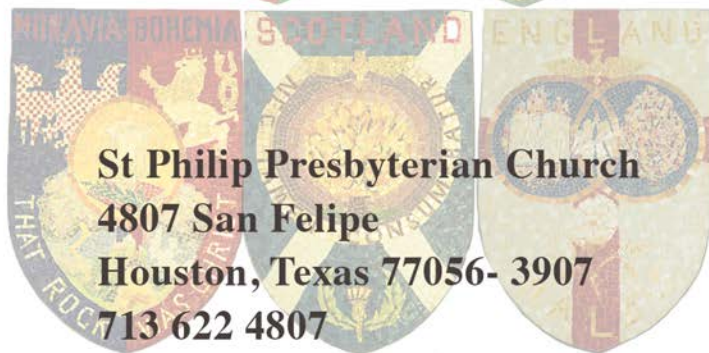
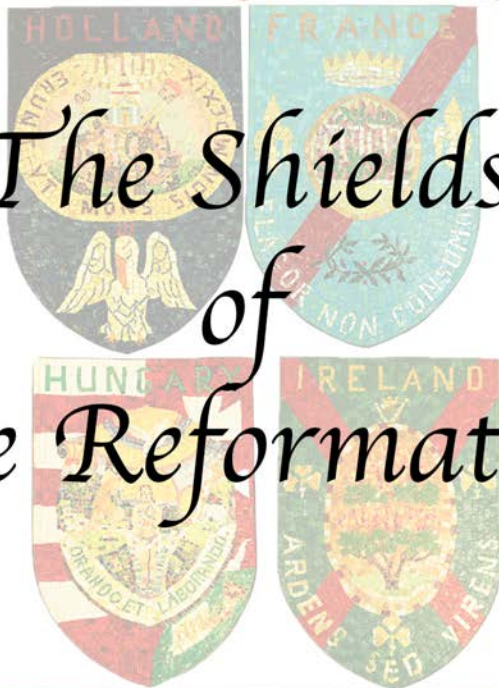


St Philip Presbyterian Church



The Shields of The Reformation



St Philip Presbyterian Church
4807 San Felipe
Houston, Texas 77056- 3907
713 622 4807

