



Farewell to Canon Mary Gregory

It was farewell to our Canon for Arts and Reconciliation at the start of this month, ahead of her move south to be Bishop of Reading. Mary has been a wonderful colleague and has done an enormous amount to make the arts more aligned with reconciliation in her three years at Coventry. We wish her all the very best in her new role.

Read Mary's [final sermon](#) at Coventry and watch her filmed [interview](#) with us, recorded in her final week here. The announcement for Mary's replacement is expected very soon.

North American internship

We are on the lookout for next year's North American volunteer intern! Do you know someone in the USA or Canada who could be interested on spending the best part of a year with us in Coventry from September 2025? Read more about the internship [here](#) and please do contact us if you'd like to know more! Read more from Sophia Burr, our current US intern:



Hi. I'm Sophia and I'm the North American Reconciliation Intern here at Coventry Cathedral. I graduated from University last spring with a degree in religious studies and wanted to take a gap year abroad before heading to graduate school. My role primarily focuses on the work of the Community of the Cross of Nails where I help out with creating content for our social media and connecting with our North American partners and friends. Besides our everyday tasks and helping out where needed, the interns are here to learn about reconciliation, the Cathedral, and its story, and be involved with the life of the Cathedral as much as possible. For instance, each of us leads the Litany of Reconciliation in the Cathedral once a week which is then broadcast for people to take part in. I'm really grateful to work in this environment because everyone is kind and welcoming and no matter what I'm doing, I always feel my voice and input is valued. Besides this, what I'm gaining most from my time here is how I can apply what I've learned both professionally and philosophically to my own life and how I engage with the world as a young person.

Join others in the new year monthly on Zoom to pray the Litany of Reconciliation: all welcome!

- On the first Friday of the month at 11am UK time, led by our UK & Ireland partners :
<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/6527541231?pwd=uAgknkerTxUiC4pvYy3jiEWbDtNLO.1&omn=82688331914>
Meeting ID: 652 754 1231 Passcode: 2Cor518
- On the third Tuesday of the month at midday US EST, led by our North American partners :
<https://zoom.us/j/91751768631?pwd=9gQO2FYvie0HiWMqgeB6enWeFt68Vs.1>
Meeting ID: 917 5176 8631 Passcode: 896595

Contact us at:

alice.farnhill@coventry.anglican.org | <https://www.facebook.com/CCNCoventry/>
<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/reconciliation/community-of-the-cross-of-nails>

Read this and earlier newsletters [here](#)

Access the Cathedral's recent sermons [here](#).

Events coming up this spring: all welcome!



CCN UK & Ireland Board

Retreat at Marygate House,
Holy Island, 16-18 May 2025

Join us in a rhythm of prayer, worship and time together, with a focus in discussions on the language of the Litany of Reconciliation and gender, with input from various experts and CCN UK/Ireland partners

● 16 - 18 May 2025 ● £250 pp full board ● www.marygatehouse.org.uk

Limited
Places

Further information/sign up:
csmith.mediations@gmail.com



January was a month for younger ICON Schools. We welcomed **Farway School** in East Devon - a small community deeply committed to fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment where students learn the values of empathy, understanding, and respect for others. We also ran our largest Ambassadors Training programme for pupils 7-11; focussing on learning skills to transform conflict. We look forward to hearing how their change projects have impacted their school communities.

See our ICONS newsletter [here](#) or email:
Jessica.Weale@Coventry.Anglican.org



Corrymeela: Sixty Years of Reconciliation

*Applying our experience to today's challenges:
Hearing the stories of refugees and asylum seekers*

Sat, 15 Mar 2025 2pm

Join us at the Laing Centre, **Coventry Cathedral** to celebrate **sixty years** of reconciliation work and community building in Northern Ireland

Rev Dr Alex Wimberly, the Leader of the Corrymeela Community will open an afternoon of discussion and reflections on our experience over that period and its relevance to today's challenges in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

Other speakers invited include those working with refugees and asylum seekers and former volunteers.

To reserve a place click on the link below.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/corrymeela-sixty-years-of-reconciliation-tickets-1209664201189?aff=oddttdtcreator>

Lunch will be available at 1pm. To let us know you would like to join us, please email Martin at mstearshandscomb@gmail.com
Please let us know of any dietary needs.



ICONS Facebook
ICONS Instagram
<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/reconciliation/icon-schools>

Response to events in these current times

We asked two of our volunteer interns for their responses to what is happening politically in their countries right now, in the light of their internships at Coventry and what they have learned in their time here so far. Read what they have to say on this page and the one following:

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### Thoughts in advance of the German elections on 23rd February

The upcoming German elections have me deeply concerned about the current political landscape, especially in light of recent developments. It's alarming to see how parties like the AfD are gaining more traction, and even more disturbing is the fact that the Union has actively cooperated with them in certain votes in the Bundestag. This merging of conservative and far-right forces is a dangerous step and raises serious questions about the direction our country is heading. For those of us who care about democracy and values like justice and equality, this alliance is deeply unsettling.

