



The Crown and Cross symbol was designed by the Rev. Ervin A. Brown, III, XV Rector of Christ Church shortly after he arrived. He called it *Christus Victor* - symbolizing resurrection and Christ's victory over sin and death.

A Tour of Christ Church Detroit

Foreword

In May of 1845 a group of people who had been worshipping at St. Paul's Church, a small structure on Woodward Avenue between Larned and Congress, later to become the Cathedral, decided the church was too crowded. They came up to this present lot, which was between Hastings and Rivard on Jefferson Avenue, and though it was at the time mostly farms and fields, they decided that this would be an appropriate site for a second Episcopal church in the rapidly growing town of Detroit. It is now the oldest continuously used Protestant religious site in the city of Detroit.

With the assistance of Lieutenant M. C. Meigs, an architect then stationed at Fort Wayne, they designed a small wooden structure on this very land where we are standing today. Meigs would later become a General and a distinguished builder in the nation's capitol. Fifteen years later, the hopes of the founders of the church were justified and Jefferson Avenue was becoming the residence of many important and prominent people in Detroit. The surrounding streets toward the river on Atwater and Woodbridge and Franklin and north of Jefferson Avenue on Fort and Lafayette were also heavily populated. The Rector of Christ Church at that time was the Rev. Benjamin Paddock, who later was to become Bishop of Connecticut, and whose family still lives in Detroit. Bishop Paddock, with energy and foresight, planned the present building in which you are now standing, built in 1860.

The Narthex

In the narthex, which is the hallway at the entrance, there rises a great tower. It houses the oldest set of church chimes in the City of Detroit. They were installed in 1863, having been cast in Philadelphia, and from the smallest to the largest of the nine bells each is inscribed with a verse from the Bible and the name of the person who donated the bell. In the narthex you will find still posted an old seating plan of the church with names of some of the pew renters in former years. The practice of renting pews was ended gradually in the 1940s by attrition and the last person to rent a pew was Mrs. James Turner (Pamela Tappey) who died in the early 1950s.

Also in the narthex is a bust of Dr. William S. Maxon, who served as Rector for thirty-three years – the longest rectorate in the history of the parish.

The windows in the narthex are gifts of former parish members. There are two angels on the Jefferson Avenue side. One is a resurrection angel, given in memory of Mary Conner Campau by her sister Adele Campau Thompson created by Louis Comfort Tiffany of Tiffany Studios, New York. The other is an ascension angel, and was given by Mr. Henry N. Walker in memory of his parents. His father, Henry N. Walker, Sr., was an editor of the Detroit Free Press in 1845, and was one of the original founders of Christ Church.

The main body of the church is the nave. "Nave" (Medieval Latin *navis*, "ship,") is suggested by the keel shape of its vaulting. The nave of a church extends from the narthex to the chancel. Here we make use of the convention of an ecclesiastical or liturgical east end. This is the end in which the altar is erected. Irrespective of the building's geographical orientation, the front or altar end is spoken of, technically, as the ecclesiastical or liturgical east end when talking about the interior of the building. In a cruciform space

such as this the transept on the right as you face the back or west end of the nave, is the north transept and that on the left the south.

The church was designed by an architect named Arthur Gordon Lloyd, who made a specialty of churches, and particularly interested in what he termed "American Gothic." You see the handsomely carved spans across the ceiling and each has a hand carved angel that holds the light fixture. The original gas fixtures were gone long ago, and the present were specially designed ecclesiastical lanterns created in a studio in Weehauken, New Jersey. The original pews were made of native butternut wood. Because of the many coats of varnish and stain, and decades of use, they are much darker than they were when originally installed.

On the walls of the nave are numerous plaques, some with names of prominent Detroiters of bygone years. There is an Echo Organ that was given by old Detroit families named Wetmore and Snow. There is also a magnificent west window, one of the largest in the city. As you proceed up the nave you will see the two transepts.

The Nave

From the crossing you can see the magnificent window in the back or west wall which depicts the entire life of Christ. On the left hand side are scenes which show the prophecies which predict the birth of Christ. Then, along the bottom and on the right hand side are lancets or panels which depict incidents in the life of Christ: the baptism, the preaching from the boat, the commissioning of the disciples, some of the miracles, and in the center, dominating the lower part of the whole window is the Last Supper, and



above that the Crucifixion. The upper part of the window has Christian symbols depicting the Holy Spirit, the Incarnate Lord, and the Creator, and shows the glorified Christ at the top.

The ceiling design was created as part of the 125th anniversary celebration when a new slate roof was installed and the original chandeliers were replaced.

