

Presenting the Stained Glass Windows at St. Thomas

History

St. Thomas Lutheran Church of Chapin South Carolina was organized on May 12th, 1875 in a partially completed house on our present property. By 1889 the converted house became too small, and the congregation began to build their first church building. This small, white building sufficed until 1935 when the second upgrade began on the same property. Finally in 1972, construction on our present church building, pictured below, began. It's architecture is quite modern, while the layout of the nave is in the common shape of the cross, as shown in the drawing on page two.



Many would agree that our twenty-two, stained glass windows are the most unique and outstanding features of our beautiful facilities. Their artistic content, as well as their manufacture and the materials used, is the primary topic of this presentation.

Our building committee, headed up by Mr. Arthur Wessinger, with the assistance of Rev. Matthew Moye, began the windows procurement process with High Point Glass & Decorative Company of North Carolina in the fall of 1972,

This firm employed a highly qualified artist who had studied in England's Royal College of Art and apprenticed in Westminster Abbey and Chartres Cathedral. His name was Thomas Dixon. During his work on our project, he became very ill, resulting in its long delayed completion in mid-1976, forcing the congregation to use the building for months with acrylic windows. However, not only did High Point Glass honor their original commitment, they delivered a unique and valuable product that we are proud of today.



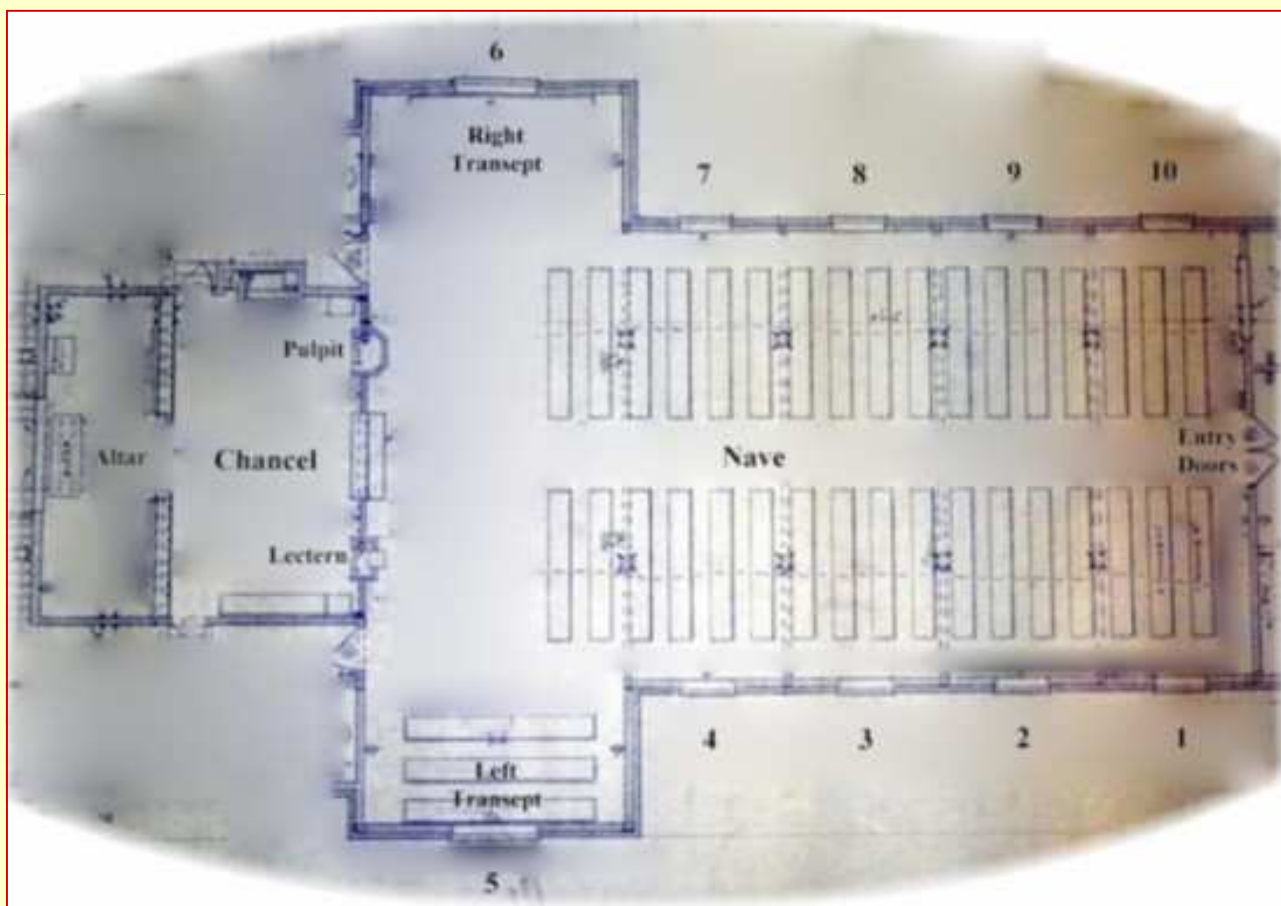
Our "St. Thomas Window", shown above, is located behind the pulpit. It is said that Saint Thomas went to India to build churches, thus the carpenter's square is his trademark.

