

Academy Building on South Main Street in which first Episcopal services were held,

TORRINGTON'S RICH HISTORY AS PLAYED OUT IN THE HISTORY OF TRINITY CHURCH

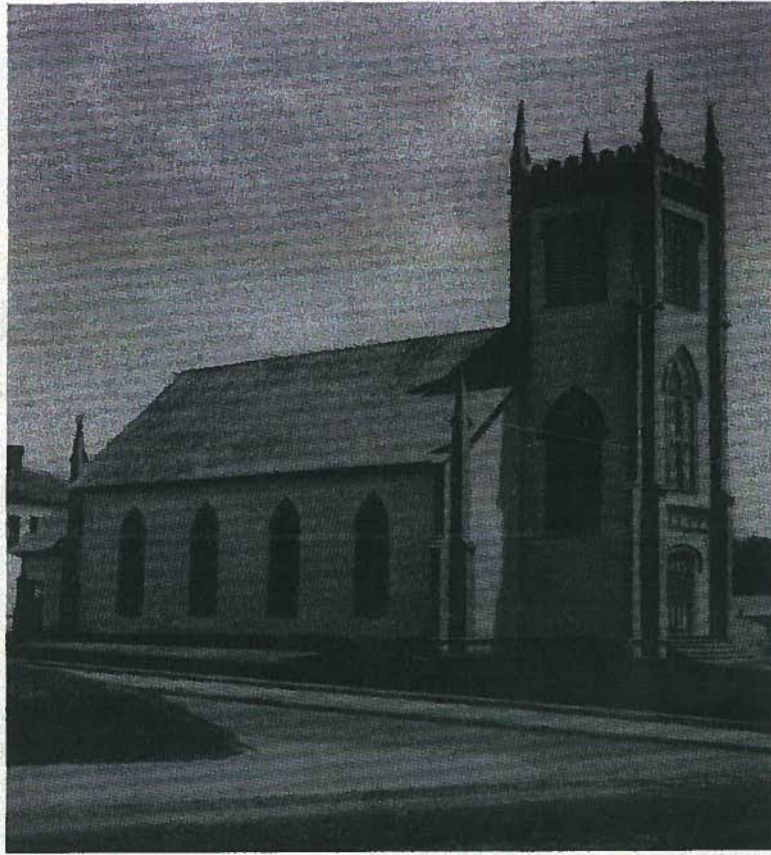
In The beginning - 1830 to 1899

The earliest Episcopal services in Torrington, alias Wolcottville, were held in the first part of the 19th century in the Academy building opposite Coe Park, on South Main Street. The building, used as a school during the week, housed various church groups on alternate Sundays. The Rev. Henry Zell, Rector of Christ Church, Harwinton, reports that Episcopal services had been conducted occasionally beginning in 1830. He preached at the Academy every fourth Sunday beginning in 1842.

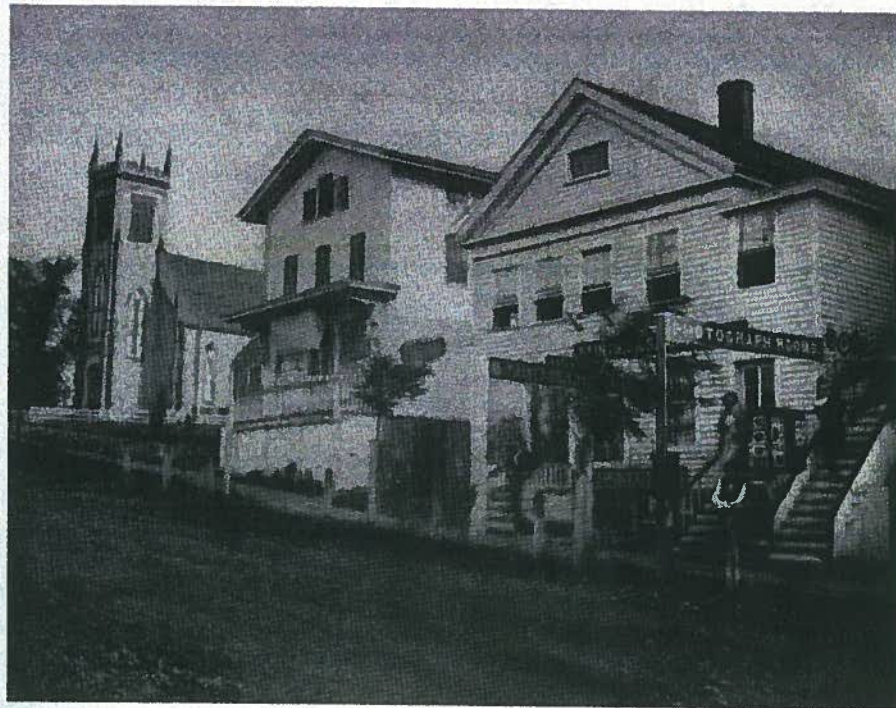
On February 21, 1843 a meeting was held to incorporate a new parish. Trinity was born. Among the founders are many of the names that were destined to be important in Torrington's economic development. The Rev. Zell left Christ Church, Harwinton to become Trinity's first Rector.

