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## UNITARIAN CHURCH OF CHARLESTON

### DOCENT NOTEBOOK

## Welcome New Docents!

Thank you for your decision to become a UC Docent! We think you will find the experience very rewarding and especially informative about our historic church.

The **Docent Notebook** contains the information you will need to perform the duties of a Docent, and more. It is for your personal use during the period you serve as a Docent. Please return it to the church office if you leave the Docent Program. The entire Handbook and any updated replacement pages can be downloaded from the church's website at [www.charlestonuu.org](http://www.charlestonuu.org) under *Getting Involved / Docents*.

### TRAINING

"Training" for Docents is "on the job". You will be paired with an experienced Docent who will show you the ropes. You will not find it difficult, and your knowledge will grow rapidly with each tour. Periodic Sunday afternoon forums will be used to supplement your Docent training. We also recommend following as many tours as possible. You will notice that no two tours are alike. Each Docent brings his or her unique perspective ( as long as it's accurate) to his or her presentation.

### DRESS CODE

The "Dress Code" for Docents is "nice casual". No jeans, shorts, tee shirts or tank tops. Please carry your cell phone with you when you are on duty in case of emergency.

### PARKING

A "Parking Pass" is provided for our rear parking lot. You can pick up a Parking Pass at the Information Desk in Gage Hall during the Sunday Coffee Hour. Please enter your name and cell phone number on the Pass and display it on your dashboard. Please pull your car all the way into the space marked "Docents" as parking is two deep.

Thank you again for agreeing to perform this important function for visitors to our beautiful church.

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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## MISSION AND GOALS

### MISSION

The mission of our committee is to share the heritage and beauty of our church with members of the church and with the community.

### GOALS

1. to train and educate docents who will help us achieve our mission
2. to educate members of our church about our heritage
3. to share the heritage of our church with members of the community and its visitors
4. to collect cash contributions which will help maintain our church and our program
5. to appoint a chairperson and three to five members of a steering committee. The duties of these persons will be to recruit docents, manage and evaluate activities that help us achieve our goals.

The Steering Committee reports to the Buildings and Grounds liaison to the Vestry.



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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR DOCENTS

### DOCENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The job of being a Docent is quite undemanding. Anyone can do it! And it is the best way to learn a great deal about the history of our church, while making many close friends among the Docents and the congregation at large.

Once you sign up, however, there are responsibilities! The docent program is publicized through rack cards in numerous hotels, motels, the visitor's center and other places throughout Charleston. We have made a commitment to be open and give tours, and people will come to Charleston with a tour of our church as part of their plans. After enticing them to come, we do not want to disappoint!

So as a Docent, all we ask is that you:

- Make a conscientious effort to study your Docent Notebook and learn a few facts.
- Always show up on time for your assignment, or make arrangements for a substitute well in advance with the Schedule Coordinator.
- Be presentable: fancy dress is not required but nice casual is expected.

That's about it, and we look forward to having you as a UC Docent!

### DOCENT DIRECTIONS

#### GENERAL

Our Schedule Coordinator will send you an email reminder on the Monday preceding your tour. If you have a conflict and cannot volunteer on your assigned day, please call or email Susan Robinson at 843-766-8358 / 843-330-9061 or email her at [csrobinson@knology.net](mailto:csrobinson@knology.net) beforehand and Susan will arrange a replacement for you. Tours hours on Friday and Saturday are from 10 am to 1 pm and Sunday from 12:30 pm to 3 pm.

#### OPENINGS

Please arrive at the church no later than 9:45 am. The Sexton will open the church. He will open the doors, put out the signage, set up the easels in the interior aisles, and turn on the lights, heat or air conditioning, if necessary. Our Sexton, Joe McCormack, will remain on our campus all day. In case of emergency, Joe can be reached at: 843-870-3618.

If you park in one of the designated Docent spaces, place your Parking Pass on your dashboard.

If your partner is not there by 9:55 am please contact Susan Robinson.

In case the Sexton has not opened the church, turn on the lights, set out the signs, and set up the easels and pictures in the aisles. Put out a “seeded” Donation Box, brochures, post cards and Guest Book. You are expected to follow through on your own.

## **GATES**

Gates: All have combination locks

Gage Hall	1772
Front of Church	5483
Front of Garden	5483
King Street	4617
Gateway Walk And Garden (back way)	5483

You should only have to open the gate in front of the church. Please replace the chain and lock around the open gate.

## **SETUP**

Set out the sandwich board (located in the foyer) that the “Church is Open”.

Check the pamphlet rack for:

- Visitor’s Guide (new self-guide brochure)
- History / Architectural Guide
- 7 Principles
- Welcome – Who are we?

Additional copies are located in the chest of drawers in the second and third drawers. The Office Administrator should be notified if more copies are needed (843-723-4617).

Copies of “Touring the Tombstones” and the Alliance Cookbook are in the third drawer under lock and key. The key to the box is in the top drawer on your right.

The “Tombstone” pamphlet is \$5 and the cookbook is \$20.

Wear your Nametag. Nametags in the second drawer of the chest on your right.



Put out the Donation Box (on top of the chest) and seed it with any size bills (monetary not personal). Remember to remove them at the end of your shift and do not include them in the cash tally. Please try not to leave the Donation Box unattended.

Place the translation cards on the window sills.

## **TOURS**

Use the mechanical counter to determine the number of visitors. It works best if one of you takes responsibility for that important task. Number counts are an assessment tool to evaluate the viability of the program.

Visitors may take photographs.

Tell visitors that their donations will go toward the maintenance of the church building and thank them for their donation.

Show visitors a copy of "Touring the Tombstones" (\$5) and the Alliance Cookbook (\$20) and let them know they are for sale.

Do not leave your partner alone in the church for more than a few minutes.

We DO NOT have public restrooms. Suggest the Public Garages to the left on Queen, or to the right on Archdale.

At the end of your tours, record visitor counts and donations in the notebook in the top drawer of the chest. Place the money in a small yellow envelope, label it with the date and total receipts and give it to the Sexton or drop it into the mail drop in Gage Hall.

Please do not:   Light candles  
                          Play CD's  
                          Allow anyone to play the organ.

## CLOSING

If the Sexton is **not** available:

- ✓ At 1:00 pm take in the “Church is Open” sandwich board sign and leave it in the vestibule.
- ✓ Lock the front door and gates as soon as the visitors are gone.
- ✓ Remove the artificial flowers from the front of the church and put them in the back room.
- ✓ Remove the tripod, photos, and display items and put them in the back room.
- ✓ Remove the money box and put the note and postcards away.
- ✓ Remove donations and return seed money to donor and put the Donation Box on top of the chest.
- ✓ In the Docent Log Book, record the date, number of visitors, amount of donations and sales of cards, notes, “Touring the Tombstones” and the Alliance Cookbook.
- ✓ Put the donations, sales of cards and pamphlet in one envelope and the Alliance sales in another. In both cases record the date and cash on the front of each envelope. Both envelopes should either be dropped in the Gage Hall mail slot or given to the Sexton.

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## THE TOUR

### TIPS FOR DOCENTS: GIVING SUCCESSFUL TOURS

1. You are representing the congregation to the public so at all times be friendly and greet everyone that comes into the church. This may be difficult when large groups arrive; however, you can speak in a general sense to the entire group.
2. Project your voice so you can be heard. You have very important information to impart so do not be tentative.
3. Try to judge how long you talk by the interest and makeup of the group, i.e., a family with a child in a stroller and two toddlers will not have the interest span that two elderly historians from England may have.
4. Stress that the building is a National Historic Landmark (1976) and the congregation supports the docent program in order to share the building with the public and that it is very expensive to maintain the landmark.
5. When people arrive in smaller groups, ask them where they live and how long they will be visiting Charleston. If they will be in town Sunday, invite them to the service and coffee hour.
6. Encourage people to wander around the church and enjoy the beautiful space and ambiance. Invite them to “sit a spell” and enjoy the quiet or mediate. Also, encourage them to tour the churchyard.
7. Offer people a brochure as they are leaving if they did not pick one up when they came in. This helps to publicize the fact that we are open during stated hours.
8. Connect with your fellow docent. The two of you will probably be there alone for some part of the three hours so use this time to make a new friendship or deepen an old one.
9. A note on theology. (And this does come up!) Some people feel very comfortable discussing theology and others do not. The green sheet is very helpful in this regard. You can simply hand it to a person and say these are the covenants of the church and this is what most of the congregation accepts.

10. Remember it is an honor and a privilege to show this beautiful building to the public and that your willingness to volunteer in this program is a very large contribution to the congregation. Thank you!

Prepared by Sue Simons Wallace, August 2001

## **SAMPLE PRESENTATION**

Hi! Please come in.

Where are you from?

(Small talk)

Would you like to hear something about the history of the church? The tour is free, but donations are welcome.

## **FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH**

This is the oldest Unitarian Church in the South, and the second oldest church building on the Charleston peninsula. St. Michael's is the oldest, at the corner of Meeting and Broad.

This church was started in 1774 to handle the overflow from the First Independent Church of Charleston, which is on the site of the present day Circular Congregational Church. In those days, the official church of South Carolina was the Church of England, supported by taxes. Anyone who did not want to be Church of England was termed a dissenter and joined an Independent Church.

The First Independent Church of Charleston was founded in 1681 and was referred to as "the old white meeting house." It is believed that Meeting Street was named for this church. By 1772, the First Independent Church had so many members that more space was needed and this church was built to handle the overflow.

The structure that was built was a simple, utilitarian Georgian structure, as you can see in the pictures here. This is how the church originally looked.

While the church was started in 1774 and substantially completed, it was not used as a church until 1787. Would anyone like to guess why? The revolutionary war got in the way. The building was first used by the Americans as a barracks, then by the English, and then again by the Americans after the British were driven out. The English had great disdain for dissenters and did not treat the building well. Some say it was used to stable horses.

## **CHANGE TO UNITARIANISM**

After repairs, the church was consecrated in 1787, and for the next 25 years shared a ministry with the church on Meeting Street, with morning and afternoon services. In 1815, the first Unitarian Minister came on board, the Reverend Anthony Forster, although he did not refer to himself as a Unitarian. Forster was married to Altona Gales, the daughter of Joseph Gales, a North Carolina printer and a close associate of Joseph Priestley. Gales and Priestley were friends in England, and both fled England to escape religious persecution in 1795-1796. You may remember Priestley from your school days. Dr. Joseph Priestley was the eminent British Scientist who discovered oxygen, among many other gases. Priestly was also a Unitarian Minister, and a dissenter. After the French Revolution, England and Spain cracked down on dissenters, which gave rise to the Spanish Inquisition, and persecution of Catholics, Presbyterians, Jews, Quakers and all other dissenters in England, and anyone who was not Catholic in Spain. Priestley's house was burned down, and he and his family fled to the United States, winding up in Pennsylvania. Priestley helped found the first Unitarian church in Philadelphia. Gales and his family moved to Altona, Germany, and then came to America, where he reconnected with Priestley.

In 1819, we received our second Unitarian minister, Rev. Samuel Gilman, whose picture is on the wall over there. Gilman remained with the church for almost 40 years, and he and his wife Caroline were responsible for freeing the church of debt and establishing it as a solid institution. By 1852, Gilman was able to say that the congregation "averaged about 400 souls".

## **REMODELING**

The church had plenty of money in those days, Charleston being one of the wealthiest cities in the nation, and Gilman wanted to improve the edifice. Note the numbers on the pews. To help finance the remodeling, the pews were sold to the congregation – you had to buy your seat. In 1852, the architect Francis Lee was commissioned to design the building you see today. Lee was a member of the congregation and a mere 26 years old. He patterned the perpendicular gothic design after churches in England, particularly King's College Chapel, Cambridge.

The beautiful fan tracery ceiling you see overhead – all lathe and plaster – was copied from that structure.

What happened to the old building? It is still with us, which is why we can say we are the second oldest church on the Charleston peninsula. The congregation was so attached to the brick walls of the old building that they would not permit them to be demolished, so the stucco you see today was placed over the old bricks. The stucco was then scored to look like large blocks. This is common treatment in Charleston.

