

## CCN Thought for the Week for 7th December – a look back at 2018

On the eve of the final Cross of Nails presentation of this year, to the parish of Abbeydale and Millhouses in Sheffield, it's a chance to reflect on what an incredibly busy year this has been! With a record number of new partners joining (17), two major gatherings in Coventry, visits from royalty and from the Archbishop of Canterbury, celebrations and reflections as Coventry Diocese and Cathedral mark their 100th anniversary, and a new baby sibling for the CCN, Together for Hope, being born, it has been full of blessings. All this, as well as plenty of day-to-day enquiries and people coming to visit our reconciliation ministry.



Our royal visit came in January, when we were all incredibly honoured to welcome the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (William and Kate) to Coventry on a stunning sunny day. They visited the ruins and new cathedral with our three Canons, met the staff of the social enterprise who run the ever-popular Rising Café in the Cathedral undercroft, heard Canon Sarah speak and met the choir.

We welcomed our third Cuban member, the First Baptist Church of Matanzas, in February, thanks to lots of relationship building on the part of the US Board and specifically Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in North Carolina. This was a really special and very memorable service, with the whole congregation literally taking a hold of the Cross of Nails and its significance. April brought us three more partners: the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship whose relationship with us grew in part from Canon Paul Oestreicher's involvement; the Evangelisches Bildungswerk im Landkreis Esslingen, near Stuttgart, and St Clement Danes Church, the Central Church of the Royal Air Force, in central London, in the RAF's own 100th anniversary year. Canon Sarah then travelled to the Holy Land in May with our reconciliation interns to Tantur Ecumenical Institute to present them with a replacement Cross and meet with some other partners in the area.

In early May we welcomed Flodden Peace Garden in Northumberland, a small but wonderful space for peace and reflection near the site of the biggest battle between Scotland and England in the 1500's, and then we had a few months' breather before the Evangelisch Lutherische Innenstadtgemeinde Rostock and the Anhaltische Diakonissenanstalt Dessau joined us in the same weekend in September. October brought the Church of St Michael the Archangel, Southampton into the fold, and November a mobile Cross to the Diakonie Neuendettelsau, presented at Coventry while they were here on pilgrimage, and the worldwide Mothers' Union. Our final Cross this year will be presented very shortly (8th December) to the parish of Abbeydale and Millhouses in Sheffield – Canon Sarah's former parish!



Quite aside from these partners, five new ICON schools have also joined us; three in Coventry diocese, and two in Devon.

Events and welcoming people to Coventry have been a major focus this year, and the Cathedral has been looking at its best with the Chapel of Unity finally repaired and unveiled and the path around it open! Seventeen young people from Germany, Austria, the UK, USA, South Africa, Mauritius, India and Eastern Europe attended our International Youth Gathering, which was such an inspiring and uplifting five days for all connected with it, with some fantastic friendships forged. Its spirit lives on in

the brilliant daily videos which Tim Wagner made for us, viewable above and in our thought for the week gallery. Two months later, 65 people from right across our membership came to our International Members' Gathering in Coventry, again for several days, with many good conversations and connections had and made. Around these were a full pilgrimage in May and shorter pilgrimage visits from Breukelen in the Netherlands, and Neuendettelsau in Germany, and various other short visits from contacts near and far.

The Cathedral and Diocese's 100th anniversary has been a major focus for other parts of both organisations this year, and we've been really pleased to be a part of it, and for Reconciliation to have such a raised profile. Welcoming Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, back for an entire weekend of Diocese celebration in early May was wonderful, and it was really good that Flodden Peace Garden's Cross (picture above) was able to be blessed by him in a major Cathedral service when he was here. It was also during this weekend that the Cathedral was once again able to throw open its doors to the public for free, something which Dean John has been working towards for some time and which with sustained donations and income from other areas we hope can continue going forward, particularly as the Cathedral is such a major focus for Coventry's forthcoming year as UK City of Culture in 2021.

Later in May we launched Together for Hope, the CCN's largely identical in scope but secular/multifaith sister organisation, a major development in our partnership building at Coventry and the climax of several years of planning and discussion. Faithful Friends, a group of various different faith leaders in Sandwell in Birmingham, the first partner, joined at the time of the launch, in a hugely inspiring and moving multifaith service in the new Cathedral, with a brand new 'Pledge for Transformation' written for the occasion and into the future as a secular / multifaith prayer in place of the Litany of Reconciliation.

