



Genesis 8

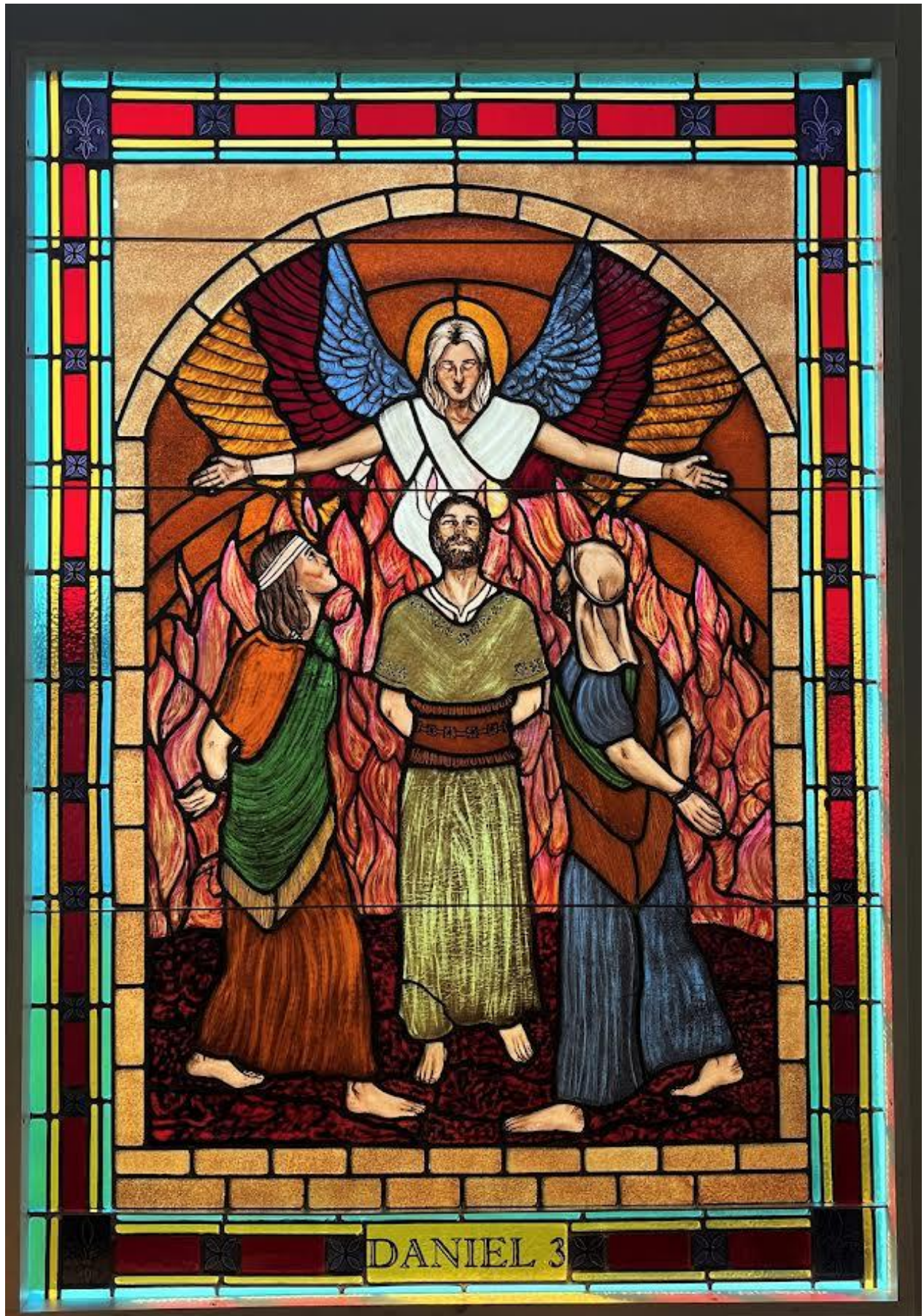
The Noah's Ark Window – Genesis 8

The Noah window is by the baptism font because the flood is referenced in the blessing of the water for a baptism: "O God, who by the outpouring of the flood foreshadowed regeneration". The first sentences of the Bible describe the beginning of the Earth as being a formless void. God starts to give the Earth order as he separates the light from the darkness and the land from the sea. He then generates life. Later in Genesis, after the first sin, humans become so egocentric and domineering that the Earth fights back, shielding and recreating itself through the chaos of the flood. God saves representatives of all his creation through Noah. After the rain and flooding, God allows the elements to be organized so humanity can again try to have a healthier dominion over the Earth. In baptism we pass through the element of water and its chaotic power. Water is such a great representation of chaos for many reasons, especially because it distorts your senses when you are under it. As you pass through this watery grave of Christ's death, you get to come out on the other side, like Noah, into the more intelligible life of the Resurrection of Christ. You are then reorganized into the body of Christ. I love the way this window looks including the details of the wood of the ark and all the colors. Within the colors are the white and black birds almost like a ying and a yang. The opposites remind us that God is present in the wet and the dry, in the intelligible world and the world of chaos. He regenerates us, especially in the times that we've lost control. He breathes over us again or, like the raven beating his wings, sometimes he lets us offer the recreating spirit to each other in works of charity. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created and You shall renew the face of the earth.



