

## Seeger Memorial Chapel: Symbols and stories in stained glass

A distinctive feature of Seeger Memorial Chapel is symbolic art successfully employed in the Colonial design of the building. Circling the main auditorium where the walls meet the ceiling is an endless golden cord, symbolizing the eternal wisdom, goodness, and love of God.

The stained glass windows, designed and fabricated by Gordon Smith, reflect a modern development of the primitive form of this art. This style had its origins in early Christian paintings and drawings; later, it was adapted to stained glass window techniques. The artist has liberally interpreted this style in creating windows reflective of the age nearest to the New Testament, yet incorporating superior contemporary techniques, blending time into one continuing stream — always past and present and future.

The upper windows on the East portray events from the era of the law. On the West representative events from the New Testament are recorded. Each window below the balcony designates one of the twelve Apostles.



Spirit Medallion

All of the windows have a symbolic border. The muted grays, lavenders, and blues of the outer border denote the Christian's struggle against adversity. The red inner border symbolizes the intensity of the Christian's faith since the twelve Apostles took the Word of Jesus and began to spread it through the world. The clear glass signifies the future, which Christians as dedicated followers of Jesus can see clearly through the eyes of faith.

In addition to the sanctuary windows, each of the corner windows, located in the stairs, is a symbolic representation of one of four events in the life of Christ which are unique in Him as the Son of God.

Above the Great Doors are two windows, one for Moses as the foremost prophet of Israel, one for Paul as the major Apostle to the Gentiles.

Over the proscenium arch is a mosaic keystone containing a hand, a red cross, and a kernel of wheat. The fingers of the hand spell out the ancient monogram for Jesus Christ, while the cross and wheat remind the worshipper of Jesus' death and resurrection, as well as Jesus the bread of life. This keystone is also part of an overall design in which Jesus is presented as part of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is represented by a mosaic of a dove, and a round, stained glass window symbolizing the glory of God the Father is set in the pediment over the main entrance door. These three images define a straight line running entirely through the building, and together they speak of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



Glory of God Window



Christ Keystone

## A Building of Focus

Seeger Memorial Chapel occupies the center of campus with its spire and 12-foot Celtic cross — 192 feet above ground level — overlooking the campus. The Chapel points to the fact that the primary objective of Milligan College is to include Christian understanding and practice in all of life's attitudes and activities.

The Chapel was dedicated November 4, 1967, and remains the most prominent building on campus. At 31,000 square feet of floor space, there is still no structure of comparable quality and magnitude in this area. The main sanctuary-auditorium seats 1,275. The George O. Walker Auditorium, located on the lower level, accommodates several hundred. The Chapel houses the college's music program and serves the campus and community in many purposes — worship, lecture, concerts, drama, and instruction.

Structurally, the chapel features antique face brick, Indiana limestone, various grades of marble, bronze, granite, and Appalachian white oak. The structure and symbolism of the Chapel gives us a sense of the significant forethought then President Dean Everest Walker put into the construction of this facility and the messages it embodies.

It is through the generosity and support of many that this facility stands today as a significant part of Milligan's campus. The Chapel is named in memory of Mr. Ura Seeger. A native of Indiana, Mr. Seeger was the owner of several grain elevators in the Midwest and served as an Indiana state senator. An elder and Sunday school teacher at the West Lebanon (Indiana) Christian Church, Mr. Seeger financed many educational projects which now stand before the world as living memorials of a dedicated Christian life.

### Milligan College

Founded in 1866, Milligan College is a nationally recognized Christian liberal arts college in Northeast, Tennessee, whose mission is to educate men and women as servant-leaders. The college offers more than two-dozen academic programs, including three master's degrees.

If you would like to make a contribution to support ongoing projects related to the chapel and campus ministry, please contact the Institutional Advancement Office at 800.447.5922.

