



The Resurrection Window at Grace Church, Millbrook

By any standard it is a stunning work of art, a masterpiece in the American style of layered opalescent glass pioneered by John La Farge and Louis C. Tiffany. The four-panel stained glass window by Maitland Armstrong, with facial drawings by his daughter and artistic collaborator Helen Armstrong, is a memorial to John Daniel Wing (1831-1910) and his wife Adelaide Warner Hinman (1831-1911). "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" we read on the memorial inscriptions at the bottom—a benediction delivered by Jesus to the assembled disciples before his death (John 14:27). It was dedicated on Easter Sunday, 1912, and the local paper of the time called it the Resurrection window. Take a close look.

Banners above flanking angels name the beardless male figure clad in a white robe in the left central panel: "Thou art the king of glory, O Christ," and "Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father." The angel on the far-left panel gazes at Jesus in adoration, the one on the right reverently bows his head. Crenelated gothic arches frame the heads of the angels. Above the two main figures delicate pillars support elaborate crowns of flowers and grapevines. All the figures are haloed, with an additional ring of gold around the halo of Jesus.

Who then is the lovely young woman whose right hand Jesus gently holds with his left hand while gesturing heavenward with his right? She is clad in a blue robe, purple mantle, and white headdress. Her left hand grazes, without holding tightly, one of the white lilies springing up from the ground, trumpeting above a clutch of blue irises. In the center of the window, just above their paired hands, you can spy a single red rose. She is still, while he seems to be moving forward, his left foot just past a small step (and note the blue socks and sandals). He looks back at her while pointing up, she stands with her head slightly bowed. Their looks are tender but it is clear they are parting.

The young woman is Mary Magdalene, the first witness to the risen Christ. The story depicted in this scene is told in the gospel according to John chapter 20. Here are the relevant verses:

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb, ¹²and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, "Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and she told them that he had said these things to her.

In the Vulgate translation of the New Testament, the phrase "Do not touch me," is rendered by the Latin "Noli me tangere"—a phrase often used to refer to this pictorial trope of the Resurrection. (Note: the original biblical Greek is in the continuing present tense—rather "stop holding on" than a single pointed imperative "do not touch.") Noli me tangere is a frequent subject of religious art and stained-glass windows in particular. But what is quite striking about the Resurrection window is that Jesus and Mary indeed touch; they hold

hands as friends or lovers would when parting. This is clearly intended to be a focal point of the window. Not only are the clasped hands centrally located, Christ's hand crosses the stone mullion containing him in his own lancet in order to touch Mary's.

This is not the only unusual element in this depiction by Maitland Armstrong and his daughter. Jesus and Mary are both standing, whereas Mary is typically pictured kneeling, usually at some distance (see attached images). Perhaps the equal standing of Jesus and Mary illustrates what the children of John D. and Adelaide Wing wanted Armstrong to convey: the love and mutual regard of their parents to whom this window is equally dedicated. They were born in the same year and died only a year apart, after fifty-plus years of married life. Only a year apart, yet it was John who died first, and another line from Jesus' farewell discourse to his disciples comes to mind: "I go to prepare a place for you, so that where I am there you will be also" (John 14:3).

In sum, the scene pictured in this wonderful window is one in which Mary Magdalene, who began the morning in mourning, encounters the risen Christ, her beloved teacher and friend. She recognizes him when he calls her name. She reaches out to touch him, and they briefly clasp hands. But Jesus is in the process of ascending to the Father, he cannot stay. At the very moment of the picture, he is saying goodbye and yet at the same time comforting Mary. The full verse from John 14:27, part of which is in the memorial inscription, sums up the sentiment: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, and do not be afraid." The scene as depicted in this beautiful window perfectly conveys this assurance of eternal love, peace, and togetherness.

The Patrons: John and Adelaide Wing

John Daniel Wing is among the many Wings of Dutchess County who trace their ancestry to Daniel and Catherine Cornell Wing. They came from New England and settled in south Dover—in a place now named Wingdale—in 1765. Daniel and Catherine's son John Wing married Miriam Thorne Wing (marriage was strictly regulated among early Quakers and Cornells and Thornes were among the many Quaker families who settled in southeastern and central Dutchess County in the eighteenth century). John and Miriam's son Jacob married Anna Maria Cornell of Stanford and John Daniel was one of their six children.

