

Sanctuary Tour | Architectural Design

GOTHIC REVIVAL ARCHITECTURE

The **Mamaroneck United Methodist Church** stands at the heart of the Village of Mamaroneck in Westchester County, New York – a fine example of Gothic Revival architecture. Like the European Gothic cathedrals of old, still today, the spire of our church rises above any other building in town and is visible when anyone looks up, whether from the surrounding streets or from the waters of the harbor or Long Island Sound.

John Correja, a New York City architect, designed our current church building 1880 (circa) – one of two Gothic Revival churches known to have been built according to the plans of **Richard Upjohn**, a self-schooled New England cabinetmaker become draftsman-architect who designed and had built the present Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York City. **Solomon Gedney**, was the builder; a member of a family of shipbuilders originally from Salem, Massachusetts. Also contributing may have been master shipbuilders in the area and within the congregation.

However, our church is very distinctive among Carpenter Gothic Revival churches of its day in that the type of wood and



structural elements are similar to that used in the construction of ships. Our builders knew how to build water-tight wooden boats and applied tongue and groove fitted boards on the exterior. They knew how to work with timber – and the massiveness of the structural elements of this building and their joinery is witness not only to the mastery of the builders, but to the sheer strength, inventiveness and will of those who raised the timbers without benefit of powered machines.

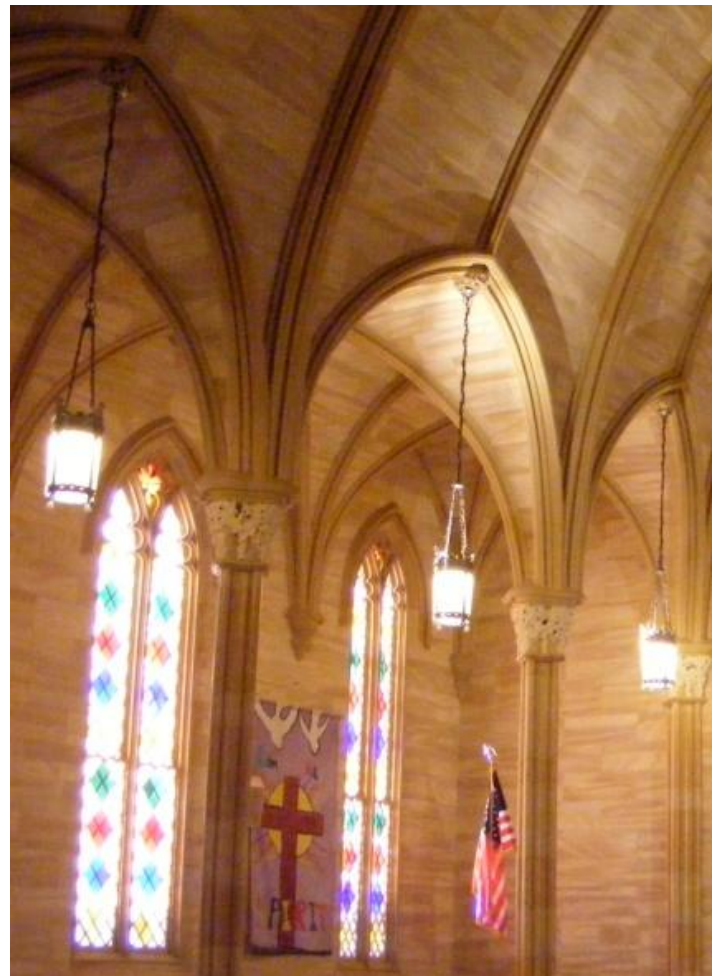
Stepped buttresses, the spire, pinnacles and finials are emblematic Gothic Revival features that enhance the grace and upward sweep of the building. Other decorative features applied by carpenters to wooden buildings of the period, from which comes the familiar term “Carpenter Gothic” are to be found in the church. Look at the exterior for the drip cornice molding and the frieze band uniting the tower’s buttresses rendered in a quatrefoil motif. Within the sanctuary, the quatrefoil and trefoil are repeated as a recurrent and unifying decoration.

Features most commonly associated with Gothic Revival architecture – the lancet windows of tall proportion which come to a pointed arch and the window tracery – distinguish our building. Each day for years to come the sun will rise and, early in the morning, as its rays shine through the stained glass panes, it will cast the colors of the rainbow across the walls and floor. And, again, as it sets, the pattern will reappear---the colors of simplicity, the aura



of the Holy Spirit, a reminder of the rainbow of Noah and the covenant relationship.

Columns - The twelve columns do not just support the ceiling and roof, but are reminders of the pillars of the church--- the Twelve Tribes of Israel and the Twelve Apostles. The Gothic vaults that sweep skyward serve as imaginative reminders of the Word and the Sacraments by which God and humanity are joined together in relationship. Pointed arches are interpreted by some to be illustrative of the beneficence of and the hospitality of the Christian faith. Without a doubt, they focus our attention "heavenward" and invite feelings of aspiration and awe.



Pulpit - The pulpit and altar are both central in this church and the pews are so arranged that the congregants are focused on the preacher and/or the celebrant—the one who shares the Word of God and the one who prepares the



holy meal. In our sanctuary is found the balance between the significance of the Word and the centrality of the sacraments.

Apse - Framing the altar behind the pulpit is the apse, a graceful curved columned area, which to many looks like the contour of a ship's hull with its ribbing terminating in a bowsprit of a decorative motif. Within this apse are found symbols introduced into the Church's decoration in the 1950's restoration, modified and replaced in 1996.



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