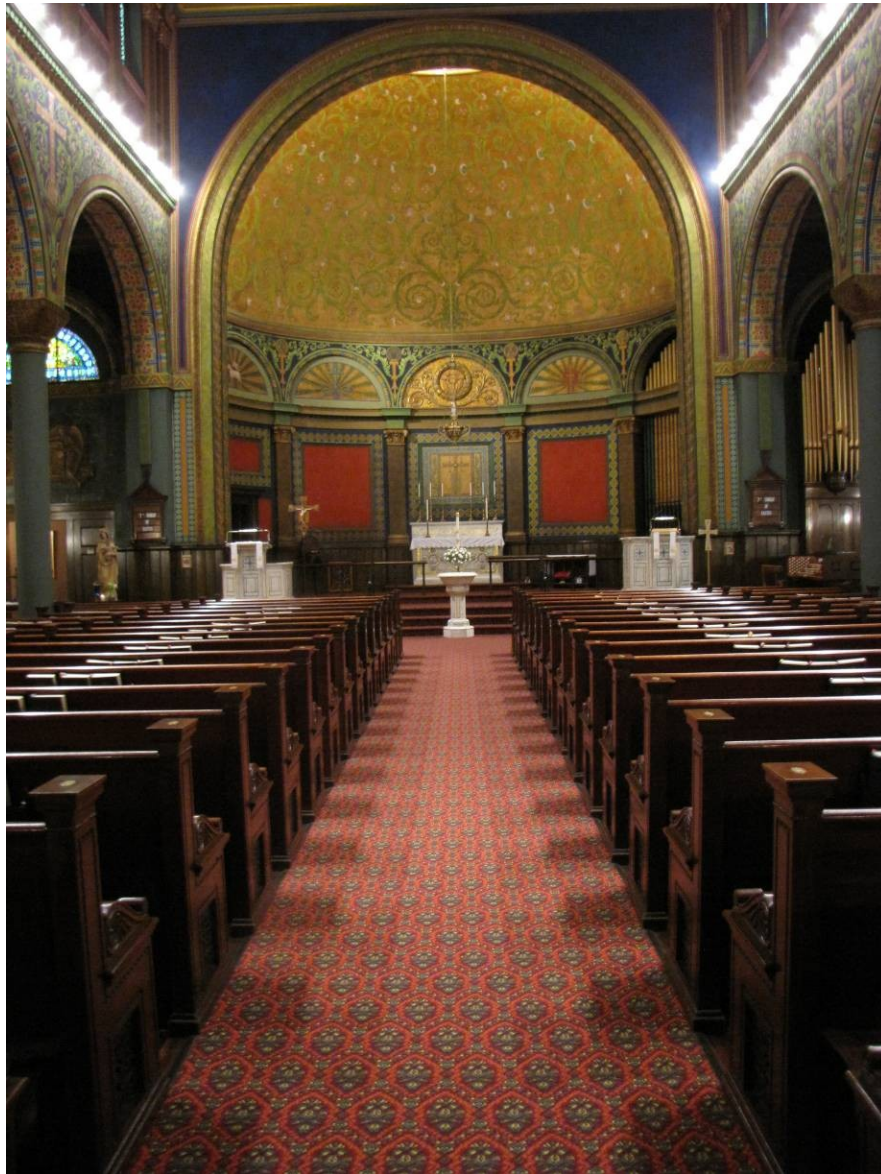


**The Commission for Historical and  
Architectural Preservation**

**Public Interior Landmark Designation Staff Report  
July 10, 2012**



**St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

1920 Saint Paul Street  
Baltimore, Maryland



## Summary

While several churches and residences in Baltimore have Tiffany stained-glass windows, St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church is the only building with a Tiffany interior. Louis Comfort Tiffany was one of America's most famous interior designers and artists of the late 19th - early 20th century. Today, he is best known for his stained-glass. Built in 1898, St. Mark's is one of only a few intact Tiffany-designed interiors left in the world. The Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company designed and produced the ornately decorated walls, mosaics, stained-glass windows, and lamps in the church.

## Property History

St. Mark's Evangelical English Lutheran Church was founded in 1860, and was originally located on Eutaw Street between Saratoga and Mulberry Streets until 1898, when this Italian Romanesque church at the corner of St. Paul and 20th Streets was constructed. The church was designed by seminal Baltimore architect Joseph Evans Sperry. St Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church is a Baltimore City Landmark and contributes to the Old Goucher College National Register Historic District.

