

*Immanuel Lutheran Church
50th Anniversary Celebration*

*An Explanation of our
Chancel Windows*

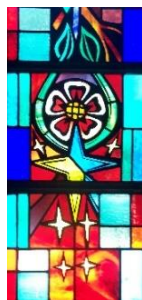


April 9, 2017

The four windows of the chancel carry out the theme of "Immanuel" - God with us. To understand how this is shown, the windows must be studied individually, and as a whole. The lower panels of all four windows have reference to the Old Testament. Above these are New Testament symbols. By considering the four windows as a whole we note the theme is carried out by the Father being represented in the window to the left, the Son by the two windows in the center, and the Holy Spirit by the window to the right. To further break down the themes of the windows, the left window represents the **Incarnation** (God becoming flesh); the window immediately to the left of the altar, the **Atonement** (Jesus' payment for sin, satisfying God's wrath); the window immediately to the right of the altar, the **Resurrection**; and the far right window, the **Real Presence**.

The First Window

Commencing with the first window from the left we note that the Old Testament reference at the bottom of the window is the **Stars of Abraham** and the **Large Star of Christ's Birth**, for Jesus was the fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham that in him "all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:3)



Immediately above the Bethlehem star is the **Rose of Sharon**, which should remind us of the hymn, "*Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*" (LSB 359), where it is an image of Christ's incarnation. Around and up from the rose is growing the **Tree of Jesse** with the **Star of David** in the midst of it. This reminds us of Christ's birth from the line of David, the son of Jesse. The six points on the star represent the six days of creation, reminding us that all things were created through Christ and for Christ.

Above the Tree of Jesse is the **CHI RHO**, the first two Greek letters of the name "Christ" (ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ).



Above this is the depiction of the **Annunciation** by the **Moon of the Virgin Mary** and the Lily with the **Flame**. The moon and lilies are used in reference to Mary's honor and chastity. The moon is depicted in St. John's vision in Revelation 12:1, where a woman is described as being "clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet." The moon, being under the woman's feet, is a sign of authority. Mary is called "favored of God" and "blessed among women" because she would bear the Christ Child (Luke 1). Mary is

the model for the woman depicted here in Revelation, but she represents the whole Christian church. As the Reverend Dr. Louis A. Brighton put it, "The woman [of Revelation 12] thus represents the faithful people of God who longed for the Messiah to come, and who by their faith can be said metaphorically to be the mother of the Child and thus to have given birth to him. After the birth and the ascension of the Child, the woman becomes and represents the church of the apostles [note the crown of *twelve* stars]... The church, symbolized by the woman, is adorned with the sun and the crown of stars. This certainly illustrates how much God loves and honors his people. The fact that the moon is under her feet suggests that she is the dominant entity in his creation. Under God's sovereignty all things and all creation are governed for the benefit of the church, to spread and increase the church, care for her, and protect her while in her earthly pilgrimage. For the church is the jewel, the apple of God's eye."⁽¹⁾ Mary's honor and chastity is a sign for the whole Christian church's dominion and holiness which she receives because of the incarnation of our Lord.

(1) Brighton, Louis A. *Revelation*. The Concordian Commentary. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999.



Above the Lily with the Flame is the Nativity Crib with the **Shepherd's Staff** and the **Nimbus**. A nimbus is a halo which lightens the person or subject. It signifies the holiness of the Christ. The Heads of Wheat could call to mind the place of Jesus' birth, Bethlehem (which means "House of Bread"). It has also been used as an image for Christ. God gave the people of Israel grain from heaven when they wandered in the

wilderness. Jesus called Himself the new bread of heaven. In predicting His death, Jesus said, "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24) The **Shepherd's Staff** should remind us of God's promise through Ezekiel when He said, "I myself will be their shepherd" (Ezekiel 34:15). The **IHC** stands for the first three letters of Jesus' name in Greek.

The **Orb and Cross** represent Christ's reign over this world by defeating all powers on the cross. The Star is the **Epiphany Star** which reminds us of John 8:12 where Jesus calls Himself the "Light of the World." He is the revelation of God in the flesh, who brings people out of the darkness through the Gospel.





Christ, the second person of the Triune God, represented by the **Trinity Triangle**, was sent by the **Hand of God** the Father to redeem the world.

The Second Window

In the Atonement window, which is immediately to the right of the first window, we start at the bottom with the **Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil**, the fruit of which Adam and Eve ate, bringing sin and death into the world (Genesis 3). Afterward, God set the Cherubim with a flaming sword to guard the way to the Tree of Life.



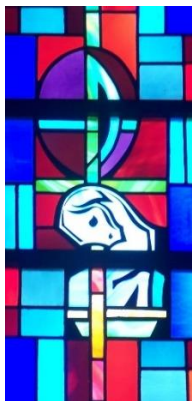


Immediately above the sword are the **Scales of Judgment** and the **Tablets of the Law** which were now needed because sin had come into the world.