The Annunciation Window – Luke 1

The line “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you,” comes from this scene as the Archangel Gabriel was revealed to Mary of Nazareth. St. Gabriel followed up with “do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.” One of Mary’s lines in the conversation is, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” I love this line because it demonstrates God’s gentleness. God (the Holy Spirit) often simply nudges us towards relationships, charity, and other callings and sometimes, we can feel the nudge and have the autonomy to consciously cooperate with our loving God. Mary cooperated perfectly with the Holy Spirit and even has the title “spouse of the Holy Spirit.” One more line by the archangel is “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.” This reference to the Holy Spirit is why the image is in our church. You can see how our artist depicted the Holy Spirit as a cloud above Mary and you can see how the clouds gently push the angel toward her. Finally, notice that this window is opposite from the Solomon’s Temple window. Mary’s overshadowing can be compared to Solomon’s temple where the cloud of God’s presence sat or overshadowed the lid of the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple letting the people know that God is among us. In Mary’s perfect cooperation with the Holy Spirit, Jesus our Savior is born, God among us. Come Holy Spirit.



DANIEL 3

The Fiery Furnace Window – Daniel 3

Daniel and three of his friends were taken by force to Babylon to study and act as foreign advisors, working in the Babylonian King's house. The three friends were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. They were given Babylonian names: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These names can get confusing when you read the story. Daniel's three friends were commanded to worship an image of the Babylonian king and when they refused, they were thrown into a fiery furnace. Even though some of the Babylonian servants died from the heat while trying to throw Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah into the fire, the three Jews were protected from the fire. While they were in the furnace, Azariah offered a prayer and then the three sang a hymn of praise to God. As they prayed and sang a hymn, an angel that looked like a son of the gods seemed to be with them in the furnace protecting them. You can see this and the beautiful flames and coals in our stained glass. The lyrics to Azariah's canticle and the hymn are in the Catholic Bible, but not in protestant Bibles. Here is an excerpt: Bless the Lord, sun and moon, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever. Bless the Lord, stars of heaven, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever. Bless the Lord, all rain and dew, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever. Bless the Lord, all winds, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever. Bless the Lord, fire and heat, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever. I like this image for the Holy Spirit because it contrasts material fire with spiritual fire. This is similar to Moses when the bush burned without changing it, or to the apostles at Pentecost with flames over their heads. God shows his presence in his creatures without destroying them. While the king threatened them with material destruction, God manifests his power which is beyond the material. In the above hymn, the greatest created powers give praise to God above them. The three young men and Daniel still suffered as slaves, but they were empowered with God's Spirit, love, and mission. The Holy Spirit burns like a fire but is beyond fire. Come Holy Spirit.



Resurrection Window – Ezekiel 37

I love how the white from the skeletons catches people's eyes in this window. Often it requires a double take to process that we are looking at skeletons and naked bodies in the stained glass. Ezekiel is a prophet from the 6th century BC, and his book recounts many bizarre mystical images as well as pageantries that he was made to see or act out. His book starts after he turned 30 years old as a priest in exile. After acting out many visions of doom and after understanding that God has abandoned the temple, taking his presence and life from the Israelites, Ezekiel starts to see and consequently communicate scenes of hope. In our window's scene, the prophet was mystically taken out to a valley abundantly full of dry bones. Ezekiel was commanded to prophesy over the bones. After he did, he heard "a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone" and then the skeletons grew muscles and flesh. Ezekiel was told to breathe on them, and after he did, a wind came and gave them life and they appeared as a great army. In the window, you can see Ezekiel's head cover blowing due to the breath of God joining with his breath to give life. Wind is another symbol of the Holy Spirit, and it will raise us up from our graves into a community, just as it promised to raise Israel up out of its exile and spiritual death. The actual reason I love this image is because it reminds us of the central message and hope of Christianity, that there is life after death, therefore we do not have to be slaves to the fear of death. It also shows the Holy Spirit as "the Lord, the giver of life." Come Holy Spirit.



