

Thought for the week archive 2021

Contents

CCN Thought for the Week for 6th January – the treasures of Epiphany	3
CCN Thought for the Week for 15th January – the Right Rev. Dr. Logan McMenamie, Diocese of British Columbia	4
CCN Thought for the Week for 22nd January – the UN Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons becomes law.....	5
CCN Thought for the Week for 29th January – the Revd Dr Chris Hodder, RAF Chaplains’ Branch.....	6
CCN Thought for the Week for 5th February – Hans Jørgen Morvik, Bergen Cathedral Congregation .	7
CCN Thought for the Week for 12th February – Josefine Ufkes on her distance-internship with Coventry this year	9
CCN Thought for the Week for 25th February – a new Cross of Nails for the Augustinerkloster in Erfurt, Germany.....	10
CCN Thought for the Week for 13th March – a new, second Cross for Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg	11
CCN Thought for the Week for 19th March – Sarah Bourne, St Mary’s, Banbury.....	13
CCN Thought for the Week for 1st April – the Very Reverend John Witcombe	14
CCN Thought for the Week for 15th May – welcome, Coventry UK City of Culture year!	15
CCN Thought for the Week for 21st May on the Covid-19 situation in India – Kasta Dip, India Peace Centre.....	16
CCN Thought for the Week for 28th May – “This Feather continues to fly” by the Right Rev. Logan McMenamie.....	17
CCN Thought for the Week for 12th June – limited edition Cross of Nails necklaces	19
CCN Thought for the Week for 23rd July – some thoughts on ‘Community’	20
CCN Thought for the Week for 30th July – Walking for Peace	21
CCN Thought for the Week for 13th August – Farewell from Josefine Ufkes, our reconciliation intern	22
CCN Thought for the Week for 10th September – Remembering 9/11 twenty years on	24
CCN Thought for the Week for 17th September – Robert Childers and Stacy Nelson discuss Coventry and its inspiration	25
CCN Thought for the Week for 24th September and CCN Sunday – the Third Order, Society of St. Francis	25
CCN Thought for the Week for 2nd October – What is the CCN’s role in these times of environmental crisis?.....	26
CCN Thought for the Week for 16th October – the CCN and Environmental Crisis: introducing our speakers for 28th October	27
CCN Thought for the Week for 22nd October – the CCN prayer community Wageningen, our newest partner	28

CCN Thought for the Week for 29th October – on the eve of Cop26, the CCN and its role in tackling the environmental crisis.....	29
CCN Thought for the Week for 3rd December – a Journey of Hope for all of us	30
CCN Thought for the Week for 11th December – CCN awarded the Ecumenical prize of the Catholic Academy of Bavaria	31
CCN Thought for the Week for 20th December – a round-up of 2021	32
CCN Thought for the Week for 24th December – the Very Reverend John Witcombe	34

CCN Thought for the Week for 6th January – the treasures of Epiphany



As we ease into a new year, it seems the challenges of the past one are by no means over, and if anything are, for now, increasing. This is true particularly for those in our community which are first and foremost not worship or teaching organisations, but primarily connectors and providers of relief, often through practical opportunity. As outreach organisations they're not generally somewhere you can pay a visit to; their work is out in the field. Some rely very heavily on fundraising and more distant

relationship-building. 2020 and its aftermath has been a desperately long journey. No two are the same; some are internationally-known; some are very small: each has its unique calling.

This epiphany season, as we mark the time when the Magi came to the baby Jesus with gifts, we'll be seeking to shine a small spotlight on these, our own gifts: these CCN partner charities across the world, each making such a difference in terrible times. From tomorrow, each weekday over the next few weeks we'll provide a brief focus on one of them on our facebook page. Please support these organisations where you can, as we face this new year together.

With our blessings,

Alice Farnhill, CCN Co-ordinator

CCN Thought for the Week for 15th January – the Right Rev. Dr. Logan McMenamie, Diocese of British Columbia



Pilgrimage is the kind of journeying that marks just this move from mindless to mindful, soulless to soulful travel. The difference may be subtle or dramatic; by definition it is life-changing.

Phil Cousineau

The journey of the Magi is a life-changing one. It is one that takes them to a different land, with different customs and people. It proves in many ways to be a dangerous land. In spite of this they leave changed through their experience of the divine.

On the west coast of Canada, off the mainland of British Columbia, there lives an indigenous people who have a history going back some 10,000 to 15,000 years or more. They are known as the Kwakwaka'wakw and their language is Kwak'wala.

