

Trinity Anglican Church, Saint John NB

General History and Information:

In 1783, approximately 3000 Loyalist refugees fled to the small settlement of Saint John. Making up the first congregation in the city, they first worshipped in the building that served as the court and seat of government. Soon after they established a rough wooden church just down Germain Street, and moved to the present location in 1791. Bishop Charles Inglis, the first North American Anglican Bishop consecrated the church. There is a plaque dedicated to him at Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York, where Inglis had been Rector. Many of the refugees had been his parishioners there. The first church burned in the Great Fire of 1877, and the present structure was built in 1880.

Exterior:

The architectural style of the church is known as “Late Early English Gothic” and emulates the medieval cathedrals of England. The rationale behind the ornate construction of the entire building can be traced to the inscription on the doors of St. Denis, the first fully Gothic building, near Paris:

*The noble work is bright, but, being nobly bright,
the work should brighten our minds,
Allowing them to travel through the lights to the true Light,
Where Christ is the true Door.
The dull mind rises to the truth through material things,
And is resurrected from its former submersion when the Light is seen.*

–Abbot Suger, 12th century.

As humans, we are sensual beings. Thus, the construction of this church and those it emulates attempts to focus one’s mind on beautiful material things, which nevertheless direct the senses onward to divine beauty and holiness of body, mind and spirit.

The *Clock Tower* contains twelve bells which ring every fifteen minutes. They can be played by means of a mechanism which is controlled by a small keyboard. Atop the tower is the weathervane in the shape of a fish - a salmon. The fish is one of the first Christian symbols and the salmon was very important to the early settlers at the mouth of the Saint John River. For many years the fish was an important navigational reference for local sailors.

Entryway or Vestibule:

1a. Columbarium and Candle Rack

To be found in the *Nave*:

1. *Coat of Arms*:

The Coat of Arms was made in 1714. It was removed from the Boston State House in 1776 because it was feared that it would be defaced by the Revolutionaries after the British retreated. Brought first to Halifax by Harvard graduate Edward Winslow, it was eventually sent to Mr. Winslow's friend Ward Chipman in Saint John with instructions that it be bestowed upon a public building in 1785. Winslow's letter accompanying the piece may be found in the hallway. It states that the Royal Lion and Unicorn suffered as much as any Loyalist and were entitled to safe harbour in New Brunswick. The city of Boston requested to borrow the Coat of Arms for the American bicentennial in 1976. A story has it that the Church Wardens responded with a polite letter stating that they would be happy to lend it, provided that all property confiscated from the Loyalists be returned to their heirs and successors, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts return to obedience to their lawful monarch.

2. *Bust of Queen Victoria*: Given to Trinity upon Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee, celebrating the 50th year of her reign.

3. *Royal Canadian Air Force Memorial*:

The book here contains the names of some 18,000 RCAF personnel killed in 20th century conflicts, including both World Wars and the Korean War. A page is turned each day.

4. *Back Window*:

This depicts the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ as described in Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-8 and Luke 9:28-36. It complements the depiction of Christ's Ascension at the centre of the East Window.

5. *Pew Numbers*:

These remain from a time when one could rent a pew for a fee. This practice no longer exists.

6. *Ceiling*:

Made of Black Ash, the ceiling resembles the inverted hull of a ship, as does that in the Saint John City Market. It was constructed by local shipwrights. This is interesting, as the main part of a church is known as the *Nave*, from the Latin for ship.

7. *Pillars and Arches*:

These are constructed of local granite and sandstone, respectively. There are thirteen, one for each of the apostles, Christ' 'inner circle'. There were twelve originally. Eleven remained after Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus. Each of these eleven original faithful apostles has his own arch, and appears in a stained glass window that is framed by the arch. St. Matthias and St. Paul are outside the number of the original faithful eleven. They came later. For that reason their windows are not framed by arches. They can be found near the back, on either side of the west entrance.