Stained glass window construction

High Point Glass assembled our windows using "hand blown" glass manufactured by Blenko Glass company of Milton, West Virginia. This firm has been in the business for over a century, and is well-respected nation wide. It has been run by four generations of Blenko's, whose patriarch emigrated to this country from England in 1853.

All of the flat, diamond shaped pieces of this unique material were, in fact, first formed into cylinders by a glass blower using a blow-pipe . Later in the process, the cylindrical mold is allowed to open under great heat, and the glass "unwinds" into a flat sheet. Since the stained glass art dates back many centuries, these molds have been made of various materials, even hollowed-out sections of tree logs. This technique resulted in a unique surface pattern, caused by the hollowing tool, that is still seen in modern stained glass.

Of course, the artist's work is critical to the production of the beautiful scenes (called "medallion cartoons") in the ten windows in our nave. Not only did the late Thomas Dixon achieve meaningful facial features and details, his use of colors is excellent. In addition, with Pastor Moye's assistance, he designed the ten nave windows to display the life of Jesus, based on popular Bible passages.



A photograph of the main floor drawing is shown above with the identification numbers, used in the following pages, on the outside of the nave walls.

Upon entry into the nave on the right side of the drawing above, our stained glass window story depicted in the medallion cartoons, begins on your left, proceeding to Jesus' Crucifixion in the left transept (#5), resurrection in the right transept (#6), and then continuing the New Testament story back down the right side, with post-passion highlights.

The following pages include enlarged photographs of each medallion scene painted by the artist, plus full photos of each window. Although we do not know the specific Bible verses our artist had in mind, applicable verses are noted on each page.

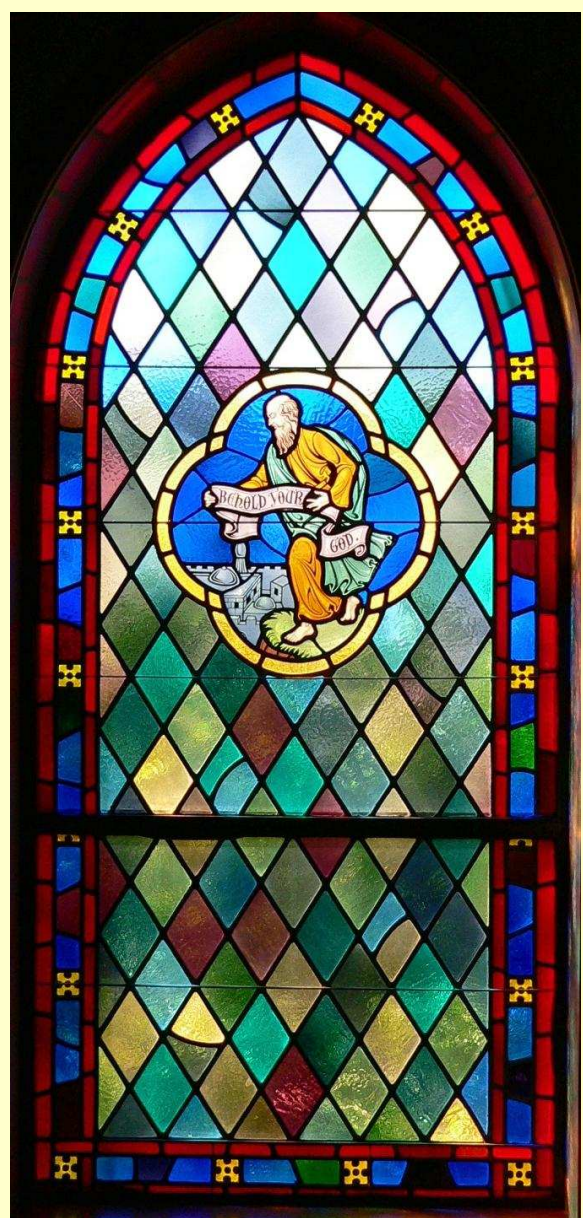


Window #1

God's People are Comforted.

