OUR TREASURED WINDOWS

(from Grace Notes)

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of a projected series of articles written by Anita McCarty explaining Grace Church's stained glass windows.)

There is nothing in Grace Church that occasions more comment than the stained glass windows, yet when called upon, as we all are at times to talk about them to strangers, not many of us know the sequence or even the subject of the designs of the various ones.

GRACE NOTES editors feel that we might, from time to time as space permits, run a story about these windows and so familiarize ourselves with what they are saying to us in their multi-colored splendor.

For the benefit of newcomers, it might be well to exptain why the windows in the chancel end of the church differ in type from those beginning about at the halfway mark and extending back into the narthex. All these large picture-type windows have been there throughout the years. They have not always been concentrated in one section of the church. This particular arrangement was done within the last decade so that when the newer windows were installed they could be grouped together.

All the windows are memorials and according to available records, the first one, the Madonna window near the front. was put in in 1906. Others were installed soon afterwards. The subject matter of all these windows is apparent and each window is a unit in itself. Therefore no explanation becomes necessary. They are just there simple and appealing in design and gorgeous and inspiring in their coloring.

To fully appreciate the two large chancel windows, however, the Gorham Epiphany window on the East side and the French designed window on the West side, one must be in the church at different hours of the day; for it is only when the sun is behind them that their full beauty is achieved.

In the early 1950's, the matter of more memorial windows came up for consideration. It was decided that it would be well to lay plans for the use of all the remaining windows as memorials, all to be of the same type and each a part of a sequence of events in the life of Christ.

To make a long story short, the firm of Reynolds, Francis and Rhonstock of Boston, internationally famous specialists in their art, was commissioned to design and install eleven windows and so complete this phase of the church's architecture.

In a future issue, we will attempt an interpretation of these windows beginning with the first of the series, which is known as the McCaa window, and is located in the rear on the west side of the Nave.

2 Details of Windows Varied and of Great Beauty

In addition to the six windows of the single picture type described in last months Grace Notes and which are located in the front area of the church, there are eleven others, also memorials, equally beautiful and appealing but of an entirely different design. These windows were designed, executed and installed during the 1950's by Reynolds, Francis and Rhonstock of Boston, Mass. This company is widely known for the magnificent windows which they have designed for the finest churches and cathedrals both here and abroad and each of the windows designed for Grace Church is a perfect gem of line, color and subject matter. Only careful observation at various times of day can bring the utmost appreciation of their beauty and it is our hope that the articles in Grace Notes may stimulate more people to study them.

While the installation of these windows was going on Mr. Joseph Reynolds made a trip to Anniston and on request brought with him slides of many of the company's glorious creations that are now in churches around the world. During the evening when he showed them, he also gave a talk on the art of stained glass making which made an unforgettable impression on those who were fortunate enough to hear him and also served to make them more aware of the beauty of Grace Church windows.

(McCaa Window) For a description of these windows which depict events in Christ's life, it seems best to begin with the window on the west side of the Nave as you enter the church from the Narthex, since its subject matter deals with the "Infancy of Jesus. "

In the lower half of the left lancet is pictured the Annunciation. The Angel Gabriel, holding a lily, symbol of innocence and purity, speaks to Mary, who is seated, and announces "Hail, thou, that art highly favored, the Lord is with Thee." The Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descends over the head of the Virgin.

In the top half of this lancet we see the Nativity scene. The child lies on a pallet of straw. Mary, His Mother, kneels before him. The Star of Bethlehem shines from above. The ox and the ass suggest the stable. The small subject at the top of this lancet is the Annunciation to the Shepherds.

Beginning at the bottom right lancet we see the Presentation in the Temple. Mary hands the Child Jesus to Simeon.

In the top half there is the Adoration of the Magi. Mary holds the Christ Child on her knees while the Wise Men offer their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The subject at the top of this lancet is the Magi following the star to the place where the young child lay.

In the circle at the top, an angel kneels.

When one describes such gloriously colored scenes in ordinary words it seems almost a travesty. Perhaps the best thing to do is go to the window, description in hand, and study it and if you did this over and over again it still would be new and beautiful to you.

3 The Childhood of Jesus (Tyler Window)

The window which is designated No. 2 in the overall plan for the stained glass windows is the second from the rear of the church, on the left side of the nave as one enters from the narthex. It continues the story of the childhood of Jesus. As a sort of herald of this, the Christ Child stands in a glory of light in the circle at the top of the window.

