

**The Interior of**  
**ST. JOHN'S**  
**EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**Salisbury, Connecticut**  
**(203) 435-9290**



## THE INTERIOR OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

### History and Structure

The English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts sponsored the beginning of the Episcopal Church in Salisbury, in the middle of the eighteenth century. Then in 1824 Bishop Brownell consecrated the present building which has been added to over the years. In 1959, the vestibule, or narthex, was built and also the gallery for the organ and choir. It was not until 1970 that the church had to replace some of the weakening structure. The Gothic arch over the nave had been built by men who knew more about building barns, but it lasted for nearly a century and a half. The two oak beams which supported the floor were fifty feet long and two feet in diameter, cut from two great trees on Mount Riga and transported by ox cart to the village.

### STAINED GLASS

#### Over the Altar

The three-lancet window in the chancel over the altar is a memorial to the Honorable Samuel Church, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Connecticut. It depicts three episodes from the life of St. John. The calling of James and John, sons of Zebedee at Galilee; John as writer of the Gospel, holding script on which is written the opening words; and his vision of "The Heavenly Jerusalem" from the Island of Patmos. The workmanship is English and the date is 1886.

At the top of these windows are representations of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove; the Cross and Crown of Jesus; and a pelican, with her young, since the ancients believed the mother pelican would tear at her own breast to feed her young with her blood; thus it is symbolic of Christ who shed his blood for mankind. The star is the star of David, and the circle stands for God, in the Old and New Testaments.

### The Twelve Apostles

The twelve stained glass panels in the six side windows were installed in 1965 through 1968 and are all memorials to parish members or their relatives. The ones of St. Peter and St. John were made by Len Howard of Kent, Connecticut and all the others by the Willet Studios in Philadelphia, in the style of fifteenth Century glass in Yorkminster, England.

#### (At the north rear of the nave)

#### St. James the Less and St. Bartholomew

This pair of windows, in memory of William Henry Odell, depicts St. James the Less and St. Bartholomew. St. James was a brother of St. Matthew and a member of a remarkable Christian family. He carries a saw, symbol of his martyrdom; and St. Bartholomew (also called Nathaniel) bears the Gospel and a flaying knife, the manner of his death. He was a mystic and inclined to meditation, the pearls at his feet indicate incarnation. The tops of lancets, or panels, show Christ blessing the children, and the Ascension, which was probably witnessed by these two apostles. The scenes in the predella (lower part) deal with discipleship. Jesus calls the fishermen to follow him, and watches Bartholomew asleep under the fig tree. The inscription and the tracery also show discipleship. The basket with a fish in it while two other fish draw near is derived from a ring-stone of Arnulf, Bishop of Metz.

#### (In the middle of the north side)

#### St. Andrew and St. Philip

This window is in memory of The Reverend Romaine Stiles Mansfield. The X-shaped cross was the kind St. Andrew was crucified on, and the spear is the symbol of St. Philip's martyrdom. Above St. Andrew are Aquilla and Priscilla the tent makers, while above St. Philip is St.

Cecilia, patron saint of music, in remembrance of Emilia Moore Mansfield who played the organ in her husband's church. They both loved the land and growing things, so leaves and flowers are caught up in the canopy of the window. At the feet of St. Andrew is a boy holding the five loaves and two fishes with which Jesus fed the multitude. Beside St. Philip are the Greeks who asked to see Jesus. The predellas show the Sower and Ruth, the gleaner. Small shield shapes in the canopy contain additional symbols of each Apostle. The kite contains an escallop shell of baptism superimposed on an open book, symbol of the great commission Jesus gave his Apostles to go into the world to preach the Gospel and baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**(Forward on the north aisle)**

**St. Peter and St. John**

This pair of windows is in memory of George F. Winter. St. Peter is shown familiarly holding the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, while at the lower part of the window there is a cock, reminder of Peter having thrice denied his Lord before the crowing of the cock. The quatrefoil shape is symbolic of the four Evangelists. St. John is pictured holding a chalice because he was thought once to have been offered a cup of poison by his enemies. A snake is also associated with a supposed attempt to kill him by a snake bite, but he escaped all attempts on his life and was thought to be the only Apostle to have died a natural death. He is represented by an eagle, the bird who flies higher than any other, which reminds us of the loftiness and inspiration of his Gospel, and the Book of Revelation.

A pomegranate, a symbol of the Resurrection, and the fiery chariot of Elijah are also in this window.

**(On the south aisle near the baptistry)**

**St. Thomas and St. Jude**

These were placed in memory of John and Mary Scoville McChesney. Mrs. McChesney's window includes a likeness of St. Thomas' Church in New York, where the couple was married, and Mr. McChesney's has a rendering of Gamaliel teaching the boy Paul, since Mr. McChesney taught for many years at Hotchkiss School. St. Thomas bears the spear of his martyrdom, and St. Jude holds a boat hook symbolic of his travels by ship, relevant for the McChesneys who were frequent travellers. At the very top of the window is the seal of Amherst College which Mr. McChesney attended.

