

Albany's Historic Churches

by Elissa Ebersold

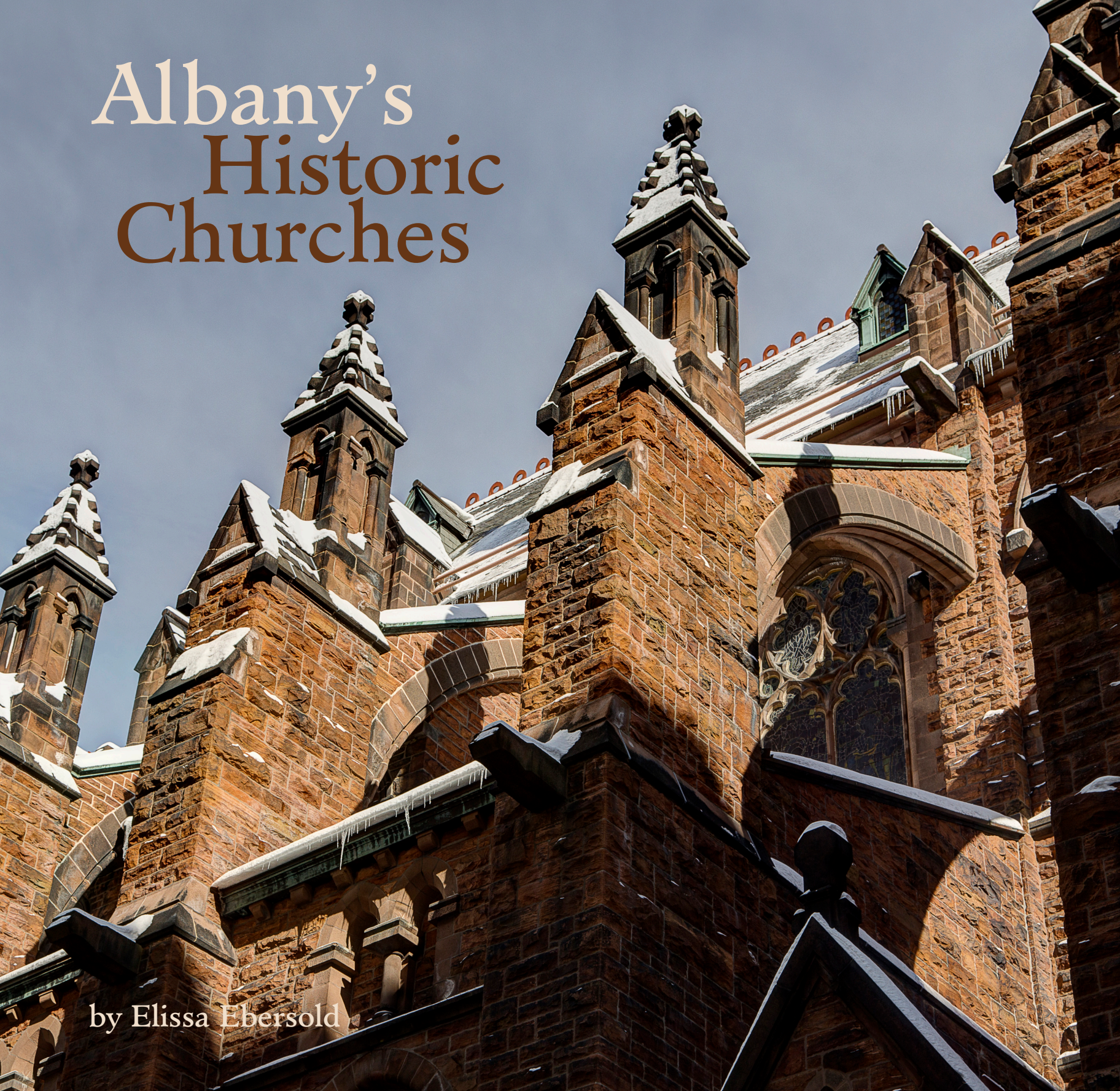


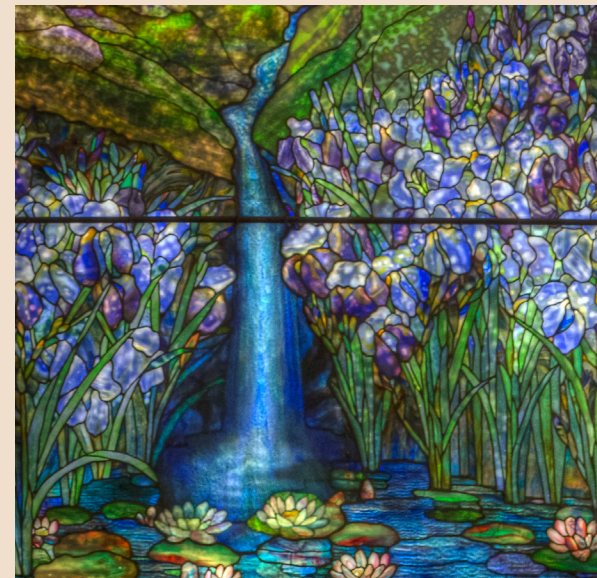
Table of Contents

- 4** First Church in Albany
- 6** Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
- 8** Saint Peter's Episcopal
- 10** Saint Joseph's
- 12** Westminster Presbyterian
- 14** Emmanuel Baptist
- 16** Saint Mary's
- 18** First Presbyterian
- 20** Beth Emeth/Wilborn Temple
- 22** Cathedral of All Saints
- 24** Trinity Church

Cover: Cathedral of All Saints
Inside: Emmanuel Baptist
Back: Saint Joseph's
Photography by Elissa Ebersold



First Church in Albany



Denomination: Dutch Dominant

Year: 1796

Style: Romanesque Revival

Architect: Phillip Hooker

The pulpit in First Church is the oldest in the United States. It was imported from Holland in 1656.

Since Albany was founded by the Dutch, who were the pioneer slave traders to the New World, the balcony in the sanctuary was intended for slaves.

When facing the back of the sanctuary, the third pew on the right of the center aisle was occupied by Theodore Roosevelt and his family while he was Governor of New York.

The Sumner Window was commissioned of Tiffany in 1912 by Emily Sumner. The present window has had the border removed and is 35 square feet. The original was 75 square feet.

The lectern to the right of the pulpit was also designed by Tiffany.

The weathervane is a rooster, the traditional symbol of Reformed churches. It is a replica of the brass original, which is preserved in glass to protect it from further corrosion from the environment.



