

A Brief History of Our Sanctuary

"Takoma Park Presbyterian Church stands for the intellectual, moral, and spiritual uplift of the community. It seeks the betterment of Takoma Park [and is] a center of the community life and spirit."

- from the 1915 Capital Campaign pamphlet



UPPER: "Takoma News" article describing the 1923 Dedication. Former Union Chapel can be seen at far left.

LOWER: 1937 Easter service



Takoma Park Presbyterian Church's current Sanctuary was built in 1922-23 to accommodate the church's then 500+ members. The stone exterior was extended to cover over the existing church building, Union Chapel, which was the first church in Takoma Park and built in 1888.

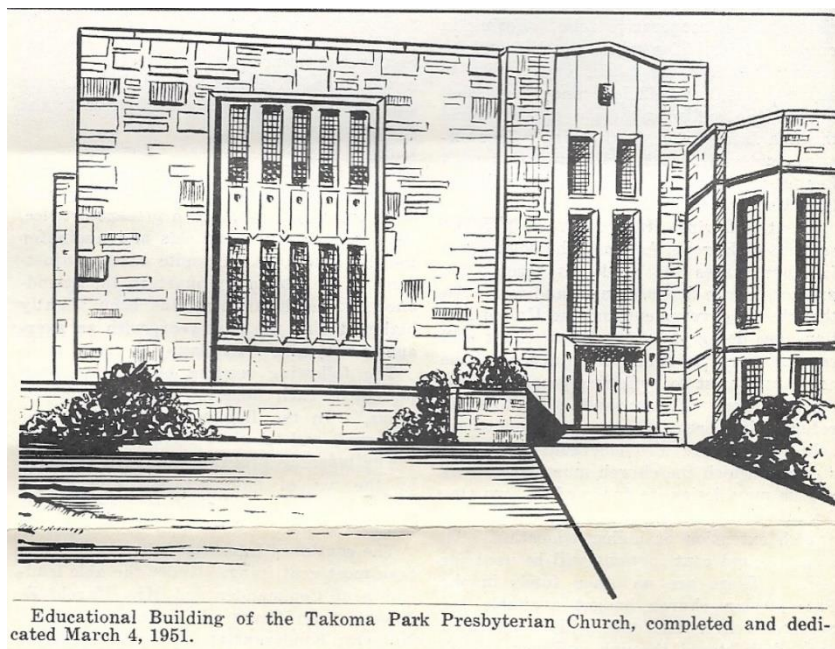
A capital campaign for the new church was undertaken in 1915 and promptly put on hold until after what is now known as World War I ended.

In 1923, a month-long series of events helped celebrate Takoma Park Presbyterian Church's 30th Anniversary and the Dedication of its new sanctuary.

Originally installed in the center of the Choir Loft, the large stained-glass window known as the "Soldiers Memorial" was donated by TPPC's great benefactress, Helen L. Thompson, to honor the 55 members of the congregation who served in the war effort. The Ladies Aid Society provided funds for the beautiful organ. The new edifice and equipment cost \$79,000.

In 1930, the interior of the church was completely renovated. The pews from Union Chapel had simply been moved to the new church when it first opened, but during the renovation the old pews were placed in the balcony where they remain today. Our Tudor-style windows were installed by the Washington Art Glass Studio, a now four-generation firm still in business and caring for the windows.

In 1938, as part of the church's 50th anniversary, plans for a new building to replace the old Union Chapel were announced. A new capital campaign for an Education Building began with great promise, only to be put on hold by the Second World War. The new Education Building was finally completed and dedicated in 1951 and has been in steady use ever since. It is believed that the Soldiers Memorial window was moved to its current position during this time to accommodate a new organ. The organ was most recently rebuilt and upgraded in 1984.



Educational Building of the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church, completed and dedicated March 4, 1951.

Efforts to improve the accessibility of the buildings by installing an elevator, wheelchair ramp, and new bathrooms were undertaken in the 1990s through the church's "Vision 2000" campaign. No world wars occurred (!) and the improvements were formally dedicated in 2001.

The most recent renovation of the Sanctuary was funded by a loan from the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program and through the generous donations to the "Rebuild-Restore-Rejoice" capital campaign, originally authorized by the Session in 2016. Completed projects include: replacing the original 1922 slate roof with a new slate roof; extensive repointing of the stone exterior; replastering and repainting the Sanctuary, which had been damaged by water leaking through the old roof; restoring some of the stained glass windows; refinishing the floor in the Sanctuary and Choir Loft; and upgrading the church's lighting, sound, and video capabilities. Electricity for our buildings is now partially provided by an array of 81 solar panels recently installed on the roof of the Education Building, which was replaced in 2017.

This story is not done! More improvements and projects are still in store for our beautiful sacred and communal space. Today, however, we pause to give thanks and praise to all who have given so generously of their time, treasures, and talents over the past 134 years.

May our faithful stewardship continue to bless our church and the entire community for many years to come.