## **CAROLINE GILMAN**

Caroline Gilman was a legend herself. She was at one time the best-known woman author in the South, and some would refer to Samuel Gilman as “the husband of Caroline Gilman.” She did many important things, among them the design of the churchyard in 1831. The Gilman’s had seven children, but only four, all girls, survived beyond infancy. The Gilman’s and several of their children are buried under the large monument you see outside.

In 1858, Samuel Gilman died while visiting his daughter in Massachusetts. He was 67 years old. Caroline Gilman lived to be 94 and died in 1888 while visiting her only surviving daughter in Washington, D.C.

## **EARTHQUAKE OF 1886**

Please take a look at these photos over here (point). You have heard about the great earthquake of 1886? You can see in these pictures the damage done to the sanctuary. This is a photo taken before the earthquake; this is a photo taken after the earthquake. You can see the top of the window here and the top of the window here (point). The tower came down through the roof right where you are standing. This is daylight coming through the roof. The beautiful fan tracery ceiling had to be constructed a second time. This other photo shows the building after reconstruction. You can see that much of the gingerbread was not replaced, both to save money and to make the building less susceptible to earthquake damage.

The side windows were blown out by a hurricane in 1885, a year before the earthquake. Miraculously, the chancel window survived both the hurricane and the earthquake. Note the difference between the Art Nouveau side windows and the traditionally Christian chancel window. The chancel window dates from 1854, and the side windows date from about 1865. The chancel window is painted glass, done by a German process no longer replicable. The side windows are solid stained glass, donated by the Boston Unitarian Church. The writings in the windows say “The Lord is One” in Hebrew, and “Spirit of God” in Greek.

## **CHARLESTON**

I mentioned that by the 1850s Charleston was a very wealthy city. This wealth came from rice, indigo, cotton and tobacco – all labor intensive industries reliant on slaves. Slaves outnumbered whites in South Carolina by 9 to 7, and in Charleston, by 3 to 1. After the war, the industries collapsed, thus by the time of the earthquake, Charleston was no longer a wealthy city, but rather poor. Money had to be obtained from northern Unitarians in order to rebuild the church.

The Civil War was, of course, devastating to Charleston and to the Church, which was closed from 1861 until the end of the war in 1865. Caroline Gilman fled to Greenville, SC, returning after the war to her home on Orange Street, which escaped major damage. Both her home and the church survived the great fire of 1861, which destroyed a thousand buildings. Valuables from the

church – the organ, silver, records and furniture – were moved to Columbia where they were destroyed when Sherman’s troops burned the city to the ground.

**ALVA GAGE**

You might ask “Who is that man with the funny little beard” over there? That is Alva Gage. Alva Gage was one of 15 children, though he and his wife had no children of their own. Alva Gage was a long-term church member who became wealthy selling ice packed in sawdust and brought on barges from the North to the South. He retained his wealth through the Civil War by investing overseas, and by not converting his wealth to Confederate dollars. For a number of years he was the financial savior of the church, paying the minister’s salary for a time. In 1892, he funded the construction of Gage Hall, and upon his death in 1896, left half of his estate to the church.

**ORGAN**

The organ pipes you see up on the balcony are decorative. The first organ was installed in 1825, which was the one sent to Columbia and destroyed. The second organ was installed in 1866 after the War. The third was installed in 1916. The third organ had not worked since 1982 and could not be repaired. An electric organ was placed in the choir loft and then moved downstairs in 2000. It was replaced in 2010 by the digital organ you see in at the right side of the church.

**SUMMARY**

Our church has an interesting and varied history. It has survived two wars, six major hurricanes, two devastating fires, and an earthquake. We are hoping to keep it going for another hundred years.

Does anyone have any questions? Thank you for coming, feel free to look around and take pictures if you like . . .

**HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

1772	Rev. William Tennant Jr. instigates start of construction
1776	Revolutionary war halts construction
1778	American troops use church as barracks
1781	British use church as barracks
1787	Church finally consecrated by Rev. Dr. William Hollingshead
1787	Ministry shared with Old White Meeting House for 30 years
1817	Rev. Anthony Forster becomes first Unitarian Minister
1819	Samuel Gilman, age 28, marries Caroline Gilman, becomes pastor
1825	First of four organs installed
1831	Caroline Gilman designs "natural" churchyard
1839	Church chartered as The Unitarian Church
1852	Church retains architect Francis D. Lee to renovate/remodel church
1858	Rev. Gilman dies in Massachusetts

1861	Fire destroys 1000 plus buildings, church spared, but closed by war
1865	Church valuables moved to Columbia where they are destroyed
1866	Church is renovated, new pipe organ installed
1868	Alva Gage is financial savior of church for next 30 years
1885	Hurricane destroys side windows
1886	Earthquake topples tower pinnacles and spires
1887	Northern U.S. Unitarians contribute funds for rebuilding
1888	Caroline Gilman dies at age 94
1893	Gage Hall is built, dedicated with funds from Alva Gage
1896	Alva Gage dies leaving half his estate to the church

## RESPONSES TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### CHURCH BUILDING HISTORY

**How old is the church?** The Church was erected, starting in 1772, as a second building of the Independent Church of Charleston on Meeting St., now known as the Circular Congregational Church. It was mostly completed by 1776, but the Revolutionary War and its aftermath delayed dedication until 1787.

**Who designed it?** In 1852, church member and local architect Francis D. Lee designed the current building in the English Perpendicular Gothic style. Later that year Lee joined Edward C. Jones, his former mentor, and in partnership they performed the renovation, completed in 1854.

**Is the design of the interior original or copied?** While there are interior design “similarities” to the Chapel of Henry VII, Westminster Abbey in London, “the most direct source...appears to have been Thomas Hopper’s Conservatory for Carlton House, London”...which “closely followed...King’s College Chapel, Cambridge.”\*

**If the original church was replaced in 1854, how does this structure claim to be the second oldest church building on the peninsula?** The new church was built directly over the foundation and walls of the old church. The original tower was heightened and the chancel added in order for it to correspond more nearly with the proportions of the English Perpendicular Gothic style used by Lee.

**What changes have been made since the remodeling of 1854?** Remaining today from the 1854 remodeling are the altar rail, pulpit, baptism font, and the pews. The window at the rear of the sanctuary depicting the Gospels and prophets was hand painted, sealed and installed at the same time using a German process.



The pendant above the altar was designed as a vent in the original air circulation system. Due to Charleston humidity it is now closed.

The exterior loft entrances were designed for the use of slaves and visitors. Pews in the nave were rented to church members.

During the Civil War, the church lost furniture and silverware, the organ, and other valuables sent to Columbia for safekeeping but which were destroyed when General Sherman sacked that city.

In 1885, a hurricane severely damaged the side windows in the Sanctuary.

In 1886, an earthquake shook the pinnacles and spires off the church tower sending them down through the roof. The elaborate ceiling and the floor were replaced in a costly repair effort, but the exterior decoration was simplified to minimize possible damage from future earth tremors.

In 1885, the current side windows of Victorian stained glass were installed. The Greek message is "Spirit of God"; the Hebrew is "The Lord is One".

Hurricane Hugo caused window damage in 1989, but flood waters did not reach the church nave.

## **CHURCH GRAVEYARD**

**Who created the garden graveyard?** Caroline Gilman, wife of the minister, inspired by Mount Auburn Cemetery in Massachusetts, conceived this natural setting in the early 1830s, a garden cemetery with beautiful plants and objects, a place to be used by the living. \*Waddell, Gene, Architecture of Charleston, 1670-1860, Wyrick & Co., 2003, p.247

**What are some important features of the graveyard?** Ancient bulbs, shrubs, and roses, including Noisette roses developed in Charleston in the very early 1800s, continue to decorate the yard. Church volunteers work hard to maintain its "not too manicured" look.

The oldest tombstone dates from 1777 (John Gardner).

Some well-known people of their own generation are buried here, like Samuel Gilman, minister from 1819 to 1858, and his wife Caroline, but none of them has a "famous" reputation today.

Four Confederate soldiers are buried here.

**Was the garden damaged by hurricane Hugo?** In 1989, Hurricane Hugo destroyed about 30 mature trees, which are being replaced with a lower growing canopy of dogwood, halesia (silverbell), crepe myrtle, and Japanese maple.

Over 60 tombstones were also damaged in that storm, but age and weather have also taken their toll. The Larisey Gravestone Conservation Project, named for former member, M. Maxine Larisey, was established for their repair and to date 65 have been refurbished.

The Gateway Walk from our churchyard connects the Unitarian Church with St. John's Lutheran, St. Philip's Episcopal and the Circular Congregational Churches.

## **CHURCH PIECES**

**What can you tell us about the organ?** Our current Allen organ was built in 2005 and installed in 2010. It features French Romantic specifications, a three manual French terrace console, sixty-four stops and eighteen speakers. The organ was made possible through the generous support of members and friends.

**Who are the men in the portraits?** Portraits are of the Reverend Samuel Gilman, and church member/benefactor, Alva Gage.

**Where did the cancel candelabra come from?** The chancel candelabra is a memorial to Major Marion Ryan McCown, a pilot lost in WW II.

**What are the small boxes on the backs of some pews?** The small boxes on the backs of some pews are an early hearing apparatus, now non-functional.

**Who designed the iron hand rail?** An iron hand rail on the chancel stairs was designed in 1964 by noted Charleston blacksmith Philip Simmons.

**Why is this pew called the minister's pew?** Pew Number 11 was the minister's pew.

## **MEMBERS AND EVENTS**

**How many members in the church?** Members – 424 plus.

**When are the services?** Services and religious education are held at 11:00 AM on Sundays from September through June. In July and August, services are held in the sanctuary from 10 am to 11 am. A Forum is conducted in Gage Hall at 10:00 AM September through June.

## **RELIGIOUS HISTORY AND PRACTICES**

**How did this church become a Unitarian Church?** After one of its two ministers, Anthony Forster, became a convert to monotheism in 1817; a split came as 75 members out of 144 left the mother church, now known as the Circular Congregational Church. It was chartered as the Second Independent Church of Charleston, the oldest Unitarian Church in the South, at the Archdale St. location.

As Forster succumbed to an old Army illness, in 1819, Samuel Gilman, a graduate of Harvard College and an “avowed Unitarian”, was hired to complete the slow transition to Unitarianism.

The church did not join the American Unitarian Association until 1839, when it became the Unitarian Church in Charleston.

Unitarians and Universalists merged in 1961 to form today’s Unitarian Universalist Association which establishes a framework for each church to create their own services. This includes a written set of seven principles and purposes which guide us.

**What is the difference between a Christian and Unitarian Church?** While our spiritual life was derived from the Christian heritage, we do not have a prescribed religious dogma, do not perform baptisms, and do not practice communion.

Submitted by David Elder

#### **DOCENT QUIZ**

It would be easy to construct a questionnaire of a thousand questions about our history. No one could possibly remember everything. Here is a quiz on some of the things we talk about, just for practice.

