

The Story Our Windows Tell

The members of Abiding Grace built this church building to be a place where God’s Word could be heard clearly and purely. The building itself was designed to speak a message about our God without even saying a Word – from His stability and dependability communicated with the use of stone on the exterior to His transcendence portrayed in the height of the roof and bell-tower. We pray that all who see this building are drawn to find out more about the One who would inspire such architecture and such love.

But nowhere were we given a more clear opportunity to communicate to all who see a crystal clear message about our God and his love than in our stained glass windows.¹ Our goal was to connect people to the message of God’s love for us in His Son. As Jesus says in our congregation’s theme passage, “I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” So, throughout our windows, you’ll notice the vine-and-branches border tying this whole story together and reminding us of the importance of our time spent here in the Word strengthening our ability to bear fruit in our lives.



We’ll start with the sacrament windows. These are the smaller windows on either side of the Crucifixion window, and they lay the groundwork for God’s communication with us. Both depict God’s Word as central to His work with us, empowering everything that goes on here as the “power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

The Baptism Window

God has made us his own through the miracle of water and the word we call Holy Baptism, symbolized by the shell and the three drops of water. Each of us who have been baptized “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” now know the peace and joy of being able to say, “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called the children of God.”



The Lord’s Supper Window

In the matching sacrament window, the sheaves and grapes call to mind the bread and wine which Jesus calls his own body and blood in the sacrament of Holy Communion. Matthew’s words remind us of the power given to the body and blood of Jesus we are truly given to eat and drink...”for the forgiveness of sins.”



The Crucifixion Window²

We now turn our attention to the Crucifixion window where we are reminded where the forgiveness of sins was won. Already in the Garden of Eden, God had promised our Savior when He said to Satan: “He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen. 3:15). You’ll notice that the artist³ reminds us of that promise fulfilled as the serpent is crushed by the weight of the cross on

Also woven into the scene are representations of this place’s name and its purpose. Golgatha means “The Place of the Skull”. On Christ’s right, you’ll see a representation of the hill in the shape of a skull taken from a 2008 picture of the possible site of his execution.⁴ On his left is the open tomb, foreshadowing the resurrection that proved Christ’s sixth word true: “It is finished.”



The Ascension Window

Since Christ’s work is finished we turn our attention to the center window. At the focal point of our worship is our risen and ascending Lord. God’s Word tells us that after 40 days Jesus returned to his Father’s right hand “far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given,” where he rules all things “for the Church” (Ephesians 1:21-22). Robed in the gold of victory, Jesus’ hands are raised in blessing as this window reminds us that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, there he is with us. His words to Martha in John 11 remind us of the hope and promise the ascended Christ gives. “He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.”

The Oculus Window

Then the windows come full circle as the oculus (from the Latin for “eye”) window portrays the Holy Spirit, represented by the form of the dove he took at Jesus’ baptism. On the night he was betrayed, Jesus promised “The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26). Then, at his ascension, our Savior promised that when he left he would send the Spirit to us: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).



You will notice that the dove in the window carries a section of the grapevine in his beak, reminding us that the Spirit works through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament proclaimed and celebrated here to build your connection with Christ who promised: “Remain in me, and I will remain in you,” and then tells us, “I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last” (John 15).



¹ The glass used in our windows is “German Antique” and hand blown “Blenko” glass made in Milton, West Virginia.

² The specific Chi Rho we’ve used on our cross, cornerstone and Crucifixion window was taken from a double centenionalis coin minted by Flavius Magnus Magnentius, who ruled Rome with the title emperor from 350-353 AD.

³ The artist, Ken Hardeman, comes from a long line of stained glass artists. His great-grandfather, Joe Llorens Sr., started the business in Duluth, GA, in 1920. In fact, the figure of Christ used in our windows is taken from a sketch done by the artist’s great-grandfather in the year he was born – 1958.

⁴ The representation of the “place of the skull” and the empty tomb are taken from pictures taken in November 2008 at “Gordon’s Calvary” and “the Garden Tomb” just outside the walls of the ancient city of Jerusalem. Those pictures are available for reference on the next page.

