“To build your house well is, ironically, to be nudged beyond its doors.”

– Richard Rohr

Duke Chapel is home to an interdenominational Christian community formed by the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus broke down the wall that divides humankind from God, the Chapel aims to be a “church without walls,” desiring to bridge all people to God’s reconciling love.

Duke University Chapel
Bridging Faith & Learning

Through worship, student ministry, community connection, interfaith engagement, and the arts, Duke Chapel stands as a beacon of Christian hope that bridges faith (religio) and learning (eruditio).
INFORMATION FOR VISITORS

Chapel Hours
Academic Year: 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Summer Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Holidays and Breaks: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Closed Christmas Day

Duke Chapel is closed to the public for weddings, funerals and other special events that are not listed on the Chapel’s website calendar. Weddings are often held on Saturdays and some Sundays, so please contact us to verify our weekend schedule before planning your trip.

Restrooms
Public restrooms are available near the Chapel, located in the Bryan Center, Page Auditorium, and the Divinity School.

Tower Access
Access to the Chapel tower is closed to the public. The circular stairway to the top of the tower is open to Duke students on special occasions such as orientation and graduation, with prior arrangements made by the University.

Chapel Website
A wealth of information about the Chapel, upcoming events, and more is available at chapel.duke.edu.

Directory
For general information, or an updated events schedule: 919-681-9488

To reserve space in the Chapel for events and weddings: 919-684-8150

For information regarding Chapel Music: 919-684-3898

To become a Friend of Duke Chapel: 919-684-5955

Chapel Email
Unsafe of where to direct your call? Send an email to dukechapel@duke.edu.
A BRIEF HISTORY

One April day in 1925, James Buchanan Duke walked through a forest with his friend, William Preston Few, in the hope of finding a suitable site for a new university. Walking away from Durham along a plateau full of pines, gums, hickories, and oaks, Duke paused and said: “Here’s where it ought to be.” He decided that the Chapel should stand at the center of the University.

“I want the central building to be a church, because such an edifice would be bound to have a profound influence on the spiritual life of the young men and women who come here.”

Almost a century after Duke’s dream became reality, Duke Chapel continues to be the central building, fusing the university’s motto, eruditio et religio, bridging faith and learning.
Among the buildings of West Campus, Duke Chapel was the first to be planned and the last to be built. The cornerstone was laid on October 22, 1930, but construction continued for the next two years. Students often gathered at the huts of the stone carvers that occupied the land directly behind the construction site; they enjoyed watching the Chapel rise higher and higher.

The Chapel was first used for Commencement in 1932 and was formally dedicated on June 2, 1935.

ARCHITECTS & ARTISANS

The architectural style of the Chapel is inspired by English Gothic and represents one of the last great collegiate Gothic projects in this country.

The architect of the Chapel was Horace Trumbauer of Philadelphia; the chief designer was Julian Abele, a renowned African-American architect from Pennsylvania.

The stone carving in the Chapel was sculpted by John Donnelly, Inc., of New York. All of the woodwork was fashioned by Irving and Casson, A. H. Davenport, Inc., of Boston, and designer Charles H. Crowther.

The 77 stained-glass windows and the ornamental lead-and-gold symbols in the doors were designed and made by G. Owen Bonawit, Inc., of New York, along with designer S. Charles Jaekle and craftsman Hugh Doherty.

Charles Keck, of New York, sculpted the recumbent statues on the tombs in the Memorial Chapel. The ironwork was hewn by the William H. Jackson Company of New York.
BUILDING DIMENSIONS

Chapel interior: 291 feet by 63 feet
The nave proper: 73 feet high and 39 feet wide
The tower: 38 feet square at the base and 210 feet high
The nave and transepts seat 1500.
The chancel seats 150.
The Memorial Chapel seats 50.

THE STONE

The Chapel is constructed of stone from the Duke Quarry near Hillsborough, North Carolina, located twelve miles west of Durham. The trimmings, lectern, pulpit, and the balustrade and vaults of the choir are of limestone from Bedford, Indiana. The walls of the nave and vaults of the nave and transepts are composed of Guastavino tile, a stone composite material, which was sealed in 1976 to provide increased sound reverberation.
Members of the Duke family were devout Methodists. Although Duke Chapel is not a Methodist church, above the portal are sculptures of those who helped advance the American Methodist movement.

