

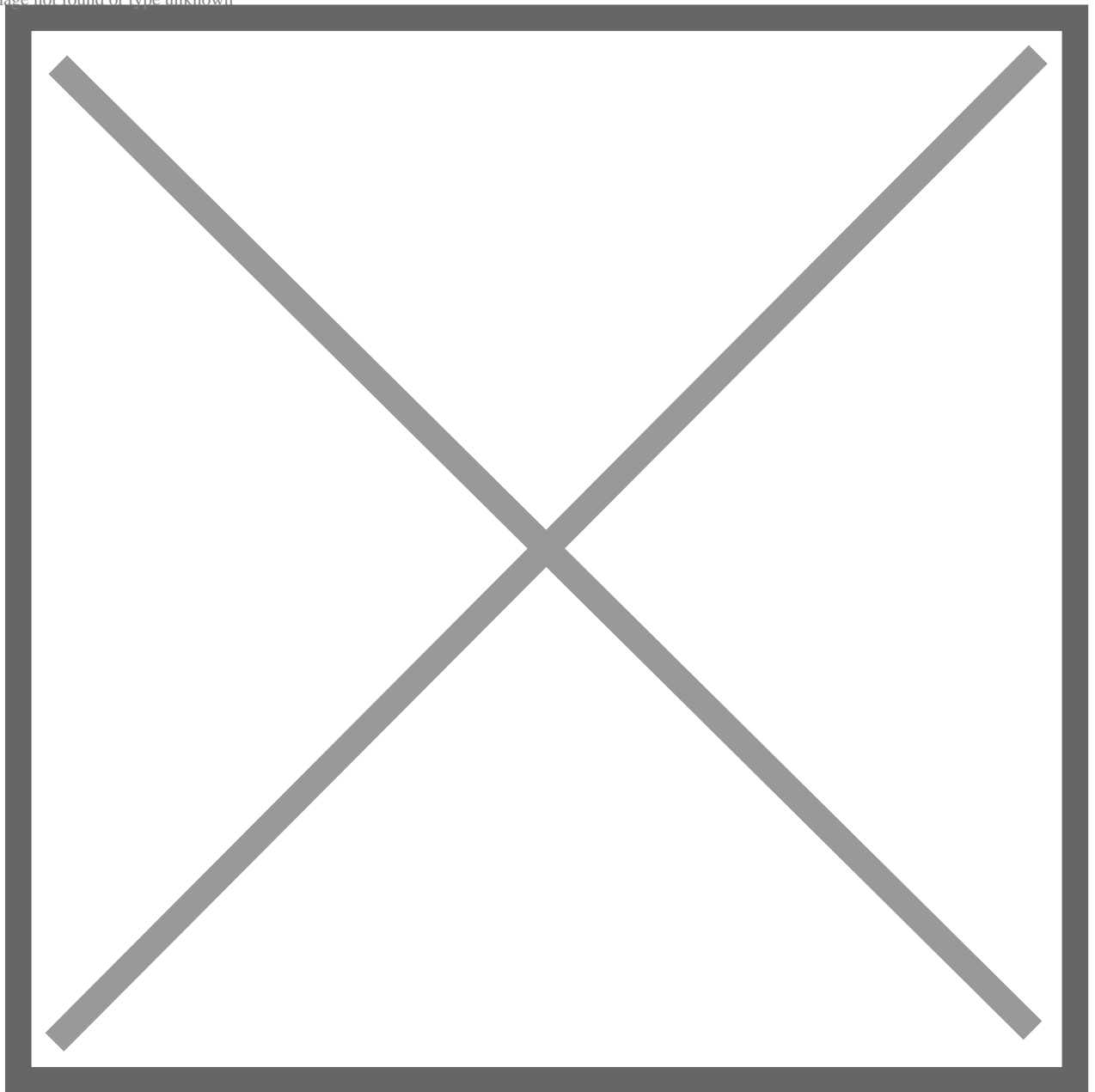
St Jude's new windows 'a prayer of the people'

By Kath Fisher

The people of St Jude's have had a long history of adapting the church buildings to the needs of the people and they did it again on 28 August 2022 when the congregation gathered to give thanks to God for the creation of significantly large seven stained glass windows.

