

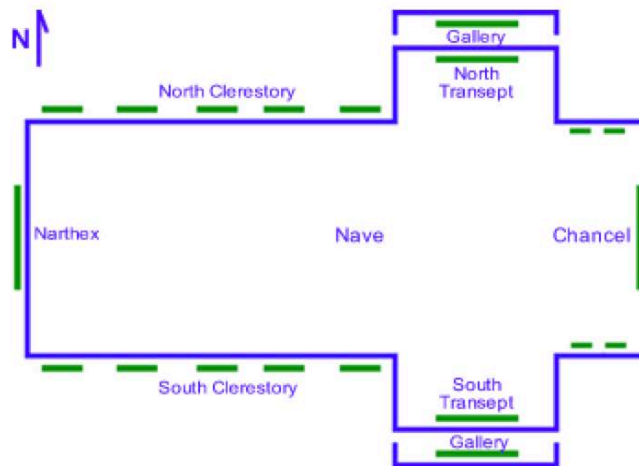


MOUNT OLIVE
A LUTHERAN CHURCH

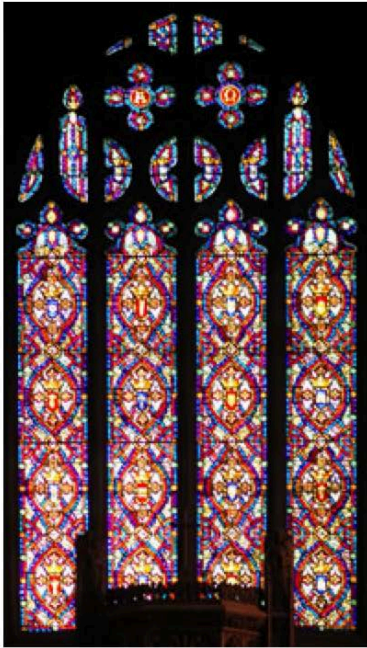
SERMONS IN GLASS

Mount Olive's building is a gothic church that took six years to complete. The chancel window behind the altar was in place when the church was dedicated in 1931. The remaining windows, installed between 1931 and 1950 were given by members to glorify God and, often, to remember important events in the donors' lives.

To celebrate the building's 40th year, a series of short essays was written in 1971 to interpret each window. The series, "Sermons in Glass," was intended to enhance worshippers' pre-service meditations. The descriptions below are based on those essays.



CHANCEL WINDOW



The chancel window that extends high above the altar and forms a Gothic arch at its crest contains a multitude of themes for silent meditation. High in the arch is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, used as the symbol for Christ; the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Rev. 1:8-20; 21:6, 22:13). These titles describe Christ's position in the new age, in the Church that is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, whose symbols are found in the panels below.

Four panels form the body of the chancel window, with four symbols in each panel:

- The first panel (left) contains the symbols of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The second panel contains symbols of the major prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel.
- The third contains symbols of the four evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.
- The fourth panel contains four symbols of the Church.

The window inspired a poem written by Lydia Hobart and published in the Crescent Magazine in 1941:

I sit with quiet hands and heart,
My eyes upon the window's light
Above the altar set apart.
Its golden amber, and the blue
Of gemlike deepness, and the red
As clear and crystalline as dew.
But beauty is not all I see,
For with the lovely radiance comes
A bit of heaven down to me.

CHANCEL LANCETS

The four lancet windows in the north and south walls of the chancel contain symbols that tell the story of the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus.



CUP

Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them and all of them drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." -Mark 14:23-24



CLUB

At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?" - Matthew 26:55



TORCH

So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. - John 18:3



EAR

With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword." - Matthew 26:51-52



ROPE

They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor. - Matthew 27:2



COINS and PURSE

Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. - Matthew 26:14-15



PITCHER and BASIN

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" - Matthew 27:24



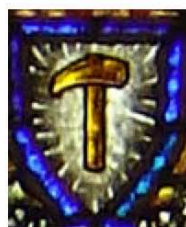
WHIP

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. -John 19:1



TUNIC

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the tunic remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." - John 19:23



HAMMER

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. -Luke 23:33



SPONGE

Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. - Matthew 27:48



SPEAR

Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. - John 19:34

CLERESTORY WINDOWS

The five clerestory windows on the south wall of the nave depict the human Jesus. The five on the north present the divine Lord. Those on the south also include smaller symbols of ten apostles. (Two apostles, Matthew and John, are already depicted in the large chancel window as evangelists.)



