



## **The LaGrave Baptism Parament**

The design ideas for this parament represent the Reformed view of baptism. The images used are from Scripture and from ancient baptismal traditions.

Water is the primary baptismal symbol, so this parament is made to look like a waterfall – as if the river of the water of life which flows from the throne of the Lamb (Revelation 21) is flowing right into our sanctuary.

Water is an important symbol of deliverance throughout the Bible. Sometimes water represents death and trouble and God delivers his people by making them pass through the water. Noah and his family kept safe from the water of the flood in the ark; The Israelites are carried safely through the water of the Red Sea.

Sometimes water represents cleansing from our sin. The Heidelberg Catechism tells us that water symbolizes the washing away of our sin. On Pentecost, thousands repent, receive baptism, and become members of the church.

Baptism also signifies our union with Christ in His death and resurrection. (Romans 6:3-5). Baptism is the multi-faceted complex work of the Spirit claiming, instructing, washing, anointing, blessing and receiving us for the kingdom, represented in the shining points of crystals.

There is other imagery in the parament. The gold in the center of the parament represents the work of God being the central force in our lives as baptized children of God. The crystals represents the Holy Spirit who shines and gives us direction throughout our lives, in the good and troubled times we experience. The baptismal shell is an old baptism symbol used in the early church. Already in the catacombs Christians used shells to symbolize baptism, and today if you go to Calvin College and look at the baptismal font in the chapel you will see that it is carved in the shape of a shell.

We thank Joe Vriend and the Art Committee for their work on the baptism parament. We hope this new addition to our liturgical furniture will bring beauty to our sanctuary and richness to our celebration of the sacrament.