United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property
   historic name Zion Episcopal Church
   other names/site number

2. Location
   street & number South side of US 264, 0.2 mile east of jct. w/ SR 1601N
   city or town Washington
   state North Carolina     code NC  county Beaufort     code 013  zip code 27889

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [☐] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [☐] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [☐] nationally [X] statewide [☐] locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

   Signature of certifying official/Title
   State of Federal agency and bureau

   In my opinion, the property [☐] meets [☐] does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

   Signature of certifying official/Title
   State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification
   I hereby certify that the property is:
   [☐] entered in the National Register. [☐] See continuation sheet.
   [☐] determined eligible for the National Register [☐] See continuation sheet.
   [☐] determined not eligible for the National Register.
   [☐] removed from the National Register.
   [☐] other, (explain:)

   Signature of the Keeper
   Date of Action
# Zion Episcopal Church

**Name of Property**

**Beaufort County, NC**

**County and State**

## 5. Classification

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<th>Ownership of Property</th>
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<td>(Check only one box)</td>
<td>(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)</td>
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**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Religion/religious facility
- Religion/church-related residence
- Funerary/cemetery

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Religion/religious facility
- Religion/church-related residence
- Funerary/cemetery

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Greek Revival

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation: brick
- walls: wood
- roof: wood
- other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
Zion Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Beaufort County, NC
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture
- Religion

Period of Significance
1856–1950

Significant Dates
1856

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

- N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # ________

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
Zion Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Beaufort County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.3 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Drucilla H. York

organization Local History Associates

date April 7, 2000

street & number 2001 East Fifth Street

telephone (252) 752-5260

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property’s location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name The Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina

street & number 705 Doctors Drive

telephone (252) 522-0885

city or town Kinston

state NC zip code 28503

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).
Narrative Description

Located in rural Beaufort County approximately seven miles east of Washington, the county seat, Zion Episcopal Church stands as a small antebellum frame church sited on approximately three acres of land just south of U.S. highway 264. Primarily open agricultural fields frame this property. This small complex includes a large cemetery which surrounds the church and to the west a modern one-story block parish hall and a two-story frame rectory built in 1884. A narrow dirt lane bisects the site of the former parish school from the church and cemetery. Two interconnecting dirt drives loop in front of the buildings, one at the church and parish hall and the other at the rectory. Facing slightly to the northwest, the church stands approximately one hundred feet from the road and the rectory stands approximately ninety feet from the road. Directly in front of the church near the road stands the present church sign enframed by a brick surround. This sign marks the former site of a curbed well and sweep through the 1950s [Exhibit 1]. A picturesque picket fence with board bottom rail defines the churchyard to the north and extends approximately fifteen feet along the cemetery’s western edge. A simple rail fence frames it to the east. Cedars, dogwoods, azaleas, and crepe myrtles enhance the site. Two mature magnolias, however, flank the front entrance of both the church and rectory. Behind the parish hall and rectory, the open yard between the two buildings is bisected by a plain picket fence. Midway between them is a small gable-roof well house. A simple gable-roof frame garage stands southwest of the house and reached by a driveway which branches from the rectory’s front loop. Woodland, principally pine, frames the property to the south and east. Today, the property stands as a well-maintained, vibrant, and little changed testament to the religious vitality and commitment of the Episcopalians within this agricultural community.

1. Cemetery: late nineteenth century to present · contributing site

The church yard surrounding Zion Church has always served as the burying ground for church members, including the Harvey, Cutler, Sheppard, Asby, Braddy, and Douglas families. In an orderly fashion, the cemetery follows a rectilinear plan with parallel rows extending in a north-south pattern, five rows to each side of the church and two directly to the front and rear. The cemetery plan contains 386 sites, of which 286 are marked and occupied and 86 are vacant and/or reserved. The remainder are either unmarked or unknown. Local tradition, however, maintains that several unmarked slave burials are located near a large cedar in front of the church. Approximately eighty per cent of the cemetery’s present grave markers date from the period of significance. Some family plots, large and small, are delineated by concrete or brick curbs. A concrete walk leads directly to the church entrance and wraps
around to the entrances toward the back of the church to east and west. This walk also extends to the front entrance of the nearby parish hall.

Dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, granite and marble monuments are typically found throughout the cemetery. Only one weathered wooden marker, a tablet made of cypress, survives. Most headstones are rectilinear tablets, some of which include companion footstones. Earlier headstones have a curvilinear header and others a simple segmental arch. The more decorative late-nineteenth-and-early-twentieth-century monuments embody Gothic Revival and Classical Revival stylistic details and include small and large obelisks. The smaller ones are simple and usually capped by a cross. The larger formal obelisks stand on pedestals and, in one case, the monument of Stella C. Cutler [1919] is capped by stylize urn. Markers for children were always small in scale and in several instances included the figure of a resting lamb and extended side arms. Two turn of the century stonemasons signed their work. C. M. Walsh of Petersburg, Virginia completed an arched tablet for Martha Ann Braddy [1885] and several monuments for the J. D. Eborn family [1904, 1905]. Also, J. N. Simmons of Washington, N.C. produced a tablet for the Alligood family [1913].

