

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH'S STAINED GLASS

(based on original notes by Mrs. Inez Steen)

Stained glass has long been used in churches to set a mood for worship, to blend color and light, and as a teaching aid through symbolism. For centuries stained glass windows illustrated the scriptures for people who did not have access to written texts. Trinity's stained glass windows are likewise rich in symbolism.

Mr. Earl Friedlmaier at the Gavin Art Glass Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin designed our windows in the Sanctuary. Other windows originally installed in the Chapel (now the Choir Room) were the work of the Conrad Pickel Studio, Inc., of Waukesha, Wisconsin.

Stained Glass in the Sanctuary

All the windows in the sanctuary have stylized borders made up of two symbols: the square cross representing Christ and His Passion; and, the butterfly, representing the Resurrection

At the front of the nave, are two completely symbolic windows:

The Tree of Knowledge Window on the left represents the wisdom of the scriptures as the path to eternal salvation. The birds in the tree are the faithful abiding in Christ. The six-pointed star is known as the Star of David, the Star of the Old Testament, or the Creator's Star. Combined here with the Tree of Knowledge, it represents the Creator's Star (Genesis 1: "In the beginning God created.") The other symbol, the Ark of the Covenant, contained the sacred articles of worship in ancient Israel and is here a symbol of Old Testament worship.

The **Tree of Life Window** is on the right. It symbolizes the life of believers here on earth and in their eternal relationship with God. The gifts of the spirit as recorded in the Old and New Testaments are written in Latin. The Old Testament verse is Isaiah 11:2 - "Wisdom and Understanding, Counsel and Might, Knowledge and Fear of the Lord." The second verse is from the New Testament, Revelation 5:12 - "Power, Riches, Wisdom, Strength, Honor, Glory and Blessing."

The middle three windows on each side (going from front to back on the left and from back to front on the right) tell the story of Christ's life. There are three symbols in each window. The symbol below the picture emphasizes a facet of Christ's life. The other two symbols are for individual disciples.

The **Nativity Window** is a picture of the Birth of Jesus. The Christ symbol is the Three Crowns symbolizing the Wise Men in the Christmas story. The symbols for the disciples are: The Keys and Inverted Cross for Peter, and the Staff and Purse for James (brother of John). The Keys are the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:13-19), and the inverted cross is the kind tradition says was used in Peter's martyrdom. The staff and purse for James the Great represent his missionary travels. He is believed to have traveled spreading the Gospel for 14 years after the crucifixion of Jesus.

The **Christ in the Temple Window** depicts Jesus at the age of twelve carrying on a discussion with a learned rabbi in the Temple. The Candle refers to the insight and understanding of the boy Jesus. The Chalice and Snake refers to the Apostle John who was given a poisoned cup of wine to drink several times, and each time was prevented from drinking it. The Cross Saltire and the Great Boat-Hook symbolize Andrew. The Cross Saltire is sometimes called the Andrew's Cross. Tradition states that it was while preaching the Gospel in Greece that he was martyred on this kind of cross. The boat-hook refers to Andrew's life as a fisherman and as a fisher of men.

The **Palm Sunday Window** shows Jesus riding into Jerusalem in triumph. The symbol of the Cross and Crown point up the true Kingship of Jesus as realized on the cross of Calvary. The symbol of the Slender Cross and Carpenter's Square represents Philip. Bartholomew is represented by an Open Bible and a Flaying Knife, referring to his life as a missionary and to the method of his death.

The **Gethsemane Window** shows Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane with the sleeping disciples in the foreground. The Lantern is symbolic of Christ's arrest at night. A Lance Stone is used as a symbol for Thomas because he was stoned to death in India. The Windmill represents James the Less who was martyred at the age of 96 years. He had worked in and about Jerusalem.

The **Crucifixion Window** shows Jesus in the agony of death on the Cross of Golgotha. The large "J" and money bag remind us that it was Judas who betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver. Matthew is represented by a Battle-Ax and Chest. The chest refers to Matthew's work as a tax collector before he became a disciple. The ax symbolizes the method of his death. Jude is symbolized by a Boat. He traveled far - to Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia.

The **Resurrection Window** beautifully portrays the victory of Christ over death. The Butterfly again symbolizes Christ's resurrection. Simon is represented by a Fish on the Hook as a reminder that he was a fisher of men. Matthias, who was chosen to take the place of Judas Iscariot, has the symbol of an Open Bible and Double Battle-Ax. This apostle is said to have been stoned and then beheaded after missionary work in Judaea.

The **Ascension Window** in the chancel completes the story. The central figure is that of the ascending Christ, rising from earth to His Father in heaven. The Sun moon and stars represent God, the Creator. The Phoenix represents Resurrection. The Rainbow symbolizes the Covenant and Promises of God. The Alpha and Omega (first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) is God as both the beginning and the end of all (eternal). The two Feet on the Globe represent Christ's impact on earth, on history, and on people of all time. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John represent the Gospel message. The Rays Surrounding Christ symbolize God's pleasure with His Son. The Crown at the top center refers to Christ's victory over Sin, Death and the Devil and of his ascending to rule with His Father.

The **Martin Luther Window** is at the back left. It symbolizes the Great Reformer with the Luther Seal or Coat of Arms; though it not accurately represented (it should be a black cross within a red heart within a white rose set in a field of blue and enclosed in a circle of gold.) There is also a Lion to represent Luther's courage and a Harp to symbolize his love of music and

contributions to it. The Swan is a symbol of John Huss of Bohemia who was burned at the stake for his attempts to purify the Church.

