St. Andrew’s Episcopal Marks 125th Anniversary on Sunday

By MARILYN GOFF
Advocate Staff Correspondent

CLINTON — Members of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church here celebrate the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the church, with the annual visitation of Rt. Rev. Giralt M. Jones, D.D., Sunday.

Although the church and its history is dated, during the last three years, the congregation has taken a great interest in making the church properties more comfortable, beautiful and usable.

Working on a “pay as you go plan,” the initial work replaced sills under the building which leveled the church. Then the sanctuary was enlarged and modernized, followed by painting, plastering, rewiring and adding new central heating and air conditioning. Refinishing the floor and adding carpets put the church in an excellent condition.

Every effort has and is being made to maintain this East Feliciana Parish landmark, not only because it is one of the finest examples of Victorian Wood Gothic architecture, but because it is an active, progressive and lively community of Christian people.

St. Andrew’s history dates from the first services held in Clinton by Episcopalians in 1842 under the leadership of a Rev. Lacy, who was president of the College of Louisiana at Jackson. In 1844 when he founded the Southern Institute for Young Ladies, he continued his ministry to Episcopalians in Jackson and occasionally in Clinton.

In 1843, a Rev. Ramsey began holding Episcopal services in Clinton on various weekends. This continued until 1852 when Rev. Frederick Dean, first resident priest of the church, began holding services in the Clinton Courthouse. That same year, St. Andrews was admitted into the union with the Diocese of Louisiana as a parish and Messrs. Hardey and M. A. Mills were elected delegates to the diocesan convention.

Following Rev. Dean’s death in 1854, Rev. John T. Cushing became pastor but resigned several months later. During the years from 1854 to 1859, religious services were not held so frequently as there was no regular pastor, and only two full communicant members. Then in 1859, Rev. John E. C. Smedes became rector and served for several years.

Active Weekend

Probably one of the most active weekends in St. Andrews 125-year-history was Jan. 15, 1886. Upon the annual visit of Rt. Rev. Joseph Bell Wimmer, D.D., five adults were baptized followed by his preaching to a “large and appreciative congregation.”

The next day he was called to meet a class of candidates for Holy Confirmation; and while there, the bishop baptized several infants. At 11 a.m., he read morning prayer, preached a sermon and administered Baptism to several adults and confirmed 15 persons. He then addressed the class and celebrated Holy Communion.

In the afternoon the bishop presided at a vestry meeting and instructed a second class.
for confirmation. In the evening, he read a prayer, administered adult baptism again and preached and confirmed 10 more persons. At the conclusion, he solemnized a marriage, followed by another baptism, confirmation service and a parting address to the congregation in which he said, “It almost breaks one's heart to turn away from a people so eager for instruction, and feel yourself powerless to send them relief.”

It wasn't until 1870 that regular Episcopal church services were started under the rector Rev. A. G. Bakewell. Services were held in the Presbyterian church. In 1871, the church had its true ecumenical beginning when the building was donated by a member of the Baptist faith in memory of her husband who was an Episcopalian.

The organ installed in the church that year was a gift of a member of the Presbyterian faith and the soloists and lead voices of the choir were of Jewish background. At this time there were 73 communicants.

With the resignation of Rev. Bakewell in 1872, the church came under the leadership of Rev. James Philson and was consecrated Nov. 23, 1873.

The church remained in some regular connection with the Diocese of Louisiana, but for many years laymen were responsible for the services. With the help of the parish women, an occasional visit from a priest and an annual visit from the bishop, the church always held some influence in the area.

St. Andrews today has regular Sunday services at 9 a.m. under the leadership of Rev. Harry Allen. Located under a grove of Pine trees, the 125-year-old-parish landmark, provides a Christian influence in the historical parish which it serves.