

History of the church.

It is believed that since the arrival of the first sailors during the 1500's , there has been a chapel or church on or near this site in James' Valley; indeed, the valley was first called "Chapel Valley". In his report of the island, written in 1588, Cavendish wrote

...we found a marvellous fair and pleasant valley, wherein lay divers handsome buildings and houses were set up, and especially one which was a church, which was tiled and whitened on the outside very fair, and made with a porch...

His account gives more details and gives the date to the cross erected outside the church, that of 1571. [See St Helena 1502-1938 Gosse]

The first Anglican church in Jamestown was built following the arrival of the East India Company [EIC]in 1659 and their first chaplain in 1671. It is thought not to have been a very solidly built church as by 1678 it was in need of repair. Many petitions were made to the Governor in Council before any action was taken and it was 1772 before preparations were made to build a new church. The church built in 1774 still stands although it has been altered during its life. You will see inside, marks on the walls suggesting that the roof height has been raised and that there was also a gallery in the church at some time.

The church is large - it served the garrison of the **town and several pews are marked "military"**. The tower was originally at the West End and there was no north porch. In 1843 the tower had to be dismantled as it was unsafe, a new tower was built by the north door with a spire. The spire became unsafe and was taken down in 1980.

We are proud to be the oldest Anglican church South of the Equator.

A view of one of the memorials.



Where to find clergy and services.

There is a morning Eucharist in this church at 9.30am each Sunday except on the 2nd Sunday of the month **when it is held in St John's Church, at the top of the town.** Choral Evensong is held on the 2nd Sunday in **this church** and on the 4th Sunday in **St John's** at 7.00pm.

Please see the notice in the church porch for other services which are also advertised in the local paper.

The Bishop of St Helena Rt Rev'd Dr Richard Fenwick
Phone 24471

Vicar Ven. Archdeacon Fr Dale Bowers Phone 22663

Churchwardens—
Mrs Ivy Ellick 24733; Mrs Cathy Hopkins 23729.

We hope you will join us in our worship while you are staying here.

St James' Church

The oldest Anglican church South of the Equator



Welcome to St James' Church

We hope you will enjoy your visit and take away happy memories of the church and of the island.

Bienvenue ! Willkommen!

A look around the Church.

Inside the porch, you will see the plaque erected to the workmen who removed the spire in 1980. The inner doors were added to prevent mynah birds and pigeons from getting into the church to nest! In the tower there are two bells and on the north face you will have seen the clock which was restored by local craftsmen a few years ago and is wound every week.

The East End

If you turn towards the altar, you will notice first the stained glass window of the Good Shepherd which was installed in 1874. It is in the centre above the altar and is flanked by two painted glass windows of a later date which have recently been restored.

The stone reredos was presented by Saul Solomon in 1845; there is a memorial to Mr Solomon on the north wall of the chancel.

The altar rail of teak, was presented in memory of Thomas Ford Thompson, a long-serving parish clerk and schoolmaster.

In the 1800's St James' Church suffered from the attentions of the white ants. In 1862 it had to be closed to public worship. You will notice that all the furniture is made from hardwoods like iroko or teak.

On the walls of the chancel and sanctuary there are some interesting marbles and brasses. Outside the church you will find tombstones moved from the graveyard further up the street which is now a **children's playground. The story of soldiers and East India Company employees is told in these memorials. They tell of deaths as travellers to England from India stopped to recover from what proved to be fatal illnesses. (The stones were removed to allow restoration work to the exterior of the church which was completed in 2012– some are at St John's Church, others at St Michael's, Rupert's Valley)**

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The West End.

The font could be from the original Portuguese church; it is made of white marble set on a cylinder and plinth of black marble. the inscription reads *J Mallcott London.* Mallcott was a marble mason who died in 1776.

There is an icon of Our Lady and Our Lord on the west wall. a reproduction of the Mother of God Petroskaja, early 15th Century.

There is much more detail about St James' Church and the other churches of the diocese in "Churches of the South Atlantic Islands 1502 -1991" by + Edward Cannan, a former bishop of St Helena.

View of the Sanctuary



Some Important Dates.

1502 Discovery of St Helena by Juan da Nova. A chapel was built using timbers from a ship of the fleet.

1588 Thomas Cavendish visited St Helena on his round the world voyage.

1659 The East India Company garrisoned the island & first permanent settlement was built. St Helena was important as a staging post for ships going to and from the East.

1673 The Dutch captured the island briefly, before it was retaken by Sir Richard Munden.

1772 The present building of St James commenced, it was completed in 1774 and the spire was added in 1843 [removed in 1980].

1795 Troops were sent from St Helena to help the British secure the Cape colony.

1815 Napoleon was exiled to St Helena.

1821 Napoleon died [recorded in the St James' Parish register].

1834 St Helena was handed over by the East India Company to British Crown rule.

1840 A Vice Admiralty Court was established to deal with slave ships which were brought here and **the slaves were cared for. Napoleon's body was exhumed and sent to France.**

1849 St James was handed from the East India Company to the church to maintain.

1859 The diocese of St Helena was created & the first Bishop of St Helena arrived.

1869 The Suez Canal opened and lessened St Helena's importance as a port of call.

1890 The Zulu chief Dinizulu was imprisoned here for 7 years.

1899 The first stage of the submarine cable from South Africa to England was landed,

1900 Boer prisoners of war from South Africa were sent here.

1906 The British Army withdrew their garrison.

1914-18 The island was garrisoned and the St Helena Regiment was reformed.

1939-45 St Helena contributed to the war effort as it did again during the Falklands crisis.

