

New high altar frontal for Advent and Lent

Job No: 10229

Brief

To design and produce a high altar frontal for Advent and Lent reflecting St Peter's vision and engaging the values of the worshipping community.

Designs must be inspiring, timeless, simple, and impactful to be effective from close up and at the back of the nave. They must be sympathetic to the interior of St Peter's and include an element of blue to reflect the main colours in the East window.

Themes: Hope, self-examination, and repentance. Bible passages: Feeding the 5,000 and the wedding at Cana.

Artists notes

St Peter's Church is a spectacular example of a neo Gothic Victorian Church and is brimming with decorative panels, gold work, marble and carved stone. To produce an effective and bold piece of new artwork in the central focal point of the building is no mean feat- there is a lot going on already and the altar frontal needs to harmonise with everything that is already there, whilst also making its own statement. Given such a decorative space with so many figurative images, I have chosen to propose an abstract design. (When finished the design should have explanation to hand, but the abstract nature should also allow the individual observer to form their own personal interpretation of the cloth.) The colour and rhythm of the work will be the elements that will connect with the surroundings. They are arresting. They should be visible from the back of the building and make the observer want to look closer.

The colour purple is predominant to correspond with the liturgical season, but blue is an important colour to link to the east window. There is also an element of gold to connect with the ornate reredos. The circular shape in the proposal draws on the theme of no beginning or ending with God, it also reflects the shape of the whole church through the sacrament.

The Commissioning Group has chosen design B. In due course, I am happy to present the project to the congregation and facilitate discussions. This may have to happen virtually due to my distance from Harrogate and the limits of the budget.

It could be possible to share my progress on the work via the church website or social media so as the community can feel they are kept in touch as it develops.

Design B proposal

This design uses the sacrament as the central theme; it is broken into pieces to feed the people. The bold colours enable a clear view of the design whether you are standing up close or at the back of the nave. The red and pink segments are representative of the body and blood, between them the blue is for the Virgin Mary and her central role in carrying and nurturing the Christ child. This blue is pierced with a vertical shard of gold putting God at the heart, and the horizontal gold bar links the body and blood with Mary's mantle cradling from the left. The green segment and small vertical section represent the vine, and the are the connecting feature between the sacrament and the background. The base cloth has a fluid element to it emulating wine, and the blood of Christ, it also has shades of blue and green reflecting themes of water.



