

First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood

SANCTUARY WINDOWS

SYMBOLISM



SANCTUARY
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, KIRKWOOD, MISSOURI



The windows in the front of the sanctuary depict images from both the Old and New testaments. The six windows on the left are the prominent figures of the Old Testament: Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, David and Daniel. In the center is Christ, the fulfillment of the New Covenant. On the right side are six representatives of the New Testament including four evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) as well as Peter and Paul.

These prophets and apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and became the inspiration for faith through the ages as we read in the Bible. In the lower sections, are shown the great events of the Incarnation, visions of the suffering of Christ, and some of the ministry of Jesus. In Christ we see God's love made flesh, the promise the Apostles proclaimed, and the hope that still sustains the church. The Apostles' preaching centered the Cross and the boundless love of Christ, who gave himself in solidarity with the world, offering us hope and new life in God.



MOSES

Moses is shown with the tablets of the Decalogue with the Hand of God directing him. From his forehead emanate two tongues of fire or horns of light (horn in Hebrew meant valiance or greatness of spiritual strength). In the background is visible the Mount Sinai with lightning striking down from heaven. The center depicts atonement. The cleansing of the Temple with the sin offering of the high priest as described in Leviticus 4:4 and in Hebrews 9 and 10: The text, "and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the Lord."

In the lower panel are represented Abraham and Melchizedek, King of Salem, offering bread and wine (Genesis 14): "... Melchizedek, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine."

ISAIAH

The prophet is ready to receive from the hand of the seraphim a live coal upon his tongue (Isaiah 52:13 - 53:6). In the background is seen a Judean city. The center depicts the vision of Christ's suffering - text "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows."

In the lower panel we see the prophecy of the coming birth of Christ. Mary is shown sitting on the branch out of the root of Jesse, holding the child Jesus, while prophets witness the event in their vision (Isaiah 11:1-5): - "and there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse."

JEREMIAH

The Hand of God is ordering the prophet on the way of his mission. In the background he points out the destruction of Judean cities. In the center the prophet expressed the desolation of Judah for their idolatry (Jeremiah 16:1-4): "and they shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine." The lower panel shows the idolatry of the Jews in Egypt in the service of other gods (Jeremiah 44:1-6): "in that they went to burn incense and to serve other gods."

AMOS

The Hand of God is calling him from his shepherd job into the cities of Judah and Israel to reprove the people for their iniquities. In the background is the lightning of God's fury upon the cities; behind Amos is a few of his flock. In the center people flee in terror from the destruction of Jerusalem while fire is raining down from heaven (Amos 2:15) "... I will send a fire upon Judah."

The lower panel shares an image of Jesus and King David. The verse is a lament for Israel's sin (Amos 5:1-17): "seek good and not evil that ye may live."

DAVID

The blessing hands of the Lord are upon the ancestor of Christ. David is symbolized as the inspired singer of the Psalms. In the background is the city of Jerusalem. The center is based upon Psalm 118:26, the true believers in God expecting the coming of the Messiah: "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The lower panel is based upon Psalm 93:2. The Lord (Christ) reigns in majesty - Christ the King sitting on the throne resting on the rainbow of glory, the earth his footstool. "Thy throne is established of old - Thou art from everlasting."

DANIEL

Above him the Holy Spirit (dove and flames) is giving vision to the prophet to record the coming historic events in the course of the world. In the background is depicted the fall of Babylon. In the center the providence of God protects His chosen men in the fire of the furnace wherein King Nebuchadnezzar condemned them to die (Daniel 3:25).

