



The Stained Glass Windows
in the Nave at

Resurrection Evangelical
Lutheran Church

6201 North Washington Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia
22205

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Many visitors, upon entering the nave at Resurrection church, are impressed by the brilliant colors of the stained glass cross in the window behind the altar. Its colors change with the hours of the day: on a sunny morning the reds, blues, and purples leap out at us; at night there is a feeling of endless depth in the darkness of the yellows, blues, and oranges.

But it is to the seventeen stained glass windows on either side of the nave that the eye travels again and again. No matter how often we have seen these windows, with their somber hues and occasional bursts of bright colors, we always manage to see something new or gain new insights into symbols we may see for the first time.

The Resurrection of Jesus is central to the Christian faith. Without the Resurrection there is no faith. The Resurrection is God's victory over the power of death which seeks to bring all people, institutions, and nations under its power. That power has been broken. The windows depict that victory and our participation in it.

Dr. Melvin S. Lange, pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church from 1958 to 1971, prepared the theological material for the artist, Roy Calligan, of the Hunt Stained Glass Studios in Pittsburgh, PA. The meaning of each of the seventeen windows is indicated by a Bible verse. The theme begins with the window to the left of the lectern (when facing the altar) and proceeds around the nave toward the back, and then forward on the opposite side toward the last window to the right of the pulpit.



Window #1

“The Father and I are one”
(John 10:30)

In the beginning was the Word, the self-giving, self-revealing activity of God. That Word stands before us in Jesus of Nazareth. The eye and the hand symbolize God the Father, the red flames depict the Holy Spirit. The group together is the Trinity. We notice not only in this window, but also in others, the three crosses – a forecast of the crucifixion and resurrection.



Window #2

“By him were all things created”
(Colossians 1:16)

This window stresses that all things flow from God. The Hebrew symbol for Jahweh (Jehovah) is found in the upper left. We see Adam and Eve, the Sun, Moon, stars, earth, trees, and fishes as told in the Creation story.



Window #3

“By man came death”
(I Corinthians 15:21)

Humanity has chosen to be in bondage to death (illustrated by the chains at the bottom of the window) rather than live under the dominion of God. The conflict between Cain and Abel was one consequence. The flaming sword, representing conflict, keeps the human race from becoming what God intended



Window #4

“The lamb slain from the foundation of the world”
(Revelation 13:8)

This window depicts the prophets – shown as the people with the many Stars of David. Included is a figure of Isaac. Theologically, the window’s message states that redemption was part of God’s plan from the very beginning. Notice the symbol of the Trinity.



Window #5

“The Word was made flesh”
(John 1:14)

This window with its figures of Mary and the baby Jesus might be termed the incarnation window. It bears the fleur-de-lis symbol which in several windows represents the Virgin Mary. The red dove for the Holy Spirit symbolizes that the birth of Jesus was God’s action. Notice here the small cross, again indicating that even in birth Jesus encounters the power of death.



Window #6

“He was without sin”
(II Corinthians 5:21”

This window shows Christ seated, with a halo around his head. Jesus was without sin and was never subject to the power of death. Here we see a depiction of Jesus’ miracles – the blind who see (an eye), the deaf who hear (a bell), the lame who walk (crutches), and the hungry who are fed (hand reaching for food). This window might be called the Ministry window.

