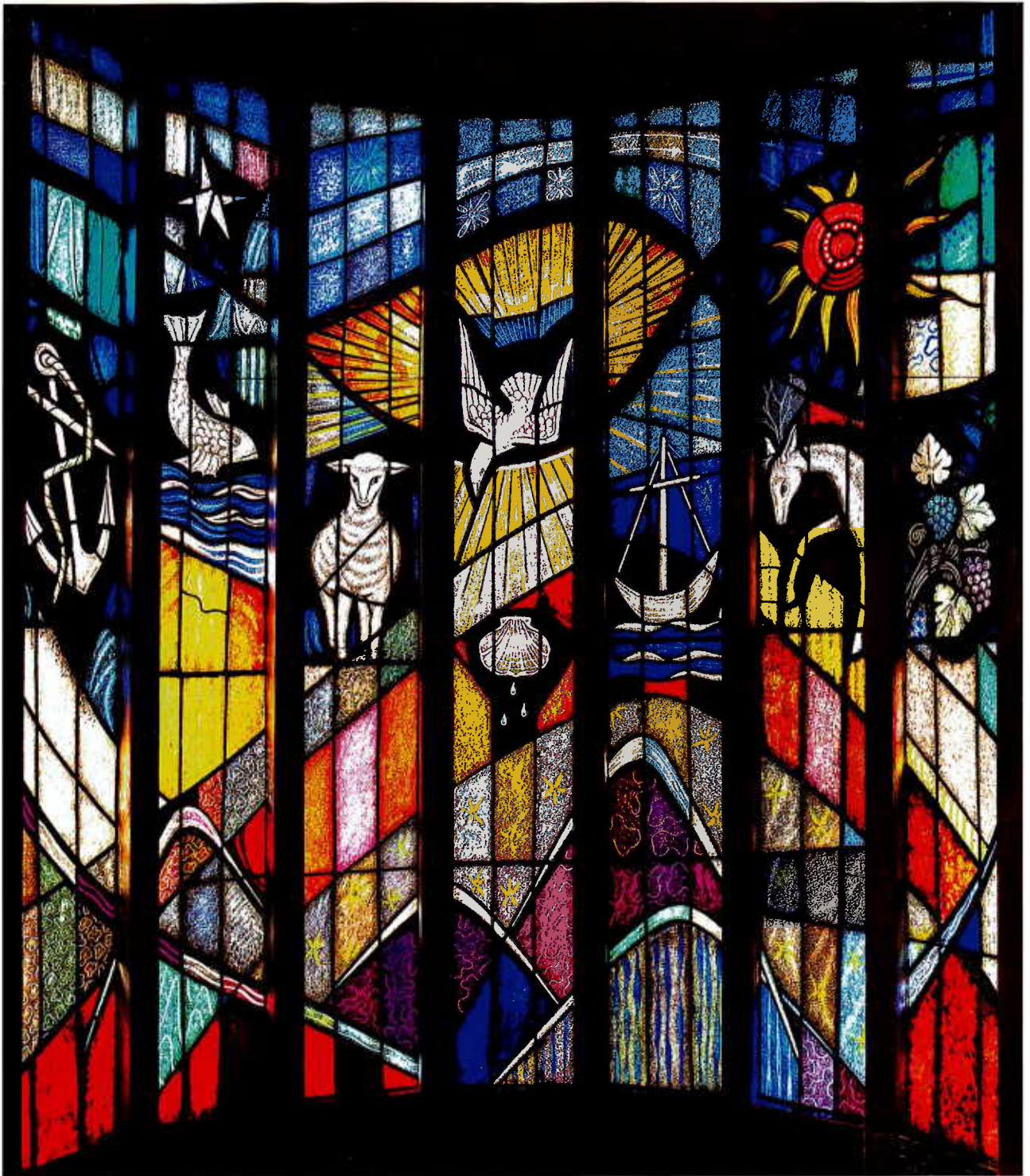


# *A Journey of Faith*



THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS OF  
ST PAUL'S BENTLEIGH,  
HOLY TRINITY PARISH

This book was originally conceived as a fundraiser to repair the bells of St Paul's. It has, however, grown into a labour of love which highlights the beauty of our stained glass windows. Wedding these wonderful works of art with Scripture and commentary, we hope that it will bring joy to all who read it.

In acknowledging the artist Alan Sumner, we also pay tribute to the foresight of Father Timothy O'Sullivan, who commissioned the work, and with the whole Church give praise to the Honour and Glory of God.

## **Acknowledgements**

Fr Timothy O'Sullivan, who built the Church and commissioned the artist

Fr Cyril Blake, who initiated the project to produce this book

Sr Elizabeth Taylor OLSH, who originally wrote the story of the windows

Libby Thomas, CEO of Holy Trinity Parish, who co-ordinated  
fundraising and contacts

Patrick Ferry, who wrote the introduction and biography of Alan Sumner,  
and assisted with the interpretation of the stories told in the windows

Mario Mirabile, who photographed the windows and edited the book

Dr Bronwyn Hughes who supplied the photograph of Alan Sumner

Alan Cowburn for permission to use his photograph of Alan Sumner

Fr Michael Sierakowski, Parish Priest of Holy Trinity Parish,  
who generously supported this project

***From the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe, to parish churches all across***

Australia, the art of stained glass has a long and proud tradition.

