

# Victor Lundy's Unitarian Meeting House

Hartford, Connecticut

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## Foreward

This paper, which primarily discusses the architecture of the present Unitarian Meeting House at 50 Bloomfield Avenue in Hartford's northwest corner, is a logical continuation of my historical investigation of Hartford Unitarianism. This larger study began in 1990-91 when I wrote my senior honors thesis at Trinity College on the early nineteenth-century Unitarian challenge to the Connecticut "Standing Order." In that paper I included (as an appendix) a survey of Connecticut's religious history to 1818, which also contained details about each of the six Unitarian societies founded in the state between 1820 and the beginning of the Civil War, including the Hartford society.

While editing *Hartford Unitarianism, 1844-1994* (1994) I built on this research, adding numerous historical details. The chapter that includes a sketchy description of the planning and construction of the present Meeting House is my original work, and I researched many of the details in the book relating to the other three buildings that have housed the Society during its one hundred fifty-one years in the city.

It is important to note that until 1818, when Connecticut adopted a new constitution that effectively disestablished the Congregational Church, [1] a rarely enforced statute existed that made felons of anyone practicing Unitarianism. [2] Although there were "heresy" trials in Mansfield (1805) and Coventry (1811) involving Congregational pastors accused of anti-Trinitarianism, [3] and an uncle of the Rev. William Ellery Channing [4] was dismissed in 1806 from his New London pulpit because of alleged Unitarian leanings,[5] it was not until 1821 that dissident members of the First Ecclesiastical Society of Brooklyn were able to legally separate from their orthodox brethren and establish the first Unitarian church in the state. [6] In 1823 the Rev. Samuel Joseph May, who would later play a key role in introducing Unitarianism to Hartford, was called to Brooklyn, becoming the first Unitarian minister called to a church in Connecticut. [7]

This paper surveys the history of Hartford Unitarianism, including brief descriptions of the three earlier buildings that housed the First Unitarian Congregational Society of Hartford between 1846 and 1963. The bulk of the paper, however, is devoted to the present church building. This 25,000-square-foot edifice was designed by Victor A. Lundy and dedicated in December 1964. I describe the building in detail and discuss its genesis and planning, construction, and subsequent problems. I also discuss some of Lundy's other ecclesiastical structures.

I am indebted to Margaret Sax, whose timely organization of the Society's archives made it possible for me to examine heretofore inaccessible documents relating to the building's design and construction. I

would also like to thank Roy Cook, a church member and vice-president of the Farmington architectural firm of Russell Gibson Von Dohlen, for his careful reading of a draft of this paper and his cogent suggestions for its improvement.

The strikingly modern concrete and wooden structure at 50 Bloomfield Avenue that has housed the Unitarian Society of Hartford since 1964 is the fourth meeting house built and occupied by the church in its 151-year history. Variouslly described as a "spider's web" or a "space ship," the building's twelve reinforced-concrete piers "grow out of the ground and leap up to become cantilever supports for the sanctuary roof," according to its architect, Victor Lundy. [8]

The 350-seat sanctuary in the center of the main floor is surrounded by a 360-degree ambulatory, classrooms, offices, lobby, library, and a chapel behind the altar. The Payson Miller Chapel has a large window that allows nature to be quietly reflected upon. The concrete piers serve as partitions between classrooms and provide support for the steel bridge cables that support the sweeping, cedar plank roof. [9]

The roof over the sanctuary was designed to be lower than the one over the classrooms. Between the two roofs is a clerestory window that allows light into both the sanctuary and classrooms. The sanctuary houses an Austin pipe organ in the choir loft, and the tent-like wooden ceiling evokes the rays of the sun.



*Unitarian Society of Hartford, exterior view from Bloomfield Ave.*



*Interior view of Sanctuary showing altar and ceiling*

The acoustical properties of the sanctuary are lively, lending themselves well to performances of chamber music and leading, over the years, to a symbiotic relationship between the Society and the Hartt School at the nearby University of Hartford: faculty and student recitals frequently take place at the Meeting House, often utilizing its Steinway concert grand piano. The ambulatory walls provide excellent exhibition space for artists, and portions of the building are regularly utilized by outside organizations for meetings and other activities.

When opened in 1964, the lower (or basement) level was left unfinished. Classrooms were separated from Fellowship Hall by furniture. Over the years a kitchen was installed and classroom partitions were added, all according to the architect's original plans. On the ground floor, carpeting added color and reduced the noise from foot traffic. In 1994 the building was made accessible to the physically handicapped through the addition of an elevator, linking the two floors.

