

The Windows of St. Aidan's Anglican Church



WORSHIP

CARING

MISSION

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Introduction



Part of our experience at St. Aidan's is to walk from the busy, secular world into the peaceful, holy space that is our church.

Over the years it has been endowed with time, talents and gifts that have added to its beauty and comfort and enriched our worship. The stained glass windows have contributed in a significant way in creating a church that is dedicated to the glory of God and that reflects the hearts and lives of its people over several generations.

Each window reveals an important figure or event central to the bringing of Christianity to our country and parish. Whether you are a visitor to this church or one of its congregation we hope that you will find in this booklet some of the stories of the peoples that have been part of our history and our faith.

Production: Sue Cadwallader

Text: Anne Mercer

Photographs: Belle Tregoweth

Acknowledgements: We would like to thank Bishop Peter Atkins and the Rev's Roy Everall and Gillian Reid for their help in compiling the text and interpreting the symbols.

World War Two Memorial Windows

On the brass plate on the left-hand wall as you enter the church are these words:

“These four windows are a thank offering to Almighty God for His mercies during the Second World War and in honoured memory of the men of this Parish who gave their lives in the struggle for freedom and whose names are inscribed on the cross in the churchyard.”



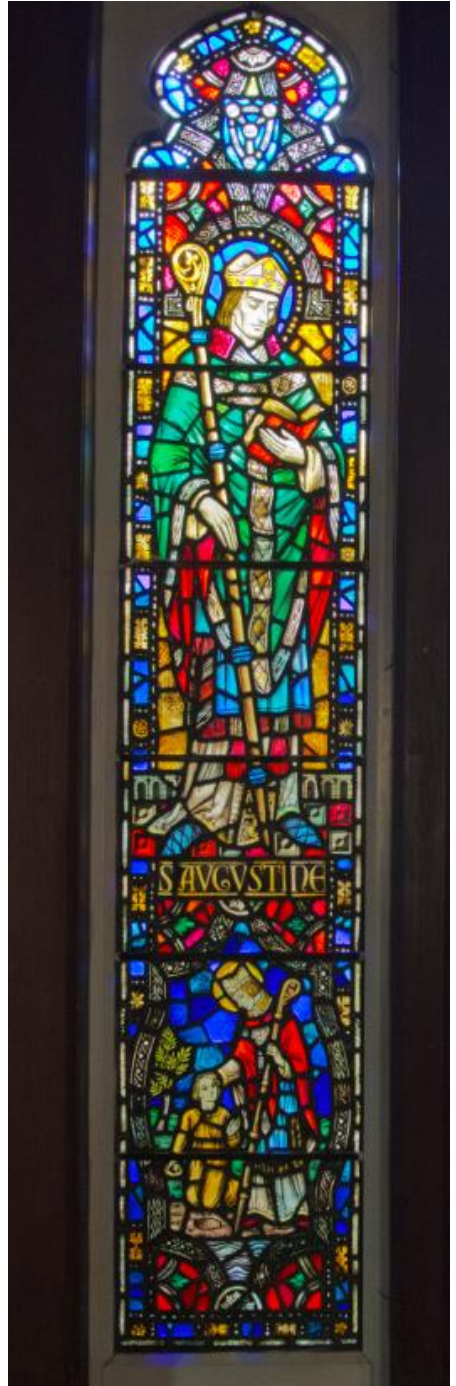
While Prior of a Benedictine monastery in Rome, Augustine was called by Pope Gregory to lead a mission, known as the Gregorian Mission, to establish Christianity in England. He was sent first to Canterbury where lived King Aethelbert of Kent whose wife was a Christian princess. The king became a Christian and allowed Augustine and his missionaries to preach freely and establish a monastery outside the city.

Augustine was consecrated as the first Bishop of Canterbury and is shown in the window carrying a crozier with the scriptures in his hand and on his head a bishop's mitre. Above is a 3 part symbol of the Trinity.

In the lower window he is shown beside the water baptising with a traditional shell signifying the thousands who were baptised on Christmas Day 597.

Augustine's attempts to persuade the indigenous Celtic Bishops further north (e.g. St. Aidan) to submit to the authority of Rome met with failure, but he founded a school to train Anglo-Saxon priests and missionaries.

The four pairs of windows were designed by James Hogan and made by James Powell & Sons at Whitefriars Glass Works, London.





Born into troubled times between East and West he was a skilled reformer and administrator and regarded as the founder of the medieval papacy which exercised both secular and spiritual power. Known as Gregory the Great he became Pope in 590. He fought tirelessly against corrupt factions which were endeavouring to influence social, civil and economic life.

As Pope Gregory he is shown in the window holding the Eastern-style crozier with a robe and head-dress quite different from that of Augustine. He was a prolific writer, often referred to as the father of Christian worship, hence he is depicted book in hand. The Gregorian chant, a style of plainchant, had its beginnings in his attempts to simplify church music. A parchment scroll is depicted in the top window.

He is quoted, after seeing pale-skinned English boys at a slave market in the Roman Forum "Non Angeli – sed angeli" - "they are not Angles but angels". In the lower window he is shown blessing the children. As part of his mission to take Christianity to the people of Western Europe and after the withdrawal of Roman legions from England he sent Augustine to Canterbury.