St Philip Presbyterian Church



The Evangelists

James, son of Alphaeus

James, brother of John



Peter

Simon

The Plaques of The Apostles



Bartholomew

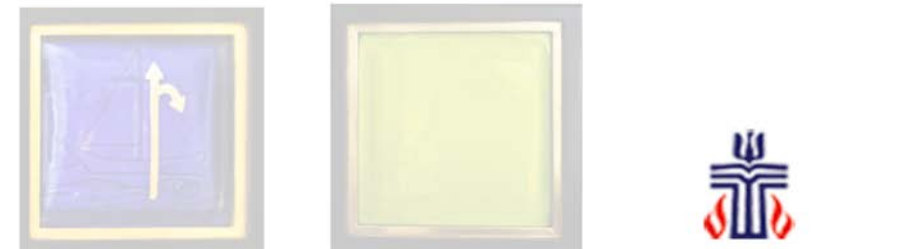
Paul



Thomas

Matthew

Philip



Judas

Judas Iscariot



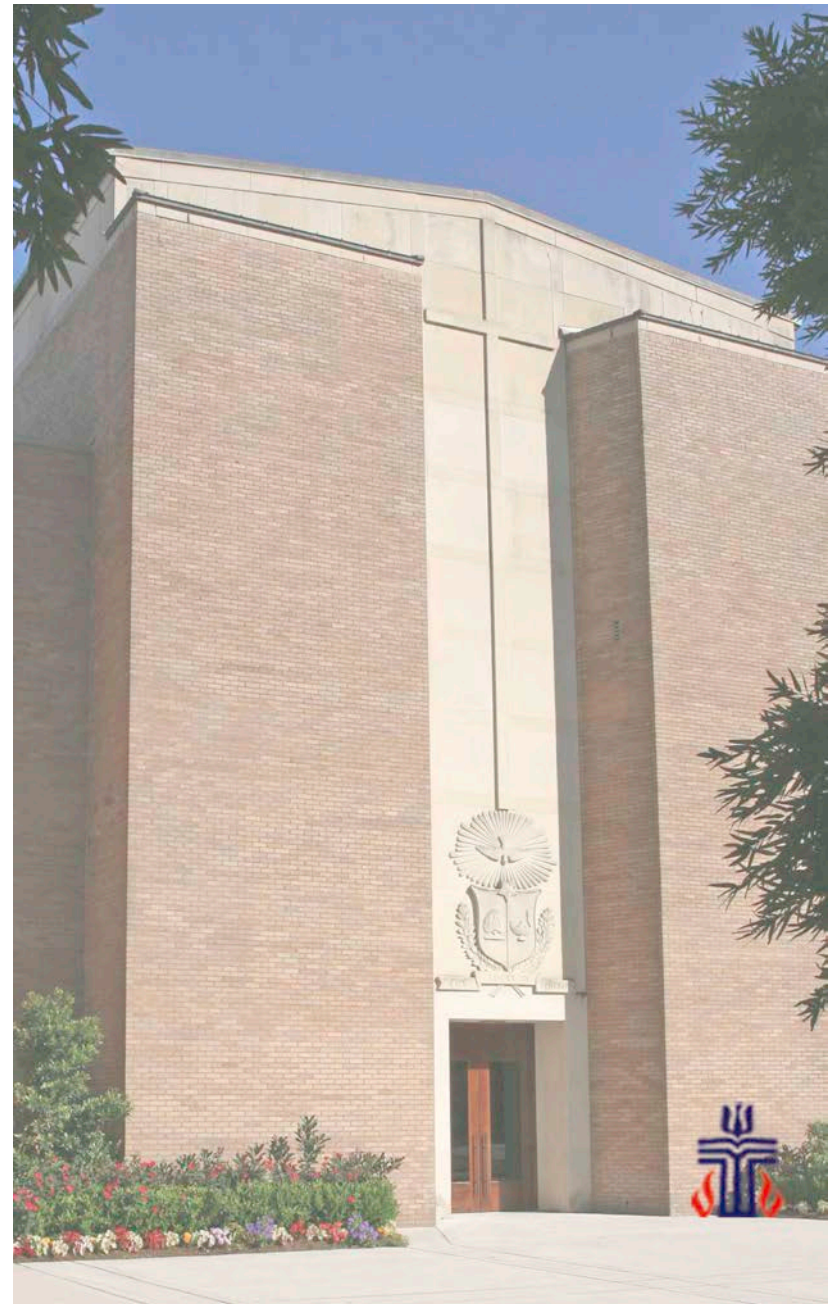
This booklet celebrates the union (2010) of two Presbyterian churches in Houston: St Philip and Central. The merged congregation, which retained the name St Philip Presbyterian Church, has become one of the most open and loving in Houston.

The plaques presented here originally surrounded the main entrance to the sanctuary at Central Presbyterian Church while the shields and the stained glass quotation from Genesis 1:1 adorned the walls of the Chapel of the Reformation.

The plaques, the shields, the Genesis 1:1 stained glass and statues of the three reformers John Calvin, Martin Luther and John Knox can all be found on the campus at St Philip.

Thanks to Catherine Patterson Ph.D., for her assistance with the text.

Photos by Roderick V. James Ph.D.





This stained glass window with the quote from Genesis 1:1, was originally on the east wall of the Chapel of the Reformation at Central Presbyterian Church. It was a gift from Houston's Congregation Emanu El, who worshipped at Central when their synagogue was being built.

It is now displayed at St Philip at the south end of the hallway from the Gathering Area.

Table of Contents

Peter	2
James, brother of John	3
John	4
Andrew	5
Philip	6
Thomas	7
Bartholomew	8
Matthew	9
James, son of Alpheus	10
Simon	11
Judas (Jude)	12
Judas Iscariot	13
Paul	14
The Evangelists	15
Chapel of the Reformation	16
Plaques and Shields Narrative	17
Italy	18
Switzerland	19
Germany	20
Holland	21
France	22
Hungary	23
Moravia–Bohemia	24
Scotland	25
England	26
Ireland	27
Genesis 1:1 Stained Glass	28



Peter: The crowing rooster reminds us of how Peter denied knowing Jesus after Jesus was arrested—just before a cock crowed (Mark 14:66-72), as Jesus had predicted.

The inverted cross, however, reminds us of Peter's later faithfulness to Jesus: When Peter was going to be crucified under the emperor Nero, Peter asked to be crucified upside down because he did not consider himself to be of the same status as Jesus.



Ireland:

Symbols include St. Patrick's Cross, the burning bush and the Latin motto "Burning yet flourishing". When the shields of England, Scotland and Ireland are overlaid, the cross patterns form the Union Jack. The reformed church in Ireland was founded largely by Scottish and English immigrants to Ireland in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.