While stained glass windows are objects of great artistic skill and beauty, they are much more than mere decorative art. They enable us to visualise, relate to, and connect with the sacred figures and scenes they depict, and transform the light and atmosphere of the church.

They say something to each person who takes the time to contemplate their meaning. Like all genuinely sacred art, these windows in some way convey truth, precisely because they provide our faith with form, image and colour.

St Paul's is blessed to be richly endowed with a magnificent collection of stained glass windows by the late Alan Sumner MBE, who was one of Australia's leading stained glass artists. The windows were progressively installed from 1961, and took nearly 20 years to complete.

The windows are arranged as follows:

**Sanctuary windows:** the two windows here focus on Jesus Christ himself, God and true man. They depict scenes which relate to His incarnation, His Passion, and also His glorification in Heaven as Christ the King.

**Main windows:** These windows run high along both sides of the central nave. Down one side are figures and scenes from the Old Testament. On the other side are scenes from the New Testament which depict the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Messiah. This is reminiscent of medieval stained glass window design techniques.

**West window:** located above the entrance of the church is a large window which commemorates St Paul, the patron saint of this church.

**Baptistry window:** Located to the north of the main entrance is the old Baptistry. The window features a number of baptismal and Eucharistic symbols. The baptismal font is now located centrally within the church and the Baptistry is an area used for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Unlike in many churches, these windows are not individually dedicated to the

people. Instead, they are a testament to the faith and devotion of all members, past, present and future. The words of this book will speak for themselves, and what these windows say to you will be found in the Scriptures.

Donated  
by  
Frances  
Bader  
2018

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Unlike in many churches, these windows are not individually dedicated to the memory of specific people. Instead, they witness to the faith and devotion of all of St Paul's parishioners, past, present and future. Hopefully this book will inspire you to discover what these wonderful windows say to you personally about the Scriptures.

***Patrick Ferry***

## A: The Birth of Jesus

*The window on the south side of the Sanctuary* shows events associated with the birth of Jesus.

In the middle of the window we see the new-born Jesus with Mary and Joseph. This event, the Incarnation of God as man in the person of Jesus, is a central mystery of our Christian faith. The ox and ass, mentioned in the Book of Isaiah are there too, reminding us that Jesus came humbly into the world.<sup>(1)</sup> Next to the Holy Family are the shepherds who came to adore Jesus, and, at the top the three Wise Men, bearing their gifts of gold, incense and myrrh, and being led by a star.<sup>(2)</sup> The Wise Men were foreigners, and had travelled far to see Jesus, showing that He came into the world for all people.

At the bottom we have the flight into Egypt. Like so many other refugees, the family fled under cover of night, fearing for their lives and safety.<sup>(3)</sup> They had to flee from King Herod, who wished to kill the baby Jesus. This reminds us that although he was the Messiah, Jesus would know hardship, suffering and death, fully sharing in our humanity. Their flight to Egypt and subsequent return fulfilled a prophecy, further showing that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.<sup>(4)</sup>

1. Luke 2:7 '...and she gave birth to a son, her first-born...'
2. Matthew 2:1 'Wise men from the East came to Jerusalem...'
3. Matthew 2:13 'Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt.'
4. Matthew 2:15 'He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son." '



## B: Christ the King

*The window on the north side of the Sanctuary* shows Jesus as King of heaven and earth. The orb and sceptre at his feet are earthly symbols of kingship, but he is surrounded by heavenly light, and His heavenly crown is bestowed by the Father and Holy Spirit. On either side of Jesus' face are the Alpha and the Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, often used to symbolize the eternity of God.<sup>(1)</sup>

Underneath this picture, however, there is a very different scene. Pilate is washing his hands, wanting to have nothing to do with Jesus. Soldiers stand behind, Jesus' hands are bound, and he is being presented with His cross.<sup>(2)</sup> This depiction of Christ's suffering draws on Isaiah's image of the Messiah as the Suffering Servant.<sup>(3)</sup>

What we can take from these images is that although Jesus is in Heaven, he also remains on earth, and within many people he is still walking the way of the cross.<sup>(4)</sup>

1. Matthew 25:31-46 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory.'
2. Matthew 27:24 'Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood." '
3. Isaiah Chapter 53
4. Matthew 28:18-20 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; .... And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'



## C: Abraham and God's Promise



### ***The first large window on the north side of the church***

shows three main figures. Two are of Abraham, and one is of Joseph. Abraham is considered the Father of Faith by the Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions. He was called by God to leave his country and to shepherd God's chosen people, which is why the first panel shows people travelling with their animals. Abraham is leaving his country for a land God would show him.<sup>(1)</sup> This panel also pictures two women; Sara his wife, and the slave girl Hagar, both of whom bore Abraham's children. They are symbolic of the fact that God's Word would be for all the people of the world. The first panel flows into the second, which shows the rich land that God promised to Abraham.<sup>(2)</sup> It also shows the stars, by which God promised Abraham would number his descendants.<sup>(3)</sup>

God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Abraham prepares to do what he thinks is God's will, but, before he can kill Isaac, God intervenes. The third panel shows an Angel preventing Abraham killing Isaac as the knife falls from his hand.<sup>(4)</sup> Abraham's act of sacrifice, and the ram caught in the bush, are significant in prefiguring Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.<sup>(5)</sup>