INCARNATION

In the first south clerestory window is the medallion of the Incarnation, the familiar story of the birth of Jesus Christ. The medallion portrays the infant Jesus with his virgin mother Mary and his earthly father Joseph.

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

"I am come that you might have life and that your life might be abundant."

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life as ransom for many."

On the left is the symbol of the Crossed Keys, the symbol of the apostle Peter, recalling his confession and our Lord's word, "I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 16:18-19) On the right is the symbol of Andrew, the brother of Peter. Tradition says that while Andrew was preaching in Greece he was put to death on a cross of this type, known ever since as Saint Andrew's cross. The window was installed in 1931 as a memorial to the departed sister and mother of Miss Block and Mrs. Lohmann.



THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

In the second south clerestory window is the medallion of the child Jesus in the temple at the age of 12, based on the gospel for the first Sunday after Epiphany, Luke 2:41-52: "All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers," even as we are still amazed these 20 centuries later. His reply to his questioning mother, "Did you not know that I must be in my father's house?" reflects his own knowledge of his person and his mission. He understands himself as the Son of God who has appeared in human form to identify with us, assume our burden, reveal the Father's love for us, and open by his sacrifice the life of the new age, the kingdom at hand. He was there in fulfillment of God's ancient prophetic word, "...and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple." (Malachi 3:1)

On the left of the medallion is the symbol of the staff and wallet, emblem of the travels of James the Greater. On the right of the medallion is the symbol of the patriarchal cross and the basket filled with bread which is commonly the symbol of Philip, who asked before Jesus fed the 5,000, "Where will we buy bread that these hungry ones may eat?"

This window was installed in 1931 as the gift of Mrs. Birgilen and her two daughters in memory of their husband and father.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The third south clerestory window contains the medallion of Jesus preaching the Sermon on the Mount.

A major thrust of Jesus' ministry was the preaching of the Word. He was himself the Word from God who spoke the gospel of life and salvation by his very presence in our midst. He revealed God's heart of love, and by his sacrifice at Calvary brought to a climax God's self-revelation as a God of mercy and forgiveness.

As we view this medallion the entire record of the Sermon on the Mount comes to mind; Jesus' delineation of the new life that is ours in him, the way, the truth, the life. His proclamation was not set of moral precepts, but the declaration of the fact that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In his person God had drawn near, summoning us to repentance and to faith, turning us from the old way to the new way in the new age, the age he came to bring.

On the left of the medallion in this window is the symbol of the carpenter's square and spear, the symbol of Thomas, because this apostle is said to have built a church with his own hands in India. Later he was persecuted there and was killed with a spear by a pagan priest. On the right is the symbol of the flaying knife, the symbol of Bartholemew, who is said to have been flayed alive for the gospel.

This third window was installed in 1934, three years after the completion of the church, and was a gift to the congregation by an anonymous donor.



GOOD SHEPHERD

The fourth south clerestory window depicts the Good Shepherd. Installed in 1941, this window was a gift of Mr. Hugo Hess in memory of his wife.

The center medallion portrays Jesus as the Good Shepherd, with rod and staff in hand and carrying the young lamb in his bosom. It brings to memory one of the most beautiful and beloved images of the scriptures. Perhaps the most familiar shepherd passage is the 23rd Psalm; but equally as beautiful and perhaps even more specific are the shepherd verses of the prophets, notably of Isaiah and Ezekiel, and Jesus' own use of the imagery in John 10.

The medallion recalls especially the words of Isaiah 40:11, "He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young." This is the verse that Handel incorporated in his beautiful composition "The Messiah". The image also recalls the word of Jesus in John 10, "I am the Good Shepherd...and I lay down my life for the sheep." With this word Jesus identifies himself as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise.

To the left and right of the medallion are the symbols of James the Less and Jude, two apostles whose symbols reflect their deaths which, according to tradition, related to witness and faith.



JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

The fifth south clerestory window can be examined by climbing into the choir balcony. It was installed at the tenth anniversary (in 1941) of the church building dedication, with funds given by the children of the Sunday school. Fittingly, the center medallion portrays the story of Jesus touching the little children as recorded in the gospel of Mark. Mothers brought their little ones to Jesus but the disciples rebuked them, insisting that he did not have time for little children. But Jesus, in turn, rebuked his own disciples saying, "Let the little children come to me. Do not stop them. Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

We bring our children to the Lord today in Holy baptism, in Christian instruction and in parents' prayerful teaching. We bring them to the house of God and train them early to participate in Christian worship. We guide them, lead them in the way of truth, and make it our foremost concern. This requires our best effort, our most energetic labors, our consistent love.

