

A Thing of Beauty...

Grace Anglican Church's Stained Glass Windows

By John Dinsmore



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Paul Kinnis

Grace Church today; the presbytery (right) is now a seniors residence.

A thing of beauty is a joy forever – John Keats

By John Dinsmore

Stained glass windows have adorned Christian churches for centuries, and serve a variety of purposes: to portray significant events from the Bible, to add a unique decorative focus to a place of worship, and to commemorate the lives of loved and respected individuals and family members.

Grace Church, Sutton, is a fortunate beneficiary of these purposes. Comprising 14 installations, not only do they illuminate the interior of the church, they provide a remarkable artistic legacy for the people of the Town of Sutton. Equally remarkable is that many of the windows have been given by, or in memory of, family members of those prominent in Sutton's development, from the 1830s to present day.

Sutton's Grace Church

The settlement of what was then known as Sutton Flats began in the late 18th century, when the land was opened for development. Having sided with the British in the American Revolutionary War, many of the settlers arrived from Vermont and other northeastern States. As the population grew in the early 1800s, Anglicans and Episcopalians in the area came together and built the existing church, which opened in 1846. The first stained glass window was dedicated in 1885, the last in 1962.

What is "stained glass"?

Coloured glass is created by mixing the components of glass—sand, potash, lime—with a metallic oxide, each which imparts a particular uniform colour to the transparent glass. The molten glass is then formed into a sheet. When cooled, this glass sheet can be scored and broken (along the score), making particular shapes for use in a window, similar to how squares of tile are arranged to make a mosaic floor.

After a piece of coloured glass is cut and shaped, it can be painted with a mixture of iron oxide, ground copper, and powdered glass. When applied with a vitreous substance—wine, urine, vinegar—this paint, when fired in a kiln, will fuse permanently to the coloured glass, adding fine, opaque details in various shades from brown to black. This process of adding detail with paint, followed by heating the glass in a kiln, is called "staining."

How do you make a stained glass window?

Creating a stained glass window is a technically-intricate and artistically-demanding process. First, an original, hand-drawn “cartoon” is created, which outlines the design and the component parts.¹ The production stage involves selecting, cutting, painting, and firing each piece of glass. This is followed by fitting, joining, and securing the panels into the frame of the finished window. The entire process involves a precise level of artisanal skills that are no longer as widely available as they were a century ago, due in large part to a sharp decline in demand.

Grace Church’s windows were probably chosen from a catalogue, though made to order. Teams involving up to 20 people might work on one window—as did the Renaissance painters. “Staining” each piece of glass is an art itself; sometimes a piece would have to be repainted and fired multiple times, because the heat level and/or duration proved incorrect. The repeating borders, used to frame and fit each window’s central image, were produced using stencils.²

Grace Church’s stained glass windows

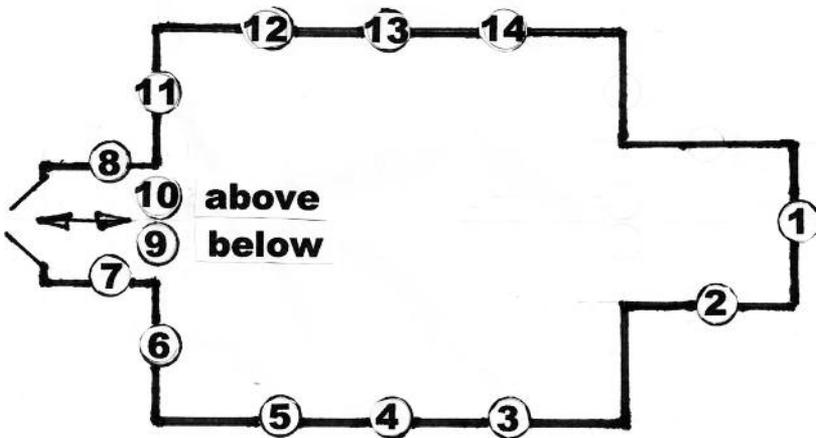
The windows in Grace Church are excellent examples of the art of stained glass, which was widely popular during the latter part of the 19th century. While all of the windows are masterful representations—primarily of events in the life of Jesus—they are also beautiful combinations of colour, creativity, and technical skill, which can be enjoyed aesthetically, both

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1. In many cases, once completed, these cartoons are kept in stock for use in other orders, and the image of the completed product is displayed in catalogue.
 2. A detailed description of the process can be found here:
 - www.khanacademy.org/humanities/medieval-world/gothic1/a/how-stained-glass-is-made
 - www.madehow.com/Volume-2/Stained-Glass.html

for their visual qualities and their artisanal achievement. What follows is a brief compendium of the human and spiritual forces that inspired them.