Both the CCN and Together for Hope have a sizeable list of partners interested in joining in 2019, and both Alex Albans (Together for Hope Project Officer) and I look forward to continuing our growing ministry in the coming months. In the CCN's case, this is greatly helped by the hard work, and in some instances very gratefully-received funding to Coventry, of the CCN Boards in Germany, the USA, South Africa, the Netherlands, Central & Eastern Europe, Asia, Canada and, very newly, the UK!

Our interns in 2017-18 were a particularly finely-tuned team, who have been instrumental in allowing us to deliver all this through their support, ideas and good humour – massive thanks to Stacy, Maite and Cerys! And welcome to Jack, Ricarda, Basha and Stacy for this year.

And as we come to the end of such a fulfilling but exhausting year, we are losing our Canon for Reconciliation to her new role as Vicar of Holy Island in Northumberland! Sarah has held on steady course a reconciliation ministry team that has been navigating a number of particularly major personal challenges this year, none of which seem to have impacted on the work that we have been called to do here in Coventry; but keeping us all together and in one piece has been no mean feat, and we will miss her so very much! But above all, we all wish her all the best in her new calling, and look forward to giving her an appropriate send-off during her last weekend here, 14th-16th December.



With our blessings as we look forward to 2019,

Alice Farnhill, CCN Project Officer

## CCN Thought for the Week for 30th December – a look back at 2019



2019 has seen some change in Coventry and a healthy mix of new partners joining the CCN and ICONS!

Dresden gained a 5th partner in the Sophienkirche Busmannkapelle in February. The Busmannkapelle, designed and built on the foundations of the original chapel of the same name which formed part of the bomb-damaged and subsequently dismantled original Church, is a truly unique memorial to war and destruction, as well as a very powerful and thought-provoking building-artwork, in the very heart of the city.

In June, two new partners in Canada came on board: the stunningly located Sorrento Centre, a peace and retreat centre in rural British Columbia, and Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria, Vancouver Island – connected to us historically, but now a fully-fledged member with its own Cross of Nails. Shortly after this, in July we welcomed our very first hospital chaplaincy – Guys’ and St Thomas’ NHS Trust on central London’s south bank. We were thrilled to have many of their chaplains – of various different faiths – here on pilgrimage with us in May for what became our first ever interfaith pilgrimage, and which led to the chaplaincy joining our new interfaith sister network Together for Hope too, as its second partner.

Autumn was again a busy time for new partners, with one of Germany’s foremost churches, the Ludwigskirche in Saarbrücken, itself very heavily damaged during the war 75 years to the day previously; a youth ministry, Evangelisches Jugendwerk Bezirk Öhringen, in southern Germany; the historic Pauluskerk Breukelen in the Netherlands; and Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church, in Houston, Texas.



We celebrated our first Cross of Nails Sunday on the final Sunday in September, with a number of partners incorporating celebrating the CCN into their morning services across the world, particularly in Germany; we hope to run this each year as a chance for partners to know they are praying and celebrating our network together, concurrently on one special day each year.

Here in Coventry we said goodbye to Stacy – who arrived as a Nelson and left as a Taylor! – after her two years of input, support and friendship with us as our US intern. We’re delighted she’s still in Coventry and we can see her from time to time. And we said hello and welcome to Hanna-Lotta Lehmann, our German intern for this year, who has got well stuck in to her role across reconciliation, schools, events and tourism in her first few months. In between all of the various changes the loyal services of our wonderful volunteer Richard Parker has kept us welcoming people in German when we have needed to.

Another CCN partner Board to very much welcome this year too is the CCN Canada Board under Dean Shane Parker from Ottawa– who spent a very rich two weeks with us in Coventry in May and who helped heavily with our interfaith pilgrimage. These networks are key to the CCN making a difference to partners!



Two more key new arrivals at the start of this year have been Jen Jenkins, ICONS Manager, who is growing and strengthening the ICONS network, working from the Cathedral's schools team. During her time here our 50th ICON School – Bury – joined us, one of five UK schools to join this year. And Mark Simmons, Dean's Advisor for Reconciliation Ministry, has been with us for this past calendar year to manage the team and its activity and other partnerships day-to-day part-time. He also – wearing an entirely different, voluntary hat – chairs the now year-old UK and Ireland CCN Board, which is making a real difference to connectivity.

