



# **A LITURGICAL PLAN FOR COVENTRY CATHEDRAL**

*God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and  
has committed to us the ministry of Reconciliation.*

2 Corinthians 5.18

*Approved by Chapter, February 27th 2018*

# I. Introduction

Coventry Cathedral exists to welcome, worship and reconcile, locally, nationally and internationally. Our core text is 2 Corinthians 5.18:

*God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation.*

The call to reconciliation is our distinctive vocation here in Coventry (compared to other cathedrals) and should be reflected throughout the experience of our visitors and community, throughout our welcome and our worship, and especially in the liturgical use of our space. We do not restrict this to formal liturgy, however, but in the entire experience of the visitor (the 'guest'), arriving as either tourist or self-consciously as a pilgrim. Our purpose is that all experience welcome, are drawn to worship and challenged, encouraged and enabled to move forward in their own journey of reconciliation. A visit to Coventry should be transformative, and the ongoing liturgical experience of the community should be formational – such that visitors and community are all invited to travel forward in their own formation as people of reconciliation. The history of the Cathedral, well known as it is (see appendix one), offers a trajectory from a fractured past towards a shared future into which we are drawn by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The buildings in Coventry embody the Christian Gospel. Provost Howard saw the ruined cathedral church of St. Michael 'sharing in the crucifixion of Christ', and the new Cathedral rising alongside it embodies (as Howard anticipated) the hope of resurrection and of Christ's return in glory. The Chapel of Unity expresses the commitment of the then Bishop and Provost to healing relationships within the church and the Chapel of Industry (now more usually known as the Chapel of Christ the Servant) a parallel commitment to the world, especially the world of work. Throughout the building art and architecture are full of meaning and significance, expressing our core purpose of reconciliation with God and one another.

The liturgy used in the Cathedral also reflects this commitment, although arguably less uniquely or consistently. There are some services and practices whose origins lie in the earliest days of the new Cathedral, innovative in their day but ripe for revisiting. Other more recent developments have not always sprung from nor communicated our unique vocation.

This plan therefore seeks to address these questions:

- What is our unique calling in Coventry?
- How might this be expressed in our life and liturgy?
- How might this be expressed in our buildings?

## **Our unique calling in Coventry Cathedral**

To say that our core purpose is unique in its mission of reconciliation needs a little explaining. Core to our understanding of reconciliation are the three-fold priorities of the Community of the Cross of Nails, a worldwide partnership which has its origin and home in Coventry.

<i>Coventry Community of the Cross of Nails</i>		
Healing the Wounds of History	Learning to Live with Difference and to Celebrate Diversity	Building a Culture of Peace

For many in the Cathedral community and ministry team, reconciliation **is** the gospel; for others, it is better expressed as the ‘lens through which we see the gospel’, or what we use to focus the light of the gospel on our contemporary situation. It is impossible to overestimate the significance and centrality of this commitment for Coventry Cathedral.

## **A reconciled and reconciling Cathedral**

We have been reflecting again recently what a ‘reconciled and reconciling Cathedral’ looks like. The answer will change year by year, but the present Dean and Canons have identified these as some key areas:

- Staff relationships which are open and honest, raising and addressing issues as necessary
- A place where others can seek help in the practical work of Reconciliation, with expertise available, and a team of trained reconcilers
- A congregational community which is
  - shaped in the light of the past but not shackled by it
  - reflecting in its diversity of our 3 reconciliation priorities (see above)
  - shaped by a consistent reflection of our commitment to reconciliation in its regular liturgy
  - regularly challenged through sermons which address the theological and practical lessons of reconciliation
  - enabled to see reconciliation through the lens of the gospel, and the gospel through the lens of reconciliation
  - helped to understand the practical working out of reconciliation through interviews at the Peace, and attention to ‘TTT’ (‘this time tomorrow’)

- grown through ‘foyers’ – a feature of our history, these are groups meeting around a simple meal and discussion to explore how to live out reconciliation in practice, which are now being re-launched
- using the ‘Coventry Way’, a simple Rule of life developed in the early days of the New Cathedral and now being revised and relaunched for our Centenary Year
- A ministry team (including our chaplains) who share the ministry of reconciliation, with appropriate training
- A clergy (or minister) welcome to all events that helps the visiting public understand our core identity and purpose
  - Key written material (bookmarks, postcards) to convey our message
- Interpretation in the Cathedral buildings which communicates our purpose and invites the guest to participate
- A willingness to acknowledge brokenness – which is a severe challenge in any Cathedral’s life, especially in liturgical forms which characteristically communicate ‘perfection’. Our ruins, of course, and our story give us the perfect framework for this. Nevertheless, as one member of clergy has said: “I think this is where we most fall down... because the intrinsic order of cathedral liturgy works against the messiness of a broken world.” The life of the Cathedral should reflect and embrace the brokenness of the world around us, offering transformation from a place of honesty, rather than inoculate us against it.
- A shape to our weekly pattern which reflects the central place of reconciliation in our shared life
- A shape to our liturgical space which reflects the central place of reconciliation in our shared life – is it adequate to say that the whole Cathedral speaks of reconciliation, or should we have a space specially set aside and dedicated to this ministry?

## **Our liturgy and liturgical space**

We recognise that a key opportunity of this liturgical plan is the chance to refocus our life and buildings on our core purpose, as we understand it today. Our liturgy does not consistently present the character of our understanding of reconciliation: for example, the unique Coventry Litany of Reconciliation (part of our history since 1958) is used daily at noon, but rarely on other occasions; the Reconciliation Eucharist is used only on Fridays. There is scope to make more of the prayers of penitence within the Eucharist and to devise more effective ways of highlighting our identity as reconciled and reconciling. Similarly, we use our Ruins for the Litany regularly on Fridays, but otherwise only on rare occasions. Our buildings embody our story, and our commitment to reconciliation – but our interpretation for visitors (and our own community) throughout the building is ripe for renewal.

Outside of the need to refocus on reconciliation, our liturgy and buildings offer other exciting opportunities to consider new developments, including

- a Nave altar, or other potential reconfiguring of the Nave seating pattern to form and engender a greater sense of community and reflect the changing congregational numbers
- personal and intimate prayer spaces – especially in the light of a potential movement towards open admission without charging (this will become easier once access to the whole building is open without charging, allowing visitors to discover their own preferred space for prayer, for example at the foot of the tapestry, or in the Millennium Chapel)
- bringing the Chapel of Christ the Servant into regular liturgical use
- a welcoming and ‘pausing’ space in the Ruins, perhaps in the form of a labyrinth, to guide the visitor into a journey of reconciliation
- a greater intentional use of the Ruins, as well as the New Cathedral, in all aspects of welcome, worship and reconciliation

As we continue to explore these questions in the following plan, we need also to bear in mind the severe constraints upon our resources. We are not in a position to be ambitious beyond our capacity. However, we will seek to do the most with what we have, and set a trajectory for the future which may one day be fulfilled.

## 2. Current patterns of worship and prayer

*This describes what we do now, largely without seeking to evaluate it. Rather than start with a description of the space, we begin with what we do in the space. A plan of the Cathedral is included in the appendix.*

Most of the Cathedral's services are drawn from the Church of England's Common Worship material, with extensive use of permitted variations and seasonal provisions. We also make use of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer for Choral Evensong and the 8 am service of Holy Communion on Sundays. We have a number of unique liturgical forms, largely originating with Joseph Poole, first Precentor of the new Cathedral, and reflecting our commitment to a contemporary (in 1962) servant ministry of reconciliation.

Ecumenical services in the Chapel of Unity are led by a team of lay people or ministers organised by the ecumenical team responsible for the Chapel, which is not formally part of the Cathedral (see below). Following a review of ministry across Hill Top in 2007, a shared service pattern was introduced with Holy Trinity Church, next door – as reflected in the outline below.

Our pattern of services is as follows (more detail may be found in the appendix):

### Sundays

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 8 am     | Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer), shared with Holy Trinity Church. Holy Trinity is the venue during odd-numbered months and the Cathedral Lady Chapel during even-numbered months. This said service is normally attended by about a dozen people.  |
| 10.30 am | The Cathedral Eucharist (Common Worship Order One). This service takes place in the Nave, is attended by up to 200 people (including the choir) and is sung by the Choristers (alternating between Boys and Girls), Scholars and Clerks of the Cathedral Choir during term time and by visiting choirs on other occasions. Vestments are worn and incense is occasionally used. A service booklet is printed each week so that visitors and other members of the congregation can follow the liturgy more easily and, if they wish, take it away with them. |
| 4 pm     | Choral Evensong (Book of Common Prayer). This service, attended by about 50 people (including the choir), is sung by the Choristers (alternating between Boys and Girls), Scholars and Clerks of the Cathedral Choir during term time and by visiting choirs on other occasions. An address is usually given.   |
| 6 pm     | OPEN – an informal service which takes a variety of forms. 'Open' began life as 'Cathedral Praise' in the mid 2000's, a service characterised by contemporary Christian songs led by a worship band, an address and the opportunity for prayer ministry. Its current pattern cycles through a variety of different contemporary styles, including a) an informal Eucharist, b) 'Open Table' (an opportunity to join in worship and explore faith in the context of a simple shared meal, c) 'Breathing  |

Space' (an informal service of prayer and meditation) as well as d) the inherited 'Cathedral Praise' format. It attracts up to 30 people each week.

