

ST WILFRID'S CHURCH

KIRKBY KNOWLE, NORTH YORKSHIRE

St Luke, Artist and Physician – North Nave Aisle
(1.1m x 2.0m) 2014

This memorial window to Dr Jane Rajan celebrates her vocation as a doctor, a wife and a mother. The figure of Saint Luke, physician and painter, was chosen to represent the idea of healing as a work of renewal and creativity.

The left-hand light shows Saint Luke painting an icon of the Virgin and Child. Behind the artist is a darkened doorway through which glimpses of finished portraits can be seen. At the saint's feet are copies of his writings, including an open folio of purple vellum with gold lettering – a reference to Luke's importance as an Evangelist and to the Gospel book commissioned by Saint Wilfrid for his northern monasteries. This book contains the dedicatory memorial inscription, and so brings together the dedicatee, Saint Wilfrid's Church and Saint Luke's Gospel.

The saint is at work in a humble studio, perhaps a converted barn or stable, as fits the subject of his painting. In the apex of the left-hand light, an ox (Luke's representation in the tetramorph, and symbol of sacrifice) is shown in an 'upper room', a hint towards the last supper before Christ's sacrifice on the cross. This theme is developed in the tracery above, through the depiction of a chalice, representing the Eucharist. Thus Christ's love can be seen through the works of all those, throughout history, who have dedicated themselves to the care of others.

In the right-hand light, Saint Luke's work shines light onto future generations of celebrated medical and religious figures, with a selection of portraits depicting Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (pioneer of women's medicine), Alexander Fleming (discoverer of penicillin), Saint Basil (founder of the first Christian hospital) and abbess Hildegard of Bingen (authoress of a treatise on natural medicine and healing, and a significant creative artist).

In the foreground of the window are three pots representing the over-arching themes of purity, healing and creativity. To the left is a jar of paintbrushes, and to the right is a pot of three lilies, a reference both to the Holy Trinity and to Jane's husband and two children. In the centre is a pot holding medical instruments, with a small emblem of the British Medical Association – a body close to Jane's practice as a Doctor.

The structure of the roof takes the form of Saint Andrew's cross, representing the dedicatee's Scottish roots. In the background, the artist/Evangelist can be seen at his easel, silhouetted through the doorway. Directly above the doorway, and illuminated by the light coming through, is a portrait of the nativity; alluding to the dedicatee as a wife and mother, and the way that she shone light on her husband and family.

Jane and Raj's family roots in Scotland and Sri Lanka are symbolised by the border patterns, which derive from the tea plant with its historical trade connections between the two countries. Continuing growth from these roots symbolises their love for each other and their children.

