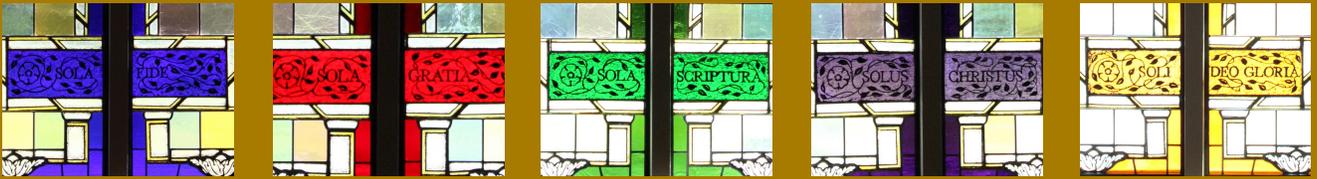


# The Five “Solas” Windows



## Introduction

The stained glass windows which grace the east side of the Sanctuary Nave of Christ Congregational Church were commissioned of the Cavallini Stained Glass Studios, Inc. of San Antonio, Texas, to pay homage to the so-called “five *solas* of the Reformation.” The “solas” - Latin phrases that emerged from the 16th century Protestant Reformation - were intended to summarize some of the Reformers’ basic theological principles, principles which continue to undergird the teaching of much of Protestantism, including Christ Congregational Church. This brochure is provided as a guide to understanding the content, symbolism and design of the windows.

