

= Christ Episcopal Church (Waltham , Massachusetts) =

Christ Church is a historic Episcopal church at 750 Main Street in Waltham , Massachusetts . The church is a parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts , and was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1989 .

The church was founded in 1848 , but a local hall was used for services until a wooden church was built in 1849 . The wooden structure eventually proved inadequate and a larger church designed by Peabody and Stearns was built of local fieldstone at the current location between 1897 and 1898 .

The church contains stained glass windows produced by several noteworthy manufacturers , including Clayton and Bell , Charles Connick , Louis Comfort Tiffany , and Donald MacDonald . Eight rectors have served the church since its founding .

= = History = =

The community of Christ Church was founded in 1848 by Albert C. Patterson , an Episcopal clergyman and missionary who identified the growing industrial city of Waltham as an ideal place to build a church . The new Episcopal community met in Rumford Hall (later Waltham City Hall) until a Gothic wooden church was completed on Central Street in Waltham in 1849 . The land for the church and much of its funding was provided by founding member J.S. Copley Greene .

Christ Church 's first rector was the Rev. Thomas F. Fales , from St. Paul 's Episcopal Church in Brunswick , Maine . Fales remained the church 's rector for more than 40 years , until retiring in 1890 . During this time , Christ Church 's membership grew from 15 members to more than 400 .

At about the time Fales retired , the church outgrew the Central Street building . In 1892 , the parish bought land with the intent of building a larger church at 750 Main Street . In 1895 , the old church building was sold to a French Canadian Roman Catholic community . Christ Church held services in Waltham 's Maynard Hall until the new building could be completed .

In 1896 , after four years of planning , the architectural firm of Peabody and Stearns was hired to design the new structure and construction began in the early months of 1897 . Philanthropist and Christ Church senior warden Robert Treat Paine , Jr. signed the contract for construction , and financed much of the building with his own fortune . Philanthropist sisters and Christ Church parishioners Harriet Sarah and Mary Sophia Walker also contributed significantly to the funding .

The first service in the completed building was held on June 17 , 1898 . That Sunday , the retired Rev. Fales delivered the church 's inaugural sermon from the wooden pulpit that was his gift to the new building .

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= = Architecture and design = =

Christ Church was designed by Peabody and Stearns , masters of American Shingle style architecture , and was constructed of native Waltham fieldstone in the English Country style . The inspiration for the church 's stone exterior came indirectly from architect H. H. Richardson , who was also a friend and Harvard classmate of Robert Treat Paine , Jr. . When Paine remodeled and expanded his Waltham home in 1883 , it was Richardson who designed the residence that would become Stonehurst , a Shingle style mansion built of glacial stones quarried on site from Paine 's estate . Richardson died in 1886 and played no part in the planning of Christ Church , but it was his Stonehurst design that inspired Robert Treat Paine , Jr. to use the same stones from his property for the exterior of the church .

The church features several stained glass windows of significance . The east window , by Clayton and Bell , was a gift from Robert Treat Paine , Jr. in memory of his wife , Lydia Lyman Paine , who died in 1897 during the construction of the church . At Paine 's request , his wife 's likeness was incorporated into the left panel of the window as a red @-@ clad figure kneeling before Christ . The west window , designed by Charles Connick , pays homage to Waltham 's manufacturing history . In

addition to images of Ruth , Solomon , and Noah ? all industrious figures in the Bible ? the window features rivets , a bicycle wheel , a watch escapement , a Metz car , and other symbols that reference Waltham 's industrial character . Along the south wall is a signed Tiffany window , designed by Tiffany artist Frederick Wilson . The window depicts the Nativity , and was given to the church in 1908 by John H. Storer in memory of Frank Henry Perkins and Mary Ella Perkins . Also along the south wall is a window by noted Boston stained glass artist Donald MacDonald . This work , given in memory of Harriet K. Parmenter , depicts the Easter scene of the risen Christ revealing himself to Mary Magdalene .

= = Rectors = =

Since its founding , eight clergy have been elected by the Christ Church parish to serve as rector :

The Rev. Thomas F. Fales (1849 ? 1890)

The Rev. Herbert Noel Cunningham (1890 ? 1895)

The Rev. Hubert Wetmore Wells (1896 ? 1900)

The Rev. Francis Ellsworth Webster (1901 ? 1930)

The Rev. George O. Ekwall (1930 ? 1960)

The Rev. John S. Kromer (1961 ? 1970)

The Rev. William R. Mawhinney (1971 ? 1999)

The Rev. Sara H. Irwin (2009 ? present)

Note : In the intervening years listed above , a priest @-@ in @-@ charge appointed by the bishop served as the leader of the church .