

# **St. John's Episcopal Church Carlisle, Pennsylvania**

## ***A Guide to the Church Building***

### ***St. John's History***

Welcome to historic Saint John's Episcopal Church, on the Square! Located on this northeast corner of the Square, the Church sits on land reserved by the Penn family for the use of the Church of England at the time of the founding of Carlisle. The first



celebration of the Eucharist took place on Trinity Sunday 1752. At that time Carlisle was described by the missionary priest as "the very frontiers of Messiah's kingdom ... the remotest part of the West." As the first church to meet in Carlisle, the parish continues as St. John's Episcopal Church, named in honor of St. John, evangelist and apostle, known also in Scripture as the "Beloved Disciple". Today St. John's is the spiritual

home of over 900 active members, making it one of the 200 largest congregations of the Episcopal Church in the United States.

Over the years many of the citizens of Carlisle and numerous famous visitors have walked through these doors.

- The majority of the early founding families of the parish had ties to Ireland and the Irish Anglican Church. Indian fur traders such as George Croghan and Thomas Butler were followed by Iron Masters and Anglo-Irish families including the Lees, Nobles and Leyburns.
- Bishop William White, first Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church presided over the consecration of the present building on July 8, 1827. In attendance was the fabled Molly Pitcher, a resident of the town.
- During the brief occupation of Carlisle in June 1863, Confederate soldiers of Richard Ewell's Corps worshipped at St. John's on the Sunday before the Battle of Gettysburg. As the battle began on July 1, a second Confederate force shelled the town from the east, hitting many buildings, including the roof of this church.
- Various military officers stationed at Carlisle Barracks and educators teaching at Dickinson College have worshipped here. So also scores of Native American children who called St. John's their church home while resident at the Carlisle Indian School in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- Among the notable persons who have worshipped here in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize winner.

The church building you have entered is the third building to serve this congregation. A rustic log structure was first erected in the 1750s and served for a time as the county courthouse as well as a church. A



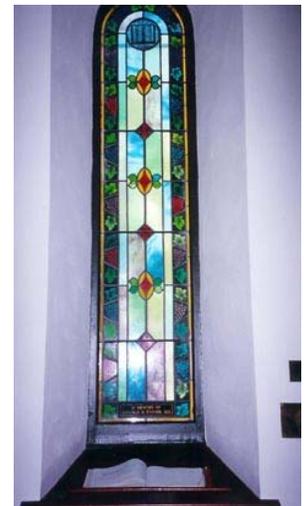
modest stone colonial church was built in the 1760s. Both of these early church buildings were located adjacent to East High Street, in the area now occupied by the Parish Hall. Work on the present church began in 1826 and concluded the following year, making use of stone from the dismantled colonial building. An original tower on the east end of the church was removed during a large renovation in 1861 and the present tower and steeple were erected. The choir area was also added at this time and the interior was remodeled. Bishop Alonzo Potter consecrated the renovated church on December 1, 1861. A final expansion was undertaken in 1896 when the Sanctuary and High Altar were added. Presiding Bishop Ethelbert Talbot consecrated these renovations on April 27, 1898. The architectural styles of the church combines a Federalist shape with Norman design, characterized by the rounded arches and windows.

In the summer of 1995 a comprehensive renovation/restoration of the church interior was undertaken. The Rt. Rev. Charlie F. McNutt, Bishop of Central Pennsylvania, presided over the dedication of the newly restored church.

### ***A Walking Tour Through the Building***

#### *THE NARTHEX (entrance)*

- The Narthex or vestibule of the church features narrow stained glass windows on the south and north sides, in memory of former Senior Warden, Donald D. Stoner, MD. The tile floor, laid in imported English encaustic tile, in memory of Adam Keller, also a former Sr. Warden, was installed in 1896.
- The Church bell has been hung in the tower overhead since the construction of the steeple in 1861. It was cast in England in 1830. The original parish bell, which was “on loan” to the county, was destroyed in the courthouse fire of 1842.
- The Narthex Doors, given in memory of John Franklin Fogel feature handsome etched glass. The etching is a memorial to Canon John Hilton, 16<sup>th</sup> Rector from 1950-1974. The etchings depict symbols of the seven Sacraments, beginning overhead with Baptism and continuing on the left door with Eucharist, Marriage, and Ordination; on the right door with Confirmation, Unction, and Reconciliation.

