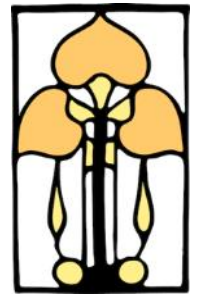


# FRIENDS of HISTORIC SECOND CHURCH

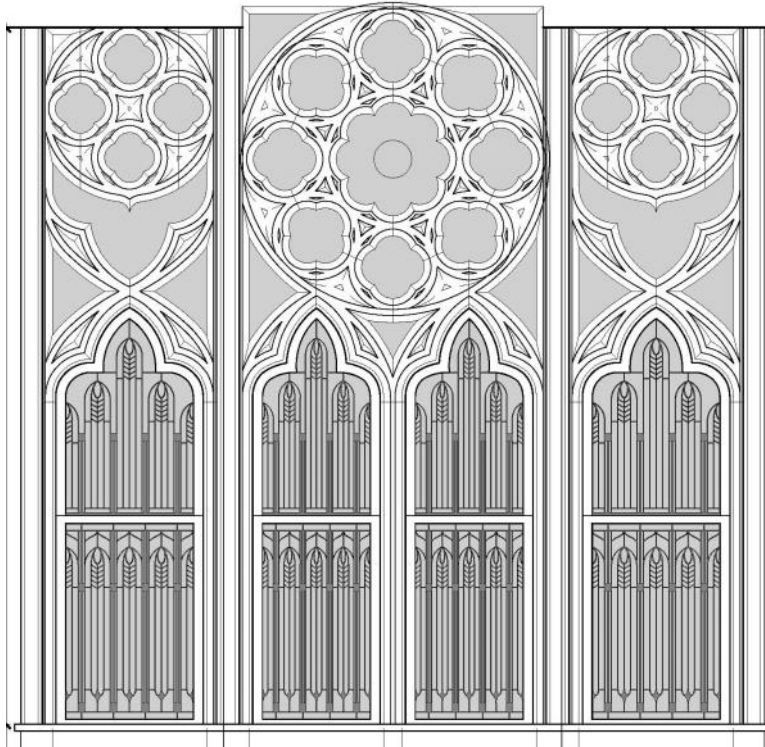
## THE HERALD

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### THE ORIEL WINDOW: A HIDDEN GEM IN NEED OF PRESERVATION *by Nate Lielasus*



*Architectural drawing of the Oriel Window.  
Credit: Nate Lielasus*

Second Presbyterian Church is famous for its extraordinary collection of stained-glass windows which showcase distinct artistic expressions and unique fabrication techniques by a variety of talented designers. While many have marveled at the stunning Tiffany windows or those created by artists such as Edward Burne Jones, there is a lesser-known treasure: the remarkable Oriel Window. Tucked away in the former pastor's office on the third floor of Fellowship Hall, the window is out of the way and often inaccessible behind a locked door. Though relegated to a less

trafficked part of the building, the window stands as one of the crown jewels of the church and a distinctly Midwestern expression of art glass.

The Oriel Window may be better known from the exterior than from the interior. The window occupies a green copper-clad bay with segmented conical roof that overlooks the south garden along Cullerton Avenue. The bay occupies the upper story of the wall at the west end of the garden offering a picturesque culmination to the garden vista.

The Oriel Window is in three segments corresponding to the faces

of the bay with art glass set within wooden Gothic tracery and window sashes. The short sides of the bay have narrow lancet windows with quatrefoils above. The center of the bay has a double lancet with rose window above. The stylized geometric design of the art glass has a limited color palette – the glass is mostly milky white with punctuations of gold - and is in two themes. In the lower tall and narrow lancet portions of the window, there is a simplified depiction of rows of wheat marching across the glass. The metal coming which holds together the pieces of glass is used as an expressive element of the design. The repetitive vertical lines of the coming evoke a regimented farm field and thicker bands of coming separate individual stalks of wheat. In the quatrefoils above, curving vines of ivy relate to the shapes of the tracery openings. The coming stands in for the vines which curve freely in contrast to the rectilinear wheat below. In the center of the rose window, an inner ring of thick coming unravels into tendrils of ivy.

The Oriel Window was not part of the original James Renwick Jr. design of the church but was added in 1888. In Renwick's design, the location of the Oriel window was occupied by two tall lancet windows, corresponding to the two lancet windows below in the current church office. Recent research by Wiss, Janney and Elstner Associates,

Inc (WJE) revealed that the Oriel Window was over framed on the existing structure and that the original eave line and gutter remain encapsulated within the volume of the Oriel Window's conical roof.

The construction of the Oriel Window predates the devastating 1901 fire that destroyed the sanctuary and the reconstruction by Howard Van Doren Shaw that followed. However, while the tracery may be original, the current art glass itself is a replacement for glass that was lost in the fire. The designer of the art glass is not known but may have been Howard Van Doren Shaw himself. The Oriel window has similarities to the Arts and Crafts windows by Shaw found throughout the church. All of these windows depict stylized plant motifs in a flattened aesthetic and limited color palette. There are also similarities with the Grape Vine Screen at the rear of the sanctuary – again for the flattened aesthetic and limited color palette but also for the use of the coming as a decorative element in the design.