**Right Image:**

**John Wesley (1703–1791)**  
*Founder of Methodism*

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**Top Left: Thomas Coke (1747–1814)**  
*English Methodist missionary and bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church*

The Thomas Coke meant to be depicted was actually a heavy, clean shaven man who wore clerical garb. It is believed the sculptor accidentally used a photo of British judge Lord Chief Justice Thomas Coke as his model, so the statue is of a thin man in a hat with a beard.

**Top Center: Francis Asbury (1745–1816)**  
*Pioneer Methodist preacher and bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church*

**Top Right: George Whitefield (1714–1770)**  
*Evangelist and missionary who helped start the Great Awakening in the United States*
On the left side are three well-known Christian reformers:

**Top Left: Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498)**
Florentine monk who incited the original Bonfire of the Vanities (he was later burned as a heretic)

**Top Center: Martin Luther (1483–1546)**
Father of the Protestant Reformation

**Top Right: John Wycliffe (1324–1384)**
Early translator of the Bible into English

On the right side are three great men of the American South:

**Top Left: Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)**
President of the United States and author of the Declaration of Independence

**Top Center: Robert E. Lee (1807–1870)**
Soldier of the South and president of Washington and Lee University

Accidentally depicted on Robert E. Lee's belt buckle were the letters “US” instead of “CSA” (Confederate States of America). The carver scratched through the letters, but they still remain visible.

**Top Right: Sidney Lanier (1842–1881)**
Famous poet and musician
STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS

The Chapel’s 77 windows depict biblical characters and stories.

The clerestory (upper) windows of the nave and chancel are devoted to the Old Testament. The twelve medallion (lower) windows of the aisles illustrate New Testament stories.

The two large transept windows and the great altar window contain prominent figures from both the Old and New Testaments.

The subjects of the windows in the narthex (entrance) are noted Old Testament women.

Six scenes from the life of Jesus, painted in black on amber glass, appear in the two entrance halls of either side of the narthex.
In the two small turrets leading to the triforia (upper arcade) are ten windows whose subjects are chiefly the favorite biblical warriors of the Middle Ages, such as Joshua, Judas Maccabeus, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, and St. Longinus.

The windows of the Memorial Chapel are made of silvery tinted glass (grisaille), and the windows of the crypt are composed of purple glass and lead grilles.

The largest window is 17 feet 6 inches by 38 feet, and the smallest is 14 by 20 inches. The number of figures in the windows totals between 800 and 900. There are 301 figures larger than life-size.

More than one-million pieces of glass, varying in thickness from 1/8 to 3/16 of an inch, are used in the windows. The primary colors are yellow, ruby, and blue; the secondary colors are brown, white, purple, and green. All of the ruby glass and most of the blue glass was made in the United States. The other colors were imported from England, France, and Belgium.

Mr. S. Charles Jaekle of G. Owen Bonawit, Inc. in New York, along with fourteen other artists and craftsmen, designed and composed the windows. It took them almost three years to complete the project.
MEMORIAL CHAPEL

To the left of the chancel and behind the iron gates is the Memorial Chapel. On the altar are three limewood figures: St. Paul, Jesus, and St. Peter.

The benefactors for whom the University is named, Washington Duke and his two sons, Benjamin N. Duke and James B. Duke, are entombed in the Memorial Chapel.

The sarcophagi and the Memorial Chapel are gifts of the Duke Memorial Association. Organized in 1928 by James A. Thomas, the association received contributions from friends of the Dukes all over the world.

On the ceiling in the Memorial Chapel, a boss (ornamental ceiling stone) with the Duke family coat of arms can be found. There is also a plaque on the wall honoring philanthropist Doris Duke, daughter of James B. Duke.
CRYPT
Between the Memorial Chapel and the chancel, a flight of steps descends to the crypt. Here are buried:

William Preston Few
First President of Duke University

Mrs. Nanaline Holt Duke
Wife of James B. Duke

J. Deryl Hart
Fourth President of the University

Mrs. Mary Johnson Hart
Wife of J. Deryl Hart

Terry Sanford
Sixth President of Duke University, U.S. Senator, and Governor of North Carolina

Mrs. Margaret Rose Sanford
Wife of Terry Sanford

The ashes of James A. Thomas, Chairman of the Duke Memorial Association, and James T. Cleland, former dean of Duke Chapel, and his wife, Mrs. Alice Mead Cleland, are also interred here.