Isaiah 40:9:

Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news; lift
up your voice with strength, O
Jerusalem, herald of good
news; lift it up, fear not; say to
the cities of Judah, "Behold
your God!"



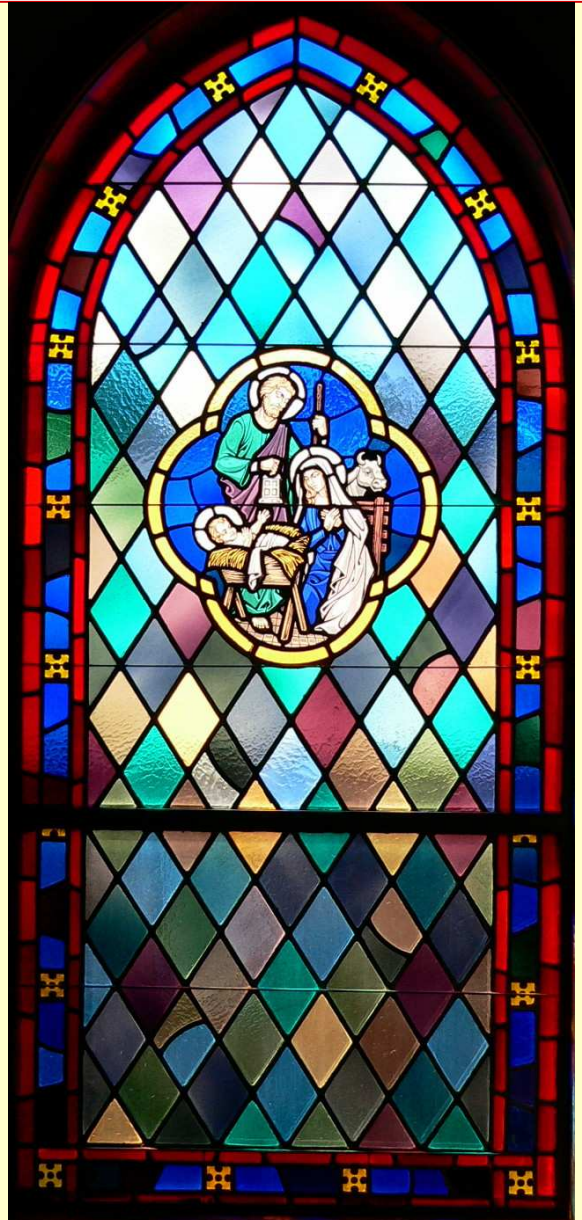


Window #2

The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:7:

And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.





Window #3

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

Luke 2:47:

And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.