8. *Windows depicting the Apostles*

9. *All Saints' Chapel*

10. *Lectern:*

The lectern, in the shape of an eagle, was made by Messrs Cox and Sons in London, England. It is from here that the Holy Scriptures are read. It is partially of brass. It rests upon four lions, symbolizing Christ. The eagle (the symbol of John the Evangelist) rests upon an orb, symbolizing the spreading of the Gospel throughout the world. In the ancient world the eagle was thought to be the only animal capable of gazing into the sun without blinking. John's Gospel, more theological than the other three, can be said to look into the deep things of God, who is often symbolized by the sun. Thus John's symbol is the eagle. One may also notice that he is the only person in the centre panel of the altarpiece who is looking directly at Christ. Incorporated into the bottom of the lectern are the symbolic animals of the other Gospel writers: the Man (St. Matthew), the Lion (St. Mark), and the Ox (St. Luke). The lectern swivels to accommodate the reader.

11. *Pulpit:*

From here the sermon is preached (the priest or preacher addresses the congregation and interprets the parts of the Bible which have been read from the lectern). The pulpit is made of Ohio freestone (sandstone). It is original to the building and weighs three tons, being supported by iron girders in the basement.

The Baptistry

12. *Baptismal Font and surrounding carpet:*

The Baptistry is located by the door to symbolize the fact that the sacrament of Holy Baptism represents our entry into the Church, which is not just a building, but the living body of all Christians. The cover of the font is removed for baptisms. The carpet surrounding the font is indicative of the carpet once covering the sanctuary. A plaque explaining this hangs near the door.

The Chancel:

13. *Rood Screen*: Separating the nave and the chancel, this construction was installed in 1912 and is yet another feature of the church which is reminiscent of medieval Gothic architecture. The lower portion is richly carved with images that tell the story of Christ's Passion.

14. *Choir Stalls*

15. *Mosaic Floor*:

This floor is made of bone china, just as tea cups are. The pieces were imported from the Minton and Hollis Company in England and installed in 1908. This is a rare treasure in **Canada, though there are other examples of Minton Floors in Saint John.**

16. *Organ and Organ Pipes*:

The organ pipes you see in the church are no longer functional. They are left over from a Casavant organ installed in 1882. After this organ apparently "fell apart" during a funeral service in 1974 it was sold to St. Dunstan's Basilica in Prince Edward Island, where it was restored, though recently replaced. It was replaced by an Allen electric organ which plays faithfully, though it is in the late autumn years of its useful life.

The Sanctuary:

17. *Altar Rail and Carpet*:

In recent years, the carpet in the Chancel was replaced with the red carpet seen today. Additional information on the old carpet can be found in the Baptistry. The new carpet is purported to be a remnant left over when the Senate Chambers in Ottawa were carpeted and was donated to Trinity by parishioner Senator C. V. Emerson. It is said that the original reason for the installation of communion rails in the Middle Ages was not for a kneeling aid for those about to receive, but to prevent dogs from urinating on the altar.

18. *Flags*:

The oldest set of flags is closest to the Rood screen at approximately 150 years old. These belonged to the Royal Saint John Fusiliers, a local rifle company in the mid-late 19th century and laid up in the church in 1901. The next two sets belong to the Royal 115th and 104th Canadian Expeditionary Battalions. The colours of these local infantry units saw service in World War One and were placed in the church in 1921. The closest flags to the East Window are not a set. The one on the right dates to 1899 and was issued to a company which fought alongside the British in South Africa. The left hand flag is a replica and belongs to the 26th Canadian Expeditionary Battalion.

19. The Altar and Reredos

20. The East Window

Please refer to the supplementary information sheet interpreting the stained glass and Reredos. It is found with the display showing details of the East Window.

For more information of Christian Symbols found in the Church, please ask our tour guides or request to borrow our small book on Christian symbols. Another book is available which gives information on Trinity's various plaques and memorials.

Trinity Church appreciates your visit. Donations are very much appreciated and go to help the church's operation costs, including numerous projects involving charitable outreach to the poor of Saint John. A full worship schedule is maintained here, including the Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, Sunday and mid-week Eucharist services, as well as Compline. All are always welcome in this place.

Come, rest and pray in the Church of the Loyalists.