

The sweeping curvilinear design of St. Augustine's Church breaks sharply from the triangular prisms and cubes of many low cost church buildings in recent years. Built of brick, glass, and warm-colored woods, the building cost \$100,000. The carillon bell at the west end of the building is controlled from the sanctuary and is used as a sanctus bell.

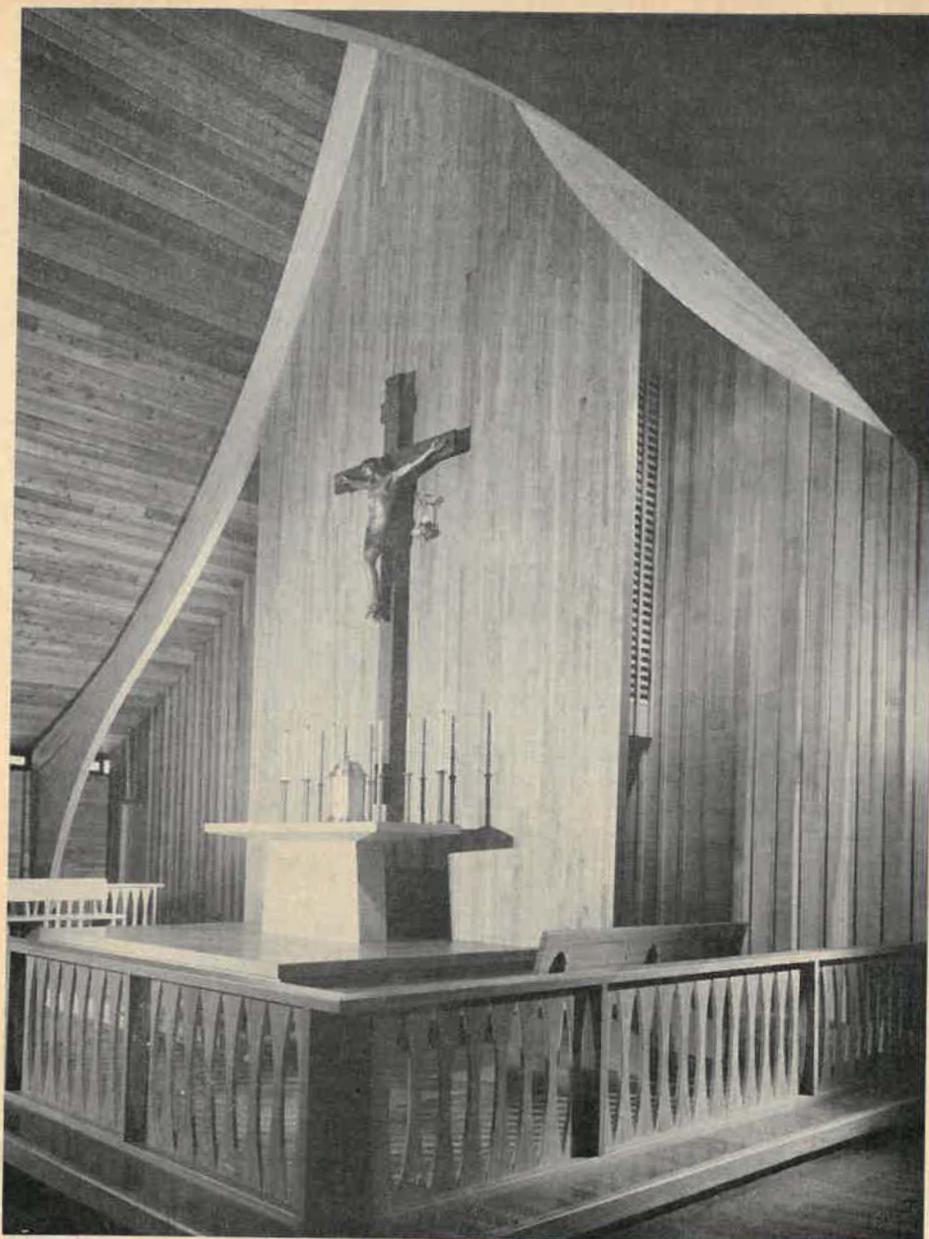


Prayerful And Militant

*From sacrifice —
“an honest building”*

St. Augustine's 325 Negro members find the unusual building comfortable and utilitarian. The first floor includes narthex, nave which seats 300, choir loft, sacristy, and priest's study. A basement provides for Church school and other activities, and contains a modern kitchen, rest rooms, storage space, and a heater room.

