

ANN ARBOR GOES TO CHURCH

Ann Arbor's first settlers brought with them a strong background in Protestant Christianity. Early services held in the schoolhouse included anyone who wished to attend. In 1826 the Presbyterians organized a Society, which included the wife, brother, and parents of town founder John Allen, though not John himself. Two years later, on the southwest corner of Huron and Division Streets, the society built the first church in the county. Other Protestant denominations soon followed the Presbyterians: Methodists in 1827, Baptists and Episcopalians in 1828, German Protestants in 1832.



▲ In 1835, Roman Catholics began meeting in Northfield Township. Ten years later they built Ann Arbor's first brick church, Old St. Thomas. It stood on the south side of East Kingsley Street between Division and State.



◀ George D. Gillespie

Rev. Gillespie served as pastor of St. Andrew's from 1861 to 1875, when he became bishop of western Michigan. Under his leadership, the Episcopalians replaced their original frame church with the city's first stone church.

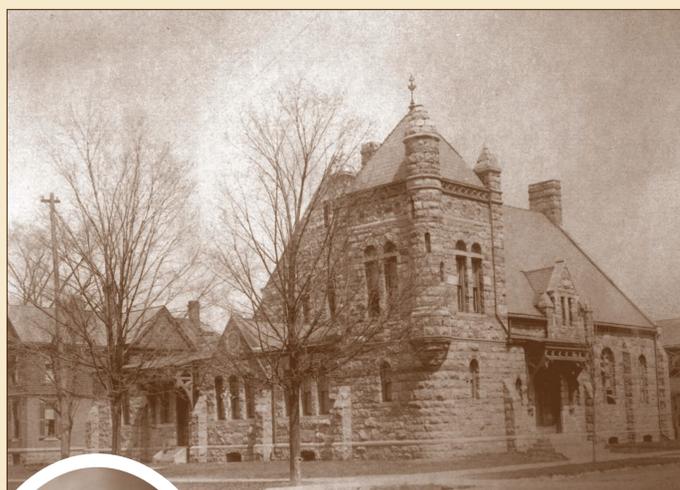


▲ Designed by Detroit architect Gordon W. Lloyd, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, at 306 North Division Street, was dedicated in 1869. It is the oldest church in the city in continuous use. By 1900 six more stone churches had been completed: First Congregational in 1876, First Baptist in 1881, First Unitarian in 1882, Memorial Christian Church in 1891, Bethlehem United Church of Christ in 1895-96, and St. Thomas the Apostle in 1899.



▲ Edward D. Kelly

Rev. Kelly led St. Thomas Parish from 1891 to 1919, built the new stone church, the convent and rectory, and founded St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital. A man of boundless energy, he also served as auxiliary bishop of Detroit from 1910 to 1919, when he became bishop of Grand Rapids.



▲ The Unitarians, organized in 1865, first used the Methodists' old church before building their own stone church at Huron and State in 1882 under the dynamic leadership of minister Jabez Sunderland. It featured a liberal library for students from the nearby university.

◀ Jabez Sunderland



▲ On the opposite corner from the Unitarian Church, the Episcopalians built Harris Hall in 1886. Its large lecture hall, handsome parlors, and even a bowling alley were planned for students to meet "under the refining and elevating influence of the Church's social life."