On the right-hand side of the lower window you will find a tiny white-clothed monk, an identifying feature of the windows made by Whitefriars of London, England.



This pair of windows depicts two early Christian martyrs and commemorates those who sacrificed their lives in World War II.

St Alban was a British soldier at the time of the Roman occupation of Britain (about 3rd century) during the persecution of Christians. History records that he sheltered a fugitive Christian priest in his home and was converted and baptised by him. When Roman soldiers searched Alban's house he exchanged cloaks with the priest and was arrested in his stead. The magistrate, furious at the deception, ordered that Alban, if he had in fact become a Christian, be given similar punishment. Alban declared "I worship and adore the true and living God who created all things." He was condemned to death and executed by beheading, reputedly where St. Alban's Cathedral now stands. He was the first known British martyr.

He is shown as a soldier, with shaved head and wearing a tunic and footwear of the time. He holds the sword of faith. His cloak is a reminder of the disguise he used to protect the priest. As a Christian martyr he is crowned with a cross in the upper window. And in the lower window he kneels in prayer at his execution by the same sword of faith.

St Stephen became the first Christian martyr soon after Christ's ascension. In Jerusalem he preached the message of Jesus as the Messiah and many Jews began to follow his teaching. Some Jewish leaders became alarmed at this and falsely accused him of blasphemy. He was brought before the elders and teachers of the law – the Sanhedrin.

In his long speech, (which is found in the New Testament -Acts 7) rather than appealing them, he accused them of rejecting God's message in the past and then rejecting Jesus. Furious, they dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death. Saul, later to be renamed Paul, stood and watched and approved the killing.

Stephen is depicted dressed as a deacon, the palm and the stone he carries a sign of his martyrdom, as does the crown in the upper window. Below, like St. Alban, he kneels in prayer at his death by stoning.



These windows represent two great missionary figures in Church history; St. Aidan, our patron saint who took the gospel to the people of northern England in the 600s and St. Paul, chosen by Jesus to preach the word to the Gentiles (non-Jewish people) from Israel to Rome.

St. Aidan travelled from a monastery on the island of Iona off the north-west coast of Scotland to Northumbria in England. He came at the request of King Oswald who desired his people to be converted to the way of Christ. Aidan replaced a former austere monk, unsuccessful in his mission, who spoke harshly of the people. Aidan suggested that it might be better to “gently instruct with the milk of human kindness”. Installed as Bishop he walked long distances meeting and teaching. King Oswald presented him with a horse which was soon given away because, Aidan said, “it raised me too far above the people”.

He is depicted in the dress of a Bishop, with mitre on his head and holding the crozier. One hand is raised to symbolise his role as a teacher and in the other he holds a copy of the Lindisfarne Gospels. He established a monastery on the island of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, off the north-east coast of England which was noted for its fine copying of the gospels and from where he trained and sent missionaries into the pagan kingdoms on the mainland.

In the upper window burns the torch, symbol of his missionary faith, while the lower window depicts his blessing and teaching of the king and people of all ages.

Chad, one of his students became Bishop of Mercia in central England, which later became the Diocese of Lichfield. This links us to Bishop Selwyn who returned there after his time as Bishop of New Zealand. The churches of St. Chad, Meadowbank and St. Oswald in One Tree Hill are also linked to this time in history.



St. Paul

After the stoning of Stephen in Jerusalem, Saul, a learned and devout Jew from Tarsus living in Jerusalem, set out for Damascus. He was intent on the persecution of Christians. Not far from the city he was struck down by a vision of Jesus who cried “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Unable to see, he was lead into the city. After three days, he met with Ananias who had been instructed by God that Saul had been chosen by Him to “proclaim my name to the Gentiles and to Israel”.

Saul regained his sight, was baptised and, filled with the Holy Spirit, became known as Paul. After some years in Arabia and then in Jerusalem he began the first of his four great missionary journeys, mostly on foot or by sea. These took him to Syria, through the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean and to Rome where he was once again imprisoned for his faith. His many writings and letters to the early churches form a large part of the New Testament.

As described by historians he is shown as dark-haired and bearded. He carries the sword of faith a symbol of his missionary outreach. The open book in the upper window bears testimony to his writing. In the lower window he is shown, as with St. Aidan, hands raised as teacher, and the figures (which include a woman) are representative of the many different generations to whom he preached.





This pair of windows, placed in the part of the church traditionally known as the Lady Chapel features the Blessed Virgin Mary and Eunice. They commemorate the role of women and mothers through the ages in the nurturing, protection and teaching of children especially in times of war.

Mary, mother of Jesus, was a young

virgin from a humble Jewish family in Nazareth, engaged to Joseph. She was visited by the Angel Gabriel and told that she had been chosen by God to bear a son whom she must name Jesus. He would be the Son of the Most High. She accepted God's decision and, after the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, nurtured and cared for him and his brothers until he was ready to lead his people.

Her window is decorated with the fleur-de-lis, a heraldic styled lily motif which is regarded as a symbol of innocence, piety and purity. She wears a blue robe and carries a lily. Both are traditional depictions of Mary. She is shown with her hand raised symbolising her teaching of the scriptures. Throughout Christianity she has been esteemed among women as an example of the willing acceptance of God's will for her.