110 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12207
For more information: www.firstchurchinalbany.org



Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Denomination: Roman Catholic

Year: 1852

Style: Gothic Revival

Architect: Patrick Charles Keely



The north tower was not completed until 1862; the south tower spire was not added until 1888. The north tower contains a clock made by John Thwaite in 1801 and was originally located in First Church in Albany.

The cathedral was built with \$250,000 (\$6.5 million in today's money).

The choir stalls feature the only gargoyles in the building.

The fourteen monumental Stations of the Cross are crafted in the Beaux Arts style. They were installed in 1900. The Stations of the Cross won the gold medal at the Paris Arts Exhibition in 1888.

The pulpit was given as a gift in 1902. It is made of quartered oak and is the handiwork of Stolzenberg of Holland.

Six bishops of the Albany Diocese are buried in the crypt beneath the cathedral.

The organ is inoperable due to micro-particles and dust from the construction of the Empire State Plaza.

125 Eagle Street, Albany, NY 12202
For more information: www.cathedralic.com



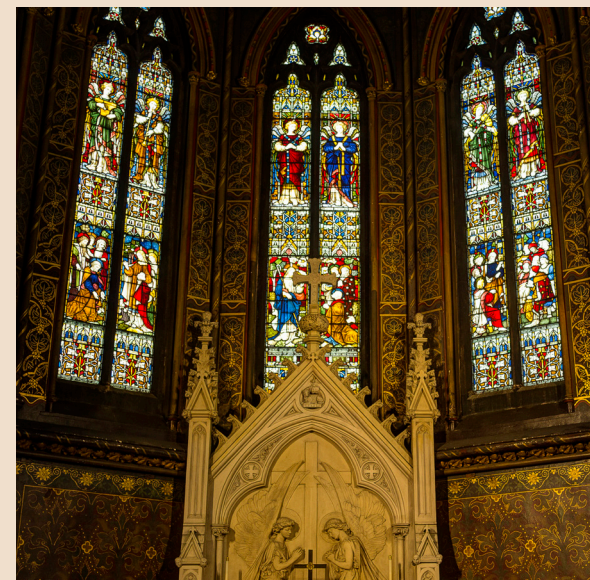
Saint Peter's Episcopal

Denomination: Episcopalian

Year: 1859

Style: Gothic Revival

Architect: Richard Upjohn



The flags lining the sanctuary are those of the original thirteen colonies, and other flags relevant to the church's history.