As a boy John Daniel attended the Nine Partners Boarding School — adjacent to the Nine Partners Meeting House still standing on Route 343 in Millbrook. After graduating, not yet twenty years old, Wing boldly sailed to San Francisco in 1850—the gold rush was on—and went into business there. He returned to New York City to start a chemical import business, Wing and Evans, in 1858 and marry Adelaide Hinman, daughter of Grover Hinman of Chicago, in 1859. The business did well—Wing's 143 foot sailing yacht may still be viewed in the sailing museum of Newport, RI. The marriage lasted until death.

Mr. Wing returned to Millbrook to become a gentleman farmer on weekends when he purchased the Nine Partners School building in 1866 (the school had relocated in 1863, eventually becoming the Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie). He moved it to a new

site, expanding it and adding beautiful terraced gardens. John and Adelaide named it Maple Shade, though their daughter Marion would later rename it Sandanona, an Indian word meaning light and sunshine. Not content to be a mere gentleman farmer, Wing specialized in breeding Jersey cattle and became head of the New York State Agricultural Society.

In addition to being a successful businessman and farmer, Mr. Wing was a devout churchman. According to a letter in the *Church Journal* of 1870 cited in *Years of Grace*, a wonderful history of Grace Church by Elliott Lindsley, Mr. Wing gave “three beautiful and expensive chancel windows” to the first Grace Church built in 1867 in the hamlet of Hart’s Village, a few years before the village of Millbrook was built around a new railroad station. It is unclear when he had become an Episcopalian, possibly upon his marriage to Adelaide, but Grace Church certainly was blessed by their generosity and care. A portrait of John D. Wing currently hangs in the Parish Hall, the very image of a benevolent patriarch. The children of John and Adelaide—Morgan, Marion and Louis—were lifelong members of Grace and, as we will see below, continued the tradition of commissioning stained-glass windows for the church.

The gilded age was a heyday of Episcopal church construction, especially in the stone church styles of old England, and John Wing, a frequent traveler there on business, decided it was time for a new building—the first church had burned down in 1870, the second was a rather plain building in the center of the village, now the site of a parking lot on the corner of Church and Merrick Streets. In 1899, on the cusp of a new century, the Wings donated a lot adjacent to the entrance of Sandanona on Franklin Avenue. Across the street stood the yellow brick school building given to the village of Millbrook five years earlier by the children of Jonathan and Lydia Thorne—an architectural treasure currently undergoing renovation as a community center.

The plans for the English Arts and Crafts Style church were drawn by Abner Haydel, a young architect from Louisiana trained in the Paris Ecole des Beaux-Arts. On September 16, 1901, the cornerstone was laid. The original windows of the church were mostly filled with pale tinted diamond panes, a top row of windows along the west wall remain this way, but some of the stained glass of the previous church building was incorporated into the new building by the side walls near the altar. But the large round window above the baptismal font, directly opposite the main entrance to the sanctuary, and the large window facing Franklin Street awaited commissions from the Wing family. The first commission was the stunning Rose window above the font. It memorializes Marion Austin Flint, the daughter of Marion Wing who had married Dr. Austin Flint in 1896. According to the *Millbrook Mirror*, the window was commissioned by J. Morgan Wing & Louis Stewart Wing and dedicated to their niece’s memory in March 1910. The Resurrection window followed the death of both parents and was dedicated on Easter Sunday 1912. Finally, the St. Martin window was given in memory of Louis Stuart Wing, who died of a heart attack in 1916; this window was dedicated in 1918, according to reports in the local paper. The images of these other two windows are also attached.

