



The Treasures of St. Augustine's



Edition 2

INTRODUCTION Last week, we presented a brief history of St. Augustine's Church—an A-List Heritage Building. This week, the focus is on the most prominent treasure of our church—the lovely Stained Glass windows, many of which are in need of help.

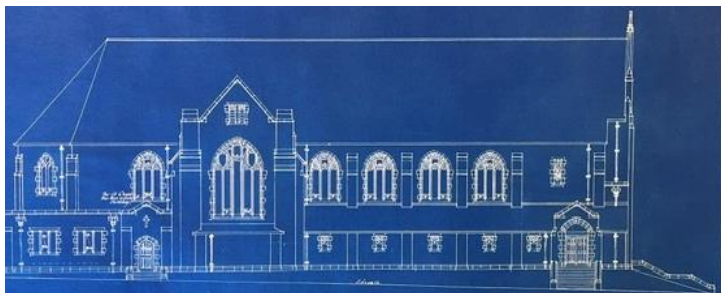
STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

Stained glass windows have long adorned churches, adding beauty, symbolism, and spiritual significance. To the medieval mind, stained glass possessed a magical quality which had the power to transform one's soul. In 1563, the **Council of Trent** addressed the role of Sacred Art: **These images ought to be borne in mind and constantly reflected upon.** More recently, in his 1999 *Letter to Artists*, Pope John Paul II stated: **In order to communicate the message entrusted to her by Christ, the Church needs art. Art must make perceptible, and as far as possible attractive, the world of the spirit, of the invisible, of God.**

https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_23041999_artists.html

Stained glass art is a way to express devotion and biblical stories. These windows are not just decorative artifacts, they filter light in a way that creates a mystical and ethereal atmosphere, allowing worshippers to feel inspired. And light, of course, is a powerful symbol for Christians because Christ is the light shining in the darkness. <https://nyliturgy.org/wp-content/uploads/BOLS.pdf>

St. Augustine's has 53 stained glass windows: six large ones in full colour, 8 large heraldic ones with splashes of colour, and 44 small ones of neutral colour. All these windows are divided internally by leaded mullions—properly known as *comes*. Sadly, though, the names of the skilled artisans who designed, produced and installed our windows are unknown.



1931 Architect's Drawing Showing the Stained Glass Window Locations on the East Elevation

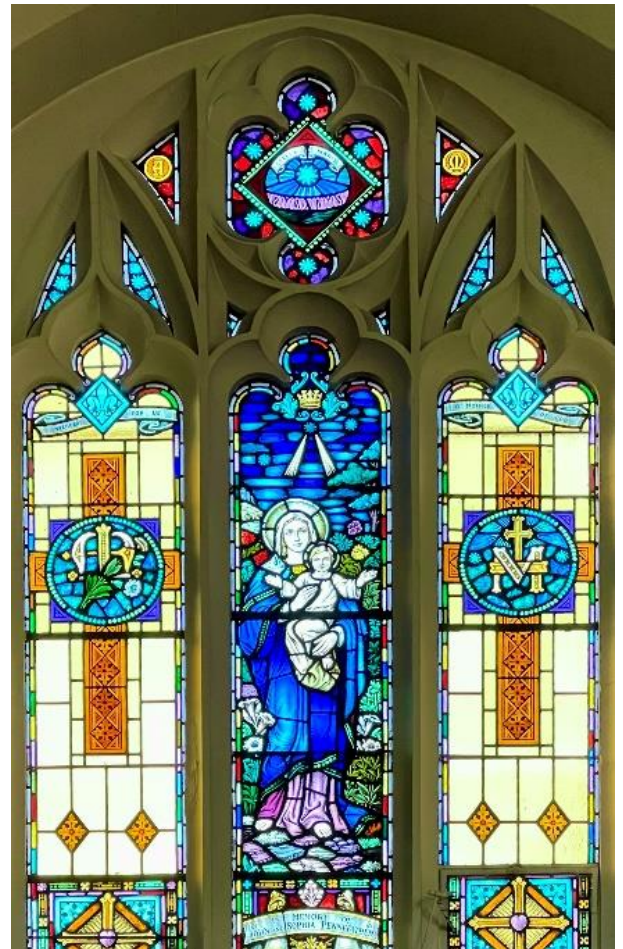
Charles Jay Connick (1875–1945) was a prominent American artist and designer, best known for his work in stained glass, usually in the Gothic Revival style. He

had some astute comments on his art:

A stained glass window is an architectural unit....It should let in light, though it should make that light beautiful and significant. It must always be luminous—it must never shut out the light like a curtain....

