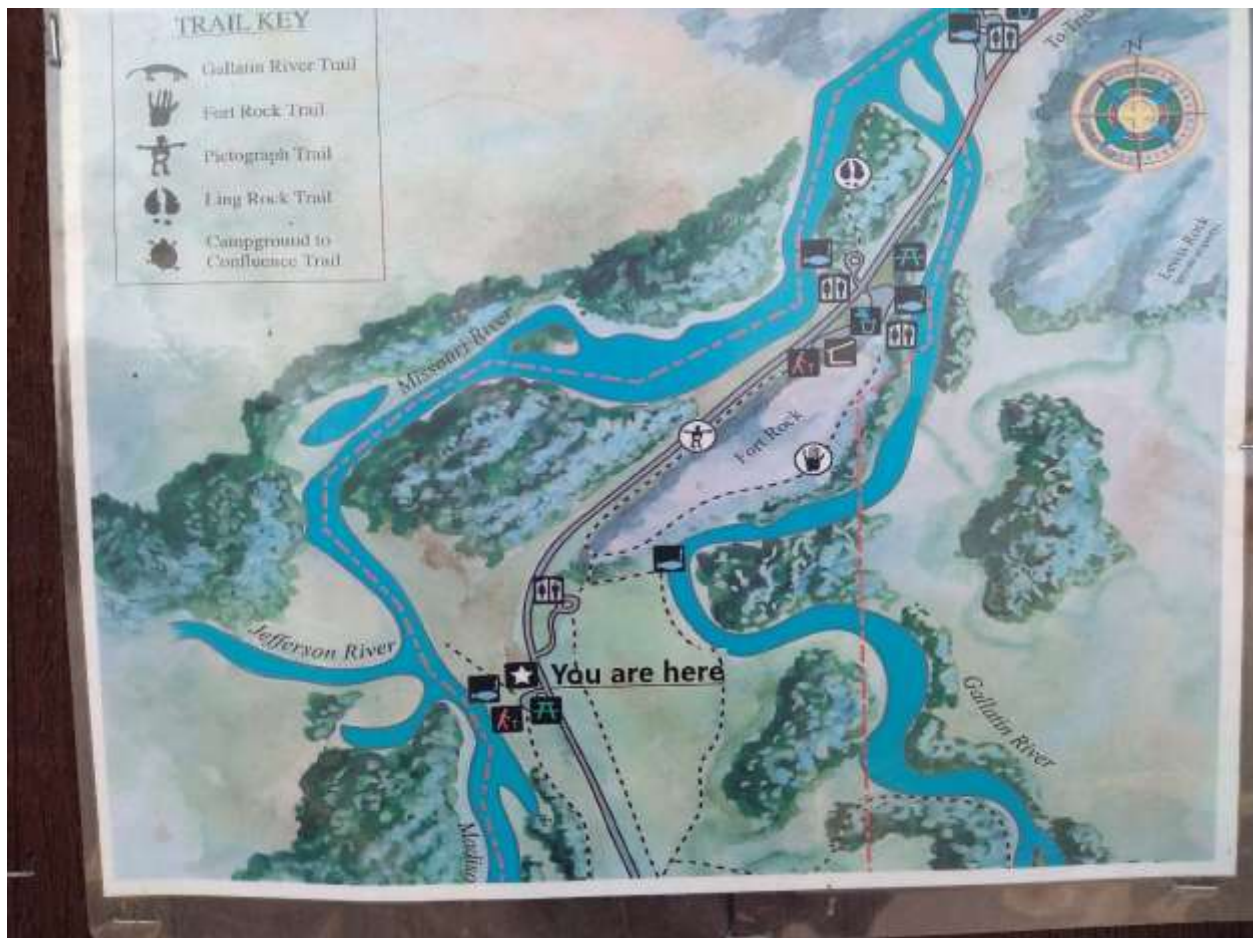


DAY 2 – MONTANA



Three Forks is a city in Gallatin County, Montana, United States and is located within the watershed valley system of both the Missouri and Mississippi rivers drainage basins — and is historically considered the birthplace or start of the Missouri River.

The city of Three Forks is named so because it lies geographically near the point, in nearby Missouri Headwaters State Park, where the Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin rivers converge to form the Missouri River

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Forks,_Montana



Sign: “The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it, as, by its course & communication with the waters of the Pacific ocean . . . may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent...”

From Thomas Jefferson's instructions to Meriwether Lewis, July 4, 1803





Helena, capital of Montana

A Lost World

Geological Time



Imagine a world very different than we know today. About 1.3 billion years ago during the Precambrian Era, the earth's environment was desolate, with no trees, fish, animals or birds. Shallow seas with extensive near-shore flats were fed by streams that deposited great amounts of sand and mud. Rain frequently fell and pooled in vast shallow lakes and ponds in what would one day become northwest Montana.

Despite the hostile environment, blue-green algae mats often trapped fine particles of calcium carbonate to form structures called stromatolites, that grew in shallow near-shore environments. The surface of the rocks often display mud cracks, ripple marks, and, sometimes, the spatter marks of primeval raindrops.

The earth's crust slowly sank for about 100 million years forming a large geologic basin in which Belt Supergroup sediments accumulated as much as 10 miles thick! The rocks are common in northern and central Idaho and western Montana, and extend east to the Little Belt Mountains in central Montana. The sedimentary rocks along Interstate 90 between Lookout Pass and Albion are almost entirely rocks of the Belt Supergroup. These rocks are distinguished by brown, gray, red, green, purple, and yellow colors and locally form dramatic cliffs where resistant, well-cemented sandstones are exposed in the canyon.

Interstate 90 from near Lookout Pass through Missoula is located along the Lewis and Clark Fault Zone, a series of faults that stretch between northwest Washington State and the Helena area. The faults had significant movement about 70 million years ago when the Rocky Mountains were uplifting and were active until at least 25 million years ago. Interstate 90 and US Highway 10 in western Montana follow the trend of the faults along straight canyons that eroded along the fault zone.



Massive Stromatolites found near Libby, Montana. Photo by Larry Smith.



Ripple marks at Mount Stikine Lake. Photo by Kourt Rogers.

Key Facts

- Geologists map rocks as formations. The Belt rocks are so thick that similar formations have been combined into "groups" and the groups in turn are referred to as one very large unit called a "Supergroup".
- Ancient rocks indicate that oxygen was not abundant in Earth's atmosphere until about 2.3 billion years ago. An explosion of abundant and complex life forms, such as trilobites, did not occur until about 550 million years ago in the presence of abundant oxygen and protective ozone layer that filtered solar radiation.
- The lack of burrowing organisms during the Precambrian time allowed excellent preservation of finely layered sedimentary rocks of the Belt Supergroup. Some of the thin beds in the Belt rocks can be traced for miles.

