



Friends of Historic Second Church

THE HERALD

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THE STORY OF THREE WINDOWS

by William Tyre

The Ascension Window, located on the front (east) wall of the sanctuary, is the largest in the church and is impressive for the brilliant tones of the glass used in its design. It is the third window in this location, and the history of those three windows reflects the changing tastes in architecture and design that gave us the sanctuary we have today.

When the church building was completed in 1874, the front wall featured a huge rose window measuring 23 feet in diameter (fig. 1). A typical feature of Gothic Revival churches, the rose window contained elaborate wood tracery which divided it into twelve wedge shaped sections with a small medallion at the center and twelve quatrefoils around the perimeter.

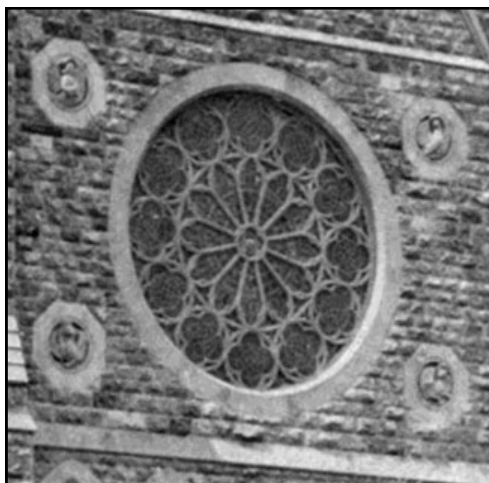


Fig. 1

The color and design of the glass is unknown, although they may well have been similar to the 1870s stenciled windows which remain in the bell tower. A large window with pointed-arch was located above the rose window, and five smaller windows were placed underneath.

In 1889, John Crerar, one of Chicago's most successful businessmen, and a trustee of the church for 20 years, died unmarried and childless. His huge estate was given to numerous charities including \$100,000 to Second Presbyterian Church and an additional \$100,000 to support its missions. Among the smaller personal gifts was a bequest of \$5,000 to his friend Timothy Blackstone, president of the Chicago and Alton Railroad, with the request that "he purchase therewith some memento which will remind him of my appreciation of his uniform and lifelong kindness to me."

Blackstone used the gift to fund a new rose window for the church. He selected John La Farge for the design, and requested that the artist base the window on his large painting in the apse of the Church of the



Fig. 2

Ascension in New York City, which depicted the ascension of Christ. La Farge, who was a prominent stained glass artisan and competent rival to Louis Comfort Tiffany, visited Second Presbyterian in 1892 to view the window and the decoration of the sanctuary, which by this time featured elaborately decorated walls in rich tones executed by English artist William Pretzman. La Farge's watercolor design for the window (fig. 2) shows the ascending Christ surrounded by a dozen angels in a "maze of varied hues." The main window, which measured 15 feet in diameter, featured purple, dark blue, and mauve glass in the background, the figure of Christ with a robe of purple and green, and angels robed in red, sky blue, green, gold, and mauve. A four-foot wide border around the window

featured an elaborate design in a similar color palette. An article in the *Chicago Tribune* reporting on the window speculated that “the worshippers in the church may pay more heed to the play of light through the gorgeous panes than to the prayers and sermons from the chancel and pulpit.” It was dedicated on October 1, 1893.

The window remained only 6-1/2 years before being destroyed in the fire of March 8, 1900 which gutted the sanctuary. In rebuilding the space, architect Howard Van Doren Shaw removed the rose window and replaced it with a new opening capped by a stilted arch.

Although the current window also features the depiction of the ascension of Christ, it is not the work of La Farge. The artisan selected for the window, and the corresponding series of five windows beneath, was William Fair Kline, an artist in his early 30s known primarily for his paintings of Aztec and Maya scenes. The main window (fig. 3) features the ascending Christ surrounded by a host of heavenly angels in rich tones similar to the La Farge window. Beneath, the five smaller windows were designed to depict the five “scourges” – angels holding the elements of torture leading up to the

crucifixion – the whip, crown, cross, hammer and nails, and rope. All six windows were made by the Church Glass and Decorating Company, which used illustrations of both the Ascension and Crown windows in early marketing materials for the company.

