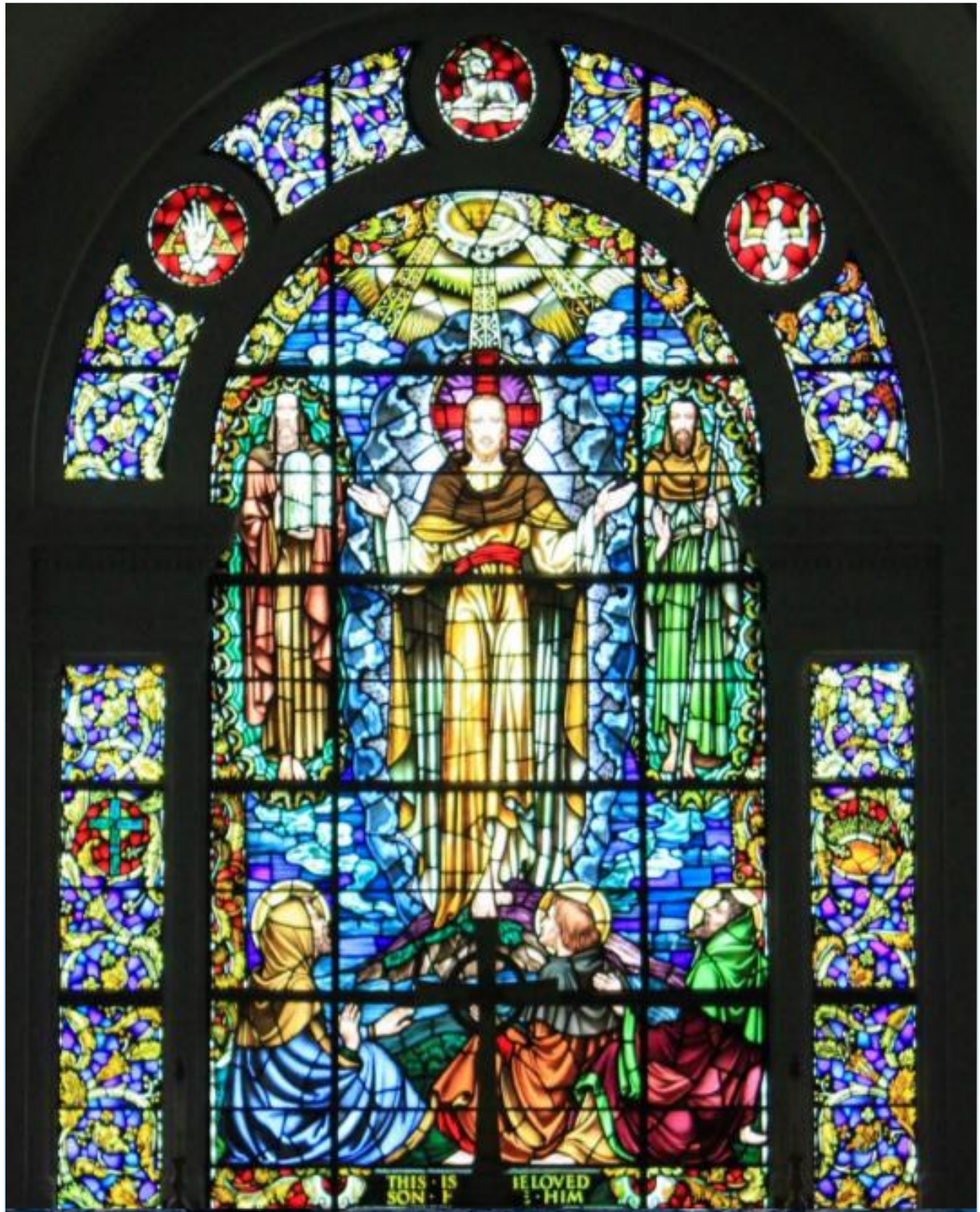


Let There Be Light

A Study of First Presbyterian Church Stained-Glass Windows



Acknowledgments

Appreciation is given to the First Presbyterian Church Adult Sunday School Class and Staff for their support in encouragement, attendance and reflections in the study. The idea of the study originated with Elder and class member, Bob Thomas.

The core of the study taught in the 2022-2023 church year comes from the stories found in the 15 beautiful stained-glass windows, which were highlighted by Virginia Wiley in her 1990 publication entitled, "A Guide to The Stained Glass Windows of the First Presbyterian Church of Lynchburg" with photographs provided by Gene Campbell. Each window tells a unique story about the history of the Church and Christ's life through the lens of Scripture.

The study utilizes numerous resources both hardcopy and digital, including Christian theological commentaries, Christian periodical publications, Christian sermons and reflections on related Scripture from various pastors and church leaders, Christian history lectures and publications, PCUSA publications, and digital links of Christian music and pictorial Scripture verses. None of the ideas and thoughts expressed are original to the Study Leaders, but come primarily from those who are much more adept in and dedicated to God's Word. If by God's grace that a thought or two may have been unique, it was birthed only by God, the Holy Spirit.

Final acknowledgements are made to all the saints that have gone before, who answered God's call and influenced the faith walks of so many, including the Study Leaders.

Study Leaders: *Gary and Beth Williams*

Contents

Preface	1
Adoration of Shepherds Window	4
Adoration of Shepherds Window - Prophecy Fulfilled	7
Martin Luther Window Medallion	9
Jesus as a Boy in the Temple Window	13
John Knox Window Medallion	18
The Baptism of Jesus Window	22
William Tyndale Window Medallion	26
Jesus Healing The Blind Man Window	30
The Huguenots Suffering For Their Faith Medallion	33
Christ on the Cross Window	39
William Carey Father of Modern Missions Medallion.....	43
The Resurrection of Jesus Christ Window	48
Francis Makemie Medallion	52
Ascension of Christ Window	55
Beginnings of Presbyterian Education Medallion	59
The Transfiguration Window	66
Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane Window	71
Mary at the Tomb Window	74
Christ at the Door Window	78
Christ The Good Shepherd Window	83
The House of the Lord (Psalm 42) Window	87
First Miracle in Cana of Galilee Window	90
Christ and the Children Window	94

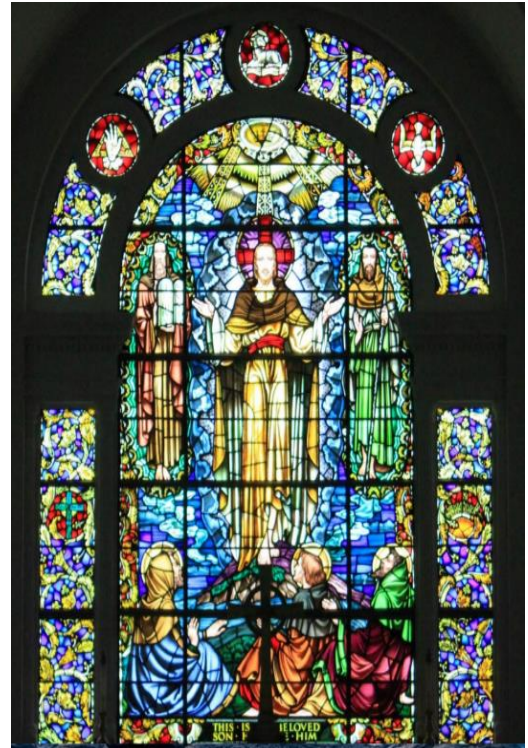
Preface

Stained-glass windows were historically used in churches to inform the viewer via symbolism and narrative and were often referred to as the 'poor man's bible'. Stained-glass windows were a visible representation of the Bible's teachings such that even illiterate people could understand. Stained-glass windows have been crucial in spreading the Christian faith message to the masses.

'Glazed' glass windows that date back as early as the 7th century have been found. Churches started using stained glass windows extensively from the 12th century to the 17th century. During this time, most people could not read and relied on the priests to tell them the stories of the Bible. In time, as Christianity spread, the local language was not used since Latin was the formal language of the church service. The initial liturgical language used was Greek before approximately the year 190, when the Church in Rome changed from Greek to Latin. Since 1570, the Tridentine Latin Mass (Council of Trent) was the norm until the Second Vatican Council in 1962 with Pope John XXIII. The Latin Vulgate translation was also the predominant Bible of the medieval era. Vernacular translations did not come about until the 1500s, and typically, translations were required to have Catholic Church oversight and approval and came with great personal risks to those without such approval.

Today, stained-glass windows are seen in modern churches, primarily to honor and preserve their religious history, while providing for depiction of Bible stories artistically and creating a beautiful and devotion-inspiring ambience inside the church.

First Presbyterian Church has been blessed with parishioner memorial gifts of 15 beautiful stained-glass windows over the years, as summarized in the wonderful guide put together by Virginia Wiley in 1990, as part of the 175 year anniversary celebration of the church. Of course, we cannot take in the full effect, beauty, and colors of the stained glass without the light that God provides. However, the significance of light in relation to God Himself is even greater than the light that provides for the beautiful and welcoming character of the stained glass windows that we enjoy in our worship and gathering.



2 Corinthians 4:6 - For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

Here the Apostle Paul has emphasized his sole mission to deliver the true Gospel of Jesus and to proclaim that Christ is Lord. Phrasing the Gospel in universal terms, God is quoted: “Let light shine out of darkness.” Only the light of the Gospel can penetrate the darkness of unbelief in Jesus. That was

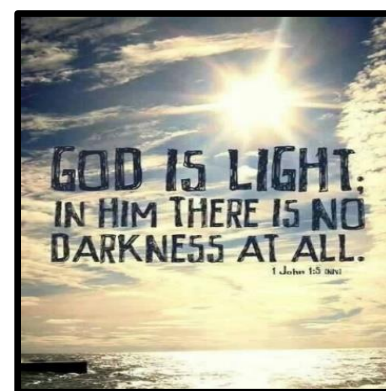
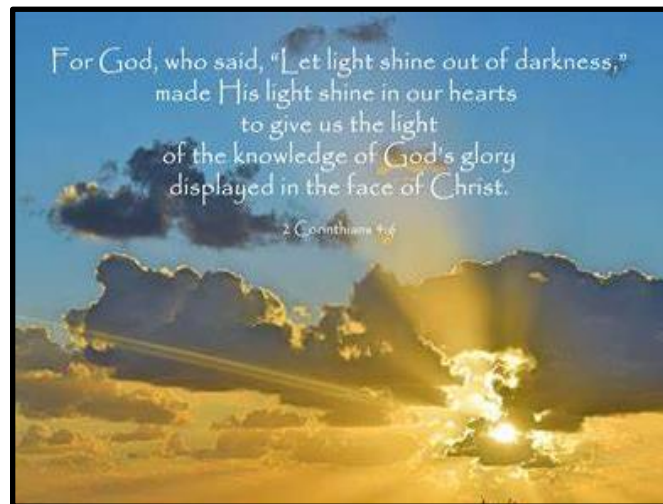
Paul’s experience on the road to Damascus when a literal “light from Heaven” shone around him and the voice of the Lord spoke to him. God shone the light into Paul’s heart, and it was the light Paul showed to all who would listen to the Gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus.

Paul describes the Gospel as the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Every culture has a ‘theme’ such as this, an idea summarizing what the culture truly values. The United States, for example, tends to use ‘freedom’ this way. In Paul’s time, the Hebrews valued ‘light’. Greeks valued ‘knowledge’ as the culture of philosophy. Roman culture prized ‘glory’, being the empire that conquered the known world. Paul’s statement here incorporates all of these: light, knowledge, and glory, implying that Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of anything and everything we could ever want. He is the Truth we all seek, even when we are blinded to our need by sin.

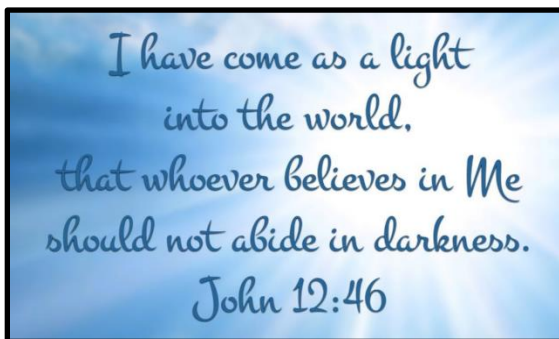
In the previous chapter of 2 Corinthians, Paul discussed God’s glory reflected in the face of Moses. As a reflection, the glory began to fade as soon as Moses left the presence of the Lord. The glory shining from the face of Christ, though, never fades. He is the source of the light. To see and know His glory is to share in God’s glory for eternity. Paul adds a detail which is crucial to the Gospel: the idea of God giving mankind a person, rather than an idea, as our salvation. The light, knowledge and glory are reflected “in the face” of Christ. Rather than man being assigned virtues, or work, God intended us to seek a relationship with His Son.

1 John 1:5 - God is light: in Him there is no darkness.

The Apostle John provides one simple declaration of truth - **God is light**. Light was God’s garment in *Psalm 104:2* - *The LORD wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent*. To the prophet Ezekiel, the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord was brightness: “All around him was a glowing halo, like a rainbow shining in the clouds on a rainy day. This is what the glory of the LORD looked like to me” (*Ezekiel 1:28*).



In *Hebrews 1:3*, Christ was the refracted ray of the Father's glory, "*the express image of His person.*" To James, the Almighty was the "*Father of all lights*" (*James 1:17*). Charles Ellicott's commentary shares the fullness of the Apostle John's God is Light: Light Physical, because it was He who called everything first out of darkness, and from whom proceeds all health and perfection; Light Intellectual, because He is the source of all wisdom and knowledge, and in His mind exist the ideals after which all things strive; Light Moral, because His perfection shows that the difference between good and evil is not merely a question of degree, but fundamental and final, and the life of Christ had exhibited that contrast sharply once for all. Thus, on this declaration depends the whole doctrine of sin: sin is not merely imperfection; it is enmity to God. There can be no shades of progression, uniting good and evil: in Him is no darkness at all. Good and evil may be mixed in an individual: in themselves they are contrary.



John 12:46 - *I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in me should not abide in darkness.*

Jesus publicly proclaimed that everyone who believed in Him, as His true disciple, did not believe in Him only, but on the Father who sent Him. By daily looking to Him, who came as Light into the world, we learn to obey, love and trust in Him. We

are made free from the darkness of sin and all that would separate us from Him; we learn that the command of God our Savior is everlasting life. Christ called the sons of God children of the light (*John 12:36*): *Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.*

Matthew 5:16 - *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

So, what are we to do? Do as Jesus commanded: As children of light, we are to let our light shine ... everywhere seen and known, but not for ourselves, but that our heavenly Father may be glorified.

A song to reflect and pray on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbhMBg8Hv18>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbhMBg8Hv18>

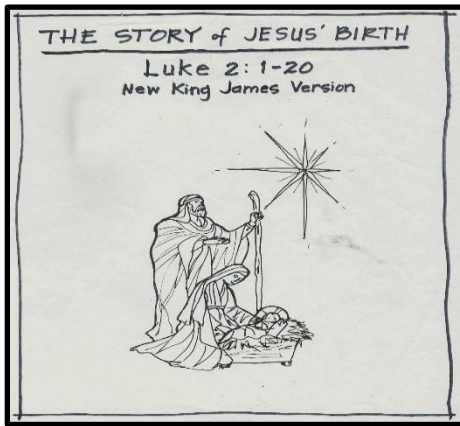
Adoration of Shepherds Window

The window of focus is the Adoration of the Shepherds, located in the left front side of the sanctuary and framed in the Upper Medallion.

Collectively, we see the beauty of the story of *Luke 2*, pictorially characterized with Joseph, Mary, the infant Christ, two shepherds, and a lamb in the stable under the canvas of the night sky. Joseph's cloak and cowl are brown in color, representing his faithful humility and sincerity to God and Mary. Mary's cloak and cowl are blue in color, signifying her hope, sincerity, and piety as a bond-servant of God. The infant Jesus is clothed in a gown of white with a glowing nimbus around His head, embodying His divinity, innocence, and purity. Both Joseph and Mary are also shown with a nimbus, expressive of their sacred reliance upon God's grace and faithful obedience to Him. The shepherds are clothed in cloaks and cowls of green, brown, and purple, which convey their humility, sincerity, and expectant faith and fulfilled adoration of and in Christ Jesus as the One who saves, the true Good Shepherd, and the Prince of Peace and Lord of Lords of the kingdom that never ends. We see the gift of a white lamb, symbolizing the name bestowed to Jesus by John the Baptist: "*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*" A hanging lantern provides light to the earthly scene, while representing the "*Light of the World*" who lies in the manger – "*a light has dawned*" as the Prophet Isaiah writes. Joseph is seen holding a large white cloth, which may serve as a source of privacy for mother and child but may also symbolize the burial cloth of the crucified Christ that is to come. The linen garment in which Jesus was wrapped speaks of His work as the Great High Priest on the Day of Atonement as conveyed in *Leviticus 16*.



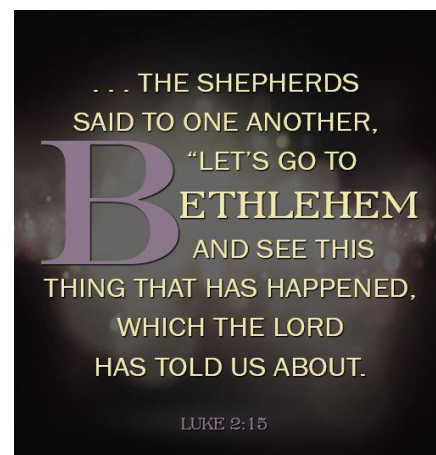
The upper medallion is filled with many other symbolic features: golden oak leaves representing God's unending and sufficient strength; garlands of green laurel leaves symbolizing God's eternal Word and triumph over sin through salvation in and through Christ Jesus; fern leaves that signify the humility of Jesus, "*who emptied himself, taking the form of a servant in the likeness of men, humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*" (*Philippians 2:7-8*). The upper medallion is framed in a circle, which symbolizes the everlasting life that God has given us in Christ Jesus through His birth, life, death, and resurrection. On top of the circle frame rests an angel, robed in red on a half shell, who is God's messenger of the Good News of God's sacrificial love, saving grace and presence throughout our life's faith journey.



The story of Jesus' birth is detailed in the Gospel of Luke (*Luke 2:1-20*). Luke was a close friend of the Apostle Paul, who referred to him as "the beloved physician" and was the only Gentile to write any part of the New Testament (*Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts*). Both are addressed to the same person, Theophilus, also a Gentile, so that he would know with certainty about the person and work of Jesus Christ. Luke gives a historical view of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. He emphasized that the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is for all humanity through Christ.

Luke tells of Jesus' birth in the frame of human history, i.e., in the time of Roman emperor Augustus and a census called for all to return to their ancestral towns. For Joseph, this is Bethlehem since he is a descendant of King David. Joseph takes Mary to whom he is engaged and is expecting with child. We know that both Joseph (*Matthew 1*) and Mary (*Luke 1*) were faithful servants of the Lord and were obedient to God's sovereign plan as revealed to each of them by the angel Gabriel. Upon their arrival, no room is available anywhere and Mary gives birth to Jesus in the humble surroundings of a cave or a stable used for the keeping of animals. The revelation of the birth of the son of God is made known first to the shepherds in the surrounding fields. Shepherds of that day were the lowest rung of the social order, considered ritually unclean and dishonest such that they were not even allowed to testify in court proceedings. However low in the social order, Luke suggests that these shepherds were not ignorant of the promise of the Messiah but expectant. During the prophetic period of Israel's history, the Jewish people were promised that God would raise up a redeemer from the seed of David who would bring the physical deliverance from their Gentile enemies, restore the Temple, and reestablish the kingdom rule of David. It has been considered that these shepherds were not ordinary in that they were chosen for the specific task of tending the Temple sheep intended to be sacrificed for Passover. It was their job to make sure the lambs were without blemish and completely unharmed before being sacrificed. Here in the angelic proclamation of the Good News, the shepherds' initial fear is overcome by joy and adoration of the Lord with the praise and glory of the great company of the heavenly host.

It is in the shepherds' response that we see how God's sovereign plan touches those whom He has called. They were given clues: swaddling clothes and a feeding trough/ manger. The shepherds did not ask further questions or need clarification. They went with haste! When they had seen the Christ Child, they spread the word at what had been told them about the child while continuing to glorify and praise God for what they had experienced. Such men were the first to meet the Savior of the world, forever changed, expressing a divine adoration for Him and so it should be with us:



*Sweet adoration flows from Your children
Glory and honor and praise are a part
Of our constant devotion, love set in motion
For the Divine One, who reigns in our hearts.*

We celebrate in the restoration of our relationship with our Creator through His perfect sovereignty in the coming of Christ Jesus our Lord, who is indeed the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world through the shedding of His blood.

A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(913\) Lauren Daigle - Light Of The World \(Lyric Video\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cLhaZIBSpo)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cLhaZIBSpo

Adoration of Shepherds Window - Prophecy Fulfilled

While Luke tells the story of Jesus' birth in the frame of human history with God's sovereign mercy and love pouring forth in the Bethlehem manger 2000 years ago, the prophets of old, Micah and Isaiah, foretold the Messiah's coming 700 years prior for God's people, Israel. In *Micah 5:2,4-5* and *Isaiah 7:14*, God's Word speaks history into being centuries before it is acted out, proclaiming the insignificant little Judea town of Bethlehem as the chosen place from whence the promised Messiah would come. From the "days of immeasurable time", His beginnings were from of old and His existence was rooted outside time, space, and matter for He is the One Who spoke everything into being. He is *Emmanuel*, "God with us."



For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his
shoulder, and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of
peace there will be no end, on the throne of
David and over his kingdom, to establish it
and to uphold it with justice and with
righteousness from this time forth and
forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.
Isaiah 9:6-7

There are twenty two Messianic prophecies in the book of Isaiah and each point to our Lord Jesus Christ as the glorious fulfillment. *Isaiah 9:6-7* tells of the coming rule of Jesus on earth, gathering into one announcement, the predictions of His birth, deity, earthly government, just kingdom, and the eternity of Christ. Isaiah proclaims for whom and by whom: "For to us"... *the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will do this.*" In *Isaiah 1:18*, the prophet writes, "Come now, let us settle the

matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." The exhortation is made to the nation of Israel and in essence to all sinners. The deep, fixed stain of sin, which no human power could remove, shall be taken away. The sin shall be pardoned, and the soul be made pure, only by God's saving grace in and through His Son, our Lord.

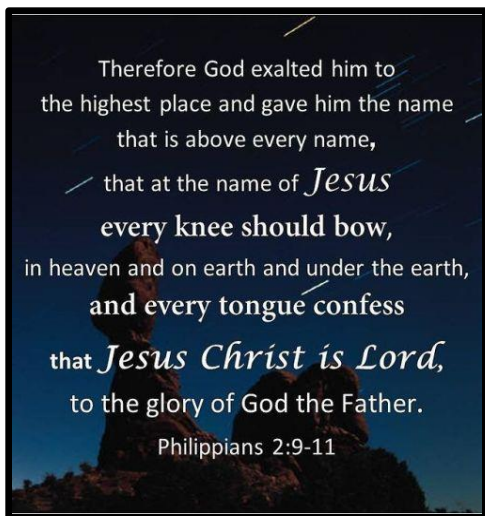
In *Isaiah 43:18-19,25*, a two-fold prophecy is given in God's Word, "Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past, Behold. I will do something new."

Speaking of all the former things God has done for His people, including the deliverance from Egyptian slavery to the Promised Land, the future freedom from Babylon captivity is foretold, but there is reference to even greater events to come in Christ Jesus. God is "making ways in the



wilderness and streams in the desert, giving drink to my people, my chosen ... I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.” In God’s perfect plan, He gives us a “new heart and new spirit”(Ezekiel 36:26). He is a God of new things, making all things new.

As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation - the old has passed away; behold the new has come.” The fullness of God in and through His Son is conveyed in Philippians 2:5-11. In these verses, Paul speaks of God’s essential character as one of self-emptying love poured out of heaven into our life in Christ Jesus. “Being in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped or exploited, as something to be held onto at all costs and used to his own advantage. Rather, he willingly emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point to death — even death on a cross.”



In exalting Jesus, God gives Jesus his own name — “Lord” — and confers on him Lordship over all creation. One day every knee will bend before him, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue join in confessing together that Jesus Christ is Lord. The one who humbled himself and took the form of a slave shows us who God is and how God acts. God’s high exaltation of Jesus confirms the divine nature of his mission and ensures that one day he will be acknowledged by all for who he truly is. Jesus, the one who saves, is God’s anointed one (the Messiah or Christ), and Lord of all.

A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(963\) Big Daddy Weave - All Things New \(Official Lyric Video\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_2aX_i4qpM)

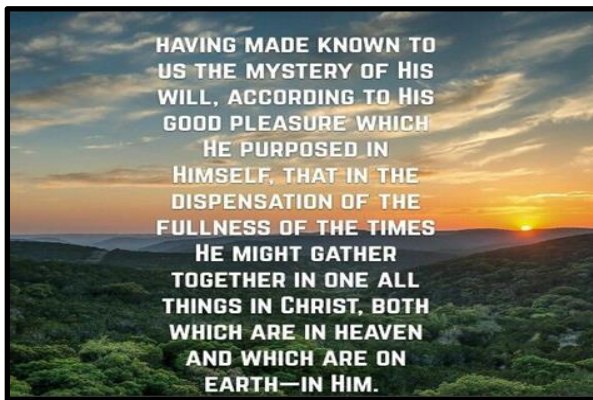
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_2aX_i4qpM

Martin Luther Window Medallion

The stained-glass window medallion of Martin Luther portrays the posting of his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany on October 31, 1517, which is considered the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Luther's document, *Disputation on the Power of Indulgences*, was a collection of 95 ideas about Christianity that he posted for debate. His ideas were controversial because they directly contradicted the Catholic Church's teachings, particular to the selling of indulgences, the extent of the Pope's authority and the accuracy of the doctrine of purgatory. Luther's successful challenges to church doctrine and practice were



advanced by public access to his ideas through the development and use of the printing press and propagated through his personal protection from papal persecution granted by Frederick the Wise, the prince of Saxony. Luther was preceded by theologians with similar ideas, but who met their demise for heresy, such as Jan Hus 100 years prior, who was burned at the stake for publicly denouncing church abuses, including the sale of indulgences to raise money for a war between two rival popes seeking power at the time.



The state of the Roman Catholic Church leadership by the time of Luther was one of worldly power and corruption and far removed from that expressed in *Ephesians 1:9-10*: “God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. “

In 1517, Pope Leo X was like many of his papal predecessors of the previous 500 years of the western church since the Great Schism of 1054, i.e., business, worldly and self-centered as opposed to God-centered, and who was known for his infamous quote: “God has given us the papacy, let us enjoy it.” Pope Leo X was tasked with the raising of revenue for the new construction of St. Peter's Basilica. Archbishop Albert of Mainz, who bought his position through borrowed money still owed, colluded with Leo X in the sale of indulgences to be split 50-50. These indulgences were expanded to apply also to those who had died but resided in purgatory and were hawked by Johannes Tetzel, who was given the post of Commissioner of

Indulgences by Albert. Tetzels selling slogan was “As soon as the gold in the coffer rings, the rescued soul to heaven springs.”

For perspective, the medieval indulgence was a writ offered by the Church, for money, guaranteeing the remission of sin, and its abuse was the spark that inspired Luther. Indulgences dated to the 11th century and were based on the concept of the 'treasury of the Church', which held that the merits of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the saints, and others who had led exemplary lives, could be drawn on by laypersons to lessen their time – or that of a loved one – in purgatory or remit the penalty of sin in this life. Purgatory was considered by the catholic church as the state of those who die in God's friendship, assured of their eternal salvation, but who still have need of purification to enter the happiness of heaven. Initially, the sale of an indulgence carried with it the expectation that the buyer would perform penitential acts but, by Martin Luther's time, paying money for the writ was frequently considered enough.

It is in this context that Martin Luther challenged the church in his 95 Theses but unknowing of the explicit authorization and personal involvement of Pope Leo X in the sale of indulgences. Luther's 95 Theses raised the pope's ire and eventually led to Luther's ex-communication and trial at the Diet of Worms in 1521.



Luther did not originally set out to start his own church, but was committed to seeking discussion and change within the church. As a monk, Luther personally struggled to understand his relationship to God and felt unworthy of God's attention, possibly driven in part by his abusive relationship with his parents when growing up. His eventual conclusion was that he was not worthy of approaching God. Martin Luther's personal break-through came in early 1517 in revelation of the true meaning of *Romans 1:17*, exclaiming, “And I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which I had before hated the word ‘Righteousness of God’. Thus, that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to Paradise.” For Luther, any understanding, and especially salvation, was not deserved or earned in any way, but was purely a gift of grace from God. Luther emphasized the doctrine of justification by grace through faith preached by the Apostle Paul. This emphasis on "faith alone" was a significant shift in perspective with Scripture being the basis of his challenge to the church authority in his 95 Theses, which include the following as examples:

1. *When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, “Repent (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believer to be one of repentance.*
5. *The pope neither desires nor is able to remit any penalties except those imposed by his own authority or that of the canons.*

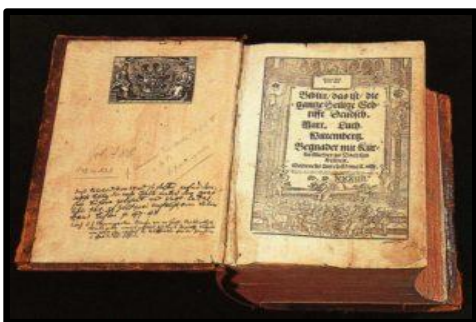
16. *Hell, purgatory and heaven seem to differ the same as despair, fear and assurance of salvation.*
37. *Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letters.*

Interestingly, one month prior to the posting of his 95 Theses, Martin Luther issued 97 Theses, which were considered more radical, attacking the whole theological system of the Church including the rejection of Scholastic Theology in which Aristotle teachings were embedded. However, no papal attention or rebuttal was given to these ideas, signifying no interest in true Christian doctrine or understanding but only the selfish interests of the Pope himself such as with the monies from the sale of indulgences.