Key Activity

- As you travel along I-90, keep in mind that you are also following the path of a fault. How many times can you count cliffs of brown, gray, red, green, purple, and yellow colors rocks that have eroded away along the fault line?



Belt Supergroup indicated in yellow. Courtesy of Larry Smith

As you travel along I-90, keep in mind that you are also following the path of a fault. How many times can you count cliffs of brown, gray, red, green, purple, and yellow colors rocks that have eroded away along the fault line (Lewis and Clark Fault Zone, a series of faults that stretch between northwest Washington State and the Helena area)?



Pompeys Pillar, Lewis & Clark national historic trail

<https://www.nps.gov/places/pompeys-pillar-mt.htm>

On July 25, 1806, while descending the Yellowstone River, Clark "arived at a remarkable rock Situated in an extensive bottom on the Stard. Side of the river & 250 paces from it." He wrote that, "this rock I ascended and from it's top had a most extensive view in every direction. This rock which I shall Call Pompys's Tower [named for Jean Baptiste 'Pomp' Charbonneau] is 200 feet high and 400 paces in secumphrance and only axcessable on one Side which is from the N. E the other parts of it being a perpendicular Clift of lightish Coloured gritty rock on the top there is a tolerable Soil of about 5 or 6 feet thick Covered with Short grass. The Indians have made 2 piles of Stone on the top of this Tower. The natives have ingravd on the face of this rock the figures of animals &c. near which I marked my name and the day of the month & year."

Although Clark named the feature "Pompys Tower" in his original journal entry, Nicholas Biddle altered the name to "Pompey's Pillar" for the 1814 published history of the expedition. Clark's inscription is the only known visible evidence of the entire journey that remains intact. [Pompeys Pillar](#) was established as a national monument in 2001. An on-site visitor center interprets the expedition's travels through the Yellowstone River valley.



... the indians formed a large simicircular camp ^[11] of dressed buffaloe skins and invited us to partake of their shelter which [Drewyer](#) and myself accepted and the [Fieldses](#) lay near the fire in front of the sheter. with the assistance of [Drewyer](#) I had much conversation with these people in the course of the evening. I learned from them that they were a part of a large band which lay encamped at present near the foot of the [rocky mountains](#) on the [main branch of Maria's river](#) one ½ days march from our present encampment; that there was a whiteman with their band; that there was another large band of their nation hunting buffaloe near the broken mountains and were on there way to the mouth of [Maria's river](#) where they would probably be in the course of a few days.

<https://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/item/lc.jrn.1806-07-26>







THREE FORKS -- Headwaters of the Missouri was a critical point for the expedition. Travel by canoe would not be possible over the mountain passes. Without horses the Corps could not pack the supplies needed to continue to the Pacific. Wintering in the mountains was not an option.

<https://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/item/lc.jrn.1806-07-27> July 27, 1805

“ . . . the country opens suddenly to extensive and beautiful plains and meadows which appear to be surrounded in every direction with distant and lofty mountains; supposing this to be the three forks of the Missouri . . . believing this to be an essential point in the geography of this western part of the continent I determined to remain at all events until I obtained the necessary data for fixing its latitude and longitude.”

Mural: “We begin to feel considerable anxiety with respect to the Snake Indians. If we do not find them or some other nation who have horses I fear the successful issue of our voyage will be very doubtful or at all events much more difficult in its accomplishment.”



Journey back to the early 1800s and retrace the footsteps of Lewis & Clark as they journeyed through Montana. See what the Corps of Discovery saw as they traveled by foot over scenic mountains and by boat through the clear waters. Follow an etching of the Missouri River along one side of the pedestrian plaza and the Yellowstone along the other side, experiencing several of the journey's highlights along the way.

This permanent outdoor exhibit located at the Great Northern Town Center is a cooperative project with Lewis & Clark Trail Commission. Visitors to this exhibit will enjoy and learn about 19 historical sites from Montana's Lewis & Clark Trail such as the Gates of the Mountains, Pompeys Pillar, Great Falls/Portage and the Three Forks of the Missouri. Enormous boulders, for example, form the Interpretive Exhibit's version of Pompeys Pillar, complete with bison prints and a replica of Clark's signature. The easy interpretive signage will guide you on your journey of Lewis & Clark's Montana Experience.

<https://southwestmt.com/listings/lewis-clark-the-montana-experience/>



“... a Squawl of wind Struck our Sale broad Side and turned the perogue nearly over, and in this Situation the Perogue remained untill the Sale was Cut down in which time She nearly filled with water— the articles which floated out was nearly all caught by the Squar who was in the rear. This accident had like to have cost us dearly; [8] for in this perogue were embarked our papers, Instruments, books, medicine, a great proportion of our merchandize, and in short almost every article indispensibly necessary to further the views, or insure the success of the enterprize in which, we are now launched to the distance of 2,200 miles.” [Squar=Sacajawea, who saved the papers and instruments essential to the voyage]

<https://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/item/lc.jrn.1805-05-14>



Helena Civic Center, Helena MT

People also ask:

