And finally, please don’t laugh but… EASTER IS COMING (and it’s early next year)!

Last Easter I was very struck by the fact that, apart from the Paschal candle, there was absolutely nothing in the Cathedral to help visitors grasp that this was an important season for Christians, no way for them to learn anything about the events that are at the heart of our faith. As a result, with encouragement from the Cathedral Liturgical Committee, we are going to have an Easter Garden. So… artists, craftspeople, designers, jobbing builders, gardeners – your Cathedral needs you. PLEASE get in touch if you would like to be part of making something beautiful this Easter. Thank you. Canon Kathryn

Welcome to Coventry Cathedral!

Today we are pleased to welcome Bishop Jonathan Goodall, Bishop of Ebbsfleet, as our preacher. Bishop Jonathan is an honorary assistant bishop in the Diocese of Coventry, and is here at the invitation of Bishop Christopher, who will be presiding this morning. The Bishop of Ebbsfleet has a ministry of care and oversight for those priests and congregations in the Province of Canterbury of the Church of England who find themselves unable, for reasons of theological conviction, to accept the sacramental ministry of women ordained as priests or bishops. His appointment is a visible expression of theological diversity in the Church of England, and we look forward to his ministry among us here in Coventry.

As we continue through this season of Advent, we pray for God’s grace to be ready for the coming of Emmanuel, the Prince of Peace, into our lives and this troubled and divided world.

Every blessing

John

The Very Reverend John Witcombe MA MPhil
Dean of Coventry
CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY NOTICES

The Diocesan Reader assisting at the Eucharist today is Margaret East from Christchurch, Chelmsmore.

Christmas Goodies
Today the catering team will be selling mince pies, lemon curd, jams, chutney and greeting cards. If you want to order mince pies for next week the list is on the community table. Don’t forget to sign the Community Christmas Card.

Advent talks - ‘Living Reconciliation’
During Advent there will be a series of sessions focusing on ‘Living Reconciliation’ led by Phil Groves, author of ‘Living Reconciliation’, who will explore how reconciliation is at the heart of mission and a guiding principle of scripture. The remaining talk will take place on Tuesday 15th December. It is free, with donations to support the reconciliation ministry welcome. Reconciliation Ministry Team

Advance warning - Christmas week early evening services
During the Christmas period (Monday 28th December to Friday 2nd January), the regular early evening services will begin at 4pm. Canon David

Advent Prayers in the Chapel of Unity
The Chapel of Unity will be hosting Advent Prayers for Christian Aid throughout the season, every Monday at 10am - a short candle lighting liturgy, which will then be left in the Chapel for anyone to use in their own time.

In addition we have the Christian Aid display material from the Greenbelt Festival. The display celebrates 70 years of Christian Aid, taking us back through old posters and campaigns and is a great opportunity to give thanks and look to the future.

Please join me on Monday 14th December, Monday 21st December and at 8am on Wednesday 23rd December when the Wednesday Morning Group will light the Christmas candle! Or feel free to visit in your own time. Craig Muir

Flowers at Christmas
If you would like to see some flowers in the Cathedral for Christmas there will be a little flowery jug on the Community Table on Sunday 13th and 20th December. All donations will be gratefully received. Many thanks. David East

Hear the stories – Record the History
Would you like to be involved in an oral history project and be one of the interviewers? A number of people who have memories and stories to tell have been interviewed and recorded over the years and we want to talk to many more in 2016. They could include members of the Cathedral congregation, former clerics and musicians, and those who have been employed by the Cathedral in a variety of roles. The stories will be part of a living archive that may become accessible to visitors. If you would like to join a small team please let me know: janecorrigan45@btinternet.com or telephone 024 76311113. Jane Corrigan

Cathedral Matters for the next three weeks
There will be a joint Cathedral Matters for the 20th and 27th December followed by the first edition of the new year on Sunday 3rd December. Both editions will be produced next week, so please send any articles by Tuesday 15th December. Christine Doyle

If you had asked me in 1980 to list my top one hundred career paths, being a cop wouldn’t have made the list. But I needed to support my family and policing seemed as good an option as any. During my thirty years in law enforcement, I learned a lot about reconciliation, and about the cost of failing to be reconciled.

As a “peace” officer, I often found myself holding up the prospect of reconciliation to people who had become estranged from one another, and in some cases from the community, due to a veritable litany of real and imagined sins perpetrated by one person against another.

In most cases, no one was truly without sin. Some figured it out, accepted accountability for things done and left undone and managed to begin anew with those they had wronged, and had been wronged by. Others clung to the myth of their own righteousness, and were never completely able to let go of their injury, or accept their own culpability. Their anger and pain never really abated; the wounds they had suffered could never truly heal.