The tower, also designed by Upjohn, was added in 1876. A parish house was built behind the church at the same time.

Its hammerbeam ceilings are patterned after medieval English churches whose ceilings look like the hull of a ship.

The stained glass windows are by Heaton, Butler and Payne (Boston), Clayton and Bell (London), Edmondson (Manchester), and William Morris (London). Most notably, the Rose window was done by Tiffany in New York City. The William Morris and Edward Burne Jones Window (Window 11 in the south aisle) is pre-Raphaelite in style as opposed to gothic revival like the other windows of the building.

The tower holds an eleven-bell chime made by the Meneely Bell Company of Troy. The Old Bell, which swung in the first Saint Peter's steeple, only rings as it brings in the New Year.



107 State Street, Albany, NY 12207

For more information: www.stpeterschurchalbany.org



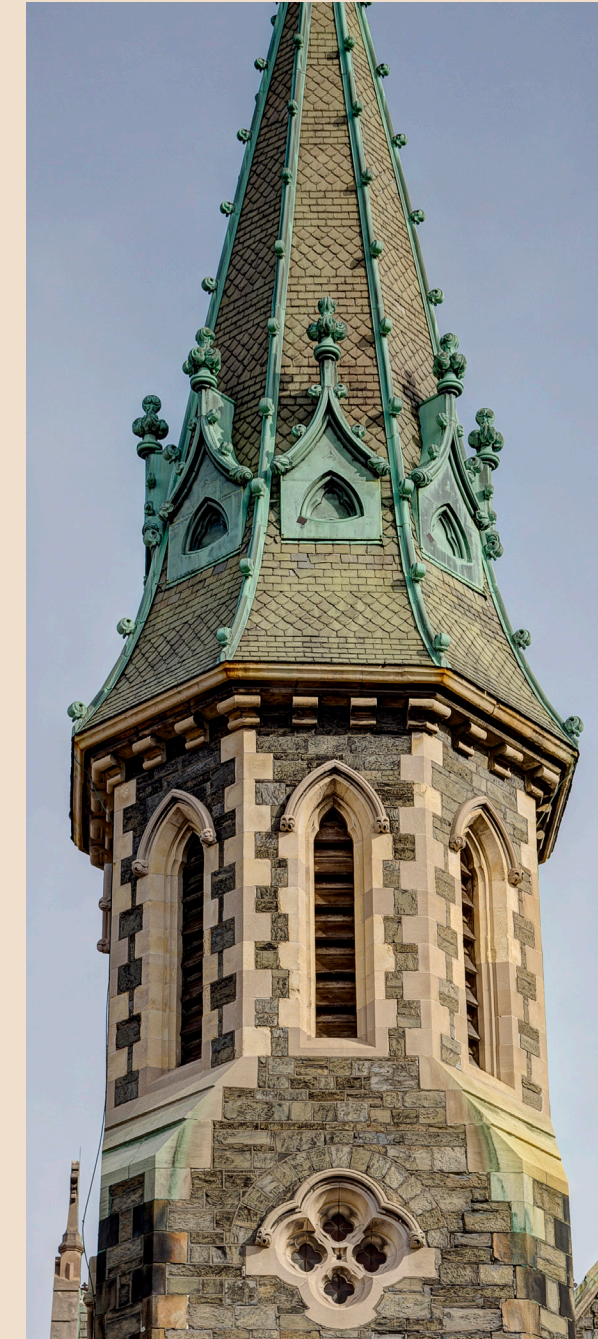
Saint Joseph's

Denomination: Roman Catholic, Unoccupied

Year: 1860

Style: Gothic Revival

Architect: Patrick Charles Keely



The exterior walls are bluestone from the Hudson highlands.

The spire was not completed until 1906. The dormers on the spire, not characteristic of traditional gothic spires, was a later architect's contribution since they did not appear on Keely's original lithograph.

Its last service was held in 1993.

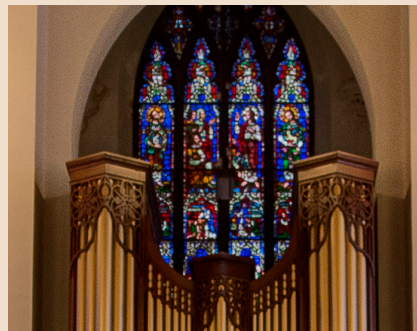
The building was saved from demolition and acquired by the Historic Albany Foundation in 2003.

