



FBC Pontotoc



Researched and Written by Wayne L. Carter

MAJESTIC AND GLORIOUS

The Jesus Windows

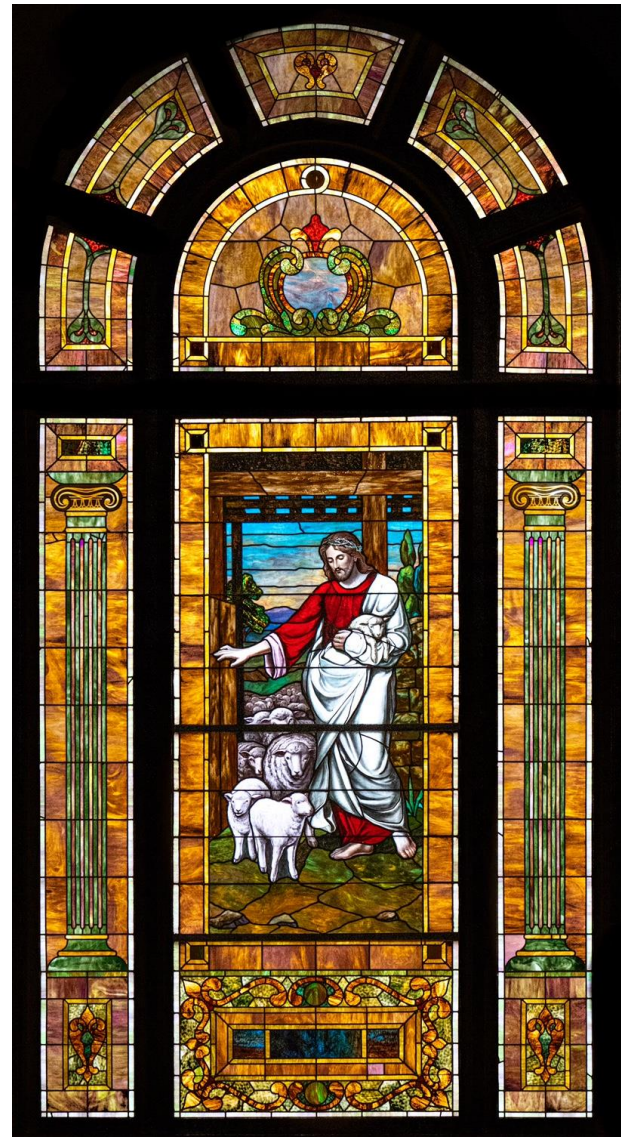
Without doubt, the two main stained-glass windows in our Sanctuary are the most impressive. In each window, Jesus is exhibited in a fashion that draws the observer into the scene.

Worshippers seated on the left side of the Sanctuary probably spend more time looking at the east window, while persons on the right side are more likely to look more often at the north window. Persons seated in the center sections of the Sanctuary may divide their viewing of the two windows evenly or to whichever of the two is their favorite.

It would be helpful had one of the FBC memberships of yesteryear named the two main windows. Perhaps our forebears were much like us and could not decide on a name or title which best fit the north window, but could easily identify the east window as “The Good Shepherd,” because therein Jesus is pictured with a flock of sheep returning to shelter from the elements and to safety from predators. I can imagine folks simply described the two windows as “The Good Shepherd” window and the “Other” window.

Over the years, I have observed how each of the Jesus windows is more glorious than the other depending on the time of day. With the morning sun striking The Good Shepherd window or east window, the various colors that form the scene seem to burst with brilliance.

The north window (the Other Window) rarely catches direct sunlight, but on those occasional days of spring when the setting sun is positioned just enough north of due west for the sun’s rays to fully illuminate it, then it glows with its own resplendence and glory.



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The Good Shepherd Window:

Even a casual observer will quickly understand why this window is oft referred to as The Good Shepherd

Window. Here, Jesus is holding a lamb as he opens a gate for other sheep to enter.

In John 10, Jesus told His disciples "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

Dr. Ken Hester considers the Other Window and the Good Shepherd window as companion pieces. In the former, Jesus is calling persons to believe in him, and in the latter, Jesus is shown making it possible for us to enter into a relationship with him.

It is easy to see that Jesus is portrayed here as The Good Shepherd, but he is also in His earthly post-resurrection form. Jesus bears a scar, visible on His left foot, which surely documents His being recently crucified.

Jesus is also wearing a crown of thorns, perhaps signifying the one His tormentors placed mockingly on His head and cried, Hail, King of the Jews." Additionally, Jesus' inner garment appears crimson or scarlet, but it may well be representative of the purple robe the soldiers placed on him while mocking His royalty. Jesus' white outer garment forth tells of His Heavenly robe and the robes of the saints in Heaven.