No one said reconciliation was easy: the cases of real reconciliation that I have witnessed were not the result of “cheap grace”—lip service in lieu of the hard work necessary to bring about a lasting peace. The parties to the conflict had to engage closely with each other and hammer out the wrongs that each had perpetrated on the other. Both had to ask for and grant forgiveness. And still there would always be “raw moments,” where old wounds were apt to reopen and threaten a fragile peace. I’ve learned that forgiveness and reconciliation must be ongoing.

So now I’m beginning my “second journey” as a priest in God’s church. The need for reconciliation between (and within) faith traditions has never been greater. The imperative to end the estrangement between sisters and brothers of different races and ethnicities, socio-economic classes and generational cohorts has never been more urgent. Failure in this most important work will guarantee an on-going cycle of social conflict, “tit-for-tat” insults and injuries, grinding on with endless monotony, and ensure that our pain and half-healed scars are passed down to our children and grandchildren.

What can I do? I can’t “fix” the problems, but I can get in the middle of things, roll up my sleeves and work to apply the lessons I learned from the story of Coventry and Dresden, and from my years as a peace officer, as I walk beside those who are willing to give forgiveness and reconciliation a chance.

For a long time, I thought this cop turned priest thing was “simply serendipitous,” (if there is such a thing) but I’ve begun to discern that I’ve been formed for ministry since well before seminary. God just had a lot of work to do with me. And God never wastes anything. How it will all work out, I can’t say. But I’m game. Given what I’ve learned over the past three and a half decades, how could I not be?
As we commemorate 75 years of peacemaking and the work of the Coventry Community of the Cross of Nails, we have been collecting stories of reconciliation which have either been inspired by the Coventry story or from our work directly; some stories are recent, others from our history which you may have heard before and, perhaps, forgotten. For those members of our Cathedral community who are not online, we will be distributing stories via Cathedral Matters. Some stories are just a paragraph while others have been given to us in detail. We hope you find them interesting.

From Kemper Anderson (Georgia)
I first heard about the Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN) from the Rev. Eloise Lester at St. Anne’s Episcopal Church in Atlanta (Georgia) in 1980. I was twenty something and grappling with the transition from being a young person to a “grown-up” (if there is such a thing) in God’s church. Of course, I had studied the Second World War in high school and college, but the story of Coventry and Dresden that Eloise told me challenged my rather simplistic perspective about “who were the good guys and who were the bad.” That we on the allied side could also be guilty of wanton and indiscriminate violence against brothers and sisters caught up in the madness of war, whose only crime was being at the wrong place at the wrong time, was a sobering thought indeed.

My participation in a CCN-focused “foyer group” was instructive—in an odd sort of way. This was the year of the Mariel Boat Lift, wherein 125,000 Cuban expats, many recently released from Cuban jails and mental health facilities by Fidel Castro, attempted the perilous transit across the Florida straits in small boats, rafts and even converted automobiles, to reach the U.S. mainland and a better life.

The impact on South Florida was enormous, both economically and politically, and the evening news was filled with stories of chaos, survival against the odds and, all too often, death.

Sadly, however, even within a Christian foyer group formed around an ethic of reconciliation, many resisted the moral imperative to adopt Castro’s exiles, opting instead to have them repelled at sea by the Navy and Coast Guard, even if it meant death by dehydration or drowning.

I was pretty disillusioned—how could this be? How could good people, people I loved and admired, turn a blind eye to such suffering? How could they fail to be reconciled with brothers and sisters in such grievous need?

Isn’t it ironic how the present sometimes mirrors the past? I confess that I dropped out of that foyer group a few months later in search of something more authentic. I never forgot the lessons I had learned from the Coventry story, however, and they would later stand me in good stead during the “first journey” God had in store for me.

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News from the Friends of Coventry Cathedral

Christmas card sale
There are a few packs left of the acclaimed Friends 80th Anniversary Christmas Card.

You can buy packs of eight cards (four of each of the two designs), or all eight of one design, for the bargain price of £2.50 today, from the Friends’ table after the Eucharist.

The two cards feature, respectively, the spire of the old Cathedral Church of St. Michael in the snow, and the Choir in front of the Christmas tree in the Nave.

A real Christmas bargain and you will be supporting the Friends!

These are a few of my favourite things
We would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to share their ‘favourite thing’ about the Cathedral. Just tell us, in about 100 words, what it is you love best, what means most to you, and why. The results will be published in the Spring Issue of the Friends bi-annual Newsletter.

There are so many treasures, that give us inspiration – please share your source of pleasure and praise.

Either leave a note for me on the Community Table, or email me direct, before 31st January 2016: janecorrigan@btinternet.com
Jane Corrigan Editor of the Newsletter

Pick up your newsletter
Copies of the Friends’ December e bulletin are available free on the Community Table today, for those without Internet access.

