

JESUS IS.....



Writer: Colene Smyer Hank

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"THE SHIELD OF THE BLESSED TRINITY" compliments of First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, Kansas

The medallion contains words in Latin which depict the Trinitarian nature of God. The center circle has the word Deus, which is Latin for God. The three outer circles have the words Pater (Father), Filius (Son) and Sanctus Spiritus (Holy Spirit).

In the bands connecting the circles is the Latin word est, meaning "is." Reading from the center outward: God is Father, God is Son, God is Holy Spirit. The outer circles are also connected with an outer band containing non est, meaning "is not:" The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. In the words of Kenneth L. Mauldin, "The great value of this symbol and the value of our historical creeds is not the mystery (of the Trinity) is explained, but that the mystery is retained!" (Make Me a Sanctuary)

****The above information taken directly from the website of First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, KS.**



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord,

As I take in the beauty of this collection of magnificent stained glass windows, transform my soul into Your living sanctuary; a holy place of worship. Open my eyes that I may see the vision You have for my life. Open my ears that I may hear the calling of your still small voice. Open my heart that I may receive the message You have for my life and follow with complete obedience.

Amen



(THE FINGER OF GOD" courtesy of Sunset Baptist Church, Ponca City, Oklahoma)

Genesis 2: 7

The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.



THE CREATION

**“Let US make man in OUR own image, “words the Lord God spoke
Shows Jesus present before creation, when man was formed and awoke
From the dust of the ground, with His own hand, the Creator molded man
Then in his nostrils, breathed the breath of life, and his time on earth began.**

**You are the Potter, O gracious God, and in Your hands I am clay
Having uniquely created my inmost being, You know me in every way
Your eyes clearly saw my unformed body and all my days ordained
Before I ever walked on earth, my time in Your book was contained.**

**All-Knowing eternal, Abba my Father, You knew I would need Your Son
For You chose Him, as my Blessed Redeemer, before time on earth had begun
Molding me according to Your good purpose is Your greatest heart’s desire
How precious to me is Your love, Dear Lord, my soul it does inspire.**

**Search me, O God, and know my thoughts, correcting me without delay
Lead me today in Your chosen path, and cleanse me in every way
Out of the depths I cry to You, as my mighty fortress and shield
For You are my Savior and Sovereign Creator; to Your voice I humbly yield.**



(“ADAM AND EVE” courtesy of Sunset Baptist Church, Ponca City, Oklahoma)

Genesis 3: 24

After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.



THE LAST ADAM

The first Adam was a physical creation, perfectly formed by God's own hand.

Who in the garden, communed with Him, and freely roamed the land

From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve were told not to eat

But convinced by the serpent to disobey God, from their sin they could not retreat.

This act of disobedience and fall from grace, now affected all creation

Paradise underserved, God cast them out, for succumbing to Satan's temptation

God's plan of eternal life, in a state of sin, to dust we all would return

How to survive, in a cruel hardened world, would now be mankind's mutual concern.

The last Adam, a life-giving Spirit, was Jesus, God's one and only Son

Through the act of salvation, the work would be finished, the Master Potter had begun.

Although borne in the image of the one from dust, we can bear that of the heavenly Man

Through belief in Jesus and repentance of sin, God will complete the work in us He began.

Man's road to God's presence, closed in Eden, has now been opened by His Son

His death on the cross, brought triumph out of tragedy, and our access to God had begun

Due to Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, no one spiritually needs ever to die

Since salvation is found in no one else, it is on our Savior all man must rely.



(“NOAH AND THE ARK” courtesy of Sunset Baptist Church, Ponca City, Oklahoma)

Genesis 8: 10-11

He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. When the dove returned to him in the evening there in its beak was a freshly picked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth.



JESUS THE ARK

Nine generations had descended from Adam, when Noah on earth did reside
Sin having reached its utmost depths, with God man was destined to collide
Having been formed in His own image, man was now repugnant in God's mind
"The soul that sinS, it shall die!" was the verdict for all mankind.

Walking with God and doing His will was Noah's own chosen path
Thus, finding grace in the eyes of the Lord, was saved from the flood of God's wrath
Though contrary to reason and his experience, Noah believed because His own God spoke
The ark was built, no questions asked, for to him God's Word was no joke.

The ark was a picture of Jesus Christ; our shelter God did prepare
A place of refuge for all His children; through His gift of grace so rare
Every wretched sinner finds all his needs supplied in Christ our Ark
Blood enough! Pardon enough! Our Light when the world is dark.

All who come and receive salvation by the Holy Spirit will be taught
For Jesus our all-sufficient loving Savior, has our battles already fought
What time I am afraid, O Great Redeemer, I will place my trust in thee
Because of the cross, all the waves and thy billows have gone completely over me.



("MOSES AND THE RED SEA" courtesy of Sunset Baptist Church, Ponca City, Oklahoma)

Exodus 14: 27

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the Lord swept them into the sea.



STAND FIRM!

The Israelites led by Moses, left Egypt right on cue

**Unaware there'd been a change of heart, with an order to pursue
Soldiers marching toward God's children, overtook them by the sea
In fear, they loudly cried to the Lord, for they saw no place to flee.**

**Stand firm, commanded Moses, and believe what I have to say
Fear not, for you'll see your deliverance, the Lord will bring today
The Egyptians within your sight, you will never see again
Being still is what you do, and the Lord your battle will win.**

**All night the Lord drove back the sea, with a mighty strong east wind
A sign from their Creator, that on Him they could always depend
The people feared the Lord, putting their trust in Him for awhile
But soon forgetting the Red Sea encounter, complained, with their faith in denial.**

**For His people, the Lord had worked through the night, just as He does for you
Though unseen with the human eye, for you the same is true
During the darkest time of your life, Christ powers through the tempest blast
Calming the rapid swelling current, until all danger is past.**



("TABLETS OF THE TESTIMONY" courtesy of Sunset Baptist Church, Ponca City, Oklahoma)

Exodus 31: 18

When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.



TEN COMMANDMENTS

The mere sight of the Hebrew people brought pleasure to God's own heart
Thus, 'twas love that prompted the Ten Commandments; His laws for a brand new start

Written in stone by His own finger, they exemplified the depth of His love
A powerful expression of His majestic nature, delivered from heaven above.

These laws were created to honor God and to benefit man as well
His plans always being to prosper His children, as the scriptures clearly tell
By obeying His voice and keeping His laws, we will be His valued treasure
Because all the earth belongs to God, and man exists for His pleasure.

Today as then, we need strong reminders of His standards between right and wrong
To serve as a model of how He desires His children to act and belong
Through following all God's Old Testament laws, life's purpose and meaning are found
And by simply reading the words of Jesus, we'll find His principles to be sound.

The Savior came as our Blessed Redeemer offering all an abundant life
A perfect example for what's true and right and a guide for facing strife
What happens when deciding to follow God's lead is a question we all should ask
Fulfillment and joy is what we'll experience, and our walk will not be a task.



“YOUNG KING DAVID” stained glass window designed by Tiffany Studios in early 1900

(Courtesy of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland)

Isaiah 9: 7

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will rein on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing it and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.



SPIRITUAL KINGDOM

The Lord Almighty, to David made a promise, that over His people he would rule.

With David as king, His people would receive, rest peace and renewal

As Israel's new king, God promised to David, that His throne would live forever

And salvation would come only through his line; a promise impossible to sever.

Four centuries later David's earthly kingdom, faltered and came to an end

But fulfilling the promise, earlier made to David, His only Son God did send

Jesus the Christ, called the Son of David, at birth received his earthly father's throne

And would forever reign over the house of Jacob; to the world His Light would be shone.

The Son of the Most High, unlike David, over a Spiritual Kingdom He would reign

To build His Kingdom and increase His government, the hearts of mankind would obtain

Those who were subjects and citizens of His Kingdom must commit their lives to Him

Then out of darkness, would appear a great Light, for them that would never grow dim.

David's earthly kingdom, became a Spiritual One, at the time of Jesus' birth

Redemption for man, its messianic mission, makes it impossible to measure its worth

For when Christ returns, God's established Kingdom, will be an accomplished endeavor

Then Jesus will rein in the lives of his followers; eternally--- forever and ever.



(“DANIEL AND THE LION’S DEN” courtesy of Sunset Baptist Church, Ponca City, Oklahoma)

Daniel 6:22

My God sent His angel and He shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me because, I was found innocent in His sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king.



PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Daniel and his friends were an inspiring example of living a faithful life

By not giving in, to an ungodly world, filled with temptation sin and strife

Ignored dire consequences, under great pressure, and to idol worship didn't succumb

For they possessed confidence; their all-knowing God had already formed the outcome.

Daniel's reputation, as a talented statesman, was admired and known by all

As a man of prayer, with a gift of prophecy, on him the king would call

When receiving praise, Daniel always gave credit, to his mighty powerful God

In words of thanksgiving, his Heavenly Father, was given all glory honor and laud.

That God would establish an everlasting kingdom, was a prophecy from Daniel's own voice

In advance of Jesus' birth, over 500 years, gives all of us reason to rejoice

This kingdom, of which Daniel clearly spoke, God wrote before time began

That man would be delivered, from the domain of darkness, was always our Father's plan.

Gloom now diminished, no more darkness, for the great Light we've now seen

The Light called Jesus, arrived like the dawn, as a refreshing crystal stream

The Kingdom of God, Daniel described, is in our midst and alive today

By letting God rule and reign in our lives; gladness will increase in every way.



(Nativity window from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Springfield, Missouri)

Isaiah 60: 3

**And the gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the
brightness of thy rising.**



THE ONE AND ONLY

**God broke the barrier of silence with the sound of a baby's cry
Rocked in the arms of a virgin girl, in our place he soon would die
The mighty Creator now a part of creation as a babe so perfect and small
A Light shining in darkness, to all men the Savior would call.**

**The world would soon see His glory, the glory of God's own Son
The Word became flesh to dwell on earth; our Redeemer from the Holy One
Love so abounding! Love so amazing! Full of truth and grace
Prophecy fulfilled by the Ancient of Days, as promised to the human race.**

**Have you like Mary pondered His birth deep within your heart
That Jesus our Messiah lowered Himself to offer a brand new start
Do you consider the rugged cross and remember His agony and pain
How the Lamb of God brutally suffered and all for your own gain?**

**Do you cherish the birth of Jesus as a priceless invaluable treasure
Out of the realm of your understanding; unfathomable and beyond measure
Since for those living in Christ there is no condemnation
This season of love joy and peace gives pause for deep contemplation.**



"THE NATIVITY WINDOW" designed by Tiffany Studios in early 1900

(Courtesy of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland)

Luke 2: 13-14

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests."



THE SHEPHERDS' NEWS

**Unsuspecting shepherds, quietly tending flocks, beneath a starry ebony sky
Were caught unaware, when piercing the night, was a radiant angel from on high
As they watched in wonder, countless angels gathered, soaring in the heavens all around
All praising God, in one ethereal voice, causing the hills to come alive with their sound.**

**That shepherds were the first, to greet the Lamb of God, is not what one might expect
But it's plain for all to see, that to ordinary people, the Father shows love and respect
The enormity of it all, is hard for one to capture, that God freely chose to be with us
Harder yet to grasp, is the long awaited King, would be born in a manger without fuss.**

**Raised by a family, in modest surroundings, special advantages Jesus did not find
Yet His entire conduct, and outlook on life, was an example for all mankind
He came to set man free, from the snare of sin, and from their own human fears release
"Glory to God in the Highest!" Our Lord had arrived to offer peace.**

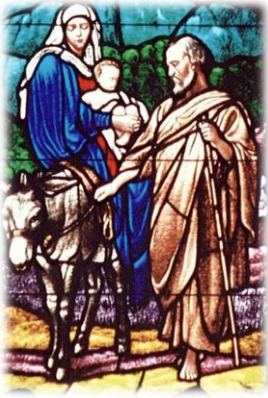
**Each heart must accept, God came to earth, to live and die and then to live again
Sharing this with man, would draw them close to Him, with the purpose of our souls to win
Because of lowly shepherds, the Good News traveled over 20 centuries of time
Oh what grandeur! Oh what power! God's love provides thoughts so sublime!**



("TRIP TO EGYPT" courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Matthew 2: 13

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt."



DIVINE GUIDANCE

The magi known as men of wisdom, in the night sky beheld a bright star.
Signifying the birth, of a ruler great, its brilliance could be seen from afar
With their own eyes, to behold this king, would fulfill their hearts desire
To accomplish this goal, traveling many miles, from them it would require.

Upon hearing the description the magi gave, Herod quickly feared the new king
Thoughts of another, taking his throne, to Herod was a threatening thing
Receiving a warning from God Almighty, the magi returned another way
In a fit of rage, having gone mad, Herod held a massacre that day.

Joseph in a dream, was told by an angel, that Egypt would be their new home
There they would stay, until they were told it was safe for them to roam
Herod had power by human appointment, unlike Jesus the King
That no one can thwart God's magnificent plans, is truly a glorious thing.

Obedience to Jesus, may require us to travel, in a totally different way
Letting faith be our eyes, trusting in His promise, and moving without delay
God's divine guidance comes to open hearts, and with our best interest in mind
For our well being, we may be quietly asked, to leave the familiar behind.



("JESUS IN THE TEMPLE AT AGE 12" donated by Rev and Mrs. E. P. Krleen from Salemsborg Lutheran Parish, Lindsborg, KS)

Luke 2: 46-47

After three days they found Him in the temple courts sitting among the teachers listening to them, and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at His understanding and His answers.



JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

The greatest rabbis gathered in the temple at Passover time of year
Anxious to hear various truths discussed, many Jewish men would appear
At the age of twelve, Jesus of Nazareth, in the temple with them did dwell
Displaying wisdom, asking many questions and offering information as well.

The coming Messiah, a popular topic, was a subject Jesus wanted to hear
Absorbed in discussion, was totally oblivious, His departure for Nazareth was near
After the Feast, the caravan departed, leaving Jesus in the city behind
Frantically searching, His parents were relieved, when their Son in the temple did find.

Discovering Him safe, Mary scolded her boy, not realizing He, too, was God's Son
But Christ's reply showed His own awareness that His mission on earth had begun
That He must be in His Father's house, showed His connection to God as unique
Knowing this at birth, Mary and Joseph, still did not know what to think.

Isaiah had prophesied, from the stump of Jesse would come a spiritual shoot
And 'twas from these roots, a Branch much greater was to bear God's righteous fruit
All those hearing Him speak to his parents witnessed David's promise come true
For the earliest signs of Christ's divine nature in His own words had shone through.



"THE BAPTISM OF JESUS" by Louis Comfort Tiffany, compliments of First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, KS

Matthew 3: 16

"And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him."