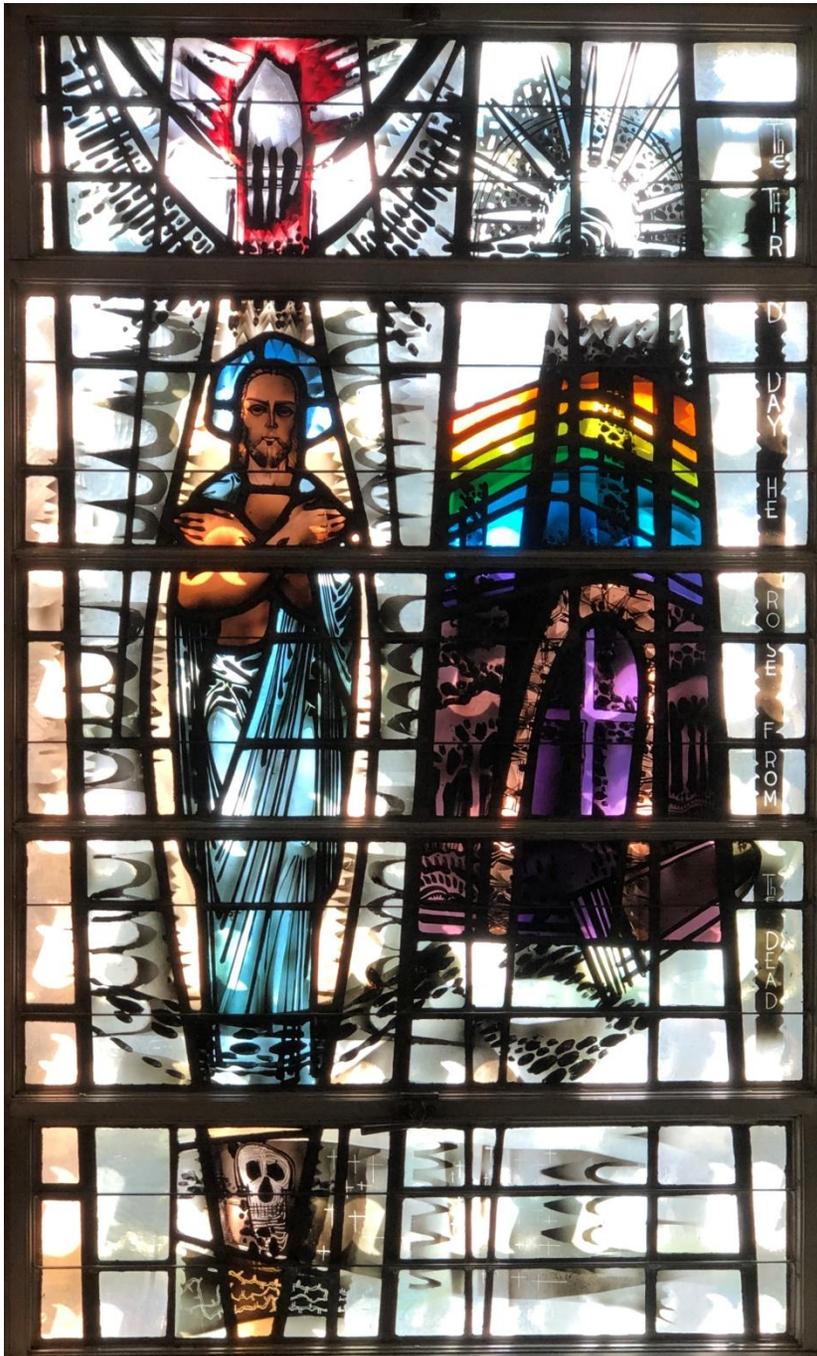


Window #7

“He was crucified, died and was buried”

(The Apostles’ Creed)

The dominant figure in this window is Christ on the cross. However, the scrolls with the Ten Commandments, symbolizing that people broke these Commandments, are predominant on the left side of the design. Beneath the cross, we see the hyssop which was tendered to Jesus while on the cross. Directly beneath the main cross are the three smaller crosses, one of which is an extension of the main cross. These crosses represent the thieves who were crucified with our Lord. The man emerging from the tomb represents the dead being raised. Note that the right side of the window is smoky, representing the darkened Earth during the crucifixion. We see that the pillars of the temple are also being rent. But in the lower left, we see the Messianic rose, the symbol of hope.



Window #8

“The third day he rose from the dead”

(I Corinthians 15:4)

This window proclaims Christ’s triumph over death. We see Jesus as the central figure and also note that the door of the tomb is broken down and a cross denotes the victory. The rainbow is the symbol of God’s promise; the Sun and its rays signify the bursting forth of glory.



Window #9

“We have seen the Lord”

(John 20:25)

The first thing we notice about this window is that it is not quite as translucent as most of the other windows; it is veiled because the artist wanted to depict the fact that no one actually *saw* the Resurrection. We see the risen Christ in the upper right, Paul as the central figure, and Peter shown as a bearded man in the lower right. This window bespeaks Paul’s first account of the Resurrection. The window depicts many people, representing the 500 brethren, and contains the symbols for the twelve apostles.



Window # 10

“Behold, I make all things new”

(Revelation 21:5)

Beginning with this window, #10, the theme turns from the life of Christ to the beginning of a new creation. Our eyes are drawn to a large blue circle center within a symbol representing the hand of God the Father. Within his hand is a new world with Christ as the head.