While the coloured illustrations are attractive images of some of the windows, only by seeing them in the church can they fully be appreciated and enjoyed. Eight of the windows are approximately one metre wide and 3.5 metres high; the three-panel window above the altar is triple the width and 4 metres at its highest point. The remaining windows are considerably smaller, but no less interesting.

Ideally, each window should initially be viewed from a distance, in order to appreciate the beauty and arrangement of the whole image and its various parts. Secondly, it should be viewed up close, to examine the details: various colours of glass, the skill of the painting and firing (“staining”), and assembling the many pieces.



Location plan of the different windows.

All photos of stained glass windows were made by Reverend Tim Smart.

Individual Stained Glass Windows

Note: The Bible verses below are from the *New King James Version Bible*, 1982.



Window 1 (above the altar): *I am the good shepherd.* (John 10:11.) This is a three-panel work, installed in 1888, by the parishioners in memory of the first rector of Grace Church—the Reverend John Smith, who served in this capacity for 24 years—and his wife, Ann Buxton. Because this window faces south, sunlight streams through the red-tinted glass and fills the chancel with a colourful glow!



Window 2: *I am the true vine, . . .* (John 15:5). This small window is not dedicated. It contains Jesus' words to his disciples, identifying Himself as the vine that gives life and the disciples as branches. Inscribed in the centre are the letters IHS, a monogram that symbolizes Jesus. (These are the Latinized initial three letters of Jesus' name in Greek, ΙΗΣΟΥΣ.)



Window 3: *Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas[,] . . . was full of good works and charitable deeds.* (Acts 9:36). The window, a simple portrait, reminds us of the vital role of women, who provide help to the needy. It was dedicated in 1895 by George H. Boright (1822–1910) to the memory his wife, Elizabeth Gittens. Active in the development of Sutton, Boright served on the Town Council. In 1861, he hired William Dow (who had designed Sutton's Town Hall)

to build—of brick, unusual at the time—a general store on rue Principale Nord. It survived the Great Fire of 1898 and today is the popular *épicerie fine*, *La Rumeur Affamée*.



Window 4: *Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.* (Matthew 5:8).

Installed in 1913, it was given by William H. O'Regan in memory of his wife, Emily M. Cutter. She was a sister of Dr. Frederick A. Cutter, Jr., who had continued his father's pharmacy in Sutton, and who eventually moved to Berkeley, CA, where his son Edward Ahern Cutter (Ahern is his mother's maiden name) founded, in 1897, *Cutter Laboratories*. (Frederick, Jr.,'s brother George stayed in Sutton and became a tinsmith; he produced

trays and pails for the maple syrup industry.) This splendid window is composed of red, blue, and clear glass extensively "stained" to create a majestic angel—the angel Gabriel, with a "Pre-Raphaelite" face—cradling the Christ child, an image of purity that embodies the beatitude.



Window 5: *Christ the King.* This was dedicated in 1949 to the memory of Franklin Clement Boright and his wife, Elizabeth Nancy Allen, by their son George Henry Boright. The window displays a risen Jesus—open wounds on hands and feet—giving a blessing of peace with his right hand and holding an orb topped by a cross in his left hand. The window is richly coloured using seven different shades of glass.



Window 6: *The Parable of the Good Samaritan.* (Luke 10:25–37). This window, installed in 1954, was given in memory of Homer Morton Jaquays³ by his wife, Emily Gould Jaquays. In the window, one sees the first two people retreating into the distance—people who have ignored the injured man—while the Good Samaritan, whose tribe was a pariah to the Jews, tends to his wounds. While the colours are somewhat

somber, the details are admirable. Note the hem of the Samaritan's outer robe. Born in 1870, Homer Jaquays trained as an engineer, and eventually became president of the *Steel Company of Canada*.



