

By the grace of God,

I was able to prepare this booklet as a member of

BERN REFORMED CHURCH

in the year 1974. I dedicate it to my wife,

DOROTHY M. (SEIFRIT) REESER,

who has given of her best for the advancement of the Kingdom of God in Bern Reformed and Lutheran Church

and also in memory of my wife, Dorothy's parents,

FRANK AND TAMIE SEIFRIT

who gave of their best in support of Bern United Church of Christ of the Bern Union Church.

EARL H. REESER



Note: Typos and minor grammar errors have been corrected.

THE SYMBOLS OF BERN UNION CHURCH

Earl H. Reeser

I heard people say that the stained-glass windows in the Bern Reformed and Lutheran Church of Leesport, R.D.1, along Rt. 183, are the most beautiful they have ever seen. It is with these thoughts in mind that prompted me to undertake my interpretation of the meaning of the symbols as well as other work you see before you, which the building committee saw fit to install in the building of this church.

The first church built was exclusively by the Reformed. When this organization was affected, is not definitely known, but the belief is, that it may have been as early as 1739. The earliest baptism is recorded in that year. When the first building was erected, is also not definitely known. In 1743 about 15 acres were surveyed by the Penns for the use of the congregation. In 1748, this land was conveyed to Henry Resier for Calvinists in Bern, Cumru, and Heidelberg Townships.

About this time, a log church was built on this ground and served the congregation until 1762 (1765 and 1775 are also given). In the year 1769, a chalice was used with the above year inscribed. A stone structure was then built, which lasted until 1837. The third church at Bern was erected in 1837 at which time the Lutheran organization assisted in the same and secured half interest. This third building was used until July 9, 1917 when it was torn down to prepare the way for the new and modern edifice that occupies the same spot.

The building before you, was built so that the truths may be revealed concerning a Supreme Ruler of heaven and of earth. Yes, truths are told by emblem as well as words, they speak of duty and of love, they foretell destiny, they inculcate morality.

An eminent scholar of many years of research has brought forward these thoughts of the primitive theory of the ancient people. That the imagery of a mountain rising to and piercing the skies, a terraced mountain with each stage dedicated to one of the seven stars; that these stars later became identical with the Ursa Major, which continually revolve around the pole and that God was believed to be residing at the top of the symbolic mountain. The Tower of Babel, the Pyramids and others were believed to have been imitated after this conception.

You may wonder why I suggested it at this time. As we continue in our thoughts, you will believe as I do, that, our church may be likened to the terraced mountain and that God does reside at the top or heaven as we understand it.

As we are about to describe what our church is made of and what each item represents, let us start with the **bell**, which was put there to announce worship services at various times.

The following prayer had been cast on the bell:

Come all you people,
hear my call;
Come to this Holy place,
Leave all your pleasures, work and home
And gather here to praise.

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Come pray and sing,
And worship Him
Who came the world to save;
Receive a benediction here!
Come worship Him, I pray.

The following names of the building committee are also cast on the bell in 1918:

John Leib, President
Henry Field, Vice-President
Harry Hiester, Secretary
Harry Kerschner, Treasurer
Harry Bear and Cyrus Ruth
McShane Bell Foundry, Co., Baltimore, Md.

The bells were rung on Saturday at 6 P.M. for Sunday morning services. 15 minutes before services or as now, at the start of the services.

Death of a member, at which time, his age was tolled.

Funerals – tolling of the bells was started when the funeral approached the church.

New Year – As the clock struck midnight, the bells were rung to announce the beginning of a New Year.

As we approach the church, we behold the steeple, with four spires pointing heavenward. These four spires are to signify that God loves the world, reconciles the world unto himself through worship, meditation, prayers, and hymns of the people in the church below.

We have now heard about the steeple and about the bell, but below the bell is a room which is called a Tower. This room is to call to mind the name of God who is a strong tower to whom we should come for refuge, Proverbs 18:10 “The Lord is a strong fortress. The godly run to Him and are safe.”

As we approach the church building, there are **steps** which we must climb before we get to the door. As we climb these steps on our Christian pilgrimage, we are to remember that as Christians we seek to worship God and learn of His ways.

We are now at the **door** as Christ said, “I am the door” at which time we should say, “Come into my heart Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for Thee.”

While these doors are divided, making two entrances, they should remind us of the two natures of Christ, “Human and Divine.” The large doors are to welcome everyone, to advance into the church to worship, learn and serve.

We are now entering the main body or the **nave** of the church by the center aisle, which in itself, symbolizes the way that lead to the throne of God. This aisle is covered with **carpet** to remind us that while we walk on carpet, Christ rode his donkey on a path to Jerusalem covered with garments, flowers, & palms.