Eunice was the mother of Timothy. She was Jewish, married to a Greek non-believer, and living in Lystra, a city in Southern Galatia, now Turkey. She raised and taught Timothy “in the fear of the Lord” as decreed in Old Testament scriptures. It is possible that Eunice, her mother Lois, and Timothy were open to Paul’s teaching on his first missionary journey and were converted at that time to Christianity. In his letters Paul speaks highly of them, and Timothy later accompanied Paul on his further missionary journeys.

She is shown with a book in hand connecting her to Paul’s writing of the scriptures and in the lower window, as with Mary, depicted with a raised hand, teaching Timothy. Above is a decorative “E” for Eunice and in the lower right corner you can again see the little white-robed monk which signifies this set of eight windows were made by Whitefriars of London.

In the church sanctuary, on the left, are the windows of St. Oswald, King of Northumbria and Bishop Selwyn, the first Anglican Bishop of New Zealand.

St. Oswald

After the death of the King of Northumbria in 616 his young sons, Eanfrith, Oswald and Oswy were sent for protection and schooling to the monks of Iona, off the North-West of Scotland. When Eanfrith later returned to claim his father's kingdom he attempted to negotiate a peace but was killed in battle by his adversary Cadwalla of Wales. As heir, Oswald, aged eighteen, arranged to meet Cadwalla in battle near Hexham. Before the battle he set up, with his own hands, a large wooden cross and called together his small army to pray. Cadwalla was killed and a victorious Oswald was re-united with Northumbria, the most powerful kingdom in England.

Oswald sent at once to the monks of Iona for a bishop to convert his people to Christianity. It was Bishop Aidan (our patron saint) who successfully took up this role. Oswald was kind and supportive of Aidan and was known for his generosity to the poor. Consequently Christianity flourished in north and central England.

St. Oswald is shown crowned as King. He holds both a wooden cross recalling his battle with Cadwalla and a fleur-de-lis sceptre, signifying his faith and royal duties. The crown is repeated in the top quarter. The lower quarter depicting a raven on a reliquary recalls Oswald's death in battle with a rival king at Oswestry. Parts of his dismembered body were entombed in reliquaries and taken to holy sites throughout England and Europe, the beginning of a cult following. A raven is said to have flown with a part of his arm to a nearby tree which became noted for its powers of healing.

This window was given in memory of a former vicar, the Rev. Richard L. Connolly and his wife, Muriel.



Bishop George Augustus Selwyn

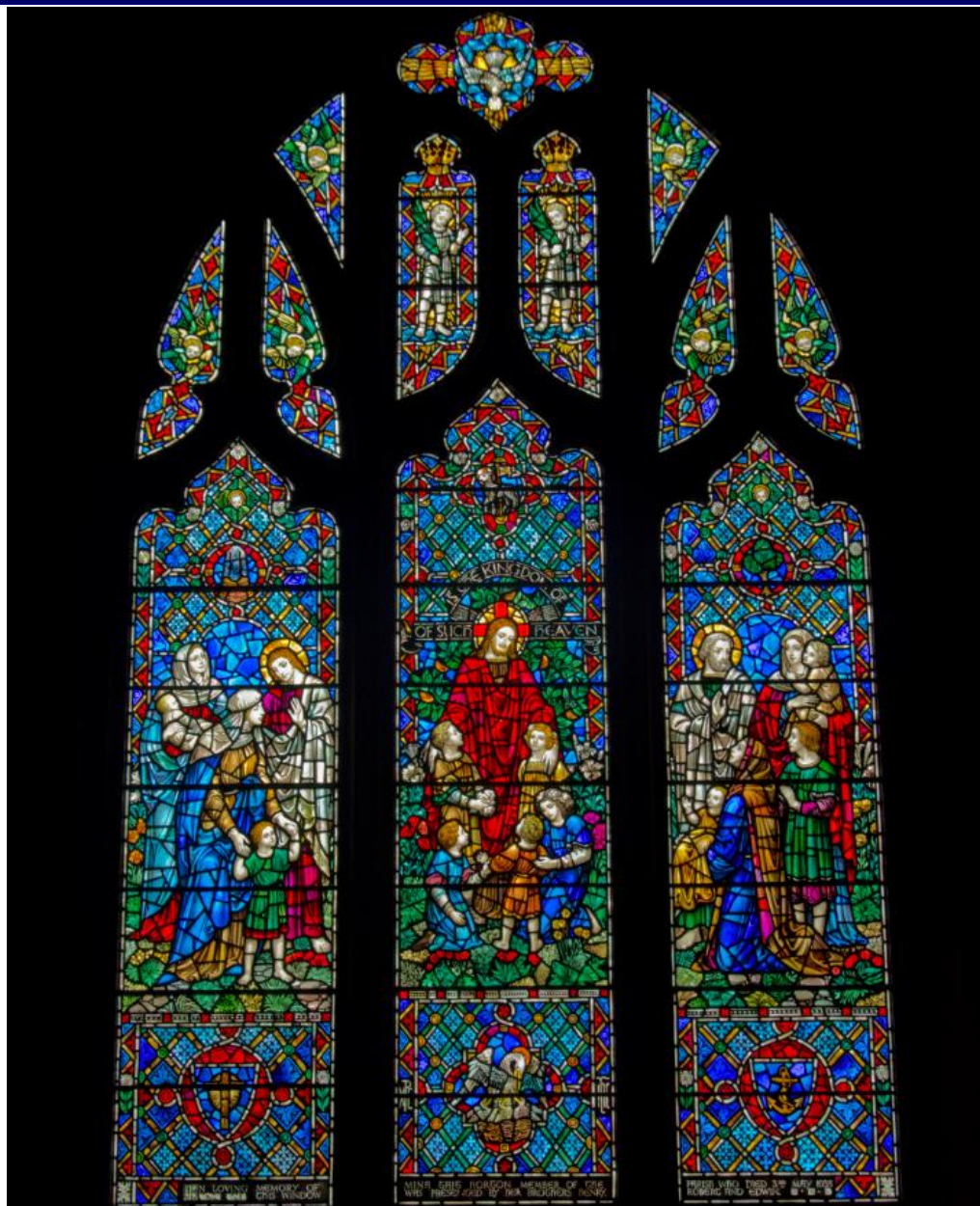
Born in England in 1809 he was a man of enormous zeal and energy with vision and a genius for organisation. In 1842, soon after his arrival in New Zealand with his wife Sarah and infant son, he spent six months visiting every mission in the North Island, travelling several thousand kilometres on foot, on horseback, by boat or canoe. Able to converse and preach in Maori and English his next journey took him to the South Island, including Stewart Island and the Chathams. Later as an expert mariner and navigator he made several voyages by schooner to the distant islands of Melanesia.

