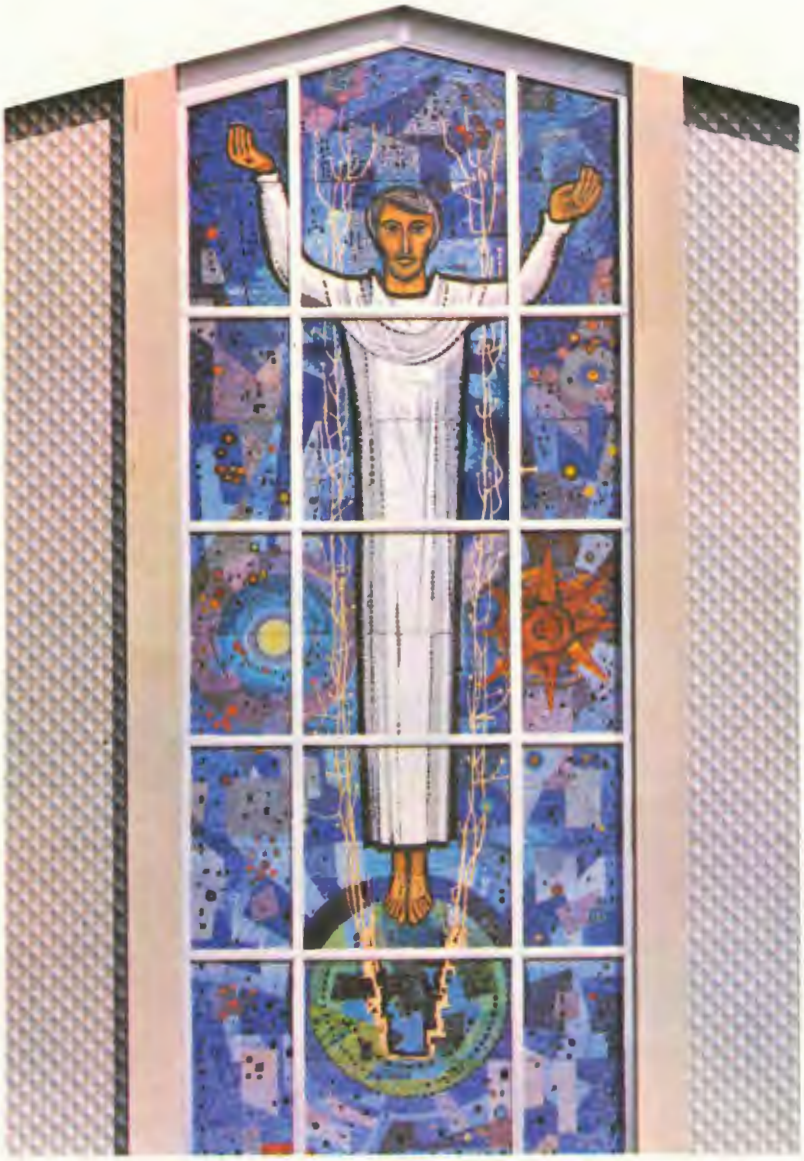


The Windows of Saint Mark's Lutheran Church

WILLIAMSPORT, PENNSYLVANIA

The West Window

THE THEME / The subject of this tremendous and striking window is uncomplicated: it is simply Jesus Christ. Christ triumphant over the grave, over death, over the forces in the world. He is being raised to be the Lord of all life.

Against the background of God's created universe, symbolized by the vastness of the skies, the sun and the moon, He looks out over the world, reminding it of His constant presence, not just in the Church, but also in the world. This is why the main thrust and emphasis, through startling color treatment, is toward the outside.

His imposing figure, dwarfing all else around Him, is symbolic of His Presence as both Redeemer and Judge of the world. We live and work and worship under and before Him.

From the inside, we see only the silhouette of His figure, reminding us, as we leave to live and serve in the world, that all we are and do, are under Him.

