

A HISTORY OF TRINITY

Modest and Faithful Beginnings

Early pioneers who founded Excelsior in 1853 also founded Trinity Church, which began in homes and in 1855 moved to a log church on St. Alban's Bay on Lake Minnetonka. In 1861, the congregation's decision to build a new church was hampered by the burning of St. Alban's sawmill and the Civil War. But conditions across the bay in Excelsior were brighter and construction began on a new chapel in Excelsior in 1862. Bishop Whipple, the first Bishop of Minnesota, consecrated Trinity Church on Ascension Day in 1864.

The little mission parish had good and bad times throughout the 1800s, but by the turn of the century, a new parish hall was added and the church had become a major part of Excelsior village life. It still had mission status, however, meaning that it was dependent upon the diocese for support.

In 1940, after relying on the diocese for nearly 80 years, Trinity became an independent parish and a full-fledged member of the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota. In 1949, the Chapel was expanded to meet the needs of the growing parish. A new and larger sanctuary was consecrated in 1970 but the historic Chapel has remained an important part of the parish; it is the only original church building standing in Excelsior and the oldest Episcopal Church in Minnesota still in use.

In 1998, a large portion of the existing building was demolished and rebuilt. Chamberlin Hall, named after Trinity's founding priest, replaced the 1926 parish hall. A new kitchen, library, office spaces, vesting area, elevator, and atrium area were included in this remodel. In 2006–2007, the main sanctuary and narthex areas were completely remodeled and refurnished, including a new baptismal font and altar. In 2011, Trinitarians celebrated the sound of a new Hendrickson pipe organ, the finishing touch to its sanctuary redesign.

Throughout the years, parishioners of all ages have not only contributed to the life of the parish but also have been active leaders in the community and in the greater Episcopal Church of Minnesota.

So Much More Than a Building

At Trinity we understand our building to be a beautiful and life-giving resource that supports our parish community. But Trinity Church and its history is so much more than a building. What is important is not so much the rooms and spaces themselves but what happens, and has happened, for more than 160 years within those spaces: inspired preaching, meaningful worship, celebration and hilarity, mourning and grief, relationships, growing children, and deepened faith. Within these walls, for 16 decades, Trinitarians have dreamed, discussed, and planned how to reach beyond the walls to serve the needs of the community. Trinity values its hard-won reputation as a congregation with a big heart and its long-term investment in refugee re-settlement, advocacy for immigrants, food security, mental health, anti-racism, and justice for indigenous people and their communities.



322 Second St. Excelsior, MN 55331

Office: 952.474.5263