St. John's Theological College was founded by him as a training school for those studying for ordination in the Church, including Maori and English-speaking New Zealanders and students from Melanesia. Under his leadership the Anglican Church in New Zealand became a properly constituted province of the Church of England. His concern was for both the spiritual and secular concerns of the people, especially where it touched on the rights of the Maori. He was frequently consulted by the government of the time on constitutional and political issues and took part in conciliatory talks between warring factions.

He left New Zealand in 1868 with his wife and family to take up an appointment as Bishop of Lichfield, England.

He is depicted wearing a traditional episcopal walking dress of long frock coat and high boots. As Bishop of the Islands of the South Pacific he carries a later edition of the bible and a sexton, against a background of a sailing ship and the sea. A bishop's mitre is shown in the top quarter and his coat of arms in the lower. These windows, designed by Rupert Moore, were made by Whitefriars of London. This window was given in memory of Grant Harris MacKay and faces diagonally across the church to that of Bishop Selwyn's wife, Sarah.





The beautiful East Window, a central focus of worship at St. Aidan's, is in three parts, representative of the Trinity. The central figure depicts Jesus with his arms around children.



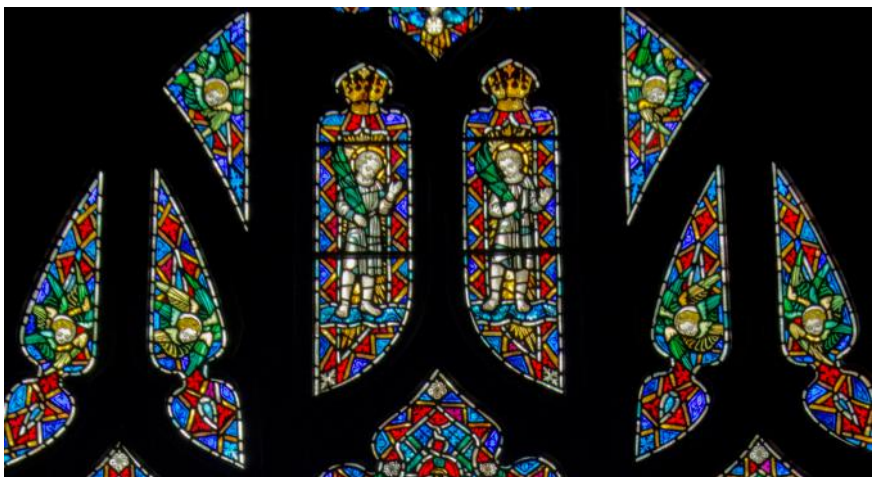
On either side a disciple is shown with his hand raised preventing the women and children, waiting and eager to receive Christ's blessing, from approaching. Jesus' response was to rebuke the disciples with the words: "Let the little children come to me for of such is the kingdom of heaven". Words that are engraved around the head of Jesus, and taken from the gospel of Matthew Ch.19: 13-14.