The Byzantine interior of St. Mark's was decorated by the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company of New York City under the direction of René T. de Quelin, head designer and manager of the decorating department. The work was supervised by F.W. Kouzelmann.<sup>1</sup> The company was led by Louis Comfort Tiffany, one of the premier artists and designers in America in the late 19th - early 20th century.

The Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company designed and executed every aspect of the interior decoration, including the ornate paint scheme, windows, mosaics, and light fixtures. St. Mark's is the only existing building in Baltimore with a Tiffany interior. Other buildings in Baltimore have Tiffany windows, including several churches and former residences, and the Baltimore Museum of Art.<sup>2</sup> The oral history for St. Mark's Church states that the interior was paid for by the Newcomer family. Mr. Waldo Newcomer was an important Baltimore businessman, philanthropist, and member of St. Mark's.<sup>3</sup> The *Sun* called the rich interior of St. Mark's "different from ordinary" when it was nearly complete in 1898, and described it in detail:

“The Byzantine lines have been followed in the decorations, the general coloring being of rich greens, gold, deep purple and blue in perfect harmony. The shafts of the columns of the nave are in green, the capitals in gold and the spandrels [sic] of the arches above the capitals are in green, greenish blues, rich yellows and reds, ornamented with Byzantine scrolls carrying a jeweled cross, resting upon a globe, and the whole surrounded by ornamental borders. The underside of the arches and side walls

correspond to the line of the arch and are finished in a deep and peculiar red.”<sup>4</sup>

This opulent decorative scheme was quite unusual for a Lutheran church. Rev. Dale Dusman, pastor for St. Mark’s, explains that "It's a passionate room, and Lutherans are not known for passion," but that the congregation at the time that the church was built was comprised of “worldly, well-traveled, and sophisticated people, and they wanted something grand to worship in.”<sup>5</sup> The interior is still intact and well-maintained today.

## **Contextual History**

The Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company was founded and led by Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933), one of the premier artists and designers in America in the late 19th - early 20th century and a leader in the Aesthetic art movement. He was born into a life of wealth and privilege as the son of Charles L. Tiffany, the head of world-famous firm Tiffany & Company, best known for its jewelry. Louis C. Tiffany was originally a painter, but his career as a “tastemaker” began in 1878 when he started designing interiors. A year later, he established the interior design firm Louis C. Tiffany and Associated Artists with Samuel Colman, Lockwood de Forest, and Candace Wheeler.<sup>6</sup> Within four years, the firm was celebrated as one of the best in the business.<sup>7</sup> In this early period, Tiffany was commissioned to decorate the private homes of America’s wealthy elite, such as Cornelius Vanderbilt, George Kemp, President Chester Arthur, and the descendants of John Work Garrett in Baltimore.<sup>8</sup> The book *Artistic Houses*, published in 1883-1884, featured the interior decoration of fourteen homes of America’s elite, eight of which were designed by Tiffany. In a few short years, he had become one of the most influential “celebrity designers” of the industrial age in America.<sup>9</sup>

Tiffany was greatly influenced by the Arts & Crafts Movement. His company began producing the materials that he used in his interiors, such as enamels, pottery, textiles, and metalwork.<sup>10</sup> Tiffany became particularly interested in glass, and founded the Tiffany Glass Company in 1885, later changing the name to Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company in 1892. In 1902, following the death of his father, Louis Comfort Tiffany merged Tiffany & Co. and Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company into Tiffany Studios.<sup>11</sup> Today, Tiffany’s glass is his most recognized and celebrated medium.

Tiffany’s interior commissions ranged from residences to theaters, museums, clubs, and religious buildings. However, very few of the vast number of interior commissions were for every aspect of an interior, like that of St. Mark’s. The majority of the commissions were for specific pieces of interior decoration, such as the Tiffany windows at the Garrett-Jacobs House and Brown Memorial Chapel, or chandeliers and favrile glass sconces for Evergreen House.<sup>12</sup>

The primary source of Tiffany’s interior commissions was religious buildings. The economic prosperity of the late 19th-century industrial era led to a boom in church construction, with 4,000 churches under construction by 1888.<sup>13</sup> In 1889, Tiffany opened

an Ecclesiastical Department in order to create “all forms of church decoration and instrumenta ecclesiastica,” meeting this great demand for ecclesiastical art.<sup>14</sup> Advertisement booklets produced by the Ecclesiastical Department exhibited examples of their wares: stained glass windows and mosaics, indoor and outdoor memorials, and church furnishings which included frescos, mosaics, altars, lighting fixtures, sacred vessels, and altar furnishings.<sup>15</sup> Churches and synagogues across the US had items from Tiffany Studios in their houses of worship.

