

New Churches

I THINK God loves new temples built
to Him,

And watches as each stone is laid on stone,
And smiles to see them laid so straight
and true,

Lifting the strong wide walls to heaven's
blue.

And when the carpenters have done with
them,

And each new church stands finished and
alone,

When dust sifts violet shadows through
the glass

Of painted windows, I think that God
must pass

Between the new dim aisles, and stopping
where

The last light falls across His shining hair,
He kneels and holds the first communion
there.

By Lexie Dean Robertson



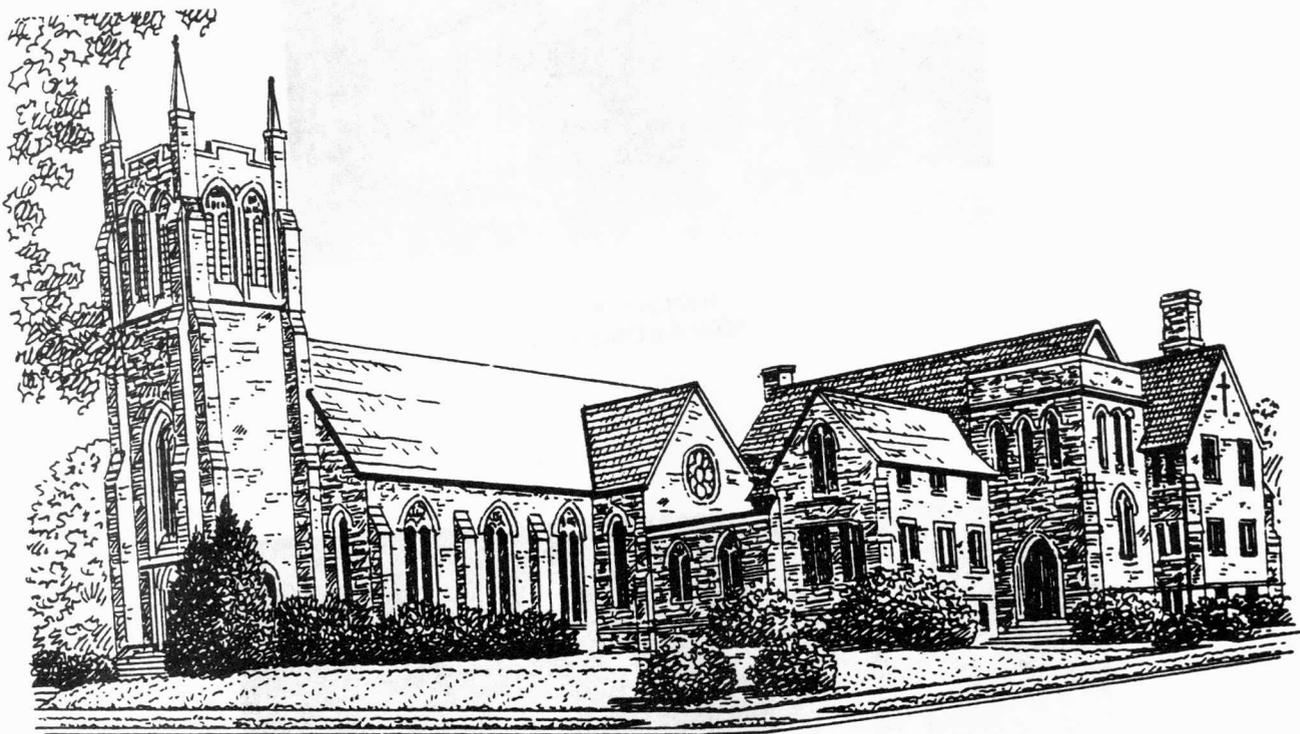
1828 CHURCH
NOW USED AS AN APARTMENT HOUSE.
BOISE AND HAMBURG ST.



