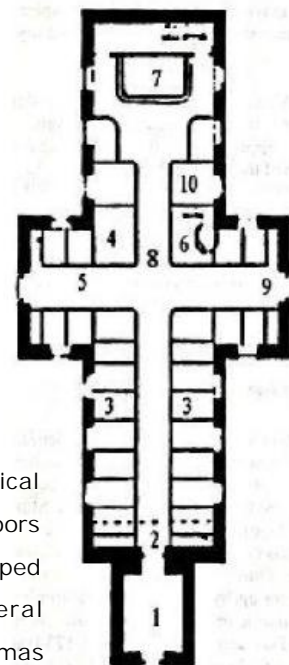


A BRIEF GUIDE TO BRUTON PARISH CHURCH



(1) **THE TOWER:** The Tower was added to the church in 1769 and houses the historic Tarpley Bell, given to Bruton Parish in 1761. It continues to summon worshippers every day. Inside the doorway of the Tower is a bronze bust of the Reverend W.A.R. Goodwin, rector, 1903-1909 and 1926-1938.



(2) **THE WEST GALLERY:** Erected for The College of William and Mary students and the only original part of the interior, this gallery has a handrail with visible initials carved nearly 300 years ago.



(3) **THE HIGH BOX PEWS:** These pews with doors were typical of unheated eighteenth-century English churches. Names on the doors commemorate parish leaders and well-known patriots who worshipped here as college students or members of the colonial General Assembly. Names such as Patrick Henry, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe and John Marshall remind us of the important place of Bruton Parish in colonial and early U.S. history.



(4) **THE GOVERNOR'S PEW:** Reserved for the royal governor and Council members, this pew has an ornate canopied chair. In colonial days it had curtains for privacy and warmth. Church wardens and vestrymen occupied the pews nearer the altar. Today, the choir uses them.



(5) **THE BRONZE LECTERN:** In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt presented the lectern to Bruton to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the first permanent English settlement and the establishment of the Anglican church at Jamestown. Near the lectern are the gravestones of royal Governor Francis Fauquier and patriot Edmund Pendleton. For the same occasion, King Edward VII presented the church a Holy Bible.

(6) **THE RECTOR'S PEW:** Towering over the rector's pew is the eighteenth-century style pulpit. It features a cantilever-supported sounding board to help project the voices of those addressing the congregation. The service was conducted from this pew.

(7) **THE ALTAR:** The altar and communion rail of black walnut and cross of gilded wood are the central features of this historic church. The panel behind the altar, called a reredos, contains the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. These fundamentals of faith, law, and prayer reflect canon law mandating their display in Anglican churches.



(8) **THE BAPTISMAL FONT:** In regular use today, the font occupies a central place in the governor's pew— a reminder that baptism is of central focus in the Church. It came to Bruton Parish c1758, when the church at Jamestown was abandoned.

(9) **THE SOUTH GALLERY:** Today's gallery in the south wing (and the opposite one in the north wing) was constructed in the restoration of 1938-1939. Earlier galleries had been built in the church at other points in time for distinct purposes. For example, a north gallery was erected in 1852 to serve as seating for black members of the parish's antebellum congregation, and later removed.



(10) **THE ORGAN:** The three-manual pipe organ was completed by Dobson Organ Builders in the fall of 2019. Two divisions are placed in the attic and two are in the gallery, with 2,587 pipes in all. The façade pipes in the front of the case are gilded in gold, and the console, built of walnut and burled elm, can be moved for concerts.

THE CHURCHYARD

Bruton Parish has probably the largest colonial burial site still existing in Virginia. By 1754, a brick wall enclosed the area. Some of the early tombstones and memorials in the forms of chest and table tombs, obelisks, sculptural designs, headstones, and ledger stones are examples of the Baroque style of funerary art. Beginning in 1678 with the burial of Thomas Ludwell, secretary of the colony, the churchyard received the remains of important residents such as Governor Edward Nott, and many others of more modest status. Of the hundreds buried in the grounds, only 148 have permanent markers. These are made of limestone, marble, sandstone, slate, or granite. In 2003, a memorial garden for interment of ashes was created.



PARISH HISTORY

Bruton Parish was formed in 1674 from the merger of several colonial parishes dating to 1633. It took its name from the town of Bruton in county Somerset, England. Governor Sir William Berkeley and the prominent Ludwell family had strong ancestral ties to that town. In 1678, Col. John Page promised funds and land for a church and churchyard. The first brick church was completed in 1683 and lay to the north and west of the present building.



In colonial times, the Church of England (Anglican) was the state church in Virginia, with Bruton the parish church for the Williamsburg area. The law required ordinary people and officeholders to attend services regularly. After 1699, when the capital of Virginia moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg, the need arose for a new church building, to accommodate an expanding population, students from the College of William & Mary (founded 1693) and the periodic influx of government officials and travelers from all over the colony. The third and present building was completed in 1715.



With American independence, ties between church and state came to an end. The Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776) called for free exercise of religion for all denominations. In 1786, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was passed by the General Assembly. The Anglican church became the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia and America. Bruton Parish entered a period of decline in membership and deterioration of the building. In 1840, a remodeling effort moved the altar to the west end and stripped the interior of its colonial furnishings.



The restoration of 1905-1907 partially returned the church to its colonial appearance, moving the altar back to the east end of the building. In 1926, Dr. Goodwin began his second tenure as Bruton Parish rector, and turned his attention to additional research about the church building. Bruton Parish members, friends, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. pledged funds for a restoration. The work was carried out in 1938-1939 with input from experts already at work on the restoration of Williamsburg buildings, and resulted in the building we see today.

ARCHITECTURAL NOTES

Bruton's cruciform shape, unusual for Virginia colonial churches, was intended to accommodate the governor's entourage and members of the General Assembly, college students and faculty, as well as townspeople. Governor Alexander Spotswood designed the building in 1711, and the General Assembly and the parish funded the construction. Completed four years later, the church was 75 feet long with transepts (wings) extending 14-1/2 feet. An addition in 1752 lengthened the chancel 25 feet and gave the church its symmetrical form with chancel and nave of equal length. Laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers, the brickwork is strikingly lovely. The erection of the tower in 1769 completed the structure.

THE PARISH TODAY

Today, Bruton Parish is an active, vibrant church as well as a colonial architectural masterpiece. Nearly 650 families, as well as college students and visitors attend the numerous services on Sundays, weekdays, and Holy Days in the building that accommodates more than 400 people. Bruton offers a full array of Christian Formation classes for adults and children and many other activities in the Parish House one and a half blocks west on Duke of Gloucester Street. Bruton Parish Church members volunteer to serve as trained guides to interpret the building and its history to our visitors.



BRUTON PARISH GIFT SHOP & HERITAGE CENTER LOCATED AT 331 W. DUKE OF GLOUCESTER STREET 1 ½ BLOCKS WEST OF THE CHURCH

Visit the Bruton Parish Shop & Heritage Center for a self-guided tour. In words, photographs and graphics, the history of Anglicanism in America is outlined from the colonial period to today. See the original iron weather vane that graced the Tower, replicas of a chalice and paten used in the Jamestown church in the early 1600s, and the lectern Bible given by King Edward VII in 1907. Come and learn about Bruton Parish Church as a community of faith and service since 1674— through revolution, transformation, hardship and renewal. Among the interesting things to explore in our new Heritage Center is a short video describing the Bruton Parish Historic Records. The records themselves are available on the Parish website at www.brutonparish.org/heritage, readily accessed on a home computer.

Bruton Parish Church

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