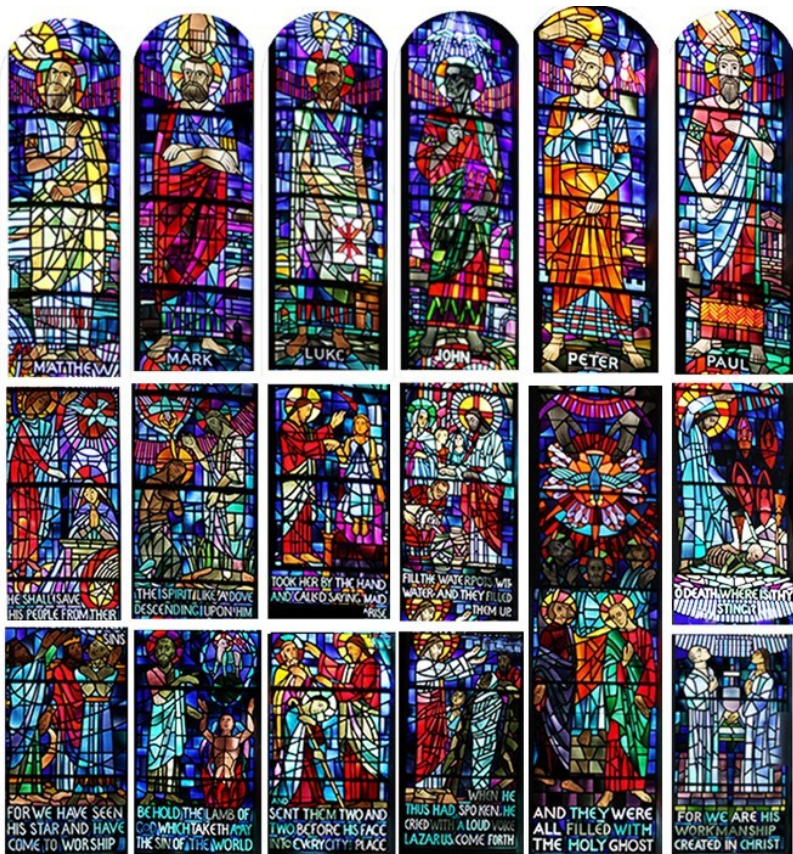
In the lower panel the same act of providence is shown protecting Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 6:22). The text (Daniel 3:17): "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us."

CHRIST



Christ is depicted standing on the globe, inviting all peoples and nations (races) to come unto Him, the way, the truth and the life. The triangle behind the head of Jesus is symbolic of the Trinity, while the Dove (Holy Spirit) emanates from His breast. In the background is the golden city of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven (Revelation 21 and 22). In the center is the brazen serpent on a cross, healing the suffering of those who look up to it in penance from the sting of the serpent (Ephesians 2:8): "By grace are you saved."

In the lower panel is the symbol of our Lord's sacrifice. It is an elaboration on the Gethsemane symbol of a chalice with cross, enlarging it to the fountain of redemption, with the heart of Christ in the center of the cross joints, instead of the slaughtered lamb or grapes. (See Revelation 1:5, 5:9, 7:14, 16:6. Luke 22:20. John 6:53, 56. Hebrews 9:12, 26:28, 10:10-19.) This symbol is of a mystical nature in that washing in the blood of the Lamb and drinking His blood, etc. can be expressed adequately and understood only by means of symbols. In that mystical sense, Christ's blood streams as the universe streams out energy and life in the smallest part of creation to sustain it. So, the heart of Christ, the Redeemer, sheds His mystical blood freely and abundantly in His divine love in the chalice or fountain of eternal life for the salvation of men. The spear of sin opened the wound of his heart and caused the act of His sacrifice. (John 1:29): *"Behold the Lamb."* (Isaiah 53:7) *"He is brought as a lamb to slaughter."* The text (Ephesians 2:14): "In Him is our peace ...". (John 3:16): "For God so loved the world."



MATTHEW

The hand of Christ calling Matthew, the tax collector, to follow him is the hand seen above his head. In the background is Jerusalem. In the center the Angel Gabriel appears to Mary and announces the coming of our Lord. (Matthew 1:21): *"He shall save his people from their sins"*. In the lower panel are the three Magi. (Matthew 2): *"For we have seen his star and have come to worship."*

MARK

The hand of God is confirming Mark in his gospel writings. In the background are the Roman hills. The center depicts the baptism of Jesus by St. John in the Jordan River (Mark 1:9-11): *"The Spirit is like a dove descending upon him"*. In the lower panel John points out Jesus as the Lamb of God, while the lamb is seen standing upon a globe. (John 1:29): *"Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."*

LUKE

The wing of the Holy Spirit touches his forehead inspiring him in his Gospel writings and the Acts of the Apostles, which he holds with both hands. The hills of Rome are also seen here in the background. In the center is the story of Jairus' daughter. (Luke 8:55): "Took her by the hand and called saying, "Maid Arise"." In the lower panel is shown the great commission - Jesus sending His apostles out to preach. (Luke 10:1): "Sent them two by two before his face into every city and place."