1. When was the First Independent Church of Charleston founded? (1681)
2. How did Meeting Street get its name? (Named for the Old White Meeting House, the First Independent Church of Charleston.)
3. What church now rests on the site of the First Independent Church of Charleston? (Circular Congregational Church)
4. In what year did the Church of England become the official religion in the Carolinas (supported by taxes)? (1706)
5. What is the oldest surviving church in South Carolina and when was it built? (St Andrews, 1706)
6. What is the oldest church building on the Charleston peninsula and when was it built? (St. Michael’s, 1761)
7. In what year did the Rev. William Tennant Jr. preach about the need for a new church to house overflow from the First Independent Church? (1772)
8. When was our original church built and when was it first used as a church? (Started in 1774, consecrated in 1787)

9. What caused the delay? (Revolutionary War)
10. When was the Church of England “disestablished”? (1778)
11. For how long did the Archdale St. church and the Meeting St. church share a ministry? (30 years)
12. When did the Archdale St. church separate from the Meeting St. church? (1817)
13. Who was the first Unitarian minister of our church? (Anthony Forster)
14. Who was the second Unitarian minister of our church? (Samuel Gilman)
15. Where was he from? (Harvard College)
16. How long did he serve? (Almost 40 years)
17. Who was his wife? (Caroline Gilman)
18. When was the American Unitarian Association formed? (1825)
19. When was the first organ installed in our church? (1825)
20. How many organs have we had? (Four)
21. When did our third pipe organ stop working? (1982)
22. In what year was our garden cemetery designed, and who designed it? (1831, Caroline Gilman)
23. In what year was our church chartered as The Unitarian Church in Charleston? (1839)
24. When was the Sanctuary remodeled? (1852-1854)
25. Who was our architect and how old was he when he received the commission? (Francis Lee, 26 years old)
26. What English church inspired the fan tracery ceiling and other aspects of the English Perpendicular Gothic design? (King’s College Chapel, Cambridge)
27. What became of the old church? (It’s walls are still with us, under the Stucco)
28. When was Charles Manson Taggard hired as assistant to Gilman and how long did he last? (1853, less than two years)
29. When and where did Gilman die? (1858 while visiting his daughter in Massachusetts)

30. What happened to church valuables during the Civil War? (Organ, silver, records, library, and furniture moved to Columbia where all were destroyed in fire caused by Sherman's troops)
31. Who was Alva Gage, and how did he acquire his wealth? (Alva Gage was a long-term church member who became wealthy selling ice packed in sawdust and brought on barges from the north. He retained his wealth through the Civil War by investing overseas.)
32. Why are the years 1885 and 1886 significant? (Severe hurricane in August, 1885 destroys windows; devastating earthquake on August 31, 1886 causes serious damage to church.)
33. How strong was the earthquake? (7.3 USGS scale)
34. How was reconstruction of the Sanctuary financed? (By Northern Unitarians)
35. Who donated the replacement windows? (The Boston Unitarian Church)
36. What is significant about the chancel window? (It survived the hurricane and the Earthquake and is painted glass, not solid stained glass.)
37. When did the Unitarian and Universalist churches merge? (1961)
38. How many members do we have? (424)
39. What is the oldest tombstone in the graveyard? (1777 John Gardner)



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## CHURCH HISTORY

### **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THIS CHURCH 1772-1997**

The Unitarian Church in Charleston, like the city itself, has a long and fascinating history. The building began as an adjunct house of worship for the Independent Church of Charleston on Meeting Street (predecessor of today's Circular Church). Its foundation was laid in 1772, but construction was delayed by the Revolutionary War and not completed until 1787. In that early form, the Archdale Street building was a brick colonial structure with round-headed windows and an elevated mahogany pulpit. Its congregation and the Meeting Street Congregation constituted one corporate body which heard sermons by alternating ministers each Sunday. The man most responsible for this building project was the Rev. William Tennent, who was also a member of the Provincial Congress and the Common House of Assembly.

### **REV. FORSTER**

During the next century the church underwent spiritual and structural transformations. In 1816, the Rev. Anthony Forster came from North Carolina where he had studied law before being licensed by the Presbytery. Forster was married to the granddaughter of Joseph Priestly, the great British scientist and Unitarian. Through this influence, Forster gradually became a Unitarian and the Archdale Street church followed his spiritual path, though not without controversy. In 1819 it was granted a charter as the Second Independent Church of Charleston. Because the American Unitarian Association was not formed until 1825 it was 1839 before the Unitarian Church of Charleston was officially chartered.

### **DR. GILMAN**

This early flowering of the church peaked during the ministry of Dr. Samuel Gilman, who delivered his first guest sermon upon Forster's resignation in 1818. A graduate of Harvard where he had been class poet (and later author of "Fair Harvard", the school's alma mater", Gilman walked into a difficult situation with a congregation still polarized due to the separation from its "mother" church. Yet Gilman prevailed, and under his tutelage the Unitarian community prospered. For twenty years he personally conducted Sunday school, introduced female voices into the choir, and encouraged the formation of a women's society – the present alliance. In 1852-54 the building was enlarged and remodeled into its present neo-Gothic form, with stucco exterior covering the older walls. The outstanding fan-tracery ceiling was patterned after the chapel in King's College, Cambridge. Painted glass windows were also installed. The large east window of the chancel, the only original window to survive, portrays Moses and his brother Aaron with the Ark of the Covenant between them. Arrayed above are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Dr. Gilman dedicated the remodeled church in 1854 and continued to serve until his death in 1858.

## **DISASTERS**

Like most Charleston institutions, the Unitarian Church suffered disaster in the second half of the 19th Century: Civil War, earthquake, hurricanes and tornadoes, Sherman's march led to the burning of Columbia where most church records had been sent, ironically, for safekeeping. The earthquake of 1886 brought down the original 1854 tower, which had been taller than the one in place today. Unitarians throughout the country contributed to the restoration of the building to its current form. New building commenced again in the 1890s with the construction of Gage Hall, funded with a gift from long time benefactor Alva Gage.

Thus today's Unitarian Church building has seen and survived revolution, transformation, war, earthquake and renovation. This rich early history forms the backdrop for the church community today.

## **MR. GILLMAN'S GOTHIC CHURCH**

In his 2003 double volume, one of text, the other full of absorbing historical photographs and drawings, *Architecture of Charleston, 1670-1860*, Gene Waddell, Archivist at the College of Charleston, devotes six pages to the 19th century architectural firm of Jones and Lee. Because the design was his and he was responsible for the Gothic remodeling of our Unitarian Church between 1852 and 1854, and we are very familiar with Francis D. Lee. However, we tend to overlook the role that Edward C. Jones played in that transformation and in the life and career of Francis Lee.

## **EDWARD C. JONES**

Jones was born in 1822 and, realizing at an early age his desire to become an architect, went to work for builders James Curtis and David Lopez when he was 16, gaining the firsthand knowledge of construction technique on which he founded a future architectural practice. As for formal training, he learned the art of drafting from a Professor Guthrie, College of Charleston; he also made use of design books at the Apprentices' Library Society, the largest architectural library in South Carolina, to acquire knowledge of world architectonics. Eleven years later, at age 26, he began his career as an independent architect, when in 1847 he was commissioned to draw plans for the Glebe Street Presbyterian Church (now the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church at 7 Glebe St.) in the fashion of John Soane. Waddell says, he "demonstrated a mastery of (Soane's) idiosyncratic style" and "(s)ince there were no equivalent examples of Soane's work in Charleston, Jones was clearly studying books with great care."

## **FRANCIS D. LEE**

In 1848, the following announcement appeared in the *Courier*: "EDWARD C. JONES, ARCHITECT, 63 Broad-Street; Office Hours 9 to 3 o'clock." That year Jones helped organize the South Carolina Institute, an association established to promote "local arts and industries", becoming its secretary. Construction also got started that year on his Central Presbyterian Church (today's Trinity United



Methodist Church at 273 Meeting St.) and by 1849 success had come to such an extent that he hired two architectural students. One of them was Louis J. Barbot who went on to become a principle in Charleston's only other (than Jones and Lee) pre-Civil War architectural partnership.

The other architectural student was Francis D. Lee. Lee was born in 1826 in Charleston and attended the College of Charleston (whose records show his middle name was "Dee"), winning a Gold Medal for a speech entitled *Imagination* in 1845, graduating in 1846, and earning a master's degree in 1848. The next year he "joined the short-lived South Carolina Lyceum, a group which heard lectures on scientific discoveries, his name coming last on a list of curators. He was later to join the Scottish Rites Masons and the South Carolina Society...and to be recording secretary of the Carolina Art Association...Lee taught at Mr. Satcheben's School in 1848 and '49..." according to Beatrice St. Julien Ravenel in *Architects of Charleston* written in 1992. He also earned a silver medal at the South Carolina Institute Fair for the best architectural drawing (subject unknown). Lee was a member of the Unitarian Church in Charleston.

In 1849, Lee became apprenticed to the older (but by only four years) Jones. Gene Waddell writes that "(h)is training in the practice of architecture was probably obtained largely while working for Jones from 1849-1850 and later from working with him." In 1850, a 24 year old Lee evidently thought he had absorbed enough schooling to set up his own independent practice, opening an office on Broad St. near that of his former mentor. However, by 1852, a year and one-half later, when he was awarded the contract for the redesign of our Unitarian Church, he had received but one other commission, the "pinnacled Elbert P. Jones marble monument...at Magnolia Cemetery," according to Ravenel.

#### **REBUILT ON PRESENT WALLS AND FOUNDATIONS**

The *Evening News*, March 6, 1852, enthuses about Lee's project: "The entire building is to be remodeled or in fact almost entirely rebuilt upon the present walls and foundations. Mr. Lee's plan has been accepted by the Church. Its style is known as the perpendicular Gothic. The ceilings will be groined and beautifully ornamented with fan tracery."

According to E.C. L. Browne, our minister from 1875-89, in his *Historical Sketch of the Unitarian Church*, written for the *Yearbook of the City*, 1882, reports, "In 1852, when repairs somewhat extensive had become necessary, a proposition came from the younger members of the congregation that the edifice should be entirely remodeled and modernized. The cordial reception of this proposition seemed to warrant the undertaking, and plans were sought. The late Wm. Thompson, both architect and builder, submitted a plan (but) the plan finally accepted was one offered by young F. D. Lee, also a church member, who was then establishing himself in the city as an architect." Samuel Gilman, himself, was an inspiration for rebuilding of the church on its existing walls and foundation. On April 4, 1852, only 65 years after its original dedication, he preached in his farewell sermon that the church needed to undergo total transformation: "The very spirit of the age

urged upon us a reconstruction of a more impressive and imposing character – we felt ashamed that our houses and equipages (carriages), and banks, and civic halls, should throw the church of our God into the shade...we are sustained by the unavoidable conviction, that old things MUST pass away.” He recalled, “The appearance of this building, on my earliest connection with it, (i.e. 1819) was that of a plain brick structure. It has been twice covered with plaster (stucco), and two or three times subjected to large and costly repairs,” later noting that “(b)y a vote of the corporation...the walls of the church were to be retained in the construction of the new edifice,” and the church was closed for two years to complete the project.

#### **PARTNERSHIP WITH EDWARD JONES**

Three months later, on July 1st, Edward C. Jones and Francis D. Lee announced the formation of their architectural partnership. Kenneth Severens, in *Charleston Antebellum Architecture and Civic Destiny*, 1988, speculates on the meaning of such a partnership at this juncture: the Unitarian Church “proved easier to conceive than to execute.” Lee had little experience with buildings of this complexity; his “background was primarily academic...indeed, the partnership of Jones and Lee may have grown out of the early technical problems encountered. The decision to retain the walls of the existing church required constructional and structural expertise that Lee had not acquired, and the Perpendicular Gothic ornament was more complicated than that of any previous Charleston church...Jones’s more established office could provide those practical elements (that Lee could not) – working drawings, specifications, and supervision – that would turn Gilman’s and Lee’s visionary concept into reality.”

This all begs the question: “How did our 1852 architects get their professional knowledge?” Benjamin Latrobe, an English immigrant called the first Professional Architect in the U.S., was appointed by his friend Thomas Jefferson (merely a “Gentleman” Architect) as Surveyor of Public Buildings in the United States. In an early 1800s letter to his protégé, Robert Mills of Charleston, known himself as the first native-born Professional Architect, Latrobe writes, “The profession of architecture has been hitherto in the hands of two sets of Men. The first of those, who from traveling or from books have acquired some knowledge of the Theory of the art, but know nothing of its practice, the second of those know nothing but the practice, and whose early life being spent in labor (in some building trade) and in the habits of a laborious life, have had no opportunity of acquiring the theory.” As for our architects, members of the next generation from Latrobe, nowhere is it said that they traveled abroad. Edward C. Jones appears to bridge both of Latrobe’s categories, as mentioned, he went to work for builders at age 16 where he learned construction technique first hand; for “book learning,” he studied drafting at the College of Charleston and was known as an avid architectural reader at the Apprentices’ Library Society. Francis D. Lee, on the other hand, after earning non-architectural bachelor’s and master’s degrees at the College of Charleston, apprenticed to his future partner, but for only about one year before establishing his own practice. Although he won awards for architectural drawing, it has been suggested that his

joint venture with Jones was partially necessitated by his engineering naiveté. He apparently fits into Latrobe's former category.