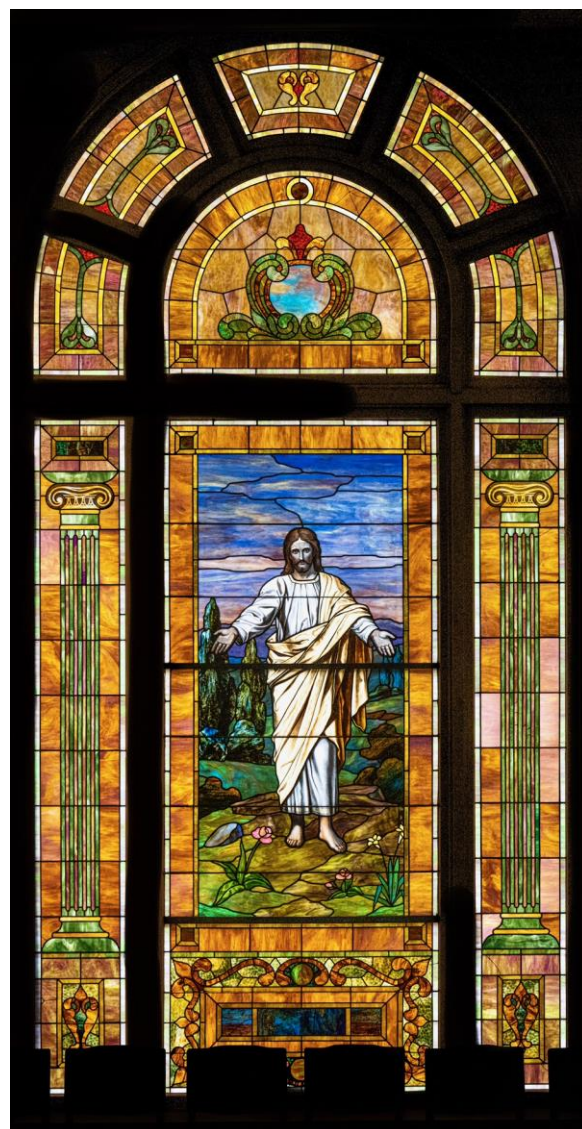
There are other aspects of The Good Shepherd window worth considering as noteworthy. Jesus' right hand is against a door or gate, allowing sheep to pass through. Jesus not only described Himself as The Good Shepherd, He also declared He was the gate or door, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." John 10:9 KJV

The lattice work, posts, and overhead beam are elements of an enclosure, perhaps a barn. Does this suggest a place of safety from nighttime predators, or simply that Jesus provides even more for us than for the lambs we find in the window?

The Other Window:

In this window, Jesus is standing on what may well be a hillside, and there are mountains or the suggestion of mountains in the background, but these are not like the Rocky Mountains of the western United States. In my mind these mountains appear similar to the rolling hills of North Alabama and Middle Tennessee.

The focal point of this window is Jesus, who is arrayed in gold and white clothing. He is standing



THE OTHER WINDOW

with arms outstretched. The palms of His hands are opened and are roughly waist high and depict a welcoming gesture that is reminiscent of His words, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

Perhaps the glass artisan is portraying Jesus on the hillside where He preached the greatest sermon ever spoken, the one we know as The Sermon of The Mount. The exact location of the mount on which Jesus stood is uncertain, but it is believed to be located near Capernaum along the Sea of Galilee.

In the lower section of the window flowers are blooming. Two of the flowers appear to be pink roses while the yellow flowers may represent lilies.

If the yellow flowers represent lilies, and if the setting is Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, perhaps the lilies are there to remind one and all of Jesus' admonition, "Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Luke 12:27 KJV

I'm still left to ponder a good name for the Other Window. A suitable name might be "Come Unto Me" or "Christ Our Savior" or even "The Great Redeemer," but until such time as the membership calls for action to address our unnamed window, I'll keep referring to it as the Other Window.

Proper window names are not necessary for the Christian or anyone to appreciate the windows of First Baptist Church Pontotoc. The windows speak for themselves. They speak the same things to many people, and they speak differently to others, but in the final analysis they declare to all that Jesus is Lord and worthy to be praised.

At First Baptist Pontotoc, we don't worship our windows. We worship Him, who was, and is, and is to come.

Photos are courtesy of Dr. Terry Wood

FROM THE NEO CLASSICAL ERA

Memorial Windows

Stained glass windows, as we know them, were originally added to medieval churches to allow more light into large cathedrals.

Stained glass windows also added to the beauty of the building and no doubt contributed to the overall worship experience.