## **Weekdays**

The Dean, Canons and members of the Reconciliation Ministry Team make a priority of attending Morning Prayer and are joined by a few other staff members and occasional visitors and passers-by. Wednesday morning's service is usually attended by a few members of the diocesan staff, dating back to a time when staff numbers were significantly higher and the service included a brief address delivered by a member of the senior staff of the Cathedral or Diocese. Evening Prayer is led by the officiating minister (usually the Dean or one of the Canons) and attended by occasional visitors and passers-by. Completed prayer request slips are used during the Intercessions at Evening Prayer or Choral Evensong, where they provide specific foci for prayer to supplement the four prayer cycles (Cathedral, Diocesan, Community of the Cross of Nails, and Anglican Communion) in regular use. Numbers attending Morning and Evening Prayer, and midweek services of Holy Communion, are usually in single figures. The attendance at mid-week Choral Evensong is bolstered by between 15 and 20 choristers and a small number of choir parents, together with a small handful of faithful regulars. Whilst the Litany can see large numbers if there are groups visiting, this is the exception.

For the sake of clarity, full details of our service pattern are set out in the appendix.

### **Monday - Friday regular pattern:**

8.30 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship Daily Prayer).
12 noon	The Litany of Reconciliation. This short prayer of confession, based on the seven cardinal sins, was written in 1958 by Canon Joseph Poole, the first Precentor of the new Cathedral. It includes as a response the words 'Father forgive', echoing the reaction of Provost Dick Howard to the destruction of his Cathedral in November 1940. Visitors present when it is introduced (either at the front of the Nave or in front of the altar in the Ruins, on Fridays) are invited to pause and join in.
5.15pm	Evensong (BCP) or Evening Prayer (Common Worship Daily Prayer) . Evensong is sung by the Cathedral choristers on Wednesdays (boys) and Thursdays (girls) during school term.

### **and in addition:**

Tues 12.10pm	Holy Communion (Common Worship Order One) (on the 1st Tuesday of the month).
Tues 1.05pm	Ecumenical Service in the Chapel of Unity.
Mon 5.45pm	Remember our Child (first Monday of each month) in the Chapel of Unity

[Tues 1.00pm Prayers for Healing, sometimes with Holy Communion (at Holy Trinity Church).]

Weds 8am Ecumenical Service in the Chapel of Unity.

[Weds 10.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) (at Holy Trinity Church).]

Thurs 10.15am Mothers' Union Corporate Communion (Common Worship Order One) (on the 2nd Thursday of the month).

Thurs 12.10pm Holy Communion (Common Worship Order One) (on all except the 2nd Thursday of the month).

Friday 12.10pm Holy Communion (Common Worship Order One): the 'Reconciliation Eucharist' in which the liturgy, readings, prayers reflect the theme of reconciliation.

### **Saturdays**

12 noon The Litany of Reconciliation.

12.10 pm Holy Communion in the Chapel of Unity or Chapel of Christ in Gethsemane

4.00 pm Evening Prayer (or Evensong when a visiting choir comes to sing, something which particularly happens during school holidays, when a visiting choir will usually come for a whole weekend of services)

Regular Offices take place, when possible, in the 'prayer circle' around the Chi-Rho at the rear of the Nave and in full sight of those passing outside the West Screen. Other weekday services, including services of Holy Communion, also take place here, as well as the Lady Chapel, the Chapel of Christ in Gethsemane or the Chapel of Unity – sometimes dictated by numbers, or accessibility requirements. As indicated above, certain midweek services take place in Holy Trinity Church, adjacent to the Cathedral, in an arrangement dating back to 2007 thus seeking to provide a daily Eucharist, and Sunday 8.00 provision, across Hill Top.

### **Seasonal Services**

Special services are detailed in the appendix. Given the geographical spread of the Cathedral's regular Sunday morning congregation, festivals such as Epiphany, the Patronal Festival of St Michael, and All Saints' Day are usually transferred to the nearest Sunday. A number of these reflect our unique and innovative liturgical history.

### **Diocesan and other Special Services**

The Cathedral's primary purpose in supporting and assisting the Bishop gives substance to its role as the 'mother church' of the diocese. The Chrism Eucharist on the morning of Maundy Thursday and the Ordinations of Deacons and Priests are the most obvious focus of this ministry. The Bishop also leads worship in the Cathedral on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and Easter Day, celebrating the Eucharist, preaching the gospel and teaching the faith. Confirmations are held at the Cathedral three



times a year, each with a distinctive style: at the Dawn Service on Easter Day, informal contemporary worship at Pentecost and a more traditional 'Cathedral style' service at the end of November.

The Cathedral's liturgical relationship with the wider Diocese has a particular focus in the daily use of the Diocesan Prayer Cycle. We take the opportunity to invite incumbents to update the information they have provided and, together with colleagues and members of their parishes, to attend one or more of the services on the day when they are being remembered. The bond it represents is widely appreciated.

In addition to the regular Cathedral congregation, a wide variety of other groups and individuals continue to own Coventry Cathedral as 'their' Cathedral. A striking recent example of this was the largely non-religious celebration of the life of Jimmy Hill held early in 2016, which attracted a very high attendance, coming close to the Cathedral's maximum capacity of 2,000. The Cathedral is also regularly used for more conventional funerals and memorial services during the year, especially when congregations of a size which would overwhelm other venues are anticipated.

Weddings are occasionally held in the Cathedral. The legislation enabling those with appropriate 'qualifying connections' to marry in a parish church does not apply to cathedrals, which places what we, in our desire to be as hospitable as we can, perceive as unnecessarily restrictive limits on those we are able to welcome for this purpose.

Significant use is made of the Cathedral by a number of local schools for various services and other events such as awards ceremonies during the year. Blue Coat Church of England School & Music College bring most of their school community into the Cathedral for a service at the end of each term and, depending on the date of the summer half term break, on Ascension Day or the Feast of Corpus Christi. Bablake School and King Henry VIII School hold a carol service here each year. For the Cathedral Schools team, who welcome a steady stream of school parties on educational visits throughout the year, a particular highlight is the sequence of two or three Christingle services held in early December. A number of local schools (Blue Coat, Finham and Sidney Stringer) also hold award ceremonies in the Cathedral each year.

The Cathedral's 'Remember our Child' group meets in the Cathedral on the first Monday of each month (or the second Monday if the first is a Bank Holiday) at 5.45pm for a short service in the Chapel of Unity, during which those children whose anniversaries will occur that month, are remembered by name. The group also holds an annual service on a Sunday afternoon after Easter and a Christmas service early in December.

### **Personal Prayer, and other provision for prayer in the Cathedral**

The cathedral ruins provide a space where many visitors are brought to a natural halt – sometimes in tears – and naturally gravitate to the altar and the apse. However, no specific places nor prompts are currently provided.

The new Cathedral is challenged by the admissions charge (see below). Charging has also led to the need to make specific provision for those who simply wanted to come into the building in order to be still and pray. The current way of doing this is to invite such visitors to make use of the area at the Chi-Rho, where a circle of chairs, a table (with prayer request slips and a box to place them in) and a

candle stand are set out each day. Whilst an improvement on earlier compromises, this is far from ideal, failing to provide anything approaching an intimate or private space for prayer.

The life of the Cathedral benefits enormously from a team of voluntary ordained and lay chaplains who make themselves available to talk and pray with visitors as required. Many of the chaplains take the opportunity to lead a short act of public prayer on the hour from the front of the Nave.

In addition to the prayer circle at the Chi Rho, there are other candle stands in the building. In particular, the Kiel Globe Candle (presented on the 10th anniversary of the London tube bombing, by students from Kiel in Germany) stand provides a focus for prayer for events the news relating especially to our ministry of reconciliation.

### 3. Challenges and Opportunities

The introduction has already listed some of our challenges and opportunities. There is a rich offering of worship in the Cathedral. However, we also recognise that there is both an opportunity and a need to grow in number and engagement, especially in relation to our specific focus on reconciliation, both during services and at other times. In this section we detail some of the general issues, before continuing to look at the building itself in section four.

In our 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, worship is described in these terms:

Worship is what happens as people's hearts, minds and wills are engaged through exploring and experiencing the nature and activity of God, whom we know as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Cathedral's role is to develop, build and maintain 'bridges' for God to make himself known and for people – the regular congregations, visitors from near and far (some of whom may be potential members of the community) and those who attend the Cathedral occasionally as their 'mother church' – to respond to him through liturgy, music, preaching, interaction, drama, dance, art, supportive fellowship and active engagement with the work of God in the world.

Worship enables us to: deepen our relationship with God; strengthen our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ; flourish as the people God is calling us to be; discern and use our gifts to serve God in the church and in the wider world; be transformed as agents of positive change in society; and develop a healthy relationship with the environment.

