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Glorious TREASURES

Lower Hudson Valley churches offer beautiful displays of art and architecture

Life&Style Staff

We'll spend vacations in the grand capitals of Europe, admiring cathedrals in Paris and Rome. We'll stare in awe at stained glass in London, snap photos of flying buttresses in Munich, and admire swooping arches and detailed carvings in Madrid.

Here at home, we have churches with every bit as beautiful art and architectural details — but unless they are our own houses of worship we never visit — or even know what treasures they hold.

So on this Easter Sunday, we celebrate 10 hidden gems in churches all over the Lower Hudson Valley.

THE ROSE WINDOW BY HENRI MATISSE

Where: Union Church, 555 Bedford Road, Pocantico Hills. 914-332-6659.

Why you should see it: Matisse, a modernist painter, designed this exquisite yet simple window behind the church's pulpit as a tribute to his friend and mentor Abby Aldrich Rockefeller in 1956. The window is noteworthy because it was the last work of art Matisse completed before his death.

Also don't miss: While the Matisse window is a rarity, it is joined by nine other striking stained glass windows, each depicting a theme from the Bible. They were created by another legendary artist, Marc Chagall, from original paintings. The artist, according to a church history, actually painted on the glass to recreate his originals, adding in details such as facial features, animals, and birds to complete scenes in the windows, which were dedicated between 1964 and 1966.

Open to the public: Tours are overseen by Historic Hudson Valley from April-October, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., weekdays, except Tuesday; 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays; 2-5 p.m. Sundays. \$5 fee. Please note that no cameras are allowed. Go to www.hudsonvalley.org or call 914-631-8200. — Karen Croke

SEE GEMS, 4B



The Holy Virgin Protection Russian Orthodox Church in Nyack is known for its golden cupola, which is thought to be influenced by Persian architecture and represents a burning candle flame, signifying prayer.

Top left: The Rose Window at the Union Church of Pocantico Hills was designed by Henri Matisse.

View a slide show with 140 photos of churches featured in this story at LoHud.com.

Ricky Flores/The Journal News



File/The Journal News

Joe Queenan of Tarrytown will read from his memoir, "Closing Time," next Sunday in Briarcliff Manor.

April is a busy time for writers

Authors and their books are on the programs at a host of literary events

Barbara Livingston Nackman
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Finding a book-and-author program in Lower Hudson Valley won't be a problem in April.

Benjamin Cheever of Pleasantville will be at two different events, while Marilyn Johnson of Briarcliff and Joe Queenan of Sleepy Hollow will each be at one literary gathering. Writers Steven V. Roberts, Leonard Marcus and Sue Miller are expected to travel to our region to grace some of these literary festivals as well.

■ The Briarcliff Committee for the Arts kicks off National Library Week, which begins April 11, with Open Pages: An Afternoon of Author Readings and Musical Entertainment. Featured are two writers who will read from their memoirs — Queenan from "Closing Time" and Guilia Melucci from "I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti." There will be performances by Opera Steve plus the Lubin Singers and a wine and cheese reception. It is from 4 to 6 p.m. Sunday, April 11, at The Mansion at Rosecliff, Wilderness Way, Briarcliff Manor. Tickets: \$20 per person. Contact Elsa Rubenstein at 914-941-2260 or Laura Mogil at 914-923-0688.

■ The Greenburgh Public Library Foundation hosts a literary tour of its new library building during Books & Cooks. The program features food and drink from 13 local culinary spots and discussions by and mingling with seven local writers. This is a first-time event to raise money for the library. Authors are Simon Schama, Benjamin Cheever, Herbert Hadad, Bente Hansen, Marilyn Johnson, Toni Lydecker and Joe Wallace. Food and wine from 42 at the Ritz Carlton, Anna Artuso Pastry Shop, Captain Lawrence Brewing Company, Rioga, River City Grille, and others. It is from 6 to 9 p.m. Monday, April 12, at the Greenburgh Public Library, 300 Tarry-

SEE AUTHORS, 7B

More books coverage

■ A review of "The Sabbath World" by Judith Shulevitz, plus a full page of books coverage, 8B