The **St. Paul Window** is at the right back of the chancel with its central cross and sword (... of the spirit: the Word of God - Ephesians 6:17 - as symbols of Paul and his ministry. Two Old Testament symbols are also included: Stone Tablets with the Ten Commandments, and the Fiery Chariot in which Elijah was taken into Heaven.

The **Rose Window** is located in the balcony (choir loft) and is now framed by raised organ pipes. It is a simple stone cross set off by elaborate wood tracery and colored glass.

Narthex

Psalm Windows

There are six windows with each containing a shield with a Bible verse:

Psalm 23:3 - "He restoreth my soul."

Psalm 23:4 - "For Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

Psalm 100:5 - "His truth endureth forever."

Psalm 100:4 - "Be thankful unto Him."

Psalm 23:5 - "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

Psalm 23:1 - "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

The **Transom Window** over the Narthex front entrance contains the Trefoil, three lobes of equal size yet forming one figure. This figure is one of the traditional symbols for the Holy Trinity. Embedded in the trefoil are a Cross and Orb proclaiming the triumph of the Gospel in the world.

Vesting Sacristy

The **Window of the Ministry** in the vesting sacristy features the bust of Dr. Martin Luther, sixteenth century Protestant reformer. The window also contains the traditional symbols of the ordained ministry: Chalice and Bible, Stole, and the Keys of the office of ministry.

Sanctuary Level Elevator Lobby and Hallway Windows

There were originally eight stained glass windows in the Old Chapel (present Choir Room.) Five are descriptions of Christ. The other three symbolize Faith, Hope, and Love (1st Corinthians, chapter 13.)

I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life (Elevator lobby: left-hand side.)

The interestingly designed road symbolizes the Way. The Bible represents Truth. Flowers, birds, water; grasses and light represent Life and its creation.

I Am the Good Shepherd (Elevator Lobby: right-hand side.)

The Chi Rho (X P) represents Christ. It is one of the most ancient of monograms of "Christ" ("Christos" in Greek), and was spelled "XPICTOC." Chi and Rho are the first two letters. In

ancient Greek uncials, the letter “C” is used at the end rather than “S” (Sigma) familiar in our day. The crook represents Christ as the Shepherd. The sheep symbolize people. The water signifies Christ’s care of His sheep in providing for them. The crown at the top of the window refers to Christ’s victory and kingship. The three red crosses both in color and form represent Christ’s passion and loving care of His sheep.

I Am the Light of the World (Elevator Hallway: choir room wall, right side.)

The monogram IHS symbolizes Jesus. The monogram is placed in the sun symbolizing Jesus as the Light of the World. The sun and moon represent creation. They also mean that as the sun and moon give light to our earth, so Christ gives light to His followers on their way through life. The square cross represents Christ. The world represents those for whom Christ is the Light. The treatment of light by rays and color is stylized, varied and very interesting. There are many crosses in this window: a Latin cross, two black crosses, a group of three Latin crosses, one green cross and an Andrews cross.

I Am the True Vine (Elevator Hallway: choir room wall, left side.)

The vine represents Christ. The branches represent Christians. The grapes represent good works arise out of faith. (Note the crosses and stylized trefoils.)

I Am the Bread of Life (Hallway just outside of Elevator Lobby)

The Chi Rho represents Christ. The Wheat and the Cup represent the Sacrament of the Altar as a sustaining force in our spiritual life. The Basket (representing Bread) and the Fish symbolize both food for the body and for the soul. It also recalls the miracle of the feeding of so many with just a few loaves and fishes after they had gathered to hear Jesus preach.

The **Faith Window** (High on outside wall in elevator hallway to the education wing.)

- The triangular form is a symbol of the Trinity.
- The IHS symbolizes our Savior.
- The nimbed Latin cross represents our Savior who was victorious over the cross.
- The doves represent the Holy Spirit who engenders faith.
- The two crosses remind one of the dual natures of Christ.
- The font refers to the Sacrament of Baptism.
- (The window’s overall message is that it is the Holy Spirit who engenders faith in our crucified, victorious, and risen Savior; and we become members of the Kingdom at Baptism.)

The **Hope Window** (High on outside wall in elevator hallway to the education wing.)

- The cross used with an anchor is the symbol of hope. It is sometimes called the cross of hope.
- The dove with the leaf represents hope also. It goes back to the Old Testament flood story of the dove returning to the ark with a leaf in its beak.
- The palm branch symbolizes the peace that comes with hope.
- The three crosses refer to the Trinity.

The **Love Window** (High on outside wall in elevator hallway to the education wing)

- The Lamb is a symbol of Jesus, the Lamb of God who died for our sins.
- The Cross represents the passion and suffering of Christ on our behalf.
- The Cup and Serpent are a symbol of John, the disciple of Love.
- The Rose of Sharon represents the love of Christ for humanity.
- The three crosses point up the importance of belief in the Trinity and how each person of the Trinity has done a special work of love for us.

Additional Windows

Narthex Side Entrance Stair Landing (First Street Side):

Psalm 100:4 - "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving."

Narthex Choir Loft Stair Landing (First Street Side):

Psalm 100:2 - "Come before His presence with singing."

In Storage (Removed when Education Wing was added.):

Psalm 100:5 - "His mercy is everlasting."

2nd Floor Elevator Lobby (Removed from Choir Loft Stairway for Elevator):

Psalm 100:1 - "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord."