

THE BELLTOWER

1ST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF KANKAKEE



The Saga of The Lord's Supper Window

In 1944 the members of the church had a bold idea. The sanctuary was recently remodeled with new pews along with the beautiful wood work on the altar and around the organ. The space was lovely but something was missing. The answer? Two 18'x10' arched stained glass windows. One of Jesus the Good Shepherd, the other, Da Vinci's depiction of the Last Supper. In May, 1944 the members of Session approved the project. Unfortunately they didn't record what company created the windows.

Fast forward to February 28th, 2019. A wind storm with gusts up to 70 mph hit Kankakee. Some of the wood had rotted around the Last Supper window and caulking had dried



holding the outer plate glass covering. This allowed wind to get in between the two windows and the imbalance in pressure blew out the entire outer glass covering including the frame. Before repairs could be made, two independent contractors came and inspected the stained glass window (SGW). They both came to the same conclusion. The SGW also was pulled out in a large area of the middle of the window. The force of the wind was enough to break solder point's attaching the rebar to the SGW.

Staff

Karen Williams,
CRE, Interim Pastor
&
Moderator

Paul Johnson,
Director of Music,
Office and Building
Manager

Mark Wadley,
Maintenance

This created a danger to the structural integrity of the window itself. Without repair it would only be a matter of time before the window would completely fail. In other words fall apart. To protect it from further wind damage, the window was boarded up.

A call was made to our insurance company and after looking at pictures, and speaking with the contractors, a check for \$52,700 was issued to us. There was a significant price difference in the two vendors, and both were excellent, so the insurance paid for the lower bid which went to Jacksonville Stained Glass (JSG), located in Jacksonville Illinois. The advantage they had over the other contractor was that they could take the window apart and work on it on site. They have a large and small trailer with work stations and the needed materials. They also own their own scaffolding and lift. The other vendor did not have that capability.

JSG also proposed replacing the wooden frame holding the window. The existing frame was heavily rotted in numerous places, but the insurance company considered this normal wear and tear. JSG could put in a new metal frame to hold the protective glass for an additional cost of \$15,000. Session members agreed it just made no sense to put a window back in a frame that was deteriorated, so the additional cost was approved.



THE BELLTOWER

Fortunately one of JSG specialties is to have the ability to create custom metal frames to hold an outer covering of protective plate glass. In May JSG began the work and actually traced the entire window frame, made measurements to begin the process. Then back at their shop they created a beautiful metal frame that matches the lines of the SGW perfectly. Their frame has ventilation on both the bottom and top which keeps the stained glass from “cooking.” (see “cooking” on page 4) If you look closely, you would see that the frame for the protective glass matches exactly the frame of the SGW. Also the glass has a nice reflective quality.



Sunday, June 23rd, Ron Weaver and Bill Preston, co-owners of JSG, arrived along with three of their craftsman to spend a week repairing and restoring the window. They came with two trailers. One quite long and the other about half the size. Strapped to the side of one of the trailers was the metal frame JSG built.



On Monday morning they first built scaffolding outside the window. Next they moved pews to create a work area inside to work on the project. A scaffolding was erected on the inside of the window. I was impressed with how meticulous they were in moving pews and setting up their work space so they did not damage the carpet or church in general.

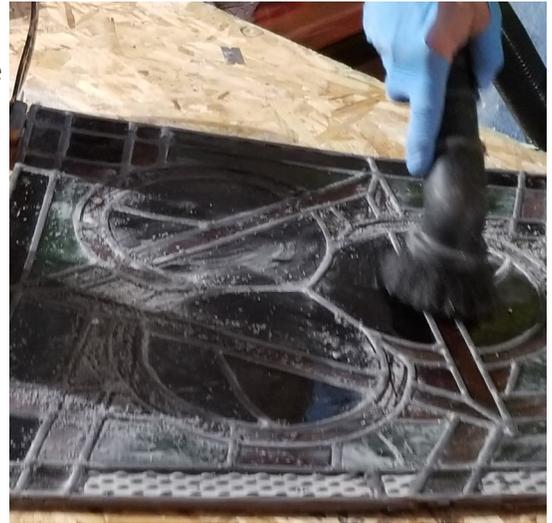
The outside plywood was removed only in the areas they were working. To disassemble the window the work began from the top down. There are 13 panels altogether. Workers on both the inside and outside carefully removed old caulk and materials from the panel they were working on. This was not an easy task. It could take up to an hour or more for just one panel depending on the size of the panels. It takes just the right mix of force and delicacy. Too much force and pieces of glass will start breaking.