The building grows organically out of the slope of the earth and its cedar roof soars towards the center above the sanctuary. The concrete piers and cedar roof add to the warm organic atmosphere. The entrance of sunlight from unexpected clerestory windows allow light and warmth into the center of the building, which would otherwise be oppressive. Since the roof is supported by bridge cables and the clerestory (as well as other windows) is made of plexiglass, the roof and windows move with the wind, thus generating creaking sounds that give the impression that the building is alive.

Architect Roy Cook notes that Lundy adhered in principle to Frank Lloyd Wright's philosophy of "enhancing" nature. "Because of how the glass and plexiglass windows meet the concrete piers and roof," Cook says, "the outside grass and trees and inside carpet and furniture flow in and out of the building. It is hard to tell what is inside and outside because you can see the piers and roof flow through the outside wall."



*Interior view of church office, showing how concrete piers organically unite interior and exterior.*



*Exterior view, showing Memorial Garden.*

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Unitarianism has existed in Hartford since 1830 when the Rev. Samuel Joseph May, pastor of the state's only Unitarian church (in Brooklyn), preached three sermons at Allyn's Hall on Jan. 24 to a total of seven hundred people. But not until 1844 was the First Unitarian Congregational Society actually formed. [10]

Within months the Society's leaders had contacted New York City architect Minard Lafever (1798-1854) [11] about drawing up plans for a church building. Hartford Unitarians hoped to raise \$5,000 and were relying on an oral promise from the American Unitarian Association (AUA) to match that amount. Lafever agreed to prepare designs for such a church, but noted sarcastically that "the small amount of money which you propose to appropriate to the erection of your edifice will render the duties of the Architect decidedly more difficult than one that would cost double the amount, provided he produced an agreeable design." [12] Design and construction costs ultimately exceeded \$20,000.

Lafever's design for the Church of the Saviour was erected on the northeast corner of Asylum and Trumbull Streets in downtown Hartford. The cornerstone of the brownstone Gothic Revival structure was laid on May 24, 1845, and the building was dedicated on April 22, 1846. [13] Responding to AUA charges that Hartford Unitarians were being extravagant, the Society's first settled pastor, the Rev. Joseph Harrington, chided the Boston bureaucrats. "We must remember what Hartford is: Its antiquity...its wealth, its habits, its respectability, its tastes,-- and we must have a church there in keeping with these things." Defending the unexpected final cost of the building, Rev. Harrington added that

*...a sum that may seem extravagant under some circumstances, may seem almost niggardly under others.... Among all the places where I have ministered, I have found no where so noble a zeal...have no where witnessed so generous pecuniary sacrifices. [14]*

But while Hartford Unitarians were able to raise \$7,000, the AUA provided only \$900. [15] In June 1852, Rev. Harrington resigned and moved to San Francisco. Debts related to the building's cost contributed

greatly to the Society's decline, during the next five years. In 1857 the Society voted to suspend ecclesiastical services indefinitely. By the end of the 1850s the Society owed its creditors about \$4,000.



*The Church of Our Saviour, Corner of Asylum and Trumbull Streets, Hartford, CT (1846-1860)*

At the 1860 annual meeting the trustees voted to sell the building and property to the Charter Oak Bank of Hartford, the proceeds of which were sufficient to pay off all the Society's debts and leave a balance of approximately \$20,000. Two years later the bank sold the building to a new Episcopalian congregation, which dismantled and moved it to 122 Sigourney Street in the city's Asylum Hill neighborhood, where it was reconstructed as Trinity Church. [16]

Between 1857 and 1877, the church had no regular services or resident pastor, but did conduct annual business meetings and occasional religious services in public halls. By the end of the Civil War in 1865, the trustees' astute investments had produced a balance of over \$31,000; by 1872, the total was \$50,000. [17]

In 1877, with assets approaching \$70,000, a new effort was made to revive the Society. Services were at first held in Roberts' Opera House, then moved to the Representatives' Hall of the Old State House, and finally to a section of the Cheney Building. Construction of a church building was begun in the late spring of 1880 and, on April 3, 1881, Unity Church on Pratt Street was formally dedicated. [18] The plain, red-brick Romanesque structure with a square tower over the front entrance seated approximately 700 people; better known as Unity Hall, it doubled during the next four decades as one of Hartford's leading concert and lecture halls. [19]

