

STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS IN WELS: ARTISTIC WHIMSY OR AUTHENTIC  
WITNESS?

BY

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## ABSTRACT

Stained-glass windows have been a practical and useful staple in the buildings of the Christian church for over a thousand years. The WELS is a beneficiary of this rich heritage. Although many WELS congregations have this beautiful and rich resource, stained-glass windows are often underused, underappreciated, and quickly forgotten. The goal of this paper is to determine whether stained-glass windows are still beneficial for the twenty-first century WELS church. The historical use of the stained-glass windows is investigated and evaluated in the first part of the thesis. After considering the purpose of the windows, contemporary applications are made for the WELS pastor in the second part of the thesis.

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## LET'S HAVE A LOOK

If a person is looking at a stained-glass window, then presumably she is looking at part of a church. Stained-glass windows are closely linked with church buildings. They are both practical and beautiful; they are functional works of art. Although the author of this paper is no artist, he has always been fascinated with sacred stained-glass windows. Many resources describe how to make stained glass and many outline its history, but this is an attempt to recognize the multitude of useful stained-glass windows in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

The purpose of this thesis is not to investigate the construction of stained glass or to determine whether a congregation should install new stained glass in their church. The goal of this thesis is to determine how a WELS pastor can use the stained glass that is already in WELS churches. The first part of the thesis investigates the historical use of stained-glass windows in the Christian church. The second part applies the historical use of stained-glass windows to the twenty-first century WELS pastor. The author used a combination of books, journal articles, essays, websites, church publications, and interviews to discover the purpose and current use of stained-glass windows.

The thesis that I wish to defend in this paper is that stained-glass windows are an authentic witness that pastors would be wise to continue to use in the WELS context because they have been used historically by the church for teaching and for strengthening believers.

## PART I: WHY IS STAINED GLASS HERE?

### **It's Hard to Explain**

To begin to answer the question of how stained-glass windows might properly be used, the original purpose of the use of stained-glass windows must be considered. It would be as foolish to try to draw meaning from a window that was not meant to communicate anything as it would be to ignore the proclamation of the truth of Christians of the past. Therefore, a person needs to see how the artists originally intended these stained-glass windows to be used. The issue is complex. The documentation does not exist that would provide an easy explanation, and there are conflicting theories that attempt to provide the answer for the existence of stained glass.

### The Documentation Doesn't Exist

Pieces of stained glass can be traced back to the era of the Roman Empire, but the pieces are all that can be found. There is no record of how the medium developed. There is no literature to trace how the techniques developed and grew. The culmination of the medium of stained glass is evident in the magnificent stained-glass windows of the Gothic <sup>1</sup> period.<sup>2</sup> Glass was used practically, first, before it was improved in stained-glass windows. The steps that were taken

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1. Circa 1100-1500 CE

2. Francesca Dell'Acqua, "Early History of Stained Glass." *Investigations in Medieval Stained Glass: Materials, Methods, and Expressions*. Edited by Elizabeth Carson Pastan and Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz. Vol. Three of *Reading Medieval Sources*. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019): 29.

from the practical use of glass to the artistic use of glass are lost. Since the antecedent windows are lost, there is a seeming explosion of the use of colored glass in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup>

There are hundreds of years of evolution and perfection of the craft that are lost. The earliest indisputable evidence is the abundance of intact windows that have lasted since the Gothic period (Figure 18). The documentation of those masterpieces is still highly questionable. It was the nature of the artists of that era to be anonymous. “Hundreds of unknown artists have left a heritage that still fascinates the onlooker today as he views the beautiful windows of many churches that display this dazzling form of religious art.”<sup>4</sup> It was not important for those artists to take credit for their work. They simply presented their work and left it to the church to determine the purpose.<sup>5</sup>

Stained glass remained popular until the eighteenth century. The custom of stained glass spanned over one thousand years in Europe.<sup>6</sup> Only a small amount of the windows remain from that period, but there was an enormous amount of stained-glass windows that were made, most of which came between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>7</sup>

Another reason that the documentation does not exist is because of the nature of stained glass. Glass is a fragile material. Stained-glass windows are easily destroyed by stress on the

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3. Lawrence Lee, George Seddon, and Francis Stephens, *Stained Glass*. (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc, 1976): 10-12.

4. Louis Giorgi, *The Windows of the Church of Saint Justin Martyr*. Illustrated Edition. Philadelphia, PA: The Art Alliance Press, 1982):16.

5. The influence of the church will be covered later in the paper.

6. Dell’Acqua, “Early History of Stained Glass,”31.

7. Lindsay MacDonald, “Stained Glass: The Medieval Multimedia Experience.” *Proc. Electronic Imaging & the Visual Arts Conf.(EVA)* (1997)”

windows or when something impacts them. They are also easily destroyed in times of war or attack, of which there have been many in the European countries where stained glass is prevalent.

Fragments of stained glass are periodically discovered in archeological digs. They find fragments of the glass, cut in precise geometric shapes.<sup>8</sup> The discoveries of these ruins of the glass can give a glimpse, but not the whole vision of what the window originally looked like. If a stained-glass window does not stay intact, it is erased from history because of the lack of documentation.

This question [of a master plan behind the windows] remains unresolved, though it is perhaps worth noting that, in many venues, protracted completion times, loss of glass, restoration, and use of recurrent armature patterns enabling easy transposition of windows, render the pursuit of inclusive “master plans” largely moot.<sup>9</sup>

Professor Jordan, here, recognizes that there are many ways that the glass windows can be changed from their original design and purpose. Glass is not a permanent medium, and so the evidence of the windows that are left does not give an accurate representation of their appearance at their creation.

Nevertheless, the lack of documentation has forced scholars to draw conclusions from the stained-glass windows themselves. Certain conclusions can be reasonably asserted by the evidence that remains. The comparison of medieval and post-medieval stained glass illustrates the evolution of stained glass that can then be documented. They also compare stained-glass

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8. Dell’Acqua, “Early History of Stained Glass,” 23.

9. Alyce Jordan, “Stories in Windows: The Architectonics of Narrative.” *Investigations in Medieval Stained Glass: Materials, Methods, and Expressions*. Edited by Elizabeth Carson Pastan and Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz. Vol. Three of *Reading Medieval Sources*. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019): 193.

windows in the same era to identify what the artists accomplished with their craft. The presentation of the stories contained in the stained-glass windows piece together the rich history of the stained-glass craft.<sup>10</sup>

Another problem with the documentation is the issue of patronage. Men and women alike sponsored these tremendous undertakings. Stained-glass windows have always been an expensive project. Their funding usually did not come out of the ordinary financial source of the institution; it was usually a special gift by wealthy men or women in the community. They would often sponsor these projects as memorials, in memory of family members who had died. The donors could be recognized with inscriptions under the window, or they might be drawn right into the glass. They could be identified by their coat of arms in the glass, or by the replication of their dress or style in one of the characters in the window.<sup>11</sup> If the patrons were not explicitly and permanently recognized, the documentation of their identity in the windows can be lost already by the next generation.

To avoid this, some patrons went to great lengths to retain their identity in the glass. One example is the St. Lubin window in the Chartres Cathedral, which was undoubtedly given by a winemaker, merchant, or tavern keeper.<sup>12</sup> Their donation apparently demanded that their trade be unmistakably promoted in the glass (Figure 25<sup>13</sup>). There are characters giving wine goblets to one another. Other characters are buying, selling, and transporting wine. While the donor is

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10. Jordan, "Stories in Windows: The Architectonics of Narrative," 199.

11. Christine Hediger. "Female Donors of Medieval Stained-Glass Windows." *Investigations in Medieval Stained Glass: Materials, Methods, and Expressions*. Edited by Elizabeth Carson Pastan and Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz. Vol. Three of *Reading Medieval Sources*. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019): 245.

12. Jordan, "Stories in Windows: The Architectonics of Narrative," 193.

13. Throughout this Thesis, representations of selected stained-glass windows are provided in Appendix I.



unmistakable, many avoided doing this so that they could keep advertisements out of the sacred stories that the windows portrayed.<sup>14</sup>

The same issue of documentation is not just a problem of the medieval stained-glass windows but is present in churches today. St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Saginaw, Michigan is a WELS church that is recognized for its impressive stained-glass windows. In their celebration of their one-hundredth anniversary of their church building, they searched their records to try to discover more about the glass. Outside of the memories of the members of the church, no documentation exists in their records or the records of their local history museums.

We’ve come up with nothing — Zilch. We cannot even find how much we paid for them originally or who made them. I’ve heard several times that the red in our windows can only be made with pure gold. That’s cool to me! I do know that right now our stained-glass windows themselves are insured for over one million dollars! I’m sorry, I wish I had more info on their history.<sup>15</sup>

It may be that the finished product of the stained-glass windows seems to the donors and the members to speak for themselves to such an extent that documentation seems superfluous. Evidently, the ability to be recognized by future inquisitors as designers and planners of those stained-glass windows was superfluous to those who made them and first witnessed them.

### Conflicting Theories

Since the documentation is inconclusive at best, there are conflicting theories about the purpose of stained-glass windows. The first issue is whether stained-glass windows were primarily used

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14. Jordan, “Stories in Windows: The Architectonics of Narrative,” 193.

15. Julius Buelow, “St Paul, Saginaw Windows.” Interview by JP Lindemann. Email, (2 October 2020).

for secular purposes or sacred purposes. Both kinds of windows exist, and the discovery of their original use informs why the stained glass presently exists.

Sometimes, stained-glass windows have been used to portray secular events and stories. Stained-glass windows are not limited to spaces of Christian worship. Cultural movements are also depicted in stained-glass windows. The University of Pittsburgh has famous scenes from fairy tales by the Grimm brothers<sup>16</sup> and the Blue Grass Motor Inn restaurant in Maple Heights, Cleveland, Ohio had a stained-glass window in honor of the iconic football star of the Cleveland Browns Jim Brown (Figures 25 and 26).<sup>17</sup>

Secular scenes have also been portrayed in Christian worship space. The Washington National Cathedral has many secular scenes depicted in its glass, such as the YWCA and Civil War generals and battles between the Union and the Confederacy. These stained-glass windows give honor and focus to earthly accomplishments and landmarks of history in the church. Experts debate whether the inclusion of secular stained glass in churches detracts from the church's reputation of being a house of prayer for people. Some contend that those secular windows take the focus off of spiritual worship, and some contend that both can exist side by side.<sup>18</sup>

The Christian church has by far and away the greatest influence on stained-glass windows. Monasteries, specifically, popularized and utilized this art form to beautify the worship space and to create a picture of heavenly light that symbolizes the presence of God with his

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16. Lee, *Stained Glass*, 28.

17. Lee, *Stained Glass*, 164.

18. "Reflecting on the Washington National Cathedral's Stained-Glass Windows" *U.S. Newsstream – ProQuest*. (September 13, 2017).

church. Abbot Suger of Saint Denis in France is called the father of stained glass. The recognition that this church leader is so influential in the field of stained glass illustrates how closely the church is connected to stained-glass windows.<sup>19</sup>

The church used stained-glass windows to transform itself. Instead of merely a space *for* liturgy, stained-glass windows have the ability to transform the church into a liturgical space. Christians use the stained-glass windows to set aside and mark the church building as special. Professor Caviness maintains that a lot of stained-glass windows were created to enhance the liturgy. The artists would even use the church's liturgical books as sources for the stained glass. This would be the reason, then, for the stained glass depicting the mass, the sacraments, Marian Feasts, the crucifixion, and all kinds of narrative Bible stories. Some stained glass was designed to highlight the message of the liturgy of the church.<sup>20</sup>

The church was highly influential in what was made into stained glass. The intrinsic seduction of the glass made it a great educational tool for the teaching ministry of the church. The details and mystery of the glass drew a person in, purely through the medium.<sup>21</sup> Taking advantage of the captive audience, a church teacher could explain the mysterious truths of the Bible.<sup>22</sup> Some stained glass was designed to be an educational tool to launch into an explanation of biblical truth.

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19. Wei An, "The Development of Stained Glass in Gothic Cathedrals," Johnson County Community College 4.1 (2012).

20. Jordan, "Stories in Windows: The Architectonics of Narrative," 177-179.

21. Lee, *Stained Glass*, 24.

22. More on this later.

Stained-glass windows are generally assumed to teach the illiterate. The majority of the laity existing in the church of the Middle Ages not only did not have access to copies of the Bible, but they also were unable to read it. This made individual Christian growth in the Word of God nearly impossible outside of the church. Stained-glass windows are believed to be one way that the church sought to teach doctrine to the illiterate laity outside of organized religious services. Pierre de Roissy, a member of the leadership at Chartres Cathedral in the thirteenth century, believed that the whole church building witnessed biblical truth to the passersby, especially the stained glass that illumed biblical imagery.<sup>23</sup>

Stained-glass windows are often referred to as the “Poor Man’s Bible.”<sup>24</sup> Those who use this title imply that the stained-glass windows did a lot of teaching all on their own. It does not take nearly as much education to teach a person to look at a picture as opposed to teaching them to read. The stained-glass windows are believed to be a constant reminder and solidifier for the people who had no access to a Bible of words. John Baker highlighted this in his book,

To the ordinary people, certainly illiterate, and unlikely to have access to missals and psalters in the possessions of the rich or scholarly, they provided the most effective means of communicating spiritual truths. Not without reason have the windows been referred to as the ‘Poor Man’s Bible’.<sup>25</sup>

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23. Herbert Kessler, “‘Consider the Glass, It Can Teach You’: The Medium’s Lesson.” *Investigations in Medieval Stained Glass: Materials, Methods, and Expressions*. Edited by Elizabeth Carson Pastan and Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz. Vol. Three of *Reading Medieval Sources*. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019): 145.