At the crossing there is a handsome lectern with a bible or lectionary placed on the back of the wings of an eagle given in memory of Katherine Whipple Sibley Trowbridge. The eagle is one of the strongest of birds, and found all over the world. It often adorns a lectern to indicate that the word of God is to be carried throughout the world.

On the right hand side, is a pulpit given by the Brush family. Mr. Brush, who owned the tremendous Brush Farm in the heart of what is now Detroit, was fond of naming streets after his family some of which you will find here. You will see Elizabeth Cass Brush as Mr. Brush had married the daughter of General Cass. And on another side the name of Adelaide, another named Hunt, Edmund, Elliot and Erskine and Alfred. All these are names of old streets in the city.

St. Michael's Chapel

In the north transept is St. Michael's Chapel, sometimes called "The Chapel of St. Michael and All Angels." Originally this transept mirrored the south transept with family and box pews. During World War II there was an increasing need for a place where private devotions could be offered for the many young people going into the armed services. An altar was installed and two pews turned around to face it. It proved to be a favorite place and the windows which are an excellent example of English stained glass were already there including one of St. Michael. The Archangel Michael is the powerful agent of God who wards off evil from God's people and delivers peace to them at the end of this life's mortal struggle, of meaning to those whose young people had gone off to war.

Eventually all the pews in the north transept were turned around to face the altar so that it became a special place for small communion services, weddings, and even funerals. With the creation of the St. Michael's entrance from the parish house, installed in 2007, the chapel was returned to its World War II function as a small chapel for private prayer. Against the east wall now stands an altar originally belonging to St. Andrew's Church, which stood on the campus of Wayne State University, and is now closed.



2008 New door to left of St. Michael's leading to Atrium



2008 St. Michael's Chapel

More than a few members of St. Andrew's came to Christ Church bringing the altar with them. Other memorials from St. Andrew's include the altar cross in the chapel, a votive candle stand that indicates the chapel's use for private prayer, and a sanctuary lamp that indicates the presence of the reserved sacrament in the aumbry on the wall. The sanctuary lamp, fittingly, honors the life of a young parishioner of St. Andrew's who died in battle during World War II. The communion services once held here will now be celebrated in the chancel or the new chapel planned for the south transept.

The icon which hangs beside chapel altar is very old. It was given by a parishioner who was travelling in Russia in Czarist days. The other paintings are Florentine pieces given by Miss Frances Sibley and date from the late 19th century.

A plaque near the St. Michael's entrance from the parish honors the memory of three people who carried on the work of the church during those war years and are closely associated with the chapel's original design. They were Miss Adele Page, a notable social worker in Detroit following the turn of the 19th century, Miss Margaret Wilson, who was in charge of Christ Church Neighborhood House, and the Rev. Robert S. Whitehead, who was vicar during those years.

On the wall behind the lectern are three handsome frames on which are shown the names of those from Christ Church Parish who served in World War II. The parish at that time included the chapel in Grosse Pointe, now Christ Church, Grosse Pointe, as well as this structure on Jefferson Avenue.

Another war memorial hangs on the wall behind the pulpit. It is a handsome bronze and an additional frame showing the names of those from this parish who served in World War I. The name of the Rev. Dr. William S. Maxon, who was a chaplain at a base hospital, is among them, and many names well known in the history of Detroit. They include Edwin Denby, who later was Secretary of the Navy, and others who served on the crew of the "Yosemite" in the Spanish-American War.

The Organ

The original Roosevelt organ and the windows on the south side of the chancel were given by the family of Arthur Maxwell Parker and Thomas Parker, his father. After years of faithful service the Roosevelt organ was replaced by a Canadian instrument built by Casavant Frères. The contract was signed April 21, 1975 and the current instrument was dedicated on May 16, 1976. For those interested in the organ's specifications, the stolist follows.

GREAT

16' Bordun
8' Prinzipal
8' Hohlflöte
4' Oktave
4' Spitzflöte
2' Waldflöte
IV Mixtur
8' Trompete
Sw./Gt.
Ch./Gt.
Ant./Gt.

SWELL

8' Gedeckt
8' Gemshorn
8' Gemshorn Celeste
4' Prinzipal
4' Rohrflöte
2' Oktave
IV Scharf
16' Fagott
8' Oboe
4' Klarine
Tremulant

CHOIR

8' Rohrflöte
8' Fernflöte
8' Schwebung
4' Gemshorn
2 2/3' Nasat
2' Weit Prinzipal
1 3/5' Terz
8' Krummhorn
Tremulant
Sw./Ch.
Sw./Ch. 4'
Ant./Ch.