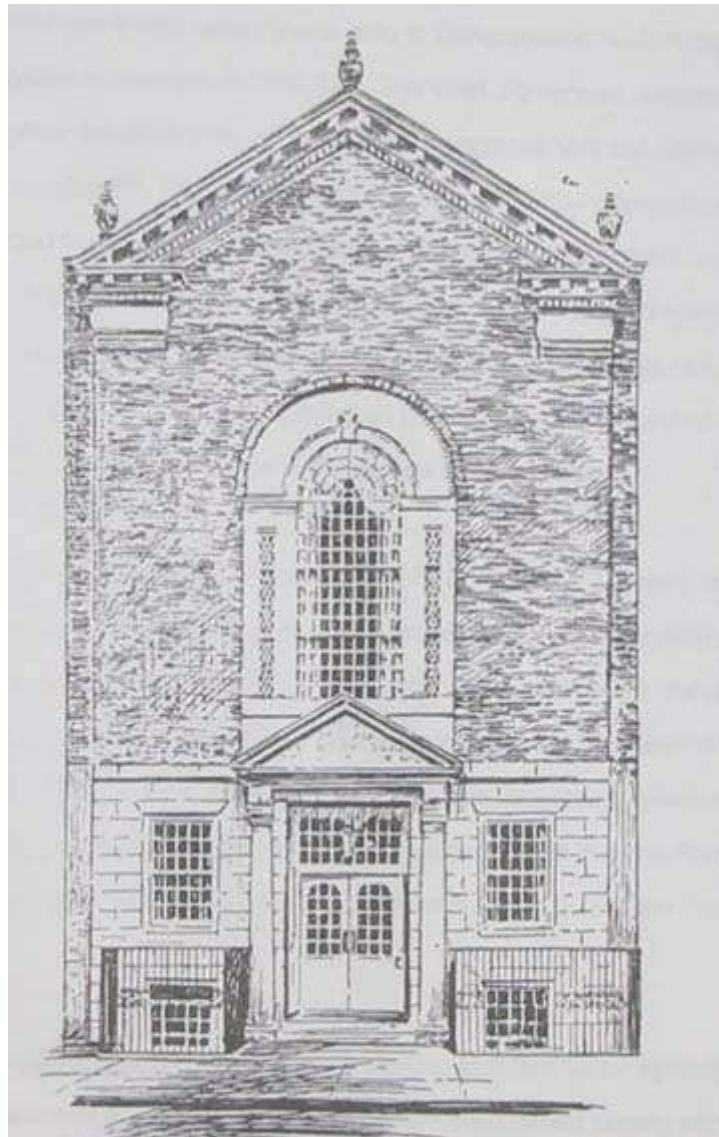


*Unity Hall, Pratt Street, Hartford, CT (1881-1924)*

The Unity Church building was sold in 1917, although the Society continued to hold services there until 1924 (when it was finally razed). During that interval, there was much discussion among the membership concerning whether a new building should be constructed downtown or in an outlying area. The former view finally prevailed and the 215 Pearl Street site was purchased in 1921.

A new church, designed by Hartford architect Milton E. Hayman, [20] was built in 1924 at a cost of \$125,000, and dedicated on Nov. 30. Historian Nelson Burr described the Pearl Street Meeting House as follows:

*It is a long, narrow building in Classical style, the lower story of the façade of white stone, the rest of red brick. The front entrance, in Classical style, is surmounted by a pediment bearing the inscription: FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY OF HARTFORD. Above is a large Palladian window. The vestibule, flanked by small office rooms, leads to an octagonal hall with stairs to the second floor. The auditorium, without windows or skylight, is illuminated by five lanterns suspended from the middle of the ceiling, and by indirect lighting in the chancel. The style is strictly Classical, white with mahogany trim. There is a font, also a reading desk and a pulpit, but no Communion table, as the Communion is not observed. The organ is located behind the chancel, and there are facilities for broadcasting the services. [21]*



*First Unitarian Congregational Society, 215 Pearl Street, Hartford, CT (1924-1963).*

\* \* \*

With a membership approaching four hundred and a sanctuary that could seat only about 250, it was evident by 1956 that the Pearl Street Meeting House was in danger of bursting at the seams. Basing its projections on statistical trends, a Church Planning Committee recommended that the Society construct a new church building within the next five years. [22]

Unable to locate a suitable site in downtown Hartford and unwilling to see the church split in two, the Committee voted in November 1958 to move to the city's outskirts. But four years were to pass before the Society acted on that recommendation.

In April 1962, the Pearl Street property was sold to Congregation Ados Israel, the oldest Jewish congregation in Hartford, for \$85,000. The sales agreement stipulated that the Jewish congregation be allowed to remain in their synagogue until the Society was able to move to a new building. [23] The following year, in June 1963, the Society bought six acres of land for \$50,000 from the Watkinson College Preparatory School on Bloomfield Avenue, [24] in a meadow that borders the Children's Village on Albany Avenue. The Society immediately vacated the Pearl Street Meeting House and temporarily moved to the Connecticut Council of Churches building on the campus of the Hartford Seminary, 60 Lorraine Street, while awaiting completion of its new Meeting House.

