FAITH AND PICTURES

THE ART OF ST. OSWALD'S

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and the Bible stories behind them.

Having a bit of extra time at home gives us a chance to think a bit more about things we often take for granted or don't always notice. With this in mind it felt like a nice opportunity to reflect a little more on Jesus and the faith he draws us into through thinking about some of the images which surround us gather in when we St. Oswald's. Maybe when we return to gathering we might even look at those familiar sights through a new lens, and be drawn deeper into God's goodness through remembering the stories they inspire.



the Bible in the Windows - the East window



A WORD FROM THE BIBLE

AFTER THE LORD JESUS HAD SPOKEN TO THEM, HE WAS TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN AND HE SAT AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. THEN THE DISCIPLES WENT OUT AND PREACHED EVERYWHERE, AND THE LORD WORKED WITH THEM AND CONFIRMED HIS WORD BY THE SIGNSTHAT ACCOMPANIED IT. MARK 16:19-20 Many of us have seen this window more times than we care to count. For some it's the crowning glory of St. Oswald's as a building.

The depiction of the Ascension as we see it beautifully and colourfully portrayed is one of the most colourful moments of the Christian faith.

After the pain of Easter and the excitement of the post resurrection appearances to the disciples, Jesus is raised before them to be reunited with the Father. The Ascension is Jesus' culminating step in the plan for redemption, and a picture of the Hope Jesus came to announce and enact.

A thought to ponder:

In a time where darkness and challenge feel rife, what do beauty and hope look like to you?

the Bible in the Windows - the East Window



Have you every been and had a close look at the Ascension window? Whave you ever noticed the proclamation at the bottom? HE HATH LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE - It's a reference to the mission of Jesus to free us all from the captivity of sin and brokenness. As you pray today, who do you know who needs freeing from the traps and prisons of the world?

A WORD FROM THE BIBLE

THE SPIRIT OF THE SOVEREIGN LORD IS ON ME, BECAUSE THE LORD HAS ANOINTED ME TO PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO BIND UP THE BROKENHEARTED, TO PROCLAIM FREEDOM FOR THE CAPTIVES AND RELEASE FROM DARKNESS FOR THE PRISONERS,TO PROCLAIM THE YEAR OF

THE LORD'S FAVOR

ISAIAH 61:1, QUOTED BY JESUS IN LUKE 4:18

the Bible in the Windows - the East Window

The South side of the Ascension window is once again filled with beautiful details it's easy to miss.

Here we see how the artist has depicted some of the historic industry of Bradford, as well as the more religious imagery of the three crosses at Golgotha, and the celebrating of the disciples who are focused on adoring the ascending Christ (out of shot).

It might serve as a reminder that our work and our worship can go hand in hand if in all we do we strive to honur and adore God.

How will you worship today?



LET THE PEACE OF CHRIST RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, SINCE AS MEMBERS OF ONE BODY YOU WERE CALLED TO PEACE. AND BE THANKFUL. LET THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST DWELL AMONG YOU RICHLY AS YOU TEACH AND ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER WITH ALL WISDOM THROUGH PSALMS, HYMNS, AND SONGS FROM THE SPIRIT, SINGING TO GOD WITH GRATITUDE IN YOUR HEARTS. AND WHATEVER YOU DO, WHETHER IN WORD OR DEED, DO IT ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, GIVING THANKS TO GOD THE FATHER THROUGH HIM. COLOSSIANS 3:15-17

the Bible in the Windows



"MY PRAYER IS NOT FOR THEM ALONE. I PRAY ALSO FOR THOSE WHO WILL BELIEVE IN ME THROUGH THEIR MESSAGE, THAT ALL OF THEM MAY BE ONE, FATHER, JUST AS YOU ARE IN ME AND I AM IN YOU. MAY THEY ALSO BE IN US SO THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE SENT ME.'

FROM JESUS' PRAYER FOR THE DISCIPLES, JOHN 17:20-21

The North Side of the East window is equally interesting. Here we see, amongst other things, disciples worshiping Jesus, the celebration of the Eucharist, York Minster as a picture of 'mother Church'. roaring seas, and kings and people from around the world bringing gifts. This imagery is full of symbolism, adding to a sense of togetherness, recognising that the Church of God covers God's whole creation, drawing us all together in one communion under Christ.

Take a moment now to think about and pray for the Church, not just for the Church you know, but God's whole Church around the world.

the Bible in the Windows



BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO THEM, "DO NOT BE AFRAID. I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS THAT WILL CAUSE GREAT JOY FOR ALL THE PEOPLE.

TODAY IN THE TOWN OF DAVID A SAVIOR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU; HE IS THE MESSIAH, THE LORD.

