

Thoughts, news and comments concerning the art and craft of Connick stained glass, published periodically by....
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Connick Windows in Some Recent Church Publications

Albert M. Tannler

This review is the first of five parish histories published between 2007 and 2012 that devote substantial space to discussing and illustrating stained glass windows. The other reviews will appear on the Connick Foundation website; citations of these are listed below. In four of the five books Connick windows share the space with windows by other studios. Our observations will focus on the windows by Charles J. Connick [1909-1913], Connick Studio [1913-1945], and Connick Associates [1945-1986], but some of these other studios will be mentioned

Recall Charles Connick's observation that even the best photographs subvert "the charm of color alive, the vibration and radiation that make it glow," replace transparency with opacity, and turn windows into pictures. I will draw attention to some of the more successful images in the books under review.

***The Story in the Windows: The First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, 2012 Anniversary Edition* by Gary W. Denning**

2012 is the 200th anniversary of the First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh and the 100th anniversary of the 1912 dedication of the church building which was designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson in 1910. Goodhue authority Richard Oliver called First Baptist "one of his most important buildings." With the exception of one window attributed to Goodhue, nineteen windows in the church and seven windows in the parish house were designed and made by Charles J. Connick, 1911-12; they were fabricated in the studio of Horace J. Phipps & Company in Brookline.

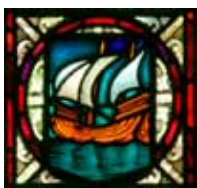
While in France in 1910 on his first trip to Europe, Connick was inspired to create modern windows that captured the character and original materials of a type of medieval ornamental window known as grisaille. He later wrote "the French word 'grisaille' is translated 'grayish'. It achieves a delightful luminous and colorful 'gray' through the use of flowing patterns of paint over varying tints of glass that are interrupted by bands and spots of color—usually in a geometrical arrangement resembling what is ordinarily called an arabesque." Back in Boston he showed some designs and sample windows to Ralph Adams Cram who wrote: "The results you have achieved are far above anything I ... supposed would be possible. . . . Your real grisaille, which is really almost equal to the medieval product, is, in my opinion, ideal for permanent purposes, and its price brings it within the reach of almost everyone. On the whole, I should say you had put both the Church and architecture in your debt by making it possible for both to obtain so absolutely beautiful and satisfactory a material."

The First Baptist Church commission was Connick's first opportunity to design grisaille windows on a large scale. Through that commission he met a Goodhue apprentice, Leicester Holland, who had made the first English translation of E. E. Viollet-le-Duc's 1868 seminal essay on medieval stained glass. "It is almost impossible," Connick wrote in *Adventures in Light and Color*, "to compare the action of colored glass in light with the functioning of color in any other material. It is because Viollet-le-Duc approached the neglected region of color-in-light so directly and so intelligently that his essay, with its shorthand diagrams, is so significant to all of us who are interested in stained glass."



Grisaille panel of South/West Chancel window

The Story in the Windows is not a parish history but a detailed explication of "the religious significance" of all of the windows, which are illustrated in excellent color photographs taken by B. Glenn Lewis. The pastor of First Baptist, the Rev. Gary W. Denning, conceived of the project, wrote the text, and formatted the book. The principle windows include two transept windows devoted to the *Nativity* and Christ's *Ministry*; eight clerestory windows devoted to the *Beatitudes*, two chancel windows devoted to the *Passion*, and the façade *Resurrection* window. These are large windows, rising almost 50 feet above the church floor; architect James McFarland Baker of Goodhue's office called them "almost literally walls of glass."



Ship on Water medallion
South Transept

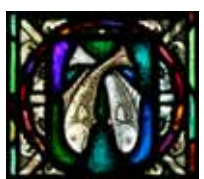
Each section shows a floor plan of the area to be discussed and locates the windows within it. Each window is illustrated as a whole. Every medallion within that window is illustrated and its religious significance described. The author draws upon scripture, church history, theological exegesis, and local cemetery iconography. The writing is lucid and engaging.

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Albert M. Tannler is Historical Collections Director, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation and Director of the Connick Foundation

Charles J. Connick's All Saints window at the Church of our Saviour, Brookline, is discussed and illustrated in Mr. Tannler's article "Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris in America: A Study of Influence" in the forthcoming special issue of The Journal of Stained Glass devoted to Edward Burne-Jones.

The book reviewed above is



Two Fishes medallion
representing meekness
South Transept

Gary W. Denning, *The Story in the Windows: The First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, 2012 Anniversary Edition*. Photographs by B. Glenn Lewis. Pittsburgh: First Baptist Church, 2012. 58 pages, 8 x 11 in. Softbound \$20

This book can be purchased from the First Baptist Church by sending a check for \$24. Details are available at <http://www.fbcpg.org/Pages/default.aspx> or by telephoning 412-621-0500.

The books to be reviewed online are

Anne Lindou Jones, *Glory in the Wilderness: The Art of Saint John's Cathedral, Denver. Colorado 1911-2011*. Photographs by Susie Masterson. Winter Park, Colorado: GuestGuide Publications, 2011

Eric C. Hansen, *The Cathedral of Saint Paul: An Architectural Biography*. [1990] 2nd rev. edition. Saint Paul, Minnesota: The Cathedral Foundation, 2007

John Burruss, *The Stained Glass Windows of The Parish of the Good Shepherd, Waban, Massachusetts*. Photographs by Mary Ann Stewart. Published by the Parish, 2010

James W. Sherby and Ralph E Lewis, *Stained Glass Scriptures. Emil Frei and Charles Connick Windows at the Church of St. Michael and St. George*. Photographs by Charles Babington III. St. Louis, MO: Virginia Publishing Company, 2012.

All four photos in this newsletter show windows located in the First Baptist Church, Pittsburgh and were photographed by B. Glenn Lewis.

Announcements

In May at Church of St. John the Evangelist, Boston, Jeremy Grubman, former Project Manager of the Charles J Connick Stained Glass Foundation Collection at MIT led a tour largely devoted to the heraldic windows depicting saints through coats-of-arms. These windows were designed by Pierre de Chaignon la Rose and executed by the Charles J Connick Studio. Mr. Grubman has also participated in an Adult Forum at St. Peter's Church, Cambridge talking about the Connick Collection at MIT. The digital content of this collection can be seen at <http://dome.mit.edu/handle/1721.3/74802>

The Connick Foundation held its twenty-seventh annual meeting March 31st.

Please see the Connick Foundation website www.cjconnick.org for upcoming events.

The American Glass Guild will hold its 2012 conference in Pittsburgh July 20-22. Al Tannler, Historical Collections Director, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation and a trustee of the Connick Foundation, will deliver the keynote address "Architectural Glass in Western Pennsylvania."

Articles by Charles J. Connick and Orin E. Skinner are being reprinted on the Connick Foundation's web page <http://www.cjconnick.org/publications.php>