The Artists: Maitland Armstrong and Helen Maitland Armstrong

Maitland Armstrong, the stained-glass designer, led an interesting life. He was born in Newburgh, NY in 1834 and maintained a country home there later in life. Armstrong was American Consul in Rome, 1869–71, *Charge d'Affaires* to the Papal States 1869 and Consul General in Rome 1871–73. From the 1880s, Armstrong worked with his friends [Louis C. Tiffany](#) and [John La Farge](#). In 1887 he formed his own firm, Maitland Armstrong and Co., of New York. His office was not far from Abner Haydel in Manhattan. Armstrong was one of the foremost exponents of American-style opalescent stained glass during the Gilded Age.

His daughter, Helen Maitland Armstrong (1869–1948), joined him in the business and she became an important stained-glass artist in her own right. Works created included important installations at the Appellate Court Building in New York, Vanderbilt's All Souls Church in Biltmore Village (Asheville, NC), and the Church of the Ascension in New York, where she was a parishioner. Work produced from their studio is incredibly important; it is innovative and high quality. Helen executed the glass painting for the firm.

The stained glass works of Armstrong and Co. have yet to be fully catalogued. There is a 1999 monograph by Robert O. Jones, *D. Maitland Armstrong: American Stained Glass Master*, but the three works at Grace Church Millbrook are not mentioned. A new online index to the works of Maitland Armstrong is in the process of being compiled by Wayne Boucher. We are excited to be part of the rediscovery of this major pair of American stained-glass artists.

The subsequent history and exciting future of the Resurrection window: How it was covered and how it will be conserved and displayed

The *Resurrection* window has been in hiding for decades. An organ was placed in front of it in 1968, hiding it from interior view. The narrow space of the organ loft, about 20", makes it impossible to view the entirety of the window at once—although allowing very close inspection of the magnificent details. The exterior faces onto Franklin Avenue, the main street of the little village of Millbrook, but for many years a giant spruce tree hid it from view. In the first decade of the twenty-first century this tree was removed and a Memorial Garden consecrated in front of the church, beneath the window. It is now illuminated at night from behind, but the overlaying layers of colored glass prevent a full appreciation of the window. The faces of Jesus and Mary—the delicate drawing of Helen Armstrong—cannot be seen.

In one way, the obfuscation of the window has had a significant positive impact. The window remains completely original, avoiding restoration over the last 110 years. Undisturbed opalescent windows are a rarity. The original materials, including the bespoke leading, are intact. For example, Armstrong took the unique approach of attaching plates to the exterior of the window that were not leaded on all sides. This was done to create a shadow without the hard line that would have appeared from leading all sides of the piece

in the traditional way. These are known as “hanging plates” and are unique to Armstrong & Co. windows. They are intentionally subtle and as a result, are often overlooked or changed by heavy-handed restorers.

But the condition of the window and setting now require treatment. The stained glass has untreated breaks, areas of missing waterproofing putty, and dirt build-up between the plates of opalescent glass. The exterior protective glazing, added at some point in the past, is not helping the window. It is unventilated; heat and moisture build and remain in the interspace for long periods of time. Moisture degrades glass and lead at an accelerated rate. The exterior of the wood frame has also suffered from being enclosed. The paint has peeled away exposed bare wood. The glazing putty has failed. The existing monolithic secondary glazing is no longer best practice as its insulation value has been surpassed and it provides minimal protection from projectiles.

The originality of the window is immensely important from an art history standpoint. Therefore, a distinct conservation approach, preventative conservation, is required. The window deserves specific, yet mindful, treatment. The interior plates are to be removed for cleaning without replacing the original lead. Cracks will be repaired using (reversible) conservation-grade materials, rather than replaced. The hanging plates will be gently cleaned but otherwise undisturbed. Waterproofing putty will be reinstated. Venting the interspace between the stained glass and protective glazing is of paramount importance. New laminated glass will be used for the protective glazing, and the wood frame stripped and repainted. The stained glass will be moved about 1” to the interior and areas at the base and top of the frame routed to allow for air flow. This will create a vented interspace, keeping condensation off the stained glass. Preventative conservation is the best tool we currently have at our disposal to conserve historic stained glass. It not only treats the existing issues but modifies the environment to support the ongoing longevity of the incredibly valuable original artwork.

