

St. Paul's Church

Newport



AS SEEN FROM CENTRAL DOWNTOWN Cincinnati, across the Ohio River, the distinctive spire of St. Paul's Church combines with the four-sided clock tower of the neighboring Campbell County Courthouse to form the picturesque skyline of Newport, Kentucky. St. Paul's began with a meeting of Episcopalians in a private residence on Easter Day 1844. Membership grew rapidly and a wooden church building originally occupied by Methodists was purchased, but was soon outgrown and a new church was erected.

After the Civil War a larger facility was again required and in 1871 the present church building was erected on Court Place in downtown Newport. The product is a native interpretation of the English Gothic style designed by J.R. Neff. The building is said to boast the only unreinforced stone steeple in the United States. The facility was far more costly than anticipated, leaving St. Paul's saddled with a heavy debt that took many years to retire.

Through the decades, furnishings and paraments have been provided through bequests and gifts, but because they came from different periods, St. Paul's interior has come to have a certain eclectic appearance, which is part of its charm. Stained glass was eventually emplaced, lancet window by lancet window, the last as recently as the 1950s; consequently the stained glass tells no story. The center window in the chancel depicts the Ascension of Jesus. It is unusual in that it contains a border of multicolored rondelets thought to be found otherwise only in France. As the sun sets, the window, ordi-

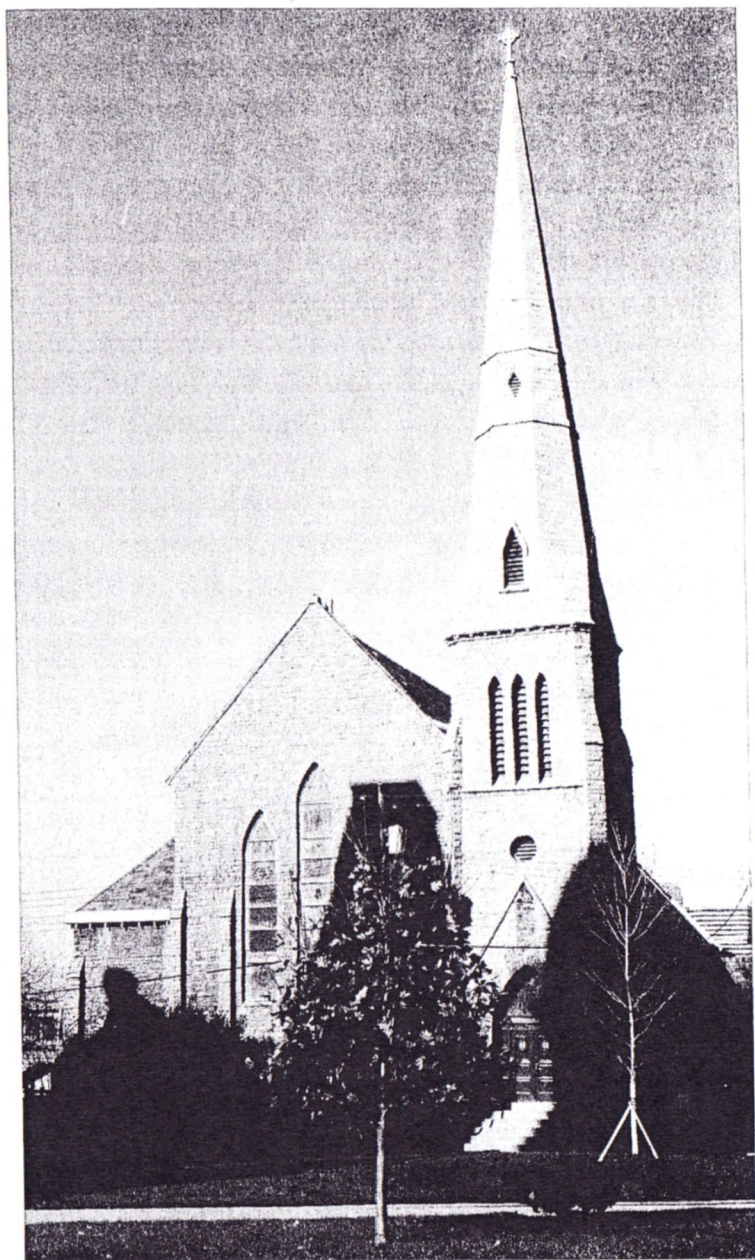
narily rather muddy, glows as if on fire and takes on a three-dimensional aspect.

