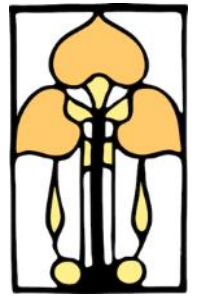


# FRIENDS of HISTORIC SECOND CHURCH

## THE HERALD

Volume XV, Number 2

Summer 2021



### AGNES F. NORTHROP: DESIGNER OF TIFFANY'S GARDENS IN GLASS *by Lindsay R. Parrott*

The design for the serene “Pastoral Landscape” memorial window that shines from the Second Presbyterian Church’s northwest balcony grew from the fertile imagination of Agnes F. Northrop (1857-1953), the foremost female designer at Louis C. Tiffany’s celebrated studios (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> Northrop shared Tiffany’s



Figure 1: Davis & Sanford, New York. Cabinet card photograph of Agnes F. Northrop (1857-1953), late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. Gift of Paul Nassau.

reverence for nature and devoted her long and distinguished career to creating gardens in glass.<sup>2</sup> Over the course of five decades, she designed virtually every window that featured brilliant blossoms, lush gardens and luminous landscapes and, as a result, she was integral to pioneering a new genre of memorial windows that featured scenes from nature rather than reinterpretations of religious subjects.

Northrop was born and raised in Flushing, New York, the site of the first commercial nurseries in the United States. Exotic flowers, including the magnolias and rhododendrons that frequently appear in her windows, were imported and sold nationwide

through these local distributors. Whether Northrop received any formal artistic training is unknown, but early exposure to this special flora may well have planted early seeds of inspiration.

In 1884, at the age of 27, Northrop took a position in Tiffany’s fledgling window department where she soon demonstrated “a natural talent for floral and conventional designs.”<sup>3</sup> During these early years of window



Figure 2: Tiffany Studios, New York. Designed attributed to Agnes F. Northrop (1857-1953). Rundel Memorial Window: “Lilies and Passion Flowers,” before 1910. 5’5” high x 2’6” wide. Unsigned. Originally installed at the Centennial Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois. The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass, Queens, New York.

production, Tiffany’s firm frequently reproduced famous religious works

of art by Renaissance masters as well as popular contemporary artists who illustrated biblical scenes. By the early 1890s, however, Tiffany began phasing out these reproductions and replacing them with original compositions made in-house. Northrop collaborated with her fellow Tiffany designers to provide natural settings for their figural works, but she also created windows of her own design (Figure 2). These windows established her as an indispensable member of Tiffany’s artistic team and set her on equal footing with her male counterparts in the window department: she, too, had a private studio and periodically received public credit for her designs.<sup>4</sup>

Northrop’s floral and landscape windows were commissioned for grand private residences as well as churches, cemetery chapels and mausoleums. In the late-nineteenth century, the religious climate in America temporarily shifted to favor an optimistic vision of a loving God over oppressive themes of original sin.<sup>5</sup> Liberal congregations viewed the beauty of the natural world as a manifestation of God’s benevolence and, in turn, they commissioned Northrop’s landscape windows as memorials for loved ones. Excerpts from Psalms, such as “My help cometh from the Lord which made Heaven and Earth” (Psalm 121:2), were often included on memorial plaques and affirmed the relevance and appropriateness of landscape windows in religious settings.<sup>6</sup>

By conservative estimates, Northrop designed a few hundred windows



Figure 3: Tiffany Studios, New York. Designed by Agnes F. Northrop (1857-1953). Charles D. Ettinger (1838-1916) Memorial Window: "Pastoral Landscape," 1917. 16' 9" high x 8' 2" wide. "Signed: TIFFANY STUDIOS NY." Second Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Illinois. Photo: Martin Cheung.

during her long career, but that number increases significantly when the backgrounds and floral elements in figural windows are included in the count. Chicago alone boasts approximately thirty windows attributed to Northrop that are original to the city, and local collectors

Edward Byron (E.B.) Smith, Jr., and the late Richard H. Driehaus have increased that number over the years.