1 Kings 17

The Elijah Window – 1 Kings 17

King Ahab ruled over the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 874-853 BC. He was the 8th Northern King since the split in 930 BC after King Solomon died. Ahab's wife Jezebel was princess of Sidon, a foreign nation who worshiped Baal. The Sidonites influenced King Ahab to promote false religion. Elijah was a prophet who God empowered to prophesy a drought over Israel because of so much false worship under King Ahab. Elijah then fled outside of Israel to Cherith Creek, east of the Jordan River. As he waited in exile, the ravens brought him bread and meat, and he drank from the brook until it dried up from lack of rain. Then the Lord commanded him to go to Zarephath in Sidon to meet with a widow who would miraculously provide bread for them. The Holy Spirit helps and consoles us. It gives us strength and nudges us to the next phase along God's plan for us. Elijah's patience and resting in God's plan without certainty of his destination is a great portrayal of the consolation that the Holy Spirit provides. The ravens are also a sign of the Holy Spirit, as they are working for God by providing Elijah with nourishment. I really love instances in scripture where animals do God's will. In this scene Elijah is outside of his native home and is about to be led to Sidon (the home country of Queen Jezebel). However, even though evil came from Sidon, another Sidonian woman will give Elijah grace, reminding us that God's spirit traverses national borders and can work anywhere and through anyone. Come Holy Spirit.



1 Kings 8

The Solomon's Temple Window – 1 Kings 8

King David was the greatest King of Israel, and Jesus is often called the Son of David. David, who was a general in many battles, conquered Jerusalem and made it the capital of the Israelite land. He wanted to build a house or temple in Jerusalem for the Ark of the Covenant, which was a box that held the Ten Commandments and was a sign of the covenant or contract between the Israelites and God. The lid of the Ark was a chair for God, where he would appear as a cloud to show that he dwelt with the Israelites. In 2 Samuel 7, David is told he is not permitted to build a temple but “[David’s offspring] shall build a house for [the Lord’s] name, and he [the Lord] will establish the throne of [David’s] kingdom forever.” This comes true in two ways. Solomon, one of his sons, will build the Temple out of stone, and Jesus, his descendant 1000 years later, will have the temple of his body destroyed and rebuilt in three days, establishing the Church. Once Solomon’s stone Temple was built, the priests placed the Ark of the Covenant inside. When the priests exited, “a cloud filled the house of the Lord...the glory of the Lord filled the house” (1 Kings 8:11). This stained glass depicts King Solomon and a High priest reacting to the glory of the Lord entering the temple. This image reminds us that the Holy Spirit fills the temple of our bodies at our baptisms like the cloud filled the original temple. Come Holy Spirit.



Luke 2

The Presentation Window – Luke 2

There are two temple pictures in a row. The Temple window to the left shows God's spirit entering the Temple of Jerusalem freshly constructed by Solomon. The right window shows Christ entering the reconstructed Temple of Jerusalem almost 1000 years later. Both illustrate God entering this sacred space unique to Israel. Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the temple as a baby because all first born needed to be consecrated to God since the Passover plague in Egypt, when all the first born not marked by the blood of the lamb died (Exodus 13). Furthermore, in the rituals of clean and unclean things, new mothers needed to bring a sacrifice to God (Leviticus 11-15). If [the new mom] cannot afford a lamb, she must take two turtledoves or two young pigeons [...]. The priest will perform the rite of expiation for her, and she will be purified. (Leviticus 11:7-8). You can see the two birds in the window both as a sign of the Holy Spirit and as a representation of the poverty of Christ in his humanity. After the Resurrection and Pentecost, it is us baptized people who are seen as Christ's body and the new Temple where the Holy Spirit dwells. The Temple windows are in our church to help us understand that the Holy Spirit dwells in us, binds all of us together, and makes us holy. God chooses to dwell in special ways, in special places, including us. Come Holy Spirit.



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NUMBERS 24

Tents of Israel Window – Numbers 24

Yes, they are tents. The book of Numbers tells the story of Israel traveling through the desert between Egypt and the Promised Land (15th century BC). It is called “Numbers” because they counted the number of traveling Israelites. As you can see in the stained-glass image, the Israelites organized their tribes to revolve around the mobile tent-shrine. The shrine was an enclosed courtyard with a tent, where God dwelled as a pillar of cloud and where ritualistic sacrifices were made. Numbers 24 takes place in the plains of Moab after Israel defeated several other armies. The king of Moab worried about the traveling group of hundreds of thousands of Israelites who would destroy and disrupt the Moabite land. Therefore, King Balak paid a prophet, Balaam, to travel to their land and curse Israel to protect Moab. When Balaam came, he attempted to curse the tents of Israel. However, after several failed attempts, he said he could not curse what the Lord has blessed. I enjoy the image of the formation of Israel because it shows how individual people, families, and tribes were unified and oriented by God’s presence. In a similar way, we are members of the Body of Christ, unified by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, as members of the Body of Christ and temples of his Holy Spirit, who don’t give authority to evil, we know we cannot be cursed. Instead, we can see the Holy Spirit uniting and guiding us to eternal life. Come Holy Spirit.

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