With the completion of the renovation, an extract from the Charleston Courier's April 3, 1854 issue "reviews" the new building, stating, "the venerable old building...so well known for its quaint and somber appearance, furnished the basis for the present structure (and) was adopted as the basis of the present elegant and commodious edifice. This retention, as far as possible, of the old structure, was due to a natural regard and respect for time-honored associations, rather than to any considerations of mere economy, for the cost of an entirely new edifice would scarcely have exceeded the repairs introduced and perfected, augmented as these have been by the difficulties surmounted by perforating the faithful old masonry to admit the new and lofty windows, and of (en)compassing the massive tower to build one far more lofty and imposing. The original structure was so nearly square, and was accordingly not well adapted to the Gothic style" that the chancel was added with its dramatic window to enhance the appearance of length.

#### **SIDE GALLERIES**

The report continues, "A regard to full accommodations also rendered it necessary to retain the side galleries, an appendage which is rarely found in Gothic edifices, and which is difficult to reconcile with the purity and harmony of that order." So, our architects didn't preserve them. Despite opposing contentions, the side galleries of the original building were apparently dismantled in the renovations. Since the roof of the original building was constructed utilizing wooden trusses, it was entirely capable of being free of supporting posts. Nevertheless, the nave piers in the reconstructed church were made of large wooden posts (not cast iron as has been suggested) which have been erroneously cited as needed props for balconies. Gene Waddell, however, affirms they "were purely for visual effect and were no more necessary than the lathe and plaster vaulting." One proof lies in a photograph from his book, *Architecture of Charleston* (2003) showing the church's littered interior after the 1886 earthquake, but also revealing both side walls free of any galleries at all – yet absolutely unscathed by their supposed collapse.

The Charleston Courier further discusses the transformation of the interior from a relatively nondescript auditorium into one which, our Docents know, continues to inspire remarks of awe and wonder from visitors today. "The most striking feature of the interior is the ceiling of the nave, being, it is believed, the only work of its kind in this country.

#### **REMODELED CHURCH, "THE MOST REMARKABLE FEATURE IN THE EXTERIOR OF THE BUILDING IS THE TOWER, FAN TRACERY CEILING**

Kenneth Severens cites St. Joseph's Church [built 1847-52] in New Orleans as the first of its kind). It is of that peculiar Gothic work styled 'fan tracery' (ribbed vaulting of an arched ceiling which resembles a folding fan); the delicate enrichments, the almost numberless arches (of the vault ribs)

intersecting each other in every direction, the gracefully falling pendants (the five large hanging adornments in the ceiling), all filled with the richest tracery (the patterns of interlacing ornamental work in the vaults, walls, columns, windows and the woodwork), give to the whole an exceeding gorgeous appearance, not easily appreciated by description. The groins of the ceiling (the curved intersection of two vaults) are supported by shafts attached to the massive columns which rise from the floor to the ceiling. Between these columns are flat arches, the spandrels (the roughly triangular space between two adjacent arches) of which are filled with cusped (cusps are the elongated triangular shapes projecting from the inner curve of an arch which creates a scalloped effect) work....” These terms apply to churches of the English Perpendicular or Tudor style of architecture from the 14th-16th centuries, the style which Francis Lee echoed. These medieval churches were constructed principally of stone and the fans actually held up the roof. Of course, in our church a large part of the interior decoration is constructed of lath (thin strips of wood) and plaster (applied over the wood), although Frank Palmer reports that some of that decoration is forged from cast iron, especially the smaller, more intricate details in the fans, in the pendants, and in the capitals (tops of columns). None of it is stone, however, and the fans are actually suspended from the roof and the roof trusses above.

The specific inspiration for Lee’s design has been a matter of conjecture for years. E.C.L. Browne says that Francis Lee’s “plan was modeled on the Chapel of Edward VI in Westminster” (Abbey). Gene Waddell clarifies this, saying that Edward VI is really buried in Westminster’s Chapel of Henry VII, his grandfather. Back in 1854, the Charleston Standard erroneously noted the source of the vaulting as the Chapel of Henry VIII at Westminster. To further the confusion, Henry VIII is actually buried in St. George’s Chapel at Windsor Castle and there is no Chapel of Henry VIII at Westminster. Traditionally, our Docents have been using this background as the source, saying something to the effect that our ceiling is patterned after the Henry VII Chapel and/or St. George’s. Waddell writes “(t)here are some similarities, but major differences” between those two structures and the Unitarian Church. However, “(t)he most direct source for the Unitarian Church appears to have been Thomas Hopper’s Conservatory for Carlton House, London,” a 19th century building dating from 1807. He concludes, “In turn, Hopper’s nave closely followed the vaulting of...King’s College Chapel, Cambridge ([built] 1445-1514)” although Waddell does give Lee this credit for originality: “The panels for the vaulting appear to be Lee’s own design,” and they are what cause those gasps of awe.

Comparing images of these ceilings as reproduced in Waddell’s book or downloaded from the Internet, there is no question that certain elements in the ceiling of the Henry VII Chapel are repeated in our ceiling. The pendants, especially, are similar. However the fans themselves are not at all alike, with Henry VII ribbing being much more delicate, convoluted and complex than the straightforward, bold ribs in Charleston which force your eye heavenward, just what the Gothic builders were trying to accomplish. Furthermore, Carlton House, King’s College, St George’s and

Charleston Unitarian all have a single row of large pendants prominently marching down the center of the ceiling, as opposed to Henry VII which has three rows, two large rows flanking one small one. This plus the fact that the Henry VII fans have a structural member, reminiscent of a flying buttress, arching from the side walls to the center of each large pendant makes the overall look of the ceiling entirely different from Charleston's. Clearly the pictures show why Waddell selects the Carlton House Conservatory, a Gothic Revival building dated 1807, as Lee's model, although nowhere is it definitively said that it was Lee's choice.

### **THE TOWER**

Continuing to quote from the 1854 Charleston Courier's description of our newly (remember that the new tower was considerably taller and more imposing than the original low tower which had given the building a unappealing, squat appearance) through the base of which is the principle entrance to the church. The form of it (that is, its cross-section) is square with eight buttresses (this was for effect only as they buttressed nothing; furthermore, as we ironically found in our recent remodeling, the buttresses had progressively been detaching themselves from the church and becoming a danger, a problem now fixed) "rising in successive stages, paneled and surmounted with pinnacles richly crocheted (in the modern spelling, crockets are three-dimensional carved images of leaf/foilage stems projecting from medieval spires, pinnacles, gables, etc. common in Gothic architecture). Over the tower entrance is a spacious window, opening on the choir loft, the head of which is filled with elaborate tracery, in which is set the richest stained glass (That stained glass was replaced with clear glass in a repair effort after 20th century hurricanes). Above this window, in the third stage of the tower, are four square tower lights, filled with rich cusped tracery work (Also replaced with clear glass. Above these are four pointed windows with decorated heads. All the windows are finished with moulded hoods; (the one) over the doorway is elaborately crocheted. The summit of the tower is embattled;" (embattlements are the saw-toothed parapets at the top of defensive walls and towers in medieval buildings) "every portion is here filled with cusped panels, which give it an exceedingly rich appearance. At the four angles of the summit rise lofty pinnacles crowned with enriched crotchets and finials (a finial is the top or finishing stone of a pinnacle); each finial bears a vane in the shape of a pennant, a form frequently used in English churches of this period." Remember, though, you must read this description with a photograph taken of the 1852-54 remodeling before the earthquake of 1886 demolished much of this decoration, which was never replaced. (But the pennants are still flying!)

### **THE PULPIT RECESS, ORGAN LOFT, AND FURNITURE**

And, finally, from the Charleston Courier's April, 1854 description: "An addition has been made to the rear of the church for a pulpit recess. A lofty archway opens into it, the splayed jambs (splayed openings have casings which angle outward to affect an enlarged appearance) of which are filled with Gothic tracery. In the rear of this recess is the great east window...in the richest style of design and finish...filled with figures of emblematic character. The ceiling over this portion of the church is

in the richest style of 'fan tracery' with one central pendant. An arch, nearly similar to that over the pulpit, opens over the organ loft; where a new and valuable organ, now being built, similar in style to the building, will soon be placed (Samuel Gilman informs us that this organ was funded by the Ladies' Working Society, forerunner of the Alliance). Beneath the organ gallery a handsomely carved screen work separates the body of the church from the entrance in the base of the tower. The last is paved with encaustic tiles (tiles colored with clay pigments) of the most appropriate pattern. The furniture of the church is all in conformity with the finish. The pulpit is in solid walnut of the richest design; the pews, gallery rail, &c., are capped with the same wood. The pews will present all the modern advantages and improvements. The church is lit with gas. The interior is finished throughout in imitation of stone...the Unitarian Church (is) a monument of the taste and skill of its designers." Kenneth Severens comments in *Charleston Antebellum Architecture and Civic Destiny* that, "The original colors of the fan and pendant vaults were dark and somber to unify the Victorian interior." E.C.L. Browne says the estimated cost for the project was \$21,000; as built it reached \$35,000 (\$763,000 today), including the new organ and furnishings.

#### **EARTHQUAKE OF 1886**

The Charleston earthquake of 1886 is estimated at 7.3 on the USGS scale (San Francisco in 1906 was 8.25). It cleaned the enlarged tower top, only 32 years old, of its pinnacles, spires, crockets and finials. These destroyed decorative elements were propelled down through the roof, leaving a gaping hole and a pile of rubble in the sanctuary below. Dr. A. B. Rose, vestry chair at the time, hopelessness over shadowed the entire congregation." In *A Historical Sketch of the Charleston Unitarian Church*, our minister in 1900, H.A. Whitman, offers a more reported, "The destruction was so complete that a feeling of despair and utter optimistic view: "But even then the congregation did not altogether despair." He goes on to leave one of the best anecdotes in neighborly lore. "Augustus Harleston, the church gardener, an ex-slave of Governor Pickens and a member of the congregation, expressed the feeling of many. The next morning after the earthquake, while mournfully contemplating the ruins, he was accosted by the sexton of St. John's Lutheran Church next door, which was comparatively uninjured, who said, 'Well, Harleston, you folks can't be right, or else the Lord wouldn't have destroyed your church.' Augustus replied (dialect by Whitman), 'You forgit what de good book say. It say, dat judgment must begin at de house of God; and if it begin fust at us, what shall be de end of dem dat obey not de gospel of God? No, de Lord aint gwinter desert his people. He is jess a trying der faith.'"

Making Harleston a true prophet, the national Unitarians were just then meeting in New York State. Whitman continues, "As soon as the news of what had befallen the church became known, there was a generous outpouring of Unitarian money from all parts of the country. Before the vibrations of the earthquake had subsided, there came flashing along the (telegraph) wires the question, 'What are the estimated damages to the Charleston church? The Conference of Unitarian churches assembled in Saratoga ask the question.' Subscription lists were opened, and in a short while a

sum aggregating nearly \$14,000 (\$290,000 today) was contributed.” Robert P. Stockton, who wrote on the Charleston earthquake in *The Great Shock*, (1986), says we received \$17,000 (\$352,000) in total relief funds.

Thomas W. Silloway, a Boston architect and Universalist minister, who remodeled the Vermont State Capital after a fire, came south in the earthquake’s aftermath to do the same for several of Charleston’s churches, including the Citadel Square Baptist Church, St. Matthews German Lutheran Church, the French Huguenot Church and the Unitarian Church. Stockton reports, “Silloway...replicated the original design of the fan vaulting and pendants ...‘with scrupulous exactness.’” The exterior “was preserved except in the case of the tower, the top of which was rebuilt less elaborately...high pinnacles and parapet(s)...were lowered and simplified...to minimize elements” which might again be damaged in another quake. The bold embattlements extending across the north and south roof edges and the pinnacles mounted atop each buttress on the side walls were also completely eliminated. “Silloway apologized for the changes, maintaining that they were in ‘strict keeping’ with the existing architecture and were made ‘simply to give a greater stability to the work.’ Dr. Rose said that such changes which the vestry agreed ‘would add to the strength without marring the general effect,’ were adopted (asserting) ‘we believe the church building to be now in better condition than it has ever been since its erection.’” Silloway’s fee was 5% of the \$13,000 (\$269,000 today) cost of renovations, or \$650 (\$3,500), returning \$50 (\$1,035) of it as a donation.