Among the Northrop gems in the Windy City is the Ettinger Memorial Window, or "Pastoral Landscape," at Second Presbyterian (Figure 3). Created in 1917, it memorializes businessman and long-time church member Charles D. Ettinger (1838-1916).<sup>7</sup> It is a classic example of Northrop's serene vistas in glass (Figure 3). As with so many of her landscape designs, a river wends its way toward distant mountains, placidly flowing along mossy riverbanks lined with solemn trees. Colorful flowers decorate the window's foreground: on the left, clusters of magenta rhododendrons bloom beside a bank of velvety purple irises; on the right, pale pink crowns of mountain laurel flower beneath the cool shade of the trees. The sky blushes with the rosy light of dawn or dusk, an allusion to the arc of life.

A remarkably similar landscape window, which also dates to 1917, is installed at the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York.<sup>8</sup> Known as "The

Miracle of Creation" or the Hand Memorial Window, it, too, depicts a quiet river, flanked by trees and flowers, flowing towards distant mountains.<sup>9</sup> Although this window predates the "Pastoral Landscape" in Chicago, the Ettinger window stands as an extraordinary artistic feat in its own right. Northrop inserted birch trees among the evergreens and added an abundance of rhododendron. The window's three-lancet composition culminates in elaborate gothic tracery that lifts viewers' eyes toward Heaven.

It may seem surprising that Agnes Northrop designed nearly identical windows for two separate clients, but this practice was not uncommon at Tiffany Studios. The exceptional beauty and superior quality of Tiffany's windows came with a considerable price tag and purchasing an original design, regardless of its subject, significantly increased—and could even double—the cost of a commission.<sup>10</sup> For those clients who wanted a Tiffany window, but did not require a wholly original composition, the Studios offered variations on existing designs. Northrop would modify design details including the number, placement, and species of trees and flowers, to ensure that each landscape window, though very similar to another, was, in fact, unique. She also adapted her designs to fit the size and configuration requirements of specific window openings.

A survey of Northrop's Chicago windows—from Second Presbyterian's imposing "Pastoral Landscape," to the soaring Hartwell Memorial Window recently acquired by the Art Institute of Chicago,<sup>11</sup> to the twenty-odd, intimately-scaled windows at Rosehill Cemetery's Community Mausoleum—illuminates her extraordinary talent for translating nature's beauty into glass and adapting that beauty to any scale. More than one hundred years later, Northrop's glass gardens, in perpetual bloom, stand as a testament to the timelessness of her artistic vision.

<sup>1</sup> Although best known for her windows, Agnes Northrop also created designs for lampshades, fancy goods, silk fabrics and carpets, though seemingly in limited quantities. For an excellent discussion of Northrop's life and career, see Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, "Agnes Northrop: Tiffany Studios' Designer of Floral and Landscape Windows," in *Louis C. Tiffany and the Art of Devotion* (D. Giles, London, and Museum of Biblical Art, New York, 2012), pp. 163-184.

<sup>2</sup> "In Tiffany's famous windows, Mrs. [sic] Northrop [sic] designs under his supervision all the landscapes, flowers and backgrounds. "What Our Women are Doing in Art," *The Philadelphia Times*, June 25, 1899, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Polly King, "Women Workers in Glass at the Tiffany Studios," *The Art Interchange* vol.3, no.4 (October 1894), p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> Contrary to popular belief, Tiffany regularly credited his designers in promotional materials and press releases. See Jennifer Perry Thalheimer, "Louis Comfort Tiffany's Gospel of Good Taste," in *Louis C. Tiffany and the Art of Devotion* (D. Giles, London, and Museum of Biblical Art, New York, 2012), pp. 33-36.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Elizabeth De Rosa provides a thorough analysis of this trend in her dissertation "Louis Comfort Tiffany and the Development of Religious Landscape Windows," Columbia University, 1995, as well as her article "Louis C. Tiffany's Landscapes of Devotion," *The Magazine Antiques*, November/December 2012. <https://www.themagazineantiques.com/article/louis-c-tiffanys-landscapes-of-devotion/>.