The final two panels tell the story of Joseph. Joseph was Abraham's great grandson, who was sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers. They were jealous of the love shown him by their father, Jacob, and annoyed by the dreams he related to them, where he appeared to be more important than his brothers. In Egypt, the Pharaoh had a recurring

and troubling dream, where seven fat cows were consumed by seven lean cows, and seven fat ears of grain were consumed by seven lean ears.<sup>(6)</sup>

Joseph's talent for interpreting dreams came to Pharaoh's notice, and he was brought to court. Joseph interpreted the dream as a foretelling of seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. By allowing the Egyptians to prepare for the coming famine, he found favour with Pharaoh and rose to power in the land of Egypt.<sup>(7)</sup> Joseph brought his family and their people to Egypt, saving them from famine in their homeland. By saving both the Israelites and Egyptians, Joseph foreshadowed that Jesus will come to save all people.

1. Genesis 12:1 'Go from your own country, to a land I show you.'
2. Genesis 17:8 'And to you and to your descendants after you, I shall give the country where you are now immigrants, the entire land of Canaan, to own in perpetuity. And I shall be their God.'
3. Genesis 15:5 'Then taking him outside, he said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars if you can. Just so will your descendants be," he told him.'
4. Genesis 22:13 'Do not raise your hand against the boy.'
5. Genesis 22:8 'My son, God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering.'
6. Genesis 41 1-7 'It happened that Pharaoh had a dream...'
7. Genesis 41 17-37 'Pharaoh and all his ministers approved of what he said...'

## D: Moses and the Commandments



***The second window on the north side also has three*** main figures, but this time they are all images of Moses. Moses was an extremely important figure in the history of the Jewish people, and considered the greatest prophet.

Moses lived at a time when the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt. God first appeared to Moses in the form of a bush, burning fiercely but not being consumed - a scene depicted in the first panel.<sup>(1)</sup> He is instructed to remove his shoes as he is standing on holy ground. Moses is commanded to go to Egypt and demand the release of God's people from captivity.

Moses obeyed God's command, and after much difficulty in securing their release, the second and third panels show Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt and towards the Promised Land.<sup>(2)</sup>

The last two panels show Moses receiving the Ten Commandments. We see the watchful eye of God behind Moses, and lightning in the sky, which people then interpreted as an indicator of God's presence. Moses is surrounded by symbols of the journey through the desert - the serpent on the stick, the golden calf, the water flowing from the rock and many other details that are mentioned in these stories in the Bible. In the distance can be seen the Promised Land, the hope of which kept the Israelites pushing forward through all the hardships

they suffered.<sup>(3)</sup> The symbol of the serpent on the Cross is highly significant. In the wilderness, God directed Moses to erect this symbol, which had the power to heal people. Jesus himself used this image when referring to the healing power of his future crucifixion.<sup>(4)</sup>

Moses' beard gets a bit longer in each picture - a sign of time passing and his ageing as his people wandered through the desert for 40 years.<sup>(5)</sup> Moses leading his people out of slavery in Egypt and guiding them through the desert is a powerful foretelling of Jesus freeing God's people and leading them away from the slavery of sin to freedom.

1. Exodus 3:2 'Yahweh appeared to him in a flame blazing from the middle of a bush.'
2. Exodus 13:3 'Remember this day on which you came out of Egypt.'
3. Exodus 20:2 'I am Yahweh, your God who brought you out of Egypt.'  
Deuteronomy 19:8 'He will give you the Land that he promised.'
4. John 3:14 'And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.'
5. Exodus 34:7 'Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye undimmed, his vigour unimpaired.'

## E: King David, the Prophets and the Prophecies fulfilled



***In the third window on the north side, the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah become reality.*** The central figure in this window is the prophet Isaiah. More than any other prophet, Isaiah directly foretold the coming of Jesus - that He would be born of a virgin<sup>(1)</sup>, that His way would be prepared<sup>(2)</sup>, that He would bear our sins and sorrows<sup>(3)</sup>, and many other prophecies in which he revealed the coming of the Messiah. The burning city is a reference to the often foretold destruction of Jerusalem, a fate which would befall it if the people were not faithful to their covenant with God.<sup>(4)</sup> He also prophesied that the Messiah would be born of the line of David<sup>(5)</sup>, and so it is not surprising that David, the most famous of the kings of Israel, features prominently in the window.

In the first panel, the prophet Samuel has been sent to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as God's chosen King. One by one the sons are rejected, until David, the youngest and least significant, is presented. Samuel immediately recognizes him as the one, and anoints him.<sup>(6)</sup> In the background are the sheep which David, who was a shepherd, had been tending. God's hand is there again, reminding us that this Kingship is not of human origin, but that it is God who has chosen David to be King.

The forlorn figure in the fourth panel is not clearly identified. It could be Ezekiel, who also foretold the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>(7)</sup> It could also be Job, whose faith and perseverance through suffering was amply rewarded.<sup>(8)</sup> It

suggests that we need to have confidence in God's promises, regardless of how dark things seem on a human level.

