

This photo is available in the print version of
Moral Landscape of Creation

Vibrant colors, to be savored in nature's sunlight or sanctuary lighting, capture this time of joyous innocence: the spirit of God brooding over the populating of the sky and sea landscapes.

Joyous Innocence

B Y H E I D I J . H O R N I K

The contemporary Christian artist David J. Hetland transforms spaces with light. Dramatic in their scale, rich color, and pattern, his stained glass series at First Lutheran Church in Fergus Falls, MN celebrates the Genesis 1 creation account. The scene illustrated here depicts the bringing forth of living creatures on the fifth day (1:20-23).

The magnificent, vibrant colors chosen by the artist give a glorious effect to the scripture. In response to God's word, the waters teem with an abundance of living creatures (1:20) and the birds multiply on the earth (1:22). Brooding over them all, with outstretched wings and crowned with a nimbus and cross, is a dove, symbolizing the preeminent presence of the Holy Spirit throughout God's creation. Other birds fill the sky in every direction. In the lower portion of the window we see a medley of fish, crustaceans, and amphibians of divers colors and species. God's creation is brimming but not crowded, varied but not chaotic! The creatures swirl before a backdrop of geometric patterns that recalls the medium of mosaic, a technique also enjoyed by this artist.

Hetland is best known for his liturgical interpretations expressed in mosaic and stained glass. He studied with Cyrus M. Running of Concordia College in Moorhead, MN. The companion pieces to this window, "Teeming With Life," and other liturgical art can be viewed on the artist's Web site, www.hetland.com.

The populating of the sky and sea landscapes is a moment of joyous innocence, indicated by expressive color in this window. Craftspersons of Venetian glass tiles began with Hetland's designs and formed them into this work of art that can be enjoyed and studied in either nature's sunlight or sanctuary lighting.