

Trinity's Stained Glass Windows

September 27, 2017

Trinity Historical Society Fall Series

The Rev. Dr. Wayne D. Wiatt,
Pastor Trinity United Methodist Church

*Appreciation to Dr. George Foster
Pastor of Trinity from 1965-1972
Original stained glass explanation (1970)
New sanctuary of Trinity UMC occupied in 1964 with
Trinity Chancel Windows
PDF by Rex Adams*

Overview

General Overview – Three windows are, of course, a Trinity and are intended to suggest the Trinitarian nature of our belief in God. The phrase Triune God or Triune Deity encompasses our understanding that God is 3 in 1 – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

More simply stated –

The West Window - (Duval Street side or left side of the Sanctuary) represents the Old Testament story.

Teaching us that God is creator and Lord of history, especially as seen in the historical experience of the Hebrew-Jewish people.

The Central Window – represents the New Testament story, the incarnation simply means God coming to us in human form in the person of Jesus. Our understanding of Jesus as the savior of the world, born in a manger, walking upon the earth and doing good, crucified, risen, and reigning in glory.

The East Window – portrays the church from the day of pentecost and the early centuries of church history through the protestant reformation, our Methodist tradition, ecumenical movement or ecumenism and of particular connection to Florida – the space age.

Each window is further divided into three sections (yet another Trinity!)

Each window has four secondary designs represented in half circle medallions in the side windows and half-square medallions in the center window. Then in each corner of all 3 windows, there are symbols of biblical or historical events, persons, or teachings.

So in summary – total of 33 representations to understand in order to receive the full impact of these windows!

How to read the windows –

- The west window (above left) – should be read from the top downward
- The center window (above center) – should be read from the bottom upward
- The east window (above right) – Should be read from the top downward

Summary of Design – Developed by the Willet Stained Glass Studios of Philadelphia

a. Combination of Sculpture in bas-relief (shapes slightly higher than their background) super-imposed on stained glass; and then overlaid with “flown gold leaf”. Trinity windows are different than the classical stained glass - light shining from outside in. Our Stained glass Images are more easily seen at night with artificial light from the inside shining on the windows.



Reading the west window

(Read from the top downward) –

The left or Duval Street side of the sanctuary

I. The West Window Represents the “Father God” in the Holy Trinity. Look at the top of the window and you can see the depiction of creation. Central to this grouping of images is the hand of God and the relatively large figure of Adam. The hand is encircled by a nimbus (or cloud), and a translucent beam moves toward Adam as the primary figure of creation. Eve, on the other hand, is represented in a very small figure, just below the hand of God. Depicted in this scene are the wonders of creation: the heavens with its sun, stars, planets, and moon. Observe the creatures of earth: animals, birds, fish. Don’t miss the serpent, just below Adam, depicted as relatively large - symbolizing the story of the fall.

Now move down to the half-circle medallion. This depicts the moment in Old Testament history of the sacrifice of Isaac. The angel of the Lord calls out to Abraham to spare Isaac and not follow through with the sacrifice.

Next to Abraham and Isaac is Moses, receiving the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. The large central image in this window is a representation of the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea; the curled waves are depicting the miraculous parting of the water for Moses to lead the Israelites to freedom and safety on the other side.

To the right, Moses holds his hands up with three large figures in the foreground, and four smaller figures behind these, and six yet smaller figures behind these representing the multitudes in the exodus event.

The artists skip over several hundred years of Old Testament history jumping over King David, Solomon, the divided kingdom, the psalmists and the prophets, and move to the return from captivity and exile for the Jews. This period of restoration is the theme for the next three sections we’ll call