Samuel Bradley	James Ashborn
James Gaunt	Nelson Alvord
M. W. Flyer	James R. Coe
Samuel Workman	Edward Adkins
Charles B. Smith	Charles Cooper
Benjamin H. Morse	James B. Phelps
James H. Seymour	Allen G. Brady
Demas Coe	The Rev. Henry Zell

Within a year, \$2,000 was raised, a plot on the corner of Water and Prospect Streets was purchased, and a wooden church was built. The small Parish had about 10 faithful families. Torrington, however, was about to participate in the industrial revolution. In 1849 the Naugatuck Rail Road reached Torrington, giving the town's entrepreneurs access to New England's industrial centers. Migrants from England flooded in seeking work in Wolcottville's growing mills and factories. Many of them joined Trinity. By the end of the century Trinity's ranks had swelled to 371.

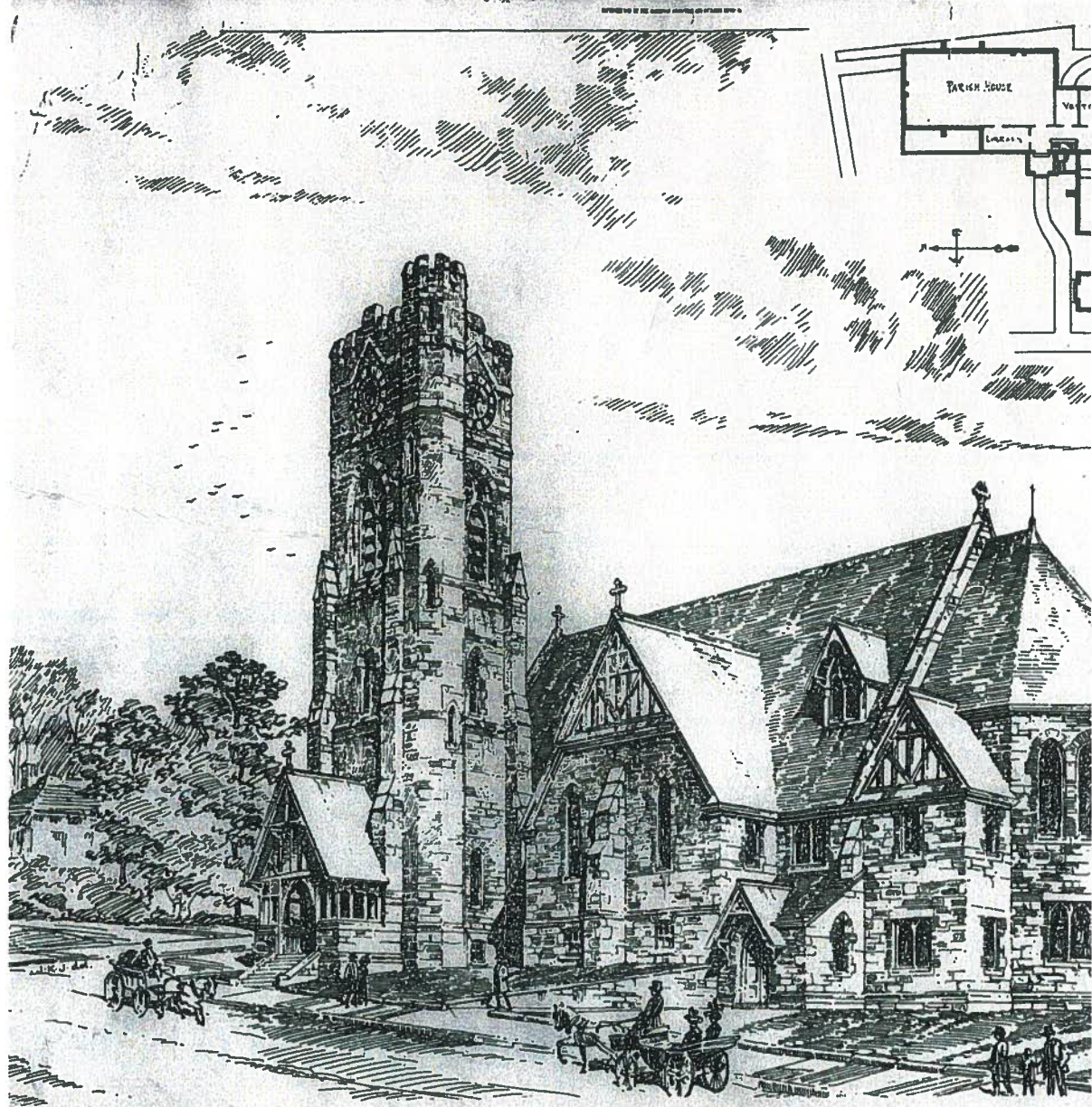


**ORIGINAL CHURCH BUILDING WHICH STOOD
ON SITE OF PRESENT CHURCH**



LOOKING UP WATER STREET ABOUT 1860, SHOWING ORIGINAL CHURCH EDIFICE IN BACKGROUND.

Henry M. Congdon's Vision for Trinity Torrington



The original wooden church was no longer large enough for the congregation and it proved to be drafty and in constant need of repair. The desire to build a larger and more permanent church was growing. In 1875 a building fund was established.