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As we move forward, we behold the **Altar** as a large appointment, which is shaped like a tomb, reminding us of the catacombs, when Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper upon the tombs of Martyrs.

The Altar should symbolize to us Christ's sacrificial death, which is to be further illustrated by the bread and wine, as the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour. A special chalice, like the one Christ used at His Last Supper is used. The Altar is the throne of God in His house. It is an everlasting symbol of His spiritual presence in the church.

This Altar of Sacrifice symbolizes a faith in god, obedience to His commands and implies that no sacrifice is too great for a creature to please the Creator. Self-denial and submission are constantly recurring events in a virtuous life and that we should not hesitate when called upon to sacrifice comfort and personal gratification upon the Altar of duty.

The offering plates filled with the people's offering are placed on the Altar to symbolize that what these people gave, they gave as a sacrifice to God.

On the Altar is a **Cross**. This Cross is like a Latin Cross which was set on three steps, now known as the Calvary Cross, signifying Faith, Hope, and Love, symbolizing the redemption of Christ, risen from the dead and reigning from His House to heaven.

On either side of the Cross is a **candle** symbolizing to us that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World and that the two candles signify Jesus Christ's two natures divine and human.

The **Candelabra** that is used on special occasions has seven candles on each side of the Altar, is regarded as the perfect number, four candles are to remind us that it is a man number, referring to the four seasons of the year and the four corners of the earth. Will three is a God number everlastingly associated with the Blessed Trinity. The seven-branched candelabra on each side of the Altar may be said to refer to the perfect life of Christ.

The **kneeling benches** as used in worship services and weddings, are used to remind us that whosoever kneels before this Altar, kneels in humility before the throne of God.

The **Ⲡ** symbol as can be seen on the back board of the Altar is called the **Chi-Rho** symbol or the ancient monogram of Christ.

On the **Altar cover drop** when the green cover is used, you will see the fleur-de-lis design, which is either a lily or other flower. When this design is used with an HIS or le., it is the symbol of the Holy Trinity, Annunciation, Mary the Mother of Jesus, the human and divine natures of Jesus Christ.

The **book of worship** as it appears on a special stand on the Altar is symbolic of the church at large and the continuance of the present-day church with the church of the past.

On the front drop of the green Altar cover are two crosses, which are called the Greek Crosses, having four arms of equal length. The Red Cross organization makes abundant use of this form of Cross.

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Above the Altar is a stained-glass window showing Jesus Christ in the garden with open outstretched hands which to me suggests that He is saying "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you a rest."

Above the picture of Christ, we see two angels which should lead us to recall that there is Joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents or enters his sanctuary.

The figure at the top of the picture above the angels is to represent one of the Chief Angels, which has charge of thousands of Angels under his control and has a specific duty to perform. From one knowing the art of making stained glass windows, his belief is that the Angel in charge was to have uttered this statement, "Peace be unto you" to the world beholding its glory. You see this Angel holding Palm branches which is a symbol of the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, meaning victory, joy, martyrdom, and prosperity.

On either side of this window on the bottom, we see two Angels holding shields which to us shall represent protection and faith. They also support pillars upon which are placed these symbols A and Q. The Alpha and Omega, which stand for Jesus Christ, the first and last, the beginning and the end. According to this picture, Jesus Christ shall represent Mankind from the beginning of life to the end.

We are still walking down the center aisle and are in what is called the nave of the church, passing through the Altar rails, which separate the Church Militant from the Church Triumphant or the Chancel.

Inside the Chancel are placed the **American and the Christian flags** which give warmth, because of their beautiful color and design as well as their realities which they signify. The **Stars and Stripes**, our National emblem, represents all the privileges and high ideals of America, such as freedom, opportunity, and the way of life. Even the colors of the American flag are meaningful: red is for courage, white for purity, and blue for truth and loyalty. George Washington described the symbolism as follows: We take the stars from heaven, the red from our mother country separating it by white stripes which shall go down to posterity representing liberty.

The **Christian flag**, envisioned on September 26, 1897 by Charles Overton signifies Christianity in its entirety. The Cross on the flag symbolizes the Christian religion.

The flag also symbolizes God's love for man as exemplified in Jesus' life and death, and the promise of eternal life. The blue background of the Cross speaks of the faithfulness and sincerity of the Saviour, who was obedient unto death. The white portion of the flag is symbolic of purity, innocence, and peace. The color also bears witness to the purity and sinlessness of the Founder of the faith and man's joy in contemplating God's initiative in redeeming the world.

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A **baptismal font** as seen in the Chancel, is a symbol of the Church's belief in the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Our font is circular in shape with the symbol HIS and the Cross inscribed, emphasizing the beginning of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ who suffered on the Cross.

