

Stained Glass Windows



Geneva United Methodist Church
89 South Broadway, Geneva, Ohio 44041

Editing and photography by Jean Arthur and Suzanne Hill.
2010

This booklet is dedicated to the glory of God.



Mary Jane and Jack Ruhl

The background research on the windows, as well as the restoration project itself was spear-headed by Mr. John H. "Jack" Ruhl, along with his wife Mary Jane. Jack serves as chair of the church's Archives & History Committee.

The church extends its gratitude to Mr. & Mrs. Ruhl for their recognition of the need to preserve the beauty of the windows, to the Glory of Christ, and for future generations.

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A BRIEF HISTORY
of the Stained Glass Windows
of Geneva United Methodist Church

In 1816 a circuit rider preacher by the name of Samuel Brown arrived at James Morrison's home and asked about having some neighbors in for a church service. As a result of his request, the first sermon by a Methodist minister took place at this time. From this small beginning, prayer meetings were held at various homes in the neighborhood.

In 1833 land was purchased on the northwest corner of Park and South Broadway for the new church. The church was dedicated February 8, 1833. This church building seemed large enough to accommodate the congregation until 1865 when Rev. A. C. Tibbitts was the pastor. It was decided that it was necessary to have larger quarters. A committee was appointed and a campaign was started to raise money for the new church. The campaign was quite successful and the cornerstone of the new church was laid at the present site in July 1866.

The new church was ready for the conducting of worship services early the following winter. However the church bell caused a problem when it was discovered it sounded like the Baptist bell. The bell was exchanged for another which was hung January 12, 1867. It weighed 1,500 pounds and cost \$893.43.

In 1875 the rear wall of the church was removed and a wood structure was built for the choir and a platform for the pastor. The platform was furnished with chairs and a table and also a pulpit. In 1886 extensive remodeling to the sanctuary took place which included the purchase of a new organ. The organ was pumped by hand.

In early 1900, our beautiful stained glass windows were installed in the sanctuary. Five of these windows represented New Testament stories or parables.

Wind, weather, airborne "enemies" took a heavy toll on our windows. They literally could have fallen apart. The material holding them together had weakened and become porous. In 1968 there was concern about the large balcony window. James and Rae Puckrins underwrote the expense of restoring the window.

In 1970 one of the windows was replaced with new stained glass which represented a Bible story of Jesus preaching about the Vine and the Branches.

In 1996 a determined group of church members began planning for the restoration of the sanctuary stained glass windows. The following people served on the committee: Jack Ruhl, MaryJane Ruhl, Rev. Chuck Oplinger, Dave Johnson, Don Horner, June Horner, Ruth Ferguson, Lois Bosley, Sara Dean, Jeanne Green, Addie Cunningham and Pat Vensel. The committee soon learned there were very few craftspeople with the skills to address this delicate, intricate, tedious and even dangerous work of stained glass restoration.

The Northern Lights Stained Glass, Inc. of Cedar Road, South Euclid, Ohio 44118 completed the restoration of the windows. Excerpts from the signed contract are included here:

"Restoration of Leaded Glass Windows: *Given the age of the glass in the Church, it has been decided to rebuild all the existing leaded glass in the sanctuary, narthex, men's and women's bathrooms, balcony and tower windows. In addition, we will redesign the panel in the tower window that has been eliciting comment from the townspeople. While all of these windows are not in immediate need of repair, it is certain that all will eventually need to be rebuilt in the next ten to twenty years...*

The Rebuilding Process: *All panels are carefully removed from and openings and transported back to our studio. There the panels are carefully disassembled and rebuilt using new lead coming. Due to its superior strength, corrosion resistance and durability, Northern Lights uses a special restoration grade lead alloy exclusively. The panels are then made weather tight using special putty between the coming and the glass...*

Total Cost: *Total cost for all work performed is \$69,660.00...*

Estimated Timetable for the Above Work:

- i. Rebuilding the sanctuary panels: January-April 1999*
- ii. Rebuilding tower, balcony and narthex panels: April-June 1999*
- iii. Installation of protective glazing- completed by September 1999*

Naturally this timetable is approximate and depends upon financing, weather etc. We have no objection to doing this job in separate phases, and would be happy to work with the Church in any way that would be helpful..."

