

The First Presbyterian Church of Rumson

1886



Today



Rev. W. John Monroe III

East River Road at Park Avenue, Rumson, NJ 07760

732-842-0429 www.rumsonpresbyterian.org

Welcome: The members and clergy of the First Presbyterian Church of Rumson thank you for your interest. This brochure is designed to give you important and interesting facts about the history of our church.

History: The Congregation of our church was formally organized on April 23, 1861. Five local residents, by confession of their faith, became the first communicants. Albert V. King, a licentiate from New York, was ordained and installed as pastor. Their names are engraved on a plaque in the sanctuary. The small church on Bingham Avenue had been, since 1842, available to all faiths to conduct Sunday services, mostly in the summer. It was then known as the First Presbyterian Church of Port Washington. That building is now known as Bingham Hall and is used by the town residents and organizations for meetings. As the congregation grew it continued to worship at Bingham Hall but by 1885, they had outgrown the small church. Dr. Ehrick Parmly donated the land where the church sits today. The new church was completed in seven months and was dedicated on June 19 and 20, 1886. Rev. Doctor Thomas Hastings, Sr., was the President of Union Theological Seminary, delivered an historical sermon about the church. Bingham Hall became the Parish House.

In 1907, the Borough incorporated and renamed Rumson and the church's name became The First Presbyterian church of Rumson. In the lounge are photos of some of our former pastors.

Architecture: Thomas Hastings, the son of Rev. Hastings, a summer resident of Rumson, and John Carrere had just completed studying at Les Beaux Arts in Paris. Designing our church was their first commission, this was the beginning of an illustrious career. They later designed the New York Public Library, the Frick Museum, The Flagler Hotel in Saint Augustine, Florida, The House and Senate Office building in Washington, and the Arlington Memorial Amphitheater, the site of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

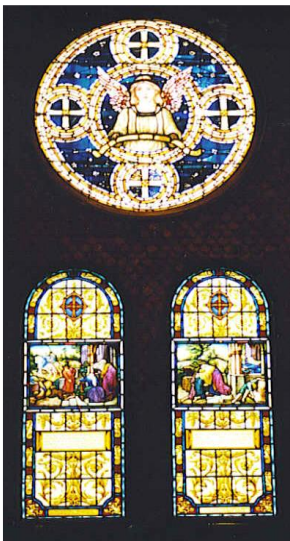
Style: Hastings and Carrere designed a shingle style church using his knowledge of the congregation, classical building organization, Christian religious symbolism, and the needs of the surrounding community. They integrated this knowledge into a coherent whole. The asymmetry of the building's outline and decor' created many different elements, each designed to create a sense of belonging for different parts of the congregation.

The community was sustained by its presence on the river, so they chose cedar fish-scale shaped shingles from the top of the wainscot to the top of the interior octagonal dome. Its effect was quaint and refined. It joined this Christian meeting place to that earliest history of the Christian church, which used the ichthus, an outline of a fish, to secretly mark a meeting place in Christianity's earliest times.

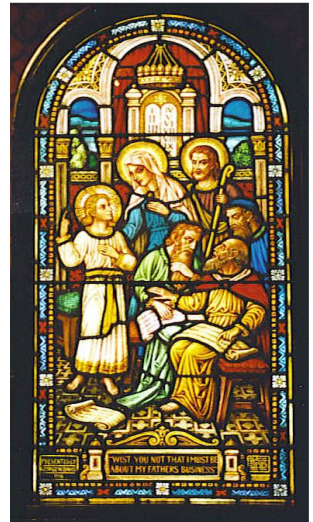
Another example is the octagonal dome over the chancel area. It creates a sense of weightlessness, spaciousness, and a focal point of the divine.

To further integrate the building, the steeple-cum-aviary was designed to swell from the juncture of two roof lines on the southwest side of the building. The aviary evoked the Christian meaning attached to the dove — purity, innocence, peace and the Holy Spirit, and the hope it brought to Noah as the flood waters receded.

Windows: There are 34 stained glass windows in the sanctuary, all but one donated in someone's memory or honor. The history of some of the older windows follows. The round rose window on the east is most likely an early Tiffany window and given by Dr. Henry Owen, in memory of his young daughter. The three windows on the south, near the



porte-cochere, including the round one, are all Tiffany windows and were donated by Robert Maitland in memory of his parents. The windows behind the choir were donated by George Walker Davis in memory of those who served in WWII. The Good Shepherd window, on the west wall, was donated in 1935 by George Parmly, a descendant of Dr. Ehrick Parmly.



Points of Interest: Our church was listed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2010.

The exterior has been restored and all the paint is now historically correct and the original colors.

The original gas lanterns on the walls have been converted to electricity. The Porte-cochere was designed for horses and carriages to let people off and there were stables in the back for the animals. The original bell is in the tower.

There is a Memorial Garden behind the church in a park like setting with benches for visitation and meditation.

Dedication of the Memorial Garden, October 2008



Information: There is a church service on Sunday Mornings at 9:45 AM (9:15 in summer months). Sunday school is held at the same time and babysitting is available in the nursery, both in the Wilson Hall Educational Wing.

We hope to see you soon in church!

The Congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Rumson.

The Rumson Presbyterian Historical Committee