



A Guide to the
Architecture
of Fourth Presbyterian Church

Completed in 1914, Fourth Church is, after the 1869 Old Water Tower complex, the oldest structure north of the river on Chicago's "Magnificent Mile."





The Sanctuary

A beehive, a turtle, a bunch of grapes, a frog: there are interesting little carvings under the balconies and in the armrests of the preachers' seats up in front.

The walls of Fourth Church's 1914 buildings are built of Bedford limestone quarried in south-central Indiana—the same source of the stone used to build the Empire State Building and Rockefeller Center in New York City, the Pentagon and National Cathedral in Washington, and the Biltmore estate in North Carolina.

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The Sanctuary seats about 1,200 people when the balconies are filled.

The architectural style of the church—inside and out—is a combination of English and French Gothic.

This is not a copy of any individual church but rather an amalgam of late-medieval design elements that the architect integrated into his buildings following his studies in Europe in the 1880s.

This is actually the third building to house the Fourth Church congregation, which traces its roots back to a congregation formed in 1848, when the city of Chicago was barely a decade old.

The congregation's first church building, located several blocks south of here—on the site where the Nordstrom store is now—**burned to the ground in the Great Chicago Fire of October 8, 1871.** Then, from 1874 to 1914, the congregation worshiped in a church—since demolished—at Rush and Superior.

The 1914 Sanctuary is decorated largely with an Arts-and-Crafts palette; its muted warm colors are visible especially on the ceiling.

The ceilings of churches often look like an inverted ship.

The main area of a church is called the “nave,” from the Latin word for “ship” (as in “navy” and “navigate”).

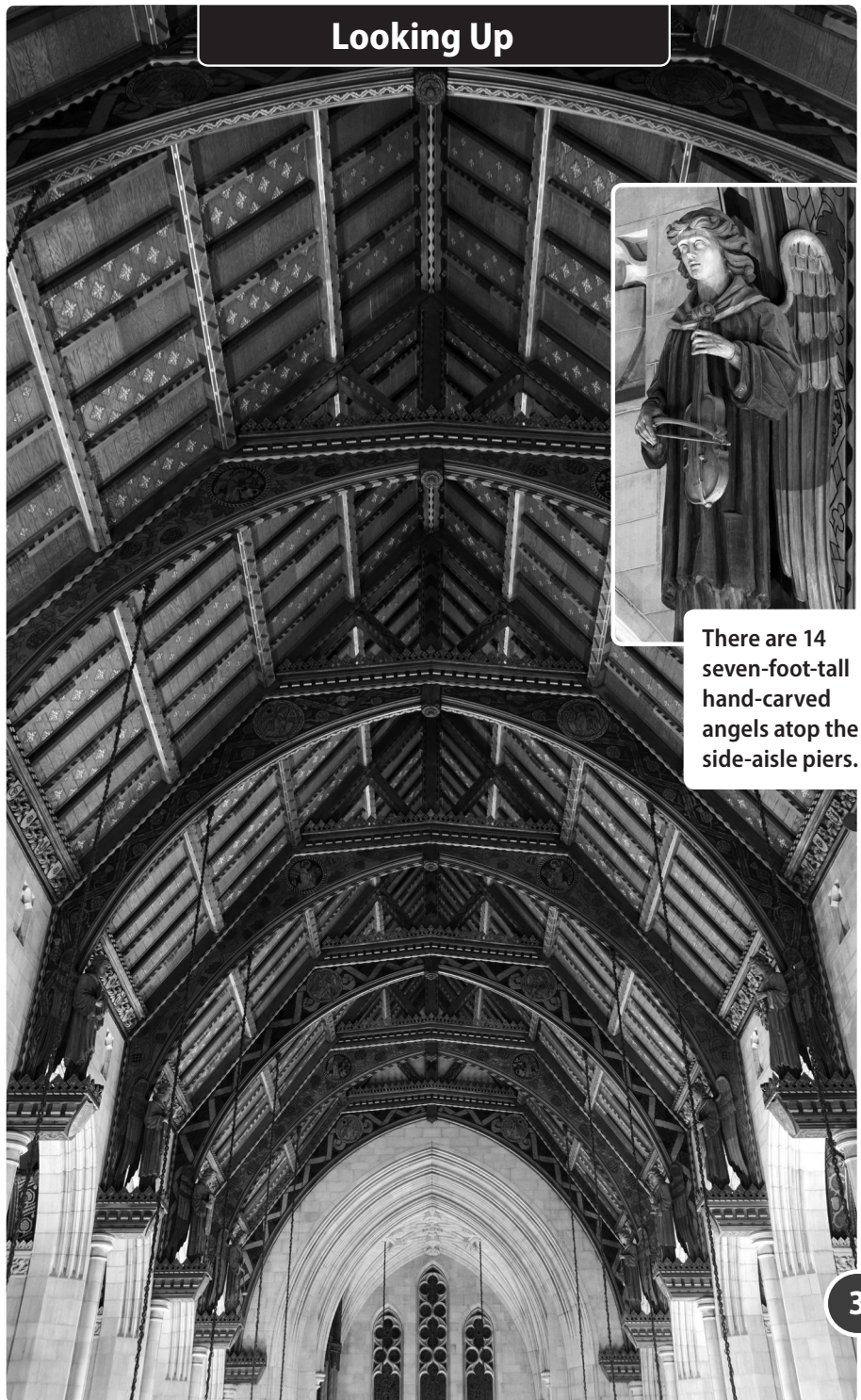
Almost everything you see in the nave looks like it looked in 1914.