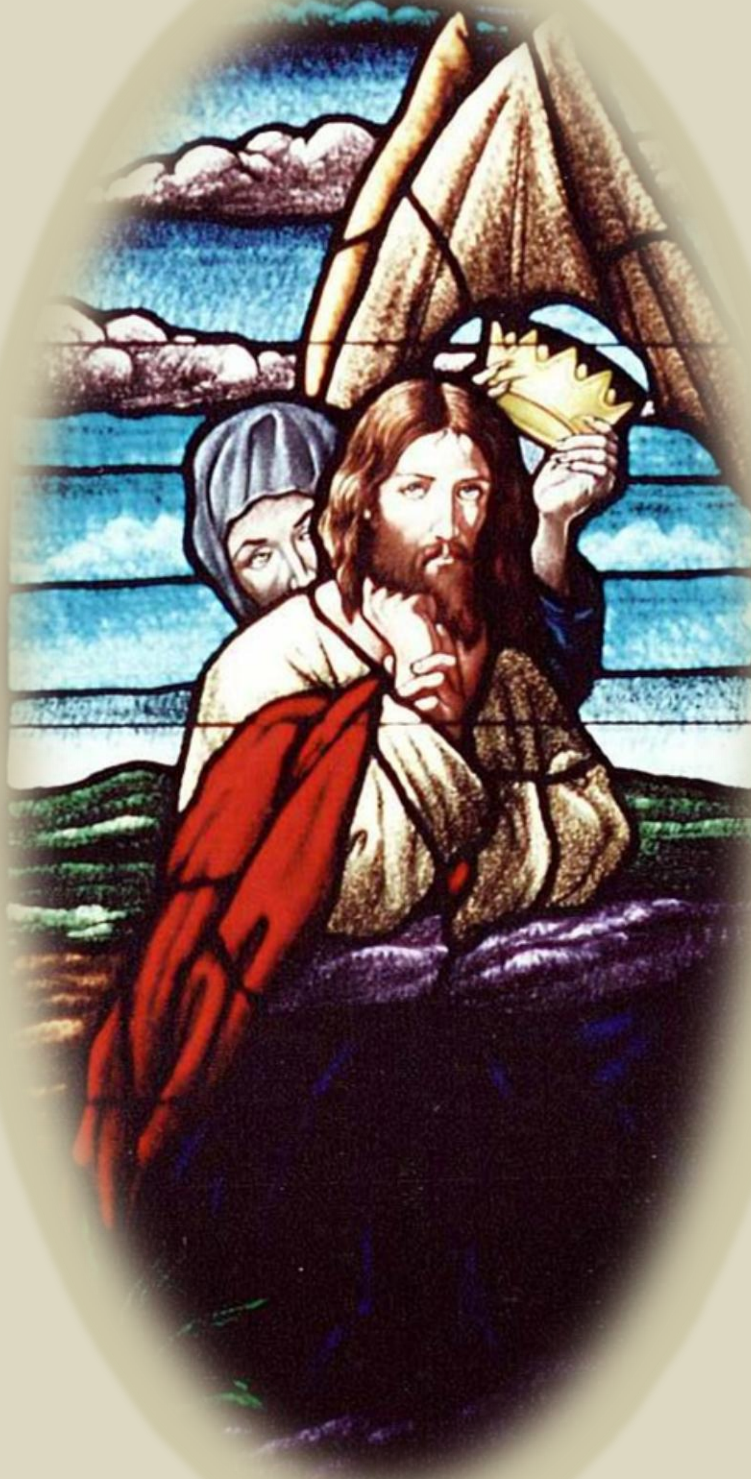
HOLY BAPTISM

**When Jesus, age twelve, visited the temple, God's mission to Him was clear
And in eighteen years, to John at the Jordan, He did quietly appear
Wearing righteousness as His belt, and faithfulness at His waist
Resolutely, Christ moved toward His baptism in haste.**

**Jesus, the perfect man, wasn't baptized for committing sin
But was inaugurating His public ministry which was ready to begin
Accepting baptism in obedient service to His Heavenly Father above
Brought down the Spirit of God, lighting on Him like a dove.**

**Baptism for believers symbolizes a washing and cleansing of sin
An outward sign of commitment, accompanied by a change from within
It's a time when the Holy Spirit; our innermost beings does fill
And joins us to the body of believers, retaining our identity still.**

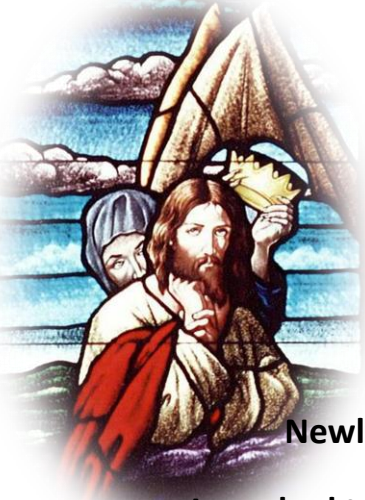
**God baptizes us with Holy boldness and confidence from on high
Thus, it's through His might and power that we take wings and fly
God is not looking for great people, but humble hearts instead
For those who dare to prove His greatness and by Him be willingly led.**



("TEMPTATION OF CHRIST" courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, TX)

Matthew 4: 1

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.



LIFE'S TEMPTATIONS

Newly baptized, with His Father's approval euphorically floating in His head
Jesus had to be shocked, when into the desert, He, by the Spirit was led
To fully experience, humanities temptations, as a man without divine power
Exhausted, hungry and feeling alone, was vulnerable in a very dark hour.

Satan the fallen angel, used every known tactic, trying to get Jesus to sin
Noting His condition, approached with great force, using enormous temptations to win
He offered to Jesus, relief from hunger and worldly treasures as well
But Jesus not wavering, resisted temptation, and to the devil His soul did not sell.

Had Jesus given in, His mission on earth, sadly, would have been tragically lost
No gift to mankind, of eternal life, would have come with our death as the cost
But Jesus knew scripture and used it on Satan, like a mighty sharp swift sword
By combating temptation, with the Word of God, victory was His reward.

Celebrating life's blessings, your heart may be basking, in the radiance of a glorious morning
When dark clouds of trouble cloud the blue sky, and violently appear without warning
Our Lord knows firsthand, the temptations and struggles in life His children must face
And will illuminate His Light, in the dark recesses, and throughout every hidden place.



("FISHERS OF MEN" courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Luke 5: 10-11

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.



FISHERS OF MEN

**Peter and Andrew had fished all night without one catch to show
Seen by Jesus, while cleaning their nets, He somehow seemed to know
Put out in deep water, was the advice to Peter, Jesus so cheerfully gave
This unlucky night, thought the weary men, only a miracle could save.**

**Still unbelieving, Peter told the Master, they would do exactly as He said
But in their minds, down an empty path, they were all being hopelessly led
Then pulling the cord, their nets were so full; they were stunned unable to think
Quickly calling their partners, both boats were filled, until sagging and began to sink.**

**Jesus had entered Peter's daily routine, understanding his every need
Nothing was too ordinary, in Jesus' mind, for He wanted His children to succeed
The greatness of Christ, as compared to his own, to Peter, was abundantly clear
Feeling insignificant, as a sinful man, caused him great consternation and fear.**

**Authority established, Jesus invited them to follow, and become His disciples that day
Claiming Christ as Savior, pulled their boats on shore, starting life in a different way**

**Jesus, the One and Only, invites all of us, to pull "our boats" ashore
To become His disciples, as fishers of men, and follow Him forever more.**



"THE CALL OF MATTHEW" by Louis Comfort Tiffany, compliments of First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, KS

Matthew 9: 9, 13

"As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me," And Matthew got up and followed him. Jesus said, "For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."



MATTHEW'S CALL

Matthew, more than any disciple, knew what following Jesus would cost

By answering the call, unemployment guaranteed, his lucrative income would be lost

Following the Savior, in this new life, resulted for him in no turning back

Becoming a disciple radically transformed; meant a new direction and different track.

From being despised, to Christ's disciple, for Matthew was a thrill

Now given purpose, by the Son of God, he would use his every skill

As record keeper for Jesus, using his pen, would become his finest hour

And the crowd stood amazed, by the blessing on Matthew, Jesus the Christ did shower.

That we are all, a work in progress, Matthew's story does truly point out

God's children are, the work of His hand, given purpose without doubt

It is a matter of listening for His gentle call, beckoning softly in the night

And following with obedience, as He illuminates our paths, with His transforming light.

Do you hear the voice of Jesus saying, "Come and follow me"

Are you willing to approach the cross of Christ and bow on bended knee

And, like Matthew, walk resolutely forever by Jesus' side

Spreading the good news of salvation to others on life's journey, both far and wide?



("JESUS TURNS WATER INTO WINE" courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, TX)

John 2: 9, 11

And the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. This, the first of the miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.



WHEN THE WINE RUNS OUT

**Jesus and His disciples, to a wedding in Cana, had all been invited to attend
A week of festivities, where blessings to the couple, all people in the village would send
The torches aflame, a canopy overhead, through the village the newlyweds were led
No honeymoon planned, they'd go straight home, and host a seven-day party instead.**

**But in just three days, in the midst of joy, something went terribly askew
Having carefully prepared, ample food and drink, their wine estimates were not quite true
Since eastern hospitality, was a sacred duty, Mary noticed and took things in hand
She turned to her Son, knowing He would be the One, to save this couple's party so grand.**

**Jesus wanting to know why this involved Him, was His response to the matter in reply
Paying no mind, Mary returned to her work, knowing on Jesus she could always rely
Calling her "woman", to all in those days, was a sign of endearment and respect
Continuing her duties, she said nothing more, for from her Son she knew what to expect.**

**Jesus then instructed, six stone jars, be filled with water to the brim
Turning water into wine, at the wedding in Cana; they saw the first miracle from Him
Where do you go when the "wine" runs out, as it did at the wedding that day
Is it to Jesus, the Miracle Worker, you always turn for assistance without delay?**



(Stained glass window from United Methodist Church, Mountain Grove, Missouri.)

Matthew 16: 24

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”



FOLLOWING JESUS

Following Jesus, an all encompassing total commitment, is making Him Lord of all

It's knowing Him so well, you recognize His voice, and obediently answer His call

Clothing yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ, means the old self's dead to sin

It's denying the desires of the sinful nature, and letting your new life win.

Getting rid of self-will, requires time with Jesus, allowing Him to take the lead

Using prayer to talk and listen to Him, and on His Word to daily feed

Developing a strong relationship with Jesus, means you're willing to take up His cross

Giving up previous friendships and sinful habits; a hard and painful loss.

The more you become a mirror of Christ, the less in the world you belong

For paying the cost of being His disciple, means walking away from the throng

But the trials you face push you closer to Jesus, with each and every day

And serve to deepen your relationship with Him, as you learn to trust and obey.

Spiritual growth is a never-ending process; being a student your whole life-long

Through receiving Jesus and walking in Him, you'll discover a place to belong

In this life you'll always have trouble, but know this world He's overcome

And to know God and believe Him, means all your battles have been won.



"JESUS AND THE LITTLE CHILDREN" from Pitts Chapel United Methodist Church, Springfield, Missouri.)

Matthew 18: 1-4

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked," Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

He called a little child and had him stand among them. And He said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."



LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN

“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” the Lords disciples wanted to know

Their question being selfish as well as proud, a child was used to help them grow

Positions of advantage, Jesus knew they sought, over service to others instead

The opposite view of little children, who are weak, dependent and eager to be led.

You can never please God by outward actions, if it's purity of heart you lack

For He esteems the one who is humble, and will gently lift him up on track

Do nothing out of vain conceit, but always with an open and loving heart

Considering all others better than you, ready to serve them at each day's start.

May compassion freely flow to those around who are broken alone and lost

Truly helping all whose needs are great, no matter to you the personal cost

May we be your transformed people, filled with love hope and grace

Spreading the message of your heavenly kingdom, throughout the human race.

Unless you become like little children, God's kingdom you will not enter

For man's worth comes from God alone, with Him at the core and center

Seek the Lord while He can be found; call on Him while He is near

Humbly bowing at the foot of the cross, with a heart that's contrite and sincere.



("JESUS AND THE CHILDREN" in memory of the children at Salemsborg that have been laid to rest.)

Mark 9: 37

"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."



TRUE GREATNESS

The disciples argued about who would be greatest in the kingdom the Lord did bring

Preoccupied only with personal status, each to his desires did cling

Holding a child, Jesus spoke to His disciples, on the issue making a stand

That whoever welcomed a child like this had followed His Father's command.

That greatness comes from God Himself, was a lesson they needed to learn

All tightly caught in their struggle for success, Jesus trained them to discern

To be great requires the heart of a servant and a gentle healing hand

These two combined with love and humility, the Lord did clearly demand.

True greatness consists in total dependence on Jesus Christ alone

Who by humbling Himself on the cross, our sin He did atone

His followers, like Him, must die to self and in their Father dwell

For anyone wanting to be first must be last and the servant of all as well.

To receive the Father, we must willingly serve the lowly powerless and weak

Placing them always in front of self if it is true greatness we seek

Jesus is great! Rejoice in His greatness! Emulate Him every day!

Glorify our Savior by delighting in Him through sacrifice along the way.



"CHRIST BLESSING CHILDREN" by Louis Comfort Tiffany, from First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, KS

Matthew 19: 14

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."



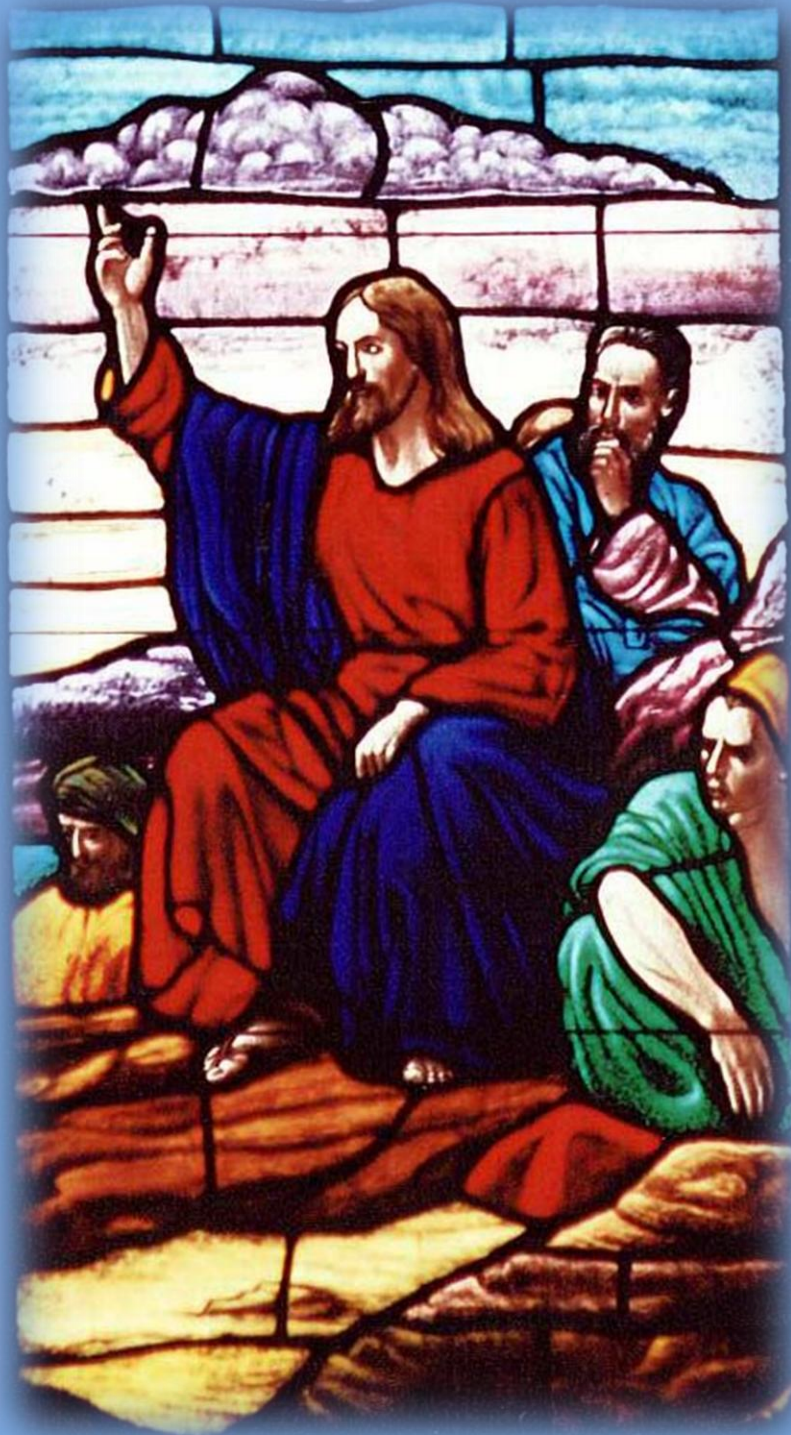
CHILD LIKE FAITH

Little children were so precious to Jesus, their value was impossible to measure
Rebuking His disciples for turning them away, He passionately described them as a treasure
In a society that viewed them as second class citizens, Jesus quickly took a shocking stand
For to Him, their attitude in approaching God could only be labeled as grand.

Trusting the Father without reservation, their voices to Him they raise
Tis' from the lips of children and infants, that the Lord has ordained great praise
All they require is a gentle touch from an elder who truly cares
Trusting by nature, they openly respond to anyone who lovingly shares.

Woe to an adult who neglects or demeans a priceless child of God
Or leads them into temptation and harm, as down life's paths they trod
Turning a child away from faith, Jesus warns of punishment severe
For the kingdom of heaven belongs to these, and, they, we should also revere.

That God loves us and provides forgiveness, should be enough for everyone to know
Realizing God holds all our answers, to Him a child like faith should show
Let us tenderly teach the little children, gently bringing them all to Him
Creating in each adorable tiny heart, a faith in Christ that will never dim.



("SERMON ON THE MOUNT" courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Matthew 5: 1

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenged the religious leaders of that day

Those setting the righteousness standard for judging people in every way

Six hundred thirteen self glorifying rules turned into strict behavioral commands

Completely focused on outward appearance through harsh external demands.

