A BRIEF HISTORY OF
ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WATERLOO, BELGIUM

In 1979, after many months of prayer, All Saints - Waterloo was founded as an outreach to English-speakers in the Waterloo area by members of Brussels' Holy Trinity Church (now Pro-Cathedral), a chaplaincy in the Diocese in Europe of the Church of England[1]. The community soon grew to some 100 families, led by Episcopal clergy from the U.S. and jointly administered by the Diocese in Europe and the Convocation of American (Episcopal) Churches in Europe.

Within a few years disenchantment with the Church of England's polity, liturgical practice and stances on women's ordination, among other issues, obviated the need for All Saints to be identified as an Episcopal congregation, distinct from but retaining close ties to the other Anglican churches in Belgium. In 1990, the congregation voted to become an Episcopal parish in the Convocation under the sole jurisdiction of its bishop in charge. All Saints status was further validated by issuance of a royal decree on September 12, 2001, recognizing All Saints Episcopal Church as the first Anglican church in Wallonia, the French-speaking region of Belgium.

For 28 years, All Saints rented space at Centre Notre Dame d'Argenteuil in Ohain, sharing the sanctuary with a small French-speaking Catholic congregation. The arrangement ceased abruptly in 2006 after the religious order owning the complex sold it for conversion into a nursing home. Serendipitously, at that same time the Swedish Lutheran Church decided to move to downtown Brussels, and sell their attractive 1600 square meter church adjoining the historic battlefield. With its easy access to the Ring, at the junction of two busy chaussees, All Saints could not hope to find a better site for its new home.[2]

The new site also has historical significance of interest to both Americans and Episcopalians. At the Battle of Waterloo, June 18, 1815, the senior-most Allied casualty was New York-born Colonel Sir William H. DeLancey, KGB. Eight days after the battle DeLancey, Wellington's Quartermaster General and chief of staff, died in the arms of his young bride, Magdalene, in a cottage where the church now stands. Absent baptismal records, DeLancey's ties to the Episcopal Church are

'presumed' as his grandparents are buried at Trinity Church Wall Street, also where his parents were married by Trinity's rector.

Sir William's eponymous cousin, the Rt. Rev. William H. DeLancey, 1st bishop of Western New York, made history himself in 1852 as the 1st Episcopal bishop recognized as an equal by the English House of Bishops. The DeLancey ancestral home in Manhattan still stands, now called Fraunces Tavern (ca. 1719) after a subsequent owner, Samuel Fraunces. The site of Washington's 1783 farewell address, Fraunces Tavern was home of the new nation's Department of War, Treasury and Foreign Affairs (State Department).

[1] Anglicanism's history in Belgium dates to the 16th century, well before modern Belgium was founded. The first King of the Belgians, Leopold I, was himself an Anglican. Since 1870, Anglican Churches in Belgium have had official representation with the Ministry of Justice.

[2] Waterloo is 20km from Brussels, a capital city whose diverse population includes some 15,000 permanent staff from the 27 EU countries working at the European Commission and other EU agencies, plus the 600 elected members of the European Parliament. Brussels is also home to NATO HQ and its thousands of permanent staff and assigned representatives; Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) is in Mons, 45 km away. In total 286 diplomatic missions accredited in Brussels, and the number of journalists and lobbyists surpasses those in Washington, DC.