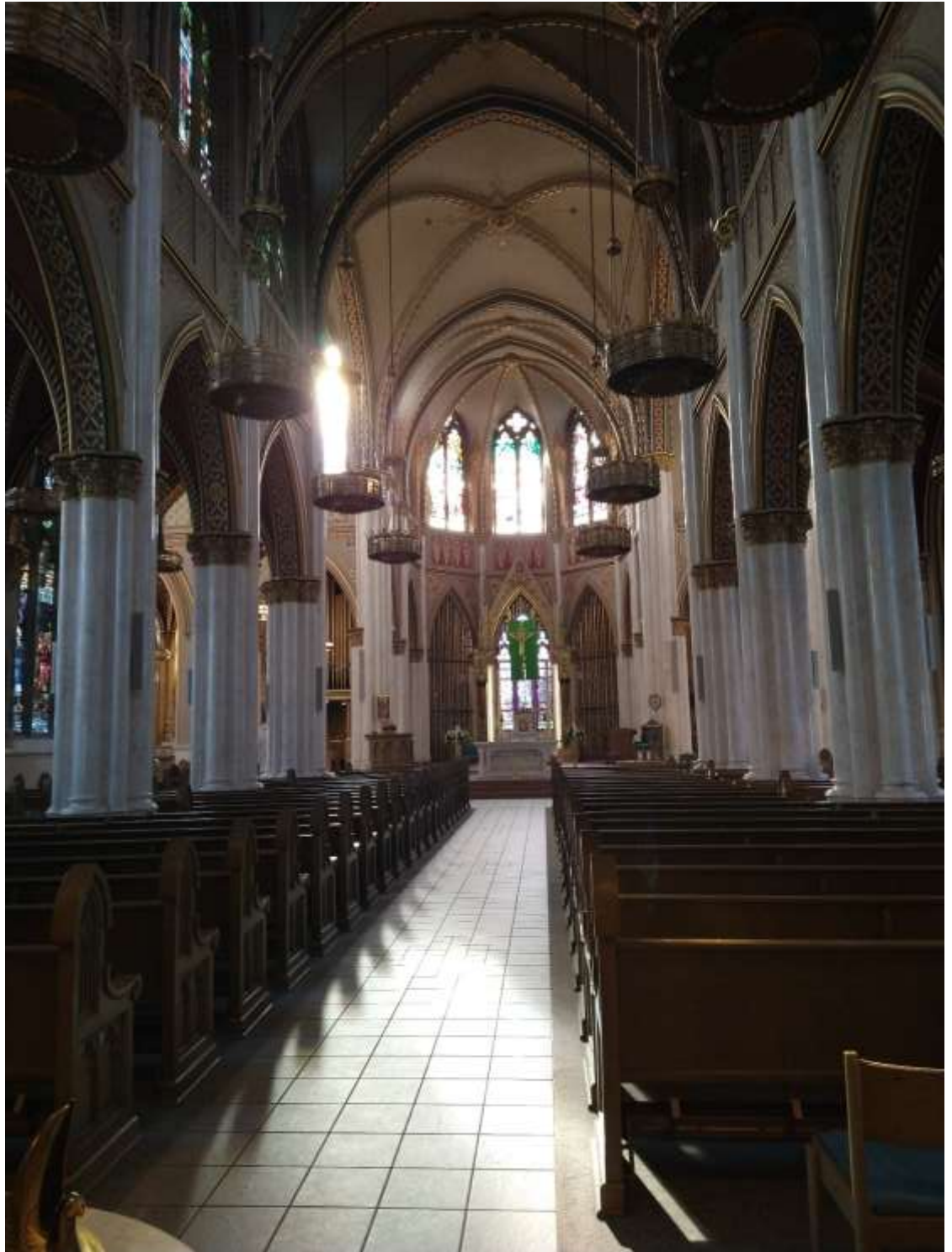
Why does the Helena Civic Center look like a mosque?

It looks like a mosque plopped down in the mountains of Montana, but it was built in the Moorish Revival Style in 1919 for the Algeria Shriners (hence the Moorish style!). It's listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It reportedly holds a 2,000 seat auditorium and a 15,000 sq. ballroom/exhibition hall.

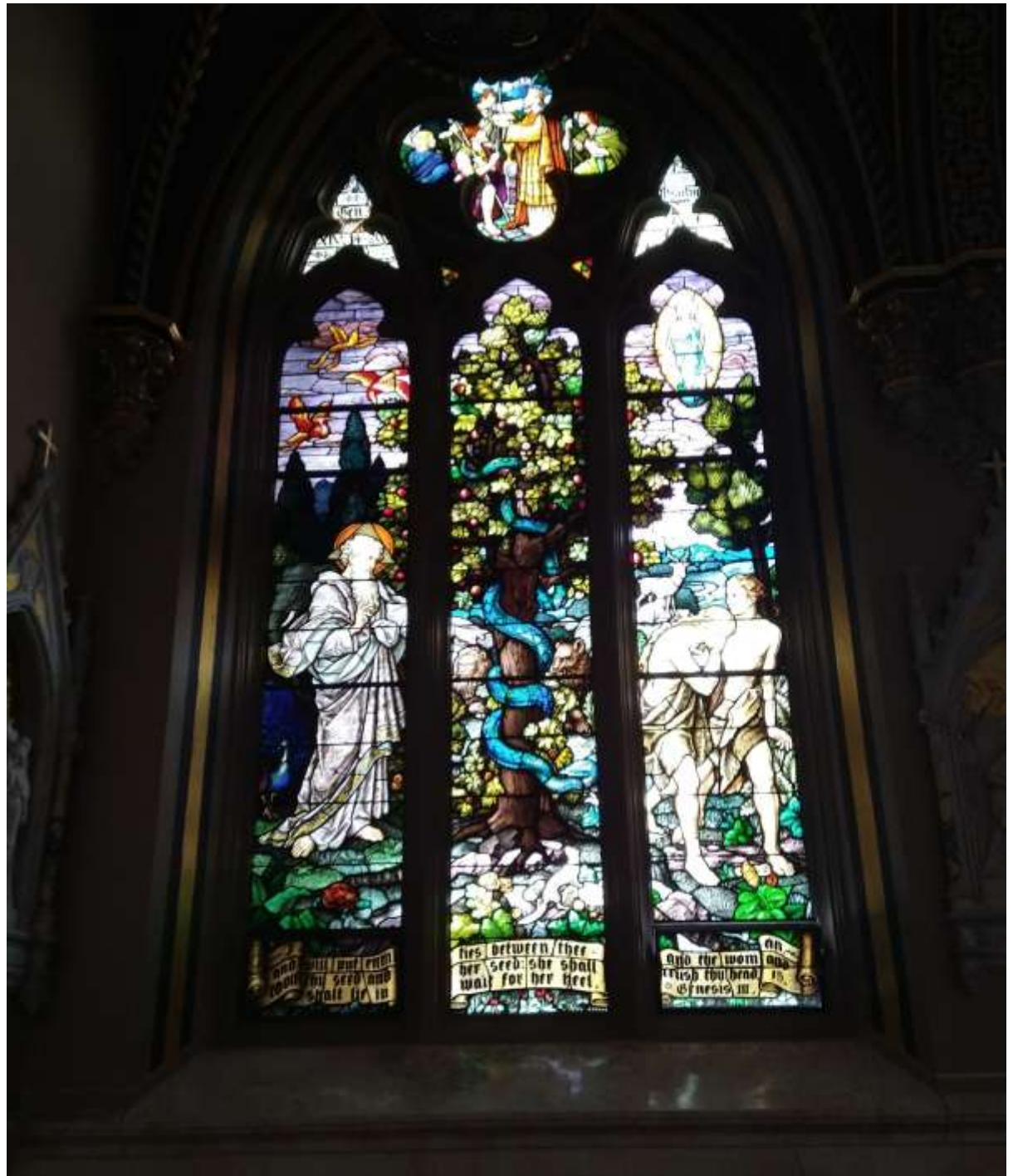
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algeria_Shrine_Temple