In the last 5 years of the 19th century 3 things happened that changed Trinity (and Torrington) forever.

- The Rev. J. Chauncey Linsley began his 32 year term as Rector of Trinity in 1895
- The building fund reached the grand sum of \$16,000
- The Vestry hired well known, ecclesiastical architectural firm, Henry M. Congdon & Son of New York City to design a complete church complex

Congdon worked in the Victorian Gothic style and left any number of beautiful and imposing church complexes up and down the eastern seaboard. With Trinity's site up a slight hill and only one block off Torrington's Main Street, he envisioned a landmark for downtown Torrington. Trinity still looks very much as he designed it. Only the mode of transportation and the amount of traffic on Water Street has changed.

The 1897 Vestry included the same industrial giants that built Torrington. Owners and CEOs of the Hendy Machine Company, Coe Brass, Turner & Seymour Company, the Wolcott Woolen Mill, and the Hotchkiss Brothers all sat on Trinity's governing board.

Henry J. Hendey

John Workman

Fredrick F. Fuessenich

Hilan M. Rogers

Edward T. Coe

Henry Hotchkiss

Luther G. Turner

Andrew E. Workman

Charles McNeil

Uri T. Church

The Rev. J. Chauncy Linsley

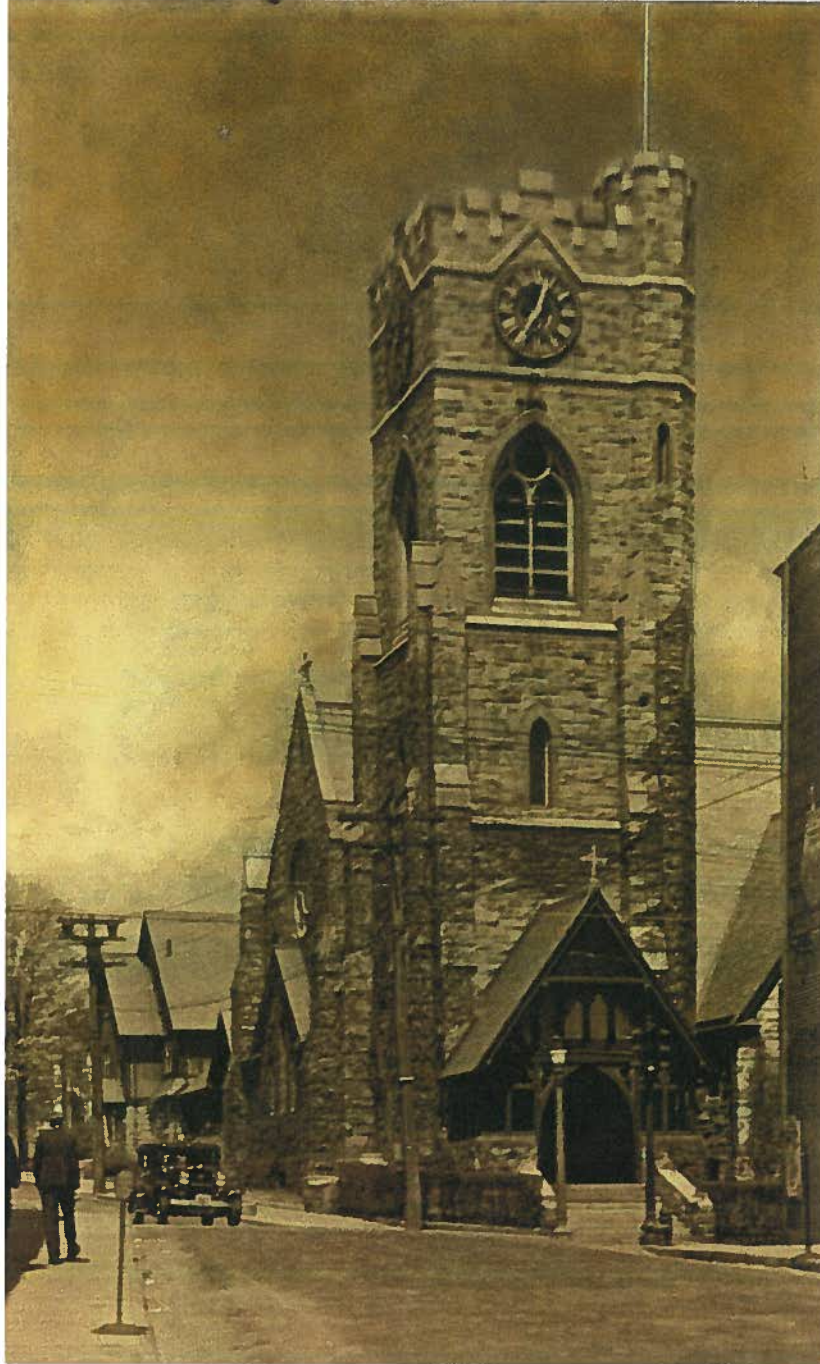
On October 3, 1897 the corner stone was laid.