<sup>6</sup> This passage appears on the Hand Memorial Window in Brooklyn (discussed above) as well as the newly acquired Hartwell Memorial Window at the Art Institute of Chicago.

<sup>7</sup> For a brief announcement about the window's unveiling see, "Presbyterian," *The Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, IL), 23 February 1918, p. 8. Based on this notice, the window was fabricated in 1917.

<sup>8</sup> For an image of the Hand Memorial Window (also called "The Miracle of Creation"), see Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church Brooklyn, New York, accessed August 1, 2021, <https://brooklynarchive.com/shop/lafayette-avenue-presbyterian-church-tiffany-trypitch-4/>.

<sup>9</sup> "Sermon Subjects of Brooklyn Clergymen: To Unveil Three Windows," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 27 October 1917, p. 9. The window was dedicated on October 28, 1917, which indicates that its design predates the Ettinger memorial at Second Presbyterian in Chicago.

<sup>10</sup> The original cost of the Hand and the Ettinger memorial windows is unknown to the author. However, a similar, though significantly smaller, landscape window was commissioned in 1913 by Andrew Carnegie for his hometown of Dunfermline, Scotland. It cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000 (or \$82,332 to \$109,776 in 2021). Given the considerably larger size of the Hand and Ettinger windows, it is reasonable to assume that these two commissions were more costly. Thank you to Paul Doros for sharing the information on the Carnegie commission.

<sup>11</sup> For more on the Hartwell Memorial Window, see Elizabeth McGoey, "Breaking Ground for a Landscape in Light," Art Institute of Chicago, accessed May 25, 2021, <https://www.artic.edu/articles/903/breaking-ground-for-a-landscape-in-light>.

## GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

*The Herald* welcomes our first guest contributor Lindsay Parrott, Executive Director and Curator of the Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass in Queens, New York. During Parrott's eighteen year career at The Neustadt she has conducted groundbreaking research on the manufacture and use of Tiffany's opalescent flat glass and developed The Neustadt's partnership with the Queens Museum. Her recent exhibitions include *Tiffany's Glass Mosaics*, an exhibition and publication organized jointly with the Corning Museum of Glass. She has done extensive research on Tiffany's artists and artisans, with a particular focus on the women of Tiffany Studios. Visit [theneustadt.org](http://theneustadt.org) and @theneustadt on social media for more.

## NEWS OF THE RESTORATION OF "ST. PAUL PREACHING AT ATHENS" WINDOW



*Venturella Studio is immersed in the work of the restoration of our St. Paul Preaching at Athens window. Tom Venturella and Jim Murphy report that this window is even dirtier than the Peace window. These photos show the dirty glass and how well it cleans up.*

## UPGRADES COMING TO MEETING SPACES AT SECOND PRESBYTERIAN

Second Presbyterian Church has won a grant of \$250,000 from the National Fund for Sacred Places. The church is using this to anchor a Capital Campaign, Sacred Places and Safe Spaces, to undertake \$1.25 million in repairs and improvements to our buildings.

These much-needed updates and improvements include: installing an attractive ADA masonry walkway on the south side of the building to make our building accessible to all, upgrading, expanding and rewiring the electrical service, upgrading the plumbing, restrooms, and sewer services, replacing the failed heating system in the gymnasium, renovating and re-lighting the North Parlor and Fellowship Hall, improving meeting and office spaces on the first, second, and third floors, and updating the décor and storage of our Mission Shop.

Each week the church hosts between 700 and 800 people for activities including the Lunch Bag program, the South Loop Community Table, tutoring, Irish Dancing, gymnastics, Tai Chi, stretch and yoga, Bible classes, building tours by Friends, book groups, meeting space for local associations, immigrant diaspora groups, homeowner groups and town halls, shoppers in our Mission Shop, 12-step programs, a Memory Café, rehearsal space for the South Loop Symphony Orchestra, and the Prairie District Farmers Market.

