

You are standing inside the Cathedral Church of St. Paul.

The building was built as a parish church in 1819 by the architects Alexander Parris and Solomon Willard. It was the first example of Greek Revival architecture in Boston. In 1912, it was designated the cathedral church of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, and “a House of Prayer for All People.” This legacy lives on today through the open and affirming ethos of the Cathedral, and in the diverse congregations that worship here.

The Cathedral has been the site of several important events in Episcopal Church history, including the 1988 election of the Rt. Rev. Barbara C. Harris, the first woman to be ordained a bishop in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

The Cathedral is the seat of the Bishop of Massachusetts, hosts many important events in diocesan life, and underwent a major renovation completed in 2015. The Cathedral is now more accessible and flexible than ever before, hosting a wide range of events and accommodating many worship styles.

PHOTO CREDIT: ROY GOODWIN



The Cathedral Church of Saint Paul
A House of Prayer for All People

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COVER PHOTO CREDIT: REBECCA KRESHAK

Welcome

歡迎光臨

أهلاً و سهلاً

Bienvenido

Bem-vindo

환영합니다

Willkommen

Bienvenue

אבה דורב

Benvenuto

Добро

пожаловать

Karibu

Καλώς

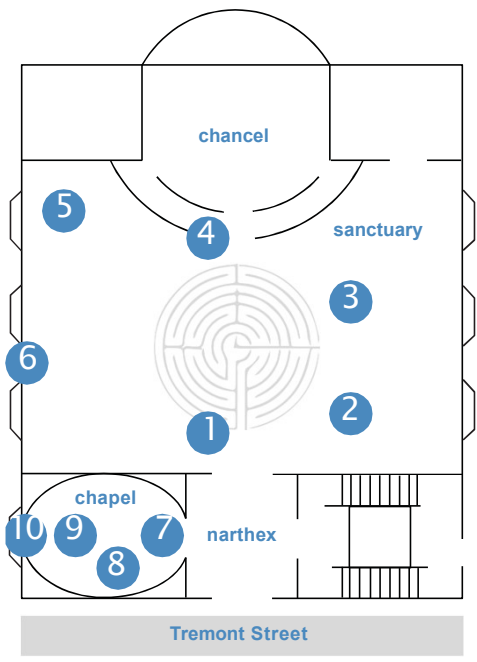
Ορίσατε

Hoan

ngôn

ようこそ

Let's explore some of the Cathedral's unique features, both modern and historic.



1 LABYRINTH

The labyrinth beneath your feet is modeled after one in Ravenna, Italy and is an ancient meditative tool. Start anywhere, and follow the path to the center. Use the gentle, repetitive movement to pray, think, or quiet your mind.

2 PARISH TILES

Also at shoe-level, you will find tiles, randomly placed, that bear the names of all the churches and missions in the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. If you are looking for your church or one that is special to you, you may find a tile map to your right as you enter the sanctuary.



PHOTO CREDIT (L-R): REBECCA KRESHAK (1, 2, 4, 5), ROY GOODWIN (3)

3 SKYLIGHTS

Look up! The skylights above your head were added during the 2015 renovation. They, along with the glass panels on the front of the church, allow natural light into the Cathedral. The Cathedral Church of St. Paul is a LEED-certified building.

4 RAMP

The curving ramp that encircles the chancel was added during the 2015 renovation to make the altar and its surrounding area fully accessible. Other accessibility-focused changes include the elevator in the entryway.

5 STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The brass Roman numerals inlaid around the perimeter of the sanctuary can be used to pray the Stations of the Cross. The stations begin in the left front corner of the sanctuary where you'll find leaflets to guide you.

6 NO PEWS?

The pews were removed as part of the 2015 renovation. New chairs provide greater flexibility for different kinds of worship services and special events and leave room for labyrinth walkers! The pews have not completely disappeared: Look at the perimeter of the room. The polished wood molding is made from the old pew rails, salvaged during the renovation.

7 CHAPEL

The glass chapel, visible from the street, is a quiet place for prayer and reflection. It honors the Church of St. John the Evangelist, formerly located on Bowdoin St. in Boston, and is dedicated to the memory of the late Rt. Rev. M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE, Bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts from 1995 to 2014 and a brother of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE). The Church of St. John the Evangelist began as a mission of SSJE in 1883, and served, among others, the poor and unemployed in Boston's West End and Beacon Hill neighborhoods. It became a parish in 1985. Due to diminishing membership, it was sold in 2015 and the congregation merged with the Cathedral Church of St. Paul.

8 BLACK MADONNA

This wooden Madonna and Child statue was given to the Church of St. John the Evangelist in the late 1890s and for many years stood outdoors in the church's memorial garden.

9 IN MEMORIAM

Buried beneath the altar in the chapel is soil from the former memorial garden at the Church of St. John the Evangelist, where ashes of parishioners and family members were scattered. That garden was a resting place for the ashes of AIDS victims at a time when they were not accepted elsewhere.

10 STAINED GLASS

The stained glass window behind the altar in the chapel was installed in 2016. The names of St. Paul and St. John adorn its upper corners; outlines of the gothic-style St. John's church building and its storied Connick windows have been worked into the background. A chalice modeled after one used at St. John's forms the window's central image, haloed by stylized representations of wheat and grapes. Andrew Young and Pearl River Glass Studio in Jackson, Miss., designed and crafted the window.