England and Wales:

Symbols include St. George's Cross, the burning bush, the 10 Commandments. When the shields of England, Scotland and Ireland are overlaid the cross patterns form the Union Jack. King Henry VIII touched off the Reformation in England and Wales in the 1530s; the reformed ideas of John Calvin further influenced the Protestant church in the later 16th century.



James, brother of John: The scallop shell symbolizes James's travels making and baptizing followers of Jesus. The sword refers to James's being executed by the ruler Herod (Acts 12:1-2).



John: The cup represents an attempt to kill John with poisoned drink, one of many attempts to do so. And the eagle (a symbol of divinity) represents John's miraculously escaping from that attempt. The serpent on a pole refers to the story in John's Gospel (3:15) in which Jesus explains to Nicodemus that if people look up to Jesus in the way people under Moses looked at a serpent made of bronze on a pole (Numbers 21:8-9), they will be freed from sin and death.



Scotland:

Symbols include St. Andrew's Cross, the burning bush, and the Latin motto "However it was not consumed". When the shields of England, Scotland and Ireland are overlaid the cross patterns form the Union Jack. Led by John Knox and others who followed the teachings of Calvin, the Protestant church in Scotland was Reformed and Presbyterian from its start in the 1560s.



Bohemia Moravia:

Symbols include the lion and eagle seal of the church of Bohemia and the chalice standing upon a Bible with a palm branch at its base, evoking the return to the people of the cup of the Lord's supper and the word of God in their own language. Moravia and Bohemia (now in the Czech Republic) adopted Reformed belief and practice early in the 16th century, influenced by the earlier reform movement of Jan Hus in the 15th century.



Andrew: The fishes tell of Andrew's having been a fisherman before Jesus told him to "fish for people" instead (Mark 1:17). The anchor refers to that story as well as to Andrew's sea travels. The fishes being crossed subtly refers to Andrew's having been martyred on an X-shaped cross, a white X on a blue background having thus become the St. Andrew's cross of Scotland.



Philip: The basket refers to the story of Jesus’s feeding of 5,000 people (John 6:1-14), despite the practical Philip’s skepticism that there could be sufficient food. The cross, however, speaks of his faith, even to the point of martyrdom.



Hungary:

Symbols include the baptism of Jesus, with the Spirit descending on Him “as a dove” and the Devil fleeing “as a lion”, and the Latin motto “By praying and working”. The reformed theology of John Calvin took strong root among the Magyars in the later 16th century, and a reformed tradition remains in Hungary today.



France:

Symbols include the crown, the laurel wreath, the sacred name of God in Hebrew and the date of the final revision of Calvin's Institutes 1559 (AD MDLIX); and the Latin motto "I am burned, but not consumed", referencing the burning bush. The Protestant church in France was among the first to adopt the symbol of the burning bush, where Protestant believers endured tremendous hardship and persecution during the Reformation.



Thomas: The carpenter's square represents Thomas's having been a carpenter, but also subtly refers to the building of the early church (by tradition, in India). The crossed spears tells that he too came to a violent death, like so many because of the persecution of early Christians.



Bartholomew: Some traditional interpretations of the Bible identified Bartholomew as being the same man as Nathaniel, who Jesus first saw under a fig tree, knowing that he was a devout man (John 1:47-49). Thus the fig and fig leaves on this plaque. The scimitar refers to his death by sword.



Holland:

Symbols include the Pelican (a symbol of costly self-sacrifice); Christ as the Rock, indicating a place of safety for the dove and the Church from the storms of life; and the Latin motto “They shall be [as] Mount Zion”, which refers to Psalm 125:1. Strongly influenced by Calvin and Zwingli, the Dutch established a Reformed Church in the mid 16th century.



Germany:

Symbols include the ever-open and all-seeing Eye of God above the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Latin motto “For God and the Church”. Germany, home of the original reformer Martin Luther, has a long tradition of Protestant belief. The Heidelberg Catechism is one of the foundational documents of Reformed churches around the world.



Matthew: The money bags represent Matthew’s having been a tax-collector named Levi before he choose to follow Jesus instead, changing his name to express that turning in his life (Matthew 9:9). The battle ax is a symbol of the suffering of a violent death.



James, son of Alpheus: This James is said to have died by being fastened to the arms of a windmill, his body then being taken down and sawed asunder. Thus, those devices of his martyrdom being represented on this plaque.



Switzerland:

Symbols include the key and the eagle, with the personal seals of John Calvin, offering his heart on his extended hand (right), and Huldrych Zwingli (left).