The last panel shows the fulfilment of all the prophecies about the coming Messiah. The angel appears to Mary to tell her that she has been chosen to be the Mother of Jesus, and she graciously accepts God's plan for her.<sup>(9)</sup>

1. Isaiah 7:14 'The virgin is with child and will give birth to a son, whom she will call Immanuel.'
2. Isaiah 40:3 'A voice cries, "Prepare in the desert a way for Yahweh. Make a straight highway for our God across the wastelands." '
3. Isaiah 53:4-5 'Yet ours were the sufferings he was bearing, ours the sorrows he was carrying.'
4. Isaiah 1:7 '...your country a desolation, your towns burnt down, your soil, foreigners lay it waste before your eyes, a desolation like devastation by foreigners.'
5. Isaiah 11:1-10 'A shoot will spring from the stock of Jesse, a new shoot will grow from his roots.'
6. 1 Samuel 16:12-13 ' "Get up and anoint him: he is the one!" At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him, surrounded by his brothers; and the spirit of Yahweh seized on David from that day onwards.'
7. Ezekiel 5:8 'The Lord Yahweh says this: "I, too, am against you and shall execute my judgements on you for the nations to see." '
8. Job 42:10 'More than that, Yahweh gave him double what he had before.'
9. Luke 1:26-38 'You see before you the Lord's servant; let it happen to me as you have said.'

## F: John the Baptist and the Baptism of Jesus



***In the fourth window on the north side, John the Baptist,*** who was Jesus' cousin, and was to be the last herald of Christ's coming, is shown three times.

In the first panel, the figure of Elijah looms behind John. The Jewish people of the time believed Elijah was the prophet who would return to announce the coming of the Messiah. John was a very ascetic prophet and lived a simple life: he dwelt in the desert, ate wild food, had no shoes, and only camel skin for a garment. He preached repentance and Baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and that the time of the Messiah was near.<sup>(1)</sup> Not all of the people gathered around John appear to be listening to him, and perhaps did not come for Baptism with the best of intentions - a portent that the coming of the Christ would not be welcomed by all.<sup>(2)</sup>

Jesus came to the Jordan River to be baptised by John, and this event is portrayed in the third and fourth panels. As John pours water on Jesus' head, the Father's hands can be seen pouring out Grace as the Holy Spirit descends like a dove.<sup>(3)</sup> Christian theology has always seen in baptism

the sign of Christ's Resurrection - the old self dies in a spiritual sense, and is restored to fullness of life through the sacrament - to be 'born again'.<sup>(4)</sup>

The last panel shows the beheading of John.<sup>(5)</sup> His preaching had become very unwelcome and uncomfortable for the authorities of the day, and they made the mistake of thinking his death would be the end of his message.

1. Luke 3:1-6 '...prepare a way for the Lord, make His paths straight.'
2. Matthew 3:7 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming retribution?'
3. Matthew 3:13 'Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John.'  
Matthew 3:16 'The heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove.'
4. John 3:5 'Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.'
5. Matthew 14:8 'Give me John the Baptist's head, here, on a dish.'

## G: The Sermon on the Mount



***The large windows on the south side of the church tell*** of key aspects of the fulfilment of God's promises through Christ and his Church. The scene in the first window is the famous Sermon on the Mount<sup>(1)</sup>, in which Jesus teaches about the qualities and characteristics required of people by God to help them enter the kingdom of Heaven.

There is a strong link between this image and the image of Moses and the Ten Commandments. Both take place on a mountain, the sun in this window is reminiscent of the Eye of God in the other, and both depict the handing down of laws and guidelines for living our lives. While the law of Moses could be considered stern, the law that Jesus teaches, while challenging, is gentle and kind. It is also significant that Jesus Himself said that he came to perfect the Law of Moses.<sup>(2)</sup>

The people in the window flock to Jesus, as they did throughout the three years he spent teaching, healing and breaking down barriers.<sup>(3)</sup> The crowd is surrounding and facing Him, and all appear to listen intently to his teachings. They come from the north and the south, the east and the west. It is a powerful symbol that Jesus came to save everyone, regardless of their race or background. Perhaps it is a reminder for us here in this Church, where young and old, sick and well, rich and

poor, gather to remember and celebrate Jesus' words to us. Especially we remember that He told us we are all equal, all loved, all important to God.

1. Matthew 5:1-48 'Seeing the crowds, He went up the mountain...'
2. Matthew 5:17 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them.'  
John 1:16-17 'Indeed, from His fullness we have, all of us, received one gift replacing another, for the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ.'
3. Matthew 4:23 'Jesus went through Galilee teaching ...'  
Mark 9:30-32 'He was instructing his Disciples; ... The Son of man will be delivered into the power of men.'  
Matthew 14:14 'So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them and healed their sick.'  
John 4:3 'A Samaritan woman came to draw water.'  
Luke Chapter 16 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them...'  
John 3:16 'For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.'  
Matthew 9:36 'He felt sorry for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.'

## H: The Resurrection



***The second window on the south side tells of the*** resurrection of Jesus through three separate encounters. This window is the ultimate fulfilment of the prophecies - that the Messiah would suffer death, and rise again on the third day.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the first panel (to the right) there are jars of spices on the ground and, in the background, three crosses. One cross can be seen draped with a shroud, a symbol that death was not the end for Jesus. Three women have gone to the tomb after the Sabbath to anoint the body of Jesus, only to find the tomb empty. An angel appears to them and astounds them by telling them that Jesus has risen from the dead.<sup>(2)</sup>

The second resurrection story tells of Mary of Magdala. She was weeping because she thought the body of Jesus had been stolen and she asked the man she thought to be a gardener (notice the spade in his hand) if he knew where the body of Jesus had been taken. Of course the gardener turned out to be Jesus!<sup>(3)</sup>

The third story is of Jesus meeting two disciples on the way to Emmaus, although He does not reveal himself to them. The disciples have not yet heard that Jesus has risen, and are still despondent. One is pointing back to the city of Jerusalem and seems to be saying 'you must be the only person who does not know what has happened in the

city in the last three days'. As they walk, Jesus reminds them of all that has been prophesied about the Messiah.<sup>(4)</sup> They invite him to share a meal where Jesus reveals himself<sup>(5)</sup>, leaving them to hurry back to Jerusalem to share the great news.

1. Isaiah 53:5 'Whereas he was being wounded for our rebellions, crushed because of our guilt; the punishment reconciling us fell on him, and we have been healed by his bruises.'
2. Luke 24:1-7 'But on the first day of the week they came to the tomb... Remember what he told you when he was still in Galilee: that the Son of man was destined to be handed over into the power of sinful men and be crucified, and rise again on the third day.'
3. John 20:14-18 'As she said this she turned round and saw Jesus standing there ... So Mary of Magdala told the disciples, "I have seen the Lord." '
4. Luke 24: 25-27 'Then he said to them, "You foolish men! So slow to believe all that the prophets have said! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer before entering into his glory?" '
5. Luke 24: 13-30 '...and their eyes were opened...'

# I: The Ascension of the Lord



***The third window on the south side shows Jesus*** ascending into heaven.<sup>(1)</sup> He is surrounded by heavenly light as he ascends into Glory, much as he is in the Christ the King window in the Sanctuary. There is also a strong element of the Trinity in this window – the Holy Spirit is clearly present in the form of a dove, and once again the sun in the sky is reminiscent of the Eye of God seen in other windows.

The Apostles appear anxious at being left behind, and one even seems to be throwing up his hands in despair. But Jesus is confident in his disciples and in us. He has entrusted them, as he entrusts us, with the mission of building the kingdom of God on earth through continuing Christ's saving work.<sup>(2)</sup> The presence of the Father and Holy Spirit remind us that they too will be with us.

We also see in the picture the moon and stars, foreshadowing the events of the Book of Revelation. We are not to lose hope, even though we face many trials, because Christ will come again.

1. Luke 24:50-52 'Now as he blessed them, he withdrew from them and was carried up to heaven. They worshipped him, and then went back to Jerusalem full of joy.'  
Acts 1:9 'As he said this, he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took Him from their sight.'
2. Matthew 28:19-20 'Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

## J: Pentecost and the Gift of the Holy Spirit



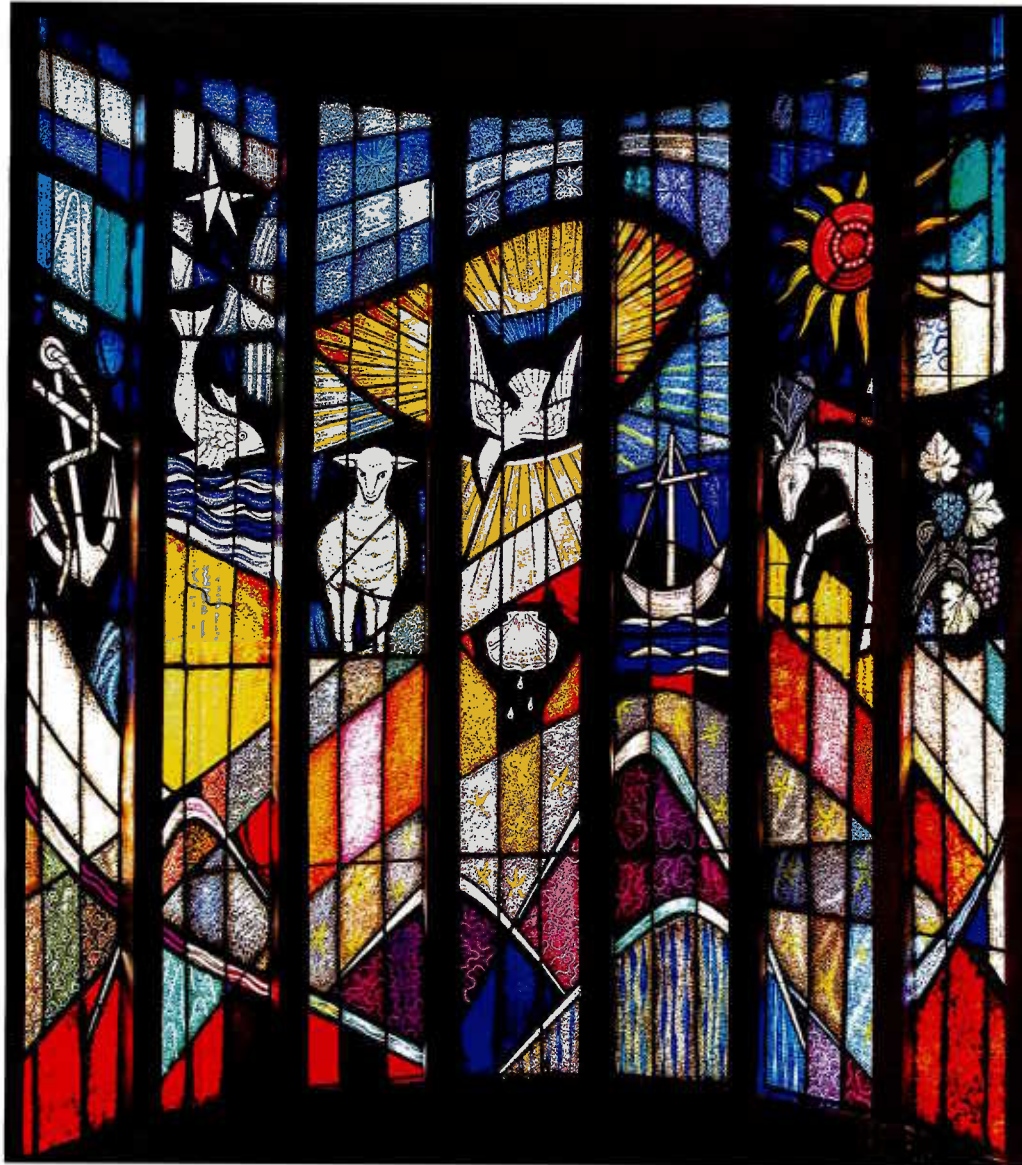
***This last southern window shows the events of Pentecost.***<sup>(1)</sup> For the 10 days following the Ascension, the Apostles have been in hiding, afraid to show themselves. The Bible tells us that a strong wind came into the room, which you can see as a long swirl, and tongues of flame descended on all those present. The wind is sweeping out their fears and inhibitions, and the fire is igniting their fervour. It is interesting to note that there are 12 Apostles, Matthias having been elected to replace Judas. Soon, they will go out and begin to spread the Good News throughout the world. The Blessed Virgin is also present, reminding us that she was there from the beginning of the Church.

