



CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER  
40 CENTER STREET

Records do not indicate when the first services were held in Elgin by the Episcopalians but, on January 24, 1858, official consent was asked of the bishop of Illinois for permission to form a parish. On Ash Wednesday of that year (February 17), a parish was organized under the name of the Church of the Redeemer and the Reverend J. H. Waterbury was elected rector. Sunday morning and evening services were held for years in the Odd Fellows' Hall in downtown Elgin until the first church was built in 1880. Built in the Gothic style, it was 30 feet by 70 feet with a seating capacity of 250, and was described in later years as a beautiful, vine covered church. This church, however, was destroyed by fire in 1916 and the current building was constructed on the same site in 1917. This building suffered damage from fire in 1934 and underwent extensive repairs.

The building has a rusticated stone foundation and buttresses transfer lateral roof loads onto the foundation. The form of the pointed arches in the window reflects a Gothic influence, while the asymmetrical bell tower with a castellated top is reminiscent of English Gothic. Note the chapel entrance on the north wall with buttressing on the corner and the main sanctuary walls. The choice of brick used on the west addition reflects judgment in constructing a sympathetic contemporary addition.

Upon entering the church, notice the distinct English atmosphere. Originally, the altar was at the west end of the building under a large arch but, after the interior was gutted by the 1934 fire, it was placed at the east end. The carved wood altar and lectern, and the brass pulpit all date from the original 1880 church. Note the beautiful stained glass windows.