The original church had been moved to the back of the lot where it served as a Parish Hall for the next 9 years. Water and Prospect Streets were closed for the event. A 13 piece YMCA Orchestra led by Henry Hotchkiss provided the music. The Weekly Register

(fore runner of the current Register Citizen) estimates that 3,000 people attended and \$3,500 was collected for the building fund. Hotchkiss Brothers & Co. was the general contractor.

In 1898, within 3 years of his arrival, the Rev. J. Chauncey Linsley conducted the first services in the new church.



Trinity's Interior

Congdon's design was carried out in the interior as well as the exterior. Parish families filled the church with gifts and memorials, most of which are still in use today.



The High Altar and Reredos are the gift of Eliza Seymour Coe. Eight different types of marble and stone were used from six countries – Mexico, France, North Africa, Italy, Spain and, the United States.





The Baptismal Font at the rear of the Nave where worshipers first enter the church, was given by the Workman family in memory of Jennie Workman.

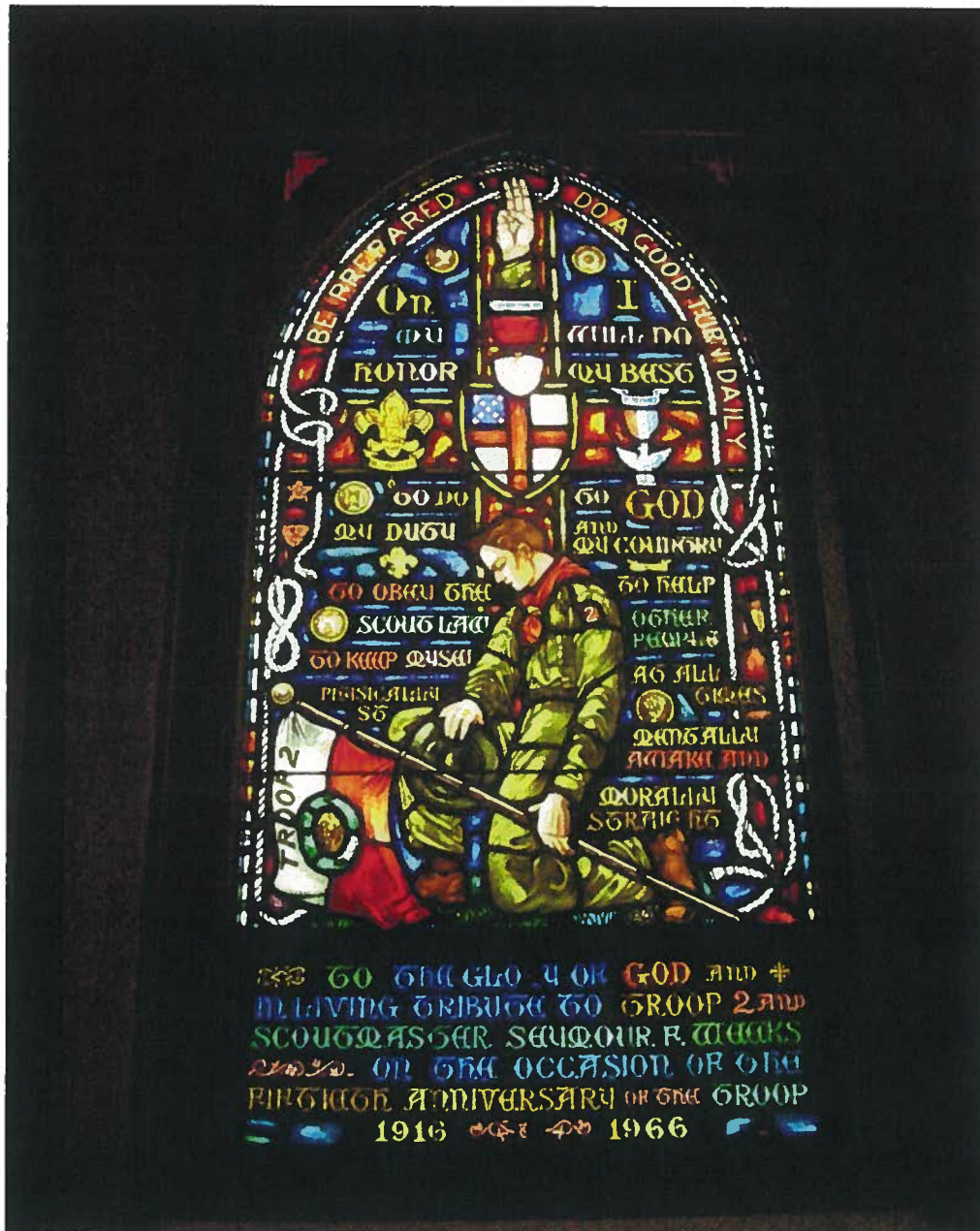
The stenciled ceiling above the altar is done in a style of decoration used in European cathedrals in the middle ages. It is meant to focus attention on the grandeur of God's house and to

remind us of the starry heavens.





Ornamental Brass was, and still is, used throughout the church. The crosses, candelabra, vases and other items used at the Altar are all brass. Many of them inscribed as memorials to members of the Coe family.



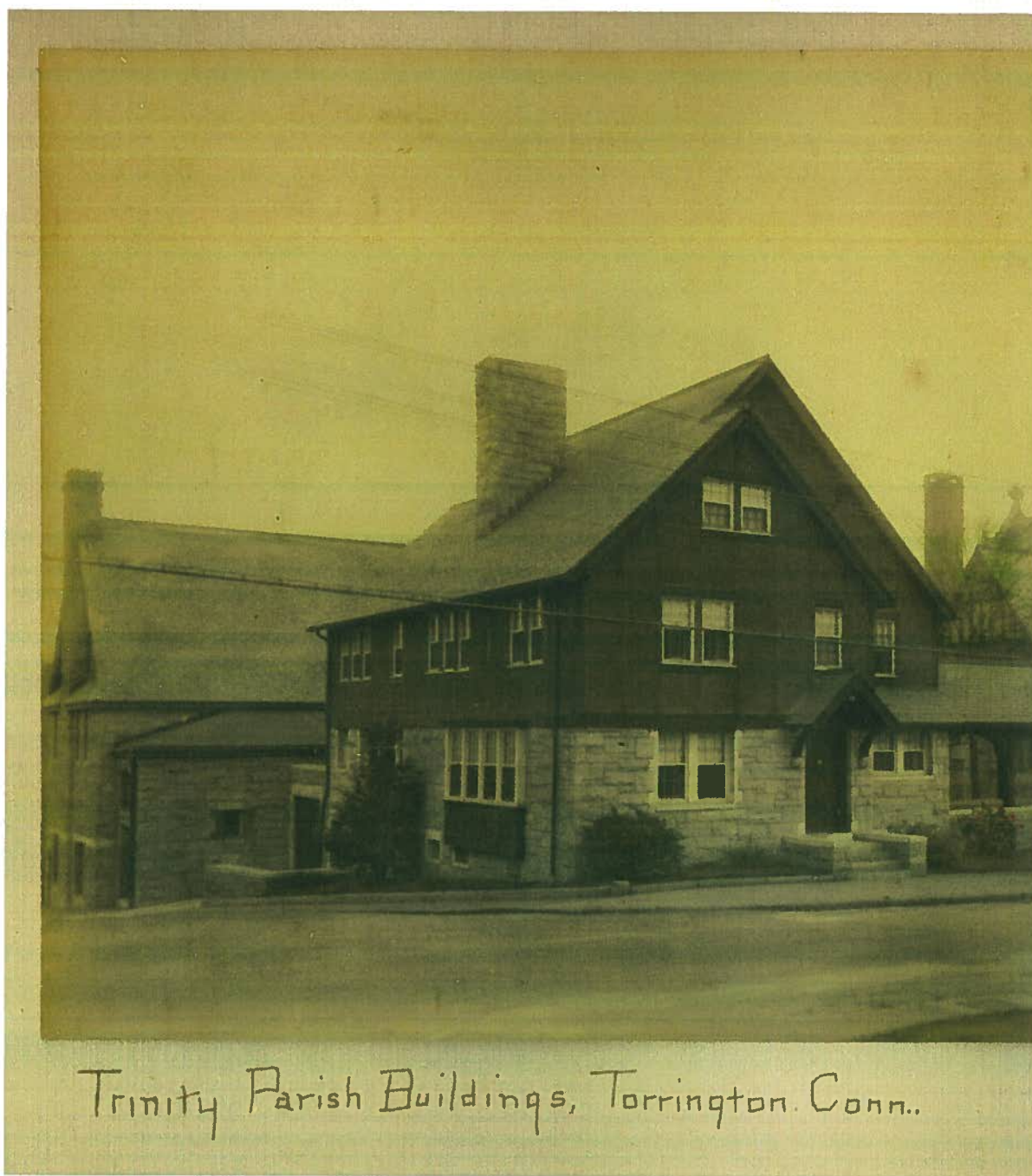
Trinity has many fine stained glass windows. Congdon suggested a pattern of themes that has been followed, for the most part. The Boy Scout window, is one of the exceptions. It was given in honor of Troop #2's 50th anniversary. The window is familiar to many who have never been inside Trinity as it graced the cover of the Boy Scout Handbook for many years. A brochure describing each window is available at church or from the office.

