

The Motivations to Begin and End Church Buildings

The news media occasionally take note that a Christian denomination is about to build a new church building, or that a church building is for sale, or will be demolished. To build or demolish a church involves a high measure of courage, and emotions of joy or dismay.

The history leading up to the building today's Old St. Luke's Church includes an array of emotions.

WHEN DO WE BUILD, CLOSE OR DEMOLISH?

In the aura of winning the Revolutionary War, American patriots rejoiced in new found freedoms, One such freedom came as Christians enjoyed the end of the Established Church rule of tithing (taxation) to support just one denomination in a state. Tithing became voluntary and each congregation could administer their finances as they saw fit. It was a motivating freedom. In the Chartiers Valley, many Christians held worship in their homes or a nearby fort. In 1790, Major John and Dorothy Lea and Gen. John and Winifred Neville must have caught the spirit of expanding worship opportunities and participation. The Leas donated the use of 10 rods square of their plantation and the Nevilles and others shared their wealth to erect a frame church building. It was a joyful way to build a fellowship of Christians giving thanks to God for His presence in their lives.



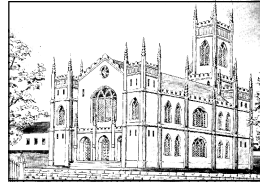
Suggested image of St. Luke's Church 1790. built on Lea's Summer Hill plantation. First vicar, the Rev. Francis Reno. Second known Vicar, the Rev. Sanson Brunot.
Demolished about 1834.

The population of the borough of Pittsburgh in 1800 was about 1500 and rapidly growing. Episcopalians excitedly purchased a triangular tract of land in order to build a church downtown, even though they held the Penn land grant near by on Sixth Avenue.



Trinity Episcopal Church, 1805, 42 pews. It was octagonal in shape, but was called "Old Round Church." and situated on a triangular lot at Sixth, Liberty Avenue and Wood Street. The 1823 pipe organ, now at Old St. Lukes, was installed there. The first rector was the Rev. John Taylor
Demolished after 1825.

The need for a new Trinity building to accommodate and serve an expanding congregation of worshippers with pastoral needs soon became clear. In 1825, on the Penn land grant on Sixth Avenue, where Indians and pioneers had already been buried, the second Trinity Church was constructed.



Trinity Church, 1825.

Designed by the Rector, the Rev. John Henry Hopkins.

Demolished about 1869 to start building today's Trinity Cathedral on Sixth Avenue.

With the amazing leadership of Hopkins and the resource of Trinity's 1825 impressive building, and before the church became totally overcrowded, a bold decision was made to build two other buildings to accommodate the growing congregations. Both churches would be "Chapels of Ease," a location designed to make it easier for worshippers to attend and participate. John Notman was the architect for both of the new buildings.

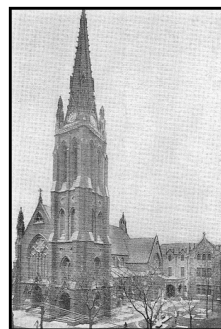


1851 Trinity Church erected St. Peter's Church at Grant St., and Forbes Avenue (then called Diamond Alley) The Rev. Theodore Lyman, rector.

It was dismantled In 1901 by industrialist Henry Frick and moved to Forbes and Craft Avenues, Oakland, to build his office building on the Grant Street site. **It was demolished in 1989** due to the lack of parishioners.



1852 St. Luke's Church, also initiated by Trinity Church to be the "Church on the Chartiers Creek" on Major Lea's land, and to restart the congregation. The Rev. George Foote was the first vicar. Prefix "Old" added to the name in 1975.



Trinity Church, Dedicated 1872 replacing the 1825 structure.

The architect was Gordon Lloyd. Initial financial support was by rental of pews.

The Church suffered two fires in 1964.

Designated a Cathedral in 1928. (The first Bishop of the new Diocese of Pittsburgh (1865) was the Rt. Rev. John B. Kerfoot.)

A church consists of people who seek to be in an enduring relationship with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and to be in fellowship with, and serve, one another. On page 2 is a number of selected public events, circa 1852, that impacted the lives and faith of Pittsburghers, and when combined with private and personal needs, drew many of them together to be the church for worship, prayer and grace. We commend all who were spiritually energized in the past to construct the church buildings that have led up to the historic site we now call Old St. Luke's Church, Burial Ground and Garden.

Public Events in Pittsburgh 1845-1869

1845 The Great Fire destroyed 600 buildings, which was caused by a washer woman's open fire to boil clothes. The rebuilding of the city was seen as a way to give better buildings, water supply and sanitation.

1846 Kerr's "Remedy of Wonderful Efficacy" from crude oil was refined and bottled in a plant at 7th and Grant

Street. (Gulf Building site)

1845 Mercy Hospital opens.

1848 Leveling of the earthen mound and a pond began at city center. . (The third of 3 cuts made in 1911.)

1849 Gas lamps placed on city streets.

1849 Joseph Horne store is opened.

1850 Stephen Collins Foster married Jane McDowell in Trinity Church.

1850 Sixty worship sites exist in Pittsburgh. Temperance is stressed to replace drunkenness.

1851 Neville Craig, editor of the Gazette newspaper, refused to print ads for rewards to capture runaway slaves.

1851 Start of St. Peter's Church, Grant Street

1852 Start of St. Luke's Church stone building

1852 First rail service by Ohio & Pa RR to New Brighton

1852 Railroad to Philadelphia, and tracks were laid over Liberty Avenue. (Tracks removed in 1906.)

1853 The Chartiers Valley Railroad Co was formed.

1853 B. F. Jones began American Works (J&L Steel)

1854 Cholera plague killed 400 Pittsburghers.

1855 Bread lines form.

1855 Gazette calls for formation of Republican party with the convention at Lafayette Hall, 4th and Wood St.

1857 Financial panic hits.

1858 Puddler iron workers formed a labor union.

1859 John Roebling's Sixth St Bridge built, The horsecar railway authorized from Penn Ave. to 34th Street.

1861 The critical national event - The Civil War began April 12, 1861 and ended June 23, 1865.

1869 Start of Construction of Trinity Church on Sixth Avenue