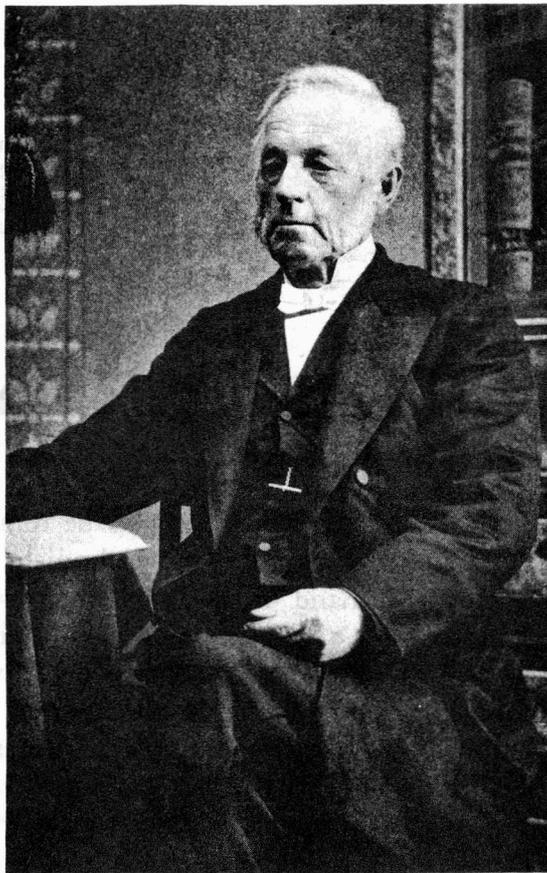
1877 CHURCH
MAIN AND CENTER



SANCTUARY



1928 CHURCH



Reverend Chauncey Steele Baker

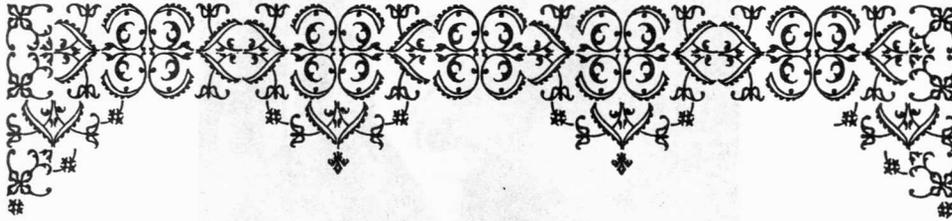
Reverend Chauncey Steele Baker, in whose memory our beautiful church sanctuary has been erected, was among the early pastors of the first organized Methodist Church Society in East Aurora, having served as pastor here during 1874, 1875, and 1876, in the old Hamburg Street Church.

The hardships the olden time preachers had to overcome were his also, and endured without complaint..

His pastorate was eminently successful, as his congregation had a healthy growth and an especially strong spiritual foundation was laid in those early days by Rev. Baker

Reverend Chauncey Baker was born in February, 1814, and passed on to his reward in 1892 in his seventy-eighth year. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery.

We deeply appreciate this generous gift by Mrs. George H. Maxwell in memory of her venerable father, and can only promise to use it to the best of our ability and to the glory of God and His Kingdom.



CHURCH HISTORY



THE year 1822. is one long to be remembered, for it marked the beginning of Methodism in this vicinity. The little band of hardy pioneers who settled here more than a century ago held their religious services at infrequent intervals in the various homes, but in spite of the hardships and inconveniences that were encountered, their interest never waned and it was finally decided to erect a meeting house where all could worship in a more convenient and satisfactory manner.

{ On March 9, 1822., an organization meeting was called and at that meeting there were seven trustees elected. They were: Nathaniel Holmes, William Allen, Samuel Gail, Hauxhurst Addington, Thomas Pratt, Arthur Humphrey, and Daniel C. Crane. The record of this election can be found in the files in the Erie County Clerk's office in Liber One of Miscellaneous Records and was recorded on May 16, 1822, jfo. to.

{ After having made this start, the trustees began a campaign for funds with which to erect a building. Their days were largely spent in their daily labors and with lands to be cleared and cultivated, it is to be assumed that their hours of leisure were few, and that little time was to be found for visitations. This was particularly true of the winter months, when the blizzards rendered roads impassable and severed all means of communications. Under these conditions it is not surprising that it required several years to get the subscription list completed.

