

# St Jude-on-the-Hill

The Parish Church of  
Hampstead Garden Suburb

## A Short Guide



# Welcome to St Jude's

Jude was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. He is often identified with the apostle Thaddeus, and with the author of the New Testament book the *Letter of Jude*. According to tradition Jude was martyred in the Roman province of Syria about the year 65.



*Icon of St Jude by Achilles Kyriacou*

After being killed his body was hung upside down on a cross in mockery of his faith and so the inverted cross has become one of his symbols (there are four on the outside of our church). His remains are to be found in St Peter's Basilica in Rome in the same tomb as those of Saint Simon, with whom he also shares a feast day on 28th October.

Jude is one of the more obscure of the apostles and, because he shares his name with the one who betrayed Jesus, Christians have hesitated to invoke his help. As a result Jude has become known as the patron of lost causes or hopeless cases.

Our church takes its name from St Jude's, Whitechapel where Canon Samuel Barnett, husband of Henrietta Barnett, the founder of Hampstead Garden Suburb, was vicar. Its parish was in one of the most deprived parts of London, and it was from the vicarage there that the Barnetts developed their projects of social improvement and reform, most notably Toynbee Hall, the Whitechapel Art Gallery and Hampstead Garden Suburb itself, a model community in which people of different social classes would live together in attractive surroundings.



*St Jude's as 'the city set on a hill' by Walter Starmer*

The church was built to the designs of Edwin Landseer Lutyens (1869–1944), generally acknowledged to be the greatest British architect of the twentieth century. It is now a Grade 1 Listed Building. Simon Jenkins (1999) considers it to be one England Thousand Best Churches: “one of Lutyens’s most distinctive creations”.

Peter Anson (1960) described it as

*a magnificent Edwardian period piece; the spiritual centre of this fifty year old experiment in the breaking down of class-distinctions by new housing schemes. The tunnel like domed interior contains a wonderful collection of gay furnishings, the willful naughtiness of which was quite in keeping with the emancipated outlook of the people who lived in the hand-made red brick houses designed by Raymond Unwin, Baillie Scott, . . . and Crickmer - all of whom were then regarded as the last word of fashion.*

*Gorgeous is the best word to use for the painted ornaments and decorations; which, for the most part, recall the favourite reds, greens and orange used by Sir Frank Brangwyn.*

Philip Davies (2012) says:

*At St Jude's [Lutyens] produced a remarkable composition which ranks among his finest works – an ingenious hybrid of Gothic, Byzantine and Quattrocento styles. Imbued with spiritual symbolism, the intention was to provide a tangible architectural expression of the transfiguring power of spiritual aspiration at the very centre of the community. At the cutting of the first sod in October 1929 Dame Henrietta said: “That is our hope, that the outside . . . will aid those who . . . have not yet had the privilege of knowing God to seek higher things . . . and to comprehend . . . what is meant by the Beauty of Holiness.”*

One of those who said he had “some glimpse of higher mysteries” at St Jude’s was the author Evelyn Waugh (1964) who was confirmed here on 25th May 1916. The Waugh family lived in North End Road and Evelyn’s father, Arthur, was a leading member of the congregation in the early years.

Building began in 1909, but the west end was not completed until 1935. The church was formally opened on St Jude’s Day 1910 and consecrated on 7 May 1911 when its new parish was also created.

Externally it is 200 feet long and the spire rises 178 feet above the ground. Inside, the church is 122 feet from the west door to the chancel steps, and 40 feet to the highest part of the roof. The tower and spire were ‘presented’ to Henrietta Barnett to mark her sixtieth birthday on 4th May 1911 “to symbolise the aspiration of the founders of Hampstead Garden Suburb.”

Like all churches St Jude’s is planned around a table, a symbol of nourishment and hospitality.

*The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me’.*

1 Corinthians 11.23-24 NRSV

Behind our table or ‘altar’ is a large painting of Jesus sharing his Last Supper with his friends on the day before he died. His terrible death on the cross is portrayed on the central arch of the church. But Christians believe God raised Jesus



*The Last Supper by Walter Starmer*

from the dead and took him up into heaven, and so you will also find images of his Resurrection (above the Last Supper) and Ascension (in the dome above the altar).

