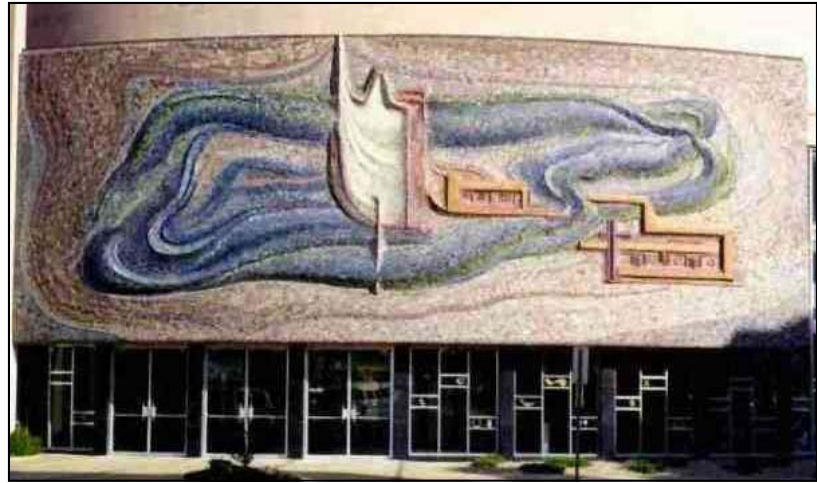


Sanctuary Symbolism

THE MURAL

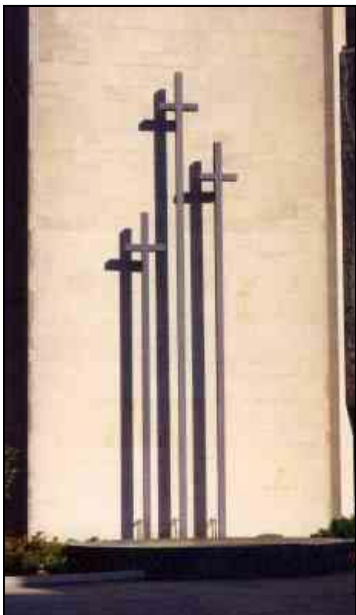
This 24 x 70 foot mosaic masterpiece, located above the Sanctuary's Broadway entrance, is a graphic piece of art executed by Bernard Frazier in 1964. The 70,000 tessera (or pieces) created and fired by Frazier's own recipes are set to produce scores of different brilliant sheens and sparkling effects. The mural took three years of patient work to complete. The question often asked is: 'What is its meaning?' "What did the author have in mind in creating the design?" While creating the mural Mr. Frazier kept in mind a biblical text: *"Be still and know I am God."* Through design, color and symbolism he has attempted to portray the concept of the good in creation inherent from the beginning and which will continue to exist. One senses the swirl of creative forces in the universe-rugged, relentless, powerful. Interwoven in the midst of the turbulent eddies the central figure symbolizes the universal deity of all time and places. At the far left is depicted the wild forces of nature tumbling about in apparent chaotic meaninglessness. This is dramatized at night by the varied lights shining through the dancing fountain waters nearby. A mixture of mottled lights and shadows reflect on the mural giving the feeling of playing forces. As the eye follows the curving, disorderly lines, the vision is carried toward the right of the design. Meaning begins to penetrate the design: "Nature's raw forces flowing through the designing purpose of God became the cradle out of which man arose. Civilizations came into existence. To the right of the Creating God is a small rectangular space protruding out of the mass holding three symbols of religions: an eye for past unnamed religions long forgotten; the facade of the Athenian parthenon; and a section of the supposed architecture of King Solomon's Temple around 9th century BC. These are forerunners of Christianity the advent of which is symbolized by a cross. The larger rectangle is symbolic of the latest developments in man's reach toward God's ultimate purpose. The latest is characterized by the geometric features: the square, a circle and a triangle, symbolizing the closer relationship of theology, philosophy and science. This is not intended to be the end of the Creator's activity. It is the latest in the onward sweep of His creative purpose for man.



More information on the mural can be found by securing a copy of "Ten Adventurous Decades" by Dr. B. Lester Hankins.

THE THREE CROSSES

Located just outside the Broadway entrance to the Sanctuary are three crosses at the base of the tower. These represent the three crosses at the time of Christ's crucifixion; the center and tallest is representative of Christ's death. The next tallest recalls the thief who asked for mercy and the third reminds us of the other criminal who spoke bitterly.