New features

Open/Opening: A peek at Elia Taverna, a newcomer on the restaurant scene, in the Chester Heights section of Eastchester, 6B

Hold the Date: Tom Chapin, right, is among the performers whose upcoming concerts you will want to note in your datebooks. See the full list, 2B



Travel: Orlando

The wizards at Universal Orlando have conjured up a new Harry Potter attraction, 3B



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GEMS: Find art and architectural treasures nearby



Some of the 2,640 pipes from the tracker organ at the Mount Kisco Presbyterian Church. It took four months for four master builders from the von Beckerath Company in Germany to assemble the hand-built, 8-ton organ. *Carucha L. Meuse/The Journal News*



A detail from one of the Stations of the Cross at St. Augustine's Catholic Church in Ossining. The 15 large ceramic bas-relief panels, created by ceramic artist Nino Di Simone of Castelli in Italy, encircle a paved terrace overlooking the Hudson. *Ricky Flores/The Journal News*



The Chancel Organ and Rose Window of the Larchmont Avenue Church in Larchmont. *Matthew Brown/The Journal News*



Apostle symbols flank the pulpit of the Mamaroneck United Methodist Church. *Carucha L. Meuse/The Journal News*

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THE WATER ORGAN

Where: Mount Kisco Presbyterian Church, 605 Millwood Road, Mount Kisco. 914-666-8305. www.pcmk.org

Why you should see it: Don't expect bubbles: This impressive 2,640-pipe tracker organ is named The Water Organ because it is a "reflection of new life." And that's what this stately church was looking for when its original organ broke down during Palm Sunday services three years ago. It took four months for four master builders from the von Beckerath Company in Germany to assemble the hand-built, 8-ton organ, which soars heavenward just behind the pulpit. Its impressive 41 stops, 53 ranks, and gleaming pipes capped by gingerbread filigree create a sound that makes the heart soar. The first person to play this heavenly instrument? Well-known composer and pianist Anthony Newman of Bedford did the honors at its inaugural concert.

Also don't miss: The church often hosts concerts. At 8 p.m. April 24, the Taghkanic Chorale is here with selections from Rachmaninoff, including selections from "All Night Vigil," a Chesnokov jewel, "Salvation Is Created." 8 p.m.

Open to the public: Sunday worship services take place at 10 a.m. The church is open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. — Karen Croke

OUTDOOR CERAMIC STATIONS OF THE CROSS, OVERLOOKING THE HUDSON RIVER

Where: St. Augustine's Catholic Church, Eagle Park, 381 N. Highland Ave., Ossining. 914-941-0067.

Why you should see it: The views of the Hudson are simply magnificent here and the 15 large ceramic bas-relief panels, created by ceramic artist Nino Di Simone in his studio in the Italian town of Castelli, are set into brick housings that encircle a paved terrace overlooking the Hudson. Each of the blue and gold panels is 9 feet tall and 3 feet wide, and the ethereal figures are life-size. The panels depict Christ's journey bearing his cross, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

Also don't miss: Check out the modern architecture inside the church, which has ceiling-high glass windows and sweeping views of the river. Outside, you'll find 35 peaceful acres, with hiking trails, woods, gardens, fields and lush lawns.

Open to the public: Church hours are 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Information: 914-941-0067 or st-augustine-church.org — Bill Cary

THE APOSTLE SYMBOLS FRAMING THE ALTAR BEHIND THE PULPIT

Where: Mamaroneck United Methodist Church, 546 E. Boston Post Road, Mamaroneck. 914-698-4343 or www.mamaroneckumc.org

Why you should see it: The 12 Apostle symbols, installed in 1996, were created by local artist and church member Grace Powers Fraioli. The shields, which depict swords, ships, cups and other Christian symbols, were hand-sculpted from clay and feature cut-out images representing the lives of the Apostles and the manner in which they died.

Also don't miss: The church, on the National Reg-

ister of Historic Places, is a prime example of "Carpenter Gothic" architecture. Outside, step back and look up at the steeple; inside, see the metal pillars painted to look like stone.

Open to the public: 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, 8 a.m. to noon Sundays.