All of the wall paintings at St Jude’s are the work of the artist Walter Starmer (1877-1961) who spent more than a decade working on them. Starmer was the son of a Congregational minister who worked for the British and Foreign Bible Society in East Anglia. He was a prize-winning student at Norwich Art School from where he won a government scholarship to continue his studies at Birmingham, then England’s leading art school, and one closely associated with the Arts and Crafts movement. Starmer volunteered as a medical orderly at the beginning of the First World War, but also worked as a war artist. Several of his paintings were used in the official history of the war work of the YMCA, and thirty are in the collection of the Imperial War Museum.



*The Crucifixion by Walter Starmer*



*Before the Murals by Karel Verschaeren 1915*

After the War he was invited by the first vicar, Basil Bouchier, who had served as an army chaplain, to decorate the Lady Chapel at St Jude's as a war memorial.

It is sometimes suggested that Lutyens disapproved of the murals, but there is no direct evidence for this. He certainly met with Starmer several times to discuss them. It is important not to think of the church as an architectural monument, but as a place of worship designed by Lutyens and decorated by Starmer.

It was always planned to have pictures in the church. Henrietta Barnett said of Starmer: "few will see his pictures without reviving their memories of the Holy Bible, and deepening their wells of reverence". Starmer had illustrated several children's books before the War and the style of the murals is rather reminiscent of these.

St Jude's seems a very big church, but visitors are sometimes surprised that the seating space is relatively small. The area around the altar, known as the 'sanctuary' or holy space, is reserved for those who prepare the 'meal' in which we both remember Jesus and meet him again. The wide spaces at the sides of the church were designed for the processions that remind us that being a Christian is not so much about believing a list of things, but is a journey of exploration and growth. The large area at the back is where we gather before the 'font', the place where we begin that journey by coming up out of the waters of death to share the new life of the risen Jesus. That's why the font is near the main entrance to the church.

On the north side of the main west doors is what is probably the earliest memorial in the country to the horses killed in the First World War. The plaque was originally (1926) fixed to a wooden plinth (designed by Lutyens) on which stood a bronze model of a horse by the architect's father Charles Lutyens.



*Memorial to War Horses*

*Basil Graham Bouchier,  
Vicar 1908-1929*

The model (and a replacement) was stolen and the plaque moved to its present location in 1970. Above it is a later bronze relief by Rosemary Proctor (died 1995) showing a warhorse rearing in terror.

The inspiration for the memorial came from the first vicar, Basil Bouchier, who was a leading campaigner for the rights of animals. The church muralist Walter Starmer also supported this cause and had worked as an illustrator for anti-vivisection organisations. He ‘hid’ many small pictures of animals throughout the church.

There is a memorial tablet to Bouchier himself just to the right of the west doors, and a portrait of him in the north porch. The great west window above portraying St Jude (again by Starmer), holding the cross in his right hand and this church in his left, was installed to

commemorate Bouchier who died in 1934, and the completion of the church in his memory in 1935.

In the south porch is a small shrine room (the ‘Calvary Cupboard’) containing a crucifix and tablets recording the fallen of the First World War. The crucifix (the origin of which is unknown) was originally placed against the outside east wall of the church in August 1916 as a memorial to the fallen. It was probably the first public Great War memorial in London, and was blessed by the Bishop of London, and inspected by the King and Queen. Marble tablets carrying the names of the dead were added at various times during the war and the memorial was given a more prominent position before being moved inside the church in 1923. An enormous crucifix designed by Lutyens in the style of Velasquez replaced it on the new external east wall (view from Central Square).



*First World War Memorial  
(now in south porch)*



*‘Velasquez’ Calvary  
by Lutyens*

The murals in the ‘nave’ (the body of the church) tell the story of Jesus and illustrate his teachings. All of the pictures are based on passages in the Bible, which is read every Sunday from the ‘ambo’ or ‘lectern’ on the right at the front of the church. Opposite it on the left is the ‘pulpit’ from which the Bible is explained and applied to our lives. The unusual words we sometimes use to describe parts of the church come from Latin or Greek, languages spoken in the Mediterranean world where Christianity began.