*David Stone, Canon Precentor*

This is taken forward in the following priorities:

To grow the Cathedral *congregations*

Actions	Measures
Offer a range of services and styles to meet the needs of a variety of worshippers	Welcome on average 600 worshippers every week (ie 30000 pa; 400 pw in 2016)

Provide an enhanced music offering by our choirs.	Regularly used for national broadcasts and recordings
Provide pathways for those exploring faith and Cathedral membership	A structured programme of small groups / nurture / training courses to build faith and grow our core character of reconciliation

*To be a resource for the Diocese, especially in welcome, worship and reconciliation*

Actions	Measures
Work collaboratively with the Bishop and Core Staff in strategic alignment between the Cathedral and Diocesan Vision	Shared strategic vision expressed in core documents of Cathedral and Diocese Numbers attending Diocesan events
Host diocesan and special services, offering high quality celebratory worship,	Cathedral clergy present at all new licensing and assisting with vacancy cover
Visits from Cathedral clergy out to Diocese & from parishes in to Cathedral	
Place Diocesan resource ministers within life of Cathedral	Cathedral perceived as resource by wider Diocesan family
Develop and promote an online library of reconciliation-themed liturgical resources	Monitor web traffic and use, both in the Diocese and further afield

These specific priorities for worship need to be held in relation to the whole Strategic Plan, with its three-fold emphasis on Welcome, Worship and Reconciliation – a combination which all intersects in the desire to draw people to Jesus Christ. Our Liturgical Plan needs to enable us to deliver these priorities through the way we plan and deliver our worship, and through the way we work in partnership and make our worship known to others, both within the Diocese and outside the Anglican church, and more widely within the Christian family. It needs to work hand in hand with our priorities in welcome and reconciliation, and reflect our agreed values:

- **Hospitality** – of both people and ideas
- **Faith and Spirituality** – being open to the challenge and resources of God
- **Art and Creativity** – expressing the life of God amongst us in ways beyond words
- **Reconciliation** – embracing and welcoming difference and diversity
- **Risk Taking** – confidently stepping out of the familiar in the service of God
- **Excellence** – always reaching beyond our present practice and experience

It needs to offer a home for worship and prayer to all those whom we count as members of our Cathedral Community – which includes our staff, volunteers, and congregations. And it needs to offer a welcome to all those who visit. Above all, it needs to express our commitment to the

reconciliation that God has wrought in Christ, and to make it a reality in the lives of those who visit or join us.

Our liturgy, together with our buildings, need to communicate that we are a welcoming, worshipping and reconciling community. We are blessed with a space that invites the visitor to make a journey from Crucifixion to Resurrection and Glorification, from Honesty through Hope to Healing. We have a significant liturgical history of innovation, that has left us some jewels, such as 'Form of our Servant', our unique liturgy for Christmas Eve which makes full use of our New Cathedral's space and which is quite unlike a traditional crib service. However, tastes and patterns of worship have changed significantly since 1962, and our liturgical life is ripe for review. Here are some of the areas for attention.

### **Admission Charge**

The decision implemented from early in 2010 to charge visitors for admission to the Cathedral has given rise to a great many difficulties. The building has to be cleared before reopening (without charge) for services. At the end of services, members of the public face uncertainty as to the status of entry to the Cathedral. The emphasis on welcome is heavily compromised, and numbers of people coming for prayer, or for attending worship are without doubt affected.

Charging has also led to the need to make specific provision for those who simply wanted to come into the building in order to be still and pray. As already described, the current way of doing this is to invite such visitors to make use of the area at the Chi-Rho, where the Nave Altar, a circle of chairs, a table (with prayer request slips and a box to place them in) and a candle stand are set out each day. Whilst an improvement on earlier compromises, this is far from ideal, failing to provide anything approaching an intimate or private space for prayer.

With all this in mind, the Cathedral Chapter has accepted the principle that it would be good to remove the admissions charge, subject to the necessary resources. Partners are being actively sought to enable this to happen, along with a dedicated chaplaincy resource to offer an approach to mission which is shaped by our commitment to reconciliation. This Liturgical Plan acknowledges this intention and, where appropriate, is shaped by it.

### **Chaplaincy and other provision**

Apart from services, what guidance does Coventry Cathedral offer people who want to know how to pray? Chaplains are usually on duty when the Cathedral is open to the public – but not everyone wants to engage in this sort of conversation and there may be more we can do to help people connect more effectively with God, perhaps through prayer cards and other literature and signage. Apart from the prayer circle at the Chi-Rho, we do not currently make any suggestions about exactly where people might like to pray and this may be worth considering further. Are there spaces within the Cathedral which could be more obviously set aside for personal prayer and enhanced with appropriate resources? It may also be helpful to overhaul the Cathedral app with opportunities for personal prayer in mind.

Alongside this description about what the Cathedral provides, it also needs to be pointed out that attendance at services and visitor numbers generally is in decline. In common with many other churches, our ability to attract new members into our congregations is not keeping pace with the

rate of loss. In addition, the attendance at diocesan services in the Cathedral has declined in recent years. It may simply be a reflection of changing patterns of engagement in a culture where there are more demands on people's time or there may be more specific reasons (such as the perceived busyness of the city centre and the difficulties of car parking) which we can and should seek to address. Further research is now available to draw on.

### **Art, exhibitions and events**

One effective way of drawing people into the building is through the hosting of exhibitions, especially in the field of art, a number of which have served to enhance the Cathedral and amplify its message in recent years. We are fortunate to have a dedicated volunteer to curate this aspect of the Cathedral's life and the building continues to attract proposals of high quality.

In recent years, we have also dramatically increased our events programme. This has been successful in bringing many new people into the Cathedral buildings, but care is needed in both exhibitions and events that our underlying mission is supported and not compromised. **We have recently introduced new Visual Arts and Events policies to assist with this, and this Liturgical Plan should be considered in relation to those two documents.**

### **Publicity**

Daily services (especially Evensong). We do not currently do a great deal to publicise these services and it might be productive to promote them more actively. Some services (such as 'Open') attract those who are also committed members of their own local church – it's possible that we could promote the idea of attending the Cathedral 'in addition' to local church membership (rather like St. Mark's, Swanswell). In addition, one way of expanding the reach of our daily pattern of worship would be to broadcast some or all of these services on the internet. This sounds relatively straightforward but there are potential issues to consider further, for example with sensitivities and confidentiality in the intercessions. And although much of the participation in this way would probably be anonymous, we would also need to plan exactly how we would meet the potential pastoral expectations created by such a service, which are beyond our current capacity to meet effectively.

### **Working with our neighbours**

As described, we share a number of services with the neighbouring parish church of Holy Trinity, Coventry. This partnership would benefit from being reviewed, not least following the recent arrival of Graeme Anderson as the new Vicar of Holy Trinity. The current pattern of shared services means that we do not, in fact, offer a daily Eucharist on Hill Top. And although we share in the provision of a number of services, we are also sometimes in direct competition with Holy Trinity – for example, on Sunday afternoons, when Choral Evensong takes place in the Cathedral at 4 pm and in Holy Trinity at 4.30 pm. It may be that there are good reasons for such duplicated activity to continue – but it would certainly be worth investigation and discussion.



## 4. The setting for our liturgy: our buildings

Coventry Cathedral is an extraordinary building – or, rather, buildings. Some of its history is set out in the appendices. It is inspiring to direct people's eyes and hearts to the various art works – the grandeur of the tapestry, the wonder of the baptistery window, the sheer physicality of the font, the joy of the sloping floor in the Chapel of Unity. The transitions from crucifixion to resurrection framed in the architecture allow a rich reflection on the transitions of our own lives. For these reasons, Coventry Cathedral as a building very much works with those who lead liturgy, preach, and seek to inspire the community in worship. However, it can also be challenging: it is not the most flexible of spaces. As one Precentor put it, “you can try to fight the building, but the building always wins.” It emerged from a particular vision of, primarily Eucharistic, worship – and to seek to bend it to other approaches in 21st Century is not easy. Alongside the theological and stylistic challenges are more practical issues, for example: some heating zones are not working and the system is not capable of achieving levels of comfort suitable to current requirements or user expectations; the lighting is inadequate; the acoustics are less than helpful. How are we to shape the building for this, and the next generation of worshippers? In this section, we explore some of the challenges of our various areas, following an imaginative tour of the Cathedral space.

### General observations

The years since the opening of the Cathedral in 1962 have undoubtedly taken their toll on a building which is open every day of the year and used by so many thousands of people. It has to be admitted that although first impressions are usually entirely positive, closer inspection reveals that the condition of the building is somewhat shabby – something which is clearly at odds with its vocation “to speak to us and to generations to come of the Majesty, the Eternity and the Glory of God,” as the 1950 introduction to the architectural competition put it. Many of the floor tiles are scratched or cracked and there is a significant layer of dirt on the walls, altars and other furnishings at floor level. There are particular problems around the building – for example, with the windows in the Chapel of Christ the Servant.

