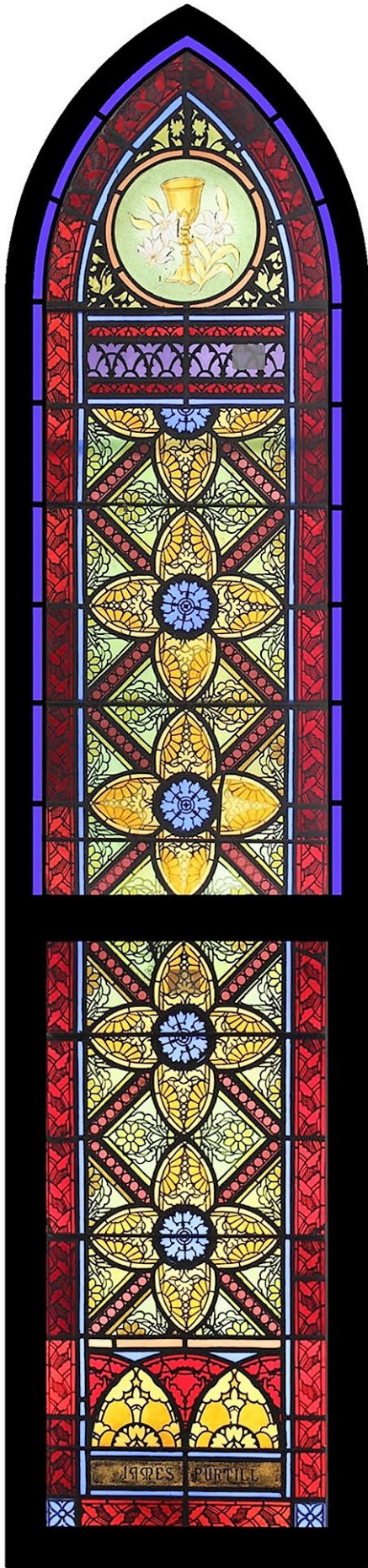


The Windows of St. Michael's

A brief history about those who donated the stained glass windows of St. Michael's, or in whose memory they were given.



Window Symbol: Chalice and Lilies

The chalice is a symbol of the Holy Eucharist, a commemoration of the Lord's sacrifice and resurrection to eternal life. Along with being a well-known representation of the Blessed Mother, the lily is also a symbol of the Lord's resurrection and His life after death.

Given by: James Purtill

James Purtill was born about 1827 in the parish of Fethard in the southern part of County Tipperary, son of Jeremiah and Ellen Purtill. He emigrated about 1841, probably to the Port of New York. James and other members of the Purtill family were among the founders of St. Michael Church. They first went to the Buffalo, New York, area then located in West Mystic. Some remained in Mystic, but most eventually settled in Pawcatuck. Purtill families lived on Walnut Street and Stillman Avenue for many years. They were closely related to another Tipperary family, the Craddocks of Pawcatuck, also a founding family of the church.

About 1857 James Purtill married Mary Jane Cronin of Ireland. For a period of time he and his siblings lived in Buffalo, New York, where a few of the Purtill children were born. Upon settling in Pawcatuck, Jim and Mary Purtill acquired the house at 1 Walnut Street. The property at that time extended from Walnut Street all the way to Noyes Avenue, and Jim operated a blacksmith shop there. It was a very popular blacksmith business, caring for the needs of many local families. He also worked as a teamster in the local quarries, shoeing and caring for horses, oxen and mules. And at one time he was even an engineer in the local textile mills.

Jim and Mary Jane (Cronin) Purtill had at least eight children, including Ellen; Jeremiah "Jerry" who married Annie Ryan; Mary Jane who married Martin Hogan; Catherine "Katie" who married Daniel Donovan; William H; James H; Lawrence who married Julia Twomey; and Thomas Purtill. James Purtill died in 1904 and Mary in 1915. They're buried in St. Patrick Cemetery in Mystic with other Tipperary families.

Descendants

Descendants of the Purtill family include members of the **Purtill, Craddock, Hogan, Donovan, McCormick, Morrison, Getchell, Dunnigan, Grace, Portman, and Shugrue** families. Sons James and Lawrence Purtill both served as selectmen for the town of Stonington. Son William Purtill was a blacksmith for the circus and traveled with the circus for years. Other descendants include a Chief of the Pawcatuck Fire Department, a Judge of the Connecticut Superior Court, a member of the Connecticut legislature, a Superior General of the Society of St. Edmund, the proprietor of McCormick's Department Store, a construction superintendent of Stonington High School in the Borough, and a popular Stillman Avenue mailman.