JOHN

The Holy Spirit is descending upon the beloved disciple, evangelist, and New Testament prophet (Revelations). In the background is seen Jerusalem. The center panel depicts the marriage feast at Cana (the first miracle) where Jesus changed water into wine (John 2:7): "Fill the waterpots with water, and they filled them up." In the lower panel Jesus is seen raising Lazarus (John 11:44): "When he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice. "Lazarus, come forth"."

PETER

The hand is the reproachful hand of Christ for Peter's denial, while at the right side the cock crows (Matthew: 26:75). Jerusalem appears in the background, while the center and lower panels depict Feast of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is seen sending out cloven tongues of fire whereof they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter is seen standing beneath the circle of the Holy Spirit addressing the assembly. (Acts 2:4): "And they were filled with the Holy Spirit."

PAUL

The hand of Christ is seen initiating the Apostle for his mission to the Gentiles. The city of Corinth appears in the background. The center and lower panels treat the resurrection of the dead in incorruptible bodies, rising from their graves (I Corinthians 15:52). In the center Christ triumphs over death, and souls are seen ascending into heaven (I Corinthians 15:37). Lower panel text (I Corinthians. 15:55): "O Death, where is thy sting?" The text in the bottom panel (Ephesians 2:10): "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ."

The smaller windows, on the left side of the sanctuary as you face the chancel, are explained starting from the narthex end of the church (Adams Ave. side) and moving towards the chancel; the lower windows first and then the upper windows, numbered as follows:



SANCTUARY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, KIRKWOOD, MISSOURI

- (22) (23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28) (29) (30) (31) (32)|
- (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20) (21)
- (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11)

BOTTOM ROW – Left to Right – 1 to 11

	(1) ST. JUDE This Apostle, also known as Thaddeus, traveled far with St. Simon on missionary journeys. Hence, he is given a sailboat with a cross-shaped mast. He was a tireless missionary, having visited Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia. The Bible records but one question that he ever uttered (John 12:22): <i>"Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?"</i> -. The exact manner of his death is unknown.
	(2) THE TORCH The torch is symbol of the betrayal. It refers to John 18:3 where Judas and a band of soldiers <i>"...went there with lanterns and torches and weapons."</i>



(3) THE SUN

The sun, as a symbol of Jesus Christ, is seldom portrayed in churches today. The prophet Malachai spoke of a time when *"the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings"*, (Malachi. 4:2). Both the sun and the Son bring light into the world.



(4) MATTHEW THE EVANGELIST

The symbols of the four evangelists may be traced back almost to the beginning of the Christian era. It is certain that they were used in the fourth century. The symbols most frequently met with are the four-winged creatures mentioned in the book of Ezekiel, as well as in the fourth chapter of Revelation, namely the winged man, lion, calf and eagle. The winged man is the symbol of St. Matthew because he begins his Gospel by tracing the human descent of our Lord



(5) MARK THE EVANGELIST

The winged lion denotes St. Mark because that writer opens his Gospel by describing St. John the Baptist who was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. The lion, as the king of beasts, represents the royal character of Jesus Christ. Mark's emphasis on the resurrection is indicated by the lion, for according to an old story; the cub of a lion was thought to be born dead and only raised to life on the third day by the voice of its parents.



(6) ST. PAUL

While not one of the original twelve, Paul is often thought of as one of the great Apostles. The most common form of his symbol is an open Bible bearing the words "Spiritus Gladius" - The Sword of the Spirit - and behind the Bible the sword of the Spirit cross-hilted.



(7) ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST

Luke is symbolized by the winged ox because his Gospel opens with the sacrifice of Zacharias and emphasizes in the latter part the sacrificial death of our savior which he gives in a very full account.



(8) ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

The eagle, flying higher than any other bird, denotes John because from the first to last, his Gospel soars on eagle's wings to the very throne of heaven.



(9) LIBERTY

This symbol proclaims that the bonds of sin, evil habit and external authority are broken by the power of a life of sacrificial service, symbolized by the illuminated cross with a pair of upstretched hands from which the binding chain is falling.



(10) LAW

The Ten Commandments, or Decalogue, were written on two tablets of stone - the tables of the Law. These constitute the fundamental moral law for both Jews and Christians. They are found both in Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21.