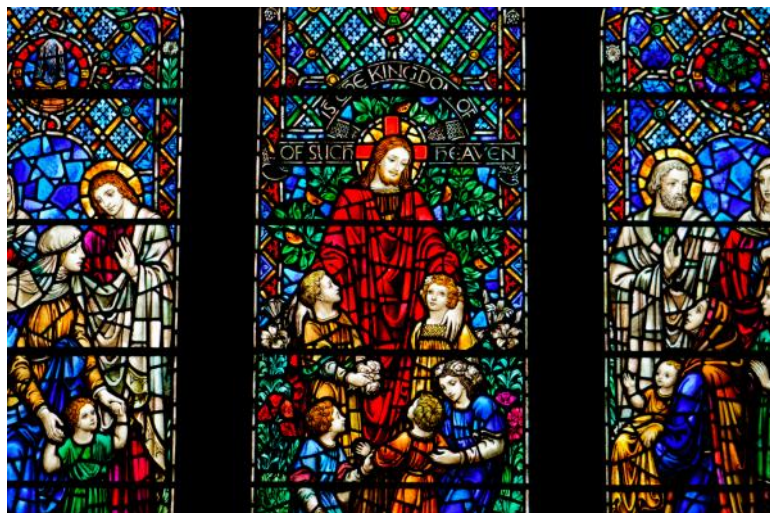
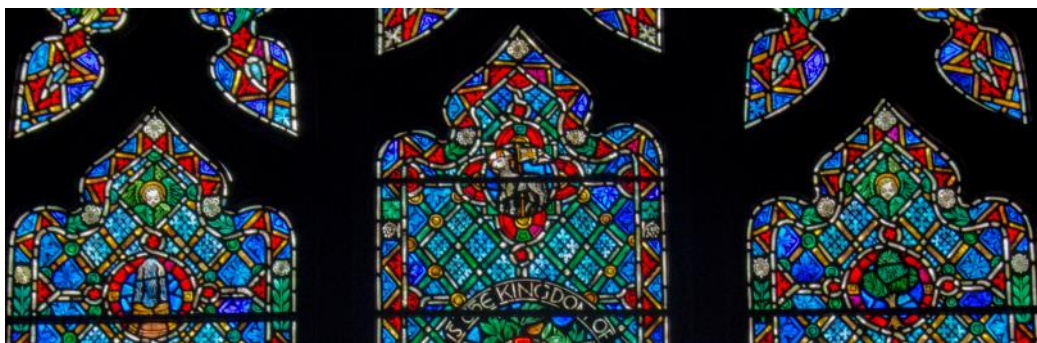


At the top of the central window the dove of the Holy Spirit with a bread wafer in its mouth is seen descending – bringing the bread of life.



Angels and cherubs are shown either side of two angelic figures each holding a palm frond and surmounted by a crown, symbols of early Christian martyrs.





The lamb of God, symbol of Christ's sacrifice is shown above His head, and to the right is the tree of life, to the left is a well with the water of life overflowing the rim.

The three lower segments show, from left to right, the cross of the crucifixion, the phoenix of the resurrection and the anchor of hope and faith.



The window was given in loving memory of Mina Tait Horton who died on 3rd May 1935 and was designed and made by Whitefriars in London. The depiction of Jesus surrounded by children and placed central to the church, was almost certainly chosen in recognition of St. Aidan's as a family church to serve the people of Remuera.

The pair of windows on the south side of the Sanctuary represent St. Luke, the evangelist, and St. Barnabas.

Luke is believed to have been born a Gentile in Antioch. His writing indicates that he was well educated in Greek language and culture, and confirms that he was a physician by profession. A close companion of Paul, he travelled with him on Paul's second missionary journey and on the journey to Paul's final imprisonment in Rome. He remained there with Paul after others had deserted him.

His Gospel is especially important in its fine literary style and historical scope. He shows special concern in recognising the Gentiles as well as Jews in God's plan and writes with warmth and understanding of sinners, the poor, and the role of women and the family. In his gospel (Ch.19:10) "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" he summarises his teaching on the nature of Jesus as Messiah and in His mission.

In his book of the Acts of the Apostles he accurately describes how the gospel progressed from its Jewish roots out to the Gentile world and presents a history of the early Church.

Luke is depicted as an evangelist, holding his gospel which tells in detail the story of the Virgin Mary and child, and is witness to the importance he gave to women. In the top quarter is a pestle and mortar a reference to his profession as a physician. The lower quarter uses one of the early symbols relating to each of the evangelists. In Luke's case this is a winged bull or ox.





Barnabas was first known as Joseph, born a Jew on the island of Cyprus, but as an early Christian was called Barnabas by the apostles. The name means “son of encouragement” and as a recognised leader of the church in Antioch he was instrumental in persuading the apostles in Jerusalem that Paul, not long after his conversion, was no longer a danger to them. It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

He travelled with Paul on the first of his missionary journeys to the Gentiles. Together they attended the Council of Jerusalem, a crucial point in the history of the early church, where the Jews, converted to Christianity, were trying to impose Jewish law on the Gentile converts. They were able to gain admission of the Gentiles into the Christian community without the need for circumcision.

Later he travelled with Mark to Cyprus and is presumed to have continued his missionary work to both the Gentiles and Jews, converting and encouraging the people.

Barnabas is shown holding a bible inscribed with the words “I have made you a light to the nations so that my word may reach to the ends of the earth”. The lower quarter shows a boat representing the many missionary voyages he made across the Mediterranean.

The words “PEACE” and “GRACE” inscribed on these windows are relevant both in the lives of the apostles but also in the life of Shirley Nicholson, faithful servant of the Parish and Diocese for many years. His memorial plate is to the left of the windows. The windows were designed by Beverly Shore-Bennett in 1997.

These windows, part of the exit doors on the south side of the church, were designed to allow plenty of light into this part of the church. Unlike the previous windows they do not represent a person or saint. Their abstract nature is simple and intended to gently complement the more dramatic images around them.

The design is made up of several symbols used in ancient Christian art. At the top of the left-hand window is the Chi-Rho or Labarum formed from the first two letters of the word “Christ” in Greek, and often interpreted as **Pax , or Peace in Christ the King.**

The central design on both doors, IHS is a Christogram, a combination of Greek letters which form an abbreviation of the name of **Jesus Christ as our Saviour.** Oak leaves form a decorative feature, and their use is seen on other windows in the church.

