BICENTENNIAL HISTORY MINUTE

#34

A Sacred Space for Peace and Prayer

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ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
DOWNTOWN SYRACUSE
200
WHERE LOVE GROWS
1826 – 2026

On October 14, 1951, a simple yet beautiful white marble altar designed by Kenneth Sargent was installed at the east end of the North Aisle. Set against walls adorned with 22-carat gold leaf, the altar was the gift of Miss Carrie S. Rice of Geneva, New York. It was dedicated as the Peace Altar in memory of her sister and brother-in-law, Jane and Joseph Terbush, faithful communicants of St. Paul's Church.



The installation was especially timely. The Korean War had begun the previous year, and concerns about war weighed heavily on the minds of many. To provide a place for prayer and reflection, the church remained open throughout the day, with the altar illuminated as a welcome invitation for members of the public to pray privately. As reported in a Post-Standard article published on October 14, 1951, the Rev. Hall Hutton explained that the altar was intended to serve as a special place for prayers for peace and for those serving in times of war. He expressed the hope that, even after the conflict had ended, the altar would continue to inspire prayer, noting that if people prayed for peace during times of peace, perhaps future wars could be avoided.

Over the decades, the Peace Altar has remained a place of prayer, quiet reflection, and comfort. Countless individuals have sought solace there, offering private prayers, receiving Holy Communion, and seeking God's presence in times of need. It has also served as a setting for blessings led by lay ministers. More than seventy years after its dedication, the Peace Altar continues to fulfill the purpose envisioned by its donor and clergy: providing a sacred space where prayers for peace may be offered by every generation.

Today, the Peace Altar stands as both a beautiful memorial and a lasting reminder of St. Paul's commitment to prayer, reconciliation, and the hope for peace in a troubled world.