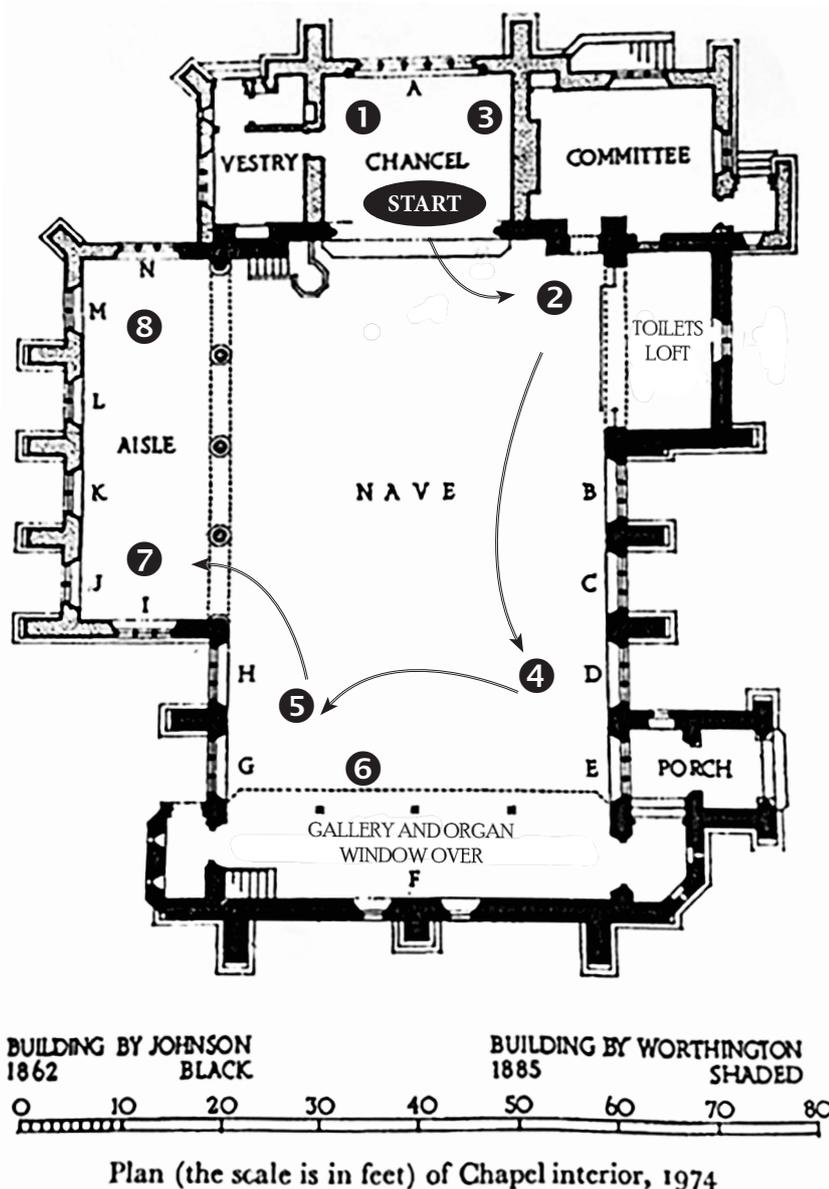


9 must-see things in the Chapel

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Most of the art within the Chapel was created in the period 1860-1920 and draws heavily from the Judeo-Christian heritage. Although Unitarians today draw inspiration from other world religions, poets, musicians and scientists, the values of these biblical stories still ring true today.

Start standing in front of the altar table in the Chancel of the Chapel and then work your way to the right round the Chapel going clockwise. It takes about 20 minutes in all.



1 The Chancel. This is a nice piece of sacred space - it has a set of four choir pews, the War Memorial to the 21 men of the Chapel who did not return from World War One, and the main window of the Chapel. This window was installed in 1886 and is by stained glass specialists Wilson & Hammond. The window depicts Christ and the four Evangelists. Left to right this is Matthew, Mark, Christ, Luke and John. The lower panels draw from the gospels: Parable of the Talents (Matthew), Poor Widow and the Rich Man (Mark), Mary Magdalene at the Tomb, The prodigal Son (Luke) and the Apostles healing (Luke). On the War Memorial note the name Charles Humphrey Gow, a Navy Surgeon - he was the son of the then serving Minister, Dr Henry Gow.