On the left and right respectively are shields with symbols of the apostles Simon Zelotes and Matthias. The latter, symbolized by an open bible and a double bladed axe, is the one who took the place of Judas and is said to have been beheaded. The former, Simon the Zealot, is symbolized by a book upon which rests a fish. Through the power of the word, it's said that he became a great fisher of men.

NORTH CLERESTORY WINDOWS

The theme of the clerestory windows on the north side is the divine nature of our Lord. God's Son moved in against all of the disorder which the reign of evil has brought: disease, grief, sorrow, even death itself. Jesus our Lord destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light. He came that we might have life and have it abundantly.



JESUS CALMING THE STORM

The first of five clerestory windows on the north side of the church, farthest west, is viewable only from the choir loft. This window begins the series of medallions portraying the divine nature of Christ. It represents Jesus calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee, which prompted the exclamation of the disciples, "What kind of man is this that even the winds and waves obey him?" It also reminds us of their frantic cry in the storm, "Lord, save us, for we perish!" and recalls Jesus' gentle rebuke, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Need we be reminded that Christ is in our ship, too?

Having concluded the shields of the apostles on the south side, the shields to the left and right of the medallions on the north pick up a new theme. In this window the shields are the most common symbols for Jesus Christ, the JES for Jesus and the Chi Rho symbol for Christ, Jesus the savior, and Christ the messiah, the anointed one.

The window was installed in 1946, the gift of the Mount Olive AAL (Aid Association for Lutherans) branch.



JESUS FEEDS THE PEOPLE

After the dedication of this church in 1931, the stained glass windows were added as memorial or special funds became available. The second north clerestory window was installed in 1945 as a memorial for one of the charter members of the congregation, Mr. Carl J. Allison.

All clerestory windows on the north side express the divinity of our Lord. This window carries out that theme in portraying the multiplication of the loaves and fish, as recorded by John in the sixth chapter, where 5,000 were fed; and by Mark in the eighth chapter where four thousand were fed. Its setting in the Gospel of John underscores a distinct relationship between this meal and the Holy Eucharist. We understand that feeding 5,000 hungry stomachs was not the most important thing that happened. Christ brings the full and final satisfaction of the needs of all. We are totally dependent upon God, not only for the bread that perishes, but also for the Bread of Life.

The shield on the left is the emblem for Holy Communion based on this bountiful provision. The Greek word meaning "fish" across the bottom of the cross is spelled by the first letters of the Greek phrase, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, our Savior." In the shield on the right is the cross of the rock from which the living water flows, symbolizing the bounteous gifts of God which flow constantly into the life of the believer through word and sacrament.



TRANSFIGURATION

In April of 1945, Pastor Schroedel received a letter from a young lieutenant, Elmer Jaster, writing from France, where he was serving during World War II. Inspired by the story of Jacob, who took the stone that had been his pillow and set it up to mark the place he named Beth-el, the House of God, Lt. Jaster promised Pastor Schroedel that he intended to give one of the windows as a thank offering for his safe return from the war. This promise was fulfilled with the installation of the Transfiguration window.

As recorded in Matthew 17, Jesus, standing on a high mountain with Peter, James and John, was suddenly transfigured before them. They saw the brilliant glory of the Lord, and heard a voice from heaven say, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." They witnessed Jesus speaking to Moses and Elijah. Here was revealed the glory in which the Son of God will come to rule at the end of the age. The voice from heaven reveals that here in Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament expectations. Here is our Lord, the sovereign of heaven and earth, the God before whom we bow.

In the shield at the left, the tablets on either side of the cross symbolize the appearance of Moses at the Transfiguration. The flaming wheel is the symbol for Elijah.

In the shield at the right is the symbol of the heavenly Zion, the final abode of the redeemed, with the crown of glory, the palms of victory, and the stars of heaven.



RAISING OF LAZARUS

The 11th chapter of the Gospel of John provides the theme for the north clerestory window second from the front: the raising of Lazarus. It is fitting that this window was placed by the Ladies' Aid Society of Mount Olive in 1944, a society dedicated to the twin purposes reflected in the sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, hearers and doers of the Word.

