

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

When you step into our church building you must completely re-orient your compass. The main door is known as the west door. Traditionally Christians worshipped facing the rising sun to celebrate the risen life of Christ, and then left through the west door to serve Christ in the world. The "east" wall is, therefore, the focal point of our building and there you will find the Altar or Holy Table. This table serves as the place of meeting to remember Christ's death and resurrection. Here we share in our worship a oneness in Christ as we participate in the Holy Eucharist. Here we are reminded of God's love for us in the gift of forgiveness, and of his continuing presence among us.

Behind the Holy Table is a screen, called the *revelos*, and on this screen are three decorative monograms, each depicting Christ: Alpha and Omega - the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, symbolizing Christ, the beginning and the end; IHS - the first three letters of the name Jesus in Greek, Chi-Rho - the first two letters of the name Christ in Greek.

Between the table and the Holy table is a small ledge, called the *retzble*. On the retable is a cross which serves as the visible focal point of the sanctuary area. Notice the lamb bearing the victory flag in the center, reminding us that Christ, the Lamb of God, is our victory over sin and death. On each side of the cross there are flowers. Generally the flowers are in a color appropriate to the liturgical calendar and serve to remind us of the new life in the Resurrection. Candles complete the furnishings on the retable. The sevenfold candelabra is a traditional ornament and reminds us of the many references to "seven" in the scripture.

On each side of the Altar there is a place for the Word of God - the Lectern, where the Word is read, and the Pulpit, where the Word is proclaimed. Thus, we see our Christian lives sustained by both Word and Sacrament.

The shape of our building is in the form of a cross, reminding us that we are kept in Christ - "baptized into

his death". The architectural style is Gothic and reminds us that man reaches up to God, offering Him the best he can. The main body of the church is known as the Nave, from the Latin, *navis*, meaning ship, where the assembled church is thought of as being on a great voyage for Christ. From the Nave we move into the Chancel, where the choir leads in the liturgy of the church. The Bishop's throne is in the Chancel, reminding us that we are part of the universal church and as chief pastor, the Bishop is given special recognition when he visits us. The area behind the Communion Rail is known as the Sanctuary.

The whole building is enhanced by stained-glass windows depicting various biblical themes. Notice especially the four Tiffany windows and the unique techniques involved in their production. The total effect is to encourage reverence and awe as one responds to the gracious love of God in praise and thanksgiving.

HISTORICAL NOTES

The first public church service according to the Rite of the Book of Common Prayer was held sometime before the founding of Trinity Parish. It is "Prayer-book" worship that unites people of the Episcopal Church with Christians of many lands who share in this common Anglican heritage. It represents an order of worship that is both Catholic and Protestant. It is Catholic in so far as it traces its continuity of doctrine and order back to the Apostolic Age, and it is Protestant in so far as it places its theology under the scrutiny of Scripture.

But "Prayer-book" worship was unfamiliar to many at this first service. It was not until June 21, 1832, that Articles of Association were drawn up for Trinity Church, Clarksville, to become a Parochial member of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America.

At first the services were held in the old Masonic Temple by visiting clergy only. But within the first year the Parish appointed their first Rector, and on September 11, 1834, foundations were laid for the first building which