Based on the precepts of scripture alone and faith alone as a means of knowing God's will, Luther published his 97 Theses, speaking to the will and condition of man and God's righteousness and grace with examples as follows:

5. *It is false to state that man's inclination is free to choose between either of two opposites. Indeed, the inclination is not free, but captive.*
17. *Man is by nature unable to want God to be God. Indeed, he himself wants to be God, and does not want God to be God.*
29. *The best and infallible preparation for grace and the sole disposition toward grace is the eternal election and predestination of God.*
40. *We do not become righteous by doing righteous deeds but, having been made righteous, we do righteous deeds.*
84. *The good law and that in which one lives is the love of God, spread abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.*

Luther was a prolific writer, who translated the Bible into his native German language and in such a way that it became the core of the common German language today. His preface to the Book of Romans translation was instrumental to the conversion of John Wesley who brought about the great Methodist revival of the 18th century in the Church of England.



In it he writes: *“Faith is a divine work in us, which changes us anew of God...Faith is a living, daring confidence on God's grace , so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times... It is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate heat and light from fire.”*

In *‘On the Bondage of the Will’*, Luther argues that people can only achieve salvation or redemption through God and could not choose between good and evil through their own will power. He writes: *“As for me, I firmly confess that if it were possible, I would not wish to be given free will or to have anything left in my power by which I could endeavor to be saved... for*

no matter how long I should live, and do works, my conscience would never be certain and sure how much it had to do to satisfy God.”

Luther loved music, writing more than 30 hymns including a *Mighty Fortress is Our God*, and gave us the modern form of worship that incorporates music. He writes, *“Music is a fair and lovely gift of God which has often wakened and moved me to the joy of preaching... I have no use for cranks who despise music because it is a gift of God. Music drives away the Devil and makes people gay; they forget thereby all wrath, unchastity, arrogance and the like. Next after theology I give to music the highest place and greatest honor....Experience proves that next to the Word of God only music deserves to be extolled as the mistress and governess of the feelings of the human heart.”*

A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(962\) On Faith Alone - YouTube](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YB2UH4cKcLo&list=RDYB2UH4cKcLo&start_radio=1&t=2s

Documentaries on Martin Luther:

[\(962\) PBS - Martin Luther – Complete documentary. \(Parts 1 & 2\) - YouTube](#)

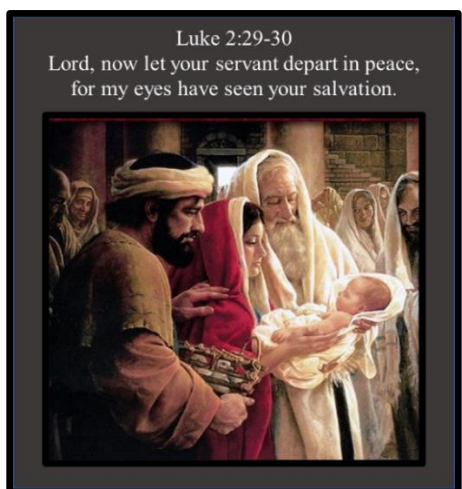
[\(962\) Martin Luther and the 95 Theses - YouTube](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJITsWCua1M>

Jesus as a Boy in the Temple Window

The window of focus is Jesus as a boy in the temple, located in the left middle side of the sanctuary facing the chancel and framed in the upper medallion.

Collectively, we see the beauty of the story of *Luke 2:41-52*, pictorially characterized with Joseph and Mary, who has found their young boy of 12 years of age, sitting among the religious leaders in the temple, who are impressed with His questions, understanding and answers. Jesus, with a glowing nimbus around His head, is clothed in a red tunic, embodying His divinity and His blood, a complete and perfect sacrifice for our sins. As in the nativity window, Joseph's cloak and cowl are brown in color, representing his faithful humility and sincerity to God and Mary. Mary's cloak and cowl are blue in color, signifying her hope, sincerity, and piety as a bond-servant of God. Four religious leaders are clothed in green and blue tunics, signifying faith, contemplation, and piety. Again, the upper medallion is framed in a circle, which symbolizes the everlasting life that God has given us in Christ Jesus through His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. On top of the circle frame rests an angel, robed in blue/violet on a half shell, who is God's messenger of the Good News of God's sacrificial love, saving grace, lasting truth, and presence throughout our life's faith journey.



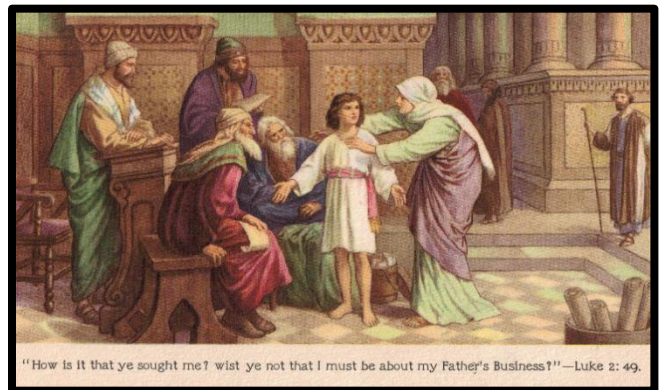
In *Luke 2*, Jesus' birth narrative is concluded. The young Jesus became strong and filled with heavenly wisdom, benefiting from his faithful and religiously observant upbringing of his parents in Nazareth. When he was eight days old, Joseph and Mary had him circumcised and formally gave him the name assigned by Gabriel (*Luke 1*). When he was forty days old, he was dedicated in the temple as the Law of Moses dictated where Mary and Joseph brought their baby boy to Jerusalem for the rite of purification. While they are in the temple courts, they have two separate encounters with older, prayerful saints, Simeon and Anna, who have been watching and longing for

the consolation of Israel and fully knowing who Jesus is. For Simeon (*Luke 2:22-35*), the Holy Spirit had spoken to him that he would not die before he had seen the Messiah. On that day the Holy Spirit told him to go to the temple and nudged him toward this poor family. He takes the baby Jesus in his arms and prays, “*Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation.*” He speaks a prophesy over Jesus and his mother.

Anna, an 84 year old widow, who was married for only seven years, dedicated her life to God and lived in the temple courts, praying, and fasting for the redemption of Israel. She approaches Mary and Joseph and rejoices that God’s redemption had come in their son Jesus. (*Luke 2:36-38*)

Mary and Joseph, as faithful Jews, make sure to fulfill their duties as parents toward their son Jesus, who is now 12 years old. They need to introduce Jesus to the Passover in Jerusalem. According to the Jewish tradition at that time, Joseph is obligated to teach Jesus the Torah. The rabbis agreed that a boy can start learning the Torah no later than puberty, which is about age twelve. Jerusalem was packed with Jewish worshipers from all over the world to celebrate the Passover. Usually, this celebration covers about one week. The Jews also traveled in groups to avoid danger on the road, such as thieves. The entire group had to watch over each other — particularly the children. Mary and Joseph had relatives and friends in Jerusalem. They might stay with them during the festival week. At the end of the celebration, Mary and Joseph started to return home. They went a day’s journey without checking on their son assuming he was in the group of travelers. It was then that they realized that they had accidentally left their son and returned to Jerusalem, arriving the next day to find Jesus in the temple.

“But why did you need to search?” Jesus asked. “Didn’t you know that I must be in my Father’s house?” But they didn’t understand what he meant. Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And his mother stored all these things in her heart. Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people. (Luke 2:49-52)



Of particular interest in Luke’s account is that Mary and Joseph did not understand what Jesus meant when he said that he was in his Father’s house, doing his Father’s business as in the literal translation. From an adaptation of A. Edersheim’s work¹ on the subject, our perspective 2000 years later may find this puzzling. After all, both Mary and Joseph had angelic encounters announcing Jesus’ birth—not to mention the miraculous conception itself of a child to a virgin. Yet, when the shepherds told Mary what the angels said (*Luke 2:8-20*), she pondered this announcement as if not completely understanding.

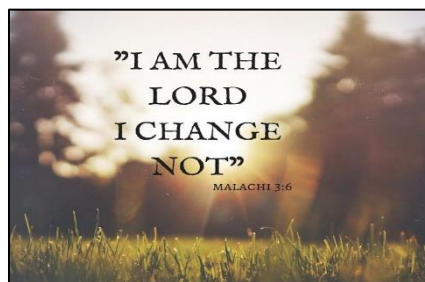
Given the events surrounding His birth, Mary and Joseph might be expected to have fully known His divine nature as the Son of God. However, Jesus's mission on earth required that all events be fulfilled exactly as we have them. This includes His submission to a fully human life. Had Mary known the complete mission from the beginning—that He was fully God and fully man—the human side could never have been fulfilled. The thought of His divinity would have been too all-consuming. The human bond shared between Jesus and His family and disciples may not have been possible if they had known they spoke with God. Christ humbled Himself to live as we are called to do (*Hebrews 4:15*), something that would have been impossible if all had been known from the beginning.

Beyond this, the gradual revelation of Jesus's mission also provided important instruction to those closest to Him. Just as the disciples came to understand whom they followed, Mary realized day by day, revelation by revelation, that she had indeed given birth to the Son of the living God. The lessons had all the greater impact being understood gradually than they would have if given all at once. With each revealing event, Mary is said to have pondered and stored all these things in her heart.

This gradual revelation of who God is to us through Christ Jesus and His Holy Spirit in our day to day faith walk is no different in many respects than that exhibited by Mary and is consistent with how God reveals Himself through the Old and New Testaments. Paul Miller writes on his understanding of the doctrine of progressive revelation²: “At each stage in redemptive history, the things that God had revealed were for his people for that time, and they were to study, believe, and obey those things. With further progress in the history of redemption, more of God’s words were added, recording and interpreting that history.”

In the scriptural revelation, God was referred to as *“our Father”* 13 times in the Old Testament. From Jesus’ first reference to God as His Father in the temple story to His frequent use of this name throughout His ministry, Jesus brought a magnified and full understanding of our relationship with God. Jesus referred to God as His Father over 150 times, even calling Him *“Abba”* or *“Daddy”*, and He spoke of God as being *“our Father”* 30 times.

We know that God is unchanging but His revelation of Himself to His people happens over time. *“I am the Lord I change not.”* (*Malachi 3:6*) *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”* (*Hebrews 13:8*)



In times past, before the canon of Scripture was complete, God did not provide his people with all the revelation we have of him today. For example, before the Incarnation, God did not reveal the person of Jesus, the nature of the Trinity, the distinction between the first and second comings of the Messiah, or the exact means of the Atonement. Those pieces of revelation came later. This, then, is the picture of His Fatherhood that God wanted His people to have during that moment in redemptive history. As their Father, He had special tender mercy for them, but He also expected honor and obedience from them. The people of God are welcomed to approach

their God not only as creator, lawgiver, and judge, but as Father - a relationship that is personal, affectionate, and promised.

The prophet Isaiah writes of God: *“But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.” (Isaiah 63:16)*

Miller writes that the passages that describe God as Father in the Old Testament seem to serve three purposes: 1) emphasize God’s compassion and tenderness toward his people, 2) emphasize God’s authority and the rightfulness of his judgment against his disobedient children and 3) point to the Messiah.

Deuteronomy 1:31 *The Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his child, all the way that you went until you came to this place.*

Psalms 103:13-14 *As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.*

Proverbs 3:11-12 *My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.*

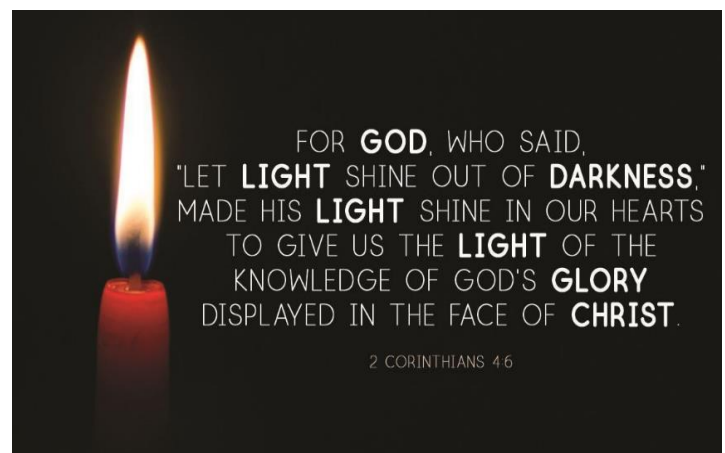


Isaiah 9:6 *For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

God continues to reveal Himself through His Son Jesus and the empowering presence of His Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul writes in *2 Corinthians 4:6*:

For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

In this light, the temple story of Jesus doing His Father’s business amongst the priests of that day takes on even newer and fuller understanding of God’s redeeming plan that leads to *Hebrews 4:14-16*:



Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(971\) The Father's House - Cory Asbury \(Lyrics\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjVi0CDicEQ)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjVi0CDicEQ>

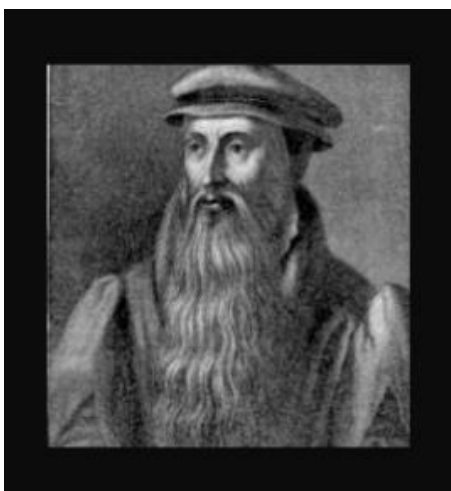
¹ Alfred Eldership (March 7, 1825-March 16, 1889) was a Jewish convert to Christianity and a pastor and biblical scholar known especially for his book *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (1883). *Adapted from The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah by Alfred Eldership (Book II, Chapter VII).*

² “*God as Father: Seeing the same God in both Testaments*”, Paul B. Miller, professor of the practice of international affairs at Georgetown University.

John Knox Window Medallion

The window of focus is John Knox, founder of the Scottish Presbyterian Church and spiritual father of American Presbyterianism, located in the left back of the sanctuary, facing the chancel and framed in the lower medallion.

In the window, we see John Knox preaching at St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh Scotland from 1564 to 1572. Gifted with power and passion in preaching God's Word, Thomas Randolph, the English ambassador to Queen Elizabeth, once stated of John Knox: "His voice could put life into them more than 500 trumpets." Knox's conviction to preaching Scripture was paramount as he stated, "The Scriptures of God are my only foundation and substance in all matters of weight and importance." Throughout his ministry and life, he was known as one to fear no man, no power, and no principality – "I never once feared the devil, but I tremble every time I enter the pulpit." In all his ministry, including the formulation of church and political governments, he professed the sovereignty and power of God: "A man with God is always in the majority."



Knox (1514-1572) was a Scottish minister, Reformed theologian, writer, and leader of Scotland's Reformation and the founder of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. He gave us the Scots Confession of 1560, which is part of the PCUSA's Book of Confession, and provided the representative democratic polity of today's Presbyterian Church in his Book of Discipline of 1561, which was the basis of our Book of Order. Knox led the Protestant Reformation in Scotland and England and was active in shaping the form of church and state of the day and that which followed, even influencing future American political thought. Knox's beliefs about church-building and politics remained constant in that his

reverence for God remained central. Knox concluded that political government was based on the concept of covenant as set forth on the Old Testament and that rulers, king or queen, subordinate magistrates and people were to obey God's law in all political matters, which allowed for civil replacement of rulers who were ungodly, idolatrous, and unjust.

John Knox was born in Haddington, near Edinburgh, in about 1514 or 1515. He was orphaned at an early age, but his relatives sent him to St. Andrews University and when he graduated, he became a priest, working as a notary apostolic (ecclesiastical lawyer) and then as tutor to two young boys whose parents were Protestants. Knox converted to Protestantism and became a bodyguard for Reformer George Wishart as he traveled and preached throughout



Scotland from 1543 to 1546 until Wishart's arrest. Wishart was tried by a Church court presided over by Cardinal Beaton and burned at the stake. Two months later, a group of Protestants broke into St. Andrews Castle and murdered Beaton. They then held the Castle and were joined by supporters of Wishart, including Knox. It was during this time that his gifts as a preacher were recognized by the chaplain. At first reluctant and overwhelmed by his call, Knox gave his first sermon at St. Andrews with the Bible as sole authority and justification by faith alone as key to his entire ministry.

A lengthy siege by the Scottish army ensued until a French fleet, summoned by the Dowager Queen Mary of Guise, eventually captured the Castle, and carried off Knox and his colleagues to serve as galley slaves. While passing the steeple of St Andrews while on the slave ship, Knox declared to a fellow prisoner that he would not die until he had preached there again.

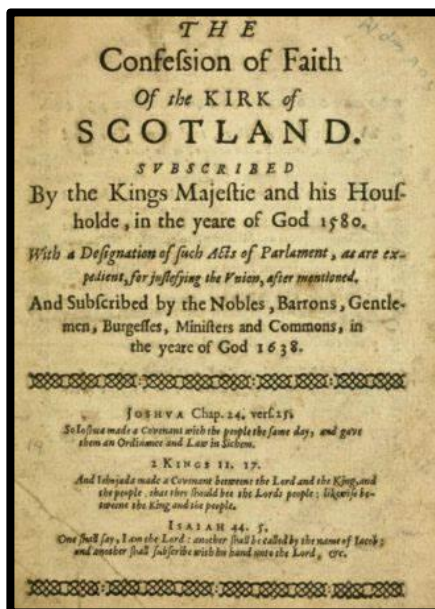
Permanently and physically impaired from his imprisonment, Knox was finally released in a prisoner exchange. It was too dangerous for Knox to return to Scotland. Instead, he travelled to England and was appointed pastor of Berwick-on-Tweed. There he gained such fame that he preached before King Edward VI of England, became an influential figure in the English Protestant Church and was invited to become Bishop of Rochester but refused. Upon the death of King Edward VI, his Catholic sister, Mary Tudor, took power and began to persecute Protestants. Knox moved to the safety of Geneva in January 1554, becoming the friend and disciple of John Calvin. During this time, Knox formulated his political thoughts on the situations in England and Scotland. He posed difficult questions to Calvin, who deferred to reformer Heinrich Bullinger, with both giving cautious answers. Knox particularly wanted to know whether people should obey ungodly or idolatrous rulers and what party godly persons should follow if they resisted an idolatrous ruler.

In July 1554, Knox published a pamphlet attacking Mary Tudor and the bishops who brought her to the throne. He also attacked the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, calling him "no less enemy to Christ than was Nero."

In September 1554 , Knox took a minister position in a Frankfurt congregation of English exiles. After conflicts on the use of different reformed versions of the Book of Common Prayer, with a parishioner exposing his earlier attack on the Holy Roman Emperor, he was asked to return to Geneva after only 6 months.

Encouraged by friends and family, he returned to Scotland in May of 1556 but only stayed for a short time, and then upon returned to Geneva as minister of Auditiore de Calvin. He viewed Geneva as the best place for Protestants, stating it as “the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in earth since the days of apostles.” Here he anonymously published the First Blast of the Trumpet, which called the “regimen: or rule of women ‘monstruous’, meaning “unnatural”, and it was directed specifically at Queen Mary 1 of England and Mary of Guise, the Queen Regent of Scotland. The pamphlet did not find favor with many, including John Calvin. In England, it was officially condemned by royal proclamation and complicated his relationship with Queen Elizabeth when she came to power although she supported the Protestants.

Knox returned to Scotland in May 1559 upon Elizabeth becoming queen of England and with the invitation of the Scottish Lords who were determined to make Scotland a Protestant country. Many of their motives were secular rather than religious, but Knox’s preaching inspired them. Within two days of his return, he was declared an outlaw by the Queen Regent Mary Guise, mother of Mary Queen of Scots. Revolution persisted in Scotland in 1559 and 1560 where Protestant riots followed sermons of Knox. He returned to St. Andrews fulfilling the prophecy he made in the slave ship galley that he would one day preach again in its church.

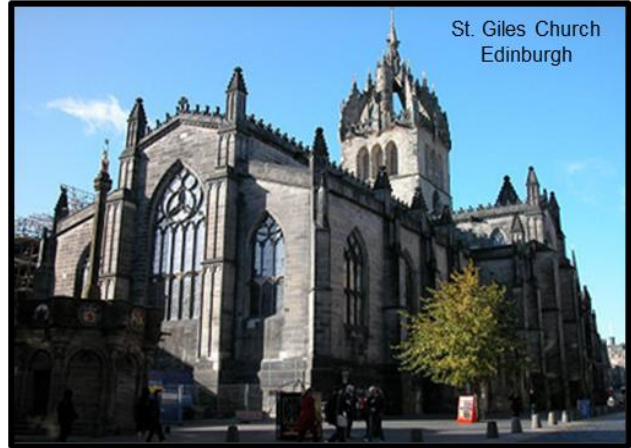


The Queen Regent brought in French troops to quell the rebellion, while Knox discreetly negotiated England’s support from Queen Elizabeth. The Scottish nobility followed by formally deposing the Queen Regent upon the arrival of English troops. The revolution ended in June 1560 when Queen Regent Mary of Guise died.

In 1560, the Scottish Parliament approved Knox’s Scots Confession, which set forth three marks of a true and faithful church: “the true preaching of the Word of God,” the right administration of the sacrament of Christ Jesus” and “ecclesiastical discipline... whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished.” The jurisdiction of the Pope in Scotland was abolished and all doctrine and practice contrary to the reformed faith was condemned. The celebration of Mass was forbidden and Knox along with other ministers were tasked

to organize the newly reformed church. In 1561, the Scottish Parliament reconvened to consider the Book of Discipline that set out a system of church order that included superintendents, ministers, teachers, elders, and deacons in addition to a parish-based reformation including a universal primary, secondary and university educational system and arrangements for poor relief. The proposed funding was rejected by the nobles, which was to come from the old church wealth, and which the nobles now controlled. However, the proposal became the seed for future generations of Scotland to become world leaders in all disciplines of education.

When Mary Queen of Scots came back from France in 1561, Knox was convinced that she intended to make the country Catholic once more, and preached vigorously against her. Their relationship was contentious until her subsequent abdication and imprisonment in 1566 and eventual escape to England in May 1568. During her reign, Mary Queen of Scots tried every tactic to win over Knox but failed. She stated: “ I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.” She even had Knox arrested for treason when he objected to her personally having Mass in violation of Scottish law. Knox successfully defended himself and the case was thrown out. Knox preached the sermon for James VI (future James I of England) coronation following his mother’s abdication. Knox continued to serve as minister of St Giles Church in Edinburgh until his death in November 1572, following a massive stroke a year earlier. True to his perpetual honor and commitment in his call, he dragged himself into the pulpit to address the tragedy of the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre of 5,000 to 30,000 French Protestants across France in August 1572 and continued to preach until two weeks prior to his death. In his will, Knox was able to leave only a paltry sum of money to his family, true to his quote: “I have neither preeminence, glory, nor riches; my honor was that Jesus Christ would reign.



A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(1004\) Home Free - How Great Thou Art - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXQpDDcrN-w)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXQpDDcrN-w>

Resource Videos

[\(1004\) 28. John Knox and the Scottish Reformation \(part 1\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rilgmZXVoP4)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rilgmZXVoP4>

[\(1004\) 29. John Knox: Prisoner, Exile, Reformer \(part 2\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ncouHlpG6CA)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ncouHlpG6CA>

[\(1004\) 30. John Knox and a New Vision for Scotland \(part 3\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAzfuLORUEg&t=2168s)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAzfuLORUEg&t=2168s>

[\(1004\) A Treatise on Prayer - John Knox \(1514 – 1572\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3aPogo-dNk)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3aPogo-dNk>

The Baptism of Jesus Window

The window of focus is the baptism of Jesus, located in the left back side of the sanctuary, facing the chancel, and framed in the upper medallion. In the window, we see a beautiful pictorial of Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist as shared in *Matthew 3:13-17*. As with the previous windows, this window is bordered with leaves of green laurel symbolizing the triumph of eternal life and with leaves of golden oak signifying God's glory and strength. The upper medallion is framed in an ornate gold mandala, which symbolizes the everlasting life that God has given us in Christ Jesus through His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. On top of the circle frame rests an angel, robed in blue on a half shell, who is God's messenger of the Good News of His sacrificial love, saving grace, and everlasting hope sent from heaven that is present throughout our life's faith journey.

Within the mandala, the Triune God is displayed with God the Father pronouncing His favor on His Son in the white banner with gold backing, signifying Christ's purity and glory, "*this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased*"; the white dove descending from heaven with a nimbus of a gold cross, signifying the glory of God the Holy Spirit, whose beam of fire and light of Truth radiate from heaven to the Son, the Word made flesh, and to the world beyond; and God the Son, with a nimbus of red cross, the One who humbled and sacrificed Himself to the point of death in obedience to the Father, who baptizes with fire and the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist is clad in red tunic and purple robe representing the sacrifice and suffering that he is to see for the sake of his Lord, speaking truth against principalities and powers. His head is shrouded with a gold rim nimbus, a symbol of God's servant in His perfect plan, fulfilling his role as a prophet of the Most High, "*the voice crying out in the wilderness, preparing the way of the Lord.*" Off to the side are red roses symbolizing the crucifixion of our Lord as seen in the nail wounds in His hands and sword-pierced side. In the distance, the rose and purple of Elijah's Hill are seen, where Elijah ascended into heaven, signifying the fulfillment of *Malachi 4:5-6*, in God announcing that He would send "*Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord,*" where John the Baptist is named in the Gospel's baptism accounts.

While standing on green laurel leaves on the Jordan riverside, leading the way for the glory of the Savior. John the Baptist holds a crossed-staff mounted with a white and gold banner of the cross, signifying the sinless and pure Savior, who humbles Himself to a baptism that is for the sake of all those who come to believe in Him.



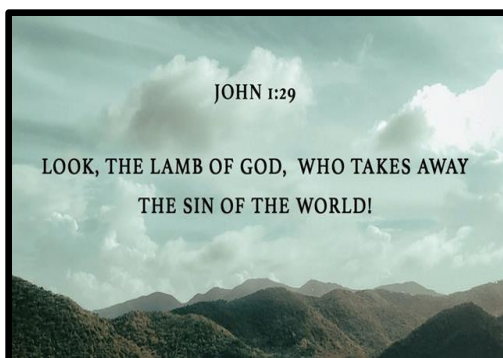
John pours the baptismal water from a half shell onto Jesus' head as Jesus stands in the flowing waters of the river Jordan, signifying the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry and symbolic of the words of *John 7:38: Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*

All four of the Synoptic Gospels share the story of Jesus' baptism with the manifestation of the Triune God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as portrayed in the sanctuary stained-glass window. Each Gospel includes John the Baptist speaking of his unworthiness to baptize Jesus: *"I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals."* Unique to Matthew's Gospel (*Matthew 3:15*), John the Baptist tells Jesus, *"I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"* Jesus replies, *"Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."* Matthew Henry comments that here Christ humbly submits Himself to John's baptism, 'looking upon it as well becoming Him to fulfil all righteousness, to own every Divine institution, and to show His readiness to comply with all God's righteous precepts. In and through Christ, the heavens are opened to the children of men.'

Mark's Gospel speaks of *"the heavens (schizo) torn apart"* as God's Holy Spirit descends like a dove. 'Schizo' resonates with the prophecy of Isaiah, when Isaiah says to God, *"O that you would tear open the heavens and come down."*(*Isaiah 64:1*) Mark and Luke similarly describe the moment on Good Friday when the curtain of the temple is torn in two. In Mark's judgment, the baptism of Jesus is so very clearly a radical act. In Jesus, God has committed the act of breaking into and entering the world and Mark wants the world to know.

Each Gospel speaks of John baptizing with water and Jesus as the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire. The use of the *mikvah*, or the Jewish ceremonial immersion in preferably flowing water, provides the background for New Testament baptism. The word *mikvah* comes from the same Hebrew root word as *hope*, used in *Jeremiah 17:13: "O Lord, the hope (Mikveh) of Israel, all who forsake You will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the Lord."*

When John was baptizing and preaching repentance, those who responded were admitting that they were "unclean." This seems to be why John objected so strongly to baptizing Jesus and why the Pharisees refused to be baptized. Likewise, Christian baptism is understood against this background as in *Acts 2:37-38: Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*



The story of John the Baptist and Jesus unfolds in the Gospel of John. The day after His baptism, John the Baptist acknowledges Jesus as *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* and as *"God's Chosen One,"* while stating that the sole purpose of his ministry was that Jesus might be revealed to Israel as the Messiah. That same day, two of John's disciples, the Apostles Andrew and John, asked Jesus, *"where are you*

staying?” Jesus’ response was, “Come and you will see.” Thus John’s ministry and its purpose nears its completion as Jesus’ public ministry begins.