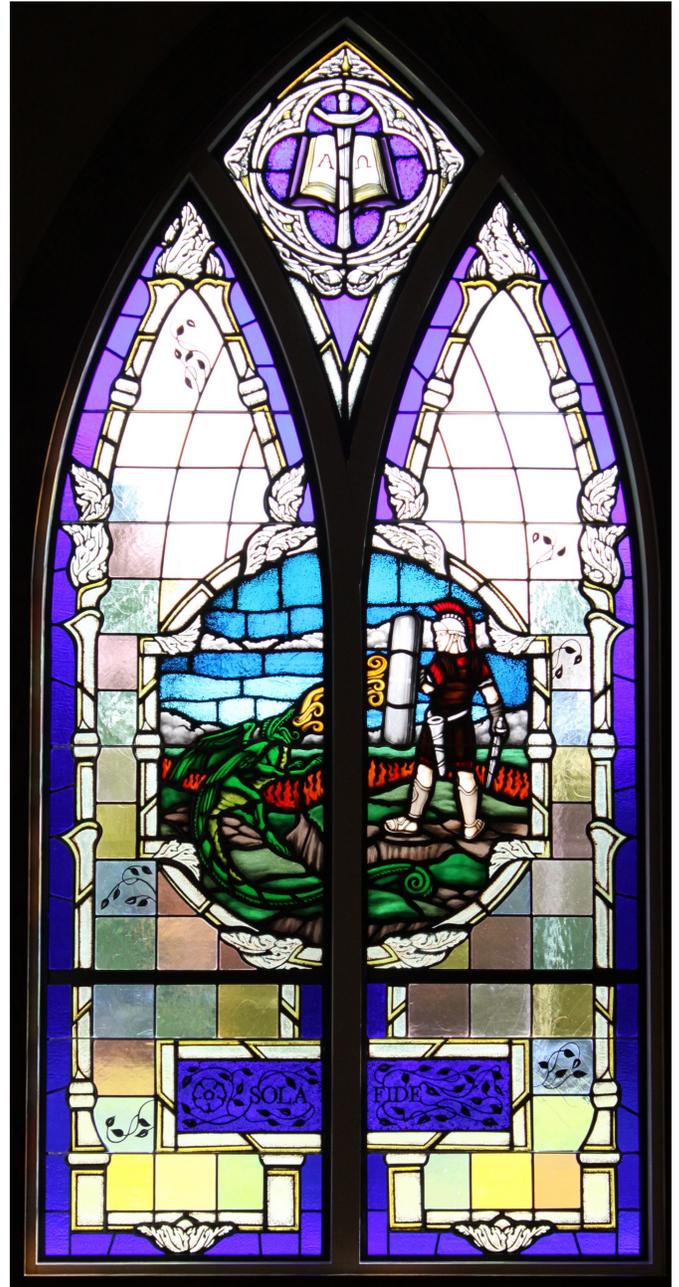
## Sola Fide

As one enters the nave, the first of the five windows one encounters is the “Sola Fide” window. “Sola Fide” is Latin for “faith alone,” a slogan which reminds us of the foundational Reformation teaching that our salvation does not rest on any merit earned by us, nor upon the grounds of an infusion of Christ’s righteousness in us, but upon the fact that Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us *through faith alone*, this gift being the only possible way that God’s perfect justice can be satisfied. What is more, it is likewise through *faith alone* that the believer grows and serves as he lives out his life “in Christ,” for we are taught in Holy Scripture to “walk by faith” and that it is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11.6).

The concept of faith is depicted artistically in the window by an armor-clad “soldier of Christ” prominently wielding the “shield of faith,” by which, St. Paul assures us (Ephesians 6.10-17), the believer can “extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one” (depicted in the window by a fire-breathing, dragon-like beast).

Atop the window will be discovered the ancient symbols for “Alpha and Omega,” the first and last letters, respectively, of the Greek alphabet. Jesus Himself is known in Scripture by the name, “Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End,” and the use of these symbols at the top of this window, therefore, is meant to remind us that our faith must always look up to Jesus, the beginning and the end, the sole object of Christian belief.

Finally, this first window prominently features the color, blue-violet, associated with the first liturgical season of the Church year, Advent, a season concerned especially with the “coming” of Jesus Christ, first at Bethlehem, and again, at the end of the age. It is a particularly appropriate color for this window in that our Lord Himself linked the concepts of his coming and the necessity of faith by one day asking, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Luke 18.8)



*The “Sola Fide” window is furnished to the glory of God through the cooperative generosity of Mary Ellen Rowland, in memory of her husband Dr. Peter Rowland, and Steve and Cathy Bizzell Green, in honor of their parents, Kenneth and Jean Green and Art and Mary Bizzell.*

## Sola Gratia

The second of the five windows is the “Sola Gratia” window. “Sola Gratia” is Latin for “grace alone,” by which phrase we are reminded that we are saved “by grace alone” (Ephesians 2.8) and not by meritorious works, especially not by our keeping the Law of God.

Indeed, all of the artwork in this window--Moses before the burning bush of Mt. Sinai, at which time he received the Law; Jesus among the Sanhedrin, an occasion upon which our Lord summarized the teaching of the Law; and, at the top of the window, the image of the stone tablets on which were inscribed the Ten Commandments of the Law--serves to remind us that the precepts of the Lord were never meant to be a means to our salvation, but rather, to convince us that we are one and all law breakers and, therefore, must depend upon God's *grace alone* for our salvation (Galatians 3.10-29).

The most prominent color in this window is red, a hue often associated in the church with Pentecost and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is especially appropriate for this window in that the doctrine associated with “Sola Gratia” teaches that salvation is in no sense a human work, but rather, the supernatural work of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, who brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life, graciously imparting to us the things of Christ (Ephesians 2.1-7 and John 16.12-15).



*The “Sola Gratia” window is furnished to the glory of God through the generosity of JE and Janet Treadway.*

## Sola Scriptura

The third window of the group of five is the “Sola Scriptura” window, from the Latin for “Scripture alone,” which reminds us that the inerrant Scripture (the Bible) is the sole source of written divine revelation, that Scripture alone can bind the conscience, and that the Scriptural revelation is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured.

