

## Gaia at St Chad's

As part of the Knowsley Borough of Culture St Chad's hosted the event to showcase Gaia. In Greek mythology Gaia is the personification of the Earth.



As we entered St Chad's we could see people holding their cups of coffee and standing in the aisle. When we turned to look up the aisle towards the altar the absolutely breathtaking beauty of this model was revealed, slowly revolving, cloud covered, with glimpses of blue oceans and green and orange land masses appearing through the cloud as the earth rotated, all suspended above the choir stalls. It is magnificent.



There was a short presentation about the Borough of Culture and then we were treated to a short performance by a local soprano before we were then able to continue viewing the Earth from all available aspects.





Gaia is a huge three dimensional model of the Earth and yet is 2.1 million times smaller than the real thing! This means each centimetre of the model represents 21km of the Earth's surface. Do your maths and you can work out that by standing about 180m away from the model it will be like looking at the Earth as if you were on the moon, just like the iconic photo that was taken from Apollo 17 in 1972.

Gaia measures about 6m in diameter and the detailed surface of the Earth is created from 120dpi images provided by NASA and is internally illuminated. Common experiences of astronauts include a feeling of awe for the planet, an understanding of the interconnection of life and a renewed sense of responsibility for taking care of the environment.

Gaia was created by Luke Jerram who works with sculptures, installations and live arts projects. [www.lukejerram.com](http://www.lukejerram.com)

The installation is accompanied by a surround-sound composition by BAFTA award winning composer Dan Jones.

Gaia is on a world tour appearing in various arts and science exhibitions and festivals around the world (which goes to show how special it was to see it in St Chad's!). Other venues include Birmingham, Aberdeen and Switzerland.



## **St Chad's Kirkby**

Kirkby appears in the Domesday book as 'Cherchbi'. The current Church for St Chad's was built under the auspices of the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Sefton and began in 1869, but there has been a Christian Church on the site since about 870.



The sandstone baptismal font is all that is left of the first chapel and is the oldest known font in Britain. It survived the Reformation when some inventive person lime-washed it and re-purposed it as a water butt, so saving it from destruction as being so highly decorated it would almost certainly have been destroyed. The Revd Robert Grey rescued and restored it in 1850. It was suggested by the Government that it be removed to a place of safety during WWII but the Vicar, Revd. D.L.Griffiths insisted it be kept in Church for baptising the Kirkby babies.



The Church has many typically Gothic features which the Victorians favoured but the pillars on one side of the aisle are round, and on the other side octagonal. The farmers of Kirkby wanted round and the farmers of Simonswood wanted octagonal so this is the compromise that was reached.



St Chad's has several beautiful stained glass windows including some by William Morris and company which are located over the font. The windows in the side walls feature men and women from the Bible. It seems that the organ conceals one of the greatest stained glass work of arts in England, by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, maybe next time I'll ask to see it!

There are also some lovely windows above the High Altar but even more attention grabbing is the reredos. This is a mosaic of the Last Supper and was designed by Henry Holiday who had travelled in Italy. He had the mosaic prepared in Florence and brought Italian craftsmen to piece the work together.



The MU banner in St Chad's is pretty impressive as well!

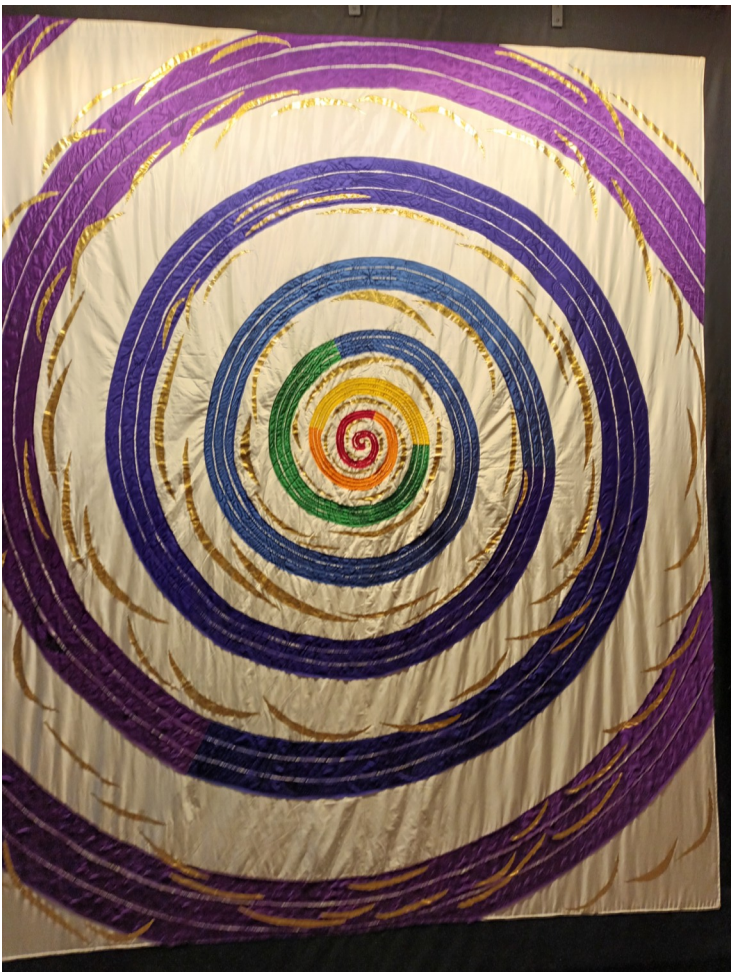




## Chester Cathedral Exhibition- Threads through Creation

This exhibition is stunning. It tells the story of creation in embroidered textiles using mostly contemporary techniques to achieve the desired effects through a sequence of twelve huge panels.

The textile artist is Jacqui Parkinson. It took almost 3 years to create the panels, one of the largest textile projects by a single artist, using literally millions of stitches and miles of threads. This is her second project on this scale the first being 'Threads through Revelation' which toured many cathedrals between 2016 and 2018.



In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

The spiral is in three pieces to represent the Trinity.

Then God said, "Let there be light;" and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.





And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.



This is very complex and the work includes 'solid' water as well. The detail in the snowflakes is incredible and each is unique!



A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches.

And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

The vegetation and seeds are in the orange and green squares around the edge of the panel.



And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights-the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night-and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.



And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.





And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."



So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.



Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.



Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a



helper as his partner." So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his



partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman for out of Man this one was taken.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the ser-





pent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

The panel showing all the animals has a detail at the bottom showing that as Adam and Eve leave the Garden of Eden God is still with them in the form of the dove and the Lamb.

It really is a wonderful exhibition.