Submitted by David Elder September, 2006

## UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON CHRONOLOGY

	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
1669	John Locke and Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper write Carolina Colony Fundamental Constitutions. <sup>3</sup>	Edgar, p.46
1680	St. Philip's, the first Anglican parish, forms on the site of present-day St. Michael's Church. <sup>15</sup>	their website
1681	Local dissenters from the Church of England found the Independent Church of Charleston. <sup>15</sup> The first Old White Meeting House is built "and no doubt gave its name to Meeting-street." <sup>4</sup>	their website Farewell p. 8
1687	Huguenots break away from Independents and start their own church. <sup>15</sup>	their website
1706	The Church Act establishes the Church of England as the official religion of the Carolinas. <sup>3</sup>	Edgar, p.96
1706	Old St. Andrews Church is built, now the oldest surviving church building in South Carolina. <sup>15</sup>	their website

	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
1726	Thomas Lamboll <sup>4</sup> gives land to the Dissenters Church on a new street (Archdale) for a parsonage which is built where the present churchyard stands. <sup>2</sup>	date of 1726 from old chronology; not examined Farewell, p. 10/1882, p.415
1731	Presbyterians break away from Dissenters and organize First Scots Presbyterian Church. <sup>15</sup>	their website
1732	Old White Meeting House is enlarged. <sup>15</sup>	their website
1749	Jewish congregation Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim is established. <sup>15</sup>	their website
1761	St. Michael's Church building is completed, now the oldest church building on the peninsula. <sup>9</sup>	Poston/not oldest in the city of Charleston
1772	Rev. William Tennent, Jr. preaches about the need for a second building to house an expanding congregation. <sup>6</sup> Construction begins at the Archdale St. parsonage lot on a second sanctuary, <sup>4</sup> a typical Georgian edifice of red brick and white trim. Land on King St. is given to allow passage between the two sites. The building is now the second oldest church structure on the peninsula.	MML-1 Farewell, p.10/1882, p. 408/Poston Old chronology; not examined
1775	The walls, the roof and most of the pews in the new building are essentially complete, but the Revolutionary War halts construction. <sup>4</sup>	Farewell, p. 10
1776-1777	Rev. Tennent leads a drive to disestablish the Church of England as the S.C. state religion. <sup>4</sup>	Farewell, p. 18
1777	Rev. Tennant dies. <sup>5</sup>	MML-2
1777-1783	No minister is called; services in either church are virtually nil during the Revolutionary War. <sup>5</sup>	MML-2
1778	Its authors unanimously vote disestablishment into the new So. Carolina state constitution. <sup>3</sup>	Edgar, p. 230
1778	To defend Charleston, American troops are barracked in the empty church and destroy the pews.	John Meffert
1780-1782	The British invade and control the city, occupying both church buildings, with "contempt and abuse lavished upon those which at that time bore the epithet of Dissenting." <sup>4</sup>	Farewell, p. 11
1780	The powder magazine at the Old City Jail explodes damaging the new church building.	Old chronology; not examined
1781	British use the Archdale church "as a barrack, some say a stable" <sup>4</sup> and further injure the building.	direct quote: Farewell p. 11/Waddell
1783	Rev. Dr. William Hollinshead of Philadelphia is called to minister to the Meeting Street church. <sup>5</sup>	MML-2



	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
1786	War damage at the Archdale St. building is finally repaired and the church pews and galleries completed for \$6,000 <sup>4</sup> (or \$116,000 in 2003 dollars <sup>17</sup> ), but the church is left with plain brick exterior walls which are eventually "plastered" <sup>4</sup> (meaning "stuccoed" in today's terms).	Farewell, p. 12 Williamson Farewell, p. 27, Glenn Keyes
1787	The new church building is consecrated by Rev. Hollingshead on October 25, 1787. Both the Archdale St. and Meeting St. buildings are used by the Dissenters. <sup>2</sup>	1882, p. 409
1787 et seq.	For 25 years, the co-pastors Revs. Hollingshead and Isaac Stockton Keith preach their own sermon in each house, each Sunday, alternating morning and afternoon services. The practice becomes formalized in the by-laws of the two churches. <sup>4</sup>	Farewell, p. 13
1804	Old White Meeting House is replaced with a third building: the Circular Congregational Church. <sup>15</sup>	their website
C.1815	Differences of opinion surface; the Dissenters dissent from one another. <sup>4</sup>	Farewell, p. 14
1815 5	Rev. Anthony Forster is called (temporarily) to assist an aging Dr. Hollinshead; <sup>5</sup> Forster is married to the granddaughter of Dr. Joseph Priestley, <sup>4</sup> expatriate British scientist and Unitarian minister.	MML-2 Farewell, p. 15 /www.infoplease.com
1816	Dr. Hollingshead dies. <sup>5</sup>	MML-2
1817	Rev. Forster, in an attempt to persuade his father-in-law, Unitarian publisher Joseph Gales, to become a Calvinist, and finding no Biblical support for the Trinity, is himself converted to Unitarianism (although he never used that term <sup>4</sup> ). Unable to sign a pledge of Presbyterian orthodoxy, Forster is terminated by church vote; <sup>16</sup> 75 members join him and leave the associated congregation, 69 remain behind at the Circular Church. <sup>2</sup>	Farewell, p. 15 Whitman, p.11-12 1882, p. 411-412
1817	After several months of contention, the churches agree to disagree, and formally separate. The new church is granted the Archdale building, and assumes one-third of the joint debt, about \$9,000 <sup>4</sup> (\$124,000 in 2003 <sup>17</sup> ), and purchases the parsonage for \$500 <sup>2</sup> (\$7,000 <sup>17</sup> ). The church is chartered, not as the Unitarian Church, but as the Second Independent or Congregational Church <sup>4</sup> of Charleston on December 13, 1817. The date marks it the oldest "Unitarian Church in the South", although the term "Unitarian" is not actually applied until 1839. <sup>16</sup>	Farewell, p. 21 Williamson 1882, p. 412 Farewell, p. 19 Jacqueline Collins Whitman, p. 12
1818 4	An old army illness forces Rev. Forster to leave his position and a successor is sought. <sup>16</sup>	Farewell, p. 20/Whitman, p. 13

	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
1819	Asked to recommend a replacement, Harvard College sends Samuel Gilman, age 28 and an "avowed Unitarian" <sup>4</sup> , who travels in the spring to Charleston to "officiate" <sup>4</sup> on four Sundays. He is "unanimously elected pastor" <sup>4</sup> and returns to Boston <sup>2</sup> to marry Caroline Howard; late in the fall the couple moves to Charleston where he is ordained, December 8, 1819. <sup>16</sup>	Farewell, p. 20 1882, p. 413-414 Whitman, p. 12
1820	Rev. Forster dies on January, 18, 1820 at the age of 35. <sup>5</sup>	MML-2 has actual date, 1/18/1820
1820 et seq.	The new minister's Unitarian Christianity is not entirely welcomed by a congregation mourning Forster. In fact, unwilling to "brave the odium of bearing a new and unpopular name", <sup>4</sup> a "considerable number of persons very soon" <sup>4</sup> leave the church. However, Gilman's intellect, ministry and force of personality earn widespread respect within the congregation and throughout the greater community. The inherited debt weighs heavily on the church, but under the leadership of the two Gilmans it nears solvency by garnering generous subscriptions from the membership, removing the parsonage to create saleable plots in the churchyard, and selling the passage-way to King St. <sup>2</sup> (since retrieved although it follows a more southerly path, the Gateway Walk <sup>5</sup> ).	Farewell, p. 21 way to King St. <sup>2</sup> 1882, p. 414/ MML2
1821	The Charleston Unitarian Book and Tract Society is founded by Gilman and church members, the first such organization in the United States formed to disseminate Unitarian literature. <sup>7</sup>	Macaulay
1825	The American Unitarian Association is formed in Boston, May 25, 1825. <sup>7</sup>	Macaulay
1825	The first organ (of four), a Thomas Appleton 2-manual pipe organ, <sup>11</sup> is installed and the gallery over the main entrance door is given a "circular alteration" to accommodate it. <sup>4</sup>	Bob Schulz Farewell, p. 13
1827	Ralph Waldo Emerson visits Charleston and preaches at the Unitarian Church.	Sue Wallace
1829	Col. Thomas Roper dies leaving a bequest of \$1,500 (\$29,000 in 2003 <sup>17</sup> ) to the church. <sup>4</sup>	Farewell p. 22/Williamson
C. 1831	Inspired by America's first landscaped cemetery, Mt. Auburn in Massachusetts, Caroline Gilman proposes the churchyard be laid out as a garden cemetery, a beautiful, tranquil natural setting.	Date/Caroline's role??
1831 5	The Ladies Working Society <sup>4</sup> is organized by Caroline Gilman <sup>16</sup> to raise money for church repairs.	MML-2/Farewell p. 23/Whitman, p. 35

	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
1832	A bazaar held by the Ladies' Working Society nets about \$1,000 (\$21,000 in 200317), the first fair ever conducted by Charleston "ladies", 2 May 17, 1832.5	1882, p.416/Williamson MML-2
1839	The 21 year charter of the Second Independent Church with the State of S.C. expires; it is re-chartered as the Unitarian Church in Charleston for another 21, and renewed "from time to time." <sup>2</sup>	1882, p. 415
1849	23 year old Francis D. Lee becomes an apprentice to Charleston architect Edward C. Jones. <sup>10</sup>	Ravenel, p. 221
1850	Lee opens his own architectural practice in Charleston. <sup>10</sup>	Ravenel, p. 221
1852 2	Repairs to the church becoming necessary, younger members propose it be entirely "remodeled and modernized," <sup>2</sup> retaining "a certain degree of reverence for the old walls" <sup>12</sup> (a congregational vote preserves the walls <sup>4</sup> ) and "to adapt them to a more pleasing and graceful structure." <sup>12</sup>	1882, p. 417/Farewell, p.10, Note Severens, Chap 11, Note 3 (quoting Courier, Aug. 27, 1853)
1852	Lee, a church member, is awarded the architectural contract (announced March 6, 1852, his first documented project as an independent) for his English Perpendicular Gothic design <sup>12</sup> , similar in styling on the interior to Westminster Abbey's Henry VII Chapel (1509) and St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. The interior is more likely modeled after the Carlton House Conservatory, London (1807), which in turn follows King's College Chapel, Cambridge (1446-1515). <sup>13</sup> Lee joins in a partnership with his former mentor, Jones, on July 1, 1852, <sup>13</sup> and together they renovate the church, suggesting that, given the uniqueness of the interior design, Lee required Jones' engineering, drafting, and management expertise. <sup>12</sup> Side galleries overlooking the nave were not included in the design nor were they built. <sup>14</sup> The project was estimated to cost \$21,000, but it actually approached \$35,000 (\$763,000 today <sup>17</sup> ), including the organ <sup>2</sup> (using funds raised by the Ladies' Working Society <sup>4</sup> ) and furnishings. <sup>2</sup>	Severens, p. 205 July, 2002, UU FAQs Waddell, p. 234 Waddell, p. 250, note 15 Severens, p. 205 Waddell, U.U. Forum 1882, p.417/Williamson Farewell p.23
1852	In a famous sermon in which he states that during his tenure the congregation has "generally averaged about four hundred souls", Gilman bids goodbye to the old church, April 4, 1852. <sup>4</sup>	Farewell, p. 29
1853	An assistant to the aging Gilman, Charles M. Taggart, is hired and quickly becomes popular. <sup>2</sup>	1882, p. 416
1854	Renovations complete, the church is rededicated on April 2, 1854. The new pews are sold to the congregation, valued from \$200-400 (\$4,350-8,700 in 200317), to fund the construction. <sup>2</sup>	1882, p. 417-18/Williamson
1854	Taggart dies at age 33, October 22, 1854. <sup>2</sup>	1882, p. 417

