



## THE SCULPTURAL METAL SCREEN



*The sculptural metal screen at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church was designed by artist and church member Joan Huiner Ranzini in 2010. The screen is intended to create a sense of safe enclosure within the columbarium terrace and provide visual interest and Christian symbolism to the site. Materials and imagery were chosen to complement the Mid-Century Modern architectural style of the church building (designed by architect Milton Grigg in the 1950's), and link thematically with the chapel at Grace, also designed by Ms. Ranzini. (The columbarium's design was envisioned by landscape architect William Spell, and fully realized and completed by landscape architect Proctor Harvey.)*

*Located at the juncture of the cross tower and the sculpture of the Risen Christ, the sculptural screen addresses issues of death and resurrection, symbolizing the passage of time and seasons, the cycle of life, and the grace and faithfulness of God. The motifs may be read in multiple ways. For example, three perforated discs “moving” across the screen suggest the sun and the moon rising and setting in the sky. These three circles can also serve as a symbol indicating the idea of the Triune God, or they might be seen as suggestive of communion wafers. Here, the imagery of Holy Communion is reinforced by the placement of the middle disc or “wafer” next to a chalice shape formed by the “negative” or cut-out edges at the center of the screen.*

*The metal screen creates a skyline to mediate between built space and the natural world. The trees against the horizon suggest nature in an urban setting, and emphasize the contrast between the gardens we build and the first garden at Eden. The skyline is framed on the west with the shape of the church and cross tower, and on the east by a dove with an olive branch to remind us of the story of the great flood, God's covenant, and our shared hope for peace on earth. At the center of the screen, trees are silhouetted against the sky, their limbs bare and waiting, yet there are also signs of new life. On top of the screen two new leaves spring from the branches, a shape which might also be read as the shape of a butterfly, which is a symbol of Christ's resurrection at Easter. At the base of the screen seedlings emerge from the soil, sheltered by those already there. Young leaves sprouting from an old tree symbolize hope, as in the story of the Jesse Tree in Isaiah 11:1, and are a sign of growth and hopefulness even in times of despair.*

*These are some of the basic ideas which guided the artist as she designed the screen, but they are not the only ways in which it may be appreciated. Everyone brings their own life experience and perception to their encounter with art, and may see and appreciate imagery or ideas unanticipated by the artist. By thoughtfully viewing and being open to ideas, one becomes a participant in the creative process, and thus adds richness to the meaning of a work of art.*

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