


# WELCOME

Calvary Episcopal Church  
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## Calvary Episcopal Church Self-guided Tour



**T**he parishioners of Calvary Episcopal Church have worshipped in three buildings since the parish was founded in 1855. Both previous church buildings were within a half-mile radius of the present site. **T**he first worship service was held in this building in December of 1907. The structure took three years to complete, the land having been purchased in 1904. Calvary is considered architecturally important because it is the first major commission of Ralph Adams Cram [1863-1943], a leader in the Gothic revival movement in architecture.



**D**r. Cram considered the Gothic architectural style of the Middle Ages to be the ideal for a parish church. With a seating capacity of 1200, Calvary Church is of the traditional cruciform shape; that is, forming a cross made up of the long nave and the cross bar formed by the north [left] and south [right] transepts. **T**he length of the church from the front door [west] to the altar wall [east] is 208 feet. The height of the nave is 55 feet from the floor to the wooden ceiling. **D**r. Cram planned the entire scheme of windows and symbols throughout this building. The artistic themes in wood, stone, glass and tiling were meticulously integrated by his architectural firm of Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson of Boston, Massachusetts. **A**fter your tour, you might want to return to the Narthex to spend more time examining the small windows depicting scenes from our national heritage. You may also wish to view the outside of Calvary Church with its magnificently sharp and focused lines pointing up to the great spire. The Rector of Calvary Church when the structure was built, The Rev. Dr. James Hall McIlvaine, himself climbed to the top of the wooden scaffolding in the winter of 1906 to affix the cross to the tip of the spire. **C**alvary Church, with more than 1600 members, is the largest Episcopal parish in the City of Pittsburgh. This outstanding worship space, and the liturgies that occur within it, form the foundation of, and impetus for, Calvary's mission to its neighborhood, city, and the world.



# Calvary Episcopal Church

## Self-guided Tour

① You are standing in the **Narthex**, designed as a transition area from the secular world outside to the sacred world within the church.

The Narthex windows, depicting our great American historical figures and events, symbolize the importance of our national heritage as well as the roots of Christianity in this country.

② Over the nave side of the Narthex door, there are three great stone carvings of the **Old Testament figures** of Isaiah, Moses, and King David.

The **stained glass windows** on both sides of the nave are among the finest sequence of windows anywhere. They are of the twelfth and thirteenth century French medieval style. The windows on the south aisle, the right side facing the altar, depict the story of Jesus' life. The windows on the opposite side depict events from his ministry.

The **clerestory windows**, high and overlooking each side of the nave, depict the apostles in each center lancet.

③ In keeping with the Gothic style, Dr. Cram constructed a large **tower** over the crossing. The four sides of the tower have stained glass lantern windows which are 75 feet above the red tile floor. The weight of the stone tower is carried by four massive pillars. Resting on these pillars is Calvary's majestic steeple which reaches a height of 220 feet.

The restored **chandelier** signals the importance that Dr. Cram placed on the crossing which, along with the high altar, is one of the two focal points of the church.

④ The brilliant **south transept windows** depicts early British Saints, martyrs and missionaries during the first ten centuries, A.D. Dr. Cram's intent was to remind us that the seeds of Anglicanism were sown long before the English Reformation in the 16th century. Anglicanism, in fact, was planted in the Celtic Christian Church, begun during the second century Roman Occupation of England.

⑤ The wood screen around the **All Saints Chapel** is an addition of Calvary's 1991 renovation. This lovely small chapel is now a place for private prayer and meditation. Carved by the Herbert Read craftsmen in England, and designed by Gerald Allen, the screen depicts the flames of the Holy Spirit that have burned in the hearts of all saints through the ages. The figures depicted in the needlepoint chair cushions represent saints through the years.

⑥ The **crossing platform** is also a recent addition. The wood screen separating the chancel and the nave is called a **rood screen**, which was a fixture in English Gothic Churches. Beyond the rood screen is the chancel which consists of the choir and the sanctuary. In medieval times the chancel was the exclusive domain of the clergy.