Beginning at the bottom of the left lancet is portrayed the Adoration of the shepherds. Mary is seated, holding the Baby, while the shepherds are grouped about Him. It is extremely interesting to note the expressions on the faces. Mary looks at them questioningly while the shepherds show wonder, amazement and adoration. Above in the same lancet is pictured the flight into Egypt. Mary and the Child ride a donkey which Joseph leads, but he has turned towards Mary as if to encourage her to bear up under the weariness of the journey.

At the top of the lancet is the "Repose" or the rest on the way to Egypt, showing Mary, the Child and Joseph who is pouring water for their refreshment.

At the bottom of the right lancet stands the 12-year-old Christ in the Temple, teaching the doctors, and again the facial expressions are fascinating.

In the upper half of the lancet we see Joseph and Jesus in the carpenter shop. Note the saw in Joseph's hand and the two pieces of wood which Jesus holds. They form a cross, symbolic of the crucifixion to come.

At the top of this lancet is the symbol of Egypt in the form of a pyramid and a palm tree.

Again in this window the brilliant blues and reds seem to predominate. particularly in the background, with the yellow in the garments giving a beautiful highlight. One thrills to the exquisite artistry

Preparation for Ministry (Roberts

The third window on the left side of the aisle, as one enters the church, takes up the theme of Christ's preparation for the ministry.

Shown in the lower left lancet are two events - first there is John the Baptist apparently preaching "after me comes he who is mightier than l, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie; " and second, there are the first two disciples to be won, Andrew and Peter, to whom Jesus had said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

At the top of this lancet is reenacted the second temptation as Satan tempts Christ to take dominion over the whole world.

Following this theme of the temptations in the lower right lancet we see Satan tempting Christ to turn stones into bread and in the top of the right lancet he is shown tempting Christ to hurl himself from the pinnacle of the Temple.

Also in the bottom right lancet is a representation of Christ's baptism at the hands of John.

In the circle above the lancets Christ is portrayed in the compelling role of driving the money changers from the Temple.

Again reds and blues predominate in the window, but the introduction of a vivid green in the representation of Satan gives an eerie effect which very definitely serves its purpose.

Miracle Window (Ayers

The fourth window on the left side as one enters the church from the narthex is devoted to some of the best known of Christ's miracles. The glorious coloring is largely red and blue and it is most beautiful when the sun is in the west and shines directly through it in the late afternoon.

In the lower left lancet is the story of the first miracle. the very familiar one of the wedding feast at which Jesus turned water into wine. Immediately above this, Jesus is shown healing the blind as described in the verses in one of the gospels" "Believe ye that I am able to do this? And they said 'yea, Lord,' and he touched their eyes and they were opened. "

At the top of this lancet Christ heals the deaf and mute. The figure is shown with hands symbolically on the ears as Christ rests His hand on the head.

At the bottom of the right lancet, the faith of the centurion is portrayed, as he kneels at the Master's feet in complete trust to hear Him say: "Verily I say unto thee, I have not seen so great faith in all Israel."

In the lower lancet is shown the raising of the widow's son,and above this Christ is seen healing the crooked woman, bent over her cane with eyes raised adoringly to Him.

In the circle above the lancets is the well known miracle performed at the tomb of Lazarus. Christ stands at the entrance of the tomb and the two sisters prostrate themselves at His feet.

Humanity of Jesus (Wheeler

In the Narthex of the Church are three beautifully executed windows which outline different phases of Jesus' ministry as He came in contact with all sorts of people.

The one at the left, as one enters the center door, is devoted to incidents in His life which point up the deeply human side of his nature.

Beginning at the bottom of the right lancet, Jesus is shown, seated, His hand uplifted as He blesses the small child whom He holds in His arms. Around Him stand other children whom He has bidden to "Come Unto Me." Above and in the same lancet he is pictured at the home of Martha and Mary. Martha is seen in the background as she devotes herself to serving, while Mary, holding a jar of ointment, a symbol, chooses the better part of ministering to His spirit.

At the top of this lancet is the figure of a child holding a palm branch, suggesting the thought that a little child shall lead them.

At the bottom of the left lancet, Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with the precious ointment and dries them with her hair. Standing by is the protesting disciple, Judas, whom Jesus is waving aside.

In the central position of the left lancet Jesus stands at the entrance of the tomb of Lazarus as he comes forth in answer to the command, bound in burial robes.

At the top of the lancet is pictured the sinful woman, kneeling at Jesus' feet, her head bowed low in penitence as he offers her forgiveness.

In the circle above the lancet a kneeling angel looks down from heaven.

Parable Window (Willett/Woods

The window in the Narthex immediately to the right of the door as one enters the church is devoted to the parables through which Jesus taught about love.

