

## **Evensong**

13 February 2022

St James' Church, Lower Hutt

Living Water

Preached by Revd Murray Wills

*May the words of My mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you Lord, my rock and redeemer. Amen*

Today we continue our Evensong series on art. Not only do we have a very special piece of art here today which I will reveal shortly, but we also have the artist here to talk about the artistic process involved in creating it.

The artistic process is different for every artist, and each piece of art speaks to each one of us, the artist and viewer differently.

The painting that we will be looking at today called "Making Waves" spoke to me so much that I bought it from the exhibition it was in.

This Painting, was expertly painted by our own Robyn Eastgate-Manning. And I really thank Robyn for being here today.

When I first saw it online, I was immediately drawn to it and its topic of water. I was not disappointed when I saw it in person.

The bible is full of passages about water.

It doesn't take long for water to be mentioned. Right away in Genesis 1:2, "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." Water is such an essential component of life; it was created on the very first day.

In Revelation water is mentioned again, in almost the last words of the Bible.

Revelation 22:17, says, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let everyone who hears say, 'Come.' And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift."

Water represents life. In a Christian context, water has many correlations. Christ walked on water, and turned it into wine. Christians are baptised with or in water, symbolizing a purification of the soul, and an admission into the faith.

Water flows throughout scripture, and this should remind us of its importance... both spiritually and physically.

Water has the power to heal, - think of the Syrian cured from leprosy in the river Jordan (2 Kings 5:1-14) and the miracles at Bethesda in Jerusalem (John 5:1-9). Water has the power to purify, provide deliverance, and destroy enemies as in the Flood (Genesis 6:17) and the flight from Israel.

Jesus, the source of Living Water extends an invitation to all of us who thirst.

Water is in fact mentioned 722 times in the Bible.

Here are some well-known bible quotes about water:

- For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring. (*Isaiah 44:3*)
- The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. (*Isaiah 58:11*)
- Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. (*John 3:5*)
- On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” (*John 7:37-39*)

So, lets reveal the painting and I will ask Robyn to speak to us about it.

As I mentioned before, a painting speaks to us each in different ways.

To me- looking at this painting, I see:

- The Holy Spirit at work

- Baptism
- Cleansing and Purity
- A symbol of spiritual things
- River Jordan
- Jesus, walking on water
- Life
- Light
- Healing

There will be other ways it speaks to you.

Here is a way that the Holy Spirit speaks to me when I view the painting. Some will see the swirling of the waves if you look at the bottom two thirds of the painting.

I though see an image of the sign of the fish or Ichthys (pron *lckthis*). I mentioned that in my sermon on the Supper at Emmaus.

Let me show you what I mean.



This symbol of a fish according to scholarship dates to the 2nd Century as a sign of Christian belief. It was a secret sign of their Christian beliefs.

To ensure that you were in the company of a fellow Christian, a semi-circular arch was traced on the ground. If the stranger then drew a mirroring arch that formed the outline of a fish, you could consider yourself to be in the presence of a fellow Christian. Now you will see it on bumper stickers and products and it is still a symbol of the Christian Faith.

Water is the gift of life as we have seen not just for our survival on earth but for our spiritual survival also. Today as we reflect on this painting, we thank God for the gifts we have been bestowed with, any in particular today we thank you God for Robyn and her gift of expression in art. We ask that you bless her and continue to speak through her.

*God who created water, we beg you to pour your refreshment into our lives.*

*Give us the power of the springs of water from the Holy Spirit, so that we might live lives that honour you.*

*God who is called the Word, we beg you to make our words like fresh water to bless the people we speak to. God of*

*justice and righteousness, we beg you to bring fresh water to our local and national leaders. Help them speak*

*words that will fall like a gentle, cleansing, and empowering rain on our broken country. Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, that all people are in your hands. Amen.*

*Credit: The Revd Dr Lynne Baab*



Making Waves by Robyn Eastgate-Manning