

Churches are always blessed with their congregations. Some are especially blessed when members of the congregation are exceptionally talented, and will use those talents for the good of their church. The Covenant Reformed Episcopal Church, <http://www.crecroanoke.org/>, is blessed with having two members of their congregation who enhanced the beauty of sanctuary and parish with stained glass windows, calligraphy and art.

Pat Smith and Richard “Rich” Workowski have used their talents to beautify the windows of the church. As the old hymn says. “Bless these windows shining bright, Letting in God's Heavenly light,”



Pat Smith made the two stained glass windows for the church chancel, the area where the altar is placed. The windows show the Christian symbols of the “Alpha and Omega”, and the “Chi-Rho”. She said, “I started stained glass as a hobby in 1990 with my husband who has been creating stained glass projects since the 1970s. He made the first pair of panels in the late 1970s for Faith Reformed Episcopal Church in Baltimore MD where he was pastor. They were the center panels of two French doors leading into the sanctuary. Faith church went through a major rehab project a few years ago and the doors were not in the plans. They gave me the panels back and I thought they would be fine for the cancel windows of Covenant Reformed Episcopal Church in Roanoke, VA. The problem was one panel in each window was not large enough for the windows. So I made an identical pair, using his original for the pattern for the pair I made.”

The center of the stained glass windows are shown the logo for the Reformed Episcopal Church. The logo was originally designed by Rich Workowski in 1973. He said, “For the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Reformed Episcopal Church I designed the logo. This is a white shield surmounted by a red cross and in the center of the cross is an open Bible and the Greek symbols of the Alpha and Omega. This logo was adopted by the General Convention and it became the official symbol of Reformed Episcopal Church, now seen on stationary, church and seminary outdoor signs and even in stained glass.”



Richard Workowski spoke about his windows in the sanctuary, saying “We began to improve (inside and outside) our small mission parish in the Penn Forest and Cave Spring area of Roanoke, we decided to “Tudorize” our building. The first phase was to create windows that had the look of Old English leaded windows. But instead of lead, we used a special glue and long strips of black gros grain. And some of the diamond shaped pieces were given special glass paint to simulate the look and feel of stained glass.” He continued, “Some of my “inspiration” for the windows has come from myriad sources, but some of the more prominent ones are: Engravings in our huge old family Bible; Islamic mosque windows; church windows, Tudor windows,---& artists such as Piet Mondrian, Le Corbusier, Georges Roualt, and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. While my favorite oils are Vermeer & Cezanne, they really don’t figure in the stained glass and calligraphy and illumination aspects.”

In addition, the windows in the parish hall were also decorated by the Rev. Rich Workowski, a retired presbyter from St Mark’s Reformed Episcopal Church in the Philadelphia, PA region, which is not far from George Washington’s Valley Forge area. He spoke about his admiration for George Washington, and said, “It may be noted that the window in the Sunday School Room features the heraldic device of the de Wessington family, forebears of George Washington, in a stained glass window in Selby Abby, Yorkshire, which dated to the 1200s, and remains one of the few abbys that survived dissolution by Henry VIII.”

One of the windows in the parish hall includes: the logo of the Reformed Episcopal Church; the logo of the Diocese of the Central States; the logo of the Anglican Communion; the logo of the Free Church of England; the Canterbury Cross and the heraldry of George Washington. The heraldry of George Washington's family goes back to the 1200s at Selby Abby, and the red and white stripes are thought to be the inspiration of our American flag.

The Reformed Episcopal Church split away from the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1873 over several disputes, including the issue of open communion. Before each service of Holy Communion, the presbyter says, "Our fellow Christians of other branches of Christ's Church, and all who love our Divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in sincerity, are affectionately invited to the Lord's Table."

The Reformed Episcopal Church is an Anglican Christian Church of the evangelical Episcopal heritage. The Reformed Episcopal Church, or "REC", still uses the traditional Episcopalian "Book of Common Prayer" and readings from the King James Version of the Holy Bible in their church service. The Covenant Reformed Episcopal Church was started in Roanoke in 1985, and the church sanctuary and rectory are opposite the historic Starkey Elementary school on Merriman Road. The current vicar (minister) is the Rev. William "Bill" H. Smith. "Our only regret is that we have too many single men in the congregation."







