

The background of the entire page is composed of several vertical panels of abstract, painterly textures. From left to right: a panel with soft, blended colors of yellow, green, and blue; a panel with vertical stripes of green and blue; a panel with a dense, golden-yellow, pebbled texture; a panel with soft, blended colors of orange, yellow, and red; and a panel with vertical stripes of green and blue. A dark purple rectangular box is centered over the middle of these panels, containing the title and subtitle.

A BANNER YEAR

*A Visual Path Through
the Seasons of the Church at*
**WASHINGTON
NATIONAL CATHEDRAL**

O God of new beginnings,
You burnish a sunrise with crimson and ochre
and paint poetry through the seasons of your word:
Draw us into your radiant presence!
As we embark upon this visual path,
help us to trust that your guidance is sure,
that in all our journeys it is you whom we seek,
and you whom we find in serving others. Amen.

A BANNER YEAR

A VISUAL PATH THROUGH THE SEASONS OF THE CHURCH
AT WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

Washington National Cathedral has commissioned this banner series of great beauty and power by renowned liturgical artist Nancy Chinn. Originally painted in acrylic, the banners have been digitally printed four feet by twenty feet and installed for the Centennial year on successive pillars in the nave and transepts. These banners lead us on a spiritual pilgrimage, guiding us through the seasons of the Christian year.

The explorations that accompany the reproductions in this booklet are meant to guide the pilgrim on a visual journey beginning with the season of Advent, and following the seasons through Reign of Christ. The banners created for Washington National Cathedral reflect in fresh imaginings the ancient rhythms of the life of faith.

The cyclical nature of the seasons is depicted through the fundamental image of the circle. Repeating circular patterns are used in different ways to communicate different themes. The circle represents the work of the divine. It connotes birth and completion, the movement of the Spirit, the light of Christ, and the world opening up to the glory of God.

We are delighted that your pilgrimage has brought you to Washington National Cathedral. We pray that as you gaze upon these works of art in the nation's spiritual home, you will catch a glimpse of God's grace.



"LET IT BE WITH ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD."

Luke 1:38

ADVENT

Preparation and hope are the key themes of Advent, the four weeks leading to Christmas. John the Baptist, who foretells the coming of the Messiah, cries out to prepare a way for the Lord. Mary's meeting with the angel Gabriel frames the season with an air of expectancy. When Mary learns from Gabriel that she will bear the Christ child, her "yes" is our yes to fill the hungry with good things.

Artist Nancy Chinn reflects that this is a time of "anticipation and prayer for the promise of a Messiah, and uncertainty about what that will mean to us in this time. So we wonder and yearn for the unfolding of this mystery."

Blue is associated with the expectancy of Advent and is the dominant color of this banner. The movement of arching arabesques signifies the advent of divinity entering humanity. Heaven and earth conjoin as the colors swirl in divine reproduction.

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND
THE WORD WAS WITH GOD...HE WAS IN THE
BEGINNING WITH GOD...WHAT HAS COME INTO
BEING IN HIM WAS LIFE, AND THE LIFE WAS
THE LIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE. THE LIGHT SHINES
IN THE DARKNESS AND THE DARKNESS DID NOT
OVERCOME IT.

John 1:1-5

CHRISTMAS

The Nativity is a time to celebrate the bringing of light into the darkness which is accomplished in Jesus' birth. The Incarnation signifies that in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, divinity meets humanity.

In the words of the artist, "Christmas celebrates the cosmic Incarnation of God among us, bringing light and truth to us as the great gift of God made present and visible at this time to us."

The white orb hints at the manifestation of Christ. Radiating gold and yellow, the Christ-light emerges from a background of deep lapis blue, as expectancy gives way to Incarnation.





"MY EYES HAVE SEEN YOUR SALVATION,
WHICH YOU HAVE PREPARED IN THE PRESENCE
OF ALL PEOPLES."

Luke 2:30-31

EPIPHANY

At Christmas, angels announce the birth of the Christ child to the shepherds of Israel. At Epiphany, when the Magi seers make a great journey to meet the young Jesus, we understand that the whole world has been drawn to Christ.