The building campaign, under the leadership of J. B. C. "Tommy" Thomas, was launched on April 21, 1961, with a goal of \$40,000, which would bring available building funds to \$400,000. That goal was reached within two weeks. Although the Rev. Payson Miller, who was about to complete a twenty-year pastorate in Hartford, had planned to retire in May 1961, he changed his mind a month before that date, apparently reinvigorated by the prospect of building a new Meeting House. The chairman of the Building Fund Committee, who effectively doubled as clerk of the works, was J. Garland Pass, Jr., of Avon.

In April 1961 the Society Council chose New York City architect Victor A[lfred] Lundy (b. 1923) to design the new Meeting House. Rev. Miller, who worked closely with Lundy on the preliminary design phase, reportedly told the architect that he envisioned "something that came up out of the ground" and symbolized the belief that all religions are but so many paths to a single, all-pervading Reality, a belief shared by Hindus and many Unitarians. Lundy clearly reflected this theological statement in his design, ensuring that none of the twelve concrete piers is identical in either height or form. Having previously worked with Unitarians in Westport, Lundy was familiar with their theological liberalism. "Unitarians believe there are many approaches to the Truth that unites them," he wrote. "I tried in this church for a symbolic and lyrical interpretation of the Unitarian Church." [25]

Lundy's outline specifications were completed in January 1962, and his formal plans for the new Meeting House were unveiled in June.

Twelve concrete walls radiating out from the central sanctuary and rising fin-like above the roof give a distinctive form to the polygonal building. The sanctuary, in the center, will receive daylight indirectly



from a band of high windows just below the outer roof level. The wooden roof deck over the sanctuary...will be suspended by steel cables hung in a cobweb pattern from the radial walls.

In the February 1962 issue of *Architectural Record*, Lundy described the Hartford design:

*The site lies on a gently sloping hillside overlooking Hartford, approached from on up the slope. It gives one the feeling of being able to see it from all directions and to see out from it in all directions. The concept is that many points of view draw together and become united in the center. One may start in one of many directions to reach the unity of the center; a unity of equality. The congregation specifically asked for a "closed" sanctuary; one that directs attention inward rather than outward.*

*From outside, there is a sense of being able to enter from any direction; which is so. The building rises towards the center, the high points forming a ring of reverse skylights which will throw colored light backwards upon the white walls of the sanctuary. A delicate ceiling tapestry of radiating thin wood members will further diffuse the light.*

*Two orders discipline the scheme: the order of plan, and the order of height. The sanctuary is at the center, ringed by a circular ambulatory--with three small interior courts at approximately the third points for visual relief. These separate the chapel (back of the altar), and define play spaces for children. Radial spaces contain Sunday School rooms, offices, toilets, etc. The lower floor centers on a central multipurpose room, ringed by ancillary spaces. The order of height simply allots scale and importance to specific spaces in relation to their functional significance, i.e., chapel highest, then lobby, library, children's rooms by age, etc.*

*The concrete radial walls start low on the periphery, grow out of the ground, and leap up to become cantilevers that support the sanctuary roof. A system of light beams 16 or 18 ft. apart will run concentrically and carry the 4 by 6 double tongue and groove wood decking. A thin `eyebrow' skylight will occur at every beam, worked in conjunction with the partitions below, and arranged so that extensions of the decking will hide the light source. [26] With the lights on at night, there should be an interesting effect created by the random bands of light--like stepping stones. To preserve the ceiling tracery effect, the sanctuary roof beams will be placed on top, with a radial lacework of thin wood members as ceiling. All roof surfaces will be covered with thin cedar members. [27]*



*Closeup (from below) of cable-supported roof.*



*Interior view of Payson Miller memorial Chapel.*

The plans proved controversial, with many members favoring a more traditional design. A major objection was the cable-hung roof, whose boards were to be covered by tar paper, paint, and a spray-on roofing material that proved highly susceptible to water leakage. [28] Each section of the roof is supported by between four and six 2-inch-thick steel bridge cables. (Within months of the building's completion, the architect complained to the contractor that water leakage had "ruined the finish on one of the pews and...loosened the veneer in several places." [29]) But most of the objections to the design were overcome and Lundy's plans were approved on Dec. 1, 1962. Matthew J. Reiser of West Hartford was named general contractor, and ground was broken on March 22, 1963. [30]

Not surprisingly, there were problems with the contractor and sub-contractors. Lundy and Reiser squabbled over many issues, including an extra sandblasting of the concrete piers so as to achieve a uniformity of color. With the dedication only a month away, Building Committee Chairman Garland Pass, in exasperation, wrote a sarcastic letter to the president of Austin Organs, which had informally warned the Society that less-than-perfect working conditions in the unfinished sanctuary might make it impossible for them to complete the installation of their "delicate instrument" on time.

