

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF LANSDOWNE BUILDING HISTORY, SYMBOLISM, AND WINDOWS

The first church building was erected in 1887 (located in the section where Westminster Hall (Rm. 103) is now. To house a growing congregation, the new nave was built in 1915. The part of the Sunday School building west of where Westminster Hall is now located, was added in 1928. In 1949, the original church building was razed and church school rooms, offices, and Westminster Hall were built on its foundation. In 1987, to celebrate the church's centennial year, a new Casavant pipe organ was designed for, built, and installed in the sanctuary, in keeping with our church's historic emphasis on the importance of music and hymns in our worship. In building its new house of worship, the congregation thought it wise to select the historic type, cruciform in shape, with passage aisles. The style of architecture is early English Gothic. A characteristic feature of this style is the shield, and so the shield is liberally distributed throughout the building. It may be found on the doors, above the doorways, in the glass, and on the hammer beams. Even the copper water conductors outside carry a tiny shield. On the face of the fourteen hammer beams are painted shields bearing, as their subject, emblems of the Trinity and of the apostles. On the face of the tower is the clock, the dial plate of which is composed of letters instead of figures. The letters form the word "Presbyterian." Over the tower entrance is the Scripture text, "Exalt ye the Lord our God and worship at His footstool." Over the Greenwood Avenue door are the words of benediction which our Lord uttered three times after His resurrection, "Peace be unto you." There are stone carvings in the interior. Entering the Lansdowne Avenue Narthex, over the doorway to the left is seen a cross. The two Greek words on its face, Phos and Zoe, mean Light and Life. Roughly cut into the lintel beneath are the Latin words, Comus Dei, "House of God." On the nave's side of this doorway is a shield with an emblem depicting three fish in motion. They are shown enclosed in an unbroken circle of rope. This portrays the eternity of God. Among the early Christians, a fish was often used as a symbol of Christ. The Greek word for fish was Ichthus. Ichthus is an acronym for the Greek phrase, "Jesus Christ, of God the Son, Savior." Over the other Lansdowne Avenue Narthex doorway is the familiar monogram, "Alpha Omega." Beneath it are the Latin words, Porta Coeli, "Gate of Heaven." On the nave's side of this doorway is the shield that carries the seal of the Waldensian Church. It is a lighted candle that is shining in the midst of seven stars with the Latin words, Lux lucet in tenebris — "The Light shineth in darkness." Above the doorway to the left of the pulpit is a shield with an open Bible upon it. On the Bible is a torch, a sword, and a trumpet. To the right of the pulpit, above the door, is the seal of the Federation of all the Reformed Churches which hold the Presbyterian Faith. This shield shows a seven-branched lamp, and the Latin motto, Lampades Multae, Una Lux — "There are many lamps, but one light." Over the doorway to the Greenwood Avenue entrance is a ribbon of limestone with the words, "Alleluia! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." There is a kneeling angel with a trumpet to his mouth at either end of the ribbon. There are fourteen corbels. Cunningly concealed amidst the carvings of thirteen of them are found such representations as a lizard, bird, butterfly, snake, carpenter's square, bat, and fish. The corbels are carved with thistles, thistle leaves, and a St. Andrew's cross.

WINDOWS

Upon entering the Lansdowne Avenue Narthex, you will see twin windows (1). To the right is Christ with Latin words meaning, "Christ, the Way, the Truth, & the Light." To the left is also Christ with the Latin words for, "the King, the Light, the Law, & the Guide." The window in the west transept (2) is of St. Gabriel's blowing the trumpet for the resurrection. Going back in the nave is a window (3) which shows Jesus' raising the daughter of Jairus from death. Other windows depict (4) King David's friendships at various stages of his life — with Jonathan, Barzillai, and God. We see windows' depicting Jesus' life — (5) ordaining the twelve disciples, (6) His transfiguration when He meets with Moses and Elijah (Peter, James, and John are in the area at the bottom), (7) speaking with the woman at the Well of Sychar in Samaria, (8) being interviewed by Nicodemus, and (9) visiting Mary and Martha. Our two largest windows are the most outstanding. The Victory Window (10) was installed at a cost of \$5000 by the Decorative Glass Company of Philadelphia. It honors the seventy-six people from our congregation who served in the First World War. At the top of the window, at the base of the cross are four stars on the flag symbolic of the four who lost their lives. The story of the Christian soldier is told in six panels. Panel one, from Pilgrim's Progress, shows Christian's enlisting for war. Panel two shows his receiving spiritual armor from a monk. Panel three shows Joshua's being visited by the Angel of the Lord and realizing that ultimate leadership is from God Himself. Panel four shows the Hebrews' coming out of Egypt, locked in battle with the Amalekites, while Moses raises his arms in prayer. Israel prevails. Panel five shows a faithful Roman soldier whose body is found in Pompeii after the city's burial by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The final panel shows the reward that comes to those who fight well for the Christian faith. The Christ Window (11) in the west transept was dedicated on April 27, 1980, to the memory of a longtime member, William W. Macaleer. The window, in the Gothic idiom, leans heavily on reds and blues. Four petals of the quatrefoil at the top represent four major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Symbols are at the top of each lancet. The harp and trumpet (lancet one), and a smoking censer (lancet six), signify praise and prayer. The symbols at the top of the center four lancets represent the four Gospels. The winged man is Matthew, the lion represents Mark, the ox represents Luke, and John's symbol is the eagle. Going lower on the window, the first lancet contains the Nativity and below, Jesus as a boy. Lancet two shows John's baptizing Jesus and below, Jesus' beginning his ministry. In Lancet three, Jesus preaches the Sermon on the Mount and below, multiplies the fishes and bread. Lancet four shows the Last Supper and Judas' sneaking away, and below, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. Lancet five shows Jesus' crucifixion and below, Jesus' praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. The final lancet depicts the Easter story of the

resurrection and below, the angel's speaking to the women who had come to the tomb. The six small windows of the interior each have, as their central monogram, the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ. Each window bears a title of Christ, in Latin, taken from the New Testament. Each also shows a small symbol representing the title:

Titles	Symbols
(12) Verus Deus — True God	Alpha and Omega
(13) Panis Verus — True Bread	Stalks of Wheat
(14) Testis Verus — True Witness	Sprigs of Laurel
(15) Pastor Bonus — Good Shepherd	Shepherds' Crooks
(16) Lux Vera — True Light	Torches
Vitis Vera — True Vine	Grapes and Leaf

In the Noel Room, in the Southwest corner of the building, are additional glass windows. These windows, done in a more modern style, depicting God's descending hand, a sheep with a cross (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit's descending dove, were given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Douglas M. Krebs and C. Gordon Milbourne.