

**PROJECT REPORT ON THE RESTORATION
OF THE
“THE GOOD SAMARITAN” WINDOW
DESIGNED BY THE TIFFANY STUDIOS IN 1900**

Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church



BROOKLYN STAINED GLASS CONSERVATION CENTER

55 Washington Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

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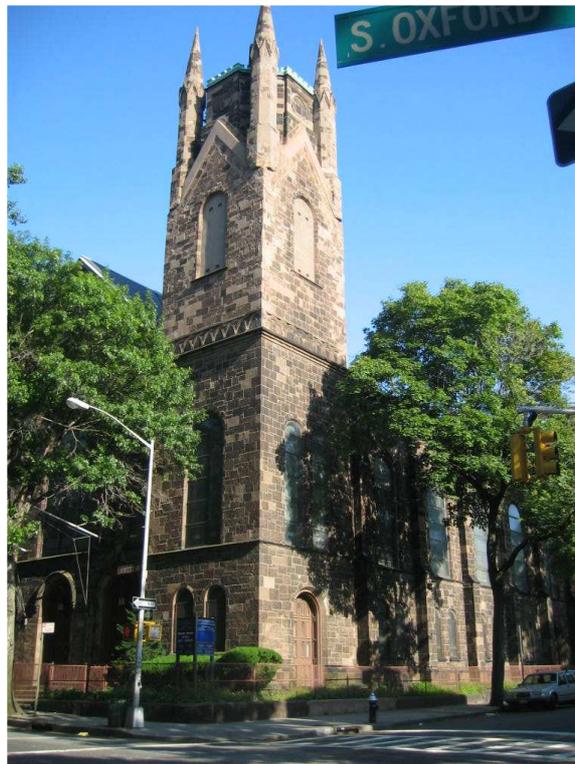
Introduction

This report will detail the “pre” restoration conditions of this window and describe the restoration process followed during the scope of work.

I. The window's history

1. Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church

The Lafayette Presbyterian Church, located at 85 South Oxford Street in Brooklyn, was founded in 1857 by a prominent group of abolitionists. Since that time, the church has enjoyed a rich history of protesting social and economic injustice.



Robert Todd, the eldest son of President Abraham Lincoln, broke ground to build Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church on November 11, 1860. During and after the Civil War, the church served as an emergency stop on the Underground Railroad. The heating tunnel that sheltered families is a rare, intact Underground Railroad site.

Alexander Graham Bell made the first telephone call in Brooklyn on a phone line installed in Rev. Cuyler's study in the church's bell tower. Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, and P.T. Barnum have spoken in the church's Lecture Room. In the late nineteenth and early 20th century, the church was a leading voice in the campaign against sweatshops and child labor. The church was first home to Medgar Evers College, which grew to become part of the City University of New York.

A Fund campaign has been raised to repair and conserve the historic stained glass windows.

2. Tiffany Windows in Lafayette Presbyterian Church

The window “The Good Samaritan”, dedicated in November 25, 1900, is part of a significant ensemble of American Opalescent Stained Glass. It is one of nine windows designed by Tiffany Studios for Lafayette Presbyterian Church. Six are found in the Upper Gallery, two, including this one, in the lower aisle and one, “The Miracle of Creation”, in the Parish Hall. The “Miracle of Creation” is part of a series of three panels, one of which is on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