More generally, the sense of welcome and hospitality we want to offer is adversely affected by a number of factors. First, the heating system is unable to achieve temperatures in line with modern expectations of comfort during cold weather. This is true throughout the Nave and especially in the Chapel of Unity and the Chapel of Christ the Servant. Secondly, the Cathedral's toilet facilities are insufficient to meet contemporary expectations and need to be extended and refurbished. Thirdly, the facilities for the serving of refreshments in the Nave are somewhat ad hoc and would benefit from being reviewed and upgraded. The details are outside the scope of this Plan but it is clear that, from a purely liturgical perspective, these issues need to be addressed in order for the Cathedral to do the job it was designed to do.

The new building is undoubtedly grand and awe inspiring – but does it offer an adequate framework as it is for our ministry of welcome and reconciliation, let alone the more intimate acts of worship? Is it a place for visitors, or a liturgical community, to feel ‘at home’? Someone has observed that for them, Coventry Cathedral is ‘a masculine building designed by men for men’ – although this is strongly refuted by others, both women and men. Can anything be done about this? Should it? Does the desire to preserve the Cathedral as a piece of its time mean that it will become increasingly alien

to the aspirations and expectations of modern worshippers? Or can the building be ‘softened’ without compromising the integrity of Basil Spence’s vision? In particular, the appearance of the choir stalls has been questioned, both on aesthetic and practical grounds. Might it be right to seek to replace them – even though they are an integral part of the building’s original design? Does the original design still serve the liturgical needs of today? Whatever the answer, good interpretation is important: the intended symbolism of the design above choir stalls, for example, as ‘thorns’ is not widely known, and such pieces of interpretation could be included in a rolling programme in the weekly liturgical booklets.

## **The Ruins**

The ruins are used for liturgical worship on a weekly basis for the Litany (below) and also for occasional, particularly seasonal services: the Presentation, Palm Sunday, Maundy Watch, Easter Vigil, Ascension Day – and, most recently, an outdoor Pentecost celebration incorporating full immersion baptism. They are an exciting space to use liturgically,

Given the substantial numbers of people who currently visit the Ruins without visiting the New Cathedral, we should make more use of them liturgically. In addition, activity which ‘hallows’ the space which the Cathedral Events Department is populating more and more with non-liturgical events has much to commend it. Although the need for most of our choral music to be accompanied by the organ places limitations on us, the main Sunday Eucharist could, from time to time, be celebrated in the Ruins and music chosen accordingly.

The Litany of Reconciliation is usually said in the Ruins at 12 noon each Friday and on other days when using the Nave is not practicable. There is no reason why the Ruins should not be the regular location for praying the Litany on other days as well, especially if more people are present. The logistical challenges of using the Ruins as the location for the Eucharist that follows the Litany (on most Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays) are currently being investigated. As a wet weather alternative, the service could take place in the Haigh Chapel, which is not currently being used to its full potential. Following an incident when a piece of stonework became dislodged and fell to the ground in 2016, the Ruins Apse is currently designated a hard-hat area. This is a priority to be addressed as resources allow. The Apse is the ‘spiritual heart’ of the Ruins, and the place to which visitors naturally gravitate – an area which calls for more care and usage.

The ruins also include small plaques indicating the ‘Hallowing Places’ – prayers for God to hallow all aspects of our lives, which date back to Canon Poole. A move to designate the Ruins as the National Memorial for Civilians killed in the course of war has not received recent endorsement: it seems to limit their power to speak into any experience of human brokenness.

The ruins are used especially by the Reconciliation Ministry Team within the Community of the Cross of Nails Pilgrimages – when groups of present or prospective members of the CCN gather for a few days of teaching, sharing and prayer. The specific liturgical act sometimes known as ‘On this Holy Mountain’ is an imaginative progression, akin to Stations of the Cross, throughout the space of the ruins, sometimes using the hallowing places, and leading to the Apse. The Ruins are also typically used for the Stations as such on Good Friday – not altogether successfully, they nonetheless do tend to draw a growing group as they proceed, which can be enormously moving.



The visitor route around the Cathedral typically – and preferably – begins by entering under the tower into the Ruins. This is a natural pausing point, where many stop in their tracks and fall silent. We would like to build on this ‘natural pause’ by installing a labyrinth in the floor of the ruins, to lead visitors into a reflection on their own lives and relationships, or the wider the world, as the first steps in the journey of reconciliation which will shape their pilgrimage through the entire Cathedral space. This aspiration needs to be considered carefully in relation to the need and desire to maximize the economic potential of the ruins, especially through the opening up of the Tower Shop in Summer 2017 – it may be that a labyrinth would need to be installed more centrally.

The Ruins host a number of significant, and less significant, art works and memorials. To merit a place in this most important of spaces they need to find a place in the liturgical purpose of the Ruins – to speak to the visitor of welcome, worship or reconciliation. The Statue of Reconciliation, whilst rather looked down on by some, nevertheless fulfills this aspiration admirably – as does the Epstein Ecce Homo. The Choir of Survivors statue is perhaps not best situated in its present position, as it is rather overwhelmed by the architecture. The Home Guard memorial seems quite out of place and interrupts the space and it would be best moved to another location, perhaps adjacent to but outside the Ruins.

### **The Crypts**

Below the ruins are two crypts, known the Wyley Chapel and the Chapel of the Cross. The much larger Chapel of the Cross was used as the place for worship after the bombing and before the opening of the New Cathedral (worship initially took place in the Lecture hall). After the waterproof membrane was punctured as floodlights were installed in the Ruins at the Millennium, the crypts became progressively waterlogged and unusable. A recent grant has enabled the waterproofing to be renewed, and the spaces are presently drying out, in order to be brought back into use. Our initial ideas have been to use the smaller Wyley Chapel (although partially ramped, still not wheelchair accessible) as a place of open prayer, and the larger, but accessed via steep steps, perhaps as space for exhibition or interpretation. With the advent of open admission, this could perhaps be a charged area.

### **The Porch and external areas**

Little use is currently made of the Cathedral Porch as a liturgical space which, given its significance as a major thoroughfare between Coventry University’s central campus and the city centre, is something which should be remedied. It could, for example, be the location for praying the Litany of Reconciliation and/or celebrating the Eucharist at 12 noon. It has been proved to be a good space in which to hold occasional prayer vigils and other events which benefit from greater public awareness.

Access to the central doors of the West Screen is currently restricted by an arrangement of barriers and gates known as the ‘sheep pen’. Visitors are not therefore usually permitted to use the most obvious way of entering the Cathedral! The security and safety of the West Screen is a factor here but it would be worth considering the extent to which our current practice hampers our desire to be as welcoming as possible to our visitors.

The lawns adjacent to the Tower and Chapel of Unity are our principal outdoor areas, and are not regularly used in liturgical activity. The Unity lawn and flowerbeds are used for the interring of ashes,

but memorials of individuals are restricted to former Deans and Bishops. The area of grass outside the South (liturgically speaking) Wall is hardly considered as 'Cathedral space'.

### **The Chapel of Unity**

As indicated above, the Chapel of Unity community holds services in the Chapel on Tuesday lunchtimes and Wednesday mornings. In addition, the Chapel is usually the location for the Cathedral's mid-day communion services on Fridays and Saturdays – unless disabled access is required. It houses the monthly Remember our Child service, and is also the location for occasional special services – notably the annual Hiroshima Day multi-faith service, organised by the Lord Mayor of Coventry's Peace Committee.

The Chapel of Unity is a striking space. It is described in the early history of the new Cathedral as 'a place for shared prayer for different faiths' – meaning, at the time, different Christian denominations. Today, that description may prompt an exploration of shared prayer or worship for those of different religions. The Chapel has a striking mosaic floor, which is concave – visiting school groups are encouraged to release golf balls from the perimeter, and see to their surprise how they trickle through the chairs to gather under the circular glass table in the centre. It is quite a dark space, the tall dalle de verre windows only letting in a little light. It is also fearsomely cold in winter – a difficult problem to address given the shape of the building. It 'comes alive' when used in worship, especially the Eucharist, or at the Hiroshima Day service, when it is filled with people making paper cranes and lighting candles.

The Chapel of Unity is not formally part of the Cathedral. The small ecumenical group who manage it are very politically engaged, and the space is often dominated by politically charged displays – as well as by the cascade of paper cranes suspended from the screen. Some concern has been expressed at the variableness of the quality of some of the materials on display. We need to work more closely with the Chapel of Unity community to maintain standards of presentation and to ensure that the expectations of our visitors are met more consistently. There is much more that could be done to communicate the unique significance of this ecumenical space within the Cathedral building, and to draw visitors into its message of reconciliation.

It is unfortunate that the Chapel cannot be accessed from within the Cathedral except via steps. A design for an internal ramp was, we understand, rejected by the Cathedral's Fabric Commission for England. Access via external doors in the 'link' between the Chapel and the Cathedral reduces the need to negotiate steps but does not eliminate it.

### **Notice boards and displays**

Our notice boards and displays have evolved over a number of years and are in urgent need of refreshing and unifying, not least in what they say about worship. There are a number of free standing noticeboards at the rear of the Cathedral, along with the 'Welcome Wall' adjacent to the 'welcome desk'. Whilst of strong and consistent design, there is a particular need to sort out the way information is presented at the Welcome Desk and the west end of the Nave, which can be confusing and distracting for visitors – and to be aware that interpretation can add to general clutter if not done well.

