Chapter Four

THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

The Psalm Windows

On both sides of the chancel are two side chapels, separated from the nave of the church by an open archway, and from the raised floor of the chancel by a wooden screen of arches. The western chapel has been designated as The Chantry, because it is available for choral music without the choir actually entering the main body of the sanctuary. The chantry will be the location of incidental handbell music. The chantry has two stained glass windows. On the east side of the chancel is The Memorial Prayer Chapel with three windows, and the passageway with two windows. The memorial prayer chapel is a round bay for semi-private prayer and meditation, for a repository for memorials, and for lying in state.

Each of the seven psalm windows has a harp symbol located in the lower section of the cartouche which indicates that these windows are dedicated to the Psalms of David. At one time or another all the psalms were ascribed to him. The harp refers to the fact that David was an accomplished singer, whose music on the harp was a comfort to the emotionally ill King Saul. The collection of Psalms windows reinforces the original use of the psalms as the hymnal for Jews and Christians.

The Eighth Psalm Window

The basic theme of the eighth Psalm, as with Presbyterian theology, is the sovereignty of God. The psalm begins, "O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (NRSV). The psalmist is awed by two aspects of creation, by the scope of it, and by the fact that God has placed us mortal human beings in such an exalted place in the order of creation: "...a little lower than God, ...(with) all things under their feet."

The subject of the Psalm, however, is God the Creator. So the window invites worshipers to lift their thoughts heavenward, to "...the moon and the stars that you have established" (vs. 3). The sun and moon have their places in the galaxy of ordered stars. The Creator's star is in the center.

For those who wish to look beyond the symbolism of the eighth Psalm, the sun can be understood as a symbol of Christ, based on the verse, "...the Sun of righteousness (shall) arise with healing in his wings" (Malachi 4:2). The sun and moon are often included in scenes of the Crucifixion to indicate the grief of heaven at the death of Christ. The star lighting the dark heaven is a symbol of divine guidance.

The Twenty-Seventh Psalm Window

Psalm twenty-seven begins with the familiar and comforting words, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" It is clear that the psalm writer had human enemies, and even armies, in mind when recalling that there is no need to be afraid. And that the psalmist has not sought armed conflict, but only desired only to behold the beauty of the Lord in the temple (vs. 4). It could be that adversity of other sorts were in the psalmist's mind, as they have certainly occurred to later singers of the psalm. In the end, no matter what the trouble, the psalmist imagines there will come deliverance. At that time, "...he will set me high on a rock. Now my head is lifted up ... I will sing and make melody to the Lord. Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud."

Although the psalm is an exaltation to courage in the face of trouble, the moment of victory is anticipated in the psalm and in the symbolism in the window. There is a picture of a colorful rooster standing on a rocky prominence, head thrown back and making his "melody to the Lord." The artist reminds us in his own written notes that "creatures other than 'man' may also 'sing and make melody' to the Lord, their Creator."

For Christians, of course, the Rooster is a symbol of humility, at least a symbol of Peter's humiliation at thrice denying he knew Jesus before the cock crowed, as Jesus had said he would, on the night Jesus was put on trial. When Peter heard the rooster he went away and wept bitterly, beginning to purge his soul of the arrogance that all must purge if they are to follow Christ.

The One Hundredth Psalm Window

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing." (vss. 1-2). The psalm is a song of thanksgiving, but it is also an invitation to worship, to "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise."

The psalm is so often used in Christian worship that it is memorized by many people. It draws attention to God and invites everyone to join the psalmist in revery and joy at being in the presence of the Lord.

Again shying away from representing a human figure in the stained glass rendering of the psalm, the katydid and frogs are pictured. Indeed, on a summer's night what on earth makes a more "joyous noise?" Going beyond both the psalmist's and the stained glass artist's intentions, it can be mentioned that the frog is found in many ancient legends and religious contexts; the frog is one of the principal beings associated with the idea of creation and resurrection (because of its alternating periods of appearance and disappearance).

The One Hundred and Fiftieth Psalm Window

The last psalm in the psalter is a call to praise God with all the musical facilities at our disposal, and in fact to join even the celestial firmament in praise. The psalm lists many of the wind, stringed, and percussion instruments that must have accompanied choirs of priests in the great temple of Solomon. What glorious sound they must have produced!

Out of the orchestra the artist has selected a trumpet and a harp to represent the music of the whole ensemble. "Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!" (vs. 3).

Moreover, the trumpet and the harp have entered the Christian catalog of symbols as instruments of heaven. Paul wrote that at the trumpet sound the dead shall be raised. It could very well be that Paul was recalling Jesus' own words in Matthew's account of the Lord's great eschatological sermon in which Jesus said, that God "will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matthew 24:31). In the book of Revelation trumpets sound on many occasions, both to raise the dead and to represent the indescribable voice of the Divine. In the same book, harps are given, not only to poets such as David, but to all the faithful in heaven. John had a vision of "those who had conquered the beast and its image ... standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" (Revelation 15:2-3). So the window recalls not only the worship that we lift to God in this life, but the hope and promise of greater songs of praise in glory.

The One Hundred and Twenty First Psalm Window

One of the reasons people return to worship God is to be lifted spiritually above the troubles that seem to beset us. The one hundred and twenty-first Psalm, on one level, compares our life, as we move toward God, to a perilous journey. We will not stumble because God is always alert and awake to keep us from falling. We will not succumb to the physical affliction of such things as the heat of the day, or to the spiritual dangers of the night. On another level, the psalm is a hymn sung by pilgrims as they ascended the final ramp into the Temple in Jerusalem, lifting their voices in praise to God.

"My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth," the Psalmist sings (vs. 2). In the window the heaven is represented by the rainbow, which is also a sign of God's help and salvation, and by the clouds. The earth is represented by the trees and flowers.

Yet there is another sense in which the symbols remind us that we have already stumbled and we have fallen. The rainbow sign of salvation was necessary, after all, because humanity had become so debased that God had to resort to extreme measures

to preserve a remnant for a new beginning. Clouds often (as in the picture) cut us off from a clear view of the full beauty of God's heaven. There is a dark and sinister side to the forest as well. Not all who propose to cross a primeval forest find their way safely. "Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come" John Newton wrote in his hymn Amazing Grace. The psalmist also expects for grace in this life's travel. "The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore."

The Eighty Fourth Psalm Window

Perhaps two phrases are most remembered from the eighty fourth Psalm. The opening sentence, "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!" and the statement, "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness." The Temple, of course, was the dwelling place for the Lord which the psalmist had in mind. It was such a comfort to be there, and such an inspiration for those on a return journey from far places. It was a place that the psalm writer apparently knew very well. The singer recalled that not only people, but even a sparrow and a swallow could find roosting places for themselves there and a spot under the gigantic altars to attach a nest for their young. In Psalm 84 the Temple is a metaphor for the nurturing and protective side of God.