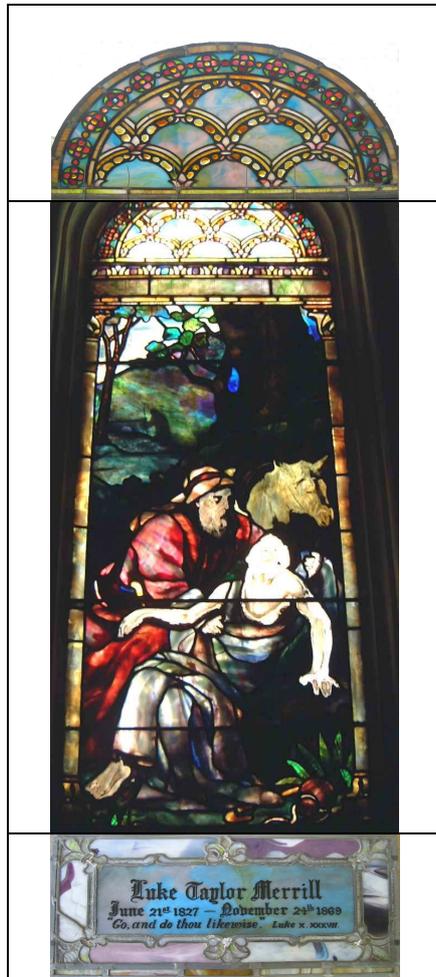
The Brooklyn Eagle News Paper considered the installation of the windows to be important and covered each installation as it occurred between 1895 and 1913. The articles listed donors, fabricators, designers and memorials. In some cases there was also information on the glass and a critique of the window itself. Unfortunately, for this window, there wasn't any information about who the painter might have been.

3. The Good Samaritan window:

The window is set into a wooden frame. It is further supported by round, steel saddle bars that are set into the wood and attached to the panels by means of copper tie wires. On the exterior of the window, a plate glass was installed.

It is a Roman arch topped and is divided in three sections:

- An upper part of the window is meant to have a decorative effect and is more of a geometric and Byzantine style. Different streaky or rippled opalescent glasses are used in small fragments and are highlighted with cast jewels made of dalle glass (26' wide, 13'7/16 tall);
- A main section consisting of two figures and a donkey in a landscape, made out of a rich palette of opalescent glass, and painted pieces for the flesh. The window depicts an episode from the Bible (Luke X: 37), the Good Samaritan parable (26 wide, 58 ½ tall). The mood of this window is dark and intimate;
- A small, horizontal, center-pivot ventilator section containing a memorial painted plate on top of a semi-opalescent glass. This section has been reduced to fit into a new metallic frame (22 ½ wide, 11'6/8 tall);



A Memorial Window

This window is a Memorial to Luke Taylor Merrill and was commissioned by the Merrill family. The dedication is:

“Luke Taylor Merrill
June 21st 1827 – November 24th 1869
“Go and do thou likewise.”
Luke X-XXXVII

An article was published in the “Brooklyn Eagle” on the 26th of November, 1900 (p. 15). It relates:

“Most of the windows in this edifice depict some scene or character from holy scripture; and the character selected as emblematic of our Brother Merrill is the Good Samaritan, who gave kind deeds instead of empty words, who poured oil into bleeding wounds, who walked that the poor sufferer might ride and who spared that sufferer’s pride by quietly putting into the hands of the innkeeper the required pay for his entertainment.” (...)

“It presents a beautiful picture which was depicted by our blessed Lord Himself- and beneath that scene of tender compassion is our Lord’s injunction to all of us: “Go, and do thou likewise.”. Following the sketch the sermon was preached by the pastor, the Rev. Dr. David Gregg. He said he took the subject of the window as the theme of his sermon. “This window,

besides being a tribute to a noble life, is a voice speaking to all of us. Christian philanthropy is love working man ward. I take as my text what is there written with the pencil of light: Luke x: 37 “To thou and do likewise.” The window has a unique mission, which makes it stand out distinctive- in this gallery of sacred art. It has a unique mission among all the windows, to preach Christian philanthropy, the religion of divine brotherhood. (...)”.

II. Condition of the window and removal

1. Actual state of the window before restoration

The window appears to be very opaque. In normal daylight conditions, much of the glass appears dark and colorless.

- The painted images are suffering from severe paint loss and instability. The ghost images will assist in the restoration of the missing paint;
- There is a large amount of soot between the glass layers. The soot is making areas of the windows very opaque and difficult to read. Numerous pieces of glass are broken;
- The vent section has been trimmed to fit into the new ventilator frame. The donor’s inscription has been repainted, and has been varnished.
- All the glass in the window, with an exception of a border of the vent section) is original. There are numerous broken pieces which have never been repaired.
- The inside perimeter of the stained glass was sealed into the frame with a very sloppy putty bead that seemed to fill in an area that had previously been a wood or plaster molding.
- The protective glazing was incorrectly installed and was damaging the window and the wood frame. There are two types of problems: condensation is forming; and the air column that is trapped between the stained glass panel and the protective sheet of glass is being heated to temperatures well above 120°F.