[www.milligan.edu](http://www.milligan.edu)

*Photos by Benjamin A. Dugger & Mark Peacock*



## Four Corner Windows: Key events in the life of Jesus



### Nativity

In the nativity window in the northeast stairwell, the members of the Holy Family are clearly depicted in a way that emphasizes their unity and love. A seated Mary holds the child, and Joseph embraces them both. While much of the window is dark blue, dark purple, and varying shades of gray, the child is radiant, dressed in white, and circled with gold light — a dramatic way of showing that he was bringing light into a dark world. A cruciform halo foreshadows his death even at his birth. All three figures are serious, but Mary's look has the suggestion of pain, a reminder of the angel's words to her that "a sword will pierce your own soul also."

### Baptism

The baptism window, located in the northwest stairwell, contains only two people: John the Baptist and Jesus. Jesus is deep in the water, kneeling, while John stands beside him with his hand placed on Jesus' head in blessing. Jesus' hands are held together in prayer. Both men convey a deep sense of peace and submission to God's will. God's presence at the baptism is indicated by several golden beams of light, while Jesus' identity as the saving Son of God is expressed by the cruciform halo. There are also three green fish in the water. The fish are reminders of Jesus' miraculous power to feed the hungry thousands with just a few fish, as well as the calling of four of his apostles with the words, "I will make you fishers of men." The three fish are a clear reference to Jesus as part of the three-fold nature of God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

