

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

The eight stained glass windows in the vestibule of the church came from Lord of Life's first facility that served the congregation from 1979 - 1989. The windows were designed and created by two former members of the congregation--Gail Olson and Karen Vaughn -- in 1988. The eight windows depict phrases from the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed.

1. "Conceived by the Holy Spirit" The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. We read in Matthew 3:16, "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him."

2. "Born of the Virgin Mary" The fleur-des-lis has for centuries been a symbol for the Virgin Mary to whom Gabriel said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35)

3. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate" The cup and cross remind us of Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

4. "Was crucified, died, and was buried" The crown of thorns and the three nails reminds us of Jesus' crucifixion.

5. "On the third day He rose again from the dead" The butterfly has been used by Christian artists for centuries to symbolize the resurrection. As the butterfly emerges from the cocoon, so Christ emerged triumphantly from the tomb.

6. "He ascended into heaven" The cross above the globe reminds us that Jesus physically left the earth and ascended into heaven forty days after Easter.

7. "And sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty" The crown reminds us that Jesus is now ruler over all things. In Ephesians 1:20-22 St. Paul describes how God the Father "seated [Jesus] at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion ... And God ... appointed him to be the head over everything for the church." The cross through the crown tells us that it was by means of the cross that Jesus won the victory over sin, death, and Satan.

8. "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead" The ram's horn, used as a trumpet in Biblical times, reminds us of Jesus' return as Judge. St. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, "The Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God."

It is appropriate that these windows are the first thing which attracts your attention as you enter the church through the main entrance, for they center on Jesus who through his birth, life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension has become the Lord of Life.

STAINED GLASS WINDOWS IN THE SANCTUARY

There are ten stained glass side windows in the nave of the church. These windows (as well as the window in the choir loft and the two on the side walls of the chancel area) were designed and crafted by artisan Robert Frei of Emil Frei & Associates of Kirkwood, Missouri. The over all theme of the windows is the great "I AMs" of the New Testament as recorded by St. John. The background of the significance of the great "I AMs" is Exodus 3. There God appears to Moses in the burning bush. When Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" "I AM" is the divine name. The English equivalent of the divine name is YAHWEH. Several times in John's Gospel Jesus says of himself, "I AM" In so doing, he was in fact identifying himself with Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament. We look at the windows one by one.

1. "I AM the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." John 6:35

In this window we have the stalk of wheat from which bread comes. Also depicted is the cup or chalice since reference is made not only to hunger, but to thirst. Christians are reminded of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in which we are nourished by the bread and the wine which are Christ's body and blood. Also depicted are the loaves and fishes of the miraculous feeding of 5,000 people by Jesus as recorded in John 6. Jesus fills our every need.



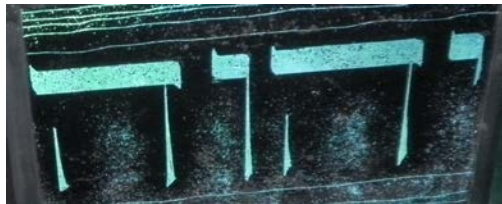
2. "I AM the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

The rising sun, the moon, and the star all remind us that Jesus is the Light. Inconspicuous footprints depict the path of one following Jesus on the road to life.



3. "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I AM!" John 8:58

With this statement Jesus clearly indicated his existence from all eternity. Depicted in the window is Noah's ark, for Jesus was already present at that time and before. An ancient altar is depicted as a symbol of Abraham who built an altar wherever he traveled and called on the name of the Lord (see Genesis 12:7,8; 13:4,18; 22:9). The star of David is depicted. This reminds us of Jesus' statement in Matthew 22 that David referred to the coming Messiah as "Lord," even though humanly speaking the Messiah was David's son. Also in the window are symbols reminding us of Exodus 3 where God revealed himself to Moses. We have the burning bush from which God revealed the divine name YAHWEH or I AM to Moses. Finally, we have the four Hebrew letters of that divine name.



4. "I tell you the truth, I AM the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I AM the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture." John 10:7-9

In this window we have a gate. Jesus is indeed the gate; whoever enters through him will be saved. The lamb in the window reminds us that we are sheep who enter through Jesus. Finally, a stairway brings to mind Jacob's vision in Genesis 28. He saw a stairway resting on earth, with its top reaching to heaven. Jesus is our way to heaven.



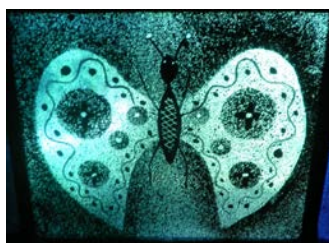
5. "I AM the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." John 10:11

We cannot think of Jesus as the Good Shepherd without thinking of the familiar Psalm 23. Depicted in this window is the shepherd's staff ("Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me," Psalm 23:4) and a scene depicting an inviting area for sheep to pasture ("He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters." Psalm 23:2). But also in this window is the cross – reminding us that our Good Shepherd laid down his life for us.



6. "I AM the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." John 11:25-26

In this window we have the butterfly -- for centuries a symbol for the resurrection and new life. Also depicted is the empty tomb with the stone rolled away. Here we also have the shell -- an ancient symbol for baptism. It is through baptism that we gain the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection. St. Paul writes, "Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection." (Romans 6:4-5) The lily brings to mind the joyful Easter celebration of Christ's resurrection.