In 1906, a ten-bell chime was installed. The bourbon, or Great Bell, was the largest ever cast by the Meneely Bell Company of Troy. It weighed 3600 pounds out of the aggregate 13,000 pounds.

The interior has hammer beam ceilings that are lined with 30 life-size angel carvings.

The building is currently vacant and deteriorating. Its future as a local landmark is uncertain.

Ten Broeck Street & Second Street, Albany, NY 12210
For more information: www.historic-albany.org/stjosephs.html



Westminster Presbyterian



Denomination: Presbyterian

Year: 1862, rebuilt in 1928 after fire

Style: Gothic Revival

Architect: Unknown

The church was built in 1862, but severely damaged by a fire in 1928. It was rebuilt and reopened on Palm Sunday in 1930.

The church organ is a Skinner Opus 780 that was installed in 1929 after the fire had destroyed the original 1860 Johnson organ. Skinner is considered by many to be the finest pipe organ builder in America. In 1976, the Skinner was replaced with an electric organ when the church could not fund repairs, and the Skinner was moved to the nearby residence of Dr. Thomas and Anne Older, where it was preserved. When the church's electronic organ began to fail in the 1990s, the Olders returned the Skinner back to the church.

The bell, from Meneely Bell Works of Troy, weighs 3200 pounds. It bears the inscription, "State Street, July 4, 1862. 'Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound. Psalm 89:15'." At noon in 1979, the bell was tolled 50 times inviting anyone to the sanctuary to pray for the safe return of the American Hostages being held captive in Iran.



262 State Street, Albany, NY 12210
For more information: www.wpcalbany.org/



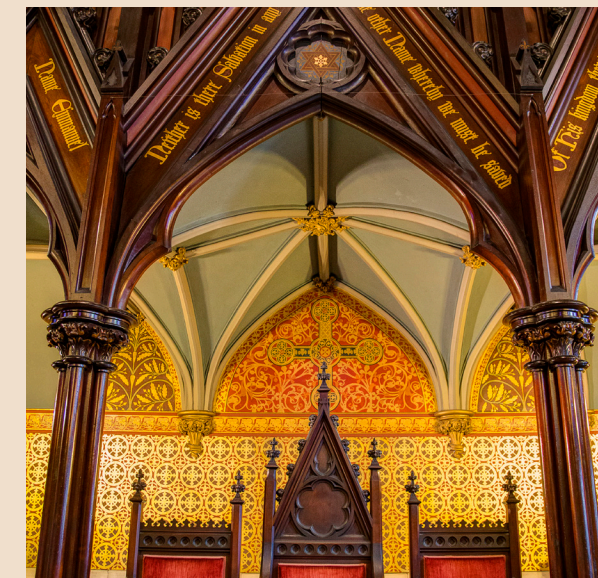
Emmanuel Baptist

Denomination: Baptist

Year: 1870

Style: Gothic Revival

Architect: Unknown



The church tower was erected in 1883, thirteen years after the church was built.

In 1926, Calvary Church united with Emmanuel after a fire destroyed their building on State Street.

In 1886, the interior was refrescoed and recarpeted. The pink, green, and yellow color scheme is original.

The exterior is constructed from Onodaga limestone, and cost about \$200,000. There was a generous response and the greater part of the expense was paid for by the congregation before it moved from its previous location.

In the 1960s, the original stained glass windows were replaced by ones with more modern, geometric designs because the original ones had decayed.

The pulpit that is situated in the front of the baptistry can be lowered in order to give members of the congregation an uninterrupted view of baptisms.



275 State Street, Albany, NY 12210
For more information: www.emmanuelalbany.net



Saint Mary's

Denomination: Roman Catholic

Year: 1870

Style: Romanesque Revival/Neo-Baroque

Architect: Charles Nichols

While the outside is Romanesque, the interior is neo-baroque in nature.

It was the first church in Albany to have electric lighting.

The building was knocked down two times prior and then rebuilt in the same location.

The stained glass windows are nineteenth century and are inconsistent with the neo-baroque decoration.

The balcony is a feature of Victorian churches of all faiths. Were it not for the extensive neo-baroque decoration, the building would have been a typical Victorian-American church. Additionally, the building is rectangular, not a latin cross.

It cost \$100,000 to build.



10 Lodge Street, Albany, NY 12207
For more information: www.hist-stmarys.org

First Presbyterian

Denomination: Presbyterian

Year: 1883

Style: Romanesque Revival

Architect: William Cady

The windows installed presently are not the original windows. Early photographs show that the original windows were of a more geometric design.

