

Memorial Windows
in
First Baptist Church
Granville, Ohio
by
John and Beverly Seaton
May, 1975

In memory of
Forest and Elizabeth Ashbrook

We remember not only those whose names are perpetuated in these memorials, but a host of others, men and women, boys and girls, college presidents, students and townspeople, who built their lives into this Church. If we should engrave their names the walls would not be spacious enough to contain them. Beginning with that little band who organized this Church in 1819, the members come marching down through the 130 years of its course, increasing in multitude and magnifying with their devotion this institution of which this stately edifice is only the outward manifestation.

-Willis Chamberlin

The building which our church now occupies, a large Gothic structure of blue Sandusky limestone, was dedicated in 1883. Church records indicate that the original windows consisted of small panes of enameled and tinted glass, but there are not details as to color. The memorial windows were installed at later dates. Our earliest memorial window, the Good Shepherd, dates from 1902. Mrs. Kate Shepard Hines, in her History of the First Baptist Church (1919), relates that the congregation was not pleased with the color of the other windows in the sanctuary, and so decided to replace them in 1914. At that time, certain of the windows were designated as memorials by individuals or groups who then paid for them. Presumably, the church paid for the others. During the remodeling of the church in the late 1920's, when the front area of the building became a prayer room (later, the Rhoades Chapel), the three pictorial windows there and the one in the church office were installed. So our memorial windows were put in over a period of thirty-odd years.

During the early years of this century, it was customary for the person or group who was contributing the window to choose the design from those offered by a stained glass studio. The larger pictorial window designs were based on well-known popular paintings of religious subjects. Usually, the artist who worked in stained glass copies the central figure from the painting and adapted the background more freely to suit his design. It is interesting that the two main pictorial windows in the sanctuary of the Centenary United Methodist Church seem to be based on the same two figures of Christ as our main windows, the Good Shepherd and Christ in Gethsemane. But the treatment of the features is different, especially in the Christ in Gethsemane, in which the face of Christ shows more emotion than in our window or in the original on which it is based. The overall tone of the Methodist windows is lighter, and this is particularly true of the Gethsemane window, since in our window a double layer of glass has been used to modulate the colors.

Stained glass studios also offered a repertoire of standard Christian symbols to be used in smaller windows or as parts of the larger windows. Throughout our church, on most of the windows, we see various traditional Christian symbols used as parts of the decorative motif. Most numerous are the circles, which symbolize eternity. Our church windows also abound in shields, which in Catholic churches are often adorned with the symbols of various saints. However, the shield itself symbolizes the Church militant in all its aspects. Finally, the fleur-de-lis found on so many of our windows is a traditional

symbol of the trinity. The non-symbolic decorative motifs are based on generalized plant forms and are typical of the late nineteenth century.

Dominating the east wall of the sanctuary is our earliest memorial window, depicting Christ as the Good Shepherd. We feel that this window is based on a painting by Bernhard Plockhorst (1825-1907), a German painter of religious scenes whose work has often been used to illustrate Sunday school literature. His "The Triumphal Entry," showing Christ entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, is especially familiar. In his paper on the church memorial windows written in 1944, Dr. Willis Chamberlin attributed the original for the figure of Christ to Hofmann, but we cannot find any such work even listed by Hofman, and the figure appears identical to that in the Plockhorst painting. This window does not illustrate a scene in the life of Christ, but rather the concept of Christ as found in John 10:1-18. Above the figure of Christ we find a common image, the combined cross and crown, in our case a jeweled crown. These of course symbolize the kingship of Christ and his martyrdom. This window was bought from the Von Gerichten Art Glass Company of Columbus at a reported cost of \$300.00. The Von Gerichten Company, which was located on South High Street near German Village, went out of business in 1939, but had been for many years one of the country's leading art glass studios. Possibly most of our other windows are from the same source, but we do not know.

This window was given by Dr. Edwin Sinnett, a member of the Presbyterian church, by a bequest in his will upon his death in 1902. It was to memorialize his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Allen Sinnett, and his sister, Miss Jane Sinnett, who were members of this church. Allen Sinnett was born in 1797 and died in 1851, while his wife was born in 1799 and died in 1866. Both are buried in Maple Grove Cemetery. The name of Miss Jane Sinnett (1829-1894) appears often in church records of her times, showing her to have been an active participant in the affairs of the church. This window was officially dedicated on May 18, 1902.