Christ's sermon reaffirmed that God's written Word is the true guideline, indeed

But without God's help, man can never possibly be, righteous enough to succeed

The words of Jesus clearly point out how dependent we are on God's grace

Since the Father knows our inner thoughts, falling short is always the case.

Before judging others, an inner reflection is where each person should start

"For man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart."

Condescending eyes or harshly spoken words are used by people all the time

Falling short of God's righteous standard and morally for man like a crime.

Identifying and correcting a problem is imperative, and the right thing to do

Solving grievances with one another, forgiving as Jesus forgave you

Religious rituals will lead to nowhere if the heart is not pure and right

They're merely exercises in futility, and unimpressive in God's sight.



("MARTHA AND MARY" donated by Peter and Harold Anderson from Salemsborg Lutheran Parish, Lindsborg, KS)

Luke 10: 40

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"



MARTHA AND MARY

Martha and Mary, a fascinating pair, were alike in one vital aspect

Although very different, both loved the Lord, which their actions did clearly reflect

That Jesus stopped regularly in their home, signaled Him to be a close friend

A frequent stop for Christ in His travels; a much welcomed hub at journey's end.

Martha was a noble and godly woman, possessing a true servant's heart

A fastidious hostess, who desired to work; traits that set her apart

Mary, in contrast, understood the great value of learning at the Master's feet

Truly a worshiper of her Lord considered gaining wisdom a treat.

Conflict arose between the two sisters, when Jesus brought more than one guest

Leaving Martha in the kitchen, Mary sat at Christ's feet, creating the ultimate test

Totally overwhelmed, Martha asked the Lord, why it was He did not care

That as her sister, Mary's first obligation was definitely the meal to prepare.

Jesus brought Martha back into balance with an ever so gentle reprimand

That Mary's priorities were in proper order, a fact Martha needed to understand

Service must be done under the Master's direction and all according to His will

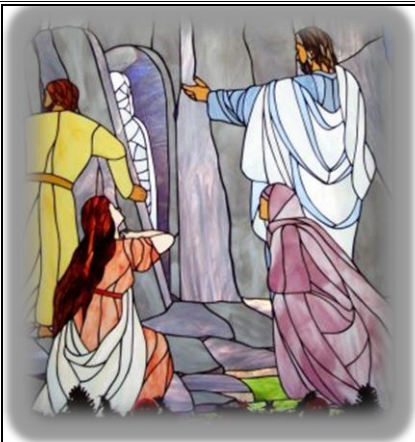
But unless one first chooses to listen, Christ's mission we will not fulfill.



(“JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD” courtesy of Sunset Baptist Church, Ponca City, Oklahoma)

John 11: 43-44

**When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”
The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of
linen, and a cloth around his face.**



JESUS WEPT

Martha and Mary sent word to Jesus that Lazarus on his death bed lay

Both sisters understanding the Lord's compassion felt He would come without delay

Our omniscient Savior, surprisingly didn't leave, but for two more days did remain

Knowing Lazarus' resurrection would bring God glory, gave Jesus every reason to refrain.

For three full days, near the body the spirit hovered, is what the Jewish people believed

Arriving on day four, Jesus deliberately planned, so His message to them would be received

"I am the resurrection and life everlasting," the communication He clearly did intend

Put your faith in Me, for I rule over death; a truth to the mourners He did send.

Martha and Mary, in a state of deep grief, found their brother's death hard to accept

So moved by their pain---as if it were His own, Scripture states that, "Jesus Wept."

Demanding the stone be removed from his tomb, Christ actions would leave no doubt

After praying to His Father, in a loud voice he called, "Lazarus, come out."

Our all-loving God knows everything in life His children must strive to endure

That God is in us and feels our every hurt, of this Lazarus' story does assure

Through faith in Jesus, even though we die, we all shall eternally live

The grave is but a doorway to the portals of heaven; this gift Christ the Savior did give.



(“CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA” from First Presbyterian Church, Wichita, Kansas)

John 4: 13

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”



LIVING WATER

**Jesus had places to go, and people to meet, before His appointment with the cross
And possessed full knowledge, as a Jewish man, many laws of His people He would toss
Thus, walking toward Galilee, the town of Samaria, Jesus absolutely HAD to go through
Not the customary route, but His preferred course, based on what God needed Him to do.**

**Since Jews and Samaritans hated each other, avoidance was the proper way
But Divine necessity, caused Jesus to depart, for the town of Samaria without delay
Weary from travel, at Jacob's Well, was where Jesus rested about noon
For our Lord and Savior knew the Samaritan woman would seek to draw water soon.**

**In just a little while, a woman approached, carrying a huge pot upon her head
One can only imagine, her lifeless gait, accompanied by eyes that were empty and dead
But after talking to Christ about living water, she, with the others did immediately share
And despite her reputation, many came to meet Jesus; an action from them so rare.**

**That day at the well, the world found out that God loves both you and me
In spite of our state, it is only His water that will set His children free
Jesus' simple request to drink from a cup, showed His desire to save the lost
Courageously breaking through man-made barriers, to Him, at great personal cost.**



("JESUS TEACHES WITH GREAT AUTHORITY" from Salemsborg Lutheran Parish, Lindsborg, KS.)

Mark 1: 22

The people were amazed at His teaching because He taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.



THE TEACHER

Jesus taught in all the synagogues like an eminent distinguished teacher

Unlike the scribes who centered on the law, He had no limitations as a preacher

Since He came from God, possessing authority, Jesus spoke as One divine

Not as human, hesitating or halting, and afraid to cross the line.

The scribes taught as law givers without spirit; lifeless, dictatorial and cold

While Christ's delivery was filled with affection, and presentation extremely bold

Our Lord didn't seek the support of others, but spoke in His own name

For from His Father, received great power, and knew from hence it came.

Those listening to Jesus were truly astonished at His wisdom knowledge and insight

Their consciousness of divine authority made the scribes look foolish in Christ's light

He was authority incarnate----the Word of God made flesh

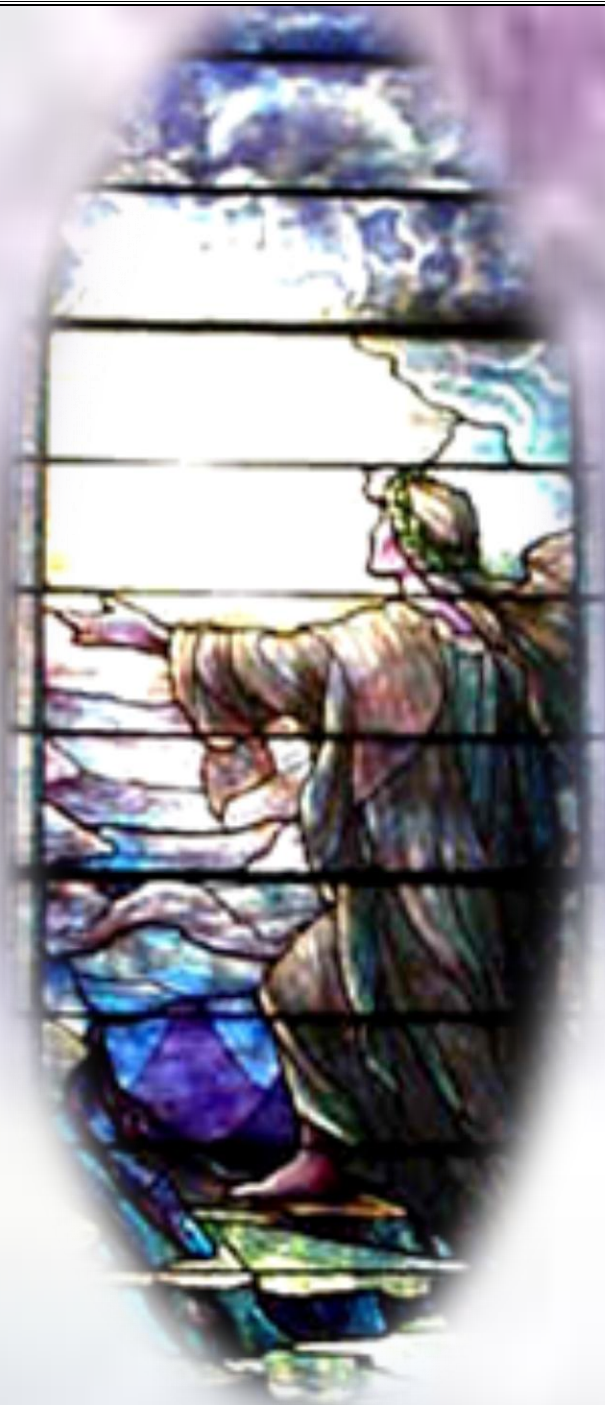
When He spoke, God spoke; mankind's safety net---- the very thread and mesh.

Write Your sayings upon our hearts, we beseech thee Lord today

Implanting in our souls Your pure and holy sermon, profound in every way

May we always grow and be nourished by the mighty power of Your Word

Treasuring it always in our minds, as the sweetest message ever heard.



"LEAD KINDLY LIGHT" stained glass window designed by Tiffany Studios in early 1900

"Courtesy of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland"

John 8: 12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."



ONE AND ONLY LIGHT

O Lord, my Rock, my Redeemer! Your glorious radiance pierces the night
Son of the Heavenly Father's love; Jesus Christ the One and Only Light
Wearing righteousness like a garment, Your resplendence fills the skies
The commands of my Lord are brilliant, giving Light to my blinded eyes.

Your glow dances with the darkness, transforming every mysterious shape
Illuminating all life's troubling shadows into one magnificent landscape
You shine on all the broken places and deep recesses of my soul
Invading the fortress of an aching heart, and once again making it whole.

Permit my heart to sing, O God, as I feel the warmth of Your Light
Even through the layers of my misery and confusion, You're forever in my sight
Though lacking the strength to journey toward you, there is still a silver lining
For Your Light of love always moves to my being, and on my countenance is shining.

Since You, O Lord, are my Light and Salvation, there's nothing left to fear
For You are the Stronghold of my life, and I will always find You near
Even the darkness will not be dark to You; night will shine like the day
To You I'll yield my flickering torch, and forever in Your presence stay.



("THE PRODIGAL SON" courtesy of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Columbus, Indiana)

Luke 15: 20-21

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son."



THE PRODIGAL SON

Worried eyes of a loving father daily scanned the vast horizon at dawn

Hoping against hope his lost son would appear as a distant silhouette yon

When suddenly one day a mere speck emerged, he imagined his wish had come true

Approaching from a distance, he identified his son, from the all familiar gait he knew.

The lost son fearing rejection, had carefully stored up thousands of greetings on his list

With his father now approaching, remembered not, leaving him unprepared for the twist

Dry was his tongue and heavy his step, as he moved nervously toward the scene ahead

With large salty tears now blurring his vision, his father's arms appeared open instead.

Filled with compassion, the father ran to his son, bestowing on him a kiss

The once dreaded thoughts of total rejection, the son could now dismiss

Blaming only himself, the son confessed, and for his actions did humbly repent

No matter how sinful his behavior had been, he could now see his father's intent.

If you've been on a journey to the back of beyond, like that of the Prodigal Son

When your Father sees you turn desperately toward Him, He'll not walk to you, but run

Then lift your tired face toward heaven above and listen to the beautiful sound

As the saints and angels together rejoice, that once lost, you now are found.



(The Sower, c. 1907, compliments of The Presbyterian Church of Pittsburg, Kansas)

Matthew 13: 23

But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.



SOWING

Open your eyes and look at the fields, the harvest is ripe indeed

Many people are ready to hear God's Word, searching and waiting in need

Since the mission of Christ brought salvation to man, witness to others in His Light

Like a beacon of hope proclaiming the glory of God's Only Son in the night.

Prepare through prayer the soil of men's hearts that's rock-hard dry and untilled

Then sow ample seeds, called the Word of God, until His mission is totally fulfilled

Let not your heart grow weary, for in due season a crop you shall reap

For sharing simple truths of Christ to others will help roots of faith grow deep.

Be like a mirror whose glass is not seen, but a reflection of Jesus so clear

Showing His generous Spirit of forgiveness to the plantings He holds so dear

Jesus taught in the temple of open air, on the roads and the village street

Speaking in parables, scriptures came to life for everyone He would meet.

Just like Jesus, we need to get involved with each unsaved neighbor and friend

Through befriending others, softly and gently, the message of the kingdom we can send

If our life in Christ shows that of joy, an example for others it will be

Living our faith in times of trouble is the greatest testimony others can see.

MATTHEW 13: 3-13 SOME FELL....



(By the wayside)

(On stony ground)



(Among Thorns)

(ON GOOD SOIL)



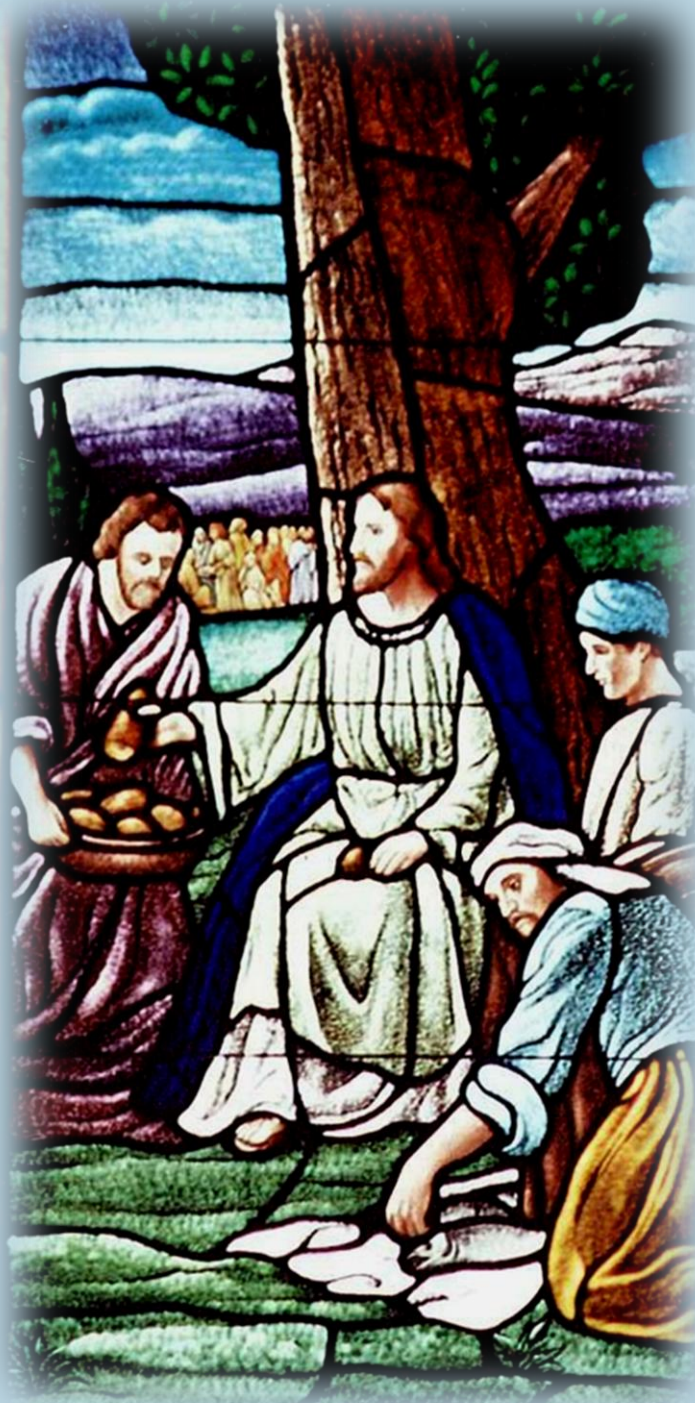
SOWING AND REAPING

**Christ's first parable compared seed to the Gospel and soil to those who hear
The catalyst required for spiritual growth, being a heart that's totally sincere
He longed to open mans hearts and minds so a change would then take place
By having them focus on the meaning of His words, God's truths would be their base.**

**Jesus then likened severely packed soil to people whose hearts are hard
Insensitivity causing a lack of understanding with spiritual learning barred
Their ears are described as completely deaf, along with eyes that cannot see
Wearing hearts so rough and badly calloused, they're unable to hear God's plea.**

**The Lord next talked about paper thin soil being like a shallow heart
Repelled by the cost of following Christ, not allowing deep roots to start
Another condition Jesus warned them of was a soil that is filled with weeds
A heart that allows a busy earthly life to crowd out the spiritual seeds.**

**Last, He spoke about the good soil, producing more than the seeds that were sown
This an example of a heart that is open, resulting in a faith that has grown
These four responses can be from one person; Christians like you and me
So ask God in prayer to search your heart, providing wisdom and open eyes that see.**



(“JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND” courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Luke 9: 16-17

Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.



