

The Southampton Press

St. John's Episcopal Church in Southampton Adds New Stained Glass Windows Honoring Loved Ones

Dan Stark on Oct 23, 2024

St. John's Episcopal Church in Southampton recently finished a renovation project during which new stained glass windows were installed.

Located on South Main Street in Southampton Village, the stained glass windows replaced the 112-year-old windows of the church that had become weathered and increasingly in disrepair in recent years.

The church now has 11 new windows, each of which feature depictions of Biblical stories over the background of diamond-shaped panes.

The goal of the project was to not only replace the aging windows but also to help beautify the church, though not deviating from the look of the previous windows too much.

“What we decided to do is not only replace everything just as it was, but to add something beautiful to it as well,” said the Reverend Patrick Edwards, the recently departed rector at St. John's. “We also wanted to leave as much of a sustained continuity with what had been there before.”

To fund the project, the church primarily relied on donors. In exchange for their contributions, donors were allowed to choose what images they wanted to see on the windows and dedicate them to late family members, something that Sandra Gary, a parishioner at St. John's, said was used to recruit people to donate.

“When a building or church facility needs repair, the approach that most parishes take is to run a capital campaign,” Gary said. “And what Father Patrick did was to say, ‘People will be much more interested in contributing to a project that has some visual artistic appeal. How about creating stained glass windows that people can be a part of sponsoring?’”

Among the donors to the project was Lisa Gillespie, a senior warden at St. John's who donated to dedicate a window to her late sister Ruth, who had Down syndrome and died at a young age.

Gillespie said that “when the window project came up, it was something that my sister and I felt strongly about being able to donate a window” to dedicate to Ruth, and that “Ruth was the inspiration for me becoming a teacher and working with kids that have learning issues.”

For her window, Gillespie chose to feature an image of the story of Ruth and Naomi, an Old Testament tale of a young woman and her mother-in-law, both left alone after the death of their husbands, and how they forged on after that. Gillespie said that her sister was named after the character of Ruth and that the story echoes the impact she had on her family.

“The story in the Bible illustrates the inspiration one person can have for another,” Gillespie said. “And she really inspired all of her siblings to be the people that we became today.”

Another donor to the project was the board of trustees of St. Andrew’s Dune Church in Southampton, whose window depicts what the church looked like when it was a life-saving station in the 19th century. Edwards said that the donation from them is “an homage to them, and also a recognition of the close relationship between St. Andrew’s and St. John’s.”

In addition to the new stained glass windows, Adele Zachrisson, who Gary described as “a friend of the church,” donated two round windows that feature the work of stained glass artist Margaret Redmond, whose work has been featured in churches across the Northeast. These two windows depict the Adoration of the Magi and the Annunciation.

The new windows were made by Epiphany Studios in Richmond, Virginia. Edwards spoke highly of the company for delivering a quality product at a reasonable rate.

“In the case of stained glass window artisans, you could get good, fast and inexpensive, but you could only have two of those,” he said. “Epiphany Studio wasn’t the fastest guys that we could have found. They were very good and were very conscientious on their charging and expenses.”

Edwards also spoke highly of the studio’s director, Gene Higgins, and his support during the project.

“He’s an Episcopalian himself, but he also sees us as a ministry and not just a business,” he said. “He made us feel like we were being taken care of by somebody that cared spiritually, as well as artisanally, on this.”



Come Unto Me All Ye Who Travail donated by Andrew Pilaro and Charlotte Lucas-Pilaro.
DANA SHAW



The Rev. Patrick Edwards and Adele Hall Zachrisson with the Margaret Redmond Windows that she donated in honor of her mother Josephine Dawes Hall and Harold Stanley.
COURTESY ST. JOHN'S ESPICOPAL CHURCH



Parishioners at St. John's Episcopal Church in Southampton on Sunday. DANA SHAW



Three Marys at the Tomb (also known as The Annunciation) donated by Adele Hall Zachrisson. DANA SHAW



Ruth and Naomi donated by Lisa Gillespie and family. DANA SHAW



Our Lady of Walsingham donated by Joseph and Sheila Fuchs. DANA SHAW



Parishioners at St. John's Episcopal Church in Southampton on Sunday. DANA SHAW



The Dune Church window donated by the trustees of St. Andrew's Dune Church. DANA SHAW



and Lisa Gillespie with the window, Ruth and Naomi, that they donated. DANA SHAW



Jesus Calming the Waters donated by a bequest of Peter and Margery Sullivan. DANA SHAW