

Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church
Durham, NC
1925 Stained Glass Windows

Trinity Avenue Presbyterian's 1925 sanctuary was designed by Rose and Rose Architects and Norman Underwood was the contractor. Early in 1924 a building committee was elected including H.C. Carr, L.D. Kirkland, Perry A. Sloan, and I.W. Bingham. The building was completed in October 1925 for a cost of \$77,800. The stained glass windows were installed as part of the original design and construction. Records show the sanctuary windows cost \$2,000ⁱ

In 2016 Sanctuary Glass of Burlingtonⁱⁱ, under the direction of Justin Forbis, found the name Dr. H. C. Carr marked on the inside casement of several windows indicating that Dr. Carr likely played a leading role in procuring the windows. One frame displayed the reference *Empire Glass*. The windows were produced by Empire Glass and Decoration Company which was one of the largest stained glass window makers in the South and was located in Atlanta, Georgia. The firm claimed to have served over one thousand churches in the Southeast between 1889 and 1935 and outfitted them with opalescent stained glass windows and church furniture.ⁱⁱⁱ

The sanctuary windows have been refurbished twice. In 1986, John Raynal was working with Preservation Trades Company in Front Royal, Virginia.^{iv} He did extensive repairs to the casements, but did not remove any windows. In 2015, Sanctuary Glass of Burlington completed more extensive repairs, including re-milling some frames and doing extensive replacement of rotted casements. The firm also removed windows, taking several to their studio in Burlington to reinforce struts and repair cracked glass. Old caulk was carefully removed and new windows were reinstalled with a new long-lasting caulk product.

According to Justin Forbis of Sanctuary Glass, stained glass in churches of the twentieth century was very common and an important part of sanctuary design. Their firm has worked on many area churches over the past thirty years. The Trinity Avenue sanctuary windows are most unique in their extensive woodworking which encases the windows, and this woodworking is reflected in the sanctuary trusses and molding. The arch design found in the windows is a Moorish Arch.^v This arch is used in the woodworking above the chancel and in the trusses from the chancel to the balcony. This same Moorish arch is reflected in the wood trim on the balcony.

Stain Glass Associates of Raleigh inspected and appraised the windows in 1983 and described the main windows as, "divided into two lower Gothics and the balance of the upper window further divided into four lancets."^{vi} Unique to the church sanctuary is the large number of windows, and their reliance on geometric design which is void of religious images and contain few botanical elements. The glass in the windows includes both *opalescent glass*--a mixed glass in which one piece has several colors, usually a mix of three with white being one of the three.

The more transparent and single-colored glass is termed *cathedral*. Much of the window glass is of a granite texture, i.e., it's bumpy. The strong use of amber glass was typical of this early period. However, the rich amber color cannot be matched in today's art glass market. To achieve the deeper amber color on the replaced panels Sanctuary Glass of Burlington doubled the glass, leading one piece inside and another behind it. Fortunately the beautiful blues prominently featured in the windows was available as *K-70* from Kokomo Opalescent Glass which has been in business for 125 years in Kokomo, IN.

Each of the windows includes some use of black paint to achieve fine detail. According to Justin Forbis of Sanctuary Glass, the design is achieved by removing paint around, a technique called negative painting, i.e., instead of first painting the image directly, areas around these objects are removed. After the desired design is achieved, this piece of glass is baked to fire the image to the glass. The artisans achieved the Gothic embellishments in the sanctuary windows using this technique.

1/10/2016 Sally Adkin

ⁱ Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Session Minutes, 1925

ⁱⁱ Sanctuary Glass & Furniture, 737 East Davis Street , Burlington, NC 27215

ⁱⁱⁱ US Department of Interior, National Register of Historic Places. First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Perry FL. October 2, 2015. <http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/15000210.pdf>. January 9, 2016. See also, Robert O. Jones, *Biographical Index of American Historic Stained Glass Makers*, Raytown, Missouri: Stained Glass Association of America, 2001, 3.8.

^{iv} John Raynal presently owns Raynal Studios Stained Glass Restoration and Design, 88 Natural Bridge School Rd, Natural Bridge Station, VA 24579

^v Curl, James Stevens (2006). *A Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture* (Paperback) (Second ed.). Oxford University Press. p. 880 pages.

^{vi} Stained Glass Associates is now at 221 North First Ave, Knightdale, NC 27545. Michael Strickland purchased the company from Robert J. Wysocki, deceased. The 1983 appraisal can be found in the Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church archives.