



OUR SANCTUARY'S STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

While sitting in a sanctuary pew before a worship service, you have undoubtedly marveled at the beauty of our stained glass windows, and you may have wondered about the symbolism depicted in those windows. In this pamphlet, we will describe our windows. Before we begin, a little history. Our stained glass windows were given by a former member, Charles R. Fahringer, as a memorial to his wife, Adelaide Gibb Fahringer. The windows were made by Giannini and Hilgart of Chicago, one of the few companies that Frank Lloyd Wright used to produce his designs. After a year of production and installation, our windows were formally dedicated on June 4, 1961.

The early Christian church depended heavily on images and symbols to communicate Bible stories to a population that was mostly illiterate. The physical space in which people worshiped became the arena for teaching through imagery that was easy to understand. Our windows continue that tradition of communicating with worshipers by the use of images. Our stained glass windows are in three parts. On the west wall (on your right as you face the pulpit), the images depict events from the First Testament. They start with the window nearest the chancel and move toward the rear of the sanctuary, in the order of the books of the Bible. The east wall deals with New Testament stories, and the large window in the chancel depicts the history of the Christian Church.

Genesis

We begin with the first window on the right, which illustrates eight stories from the book of Genesis. We'll start with the top left image and move downwards to the bottom image of that panel. Then we'll jump to the top right image and move downwards to the bottom. At the top left is the Creation Star, pointing to the six attributes of God: power, wisdom, majesty, love, mercy, and justice (Genesis 1 & 2). Beneath the Creation Star is the Serpent on the Tree of Forbidden Fruit (Genesis 3:1-7). Mankind is banished from the Garden of Eden, and the Flaming Sword guards its entry (Genesis 3:24). At the bottom of the left panel we see Two Altars, prepared by Adam and Eve's sons. Cain offers produce from the field, and Abel offers a lamb from his flock (Genesis 4:1-7). At the top right we see Noah's Ark (Genesis 6-9). Beneath the ark is the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). Next is a Bundle of Wood and a Bucket of Burning Coal, representing the readiness of Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac (Genesis 22). At the bottom right are the Sun and Moon, representing Isaac's son, Jacob, and his wife, Rachel; the Twelve Stars represent Jacob's sons (Genesis 35:23-26).

Exodus

At the top left of the second window, we see a Whip and a Pile of Bricks, which signify the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 1: 8-14). As we know, Moses was called to free the Israelites, and he confronted Pharaoh with a series of plagues. The image at the bottom left shows Lamb's Blood on the Doorposts and Lintels of the Houses, which

was placed there to save the first-born children of the Israelites from the angel of death in the final plague. Our Jewish friends commemorate this event as the Passover (Exodus 12:1-13). At the top right, we see Twin Stone Tablets bearing the Ten Commandments, brought down by Moses from Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19-20). At the bottom right, a Scroll is depicted, which represents the words that Moses wrote in the book of the covenant, also known as the “Law of Moses.” (Exodus 24:4 & 7). (As an aside, the original blueprints for the sanctuary show that the second, third and fourth windows on the west side were always half the height of the other windows; the chapel abuts this wall. There is no evidence that these windows were ever the same size as the remaining stained glass windows.)

The Promised Land and Four Prophets

The third and fourth windows on the right depict First Testament events that may not be familiar. The third window illustrates life in the promised land. At the top left, we see a Seven-Branched Candlestick, or temple menorah, which depicts the worship life of the covenant community (Exodus 25:31-37). The image at the bottom left is a Roll of the Law and a Sheaf of Wheat, depicting the festivals of celebration and thanksgiving. The image at the top right illustrates the promised land—a land of abundance—represented here by Grapes on a Staff (Numbers 14:7-9 and Joshua 1-11). At the bottom right we see a Fleece and Bowl, symbolizing the call of Gideon to be a judge and to free the people of Israel and condemn their worship of idols

(Judges 6:36-40).

A trip to the balcony may be needed for a good look at the fourth window, which symbolizes the four major prophets. At the top left, the Tongs and Burning Coal represent the cleansing of Isaiah’s unclean lips (Isaiah 6:1-8). At the bottom left, we see the Cistern into which Jeremiah was thrown (Jeremiah 38:6-13). At the top right, Ezekiel’s vision noted that the East Outer Gate of the sanctuary was closed because the Lord God of Israel had entered by it (Ezekiel 44:1-2). Finally, at the bottom right, we see a Goat with Four Horns, representing Daniel’s vision of a kingdom that would rise to power following a period of turmoil (Daniel 8). Scholars interpret the goat to represent the Greek Empire, led by Alexander the Great, which overthrew the Persian Empire.

Jesus’ Birth and Early Years

Having finished our examination of the four stained glass windows on the west (or right) side of our sanctuary which depict stories and symbols from the First Testament, we turn our attention to the windows on the east (or left) side of our sanctuary, which illustrate stories from the New Testament. We begin with the window closest to the organ console; the images in this window depict the birth of Jesus and his early years. As before, we’ll start with the top image of the right vertical panel, and move downwards to the bottom image of that panel, then we’ll jump to the top of the left vertical panel, and move downwards to the bottom.