The fabricator of the window was Giannini and Hilgart. Giannini and Hilgart provided other art glass in the church. The firm was comprised of Orlando Giannini (1861-1928), an artist and craftsman who studied as a sculptor, and Frederick "Fritz" Hilgart (1867-1943), a skilled glass cutter. The firm provided art glass and glass mosaic design and installation and collaborated with some of the most well-regarded designers and architects of their time.

The Oriel Window shares design

affinities with other windows fabricated by Giannini and Hilgart – most notably the windows designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for the prairie-style Willits House (completed in 1902.) Ward W. Willits was vice-president of Adams & Westlake, a hardware wholesaler best known for designing and fabricating lanterns sold to the railroads. Orlando Giannini was a former employee who also knew Wright through a mural commission at Wright's Oak Park home. It is possible that Giannini may have played a role in connecting Willits with Wright for the Willits House project. Though more complex, Frank Lloyd Wright's famous "Tree of Life" design, which can be found at the Darwin Martin House (completed in 1905) in Buffalo, NY, also shares a similar composition and color palette to the Oriel Window.

Giannini and Hilgart collaborated with other architects on windows which also share design similarities with the Oriel Window. The art glass windows designed by architect Arthur Heun for the Brinsmaid House (completed in 1902, demolished) had geometric designs in a similar limited color palette. Some of these windows were saved and are now housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Today, the Oriel Window is in dire condition. Years of deferred maintenance and water intrusion have wreaked havoc on the window resulting in crumbling plaster,

peeling paint, rotted wood, and cracked glass. The gothic wooden tracery is water-stained, decaying and with visible open joints. Some glass segments have come loose. The whole structure of the window is sagging. A recent analysis by WJE determined that the damage is so extensive that repairs should not be made in place. Instead, they recommended the removal of the art glass for safekeeping until a comprehensive restoration plan can be developed.

Friends of Historic Second Church is currently working on that restoration plan. The next steps involve taking out the art glass to prevent further damage, along with the removal of damaged interior plaster at the walls and ceiling to allow further in-depth analysis. A full restoration would entail shoring up or reconstructing the structure, repairing exterior cladding, addressing the leaky roof and flashing, plastering interior walls and the ceiling, and restoring the wood tracery and art glass to their former glory.

The Oriel Window is a significant work with a uniquely Midwestern perspective and it deserves to be preserved. The window connects us to a time when craftsmen and designers looked to traditional aesthetic movements of the past while forging a new aesthetic for the future.



*The Oriel Window  
Photo credit: Nate Lielasus*

#### **SECOND PRESBYTERIAN PUBLIC TOUR SCHEDULE:**

Fridays until December:

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Saturdays:

11:00-3:00 pm

Sundays: 12:15 pm

(after worship service)

Or call

1-800-657-0687 for a private tour

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acknowledges the following memberships, donations,  
and contributions from  
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**FRIENDS IN YOUR YEAR-END PLANNING**

If you turned 72 prior to 2023, you have a unique opportunity to support the mission of Friends of Historic Second Church while minimizing your taxable income. An eligible individual can use his or her required minimum distributions (RMDs) from qualified retirement plans to support Friends through a tax-efficient strategy known as a “qualified charitable distribution” (QCD). Here's how it works:

**Eligibility.** To use RMDs for charitable giving in 2023, you must have (1) turned 70½ years old prior to January 1, 2020 or (2) turned 72 prior to January 1, 2023.

**Determine RMD Amount.** Calculate the RMD amount you are required to take from your retirement account for the year. Your retirement plan administrator should be able to provide you with this amount.

**Request a QCD.** Contact your retirement plan administrator or custodian and request a QCD. Many have their own forms to make the request and will require certain information, but most commonly will request the full legal name and taxpayer identification number.

**Direct Transfer.** The retirement plan administrator will then directly transfer the amount you request from your RMD account to Friends of Historic Second Church. This is not an all or nothing decision; you can direct an amount less than your full RMD. This transfer is tax-free and is not considered part of your taxable income for the year.

**Checks.** Rather than a direct transfer, it may be possible for you to write a check if your retirement plan provides you with check writing ability.

If you are already planning to support Friends, using a QCD to do so has additional benefits: It is not included in your taxable income in the year that it is made. Also, it does not count towards your adjusted gross income (AGI).

**Legacy Planning with Friends in Mind**

In addition to making a QCD to support Friends now, you can leave a lasting and tax efficient legacy by designating Friends of Historic Second Church as a beneficiary under your qualified retirement plans. Questions? Please do not hesitate to contact us at (800) 657-0687.



## NEW TYPES OF GLASS UNCOVERED IN MOUNT OF THE HOLY CROSS WINDOW BY WILLIAM TYRE



*Example of Streamer Glass*

Tiffany developed many different types of glass that he incorporated into his windows to provide a variety of effects. The ongoing restoration work on the *Mount of the Holy Cross* window has revealed two types of Tiffany glass that were previously not thought to have been used at Second Presbyterian.