There have been a number of poignant war anniversaries this year, not least in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, in March and in Nürnberg in November, as well as in Saarbrücken (above) in October.



Also, in September, in Darmstadt, where on this occasion one of our UK partners, and a key one in this context, St Clement Danes, the Church of the Royal Air Force, attended on Coventry's behalf. We so very much welcome the chance for partners to support one another through the CCN network, which is based on Coventry, but which enables links to be forged around and through Coventry's example. And in Coventry, more broadly, we were visited so memorably by both the Knife Angel and by Where Light Falls.

As we look forward to a very good number of new partners again in 2020, in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, central and south Africa, and from two countries new to our partnerships – Belgium and Norway – we are also seeking to focus how we can best use our unique network in reconciling the themes of our time – not least Brexit, and its many and varied current and long term effects; but also the global environment crisis, and our shared need to act, and make a difference; and how we become a network that better engages young people. Expect to hear more from us on those very soon!

Alice Farnhill, CCN Project Officer

## Thought for the Week for 18th December – a look back on 2020 for the CCN



It's been a year unlike anything we've known before. The key word for it probably is 'online'; as for so many others, everything's gone this way this year for the CCN!

To look on the positive side however, it's forced us to take the plunge into areas that we already knew we needed to be addressing: how to bring Coventry to others, who don't have the means to come to Coventry? How to connect meaningfully partners across large distances in such a dispersed network?

The earliest venture down this road was early in lockdown, in March, in the form of the German CCN's Friday litany prayers on Zoom, which quickly became a source of connection and fellowship each week for partners far beyond Germany's own borders. It's been a joy to connect with partners this way, and such good news that beyond lockdown the litany became monthly and still continues on the first Friday of the month at midday CET (next one on Friday 8th January).

At Coventry we held our first online pilgrimage in October, taking place on Zoom across three afternoons, and we were so encouraged to have 19 pilgrims from 5 countries and both sides of the Atlantic. There was much discussion and sharing of ideas, not least on the subject of race and the CCN



in a year when, in large part triggered by events in the USA, this has been tragically foremost in people's minds. The group is due to meet regularly online going forward, where circumstances permit, and we shall certainly be running more online pilgrimages each year going forward, alongside our traditional in-person pilgrimages (dates for next year here).



The 80th anniversary of the Coventry bombing took place this way as well, via video messages between Berlin and Coventry, via Zoom virtual meetings, a thought-provoking reflection on the wider relevance of the anniversary this year, and via the Cathedral's online service broadcast at 7pm, the time of the bombing. Earlier, CCN partners from both the UK and German boards joined up together via Zoom in a first 'virtual' linkage of the two boards; a significant moment. Each of the lead partners

from the CCN boards around the world recorded a really special shared litany of reconciliation as well, used in the anniversary service.

At Coventry many staff were furloughed (put on government paid leave), and a few very sadly lost their jobs entirely in a resulting restructure. Jen Jenkins, our ICONS project manager, sadly, also, left us to work for the Coventry DBE. Our internship was affected, as well – we had to say goodbye, mostly virtually, to Hanna-Lotta months early, in March, and while we've been delighted to welcome Josefine in September her internship has hitherto been very different; part-time only, with us, because of the Covid logistical circumstances we find ourselves in, and long-distance for much of the time.

Before Covid took hold, in January our ICONS Ambassadors programme was launched, training 30 primary-aged pupils from 5 local ICONS in peace building and reconciliation, so that they could lead on positive change in their own schools. Sadly, only two of the planned four sessions could take place before the pandemic put a long-term interruption on the programme. We had several schools poised to receive their Crosses of Nails in April and May of this year, but sadly St John's CE Academy in Coventry and Brailes CE Primary in Warwickshire are having to wait a little longer to receive their crosses (as are other CCN prospective partners). Schools are still engaging in the process of finding out about and becoming ICONS and we look forward to more schools joining us in 2021.

Just the weekend before lockdown restrictions began to take hold, we had a physical get-together meeting with our international board, the lead partners from each CCN geographical cluster area around the globe. This was a great two days of overview and sharing ideas, and arising from both that meeting and successive regular ones on zoom, we have a new CCN Governance Document, which sets out how the CCN works and interconnects. We spoke also of plans for another international gathering and youth gathering in 2022, and 2020 notwithstanding we are very much planning for these still – more information forthcoming in spring 2021. We also focussed quite strongly on interfaith engagement and the CCN's still very small sister network Together for Hope – which we hope to be able take forward much more boldly in 2021.