It was a collaborative project between artist and the parishioners.

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The first St Jude's

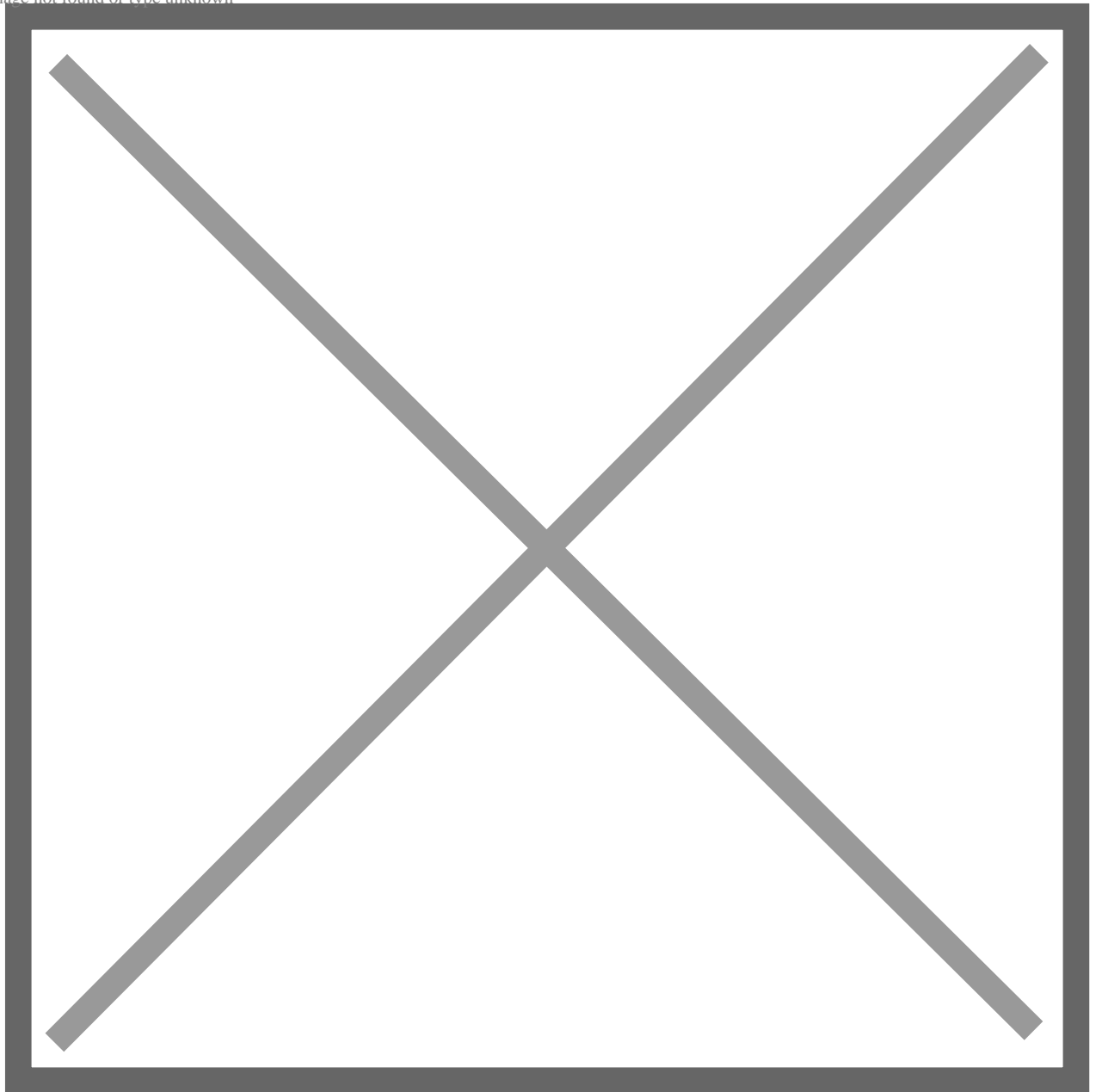
Prior to 1855, the pioneers of St Jude's first met in Mrs Hillier's School in Jetty Road, Brighton and after a meeting of subscribers in Mr William Voules Brown's Thatched House Tavern in September 1853, plans were put in place for building the first church.

