



# **New Heritage: Textiles at St Matthew's Church, Surbiton**

**1996 – The Advent banners**, made in memory of Jack Howell (a former member of the congregation), are 8-foot long and are hung each year on pillars either side of the church. They are in rich red, orange and purple, and depict the Angel Gabriel's visit to the Virgin Mary.

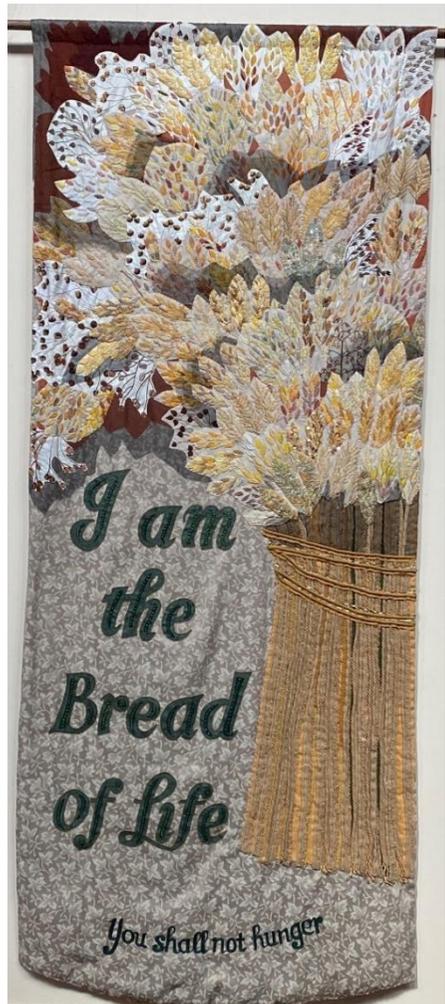
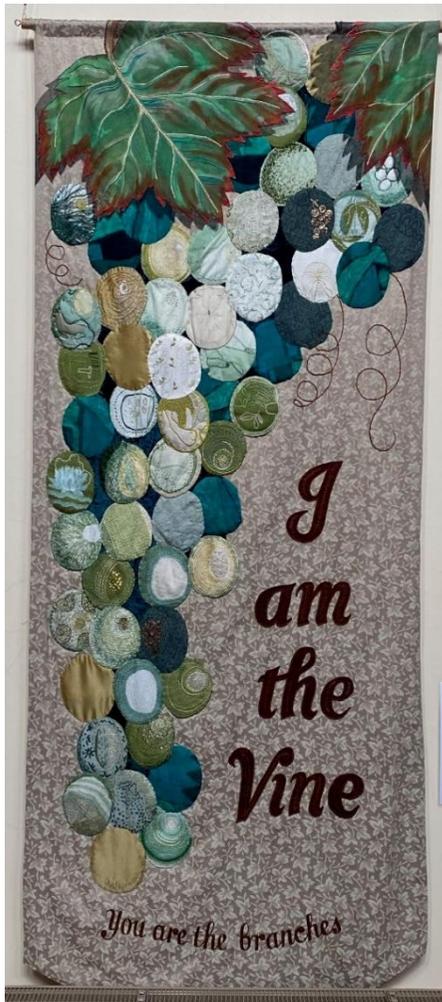


**1997 – The Easter hanging**, representing the hope of a risen Christ, hangs in the chapel throughout the year and is transferred to the nave for Easter Sunday and the following 50 day Easter season. Its cross of appliqué flowers (all of which are depiction of flowers growing in Israel in the time of Jesus) is mounted on blue muslin, through which shines the light of the stained-glass windows.



## 1998-1999 – Two Harvest banners

'I am the Bread of Life' depicts a beautifully embroidered wheat-sheaf; 'I am the Vine' has a tumbling bunch of grapes. These also represent the bread and wine of communion.



**'I am the Vine'** was made for Harvest 1998. The grapes were worked individually and the leaf was hand painted with fabric pens onto cream calico, then gold thread and embroidery were added. The letters were embroidered individually before being cut out, machine-edged and sewn on to the backing material.

Jesus said: "I am the Vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me, you can do nothing." (John 15.5)

**'I am the Bread of Life'** was made in 1999. Heads of wheat and linseed were individually embroidered and beaded by members of the group before being made up into a wheatsheaf. The stalks were made from different sorts of furnishing cords and frayed fabrics.

Jesus said: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6.35)

**2000 – 2001 -Our Millennium 'WELCOME' - a long banner for each letter, in the colours of the rainbow.**



This group of seven banners was made in 1999-2001 as our Millennium project.

To greet people into the church, it was decided to make a banner to hang in the church porch. As there are seven letters in the word 'welcome', it seemed appropriate to use the seven colours of the rainbow.

Each letter depicts something of Creation – flowers, birds and animals, sunlight, trees, the universe and water creatures.

Several different techniques are used: applique, patchwork, cross-stitch, beading, machine-embroidery and hand - stitching.