ANTIPHONAL

8' Gemshorn
8' Bordun
4' Prinzipal
4' Querflöte
2' Oktave
III Mixtur
8' Königliche Trompete en
Chamade
16' Pedal Bordun (extension)

PEDAL

32' Sub Principal (electronic extension)
16' Principal
16' Violon
16' Subbass
8' Oktave Bass
8' Bordun (Gt.)
4' Oktave
III Mixtur
32' Contra Posaune (electronic extension)
16' Posaune
16' Fagott (Sw.)
8' Trompete
4' Schalmey
Gt./Ped.
Sw./Ped.
Ch./Ped.
Ant./Ped.



The stencils on the wall of the chancel are original to the 1903 chancel extension. The walls of the nave were originally quite similar, but were painted over decades ago because of the challenge of maintaining them



The Chancel

The figures adorning the choir stalls were handcarved and were installed in 1903.



The Sanctuary

The altar rail is walnut and brass, and the brass work was designed to reflect the words of Jesus, "I am the vine, you are the branches." Over the door on the south side leading to the Vestry, the clergy vesting sacristy, is a tablet in memory of Samuel Smith Harris, who was the second Bishop of Michigan. He came originally from Alabama, and was an officer in the Confederate Army. At the end of the War Between the States he became a lawyer and practiced very successfully in New York City. Coming back to visit his native Alabama he saw the plight of the church and responded by entering the ministry. He had a very distinguished rectorate both there, and then in Chicago, before being elected Bishop of Michigan. He is the great-grandfather of the famous actress Julie Harris, and the Harris family still lives here in Grosse Pointe.

Inside the altar rail there is another handsome tablet in memory of another Bishop of Michigan named Thomas Frederick Davies. He came from a distinguished line of clergy, and his son also became a bishop in Western Massachusetts. When he was in Detroit he lived across the street from the church here on Jefferson Avenue and Christ Church was the parish of the Davies family.

The bishop's chair and the sedilia on the opposite side were given by the Miller family at a time when the chancel was enlarged and deepened, about 1900. It was at that time that the Italian marble altar was given in memory of Mr. Charles C. Trowbridge, the first senior warden of the parish. The credence table on the side was given in memory of the Carpenter family. Mr. W. N. Carpenter was the first junior warden of the parish and later succeeded Mr. Trowbridge. He too was one of the original founders of Christ Church.



The mosaic above the altar was done by a firm in Brussels, Belgium, and was shipped here intact. It is a beautiful example of the artist's work in the field of church mosaics, and above it is a handsome Ascension window given by the Scotten and Newman families of Detroit. They were extremely active members of the parish and the community in the late 1800's and at the turn of the century. The central mosaic of the Ascending Christ was placed in the center panel of the reredos in the 1903 renovations when the chancel was deepened. In 1982 Marian Johns, the archivist, discovered two drawings dated 1903, depicting a heavenly messenger pointing toward the center, which appeared to have been intended for the side panels in the reredos, but never installed. After a discreet fund-raising effort the project was commissioned and installed. The vestry made the decision to dedicate them in thanksgiving for the ministries of the 12th and 14th rectors, the Revs. William Sperry and Tobe Johnston.

The needlepoint rug gracing the steps to the altar was a gift of the actress Julie Harris in memory of her parents, Elsie and William Pickett Harris, Jr. and her brother, William P. Harris. The 12x15 foot canvass was designed by Rhoda Sablow of Scarsdale, NY, designer of much of the other needlepoint adorning the church. The stitching was done by the rector, the Rev. Ervin A. Brown, III with several members of the parish, and was finished and dedicated in the spring of 1986. The design, materials and installation cost approximately \$10,000 at the time.



The Baptistry

The baptistry is located near the south entrance. The font is of Italian marble, and is located near a door of the church to indicate that baptism is the sacrament of Christian initiation and entrance into the Body of Christ that is the church. It was given in memory of Sidney Davy Miller. The stained glass that is in the baptistry was done in Munich, Germany, and is a memorial to members of the Lyster family. Dr. William Narcissus Lyster was the first rector of Christ Church. He was born in Ireland and attended the University of Dublin. When he came to this country he came to Detroit. In addition to his ministry here he later founded several missions in what is now known as Irish Hills, a name he gave to that area.

One feature of this window is that photographs of members of the family were sent to Germany where the window was being made and the faces, with the exception of the figure of our Lord, are all recognizable likenesses of members of the Lyster family. The old gentleman on the left is Dr. Lyster himself, and the one next to him was a physician, Dr. Francis Lyster, whose family gave the window.

