

# Church of the Magdalen

*A Self-Guided Tour of Magdalen Catholic Church*



## Sacred Space Church of the Magdalen

This self-guided tour is designed to give an overview of some of the architectural and artistic elements that help to shape our parish home. As you walk around, please remember that this guide is intended to help us to keep sacred our *domus ecclesiae*, or house of the Church, and also to explain some of the symbolism and ritual actions of our faith. Please do not bring any food or drink into the main worship space. There are docents available to answer questions.

### History

The Church of the Magdalen parish was established in 1950. We have moved three times since then. The first worship space was the building that became the social hall at our former location. From that building we moved to the ‘round church’, a local landmark at the intersection of Kellogg and Woodlawn, where we worshipped from 1968 to 2001. With the widening of Kellogg, our building was purchased by the city, and we relocated to our current site. The new home for the Magdalen parish was dedicated in November of 2002. This building was designed to, in many ways, replicate the feeling of the church building our parish called home for 33 years with its rounded walls, curved pews and sloped floor. The main difference is size. Our former church building seated 850 people. The new worship space has room for 1500 people. Two dominant themes influenced the design of this church building. The first was that of a pilgrimage of faith, a journey of conversion. The second was a theme of healing, which has become the focus of the art created for this new space. There has been a concentrated effort to adhere to the guiding principle of “noble simplicity” in shaping this space.



### Plaza

To the east of the Gathering Space is the Plaza, which provides a wide entrance way to the church. The large boulder on the Plaza marks the location of the Easter Vigil fire. There the Paschal Candle is lit and carried into the darkened church. Two stone pillars flank the entrance to the Plaza, each containing one of the cornerstones of the two

former church buildings (1950 and 1968). The cornerstone of this building is located at the front of the Plaza, to the north of the main church entrance. A prayer and meditation garden is being designed for the large area just the north of the Plaza.

## Gathering Space



depicts our patron at the beginning of her journey of conversion and sets the tone for this church as a place of healing.

The Gathering Space provides a place for our parishioners to gather prior to and after the mass. The focal point of this space is a sculpture of the Healing of St. Mary Magdalen, which is described in Luke, Chapter 6. Artist Linda Dabeau was commissioned by the Magdalen Altar Society to create these life sized figures of Christ and Mary Magdalen. This artwork

## St. Joseph Meeting Room



Adjacent to the gathering space is the Saint Joseph meeting room. Art glass was taken from the 1968 church building and placed here. This window depicts Mary Magdalen and two other women going to the tomb on Easter morning. The St. Joseph room serves as a meeting location, parish library, and a place for families to gather before funerals. Next to this room is a dressing room for brides.

## Holy Family Adoration Chapel



In this small chapel, located off a separate hallway adjacent to the gathering space, parishioners worship our Eucharistic Lord 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. *If you enter this space please observe respectful silence.* Inside the chapel is the baptismal font from our former church, now serving as a base for the monstrance, which houses the body of Christ under the form of Eucharistic bread. The rose window and portions of two of the Beatitude windows, created by the late Gabrielle Loire, have also been relocated here from the old church. The windows at the entrance to the chapel depict Christ holding the Eucharistic symbols of a lamb and a chalice.

## Threshold

Between the gathering space and the main worship space are three sets of doors that separate the two areas. The larger center doors are ceremonial doors. Wisconsin glass artist Steve Melahn has designed art glass for this large expanse of glass wall which will provide a view of what is beyond, and at the same time enhance the sense that, in stepping over this threshold into the church, we are entering a sacred space.



The fan-shaped configuration of the main worship space allows all to see the altar and ambo, as well as each other. We are called to participate actively in the celebration of the liturgy, not be mere spectators. Our space is barrier free, so that persons with disabilities are not excluded in any way from the celebration.



## Baptismal Font

The baptismal font, which is made of Kansas limestone, was designed to give the appearance of a grave or tomb, for *“through the waters of baptism we die and rise with Jesus Christ”* [Romans 6:3-5]. The font was placed at the entrance of the Church to remind us that baptism is the

“gateway”, the first sacrament we as Christians receive. The upper basin allows for infant baptisms and individual blessings. The lower basin is used for adult baptisms during the Easter Vigil. Three steps down and three steps out of the font are symbolic of the three days Christ was in the Tomb.

## **Altar, Ambo, Liturgical Furnishings**

The altar is the focal point of the entire church. Upon it is laid the sacrificial elements of bread and wine, consecrated to the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The altar is made of wood and stone. The relics of saints are located beneath the altar in a special reliquary. The altar, ambo, presider's chair, and other furnishings were designed by our Liturgical Design Consultant, Robert Habiger, and constructed by Arizona artist Chris Sandoval.



