

St Swithin's, Frettenham - www.norfolkstainedglass.co.uk



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Address : St Swithin's Church, Church Street, Frettenham, Norwich, Norfolk NR12 7NW

Further information see: www.norwich.anglican.org or www.achurchnearyou.com



General Information

The church mainly dates from the 14th century, with subsequent alterations including the addition of the parapet in 1672 and the rebuilding of the chancel in 1869. Of particular interest are the quatrefoil windows in the clerestory which are typical of the Decorated period (early 14th century) – we are more used to seeing large windows in the clerestory to maximise the amount of light in the church.

Although the church contains a 14th century stained glass window depicting Angel Gabriel the church is dominated by the magnificent 20th century east window.

East Window



This striking window was designed and made by workers on a Manpower Services Commission programme, who restored the church during the 1980s. It dramatically illustrates Christ's victory over Death at his resurrection. The eye at the apex of the window represents God the Father overseeing events. On the left the skeleton represents Death whilst on the right we see angel who rolled away the stone complete with magnificent wings.

Chancel South Window 1

In this window we find the only medieval glass remaining in the church. Angel Gabriel (figure in the tracery on the right) can be seen complete with a nimbus and a proportionately large right hand. He carries a scroll proclaiming "ave gracia plena do(minus)" inferring that the figure was originally part of an Annunciation scene.

The other figure although originally



from the same period has been heavily restored. Although now an angel it is possible that it was originally the Virgin Mary.

The canopy tops to the main lights, depict foliage and pieces of ruby glass and date from the same period. Note that the border to the left window includes tiny castle turrets.

Remaining Chancel Windows



This Victorian windows now depict modern Christian emblems accentuated by the use of bright colours and include representation of Agnus Dei and the Keys of Heaven

South Aisle West

The window dates from 1922 and depicts "The Good Shepherd"



North Aisle East

The window is dedicated to Brian Ernest Mason (1930 – 84) and contains a small roundel holding a shield representing St Swithin (or Swithun) who was a Saxon Bishop of Winchester famed for both charitable giving and building churches. According to legend the Bishop asked to be buried out

of doors where he would be "trodden and rained upon". Although his wish was initially granted, on 15th July 971 the monks of Winchester transferred his remains to a splendid shrine inside the Cathedral on this day there was a heavy rainstorm. This led to the "old wife's tale" (totally without substantiation) that if it rains on St Swithin's day it will be followed by 40 successive wet days conversely if the day is fine so will the next 40 days. The emblems of St. Swithin are depicted on the shield and refer to the legend of the forty days' rain (raindrops) and the apples from the trees he planted. Indeed there is an old belief that when it rains on St. Swithin's Day, it is the Saint christening the apple crop.



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