I think if we were to award a prize for resilience this year it would be to Kasta Dip, our CCN Asia representative, who became caught in early Covid restrictions in Germany when he attended meetings there en route home from our CCN international board meeting and only made it home back to India in the summer. We absolutely salute your

months of fortitude, Kasta – and we so value the time you and all the other international reps gave us in attending.

We've had new partners join, too (albeit in much smaller numbers than a typical year) and from new countries: Bergen Cathedral Community and Holy Trinity Pro-Cathedral Brussels joined at the beginning of the year, as did Southwark Cathedral in London – we're thrilled to have them all on board. And in September, the Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Demmin in Germany joined us, about whose story Dean John preached movingly in Coventry Cathedral the following Sunday, CCN Sunday – which, as so often this year, was for many an online service but on this occasion led beautifully by our UK & Ireland board partners in a prepared video.



We know this has been an incredibly tough year for everyone everywhere, that will leave scars behind it long past the chimes that ring in the new year (where this is even possible). We're set to head into a recession that is the worst of any of our lifetimes – coupled with, in the UK, for very many of us, the immense sadness that is Brexit in just a few weeks. Things are, and will be, really tough. We continue to be incredibly grateful for the CCN ministry that our friends in the German CCN and USA CCN enable through their financial support, and for their spreading the word about the CCN more broadly – which this year has led to the CCN proudly winning the 10,000-euro ecumenical prize from the Catholic Academy in Bavaria (presentation delayed until 2021).



Early this year at Coventry the Cathedral's West Screen was broken into, and one of our precious, irreplaceable John Hutton angels was smashed. The screen will never again be quite what it was, and this has desperately saddened so many. What happens next is still to be confirmed. Yet we end this year with a fabulous winter ice rink in the cathedral ruins, created and sponsored by Coventry City of Culture 2021, a year of cultural celebration which starts in May 2021, as one of the pre-events, and a chance to bring real joy (and a few happy but sore muscles, as I can testify) to local people this winter.

With our blessings and sincerest thanks for all your support and endeavours this very tough year, and may this Christmas bring you hope, peace, and rest.

Alice Farnhill, CCN Co-ordinator

## CCN Thought for the Week for 20th December – a round-up of 2021

**Sometimes it feels like a good portion of 2021 has been picking up on what was delayed from 2020 as we all continue to journey as best we can through the Covid-19 pandemic.**



Earlier this month the ecumenical prize awarded to the CCN by the Catholic Academy of Bavaria was one such: a major prize, bringing with it 10,000 euros, bestowed upon the CCN for its work across borders, particularly in the era of Brexit when such international partnership is all the more important. Dean John and Bishop Christopher travelled to Munich to receive the prize, at a ceremony delayed by 12 months: we're so very grateful and honoured and plan to spend the money on resources for youth ministry next year and beyond.

Three of this year's new partners had also waited a good deal of time for their Cross of Nails ceremonies: two being the dispersed community the Third Order, Society of St Francis and the Wageningen ecumenical prayer group in the Netherlands. Both had sent individuals to come to a Coventry pilgrimage in 2019; the Wageningen group indeed had taken part in a BBC Sunday Worship service recorded at Coventry during their pilgrimage in November 2019. The TSSF received their Cross of Nails at our CCN Sunday service at the end of September in Coventry (pictured), and Dean John travelled to Wageningen to present the ecumenical prayer group's the following month.

The first of these three, the St-Johnannis-Kirchengemeinde Plauen, went ahead one year on from the 75th anniversary of the town's destruction, in April, but very sadly without representation from Coventry, very unusually, due to travel restrictions; on this occasion Oliver Schuegraf, Chair of the German Board, presented two Crosses – one to stay in situ and one to be shared among the community and spend time at different sites. However Dean John was present (pictured) at St Luke in the City, Liverpool's ceremony in May on their own 80th anniversary of their destruction – a very wet occasion in a church building open to the skies, not unlike Coventry's own ruins.



There have also been new partners joining our ICONS network – read the ICONS newsletter updates here. There is a new ICONS assistant too, Jess Weale – welcome, Jess!

