Trinity Episcopal Church

1329 Jackson Avenue, New Orleans

Long lancet windows and the trefoil design characterize the handsome Gothic Revival exterior of Trinity Episcopal Church.

The Trinity congregation, which began as a missionary undertaking in the suburban city of Lafayette in 1847, worshiped at two other locations before breaking ground for todays church in 1852, following the design of George Purvis, a popular builder of the day. The original structure included a tall gable, twin octagonal towers, and a simple interior design. Ten years after construction the towers were torn down because of design flaws, and the front was redesigned. The decorative minarets were not replaced after the devastating 1915 hurricane eliminated most of them. Surprisingly, the storm did not damage the windows. The church, both front and back, has been enlarged over the years. Architect Richard Koch modified the entrance in 1955 to accommodate additional stained glass.

The interior has seen three major redesigns. The illuminated reredos, an eagle lectern, and the pulpit were added during the late 19th century, and a few years later the chancel was expanded to include an organ and a dark wooden ceiling. The Polk Window (ca. 1873) is among the oldest extant stained glass in New Orleans, and six other stained glass windows at Trinity predate the twentieth century. (The Good Shepherd window at Christ Church Cathedral also dates to 1873.)

In the first quarter of the 20th century, new pews, choir stalls, and the existing altar were added (pew rentals ceased after 1920). Subscriptions for the rest of the nave windows were raised in preparation for the 1925 General Convention of the Episcopal Church, held in Audubon Park, and the large window in the gallery was dedicated in 1936. In 1986, Trinity Church was added to the National Registry of Historic Places.

The last major changes to the building, completed in 2000, recognize that since baptism, Eucharist, and the ministry of the Word are all foci of Christian worship, the font, the communion table, and the pulpit share prominence. The colors on the walls, ceiling, and kneelers were chosen to enhance worship and complement the windows. Additions, including a sound and light system, create greater flexibility in the use of space.

Hurricane Betsy in 1965 caused little damage to the windows but provided the impetus to protect them. Despite extensive damage to the slate roof during Hurricane Katrina, the windows and the ten thousandpipe Redman tracker action organ (second largest in this region) were not damaged.

Community involvement has been important to this church since the late 19th century, when Trinity earned the reputation for reaching out to others in significant ways during times of hardship and change. That tradition continues today, as many members of Trinity Church are actively involved in addressing the myriad social problems facing New Orleans.

*From former parishioner Harriet Murrell, Sept 29, 2014: The altar window at Trinity is supposed to be the oldest figural window in the city according to Jean Farnsworth. Two small windows on the balcony at Trinity may be older ones having come from a Plaquemine Parish church that no longer exists. I asked two of the presenters (including Jean) at the big event we had at Trinity to look at them. They could only speculate but thought they were older. They are non-figural and quite small.*

*The Polk window at Trinity was dedicated in 1873. I suspect it was installed sometime before. The dedication date was one that accommodated the children of the memorialized couple. Mrs. Polk died between the time the window was ordered and it was dedicated. Her name does not appear on the window but her name was included at the dedication.*

A later window description by the church speculates that the small gallery windows may be parts of the window that preceded the Polk Window over the reredos.

**Windows**

The Polk Window

*(Nathaniel Westlake, ca.1873)*

Reredos

Organ Area Sanctuary and Vestibule

Christ Blessing the Children *(Charles Connick, 1966)*  God, the King Eternal *(1890?)*

Angel of Praise *(Connick 1965)* Seal of Trinity Church *(Connick, 1971)*

Our Lord with the Chalice *(Connick, 1963)* Fleur-de-Lys *(Connick, 1963)*

Nave

The Nativity *(P. J. Spencer, Montreal, 1888)*  Jesus Calling the Children *(1890)*

The Good Samaritan *(1888)* Jesus Calming the Waves *(Cox, Sons,*

*Buckley & Co., New York, 1890)*

The Resurrection *(1897?)* The Resurrection *(1893)*

Adoration of the Magi *(J & R Lamb, 1913 (1925?))* Presentation in the Temple *(1898)*

The Annunciation *(Lamb, 1923)* Young Christ in the Temple *(Connick, signed. 1923)*

Christ on the Road to Emmaus *(Lamb, 1925)* Angel of Consolation ministers to Jesus

*(Lamb, 1924)*

Entrance

Noahs Ark *(Connick, 1962)* Peters Barque *(Connick, 1962)*

Symbols of the Trinity and the Evangelists *(Connick, 1955)*

Gallery

Symbols of Four Evangelists Symbols of Theological Virtues

*(Connick, 1960) (Connick, 1960)*

St. Paul Teaching at Mars Hill *(Connick 1936)*

*Toured*

*September 17, 1989*

*April 5, 1997*

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