Following its opening in April 1855, this served the needs of the congregation until it was badly damaged by an earthquake in March 1954. Services were held in Grundy Hall while the church was repaired and reopened for services in March 1958.

As a result of post war migration in the 1950s it soon became apparent that where the congregation filled Grundy Hall, the restored church could not support these numbers and after much debate a momentous decision was made to build the large extension we now see on Brighton Road.

A very large building was created to serve the needs of the St Jude's community for many decades to follow. This was completed for the first service in March 1964.

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Artist Gail Donovan with her husband, Dan

There were many changes made to the internal features to serve both practical needs and the changing responses to ideas about worship.

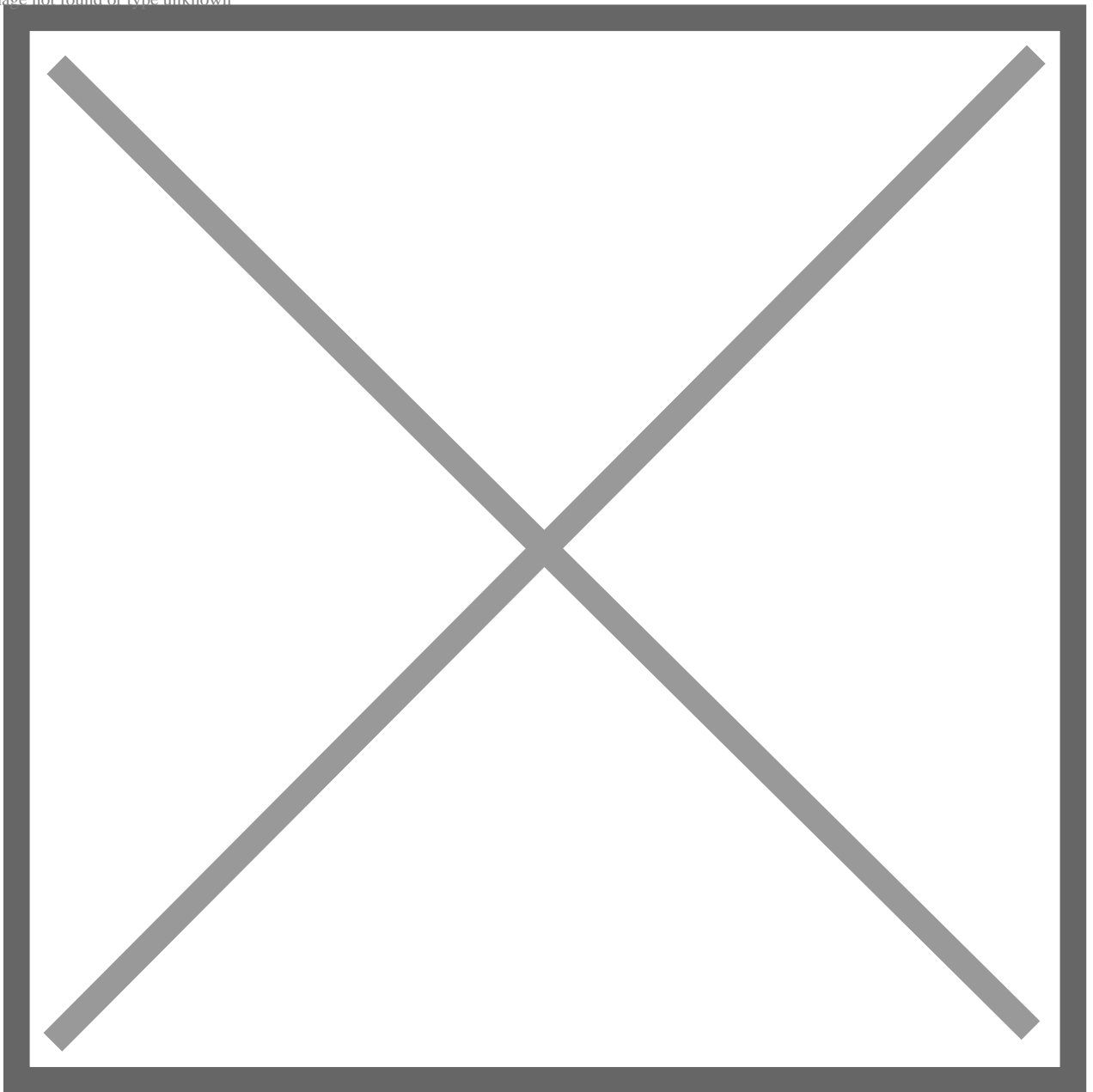
The windows of St Jude's were extensive and plain in contrast to the stained glass windows in the Chapel which offered much to assist with religious reflection. It was a desire of many to see this replicated in the main church.