The columbarium, for the repository of ashes following cremation, was created and installed by John Rocus of Ann Arbor, who had designed and built the aumbry that houses the reserved sacrament given in honor of Moses Ellois, Jr. The project was accomplished under the supervision of Richard Villwock and dedicated by the Rt. Rev. H. Coleman McGehee on November 22, 1992. Richard's wife Ruth was among the first whose ashes were placed there together with Harold Hammond, long time sexton Sidney President, and Christine Florka.

The Chapel of Sts. Elizabeth & Eunice

A new chapel is emerging from the south transept that has been named the Chapel of Sts. Elizabeth & Eunice to honor the women depicted in the windows. It once housed one of the old "box" or family pews which were used in the early days of the church when families came together to worship and sat in the same pew. This was a pew used by Mr. Henry Walker and plaques indicate the location of the pew and some of the family history.

The Vestry

The vestry is the name of the vesting sacristy used by the clergy and has housed the likenesses of the former rectors of the parish and other worthies of times past.

The Choir Room

The tall painting in the choir room was done by a famous Detroit artist, Julius Rolshoven. It depicts the Annunciation, with the Angel Gabriel announcing to the Virgin Mary that she will become the mother of the Son of God.

The Clerestory Windows

Returning to the nave, there are six clerestory windows. They are called clerestory windows because in crowded European cities builders had to go two stories high before they had a clear story where light could come in. Buildings were crowded side by side, close to each other, so a lower window would not have admitted light, and this architectural term “clerestory,” really comes from the fact that they were in the “clear story.”

These six windows depict six of the parables of our Lord. On the south side there are the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. These were given by members of the parish in memory of their families. On the north side of the chancel the parables beginning from Jefferson Avenue are the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Parable of the Talents, and the Last Judgment. The Vestry of the church erected these windows “in tribute to the pastorate of William Butler Sperry, Rector of this church 1947-1966.”

The decorations in the church and the colors used are the same as were in the original church when it was finished about 1860. You will note that the cornerstone on Jefferson Avenue gives 1860 as the date. At the time when the church was refurbished a well known ecclesiastical architect in the city said that what he found was that the colors in the church were like a symphony. The composer of a symphony finds a phrase of music that he has rendered first in one manner and then in another manner and in variations with assorted instruments, and then you come to a grand finale. The architect said that this is what has been done at Christ Church. There is one color and another color, one church symbol and then another, and finally, in the chancel we find the whole building culminating in a great symphony of color, adoration and worship.

The Balcony Windows

On the left in the south transept balcony is the scene of Christ on the Sea of Galilee with the water and fish. It is a gift of the Norris-Matthew family; Megan, Howard, and Taylor. Although Megan and Howard allowed the artist to decide on the particular scene, their desire was that the portrayal of Christ more closely resemble the cultures and ethnic groups of the region from which he came, and that the children of the parish be able to visualize such an image of Christ.



On the right in the south transept, the window carries the theme of creation. This window is a gift of Claire and Robert Brown and is given in memory of their daughter Alexa Jane Brown who died suddenly, in her mid-twenties, on August 27, 1999. The theme was chosen because of Alexa's passion for the environment. She was a wildlife biology major at the University of Vermont and was working for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources at the time of her death.

The north transept window on the left is the gift of Alec and Josephine Mashour, given in thanksgiving for their fifty years of marriage. The scene is of the Garden of Eden and shows Adam and Eve coexisting peaceably with the animals and nature of creation, in beauty and harmony. Alec and Jo chose a theme representative of their Syrian heritage. The Garden of Eden is thought to be located near the city of Damascus in Syria.

On the right is a window given by Margaret Hammond in memory of her parents, Kathleen and Harold Hammond. Inspiration for this design came from a purple super frontal Margaret's mother embroidered for the altar of their former parish, Epiphany. The central motif was a crown of thorns representing the passion surrounding a gold crown of glory. On either side was a passionflower. In this window the crowns can be seen in the rosette and the passionflowers appear throughout the window. The rest of the design is one of renewal and is based on an observation by the XV Rector of Christ Church, the Rev. Ervin A. Brown, III, that he really came to appreciate the resurrection and gift of new life when he came to Michigan and witnessed the glory of the spring season.

The people of Christ Church continue today as the inheritors and trustees of this building and the mission it serves, and God willing will continue to contribute to it for the benefit of those who will inherit this legacy for the advance of God's reign.

Revised May 2008
Mr. George Ellenwood
The Reverend Carol Cole Flanagan