In order to provide a means for our witness to the community, and to make the impact of the Resurrection as great as possible, the design was developed and techniques used so that it may be seen (both day and night); from the inside as well as from outside. The impact of the message of the resurrected Lord is the more striking through the use of mosaic on the outside. From the inside, perforations in the matrix (the epoxy and cement) permit light to enter through the faceted glass thus outlining the risen Christ. From the outside, it is a mosaic.

The Nave Windows

AS ONE ENTERS THE DOOR / The color in St. Mark's Church will be the first thing to catch the eye. Stained Glass colors have beautified houses of worship and created beautiful gifts for God since the early medieval era. The beautiful glasses developed in those times have been enhanced by modern technology which makes possible the use of glasses up to two inches in thickness, cut and faceted with carbide tipped hammers unknown to the medieval craftsmen, held strongly in place by a matrix of epoxy, a synthetic resin of great strength. The stained glass artist derives inspiration from the beautiful windows of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries without slavishly copying them. For it is more than a pretty truth that the stained glass must serve as the handmaid of the architecture.

Besides beautifying buildings, stained glass has always had an added function: to teach the lessons of faith. These windows have been planned to illustrate the divisions of the liturgy: preparation, praise, proclamation, presentation and receiving as well as aspects of Christian living. Besides scenes and symbols, the predominant color of each window has a related meaning.

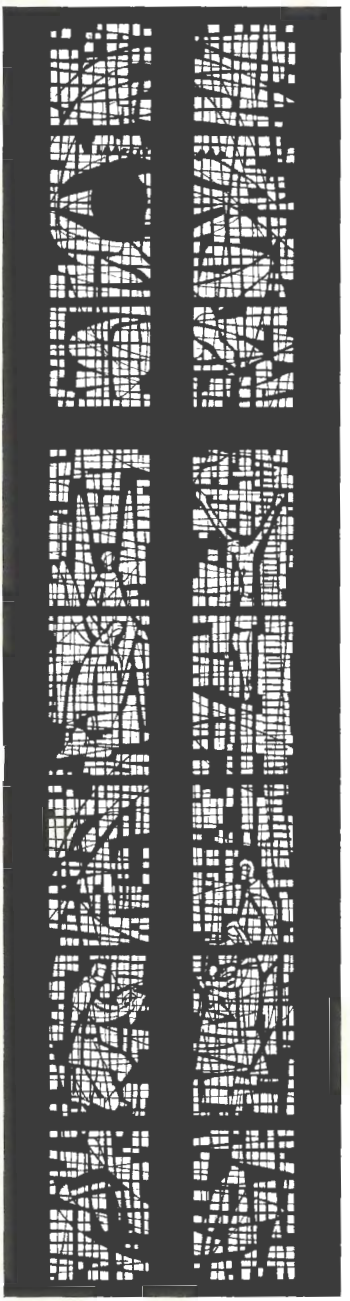
The South Windows



The south windows of the Nave show the Lenten preparation for the joy of the Resurrection. Its ecclesiastical color is purple symbolizing penitence. Every Sunday is a little Easter. The Service opens with a confession of sins as a preparation to receiving the gifts of the Body and Blood of Christ who died on the cross so that sins might be forgiven.