The New Parish Hall and Rectory Complete the Vision

1909 photo taken from Prospect Street shows the new Church and the new Parish Hall surrounding the old Rectory. The Parish Hall was built by Torrington Building Co.



The old Rectory was replaced with the new one by 1919. The entire Trinity campus was built in just 22 years for a total cost of \$76,000!



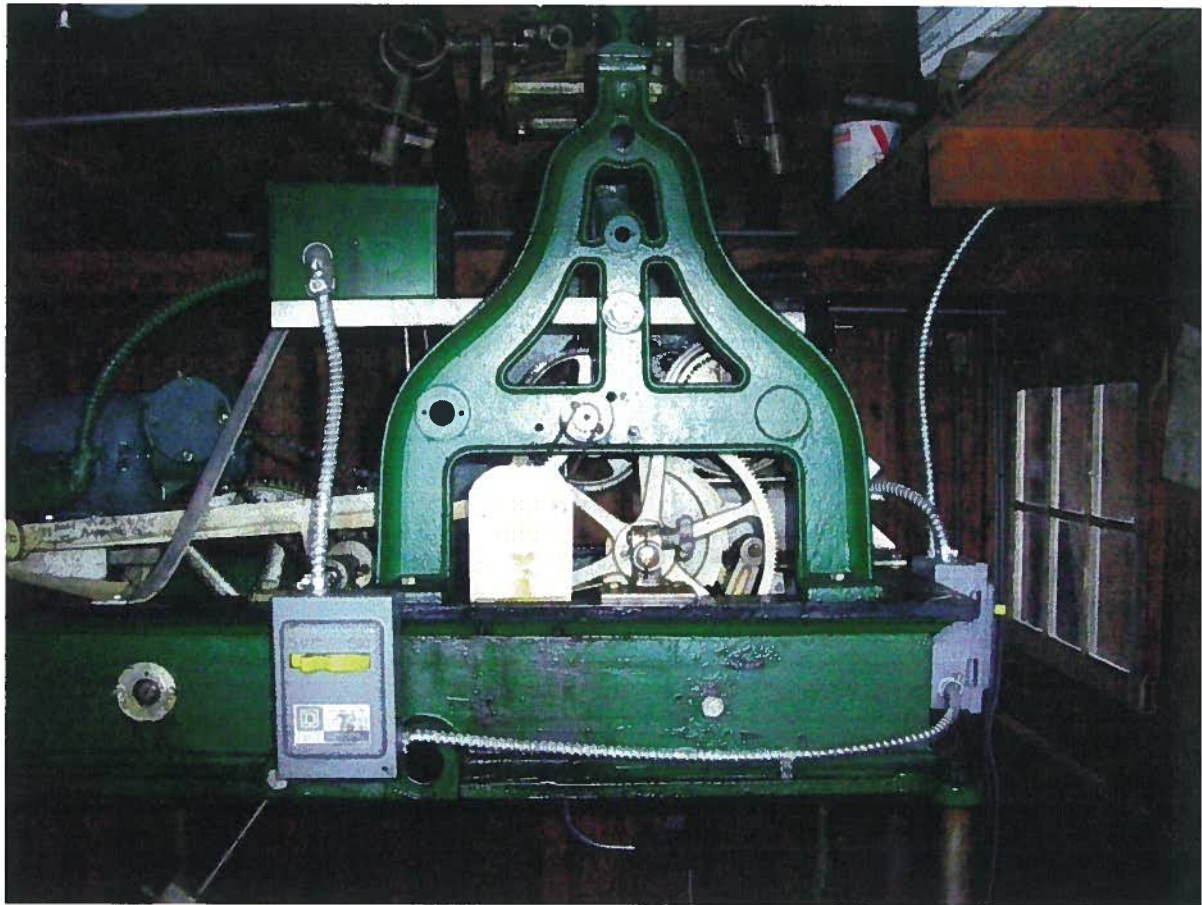
All 3 buildings inside & out are of one design making for a cohesive campus. The complex is listed in Connecticut's Register of Historic Places and on the National Register as part of downtown's Historic District.

