First United Methodist Church

930 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge

The first Methodist preacher in Baton Rouge was probably an itinerant minister whose inaugural service there took place in 1810. Twenty-five years later the church appointed a permanent minister, and in 1836 a dedicated worship building was erected. Seating 450, it was the largest church in Baton Rouge.

Despite renovations in 1860, the building was dilapidated by 1905. In response to the rapid increase in membership (from 300 in 1905 to 1,800 in 1930), the congregation purchased a new lot in 1922 and laid the cornerstone in April 1925. What a ceremony that was! The LSU band and Tigerette Quartet enlivened the festivities.

The stained glass windows, illustrating familiar scenes from the New Testament, all date to the construction. The Kansas City [Missouri] Stained Glass Company executed the designs by A. A. Leyendecker, an artist of Bavarian heritage. Especially striking is the large portrayal of The Last Supper, a copy of the painting by Leonardo da Vinci, in the balcony.

Many characteristics of Tiffany-era glass can be enjoyed here. For example, the only painting is on the faces, hands, and feet. All other shading is achieved through the variegated shading within the opalescent glass, and the drapery-like rippled glass tempts the viewer to reach out and touch. The generous use of opalescent glass in pale lavender, aqua, and pearl-like colors creates a warm and calming atmosphere to welcome all who come to visit or worship in this church.

 **Windows**

 Altar

Jesus with Little Children Mary and Martha

Jesus in the Temple Healing the Blind Man (?)

Nativity Jesus Preaching

 Balcony

 The Last Supper

The windows in the Tudor Gothic Aldrich Chapel were installed as a set in 1953, about a year after the chapel dedication. Each features a religious symbol surrounded by decorative elements that complement those in the small windows in the main sanctuary.

Both the chapel and the sanctuary include lovely examples of parishioners needlepoint skills, many portraying Louisiana flora and fauna.

Hiding in the library are stained glass depictions of the well-known Psalms 23, 19, 1, and 121. St. Francisville artist Marjorie Blake incorporated strong colors and flowing, dramatic lines to convey the Psalms powerful messages. The back-lit windows date to the mid-1990s.

First United Methodist Church has stained glass even for the young members of the congregation. Note the Noahs Ark decorating the wall of the Childrens Room.

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