Later, as John continues to baptize, his followers point out that Jesus is also “*baptizing and everyone is going to him.*” John humbly responds as a friend of the bridegroom who attends and hears his voice, “*That joy is mine and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less.*” (John 3:30)

In *Matthew 11:2-15*, we read of John the Baptist’s doubt while he is in prison, sending his disciples to ask Jesus: “*Are you the one who is to come or should we expect someone else?*” Jesus tells his disciples to go back and tell John of all the miracles that have occurred along with a word of assurance, “*Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.*” Then Jesus speaks to the crowd, paying tribute to his cousin John, the one who jumped while in his mother’s womb as the Virgin Mary, who was pregnant with the Christ Child, shared her Good News with her cousin Elizabeth:

“A prophet? Yes, and I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ Truly I tell you among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he... And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah, who was to come. Whoever has ears let them hear.”

Baptism is one of two sacraments of the Presbyterian Church, the other being communion. As Christians we are called to remember our baptism. Baptism is an indispensable part of Christian life, Christian identity, and the Church’s mission, as shared on the PCUSA website:

Baptism is an indispensable part of Christian life:

Romans 6:3-4:

So don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We therefore were buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Baptism is an indispensable part of Christian identity:

Galatians 3:27-28

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.



Baptism is an indispensable part of the Church's Mission:

Matthew 28-19

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

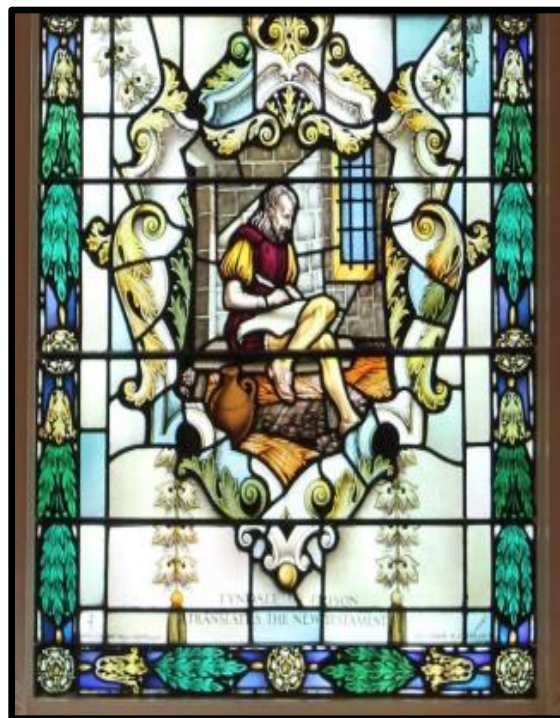
A song to reflect and pray on:

[1062\) Zach Williams - Baptized \(Official Audio\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ov-kPUJPec)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ov-kPUJPec>

William Tyndale Window Medallion

The window of focus is William Tyndale, located in the left back side of the sanctuary, facing the chancel, and framed in the lower medallion. In the window, we see the Christian martyr, William Tyndale, imprisoned in a dark, cold prison cell near Brussels, awaiting his eventual execution for translating and publishing the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament from Greek into English.



Tyndale was a brilliantly gifted scholar and linguist, who was a leading figure in the Protestant Reformation in the years leading up to his execution. Tyndale was a contemporary of John Calvin, John Knox and in particular, Martin Luther, whose works greatly influenced him. We recall that the Protestant reformers such as Tyndale were anchored to the four 'solas' of the Reformation¹ founded in Scripture: *Sola Fides (Faith Alone)*, *Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone)*, *Sola Gratia (Grace Alone)*, and *Sola Christus (Christ Alone)*. Contrary to the teachings and will of the Catholic Church at the time, the Reformists were faithfully and publicly committed to the truth of Scripture, even against personal persecution and death as with Tyndale. Based on Scripture, salvation comes from faith by grace alone and that legitimate faith produces works. The only merit that will save is the work of Jesus alone. Every Christian has the right and responsibility to interpret the Scriptures. There is no priest needed to have access to Jesus. He alone is the High Priest, and He is accessible to every believer.

The four emphases of the Reformation¹ included:

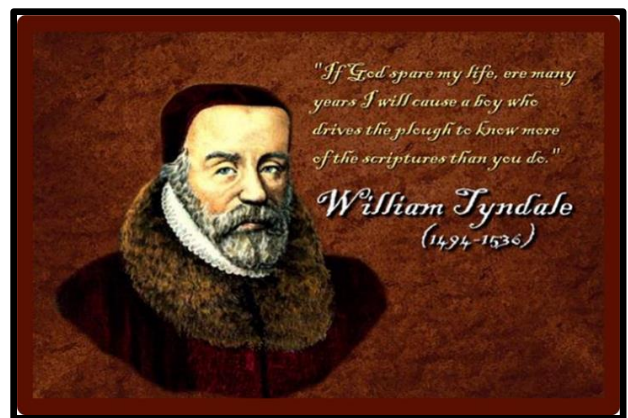
- 1) sources over tradition, noting that *"in the beginning was the Word and the Word was God"*, and signifying the importance of Biblical translations into common languages for the common people based on the original Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) texts;
- 2) conscience over authority such that all Christians must be convinced through the testimony of Scripture made available to them in their common language;
- 3) productive over slave labor where all Christians doing what God calls them to do brings reverence to all work being done in God's name;
- 4) universal education of all people such that all Christians can read and interpret Scripture for themselves. It was in the realm of the 'solas' and "emphases" of the Reformation that Tyndale lived his faith and call even unto death.

Born in 1494, Tyndale's childhood was spent in Gloucestershire in southwest England, very close to the port of Bristol. He went to a very good school at a young age and studied Latin,

which was the language of scholars and the church. Tyndale went to Oxford when he was twelve years old where he studied for 10 years. There he became an extremely gifted linguist, being fluent in eight different languages, including Greek and Hebrew. He was passionately interested in the Scriptures, and started studying theology but the Oxford official course did not include a systematic study of Scripture. As Tyndale later complained: "They have ordained that no man shall look on the Scripture until he is modeled in heathen learning eight or nine years and armed with false principles, with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of the Scripture." Between 1517 and 1521, Tyndale extended his study of language at the University of Cambridge where Erasmus, a leading Dutch philosopher and Catholic theologian had been the leading teacher of Greek from August 1511 to January 1512.

In 1516, Erasmus, published the Greek New Testament. These texts flooded Europe, and strongly impacted the life of Tyndale. The Greek New Testament offered Tyndale the opportunity to translate Scripture into English, which he began to pursue with great passion and personal risk. Even though this work was against the law and could bring severe punishment, he discerned that his call from God was to make sure that all could read Scripture in the English language.

Tyndale left Cambridge in 1521 and became a chaplain at the home of Sir John Walsh, tutoring their young children, while translating, and preaching. His opinions proved controversial to fellow clergymen, and the next year he was summoned before John Bell, the Chancellor of the Diocese of Worcester, and other church leaders. Although no formal charges were made at the time, Tyndale had an argument with them where Bell allegedly asserted: "We had better be without God's laws than the Pope's", to which Tyndale responded: "I defy the Pope and all his laws; and if God spares my life, ere many years, I will cause the boy that drives the plow to know more of the Scriptures than you do!"



Tyndale later sought Bishop Tunstall in London, who was a scholar and a great admirer of Erasmus. Tunstall would not agree to support Tyndale in his translating work. Tyndale pursued a permit on several occasions from the Catholic church for a translation but was denied as were a multitude of requests made over the previous 100 years by others.

Henry Monmouth, a wealthy cloth merchant, gave Tyndale the financial backing to do this translation. Because of the persecution rising around him and concern for the safety of the Walsh family, Tyndale

sailed for Hamburg, Germany. He met friends of Martin Luther who helped him finish the books of Matthew and Mark, and had them printed. Tyndale sent the first of these books to Monmouth in 1524, which were smuggled into the English port hidden in the shipment of cloth. In April of 1525, they went to Cologne to seek out better printing advantages. He was able to arrange for 3,000 copies of these texts to be printed, prior to escaping a raid on the print shop by the church authorities and saving the print block and manuscripts.

At the close of 1525 Tyndale had finished 6,000 copies from Worms, Germany. Five sea merchants from Germany smuggled the Bibles into England to Thomas Garrett who sold them to the common people of England. As people read the words of Scripture in their own language, their desire to know more increased.

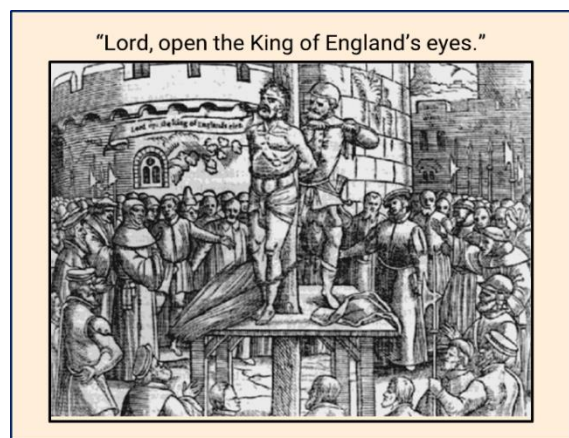
Many who helped spread Tyndale's Bibles were arrested and thrown into prison. Henry VIII had a warrant issued for Tyndale's arrest, and the leaders of the church were searching for Tyndale for heresy. He had moved to a safe house in Antwerp, Belgium, belonging to Thomas Poyntz, a relative of Lady Walsh. There Tyndale began translating the Old Testament from the original Hebrew into English. The Pentateuch was issued in Marburg in 1530, with each of the five books being separately published and circulated. Tyndale continued to work on the Old Testament translation but was captured in Antwerp before it was completed.

By 1534, Anne Bolyne, Queen of England and the wife of Henry the VIII, started to persuade her husband to favor the Reformed party. She possessed and treasured a Bible that was written in English. The King started to change his mind about the English Bible, however he did not rescind Tyndale's warrant.

A man named Henry Phillips, broke from gambling depots, was secretly working for Catholic Church authorities, who had placed a bounty on Tyndale. Philips deceitfully befriended Tyndale and coaxed him out of the safety of the Poyntz House. The waiting authorities immediately arrested Tyndale and imprisoned him in the castle of Vilvoorde near Brussels on May 24, 1535, where he remained in isolation for 18 months in the cold dark cell.

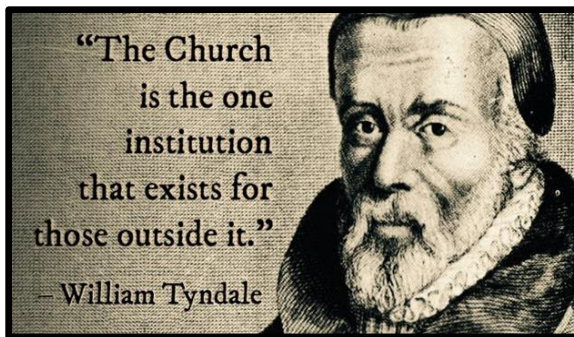
On Friday, October 6, 1536, Tyndale was brought to the cross in the middle of the town square and given a chance to recant before the local church officials, which he refused. Condemned for heresy, Tyndale was executed by strangulation and then burned at the stake. Given a moment to pray prior to his execution, Tyndale's last words were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes!"

Within two years of Tyndale's death, Henry VIII allowed publication of Tyndale's Bible. An English bishop was quoted saying to the English clergy of the day: "The common people now know the Holy Scripture better than most of us." Tyndale's Bible never carried his name but was



named the Matthew Bible, which included the New Testament and the historical books of the Old Testament through Second Chronicles. Tyndale's Bible translation was used for subsequent English translations, including the Great Bible and the Bishop's Bible, authorized by the Church of England. In 1611, after seven years of work, the 47 scholars who produced the King James Version drew extensively from Tyndale's original work and other translations that descended from his work. In 1947, modern scholars who assembled for the Revised Standard Version edition, attributed 85% of the New Testament and 76% of the Old Testament (of the books translated by Tyndale) of the King James Bible to Tyndale's Bible.

At the time of Tyndale's death, 18,000 copies of his New Testament had been printed; however, only two complete volumes and a fragment remain today, at London's British Library.



William Tyndale once spoke, "The Church is the one institution that exists for those outside it." As Christ followers, may our business always be one of bringing the Good News to the world, no matter the sacrifice, that we might all receive adoption as children of God.

A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(1072\) Let The Words Of My Mouth \(Psalm 19:14, Philippians 4:8\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qr8QoQKmXfk)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qr8QoQKmXfk>

Resource Video

¹ [\(1072\) 22. The Effects of the Reformation and William Tyndale - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4f4NjcxP-3Y&t=2268s)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4f4NjcxP-3Y&t=2268s>

Jesus Healing The Blind Man Window

The window of focus is Jesus healing the blind man, located in the right back side of the sanctuary, facing the pulpit, and framed in the upper medallion.

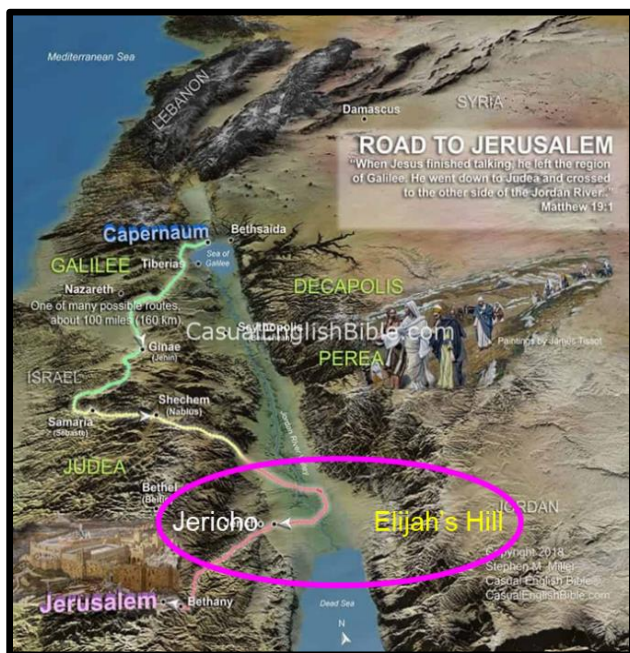
In the window, we see a beautiful pictorial of Jesus healing the blind beggar Bartimaeus as shared in *Mark 10:46-52*. As with the previous windows, this window is bordered with leaves of green laurel symbolizing the triumph of eternal life and with leaves of golden oak signifying God's glory and strength. The upper medallion is framed in an ornate gold mandala, which symbolizes the everlasting life that God has given us in Christ Jesus through His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. On top of the mandala rests an angel, robed in blue on a half shell, who is God's messenger of the Good News of His sacrificial love, saving grace, and everlasting hope sent from heaven that is present throughout our life's faith journey.

Pictured is one of the last miracles performed by Jesus as he is completing his final journey to Jerusalem as King and Savior. We see that the healing takes place along the Jordan River near Jericho with the backdrop of Elijah's Hill and in the vicinity of His baptism, which took place 3 years earlier. We see Jesus and a disciple standing with an unknown man along with a blind beggar kneeling before Jesus. Jesus is shown with the Divine nimbus, dressed in gold tunic representing God's glory and strength and red cloak symbolizing His suffering and sacrifice that is to soon follow. The disciple shown with nimbus and dressed in a green tunic and burgundy cloak is likely Matthew, given his personal account of Jesus healing two blind men in *Matthew 20:29-34*. The blind beggar, who Mark names Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus (meaning honor in Greek), is shown with a beggar's crutch and is dressed in a simple, worn, pale yellow/brown tunic with a red sash. The beggar's sash is the same red as Christ's tunic, possibly symbolic of the "Belt of Truth", as the beggar exclaims publicly Jesus's identity, "Jesus, the Son of David." The beggar wears no cloak, which is consistent with Mark's account that he threw off his cloak running to Jesus, a cloak that would have likely been a government issue allowing him to beg. It could also be symbolic of removing a self-reliance in the security of a cloak that protects from the elements but prevents us to rely upon Jesus as Lord. The unknown man dressed in a gold tunic and burgundy cloak may possibly be one from the crowd who told Bartimaeus to be silent but who praised God after the healing. He may also be the second blind man yet to be healed in Matthew's account since his eyes appear to be closed. Amid the healing, we see a green oak



tree along the river bank, signifying God’s eternal strength. We recall the prophet in *Jeremiah 17:8* comparing the righteous man to a tree with deep roots, which is able to withstand any drought or storm. In *Psalms 1:3*, King David praises the man who is “like a tree planted by streams of water, whose roots go down deep into the soil.” One such man is now Bartimaeus who has been healed and made right by the faith that Christ has given him.

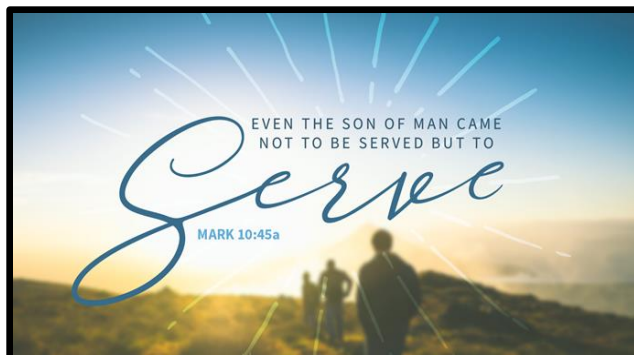
The healing is shared in all three *Synoptic Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke*. Each story varies some which indicates that they may be one or more healings. The Mark and Luke accounts occur with Jesus healing one blind beggar while approaching Jericho. Mark names the blind man Bartimaeus, while remaining unnamed with Luke. Mark also has Bartimaeus throwing his cloak aside and running to Jesus.



Matthew’s account occurs with Jesus leaving Jericho and includes two unnamed blind men. All three accounts are consistent with 1) the blind man (men) shouts to Jesus, “*Son of David, have mercy on me (us)*”; 2) the crowd rebukes the blind man (men) but he (they) is persistent in calling to Jesus, 3) Jesus asks the blind man (men), “*What do you want me to do for you?*”, 4) the response to Jesus’ question being, “*I (we) want to see*”, 5) the blind man (men) is healed, and 6) the blind man (men) follows Jesus. In Mark and Luke, Jesus states that “*your faith has healed you*” while Matthew has Jesus touching the blind men’s eyes. Luke has all of the crowd who sees the miracle praising God.

The story of the healing also has a particular interest in what precedes it. In all three *Synoptic Gospels (Mark 10:32-34, Matthew 20:17-19, and Luke 18:31-33)*, Jesus foretells his death to his disciples. The disciples clearly did not understand and did not know what he was talking about (*Luke 18:34*). The Mark and Matthew accounts are more specific and revealing in the disciples’ egregious inability to understand. *Mark 10:35-45* provides the full account of the exchange.

Immediately after Jesus has shared what is to come for Him, the disciples, James and John, boldly tells Jesus, “*We want you to do for us whatever we ask.*” It is then that Jesus asks them the same question that he will ask the blind man, “*What do you want me to do for you?*” Their response is quite different from that of wanting to “see” Jesus but is reflective



of a heart more of self than of Jesus. They replied, *“Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”* In telling them they do not know what they ask, Jesus follows with a miracle in revealing to James and John and to all of His disciples what He was about and who they as followers of Christ were to become in *Mark 10:43-45*. *“Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

At times, we are all challenged in our faith and assurance that Jesus, out of great compassion and love, can and does, according to His will, answer the question, *“What do you want me to do for you?”* May we be about decreasing and Christ our Lord increasing in all things and at all times, always fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, taking delight in our God, who fills our hearts with joy and peace, and abounding in hope through the power of His Holy Spirit.

A song to reflect and pray on:

[Judy Collins Amazing Grace Lyrics \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H16O-WZ-Oz8)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H16O-WZ-Oz8>

The Huguenots Suffering For Their Faith Medallion

The window of focus is the suffering of the Huguenots for their faith, located in the right back side of the sanctuary, facing the pulpit, and framed in the lower medallion.

In the window, we see a moving pictorial of a Huguenot suffering for his faith by burning at the stake as two companions, possibly family, and a guard look on. Standing out is the immeasurable peace and prayerful reference to the Prince of Peace exhibited by the three Huguenots. The scene is bordered with gold oak leaves signifying God's eternal strength and glory. We see the blending of the gold oak leaves into red oak leaves, seen as the flames themselves, signifying God's strength and presence that knows no bounds even in the midst of the fire. We are reminded of *Daniel 7:10*: "A river of fire was flowing, coming out of His presence." The stake to which the Huguenot is bound is not an expected charred-black color but green, symbolizing the gift of eternal life that God gives to each of us in faith. The Huguenots are each dressed in gold tunics, representing the fulfillment of their life's purpose, i.e., to glorify God. The guard is shown with a halberd and scourge, possibly signifying both the political and religious elements of the Huguenots' punishment, respectively. The Protestant Huguenots were a political threat given the social and economic power of the nobility, educated, prominent professionals in trades, medicine and crafts and military officers, who followed the teachings of John Calvin. The French Calvinists, as with all Protestant Reformists, were seen as a religious threat to the Catholic church and considered heretics, deserving of death.



French Calvinists adopted the Huguenot name around 1560, but the first Huguenot church was created five years earlier in a private home in Paris. The origin of the name Huguenot is unknown but believed to have been derived from combining phrases in German and Flemish that described their practice of home worship. By 1562, there were two million Huguenots in France (10% of the population) with more than 2,000 churches.

In January 1562, Catherine de' Medici, the Queen Regent of France, issued the Edict of St. Germain, which recognized the right of Huguenots to practice their religion, though

with limits. Huguenots were not permitted to practice within towns or at night, and in an effort to quench fears of rebellion, they were not allowed to be armed. Catherine, who was also Queen of France from 1547-1559 and the mother of three French kings, Francis II, Charles IX and Henry III, greatly influenced French Huguenot policies for more than 40 years. While initially favoring toleration, she abruptly changed to policies of severe persecution and purging of the Huguenots.

The Edict of Germain was quickly followed by the Massacre of Vassy on March 1, 1562, which sparked decades of violence known as the French Wars of Religion. More than 300 Huguenots holding religious services in a barn outside the town wall of Vassy, France, were attacked by troops under the command of Francis, Duke of Guise, and uncle to Mary Queen of Scots. More than 60 Huguenots were killed and more than 100 wounded at Vassy. The battling continued into February of 1563 when Francis was assassinated by a Huguenot during a siege on Orleans and an unstable truce was agreed upon.

The most infamous Catholic purge of the Huguenots was the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre on August 23, 1572. Murders of 70,000 Huguenots across France took place under the direction of Catherine de Medici, with the pretense of a truce in the wedding of her daughter Margaret to Huguenot Henry of Navarre (future Henry IV of France). The wedding was meant to bring together the conflicting Catholic House of Guise and the Protestant House of Bourbon. For three days of violence, officials recruited Catholic citizens into militia groups that hunted down Huguenot citizens, indulging not only in murder but gruesome torture, mutilation and desecration of the dead. Violence and murder spread to 12 French cities over a two month period, leading to the first wave of Huguenot departures from France to England, Germany and the Netherlands.



Violence such as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre became the norm, as civilian bloodshed and military battles dragged on until the Edict of Nantes in April 1598, issued by Henry IV, which ended the civil war and granted Huguenots their demanded civil rights. Henry IV was

Jeanne d'Albret



greatly influenced by his family's matriarchs. Marguerite d'Angoulême was queen of Navarre, the wife of King Henry II of Navarre, and the grandmother of King Henry IV of France, whom scholars have called "the first modern woman," and was an early supporter of reform in the Catholic Church. She influenced her brother, Francis I, to be lenient with the Huguenots.

Marguerite's daughter, Jeanne d'Albret, queen of Navarre and Henry IV's mother, was one of the most powerful political women of 16th-century Europe. Along with Elizabeth I of England and Catherine de Medici in France, Jeanne d'Albret played a leading role in the religious and political conflicts that marked the second half of

the 16th century. Jeanne was brought up in a religiously liberal and intellectual atmosphere. She was strong-willed and consistently followed her own course, declaring Calvinism the official religion of her kingdom after publicly embracing the teachings of John Calvin on Christmas Day 1560. This conversion made her the highest-ranking Protestant in France, while defying the demands of her second husband, Antoine de Bourbon, that she return to Catholicism. By supporting the Reformation and establishing Navarre as a haven for Huguenots, Jeanne increased the tensions that erupted in the French Wars of Religion. She initially supported the Protestant side financially and politically and, in the third war, took an active role as propagandist, figurehead, leader, and negotiated the peace twice in 1563 and 1570. She also, reluctantly agreed to the marriage of her Protestant son Henry to the Catholic Margaret of Valois, daughter of King Henry II of France and Catherine de 'Medici, in the interests of national unity.

Another influential connection to Marguerite d'Angoulême was Renée de France, a woman to note from the French Protestant Reformation because of her piety, hospitality and generosity to those who were in danger because of their faith. She was raised by Marguerite d'Angoulême, being orphaned at age five after the deaths of her father, King Louis XII of France, and mother, Anne de Bretagne. At 18 years old, Renée became the Duchess of Ferrara in 1534 until the death of her husband, Ercole II d'Este, grandson of Pope Alexander VI, in 1559. Their marriage proved to be a mismatch due to their cultural inclinations and religion. Her husband was a staunch Catholic, while Renée followed the ideas of Martin Luther and John Calvin. She gained knowledge in Protestant theology while she was part of Marguerite's circles, where she met with many reformers, humanists, and evangelicals.

Renée de France



In 1536, John Calvin visited the Duchy of Ferrara under the name Charles d'Esperville, likely as a religious refugee, and was accepted with warmth by the Protestant believers at Renée's court. Calvin befriended Renée and became her personal secretary for 6 months, causing her to be more inclined to Protestantism. After his departure, they maintained personal correspondence until Calvin's death in 1564.

Renée was instrumental in the spread of Protestantism, financing Venetian printers in the production of Bibles and other religious books, not only in Italian but in other languages. In 1540, Renée received a villa in Consandolo as a gift, where she built a large library of Reformed books and treatises, hosted whomever she wished and enjoyed the preaching of Protestant ministers. Renée participated in the Eucharist in the Protestant manner together with her daughters and fellow believers in 1550. Her husband, the Duke of Ferrara, followed with the public accusation of heresy against her. Renée was arrested and all of her personal possessions were confiscated unless she recanted. Renée did not relent until her two daughters were taken away from her. Although she recanted, she refused to attend Catholic worship.

Château de Montargis located in north-central France
A place of refuge - "The Hotel of the Lord"



After her husband's death in 1559, their son, Alfonso II d'Este, the new Duke of Ferrara was compelled by Pope Pius IV to exile his mother to France because of her Calvinist creed. Renée resided at Château de Montargis, located in north-central France, and continued to worship the Protestant faith. In later years, during the Wars of Religion in France, Renée's castle became a place of refuge for the Protestants and any who needed assistance regardless of faith. Renée's Protestant faith remained

unwavering. In her last 10 years, John Calvin corresponded with Renée more often, and he praised her in his letters to other Protestants. Calvin remained her friend and mentor until the end of his life, and in one of his last letters to her, he reminded her that her trials and tribulations did not sway her *'from a right and pure profession of Christianity.'* Passing in June 1574, because of her faith, Renée was not buried with the Valois royals at Saint-Denis but at Montargis, without pomp and even a tombstone.

Following the Edict of Nantes, the Huguenots subsequently used their freedom to organize against the French crown, gaining political power, amassing loyal forces and forging separate diplomatic relationships with other countries.

When King Louis XIV ascended the French throne in 1643, persecution of the Huguenots began again, escalating to the point that he directed troops to seize Huguenot homes and force them to convert to Catholicism, a practice known as the Dragonades. In 1685, Louis XIV enacted the Edict of Fontainebleau, which replaced the Edict of Nante and made Protestantism illegal. Practice of the "heretical" religion was forbidden and Huguenots were ordered to renounce their faith and join the Catholic Church. They were denied exit from France under pain of death. Louis XIV hired 300,000 troops to hunt the heretics down and confiscate their property. This revocation caused France to lose half a million of its best citizens.

Persecution finally relaxed during the latter years of the reign of Louis XV (~1764 onward), especially among discreet members of the upper classes. In practice, the stringent policies outlawing Protestants was opposed by the Jansenists. Jansensim was a theological movement within Catholicism at the time, primarily active in the Kingdom of France, that emphasized original sin, human depravity, the necessity of divine grace, and predestination. It was declared a heresy by the Catholic Church with Jesuits aligning them with Calvinist leanings.

