".

In 1877 money was left by D. W. Tomlinson and Judge Phineas Tracy for the purchase of a new organ. It was built by William Allen Johnson and his son at a cost of \$4,825 and was moved to the new site. In 1940 pipes were acquired from the Skinner Organ Company, owned by Harper Sibley of Rochester. The firm, having the contract for the work, provided additional pedal pipes and couplers. The organ was revamped again late in the twentieth century.

In 1904 the church was deteriorating fast. The Tonawanda Creek gave periodic trouble and the neighborhood had begun to industrialize. The property was put up for sale, which didn't occur until 1908. A bequest by Adelaide Richmond Kenny made the move possible. They purchased the old Tomlinson place on East Main St. for \$15,000. The barn on the property was sold, the land rented, and the lumber from the house was saved for building purposes. Only the iron fence was left and is still standing along Main Street. As building progressed, windows were transferred from the old church along with choir stalls, organ, chancel rail, lectern, tabernacle, Bishop's chair, litany desk and candelabras. Mr. Rupprecht donated a new chancel window and the old Troy bell now hung in a truly English belfry and first chimed the call to worship in the fall of 1909.

In 1948 the chapel was redesigned and new lights installed. In 1959 the chantry was completed, and in 1960 new lighting was installed in the nave and aisles, chancel and sanctuary. A major restoration was undertaken in 1964 and the church was rededicated that same year.

As part of our nation's 1976 bicentennial celebration, our country's, and church's historic flags were hung in the nave. They are memorials made possible by donations from the members of ten families. A memorial plaque in the rear of the nave commemorates the flags and those memorialized.

We hope you will take a moment to enjoy the beauty and find as much peace and comfort from God within these walls as thousands of parishioners and others have through the years.