

## Story of Liturgical Quilts for St Philip-by-the-Sea Anglican Church

In late 2004 I received a call from Rev. Kevin Arndt regarding interviewing me for perhaps doing several commissions in Landscape form to depict the colours of the church year.

I met with both the Rev Arndt and a couple of church wardens with my portfolio of some of my quilts and to discuss what they were expecting me to do. We discussed each time of the church year and I suggested as the Christmas colours and the Easter colours were both gold and white, and that they both were to hang for a short time that perhaps I could come up with something that would cover both, so that would be four different ones rather than five.

Once they decided they wanted me to make these quilts for them, Rev. Arndt had me meet with a committee of nine to discuss what would go into this first quilt. It didn't take me long into that meeting to discover I could never please all nine people or work that way, and Rev Arndt realized that as well. So after that I only had to have the Rev Arndt oversee what I was doing on each quilt and approve or suggest what was wanted. Rev. Arndt was very helpful but also very specific in what he wanted as symbols on the quilts. For instance, each quilt has a thread painted dove somewhere in the quilt, and also an image of the fish that is the symbol outside the church.

The first quilt I did was "Light and Life of the World" in early January 2005 so that it would be completed to hand over to the church to hang Easter Sunday. The left side of the quilt is symbolic for the Christmas season- with the star shining down on three deer to signify the holy family. Rev Arndt was adamant that it be "Island" deer which have a different type of horn and he made sure I had a picture of them! Also the star had to be the stylized long shape. The right side of the quilt he wanted a brilliant sunrise for Easter to symbolize Jesus Christ rising on Easter Sunday. The boats on the lower right were also his idea. The biggest challenge for me was to blend from a Night/Winter scene to the Brilliant Sunrise.

When this quilt was finished, the lady that donated the monies for these art

pieces was in hospital and Rev Arndt took it up there to show her, although she was well enough to attend church on that Easter Sunday to see the first installation and viewing of that quilt.

After finishing this quilt, I met again with Rev Arndt to see which one he wanted me to work on next. He explained that they were so happy with this first one and that they had "found" some money and wanted me to make a large one for a bare wall on the side across from where the quilts that were of the church year were to hang.

After discussing with Rev Arndt what was wanted, I came up with the idea of the triptych. Rev Arndt wanted it island-like but no place in particular, with many different animals, etc. in it. He also wanted dogwood in it as there was a beautiful old dogwood tree beside the little church that St Phillips had been in before building the new church where they are today. This quilt also has a thread painted dove in the sky and all the quilting lines come from the wings of the dove to encompass the scene. This quilt is called "The Seventh Day of Creation" - Rev Arndt named all the quilts. This quilt was completed the summer of 2005.

The next quilt I made in 2005 was the green one for "Ordinary Time" called "Wisdom Along the Way." Rev Arndt gave me quite a list of scriptures to depict in five different scenes. The centre scene is from a scripture about Jesus lighting the way and the four smaller ones are scenes created from definite scriptures or parables. It also has the thread painted dove and fish in it.

In early 2006 I made "Lenten Seascape" for the Lent season. Rev. Arndt told me it was a time of turbulence and starkness, so we felt a turbulent seascape with a barren tree, and three subtle crosses in the distance - all in purples - would depict this season of the church year. I completed this quilt in between two surgeries on my right hand! It also has the same thread painted dove and the fish symbol sewn in stitches somewhere in the quilt - sometimes these fish symbols are very hard to find!

The final quilt "Beneath the Surface" was completed in 2006 in time to hand over for the Advent season. Rev. Arndt had told me it was a "period

of waiting and what lies beneath the surface”, so I felt an undersea piece was the best way to portray this message. I have had the opportunity to meet a few underwater divers off the coast of the island that are photographers that graciously shared their photos with me. They explained that off our Island coast is some of the best diving in the world and that once you go beneath 40 feet the ocean floor is alive with colour! It was a licence to go crazy with creating 3 dimensional thread creatures! The whales in the centre of this piece took me 3 days to thread paint - they are entirely made of thread, but once I covered them with the sheer material - you cannot tell! That was a great learning curve for me.

I put the sky, under water and sea bottom together inserting the sheer as I did all of this. As usual I emailed photos to Rev Arndt for his approval and when he saw this one, he came back with an idea of a seal breaking the surface of the water to emphasize the top of the water. To do this it meant I had to pick apart all these pieces and insert the seals. I had a glass of wine before I embarked on this task and decided the seal should be bottom's up!!

In December 2006 St Philip-by-the-Sea Anglican church put on a lovely evening of an art show and a Dedication. Avril Valentine, a friend that was in attendance, wrote a lovely article with photos that was submitted and published in the winter 2007 Canadian Quilter magazine.

With the church's permission, in May of 2007, I entered the Lenten Seascape in the local Parksville Show where it won 1<sup>st</sup> in the large wall hanging category and also “Best in Show”. I also entered it in the 2007 National Juried Show of the Canadian Quilters Association, held that year in Kamloops, BC. There it won Honourable mention in its category and also Viewer's Choice.

It was also featured as the cover on the Fall Edition of Canadian Quilters magazine.

It was a joy and a real learning experience for me to complete these 5 commissions over these two years.