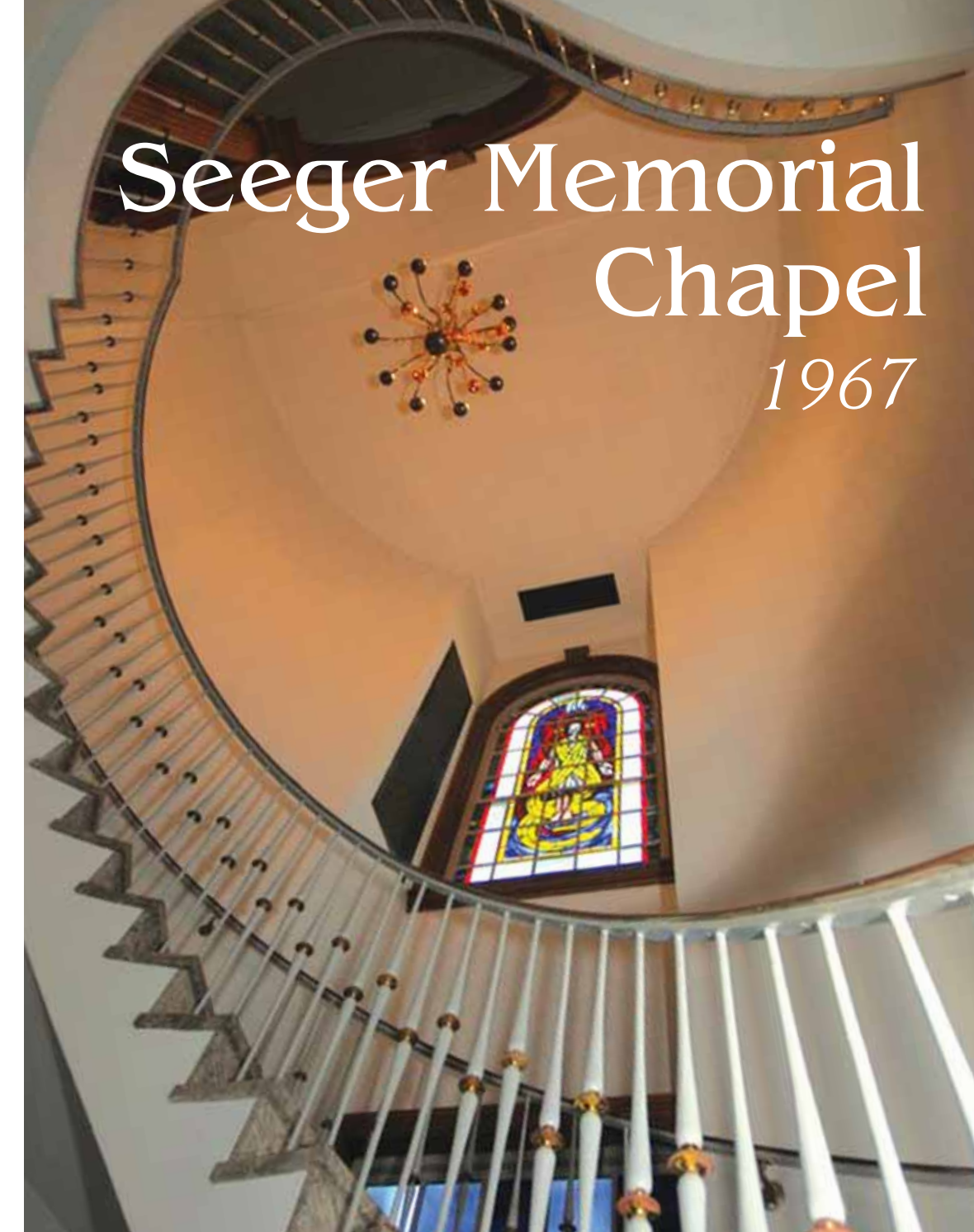
### Resurrection

Deep purples, rich blues, and greens dominate the resurrection window, with smaller, dramatically contrasting areas of gold, white, and red. Jesus' body is outlined in gold, while his head stands out against a red and gold cruciform halo. He holds the traditional banner of the resurrection, white with a red and gold cross. The brilliant red of the flag and halo is echoed in the wounds in his feet. A descending angel, God's messenger, welcomes Jesus with encircling arms. The angel's right hand is grasping the right hand of Jesus who is mounting a small hill. The angel is not pulling Jesus up the hill, as if Jesus is too weak. Rather, the angel conveys God's tender concern and comfort, while Jesus looks to the angel not with surprise or victory but with a sense of serious purpose.

### Ascension

To create a sense of motion in the ascension window, the artist used a swirl of gold, red, and blue as well as a narrowing tower of light reaching into the sky. Jesus has a red and gold cruciform halo. He reaches out and down to his followers with a gesture of welcome and mercy. Jesus' look is not celebratory but serious, not victorious but compassionate.

# Seeger Memorial Chapel 1967



# MILLIGAN COLLEGE

*Academic excellence since 1866*

# stained glass windows

**“In part the windows are intended to teach the life of Jesus, but beyond that they also introduce Jesus as the teacher, the one who is present with the students each day and in all experiences.”**

**– Pat Magness, Ph.D., Humanities professor**

## Twelve Apostles (below balcony)

### Matthew

The central symbol of this window is the T cross, so named because of its resemblance to the letter “T.” According to tradition Matthew was crucified upon such a cross after a sojourn as a missionary in Ethiopia following Christ’s resurrection. Irregular lines pattern the cross to represent Matthew’s torture during his crucifixion. A wedge of red enters the cross as a symbol of his death. To the left of the cross is a laurel tree symbolizing eternal life. The palm tree, an ancient symbol of virtue, represents the martyr’s triumph over death. The cross rests upon the rock of faith, upon which are growing clover and grass. The clover signifies the Trinity and the grass represents the multitude of the Christian faithful who were converted because of Matthew’s ministry.



### James the Greater

James the Greater is closely associated with the growth of Christianity in Spain where, according to tradition, he journeyed after Christ’s ascension. He is, therefore, represented in this window by a horse, upon which he is said to have traveled bearing the banner of Christianity. The three scallop shells, which are embedded in the earth under the horse, symbolize his pilgrimage and also represent his Apostle’s zeal and intense missionary spirit.

### John

In this window John is represented both as an Apostle and as the Gospel writer. As an Apostle his primary symbol is the chalice and snake – tradition says he miraculously survived an attempted poisoning. As a gospel writer, he is represented by the scroll behind the chalice and the hand holding a quill.

### Jude

Jude is represented by a ship under full sail due to his extensive missionary journeys by ship. The water is troubled, reflecting the fact that the ship of Christianity sails untouched through troubled waters. The three fish symbolize the Word of God as revealed in the Trinity.

### Judas Iscariot

The Judas window is primarily blank, to emphasize the utter emptiness and futility of such a life. The chief elements of his betrayal of Christ are represented, however. These are the hangman’s noose, by which he killed himself, and the bag of silver coins for which he betrayed his Lord.