Cathedral of St. Helena, Montana <https://www.sthelenas.org/>



http://www.helenahistory.org/cathedral_of_saint_helena.htm

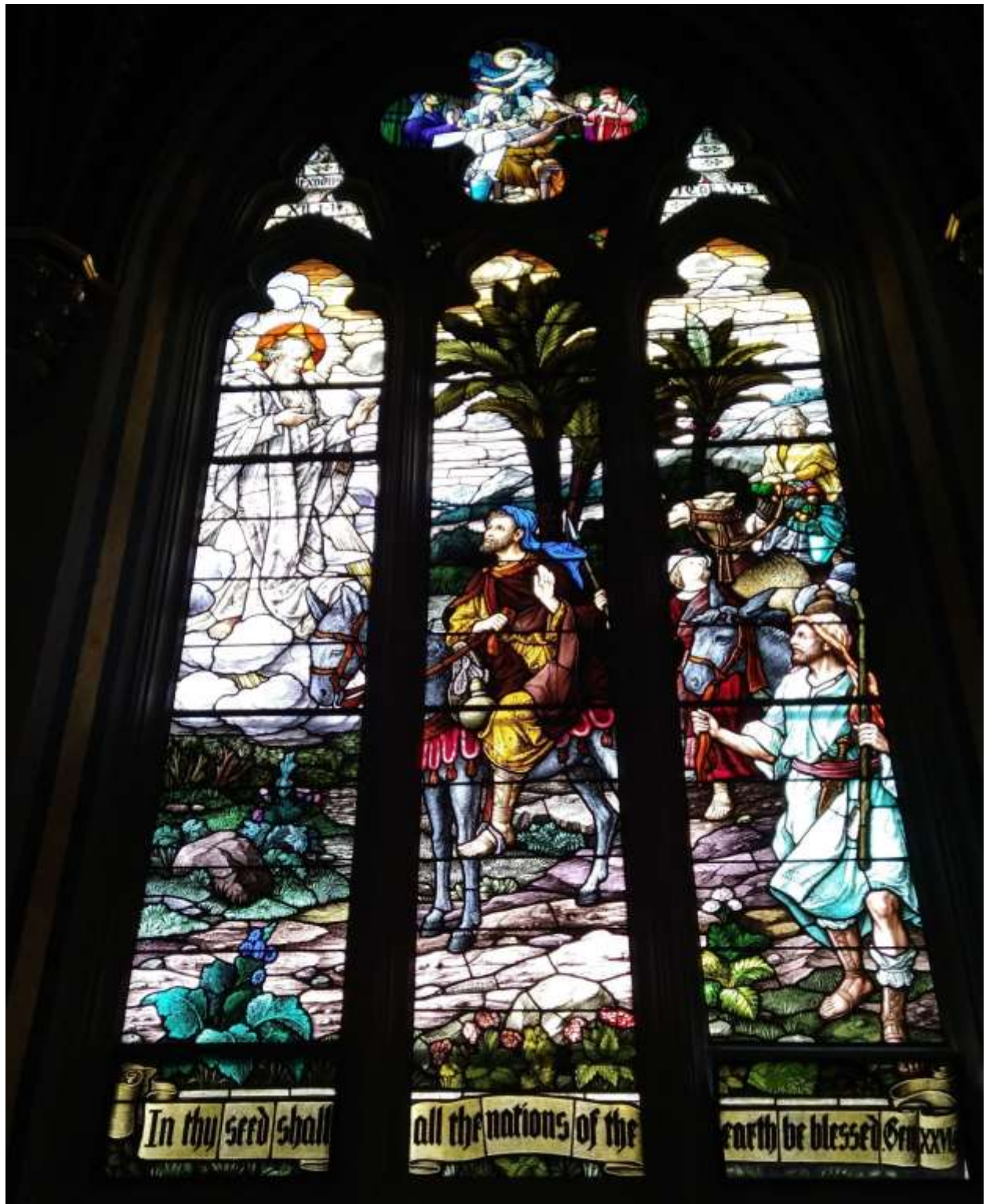


The Garden of Eden stained glass window

<https://happywonderer.com/2021/10/18/inside-cathedral-of-st-helena/>
<https://www.sthelenas.org/stained-glass-window-gallery/the-annunciation>



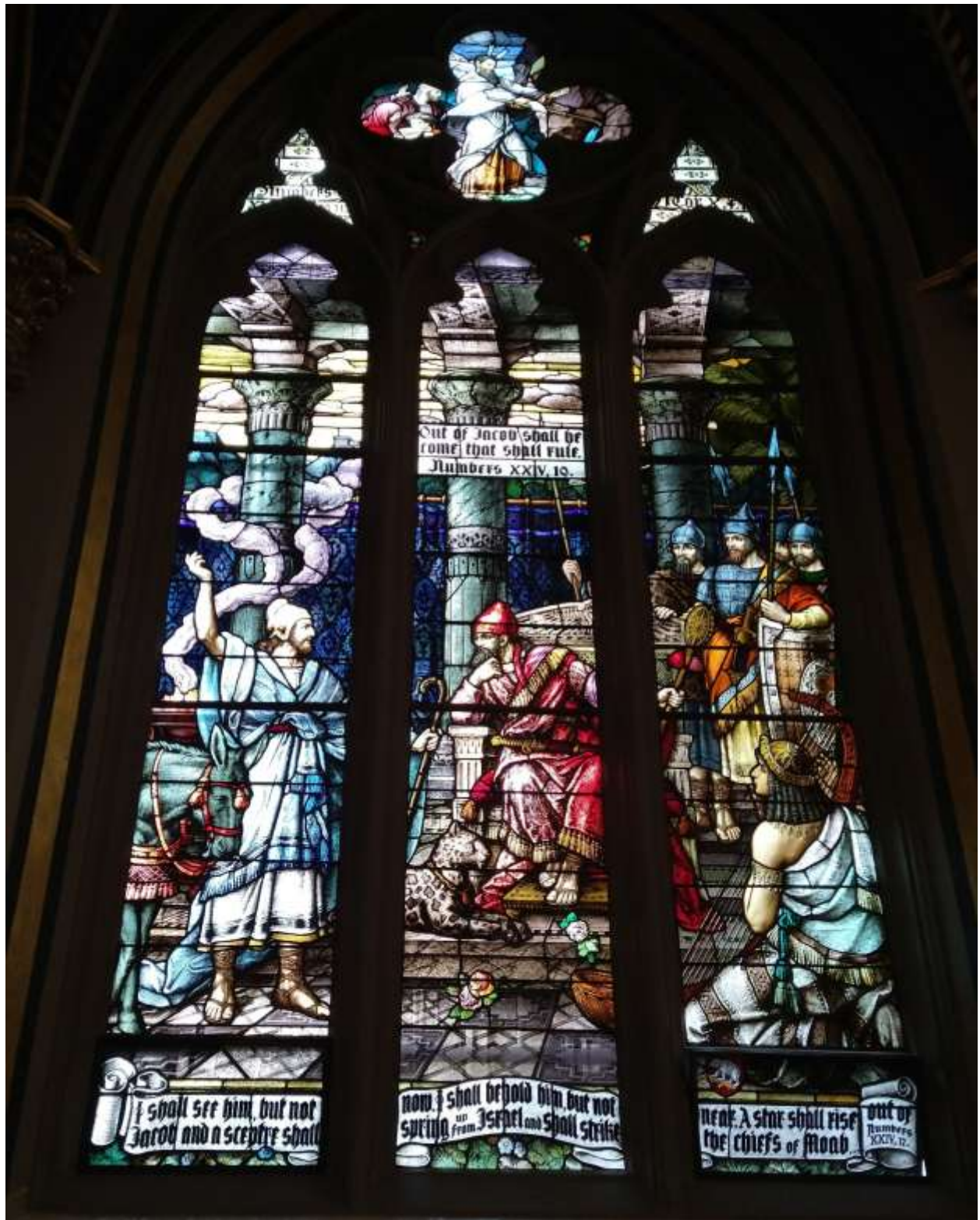
Abraham offered a ram instead of his son Isaac (as a sacrifice). Gen. 22:13