24. MacDonald, “Stained Glass: The Medieval Multimedia Experience,” Lee, *Stained Glass*, et al.

25. MacDonald, “Stained Glass: The Medieval Multimedia Experience.”

The stained-glass windows had one of the greatest and most constant influences on the people of the church.<sup>2627</sup>

During the middle ages, the glass carried the message of the gospel for the church. When it was misrepresented or hidden during the dark ages of the church, the exceptional stained-glass windows told the story. Many German Christians got the message of the gospel through their eyes rather than through their ears. They saw the message, instead of reading it or hearing it.<sup>28</sup>

The stained-glass windows of the church of Saint Justin Martyr, a church constructed in 1964 in Philadelphia, PA, were commissioned because of this theory for the purpose of stained-glass windows. Father Louis P. Giorgi, a former priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, said stained-glass windows “served as an attractive visual means of providing religious education for the unlettered multitudes.”<sup>29</sup> That church sought to use stained-glass windows to duplicate what they believed to be one of the stained-glass window’s original purposes, to teach people without words.

There is also a possibility that stained-glass windows were commissioned primarily for the educated clergy.

It is always a mistake to explain medieval stained-glass windows as images for illiterate peasants to look at, since they could not read the Bible. This is simply “fake news” created in the nineteenth century. Nothing is further from the truth. Stained glass has nothing to do with educating peasants, but everything to do with the medieval theology of

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26. MacDonald, “Stained Glass: The Medieval Multimedia Experience.”

27. There is the question of the efficacy of and the relationship between the illumed and the written gospels. What follows is both sides of the discussion.

28. Eric Hartzell, “When Christians Make Glass.” Interview by JP Lindemann, (19 October 2020).

29. Louis Giorgi, *The Windows of the Church of Saint Justin Martyr*. Illustrated Edition. Philadelphia, PA: The Art Alliance Press, 1982): 16.

light.<sup>30</sup> Since no one seems to know about this theology anymore, it is always easier to talk about images educating illiterate peasants.”<sup>31</sup>

Because of the lack of documentation, as already discussed, this theory maintains modern teachers have imposed their ideas on the evidence of the past.

Many of the stained-glass windows require background knowledge to convey the message, and so the clergy would be the only ones who could understand it.

‘Twelfth- and thirteenth-century stained glass figured rich arrays of biblical personages, dense sequences of sacred narratives, and scriptural allegories, despite the fact that some of the detailed iconographies are barely legible and the most ingenious typologies would have been incomprehensible to the “fidelibus Ecclesiae” (to the faithful of the church).<sup>32</sup>

This theory contends that the stained-glass windows have too much detail for the laity to possibly understand. Not every Christian would be able to understand what was in the glass because it comes from such an in-depth study of the Bible. It isn’t that the laity weren’t Christians and wouldn’t have believed what was taught in the glass, it was simply above their understanding.

This gap in understanding could cause a more extreme gap between the clergy and the laity. Instead of the lessons being taught by the clergy and learned by the laity, sometimes the lessons were withheld by the clergy. Sometimes the laity detested that they had to be taught by the clergy and would rather live without understanding. For example, when it came to education

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30. More on this soon.

31. “The Cathedral And The Icon: The Theology Of Light.” *The Postil Magazine*. (October 1, 2017).

32. Kessler, “Consider the Glass, It Can Tech You,” 144.

about the saints illumined in the windows, the teaching was an involved, complicated process that was ignored. The stained glass would then not unite and teach the church, but divide it.<sup>33</sup>

The clergy also kept some stained glass for their own benefit, away from the laity. Much of the stained glass was in common spaces where clergy and laity gathered together, but stained-glass windows could also be reserved for places where only the clergy or monks would go. A person could even go as far as to say that the friars only shared stained glass with the laity so that they would continue to support them financially when in reality they wanted to keep it for themselves. This pessimistic theory holds that the glass was only understood by the clergy, and used divisively against the laity.<sup>34</sup>

### **Because of the Light of the World**

Stained glass cannot convey any message on its own. It requires light. Light is an important concept in the Bible. It symbolizes the difference between good and evil, belief and unbelief, and God and the devil. The most powerful picture of light is when Jesus calls himself the Light of the World, meaning that he saves the world. The Light of the World is the reason for stained glass being used in the church — both Jesus as the proper Light of the World (Appendix II<sup>35</sup>) and natural light as the general light of the world.

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33. Ashley Laverock, “Saints’ Lives and Stained Glass.” *Investigations in Medieval Stained Glass: Materials, Methods, and Expressions*. Edited by Elizabeth Carson Pastan and Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz. Vol. Three of *Reading Medieval Sources*. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019): 227.

34. Joanne Allen, “Review of Religious Poverty, Visual Riches: Art in the Dominican Churches of Central Italy in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, By Cannon Joanna.” *JBAA* 168.2015 (2015): 255–56. DOI: 10.1179/0068128815Z.00000000048.

35. To keep the focus of this thesis on stained-glass windows and not the theology of light, the biblical picture of light is explained in Appendix II.

## Natural Light

Jesus is the light of the world, but he also gives light in a natural way for the world. The natural makeup of light and how it interacts with the glass creates a phenomenon of activity for the senses. A stained-glass window is a dazzling, daytime art. “[It] waits for the sun to energize its varied hues. At nightfall the stained-glass windows die, only to be revived with the rising sun.”<sup>36</sup> Morning church services are a perfect time to witness the effect of the light on the windows.

Stained glass allows a few aspects of light into the sanctuary. Stained glass lets in natural light (*lumen*). It allows for ventilation of air from the outside when it opens and closes (*aer*). It also allows a view of the outside world (*prospectus*).<sup>37</sup> In stained-glass windows, the artist paints, not with material, but with light.<sup>38</sup> The nature of light pouring through a window begs for symbolic representation. The light is powerful and can reinforce powerful symbols.<sup>39</sup>

The nature of glass also allows for a special opportunity for the artist. At the same time, glass is a functional part of a building and can carry pictures. They are practical as well as artistic.<sup>40</sup> The stained-glass windows also symbolically represent the Bible. Like the windows

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36. Giorgi, *The Windows of the Church of Saint Justin Martyr*, 16.

37. Dell’Acqua, “Early History of Stained Glass,” 23.

38. Lee, *Stained Glass*, 18.

39. Nathan Pope, “Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That’s Always Playing.” Interview by JP Lindemann. Phone Call, (16 October 2020).

40. Wojciech Balus, “A Matter of Matter: Transparent – Translucent – Diaphanum in the Medium of Stained Glass.” *Investigations in Medieval Stained Glass: Materials, Methods, and Expressions*. Edited by Elizabeth Carson Pastan and Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz. Vol. Three of *Reading Medieval Sources*. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019), 109.



keep the wind and the rain out of the building, the Bible keeps harmful things out of the church. Like the sun shines through the glass onto the people, God shines on the hearts of the faithful.<sup>41</sup>

The translucent feature of glass also makes it a useful tool. Instead of an opaque wall, a person can peer through the glass to the outside world. Instead of seeing straight out of the window, the person sees the outside world through the art of the stained glass. This can help a Christian see the outside world through the literal lens of the stained glass, and the spiritual lens of Christ.<sup>42</sup> Pastor Pope<sup>43</sup> used this feature in a stained-glass window in Christ Lutheran Church in Baileys Harbor, WI. “The window behind the crucified Christ is the clearest of the windows and allows the viewer to see the real world outside, the one Christ came to save” (Figure 1).

Since the sun pours through the colors of the window, a sort of living picture is created. A stained-glass window is active. “The rays of the sun entering the interior, light it up and illuminate the person standing opposite the window, penetrating into his eyes.”<sup>44</sup> Stained-glass windows make the words of the Bible visible.<sup>45</sup> It illustrates the words.

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41. Kessler, “Consider the Glass, It Can Tech You,” 143.

42 . Wojciech Balus, “A Matter of Matter,” 112.

43. Pastor Nathan Pope is a retired WELS pastor who is also a stained-glass window craftsman He was a Pastor from 1977–1980 at St Mark’s Lutheran Church in Citrus Heights, CA and from 1980–2005 at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Racine, Wisconsin. In 2005, Nathan and his wife Patty took an early retirement to embark on a second career of church art. They started their first stained-glass project in 1970, and over time through trial and error, they learned the craft. Their buisness is Avignon Art Studios and they have worked with more than fifty WELS churches. Patty cuts all the glass for their stained-glass window projects, and she also learned how to solder the lead together and cement the windows. Pastor Pope designs the windows, milters the lead strips and fits the led together. Pastor and Patty’s journey through church art has been truly fulfilling, as they have worked with many churches both big and small. They still work in this craft to the glory of God and the edification of God’s people.

44. Wojciech Balus, “A Matter of Matter,” 111.

45. Richard Leonard, “The Word Made Visible.” *Christian History* 15.1 (1996): 27.

Stained glass creates a unique mood and feeling. Light demands an emotional response that no other art form can duplicate.<sup>46</sup> God does not merely come to his people through his word in an intellectual way. He also works psychologically through emotions. God's Word can do this all on its own, as it is written, "I run in the path of your commands, for you have broadened my understanding" (Ps 119:32). However, he also does this through the art of stained-glass windows, "Light passing through the windows reifies the argument that the persons and events of sacred history are diverse manifestations of a single Deity who, entering the minds of the faithful through both knowledge and emotions, lifts them heavenward."<sup>47</sup> Stained glass establishes a unique mood to the worship space. The colored light that it allows into the building creates a glowing color that transforms the building.<sup>48</sup>

### **Some Are Unusable by a Pastor**

Some stained-glass windows are not fit for use in the teaching ministry of the church. It is not the fault of a medium. Like a Bible story, the misuse or misrepresentation of stained-glass windows can very easily be ineffective.<sup>49</sup>

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46. Pope, "Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That's Always Playing."

47. Kessler, "Consider the Glass, It Can Tech You," 151.

48. MacDonald, "Stained Glass: The Medieval Multimedia Experience."

49. For example, do you roll your eyes when you hear the teaching of David and Goliath, *again?*

### Artistic Whimsy

Some stained glass is unusable because of its design. A portion of stained-glass windows are simply artistic whimsy, but other stained glass contains false teaching.

Some stained glass was never meant to be used for teaching doctrine. A stained-glass window about *Alice in Wonderland*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, or other fairy tales can be enjoyed on their own outside of the church (Figure 26).<sup>50</sup> Stained-glass windows also don't work if there are no religious symbols or stories in the glass. Certain types of leaded/art glass are simply designed to let colored light into the building without conveying a message.<sup>51</sup> At Grace Lutheran Church in Crivitz, WI, the stained glass is beautiful, but there are very few biblical symbols in them. They are simply decorations intended to invoke an emotional response based on feelings (as discussed above). In St Paul's Episcopal in Milwaukee, the stained-glass windows have titles like "Ornamental Cross." They are beautiful but do not teach anything about the cross.<sup>52</sup> Stained glass must also be well done. As Pastor Hartzell<sup>53</sup> said, "If it's attractive, it's attractive. If it's

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50. Lee, *Stained Glass*, 28-29.

51. Pope, "Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That's Always Playing."

52. Paul Haubrich, "The Stained Glass Windows of St. Paul's." St Paul's Episcopal Church, (Milwaukee WI).

53. Eric Hartzell grew up on the Fort Apache Reservation in eastern Arizona where his father was serving as missionary. He followed his father's example and entered the ministry himself to serve in Japan for a year; in Zambia, Africa, for six years; at East Fork Mission on the Fort Apache Reservation in Arizona for fourteen years; in the Austin, Texas area for twenty years; and finally to serve five years presently as pastor in a semi-retirement call in Globe, Arizona. Pastor Eric Hartzell did his first stained glass work during the years he spent in the Austin, Texas area. Members in Cross and Crown Lutheran Church there where he was serving encouraged him to try and do the stained-glass windows in their new church. So, over the course of ten years or so the project was undertaken and finished finally in 2015. There were stained-glass windows in fifteen of the church's windows. They were designed and constructed in a small shed in the backyard of the parsonage. Each window had a motif: a Bible story, or certain Christian signs and symbols, or the church's name "Cross and Crown." The windows were constructed and organized to tell a story and to be used possibly to teach and exemplify things in worship. They were all works of love, taking hundreds of hours to make. As the process would go from the thought to the actual coming together of the different pieces and colors of glass, it almost seemed sometimes like the picture and the window had a mind of

hideous... goodnight!”<sup>54</sup> Simply including stained-glass windows in a sanctuary does not guarantee a teaching opportunity.

### False Teaching

Some stained-glass windows contain false or misleading teachings. On several occasions throughout the history of the church, windows have been boarded up or removed for this reason. In the various iconoclasm movements, such as the iconoclasm movement of the sixteenth century during the reformation, stained-glass windows were destroyed because they believed them to be a misrepresentation of God. When churches change church body allegiances, they could also be boarded up. Lutherans have desired not to be surrounded by images of Mary, so if a Catholic Church full of Mariology teachings is changed to or purchased by a Lutheran church, the windows are often removed.

Saint worship is one false teaching that is a common false teaching in stained glass. The Virgin Mary is often depicted in stained-glass windows. This is not inherently wrong, but the teaching of the window is misleading, “As the light passes through the glass, God passed through Mary to keep her pure.”<sup>55</sup> Since the perpetual virginity of Mary cannot be proven from Scripture, this teaching should be avoided in the church.