— Linda Lombroso

CHANCEL ORGAN WITH NEARLY 3,000 PIPES

Where: Larchmont Avenue Church, 60 Forest Park Ave., Larchmont. 914-834-1800 or www.lacny.org

Why you should see it: The organ, built by James Konzelman, was installed in 2008, on the heels of a renovation project aimed at improving acoustics in the church. It has 2,916 pipes that are operated from a four-manual console with digital features. The organ replaced an electronic instrument that had been in the church since 1972.

Also don't miss: The stained-glass Great West Window, installed in 1947, is a memorial to local soldiers who served during World War II. Another beauty: the Rose Window, installed in 1929 and the church's first stained-glass piece.

Open to the public: 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily.

— Linda Lombroso

CHINESE-STYLE ARCHITECTURE OF THE MAIN MARYKNOLL BUILDING, THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS CENTER

Where: Maryknoll, 55 Ryder Road, Ossining. 914-941-7590.

Why you should see it: The basilica-style Queen of Apostles chapel inside the imposing 4-story fieldstone building has soaring ceilings and 35 gorgeous Art Deco stained-glass windows. Construction on the main building began in 1919 and lasted until the mid-1950s. The chapel was completed in 1956. The floor of the rotunda is made of old slate pavers from Manhattan sidewalks that were torn up to make way for subways. Maryknoll was initially founded in 1911 as a mission to China and it has a long, rich history there.

Also don't miss: This world headquarters of Maryknoll is a very welcoming place, with lots to see. Check out the interactive Museum of Living Mission, the Founders Shrine and the Spellman Room, which has rotating exhibits of artwork from around the world. Outside, check out the elaborately styled Chinese-red Our Lady of Maryknoll kiosk.

Open to the public: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day. — Bill Cary

13 TIFFANY-MADE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

Where: Central Presbyterian Church, 64 New Main St., Haverstraw. 845-429-5111

Why you should see it: There are 13 exquisitely crafted, brilliantly colored, Tiffany-made stained-glass windows in the sanctuary. Two are enormous — one, visible from the street, depicts the ascension; the other shows Jesus and the two men on the road to Emmaus. The road to Emmaus window was originally built for the church's first location, and was brought to the new building by horse-drawn carriage in 1906. Flanking that window are six smaller windows that

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Ricky Flores/The Journal News

A detail of the Chinese bell at the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Center in Ossining. The exterior of the structure is influenced by Chinese architectural design.

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show symbols of the Christian faith: light, a cross, a crown, a cup, bread and grapes. Five windows in the back of the church depict the four writers of the Gospels with Christ in the center.

Also don't miss: The interior is adorned with Gothic and Victorian details made from American chestnut, a wood that became extinct after a blight in the 1920s. One particularly detailed carving is a rose figure in the ceiling that was designed to raise up to allow ventilation. The exterior of the church, which was built from 1906 to 1909, is made from Haverstraw brick collected from between 20 and 25 different companies.

Open to the public: 10 a.m. Sundays for worship; by appointment; and for two concerts: a spring one for which the date has not yet been set, and the Rockland County Christmas Concert at 2 p.m. on Dec. 4, 2010.

— Liz Johnson

TWO 485-POUND OAK DOORS, PAINTED RED

Where: St. Andrew's Episcopal in Brewster, 26 Prospect St. 845-279-4325.

Why you should see it: The gigantic red doors, which have remained intact since the building was constructed in 1903, have been kept bright red in keeping with religious tradition. The doors of Episcopal churches are most often painted red with the exception of churches named after St. Mary, which usually have blue doors, according to junior warden Valerie DeBenedette. "I think they just look striking," DeBenedette says. "If you just stand on the street and you look there — you've got the gray stone and the bright red — when it's really bright and sunny, it just looks ... good."

Also don't miss: The building — designed by Edward Pearce Casey, who completed the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and Arthur Durant Sneden, a former chief designer for the New York City Board of Education — is on the National Register of Historic Places, so there's lots to see, including the tower's main church bell, which weighs almost 1 ton; a vestibule portrait of noted circus promoter Seth B. Howes, who built the church; a chapel from Howes' Turk Hill estate in one of the church wings; and stained-glass windows made by Tiffany-trained craftsmen.