We now have passed through the Chancel and are now ready to go up a few steps into the Sanctuary or the Throne of God. We also pass through the tallest of the Arches, which as I mentioned before, resembles the tallest of the mountains where the Throne of God was believed to be located. As we are now within the most inner most Sanctuary of the Throne of God in Bern Church, we are to realize that the most important symbol of this Throne of God is the Chalice which is used in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The Chalice that is used, is similar to the actual cup used by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ at the institution of the Lord's Supper.

This archway has three pillars on each side which represent Faith, Hope, and Charity. The greatest of these is Charity. We may possess all other virtues, but if we are destitute of Charity, we are like sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. As symbols the three pillars direct us to an enlightened faith in God, Father of Spirits, maker, and preserver of the universe and impress upon us the importance of always wearing the mantle of Charity and Brotherly Love.

Above these pillars are arches which come together at the top, like a Gothic Arch, high and pointed, suggesting aspiration and feeling, symbolic of the goodness of God and the hospitality of the Christian Faith.

There are two important pieces of furniture located in the Sanctuary; Their purpose is to uphold the Word of God, the **Pulpit**, and the **Lectern**. The pulpit in our Church is elevated and octagon shaped, symbolizing the regenerating power of God's Word, which is transmitted through the personality of the minister. The wood-work design to my mind, as can be seen on the sides of the Pulpit are to represent the five wounds suffered by our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.



(The Lectern continued on page ?).

The **Hangings** or Antependia on the Altar, Lectern, and the Pulpit are to a church what curtains and drapes are to a home. The Stoles that the pastors wear are also included in these hangings. When they appear in churches, the changing colors attract, add variety, and joint to the significance of the season or festival, the same colors of the church year are also used as bookmarks.

White: Christmas, Sundays after Christmas to the transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ is the symbol of the Creator, light, joy, purity, innocence, glory, and perfection.

Violet: pre-Lenten Sundays, all Sundays in Lent, up to Good Friday – denotes mourning and penitence, also humility, suffering, sympathy, and fasting.

Black: Good Friday, Memorial Day – denotes grief and sorrow.

White: Easter to after Ascension Day, Festival of the Holy Trinity.

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Purple: a regal color, referring to the triumphal entry of the King of Kings.

Red: Pentecost, Harvest festival, Reformation Sunday, Thanksgiving, depicts the divine zeal of the Pentecost, and to the blood of the Martyrs of the Church.

Green: After Trinity – The universal color of nature, signifying hope.

Gold: As seen on the fringes of the hangings, refers to worth, virtue, the glory of God, and the Christian might.

There are two of the three arches in the front of the Church which I have not described as yet, and what lessons we can gain in regard to their purpose in this church. In the arch to our left, we behold the display pipes, which are symbolic of a great instrument of praise. They also symbolize joy and music. Good church music has rightly been called “The daughter of heaven,” and the organ “The king of instruments”



In the arch to the right, we behold the Ascension of our Lord and Master into Heaven, to prepare a place for those of us, who walk with Jesus and give of their best for the Kingdom of God.

In the nave of the Church, we shall find seats for those, who seeking wisdom and comfort may rest. These seats in earlier times were used as kneeling benches during preparatory services for Communion. At the ends of each pew, we see special standards or pillars the to me have special religious significance. There are three carvings like pillars extending upwards representing Father, Son, and Holy Ghost coming together and pointing upwards to God in Heaven and on the same ends, we see five indentations which to me represent the five wounds of Christ Jesus on the Cross.

The hymnals in each pew symbolize the Christian religion as it is loved in musical participation. The Communion Cup holders are placed there as a convenience. The Cards are for information to the church concerning communion, visitors, members, and sickness.

The windows of our church symbolize the Christian life. When they are open, the warmth and light of the sun can come in, so the Christian at his best, is open to good thoughts and good words and closed to the things that harm, same as though they are closed to wind and rain. As these windows are beautiful when the sunlight can come in, so human life can be radiant and rich with Christian grace when the light of Jesus Christ shines through.

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At the lower part of each window in the church, we see two angels holding a shield supporting a banner on which we see pictures of the fleur-de-lis and the rose, which to my mind means to symbolize the Holy Trinity out of which emerges the Messianic Hope.

All windows in the Church have pillars extending upwards upon which rest two Cherubims facing outward and stressing Holiness. The Latin Cross above the Cherubims signifies the type of Cross on which our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was crucified.

On the window in the little room or the vestry, we see the symbols IHS, the Lillies, Rose, union and the word Emergo and the picture of a Child. The IHS for I (Christ) have suffered, the Lillies remind us of the resurrection, the rose of the nativity. So, while Christ died for us, the resurrection in union with the nativity together there shall emerge the Messianic Hope, that we shall not forget the Child.