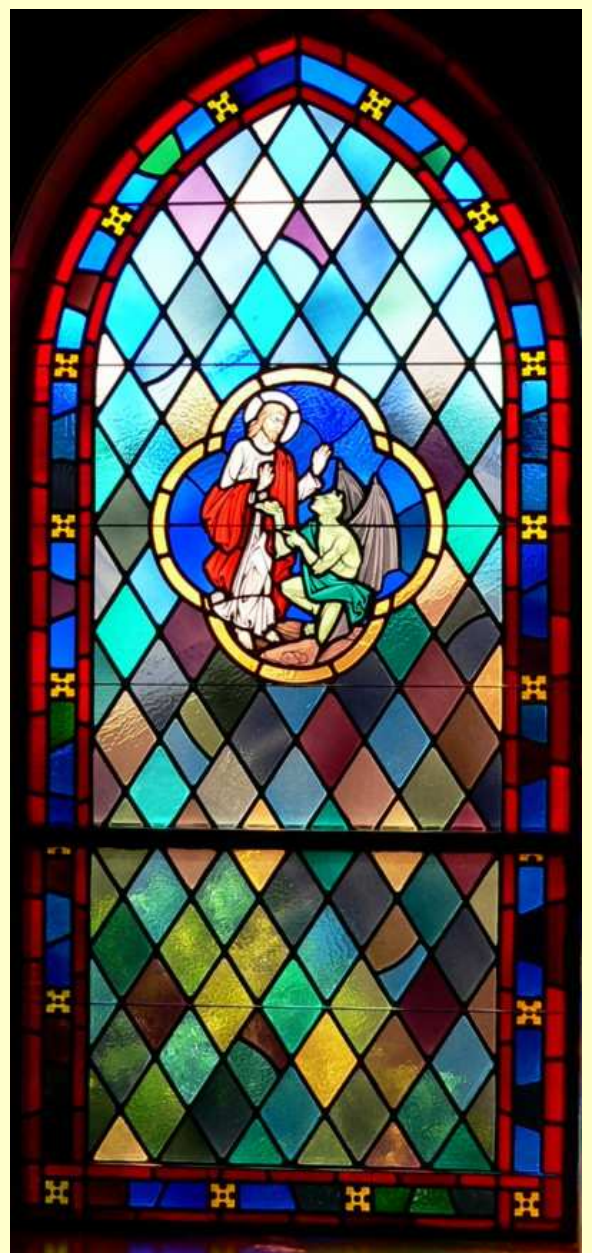


Window #4

The Temptation of Jesus

Matthew 4:3:

The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."





