

Catoctin Presbyterian Church Windows

"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." Psalm 122:1

Kittoctin Church, or as it is now written, "Catoctin" was founded in 1764 in a log cabin located about a mile South of the present church building. The property where the church now stands was purchased in 1814. A brick church building was constructed sometime between 1817 and 1833. In 1878 the original brick church caught fire and was torn down. Using bricks from the original church, the present sanctuary was constructed and dedicated on May 17, 1883. Congregation member, John N. Campbell, constructed the south wing addition in 1950.

The original windows in the church were made of clear glass. Mary Brown, whose Grandfather, Robert N. Legard, served Catoctin as an Elder from the early twenties until the early forties, recalls: "The back of the glass was covered with colored sheets of cellophane paper bonded to the panes to create simulated stained glass. The background was opaque with a repeated pattern of soft green and touches of red set in a geometric pattern outlined with pretend black leading."

Techniques used by stained glass artists support this recollection. According to Encarta Encyclopedia "...a window's design was put on a "cartoon" which was drawn with lead or tin point. Late Gothic and Renaissance cartoons were made on parchment, cloth, paper, or cardboard."

At the beginning of 1950 The Women of Catoctin Presbyterian Church, with guidance from member Jean Campbell, devoted their time and talents to replacing the original windows with stained glass windows. As recorded in the minutes from History of Women of the Church "Two days in early April 1952 were devoted to the laborious process of scraping the paper decalomania from all the windows in the church auditorium and washing them." Other notes indicate "...lovely memorial windows were placed in our church and vestibule, the result of the work of a committee of men, Mr. Edgar Beans and Mr. Louis McGavack. The window project, started a number of years ago by our women, has thus been concluded."

Mrs. Elisabeth B. Nix, historian for Women of the Church, recorded in 1952: "Memorial windows were installed in the Sanctuary prior to November, 1952, designed by B.F. Biehl of Camden, NJ, across the river from Philadelphia." Verification of these dates and names can be found on the west window in the vestibule.

Twenty-two stained glass windows were placed in Catoctin Presbyterian Church in 1952. They surrounded the sanctuary, choir loft and vestibule. To offset the cost, members of the congregation were invited to purchase a window for fifty dollars in memory of a loved one. Later, brass plaques were placed at the bottom to honor those who purchased a window. The round "rose" stained glass window above the choir loft was installed in 1995. It was a gift to the church from Elmer O. Olin and family in memory of Margery Ella Thormeyer Olin. The window was designed by Mrs. Louise Conover of Great Falls, Virginia, and installed by John and Greg Stowers of Lovettsville, Virginia.

Located high in the vestibule is one of two identical, original windows installed in the church when it was built. One was located above the choir loft, the other in the vestibule. In 1985 the window in the vestibule was removed to accommodate a fan to cool the sanctuary. In 2000 central air conditioning was installed in the church building and the original window from above the choir loft, which had been removed for the new "rose" window, was reinstalled in the vestibule. The other matching window has been stored.

Christian symbols used in our stained glass windows are a way to remind us of God's Divine Love. Many of the windows display the cross surrounded by a crown. This symbol reminds us of Christ's death and

our reward of life after death. The symbol of the cup covered with grape leaves signifies that we are a congregation in communion with Jesus Christ, our Savior. The shield with three stars symbolizes the presence of the Holy Trinity throughout our lives. The lamp setting on The Book is the symbol of Christian knowledge and our constant search for Christian understanding. The lilies are a testament to Christ's death and resurrection. The lamb lying on the The Book of Seven Seals with an unfurled banner symbolizes Christ as The Lamb of God and His victory over death. The light above the banner reminds us that Christ lights the way for all God's children.

Catoctin Presbyterian Church is proud of its heritage, its congregation and its growth. We are especially thankful to the women and men whose diligence and faith continue to preserve and beautify God's house.

Respectfully compiled and written by Jane D. Piercy, September 2001