David, as you see him in the left front window, is attired in his kingly robe displaying the instrument that gave him his start. David was the Son of Jesse, his duty was to be a shepherd, tending the sheep of his father's flock. While attending to his duty, he dwelt in a tent, believing that costly mansions were not necessary to acts of humanity, the sympathizing heart which presents a cool drink and shelter cannot be found in palace gates. David amused himself by playing upon the harp. King Saul at this time, had many troubles and word came to him of a Shepherd lad, who plays upon the harp and has power to sooth the evil spirits. During the time, God directed Samuel to seek out David and anoint him with Holy oil, to be the next king of Israel. So, it is through David that we are blessed with music.

Moses, as you see him in the right front window, was the son of Jachebed. His sister, Miriam, was ten years old when Moses was born. It was at this time that Pharaoh put out a decree that all male children shall be put to death. Not knowing what to do, Jochebed made an Ark and put Moses in the Ark and hid him in the bulrushes for three months with Miriam to watch over him. Moses became the leader of the Israelites on their long journey out of Egypt and so became God's emissary in delivering the law to the Israelites as well as the great emancipator of the people of Israel. The Tablets of Stone, and the Cross which we have seen, signify universal toleration.



In the works of humanity, all the differences in politics or forms of worship should be forgotten. The tablets of stone with the moral law written upon them presents a common basis of pure morality and teaches us that God is our Father. So, let the golden rule prevail, for whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them.

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St. John: After Moses, we see a picture of St. John, who was a son of Zebedee, a fisherman. He had received three calls, the first was a call to discipleship after or during which time he continued as a fisherman for a short period of time. The second call was to be in the immediate companionship of Christ. He was the youngest of the twelve Apostles. He was described as the disciple whom Jesus loved. He was an eyewitness in the company with Peter and James in many of Christ's works for the kingdom of God. After the Ascension and the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, John became one of the chief Apostles. John's Gospel was supposed to have been written about the year 97 AD, or three years before the evangelist's death.

St. Luke, who first appears historically at Troas with Paul, going with him into Macedonia and writing his history, after that as an eyewitness. St. Luke was descended from Gentile parents, while in his youth, he had embraced Judaism, from which he was converted to Christianity. There was sufficient proof that he was of Grecian birth and education. His Gospel was divided into five divisions: 1. Birth of Christ; 2. Christ's infancy and youth; 3. Preaching of John and baptism and genealogy of Christ; 4. Discourses, miracles, and action of Christ during His ministry; 5. Christ's last journey to Jerusalem; his passion, death, resurrection, and Ascension.



From St. Paul, we learn that St. Luke was by profession a physician and consequently a man of letters.



St Mark: Mark was not an apostle of Jesus Christ, but he had the advantage of the friendship and knowledge of Peter. After Peter's deliverance, Mark went from Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas to other countries as their minister. Having completed his gospel, he delivered it to the persons, who made the request.

St. Matthew: Prior to being called an apostle of Jesus Christ, was a publican or tax collector at Capernaum. He is said to have preached the Gospel in Macedonia, Greece, and Ethiopia, and to have died at an advance age. He seems to have kept an accurate record of our Lord's public discourses. The statement by Irenaeus, that St. Matthew published his Gospel while St. Peter and St. Paul were founding the Church at Rome.



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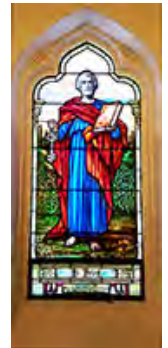
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St. Paul: This apostle whose Jewish name was Saul, was born in the city of Cilicia, his early schooling was under Gamaliel in Jerusalem to be a scribe. He was also of the first martyr, Stephen. The conversion of Paul through a light from heaven, causing him to become blind, thus enabling him to see the Lord in the glory of His Heavenly Majesty. After three days of fasting and praying, his sight returned. He thus became baptized and straightway preached Christ as the Son of God.

In this picture, we see Paul with his usual symbol, the open Bible, where the living truths are found and a sword in his right hand, meaning a sword of the Spirit where justice shall prevail.

St. Peter; whose picture can be seen in the window half way up the front wall in the small room on the balcony holding a set of keys. Simon surnamed Peter, was the Son of Jonas, born in Bethsaida on the coast of the Sea of Galilee, was a fisherman until he joined Christ, the Son of the Living God. The keys that Peter is holding refer to the saying of Jesus to Peter, "I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you find on earth shall be found in heaven and whatever you lose on earth shall be lost in heaven."