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its own. It is surely the hope of the one who made the windows that they might all serve their church “to the glory of God.”

54. Hartzell, “When Christians Make Glass.”

55. 147 Kessler, “Consider the Glass, It Can Tech You.”

The dangerous false teaching of saint worship and Mariology is the intercessory nature. In Heiligkreuztal Monastery, Mary is seen as holding the baby Jesus with a donor bowing before her. Mary is four times larger than the woman at her feet, teaching that the woman is coming to Mary for forgiveness instead of Jesus<sup>56</sup> (Figure 2).

Stained-glass windows can also communicate false teachings that are simply misunderstandings. A stained-glass window that attempts to portray the ten commandments by showing four roman numerals on one tablet and six on the other, could be misunderstood by the onlooker that only the ten commandments were written on the stones, and not the whole law of Moses (Figure 3). A stained-glass window that attempts to portray the story of Jonah by showing a specific fish or whale swallowing him, could incorrectly inform the onlooker of what the beast was (Figure 4).

Some stained-glass windows are used as advertisements for relics in the church. If a church is particularly proud of their relic collection, they depict the relics in their windows and people crowding around to adore them. Some stained-glass windows also give the impression that the monumental saints of the past are to be held in such high regard that it gives them near god-like status.<sup>57</sup> The process of creating the window can even symbolize this false teaching. Just like a window is fired in the oven and something beautiful is produced, so a mortal is made heavenly.<sup>58 59</sup>

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56. Hediger. "Female Donors of Medieval Stained-Glass Windows," 242.

57. Jordan, "Stories in Windows: The Architectonics of Narrative," 199.

58. Laverock, "Saints' Lives and Stained Glass," 299.

59. There is a proper way to honor Mary and the saints with stained glass that will be discussed later.

Two more common false teachings in stained-glass windows are false teachings about the nature of Christ and even idolatry. The idea that two materials are combined to form something new, whether sand and fire to create it, or glass and light to see it, can give a person a false understanding of the nature of Christ.<sup>60</sup> Christ is not a mix of anything or divided into two persons. He is one person. Some stained-glass windows have been falsely instituted to invite the rays of light from the false gods Phoebus and Apollo. They teach that false gods give knowledge, wisdom, and enlightenment through the natural light of the sun.<sup>61</sup>

### **It Is Authentic Witness**

The examples of how stained glass can be misused and misrepresented must not detract from the authentic witness of the best of the stained-glass windows. Stained-glass windows have been used by Christian for centuries to use their skills, to teach, and to learn.

#### For Christians to Use their God-given skills

God gives Christians the ability to make beautiful things for him. Just as God gave Bezalel and Oholiab gifts in the past to beautify his house, he still uses the gifts he gave Christians to glorify himself (Exodus 36). Faithful Christian stained-glass artists don't impose their own ideas into the glass, they use the imagery and teachings from the Bible.

“Listen to *them* [the facts of the account], and try to formulate and illustrate *their* meaning, not to announce your own. Do not set puzzles, or set things that will be puzzling, without the highest and deepest reasons... Let your allegory surround some definite subject, so that men in general can see it and say, “Yes, that is so and so,” and go

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60. Laverock, “Saints’ Lives and Stained Glass,” 229.

61. Dell’Acqua, “Early History of Stained Glass,” 29.

away satisfied rather than puzzled and affronted... ”Yes, that *means* so and so, and it is a good thought.”<sup>62</sup><sup>63</sup>

This excerpt from a professor of stained glass in the early 1900s, instructing his students on how to make stained-glass windows shows what faithful Christian artists are trying to accomplish. The goal of the Christian stained-glass windows is not to show off skills or confuse the onlooker, but to illustrate the thoughts and teachings of the Bible.

Pastor Hartzell cites two Bible passages as his goal for creating stained-glass windows: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might” (Ecc 9:10). “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1Cor 10:31). Stained-glass windows are a lasting medium that Pastor Hartzell has enjoyed working throughout his life.<sup>64</sup> This is just one vivid example of an artist who has used his gifts to glorify God with his work.

Stained-glass windows are not just a lasting medium, but a lasting witness. As has already been discussed, stained-glass windows have carried the gospel throughout the ages of the church. Their powerful witness was felt by the congregations by the sheer number and clear depiction and reminder of Bible stories.<sup>65</sup>

Even though the production of stained-glass windows is not only time-consuming but expensive, Christians throughout the centuries have taken pride in “wasting” their time and “wasting” their money on God’s house.

“Stained-glass windows are, to me, a beautiful fulfillment of the story of the woman pouring oil on Jesus’ feet. Could that money have been given to the poor? Sure. But the

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62. Emphasis his.

63. Whall, *Stained Glass Work*, 259.

64. Hartzell, “When Christians Make Glass.”

65. MacDonald, “Stained Glass: The Medieval Multimedia Experience.”

poor we will always have with us (and we do have funds for them at our church and a pregnancy care center!). But generations past reserved the right to “waste” their money on anointing this sanctuary with God’s messages in priceless stained glass, and still today, rich and poor can enter this church and get a sense of the incalculable riches of Christ and the true wealth of knowing and worshipping him.”<sup>66</sup>

The expense is no waste at all. The extravagance demonstrates the thankfulness of the people.

### For Christians to Teach

Stained-glass windows are wonderful teaching tools. It isn’t only the artists who use these windows for God’s glory but also teachers of God’s truth. The stained-glass windows contain rich biblical imagery. They are designed to be used to instruct and edify. Stained-glass windows contain such deep and vast imagery that “only an expert in patrology, theology, religious symbolism, and iconography can read one immediately.”<sup>67</sup> God has given these gifts to many teachers in his church. Pastors and teachers have the joy of walking their students through the mysteries of God by taking them through the mysteries of the glass. The contents of these authentic witnesses to the truths of Christianity are not just fluff.<sup>68</sup> They are the contents of the Bible illustrated; they *are* scriptural truths. Christians have the joy to point to a window and say, “Look! Do you see the river of blood coming from the Lamb of God (Figure 21)? That is Jesus’ blood that makes you clean, just like you see here!”<sup>69</sup>

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66. Buelow, “St Paul, Saginaw Windows.”

67. Giorgi, *The Windows of the Church of Saint Justin Martyr*, 17.

68. Robert Koester, “Seeing Stained-Glass Windows in 2020.” Interview by JP Lindemann. Phone Call, (13 October 2020).

69. Hartzell, “When Christians Make Glass.” Pastor Hartzell did this for the author of this paper..



Christians can use appropriate stained-glass windows to teach deep mysteries of the truth of God's Word. They can be used to teach about types of Christ. In a stained-glass window about the spies of Canaan, a teacher has the joy of showing how Christ fits into the story (Figure 5). The faithful spy looked at the grapes, believing in God's promise to save him, both at that time and in the future in Christ. This spy gave a good report, while the unfaithful spy does not look at the grapes, doubting God's promise to help him.<sup>70</sup>

Another theory is that the stained-glass windows can be best used to teach about the virgin birth, and that the lesson of stained glass is the mystery of the incarnation.<sup>71</sup> The thought is that God shines through the windows to give light to the space, and in the same way God shined on the virgin to bring the incarnate Jesus into the world to give the light of the gospel.

Another theory is that the stained-glass windows can be best used to teach about the saints. A person surrounded by stained-glass windows depicting the saints is surrounded by the witnesses to the truth who lived in the past. "Behold a host arrayed in white, Like thousand snow-clad mountains bright... These are the saints of glorious fame, who from the great affliction came And in the flood of Jesus' blood Are cleansed from guilt and blame."<sup>72</sup> Christians sing this on festivals like All Saints Day to remember and honor those who have gone before. With windows like these, the Christian gets a vision of the saints of heaven.<sup>73</sup>

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70. Lee, *Stained Glass*, 25.

71. Kessler, "Consider the Glass, It Can Teach You," 151.

72. Behold a Host, Arrayed in White in *Christian Worship Hymnal*. Northwestern Publishing House. (1993): Hymn 550

73. Koester, "Seeing Stained-Glass Windows in 2020."

Stained-glass windows give a chance for teachers to show the beauty of God’s Word rather than to describe it. God’s goodness to people goes beyond words that can describe him, he is so great. “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy” (1Pt 1:8, Ps 145:3, 2Cor 9:15, et al.). Stained-glass teachers voice the same opinion when trying to describe the windows with words, “But how hopeless to deal with it by way of words in a book where actual colour cannot be shown! Nevertheless, let us try.”<sup>74</sup> Stained-glass windows are one way to express the inexpressible goodness of God.

#### For Christians to Learn

Stained-glass windows glorify God through the people who make them, the people who use them to teach, and the people who learn from them. Sicard of Cremona said, “Through these [stained-glass windows], we learn Holy Scripture and keep heresy at bay.” From the middle ages until now, stained-glass windows teach the same truths that Jesus and the apostles taught in the early church. Students of stained glass are often left in awe by the pure doctrine being taught so long ago as it is now.<sup>75</sup>

Stained-glass windows are an enjoyable way to learn. A person can learn about a seemingly intimidating topic like the church fathers in an artistic and entertaining way. Instead of learning from an abundance of words, the pictures in the windows present the material in a

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74. Whall, *Stained Glass Work*, 198-199.

75. Pope, “Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That’s Always Playing.”

simplified, experiential way.<sup>76</sup> The stained-glass windows make the lessons come alive and are inspiring to the people who learn from them. “A sermon only goes on for as long as the pastor is speaking. An orchestra is only enjoyed as long as the orchestra is playing the music. Stained-glass windows are sermons that never end, and orchestra that is constantly playing. All they need is an audience!”<sup>77</sup>

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76. Giorgi, *The Windows of the Church of Saint Justin Martyr*, 17.

77. Pope, “Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That’s Always Playing.”

## PART II: HOW CAN A WELS PASTOR USE STAINED GLASS?

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) has been blessed with this rich heritage of stained-glass windows. Stained-glass windows have spread in the WELS with the spread of the gospel. The main concentration of stained glass in WELS is in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan, but can be found in WELS churches all over the country. Churches would either put grand windows in their church right away or work on installing them slowly for years to be able to financially support it.<sup>78</sup>

Because of the necessity of skilled craftsmen in an industrial age, stained-glass windows became much more expensive to create after the 1960s. This has discouraged a majority of churches from funding and installing new stained glass in recent years. However, the existing stained glass in many churches can be used to promote the kingdom of God now and in the future. As Pastor Koester<sup>79</sup> reflected after he went searching for stained-glass windows in WELS churches, not knowing if he would even find stained-glass windows, “I’m often surprised when I do my tours, and I say ‘Wow, this is really nice stained glass!’”<sup>80</sup>

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78. Robert Koester, “Overview of Stained-Glass WELS History.” Interview by JP Lindemann. Phone Call, 11 November 2020.

79 Pastor Robert Koester served churches in California, Montana, Minnesota and Alberta. He also served as the Bible Study editor at Northwestern Publishing House for 20 years. He began researching how to photograph stained-glass windows with a variety of film cameras. Digital photography proved to be the key. His web site, [welsstainedglass.org](http://welsstainedglass.org), contains images of the stained glass in many WELS churches. He currently offers stained glass and song worship services to the churches in his area.

80. Koester, “Overview of Stained-Glass WELS History.”

In order to use the heritage of stained-glass windows properly, a pastor must learn about them. WELS pastors are trained to work with words and not with art, so the use of stained-glass windows ranges in difficulty for pastors depending on their situation. For some pastors who are not artists, it takes toiling labor to use what is there. For some pastors who are art enthusiasts or even artists in their own right, using stained-glass windows in ministry comes more easily.<sup>81</sup> No matter the natural inclination of the pastor, using stained-glass windows well is not easy. It takes hard work to use it well. A pastor requires education, effort, and passion to use stained-glass windows effectively.

The second part of this paper will focus on how a pastor in one of these WELS churches can use the heritage that is readily available. Educated by the familiarities of stained-glass windows of four experienced WELS pastors, the author will draw conclusions about how the contemporary use of stained-glass windows. Depending on what the kind of stained-glass windows are at a church, a pastor can use them for preaching, teaching, outreach, to touch emotions, and personal devotion.

### **What Categories of Stained Glass Can WELS Pastors Use?**

The pastor's use of stained-glass windows in a church begins with learning about what is in his church. A pastor must familiarize himself, not with the stained glass in other churches, but what is in his own. It takes time and effort to learn about the dynamic and intricacies of each unique stained-glass window, and so many pastors don't know about the stained glass in their church beyond that they have it.

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81. Pope, "Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That's Always Playing."

Useful stained glass is Christocentric. A Christocentric stained-glass window, however, does not automatically require a cross or the face of Jesus. The author has categorized the different kinds of windows that a WELS pastor might find in his church that can be used to teach the good news about Jesus.

### Narrative

Some stained-glass windows tell a story. Narrative stained-glass windows gained popularity in the thirteenth century.<sup>82</sup> These stained-glass windows take an iconic snapshot or highpoint of a biblical narrative and portray it in the glass. One example is in the account of the twelve spies, the spies are seen carrying the fruit of the holy land back to Moses to give a report (Figure 5). Another example is in the account of Jesus calming the storm, Jesus is seen getting ready to speak to silence the waves as the storm is at its fiercest (Figure 6). Even though the stained-glass windows are motionless, the complexity and symbolism in these windows simulate the motion, as the onlooker's eyes travel around the window to find the full story.