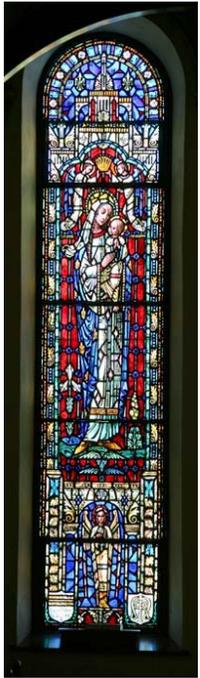


#### *THE FONT AND BAPTISTRY*

- The Baptismal Font was first installed in the front of the church in 1861. Later it was moved to the back southwest corner. In the renovation of 1995 it was moved to the current location at the entrance of the main aisle to symbolize our entrance into the church through Baptism. Its white marble is complimented by the decorative tile, including some blue tile to symbolize

water, which forms the share of the cross and defines the baptismal area. The Paschal or Easter Candle stands with the font as a reminder of new life and light given in baptism. The candle stand is in memory of David Eavenson, Sr.

### *THE WEST WALL*



- The Wooden Celtic Cross, hanging on the west wall (to the right of the door) was carved by Alan Nadeau in 1994. Alan designed and carved this cross during the last year of his life as a fifteen station” and a symbol of the Resurrection. The cross features the risen Christ and is carved on both sides so that it may be used in procession.
- The stained glass window to the left of the Celtic Cross (southwest corner) depicts the Madonna and Child, Mary holding Jesus. Like many of the windows in the church, the use of blues and reds is particularly striking. The window was created by the Conrad Schmitt studio of Milwaukee and installed during the 1940s as a memorial to Frank Hoover Kimmel and Mary Wetzel Kimmel. The window in the southeast corner celebrates Christ the King. This window shows the cosmic Christ of glory “who comes to judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end”. The window is a memorial to Henrietta Herman Viets, wife of the Rev. Harry Viets, the 14<sup>th</sup> rector of the parish.
- The piece of red sandstone set in the plaster wall in the corner of the west wall is from the tower of the Carlisle Cathedral in Carlisle England. The Rev. Mark Scheneman, 18<sup>th</sup> rector, was given this stone during a trip to the Cathedral in 1995. It is a symbol of the parish’s tie to our namesake English parish.

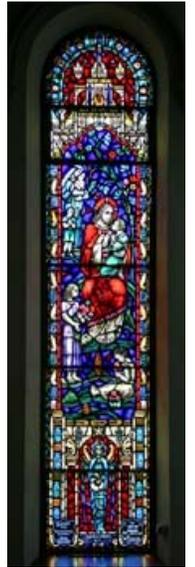


### *THE SOUTH WALL*

- The Stations of the Cross, numbers 8-14, are mounted on the south aisle wall, beginning with Station 8. Each of the fourteen Stations in the church bear a title and Roman numeral designation. Representing an immense project, the Stations were designed and carved in mahogany by Alan Nadeau. The work took over three years! The Stations are in the shape of the windows, using a rounded Norman arch and featuring a Celtic Cross. Dedicated by the Rt. Rev. Dean Stevenson in 1992, the Stations on the south wall are a memorial to the Rev. William Weitzel, 17<sup>th</sup> rector (1975-85).

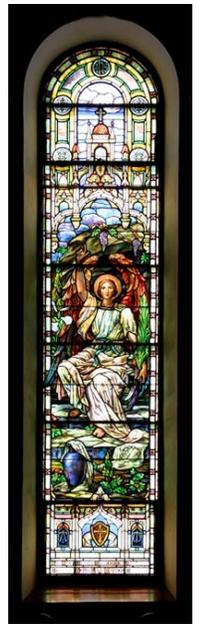


- The first stained glass window on the south aisle depicts Jesus with the Children. Given by the Livingston family in memory of Catharine Livingston, it was installed in the late 1940s and done by the Conrad Schmitt studio. Of particular note is the disk which the angel in the lower panel holds. A member of the Livingston family, the Rev. Kunkle, suggested this addition to depict a millstone. “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea”. (Mt 18:6).



- The next window bears the title “Faith”. It is unique among the church’s windows, the work on an unknown English studio. In the style of many English stained glass windows, it has a “white” or washed out effect, apparently favored in England because of dull weather. Even on a dark day, the window has a bright appearance. The angel or saintly figure represents the faith of the church and the window in a memorial to the Margretta Gibson McClure, Margaret Crane McClure, and William McClure.

- The “Resurrection” window is next in line. It features a vivid depiction of the empty tomb with an angel proclaiming the victory of Christ. Notice the shroud at the foot of the angel. An imprint of the crown of thorns can be seen in the shroud, now left behind by the Resurrected Christ. A memorial to Harry Law Warren, the window was installed in 1924 by the Diazenzo studio of Philadelphia.