### **Crucifix**

The crucifix selected for our worship space is entitled “The Transcendent Christ”. It depicts neither a lifeless Christ figure nor a Risen Christ, but portrays the moment when Jesus said “Into your hands Father, I commend my spirit”. The artist, Mr. Lynn Kircher, merged the moment of death, the knowledge of life to come and the victory of life over death in this one figure. Because the moment depicted is before Christ’s death, there is no mark of a spear in His side. The cross is the central image of Christianity, embracing ambiguities of suffering and death, healing and resurrection. The sculptor stated that he has Christ looking straight up to His Father; head tilted back, every aspect attesting to the *hope* engendered by His experience.

### **Tabernacle**

The tabernacle, fabricated by F. C. Ziegler Company, houses the Blessed Sacrament. This reservation is for both Eucharistic adoration and communion of the sick. The tabernacle is set on top of a large stone that has been embedded into the floor of the church. The outer bronze veil of the tabernacle doors replicates the lines of the image of the Risen Christ, a reference to the large mosaic which was located behind the altar in our former church building.



## Windows



The art glass in the upper windows was designed by Steve Melahn of Light Haus Glass, an art and liturgical glass company in Wisconsin. These windows are the first phase of an integrated design that begins at the glass wall separating the gathering space from the church, and continues around the church in both the upper and lower windows. The colors of glass

chosen include all the colors of the liturgical year. Although the style of the glass is architectural, not figurative, Melahn sought provide a sense of “living light” in using glass that reflects colors onto the walls and floor which move and change throughout the day, as the sun moves across the sky.

## Devotional Spaces



In each of the four niches that surround the worship space there is a bronze sculpture depicting a saint associated with healing. In the niche at the front on the southwest side of the church, **Mary Magdalen** is shown in the garden on Easter morning at the moment when she recognizes the Risen Christ. The tomb is outlined in the stone wall behind her, the dropped jar of oil sits at her feet, and her outstretched arms joyfully reach for our

Lord. The oil of anointing is kept on a small shelf in this niche.



**St. Peregrine**, the patron saint of those living with cancer and other life-threatening diseases, is located in the other niche on the south side of the worship space. St. Peregrine is depicted sitting in prayer before the image of the crucified Jesus.



On the northeast side of the church there are sculptures of **the Virgin Mary and Saint Bernadette**. Bernadette is depicted praying the rosary with Mary in the grotto at Lourdes. The shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France is one that is associated with healing of the sick.

The final niche is not yet completed. The last sculpture that will be added will depict **Mother Teresa** of Calcutta. All of the figures in these niches are original designs that have been created by artist Lynn Kircher.



### **Reconciliation Chapels**

The two small rooms located to the left and right of the church entrance are used for the sacrament of reconciliation. They each contain art glass from our previous church building. The Merciful Beatitude is depicted in one of the chapels and Mary Magdalen and Jesus in the other. These rooms provide the penitent with the choice of sitting face-to-face with the priest, or behind a screen that provides anonymity.

### **Dedication Crosses**

Designed and created by Wichita artists Diane and Gary Lincoln, the four small crosses, mark the places where the walls of the church were anointed during the dedication ceremony. Each of the wooden crosses is inlaid with tiles that were salvaged from the Risen Christ mosaic that was in the 1968 church building.





## Stations of the Cross

There are 14 pillars that encircle our worship space. On each of these pillars is one of the Stations of the Cross, brought with us from the 1968 church building. These images are used for private devotion and for reflections on the passion of Jesus, during which parishioners are encouraged to walk the Stations of the Cross as they meditate on Christ's suffering and death.

## Candles

Throughout our worship space you will notice a variety of candles. Candles are ancient symbols we use in our worship. Next to the baptismal font is the Paschal candle, which is a symbol of the Risen Christ. It is lit during the Easter season, for baptisms and for funerals. Suspended above and to the right of the tabernacle is the sanctuary lamp. This lamp signals the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, and burns constantly, except when there is no Eucharist held in reservation in the tabernacle. There are candles that are carried in during the procession at the beginning of mass and placed near the altar and ambo as a sign of reverence. In the niches are a variety of votive candles. Candles in these spaces are there to represent our personal concerns and devotions.

*Thank you for visiting our church. Rest here. Come for healing of mind, body, spirit and soul. If you desire further information about our church building or the Catholic Church, please contact the parish office at (316) 634-2315. One of the pastoral staff would be privileged to serve you.*