Equally important is the unveiling of the window to the public. The organ is itself a masterpiece, a tracker organ by the postwar German firm of Beckerath, one of the best instruments in our region (and even the country), especially for Baroque organ music. It will not be moved or altered. So how to see this magnificent window in its intended glory? We plan to follow the process of removal and restoration by rotating its placement to face Franklin Avenue. We will upgrade the lighting behind the window, facilitated by the presence of the organ cabinet, to provide uniform illumination. It will be visually stunning at night, and provide a profound visual coda to the Memorial Garden in front. This garden, coming from the street, will eventually include a contemplative walking path, the enclosed space created by low stone walls around the Memorial Garden proper, a fountain and, directly below the window, a granite celtic cross. The journey of faith is thus encapsulated: a pilgrimage from the busy street, through a contemplative journey, a baptismal fountain, the cross and memorials to those who have died and then as the eye moves upward, the Resurrection window. It is a vision not only for the members of the church but for the whole community, for all who pass by, and for those who will come in order to see this masterpiece of stained-glass art.

Conclusion: How you can help

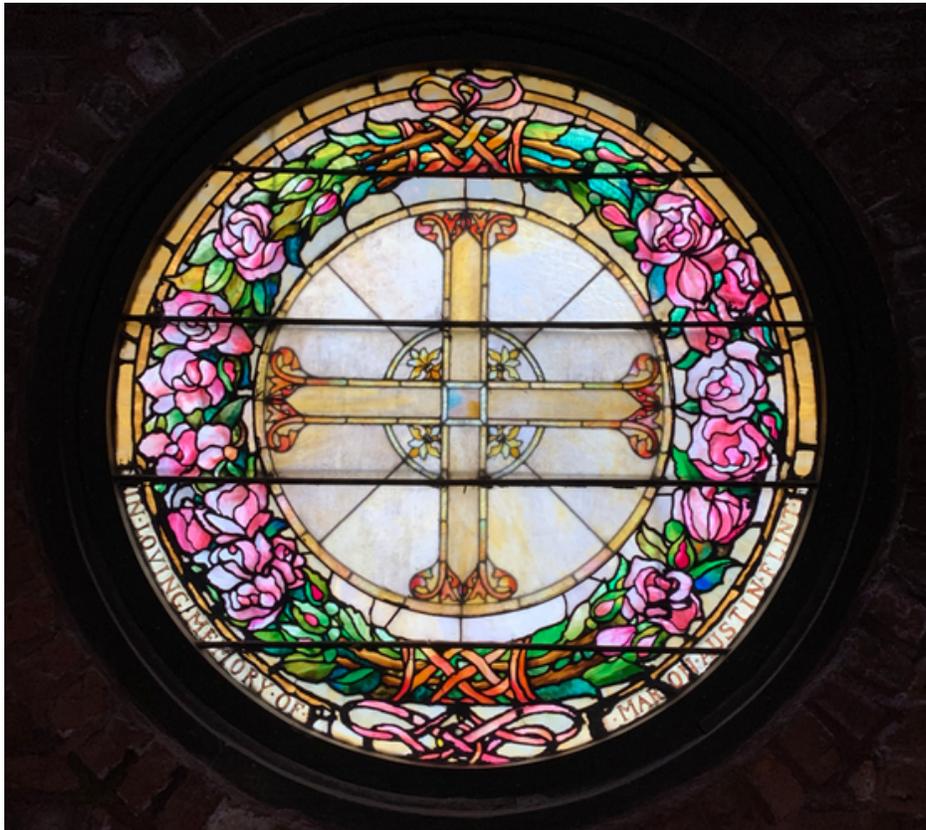
You will not be surprised to hear that this process of conservation and new orientation will cost money. One of us is an expert in the business, Brianne van Vorst of Liberty Stain Glass Consulting. It is Brianne who has prepared the conditions report, bid documents, and screened the best artisans for the job. We have selected two we think most qualified. Both are comparably priced—but the price is high, around \$68,000 for the work. Add to that consulting costs, lighting, and masonry, and we are upwards of \$75,000 in total. We have about \$35,000 in hand, after preliminary payments for conditions report and bid documents. This money has come from previous memorial gifts and two grants (thank you New York Altar Guild and the Marshall & Sterling Fund). We need to raise the rest through grants and individual and family donations.