The left-hand lower window depicts the Greek



letters for Alpha and Omega, a reference to the last chapter in the Book of Revelations, 22:13, where Jesus says “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”

In the top of the right-hand window shines **the light or torch of hope and faith** complimenting the same symbol used in the window of St. Aidan across the

church. The rose in the lower segment is a symbol of love.

The windows were given in memory of Trevor Down by his wife, Thelma. Trevor was for many years a faithful servant of this Parish and community. The windows were designed and made in 2012 by Glassworks of Mt. Eden, Auckland and are the work of Suzanne Johnson and Ben Hanly.

It may be worth noting here that these windows and the following two pairs of windows of Tarore and Sarah Selwyn and St. Mark and St. Matthew replaced the last of the plain glass windows in the church. The names of the Down, Glenie and Barratt families who each gave these windows have long been synonymous with the desire “to get things done” around the Parish.



These windows are more specifically New Zealand in their subjects and symbols. The choice of females provides some balance to the predominantly male images in the other windows and they continue the stories of first martyrs, young disciples and teachers of the faith depicted in the windows opposite.

Tarore

In the 1830s Tarore, a 12 year old Maori girl, attended a mission school in Matamata where she learnt to read and became a Christian. During a raid she was killed by a warrior from another tribe and the Gospel of Luke which she always carried, was stolen from under her pillow. Her father, Ngakuku, refused to seek revenge (utu) for her death customary amongst Maori tribes of that time. Her killer, on reading the gospel, was transformed, made peace with her father and became converted to Christianity. Through the faith of Tarore, the gospel and Christianity spread as far as the South Island. She could thus be considered as the first Christian martyr in New Zealand. *

The three fantails at the top of the window are symbols of her life as a Maori forest dweller and also her connection to the Trinity. The informal flower image represents her youth but has links to similar images painted on the rafters of early buildings on the marae. Tarore holds a copy of the Gospel of Luke in Maori. The words around her head “Kia tau iho te rangimarie ki a koutou katoa” translate from the Maori as “Peace be with you” and below her is depicted the tree of life – the Joshua Tree – the ladder to heaven, linked to early Christianity in New Zealand.

**For the full story of Tarore, please turn to page 33*



Sarah Selwyn

Sarah Selwyn travelled to New Zealand from England in 1842 with her husband, Bishop Selwyn. She fully supported her husband and worked tirelessly to teach and nurture young Maori and Pakeha children at a mission school which later became St. John's College. She bravely coped with the deficiencies of early life in the young colony, despite the frequent and often long absences of her husband. They often took perilous journeys together, along with their children. She organised and supervised the meals, nursed the sick and encouraged those at the mission in their faith. She was described as "a gracious lady, loving and kind, imbued with sympathy and forbearance".

In the top panel the dove symbolises love, peace and the Holy Spirit. The stylised flower recognises the more formal and structured nature of her European source. As well as looking towards Tarore, she is also facing towards the Bishop Selwyn window diagonally across from her. The words around her head are the English version of the Maori ones around Tarore. The familiar Maori symbol of the three baskets in the lower image combine with the Trinity to represent knowledge, self-awareness, and ritual memory and prayer, all characteristics which are associated with Sarah Selwyn. They link her to the Maori people with whom she was involved for much of her life .

Gifted by the Glenie family. These and the following pair of windows were designed by Suzanne Johnson of Glassworks in Mt. Eden, Auckland in 2011.



This pair of windows completed a depiction of the two gospel writers, not yet represented in the church. They were designed in conjunction with the Tarore and Sarah Selwyn windows and some elements, such as the Pohutakawa flowers in the top segment provide a New Zealand link across them.

St. Mark

First mentioned in the bible as John Mark, Mark travelled throughout Europe as an evangelist with Paul and Barnabas. Later he was with Peter, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, as his interpreter and companion. It is believed that much of Mark's gospel written in a clear, succinct style was gathered from the preaching and teaching of Peter. It was probably written in Rome where he and Peter were living and was intended for Roman believers and Gentiles living there. He founded the church of Africa and became Bishop of Alexandria.

In this window St. Mark is depicted in a traditional view. He is carrying a cross and with raised hand in recognition of his renown as a preacher. Below him is a winged lion, consistent with the symbols of the other gospel writers. These are usually taken as an apocalyptic reference back to Ezekiel's vision of the creatures around the throne of God, each one representing one of the evangelists.

The tiled floor beneath both saints, not only reflects a traditional tiled floor, common at the time they lived, but also links across to the geometric Maori designs in the other two windows.

These windows are inscribed "In memory of the Barratt family, 2011". They recognise the many members of that family, who through several generations have served and continue to serve this church. Suzanne Johnson of Glassworks in Mt. Eden, Auckland designed and made the windows.

St. Matthew

Summoned by Jesus from his life as Levi, a tax collector in Capernaum, Matthew became one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, and is believed to have been a witness to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. His gospel is thought to be aimed particularly at Jewish-Christians, confirming that Jesus is their Messiah, and he does this by showing how Jesus in his life and ministry

fulfilled the Old Testament scriptures. His gospel begins with a genealogy tracing Jesus back to the line of Abraham, and ends with a full statement of the Great Commission.