The symbols in the window expand on the word lovely, as the artist writes about his window, by representing the lovely beauty of flowers and the graceful form of a bird in flight. The hospitality of God is represented in the psalm in the words, "...the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself...." A bird's nest with eggs depicts this verse (vs. 3). The bird has her mouth open, "ever singing your praise," the artist explains.

In ancient times birds were symbols of the "winged soul" or the spiritual aspect of people. Eggs were symbols of resurrection, because of the need for young birds to break out of the strong bonds of the egg shell, as the dead need to break death's strong bonds if they are to be raised from the grave. In the psalm mention is made of the sparrow which was considered the most common bird, hardly worthy of consideration except by God. They too were created on earth and were given life at God's command. Jesus illustrated God's tender concern for every human being and every creature, by declaring that not even a sparrow could fall unnoticed by God. Nor can we. The swallow was a symbol of incarnation in medieval painting, and is depicted in the eaves of the stable where Christ was born. But she was also thought to hibernate in the mud and re-emerge in Spring, so she was a symbol of resurrection. Since both of these meanings go back hundreds of years before the New Testament, they could have been part of the psalmist's thinking.

The Twenty Third Psalm Window

"The Lord is my shepherd," the psalmist sings, and imagines what it must be like to be a sheep with such a shepherd. The sheep of God find their every need anticipated and their every fear dispelled. Green pastures, clear water, a safe path, healing for wounds, a cup of grain, and a place to rest, these are the blessings God provides his sheep. In such care neither the ravages of past grief which haunt the soul, nor the terror of even the presence of howling evil on the cliffs on every side, nor the shadow of death creeping over the future will shake the sheep's confidence. This goodness and mercy will go on eternally.

In the window, the sheep is pictured grazing serenely from grass picked clear of noxious weeds and swept of predators. The Lord's unseen presence is symbolized in the shepherd's crook. The sandals to indicate walk refer to the phrase, "Even though I walk through the darkest valley" (NRSV) or the valley of the shadow of death as the older translations have it. Clearly, we sheep do not have to walk this valley alone, for it is not sheep tracks but sandal prints we see. In fact, there are no sheep tracks along the darkest valley, but only the sandals, as if we are carried through the worst part.

The oldest representation of Jesus in Christian art is as a shepherd with a sheep across his shoulders. John's gospel portrays Jesus as a good shepherd in contrast to a hired watchman who runs away at the slightest danger. The good shepherd goes after even one lost lamb who has fallen into a crevasse, Jesus says. Ezekiel, to which Jesus apparently referred, is more disparaging of shepherds who are supposed to take the sheep's safety to heart but look out for themselves instead. Jesus asserts that shepherds (or religious leaders who assume the title pastor which means "shepherd") who do that will be judged and condemned by a righteous God whose insistence is always that the sheep be allowed to safely graze.

The Apostles Windows

In the rear of the sanctuary are stained glass windows of a design new to the church. The style of the window casements themselves are romanesque, with round lintels. Each of the three tiers of windows is divided into two vertical sections, surmounted by a shield that unites the two sides into a single window, and an upper level divided from a lower level. There are, therefore, twelve windows. Each of the twelve is further divided into three sections, one of which contains a shield with a symbol of one of the twelve original Apostles of Christ. The remainder of each window is filled with an elaborate design of twisted vine and leaves.

The vine recalls Jesus' declaration, "I am the vine and you are the branches," (John 15:5). But an allegorical reference can also be made to frequent Old Testament references to vines representing the people of God, particularly Zechariah 3:10, where the Lord promises, "...you shall invite each other to come under your vine and fig tree." In a real sense, the church gathers under the vine of the Apostles.

St. Andrew

The fullest account of Andrew is in John's Gospel, where it is clear that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. When John pointed to Jesus as the "Lamb of God" Andrew followed Jesus. The next day Andrew introduced his brother Simon (Peter) to Jesus with the words, "We have found the Messiah." Andrew is seen again introducing someone to Jesus in the story of the feeding of the multitude. With no food the disciples did not know how to feed the crowd who were gathered listening to Jesus. But when Andrew introduced a small boy with a lunch he was willing to offer, consisting of five barley loaves and two fishes, Jesus fed the whole assembly. John recalls, also, that it was Andrew who brought the Greek travelers to Jesus when they asked.

Following Pentecost, Andrew traveled far and wide introducing people to Christ. The fourth century historian Eusebius writes that Andrew traveled to Scythia converting the ruthless barbarians of the Ukraine. Another tradition suggests that Andrew survived being thrown to the beasts in the stadium at Thessalonica, but that he was crucified at the command of the ruler of Patrae, whose family had been saved by a miraculous healing at which Andrew had ministered. While he hung dying, Andrew preached to those who had gathered, and even after he suffered for two days he still prayed, "Would, Father, that I had time to teach truth to my murderers...." -- or so the legend says.

The shield of St. Andrew contains a cross saltire (x-shaped). It was, however, not until the fourteenth century that the tradition appeared that he had been crucified on an X-shaped cross. It could be the X was adopted because it repeated the shape of the Greek letter chi, the first letter in the Greek spelling of Christ. In any case, the cross saltire is the symbol of Scotland, whose patron saint is Andrew.

St. Peter

Next to Andrew is the window of Peter, Andrew's brother, of the village of Bethsaida in Galilee. Jesus was the one who gave Peter his name, which means "the Rock"; and then Jesus announced, "Upon this rock I will build my church." In the beginning, however, Peter was impetuous and boisterous; it took time for the life-changing influence of Jesus to transform Simon into Peter.

Peter was one of the disciples on the inner circle, who were invited to witness the Lord's most powerful manifestations of himself as the Christ. Peter was with Jesus behind closed doors when Jesus raised Jairus' daughter, and alone (with James and John) with Jesus when he was transfigured on the mountain, and apart with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was Peter who testified aloud, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." It was Peter who answered the Lord's invitation to walk on water.

Still, on the night of the betrayal, it was Peter's rock-like understanding and faith that failed the tests. For it was Peter who so misunderstood the teaching of the Prince of Peace that he drew his sword to attack the servant of the High Priest who had come to arrest Jesus. Then Peter denied knowing Jesus, when he was identified as a Galilean, as the trial of Jesus was going on. On Easter morning, Peter saw the empty tomb with the folded grave cloths, and believed. That belief was challenged by Jesus in a final meeting by the lake side, when Jesus challenged Peter to begin to "feed my sheep."