LUKE 2:10-11



This window depicting the shepherds and the Angels present beside the newborn Jesus is very different in style to the spectacular East Window, but no less poingant. Picturing the scene with the angels much more prevalent in the picture than lots of depictions gives an incredible reminder of the fact that this humble birth marked the beginning of an earthly life with heavenly connotations.

At a time when so many people have never encountered this incredible baby, why not pray today for others to see and experience who this Jesus really is?

the Bible in the Windows



THEREFORE, SINCE WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST WHO HAS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, JESUS THE SON OF GOD, LET US HOLD FIRMLY TO THE FAITH WE PROFESS. FOR WE DO NOT HAVE A HIGH PRIEST WHO IS UNABLE TO EMPATHIZE WITH OUR WEAKNESSES, BUT WE HAVE ONE WHO HAS BEEN TEMPTED IN EVERY WAY, JUST AS WE ARE-YET HE DID NOT SIN. LET US THEN APPROACH GOD'S THRONE OF GRACE WITH CONFIDENCE, SO THAT WE MAY RECEIVE MERCY AND FIND GRACE TO HELP US IN OUR TIME OF NEED.

HEBREWS 4:14-16

Above the side altar shines this picture of the East Magi from the visiting Mary and her newborn child. Bringing their gifts to present the young saviour, these mysterious travellers symbolically point to Jesus' status as a King (Gold), his role as great high priest (frankincense was used by priests in worship) and his untimely death (myrrh was used when wrapping bodies). We're reminded that Jesus came into the world to both reign over and minister to all of creation, and that part of that would be his suffering.

Whether it be an offering or a concern, what do you need to bring to Jesus our Great High priest today?

the Bible in the Windows



Hidden above the computer room hides this wonderful picture of the parable of the Good Samaritan. We see the man being washed and cared for by this kind foreigner, and are reminded of the call to demonstrate our love for God by showing love to others, even if this means incurring personal costs. You can read the whole story in Luke 10:25-37.

As we reflect on the world around us and those in need, how might we show love for neighbour today?

"WHICH OF THESE THREE DO YOU THINK WAS A NEIGHBOR TO THE MAN WHO FELL INTO THE HANDS OF ROBBERS? THE EXPERT IN THE LAW REPLIED, "THE ONE WHO HAD MERCY ON HIM." JESUS TOLD HIM, "GO AND DO LIKEWISE." LUKE 10:36-37

the Bible in the Windows



A WORD FROM THE BIBLE

THEN MARY SAID, "HERE AM I, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD; LET IT BE WITH ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD." THEN THE ANGEL DEPARTED FROM HER. LUKE 1: 38 (NRSV) Hiding away above the office and toilets is another window many may not have spotted. Here we see the brave young mary assenting to the Angel's instruction that she would soon be pregnant with the saviour of all creation.

It needs no imagination to think that this announcement, despite being a huge privilege, would also have been a terrifying prospect, as a young girl not yet married, at a time of occupation under foreign rule would have to begin the already dangerous journey of carrying a baby to full term. yet Mary's words remain for us a picture of her bravery and trust in the Lord who was calling her.

What might you need to trust God to see you through today?

The Angel appears to Mary - Luke 1:26-38



BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO HER, "DO NOT BE AFRAID, MARY; YOU HAVE FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD. YOU WILL CONCEIVE AND GIVE BIRTH TO A SON, AND YOU ARE TO CALL HIM JESUS. HE WILL BE GREAT AND WILL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE MOST HIGH. THE LORD GOD WILL GIVE HIM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID, LUKE 1:30-32 The North window is not the only place in St. Oswalds we find an image of the Angel's visit to Mary. Its also the first of our series of fantastic embroideries depicting the life and ministry of Jesus, who's time on earth the Annunciation marks the beginning of.

That it took an Angel to bring such special news gives readers of the Gospels an early pointer to just how special this baby would be. Indeed Mark's Gospel, which actually bypasses all of the early life of Christ, puts it even more explicitly, opeing with the line 'The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the SOn of God' (Mark 1:1). However they tell the story, the evangelists are all pointing to one central truth - this baby, this man, came from God to bring hope to the world.

And that's news that will never fail to be good.

Mary visits Elizabeth - Luke 1:39-59

Our second embroidery sees Mary visiting Elizabeth, her relative, now also pregnant, and also by miraculous means as she had never before been able to conceive. The baby to be born to Elizabeth would be John the Baptist, the man sent to proclaim the way for Jesus, preparing others to grasp what it would mean to meet with him, and even before his birth, John alerts his mother to the significance of the baby Mary is carrying by leaping in her womb (Luke 1:41) and she's filled with the Holy Spirit. This meeting also gives us the Magnificat, mary's beautiful song of faithful obedience, which remains a challenge and in inspiration to millions to this day.