A MIRACLE MEAL

John the Baptist had just been beheaded, causing Jesus sadness and grief

Requiring time to reflect, He slipped from the crowds for a time of quiet relief

Jesus, the Great Healer, now enormously popular, was sought after more and more

Thus, watching His boat, the people kept track, and followed along the shore.

Showing great compassion Christ compared them to sheep, needing care from His own hand

This pitiful flock, lost without a shepherd, required love; His Father's command

The day quickly passed under the Master's care, and the hour was growing quite late

Causing the disciples to describe the crowd's intense hunger, as a need that could not wait.

To their surprise, the Master's command was to give them something to eat

Which to their human minds was insurmountable; an absolutely impossible feat

Jesus then instructed them to look among the people and see what they could find

Obtaining five loaves of bread and only two fish, they knew they were in a bind.

Jesus then broke the bread, looked toward heaven and to His Father did thankfully pray

Resulting in 5,000 men plus women and children eating God's miracle meal that day

Let us all bring the simplicity of who we are to the mighty altar of God above

Allowing Him to transform our ordinary gifts with His abundant miracle of love.



("JESUS THE CONSOLER" courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Luke 12: 32

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.



JESUS THE CONSOLER

**Time and time again as you watch from above
Your soft and gentle eyes fill with compassion and love
For often you see, this child made from dust
Grasping for words; failing miserably to trust.**

**Wrapped in Your arms, You console and wipe my tears
“Don’t be afraid little flock,” Your words that calm my fears
As my sobs become sighs replaced with calm and peace
My soul is filled with hope, feeling the sweetness of release.**

**Even the walls black shadows glow softly with Your light
As all the noisy discords become a peaceful sight
In the midst of stormy clouds, you’re the Consoler of my life
Providing strength for the journey in the face of pain and strife.**

**When I walk through death’s dark valley, I’ll never be alone
For You are in Your kingdom, ever watching from Your throne
Your warm and tender care hems me in front and from behind
Never leaving or forsaking; no greater love can this child ever find.**



“CHRIST AND THE VALIANT WOMAN” by Louis Comfort Tiffany, from First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, KS

1 John 4: 16

“So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.”



VALIANT WOMAN

Women like men bear the stamp of God's image and equally share His love

Thus, the Holy Bible pays them homage and respect, like the Father in heaven above

As seen in the picture of the Valiant Woman, Christ looks them straight in the eyes

Woe to anyone treating them as less, for the Scripture he flagrantly belies.

Extraordinary women in the Bible appeared outlandishly special indeed

But were only ordinary females, transformed by God's own hand to succeed

Their stories they owed to their glorious Savior, whom they dearly loved and served

The extraordinary One being only God; for whom all praise is reserved.

So unveil your face and look into the eyes of your glorious Savior and Lord

For His greatest desire is to transform His children with Him in one accord

That God has always used imperfect vessels; to us history does unfold

Teaching all today that Christ's great glory we can still miraculously behold.

May our hearts be ablaze with a faith that lasts, and our Savior forever serve

Like on eagles wings continuously soaring, possessing ample energy in reserve

Knowing and believing God's love for us, wearing His seal will be our mark

Displaying feminine virtue to one and all, creating faith's first brilliant spark.



(“COME UNTO ME” from First Presbyterian Church, Wichita, Kansas)

Matthew 11:28

“Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”



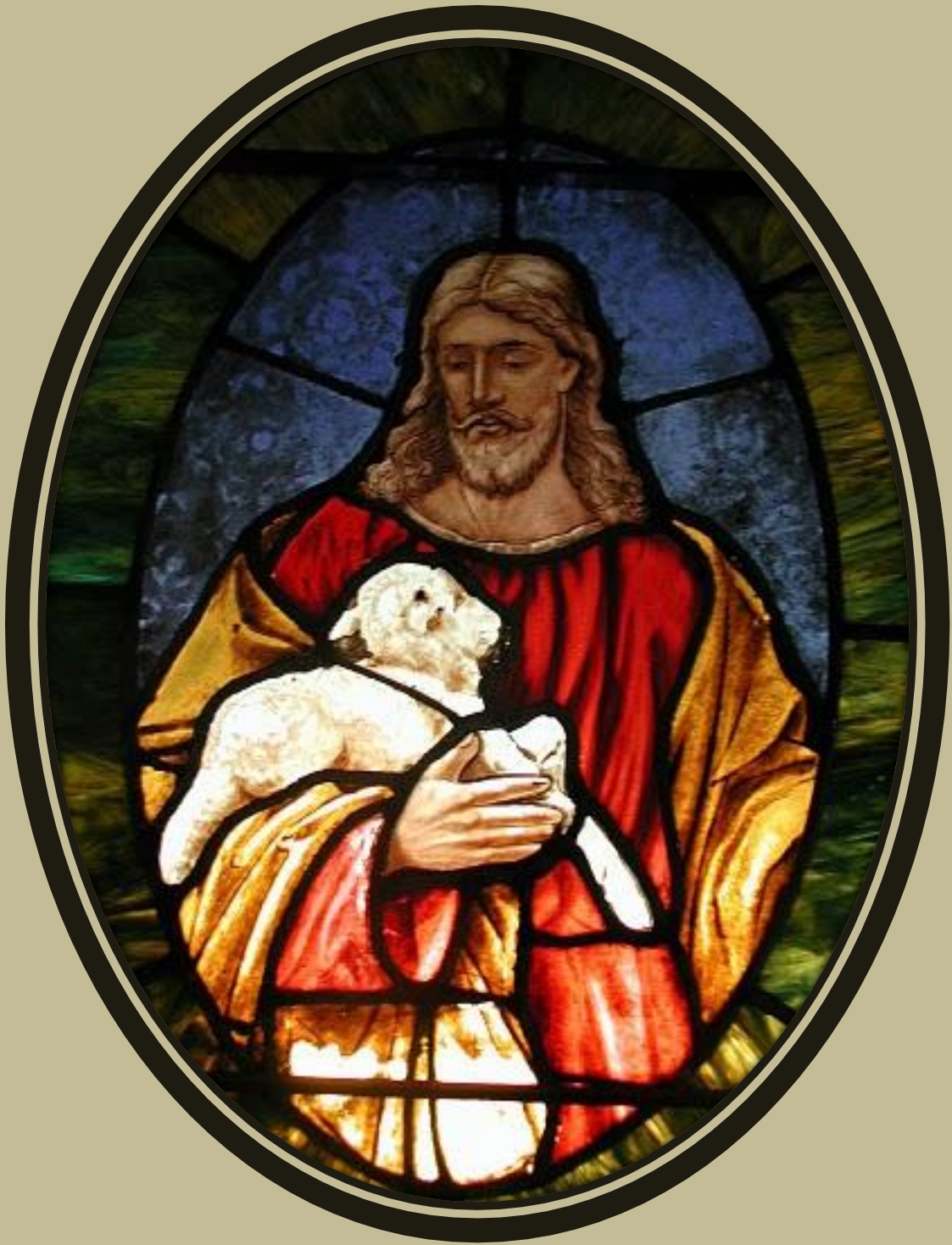
COME UNTO ME!

**When the winds of change wildly blow and nothing remains the same
With the world in rags and tatters; not knowing from whence it came
When the deafening silence of yesterday appears as barren waste
'Tis time to quiet our troubled thoughts and turn to Christ in haste.**

**The whisper of Jesus brings solace as it kisses the worried face
He's the One who softly beckons and will all our fears erase
As His words of mercy quietly enter and soothe the anxious mind
No greater respite in all this life can His children ever find.**

**Come unto me, He says, and I will give you rest
Let me carry the weight of your burdens that seem an impossible test
Take my simple yoke upon you and freely learn from me
Finding new hope with your Father and a peace that's light and free.**

**The One who stilled the tempest and calmed the angry sea
Can be a place of sweet release; a harbor for you and me
To all who genuinely love the Lord, for His purpose He will call
Being plantings of God the Father, we will never stumble or fall.**



("The Good Shepherd", c. 1907, compliments of The Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Kansas)

John 10: 11

I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"I am the Good Shepherd," the Lord did magnanimously declare

"The Good Shepherd gives His life for His sheep," His statement of love so rare

God demonstrated at Calvary, the deepest desires of His heart

Placing man under His benevolent care, offering a brand new start

Christ Himself absorbed the penalty, bearing the inequity for all

At the incredible price of His own life, in answer to His Father's call

"I am the Good Shepherd, I know my sheep, and they for sure know me"

"Where ever I go, they will follow and from themselves be set free."

His sheep are given a distinctive mark and are sealed to Him forever

That of the cross, the claim of Christ, one that nothing can possibly sever

As an object of my Father's affection, He chose to create me

Thus, it's abundantly clear I belong to Him and with Him shall always be.

With the Lord as my Shepherd, I shall always flourish no matter what life may bring

This thought alone offers deep contentment; a sobering and glorious thing

Then, like David, with great exaltation, I can joyously exclaim

"The Lord, He is my Shepherd," a fact I will proudly proclaim.



**("The Good Shepherd donated by The Sunday School at Salemsborg Lutheran Parish,
Lindsborg, KS.)**

Psalm 23: 1-3

**The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green
pastures, he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in
paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**



FEED MY SHEEP

Jesus asked Peter if he loved him one day

“Yes Lord,” he spoke without delay

Are you sure Jesus asked, that its love you feel

Above all things, is it stead fast and real?

Will you love my children when it makes no sense

When they act unkind without a defense

Will you hold the lepers, and sing them to sleep

With love beyond reason; my promises to keep?

“Then feed my sheep,” speaking thrice not twice

Words from the Savior who had paid our price

Feed the poor and hungry; weep with those who grieve

Showing grace to others; with open arms receive.

He described Spiritual food as coming from above

Requiring us to feed, from actions filled with love

Being a mirror of Jesus is what the world should see

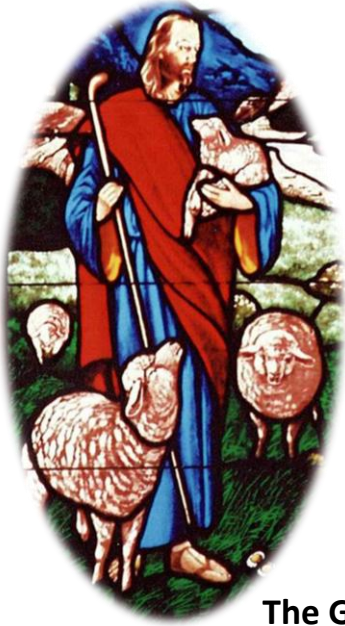
Through obedience to the Word, His shepherds we can be.



"SECOND LANDSCAPE" by Louis Tiffany Comfort, compliments of First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, Kansas

Psalm 23: 1-2a

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul."



A PLACE OF PEACE

The Lord makes me to quietly lie down in luxuriant pastures green

A land flowing with milk and honey; in His place of peace serene

The Good Shepherd Jesus has faithfully promised His sheep an abundant life

If they keep their eyes focused on the Master instead of worldly strife.

Through the unrelenting effort of Christ, who works on our behalf

He clears our rocks of unbelief, by using His rod and staff

And by breaking up our proud cold hearts, hardened like sun dried clay

He sows the seeds of His precious Word, creating for us a new day.

Not only can Christ satisfy hunger, but quince our thirst as well

“If any man thirsts let Him come unto me,” His words the scriptures tell

All thirsty souls of men and women, He’ll lead by the waters still

By drawing from Himself will supply Living water and our cups completely fill.

The Lord our Shepherd knows His sheep, and how much each one can face

As our guide during times of grief and pain, through mercy our fears will erase

Replaced by dignity and direction, with sense and purpose His goal

By dwelling with Him in His place of peace, He’ll refresh and restore our soul.



(“THE SHEEPFOLD” from First Presbyterian Church, Wichita, Kansas)

John 10: 1-2

“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.”



THE SHEEPFOLD

The Lord is my Shepherd, the great protector; to Him I am thrilled to belong
For life with Him, is on a higher plane, far away from the madding throng
Left entirely on my own, I'd graze the same hills, until they became a desert waste
Stubborn and self-willed, following familiar trails, all my days would pass in reckless haste.

A sheepfold for His lambs, Jesus has prepared, a place of protection and rest
Where He will be the Shepherd, of His flock forever, and to them eternal life bequest
The world cannot pluck them from His hand, for the sheep belong to Him and will not perish
For His Heavenly Father, gave them all to Him, and His Son's sheep, He, too, will cherish.

The Good Shepherd Jesus, called the sheepfold door, is the only way one can enter
Woe to the stranger, claiming to be the shepherd, for the flock will turn away and splinter
Since the Good Shepherd died for the sins of His sheep, to follow Him only was their choice
Thus, grazing in green pastures, under loving care, they'll respond just to His voice.

The Saviors eager eyes, search the broad horizon, with compassion pathos and concern
If a sheep has come undone, He's eagerly by its side, teaching the lessons it needs to learn
When a lamb is cast down, unable to move, 'tis in God it will find a place of hope
For the Good Shepherd waits, ready to restore, as they walk each slippery slope.



(“JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD” from Pitts Chapel United Methodist Church, Springfield, Mo.)

John 10: 27

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Ephesians 1: 13-14

And you were also included in Christ when you heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.



HIGHER GROUND

During the autumn of our lives, when the leaves of time begin to fall
Our tired eyes sweep the wide horizon, anticipating the Shepherd's call
As dark forbidding ominous clouds, sweep over the distant hill
The cold wind of the approaching storm, harshly announces the winter chill.

But no matter the raging tempest, faced by His sheep along the way
The Shepherd pours His life into theirs, and beside them He will stay
And if a loved one first departs, leaving those who care behind
The Shepherd will gently still remain, offering strength for all to find.

Yeah though I walk through death's dark valley, life for me will never stop
For the Lord promises this as the beginning, with higher ground waiting on top
He then prepares a table before me and sweetly anoints my head with oil
And with His goodness and mercy overflowing, nothing will make me ever recoil.

All through this life Christ attends to me, with tender care and concern
He is my Shepherd, to whom I belong, and to Him I will humbly return
That I shall dwell in His presence forever, gives cause for my cup to overflow
And one day, soon, I'll leave for higher ground, this I believe and know.



("The Transfiguration," c 1907, compliments of The Presbyterian Church of Pittsburg, Kansas)

Matthew 17: 1-3, 5

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses, and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him."



TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

The transfiguration of Jesus; a vision His disciples did behold
Was a brief glimpse of the King's true glory and all that was to unfold
His face shone bright like the sun and his garments glowed white like light
Witnessed in awe by Peter James and John; a magnificent and glorious sight.

Moses and Elijah in the presence of Jesus; a vision the three did see
Discussing the Lord's upcoming exodus and death at Calvary
Speaking of His eminent departure; resurrection and ascension to above
One can only try and imagine, how much He was comforted by their love.

Showing great exuberance, as always, Peter offered to build each a tent
Not fully comprehending who Jesus truly was and why he had really been sent
"THIS IS MY SON WHOM I LOVE"; these words came powerfully from God
Reacting with great fear and trembling, the disciples fell down upon the sod.

The transfiguration of Jesus was blessed by God's own voice
And that He paid our price as the Lamb on the cross gives all a reason to rejoice
The disciples glimpsed the glory of God and reward for those who believe
Just like Moses and Elijah, eternal life we too can receive.



("JESUS WALKING ON WATER" from Salemsborg Lutheran Parish, Lindsborg, Kansas)

Matthew 14:30

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and beginning to sink cried out, "Lord, save me!"