Stained Glassed Art

This was a project of great magnitude and the Lord surely did provide. There was never the need for a formal financial campaign as the church members stepped forward with generosity of spirit and pocketbook. Jim and Sara Dean got the financial ball rolling as they paid for the restoration of the first window – the one in the most precarious condition. Once all the windows were restored, Jim and Sara's son, Dennis Dean, provided the external, plastic protective covering.

During a three year period (1998-2001), the stained glass windows in the sanctuary were removed, repaired, restored and installed. This very ambitious and expensive project totaling \$69,600 was funded entirely by individual gifts from the congregation.

Stained glass is not merely window glass that has been covered over with some kind of dye. The color is not a fluke, but is produced by mixing the proper chemicals in the right amount before or during the molten stage with the temperature just right. Red glass is the most expensive because of the gold oxide required to produce that color. Similarly, painting on glass requires special enamel, carefully applied and meticulously fired at specific temperatures, with care used not to crack the glass. Painting on glass is as old as the art of stained glass.

The blending of art and emotion reached a high peak of perfection in the 12th and 13th centuries in Christian churches of Western Europe. The stained glass windows were teaching aids for the people, very few of whom could read or write. Each window told a story. As the Middle Ages moved on to the enlightenment of the Renaissance, stained glass art decreased in conveying the Biblical narratives as the printed word took over. The printing press was invented in the 1440 by Johannes Gutenberg and by 1455 Gutenberg completed work on what is estimated to be 200 copies of the Bible.

Modern stained glass artists have gone back to the 12th and 13th centuries. The artists of that era executed the finest windows the world has ever seen. Using pot metal glass and mastering the subtleties of color, they created beauty that has withstood the test of time. They sensed that the first function of glass is to introduce light and color rather than to carry a picture. As the sunlight waxes and wanes in any given day through our magnificent stained glass windows, there is an ever changing pattern of tones and hues. The beauty of these windows lies in this movement of light.



THE WINDOWS PROCLAIM HIM

Written for the restoration of the Stained Glass Windows
at Geneva United Methodist Church, Geneva, Ohio.*
Words: by Paul F. Shagnot. Tune: St. Peter

The Church is not the structure here,
nor is it pew or rail.
It is in those whose love for Christ,
converges old with new.

When first our predecessors set
to raise this building high;
through prayer and thought their sights
were set the Lord to glorify.

The building rose, and in its walls
the windows showed the way;
with teacher, shepherd, child and king,
the faith still stands today.

Throughout the years the windows shone,
a beacon to the town.
And when with age they lost their gleam,
the course was quickly known.

With care, the people of our time,
preserved the heritage;
the beauty for their Lord and King,
and for their children's age.

The church is not a structure here,
nor is it windows bright –
it is the people gathered here
to share the Lord of Light.

And so we dedicate again
these windows to proclaim:
“May Christ be glorified anew
that all may know his name.”

**A Service of Rededication for the Restored Stain Glass Windows was
conducted on January 20, 2002 at the Geneva United Methodist
Church*



Stained Glass Window Dedications

South Side of the of Sanctuary (Front to Rear)

1S Chancel window

2S “In Memory of John and Mary Swan”

This window was given by John and Mary Swan's daughter Minnie Munger Swan. Minnie's son, Gary Swan, had an interest in the New York Central Railroad. He worked for the railroad and lived in a house nearby. Swan Street was named for him and his wife, Hazel, who originally lived in Pierpont.

3S “In Memory of James C. Morgan” “Restored in 1999 by the James G. Dean Family.” James C. Morgan (1824-1899) married Olive Gould who came to Geneva from Bloomfield, Ohio about 1850. James was in the mercantile business until 1868, at which time he founded the First National Bank.

4S “In Memory of Jerome B. Stephens and Emma R. Stephens”

Jerome B. Stephens had a dry good store on South Broadway which was later run by his son, Walter Martin, who was Olive Martin's father. Olive's mother, Kate, played the organ for a number of years.

5S “In Memory of the Pallant Family”

This window was given by the Joseph and Katherine Pallant family in 1970 when they transferred their membership to the South Harpersfield United Methodist Church. The Pallant family had a long history of teaching, and love for our church in Geneva. How appropriate it is, then, that the picture bears the likeness of Jesus teaching.

North Side of Sanctuary (Front to Rear)

1N Chancel window

2N This window displays no Bible story and matches the design of the **2S** window.

3N “In Memory of Olive Gould Martin and Kate Morgan Stephens”

4N “In Memory of Rev. Almanson C. Tibbitts and his wife

Eliza A. Tibbitts under whose ministry this church was erected.”

