

Christian art expresses an abstract motif

By **FAY HENDRY**
Journal Correspondent

The most amazing thing about Ascension Lutheran Church's annual Christian Art Show could very well be its definition of Christian art.

Works are not required to have overt religious imagery or content — only a motif that expresses a Christian thought or idea.

Professor Lawrence Mills of Central College in Pella, Iowa, juried the 21st annual show. "This show has unusual breadth, as opposed to other Christian art shows," he said.

The Rev. Roy Schroeder, founder of the annual show, explained that Christianity itself is an abstract concept just as joy and hate are.

Commentary

OF THE 460 entries, there were only a few that Mills rejected because they didn't have a Christian motif. His final selection includes 146 pieces from artists around the United States. Mills also selected 23 prize winners.

Mills selection of Robin Heerns Blocksma of Grass Lake as first prize winner is disappointing.

Her handmade paper and feather piece, "Earth and Sky-Series IX," is composed of two forms. A round form, reminiscent of a shield, floats above a shape which suggests a canoe.

Handmade pieces of better quality include Karen DeVines untitled piece and Susan Hensel's "La Deluge." Hensel won a \$75 prize for another piece, "Human Landscape."

Bill Bippes of Concord has two wooden reliefs in which the natural wood is contrasted with black paint. Titled "Psalm 8," the works portray an expressive, but somewhat Oriental God, looking down on two sheep.

Across from Bippe's work is a delicate, monochromatic weaving by Lois Lewis that could easily be missed because of its subtlety.

TWO PIECES smack you in the face as you enter the church — William Tacke's large painting of a pregnant woman, "Jesus Lives Here," and Bohdan Kosicki's wooden puppet carousel, "Noah

Rounding Up the Animals."

Works more in the traditional history of religious art include Armida Stewart's stunning tapestry, "Guardian Angel," and Barbara Brayman McMullen's woodcut, "Four Evangelists," which has the charm of a medieval manuscript.

Robin Jensen's mixed-media piece, "2555 Jaunt," describes his bicycle trip across the United States. It also expresses the lifelong joy of a Christian jaunt.

TWO OTHER interesting pieces in the show were done by Helen Bonzelaar and J. Steven Hazzard. Bonzelaar's puppet piece consists of flat copper figures; Hazzard's intricate pencil drawing is filled with medieval monsters.

Also included in the show is a room of non-juried children's art.

The exhibit can be seen from noon to 9 p.m. daily through April 18. The church is at 2780 Haslett Road, East Lansing.

Christian Art Show winners

Here are the winners of this year's Christian Art Show:

FIRST PRIZE (purchase award)
— Robin Blocksma of Grass Lake.

\$100 prizes — Judith Alban of East Lansing, Bill Bippes of Concord and Chris Overvoorde of Grand Rapids.

\$75 prizes — Susan Hensel, Joy Schroeder, Thomas Astley and Carolyn Hoagland, all of East Lansing; Mary Anderson of Owosso; James Patterson of Brighton; Darlene Lucas of Okemos; W. Alonzo Allen of Royal Oak, and Ilse Eerdmans of Grand Rapids.

\$50 prizes — Rich Bishop, Helen Bonzelaar and Edgard Boeve of Grand Rapids; Laura Brody and Doug DeLind of Lansing; Bruce Rae of Onandaga; Margare Meade-Turnbull and Celia Skarstad of East Lansing, and James Reinert of Owosso.

Judge's Award — May Xiang of East Lansing.