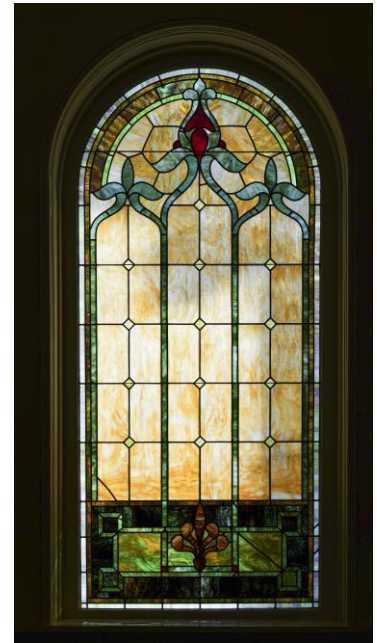
The early examples of stained glass windows used mostly varying shades of blue and red. In time, stained glass windows were used to portray Biblical scenes.

As architectural advances were made in construction of cathedrals to accommodate greater heights, changes were also made in the shapes of window openings for building. For many years, the Gothic arch that solved many of the engineering issues related to a building's height was also utilized

in window design for churches. A Gothic arch window has a more acutely pointed top portion than do the arched windows in our Sanctuary.

A Roman arch is an arch formed by a half-circle. The arched windows in our Sanctuary are of this style.

Capping each of the Jesus Windows is a transom area using six separate windows to create a Roman arch.



ROMAN ARCH MEMORIAL WINDOW

Each Jesus window has two narrow windows, one on either side of Jesus. These depict a fluted Ionic column with an Ionic capital at the top of the column, and are perhaps intentionally used to complement the beautiful white unfluted Ionic columns with capitals on the East Porch and the North Porch.

Flanking either side of the Jesus windows are two lesser windows each topped with a Roman arch. The stained glass panels within these have colors that blend with the other windows.

These four windows are noted in the 1914 minutes of the Church Building Committee thusly, "...the price of the 4 large [or memorial] windows [was] fix (SIC) at \$100.00 each." Brackets are used to indicate my best guess in deciphering the cursive handwriting in the minutes.

I would note that \$100.00 doesn't sound very expensive, but today (2023) the amount would exceed \$3,008.40 for each of the four windows. (In 2001, the three stained glass windows of the Prayer Room cost almost \$20,000)

While these four large windows began their life back in 1914, as casement windows, they no longer have any hinges or hardware. They are beautiful in their own right, and they complement the Jesus windows. The colors of the panels that form the entire window are much the same as the Jesus windows.

Apart from the geometric shapes employed in the design of these four arched windows are some elements that I am at a loss to define by name.

There is a shape similar to a *fleur de lis* near the bottom of each window. Several feet above this element, at the top of the window, is what may be the blub of a flower. My imaginative mind sees the bud of a rose trying to free itself from the confines of the calix.

On either side of this red flower are formations with three green leaves, which suggest either a floral plant or the leaves of a vine.

I have appealed to several companies in the art glass business for help in identifying specific elements or forms in our windows. One offered to help if I supplied photos. I did so but never got a reply. The others have yet to respond.

There is an aspect of the stained glass windows in our Sanctuary that the eye may see and yet not comprehend until sight is combined with the sense of touch. The many panels have various textures that must be touched to appreciate the complexity of the glass.

Within the Memorial Window shown above, the large rectangular panels have mostly a smooth feel with a slight rippling effect as one's fingers are drawn across the surface. The lower sections of dark green glass have a pebbly feel. The narrow gold toned strips have a more abrasive, almost gritty, feel to them. One might conclude that to appreciate the visual beauty of this stained glass window, one must touch it.

Photo: Courtesy of Dr. Terry Wood

CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM

Round Windows

There may be a story regarding the selection of the subject matter for each round window, but I haven't found it.

Did James E. Greene, the architect, choose from a selection offered by Jacoby Glass Works of St. Louis? Did the 1914 Building Committee choose our windows? In my research efforts, I found no answers.

I did discover a tidbit of information in the minutes of the Building Committee dated September 22, 1914 stating, "On motion the 4 Bull's Eye windows are to have emblems placed in them." However, the minutes do not elaborate on the emblems or their subject matter.

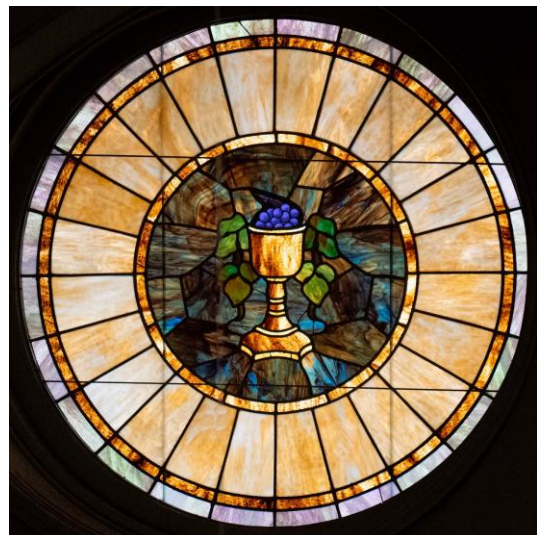
In all my years of membership in our church, I had never heard the round windows referred to as Bull's Eye windows. However, I can understand how a circle within a circle would pass for a bull's eye,

Other than for historical purposes, it matters little today who chose our windows, but I commend the person or persons who chose them. Each and every window is stunningly beautiful.