7. "I AM the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Depicted in this window is a curtain being torn from top to bottom. This reminds us of what happened at the moment of Jesus' death. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell us that at the moment Jesus died the curtain in the Temple which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was torn in two from top to bottom. This curtain had first been part of the Tabernacle

(Exodus 26:33) and later part of Solomon's Temple (2 Chronicles 3:14). Into the Holy of Holies behind the curtain entered the high priest, once a year, taking the blood of animals as a sacrifice for sin. The author of the Hebrews tells us that because of Christ's death, we can now enter that Holy of Holies and have direct access to God: "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:19-22). Jesus in indeed the way -- the way to God the Father.

Also depicted is an open Bible. God's Word is truth. The widow of Zarephath said to Elijah, "I know that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth" (1 Kings 17:24). The Psalmist wrote, "Do not snatch the word of truth from my mouth" (Psalm 119:43). Jesus said to the Father, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). St. Paul wrote, "You were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation" (Ephesians 1:13). The ultimate Word of God and Truth of God is Jesus himself: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

The shell in this window reminds us of the sacrament of Baptism through which God grants life.



8. "I AM the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

In this window we have a vine and branches. Each branch, firmly attached to the vine, bears much fruit (depicted by the clusters of seven grapes, with seven being the Biblical number of completion and perfection). God's Old Testament people were regularly spoke of as a vine. See Psalm 80:8-14; Ezekiel 17:6-8; Zechariah 8:12. Jesus is the vine; we are the branches. Apart from him, we can do nothing. St. Paul reminds us that the fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23)



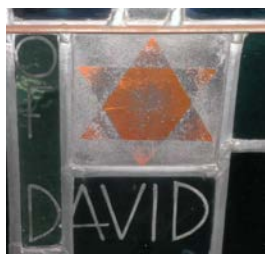
9. "Do not be afraid. I AM the First and the Last. I AM the Living One; I was dead, and behold I AM alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." Revelation 1:17-18

In this window we have the Greek letters alpha and omega, the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. In Revelation 22:13 we read, "I AM the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." Also depicted in the window are keys, symbolizing the fact that Jesus holds the keys of death and Hades.



10. "I AM the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright morning star." Revelation 22:16

This window contains the star of David, the royal ancestor of Jesus. The crown reminds us that as David was king, so is Jesus -- but in a much greater way. Also depicted is a branch growing out of a stump which has deep roots. Jesus is not only the Root; according to Isaiah he is also a branch: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse [King David's father]; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." (Isaiah 11:1)

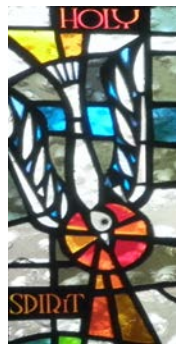


In the back wall of the nave, above the choir loft, is a round window made of faceted glass. Appropriate for the space from which the choirs sing their songs of praise, the window depicts an

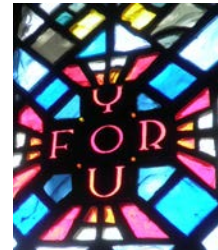
angel proclaiming Good News and praising God. The words circumscribing the window are based on Luke 2:14. As the angels announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." That night the angel of the Lord also spoke to the shepherds of the greatest sign of all: "This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:12) That baby is the surest sign of all of God's love to us!

There are two faceted glass windows in the chancel – one on either side. They portray the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The window to the left of the altar depicts Holy Baptism. Symbols for the Father (hand), the Son (cross) and Holy Spirit (dove) are prominent. The top and the bottom panels depict a shell, an ancient symbol for the sacrament of Baptism.



The window to the right of the altar depicts Holy Communion. The top and bottom panels portray stalks of wheat and clusters of grapes, reminding us of the bread and the wine of the Sacrament. One panel depicts a ciborium (container for the bread) and another depicts the chalice (container for the wine). The fifth panel prominently displays the words "For You."



The cover of the baptismal font has been enlarged from the cover used for the font in this congregation's first church. Atop the cover a flame is sculpted. The flame reminds us of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Peter proclaimed, "The promise is for you and your children." (Acts 2:39) The cover was crafted by Marvin Linenbroker of Architectural Bronze Studio Incorporated in Eureka, MO. Architectural Bronze also crafted the chandeliers in the nave and the cross in the chancel over the altar.

On the terrace on the Clarkson Road side of the church there is a sculptured fountain. The work is titled "Radiance." The sculpture is made of distressed stainless steel. Artist is the late Henry Menke of the Still Waters Sculpture Garden near Rogers, Arkansas.

The work is based on St. Paul's famous passage of 1 Corinthians 13:13, "So faith, hope, and love abide these three; but the greatest of these is love." This passage appears around the top of the sculpture. The three sides of the work not only remind us of the Trinity, but also depict the three subjects of faith, hope, and love. On each side respectively are passages of Scripture which speak of faith, hope and love: Galatians 5:22, "The fruit of the Spirit is love." 1 Corinthians 13:4, "Love is patient and kind." Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for." Romans 5:1, "Justified through faith, we have peace with God." 1 Peter 1:3, "We have been born anew to a living hope." Psalm 130:5, "In His Word I put my hope."

Around the bottom over which the water flows are the words which Jesus the Water of Life spoke to the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well: "The water I give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:14) At the top of the work is a dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit who is the one who creates faith, hope, and love in human hearts.