The principal architect was Ralph Adams Cram (1863–1942), designer of hundreds of churches but best known for his work on the massive Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, the fifth largest church in the world.

The ceiling canvases above the side aisles and balconies were painted by Frederick C. Bartlett (1873–1953), the Chicago artist also known for the ceilings at the University Club as well as for donating to

the Art Institute of Chicago

George Seurat’s *Sunday Afternoon at La Grande Jatte*—along with now-priceless works by Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, and Picasso.



Looking Up

There are 14 seven-foot-tall hand-carved angels atop the side-aisle piers.

To see a beautifully restored 1914 ceiling canvas close up, exit the south doors of the Sanctuary and turn right into the Commons.

The Stained-Glass Windows

Be sure to walk up the center aisle and turn around to see the dramatic East Window over Michigan Avenue!

All of the stained-glass windows in the Sanctuary remain as they were installed. All were designed and built by the studios of Charles J. Connick (1875–1945) of Boston, a proponent of medieval art who worked frequently with Gothic Revival architect Ralph Adams Cram.

The windows on the sides of the nave are of a light floral/pastel “grisaille” style to let in more daylight.

The central “diamonds” of the grisaille windows generally feature Christian symbols (cross, chalice, ship) but there are exceptions (*see inset at left*).

The windows on the east and west ends of the nave are of thicker glass, with richer and more vivid colors.

The Great East Window is set in a stone “Tree of Jesse”-inspired tracery and features the trademark rich blue palette for which designer Connick is known.



These proud dogs (a nod to the architect’s coat of arms) are above the pastors’ plaque in the north aisle.

The Fourth Church pipe organ is the largest in Chicago, with 8,343 pipes.

The \$3 million Andrew Pipe Organ was built by the Quimby Organ Company in 2015.

The longest pipes (for low notes) are 32 feet tall; the smallest pipes (for high notes) are the size of a coffee stirrer!

Most of the organ pipes are deep inside the three-story-tall organ chamber in the front left of the church (where you can see the huge 1914 carved-wood case shown here). But there are also pipes in the north balcony and a few hundred more high above the Great East Window.

Music has for 150 years been an important part of the ministry of Fourth Church,

in both worship and in concerts. For more than 20 years the church has presented a free concert every Friday noon; that's more than 1,000 "Noonday" concerts!