CHANCEL
Limewood and oak figures of patriarchs, apostles, and saints appear in the niches of the oak choir stalls and in the ornamental screen behind the altar. Symbols from the Passion of Christ are carved on the north and south walls.
ORGANS

Duke University Chapel is home to three outstanding pipe organs, each fabricated in a different style, used for worship services, recitals, and the study of organ performance. In addition, there is a portative organ, used for accompanying small groups.

Duke Chapel and the Department of Music sponsor a free organ recital series featuring some of the world’s finest organists performing on the renowned Chapel organs.

KATHLEEN MCCLENDON ORGAN

The Kathleen Upton Byrns McClendon Organ is lodged in chambers on either side of the chancel. This is Duke Chapel’s original organ, built and installed in 1932 by the Æolian Organ Company, and reconditioned in 2007-2008.

This remarkable instrument was the last major organ made by the Æolian Organ Company of New York before it merged with the E.M. Skinner Organ Company, and is the firm’s only significant organ built for a church. Designed in the post-Romantic tradition, which was in fashion at the time of its construction, the organ is known for its extremes of dynamic expression and the orchestral voicing of its individual stops.

The massive pipes visible from the nave only hint at the Æolian’s size. Approximately 6900 pipes are located behind elaborately carved oak screens in large chambers on both sides of the choir and in front of both transepts. The console is located in the choir stalls, and all of the sounds are controlled from the console’s four-manual and pedal keyboard.
BENJAMIN N. DUKE MEMORIAL ORGAN
The Benjamin N. Duke Memorial Organ, built by Dirk A. Flentrop of Holland and dedicated in 1976, is located in the great arch separating the narthex and nave. This mechanical action organ contains 5033 speaking pipes controlled by a pedalboard and four keyboards, and has two cases. The key action, stop action, and wind supply connect the main case to the smaller Rugwerk. The main case rises approximately 40 feet above the gallery floor and is about 4 1/2 feet deep. It is made of solid mahogany, decorated with stains of various hues and gold leaf. The Rugwerk is situated in front of the main case on the gallery rail. The gallery that supports the organ is constructed of solid oak in the classical style. Both tonally and visually, the Flentrop organ reflects the techniques of Dutch and French organs of the 18th century.

At Mr. Flentrop’s suggestion, the acoustics of the Chapel were adjusted to provide an ideal environment for the organ. When the Chapel was first built, its acoustics were deliberately deadened through the use of special sound-absorbing Guastavino tile. With the help of Bolt, Beranek and Newman, the famous acoustical consulting firm, a solution was found to make the acoustics livelier, while still accommodating the needs of spoken word. The absorptive tile was sealed, increasing the maximum reverberation time, and a time-delay speech-reinforcement system was designed and installed.
BROMBAUGH ORGAN
Located in a “swallow’s nest” gallery, the Brombaugh organ (1997) in the Memorial Chapel is modeled after Renaissance Italian instruments. Modified somewhat to accommodate other schools of organ music as well, this two-manual and pedal organ of 960 pipes produces gentle, sparkling tones on very low wind pressure. The organ is tuned in meantone temperament, offering choices of D-sharp/E-flat and G-sharp/A-flat, the tuning system used for most organs in the 16th and 17th centuries. Carved pipe shades are made from centuries-old Appalachian oak. The Duke family crest is visible at the very top of the richly polychromed organ case.

CARILLON
Inside the Duke Chapel tower is a 50-bell carillon. The carillon was the gift of George G. Allen and William R. Perkins of the Duke Endowment, made in honor of James B. Duke. The largest bell, G-natural in pitch, weighs 11,200 pounds and measures 6 feet 9 inches at the mouth; the smallest bell weighs 10 1/2 pounds and is 6 3/8 inches in diameter. The University Carillonneur performs a 15-minute recital on weekdays at 5:00 p.m. and before and after the Sunday worship services at 10:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.
SERVICES OF WORSHIP

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP
Duke Chapel has one of the largest congregations of any university church in the country. A service of worship is held each Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m. Services are ecumenical in nature and feature sermons by the dean of the Chapel and other renowned preachers. Musical leadership is provided by the Duke Chapel Choir.