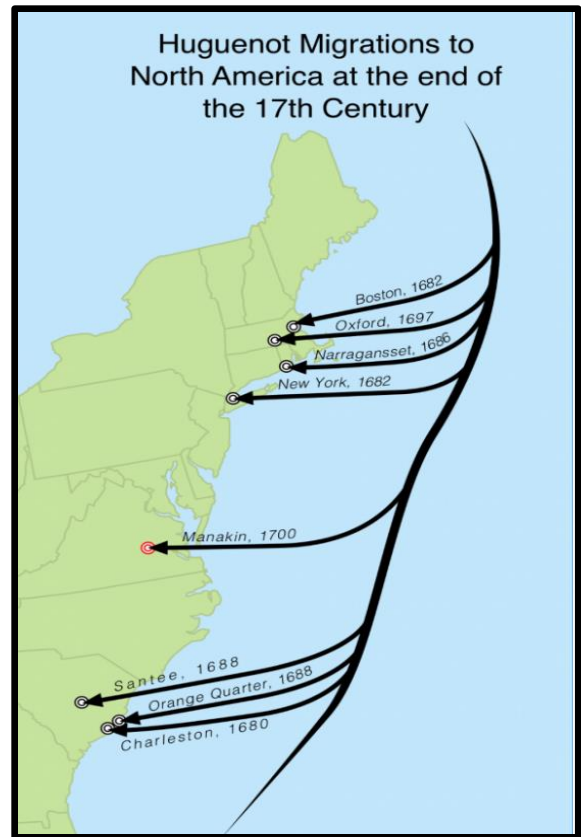
It was not until November 7, 1787 with the Edict of Versailles, issued by King Louis XVI, that the Huguenots toleration was re-instated. Roman Catholicism continued as the state religion of the Kingdom of France but relief was offered to non-Catholic worshippers: Calvinist Huguenots, Lutherans and Jews alike. Considering the long-standing dominance of the state religion, restrictions were still placed on non-Catholics around the country such at workplace

and educational settings to avoid misrepresenting the kingdom. The Edict of Versailles did not proclaim freedom of religion across France, which would occur only by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789.

The departure of the Huguenots was a disaster for France, costing the nation much of its cultural and economic influence. In some French cities, the mass exodus meant losing half the working population. Huguenots were particularly prolific in the textile industry and considered reliable workers in many fields. They were also an educated group, with the ability to read and write. Many European countries in addition to Russia and South Africa, welcomed them and benefited from their arrival. The most significant population ended up in the Netherlands with Amsterdam receiving the most Huguenot transplants.

Some Huguenots had emigrated far earlier than the mass movement in the 17th century to North America, but many met with misfortune. In 1564, Norman Huguenots settled in Florida in an area now Jacksonville, but were slaughtered by Spanish troops following an altercation with the French navy.

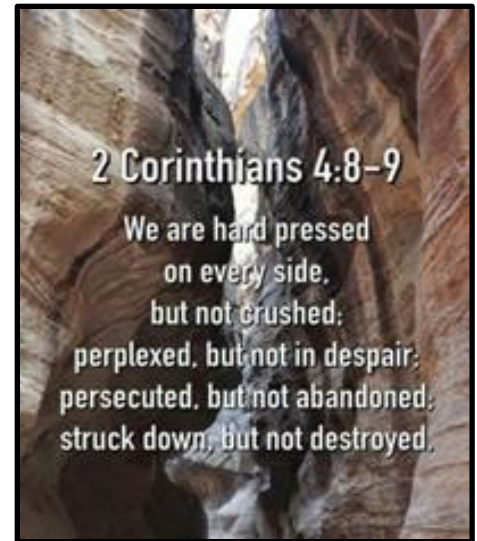
Beginning in 1624, Huguenots began to arrive in mass in the New York and New Jersey area. In 1628, some moved into what would become Bushwick, Brooklyn. Others moved to New Rochelle and New Paltz, New York, as well as Staten Island. By the time of the exodus beginning in 1685, Huguenot communities sprang up in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia and South Carolina. Often, the Huguenot settlers would assimilate with existing Protestant groups, particularly Presbyterians, given the Calvinist teachings. A wealth of Huguenot ancestry grew in the American colonies. The father of Paul Revere, Apollo Rivoire, was a Huguenot, and George Washington was descended from a Huguenot named Nicolas Martiau.



In retrospect, the Huguenots truly lived the Apostle Paul's words of Christian encouragement and perspective:

2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 16-18 *We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.*

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.



A song to reflect and pray on:

[Fernando Ortega I Need Thee Every Hour With Lyrics - Bing video](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=fernando+ortega&&view=detail&mid=B562FB4B72D65509D082B562FB4B72D65509D082&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dfernando%2520ortega%26qs%3DOS%26form%3DQBVR%26%3D%2525eManage%2520Your%2520Search%2520History%2525E%26sp%3D1%26pq%3Dfernando%2520ortega%26sc%3D10-13%26cvid%3D620003E9536A4624848CFF6923C3E495)

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=fernando+ortega&&view=detail&mid=B562FB4B72D65509D082B562FB4B72D65509D082&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dfernando%2520ortega%26qs%3DOS%26form%3DQBVR%26%3D%2525eManage%2520Your%2520Search%2520History%2525E%26sp%3D1%26pq%3Dfernando%2520ortega%26sc%3D10-13%26cvid%3D620003E9536A4624848CFF6923C3E495>

Christ on the Cross Window

The window of focus is the crucifixion of Jesus, located in the second window from the right back side of the sanctuary, facing the pulpit, and framed in the upper medallion.

The window is filled with many symbolic features: golden oak leaves representing God's unending and sufficient strength; garlands of green laurel leaves symbolizing God's eternal Word and triumph over sin through salvation in and through Christ Jesus; fern leaves that signify the humility of Jesus, "*who emptied himself, taking the form of a servant in the likeness of men, humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*" (Philippians 2:7-8)

The upper medallion is framed in a circle, which symbolizes the everlasting life that God has given us in Christ Jesus through His birth, life, death, and resurrection. On top rests an angel, robed in red on a half shell, who is God's messenger of the Good News of God's sacrificial love, saving grace and presence throughout our life's faith journey.



At the foot of the cross, we see Mary, mother of Jesus, robed in a blue cloak and cowl, signifying her hope, sincerity, and piety as a bond-servant of God. The beloved disciple John is seen in a brown and scarlet tunic and cloak, representing a humble, faithful and sacrificial servant. Jesus is shown in a red cloth, symbolizing the suffering and sacrifice endured out of great love - a ransom paid for all. Above Christ's head is the sign, KING OF THE JEWS, meant to be a statement of ridicule by the Romans and a sign adamantly rejected by the chief priests, although proclaimed in *Revelation 17:14* as "*KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*" The cross is green in color as was the Huguenot stake in the previous window, representing the eternal life that God gives through His Son, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We see Jerusalem in the background from the height of Golgotha (Calvary). The portrayal of the city may be symbolic of the New Jerusalem that is to come in *Revelation 21:2*: "*And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.*"

Interestingly we see two white swans at the top of the mandala. Swans are often a symbol of love and fidelity because of their long-lasting and monogamous relationships. They possibly represent the pure and eternal fidelity of Christ's (Bridegroom's) love for His Church (bride). Christ has sacrificially and lovingly chosen the Church to be His bride (*Ephesians 5:24-27*).

Revelation 19:7-9 and 21:1-2 speak of the eventual and eternal union of the Church with Christ.

The crucifixion story is told in all of the Synoptic Gospels in addition to John (*Matthew 27:27-56, Mark 15:16-41, Luke 23:26-49, and John 19:16-37*). Matthew, Mark and Luke are largely similar in sequence and sometimes identical in wording. John, while similar in some cases, is unique in his emphasis on the fulfillment of Scripture, i.e., his use of “so that Scripture would be fulfilled.”

The crucifixion story reflects the prophetic words 700 years prior in *Isaiah 53:1-12*, speaking of the “Suffering Servant,” and of David 1000 years prior in *Psalms 22*, speaking of Christ’s suffering and His glory. The Synoptic Gospels speak of Jesus being mocked, reviled and spit on by the crowd as conveyed in *Psalms 22:6-7*: “But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads.”



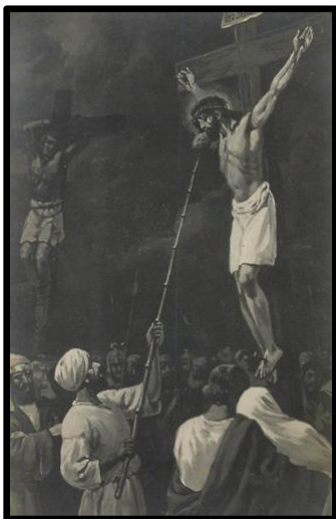
All four Gospels tell of the charge made against Jesus and the sign fastened to the cross, “*THIS IS JESUS, KING OF THE JEWS.*” John includes the dialogue between Pilate and the chief priests, who protested the sign. We are reminded that just weeks prior, the blind beggar Bartimaeus who was healed sees Jesus for who He is, “*Son of David*”, “*the King of Kings.*” In *John 9:39*, Jesus says, “*For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.*”

Each of the Gospels fulfill the words of *Psalms 22:18*: “*They divide my clothes among them and cast lot for my garment.*” We are told in Matthew and Luke that a man from Cyrene, named Simon is forced to carry Jesus’ cross. It is likely that Simon was in Jerusalem for the Jewish Passover traveling from Cyrene, which was a Greco-Egyptian city in eastern Libya with a large Jewish community that became an early center of Christianity. Mark further identifies Simon as the father of Alexander and Rufus. Tradition states that they became missionaries. It has also been suggested that the Rufus, mentioned by Paul in *Romans 16:13*, was the son of Simon of Cyrene. Some also have linked Simon himself with the “men of Cyrene” who preached the Gospel to the Greeks in *Acts 11:20*. A burial cave discovered in 1941 in the Kidron Valley, just outside the Old City of Jerusalem, belonging to Cyrenian Jews and dating before AD 70, was found to have an ossuary inscribed twice in Greek, “Alexander son of Simon.”

Each of the Gospels speak of the two men that were crucified beside Jesus. The Synoptic Gospels identify them as rebels or criminals. Luke provides the detailed exchange amongst themselves. One of the rebels hurls insults at Jesus, *“Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”*; the other defends Jesus, *“This man has done nothing wrong ... Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”* Jesus answered him, *“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”* Saint Augustine noted the significance of this scene: *“The very cross was the tribunal of Christ;*



for the Judge was placed in the middle; one thief, who believed, was set free; the other, who reviled, was condemned; which signified what he was already about to do with the quick and dead; being about to set some on his right hand, but others on his left. *“For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.”* (John 5:22).



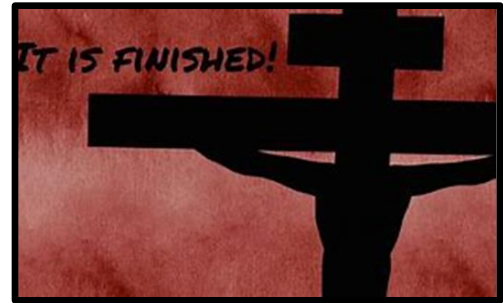
Matthew and Mark tell of Jesus being given wine with myrrh (gall), which Jesus refuses and later given wine vinegar on a hyssop-sponge staff, which Jesus accepts. Myrrh, one of the gifts of the Magi, was culturally significant to the region and was used along with vinegar and wine to make the water potable. Myrrh also served as an excellent antiseptic and a mild narcotic. The first drink offered to Jesus was a cheap Roman vinegar wine mixed with myrrh to dull the senses. It was the custom of the Romans to offer a man being crucified drugged wine so that he might more easily endure his cross. Jesus refused the wine, however, apparently so that He could go through his suffering with a clear mind. Later John writes: *knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”* The psalmist declares

in *Psalm 22:15*: *“My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.”* Jesus accepts the vinegar wine to quench his last thirst.

The Synoptic Gospels speak the fulfillment of prophecy of *Amos 8:9-10*: *“In that day, declares the Sovereign Lord, “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. I will turn your religious festivals into mourning and all your singing into weeping. I will make that time like mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day.”* It is written that *“from noon until three in the afternoon a darkness came over all the land.”*

Matthew and Mark speak of Jesus crying out, fulfilling *Psalm 22:1-2*: *About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”* (which means *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*) The psalmist writes, *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.”*

It is then that all four Gospels speak of Jesus giving up His Spirit with Luke recording that Jesus called out with a loud voice, *“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit”* and John recording that Jesus said, *“It is finished. With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”*



The Synoptic Gospels speak of the temple curtain being torn at the moment of Jesus giving Himself up. Matthew writes: *“At that moment, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked and the rocks were split.”* The *Book of Hebrews* identifies the torn curtain as the one at the entrance to the temple's Most Holy Place that was only accessible to the High Priest on the Day of Atonement to make sacrifices for the people. The curtain is symbolic of Jesus' torn body, where the tearing of the curtain points to a key consequence of Jesus' sacrificial death: Christians, no longer cut off from God, can come freely before God's throne of grace in heaven (*Hebrews 4:14-16*). *“We have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.”* (*Hebrews 8:1*)

Afterwards, the Synoptic Gospels speak of the conversion of the centurion exclaiming, *“Surely this man was the Son of God!”* All four Gospels identify those who were present. Matthew, Mark and Luke speak of many women watching from a distance who had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Included were Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James the younger and Joseph and Salome, the mother of the disciples James and John. John writes that near the cross stood His mother Mary, his mother's sister Mary, wife of Clopas, Mary Magdalene and the disciple whom he loved (John). Here John writes: *“he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.”*

John concludes the story noting the fulfillment of Scripture: *“But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.”* From *Psalms 34:20*: *“He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.”* From *Zechariah 12:10*: *“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.”*

*Thank you for this love, Lord
Thank you for the nail pierced hands
Washed me in Your cleansing flow
Now all I know
Your forgiveness and embrace (Worthy is the Lamb)*

A song to reflect and pray on:

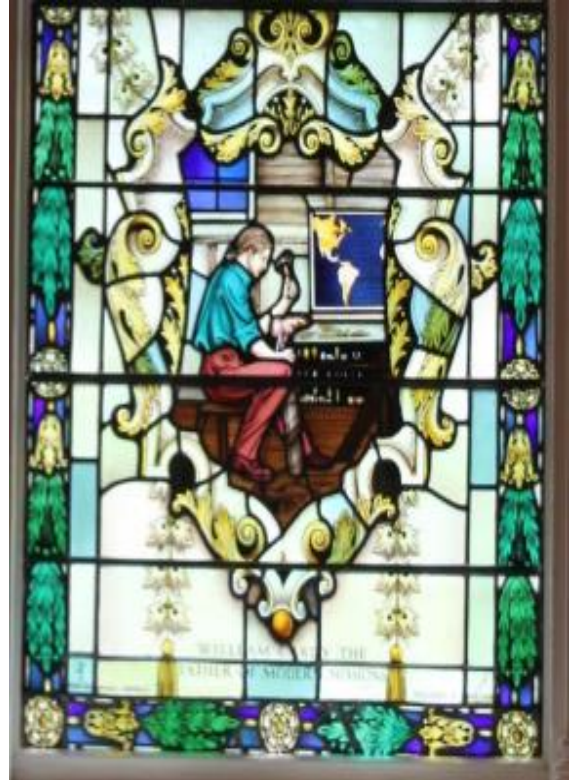
[\(17\) WORTHY IS THE LAMB, by Darlene Zschech - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pep1cggXbDg)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pep1cggXbDg>

William Carey Father of Modern Missions Medallion

The window of focus is William Carey, the “father of modern missions”, located in the second window from the right back side of the sanctuary, facing the pulpit, and framed in the lower medallion.

The window shows William Carey working at his shoe cobbler table with a map of the world in the background that he crafted out of leather scraps in his shop, which was a product of his vision and zeal for Christian world mission as a young man. His blue shirt and scarlet pants symbolize respectively the hope and trust he placed in God throughout his mission work and the personal suffering and hardship that he endured in his faithful service. The scene is bordered with gold oak leaves signifying God’s eternal strength and glory that became evident in and through Carey’s devotion and service to his Lord. Below his work table is a small library of books, which would likely include language texts of



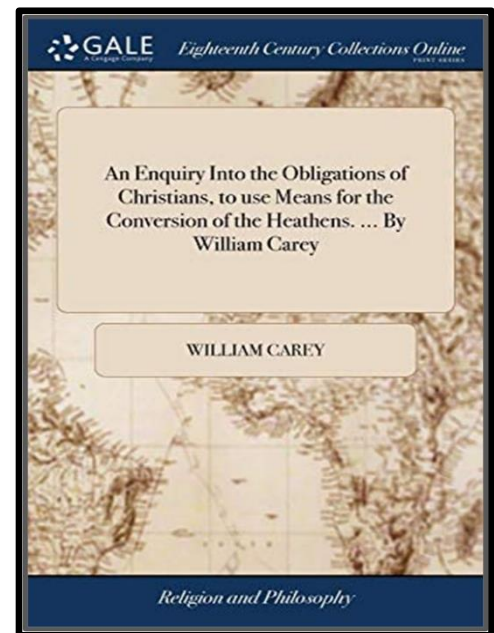
Latin and Greek, which he self-taught by ages 10 and 14, in addition to Hebrew, Italian, Dutch and French, in which he became fluent by the age of 20. Carey, a shoemaker by trade was a modest, self-educated and gifted man of languages, who grew up in the Anglican Church in England in the late 1700’s and became a Baptist minister at the age of 24 with a vision and deep devotion for Christian world mission. He led the formation of the Baptist Missionary in 1792, comprised of 12 small churches encouraged by Carey’s words: “Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.” Carey became the first Christian missionary to India in 1793 and faithfully served the rest of his life for more than 40 years at great personal risk and suffering of he and his family. Near the end of his ministry Carey humbly spoke, “You have been speaking about William Carey. When I am gone, say nothing about William Carey-speak only about Willam Carey's Savior.”

Carey was born in Northhamptonshire, England in 1761, the son of a weaver with minimal means of education. Early in his childhood he showed an exceptional gift and interest in language, becoming fluent in six different languages as a teen. Apprenticed to a shoemaker, he joined the Dissenters, influenced by a fellow apprentice John Warr, after growing up in the Anglican church. While attending Congregationalist meetings with his friend, Carey came under deep conviction of his sin and need for Christ. He would eventually come to put his complete trust in Christ crucified. The Dissenters were congregationalists, who benefited from the religious tolerance that existed in England since the early 1700’s, and who had a view for Evangelism to which Carey was drawn and which the Anglican church lacked at the time.

During these years, Carey painstakingly searched the Scriptures in order to establish his faith on the Word of God alone. His careful study of Scripture led him to reject the practice of infant-baptism, which was practiced by both the Church of England and Congregationalists.

In 1781 at 20 years old, William Carey married Dorothy Plackett, the sister-in-law of his employer, Thomas Olds. She was uneducated and was reluctantly accepting of Carey's future mission endeavors. In 1783, Carey joined the Strict (Particular) Baptists, a Calvinist group that distinguished themselves in the belief that baptism should only be performed as a professing adult, not as an infant. Two years later Carey was ordained as a minister and preached every other Sunday at a small Baptist church in Leicester while continuing to work at the shoe repair shop. Carey became greatly influenced by the works of Jonathan Edwards, Congregationalist pastor and theologian, and David Brainerd, Presbyterian pastor, both of whom were missionaries to the Native Americans, and by Captain James Cook's journal of his first voyage around the world. Carey came to the ardent belief that the Great Commission in *Matthew 28:18-20* to make disciples of all nations, was intended not only for Jesus's immediate disciples but for all of God's people in the present.

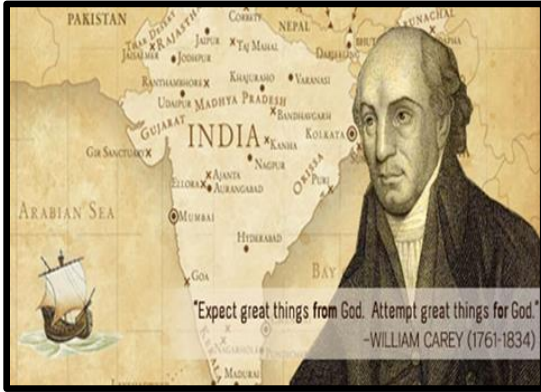
In 1792, Carey would offer two contributions that served as a catalyst for the establishment of the Baptist Missionary Society. Carey published a book titled, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*. This work was divided into five sections that (1) discussed the theological implications of *Matthew 28:19-20*; (2) outlined the history of missions since the days of the apostles; (3) surveyed the state of the world in Carey's day; (4) answered various objections to sending out missionaries; and (5) indicated the immediate practical steps which could be taken, namely the establishment of a missionary society. Also in 1792, Carey preached a sermon based on *Isaiah 54:2-3* at his local associational meeting, often called the "Deathless Sermon."



In Isaiah, the prophet spoke of what is to become for God's people: *"Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities."*

In his sermon, Carey shared that our call as Christians is to make room for more and more people to hear the Good News and to choose to belong to Christ. He called upon his hearers to trust in a great God and attempt great things for Him from which was born the quote: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."

In October of 1792, Carey along with his friends Andrew Fuller, John Ryland (who baptized Carey) and John Sutcliff formed the *Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen* (later known as the Baptist Missionary Society and today as BMS World Mission). Their commitment to missions flowed from their theological commitment to an evangelical Calvinism nurtured through the writings of the Great Awakening preacher Jonathan Edwards.



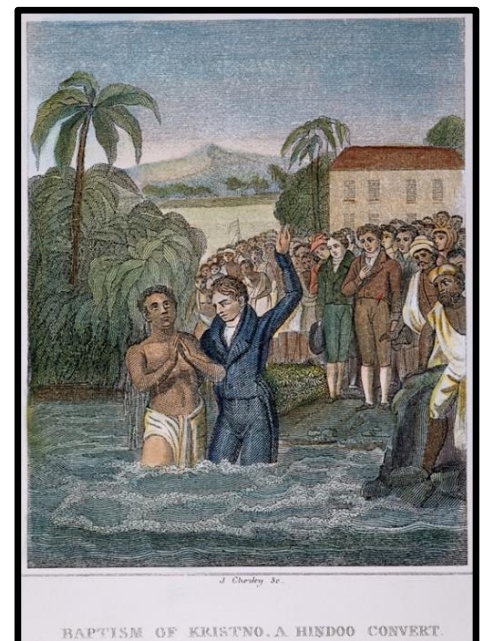
In April of 1793, Carey and his family, along with fellow missionary Dr. Thomas, set sail from England to Calcutta as the first missionaries of the fledgling society. They were waylaid by the British East India Company rules. British East India Company thought that the Reformed Christian teaching would not be good for business. Recall that one of emphases of the Reformation was placing reverence on all work being done in God's name, elevating the value of all doing so, which was contrary to the treatment of those

working in India as part of the tea trade. Carey and his group changed to a Danish ship and arrived in India in December of 1793.

Carey and Thomas had grossly underestimated what it would cost and mean to live in India, and Carey's early years there were miserable. Thomas deserted the mission setting up a medical practice in Calcutta with all of the funds designated for the first two years. Carey was forced to move his family repeatedly for employment. Illness racked the family with his son dying of dysentery and his wife suffering immensely from mental illness and eventually dying. Loneliness and regret set in: "I am in a strange land," he wrote, "no Christian friend, a large family, and nothing to supply their wants. This is indeed the valley of the shadow of death to me," Carey wrote, though characteristically added, "But I rejoice that I am here notwithstanding; and God is here."

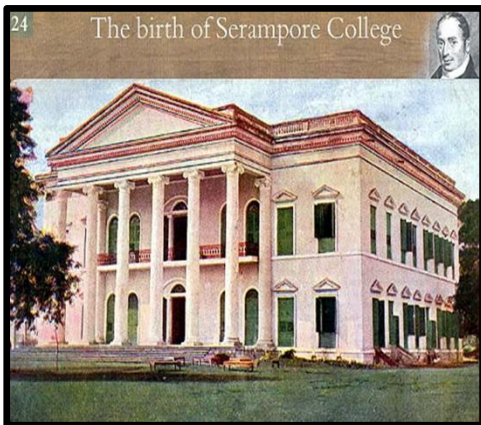
Carey spent the first six years learning and translating the Bible into Bengali. He preached everywhere, but had no converts to the Christian faith. People listened; they loved the message, but refused to break caste. In October 1799, he was invited to locate in a Danish settlement in Serampore near Calcutta, which allowed him to preach legally. Carey was joined by William Ward, a printer, and Joshua and Hanna Marshman, teachers.

Mission finances increased considerably as Ward began securing government printing contracts. The Marshman's opened schools for children, and Carey began teaching at Fort William College in Calcutta. In December 1800, after seven years of missionary labor, Carey baptized his first



convert, Krishna Pal, and two months later, he published his first Bengali New Testament. With this and subsequent editions, Carey and his colleagues laid the foundation for the study of modern Bengali, which up to this time had been an "unsettled dialect." Krishna Pal's daughter eventually married a man above her caste in 1802, helping to break down the caste system.

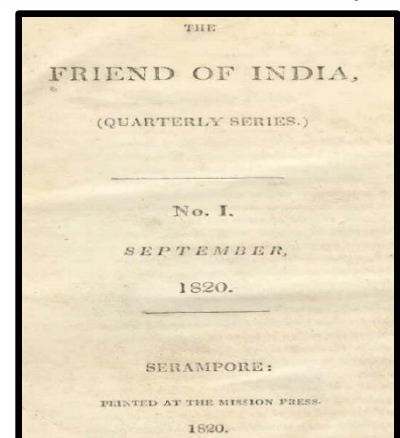
In India, Carey witnessed a rigid caste system, worship of thousands of petty gods, radical asceticism, infant sacrifice in the Ganges River, and suttee (widow burning). Carey worked the rest of his life to eliminate infant sacrifice and suttee, a self-sacrifice of a widow by throwing herself on her husband's funeral pyre. He studied Bhramin texts to get and use Indian priestly arguments to eliminate these horrendous practices. He was the first man to stand against the ruthless murders and widespread oppression of women. Women in India were being crushed through polygamy, female infanticide, child marriage, widow burning, euthanasia, and forced illiteracy—all sanctioned by religion. Carey opened schools for girls. When widows converted to Christianity, he arranged marriages for them. It was his persistent, 25-year battle against widow burning that finally led to the formal banning of this horrible religious practice. He was the first to campaign for humane treatment of India's leprosy victims (who were part of the Untouchable caste) because he believed that Jesus' love extends to leprosy patients, so they should be cared for. Before then, lepers were often buried or burned alive because of the belief that a violent death purified the body on its way to reincarnation into a new healthy existence.



Carey and the Marshman's founded Serampore College in 1818, a divinity school for Indians that was supported by the King of Denmark in a gift of a large house and grounds adjoining the college premises. Today the college offers theological and liberal arts education for some 2,500 students. Carey founded the Agri Horticultural Society in 1820. He carried out a systematic survey of agriculture and campaigned for agriculture reform given his great interest in botany. He introduced the Linnean system of plant organizations and published the first science texts in India. He did this because he believed that nature is declared

“good” by its Creator; it is not maya (illusion) to be shunned, as Hindus believe, but a subject worthy of human study.

Carey established the first newspaper ever printed in any Oriental language, because he believed that “above all forms of truth and faith, Christianity seeks free discussion.” His English-language journal, *Friend of India*, was the force that gave birth to the social-reform movement in India in the first half of the nineteenth century. He also introduced the idea of savings banks to India to fight the all-pervasive social evil of usury (the lending of money at excessive interest). He believed that God, being



righteous, hated this practice which made investment, industry, commerce, and economic development impossible.

In his lifetime Carey, as a gifted linguist, was able to see his mission print and distribute the entire Bible or in parts in 44 different languages and dialects. He transformed the Bengali language, previously considered “fit for only demons and women,” into the foremost literary language of India. He wrote gospel ballads in Bengali to bring the Hindu love of music to the service of his Lord.

William Carey was a pioneer of the modern Christian missionary movement, a movement that has since reached every corner of the world. Although a man of simple origins, he used his God-given genius and every available means to serve his Lord and illumine the dark corners of India with the light of the truth. In his words, we are reminded of our Christian call: “To belong to Jesus is to embrace the nations with Him.”

In expecting great things from God, the Apostle Paul reminds us of what we sometimes forget:

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(14\) What If I Gave Everything - Casting Crowns - with Lyrics - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tP27ySgbYLU)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tP27ySgbYLU>

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ Window

The window of focus is the resurrection of Jesus, located in the second window on the right side from the front facing the Chancel and framed in the upper medallion.

The framing of the window of the resurrection of Jesus is the same as with the other stain-glass windows. The border of green laurel leaves symbolizes the triumph of eternal life and the leaves of golden oak signify God's glory and strength. The upper medallion is framed in an ornate gold mandala, representing the everlasting life that God has given us in Christ Jesus through His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. On top of the mandala rests an angel, robed in red on a half shell, who is God's messenger of the Good News of His sacrificial suffering and love, saving grace, and everlasting hope sent from heaven that is present throughout our life's faith journey.



We see Jesus crowned with a Holy nimbus and robed in the white of His sinless nature and the gold of His glory, being raised out of the tomb shrouded in the glory of His resurrection. We see the wounds of His crucifixion, *"knowing that He was pierced through for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities"* (Isaiah 53:5). Christ is carrying a banner of the cross on a cross-shaped staff. The banner background, is white, representing peace, purity, and innocence. The red cross represents the victory won in the death and resurrection of our Lord as exclaimed in *1 Corinthians 15:54,57: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. ... Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* In the background, we see the bedrock of the tomb that was provided by Joseph of Arimathea, even after His disciples had fled in fear and despair. Also pictured is a small number of palm leaves above the tomb, possibly a reminder of Jesus' triumphal arrival to Jerusalem that is now made eternally complete in His resurrection: *They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the king of Israel!"* (John 12:13) We also see In the backdrop, the bench on which His body rested. The bench appears ornate, which is possibly symbolic of God's Mercy Seat and the perfect atonement that is now made in and through the sacrifice of His Son for the world. *"He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."* (1 John 2:2) Pictured in the foreground are the Roman guards at the tomb, *"who were so shaken in fear upon seeing the angel of the Lord, who rolled away the stone, that they became as dead men."*

Matthew tells the story surrounding Jesus' resurrection (*Matthew 27:57-66, 28:1-20*), including the burial of Jesus, the guards at the tomb, Jesus' resurrection, the guard's report to the high priests and the Great Commission. Herein follows some perspectives of Matthew Henry's commentary on the Apostle Matthew's account. Matthew's story portrays the kindness and good will of Jesus friends that laid Him in the grave in contrast to the malice and ill will of His enemies that were very anxious to keep Him there.