After the Spirit's baptism on the Day of Pentecost, Peter became the spokesman for the disciples, and the leader of the Apostles in building the Church. As clouds of persecution began to gather, John Mark collected the accounts of Peter into a written story of Jesus. Peter struggled with the transformation of the young Church from a Jewish sect into a separate entity, but followed Christ's instructions (see Acts 10). So, tradition insists, Peter ended his life in Rome, crucified for Christ, but upside down because he objected to the honor of dying as Christ had died.

Peter's symbol is the keys (Matthew 16:19: "I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven").

St. James

James was one of two sons of Zebedee who became Apostles of Jesus. James and John, like Peter and Andrew, were fishermen -- and prosperous. James, Peter and John were part of an inner circle of disciples who witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter, the transfiguration, and the agony in the garden. James was loyal, as he was zealous. He proposed to defend Jesus against another healer using Christ's name, but was rebuked. He proposed to have Jesus destroy an inhospitable Samaritan village (Luke 9:51-56), and was rebuked. In the third place, Salome, the pious mother of James and John, came to ask that they be given places of leadership among the Apostles when Jesus establishes his kingdom, and Jesus rebuked them again.

The rebuke of Jesus was not confused with rejection by Jesus. For Jesus loved them, and they followed him devotedly. As was the case with the other disciples, their experience with Jesus transformed them. James, who was never mentioned apart from his brother John, and about whom almost nothing is written in scripture, was one of the leaders of the believers and disciples. For, when Herod Agrippa I decided to suppress the Christians, he chose Peter and James to be his examples. James was imprisoned and then executed (Acts 12:1-3); but when Herod saw how it pleased the crowd he imprisoned Peter also. Thus James "drank the cup" which Jesus prophesied he would drink, becoming the first of the Apostles to die of martyrdom (and the second Christian, after Stephen). James' death was a great source of inspiration to the Christians facing martyrdom later.

Legend has James doing a great deal of traveling in the course of missionary labors before he died fifteen years after meeting Jesus. One trip was presumably to Spain, where James is considered the patron Saint, although the legend only goes back to Isidore, Bishop of Seville from 600 to 636. Nevertheless, James' symbol is the scallop shell -- or three scallop shells -- representing the saint's missionary spirit. Erasmus reported that this emblem was adopted because the shore of the adjacent sea had so many scallop shells.

St. James

John and James were called "Sons of Thunder" by Jesus. The brothers lived up to the label several times as they invited God's wrath on those who would cause Jesus trouble. John was probably an earlier follower of John the Baptist, but he left his fishing nets at Jesus' invitation to become a "fisher of men." John is mentioned by name one time, apart from his inclusion in the inner circle of three who were present at Jesus' raising of Jairus' daughter, at the transfiguration, and at Jesus' side in the Garden of Gethsemane. John is credited with asking Jesus the question about when the destruction of the Temple would take place.

There is another possibility for John, however. In the Gospel of John there is repeated mention of a "disciple whom Jesus loved." For several reasons, this surely must have been John, the Son of Zebedee, one of the inner circle of Apostles. The beloved disciple was the one who asked Jesus who would betray him. Jesus replied that it was to be the disciple to whom Jesus gave the morsel of bread when he had dipped it. Jesus then gave the bread to Judas. The next appearance of the beloved disciple is at the foot of the cross. Jesus turned his Mother over to the beloved disciple with the words, "Behold your Mother." "And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home," the Gospel says. The third mention is on Easter morning when Peter and the beloved disciple ran to the tomb, with the beloved disciple getting there first. He looked in and saw the grave cloths but did not go in. Peter went right into the tomb a moment later, and John joined him. Seeing the empty tomb and the grave cloths they believed. The final mention of the beloved disciple is on a morning after the Apostles had returned to Galilee, and had spent a fruitless night fishing. Jesus called to them from the beach to cast their nets again, and this time the catch was immense. The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord."

Following the ascension of Jesus, John is recorded among the other Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Strong tradition insists that John became a leader of Christians in Ephesus (on the west coast of what is now Turkey). There, as his life edged toward the century mark, his stories of Jesus were set down by one of his followers, perhaps an elder in the church also with the name John. This John the elder, secretary to John the Apostle, was the author of at least two of the three letters of John. Just who was the author of the Book of Revelation is less certain, though it could have been either of these two Johns or another John.

John the Apostle was one of the most beloved, not only of Jesus, but of the churches he served. He set the standard for pastoral concern, fulfilling Christ's mandate for a good shepherd. John was the only Apostle to live to old age and die of natural causes, although attempts were made on his life, which failed. One legend suggests that John was offered a poisoned drink, but spared. The picture of a chalice with serpent inside, preserves this story as John's symbol.

St. Philip

Philip was originally another of the followers of John the Baptist, whom Jesus called. He, like Peter, was from Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee. And he brought Nathanael to the Lord a day after he himself had begun to follow him.

The most memorable account of Philip is when the multitude hearing Jesus preach needed to be fed. Philip protested that it would take a year's wages to buy everyone a single bite of bread. Philip seems to have been a practical man, perhaps one responsible for the provisions for the Apostles as they traveled with Jesus. This practical bent may have become visible again when Greeks approached Philip (who had a Greek name, and spoke Greek from childhood contact with the Greek towns in the vicinity). What to do, he worried; because Jesus had specifically said he had come to save the lost of Israel. Practical Philip wanted no difficulty. So he asked Andrew, who brought the matter to Jesus. Jesus took the presence of the Greeks asking for him to be another sign of the impending final conflict leading to the cross, for now even foreigners had become interested in him. The practical, no-nonsense side of Philip was again apparent at the Last Supper when Philip is reported to have responded to Jesus' words, "I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me." Philip spoke up, "Show us the Father and we will be satisfied." Philip needed more than rhetoric if Jesus were planning on leaving them. But Jesus had already satisfied Philip's demand. "I have shown you the Father," Jesus said. "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. I and the Father are one and the same." This was a part of Philip which was transformed at Pentecost.

Tradition about what happened to Philip after Pentecost is muddled. Some otherwise careful early scholars have confused Philip the Apostle with another Philip who was elected a Deacon and who became a wonderful evangelist, baptizing the Ethiopian treasurer of the Queen, and performing other missionary duties. The Apostle also traveled after the martyrdom of Stephen and James, becoming at last the bishop of Hierapolis, a hundred miles inland (west) of Ephesus. He died, like the Lord Jesus whom he served as a missionary all over Asia Minor, crucified on a cross.

The symbol in the shield of Philip is a tall slender cross and two loaves of bread (recalling John 6:7).