As a result of a gift from the MacLeod family in memory of Ian MacLeod (Mayor of Brighton between 1989 and 1993) as well as Nancy and Jennifer MacLeod, specifically for stained glass windows, there was enthusiasm to make this possible.

Ian MacLeod, a Brighton-born Anglican, and family were parishioners.

Artist, Gail Donovan, accepted our request to take on this great challenge and a process of consultation with the parishioners took place. Ideas were presented, developed and themes for the panels were accepted by the parish.

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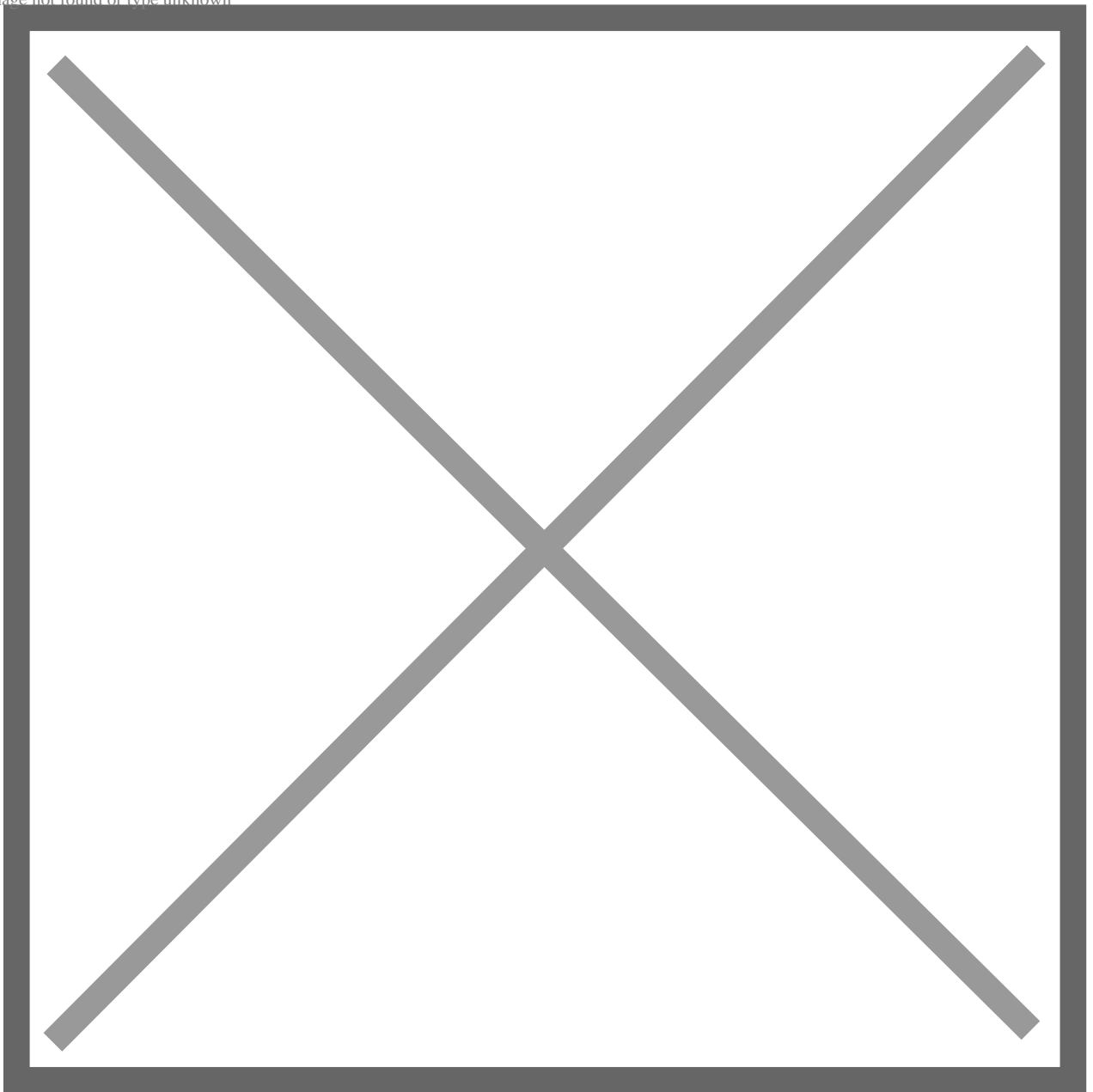


