

The Stained Glass Windows at St. Mark's

The 29 stained glass windows at St. Mark's were created and installed by the Charles Connick Associates studio in Boston between 1953 and 1966. We value them for their artistic, theological, and historical meaning.

The Nave of the church features:

- nine double panes portraying scenes from the life of Christ from the annunciation to Pentecost
- four windows depicting the ministry of the church
- Christ with children, on the south wall near the back of the church
- the rose-shaped window (now hidden by the organ and visible from outside) on the upper west wall, depicting Christ the Comforter

The Chancel holds seven windows depicting the sacraments. The round window above the altar shows the Eucharist. The six windows on the south wall represent marriage, baptism, ordination, prayers for the sick, confirmation, and reconciliation.

The Chapel contains six windows portraying saints Barnabus, Luke, Mark, Christ in Gethsemane, and saints Peter and Paul. The face of Christ appears in the round window above the altar.

Many windows include the "Connick Associates" signature etched in the lower right-hand corner. There are dedication plaques in the stone sills below the windows.

In the narthex, the windows of the angel of prayer and the angel of praise on either side of the main doors are from an unknown glass studio.

About Connick Studios

Charles Connick (1875-1945) began his work life as a cartoonist for a newspaper but left that profession to become an apprentice of stained glass and studied in Europe. After working in Pittsburgh and New York, he opened his studio in Boston.

In the world of stained glass art, his name is rivaled only by John LaFarge (1835-1910) and Louis Comfort Tiffany, (1848-1933). Unlike his better-known competitors, Connick did not use opalescent glass, which uses the colors of the opal in milky tones. Connick believed that opalescent glass detracted from intense colors, and he chose to use clear glass. Although Connick died in 1945, his studio continued his high standards of art and craftsmanship until it closed in 1986.

The original windows in the St. Mark's sanctuary were colored glass. When funds became available the parish chose Connick windows because of their details, inspirational quality, and reputation for artistic excellence.

Connick windows are distinctive by their pure intense colors, and because the fine quality of the work exemplifies the revival of medieval-style stained glass that occurred in the early part of the 20th century. The medieval revivalists connected the style and design of their glasswork to the architectural style of the church. St. Mark's gothic style of architecture is a natural home for Connick windows.

Connick windows are found in over 5,000 churches, chapels, schools and hospitals around the world. In Illinois there are 23 installations of Connick windows, including St. Mark's, Fourth Presbyterian Church in downtown Chicago, and seven installations in Evanston. The Connick installation closest to St. Mark's is at Gary United Methodist Church at 224 N. Main St. in Wheaton.

More information is available on the Charles Connick Foundation Web site:
www.cjconnick.org