It's easy to find the Manger and the Star of Bethlehem, symbolizing the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-7). Below the manger, we see Three Crowns, which recall the journey of the Wise Men from the East (Matthew 2:1-12). Depicted next is a Cage of Doves – according to the Law of Moses, Jesus was brought as an infant to the Temple to be presented to the Lord and a sacrificial offering of a pair of turtle-doves was made (Luke 2:22-24). The Pyramids with a Cross suggest the flight of the holy family to Egypt to escape King Herod (Matthew 2:13-15).

At the top of the right vertical panel, we see a Hammer, Saw and Square, which represent Joseph's skill as a carpenter—a trade with which Jesus was familiar (Matthew 13:55). Next we see a Scroll of the Law, depicting the discussions Jesus had with Temple scholars at the age of twelve (Luke 2:41-50). The next symbol is a Baptismal Font and Descending Dove, which represent the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, an event which marked the start of his public ministry (Mark 1:9-11). At the bottom right we see a Fish and a Net, symbolizing Jesus' selection of disciples, some of whom were fishermen (Mark 1:16-20).

Jesus' Public Ministry

Starting with the top image of the right panel of the second window from the organ console, we see Three Water Jars, which represent Jesus' first miracle at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11). The image below the jars shows Hands with Healing Rays, depicting Jesus' power to bring sight to the blind (Mark 8:22-26). Moving down, we see the Well where

Jesus revealed himself as the Messiah to the Samaritan woman (John 4:7-30). At the bottom right is a Book, which depicts the “one thing” that sisters Mary and Martha needed—learning from Jesus (Luke 10:38-42).

The top image of the left vertical panel is a Mound of Earth Topped by a Cross, which suggests Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Moving downward, we see the Five Loaves and Two Fish with which Jesus fed the five thousand (Mark 6:35-44). Depicted next is a Cross between Stone Tablets and a Flaming Chariot, representing the transfiguration, where Jesus stood with Moses and Elijah (Mark 9:2-8). At the bottom right, the Temple and a Whip can be seen, depicting Jesus driving the moneychangers and merchants from the temple (Mark 11:15-16).

Holy Week

At the top right of the third window from the organ console, we find Palm Branches, denoting Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10). The image below is of a Cup and Wafer, recalling Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples (Mark 14:17-25). Next we see a Jug and Basin, representing Jesus washing the feet of his disciples (John 13:2-9). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prays in anguish about the Cup of Suffering that awaits him, shown in the bottom left image (Mark 14:32-42).

At the top left, we see a Purse and Silver Coins that represent the betrayal of Jesus by Judas (Mark 14:10-11 & 43-46). The next image

depicts the act by one of the disciples who responded to Jesus' arrest by cutting off An Ear with a Sword (Luke 22:49-51). Jesus is then brought to trial before Pontius Pilate, tied to the Ring of a Pillar and whipped (John 19:1). Mocking the claim that Jesus is king of the Jews, Roman soldiers place a Crown of Thorns on Jesus' head (John 19:2).

The Crucifixion and Resurrection

At the top right of the fourth window, we see Three Crosses, representing Jesus' crucifixion between two thieves (Mark 15: 27). Beneath the crosses, we see the Sponge of Sour Wine on a Branch of Hyssop that was offered to Jesus just before his death (John 19: 28-29). Next (but somewhat hidden by the balcony) is the Pair of Dice that the Roman soldiers used to gamble for possession of Jesus' Seamless Robe (John 19: 23-24). The bottom image is a Cross, a Shroud, and the inscription INRI (Jesus, King of the Jews) which Pilate ordered to be fixed to Jesus' cross (John 19: 19-22).

At the top left, Jesus' resurrection is symbolized by the Phoenix, a bird that, according to legend, rose from ashes to live again. Next we see a Bolted Door with a Cross, that recalls the appearance of Jesus to his disciples in a closed room (John 20:19-20). Next (but hidden by the balcony) we see the Flaming Chariot of Elijah, in which Jesus, like Elijah before him, ascended up into heaven (Acts 1:9-11 and II Kings 2:11-12). The bottom left image isn't a true part of the resurrection story; the Seven Flames of the Holy Spirit (wisdom, understanding, counsel, might,

knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord) depict Pentecost, the birth of the Christian Church. (Isaiah 11:2 and Acts 2:1-4).

The Chancel Window

We have now completed our examination of the First and New Testament windows on the right and left sides of the sanctuary. The large window in the chancel remains to be explored. The images in this window don't depict Bible stories; rather, they are symbols of the apostles, other evangelists, and six European reformers of the 15th and 16th centuries. Finally, there is the giant quatrefoil, or flower with four petals. Unless you're a theological scholar, you may not be familiar with these symbols, but we'll try to explain them to you.