2. Fence: early twentieth century, 1922 • contributing structure

Fences frame the church yard along its perimeter to the north and east. A picturesque early twentieth-century picket fence with central double-swing gate defines the front yard of the church and extends approximately fifteen feet along the cemetery’s western edge. An additional single-swing gate also opens along this fence line into the cemetery’s eastern section. The fence’s main design feature is a simple picket pattern with an alternating height for each one-and-one-half-inch square picket. Major four-by-four posts support each corner and gate opening along the fence. Smaller posts are spaced approximately every eight feet to support the two-by-four scantlings to which the pickets are nailed. One sixteen-foot scantling is placed horizontally on top of the post and another is let into the post face for stability. A bottom rail with beveled cap skirts the base of the fence. In contrast, a plain board fence frames the eastern edge of the cemetery.

3. Church: 1856 • contributing building

The Zion Episcopal Church is a simple Greek Revival building that features a rectilinear plan extending three-bays in depth. The original main body of the church measures approximately thirty feet three inches by forty feet five inches. Simple Greek Revival features enhance its exterior using brick piers. Based on a brick pier foundation with brick in 1854, the church is sheathed in plain weatherboards and features simple
cornerboards. Late-nineteenth and twentieth-century additions include the entrance vestibule (ca. 1885), rear addition (ca. 1920), and bell tower in 1954.

Notable exterior features include the windows and roof. The cypress shake roof, applied in 1983, replicates the original. The windows, however, are original and contain attenuated nine-over-nine pegged sash with each pane measuring twelve inches by eighteen inches. Simple surrounds with an unusual mitred, raised inner band and a plain sill frame each window. Hung on pintle hinges, shutters with three tiers of adjustable louvers protect each window.

The vestibule or narthex conceals the church’s original central entrance with three-light transom and double-leaf doorway. This vestibule, in all likelihood, was added ca. 1885. Measuring approximately eight feet nine inches by ten feet nine inches, it mirrors the church’s exterior features in form and detail, including a gable-front orientation, plain weatherboard sheathing, boxed cornice with returns, and central double-leaf entrance. Here, however, the entrance is capped by a peaked lintel as is the gable ventilator. The original four-panel doors were relocated at the vestibule entrance. A single small window with four-over-four sash flanks the vestibule. Modern brick steps and wooden handrails lead up to the church.

Like the vestibule, the bell tower complements the church in form and scale [Exhibit 1]. Added in the fall of 1954, it straddles the roof’s ridge near the front. Octagonal in form, the belfry has louvered ventilators on its four principal faces and a wood-shingled roof capped by a simple wooden cross.

Originally, a small vestry room with shed roof was appended to the rear elevation. Today it is replaced by a ca. 1920 addition. This one-story frame addition extends to the east and west approximately six feet beyond the width of the church and features a hipped roof with exposed rafter ends and six-over-six sash windows. Each extension contains a door which connects with a walkway leading to the front of the church. Two original vestry doors survive and each contains four panels similar in style to those at the front entrance. The addition is divided into three rooms: a sacristy, vesting room, and office.

The simplicity of the exterior features carries over into the interior. It is divided into three spaces: vestibule, nave with tongue-and-groove boards sheathe both the vestibule and nave walls and ceilings. The vestibule has a flat ceiling and the nave a vaulted one. The curve of this vault is broken into four segments, creating a peak at each corner. This peak rises above the step and crown of the wall with simple molding strips framing each side. These strips also finish the cut ends
and edges of the tongue-and-groove boards bordering the baseboards and door and window surrounds. The surrounds and baseboards feature plain boards. The nave floors are pine tongue-and-groove boards measuring four to four-and-a-half inches wide. The vestibule floors, however, are a narrower width.

The floor plan typically has a center aisle, side aisles, and a raised chancel area opposite the entrance. Flanking the center aisle are ten rows of benches on the west side and nine on the east. At the rear of the church, a modern tracker organ stands just east of the entrance and the original baptismal font to the west. All the benches are original and identical in form. The congregational ones, however, are longer than the shorter ones flanking the chancel. Their simple enclosed ends incorporate a slight incline for a more comfortable sitting position. Two back rails are let into each enclosed end as is the seat which is mortised. Each has book rack and kneeler additions. Four ca. 1940 brass lanterns, suspended from the ceiling, and two attached wall lanterns, flanking the chancel, light the interior.

The rectilinear chancel measures approximately eight feet four inches by fourteen feet eight inches. It is encircled by a kneeler and then enframed by an altar rail. This rail or balustrade has rectangular-in-section balusters, square-in-section corner posts, and a slightly rounded handrail. The chancel is entered directly from the central aisle and during communion is enclosed by a dovetailed rail extension. To each side of this opening, an original simple frame lectern with battered pedestal is positioned in front of the rail and rests on the kneeler. Within the chancel stands the centrally-placed nineteenth-century altar, two nineteenth-century side chairs, and a small reredos which is flanked by credence shelves. This simple reredos, with “Holy Holy Holy” inscription, was enlarged in 1991 to replicate a tripartite screen. It is now framed by modern fluted pilasters and capped by a decorative lintel with central gable. A wooden hymn board, capped by a Decorated-style cross, hangs on the rear wall just west of the chancel.

