

## **The symbols and elements of the stained-glass windows**

Unfortunately the origin of the five stained-glass windows in the old choir is not documented. These are full of symbols which are waiting to be discovered and interpreted.

The windows show some similarities. Four of them show the cross as a central motif, but in connection with different themes, and all of them include an arch.

The **cross in the left-hand window** is bright yellow. This could be an indication that the cross - and therefore Christ's suffering - has to be seen in the light of the resurrection. This interpretation is reinforced by the two circular elements at the base of the window, on either side of the cross. These might represent the closed tomb (dark orange circle) and the partially rolled-back stone (white and yellow circle). This would confirm that the yellow shining cross ought to be considered as a symbol of the resurrection. The three small crosses at the base of the window remind us of the scene at Golgotha; the blue one in the middle may be a symbol for faith. For the three colours blue, green and red appear in each window and call to mind the trilogy "Faith, Hope and Love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

The **second window from the left** shows a yellow chalice at its centre standing on a purple altar. At its base two yellow ornaments take on the shape of a cross, again a symbol of the resurrection. Green grapes in an oval frame are placed above the chalice. Two stalks of wheat cross over each other behind the chalice – half green (still growing) and half yellow (already ripe). The combination of chalice, grapes and stalks of wheat is clearly meant to symbolise the Holy Communion. The crossed wheat stalks behind the chalice bring to mind an old Christian symbol, the Christogram.

The next **window, the central one**, could just as well illustrate a central subject. One can see a very large bird above the horizontal beam of the cross. Is it an eagle, an animal associated with the Gospel according to John, or a dove? The vertical beam ends in the outlined bow of a ship which is making its way across the waves. The two red shapes under the cross are obviously meant to be fish. This leads us to consider that the subject of this window must be the Church - as described in a well known hymn by Gotthard Schneider "A ship called parish". Consequently, the bird on the cross must be a dove, symbol for the Holy Spirit which is the invisible force pushing the Church onwards like the wind a sailing ship. The dove's wings are conspicuously widely spread, which can be associated with the sign of the blessing dispensed at the end of every evangelical service. The window is dominated by two symbolic colours of the Evangelical Church: red, which symbolises the Holy Spirit and the religious occasions related to it (Pentecost, Confirmation, Investiture, etc.), and green, the colour of Trinity, the longest season of the liturgical year.

An anchor in various shades of blue is clearly visible in **the fourth window from the left**. A narrow strip leads from its upper right tip to a red heart framed in the same colour as the anchor. The heart itself is connected to the right horizontal beam of the cross by means of red and yellow waves. The vertical beam of the white cross, in turn, touches the anchor, so that the three main symbols of this window form a unit. These might well symbolise the three essential attributes of the Christian faith. The red heart stands for love, the bright cross for Christ's resurrection and the anchor, which secures the ship to the bottom of the sea and stops it from drifting away, stands for Jesus Christ himself. He gives hope to all those who follow him and firmly believe in him as the anchor in their life. The title of this stained-glass window could be: Faith (the cross), Hope (the anchor) and Love (the heart).

The subject of **the fifth window** refers to the second sacrament in the Evangelical Church: Baptism. A blue jug-like vessel stands in the bottom right-hand corner. It could be seen as a Baptismal Font

because of its split base; the blue colour brings to mind the baptismal water and the red lid the Holy Spirit, both flowing during this sacrament.

Baptism signifies admission into the parish as well as the worldwide Christian community. This could be the meaning of the circle surrounding the upper part of the cross beams. The blue colour of the font appears in various hues within this circle, reminding us of the fact that the Holy Spirit binds all Christians together in a worldwide community – a blessing and a huge responsibility at the same time.

*Abridged and simplified version,  
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