Calvin in Geneva and Zwingli in Zurich helped shape reformed theology, liturgy, and practice in Switzerland and throughout the broader Protestant church.



Italy:

Symbols include a candle aflame, with the Latin motto “Light Shining in the Darkness”. The Waldensians, a reformist group in Italy that began in the middle ages, suffered great persecution for reformed beliefs (such as permitting lay people, including women, to preach) that were declared heretical. The Waldensian church continues in Italy today.



Simon:The fish on an open Bible symbolizes Simon the Zealot’s feeding the souls of people with the Word of the message about Jesus.



Judas: Also called “Jude” so as not to be confused with Judas Iscariot, he is represented here by a sailboat with a mast in the form of a cross. That is because he sailed the seas telling the story of Jesus.

The Plaques of the Apostles:

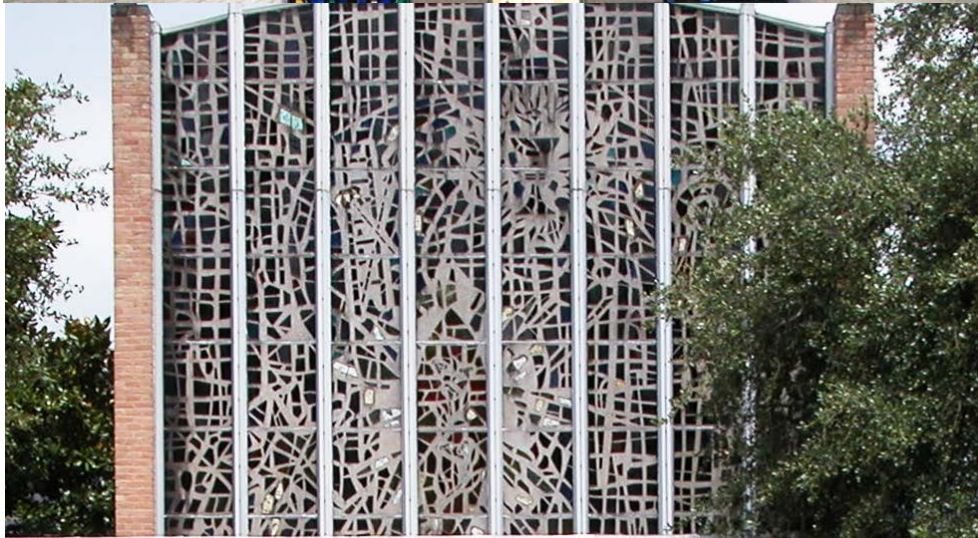
Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says that the church is built upon the foundation the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

It is, therefore, fitting that the Shields of the Apostles should be displayed on the wall on the way to the sanctuary. Those who walk by the shields, on the way from the office to the sanctuary or as they enter from the west side of the building, enter the sanctuary through the contributions of the Apostles to us. The Apostles were the founders of the church. Our faith is built upon the testimony that came from them in the words of holy scripture. We believe that we belong to the “**one holy catholic and apostolic church**” which makes us heirs to their faith.

The shields are an important part of our symbolism. They are more than decorations; they remind us of our faith.

The Shields of the Reformation:

A common theme in the shields of the Reformation is “burning bush”. It appears in the shields of **Scotland, England and Wales, Ireland and France**. The burning bush recalls Moses experience with a “bush that burns but is not consumed” and speaks of fiery trials that the reformers passed through but whose faith was triumphant.



The Chapel of the Reformation



Judas Iscariot: The disciple who betrayed Jesus (Matthew 26:47-50). His plaque is thus left blank.



Paul: The armor and shield represent the metaphorical exhortation to Christians to “put on the whole armor of God” (Ephesians 6:11)—such as the virtues of truth and faith. Throughout his letters to early churches, later added to the New Testament, Paul encouraged the early Christians in a life of such faithfulness.



The Evangelists: On this single plaque, the writers of all four Gospels in the New Testament are depicted using symbols that Christianity drew out of a vision in the Old Testament book of Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:4-10). Those symbols were not only re-used in the New Testament book of Revelation (Rev.4:7-8); they were also adapted by Christianity to represent the four Gospel writers: The winged man assigned to Matthew. The winged lion for Mark. The winged ox for Luke. And the eagle assigned to John. In Ezekiel, these beings were all part of Ezekiel’s revelatory encounter with God, and were thus associated with Christians encountering God through their engagement with the Gospel narratives about Jesus.