WE PREPARE

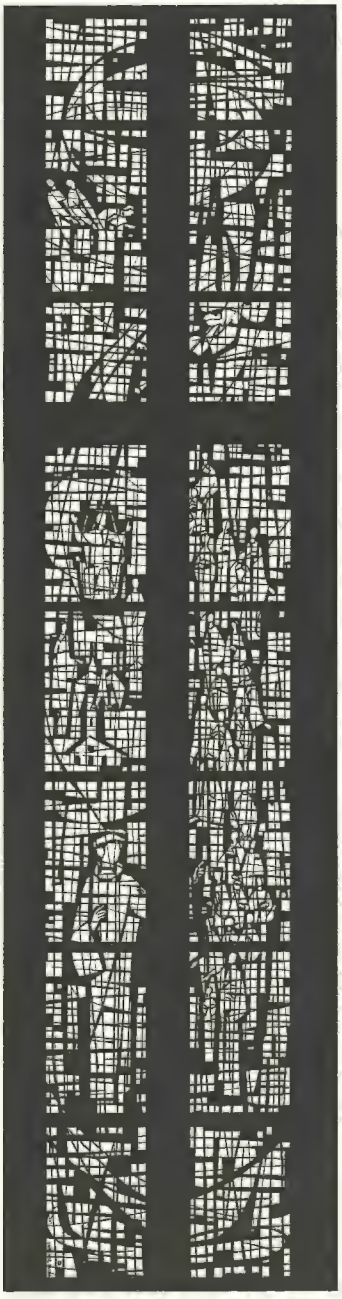
The window nearest the entrance shows God's preparation for man, which was the creation of the universe. The sun, moon and the stars at the top of the window symbolize this. But man rejected the gift of a trouble-free existence, and disobeying God, fell from grace.
The wrathful angel drives Adam and Eve from the garden. Thus the long preparation for the birth of the Saviour is begun. God's forgiveness of his erring children is typified by the father who forgives his prodigal son, at the lower left. The figure opposite at the right is David crowned as a king with a harp. The words of his Psalm No. 51 of penitence, "Have mercy upon me O God" are recalled.



WE PRAISE

The liturgy proceeds with hymns of praise and these have been an integral part of all worship services from the dawn of history. Gold is the color of rejoicing. God is praised, the Triune God. In the matrix at the top of the window is the eye of God the Father. Next below is the descending dove of the Holy Spirit. The third member of the Trinity, God the Son, is shown as Christ crucified.

The angels announced Christ's birth to shepherds on the hillside. They are seen opposite Christ. Below, a shepherd offers a lamb to the Holy Child seen together with Mary and Joseph.



WE PROCLAIM

Proclamation is the preaching of the word of God. An angel blows a trumpet. The color of red recalls the love of God which made the birth of his son a reality. One of the first great preachers was St. Paul who endured many privations to carry the message of the Gospel seen being lowered from a wall in a basket to make his escape from persecution. From the upper part of the window is seen a long stream of figures. These are the saints of the Church Militant and Church Triumphant. The procession culminates in the large figure of Martin Luther at the bottom. Above Luther, the Church is represented by a Church Building. The eagle is the symbol for St. John, the Evangelist, who begins his inspirational Gospel with the exegesis on "the Word" and continues "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" —thus proclaiming the love of God for all times.



WE PRESENT

After the sermon comes the offertory; offerings of people, their gifts, their prayers and their talents. In some of the new liturgies, members of the congregation come forward to offer the bread and wine which will be blessed to become the sacred elements of the Communion meal. Green symbolizes hope. Three different Bible stories of offerings are illustrated in this window.

First is Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his beloved son, Isaac, in obedience to what he believed was God's will. He is prevented by an angel who hurtles down from above to stay the knife. Next Abel's hands are seen offering a lamb, his acceptable sacrifice. Each of those is a type of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

At the bottom Jesus himself is presented in the Temple to Simeon by his parents, in obedience to the old Mosaic law which states that the first born belongs to God. The cage of the two turtle doves, a small ransom for so precious a Child, because of the Family's poverty, is carried by Joseph.