### Doctrinal

Some stained-glass windows teach doctrine. Since the church has its hand in the stained-glass windows not only in the funding, installation, and display, but also in the content, planning, and creation, stained-glass windows are full of doctrinal truths. Generally, the doctrine of the church is taught through any of the windows that portray what the church teaches, but specifically, stained-glass windows are full of doctrinal *symbolism*. These symbols that correctly teach

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82. Laverock, "Saints' Lives and Stained Glass," 227

doctrine are taken directly from Scripture. They are neither outdated symbols nor innovative symbols but symbols that the biblical writers used to convey the message of the gospel. A crown of thorns teaches the suffering that Jesus endured in his passion. A lamp with the light on the end of it teaches that Jesus is the light of the world (Figure 7).

A major portion of those stained-glass windows that teach doctrine highlight the means of grace. The baptismal shell paired with water droplets symbolizing Holy Baptism and bread paired with wine symbolizing the Lord's Supper can be found in many WELS churches. Holy Baptism is a sacrament that happens once in a Christian's life, but that has implications lasting her whole life. *Christian Worship* contains the blessing given to baptized believers: "May God strengthen you to live in your baptismal grace all the days of your life."<sup>83</sup> The prevalence of baptism in stained glass windows reminds the Christian to recognize her baptism again each time she sees it. The Lord's Supper stained-glass windows also remind a person to ponder that sacrament. Communicant members of the WELS need to be well instructed about what the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is before communing. The Lord's Supper in stained-glass windows helps the Christian to reflect on their instruction every time they see it. As the Christian enters the church of stained-glass windows depicting the means of grace, she is reminded of God's means of grace to her anew.

### Language

Some stained-glass windows contain words. Stained-glass windows are not incompatible with words, but they are rather contradictory. The stained-glass medium is a picture medium. They

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83. *Christian Worship Hymnal*, page 14.

convey meaning without words. Characters and symbols *show* the onlooker a message, they do not *tell* them. Language evolves and changes over time and also requires knowledge of the language to understand (Figure 8). Characters and symbols do not require a knowledge of language to understand, and they are more accessible universally.

Some language, however, has a cemented meaning throughout time because it is language that God has used to describe himself. Names for God are a useful category of stained-glass windows (Figure 17). The combination of the Greek Letters alpha and omega (A and Ω) are letters that Jesus used to describe himself (Rev 22:13). In the first half of the ninth century under Charlemagne, this combination of letters became so popular in stained-glass windows that they became known as Christ's monogram.<sup>84</sup> These same letters are still used in churches today to identify Jesus (Figure 14). A Christian in the ninth century and a Christian in the twenty-first century would use different words of their own language to identify Jesus, but both could identify him in stained glass by his monogram (AΩ) — the Alpha and Omega, as he described himself in Revelation 22:13.

### **Use Them in Church Services**

One of the historical uses for stained-glass windows and a use that the WELS pastor can still use is to use them for preaching. Stained-glass windows provide a precious visual medium of the message of the Gospel that is proclaimed from the pulpit. Christians have been making use of the

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84. Dell'Acqua, "Early History of Stained Glass," 28.



visual aid of stained-glass windows for centuries.<sup>85</sup> These visual aids can be used by the preacher to supplement his sermon.

Pastor Pope contends that using stained-glass windows for preaching is the best way a WELS pastor can use it. “The most effective use of stained glass is when you point to it in your sermon and say, ‘See what I mean?’”<sup>86</sup> A pastor often searches for illustrations for his sermon to keep his congregation engaged in his words. Stained-glass windows are effective illustrations because they are hiding in plain sight. When a pastor points to stained-glass windows that illustrate what he is talking about, the logical connection is obvious and engaging. “It is an oasis of relief for the ear when you give the eye something to look at.”<sup>87</sup>

One stained-glass window instructor showed the importance of the use of visual aids to accompany words in this way:

... One thinks of morning and evening; ... of clouds passing over the sun; of the dappled glow and glitter, and of faint flushes cast from the windows on the cathedral pavement; of pearly white, like the lining of a shell; of purple bloom and azure haze, and grass-green and golden spots, like the budding of the spring; of all the gaiety, the sparkle, and the charm. And the, as if the evening were drawing on, comes over the memory the picture of those graver harmonies, in the full glow of red and blue, which go with the deep notes of the great organ, playing requiem or evening hymn. Of what use is it to speak of these things? The words fall upon the ear, but the eye is not filled.

This description means little to nothing without the visual they are describing. When it comes to sacred stained glass, the subject of Christ means everything. To instill that, the windows can also fill the eyes to assist the words falling on the ears. A pastor who wants to communicate that the

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85. Christie, “Using Stained-Glass Windows in the Classroom,”

86. Pope, “Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That’s Always Playing.”

87. Pope, “Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That’s Always Playing.”

hands that were outstretched on the cross for them are the same hands that bless them can do so simply by pointing to a window (Figure 1 and Figure 9). A pastor who wants to communicate that while Mary was weeping that Jesus was gone, can direct attention to a window that shows that Jesus was standing right behind her (Figure 10).

“If a picture says 1000 words, you save a lot of time in your sermon!”<sup>88</sup> Pastor Pope encourages. Not only do stained-glass windows assist the main point of a preacher’s message, but they can also be used to supplement what he is saying. A pastor can’t cover everything he wants to talk about in the limited length of a sermon. A pastor is often forced to leave out of his sermon some thought-provoking and insightful applications and connections. Stained-glass windows can help a pastor communicate some of those ideas by simply pointing at them in stained glass. A reference to Jesus as the “Good Shepherd” does not require paragraphs of explanation, but a simple point to the window depicting the shepherd caring for the sheep (Figure 11).

A pastor can additionally use stained glass, not only during his sermons but to plan out his sermons or services. One of the reasons that stained-glass windows were historically installed in the first place was to highlight certain church festivals.<sup>89</sup> During the Christmas season when there are many extra church services, a pastor can use the stained-glass window that tells the Christmas story to outline the dialogue, readings, songs, and topics of the sermon. To celebrate a minor festival of the church year such as the celebration of a specific saint like St Matthew the Apostle, the stained-glass window that gives the symbol of St. Matthew could be highlighted and

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88. Pope, “Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That’s Always Playing.”

89. Lee, *Stained Glass*, 25.

explained in the service (Figure 12). Stained-glass windows can also be used for anniversary services. St Paul's in Saginaw is using the biblical message conveyed by the stained-glass windows to guide their sermon and message of that day.<sup>90</sup> Stained-glass windows can also be used to plan a sermon series. Many churches have multiple stained-glass windows lined up side by side in the sanctuary. The progression from window to window on each progressing Sunday provides a logical path for a sermon series.

### **Use Them in Class**

Stained-glass windows are an effective visual teaching tool. WELS pastors teach Bible Class, Catechism Class, and Bible Information Class. Pastors across WELS have used stained-glass windows in their teaching.

#### Bible Class

In a Bible Class, a pastor can deeply analyze the symbolism of the stained-glass windows. As has been already explored, many stained-glass windows convey rich messages. There are layers of meaning to stained-glass windows. A pastor can explain in depth what he senses would be too overwhelming in the setting of a church service. "In a bible class, you can get into detail for those who are really interested."<sup>91</sup>

It is also useful to teach about stained-glass windows in Bible Class because it is a setting where people can ask questions. The symbols and positioning in the glass are oftentimes

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90. Buelow, "St Paul, Saginaw Windows."

91. Pope, "Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That's Always Playing."

portrayed in a meaningful way by the artist. A meaning of a part of the stained-glass window may seem too obvious to the pastor to explain that needs to be clarified to the people. This provides a setting for people to get the answer to the questions that cross their mind every Sunday when they notice a specific aspect of the stained-glass windows.

### Catechism Class

In a Catechism Class, a WELS pastor can slowly and methodically peel back the symbols of stained-glass windows for the seventh and eighth-grade students. In Catechism Class, the WELS pastor educates the catechumens about the teaching of the church. The stained-glass windows can be part of that education. The pastor can show the students that stained-glass windows are much more than an enticement to come and took. They actually proclaim the gospel themselves.<sup>92</sup>

Professor Christie<sup>93</sup> taught his catechumens the doctrine of baptism with stained-glass windows when he was the pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Waukesha, Wisconsin (Trinity Waukesha). He used stained-glass windows to take his class “on a field trip”. Trinity Waukesha recently installed stained-glass windows that teach the doctrine of baptism in their church. Professor Christie used the stained-glass window to teach the presence of the institution of baptism, the Holy Trinity in baptism, infant baptism, and the blessings of baptism (Figure 13).

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92. Christie, “Using Stained-Glass Windows in the Classroom.”

93. Professor Aaron Christie serves as Worship and Homiletics professor and Dean of Chapel at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. He was a pastor for 27 years combined between Faith, Antioch, Ill and Trinity Lutheran Church in Waukesha, WI. In addition, he served for 14 years as district worship coordinator for the Southeastern Wisconsin District of WELS. He currently serves the synod as a member of the Commission on Worship, as the Hymnody Chairman of the WELS Hymnal Project, as a regular presenter for WELS Schools of Worship Enrichment, and as a member of WELS Institute for Worship and Outreach.

An alternate method for using the windows is to use them for review for the students. He takes the students to look at the windows and asks them to identify the parts of baptism.<sup>94</sup>

Professor Christie says that this is one way that he teaches the catechumens to make their learning practical. “It teaches them to take the lessons they learn out of the classroom. Take it from the classroom to the church, and then the trick is to take it from there to the outside world. This teaching is just as real as that window, and both are just as real as real life. This is one way that they can break down the barrier of “this is church and this is everything else.”<sup>95</sup> The stained-glass windows are one way to show the students how important the doctrines are that they are learning. It can also help them recall their basic catechism instruction as they see the windows when they attend church after they are confirmed. The teachings are connected to the windows for them. Pastor Christie’s students fondly remember their instruction using the windows.<sup>96</sup>

#### Bible Information Class

In a Bible Information Class, a WELS pastor can introduce the new and potential members to their church using the stained-glass windows in the church. Pastor Hartzell did this in Cross and Crown, Georgetown, Texas (Cross and Crown). The stained-glass windows that he had access to (and also made) gave a basic presentation of Christianity. Pastor Hartzell used them to teach the new members what his church was all about.

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94. Christie, “Using Stained-Glass Windows in the Classroom.”

95. Christie, “Using Stained-Glass Windows in the Classroom.”

96. Christie, “Using Stained-Glass Windows in the Classroom.”

The name of the church was Cross and Crown, and so the first window he would show the new members is the window of the cross and crown that stands for Jesus' death and resurrection (Figure 14). This simple meaning makes the rest of the windows less intimidating and more accessible to the new members. Pastor Hartzell liked that he could teach the basics of Christianity with the stained-glass windows in a non-confrontational way. He would encourage them to take a look around the church and hope that they would reference or ask about a window. "The new member would say, 'I like your glass windows!' and I would say, 'Can I tell you? This window tells a story that applies to our church.' This is a non-confrontational way to teach them. I don't hit them on the head with Bible passages. In a non-preachy, non-judgmental way I explained what the windows meant."

Each stained-glass window launches into a story for Pastor Pope.<sup>97</sup> In this way, a pastor can tell the story of the thief on the cross (Figure 15) or the raising of Lazarus from the dead (Figure 16), or even the Tetragrammaton (Figure 17) in Bible Information Class in an informal way, which he would never get the chance to in a normal Bible Information Class. About the thief on the cross:

"Look at the thieves by Jesus. This one was an unbeliever all his life. This thief stopped doing what he was doing and Jesus saved him. Jesus told him, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise!' This thief calls on the name of Jesus. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

About the raising of Lazarus from the dead: "Do you see the examples of how the people are dealing with death? Some have hope and some have no hope. Your children will be watching you when death comes, just like we are watching these people here. Have your hand on Jesus

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97. A senior thesis about Pastor Pope explaining one stained-glass window would have more than enough content

when you look at death.” Even about the Tetragrammaton: “You see these letters? What’s in a name? That’s the gospel! Hosanna, Amen, this is the heavenly language! This is the special name of God!”<sup>98</sup> Using stained-glass windows in Bible Information Class is a great way to supplement the class and get new members excited to learn more about the church.

### **Use Them for Outreach**

Stained-glass windows are objectively beautiful. Their beauty can be used to attract people to the message they communicate. A person does not need to be a WELS Lutheran to gaze upon the beauty of a stained-glass window. Onlookers admire the stained-glass windows, whether believers or not. “Even unbelievers gape in awe at the beauty of the windows. That’s already something special, and a teaching of: How lovely is your dwelling place oh Lord Almighty. Does that beauty in any way just maybe point to one who is beauty itself, the creator of beauty?”<sup>99</sup> Stained-glass windows naturally invite the onlookers to investigate them further. The sheer beauty of light and color combined with the seemingly mysterious figures portrayed in the glass. One way to introduce the gospel to the community is to promote the stained-glass windows for the community to enjoy as art that gives an authentic witness to Jesus.

The methods a WELS pastor might publicize and promote the stained-glass windows vary. Using stained-glass windows as an evangelism tool requires creativity, and stained-glass windows lend themselves well to the creative mind. The author discovered a few successful

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98. Pope, “Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That’s Always Playing.”

99. Christie, “Using Stained-Glass Windows in the Classroom.”

ways of evangelizing with stained-glass windows. Stained-glass windows can be explained in a publication, highlighted in a storybook, or featured in a video presentation.

