

# How many church windows? Piece of cake!



BY FLO JOHNSTON

**H**ow many stained-glass windows are there in **Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church**, a structure that dates to 1925?

A correct answer in the "Great TAPC Counting Contest" will get you a piece of birthday cake and a chance to help blow out the candles on that cake.

The church is celebrating the 90th anniversary of its building and

the recent refurbishing of its beautiful windows.

Anyone may enter the contest by submitting a slip with their count in the box in the church narthex.

Winners with the correct number will be recognized at the 11 a.m. service of window dedication on Sunday, Jan. 31.

Looking back, the church building was completed in 1925 for a cost of \$77,800. Translate that into 2016 dollars and it would be an investment of more than \$1 million. The stained-glass windows were a part of that amount, and old church records say they cost \$2,000. That amount today would be around \$27,000.

Over the years, the windows have been refurb-



Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church is located at 927 W. Trinity Ave., on the corner of Trinity Avenue and Gregson Street in Durham.

ished twice. In 2015 Sanctuary Glass of Burlington made extensive repairs, including re-milling some framing and replacing rotted casements. Some windows were removed and taken to the company's studio in Burlington for reinforcing struts and repairing cracked glass. These were also cleaned of all the old caulk and re-installed with new longlasting caulking products.

A historic narrative about the church's history was written in 1990 by ruling Elder Robert L. Blake.

It was in 1894 when the Rev. L.B. Turnbull, minister at **First Presbyterian Church**, opened a mission at the Pearl Cotton Mill on Trinity Avenue. At first, the group met in a mill cottage on Washington Street. A year later a chapel was built on the site.

George Watts and Leo Heartt led a regular Sunday School and a Friday night prayer meeting at the chapel.

Blake's history notes: "When it was Mr. Watts turn to conduct that service, he was there even if it meant a train trip from Baltimore or New York, interrupting business, and with the knowledge that there may be only a handful of people at the chapel."

It was E. R. Leyburn, who came to First Presbyterian as minister in 1802, who became a supporter of the chapel. In 1805 when the chapel group was given the name "Second Church," Leyburn was chosen to provide pastoral care for the new congregation. The Rev. R.G. Matheson was named assistant pastor.

The next years were rocky. Its financial situation became so weak that Presbytery dissolved **Second Presbyterian Church**.

But in 1921, three elders from First Presbyterian organized a special revival service with the Rev. O.G. Jones, evangelist in the Synod of North Carolina, doing the preaching.

The evangelist's powerful preaching resulted in 70 people deciding to reorganize the church and take the name Trinity Avenue Presbyterian.

But financial support in the congregation again reached a dangerous point in 1924. Deliverance came when 38 members, again from First Presbyterian,

moved their memberships to Trinity Avenue in January of that year.

Later that year, the re-invigorated congregation decided to build a church. The first service in the new church was held in October of 1925.

Over the years, Trinity Avenue Presbyterian, one of the city's older congregations, has been a force in justice issues in the city, its members have been active in the work of Durham Congregations in Action and its pastors have been leaders in the clergy community.

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THE DURHAM NEWS.COM

## The News & Observer

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A McClatchy Newspaper

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FROM THE WILL OF JOSEPHUS DANIELS, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER, 1894-1948

Link to Duke Divinity Web Site w/ TAPC Archives:

<http://divinityarchive.com/handle/11258/13607>



The Herald-Sun | Bernard Thomas

Sally Adkin looks at a restored stained glass window in the sanctuary of Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church. The restored stained glass windows will be rededicated during the church's 11 a.m. worship service on Jan. 31.

## Preserving history, in glass and digital

Trinity Avenue Presbyterian  
restores stained glass  
windows; archives digitized  
by Duke Divinity Library

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DURHAM

When two church members at Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church were asked to go through a box of a late member's files, it launched a whole new way of

archiving the church's history.

Sally Adkin and Ann Kirkland offered to sort the box of papers as part of their research to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the church building. At the same time, the church worked to restore its large sanctuary stained glass windows. The result has been the preservation of the glass and woodwork windows as well as turning boxes of old bulletins and sermon notes into searchable, professionally archived files.

Trinity Avenue Presbyterian enlisted the help of the Duke Divinity School Library, which has taken on the task of digitizing not just bulletins and sermons, but hand-drawn

illustrations by the late Bob Blake, a well known local artist who lent his design skills to a Sunday school class newsletter in the 1940s and '50s called "Attic Antics."

Kenneth Woo, an archivist and Divinity School historian, called the discovery of Blake's work — kept in paper scrapbooks — a treasure.

"That's been a real treat, seeing the originals and scanning them," Woo said, so they can be shared broadly digitally.

Beth M. Sheppard, director of the Duke Divinity School Library, said they were previously involved in the

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