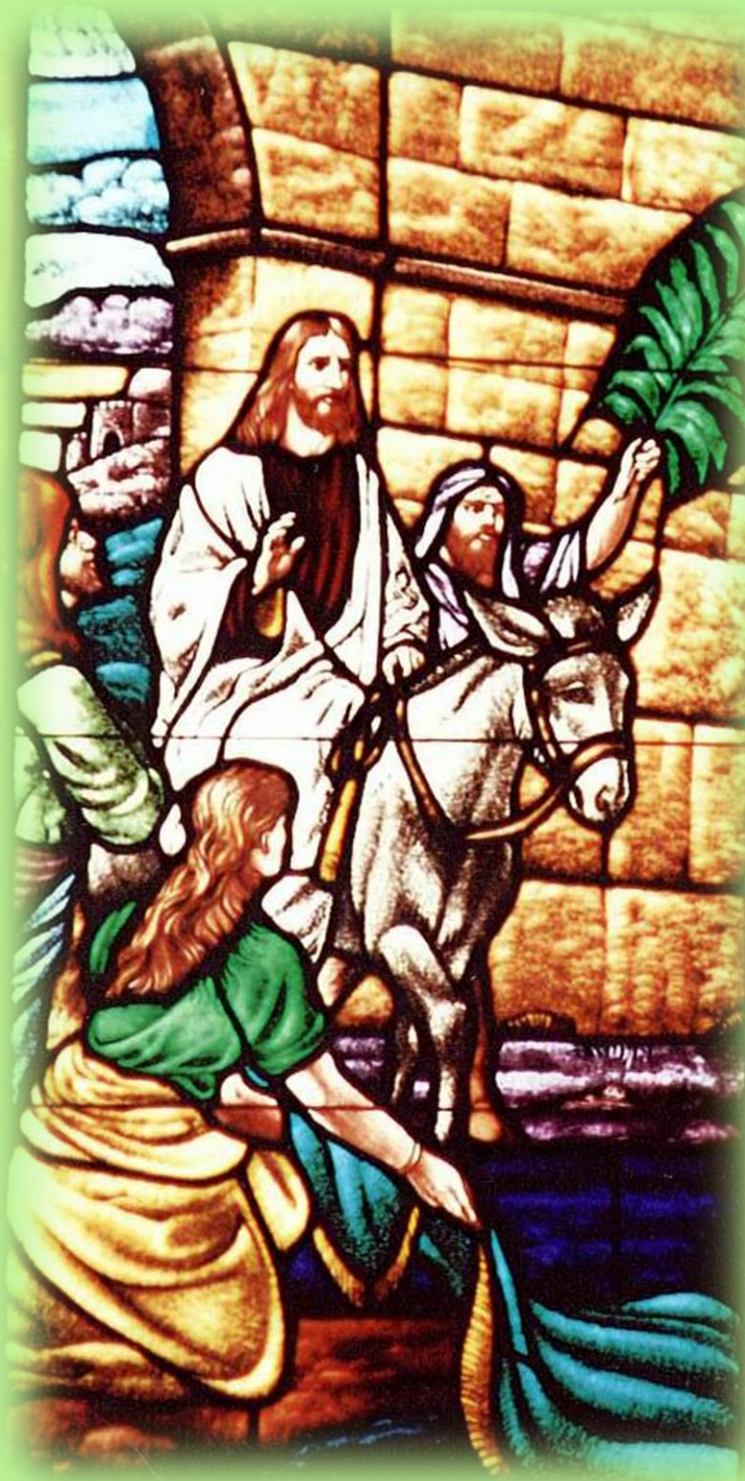
STEP OUT OF THE BOAT

**As stormy waves rocked the disciple's boat on the Sea of Galilee
Exhausted from rowing they surrendered in fear without a place to flee
When Jesus was seen walking on water they panicked and knew Him not
Thinking their Lord to be a ghost they became even more distraught.**

**After hearing their Savior's words for them to relax and be of good cheer
They still didn't know it was their Lord even though He was so near
As courageous Peter tried walking toward Christ his feet began to sink
With eyes being cast on the storm instead his confidence did shrink.**

**Jesus beckons us to walk on water with eyes fixed only on Him
Having trust and faith in His promise alone when hopes and options are grim
So step out of the boat onto the water far from the peaceful shore
And be in a place where you'll soon discover your Lord like never before.**

**Across the water our Savior walks above the trials of life
Dwelling in a realm victorious; above our pain and strife
Remember when dark clouds gather he calls to us by name
With love that's unconditional and will always remain the same.**



(“TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF JESUS” courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Zechariah 9:9

**Rejoice greatly, Oh Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!
See, your King comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt,
the foal of a donkey.**



HIS FINAL EARTHLY RIDE

Gentle and riding on a donkey, as the prophecy long foretold

Jesus knew what lay ahead, and the events that would unfold

This was to be His last approach, His final earthly ride

With full awareness the loud hosannas, on the morrow, would dimly slide.

Thus, approaching the city of Jerusalem, overcome with sadness He wept
For His children's minds remained unchanged, their rejection of Him they kept

Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, all the prophets you chose to kill
Blinded by foolish sinful thoughts, disobeying your Father's will.

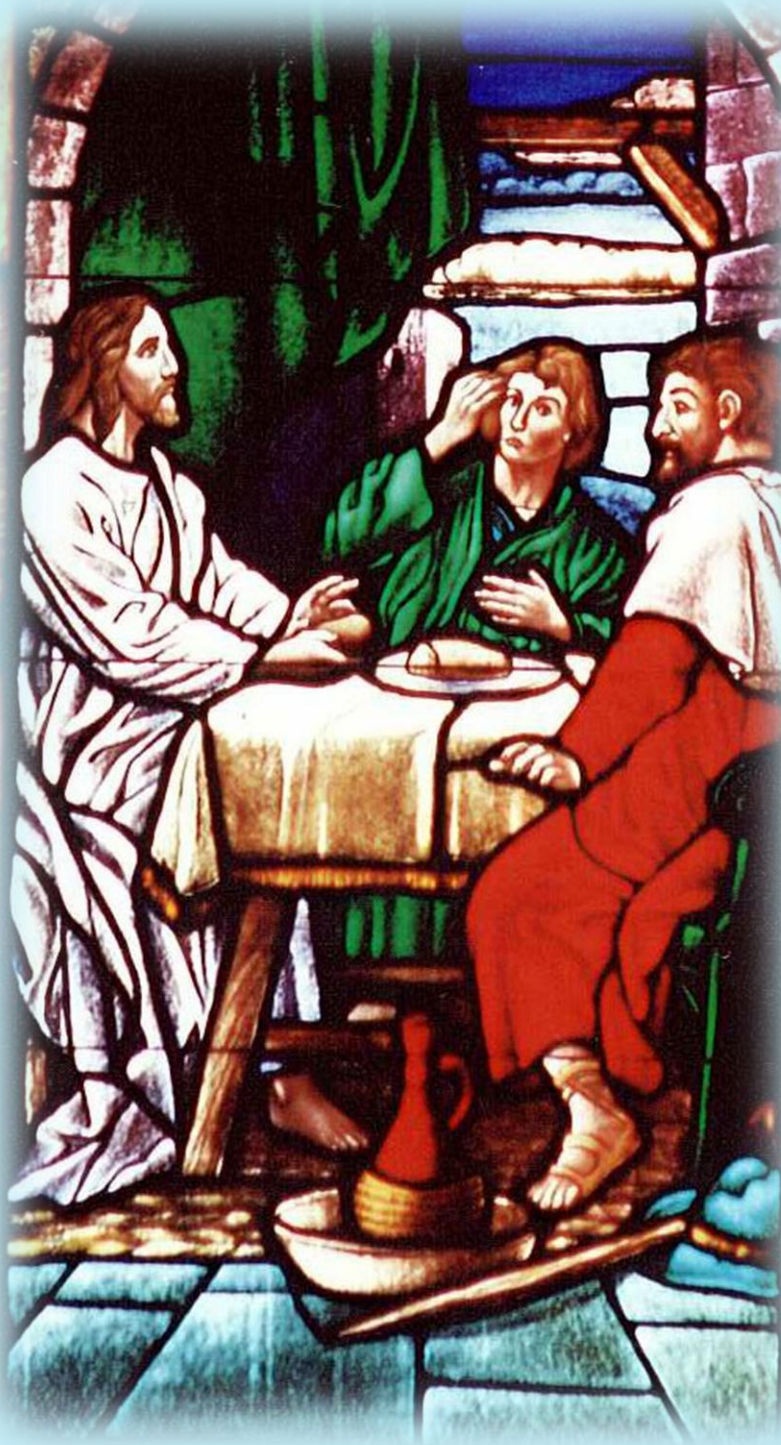
Oh how I longed to gather you like chicks beneath my wing
Filling your hearts with joy and hope, that only My peace could bring
Still as the time approached, resolutely, Jesus moved ahead
This man of sorrows, filled with compassion, His blood would soon be shed.

Which side of the street were you on that day when Jesus rode right by?

Did you look into His eyes and promise on Him to rely?

Will you daily sing the Messiah's glory, never letting your praises fade?

Always seeking shelter under His wings and trusting the promises He made?



(“THE LAST SUPPER” courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Luke 22: 19

He took the bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”



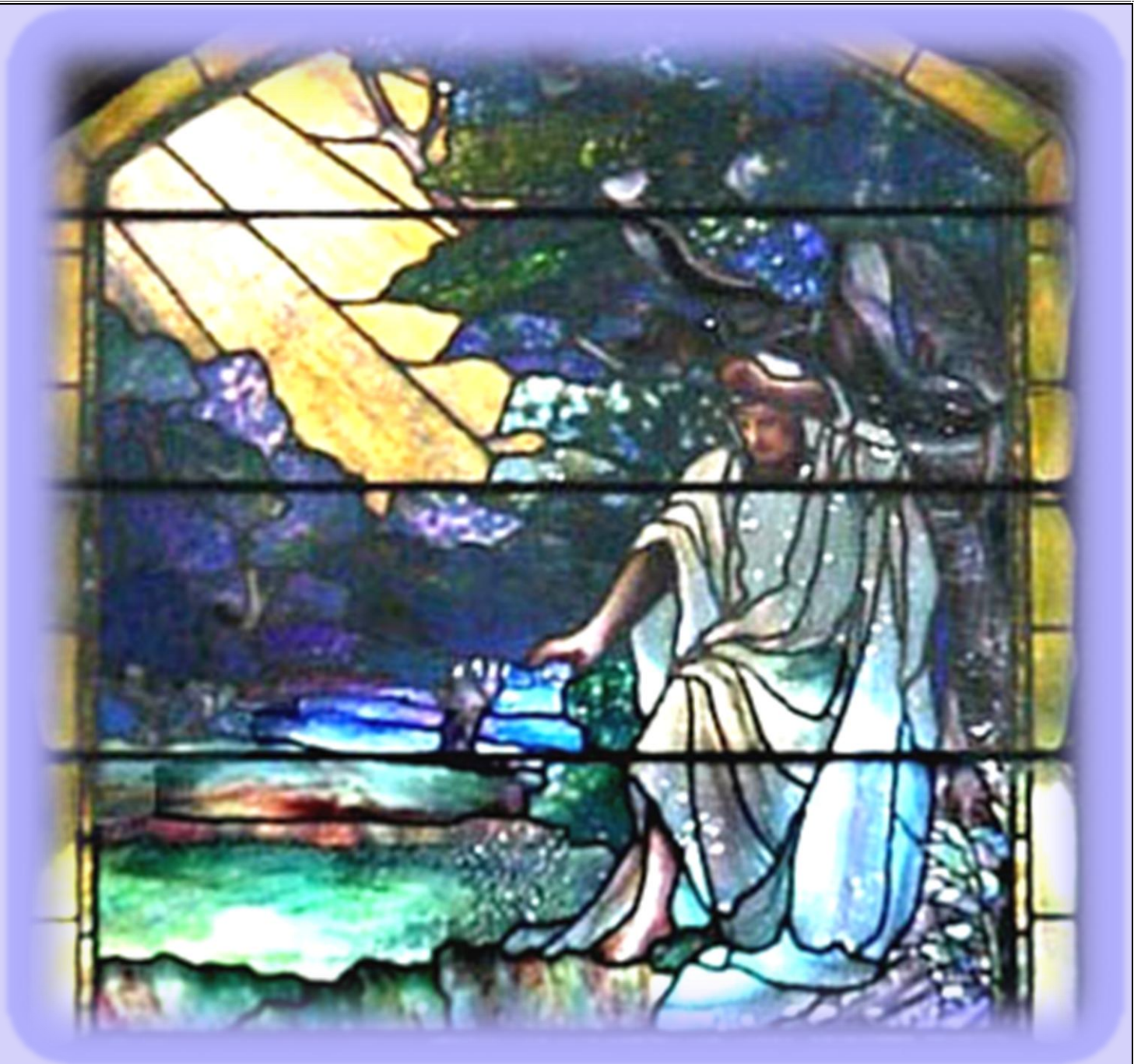
THE LAST SUPPER

Peter and John would both carefully prepare
The Passover meal Christ desired to share
Lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread
Exodus symbols; for out of bondage being led.

A lamb without blemish they were told to procure
Highly symbolic of what our Lord would endure
For Christ soon would become the Lamb to be slain
Suffering death on the cross in agony and pain.

Four cups of wine Jesus served at the meal
Recalling God's promises with the words, "I will"
"I will" bring you out of bondage from the Egyptians yoke
"I will" take you as my people; the precious words God spoke.

Christ refused the third cup, not desiring to drink
"I will" redeem my people a duty He did not shrink
He would personally be the cup for the redemption of man
Not drinking the cup again until God's kingdom began.



"THY WILL BE DONE" stained glass window by Tiffany Studios

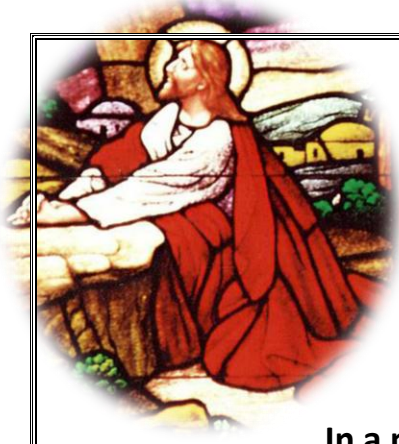
(Courtesy of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland)

Matthew 6: 10

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 26: 39

"My Father if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet, not as I will but as You will."



THY WILL BE DONE

**In a moonlit garden with dark shadows enveloping His face
Contemplating the dreaded morrow when our sin He was to erase
Jesus, the Suffering Servant, would soon be facing the cross
Removing eternally for each of us life's dreaded albatross.**

**Still in human form, not desiring to pay the price
As the perfect Lamb of God; Himself as a sacrifice
Jesus clung tightly to His Father, in prayer He did remain
Saying, "Not My will but Yours be done," His submissive obedient refrain.**

**When subtle shades of color sound our troubled soul's alarm
And the raging tempest moans signaling overwhelming harm
God's voice rises above the sound of mournful howling wind
With an anchor at the ready that only He can send.**

**His still small voice of calm will quiet the waves of sorrow
Offering everlasting peace and the courage to face tomorrow
He strikes the strings of your tender heart listening for the strain
"Thy will be done, dear Savior," as your humble obedient refrain.**



**("JESUS AGONIZES IN THE GARDEN" from Salemsborg Lutheran Parish,
Lindsborg, KS.)**

Luke 22: 45-46

**When He arose from prayer and went back to the disciples, He found
them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. "Why are you sleeping?" He
asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into
temptation."**



AGONIZING IN THE GARDEN

**Jesus slowly climbed to the Olive Grove; toward the finale of His life
Fully cognizant of the events to come; thoughts cutting Him like a knife**

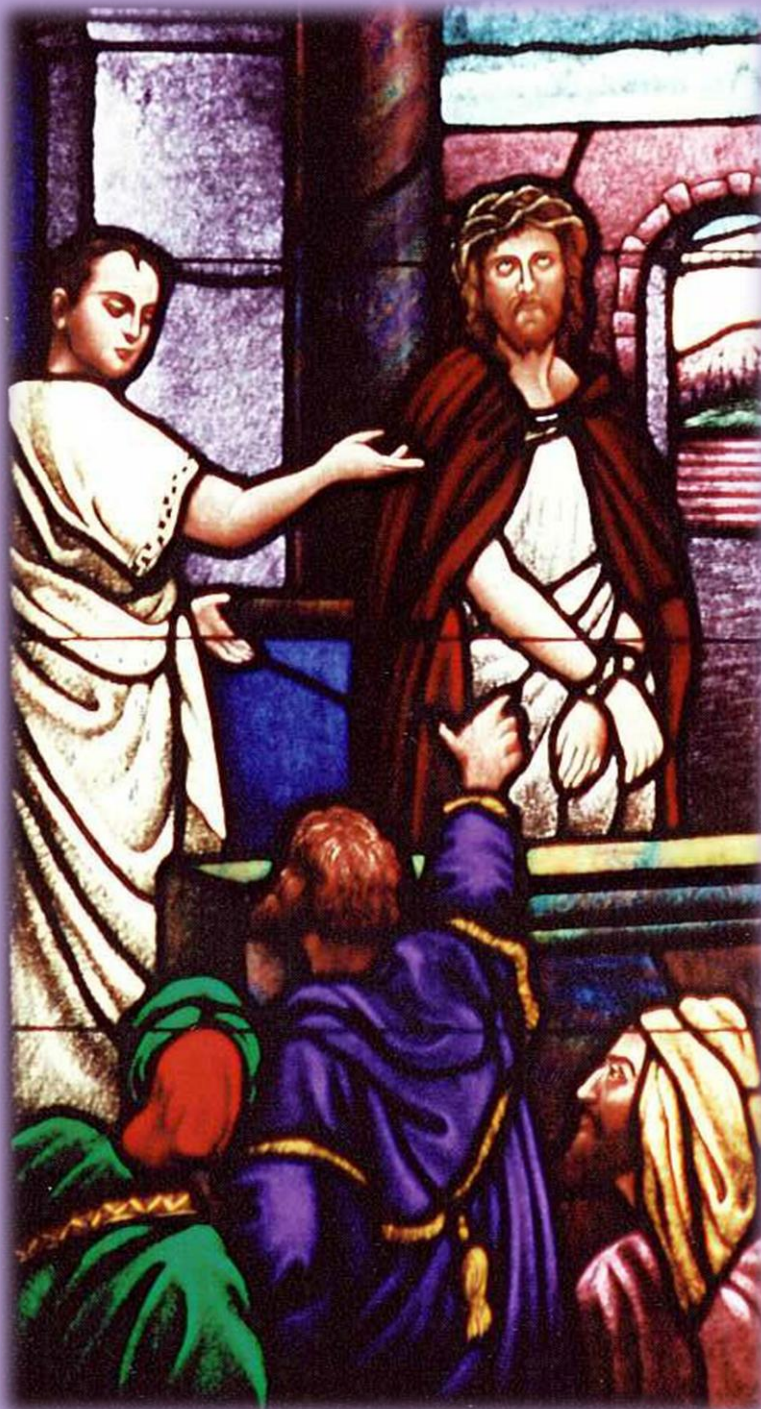
“I will strike the Shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.”

