

Welcome

Welcome to the Lutheran exhibit. For the next few minutes we invite you to consider the theme of this pavilion:

Jesus Christ, the Light of the World,

as portrayed by nine great artists. After the presentation, we would be happy to meet you in the reception area. Please let us know if we can be of any help to you.

1. THE NATIVITY

Lauren Ford (1891-), American

(Courtesy, American Artists Group Christmas Cards)

Nineteen centuries ago Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem. If He were only one more Jewish baby in an obscure corner of the Roman empire, no one today would know of Him or care. But hundreds of millions of people of every race and every land call themselves by His name, worship Him as God, know Him as companion and friend. He is as real today as He was when He walked the dusty streets of Nazareth. Lauren Ford in her painting of the Nativity makes the birth of Jesus a modern event in a New England village, just as artists of other countries and other centuries have made Him at home in theirs.

2. THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

Georges LaTour (1593-1652), French

(Reproduction by Francis Mayer, New York)

What kind of child was Jesus? When did He become aware of His unique role in the world's history? The Bible tells us little of His early years. Georges LaTour, a French artist of 300 years ago, pictures Him in the carpenter shop with Joseph, who patiently teaches Him the skills which He probably used to support his mother, brothers and sisters after Joseph's death. The boy, completely absorbed in His lesson, is holding the light, but all around the darkness clusters close, foreshadowing the fate in store for this child who was to be the world's Saviour.

3. JESUS, THE FRIEND OF MAN

Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), Dutch

(Reproduction by Three Lions, New York)

Rembrandt van Rijn of Holland portrays Jesus, the young man. The Reformation and the printing press had given the Bible to people in their own language, and to no artist did it mean more than to Rembrandt. Hundreds of times he reproduced its scenes and its people, with a depth of understanding and artistic skill no one has ever been able to excel. Here is Jesus in the fullness of His true humanity—strong yet gentle; serene yet troubled; sinless, yet understanding the burden of the world's evil. Here is a Friend for life—for days of quiet joy; for nights that without Him would be long and dark indeed.

4. THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Tadao Tanaka (1903-), Japanese

(Courtesy, Chaplain Thomas Klewen, USAF)

It's a long way—in miles, years, and the world of art—from Rembrandt to Tadao Tanaka, known as Japan's foremost Christian artist. This stained glass-like technique may startle you at first, but surely you catch something of the excitement of the ministry of Jesus, here speaking from a boat on Lake Galilee. The bold splashes of color show us how His teaching and healing bring light and gladness into the lives He touches.



THE HOLY FAMILY

(Courtesy, American Artists Group Christmas Cards)

LAUREN FORD

This folder is made available to you as a souvenir of your visit to the All-Lutheran Exhibit. We have tried to present something of the meaning of our faith rather than to give information about the church itself. However, if you wish further information, please speak to someone in the reception area, or to a Lutheran pastor in your home community.

5. THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

El Greco (1542-1614), Greek

(Reproduction by Three Lions, New York)

Three short years of ministry—three years of walking in the sunshine and the shadows, and now the darkness is closing in; the dramatic climax to the life of Jesus of Nazareth upon earth. El Greco—"The Greek"—has captured marvelously all the tense excitement of the impending tragedy. The color, the composition, the play of light and dark symbolize the struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane for the decision of Jesus—for the very soul of man. The actors in the drama are gathered in the Garden: the sleeping disciples, the Roman soldiers led by Judas the betrayer, the strengthening angels—and Jesus, praying that prayer of ultimate selflessness: "not my will but thine be done."

6. THE CRUCIFIXION

Maxim Kopf (1892-1958), American

(Courtesy, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York)

And there—on the little hill of Calvary, outside the walls of Jerusalem—they crucified Him, between two thieves.

It was man's answer to God's love, his final horrible rebellion against God's reaching, searching, pleading goodness. And I ask myself, aghast, am I like that? Would I, too, have shouted, "crucify him?"—Crucify HIM?

And then I look inside my heart and see the sad record of my betrayals, the feebleness of my resolves of virtue, my total unworthiness of His sacrifice.

The artist Maxim Kopf has masked with compassion the horror of that scene—for we could scarcely bear it otherwise. Yet the central meaning is there for all to see: He cared—that much—for me.

7. THE RESURRECTION

Matthias Grünewald (1500-1530), German

(Reproduction by Three Lions, New York)

"And on the third day He rose again from the dead." The resurrection of Jesus was God's vindication of His Son. We don't know how it happened—only that it did happen—only that a band of defeated, hopeless, sorrowing disciples were changed overnight into a fellowship of joyous, hopeful messengers—only that people of every land and age have met a living Christ in Holy Scripture, in Holy Communion, and when they gather each Sunday to commemorate that first great Easter.

This panel, one of three known together as the Eisenheim altarpiece, was painted by Matthias Grünewald 500 years ago. Yet the concept is as fresh as tomorrow. It is almost as if he wanted to use atomic energy, the basic power of the physical universe, as a symbol of the power of the resurrection. For the power of the atom and the power of the Risen Christ are both God's, intended to bless man in this life and forever.

8. THE RIGHTEOUS ONE

José Clemente Orozco (1883-1949), Mexican

(Courtesy, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire)

Down through the years the cross has come to stand for many things. Here Orozco, the Mexican muralist, portrays an angry Christ who has cut down a cross which came to represent oppression, not healing and peace, for God seems to have as many problems with religious people as with others. Christians, being human beings, have their full share of weaknesses, and the church in every age including our own is in constant need of reformation. Even the Cross, Christianity's central symbol, can be misused and perverted—to bless a war of conquest, as in the Crusades, to dangle thoughtlessly on a necklace as a mere ornament, or to be burned on a lawn at midnight by cowards dressed in sheets.

9. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Unknown Byzantine Artist

(Reproduction by Three Lions, New York)

The earliest portraits of Jesus are in mosaic, made up of thousands of tiny pieces of colored stone. Some of them are 1,700 years old. This later Byzantine mosaic is from an Eastern Orthodox church. The inscription in Greek and Latin, reads: "I am the Light of the World; he who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." Christian faith sees in Jesus, not only the good man, the wise teacher, the unselfish martyr, but the Son of God who is truly the Light of all the world. His hand is lifted in blessing for He would win your trust and loyalty.

10. THE EMPTY FRAME

And now—an empty frame. The light is there, but without any shape or line to give it meaning. You have seen how the glory of God has been revealed in the face of Jesus Christ by nine great artists. Their skill and dedication have enabled the light, shining through the pictures, to be translated into ideas and emotions.

And this, we would suggest, is where you come into God's plan. As Jesus revealed God's light and love in terms of human life, so He would have you reveal it in your life; in your home, on your job, in your neighborhood. As Martin Luther said, each of us is to be a Christ to his fellow man.

The empty frame, you see, is for your portrait. As you live close to God's light it will shine through you.

ALL-LUTHERAN EXHIBIT

Protestant and Orthodox Center

New York World's Fair

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