However, on September 4, 1826, the people gathered together in what was known as School House NO.7, and decided to complete the

~I~J~i~"~J~}~I~o~w~e~r~ ,~o~n~ S~e~p~t~e~m~b~e~r~ 4~ ,~ 1826~ ,~ t~h~e~ p~e~o~p~l~e~ g~a~t~h~e~r~e~d~ t~o~g~e~t~h~e~r~ i~n~ w~h~a~t~ w~a~s~ k~n~o~w~n~ a~s~ S~c~h~o~o~l~ H~o~u~s~e~ N~O~.7~ ,~ a~n~d~ d~e~c~i~d~e~d~ t~o~ c~o~m~p~l~e~t~e~ t~h~e~

subscription list and build a church on Hamburg Street. The task of completing the list was of long duration and it was late in the winter of 181.8 before any contract could be awarded. Finally the contract was drawn on January 19, 181.9, and was signed on behalf of the Trustees by Samuel Gail, Hauxhurst Addington, and Daniel Nichols. The contract was given to Benjamin Searles, of the Town of Wales, and the amount of the contract was seven hundred dollars. The building was completed on November 11., 181.9, and the congregation moved in shortly afterwards.

(The original subscription list is still in existence, and though time has dimmed its signatures, it is still possible to decipher the contributions which must have been real sacrifices. We find very few contributions of actual money, but we do find many subscriptions of materials and labor.. Some contributed standing timber; one gave the use of a saw mill; others gave their horses to haul the lumber, while others gave of their time for the erection of the building. We even find contributions of livestock and grain and wearing apparel. It can be readily seen that theirs was a labor of love and great must have been the satisfaction of these brave people when at last the task was completed.

(It is of surpassing interest to note the completeness of the preamble to the subscription list, of which the following is an exact copy:

.. We the subscriQers wishing to accommodate our friends together with ourselves, and believing it to be our duty and for our interests (as it respects our character and property) do severally agree to pay to the Trustees of the First Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Town of Aurora, or their successors in office, the sums annexed to our several names for the purpose of erecting a house for public worship within one-fourth of a mile of the house of Stephen Holmes. The said house is to be about 36 by 48 on the ground with posts about 18 or 1.0 feet. There is to be a belfry, a square or circular end gallery and gothic windows on the sides and one end, at least. We will pay what we subscribe in the following manner, to wit: the last by the first day of January, 181.8. The materials subscribed for said house shall be good and delivered at the site by the first day of April next at last price. Labour at last price when called for by



The grain or stock, one-half the first day of May next and the other half on the first day of May, 1828, and whatever else may be subscribed shall be paid when called for by the said Trustees at last price .

.. In consideration of the above agreements, we the said Trustees do agree and bind ourselves and our successors in office to use our best endeavors to collect this said subscription and faithfully to expend the same when collected, in building a house of the above description, provided that a sufficient amount be paid to warrant the completion of at least the outside. The probable amount estimated at 800 dollars, otherwise nothing is to be collected."

Dated: Aurora, Sept. 4, 1826

AMOS LEWIS
BRIAN HAWLEY
SAMUEL GAIL
H. ADDINGTON

Trustees

(There are no records which clearly indicate the size of the membership of this church, but an old subscription list made in the Spring of 1831, contains the names of 89 people, so that the constituency of the new undertaking was very substantial. Living costs at that time were very low and it is not surprising to find that the total subscription amounted to \$191.67. This probably provided for the expenses for the year, including the salary of the pastor, which was \$75 a year. This is further borne out by a statement of expenses, presumably those of a pastor, and which reads as follows:

Expenses for Conference Year, 18Jo

Sulky, use of from Sardinia to Leroy	\$0.75
To horse keeping at Dulfalo31
To Buffalo expenses, interest.....	.06
To blank books, two.38
Expenses Buffalo.25
To washing for Conference year	4.00
One blank book.37



It may be said in passing that the religious enthusiasm in this vicinity at this time was materially aided by a revival which took place in 1817. It is interesting to know that prior to 1817, there was not a single religious edifice in the entire county, and when the circuit riders came to this portion of the county, the effects of the religious revival were quickly noised about, and was referred to by a city newspaper in the following manner: "Through the section of this lathy heathen country the spirit of the Gospel is extending far and wide," and the same writer dwelt on the results of religious work in the town of Willink where "the spirit of the evil one enchained many."

Very little information regarding the succeeding years is recorded, but it has been shown that the church had a continuous spiritual and physical growth, and in due time the facilities became inadequate, and the need for a new location and a larger building became urgent.