A fact he taught His disciples; one that truly mattered.

**While with them at Gethsemane, Jesus went alone to pray
His disciples as chosen followers; awake He desired them to stay
Then returning to His faithful, He found them fast asleep
Wakefulness being their hearts desire, but one they did not keep.**

**Strengthened by a heavenly angel, Jesus’ mission was clearly to remain
Though His sweat poured like drops of blood due to intense agony and pain
When Jesus cried out, “Abba, Father,” God was watching from above
That He did not intercede shows how great for us His love.**

**For God so loved the world He gave His only Son
Allowing Christ to die in our place so that we all might be one
Don’t sleep dear children, be alert keep watch and pray
Overcome temptation by wearing God’s armor each and every day.**



("JESUS GOES BEFORE PILATE" courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Luke 23: 13

Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him."



THE CROSS NOW IN VIEW

Jesus was clearly prosecuted for being the Son of God

Given six mock trials, complete with false charges and fraud

Judas led the crowd to Gethsemane where Jesus could be found

By a huge detachment of soldiers; our Lord was cruelly bound.

As a way to identify Christ, Judas approached Him with a kiss

Acting as accuser, using a signal they could not miss

Religious leaders, out of envy, determined our Lord should die

Crucifixion before Sabbath would be their battle cry.

Lacking authority themselves, Pilate would certainly have the power

Thus, to the governor Christ was led, at a very early hour

Pilate repeatedly told the crowd Jesus was guiltless of a crime

But the governor fearing uproar knew he was only wasting time.

His Father could have rescued Him, had Jesus made the call

“God’s kingdom come, Thy will be done;” on His shoulders it would befall.

Our Savior, Suffering Servant, knew things must be this way

The cross now in view, there would be no further delay.



("JESUS' WALK TO THE CROSS" courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Luke 23: 27

A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him.



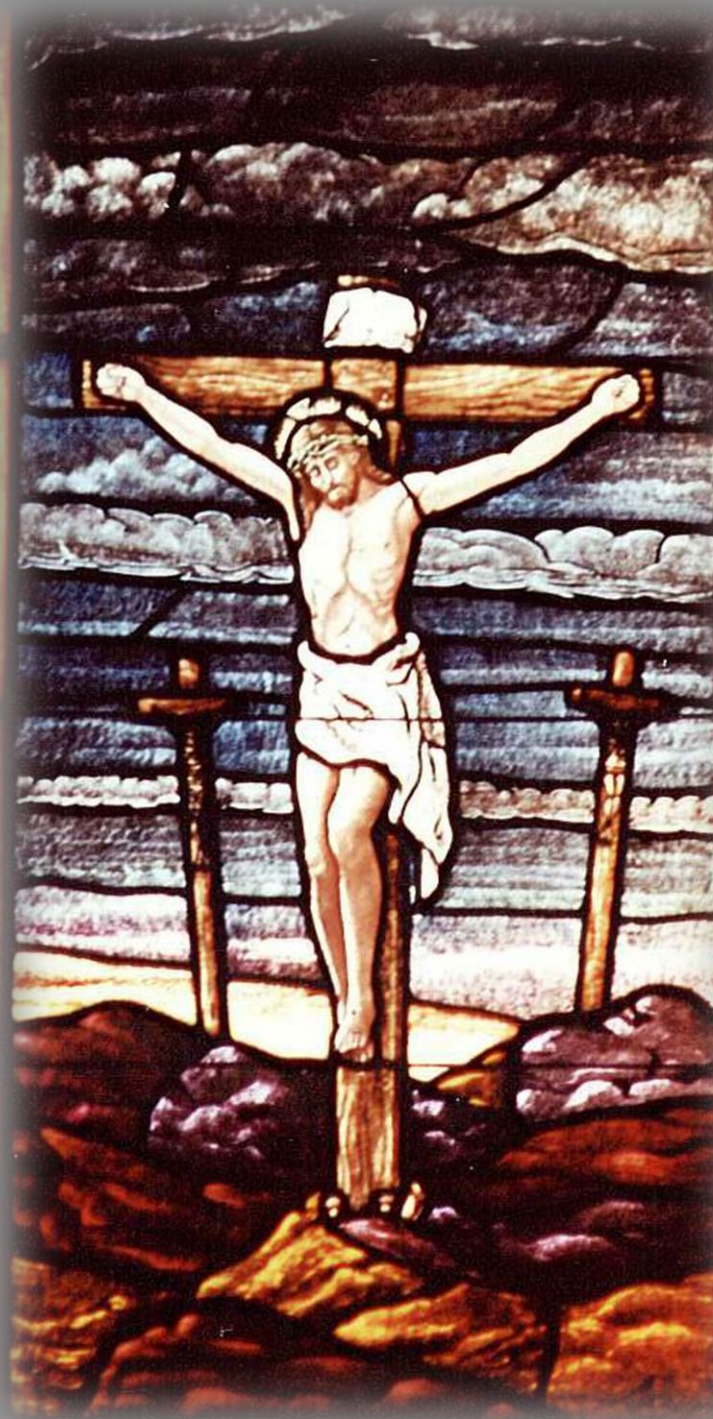
WALK TO THE CROSS

**Jesus' last walk as the Son of Man had finally arrived and begun
Deserted and alone, His disciples panicked and had quickly come undone
A heavy wooden cross now upon His back; an unimaginable strain
Beyond recognition, His lacerated body was marred and racked with pain.**

**His faithful followers of grief stricken women wept and trailed behind
No greater servants on His earthly walk was the Lord ever able to find
They were present at the start and would stay until the end
For the Lord always honored and called each one His friend.**

**A Jew named Simon who happened by as Jesus was led away
Was ordered to carry the cross for Christ so there would be no further delay
That same Simon whose compassion to Jesus was carefully and gently shown
Had begat two sons, who in the church, soon would be very well known.**

**Let each of us deliberately walk the path of the cross with Him
Keeping our eyes upon His face, never letting our faith grow dim
For sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a contrite and broken heart
Crucifying self and replacing it with God will offer a brand new start.**



("CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS" courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Isaiah 52: 14

**Just as there were many who were appalled at Him---his appearance
was so disfigured beyond that of any man.**



THE EMPTY CROSS

The rugged cross now empty standing beneath an ominous sky
Where hours before a crucified Jesus, for our sins did bleed and die
What now appears as shadows are memories time can't erase
Bloodstains left by a wounded Savior who chose to die in our place.

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" words He did call out
Humanities' sins heaped upon His shoulders to God He did loudly shout
Being separated from His Father, was an agonizing price to pay
Sin now judged; mission accomplished He departed without delay.

"Into Your hands I commit my Spirit," the last precious words Christ said
As an earthquake violently shook and taunting turned to fear instead
Then darkness covered the entire land; from graves the dead set free
The curtain in the temple was torn in two, an event for all to see.

Removed by Joseph, His disfigured body was handled with tender love
Prior to Sabbath, was placed in a tomb out of reverence to God above
The cross now empty, but full of God's promises---HOPE for you and me
For in Jesus' blood, written on each name, FORGIVEN, you are set free.



(“CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST” courtesy of Sunset Baptist Church, Ponca City, Oklahoma)

John 19: 25

Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.



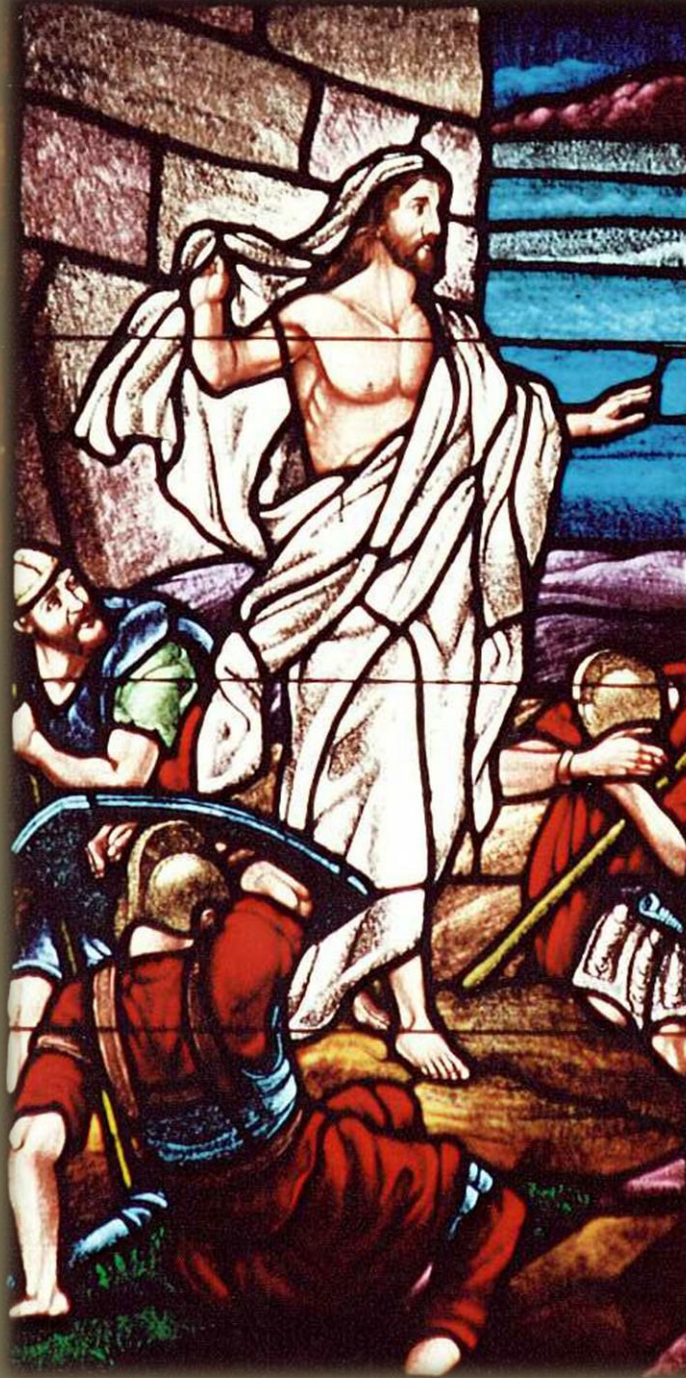
AT THE FEET OF JESUS

At the feet of Jesus where women's tears were painfully and mournfully shed
Is found the place of comfort and peace where troubled souls are fed
Through His mercy love and forgiveness, our sin He will tenderly erase
By freely pardoning all who ask and will save them by His grace.

Finding His Word as a map for all and a Light to lead the way
Hope springs eternal at the Savior's feet that brightens every day
With old things passed, behold alas, all things are born anew
And all are found at the feet of Jesus, through faith, we believe is true.

A place of worship is found at His feet; an altar of the heart
In complete obedience, we humbly bow, receiving a brand new start
On bended knee we lift our voice with open arms we raise
As the air is filled, with sweet adoration, from notes of love and praise.

What a day it will be, when we all shall gather, falling prostrate at His feet
Every tongue will confess, Jesus is Lord, as He sits on His Justice Seat
Until that time, let us rise and follow, where ere His feet shall lead
Proclaiming His name, on life's short journey, to hungry souls in need.



("RESSURECTION POWER" courtesy of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Matthew 28: 2,4

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. The guards were so afraid of Him that they shook and became like dead men.



GOD'S TIMING

After Christ's last breath, soldiers pierced His side
Proving to one and all that the Savior had died
Afraid His disciples would declare Him not dead
Pharisees thought they would steal His body instead.

Thus, a huge stone covered the tomb's only entrance
With soldiers to guard at the Pharisees' insistence
But Jesus' resurrection, only God knew the hour
And no sword or stone could halt his Father's power.

God's plan on time, there would be no delay
As an angel of the Lord rolled the stone away
The guards with great fear fell down to the ground
Looking like dead men; making not a sound.

God's Eternal Kingdom now firmly in place
His promise to mankind no one could erase
Relax dear child, Christ took death's sting away
There's nothing left to fear if we believe Him today.



("Open Tomb" donated by Dr. and Mrs. Carl Waleen from Salemsborg Lutheran Parish, Lindsborg, Kansas)

Matthew 28: 2

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes as white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.



HE LIVES!

Jerusalem's shadows, dark and lingering, with everyone fast asleep

Not breaking the city's lazy slumber, God had promises to keep

Just the morning star shone above His tomb, on this His resurrection day

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done; had unfolded without delay.

The women bringing spices to Jesus' tomb found the large stone rolled away

The grave now empty, finding Him gone, and why they could not say

Gleaming like lightning, two men appeared, standing powerfully at their side

They told them Christ had truly risen, though on the cross He'd died.

The women bowed down, with faces to the ground, afraid of what they'd said

Why do you look, they wanted to know, for the living among the dead

Returning from the tomb, they told the Eleven and all the others as well

Women, once again, were given the task of the resurrection story to tell.

Why are you down cast O my soul, for the Lord has risen today

Because Christ lives, the sting of death has forever been taken away

So let us delightfully rejoice in the Lord from now, and evermore

Shouting loud hosannas to one and all that it's Jesus our Messiah we adore.



("ROAD TO EMMAUS" courtesy of Austin United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas)

Luke 24: 15

As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.



ROAD TO EMMAUS

Several women had delivered the resurrection news the angels told them to give

Their Lord, crucified dead and buried, had arisen and still did live

Two men walking slowly to Emmaus, who had heard their words that day

Still unbelieving, had down cast faces, as they journeyed along the way.

Their discussion continuing, Jesus suddenly appeared, surprisingly at their side

Asking what their comments were all about, as He easily fell into stride

Repeating their words they sadly said, "But we had hoped he was the one."

Completely discounting, the sacrifice endured, by our Father's Only Son.

Clearly displeased at their unbelief, Christ offered a firm rebuke

That the prophets' words had long been proven and were not a random fluke

Calling them foolish, He clearly asked, why the scriptures they did not regard

The prophets, after all, had described the events, and labeled them extremely hard.

On the road to your own Emmaus do you truly recognize the Lord

Have you accepted the resurrection story; living with Him in one accord

When He lovingly looks upon your countenance, centering eyes upon your face

Are you a vision of joy and peace, wearing a heart filled with His grace?