Above the division of the Old Testament portion of the window is a **Red Rose** with thorns representing Christ's suffering and shedding of blood. The **Crowing Rooster** is the one who sounded after Peter's denial (Matthew 26:34, 74-75).



Above these are the **Tree Crosses of Golgatha**, the lightning, a symbol of divine judgment, and the **INRI**, which is the Latin acronym of the inscription "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," which Pontius Pilate ordered to be put on top of the cross (John 19:19).



Proceeding upward, we see the **Paschal Lamb** with the **CHI RHO**. The lamb should remind us of the lambs slaughtered which spared the first born sons of Israel at the Passover (Exodus 12). This new Lamb is the one Isaiah foretold, "He was like a lamb that is led to the slaughter" (Isaiah 53:7).

Finally at the top of the second window we have the **Pointed Cross** and **Crown of Thorns**.



The Third Window



The first window to the right of the altar is the Resurrection window. Starting at the bottom we have the **CHI RHO Cross Crushing the head of the Serpent**, a reference to Genesis curse upon the Serpent Satan, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15)



Next is **Jonah's fish**, which Jesus gave as a sign of His resurrection. Above it is the **Burning Bush of Deliverance** (Exodus 3), through which God spoke to Moses about the Exodus of Israel from slavery in Egypt. The Exodus is a foreshadowing of our own release from the slavery of sin (1 Corinthians 10:1-4; Hebrews 2:14-18).

The **Tulips** also represent the resurrection and the **Chains of Death**, our release from the bondage to decay. The **Bursting Pomegranate** is a symbol of Christ's bursting out of the tomb and the regeneration He gives to the world. Atop the pomegranate is the **Helmet**, reminding us of the guards who watched the tomb and fainted in terror when Christ burst from it.





Continuing up we see the **Empty Tomb** with a **Lily**, a sign of life and holiness, and the **Sun**, a symbol of Christ found in Malachi 4:2: "The sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings."

The lamb here is a **Triumphant Lamb with the Banner, Easter Cross**, and Crown of Life. These are symbols of victory like what St. John described in Revelation 2:10 and Revelation 5.

The Fourth Window



The right window, or Holy Spirit Window reminds us of God's presence with His people. God spared Noah, his family, and pairs of all the animals on **the Ark** during the worldwide flood of Genesis 6-9 and gave the **Rainbow** as a sign of his covenant with them (Genesis 9:12-17). The structure on top of the boat appears to be a castle-like structure to remind us that our God is a "mighty fortress" for all who abide in the ark of God's Holy Church.

In the days of the Tabernacle and Temple, God's presence was in the Most Holy Place where the **Ark of the Covenant** with its **Cherubim** rested (Exodus 25:22). The **Pillars of Fire and Cloud** were God's instruments to lead the people of Israel to the Promised Land (Exodus 13:21-22).



The **Yellow Sunflower** is a flower which always faces the sun, much like Christians who look always to Christ the *Son* of God for life and salvation. Next to it is **Luther's Rose**, the seal which Martin Luther used. It

reminds us that faith in Christ crucified (heart and cross) saves us, giving joy, comfort, and peace (flower) which leads to eternal bliss in heaven (circle around the flower).



The Church of Christ is found wherever the Gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel (Augsburg Confession, Article VII). These are the means through which God is present today, giving forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. The **Christ Candle** or **Paschal Candle** signifies Christ's victorious resurrection and the light which He shares with the world. On the candle are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, the **Alpha and Omega (Α Ω)**, reminding us of Jesus' words, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (Revelation 22:13) His light is given to us in baptism, symbolized by the **Shell and Water**, where we are washed of our sins and first given the Holy Spirit. Three drops of water drip from the shell for the Triune Name

given to us in baptism. Christ gives us His very Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sins in the Lord's Supper, represented by the **Chalice**. He speaks to us in the words of **Bible**. The four crosses represent the testimony of the four Gospels. God's holy Word, from beginning to end, proclaims the message of "Christ crucified" and grafts us to the **Vine**, Christ. Thus the vine is cross-shaped and bears much fruit, increasing the kingdom of God. There are 24 grapes, the multiplication of 12 and 2 (12 is a number often representing the Christian Church).



Through Word and Sacraments Christ **Anchors** us in hope, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, not sin or death or the devil or any powers (Romans 8:38-39). The **Ship** is the Church and the **Dove** is the Holy Spirit, who descended upon the disciples at Pentecost in the appearance of **Flames of Fire** (Acts 2). It is helpful to recall Luther's Small Catechism under the Third Article of the Creed: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true."

Take the time to look at our windows in person and meditate upon the various depictions of the salvation of our God. May these windows teach you to have faith in our Immanuel!

This information along with links to the various Bible passages can be found on our website at www.immanuelmc.com/about/our-windows.