Dichroic glass appears as different colors depending on the lighting and is the result of applying transparent layers of metallic oxides to the surface of the glass during its production. For example, a piece of glass may appear green in reflected light, but orange in transmitted light. This type of glass is used

to form part of the border in the Mount window. Some of the pieces were missing, but fortunately Venturella Studio was able to find dichroic glass that exactly matches the color range of the original.

Streamer glass incorporates glass strings that are made by taking molten glass, gathering it at the end of an iron rod known as a punty or pontil, and then rapidly swinging it back and forth to create long, thin strings of glass. These thin strings are then laid on a steel table known as a marver and the base glass is poured over, resulting in the strings being permanently fused into the glass. Tiffany used this type of glass to depict twigs, branches, and grass. For the Mount window, strings are broken into short segments to create the appearance of pine needles in some of the trees, as is seen in the image above.

With the identification of these two types of glass, we can now say that our windows exhibit every major type of glass that Tiffany produced during his career.

### MOUNT OF THE HOLY CROSS RESTORATION NEWS



*Tom Venturella showing the pine needle glass to board members of Friends.*

The 1902 Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company window, *Mount of the Holy Cross*, was removed for restoration in late March 2023 and taken to the Venturella Studio in Troy, New York on the banks of the Hudson River. There, Tom Venturella and Jim Murphy are skillfully doing the painstaking work of a total restoration of this window.

To see a video detailing the restoration work to date, click on this link—<https://youtu.be/n72fZZ8K-bc?si=RwxrvIvhsW4eOtEt>

We hope you will join us to see the restored *Mount of the Holy Cross* window in late spring 2024 when it will be reinstalled and its original beauty is revealed.

### MOMENTS FROM OPEN HOUSE CHICAGO



*Docent Bill Crawford leads a tour of the sanctuary.*

**YOU CAN BE A PART OF THE RESTORATION TEAM - MAKE A GIFT TO FRIENDS' 2023 ANNUAL APPEAL**

The work of Friends is the preservation of the magnificent Arts and Crafts interior of Historic Second Church. Our work is also to reach the public to tell the stories of the art, architecture of the building and the people who built it. We need **YOU** on our team.

With **YOUR** help, we have accomplished so much. The *Tree of Life* mural restored, old wiring replaced, Tiffany windows restored, plaster repaired, light fixtures cleaned. But there is much more restoration to do and more people to engage in this work.

Your gift to Friends' 2023 Annual Appeal will enable us to continue this work. By donating YOU will become part of the team restoring one of Chicago's architectural treasures.

**ANNUAL APPEAL FORM**

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

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

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Enclosed is my gift to the 2023 Friends Annual Appeal in the amount of:

\$50    \$100    \$250    \$500    \$1,000    \$2,500    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My donation is in memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

My donation is in honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No Please send me information about membership.

If you would like to make a gift of stock, please contact us at (800) 657-0687 or online at [www.historicsecondchurch.org](http://www.historicsecondchurch.org).

If you wish to discuss sponsoring a restoration project, contact Friends of Historic Second Church at (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 online at [www.historicsecondchurch.org/donate](http://www.historicsecondchurch.org/donate).

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



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HISTORIC SECOND CHURCH**

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Contributors: Ann Belletire, Heather Kendall,  
Nate Lielasus, Nicholas Luther, Linda Miller  
and William Tyre.

**EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED**

What would a person expect on a first visit to view the sanctuary of Historic Second Church? A completely intact Arts and Crafts interior that is a National Historic Landmark? Yes. A virtual museum of exquisite stained-glass windows including nine from the Tiffany Studios, two designed by Sir Edward-Burne Jones, and detailed painting on a window by Louis J. Millet? Yes. Thirteen Pre-Raphaelite murals by Frederic Clay Bartlett including the recently restored *Tree of Life* mural? Yes. Two Tiffany windows, *Peace and St. Paul Preaching at Athens*, that recently underwent complete restorations making them now gleam in the sunlight? Yes.

But the whole is more than the sum of its beautiful parts. What you might not expect is how you feel when you enter and experience this space. What is the power of such sublime beauty? Is it wonder or awe? A person can find comfort or peace here. A person can find joy here. What should you expect? It is best to expect the unexpected.

If you have visited before, come again for what's newly restored. The magic happens every time.

You can join the conversation What did you experience on your most recent visit to Historic Second Church? Send to [info@historicsecondchurch.org](mailto:info@historicsecondchurch.org) with subject line "Unexpected." We will publish a few of your comments in each edition of *The Herald*.

**MEMBERSHIP**

There is still time to submit your annual membership for 2023, if you haven't already done so. Visit—<https://www.historicsecondchurch.org/membership> to purchase. Your membership will ensure that you don't miss any of the exciting restoration projects or upcoming programs.

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

**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.*