Rev. Tibbitts served the Geneva First Methodist Church from 1864 to 1866.

5N “In Memory of Mrs. Sally Bissell Bowe and Daughter Nina S. Bowe.”

The Balcony Bell Tower Window

“Dedicated in memory of Robert Fails, Sr. 2001”

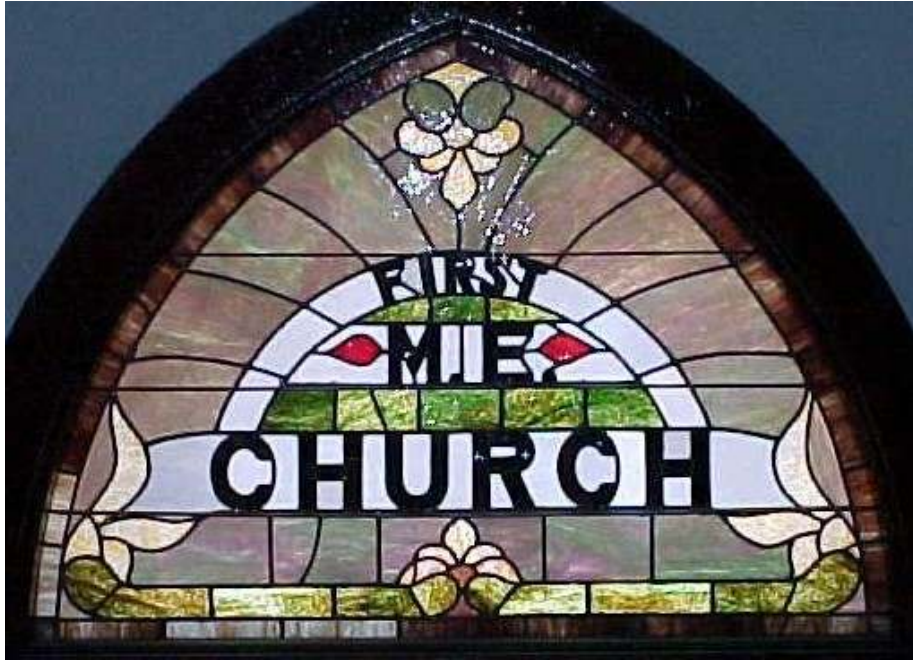
For 47 years Bob Fails worked for the railroad. Upon his retirement, he became the church custodian. In 1988, Bob’s wife, Rosie Fails, retired from her nursing career, and she became Bob’s custodial assistant. For over twenty five years Bob was head usher of the church. It is fitting that the stained glass window dedicated in his memory is located by the church bell rope. As head usher Bob faithfully rang the church bell every single Sunday before every worship service.

The Chapel Window

“In Honor of My Mom, Elizabeth Hewitt, my Aunt Mary Makee and all Teachers”

This stunning stained glass window featuring rays of light radiating from a rugged cross was given by Carol Wilt and John McGuire and family. The window was dedicated on November 2, 2006.





This window is located at the front entrance of the church on South Broadway.



South

North

Balcony

5S

5N



4S

4N



3S

3N



2S

2N



Pulpit

Altar
Cross

Lectern

Biblical Narrative of the Windows

3N

The Empty Tomb

“But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come see the place where he lay.’” Matthew 28:5-6

In this stained glass window imagine that you are looking at the angel from the perspective of the women who have come to the garden at dawn on the first day of the week to anoint the body of the crucified Jesus. When the women come to the tomb, they see that the stone has been rolled away from the entrance of the tomb. Going into the tomb, they find it empty. Then the women hear a voice and turning they see an angel standing in the opening of the tomb where the stone had been. According to Matthew, the angel tells the women not to be afraid and proceeds to tell them to go and tell the disciples that Jesus, who was crucified, has been raised from the dead. Like the women, we too are charged with telling others that Jesus the Christ is alive.



4N

The Risen Christ

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, yet shall they live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die." John 11:25

In this window we see the Risen Christ dressed in a white robe with his hands turned so we can see his palms. And we can imagine seeing nail prints in those palms. Jesus stands between two lily plants which symbolizes the garden where he was buried and was raised from the dead on the third day. The beautiful white, trumpet-shaped Easter lilies symbolize purity, hope and life – the essence of Easter.