2 The Flaxman Reliefs. John Flaxman (1755-1826) is considered to have been one of Britain's best sculptors and the two reliefs in the Chancel are by him. The one on the left is called Charity (and dates from 1816-19) and the one on the right is called Maternal Affection (and dates from 1811). In addition, either side of the Chancel are two more striking reliefs: the left is The Lord's Prayer: "For Thine is the Kingdom" and the right The Lord's Prayer: "Deliver us from Evil".

3 The work of William Morris. The bronze plaque in the Chancel to Rev Thomas Sadler (1822-1891) and his wife Mary Colgate (died 1898) was designed by their friend William Morris, the founder of the Arts & Crafts Movement. The dedication words were written by the Rev Dr James Martineau, a very famous and distinguished theologian and Unitarian. Rev. Martineau himself is commemorated by a tablet relief opposite (above the Vestry door). For more William Morris influence in the Chapel look at the windows marked I and K on the plan.



4 Act of Parliament Clock. In window E is an Act of Parliament Clock, dated to 1792 built by William Billinghamurst. This was in the old brick built Chapel (now the Hall). The public display of the clock was itself a declaration of public dissenting worship. For a brief period in 1797 Tavern Clocks, or Act of Parliament Clocks as they came to be known, were taxed by the Government of Robert Peel, but this was dropped after huge public outcry.

5 Opposite in window G is the only surviving the original clear glass from when the current Chapel was first built in 1862. The sheer clarity and simplicity of this window allows us to pause and reflect on how the Chapel would have looked originally and also to understand how the finances of the Chapel were stretched to cover the construction.. it was through later appeals, deaths and therefore memorials that windows were replaced with the stained and coloured glass.

6 Under the Organ Gallery are some oak stalls or pews - these came to this Chapel in the 1970s when Kensington Church was rebuilt. They along with the Oak Font were carved by leading architect and Unitarian Ronald Pottery Jones as a memorial to his parents. Ronald was a first cousin of Beatrix Potter (author of the Peter Rabbit stories and others) and she is thought to have sat in the pews when they were in Essex Unitarian Church, Kensington.

7 Edward Byrne-Jones and William Morris. Two of the stained glass windows in the Chapel are celebrated as being designed by Burne-Jones and executed by the William Morris Company at their workshop in Surrey. William Morris chose the coloured glass and supervised the manufacturing of the windows. These are windows I and K. Window I is Faith, Charity and Hope and dates from 1899 (in memory of the current Chapel's founder Rev Thomas Sadler and his wife Mary). Window K dates from 1888 and reflects Burne-Jones's earlier style and his influence from the Italian Renaissance.

8 The side aisle was added to the Chapel in 1884. There are three special features to enjoy here. The first is the plaque to Helen Allingham (1848-1926). A highly significant artist, Helen Allingham, was the first woman admitted to the Royal Watercolour Society in 1875. There is a superb brief exhibition of her work at Burgh House in Hampstead that you might want to visit. Her Uncle, Rev Herford was Minister of this Chapel. Second is the stained glass in window N of David and Jonathan (from the Book of Samuel). Cited as being the virtue of friendship, it is one of the few citations in the Bible of two men who loved each other. And thirdly the stone font. This came to Rosslyn Hill in 1948 and is thought to have come from Temple Church in the City of London which was bombed in World War Two. The font is thought to be medieval and dates from the fourteenth century.

9 And finally... we recommend you take a few moments to walk up the stone steps of the pulpit and enjoy the view of the Chapel from this viewpoint. The pulpit is rarely used today by Ministers in the Chapel, but is said to be raised above the height of the altar table to reflect the Unitarian view that it was the views of the Minister and congregation to think for themselves and not be lead solely by doctrine and dogma. Standing in the pulpit is a great place from which to view the organ gallery at the back of the Chapel and also the massive stained glass window (which was originally in the Unitarian Church in Kensington). The stained-glass, depicting Truth and Mercy is dedicated to the Liberal politician Sir John Brunner (1865-1929), grandfather of the current Duchess of Kent. The organ is a Matthew Copley Organ of some 2,000 pipes and has great versatility and a wide dynamic range. Do take time to appreciate the carved musical instruments on the front of the cases high up in the roof.

We are grateful for the time, talent and treasure with which previous generations have lovingly developed this Chapel and hope to carry forward their spirit of generosity and vision for the future.

We hope you have enjoyed this tour and visit. Please come back and visit us again.