### Publication

Using a publication to explain what the windows mean is a simple way to share their meaning with the public. Publications of stained-glass windows vary in complexity. St Paul’s Episcopal Church in Milwaukee has a publication that goes into deep history about the backstories of the stained-glass windows (Figure 30). Trinity, Waukesha has a readily available publication that gives a one-paragraph explanation of the doctrine behind each window (Figure 31). Christ, Baileys Harbor published a half-page report on each window in the bulletin from the stained-glass window installation service (Figure 32).<sup>100</sup>

As has been explored above, stained-glass windows are not often documented well. Composing a publication about the stained-glass windows might be the first time there has ever been written documentation about the windows in the church. The publications can be made available for the members of the church to use so that they also can know and explain what the windows mean. The publications can also accompany any other church information that a church is already sending out to promote itself.

### Storybook

Narrative stained-glass windows can be photographed and used to illustrate a story. A compilation of stained-glass windows from different locations can be collected to be used

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100. Peter Lindemann, “Hands of Jesus,” Christ Lutheran Church, Baileys Harbor, WI, (2013).



together. One of the frequent subjects of stained-glass windows is the Christmas story. One page may feature a window containing the annunciation to the Virgin Mary, and the story may accompany it. The words on the page in the book don't explain the stained-glass windows. Rather, the stained-glass windows explain the words. One series of books specifically uses this format.<sup>101</sup> The stories of Christmas, Easter, and the seasons are all illustrated with photographs of stained-glass windows (Figures 22-24).

### Technological Presentation

Pastor Koester's use of stained-glass windows was the most creative that the author discovered. He himself is not a stained-glass artist, but he uses stained-glass windows in videos and a website. His work started as simply taking an interest in stained-glass windows, but evolved into a brand new way to use stained-glass windows that has only recently become possible.

One way that Pastor Koester uses stained-glass windows is by combining the photographs of the stained-glass windows with music. He creates a PowerPoint presentation consisting of a topical collection of stained-glass windows and synchronizes it with a song that matches the topic of the stained glass. One example is a Lenten collection, entitled "I Know of a Sleep." The song "I Know of a Sleep," is played in the background, while the pictures of the stained-glass windows are shown depicting Jesus praying in Gethsemane, the three crosses on the outside of Jerusalem, and the like (Figures 28, 29). Pastor Koester would then take this video on tour, so to speak. He found an audience in nursing homes. He could invite anyone and

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101. Sonia Halliday, *The Easter Story in Stained Glass*. (First American Edition. William B Eerdmans Publishing, 1982).

everyone to watch his video with him in the nursing home. The presentation of the gospel to the ears and the eyes was then made in a unique way to anyone who devoted the three minutes that it takes to watch one of these. Not only are the people who view the video enriched, but it is also a devotional experience for Pastor Koester to make the presentation.<sup>102103</sup>

Another way that Pastor Koester uses technology with stained-glass windows is by collecting them in a library. Pastor Koester runs the website WELStainedGlass.org (WELS Stained Glass). On this website, he has accessible photographs of the stained-glass windows that he has photographed in his years visiting different churches. This website is not a full catalog of all of the stained-glass windows in WELS, but it is the most complete catalog that the author is aware of. The website has the stained-glass windows of 125 of the 1226 churches in WELS at the time of the writing of this paper. Pastor Koester estimates that there are at least three hundred more WELS churches that have stained-glass windows that he would be happy to document on his website but does not have access to. He also indicated that he wouldn't be surprised if the number of WELS churches with stained glass is even higher than that, as he is often surprised when he visits a WELS church that he has never visited before, only to find that it has useful stained-glass windows that he was not aware of.<sup>104</sup>

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102. More on this soon.

103. Interview and video files Koester Koester, "Seeing Stained-Glass Windows in 2020."

104. Koester, "Seeing Stained-Glass Windows in 2020."

### Use Them to Touch Emotions

Believers receive God’s word not only with their intellect, but also with their emotions.

Emotions are not the main focus for a believer, but it is one facet that serves the education of the believer. Psalm 119 shows the emotional progression that a believer can go through. He may start by walking in the Lord’s path, but he soon runs out of zeal for him: “Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who *walk* according to the law of the Lord” (Ps 119:1). “I *run* in the path of your commands, for you have broadened my understanding” (Ps 119:32).<sup>105</sup> The transition from walking to running shows excited emotion. Stained-glass windows invoke an emotional response in people because it conveys God’s message to them in a beautiful way.

Sunlight, which is given by God, comes through the windows and lands on the onlooker in a way that she can simply reflect on it. “Light passing through the windows reifies the argument that the persons and events of sacred history are diverse manifestations of a single Deity who, entering the minds of the faithful through both knowledge and emotions, lifts them heavenward.”<sup>106</sup> The beauty of stained-glass windows has affected the emotions of onlookers since they became popular over one thousand years ago. They still positively affect human emotions today. The beauty of the windows allows the onlooker to reflect on God’s beauty and the light of his goodness.<sup>107</sup>

The characters and content of the stained-glass window can also affect emotions. Consider the relationships that the windows depict. In some windows, Jesus is standing tall, and

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105. Emphasis the author’s.

106. Kessler, “Consider the Glass, It Can Tech You,” 151.

107. Kessler, “Consider the Glass, It Can Tech You,” 151.

all of his subjects are bowing before him. This highlights the power of Jesus and invokes a feeling of reverence in the onlooker. In some windows, Jesus is being held by his mother. This highlights the personal relationship between Jesus and his mother and invites the onlooker to ponder the bewildering mystery that God was a baby (Figure 18). Touching emotion is a part of teaching Scripture, and stained-glass windows do that inherently.<sup>108</sup>

### **Use Them in Personal Devotion**

The biggest and most pleasant surprise for the author in researching the field of stained-glass windows is its use for personal devotion. Refrains like “It’s a devotional thing for me”<sup>109</sup> are littered throughout the literature and interviews on the subject. Stained-glass windows stir up personal reflection. When the stained-glass windows convey the Scriptures, the reflection is on the message of the Scripture. This is useful for the pastor who lives in a world of words.

“Stained-glass windows provided icons to concentrate devotion on divinity and on individual saints during masses, and direct prayers for special occasions. But they also supplied a focus for devotion regardless of the daily rhythm of the hours, the weekly rhythm of masses or the annual rhythm of feast days.”<sup>110</sup>

As was explored above, stained-glass windows are an orchestra that is always playing. It needs only an audience. A private audience of one is enough to view this sermon that never ends. The stained-glass windows invite the busy pastor, no matter the success or chaos, no matter if the day

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108. Pope, “Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That’s Always Playing.”

109. Koester, “Seeing Stained-Glass Windows in 2020.”

110. Jordan, “Stories in Windows: The Architectonics of Narrative,” 184.

seems to last forever or the day disappears in a flash, as long as God sends his light, to reflect on the wonders of the teachings featured in the stained-glass windows.

### Deep Encounter with God's Word

Stained-glass windows are designed to convey a message. The useful stained-glass windows convey a message that is not their own but is borrowed.<sup>111</sup> A useful stained-glass window is one artist's testimony of her encounter with God's Word. The artist spent hours in contemplation of the Bible teaching, planning, and designing the window, and her conclusions are displayed for anyone to see. Because of the time and meditation spent on the subject, these artists have insights and takes on the teaching that a standard theologian might not ponder as deeply because the artist has to convey the thought.

"I can't wait to look at his hands!" Pastor Hartzell exclaimed while he was explaining the window (Figure 19) that he created depicting the scene of Jesus's ascension into heaven.

"It's a great application to teach the people. I tell them, "You will see Jesus come back just like this." You can see the wounds in his hands [in the stained-glass window]. Now those are stylized, but people will say, "That's not where they put the nails, because they would rip out!" And that's ok because at least they know that his hands were wounded for us. What are you going to look at when you look at Jesus when he comes back? I'm going to look at the nail marks in his hands! Jesus showed those marks to his disciples for that very reason, so that they could look at the nail marks. Those nail marks are testimony to the fact that Jesus *really* came and suffered for us. I can't wait to look at his hands!"<sup>112</sup>

Pastor Hartzell has spent much time and energy trying to figure out how best to elucidate the account of Jesus' ascension into heaven, and it has given him an extra yearning to see the Lord

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111. Cf. page 24

112. Hartzell, "When Christians Make Glass."

come back on the last day. This deep encounter with the word of God is shared with those who observe the glass and learn about the message it conveys.

Christians are hungry for something deeper than facts. The Christian seeks what God has for him, which is beyond his natural understanding, as Isaiah declares, “Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him” (Is 64:4). Stained-glass windows offer a way to reflect on that transcendent attribute of God’s love. Stained-glass windows offer something deeper than words. Stained-glass windows get the Christian sucked in to investigate the light of the world further. They invite him to a deeper encounter with God’s Word.

#### It Gives the Pastor a Glimpse

One temptation for WELS pastors is to treat the Word of God academically to the detriment of meditating on it devotionally. Stained-glass windows can give the WELS pastor a glimpse at what they are preaching. Stained-glass windows are not just for pastors to explain to others; they are also for the pastor to ponder. For example, in preparation for a Sunday that focuses on heaven or the final coming of Christ, a pastor may be tempted to apply the teaching only to the people, but not to himself. “[Discussing a stained-glass window] The Last Judgment is seen as a spiritual vision of Christ and his apostles occupying the celestial temple. It is a glimpse of what the faithful aspire to attain.”<sup>113</sup> It may strike the WELS pastor, as he prepares for his sermon and sees the glimpse of the heavenly goal the stained-glass window, which he devotionally

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113. Kessler, “Consider the Glass, It Can Teach You,” 144.

appreciates is for him too. The theoretical words become real for him as he gazes at the visualization of God's Word to aid him in his study.

### It is a Special Experience

Reflecting on stained-glass windows in personal devotion is a special experience. One pastor reflected anonymously:

I would often go into the sanctuary early in the morning and kneel at the rail and say my morning prayers. And it was always just something special when you saw the light coming in through those windows and recall the sacraments [that the windows elucidate]. I always thought that was a precious reminder: God is everywhere, which means he is on the far side of Pluto, but in the sacraments, he is up close and personal and all in with his forgiveness for me this morning.<sup>114</sup>

Another pastor also reflects, "Personally, I can't get enough of the sun shining through the resurrection window at just the right angle where the 'sky' in the window changes to golden/orange (Figure 20)."<sup>115</sup><sup>116</sup> Interactions with stained-glass windows are a precious experience for the pastor who is aware of them. This one-on-one experience that a person has with God is emotional and devotional.

The WELS pastor has the advantage of years of education and being constantly immersed in the Word of God. Any Christian, but especially a WELS pastor, who is educated in the intricacies of stained-glass windows can see things in the stained-glass window that no one else can see right away. That doesn't mean he knows everything there is to know, but he is literate in biblical imagery. A stained-glass window that portrays a lamb who is slain pouring out a river of

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114. Annonomous Interview

115. Buelow, "St Paul, Saginaw Windows."

116. Resurrection window st Paul's.

blood for sheep to gather around a shepherd and be clean contains multiple biblical allusions (Figure 21).<sup>117</sup> The WELS pastor is constantly working with this kind of imagery and can perceive them.

Since he can perceive them, they are meaningful to him. After the WELS pastor has dwelled on the meaning of the windows devotionally and let them affect him, he can effectively make them meaningful to the people. The WELS pastor has insight into the meaning of the stained-glass windows. In one instance, he may know that the flow of blood depicted in the glass has pure gold fired into the stained-glass window to give it its deep color (Figure 21). This gives more reflection for the educated observer that Jesus' blood is precious. After the WELS pastor ponders that Jesus shed that precious blood for him, he can communicate it to the people.<sup>118</sup>

The primary stained-glass windows that a WELS pastor works with are the ones in his own church. However, he can also use other stained-glass windows as a special devotion for himself too. If he finds a stained-glass window in another church, he most likely will not use it to teach the people of his congregation (unless he has access to a picture of it), but his education and familiarity with stained-glass windows and biblical language go with him as he views the new window. It is special for the educated WELS pastor to find meaning in a new window. He may ask himself questions like "How long has Jesus been waiting for me to look at me in this window? How much longer will he be here?"<sup>119</sup> How many people have gazed upon this window

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117. Isaiah 40:11, John 10:11, Revelation 5:6, Revelation 7:14, et al.

118. Hartzell, "When Christians Make Glass."

119. Pope, "Stained-Glass Windows: An Orchestra That's Always Playing."



in this spot to learn about Jesus before me? What does this stained-glass window communicate to me that has been different from all the others?

## THE LIGHT SHINES THROUGH

God has blessed his church with the beautiful and useful heritage of stained-glass windows. The educated use of stained-glass windows that portray the true doctrine of the church has many and varied uses in the twenty-first century WELS church. Stained-glass windows are an authentic witness to the gospel because they enlighten the mind and affect the emotions of the Christian with the good news of the Bible. Jesus's love for his people shines through beautiful stained-glass windows.

Although there is a wide variety of sources available about stained-glass windows in general, as well as famous stained-glass windows, the stained-glass windows of WELS are tragically under-documented. Since this thesis was researched and written during the Coronavirus pandemic, and access to churches was limited, the research relied heavily on virtual documentation, the knowledge of four experienced pastors, and a website created by one of those pastors as a passionate hobby that is dedicated to the stained-glass windows of WELS. The author hopes that as many in WELS that become aware of the under-documentation of the stained-glass windows in their church, that they make efforts to capture the windows in photograph and explanation so that Christians across the country and in future centuries may also be enlightened by their authentic witness.