St. Bartholomew

Bar-Tholomai (or son of Tholmai) must have had another name, a given name by which he was called by friends and family. A tradition which can be traced back no farther than the ninth century says that Bartholomew was otherwise known as Nathaniel. If so, then he is mentioned in the Gospels. It is said that Philip first announced to Nathaniel that the long-awaited Messiah had been found, Jesus from Galilee. Nathaniel's home was Cana of Galilee, a neighboring rival town of Bethsaida which was home to Peter and the other fishermen. Nathaniel commented, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" But when Jesus came to Nathaniel, under his fig tree in prayer, Jesus greeted him, "Behold an Israelite in whom there is no guile!" And Nathaniel responded, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel." Bartholomew spent as much time with Jesus as the other disciples, and was one of six who were fishing on the sea when Jesus appeared on the shore and directed them to cast nets again to bring up a miraculous catch.

Although Bartholomew is little mentioned in the Bible, he is widely believed to have traveled extensively as a missionary. It is said he went with Philip to Heieropolis to preach, and escaped martyrdom at that time. Certainly Bartholomew went to Armenia, and the Armenian Church claims him as their founder. In one legend Bartholomew is said to have proved that an idol in the king's palace was empty and to have banished a demon from within it. The king was baptized, along with his daughter who was delivered from lunacy. But the priests had Bartholomew caught, beaten with clubs, flayed alive, and crucified in agony. The symbol for Bartholomew is the tools of his martyrdom, three flaying knives.

St. Thomas

Thomas was a twin, whose brother died in his youth. Psychologists surmise it may have left Thomas careful, even skeptical. But it may have made him brave in the face of death as well, for when Jesus proposed to confront his enemies, Thomas rallied the disciples to follow, saying, "Come, let us go die with him." When Jesus died Thomas was devastated, and went off by himself for a few days, so he missed Jesus' first appearance among the disciples on Easter evening. Thomas doubted they had been correct about whom they had seen. "Unless I see the nail holes in his hands ... I will not be convinced." A short time later Jesus came again, and this time commanded Thomas not only to look but even to put his finger in the nail prints. Thomas slumped to the floor and uttered Scripture's most profound acknowledgement of Jesus, "My Lord and My God!"

Thomas never doubted the Risen Lord again, but served him steadfastly all over the region of Arabia and the sub-continent, founding churches which still call themselves by his name. Skeptical scholars (perhaps in Thomas's own mold) have doubted that Thomas could have gone to India, but recent archeological evidence is more supportive of the legends that Thomas built churches and was finally martyred in Madras. The

story says he was slain by a spear thrust through a crack in the chapel where he sat meditating.

St. James the Less

James, the son of Alphaeus (who was the father of Matthew, the tax collector), is one of several men named James. One was certainly the Apostle James, and the other was James the brother of Jesus who became a follower after Jesus' death, and who became the first "president" of the Church in Jerusalem. But about James "the Less" very little is known, and there are even fewer legends and local traditions to fuel the imagination than is the case with other Apostles. According to the language of the times, "the Less", by which Mark referred to him, would have indicated he was shorter than the average, or at least shorter than the other James. There is one more fragment.

Not only is it suggested in scripture that James and Matthew were brothers, it is hinted that James was a compatriot in arms (in a fairly literal sense) with Jude (whose other name was Thaddaeus), Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. They are always listed together, and all but James are clearly identified as Zealots. If the three were Zealots, James also was -- so the reasoning goes. The Zealots were a revolutionary group, fanatically dedicated to the liberation of Jerusalem and all Israel from foreign domination. They were pledged to the death to wage guerilla warfare against the kingdoms of the Herods, and against Roman authority itself. They were an underground resistance movement, whose most despised opponents were all who compromised their nationalism by cooperating with or sometimes even assisting the Roman enemy. Jewish tax collectors were at the top of the list of those hated by the Zealots. And James' brother, Matthew, was such a despicable person. Surely, James' and Matthew's paths had irreconcilably parted, when Jesus brought them back together under his mastery. As William Barclay summarizes, "It may well be that the fact that Matthew and James were both members of the twelve is one of the great illustrations that Jesus came not only to reconcile men to God but also to reconcile them to each other."

One legend says James journeyed to Persia where he converted many and was then crucified; the legend is not old and is certainly wrong. Another legend tells of James' work in Spain (with side trips, perhaps, to England and Ireland), which was well begun before James returned to Jerusalem. There he was said to have died horribly by being stoned by a mob, then bashed to death with a fuller's club by Simon the fuller, and then his body dismembered with a saw. The saw, therefore, is the emblem which has come to stand for James the Less.

St. Matthew

Christians through the centuries owe as much to Matthew as to any other Apostle, for it is Matthew's work that has provided the priceless Gospel of Matthew. Matthew's

careful record, with his skillful cross-references to Jewish scripture, provides us the clearest view of the presentation of Jesus as Christ to the Jews of that time, and provides us with a compelling picture of Jesus as our Messiah and Lord.

Matthew was the name Jesus gave the tax-collector Levi, the son of Alphaeus; Matthew means "gift of God." Matthew collected taxes in Galilee, in service of Herod Antipas, at the collection station at Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. If Matthew was incorrupt in his work he was unique, and there is no evidence he was unique. Popular opinion, and even scriptural injunction, classified tax-collectors as criminals. But Matthew's customs office by the seashore gave Matthew opportunity to hear Jesus preach and teach. When Jesus invited the outcast and friendless man to follow him, the first thing he did was to make a feast and invite other outcasts and tax-collectors to meet Jesus. The proper folk of society were shocked, but Jesus said it was precisely to these sick that he had been sent.

Then Matthew left everything behind, except his pen, so to speak. He became a loyal follower of Jesus, and made note of the Master's sayings. All the most reliable and ancient Church historians agree that Matthew wrote a Gospel in Hebrew. A copy was reported to have been taken by Bartholomew to India, where it was found centuries later, still in use. Even greater use of Matthew's record was made after his death, when it was combined with Mark's work, to form a book given Matthew's signature.

For eight years Matthew preached in Judea, it is said. More than that is speculation. One legend, certainly fictitious, has Matthew preaching and converting the man-eating savages near the Black Sea. Another legend tells of Matthew's work in the wilderness area of western Iraq. He is said to have died by crucifixion and then to have been beheaded with a battle-ax. The ax is his symbol in the windows of the Apostles. But in the round window of the Evangelists in the Cortley H. Burroughs Chapel, the symbol of Matthew is the picture of a man, for Matthew made a great deal of Jesus' human genealogy.

St. Jude

Jude, or Judas, is mentioned by Luke in his Gospel and in Acts. Matthew and Mark have no mention of Jude but in that place list Thaddaeus, who must be the same person. John has one comment attributed to "Judas, not Iscariot." Jude is also mentioned as the son of James, although some earlier English versions mis-translate "son of" as "brother of" in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13.

