Immanuel Evangelical Church

138 North Broad Street

This handsome church stands as evidence of a former German neighborhood in Mid-City. Only five blocks away, the Deutsches Haus provided a less serious meeting place. This was a working class neighborhood, and the church economized by building with wooden clapboard.

All members of the building committee for this 1918 church are listed on the cornerstone. The names are all German, and the contractor was E. E. Reimann, also a member of that committee. Reached by a long flight of stairs, the sanctuary is open, serene, and filled with soft light.

The opalescent windows probably were installed during construction. They resemble glass installed about the same time elsewhere in the city (for example, at Zion Lutheran Church on St. Charles Avenue). All the side windows have identical fleurs de lis that are executed with flowing curves, reflecting art nouveau aesthetics.

Opalescent glass was among the contributions to decorative glass from John La Farge and Louis Comfort Tiffany. This material relies on variations in color within the glass and thus obviates the laborious application of ground glass paint to produce shading. The cost savings are probably considerable.

While traditional stained glass acquires its color from the passage of exterior light through it, opalescent glass displays its color both through translucence and by reflecting light, even artificial light. Thus, at a time when electric lighting was becoming widespread, decorative glass that could be enjoyed at any hour and from both sides was a popular architectural option.

In 1990 Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church merged with Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church and moved to a brand-new church on Canal Boulevard. The 1952 Möller organ also moved to the new Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. Since 1990, a series of fundamentalist congregations, including the True Gospel of Jesus Christ Church, have occupied the Broad Street building.

*Not toured*

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