Based on a ca. 1900 photograph of the church interior (Exhibit 2), the chancel area has undergone several changes during the twentieth century. The most significant is the repositioning of the rear door from inside the chancel rail to just outside it. A four-panel door is depicted with a plain mitred-corner surround. Also, the altar rail had only one opening near this door. The two lecterns were originally placed where they rest as the ghost marks on the floor indicate, and the baptismal font was centrally positioned behind the rail and in front of the altar. The rail’s cornerposts had turned extensions which supported brass lighting fixtures. These fixtures had two branches
4. **Parish Hall:** 1952, remodeled 1996  

Built of concrete block, this one-story parish hall is a simple cross-gable-roof building which in recent years has undergone a major remodeling. This remodeling replicates many of the church’s exterior features and includes vinyl sheathing, double-sash windows, and a gable-front vestibule addition. Although a relatively large building, the low-pitched cross-gable roof minimizes its size. Entered through a Colonial-style double-leaf entry, the parish hall contains a large gathering space with an impressive ballast stone fireplace at the opposing end. The cross gable to the east contains bathrooms and to the west a well-equipped commercial kitchen.

5. **Rectory:** 1884-1885  

Typical of many late nineteenth-century houses built in eastern North Carolina, the Zion Church rectory is a two-story three-bay frame dwelling with t-plan. A double-tier porch supported by tall square-section fluted posts dominates the front facade. The gable roof features boxed cornices with returns. The central entrance is flanked by narrow side lights and enters into a central hall. Two interior chimneys service fireplaces in each room. In recent years several modifications were made to the rectory, including converting the one-story rear porch into a kitchen, replacing the windows with nine-over-nine sash thermal windows, and sheathing the exterior with vinyl siding.

6. **Garage:** ca. 1910  

Gable-roof frame structure sheathed with plain weatherboards and featuring exposed rafter ends.

7. **Well house:** ca. 1920  

Simple gable-roof structure with raised block foundation.
Zion Episcopal Church
Beaufort County, North Carolina

Statement of Significance

Summary

Located in rural Beaufort County seven miles east of Washington and completed in 1856, Zion Episcopal Church reflects Criterion A through its association with the missionary work and goals of the Episcopal Church within North Carolina. Organized in 1823, Zion Church was nurtured by both ministers and deacons working as missionaries within the Beaufort County area. By 1855, the Beaufort County missionary field was one of the most well-established in the state and contained two town congregations, three rural ones, and a parochial school. Between 1850 and 1856, the Rev. Nicholas C. Hughes served this missionary field as an ordained minister and established Trinity School near Trinity Church in Beaufort County. Here he inspired many students to serve the Episcopal church as lay readers and enter the ministry as deacons and then ministers. The subsequent growth and development of Zion Church under the leadership of such notable figures as the Revs. Luther Eborn, Israel Harding, Robert B. Windley, and Nathaniel Harding—all natives of Beaufort County—reflects this missionary outreach. Zion Church also embodies Criterion C by illustrating the perpetuation of a modest frame church form traditionally built throughout eastern North Carolina by various denominations at a time when the Ecclesiological movement was actively promoting Gothic architectural design. Development of the church, cemetery, and site also embodies other trends taking place within the Episcopal Church throughout the period of significance, 1856-1950. The church was built as a simple, gable-front frame structure with a rectilinear plan and rear vestry addition. Later additions to the church and site, respectively, included a narthex ca. 1885, a parsonage in 1884 and parish hall in 1952. This property also meets Criteria Consideration A for its associative value with the development of Episcopal missionary churches and their architectural design in North Carolina. In addition, the cemetery meets Criteria Consideration D for its distinctive design features and its association with the development of the church, site, and its congregation throughout the period of significance. Today, Zion Church stands as a rare antebellum example of a traditional church form typically built by Episcopalians in rural North Carolina.

Religious and Architectural Context

As new Protestant Episcopal churches were built in North Carolina during the antebellum period, church architectural preferences within the Episcopal denomination were increasingly rooted in the Gothic Revival style and reflected a progression in design and theological
ideals. Congregations within towns and villages embraced this new ideal. New church construction adhered to these ideals as local economics allowed. Small rural congregations, however, continued to construct simple churches reflecting more popular regional building trends and traditions.

For Episcopalians, the former evangelical emphasis on worship was giving way to the Ecclesiological movement and its study of liturgical and symbolic functions within the worship service of the medieval Gothic Church. Appointments, vestments, and ceremonies were becoming common practice. The strong influence of the Cambridge Camden Society in England, which published in 1841 The Ecclesiologist, "a periodical devoted to church building, restorations, ritual, and symbolism," gave rise to the development of an English Gothic Revival standard. Both Richard Upjohn and the New York Ecclesiological Society became its proponents and established nationally important architectural standards.

The New York Ecclesiological Society, founded in 1847, held its first meeting on April 2, 1848. Its founders included clergymen, architects, and laymen, many of which were associated with General Theological Seminary and the ministers of the large New York congregations. An English architect, Frank Wills immediately became the society’s official architect. Beginning in October 1848, the Society published over the next five years the New York Ecclesiologist, "a journal intended to disseminate Ecclesiological precepts and educate the Episcopal clergy in church architecture, history, and liturgical tradition." In 1852, the Society named Frank Wills, Wills’ partner Henry Dudley, John W. Priest, and Richard Upjohn and Company to its first list of approved architects. Upjohn also published in 1852, Upjohn’s Rural Architecture, a pattern book which included good designs for simple churches. Episcopal congregations in several North Carolina cities and towns, namely Edenton, Asheville, Halifax, Scotland Neck, Lexington, Goldsboro, Raleigh, and Plymouth, received church designs by either Wills, Priest, or Upjohn.