On the left of the Good Shepherd window, as we face it, is a window in memory of Clifford E. Case. In the small round pane at the top is a chalice with the wheat and grapes, symbolizing the bread and wine of communion. Clifford Case (1877-1930) was a member of this church for many years. He and his brother Guy operated a candy and refreshment store in the building now occupied by the Aladdin Restaurant, and he was active in Granville business affairs. The window was presented to the church by his wife, Cora Deeds Case (1876-1937).

The window on the right of the Good Shepherd memorializes two long-time members of the church, Deacon and Mrs. Daniel M. Shepardson. At the top, in the round pane, we find the familiar Easter lilies, symbolizing the resurrection. Pairing this symbol with the chalice in the Case window, we see that these two present the suffering and triumph of Christ, just as is done by the cross-crown combination above the Good Shepherd.

Mrs. Esmah Orcutt (1850-1933) and Mrs. Milan P. Ashbrook (1856-1932) contributed this window, some time between 1914 and 1919, in honor of Deacon and Mrs.

Shepardson, who were their parents. The Shepardson family were leaders in the church and college as well. Deacon Shepardson's father was also a Deacon (Daniel Shepardson), and was a trustee of the Literary and Theological Institution (Denison) upon its founding in 1831. The Deacon Shepardson of our window was one of those in charge of the building of the present church. He was born in 1824 and died in 1912, having served many years as a deacon in this church. His wife, Abby Durant Shepardson, was born in 1827 and died in 1894. Deacon and Mrs. Shepardson lived most of their lives on a farm about three and one-half miles north of town on Burg Street. Their brick and frame home is still there (as of 1975).

The last window in the east wall, with no pictures in it, is in memory of Mrs. Emily Gear Spencer (1864-1912), given by her Sunday School class, the Spencer Bible Class for adult women, some time before 1919. Mrs. Spencer was the wife of Dr. Bunyan Spencer of Denison and the mother of Dr. William Gear Spencer, Dr. Gladys Spencer, Mrs. Lee Smith, and others. Mrs. Hines gives this class credit for founding the first public library in Granville, for they rented a room in the town hall and operated it as a library.

On the west wall of the sanctuary, the large central window represents Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. High above the figure of Christ we see a chalice with grapes, symbolizing the communion cup, in this situation especially recalling Christ's words in the garden, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Directly above the figure of Christ there is a form which strongly suggests the "eternal light," a kind of hanging lamp, a feature found in both Jewish synagogues and early Christian churches. The figure of Christ is based on a well-known painting by the German artist Heinrich Johan Michael Ferdinand Hofmann (1824-1911). Hofmann was a professor in a German university, and his illustrations of the life of Christ and of the works of Shakespeare were very popular during the nineteenth century.

Church records indicate that this window was originally placed in one of the smaller side windows, possibly the one to the left of the present location. In 1926, when the church underwent considerable remodeling, the trustees voted to move this window to its present location and supplied appropriate windows to flank it. These windows show the alpha and omega motif, symbolizing Christ as the beginning and end of all things (Rev. 1:8). Behind the omega we see the shape of the cross.

The Christ in Gethsemane window memorializes Judge Thomas West Ewart, LL.D. (1816-1881), an outstanding Baptist and trustee of Denison University from 1845 to 1881. He spent most of his life in Marietta, but moved to Granville late in life and was an active member of our church until he died. Dr. Willis A. Chamberlin says of him, "Without benefit of college or professional school, he educated himself and became a leading lawyer famous for his honesty and ability." The window was provided by the Reverend George Ewart (1863-1920) in honor of his father. The plaque is mounted under the alpha window where, as previously suggested, the picture was presumably located sometime between 1914 and 1919. The alpha and omega windows are apparently not memorial windows.

There is one other memorial window on the west side of the sanctuary, that directly left of the alpha window. It does not show any special decoration. This window honors the memory of Bessie Avery. We have been unable to find much about her, as she is not apparently of a local family and is not buried here. Dr. Willis Chamberlin says that she and her sister came to Granville from Cleveland “rather recently” (he was writing in 1944), were active in the church, and were both deceased.

