

The History

Venerable Historic St. Luke's, Mother Church of Warrasquoyacke Parish (later called Isle of Wight), was affectionately known as "Old Brick Church" long before it was given its present name in 1820. It is the oldest existing church of English foundation in America and the nation's only surviving Gothic building. It forms a unique bridge between the early civilization of our country and the rich culture of Medieval England. Its structure reflects the architectural and spiritual descendents of the great Gothic cathedrals of England.

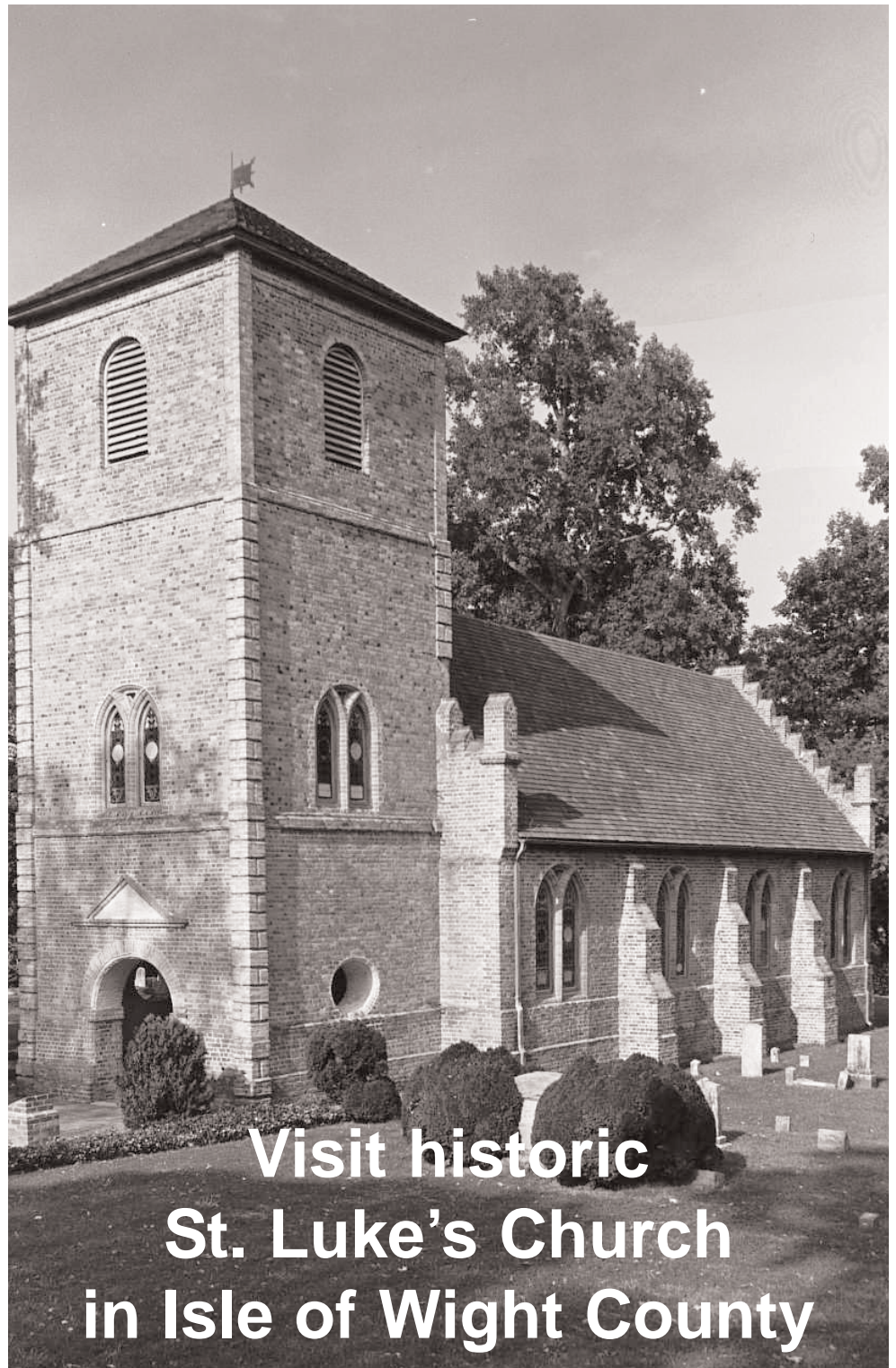
By tradition and recollection of the first Vestry Book, "Old Brick Church" is dated to 1632. It closely relates to the Tower Church at Jamestown, dated circa 1638/39. As was common at the time, it took four or five years to erect such a church; and the finishing of the interior fittings required an additional number of years, even in this parish, already numbering 522 persons in the year 1634.

Those who first assembled in "Old Brick Church" knew much of Captain John Smith, Pocahontas, John Rolfe and Powhatan, who were regarded as their contemporaries. They also suffered through the tragic Indian Massacre of 1622, which wiped out nearly a third of the Virginia settlers. Nathaniel Bacon, the scourge of Governor Berkeley, passed not far from "Old Brick Church" on his way to burn Jamestown in 1676.

In the stirring days before the Revolutionary War, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Patrick Henry, and many other of our great patriots must have knelt here before the altar and asked for guidance on their passage to or from Williamsburg, as they slowly shaped the destiny of a nation.

Amid stately oaks south of the James River in Virginia stands a handsome brick Gothic church which has stood vigil over the community of Isle of Wight County through almost 400 years of conflict, peace, despair and prosperity. Traditionally, Historic St. Luke's Church, formerly called the Old Brick Church, was founded in 1632 as a beacon, a fortress, a mission, and a gathering place for colonists facing unbearable hardship in the early days of the colonies.

--Source: www.historicstlukes.org



Visit historic
St. Luke's Church
in Isle of Wight County