In an effort to control the quality of Gothic architectural design, the New York Ecclesiological Society recommended “the Early English parish church as the most suitable model for religious edifices.” The Society also promoted the restoration of the chancel, use of asymmetry, in place of a tower and/or entrance, and separation of chancel and nave by a rood screen or altar rail as well as a heavily defined arched opening. The steep pitch of the roof, the tall spire of the bell tower, the elevation of the chancel, and the use of stained glass, were all symbolic Gothic Revival elements. If walls could not be decoratively painted, then all woodwork was to be darkly stained. The altar became the chancel’s focal point with the pulpit and lectern.
Zion Episcopal Church
Beaufort County, North Carolina

Missionary initiatives and clergy interest provided the guiding force in the architectural development of the Protestant Episcopal church in North Carolina. Between 1831 and 1883, the three successive bishops of North Carolina, Levi Silliman Ives, Thomas Atkinson [1807-1881], and Theodore Benedict Lyman [1815-1893], provided leadership within the state-wide diocese. As each traveled throughout the Diocese of North Carolina making visitations, its challenges, needs, and opportunities became apparent. In about 1830, the diocese included approximately 900 communicants in sixteen parishes, only four of which were west of Raleigh. By 1883 these numbers, however, had multiplied significantly to 5,889 communicants in 117 parishes and mission stations. This growth within the church was achieved primarily through outreach by a dedicated clergy, both priests and deacons, many of whom were missionaries from northern states.

Elected the second bishop of North Carolina in 1831, Bishop Ives consistently stressed the necessity for missionary and church building expenditures with a focus on duty. In his 1842 annual report, he stated:

God hath opened before the Church in this Diocese a certain field of duty, and hath blessed us with the means necessary to accomplish it. We are to go forward in our plans of labor with as much confidence and energy as if the money was actually in our treasury; God's spirit upon the hearts of our individual members being the guarantee that it will be there in due time.

Missionary work by priests, deacons, and presbyters helped stabilize older congregations and establish new ones. In many cases, newly ordained deacons were sent into promising areas and ministered by holding services, baptizing individuals, and distributing prayer books and tracts. A high point in this missionary field came in 1848 when fourteen ministers and deacons were assigned to missions in North Carolina. In his promotion of High Church Gothic Revivalism, Bishop Ives pointed out that Gothic churches "...are the most stable and durable of all the buildings that are to be found."

From the very outset, the updating of an older church or the construction of a new one was a major event within the missionary field. During the ante-bellum period, several clergy members demonstrated a gift
Collin Hughes, Jarvis Buxton, John H. Parker, William B. Otis, William E. Snowden, and Frederick FitzGerald. Bishop Ives led the diocese through a significant growth period with the number of communicants increasing to 2,219 by 1852. Between 1848-1852, five churches were admitted into union with the convention, and eleven new church buildings were consecrated throughout the state. Named as third bishop of North Carolina in 1853, Thomas Atkinson guided the diocese during the next twenty-eight years through a period of strong growth, followed by the tumultuous years of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Raised in Virginia's low church tradition, the new bishop was opposed to tractarian ritualism. Atkinson was called to North Carolina from Baltimore, Maryland, where he had served as a rector for ten years, first at St. Peter's Church [1843-1850] and then Grace Church. Having organized Grace Church in 1850, he also oversaw its construction and completion in 1852 as planned by the Baltimore architectural firm of Niernsee and Nielsen.

In North Carolina, Atkinson quickly identified several needs which, when addressed, would aid the denomination's growth and actively expand its calling to the poor and less educated within the state. In 1855, his primary charge to the clergy noted four actions which would promote church growth: to consider carefully "...some relaxation of the Rubrics for the conduct of public worship..."; to foster within the working class a calling to the ministry; to slowly eliminate the practice of pew rental; and to develop endowments supporting Episcopal churches and schools. To underpin this growth, "...schools, colleges, seminaries, parsonages, asylums, and in various other forms, endowments..." would be required. In 1856 Bishop Atkinson eloquently stated the need for new ministers, churches, and parsonages to serve the needs of the diocese. He thought the needs should be met by the people of the diocese itself through the development of parochial and diocesan schools.

Bishop Atkinson's pleas did stimulate action. More churches became involved in construction projects, which included schools, churches, and parsonages. Parochial schools were built in Elizabeth City, New Bern, Asheville, Lincolnton, and Beaufort. In 1853, the number of parsonages in the diocese related firms. By 1856, however, twelve more had been built.

The formation of the Church Building Society in May, 1856, provided tangible and collective assistance in the promotion of church development throughout the state. Its mission statement was "...to erect or aid in the erection of churches and churches of
chapels in the Diocese.” Membership included the bishop, all clergy, and any lay person who contributed one dollar or more each year. Each parish could also establish a Church Building Society. At its first meeting on November 13, 1857, the Committee of Appropriation elected the Rev. Frederick FitzGerald as secretary and allocated $500 towards the completion of St. Paul’s Church in Beaufort. 21

The Ecclesiological movement during the 1850s influenced the designs of Gothic-style churches in such cities and towns as Wilmington, Elizabeth City, Tabor, Murfreesboro, Hertford, Jackson, and Beaufort, but Episcopal church construction in rural areas and some small towns continued to reflect traditional building patterns within a region. Three such antebellum churches were St. Luke’s Church [Exhibit 3] in Washington County built in 1837, St. Paul’s Church in Greenville built in 1848, and Zion Church in Beaufort County built in 1856. All were frame structures sheathed with plain weatherboards and followed similar gable-front forms. Both St. Luke’s and Zion also extended three bays in depth. Bishop Ives described St. Luke’s as a small, neat edifice with “a commodious Vestry room.” 22 In all likelihood, Zion Church built approximately twenty years later had a similar vestry room; however, the church’s proportions and window size were more generous.