"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22 (Abraham)

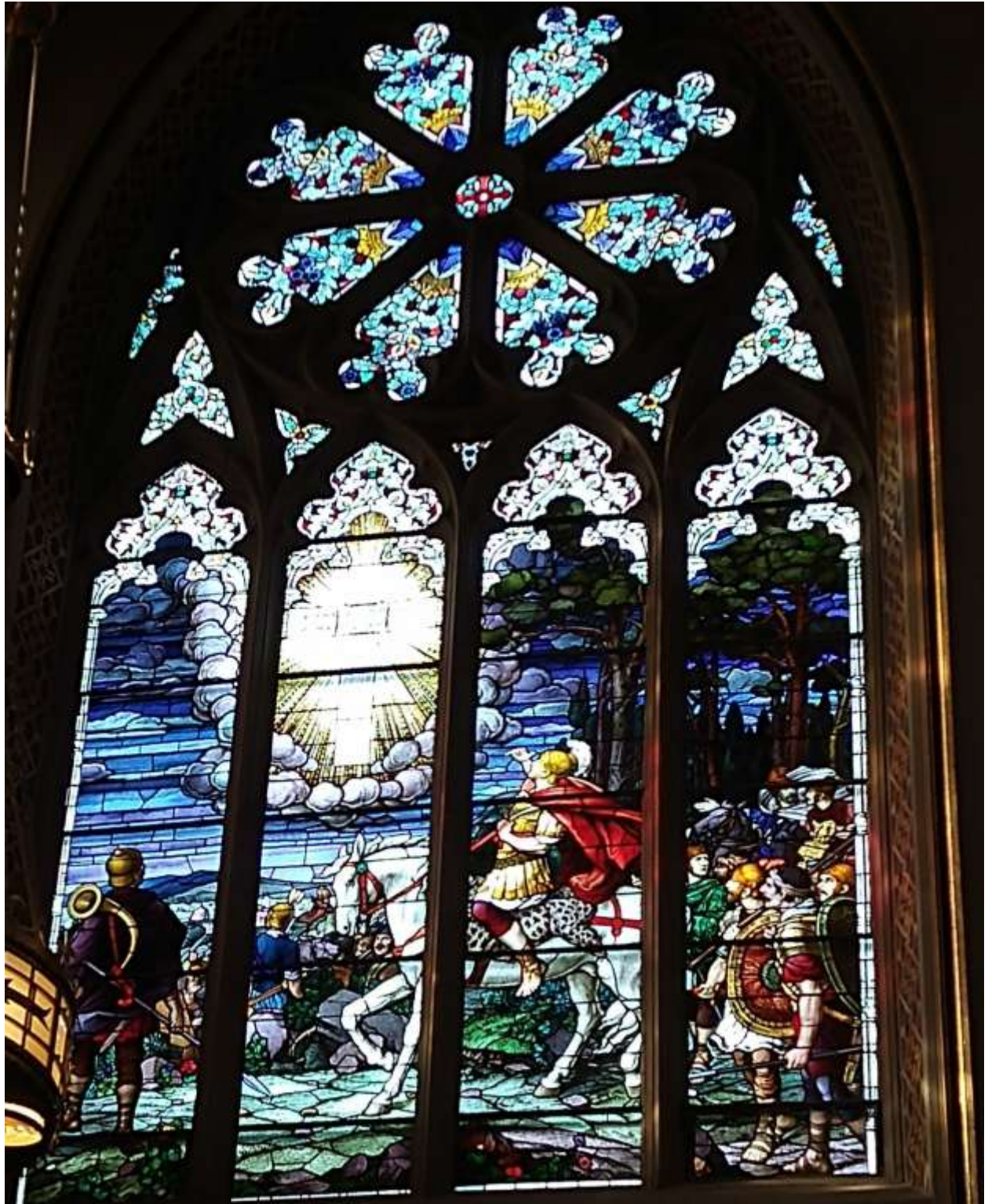


Gen. 49:10 -- The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations. ([Douay-Rheims Bible](#))