The Ascension of Christ

Acts 1:6-10

This window is of Jesus ascending into heaven. The window was patterned after the painting, *“The Ascension”* by Gottlieb Peter Biermann.

The German artist Biermann (1758-1844) is able to portray the beauty of the form and face of Jesus as he stands for a moment suspended in the clouds. His downcast eyes and outstretched hands suggest he is offering a benediction upon his infant Church. The disciples are not seen in this portrayal, but they are there in the artist’s mind. As Christ ascends, he leaves a little band of disciples who are willing to wait for the promise of *“the power from on high”*.

The ascension’s meaning is revealed in the words of John 16:7, *“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”*

It is by the power of an ascended Christ that his Holy Spirit comes and is able to transcend all countries, all lands, all peoples and all times. Therefore, Christ cannot be confined to one place, one time, or one people.



The Good Shepherd

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep” John 10:11

This window depicts Jesus tenderly carrying the little lost lamb (Luke 15:3-7) while the mother sheep follows the shepherd. This window is designed after Bernard Plockhorst’s famous painting, *“The Good Shepherd”*. The painting was inspired by the Gospel story in John 10:1-16.

In Jesus’ day each shepherd had his own sheep; and each shepherd would have his own distinctive call, and only his sheep would respond to that call. Shepherds often shared communal sheepfolds, and when a shepherd went out in the early morning and made his call, only his sheep would come running to him. And they would follow their shepherd that day to pasture. When the sheep bedded down for the night in the sheepfold, they would sleep calmly because the shepherd would station himself in front of the gate of the sheepfold. The shepherd carried a rod and a staff (Psalm 23). The staff or crook was used to rescue a sheep and to keep the flock together. The rod was used as a weapon to ward off thieves and predatory animals such as lions and wolves. The good shepherd laid down his life for his sheep just as Jesus laid down his life for us.



Jesus Knocking at the Door

“Listen, I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you.” Revelation 3:20

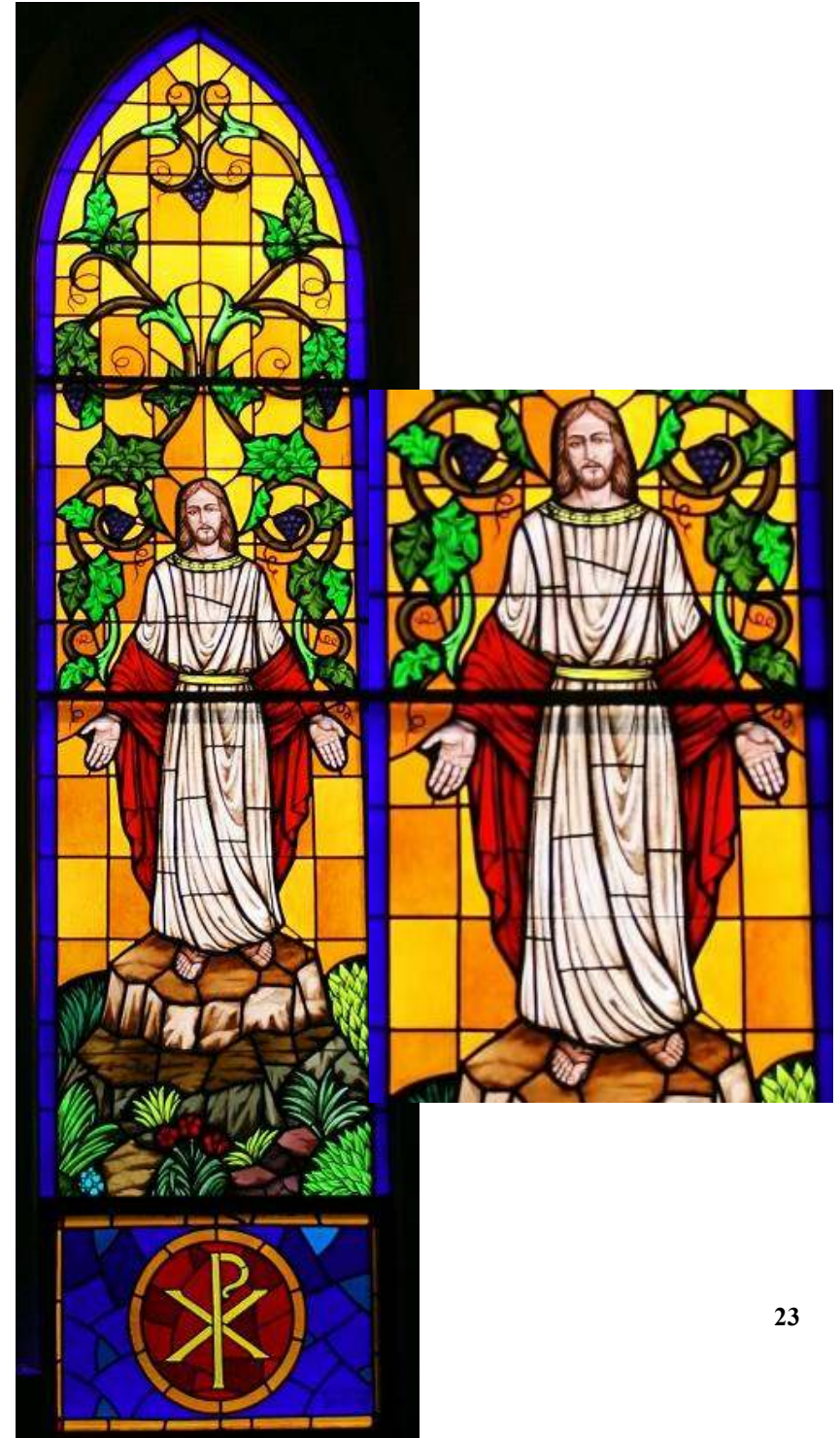
There are many paintings and other art work depicting Jesus knocking at the door. Our stained glass window of Jesus knocking seems to most resemble the painting by Tobey. You will notice that Jesus holds a shepherd’s staff. The staff represents Jesus’ authority and leadership of his Church. The symbol of the bishop’s office in the United Methodist church is a shepherd’s staff. The crook of the staff can be turned inward in caring for the flock safely gathered in. The crook of the staff can also be turned outward toward those not here yet. You will also notice in this window that Jesus is knocking at a door that has no handle or knob. The door at which Jesus is knocking represents the human heart; and the door does not have a handle or knob on the outside, because Jesus will only come into a person’s heart if they open their heart and invite him in.



