



## Community of the Cross of Nails Governance Document

The Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN) was set up in 1974 as a Coventry Cathedral-led global partnership to coordinate a network of Christian churches and organisations (and occasional individuals) active in reconciliation and inspired by Coventry Cathedral.

**Partnership** is symbolised by the receiving of a Cross of Nails from Coventry following a formal application process, assessed by national boards where possible, and approved by the Dean of Coventry in consultation with the CCN International Board. *In 2020, partnership numbered just under 250 churches, charities and schools globally.*

Each partner undertakes to pray the Litany of Reconciliation regularly, and to serve the three priorities of the CCN:

- Healing the Wounds of History
- Living with Difference and Celebrating Diversity
- Building a Culture of Justice and Peace

*The International Board has recently (2020) recognised afresh the increased and urgent challenge and importance of reconciliation in relation to the environment, and is exploring how best to relate this to all three of our lead priorities. It is also responding to the opportunities of developing reconciled and reconciling relationships across different faith groups, and is taking this forward through the CCN sister organisation, Together for Hope (T4H – see appendix).*

### **The CCN aims to**

- **Inspire** – through sharing stories, especially the story of the Cathedral, to encourage partners and others into the work of peace and reconciliation
- **Connect** – our partners, to sustain, inform and encourage them in their work, through prayer and the discovery of mutual insight and support
- **Equip** – with resources (shared or produced specifically) to address the understanding and practical challenges of reconciliation

Our biblical basis is found in 2 Corinthians 5.18: God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and has entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation.

### **The role of the Cathedral**

The CCN is led from the Cathedral in collaboration with the International Board. The central organisation of the CCN is under the auspices of Coventry Cathedral, which is governed by the Cathedral Chapter, and its central funding, accounts, data, communications and staffing are all hosted by Coventry Cathedral. National or wider regional bodies may have their own, separate, organisation, not under the authority of the Cathedral. The Cathedral's CCN ministry is led by the Dean of Coventry Cathedral and lies within the particular responsibility of the Reconciliation team, including the Canon for Reconciliation (when on staff). It is run day-to-day by the CCN Project Officer, in collaboration with other staff and volunteers.

**The Cathedral's CCN ministry provides:**

- central administration, communications, representation and profile for the network
- co-ordination of new partner applications, in partnership with national boards where possible
- hospitality and hosting of visits and Coventry-specific events and training, especially pilgrimages, for potential and existing members
- shared resources for prayer, worship and practising reconciliation
- hosting of international internships and placements.

**The role of the International Board**

The International Board:

- comprises of the chairs of the national (or wider regional) boards and is chaired by the Dean of Coventry, or the Dean's representative
- is consultative not authoritative, is advisory and participatory;
- is not exclusive to national or regional chairs; others may deputise or attend alongside at the request of a national (or wider regional) board, by agreement with the Dean in consultation with other members. However, if possible the chair should attend in person to ensure continuity and proper representation of a nation or wider region.

National board chairs represent the national or wider regional CCN (and the Cathedral) to partners in their home regions, and also represent their partners back to the Cathedral. The board will aim to meet at least every two years and digitally at least twice a year between these times.

Every effort will be made to enable full participation at physical gatherings of the international board for those members for whom this would be financially challenging. Where possible, dates will be arranged to allow multiple purpose travel (and funding).

If individual members of the International Board wish to raise issues about the Cathedral's reconciliation ministry directly with the Cathedral Chapter, they may do so either via the Dean, or the Chapter Administrator.

## **The national (and multinational) networks and boards**

The CCN's membership is nurtured and developed by partner-led national networks, which in 2020 included:

- Germany
- The Netherlands
- Central and Eastern Europe
- The UK and Ireland
- The USA
- Canada
- Southern Africa
- Asia (\*)

*\*Asia does not yet have a board (2020), but was invited to send an international representative to the International Board, in anticipation of a growing network. In the future we hope to see boards develop in Israel/Palestine (to cover the wider region), New Zealand/Aotearoa and Australasia, and East Africa (including South Sudan), amongst others.*

Structure varies, but all have a committee and provide a chair or president who represents their partner network to Coventry as a member of the International Board. It is our strategic intention to structure the CCN so far as possible through national networks, led by national boards.