Following the Civil War, members of the clergy continued to be actively involved in the provision of overall designs and/or specifications for renovations, including chancels, bell towers, porches, transepts. In 1874, Assistant Bishop Theodore B. Lyman urged the following:

where new churches are in contemplation, greater care should be taken to have them built in a more churchly form. It costs scarce anything more to have a building in just proportions, and in comely style, than to construct the unsightly barns which are all too often erected. A little judicious attention on the part of the Clergy, would always avail to secure buildings in perfectly good taste, while such buildings always exert a refining and elevating influence. 23

He also called attention to the importance of a broad central aisle and stated that placing pews in front of the chancel was “... to violate every principle of good taste....” 24

During the three decades following the war, the Gothic Revival remained the style of preference within the Episcopal church. In small towns construction was predominately frame, with few masonry exceptions. Little is known oftentimes about the origin of specific designs; however, the continuing influence of Upjohn’s Rural Architecture is
apparent in many of the frame churches." These churches follow basically two forms, the simple gable front and the gable front with central or off-set tower.

Assistant Bishop Lyman continued to encourage congregations not only to be thoughtful about church design, but also to maintain and improve existing structures. His encouragement served as a catalyst for congregations and ministers.26

In 1883, the Diocese of East Carolina was formed from the Diocese of North Carolina and shortly thereafter its first bishop was appointed, the Rt. Rev. Alfred A. Watson. He had a deep love for eastern North Carolina drawing from his forty-year ministry within the region. In his work, he diligently tried to reconcile the financial limitations of a relatively poor rural population with providing for missionary growth and clergy needs. By 1891, the Church Building Committee report indicated that various congregations were requesting financial assistance to complete twelve unfinished churches, construct five new churches, and repair four churches. The report also stated:

A church building out of repair is a standing reproach to somebody, and it were better not to lay the foundation than to begin to build and not be able to finish.27

Bishop Watson continued to grapple with these issues while praising the church's schools, such as Trinity School in Chocowinity and St. Paul's School in Beaufort.

Throughout the late nineteenth-century accounts of renovations are recorded for churches in eastern North Carolina. Chancels, vestibules, and bell towers were the most common additions. St. James's Church, Kittrell was reported in 1879 as having received a new chancel, front porch and bell tower28; St. Mark's Memorial Church, Roxobel was also enlarged by the addition of a chancel by 188329; and Church of Our Savior, Jackson had completed by April, 1886, extensive renovations including a corner bell tower, transept, and double lancet windows, which replaced "the old square ones."30 By 1887 even St. Luke's in rural Washington County was improved by the addition of a vestibule and belfry [Exhibit 3].31 At Hertford in 1894, T. W. Watson, a local contractor, expanded the Church of the Holy Trinity with the addition of a narthex and bell tower.32

The twentieth century heralded another building trend within the parish house annexes. Initially, a project associated with larger
parishes, this trend became more common place with smaller churches in the 1950s. One of the earlier parish houses, now destroyed, was constructed in 1892 at St. James Church in Wilmington. During the 1920s, Hobart B. Upjohn, a New York architect and grandson of Richard Upjohn, designed three parish houses in eastern North Carolina: the Parish House and Chapel [1921] at Christ Church in Raleigh, the Parish House and Cloister [1922-23,1926] at Calvary Church in Tarboro, and the new parish house called the Great Hall [1922-24] at St. James Church in Wilmington. The architectural firm of Benton and Benton in Wilson provided the designs for Trinity Church and its parish house as well as the Parish Hall [1925-26] at Christ Church in Elizabeth City. Smaller churches on the other hand usually hired local contractors to construct more modest parish houses, most of which were built during the mid-twentieth century. In a few early cases, neighboring houses were purchased and used as parish houses until one could be constructed.

**Historical Background**

First established as an Anglican church within the nearby Beaver Dam area of Beaufort County during the eighteenth century, Zion Church officially received a certificate of organization in 1823 from the fledgling Protestant Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. For approximately the next thirty years, services were held chiefly in the former Anglican church, now a free chapel used by various denominations. During this period, the initial dedication of two lay readers Jarvis Buxton and Jas. B. Marsh and the missionary outreach of priests and deacons, such as the Reverends R. S. Mason, William N. Hawks, William E. Snowmen, and especially, N. Colin Hughes, nurtured this small rural congregation of Zion Church and enabled it to mature into one with forty-two communicants by 1856.

The Anglican and later Episcopal presence in Beaufort County produced more churches than most other counties in North Carolina. Built in ca. 1734, St. Thomas’s Church [NR, 1970] in Bath is the oldest church building in North Carolina. Another important eighteenth century church is Trinity Church built ca. 1774 and located in present day Chocowinity. By 1830 the county had five active Episcopal congregations, St. Thomas’s, Trinity, Zion, St. John’s at Durham Creek, and St. Peter’s in Washington. Bisecting the county roughly east to west, the Pamlico River separates the three churches built north of the river from Trinity and St. John’s Durham Creek located to the south. Oftentimes, ministerial assignments linked these churches, especially the rural congregations. A church’s financial ability to support a clergyman and
the size of the missionary circuit, however, determined the frequency of visitations to each church.

