

Celebration of an Enduring Way of Life & Triumph Over Adversity –
Grassington Congregational Church's 200th Anniversary Banner



Background

To celebrate and commemorate Grassington Congregational Church's 200th anniversary a small group of members decided to produce a work of art that would express in visual terms the contribution that the Church has played, and continues to play, in both the religious and secular life of the local community. The result of substantial effort over many months was the banner now proudly displayed within the church for all to see.

The work comprises seventeen panels, each expressing a different aspect of the Christian life in general or the life of Grassington Congregational Church in particular.

The essential elements are:

- Beauty of the natural world;
- Celebration of survival and success;
- Commitment to God and to each other;
- Community life in a rural village;
- Gratitude for spiritual gifts received;
- Praise & worship of the God in whom we believe; and
- Remembrance of those faithful souls, now departed, whose witness underpins our current vision and mission.

An important facet of the project is the way in which it brought together a diverse group of members who worked long hours together on the common task. In so doing they deepened their friendship and benefitted greatly from the experience of sharing ideas, perfecting practical skills and engaging in the negotiations necessary to ensure that the finished banner was well balanced, aesthetically attractive and robust.

In years gone by, banners were much used by secular and sacred organisations alike. They were proudly displayed at outdoor events and in processions, and used for information, advertising and propaganda purposes. Times have moved on and there are now many alternative ways of presenting one's message to the population at large, but the banner still has a fascination for many, as is demonstrated by the large number of people who visit the People's History Museum, Manchester which holds the largest collection of historic trade union and political banners in the world and is the UK's leading authority on the conservation and study of banners.

We hope that you will visit the Church and take a look at the banner, admiring the workmanship and creativity therein displayed, and finding it to be a source of comfort, solace and inspiration.

Descriptions of Individual Panels



The Church (Ann & Brian Graham)

Grassington Congregational Church was built in 1811, and the first service was held on Christmas day that year. The church and its members have thus witnessed to the Christian Faith for 200 years. The Lord Jesus is the same now as then and will be forever.

The Church is a symbol of the glory of our never changing, faithful God.



Maypole (Pat & Terry Haycock)

A maypole is a tall wooden pole erected for various European folk festivals, particularly on May Day or Pentecost (Whitsun). Maypoles were generally erected to express general rejoicing at the return of summer, and the growth of new vegetation.

Because there was no village green in Grassington, the children of the village used to practice on the green at Linton.



Symbol of the Congregational Federation (Pat & Terry Haycock)

Along with 293 other churches, Grassington Congregational Church is a member of the Congregational Federation – a group of independent free churches with a common vision and history which are committed to mutual support, tolerance, and the acceptance of diversity of belief within the Christian tradition, protestant and reformed.



Celebration! (Jean Slater)

God's word through music and song!

Christianity is a religion of joy, enthusiasm, excitement and fun. Singing (and in some traditions, dancing) raises the spirits, develops a sense of community, encourages common purpose, and from earliest times has been appreciated as a gift from God to be both savoured and enjoyed.

"Let all the world in every corner sing!"



Maundy Thursday, Crucifixion & Resurrection (Vera Winn)

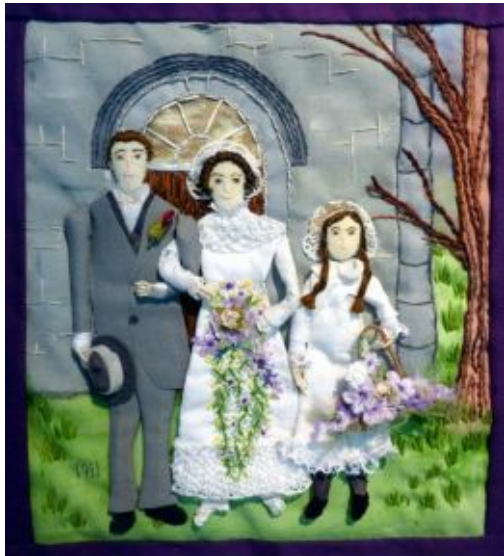
Easter is the pivotal event in the religious calendar which defines Christianity. It embraces all strands of human emotion and ends with a message of forgiveness, hope, reassurance and joy.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that all who believe in Him will not perish but have everlasting life." John 3v16



Pentecost (Christine Chisholm)

"When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched each person there. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak." Acts 2 v 1-4



Celebrations: A wedding 1911 (Alyson Gill)

I used a photo taken of my grandparents on their wedding day in 1914 as inspiration for this panel. At the time of the wedding, war had not been declared and the terrible events about to unfold had barely entered the common consciousness. Sadly, my Granny's brother, like so many Grassington men, was one of the hundreds of thousands killed in the conflict. Mercifully, my grandparents had the benefit of 63yrs together.