Would you like to help make this project happen? Donations of any amount are welcome, but gifts of \$5000 or more will receive special mention on the memorial plaque to be added to the side of the window and in subsequent articles. Perhaps the Resurrection window of Grace Church Millbrook is a worthy memorial of ones you love but see no more. Jesus has gone ahead to prepare a place for all. This window is a perpetual sign pointing the Way.

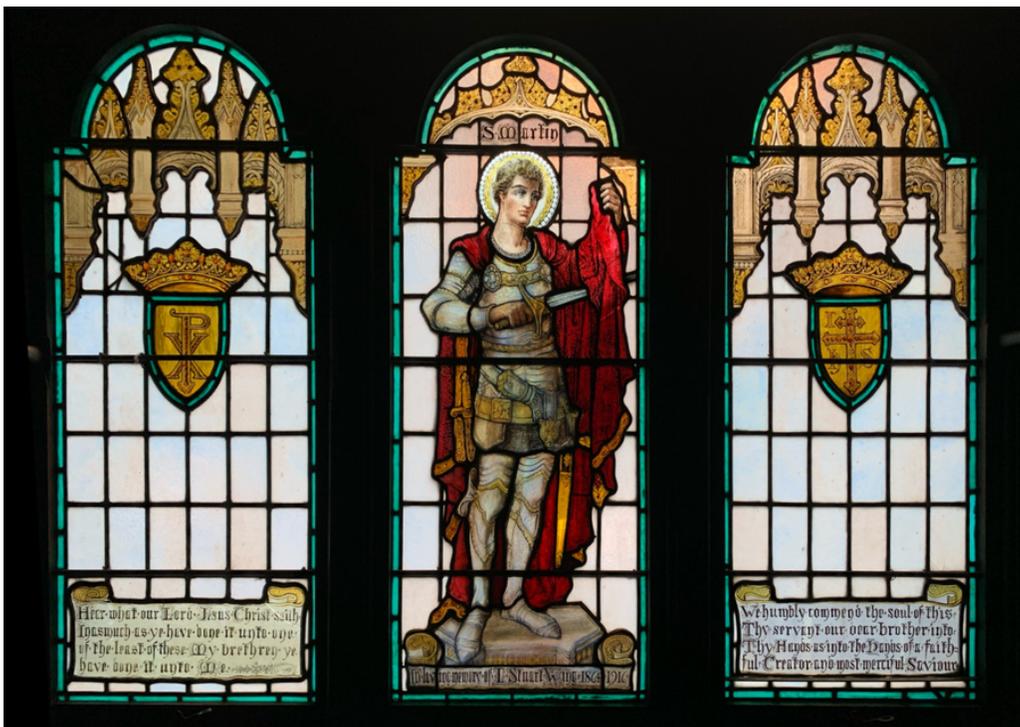
Contact the Rev. Dr. Matthew Calkins, Rector of Grace Church, for more information and to arrange a tour of the church and a climb into the organ loft for an up-close look at the window before it is removed for conservation.

Matthew Calkins and Brianne Van Vorst
July, 2022

Armstrong & Co. Windows in Grace Church



Marion Austin Flint Memorial Window, Grace Church, Millbrook, NY, 1910.

