

FIRST CHURCH  
ARTS  
TEXTILES & SCULPTURE

# THE BRUSSELS TAPESTRIES



Two Brussels tapestries woven in 1575 by Franz Geubels were presented to the First Congregational Church by Frederick W. Schumacher, art collector, and formally accepted by Dr. M. H. Lichliter for the church Sunday morning, November 12, 1933.

The tapestries, representing themes from Genesis, are hung in the east and west transepts of the church. The theme of the tapestry in the west transept is taken from Genesis 23, the story of Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the son of Zohar. Abraham is seen paying the purchase money into the hands of Ephron, and at the left, one sees the cave, the burial place of Sarah near the oak of Mamre.

The story of the tapestry in the east transept is derived from Genesis 24. Abraham is sending his trusted servant to find a wife for Isaac. The servant kneels, swearing his oath of fealty, in the oriental manor, his hand under Abraham's thigh. Isaac stands behind his father – eager to be on his way. At the left we see the camels ready for the eventful journey.

Frederick William Schumacher Geubels, the weaver, was one of the most prominent tapissiers of Brussels. His monogram is in the lower right-hand corner of the two works.

The tapestry, for a number of years, were in the palace of Baron von Tuchers, former German ambassador to Rome, Paris and Vienna.



# LITURGICAL BANNERS



Deborah Melton Anderson, a longtime member of First Church and its Art Committee, studied drawing, painting and art history in college and went on to receive a Master of Arts in teaching from Harvard University. She took her first quilting class with well-known quilter Nancy Crow (b. 1943), known for her development of certain techniques to allow more spontaneity and expression.

Anderson began working traditionally but moved on to “controlled innovation” a process in which she uses traditional techniques and designs as starting points but steps off to something new, constantly expanding her range of materials and

techniques. Ms. Anderson is a longtime member of the Liturgical Art Guild of Ohio and says this provides direction for her work. The Guild brings together architects, religious leaders, artists and congregants to fulfill the liturgical art needs religious congregations. Ms. Anderson has frequently met with our own Art Committee to define our needs and prepare specifications with an eye for “good” art. Reverend Dr. Chalmers Coe and other pastors since, have advised the Art Committee as to the theological soundness as suitability of our banners. Dialogue with all committee members has been very important in order to create exactly what fits our space and liturgy.

In general, Anderson’s goal has been to make a piece complex enough that new discoveries can be made when the item is viewed a second time or when viewed from a different angle or distance.

Ms. Anderson’s longtime work on the banners at First Church started by making a pretzel symbol for the Petriola Shop, which sold items from around the world. This inspired Dr. Coe to suggest the Pentecost Banner be made by the artist.



# PENTECOST BANNER



This banner was inspired by Acts 1:6-8 which says "you will receive power." Sister Mary Corita (1918-1986) also influenced the creation of this banner. She created banners with words on them and integrated the words into the design. They often reflected her concerns about poverty, racism, and war and her message of peace and social justice.

The Pentecost symbols of the great wind, fire and dove are integral to the design. Also influencing Deborah were how the Chinese represented fire: fire coming down as we see at the top of the banner; along with Italians where we see flames above the heads of the Disciples. These nimbi or auras around the heads, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, could speak in tongues and communicate with the world, are represented in the white area. One sees little flames or tongues that represent this communication. The blue lines at the top represent the wind.





# ADVENT BANNER



The Christ Child is represented in the center, wrapped in swaddling clothes lying on a bed of hay. The halo denotes divinity.

Mary and Joseph gaze in wonder at the miracle before them. The Animals stare in rapt amazement. Doves in flight symbolize the presence of the Holy Spirit. A bright beam from heaven lights the way for The Three Kings who are seeking to worship Him.



# BAPTISM PARAMENTS



These complementary pieces were commissioned by Ann MacIsaac (1933-2016) in memory of her husband of 43 years Robert Forbes, both longtime members of First Church. The colors and designs of these pieces were inspired by the reredos and carvings at the end of the pews. The glass crystals at the ends of the font pieces are from a chandelier and represent drops of water.

# COMMUNION BANNER



In this banner we see the cross and chalice in the center. Wine flows down to the base of a chalice. The streak of light in the center represents the gift of Jesus who is “The Light of the World.” Broken bread is on either side of the banner. So often the cross has a body on it, but Ms. Anderson wanted to soften the banner, as this is about taking Communion. The curve at the bottom represents Christ as an anchor in our lives and is a stabilizer in life. The Rose Window served as an inspiration for this banner, offering the artist hope and the gift of love; hope being represented by the anchor.