Epiphany is an astonishing word that suggests the unfurling of a great mystery. Chinn remarks, "Epiphany brings the wonder of that Incarnation present and available to all people of the earth."

Gold, yellow, and white are prominent in this work. The small, condensed central orb of light from the Christmas banner encompasses nearly the whole of the Epiphany banner. The Light shines forth to all creation, as suggested by the color spectrum at the lower corner of the banner.

CARRYING THE CROSS BY HIMSELF, JESUS WENT OUT TO WHAT IS CALLED THE PLACE OF THE SKULL, WHICH IN HEBREW IS CALLED GOLGOTHA. THERE THEY CRUCIFIED HIM, AND WITH HIM TWO OTHERS, ONE ON EITHER SIDE, WITH JESUS BETWEEN THEM.

John 19:17-18


LENT

Lent is the season that inexorably leads us to the cross of Good Friday, where we recall a dark night of the soul. We journey to Golgotha where light and dark collide and we are blind-sided by death.

The artist reflects, "Lent is six weeks of self-examination, preparing us for the greatest feast...his astonishing resurrection."

In contrast with the circular motion of the prior seasons, the Lenten banner makes a horizontal statement. The bands of color suggest a separation between us and God. However, the red of the Passion, depicted vertically, realigns all humanity.





THE ANGEL SAID TO THE WOMEN, "DO NOT BE AFRAID; I KNOW THAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR JESUS WHO WAS CRUCIFIED. HE IS NOT HERE; FOR HE HAS BEEN RAISED, AS HE SAID. COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE HE LAY. THEN GO QUICKLY AND TELL HIS DISCIPLES..."

Matthew 28:5-7

EASTER

The queen of all seasons, Easter, is the crown of the Christian year. The Living God triumphs over death and the world is reborn through divine grace. The feast of Easter is more than one day; it is fifty days of rejoicing. Throughout the year the Easter celebration is remembered and renewed through the worship life of the Church.

Liturgical artist Nancy Chinn describes the season in these words: "Easter is the promise of the overturning of all adversity into new life. Here we see the dawn breaking the tangles of darkness, death, and confusion, filling us with hope."

The splendor of the Resurrection is conveyed in the majestic colors of gold, yellow, and white, signifying Life bursting forth from the empty tomb, filling all creation.

ALL OF THEM WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT
AND BEGAN TO SPEAK IN OTHER LANGUAGES, AS
THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM ABILITY.

Acts 2:4

PENTECOST

The fiftieth day of Easter, Pentecost, marks the coming of the Holy Spirit and emphasizes the miracle of communication despite linguistic and cultural differences.

Chinn remarks, “Pentecost celebrates the riotous power of the gift of the Holy Spirit, sometimes felt as a gentle breath, and sometimes as strong as a mighty wind or flame. It is also the birthday party of the Church.”

Pentecost celebrates diversity and communication. The images of this banner recall flame, life-force, and wind. The movement in this banner illustrates the ability of the Spirit-empowered Church to journey in directions that reflect the variety of all its members.





FOR AS THE RAIN AND THE SNOW COME DOWN
FROM HEAVEN, AND DO NOT RETURN THERE
UNTIL THEY HAVE WATERED THE EARTH, MAKING
IT BRING FORTH AND SPROUT...SO SHALL MY
WORD BE THAT GOES OUT FROM MY MOUTH.

Isaiah 55: 10-11

ORDINARY TIME I & II


THE SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

Ordinary Time occasions growth. In the northern hemisphere the season after Pentecost spans the agricultural season. As crops mature with the help of sunlight, soil, and rain, so we grow in relation to Christ as we hear Jesus' teachings.

The first banner buds forth with the freshness of spring as sunlight dapples our Godward journey. Deep oranges reminisce the warm breath of the Holy Spirit, which stirs our hearts, causing the seeds which God planted in us to grow. Rich blues remind us of our covenant made with God in the waters of Baptism. Nancy Chinn states that in this banner "we can anticipate the gifts of understanding, of deepening our faith."

God spoke our world into being and proclaimed its goodness. The globe-like rendering of the second banner bespeaks our earth's beauty. Wave-like contours echo the fragile blend of air and water, calling us to care for the well-being of creation. The circle resounds with God's eternal and threefold presence with us. As Nancy Chinn describes, "We enter mystery and discover our faith born through Wisdom."