The theme carved in the wood of the rood screen, the vine and the branches, symbolizes Christ's relationship to the church. The rood screen supports the **great rood** (crucifix) with St. Mary and St. John on each side of Christ. Christ is depicted as Christus Rex or Christ the King who rules from the cross.

⑦ Calvary's link to the world-wide Anglican communion is symbolized by the **coats of arms** on the rood screen and the marble **St. Chad's cross** on the floor of the choir. St. Chad was a 7th century Anglican saint.

The **finials** on the ends of the choir stall depict Biblical figures who have inspired our great musical heritage, including King David (Psalms, Zechariah (Benedictus), St. Mary (Magnificat), and others.

tion as one moved through the choir and toward the high altar.

Notice how Dr. Cram increased the use of finely carved wood and rich marble as one approaches the **high altar**. Calvary parishioners made the rug and other needlepoint in the chancel and adjoining chapels.

In the center of the intricately carved **reredos**, which forms the backdrop for the high altar, Jesus Christ is blessing the bread and wine. Christ is flanked on each side by St. John (shown driving the serpent from the cup of wine) and St. James (holding the sea shell). The other statues represent missionaries, bishops, martyrs and two guardian angels: St. Michael (Calvary's patron saint) on the far left and St. Gabriel on the far right.

Above the reredos is the **Passion Window**, the story of Christ's passion told in stained glass. There are twelve New Testament panels (the four larger panels in each vertical lancet) depicting Christ from the anointing at Bethany until his conquest over the grave. There are nine Old Testament stories (the three smaller panels in each vertical lancet) which, for Christians, foretell the passion.

⑨ The **Morning Chapel** (sometimes called **The Lady Chapel**) is used for small services of worship.

Above the Altar is a stained glass window which depicts the annunciation story as written in the first chapter of The Gospel According to St. Luke. Notice the delicately carved gold leaf reredos. The altar rail and credence table were from Calvary's previous church building dating from 1860. Acolumbarium, which holds the cremated remains of parishioners and other persons, is on the south wall.

In the Morning Chapel there are two glass mosaics: on the north wall is a fine mosaic panel of St. George and on the south wall is a mosaic of St. Mary.