When it comes to interpretative signage, questions need to be asked about the balance between description and interpretation. To what extent can visitors be expected simply to 'get' what they see? In what level of detail do things need to be explained? Whilst alert to the dangers of restricting the opportunity for visitors to discover their own meaning in a building with largely non-figurative art, we nevertheless must recognise that without interpretation most visitors would simply miss the great keys to the building and many of its treasures, especially the transition from darkness to light in the journey up the Nave. Even in the apparently abstract Nave windows, for example, there is a wealth of symbolism that is unlikely to be appreciated without some guidance. Our literature for visitors and the Cathedral app need also to be reviewed with these issues in mind – and with the prospect of introducing open admission, the opportunity to raise revenue by charging for guides (paper or human) needs to be balanced with the need to enable non paying visitors to be touched deeply by God in their visit.

In recent years there has been discussion about introducing electronic displays in the West Screen's south west doorway, at the Welcome Desk and perhaps in the area outside the Millennium Chapel.

As we continue to explore the move to open admission, alongside a Development Plan, these challenges and opportunities of renewing our interpretation will be explored in full – especially in the context of creating and offering a 'pilgrim's route' through the buildings.

### **The West Screen**

The West Wall of the Cathedral is a huge glass screen, engraved by John Hutton with saints and dancing angels, around the figures of St Michael, the Virgin and the infant Christ. (West here is used in its liturgical sense, meaning the rear wall.) It is another unique ingredient of the Coventry offering. It is an integral part of our worship context, as it links the inside of the new Cathedral to the Ruins, and the City beyond – and as the public are constantly using the thoroughfare through the porch, it allows full sight of whatever is going on inside. At Sunday's 10.30am Eucharist especially, there are frequently passers-by watching through the glass and taking photographs.

The ministers and choir currently process to the West Screen area at the conclusion of the Sunday Cathedral Eucharist, which gives a distinctive and clear focus for the act of sending the congregation out into the world. The Crib is usually located at the West Screen during Advent, Christmas and Epiphany and our promenade worship at these times makes use of it as an area for liturgical devotion. The area in front of the West Screen is also used on other feasts – especially our Good Friday liturgy, and for the Easter Vigil (once we have progressed from the lighting of the fire in the Ruins). It is an exciting area for worship, with the light and transparency of the West Screen as a backdrop (we face west for these services).

Looked at from the outside, the area by the West Screen is an obvious 'shop window'. Although occasionally used for displays and exhibitions, there is scope for more imaginative use to be made of this particular space. Praying the office here, as we regularly do, is important. One (not uncontroversial!) suggestion is that the Cathedral could be made more welcoming to visitors and 'softened' by introducing sofas – perhaps soft cube cushions - and other more relaxing furniture, though there is a practical issue to do with the area of brass lettering across the floor at the west end of the Cathedral. We currently seek to protect this by not allowing it to be covered in any way.

## **The Chi-Rho**

As mentioned above, the impact of the Cathedral's policy of charging visitors for admission is somewhat ameliorated by the provision of a 'free' prayer space around the Chi-Rho. This space, easily visible to outsiders walking past the West Screen, is also currently the location for Morning and Evening Prayer on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays( and is currently being tested out as an appropriate location for midweek communion services). We find it works very well for this, allowing meditation on the baptistery window or the tapestry (depending on where one sits), and with a clear sense of demonstrating our rhythm of prayer to those passing by.

## **The Rear of the Nave/Chapel of Unity steps**

The area in front of the Chapel of Unity steps has often been used liturgically. Until recently, the 'Open' service took place here, with a projector screen on the top of the steps and the keyboard, sound system, lectern, Holy Table (when used) at the foot. This has recently been moved to the Chi Rho, on the basis that the worshippers are thereby encouraged to gaze at the tapestry, and wider Cathedral, rather than a porch area leading into a dark Chapel of Unity behind. However, the area is useful for presentations which do not merit the entire Nave or for services which although focused on the Chapel of Unity are too large for it (for example recent Hiroshima Day services, and occasional funeral or memorial services). It is often used as part of 'promenade' services, for example at Christmas. It is typically chaired, but its recent change of regular use suggests that this should be reconsidered. Indeed, the reduction of the overall number of chairs in our default 'Nave at Rest' arrangement would commend itself to many – although raises the challenge of storage for the surplus chairs.

## **The Baptistry**

The wonderful limestone boulder font and glorious Piper Reyntiens window are a focal point for the rear of the Cathedral. The font is used regularly: at 10.30 services the entire congregation is sometimes brought down to gather around it; it is also used for the renewal of vows (and baptisms where needed) at the Easter liturgy and some confirmations. When we practice baptism by immersion, the Cathedral's temporary baptism pool is erected in front of the stone font (or, on rare occasions, outside in the Ruins). This practice works well, and we have not found the need to use a small portable font elsewhere in our space. The area around the font can tend attract clutter, and more could be made of it as a place for meditation and prayer, especially within a renewed pilgrimage route. When the prayer circle and candle stand needs to be moved, it is relocated to the Baptistry area. When we have books for remembrance opened, these are typically placed on a small table in front of the font.

Along with the whole of the west end of the Cathedral, the Baptistry suffers from being very poorly lit, an issue which was not satisfactorily addressed when the Nave lighting was upgraded in 2010. The possibility of lighting the Baptistry window externally for evening/night-time services and events is one to consider and explore further, as a way of enhancing the space within the Cathedral by revealing the glories of the window, especially during the darker months of the year.

## **The Nave**

There are 780 seats in the current 'Nave at rest' configuration. This number is rarely used, however, and we are exploring reducing this figure, to open up the space and to make it easier to re-set following an event. We are also experimenting with the removal of at least some of the kneelers, and instead having small neat piles available in the Nave bays, again to make the task re-setting the space easier (and cheaper) following events – it can take a small team of paid staff up to an hour simply to rehang the kneelers, which are very rarely used. Reducing visual clutter by clearing the Nave of chairs has a noticeably impressive effect on the appearance of the building, and we would like to further explore how we can do this more regularly.

Although there is danger in cluttering up the space too much, there is scope for thinking more imaginatively about the Tablets of the Word bays as spaces for exhibitions, displays and prayer stations. We use one bay for prayer ministry at the 10.30 service, but otherwise their potential is unexplored.

There is considerable scope for improving the lighting in the Cathedral. An imaginative scheme installed some years ago remains little used: although long standing difficulties concerning the control board appear now to have been rectified, adjusting the direction in which the lights on the lighting bars in the north and south aisles are pointing remains a challenge. Improved lighting would significantly enhance the space (perhaps lending the possibility of colour to the grey walls which confront the congregation on both sides, the windows being deliberately set to only be seen from the front) – and encourage an atmosphere of worship. Undoubtedly we should fully explore the options available with our current equipment.

We have recently acquired a temporary and small platform to help us explore the use of our small Nave altar, effectively by creating a small and level extension into the Nave of the Chancel step (which is on an angle). We currently make use of a Nave altar primarily at the Chrism and Footwashing services on Maundy Thursday, and for the Eucharist on the Longest Night of the Year. We are also experimenting with its use on occasional Sundays, and find that it engenders a strong feeling of community – at least for the clergy, who find the High Altar remote from the congregation. Longer term consideration of where our Eucharist should usually take place is ongoing, but it is unlikely that we would move away from the High Altar as our norm, reflecting as it does the architecture of the building. However, in the early days of the new cathedral there were two Sunday services – a 'high mass' and a 'parish mass', the latter based around a nave altar, and we could consider reinstigating such a practice, with a more contemporary feel. (An alternative approach could be follow the practice of other places such as Liverpool Cathedral or the Coventry Methodist Hall and offer concurrent services with contrasting worship styles.)

Although not situated in the Nave, the great Sutherland Tapestry dominates the view towards the East. The image of Christ in Glory is not especially accessible, and whilst it has stood the test of time, it would benefit from interpretation for many visitors. It would lend itself to a touch screen electronic display, probably located at the rear of the Nave, to lead people into the artistic and theological/spiritual significance of its many different elements, especially the living creatures. It serves at present as the 'culmination' of the theological journey embodied by the buildings, of crucifixion through to glory, and is frequently referenced in sermons both for this reason, and also for the gaze of Christ, and the image of the human being between the huge feet.

Other art works in the Nave can also serve to draw the pilgrim's or worshipper's attention to God's presence with them, especially the Elizabeth Frink Eagle lectern (and later addition of the crucifix on the pulpit) and the Ralph Beyer Tablets of the Word with eight texts chosen to communicate the gospel. The tablets are not especially well lit, and the two eastern most tablets are somewhat obscured by the choir stalls.

As mentioned earlier, the idea behind Basil Spence's zig-zag arrangement of the Nave windows was that those going forward to receive communion would see them and be transformed as they turned round in order to return to their seats in the Nave. Our current habit of sending people back down the side aisles means that this does not happen in quite the way Spence envisaged!