- The last window on the south aisle is a favorite of the parish. The “Good Shepherd” window is the oldest in the nave, dating to 1907. The unknown studio used the popular “Tiffany” style with the glass cut rather than painted. The robe of Christ the Good Shepherd is made of drapery glass, molten glass turned over itself, a very rare technique. The window is a memorial to Washington Lafayette Elliott.



### *ORGAN ALCOVE*

- The console for the Moller Pipe Organ was installed in this location when the present organ was constructed in 1980. The organ is a memorial to the Honorable Fred and Edith Reese. This magnificent instrument includes three divisions: Great, Sell and Pedal.
- The organ chimes, above the chapel door are a memorial to Mary Alicia (Prescott) Zeger (d. 1996), a woman who had the distinction of being baptized, confirmed, married in and buried from St. John’s.
- The Bishop’s Confirmation Chair, used as a moveable chair for the Bishop, is a duplicate of the diocesan Bishop’s Chair which is kept at diocesan

headquarters. It was made in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The needlepoint seat cushion worked by Mary Healy bears the seal of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. The hand carved bishop's staff or crosier was carved by Alan Nadeau, originally for the use of the parish Twelfth Night Boar's Head Festival in 1987.

*CHAPEL OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD* (proceed through the doors)

- The Chapel of the Good Shepherd is a memorial to the Rev. William Weitzel, 17<sup>th</sup> rector who died in 1985. This small chapel is used for private prayer and devotions, for daily Morning Prayer, for private confession and some other occasional services.
- Entering the Chapel, the parish Columbarium of the Good Shepherd is located on the right wall. The brass covering plates are arranged in squares, depicting Easter Lilies, each unit forming a Greek Cross. In the center, is a striking contemporary rendition of Christ the Good Shepherd, gently and lovingly holding a lamb. The center depiction of Christ the Good Shepherd is in memory of Otto Eleuteri, who was the first person buried in the Columbarium on All Souls Day, November 2, 2002. There are 104 burial niches under the brass covering plates, each marked with a name plate. An icon of the Crucifixion stands on a small altar in front of the Columbarium. The icon was "written" or painted in the traditional Orthodox style by Cheryl Hayward, member of the parish.



- The altar incorporates the marble altar top of the church's 1861 altar. The remainder of this altar is in storage in the church basement. Roy Atkinson, former Junior Warden, fashioned the pedestal and support framing in 1989 as a memorial to his brother who was killed in World War II.

- The stained glass window behind the altar depicts Christ the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd both carries a young lamb on his shoulder and with his staff, leads the sheep by his side. Notice that this shepherds holds pipes from the left arm and that a Scottish thistle is at his feet! The panels feature an olive branch (left) and a wild mustard branch (right), symbols of Judea and Galilee. The window was the gift of Mark Hayward in memory of Donald and Maryanne Hayward and dedicated by the Rt. Rev. Charlie McNutt in September 1998.



- The icon behind the altar is a classic Orthodox icon of the Pantocrator. The Rev. Mark Scheneman brought it from Jerusalem in 1995 where it was blessed in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. This icon, as well as the two reproductions of icons on the wall, are memorials to Jennie Broujos (d. 1989) and Nessema Davis (d. 1990). The olive wood figure of the Good Shepherd was also brought from the Holy City in 1996. The bas relief on the south wall is a copy of the sculpture in the Washington National Cathedral Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

*CHANCEL STEPS* (walk back through the organ alcove, turning right to the center aisle)

- The Communion Rail was installed in 1897, beyond the choir in the chancel and served to separate the choir from the sanctuary. It was a memorial to Lily VanRensselair Grubb, wife of a Civil War general. During the renovations of 1995 it was moved to the present location and expanded, adding the two sides. The Communion Platform, including the expanded Communion Rail, the decorative tile and the marble steps, is a memorial to Marianne Jacobs Hayward (d. 1991). The Communion Rail was further adapted and refinished in April 1999 to receive the needlework cushions. This work was given in memory of Mary Prescott (d. 1998).



- The needlework kneeling cushions, completed in 1999, were designed by Divine Designs, Indianapolis and stitched by members and friends of the parish. Each features the vine and wheat motif of the Eucharist. Individual cushions bear symbols of the heritage and faith of the parish, beginning from right to left: The Holy Spirit Dove, the Shield of the Carlisle Cathedral in England, the Episcopal Church Shield, the Fleur-de-lis (symbol of Mary), the Canterbury Cross, the Alpha and Omega symbol, the Agnes Dei (Lamb of God center cushion), the Chi Rho symbol, the Celtic Cross, the Hand of God symbol (All Saints), the Jerusalem Cross, the Anglican Communion Compass Rose, and the St. John's Eagle. Each cushion has an individual dedication inscription on the bottom of the cushion.