Window 7: *Jesus, the Good Shepherd.* Located in the vestibule of the church, this window was given by Clarence S. Shepard in memory of his son Henry, who died in 1885 at the age of 8. It is the first stained glass window installed in Grace Church. Compact in design but beautifully coloured, it displays the head of Jesus wearing a crown of thorns and bearing a lamb on his shoulders. Note

the curls of His beard! Four white lilies decorate the lower portion of the window, a simple but compelling expression of grief and hope.

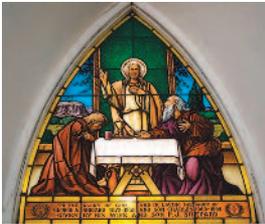
3. Older documents, genealogy trees, and tombstones use the spelling *Jacquays*; Windows 6 and 11 clearly use the spelling *Jaquays*. We couldn't discern who made the change, when, or why. Don't be surprised to see both spellings.



Window 8: *Jesus with Bread and Wine.*

This window is a reminder of the Last Supper. Installed in 1949, it was given in memory of Frank Nelson Carr by his wife, Iva Ellena Townsend. Frank Carr was a widely-recognized cheesemaker for over 45 years. He was a councillor for 12 years and mayor of Sutton for two. Eventually, he was a shareholder and manager of what became Sutton's "Butter and Cheese Manufacturing Society," a very successful enterprise. (It is no longer in operation, but is still

referred locally as "The Creamery.") This window is a beautiful combination of the image of Jesus and low-key decorative elements.



Window 9: *Christ Breaks Bread in Emmaus.* (Luke 24:13–35). This window depicts the risen Christ with Cleopas (also spelled Cleophas) and Simon at the moment when they recognize Him. Given in 1962 by his wife, Minnie Richard, and son Paul Jackson Shepard, it was

given in memory of husband/father George A. Shepard and son/elder-brother Charles, who had died at age nine. The window, framed in an ogive⁴, is a dramatic portrayal of this "moment of truth." Reflecting the Renaissance tradition, it includes views of distant landscapes.

4. *ō' gīve* (noun) 1. in architecture, the diagonal rib or groin of a Gothic vault.
2. a pointed, or Gothic, arch. *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, 1983*



Window 10: *The Flight into Egypt.* (Matthew 2:13–18). This round window is located above Window 9. It recalls the flight of Joseph and Mary, with the newborn Jesus, to escape the consequences of King Herod's order to kill all baby boys in Bethlehem. This beautifully-conceived

image shows a resolute Joseph, intent on the way ahead, and Mary, who tends to her sleeping child. It was installed in 1962, and given by George C. Dyer, and family, in memory of his parents, Dr. Charles Chester Dyer and his wife, Jessie Ballard. (See also Window 14.)



Window 11: *Presentation at the Temple.* (Mark 2:22–40). This panel shows Simeon, holding the baby Jesus, and a propheticess, Anna, looking on; both Simeon and Anna recognize the infant as the Messiah. It is full of rich colour and detail. Installed in 1953, it was given by Henry Morton Jaquays (see Footnote 3) in memory of his grandfather Asa Frary (1819–96) and his mother, Florence Maria Jaquays. Asa Frary

married Prudence Dyer; their daughter married Homer Loveland Jaquays, whose son is memorialized in Window 6. Asa Frary was one of Sutton's early farmers and leaders, who contributed much to Sutton's development. Asa Frary served as mayor of the Township on three occasions between 1855 and 1872; he spearheaded the effort that brought the railroad through Sutton.



Window 12: Inscribed on Window 12 is *The Vocation of St. John*. It is inspired by Jesus' instruction to his disciples, *Follow me and I will make you fishers of men*. (Matthew 4:19).⁵ Window 12 portrays St. John—as a fisherman, one foot in the water having just stepped out of the boat behind him—listening devoutly to Jesus' words. Installed in 1933, it was given in memory of Clarence W. Darrah by his widow, Lena Smith, and his

brother Arthur. Starting in 1912, Clarence and Arthur Darrah were co-owners of a series of ventures, including a livery stable, the first garage in Sutton, and the first car-rental company in the county. In 1918, *Darrah Bros.* began several successful wood-product businesses, making such specialty items as maple bowling pins and the laminated, white ash strips made into wooden tennis-racquet heads; it was said that *Darrah Bros.* was the exclusive supplier for the world-famous brand, *Slazenger*. The company added caskets to their product line after *Darrah Bros.* bought *Godue Casket*, founded in 1890 by Alexandre Godue. Arthur Darrah served as councillor and mayor of Sutton, chaired eight Victory Loan drives during the Second World War, and was instrumental in obtaining fire trucks and booster pumps for fire brigade. The Junior Chamber of Commerce named Arthur "Man of the Year" for 1964–65.