### Peter

The New Testament reveals Peter as a man of two tendencies. The one tendency is represented in this window by the cock, recalling the fact that Peter thrice denied Christ the night of His arrest before the cock crowed. The other side of Peter’s nature is symbolized in the window by the rock upon which the cock stands and the crossed keys, reminding us of the promises of Matthew 16:16-18.

### James the Less

According to legend James the Less was the first Bishop of Jerusalem. His death occurred when, having survived being hurled from the roof of the Temple, he was beaten to death with a fuller’s bat and then sawn asunder. The Temple as depicted in this window refers both to his Bishopric and to his martyrdom. The red rose symbolizes the martyr’s death.



### Andrew

Tradition says that a Roman governor, fearing that Andrew’s teachings would lead to a popular uprising, had the Apostle crucified on an X-shaped cross. The crooked lines within the cross hint at the suffering of Andrew upon the cross. Draped around the top of the cross is the fisherman’s net, a reference to Jesus’ statement to Andrew and Peter his brother, when Jesus called them as Apostles: “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Growing from the rocks beneath the cross is a strawberry plant, the symbol of perfect righteousness.



### Thomas

Thomas is remembered as “doubting Thomas” because of his refusal to believe in the resurrection of Christ until convinced by the touch. The two hands in this window refer to Thomas’ insistence to touch the nail wounds of Christ after the resurrection. After this event Thomas was asked to build a church by the King of the Indies. The Apostle refused but explained to the King that by faith and charity in this world it was possible to build up a store of wealth in Heaven. The carpenter’s square refers to this story. The spear and the arrows were, according to tradition, the instruments of Thomas’ martyrdom.

### Simon Zelotes

Simon Zelotes is represented by the fish and the scroll – a reference to the fact that through the power of the Gospel, he became a great fisher of men during his lifetime. The boat hook recalls the fact that this Apostle traveled extensively in his missionary journeys following the resurrection of Christ.

### Bartholomew

The fig tree in this window is the chief symbol for Bartholomew. In this context the fig tree symbolizes the fertility of Christianity and its growth through the work of the Apostles. Bartholomew said to Jesus, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are King of Israel!” The crown at the top of the window refers to this statement, indicating Jesus’ Kingship both on earth and in Heaven. According to tradition Bartholomew was flayed alive when he met his martyrdom. A flaying knife is portrayed at the bottom of the window in the process of cutting the fig tree.



### Philip

Philip is mentioned in the New Testament as having helped to feed the five thousand. The symbols of that event are contained in this window, including the fish and loaves of bread. An abundance of grass recalls the fact that the feast took place in a grassy place. Later in life Philip was supposed to have been crucified as a martyr, which is represented by the Latin cross. The cross has flowers at its extremities, an allusion to the flowering of Christianity which occurred as a result of Philip’s missionary journeys.

## Events from the Old and New Testaments

### (above balcony)

#### The Creation

The creation window attempts to synthesize the story of the creation as related in Genesis. In the upper section of the window, at its focal point, is the right hand of God in the traditional position with the two forefingers outstretched. Surrounding the hand is the cruciform halo identifying it as a member of the Trinity. Emanating from



the hand, and descending downward, are six rays representing the six days of creation. The creation of light is also implied along with God’s gift of life to the earth. Caught in the life-giving rays, and transformed by them, are earth’s life forms. The separation of water from dry land is depicted in the bottom section of the window. Surrounding the hand of God are the wonders of the firmament created by God, including stars and hints of galaxies and other bodies in the far reaches of space.

#### The Flood

The major elements in the event of the flood, as recounted in Genesis, are contained in this window. The ark rests upon Mount Ararat from which stream the receding floodwaters. The way in which the ark is depicted suggests the fury of the storm and, therefore, God’s wrath. Arching over the ark is the rainbow, the symbol of God’s covenant promise never to destroy every living creature on the earth by floodwaters again.