Artistically, the window depicts “Christ in Majesty” surrounded by the four Biblical evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who are represented by the traditional figures of a divine man, a winged lion, a winged ox and an eagle, respectively. The symbols are taken from Ezekiel 1.1-21 and Revelation 4.6-8, where they are described as “four living creatures” who surround the throne of God. The church father, Irenaeus (A.D. 140-202), was the first to suggest a symbolic connection between the four living creatures and the four gospel writers, primarily because of the manner in which each of the gospels begins, and the manner in which each focuses on Christ.

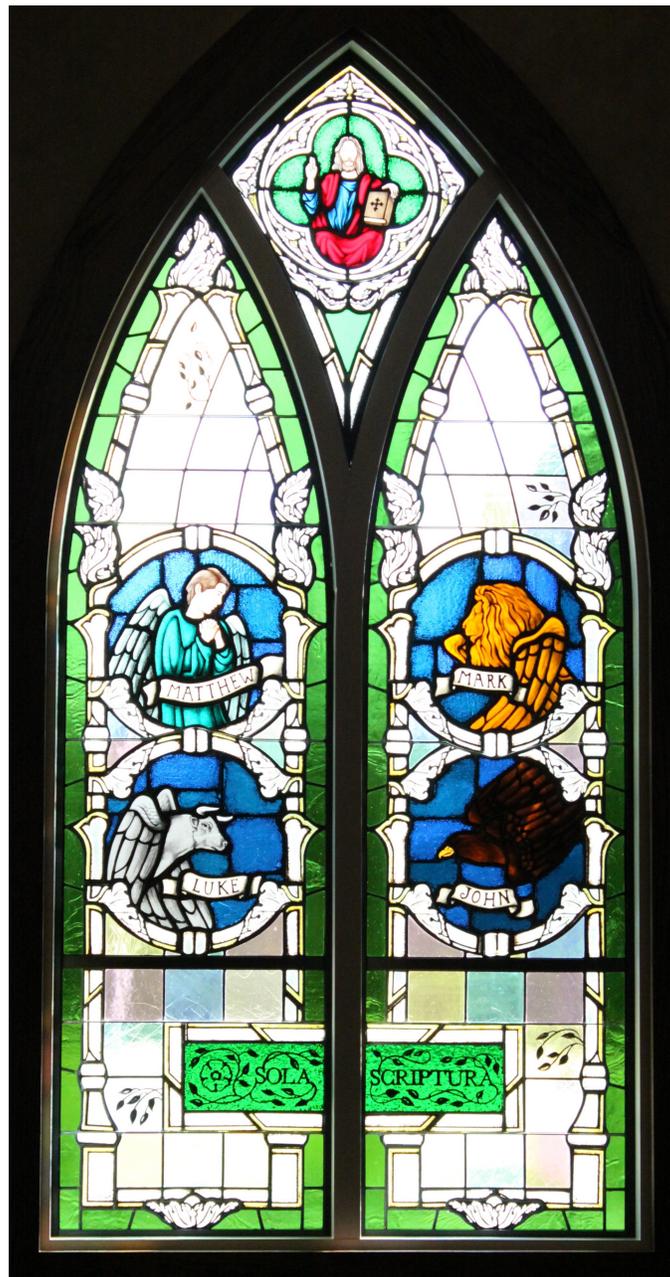
Matthew, for instance, commences his gospel with a record of the family lineage of Jesus, traced through Abraham and David, and highlights, also, Christ’s incarnation and birth (“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way”). Matthew is, then, according to Irenaeus, “the gospel of Christ’s humanity” and therefore, appropriately symbolized by the “divine man.”

Mark, represented by the winged lion, references the Prophet Isaiah as he begins his gospel: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness.’” Irenaeus heard in this “voice” a reminder of a “lion’s roar,” while the prophetic Spirit which descended on the Baptist and on Christ, the Prophet of God - whose sandals his herald was not “worthy to stoop down and untie” - put him in mind of a “winged message.”

