



Easter Monday 1858

Easter 1858 was a time of resurrection for the Episcopal Church in San Antonio. Eight years earlier, the Diocese of Texas had admitted Trinity Church of San Antonio, with 13 communicants. The congregation struggled to find a permanent location and a rector, finally falling into a complicated dysfunction referred to in surviving records only as “a state of affairs.”

For a new start, the Episcopal missionary Rev. Lucius H. Jones, based at St. Andrew's in Seguin, gathered San Antonio Episcopalians for an independent Easter Sunday Service on April 4, 1858. The next day the worshippers gathered again, elected a vestry and adopted the name of St. Mark's. Within two weeks, the diocese closed Trinity's records and admitted the new church. Its 40 communicants made St. Mark's the third largest Episcopal church in Texas.

Lucius Jones became the first rector. Fund-raising enabled the congregation to buy two lots facing a dusty square soon known as Travis Park. Visionary members hired America's greatest church architect of the time, Richard Upjohn, whose works included Trinity Church at the head of Wall Street in New York.

The new building had hardly risen ten feet when civil war split the young congregation. Most military members were able to escape to the north. The Connecticut-born rector, however, believed Confederate souls were as important to God as Union souls and became a chaplain in the Confederate Army, only to die of malaria in Louisiana.

Vigor returned with the end of the war. St. Mark's established St. Mary's School for Girls, now known as St. Mary's Hall, where church services were held upstairs until completion of St. Mark's Church in 1875. In a sign of postwar reconciliation, one northern donor was Alonzo Jones of Boston, who gave a window in memory of his brother, the first rector.