The memorials on the north wall are to John Raphael, a popular sportsman killed in the First World War; to Father William Maxwell Rennie (a bust by his daughter Rosemary Proctor); and, in the lunette above the St George’s altar, a painting by Starmer represents the last few moments in the life Michael Rennie, the Vicar’s son, who died of exhaustion after rescuing several evacuee children after their ship, the *City of Benares*, had been torpedoed on its way to Canada in 1940.



*City of Benares Memorial by Walter Starmer*



*Lady Chapel  
(in an old postcard)*

To the left of the sanctuary, in the north-east corner of the church, is the Lady Chapel. This isn’t a special chapel for ‘ladies’ but a space dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus. It’s actually a kind of miniature church and is used for smaller services. As such it has its own altar, but no font – churches only ever have one font because you can only be ‘baptised’ – become a Christian – once (although you are always welcome back to church if you have wandered away!).

Christians venerate (but do not worship) Mary because she answered for all of us the angel’s invitation to welcome God into the world in the person of his Son and hers, the truly divine and truly human Jesus. We call Mary ‘blessed’, the ‘God-bearer’, the ‘Mother of God’, because of her role in our salvation. God through Mary took on human flesh so that humans might be raised back to the divine relationship with God they enjoyed before they turned against him.

Near the altar in the Lady Chapel is a wooden statue of Our Lady, a reproduction of the early sixteenth century ‘Mourning Virgin’ or ‘Nuremberg Madonna’ which would originally have been part of a crucifixion scene.







*War Memorial by Walter Stamer and Foundation Stone by Eric Gill*

On the south wall of the Lady Chapel is a foundation stone by Eric Gill laid on 25 April 1910. It is now enclosed within a later mural commemorating the dead of the First World War.

St John's Chapel, to the right of the sanctuary, was a gift of the Harmsworth family in 1923. The murals here draw on the *Gospel of John* and the *Book of Revelation*. The memorial window to Sir John Harmsworth is by Robert Anning Bell, one of the most distinguished stained glass artists of his day, and makes use of features from seventeenth century English Baroque sepulchral monuments.

The green and white marble altar is by Lutyens. In the central panel is a picture by Maurice Greiffenhagen (a friend and colleague of Anning Bell at the Glasgow School of Art, and a fellow Royal Academician) of St John holding a chalice

from which is emerging a serpent. This refers to the legend in which the priest of the temple of Diana gave St John poison to drink as a test of faith. Two men had already died of the poison, but St John survived, and restored the other two to life as well. The vestries lie behind the altar of St John.

The fine iron screens that separate each chapel from the sanctuary are much older than the church and bear the name Matthias Heit and the date 1710. The sanctuary floor is patterned in brick and marble. The high altar contains two stones from Canada: one from the former French royal chapel of Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia (where the first regular Church of England services were held in Canada in 1710), and another from the altar steps of Montreal Cathedral.



*Saint John by Maurice Greiffenhagen*

The 'Father Willis' organ comes from St Jude's church in Whitechapel. It was moved, after restoration, to its present position in the chancel in 1934. The organ was rededicated in October 2002 following extensive rebuilding and renovation works. St Jude's has a fine acoustic and is used for musical recordings and rehearsals. It hosts the annual *Proms at St Jude's* music festival and has also appeared in several films.



*Father Willis' organ*

*Back cover image: Bishop of London at the Centenary Service in 2011*

## Further reading

Philip Davies (2012)

*London: Hidden Interiors*

Simon Jenkins (1999)

*England's Thousand Best Churches*

Alan Walker (2011)

*The Centenary Book of St Jude-on-the-Hill*

Alan Walker (2015)

*Walter P. Stamer Artist 1877-1961*

Evelyn Waugh (1964)

*A Little Learning*

More information about the church and the Suburb can be found on the websites of the church ([www.stjudeonthehill.com](http://www.stjudeonthehill.com)) and the Hampstead Garden Suburb Archives Trust ([suburbarchives.com](http://suburbarchives.com)).

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