The original building was sold to James Boies, and was used for some time afterwards for religious purposes, and then as a flour and feed mill, and finally it was rebuilt as a dwelling house, and is still used for that purpose.

In 1877, the congregation decided to purchase a piece of land at the Southeast corner of Big Tree Road (now Main Street) and Centre Street and erect on it a frame church. The site was purchased from John O. Riley of Holland, N. Y., on June 3rd, 1877, for a price of \$2,200. The trustees were extremely anxious to get the deed recorded at once, and the records indicate that the building committee met at the Persons House and received the deed of said property from John O. Riley of Holland at six o'clock, A. M., July 2, 1877. Deed recorded in Erie Co. Clerk's office on same day." Thus the transaction was closed and the committee was free to proceed with the work of erecting the building. The property was paid for in cash, except for a mortgage of \$1,100 which was held against the property by a Mr. Dickerman of Holland, and which was transferred to the new purchaser.

When the committee went to Buffalo to have the deed recorded, they also visited a number of city churches, "hoping," as stated in the minutes "to pick up some ideas that would be of advantage to us in determining the style and finish of the church we have in

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at main entrance; two furnaces; wall and ceiling decorations; electric wiring and fixtures; remodeling of the pews, and the installation of a new pipe organ, which necessitated the rebuilding of the choir and pulpit. The cost of the improvements amounted to nearly \$9000. The reopening and dedicatory services of a week's duration began on January 14, 1904. Morning sermon was delivered by Bishop Joseph F. Berry, D. D., while the evening service was conducted "by Presiding Elder Rev. Ward Platt of Buffalo.

{ The Monday evening service was conducted by Rev. C. G. Stevens, of Albion ;\$., ;\$.

{The following night the famous lecture .. Acres of Diamonds .. ~as delivered by Dr. Russell H. Conwell.. This lecture, however, was held in the old opera house.

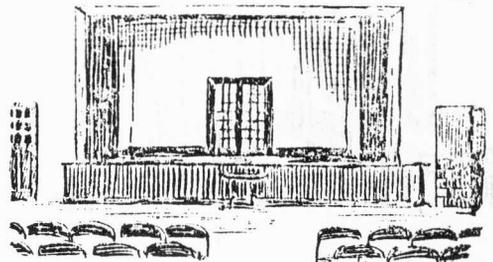
{ The Wednesday evening service was in charge of Rev. A. F. Colburn of Buffalo, while the sermon on Thursday was delivered by Rev. W. A. V. E. Pattyson, of Buffalo.

{ The service was preceded by a supper served by the Ladies' Aid Society, the proceeds of which were used to help the church expenses. The final service on Friday evening was entirely of a musical nature, and included a recital on the new organ.

{This larger and better equipped building gave a new impetus to the work and as a result, the membership of the church and school increased, but within the next fifteen years there were conditions arising which indicated that the Sunday School would need more room in a few years. The capacity of the church was taxed on several occasions in later years, and this was particularly noticeable as early as 192..2..when the celebration of one hundred years of Methodism in East Aurora took place.

{The Centennial Celebration was held on September 17th, 192..2., and occupied the entire day. The day opened with a sunrise prayer service at 6:30 A. M., which was followed by an old fashioned love feast at 10 o'clock. The regular service was conducted by the pastor, Rev. A. L. Schumann. The Sunday School met at noon and the attendance was 330. The Epworth League conducted the service at 6:30 and at the regular evening service there were three addresses on th~ p~std?rE~---=c;:=~",~c~==~.c...~

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ent and future, the first talk being given by one of the oldest members of the church, and who worshipped in the original meeting house. The day closed with a rendition of the "Hallelujah Chorus" from the .. Messiah .. by a large chorus choir. In passing it is interesting to note that in addition to the profuse decorations, a huge floral arch spanned the platform, and worked into the design were the dates 1822.-1922. .