The great south window on the main facade portrays "Truth" arriving on a cloud of opalescent glass. Legend maintains that the woman who gave the glass for this window insisted that she be the model for the face of its allegorical figure. She was an imperious woman, and when the face of "Truth" turned green after a few years many people said it served her right!

In the 1960s the church's interior was rearranged. Pews abutting the walls were removed, the central aisle was widened, asphalt tiles were laid over the original wooden flooring and the original brass chandeliers and wall sconces were replaced with spotlights to brighten the interior.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s Newport underwent urban renewal. All of the old houses and buildings around the church were purchased and demolished, and an assemblage of marginal businesses interspersed with overgrown vacant lots and subsidized public housing appeared. Newport gentry, who composed much of St. Paul's membership, moved and were replaced by impoverished immigrants from Appalachia. St. Paul's, at one time the largest parish in the diocese, saw a long-term membership drain. In 1980, unable to support itself financially, the parish was reduced to mission status.

The church's financial picture is more promising now than in many years, due in part to a large bequest from the estate of the late Miss LaVerne Elmes, superintendent of the Sunday school for over sixty years. This legacy, along with additional but smaller bequests, has been used to establish an endowment fund. "Miss LaVerne," as she was widely known, joins the ranks of the more prominent members who have belonged to St. Paul's throughout its near-century-and-a-half existence—Newport founder General James Taylor, and the Berry, Weidemann, Root and Reed families among them.



To address a community need, St. Paul's Child Care Center was established with the help of a United Thank Offering grant in the late 1960s. Serving more than sixty children of the working poor, this project is the oldest and for a long time the only one of its kind in Campbell County. Occupying the first floor of the parish house, it became an agency of the Greater Cincinnati Community Chest/United Appeal in 1984.

The current membership of about one hundred is a happy mixture of young and old, blue-collar workers and professionals, with a preponderance of single people. Only one-third of St. Paul's members live in Newport. Others come from throughout the area, drawn by St. Paul's beauty, history and friendliness. One member, initially attracted by St. Paul's distinctive red front doors, observed upon viewing the interior of the church, "The people who worship here have loved the Lord; the Spirit lives here."

CLERGY

The Rev. Nicholas Hammer Cobbs	1844
The Rev. Edward Lounsbury	1844-1848
The Rev. Green Grove Moore	1848-1849
The Rev. Charles Henry Page	1849-1852
The Rev. J. Rice Taylor	1852-1853
The Rev. W.W. Dodge	1854
The Rev. Frederick C. Boyd	1855
The Rev. Colley A. Foster, M.D.	1856
The Rev. Peter H. Jeffries	1858-1866
The Rev. G.D.E. Mortimer	1867-1870
The Rev. Albert D. Walker	1870-1871
The Rev. Foster Ely	1871-1875
The Rev. William M. Pettis	1876-1883
The Rev. Reverdy Estill	1884-1893
The Rev. William G. McCready	1894-1900

The Rev. Robert L. Harris	1901-1904
The Rev. Robert B. Nelson	1904-1907
The Rev. Charles Clingman	1908-1913
The Rev. Lester L. Riley	1914-1917
The Rev. Edmund T. Jillson	1918-1923
The Rev. Frank E. Cooley	1923-1931
The Rev. B.H. Crewe	1931-1936
The Rev. W.B. Dern	1936-1959
The Rev. Calvin R. Miller	1956-1959
The Rev. Edwin W. Taylor	1959-1977
The Rev. Michael R. Murphy	1978-1980
The Rev. Stephen G. Alexander	1981-