"I will never leave you or forsake you." Deu 31 v 6



Shepherd of the Sheep (Mary Flather)

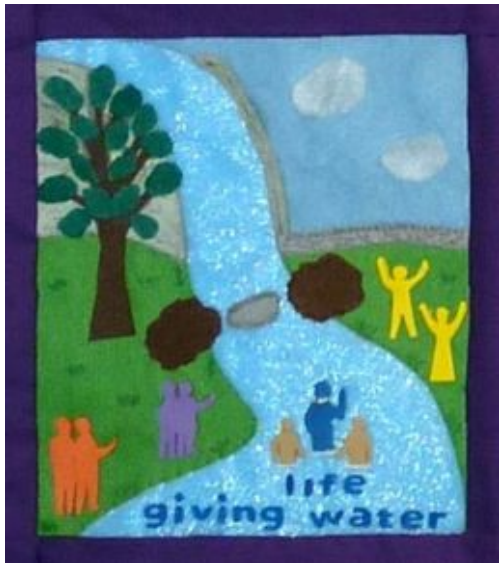
Here the shepherd represents "Jesus, The Good Shepherd" and the sheep represent us, his followers. Shepherds and sheep are very much a part of Dales life. The hills depicted are to be found between Grassington and Rylstone. They have a distinctive geological formation and are topped by Rylstone Cross. The knitted woollen sheep in the bottom left hand corner reminds us that the wool industry delivered prosperity to the Dales for many centuries, and also acknowledges the efforts of the church's ladies' knitting circle.



The Flower Festival (Patricia Currie)

"As soon as I knew I was going to be part of the team putting our anniversary banner together I had a wonderful sense of inspiration in that I always have loved bright colours, and this I have tried to reflect with my piece."

(In July 2011 Grassington Congregational Church hosted a very successful flower festival whose theme was "Celebrations".)



Baptism (Pat & Terry Haycock)

This panel depicts a baptism by total immersion in the River Wharfe.

"Not long afterwards Jesus came from Nazareth in the province of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, he saw heaven opening and the Spirit coming down on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my own dear Son. I am pleased with you." " Mark 1 v 9-13



"Living by the Book" (Jean Worswick)

Bible studies are a regular and important part of life at Grassington Congregational Church. This scene depicts the verse from Psalm 121 v 1 "I will lift mine eyes to the hills, whence comes my help?"

The hills in the Yorkshire Dales are so beautiful that many people have been inspired to action whilst residing among them - notably George Fox, a powerful preacher and leader of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).



Holy Communion (Pam Cook)

"For I received from the Lord the teaching that I passed onto you: that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took a piece of bread, gave thanks to God, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in memory of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup and said "This cup is God's new covenant, sealed with my blood. Whenever you drink it, do so in memory of me." "

1 Corinthians 11 v 23-25



Christmas Tree (Margaret Kemsley)

The Christmas tree was introduced to aristocratic circles by George III's Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz in the early 19th century.

In Victorian times only the richest families in Grassington would have been fortunate enough to have a tree and Christmas gifts as depicted on the panel. Within poorer families, the children would probably be given no more than a carved wooden toy. Many would receive nothing at all.



Wild Flowers (Shirley Moorhouse)

These are the flowers that were in bloom on the Threshfield to Linton Falls walk when members of the church were first asked to contribute ideas for the banner in May 2010. They are water avens (*geum rivale*), cuckoo pint (*arum maculata*), primrose and violet.

"And why are you troubled about clothing? See the flowers of the field, how they come up; they do no work, they make no thread. But I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these." Matt 6 v 28-29



The Lamb of God (Paula Jackson)

This term first appears in John's Gospel when John the Baptist says of Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world".

The panel also depicts a local smelting flue (a feature of the lead mines which employed so many of the early members of this church), flowers of the Dale, and the rainbow revealed by God to Noah as confirmation of the enduring covenant between God and all living creatures.



Pilots (Jackie Green)

The panel represents the missionary ship "John Williams" launched in 1844 and used to spread Christianity among the Pacific Islands. Today it is the symbol of "Pilots" – an non-uniformed Christian organisation for young people aged between 4 and 18. The essence of being a Pilot is faithfulness, commitment, loyalty, obedience, trust and strength of character. Pilots also have lots of fun and excitement. They subscribe to Jesus' words in John 10v10: "I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness".



The Dickensian Festival (Pat & Terry Haycock)

The panel depicts elements of the festivities during the village's three "Dickensian Weekends": For the first three Saturdays in December Grassington is transported back to the time of Charles Dickens. In addition to Christmas lights and a traditional market, there are musicians, dancers, street entertainers and exhibitions of traditional country crafts. Shopkeepers, villagers and visitors are all encouraged to dress in Victorian costume. Our church uses the event to raise funds for Christian Aid.

Times of Services / Members' Meetings

10.30am Sunday morning family service
(with Holy Communion on 1st
Sunday in month)

7.30pm Church Members Meeting
(first Monday in the month)

Pilots (for young people)

Fridays:

4.45-6.00pm School Year Groups 1-3

6.00-7.30pm School Year Groups 4-6

7.30-9.00pm School Year Groups 7+

Sundays:

7.30-9.00pm School Year Groups 11-13

Other Activities

WAGS – Women About Grassington (Social Group)

Charity fundraising

Sunday dining club

Bible Study

Prayer meeting

Contacts

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Church Web Site

Visit us at www.grassingtonchurch.org
Webmaster: Andrew Wyatt (andrew@badgergate.com)

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