*We are fully aware that your organ is a "delicate instrument." As far as that goes this entire building is "delicate"--there have been a host of revisions, changes and conflicts that have presented problems to all parties concerned, but every contractor so far has managed to work them out. There is no reason that your company must be the exception and have ideal and problem-free conditions under which to work. Your problems when compared to those of the general contractor are pitiful. We now have both heat and light in operation at the building and you have free use of both. There are more than eight hours in a day and more than five days in a week. We suggest that you consider their use. [31]*

The organ company got the message and completed the work in time for the dedication, which took place on December 6, 1964, [32] with the Rev. Nathaniel Lauriat, the congregation's eleventh pastor, presiding. [33]

\* \* \*

At the time he received the Hartford commission, architect Victor Lundy had already designed St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Sarasota, FL (1960), and the First Unitarian Church in Westport, CT (1961); he would later design the Westminster Unitarian Church in East Greenwich, RI; the clubhouse at the Bay Hill Country Club in Orlando, FL, the Sierra Blanca Ski Center at Lincoln National Forest, NM, the Church of the Resurrection in East Harlem, NY, the U.S. Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka [Ceylon] (1964), and the U.S. Tax Court in Washington, DC (1976).



U. S. Embassy, Colombo, Sri Lanka.



Born in New York City on Feb. 1, 1923, Lundy was graduated from Harvard College in 1943. Returning to Harvard following World War II, he earned his master's degree in Architecture in 1948. Lundy began private practice in New York City in 1951, and briefly re-turned to his alma mater as Visiting Lecturer in 1957. He also guest-lectured at the University of California at Berkeley (1958), University of Florida (1958), Columbia University (1963), and Yale University (1964).

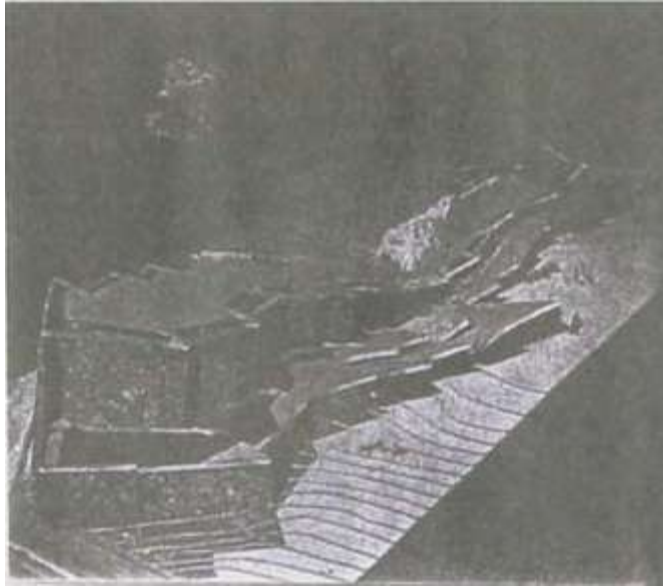
The American Institute of Architects twice awarded Lundy its Award of Merit, in 1960 and 1966, and its First Honor Award in 1965. [34] Although he maintained an office in Guilford, CT, Lundy essentially remained in New York City until 1980, when he moved his practice to Houston. [35]

Lundy's architecture has been described as "serene, quiet, delicately balanced and carefully resolved...not synthesized from purely intellectual concerns." [36] "I strive to make a perfect thing...I seek equilibrium," Lundy once claimed. "I do things intuitively, by sheer work, by the act of doing, testing, trying over and over until I get the ultimate irreducible expression of what it is I am after," he explained.[37]

*My buildings tend to have a strong, easily recognized image, because I try to make architecture say something boldly, clearly, simply. The great ideas in art are not covered over with complicated layers of intellectualism. The great artists are primitives, and what they say touches on fundamental ideas common to many men. [38]*

The simplicity of Lundy's work is nowhere more evident than in St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Sarasota, Florida. "At a time when so much building is either angry and chaotic or competent and sterile, I wanted to...make a serene, perfectly simple space," Lundy said. "I wanted a form that developed logically out of engineering, proportions, dimensions, and purpose. The result is a tent form, one of the most ancient of enclosures." [39]

In East Greenwich, RI, Lundy adhered to "the Unitarian insistence on man's relation to nature." The site includes a rock formation" that rises high to form the edge of a plateau with an attractive view of the surrounding...countryside." Westminster Unitarian Church "nestles into the hill, using the stone floor in terraces where that idea will work." Parts of the rock ledge were used as the actual floor, and outcroppings were included in the walls. [40]



