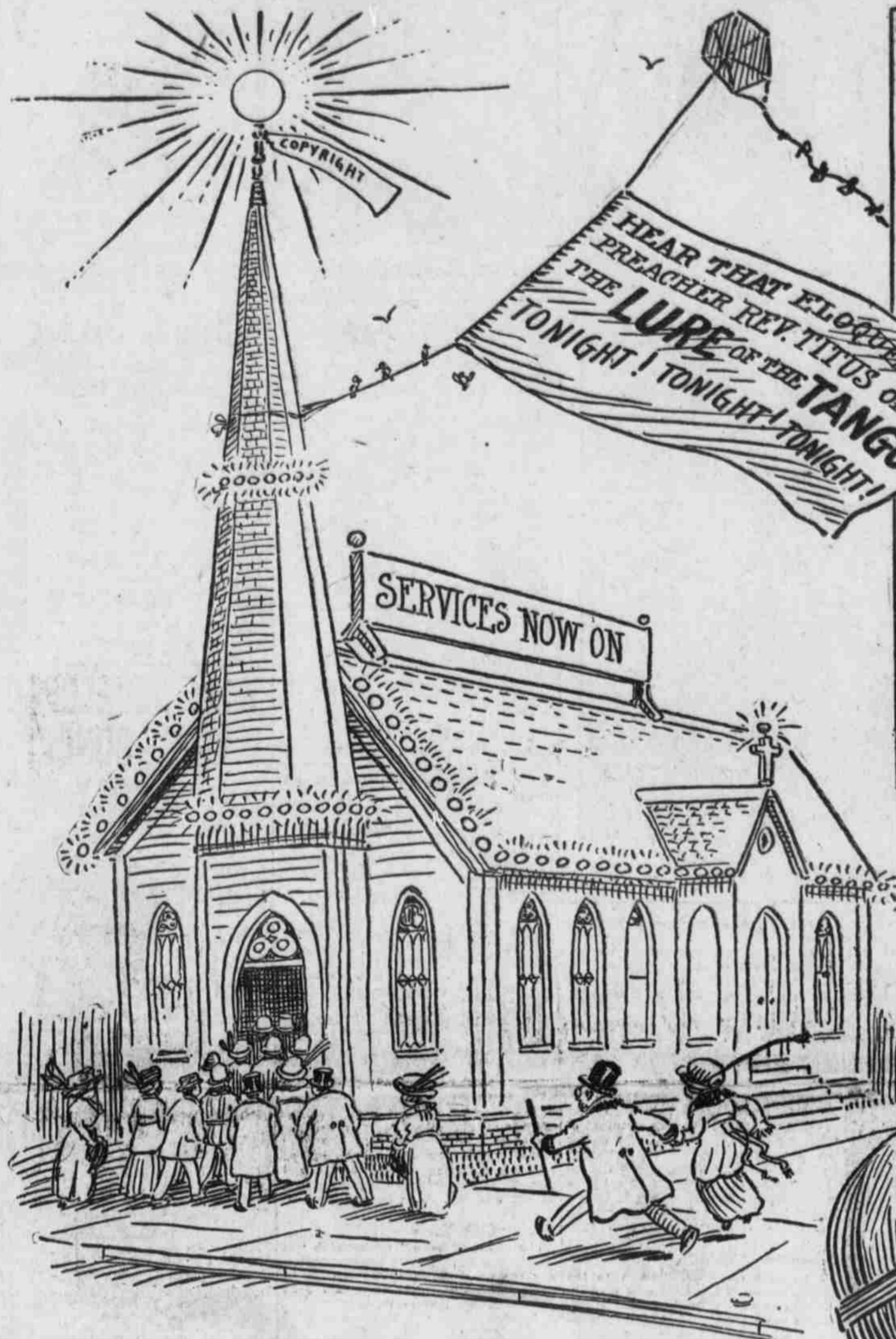


Finding Church in Omaha No Easy Job for the Stranger



THERE are a few churches in Omaha that let it be known in various ways just where they are located. They invite the public.

There are very many more that do nothing of the kind.

Church bells have gone out of date. No other form of call to worship has taken their place. Lights of a characteristic kind in front of the churches to guide strangers to the doors of worship are not many. Lights of any kind over the doors of the churches are few.

Thus the thousands of strangers who spend Sunday in Omaha sometimes have a hard time to find a church, when on Sunday evening they suddenly decide to go to church.

The stranger writes a letter or two in the writing room of his hotel, and then decides to look up a church. If he is at the Rome, the Henshaw, the Merchants, or the Loyal, he may find a framed church announcement hanging on the wall in the writing room. It may give directions to the church he wants and it may not. In many of the other hotels he finds no such directions at all.

If he happens to find a Saturday Evening Bee he can find the announcements for all the churches for the Sabbath. If he doesn't find the paper he can examine the walls in the writing room of his hotel. Maybe he is staying at the Loyal. He looks round and round the walls and finds but one church announced.

A little brown frame greets his eye. It holds a white piece of paper with a picture of a church. Under this picture are the words:

"Trinity Cathedral."
Capitol Avenue and Eighteenth Street.
Rev. James Arthur Tancock, Dean."

This information is followed by a schedule showing the time of services on Sunday.

If this traveler is looking for Trinity Cathedral he is lucky, for not another church is announced on the walls of the room. If not, what does he do?