	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
1856	The final obligation incurred in building the new church is met. <sup>2</sup>	1882, p. 418
1857	Jones and Lee dissolve their partnership of four and one-half years, on January 5, 1857. <sup>10</sup>	Ravenel, p 227
1858	Visiting his daughter and son-in-law, the Rev. C.J. Bowen, in Massachusetts, Gilman dies after a short illness at age 67 on February 9, 1858. <sup>2</sup>	1882, p. 419
1858	Assistant minister James McFarland is called to succeed Gilman but falls ill before he can be installed and dies at age 29 on April 4, 1859. <sup>2</sup>	1882, p. 419
1861	The church is spared Charleston's Great Fire, but then closes due to the war effort.	Old chronology; not examined
1865	Organ, silver, records, library and furniture removed to Columbia for safekeeping are lost in the Great Conflagration at the fall of Columbia to Sherman's troops. <sup>2</sup>	1882, p. 420
1865	The church reopens. The American Unitarian Association sends a "missionary" newly graduated from Harvard Divinity School to lead the church (at no charge to the church). Calvin Stebbins, inexperienced, from the North and an Abolitionist, oversees "the transition from military to civilian authority, holding the church property under military rule" <sup>16</sup> or "martial law <sup>5</sup> ." This ends in a rift between the leadership and the congregation, and leads to Stebbins' recall by the A.U.A. <sup>5</sup>	Old chronology Whitman, p. 24; MML-2
1865 Et seq.	Emerging from war a weakened church, it experiments with five ministers over the next decade. Since the former membership has now scattered, pew rents fall to one-half the prewar level; annual deficits threaten solvency and the very existence of the church. <sup>16</sup>	Whitman, p. 25
1866	Second Unitarian Church of Baltimore where Rev. C.J. Bowen, Gilman's son-in-law, is now minister presents a silver communion service to replace the one lost in the burning of Columbia.	Old chronology; not examined
1866	The church is refurbished to renew the war's "dilapidation" and a pipe organ by William H. Davis and Son of New York City <sup>11</sup> is purchased for \$1,500 (\$17,000 in 2003 17). <sup>16</sup>	Whitman, p. 26 Bob Schulz/Williamson
1868 et seq.	For the next 30 years, Alva Gage is the financial savior of the church. <sup>16</sup>	Whitman, p.29
1870	Caroline Gilman calls these the "Years of Trial."	
1886	An earthquake (7.3 Richter) topples the pinnacles and spires of the new tower and hurtles them down thru the roof, leaving a gaping hole and a pile of rubble in the sanctuary, August 31, 1886. <sup>16</sup>	Whitman, p. 31/Justin Davis, SCDOT Engineer, New Cooper River Bridge

	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
1887	In another subscription from northern Unitarians, initiated at a conference of Unitarians being held at the time of the quake, this time \$14,000 (\$270,000 today <sup>17</sup> ) is collected for repairs. Thomas W. Silloyay, Universalist minister and Boston architect, is hired to repair the ruin. The tower is restored with a design containing more sturdy elements, hoping to minimize damage from future earthquakes. Almost totally destroyed, the fan tracery ceiling is rebuilt to its original look from drawings. The final cost of all repairs is \$13,000 <sup>16</sup> (\$245,000 <sup>17</sup> ).	Williamson Whitman, p. 32/Robert P. Stockton, Charleston Post
1888	Caroline Gilman dies at age 94 in Washington, DC, on September 15, 1888.	Docent Notebook, Historical Figures
C. 1890	The new Art Nouveau windows installed in the sanctuary following earthquake and hurricane damage are donated by the Boston Unitarian Church.	Sue Wallace
1892	A local branch of Women's Alliance is formed (the national organization dates from 1880). <sup>5</sup>	MML-2
1892	The current Circular Congregational Church is constructed in Richardson Romanesque style. <sup>9</sup>	Poston
1892	The vestry accepts Alva Gage's offer to fund and build a parish hall, December 11, 1892. <sup>16</sup>	Whitman, p. 33
1893	Completed at a cost of \$10,000 (\$203,800 now <sup>17</sup> ), Gage Hall is dedicated on December 5, 1893, and used for Sunday School/library/kitchen with the second floor as the minister's residence. <sup>16</sup>	Whitman, p. 33-34/Williamson
1896	Alva Gage dies September 12, 1896, leaving one-half his estate to the church. <sup>16</sup>	Whitman, p. 34
1916	As a memorial, the Gilman Room is constructed in the church tower by Harvard alumni. <sup>5</sup>	MML-2
1916	Rosa Thompson Memorial donates an Austin Opus 649 Organ, value \$6,850 (\$116,000 now <sup>17</sup> ). <sup>11</sup>	Bob Schulz/Williamson
1917	Church bylaws are amended to allow women on the vestry; three are elected. <sup>5</sup>	MML-2
1921	The Ladies' Sewing Circle and the Women's Alliance merge under the Women's Alliance name. <sup>5</sup>	MML-2 When did "Working Society" become "Sewing Circle"?
1938	A tornado spawned by the hurricane of 1938 damages the roof and tower of the church.	Old chronology; not examined
1943	The 9' 4" Mason & Hamlin concert grand piano (1903) is the gift of member Elizabeth H. Poole.	Martha Welch
1952	The Austin Organ is repaired and restored by I.E. Thomas for \$1,035 (\$7,200 today <sup>17</sup> ). <sup>11</sup>	Bob Schulz/ Williamson

	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
C.1952	The candelabra on the altar is presented to the church as a memorial to Major Marion Ryan McCown, a pilot lost during World War II and listed as missing in action.	Old chronology and UU FAQs combined; not examined
1957	A parsonage is built at 94 Murray Blvd. with money donated by Anna Geary in memory of her father, Augustus Jones. The house is sold several years later.	Hodges, The U. Church in Charleston
1957	The Women's Alliance is reactivated after some years' hiatus.	Old chronology; not examined Since WWII
1961	The Unitarian and Universalist organizations merge into a single national church, but Charleston remains known as the Unitarian Church in Charleston.	Jacqueline Collins Old chronology
1962	Repairs are made to the tower, the discarded windows are replaced with Plexiglas panels.	(or Lexan) Hodges, ibid.
1968	The interior of the church is repainted and new lighting added.	Old chronology
1974	The lowest membership ever (about 50) is recorded.	John Meffert
1976	The church becomes a National Historic Landmark, after which Landmark Committee is formed.	News & Courier, 3/29/1976
C. 1976	Tower and exterior wall restoration are funded by a So. Carolina Archives & History grant of \$19,000 (\$54,000 today <sup>17</sup> ), and a Federal matching grant of \$30,000 (\$85,000 <sup>17</sup> ).	Exact date/Current chronology/Williamson Hodges, The Church's Real Property??Is it a
1981	Women's Alliance becomes The Alliance of the Unitarian Church and opens to all adults.	Old chronology
1982	The Austin organ's blower motor is deemed not repairable, making the organ not playable. <sup>11</sup>	Bob Schulz
1986	A Johannus Opus 240 analog electric organ is purchased for \$19,201 (\$32,000 <sup>17</sup> ). The unusable Austin and its ancient pipes remain in place. <sup>11</sup>	Bob Schulz/Williamson
1989	Damages to the churchyard from falling trees in Hurricane Hugo amount to more than \$60,000.	John Meffert
1997-98	The new religious education and sexton's apartment building is constructed.	John Milkereit/U.U. brochure, A National Historic
2000	A Long Range Planning Board identifies \$811,350 in capital needs.	
2002	Architect Glenn Keyes is hired to oversee repairs and "seal the envelope" of the church exterior.	
2003	The Larisey Fund is used to caulk windows and install a power ventilator in the church.	Ray Setzer
2003-04	Many gravestones damaged by Hurricane Hugo are repaired using \$38,000 from the Larisey Fund.	

	<b>Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
2004	Pledges amount to almost \$700,000 in the capital fund campaign to help save the physical church.	Emilie Carey
2004-05	Work ensues to repair/replace failing stucco in order to weatherproof the exterior of the church.	
2005	The Unitarian Church in Charleston has 255 members and 170 pledging units.	Jacqueline Collins
	Revised 6/20/05, Reformatted by John Preston 2/26/16	

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## A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF CHARLESTON

1670 The first permanent English settlement south of Virginia is established at Albermarle Point on the Ashley River, several miles inland of the current city of Charleston, at the direction of eight Lords Proprietors.

1680 City Of 'Charles Town' is moved to Oyster Point on the lower peninsula, between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. It is laid out according to the "Grand Modell," a plan that included gridded streets and a central public square.

The first Huguenots arrive in the ship, Richmond.

1695 The first Jewish settler is recorded in Charles Town.

1704 Walled fortifications surrounding the town have been completed, as shown on the Crisp map of 1704; designed to ward off a Spanish attack by sea, these walls remain essentially in place until after 1719.

1712 The province of Carolina is divided and governed as two colonies: North Carolina and South Carolina.

1718 Stede Bonnet, "Gentleman Pirate," is captured, tried and hanged at Oyster Point.

1719 Dissatisfied with the rule of the Lords Proprietors, the S.C. House of Assembly forms a convention and petitions to become a crown colony.

1730 The population of the colony (excluding tribal Indians) has grown to nearly 30,000. Of these, more than 20,000 individuals are slaves.

1730s/1740s Rice and indigo become major cash crops.

1736 The Charles Town (Dock Street) Theater opens with a performance of The Recruiting Officer.

1740 A great fire burns nearly half of the city, including Elliott, Broad, and parts of Church Streets.

1765 Charles Town has become known as Charlestown.

1772 Charlestown, nearing a population of 12,000, is the largest city in British America.

1776 Fort Moultrie, a palmetto log fort, becomes the site of the first decisive patriot victory of the American Revolution.

1778 Another great fire destroys several blocks.

1780-1782 The British occupy Charlestown.

1783 The city is incorporated and called Charleston.

1785 The College of Charleston is incorporated.

1786 The state capital is moved to Columbia.

1788 South Carolina ratifies the U.S. Constitution in the Exchange Building.

1791 President George Washington visits Charleston.

1796 A fire spreads west from East Bay to Meeting streets. The area between Broad and Cumberland streets is chiefly damaged.

1811, 1813 The city is devastated by great "cyclones" (hurricanes)

1822 Denmark Vesey organizes, but is unable to execute, a slave insurrection

1824 Medical College of South Carolina is founded

1833 Charleston and Hamburg (near Augusta) are linked by rail, the longest railroad in the world at the time.

1838 Fire ravages 145 acres of the city, destroying nearly 1000 buildings from King Street to Ansonborough.

1842 The Citadel is established.

1860 South Carolinians sign the Ordinance of Secession on December 20, at Institute Hall in Charleston.

1861 On April 12, shots fired on Federal forces at Fort Sumter initiate the Civil War.

In December, the worst fire in Charleston's history cuts a path from the Cooper to the Ashley Rivers.

1863 Federal bombardment of Charleston commences in August and lasts nearly eighteen months.

1864 The Confederate submarine, Hunley, sinks the Union ship, Housatonic. off Sullivan's Island.

1865 Federal troops occupy the city until 1879.



1867 Phosphate deposits are discovered on former plantation lands, leading to a prosperous mining industry.

1885 A great 'cyclone' (hurricane) rakes the city.

1886 A devastating earthquake strikes.

1893 Another severe hurricane hits Charleston.

1901 The Navy Yard is relocated near Charleston.

1902 The Interstate and West Indian Exposition, a world's fair, brings international attention to the city.

1911 Another hurricane makes landfall and effectively brings an end to the rice growing industry in the area.

1917 The boll weevil is detected and virtually ends the Sea Island Cotton industry within two years.

1920 The Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings, now the Preservation Society of Charleston, is founded by Susan Pringle Frost.

1929 The Cooper River Bridge opens.

1931 A pioneering zoning ordinance is passed, creating the nation's first official historic district.

1935 The opera *Porgy and Bess*, based on Charlestonian DuBose Heyward's novel *Porgy* and composed by George Gershwin at Sullivan's Island, opens in New York City.