*Westminster Unitarian Church, East Greenwich, Rhode Island*

A different challenge was the Church of the Resurrection in New York City's East Harlem. Located on 80 x 100 ft. lot, the church is hemmed in by old tenements in one of New York's seamiest neighborhoods. "The two-story scheme locates the sanctuary on the upper floor, since the only dimensional freedom was upward, and some height could be gained this way," said Lundy. "This idea led to the concept of a long, easy ramp as transition from the street; the creation of an artificial hill...up which one slowly climbs in an enclosed space to burst finally into the glowing, upward-reaching spaciousness of the sanctuary." [41]



*Church of the Resurrection, East Harlem, New York City.*

\* \* \*

Upon entering the Hartford Meeting House in Hartford, I am personally struck by the powerful simplicity of Lundy's design, which evokes in its own quiet way the same sense of awe that is present in the holiest shrines of other faiths. I have experienced a similar sense of the holy in certain medieval European churches and cathedrals.

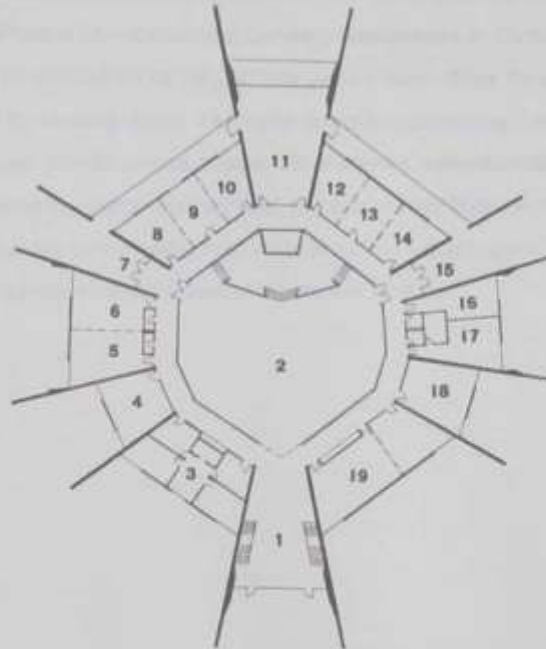
This is not to suggest a comparable grandeur but rather a spirit that speaks to the essence of divine worship. One is not overwhelmed by the artistic creativity of a Michelangelo in his Sistine Chapel; nor is one struck by the stark simplicity of a traditional New England meeting house. Instead, the architect has presented a clear theological statement about the essentials of Unitarianism: a belief in an undivided God who is the source of all being.

Outside, a similar phenomenon takes place: the supporting piers each take a slightly different shape and size, yet each points towards that same single source beyond our complete comprehension. In traditional Christian architecture, steeples often taper to a single point, suggesting that there is but one path to Truth. The Unitarian Meeting House in Hartford suggests otherwise: There may be but one Truth, it says, but there are many paths to attaining it. Modern American Unitarianism, with its lack of creeds and openness to the influence of other faiths, is well represented by the theological symbolism of this unique building.

Architect Edwin Charles Lynn, while having mixed feelings about Lundy's Hartford design, nonetheless describes it as "an architectural masterpiece...[that] has been both a curse and a blessing to the congregation." [42] But, he adds:

*Even those members not particularly interested in architecture need to realize that they are meeting and worshipping in one of the outstanding religious structures of the past fifty years. The design is daring, creative, unique. [43]*

Apart from St. Joseph's [Roman Catholic] Cathedral, the Life Sciences building at Trinity College, and the Phoenix Mutual Insurance Company headquarters on Constitution Plaza, no other building constructed during the past thirty years in Hartford has the architectural distinctiveness of the Meeting House. Its location in a downward-sloping open meadow, some thirty feet lower than Bloomfield Avenue, with a wooded residential hillside in the background, provides the aesthetic background for a modern-day Thomas Cole landscape painting. Victor Lundy's daring architectural vision is, without a doubt, one of the finest examples of late twentieth-century church architecture in America.



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|----|-------------------|----|-------------------------|----|-----------|
| 1  | Lobby             | 2  | Sanctuary               | 3  | Office    |
| 4  | Minister's Office | 5  | Classroom               | 6  | Classroom |
| 7  | Entrance          | 8  | Classroom               | 9  | Classroom |
| 10 | Classroom         | 11 | Payson Miller<br>Chapel | 12 | Classroom |
| 13 | Classroom         | 16 | Classroom               | 14 | Classroom |
| 15 | Entrance          | 19 | Library                 | 17 | Classroom |
| 18 | Choir Room        |    |                         |    |           |

Unitarian Meeting House, Hartford, CT  
Floor Plan

## Footnotes

[1]. Between 1647, when Windsor residents signed the "Windsor Creed-Covenant," until 1818, when the State of Connecticut adopted a new constitution, it was the practice of each town to be responsible for supporting the ordained Puritan (i.e., Congregational) minister(s) within its borders. Originally, each town organized a religious society, which in turn provided financial support for a church. While only baptized adult males were eligible for voting membership in the church, every adult in the community was required to pay taxes to support the society. As Connecticut (and New England) became more religiously diverse, however, arrangements were made to accommodate Baptists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, etc., by allowing them to stop supporting the local Congregational society if they could obtain a certificate proving that they were supporting another church. This practice persisted until 1818, when the new constitution failed to provide any special privileges for Congregationalism, thus opening the way for completely voluntary support for all Christian sects (and, later, other religions).