Beginning at the bottom of the right lancet is the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan is shown binding the wounds of the traveler and covering him with his own cloak. Above in the same lancet is the parable of the lost Sheep, interpreted here as Christ Himself finding the lost sheep, and lovingly kneeling to receive him.

At the top of the lancet Christ, as the Good Shepherd, holds a lamb in His arms.

In the lower left lancet, the story of the Prodigal Son is depicted. The father, rejoicing, holds out his arms to receive his erring son. Above in this lancet is shown the beggar Lazarus with hands outstretched in suppliance to the rich man seated at his bountiful table.

In the circle above the lancets, an angel holds a scroll on which is written "God is Love.

All Saints Window Memorializes the Stoneys (Stoney

third in the narthex designated as "All Saints," depicts incidents in the lives of a number of familiar figures in church history who are referred to as "Saints. "

Beginning at the bottom of the right lancet is a figure representing St. Augustine in a dream or vision which he is reputed to have had relating to himself. The story is that while writing his Discourse on the Trinity, he walked along the seashore i n medi at ion . Suddenly he saw a chi ld bringing water from the sea and pouring it into a hole which he had dug in the sand. In reply to a question, the chi ld said that he intended emptying al l the water from the ocean. " Impossible, " exclaimed St . Augustine, "Not more impossible, replied the chi ld, "than for thee, oh Augustine, to explain the mystery on which thou art now meditating. Augusti ne then realized that he had spoken to the Christ Chi ld. A halo around the chi ld' s head symbol i zes thi s in the window while the Tri nity is symbolized in the background by the globe surmounted by a cross and enclosed in a trefoi l 

In the upper right lancet St . Martin is shown sharing his cloak with a beggar. The small subject at the top of the lancet i s St . Joan of Arc clad in her coat of mail 

At the bottom of the left lancet i s shown St . Stephen, fi rst Christian martyr, as he i s stoned to death by his persecutors . In the bottom of this lancet is a favorite representation of St . Francis, an avowed natural ist, as he feeds the bi rds . The small subject at the top represents St . George triumphant with the dragon at hi s feet.

In the ci rcle above the lancets , St . Michael , Captain of the hosts of Heaven, i s shown as he slays the dragon.

Beginning with thi s window, the fi rst on the east side of the church, one should study the windows during the early hours of the day to get the ful l benefit of the glorious coloring. Only as the sun shines through as it climbs in the sky are they at the height of thei r beauty.

9 Pre-Passion Events (Shepperd Window)

Since we are in the Lenten season, it seems a fortunate coincidence that the remaining windows to be described are devoted to those events pertaining to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ .

As one enters the church from the Narthex, the fi rst window to the right very fittingly depicts Pre-Passion incidents in Jesus' l i fe . Fi rst in the bottom of the right lancet i s the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Christ rides on an ass while people shout Hosannas and strew palm branches in his path. Also in this lancet appears the institution of the Lord's Supper which the church commemorates on Maundy Thursday, The disciples are gathered together at the table with Jesus in thei r midst and John, the Beloved Disciple, leans on Jesus' shoulder.

The smal l subject at the top of this lancet suggests a modern Communion Service.

At the bottom of the left lancet i s pictured the Agony in the Garden as Christ kneels in prayer and an angel proffers Him the cup. This is symbolical of Hi s prayer that i f it be God's wi l l the cup should pass Him by. In the background signi ficantly appear three crosses, presaging the crucifixion which looms ahead.

Above in this same lancet i s a re-enactment of the Betrayal Judas is seen betraying his master with a kiss as Roman soldiers look on.

The smal l subject at the top also relates to the Betrayal as it shows Peter slashing the ear of the servant of the high priest.

In the ci rcle above the lancets, a kneeling angel holds the lantern which is the symbol of the Passion.

The Passion of Christ (Cobbs

second to the right , as one enters from the Narthex, tel ls of the passion of our Lord. Since we are now deep into the Lenten Season these incidents wi l l be more and more in our minds and hearts .

Beginning at the lower ri ght lancet, we see Christ standing tall before the bewi Idered Pi late. Immediately above i s the cruel fl agellation of the innocent Christ, whi le in the top of the lancet is a kneeling angel holding the Veronica Napkin, suggestive of the Christian legend that a woman gave Christ a cloth to wipe His face as He was on His way to Calvary and upon the cloth mi raculously was left the print of His face.

At the bottom of the left lancet is Christ bent under the weight of the cross on the way to Calvary whi le Mary, His mother, follows sorrowing. Above i n the upper lancet is portrayed the Cruci fi xion. Christ is seen on the cross with Mary and John at His feet. In the ci rcle above the lancets a kneeling angel holds the chal ice to receive the blood of the crucified Christ .