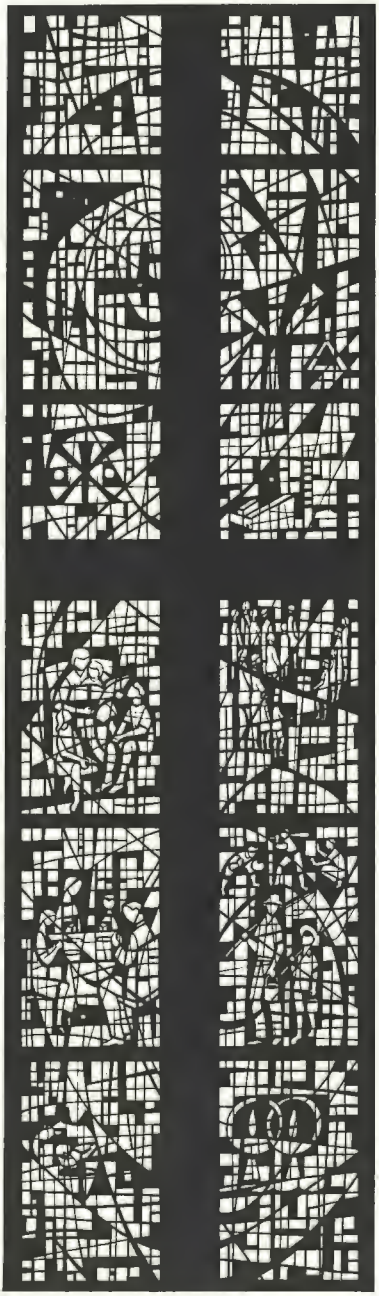


WE RECEIVE

At last the culmination of the liturgy has come. The window nearest the altar symbolizes the moment when the faithful receive the Body and Blood of Christ. Inherent in Communion is also Baptism and its water gives the window its blue color at the bottom. Fish are taken from the water in a large dragnet as is described in one of Christ's parables, which pulls in all people to be "sorted" at the Last Judgment.

The sacrament of Communion is illustrated next above by the supper at Emmaus, for it is because Christ was revealed in the breaking of the bread that Christians follow the ritual. The dove of the Holy Spirit descends with tongues of fire to the faithful who gathered together at Pentecost, and then were inspired to begin the outward movement of the Church.

The North Windows



The windows of the north wall of the nave illustrate the overall theme of the risen Christ as found in the life of his followers. The prevailing symbol of the window nearest the narthex, which is of Christ's command to go out into all the world, dominates the series which shows the many aspects of life in the world.

THE FAMILY

At the top are the archaic symbols for man, woman and family. Man is similar to a Y. Woman is a triangle with a straight line extending from the top. The family is a combination of these flanked on each side by a small circle, the children. In the lower right of the upper section is a modern church toward which several families move. The families in the window are shown at rest and recreation: the Mother reading to children, the family saying grace before the meal, a baseball game, and a father and son going fishing. The two sacraments which are the foundation of the family are shown at the bottom. On the left a child is being baptized. On the right is the symbol for a Christian marriage, two lamps with intertwined rings, presided over by the cross.



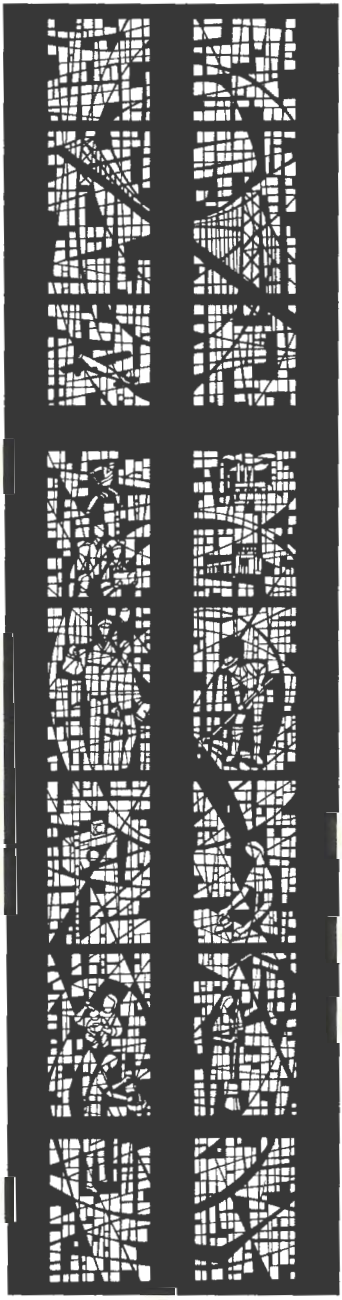
CREATIVE EXPRESSION

In this window all the arts are illustrated or symbolized. The large composite symbol at the top includes the pen, the artist's palette, the plumbline used in architecture and the lyre and the keyboard. Some of the artists at work are specific people. These are Abbe Suger shown at the lower left working at his drawing board planning the great Cathedral of St. Denis; Gutenberg at his printing press, next above extending over both lancets, and Bach at his organ. Also seen are an artist at his easel and a folk song singer, upper left and a church choir, upper right. Some products of man's artistic creativity are the Lutheran hymnal, below Bach, an open book and Michelangelo's Pieta, opposite Suger at the bottom.



