

Thoughts, news and comments concerning the art and craft of Connick stained glass, published periodically by....

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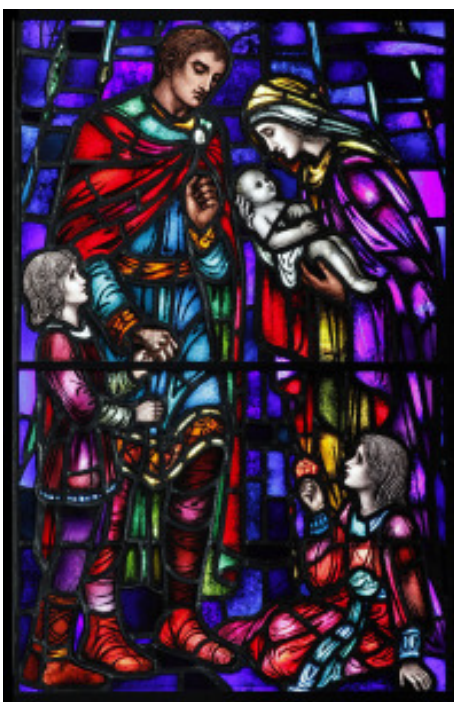
A Light in the City: The Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago

David W. Foote

Fourth Church's first building was located north of the Chicago River at Grand Avenue and Wabash Street, but the congregation held only one worship service there, Sunday, October 8, 1871. That evening the great Chicago Fire began and the church was destroyed by 3:30 the next morning. By February of 1874, a new church further north on the northwest corner of Rush Street and Superior Avenue was ready for services. By 1908 it was decided to rebuild again. A site was found on the southwest corner of what is now Michigan Avenue and Delaware Street.

The chairman of the Fourth Church Building Committee, Thomas D. Jones, had recently served on the building committee for Princeton University, where Ralph Adams Cram of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson had served as consulting architect since 1907. It is not surprising then that the Committee selected Cram as architect for the new church. Cram was given the commission for the church only. The commission for the remainder of the complex—the cloister, manse, and parish house—was given to Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw. Ground was broken on June 1, 1912, the corner stone laid on September 17 and the entire complex was dedicated on Sunday, May 10, 1914.

One of the most striking aspects of Fourth Church is the stained glass, all of which was designed and made between 1913 and 1948 by Charles J. Connick of Boston and his successor firm, Connick Associates. Connick was a modern medievalist and he rejected the opalescent glass of Tiffany and others. His windows are often marked by bright blues, which Connick used partly out of personal preference and partly because he adhered to Viollet-le-Duc's "scientific analysis" that blue was the active agent in medieval windows. Connick and Cram, who met in 1909, worked together on many churches. In fact, Cram loaned Connick money to start his own studio in Boston, which opened in 1913.



Detail from the chancel window.
Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago

Photograph courtesy of the Fourth Presbyterian
Church of Chicago.

The narrow side aisle windows are done in the grisaille style. These windows are composed of abstract organic designs, with a few recognizable symbols, and are designed to let in as much light as possible while still giving the interior of the church a soft glow of color. The west chancel window, completed April 30, 1914, was made of very thick pieces of glass to subdue the colors, but as the window is now partially blocked by buildings behind the church, it is very dark and best seen in the late afternoon. The theme of the window is the risen Christ who is in the center of the window surrounded by angels. Below Christ, at the bottom of the windows are panels with Moses, John the Baptist, and Isaiah. Above these figures are panels portraying different races, a family with three children, and various classes of people (a worker, a soldier, a king, and a beggar). The texts placed on the windows are designed to remind the congregation of the promises of Christ as well as their duties as Christians. Underneath the figure of Christ are the words, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me" and under the panel of the different races, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations."

The east façade window was originally done in the grisaille manner like the side windows, but after her death, the children of Nettie Fowler McCormack, widow of the reaper inventor, donated this window in her memory. The window was completed in September, 1930 and is a stunning example of Connick's art. The blues are vivid and sharp and the depictions of the four evangelists along with Peter and Paul (the taller figures) are resplendent in reds and gold. At the base of each window are the Old Testament prototypes for the evangelists—Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, and

Ezekiel. Just below the figures are depictions of various New Testament parables.

Stone, wood, and glass all work together in this building to create a beautiful space for praise and worship. The interior of the church is as beautiful today as it was when it was completed 96 years ago.

David W. Foote was a high school English teacher for thirty eight years. He now gives stained glass tours to friends and seniors who have moved to retirement homes. He is also a docent at LUMA, the Loyola University Museum of Art, 820 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

- After over twenty years of dedicated and faithful service, Elizabeth B. Johnson has decided to step down as a Connick Foundation director. Mrs. Johnson's inspired contribution and enthusiastic guiding light to our mission will long be treasured by the Connick Foundation.
- At the Annual Connick Foundation meeting April 17th four new directors were elected to the board. Charles S. Hayes, collector of twentieth century stained glass and enthusiast of the Connick Studio's work, and Elizabeth Ann Justice, member of the Connick Studio family, have been appointed to the Connick Foundation board of directors. Janice H. Chadbourne, Curator of Fine Arts and the Connick Collection at the Boston Public Library, and Ann Baird Whiteside, Head at Rotch Library of Architecture and Planning and the Connick Collection at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have graciously accepted *ex officio* directorships of the Connick Foundation.
- The Orin E. Skinner Annual Stained Glass Lecture will be September 14th at the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago. A screening of this lecture will be presented in Boston in November - date, time and place to be announced.

Connick Windows in Metropolitan Chicago: A Lecture and Three Tours on September 14, 15 & 16, 2010

Join us as we explore some of the several hundred extraordinary stained glass windows in metropolitan Chicago designed and made by Charles J. Connick and his Studio.

Charles J. Connick (1875-1945) was educated in Pittsburgh, PA, where he learned the stained glass craft. He lived and worked in Boston 1900-02 and in New York City in 1908. In 1909 he returned to Boston where he began his career as an independent artist using the facilities of several studios. He opened his own studio in April, 1913, and adapted the practice and precepts of the leading English Arts & Crafts glazer Christopher Whall (1849-1924) to an American context. At Charles Connick's death on December 28, 1945, his employees inherited the Studio he had led for 32 years. They continued to work under the name of Connick Associates until 1986. Some 20,000 Connick windows are to be found in churches, schools, hospitals, libraries, clubs, and residences around the world. The Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation Ltd. was established in 1985 to preserve and perpetuate the Connick tradition in stained glass.

The lecture will be given at Fourth Presbyterian Church, 126 E. Chestnut Street, Chicago, on September 14, and there will be three tours of selected sites in Chicago and Evanston on September 15 & 16. The speaker and tour leader is British historian Peter Cormack, M.B.E., F.S.A., an honorary director of The Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation Ltd. Mr. Cormack has served as editor of *The Journal of Stained Glass* and curator of the William Morris Gallery, and is recognized as a leading historian of the work of William Morris, the English Arts & Crafts movement, and British stained glass. His critical edition of Christopher Whall's *Stained Glass Work* (1905) and his study of Whall's life and work, *The Stained Glass of Christopher Whall 1849-1924* were both published in 1999. In 2009 Mr. Cormack was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II in recognition of his "contributions to art and heritage." He is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Research Department of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London and is working on a book about Arts & Crafts stained glass.

The sites to be visited, the schedule of events and other detailed information will be posted on www.cjconnick.org. Also please see on this web site the February 1996 Connick Windows newsletter featuring Connick installations in Chicago.