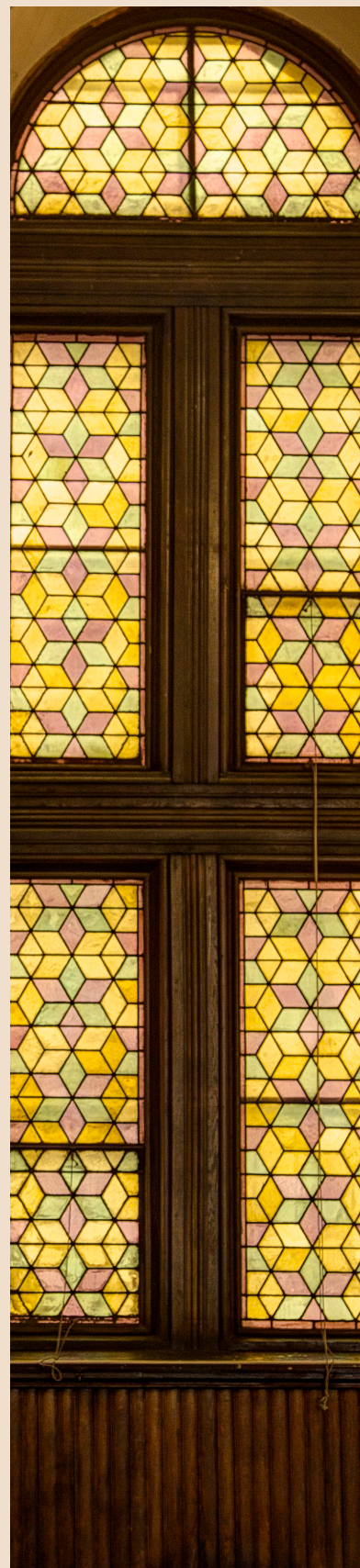
The sanctuary has two Tiffany Windows, and three in the adjoining assembly room.

According to Tiffany workers, when the windows left the studios in 1915, the workers were said to have commented that they were the finest stained glass nature windows that Tiffany ever designed.

In the 1930s, there was a full set of organ pipes that ran along the south wall inside the chancel. The reredos screen is presently in this location.

The windows facing Willet street were done by the Lamb Studio. Lamb's windows each held a different scene, while the large Tiffany Window was designed as one scene that Tiffany fit into all the openings. This created a brilliant fully-integrated tableau.





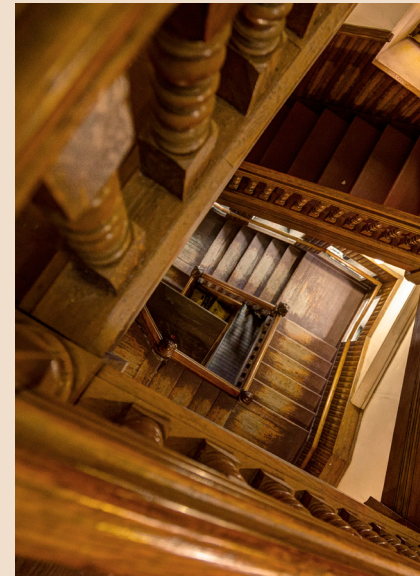
Beth Emeth/Wilborn Temple

Denomination: Reform Judaism/Pentacostal

Year: 1887

Style: Romanesque Revival

Architect: Adolph Fleischman & Issac Perry



While Adolph Fleischman, a member of the Beth Emeth congregation was selected as the architect of the new building, Issac G. Perry acted as a consultant. He was an architect and superintendent of the New York State Capitol which was under construction at the time.

The total cost of construction was estimated at about \$145,000.

Built in Richardson Romanesque, which is the style of New York architect Henry Hobson Richardson, whose designs were used for Albany City Hall, Boston's Trinity Episcopal Church, and the Marshall Field Wholesale Store in Chicago.