{The next few years that followed this celebration were destined to be the most important in the entire history of the church. The Sunday School with its large membership and high average of attendance taxed the building to its capacity, and for the first time in its history, the primary grades were forced to go into the basement and kitchen. Every available nook and corner of the building was utilized, and still the conditions were unsatisfactory. Different plans were discussed, and later on the possibility of erecting a modest community house was given consideration, but there were still some who had not caught the vision of the future and nothing resulted from the discussions. During all these discussions, the young people of the congregation patiently and prayerfully waited and watched, but were far from being discouraged at the results. Finally, their enthusiasm could be restrained no longer, and they called a meeting of young people only and it proved to be an interesting and enthusiastic gathering, and before it had come to a close, each one present was pledged to do everything possible to arouse enthusiasm in the Board of Trustees and have the Board give the young people a hearing. They furthermore created themselves into a body known as .. The Church of Tomorrow," and great was the surprise of the congregation on the following Sunday morning, when they found in their pews handbills printed in flaming red colors and scare lines headed .. Wonder of Wonders." The simple statement contained in the body of the handbill was an urgent plea for co-operation and the statement closed with these significant words, .. On to victory. Joyfully yours, The Church of Tomorrow."

{ The reaction to this appeal was magical. People became inquisitive and were anxious to learn the real situation. The " Church of Tomorrow " met with the Official Board and were given an opportunity



to be heard, and from that time forward the need for a community house was never questioned, and the ways and means of financing the project was the subject of many long discussions.

( While the need for a community building was vital, the congregation was not so seriously handicapped with its services, but nevertheless the vision of a complete church structure was continually before the people, and it was finally determined that as both could not be financed at once, it would be the better part of wisdom to proceed with the portion which was needed the most. At about this same time our good friend Mrs. George H. Maxwell decided to put into action a long cherished thought and erect and present to this congregation a memorial to her father, Rev. Chancey Steele Baker, who served as pastor of this church in 1874, 1875, 1876. This decision coming so unexpectedly assured us that our hopes for a complete structure would be realized, and after many consultations definite plans were worked out. Before any contracts could be awarded, a campaign lasting for one week was put on in February, 1927, and the full amount was pledged. The contracts were awarded and ground broken in the early Spring. The cornerstone was laid on July 17, 1927, by retired Bishop William Burt, D. D., with the assistance of District Superintendent C. E. Guthrie, the pastor, Rev. J. B. Harry, Rev. Bartlett of the Christian Church, and Rev. Gregory of the Presbyterian Church. The contents of the copper box placed in the corner stone consisted of the contents of the box removed from the stone laid in 1877 together with many other interesting papers and objects of recent date.

( After the cornerstone was laid the work of erecting and completing the building proceeded rapidly. It is designed to meet the needs of the congregation in all lines of religious, social and physical activities. The quietness of the beautiful auditorium is enhanced by the magnificent Tiffany windows; the spacious rooms in the community house afford ample room for many social gatherings, while the bowling alleys and gymnasium contribute in large measure to the athletic activities of the church. Thus all are united under one vast roof, in a beautifully designed structure which embodies within its vast walls not only the hopes of the "Church of Tomorrow."



## Baker Memorial Church 1926 to 1997

The building program for the construction of the new sanctuary on Main Street required moving and turning the existing church which was then remodeled into the educational unit. During that time the congregation worshipped with the Baptist Church with only the Sunday Schools being separate.

With the expansion program it was necessary to dispose of the parsonage which stood on Main Street. It was taken in two sections and relocated on North Street while a new parsonage was selected on Oakwood Avenue. In 1935 that house was sold, and the present Main Street parsonage was acquired together with a house on Center Street. The Main Street house was moved back 16 feet, given a quarter turn, and remodeled. The other house was moved to its present location at the east end of the parking lot where it was remodeled to be used as a residence for the Superintendent of Building and Grounds.

As evidence of the ecumenical spirit which prevailed in the community, when the East Aurora Presbyterian Church burned in 1933, the congregation met in the Methodist Church for several months, again with only the Sunday Schools conducted at different times.

After World War Two, the church sponsored a Hungarian refugee family, and beginning in 1958, hosted many foreign students through the International Christian Youth Exchange Program.

The ever increasing need for more parking space prompted the purchase in 1956 of a house and lot on Center Street adjoining the church property. The building was demolished and the parking lot expanded.

Also that year, Baker's first associate pastor, the Reverend Marion C. Finch, joined the staff. It was then necessary to provide housing for the family and a house at the northeast corner of Oakwood Avenue and S. Willow Street became the second parsonage. It was later sold when no longer needed.