## APPENDIX 1: STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS AND OTHER WORKS

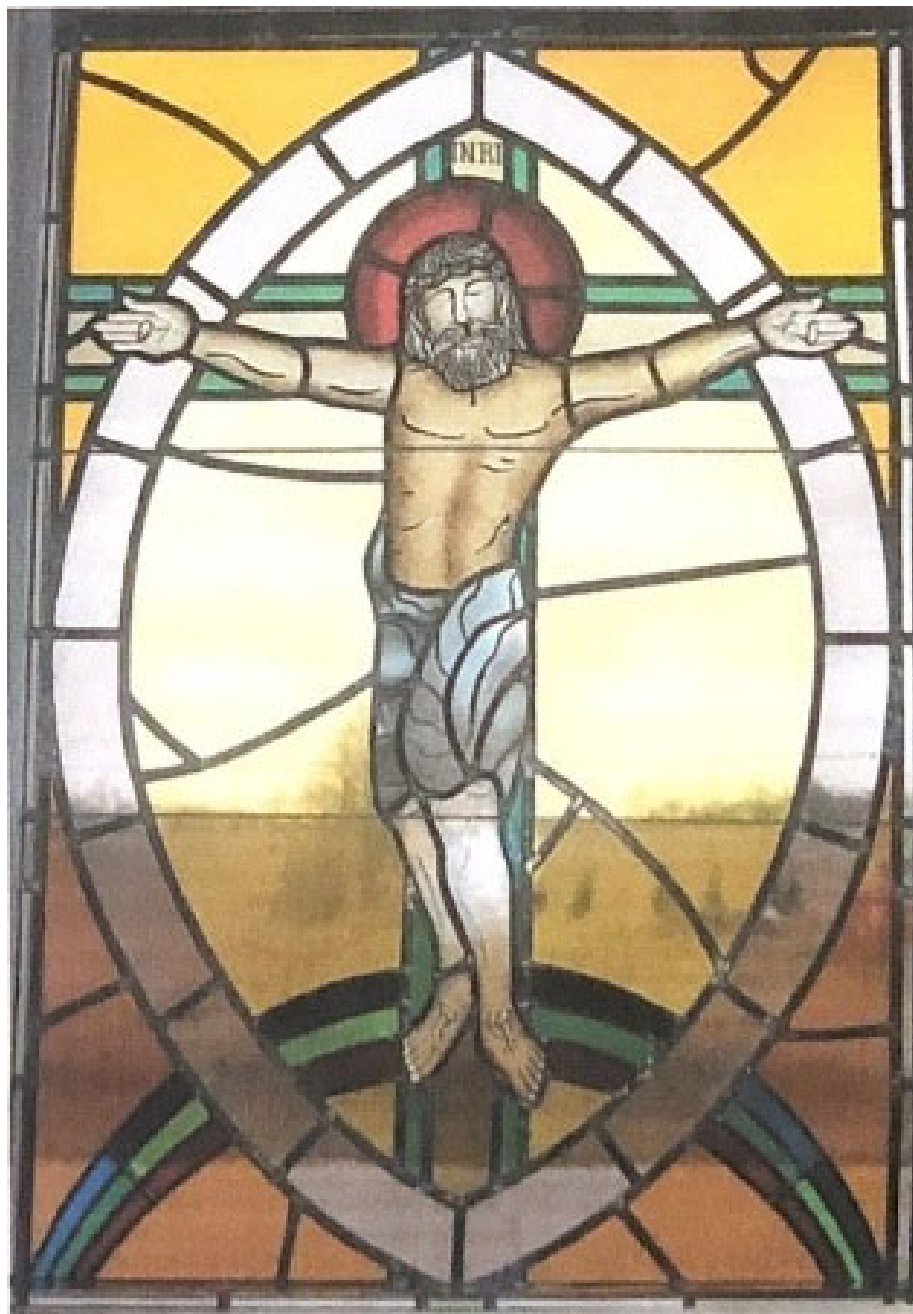


Figure 1. Nathan Pope, *Jesus Suspended on the Cross* (2013), Baileys Harbor, WI, Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

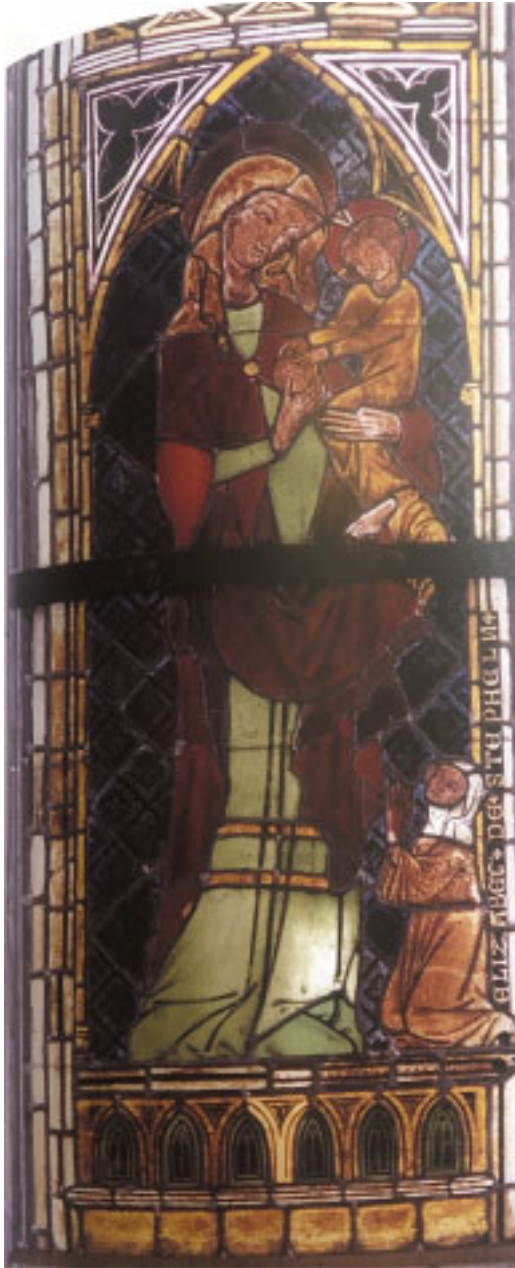


Figure 2. *Virgin and Child with Abbes Elizabeth von Stofflen* (c.1320-1330), Heiligkreuztal, Church of the former Cistercian Convent



Figure 3. *Ten Commandments*, Sleepy Eye, MN, St John's Lutheran Church

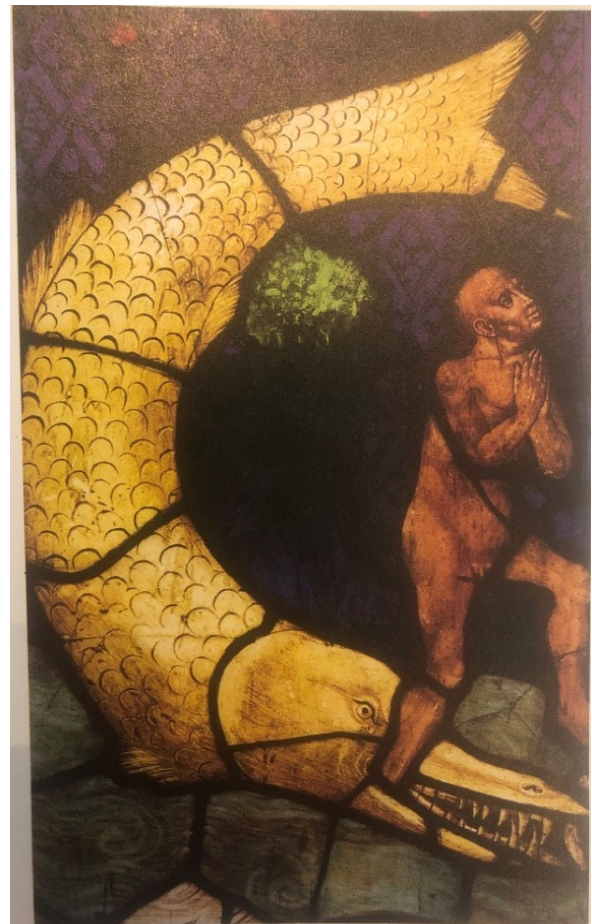


Figure 4. *The Prophet Jonah*, Austria, Convent of St Lambrecht



Figure 5. *Two Spies* (c. 1479), Nurnberg, Germany, St Lorenz Church

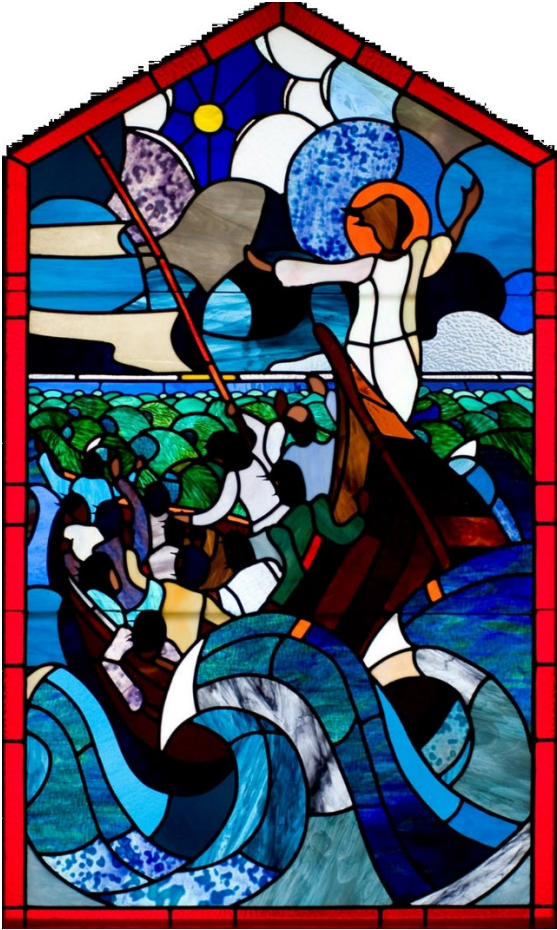


Figure 6. Hartzell, Eric, *Jesus Boat* (2015),  
Georgetown, TX, Cross and Crown  
Lutheran Church



Figure 7. *Light of the World*, Milwaukee,  
WI, Zebaoth Lutheran Church



Figure 8. *Front Left Angel*, Milwaukee, WI,  
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

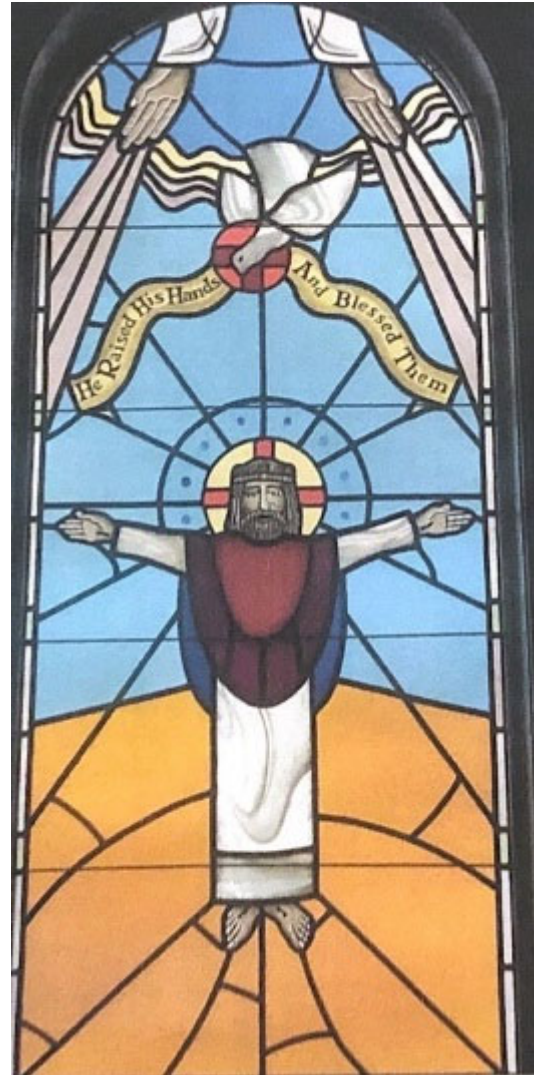


Figure 9. Nathan Pope, *Jesus's Ascension*  
(2013), Baileys Harbor, WI, Christ  
Evangelical Lutheran Church

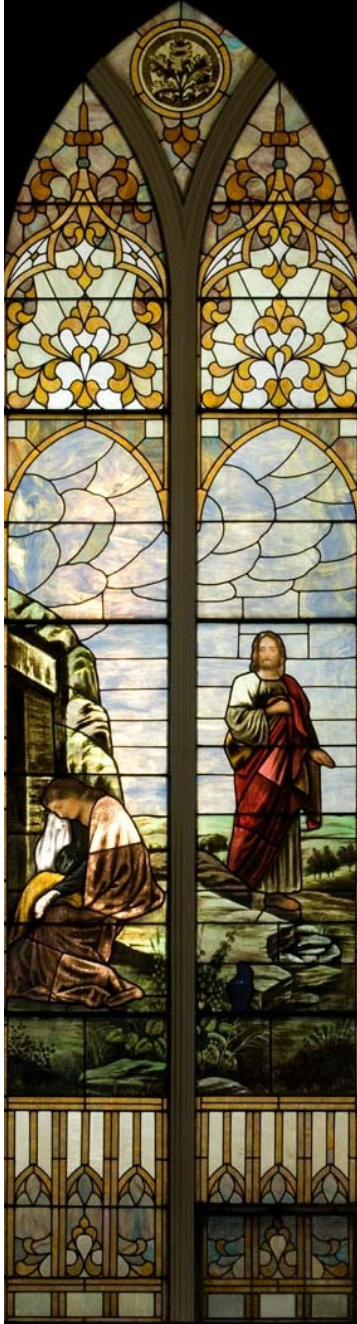


Figure 10. *Resurrection Window*,  
Manitowoc, WI, First German Lutheran  
Church