First, we'll look at the lower part of the window, which is divided into six vertical panels. The symbols in these panels do not follow any sequential pattern, but are more like a collage.

At the top of the left-most panel, Matthew is depicted as a winged man; his Gospel dwells on the human side of Jesus. Beneath Matthew, Luke is depicted as a winged ox. Depicting Matthew and Luke, and later Mark and John, as winged figures makes reference to Rev. 4:7. Beneath Luke is the disciple Peter, represented by Crossed Keys (Matthew 16:13-19) and an Upside-down Cross (Peter is said to have been crucified on an inverted cross). Beneath Peter is the German reformer Martin Luther, depicted by his coat-of-arms, a Cross

on a Heart, resting in the Center of a Messianic Rose. Beneath Luther is the disciple Thomas, depicted by a Carpenter's Square and a Vertical Spear; Thomas was a builder who was later stoned and run through with a spear.

The next vertical panel starts with the apostle Timothy at the top, represented by a club and stones; Timothy accompanied Paul on many of his journeys. Beneath Timothy is the disciple James the Greater, brother of John, depicted by Three Scalloped Shells. Beneath James is the French theologian John Calvin, considered to be the father of Presbyterianism; he is depicted by the Hand and Heart, representing his complete surrender to Jesus Christ. Beneath Calvin is the disciple James the Lesser, depicted by Three Stones, recognizing that he was stoned to death.

The next vertical panel is topped by the seal of Wilmette. Next is the disciple John, represented by a Chalice and Emerging Serpent, recalling Jesus' warning that John and James would also drink of his cup of suffering (Mark 10:35-40). Beneath John is John Knox, who established the Presbyterian church in Scotland, and is depicted here by a Burning Bush. At the bottom of this panel is the disciple Matthew, whose original vocation as a tax collector is recalled by this symbol of Three Money Purses. Almost hidden at the bottom of this panel is the emblem of the United Presbyterian Women.

The fourth vertical panel starts at the top with the seal of the United Presbyterian Church in

the USA, the name of our denomination when the windows were designed. Beneath this seal is the symbol of the disciple Andrew, depicted by St. Andrew's Cross in the shape of the letter "X." Beneath Andrew is the Swiss contemporary of Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, represented by a Crescent Moon. Beneath Zwingli is the disciple Jude, depicted by a Sailboat. Almost hidden beneath Jude is the emblem of the Westminster Youth Fellowship.

The fifth vertical panel starts with the apostle Paul, depicted by a crosshilted sword and open Bible bearing the words "Spiritus Gladius" or "Sword of the Spirit." Beneath Paul is the disciple Philip, represented by a Cross, a Basket and Two Loaves of Bread, depicting his conversation with Jesus at the feeding of the multitude. Beneath Philip is John Wesley, the Englishman who founded Methodism; he is represented by Two Worlds because of his labors in both Europe and the United States. Beneath Wesley is the disciple Simon, represented by a Fish and Book, recognizing that he was regarded as a "fisher of men."

At the top of the right-most panel is the Gospel writer Mark, depicted by a Winged Lion, who emphasized the royal or kingly, character of Jesus. Beneath Mark is John, represented by a Winged Eagle; John's Gospel is said to "soar on eagles' wings to the very throne of Heaven." Beneath John is Bartholomew (or Nathaniel), depicted by a Open Bible and a Flaying Knife. Beneath Bartholomew we find the 15th Century Bohemian reformer John Hus, represented by a Cup, Book and Olive Branch,

representing his belief that both bread and cup should be offered at communion. Finally, at the bottom is the disciple Matthias, said to have been stoned and then beheaded, and thus depicted by a Bible and Double Ax.

The Quatrefoil

Having finished our examination of the six lower panels of the large window in the chancel, which depict twenty-eight Gospel writers, disciples, apostles, early church reformers and organizations, we come to the large quatrefoil, or flower with four petals, that crowns the chancel window.

If you look carefully, you will notice that the large quatrefoil contains four mid-sized quatrefoils and one small quatrefoil in the very center. In the mid-sized quatrefoil on the left, you will see a Hand surrounded by Three Radiant Clouds, which symbolize God, the Father. In the mid-sized quatrefoil at the top is an image of God, the Son, the Sacrificial Lamb with the Banner of Victory, lying on a Book of Seven Seals (based on Rev. 5:12). Moving clockwise to the mid-sized quatrefoil on the right, we find God the Holy Spirit, represented by a Descending Dove. In the mid-sized quatrefoil at the bottom, Jesus appears again as Christ, the Head of the Church. In the center are the Greek letters Chi Rho, the first two letters of the Greek word for “Christ.” Chi is the large “X” in the center; the rho is somewhat stylized and looks like a cross with a handle at the top. These are bordered by the Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, declaring that Jesus is the beginning and the end.

This ends our exploration of the stained glass windows in our sanctuary. We are indeed fortunate to have these beautiful windows enhance our weekly worship services.

Acknowledgment

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