Between 1850-1856, the missionary field of the Rev. Nicholas Colin Hughes [1822-1893] included the oversight of Zion Church. A missionary in Pitt and Beaufort counties since 1846, the Rev. Hughes had moved from Greenville to Beaufort County in 1851 where he established Trinity School in conjunction with Trinity Church near Godley's Cross Roads, present day Chocowinity.33 Suffering from periods of poor health, Rev. Hughes was assisted by the Rev. Edwin Geer, the rector of St. Peter's Church in Washington, and by students from Trinity School serving as lay readers. In 1852 his missionary field of eight churches was reduced to the four in Beaufort County: Trinity Chapel, Zion Church, St. Thomas's Church in Bath, and St. John's Church in Durham Creek. In good health by 1854, Rev. Hughes had again expanded his missionary field to include churches in Pitt County and by 1856 Craven County. He continued, however, to rely on the lay ministry of students like Samuel S. Barber and Israel Harding.

At Zion Church, during the mid 1850s, three factors appear to contribute to its growth. After three years without a visitation by the bishop, the Right Reverend Thomas Atkinson came to Zion on May 24, 1854 where he preached, baptized infants, and confirmed five persons. The number of communicants at Zion now totaled twenty.34 Continuing to serve as a lay reader at Zion, Samuel Barber also helped establish a Sunday school there in 1855. Rev. Hughes noted his indebtedness to Barber for his "...self-denying and zealous co-operation." A candidate for holy orders, Barber was ordained a deacon on July 26, 1856.35 Another factor was the widespread interest generated by the annual diocesan convention which was held locally at St. Peter's Church in Washington from May 21-24, 1856. For the first time, Zion Church had three attending lay delegates, Allison Alligood, Caleb A. Cutlar, and Marshall H. Cutlar.36

Desiring a worship place of their own in a more central location, this rapidly growing congregation at Zion Church began planning the construction of a church a few miles east of Beaver Dam. On August 6, 1855, Henry L. Harvey deeded two acres of land to the church for one dollar. He also supervised the church's construction, which appears to have cost $74.85. J. W. Harvey and G. E. F. Cankard were also major contributors to this project.37 Completed and debt free, the church was consecrated on November 14, 1856 by Bishop Atkinson with the Revs. Hughes and Geer assisting. The Bishop wrote:

This church, itself pretty and convenient, reflects more credit on those who contributed to its erection, and particularly on
some two or three who especially exerted themselves for that object, than many a stately Temple erected at great cost, but requiring far less sacrifice on the part of its builders, than this simple and inexpensive structure.40

The number of communicants at Zion now totaled fifty-five, all of whom were white except for one African-American.

For the next six years, Zion Church matured under the leadership of the Rev. Israel Harding [1829-1891], the new missionary assigned to Beaufort County. Appointed shortly after the resignation of Rev. Hughes at the end of 1856, Rev. Harding was newly ordained as a deacon on December 21. A Beaufort County native, he had studied at Trinity School and followed a similar ministerial path as that of Samuel S. Barber serving first as a lay reader at St. John’s Church in Durham Creek.41

A trained carpenter, the Rev. Harding also built churches as well as their interior furnishings. Little is known about his early church buildings; however, in 1859 at Zion, a notation for $110 in parochial expenses may well pertain to church improvements made by Rev. Harding, possibly for interior furnishings. The next year “a handsome Communion set and a Font” were purchased and plans were underway for the construction of a rectory.42 With the outbreak of the Civil War and the secession of North Carolina from the Union on May 20, 1861, these plans never materialized. Two months later, on July 13, 1861, the Rev. Harding, however, was ordained as a priest in Morganton following the diocesan convention.43

Prior to the Civil War, Zion Church continued to develop as a parish which now included a small African-American membership. As reported in 1858, the congregation included sixty-two communicants, of which five were African Americans. Services were held on alternating Sundays with the white membership meeting in the morning and the African Americans in the afternoon. By 1860, however, only monthly services were conducted at Zion due in part to Rev. Harding’s association with five other congregations in Beaufort, Craven, and Pitt counties. Rev. Harding also promoted at Zion annual contributions to the Church Building Society and actively kept abreast of church matters as a subscriber to The Church Intelligencer, a new periodical published in Raleigh which promoted general interests within the ten Southern dioceses.44

Throughout much of the Civil War, Beaufort County experienced
supply Zion Church as well as his other churches. Early in 1862 he wrote:

The disturbed state of the country has greatly impeded the growth of Church interests in this part of the Diocese this year....In the midst, though, of all the troubles incident to war, your Missionary finds much to encourage him, much ground to sow good seen [sic] in, that will, with faithful culture on his part, bring forth fruit to the glory of God.  