Figure 11. *Good Shepherd Window*, Beaver  
Dam, WI, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church



Figure 12. *St Matthew*, Oshkosh, WI, Grace  
Lutheran Church





Figure 13. *Baptism Window*, Waukesha, WI, Trinity Lutheran Church



Figure 14. Hartzell, Eric, *Cross and Crown* (2015), Georgetown, TX, Cross and Crown Lutheran Church



Figure 15. Hartzell, Eric, *Crucifixion* (2015), Georgetown, TX, Cross and Crown Lutheran Church



Figure 16. Hartzell, Eric, *Raising of Lazarus*  
(2015), Georgetown, TX, Cross and Crown  
Lutheran Church



Figure 17. Hartzell, Eric, *Names for God*  
(2015), Georgetown, TX, Cross and Crown  
Lutheran Church



Figure 18. *Madonna*, Chartres France, Chartres Cathedral



Figure 19. Hartzell, Eric, *Jesus; Ascension* (2015), Georgetown, TX, Cross and Crown Lutheran Church



Figure 20. *Resurrection Window*, Saginaw, MI, St Paul's Lutheran Church

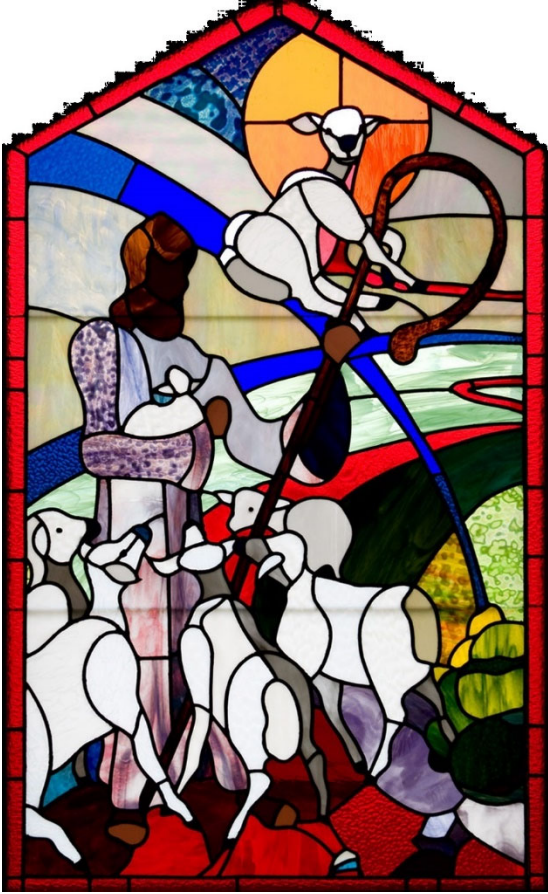


Figure 21. Hartzell, Eric, *The Lamb who was Slain* (2015), Georgetown, TX, Cross and Crown Lutheran Church

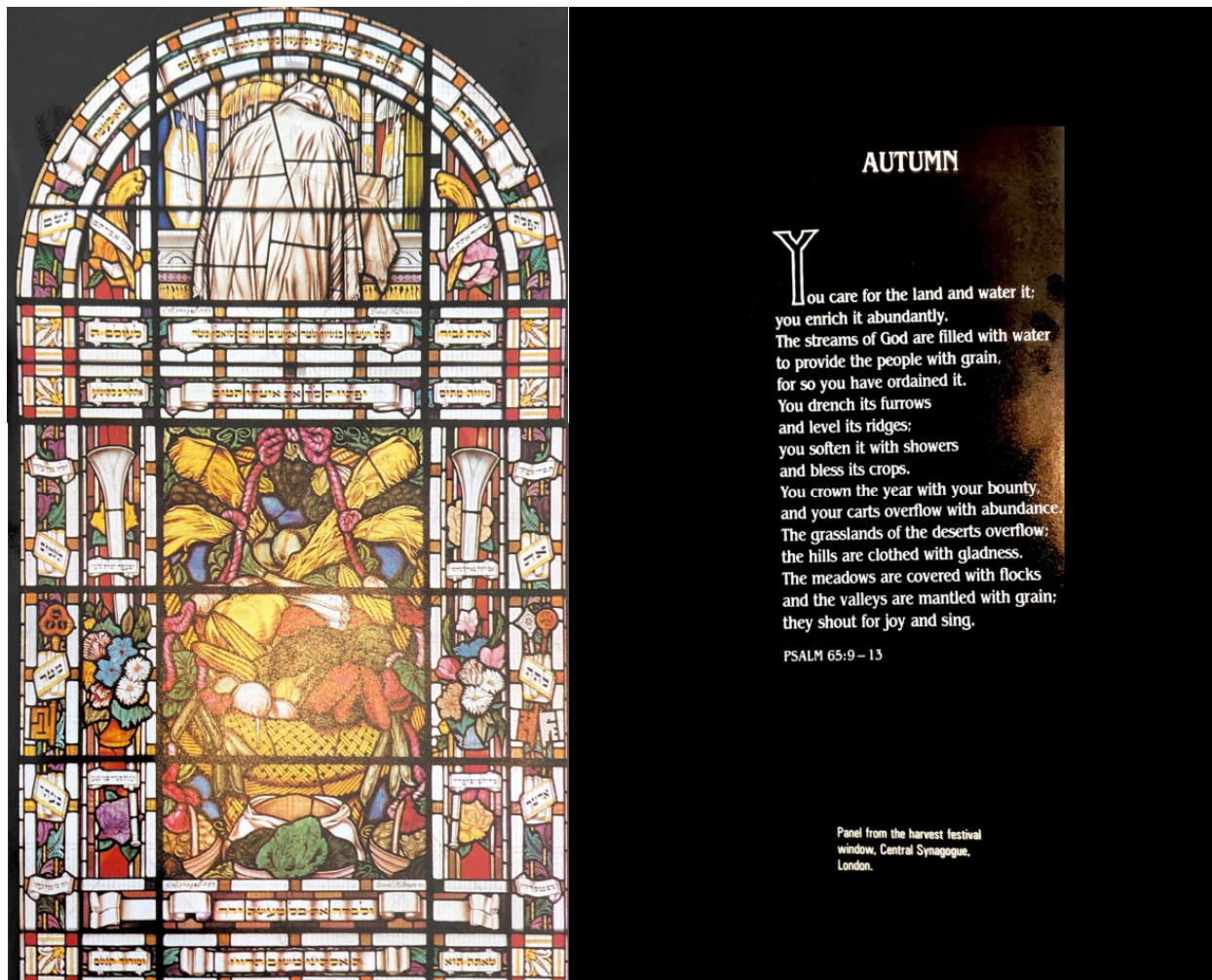


Figure 22. Halliday, Sonia. *The Seasons in Stained Glass*. First American Edition. William B Eerdmans Publishing, 1980.



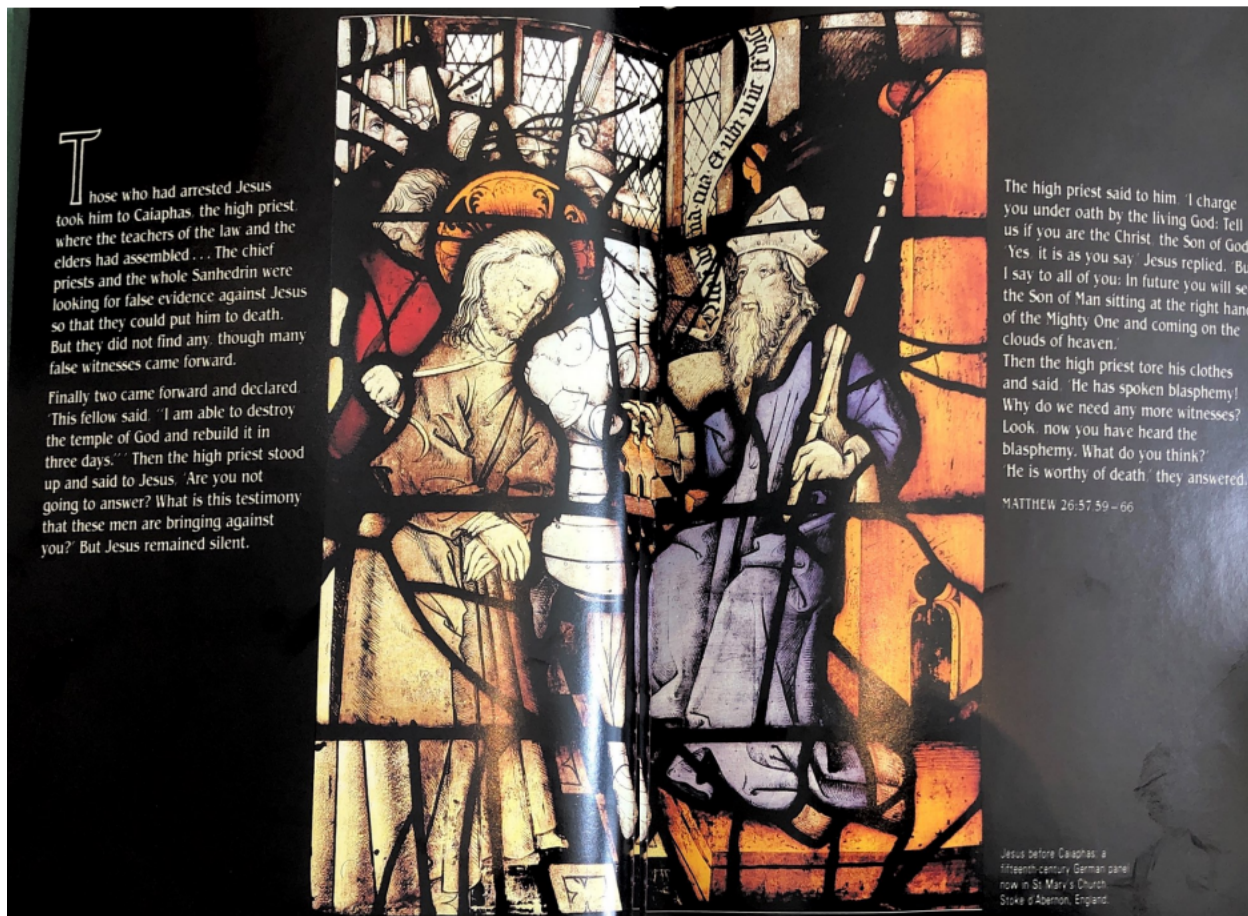


Figure 23. Halliday, Sonia. *The Easter Story in Stained Glass*. First American Edition. William B Eerdmans Publishing, 1980.

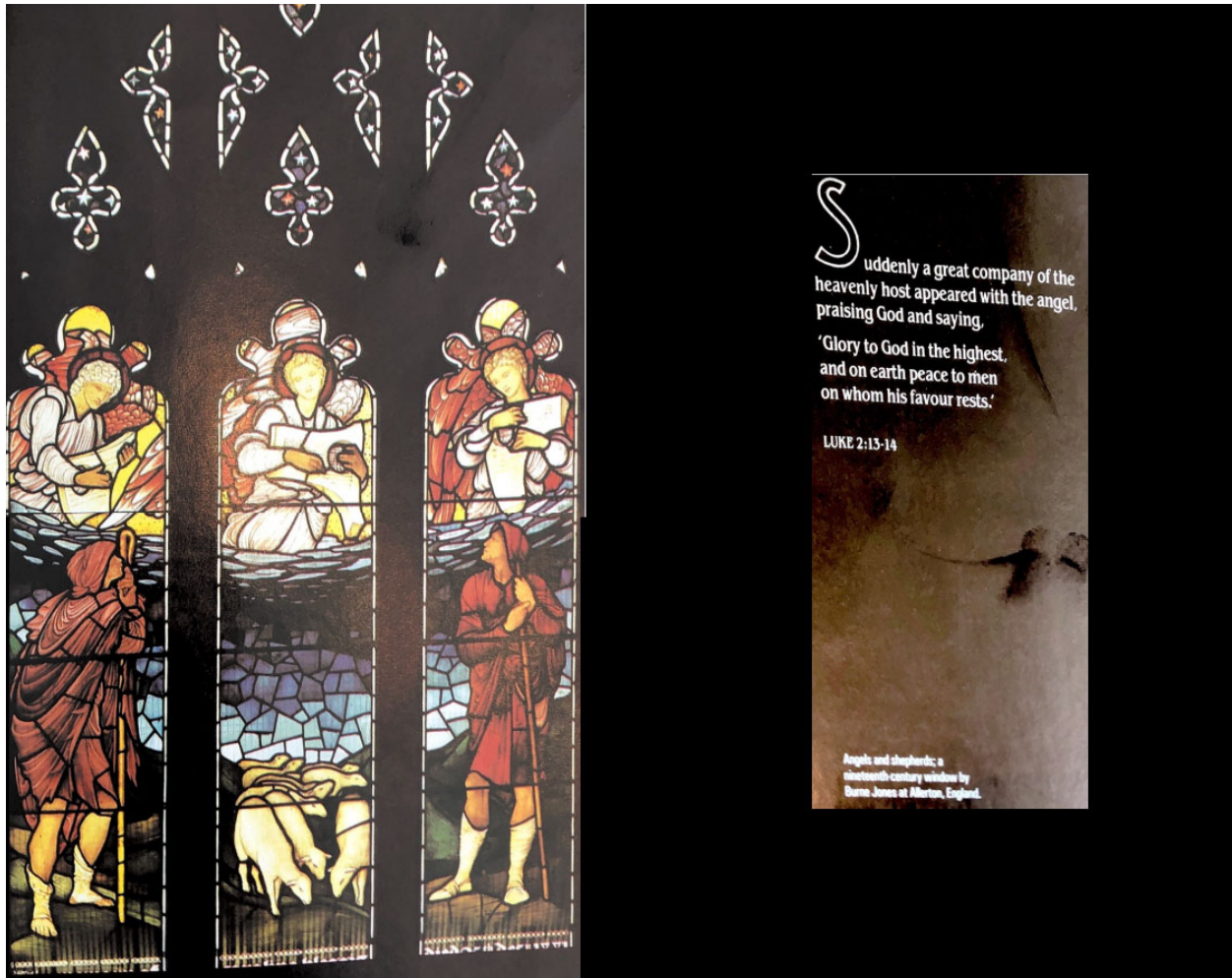


Figure 24. Halliday, Sonia. *The Christmas Story in Stained Glass*. First American Edition.