Each letter has been attached to a banner representing the blues and greens of the landscape.

## 2002 – The Camellias Altar Frontal

The Camellias altar frontal was designed and made by Gill Davies in 2002 in memory of Geoff Trotter, a former churchwarden. Geoff grew camellias in his garden and the bushes and irises are stylised using design ideas from Art Nouveau and the kneeler lectern at St Matthew's.

'The Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words' is taken from Romans 8.26 and a beaded dove is central to the design. Geoff served in the RAF and his Corsair plane is represented by a similar coloured blue tit tucked between the flowers on the left hand side.

The flowers are hand dyed and beaded, machine embroidered and sewn on individually.



**2002 – 2003 -The 'PEACE' hanging** for the Quiet Prayer Corner. Small, individual diamonds picturing things for which we wish to thank God.



**2004 – 2005 – A 'JOY' hanging** to complement the 'PEACE' one.



**2006 – 2007 – The River of Life.** Based on Revelation 22.1 – 5.

‘On either side of the river is the tree of life... and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.

On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the LORD God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.’

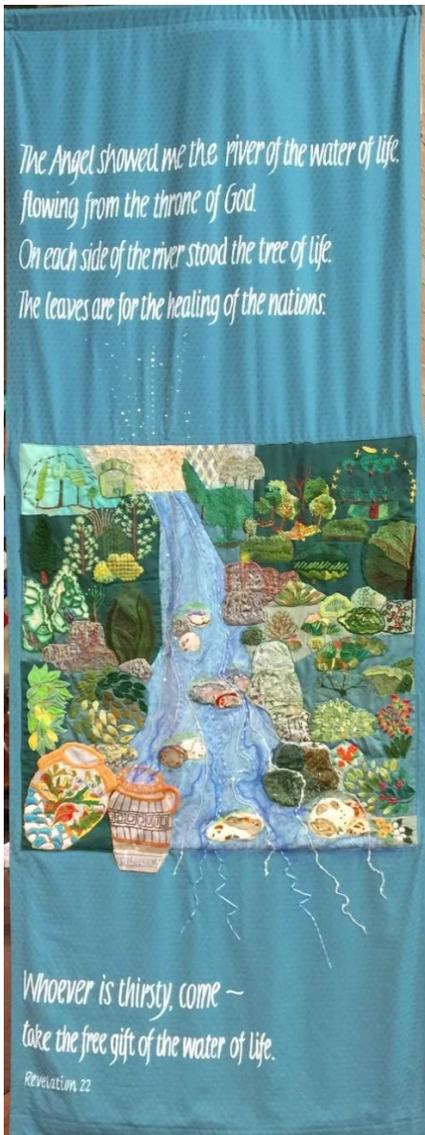
The trees, bushes and flowers of this picture were embroidered by individuals and appliqued on to a backing fabric. The river is flowing towards the viewer, who can symbolically receive the healing gifts of God in the water jars.

**2009 – 2011 – Song of Songs banner** to accompany the River of Life banner. Based on Song of Solomon 2 10-13. ‘Arise, my beautiful one, and come with me...’

The garden, with a path running through it, mirrors the stream of the River of Life banner. When someone interpreted “spring flowers” as waterlilies, we just had to have a pond! Spot also the wildlife. A wide band of grass across the middle appears, with the path, as a Cross when you are further away.

The words can be interpreted as God inviting you to 'Arise...and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing is come.'

Through the trials and tribulations of life, put your trust in the Lord and your 'time of singing will come'.



**2012 - 2013 – Fruit of the Holy Spirit banner.** The Holy Spirit of God, represented as a dove, pours forth the 'fruit of the Spirit,' as told to us in Paul's letter to the Galatians.



‘But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control....’ Galatians 5. 22

The Dove, representing the Spirit of God, has had each feather embroidered, alternately in feather-stitch and fly-stitch. The lettering was designed by Mary Platford, machine-outlined and cut out, and then sequins were sewn on by hand.

**2013-2016 – Noah's Ark.** We read the story of Noah and the Great Flood in Genesis.

The rainbow represents God's promise that there would never be another great flood.

The Noah's Ark banner was made by the SMARTies group 2013-2016. Characterful embroidered animals look out from the deck and portholes, fish swim around and birds fly above. The words 'All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all' are from the well-known hymn of 1848 by C.F. Alexander.



## 2016-2017 – Psalm 23, The Lord is my Shepherd.

Blue and green roundels of abstract water and foliage represent the Lord's comforting green pastures and still waters which 'restore my soul.' The words, conveying trust in God, run centrally down a river.



## SMARTIES

Our name stands for 'St Matthew's Arties' and up to twelve of us meet every Thursday in the Chapel from 10am – 12noon to sew, chat, laugh and support each other. We also have some 'outworkers' who are unable to join us on Thursdays.

Our next project is embroidering the sides of the kneelers which were purchased in memory of one of our own, Janet McWilliams.



With thanks to Gill Davies