Now then, you have seen and heard of the important characters and what they have done to help in the advancement of God's Kingdom. But there are certain things missing on the pictures that were used and which signify the journey of life. The script, the sandals, and the staff. The script was to contain the food, the sandals to protect the feet, and the staff to support the wearied limbs of life. For how much more important is it to make provision for a journey which begins in infancy, last through life and ends in death. For all beyond three score years and ten, is but labor and sorrow and we soon pass on and are gone. Be your journey long or short, may your life be guided by a well-regulated industry, perseverance in all good works and a humble reliance upon God.



In a window under the balcony, we see a portrait of the man who fought for the principles upon which our Reformed Church was founded. **Ulrich Zwingli** was born in Switzerland in 1484 to a prosperous farmer. He secured his knowledge in the University of Vienna. In 1516, he was elected to become a priest in the Shrine at Einsiedeln. He was a strong believer that the peoples should interpret the Bible for themselves, he also believed in the Supreme authority of the Bible. In 1531, the Catholics were at war with the Protestants, and it was in this war, the Ulrich Zwingli lost his life at Kappel.

Directly opposite, on the other side of the church, underneath the balcony, we see another personage who is important to the now present Lutheran Church. **Martin Luther** was born in Germany in the year 1483. He became a Professor in Saxony's University of Wittenberg, where during his studies, he labored on the Reformation of the churches. He came up with 95 theses, which he hung on the church door at Wittenberg. He passed away on February 18, 1546, being buried in the church on which Castle Door at Wittenberg, he hung his 95 theses.



On the green hangings on the lectern, we see a combination of the **triangle** and the **interwoven circles**, with small circles of red. The triangle symbolizes the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, while each

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circle represents one of the Persons in the Trinity. The circle has no apparent beginning or ending, signifying the eternal nature of each person in the Godhead. The circles of red are to represent the blood of Christ.

The **Budded Cross** on the Cross Botonée as can be seen on the red lectern hangings, also on the green pulpit hangings, and the top of the Christian Flag, may be of either Latin or Greek type, with Trefoil ends signifying the Holy Trinity.

The **Descending Dove** as can be seen in the electric switch box room is an emblem that is to remind us of the Holy Spirit, that descended and in the form of a dove, sat upon the head of the Saviour as he stood upon the Far-famed Jordan, after John had baptized him. The same spirit was promised by the Saviour to His disciples after He ascended on high. So, on the day of Pentecost, that promise was fulfilled.



The **Holy Bible** as can be seen underneath the balcony on the right side, is the precious book to man, the gift of the Great Father above. It is the fountain from whence the living waters of truth flow. It is a light to our feet and a lamp to our path!

The **Chalice** is the most important symbol of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It also remains as a beautiful and blessed reminder of the cup which our Lord used and blessed at the Last Supper. This picture can be seen when going up to the balcony.

The **Crown** that is seen above the Chalice as you go up to the balcony, represents Jesus as Lord and King. It refers also to the reward of a faithful Christian life.

The **Grapes** on another window on the balcony, is to remind us of God's Love for us by making possible the growth of the fruit of the vine almost every year and that of the first fruits we are willing to give portions to our Lord.

The **Sheaf of grain** is another picture in the window on the balcony is to remind us that every year without fail, there is a harvest to be garnered from the fields. God is good! He made the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, sends the rain on the just and on the unjust.

The **Lamp** with the **Flames** on the open **Bible** as seen on the balcony on the other side. The lamp is a symbol of intelligence and learning. The seven flames are to represent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost as they landed on the tongues of the followers of Christ so that they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

The **Crown** again refers to the reward of a faithful life. 1 Peter 5:4 "And when the chief Shepherd is manifested, you will obtain the unfading crown of glory. Referring to hymn *Crown Him with Many Crowns*.

The **Lamp** on the balcony next to the crown, symbolizes wisdom and knowledge. Psalm 119:105 "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

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The **Bible**, **Lamb**, and **Banner** can be seen as we come down from the balcony. This picture symbolizes that Jesus Christ is the Lamb, carrying a resurrection banner or a white pennant, "the body of Christ." As you see the lamb is standing, the suggestion is given that the Lamb of God is triumphant, risen. The white pennant is attached to the cruciform staff, representing the cross on which the Lamb of God died; and through which the risen Christ saves the world.

The **Cross** and the **Open Bible**: This window is located in what used to be the original choir room. As we see the Cross and the Open Bible rest on what appears to be a Chalice, we are reminded that as we partake of the representation of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us on the Cross. That we can learn more about giving our lives through meditation in His Word.

The **Anchor**, **Cross**, and **Crown** on the front side window, symbolizes Jesus Christ as our sure Anchor and as a reward to those who are faithful unto death. This Cross is carried over from the days of persecution before Constantine, when Christians were able to see Christian Hope in the Anchor.