William B Eerdmans Publishing, 1980.

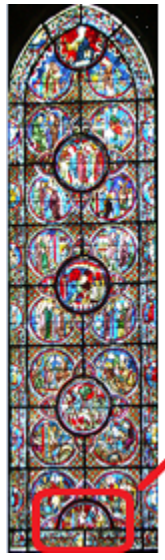


Figure 25. *St. Lubin Window*.  
Chartres, France, Chartres  
Cathedral.



Figure 26. Skinner, Orin, *Rotkäppchen*.



Figure 27.  
Winterich  
Studios, *Jimmy  
Brown*.  
Pittsburgh,  
Pennsylvania, Cleveland, Ohio,  
University of Pittsburg  
Blue Grass Restaurant Inn

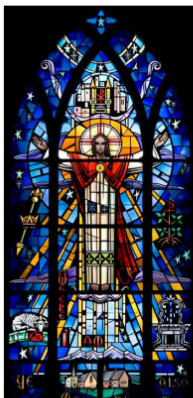
**The Song Groups**

The **Prep Singers** is the touring choir of Luther Preparatory School, located in Watertown Wisconsin. Watertown is 60 kilometers west of Milwaukee. The choir is comprised of about 24 male and female singers. Students at Luther Preparatory School are considering the full-time pastoral or teaching ministry, and many will continue their education at Martin Luther College, the WELS pastor and teacher training college.

**Koine** began as the hymn choir of St. Marcus Lutheran Church, an inner city WELS congregation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Much of their work involves setting Lutheran hymns to contemporary arrangements. They are currently artists in residence at Wisconsin Lutheran College and are busy most weekends giving concerts in various places in the US and Canada.

**The Stained Glass**

The stained glass windows used in this service can all be found in churches of the Wisconsin Lutheran Synod. For more picture of stained glass found in the WELS, see [www.welstainedglass.org](http://www.welstainedglass.org).



**A SERVICE OF THE WORD  
IN  
STAINED GLASS AND SONG**

**HE IS RISEN!****PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE**

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us a living hope through Jesus Christ. You laid our sins on him, but our sins did not overcome him. He substituted himself for us, carried our guilt, and died in our place. He rose as proof that we have been declared not guilty of sin. And through him we will live again. Be with us in our worship as we meditate on these blessed truths. Amen.

**OPENING**

**P:** We begin our worship in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** Amen.

**OFFERING****INTRODUCTION**

**CONGREGATIONAL HYMN** "He's Risen" (CW 143)

**JESUS DIED IN OUR PLACE****CONFESSION OF SINS**

**SONG**—"This Is My Will" (CW 497)

**PRAYER**

**SONG**—"Kyrie"

**JESUS ROSE FROM DEATH**

**DEVOTION**—Psalm 16

**SONG**—"He Stood Before The Court" (CW 115)

**WORDS** to "In Christ Alone"

**SONG**—"In Christ Alone"

**CONGREGATIONAL HYMN** "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" (CW 157)

**SONG**—"I Know Of A Sleep"

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** John 11:25; John 4:11-14; John 7:11-16

**JESUS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN**

**SONG**—"Blessed Be the Name of the Lord"

**JESUS GAVE US THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**SONG**—"Speak, O Lord"

**CONGREGATIONAL HYMN AND CLOSING PRAYER**

"Not Unto Us" (CW 392)

**BENEDICTION**

Figure 28. Koester, Robert *In Christ Alone*. PDF. Vol. Excerpt from "A Meditation on Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension A Service of the Word in Stained Glass and Song", 2018.



"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

*(1 Corinthians 15:55-57)*



Figure 29. Koester, Robert. Excerpt from "A Service of the Word in Stained Glass and Song," November 2018.

## Tour

Your tour of the windows will begin at the East transept of the church. Please refer to your window number and location guide found on the back cover. Please go to window number 1 to begin the tour.

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### Window - 1

#### Christ Leaving the Praetorium

Tiffany - 1884

This window is based on a painting by Gustave Dore and was donated by Mrs. E.H. Broadhead who was the daughter of Jackson Kemper, the first Episcopal bishop of Wisconsin, to whom the window was dedicated.

This is the largest Tiffany window ever made and as such is unique among Tiffany windows. The window lacks some of the opalescence quality you will see in the later windows due to the number of faces used in the window. Faces and other fleshy body parts are almost always stained (painted) to achieve the realistic quality required for the design and thus is not composed of opalescent glass.

Figure 30. Haubrich, Paul A. Excerpt from "The Stained Glass Windows of St. Paul's." St Paul's Episcopal Church, Milwaukee WI, n.d.

## ***Trinity's Stained Glass Windows***

### **Jesus' Transfiguration, Parables, and Miracles**



Jesus, in shining garment and surrounded by brilliant light, is seen with Moses (stone tablets) and Elijah (fiery chariot). *They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment in Jerusalem. Peter, James, and John were with them. Peter wanted to put up three shelters.*



Christ, our Shepherd and King, told many parables. Shown in detail here are the parable of the Good Shepherd and the parable of the Sower and the Seed.



The large hand symbolizes the power of God in Jesus to do miracles. Jesus' miracles included the raising of Jairus' daughter from death, the raising of Lazarus from the tomb, turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana, and the feeding of the 5000 with bread and fish.

Figure 31. Excerpt from "Trinity's Stained Glass Windows." Trinity Lutheran Church, Waukesha, Wisconsin.

To the left of the Christ Child are the Magi, representing the world of Gentile believers. They face the Christ Child, kneeling in faith in correspondence to the group on the Baby's right.



To the right of the Christ Child are Mary, Joseph, and a shepherd, representing the world of Jewish believers. The banners contain a passage from the Song of Simeon in Luke 2:32, beautifully tying the two outside windows together.



To the left of the ascended Christ are 6 disciples standing transfixed, watching and wondering as Jesus leaves them. The angel carries the words of Acts 1:11, reminding them that Jesus never leaves His people, but has given His Church work to do in the world, and that we should get busy.

To the right of the ascended Christ are 6 more figures, but we know only 5 can be disciples because Judas was gone by this time. Notice the first in line is Mary, who has appeared now in all 3 right side windows. Acts 1:14 tells us that Mary was numbered among the believers, making her the one person who followed Jesus' ministry from beginning to end.

The angels then, quoting Acts 1:11, keep our eyes on the skies, yearning for our dear crucified, resurrected, glorified, ascended, God-Man, Savior to return and take us also to the glory of His heaven.

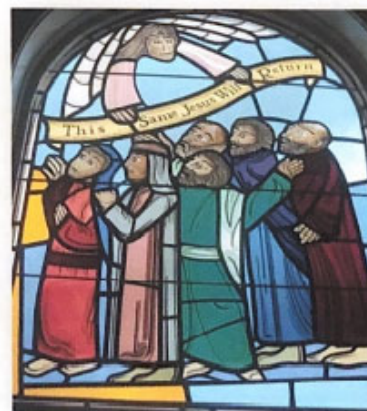


Figure 32. Lindemann, Peter. Excerpt from "Hands of Jesus Publication." Christ Lutheran Church, Baileys Harbor, WI, 2013.



## APPENDIX II: GOD'S GIFT OF LIGHT

“And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” (Gen. 1:3 NIV) Light was God’s first perfect creation and gift to the world. As God used light to beautify the abode of humanity, so architects have used light to enhance the place where people focus to worship God. Light is always associated with God, and light is an element of the natural knowledge of God.<sup>120</sup> Stained-glass windows are a marvelous way to employ this intrinsic truth about light in worship. The Bible has copious amounts of imagery that connect light with the goodness of God.

Light teaches us a lot about the nature of God. Whenever light pours into the church every new morning, it is a symbol of God’s continued presence in the church.<sup>121</sup> The Bible uses this *light* imagery in a variety of ways. It teaches the omnipresence of God in the world, but especially the special presence of God with his church, “Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, Lord” (Ps 89:15). The Christian sees the light of the sun giving him light for his eyes, and thinks on the gracious presence of God with him who provides that light. In the blessing that God gave Moses to put the Lord’s name on his people, God also used this imagery, “the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you” (Num 6:25). The shining presence of God is synonymous with his gracious presence.

The Bible also uses light imagery to teach about Jesus Christ. The Gospel of John stands out as using light in this way, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). Jesus describes himself as the light of the world to show what he does for the world. He brings the shining gospel to a world of darkness

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120. Wei, “The Development of Stained Glass in Gothic Cathedrals.”

121. Wei, “The Development of Stained Glass in Gothic Cathedrals.”

and sin, “I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness” (John 12:46). Light is also a way that the church has taught about the incarnation of Jesus. The light shines through the glass, and so God shines through humanity in Jesus.<sup>122</sup> God, who is spirit, enters into the physical world in Jesus to make himself visible, just as light makes things visible. The stained-glass windows illustrate Jesus’ title for himself, the Light of the World.<sup>123</sup>

Light is also a teaching of how God gives us faith. “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” (2Cor 4:6). People’s hearts are left in darkness without the light of faith, and stained-glass windows are not beautiful without the light from above. “It exhorts... those who live in darkness and read scripture only literally, to convert by viewing the luminous depictions with Christian understanding: [Those] who wish to turn to God / Consider the glass: it can teach you.”<sup>124</sup> God gives the sun that illumines the glass, and he gives faith that illumines the soul.

Light is also used in the Bible to describe God’s radiance and his kingdom: “Giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light” (Col 1:12). Light defines God’s kingdom. The light that streams in through the windows to the church is a picture of the light that is ever-present in God’s kingdom.<sup>125</sup>

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122. Dell’Acqua, “Early History of Stained Glass,” 27.

123. Kessler, “Consider the Glass, It Can Tech You,” 145.

124. Kessler, “Consider the Glass, It Can Tech You,” 151.

125. MacDonald, “Stained Glass: The Medieval Multimedia Experience.”

Light reminds a person about the beauty of God. Beauty is naturally delightful. The Christian artists of stained-glass windows enjoy making the glass, not only because they make something beautiful, but because he works as a servant to the kingdom of God, which itself is beautiful. God uses the beauty of the art form to show the presence of his kingdom.<sup>126</sup>

God has used light to show the beauty of his promise in the past. “I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth” (Gen 9:13). The rainbow is a light that God put in the sky so that people could see it and remember the goodness of God. The makeup of the light of the rainbow is naturally beautiful and is God’s window of light to the world.<sup>127</sup>

The beauty of the stained-glass windows has caused believers and unbelievers alike to stop and gape at their natural beauty. God is beauty itself, “From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth” (Ps 50:2). Even greater than their natural beauty is the one to whom they point.<sup>128</sup>

The book of Revelation deserves special attention in this discussion about how stained-glass windows teach about God. Before the throne of God in heaven, John sees a sea of glass like crystal (Rev 4:6). Later, John further describes this glass, “And I saw what looked like a sea of glass glowing with fire<sup>129</sup> and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name” (Rev 14:6). John also uses glass to describe the beauty and purity of God’s city streets of gold (Rev 21:21). The jewel-like characteristic of

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126. C.W. Whall, *Stained Glass Work*. The Artistic Crafts Series of Technical Handbooks IV. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1905): 276.

127. Hartzell, “When Christians Make Glass.”

128. Aaron Christie, “Using Stained-Glass Windows in the Classroom.” Interview by JP Lindemann. (Face-to-Face Meeting, 29 October 2020).

129. The author of this paper cannot help but think on the production of stained-glass in this verse, and how stained-glass is fired to finish it.

the windows calls to mind the jewels described in Revelation to describe the beauty of God.<sup>130</sup>

While depicting the foundation stones of the city of God in Revelation 21 in a stained-glass window, Pastor Hartzell discovered that they form the colors of the rainbow when assembled together, and so inserted them in the window that he crafted (Figure 17).<sup>131</sup>

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130. Kessler, "Consider the Glass, It Can Tech You," 144.

131. Hartzell, "When Christians Make Glass."

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