Today, the brilliant hues of these windows, in spite of more than a century of accumulated dirt, continue to inspire and impress visitors seeing them for the first time. In addition, they provide an important contrast to the windows by Tiffany, Millet, and others, truly creating a “museum of stained glass” within the sanctuary.



Fig. 3. Photo by Martin Cheung.

SPECIAL ACCESS DURING OPEN HOUSE CHICAGO

Historic Second Church is thrilled to be included in the 2012 Open House Chicago (OHC), presented by the Chicago Architecture Foundation. OHC is an annual weekend festival of free behind-the-scenes access to many of Chicago's greatest places and spaces. In 2011, the program's inaugural year, OHC welcomed 25,000 individuals who made more than 85,000 self-guided visits to 131 different locations across Chicago—all in two days. This year the festival will include 150 locations spanning 25 neighborhoods. Second Presbyterian's special OHC access will include specialized tours focusing on the history and construction of the stained glass windows, including windows not normally visible to the public.

Open House Chicago will be held on October 13-14, 2012. The church will be open on Saturday from 9:00am to 1:00pm and on Sunday from 12:30 to 5:00pm.

No reservation required.

For more information:
www.openhousechicago.org

Mission Statement

The mission of Friends of Historic Second Church is to preserve and restore the art and architecture of Chicago's Landmark Second Presbyterian Church, educate a worldwide audience about its historical and cultural significance, and share those resources with the community.

NATO SUMMIT COMES TO CHICAGO

On May 20-21, 2012, the eyes of the world were focused on our South Loop neighborhood, when representatives from more than 60 nations around the globe gathered for the NATO Summit at McCormick Place, just a few blocks south of the church. On Sunday May 20, thousands of protestors marched south on Michigan Avenue from the Petrillo Music Shell, past the church, to within a block of McCormick Place where a rally was held. There was an enormous police presence during the protest, and for the most part it was a peaceful demonstration. Here we present a few images from the day's events.



IN KIND GIVING:

Self-Guided Tour Brochure:

Jim Jackson put his wood working skills to use by converting a small cabinet into a stand for displaying Self-Guided Tour Brochures with a slot that allows for donations to be made. The cabinet is situated at the entrance to the sanctuary and is getting frequent use.

Sanctuary Lighting: Michael Shawgo, church organist, donated and installed vintage-style filament bulbs for all the first floor three-bulb historic light fixtures.

Artistry: Jack Simmerling created an original work of art depicting the beautiful old-growth walnut front doors of the church. Friends will use the art work to create new Christmas cards and notecards this year.

SUCCESSFUL DOCENT TRAINING

Eight docent trainees recently completed the four part docent training program for 2012. In addition to participating in the classes, trainees must shadow at least two tours given by current docents and then prepare their own tour of the art and architecture of Second Presbyterian Church before becoming "certified."

The tour program is a key component of the mission of Friends of Historic Second Church. Consider participating in our next round of training. The application can be downloaded at www.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org

DONATIONS SOUGHT

Church organist Michael Shawgo is leading an effort to relamp the sanctuary chandeliers with vintage-style filament bulbs (see In Kind Giving, below). The modern incandescent bulbs currently in use not only provide harsh light but also emit heat that may be harmful to the delicate decorative elements of the historic fixtures. Shawgo has found that Feit 60-watt A19 vintage-style bulbs are slightly brighter than the authentic "Edison" bulbs, which in a trial application proved too "dim" for reading in the sanctuary. A donation of \$200 will buy one box of 24 bulbs, enough to relamp an entire crown chandelier. There are ten crown chandeliers. The new vintage-style bulbs already installed by Shawgo in the first floor three-bulb fixtures are very attractive and provide good lighting.