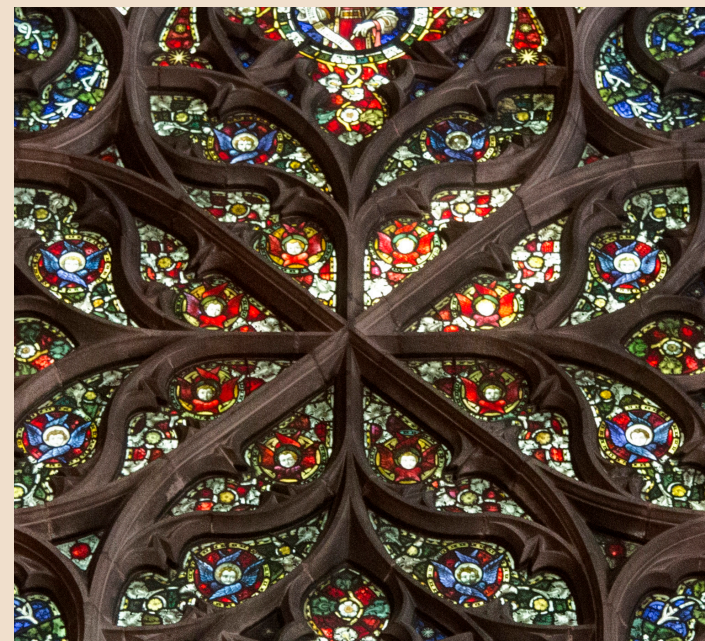
It is one of the few surviving 19th century synagogues in the United States.

It was acquired by Wilborn Temple, First Church of God in Christ in 1957.



121 Jay Street, Albany, NY 12210
For more information: www.bethemethalbany.org/

Cathedral of All Saints



Denomination: Episcopal

Year: 1888

Style: Gothic Revival

Architect: Robert W. Gibson

All of the leaded stained glass windows of the choir clerestory, choir side aisles, and great east window were designed and fabricated by Clayton and Bell of London, England. They were one of the leading glass designers of the time.

The Cathedral of All Saints has one of the finest collections of Clayton and Bell's stained glass windows, since much of their work was lost during the London Bombings in World War 2.

The wooden clergy stalls, carved in 1655, were acquired from a demolished church that once stood in Bruges, Belgium.

Gibson's competitor in the design competition was Henry Hobson Richardson, whose designs were used for Albany City Hall, Boston's Trinity Episcopal Church, and the Marshall Field Wholesale Store in Chicago.

The Cathedral of All Saints is the 5th largest traditional church in the country, and 29th in the world.

62 South Swan Street, Albany, NY 12210
For more information: www.thecathedralofallsaints.org



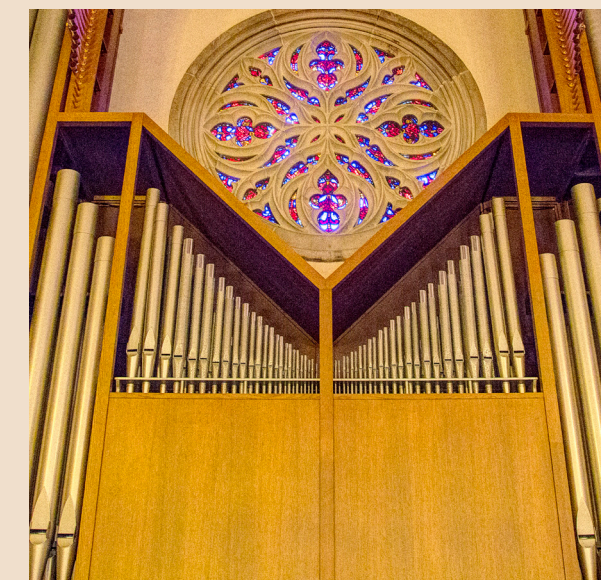
Trinity Church

Denomination: Protestant Methodist

Year: 1932

Style: Gothic Revival/Art Deco

Architect: Unknown



Although its roots are English Gothic, there are unmistakable art deco motifs throughout the building. Examples of art deco can be found on the altar and the choir stalls.

The stained glass windows depict both Biblical times and modern times. There is even a panel that has a football player.

The organ was made by MP Moller Organ Company. It is an example of the "romantic organ." While the majority of the pipe work is from the original 1933 installation, the organ was completely rebuilt in 1974 when it was subjected to damage from a leaking roof.

Some of the pews are decorated with menorahs, a tribute to the kindness put forth by Beth Emeth after the second Trinity Church was destroyed by fire in 1931, and Westminster was also destroyed by in 1928.

The narthex screen is designed in antique glass with a heavy leaded effect. Leaders in Christian arts and sciences are silhouetted in lead in these panels. Some figures include Shakespeare, Bach, DeVinci, and Edison.



235 Lark Street, Albany, NY 12210
For more information: www.trinityalbany.org



Text from the 1986 book *Historic Albany: Its Churches and Synagogues* by Anne Roberts & Marsha Cockwrell, and from literature courteously provided by the churches featured in this book.