

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

The Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Rehoboth Beach, DE

THE EIGHT ORIGINAL WINDOWS

The eight windows in the corners of the front of the sanctuary were dedicated on July 10, 1988. They include the following:



THE BAPTISMAL SHELL WINDOW

The shell with the water flowing from it was originally a symbol of our Lord's Baptism by John. However, it also serves as a reminder of our own Baptism and the many spiritual benefits we receive at Baptism.

THE PASCHAL LAMB WINDOW

"Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). The Lamb reminds us of the sacrifice which Christ made - His very life - for our salvation. The empty cross with the halo shows us that the Lamb was victorious over the cross, sin, death, and the devil.



THE 'REJOICE AND BE GLAD' WINDOW

Traditionally viewed as a symbol of the second coming of our Lord, the trumpets in the background also remind us of a call to worship. The words "Rejoice and be glad," (from Psalm 118:24) remind us of the attitude which permeates the faithful Christian life, for "this is the day the Lord has made" (Psalm 118:24).



THE SHIP WINDOW

Protected by the mighty hand of God, the church sails through all storms unharmed. Jesus has promised that the church will stand and "the gates of Hell will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18). The word "Nave," the part of the church where the congregation sits, came from the Latin word for ship.





THE CROSS AND CROWN WINDOW

These symbols emphasize the reward of the faithful in the life after death given to those who believe in the crucified and resurrected Savior. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you the Crown of Life" (Revelation 2:10).

THE DESCENDING DOVE WINDOW

The dove signifies the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, to establish faith and the presence of God in the life of the believer. The three intertwining circles indicate the equality, unity and co-eternal nature of the Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



THE 'ALIVE IN CHRIST' WINDOW

Having been dead to sin, we are now "Alive in Christ." The Chalice and the Wafer refers to the Lord's Supper, in which we find the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of our faith. The book represents God's sacred Word. It is through a diet of Word and Sacrament that we truly become "Alive in Christ."

THE BUTTERFLY WINDOW

The butterfly is a symbol of the resurrection and eternal life. It also reminds us that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (II Corinthians 5:17). Just as the butterfly leaves the cocoon and soars upward with a new body, so through Christ His followers are born to a new life.



THE MINISTRY OF OUR SAVIOR WINDOWS

The eight windows above the chancel depict the ministry of our Savior, Jesus Christ, whose title has become the name of our church, The Lutheran Church of Our Savior. These windows were dedicated on June 2, 1996, and symbolize the following:

THE ALPHA AND OMEGA



At the corners above the chancel are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, the Alpha and the Omega. These are our Savior's designation of Himself in Revelation 1:8 and 22:13: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." The purple in the shields on which the Alpha and Omega are placed is the color of royalty, stressing our Savior's position as the King of the universe and Head of the Church. The placement of these

windows at the extreme ends of the chancel stress that Jesus' ministry covers everything from the beginning to the end of time.



'HE WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT'

The second window, a picture of a white lily, is the symbol of purity, stressing that our Savior was conceived without sin, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

'BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY'

The third window, a picture of the holy Family, reminds us that our Savior came into the world as a tiny baby, to experience all that we experience here on earth, and, on top of that, to live the perfect life that we are not able to live.



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'SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED AND WAS BURIED'



The fourth window, a picture of a crown of thorns with three iron spikes, reminds us that our Savior not only lived the perfect life that we are unable to live, but that He also took on Himself the punishment that we deserve for our sin. The crown of thorns was mockingly placed on His head by Pilate's soldiers as they made fun of His status as the King of the Jews. The three spikes were driven into Him when He was crucified, one in each of His hands

and the third spike in His feet. In this way "the blood of Jesus Christ purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

"THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD"

The artist explains the fifth window as follows: "The bursting pomegranate is the symbol of the Resurrection. It represents our Lord, who on Easter Day burst from the tomb." In His victory over death, Jesus was verified by God to be our Savior, and with that also comes the assurance of our own resurrection from the dead to live forever with our Savior.



"HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AND SITS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY"

The flaming chariot, which carried Elijah into Heaven (2 Kings 2:11), has become a traditional symbol of our Savior's ascension into Heaven to become the King of the universe and Head of the Church, and thus becomes the picture in the sixth window.



"HE WILL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD"

In the seventh window the hand of our Savior, coming out of the cloud, is extended to the earth in blessing, as it rests on the green "ribbon of life," to remind us that when Jesus comes the judge of the living and the dead, He will not be coming as a vindictive judge, but rather as our Savior, welcoming us back home with Him to live with Him forever.



