

NEW CHURCH OF GREAT BEAUTY

First Unitarian Church, almost
completed, is one of the
Finest in Buffalo.

ENGLISH GOTHIC STYLE

Stained Glass Windows and Organ
are Memorial Gifts—Church
will soon be opened.

Of the many beautiful churches in this city there is not one more beautiful, more artistic and original in design, than the recently built First Unitarian Church, which will probably be opened for its first service within a fortnight. It is situated on the corner of Elmwood avenue and Ferry street, on a site donated by John J. Albright. The architect is Edward A. Kent.

The church is a stone structure, and its style is that of the early English Gothic. The interior walls are of the same stone as the exterior, and are devoid of decoration. The floor also is stone. One of the principal charms of the interior is its absolute simplicity, a simplicity which is the utmost refinement of art. The ceiling is of wood, with handsome Gothic trusses, the bases of which rest on stone corbels, about ten feet above the floor. These stone blocks are now plain, but it is expected that at some future time they will be ornamented with carving.

All the woodwork of the interior is dark weathered oak, of exquisite, satin-like grain. The pulpit is a hexagonal inclosed one, to which three stone steps lead up. It is covered with a detail of carving which will bear careful study. The carved reredos back of the pulpit is a beautiful piece of work, and it, with the pulpit and the three chairs, is the production of a Buffalo firm. The chairs are Gothic, the center one larger than the others, and having a canopy top.

The pews, which correspond in color and carving with the reredos and pulpit, have comfortable sloping backs. Those situated in the transept are placed somewhat obliquely, so as to command an equally good view of the pulpit with those in the center of the church. The Gothic design dominates all the woodwork, so that it is in keeping with the architecture of the building in all respects.

At the rear of the auditorium is a handsome wind screen of carved wood, the upper part filled in with glass. Both this and the equally effective gallery rail of the choir loft were made by the Hayden company of Rochester.

A large factor in the beauty of the First Unitarian Church is the array of stained-glass windows, of which there are two transept, one pulpit and six nave windows. These were all given to the church by Mrs. E. C. Sprague and her sons, Henry Ware and Carleton Sprague, as a memorial of Noah P. and E. Carleton Sprague. They were designed and made by the Goodhue firm of Boston.

The east transept window is of especial interest because of the story connected with its design. The central figure is that of the Good Shepherd, but it is wholly unlike the conventional representation of Christ. It shows a beardless youth, of rather martial aspect, clad in a red tunic, the right hand grasping a staff, and the left shoulder bearing a lamb. This is a reproduction of the earliest known representation of Christ, which was found in the catacombs of Rome. Beneath the figure is the text:

"And goeth into the mountains and seeketh that which is gone astray." In the small panel on each side are an anchor and an antique lamp.

The west transept window has as its central figure the prophet Isaiah. The verse underneath is this:

"Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." On the small panels are a sheaf of wheat and an open Bible.

The window back of the pulpit and rising above the exquisite tracery line of the reredos has no marked design. It is a mass of soft, dark reds, shading into lighter tones, contrasted with a bit of clear green and a little touch of purple. It is very restful to the eye, and not obtrusive enough to claim especial attention. The nave windows all show a grapevine pattern, with tracery of vine, leaf and bunches of grapes in charming design and color. Each window bears one of the Beatitudes. The colors in all the windows are most harmonious and beautifully blended.

The electrolers are lanterns of isinglass and wrought iron, suspended by iron chains from the woodwork. They are most artistic.

The church is lighted by electricity, the organ is run by the same power, and connected with the ventilating system is an electric fan to keep up a constant circulation of air. The heating and ventilating system is the best obtainable. It was designed by Dr. Woodbridge of Boston, one of the most noted experts in this line, and was installed by Clifford H. Crosby of Boston, a man

formerly associated with Dr. Woodbridge and thoroughly familiar with his methods.

The handsome marble font, a gift of Mrs. Gates to the church in former years, was brought from the former Delaware avenue home of the congregation. It corresponds admirably with the white stone of the interior, and looks as if it might have been especially made for the new church.

One of the most valued and valuable things in the First Unitarian Church is its splendid organ, the gift of Mrs. E. H. Howard and her son, Henry C. Howard, as a memorial to Ethan H. Howard. It is a three manueled instrument, made by the Hutchings-Votey Company of Boston, and thoroughly equipped with every modern facility. It is one of the most beautifully voiced organs that can be found, and the Buffalo experts who have tried it are unanimous in their admiration of the fine instrument. It is placed in the gallery at the rear of the church, with ample room in front for a double quartette or small chorus of singers. The pipes are of a rich copper color, and the wood is like the rest of the interior.

The minister's study is in the tower, back of the organ. The Sunday school room, which is a few steps below the level of the auditorium, has a beautiful hardwood floor, a handsome paneled ceiling and is as bright and cheery a room as one could wish. Above it is Unity Hall, fitted with a stage, footlights, a gallery for small orchestra, and every equipment that makes for convenience. The kitchen is in the basement, and four modern dumb-waiters carry dishes to the floor above. There is a large pantry, sink, a shelf for serving and all the accessories that housekeepers could desire for the occasion of church suppers and lunches. Just out of the Sunday school room is a pleasant library, in the corner of which is a very artistic stone and oak fireplace and mantel.

EXPRESS SEPT. 4-1906

Moisture Ruins Records
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