EDUCATION

The large symbols for education are the diploma and mortarboard and the lighted lamp of knowledge burning amid the stars. Children and young adults are shown studying throughout the window. The youngest children start school in a little red schoolhouse at the bottom. Next above is a classroom with slightly older children taught by the teacher at her desk. Next above are the girl and boy graduates. Not to be overlooked is the church and the Sunday school class. At the top, the scientist busy with his test tubes and the observatory building are indicative of advanced study and research.



WORK

The dignity of labor is symbolized at the top by a suspension bridge and a Piper Cub airplane. Many of the people shown are engaged in those occupations that are found near Williamsport: Bethlehem Steel, the Power Plant, Stroehmann's Bakery, and the four cube Kodak Camera representing the Sylvania Company. Found in all communities are businessman, the doctor, the clergyman, the deliveryman, the lawyer, the farmer and the housewives busy ironing, cleaning, cooking and caring for children.



SERVICE

At the top is the symbol of the Great Commission. Jesus sent his Apostles into the world with the command that they were to baptize and preach the Gospel. From the escallop shell spill the drops of the water of baptism. Behind the shell is an open book. The remainder of the window illustrates services to the community. On the left are a ballot box, counselling services, an evangelist in a poverty area; a physical therapist, the United Fund torch and a seeing eye dog. On the right are the seal of the Salvation Army, a scoutmaster or big brother, aged people, the Red Cross and a visiting nurse bathing a baby.

THE MEDIUM OF MOSAIC / Mosaic is produced by forming a surface by placing small pieces of marble, glass, tiles, semi-precious stones called tesserae very close together. Its historical beginnings are very remote. It was in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, where many examples of it are found varying in size from jewelry to walls. It was widely used in classic Greece and Rome, but rose to its highest form in Byzantine flat architectural design. The Byzantine School developed gold tessarae made by compressing 24 karat gold leaf between two layers of glass. At first, gold was used sparingly, but at its height became the whole background for the figures. The Mohammedan mosques of that era followed the Christian churches in the use of this decorative material although not in subject matter. Their use of mosaics in geometric patterns was in keeping with their religious edicts against portraying the human form.

After preliminary research and experimentation, the Willet Studios began the fabrication of faceted glass windows in 1954. Brilliantly colored glass, usually an inch in thickness is cut to the desired size. The inner surface of certain pieces is then chipped or faceted conchoidally (curved elevations and depressions) to enhance the design and add a jewel-like quality. The glasses used are breath-taking in radiance and purity of color.

Because the west window for St. Mark's Lutheran Church is a unique combination of the two techniques, a full size color cartoon was first painted. There is a small ratio of glass to matrix, for the matrix is completely overlaid on the exterior with the mosaic.

There are approximately three hundred glass tesserae of varying sizes in a square foot. The window was made in sections, the largest of which is sixty-six inches by forty-seven inches. The tesserae were glued face down on a heavy paper. This was placed in the bottom of the mold. The glass was carefully arranged and the matrix of epoxy resin was poured around the whole to form a structural unit of great strength. Two pourings were used, the first to cover the tesserae and the second to bring the section up to the thickness of an inch. After the epoxy was thoroughly hardened, the paper was carefully removed from the face of the panels with water and a brisk scrubbing. When installed in the church, the effulgence of light pouring through the glass into the interior will spread over the opaque matrix. The principle of this halation or spread of light over dark areas is well known to stained glass designers.