[2]. Unitarianism is among the most liberal forms of Protestantism (cf. Quakerism, Universalism). Although its theological origins can be traced to the Arianism of the Early Church, modern Unitarianism is a product of the anti-Trinitarian movement in sixteenth-century Poland, Hungary, and Transylvania that later found its way to England and America. American Unitarianism began with opposition to the Great Awakening among those eighteenth-century Massachusetts Congregationalist clergy who were inclined toward an Arminian interpretation of the relationship between the divine and the human (i.e., who affirmed some role for human choice in the process of salvation). Although its name implies only a rejection of Trinitarianism, contemporary American Unitarianism is essentially "the impulse to reject dogma in favor of free inquiry; to bring to bear the forces of reason in making religious judgments, while not necessarily denying the reality of supernatural forces; to be suspicious of religious authority that conflicts with individual reason; to replace a preoccupation with the metaphysical aspects of theology with an orientation toward living rightly and doing good in this world; and to exhibit an optimistic stance toward the possibilities of transforming the world into a saner and more humane place through the development of human potential by education, self-cultivation, and a beneficent social environment." Williams, "Unitarianism and Universalism," 579.

[3]. Chapman, "One God in One Person Only," 10-93, passim.

[4]. The Rev. William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), pastor of Boston's Federal Street Church between 1803 and 1842, was widely regarded as the spiritual leader of nascent American Unitarianism. Channing's 1819 sermon "Unitarian Christianity" succinctly stated the beliefs of his liberal colleagues who rejected Calvinism--which argues that man has no choice in his salvation since God arbitrarily chooses whom to save and whom to damn--in favor of Arminianism (see note 2); they also rejected the fourth-century conciliar Doctrine of the Trinity, which declares that the Godhead consists of three distinct "Persons" (i.e., Father, Son, Holy Spirit). More than any other single document, "Unitarian Christianity" led to the schism, in 1825, of New England Congregationalism into competing Unitarian and orthodox factions, with the founding of the American Unitarian Association. In 1961 the American Unitarian Association merged with the Universalist Church of America to form the Unitarian Universalist Association of North America.

[5]. Chapman, 7-9.

[6]. Between 1813 and 1817, a schism occurred in the eastern Connecticut town of Brooklyn that pitted supporters of the senior minister, Dr. Josiah Whitney, against the junior pastor, the Rev. Luther Willson, who openly rejected



the Doctrine of the Trinity. By 1821 the Brooklyn congregation had split into rival Unitarian and orthodox (i.e., Trinitarian) religious societies, with the former acquiring the Society's property.

[7]. Rev. May was settled as pastor of the Brooklyn church on Nov. 5, 1823, and served until 1836. An early agent for the American Unitarian Association who set about planting the seeds of Unitarianism in the Northeast, largely through the distribution of religious tracts and books, Rev. May would later become nationally known as an abolitionist and advocate for American Indian reform. In 1833 Rev. May was the only clergyman to publicly support Prudence Crandall, a Quaker schoolmistress, who had set up a short-lived school in nearby Canterbury that admitted Negro girls. When the Connecticut General Assembly enacted legislation outlawing such schools, Crandall openly violated the law, was tried, convicted, and jailed.

[8]. Unitarian Society of Hartford, Profile.

[9]. Lundy had previously used steel cables in a church building, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Sarasota, FL (1960). Working within tight budgetary restrictions, the plan is "straightforward, and the congregation faces a barren, concrete wall. The pulpit and chancel are finished cleanly, with severely minimal furnishing and accoutrements. Dramatic contrast between bright light at the ends of the church and relative darkness in the central portion adds more drama to the building...contrasting sharply with the starkness of the detailing" (Chang, Ching-Yu, "Lundy, Victor A[lfred]," in Emanuel, Contemporary Architects, 489).

[10]. Brett, Connecticut Yesterday and Today, 109.

