

New Stained Glass Window at St Thomas a Becket, Hampsthwaite

We will be holding a service of dedication and thanksgiving for the installation of a 'new' stained glass window in the chancel on Sunday 30th September at 11am (see drawing of proposed window). I will be joined by the former Archdeacon of Leeds, Rev Canon Paul Hooper for this special service in which the window will be blessed and celebrated.

The window has come to us through great serendipity and by God's grace. The first we heard about it was when our former Churchwarden, Peter Capel-Cure, met with York Glaziers Trust (YGT) to discuss the needs of our current windows in terms of their preservation. The representatives from YGT noticed the clear glass window in the chancel and suggested that a window they had in storage from a decommissioned church may suit the space. They were very generously willing to let us have the window for nothing, other than the costs of altering it to fit the precise space and of transportation and installation. Following an exciting visit to YGT by Peter & Suzanne, Jud and myself, to see the window, it was decided by our Church Committee and PCC to use part of a very generous legacy from our friend and Benefactor, the late Ian Haden, to fund the necessary work to the window in order to make it fit the space and to be installed.

The history of the window with YGT began in 1975 when salvaged glass of c1910 by the London artist Henry Victor Milner (1866-1944) was relocated in York Minster clerestory window S2.1. These panels had been acquired from the demolished church of St Paul's, Middlesbrough (built 1870, demolished 1966). The exact circumstances of the acquisition have remained unclear. These panels were removed from the Minster in 2013 and will now have a new life here.

The beautiful reconstituted window depicts Jesus Christ seen in a traditional 'blessing' pose. In this stunning, colourful, window we see the Mother of sorrows flanked by St John, as they witness to our Lord, who is not in anguish upon the cross, but is resurrected, redeeming all creation through himself. The colours in the window pick up on the green of creation, which is reflected in the countryside around the church.

One of the unintended consequences of stained glass windows from their origins is the benefit that the window is seen, not just in its beauty from the interior as the light shines through from the outside in daylight, but in hours of darkness when, lit from the inside by electric light, the stained glass is illuminated and seen from outside the church too, increasing its influence.

The window reflects and completes the stories depicted in the other windows. It offers a beautiful symmetry and synergy with the East Window in the chancel. The dedication to our patron Saint, St Thomas a Becket, reflects the profound suffering of a martyr, brutally murdered in God's church, for whom our church was built as a penance for those involved in uprisings from the area. Thus, the window encapsulates not only the hope of St Thomas a Becket of the love of God, for which he was prepared to die, but the act of repentance undertaken by individuals and communities which culminates in God's forgiveness, gained by his Son, so clearly seen in this window as Jesus bestows his blessing on the world, a palpable, permanent, reminder that we are blessed and called to share His blessings with others.

We are most grateful to Ian Haden for his incredible legacy to the Benefice Churches, and whom we will remember through this window; to York Glaziers Trust for their gift, skill and generosity; to Peter Capel-Cure for his vision and tenacity; to Jud Charlesworth for her dedication in seeing the permissions for the window through the complex Faculty process; and to Rev Canon Paul Hooper for joining us as we celebrate the installation of this incredible gift to the Church and village.

Please come and join us!

Rev Chrissy Wilson