Jesus was buried on the same *evening* that he died before sunset, which was not deferred to the next day because it was *the Jewish sabbath*. The person that took care of the funeral was Joseph of Arimathea. The apostles had all fled, but Joseph, a rich man and silent disciple of Jesus, *went to* Pilate for Jesus' body. Possibly out of guilt in condemning an innocent man, Pilate was willing to give the body to Joseph who would inter it decently. Jesus's body was wrapped in a clean linen cloth and laid in the borrowed tomb, fulfilling *Isaiah 53:9*: "*His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was*



with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence; nor was there any deceit in His mouth." The tomb was hewn out of solid rock such that his disciples had no access by some underground passage, or could not break through the back wall to steal the body contrary to the high priests' subsequent bribery of deceptions. A great stone was rolled to the door of his sepulcher with the channel for the stone sloped so it was easy to close but hard to open.



On the Jewish sabbath that followed, the chief priests and Pharisees were dealing with Pilate about securing the sepulcher, when they should have been at their devotions, seeking pardon for the sins of the past week. They had often quarreled with Christ for His works of great mercy on that day. However, they were working the greatest malice and rebellion against God, even referring to Jesus as that deceiver. They were so afraid of His resurrection, they moved to have a guard set upon the sepulcher till the third day. Pilate, as if ashamed to be part of such a thing, left them to manage their inept plan. By this time Pilate likely had conversed with his centurion, who shared his personal account of Jesus' crucifixion that made him conclude that "*truly He was the Son of God.*"

We do not know the total number of Roman soldiers guarding the tomb. However, they would die if their prisoner escaped. The temple guard had sealed the stone, probably with the great seal of their Sanhedrim, which could not be broken without penalty. On the Lord's Day, there

was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven. It was the signal of Christ's victory; when *"the heavens rejoiced, the earth also might be glad."* (Psalm 96:11. Going to the tomb the angel, broke the seal and rolled back the stone and sat on it. *"His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow."* Upon the appearance of the angel of the Lord, the guards were so afraid of him that *"they shook and became like dead men."*

In Christ's resurrection, the prediction of Hosea 6:2 was fulfilled: *"The third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."* Christ on the sixth day finished his work; He said, *"It is finished."* On the seventh day He rested, and then on the first day of the next week, Christ began *"a new creation"*, entering upon a new work as in Isaiah 43:18-19: *"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"*

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, who attended at the cross and at the closing of the tomb, continued to express their love to Christ and came to anoint the body. The angel assured them saying, *"Do not be afraid...He is not here, He has risen."* They are instructed to go tell the disciples that Jesus has risen and is going ahead to Galilee, honoring them as the apostles of the apostles in their constant devotion to Jesus. *"They departed with fear and great joy."* On their way, Jesus met and greeted them. They threw themselves at his feet, *worshipping him* with great humility and godly fear, as the Son of God, now exalted. Jesus repeats their message; *"Go, tell my brethren, that they must prepare for a journey into Galilee, and there they shall see me. Being the First-begotten from the dead, he is become the First-born among many brethren."* (Romans 8:29)

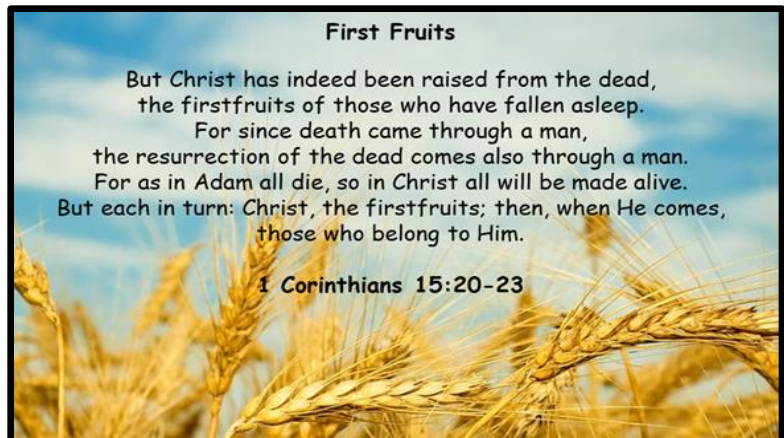


While the women were joyfully going to bring that news to the disciples, the soldiers went to bring the same news to the chief priests, which would further harden their hearts. They shared to the chief priests all the things that had transpired. Obstinate in their infidelity, the priests and elders bribed the soldiers to lie: *"You must say, Jesus' disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body."* They promised to interpose with the governor; *"We will persuade him, and secure you."* Their sin was in effect blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

Gathering at the mountain, Christ commissioned the apostles and His ministers to go forth among all nations and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Triune God, and

teach them to obey all of His commandments, assuring them of His everlasting presence. The reference passage given for the sanctuary window of Christ's resurrection is *1 Corinthians 15:20-23*:

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ the firstfruits; then when He comes, those who belong to Him.



Firstfruits was a Jewish feast held in the early spring at the beginning of the grain harvest. It was observed on the third day after Passover (Christian Easter). Firstfruits offering was a time of thanksgiving for God's provision given in *Leviticus 23:9-14*. No grain was to be harvested at all until the firstfruits offering was brought to the Lord. Paul shares that while death came through a man, which was the penalty of Adam's sin, resurrection of the dead comes also through a man, Christ Jesus, the Firstfruits offering, Perfect and Holy.

Firstfruits symbolizes God's harvest of those who belong to Him in new life. If we are supposed to offer first fruits to the Lord, then this means we are called to offer ourselves. *Romans 12:1* speaks of offering ourselves as living sacrifices unto the Lord. From scriptural commentary, "we have the opportunity to give our Creator the beautiful gift of hearts. Christ gave Himself for us, and we are to respond by giving ourselves to Him. A living sacrifice means believing who God says we are and what He has promised for us. This is where our confidence comes from, and our lives will radiate God's presence and mercy when we embrace our confidence in Him. Every day is purposed to bring glory to God. No improvement can be made upon the will of God. When we understand what it means to worship God as living sacrifices, we get to embrace the fullness of His will for our lives."

A song to reflect and pray on:

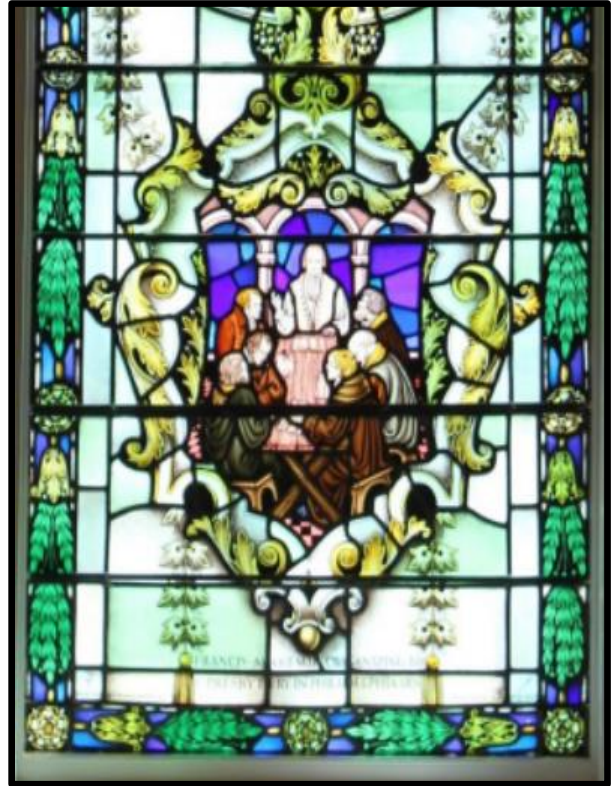
[\(31\) Matt Maher - Because He Lives \(Amen\) \(\[Official Lyric Video\]\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBvU7arNhQs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBvU7arNhQs>

Francis Makemie Medallion

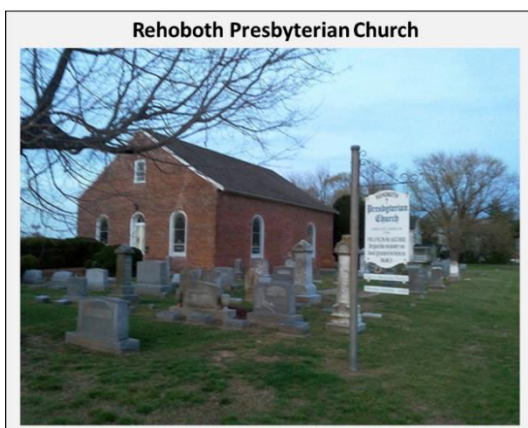
The window of focus is Francis Makemie, leader of the first presbytery, located in the second window on the right side from the front, facing the Chancel and framed in the lower medallion.

The window shows the first presbytery meeting at Philadelphia in 1706 organized by Francis Makemie, a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian minister who preached in the middle colonies from 1691 to 1707. Pictured are the seven missionaries including Makemie, who worked in scattered churches of the middle colonies, forming the first presbytery in America with power to license its own preachers. Makemie was the first moderator of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, where they ordained a new minister, John Boyd. For the first time American Presbyterianism was independent of external control. In 1717, the first Synod was established in Philadelphia with four presbyteries with churches all in the middle colonies. Makemie became the leader of the Presbyterians, also known for his defense of the rights of Presbyterians like himself to minister without a license, even though Presbyterianism had no official standing in the colonies. Makemie's successful self-defense of charges of preaching without a license was an early and significant contribution to the American heritage of rights to free expression and free worship.



Francis Makemie was born in 1658 in Ramelton, County Donegal, Ireland. Not allowed to go to the University of Ireland in Dublin since he was a Presbyterian of Scottish descent, Makemie attended Glasgow University, where he was convicted by the Holy Spirit into a life-long love of

and service to Christ and His Church. He was ordained into the clergy in 1681, and followed a missionary calling to North America in 1682 at the request of Anglican William Stevens, owner of Rehoboth plantation on the Pocomoke River. In 1684, with immigrants from England, Scotland and Ulster, Makemie established the first Presbyterian congregation on the Eastern Shore in Snow Hill, Maryland, and followed by one in Rehoboth. The church erected in Snow Hill became the current Makemie Memorial Presbyterian Church.



In 1687, Makemie settled in Accomack county, Virginia, where he purchased land, engaged in trade, and ministered at nearby Rehoboth. He married Naomi, the daughter of William

Anderson, a successful businessman and landowner who helped him become established. Naomi and Francis had two daughters. Makemie expanded his trade to Barbados facilitated by his father-in-law, purchased a house there in early 1690, and obtained a license to preach as a dissenter. Contemporaneously, he spent two years pastoring in Barbados and sheltered Irish ministers persecuted for their Calvinist faith.

Makemie continued to travel across the mid-Atlantic colonies, starting several Presbyterian churches and communities along his way. In 1689, Makemie visited England and persuaded the Presbytery there to support missionary work in the colonies. In 1706, Makemie led the formation of the first presbytery in America, joining seven missionaries working in scattered churches of the middle colonies. By 1717, the first Synod (Philadelphia), four presbyteries had been established: Philadelphia, New York, New Castle (Delaware), and Snow Hill (Maryland).

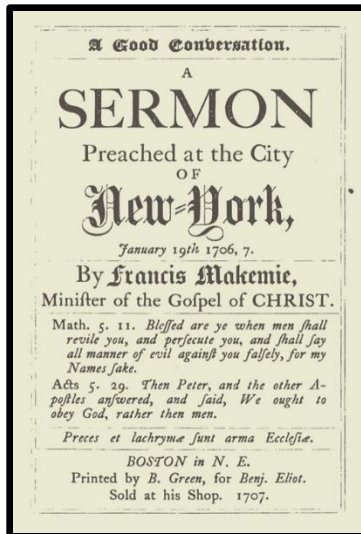
When the Presbytery of Philadelphia met, its members came from two different backgrounds. One was Presbyterianism founded among English Puritans, although only one Philadelphia minister, Jedediah Andrews, fit that profile. The most dominant was that of Scottish or Scotch-Irish Presbyterianism. Four of the original ministerial members of the presbytery hailed directly from Scotland, and the other three were from Northern Ireland. This explains in part why Philadelphia is considered the traditional capital of Presbyterianism in the United States. The colony established by William Penn granted religious liberty to a variety of persecuted believers with Presbyterians among them. In fact, Presbyterianism in Scotland would not rebound from English-Scottish rivalries to become the national kirk until 1690, thus making American Presbyterianism only seventeen years younger. For the Presbyterian church to gain a foothold in America, the goodwill and kind assistance of Pennsylvania Quakers was required. Scottish and Scotch-Irish immigration to the New World brought Presbyterians primarily to the middle colonies, especially southeastern Pennsylvania.

As Makemie continued his ministry, he faced continuous opposition by the Church of England, who had the full legal authority in the American colonies and who characterized him as “a loon propagating subversive doctrine.” In January 1707, Makemie was arrested by Lord Cornbury, the governor of New York, for preaching without a license. Anglicanism was the official religion, but Makemie had a license to preach as a dissenter in Virginia and Maryland. Makemie believed that if freedom of religion could not be obtained in one colony, it would endanger the flourishing of all of them.

Throughout his trial, he reminded Cornbury that Parliament had granted authority and liberty to preach under King William and Queen Mary through the English Toleration Act in 1689. Furthermore, he argued, this act’s jurisdiction extended beyond Great Britain into all her territories. He showed certificates from Maryland and Virginia courts that gave credence to his work. After spending 6 weeks in jail, Makemie was acquitted in June 1707 in a groundbreaking victory of free speech and free



expression of religion. The case resulted in the immediate recall of Lord Cornbury. Though found innocent, Makemie was ordered to pay both the cost of the defense and the cost of his prosecution. The case eventually caused the New York legislature to enact legislation to prevent such prosecution again in the future and also led a Maryland court to certify the establishment of a Protestant Dissenter Church justified by an act of Parliament.



Shortly after the trial, Makemie’s published the sermon entitled, “A Good Conversation” for which he was arrested. The publication’s foreword noted *Matthew 5:11* and *Acts 5:29: Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.... Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, ‘We ought to obey God rather than men’.* Makemie’s sermon was centered in *Psalm 50:23: Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that orderth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.*

The sermon of more than two hours spoke of “a good conversation”, i.e., a sacrificial life of praise and thanks that truly honors God, leading to a full revelation of the salvation of God, Christ Jesus Himself in whom we find full joy, hope, and peace.

Matthew Henry in his commentary shares that “it is not enough for us to offer praise, but we must yet order our conversation aright. Thanksgiving is good, but thanks-living is better.” Such a “conversation” requires diligence, perseverance and humility in faithful obedience to God. However, peace and grace is found in knowing, as Makemie writes, “that though the conversations of the Best are not altogether free from irregularities, God is pleased to accept and account them as blameless and perfect before Him, in and through our blessed Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.” For this we can take true joy in our salvation that God continually reveals in His Son.

A song to reflect and pray on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOiKZKV3vxl>

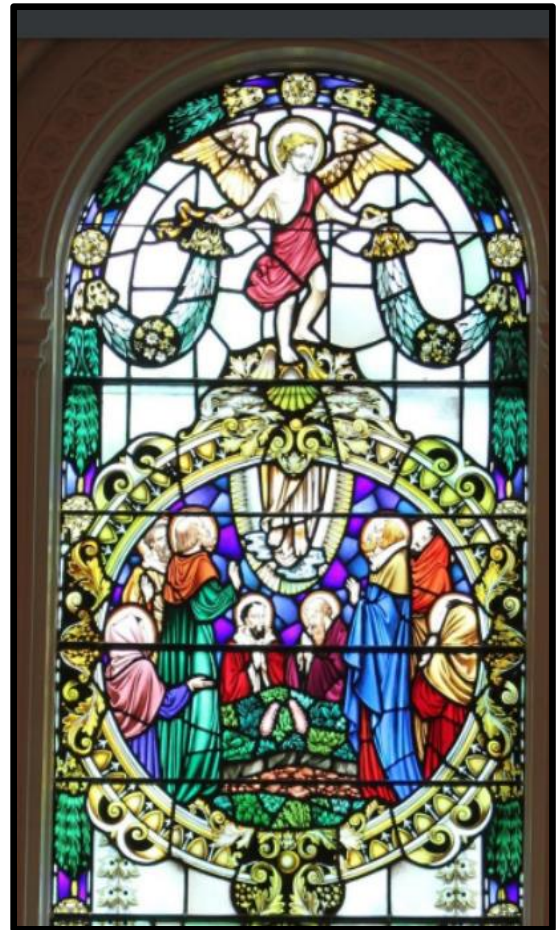
Ascension of Christ Window

The window of focus is the Ascension of Christ, located in the first window from the altar on the right side of the sanctuary and framed in the upper medallion.

The window shows the Ascension of Christ with Jesus ascending in a shroud of glory to heaven, being very similar to that shown in the Resurrection window. Only His lower legs are shown with the foot wounds of His crucifixion visible. At the base of His shroud is what appears to be a pool of water, possibly symbolizing the waters of baptism in *Romans 6:4*, out of which we rise and walk in newness of life. The water may also be symbolic of the “water of life” spoken in *Revelation 22:1*: “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.”

We see six apostles, in addition to two women, likely Mary and Mary of Cleophas, looking upwards with praise. The upwards-looking depiction of the group is in accord with the Eastern liturgy on the Feast of the Ascension: “Come, let us rise and turn our eyes and thoughts high.” All present are shown with a nimbus, representing their sainthood and sacrificial commitment to Christ. The robes and tunics worn are of different colors with blue symbolizing hope; red signifying the blood of Christ, suffering and sacrifice; green embodying faith, immortality, life and rebirth; violet denoting love, truth, passion and suffering; gold representing divinity, power and glory; and brown symbolizing humility and renunciation of worldly things. Between the disciples is a bed of garden greenery upon which are the footprints of Jesus, showing His glory in the place where He stood as He arose. These footprints may symbolize His presence that remains with us through the Holy Spirit. The garden greenery may symbolize the restored Eden that is to come, which is spoken of in *Revelation 22:1-5*. Also shown in the midst of the greenery is rock that possibly symbolizes Jesus as in *Psalms 18:22*: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.”

The upper medallion is filled with many other symbolic features as with previous windows: golden oak leaves representing God’s unending and sufficient strength; garlands of green laurel leaves symbolizing God’s eternal Word and triumph over sin through salvation in and through Christ Jesus; fern leaves that signify the humility of Jesus; a framed mandala, which symbolizes the everlasting life that God has given us in Christ Jesus through His birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. On top of the mandala rests an angel, robed in red on a



half shell, who is God's messenger of the Good News of God's sacrificial love, saving grace and presence throughout our life's faith journey.

The Ascension of Jesus is told in *Acts 1:1-11*, *Luke 24:50-5* and *Mark 16:19-20*. The great evidence of Jesus' resurrection was that He showed Himself alive to His apostles. For 40 days, Jesus frequently appeared, walking and talking with them. He ate and drank with them and showed them again and again the marks of the wounds in his hands, feet, and side, which to many was the assuring proof. Out of great compassion, He brought them out of their sorrow for His departure.

In *John 20:23*, Jesus was not taken up till after he had given them their charge, and so finished His earthly work. "*As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.*" And with that he breathed on them and said, "*Receive the Holy Spirit.*" Mark's and Luke's gospel conclude with the Lord's being received up into heaven.

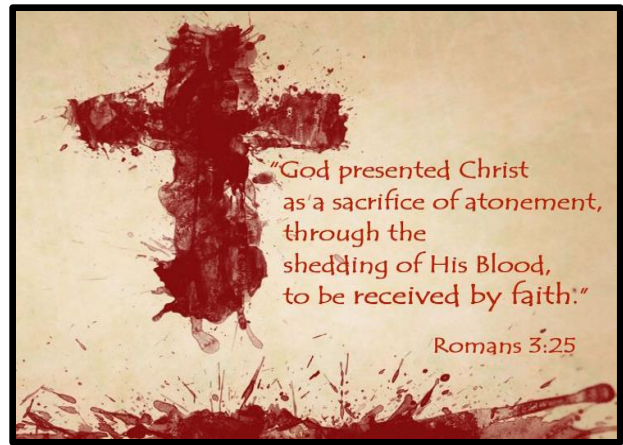


Matthew Burden in Christianity Today comments that Scripture speaks of Jesus' Ascension as a necessary part of God's plan, which stands on equal footing with the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the earliest declarations of the Gospel. "*Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.*" (*Acts 3:21*) "*God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins.*" (*Acts 5:31*)

Burden writes that the Ascension is not some strange vanishing act Jesus does at the end but the capstone of everything He has done in His passion. The Ascension is the triumphal act that crowns both the royal and priestly ministries of the Messiah in which David's heir ascends to reign and the Great High Priest completes the presentation of the atoning sacrifice.

Burden states that the Ascension appears to be an exact fulfillment of the prophetic vision of *Daniel 7:13-14*. In that vision, the Son of Man, surrounded with clouds, approaches the throne of the Ancient of Days and is given the dominion of an everlasting kingdom. The prophecy does not show the Messiah's rule beginning with an earthly reign, but with a heavenly one. Having defeated the powers of sin, Satan, and death, Jesus now makes His ascent to the throne. Jesus approaches the Ancient of Days and is crowned with splendor and honor. Although we still await His return, along with the full and final manifestation of His reign, that reign has already begun. He is on the throne, seated at the right hand of the Father with the signs expected of the messianic age being fulfilled before our eyes: the Spirit has been poured out and the nations have begun to turn their hearts to the worship of Israel's God.

Burden writes that a compelling array of biblical images connects Jesus' Ascension with the priestly work of the Messiah. Early Christians considered Jesus' death on the cross to be a sacrifice of atonement (*Romans 3:25*), an act whereby our sins are fully and finally forgiven. From the context of Israel's annual ritual of the Day of Atonement in *Leviticus 16*, the penitent sinner needed a further step in the ritual of atonement: a sacrifice to be slain and a high priest to bear the sacrificial blood into the presence of God. The high priest was to take the blood of the sacrifice and ascend the steps of the temple—to enter into the sanctuary of the Lord surrounded by billowing clouds of incense. The high priest would step up into that cloud, vanishing from the sight of those in the temple courts, and then proceed into the Holy of Holies. There, in the presence of God, the high priest would present the blood of the sacrifice, completing the ritual of atonement and interceding for the people. Then he would emerge, coming back down through the cloud of incense in the same way the crowds had seen him leave, bearing the assurance of salvation back to the people of God.



If Jesus was the Great High Priest presenting a sacrifice in the heavenly tabernacle, He would have to ascend to perform that very function. The Day of Atonement ritual was not a matter of just going up into the temple and God's presence, but also coming back again. The present age of Jesus' absence, then, is the period of His active priestly service, as He fully empathizes with our weaknesses and continues to intercede for us in the presence of God the Father as written in *Hebrews 9:24-28*: *"For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him."*

Burden writes that the Ascension is no mere footnote to the Gospel narratives; it is not an awkward absence to be explained away. It is nothing less than the climax of the Messiah's passion—and the setup for the finale of His great drama of redemption. The theological implication here is that the Ascension was the next necessary step in the ritual after the Cross. This does not imply any insufficiency in what Jesus did in his saving work on the Cross—only that this completed sacrifice was always intended to be followed by another step in the process, which was bearing his sacrifice into the true Holy of Holies.

John 14:2-3 (ESV)

- ² In my Father's house are many rooms.
If it were not so, would I have told you
that I go to prepare a place for you?
³ And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again and will take you to
myself, that where I am you may be
also.

We can find peace in knowing that the Ascension marks the beginning of the time when Jesus is preparing a place for His followers as He shares in *John 14:2-3*:

In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

We can rejoice in knowing that our Lord will indeed return for us through *Revelation 2:20*:

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

A song to reflect and pray on:

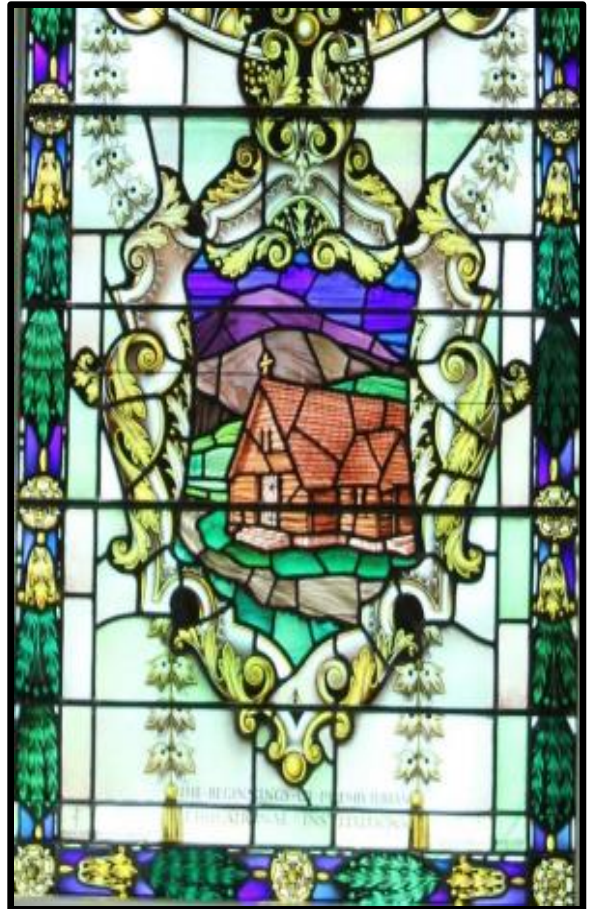
[\(67\) "I Will Rise" by Chris Tomlin \(with lyrics\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fa8w7mGug0c)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fa8w7mGug0c>

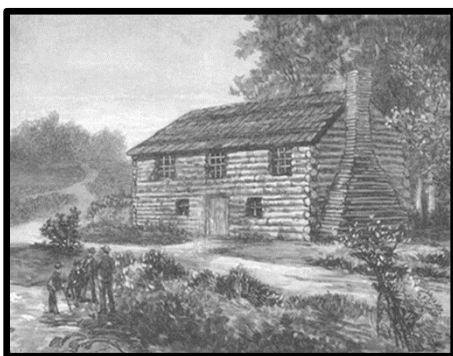
Beginnings of Presbyterian Education Medallion

The window of focus is the beginnings of Presbyterian Education, located in the first window from the altar on the right side of the sanctuary and framed in the lower medallion.

The window shows a log-constructed church with a mountain backdrop, which may be representative of those developed along the frontier of the American colonies. The window may also represent the Log College, founded in 1727, as the first theological seminary serving Presbyterians in North America. The College of New Jersey was formed out of the Log College, which would be renamed Princeton University. Presbyterians were among the earliest Reformed immigrants to America. They settled up and down the East Coast, and began to push westward into the American wilderness, founding congregations as early as the 1630s. Presbyterian churches such as that depicted grew in the western regions of the middle colonies including Appalachia as Scots-Irish Presbyterians migrated from Pennsylvania during the 18th century.



Education has historically been a strong emphasis of the Presbyterian Church for ministers and lay members as a means for evangelism and discipleship. John Knox, the founder of the Scottish Presbyterian Church and spiritual father of American Presbyterianism, wanted every person educated enough to read the Word of God so that their consciences would be dictated by God's Word.

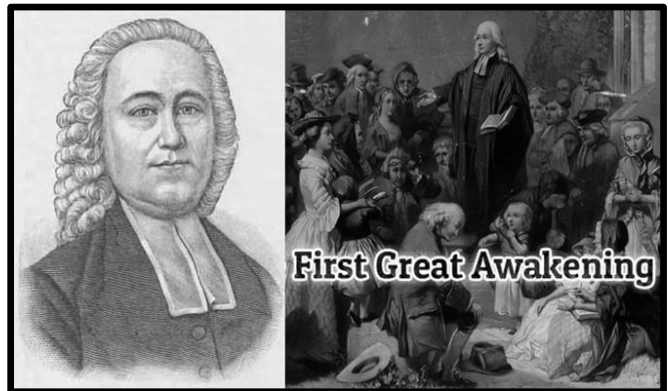


The Presbyterian Church history is filled with notable ministers who exemplified Christian outreach and discipleship through education and preaching of the Word while challenged with their own weaknesses. The Log College, founded in 1727 by William Tennent, was the first theological seminary serving Presbyterians in North America, and was located in what is now Warminster, Pennsylvania. The Log College was a purely private institution of very plain structure. The institution had no charter but was innovative as a ministers' training college in that its founding was at a time when there were few college-educated ministers in North America. The number of eventual graduates is estimated to be about 20, including William Tennent, Jr., who would become a

trustee of a newly formed College of New Jersey, which would be renamed Princeton University in 1896.