Upgrading the physical facility continued over many years. New, red wool carpeting was installed in the sanctuary in 1973, replacing the old, green "Pullman" carpeting which had served for so many years.

Nineteen seventy-four marked the renovation of the gymnasium with the installation of a new floor, lighting, cement ramps, wall repair and exterior drainage tile. The room was renamed Frantz Hall in memory of Maxwell Frantz Jr. who died in the Vietnam War, July 22, 1966.

In the late 1970's the threat of theft and vandalism of stained glass windows was a cause for concern in area churches, and the Trustees acted to have exterior plexiglass installed for the protection of the priceless Tiffany windows.

The "So All May Enter" project was undertaken in 1982 and provided a new parking lot entrance and an elevator to all four levels of the church for the physically challenged. That same year major renovation of the sanctuary took place. The choir loft was enlarged and a passageway was cut in the paneling to provide access to the choir from the platform. The organ console was moved from the center to the west side of the choir; the old sanctuary entrance was closed off and replaced in the hallway with a built in glass display case.

The lovely tower that graced Baker Memorial had begun to deteriorate over the years due to the harsh, winter weather, and pieces of falling masonry could prove hazardous. Preventative measures were futile, and in 1988 a new top was built to replace that which had been removed.

The church was continuing to grow, and the lack of office space was creating problems for the staff. In 1985 a new addition was built at the rear of the church for an office complex. Space was also at a premium for classrooms and the seldom used bowling alleys were an obvious solution to the problem. Their removal added two classrooms and a choir room in 1991.

For many years the outstanding tile roof of the sanctuary had been a source of admiration for the congregation, but the lack of skilled labor and cost for repairing broken tiles was becoming a financial burden. In 1990 the slates were replaced with a conventional roof, and at that time the chapel roof was reconstructed.

Superintendent Howard Newbury worked wonders in keeping the church's old steam boilers working, but after many years of service, they

were replaced in 1991 with a complete new piping system and two hot water boilers with a thermostat in each room, much to the comfort of the congregation.

The house at the end of the parking lot was home to associate pastors for a number of years, but it finally proved unsuitable as a second parsonage. With the arrival of a new associate/co-pastor and the Conference designation of a house of 2000 square feet, the hour had come for action. Fortuitous circumstances provided the ideal property on Lawrence Avenue, and in 1995 the Reverend Richard Danielson and family happily took possession.

Now we celebrate 175 years of accomplishments, growth, change but the greatest achievement has been the dedication, commitment and hard work of the many, many members of the church who had the faith and determination to be a Church with a Vision.

Jehovah God who dwelt of old  
In temples made with hands,  
Thy power display, thy truth unfold,  
Where this new temple stands.

Vouchsafe to meet thy children here,  
Nor ever hence depart;  
From sorrow's eye wipe every tear,  
And bless each longing heart.

The rich man's gift, the widow's mite  
Are blended in these walls;  
These altars welcome all alike  
Who heed God's gracious calls.

From things unholy and unclean  
We separate this place;  
May naught here ever come between  
This people and Thy face!

Now with this house we give to Thee  
Ourselves, our hearts, our all,  
The pledge of faith and loyalty,  
Held subject to Thy call..

And when at last the blood-washed throng  
Is gathered from all lands,  
We'll enter with triumphant song  
The house not made with hands.

## THE WINDOWS



THE church has been greatly enhanced by a series of beautiful windows, especially designed by and executed under the supervision of Louis C. Tiffany in his studios in New York City. ( Mr. Tiffany is foremost in the American School of art glass, and has endeavored, at all times to preserve the best of the old Thirteenth Century type of work, and at the same time increasing the range of color and shading as well as the power of expression in glass making. The result has been the production of a glass which varies sufficiently in the process of making to produce an increase in the color blendings which in turn gives the designer a range that is boundless.

( The glass in these windows is not only opalescent, deriving its play of colors by transmitted light, but it is iridescent with a permanent metallic lustre, emitting rainbow effects by light reflected from the surfaces. The result is that the windows stand out like a painting, and also shows substantially the same in reflected artificial light as in transmitted sunlight.

(These windows are equal in quality and artistry to the finest examples found anywhere in America.

( Upon entering the vestibule one is impressed with the figure of our Saviour in the attitude of "The Good Shepherd," which brings to mind His statement that "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold."