The positioning of the three buildings creates a welcoming court yard. Today it contains a columbarium and is used for casual gatherings and meditation.



Seth Thomas Clock Works and Meneely Bell

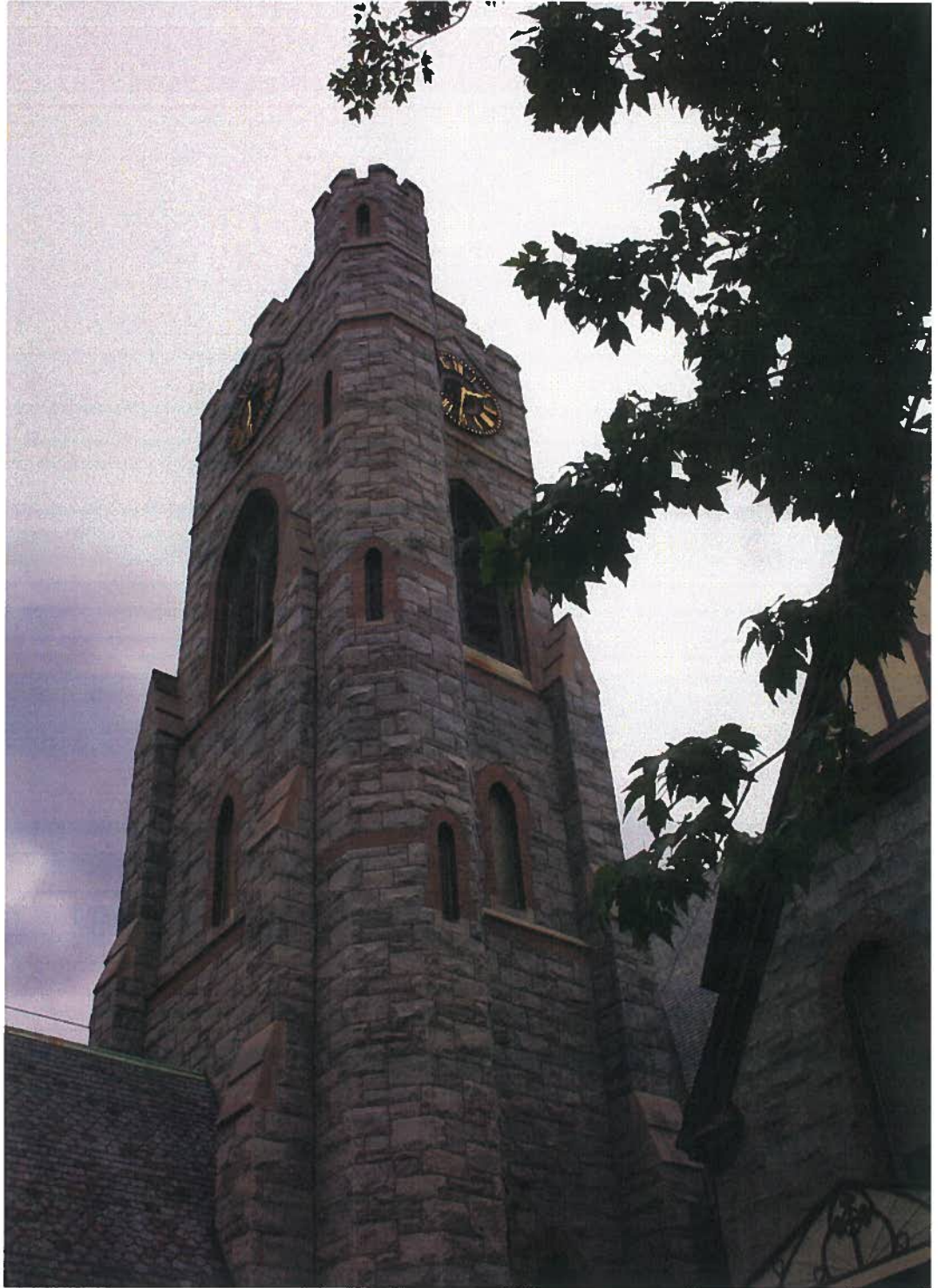
In its October 22, 1897 issue, the Weekly Register reports that, “There is some prospect of Torrington having a town clock, something greatly wanted for many years.” It goes on to say that there is a strong probability of a tower clock being placed in connection with a new church building. In fact, the original tower clock was given by Elisha Turner and installed by Ella Coe in 1898. Worn out after 30 years, it folded its hands at 12 noon and refused to go again. In the 30 year interim, it had become, in the minds of Torrington’s citizens, the town clock. When the call for funds went out many non-parishioners contributed to the \$1,200 needed to purchase and install a self-winding Seth Thomas clock. The Seth Thomas works are still in place, but it is no longer self-winding. At some point, an electric motor was installed to power the clock works. The original pendulum and weights rest on the floor near the works.