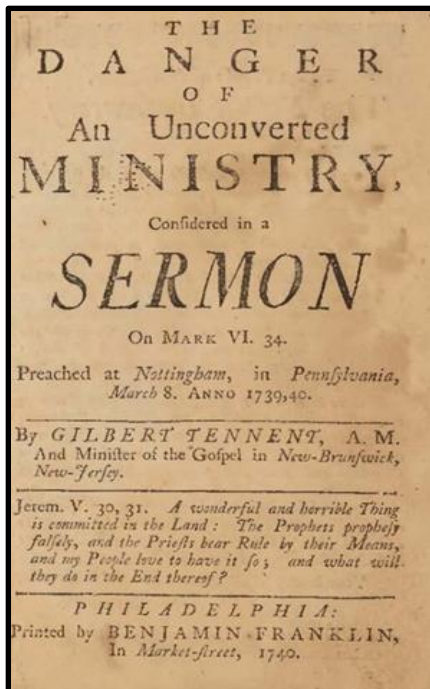
Gilbert Tennent, born in Ireland in 1703, was the son of minister William Tennent Sr, who moved his family to Pennsylvania when Gilbert was fifteen. Gilbert received an excellent education from his father, who established The Log College school for ministers. After wrestling over salvation in his teens, Tennent was converted at age twenty. Three years later he was ordained as a Presbyterian minister and began pastoring a church in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Tennent was a stirring, enthusiastic preacher, and his sermons led many to experience conversion.

In 1739, Tennent became a revivalist preacher along with George Whitefield, a traveling evangelist from England, who called Tennent "a son of thunder." Tennent traveled with Whitefield, introducing him to other ministers in the middle colonies and helping to make Whitefield's preaching tour a success. George Whitefield was probably the most famous religious figure of the eighteenth century. Whitefield was a



preacher capable of commanding thousands on two continents through the sheer power of his oratory and his gifted ability to act out the stories of Scripture. In his lifetime, he preached at least 18,000 times to perhaps 10 million hearers. In 1739, Philadelphia, the most cosmopolitan city in the New World, was the first American stop. Even the largest churches could not hold the 8,000 who came, so they met outdoors. Every stop along Whitefield's trip had record audiences, often exceeding the population of the towns in which he preached. Whitefield was a convinced Calvinist with his main theme being the necessity of the "new birth," i.e., a conversion experience. He never pleaded with people to convert, but only announced and dramatized his message. Whitefield also made the slave community a part of his revivals, though he was far from an abolitionist. He increasingly sought out audiences of slaves and wrote on their behalf. The response was so great that some historians date it as the genesis of African-American Christianity. The spiritual revival he ignited, the Great Awakening, became one of the most formative events in American history. His last sermon on this tour was given at Boston Commons before 23,000 people, likely the largest gathering in American history to that point.

When Whitefield returned to England, Tennent continued to preach for several months in New England. These tours served to unite a series of scattered, local revivals into the Great Awakening. Tennent was known for his fiery exhortations to sinners to repent and also for his scorn of his critics among the more conservative Presbyterians. Not every minister shared Tennent's zeal; many opposed both the revival and Tennent's emphasis on personal conversion. Both sides of the debate preached and published on the question.

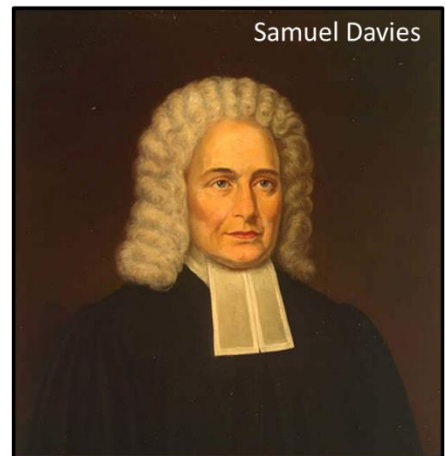


Tennent's contribution was his sermon titled *The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry* (1740). In the sermon, he denounced his opponents as hypocrites. Tennent argued that ministers who had not experienced conversion could not preach the gospel, and that Christians who had been converted were free to leave their churches and seek other ministers. The sermon did much to harden those who questioned the methods of the revivalists into opponents of the Awakening.

This led to a schism the following year when Tennent and other members of the New Brunswick Presbytery withdrew from the church. In 1743 he moved to a church in Philadelphia, to become the pastor of a New Side Congregation where he remained for the rest of his life. His preaching became less impassioned, and he worked to heal the breach in the Presbyterian Church. Despite the move and

the animosity his sermon caused, Tennant continued to support the Great Awakening. He later attempted to bring reconciliation, when he publicly admitted that he was responsible for personally causing dissension that led to the split. As a result of his attempt to bring reconciliation, his efforts were successful and in 1758, the Old Side and New Side factions reconciled and reunited.

Samuel Davies (1723-61) was born into a tradition of religious dissent. He was the son of a "plain farmer" in Delaware, who could not easily fund a formal education for his son. However, his parents did provide an early introduction to the evangelical Presbyterian thought of the Great Awakening. When Davies was nine years old, his mother Martha was expelled from her Baptist church for adopting Presbyterian doctrine. As a young man, Davies studied under "New Light" minister Samuel Blair, supported by donations from a congregation in Hanover, Virginia. Davies was ordained in 1745, at the age of twenty-two. Two years later he relocated to Hanover as the first resident Presbyterian minister in the Piedmont, what was then Virginia's western frontier. Davies was a tireless preacher and defender of religious freedom in Virginia. He brought legal challenges against Virginia's restrictions on non-Anglican churches to the governor in Williamsburg as well as the king's attorney-general in England, winning significant victories for evangelical sects and earning the epithet "apostle of dissent." Davies's success as a minister was due in part to his skill as a public speaker. His preaching style allegedly influenced a young Patrick Henry—one of the most famous orators of the Revolutionary period—who claimed that he was "first taught what an orator should be" by listening to Davies's sermons. During the decade he spent in Virginia, he had extensive contact with enslaved people—both as a slave-owner himself, and as a missionary to Africans and



African Americans. Davies was one of the first and most successful Christian evangelists to a growing population of enslaved Africans and African Americans in the American colonies. When addressing slave-owners in his sermons, Davies emphasized the “awful and important” responsibility masters had to give enslaved people access to religious education.



John Knox Witherspoon (1723-1794) was a clergyman, educator, and founding father, who served as Princeton’s (College of New Jersey) sixth president from 1768 through the Revolutionary War until his death in 1794. Witherspoon was the only clergyman and college president to sign the Declaration of Independence. Born in Scotland and educated at the University of Edinburgh, Witherspoon was a prominent 18th-century intellectual associated with the moral philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment. After migrating to New Jersey in 1768, he also became a major figure in both

Princeton and United States history. Witherspoon’s relationship to slavery shifted when he accepted a position as president of the College of New Jersey in 1768.

Like many ministers and lay people at the time, Witherspoon had a complex and sometimes contradictory relationship with slavery and enslaved people. The story of John Witherspoon and his relationship to slavery begins in Scotland in 1756. While a minister for the Beith parish of the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian), Witherspoon broke with tradition by baptizing an enslaved man named Jamie Montgomery. Born a slave in Virginia, Montgomery was sent by his master to Beith as a carpenter’s apprentice sometime around 1750. Slavery would not be prohibited in England until 1772 and throughout the British Empire until 1833, but even when Montgomery lived in Beith fewer than one hundred individuals were held as slaves in all of Scotland. Apparently, Montgomery’s legal status did not prevent Witherspoon from offering him the same religious instruction available to his white congregants. Witherspoon granted him a certificate verifying his “good Christian conduct” and then baptized him under the name James Montgomery in April 1756. Witherspoon baptized Montgomery with the understanding that he was freeing him from sin, not slavery, and likely did not anticipate that his actions would embolden Montgomery to seek his freedom. Shortly after his baptism, however, Montgomery fled his bondage on a ship bound for Virginia. He later testified to his belief that “by being baptized he would become free,” sparking debate within Scottish legal and religious communities regarding the morality of slavery.

In 1774, while serving as college president, John Witherspoon privately tutored two free African men, Bristol Yamma and John Quamine, at the request of fellow ministers and educators. Witherspoon did not appear to see a conflict between the relationship he had with his students and the practice of slaveholding. Witherspoon’s motivations did not stem from anti-slavery sentiment. Rather, he hoped that these students would ultimately serve as

missionaries and spread Christianity throughout Africa. In 1779, when Witherspoon moved from the President's House on campus into the newly completed country home he called "Tusculum," he purchased two enslaved people to help him farm the 500-acre estate. However conflicting, Witherspoon remained dedicated to the cause of religious education. In September 1792, the trustees of the college discussed the possibility of John Chavis, a "free black man of Virginia," receiving funds for an education at Princeton. Chavis arrived in Princeton and began private lessons with Witherspoon at Tusculum in late 1792. Witherspoon justified this as a means of preparing Chavis "for better enjoyment of freedom," even as two enslaved people lived and worked beside Chavis at Tusculum.

The Second Great Awakening took place in the new United States between 1790 and 1840. By the year 1800, nearly 1 million people had moved West (Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee). Religion seemed to be fading in the rough wilderness. During this time, revival meetings were held in small towns and large cities throughout the country, and the unique frontier institution known as the camp meeting began. The Presbyterian General Assembly and New England Congregationalists agreed to a Plan of Union, a successful cooperative work to plant churches along the frontier. James McGready, a



fearless Presbyterian minister and pastor of three churches, led a camp meeting at Cane Ridge, KY in August 1801, lasting seven days where over 25,000 people attended In the West. Waves of camp meeting revivals spread throughout the South and Midwest giving rise to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1810. The Cumberland Church was formed out of disagreement to the requirement that ordained ministers be formally educated and the necessity to assent to the Westminster Confession. The Cumberland Presbyterian denomination, known for its socially progressive tradition, was among the first to admit women to their educational institutions and to accept them in leadership roles including the ordained clergy. The first woman ordained in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition in 1889 was Louisa Woosley. Cumberland Presbyterians were early to ordain African Americans to the ministry (circa 1830) and eventually birthed a Presbyterian denomination for African Americans in 1874. The Cumberland Church largely reunited with the larger Presbyterian Church in 1906.

The Second Great Awakening made soul-winning the primary function of ministry and stimulated several moral and philanthropic reforms, including temperance and the emancipation of women. The second wave of evangelical revivalism led to the founding of numerous colleges and seminaries and to the organization of mission societies across the country. Many churches experienced a great increase in membership, particularly among Methodist and Baptists churches. It greatly increased the number of Christians both in New England and on the frontier.

While the Second Great Awakening greatly increased the number of churches, it brought conflicts in theology within the Presbyterian Church. The idea of individual salvation and free will over predestination was advanced and brought to question the role of revivals and the primacy of the traditional Calvinist orthodoxy in Westminster standards. This brought about a third schism within the Presbyterian Church known as Old School-New School in 1837, which eventually ended with reconciliation and reunion in 1869. The Presbyterian Church was also challenged with the role and influence of slavery in American society such that staunch abolitionists in the Synod of Cincinnati broke off in 1837 although they reunited in 1863. Similarly, the United Synod of the South broke in 1858 over the belief that that slavery was divinely ordained and resulted in the longest schism in the American Presbyterian Church, which lasted until 1983 with reconciliation and reunion with the Northern Church to form PCUSA.

Two special examples of the fruit of Presbyterian education and discipleship through God's hand in the midst of a society of slavery and persecution based on color of skin are the stories of John Gloucester and Samuel Cornish. John Gloucester was the first African American to become an ordained Presbyterian minister in the United States, and the founder of The First African Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, which had 123 members by 1811. He was born enslaved in Blount County, Tennessee, in 1776.

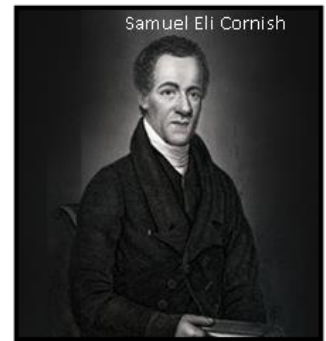


Before gaining his freedom, his name was Jack, and as a believer he began converting slaves to Christianity at an early age. Rev. Gideon Blackburn, the new Pastor at New Providence Presbyterian Church in Blount County, Tennessee, recognized the potential in Jack and after personally teaching him theology and other subjects, he purchased Jack for the sole purpose of helping him gain his freedom. Although Blackburn's 1806 petition for freedom to the Tennessee legislature was denied, Blackburn received a certificate of manumission for Jack through the local courts the same year. Upon freedom, 30 year-old Jack changed his name to John Gloucester.

Blackburn took Gloucester to a meeting of the Presbyter of the Union in East Tennessee, where Gloucester requested a "license to preach to the Africans." The Presbytery unanimously voted to take Gloucester under their care, and instructed him to return after completing further studies. In November 1806, Gloucester began his formal instructions at Greeneville (now Tusculum) College, becoming the first African American to attend the institution. At the time, Gloucester was one of fewer than six African Americans who had received religious instruction at the college level. After completing his studies, Gloucester first traveled to Philadelphia with Blackburn in 1807. While Blackburn was engaged in meetings with the Philadelphia Presbytery, Gloucester was permitted to preach in the city. There he found a group of people who were looking for a visionary to lead them, while another group of influential individuals in the city were gathering to form a place of worship for African Americans interested in the Presbyterian faith. These two groups were the foundation for the

forming of First African Presbyterian Church in 1807. After spending a brief period in Philadelphia, Gloucester was sent by the Philadelphia Presbytery to Charleston, South Carolina. He was brought back to Philadelphia as a missionary in 1809. Gloucester was only licensed to preach by the Presbytery and could not yet lead a church without being fully ordained, so he was again sent back to Tennessee to obtain the final qualifications for his calling. In April 1810, Gloucester was ordained at Baker's Creek Presbyterian Church in Maryville, Tennessee, and after the service, he and his wife Rhoda and their four children, returned by wagon to Philadelphia and his emerging congregation. All four of Gloucester's sons became Presbyterian ministers, and three formed their own congregations. John Gloucester pursued and continued a dedicated ministry until he succumbed to poor health and died of pneumonia in 1822. The Presbytery of Boston sponsors John Gloucester Memorial Scholarships for Presbyterian college students nationwide.

Over two hundred years ago, in 1819, the Presbytery of Philadelphia launched Samuel Eli Cornish (1795–1858) into a remarkable career as minister, evangelist, missionary, publisher, and social reformer. Following a rigorous two-year program of intellectual, practical, and theological training, Cornish became the first African-American preacher to be licensed by the presbytery, making him one of the first African-American ministers in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.



For a year, he preached among slaves and freedmen in eastern Maryland and his native Delaware before moving to New York City, where he was ordained as an urban missionary to New York's growing black population. That same year Cornish organized the First Colored Presbyterian Church of New York City and served as its pastor while continuing his missionary work. He founded *Freedom's Journal*, the first black-owned and operated newspaper in America, in 1827.

Over the next two decades, Cornish would go on to found two more congregations, two more newspapers in 1829 and 1837, and help co-found the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1840—all while lending his name, support, and editorial voice to nearly a dozen regional and national missionary, anti-slavery, educational, and moral reform societies. His mentor John Gloucester had told him, "Better to wear out than to rust out," a charge Cornish took to heart.

In all of the efforts of Presbyterian education, discipleship and evangelism, we can claim the surpassing value of knowing Christ as Paul writes in *Philippians 3:8*: "Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."

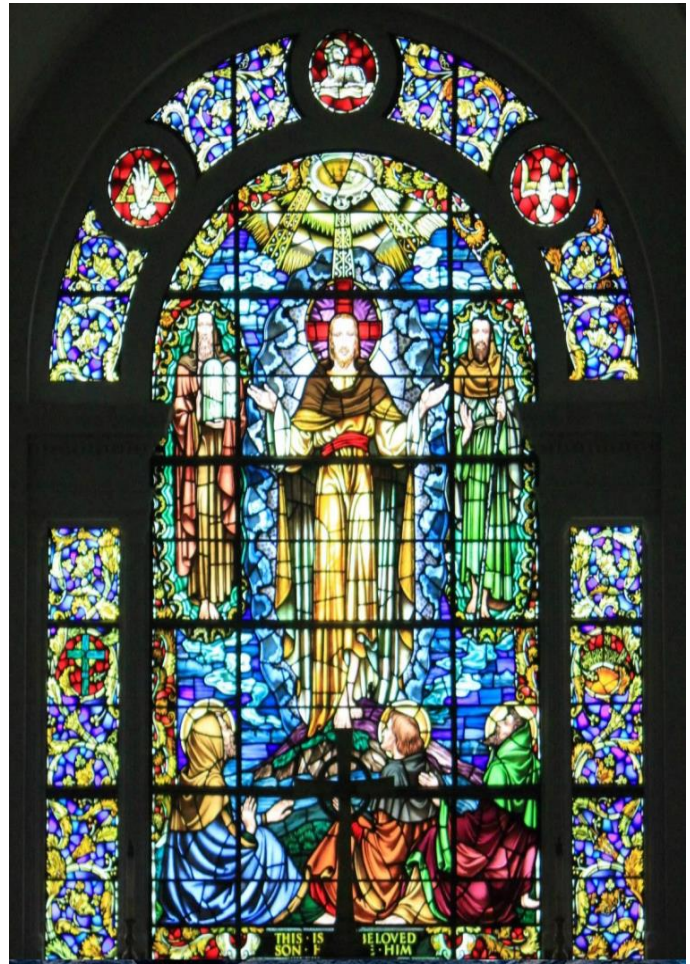
A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(71\) Phil Wickham - God Of Revival \(Acoustic Sessions\) \[Official Lyric Video\] - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GckXASqwml)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GckXASqwml>

The Transfiguration Window

The window of focus is the Transfiguration, located in the chancel of the sanctuary.

The chancel window is the most comprehensive and perhaps the most impressive of all the windows in our sanctuary. It combines the Old Testament teachings with those of the New Testament through depicting Christ, the central figure, with Moses on His right representing the law, Elijah representing the prophets on His left and the three disciples below - Peter, John and James witnessing the Transfiguration as told in *Matthew 17:1-8*. Symbols of the early church are shown in the arch above and in the side panels. The three circles in the arch contain symbols of the Trinity: the circle to the left shows the hand of God, the Creator, superimposed on the Triune, the triangular symbol representing the Trinity; the center circle is the sacrificial lamb representing Christ, and on the right, there is the descending dove signifying the Holy Ghost.



The circle in the left side panel depicts a green cross representing eternal life. The gold represents the glory of God; the black signifies death and sorrow. The circle in the right side panel shows the Crown of Victory or the Crown of the Faithful representing the reward of God's faithful, who through self-denial and love will share God's glory. Hence, the crown of gold. The tree of life winds through the window with the oak leaves symbolizing strength. The entwined reeds represent Isaiah's prophecy: "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice." At the top of the window, we see rivers of living water flowing down from heaven, as written in *Revelation 22:1-2*: "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

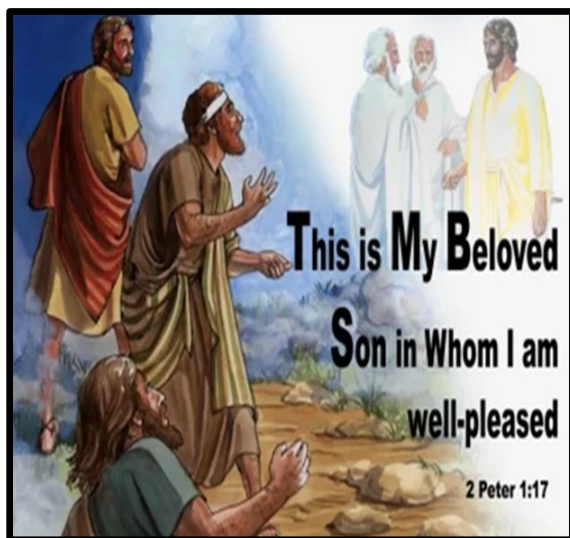
The gold in Christ's robe and throughout the window represents the glory of God; His red sash represents his blood and sacrifice; His brown tunic represents His perfect obedience and humility even to death on a cross. Standing on Mount Tabor, we see Christ with the Holy Nimbus, encompassing a red cross signifying His blood and shrouded with purple signifying His

kingship. The golden cloud above Christ's head is the Shekinah, signifying God the Father. Shekinah means "dwelling" and denotes the presence and glory of God as in the burning bush, the cloud that rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud hovering above the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem. The crown within the cloud is reserved for Christ alone showing His kingship over all.

Peter, John and James comprised the inner circle of Jesus's disciples. The disciple shown on the left in blue could be John who was later tasked by Jesus at the cross to take care of Mary. Blue is typically Mary's color of hope, sincerity and piety. The disciple in the center could be Peter, shown wearing a gray-black tunic representing his sorrow in his future denial of Jesus. The disciple on the right could be James, wearing scarlet symbolizing his martyrdom - the first of the disciples to be killed for Christ's sake. All three disciples are shown each with a saintly nimbus, representing their sacrificial lives to Christ.

Elijah's robe is largely green, symbolic of eternal life in that he did not die but was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind as told in Scripture. His tunic is gold signifying the glory of God inherited through faith. Moses' tunic is brown, symbolic of his humility in obedience to God's commandments. His robe is gold signifying the glory that he inherited through faith.

The first three Gospels provide an account of the Transfiguration (*Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36*); the Second Epistle of Peter as he recalls it (*1 Peter 1:16-18*); and the Gospel of John has a statement that alludes to it (*John 1:14*). In *Mark 9*, only days before Christ's spectacular transfiguration, we discover Jesus telling His followers that a day was fast approaching when He would come in His Father's glory to set up His promised kingdom. Christ added that some who were standing amongst them would not die until they had seen the Son of Man coming in the glory of His kingdom.

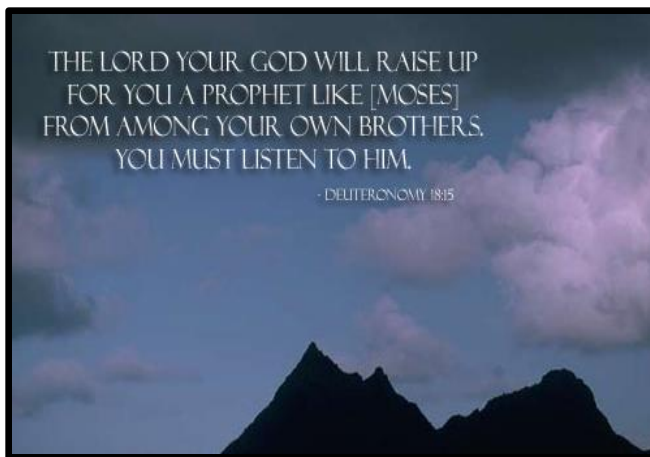


It was only the inner circle of His chosen apostles who witnessed Christ's transforming change. The radiance of His glory was witnessed by Peter, James, and John, when His face glowed with the brilliance of His glory, and His garments became as white as pure light. It was while the Lord Jesus was speaking with Moses and Elijah, who were conversing with Him about His fast approaching sacrificial death at Calvary and His own 'exodus' from this life into His resurrected glory, that: "*Suddenly a bright cloud covered them.*" The astonished disciples then heard the voice of the Creator of heaven and earth: "*This is My beloved Son. I take delight in Him. Listen to Him.*" Listen to Him and keep on listening to Him

was God's heavenly direction to the three disciples, and it is His clear direction to us all.

Moses and Elijah standing beside Jesus symbolizes that Jesus is their successor, completely fulfilling both the Law and the Messianic prophecy. He is now bringing a new covenant from God for all people to hear and to understand. Augustine writes: “Here is the Lord, here the Law and the Prophets, but the Lord as the Lord: the Law is in Moses, Prophecy in Elijah, but they are only as servants, as ministers. They are as vessels; he as the fountain. Moses and the Prophets spoke, and wrote: but when they poured out, they were filled from him.”

Moses, the most important Jewish prophet, is credited with writing the Torah and with leading the Israelites out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. In one of Moses’ final speeches, he gave this Messianic prophecy: *“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.”* (Deuteronomy 18:15.



Commentary notes that Jesus and Moses parallel in numerous ways. Moses was both a prophet and a lawgiver as was Jesus. Jesus was widely recognized as a prophet who spoke the Word of God, giving commandments for His followers to obey.

Both mediated a covenant between God and men—Moses the Old Covenant and Jesus the New. Moses was the (adopted) son of a king, and Jesus is the Son of the Most High. Moses spent forty years as a shepherd, and Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Moses and Jesus were alike in that they both led God’s people out of captivity. With great power, Moses led the Israelites out of physical bondage and slavery in Egypt, and Jesus, with even greater power, led God’s elect out of spiritual bondage and slavery to sin. Moses was also like Jesus in that he performed miracles - not all prophets did. Several of the miracles of Moses bear a resemblance to Jesus’ miracles, most notably the provision of bread in the wilderness, which is comparable to Jesus’ feeding of the 5,000. In fact, after Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes, the people’s thoughts went immediately to Moses’ prophecy: *“After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, ‘Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world’.*” When Moses stood in God’s presence, his face shone with a heavenly glory and had to be covered with a veil, which reminds us of Jesus’ Transfiguration, when *“His face shone like the sun.”* Moses constantly interceded for his people. When the Israelites sinned, Moses was always standing by, ready to petition God on their behalf and plead for their forgiveness. After the blatant idolatry at the foot of Mt. Sinai involving the golden calf, Moses interceded twice for the people. While Moses’ intercession was temporary, our Lord’s is everlasting. Jesus is right now *“at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us”* and *“always lives to intercede”* for us. Moses, like Jesus, was willing to die for his people - he offered his life in exchange for sinners. *“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends,”* Jesus said, and Jesus proved His love when He *“laid down his life for us.”*

Elijah, meaning ‘Jehovah is my God,’ was a great prophet of the Old Testament known for defending the worship of God and performing miracles in God's name. With low self-esteem and depressed to the point of death, God spoke to Elijah and reminded him of whose he was.

God performed many miracles through Elijah, including the resurrection of the widow's son, and bringing fire down from the sky in front of all of the Baal prophets. In one of his final prophetic acts, God sent Elijah to warn Jezebel's husband, King Ahab, of certain destruction, and Elijah obeyed. Because of his humility upon hearing the words of God's prophet Elijah, destruction did not befall Ahab. The Book of Malachi prophesies about Elijah receiving the grand honor of accompanying the Messiah when He comes to reign as King in His Messianic Kingdom on earth.

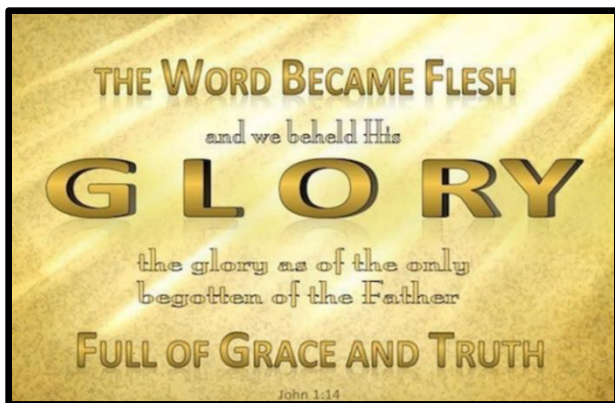
John Wesley speaks of the purpose of the Transfiguration: "Moses, the giver of the law, Elijah, the most zealous of all the prophets, and God speaking from heaven, all bore witness to him." The Transfiguration is an "extraordinary manifestation of the identity of the Son of God incarnate ... a testimony to his divine and cosmic status and an exemplary promise of their glorious destiny to those who find their life in him." Wesley notes that witness or testimony comes with the Transfiguration, whereby Moses and Elijah assist in making the nature of Jesus known to the disciples, and they in turn share it with the world.

Just prior to Jesus' Ascension is His final and ultimate teaching that brought full clarity and understanding for the disciples in who Jesus was and for what purpose He came. In *Luke 24:44-45*:

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

Peter testified firsthand with full understanding to the Transfiguration in *2 Peter 1:16-17*:

For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes when he received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said to him, 'This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy'.



In *John 1:14*, when John said, "We beheld His glory," he was giving eyewitness testimony to the incarnation—that God Himself had come to earth embodied in the Son. John continues in *1 John 1:1*: "We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life."

Not only John, but all the disciples had seen Jesus and beheld His glory with their own eyes. These apostles could all testify that the Father had sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world (*1 John 4:14*).

The teachings of John and the other disciples were trustworthy because these men had firsthand experience hearing, seeing, and touching Jesus (*John 19:35*).

As with the disciples, we are believers and followers of our Lord Jesus. Where have we seen His glory and given witness to Him?

A song to reflect and pray on:

[96\) Third day- King of Glory - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aqo-adRyM_k)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aqo-adRyM_k

Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane Window

The window of focus is Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, located in the rear of the sanctuary.