(11) ST. MATTHIAS

This is the Apostle chosen by lot to take the place of Judas Iscariot as one of the twelve (Acts 1:26). His most common shield is an open Bible and a primitive double battle-axe. This apostle is said to have been stoned and then beheaded after missionary work in Judea.

MIDDLE ROW – Left to Right – 12 to 21



(12) ST. PETER

Peter, the early leader of the Apostles, was the first to say that Jesus is "...*the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*" Peter is said to have been crucified at Rome at the close of Nero's reign, requesting that he be crucified head downward, for he did not consider himself worthy to die in the same position as that of his Lord.

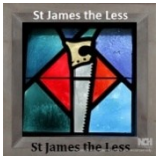
The keys refer to Matthew 16:19, where Jesus said to Peter, "*I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*"

Reference is made to heaven and earth when one key is gold and the other is silver. They represent the power to bind and absolve. They are also symbolic of the spiritual authority of the church.



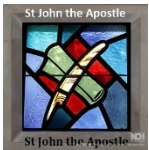
(13) ST. ANDREW

Andrew was a fisherman with his brother, Simon Peter. He is believed to have died on a cross of this sort while preaching the Gospel in Greece. He was bound to the cross, rather than nailed, to prolong his suffering. His most common symbol is this cross shaped like the letter X.



(14) ST. JAMES THE LESS

James the Less, Son of Alphaeus, is also called "The Little" because of his small stature. His shield shows a vertical saw with the handle upward. This apostle labored diligently in and about Jerusalem. Hegesippus, an ancient historian, declares that he was taken to the top of the temple and pushed into mid-air. He was seriously injured, but staggered to his knees imploring the Lord to forgive his enemies. The enraged Jews stoned him, and as he lay dying, a blacksmith crushed his head with a hammer. He is said to have been 96 years old when he suffered martyrdom. His dead body was sawn asunder, thus the symbol of the saw.



(15) ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE

When shown as the Apostle rather than the Evangelist, John has many symbols, among which is the quill and pen, signifying John the writer. Even though modern research finds another John to be the writer of the Gospel, Epistles and Revelation, still for so many centuries this John was thought to be this writer, thus these symbols. Although many attempts were made to kill him, John is said to be the only Apostle to have died a natural death, and this at a great age.



(16) ST. PHILLIP

This Apostle's usual shield shows a tall slender cross and two loaves of bread recalling his remark at the feeding of the 5,000 - "How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" After successful missionary labors in Galatia, and Phrygia, he is said to have suffered a cruel death. When scourging failed to silence him, he was stoned, crucified and finally run through with a spear to hasten his death.



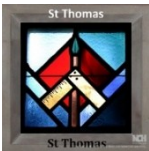
(17) ST. BARTHOLOMEW

This Apostle, thought to be the same as Nathaniel, is said to have been flayed then crucified. His most usual shield shows three flaying knives placed vertically. While preaching in Albanople, Hippolytus states that he was seized by the governor, flayed, crucified, and his dead body decapitated with a scimitar.



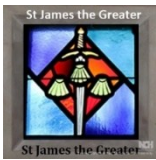
(18) ST. MATTHEW

When shown among the Apostles and not as one of the four evangelists, Matthew's usual symbol is a shield upon which are three purses, referring to his original calling of a tax collector. This apostle is said to have been crucified in Ethiopia on a Tau cross, and his head severed from his dead body with a battle-axe.



(19) ST. THOMAS

This Apostle's shield shows a carpenter's square and a vertical spear. This gloomy and once doubtful Apostle is believed to have preached the Gospel in India. There he was stoned, shot down with arrows, and left dying alone until a pagan priest ran him through with a spear. He is said to have erected with his own hands a church building in Malipur, in East India, hence the carpenter's square. He is the patron saint of builders.



(20) ST. JAMES THE GREATER

The usual form of his shield shows three escalloped shells, the escalloped shell being a symbol of pilgrimage. He lived 14 years after his Lord's crucifixion. As he was about to be martyred at the hands of Herod (Acts 12:2), the soldier who had accused him before Herod was so impressed because of James' Christian courage and faith that he fell down and implored forgiveness, humbly confessing his sins. The Apostle absolved him saying, "*Peace, my son, peace be unto thee, and the pardon of thy faults.*" The soldier arose and confessed Jesus Christ and was beheaded by Herod soon after the martyrdom of James. (This story comes from Clemens Alexandrinus.)



