



Stained glass artist Beth Jenkin.

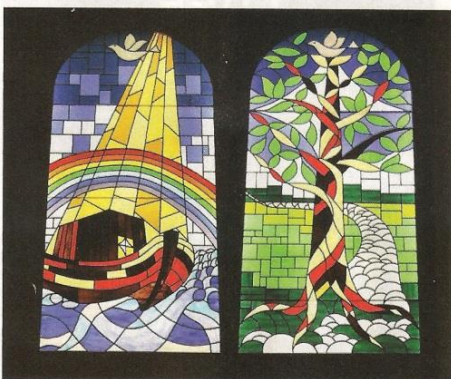
VERBATIM

Church helps artist with eye disease complete stained glass windows

Eyes may be the window to the soul, but when Beth Jenkin's eyes failed, the project she was working on — stained glass windows for Trinity United in Ottawa — revealed the church's heart. Just as the project began last summer, 29-year-old Jenkin was diagnosed with a degenerative eye disease. As her sight faded, church members helped finish the project.

Consisting of more than 700 pieces of glass, the windows are a lasting symbol of community spirit, perseverance and belonging. Here are three people who collaborated on the project, in their own words:

▶ "While working on the project, my sight deteriorated rapidly. The congregation gave me the ability to continue to create while going through something really tough. They helped keep me going. The project is special because it's the last one I'll do in the way I've been doing art for a long time." —*Beth Jenkin, artist-illustrator*



▶ "I worked in engineering where everything had an end use. I took up stained glass about five years ago. It was the first time in my life I did something creative. The designs are fabulous, but it's not just that. You meet people for coffee on Sunday, but you don't always get to know them. It was a wonderful community-building experience." —*Chris Humphrey, project co-ordinator*

▶ "The windows are so expressive of the spirit at Trinity these days. Whatever skills and talents are needed seem to be present. When Beth couldn't see clearly anymore, [a church member] was there to paint in the colours. The [window] designs and the way they were created reflect our diversity and the spiritual journey we are on together." —*Rev. Ellie Barrington, minister*

—TRISHA ELLIOTT

GREAT IDEA

Plotting a new cemetery

Broken tombstones. Overgrown vegetation. Lost records. Forget "rest in peace" — some church cemeteries are the antithesis of serenity.

Cemeteries fall into disrepair for a variety of reasons. Often congregations can't afford to maintain them, or a church is sold and plans aren't made to keep the cemetery up. Here are four ways to breathe new life (and profit) into an old graveyard:

1 Market its beauty and affordability. "Many churches have not been active in marketing their cemeteries," says Denis Marcoux, a funeral director and cemetery consultant for Montreal and Ottawa Conference. "First, clients are looking for beauty — the cemetery has to be well kept. And they look for price."

Union (Ont.) United cemetery is both beautiful and economical. "We aren't substantially cheaper, but we are



less," says Karen Whitehead, cemetery administrator. To promote the site, she rents a booth at the local home-and-garden show. "The sale of one grave recoups the [rental] cost," she says.

2 Identify potential buyers. Some faiths, such as Judaism and Eastern Orthodox Christianity, forbid cremation; adherents may be looking for plots. Rev. Daniel Hayward of Ingleside-Newington (Ont.) Pastoral Charge says that a secular cemetery nearby has sold burial plots to members of Montreal's Jewish community, 140 kilometres away.

3 Think outside the box (literally). About 60 percent of Canadians choose cremation, and some churches are opening cremation lots or columbariums. "You can pre-sell the niches and ensure that the amount pre-sold covers the construction cost," says Marcoux.

4 Stay hip to cemetery chic. Emerging trends may present new opportunities, such as offering green burials. Scattering gardens — where people spread cremated remains and the deceased's name is displayed on a plaque — are also becoming more prevalent, Marcoux says.

—T.E.