MY SOUL GLORIFIES THE LORD AND MY SPIRIT REJOICES IN GOD MY SAVIOR, FOR HE HAS BEEN MINDFUL OF THE HUMBLE STATE OF HIS SERVANT. FROM NOW ON ALL GENERATIONS WILL CALL ME BLESSED, FOR THE MIGHTY ONE HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR ME-HOLY IS HIS NAME. 50 HIS MERCY EXTENDS TO THOSE WHO FEAR HIM, FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. LUKE 1:46-50

the Birth of Jesus - Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-20



A WORD FROM THE BIBLE

AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM IN A DREAM AND SAID, "JOSEPH SON OF DAVID, DO NOT BE AFRAID TO TAKE MARY HOME AS YOUR WIFE, BECAUSE WHAT IS CONCEIVED IN HER IS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT. SHE WILL GIVE BIRTH TO A SON, AND YOU ARE TO GIVE HIM THE NAME JESUS, BECAUSE HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS." MATTHEW 1:20-21 Our third embroidery is a simple take on a familiar story - the birth of Jesus, seen here accompanied simply by his loving mother, and her husband Joseph.

We sometimes forget the cost it might have been to Joseph to follow God's call, to look after a baby which wasn't his, and to marry a woman who as far as his wider family understood would have been a baby who wasn't his.

And yet Joseph, about whom we actually know little, is remembered as 'a righteous man' (Matthew 1:19), who determined to do right by his wife andfaithfully raise Jesus, trusting in the Angel's assurance that this baby was of God.

Today we thank God for Mary and Joseph's commitment to their child, and their faithfulness to God's call.

Who are you grateful to for their part in your faith or upbringing? Take a moment to pray for them now.

the presentation in the temple - Luke 2:21-40



SIMEON TOOK HIM IN HIS ARMS AND PRAISED GOD, SAYING: "SOVEREIGN LORD, AS YOU HAVE PROMISED, YOU MAY NOW DISMIS YOUR SERVANT IN PEACE. FOR MY EYES HAVE SEEN YOUR SALVATION, WHICH YOU HAVE PREPARED IN THE SIGHT OF ALL NATIONS:A LIGHT FOR REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, AND THE GLORY OF YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL." Mary and Joseph were committed to faithful observance of the religious laws, so they took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem soon after his birth.

At this point the amazing nature of Jesus is proclaimed once again, as Simeon, a man described as 'righteous and devout' (Luke 2:25), and to whom it had been revealed that he would one day see the foretold Messiah, praised God for the baby they brought, and blessed Mary and Joseph. So too Anna a woman who 'never left the temple' (Luke 2:37) praised God and acknowledged the child as the coming redeemer.

Those who met Jesus were drawn to worship, and to proclaim Jesus as something incredible. Who could you tell about Jesus' goodness today?

LUKE 2:28-32

The Triumphal Entry - Matthew 21:1-9, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:28-38, John 12:12-19



MANY PEOPLE SPREAD THEIR CLOAKS ON THE ROAD, WHILE OTHERS SPREAD BRANCHES THEY HAD CUT IN THE FIELDS. THOSE WHO WENT AHEAD AND THOSE WHO FOLLOWED SHOUTED, "HOSANNA!" "BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!" "BLESSED IS THE COMING KINGDOM OF OUR FATHER DAVID!"

MARK 11:8-10

Our embroideries now leap from thinking about Jesus birth (or incarnation), to beginning the lead up to the Crucifixion. This begins with the entry into Jerusalem, commemorated in the Church each year on Palm Sunday. Here we see Jesus, after the three years or so of Jesus traveling ministry of preaching, healing and driving out demons, being carried into Jerusalem on a Donkey to the rapturous applause of a people awaiting a saviour.

Yet Jesus, as we now know, would not be a prooud and militaristic leader, but would journey towards a victory accomplished through his humble death. Just as his life and entry had been lived in humility and service.

What does humility mean for you? Do you find it easy?