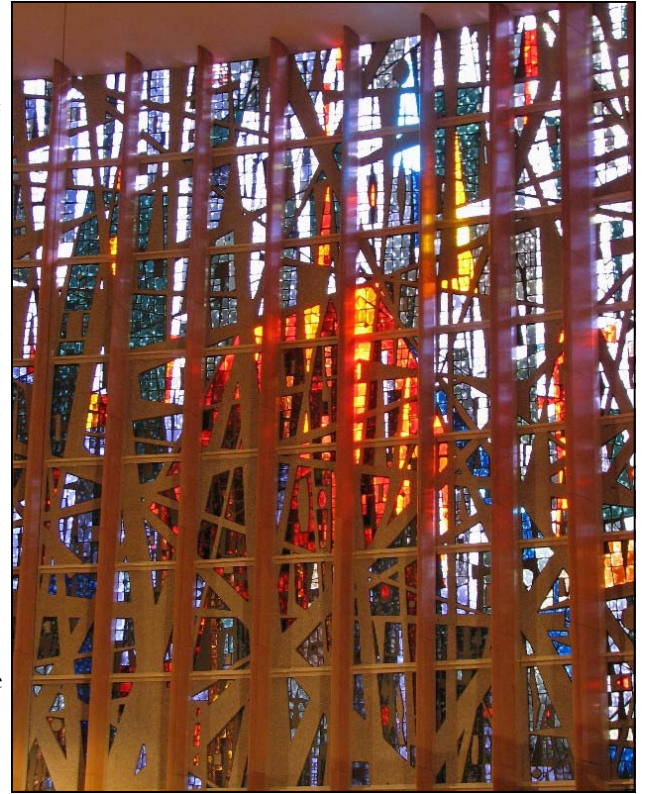
THE TOWER

Unique about this tower is the crown on top. At the time of planning Dr. Ronald R. Meredith, senior minister, suggested that since Christ is Lord and King why not symbolize it by placing a crown as the highest symbolic feature in the church complex. It is lighted so at night it can be seen from a great distance and has become a beacon for this city with its airplane industry. The Greek letters Alpha and Omega are traditional symbols signifying that Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end of God's all-time purpose for man.



INSIDE THE SANCTUARY-THE WINDOW

Upon entering the sanctuary the first thing that meets the eye is the Chancel Window; its expanse extending from ceiling to floor and from side to side catching a radiant morning sun through a myriad of crystal colorings and sparkling gems. The opaqueness at the base is designed so the window will not be too strong at the level where the celebration takes place. The eye traces the solid non-parallel veins that lead from the base toward the upper reaches where the window is almost total glass. The brilliant colors excite varied aspects of the spirit: white for purity, green for life, blue for infinitude, yellows for zest and labor, grays for difficulties, purple for loyalty and royalty, red for sacrifice. The huge area of red is central to the whole - at the center of all life stands the sacrificial love of God in Christ. "What is its meaning?" is an often asked question. The answer is, "What does it mean to YOU?" It depends on what you bring to it. As you ponder the window by some action of your own spirit it responds to your need. It never is quite the same each time. It speaks to the sorrowful, the joyful, the uncertain, the seeker - and so ministers to the different needs as one sits alone or with the congregation. In a letter from Robert Frei, St. Louis, Mo., designer of this window, he writes: "It was generally felt in the planning that strong subject matter would be static and might become somewhat tiresome as seen week after week. . . . also the spoken word being alive, changing (the window) should not have a background of an unchanging subject to compete with. Therefore it was conceived in the idea of the beautiful happenings that take place when changing sunlight is transmitted through and refracted by the crystal quality of colored glass." The onlooker may be aware that various considerations can be "pure poetry; and, like the important part of music, this tapestry of glass contributes, through our visual sense, an emotion that makes the experience of living more exciting and beautiful."