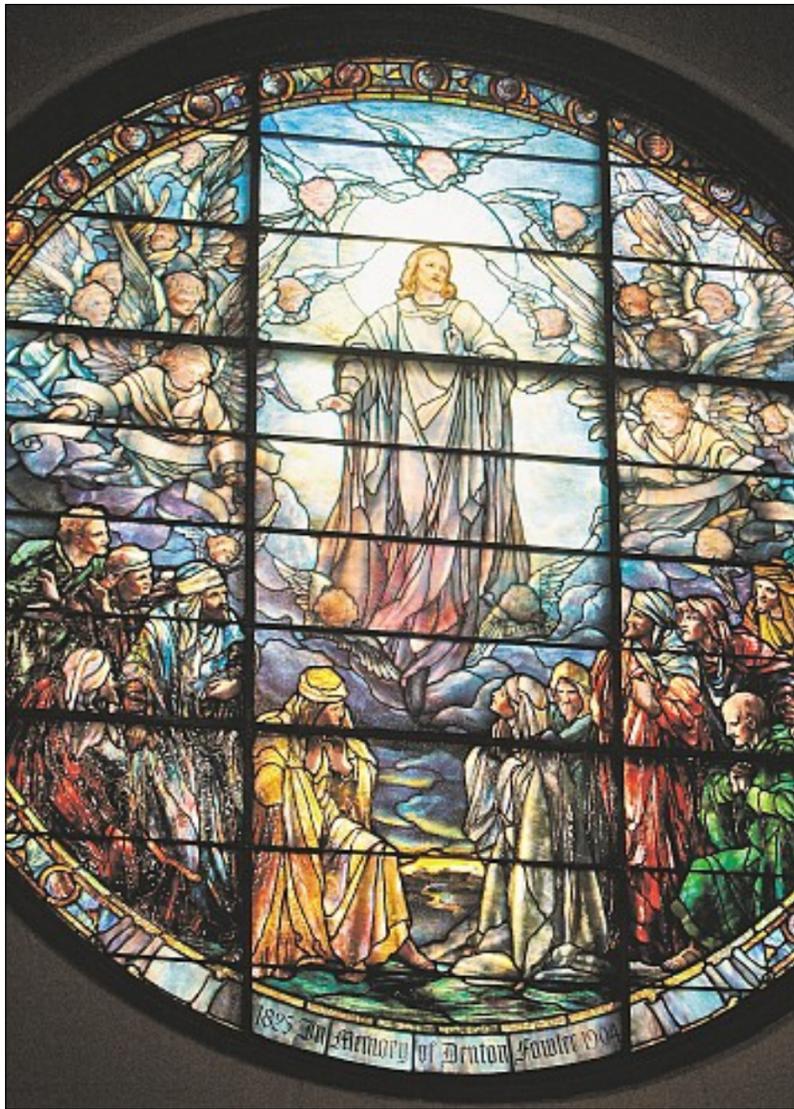
Open to the public: By appointment.

— Chris Serico

AMERICAN INDIAN MOTIFS

Where: Church of the North American Martyrs, Oscawana Lake Road, Putnam Valley. 914-737-4705

Why you should see it: This chapel — maintained by St. Columbanus Church in nearby Cortlandt Manor — was built in 1937 to honor the memory of eight French Je-



Peter Carr/The Journal News

The Ascension, an enormous stained-glass window visible from the street, is one of 13 stained-glass windows by Tiffany at Central Presbyterian Church in Haverstraw.

suits killed during a mission to convert local Native Americans to Christianity. Architect Frederick Necker designed the barrel-shaped church to look like an Iroquoian longhouse. Outside, the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary are translated into Iroquoian and etched onto one wall. Inside the church, the altarpiece is made of logs and shaped like a stockade; the altar light rests in a two-foot replica of an Iroquois canoe. Stations of the Cross are painted on Iroquois drumheads and overhead lamps resemble Iroquois food storage pots.