The single best advertisement for Tiffany’s work was his exhibition of a chapel at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The Byzantine-inspired chapel was lavishly decorated with marble and glass mosaics, stained glass windows, plaster encrusted with glass jewels, and church furnishings. This chapel was an incredible display of Tiffany’s artistic skills and vision, and was reportedly viewed by 1.4 million people at the Exposition, and brought Tiffany international acclaim.<sup>16</sup> It was later purchased and installed in the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in New York City and eventually moved to Tiffany’s estate on Long Island, Laurelton Hall, which was destroyed by fire. Today, remaining pieces of the chapel are located at the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art in Winter Park, Florida.<sup>17</sup>

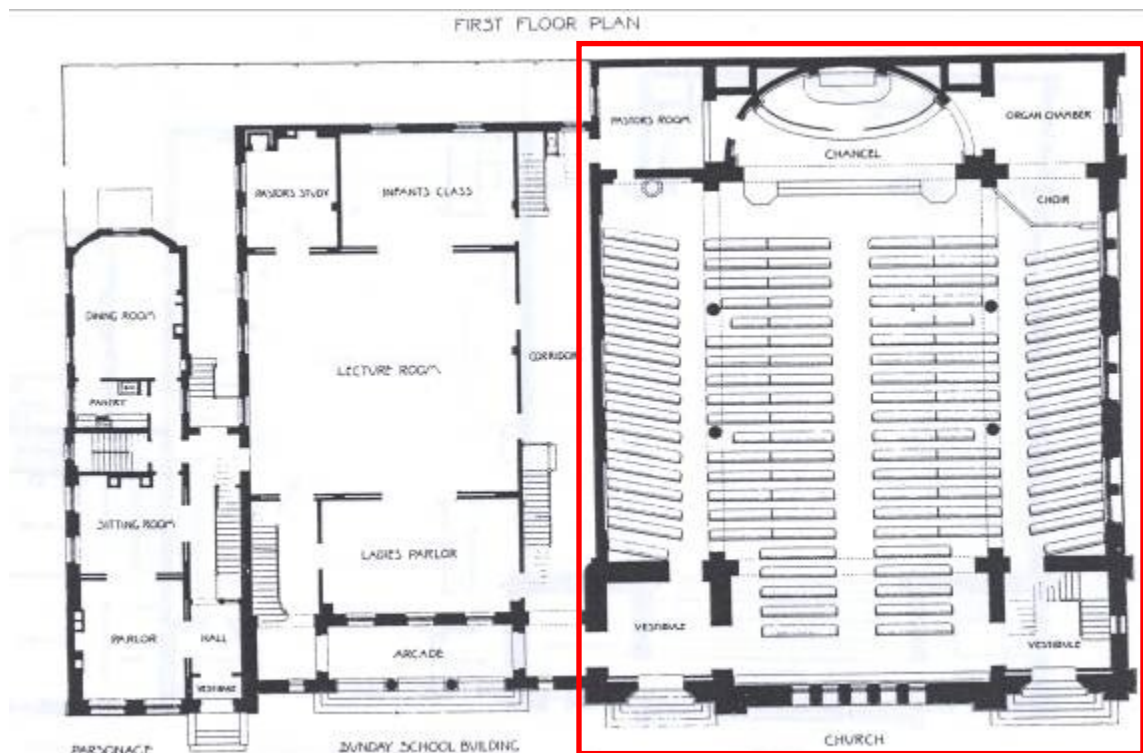
Tiffany was best known for his stained glass windows, which he called favrile. While some was installed in private homes, the majority of his stained glass work was ecclesiastical. It was popular activity among the wealthy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to memorialize loved ones with a large dedicated stained-glass window in a house of worship. These windows typically depicted scenes from the Old and New Testaments, and were manufactured until Tiffany Studios closed in 1933.<sup>18</sup>

René Theophile de Quelin designed the interior of St. Mark’s for the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company.<sup>19</sup> Originally from Brittany, France, de Quelin was an artist specializing in stained glass. He worked for Tiffany from 1895 to 1922, and for ten years was the head designer and manager of the decorating department.<sup>20</sup>