We've continued, really by necessity, our format of online pilgrimage this year, although we do hope and plan to return to in-person pilgrimage again next October 2022. In April we were honoured to have Ruth Harvey from the Iona Community and Brian Crisp from Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in North Carolina leading discussion on how we pick up from a year (as it was then) of Covid-19, and in October we held a special pilgrimage session exploring the CCN's role on the eve of Cop26, with Paul Bodenham from Green Christian and the TSSF, and Michael Shapcott from the Sorrento Centre in Canada, to help us discuss. Both occasions were so very thought-provoking, and we are planning follow-up sessions to the environmental session for March 2022, for which the Deep Waters online programme, run by the organisation Borrowed Time, over eight weekly evenings will prove a sound introduction: the sessions start in January and we'd highly recommend them.

One very good sign this year has been the return of our intern programme more in the form we used to know it – and our intern flat at the Cathedral is back with interns in residence! This is such a positive sign to many of us, and we've been delighted to welcome Lara and Theresa (pictured), both from Germany via our long connection with our CCN partner and volunteer placement agency ARSP. ARSP this year held a big online celebration of 60 years of connection to Coventry, and we're so grateful for our partnership with them. We hope to expand the intern programme back to including a North American intern in the next year or two, and remain very grateful to our German and North American partners for supporting these internships financially.

Another very good sign has been the continued existence of the monthly litany of reconciliation on zoom every first Friday at midday CET, started and still led by the CCN German Board. Many very much value this chance to get together for 30 minutes each month to pray. A welcome addition to this has been the arrival of a North American zoom litany as well, generally on the third Tuesday, at midday US East Coast time, led by the CCN US Board. All are welcome to either – contact me here if you'd like the link.

And this has been a very big year indeed for Coventry. The Cathedral has been central to the City of Culture roll-out, and the location of so much of the activity and cultural output (including the ice rink, returned currently to the ruins for a second year). At the Cathedral we have loved the Broken Angel installation (pictured) and we look forward to the contemporary War Requiem at the end of January, and more. And we were pleased to take part in the FAITH weekend activities with other faiths across Coventry in September, staged by the RSC and City of Culture, during which our Pledge for Transformation, the 'Litany' of Together for Hope, played a prominent role.



And so to next year: and again, doing things a little differently as the pandemic continues to demand flexibility of us all even into a third year. Extending the online communications that work well for our international board and online pilgrimage, we shall try an online approach for both our CCN Members' Gathering and Youth Gathering: sadly, it seems it's just not the environment just yet to bring together large numbers of multiple nationalities, much as many of us crave this. While offering less physical fellowship, in other ways it also expands our reach and accessibility. Save the dates 22nd-29th May for our online CCN Gathering, still very much in the planning but which will include the Cathedral's 60th anniversary celebration on 25th May, and look out for confirmed dates for our online Youth Gathering a little later in the summer. For the latter event we are much looking forward to working with the Student Christian Movement, the first of four new partners, so far, to join the CCN in 2022 on 12th January, with others planning to join the ICONS network too.

Obviously there are so many different projects and ministries being run across the CCN's partners, and endeavours by teams of partners, as we see across the various different regional boards within the CCN. We've been highlighting a CCN partner daily on our Facebook page during Coventry's City of Culture year, from last May until this one coming, which helps us focus on just what a fantastic range of partners the network holds, and we're so very grateful for the time, assistance and input from across the network on a daily basis.

And if the pandemic shows us anything at all, it's that no matter our differences, this situation affects us all. The Difference Course, developed by the Archbishop's Reconciliation Ministry at Lambeth Palace and the Diocese of Coventry, is now several years in the running and is available to run in your own community, with free and highly praised training for running it online. Do consider it for your own organisation. And those looking for guidance in reconciliation leadership might wish to consider the Journey of Hope programme: recruiting by January 31st for its third cohort, and open to UK, Ireland and North American candidates, the programme runs across six weekends over six months, a mixture of online and in person, and is very highly recommended by previous participants.

We look forward to a 2022 that, while perhaps not fully back to 'normal', will be very much closer to it than of late, particularly as Covid strengthens its hold for another winter. We very much look forward at Coventry, too, to a new Canon for Arts and Reconciliation, the Revd Mary Gregory, starting with us in the spring. Meantime, we wish you all a Merry Christmas, and a New Year filled with renewed hope for the future.

Alice Farnhill, CCN Co-ordinator