by the Rev. Wallace L. Wells
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Warm colors and soaring curves in a prayerful place. The roof decking is of red cedar, unfinished so that its subtle fragrance adds to the environmental effects of the architecture. The roof seems to float above the buff brick walls and shallow windows. End walls of rough-sawn redwood echo the board and batten of the exterior gables. The polished red oak of the dorsal wall, repeated in the altar rail and chancel furnishings, forms a background for the life-size crucifix.

The new St. Augustine's Church in Gary, Ind., is not just another church of contemporary design. It was conceived by the architect, Churchman Edward Dart, AIA, Chicago, as "the tabernacle, house of Jehovah, or tent of the meeting, for which Moses received instructions at Sinai." He visualized the curving roof as hands, grasping the cross at fingertip. Some of St. Augustine's parishioners also see it as the head of a spear, symbolizing the Church Militant.

St. Augustine's Church was organized by 30 communicants in 1927. It struggled rather feebly until the Benedictine monks of St. Gregory's Priory were assigned to

the church in 1938. They remained until 1946. I am a former communicant of St. Augustine's, and have served as vicar since my graduation from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in 1951.

The membership of St. Augustine's increased steadily, and outgrew the church that was given by the diocese. It was agreed that a new church was needed, and in 1955 a campaign was conducted by church members, with a goal of \$50,000 to be reached, if possible, in three years. Every family was asked to make a sacrificial pledge to be paid weekly beginning in September of that year. Pledges received amounted to \$44,000. Of this, more

than \$27,000 has been paid, and payments are still coming in. Members raised approximately \$10,000 by money-raising activities and solicitations from friends. The diocese of Northern Indiana has contributed \$7,625 from mission funds in annual grants. A sum of \$20,000 was granted by the United Thank Offering of the women of the Church, and \$5,000 came from the Children's Lenten Offering. The sale of the old church property from \$20,000 brought \$10,000 in cash, with the balance to be paid monthly in 20 years. A bank loan of \$54,000 provided the necessary balance to pay for the property and furnishings and to finance the construction of the building. The bell, furnishings in the nave (with the exception of pews, and the pulpit) are memorials or gifts. The study and kitchen were furnished by the Woman's Auxiliary at a cost of \$3,000.

Although a mission, St. Augustine's has been self-supporting for more than three years, and has received no money from outside sources except for the building program. Its budget for 1959 was \$15,000. In 1960 the budget will increase and the church will have a difficult time meeting its obligations. But the majority of the members of St. Augustine's have accepted the challenge that added responsibilities bring, and are optimistic enough to look forward to parish status in the not too distant future. Their common goal proclaims anew the victory of the reigning Christ.

Construction of the building was begun on June 30, 1958, three years after the campaign to build was initiated. The first services in the new church were held in April, 1959, and it was dedicated by Bishop Mallett of Northern Indiana the following month. The preacher at this service was the Rev. Tollie Caution of the National Council staff.

The contemporary and unique style of the building has elicited much admiration from the neighboring community and surrounding areas. The combination of structural beauty and functional design, with no liturgical requirements overlooked, made the original plans of the architect acceptable to an overwhelming majority of the parishioners. Another architect has called it "an honest building," and a local artist commented, "In the years to come, this will be known as a church of my generation."

That His house "shall be called a house of prayer" seems to have been the motivating inspiration of all that has gone into the construction of the new St. Augustine's. Each line and detail of the interior immediately directs the attention of all who enter to the life-size crucifix over the Indiana limestone altar. An inescapable feeling of enveloping protection and sanctuary welcomes the worshipper to rest here awhile in the presence of Almighty God, to Whose glory and honor this is all dedicated.