



TRINITY PARISH

Building With Faith in the Future

In October 1869 a small group of Wethersfield residents met to incorporate an Episcopal church in Wethersfield, to be known as the Episcopal Society of Trinity Church. Five years later this lovely brownstone church was consecrated as Trinity's home. Known now as Trinity Parish, also called Trinity Episcopal Church, Wethersfield, the parish celebrated its 150th Anniversary in 2019. As it moves towards its bicentennial, Trinity remains committed to spreading God's word, being together in fellowship, and sustaining others in need.

Establishment

Trinity started as a mission of Hartford's Church of the Good Shepherd. The first service was held in January 1868 at Academy Hall (now headquarters of Wethersfield Historical Society). In June 1870, Trinity was formally received into the Diocese of Connecticut. Services continued at Academy Hall until this building was completed in 1874.

Edward Tuckerman Potter, Trinity's architect, was acclaimed locally for Hartford's Church of the Good Shepherd (now part of Coltville National Historic Park) and the Mark Twain House. Many stained glass windows, donated as memorials, grace the building. Trinity is built in High Victorian Gothic style, has a

multi-colored slate roof and is constructed of Connecticut brownstone brought by river and oxcart from the Portland Quarries to the Wethersfield Dock.

The 1818 Constitutional Convention and Episcopal Church Growth

Episcopal churches grew slowly in Connecticut. Congregationalism was the established church of the State. When Connecticut's 1818 Constitutional Convention declared all churches equal under the law, and as animosity toward the Anglican church abated after the Revolutionary War, many new parishes were organized. Such growth was led by the Missionary Society of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut. Similar to the English Society that once fostered expansion of the Anglican Church in the colonies, this local Society, chartered in 1818, supported missionaries and new parishes in Connecticut.

Between 1841-1910 nine parishes and missions sprang up in Hartford, including Trinity.

Parish Growth

Trinity's first parish house was a joint gift of two parishioners in 1883. This clapboard building was used for church school and parish and community meetings.

With increasing membership and overcrowding in the church school, more space was needed in both the parish house and the church. In 1954, the old parish house was demolished and a cornerstone laid for the current one. Made of brownstone to conform with the church, it was dedicated on Easter Day 1955. In 1963, expansion of the church itself was undertaken. Ground was broken in April to extend the sanctuary and add room for offices and more classrooms. Completed that November, the original 1874 capacity of the church, 156 persons, nearly doubled.

In 1959, the parish acquired adjacent property to the south, including the 1767 home of The Rev. James Lockwood. It was restored and served as Trinity's rectory until 2013. Today the Lockwood Home is privately owned.



In early days, parish members decorated the already beautiful sanctuary at Christmas, here, using wagonloads of evergreens collected by the men, and skillfully wound into garlands by the women. 1879 Drawing by H. Rogers, courtesy of Trinity Parish



The Cross and Crown Window by L.C. Tiffany (c. 1873). Traditional glass is blended with raised jewels and faceted glass pieces. Photo by Nan Heath

Outreach /Mission Work

The Ladies Guild (renamed in 1961 the Episcopal Churchwomen), was founded in 1872 under the leadership of the first rector, The Rev. Henry W. Nelson, Jr. Part of a national a missionary society in the Episcopal Church, they raised money through suppers, catering, crafts, and annual fairs. From their inception, they contributed to church expenses and local missions, and carried out all manner of good works.

As time went on, responsibility for mission and outreach work was taken on by the entire parish. The church remains committed to these activities locally, nationally and globally, with specific undertakings changing over the years.

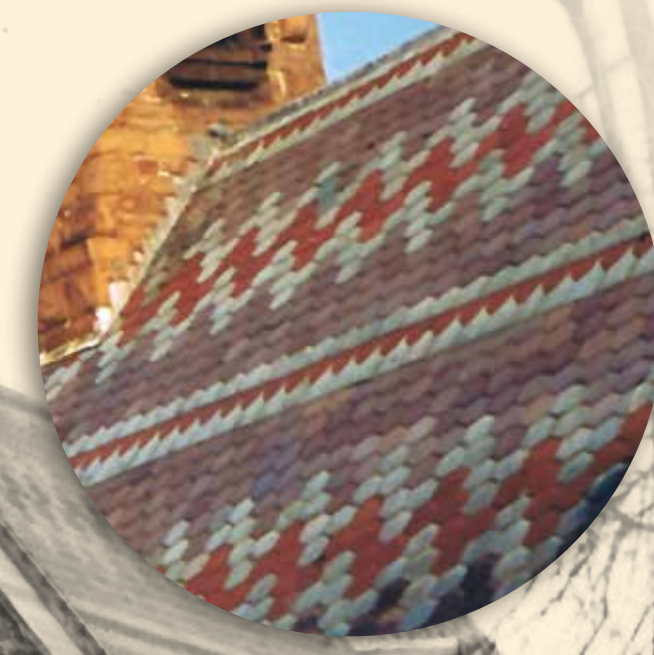
Beginning with the Social Gospel Movement of the late 19th century, which applied Christian ethics to social problems, to the 21st century movement known as the "Way of Love"— an intentional commitment to follow Jesus in our daily lives — Trinity has always strived to put faith into practice: to Love Your Neighbor.