Conditions within Beaufort County abruptly changed, however; on March 21 when Federal forces captured Washington after having captured New Bern the week before. The area's ensuing two-year Federal occupation was confined closely to the towns and the navigable waterways of the sounds, rivers, and streams. Located on the sole road leading into Hyde County from the west, Zion Church was "...occupied sometimes by the Chaplains of the Union Army and sometimes for hospital or other purposes." Rev. Harding fled Union occupation and settled in Wilson for the duration of the war. Church services within the occupied area were suspended by Union command. A newly ordained deacon and a native of Beaufort County, the Rev. Luther Eborn [1837-1911], however, continued to provide oversight of Zion and St. Thomas's Church in Bath, conduct a small Sunday School at Zion, and perform baptismal and burial services.

Immediately following the war, Bishop Atkinson journeyed to the occupied areas within the diocese from New Bern to Elizabeth City which had been inaccessible for several years. At Zion Church on December 4, 1865 he confirmed four people and made the following observations:

In this part of the State, more than any other, I saw injurious effects of the war displayed....The county generally was stripped of its laborers, the lands neglected, and the roads and bridges scarcely passable. Yet so abundant is the provision, which both the soil and the waters make in this highly favorable region for the sustenance and comfort of man, that it is not unreasonable to hope its former prosperity may be speedily restored, if not surpassed.

The Rev. Israel Harding also returned to take charge of St. Thomas's in Bath and the surrounding missionary region including Zion Church. Rev. Eborn remained as his assistant. Zion's congregation now included fifty communicants, all of whom were white.

Over the next fifteen years responsibility for Zion Church fluctuated between three ministers: the Revs. Luther Eborn, Horace G. Hilton, and Nathaniel Harding. Rev. Eborn's ministerial commitment to
During this time the number of communicants at Zion rose from forty-two to sixty-two persons. The Rev. Horace G. Hilton, a deacon, took over at Zion in 1871 guiding it through 1875. Living in Bath, Rev. Hilton also ministered to St. Thomas’s Church as well as St. James’s Church in Pantego where a new church was being constructed in 1875. After becoming rector of Grace Church in Plymouth and prior to leaving Zion, Rev. Hilton wrote in 1875 the following about Zion:

This Parish deserves credit for the neat and orderly conditions in which they keep their beautiful little Church, and their zeal and activity in the Sunday School, and more liberality in the support of the Ministry would secure to them increase services.51

Limited monetary contributions to pay ministerial salaries was apparently an ongoing problem encountered by many small mission churches and Zion was no exception. This limitation maintained a constant link between some churches and created a dependence at times on others.

Following Rev. Hilton’s departure, oversight of Zion was undertaken for one year by Rev. Nathaniel Harding at St. Peter’s Church in Washington. In 1877, Rev. Luther Eborn returned and ministered to three churches: Zion, St. Thomas in Bath and St. James in Pantego. By 1881, he was also overseeing repairs at St. Thomas and continuing efforts toward the construction of a church for the St. James’s congregation in Pantego. To date, there is no evidence linking Rev. Eborn to any alterations made at Zion; however, he did make a notation for $83.15 of unspecified parish expenses.52

After Rev. Eborn’s return in 1882 to St. David’s Parish in Washington County, Zion Church remained without a minister until June 1883. With the hope of establishing weekly services, the vestry called as its new rector a Beaufort County native and deacon, the Rev. Robert B. Windley [1840-1891]. To insure a ministerial presence at Zion, the congregation also undertook the construction of a two-story frame rectory. Built in 1884-1885 at a cost of $600, the rectory was first occupied on April 3, 1885. Rev. Windley’s description of the rectory noted “...neat & common it answers admirably the object intended.”53 The next few years the church incurred additional unspecified expenses: $215.35 in 1885, $73 in 1887, and $62.13 in 1889.54 These figures may include the addition of the vestibule and interior sheathing. By 1889, Zion Church included 104 communicants, and the church property was valued at $2,800. Rev. Windley was ordained as a priest on April 7, 1890, but died the next year leaving Zion Church vacant.55
For the next twenty years, Zion Church flourished under the guidance of the Revs. Francis Joyner and Nathaniel Harding. A deacon, Rev. Joyner lived at Zion and ministered to its burgeoning congregation with 136 communicants in 1892 as well as St. Thomas and three Beaufort County missions. In 1895 the Bishop noted Zion's strong church attendance including a significant proportion of men attending services. By 1901, the Bishop was also applauding the diocese's five parish schools, including Zion School operated by Lucy Joyner and assisted by C. D. Malone as Catechist. By 1901, however, the Rev. Nathaniel Harding, rector at St. Peter's in Washington had assumed oversight of Zion and in 1904 was holding services there once a month. C. D. Malone, a lay reader, conducted all other services. 

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Zion Church continued to serve as a center of missionary outreach in Beaufort County for its priests and deacons. Although their tenure at Zion was oftentimes no more than several years, several made documented contributions to its maintenance. In 1922, the Rev. T. N. Brincefield reported that the "Church property has been very much improved in the past year by painting buildings and new fences." He also noted that the church was now insured for $1,500. During the mid 1930s, the Rev. A. C. D. Noe became the minister at Zion serving the church for over sixteen years. Taking a active interest in the church facility, he oversaw the painting and restoration of the church and the construction of the parish hall.

Endnotes

2 Calder Loth and Julius Toulouse Sadler, Jr., The Simple, Proper Style, (York: Graphic Society, 1975), 61, hereinafter cited as Loth and Sadler, Only Proper Style.
3 Loth and Sadler, Only Proper Style, 62.
4 Loth and Sadler, Only Proper Style, 61.

