

# KAREN KIEFER, STAINED GLASS ARTIST

By LAURENA MAYNE DAVIS

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*You don't need to go to an art gallery to see stained glass artist Karen Kiefer's work. Just go to church.*

*From her home Rainbow Artistry studio, Kiefer has completed stained glass panels for several area churches and chapels.*

*Just as amazing as her work is the fact that she's done it all while watching her five grandchildren over the past 11 years. At one point, four were in diapers at the same time.*

**Who have you made windows for?**

I've done 26 for American Lutheran, 27 for Immaculate Heart ... First Presbyterian Church on 27½ Road, GJ Care Center chapel, Larchwood nursing home chapel, VA hospital, First Christian, Presbyterian Church on 27½ Road, St. James Episcopalian Church in Meeker.

**What do you try and convey in these spiritual works?**

Stained glass has always been inspirational. Way back in the 11th, 12th century, most people couldn't read, so the stories were told in glass.

**What else are you working on?**

Heir'looms for Hospice, two are in. We're going to do at least two more, maybe more. I'm also working on the ones for Redlands United Methodist. I do a lot of homes. It's all custom design.

**Are you known for any particular technique?**

I do glass fusing where you melt glass to the glass below. Like on one of the ones for American Lutheran, it's a ship on the Sea of Galilee. I created a net hanging over the side of the ship with a blowtorch.

**What are the challenges with doing commissions?**

You have to be able to work with all these different people. One of the most fun ones was the one in Meeker. There was a group of ladies, and I think the youngest one was in her 80s and they all had definite ideas. They decided on a pioneer woman with a little girl sitting at her feet. It's kind of dedicated to the women who founded the church. One woman wanted the pioneer woman in red because that was her favorite color, but the others weren't too crazy about having a woman in red at church. I ended up doing the knitting the pioneer woman was working on in red.

**What do your grandchildren think of your work?**

My grandchildren are very proud of it. When they go into a church that I did, they say "My grandma did that." They all love to draw and I think that's because we draw so much here.

*Kiefer, 56, and her husband Dennis Kiefer, a retired Grand Junction High School English teacher, live in Grand Junction. She also did two 8-by-3-foot windows for the high school.*

*Her motto is "Stained glass brings rainbows inside." Call her studio, 243-8908, for information about commissions.*



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