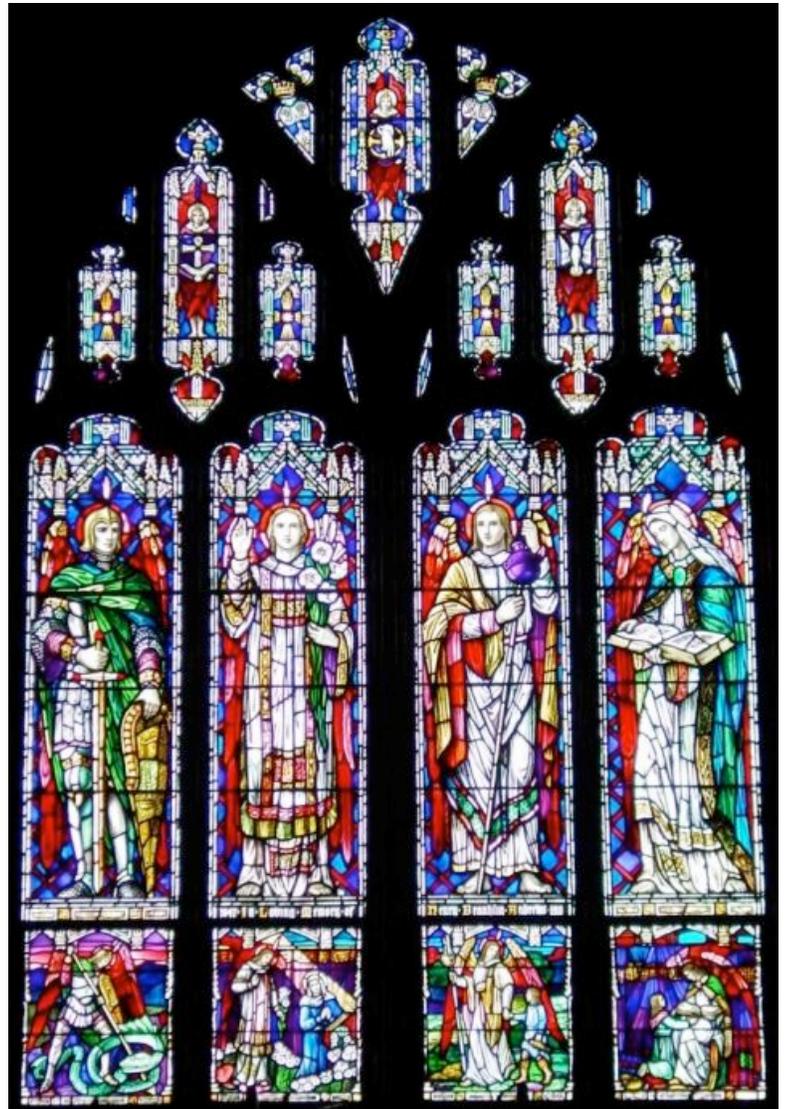


The Archangels' Window

The archangels' window in the north transept gallery is dedicated "In loving memory of Henry Franklin Andrews, 1847-1911." The window is signed, Charles J. Connick, 1913.

In the medieval arrangement of the celestial hierarchy, which like most of the symbolism of glass and carving throughout the church is wholly foreign to New England congregationalism, there were nine orders: seraphim, cherubim, thrones; dominions, virtues, powers; principalities, archangels, angels. All were, of course, below the Trinity. The ascriptions of celestial beings vary, but in one, perhaps the best known, the archangels are the chief angels – as it were, generals in the host. Tobit 12:15 reads, "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." Tradition says that the first four archangels were Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel. It cannot agree as to the remaining three. It is the first four which are subjects of the north gallery window.



The archangel Michael, prince or military commander of the heavenly host, is the subject of the left lancet and base panel. In the lancet he is depicted with a green cape and in complete armor, even to his feet. He holds a great cruciform sword and supports a shield on which is emblazoned a balance scales, the scales of the equal justice it is his duty to mete out to his subordinates. In the panel below, Michael, against a lowering sky, is slaying the dragon "That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan" (Rev. 12:7-9), which unpleasant green is indicative of evil.

The second lancet from the left represents Gabriel, messenger of divine revelation. He wears an elaborately embroidered chasuble. The annunciation is the theme of the panel, showing Mary, kneeling in the garden where grows her symbol, a lily. A ray of divine light falls on her. Gabriel, standing somewhat behind, is delivering the heavenly message that she is to be the mother of Jesus. (Luke. 1:31)

Raphael, guardian angel of mankind, designated by his traveler's staff and purple gourd, which serves as a water bottle, is seen in the third lance. Below he is pictured leading the young Tobias whom he has just saved from a savage fish that leaped out of the river to devour him and that later plays an even more important role in the amusing story. The fish is seen in the left hand of the lad (Tobit 6:3).

Uriel, in a deaconate robe of the early church, stands as the regent of the sun, a master of wisdom. He holds an open book of learning. The panel shows him answering the question of Esdras (II Esdras 4:1).

On the head of each of the archangels is a flame of fire of vivid intensity. If one is in the church as dusk falls he can enjoy the experience of seeing these flames still glowing, almost as though with their own light, long after the sun has gone and the rest of the color in the windows has faded to gray.

In the tracery above the heads of the archangels are stars. Other members of the tracery show the seraphim holding symbols of the trinity: the white hand of God the Father, palm outward; an anchor cross, emblematic of God the Son and of Christian hope; and a descending dove of God the Holy Spirit. At either side of the symbol of God the Son are crowns of glory.

Date of Last Update: 6/16/03