The ongoing story of Creation

Each panel reflected a religious theme with interwoven symbols. These design themes are in Gail's words:

"CREATION – an ongoing story, Spirit of **ST JUDE** – in our church, **WELCOME TO ALL** – community, Spirit of God in – **OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT**, **TREE OF LIFE** – care of the ENVIRONMENT, **JOY AND PRAISE** – each new day a gift and God WITH us and IN us – **INTO THE FUTURE**'.

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The Spirit of St Jude

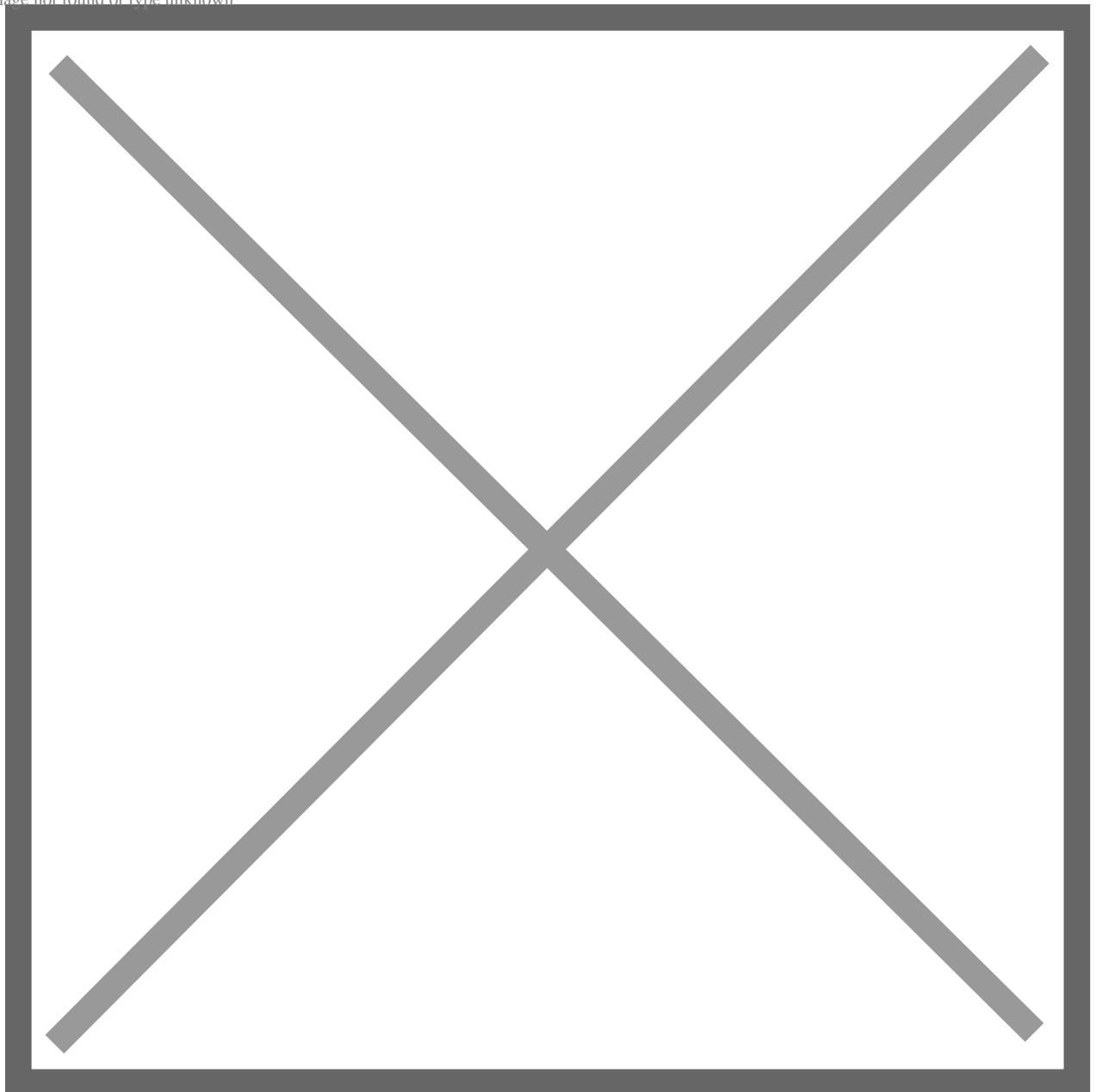
Gail has prepared detailed explanations of each design which are presented with an overall title of 'A Prayer of the People', revealing hope, love, commitment for God, Jesus and all people and the environment, now and in the future.

There are many spiritual symbols which visually dominate the designs, but the one which weaves its way throughout is **THE RAINBOW RIBBON**. It symbolises THE SPIRIT OF GOD – 'CREATING, MAKING SACRED, SUSTAINING and ANIMATING ALL THAT IS – CREATING ONTO THE FUTURE.'

In celebration, people from the St Jude's community gathered to give thanks to God for the stunningly beautiful new stained glass windows. The church was full and included guests from the MacLeod family, the Mayor of the Holdfast Bay Council, Amanda Wilson and the artist Gail Donovan.

The Reverend Canon Sophie Relf-Christopher led the service and the Reverend Dr. Jo Armour preached. A point that she stressed in the sermon was the significance of the meaning of the new windows for the people of St Jude's.

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The last window being installed in the week before the blessing service