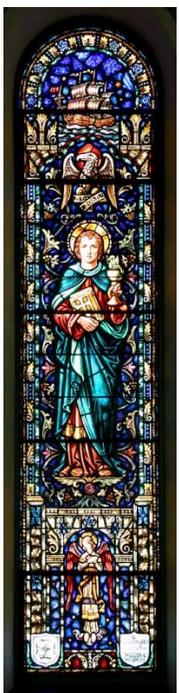
- The Lectern, located on the right side of the choir step, holds the parish Bible. The Lectern is made of brass, a memorial in 1895 to Francis Elliott of the same family remembered in the Good Shepherd window. Among the official Bibles of the parish is a large King James Bible given by the children who attended the Carlisle Indian School in 1893. That Bible is on display in the Cloister. The present New Revised Version of the Bible is a memorial to all members of the congregation who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States.

- The Pulpit in the northeast corner of the nave (left of the Communion Rail) was presented to the parish in 1907 as a memorial to Edward D. Biddle, adjutant General of Pennsylvania during the Civil War and his wife, Julianna Watts Biddle. A new wooden base and short stair case were added to the brass pulpit during the construction of 1995, a gift of James and Wilma Prescott. The brass pulpit features the shields of the four Evangelist, with the eagle of St. John facing the Communion Rail.



*NORTH AISLE* (turn left)

- The first window is also the newest, installed in the early 1950s. The window depicts the Archangel Michael in knight's armor prepared to do battle with the serpent, symbol of evil. The window was inspired by a similar representation of St. Michael at the Mercersburg Academy Chapel. It is a memorial to Valeria Merchant Penrose. This is one of two windows designed by Dean Hankinson of Carlisle.
- Stations of the Cross 1-7 are mounted on the north aisle wall. These first seven stations are a memorial to the Rev. Canon John Hilton, 16<sup>th</sup> Rector of the parish.
- The next window honors All Saints. A gift of the Jacobs family the window depicts thirteen saints, representing the church from biblical to medieval ages. In the center panel, from the top are Michael, Helena, and Gregory. On the left are Cecilia, Louis, Anne, Francis and Isidor. On the right are Agnes, Paul, Mary Magdalene, Stephan, and Jerome. This is one of the five Conrad Schmitt windows.
- The St. John's Window stands out as distinct among all the others. The patron saint of the parish is honored with a life-like face, the evangelist holding the Bible in one hand and a chalice with a serpent in the other. According to tradition, John was the only disciple not to be martyred, although he was once given a cup of poison to drink but did not die. (Note also the parish banner next to the pulpit which was painted in 1996 also depicts St. John in this style.) In the upper part of the window a sailing ship represents the gospel brought to these shores. The window is a memorial to William Woodward, and was installed by the Hankinson Studio in the early 1950s.



- The last window on the north aisle remembers the two great founding apostles, Saints Peter and Paul. Peter, on the right, holds the “Keys to the Kingdom” while Paul, on the left bears the sword of the Word. A gift of the Harman family, this window was created by the Conrad Schmitt Studio.



### *CENTER NAVE AISLE*

- The present pews were installed in 1964 with the exception of the first row added in 1995. Each features an inlaid carved plate decorating the end at the center aisle. Among the designs are the Transfiguration of Christ, the Rising Sun, the Empty Tomb, and Magi following the star, the Holy Spirit dove, and the profile of three races (the brotherhood of man).
- The overhead hanging lights were installed in the early 1960s as a memorial to Anne Hilton, daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. John Hilton. Anne was tragically killed in a car accident while a student at Dickinson College.

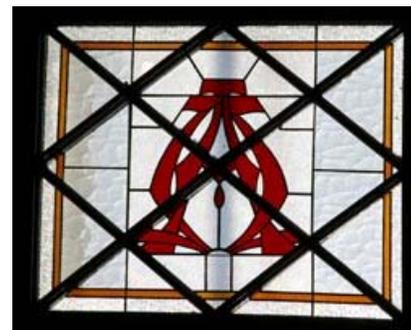


- The decorative tile in the aisle and on the Communion platform was imported in 1995 from the English company that supplied the tile in the narthex and choir area at the turn of the century. The pattern varies in complexity, with the most elaborate design around the font and on the platform. The rest of the nave floor is done in a complimentary American tile.