COMMUNION SERVICE
The Chapel offers a 30-minute service of Holy Communion, prayer, and healing in the Memorial Chapel on Tuesday evenings at 5:15 p.m. during the academic year.

MIDWEEK PRAYER
All are welcome to an informal service of midweek prayer each Wednesday during the academic year. Prayer is held in the Memorial Chapel at 12:00 p.m. noon and led by Chapel staff. The 20-minute service includes scripture reading and prayer.

CHORAL VESPERS
Choral Vespers is held on Thursday evenings at 5:15 p.m. during the academic year. This 40-minute candlelight service of worship consists of scripture readings, prayers, and sacred music. The Duke Vespers Ensemble leads the musical portion of the service.
SPECIAL SERVICES
Duke Chapel offers worship services to celebrate important dates in the liturgical year, such as Christmas Eve, the Blessing of the Animals, Ash Wednesday, and All Hallows Eve. Holy Week services include noonday worship each weekday, Maundy Thursday in the evening, Stations of the Cross at midday on Good Friday, Tenebrae on the evening of Good Friday, Easter Sunrise Service in Duke Gardens, and 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services in the Chapel on Easter Sunday. The Chapel also offers services of Jazz Vespers and Evensong each semester. Dates and times can be found at chapel.duke.edu.

CHAPEL LIFE

CHAPEL CHOIR
A “town and gown” group, the Chapel Choir’s 100 members include students, faculty, staff, and other singers from Duke and the Triangle. During the academic year, the Chapel Choir, along with the 36-voice Schola Cantorum, sings anthems and leads the congregation in hymns during Sunday worship and various other Chapel services. It also presents two major concerts with professional orchestra each year. The choir’s annual performances of Handel’s Messiah, a tradition since 1933, pack the Chapel each December. The Spring Oratorio concerts feature other major choral works from Bach to modern masterpieces.
VESPERS ENSEMBLE
The Duke Vespers Ensemble is a select group of singers specializing in Renaissance and 20th-century motets. They sing all music *a cappella*. The ensemble leads the musical portion of the Choral Vespers worship service and presents three concerts each year in Duke Chapel.

RELIGIOUS LIFE
Duke University currently has more than 25 religious life groups on campus representing Protestant, Catholic, non-denominational, Eastern Orthodox, Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu faiths. This makes it one of the most religiously active and diverse university communities in the world. The Associate Dean for Religious Life, along with campus ministers, chaplains, and professional staff, provide leadership to more than 2000 students involved in religious life on campus each year.
INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT
Students deepen their own faith commitments by organizing and participating in service events, dialogue dinners, text studies, and public events that draw participation from their peers and from community members of many faith traditions.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION
Duke Chapel’s Director of Community Ministry and the C. Eric Lincoln Minister for Student Engagement work locally to foster relationships in Durham across divisions of race, class, and education. These leaders, along with many of the students involved in the PathWays program, have a physical presence in the greater West End neighborhood, where they create meaningful ties between the Chapel and the socially disadvantaged by means of friendship, events, and small groups. The Chapel offers students opportunities to reflect on this work through a course at Duke’s Sanford School of Public Policy taught by the Chapel’s Director of Student Ministry.

PATHWAYS STUDENT MINISTRY
Duke Chapel PathWays offers students opportunities for study, artistic expression, counsel, service, and intentional community, as purposeful steps toward bridging their distinctive gifts and talents with the world’s deepest needs.
FRIENDS OF DUKE CHAPEL
The Friends of Duke Chapel is committed to helping ensure the vibrant ministry and inspirational beauty of the Chapel for current and future generations. The financial investment of Friends provides opportunities for the ministry of the Chapel to expand through the support of worship services, music events, student ministry, service projects, mission trips, community outreach programs, and building upkeep. Contributors to the Chapel’s funds and endowments are recognized as Friends of Duke Chapel.

THE CONGREGATION AT DUKE CHAPEL
The Congregation at Duke Chapel supports and enhances the activities of the Chapel and provides an interdenominational church home for those who consider the Chapel to be their primary place of worship. The Congregation has a variety of vibrant ministries; more information can be found at congregation.chapel.duke.edu.