This image of St. Matthew is a traditional one, and he is holding a copy of the first English translation of his gospel. Below his figure is the image of an angel, reflecting both an early traditional belief that he was inspired by an angel in his writing of the gospel, as well as the symbol of a winged man, a reference to Ezekiel's vision as one of the four living creatures of Revelation.



St. John the apostle

One of the early disciples, John was a fisherman, and on the shores of Galilee, was called by Jesus to follow him. He is recorded as being with Jesus throughout His ministry, often referring to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved “ and was a witness to the crucifixion and resurrection. St. John is the writer of the fourth gospel, which is recognised as being rather different from the first three, especially in its literary style. His focus is on the “signs” of Jesus’ identity and mission, and contains lengthy, theologically rich teaching.

He is depicted, pen in hand, with his gospel which is contained in the Book of Life, the Bible. In the upper part of the window is an eagle, the evangelistic symbol accorded to St. John, a powerful symbol of God’s authority, and in recognition of his writing which soared upward to the divine nature of God. The eagle carries a fish, recalling John’s former life and also an early symbol of the disciples of Jesus. The lower segment shows a serpent emerging from a cup or chalice. A legend tells of John knowingly being offered a poisoned chalice and urged to drink the contents to test his belief that God would save him. John blessed the chalice from which a two-headed serpent immediately escaped and he was able to drink without harm.



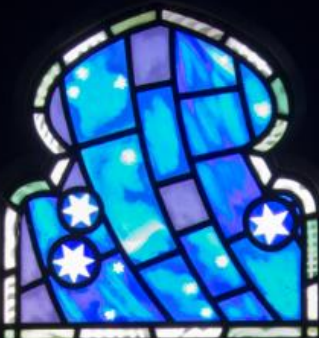
Elijah the prophet

The ministry of Elijah, one of the great prophets, is recorded in the Old Testament of the Bible, in the First and Second books of Kings. He lived at a time when the Kings of Israel and Judah had turned from God to worship idols. Although sometimes fearful of his life he frequently obeyed God's commands to confront the kings and advise them against their pagan worship and a return to their true God.

He is shown on one of these occasions, during a serious drought, when he was directed by God to a water source near which he is standing and was fed by ravens which brought him bread and meat. At his death he is recorded as being taken up to heaven by a whirlwind in a chariot and horses of fire, an event pictured in the lower window.

In the lower part of the window of St. John is the signature of the noted designer of these windows, C. Rupert Moore of A James Powell & Sons, Whitefriars, 1980.



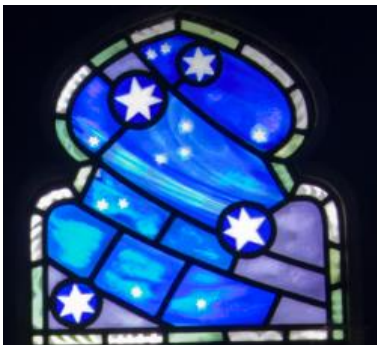


Gifted by the family of Terence and Joyce Nolan, these three windows were designed to complement the central baptistry window. At the same time they depict the words and symbols that embody all that was of most importance in the lives of Joyce and Terence: family, love and service, and an appreciation of the natural beauty of New Zealand.

The majestic Kauri tree dominates the first window, its roots and branches embracing earth and heaven. Of importance in the early colonial life of this country it also symbolises the tree of life and a pillar of strength. A wood pigeon represents the dove of peace.

The three fronds of unfurling koru from the native ponga or tree fern is an iconic New Zealand symbol

of new and emerging life; also representing the Trinity. Above flies the petrel, "St. Peter's bird" flying above the sea and carrying its call from shore to shore.



Above these two windows shines Matariki – the Maori name for the cluster of stars also known as the Seven Sisters or the Pleiades. Its midwinter rising traditionally marks the Maori New Year and was a time for remembering ancestors, the planting of new crops and celebrating new life.

To the right of the Baptistry window, the third window depicts the Marsden Cross symbolising the first preaching of the gospel in New Zealand and embodying a shared commitment to parish and country. Below is depicted the Pohutukawa tree, a reminder of Christmas and family holidays. In the window above, the Southern Cross is depicted against the night sky, a permanent reminder of God's presence uniting Maori and Pakeha.

The water elements connecting these three windows with the central baptistry window represent the river of life and the seas that surround us in these Pacific Islands.



This large window central to the West wall of the church depicts the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. In one hand John holds a staff surmounted by a cross and in the other he is baptising with a traditional shell. They are surrounded by witnesses to this important event. Above their heads is the dove of the Holy Spirit descending with rays of light piercing the sky as God speaks the words inscribed on the banner below: "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased".

The three fish are a symbol of faith used by the early Christians to avoid persecution, which also encapsulates the Holy Trinity, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A fish was also used as a symbol of baptism with its need for water as a source of life.

In front and below, the baptismal font is given light from the window which was given in memory of Jessie May Seaward who died on 28th August 1966. It was made by Whitefriars of London. Their signature appears in the bottom right corner.



Te Taonganui O Tarore (Tarore's Greatest Treasure)

The initial setting for this story, dating from the early missionary encounters with the Maori in the Waikato region in the 1830's is Okauia Pa, which is still in existence today in the foothills of the Kaimai Range.