### **The Chancel**

The Chancel is used for Choral Evensong regularly throughout the year and for Compline during Holy Week. It works reasonably well for Evensong, when the small numbers of congregation can often be accommodated in the rear stalls, though others may choose to sit out in the Nave. The services of Compline in Holy Week are always much appreciated, and we have often expressed an intention to build on this evocative style of quiet evening or night time service.

A question has arisen concerning the impact of the 'thorns' above the choir stalls. What message do they convey? Does this continue to be what we wish to communicate today? In addition, is there scope for rethinking the design of the moveable choir stalls? Is the current arrangement of the stalls as effective as it could be in housing and amplifying the choir? Although the Chancel is part of Spence's original design, this alone should not be allowed to dictate whether we explore whether some fresh development or enhancement be considered for this area, which would indicate that the Cathedral is not immovably located in its past history, but is a living space in which a new community's needs in worship are taken into account.

### **The High Altar**

The High Altar is used on most Sunday mornings and on most major festivals. It is the centrepiece of the Cathedral as a place of theatre. It is undoubtedly grand, but is also remote from the congregation. The action of ministers and servers round the High Altar, whilst looking impressive to some is apt to look rather slow and ponderous to others and we are seeking some assistance from those whose expertise lies in theatre to help us address this. The message of the High Altar is not that God is warm and close, but remote and awesome – there are some aspects of this which are good, others less so. However, the building is designed around this feature, and it is a fixed ingredient of our context. An imaginative conversation around the messages thereby conveyed, and whether they adequately communicate welcome, worship and reconciliation is called for.

The High Altar is framed by the wonderful Hans Coper candlesticks, and the Geoffrey Clarke High Altar Cross and candlesticks on the altar. These enhance the space around the altar as viewed from the Nave, and also work well from closer at hand, giving a sense of grandeur but also movement (especially the cross). As art works, they have stood the test of time, and signify the focus on the sacrifice and light of Christ for the world.

### **The Lady Chapel**

The Lady Chapel sits at the immediate foot of the Sutherland Tapestry, which makes it difficult to see as a whole from the space, which is characterized by the crucifixion at its foot. This conveys a somewhat solemn, almost unwelcoming feel to the Chapel. The screen, designed with the view from the Nave in mind, is also a heavy presence.

The narrowness and width of the Lady Chapel makes it a difficult space to use liturgically, and this is not helped by the location of the Bridgeman statue of the Blessed Virgin, a work of art which provokes mixed responses. It might be worth experimenting with a different seating arrangement – perhaps in the round and with different chairs. The Chapel is currently used for Morning Prayer/Holy Communion on Mondays and Wednesdays, the Sunday morning 8.00 am communion, and for the Mothers' Union Corporate Communion on the second Thursday morning of each month. Despite these challenges, as a more intimate space than the Nave, it is also sometimes used for marriages and services of blessing where the congregation is not expected to be large.

### **The Chapel of Christ in Gethsemane**

This chapel is used for the daily offices when circumstances make other locations impossible, and similarly for midweek communion services (for example when Unity is unsuitable because of the steps). It seats around 10-12 people comfortably, and works quite well for this purpose.

A chapel with this designation ought to feel like a safe space for private prayer, and this was the intention of the design. However, it was soon recognized that it was too open to the comings and goings around it to fulfil this function effectively. The Mosaic is a beautiful work of art but is seen by some as somewhat distracting in a place of prayer. In addition to the built-in benches, the seating in this chapel consists of three afros, which arguably look out of place in the space. It is not known why the aumbry was moved to the side of the chapel some years ago: this puts it out of sight, but it cannot easily be restored to its original location because the box has been cut to accommodate the new position. However, this is something which could be addressed.

The failure of this Chapel to provide an intimate, safe space for prayer is a serious challenge for a cathedral which lacks any such places. Future developments need to bear this in mind, and seek to remedy it. Such a space is also needed for the Sacrament of Reconciliation – something which in a Cathedral dedicated especially to this ministry should offer as a regular part of its diet of worship, but which is only presently offered as routine during Holy Week. The Millennium Chapel offers a useful compromise in practice at present – the glass walls allow both confidentiality but also transparency for safeguarding purposes.

### **The Chapel of Christ the Servant**

Although used regularly in the past, this chapel is not currently a venue for services – due mainly to the difficult acoustics and, in winter months, the low temperatures. We are anxious that in any development plan these issues be addressed and the chapel brought back into regular liturgical use. The location it offers (originally looking out onto industrial Coventry and now across the university) is distinctive, in that it enables worshippers to experience a particularly close and prayerful connection with the surrounding world. It is also known as 'the Chapel of Industry' for this reason. It is used for the Eucharist on 'deacons' days', when prospective deacons are given an induction to the Cathedral prior to their ordination. It is occasionally used for exhibitions, for which it can be very

effective – the 2016 exhibition of Peter Marlow’s ‘The English Cathedral’ series of photographs worked very well in this space.

We have recently discussed re-designating this as the ‘Chapel of Reconciliation’, as part of a Cathedral wide development plan. To do so might offer a ‘destination’ for a pilgrimage route around the cathedral, and provide a focus to revisit plans to locate much of the original Cathedral stained glass in a fresh new design in the windows of this Chapel. For some, the whole Cathedral needs to be allowed to speak of reconciliation, so to single out any particular space in this way would be to betray our core calling – for others, the reverse is true.

As with the Chapel of Unity, this chapel may also only be accessed via steps – which, although shallow, are nonetheless inhibiting for wheelchair users.

### **The Millennium Chapel**

This chapel, located a little incongruously half way down the stairs between the main floor of the Cathedral and St Michael’s Gallery, was conceived as a space to install a memorial glass screen to record the names of benefactors (or their designated persons) associated with the Millennium. It is used regularly on Sunday mornings as a place for quiet prayer by the clergy and ministry team before our services. Its focus is the ‘Stalingrad Madonna’ – a striking icon which connects us to our history of reconciliation. The isolated and relatively private location of the Millennium Chapel makes it feel like ‘safe’ space – rather more so than the Chapel of Christ in Gethsemane – and it is a favoured location for ministers and chaplains wishing to talk and pray with individuals. It fulfills this function well enough, being both private and public.

We have at times considered using it as a focus for the Cathedral’s reconciliation ministry, perhaps renaming it the ‘Reconciliation Chapel’ and incorporating information about the Community of the Cross of Nails into the surrounding area and stairwell. However, the Chapel’s rather humble presentation – “totally out of keeping with the rest of the New Cathedral” as one observer has put it – suggests that this would be inappropriate for something as central as Reconciliation. The proposal has now been superseded by our thoughts around the Chapel of Christ the Servant.

### **Other spaces, including the old Cathedral shop**

Liturgical use is made of a number of other spaces in the building from time to time. The Lecture Hall in the undercroft was used for worship while the main Cathedral was being built, though is rarely used for this purpose today. The Chapter House was used for Cathedral Praise, the precursor of ‘Open’, and makes a good liturgical space – though is also rarely used in this way at present.

Perhaps most surprisingly, the old Spence Cathedral shop has recently been redesignated a space for ‘St. Clare’s at the Cathedral’, a new, informal and inclusive Christian community sheltering under the umbrella of the wider Cathedral ministry. The space has been imaginatively redecorated and houses both a shop and a space for community and worship – meeting, at present, on a Sunday lunchtime.

### **Making more of the journey**

As indicated throughout this ‘virtual tour’, there is much more to be done to draw out the message and transitional power of a journey through the building. This will be a major theme of the



development plan. In addition, we want to heighten awe on some occasions, intimacy on others. We want to enable those coming – whether as day visitors or intentionally for worship – to feel welcomed. And, most importantly, we want to engage them in their own journey of reconciliation, with themselves, with others, with the planet, with God.

The transition to open admission invites and requires us to revisit this journey, and resource has been budgeted to make the most of the mission opportunities that it offers. To recapitulate:

Each of the individual ‘rooms’ in the Cathedral has its own distinctive identity for visitors to appreciate. In addition, there are the connections and transitions between the different spaces to explore, with the aim of strengthening the sense of journey and helping those who come as visitors to absorb more of its message and so begin to experience the Cathedral as pilgrims. At what points do people enter the Cathedral campus? How are they guided from one place to another? Attention is often drawn to the journey from the poignancy of the Ruins to the resurrection hope of the New Cathedral. Are there ways in which this can be enhanced? Could visitors be encouraged to begin at a ‘gathering labyrinth’ in the Ruins? As mentioned earlier, would it be helpful to open up the central doors in the West Screen to make the New Cathedral more accessible? What might the potential re-designation of the ‘Chapel of Christ the Servant’ as the ‘Chapel of Reconciliation’ contribute to this sense of movement through the campus?