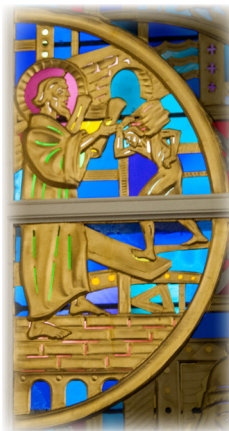
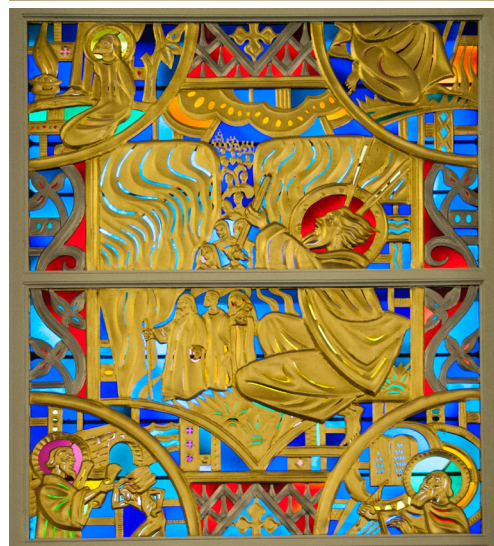
“Restoration”

In the two half-circle medallions, you will find Nehemiah and Ezra. The figure on the left is Nehemiah, overseeing the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and bringing back integrity and dignity to the Holy City.

Ezra, depicted as the law giver, scribe, and spiritual leader whose influence was great among the Jews and the strength of Judaism.

The large grouping at the bottom continues the theme of restoration representing King Cyrus, the Persian ruler who conquered the Babylonians, returning the temple vessels to the priests so that they might once again lead worship in Zion. In the background observe the buildings depicting Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.

The final scenes of the west window are in the four corners where symbols represent the four great prophets of Israel.





a. In the upper left corner is a sheep or lamb, representing Amos.

b. In the right corner you will see tongs and live coals symbolic of Isaiah's forgiveness and the cleansing of the temple described in Isaiah 6:1-8.



Isaiah's commission

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they

covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"



c. In the lower left corner, you can make out a rod and stone, standing for the martyrdom of the prophet Jeremiah.

d. At the lower right represents the writings of Isaiah and the depiction of the winepress with the letters Chi Rho, first two Greek letters of the name of Christ. (Isaiah 63:5 "I will tread the winepress alone, anticipating the coming of the Messiah.")



Reading the center window

(Read from the bottom upward) –

The center window

II. Beginning from the bottom of the window and reading up, the center window is probably the most recognizable. This of course is the holy family at Bethlehem and is magnificent. You can easily find the

infant Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and traditional animals, and the star in the sky!

The two half-square or rectangular medallions feature on the left, Jesus being baptized by John the Baptizer in the river Jordan. Note the descending dove representing the Holy Spirit. This is where Jesus heard the voice of God, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Opposite, and in corresponding size, the other rectangular medallion shows Jesus healing the blind man, featuring the healing ministry of Christ.



The central figure in the window is, of course, Christ coming forth from the tomb. It has a startling realism to it and powerfully conveys the Christian hope of resurrection from the dead.

The two rectangular medallions above it represent from left to right, two teaching scenes: Jesus teaching in the synagogue and then Jesus teaching from the boat at the lakeshore.



At the top center, you see one of the grander and more glorious representations of the entire spread of these windows. This scene is from the Christus Rex magnified and exalted, or more simply stated... "Christ the King!" When writing his summary, Dr. Foster commented... "You can almost hear the angelic chorus singing: Bring for the royal diadem and crown him, Lord of all!"



The triumphant Christ is seated upon a rainbow, the symbol of celestial

enthronement. Also, notice the cross-topped orb in the left hand, symbolizing the Christian hope that one day, the "Kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

In this majestic scene, top center of the window, we have an anthem in sculpture, eloquently ascribing glory, honor, and power to the risen Christ.

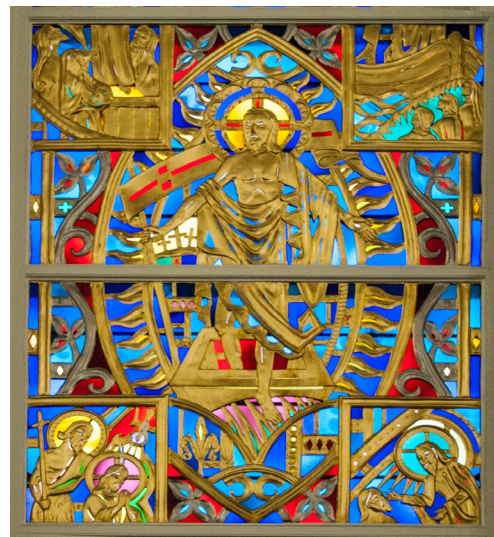
Finally, take note of the four winged creatures in the small squares at each corner of the window. These are the accepted symbols of the four evangelists, or four Gospels