CROSSES, FLOWERS, AND PLANTS WINDOWS

Eight windows on each side of the front portion of the nave were dedicated on September 20, 1998. The corner windows on each side contain various depictions of the cross of our Lord, as follows:



THE CELTIC CROSS (left front, facing the chancel)

This is a regular Latin cross, with a circle representing eternity.

THE TAU CROSS (left rear, facing the chancel)

This is generally used as a symbol of the promised Savior, often as a symbol of Advent. The name comes from the shape of the cross, which forms the Greek letter Tau ("T").



THE JERUSALEM CROSS (right front, facing the chancel)

This is formed by four Tau crosses, meeting at their lower ends, with four Greek crosses in the four corners, representing Jesus as the Savior of both Jews and Gentiles.

THE MALTESE CROSS (right rear, facing the chancel)

This is said to symbolize the eight Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10), symbolized by the eight points, all equidistant from each other.



CROSSES, FLOWERS, AND PLANTS WINDOWS

Twelve windows (were dedicated on September 20, 1998) depict plants and flowers that are mentioned in the Bible and/or have symbolic meanings for the Christian faith. Those on the left side, from front to rear, are as follows:



GRAPES AND GRAPEVINE

Jesus said, "I am the Vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in Me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5, N.R.S.V.)

LILY OF THE VALLEY

The words of Song of Solomon 2:1 ("I am...a lily of the valley") is often applied to our Lord. This flower symbolizes humility and purity, which also describes our Lord (Philippians 2:6-8 and 1 Peter 2:22).



HOLLY

The artist describes this window as follows: "The thorny, prickly leaves of the holly tree are regarded as a symbol of the crown of thorns and so recall the Passion of Christ."

DAISY

The artist describes this window as follows: "The daisy is the emblem of the Christ Child's innocence."



All of the flowers together call our attention to the fact that we Christians are connected to our Triune God through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, Who calls us to a life of peace, harmony, love and humility, rising above selfish gain, sinful passion, laziness, indifference and ignorance of God's Word.

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IRIS

The artist points out that the iris is "frequently used instead of the lily in pictures of the mother of our Lord."

OLIVE BRANCH

The artist describes the olive branch as "the symbol for peace, harmony and healing." The olive branch was also brought back to the ark by the dove (Genesis 8:11), a sign that God's punishment of the earth by the Flood had ended. Thus the olive branch is also a sign of God's grace and mercy.



MYRTLE

The artist describes this window as follows: "The myrtle is the symbol of love. In Christian symbolism it is an allusion to the Gentiles who became followers of Christ."

VIOLET

The artist points out that "St. Bernard describes the Virgin Mary as the violet of humility." She also observes that the violet's usual location beneath hedges or in the shadow of larger plants makes the violet an ideal symbol of humility.



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LOTUS

The artist has the following comment on this window: "As the lotus, with roots in quagmire, stems in muddy water, emerges as a flower of exquisite beauty and purity, so Christians are to rise above all passion and selfish gain."

CLOVER (OR SHAMROCK)

The three leaves of this plant are symbolic of the Holy Trinity.



POPPY

The poppy is sometimes shown with reference to the death of Christ. The artist points out that "it signifies sleep, ignorance and indifference," and its connection to Christ's death is therefore a reference to the disciples' falling asleep in the Garden, the ignorance of those who condemned and crucified Christ (cp. Jesus' words, "Father, forgive them; they don't know

what they are doing," Luke 23:34), and the indifference of the people at the foot of the cross, who shook their heads and mocked our Lord on the cross. For Christians this stands as a warning against becoming lazy, ignorant, or indifferent when it comes to our devotion to Christ.



CHRISTMAS ROSE (ALSO KNOWN AS THE MESSIANIC ROSE)

This famous symbol of our Lord suggests both His divine (the white color) and human (the five petals) natures.

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THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WINDOWS

The twelve windows in the rear of the sanctuary, were dedicated on Pentecost Sunday, June 11, 2000, and depict the work of the Holy Spirit in the church and the life of the Christian. The six windows on the right, facing the chancel, depict the six chief parts of the Christian Faith, as found in Luther's Small Catechism. This Faith comes to us as a gift of the Holy Spirit

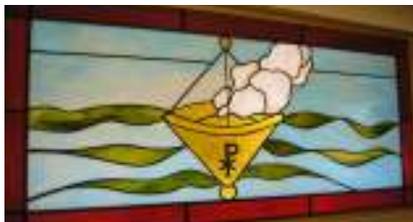


THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The window shows how the Commandments are divided into the two Tables of the Law, the left Table indicating our relationship with God (placing Him first, honoring His Name, and worshipping God), and the right Table indicating our relationship with human beings (human authorities, respect for human life, respect for marriage, respect for property, respect for reputation, contentment with property, and contentment with the persons in our lives).