There are very few surviving Tiffany interiors, since the majority of them have been destroyed by fire, the wrecking ball, or changing tastes.<sup>21</sup> The surviving interiors include the residential interiors of the Mark Twain Home in Hartford, Connecticut, the Frederick Ayer Mansion in Boston, Massachusetts, and the Pierre P. Ferry House in Seattle, Washington.<sup>22</sup> The Seventh Regimental Armory in New York City also boasts an intact Tiffany interior.<sup>23</sup> Religious structures with intact interiors designed by Tiffany include the Willard Memorial Chapel – Welch Memorial Hall in Auburn, New York, St. Paul’s Church in Troy, New York, Central Congregational Church in Boston, Massachusetts, Wade Memorial Chapel in Cleveland, Ohio, and Reid Memorial Church in Richmond, Indiana.<sup>24</sup> There are other churches that originally had Tiffany-designed interiors, but have lost their integrity. All of the buildings listed above are National Historic Landmarks, with the exception of the Pierre P. Ferry House, St. Paul’s Church, Wade Memorial Chapel, and Reid Memorial Church.

## Architectural Description

The church's architecture is based on early Christian churches that were designed like a Roman basilica, or court house. It is simple in plan, composed of a rectangular nave with an aisle on each side, and is oriented with the altar facing west. The altar is on a bema (or raised platform), surrounded by a semi-circular apse, the ceiling of which forms a semi-dome. A narthex is located at the opposite end of the nave. Above the clerestory windows, the ceiling of the nave is flat.<sup>25</sup> The church is attached to the rest of the church building (which includes the Sunday School and the former parsonage) on its south wall. The entrance vestibule is located in the south aisle, and is accessible from St. Paul Street. The north vestibule is infrequently used. The boundaries of this Public Interior Landmark Designation include only the church, outlined in red in the floorplan of the building below.



The portion of the St. Mark's Lutheran Church complex included in this public interior designation is the Church, outlined in red.

The architectural simplicity of the church is in contrast to the richness of its decoration. The walls are decorated in rich hues of blue, green, red, orange, and gold. The undersides of the arches and the edges of the walls and ceilings are decorated in vibrant geometric designs. The spandrels feature golden crosses on spheres and an ornate vine pattern. The flat ceiling is highly decorated with intricate circular patterns and crosses on a blue background, and the beams painted with green crosses and other patterns. The dome of the apse is painted with a vine on a gold background. The richly painted lunettes and spandrels of the apse feature Christian symbols. In the lunette above the altar is a mosaic and bas relief of the Holy Trinity. The reredos, or glass mosaic panel above the altar,

depicts a Latin cross studded with large uncut opals, with the Greek letters “Alpha” and “Omega” suspended from it. The symbols used throughout the church are very meaningful in the Christian tradition, representing growth and vitality, faith, hope, strength, victory, charity, and more. Even the number of columns in the church is symbolic, representing the four Evangelicals. The Circular window surrounded by twelve smaller windows represents Christ surrounded by his disciples.<sup>26</sup>

Every window in the church is stained glass, and all but one was designed by Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company. Tiffany advertised the Memorial Windows that it had produced for St. Mark’s in Baltimore, as well as those in St. James’ Lutheran Church in New York in the November and December 1899 editions of the *Lutheran League Review*.<sup>27</sup> There are three large memorial windows in the north aisle, one of which was designed by former Tiffany artist, Joseph Lauber. There is also a large circular window above the narthex, the stained glass windows in the lower level of the narthex, those in the upper level of the nave, the lunette window in the south aisle above the sacristy, and the circular window above the main entrance to the church in the entrance hall.

Other interior features included in the designation are the mosaic floor in the entrance hall and the hanging and wall lamps in the church, all of which were designed by Tiffany. Originally, the church was wired for both gas and electric lights.<sup>28</sup> Most of the organ pipes in the apse and the north aisle are also original to the building.