## 5. Other Issues to Consider

### Liturgy

As set out above, the Cathedral's liturgical diet is firmly based on the provisions of Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer. But the former was intended to serve as a liberating scaffold for worship rather than to constrain worshippers within a particular set of texts. Given Coventry Cathedral's focus on reconciliation, there is undoubtedly more we can do to express this theme more obviously in our regular liturgy. Our informal Sunday evening service 'Open' gives plenty of scope for liturgical innovation, but in the context of a small and not especially bookminded group: it is appropriate to extend this to other services as well. We would like to draw on the liturgies of other Anglicans and non Anglicans around the world who have developed their own distinctive liturgies, especially in relation to reconciliation in their own context (for example, New Zealand) and develop an online resource for reconciliation liturgy.

### Music

Under the able direction of Kerry Beaumont, the Cathedral choirs have improved very significantly over the last ten years. The size of the Nave means that the optimum number of choristers is between 20 and 25 of each gender, which our current recruitment methods have been able to achieve without great difficulty. Those who come to the end of their useful life as boy choristers now have the opportunity to join the back row as alto, tenor or bass 'Choral Scholars', which has proved to be an effective way of helping them to continue as members of the Cathedral community. Looking into the future, the pressure to recruit new adult Choral Clerks is going to intensify as current members reach retirement age and the ability to offer a more generous stipend would clearly assist in recruitment. Financial pressures have also led to a significant staffing gap in recent years. We are without an Assistant Director of Music and the Liturgical Department is without any administrative support. This has increased the Director of Music's workload to a point beyond sustainability and needs addressing if standards are to be maintained, let alone enhanced. We would also like to be able to offer the Director of Music the opportunity to take a sabbatical.

There are significant issues with the current location of the Song School, which should be more secure and less accessible to the general public. Occupying a site adjacent to the restaurant is far from ideal, not least because of the sound levels of the music played when the facility is open. Ideally, the choir needs separate robing areas for boys, girls, and adults, separate male and female washrooms, enough room for all the choir music library in one place, two rehearsal rooms (one big enough for 50 people and one enough for 30), office space with a piano, kitchen facilities nearby, and a place for parents to wait.

Touring is an important component of choir life – but we need the funds to support tour expenses and to pay for staff to administer them.

We also know that our organ, one of the finest in the UK, is in need of major refurbishment at an estimated cost in excess of £400,000. We are keeping our heads above water by means of incidental pieces of work as individual parts need repair or replacement – but this piecemeal approach is unsustainable in the longer term. In addition, the grand piano in the Nave is barely adequate and needs to be replaced with an instrument more in keeping with the scale of the building.

## **Vestments**

John Piper's vestments were designed specifically for the Cathedral and, apart from the gold set, continue to be used to this day. The Piper Gold vestments, deemed to be too fragile for liturgical use, were replaced by the 'Millennium Gold' set, presumably around 2000. Financial considerations have meant that it has not yet been possible to take up the suggestion that the Piper Gold set be re-made and brought back into use. As with other Cathedral art and architecture, improved education and interpretation for visitor and congregant alike in regard to the symbolism of the vestments would be worthwhile.

We were pleased to receive the 'Dresden Cope' (with matching mitre), designed and made by Terry Duffy which powerfully draws together the parallel stories of Dresden and Coventry. It was worn for the first time on Ash Wednesday in 2017 and adds to the richness of the interplay between our vestments and liturgy for reconciliation and penitence.

There is also scope for vestments to be commissioned and made specifically for use in the Ruins of the old Cathedral, reflecting the particular character of the space and taking into account the potential vagaries of the weather, which militate against using the vestments currently available to us when leading worship in the Ruins.

## **Lighting and Public Address Systems**

Although an extensive overhaul of the Cathedral's lighting system was undertaken in 2010, continued developments in technology mean that further desirable improvements are likely to be possible. Among the shortcomings of our present system are the complexity of setting up and operating the supplementary system (for concerts and other events), inadequate lighting at the west end of the Cathedral, and a general inability to adjust the level of the main Nave lighting.

The Cathedral's PA system was overhauled in 2011 and is generally thought to work well when amplifying speech. The amplification of contemporary worship music is a different matter, however, and additional equipment has to be brought in and set up to facilitate this when it is needed. We are fortunate to have been able to call on the skills of a particular individual, Gavin Holmes-Williams, who is now able to set up a system which enables this style of music to be heard at a sufficient volume, and with sufficient clarity, throughout the Nave. Were we to be in position to consider a more permanent installation of the necessary equipment, Gavin would be able to advise us.

## **Media and the Internet**

We are currently able to record the audio of sermons and addresses and make them available for download or streaming via the Cathedral website. Further stages to consider are a) the 24 hour live streaming of a video image of the Cathedral, b) live audio streaming of services and events, and c) video-recording and live video streaming of services and events. These provisions will be easier to achieve now that the Cathedral's wi-fi network extends to the Nave.

## **The Seat of the Bishop and the home of the Diocese**

The first section of the Cathedral's Constitution makes it clear that "The Cathedral Church is the seat of the Bishop. It is the home of the community of Christian faith from which the Episcopal ministry and mission to the Diocese proceed."

The Cathedral Statutes set out the bare bones of how this works out in practice (see Appendix 2) in relation to the Bishop's formal involvement – both directly and indirectly – in Cathedral services. His diary commitments preclude him from attending services and visiting the Cathedral on a regular basis. But it would be good to find ways of encouraging him and his staff to use the Cathedral more and to explore ways in which the Cathedral could be a more obvious conduit for his ministry to the Diocese and to the wider world. One way of bringing this about would be for the Bishop to use the Cathedral website as well as – or even in place of – the Diocesan website as his primary channel for communication.

We have also been considering how the Cathedral could find a way of building the Diocese into its fabric – for example, by engraving floor tiles with the names of all its parishes. Such a development would enhance the experience of Diocesan visitors 'coming home' to their Cathedral, and would add to the previously described practice of regularly remembering the Diocesan family in Cathedral prayers.

### **Multi-faith worship and prayer**

We are delighted to live and minister in the centre of a diverse city, in which the Cathedral is recognized by many as the spiritual heart of the city for those of many faiths and none. The Cathedral is called on to host acts of worship, celebration or commemoration which allow full participation by those from a variety of backgrounds. Our instinct has often been that the Ruins provide a more appropriate and hospitable space for such events, although there is no theological or legal reason to make this distinction (apart, perhaps, from the explicit context of brokenness). Any development plan should bear in mind this changing contemporary context, which would surely have impacted those concerned for the reconciling message of the New Cathedral when it was built.

### **The growing exhibitions programme and new Visual Arts Policy**

The growing programme of exhibitions has enhanced the liturgical space and at best complemented it. We are still finding our way into how to do this most effectively – both in content, and in the most appropriate and effective area of the Cathedral. An ideal example was the 'Stations of the Holocaust' exhibition which was launched in Coventry in Lent 2015, located in the Nave bays, and used (of course) for the liturgical stations of the cross on Good Friday – though under stiff competition from the rehearsal for the Bach Passion unavoidably taking place at the same time. The Cathedral is often offered pieces of art, with the hope that they will be on permanent display in or around the Nave. This can be difficult to negotiate, and the recently adopted Visual Arts policy gives strong and clear guidelines for how to approach such proposals.

### **The growing Events Programme and new Events Policy**

In recent years, the Cathedral has hosted a growing arts and events programme, with the aim of opening up the building to new audiences, enriching the cultural life of the city and generating income. This can be challenging for the liturgical use of the building, but can also enhance it. For example, the installation of 'the bridge' spiral sculpture at the rear of the Nave, and 'the moon'

above the chancel steps, in September 2017 drew new audiences into the building and drew forth responses of awe and wonder from a diverse group of people. However, other events can seem to challenge the sacredness of space – although such a response is often subjective. For many, the introduction of the Dining Club into the ruins, and in excess of 1000 people eating and drinking at tables stretching the length of the space is a wonderful experience of hospitality and welcome – even the Kingdom of God – whilst for others it is an aberration. The new Events Policy helps us to navigate these difficult decisions in a way that honours our threefold commitment to welcome, worship and reconciliation – whilst also supporting the need for resources.

## **5. Hearing the echoes of the past**

From the perspective of worship today, several themes from early days of the Cathedral (see Appendix 3) continue to resonate strongly, as this plan has already indicated. To begin with, it is undeniable that the building continues to exercise a powerful effect on those who experience it. Those who have worked and/or worshipped at the Cathedral for a while are often struck by the sense of awe which the Cathedral evokes in those who are new to it and especially the way in which people instinctively latch on to the journey from death to life portrayed by the relationship between the old and the new. This is fine as far as it goes – but, in Christian terms, such an encounter only tells half the story. The challenge for those who plan and organise worship is that the building is strong on communicating God’s majestic transcendence but is less easily able to speak of his comforting immanence.

The centrality of the Eucharist is highlighted by the scale and location of the high altar and the way it is lit by the Nave windows. These were deliberately set at an angle so that they cannot be seen from the west end of the Cathedral but are only revealed as those visiting or participating in worship are drawn towards the high altar and return to the world. This is one of the main ways in which Spence responded to the requirement that “The Cathedral should be built to enshrine the altar”. As a steady stream of not entirely successful experiments have demonstrated ever since, it has proved difficult to shift the perspective and bring the centre of Eucharistic action closer to the people. The solution of using a nave altar has been tried, though critics argue that this is not completely effective because it is not how the building was designed to function. It has often been claimed that ‘the building always wins’ but it must surely be possible for those with the necessary expertise to come up with an arrangement whereby the building and those seeking to use it today both win!

The story told by Coventry Cathedral’s buildings serves as a kind of parable. They stand as an invitation to reflect on the possibilities for transformation and renewal in the lives of those who come here. There is also a keen sense that worship is out on public display rather than being hidden away, that the interface between the church and the world is open. This is what has led us, in recent years, to hold services of Morning and Evening Prayer at the West Screen, in the full view of passers-by, some of whom are occasionally prompted to come and join the congregation.

Although Spence’s original plan for the West Screen to be moveable had to be abandoned, what was finally constructed serves as a window which both a) looks out onto the world with a clear focus on the Ruins and b) looks in from the world allowing those outside to see what is going on inside and so be invited to participate in it. The initial proposals for ‘Hallowing Places’ in the new Cathedral were set aside in favour of the ‘Tablets of the Word’. But the idea that worship should embrace the whole

of life rather than be restricted to the purely 'religious' remains as a vital strand in how worship is thought about and put into practice.

Our contemporary liturgy needs reexamining in the light of the particular strand in the Cathedral's DNA of our commitment to 'healing the wounds of history, learning to live with difference and celebrate diversity, and building a culture of peace'. As we continue the next stages of our life, we need to keep asking about the extent to which our buildings and the activities that take place within them – both sacred and secular – contribute to or detract from this three-fold understanding of our God-given mission. We need to ask not just ourselves, but also those who participate in our worship as visitors or regular members whether they are aware at all of these, and how they are impacted by them. For example, does Coventry Cathedral really 'heal the wounds of history'? Are we genuinely 'learning to live with difference and celebrate diversity'? Is a recognisable and contagious 'culture of peace' being built here?

In addition, the Cathedral has in recent years joined the wider Diocese in embracing an approach to the development of church life which focuses on eight 'essential qualities of healthy churches'. These are identified as empowering leadership, gift-based ministry, passionate spirituality, effective structures, inspiring worship, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism, and loving relationships. More work needs to be done on the question of whether our buildings help, hinder or are neutral in enabling these qualities to be displayed and to flourish.

## 6. Drawing the threads together

A liturgical plan needs to answer these questions:

- what do you want your building to say about the nature of the Christian Gospel?
- what does your building say about the liturgy?
- what does the liturgy say about your building?

As this plan has demonstrated, our buildings speak powerfully of the gospel but their message is not always heard nor understood. They speak of brokenness, but we do not listen as hard as we might. They frame our liturgy, but we do not always respond. Our liturgy speaks to our buildings in their original design, but our buildings have not been allowed to evolve for over fifty years. Now is the time to creatively and sensitively allow both our liturgies and our buildings to express what we want to say about the gospel and reconciliation as we approach our Diamond Jubilee, in 2022. The plan indicates in many places potential ways forward, in others it simply raises the question, leaving it for others (the clergy, the Chapter, the community) to respond.

The following is a summary of issues raised in the production of this plan, and how they will be addressed. It must be recognized that a document of this sort can only be a snapshot in time and will reflect ongoing discussions. Ongoing supervision of this action log will be taken, in the first instance, by the Liturgical Committee in liaison with the Precentor, and reported to Chapter. The list is indicative rather than exhaustive: liturgical life is ongoing and always in need of review and development. However, this indicates and sets a trajectory for progress.

Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Date
<b>CORE PURPOSE</b>			
Ensure our calling to Reconciliation is consistently reflected in our liturgy	Precentor and Canon for Reconciliation	Refreshed Liturgies for all Cathedral services, used both here and elsewhere in Diocese	November 2018
Consider whether our buildings reflect our core purpose	Senior leadership team and Fabric Advisory Committee	All community and visitors understand and are touched by our core purpose	May 2018 (with open admission) – and ongoing
<b>WORSHIP &amp; LITURGY</b>			
Develop worship patterns to stimulate congregational growth	Precentor and Canon Pastor	Congregational growth of 10% year on year	July 2018
New and imaginative ways of using all Cathedral spaces for	Precentor, Canon Pastor (and senior clergy team, with FAC)	Full liturgical use of space, especially Porch and Ruins	September 2018

liturgy			
Review patterns of congregational movement in Eucharist	Precentor and Head Verger	Improved distribution of communion, engagement with architecture	Easter 2018
Review layout and use of Chapels	Precentor with Canon Pastor, senior clergy team and Cathedral Architect	Chapels of Unity, Christ the Servant, Christ in Gethsemane, Lady and Millennium used to full advantage. Possible designation of Chapel of Reconciliation	Initially, with Open Admission (May 2018) and then within MSH
Explore means to video record and internet stream services	Precentor	Regular broadcast of Cathedral services, to stimulate attendance and grow our mission	
Increase staffing in Music and Liturgy	Precentor with Business Manager	Sustainable patterns of staffing in place, including liturgical assistant and assistant director of music	As part of ongoing budget development – hopefully by 2021
<b>GUESTS – VISITORS AND PILGRIMS</b>			
Develop new and imaginative ways of using all Cathedral spaces for all visitors	Canon Pastor and Visitor Services Manager, with Cathedral Architect	Full use of space for pilgrimage and prayer, including labyrinth. Special attention to space inside West Screen, alcoves by Tablets of the Word.	May 2018 (with open admission)
Refresh noticeboards and signage – and reduce visual clutter	Precentor, Canon Pastor and VSM (and Dean, FAC)	Refreshed, informative and attractive signage, including electronic displays	May 2018 (with open admission)
Create materials which will assist all visitors to pray	Canon Pastor with Visitor Services Manager (VSM)	People have tools available and use them which help them to pray	May 2018 (with open admission)
Train relevant staff in assisting visitors to pray			
Improve displays in Chapel of Unity	Precentor and Joint Council	Refreshed, informative and attractive displays	May 2018 (with open admission)



Open West Screen Central Doors on a regular basis when we are open	Precentor and Verger team	Doors open more often than not – both during liturgy and other times	May 2018 (with open admission)
<b>FABRIC &amp; FURNISHING</b>			
Address long standing fabric maintenance issues	Property Manager with Cathedral Architect	Recommendations of Quinquennial implemented in full	2021
Address other large scale developments (eg heating, toilets)	Business Manager with MSH board	Development Plan ('Making Space for Hope') completed, with view to making Cathedral fit for purpose	Within MSH timetable, c. 2025
Improve cleaning of nave and rest of precinct	Director of Property	General cleanliness better, less cluttered at Welcome desk. Larger scale cleaning jobs (windows / floors) completed on a regular basis	
Carry out Accessibility audit and implement findings	Business Manager, Director of Property with Consultant	Improved accessibility for everyone	Summer 2018 for audit and plan then within MSH
Review lighting, both during services and at other times. Ensure relevant staff know how to operate lighting appropriately.	Precentor and Head Verger (with FAC)	Lighting which enhances the liturgy, and the building (including Baptistry)	
Review (and reduce) seating pattern	Precentor and Head Verger	Seating patterns which foster community and free up space	Easter 2018
Trial permanent installation of Nave Altar	Precentor, Canon Pastor, FAC	Worship space improved for developing community whilst retaining grandeur	As part of Making Space for Hope
Review Chancel furniture and arrangement	Precentor, Dean and Cathedral architect	Improved environment for choral music and liturgy	In context of Development Plan, 'Making Space for Hope' (MSH)

Consider relocation of Song School	Cathedral Architect with Director of Music	All options explored within Making Space for Hope	Within MSH timetable
Restore Cathedral Organ and Pianos	Director of Music with Precentor and Head of Fundraising	Organ and pianos refurbished	
Conserve and restore of Piper vestments	Precentor with Head of Fundraising and FAC	Vestments conserved and in regular use	
Commission new vestments for outdoor use commissioned	Precentor, with FAC and Head of Fundraising	New vestments commissioned which are weather proof	
Upgrade Cathedral Sound system	Precentor, Head Verger, FAC	Ability to amplify band music	
<b>PUBLICITY AND PARTNERSHIPS</b>			
Increased use of social media to promote liturgical activities .	Precentor and Visitor Services Manager	Increased presence on social media [measure?]	July 2018
Improved publicity and marketing of Cathedral liturgy and visitor offer	Precentor, Canon Pastor, VSM	Improved awareness of Cathedral offer in city region and Diocese	May 2018 (with open admission)
Review Bishop's presence and engagement with Cathedral	Dean and Bishop	Increased presence and engagement of Bishop in Cathedral	May 2018 (with open admission)
Develop relationship with Holy Trinity Coventry	Dean, Precentor with Vicar of Holy Trinity	Refreshed and agreed programme of collaboration	June 2018

#### APPENDICES:

1. Canon law
2. Cathedral Constitution and Statutes: the Bishop and the Cathedral
3. Back to our roots
4. Learning from others (critical friends)
5. Current Pattern of services
6. Cathedral plan