(21) ST. SIMON

The companion of St. Jude on many of his missionary tours was St. Simon. This symbol of the book on which lies a fish is given him because he was a fisher of men, through the power of the Gospel. The exact manner of his death is not told us, but he is generally supposed to have been sawn asunder or else beheaded. That he suffered martyrdom is quite certain.

TOP ROW – Left to Right – 22 to 32



(22) JESUS CHRIST CONQUERS

IC - first and last letters of the Greek for "Jesus"

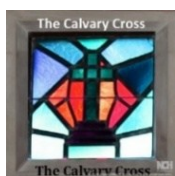
XC - first and last letters of the Greek for "Christ"

NIKA - stands for the Greek word meaning "Conquers"



(23) THE LAMP

To the ancients the lamp was not merely a light for darkness, but also a symbol of intelligence and learning. Even today the lamp stands for wisdom and knowledge. Thus, our lamp would be symbolic of knowledge, the Word of God, or divine inspiration and enlightenment.



(24) THE CALVARY CROSS

The Calvary, or Graded Cross, is a Latin Cross standing on a base composed of three steps. The lower step represents charity (love), the broadest and greatest of the three theological virtues; the second step denotes hope, without which charity avails little; the highest step is faith, and is placed next to the Cross to express the fact that faith is the gift of the crucified Lord, and not a thing of man's own creating.



(25) THE TRIQUETRA

One of the finest of all Trinity symbols is this Triquetra. This mystical symbol is quite simple in form, yet full of meaning. The three equal arcs of the circle express the equality of the three Divine Persons, their union expresses the unity of Divine Essence, their continuous form symbolizes eternity, and the fact that they are interwoven denotes the indivisibility of the Trinity. The color of this symbol is always green.



(26) THE LAMB OF GOD

The white pennant represents the body of Christ to which is attached the cruciform staff representing the Cross on which the Lamb of God died and through which Christ saves the world. This is the Resurrection banner - the white pennant with the red cross. The Lamb must be crowned with the three-rayed nimbus signifying that it is a symbol of divinity.



(27) THE HAND OF GOD

In the Western Church it was very common to see the Hand of God with the thumb and first two fingers extended, and the third and fourth fingers closed. The three extended digits were used to represent the idea of the Holy Trinity, and the two closed fingers the two-fold nature of the Son. This Hand of God is properly surrounded with the circular nimbus with three rays. The nimbus is the sign of sanctity and the three, rays within it represent the Deity.



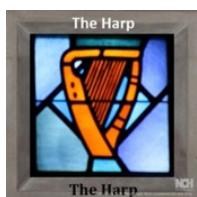
(28) THE DESCENDING DOVE

The most usual symbol by far is to represent the Holy Spirit by a descending dove. This is one of the oldest and best of symbols. The dove again has the three-rayed nimbus around its head. In the story of Jesus' baptism, we read that the Holy Spirit descended "like a dove" (Mark 1:10).



(29) THE CELTIC or IRISH CROSS

In 563, Columba left Ireland and founded a monastery on the Island of Iona off the West Coast of Southern Scotland. This monastery became the center of a missionary effort in northwestern England and southwestern Scotland. The church thus formed became new - it was orthodox in doctrine, but in organization and certain of its outward forms it differed from the Roman Catholic Churches. It did not acknowledge the supremacy of the Roman Pope. A restoration of many of the buildings erected here by Presbyterian efforts years later discovered many of these crosses, and we have rather taken it as a Presbyterian symbol. The circle signifies eternity.



(30) THE HARP

This represents joyful worship and joy in heaven. It is the symbol of David the musician. Psalm 150 - Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary! Praise Him

with the trumpet, the psaltery, the harp, the timbrel, the stringed instrument, the organ, the cymbals.



(31) THE WORD

Since it is the Word of God which causes the water of Holy Baptism, and the bread and wine of the Holy Communion to produce such marvelous effects, it is fitting that it should have a symbol - the usual form being an open Bible. The opened book indicates that the Bible is accessible throughout most of the world.



(32) THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

The church exists throughout the world, thus as Christians, no matter where we are, we all believe in the same God. God, through Christ, is the Lord of every man.

This is the symbol of the World Council of Churches - the ecumenicity of the Church.

