

Christ the Consoler Stained-Glass Window

An Invitation to Discern How to Contextualize an Historic Artifact

The Racial Justice Ministry Committee is in a process of discovery about the artifacts housed on our campus and whether they align with our anti-racist values. We invite you to reflect on some of the facts related to our stained-glass windows.

A Gothic Revival Church

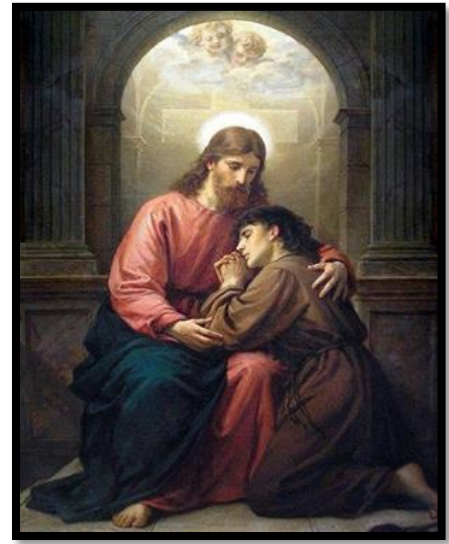
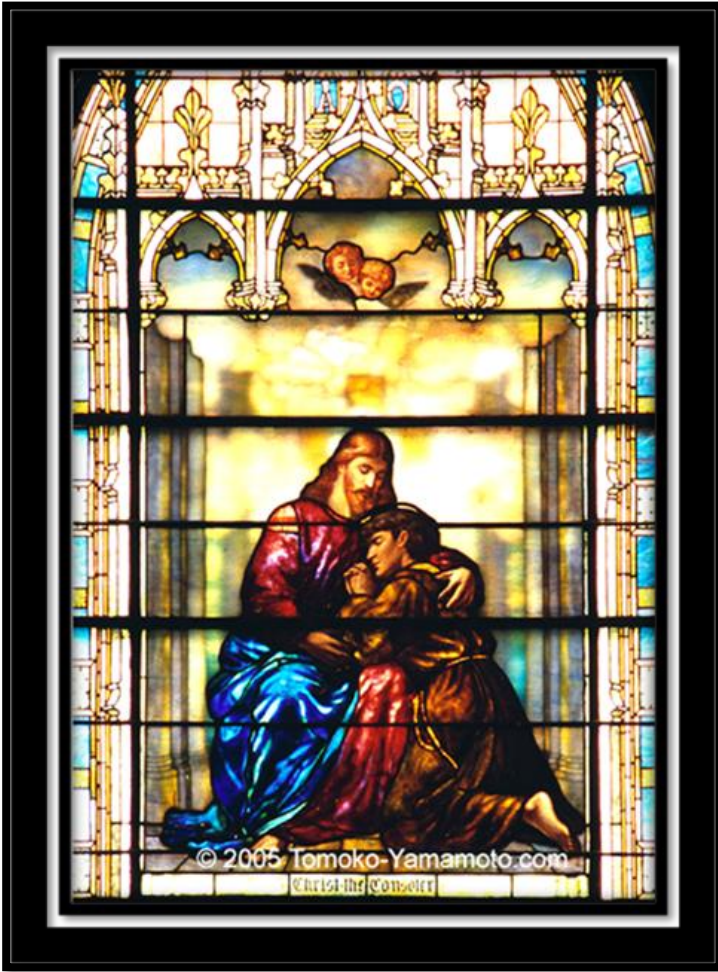
- The gothic cathedrals of 12th century medieval Europe housed the first ecclesiastical stained-glass windows with stories of the Bible illustrated with people of European heritage.
- Reformed leaders of the 16th century such as, Calvin, opposed imagery in churches, regarding them as idolatrous, including stained-glass.
- American churches had no figural stained-glass in the colonial period and for most of the 1st century of our nation.
- 1843 – date of the first-known American-made figural stained-glass window, the Nativity for Christ Church at Pelham, New York. The trend grew.
- Govane Chapel (without the bell tower or chancel and with a steeple) was built in the American Gothic Revival style (1844) designed by notable Baltimore architect R. Cary Long, Jr.
- R.C. Long, Jr. (1810-1849) is noted for establishing the gothic taste for churches in Baltimore, lasting a generation.
- The original Govane chapel had no figural stained glass for its first 60 years.
- 1905 Govans church expanded– the current bell tower, chancel and transepts were designed by noted architect Bayard Turnbull. Christ the Consoler window presumed to be installed at this time.
- 1906—Round window dedicated in south transept.
- 1908— one Tiffany window dedicated at Govans.
- Brown Memorial Park Avenue-- eleven Tiffany windows installed 1905-1910.
- Other windows at Govans presumed around the same time (1905-1910) consistent with trends. Baltimore and other cities.

The White Jesus

- The image of a light-skinned European Christ influenced other parts of the world through colonization.
- This portrayal of Jesus has come under renewed scrutiny during this period of introspection over the legacy of racism.
- Govans' Christ the Consoler is a reproduction of a painting by German artist Bernhard Plockhorst. Others of his European images of Christ can be found in many American homes and churches.

The Turnbells & Christ the Consoler Window

- Inscription on window: "In loving memory of Anna Graeme Turnbull 1811-1866".
- Anna Turnbull was the wife of Henry C. Turnbull--major benefactors of the original Govane Chapel—providing funds each individually.
- Their children Lawrence and Ellen financed expansion of the church in their parents' honor posthumously around 1905.
- Anna's great-great-grandfather, Dr. Thomas Graeme, Scottish immigrant, owned a colonial plantation north of Philadelphia, now Graeme Park, and likely owned 2-3 enslaved families.
- Anna inherited great wealth from her father, Sam Ferguson Smith, successful in the banking & insurance industries in 19th century Philadelphia.
- Banking and insurance of the antebellum period made wealth in a large part because of the slave economy of the United States.
- Anna's father financed the purchase of Anna and Henry's 165-acre estate, Auburn, located at present-day Towson University.
- Southern sympathizers, Anna and her husband owned two enslaved young women.
- Her first-born son was a Confederate soldier.
- Anna died 1866. In 1878 her husband Henry left Govans to join the Southern Presbyterian Church of Mount Washington.



Bernhard Plockhorst (March 2, 1825 – May 18, 1907) a German painter and graphic artist popular in the United States. Others of his images of Christ can be found in many American homes and churches.



Ribbon Inscription: Come unto me all who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.



Windows, Govane Chapel c. 1905



In remembrance of John Lisle Turnbull 1846 - 1880