The occasion of the raising of Lazarus prompted one of the most comforting and triumphant messages of our Lord: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, though they are dead, yet shall they live. And those who live and believe in me shall never die!" How many sorrowed hearts have found comfort, hope and victory in these words of Jesus Christ!

In the shield on the left is the simple empty cross, the sign of the Lord's triumph over death, while in the shield on the right is the heart which has ever been the center of the impulse to aid those in need. Here in the raising of Lazarus is another manifestation of the compassionate heart of Jesus, who responds to our need with all the resources of his power, even the power to defeat the enemy called death, and who gives us his life.



JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM

The story depicted in the last of the north clerestory windows, farthest to the front of the nave, is the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem. This gospel story is recounted from the Matthew 21, on the first Sunday in Advent and on Passion Sunday. The window was placed in 1944 by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Lohmann.

The arrival of our Lord in Jerusalem was a moment of great significance in the ministry of Jesus. It was the entry of the King into his capitol and the coming of God's Son to his disobedient people. Like the Transfiguration, it was a preview of his coming into glory at the end of the world. The actions and words of the crowd bear witness to the kingship of Jesus. The hosanna of that day continues to sound forth from God's people today as we, too, acclaim the Son of David, fulfiller of the promises of God, Savior, Lord, and King.

In the shield at the left is the Messianic Rose which is a favorite symbol for the promised Messiah. The shield at the right is of the griffin, an imaginary creature with the body of a lion and the wings of an eagle, suggesting the two-fold nature of Christ; the eagle suggests his divine nature and the lion denotes his humanity.

NARTHEX WINDOW



The large narthex window that faces on Chicago Avenue has not been visible from the interior of the church since the installation of our organ. It can only be examined at night from the outside, when it is lighted to provide a beautiful witness of our faith to all who pass by on Chicago Ave. or who travel toward the church on 31st street.

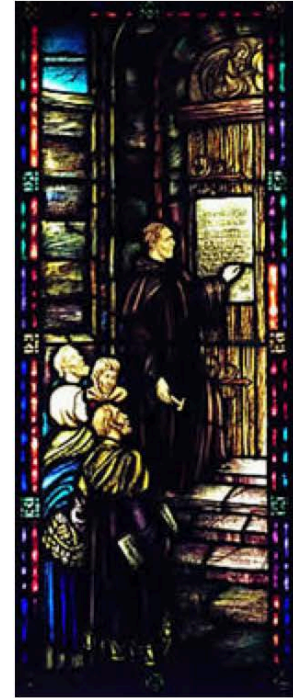
The window was placed as a memorial to the first pastor of this congregation, the Rev. Herman Prange, who served here from 1909 to 1920, and who died in Chicago on October 17, 1939. It was dedicated on the second Sunday after Easter in 1944 on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the congregation's founding. Special congregational offerings and a gift by the Mount Olive Ladies' Aid made the window possible.

Three panels portray Christ and Mary Magdalene, Christ at his Ascension, and Christ at the open tomb. The window includes three smaller symbols indicating Christ's continuing office as prophet, priest and king. As a witness to the resurrected, living and triumphant Lord whom we worship, it is an appropriate expression of our faith to all who have eyes to see.



NORTH TRANSEPT

To commemorate the Reformation, the three windows in the north transept depict scenes from the life of the church.



On the left is the Conversion of St. Paul, a visual conception of the event recorded in Acts 9, when Saul of Tarsus, breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, journeyed to Damascus to bring the Christians back in chains for persecution. His conversion on the Damascus road began the greatest missionary career in history.

The center window depicts the Pentecost, the birthday of the church, recorded in Acts. 2, when the promise of the Savior was fulfilled and the Spirit of God was poured out upon the disciples in preparation for their missionary task in all the world. The Day of Pentecost began the new age of the gospel.

On the right is the familiar scene that marks October 31st as Reformation Day. The picture portrays Martin Luther posting his 95 theses on the door of the castle church of Wittenberg, Germany (October 31, 1517). The Reformation, a movement that began in that early time, still continues to this day.

The first window was a gift of the Senior and Junior Leagues; the center window, by Mrs. Arnold Schultz in memory of her husband; and the third was the gift of the Mr. and Mrs. William Appel as a thank offering upon the safe return of their sons from World War II.