Although the interior of St. Mark’s was designed by the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, not every object in the church was made by Tiffany. The altar, pulpit, lectern, and baptismal font, made of rubio marble and inlaid with mother of pearl, were produced by J. & R. Lamb Company in New York City. They are original to the church and are presumed to be original to the design as well. They were given by members of the church as memorials to pastors and members.<sup>29</sup> The Bronze Plaque over the sacristy door was designed by famed Baltimore-based German-American artist Hans Schuler and mounted in the church in 1919 in memory of Rev. Dr. Charles S. Albert.<sup>30</sup> The Medallion Window, a memorial window, was designed in 1917 by Joseph Lauber, a Baltimore-based glass artist who had worked for John La Farge and Louis Comfort Tiffany, and served from 1912-1916 as the assistant director and an instructor at the Maryland Institute College of Art.<sup>31</sup>

There have been a few alterations to the interior of the church since it was originally designed by Tiffany. The majority of the alterations were actually done by Tiffany Studios, including the addition of the mosaic reredos in the 1920s, and two stained glass windows, added in 1917 and 1932. These were all given to the church as memorials. The mosaic reredos is a memorial to Margaret Vanderpoel Newcomer, the wife of Waldo Newcomer.<sup>32</sup> Other alterations include a change in the paint color on the walls in the aisles of the church. Some of the wall panels are an orangey-gold color, but were originally red.<sup>33</sup> It is unclear when these were repainted, but given how closely they match the rest of the color scheme and the fact that Tiffany had commissions for St. Mark’s over a span of thirty-four years, it is likely that Tiffany Studios executed this change. New lights have also been discreetly added to the interior in the nave below the

clerestory, and inside the arched surround of the nave. These alterations and additions to the church have not diminished its integrity.

Interior furnishings and objects not covered in this designation are the church furnishings: the altar, pulpit, lectern, baptismal font, the pews, the bronze plaque by Hans Schuler, the organ, and the organ pipes at the rear of the nave. The altar, pulpit, lectern, baptismal font and pews are original to the church but are not included in this designation so that they can be removed in the future, should the church be sold.<sup>34</sup> The bronze plaque by Hans Schuler is also not included in the designation. The carpet is a reproduction of the original, made in 2007.<sup>35</sup> The organ was purchased by the congregation in 2005.<sup>36</sup> The organ pipes at the rear of the nave located under the circular window were installed in 1960, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the church's founding.<sup>37</sup>

This is a full list of the interior features included in this designation:

Volume of the space

Stained glass windows:

Circular window – 1898, Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company

Lunette window – 1898, Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company

Stained glass windows in narthex and clerestory – 1898, Tiffany Glass and  
Decorating Company

Good Shepherd window – 1917, Tiffany Studios

Medallion window – 1917, Joseph Lauber

Resurrection window – 1932, Tiffany Studios

Apse, walls, columns, ceilings, and all other painted surfaces – 1898, Tiffany Glass and  
Decorating Co.

Mosaic reredo (panel above altar) – c. 1920, Tiffany Studios

Mosaic floor in entrance hall – 1898, Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company

Organ pipes in apse and right aisle – 1898, unknown

Hanging and wall lamps – 1898, Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company

### **Staff Recommendation**

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church qualifies for public interior landmark designation meeting the following standards:

B. A Baltimore City Landmark may be a site, structure, landscape, building (or portion thereof), place, work of art, or other object which:

1. is associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of Baltimore history
3. embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction



While several churches and residences in Baltimore have Tiffany stained-glass windows, St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church is the only building with a Tiffany interior. Louis Comfort Tiffany was one of America's most famous interior designers and artists of the late 19th - early 20th century. Today, he is best known for his stained-glass. Built in 1898, St. Mark's is one of only a few intact Tiffany-designed interiors left in the world. The Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company designed and produced the ornately decorated walls, mosaics, stained-glass windows, and lamps in the church.

## Locator Map



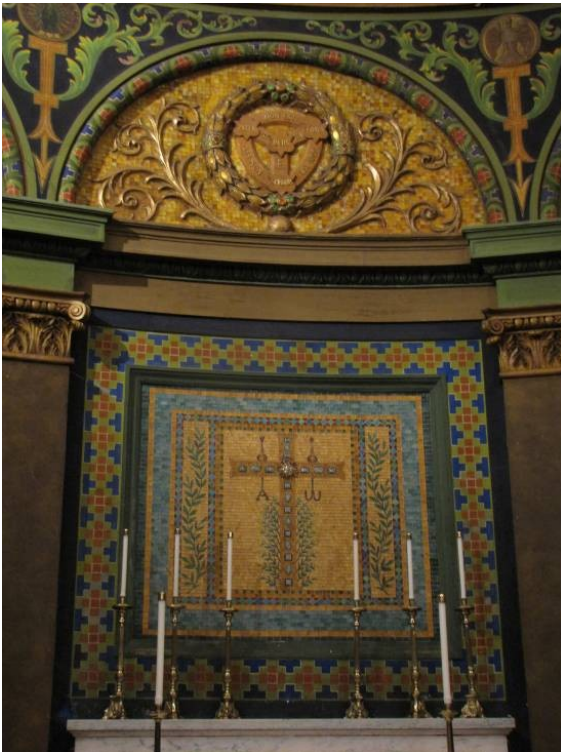
## Current Photos



The altar and apse.