1947 The civic services committee of the Carolina Art Association establishes Historic Charleston Foundation.

1959 The HCF Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project begins, using an innovative "revolving fund" method.

1977 The SPOLETO, USA arts festival is established.

1989 Hurricane Hugo causes extensive damage to the Charleston area.

1995 The Yard and Naval Base close; tourism has become Charleston's largest industry.

1997 Historic Charleston Foundation and the Festival of Houses and Gardens celebrate Fiftieth Anniversaries



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## REFERENCES

### BACKGROUND ON UNITARIANISM AND RELIGIOUS PRINCIPALS

Unitarians have a liberal religious faith that emphasizes personal values, religious inquiry and growth, and tolerance of diversity.

### SEVEN PRINCIPLES

We often refer to our Seven Principles, which are the basis for our beliefs.

Stated in brief, they are:

- Inherent worth, dignity of every person.
- Justice, equity, compassion for all.
- Acceptance of one another, common search for spiritual growth.
- Free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- Right of conscience and use of democratic process.
- The goal of a world with peace, liberty, justice for all.
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF WORSHIP:

- Sunday morning service.
- Presence of Judaic-Christian philosophy.
- Wide-ranging texts from all religious beliefs.
- Traditional, contemporary choral and instrumental music.
- Sermon, frequent involvement of lay members, guest speakers.
- Other services offer religious education for adults and children.
- Community outreach through various social service programs.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to anyone willing to accept the Church's principals and responsibilities of membership. Membership is achieved by signing the Membership book.

### MISSION STATEMENT—UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON

The Unitarian Church in Charleston is devoted to creating a community that nurtures individual values, religious growth, pursuit of truth, respect for individual dignity, and development of individual responsibility.

### GOVERNANCE

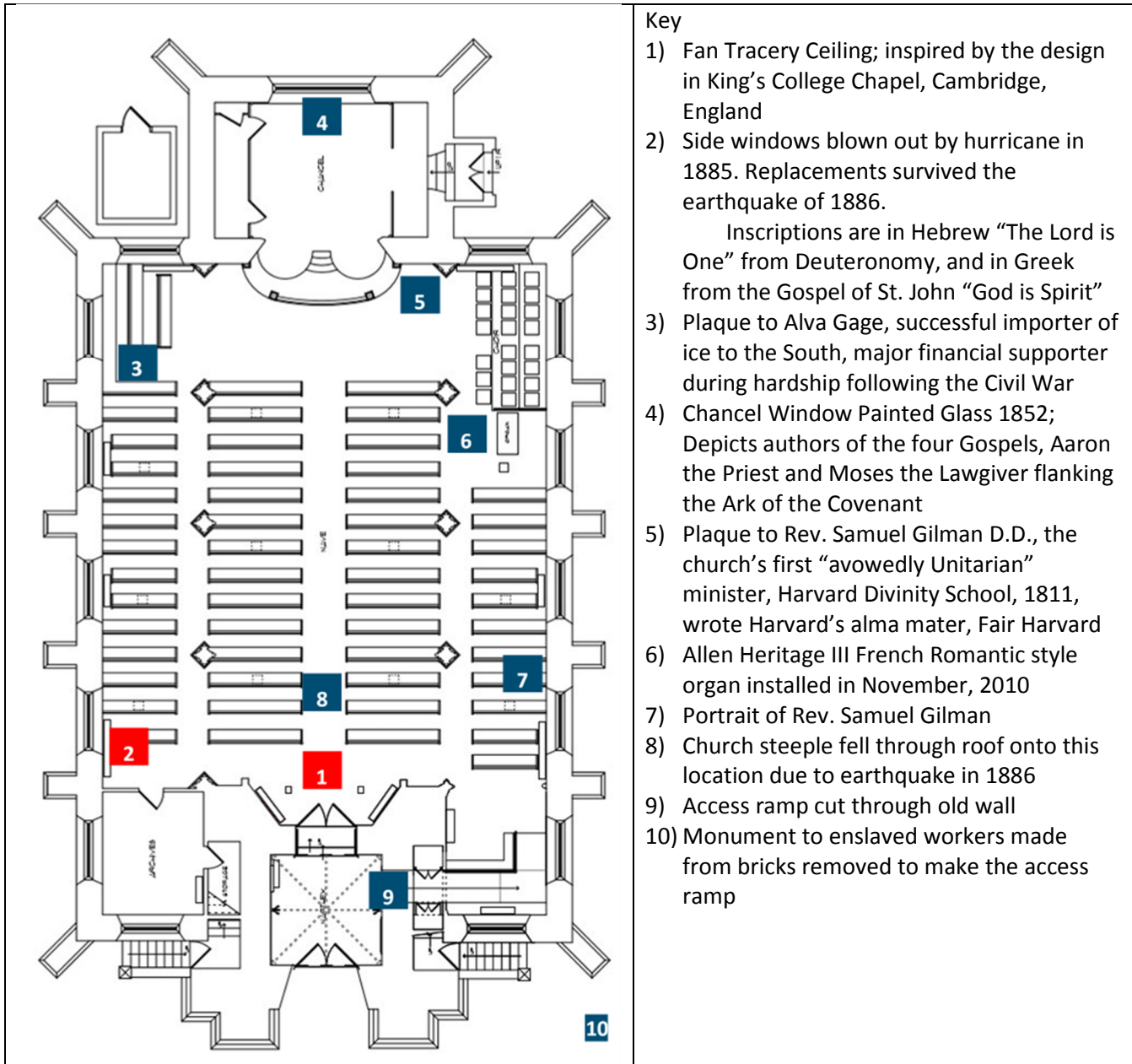
Vestry—nine lay members of the Church, elected by the membership; the Vestry is responsible for Church management, staff and ministerial selection, and employment and staff evaluation.

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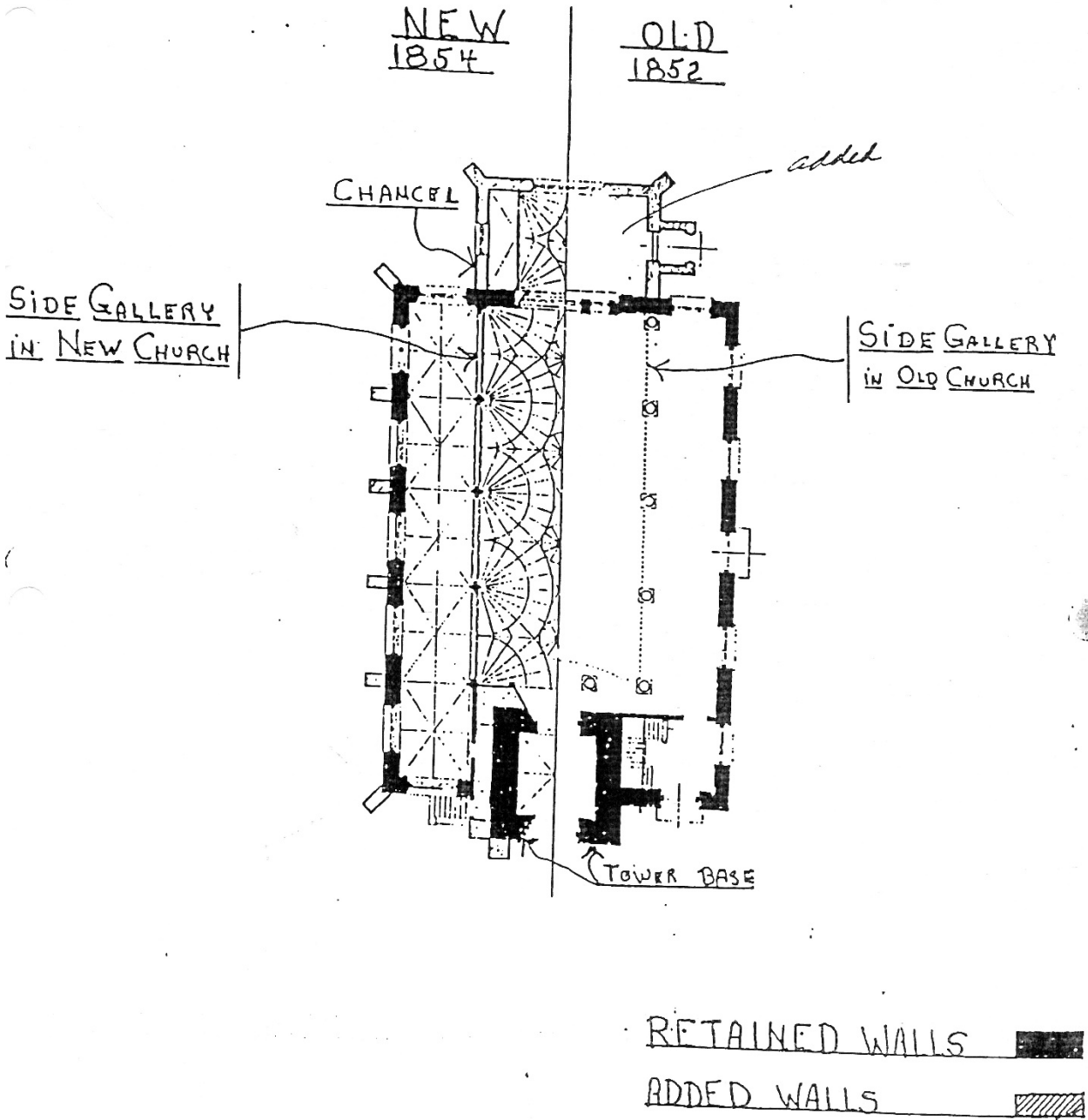
## DIAGRAMS



### Key

- 1) Fan Tracery Ceiling; inspired by the design in King's College Chapel, Cambridge, England
- 2) Side windows blown out by hurricane in 1885. Replacements survived the earthquake of 1886.  
Inscriptions are in Hebrew "The Lord is One" from Deuteronomy, and in Greek from the Gospel of St. John "God is Spirit"
- 3) Plaque to Alva Gage, successful importer of ice to the South, major financial supporter during hardship following the Civil War
- 4) Chancel Window Painted Glass 1852; Depicts authors of the four Gospels, Aaron the Priest and Moses the Lawgiver flanking the Ark of the Covenant
- 5) Plaque to Rev. Samuel Gilman D.D., the church's first "avowedly Unitarian" minister, Harvard Divinity School, 1811, wrote Harvard's alma mater, Fair Harvard
- 6) Allen Heritage III French Romantic style organ installed in November, 2010
- 7) Portrait of Rev. Samuel Gilman
- 8) Church steeple fell through roof onto this location due to earthquake in 1886
- 9) Access ramp cut through old wall
- 10) Monument to enslaved workers made from bricks removed to make the access ramp

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON, S.C.







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## HISTORICAL FIGURES

### WILLIAM TENNENT JR.

- 1772 - Rev. William Tennent, Jr. preaches about the need for a second building to house an expanding congregation at the old White Meeting House.
- 1772-1775 – Construction of the Archdale church proceeds until halted by the revolutionary war.
- 1776 - Rev. Tennent leads a drive to disestablish the Church of England as the state church.
- 1777 - Rev. Tennent dies.

### REVEREND ANTHONY FORSTER

- 1785 - Born in North Carolina. Forster's father-in-law, Joseph Gales, was a Unitarian minister and close associate of Joseph Priestley.
- 1815 - Forster determines to change Gales beliefs from Unitarian to Trinitarian.
- 1817 - Forster, trained as a lawyer, was himself swayed in the end and became Unitarian.
- 1819 - Unitarians split with Meeting Street Congregationalists and take Archdale Street church for their use. Archdale Street church becomes Unitarian.
- 1820 – Forster, about 35 years old, dies January 18 in Raleigh, NC, after Samuel Gilman has been established as rector of Second Independent Church.