(**"THE ASCENSION WINDOW"** from First Presbyterian Church, Wichita Kansas)

Matthew 28:20

**"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you: and
lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."**



ASCENSION OF JESUS

Jesus repeatedly told His disciples, to His Father He soon would return

But not understanding these abstract words, Simon Peter asked questions to discern

Christ requested their trust that He now must leave to prepare for them a place

And all who believed He was the Way, His Father, too, would embrace.

Jesus assured them they wouldn't be alone but clothed with power from on high

Then on them bestowing His blessings rich, was lifted through the clouds in the sky

As Christ ascended, the disciple's last view was that of His nail scarred feet

Forever symbolic of His precious love and His gift of grace so sweet.

Jesus now sits at God's right hand; His place in heaven today

And will return again the same way He left; this message we all should relay

He will send His angels to gather His elect from all four corners of the earth

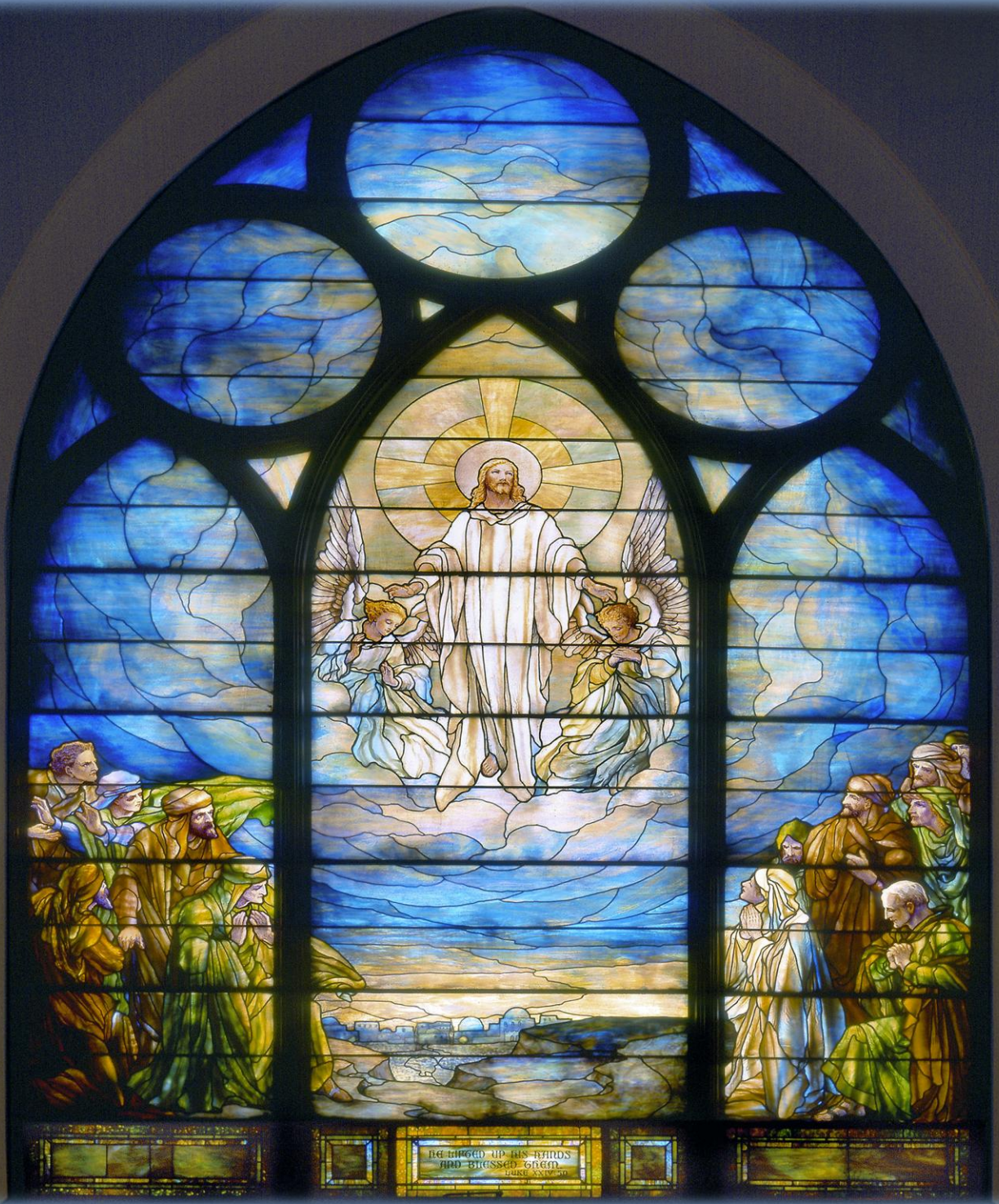
Because He lives, let your tongues rejoice, for us eternal life was given birth.

So, let not your hearts be troubled for on Christ we all can depend

Knowing the death of our earthly bodies means the beginning and not the end

For there's nothing in all creation that can take from us the love of our Lord

If our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, then heaven's our final reward.



"THE ASCENSION" by Louis Comfort Tiffany, compliments of First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, KS

Luke 24: 50-51

"Then Jesus led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven."



ASCENSION TO GLORY

We have been ransomed by Christ, not merely by silver or gold

But by Christ who is infinitely more valuable than any object to behold

In our place God gave His only Son, whose worth exceeded monetary measure

Proving how precious we are to Him, that He sacrificed His greatest treasure.

Let not our hearts be troubled, for death is but a momentary sorrow

No longer orphans in this world, His resurrection secured our tomorrow

Jesus ascended to prepare our home, this promise we can confidently believe

Along with the assurance He will return, and His faithful followers to Him receive.

When visualizing the Lord's ascension, we must recall His nail scarred wrists and feet

As symbols of His unfathomable love, and assurance with Him again we'll meet

By uniting our lives with Jesus the Christ, to God the Father we also belong

And are walking in the light of His glory, with praises and thanksgiving our song.

Perhaps like the disciples we gaze toward the sky, eagerly watching for our Lord's return

When spreading the good news of God's Kingdom, should now be our only concern

As His believers we must live by His Spirit, witnessing so lost souls can be won

Humbly following the Lord's Great Commission, until our races on earth are run.



(“PENTECOST” stained glass window from St. Paul Methodist Church, Springfield, Missouri)

Acts 2: 1-4

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.



HOLY SPIRIT ARRIVES

**Ten days following Christ's Ascension, the promised Holy Spirit did appear
Sounding like that of blowing violent wind, it filled those present with fear
Great tongues of fire dramatically divided and on the disciples did rest
Then when they all freely spoke in tongues, by God they knew they were blest.**

**Described like dew that nourishes the grass, not allowing it to wither and die
As believers today, just like then, we, too, receive His power from on high
Called the Spirit of Truth, it convicts of sin and points to us the way
Offering encouragement in the role of Counselor, to face our trials each day.**

**Our spiritual dew does silently come by lingering in the Master's presence
In absolute rest coolness and calm, we are saturated with His essence
All striving must cease if our needs are met in the deep things of our God
Just like nature, we receive spiritual dew by quietly resting on His sod.**

**Every day we live, we all must receive, the Holy Spirit's fresh renewal
Like honey from the Rock, it is heavenly manna that serves as our soul's rich fuel
God promised to be, like the dew to Israel; our Source of strength today
Thus, His vision is for the appointed time and will come without delay.**



("JESUS KNOCKING" courtesy of University Heights Baptist Church, Springfield, Missouri)

Romans 5: 13

Offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life.



WALK WITH HIM

Jesus the One and Only knocks at your heart's front door

Desiring to forgive you of your sin and inner peace restore

If you walk with Him, expect His presence, even when storm clouds gather

For our Savior is the ultimate Light that lives and shines forever.

Unlike earthly powers and leaders that speak for one short season

With Jesus at the core of your soul, you'll hear His voice beyond reason

In Him are springs fountains and streams that will never, ever run dry

For from our Lord runs the River of Life; on Him you can rely.

We're united with him in death and resurrection and, thus, are given new life

Receiving our Father's unbroken fellowship, He's present during times of strife

We can trust the Man who died for us; Son of the Living God

And count on Him every step of the way, no matter the paths we trod.

Obedying His commandments wholeheartedly, freely giving yourself to the Lord

Daily meditating on His precepts, you'll feel His loving cord

So offer yourself to God as those brought from death to life

Being alive to the Father in Christ, you'll be free from sin's sharp knife.



“Write What You See” by Tiffany Studios

(Courtesy of Brown Park Memorial Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore Maryland)

Revelation 1:11

**Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches:
Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.**



WRITE WHAT YOU SEE

**Apostle John had been banished by Rome to the rocky Patmos Isle
His punishment for spreading the news of Jesus was living alone in exile
The beloved disciple, nearing life's end, a vision of Christ did receive
His message recorded, was written to the churches and all who do believe.**

**This book of Revelation includes words of hope, along with warnings does tell
Fully revealing Christ's identity and depicting things to come, as well
In final judgment God's anger toward sin with fury will release one day
Causing Satan and his agents to be defeated and punished without delay.**

**That Christ will be present, gives His suffering followers strength and courage to endure
By standing on His promises, their safety and security, the Holy Bible does assure
His instructions to the churches, revealed to John, are relevant and still do apply
Above all else, being devoted to Christ, temptation His people must deny.**

**His followers as lamp stands are to hold the Light, for this a very dark place
For Jesus is the Light that's seen in us by others in the human race
Blessed are the ones who read Revelation; blessed are those who hear
And take to heart what is written on its pages, for the time is drawing near.**



“THE HOLY CITY” –Window designed by Tiffany Studios in early 1900

(Courtesy of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland)

Revelation 5: 12

In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”



WORTHY IS THE LAMB

A door stood open in heaven, showing John an amazing sight

A display of colors around God's throne that were rich beautiful and bright

Music filled the air from thousands of angels, in one loud voice they sang

Joined by creatures in heaven and on earth, to the Lord their worship rang.

To the Lamb and for Him who sits on the throne, were their words of grateful praise

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, the refrain they did joyfully raise

To receive wealth power and glory, for He's excellent in every way

Deserving of strength and honor; a description that will forever stay.

God put this scene in the Bible to show where our focus should be

For it is only when our thoughts are on Him, that triumph we will see

As we live in an attitude of worship, we shift from self to God

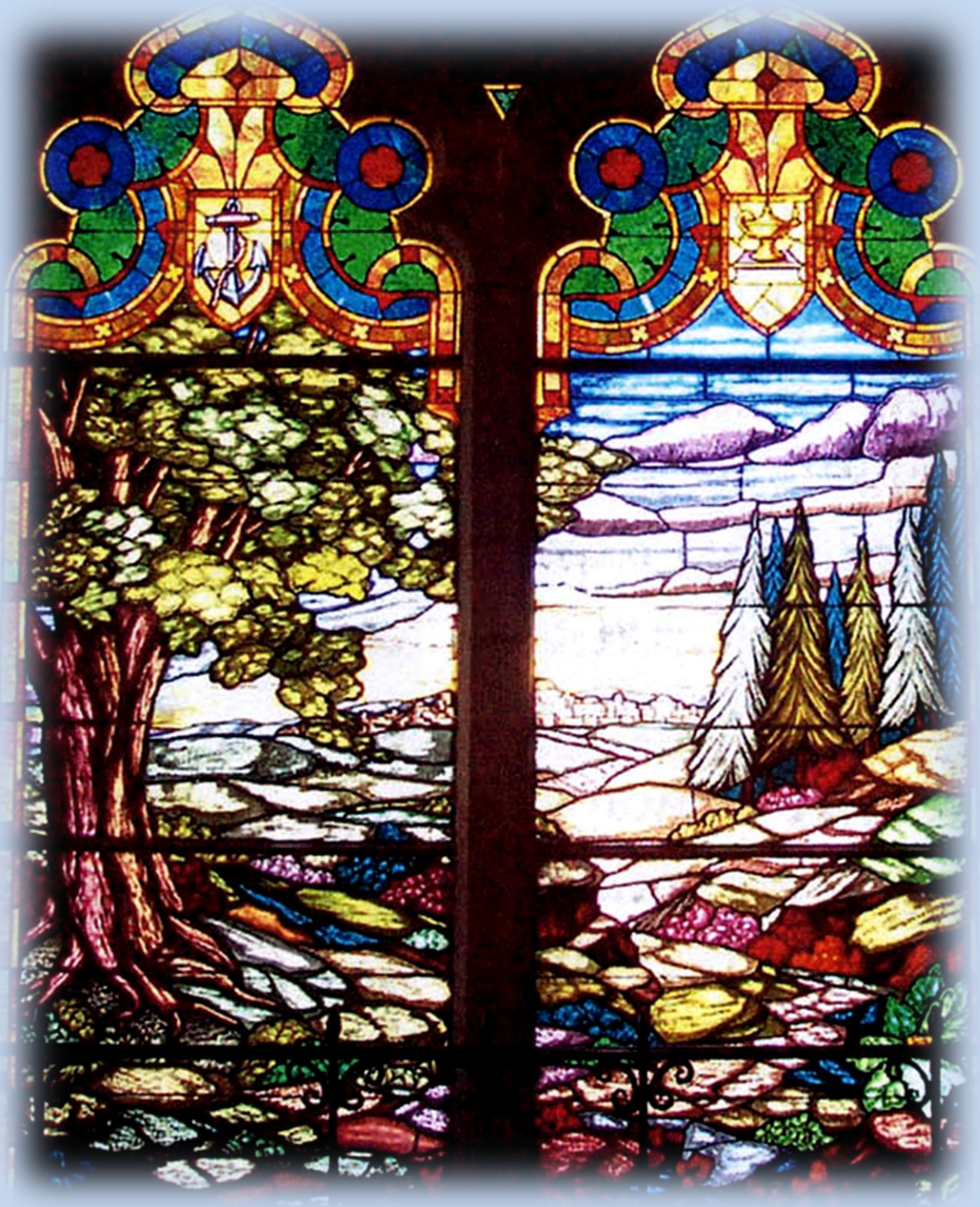
Realizing He has majesty and power for the rough long paths we trod.

An attitude of worship in all we face is what we need each day

For a clearer picture of Jesus, we must constantly look His way

Freely praising Him in advance for the answers we've yet to receive

Glory Hallelujah what a Savior! In Him we trust and believe.



(“THE HOLY CITY” window from First Presbyterian Church, Wichita, KS)

Revelation 21: 1

And I John saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.



THE NEW JERUSALEM

**The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, is the place where God will be
An eternal home for His faithful followers; their Father they will see**

With its citizenship not based on background or behavior

But on those who believe in Jesus as Messiah, Lord and Savior.

They will be His people and God Himself will be their core and center

Completely perfect in every way, where evil will not enter

The glory of God will be its Light, and the Lamb will be its Lamp

Where grace is freely given as its everlasting stamp.

Their permanent address is to be with God on this His celestial shore

Where death, mourning, crying and pain are gone forever more

To all who thirsts, Christ offers a drink totally without cost

By sipping from the water of life, no soul will ever be lost.

God has already written the final chapter for those returning His love

With sins forgiven and future secure; their home is in heaven above

Nothing will hinder God's children from abiding with Him in peace

And knowing they all will be perfect like Christ, gives pause for sweet release.



“THE NEW CREATION” stained glass window designed by Tiffany Studios in early 1900

(Courtesy of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland)

Revelation 22: 1

“And then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.



THE NEW CREATION

God the great Creator, speaking from His throne, said all things would be made a new

Then firmly told John, to write it all down; His words being trustworthy and true

The day of the Lord will come like a thief, in scripture Peter did declare

Departing with a roar, the heavens will be gone, and by fire the earth made bare.

A new heaven and earth will then come to pass, and the world shall be no more

No mind can conceive, this stunning new city, for believers God has in store.

All tears will quickly cease, as the old order of things, totally passes away

Replaced by an intimate union with God, on this brilliant celestial day.

From the throne of God and of the Lamb, the river of life will flow

Its crystal clear water, winding through the city, reflecting heavens warm glow

The most glorious change, will dramatically occur, in the miserable children of men

His name on their foreheads, forgiven and perfect, they'll be totally cleansed of sin.

By standing firm, the followers of Christ, eternal life will receive

Although God will judge, the secrets of man, He'll forgive all those who believe

Far above our thoughts, is that we shall never die, for death God will erase

And throughout the cycles, of never-ending ages, we shall actually see His face.