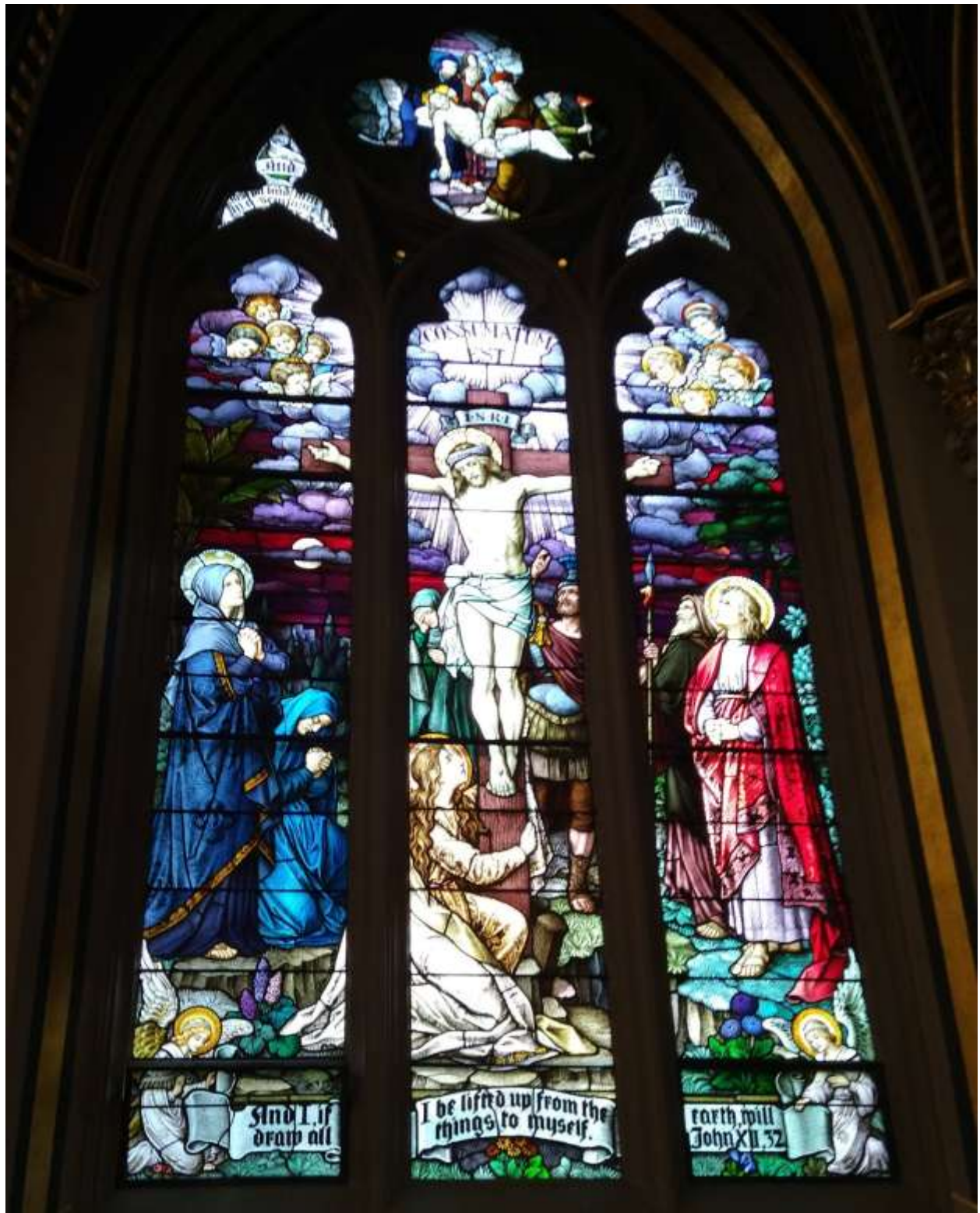


[Douay-Rheims Bible](#) (Numbers 24:17)

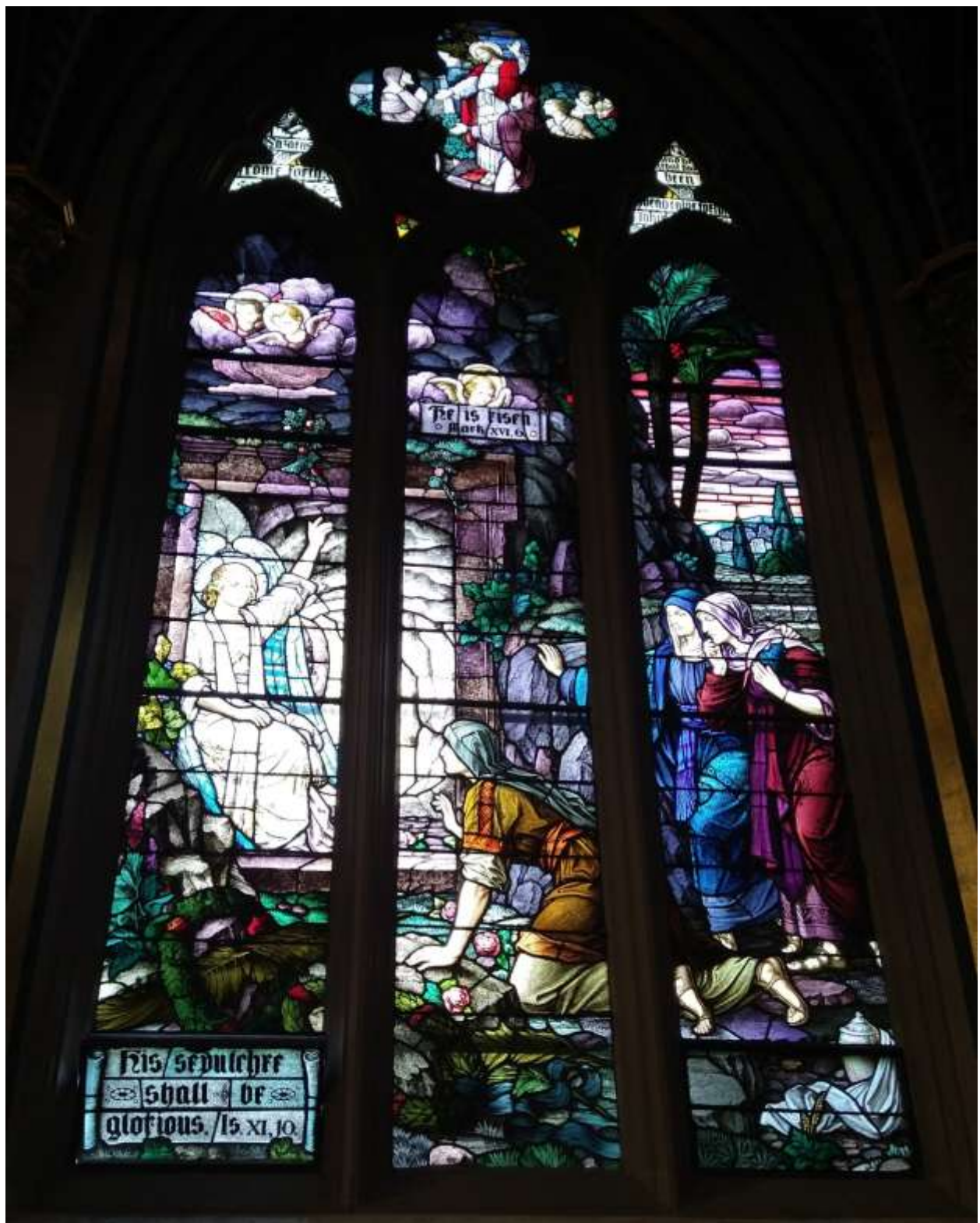
I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not near. A STAR SHALL RISE out of Jacob and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel: and shall strike the chiefs of Moab.



Emperor Constantine's vision of "the cross"



John 12:32 [Douay-Rheims Bible](#) (Catholic translation)
And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself.