The emphasis of the National Fund for Sacred Places is to support *the roles played in the community by churches, temples, synagogues, and other religious buildings*. Second's **Sacred Places and Safe Spaces Capital Campaign** is designed in pursuit of those goals. Links to donate or pledge to the Campaign can be found at: <https://2ndpresbyterian.org/capital-campaign/#Donate>

## 2021 DOCENT TRAINING



Friends of Historic Second Church invites you to consider becoming a docent at Historic Second Church, 1936 S. Michigan Ave. And now is the time to sign up for Docent Training. After a missed year of training in 2020 due to COVID-19, we are all anxious to become active again. Docent Training provides a wonderful way to

learn about the world-class art and architecture of Second Presbyterian Church. Those who attend and certify will become docents for Friends of Historic Second Church with a time commitment of approximately two hours per month. Training provides the opportunity to become part of a dedicated corps of docents who love giving tours and also enjoy participating in special docent enrichment limited-access tours and events.

The training series is **Wednesdays Sept 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th from 6:30 – 8:30 pm and Saturday, October 2nd from 9 am to 12 pm**. A partial list of topics includes: The Arts and Crafts movement; architects James Renwick, Jr. and Howard Van Doren Shaw; Gothic Revival architecture; artists Frederic Clay Bartlett and Louis Comfort Tiffany; the church's stained glass windows; preservation philosophy and techniques; and a review of completed restoration projects.

Please complete the training application form on line at [www.historicsecondchurch.org/docents](http://www.historicsecondchurch.org/docents). Training takes place at the church. Fee is \$10 for the entire 5-part class.

## SUPPORT FRIENDS WITH AMAZONSMILE

Friends has joined AmazonSmile, a website which allows non-profit organizations to receive donations from a 0.5% portion of sales made on the popular shopping website. To donate via AmazonSmile, visit: <http://smile.amazon.com/> and select Friends of Historic Second Church at the prompt.

***Friends of Historic Second Church gratefully acknowledges the following memberships, donations, and contributions from March 29, 2021 - August 7, 2021***

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| Kathryn Korn             |                     |                   |

**SHAW AND FRIENDS: A HYDE PARK WALKING TOUR**

**Saturday, September 11, 2021  
10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**Meeting location to be determined.**

**\$20 general admission/ \$16 members**

**To purchase tickets go to [historicsecondchurch.org](http://historicsecondchurch.org)**



The prolific and talented Howard Van Doren Shaw designed more than 20 houses in the Hyde Park neighborhood, as well as a church and a club house. The buildings span his full career from the 1890s through the 1920s and display the variety of styles in which Shaw was proficient. This walking tour, led by architect, Nate Lielasus will go past many of the surviving houses, with attendees learning about both the architecture and design and the families for whom they were built.

**THE GREAT CHICAGO FIRE IN MUSIC AND STORY**

**Saturday, October 9, 2021  
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

**Second Presbyterian Church  
1936 S. Michigan Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60616**

**\$25 general admission/\$20 members**

**To purchase tickets go to [historicsecondchurch.org](http://historicsecondchurch.org)**



Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire, which ravaged the city October 8-10, 1871, this very special performance will feature musical selections related to the Fire, performed on the historic four-manual Austin organ of

Second Presbyterian Church by its music director Michael Shawgo.

Commentary during the performance by William Tyre, Executive Director and Curator of Glessner House will provide a rich variety of stories about the Fire, including gripping first-hand accounts, the aid received from around the world, and the astonishing speed at which residents came together to rebuild their city bigger and better than before.

Doors will open at 2:00pm for tours of the National Historic Landmark sanctuary and a reception in Fellowship Hall. The performance will begin at 3:00pm.

**PLEASE NOTE THIS IS AN IN-PERSON EVENT.**

\* All members must sign-in to our Neon database to receive member discounts. Member discount codes are no longer viable with check out. Try to create a login first and if you continue to have questions regarding setting up an account please email [info@historicsecondchurch.org](mailto:info@historicsecondchurch.org).