THE LITURGICAL COLORS

WHITE

White is the symbol of the Creator, light, joy, purity, innocence, glory, perfection, virginity. It is the color of our Lord, His Mother and those saints who did not suffer martyrdom. It is used on Christmas and its octave, Easter and the following Sundays and Ascension Day and the following Sunday.

VIOLET

Violet denotes mourning and penitence, and is also symbolic of humility, suffering, preparation, sympathy, and fasting. PURPLE, equally appropriate, is frequently used instead of violet. Purple is the regal color, referring to the triumphal entry of the King of Kings, who was of royal (Davidic) descent, and who is the ruler of many hearts. It is used during the four Sundays in Advent and the entire Pre-Lenten and Lenten Season.

GREEN

Green is the universal color of nature, signifying hope, growth, life, fidelity, immortality, and is used during the long summer season of Trinity.

RED

Red is the symbol of love, fervor, holy zeal, youth, blood and martyrdom. It is also the symbol of the Holy Spirit, Pentecost, the Church and the blood of the martyrs of the Church.

BLACK

Black is the color of grief and sorrow, mourning and death. It is used only on Good Friday and on days of national mourning.

SANCTUARY

The height of the church's nave and its length, color, form and symbols are the word to the creature - that he is creature and not creator - God's majesty and the Word he addresses to the worshipper - this is the sanctuary's meaning.

The church's symbol is the ship - sailing on a journey through the storms of life with the sign of her Pilot's presence and guidance. (The ecumenical window - 3rd row right end little window.)

Thus, the nave (ship of the church)
the apse (as the bow of the ship);
the congregation are the pilgrims, the rowers

The Old Testament on the left Christ in the Center The New Testament on the right	confronts the worshipper with the deeds of him who keeps faithful to his covenant with his faithless children
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The spire is the mast of this ship, and the flag it flies is the cross, the sign of her Lord's victory.

Thus, the church is a "speaking medium" through form and color, structure and design. Man "hears" - long before the vocal sound of any human voice.

Worship is an event.

- The imagination is cleansed by the beauty of God;
- the conscience is quickened by the holiness of God;
- the heart is opened to the love of God;
- the mind is fed upon the truth of God;
- the will is devoted to the purpose of God.

Where this Event has taken place, worship has occurred - where not, no worship.

The stained glass was crafted by Jacoby Art Glass, St. Louis.

History of the Windows

First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood

In 1954, a program was started to sell bonds bearing a 5% interest to the members and friends of the church. The bond sale was completely successful and the building of a new sanctuary began in 1955. The sanctuary was completed in time for Christmas Eve service in 1957.

The Rev. Dr. Donald H. Stewart was the Pastor (1953 – 1967). Bob Fischer and Will Campbell were church members and partners in a local architectural firm (Fischer, Campbell & Associates) and worked closely with Fred Opplinger of Jacoby Art Glass Company as the Sanctuary Windows were designed.

The principal designer was Mr. Josef Mayer, of the Jacoby Art Glass Company, St Louis, MO.

The SANCTUARY WINDOWS were to be like none others.

“We are anxious that these windows be like none others, that the soft rich blue tones move from one window to another, that there be a unity between all the windows (not separate, spotty, individual glass). To repeat our story again: It is to be one big window, not 13 separate windows. (July 19, 1956 Letter to F.O. Opplinger, Jacoby Art Glass from R. Fischer, Fischer, Campbell & Associates)”

The Rev. Dr. Donald H. Stewart authored the content of the main as well as the side windows.

“I chose the text in the windows, some of my favorite verses that I learned by heart along with several hundred others at my grandmother’s urging. They still are deeply embedded in my heart and soul. I tried to fit the general scope of biblical story from Creation, Fall, Judgment, Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Transfiguration, being in hope born of God’s promises of new creation.” (Window Sermon Series page 7).”

Source: Windows Sermon Series, First Presbyterian Church Kirkwood by The Rev Dr Lewis R. Thomas, Pastor, The Rev. Mrs. Leslie M. Piper, Associate Pastor, The Rev. Mr. Robert E. Slater, Associate Pastor - January - April 1995. And Windows Symbolism 6/80 JS.

(Document prepared by Ray Lester July 2025)

First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood
100 East Adams Ave.
Kirkwood, MO 63122
314-965-0326
www.kirkwoodpres.org