THE APOSTLES' CREED

The words, "I Believe," are the first words of the Creed, which summarizes our faith in God the Father, almighty Creator, God the Son, our Redeemer, and God the Holy Spirit, Who has brought us together into the Christian Church through the Gospel of God's forgiveness, and given us the sure hope of the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.



THE LORD'S PRAYER

The censer, with its smoke rising to the sky, is a symbol of prayer, as recorded in Revelation 5:8. The Greek letters Chi Rho, printed on the censer, are the symbol of Christ's Name, thus identifying this particular prayer as the prayer that our Lord has given to His Church.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

The bowl, shell and three drops of water remind us that we are baptized in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in accordance with our Lord's command in Matthew 28:19.



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CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

The hand on the shoulder of the person making confession is the hand of Christ, Who brings His forgiveness to the person, as spoken by the pastor or confessor in the words of the absolution.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

Known also as the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, the Lord's Table, and the Holy Eucharist, this Sacrament brings the forgiveness of sins, symbolized by the white cross of Jesus, where those sins were washed away, and eternal life, represented by the circle behind the cross, as we receive Christ's body and blood with the bread and wine, symbolized by the grapes and the sheaves of wheat.



MARTIN LUTHER'S COAT OF ARMS

Luther described his coat of arms in a letter to a friend, Lazarus Spengler, dated July 8, 1530, as follows: "There is first to be a cross, black [and placed] in a heart, which should be of its natural color, so that I myself would be reminded that faith in the Crucified saves us. . . . Even though it is a black cross, [which] mortifies and [which] also should hurt us, yet it leaves the heart in its [natural] color [and] does not ruin nature; that is, [the cross] does not kill but keeps [man] alive Such a heart is to be in the midst of a white rose, to symbolize

that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace; in a word it places the believer into a white joyful rose; for [this faith] does not give peace and joy as the world gives and, therefore, the rose is to be white and not red, for white is the color of the spirits and of all the angels. Such a rose is to be in a sky-blue field, [symbolizing] that such joy in the Spirit and in faith is a beginning of the future heavenly joy; it is already a part [of faith], and is grasped through hope, even though not yet manifest. And around this field is a golden ring, [symbolizing] that in heaven such blessedness lasts forever and has no end, and in addition is precious beyond all joy and goods, just as gold is the most valuable and precious metal."

THE ARK AND THE RAINBOW

The ark has traditionally been a symbol of the church, a refuge against the storms of Satan and the world, just as the ark was a refuge for faithful Noah and his family (Genesis 6-9). Above the ark is pictured the rainbow, which God placed in the sky as "the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth," never again to destroy the world by a flood. Since then the rainbow has become the symbol of God's everlasting promises, which surround the church with the assurance of God's everlasting covenant of grace and forgiveness that is ours through Christ.



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THE WORD IN THE WORLD

The Bible above the globe reminds us that God's Word has gone out to the entire world. That this is God's Word is symbolized by the sun, a symbol of God's presence and His rule over the world. This calls us to bring God's precious Word to all nations, to draw all people to Christ as their Savior and Lord.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The lamp is a symbol of education. What makes this window a symbol of Christian education is the golden color of the lamp, recalling Peter's description of the Christian faith, which is "of greater worth than gold" (1 Peter 1:7) and the bright red flame, which reminds us of the Holy Spirit, whose appearance to the disciples on Pentecost was accompanied by "what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them" (Acts 2:3).



HELPING HANDS

The church in the world is called to reach out to people, both physically and spiritually, ministering to the hungry and thirsty, the ill-clothed, sick and prisoners (Matthew 25:31-40), but also to bring the precious Gospel to those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6).

THE OFFICE OF THE KEYS

Jesus told Peter (Matthew 16:19, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on Earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on Earth will be loosed in Heaven." The rays coming from the red circle (the symbol of the eternal Lord) emphasize God's authority given to His Church to proclaim the Gospel of forgiveness to those who repent of their sins, and the Word of judgment to those who refuse to repent.



THE RIBBON OF LIFE

The artist has woven through all 16 of the stained glass windows a green "Ribbon of Life," to remind us that every part of our life, physical, spiritual, and eternal, comes to us from our eternal Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, Who is with us always, the end of the world, as He has promised (Matthew 28:20).

THE ARTIST

The windows were designed and made by Mrs. Donna Middleton of Stained Glass Creations of Millsboro, Delaware. We are pleased and privileged to have Mrs. Middleton finish these windows as her final work before retirement.