

## STAINED GLASS WINDOWS



(J. Orr Photos)

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*"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."*

*1 Corinthians 13:13*

This week we will be looking at four related stained glass windows from the Medina Lodge #336, of Free and Accepted Masons (F & AM). Because of the interaction of subject matter between these beautiful windows it seems appropriate to show them altogether with their description in the same article. Therefore, I shall begin with the first three, Faith, Hope and Charity. Let me state the obvious: Fraternal Art is sometimes identical to religious art. Among the figural images we find occasionally in churches and cemeteries, are ethereal females which represent abstract personalities. From the Renaissance up through Art Deco we find portrayals of beautiful women which exemplify or epitomize ideals. Faith, Hope and Charity are virtues. They are the first three of the seven virtues, the other four being Temperance, Prudence, Fortitude and Justice. The first three which are pictured, are called the theological virtues, sometimes known as the three Christian Graces. The other four virtues are known as the Cardinal Virtues. To the Seven Virtues there are opposed the Seven Vices which are: Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy and Sloth.

All four windows here depict approximately life size figures seated in large classical chairs. Faith holds an open book which represents the word of God. She points with her right hand in a gesture which suggests her own proclamation of faith and consistency. She is dressed in a blue robe suggesting constancy and fidelity over which is draped a rose-colored mantle which in this case, suggests wisdom. In the base of the window either side of the title, it states: "In Memoriam Brother Don J. Bigelow." Mr. Bigelow was a prominent Mason and Treasurer of the S.A. Cook & Co.

The second window portrays Hope who is holding the traditional symbol of hope, the anchor. The symbolic meaning of this rests on the Epistle to the Hebrews 6:19, which refers to the everlasting virtue of God's counsel in these words, "Which hope we have as an anchor, of the soul, both sure and steadfast...". Hope is shown wearing a golden colored robe which suggests the goodness of God and fruitfulness. Over this is a blue mantle denoting truth. In the base of the window either side of her title we find the inscription "In appreciation Brother George A. Newell." Mr. Newell was a highly visible person in Orleans County. He served as President of the Union Bank of Medina, was elected County Clerk, serving from 1877-1885 and was for many years Clerk of the Medina Village Board of Trustees. His accomplishments in the Masonic Order were at the very least, outstanding. He was Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge of New York State and a thirty-third Degree Mason, a most prestigious honor.

The third window depicts Charity. The overall theme in this window is one of love and devotion. Frequently in scenes of Charity we see children such as portrayed here. Note the expression of love on Charity's face as she looks at the child. She appears to be giving the boy a new garment which is a deep ruby color, the color traditionally associated with love. Charity herself, is dressed in a white robe suggesting her purity and innocence.

In the base of the window next to the title, we find the words: "Brother Fred L. Downs." The Hon. Fred Downs was a native of Medina and became prominent in the Masonic Order. He served as Orleans County Judge from 1912 until his death in 1919.

All four of these windows were originally installed in the Masonic Temple on West Avenue in Medina which was completed in 1924-25. In 1982 the old temple was sold and the Masons moved into the Cook Building. However, they retained their windows from the former building placing them in storage. More recently Medina Lodge #336 has found new quarters in the Town of Shelby building. The stained glass windows were resurrected and are now mounted in the new Masonic Lodge room. All four windows are Colonial Revival in style which was very popular in the 1920's. All four females have a kind of classical beauty and are shown in what might be a Grecian or Roman garden and landscape. Note the two Grecian urns at the sides and the classic symmetry in the design of each window. The chairs, dais and wall behind, give the appearance of marble while the vegetation in the background is made up of various shades of green with a blue sky. Each ethereal female is wearing a head band in her hair which is typical in the portrayal of such classical figures.

Finally, now to the fourth window which is Music. Along with the Seven Virtues in Art, we also sometimes find the seven Liberal Arts which are: Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astronomy. Here, we see Music holding a lyre which is a stringed instrument of the harp class used by the ancient Greeks. It is the traditional symbol used to get across the idea of music or even heavenly music.

She is wearing a reddish robe which color here is indicative of creative power. Draped around her is also a green boa, a color to signify eternal spring or immortality and immortal music. Perhaps the following description by some anonymous author best describes what the theme of this window is all about - Music.

"Servant and master am I, servant of those dead and master of those living. Through me spirits immortal speak the message that makes the world weep, and laugh, and wonder, and worship. I tell the story of love, the story of hate, the story that saves, and the story that damns. I am the incense upon which prayers float to heaven. I am the smoke which palls over the field of battle where men lie dying with me on their lips. I am close to the marriage altar, and when the graves open I stand near by. I call the wanderer home, I rescue the soul from the depths, I open the lips of lovers, and through me the dead whisper to the living. One I serve as I serve all; and the king I make my slave as easily as I subject his slave. I speak through the birds of the air, the insects of the field, the crash of waters on rock-ribbed shores, the sighing of wind in the trees, and I am even heard by the soul that knows me in the clatter of wheels on city streets. I know no brother, yet all men are my brothers; I am the mother of the best that is in them, and they are fathers of the best that is in me; I am of them, and they are of me. For I am the instrument of God."