

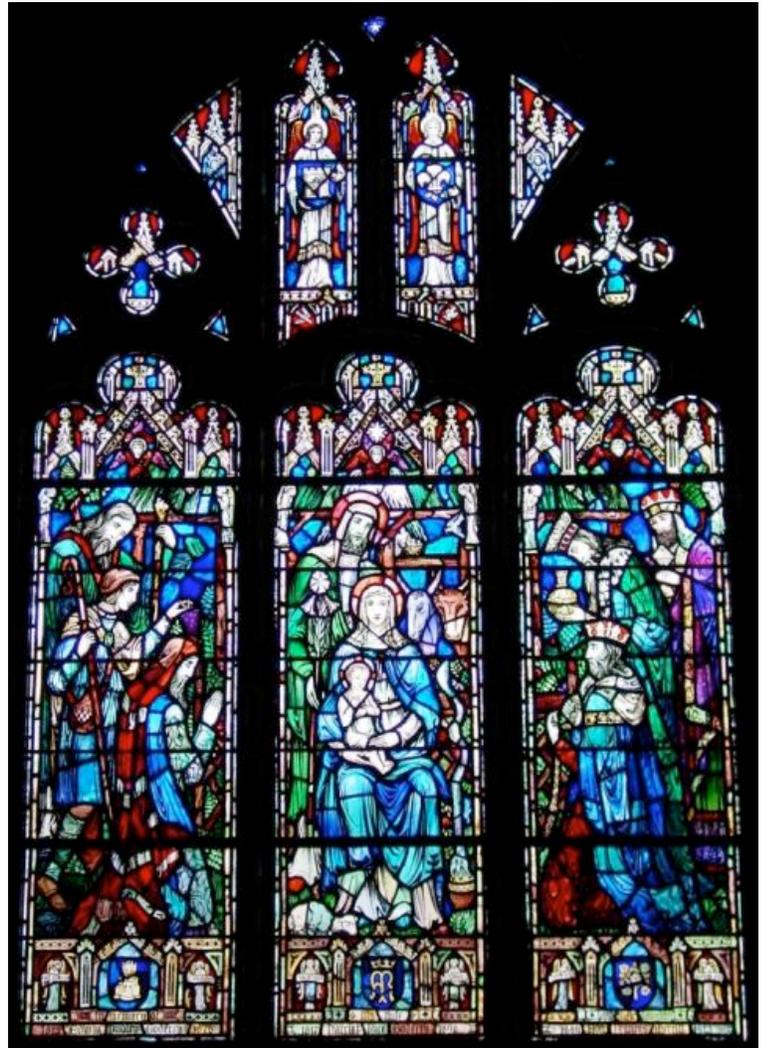
# The Nativity Window

The Nativity window is central in the north side of the nave. It was installed in 1924. The memorial inscription reads, “In memory of Edwin Dudley Godfrey, 1813-1878, his wife Harriet Rice Godfrey, 1817-1890, Ada Frances Merrill, 1846-1923.” At the bottom are angels with scrolls carrying the message of Luke 2:14: “Glory to God / in the highest / and on earth / peace / good will / toward men”.

The three lancets are all part of a single nativity scene. Central are Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus, who, even as a small baby, wears a patee nimbus. Mary and Joseph wear red nimbi. The animals of the stable are seen in the foreground and background. Above, on a beam, is a nest of little birds with mouths open to be fed. One parent bird is on the edge of the next. The other is approaching with a loaded beak. Mary’s symbol of a flowering rose in a pot appears in the scene. Joseph is holding his symbol, a rod blossoming with lilies and almonds.

Above the Holy Family are angels and four-winged cherubim and the star that the wise men saw in the East. To the left are the adoring shepherds, one with a gift of grapes. As in the other two lancets, there are angels and four-winged cherubim above. To the right are the three magi, Melchior, Kaspar, and Balthazar, who follow the star to the place where the young child lay. They carry gifts.

The tower of David, seen below the shepherd lancet, is symbolic of the lineage of Jesus, and where used, as here and elsewhere in stained glass art, as a symbol of Mary, it is simply a reminder of the royal descent of her son. The crowned monogram below the central lancet is sometimes mistakenly said to be simply the initials of Ave Maria – Hail Mary. It is actually much more, being so designated as to contain all the letters of MARIA, the Latin form of Mary, and also all the letters of the Hebrew form, Miriam.



The rose has many meanings in ecclesiastical art, not all clearly explained. In the carving of the chancel it stands for the Messianic promise. Here, in the base of the magi lancet, It is a symbol of Mary. Other symbols of Mary seen in this window are the gate of Heaven held by an angel, in the tracery above the central lancet, where is also found, in the hands of another angel, the fleur-de-lis, that in other locations is symbolic of the Trinity or of the human nature of Jesus.