

Zion

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Mitchell, SD



Zion's current sanctuary was dedicated in 1953. It would take another ten years of fundraising and planning before the art glass windows were installed at a total cost of just over \$6,500. This did not include the large stained glass window in the balcony which was installed when the church was built.

The art glass windows in the nave of the church are the work of artist Heinz Reuters working for the Reinert's Art Glass Studio of Winona, Minnesota and cover the church year or life of Christ, beginning at the back of the sanctuary on the pulpit side.



Our first window represents the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, who foretold the coming of Christ.

The Chi-Rho symbol, representing Christ is at the top. The Chi-Rho is a monogram of chi (X) and rho (P) the first two letters of the Greek word *Khristos*, or Christ.

The letter J, in the center of the star stands for Isaiah and also for Jesus as both names come from the meaning "God who saves."

The next window tells of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus.

The shell, a symbol of baptism is shown over a triangle, the symbol for the Trinity. This triangle is in turn overlaid on the cross of our Savior.

The water streaming from the shell is meant to symbolize John's work of baptizing those who came to repentance and to faith in the coming Savior.



Here we see the Annunciation depicted. The angel Gabriel was sent to tell Mary that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and through the power of the Most High a child would be born, Jesus, the Son of God.

In this window, the Holy Spirit is shown as a dove with the entwined letters A & M representing the angel's greeting to Mary, Ave Maria, or Hail, Mary, favored one.



This window is meant to represent Advent. Advent is a time of preparation and expectation as we await the coming of Christ at his birth and also on the last day.

Here, we see doors are opened on the letters IHC. These stand for the first three letters of the name Jesus in Greek.

The four Sundays in Advent are symbolized by the four marks and the four steps leading to Jesus.



Here we have Christmas, or Christ's Mass, the festival commemorating the birth of our Lord and Savior, God become man.

The birth of Christ is represented here by the Chi-Rho symbol in a manger. The Chi-Rho is a monogram of chi (X) and rho (P) the first two letters of the Greek word *Christos*, or Christ.

We see the manger is shown with a crude roof, a place for animals to feed and shelter. The light of heaven shines down on the Chi-Rho symbol for Christ.

This window symbolizes the Epiphany, celebrated on January 6th, twelve days after Christmas. Epiphany is seen as the Christmas of the Gentiles.

At the top you see the star which shown in the sky leading the magi, or wise men, to the place where Jesus was.

These magi, Gentiles from the East, are represented by the three crowns. The crowns in turn represent the gifts they brought in their adoration of the Christ Child; gold, frankincense and myrrh.



As we continue on through the church year following the life of Christ, we look at the window that represents the presentation of Jesus at the temple.

When Jesus was 40 days old his mother, Mary, and step-father, Joseph, brought him along with a sacrifice of two turtle doves to the temple in compliance with the Old Testament ceremonial law of God.



Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the season of Lent.

Jesus, is here represented by both a fish and a book. The fish calls to mind Jesus' ministry. He called ordinary fishermen to become his disciples, "fishers of men." Jesus also used fish in his miraculous feeding of the 5,000.

The book symbolizes Jesus as the Word of God, the Word made flesh.

A whipping post and scourge are superimposed over these symbols

reminding us that instead of being widely hailed as the promised Messiah, Jesus was mocked and whipped.

During Lent we ponder the sacrifice of Jesus and are reminded of our sin and mortality and need for a Savior.

Depicted here is Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week.

Christ rode into Jerusalem triumphantly as the people waved palm branches and hailed him as King shouting “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” They spread palm branches on the ground before him. Our window depicts this by showing Christ as the Chi-Rho monogram (the first 2 Greek letters of *Khristos*-Christ) surrounded by palm branches.



Maundy Thursday is the night Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, the night he was betrayed.

We see twelve pieces of bread and a golden chalice as symbols of the Lord's Supper, the bread and the wine, Christ's body and blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

The number 12 represents the Lord's disciples, including Judas the betrayer. The red cross atop the chalice reminds us what great sacrifice lay in store for Jesus the next day.



This Good Friday window has a cross, three nails and a crown of thorns as its focal point, reminding us of Christ's suffering and dying for our sins.

We also see the sign ordered to be placed on the cross by Pontius Pilate "INRI," *Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudorum* the Latin for "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The burial cloth is shown draped over the arms of the cross. Notice also the two smaller crosses, those of the two criminals crucified with Jesus.

Here we have Easter, the resurrection of our Lord depicted. Christ now takes the form of the Lamb of God shown here standing over the open tomb of the risen Jesus, with the discarded burial cloth left behind.

The Lamb is shown holding the Christian flag, with its gold cross, representative of the Church on earth. Notice that just as Christ, as the head of the Church, is above all things, the Lamb's head is above the flag.





This window shows Christ's appearance to the disciples. In the center we see the Chi-Rho symbol (Greek letters chi (X) and rho (P) first two letters of Kristos, or Christ.)

His appearance to His disciples filled them with burning zeal to spread the Gospel to the entire world, as shown by the burning lamps.

The Ascension of Christ into heaven is depicted by the rising eagle.

Before His ascension the Lord promised the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would come. The Holy Spirit is depicted by the flames beneath the ascending eagle.

The circle around the eagle's head symbolizes eternity and Christ's eternal reign.



This window represents Pentecost. The word "Pentecost" comes from the Greek word for "fiftieth."

Fifty days after Jesus' resurrection the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in the form of tongues of fire.

In this window the Holy Spirit is depicted as a dove and coming from it we see twelve tongues of fire; the power of God's Spirit working in and through His disciples.