I would note that our round windows are also quite difficult to photograph with the average camera or smartphone. Short of erecting scaffolding inside the Sanctuary, one's best option is to find a good position in the balcony. That too is problematic, for a round window photographed at any angle, apart from perpendicular, won't appear perfectly round in a two-dimensional picture. I am indebted to the skill of Dr. Terry Wood, whose perfectly round work is showcased herein.

The following are largely my personal thoughts and perspectives regarding each window.

Chalice: There are numerous tales associated with what is often described as The Holy Grail which is the cup Jesus drank from during His last meal with His twelve disciples. The Holy Grail was sought in the Indiana Jones movie, *The Last Crusade*.



ROUND WINDOW ~ CHALICE

Our Roman Catholic brethren celebrate the Lord's Supper somewhat differently than do we, using wine rather than grape juice and often drinking from a "cup" shared by all. For all we know, there was no gold chalice or silver cup shared by the disciples when the Lord instituted the tradition we call The Lord's Supper. It may have been a common bowl or shallow container to hold the wine they likely drank instead of grape juice.

One of our circular stained-glass windows portrays a gold chalice/cup with a cluster of grapes lying inside it. While I can only suppose what the artist who created the window intended it to represent, I believe this window serves to remind us of Jesus' last meal on earth, the one we revere as The Last Supper.

Among the beliefs held by Baptists, we have two observances that are precious and dear to us, observances which we describe as ordinances. We observe the ordinance of Baptism, and we observe the ordinance of The Lord's Supper.

We do not have a stained-glass window depicting baptism, but we have one that portrays a chalice filled with grapes to symbolically express The Lord's Supper. Each time we celebrate The Lord's Supper I am reminded of Jesus' blood that was shed for the remission of my/our sins.

Baptists do not believe the wine/juice we drink during the Lord's Supper becomes Christ's blood when it enters our body. This is a process known as transubstantiation, and as many as one-third of Roman Catholics believe the elements (bread and wine) of the Eucharist change into Christ's body and blood upon consumption.

Anchor: Throughout Christendom, the anchor has been a symbol for hope and steadfastness. The biblical source for this symbol may well be Hebrews 6:19, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."

Our hope is in Christ Jesus, the only One "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:2b KJV

Numerous songs that mention an anchor are dear to Christians. My Anchor Holds provides these words of assurance:

"The anchor holds, though the ship is battered
The anchor holds, though the sails are torn;



ROUND WINDOW ~ ANCHOR

I have fallen on my knees, as I faced the raging seas
The anchor holds in spite of the storm."

George Beverly Shay beautifully sang "In Times Like These," which states in part:

"In times like these I have a Savior
In times like these I have an anchor...
My anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!"

An anchor serves an important purpose, namely to keep a ship moored safely in a port. On a lesser scale of size, a fishing boat needs an anchor to keep the boat from drifting away from a desirable fishing location.

We Christians also need an anchor to keep us from drifting away from righteous living. Hiding the Word of God in our hearts is a good way to store ammunition to refute temptation when it comes our way. Jesus used the Word of God to thwart Satan's attempts to cause Jesus to sin. This method works for us, too.

The next time you are in our Sanctuary, look at the circular window with the anchor and give thanks to God for being our anchor which keeps us near Him throughout life.

Holy Bible: Serving us in our walk with Christ, the Holy Bible is paramount. The psalmist declared, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105 KJV) The truth of these words is evident even today, as Christians around our globe turn to the word of God for not only meaning in



ROUND WINDOW ~ HOLY BIBLE

their life but also for direction. God's word lights our pathway.

I feel it appropriate that one of our windows pictorially honors the Bible. Without the Bible, we might still have come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, simply through oral tradition in retelling of the Gospel. However, having the Word of God in our hands is akin to the roadmaps of yesteryear which helped us find our way to distant places.

In today's techno-world the Bible is akin to the navigational aid of our respective GPS devices, which show us where we are and where we shall soon arrive.

"The Word of God is...sharper than any two-edged sword..." (Heb.4:12 ESV) and it convicts us of our sinful nature. The Holy Bible is filled with the promises of God, promises made to the patriarchs of old, as well as promises of Jesus to His followers. As Christians, we can claim those same promises.

You may think of many reasons to be thankful a symbol of the Holy Bible is in one of our windows, as you also may find many promises to recall when you gaze upon the Bible window. I choose to recall a promise of Jesus, "and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt 28:20 KJV)

Cross and Crown: One of our circular stained-glass Sanctuary windows portrays two symbols associated directly with Jesus Christ, a cross and a crown. One may note they are not displayed side by side but are arranged more visually appealing. The cross is within the crown, symbolically tying the two together.