### *THE CHANCEL (THE CHOIR AND SANCTUARY)*

- The original church built in 1826 was rectangular in shape, a popular characteristic of Federalist architecture. In 1861 the Chancel was added to accommodate a choir and enhance the first stone altar (now incorporated in the Chapel altar). The original altar or “holy table” was wooden and has been lost to the parish. The entrance arch is in the rounded, Norman pattern, repeated in the other arches and windows of the building. Highly detailed, the arch is wooden.
- The choir stalls, facing inward, provide about 26 seats for choristers. The parish maintained a Men and Boys Choir for many years, and now features two choirs, the Adult Choir and the Men and Youth Choir. The stalls match the nave pews and are a memorial to William Kramer, and his wife, Grace Wood Kramer.

- The Sky Lights overhead in the Choir are the work of Roy Atkinson, former Junior Warden. They were fashioned and installed as part of the 1995 Renovation and are a memorial to Stephen Jusick. The left (north) skylight features the Chi Rho symbol, a common symbol for Christ which superimposes the first two Greek letters of the word “Christos”. The right (south) skylight takes as its theme the Alpha and Omega symbol, using the first and last Greek letters of the alphabet superimposed to represent “Christ, the beginning and the end”. Both symbols are found on the front of the High Altar.
- The decorative panels which form borders overhead in the ceiling of the Chancel were installed in the 1995 Renovation. Designed by Terry Eason of Chapel Hill, North Carolina (the design consultant for all of the 1995 work), the panels carry forth the red and blue colors and include stylized Greek crosses. Both these panels and the simpler ones in the nave ceiling were painted by members of the congregation and then installed in the ceiling.



*SANTUARY* (the Altar area)

- The center focus of the liturgical life of the church and of the church building is the altar. The Weitzel Memorial Altar was given by members of his family in 1986 to honor the 17<sup>th</sup> Rector of the parish. After several years of use in the Chapel and as a side altar, it became the main church altar in 1995. It is made of oak, but normally vested with full Laudian frontals.
- On the south (right) wall of the Sanctuary is the clergy Sedilia. It provides three seats for the clergy presiding at the Eucharist and is a memorial to the rectors of the parish. The three blue seat cushions depict the various parish church buildings over our history and were created as part of the parish 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2002.
- Next to the Sedilia and two steps up is the Credence Table. Both the Credence Table and the Bishop’s Chair (opposite on the other side of the Sanctuary) have high canopies of distinctive dark wood. Both were originally installed in the 1861 Choir and moved in 1896 to their present locations. The Credence Table holds the sacred vessels.
- The High Altar on the east wall was installed in 1897 as a memorial to Mary Veazy Parker Moore, the greatest patron of the parish in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



Mrs. Moore was the great granddaughter of The Rev. William Thomson, the second missionary vicar, 1760-68. Many of the fine appointments, including the brass Sanctuary Lamb which hangs over the altar and the Ambrey on the north wall of the Sanctuary, and a number of the chalices and communion vessels. The High Altar is eight feet in length and made of Italian white marble. The front piece includes beautiful inlay of stones and gold lay.

- The Reredos on the east wall behind the altar was also a key feature of the 1896 expansion. Executed in Cain Stone (France), the center panel over the altar depicts the Crucifixion. It was chosen as a theme to feature St. Mary (left) and St. John, the Beloved Disciple (right), patron of the parish. The pointed arches at the top of the



Reredos echo the pointed arches of the steeple tower.



- The stained glass window above the altar on the east wall (direction of Jerusalem and the rising sun and traditional direction for church buildings) presents Christ speaking words of comfort from St. John's gospel (John 14:19), "Because I live, ye shall live also." In the Victorian style of the turn of the century, Jesus is depicted without a beard, but with hand held out in the act of blessing. This window was restored in 2005 as a memorial to

former Associate Rector, the Rev. Canon John R. Norman. The smaller east wall windows are companions to the larger window, each featuring an angel, on the left with incense and on the right with a trumpet. The restoration of these windows, also in 2005, was made possible by William and Seymour Ewing.

- On the left side (north) of the Sanctuary the official Bishop's Chair is mounted into the wall. Although this church is not the official church of the diocesan bishop of Central Pennsylvania, a "cathedra" or Bishop's Chair is reserved for the bishop when he is in attendance. A bishop's mite or pointed hat rests on the very top of the canopy and the symbols of authority, the shepherd's staff and the apostolic keys decorate the interior panel.

