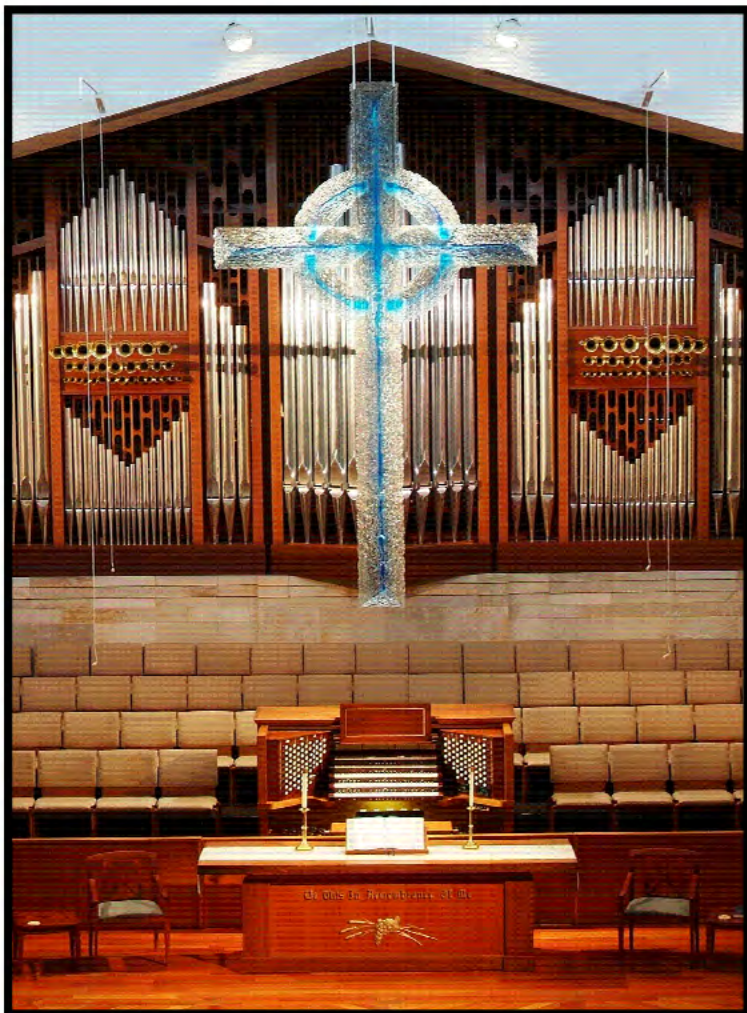


THE CERULEAN CROSS

by Henry Richardson



A unique glass sculpture by Henry Richardson, viewed at a local art gallery, provided the inspiration for contacting the sculptor about creating a glass cross for a dramatic focal point in the Sanctuary. After approving the initial drawing and sample of the remarkable technique for glass sculpturing Richardson had been perfecting at his studio in East Hampton, Massachusetts for seven years, the project began in October 2001. The cross was installed in the Sanctuary in March 2002.



The Celtic Cross design, selected by Richardson, dates back to the seventeenth century and is characterized with a circle around the arms to illustrate a sense of oneness, or being complete. The artist's name for the sculpture, "The Cerulean Cross," reflects the cerulean sky-blue color. The impressive lighting through the cross emphasizes the elegance of many tints and tones of the cerulean blue. The visual strength and dominance of the cross is an expression of the powerful impact of our faith in Jesus Christ and our mission: Serving Christ in our Community and the World. It is a constant reminder of our vision to step out in faith as a missional church.

"My sculptures emerge from a reconstruction process that begins with fractured pieces of glass and bonds them into whole forms," Richardson explained. "The construction of the cross with broken glass powerfully speaks spiritually of destruction and rebirth—a stirring



reminder of Christ's life, death and resurrection. We come together as a church with our brokenness and sin, but by the redemptive love of Christ we are made one. The broken glass of the cross refracts light that demonstrates our oneness, our diversity and our newness as members of the body of Christ.

In Christ we are new creations, reborn through the power of God over the destructive power of sin and death. The light that passes through this cross is like the Spirit that shines through each of us as we come together as the Body of Christ in our worship."

After careful planning involving intricate mathematical formulae, Richardson scored predetermined sections on the chosen slabs of one-half inch cold plate glass. With the classic hammer and chisel he cracked the edges of the pieces of glass and bonded them together with a high tech epoxy process similar to welding. He then brushed and smoothed the cracked surfaces so they are safe to the touch. The blue color of both the glass and the adhesive deepens as the layers mold together invisibly. "This method of glass sculpture is a painstaking and physically demanding process," Richardson commented. "The resultant sculpture exemplified in the Cerulean Cross is a rare treasure."



The \$85,000 cross sculpture, the largest in the world, is sixteen feet long, ten feet wide, one foot six-inches deep and weighs over one ton. Richardson personally drove the truck bringing the cross from his workshop in Massachusetts to Naples. The additional \$11,000 installation required specialized technicians and high level access machinery from a theatrical staging firm. The cross is securely double-anchored into the structure of the chancel with two strong, heavy wire cables.

The cross will constantly remind us that we, too, have the same components as the cross—we are broken and fractured and saved and redeemed through the death on the cross of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.



The Cerulean Cross is an original piece commissioned by First Presbyterian Church of Naples through the art galleries of Padulo, Longstreth and Goldberg, PLG ART.



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