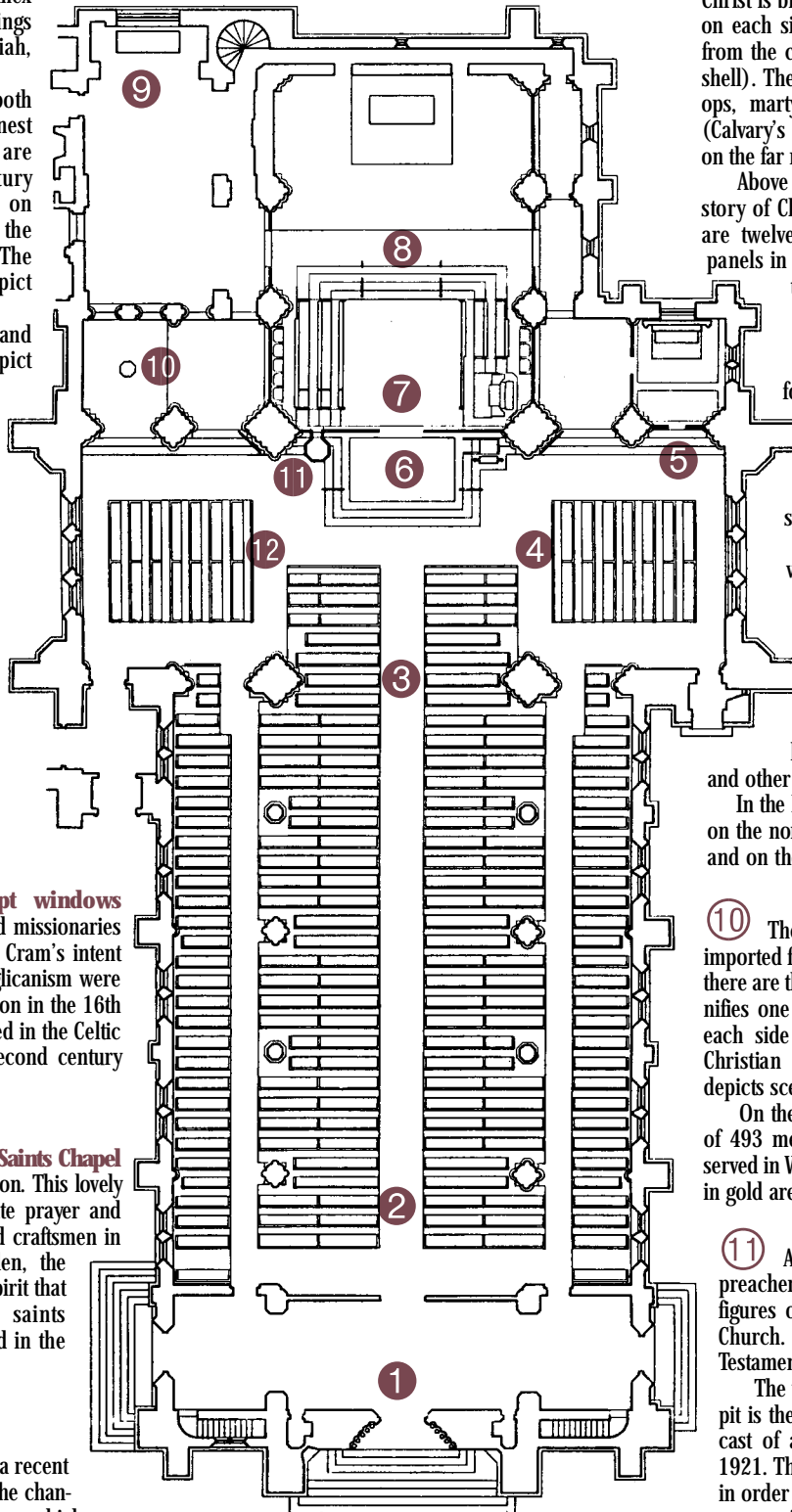
⑩ The **baptismal font** is made from Caen stone imported from France. On each face of the square font there are three carved symbols: the middle symbol signifies one of the four evangelists, and is flanked on each side by fleur-de-lis, symbol of the Trinity in Christian art. The wooden hexagonal font cover depicts scenes from the life of John the Baptist.

On the wall of the baptistry are carved the names of 493 men and women, Calvary parishioners, who served in World War I and the Korean War. The names in gold are those who died in these wars.

⑪ At the base of the **pulpit** are carved the great preachers of the Old Testament. Above them are the figures of preachers and teachers of the Christian Church. This arrangement symbolizes that the New Testament message rests upon the Old Testament.

The velvet trimmings on the umbrella of the pulpit is the last remnant of the very first radio broadcast of a religious service of worship by KDKA in 1921. The velvet was draped throughout the chancel in order to soften the acoustics to accommodate the more primitive microphones of the day.

⑫ The dramatic **north transept window** portrays all those mentioned in the Te Deum Laudamus, the great hymn of praise to the Trinity. In the center lancet are representations of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the descending dove). Starting at the top, they are surrounded by angels, apostles, prophets, and martyrs. At the bottom is the Church of God of all ages and in all lands.



Calvary's great **Casavant organ**, with its 7500 pipes, represents one of the finest examples of old world craftsmanship combined with the most modern 20th century technology. Originally installed in 1962, this organ was completely rebuilt, restored and enriched in 1991.

⑧ Gothic design mandated that progressively richer materials and detail be used in church construc-