If he happens to be stopping at the Hotel Rome, he looks up from the writing desk and finds another sign in a brown frame:

"First Church of Christ Scientist."

This is followed by a few directions. That is not the church he is looking for. He glances further on. Here is a frame announcing:

"Dietz Memorial Methodist Church,
Tenth and Pierce Streets.
C. N. Dawson, Pastor.
Farnam and Harney Cars Come to the Door."

Still that is not his church. He looks farther and finds the First Presbyterian similarly sched-

uled. Still not his church. He looks around the room three times, but see no more directions. He is looking for a Protestant Episcopal church. He stretches his legs and strolls over to the desk to bother the clerk to tell him where he can find such a church. The clerk is very busy, and he cannot get at him for some moments. He loiters about a few minutes waiting to get an opportunity to speak to Colonel Anderson at the desk.

While he is waiting here his eyes fall upon a little card no bigger than a Christmas post card. It is stuck at the edge of the window glass in the cashier's cage. It has a little picture of a church at the top. Beneath it are the words:

"Trinity Cathedral."

Then follow street directions. He is happy. He has found his church and he need not bother the clerk.

At the Merchants hotel the Sunday visitor will find the First Presbyterian church, Seventeenth and Dodge streets, advertised, as he will also find the First Church of Christ, Scientist, St. Mary's avenue and Twenty-fourth street; St. Mary Magdalene church, Nineteenth and Dodge streets, and a complete Catholic church directory.

At the Henshaw he will find the complete Catholic church directory; an announcement of the Dietz Memorial church, and that is all.

Thus it will be found that in a few of the hotels in Omaha some of the churches are scheduled. At the great majority of hotels and rooming houses no church schedules are exhibited.

Also it will be found that it is only a few churches that place their sign and schedule in the hotels, and that the great majority of the 100 or more churches of the city make no effort to announce themselves in the hotels.

Now if the guest starts in the dark to look for a church he may find it readily if he is well acquainted with the streets of the city. If he is not he may not have so good luck. If he wanders off the car line, and gets within a block of the church, how can he find it? Many of the churches have absolutely no light over the door to guide the stranger. Many, it is true, have such lights. But suppose the particular stranger is looking for one of the churches that have no light.

St. Mary Magdalene church is without light or other sign, except the name of the church carved inconspicuously in a gray stone set in the side of the building.

A stranger seeking the First Congregational church, Nineteenth and Davenport streets, would have some difficulty on arriving at the corner in determining whether he had found the right church or not. Here stands the imposing brick edifice, absolutely without a light of any kind over any of its doors. The stranger may strike a match and scrutinize either side of all three doors in vain for a sign that would tell him whether or not he has found the First Congrega-



tional church. He finds not a scratch. Hesitating to enter without assurance that he has found the right place he hugs the walls and walks around the church a few times in the hope of finding some clue. If he leans up against the west wall to rest a moment, there is one chance in 100 that he may lean against a little weather-beaten board sign on the bare wall, twenty-five feet from the nearest door. He strikes a match again and with difficulty, spells out the weather-beaten letters which make up the words:

"First Congregational Church,
Founded 1856."

At the door of the First Methodist church he

will fare better. Arriving at Twentieth and Davenport streets he finds a huge red brick church, with great globed lights over both doors. Also beside the door he reads in bold plainly printed words:

"First Methodist Church,
Titus Lowe, Minister,
Residence, 3345 Harney Street."

At Seventeenth and Dodge streets he finds the First Presbyterian church announcing itself in bold letters on a sign beside the door.

At Eighteenth and Capitol avenue the stranger will find a majestic stone church, with several doors, but with no sign, whatever, over any door. He may wonder and doubt, but he can get no in-

formation by staying on the outside. Still in some of the hotels he will find the description of this church, and find that it is Trinity Cathedral; also that Dean Tancock is on the job there. He knows this is Trinity Cathedral because he took account of the streets when he was there, and he now finds that the street numbers correspond with the direction given in the little framed announcement hanging in the hotel.

Kountze Memorial Lutheran church, the great stone building at Twenty-sixth avenue and Farnam street, makes itself known to the passing public at a glance. It has three great globed lights over the door. Also it has fresh large signs beside the door announcing the church, the name of the pastor and the hours of services.

The First Baptist church at Harney and Park avenue has two lights on iron posts, one on either side of the stone steps. Under each light on the stone approach is the sign that guides the stranger aright.

Temple Israel at Jackson street and Park avenue carries its name carved in bold letters in the stone high above the door. Two iron light posts are set, one at either side of the stone steps approaching the temple, and two more iron fixtures, one on either side of the door support flocks of globed lights.

St. Mary's Avenue Congregational church at Twenty-seventh street and St. Mary's avenue announces itself well by means of a gold-lettered sign.

Many of the best lighted and best labeled churches are the most easily accessible from the car lines. There are others, dozens of them, too, that are not so easily accessible from the car lines. Dozens of these are nesting quietly in their seclusion without lights over their doors, and some even without good plain labels.

"Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel," ran the word from the Sermon on the Mount.

There are churches in Omaha that, so far from placing their candle under a bushel, do not so much as light their candle.

If the steel king, the oil king, or the railroad magnate had invested a half million dollars in a hundred such institutions in the city, would half of them be nesting quietly in secluded corners of the city waiting for someone to find them by chance?