

Tiffany Stained Glass Windows in Franklin, Pennsylvania

In the small town of Franklin, Pennsylvania there is a church with a big claim to fame. St. John's Episcopal Church is one of only eight churches in the country with a complete set of Tiffany stained glass windows.

Louis Comfort Tiffany: An Artist Who Changed Mediums

Louis Comfort Tiffany was the son of the well-known jeweler Charles Lewis Tiffany. The younger Tiffany's passions were watercolor painting and stained glass. Ultimately he wanted to do his watercolors in a different medium so he started experimenting with creative techniques to produce his desired designs in windows.

To add an extra layer of artistic control, Tiffany experimented with ways to make glass to create visual effects. The clothing of many characters in Tiffany windows is created from the aptly named drapery glass. This illusion of flowing fabric in solid glass was created by having workers pull at the glass like taffy while it was still warm. Feather glass was created by raking a fork through cooling glass. Confetti glass was made by adding pieces of broken glass into hot glass.

Beyond creating new types of glass, Louis Comfort Tiffany also applied a unique technique for building stained glass windows: he layered the glass. Two to seven layers are piled on top of each other to create not only particular colors but also a 3D effect in each window. Because of the layering, the windows are best viewed from inside the church.

Thirty Tiffany Stained Glass Windows in All

Tiffany Studios guaranteed an original work of art in each window and St. John's Episcopal Church in Franklin is home to 30. First there are the triptychs; sets of three windows side by side that compose a larger scene. Eight triptychs line the sanctuary walls depicting scenes from the Bible and saints. Above the altar are five more windows: the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and the risen Christ. Opposite the altar, at the back of the sanctuary, is the great rose window. This attention grabbing centerpiece contains 3,912 pieces of glass and is the third largest ever made by Tiffany Studios. Louis Comfort Tiffany made an early 1900s selfie in the great rose window when he included an image of himself as a cherub.

Tiffany Stained Glass Windows Completed Between 1902-1917

The windows were built at Tiffany Studios in Long Island, New York and shipped to Franklin to be installed. Each window was completed between 1902 and 1917. A six year restoration process to restore the original brilliance of the windows was completed in 2002.

Take a Tour

Located less than two hours from both Erie and Pittsburgh and about 20 minutes from Interstate 80, Franklin is a historic and charming stop on a trip through western Pennsylvania. St. John's Episcopal Church is open for self-guided Tiffany Window Tours Tuesday through Friday, 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Guided tours are available for a small charge. To arrange for a guided tour, please call the church office. Proceeds from the guided tours are used to maintain the windows. Any tips from the self-guided tours or proceeds from the sale of window related merchandise is used by St. John's for programs such as Shepherd's Green Community Food Pantry.

For More:

- St. John's Episcopal Church, 1145 Buffalo St, Franklin, Pennsylvania 16323, <http://www.stjohnsfranklin.org/>
- More information about [Tiffany Studios](#)
- Visit Pennsylvania, <https://visitpa.com/>
- On our site: [Eclectic Museum in the Columbia Gorge](#)
- On our site: [San Diego's Spreckels Organ: A Time-Honored Tradition](#)

- All photos by Valerie D. Perry.