

“You leave a piece of yourself in every window you create.”

David Strouse, Stained-glass artist, Rayer's Bearden Studio

Windows to the Soul

A stained glass tour of downtown McPherson



“The Progress of Knowledge Triptych” at the McPherson Public Library.

The newly renovated McPherson Public Library, located on the north side of the McPherson County Courthouse, has eight stained glass windows that were given as gifts by various individuals and companies in McPherson to the library.

The children’s area at the east end of the library has a large “Under the Reading Tree” window that was given by Hospira. The window was the first one designed and set the color palette for the rest of the windows.

In the parent/toddler room is “All Aboard for Books,” a window given in memory of Michael Andrew O’Connor that depicts a train full of books emerging from a tunnel.

The third window in that area is ‘Flights of the Imagination’ donated by Dick and Bev Hess with a book-loving dragon designed by Nancy Fricker of Rayer’s Bearden Stained Glass of Wichita.

In the west end of the library the three-window

“The Progress of Knowledge Triptych” is featured with “Antiquity,” donated by Lonny and Laura Bruce; “Enlightenment,” donated by Danny and Coleen Bruce, and “Destiny,” donated by Larry and Pat Bruce. The windows were designed to represent the evolution of the word and the subsequent flowering of ideas, knowledge and wisdom which it made possible.

The final two windows at the library are “Sunrise,” given by Sid and the late Maureen Johnson and “Moonrise,” given by Jim and Connie Hess. Both windows feature quotations about the significance of libraries in everyday life.

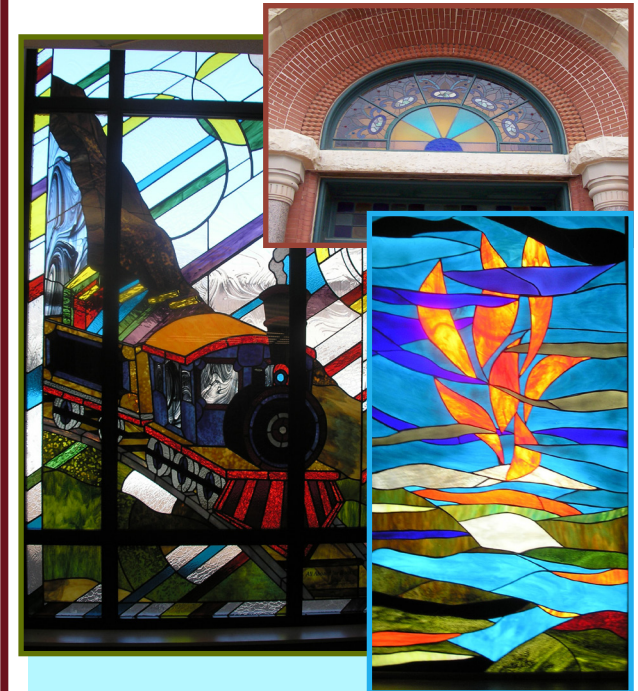
To see a video of all the stained glass windows in the MPL, go to <http://macpl.org/glass.html>

A walk down Euclid St. to McPherson College will reveal stained glass windows at the Brethren Church at Carrie and Euclid, donated by local banker F.A. Vaniman and his wife, Mary, in 1926. They were designed by Western Art Glassworks in Wichita.

The downtown McPherson area has several examples of leaded glass windows. After the tour, please stop downtown to see the windows at Sears (311 N Main) and Ameriprise Financial (100 S. Main).



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*People are like stained glass windows.
They sparkle and shine when the sun is out.
But when the darkness sets in their true beauty is revealed only if there is light from within.
-Elisabeth Kubler Ross*

The stained glass tour is made possible by the cooperation and generosity of the

- McPherson Opera House
- St. Anne’s Episcopal Church
- First Congregational United Church of Christ
- First Christian Church
- McPherson Public Library

Windows to the Soul

McPherson has an interesting variety of stained glass windows in churches and public buildings. Stained glass windows are referred to as “windows to the soul” by stained glass artist Randy Rayer, owner of Rayer Bearden Stained Glass & Gift *Galleries* in Wichita. Rayer’s studio designed and installed the eight stained glass windows at the McPherson Public Library.

Beginning at the **McPherson Opera House**, corner of Main and Sutherland, you will see examples of windows originally designed in the 1880s. The square block windows throughout the building were all in the earliest photos of the building. The windows were rebuilt

by Harold Schlender, a long-time volunteer during the restoration of the Opera House. He used any glass pieces that survived the years — and there weren’t many — and purchased whatever glass pieces he needed to complete each window.



**McPherson Opera House
Grand Ballroom**

The spectacular window above the Grand Entry is a replica of the original. Restorers only had a flimsy, rotted frame of the design, grainy black and white photos and a few pieces of glass. From this, Scott Hoefler of Hutchinson was able to make the beautiful replica window. The cost to do this was donated by Schlender in honor of his wife, Charlotte, who has since passed away.

Across the street to the southwest of the Opera House is **St. Anne’s Episcopal Church**. St. Anne’s moved to this location in 1977 and the windows were added in 1992. There are nine stained glass windows at the church built in a modern style. The windows were designed by Debbi Swank of High Plains Stained Glass in Topeka.

Seven of the nine stained glass windows in **St. Anne’s Episcopal Church** represent the seasons of the Liturgical Calendar: Advent is depicted by the Jesse Tree and is a time of anticipation of the birth of Jesus; Christmas is depicted by the lowly manger in which Jesus was born; Epiphany is depicted by the star that led the three wise men to Bethlehem; Lent is depicted by the cross upon which Jesus was crucified along with two others; Easter is depicted by the empty tomb from which Jesus rose on the third day; Trinity is depicted by the sky, earth and sea, Pentecost is depicted by tongues of fire, representing the presence of the Holy Spirit. The last two windows depict Sunrise...We give thanks as a new day dawns...and Sunset...and ask for God’s protection as the sun sets.



**St. Anne’s
Episcopal Church**

One block west of St. Anne’s is the **First Congregational Church**. The stained glass window over the east entrance is a depiction of Michaelangelo’s Creation of Adam.



The window was donated in memory of Vanessa Vee Tucker by her mother, Norma Tucker, in 1997. The window was designed by Scott Hoefler of Hutchinson. The idea for the window came from church

**First Congregational
United Church of Christ**

member Wanda Scott who had recently returned from a trip to the Vatican and suggested the work best known from the Sistine Chapel. FCC has been a presence in McPherson for more than 130 years and is one of the oldest churches in McPherson. The building boasts nearly 50 stained or leaded glass windows that can be seen on every side of the church. Many have the original casings and hardware.

Just one block north is the **First Christian Church** which contains two different styles of stained glass windows.

On the west side of the church are two large windows with painted stained glass depicting scenes of Jesus from the Bible. Details of faces, hair and hands were painted onto the inner surface of the glass in a special glass paint.

The sanctuary at FCC contains many unique stained glass windows as well. Adjacent to the sanctuary is the chapel housing multiple windows designed by Sue Jean Covacevich of Winfield. “The Cross within the design of the three south windows symbolizes divine love. The nine on the north are similar in design and color. The lines speak of growth and faith of all children of God.”



*Be sure to stop by
Studio 54 at 115 N.
Main St. to see the
work of stained glass
artists Scott and
Susan Reinecke.*

First Christian Church