Luke opens his gospel with the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist to his father, the priest Zechariah, who was offering incense in the Temple. Oxen were used in the Temple services and sacrifices. Thus the “winged ox,” through its association with the priestly duties of Zechariah, was deemed a fit symbol, at once, to represent the high priestly office of Jesus Christ, His sacrifice of Himself for our redemption, and of course, the gospel of Luke itself.

The fourth gospel, the gospel of John, begins with a “lofty” prologue and “rises” throughout to a revelation of some of the great mysteries of God, including the divine nature and pre-existence of Jesus (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God”). Therefore, the eagle was thought by Irenaeus to be an apt symbol for John’s elevated themes.

This window, which occupies a central place among the five windows--just as the holy Scriptures hold a central place of authority in Christian faith and practice--prominently features the liturgical color, green. This color is often associated with the growth of the Church, which Jesus promised would be based on the “Rock” of his apostles’ testimony, preserved for us in the Bible, and especially, in the four gospels.



*The “Sola Scriptura” window is furnished to the glory of God and in honor of their children, through the generosity of Harold “Doc” Hughey and Dorothy Hughey.*

## Solus Christus

The fourth window is the “Solus Christus” window, a Latin phrase which means, “Christ alone,” and by which we are reminded that our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone, His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone being sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father (John 14.6). Hence, the dominant color of this window is purple or violet, a color historically associated with the season of Lent in the Church’s liturgical calendar, a penitential period leading up to the events of the atonement, the meaning of which the season of Lent asks us especially to contemplate.

The two main panels of this window feature the crucified and risen Christ, respectively. The images thus serve as a symbolic summary of the mediatorial work of Christ, in which work, St. Paul wrote to the church at Rome, Christ “was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (Romans 4.25).

Atop this window will be discovered the colorful image of a butterfly. Long before the time of Christ, Egyptians saw a similarity between the cloth wrappings of their mummies and the butterfly’s cocoon. For these early people and the Greeks, who placed golden butterflies in their tombs, this insect was a symbol of new life and immortality. Thus, the butterfly has long been used in Christianity in a similar manner, as a symbol of the resurrection, in which, Paul teaches, “we shall all be changed,” the Christian hope being, as a result of Christ’s saving work alone, “that what is sown in the grave as a weak mortal body” will, at the time of Christ’s return, “be raised an indestructible, spiritual body” (I Corinthians 15.44-54).



*The “Solus Christus” window is furnished to the glory of God through the generosity of Sharon and Joe Daniel in memory of Sharon’s parents, Clarence and Lois Loden.*

## Soli Deo Gloria

The fifth, and final window, and the one nearest in proximity to the Chancel, is not coincidentally, the “Soli Deo Gloria” window, a Latin slogan meaning, “glory to God alone,” which reminds us that salvation is of God, has been accomplished by God, all the praise for which, therefore, rightly redounds now and always to God alone (Psalm 115.1). It also serves as a reminder that, as Christians, we must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for his glory alone.

The concept of the glory of God is symbolized artistically in the window by a depiction of the ascension of Christ. We read in Scripture that at his ascension, the glorified Christ was worshiped on earth by his disciples (Luke 24.52) and that as he returned to the Father, he was greeted likewise with a heavenly song of praise: “Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in” (Psalm 24.7).

Both the color gold, which dominates this window, and the image of “crown, orb and scepter” in the window’s upper medallion, give witness to the fact that the ascended Christ “has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities and powers having been subjected to Him,” (I Peter 3.22) so that as King of kings and Lord of lords, enthroned at the Father’s right hand, He now reigns in glory over all creation (Hebrews 10.12).

Finally, juxtaposed as it is to the two images of the crucified and resurrected Christ that grace the previous window, the scene of Christ’s ascension speaks to the glorious completion of Christ’s redemptive work and to the appropriateness of the song of the heavenly hosts: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” (Revelation 5.13).



*The “Soli Deo Gloria” window is furnished to the glory of God through the generosity of Jerry and Kay Highnote.*