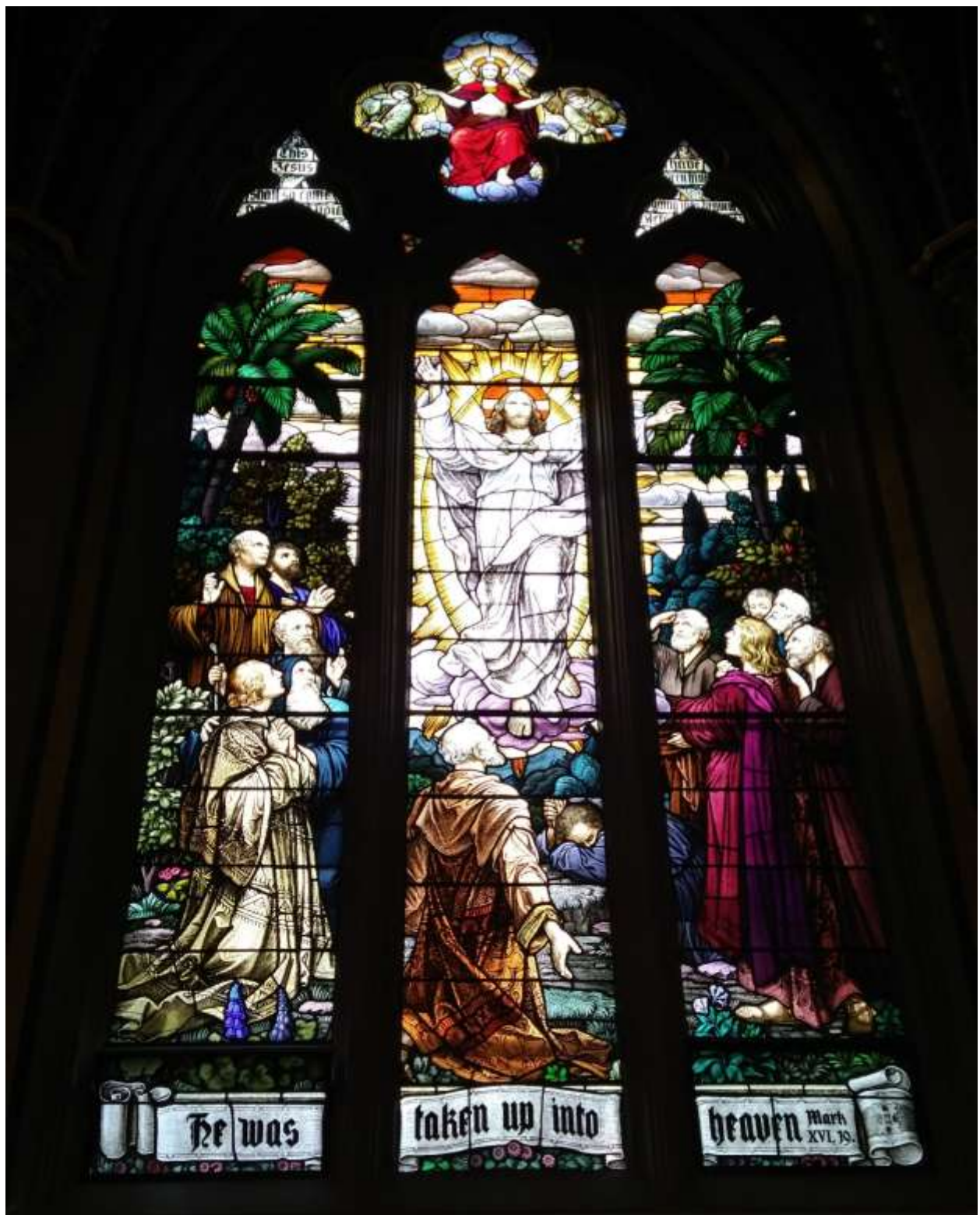
Isaiah 11:10 . . . and his sepulchre shall be glorious. He is risen, Mark 16:6



John 21:16 Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep."



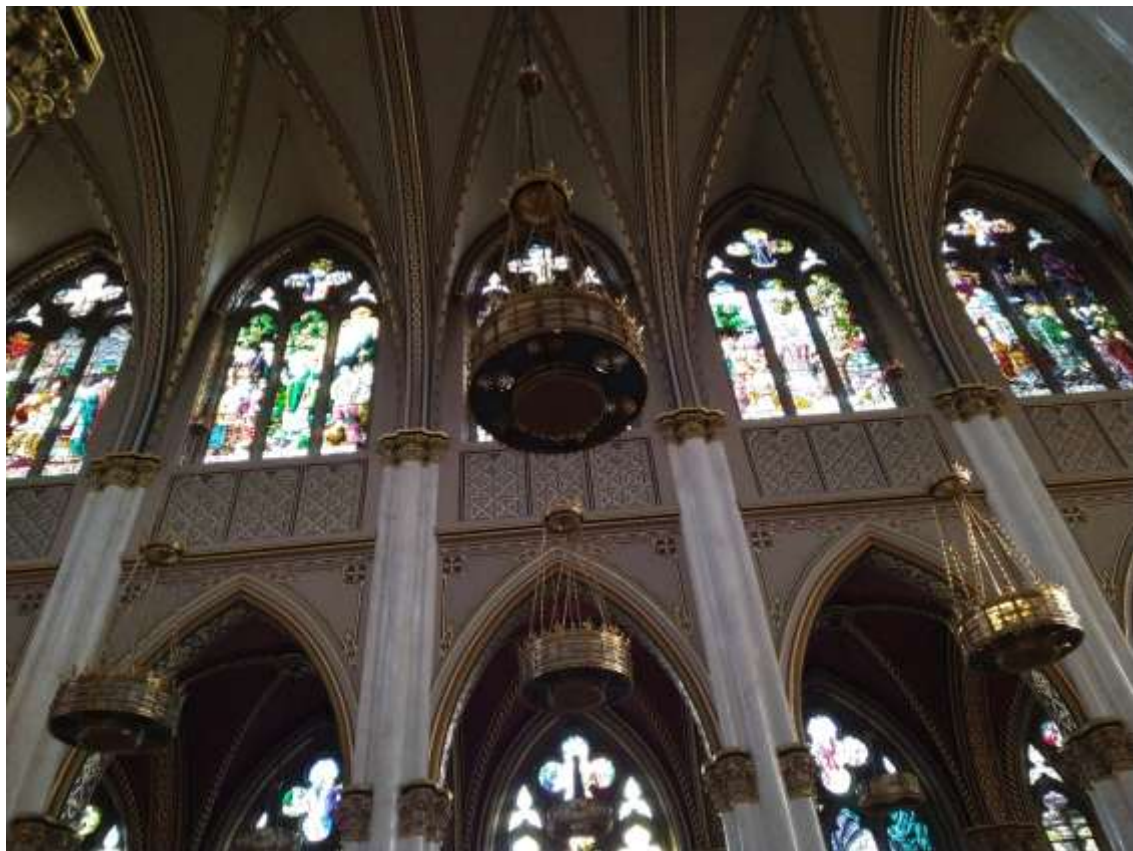
John 3:3-6 Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God