Design B in situ



Chancel view above

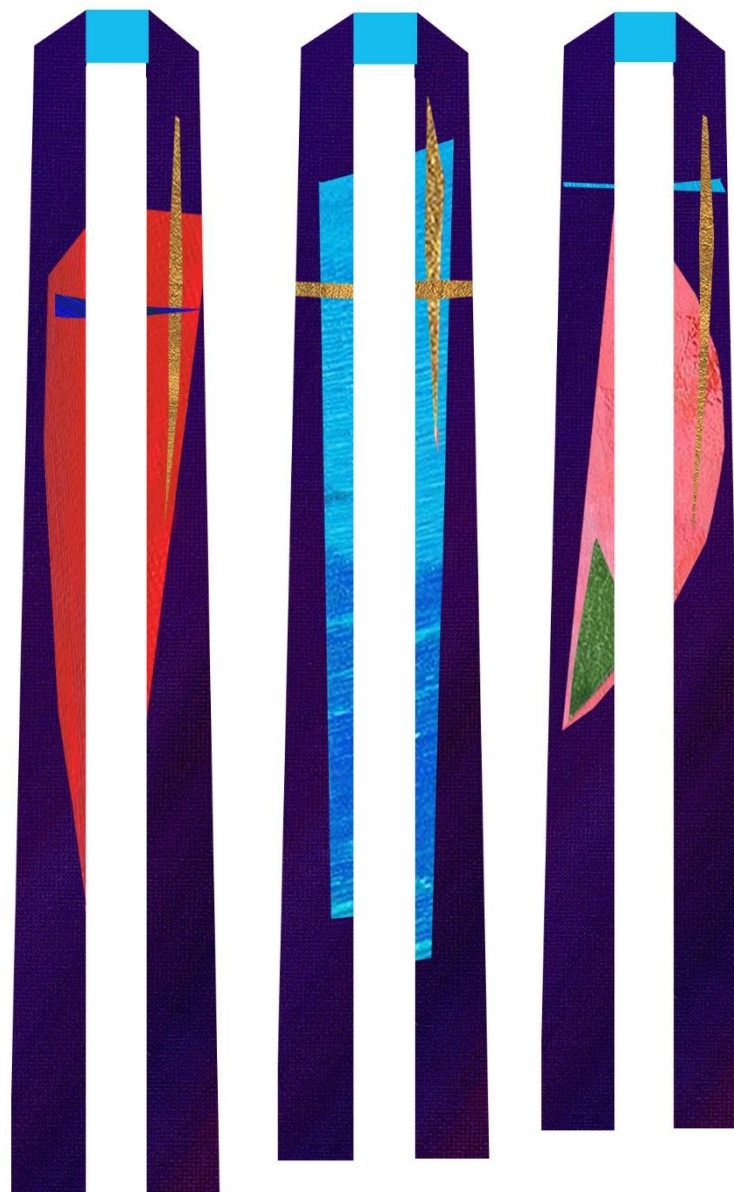


Nave view

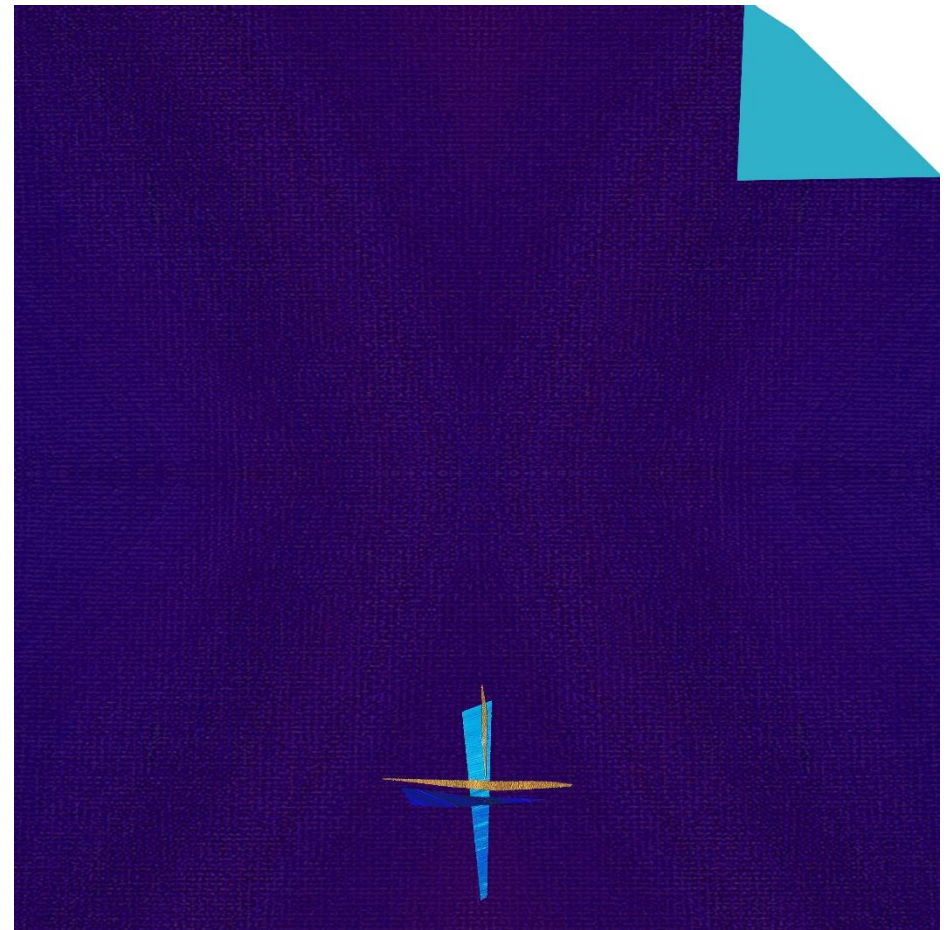
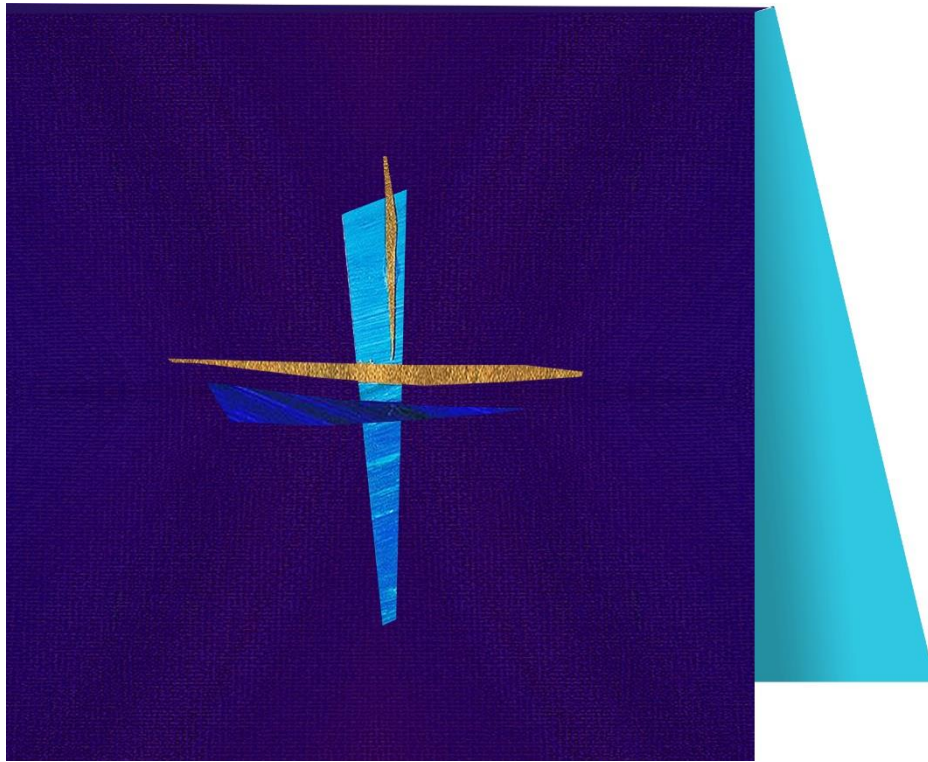


Pulpit fall

Stole designs



Burse and veil



The fabric I propose to use for the base of the frontal and pulpit fall is a woollen broadcloth from the supplier Hainsworth based in Pudsey, West Yorkshire. This supplier has been chosen primarily for their superb quality cloth which they process on site from wool to finished cloth. I have used their cloth for other works- notably the Bradford Cathedral altar panels, and it provides an excellent surface for embroidery in addition to being colour fast and fire retardant.

I will use a free motion embroidery technique shown in the image to the right to blend the base colours together. I will also use a layered appliqué technique with coloured silk dupion and viscose thread to create the bold coloured shapes of the design. These will be worked into with free motion embroidery and some satin stitch to create more depth and colour.

The stoles, burse and veil would be made in handwoven silk from the supplier James Hare in Leeds. They would be made up in layers of coloured silk appliqued and then embroidered to give depth and texture. These items will be lined in a turquoise cotton sateen to maximise the impact of the purple colour.

These items will not be as colour fast as the frontal and pulpit fall and will need to be stored in dark, dry conditions to maximise their longevity.

Instructions for the care and maintenance of all textiles will be supplied in a 'manual' with the finished project.

I prefer to deliver and install my work personally and will confirm a date in late November to present the pieces before Advent Sunday.

