



Hand of God the Father

Shepherd Staves

Star of Bethlehem  
Three crowns of the Magi

*Chi ro*

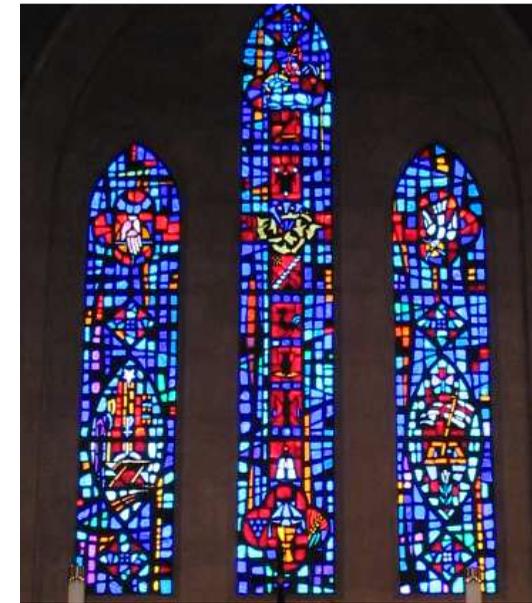
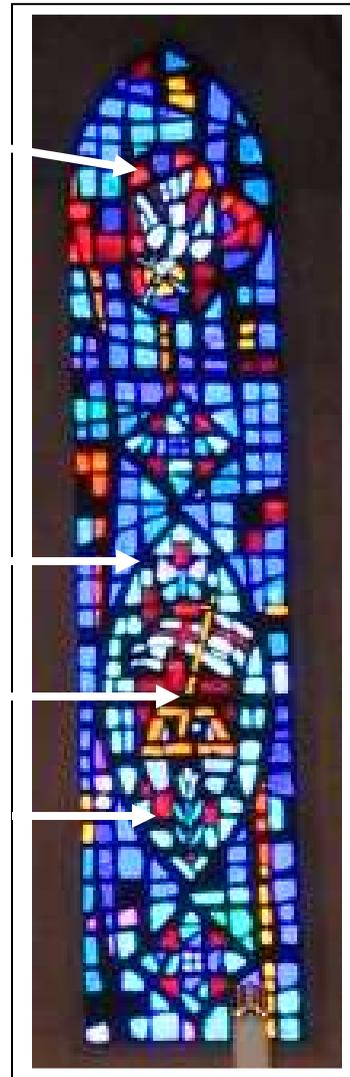
Manger

The descending dove of the Holy Spirit

Butterfly

The banner and the empty tomb

Easter lily



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN  
CHURCH

GOD'S SALVATION STORY  
TOLD  
IN  
STAIN-GLASS

St. John's Lutheran Church  
8808 Harford Rd  
Parkville, Md 21234

In the earliest Christian churches symbols were used to teach the congregations. The chancel window at St. John's that the people sit facing, illustrates the main precepts of Christianity.

The first thing that you notice when you look up at the stain glass windows is that there are three separate windows that make one window. I wonder where we have heard that before.

Christianity is uniquely Trinitarian meaning that

*We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten; the Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten; the Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. (from the Athanasian creed)*

As you might suspect each of the three windows has a theme of the Trinity. At the top of each panel (each window) there are symbols of the Trinity: the hand of God the Father; the Lamb of God, the Son, bearing the banner of victory over sin and death; and the descending dove of the Holy Spirit.

A cross extends throughout the window in tones of red against the background. At the bottom of the cross are the symbols of the Sacraments: the scallop shell of Baptism, and the chalice, the grapes and wheat which are the elements of Holy Communion.

The left panel of the window at the top you see the hand of God the Father. The medallion below is one of the two main feasts of the Church, Christmas.

Christmas is symbolized by a *chi ro* (XR) the Greek letters which is the ancient monogram for Jesus Christ, seated in the manger lighted by the star of Bethlehem. Also included are the shepherds' staves and three crowns of the Magi.

In the right panel of the window at the top you see the descending dove of the Holy Spirit. The medallion below represents the other main feast of the church, Easter. It contains the open tomb from which the banner of the Lamb emerges. Below is an Easter lily and above is a butterfly symbol of the resurrection. The caterpillar is like life on earth. The cocoon is like the grave from which a butterfly emerges at last to fly up to heaven on beautiful wings. Therefore, this symbolizes the resurrection of all not just of Jesus Christ.

The center panel of the window holds the upright cross. Up the cross, mostly silhouetted in the matrix are symbols of Christ's Passion: a lantern – his capture in Gethsemane, scourges and a pillar, the basin and pitcher with which Pilate washed his hands, the cock that crowed when Peter denied Him, the sponge and ladder with which He was given vinegar to drink on the cross and His seamless robe and the dice with which the soldiers gambled for it. At the center of the cross are the crown of thorns and nails.

The banner of victory over sin and death and the Lamb

The seamless robe and dice at the three extremes of hands and feet

The three nails  
The Crown of thorns

The ladder and sponge

The rooster

The water pitcher and basin

The scourges used to whip Jesus

The lantern

The scallop shell  
The grapes  
The chalice

The wheat