I understand the frustration many people feel with the established parties, especially when it comes to pressing issues like climate change, affordable housing, and social justice. But seeing this frustration translate into support for the AfD is deeply troubling. Their rhetoric is more about division and fear than about providing any meaningful solutions. It's hard to believe they can offer anything resembling a constructive path forward, especially when the problems we face demand collaboration, inclusion, and forward-thinking policies.

Now more than ever, it's critical to support parties that are actually working toward real solutions. While the Greens and SPD may not be without their flaws, I believe their approaches are the best chance we have to tackle the urgent challenges of climate change, inequality, and economic stability. At a time when political divisions have never been more pronounced, it is crucial to stand behind sensible, pragmatic policies that uphold democratic values and the future of our society. Anything less risks abandoning the principles that should define us.

**Constanze Biller**

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CCN Newsletter

February 2025

Healing the Wounds of History
Learning to live with Difference and Celebrate Diversity
Building a Culture of Justice and Peace

On the current situation in the USA:

The inauguration of President Trump, the actions of his administration, and the complicity of our representatives and citizens leave me speechless. But why should I be? The writing has been on the wall for years.

I am angry. I am terrified. I am grieving. Our country was founded on the principle that no single person or small group should wield unchecked power, that we are protected by the rule of law and the checks and balances woven into our Constitution. And yet, those protections are crumbling before our eyes. The blatant disregard for the law, for democracy, for the fundamental rights and welfare of Americans paves the way for a dangerous, fascist future. A future we are hurtling toward.

In the U.S., we prioritize the individual over collective responsibility, placing wealth above all else and comfort above human rights. The corruption and unchecked power in government, corporations, and big tech should alarm everyone—no matter their ideology. History has proven—time and again—that authoritarianism and fascism do not manifest overnight; they creep in through complacency, unaccountable leaders, and silenced dissent. We are not immune to the same patterns that have led other nations down these dangerous paths. This isn't about political preference—it's about the devastation this administration is inflicting, especially on the most vulnerable, both in America and around the world.

As youth, we are supposed to dream of a better future—one that is inclusive, humane, and just. However, the rise of young supporters of extremism shocks me. How many lives must be lost, how much irreversible damage inflicted, before their eyes are opened? But, we cannot freeze in shock or grief—we must fight back. We must rethink the value of human lives, our duty to one another, and our responsibility to the planet.

At the Cathedral, I am constantly reminded of hope, though I struggle to feel it. Too often, hope seems passive—an excuse for inaction. But I remind myself that true hope is not passive; it is an act of courage. And courage is what we need. A better future will not simply arrive—we must build it.

Sophia Burr



Constanze (left) and Sophia

From the Dean of Coventry, the Very Reverend John Witcombe:

Dear Friends

Since the election, and inauguration, of President Trump many people have asked if we are going to make a statement. We have been reluctant to do so, because simply to further amplify what has already been said (including in the fine sermon from Bishop Budde) seems not necessarily to take us forward, especially if we are simply repeating words within our own circle of shared opinions.

In truth, we may need to join our voices with others speaking for justice, in the light of the devastating news emerging from across the Atlantic. Speaking as those called to the ministry of reconciliation, we are called to stand alongside those who are marginalized and excluded, and to apply our three CCN principles of healing wounds, celebrating diversity, and building a culture of justice and peace. All this we need to do, to challenge injustice, and part of that work will be to continue to do what we can to ensure the stories of those we support are heard.

However, it is also our role to reach out to those from who we are divided – and that will mean those who see Donald Trump as the way forward. Lederach reminds us that “we have never really engaged in the work of reconciliation until our own friends think that we have betrayed them.” How can we seek to listen those who support Trump – to understand what hurts, what wounds, are driving their agenda, and how they could be healed? Those people who feel their needs have not been noticed, who hope that Trump will look out for them? How can we stand with them for long enough to hear, and be heard?

Here in our reconciliation team, we spent some time with these questions, and recognized that what we need to do is both to speak clearly for justice, but also to keep trying to build bridges at local, perhaps very individual levels, with those with whom we disagree. To pray for the grace to be able to listen to those whose perspectives we find hard to hear. To be ready to take one of the first steps in reconciliation towards the place where we “hear our enemy telling our story in a way that we can say, “yes, that is my story”” *. We may not be able to change the bigger picture, but we can all take small steps to build a culture of justice and peace where we are.

As Lederach says, “I believe justice, peace and reconciliation are possible. I believe they will happen.” (Reconcile, 2014) This is God’s work – and so we have hope.

Dean John Witcombe

* Stanley Hauerwas