New docents pictured left to right: Nancy Johnston, Jessica Thurk, Melanie Adcock, Anna Yuan, Glenn Rupert, Rev. David Neff, Howard Tiffen, and Mary Bucaro.



MAJOR IMPROVEMENT FOR MORRIS WINDOWS

In winter 2011 Friends made a call for donations for the Morris Windows Project. The project aimed to replace the dark and aged Lexan (a type of plastic) glazing covering the east-facing windows designed by Edward Burne-Jones, and made by Morris & Co., with more substantial glass protection. Friends members responded very generously to this effort.

However, like many preservation projects, executing the work can be filled with unforeseen complications. In this case there was not enough space within the exterior stone rabbet to hold a glass sheet with the required



thickness. Friends consulted with the Architectural Restoration Committee and considered several approaches to this dilemma. Eventually Friends decided to simply replace the old Lexan with the same material, which has seen much improvement since it was first introduced to the church in the 1970s.

In May 2012 the new protective glazing was successfully installed. The Lexan is clear and now reveals the vibrant windows from the exterior, as well as bringing more light into the interior. The new glazing is also ventilated, which creates a healthier environment for the glass. Be sure to glimpse this exciting change on the front façade.

2012 LECTURE SERIES CONTINUES

On March 29, 2012 the Friends of Historic Second Church lecture series welcomed its largest audience yet. One hundred seventeen guests gathered to take in cartographer Dennis McClendon's South Loop history talk. Audience members were surprised and fascinated to hear about the evolution of the neighborhood over the past 150 years, including some of the more illustrious establishments that called the South Loop home.

Next on the lecture series calendar is "The Work of Louis Julien Millet" by Northwestern professor and author David Van Zanten. Van Zanten explores Millet's famous family of artists, his training in Paris, and how he became one of Chicago's most important decorative designers, as well as Louis Sullivan's closest collaborator.

A Louis J. Millet window, Cast Thy Garment About Thee and Follow Me, given by Mrs. George Pullman, is located on the north wall of the sanctuary (see image to the right).

"The Work of Louis Julien Millet" will be presented on Thursday September 20, 2012 at Second Presbyterian Church. The reception begins at 6 pm and the lecture at 7pm. Suggested donation is \$5. For more information on upcoming lectures visit www.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org/visit/events.html.

Second Presbyterian Public Tour Schedule:

Wednesdays
1:00-3:00pm, Free

Saturdays
1:00-3:00pm
Suggested donation \$5.00

Sundays (after worship service)
12:15pm, Free



Photo by Martin Cheung

Friends of Historic Second Church's first annual membership drive in spring 2012 was a success with fifty-five memberships to date. Friends thanks all our faithful readers and supporters who made the smooth transition from a rolling membership program with many membership categories to an annual campaign with just two simple membership levels: Arts & Crafts Circle and Tiffany Circle. A special welcome is extended to the many first time members who are new to Friends. We hope you will participate often in tours, programs, and events. All our members provide valuable support that keeps preservation and restoration efforts at the church moving forward. Watch for special upcoming members only events and programs.

Annual Membership Levels and Benefits

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.+)

____ **Art & 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.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org.



Friends of Historic Second Church

1936 S. Michigan Ave.

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Web: www.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org

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Ann Belletire.

Friends of Historic Second Church gratefully acknowledges the following memberships, donations, and in kind contributions from February 1 through July 1, 2012.

In Kind:

Jim Jackson

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Jack Simmerling

Shaw Circle:

(\$500 - \$999)

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Winifred Leaf

Joan Lewis

Alister MacDonald

Edward Mazur

Raisa Montero

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Hilda Robinson

Jack & Marjorie Simmerling

Anne Sullivan

Daniel Taylor

Stephen & Mary Kay

Wysham

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law.*