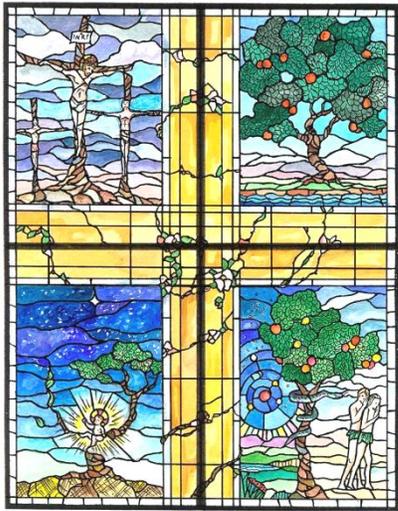# THE SAN DIMAS WINDOW STAINED GLASS DESIGN

The City of San Dimas gets its name from the traditional name for the repentant thief on the cross (Luke 23:32-43) whose faith in Jesus led Jesus to say, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." v. 43 Much of our heritage is in the citrus and avocado growing industry. Our window reflects both that heritage and the promise to San Dimas and to all who come to a living relationship with Jesus.

The cross formed between the panels of the window is the same shape as the hanging cross above the altar. God has come to us in the cross and is at the center of our worship. The story is told in the four panels that surround it. They employ a Biblical tree theme, trees also being organic element common in California Craftsman design.

On the lower right (Creation and Fall), the Creation is seen to the left of the sour lemon tree and in the background, with the tree and serpent suggesting Genesis 2:17,3:1. God created human beings for a relationship with God, but in the freedom required for a meaningful relationship, human beings rejected God and evil entered all of God's creation. These themes are also reflected in the design of our new ceramic communion ware.

The panel on the lower left (Birth/Incarnation) shows a shoot coming out of a stump-like manger to suggest Isaiah 11:1. A group of avocado trees from the time when our property was part of an avocado grove froze around 1995, seemed to have died and were cut down. Nevertheless, shoots came from their roots, grew and continued to bear fruit. In a similar way, God came into the world in the form of Jesus Christ, fully God and fully human as the fulfillment of God's promise of a Redeemer.

The panel on the upper left (Redemption) the tree of the cross (Acts 5:30) is the means by which God paid the penalty for human rebellion and sin himself, to restore the relationship with God, expressed in the gift of faith, for which human beings were created. Life with Jesus is the fruit of this tree. That life is available to anyone who accepts God's gift in Jesus Christ. Here, even at the end of his criminal life, San Dimas accepts the gift of faith and is saved.

The panel on the upper right (Salvation) would focus on the tree of life (Revelation 22:1-2, 14). The salvation that begins where anyone separated from God by his or her sin comes to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is brought to perfection in the life that continues after "death" in this world. The Judgment that ends history as we know it ushers in the salvation of all the faithful into heaven. The Bible doesn't tell us what kind of tree the tree of life is, only that it has 12 kinds of fruit. The history of the City of San Dimas and the sweetness of salvation is depicted with the sweet oranges.

The diagonal from lower right to upper left, through the cross, would also suggest a prayer from our Palm/Passion Sunday liturgy, "O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on the tree of the cross gave salvation to all, that, where death began, there life might be restored, and that he, who by a tree once overcame, might by a tree be overcome." And the diagonal from lower left to upper right, through the cross, teaches that we live between two advents, the first coming in the Incarnation and the second in the Second Coming of Christ in Judgment and eternal Salvation.

The center cross in the frame is made of oak with an organic interweaving vine to remind us that our faith is based on a living relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5 That theme of relationship is repeated at the cross in our outdoor prayer garden to remind us of our connectedness in where God comes to us and where God sends us.

Stained glass windows have a history of being teaching tools. We are blessed to be able to integrate local history with the central history of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ!