

ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH OVER PEOVER, CHESHIRE

'He is not here for He is Risen' –
North Nave Aisle (1.2 m x 2.5 m) 2017

This window, depicting the Three Maries at the Sepulchre [Mark 16:1], is dedicated to the memory of Abigail Daisy Irlam. Abigail was born on Maundy Thursday, which suggested the Easter theme; the particular event was chosen as a reference to Abigail and her friends. The Holy Women are shown carrying their pots of myrrh which they bring to anoint Christ's body, but are surprised to find the tomb empty.

At the entrance to the tomb stands an angel clothed in white, gesturing upwards and sharing the news of Christ's Resurrection – evidence for which is the fallen shroud at their feet. The white light glowing from the angel symbolises the spirit of the risen Christ, and lights up the faces of the three women. Perhaps the angel also represents aspects of Abigail herself, offering reassurance to her friends that she is now safe in Christ's love, and carried gently on the wings of the Holy Spirit.

The glow of love and light spills onto the pathway leading to the tomb, which is covered in spring flowers; daffodils and especially daisies, which are Abigail's middle name and are symbolic of innocence and purity. The daisy flowers are opening, and the desert is beginning to bloom, awakened by the light of Christ and the sunrise of a new day.

Three butterflies native to Cheshire, a Holly Blue, a Brimstone and an Orange Tip, flutter around the figures. Butterflies were a favourite of Abigail's, and are also a traditional Christian symbol of Christ's Resurrection – transformed from caterpillar, through chrysalis, to emerge in fully-formed, winged beauty.

Caper bushes grow on the rocks above the tomb. Capers are native to Israel, and have been cultivated for the culinary and medicinal properties of their flower-buds and berries. The flowers of the caper last only a short time, symbolising Abigail's short life, but the robust plant continues to flourish.

The angel at the tomb gestures towards the sacred monogram in the tracery at the apex of the window, with the cross above. These symbolise the living presence of Christ, our redemption through His sacrifice, and His triumph over death. The text at the base of the window reads 'He is not here: for He is risen' [Matthew 28:6].

The overall colour scheme is designed to evoke the idea of light overcoming darkness; the central white and golden glow is balanced by the deeper colours which surround and frame it, and set against the promise of a new dawn. This is symbolic of the darkness in which we often lose ourselves, and from which the light of Christ's presence and comfort will lead us by faith.

Lettering by Phil Thomas.



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