Also don't miss: The altar also has a wooden statue of the missionary leader Father Isaac Jogues, who was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1930.

Open to the public: Services are held at 5 p.m. Saturdays and at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sundays. Stations of the Cross are at 3 p.m. Wednesdays.

— Heather Salerno

A GOLD-PLATED CUPOLA 15 FEET IN DIAMETER

Where: Holy Virgin Protection Russian Orthodox Church, 51 Prospect St., Nyack. 845-353-1155.

Why you should see it: The onion-shaped dome, which is made of fiberglass and plated with gold, sits atop the church and is visible from

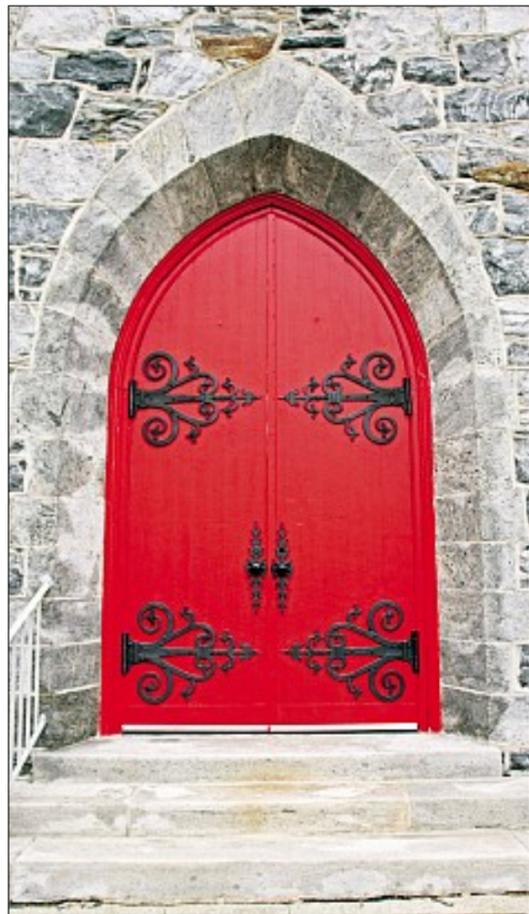
as far away as the Tappan Zee Bridge. The shape, which is common in Russian Orthodox churches, is thought to be influenced by Persian architecture, and represents a burning candle flame signifying prayer. (Its steep angle also shed a lot of snow in the cold climates of Northern Russia.) The two lateral bars across the top of the cupola represent where Jesus' hands and feet were nailed to the cross, and the slanted bar points upward to heaven for the man crucified on Jesus' right side; downward to hell for the man crucified on his left.

Also don't miss: The iconography inside the church, which was built by Vladimir Tolstoy, Leo Tolstoy's grandson, is stunning. There are brilliantly colored and gold-framed icons of saints, prophets, Mary and the Holy Trinity. The arched walls and sloped ceiling are painted a pale blue, and murals on them depict events throughout Christian history: Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, Moses and the Ten Commandments, birth of the Virgin Mary and Judgement Day. At eye level around the room, more than 100 icons, each measuring 8 1/4 inches by 10 1/2 inches, lean on the wall, attached with magnets against a metal bar. An enor-

mous brass chandelier hangs in front of the iconostasis, gold-veneer screens that open during service to reveal the altar.

Open to the public: 9:30 a.m. Sundays for worship. There is a Russian holiday boutique held each November, where the public can taste Russian food, buy Russian trinkets and get tours of the church. Watch for the dates to be announced on the church's Web site: holyyvirginprotectionchurch.org.

— Liz Johnson



Ricky Flores/The Journal News

The front entrance to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Brewster features brilliant red oak doors that weigh about 485 pound each.



Ricky Flores/The Journal News

The Holy Virgin Protection Russian Orthodox Church in Nyack is known for its hand-painted iconography and murals throughout the interior of the church.



File photo by Mark Vergari/The Journal News

A decorated canoe holds the altar light at the Church of the North American Martyrs in Putnam Valley. This chapel was built in 1937 to honor the memory of eight French Jesuits killed during a mission to convert local Native Americans to Christianity.