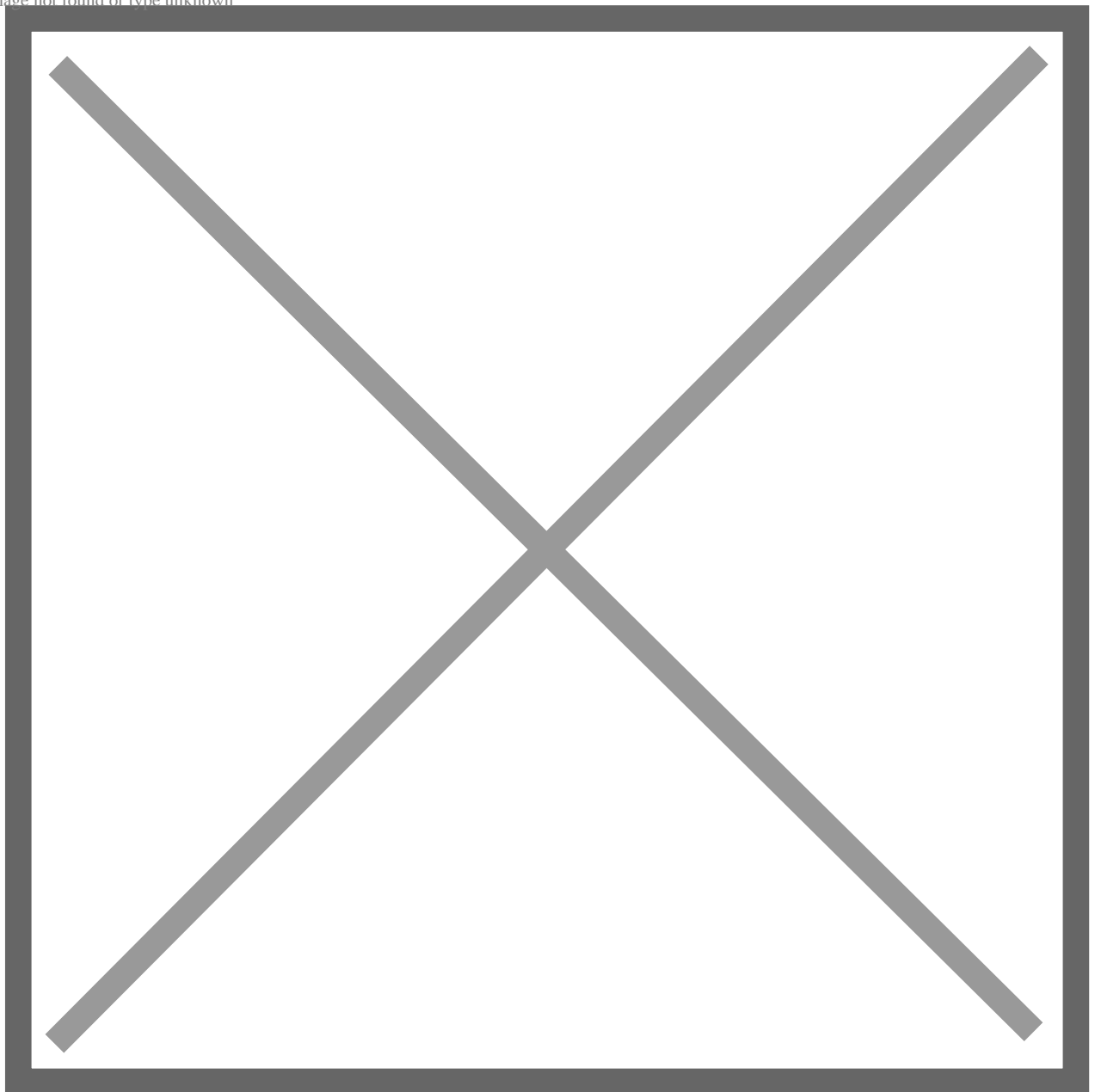
These windows wrap around the church and she stressed that they are well grounded in theology which 'values diversity, inclusivity, connectedness and relationship....they are images of hope, of a world where people gather together as one.....speak of the unimaginable expanding vastness of the

God of creation, planting us in the cosmos as we long for a new heaven.'

A special aspect included the blessing of the windows where children read prayers specific to each. At this profound stage of blessing, the windows became integrated into the building. They became part of the ongoing 'prayer of the people'.

Celebrations continued after the service where during morning tea, which included champagne and pastries, people wandered around looking at the new windows. Each had a special explanation to read about the symbols and messages infused within each specific theme. There were some past parishioners who attended and shared their memories of St Jude's.

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St Jude's place in the Cosmos

The last stained glass window, Cosmos, presented a key message for St Jude's into the future. The

spirit of God within the universe, creation and the people provides hope for the future. It is set in the most prominent position towards the front so that it is a constant visual reminder to all during worship.

All are welcome to visit St Jude's to see these windows. Sunday services are 8.00a.m and 9.30am. Web site address is <http://stjudesbrighton.org.au>

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