

St. Bede's Episcopal Church

Atlanta, Georgia

Text and photos by Dan Hardison

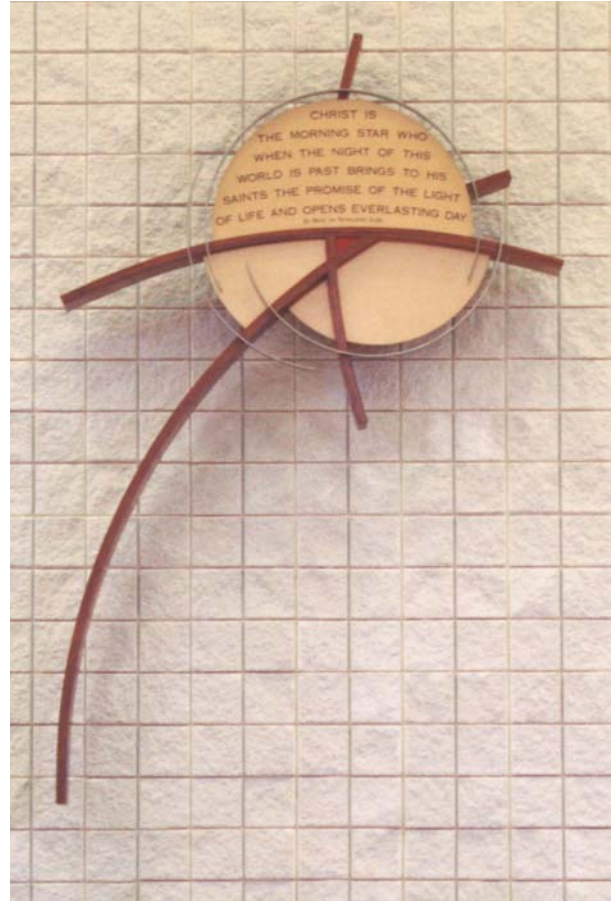
In an area that was once farmland – now part of the suburban life in Atlanta, Georgia – St. Bede's Episcopal Church is a beacon of light from the busy world that surrounds it. Above the altar is a cruciform sculpture created as a representation of the teachings of the church's namesake, Bede the Venerable. Incorporated into the sculpture are his words:

"Christ is the Morning Star who when the night of this world is past brings to his saints the promise of the light of life and opens everlasting day."

The cruciform was created by artist Ann Cowperthwaite of Raleigh, North Carolina, and is constructed of bronze, stainless steel, and walnut. Bede the Venerable (672-735) was a scholar devoted to the study of the scriptures and history of the church, and was convinced that the earth was an orb. It is the concept of the orb as the world and Bede's praise of Jesus as "The Morning Star" that is symbolized in this modern representation of the cross.

Here the world and the cross have collided and shattered leaving the world wounded. At the center is a triangle of red representing the blood of Christ. The three stainless steel arcs represent the love of God embracing the world. The horizontal bar is the one piece of the cross that has not broken, symbolizing the arms of Christ reaching out to the world. Included are the words that Bede wrote on Revelation 2:28 and that also appear over his tomb in Durham, England.

St. Bede's Church sits on a parcel of land that the former owner called his "Jesus patch". It was his desire that someday a church would be built there. That dream came true when St. Bede's Episcopal Church was founded in 1960. Since that time, the church has grown and has expanded twice since the first building was constructed in 1962.



St. Bede's Episcopal Church and the cruciform sculpture by Ann Cowperthwaite.





outreach programs at the church as well as the wonderful sculpture above the altar. Over the years two groups of parishioners have traveled to England to visit Bede's tomb at Durham Cathedral. And on one trip, the choir from the church performed at the cathedral.

The members at St. Bede's Episcopal Church have taken the words of their namesake to heart and dedicated themselves to his message that "Christ is the Morning Star". ✚

St. Bede's Episcopal Church

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The Vision Statement of St. Bede's by Mike Johnson, artist and church member.

A new nave was dedicated in 1997 following the four principal symbols for points of focus in a building as described in *The Church for Common Prayer*: the People, the Altar, the Lectern, and the Font. The clerestory windows give a glimpse of the sky and treetops of the world beyond.

As a result of St. Bede's continuing growth, there has been an expansion of its musical programs. St. Bede's music ministry includes adult, youth, and junior choirs, as well as a bell choir. And in 2000, St. Bede's welcomed its most recent musical addition with the dedication of their new tracker pipe organ built by Richards, Fowkes & Company.

Music has always been an important part of St. Bede's, but more recently the visual arts has taken an important role as well. Besides the cruciform, other works of art have found a home on the walls of the church as well. The Rev. Jim Curtis, interim Rector at St. Bede's, began an art program at the church shortly after his arrival. Exhibitions are held in the narthex with most of the work created by members of St. Bede's.

The teachings and inspiration of Bede the Venerable can be seen in the worship and