The **Cross** and the **Crown** in the front window of the cloak room also stand for a reward to those who are faithful unto death.

The **Cross**, **Crown of Thorns**, and **Chalice** in the window of the cloak room going down the steps. The Crown in this case is one of thorns around a slender Cross on the Chalice, symbolizes that as we partake of Christ's Body and Blood, we should be willing to sacrifice ourselves for others. This is now a passion symbol.

The **A** and **O** or the Alpha and Omega symbols as can be seen in the front side window of the Chapel, in the window above the Altar, on the back board of the Altar stand for Jesus Christ, "The first and the last, the beginning and the end, the same yesterday, today, and forever."

The two tablets of Stone or the Ten Commandments also in the Chapel, constitute the fundamental moral law for both Jesus and Christians, also called the Decalogue or the ten words.

The **Lyre** as can be seen in the Chapel is an ancient instrument, have a hollow body and two horns bearing a crosspiece between which and the body were stretched to the strings, usually seven. The music heard from this instrument represents joyful worship and for joy in heaven.

The **Lilies** which can also be seen in the Chapel. The symbol of this flower is the Holy Trinity. The Annunciation of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the human and divine natures of Jesus Christ when it is combined with the symbol IHS. This can be seen on the Altar hangings when they are green.

The **Roses** as they can be seen in the Annex, symbolize the Messianic hope. Isaiah 35:1 "love, our Lord or his nativity, Mary the Mother of our Lord, Paradise and beauty."

The **Open Bible** is shown in the other window of the Chapel, refers to the Holy Bible, the word of God. Indicating that the Bible can be found available for use throughout most of the world.

The **Celtic Crosses** can be seen in the stained-glass window of the front door of the Church entrance. This Cross is sometimes called the Iona or Wheel Cross, having a circle, signifying eternity, when seen around the middle part of the Cross.

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The **Quatrefoil** are as outlines for windows in the inner doors of the Church, as decorative features on the railing of the steps of the pulpit, on the base of the pulpit. They are as a leaf having four lobes. The figure is symbolic of the four evangelists, the four gospels, etc., or anything that appears in fours.

The **number Three** as can be seen as wood decoration on the wall below the organ pipes, as ornamentation on the inside of the Altar rails, are referred to as meaning Trinity

Antique Communion ware in special closets in the vestibule of the church. In the closet on the left are a silver plate and a Chalice, which were handed down from the early Lutheran Church. These utensils do not contain any inscription. In the closet on the right, we see five plates, two Chalices which have no inscription. A Chalice with the year 1769 inscribed thereon.

Also with the following inscription – *die Barner Kirchen tzu die Reformierte Gemeinde.*

These utensils were handed down from the early Reformed Church.

An urn with – *“Presented by the Catechumens to Rev. F. G. Schwartz, 1871”* – inscribed thereon.

When the church was built in 1918, the building committee had installed three canvass curtains to divide the Sunday School chapel from the Church auditorium. When the annex in 1948 was added on to Sunday School, these curtains were stored in the barn.

On the one canvas, we see the beautiful picture of Mary, the mother of Jesus, Martha, her sister, and Mary, the wife of Cleophas also her sister as they came early on the Sabbath morning, after having prepared herbs and spices, to embalm the body of Jesus.

As they came to the tomb where Jesus was buried, they found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. While they were in sorrow, an Angel appeared saying, “Jesus is not here, He is Risen.”

On another canvas, we see the picture of “Hannah presenting Samuel to High Priest Eli.” Hannah was the wife of Elkanon. But as the Bible relates, could not bear children. After much ridicule from the immediate weeping and praying, she made a vow to God that if He will bless her with a Son, she will give Him (The Son) in His hands. So, God blessed Hannah with a Son and after a reasonable period of probation, she handed him over to High Priest Eli.

The third canvas shows Dorcas giving alms to the poor. History tells it that Dorcas was a member of the infant church at Joppa, having a reputation for faith and the development of faith by good works.

The members of the Christian church at Joppa were many, who were poor. The record of her is “She was full of good works and alms deeds which she did.” It was a dark day in Joppa for the church and especially for the poor of the church and community when she died. So they sent a messenger to inform him and request him to come at once to Joppa. The wanted Peter’s help in preparing for the burial and to join them in the last sad duty. The Supreme Ruler intended to work this astonishing miracle through Peter.

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Peter arrived at Joppa, and they immediately led him into the upper room where Dorcas lay in death's embrace and shrouded for the grave, where he heard the cries of the grief stricken around him. He asked all persons to leave the room so that he might pour out his soul to God in prayer, saying, "Abitha Arise." The first object that she saw was Peter. After helping her arise, he then presented her to them alive.

