

Local Artists Create Elaborate Window for Esbon Church

As the sun shone into the East windows of the Esbon, KS, United Methodist and Christian Church, a dream was born. Stained glass windows would be an elegant way to enhance the beauty of the church and reduce the blinding glare during the summer and winter solstices.

In 2016, local stained glass artist, Charlie Fischer, and multi-media artist, Litoreous Karkinos Drakonis Ezkibel, undertook the challenge to design and create five window panes of unity and artistry. In collaboration with a member of the congregation, window themes were discussed. Litoreous researched Biblical and site history of the themes to accurately represent the events in his design. Discussions involved size, symmetry, stress points, color, Biblical references, and artistic freedom.

Window templates were made by hot-gluing large pieces of paper to the actual church windows and cutting the paper at the edge of the glass with a razor sharp tool. Litoreous then began designing and drawing the illustrations. Charlie made sure the composition and lines would minimize stress points when creating the stained glass images. After the drawing was finalized for a window, Charlie meticulously began the work of producing a paper pattern for each individual piece of glass in the design. Once paper patterns were made, they were traced onto the glass that would be used. Then the glass was cut and laid into the pattern for checking accuracy. Next, the individual pieces were removed, all edges were wrapped in copper so solder would have a surface that it could adhere to, and the pieces were once again placed back on the template. Pieces were then soldered together, and each solder was refined with steel wool. Finally, patina was put on the solder to turn it to a favorable color and the glass was waxed to make it shimmer. After completion of the top side, the window was flipped and the process repeated on the back side.

Five window pane designs were created including scripture templates made with the help of Moonlight Workshop. Charlie sandblasted and painted the lettering onto the glass. All work was done locally except for the firing and layered painting of the faces, hands, and feet. They had to be completed in Grand Island, Ne. by

an artist who had the paint, tools, and kiln for the detail work. The bottom two windows contain scripture and are framed in with a trellis of grapes. Water and cattails add to the picturesque nature as the bottom right pane depicts the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, and the bottom left pane is a thoughtful interpretation of the path of Jesus's life from birth to crucifixion to an empty tomb. The trellis and grapes continue to tie the upper two windows together with the lower windows, but the upper left pane portrays Jesus as the risen Lord, while the upper right pane represents Pentecost with the Holy Spirit characterized by a magnificent dove, rays of sunshine, and tongues of fire. The center uppermost pane is crafted with the star of Bethlehem. Together, the windows create a magnificent offering of praise to God with color, design, scripture, and creativity. And finally, for those who like a bit of whimsy, three birds and one church mouse are hidden in the artistry of it all.

Upon completion of the window, stained glass artist and life-long Esbon resident, Charlie Fischer, simply commented, "I would like to thank the congregation, my wife, and especially Janet (the project's coordinator) for having the faith in me to complete such a large endeavor. Thank you!"

Charlie, Litorieous, Steve Walker, and Barb Mizner worked together to lift the panes into the window. Gary and Janet Kriley framed them in with finished wood and quarter round.

If anyone would like to view the windows or attend worship services, the church is open Sunday mornings from 7:45 to 9:45 for worship at 8:15 with refreshments following. Rod Rose is the pastor.