Jude was a Zealot, a freedom-fighter who hoped Jesus would lead a revolution against the Roman tyrants who had over run Palestine. On the last night in the upper room, in John 14:22-23, "Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our

home with them." What this exchange between Jude and Jesus involves is Jude's challenge for Jesus to come out and declare himself as a leader of the revolution, which was the role the Zealots were certain the Messiah would take. Time was getting short. Enemies were clearly getting ready to strike. But bloody political revolution was not the route for Jesus as Savior and Christ. His agenda was one of love. We will win the battle for human hearts by loving them, Jesus replies. Not by force, but by invitation from willing souls, does God enter the world.

Following Jude's mention in Acts, he is not heard from again in scripture, unless the author of the short book of Jude should happen to be this same man. The Church has sometimes wanted Jude and the author of Jude. It was for this reason that Jude in Luke 6:16 was formerly translated "brother of James," which would make it possible for the author of Jude to be the Apostle Jude, because in the first verse of Jude the author identifies himself as "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James."

One of the legends of Thaddaeus (Jude) is that he was sent by Thomas to a king Abgarus of Edessa in Northern Mesopotamia (Iraq). Eusebius, the historian, claims to have seen and translated correspondence in which Abgarus asks Jesus to come heal a disease he had. After the Ascension of Jesus Thomas sent Thaddaeus, who helped Abgarus and many others. The legend contains the truth (as Barclay says) that the task of every Apostle was to live with Jesus and then to take to others the light and healing that Jesus brought to all the world.

Jude is often pictured together with Simon the Zealot in missionary journeys, and in martyrdom with arrows on Mount Ararat. His symbol is sometimes the arrow; but in the Apostles' windows it is the ship in honor of the extensive travels he made, or because he (along with Simon the Zealot) were supposed to have been fishermen as was Zebedee their cousin.

St. Simon the Zealot

Simon was a member of the Zealot political-religious sect in Judaism which grew increasingly violent and fanatical. In the beginning they featured themselves as revolutionaries in the style of the Maccabaeans who liberated Israel from the Greeks. When Quirinius was governor of Syria a census was ordered (about which we read on every Christmas Eve); but the Zealots refused to pay tribute to any king but God. The revolt they led was a holy war. The leader was killed, but out of the episode the Zealots arose. They gradually became more and more murderous, and developed into "the Assassins," bent not only on murdering Romans and waging warfare against Rome, but given to acts of terrorism and murder against their own people who were presumed to be soft on the revolution.

Nothing is mentioned of Simon by name in the Gospels, except what can be inferred from what is missing. There is missing any reference to Simon making an attack on Matthew (his relative) whom he would have hated, or of his vilifying Zacchaeus another

despised tax collector who was not a relative of Simon's. The Zealots were beginning to be changed by Jesus. It seems true that the Zealots among the Apostles continued to hope that Jesus would be the Messiah they had prayed would come to lead the great revolution, but they were Disciples of Jesus at the same time, and that meant they were being disciplined to let Christ lead. What Jesus proposed was another type of revolution entirely, one which pits the power of love against the power of violence -- and wins, even though it suffers the cross in the process.

After the Ascension of Jesus Simon may have traveled widely spreading the Gospel. He is often mentioned in conjunction with Thaddaeus (Jude), and is joined with him in a legend which points to how much the Zealots were changed. In Persia, the story says, they were beset by pagan priests, whom they bested time and again. At last the king gave the two Apostles permission to kill the adversaries but they refused. Indeed, they refused to take vengeance even when it would have prevented their own death. So, according to the legend, they were killed together as they had worked together for the Prince of Peace.

The symbol for Simon the Zealot is usually a fish (for Simon had been a fisherman) on a book (which was how he caught converts for Christ). In the windows an alternative form of the same symbol shows a fish on a boat hook, representing St. Simon a great "fisher of men" through the power of the Gospel.

Judas Iscariot

Great speculation surrounds the personality of Judas and the motives behind his betrayal of Jesus. Several facts must be included in any accounting. First, Jesus selected Judas because he could have been a successful Apostle; Jesus would not have trapped a man into failure and damnation. Second, Judas was trusted by Jesus with the group's money and was accorded a place of highest honor at the Last Supper; so Judas was not ignored by Jesus. Third, Judas may have been a Zealot, and probably came from Judea, meaning that he was the only non-Galilean of the twelve Apostles.

John says that Satan took over Judas, and that Judas was a thief from the group's purse. If Judas was a thief in the group for the money he could get, there are two things to be said about Judas: he was not very selective and he was not very adept. The penniless band of roving disciples, following a leader without even a roof over his head, was an unlikely source of riches for an embezzler. And Judas certainly drove no hard bargain in betraying Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, which was no more than the going price of a foreign slave (about $14). We have to look more closely than that for motive. As for Satan's role, there must have been an opening, for neither Satan nor God will compel persons against their own will to do a deed.

What seems best among the possibilities is that Judas was another of the Zealots who joined the disciples in order to follow Jesus into power as the Messiah. They all

assumed that the Messiah would fulfill the role which tradition had sketched, as a brilliant political and religious personality who would gradually take military and economic control of the legacy of David and Solomon to become high priest and king. In order to do that the Messiah would, naturally, have to replace the Romans -- apparently by force. However, Jesus was not heading in that direction. Indeed, he had the potential, he had the following, and he had the arsenal (the miraculous power), but Jesus did not seem inclined to seize the opportunities he was given. To a Judean like Judas, all too familiar with the intrigues of the Jerusalem power-brokers, the time was drawing close when Jesus would have to seize power or lose all chance of it. Surely, Judas believed Jesus was the Messiah, and that the cause was not to be lost. Judas also thought, or could have thought, of himself as the one member of the group who could be a catalyst for the critical event. So a plan hatched in his heart (according to this interpretation) to seize the moment of the Passover to present Jesus with just exactly the circumstances for him to be proclaimed Sovereign, and with the full participation of all the religious leaders of the Temple. True, these leaders planned to trap Jesus and had placed a price on his head, but Judas had seen Jesus defeat them time after time in debate, and Judas knew Jesus had powers they did not possess, to call down thunder and lightning -- or to calm storms (they had seen him do it!), and to walk away from raging mobs unscathed. Judas' plan seems clearly to have been to place Jesus in the position where he could come out on top, coalesce the enthusiasm of the multitudes as well, and declare independence.

Insofar as Satan used Judas, it was through the one weakness that Judas did not see in himself, Judas thought more of his own sense of timing for Jesus than he thought of Jesus as Lord of all things. The tragedy of Judas was that he tried to make Jesus into the Messiah he expected him to be, rather than to become Christ's servant.

The shield of Judas in the Apostles' windows is left blank, which is one of the traditions (another being to picture the sack holding the thirty pieces of silver). Matthias was chosen to replace Judas, but the blank shield of Judas is available, in a manner of speaking, for any of us who wish to take his empty place at the Lord's table and in his service.