ROUND WINDOW ~ CROSS/ CROWN

If one associates the cross and crown image with Jesus, a logical conclusion would be that the cross represents the instrument of death and upon which Jesus bore our sins both past and present.

The cross also signifies both Jesus' suffering for all of humanity and salvation offered to all by His atoning death.

The crown symbolizes Christ's kingly status for all eternity.

A different thought on the cross and crown image is that it symbolizes the Christian's reward in heaven, specifically the crown we will receive. "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him." (James 1:12 ESV).

Dr. Ken Hester suggested a biblical reference which might have been the inspiration for the cross/crown image, namely Philippians 2:5-11 KJV. Within this scripture passage, three verses stand out declaring the cross and the kingly nature of our Lord Jesus Christ:

⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

⁹ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;”

Truly Jesus is Lord of all and King above all kings.

Round Window Photos courtesy of Dr. Terry Wood

TREASURES ARE WITHIN

The Prayer Room

There is a third Jesus window that gets far fewer weekly viewings than the two in the formal worship center of the Sanctuary. This window is almost hidden away as it exists in a small room off the east vestibule. A visitor might never see it as the door is most always closed..

There likely would never have been a Jesus window in the Prayer Room, had not a small committee of women considered it an idea worth pursuing. Sandy Stark Gilbreath, Jane Austin Chamblee, Sonya Ward McCormick, and Renee Stepp comprised the Prayer Chapel Committee that studied “the needs and uses of a multi-use Chapel to be located in the room off the south-east vestibule of the Sanctuary.”

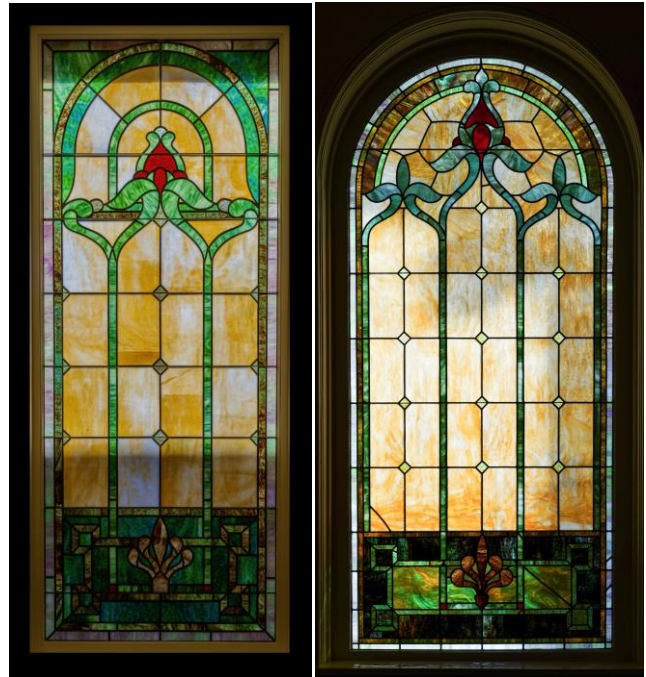
The committee proposed a general refurbishing of the Prayer Room along with a few additions including “add stained glass to existing windows in the style of the originals.”

There are now three stained glass windows in the Prayer Room; a Jesus window, and two other windows that match “the style of the originals.”

The Jesus window is an artistic representation of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was made by Andrew Cary Young of Pearl River Glass Studio, Jackson, Mississippi.

The result of Young’s studious craftsmanship is strikingly similar in style to the original stained glass windows of the Sanctuary, and employs the leaded glass technique, a method where glass is cut to a pattern and then lead came (an H-shaped channel made of lead) is used to join the pieces together.

The color matching by the glass artisan is impressive. With regard to design itself, I would point to the *fleur de lis* styled figure in the bottom section of the panel, and the use of narrow strips of glass to border the rectangular window that mirror aspects of other windows in our Sanctuary. Additionally, the



PRAYER ROOM & SANCTUARY WINDOW

lower portion of the window is laid out much as the other windows in the Sanctuary with a rectangular area having squares at each corner.

The other two windows are modeled after the memorial windows in the Sanctuary. A side by side comparison of the memorial window and one of the two unadorned windows in the Prayer Room is shown above. Unadorned is my way to differentiate these two windows from the window of Jesus praying, and in no way should it be construed as the two windows being less important.

These two stained glass windows were also made by Mr. Young of Pearl River Glass Studio. Mr. Young utilized a full-sized sketch of one of our memorial windows done in crayons by Sandy Stark Gilbreath and Jane Austin Chamblee to insure the prayer window’s colors and design elements aligned with our existing stained glass windows.