Window #11

"Death is swallowed up in victory"

(I Corinthians 15:54)

In this window, we immediately pick out the cross, the anchor, and many, many fishes. The fishes represent the Christian community; the anchor of hope is over the Christian community.

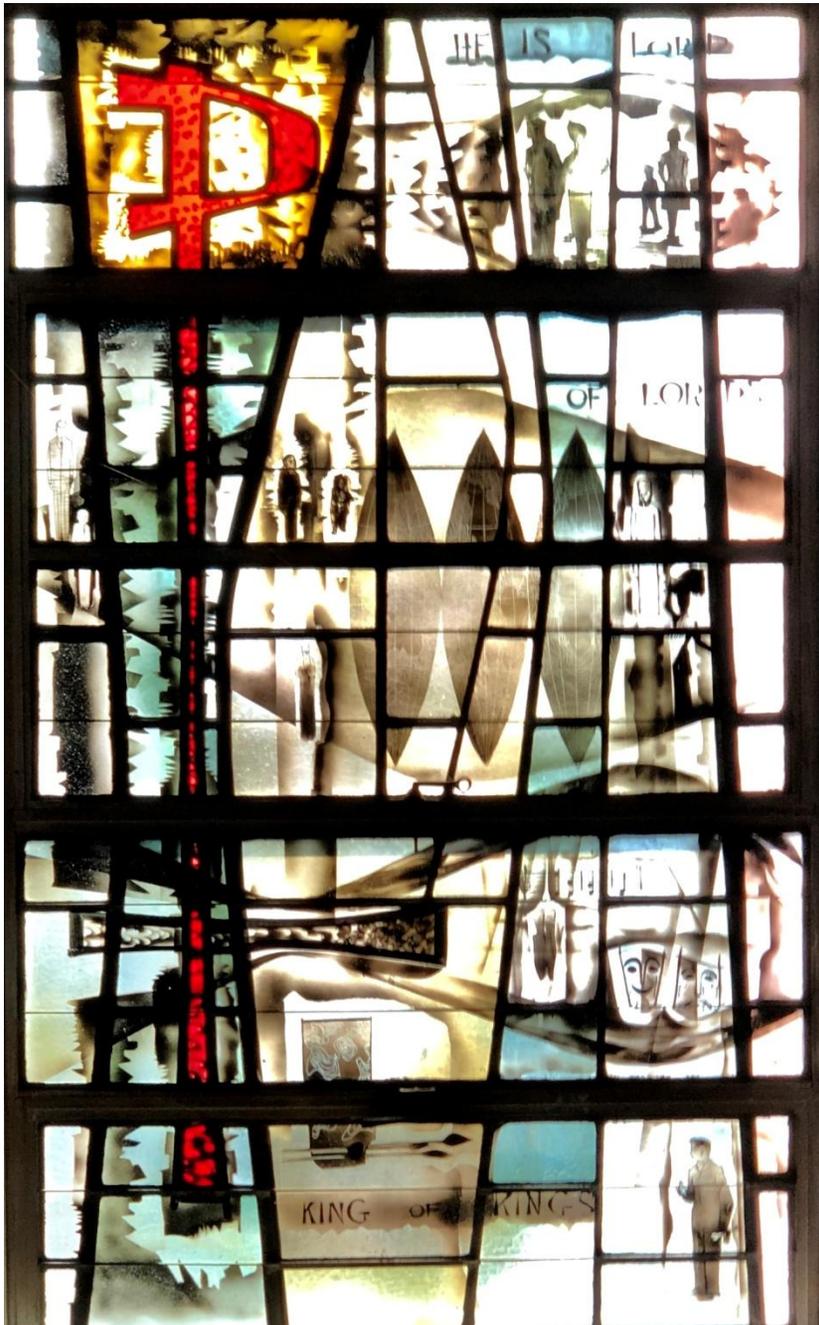


Window # 12

“He is the head of the body, the Church”

(Colossians 1:18)

Again, in this window, we notice the prevalence of fishes representing the Christians. The Alpha and Omega (beginning and end) are seen in a central motif with Christ as the center. Where the red color is evident, it stands for the Holy Spirit.

