

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

STOCKTON ON THE FOREST, YORK

The Trinity Window - North Chancel (0.4m x 1.6m) 2013

This stained glass window for Holy Trinity Church, Stockton on the Forest, York, was commissioned in memory of Marion Cooper (1937 - 2010), a member of its congregation.

The over-arching theme of the design is the Holy Trinity, which is represented by a trio of ancient and familiar Christian symbols. Protecting hands ready to cradle and bless symbolise God the Father, a Damascus Barbel fish from the Sea of Galilee represents God the Son, with a dove spreading its wings across the apex of the window for the Holy Spirit. All three variously reach, leap and fly toward Heaven, and are entwined within the boughs, leaves and fruit of the 'Tree of History' - a medieval Trinitarian idea developed by the theologian Joachim Fiore (1135 - 1202 A.D), and found in the manuscript 'Liber Figurarum'.

The fragments of the tree in the window have the cones and spiky foliage of a fir tree, the dense triangular shape of which was seen as another Christian symbol for the Trinity. The line of foliage rising up the centre of the design, within a pattern of golden semicircles, could also be seen as a climbing vine - the 'true vine' of the gospel, which is Jesus himself and the source of the wine of the Eucharist.

The images of hands, fish and dove are depicted to either side of the window, within the semi-circles which form three interlinked circles (another symbol of the Trinity). The circle is perhaps the most ancient and elemental symbol of wholeness and unity: "God is a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference is nowhere" (Hermes Trismegistus). Thus, the familiar symbols of the Trinity circle around the window, their influence spilling beyond the confines of the window opening, just as the Christian message reaches out beyond the Church to the wider community.