(On the opposite window is the figure of St. John, who has been alluded to in the scriptures as the "Disciple whom Jesus loved," and who was, at all times, His constant companion.

{The linking together of these two figure windows in the entrance to the church is a lesson in itself, for we read in the Scriptures that it was John who witnessed the glory of the transfiguration; who leaned on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper; who stood at the cross in the agonizing hour; who assisted in laying his Master's body in the tomb; who went about preaching the gospel, and who was finally banished to the Island of Patmos where he received the wonderful vision that is our heritage in the Book of Revelations.

(In the auditorium the two ornamental windows nearest the entrance bear cartouches of the Font, which symbolizes baptism; and the Chalice which is emblematical of the Lord's Supper. On the ribbons beneath these cartouches appear the words "Faith" and "Sacrifice."

( In the companion window on the opposite side of the room are the cartouches bearing the Torch and Wreath, which symbolizes Life and Peace and Victory over Death through Jesus Christ. The erect burning torch is emblematic of life, and the olive of peace. The inverted flameless torch represents death, and the laurel of victory. On one of the ribbons appears "Life and Peace" and on the other is the simple statement "Victory over Death."

( Next on the left appears the figure window symbolizing the Resurrection Scene, portraying Mary Magdalene, and Mary, wife of Cleophas, who were amazed to find the empty tomb. The scene shows their meeting with the angel who says "He is not here; He is risen." The expression on the faces of the Marys' has been carried out very effectively, and the picture as a whole portrays one of the most important events in our religion.



(The companion window on the opposite side is taken from the text found in Psalms 121:1 which is "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." A solitary figure appears in this picture, gazing out unto the distant hills which are bathed in the shimmering rays of the setting sun. In the foreground is the winding brook which carries in its ripples the reflected splendor of the blue sky. The clouds and sun rays have been beautifully wrought into the picture, and a view of this window in the light of a setting sun is one which can never be forgotten.

( Next will be found two more ornamental windows, one on either side of the church, and each one bearing cartouches of the Four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. On the ribbons at the bases of these cartouches appear the texts which refer to each of the evangelists. Under Matthew is the call "Follow Me." St. Mark begins his Gospel with the reference to John, when he says "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" and this text is found under Mark's picture ... The "Unloved Physician" is, of course, the proper reference made to St. Luke, while "The Disciple whom Jesus loved" can be found applicable only to St. John the Evangelist.

{ In addition to the ornamental windows already referred to there are four other single lancet windows, which are in perfect harmony with all of the other windows.

( Over the archway leading to the Chapel appears a beautiful rose window, and in the rear of the pulpit is a small two-opening ornamental window which contains soft glowing colors and which harmonizes very effectively with the rose window itself.

( In the tower over the main entrance is a large three-paneled window depicting the text "Well done thou good and faithful servant." In this picture we see the servant on bended knee receiving the blessing of our Lord and Master. The scene is laid out in God's great open spaces, and on all sides appear the fields and woodlands. The perspective in this window is exceptionally fine, and the coloring and beauty of the picture is a great inspiration to all who look upon it.

( The crowning feature of all the windows is found in the east transept where a scene in the boyhood life of Christ is depicted. It is taken from the world-famed Hoffmann painting entitled "Christ in the Temple." The allusion is to the period in the life of Jesus, when, at the age of twelve, he accompanied his parents to the Feast of the Passover at Jerusalem. The travel was made in caravans, and the large number of people in a caravan made it possible for one of its members to be missing without such absence being noticed. Thus upon the return homeward, the parents of Jesus did not notice his absence until after a day's journey had been completed. This caused great alarm and a hurried return was made to Jerusalem. After the three days' search his parents found Him in the temple surrounded by the learned doctors and teachers, "Both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." This is the narrative as given by Luke.

( The artist has chosen this particular episode for the scene depicted, and the expressions of amazement and astonishment on the faces of the learned men have been successfully portrayed.

( The outstanding figure of the boy Jesus, his youthful countenance all aglow with the realization of his satisfactory handling of a difficult situation, occupies the center of the picture. In contrast with His pure white robe are the gorgeously colored gowns of the doctors. In this window, as in all of the other windows, a beautiful canopy effect has a tendency to carry the glorious colors out into the very atmosphere of the room.