Detailed view of altar.



The mosaic reredos and lunette above the altar.



A Tiffany wall lamp.





The nave.



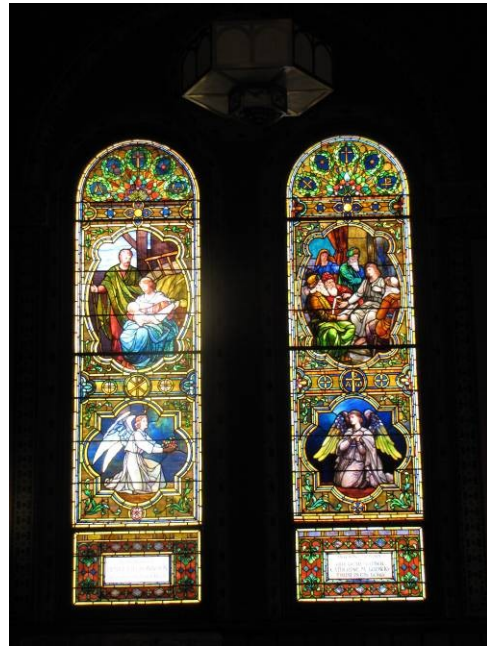
The rear of the nave, with the Circular window.



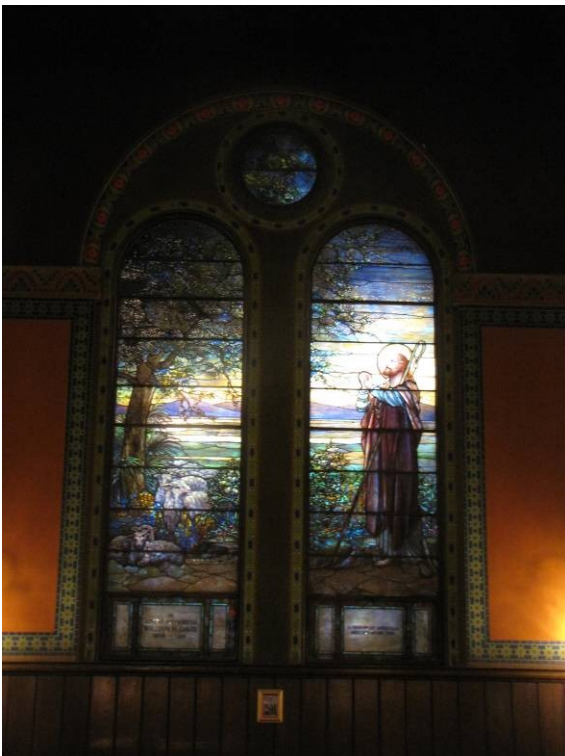
The altar designed by J. & R. Lamb Co., along with the lectern, pulpit, and baptismal font.



Three stained glass Memorial Windows in north aisle.



Medallion Window, Joseph Lauber, 1917.



The Good Shepherd Window, 1917.

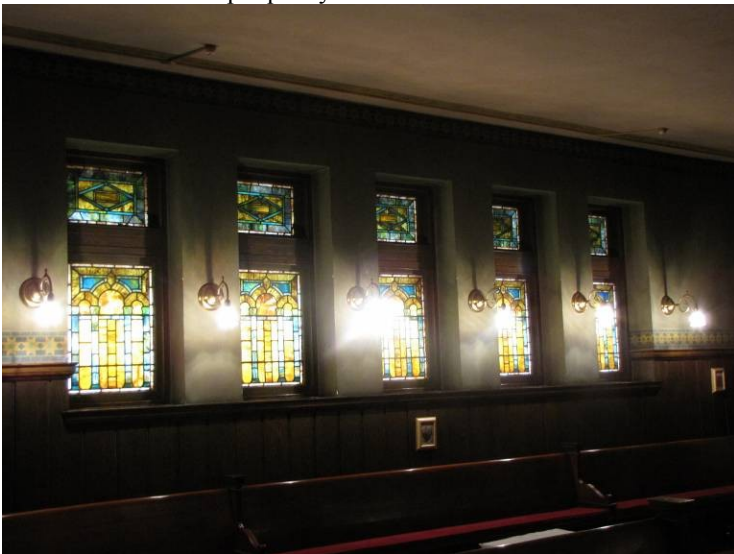


The Resurrection Window, 1932.