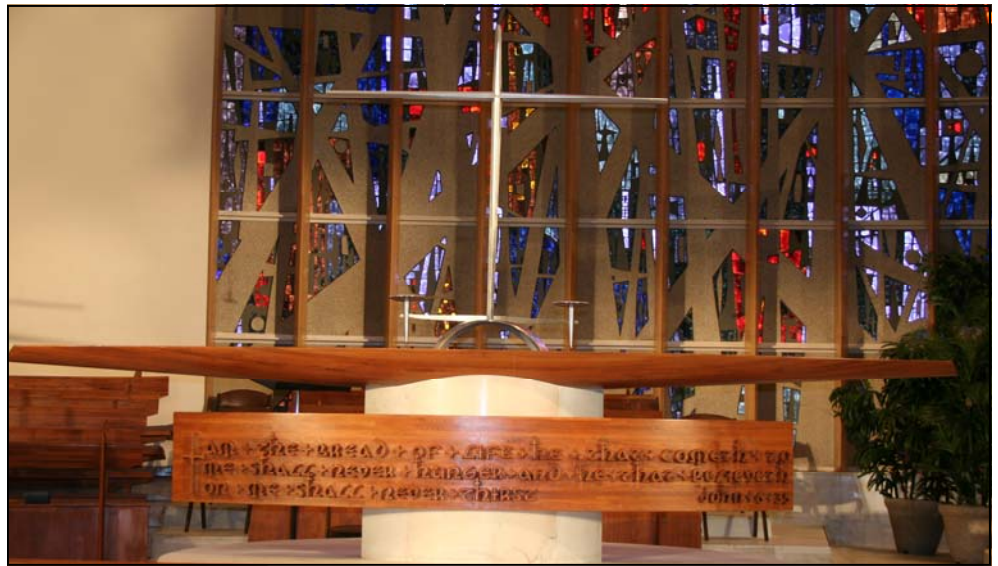
THE MEDALLIONS

In the narthex that leads to the sanctuary there are several colorful medallions set in the windows of extruded aluminum and clear glass symbolizing all creation. At the far end to the south is the single music note signifying praise and the harmony in God's handiwork; then, one after another we see the tortoise, the bird, the egg, the mouse, the ant, the birds and insects; all belonging to God's creation. All nature praises God by being. At the left of the door as you leave following worship is the Rooster Medallion; which is to remind you, after promising in worship you will be a more faithful follower of Christ, to remember Peter who heard the cock crow at his denial of his Master after pledging faithful allegiance: "If the pinch comes will I deny my Lord?" On the floor of the narthex are lines that lead from the sanctuary out beyond the doors. These symbolize the purpose of worship: you have heard the message through ritual and sermon and you've made an inner pledge to be of service, now go out into the streets and byways of society to serve in the name of Christ.



THE ALTAR

The altar standing in the chancel is built on contemporary lines fitting into the simple architectural design of the sanctuary. The arms of the table extend symmetrically holding the Resurrection Cross. The two candles, one on either side of the cross, signify both the divinity and humanity of Christ. The supporting marble column is surrounded at mid-section by curved wooden slabs, joined at the end. On the front panel are the carved words in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" -Words appropriate for the Holy Sacrament. The Altar pedestal rests on three marble circle risers from the chancel level. These represent the Holy Trinity.



THE LECTERN

To the left of the sanctuary is The Lectern, or the desk, from which the Scriptures are read. Notice the half-open door behind the lectern area. This indicates no matter how often the Bible is opened there is always more truth to be disclosed. Hangings on both the lectern and pulpit have various symbolic insignia and colorings according to the ecclesiastical seasons and special Christian observances.

THE PULPIT

Opposite the lectern is the Pulpit. Built along simple contemporary lines it gives the appearance of floating in space. The desk protrudes something like the prow of a Viking ship denoting the sermon moves out into uncharted waters, discovering and proclaiming fresh ideas, new ways and pioneer territories for the human spirit. The sounding board above the pulpit represents the hand of God blessing the sermon. On the wall to the left the lighting and shadows cast the outlines of a cross. The appendia bear the seasonal colors and always the love of Jesus is shown by the five wounds (crosses) - in His heart, His hands and His feet.



THE BAPTISMAL FONT

One of the most beautiful, chaste and expressive pieces in the sanctuary is the baptismal font. The spiraling marble-pedestal represents the soul moving upward to be met by the descending dove symbolizing the coming of the Holy Spirit into the life of the recipient. At the baptism of Jesus the Scripture relates that the Holy Spirit came down upon Him as a dove. Circling the cover top is a continuous row of oval apertures in which Chi Rho crosses stand. Chi Rho are the first two letters in the Greek word for Christ. Inside the silvery flat-like holder is a bronze bowl containing the baptismal water. From its center protrudes a Latin cross. The whole is highlighted by a bright beam shining from above.



THE LINEAL WINDOWS

On the right of the sanctuary are four long lineal windows imbedded in wall crypts. They are stained glass ranging from red through yellows and greens to blue forming a procession toward the chancel. These symbolize life - from birth to death. The victorious life moves toward the altar and cross to eternal life. Twice each year as the sun moves back and forth across the meridian, its filtered light passing through the paneled colored glass, bounces upon the white marble in the chancel and reflects upon the walls. The four windows represent the four stages in life: birth, youth, middle years and the aged. We are reminded that the Christian life, with all its ramifications, moves onward and upward.



THE FISH - DOVE

There is still one more great symbol in the sanctuary that sometimes is not noticed, yet its influence is present. Hovering over the congregation stretching from front to rear of the ceiling is the ancient symbol of the fish which, in Greek spelling I X O ~ E U S (Ichtheus) is an acrostic for Jesus Christ God's Son, Savior. A double symbolism has been created by the wing-like protrusions reaching toward the side walls. In this manner the fish symbol is changed to a dove symbol signifying the Holy Spirit hovering over the worshippers. A third symbol in observing the ceiling installation is the butterfly which, in ecclesiastical terms, symbolizes the Resurrection and Life Eternal.

THE VIGIL LIGHT

To the right of the Altar (left to the observer) hangs The Vigil Light, constantly burning, always present, reminding us of the eternal God who is ever present. *"The word of God abides forever."* (1 Peter 1:25). Of course God is everywhere but the human spirit seeks a place for prayer and worship where he can "feel" His presence. Thus the seeker finds a place in the Sanctuary.