Albright, Protestant Episcopal Church, 187.

Pierson, American Buildings and Their Architects, 201-205; Stanton, Gothic Revival, 180-181, 187, 211. In North Carolina, the earliest known work of Henry Dudley is in 1871 at St. James Church, Wilmington.


London and Lemmon, Episcopal Church in NC, 196-197.
Rankin, “Ives in North Carolina,” 318.

Stanton, Gothic Revival, 284. According to Stanton, this plan appears to copy St. Mark’s in Philadelphia designed by John Notman. Niemsee’s partner, John Crawford Nielson, later provided the plans for Christ Church in Elizabeth City which was constructed between 1856-1857.


JPECNC, 1856, 30.

London and Lemmon, Episcopal Church in NC, 229-231.

JPECNC, 1858, 27.

London and Lemmon, Episcopal Church in NC, 228.

JPECNC, 1836, 8; 1837, 8; 1838, 7. Located seven miles east of Plymouth in an area known in 1836 as Goelett’s and in 1876 as Locust Grove, St. Luke’s was formed through the local efforts of Henry Hoffman. Three of its communicants were former members of Ives’ parish St. Luke’s in New York.

JPECNC, 1874, 49.


JPECNC, 1879, 77.

JPECNC, 1891, 30.
Zion Episcopal Church
Beaufort County, North Carolina

28 JPECNC. 1879, 81.
29 JPECNC, 1883, 68.
30 JPECNC, 1886, 26.
31 JPECNC, 1887, 75.
34 History of Zion Church written in May 1885, Church Register of Zion Episcopal Church, Beaufort County, NC. Microfilm copy, hereinafter cited as Zion Church Register. As directed by the Missionary Society, each congregation was to appoint a member to solicit funds for the society. The church list included Zion Church, Beaufort County; Jarvis B. Buxton, and St. Thomas' Church, Bath: Jas. B. Marsh. [JPECNC, 1823, 21.]
35 While living in Greenville, Hughes was instrumental in 1848 in the construction of the first building for St. Paul's Church as noted by Bishop Ives when he described it as “a new and appropriate building.” [JPECNC, 1849, 12.] In “The Episcopal Church in Pitt County, North Carolina, 1760-1865,” Dr. Lawrence F. Brewster noted that Nymphus A. Price assisted in the church's construction by supplying two expert slave carpenters. [Lawrence F. Brewster Collection, University Archives, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, N. C.]
36 JPECNC, 1855, 12.
37 JPECNC, 1856, 44; 1857, 17.
38 JPECNC, 1856, 6, 19; 1857, 21-22.
39 Beaufort County Deed Book 29, 95-96; JPECNC, 1857, 44; Zion Church Register, 6.
40 JPECNC, 1857, 21-22.
41 JPECNC, 1856, 44; 1857, 4, 23, 44.
42 Norvin C. Duncan, Pictorial History of the Episcopal Church in North Carolina 1701-1964 (Asheville, N. C.: Miller Printing Company, 1965), 11; JPECNC, 1859, 35; 1860, 38. In 1886 Israel Harding served as the rector of Grace Church in Trenton and, in all likelihood, played a major role in the construction of the church there. [JPECNC, 1886, 58.]
43 JPECNC, 1861, 12.
44 JPECNC, 1858, 40; 1860, 38-39; The Church Intelligencer, July, 1860.
45 JPECNC, 1862, 44.
46 Zion Church Register, 13-14; The Church Intelligencer (Raleigh), July 12, 1860.
47 JPECNC, 1862, 12, 42; 1863, 18, 41 43; 1864, 21, 39; 1865, 48; Zion Church Register, 13-14.
48 JPECNC, 1866, 12.
49 JPECNC, 1866, 15, 36. Rev. Harding's missionary responsibilities also included St. John's Church at Durham Creek and a missionary station at Pantego. Following the war, the Rev. N. Colin Hughes also returned to Trinity Church and made an unsuccessful attempt to build a church. [JPECNC, 1875, 96.]
50 He also served as a missionary to St. James' Church in Beaufort County and Sladesville in Hyde County.
51 JPECNC, 1875, 96.
52 JPECNC, 1876, 4, 10; 1878, 88; 1879, 7, 125; 1881, 122-123; 1883, 121-122.
53 Zion Church Register, 15.
Zion Church Register, 415.
55 Journal of the Protestant Episcopal Church in East Carolina, 1889, 56; 1890, 19, hereinafter cited as JPECEC.
56 JPECEC, 1892, 48; 1895, 8; 1901, 22; 1904, 67.
57 JPECEC, 1922, 172.
Major Bibliographical References:


Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property includes the entire Zion Episcopal Church parcel, which encompasses approximately 3.3 acres and comes under the auspice of the Diocese of East Carolina. This parcel is depicted on a survey map competed by James J. Albera on July 30, 1996.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire Zion Episcopal Church parcel, which encompasses approximately 3.3 acres and comes under the auspice of the Diocese of East Carolina. This parcel is depicted on a survey map competed by James J. Albera on July 30, 1996.
Additional Documentation

List of Photographs for Zion Episcopal Church

All photographs were taken by Drucilla H. York of Local History Associates. All negatives are housed with the North Carolina Division of Archives and History at 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, North Carolina. In the following list, the photograph number is given first and followed by subject identification, photograph date, and negative #.


11. Northwest view of cemetery from the rear of church which includes