The main character is Tarore, a Maori girl, whose father, Ngakuku, was the chief (rangatira) of the Okauia Pa, with the paramount Waikato chief, his uncle Te Waharoa, having his pa about 10km away at 'Matamata' (meaning 'tongue of land' because the pa was surrounded on three sides by swamps, and on the west by the Waitoa River). In 1833, when Tarore was nine years old, the missionaries Henry Williams, John Morgan, Alfred Brown and William Fairburn of the Church Missionary Society, came from Paihia in the Bay of Islands to Kopu at the mouth of the Waihou River, and then up the river and overland to Te Waharoa's Pa, as Te Waharoa believed they could bring peace.

The Maori believed in Te Atua, the God who was creator of the world, the universe and every living thing, and the missionaries brought the news of Jesus, who brought forgiveness, rather than revenge (utu).

Although Te Waharoa didn't himself become a Christian, he protected the missionaries, with the result that Alfred Brown, his wife and helpers founded a Mission School, giving the chief axes, hoes, spades, iron, cooking pots and blankets in return for the Mission Station land. Within a few months, Tarore's father, Ngakuku, and Tarore herself decided to follow Jesus (Ihu) and eventually Ngakuku was given one of the first portions of the Bible printed in Maori at the first mission press in Paihia. This was the Gospel of Luke (Te Rongopai a Ruka). He wrote his name 'NGAKUKU' on the first page and shared it with his daughter, Tarore, who plaited a small flax kit for it so that she could wear it around her neck.

Three years later (1836), with Tarore now twelve years of age, there were Maori raids from Rotorua. Te Waharoa went to Rotorua in an effort to make peace, without success, and Te Waharoa encouraged the missionaries to move to Tauranga where he had another pa, and where they would be safer.

Tragically, during this move this small party was attacked at night where they had encamped near the Wairere falls by five raiders from Rotorua, and one of the raiders, Uira, believing he must make a sacrifice to the great evil spirit, Te Whiro, killed Tarore with his club (mere). He grabbed her flax kit, believing it contained precious greenstone, and fled back to Rotorua.

Tarore was buried on the banks of the Waitoa River, and Ngakuku stunned his people when he refused to take revenge, saying that God was the one who would judge.

The story now moves to Rotorua, and eventually to Otaki near Wellington and even to the South Island! A former slave, Ripahau, who had been set free when his master died and had been taught to read and write at the Mission Station in Paihia, was returning home to Otaki, and when he passed through Rotorua, Uira asked him to interpret the small book in Tarore's flax basket. As a result, Uira became a Christian and bravely travelled northwards to ask forgiveness from Tarore's father, Ngakuku. Ngakuku readily forgave him and then went on his own missionary journeys eastwards through the Bay of Plenty, the East Coast and Poverty Bay.

The story now moves to the south, because Ripahau on his return to Otaki, eventually shared Tarore's Gospel of Luke with two others, Te Whiwhi and Katu, the son of the feared Maori warrior chief Te Rauparaha who was on a raid in the South Island. When Te Rauparaha returned the three fled to Kapiti Island. It was here that they all became Christians. When Te Rauparaha was away on another fighting excursion they returned to Otaki where they shared the Good News of Jesus they had discovered from Tarore's Book of St Luke. Amazing changes happened in the Maori community, so much so that when Te Rauparaha returned he himself changed and eventually built a beautiful church at Otaki from totara - naming the church 'Rangiatea' (the abode of the Absolute).

In 1842 Katu and Te Whiwhi set off for the South Island, knowing the danger of revengeful tribes because of what Katu's father had done in killing so many on his raids. They took Tarore's precious 'treasure' (taonga) with them, and amazingly, as they went unarmed, their enemies respected them for their courage and they went unharmed by canoe down the East Coast of the South Island as far as Stewart Island, sharing the Good News and leaving copies of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer at each settlement.

The final chapter of this story sees the first Church of England Bishop in New Zealand, Bishop Selwyn, making his first missionary journey through New Zealand in 1844, six years after Tarore's conversion. As he travelled through the South Island with Katu he found tribes honouring Sundays as a day of worship and rest and living in peace. They distributed copies of the whole New Testament of the Bible amongst the people.

The church of St. Aidan was established on this site in 1905, the result of a growing Remuera population and the need to find an alternative to a long and often muddy walk to St. Mark's.

From a simple wooden building it evolved with several additions to its present form. These included a sanctuary at the east end in 1911, followed by the organ and organ chamber, the two side aisles and a new vestry consecrated in 1956, and, after extensive repairs to the church, a gathering area or foyer added in 2005. This connected the church to the main hall and offices built in the 1960s.

In 1921, after World War I and in memory of people in the Parish who had served, the stone cross and the lych-gate were erected in the churchyard near the intersection of Remuera Road and Ascot Avenue. Further names were added to the memorial cross after World War II.

St. Aidan's has never been just about buildings, some of which have been removed and replaced over the years. We value the dedicated work and effort of so many of our forebears, establishing a continuity of life that binds us to this church. It is an active community of people whose aim is to serve and care for one another and for all people. We are fortunate in having a beautiful place in which to worship, but with it comes a responsibility and a mission to reach out in faith and love to all the world.

A full history of St. Aidan's Church can be purchased from the Parish Office.