The Old Testament Windows

There was not always a Gothic style stained glass window in the West transept. Indeed, this barrel-vaulted "alcove" was once the front of the sanctuary, in the original Link design. There was an organ there, behind the chancel platform, with the pulpit strategically located at the acoustical center of the church. Aisles approached the chancel diagonally from the tower and the opposite corner at the back. But when the sanctuary was redesigned in 1963 and 64 a window was installed there to match the window next to it. Both of those windows were then replaced with stained glass in colors appropriate to the new Gothic interior. The windows facing east included the Old Testament motif, and the west windows (the ones first seen upon entering the church through the tower) included the New Testament symbols. In the 1991 reconstruction the windows retained the same symbols, but the Old Testament windows were placed to the west, and the New Testament windows to the east -- to receive the morning light as is traditional.

People who have memorized the 1964 windows, when first seeing the new 1990 replacements, tend to think they are very different. As a matter of fact, only the symbols are the same, and even these are not identical. The 1991 windows had to be redrawn and remade following new patterns, because a new firm was chosen for the project, when the original firm proved uncooperative and unfriendly to the committee. The results, nevertheless, are striking, beautiful, and far exceeded every expectation in terms of technical and artistic effectiveness, brilliance of color, variety of color, and attention to detail.

The Name of God Window

At the top of the Old Testament windows, on the left, is a large six-pointed star, composed, familiarly, of two interlaced equilateral triangles, known as the Star of David. In the center of the star is a Hebrew word for the name of God.

Throughout most of history the Hebrew language was written with only consonants. The vowels which transformed the consonants into pronounceable syllables were known from memory, but were added in the middle ages to assist later readers who might be unfamiliar with the sound of spoken Hebrew. Rabbis simply went through scripture and added dots and dashes above and below the consonants to stand for vowels.

However, there was one word that was written in the Bible which was never actually pronounced by the rabbis. In great fear of breaking the holy prohibition of the third commandment against taking the Lord's name in vain, the rabbis avoided saying the word out loud which was printed in Exodus 3:14 in answer to Moses's question about the name of God. God's answer in English is "I AM". Elsewhere the name is translated as God. The four Hebrew letters compare to English JHWH. We believe

the missing vowels must have produced the word, JaH-WeH, meaning "I AM," or "I AM WHO I AM." But the rabbis avoided saying that holy name. Instead, they articulated a euphemism for the name of God, saying "AD-O-NAI", which means "Lord". Adonai, is pronounced with the Hebrew vowel sounds a, o, a (or ay). So when the Rabbis were reading out loud they said Adonai whether the word was written ADNY or JHWH. The results of adding the a-o-a vowels to the consonants JHWH, is to produce the word, JaHoWaH, or Jehovah as the King James Version has the sacred name of God in English. Recent translations try to propose that we go ahead and read the name of God as it was meant in the first place, using the a-e vowels to form the word JaHWeH.

The artist, in designing the windows in 1989, insisted on the old vowel markings even though he was asked to leave them off. The resulting word is a mixture of the consonants for the name of God, Yahweh, and the vowels for the name of God, Adonai. In any case, the meaning is that God is supreme, over all. It is the Lord God who has sovereignty over all the events of history, represented in the four windows below.

The Hand of God Window

The symbol on the right in the upper tier is the hand of God extending from a bright cloud. Within the hand are five tiny figures representing the souls of the righteous. The idea is based upon Psalm 139, "Thy right hand shall hold me..." and from another passage, "...the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God." (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1). The "righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God," says the Preacher (Ecclesiastes 9:1). And from the Old Testament the symbol was remembered by the early Christians who often referred to the hand of God, especially the right hand of God where Jesus is. The picture of the hand of God extending down toward earth was often used in early Christian art to indicate the presence and providence of God.

It is fair to say that the reign of God was progressively understood in Old Testament history. The earliest concept was that YHWH was a territorial God, who was sovereign in a particular area given to Abraham and his clan. In this concept YHWH had to strive with other gods for dominance. "I am a jealous God," the prophets report. "Have no other gods before me." But as the Hebrew people began to gain total control of their nation under King David and Solomon, the thought caught hold that YHWH can protect the people and the nation from enemies because God is supreme over all other gods, no matter where they are. Within time the prophets were proclaiming that only YHWH is real, that the others are idols of wood and stone without life or reality except in the imaginations of their deluded adherents. In fact, the prophets attributed the basic political weakness of Israel to the fact that the government (the kings) continued to tolerate the presence of other cults and places of worship within the country. Israel's monotheism had become radical. Jesus' contribution was to demonstrate how that radical monotheism must operate within the conscience as a matter of decision and will rather than public law and cultic practice, and to mobilize a group of people to become God's expanding faith community -- pushing beyond the borders of Palestine into "all

the world, making disciples and baptizing...." Thus, the righteous in the hand of God includes people of all nations, whoever confesses the sovereignty of YHWH God and is guided by principles of justice (righteousness) in relation to others.

The Creation and Fall

The Bible insists that God created a good world, filled with life-giving fruit, in which all creatures live together peaceably and in which human beings even had intimate, direct companionship with God. It was paradise, pictured as a garden of delight. The entrance of evil and perfidy into this picture is explained in several ways in scripture, but the central story of the fall from paradise is in the third chapter of Genesis. There Adam and Eve (representing humankind, male and female) yielded to the beguiling temptation to try to expand the limits imposed on their humanity, and indeed to strive to become "like God." God perceived this to be rebellion which would undo the results of the ordering of creation, violating the distinctions and prerogatives set for each group of creatures. The snake was said to have suggested that the humans take the step of becoming like God. And it was in agreeing to this temptation that creation appeared to be on the way toward reverting to chaos, or at least toward being wrapped in the coils of rebellion (another word for sin) against God.

Consequently, the picture of creation which we inherit is less a vision of paradise than a portrait of the world encoiled in the serpent's grip. Originally there was no identification of the serpent with Satan, but that suggestion was certainly popular by the New Testament era. In any case, the lock which sin and evil has on the world is temporary, as menacing and deadly as the evil may be. In due time God will dispatch Satan and serpent and all else that disrupts the re-creation of paradise.

The Covenant with Noah

As the Old Testament story continues, even with the disciplines imposed after expulsion from the Garden of Eden, humankind continued to degenerate from God's model. As an example of God's determination and compassion, Genesis tells the story of Noah, a righteous man who was head of a good family. The time came when they alone remained true. So God sent a flood to eradicate life from the face of the earth, but preserved Noah with pairs of all animals to repopulate the world when the flood receded. As a sign of God's promise to preserve life against future devastation by such a flood, God consecrated the rainbow.