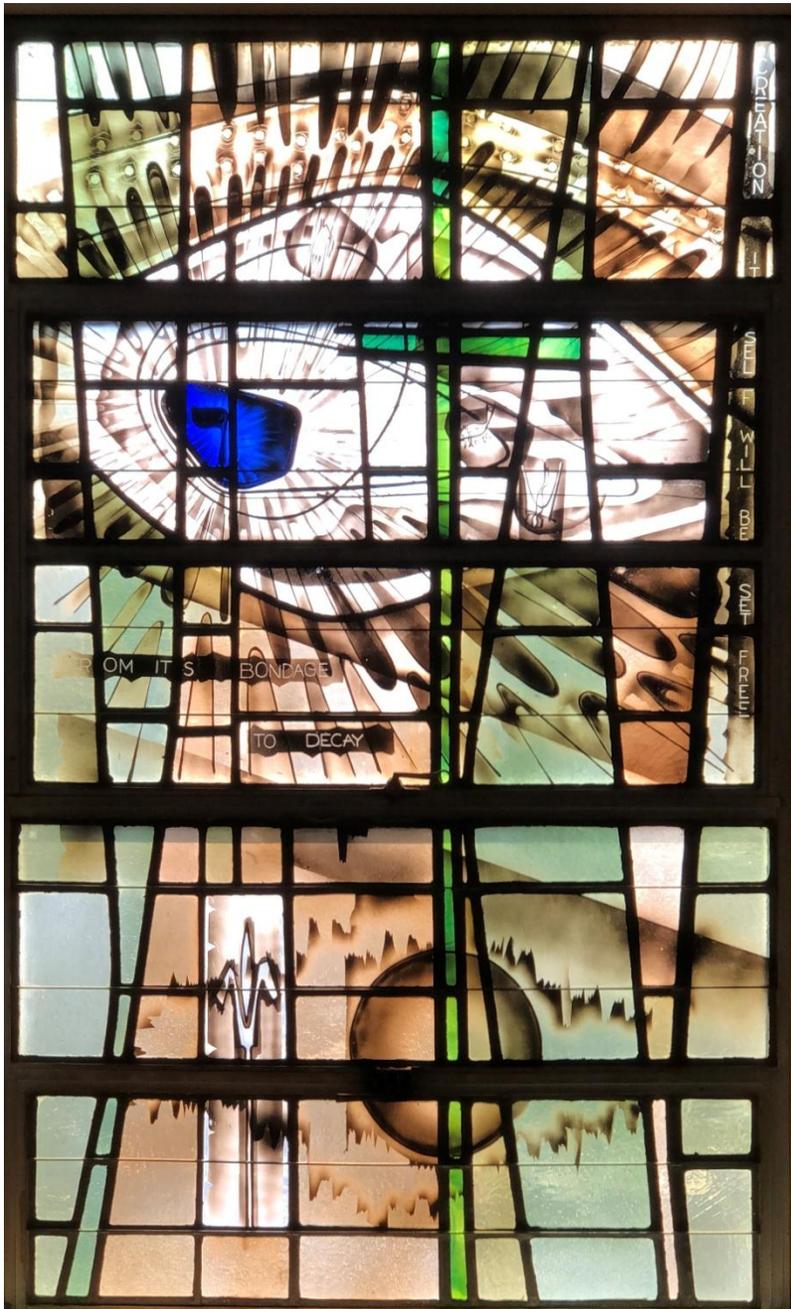


Window # 13

“He is Lord of lords – King of kings”

(Revelation 17:14)