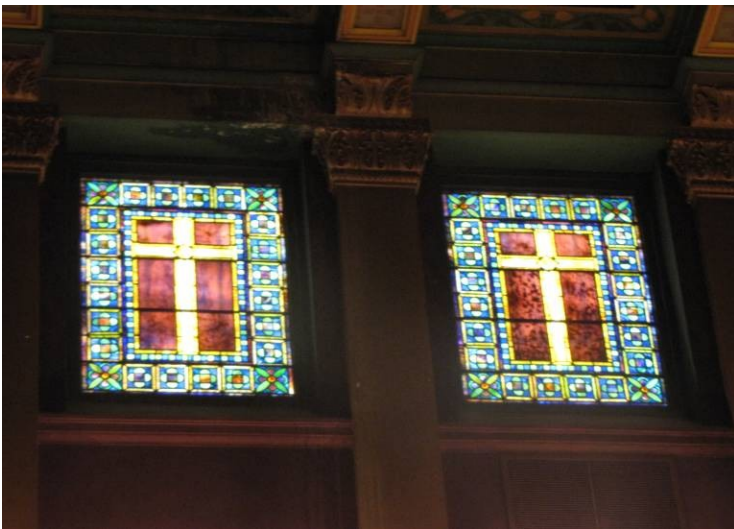




Lunette window and plaque by Hans Schuler.



Narthex windows.



Clerestory windows.

- <sup>1</sup> Norman B. Miller and Angeline R. Hoen, *A Century of Christian Service 1860-1960: The One Hundredth Anniversary of St. Mark's Lutheran Church* (Baltimore: St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1960), p. 19; Robert Koch, *Louis C. Tiffany: Rebel in Glass* (New York: Crown Publishers Inc., Third ed. 1982), p. 135-136; "New St. Mark's Church: Handsome Edifice Of The Lutheran Congregation To Be Dedicated" *The Sun* (1837-1986); Oct 10, 1898; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1986), pg. 7.
- <sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Himes "Houses of Pane: Where to Find Baltimore's Tiffany Windows" *City Paper*, 8/25/1999, <http://www2.citypaper.com/printStory.asp?id=4009>
- <sup>3</sup> Reverend Dale Dusman, personal communication, May 23, 2012; "Newcomes Dies in Honolulu on Vacation: Baltimore Banker And Philanthropist Stricken" *The Sun* (1837-1986); Jul 30, 1934; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1986), pg. 14.
- <sup>4</sup> "New St. Mark's Church: Handsome Edifice Of The Lutheran Congregation To Be Dedicated"
- <sup>5</sup> Patrick Ercolano "Church Beauty to be on View: Walking Tour to Cover 4 Midtown Landmarks" *Baltimore Sun*, May 9, 1991, [http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1991-05-09/news/1991129129\\_1\\_dusman-mark-and-st-pastor-of-st](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1991-05-09/news/1991129129_1_dusman-mark-and-st-pastor-of-st)
- <sup>6</sup> Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, "Louis Comfort Tiffany at the Metropolitan Museum," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 56, No. 1 ( Summer 1998), p.31
- <sup>7</sup> Nina Gray "Tiffany's Contemporaries: The Evolution of the American Interior Decorator" In *Louis Comfort Tiffany: Artist for the Ages*, Marilynn A. Johnson, ed. (London: Scala Publishers, 2005), pp. 60-97; p.60.
- <sup>8</sup> Frelinghuysen, p. 10; Marilynn A. Johnson "Louis Comfort Tiffany: A Nineteenth-Century Artist" In *Louis Comfort Tiffany: Artist for the Ages*, Marilynn A. Johnson, ed. (London: Scala Publishers, 2005); pp.18-59, p. 37.
- <sup>9</sup> Alastair Duncan, Martin Eidelberg and Neil Harris. *Masterworks of Louis Comfort Tiffany*. (New York: Abrams) 1989, p.18.
- <sup>10</sup> Gray, p.60.
- <sup>11</sup> Johnson, p. 37, 40, 49.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38-40, Geoffrey Himes "Tiffany Treasures: Baltimore's Stained-Glass Palaces Are a Well-Kept Secret" *City Paper*, 8/25/1999, <http://www2.citypaper.com/arts/story.asp?id=4008>.
- <sup>13</sup> Frelinghuysen, p.22.
- <sup>14</sup> "A Church Record: Photographs from the Tiffany Studios Ecclesiastical Department Object Guide" The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, 2001. Accessible at: <http://www.morsemuseum.org/on-exhibit/a-church-record-photographs-from-the-tiffany-studios>
- <sup>15</sup> *Tributes to Honor: Suggested Types of Memorials by the Ecclesiastical Department of Tiffany Studios* (New York: The Firm, ca. 1918), p.22. Accessible at <http://archive.org/details/tributestohonors00tiff>
- <sup>16</sup> Frelinghuysen, p.26; Johnson, p. 41.
- <sup>17</sup> "Tiffany Chapel", The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, 2011 <http://www.morsemuseum.org/louis-comfort-tiffany/tiffany-chapel>.
- <sup>18</sup> Frelinghuysen, p.29-31.
- <sup>19</sup> Miller and Hoen, p. 19.
- <sup>20</sup> "Library, Congregational House, Boston, Mass." *Boston Athenaeum Digital Collections*, <http://cdm15482.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15482coll8/id/157/rec/47>; "William S. Bernard: Former Business Manager of Wil- mington (N. c.) Newspaper Dearf.", *New York Times* (1923-Current file); Mar 23, 1932; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2008), pg. 21; Frelinghuysen, p.29-31.
- <sup>21</sup> Johnson, 55.
- <sup>22</sup> "Twain, Mark, Home", National Historic Landmark Program, National Park Service, <http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceId=671&ResourceType=Building>, "Frederick Ayer Mansion" National Historic Landmark Nomination, National Park Service, 2005, <http://www.nps.gov/nhl/designations/samples/ma/Frederick%20Ayer%20Mansion.pdf>; "Pierre P. Ferry House" National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1979, <http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NRHP/Text/79002537.pdf>
- <sup>23</sup> Frelinghuysen, p.10-11; "Seventh Regiment Armory" National Historic Landmarks Program, National Park Service, <http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceId=1551&ResourceType=Building>
- <sup>24</sup> "Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall" National Historic Landmark Nomination, National Park Service, 2005. <http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NHLS/Text/89000461.pdf>; "St. Paul's Episcopal