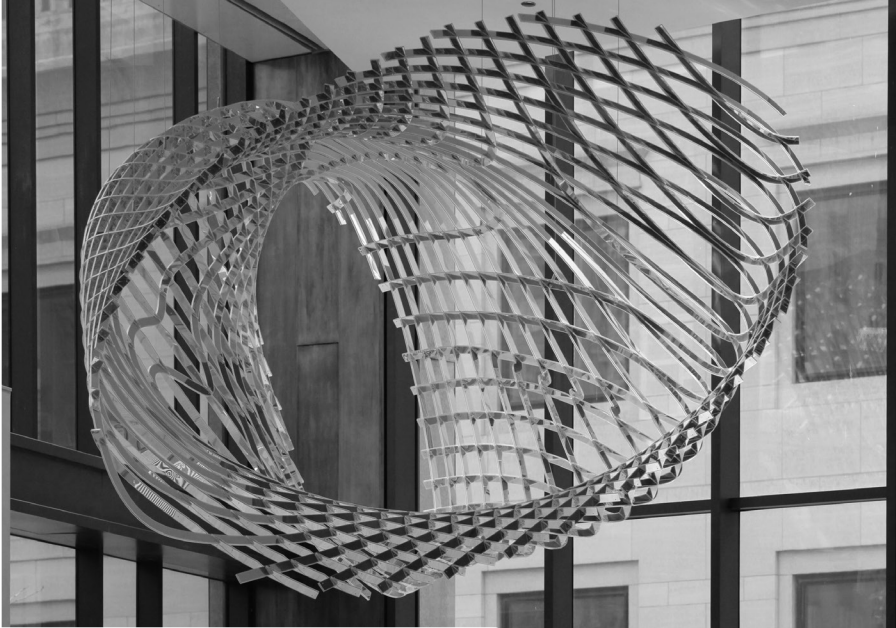
The Pipe Organ



The organ console is in the choir loft at the west end of the Sanctuary.

Buchanan Chapel

To get to Buchanan Chapel from the Sanctuary, exit through the south (left) doors, turn right, pass through the Commons, and take the stairs or elevators to the second floor.



Suspended from the ceiling of Buchanan chapel is the dramatic 17-foot-long sculpture “Quaternion” by Alyson Schotz. The undulating acrylic bands constantly change color based on viewing angle and time of day.



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In 2012, the church opened a five-story, 60,000-square-foot glass-and-copper addition featuring a beautiful new chapel.

Designed by Gensler Chicago and located immediately to the west of Fourth Church’s 1914 buildings, the Gratz Center is seamlessly connected to the Sanctuary through a large atrium (the Gignilliat Commons).

Buchanan Chapel is home to various kinds of worship services as well as being a popular lecture and concert venue.

The Gratz Center also houses a weekday preschool, office space for the church staff, a large dining room, and 20 multipurpose rooms (on floors 4 and 5). These rooms are used for everything from weeknight tutoring of 400 children living in under-resourced neighborhoods to weekday offerings through the church’s older adults’ program, the Center for Life and Learning.