Lower Left – the Winged Man for Matthew

Lower Right – the Winged Lion for Mark

Upper Left – the Winged Ox for Luke

Upper Right – the Winged Eagle for John



Winged Man for Matthew



Winged Lion for Mark



Winged Ox for Luke

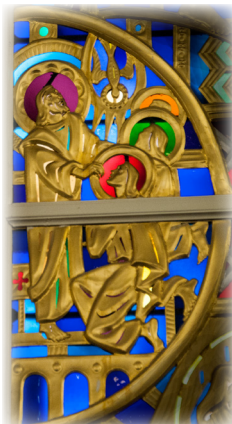


Winged Eagle for John

Reading the east window

(Read from the top downward) –
The east side or right of the sanctuary

III. This window is designed to show the work of the Holy Spirit in the rise and growth of the Church. The window begins with Pentecost (the birthday of the church) to the current time... to the then 20th century, and now 21st century!
Your eyes are immediately drawn to the dove, representing the Holy Spirit as it descends upon the waiting disciples to empower them to go out and share the Gospel.



The two half-circle medallions below the dove represent St. Paul baptizing converts and Bishop Ambrose baptizing Augustine, who later became Bishop of Hippo, and next to Paul, exercised the greatest single influence on Christian theology. The central figure in the window is Martin Luther, nailing the 95 thesis on the church door at Wittenberg on October 31, 1517... and in essence, began the Protestant Reformation! Note to the right and below, the stylized rose, which is Luther's seal. Next is the large figure of John Wesley. This depicts Wesley at Aldersgate, testifying to his heart being "strangely



warmed" as he knelt in prayer and felt the confirmation of the Holy Spirit, assuring him of his own salvation with the rays proceeding toward the heart as a portrayal of Wesley's evangelical preaching.

Above and to the left is Charles Wesley writing hymns at the clavier (piano). He was inspired to write 6500 hymns and his technical prowess as a musician enabled him to accomplish this feat with amazing diligence and success. "Hark the Herald Angels Sing..."



To the right is Francis Asbury, the exemplary "Circuit Rider" and leader of those young lay preachers who were the early heroes of Methodism, expanding the Church north and south throughout the eastern United States in the 18th and 19th centuries.



This window also has four symbols in its corners:

Quarter Circle Medallions:

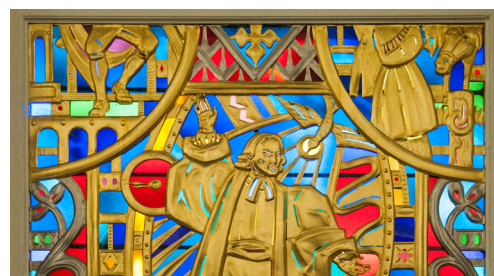
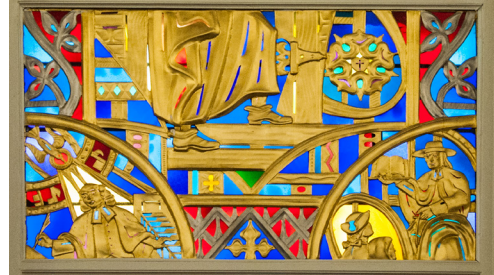
Upper Left – Apostolic symbols of wallet, staff, and scallop, representing the sending out of the 12, the 70, and all Christians into all the world!

Upper Right

- Helping hand of the Christian reaching down under the Chi



Rho toward the upstretched hands of the needy.





Lower Left – Ship a float with a full cross-emblazoned sail, representing the modern Church in the “storm tossed” world.

Lower Right - Space ship amidst the planet, representing to us the Space Age into which we have already entered!

Dr. Foster wrote these concluding words to his summary “ of the meaning of our stained glass windows!

“What a glorious heritage we have! And so much of it spread before us here in our sanctuary in resplendent fashion. It is hoped that greater knowledge and understanding of these windows will lead to greater appreciation of our heritage and

to a satisfying enhancement of our worship.