[Source: Charles J. Connick, Article in *Church Arts Magazine*, 1944.]

In the Sanctuary at St. Augustine's, we are very fortunate to have some truly beautiful, intricate, and colourful stained glass windows, many of which would be virtually irreplaceable if damaged.



Madonna and Child
Gift in Memory of John and Sophia Pennefather

COLOURS of STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

It is well-known that colours can have a significant impact on emotions, and a multitude of colours are used in ecclesiastical stained glass windows, so it's interesting to know the significance of each colour.

Red: Represents the blood of Christ and the martyrdom of various saints.

Blue: Often associated with the Virgin Mary, it's the color of the sky which symbolizes divine wisdom, enduring loyalty and hope, sincerity, piety, and heaven.

Green: Symbolizes growth and rebirth, spring, immortality, contemplation and victory.

Yellow: Associated with the halo of saints and the Gates of Heaven—glory, power, and divinity.

Purple: While often connected with royalty, it is believed that Christ wore purple before his crucifixion.

As such, it also symbolizes suffering and endurance.

White: Symbolizes innocence and purity and is often related to God.

Violet: Represents truth, suffering, passion, and love.

Brown: As it is often worn by monks, brown is a symbol of the renunciation of worldly things.

Gray: A symbol of the immortality of the spirit and of mourning.

Black: Often associated with death and regeneration.

https://www.giltravel.com/blog/stained-glass-colors-churchesak_actionreject_mobile/



One of the 8 large windows with Heraldic Shield designs, located on either side of the Nave

These eight windows on the east and west sides of the Nave are mostly translucent glass, purposely created to allow more natural light to the interior of the church. Back in the early 1600s, it was customary at a funeral to carry a heraldic shield before the coffin of the deceased, and then leaving it on display in the church.

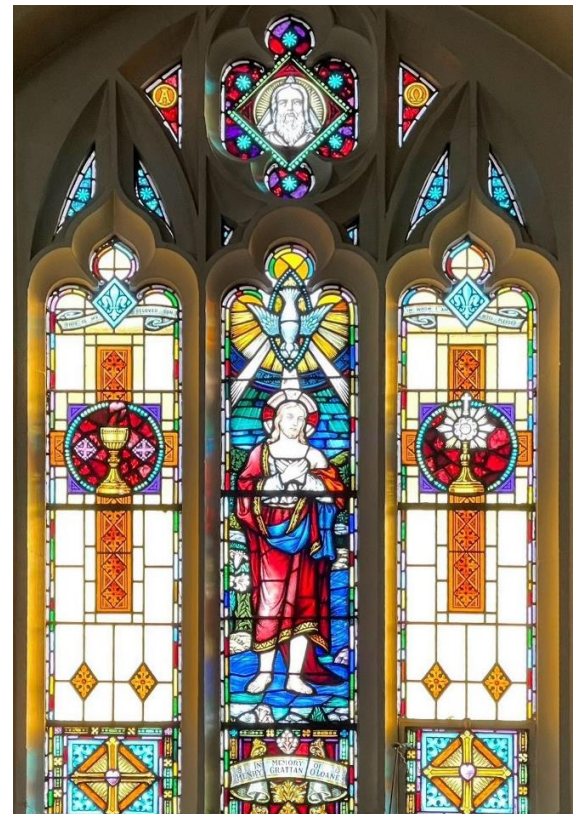
<https://lawandreligionuk.com/2018/02/22/heraldic-memorials-in-churches/>

In St. Augustine's, it's possible that these shields represented families, beloved saints or someone's ancestral country, and perhaps parishioners were encouraged to donate for specific shield spaces in these windows.



**The Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Virgin Mary
Gift of His Eminence, Cardinal Villeneuve**

It is very unfortunate that there are no records of how these lovely windows came to be. Many of them were gifts to St. Augustine's, presumably from parishioners, although the one above is an exception—and, unfortunately, we do not have information about Cardinal Villeneuve and his connection to St. Augustine's. As a result, we encourage anyone with historical information about our windows to please contact the Parish office.



**The descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ at His Baptism
In Memory of Henry Gratton O'Loane**

Next week, a discussion on the repair and maintenance of our lovely windows, plus other areas of St. Augustine's.