In the front of the sanctuary on the east side is a round pane picturing St. Cecelia at the organ. According to Mrs. Hines’ history, the artist on whose work St. Cecelia is based is Naujok, whom we tentatively identified as Gustave Naujok, an obscure German painter born in 1861 who was known to paint devotional pictures for churches. St. Cecelia, the patron saint of music, is usually depicted playing a musical instrument.

The name of the person being memorialized is engraved on this window. She was Fannie I. Ewart (1861-1891) who was choir director at the time of her death. She also played the organ and was a music teacher in the Granville school. Her parents were Dr. Thomas and Jerusha Gear Ewart, and the window was contributed sometime between 1914 and 1919 by her brother, the Reverend George Ewart.

In the round window above the door to the pastor’s study, east of the pulpit, Milan P. Ashbrook (1853-1928) had installed the symbol of the Gideons. This window was given at the same time as the Deacon Shepardson window. Mr. Ashbrook, a traveling salesman, was a member of this society, an international organization of Christian businessmen, dedicated to spreading the Gospel. One of their most famous activities is the placing of Bibles in hotel rooms. During World War II the Gideons also presented New Testaments to the troops.

The symbol of the Gideons is a pitcher and torch, based on the device used by Gideon to defeat the Midianites in Judges 7. Charged by God to do battle with the Midianites with only three hundred men, Gideon formed the scheme of approaching the enemy tents at night, with torches concealed in pitchers. At a signal from him, the men blew horns, broke the pitchers with their swords, and stood there with lit torches. Apparently this frightened the enemy sufficiently, for in time the Israelites drove off the enemy. Gideon thus symbolizes what a small group can do.

Across the front of the sanctuary from the Gideon window is a round pane depicting a menorah, or seven-branched candelabra. The menorah is a symbol of Judaism, representing the lamp which, according to Jewish legend, was created at God’s direction for Solomon’s temple. Although not a familiar Christian symbol, the menorah was used in Europe in the Middle Ages during Easter ceremonies, and there are medieval legends that the Church gained custody of the original menorah from the Temple, after its fall. To Jews, the menorah symbolizes various things, including the seven days of creation, the light of creation, and the tree of life. Possibly the motif was chosen for our window to stand for our church’s Jewish heritage. Also, seven golden candlesticks appear in the visions of John recorded in Rev. 1:12-20, and are explained to be the seven churches.

We can find nothing to indicate that this is a memorial window, which makes it difficult to even guess what significance the menorah might have in the history of this church.

The three windows in the Rhoades Chapel and the pictorial window in the office were dedicated during the re-dedication of the church April 24 - May 1, 1927. Throughout the late twenties, the church underwent extensive remodeling, including the digging of the basement and the creation of a prayer room, which was later made into the Rhoades Chapel (1933). The sermon at the main service of re-dedication was preached by Dr. Avery Shaw, president of Denison. There was a special responsive reading for the windows, part of which we quote.

Minister: To the glory of God, our Father, the Source of all Light and life,
To the honor of Jesus Christ, whose life is the light of men,
To the praise of the Holy Spirit, the invisible guide and helper of men God-ward,

People: We dedicate these windows.

The three chapel windows form a triptych, with the large central window showing a rendering of "Easter Morning" by Bernhard Plockhorst, an artist whom we have already mentioned. This window follows Plockhorst's work very closely, and in this case the window designer seems not to have added his own design details. Christ is pictured appearing to Mary Magdalene, a scene commonly called "Noli me tangere" from the Latin rendering of John 20:17. The King James version of the Bible translates this, "Touch me not," but scholars point out that this and the Latin are both inaccurate, and the Revised Standard Version reads, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended unto the Father."

This window memorializes a pastor who served this church for twenty-seven years, Dr. Charles J. Baldwin (1841-1921), and his wife Adelaide Lane Baldwin (1844-1920). Dr. Baldwin served the church from 1886 to 1913, and was a much beloved pastor and member of the community. He lived in Granville until his death and is buried in Maple Grove Cemetery. He was especially noted for his preaching. Dr. Willis Chamberlin remembered him thus: "My coming to Denison as a student was at the same time as Dr. Baldwin's arrival as pastor, and I count it as one of the great advantages of my life to have sat under his instruction during the whole period of his ministry here. Many students like me look back upon his preaching as among the most valuable elements of the training they received in college." Mrs. Baldwin served as a teacher in the Sunday School and took a leading role in women's organizations.