Unlike the memorial windows of the Sanctuary, the Jesus window in the Prayer Room is not set within a Roman arch, but the window itself contains a Romanesque arch above the figure of Jesus replete with the same decorative element as seen in the Jesus windows of the worship area of the Sanctuary.

Likewise, the two unadorned windows of the prayer room were built to fit into a rectangular frame with no arch at the top. And, each of these is remarkably



IN THE GARDEN WINDOW & ARTISAN'S SKETCH

similar to the memorial window from which it was modeled.

The three windows for the Prayer Room project cost a total of \$19,554.03. The stained glass and sash for the Jesus praying window was \$7,106.67 before taxes were added.¹

Mr. Andrew Young, who at the time I spoke with him, could not locate a copy of the invoice or his bid proposal for the windows, stated if the Jesus praying window were to be made in 2023, the price of it would be at least \$10,000.

The Jesus window of the Prayer room was added in the 2001. The wooden pews in the Prayer Room are remnants of the original curved wooden pews that seated the worshipers in the 1915 building. These were refurbished as part of the Prayer Chapel initiative.

The Sanctuary has undergone two major renovations over the past 108 years. The first such renovation occurred in 1974 and is well documented in "A Walk of Faith" that narrates our church history from its inception in 1846 through 1996.

The second renovation was completed in 1991. Several classrooms behind the balcony seats were removed to expand the balcony's seating capacity.

Additional cosmetic changes included new carpeting throughout the Sanctuary and new seat cushions for the pews.

Later, all of the stained glass windows in the Sanctuary were refurbished. Some were removed, taken offsite for repairs as needed, cleaned, then reinstalled, all by professionals from Pearl River Glass Studio in Jackson, Mississippi. This took place in 2008-2009.

As the Sanctuary ages, renovations from time to time will become the norm, if our building is to be preserved for future generations.

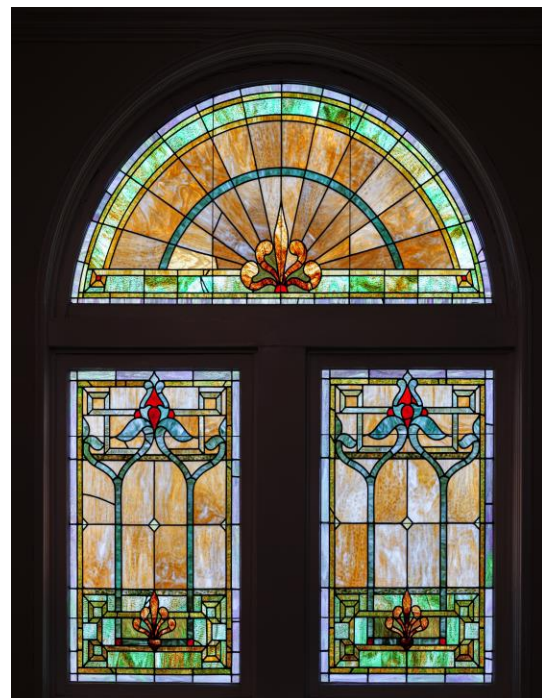
Prayer Room window photos courtesy of Dr. Terry Wood

¹ Church Business Meeting Minutes 2001

GRACEFUL AND BEAUTIFUL

East Vestibule

Most people point to the Jesus windows in the Sanctuary as our most beautiful stained glass windows. I share that same sentiment. But, the four memorial windows and the four round windows are not exactly diamonds in the rough.



EAST VESTIBULE WINDOW TRIO



FIND THE 6 SETS OF WINDOW TRIOS

As previously noted in this series of articles, the memorial windows are filled with design elements and colors which complement the Jesus Windows.

The round windows each have their own beauty. From a purely geometric perspective, we see a circle divided into twenty-four pieces, which along with a circle in its center effectively create the hub and spokes of a wheel. In each window the eye is drawn to the center circle to feast upon one of four Christian symbols.

Every window in the worship center of the Sanctuary is beautiful, but there are many stained glass windows in other areas of the building we call the Sanctuary.

Three of these are in the east vestibule and with respect to design and detail are as beautiful as those in the worship center. In simplistic terms, the layout of these three windows consists of two rectangles topped with a half-circle.

The two rectangular windows are themselves stunningly beautiful when backlit by the mid-morning sun. That the architect added a fan-shaped arch above the two rectangles is a tribute to his geometrical vision in designing our Sanctuary building.

The resultant image of the three windows is a Roman arch, a design feature of the Jesus windows and the memorial windows.

I would suggest that the next time you pass through the east vestibule you pause before this stained glass trio to consider the splendor of both color and design. You'll be blessed!

Note: This window trio is replicated in five other locations on the main floor of the Sanctuary building

with three on the north side and three on the east side..