#### The Law

The Ark of the Covenant was constructed by the people of Israel following the instructions given by God. It held the “testimony” or the tables of the law, and therefore, it is inextricably bound up with the law in Israelite history. The Ark was also considered by the people of Israel to be a seat above which God was invisibly enthroned as the originator of divine law. In this window the Ark is pictured following the description given in Exodus. Its contents, the tables of the law, are indicated by the representation of the tablets of stone on its sides. The rock upon which the Ark rests suggests the enduring foundation, which undergirds the law.

#### The Exodus

The story of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and its meaning are summarized in this window. The focal point of interest is the burning bush because it was due to this event that Moses returned to Egypt and brought about the escape of the Israelites. Behind the burning bush is the mountain upon which the event occurred and upon which Moses later received the Ten Commandments, which are symbolized by the tablets of stone in the lower right hand corner of the window. To the left is the molten calf, symbolizing an important turning point in the history of the people of Israel in their relationship to God.

#### The Kingdom

The horn of oil in this window represents the anointing of David King of Israel. David’s kingship and its special significance in Old Testament literature are represented by the harp. The scepter refers to King Solomon, during whose reign the kingdom of Israel reached new heights of glory and power. In the lower right hand corner of the window, the split crown references the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

#### Exile and New Covenant

In Jeremiah 31 the prophet promises a new covenant which God will write upon His people’s hearts. The new covenant is depicted in this window by the right hand of God in the act of touching a symbolic heart. The heart is surrounded by a radiance to denote its transformation. Two rays descend from the heart. One breaks the chain, which imprisons the Star of David, thus suggesting the return from the Babylonian exile. The other touches the towers of the new temple envisioned by Ezekiel. Implied also is the new covenant between God and Israel prophesied by Ezekiel.



#### The Nativity

The manger and the cruciform halo in this window symbolize the birth of Christ. The shepherds are symbolized by the shepherd’s staff – which is also a prophetic symbol of Christ as the Good Shepherd. The gifts of the magi, who followed the star to the child, are represented on either side of the manger. Several symbols associated with the nativity are depicted in the bottom part of the window. The Christ Child’s innocence is represented by the Christmas rose and by the daisy. The Virgin Mary is symbolized by the iris and the lily, and the cloverleaf stands for the Trinity, the completion of which was signaled by the birth of Jesus.

#### The Baptism of Jesus

In this window the baptism of Christ is represented by the Lamb of God. The Lamb of God is a reference to John 1:35 when John the Baptist, upon seeing Jesus the day following His Baptism, said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” The lamb carries the traditional banner of victory, a prophecy of Christ’s victory over death as revealed in the resurrection. The lamb stands on a rock, symbolizing the Word of God as represented by the living church. The grass symbolizes the Christian faithful, who through baptism in the church follow the word of Jesus.

#### The Sermon on the Mount

The traditional symbol of the Sermon on the Mount, Chi-Rho, represents Christ atop a mountain. Incorporated in the mountain are various symbols representing the basic doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount – doctrines which form much of the basis of Christianity. Among them are the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, the house built upon a rock, the lamp on a stand, the tree bearing good fruit, and the narrow gate.

#### Eucharist

In this window the elements of the Lord’s Supper – the chalice and the bread – are laid out upon the table. Behind the table is the Passion Cross, with pointed ends, representing the passion and death of Jesus during the night and day following the Last Supper. The arch, pointing heavenward, hints at the resurrection to come, and also recalls the Upper Room in which the Last Supper was held. Around it are garlands of grapes symbolizing the blood of Christ.

#### The Way

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” This window, through the use of symbols, attempts to convey some of the profound meaning in this phrase. At the top of the window is the vine, recalling Christ’s reference to Himself as the vine and to His followers as its branches. Christ as the Good Shepherd is depicted by the lamb with the saving crook of the shepherd around its neck. Also represented are the Alpha and Omega and the crown, symbolizing the victory over death promised to those who follow the way of Christ. The grapes are used to symbolize the blood of Christ which was shed for the salvation of humanity.

#### Pentecost

The profound experience of Pentecost is depicted by the downward rush of the dove as the Holy Spirit. He wears the cruciform halo denoting his membership in the Trinity. Radiating from his head are twelve “tongues as of fire,” suggesting the twelve Apostles and their proclamation of the Gospel when filled with the Holy Spirit.