The following stained glass windows can be found in the granary of the barn. These were placed there for preservation until that day when the building annex would be completed and that these windows would be used.

The **descending dove with an olive branch** in its mouth – This emblem presents to us important lessons for practice in life. While many other birds of the air are constantly seeking for prey and many of them attack the smaller and weaker and destroy them, the cooing dove is the embodiment of innocence and seems to injure nothing. Yes, we may learn in its blessed influences on our hearts that the waters of Jehovah's wrath are assuaged, and that in the salvation provided, are so beautiful typified by the Ark.

The **Open Bible and the Candle** – The open Bible is to be found available to all, over the whole world and when combined with the candle, it is to be used for enlightenment and religious fervor.

*The word is a lamp to my feet,
And a light to my path.*

On a window used in the chapel above one of the canvas curtains, we see Angels displaying the Communion Cup or Chalice combined with a Sheaf of Grain and a cluster of grapes. The following inscription is also found on the window:

*The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is
it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ.*

On another window which had been used above another canvas, we see Angels displaying a Quadrilateral font or baptistery, which speaks silently of people coming from four directions to be baptized, surrounded by the lotus, having its roots and its stem in muddy water, emerging as a flower of exquisite beauty and purity, asking that people are to rise above all passion and selfish gain. The following words are also recorded on the window. "*Repent and believe every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.*"

We have another window in the barn used when the canvases were used in the chapel. The angels are displaying a dove that is descending. This picture is to symbolize the baptism of Jesus Christ and also the receiving of the Holy Ghost by the disciples. The following words are inscribed on the window: "*He Breathed on them and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost.*"

In the social room of the church, we see the pulpit and the Altar, that has been a part of the church built in or around the year 1837. There are two stairways leading up to the Pulpit and the Altar was in front of the pulpit on the floor level. The pulpit was used to read the Scriptures, offer prayers, and preach the sermons. This Altar is shaped like a table and is to remind us of the table in the upper room when the Lord's Supper was instituted.

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The colors of the wardrobe as worn by the men on our colorful windows have their religious significance. The garments as worn by **David** are blue, purple, and gold. The blue to represent love, purple to represent royalty, and gold to refer to worth, virtue, and the glory of God. As we combine these colors, may we be reminded of the love that David had for his friend, Jonathan, plus the willingness to atone for his sins as well as promote the glory of God.

In the next window, we see **Jesus** attired in white and blue garments. The blue to represent love to be genuine, supporting the brotherhood of man. White for purity, sinless, which symbolize the Creator, light, joy, glory, and perfection. When combined, they are to remind us that Christ, who is sinless, gave his life for the brotherhood of man.

Moses is attired in gold and red garments. Gold refers to virtue. Red refers to divine seal. Combined they are to remind us that as Moses was a moral man, he had the divine go-ahead to seek the promised land.

St. John attired in red and green garments. Red depicts divine zeal received on the day of Pentecost, green for hope. Combined they remind us that as John had the divine go-ahead, he also had the hope to labor for God's kingdom.

St. Luke attired in blue and red garments. Blue to refer to the brotherhood of man, and red refers to the blood of the martyrs of the church.

Combined they remind us that St. Luke as a man of letters and a physician was willing to give his all so that those who gave their lives for the Church, shall not have died in vain.

St. Mark attired in red and blue garments. Red refers to the blood of the martyrs of the Church and blue refers to the brotherhood of man. St. Mark, a friend to St. Peter and learning about the martyrs of the Church, gave his all to defend the Church.

St. Matthew attired in purple and red. Purple, a regal or royal color, is to remind us of the Triumphal entry of the King of Kings, also of the royal decent, penitence, purple garment put on our Lord when they mocked Him. St. Matthew had the divine zeal to record same.

St. Paul attired in green and violet garments. Green refers to hope and violet refers to penitence, humility, suffering, sympathy, and fasting. As St. Paul endured punishment, he still had the hope to continue for the advancement of the Church.

St. Peter attired in blue and red garments. The blue to refer to the love for the Christians, while the red in this case refers to the afflictions and trials to which all Christians were subjected. On each of the stained-glass windows, we see the sky in a clear blue color with golden mists adding to its magnificence.

The **Lectern** in our church is smaller than the pulpit and stands as a single appointment for the reading of the Scriptures. On either side at the top are special ornaments which appear like wings of an eagle upholding the Bible, reference is said to be made to the gospel taking flight to all the world. Surrounding the top of the post are various symbols that refer to the fruit of the sinner as well as other glories expressed in our teachings.

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A little bit lower, we see extensions like a pelican feeding her young from her breast, referring to the atoning work of Christ. On top of the supports of the lectern, we see ornaments that point upwards representing the four gospels and in the base, we see the trefoil representing the Trinity.