The testament (or covenant) with Noah was the first of several which the Bible mentions, in which God establishes himself as Lord over humankind, and provides a symbol of his edict. God did judge and discipline his people several times, but in a less general way, by forcing the restructure of Hebrew society through conquest by empires from outside, for example. Still, scripture predicts that a time will come when God's

patience will once again reach its limits, and God will again remove his faithful people and will destroy the world God created.

The Ten Commandments

True history for the Israelite people begins with their migration back to their ancestral lands between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, from their subjugation in Egypt after a change in political power installed a new dynasty there. After centuries of domination by the Egyptians, the Hebrews needed most of all a political-religious symbol-system around which to rally. God provided this in the Ten Commandments.

The ten commandments, in a basic sense, are ten words, a decalogue, which summarizes the precepts which provide the Hebrews with a self-identity. The decalogue also created a moral and legal climate which was more enlightened and responsive than those of other nations at the time. A sophisticated theocentric humanitarianism, as outlined in the decalogue, was the essence of God's design for the creation of society.

In the Old Testament window, the central symbol of theology and society is depicted in the cartouche which contains the tablets of the law. The artist has chosen to write the ten words in Hebrew, which is read from right to left. The first four words describe people's relationship to God. The next six words dictate the law between people: honor parents, do not kill, do not steal, do not even covet, etc.

Jesus described his job as renewing this covenant, not of replacing the commandments around which it is structured, but of clarifying the teaching. The fulfillment of the commandments is not an arduous requirement, but it does take nothing less than total commitment of one's whole lifestyle. Although Christ showed through the example of his own life that this is possible, he also proclaimed that forgiveness is available out of the Lord's grace and mercy.

The Prophetic Concept

Throughout Hebrew history leadership was usually a problem. Kings were not always dependable, and even priests often vacillated in their faithfulness. Gradually, a hope was clarified for a leader, an anointed one (Messiah means anointed), to truly lead. One prophet after another sharpened and clarified this longing for a God-gifted, Spirit-anointed Messiah to come who would combine in one person the three roles of prophet-priest-king.

The prophet who, more than any other, described this Messiah and the people's hope, was Isaiah. He used a full pallet of colors and images to paint his dream, among which is the beautiful phrase, which the King James' Version has imprinted on English-speaking consciousness in the words, "...the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." (Isa. 35:1). In addition, the Lover sings, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys," in the Song of Solomon (2:1). Christian piety has long identified this

anonymous Lover with Christ. So the prophecy window which represents the latest portion of the Old Testament, is a rendition of the so-called rose of Sharon, referring also to the prophets' announcement of a coming Messiah.

Botanically, the rose in Isaiah 35 was no rose at all. Newer translations recognize that, and use the word crocus for the desert-blooming sign of promise. Those same translations, however, could not bring themselves to be consistent and call the rose of Sharon "the crocus of Sharon" (except to note in the footnote that the Hebrew word is crocus).

After Jesus, the Christians re-read the Old Testament, and became convinced that Jesus was the very One whom the prophets foretold. Jesus was the Messiah, or as the Greek word says, the Christ, the Anointed. In Jesus all the hopes and expectations for future blessedness have come into focus, or rather, into bloom. So, the last of the Old Testament windows, like the last of the Old Testament writings, points to Christ.

The symbolism of the color is that the rose is pink, a marriage of both red and white, both divinity and humanity. Red has also stood for martyrdom and white for purity. Christ is both. Furthermore at the heart of the "rose" is a white five-pointed star, symbolizing the five wounds of Christ, as the thorns also recall the wounds upon his brow.

The New Testament Windows

The windows on the east side of the sanctuary, to catch the morning sunlight, contain symbols of the New Testament. The tall gothic window is framed by two small windows containing celtic crosses. The cross to the left is colored in such a way as to leave the image of four nails converging at the center. The window on the right contains concentric rings which could stand for the wounds of Christ. The circle is in red, representing eternity.

The Lamb of God

Revelation, the fifth chapter, contains John's vision of a Lamb which, of all creatures and beings in heaven, was the only one worthy to take the sacred book of life and open its seven holy seals. It was John's poetic portrayal of Christ in victory. The Lamb, John says, looked as if it had been slain; it was a sacrificial offering, the final one. For after the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, no further sacrifice was necessary, and, indeed, the Temple ritual was soon disbanded after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The Book of Hebrews also alludes to Christ as both the supreme High Priest and also the supreme great sacrifice, the Lamb that was slain for the atonement for sin.

However, it is the picture from Revelation that is represented in the New Testament window. The image of a lamb with a banner emblazoned with a red cross on a white field is from the middle ages, but the symbol of Christ as the Lamb of God was significant in the development of Christian worship from the second century. In fact, John the Baptist says, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" when he sees Jesus, according to the Gospel of John. At the appearance of the Lamb in Revelation, angels begin a celestial chorus of praise, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" The Lamb proceeds to open the seven seals (Rev. 6-8). With the opening of each of the first four seals a horse and rider is bidden to ride forth with one of the sentences of death with which the Apocalypse begins to come to a climax. When the fifth seal is broken the saints are clothed in white. When the sixth seal is opened the kings and rulers of earth along with all other human beings are covered in darkness. When the seventh seal is broken there is silence in heaven before the trumpets of heaven are sounded.

As a whole, the Lamb of God in victory is a symbol of Christ in heaven at the right hand of God, "from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead." In Christian art the victorious Lamb is sometimes mounted on an empty tomb. But in the New Testament window the Lamb is standing on the Book which is represented by the seven colored seals hanging from seven ribbons.

The Dove of the Holy Spirit

The third person of the Holy Trinity is also represented in the New Testament window. The image is of a dove descending. The halo containing three radiant beams is an indication that the dove is one of the persons of the Trinity. In the New Testament the symbol is most clearly present in the story of the Baptism of Jesus. John the Baptist bears witness, "I saw the Holy Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it rested on him (Jesus)."

In Christian art the dove is present to represent the Holy Spirit at the annunciation to Mary that the child she is to bear is the Son of the Holy Spirit of God.

The Birth of Christ

The first of four windows in the second tier represents the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. At the center of the cartouche is a stylized picture of the manger in which the baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, was laid. The presence of the Lord Jesus in the manger is indicated by the nimbus with three radiating shafts of red (the color of Divinity). The town of Bethlehem can be seen under the legs of the manger. Overhead is a dark sky filled with bright stars. Uppermost is the star of David, for Jesus was of the lineage of David and was born in the city of David, and was born to fulfill the expectation that a successor to David would be the Messiah.