In our next window the Holy Trinity is symbolized by three interwoven circles, all equal; a triangle of equal sides; and flames of the power and majesty of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

This window is the final one depicting the events of the church year.



This window, near the baptismal font rightly depicts baptism.

We are baptized into the name of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is shown with the triangle as well as the three drops of water falling from the shell into the font below.

The second window located near the baptismal font symbolizes the Office of the Keys, the special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth, through the Holy Spirit (shown here as a dove) to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent. – John 20:22-23





The windows in the chancel depict the means of grace through which God communicates with us; the Word of the Gospel, Baptism, and Holy Communion.

Our first window in the chancel is to the left side of the altar behind the pulpit, from where the Word of God is preached and it depicts the Word of God.

We see the cross of Christ standing dominant above the entire world while a scroll representing the Word of the Gospel wraps around the globe.

This window on the right side near the altar symbolizes Communion, the Lord's Supper. Here we see the grapes and wheat, pictures of the wine and the bread, the earthly elements of Communion.

Rising from the golden chalice we see a cross and chi-rho, symbols of Christ. These are reminders that through the Lord's Supper we receive Christ's body and blood and through His death and resurrection, the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.



Here we see the window over the lectern. Through baptism we become children of God.

This is shown with the symbol for Christ, the Chi Rho, connected with the water of baptism. The fish, or ichthus, which in Greek is an acronym for "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior," was an early symbol of Christians or Christ.





The Great Window in the east wall of our sanctuary above the entrance door was created by nationally recognized German artist, Peter Dohmen, and made of glass blown and kilned by craftsmen in Germany and assembled here in our sanctuary. The installation was personally overseen by Peter Dohmen due to the unique nature of the piece. The window represents the Trinity as seen in the Father Creator, Holy Spirit and exalted, resurrected Christ, our Savior and our Lord.

The Trinity is shown as we see Christ accepted by the Father above whose hands hold five pointed stars, symbols of the revelation of the Christ-Child to the Gentiles, above the Dove, symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

Cherubim, shown on either side of Christ, bear the chalice and the host, the body and blood of Christ, given and shed for the forgiveness of sins.

The rays of glory streaming downward from the God of salvation reenforce that God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:4

We will take a closer look at our beautiful altar which was designed by the architect of our sanctuary, Frank Abrahamson, and produced by the Drake Marble Company. It is made of a forest green Spanish marble.



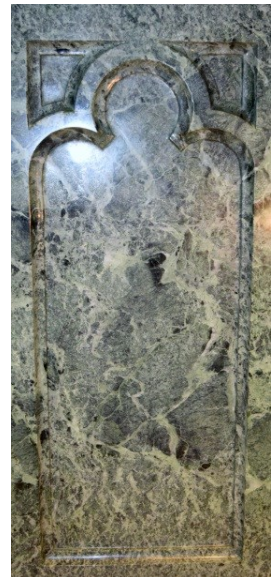
The entire raised area at the front of our church is called the *chancel* and the altar occupies the highest portion of that as the focal point of our sanctuary. The altar, reminiscent of Old Testament sacrifices, reminds us that Christ, the Lamb of God, through His death on the cross was the final, perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Christ is symbolized with a stylized Chi-Rho in the carving on the front middle section of our altar. The Chi-Rho is a monogram of chi (X) and rho (P) the first two letters of the Greek word *Christos*, or Christ.



The suffering Christ endured on the cross and the wounds he received are represented by five Greek crosses carved into the top, table portion or *mensa* of our altar.

The decorative carvings on either side of the front of our altar feature the tops of three circles symbolic of our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This design is also repeated in the large stained glass window over the main doors to our sanctuary.



As the altar is a symbol of God's presence with us, our ordained servants, our pastors turn toward the altar at times during our services when they are offering our prayers to God.

We also regard the altar as the table where the Lord's Supper, or the Sacrament of the Altar, is prepared for us. It is in Communion that we receive His body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine.



The earthly elements of Holy Communion, the bread and the wine, are beautifully

represented in the wrought iron supports of our communion rail. The panels on the ends feature grape vines and the smaller supports in between are stalks of wheat. The wrought iron communion rail, candelabras, floor flower stands, and altar candle holders were all custom designed and created for our sanctuary.

The lectern and pulpit were fashioned from the same stone as was used for the exterior trim on our building.

You are welcome to come take a closer look at our altar after services, we do ask though that you please maintain an attitude of respect and reverence especially in this part of our church.



Now let's look at the outside of our church. The front of our church is topped by a Latin cross with a nimbus (circle) of eternal victory. This cross is carved from buff Mankato stone.

From every direction our mission at Zion is clear. Latin crosses of varying designs

are set into each side of the church building's masonry telling all who approach that "we preach Christ crucified."

~1 Corinthians 1:23-24

The compound cross on the west side of our church building is made up of four connected crosses, reminding us that the mission Christ gave to His Church is to spread the saving Gospel to the four corners of the world.

~ Matthew 28:19



Above our front doors you'll see a carving of a ship which represents the church.

The Church, like a ship, rides the often stormy seas of life tossed about by sin, tribulation and death. Yet the Church is safe because Christ, who calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee is her head and protector.

Finally, we look at the Psalm carved into stone
and set above the front doors.

“Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house,
and the place where Thy honor dwelleth.” ~Psalm 26:8



Take a few minutes to look up,
and notice the beauty of our church
and the message of salvation
that even our building
proclaims to the world.

**“For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him
should not perish but have eternal life.” ~John 3:16**

