First Presbyterian Church

763 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge

Organized in 1827, First Presbyterian Church is approaching its bicentennial. It was the first Protestant church in Baton Rouge and dedicated its original building, just a few blocks from the present huge complex, in 1854.

Anticipating continued rapid growth, the church began purchasing the North Boulevard block in the 1920s and completed the process in 1976. In December 1926, in time for its centennial celebration, the congregation held a farewell service at the old church and moved into the English Gothic brick and white sandstone building where the parish worships now.

The spacious sanctuary is surrounded by soft-colored windows that continue to the balcony and culminate in lavishly decorated surrounds. Each holds three religious symbols. Behind the choir is a broad Ascension window that the Jacoby Stained Glass studio of St. Louis took two years to complete and that was described at the time as of the highest quality of modern stained glass.

In 1987 the church added a more intimate chapel, which is used for weddings and smaller events, in memory of Ted F. Dunham, Sr. With its abundant dark wood and its traditional stained glass themes, it has the feel of a chapel built long ago. The architect was the noted A. Hays Town of Baton Rouge. Almost a century old, the carved pews came from Minden. The Wicks organ first served the Louisiana College in Pineville and was modified by the Rivé Organ Company of New Orleans.

The chapel windows, by the J. Wippell studio of Exeter, England, portray well-known scenes from the life of Christ. While they are traditional in subject matter, the painting style is more contemporary, with angular features and limited shading.

Mr. Dunhams widow also had German amber glass installed in the corridor behind in the chapel in 1987. The creation of the courtyard/amphitheater in 2011, however, led to a desire to draw the attractive courtyard into the building. Stephen Wilsons abstract windows comply with church guidelines requiring each to include some of the original amber glass, have a clear center, incorporate traditional liturgical shapes, and use found objects. The final window, Marionette, with No Strings Attached, intentionally blocks the view.

*Visited May 18, 2019*

**Sanctuary Windows, First Presbyterian Church**

Choir Loft

Crown & Cross

Alpha Omega

Three Apostles Ascension St. John and Mary

Balcony

Collection box (?), Harp, Well Loaves & fish, Crutches, Boat on a stormy sea

Tempus fugit, Anchor, Bible Scales, Sword, Paschal lamb

Scallop shell, Stream, Holy Spirit Bag of coins, Broken vase, Rooster

2 ships, Shepherd crooks, Star & manger Cat o nine tails, Crown of thorns, Cross

Noahs ark, Chariot of fire, Torah Alpha, Omega, crown

Altar

**Windows of Dunham Chapel**

Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ John, the beloved disciple

Organ

Jesus knocking at the door Jesus walking on water

Boy with two loaves and five fish

Holy Family

Jesus carrying the cross Flight into Egypt

Jesus riding into Jerusalem Woman at the well gives water to Jesus

The Good Shepherd Let the children come unto me. \*

Above the door

Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane

\* The two children are the granddaughters of Mr. & Mrs. Dunham.

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