**BECOME A MEMBER**

2021 is progressing well after a difficult and challenging past year. Even while Friends of Historic Second Church adapted as best we could in 2020 with online programs and limited tours, we still successfully continued our preservation work. That is because YOU, our faithful members, continued to support us with your memberships and gifts for restoration *despite* a worldwide pandemic. We will be forever grateful. This year is an exciting year with the March removal of Tiffany's *St. Paul Preaching at Athens* and its complete restoration now underway at Venturella Studio. Fresh programs reflecting new partnerships are scheduled, and the church is gradually re-opening for Friends' tours and other events. It's the perfect time to join/renew your membership in Friends. Join because you believe in preservation as a civic duty or join because you enjoy seeing restoration come to life. But don't miss out on your chance to be a vital part of living history – the restoration of Historic Second Church.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

All members receive the newsletter *The Herald* and are recognized as donors in the newsletter.

**Tiffany Circle:** \$40 Individual; \$55 Family; \$25 Student/Senior (62 yrs.+)

*Benefits include:* Free tours during regular tour hours, 25% discount on Friends' merchandise.

**Arts & Crafts Circle:** \$100 and above

*Benefits include:* Free tours during regular tour hours, 25% discount on Friends' merchandise, and invitations to special members-only tours and programs.



I/we wish to become a member of Friends of Historic Second Church or renew a current membership.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for membership at the following level:

**Tiffany Circle:** \$40 Individual; \$55 Family; \$25 Student/Senior (62 yrs.+)

**Arts & Crafts Circle:** \$100 and above

Yes  No You may acknowledge my contribution in Friends' publications.

Yes  No I prefer to receive my newsletter by e-mail.

Yes  No I am interested in volunteering for Friends' activities.

If you wish to discuss sponsoring a restoration project, contact Friends of Historic Second Church at 1-800-657-0687.

Please return completed form with check made payable to:

Friends of Historic Second Church 1936 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60616.

Or renew online at [www.historicsecondchurch.org](http://www.historicsecondchurch.org).

Memberships and gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Friends of Historic Second Church is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.



**FRIENDS of  
HISTORIC SECOND CHURCH**

1936 S. Michigan Ave.

Chicago, IL 60616

Phone: 1-800-657-0687

E-mail: [info@historicsecondchurch.org](mailto:info@historicsecondchurch.org)

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Tiffen.

**TOURS ARE RETURNING TO HISTORIC SECOND CHURCH!**

We have missed all of you, our guests, during the pandemic. We've missed hearing the oohs and ahs of first time visitors as they enter the sanctuary. And now we are pleased to announce that docent-led tours of Chicago's only National Historic Landmark church are once again available. There are several opportunities for visiting.

- Saturdays, from 11 am – 1 pm the church doors are open for anyone to tour. No need to pre-arrange a visit.
- Sundays, at 12:15 pm, right after church services, docents are available to provide tours for visitors.
- Thursday evenings from 5 – 7 pm, now through September 30<sup>th</sup>, docents are available to provide tours for visitors.
- Pre-arranged tours for any day for groups of 6 or less can be made by contacting Friends at <https://www.historicsecondchurch.org/>. Click on the link and fill out the form under **Tours**.

Friends of Historic Second Church will continue to follow the recommendation of the CDC and local ordinances for COVID protocols.

**We can't wait to welcome you back!**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Basement to Belfry**

Saturday, October 23, 2021

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

\$20 general admission/ \$16 members

To purchase tickets go to  
[historicsecondchurch.org](http://historicsecondchurch.org).

Architect Nate Lielas will provide a Basement to Belfry tour of the church. During this tour at Second Presbyterian, guests will be given a behind the scenes look at areas of the church not typically visited on regular tours. Please note there are stairs, uneven ground, and several small spaces.

\* All members must sign-in to our Neon database to receive member discounts. Member discount codes are no longer viable with check out. Try to create a login first and if you continue to have questions regarding setting up an account please email [info@historicsecondchurch.org](mailto:info@historicsecondchurch.org).

**Mission Statement**

*To preserve and restore the art and architecture of Chicago's landmark Second Presbyterian Church and to engage neighbors and the world in sharing our passion for its beauty and significance.*

*Friends of Historic Second Church is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation. All donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.*