[11]. Richards, Who's Who in Architecture: From 1400 to the Present, 170; Ransom, Biographical Dictionary of Hartford Architects, 68-69; Withey and Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), 359. According to the Witheys, Lafever's fame rests on several splendid Gothic Revival churches in Brooklyn, NY, outstanding examples of which were First Unitarian, dedicated as the Church of the Saviour (1841); Holy Trinity (1844-47), considered by many his architectural masterpiece; and Pierpont Street Baptist (1843-44). Although Ransom noted that Lafever was active in Hartford, providing interior alterations to South Congregational Church (1853), and designing the Pearl Street Congregational Church (1851-1898), he seems unaware that Lafever was architect of the Church of the Saviour.

[12]. Meyer, Hartford Unitarianism, 9.

[13]. Meyer, 10.

[14]. Letter from Joseph Harrington to ??????, mm/dd/yy.

[15]. Meyer, 12.

[16]. That building was demolished in 1892 and replaced by the present structure in 1898 (Andrews and Ransom, Structures and Styles, 150).

[17]. Meyer, 19.

[18]. Meyer, 20.

[19]. The St. Cecilia Club gave concerts at Unity Hall two or three times a year; the well-known contralto Ruth Thayer Burnham gave a series of lecture recitals there in 1897; the pianist Franz Xaver Scharwenka gave "a brilliant program" on March 23, 1891 and again on April 3, 1894; Polish virtuoso Ignace Paderewski played at Unity Hall on Feb. 8, 1892, less than a year after his American début at New York's Carnegie Hall; the Musical Club of Hartford

gave semi-yearly concerts there beginning in 1893; Boston Symphony Orchestra conductor Arthur Nikisch played the piano with the Kneisel Quartet for a Memnon Club concert; Helen Keller lectured around 1901; the celebrated German pianist Adele aus der Ohe played on March 30, 1887; the noted American composer and pianist Edward McDowell made his only Hartford appearance there on March 11, 1898; and the French baritone Charles Gilbert sang recitals in both 1898 and 1899. Johnson, *Musical Memories of Hartford*, 83-4, 96, 212-3, 221, 230, 247, 257, 269, 273, *passim*.

[20]. *Hartford Architecture*, Volume One, 125.

[21]. Burr, "Inventory of Unitarian Church Records in Connecticut," x.

[22]. "1956 Report to the Church Council," 17-18.

[23]. Although Congregation Ados Israel no longer occupies the Pearl Street Meeting House, the building still stands.

[24]. This parcel once belonged to Anna Watkinson Wells, wife of James H. Wells, who negotiated with the Rev. Samuel Joseph May to bring Unitarianism to Hartford. On April 30, 1830, Wells, Hezekiah Huntington, Plowden Stevens, Jonathan Goodwin, C. M. Emerson, Henry Seymour, Joseph Sheldon, Edward Watkinson, and O. E. Williams formed the Hartford Unitarian Association. Throughout the 1830s the American Unitarian Association sent missionary preachers to Hartford but there was insufficient support to establish a church until the middle of the next decade. Finally, on July 27, 1844, Wells, Seth Saltmarsh, Charles Olmsted, Giles Olmsted, and Timothy M. Allyn signed the "Declaration of Faith" that established the First Unitarian Congregational Society of Hartford.

[25]. Profile.

[26]. The "eyebrow" skylights were dropped from the final plans.

[27]. "New Ideas of Victor A. Lundy," 119-120.

[28]. Around 1970, a completely adhered first-generation rubber roof was installed. When that proved unsatisfactory, a loosely applied, single-membrane rubber roof was tried. This too proved unsatisfactory. To date, the best solution has been the EPDM single-membrane roof, loosely laid over the boards, which was designed by architect Roy Cook and installed in 1984.

[29]. Letter from Victor Lundy to Matthew J. Reiser, March 12, 1965.

[30]. Although Reiser's bid was \$569,000, he was paid only \$537,875. Unsuccessful bids ranged as high as \$814,400. Among those participating in the groundbreaking ceremony was Cleora Miller, widow of the Rev. Payson Miller, who died on Oct. 28, 1962. Rev. Miller is memorialized in the Payson Miller Chapel. *Hartford Times*, photo caption (March 23, 1963), 5.

[31]. Letter from Garland Pass to the President of Austin Organs, Inc., Nov. 6, 1964.

[32]. First Unitarian Congregational Society of Hartford, "Order of Worship for the Dedication of the New Meeting House," Dec. 6, 1964.

[33]. Meyer, 83.

[34]. Emanuel, *Contemporary Architects*, 488.

[35]. Ransom, Biographical Dictionary of Hartford Architects, 71.

[36]. Emanuel, 488.

[3]. Emanuel, 489.

[38]. "New Ideas of Victor Lundy," 105.

[39]. "Church Under a Great Tent," 77.

[40]. "New Ideas of Victor Lundy," 107, 109, passim.

[41]. "New Ideas of Victor Lundy," 117.

[42]. Lynn, [architectural consultant's report, 7].

[43]. Lynn, [7]

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