Those who are in the church for the early communion Service get the most pleasure from these windows on the East side, for as the early morning sun shines through them the colors are so vi vid the designs seem to come to l i fe . During Lent thi s experience can be especial ly beneficial in making the incidents of the Passion and the Resurrection more real i stic to us.

The Resurrection Wi ndow (Ki lby

The Resurrection Window i s the thi rd window on the right side of the church as one enters from the Narthex.

The sequence of events is a l ittle harder to follow here than in the other windows, so it seems best to begin with the small representation at the top of the right lancet where can be seen the three Marys as they approach the tomb. In the center beneath thi s , the three Marys have entered the tomb to find it empty except for an angel seated, who says to them "He is not here. He has ri sen . I Immediately below in this same lancet is shown Peter and John hastening to the tomb, presumably having received the news that thei r Lord has arisen.

In the lower left lancet i s a larger representation of the three Marys going to the tomb, carrying their precious ointments to anoint the body of Christ. Above in this lancet stands the Risen Christ, the Resurrection Cross in His hand.

Depicted around the open sepulcher are the sleeping Roman soldiers who had been paid to guard Him.

In the ci rcle above the lancets, Peter is seen inside the tomb looking at the linen clothes and the napkin that was about His head, lying in another place.

Post-Resurrection Appearances (Deyo

fourth on the right as one enters from the Narthex marks the appearances of Jesus after the Resurrection.

Beginning at the bottom of the left lancet, Christ is shown as He appears to Mary in the garden. In His hand He holds the Resurrection Cross. Also in this lancet i s Thomas the Doubter, to whom Jesus i s displaying His pierced side and nai l -torn feet. At the top of this lancet is seen St . John on Patmos, tablet in hand, writi ng.

At the bottom of the right lancet, the two di sciples are seen walking along the road to Emmaus, having been joined by a thi rd traveler . Above this is shown the supper at Emmaus when the stranger i s revealed to them as Christ when together they break bread.

At the top of the right lancet, Paul is depicted in the familiar story of hi s conversion on the Damascus road. Paul kneels in despair as the finger of God points down at him.

In the ci rcle above i s St . John, again on Patmos, at the time of his fi rst vision .

The Rose Window

To members of long standing, and perhaps to some of our more recent arri vals, the removal of the old Rose Window seemed, at fi rst, something of a shock. Fami l iarity had obscured the fact that it was not as fine nor as beautiful i n depth of coloring as the other windows in the church, and besides it is always hard to see an old friend deposed.

For those who have entertained such feel ings , it i s gratifying to know that the window has been careful ly stored away and i f at al l possible wi l l be used in some future construction.

As far as can be ascertained from old records and early pictures of the church, , this window was instal led from the fi rst . While it was not a memorial window, long association had established it as a part of the tradition of the church. In recent years, it had attracted considerable publ ic attention because of being l ighted at night. This had also pointed up the fact that its colors were very pale in contrast to the richness of the other windows, a situation which i s now al leviated by the new, deeper toned stained glass panels .

On August 18, i n a simple but effective service, the new Rose window, gift of Mr. and Mrs . Oscar M . Ki lby, was dedicated to the glory of Almighty God.

From its commanding location this Rose Window, another superb creation by Reynolds , Rhonstock and Rhone of Boston, casts i ts reflections of jeweled splendor over the enti re Church, intensifying the colors of the other windows, as it picks up their changing highlights during the various hours of the day. The design of the glass itself i s planned to give a jewel -l ike color effect . Its subject matter i s simple since it confines itsel f enti rely to familiar symbols of the church, but it i s exquisite i n its execution .

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As the name "Rose" impl ies , the window i s formed of mull ioned "Petals, radi ati ng from a center, which i n this design represents the Sun, the symbol of God, from whom al l things come. In the two petals which radiate on the top are, on the left as one looks up from within the Church, the Lamb, always a symbol of Christ, and, on the right . the Dove, emblem of the Holy Spi rit. In two opposing petals or openings lower down, are the Alpha and the Omega, signi fying the beginning and end of al l things in God Below these, in two other openings, are the symbols IC and XC which in Greek represent the name of Jesus Christ and in the two lower petals are two forms of the Cross; on the left the Greek Cross, and on the right the Latin Cross. Arranged within the outer rim of the window are eight tiny Crosses made of the same jeweled tones of stained glass .

As in the case of the other windows in the Church, blues and reds predominate, but which one at a given time depends on the angle of l ight penetrating it . Greens and yel lows are used as minor tones and for emphasis.

With thi s final instal l ation, the dignity and beauty which stained glass can bring to "God's Holy House" seems to have been epitomized at Grace Church.