It is clear that the symbol is of more than the nativity of Jesus. The birth of the baby is only part of the story, and the smaller part of its significance. The story of Jesus' birth is the medium for interpreting the fact that the Lord God has descended to earth to become human and to restore the direct companionship between God and humanity that was lost in the fall from grace. It is a great mystery, how God who created the universe could become a person. For Jesus not only contained a Divine spark, or symbolized the presence of God, or represented God in principle. Jesus, the Apostles learned, was fully God as well as completely human. Thus, the birth of Jesus was the incarnation of God.

The Crucifixion of Christ

Jesus was not universally well received, although he had popular support from time to time. In the end, Jesus was delivered over to the religious tribunal in Jerusalem and accused of blasphemy for seeming to identify himself with God in a way that was forbidden of any human being. A charge of sedition was brought against Jesus in the Roman court by the Jewish leaders, who had the Roman authority in a compromising position because of the procurator's past indiscretions. So, as Jesus did not appear to be a person of consequence, Pilate turned him over to be crucified as a self-proclaimed pretender to the Jewish throne. Jesus was crucified on the eve of the Passover, and he died on the cross before sunset.

The Passion of Jesus Christ has inspired more art of more kinds than any other event in history. It has been represented in paintings and sculpture without number. It has been reproduced in plays and movies, and in the celebration of the mass which must be conducted somewhere on earth at any moment of every day and night for the past score of centuries. The passion is the climax of each of the four Gospels, and is the central concern of Christian theology.

In the stained glass window the blood-red cross is viewed through the sinister crown of thorns. The inner circle of thorns is also red as the cross, stained by blood from the Savior's brow. Three stylized nails for his hands and feet complete the set.

The Resurrection Window

It was no part of God's will that Jesus, his only begotten Son, would languish in death. For even death was to be vanquished along with the forces that promote it. As Jesus had foretold, and as he had demonstrated in several miraculous ways, Jesus was to conquer death once and for all. Death was no more to be the final grim reaper, but an event among others, for those who have the faith to grasp it. Death was no illusion; it was real, as the pain of dying and the agony of alienation that accompanies it are pathetically real. But death was not final. And to show the truth all the more dramatically, Jesus was raised from death on the third day. As the final act of his life and passion, and as the first act of his reign in glory, Jesus was raised from the dead and visited his disciples once more.

For the most part, either the lamb upon the open casket, or the picture of Christ emerging from the tomb, or the image of Christ crowned and robed as the Victorious Prince, are the standard depictions of the Resurrection. Sometimes just a gaping cave with folded grave cloths on an empty slab tells the story. But other images have been borrowed.

One symbolic representation of the resurrection is never mentioned in scripture at all, and comes from Near Eastern mythology. The legend of the phoenix is that the bird, sensing that death was near, would make a nest of sweet woods and resins, which it would expose to the full rays of the sun until it ignited. The bird would then die, but another bird would emerge from the marrow of its bones. The phoenix legend was introduced to Christianity in the first century by St. Clement. The image appears on many early Christian funeral stones, signifying the resurrection of the dead and the triumph of eternal life.

The phoenix was represented in the 1964 windows to stand for the resurrection of Christ. But during the reconstruction of the church after the fire in 1988 the symbol gained a particular poignancy for the congregation. One year was entitled, "The Year of the Phoenix," and another was called, "The Phoenix Rises."

The Ascension of Christ

The final departure of Jesus from among the disciples was described as his Ascension into Heaven. After giving them the benefit of post-resurrection encouragement, Jesus assembled the disciples on the Mount of Olives opposite the Temple, and then rose into the air where he was engulfed in a cloud. The testimony of scripture is that Jesus now sits at the right hand of God the Father. The ascension of Jesus was the end of his physical human presence with the disciples, but the beginning of his eternal reign as Lord over all the earth. As time goes on, despite set-backs and the frailty of his human agents, the Kingdom of the Spirit of the God of Love continues to expand. The universal Lordship of Christ is inevitable as it is wonderful to anticipate.

The Ascension of Christ is represented in the stained glass window in a crown emblazoned on a golden nimbus, with rays of light emanating from all around the circumference. Shafts of light from the crown, penetrating through the clouds reach the regions here below with the sign of the presence of God. As John's Gospel says of Christ, "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."

The Sacrament Windows

On the left side of the nave are two windows that used to be a window and a door in the pastor's study before the 1964 renovation. At that time stained glass windows were installed to depict the two sacraments of the church.

The Baptism Window

Nearest the Old Testament Window is a window which displays symbols of Baptism. Uppermost is the dove descending as it did when Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River. The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, owing to John's testimony that he saw the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descend on Jesus as he was baptized. Jesus commented that the only miraculous sign that the people of the modern age would receive would be the sign of Jonah (Jonah is dove in Hebrew); which seems to mean the sign of deliverance from death that comes by being raised from the water of baptism under the power of Spirit, as Jonah was delivered from death. In the stained glass window the dove has a ray of light emanating from its breast to portray the coming of the Spirit to enlighten. Scallop shells are immersed in a cascade of water, with three bright drops to emphasize the water, which is the central symbol of baptism. Scallop shells are often used in baptism, or, as in this case, in art to represent baptism. The chi rho monogram for Christ, with a equilateral Greek cross in the middle, is resting in the water. This, of course, stands for Jesus receiving baptism at the hands of John, but it also represents the coming of Christ into the hearts and lives of all who are baptized. For the significance of baptism is that it initiates a person into the community of Christ, where God is present.

Within the design, at each side, is a set of Gothic towers, which stand for churches, or the Church. The symbolism is that baptism is a sacramental act of the Church.

The Holy Communion Window

The central symbol for the Holy Communion is the chalice. The form of the chalice is medieval, during which period holy communion became the central sacrament of worship. The cup recalls the Last Supper of Jesus with the disciples, in which Christ enacted for them the significance of what was about to happen. As Paul recalls, "On the night in which he was betrayed, he took the cup ... and said, 'This is the new covenant in my blood. Drink of it all of you.'" The communion chalice must hold red wine to represent the blood of Christ, but partly visible above the rim of the chalice is a white disc with the letters INRI. This is the communion bread, or host, with the abbreviation of the sign posted over the head of Jesus on the cross, Jesus Nazarene

King (of) Jews (J and I are interchangeable in Latin). In other words, the host not only stands for Jesus, it contains the same measure of his essence and presence as does his very name. And as for that name, there is a prayer, as the hymn says, that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess him Lord and Savior now." There is a burst of light shining above the chalice to signify the presence of God in the celebration of the sacrament. But the elements themselves, which constitute the symbols, are essentially grain and grapes. That is, Christ took bread made of grain, and wine made of grapes -- common things from the table -- things produced by the life-sustaining power of natural earth -- to help his disciples remember the life-sustaining power of the Spirit which his death and resurrection would reveal.