

Staff photos/Janie Southard

The art glass windows in Zion Lutheran Church are examples of techniques developed at the turn of the century by Louis C. Tiffany.

Zion Lutheran Church has Tiffany windows

Famed glassmaker used unique technique

By JANIE SOUTHARD
The Evening Leader

Louis C. Tiffany, whose artistic technique and work in art glass established the medium as an art form in America in the early 1900s, has come to be acknowledged as a master of art glass windows.

The windows in Zion Lutheran Church in St. Marys are believed to have been created in the Louis C. Tiffany Studios in New York.

The local church windows illustrate the technique called "drapery glass" which was developed by Tiffany and used by him in religious windows. The dimensional effect of this technique duplicates in glass the folds of the flowing robes worn by the Biblical figures, thereby adding to the depth and color intensity of the artwork. Other

techniques of mottled glass and fractured glass also employed in Zion's windows are distinctively Tiffany.

Originally in the church's former building, the windows were removed for use in the new building which was dedicated in 1974. Architect Lester Trier of Elkhart, Ind., designer of the new building, said that he had no doubt the windows were Tiffany.

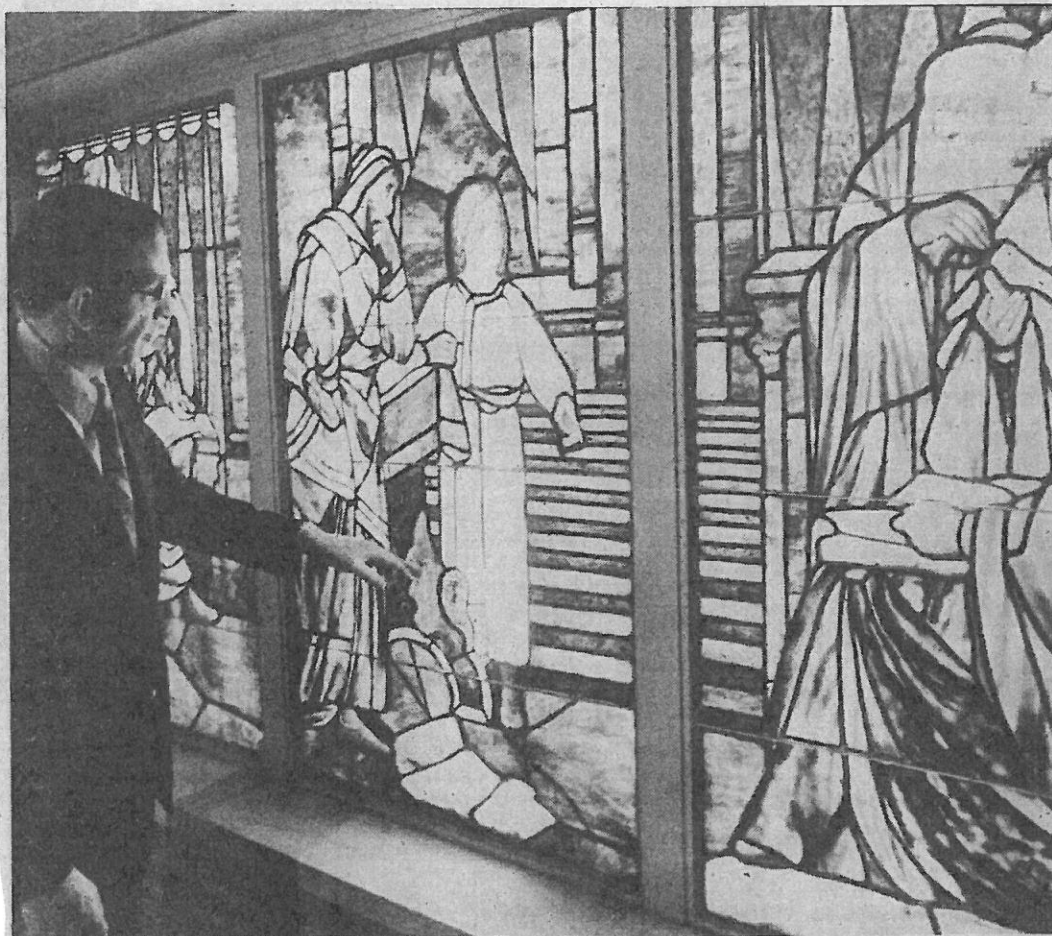
City Glass in Fort Wayne, Ind., who refurbished the windows, also indicated that, based on the techniques employed, the

hallmark of Tiffany was apparent.

None of the local windows bear the Tiffany signature but art authorities acknowledge that the majority of Tiffany windows were not signed. Each window design was unique and was created to meet the particular customer's specific wishes.

Thus, the studio felt no need to mark each creative design as they knew it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to duplicate.

See Glass/5



DEDICATION TOMORROW—Pastor Theodore Stellhorn, III, of the Zion Lutheran Church points to the stained glass window located in the chapel area of the new church.

The window was one of several kept from the old church. The new church will be dedicated tomorrow in special services. (Leader Photo by Mike Core)

Glass

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The local windows best seen are the three panels set at eye level in the small chapel to the right of the main sanctuary. The scene depicted is Jesus in the temple with the scribes. Created in drapery glass, the rich purples, blues and blue-greens of the figures' robes are striking.

In certain places this glass is so thick as to be opaque; in others, it is thin giving a shimmering effect.

Born in New York in 1848, Louis Comfort Tiffany was the son of Charles L. Tiffany, founder of the renowned Tiffany & Company. (Readers may recall the movie "Breakfast at Tiffany's.")

Louis Tiffany, a competent painter of his day, was said to be obsessed with color and regarded line and form secondarily. He observed that "line and form disappear at a short distance, while color remains visible at a much longer (distance)." His windows and lamps, particularly, display a brilliant array of color.

He began his glass experiments in 1875 in Brooklyn, New York reviving and improving the techniques used by Medieval glass artisans.

Art glass used in the late 1800s in the U.S. was imported from Europe and was virtually castoff glass not used by the European

artists. The imported glass was flat and of a solid color.

Tiffany's glass was textured, opalescent and combined as many as seven different colors. In 1897 his Corona Glass Factory housed 200-300 tons of glass representing more than 5,000 different colors and textures.

Tiffany Studios created thousands of art glass windows. In addition to ecclesiastical there were portrait windows, mythological, historical, landscape and still life windows.

Tiffany closely monitored all artistic creation in his studio including the adjoining cabinet shop in which the wooden frames for

the windows were constructed. The studio also maintained a team of installation technicians who accompanied the completed windows to their destinations.

Today the name Tiffany is primarily associated with the distinctively ornate leaded glass lamps which now bring thousands and thousands of dollars at auction. The manufacture of lamps began, however, as a way to use the millions of scrap glass pieces which were too small for use in the windows.

Tiffany was a master in his chosen art and the glass panels in Zion Lutheran Church are excellent examples of his genius.