The icon of the Episcopal Church of Connecticut is inspired by the angled blue "St. Andrew's Cross" in Scotland's flag, and places the Christian cross in the foreground. This honors the Rev. Samuel Seabury's 1784 consecration in Aberdeen, Scotland, as the first Episcopal Bishop in our new nation. Seabury, a Connecticut native, initially traveled to London for his consecration but found that the Church of England required bishops to swear allegiance to the Crown, which was impossible for an American. Seabury subsequently traveled to Scotland where he could be consecrated without such an oath. The icon was adopted in 2014.

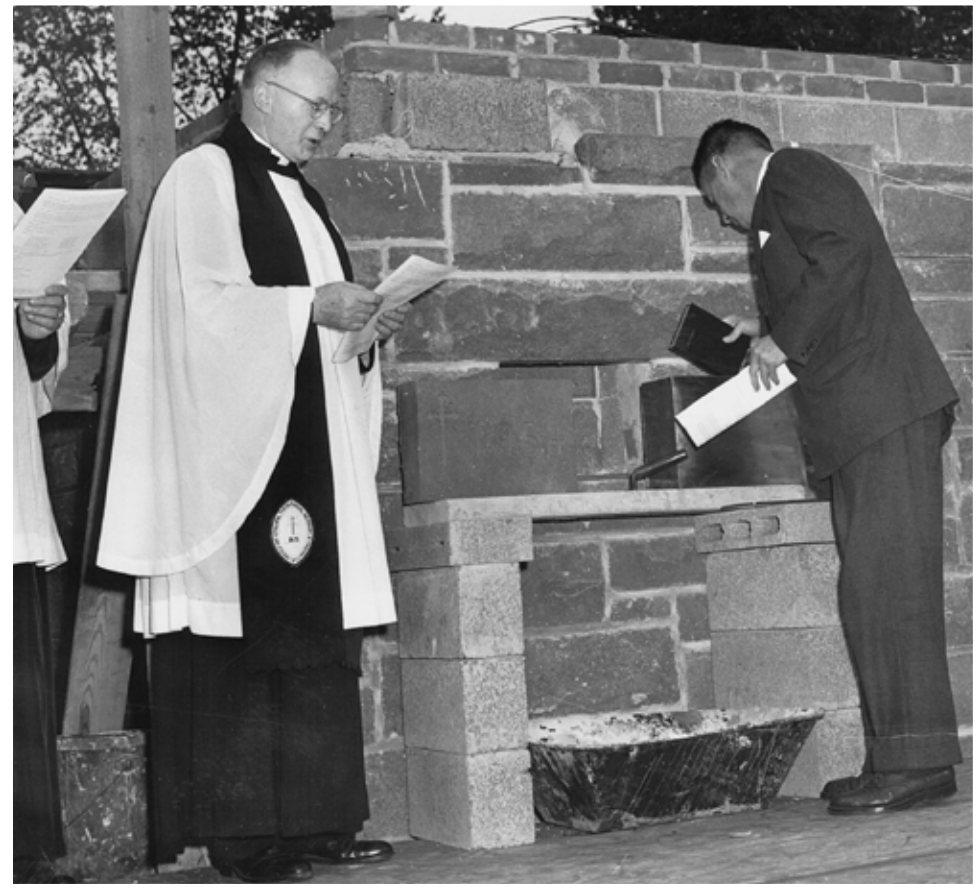


The icon of the Episcopal Church of the United States: The Cross of St. George alludes to the Church of England, and the nine white crosses in the blue quadrant reference Scotland's flag and the St. Andrew's Cross, honoring the Scottish church's role in our history.

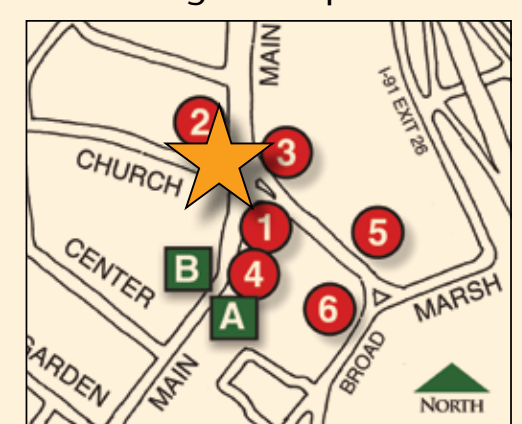


Trinity Parish with first parish house (left), sometime after 1883. Inset: detail of slate roof. Photo: Wethersfield Historical Society.

The new parish hall cornerstone, containing a Cross, Bible, Prayer Book and Parish History, was laid at a ceremony led by The Rev. John H. Findlay. Photo from family of Rev. Findlay



Other Heritage Walk panels nearby



Logos for **CThumanities**, **Hartford Foundation** (FOR PUBLIC GIVING), and the **Wethersfield Historical Society**. Text: This project was developed through a partnership between the Town of Wethersfield, Wethersfield Historical Society, the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, the Wethersfield Tourism Commission and interested residents. This project was also assisted by grants from Connecticut Humanities and the Hartford Foundation For Public Giving.