The work we had agreed on was a partial restoration or slurry restoration. Once a panel was removed, it was set on a workbench. First any loose and leeching cement intended to maintain the structural integrity of the window is removed, it is a very tedious task. The cement was originally forced in and around the lead channel holding the glass tightly in place. Then a picking tool is used to remove any loose cement from the channels—the pieces of lead and zinc in between each piece of glass are called a “came.” Once that is completed it is vacuumed and then slurry, (looks like gray goo), is spread all over the panel. It is rubbed in, filling any cracks or voids in the original cement. The slurry is forced into the lead came channels using a small brush. The addition of the new cement rejuvenates the existing cement in

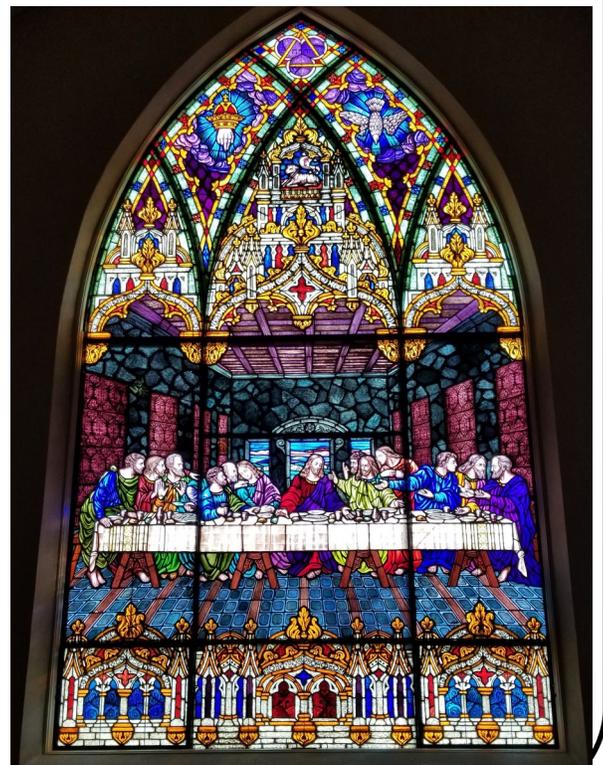
the lead came channel making a stronger more waterproof window. After this slurry cement is as applied and given time to dry, the windows are thoroughly cleaned using a white powdery substance called whiting or calcium carbonate. The whiting effectively soaks up an leftover cement and polishes the glass.



Part of the process was also to inspect the rebar that connects to points on the panels. There were many instances where there was no longer a connection. The workers carefully re-soldered those points to ensure the structural integrity of the window.

After a panel was repaired and restored they were put back in place, but this time from the bottom up. Once all the panels were in, they put fresh caulk around the panels to seal them. I guess you could say our Last Supper Window got an 75th birthday present and we now get to enjoy the beauty of the repaired and restored Da Vinci’s Last Supper in stained glass for many years to come.

Paul Johnson, Building Manager



More about Stained Glass

COOKING

In the 60's it became fashionable to cover stained glass windows with Lexan. A plastic covering that would protect your SGW from vandalism. Unfortunately, almost all were installed with no ventilation areas in the plastic. The temperature between the window and lexan can get to 165 degrees which causes lead to soften, paint to fade and glass to warp. This has happened on a number of our smaller windows. Repairing/restoring those windows is an entirely different project, but I thought it important you understand what "cooking" meant