East Vestibule Photo courtesy of Dr. Terry Wood

FBC Photo is uncredited and is from the Melissa M. Campbell Collection.

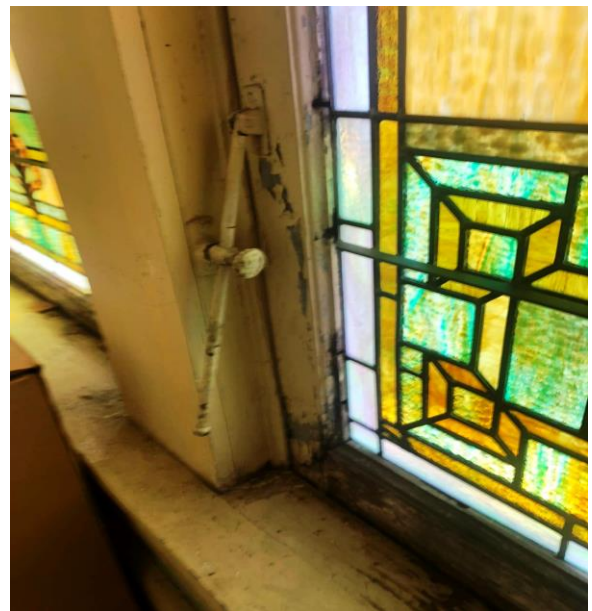
ABOVE THE BAPTISTRY

Window Hardware

The building of First Baptist Church has existed in its present location since 1914. Until 1954-1955, the church did not have air conditioning. What it did have were windows that could be opened to help allow fresh air inside the building. Some of our stained glass windows were equipped with hardware to facilitate opening. I'm unsure of the year, but at some point (possibly during or following our 1974 renovation) almost all the hardware was removed.

A few years ago, I visited the area above the baptistry that once housed the offices of our church staff which for many years consisted of the pastor and church secretary. There, I discovered some of the original window hardware still remained.

The metal rod and attachments shown in the photo once served to keep the window in a fixed position when tilted inward along a horizontal.



WINDOW SET APPARATUS

The Jesus windows in the Sanctuary did not open and close. However, the round windows could be opened horizontally, and the tall narrow windows on either side of the two Jesus windows could each be opened along their vertical axis, all of which helped worshippers endure the hot summer months.

It's true that a great many folk long for the years which were to them "the good old days," but as yet I've not found a Southerner who longed for the days before air conditioners were invented.

Photo by Wayne Carter

A BIT MORE RESEARCH

Stained Glass

I am placing this article near the end of my research on our stained glass windows, because I couldn't find a good spot for all of it or part of it elsewhere. The indented paragraphs which follow hail from *The Stained Glass Association of America* and are included largely for general information regarding types of stained glass.

I would note that all the stained glass windows at FBC Pontotoc are of the type described in an earlier article on our Prayer Room window as "leaded glass" and below as "leaded."

Stained glass possesses an aura of mystery and romance. It is the interplay between light and color that sparks the imagination. It is one of the most unchanged crafts, still taking, as it did centuries ago, time and patience, and an appreciation for color and line design.

Stained glass comes in three basic forms today: leaded, art, and faceted. The leaded is what we normally refer to as stained glass even though the term "stained glass" means any colored glass. It is usually one-eighth inch thick and is held together by lead "comes." Designs and features may be painted on in solid lines and fired in, and the glass may be shaded by putting on a light coat of paint which does not change the color but cuts down the amount of light passing through to meet the eye. The paint is an oxide of lead – usually black, dark brown or dark red.

The art-glass form was made popular by Louis C. Tiffany using colored enamels and opalescent glass. The enamels actually change the color of the light but are applied only to the surface of the glass and are fired

on as enamels on copper. Often the glass is highly textured to the point of using a three-dimensional glass for the folds of drapery or wings of an angel. The opalescent glass is that glass which is nearly opaque. It usually looks milky and is held together by lead or copper comes.

Faceted windows are made from slabs of glass ranging anywhere from one-half inch to three or four inches in thickness. These slabs are called "dalles" from a French word meaning "paving stone."

The largest studio from those times (1880s) is still the best known today: the Tiffany Glass Company, which employed hundreds of people and produced thousands of windows. The company relied on a department of artists to design the windows.²

It's safe to say that in the heyday of stained glass in the United States there were hundreds of stained glass studios.

Over the years, many a person has gazed in awe upon the stained glass window of First Baptist Church Pontotoc and asked, "Are those Tiffany stained glass windows?"

The short answer is "No."

A less short answer might be, "No they are not, but they are similar to Tiffany windows in appearance. Our beautiful windows were created in 1914 by one or more artisans working at Jacoby Art Glass of St. Louis, Missouri."