Left

Transept

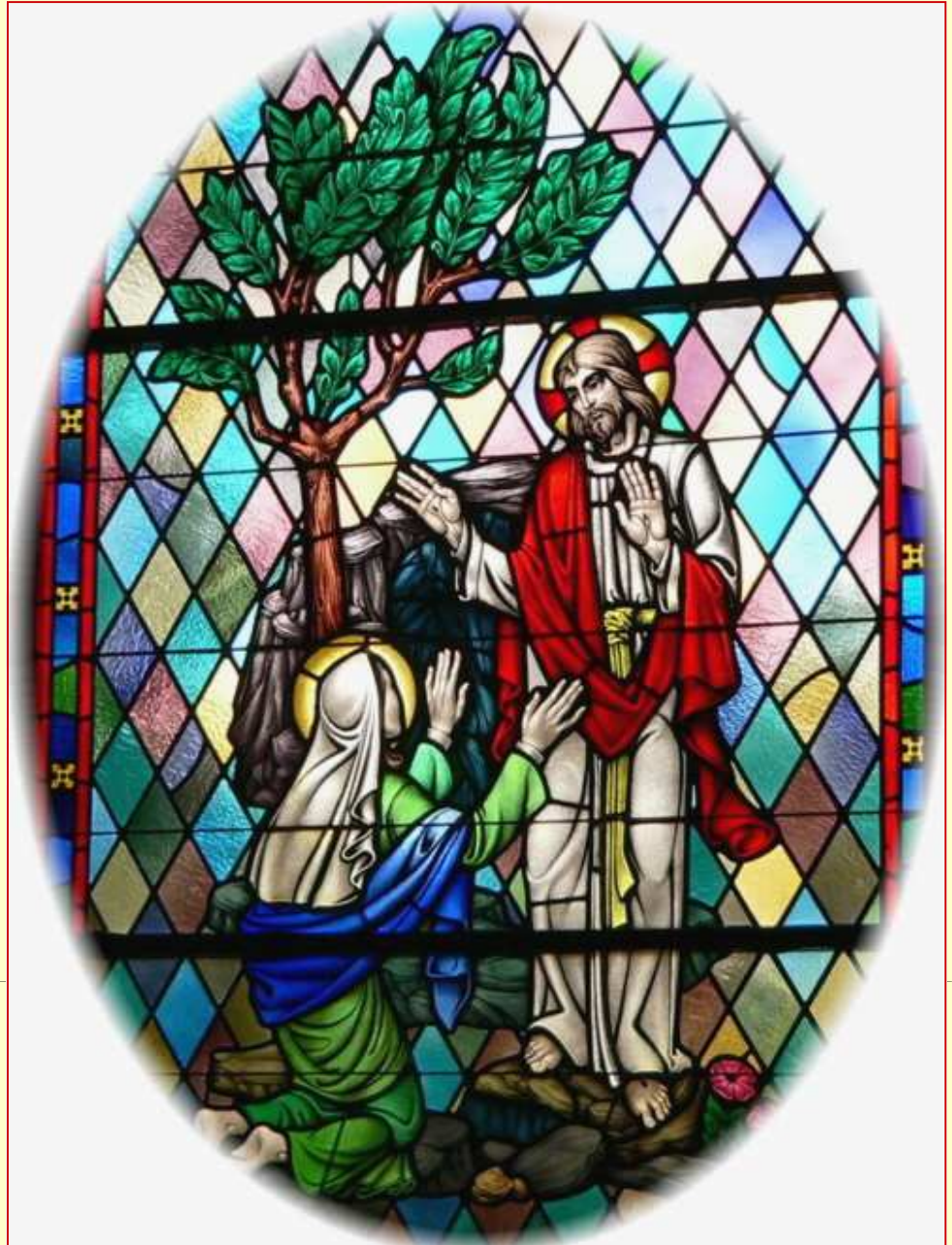
Window #5

The Crucifixion

John 20:24-25 : so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things, ²⁵ but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.



**Right
Transept**



Window #6

At the Garden Tomb

John 20:13-14 :

They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

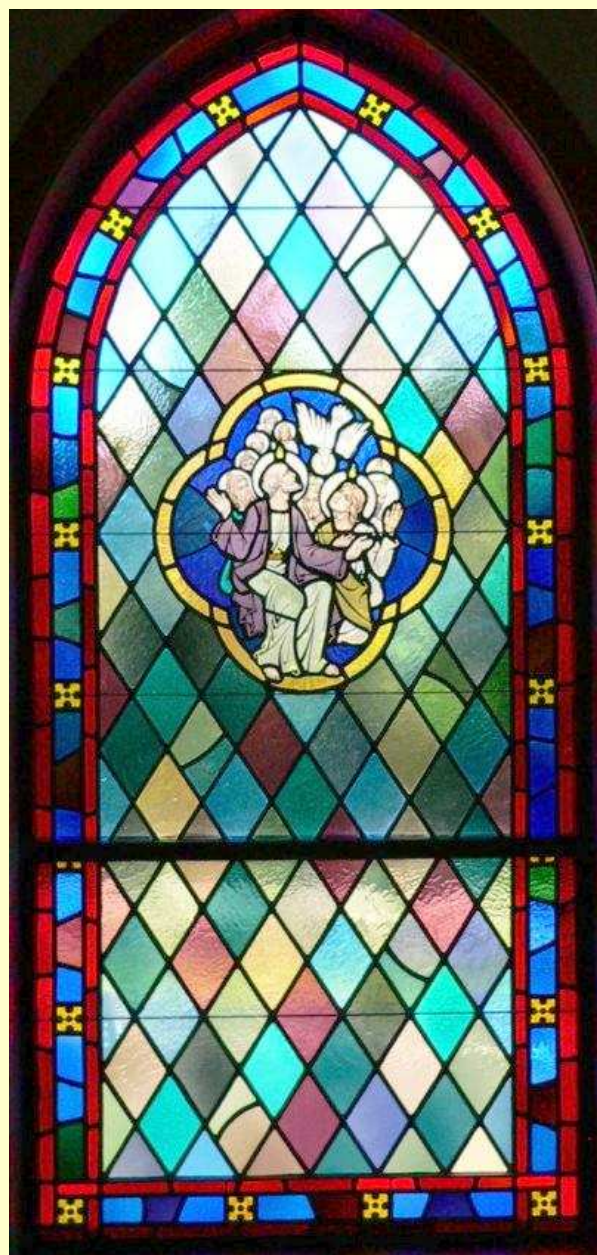


Window #7

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

John: 19-20

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." If this is the most relevant verses, our artist seems to have moved the scene out of a room.



Window #8

The Believers Pray for Boldness

Acts: 4:31:

"When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness." This connection is based on interpreting the descending dove, with a halo, as being the Holy Spirit; however, even though a dove is mentioned 21 times in the bible, none are set in a scene like this one. Perhaps, our "artist's interpretation".



Window #9

Feeding the Five Thousand

John: 6:9:

"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?"



Window #10

The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:4:

And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them.