

ST PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Chatham, New Jersey

CREATION CYCLE HANGINGS AND VESTMENTS

The hangings and vestments were designed and made in 1992 by Colleen L. Hintz of Sparta, New Jersey specifically for St. Paul's, Chatham for the Creation Cycle. They are meant to celebrate God's creation, to challenge us as its stewards and to enable us as creative beings. All animal, bird and flower representations are indigenous to our local area in New Jersey. The following notes are provided by Ms. Hintz.

The Stole

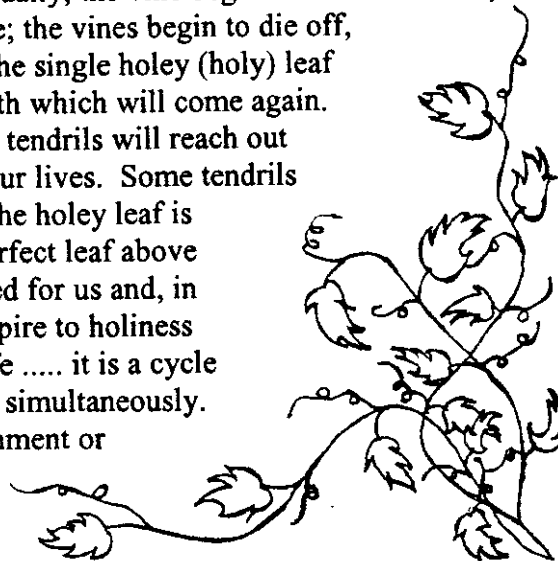


The stole shows images of autumn life the pokeweed with its black berries; poisonous once the stems turn red, but edible while green. This was used by the early colonists as a dye and, in small amounts, as a flavoring for wine. The bull thistle stands tall with its flower heads now going to seed. As the seeds disperse, we are reminded of the hope and promise of renewal of life in the spring. The thistle is an ancient Christian symbol representing human sin and sorrow. The junco is one of the first fall birds to arrive from the north prepared to spend its winter here. The chipmunk is there, settling in for its winter of half-sleep while the frog begins its hibernation safely in the depth and warmth of the soil. The cross at the center of the stole is in the shape of the crucifix at St. Damien's Chapel. It was here that St. Francis first heard his call to repair God's church.

The Chasuble

The chasuble is the story of creation and the cycle of life. It begins with the vine growing together and strong, one branch separates and quickly stops; just as in some

lives and dreams. The leaves in the beginning are tender and pale but, as they grow, they become a rich green and increase in size. Eventually, the vine begins to bear fruit and, here another branch ceases. The others continue; the vines begin to die off, the leaves turn and the fruit begins to wither. The single holey (holy) leaf falls to bring nourishment and hope to the growth which will come again. Look closely at the vine. From time to time the tendrils will reach out and touch the branch next to them as do we in our lives. Some tendrils form the letter "C" the Christ in the vine. The holey leaf is intentionally lopsided in contrast to the near perfect leaf above it. To the chasuble designer, the perfect one died for us and, in that, allowed the imperfections in all of us to aspire to holiness and a oneness with God. This is the cycle of life it is a cycle which allows forward and backward movement simultaneously. It allows us to depend on others for our nourishment or provide our own; to grow or retreat, all in the community of the Body of Christ. You are invited to find yourself on the vine.



The Altar Hangings

The frontal is taken from Eucharistic Prayer C Earth, our fragile island home. On the lower left are the three vines representing the Trinity: the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. The chalice veil and burse represent an extension of the cosmos showing the full harvest moon on the veil and Saturn, the planet, on the burse. The moon on the veil is the counterpoint to the sun on the St. Francis banner, and they are both important because St. Francis is the author of the Cantic to the Sun: *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*.

The St. Francis Banners

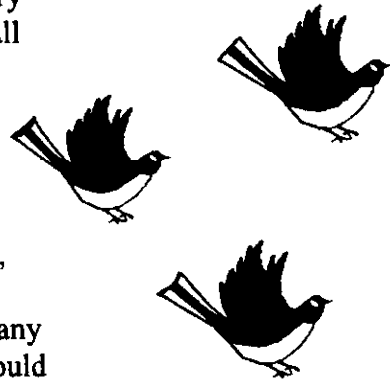
The pair of hangings represent the life of St. Francis of Assisi. By no means complete, they do attempt to portray some of the more notable events in his life.

The lamb is there because Francis loved them and tried, whenever possible, to rescue them from slaughter. When successful, he would often give them to the Poor Sisters to care for. They, in turn, would often make robes for Francis from the fleece. It is

intentional, in the banners, that Francis and the lamb are both made of monk's cloth; a fabric so named because it resembles the coarse woven cloth worn by monks.

The wolf is the famous wolf of Gubbio. The village of Gubbio was plagued by a fierce wolf which attacked its livestock and even its shepherds. In desperation, the townspeople asked Brother Francis to help them. He spoke to the wolf in his lair and convinced him to live in peace with the people of Gubbio. Of course, the people did not believe, so Francis asked the wolf for a sign whereupon, he put his paw in Francis' hand. It is written that every day thereafter, the wolf would go from door to door where he would be fed by the townspeople. The wolf lived for two more years and, when he died, the people of Gubbio missed him very much.

All the birds are there because of Francis' love for them and because of the famous Sermon to the Birds. One day, while out walking with his Brothers, Francis left them to go talk to the birds along the way. He told them of the great love God had for them and how lucky they were because God provided for their every need. He told them it was their duty to sing His praises all their days and, when Francis had finished, they all flew off in every direction doing just that.



Another encounter with the birds, this time swallows, occurred while Francis and some of his Brothers were preaching in Italy. They had come into the town singing, as was their habit, to attract the people with whom they then shared the Gospel. The square quickly filled, for many had heard of Francis. As he prepared to speak, no one could hear him over the chattering of the swallows. Francis turned to the birds and told them it was his turn to be heard whereupon, they fell silent.

Towards the end of his life Francis was preaching in the Middle East. It was there that he contracted some sort of eye ailment. Francis did not believe in medicine for he believed it was right to suffer for Christ. It is for this reason that he is portrayed as very thin and pale for he frequently fasted. Upon returning to Italy, he was in a great deal of pain from his eyes, and the light especially bothered him. Sister Clare had a dark hut built for him. It was there that he wrote the Canticle to the Sun. And so, the sunbeams reach out and surround this frail, powerful Saint.