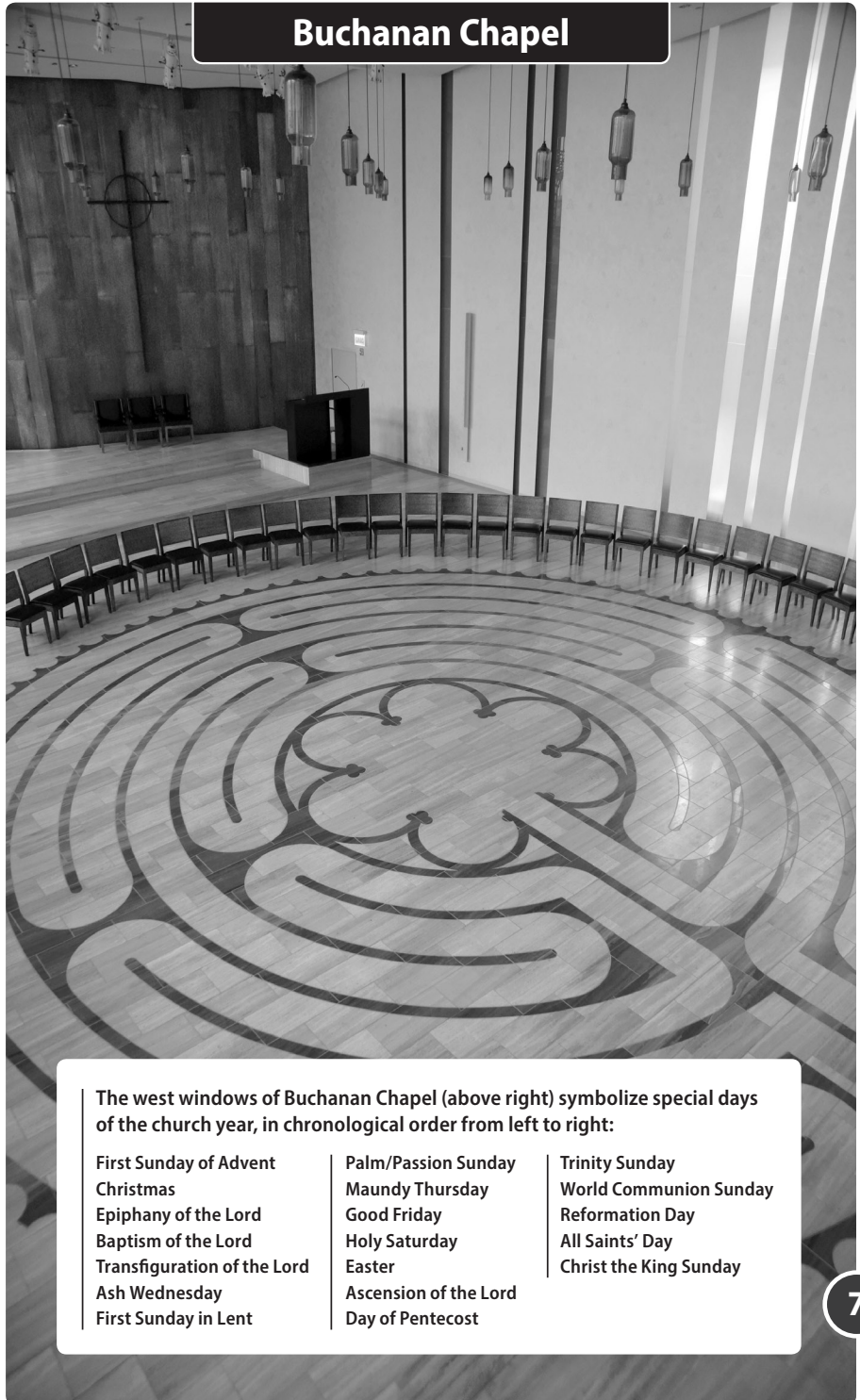
in the Gratz elevator lobbies are mounted additional stained-glass windows by Charles Connick (see page 4) from a former chapel.

Buchanan Chapel

The high-efficiency-glass curtain walls of the Gratz Center were chosen to capitalize on the outstanding views of Michigan Avenue. The green-patinaed copper cladding on the building's north (Delaware) and south (Chestnut) facades was selected to evoke the many green copper elements of the 1914 structures.

The floor of Buchanan Chapel incorporates a 40-foot polished limestone labyrinth, inspired by the thirteenth-century labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral in France.

To echo the green copper-clad exterior of the Gratz Center, the entire south wall in the chapel (*upper left in this photo*) is covered in striking polished copper.



The west windows of Buchanan Chapel (above right) symbolize special days of the church year, in chronological order from left to right:

First Sunday of Advent	Palm/Passion Sunday	Trinity Sunday
Christmas	Maundy Thursday	World Communion Sunday
Epiphany of the Lord	Good Friday	Reformation Day
Baptism of the Lord	Holy Saturday	All Saints' Day
Transfiguration of the Lord	Easter	Christ the King Sunday
Ash Wednesday	Ascension of the Lord	
First Sunday in Lent	Day of Pentecost	

The Courtyard

The popular “Children’s Fountain” (below) was a gift to the congregation in 1913 from architect Howard Van Doren Shaw.

From the covered cloister one can see the Gratz Center to the west. The cornerstones for the two halves of the church campus were laid 100 years apart: September 17, 1912, for the stone buildings and September 16, 2012, for the Gratz Center.



The beautiful church courtyard on Michigan Avenue is cherished by Chicagoans and tourists alike as a place of peacefulness in the heart of the bustling city.

Running along the north side of the courtyard is a bright enclosed art gallery space (and access ramp from Michigan Avenue) that was added in 1994— the only significant change of the past 100 years to the exterior appearance of the 1914 campus.

Apart from the Sanctuary, all of the buildings surrounding the courtyard were designed by prominent Chicago and North Shore architect Howard Van Doren Shaw (1869–1926).

During the summer the courtyard is home to the popular “Music by the Fountain” concert series.



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