“The Vine and Branches”

Jesus said, *“I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide with me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.”* John 15:5

In this stained glass window Jesus is surrounded by a grape vine and its branches. The vine is the source of nourishment for the branches, just as Jesus is our source of spiritual nourishment. If you cut away a branch from the vine, it produces no fruit, withers and dies. Likewise, without staying connected with Jesus, we will wither and die. However, if we have a relationship with Jesus and follow his teachings, we will produce much fruit. Notice also in this window that Jesus is standing on a rock as he teaches and preaches. The rock reminds us of the refrain of the 18th century hymn, *“On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking stand all other ground is sinking stand.”* The rock may also symbolize Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount found in the 5th and 6th chapter of Matthew.



Light of the World

“Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.” Revelation 3:20

In our church Library located near the church offices on the north side of the building there is large, oil painting created by George Spencer of Jesus knocking at the door. The painting is a replication of Holman Hunt’s famous painting, “Light of the World”. George Spencer was born in Austinburg, and lived in Ashtabula until 1948, when Geneva became his home. He was a graduate of Ashtabula High School and studied two years at Wooster College. For many years he owned and operated Your Furniture House on Rt. 20 east of Geneva. He was a lifetime church worker having taught Sunday school for over twenty years. Mr. Spencer painted in oils, often using a spatula or a knife for applying the paint to the surface. Spencer’s reproduction of Holman Hunt’s “Light of the World” was completed after five or six weeks of working in his spare time and on the weekends.



Holman Hunt’s famous painting is of Jesus, wearing a crown of thorns and carrying a lantern, stands outside at night knocking on a closed door that is covered with weeds. Hunt was born in 1827 in London, England. He dreamed of being a painter and eventually persuaded his reluctant parents to allow him to go to the Royal Academy Art School. In 1851, at the age of 24, Hunt began painting this picture of Christ. To achieve realism, he did much of the painting at night by the light of a lamp. The painting is full of symbolism. The door at which Jesus is knocking is the door of the human heart. The door does not have a handle on the outside, because Jesus will only come into a person’s heart if they open it and let him in. See how this door has been shut for a long time – weeds are growing up all over it. Perhaps this door covered with weeds represents Holman hunt’s heart which he acknowledged was closed to Jesus for a long time. Hunt said while working on this painting he truly became a Christian by opening his heart to Jesus.