Certainly, from a monetary viewpoint, windows made by Tiffany might appraise for a higher value than windows from other glass studios. However, there were many Art Glass studios that created works of art which, in beauty, rivaled those of Tiffany Studios.

In my opinion, if there were to be a beauty contest for stained glass windows, I believe our Jacoby windows would show quite well alongside their counterparts by Tiffany or other glass makers of that era.

² *The Stained Glass Association of America – History of Stained Glass*

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Final Thoughts

What began in May 2022, as a desire on my part to write my thoughts and impressions of our stained glass windows evolved into a quest to know even more about them.

Originally, I wondered who chose our windows. Were they chosen from a catalog of windows; did our architect, James E. Greene, select them; did our building committee provide input into their selection?

As I sought answers, I became interested in every aspect of these beautiful windows. I contacted various glass companies asking questions about certain design elements in our windows. I delved into architectural terms that applied to some of our windows. I even contacted William Dexter, an architect with Pryor Morrow and associates.

In all cases, I learned much about our windows, though I'm left with many unanswered questions.

My original plan was to write about the two Jesus windows in the Sanctuary, the four round windows that contain emblems, and the windows in the east vestibule that are replicated in other areas of our original building.

After satiating my intellectual palate regarding these windows, I proceeded to rediscover the window of Jesus praying that is in the Prayer Room, off the east vestibule.

At my request, Dr. Terry Wood made a photo of the Jesus praying window, and he also photographed one of the four memorial windows in the Sanctuary. I had not planned to write about the memorial windows, but after studying the image Dr. Wood supplied, I decided the memorial windows needed their share of notoriety and proceeded to strive to learn all I could about them.

Following several weeks trying to document the cost of the window of Jesus praying, and when that effort was finally fruitful, I also discovered the other windows of the Prayer Room were not 1914 originals.

Had I stepped back in time, mentally, I would have realized that neither the Prayer Room nor the Bride's Room had stained glass windows, for I had seen the

plain glass windows in both rooms prior to any of our Sanctuary building renovations.

Among the glass makers from whom I sought answers, I did get a somewhat helpful reply from the Rakow Library, Corning Museum of Glass. As best I can determine, Corning purchased the glass company that bought Jacoby Glass Company of St. Louis, the folks who made our original stained glass windows.

One of the references I received was an abridged document entitled, "Stained Glass In Houses of Worship" by Rolf Achilles and Neal A. Vogel.

Included in the article was some good advice with respect to documentation of a church's stained glass windows, which I am sharing here:

"Very few congregations know the true significance of their windows or have taken the time to record them for posterity. Documenting the date, designer, maker, images, symbols, and type of glass used is a worthwhile exercise for several reasons. First and foremost, it provides critical restoration material in the event of a disaster. Many important American windows have been completely lost to fires, vandalism, or severe storms due to insufficient documentation. Insurance companies rely on documentation to determine the value of the windows and payment on the claim. Finally, good documentation encourages the congregation and visitors to more fully appreciate the windows."

Reading the above affirmed my thoughts about the need for a church to remind its membership of the importance of keeping in good order all documents pertaining to their church history and to refresh from time to time the written history of said church.



MAKING HISTORY INTERESTING

Perhaps, future historians of our church will find some treasured bits and pieces of information within the personal impressions, thoughts, and research I am submitting in this document.

I trust, however, that even should there be little historical value found in my work, that those who read this will find something of interest herein and gain a greater appreciation of the stained glass windows of First Baptist Church, Pontotoc.

In the waning days of completing this series of articles on our stained glass window, I visited Mrs. Dot Hardin, now in her 98th year and who is, amazingly, still of sound mind. I gave her an incomplete copy of this document, and we talked about the importance of church history.



TWO DOTS AT A 2006 GA EVENT

I left my visit with Miss Dot remembering her statement, "I don't think people care about our church history," a statement which echoed similar thoughts shared earlier this year by other members of our Church History Committee.

There was little I could say to refute her remark, as I've also been guilty of not caring about our church history.

However, I maintain that people not caring may be more a reflection on a membership's lack of exposure to that which is deemed historically important than to a lack of interest.

It's one thing for a church to celebrate anniversary milestones such as our 150th Anniversary in 1996, and our 175th Anniversary in 2021, but when little is said or done on a yearly basis to celebrate our past, it's easy for apathy to grow with regard to church history.

Perhaps it is time for our church to consider promoting our church history annually, with a

"Church History" month? It seems a good idea to me. Refresh our History Room. Remind our people why it's there and what's in it.

I can envision a church member being allotted a few minutes to speak each Sunday morning of Church History month about our past to the congregation at First Day and to the congregation at our Traditional Service.

First Baptist Church, Pontotoc has a past that is filled with accomplishments. These accomplishments deserve to be celebrated more often than every quarter-century.

Maybe our church needs to Make History Important Again.



GA GROUP IN HERITAGE CENTER

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