

## Come and See

Charles Lutyens finished this enormous work after an intense five years in the 1960s, but in his mind the work was unfinished and so to express his dissatisfaction he left a small patch of raw cement up in the south-west corner.

**After 43 years**, at the age of 78, he added the missing piece; here was final closure on this work, with the second eye of the 'Earth Creature' being finally 'opened', now to look out upon the church and its ongoing life through the initials 'CL' which now form that eye of the Earth Creature.



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**LONDON**

St Paul's, Bow Common is a Church of England parish church in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.  
Find us at the corner of Burdett Rd. and St. Paul's Way, London E3 4AR

We are a welcoming friendly church of all ages.  
Fully Accessible  
Visitors welcome, especially Sundays.

See our website for service times  
[www.stpaulsbowcommon.org.uk](http://www.stpaulsbowcommon.org.uk)



## St Paul's, Bow Common Mosaics



### The Heavenly Host Mosaic 1963-68

### ST PAUL'S, BOW COMMON

Winner of 'The UK's  
Best Modern Church'  
Award



## The Creation of the Heavenly Host

The mosaic cycle of the 'Heavenly Host' was an intended and integral part of the church as designed by Robert Maguire, architect and Keith Murray designer. The work was then given to Charles Lutyens, an artist who had never created a mosaic before

Charles reflected on how to represent these Angels that in the Christian and Jewish tradition surround the Divine Being with ceaseless worship and praise. Rejecting fixed ideas, he left himself open to their creation and development as he went along

Having visited the island of Murano in Venice famed for its production of mosaic tesserae, and chosen 700 colours as the palette from which he would work. Work began in 1963 and during the next five years Charles crafted this huge expanse of 800 square feet, day by day and piece by piece.



### The Corner Creatures

One of the many wonderful secrets of these mosaics lies in the corners of the building. Four elements of Creation: Earth, Air, Fire and Water, one in each corner.

You can see the open jaws of the **Water Creature** like those of a huge whale as it leaps upwards. The **Air Creature** is made up of great swirls of air and is just 'landing, like a swan, with its bent neck and orange beak pointing downwards and its tail fanned out behind it.

The **'Earth Creature** has two horns rising out of its head, two nostrils at the bottom of its head and two eyes looking out. **Fire** is represented by fiery colours.

## The Twelve Angels

Haloed, clad in white, the angels raise their hands in worship. The mosaic forms a continuous image around the central space of the church, joining the congregation in the praise of God.

The triangular spandrel panels between the folds of the concrete roof make space for an Angel in each, in a gesture spreading in prayer

The subtle, circling patterns of greens and blues progress outwards and upwards, providing contrasts of warmth and cool as they take on the elements of the corner creatures.

**Winnie's Baby** named after the vicar's housekeeper who like many, thought the angels looked and winked while being made. One special day she thought she saw a baby on an angel's shoulder, in the unfinished space by , and Charles obliged.