Jesus Washes his disciples' feet - John 13:1-17



JESUS KNEW THAT THE FATHER HAD PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS POWER, AND THAT HE HAD COME FROM GOD AND WAS RETURNING TO GOD; SO HE GOT UP FROM THE MEAL, TOOK OFF HIS OUTER CLOTHING, AND WRAPPED A TOWEL AROUND HIS WAIST. AFTER THAT, HE POURED WATER INTO A BASIN AND BEGAN TO WASH HIS DISCIPLES' FEET, DRYING THEM WITH THE TOWEL THAT WAS WRAPPED AROUND HIM. JOHN 13:3-5 John's Gospel is fascinating. Unlike the other three Gospels (technically known as the 'synoptics') John tells the story of Jesus life differently. This story takes place in the upper room, where the other Gospels place the last supper. John does deny the meal that not happened there, but has a different focus - he continues to draw us to see Jesus willingly serving his friends in even the most humble of tasks - wasking their dusty and dirty feet. In doing so Jesus was choosing to his closest friends give an example of the kind of humility their lives should demonstrate, and encouraging them to see the transformational nature of serving others. Then, as today, this radical act of generosity challenged the world's picture of what it means to lead others. How might you be radically generous to others today?

The Crucifixion - Matthew 27:33-56, Mark 15:22-41, Luke 23-49, John 19:16-37



The Crucifixion is the moment in Jesus' earthly ministry where we see the ultimate image of Jesus' servant leadership, as he chooses to let himself be handed over to death. This is the very event of which Paul would later say it was 'for our sins, in accordance with the scriptures' (1 Cor. 15:3). While there remains much debate about how this iconic event works for us and for our salvation, the cross is the ultimate depiction of Jesus love for humanity, that he would endure this hardship and humiliation in order that we as creation might be redeemed. What does salvation mean for you?

A WORD FROM THE BIBLE

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. FOR GOD DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT TO SAVE THE WORLD THROUGH HIM.

JOHN 3:16-17

The Resurerction and the empty tomb - Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16: 1-8, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-18



A WORD FROM THE BIBLE

BUT CHRIST HAS INDEED BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP. FOR SINCE DEATH CAME THROUGH A MAN, THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD COMES ALSO THROUGH A MAN.

1 CORINTHIANS. 15:20-21

After watching the gruesome brutality of the cross, finding the tomb empty must have been the most shocking event in the lives of the women who went to attend to Jesus' body. Yet this incredible plot twist in the eternal story of Jesus teaching is surely the greatest picture of hope for all of history. Having endure the shame and pain of the cross, Jesus is no longer dead, he is resurrected not just to the life he had before, but an even better picture of life, a life not after death, but beyond it. This event and the encounters with the risen Jesus which followed it must have been awe inspiring for those who met him, just as encounters with the risen Christ remain for those he meets today.

We are, and will always be, and Easter people!

The Ascension - Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:1-11



A WORD FROM THE BIBLE

WHILE HE WAS BLESSING THEM, HE LEFT THEM AND WAS TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN. THEN THEY WORSHIPED HIM AND RETURNED TO JERUSALEM WITH GREAT JOY.

LUKE 24:50-51

The Ascension marks the final part in the four stage drama of Jesus' earthly ministry following his incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. This is the completion of God's rescue plan to save humanity from the grips of sin and death, and the return of Jesus to the glory from which he came (see John's Gospel, 1:1-18). Although Ascension day often overlooked in the is Christian calendar, this eternally significant moment in the story of the earth is a true mark of the hope we cling to.

As he ascends to take his seat in Glory with his Father, he takes on his role as great high priest to save completely those who come to God through him (cf. Heb. 7).

Such is our great hope!

Pentecost =- Acts 2:1-13

If the Ascension is the final chapter in Jesus' earthly ministry, then Pentecost can be seen as the first chapter i the the ministry of the church through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is here that Jesus' promise of power on the disciples is fulfilled, seen , as Luke tells us in the book of Acts, as tongues of fire resting on those who were gathered.

It is at this event that the early church began to speak other languages, proclaiming the truth and good news about Jesus Christ to all who could hear.

It is this same power of the Holy Spirit which we pray God's church continues to move in today, and while the Holy Spirit remains as mysterious person of the Godhead, the power with which the Church can be filled remains to be a blessing to the world.

Why not pray today as God work in and through you also by the power of the Holy Spirit?



"IN THE LAST DAYS, GOD SAYS, I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT ON ALL PEOPLE. YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WILL PROPHESY, YOUR YOUNG MEN WILL SEE VISIONS, YOUR OLD MEN WILL DREAM DREAMS.

AND EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.' ACTS 2: 17+21

Christ in Glory in the Ascension window



We hope you have been blessed by this little tour of some of the works of art in St. Oswald's.

We hope much more though, that you are blessed each and every day by the God who loves us, gave Jesus for us, and offers the Holy Spirit to us.

As we reflect on the hope we find in the God who lived, died, rose again and ascended to heaven, may you grow each day in faith and wisdom, to live and work to God's praise and glory.

A PRAYER FROM THE BIBLE

MAY THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BE WITH YOU ALL.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14