To the left of the central window is one picturing Christ with outstretched arms, which figuration is traditionally titled, "Come Unto Me." (Matt. 11:28 "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest") This window design is based on a painting by Heinrich Johan Hofmann, whom we mentioned previously, with the exception that the artisan in glass placed the hands closer together possibly because of space limitations.

Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Shepardson and some of their children are memorialized by this window. In the program of the service for the dedication of the windows, the children are listed as Lida marsh, Mary Pomeroy, Daniel (1868-1905), and George (1864-1926). Dr. Daniel (1813-1899) and Eliza Smart Shepardson (1835-1915) were pioneers in the field of education for women. They came to Granville from Cincinnati, where Dr. Daniel had been principal of Woodward High School, to run the Young Ladies' Institute, later called Shepardson College, now part of Denison University. Both of the Shepardsons were devoted Baptists and served this church ably. Upon the death of Dr. Daniel, the *Granville Times* devoted the entire front page to a detailed obituary. He was also the father of Dr. Francis W. Shepardson (1862-1937), a well-known Granville figure and local historian.

On the right of the central window is one representing Jesus blessing the little children. We have been unable to find any painting on which this work is based directly, although it does show some resemblance to Plockhorst's "Christ Blessing the Children." This window honors Mrs. Anna Evans Graves (1868-1923), the wife of the Reverend Ernest Graves (1866-1940). Mr. Graves was a native of England, and in Granville he was a manager at the J. S. Jones estate. He had served as pastor of several Baptist churches in northern Ohio and worked with the Y.M.C.A. during World War I. The Graves lived in the brick house known as the Robinson place, two miles east of town, until the death of Mrs. Graves.

The pictorial window in the church office represents Sir Galahad, the purest of King Arthur's knights, who, in some versions of the Arthurian legends, is the one to find the Holy Grail. The quotation below it, "My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure," is a rendering of two lines from Tennyson's "Sir Galahad." Suitably, this window memorializes a young man killed at the age of seventeen.

The young man was Frank Watson Rogers, the son of the Reverend and Mrs. Lewis B. Rogers, missionaries in Burma. He was living in the Fannie Doane Home for Missionaries' Children and played football for the Granville Blue Aces. On November 19, 1926, he was killed in a football game with Marysville. He had been hit in the stomach and died almost immediately.

One of the two windows which flank the Sir Galahad window memorializes another young man, Jocelyn Brooks Clark (1907-1924). The only child of Col. and Mrs. Charles Brooks Clark, he was killed at the age of seventeen in a coasting accident on Sugar Loaf. His father was the Professor of Military Tactics and Commandant of the R.O.T.C. at Denison, and Jocelyn had been intended for West Point. Dr. Willis Chamberlin characterized both Frank Rogers and Jocelyn Clark as young men of the highest caliber.

These, then, are all the memorial windows in the First Baptist Church. All of the large windows have memorial designations except the one next to the Bessie Avery window, the alpha and omega windows, and the one to the left of the Frank W. Rogers window in the office. There are bronze plaques marking most of the windows, but not all of them.

Having looked perhaps more carefully at the windows of our own church, we are now in a better position to look at the visual imagery which has surrounded the history of the total Church. For many centuries, illuminated gospels, written and illustrated by hand, were an important means of transmission of Christianity. European churches and cathedrals continued this tradition of illustration of both Old and New Testament stories on walls and in windows. However, early Baptists, in common with other similar Protestants, rejected all religious images. It was only in the late nineteenth century that a limited group of images, those emphasizing Christ the man, found acceptance. The considerable body of Christian iconography associated with the Church throughout its history, a mass of incidental imagery in the view of most Protestants, was not used in the decoration of such churches as ours. The scenes in the life of Christ or concepts of Christ shown in our various windows are all commonly found in Protestant windows. Crucifixion and nativity scenes seem to have been avoided, perhaps due to association with the Roman Catholic Church. Likewise, scenes of violence, such as the purging of the temple, are not popular. Although the Christ of the Gospels was often a contentious man, the Christ of popular Protestant windows is the gentle Jesus, Jesus the teacher, the Good Shepherd.

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