Membership can extend to partners in countries where a network does not exist, generally due to low CCN members in that country. In this case, there may be an affiliation with another network for geographical or relational reasons (e.g. Bergen is affiliated to the UK & Ireland network because of its relationship with Southwark Cathedral).

It is anticipated that the number of national networks will grow over time. This may happen organically, where a group of partners voluntarily convenes a Board which then seeks approval from Coventry Cathedral to send a representative to the International Board. It may also happen strategically, with encouragement from Coventry Cathedral, where the International Board discerns the potential to develop a new focus for the CCN network.

Whilst the establishment of a local network of CCN partners is at the discretion of local partners (usually with the encouragement of the Cathedral) the formal recognition of a national (or regional) network is by the Dean in consultation with the International Board. Such recognition will be marked by an invitation to send a chair to participate in the International Board, and the offer of a pectoral Cross of Nails to be worn by the chair if they wish (and to be passed on to subsequent chairs).

The development and nurture of the local CCN network will vary according to context. In Germany, for example, the Board is very well established and resourced, and applications for membership are carefully supported and developed by members of the national board. The aim is for national (and regional) boards to take responsibility for developing and nurturing partners in their context, and recommending new partners to Coventry Cathedral and the International Board.

The authority within each Board area comes from the Boards' own committee structures: Coventry Cathedral does not impose or confer any authority.

The boards will be asked to contribute to the costs of sustaining and developing the CCN network from Coventry Cathedral. They will do this according to their capacity and context. Boards are encouraged to develop a system of subscriptions which will both resource and encourage active membership by partners who will be invited to renew their subscription each year. Coventry Cathedral will not seek to develop subscriptions directly from partners who are affiliated to a local board: any membership subscriptions collected locally are understood to be on the partial behalf of the Cathedral, not in competition with it.

## **CCN partner organisations**

The CCN welcomes applications from churches and other organisations which are active in the work of peace and reconciliation, embody and practice its three priorities, and which are ready to commit to the common life of prayer and participation in the network. Such organisations are encouraged where possible to send representatives to participate in a pilgrimage in Coventry, and to engage in conversation with representatives of their national board. Their national board will encourage them in their understanding of the CCN, and help them prepare an application, which the board will then commend to the Dean of Coventry, who will consult members of the International Board in order to make a decision about admission. Admission will involve a visit from a representative of the Cathedral to the organisation in order to present a Cross of Nails. Coventry Cathedral will not admit organisations to the CCN without the support of their own national Board, where such a Board exists.

Further details and guidance may be found on the Cathedral website:

<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/reconciliation/community-of-the-cross-of-nails/join-us>

## **Internal Communication within the network**

### **The International Chairs or Presidents provide:**

- shared ownership of the international work of Coventry Cathedral and its dispersed partnership network
- a communications route to partners within their networks
- a feedback channel to Coventry, while not necessarily forming one body of thinking
- representation of experienced reconciliation practice, and shared involvement in discussion and decision-making.

### **CCN National Boards seek from Coventry Cathedral:**

- news, theology and shared thinking;
- coordination of, and support for, Cross of Nails presentations;
- Inspiration, through the sharing of Coventry's story through visits, pilgrimages and resources.

### **CCN partners** (churches, chaplaincies, charities and ICON schools):

- are expected to promote, practice and and share information about the reconciliation ministry of Coventry cathedral;
- have the right to stock and sell Cross of Nails merchandise and to use the CCN logo, and carry the responsibility to ensure the CCN logo is used in line with guidelines and in promotion of the reconciliation ministry of Coventry Cathedral and its partners. Other use of the CCN logo and brand is only permitted by express agreement with Coventry Cathedral.
- are expected to support and share in prayer the reconciliation ministry and mission of Coventry Cathedral especially through regular public use of the Litany of Reconciliation.

“God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,  
and has entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation”  
(2 Cor 5.18)

For updates and further information, please see:

[www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccn](http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccn)

**Agreed by Coventry Cathedral Chapter, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Additional notes will follow, describing in more detail CCN Partners, CCN Friends, and Together for Hope (T4H).**