2. In Situ documentation

In Situ measurements are taken:

- Frame opening
- Panel sizes
- Position of rebar
- Position of meeting joint
- Ventilator frame
- Dimensions of surrounding molding and trim

In Situ photographs are taken:

- Interior flash
- Interior transmitted
- Exterior flash

After removal, templates (window opening, stained glass and protective glazing moldings and trim) are made.

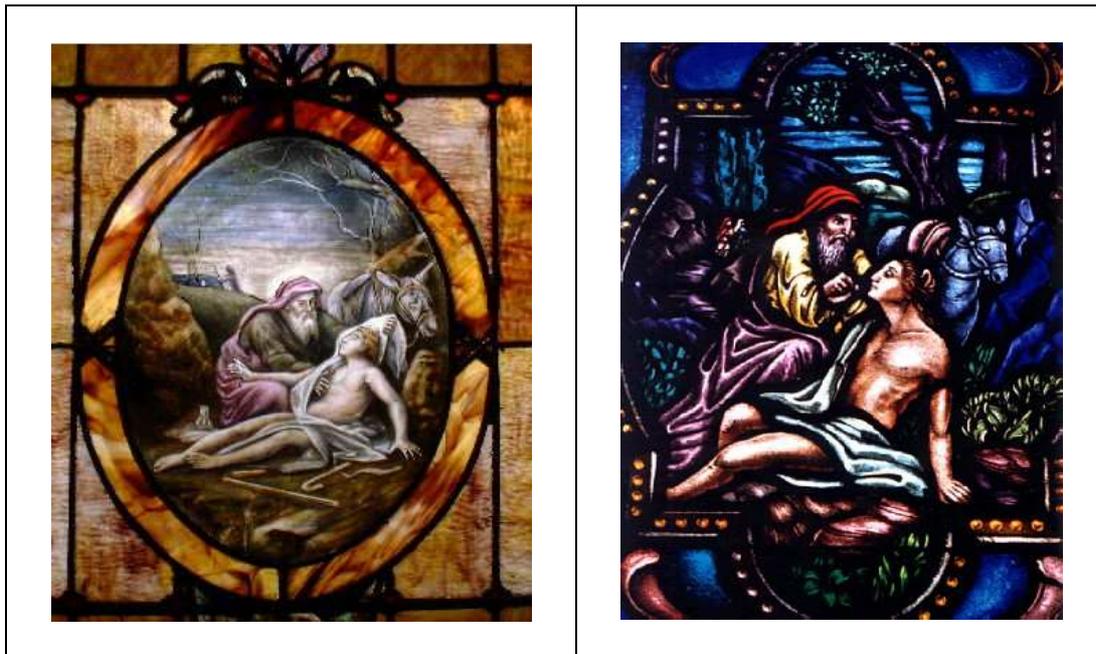
3. Removal

Scaffold was erected in front of the inside and outside of the window. The exterior coverings were removed and the glazing putty (outside) sealing the stained glass was removed. The inside wires that tied the stained glass on the rebar were cut and the two upper sections of the window were removed and inserted into foam-padded crates. Templates were taken for the stained glass and protective glazing and site size measurements were taken. The steel ventilator frame was removed with the stained glass vent panel. The window opening was then covered with painted plywood.

III. Analysis of the window

1. Art references for the theme of the Good Samaritan

Research in the field of painting are done in several data banks and libraries. The window seems to have been designed from an existing painting; even though we did extensive research, we could not find the original painting. What makes us think that there *is* an existing painting is that we found two other windows designed by other artists.



We also had the incredible luck to find another church, Brown Baptist Memorial Church on Gates Avenue in Brooklyn, a few hundred meters away from the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, having exactly the same window. It seems to us that the same cartoon has been used. Fortunately, the painted pieces in Brown Baptist Memorial Church are less damaged than the ones in Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church. This fact turns out to be a wonderful help in the restoration process for we will have some information on the painted pieces.