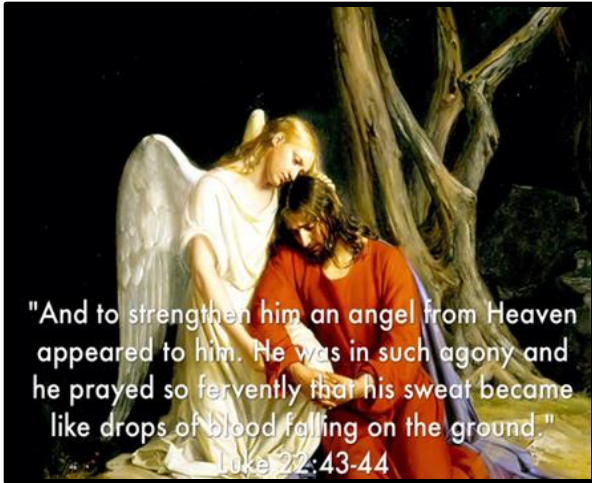
The window is one of five that were moved from our former church on Ninth and Court Streets, which was dedicated on May 8, 1900. The window depicts Jesus in His most trying moment prior to His crucifixion in the Garden of Gethsemane, voiced in *Matthew 26:39*: “*Oh my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou will.*” Jesus is shown on his knees looking heavenwardly to His Father as He is praying. Jesus wears a brown tunic and red cloak signifying His perfect humility and His suffering and sacrifice taking on the sin of all, in that “*He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.*” Although it is evening, it is as day as the light of God’s glory shines down from heaven as He prays. In front of Jesus is a very small plant growing out of the rock, possibly a small mustard plant, that may symbolize the great faith in those who believed and those not yet born who will come to believe and grow His Church. These were whom He prayed for in the Upper Room at the Last Supper.



Although it is evening, it is as day as the light of God’s glory shines down from heaven as He prays. In front of Jesus is a very small plant growing out of the rock, possibly a small mustard plant, that may symbolize the great faith in those who believed and those not yet born who will come to believe and grow His Church. These were whom He prayed for in the Upper Room at the Last Supper.

Gethsemane, meaning ‘oil press’, was located across the brook of Kidron at the foot of Mount Olive, just outside the Old City of Jerusalem. This is where the account took place as told in all four Gospels, with the Synoptic Gospels detailing Jesus’ prayer and subsequent arrest, while John gives the account of His arrest. Jesus’ inner circle of disciples, Peter, James and John, are with Jesus in the garden. The accounts given by Matthew and Mark are very similar. In the final moments before being handed over to be crucified, with ‘*His soul overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death*’, the Lord Jesus is found earnestly praying to His Father. Three times He prays His prayer. As the appointed time for the work of redemption drew ever closer, the Lord Jesus is found on His face beseeching the Father: “*If you are willing, remove this cup from Me, nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.*” Three times Jesus calls His weary disciples to be earnest in prayer as well - so that they would not fall into temptation. Each time they could not stay awake – “*the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak,*” Jesus tells them.

In Luke’s account of the Gethsemane prayer, we see Jesus, although fully God, also as fully man. In His moment of anguish, “*He prays more earnestly, His sweat is like drops of blood falling to the ground.*”



His Father sends a ministering angel to strengthen Him as He prays, just as He does for us in *Psalms 91:11*: “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your way.”. Here “anguish” is translated from the Greek word “Agonia” meaning a contest, conflict; stress, agony, intense inner tension. The intense anxiety, dread, or tension is one experienced in anticipation of a conflict, as a soldier before a battle. It denotes Jesus’ anguished state of mind in Gethsemane prior to the crucifixion. He is filled with dreaded anticipation, not fright or panic, as

He faces the epic battle on which man’s salvation rests in which He will be the Victor. When the hour had come, Jesus tells His disciples, “*The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!*”

In the Synoptic Gospels’ accounts of Jesus’ arrest, Judas arrives with a crowd armed with swords and clubs where Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss. John’s account is different in that Jesus asks the approaching crowd, “*Who is it that you want?*” When they reply “*Jesus of Nazareth*”, Jesus replies, identifying Himself to the treacherous crowd with the words spoken to Moses at the burning bush - “*I AM*”, to which they all drew back and fell to the ground to God Himself. Jesus asks a second time with the crowd repeating their answer. Here Jesus asks that that they would let His disciples go such that His words would be fulfilled: “*I have not lost one of those you gave me.*” At this time, one of Jesus’ companions (who John names as Peter) draws a sword and cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest (who John names as Malchus). Jesus commands Peter, “*Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?*” Luke’s account is unique in that he speaks of Jesus also touching the servant’s ear and healing him, thereby allowing no cause for Peter to be arrested also.

In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus speaks of the sovereignty of God that has brought about all that has taken place such that ‘*Scriptures would be fulfilled*’. Jesus said to the crowd, “*Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.*” In Matthew, Jesus adds: “*Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?*” Here Jesus made clear that their evil schemes worked only because He allowed them to work. He was determined to honor his Father's will and fulfill what the Scriptures had said about Him. Jesus was about to be arrested, brutalized, and murdered by these people. However, their evil deeds happened only because He offered Himself for our sins, not because they had power over Him. At this moment, all the disciples deserted him and fled.

We know that Jesus prayed throughout His ministry with Scripture recording more than two dozen occasions, signifying prayer to be central to His relationship with the Father. His first

recorded prayer was in *Luke 3:21* during His baptism: *“Now when all the people had been baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened.”* Our Lord often withdrew to lonely places, rising early in the morning, and prayed. He taught us how to pray to *“our Father in Heaven, hallowed be thy name”* in *Matthew 6*. Jesus prayed for the faith of His disciples. He prayed before and after healing. In the Upper Room just prior to Gethsemane, Jesus prays what is known as the High Priestly Prayer. Jesus prays for Himself, His disciples and for all believers to come. This was our Lord’s longest recorded prayer during His public ministry on earth and was offered in the presence of His apostles, after the institution and celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Following Gethsemane asking that His Father’s will would be done, our Lord prays on the cross for those who crucified Him, *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”*

The Apostle Paul tells us in *1 Thessalonians* to *“pray without ceasing.”* We are to model our Lord Jesus in prayer, understanding that there is no occasion that is not in need of prayer, and that our relationship with Him is founded in prayer. The Father always hears our prayers, answering them according to His perfect and sovereign will just as He did with His only begotten Son. A commentary poses that *“in Gethsemane, had there been an alternative way to secure the redemption of mankind, God would surely have interjected... but on this occasion the heavens remained silent, for there was no other way. There was no other good enough to pay the price for sin. Only the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, where the floodgates of God's wrath were to be poured out on His innocent Son, could satisfy the righteous requirement of a holy God.”*



Praise God for His great love and amazing grace! Throughout life, we can be assured that *“nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord”*.

A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(96\) Gethsemane Hymn - Keith & Kristyn Getty - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKfzrNs4-UU)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKfzrNs4-UU>

Mary at the Tomb Window

The window of focus is Mary at the Tomb, located in the Narthex, on the left west wall.

The window is one of five that were moved from our former church on Ninth and Court Streets, which was dedicated on May 8, 1900. The window depicts Mary at the tomb when Jesus appears to her as shared in *John 20:15-16*: *He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").*

We see Mary sitting outside the tomb with an unused burial oil vessel off to the side, sobbing thinking that someone has taken Jesus' body. Behind her, we see Jesus approaching Mary in the faint early morning light to console His dear friend and to allow her to be the first to see the risen Lord. The Christ is robed in the brightness of white, representing His purity and glory. Mary is robed in scarlet, signifying her suffering in her great grief and despair and cloaked in blue, symbolizing her hope that comes from her Lord. A vine is intertwined around the tomb and behind Jesus, symbolizing His words from *John 15:5*: *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."* The depiction at the tomb is bordered by a white arch and pillars, possibly signifying *"the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth"* as expressed in *1 Timothy 3:15*. The larger arch framing the inner arch contains a mandala, embedded with a red and rose templar cross and a golden crown encased in purple, signifying Christ's eternal kingdom as in *Revelation 11:15*: *"The world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign forever and ever."* Of particular note is that the templar cross was worn by knights symbolizing martyrdom. Throughout the window, we see laurel leaves and flowers, symbolizing the triumph and victory of Christ's resurrection.



The scene at the tomb is one of deep affection between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, who faithfully followed Jesus throughout His ministry from the moment of His healing her from

seven demons to His crucifixion, burial and now resurrection. Mary was in despair and sorrow in not finding the body of Jesus, so much so that she could not distinguish the risen Jesus. Only when Jesus calls her by name does she then know that it is Him. *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27)* With great joy she clings to Him. Jesus tells her not to hold onto Him for He had not yet ascended, but commanded her to *“Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”*

Mary Magdalene then went to the disciples with the news: *“I have seen the Lord! ‘And she told them that He had said these things to her.” (John 20:17-18)* Because she was an eyewitness to the risen Christ, she was also the first one to bear witness to Him before the Apostles. She becomes the first evangelist, announcing the Good News of the Lord’s resurrection; thus she is known as the ‘Apostle of Apostles’.



In *Luke 8:1-3*, we are told of those who set out with Jesus in His ministry, which included Mary Magdalene and several other women. *“He (Jesus) continued according to plan, traveled to town after town, village after village, preaching God’s kingdom, spreading the Message. The Twelve were with him. There were also some women in their company who had been healed of various evil afflictions and illnesses: Mary, the one called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out; Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod’s manager; and Susanna—along with many others who used their considerable means to provide for the company.”*

As with Luke, commentary notes that the gospel narrative gives a prominent place to women, as believers in Christ, as His devoted followers and constant attendants, and also as faithful and unswerving witnesses to His wondrous works. Women in Jewish society did not typically carry important roles, which makes their involvement in Jesus’ ministry more radical than normal for the time they lived in. In every stage of His ministry, our Lord modeled love for all, even the least in society. The women were immediately and entirely won to Christ's cause. They sat at His feet and listened with gratitude to the gracious words which He spoke; they brought their children to be blessed by Him; they followed Him with lamentations when He was led away to death.

The ready faith of the Gospel women is illustrated by the many narratives of miracles performed in their behalf. The faith of Martha and Mary was rewarded by the restoration to life of their brother Lazarus. There was the woman whom physicians could not cure, yet her faith led her to touch the hem of the Master's garment and she was made whole. To the widow of Nain, as she accompanied the dead body of her son to its sepulcher, her son was restored to life. The despised Syrophenician woman proved her humility and her faith, and her daughter was made whole. In the life of Christ, the influence and activity of the women were marked by purity, magnanimity, and faithfulness, and as such with Mary of Magdala.

Mary was a Jewish woman from the fishing town Magdala on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Her name is mentioned 12 times in the Gospels, more than most of the apostles. Mary must have suffered from severe emotional or psychological trauma, battered and bruised, injured and in agony from the entailed suffering of demon possession. Seven is noted as a mystic number suggesting 'completeness,' implying that when the evil spirits dominated Mary, the suffering was extremely severe. In her great suffering and turmoil, only Jesus could have seen who she really was, as He commanded the demons to leave her and restore her to an even greater life than that preceding her suffering.

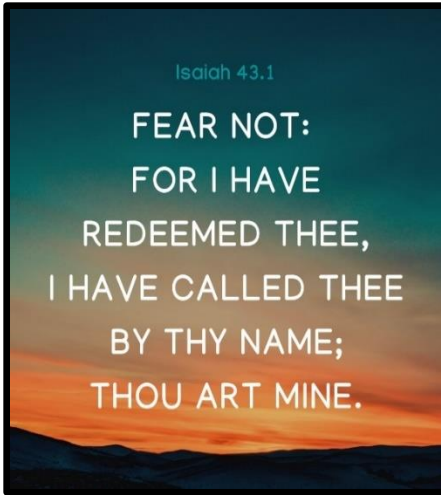
The friendship forged in her healing and wholeness led to Mary's remaining life, serving as a reflection of her immense gratitude. The "resources" provided as a part of the support of Jesus' ministry in Luke's Gospel account suggest that Mary might have been wealthy. It may be that she was connected with the industry of the town, for it would seem as if she was not without means, which enabled her to serve the Lord with her substance. Regardless of her place in society, her great healing helps us understand what fueled her generosity and dedication up to that morning at the tomb and all that followed.

In *Luke 7*, we are told of a woman that may be Mary Magdalene although not with certainty. We are certain that there was a great devotion exhibited to Jesus. *"A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them."* The story is consistent with Mary's outpouring of devotion for Jesus, and with Luke shortly thereafter, identifying her first among the women who accompanied and supported Jesus with their substance in His ministry.



Mary Magdalene's love and devotion led her to follow Jesus to the cross and to His tomb. The four Gospel accounts record the presence of women at the foot of the cross. Matthew, Mark and John record Mary Magdalene's presence, *"Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene."* (John 19:25) In Luke 23:55-56, *"The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment."*

Mary Magdalene's great part in the Gospel history was at the Resurrection. Although women were not called to testify in that age *"because their words seemed to them like nonsense"*, she was given the supreme honor of receiving the first greeting of her risen Lord and to give testimony to that occasion that changed the world.



Mary Magdalene’s powerful witness of Jesus Christ was undoubtedly put in place to strengthen the faith of others. While there are no scriptural details of her beyond that Resurrection morning, we do know that Mary held a special place in the story of Christianity and was placed there by God. Through her eyes, we learn a little more about who Jesus was. He found her in her darkest place and healed her miraculously. She was one of His friends and a faithful follower. Mary’s actions perhaps spoke the loudest, supporting Jesus’ ministry with all she had to give. To what she thought was the bitter end, she gave her life to follow Him and care for Him. And in the end, she found her risen

Lord: *“Fear not: For I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; Thou art mine.” (Isaiah 43:1)*

“We know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.” (Psalm 100:3).

It is in knowing and claiming that we are His, fully redeemed, that we shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. We are to worship the LORD with gladness and come before him with joyful songs.

A song to reflect and pray on:

[Big Daddy Weave - "Redeemed" \(Official Music Video\) - Bing video](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=big%20daddy%20weave%20redeemed%20video%20videos&FORM=VIRE0&mid=309776FABCABCDE5E8B7309776FABCABCDE5E8B7&view=detail&ru=%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dbig%20daddy%20weave%20redeemed%20video)

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=big%20daddy%20weave%20redeemed%20video%20videos&FORM=VIRE0&mid=309776FABCABCDE5E8B7309776FABCABCDE5E8B7&view=detail&ru=%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dbig%20daddy%20weave%20redeemed%20video>

Christ at the Door Window

The window of focus is Christ at the Door, located in the Narthex, in the center west wall.

The window is one of five that were moved from our former church on Ninth and Court Streets, which was dedicated on May 8, 1900. The window depicts Christ standing at the door of the Laodicean church as shared in *Revelation 3:20*: “*Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*” However, it could also represent any church that can be identified with a faith that is only ‘lukewarm’- one which has fallen away from Christ due to their riches and self-sufficiency. Note that the window depicts a door with a ‘modern’ knob, as doors of Biblical times had only holes through which the key would also function as the handle.

We see Jesus knocking at the door, robed in white representing His sinlessness and cloaked with a tunic of brown and gold, signifying His perfect humility and majestic glory. With a disheartened but compassionate face, Jesus is holding a shepherd’s staff, who seeks His sheep that have gone astray as in *1 Peter 2:25*: “*For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*”

The portico appears to be marble with the building constructed of finely worked stone, suggesting a church of great wealth. However, the door is considerably weathered and dried up, possibly symbolizing what is within, i.e., a faith that has withered due to self-sufficiency, complacency, and indifference to spiritual matters, relying only on themselves and not Jesus. Even the building façade shows a black scar suggesting that what is dying inside is starting to show outside.

In the background appears to be a large acacia tree, with foliage of mixed colors from vibrant green to yellow to brown and even black, symbolizing the varying depths of faith that remain in the church. To the right, at the base of the tree is a black mass similar to some patches in the tree that has now fallen, signifying a faith that is dead. The trunk appears to have a hole of rot in its side that has been braced. The condition of the tree is inconsistent with the characteristics of the acacia tree, known for its hardness, durability, rot-resistance and evergreen nature. The acacia tree is mentioned in the Bible, representing resurrection. The

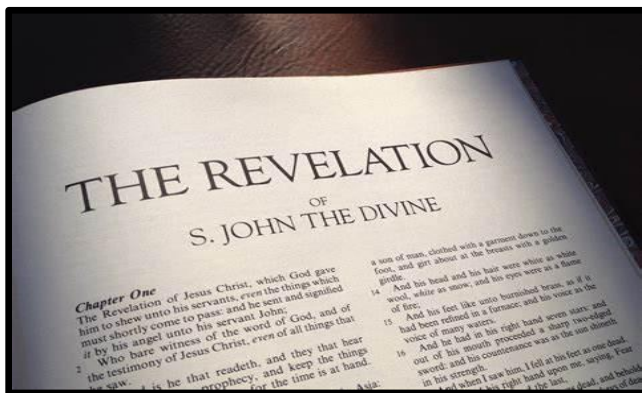


tree was used for the construction of the tabernacle in the Old Testament and even elements of the Ark of the Covenant. *Exodus 35:24* says, “Everyone who had acacia wood for any part of the work brought it.”

Outside in the light of Jesus, resting on the portico is a flowering plant that appears to be a lily. In the Bible, a lily symbolizes purity, chastity, rebirth, hope, and virtue. Lilies are often referred to as “white-robed apostles of hope” and represent the purity of Christ. In *Luke 12:27*, “The lilies grow,” Christ says, “of themselves; they toil not, neither do they spin. They grow, that is, automatically, spontaneously, without trying, without fretting, without thinking.”

At the base of the window, four brown pillars are depicted, signifying humility and obedience, which are spoken of in the preceding address to the church of Philadelphia in *Revelation 3:12*, with whom Christ found no fault: “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.”

Off in the distance to the right appears to be a boulder and a body of water. The boulder is possibly symbolic of God as in *Psalms 78:35*: “And they remembered that God was their rock, And the Most High God their Redeemer,” whom the Laodicean church had forgotten. The water signifies cleansing, as the Apostle Paul writes in *Ephesians 5:26-27*: “that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”



The *Revelation to John*, the last book of the Bible, is one of the most difficult to understand because it abounds in unfamiliar and extravagant symbolism. The symbolic language, similar to that of the Old Testament, especially Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel, is one of the chief characteristics of apocalyptic literature, which had wide popularity in both Jewish and Christian circles from 200 B.C. to A.D. 200. The perspective is eschatological,

i.e., the ultimate salvation and victory are said to take place at the end of the present age when Christ will come in glory at His Second Coming. It presents the enduring message that no matter what adversity or sacrifice Christians may endure, they will in the end triumph over Satan and his forces because of their fidelity to Christ the victor.

The author of the book calls himself John, who because of his Christian faith has been exiled to the rocky island of Patmos, a Roman penal colony. Although he never claims to be John the apostle, he was so identified by several of the early church Fathers. John is also credited as author of the fourth Gospel and three Epistles of the New Testament. The date of the book in

its present form is probably near the end of the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81–96), a fierce persecutor of the Christians.

We know that John came from the town of Bethsaida, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. He and his brother James, called the *'Sons of Thunder'*, were fishermen and the sons of Zebedee and Salome. Jesus called James and John at the Sea of Galilee and immediately, *"they left the boat and their father and followed him."* As Jesus' disciple, John belonged to the 'inner circle.' He was present at most of Jesus' personal moments and significant ministries, including His Transfiguration, His prayer at Gethsemane, His teachings, and His healing acts. John's friendship with Jesus became deep such that he was known as the *"beloved' disciple."* He was the only disciple at the foot of the cross where Jesus asked him to take care of His mother.

John remained in Jerusalem for a number of years, and through his evangelistic efforts, he helped establish the early Christian church. Since John was the last survivor of Jesus' disciples, his enemies tried to silence his testimony and attempt to stop the spread of Christ's doctrine by accusations of false witness and sedition. John was sent to Emperor Domitian in 81 AD. for a trial. Instead of death, the emperor banished John to the Isle of Patmos, a barren rocky island in the Aegean Sea. Here God gave the *Book of Revelation to John*: *"The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near."* (Revelation 1:1-3)

Chapters 2 and 3 of *Revelation* address seven specific churches of that time:

- **Ephesus:** The church had abandoned its first love for Christ, which in turn affected the love they had for others. Jesus told them to repent and do the things they did at first. (Revelation 2:4)
- **Smyrna:** The church that would face severe persecution was encouraged by Jesus to be faithful unto death and He would give them the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)
- **Pergamum:** The church that needed to repent of sin was told by Jesus that those who conquered such temptations would receive "hidden manna" and a "white stone," symbols of special blessings. (Revelation 2:16-17)
- **Thyatira:** The church whose false prophetess was leading people astray was promised by Jesus that He would give Himself (the morning star) to those who resisted her evil ways. (Revelation 2:24-26, 28).



- **Sardis:** The sleeping church that needed to wake up was instructed by Jesus to wake up and repent. Those who did would receive white garments, have their name listed in the Book of Life, and would be proclaimed before God the Father. (*Revelation 3:4-5*)
- **Philadelphia:** The church that had patiently persevered was reassured by Jesus with His pledge to stand with them in future trials, granting special honors in heaven, the New Jerusalem. (*Revelation 3:10-12*).
- **Laodicea:** The church with lukewarm faith was instructed by Jesus to repent and return to their former zeal, vowing to share His ruling authority. (*Revelation 3:16, 19-21*)

Revelation 3:14–22 is Jesus' final and most strident message, addressed to the church at Laodicea. We learn that the Laodicean church was lukewarm, smug, and self-satisfied, boasting of its wealth and need of nothing. The church had deceived itself - it was spiritually wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Laodicea was the only church of the seven which received only criticism and no positive remarks. Interestingly, Laodicea means “people ruling”, and its church had become swayed by popular opinion, clamor and voting to the point of being self-righteous and self-sufficient, in contrast to God’s ruling in the church and one guided by the Holy Spirit.

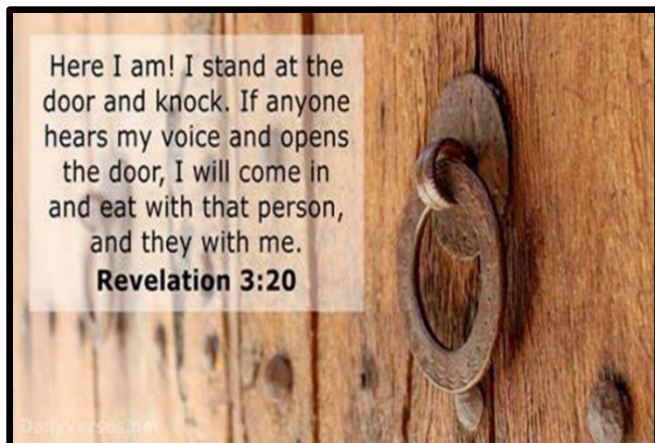
Laodicea was in southern Phrygia, midway between Philadelphia and Colosse, and was known as an independent and wealthy city where wool was a major source of commerce. It was positioned in a heavily resourced area and the people who lived there had comfortable lives, priding themselves on their ability to provide for themselves. This self-sufficiency was historically exemplified in the city suffering in the wide-wasting earthquake in the reign of Tiberius, but was repaired and restored by the efforts of its own citizens, without any help asked by them from the Roman senate due to their wealth.

This attitude of self-sufficiency spilled over into the church such that God points out their weakness and tells them they had become useless in a harsh reminder, spurred from love. *Revelation 3:15-16* says that the Laodicean church is lukewarm. Hot and cold water are good and useful, but lukewarm water is good for nothing to the point of being “*spit out*”. The words must have been uncomfortably poignant given that the Laodiceans had built an aqueduct, but the water was lukewarm and impure, such that even today, the remains of thick deposits of calcium carbonate can be seen.

Some may ponder why Jesus would rather have *cold*. However, a *hypocritical* faith is even more shameless than lack of faith. Inconsistency of conviction is more damaging and irretrievable than even wrong conviction. Scripture abounds with the theme of the need for the people to make a clear choice between God or the alternative as in *Matthew 6:24*: “*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*”

Revelation 3:18 speaks of “*buying gold refined in the fire so you can become rich*” contrary to the material gold in which the Laodiceans boasted. The Apostle Peter described “*genuine faith, approved by the test of fire, as far more precious than gold.*” (*1 Peter 1:7*) *Revelation 3:18* also speaks of covering their “*shameful nakedness*” with white clothes. Laodicea was a

great garment manufacturing center, using the black, highly valued wool of the vast flocks of sheep that grazed in the area. Laodicea was proud of its garment industry and its well-clothed citizens. This adds spiritual pertinence to the reference of 'nakedness' - their shame, guilt, and judgment. The verse concludes speaking of salve to put on their eyes due to their blindness, drawing on another aspect of Laodicean pride. The city was a noted medical center with a famous school at the temple of the Carian god, Men, which produced, an ointment for the eyes. Yet in their pride, the church of Laodicea did not recognize that they were spiritually blind.



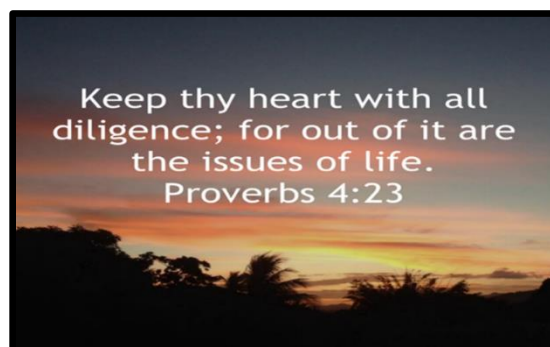
The image in *Revelation 3:20* of Christ, standing and knocking at the door, would have been familiar to anyone in the culture - an image of someone wanting to come in for dinner. It would have been considered rude and inhospitable to not let them in, a scene telling of the Laodicean church. This is not a picture of Jesus asking to come into the life of an unbeliever but of His followers. The church in Laodicea had become lukewarm such they had given up their pursuit of Jesus, neglecting

their spiritual condition. They had disconnected themselves from the vine and were withering, learning the hard lesson that without God it is impossible to produce life.

However, despite the condition of the Laodicean church, Christ has not given up on them – there remains Hope. He is willing and desiring to restore relationship. He is waiting, urging them to turn to Him, as He is positioned outside the church, inviting whoever hears His voice to open the door and welcome Him.

Even though John wrote these warnings nearly 2,000 years ago, they still apply to Christ's church today as He remains the head of the Church, His body, and is Himself its Savior, lovingly overseeing it. The prophet Ezekiel tells us that *"God will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."* (Ezekiel 36:26)

We are reminded in *Proverbs 4:23* that we are to *"keep thy heart with all diligence and vigilance, guard our heart above all else, for out of it are the issues and course of life, from which everything we do flows from it, the springs of life."*



A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(107\) The Father's House - Cory Asbury \(Lyrics\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjVi0CDicEQ&list=RDMjVi0CDicEQ&start_radio=1)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjVi0CDicEQ&list=RDMjVi0CDicEQ&start_radio=1

Christ The Good Shepherd Window

The window of focus is Christ the Good Shepherd, located in the Narthex, in the right west wall.

The window is one of five that were moved from our former church on Ninth and Court Streets, which was dedicated on May 8, 1900. The window depicts Christ as the Good Shepherd as shared in *John 10:14*: “*I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.*” Jesus is shown robed in red and green, symbolizing His suffering and sacrifice and the eternal life that He gives in our faith in Him. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is carrying a small lamb in one hand and a shepherd’s crook in the other as the lamb’s mother anxiously trots alongside Jesus, with the flock following. Of note is the flock that consists of both white and black sheep, signifying believing Jews and Gentiles with Christ’s words in *John 10:16*: “*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*” The backdrop of the sky has the appearance of an approaching storm as in *Ezekiel 34:12*: “*I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day.*” The window border is symmetric to that of the Narthex window of Mary at the Tomb. The scene is framed by a white arch and pillars, possibly signifying “*the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth*” as expressed in *1 Timothy 3:15*. Within this arch at the top are branches of flowering dogwoods, symbolic of rebirth. The larger arch, framing the inner arch, contains a mandala, embedded with a red and rose templar cross and a golden crown encased in purple, signifying Christ’s eternal kingdom as in *Revelation 11:15* – “*The world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign forever and ever.*” Throughout the window, we see laurel leaves and flowers, symbolizing the triumph and victory of Christ’s resurrection.

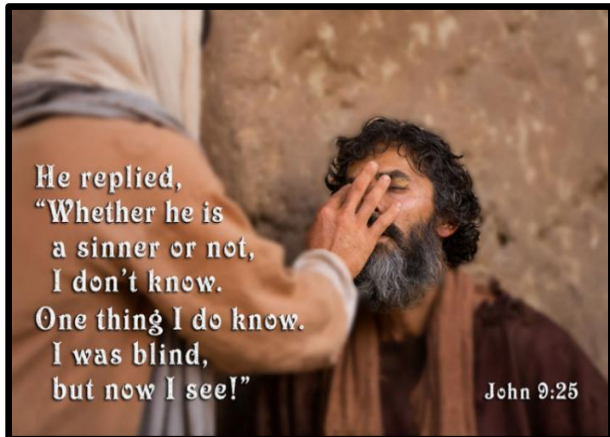


Ezekiel 34 is prophetically significant to the story depicted in that the prophet speaks of God’s message of being the ‘Good Shepherd’ Himself to His flock, who has been wronged by the Shepherds of Israel:

“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: What sorrow awaits you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of

your flocks....You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the injured. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with harshness and cruelty....You abandoned my flock and left them to be attacked by every wild animal and though you were my shepherds, you did not search for my sheep when they were lost. You took care of yourselves and left the sheep to starve. For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search and find my sheep. I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. I will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among the peoples and nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel and by the rivers and in all the places where people live. Yes, I will give them good pastureland on the high hills of Israel. There they will lie down in pleasant places and feed in the lush pastures of the hills. I myself will tend my sheep and give them a place to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign Lord. I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bandage the injured and strengthen the weak. But I will destroy those who are fat and powerful. I will feed them, yes—feed them justice!”

