

## REDEEMED CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GOD (INTERNATIONAL CHAPEL) & NEW YORK CITY WATER TUNNEL #3

Friday and Sunday services are held here by the congregants of the **REDEEMED CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GOD**. The church refurbished and occupied the building in 1997 under minister and island resident Oloe Obed. It was originally the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, built in 1924 as a chapel for Metropolitan Hospital, with an attached rectory for the hospital's chaplain. The chapel was later rededicated to the Order of Saint Dennis.

When Metropolitan Hospital moved to Manhattan in 1955 the chapel stood abandoned for the next twenty years. In 1978 Richard Hemm, the chaplain of the relocated Metropolitan Hospital, occupied the rectory and remained there until the early 1990s.

Modeled on a church in England, the chapel's most noteworthy features are its stained-glass windows and steep-slate roof. It was the last of many island structures built out of island-quarried gray gneiss, and it blended nicely with Metropolitan Hospital's other buildings. Though its architecture is quite reserved, it maintains a handsome and charming distinction amidst the surrounding land.



*The Redeemed Christian Church of God (then the Episcopal Chapel of the Holy Spirit), ca. 1925*



*A tunnel worker inside Water Tunnel #3. The tracks on the floor are for diesel trains that transport work supplies.*

Since 1970 the New York City Department of Environmental Protection has been building 60 miles of 20 foot-diameter tunnel extending from Kensico Reservoir in Westchester to areas throughout the city. This tunnel is **WATER TUNNEL #3**. Its first phase extends 13 miles from Hillview Reservoir in Yonkers to Astoria, Queens. The green fence to your right encloses the work site for this segment's deepest section, 800 feet down.

The entire Water Tunnel #3 project is in four phases, and it is the largest and most expensive public works project in New York City history. This tunnel will relieve and back up the city's two existing tunnels that have been operating continuously since 1917.

The project is both massive and dangerous. Since 1970, twenty-six tunnel diggers (or "sandhogs") have died in construction-related accidents. These workers are memorialized on a plaque at the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Reservoir in Central Park. When work at this site is complete, the land will be landscaped into a park adjoining the existing Octagon Park.

*To continue the tour, follow the white and green "Roosevelt Island Historical Walk" signs.*