In contrast to the fear and anxiety of the Apostles in the Ascension window, here they appear confident and strong, even though the artist has endeavoured to show that the house was shaking. The Holy Spirit has come upon them, they are filled with love and ready to go and spread the Good News about Jesus.

Thus, the cycle of windows ends as it began in the Abraham window, with God present in the form of fire. The central figure of St. Peter, the leader of the new Church also links this window to the first, where Abraham was the Father of a new Faith.

1. Acts 2:1-12 'When Pentecost day came round, they had all met together, when suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a violent wind which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and there appeared to them tongues as of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak different languages as the Spirit gave them power to express themselves.

Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, and each one was bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language. They were amazed and astonished. "Surely," they said, "all these men speaking are Galileans? How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language?" Everyone was amazed and perplexed; they asked one another what it all meant.'



## K: Symbols of Baptism

*The old Baptistry is located near the front entrance to the Church -*

a design element used to remind people of their own entry to the Church via Baptism. The window is a riot of colour, and has many Christian symbols. Central to the window is the Holy Spirit as a dove, surrounded by light.<sup>(1)</sup> Beneath the Holy Spirit is a scallop shell with three drops of water. The shell is a badge of pilgrimage, the three drops symbolic of Baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To the right is a boat, an ancient symbol representing the Church. Often called the 'Bark of St Peter', it reminds us that Peter, a fisherman, was the first captain of Christ's Church, and that Baptism is the beginning of our journey in the Church.<sup>(2)</sup>

On the left is the Lamb - whose blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins<sup>(3)</sup>, reminding us that the Church teaches Baptism for the remission of sins. The fish is a Eucharistic symbol, and was used to represent Christ in the early Church.<sup>(4)</sup> The anchor, another ancient Christian symbol, signifies hope and stability.<sup>(5)</sup>

The deer in Christian art represents piety and longing for God.<sup>(6)</sup> The cleansing effect of running water, which the deer longs for in the Psalm, makes a beautiful symbol for Baptism. The fruitful vine was often used in the Bible to symbolize happiness - Jesus himself used it to describe the relationship between himself and the Church.<sup>(7)</sup>

1. Mark 1:10 '...and the spirit descending like a dove.'
2. Mark 4:35-41 'Leaving the crowd behind they took him, just as he was, in the boat; and there were other boats with him.'
3. John 1:29 'Here is the Lamb of God'
4. Ichthys, Greek for fish, was an early Christian symbol. The Greek letters formed an acrostic which translated as 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.'
5. Hebrews 6:19 'We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor.'
6. Psalm 41 'As the deer longs for flowing water, so my soul longs for you.'
7. John 15:5 'I am the vine, you are the branches.'

## L: St Paul

*The window over the choir loft illustrates events in the life of St Paul, after whom this Church has been named. It was the only window in place when the church was consecrated by Archbishop Simmonds in 1961.*

The middle picture shows his conversion on the road to Damascus. It was the risen Christ who appeared to Paul, as evidenced by the nail holes in his hands and feet, and the heavenly light which surrounds Him. Behind Jesus is the Cross with the cloth, further reminders of the resurrection, in which Paul, at that time, refused to believe.<sup>(1)</sup>

At the top left, we see Paul being lowered in a basket. This is how Paul escaped from Damascus. The city was surrounded by high walls, and this was the only way out of the city as all the gates were guarded.<sup>(2)</sup> On the top right we see Paul's death. Because Paul was a Roman citizen, he was not crucified, but killed with a sword.