Behind the louvers in the tower is a Meneely Bell founded by the Meneely Foundry in West Troy, New York. The Meneely Foundry was the premiere bell foundry in the country. From 1826 to 1956 this foundry produced well over 50,000 bells. Trinity's bell weighs 2,000 pounds and has a deep resonate sound.

The Turret On the southeast side of the tower is a turret.



Most churches in the United States with towers do not have turrets. Congdon, himself, used turrets sparingly. His church in Ansonia has one as does another church in upstate New York.

In a square tower, the stairs access the different levels of the tower in a zig-zag pattern. At Trinity, access to the different levels in the tower is achieved by a circular stair case within the turret. Trinity's stairs are supported by a 90 foot central pole that very much resembles a ship's mast. Was Congdon trying to remind us that Torrington alias Wolcottville was once known as Mast Swamp?



Frederick F. Fuessenich Stories

Frederick F. Fuessenich was a dedicated Trinity parishioner all his life. His discipline within his family was legendary. He insisted that his entire family attend church without exception unless sickness or out of town travel intervened. During one particular Sunday blizzard, his four sons were sure they would be exempt from their Sunday obligation. He produced four shovels and had them precede him, shoveling a path a good four blocks to church.

The Fuessenich family donated the original flag pole on top of the tower to Trinity in 1898. On the day that Frederick Fuessenich's funeral was held in June 1925, the flag pole fell down to the street shortly after his body and coffin had been removed from the church.

Outreach –In The Past

Trinity's ministry has always included a strong commitment to those less fortunate and the greater Torrington community.

In September of 1911 a typhoid epidemic struck Torrington. The nearest hospital was in Winsted. Given the road conditions and the mode of transport at that time, it was believed that such a trip would be far too arduous for the sick. The city fathers appealed to the state for the use of the Armory, but were turned down. "Put up tents," was the reply. Tents? In a field with autumn storms coming on and no plumbing for typhoid victims? Within 36 hours, the new Parish Hall had been sanitized and set up as a hospital with volunteer nurses. Gifts of money poured in from around the state to be used to support the work of the temporary hospital and as aid to the victims and their families. 112 patients were treated with only 8 deaths in the 2-3 months of the epidemic's duration.

Current Outreach

Parishioners frequently initiate an outreach ministry with Trinity's support and then spin it off as an independent agency. Recently Trinity parishioners have been instrumental in the founding of the Community Soup Kitchen, Susan B. Anthony Project, the Torrington Community Garden, and Operation Overflow.

The following groups currently use Trinity's facilities.

Community Soup Kitchen	Family Violence Programs
Girl Scouts	AA and NA Meetings
Youth Opportunities	Northwest Mental Health
Joyful Noise	Torrington Affordable Housing
Operation Overflow Shelter	Raising Our Children
	Family Matters