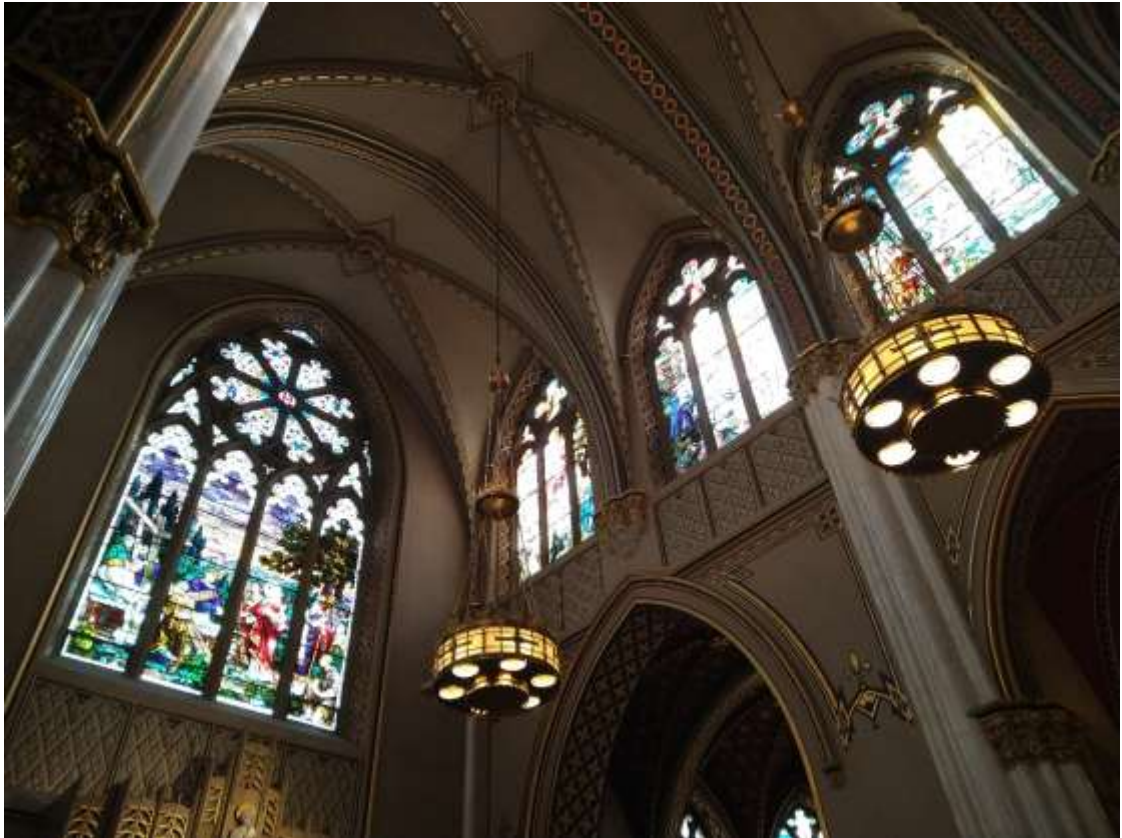
Mark 16:19 "He was taken up into heaven."



Acts 2:3,4 And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.









<https://mhs.mt.gov/education/capitol/> Capitol building, Helena



copper workers installed the statue, unofficially christened Liberty, atop the dome in December 1900.

<https://mhs.mt.gov/education/Capitol/Capitol-Art/Capitol-Exterior-Artwork>





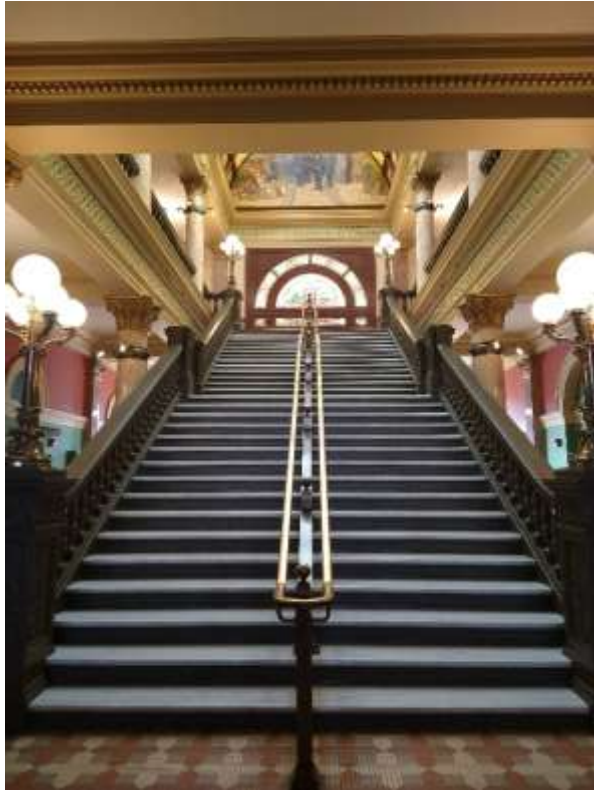
<https://mhs.mt.gov/education/Capitol/Capitol-Art/Rotunda>

In the Rotunda, four large roundels depict four characteristic “types” who played significant roles in Montana’s early development. Although the figures are meant to symbolize general themes, three of the four murals also depict specific men. This roundel’s image of famous mountain man Jim Bridger (1804–1881) acknowledges the contributions of trappers and explorers who first opened up the mountain West for Euro-Americans.

Governor Toole chose Salish chief Charlo (1830–1910) to represent Montana’s First Peoples. Charlo, Slem-hak-kah (Little Claw of a Grizzly Bear), was born in the Bitterroot Valley of western Montana.

The exploration of Montana’s vast mineral wealth originated with the humble efforts of prospectors such as Henry Finnis Edgar (1826–1910), pictured here with pickax and gold pan.

The cowboy, already a mythic figure by 1902, finds a place in the Rotunda not only because of the romantic aura of his work, but as a representative of the prosperity brought to Montana by the cattle industry.



Mural: The golden spike is the ceremonial 17.6-karat gold spike driven to mark the completion of the first transcontinental railroad across the United States.



<https://montanawomenshistory.org/women-build-montana-the-montana-womens-mural/>





Indigenous Americans encounter white man's westward movement.



Indian guide Sacajawea shows Lewis and Clark the Way west.



Montana statehood centennial bell, 1889-1989





"Colter's Run" can refer to several things: the actual historical escape of mountain man [John Colter](#) from the Blackfeet in 1808, a sculpture of the same name at the Museum of the Rockies, and a popular trail race event held near Missouri Headwaters State Park in Montana.

Historical "Colter's Run"

- **The Legend:** The name "Colter's Run" originates from the legendary escape of John Colter, a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, from the Blackfeet in 1808.
- **The Escape:** He was captured and pursued by a large group of Blackfeet, but managed to kill one of them with his own spear and escape by hiding in the river under a pile of logs. He then traveled 200 miles to Fort Raymond, surviving on bark and roots for eleven days.
- **Location:** The sculpture, titled "Colter's Run," is part of the permanent collection at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, Montana.