At the bottom, we see Paul preaching with a Greek temple in the background. Paul was a great missionary, and in the Acts of the Apostles we have many stories of him travelling from one country to another, preaching about Jesus.<sup>(3)</sup> We have a great reminder of the Churches he established in the letters he wrote to them, which are a regular part of our liturgies.

1. Acts 9:1-5 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'
2. Acts 9:25 'The Disciples took him by night and let him down from the wall, lowering him in a basket.'
3. Acts 17:22 'Paul stood in front of the Aeropagus, preaching.'



## About the artist - Alan Sumner MBE (1911 - 1994)

***Alan Sumner was born in Melbourne in 1911.*** In 1927, he began as an assistant to William 'Jock' Frater in the stained glass department of glass merchants EL Yencken & Co. Under Frater, Sumner not only learnt the art of stained glass, but was introduced to a wider circle of modernist artists, of which Frater was a leading local figure. He later studied at the National Gallery School, and also with George Bell. The commissions Frater and Sumner worked on at Yencken did not provide much scope for expression of modernist influences, tending rather to reflect the generally more conventional and traditional tastes of the commissioning parties. Sumner briefly became manager of the Yencken studio in 1940, but it closed down during WWII. Sumner meanwhile had established his own studio at his home in Collingwood.

After the War, Sumner resumed his stained glass work, initially filling orders which came to him through Yencken. By the early 1950s however, changing trends in art, architecture and theology were increasingly favouring more modernist interpretations of traditional Christian imagery, and this opened opportunities for Sumner to express his own distinctive style. A period in Europe (1950 - 1952) was significant in the development of that style. He drew inspiration from a range of sources, including contemporary modernist trends, French Impressionism, medieval stained glass and the works of El Greco. The influence of the latter can be strongly seen in the somewhat elongated figures in Sumner's windows. The result was windows which are lively and animated, effectively conveying movement, energy, emotion and sacred matters in the scenes depicted. Believing strongly in 'modern art firmly based in the classical tradition', Sumner drew heavily on Christian iconography and symbolism in his work, and at times adopted

medieval design techniques, such as juxtaposing scenes from the Old and New Testaments.

From the 1950s onwards, Sumner received a number of significant commissions to design windows for new churches being built in Melbourne's rapidly expanding suburbs. His work was strongly represented in Catholic churches, including St Francis Xavier's in Frankston, St Brigid's in Mordialloc, St Oliver Plunkett's in Pascoe Vale, St Bede's in Balwyn North, and of course here at St Paul's in Bentleigh. Although these churches were built prior to Vatican II, their designs already reflected a conscious re-interpretation of traditional church architecture in new, modernist inspired ways. This included their approach to stained glass, with provision often being made for very large areas (often entire walls), to be filled with glass. The style of Sumner's work was perfectly suited to these churches, and he was able to make his windows in a way which could better meet the generally limited budgets of the parishes themselves (see the notes on his design process below).

Aside from his reputation as one of Australia's leading stained glass artists, Sumner also gained renown for his work in other media, including painting and screen prints. He was director of the National Gallery Art School from 1954 to 1962. In 1978, the Queen awarded Sumner the Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his services to the arts. Later, he was appointed as a Fellow of the British Society of Master Glass Painters.

Sumner continued working until his death in 1994. According to the curator of a major exhibition of Sumner's work, the hallmarks of his work were 'superb design, consummate craftsmanship and meaning' (Clark 1993).

## The design and manufacturing processes

Based on discussions with the commissioning party and his own thoughts, Sumner would prepare preliminary sketches. Following further discussion and thinking, fuller presentation sketches would then be drawn for the commissioning party's approval. Sumner would often prepare designs for the complete cycle of windows, knowing that these might only be executed over time as the church managed to find the required funds. In some cases, this meant that Sumner could work on windows for individual churches like St Paul's over 20 or 30 years.

The actual window would be created using a full scale drawing, which guided the cutting of the individual pieces of glass which formed the design. Coloured glass would be used, with elements of the design painted on using ceramic paint and metal oxides and then fired in a kiln. To keep the costs of larger windows down, Sumner would often use less expensive commercial glass for the backgrounds, reserving more expensive antique glass for his figures and focal points (Hughes 2012 p. 96). Like a mosaic, the glass pieces would then be assembled on a board and fixed into place using lead and solder. This was a painstaking process, given Sumner's larger windows could involve hundreds of individual pieces of glass.

### Patrick Ferry

#### Sources:

- Clark, Jane (1993) *Alan Sumner* (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne)
- Gleeson, James (1978) *James Gleeson Interviews: Alan Sumner* (National Gallery of Australia, Canberra)  
[<http://nga.gov.au/Research/Gleeson/pdf/Sumner.pdf>]
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Alan Sumner at work in his Collingwood studio, c1990

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# **Key to the windows**

## **A: The Birth of Jesus**

Signed but not dated. Likely to have been completed in 1963 with the other sanctuary window.

## **B: Christ the King**

Signed and dated 1963.

## **C: Abraham and God's promise**

Signed and dated 1972.

## **D: Moses and the Commandments**

Signed but not dated. Probably completed in 1972.

## **E: King David, the Prophets and the Prophecies fulfilled**

Signed and dated 1974.