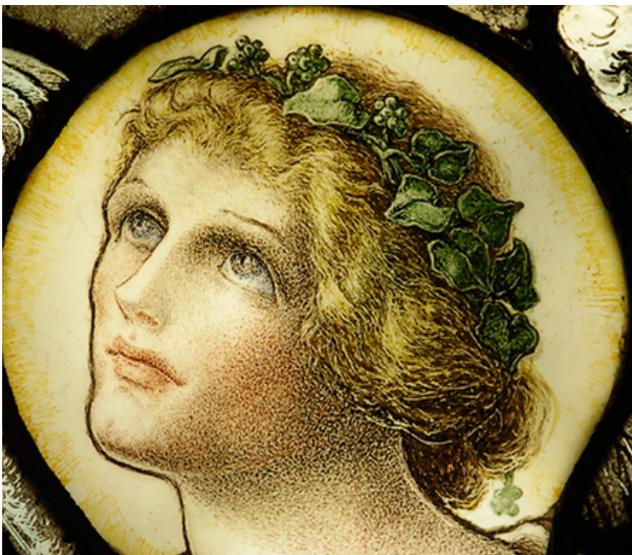


Louis Stuart Wing Memorial Window, Grace Church, Millbrook, NY, 1918.

Armstrong & Co. Reference Images



Examples of Maitland Armstrong & Co. designs for stained glass windows. Note the consistent style within the figures and the use of architectural canopies. Left: Memorial window design for St. Paul's Church, Chester, PA. Right: Design for an unspecified memorial window, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



A detail of a window in Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, NY by Helen Maitland Armstrong (left), as compared to a detail from the Wing Memorial window (right). Note the stylistic similarities in the treatment of flesh and hair.

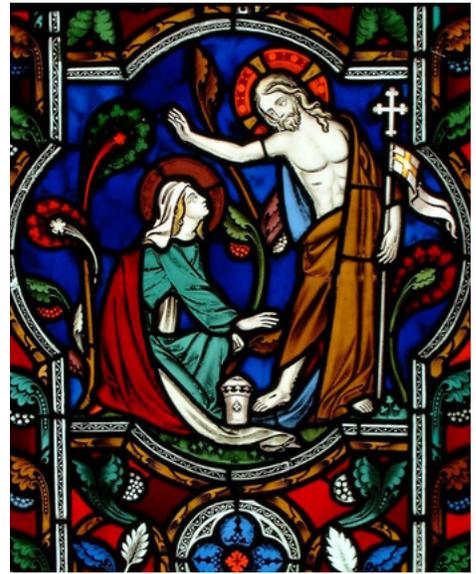
Typical examples of *Noli Me Tangere* in History



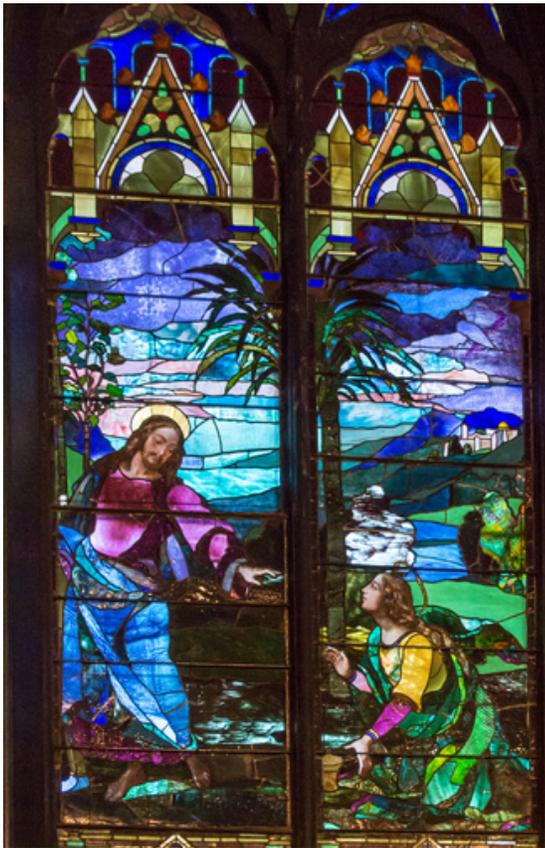
Master Henri, Livre d'Images de Madame Marie, c. 1290



The Church of St. Leonhard, Lavanttal, Austria; 1340-50



John Hardman & Co., St James Clifton, Oxford, England, 1852



Trinity Church, Buffalo, NY, c.1890



Alexander Gibbs & Co, St. Colleen Parish Church, 1879