Workers carefully remove a panel from the top of the window



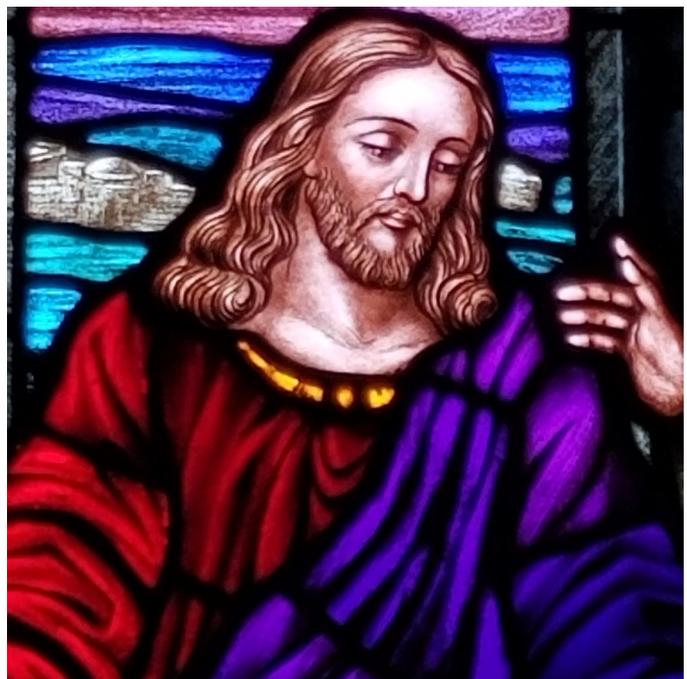
PAINTING FACES

You will not see faces often in stained glass. This is because to do one face you first have to trace out the face, then kiln fire it. Next day add a color, then kiln fire, and so on. It takes about two weeks to make one face in stained glass.



STAINED GLASS

Stained glass is glass that has been kiln fired. The "paint" is actually mixes of certain chemicals that when heated produce certain colors. This is different from "art glass," Art glass is not kiln fired, and as a result does not have the richness of color that kiln fired glass has.



More about Stained Glass



On the left two workmen work on removing old caulking from the outside of the window.

On the right it took 3 men to get this large panel down. You can only see the hands of the man in the middle



Above—After a couple of days all 13 panels were removed.

Below—The new outer glass covering has a beautiful reflective quality.



On the left—Often it would take four workmen to remove a panel. Two on the inside and two on the outside



Above L-R. Bartholomew,
James the Minor, Andrew



Above L-R. Judas, Peter,
John



Below L-R. Thomas,
James the Major, Phillip

Da Vinci painted The Last Supper on the wall of the refectory (dining hall) of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, Italy from 1495-1498. It is 180" x 350."

Below L-R. Matthew,
Thaddeus, Simon



Prayer Concerns and Praises

Our prayers, thoughts, and condolences go out to Jeanne Chapman on the loss of her son Dan Kupcikevicius. He was only 51 years old and passed after a long illness. Jeanne asks for prayers for the family and peace for Nick.

Pastor Karen fell June 15th and broke her wrist in several places. She was in the hospital for three days. She is back at work but requests prayers for the long road of rehab and dealing with the pain and discomfort. She thanks the church for a beautiful floral arrangement sent to her home.

Paul Johnson let an infection in his foot get out of hand and needed to be hospitalized. Surgery was required to remove a piece of infected bone from his right foot second toe. He will be on antibiotic infusion therapy for 6 weeks. Pray that the antibiotics will kill any remaining infected tissue the podiatrist was unable to remove. Paul thanks the church for a nice floral basket from the church.

Building Manager Update

PARKING LOT

Monday July 1st the parking lot was seal coated. Even though the parking lot foundation was fixed and fresh asphalt laid last year, It was essential it be seal coated because asphalt takes a year to “cure.” At that point any cracks need to be filled in and covered with a sealant. We won’t have to do it again until 3 years from now.

KITCHEN A/C

A new through the wall air conditioner will be installed in the kitchen. The present unit is ancient and doesn’t work correctly, if at all.

PRAYER GARDEN

Between Mark Wadley and Alex Nunez from Juan 3:16 the garden is being kept weed free as much as possible. Take time to look at it. Go inside. The plants and flowers are really nice size now. There are also flowers blooming other places around the church.



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A note from Pastor Karen

July 2, 2019

As we begin a new month and celebrate the 4th of July, a celebration of this nation's freedom, let us also remember and celebrate the death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the freedom he has given us. I am so thankful for this church family coming into my life. When finally answering God and what his plan for me was, I never thought that I would as fortunate to serve Him here in this beautiful church. God truly answered my prayers bringing me here, for us to learn together, to worship together and to be in community with one another.

In Christ's Name

Pastor Karen Williams