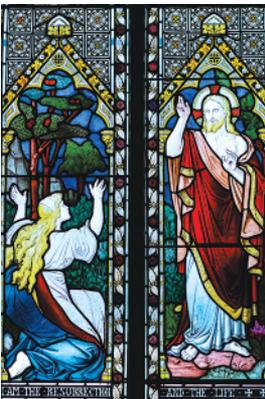
5. The pamphlet for Grace Church's sesquicentennial celebration in 1996 has labeled this verse as Mark 1:17. While the import of Mark 1:17 is the same, the verse included in the pamphlet comes from Matthew 4:19.



Window 13: *I am the resurrection and the life.* (John 11:25). Jesus uttered these words to Martha when he raised her brother Lazarus from the dead. Window 13 depicts Mary Magdalene (with brown hair) bowing before a risen Jesus, symbolizing God's power over sin and death. Given in 1905 by five daughters, the window commemorates the lives of their parents, Rufus Frederick Hamilton

and his wife, Martha Macfie, and their brother Donald. Dr. Rufus Hamilton, born in Montgomery, VT, had graduated in 1861 with a degree of medicine from McGill University. He married Martha Macfie the same year, and they moved to Sutton the following year. Dr. Rufus practiced as a doctor until his accidental death in 1881. In May of that year, while traveling by train to a call in Glen Sutton, he heard a sick child demanding some water from its mother. Dr. Rufus kindly went for the water himself, and in doing so fell from the moving train. He died of his injuries in June, leaving a widow and eight children. More misfortune followed:

Martha Macfie's home was destroyed by fire, and her son, Donald Munro Hamilton, died at only age 26.



Window 14: This window predates Window 13 and illustrates the same Biblical theme. It is quite different in colouring and tone—Mary Magdalene has blond hair!—and the scene, though similar in design, is more gently expressed. As well, each of the two

figures occupies a separate frame, effectively depicting the presence of Jesus to be more distant and spiritual. By placing these two interpretations close to each other, the artistic differences are all the more striking. Given in 1891 by Dr. Charles Chester Dyer (ref. Window 10), the window is in memory of his grandparents, George C. Dyer (1810–90) and his wife, Jane Royce. Dr. Dyer was a veterinary surgeon. His grandfather was both a prosperous farmer of 825 acres, and a merchant, owning a store/post office. Voted secretary-treasurer of the first town council (1845), he was later active in bringing the railroad to Sutton. He served as a lieutenant-colonel in the local militia, which he supported financially.

...Is a Joy Forever”

Very few country churches have every window decorated with such fine examples of late 19th–early 20th century stained glass. We in Sutton are fortunate to have such a place as Grace Church. Come visit the sanctuary, and see up-close the detail and the beauty of this stained glass. Be sure to come in daylight, when you can enjoy the sunlight streaming through these wonderful windows! It’s worth a visit.⁶ ●

More information about many of the individuals connected to these windows can be found in other History Sketchbooks/Cahiers d’histoire, published by and available from Héritage Sutton, heritagesutton@gmail.com.

Sources:

Pamphlet for Grace Church’s sesquicentennial celebration, 1996.

Grace Church Cemetery burial records.

Héritage Sutton Archives and History Sketchbooks.

Patri-Arch, 2015-16. Patrimoine religieux de Brome-Missisquoi. Base de données patrimoniales.

McCaw, Jean Darrah.1985. *Arthur James Darrah in Yesterday of Brome County*, Vol. 6, Brome County Historical Society.

Héritage Sutton web site: heritagesutton.ca/en/our-archives/cemeteries-fonds/

6. Hours to visit are posted on Grace Church’s website: www.gracechurch.org. Comments, corrections, and additional information are warmly invited. Please email Reverend Tim Smart at revtimsmart@gmail.com.