

**Bow Valley Baptist Church**

## **The Four Stained Glass Windows**

Iconography of the Designs

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Window 3



## WINDOW THREE

*From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17)*

The river Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee, and the designs in this window also follow on, from Jesus' baptism in the Jordan to His ministry, "teaching, preaching and healing in all Galilee." (Matthew 4:23).

The word 'Galilee' means 'circuit', or ring, offering a wealth of allegorical imagery which is inherent in, and associated with, the circle - 'perfection' in the language of geometry. In the poetry of Job 22, God "walketh in the circuit of heaven," and on earth, the Son of God walked by, and upon, the circuit of Galilee, teaching, healing and "preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God". (Mark 1:14).

The waters of the ring of Galilee are represented by the curve and shoreline shape in tones of blue - symbolic of faith and humility, but the choice of rich, variable blues acknowledge the often turbulent waters. The amber-yellow 'crown' of the sun's rising describes the edge of a new day in the colour associated with divine glory, and which refers to a *new*, new day as the glorious amber-gold of "the Daystar arises in your heart" (2 Peter 1: 19), accompanied here with bands of bright cloud both delicate and lively, cut in colours from the palette of the dawn, as the "Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings". (Malachi 4:2)

The necessary, physical light from the sun is witness to its spiritual parallel – the essential holy light of the Son: both are imperatives; of life, and of Life Eternal. *Jesus said, "I am the light of the world . . . the light of life."* (John 8:12).

The ideas of healing and of liberation interrelate and overlap, as do the images of their abstraction, but they share a common, or singular, genesis in Jesus' ministry of forgiveness and in His self-giving provision of a healed, and therefore, holy, relationship with God. Jesus is the one Mediator between God and man, because He is God and man. Christ is "the new and living way," our Mediator and great High Priest, declared here in the image of a bridge, which, representing Christ Himself, is "able to the uttermost" to reconcile "east and west", (Psalm 103), the polarities of God's holiness and every person's sinfulness. The bridge, in this allegorical landscape, is a symbol of the Bridge which spans a spiritual chasm; we have redemption through His blood, [even] the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians.1:14). Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1).

*"Come and dine".*

Upon the shore of the Sea of Galilee, at daybreak, Jesus stands, awaiting His disciples' return from a night's fishing. Knowing that they had made no catch, He called to them to throw the net once more. Now the flung, empty circle is transformed, filled with 153 fishes. Jesus had made a breakfast fire upon the sand. *"Come and dine"* He said, and the One who had declared that He did not come to be served, but to serve, served His disciples fish, and bread. (John 21: 12).

In this design, the image of fire represents both physical heat, and spiritual zeal. A few days previously, Peter had warmed his hands at a different fire, and three times vehemently denied knowing Jesus the Christ who had been betrayed, and was about to be crucified.

But God is rich in mercy and the Lord had lighted a new fire. Kindled with a personal tenderness, Jesus thus graciously initiated the healing restoration of the broken-by-sin love relationship between the Creator and His people. This is the Saviour who came "to heal the broken hearted" (Isaiah 61:1). This image of the fire is Christ's individual invitation; the offer of God's manifold grace.

"Treasure the privilege." Pastor Hamish Buntain.

Set into the lower left corner of the design, a small quarter-circle of ruby glass is imbued with great significance. Initially, my intention had been to set this image of fire at the actual, (and symbolic), centre of the design, but rapidly, it became clear to me that the placement of this piece should read as a 'beginning' - "from the first day . . . He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:5)

Christ came "to send fire on the earth" and the breath of the Holy Spirit fans into flame "the gift of God which is within you." (2 Timothy 1:6). Jesus' fire invites and welcomes; comforts and sustains; restores and heals.

Above the Bridge, to left and right, the design takes up the reference in Malachi 4:2 : "the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings." The outer, upper edge of wing-like shapes curving upward toward the left side of the window, take on greeny-brown tones of landscape and form the slope of a hillside, encouraging us to remember "after He had taken leave of them, He went up on the mountain to pray." (Mark 6: 46).