## **F: John the Baptist and the Baptism of Jesus**

Signed and dated 1967.

## **G: The Sermon on the Mount**

Signed and dated 1979.

## **H: The Resurrection**

Signed and dated 1977.

## **I: The Ascension of the Lord**

Signed and dated 1969.

## **J: Pentecost and the Gift of the Holy Spirit**

Signed, but not dated. Probably completed in 1967.

## **K: Symbols of Baptism**

Signed and dated 1962.

## **L: St Paul**

Signed and dated 1961. This was the only window present when the church was consecrated.



Sacristy

B

A

ALTAR

F

J

E

I

D

H

C

G

Higgins Road

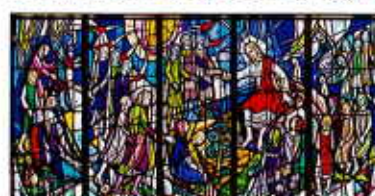
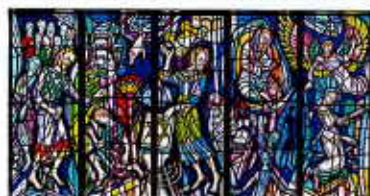
Baptism Font

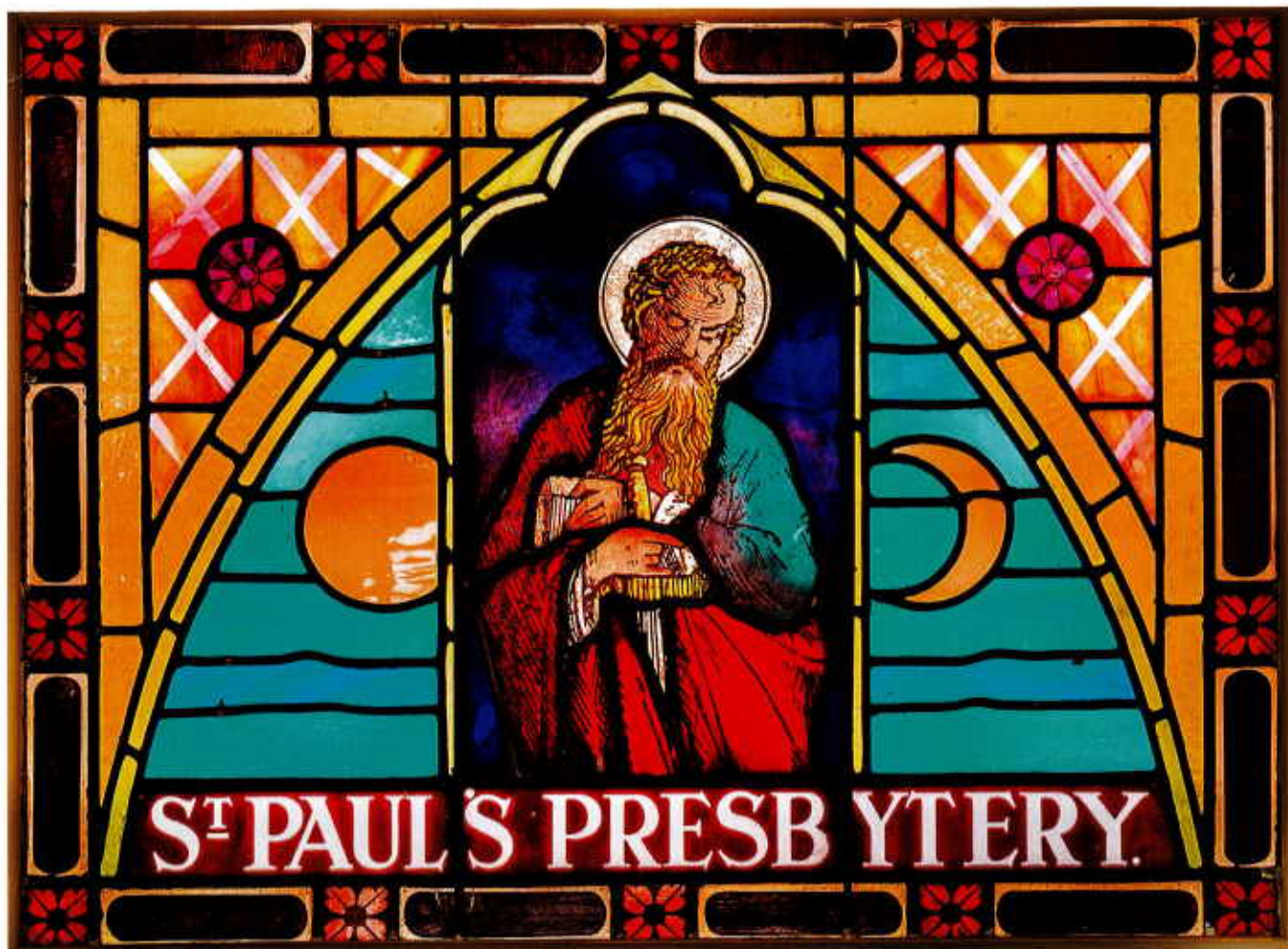
K

L

Jasper Road

Entrance





The window above the front door of the old Presbytery by Jock Frater, Alan Sumner's mentor (c 1930s). The sword is the traditional symbol of St. Paul, symbolic both of his death by beheading and of the strength of his preaching.