Ornaments on the Pillars have no religious significance. The Eagle as you see it on the end of the American flag pole is the national emblem of the United States of America.

The Haloes that you see around the head of Christ (Ascension) are of various colors, the gray halo around the head of the head Angel, the brown pink haloes of Angels above the picture of Christ and on the top of all character pictures, where the Angels have a specific duty to perform; The light blue haloes on the heads of Angels who also have a special duty to perform. On the bottom of all character windows, we see Angels with red haloes.

On all character windows, we see the characters standing in the garden surrounded by various types of trees. Some were worshiped as the home of a kind god and feared as the home of evil spirits. The tree was symbolized as meaning immortality, wisdom, and the universe. We see the **cedar tree** as suggestive of growth, height, and steadfast faith. Whether I am right or not, I do not know but we see an always fresh **evergreen tree** which is symbolic of eternal life, God's everlasting love and Christmas. We also see a shrub tree with broader leaves, but I can't see the red berries, so I am going to call it the **elder tree** which denotes zeal. We also see flowers that look like large chrysanthemums and geraniums, which from the knowledge I have gained, have no religious significance.

On the red Altar hangings, we find symbols of the Cross and Crown which as a symbol stands for a reward to those who are faithful. On the red pulpit hangings, we see the Crown of Thorns encircling the IHS, referring to the suffering of Christ on the Journey to Golgotha. The Budded Cross is referred to the Cross with trefoil ends.

On the hymn board at the organ, we see the Cross Pate. The arms curve outward from the center and is distinguished largely by the fractal curves of the lines which come out from the center.

The question was asked concerning the **hair** as we see it in our windows and the understanding of it in our generation. In the preface of the older Bibles, various subjects are explained, two of these subjects were hair and beards. The hair of the Jews, as in the case of the eastern countries generally was almost universally of a black color. By the men, it was always worn short except sometimes by delicate personage, as in the case of Prophet Samuel where Hannah made a vow with God that not a razor would be used on his head. God gave Moses these instructions, that any person who takes the Nazorite Vow (Num 6:5) must never cut his hair, for he is hold and consecrated to the Lord; but there were vain persons who left their hair grow like Absalom. David did not want to see him looking the way he did, until he looked decent. It was common to anoint the hair especially on festival occasions. It further states that, does not even nature itself teach you, that if a man has long hear, it is a shame unto him.

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The **beard** – a long heavy beard hanging down over the breast, was an ornament of peculiar excellency and added not a little to the dignity and respectability to any man's person. To show any contempt toward it by plucking it or catching hold of it, was an insult.

In a special modern day version, a beard is a symbol and proof of his masculinity, fertility, and physical strength.

As a sign of manly strength and to add to a fearsome appearance, beards and mustaches have gone to battle in a variety of shapes and forms, as personal pride and satisfaction versus intimidation.

Hair is a threefold motivation:

1. Sexual invitation
2. Need of self-confidence
3. Aggressive instinct

Hair is an exhibitionist object. It is this that underlies a man's pride in his hair and the time and effort he will spend on beautifying it. It also accounts for his anxiety to keep his hair groomed and under control.

There is also a lot to be learned under Greek mythology where the god of vegetation and wine, are identified with the Roman god, Bacchus.

In looking around for various habits of past generations, we see two casket stands (one for adults and one for children) stored in the barn. These stands were originally stored in the tool house in the old cemetery.

In former years, hearses (a fanciful glass enclosure) were drawn by horses to transport the last remains of loved ones to the final resting place on the cemetery. As the funeral approached the cemetery, the coffin stand was set up. The bearers then removed the coffin from the hearse and placed same on the stand. The bearers then carried the stand and coffin to the grave site for the final resting place.

Hearing one of the then neighbors of the church say that he remembers of a funeral of a Civil War veteran in the year 1911, when these stands were used at funerals.

Hearing of another instance where the stands were fastened to the side of the hearse at the home of the undertaker. So in this instance, as the funeral appeared at the cemetery, the bearers immediately removed the stand from the side of the hearse.

After this, the funeral proceeded as usual.

The robes you see being worn by the pastor are more elaborate than the choir robes, in that he wears a long narrow band, or stole, over the shoulders, signifying the ordination of the clergyman wearing it. It also marks the sacredness of the sacraments.

The robes also signify humility in leading an orderly and dignified worship service.

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Thus, I have tried to bring to you the various symbols of our church and what they should mean to us and what they represent. There may be some symbols which I have missed or there may be other interpretations of some of these symbols.

The present Pastors of this church are:

Rev. S. William Tyson

Rev. Walton Horn

Bern UCC

Bern Lutheran Church