Central St. Matthew United Church of Christ

1333 South Carrollton Avenue

Central St. Matthew UCC Church has seen many changes in its more than 150 year existence. It was founded in 1849 as the German Evangelical Church of Carrollton, and its first home, on Zimpel Street, was known as the Rooster Church because of its ornamental weather vane. This is still on display in a glass case in the lobby.

After only five years, the congregation split into two nearly equal parts, and when reunification occurred in 1884 members selected the weighty name of the German Evangelical Church of the Seventh District of Carrollton. In 1909 it became the St. Matthew German Evangelical Congregation of New Orleans, but the word German was deleted during World War I. In 1934 the name was revised to the St. Matthew Evangelical and Reformed Church, but in 1957 the national Evangelical and Reformed Church merged with the Congregational Church, creating the United Church of Christ. Following Hurricane Katrina, when churches confronted declining populations, Central Congregational United Church of Christ found a new home at St. Matthews.

The present structure, which combines a neoclassical facade with Romanesque-like corner towers, was erected in 1922. It was designed by the firm of William Drago, J. A. Petty, and George Geier.

Light and airy, the interior has an open, auditorium-like shape that is reminiscent of two other German Protestant churches: Salem Evangelical and the Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church (originally the German Prytania Street Presbyterian Church), which burned several years after Hurricane Katrina.

Some of the windows are by the Emil Frei Studios of St. Louis, Missouri, and were installed in the mid-to-late 1920s. The four windows representing the Evangelists and located to the side of the altar were added shortly thereafter. The origin of the pale windows on the right is unknown.

The beautiful case for the organ makes an architectural statement on its own. It also hints about the importance of music to this congregation. The instrument within is the third for this congregation, including the 1890 installation of an organ by Carl Barchoff of Salem, Ohio, in the first building. We know little of it beyond its price of $1,260. Mr. Barchoff designed and built organs in the German tradition. Like so many church parts, this organ succumbed to the infamous hurricane of 1915.

That organ was replaced in 1924 by a 13-rank, two-manual instrument by the M. P. Moller Organ Company of Hagerstown, Maryland. This electro-pneumatic organ served until 1981, when the present Memorial Organ, built in 1907 by the Hook and Hastings Company of Boston for the Central Christian Church of Dallas, was installed. The Redman Organ Company of Fort Worth had acquired it in 1975 and expanded it. Now known as Redmans Opus 32, it includes 25 ranks of pipes, played through a mechanical or tracker action and is a favorite for visiting guest concerts organized by the Organ Historical Society of New Orleans.

**Windows**

Matthew, Luke

Mark, John

Altar rail

Nativity with shepherds Crucifixion

Jesus blessing the little children Mary Magdalene at the tomb

Jesus teaching in the temple Ascension of Christ

Angel of the Lord heralds the birth of Jesus He is risen

Doors

Chalice and host Scallop shell and water

Upstairs

23rd Psalm

Christ the Shepherd

Jesus and the Christ knocking Martha and Mary

Samaritan woman at the door

*Visited September 22, 1996*

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