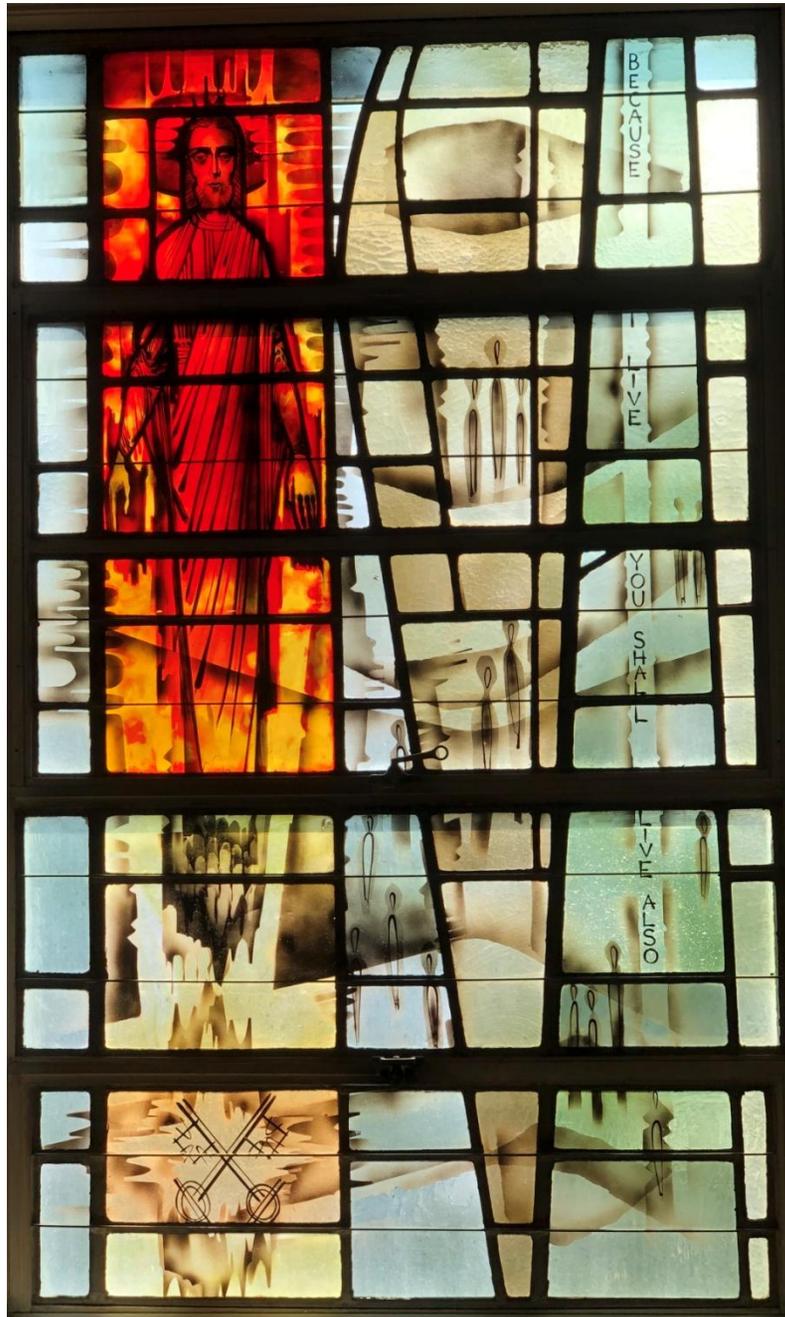
Here we notice the huge *chi rho*, symbol of Jesus. Under his dominion are all the people of the Earth, the latter symbolized by a mercator projection of the globe. This window envelops the arts; witness the artist’s canvas and brushes next to the *chi rho*, the musical notes on a staff, the ballet shoes for dance, and the masks of comedy and tragedy. An automobile mechanic represents labor. All modern people are seen in this window.



Window #14

“Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay”
(Romans 8:21)

This window declares that the Resurrection destroys death in all the world. The Earth is released from its bond. Note that, as in window #2, we have the Hebrew character for Jaweh, this time in a blue stone.



Window #15

“Because I live, you shall live also.”

(John 14:19)

The predominant figure is Jesus, in glowing red because this figure is the risen Christ who is filled with the Holy Spirit. Note the keys to the kingdom (usually associated with the disciple Peter) which are located in the lower part of the window. The candle-like objects are people figures, rising to be with Jesus.



Window #16

“He shall come again with glory”

(The Nicene Creed)

Here our central figure is a lamb with a crown, the old symbol of victory. Why the lamb is spotted, no one seems to be able to explain. Surrounding the lamb are people figures. Notice that these figures encircle the purple grapes and yellow chalice representing the Messianic feast by which we, too, come into glory with the lamb. The lower half of the window bears seven angles pouring water or wine from chalices over the roots at the very bottom, the symbol of death.



Window #17

“Thanks be to God who gives us the victory”

(Corinthians 15:57)

This, the last of the windows, depicts Christ the King, with a scepter in his left hand and a cross in his right hand. This window is unique in its use of many words. The words were penned by Martin Luther and they read:

“Christ lay in death’s strong hand for our offenses given
 But now at God’s right hand he stands
 And brings us life from heaven
 Wherefore let us joyful be
 And sing to God right thankfully
 Loud songs of alleluia.”

Modern people at everyday tasks are shown: a salesman, a telephone linesman, a baby with father and mother, a man mowing the grass, and a neighbor cutting his hedge. Look closely. See the footsteps winding around. These are ours, for we, too, want to walk in his way.