



Louis Head Community Church

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The first church organized at Louis Head was called the Sable River Baptist Church and was made up of fifteen members who left the Ragged Island Baptist Church to start a new congregation. The original church building – a Baptist Meeting House built in 1856 – stood within the boundaries of the present Louis Head cemetery. The Meeting House was initially called the Sable River Baptist Church but was later renamed the Louis Head Baptist Church when another church was established in Sable River. Very little is known about the appearance of the original building due to a fire destroying church records in 1940.

Between 1890 and 1893 shipwrights from the Pride Shipyard of John's Island built a new church down the road (pictured). The church is a wood frame building with a steep gabled roof and centre bell tower.

The entry is in front of the tower and there is a frieze of clover leaves over the double doors hung on decorated metal hinges. All of the windows in the building have detailed wooden surrounds with black painted trim. The skill of the shipbuilders who constructed it is apparent as the church has stayed square and true for more than a century.

The interior wooden trusses and braces are exposed, as are the six hanging ships' knees that help to support the roof of the building. The small alcove built at the end of the church is reached by a low platform in front of which sits an old pump organ, original to the building. Wooden pews provide seating for about 130 people.

The building has never been fitted for electricity. Lighting was originally provided by two ornate chandeliers, each holding six kerosene lamps. In approximately 1930 the chandeliers were removed and replaced by hanging Aladdin lamps. The chandeliers were restored and replaced in 2004, complete with counterweights. The bronze pulleys for the counterweights are believed to have come from a shipwreck at Raspberry Head on August 23, 1890. A shelf made of wood from a beam and deck plates also salvaged from the wreck hangs at the front entrance of the church.

The Aladdin lamps were replaced in 2000. The old ones were sent back to the company that produced them in the 1920s as partial payment for the six new ones. One of the original lamps may now be seen at the Aladdin Lamp Museum in Nashville, Tennessee.

The church was originally heated by two wood stoves, placed in front and back of the room. The back one was removed in approximately 1960 and the front replaced by kerosene heating in approximately 1990. In 2002 the roof was shingled, and the steeple received copper sheathing.

While the church has been maintained throughout the years, very little has changed in its appearance. Occasional services are now held in the church, lit only by the Aladdin lamps and the chandeliers.