### SAMUEL GILMAN

- 1791 - Born in Gloucester, Massachusetts on Feb.16.
- 1807 - Enters Harvard University at age 16.
- 1810 – Meets 16 year old Caroline Gilman, to become his wife nine years later.
- 1811 - Graduated with high honors.
- 1812 - Made faculty member at Harvard University at age 21.
- 1819 - Recommended by President Kirkland of Harvard for Charleston church position. April he preached four sermons and was “unanimously elected”, arrived in Charleston Oct. 14, after marrying Caroline Howard.
- 1819 - Ordained by Rev. J. Tuckerman with attendance of Rev. Jared Sparks, later Harvard President, Rev. M. Parks, Salkehatchie Presbyterian Church.
- 1836 – Composed “Fair Harvard”, which is still Harvard Alma Mater.
- 1838 – Granted honorary doctorate of divinity by Harvard University, but comes to the realization that because he owns slaves he will never preach in the north.
- 1850 – Wrote John Calhoun's funeral ode.
- 1852 – With wealthy congregation of 400, hired architect Francis D. Lee and launched remodeling of church to present Perpendicular Gothic style.
- 1858 – Dies while visiting daughter in Kingston, Massachusetts. Funeral rites and mourning more extensive than anyone since Calhoun.

### **FRANCIS D. LEE**

- 1849 – 23 year old architect Francis Lee becomes an apprentice to Charleston architect Edward C. Jones.
- 1850 – Lee opens his own architectural practice in Charleston.
- 1852 – Lee, a church member, is awarded the contract to remodel the Unitarian Church, his first commission since becoming independent. Lee and Jones become partners.
- 1857 – Architects Jones and Lee dissolve their partnership.

### **CAROLINE GILMAN**

- 1794 – Born in Boston on October 8.
- 1810 – First poetry published, “Jephthah’s Rash Vow”, meets Samuel Gilman at party where he read her poem not knowing her.
- 1810, 1811, 1812, 1815– after death of parents, spends winters in Savannah, Georgia with brothers.
- 1819 – Married October 14 to Samuel Gilman
- 1829 – Started Rosebud magazine. Over next 20 years, becomes best known female author in the South.
- 1831 – Planned garden cemetery next to the churchyard and organized Ladies Sewing Society, now the Women’s Alliance.
- 1832 – First funds given by ladies of Charleston for \$1,000 for repairs to church from bazaar.
- 1862 – Moves as a refugee to Greenville, S. C., where she will remain for the duration of the Civil War.
- 1870 – Completes record book for Unitarian Church to replace one lost in Columbia.
- 1873 – Moves to the north to live with daughter Anna Bowen
- 1888 – Dies in Washington, DC at age 94, while living with daughter Eliza Dodge Lippett, only surviving child.

### **ALVA GAGE**

- 1820 - Born March 18, in New London, NH
- 1844 - Married Sarah Burpee. Sarah died 1862.
- 1845 - Moved to Charleston to establish an ice business.
- Gage was active in Charleston’s civic organization and politics.
- Married Joanna Burpee (Sarah;s sister). She died 1896 (3 months after Alva).
- 1868 – Methodists try to take over the church. For the next 30 years, Gage is the financial savior of the Unitarian Church.
- 1892 - Gave money for the “parish hall”.
- 1893 - Gage Hall dedicated December.
- 1895 - The portrait of Gage (artist: William Post) was given to the church by James Eason on the 75th anniversary of Gage’s birth.
- 1896 - Died September 12, in Saluda, NC, leaving one half his estate to the church.
- Gage and his two widows are buried side-by-side in our churchyard.

## MINISTERS

### MINISTERS OF OLD WHITE MEETING, (FIRST) INDEPENDENT CHURCH OF CHARLESTON

1684-1685	_____	Thomas Barrett
1686-1691	_____	Unknown
1691-1698	_____	Benjamin Pierpont
1698-1699	_____	John Cotton
1698-1699	_____	Hugh Adams (possible Assistant)
1700-1704	_____	Archibald Stobo
1704-1720 or 1724	_____	William Livingstone
1724-1738	_____	Nathan Basset
1734-1749 or 1750	_____	Josiah Smith (possible Assistant, 1734-1738)
1741-1742	_____	James Parker (possible Assistant)
1748-1749	_____	Samuel Fayerweather (Assistant to Josiah Smith, 1748-1750)
1749 or 50-1754	_____	No Minister
1754-1767	_____	James Edmunds
1757-1761	_____	William Hutson (Assistant ?)
1761-1763	_____	Andrew Bennett (Assistant ?)
1767-1771	_____	John Thomas
1772-1777	_____	William Tennant, III
1777-1783	_____	No minister
1783-1787	_____	William Hollinshead

### JOINT MINISTERS WITH (FIRST) INDEPENDENT CHURCH OF CHARLESTON

1787-1816	_____	William Hollinshead
1788-1813	_____	Isaac Stockton Keith, Co-pastor
1814-1817	_____	Benjamin M. Palmer, Co-pastor
1815-1817	_____	Anthony Forster

### MINISTERS OF THE SECOND INDEPENDENT CHURCH OF CHARLESTON

1817-1819	_____	Anthony Forster
1819-1839	_____	Samuel Gilman

### MINISTERS OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON

1839-1858	_____	Samuel Gilman
1853-1854	_____	Charles M. Taggart ("Junior Pastor")
1858-1859	_____	James R. McFarland (called but died before installation)
1859-1860	_____	George G. Ingersoll (Interim)
1860-1861	_____	William A. Miller (Interim)
1861-1865	_____	No minister
1865-1866	_____	Calvin Stebbins
1866-1868	_____	Thomas Hirst Smith

1868	_____	Samuel A Devens (Interim)
1868	_____	L. Bushnel (Interim)
1868-1871	_____	Rufus P. Cutler
1871-1873	_____	James Boyd
1873-1875	_____	Henry F. Jenks
1875-1889	_____	E.C.L. Browne
1889-1901	_____	H.A. Whitman
1901-1921	_____	Clifton Merritt Gray
1921-1923	_____	Ralph E. Bailey
1923-1941	_____	J. Franklin Burkhart
1941-1944	_____	Marius McKarl Nielson
1945-1950	_____	Horace G. Westwood
1950-1953	_____	Alfred W. Hobart
1953-1960	_____	Rhys Williams
1960-1962	_____	H. Paul Osborne
1962-1964	_____	Spencer Lavan
1964-1969	_____	George C.B. Tolleson
1970-1974	_____	Justin Kahn
1974 -1977	_____	Josiah (Jo) Bartlett (Interim)
1977-1987	_____	George Exoo
1987-1989	_____	David Scheyer, (Interim)
1989-2005	_____	Jacqueline Collins
2005-2006	_____	Gail Collins-Ranadive, (Interim)
2006-2009	_____	Peter Lanzillotta
2009-	_____	Danny R. Reed

## JOSEPH PRIESTLEY

Those of you who paid attention in school will remember Joseph Priestley as the eminent British scientist known mostly for the discovery of oxygen. But Priestley did much more than this.

Priestley was born in 1733, the son of a cloth finisher. He was sent for a time to live with his grandparents at age one. His mother died in childbirth when Priestley was seven, and in 1741 when he was nine, his father remarried and he went to live with his wealthy aunt Sarah. His parents were Presbyterians, but his aunt Sarah was a Calvinist. Despite her Calvinism, aunt Sarah was very liberal-minded and once a week held a gathering at her house. Her guests included many dissenting ministers. This was probably where the very bright young Priestley first began to question orthodox religious dogma

When he was 13, Priestley nearly died of tuberculosis. This would not have been surprising, since only half of the population lived to the age of 15, and the life expectancy was 35. Both Priestley's wife and sister Sally were ultimately to die of TB.

The near death experience had a profound effect on Joseph and he resolved never to waste another moment of his life and became obsessed with efficiency. It is said that he never slept more than six hours a night.

By the time he was ready for higher education, Priestley had already taught himself seven languages and had read numerous books on religion, philosophy and other topics. His Aunt Sarah desperately wanted Joseph to be a Calvinist minister, but the elders in his church decided his views were “not quite orthodox” and he was rejected. This enraged Priestley, and on the spot he rejected Calvinism and became an Arian, a belief that denied the divinity of Christ and the holy trinity.

Priestley enrolled at the liberal academy, Daventry, where he spent three years preparing to be a dissenting minister. Anyone who did not belong to the Church of England, including Catholics, Presbyterians, Calvinists, Quakers, and of course, Unitarians were dissenters.

Priestley became a dissenting minister, but faced difficulties. Ministers in those days were paid on the basis of their success and because of a serious stutter coupled with his unorthodox views, he was not paid very much. To escape his misery, he spent his time writing books and papers on a wide variety of subjects. During his lifetime, he produced 150 books, pamphlets and papers.

In 1762, at the age of 29, he married Mary Wilkerson, age 17. He conquered his stutter, was assigned to a new church, and became successful. He had always been interested in science, but his full emergence as a scientist did not occur until after he met and became great friends with Benjamin Franklin in 1765. Priestley was 32 and Franklin 61. At Franklin’s urging, Priestley wrote a book, “The History of Electricity”, which made him famous throughout England.

Priestley is best known for his discovery of oxygen, but in truth he was not first. Both Carl Wilhelm Scheele, a Swedish chemist, and Frenchman Antoine Lavoisier had discovered oxygen earlier, but Priestley got the credit because he was the first to publish. Lavoisier, “the father of modern chemistry” and the creator of the periodic table of elements, coined the name “oxygen”.

But Priestley did many other things:

- He discovered that carbon was a conductor of electricity.
- He discovered that sap of a certain South American tree could be used to erase pencil marks, and coined the term “rubber”.
- He discovered that water could be infused with carbon dioxide to create soda water, a pleasant drink. He was not interested in making money from this discovery, but a contemporary named Johann Jacob Schweppe saw the potential and patented a process for making carbonated water.
- He discovered nitrous oxide and its properties as “laughing gas”. Year later, it became the first widely used anesthetic.

Priestley continued preaching, writing and doing scientific experiments for the next 32 years. In the mid-1780s, things started to heat up in France. The French Revolution started in 1789 with the storming of the Bastille, and the overthrow of the monarchy. The execution of Louis XVI in 1793 was very disturbing to the British as well as the Spanish and other European monarchies. France and England went to war in 1793 in a war that would last until 1815, ending with the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. At the start of the war, England immediately clamped down on dissenters of all stripes. The Inquisition was revived in Spain.

Joseph Priestley, openly sympathetic to both the French and the American revolutions, was in jeopardy. When a mob burned his house in Birmingham in 1791 he fled to London. Rioters also destroyed 27 houses and four dissident churches in Birmingham. The Priestleys managed to survive there for the next two years, but always in great jeopardy.

On April 7, 1794, Priestley left Britain forever, arriving in New York on June 4 after a difficult 8-week voyage. On May 8, 1794, while the Priestleys were at sea, Antoine Lavoisier was guillotined.

In the new country, they were immediately courted by various political factions vying to gain Priestley's endorsement. Priestley declined their entreaties, hoping to avoid political discord in his new country. In Philadelphia Priestley gave a series of sermons and helped found the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia. Offers of positions in Philadelphia were declined, and the Priestley's moved to Northumberland, Pennsylvania to make their home.

This brings us to Priestley's connection to the Unitarian Church in Charleston. Material in our Docent Notebooks tells us that our first Unitarian Minister, Anthony Forster, became a Unitarian when he married the granddaughter of Joseph Priestley.

In doing research for this presentation, my compatriot Dave Elder and I discovered that this story, alas, is not true. Forster was married to the daughter of Joseph Gales, a woman named Altona. Joseph Gales was a Unitarian, born in 1741 in Eckington, England. He became a prominent printer and publisher, publishing works by such as Thomas Paine and Joseph Priestley. It is likely that Gales and Priestley became close friends. Gales was also a liberal and a supporter of the French Revolution, and when war broke out in 1793, he became a target. He fled to Hamburg, leaving his wife and children behind. They were reunited in Altona near Hamburg, Germany, and while there, a daughter, named Altona, was born.

In 1814, Altona H. Gales married the Rev. Anthony Forster, the first Unitarian minister of the Second Independent Church of Charleston. Forster was succeeded by the Rev. Samuel Gilman, and died on January 18, 1820 at age 35.

Cisco Lindsey March, 2008

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## PERSONAL SAFETY

To be added