“GABRIEL—BEHOLD I SHOW YOU A MYSTERY” window designed by Tiffany studios in early 1900

(Courtesy of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland)

1 Corinthians 15:

“Listen, I tell you a mystery: we will not all sleep but we will be changed---in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.



BEHOLD A MYSTERY

The plan of God, a mystery incomprehensible to the human mind

Now made manifest by the scriptures, has been unfolded to all mankind

Apostle Paul, in a vision, experienced things impossible to tell

Told God's Gospel was for Jew and Gentile, and in heaven both would dwell.

Beyond the ancient covenant people, God's mercy was to apply

In the form of His one and only Son, on who man would rely

Thank God that death for Christians is the beginning and not the end

For through Christ's death and resurrection, to man this miracle He did extend.

"Behold," said the apostle, "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

God's plan for the resurrection of the dead, a marvel only He had arranged

At the last trumpet, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye

His children shall be raised incorruptible; on this, God's promise, we can rely.

Since the Great Creator gave man birth, He can take him back again

Giving the gift of a perfect body that's forgiven and cleansed of sin

This glorious reality for man's salvation, to the world He did unfold

Through the power of the Living God; for His believers, a marvelous sight to behold!



("RIDER ON WHITE HORSE" courtesy of Sunset Baptist Church, Ponca City, Oklahoma)

Revelation 19: 11

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True.



RIDER ON WHITE HORSE

**Jesus came first as a sacrificial Lamb and the message of salvation did bring
But will return victorious, to execute judgment, as a mighty Conqueror and King
Symbolically depicted as a rider on a horse that's sleek, triumphant and white
Battle lines drawn between God and evil----our Lord has returned to fight.**

**Since all His battles are described as righteous, the Rider's called Faithful and True
And scriptures describe His unparalleled sovereignty, guaranteeing victory when through
God has given to Christ both the keys of death and also those of hell
For those whose names are written in His Book, all will end quite well.**

**God's greater than any description or expression the human mind can devise
Thus, His entrance now signals the end of false powers, making foolish the experts and wise
There's really no fight because victory was won when on the cross Christ died for sin
When Satan and his agents are captured and punished, God's kingdom will truly begin.**

**The purifying blood of Jesus the Christ, for man, will remove sin's stain
By kneeling at the cross, there is still time, with life everlasting to gain
So open up your heart and receive the Lord before God's final trumpet does sound
Then in joyful praise you can happily sing, "I was lost but now I am found."**



("SECOND COMING" courtesy of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Columbus, IN)

Matthew 24: 30-31

They will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.



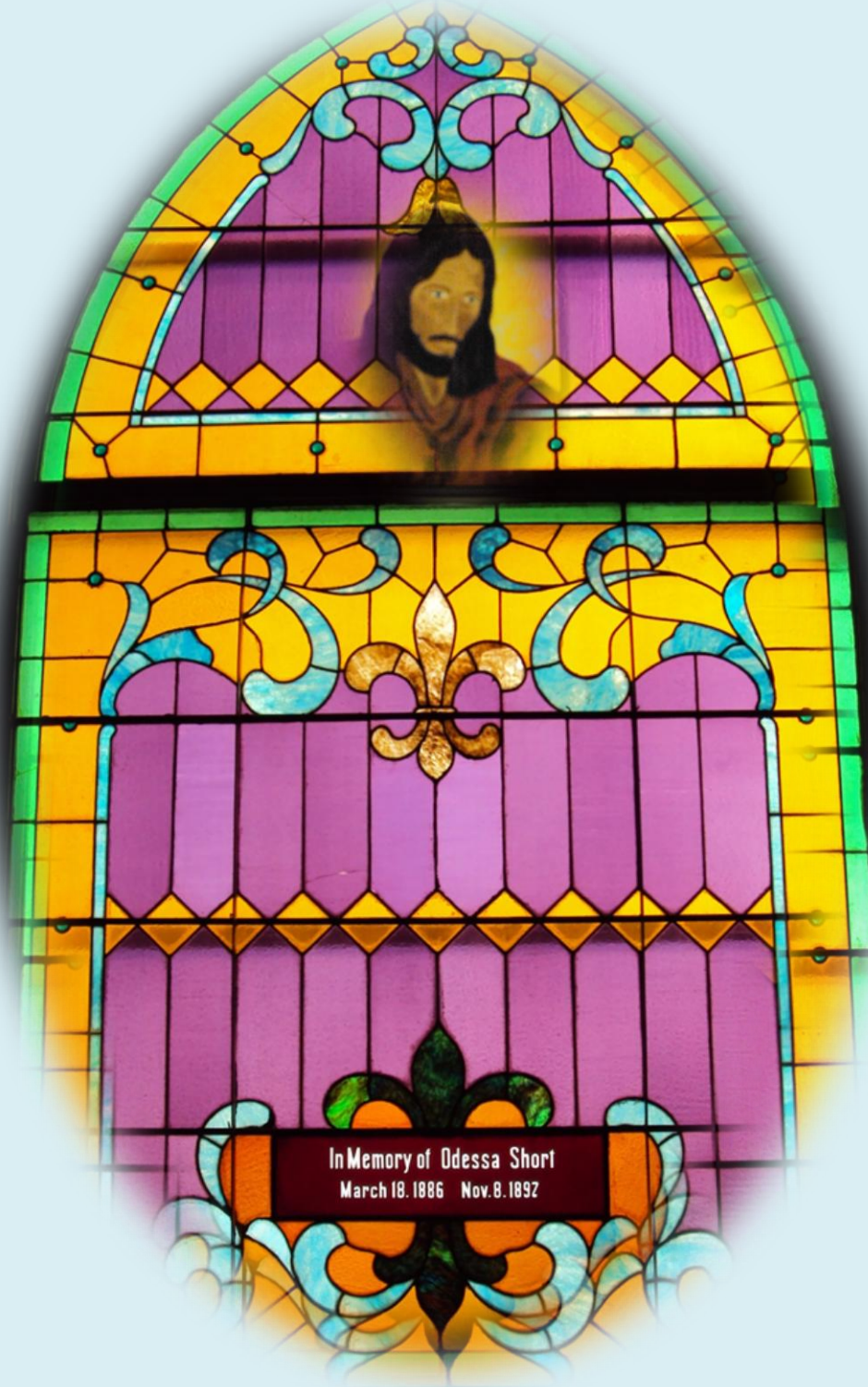
CHRIST RETURNS

Born in a stable, Jesus' first appearance, was witnessed by only a few
Even though His mission, was as sacrificial Lamb, very few cared or knew
On the wings of glory, His second appearance, will be as Christ Jesus the King
And all nations will hear the trumpet of God and realize it's a triumphant thing.

Our Lord Himself will return from heaven, shouting with a loud command
From all His believers, praises of thanksgiving, will ring throughout the land.
The good news of Jesus will have long been shared throughout the world and beyond
Woe to those who have rejected God's Son, for all time will be gone to respond.

Before the judgment seat, of Christ the Lord, all people on earth must appear
Since believers in Christ are covered by His blood, they have absolutely nothing to fear
Forgiven and pardoned, they'll stand in awe, basking in His warm glow of grace
And the depth of His love will be fully understood, as they tenderly gaze upon His face.

At His second appearance, we'll go with Him, to our home He has prepared
On that day-----That glorious day-----Eternal life for believers has been declared
Since no one knows, but God the Father, when Christ will come again
Let us continue to tell all mankind about His love and forgiveness of sin.



(Window from United Methodist Church, Mountain Grove, Missouri)

Colossians 3: 1

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.



SET YOUR MIND ON CHRIST

When God's first light awakens sleeping shadows, set your heart on things above

Allowing Christ's peace to infuse your spirit as if on the wings of a dove

Immersing your senses in the deep things of God, seeking what He desires

And you'll soon be changed, truly transformed, in a manner your Father inspires.

Be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, living a life richly filled with His love

Made by His workmanship, formed in His image; His yoke will fit you like a glove

Being completely dead, of our own transgressions, in which we carelessly chose to live

The penalty of sin was destroyed on the cross when forgiveness Christ did freely give.

Through faith in Christ, we now stand acquitted, this truth God's Word does decree

No longer are we prisoners of sin's dark power, by grace we are set free

Because Christ arose, just like Him, our resurrection will also occur

This promise from God, who is rich in mercy, the Holy Bible does concur.

Though once far away, through the blood of Jesus, we've miraculously been brought near

As a sacrificial Lamb, He destroyed the barrier, making our future with Him quite clear

Let us live each day, hidden with Christ where we are safe concealed and secure

Under the Holy Spirit's power, with our minds fixed on God, we'll receive courage to endure.



"I AM THE WAY" miracle window designed by Tiffany Studios in early 1900

Courtesy of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland

John 14: 6

**"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father
except through me."**



I AM THE WAY

**"I am the Way, Truth and Life", words Jesus did clearly speak
Your only path to the Father and open to all who seek
Small is the gate and narrow the road leading to the Father's own throne
A difficult and treacherous journey man can never do all alone.**

**For wide is the gate and broad the road that leads to eternal destruction
One that is filled with worldly temptations, sin and false instruction
Some may think that Christ's way too narrow, and flatly refuse to abide
When truly it's wide enough for all who believe and in Jesus quickly decide.**

**These words from Christ, the Promise Keeper, are valid trustworthy and pure
On them man can always rely, with assurance they will forever endure
By uniting our lives to Him, we are connected to God forever
A bond nothing in this troubled world can ever break cut or sever.**

**Confess to Him your sin, and in Jesus God's Son believe
Commit to Him the rest of your days, and the gift of life receive
There's never a sin too dark, for our loving God to forgive
So, kneel humbly at the foot of the cross, and choose today to live.**



“(JESUS IN PRAYER” window from University Hts. Baptist Church Springfield, Missouri)

1 Thessalonians 5: 17

Pray continually!



PRAY CONTINUALLY!

Prayer is a delicate divine tool that draws our Father near

A link connecting directly to God with assurance He will hear

So let your heart forever be a humble house of prayer

Placing your hope in God the Father and all your burdens share.

In thousands of ways and times the answers from God arrive

Through the touch of His tender mercy our spirit He does revive

So bend the knee and bow the head in front of God's own throne

In one sweet hour of prayer with Him; moldable and all alone.

Every godly prayer is answered before the last refrain

For no petition His children make will ever be in vain

Pray not for the desires of your own heart, but that of God's own will

Having faith that he will answer, waiting patiently and still.

Praise Him for deliverance that is already on its way

Lift up your heart and watch with delight each and every day

For God possesses unlimited love, is perfect, and right on time

Offering unspeakable fellowship, sweeter than words, and amazing grace sublime.



("JESUS THE ONE AND ONLY" courtesy of Pitts Chapel United Methodist Church, Springfield, Missouri)

John 6: 40

For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.



LOOK TO THE SON

Help us, Dear God; understand the deep mystery of Your saving grace and love

That all who looks to Your Son will eternally reside in heaven above

Realizing He gently knocks at the door of each child's sinful heart

Beckoning all to believe in Him and be granted a brand new start.

We've each been created to dance with Jesus, the eternal waltz of delight

Being held by Christ's generous embrace, in the glory of His radiant Light

Give us ears to hear His voice in the stillness of the evening hour

Resting in the knowledge He protects us by His wisdom grace and power.

Let us all remember God loves us and calls each one by name

Has no favorites, is fair to all, and treats everyone the same

Even when feeling distressed by past mistakes and poor decisions

We can always have faith in His steadfast promises, and timely provisions.

Wanting no child to be lost, Jesus calls to one and all

Inviting each to freely repent and accept His gentle call

We'll then feel His soothing presence as we face each challenge and test

And when taking our final breath, He'll hold us closely to his breast.



"FIRST LANDSCAPE" by Louis Comfort Tiffany, compliments of First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, Kansas

Psalm 42: 1

"As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God."



LONGING FOR GOD

**God's written His name upon my heart in His special secret place
Engraved with Devine indelible ink only His hand can erase
His Spirit has placed a hole in my soul that's empty and full of longing
A hollowness only He can fill that satisfies my need for belonging.**

**The hole inside me is not a curse, but truly from God a gift
That draws me ever close to him, preventing me from going adrift
It's truly God's love song calling to me so I'll not just aimlessly roam
Abba, my Father's gift without price; His call for me to come home.**

**"As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for You"
My soul only thirsts for You, O God, and it's You I will pursue
Great are the works of Your hand, O Lord, and majestic are Your deeds
For Your heavenly manna is abundantly rich and my soul it completely feeds.**

**Be still my soul and humbly bow to God on bended knee
Fill this space and quench my thirst bonding my heart to thee
The more each day I pray to You, the more of You I'll find
With joy I willingly surrender to You, my heart soul and mind.**



"HOPE AND GLORY" stained glass window designed by Tiffany studios in early 1900

(Courtesy of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland)

Colossians 1: 27

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of the mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.



JESUS IS...

THE HEART OF IT!

Jesus is the heart of it---Lord of Lords, King of Kings

The Anointed One, Messiah, God's Heir of all things

He is the Alpha and Omega; the Beginning and End

The Light of the world, our Heavenly Father did send.

Immanuel—God with us, the Holy and Righteous One

Came to dwell among us for our souls to be won

Jesus the great Teacher; truly the Word of God

Spread the news of salvation down every path He trod.

Savior of the world, Lamb of God, suffered death on the cross

A sacrifice for each of us, offering life in place of loss

Victory over death when He rose up from the grave

His mission now complete, all for our souls to save.

Now unfolded in its fullness, God's plan is open to all

To everyone on earth who answers His Father's call

The glorious riches of the mystery now have surely come true

Jesus, the Hope of Glory, which is Christ in You.



"THE JESUS MEDALLION" (favrile glass, 1900) from First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, Kansas

The Jesus Medallion contains three symbols for Jesus. The IHS in the center of the circle represents the first three letters of the Greek word for Jesus. The Chi--Rho in the bottom small circle is the oldest monogram for Jesus Christ. It is formed by placing the Greek letters X (chi) and P (rho) together, forming the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ. The upper circles down U, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet the alpha and omega—which stand for Christ, "the first and last, the beginning and the end." Revelation 22:13

DO YOU BELIEVE JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD?

AMEN!



CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Son of God, the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come, hear my prayer. You are the Light of the World, and you are my light, illuminating the path to wholeness and healing, even in the darkest of days. When I suffer, may I remember you suffered more. When I am tempted to despair, may I remember you were tempted more. When I feel alone and sorry for myself, may I remember that even your disciples abandoned you. When I feel God does not hear nor heed my prayers, may I remember your cry of forsakenness from the cross. You alone know me inside and out. You alone have been my companion through the valley of the shadow of death, and you will be there to welcome me into the hallowed halls of heaven.

Knowing that God so loved the world that he sent his Son to save the world, I pray not only for myself but also for others. Deliver us, Lord Jesus, from the fears that divide us, conflicts that destroy us, sin that denigrates us, and the lack of faith in your love that isolates us. May the poor learn the richness of life and the wealthy find the joy of sharing their bounty. May the angry find peace of mind, the anxious find the peace that passes all understanding, and those in emotional or mental turmoil find peace in their souls.

Finally, O Lord, forgive us for failures of the spirit and failures of the flesh. We have spent more time enjoying our faith than applying it. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. O Lord, have mercy upon us. You gave your life to wipe clean the slate of our sin. Now give us your grace, we pray, that we may live as those who are prepared to die. And when our days here are ended, enable us to die as those who go forth to live, so that living or dying, our life may be in Jesus Christ our Risen Lord. AMEN.



CREDITS

*My sincere thanks to the following churches for
allowing their beautiful stained glass windows to
be a part of this collection:*

Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, Texas

Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland

Christian Church, Mountain Grove, Missouri

First & Calvary Presbyterian Church, Springfield, Missouri

First Presbyterian Church, Wichita, Kansas

First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, Kansas

First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburg, Kansas

First Baptist Church, Waxahachie, Texas (In Memory of Charlotte Taylor)

Pitts Chapel United Methodist Church, Springfield, Missouri

Salemsborg Lutheran Parish, Lindsborg, Kansas

St. Elizabeth Ann Seaton Catholic Church, Springfield, Missouri

St. John's Hospital, Springfield, Missouri (Cross & Statue of Jesus)

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Columbus, Indiana

St. Paul United Methodist Church, Springfield, Missouri

Sunset Baptist Church, Ponca City, Oklahoma

University Heights Baptist Church, Springfield, Missouri

*(Special thanks go to Carol Weiler, Christian Health Care East, for being my
eyes and ears throughout the writing of the "JESUS IS THE HEART OF IT"
collection.)*