

An Explanation of the Faceted Stained Glass Memorial Windows at First Christian Church Click the Blue links below to view photos of the windows.

The faceted stained glass windows along the eastern wall of the First Christian Church sanctuary were designed by the artist and craftsman of the Willet Stained Glass Studios of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania They have done work in various forms of stained glass throughout the United States and Europe, including National City Christian Church, the Disciples' "national cathedral" in Washington, D.C.,

Installed in 1968, the 62-foot long memorial window treatment was uniquely created for First Christian Church. Within it are thirty symbols that are revealed to all who look, meditate, and recall the significance of Christ's life in ours.

Beginning at the rear of the nave with the Messianic hope of the prophet Isaiah and moving forward to the triumphant revelation of Christ as Victor, four general sections include a total of sixteen panels. The four major sections have been labeled:

**The Nativity Window The
Commitment Window The
Passion Window The
Victory Window**

[The Nativity Window](#)

The Hebrew people had long awaited the coming of a Messiah. They dreamed of time when their Kingdom would be restored by one who would cast off the oppressive rulers of many empires. While in Babylonian exile, the prophet Isaiah wrote that Israel would be restored: "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom [like a rose]" (Isa. 35; 1). See the rose in the very first panel.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Matthew tells of wise men from the East who followed a star to the Christ child in Bethlehem's manger. There they presented the baby Jesus with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. These, plus the Chi Rho monogram are in the second panel.

The next two panels contain no apparent symbols, reminding us of the hidden years of our Lord's life. From the infant accounts to age twelve, when Jesus went to Jerusalem with his parents, Mary and Joseph, and was found in the temple (Luke 2:41), until his emergence at age thirty, there is nothing known of his life. However, within these two panels (as with all of the panels), there are abstract images of the Cross. As you study the many panels, you will see the Cross in many different shapes and forms.

[The Commitment Window](#)

At approximately 30-years-old, the gospels tell us that Jesus appeared before John the Baptizer, a messenger who was "preparing the way for the Lord" (Mark 1:3 and parallels). Baptized in the River Jordan, Matthew writes, "When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold the heavens were opened, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him" (Matt. 3:16) This experience is portrayed in the large dove and drops of water in the second Window. Immediately after his baptism, Jesus went into the Wilderness to battle Satan, designated by the serpent in the lower portion of the panel. No sooner had Jesus returned, he began to call disciples to join him in ministry, saying, "Follow me." The shell with the water dropping from it is a very ancient symbol depicting the baptism of the disciples, and the fish in the lower section of the panel represents the disciples, many of whom were fishermen. The fish was one of the earliest Christian symbols because the Greek word for fish, *ichthus*, and the five Greek letters of that word came to represent the phrase

"Jesus Christ Son of God - [Theos] - Savior." In a time of persecution, it was a means by which early Christians identified one another, either by speaking the Greek word for fish or by making the sign of the fish. The symbol was also marked on walls with charcoal, pointing the direction to where "People of the Way" could meet to worship the Christ. '

The panel with the basket containing one fish with two others about to enter it symbolizes Christ's call to "Come, follow me", and the net reminds us of his words "and I will make you fishers of [people]." The mission of the church is to bring all people to a knowledge of Christ and to challenge us all to commit ourselves to Him as Lord and Savior, surrendering ourselves to Him in Christian baptism so that the Spirit of God might also come upon us. Isaac Watts wrote a prayer in 1707 that, when put to music by John B. Dykes in 1866, became one of our well known hymns:

*Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove, with all your quickening powers; _
Kindle a flame of sacred love in these cold hearts of ours.—Chalice Hymnal, #248*

[The Passion Window](#)

The third set of panels begins with the ordinance of the Communion at the Last Supper. Notice the first panel contains the wheat and the grapes in their natural state as a gift from God. The second panel shows the elements shaped by human hands into bread and wine. Jesus took these two common elements and consecrated them before his disciples, transforming them into a new meaning of his broken body and poured blood. Each time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we do so "In remembrance of Him."

On the following day, Jesus was crucified on the Cross. Those who taunted him "plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe; they came up to him saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again, and said to them, 'Behold, I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find no crime in him.' So Jesus came out, wearing a crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' When the chief priests and the officers saw him they cried out, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' " And when they crucified him, "Jesus, knowing that all was now finished said, 'I thirst!' A bowl of vinegar stood there. So they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, 'It is finished;' and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

[The Victory Window](#)

The pomegranate marks the first panel in The Victory Window. A very well-known fruit in biblical times, its small seeds would figuratively burst forth from the pod when ripe. While the life of Jesus appeared to all that it was over, God's omnipotent power chose to resurrect him as the Christ, Throwing back the stone that covered the tomb in which he had been buried, and new life came forth. 'When John the Baptist first saw Jesus at his baptism, he referred to him as the "Lamb of God." in the second panel, we see the Lamb walking and bearing the Christian banner of victory. It is the sign that God has raised the Son, the Lamb of God, and now he marches on to victory over death.

Jesus instructed his disciples to remain in Jerusalem and to wait for the promise of the Father. "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them as tongues of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts of the Apostles). The next panel depicts the tongues of fire in the seven flames.

When the Christian people of all ages have faced great difficulties, many have been consoled over and over again by the reassuring words of our Lord found in the last book of the Bible, "The Revelation of John." In chapter 2, Christians are counseled by the Spirit "to be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." The promised crown of life is found in the last panel of the Victory Window, and out of that crown extends a palm branch, for in the seventh chapter of Revelations we read these challenging words:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could ever number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!"

And all the angels stood around the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen!" - Revelation 7:9- 12

* With much thanks to the Rev. Dr. William Newman whose original writings contributed greatly to the explanation of the symbols encased within the Faceted Stained Glass Memorial Windows upon their dedication in 1968.

**Addendum: With the aid of Nelson and Stana Shogren, Sandy and Sue researching the Archives room and e-mails to the Willet Company, we have found some new information concerning the Faceted Stained Glass windows.

We now think the concept of the east wall to be transform into a stained glass depiction of the life of Christ began in 1968. The planning and funding took until 1971 when the Willet Company began their work. We have documents showing the completed windows were dedicated and paid for in 1973.

Mr. David Krysiak of the Willet Company provided this explanation of faceted stained glass as well as the link below, that offers more information. A leaded panel and a faceted panel are quite different both in appearance and their making. A leaded panel is just that, pieces of glass each caught and contained in the channel of a lead came. After the window is assembled, the joints of the leads are firmly soldered on both sides and aside from the finishing work, the leaded panel is assembled. A faceted panel on the other hand, is made by the assembly and laying out of precut thicker chunks of glass on a table. Often the edges of the glass are purposeful chipped (faceted) to give the finished window some sparkle and life. When the panel is laid out, an epoxy compound is poured around the pieces which in essence cements the pieces into one large panel of epoxy and glass. Again depending on a number of factors, that faceted panel is usually given a textured finish for a better appearance than what would be the raw, epoxy.

<http://www.willethauser.com/techniques/faceted/faceted%20process.asp>

[North Wall Stained Glass](#) was also provided by the Willet Company.