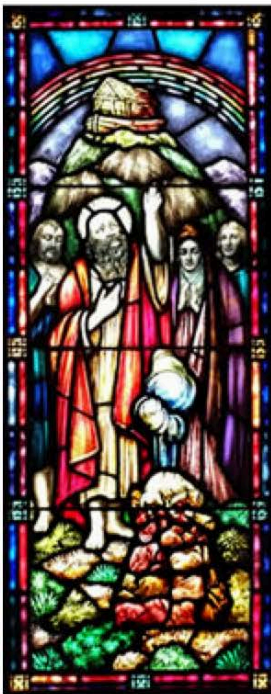
SOUTH TRANSEPT

Three Old Testament scenes and three Old Testament figures are portrayed in the windows of the south transept. From left to right they are:

Noah and his altar of sacrifice and thanksgiving, after the ark had come to rest at Mount Ararat (Genesis 8:20). It was here that God gave the covenant to Noah and set a bow in the cloud as a sign of the covenant between God and the earth (Genesis 9:12).

Moses returning from Mount Sinai with the two tables of stone on which were engraved the Ten Commandments. The event can be studied in the 19th and 20th chapters of the book of Exodus.

The ascension of Elijah into heaven in the fiery chariot, recorded in II Kings 2, when the mantle of the Prophet was then taken up by Elisha.



In each of these three Old Testament scenes and figures, we have an illustration of the faithfulness of God in keeping the covenant made with humankind. It is a reminder, too, of our part in the covenant of grace: God promised, “I will be your God, and you will be my people.”

Especially, however, we remember the covenant that has been given to us in which we have particularly experienced God’s faithfulness, the new covenant in Christ’s blood by which we are assured of freedom from the judgment. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1)

The Noah window was presented by the Sunday school; the Moses window, by the Guild on the occasion of its tenth anniversary; and the Elijah window, by five societies including the Junior Girls, the Vesper Club, the Senior League, the Junior League, and the Young Marrieds.

NORTH TRANSEPT GALLERY



The windows in the north transept gallery, installed in 1950, set forth the theme of the Annunciation. In the center window is the scene of the Annunciation, recorded in the first chapter of Luke, beginning at verse 26. The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. Gabriel's message concerned the birth of the Son of God who came from heaven to restore God's fallen creation. The announcement evoked the beloved Song of Mary, in which she expresses her praise, the well-known Magnificat (Luke 1:46 ff.). In the words of Luther, the miracle of the Annunciation was the miracle of faith; not that the Son of God was to be born of a virgin, nor that the angel came to her, but that Mary believed. This was most amazing: Mary believed!

In the shield at the right is the symbol of the pierced heart, based on the prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:35) that "a sword shall pierce through your own soul also," spoken to Mary at the time of the presentation of the baby Jesus in the temple, foretelling his death. In the shield at the left is the symbol of the lily, the symbol of Easter and immortality and the resurrection.

The central window was the gift of Dr. and Mrs. Harold Reif. The window at the left was presented by the Ladies' Guild and the window at the right by the Senior Walther League.

SOUTH TRANSEPT GALLERY



The windows of the south transept gallery emphasize a messianic theme. The center panel is a portrayal of the Old Testament book of Ruth. Ruth had come from the land of Moab with the mother of her deceased husband who was returning to her native Bethlehem. Ruth gleaned the fields of Boaz, later married him, and became the mother of Obed, who became the father of Jesse, who became the father of David. Thus this Moabite woman, a stranger to the covenant of the promise, was drawn into the lineage from which the Messiah would spring, and was the great grandmother of King David. We recall that it was to Bethlehem that Joseph of Nazareth came with Mary, his espoused wife, at the edict of Ceasar, "...for he was of the house and lineage of David." Ruth is one of four women mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord as written in the Gospel of Matthew, the first chapter.

The right window contains a shield with the star of Bethlehem and the Messianic Rose at its center. In the left window is the shield with the Rod of Jesse as it is spoken of in the Prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 11, verse 1.

The center window was a gift of the Ladies' Aid. The other two were presented by Alma Romberg, and by Mrs. Harry Mueller and her niece, Jean Glowatzke, in memory of Frederick and Wilhelmine Glowatzke, parents of Mrs. Mueller and grandparents of Jean. The windows were installed in 1947.

SHIELDS

The doors and narthex windows also have stories to tell. Pictured here are some of the symbols in small, shield-shaped window panels found in different areas in the church. Take a walk around the church building and see if you can spot them all!