Andrew Paine, Chairman of the Friends of Coventry Cathedral

Peace Circles for the Women of Coventry
St Michael’s House is partnering with Creators of Peace, a programme of the organisation Initiatives of Change, to offer peace circles for women in Coventry. These circles will be a training in discovering new tools for enhancing our own inner peace and exploring new skills to enable us to become effective creators of a peace in the world.

Women can play a significant role in creating a stable society at home and abroad, so we hope you will partner with us on the journey of discovery. We are offering circles on Saturday 9th January and Saturday 30th January from 1pm-5pm. If you are interested in joining one or both of the peace circles, please email smh@coventrycathedral.org.uk.

Haley Jones, Reconciliation Ministry Team
As part of the commemorations of the 75th anniversary of the Coventry blitz the two iconic paintings created by John Piper in the days following the bombing have been reunited and are on display in the Herbert Art Gallery from the 10th November onwards.

To mark this unique event, we are working in partnership with the Goldmark Gallery to produce limited edition prints of both paintings to raise much needed funds.

In his role as a war artist, John Piper began painting both pictures in the days following the bombing; in fact, fires were still burning. The paintings tell of a specific point in time when everything was destroyed, but the vibrant colours used speak of hope from that destruction, which is what we have achieved through our work in peace and reconciliation. The two paintings have not been seen together since the 1940s and are just stunning.

John Piper continued his involvement with Coventry by designing the breathtaking Baptistry window, our vestments and kneelers.

The prints, of which there are limited editions of 250, will be on sale directly from the Goldmark Gallery (www.goldmarkart.com), for £495 each or £875 as a pair. The income from the sale of the limited edition prints will raise up to £100,000 for the Cathedral which will make a significant impact on our finances. Frames are not included but Goldmark are happy to discuss options with you.

For more information pick up a prospectus from the Community Table, visit Goldmark Gallery’s website at www.goldmarkart.com, speak to the Visitor Service team or Christine Doyle.

The Sixteen return to Coventry - Thursday 4th February 2016 at 7.30pm

The Sixteen choir and orchestra devote an entire evening to the glorious music of Handel, including his virtuosic Dixit Dominus.

Conductor Harry Christophers introduces the programme:

‘Handel is one of only a handful of composers who was truly multi-faceted - a master of orchestral and vocal textures, both triumphant and profound. Simply compare the bustling, joyous activity of the Arrival of the Queen of Sheba with the dark, anxious apprehension of the Overture to Jephtha, and you will know exactly what I mean. However, it is majestic grandeur, alongside moments of exquisite tenderness, which overwhelmingly characterise all the works in this programme.'

Tickets: £30 - £15 National Box Office: 01904 651485 / www.ncem.co.uk. Local Box Office: Cathedral shop 024 7652 1210. Rachael Kelly

Thank you from Christian Aid

The Cathedral ‘Boat Appeal’. Many thanks for your generous response to this appeal which eventually raised a total of £842. How was our money spent? Through Act Alliance, this money was used to help Greek Orthodox Christian Charities to provide both food and other items and to improve conditions at reception centres, in addition to augmenting urgently needed water, sanitation and hygiene provision on the islands of Chios, Samos and Kos. Daily during August, 300 refugees arrived on Chios, 500 on Samos and 1300 on Lesvos. Thank you to everyone for your commitment and generosity.

Christmas Appeal

Could you help by giving a precious extra gift this Christmas? The gift of a mosquito net together with training in how to use it? Malaria is the leading cause of death in Nigeria causing 250,000 deaths of pregnant women and children every year. By providing training in malaria awareness and a safe place to sleep, these needless deaths could be prevented. Gift envelopes are available on the Community Table, for making donations towards this appeal or you can donate online at: christianaid.org.uk/Christmas. The UK Government has undertaken to double all donations up to a maximum of £5 million until February 5th 2016. Moya Horton (Cathedral Christian Aid Coordinator)

Spiritual Formation Course 2016

Archbishop Justin, when asked what must be the number one priority of the church, replied ‘Spirituality’. If you are looking for ways to grow deeper in God, this Diocesan course could be the next step for you. Choose afternoons or evenings - alternate Thursdays 2.15pm to 4.15pm or 7.30pm to 9.30pm from Thursday 7th January at St John’s Centre, Berkswell. More information on the Community Table or email passionatespirituality@live.co.uk. Margaret Lloyd
The Cathedral gift shop is full of Christmas goodies - here's a small selection......

**Scroll with verse**
- £3.50

**Carved wooden Angel**
- £12

**Cinnamon Candles**
- £3

**The Forgiveness Nail**

**Brooches**
- Star £8.50
- Snowflake £8

**Carved wooden Angel £12**

**Nativity Scene**
- £6

**Angel Plaques - £12 each**

**Star Brooches**

**Snowflake Brooches**

**Cards £2 each**