THEN I SAW A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH;
FOR THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE FIRST EARTH
HAD PASSED AWAY, AND THE SEA WAS NO
MORE. AND I SAW THE HOLY CITY, THE NEW
JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN
FROM GOD...AND I HEARD A LOUD VOICE FROM
THE THRONE SAYING, "SEE, THE HOME OF GOD
IS AMONG MORTALS."

Revelation 21:1-3

REIGN OF CHRIST

The Christian year culminates with the two great feasts of All Saints and the Reign of Christ. The artist states, "The last banner marks the end of the liturgical cycle with the Reign of God, holding our hope that the long views of life prevail." Building God's reign is a grand quest but scarcely ours alone to accomplish. For as Chinn remarks, it is "the power of Love to restore justice, and recreate the world God intended."

Christ came that we might all have life and have it abundantly. Let us embark upon this journey using God's gifts to love and serve creation.

Each time we journey through the church year we are different. Over time the seasons transform us. As we pass through each day, each season, the end of one journey positions us to step into the beginning of the next. The seasons of this calendar allow us to return again and again to the expectancy of Advent or the solemnity of Lent, to reconsider our lives and the way in which we are living them.

The patterns of the church year allow us to see afresh the new things God is working in us and in our world. The sequence of the seasons organizes our journey, yet in some ways we live all the seasons at all times. We are always waiting in hope, always called to take our light into the world, always summoned to spend time in self-reflection. We are forever engaged in an act of new creation. We are repeatedly invited to celebrate the diversity of our gifts and to work on behalf of God's reign.

Art is an act of bold proclamation. The building of Washington National Cathedral, truly a national treasure, exemplifies this. The seasonal banner pilgrimage continues to proclaim the vision and imagination of our forbears and seeks to inspire us to offer the best we have on behalf of the world.

As we celebrate the past and welcome the future in our Centennial year, let us be full partners with our forbears and like them, dreamers and builders of God's reign.

ARTIST

Nancy Chinn has created commissioned liturgical installations for Grace Cathedral and more than 500 other sites. Her art has been featured in national conferences, churches, cathedrals, and outdoor installations. Chinn holds a B.A. in Education from Lewis and Clark College; M.A. from San Francisco State College and M.F.A. in Fibers and Mixed Media from John F. Kennedy University, Orinda, CA. She is the author of *Spaces for Spirit, Adorning the Church*, a monograph of her liturgical art.

ENDNOTES

The liturgical banner project and accompanying book, *A Banner Year: A Visual Path through the Seasons of the Church at Washington National Cathedral*, was accomplished under the direction of The Rev. Canon Carol L. Wade, Canon Precentor of Washington National Cathedral.

Initial Artwork created by Nancy Chinn, nancychinn.com

Digital Illustration by Jason Chinn, magicspark.com

Banners printed by DPI, dpi-sf.com

The Centennial banners were made possible by an anonymous gift. Washington National Cathedral is deeply appreciative of this important support.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

It is our hope that the pilgrimage through the seasons you have undertaken here at Washington National Cathedral will help you grow in your faith journey. As you go into the world, please feel free to keep this booklet, to re-read it throughout the year, so that its reflections and prayers may continue to be your guide.

We pray that you will return to Washington National Cathedral and that it may become a spiritual home for you. This is a place of hospitality, where you are always welcome, with your faith, your explorations, and your doubts. We look forward to continuing to be a part of your life as you grow in your faith with Christ.

Samuel T. Lloyd III
Dean, Washington National Cathedral

ABOUT WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

Washington National Cathedral is a soaring church for national purposes, embodying the Episcopal tradition and welcoming to people of all faiths and none. A unique blend of the spiritual and the civic, we are a voice for a generous-spirited, intellectually probing Christianity and a catalyst for reconciliation and interfaith dialogue that promotes respect and understanding. We invite all people to become a partner with us and share in our commitment to create a hopeful and just world.



Washington National Cathedral
Massachusetts and Wisconsin Avenues, NW
Washington, DC 20016-5098
(202) 537-6200
www.nationalcathedral.org