Jesus’ teaching of the Good Shepherd recorded in *John 10* is directed to the Pharisees, following the events of *John 9*, where Jesus heals the man who was born blind on the Sabbath. The story is a reflection of what Ezekiel speaks of in his prophecy of Jesus as the Good Shepherd and the examples of the ill-intentioned and selfish hearts of the Shepherds of Israel. Note that the prophecy of Ezekiel should have been well known by the religious leaders, but Jesus’ teaching of the Good Shepherd fell on deaf ears and blind eyes.



Jesus and His disciples approach a blind man from birth. His disciples ask which parent had sin since he was born blind. Jesus tells them neither – *“this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”* Jesus spits on the ground, makes some mud and places it on the blind man’s eyes. He tells the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He does as Jesus commands and gains his sight. The man’s neighbors debate if this is the man that was blind. They ask him how his eyes were opened and he tells them

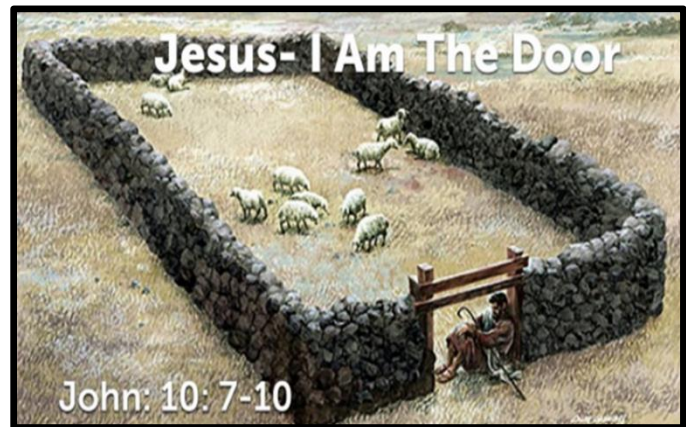
The Pharisees investigate the healing and asks the man and he tells them his story. Some Pharisees claim that Jesus was not of God since he healed on the Sabbath. Others disagree saying no sinner could do such things. They ask the man again in disbelief. They then ask his parents but his parents were afraid of the Pharisees, knowing that they would be put out of the synagogue. They tell them to ask their son - he was of age. The Pharisees ask the healed man yet again and he asks them do they want to become Jesus’ disciples. They then hurl insults accusing him of being a disciple of Jesus and not of Moses as they were. *“We don’t even know where he comes from.”* The healed man states that that was remarkable yet Jesus was able to open his eyes, and then reiterates that if Jesus was not of God, he could do

nothing. The Pharisees infuriated then throws the healed man out, telling him that he was steeped in sin at birth and should not be lecturing them.

Jesus hears this so he approached the healed man and asks if he believed in the Son of Man. He asks Jesus who the Son of Man is and Jesus tells him that it is He, upon which the healed man states that he believes and then worships Jesus. *Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."*

The religious leaders had shown themselves to be so unhelpful and cruel to the man, his parents, and the common people in general that Jesus felt it necessary to talk about the contrast between His heart and work as a leader to God's people and the heart and work of many of the religious leaders of His day. Jesus speaks of the true, legitimate shepherd, who enters in the way that is proper and prepared. He who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way is a thief and a robber. The religious leaders gained their place among God's people – the sheep spoken of here – through personal and political connections, through formal education, through ambition, manipulation, and corruption. Jesus speaks of the doorkeeper (the Holy Spirit) who opens the door for the shepherd with the sheep knowing the voice of the shepherd and follow Him. They would not follow a voice they did not know but yet the Pharisees still did not understand.

In towns of that time, sheep from many flocks were kept for the night in a common sheepfold, overseen by one doorkeeper who regulated which shepherds brought and took which sheep. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out: The shepherd calls the sheep by name, showing that the shepherd has a personal connection with the sheep. Jesus, the true shepherd, protects and promotes life; the false shepherds take away life. Then Jesus



said to them again, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."*

Here Jesus used another picture from sheep farming in His time. Out in the pasturelands for sheep, pens were made with only one entrance. The door for those sheep pens was the shepherd himself. He laid his body across the entrance, to keep the sheep in and to keep out

the wolves. The shepherd was in fact the door, protecting from the cunning and stealth of the thief and the violence of the robber.

In *John 10:11-16*, Jesus speaks, *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”* These other sheep are the Gentiles who believe and follow Jesus.

In *John 10:17-18*, Jesus gives claim of His power over life and death. *“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”* Yet there remained some who heard what Jesus proclaimed but still did not believe.

We give praise and thanks for the Lord Jesus is indeed our Shepherd in whom we have no want, as He leads us to green pastures beside still waters, restoring our souls, pouring out His goodness and mercy all the days of our life, while we await His dwelling presence and glory forever.

A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(120\) Fernando Ortega: The Good Shepherd - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=361OpSxEs6M)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=361OpSxEs6M>

The House of the Lord (Psalm 42) Window

The window of focus is that of the House of the Lord, located in the Vestibule on the left on the north wall from the front entrance.

The window is one of two in the Vestibule, which are the newest in our church. The window was installed in 1973 with the theme of “*I went to the house of the Lord*” from *Psalm 42:4*, suggested by Dr. Jerold Shetler, the pastor at the time.

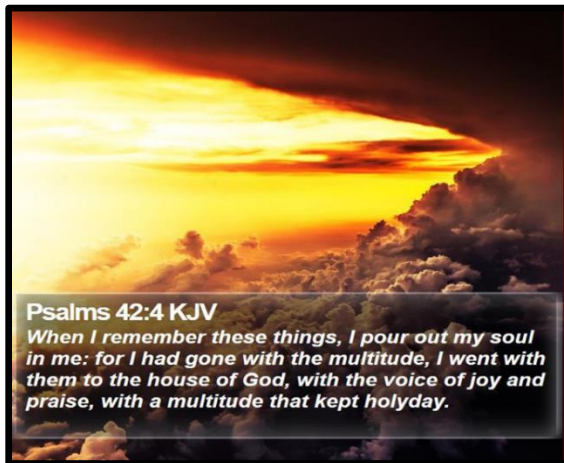
The window combines Biblical figures, with Jesus the most pictorially significant, along with our church in the right background, symbolizing the perpetuation of Christ’s Church to today. We see Jesus shrouded fully by His glory, standing on greenery symbolizing everlasting life. With Holy Nimbus and robed in light purple/violet, Jesus is shown as the royal “*Prince of Peace and King of Kings*”, with His human lineage coming from the house of King David. The nail markings in His hands and His tunic colored red signify His suffering and sacrifice on the cross. Interestingly, the tunic is tucked into His sash (belt), possibly representing the “*belt of truth*” as in *Ephesians 6:13-14*: “*take up the whole armor of God ... having fastened on the belt of truth,*” which is founded in Jesus’ prayer for His disciples: “*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*” (*John 17:17*)



The window depicts four men, two kneeling in praise and two standing, as if asking questions while being taught by Christ. The man kneeling and robed in royal purple is likely King David given the *Psalm 42* reference scripture. The other man in the foreground, robed in turquoise with gold tunic and kneeling on pebbles of stone, is possibly the Apostle Peter. Christ granted Peter as head of His Church in *Matthew 16:17-19*: “*...thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church...*” The Greek name of the New Testament that Christ gave Peter was *petros*, meaning a pebble or small stone. The word for rock in Greek is *petra*, meaning a massive rock or bedrock. Jesus was thus making the point of the truth that God had revealed to Peter, the pebble, about Jesus being the Christ, the rock.

The two men standing in the background are robed in brown tunics signifying humility. The two men, shown with skull caps, which are not consistent with headwear of Jesus’ time, and with robes appearing to be clerical, could be early church fathers from the 2nd century, Although the headwear is not consistent with that of the 16th century, the two men may be John Calvin, reformed Protestant theologian known for the doctrines of predestination and God’s absolute sovereignty, and John Knox, founder of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

The background of the window is blue representing Christ's hope in and through His Church.



Psalm 42 is the reference scripture for the window. Most likely, the setting of the psalm is that the sons of Korah—the leaders of tabernacle worship to whom the psalm is attributed—were accompanying King David as he was driven from Jerusalem by his rebellious son Absalom into the northern hills of Mount Hebron. As David and those faithful to him fled for their lives, they looked back in sadness at their home of Jerusalem, remembering and longing for times of joyful communal worship to God and faithful fellowship in the temple more than 100

miles away. Psalm 42 is a record of their thoughts in that time of exile.

The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath. By David's time they served in the musical aspect of the temple worship. Korah led a rebellion of 250 community leaders against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus. God judged Korah and his leaders and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained. They may have been so grateful for this mercy that they became notable in Israel for praising God.

The songwriter laments his great need and thirst for God's presence like "*a deer panting for streams of water.*" The emphasis is on the desperation of the need where sorrow is always a sense of lack. The exiles were longing for their Savior in tears while their enemies taunted them, even to the point that they had no appetite in their feeling of isolation. Cut off from Jerusalem, they could only remember what it was like to take part in worship with shouts of joy in the festive processions. In the reminiscing, the songwriter attempts to encourage himself in the Lord and place his hope in God. The songwriter waffles between confident hope that he would soon be able to praise the Lord as he had in the past, and despair of a "*downcast soul*" over his present affliction.

Perhaps in the presence of a waterfall in the exiled high country, the psalmist laments figuratively, "*Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me.*" The Hebrew word translated here as "deep" refers to the deepest depths of the sea. The sons of Korah exiled with David had lost all footing, and they felt as if recurring waves of trouble had plunged their souls into a bottomless ocean of sorrow and despair. The psalmist is expressing the fact that his soul was in profound deep need of God and His unfathomable greatness and depth. F.B. Meyer thought of this as the depths of God answering to the depths of human need. "Whatever depths there are in God, they appeal to corresponding depths in us. And whatever the depths of our sorrow, desire, or necessity, there are correspondences in God from which full supplies may be obtained. The deep of divine redemption calls to the deep of human need. The deep of Christ's wealth calls to the

deep of the saint's poverty. The deep of the Holy Spirit's intercession calls to the deep of the Church's prayer."

The psalmist pauses from the painful memory to challenge his own soul. He does not surrender to his feelings of spiritual depression and discouragement. Instead, he challenges them and brings them before God. *"Hope in God. He will come through because He has before."* Even in this low time, there remains hope. He is assured by *"God's love directed by day and at night by God's song within him, giving praise."*

The psalmist has the confidence to call God his Rock – his place of security, stability, and strength. At the same time he could honestly bring his feelings to God and ask, *"Why have You forgotten me?"* It was because he regarded God as his Rock that he could pour out his soul before Him so honestly. The psalmist senses God sustaining him, but his battle is not over. There is the constant oppression of the enemy. The taunt, *"Where is your God?"* continues from them. As the oppression of the enemy continues, so the psalmist continues to speak to himself and challenge his own sense of discouragement, repeating the helpful and encouraging words that the psalmist and everyone buried under discouragement needs – *"keep hope in God and keep confidence that I shall yet praise Him."*

We recall in *Psalm 84:10* that there was no place in the world that David regarded or cared to be in comparison to God's presence: *"A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."*

In *Psalm 27:4*, David exclaims: *"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple."*

The prophet Isaiah speaks to the joy that God promised long ago for His Church in *Isaiah 56:7*:

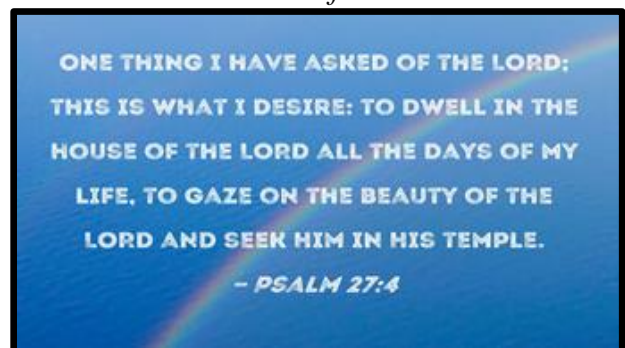
"Then will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people."

As spoken by David and Isaiah, may it always be so for each of us and for our church family

A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(131\) Lord From Sorrows Deep I Call \(Psalm 42\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYGhnbXtqbU)

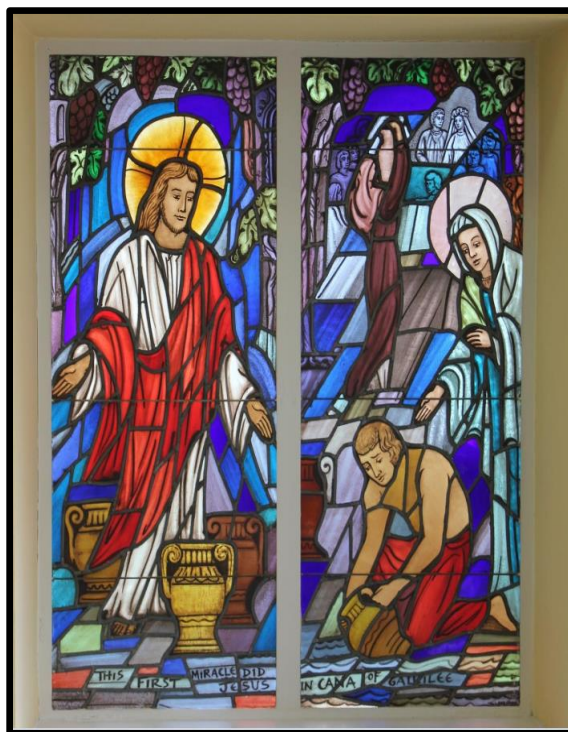
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYGhnbXtqbU>



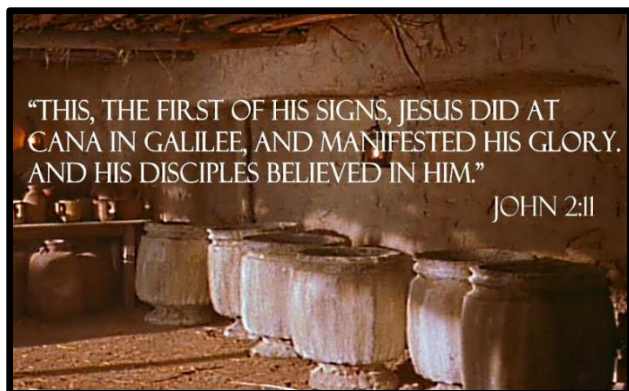
First Miracle in Cana of Galilee Window

The window of focus is that of Jesus' first miracle in Cana of Galilee, located in the Vestibule on the right on the north wall from the front entrance.

The window is one of two in the Vestibule, which are the newest in our church. The window was installed in 1976 with the theme of 'First Miracle in Cana of Galilee' from *John 2:1-11*, suggested by Dr. Jerold Shetler, the pastor at the time. The window depicts Jesus crowned with the Holy Nimbus, performing His first miracle at Cana robed in white and red, signifying His purity and sinlessness and His suffering and sacrifice, respectively. Jesus' hands are shown out-stretched as in giving the blessing of transformed wine for those of the wedding feast. At the window top are vines filled with grapes, signifying Jesus as the vine in *John 15:5*: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."



His mother Mary is shown with saintly nimbus and robed in light blue, signifying hope. Six jars of stone used for priestly purification are being attended to by one of the wine stewards, as instructed by Jesus and conveyed by Mary, with the first being delivered by another steward. The bride and groom along with the wedding guests are shown in the background not knowing the source of the new wine as it is being brought.

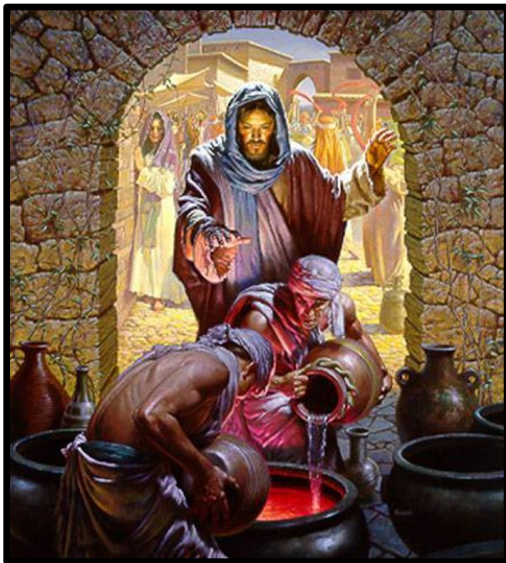


As Scripture states, "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him." The wedding is the occasion of the first great miracle of Jesus Christ on the very first week of his public ministry. The first miracle of Moses was to turn water into blood as a sign of God's judgment. However, when Jesus turned the water into wine it was a sign of God's blessing.

Mary, Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. We know that the disciples likely consisted of Andrew, Simon Peter, James, John, Philip and Nathanael, with the latter two being recently received into Christ's circle and with Nathanael actually native to Cana. This is the first of many stories showing that Jesus was always welcome among those enjoying and desiring fellowship, particularly over a meal. In the story, Mary recognizes that there is a problem and she brings it to Jesus: *The mother of Jesus said to him "They have no wine."* Failing to provide adequately for the guests would involve social disgrace. Additionally, wine was a rabbinical symbol of joy. Therefore to run out

of wine would almost have been the equivalent of admitting that neither the guests nor the bride and groom were happy.

The recorded words of Mary are few especially in Jesus' ministry so her request is of significance. She is no doubt earnestly anticipating Jesus' day of demonstration, yet she would not force the issue, leaving the matter with Jesus. *His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."* Jesus refers to His mother with a term of respect, but does *not* call her 'mother', thus emphasizing that there was a different relationship with her now. Jesus gives a surprising response to Mary's request: *And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come."* In John's Gospel, Jesus refers to 'hour' twenty two times, noting the importance of God's perfect plan and timing. Jesus' first public acknowledgement of the 'coming of His hour' does not occur until much later, i.e., in the last days of His ministry on earth as given in *John 12:23-30* after He has entered Jerusalem on a donkey with palm leaves of celebration prior to the last meal with His disciples.



In John 2:6-8: Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

The spiritual implications of Jesus' turning water into wine suggests that Jesus shows Himself to be the ultimate High Priest and the sacred space in which the work is done. Stone vessels were common in Judea for ritual purposes, since according to the Law of Moses, stone would not become impure, unlike the often-used pottery of ancient times (*Leviticus 6:28, 11:33-36*).

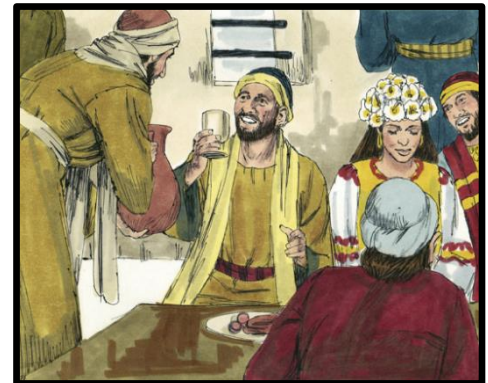
Additionally, running water or living water was considered pure, and collection of water in a stone cistern could be used for purification purposes (*Leviticus 11:36, 15:13*). This 'living water' could be stored in a large stone water jar, which would function like a cistern holding ritually clean water, then later it could be used for purification.

Generally only stone pots would be found in the homes of the priests. These stone pots were much more expensive, and they were not subject to the same laws involving destruction in the event of contact with something or someone unclean. So, the wedding feast was likely taking place at the home of a Levitical priest, and maybe even a High Priest, who acted as the representative and mediator in the Temple between the people and God. The book of Hebrews describes how Jesus acts as our High Priest in our relationship to God (*Hebrews 4:10-9:28*). In the first chapter of the Gospel of John, as well as the second chapter, almost directly following this story, there is mention of Jesus being the Temple or Tabernacle (*John 1:14 and 2:19*), which is where the work of the High Priests is done.

Later in the Gospel of John, “*living water*” is mentioned multiple times. Jesus says in reference to eternal life that He gives living water, and those that drink of it will never again thirst (*John 4:10-15; John 7:38*). Perhaps the stone water jars were used in the miracle as an earlier allusion to drinking the “*living water*” which Jesus would explain later. Beyond the obvious miracle of turning water into wine that authenticated Jesus as sent from God, there may also be a connection between drinking the wine that Jesus gave them at the wedding and the wine at the Last Supper. The wine, which represented the atonement on the cross through the blood of Jesus, was clearly used to foreshadow the death of Jesus on the cross during the Last Supper, then commemorated by drinking the wine representative of the blood of Jesus during the ritual of the Lord’s Supper in the early Church (*Matthew 26:27-29; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26*).

The water is symbolic of the old religion; the wine stands for the new. Jesus’ changing of the water into wine shows how, ultimately, the good news of His death in our place and His resurrection to new life so that we can have the same, supersedes the Hebrew Law, not that the Law was bad in and of itself. Jesus Himself said that He didn’t come to get rid of the Law. He came to fulfill it (*Matthew 5:17*). The law is even helpful, in that it shows us where we have fallen short of God’s holiness (*Romans 3:20*).

However, Jesus’ work is better... as evidenced by the headwaiter’s remark, “*Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.*”



The analogy of Christ the Bridegroom and those who believe and follow Him, His Church, is also conveyed in the wedding miracle, which is spoken by John the Baptist not long after the miracle at Cana (*John 3:29*). Contrary to the practice of many other cultures in which the bride’s father would pay the groom’s family a dowry, in Jewish culture the groom’s father paid a bride price, or *mohar*, to the bride’s family in order to negotiate the betrothal and, in essence, “purchase” the bride. The groom would also give a gift to the bride called a *mattan*, which became a part of the property the bride would bring into the marriage. These gifts were not always monetary; they may have been property or even services provided to the bride’s family. A good father was expected to share the *mohar* with his daughter or give it over to her entirely. It was a common custom for the bride to join the groom’s father’s household, rather than the groom and the bride establishing their own household. So, if the bride and groom were of a marriageable age, the groom would return to his father’s house after the betrothal to prepare a bridal chamber. This process traditionally took a year or more (the length of time being dictated by the groom’s father). When the place was complete, the groom would return and fetch his bride. The bride would not know the day or hour of her husband-to-be’s return, so the groom’s arrival was usually announced with a trumpet call and a shout so the bride had some forewarning.

Thus, we are reminded of *John 14:3* and *Revelation 19:7-9*: “He will return for His bride with a trumpet call and a shout.” “Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.”

The final triumph of God’s restoration of all creation is pictured in a heavenly wedding feast in which the redeemed are seen as the bride of Christ. They are clothed in pure white to indicate their heavenly purity. The symbolism then changes. The redeemed, though pictured collectively as a bride, are pictured individually as those invited to share the wedding feast with Christ.

As Christians, we are miraculously transformed by our relationship with Christ just as the water was turned into wine, fully redeemed, awaiting with joy the trumpet call and shout and the celebration of God’s new creation.

A song to reflect and pray on:

[\(185\) I Will Wait For You \(Psalm 130\) Lyrics ~ Shane & Shane - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8C3WQ1G1Uso)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8C3WQ1G1Uso>

Christ and the Children Window

The window of focus is that of Jesus and the children, located in the front of the Chapel.

The window is one of five that were moved from our former church on Ninth and Court Streets, which was dedicated on May 8, 1900. The window depicts Jesus with the children as conveyed in *Luke 18:16* where Jesus says, “Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of God.” The window shows Jesus robed in white with gold trim, signifying His sinlessness and glory. His cloak is red in color, signifying His suffering and sacrifice for all on the cross. Jesus is shown holding a child with three mothers bringing their children to Jesus. The children are clothed in white, representing innocence with the mothers robed in blue and brown symbolizing hope and humility. Two men, possibly Biblical patriarchs, are depicted in the background. The patriarch on the left is possibly Moses, who instructed God’s people in *Deuteronomy 6:6-7* “to place God’s commandments on their hearts and impress them on their children, talking about them when sitting at home, when on the road, when lying down and when getting up.”

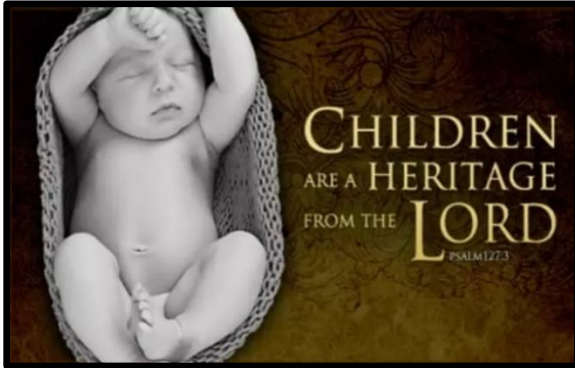


The large mandala that frames the window is bordered by twelve semi-circular windows shrouded by twelve small oculus windows. The number 12 in the Bible is a symbol of perfection, authority, completeness, and God's governmental foundation. It is often used in a context of government, such as the 12 tribes of Israel, the 12 minor prophets, the 12 apostles, and the 12 foundation stones of the heavenly city. The number 12 is also associated with the second coming of Jesus Christ and God's judgment on Earth and is found in 187 places in the Bible, with the *Book of Revelation* alone having 22 occurrences of the number.

Revelation 7 conveys that twelve thousand from each of the 12 tribes of Israel will receive salvation during the end time's Great Tribulation. Possibly the same as those in chapter 7 will be taken from earth in order to serve and follow the Lamb of God as in *Revelation 14*. Christ's bride in *Revelation 12*, the church, wears a crown containing twelve stars. The New Jerusalem, which is made in heaven and brought to the earth by God himself, contains 12 gates made of pearl that are each manned by an angel. Over each gate will be one of the names of Israel's twelve tribes. The walls are 144 cubits high (12 multiplied by itself in *Revelation 21*), with the city itself being 12,000 furlongs square.

All three Synoptic Gospels tell of the story of Jesus and the little children where He receives them and blesses them in the laying on of His hands (*Luke 18:15-17*, *Mark 10:13-16*, *Matthew 19:13-15*). As was the Jewish custom, mothers would bring their children to some

distinguished Rabbi on the first birthday that he might bless them. We are told that *people were bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."*



From *Psalm 127:3-5*: “Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.”

From *Proverbs 17:6*: “Grandchildren are the crowning glory of the aged.” We are specifically commanded in scripture to train up a child in the way he or she should go. Bring them up in the

training and instructions of the Lord and when he is old, he will not depart from it. (*Proverbs 22:6*)

Moses instructs the people in *Deuteronomy 6:4-9*: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

Parents are to be diligent in teaching and talking to their children about spiritual matters. While teaching may refer to more formal instruction, talking implies the informal. Most opportunities occur in the natural flow of life. Circumstances and situations arise where we can impart the values of our beliefs. Kids can see first-hand in a practical, down to earth way how our spiritual priorities drive our decisions. Parents, let our children hear us pray, let them see us read our Bibles and let them see us in worship, singing and praising to the Lord our God. Let the Word of God be on our mouth, in our hearts and impress them upon our children. Jesus loves the children and desires them to come to Him as we see in the text. The parents are bringing their children to Jesus and the disciples want to turn them away, but Jesus rebukes them by saying "bring them unto me." We are to bring our children to Christ. We are to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and teach them His commands, leading by example.

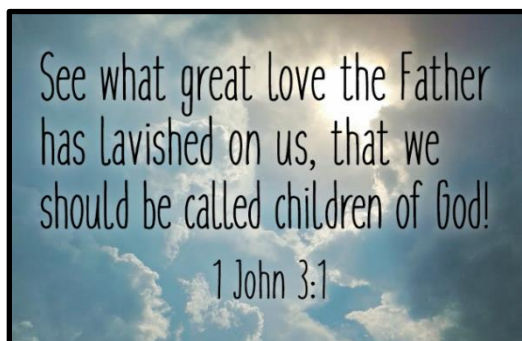
In *Matthew 18:1-6*, Jesus speaks further of having the heart of a child and care for God’s little ones. *The disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"* The disciples were often concerned



about the question of greatness. They seem to ask this question thinking that Jesus has already chosen one of them as greatest, or as if they wanted Jesus to decide among them. The disciples wanted to know who would hold the highest position in the administration Jesus would soon establish. They doubtlessly envisioned a temporal kingdom of the Messiah, in which places would be bestowed. They dreamt of a distribution of honors and offices, a worldly monarchy, like the kingdoms of the earth. Jesus called a little child to Him, who willingly was drawn to Him. Jesus drew their attention to His *nature* by having them look at a child as an example. This was probably a great disappointment to the disciples for in that day, children were regarded more as property than individuals. It was understood that they were to be seen and not heard. Jesus said we have to take this kind of humble place to enter the kingdom, much less be the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus knew that we must be converted to be like little children as it is not our nature to take the low place and to humble ourselves.

Rev. George Morgan, a British evangelist and Bible scholar is quoted: "The essential fact in the transformation Christ works is that He changes the great ones into little children."

With each year that passes, we as adults are to never forget the words of blessing of *Psalm 139*: "You are a child of God You are wonderfully made, dearly loved, and precious in His sight. Before God made you, He knew you... There is no one else like you!"



Words of blessing carry the weight and authority of heaven. God's blessings are meant to protect us, to guide us on the path of righteousness, and to give us hope. They remind us of who we are and where we are going.

From *1 John 3:1*: "We are called children of God out of the great love that the Father has lavished on us."

From *1 John 3:16-18*, as children of God: "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

Songs to reflect and pray on:

[\(195\) Third Day - Children of God - with Lyrics - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9RqVRBtjM4)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9RqVRBtjM4>

[\(189\) Jesus Loves the Little Children Lyrics || Sunday School song - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUG-UvjEmSY)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUG-UvjEmSY>