**(In the middle of the south aisle)**

**St. Matthew and St. James**

The Reverend Archibald Romaine Mansfield and his wife, Ella Huntington Mansfield, a nurse, are memorialized in these windows. St. Matthew holds the Book of his Gospel and a battle axe used in his martyrdom, and he is also shown at his table as a tax collector from where Jesus called him. St. James holds a pilgrim's staff and a wallet and a hat. Below he is garbed as a fisherman. Above Matthew, Paul is shown shipwrecked on the island of Melita; while above St. James is seen the woman anointing Jesus' head with precious ointment. Mr. Mansfield was long a director of Seaman's Church Institute, the seal of which is seen in the window. Dorcas, who, the Bible tells us, sewed for widows and orphans, here represents Mrs. Mansfield's care of the unfortunate. The Good Samaritan is also pictured to remind us of the good works of both the Mansfields. These windows are opposite those in memory of Mr. Mansfield's parents.

### **(At the south rear)**

#### **St. Simon and St. Matthias**

We read in the Book of Acts of the Apostles of the election of Matthias to take the place of Judas who betrayed Christ. This pair of windows was dedicated to the memory of Donald and Lois Church Scoville Warner. St. Simon as a "fisher of men" holds a fish and a book, while St. Matthias holds a carpenter square as a sign of his upright, four square life. A Table of the Law, and animals and birds show some of Mr. Warner's interests. Flowers were an important interest for Mrs. Warner, and one also sees a Red Cross because of her work with that organization, and the seal of the Town of Salisbury. The profile of the hills surrounding the lake where Jesus was preaching is taken from the profile of the hills around the lake on Mt. Riga in Salisbury where the Warners owned land. Further tributes to the Warner family include a quail and a beaver because of Mr. Warner's love of animals and birds; and the wild flowers pictured here are laurel, dogtooth violets, and trillium, all found in the local woods. Christ is shown in a healing miracle, reminiscent of Mrs. Warner's interest in St. Luke's Hospital in New York.

#### **Chancel Windows**

In the north wall near the sacristy door is the window given in memory of Maud Marshall Kelly Warner and her infant daughter. It was made in Florence, Italy in 1904, and represents the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. (Mrs. Warner died in childbirth).

The window in the Baptistry showing Jesus with the children is of nineteenth century make and was given in memory of Harriet Scoville Church.

#### **Sacristy Window**

Through the door to the left of the chancel is a memorial window to Page Kennon Hyde, wife of the former rector of St. John's. Mrs. Hyde's love of embroidery is represented by a picture of Aholiab, embroiderer by name in the book of Exodus; and her love of music by Pope Gregory the Great, who was the most important figure in church music. Also shown are objects relating to Mrs. Hyde's visits to Nantucket and Guatemala; flowers recall her love of them. Also included are pictures of Emmanuel Church in Baltimore where the Hydies were married, and St. James's Church in New York City where they both worked. An appealing touch is the inclusion of a Corgi, Mrs. Hyde's favorite dog breed.

### **SCULPTURE**

#### **Abraham and Isaac**

This bronze sculpture is by Marion Sanford, a distinguished artist and member of St. John's Parish.

#### **The Good Shepherd**

This bronze in memory of Miss Mildred Purdy is by another prominent sculptor who was also a member of St. John's, Cornelia Van A. Chapin.

#### **St. Catherine of Alexandria and St. Dorothy**

These two figures over the door to the sacristy, are part of a triptych from the Wullersleben altarpiece, executed by Valentin Lendenstreich in Thuringia in 1503.

#### **Madonna and Child Bas-relief**

Over the door behind the baptismal font is a glazed terra cotta bas-relief of the Madonna and Child, probably executed by Andrea della Robbia, or of his school; he lived from 1435 to 1525.

### **Adam with Eve Eating the Apple**

On the west wall, the Wood Carving of Adam and Eve was brought from Haiti by the Rev. James W. Hyde, XXIV Rector, and was dedicated to his memory in 1986.

### **NEEDLEWORK**

The needlework has been done by members of the Parish.

The kneeling cushions at the altar rail have at the ends the Greek letters Alpha and Omega. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" saith the Lord. (Revelation I,8). The twelve Apostles are represented, each with a symbol of his life or death.

### **MISCELLANY**

#### **The Bell in the Steeple**

The Bell was made in 1873 by Meneely and Company of West Troy, New York (now Watervliet). It weighs approximately two thousand pounds and was cast of Ingot Copper and Block Tin replacing the previous bell made in 1867.

#### **The Organ**

(The console and pipes are in the choir loft at the back of the nave, in the gallery over the narthex, or vestibule.) It was made by the Schantz Organ Company of Orville, Ohio, and is Baroque in style and tone. There are sixty-one notes controlled manually, and thirty-two by the pedals. It is capable of much flexibility and variation, and its tone and volume combined with the excellent acoustics of the body of the church result in a harmonious whole. The organ was installed in 1959.

*Elise G. Becket  
October 1992*