# EASTER BANNER (1985)



This bannern represents the resurrection of Christ. The wooden cross is represented by the lines around the gold cross a victory in the center. The arc represents the passage of time from death to resurrection. The white stone is rolled away with craggy mountains (red pieces) and the cave enclosed (black), and represent upward movement. The three pieces at the bottom represent the Trinity and create a rough circle including, air, land and water. At the very top of the banner, the triangular shapes of reds, pinks and oranges are the thorns of Jesus' crown, transformed into the King of Glory and celebration.





# EASTER BANNER (2021)



The Jeffrey Window scenes depict the life of Christ and served as the focus for the Easter banner. The rock rolled away from the burial cave allowing the spirit of Christ to ascend.

This Banner is used at Easter services as well as memorial services.

# MUSIC BANNER



This banner was made at the time of G. Dene Bernard's retirement as organist and choirmaster at First Church. The artist enlarged the treble clef so it would more than fill the space. She uses the blues in the negative space to relate to each other. Red is used to divide the space even further in the shadows of the treble clef. She chose the colors to relate to the Jeffrey Window with gold, red and blue. The wavy lines represent sound waves moving through air creating music.



# ORDINARY TIME BANNER



In this banner we see the monogram of the Chi (X) Rho (P), one of the earliest forms of a christogram, as well as the cross represented by gold colors in the reeds. Water is required for life. Broken bread is seen in the lily pads. Brown represents the reredos of our church. The colors overall relate to those in the tapestries in the transepts; especially the greens and pale colors.





# BANNER STAND



Albert Paley is an American modernist metal sculptor. Initially starting out as a jeweler, Paley has become one of the most distinguished and influential metal smiths in the world. Within each of his works, three foundational elements stay true: the natural environment, the built environment, and the human presence.

“In creating a work of art, besides my personal experience, my concern is how it emotionally and intellectually engages the viewer. Through the creative process I have developed a personal visual vocabulary fundamentally based in symbolism and metaphor which is implicit in my work.”





# CHANCEL CROSS



Designed and fabricated by William J. Thompson, Professor of Art, the Ohio State University, 1963. Enameled copper facets and Brazilian Rosewood relates to the stained glass above.

The late William J. Thompson, a renowned sculptor and print-maker, was born in Denver, Colorado, in 1926 to a deeply Catholic family. His interest in art was piqued early, and it was intensified during a convalescence from scarlet fever at the age of 14, when he was given a book about Michelangelo. With support from his mother and an older cousin, he studied art at the Rhode Island School of Design, interrupting his studies to serve in the Army in 1946. He returned to school afterward and received his Master of Fine Arts degree from the Cranbrook Academy of Arts in Michigan in 1952. In addition to Michelangelo, Thompson was influenced by such masters as Auguste Rodin, Georges Rouault, Ernst Barlach, and Jacob Epstein.



# THE STORY OF MAN



*The Fall*



*The Struggle*

Created by sculptor William J. Thompson for First Congregational Church when he was teaching at OSU. 4 cast concrete sculptures, each depicting a different Biblical scene, located above double entrances leading into the Education Wing and attached to the building. Each sculpture is somewhat abstract in design, and stands out a few inches from the building surface, giving it the appearance of floating in space. (Please note: that two of these sculptures are in serious dis-repair and have been removed from the west side of the building.)



# THE STORY OF MAN

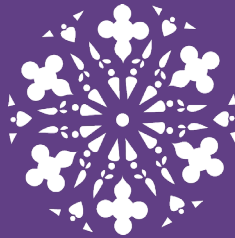


*The Mission*



*The Redemption*

The late William J. Thompson, a renowned sculptor and print-maker, was born in Denver, Colorado, in 1926 to a deeply Catholic family. His interest in art was piqued early, and it was intensified during a convalescence from scarlet fever at the age of 14, when he was given a book about Michelangelo. With support from his mother and an older cousin, he studied art at the Rhode Island School of Design, interrupting his studies to serve in the Army in 1946. He returned to school afterward and received his Master of Fine Arts degree from the Cranbrook Academy of Arts in Michigan in 1952. In addition to Michelangelo, Thompson was influenced by such masters as Auguste Rodin, Georges Rouault, Ernst Barlach, and Jacob Epstein.



FIRST CHURCH  
ARTS

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
444 E Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio  
614-228-1741

*firstchurcharts.org | music@first-church.org*