- 
- Church Complex”, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1979, [http://www.oprhp.state.ny.us/hpimaging/hp\\_view.asp?GroupView=7655](http://www.oprhp.state.ny.us/hpimaging/hp_view.asp?GroupView=7655), “Central Congregational Church”, National Historic Landmark Nomination, National Park Service, 2011, <http://www.nps.gov/nhl/Fall11Noms/CentralCongregational.pdf>; “Wade Memorial Chapel” *The Lake View Cemetery*, 2011, <http://www.lakeviewcemetery.com/wadechapel.php>; John A. Offord “True Expression of Industrial Art” *The New York Observer*, January 20, 1910, p.89-90. In *The New York Observer* Volume 88, 1910. Available as a Google E-book.
- <sup>25</sup> Miller and Hoen, p.18.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.19-21.
- <sup>27</sup> *Luther League Review*, Volume 12, No. 12 (December, 1899), p. 33. Available as a Google E-book.
- <sup>28</sup> Reverend Dale Dusman, personal communication, May 23, 2012.
- <sup>29</sup> Miller and Hoen, p. 21.
- <sup>30</sup> “A Brief History of St. Mark’s Lutheran Church” St. Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2012. <http://www.stmarkscelebrates.org/history.htm>
- <sup>31</sup> Frelinghuysen, p.31; “Baltimore Artist Praised”, *The Sun (1837-1986)*; Jun 19, 1916; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1986), pg. 14; “Art Designs on View”, *The Sun (1837-1986)*; Mar 18, 1917; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1986), pg. 6
- <sup>32</sup> Miller and Hoen, p.21; “Mrs. Waldo Newcomer”, *The Sun (1837-1986)*; Jun 13, 1920; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1986), pg. CA14.
- <sup>33</sup> Reverend Dale Dusman, personal communication, May 23, 2012.
- <sup>34</sup> Reverend Dale Dusman, personal communication, May 23, 2012.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> “St. Mark’s Virtual Tour” St. Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2012. <http://www.stmarkscelebrates.org/tour1.htm>
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*