There is a phrase in Kwak'wala – wila' mola' ma' nux, – which means we are travelling together. It is the understanding that we are on a journey where we need one another and where we can discover new insights into ourselves and others. The Kwakwaka'wakw have survived colonization, residential schools and the banning of their culture, language and traditions. When the Anglican Church came it failed to identify the Creator in this culture, language and tradition. Along with the government of the day the church attempted to destroy all of their beliefs. But the Kwakwaka'wakw are a proud and faith-filled people and many years later have restored their teaching, language and culture. One of the people instrumental in this journey was Chief Frank Nelson whose traditional name was IXULTH TLALADZI TLALILITHLA from the Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw first nation. He took his people on a journey that would bring healing and reconciliation with those who hurt them.

Frank was a survivor of the residential school process. When he went to the Truth and Reconciliation hearings he brought along a little brown suitcase that he had had with him when he entered the school in 1954. He took it with him to the hearing as it allowed, he said, his silenced and wounded child within to cry and ask “why”. The suitcase remained shut, hiding his shame and anger, but, after telling his story he was able to open the case and say: Come out little boy, it's safe now.

Through tribal journeys which began on the west coast of British Columbia Frank offered journeys for others to find healing in their own culture and tradition. Tribal journeys take place in large ocean-going canoes up and down the coast helping many indigenous people to find healing and restoration as individuals and communities. Ultimately, the journey aids them to take steps to heal the wounds of the past. Frank was affectionately known as the “Father of Tribal Journeys”.

Chief Frank Nelson was able to help many heal the wounds of history. He lived with difference, celebrated diversity, and took us a long way as we sought to build a culture of peace.

As the church re-engaged with the indigenous people through their culture, traditions and language they came into a new relationship with them. They saw this relationship not as an end but as a journey. Some indigenous leaders remained indifferent and angry towards the church. Others accepted the invitation to go on a journey of healing, truth-telling and reconciliation. For the church it was a journey

to a different place with a different culture, a different tradition and a different experience of the divine. However, it was and continues to be a journey that is life-changing for those who have the courage to take it. They discover the Creator in a new and different way.

On your journey, who are those who invite you to see yourself differently, to see the world in a new way, and to leave you changed, as you continue on your journey?

Frank Nelson in spite of his pain had a calling to become an Anglican Priest. He never realized that calling. Frank died all too suddenly in 2015. That same year he became the first indigenous person in The Diocese of British Columbia to become a Lay Canon.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Logan McMenamie

Retired Bishop

Diocese of British Columbia (Diocese of Islands and Inlets)

CCN Thought for the Week for 22nd January – the UN Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons becomes law



Today, 22 January 2021, sees the UN Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons come in as international law.

The Treaty bans the developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, stockpiling, transferring, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons. It also makes it illegal to assist or encourage anyone to engage in these activities.

This Treaty has been ratified by 51 nations, and another 86 have signed it. The 'nuclear powers' have not signed it and NATO is opposed to it, but the fact that today it is part of international law reflects years of work by organisations and individuals around the world. Prominent among these have been faith groups. A 2018 resolution in the Church of England General Synod overwhelmingly asked the UK Government to engage with the Treaty, and that has been backed by a recent letter from both Archbishops and many Bishops. Many denominations have issued statements calling for the elimination of these weapons of mass destruction.

It is interesting that this week also see the 75th anniversary of the first UN General Assembly. Meeting in London the Assembly's first resolution was:

1. the 'control of atomic energy to ensure its use only for peaceful purposes,' and
2. 'the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.'

The memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were both recent and although it has taken all those decades to put this into international law, from today that is a fact.

There is still much work to do, especially in our countries that hold nuclear weapons, but it is good to remember that previous treaties prohibiting chemical and biological weapons helped to stigmatise them in the minds of the public. This should now be taking place with nuclear weapons.

So while today we pause to celebrate this achievement, our campaigning to make the world free from these weapons of mass destruction continues.

I was much encouraged this week by the Right Rev. Dr. Martin Fair, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, when he said:

“At times, as we seek great changes – dismantling apartheid, tackling global poverty – we can become disheartened and start to think that we’ll never make any difference, that we’re ‘whistling in the wind’. The signing of TPNW into international law is a significant moment in this journey and should be all the encouragement we need to continue the work to eventually see total elimination.”

And so after the ringing of the bells, including Coventry’s peace bell, today ends, the work will continue.

Sue Claydon, Chair, Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.

CCN Thought for the Week for 29th January – the Revd Dr Chris Hodder, RAF Chaplains’ Branch

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

Genesis 1.1-4

The Falkland Islands are a windy, often cold, and definitely wild place, of outstanding natural beauty, and of course, a contested site. I recently completed a short tour of the Falkland Islands as an RAF Chaplain. As I was there from March-August 2020, my time there overlapped with the anniversaries of countless milestones in the conflict there that was fought from 2nd April – 14th June 1982.

It was a strange tour, because an outbreak of COVID-19 on the Islands had to be managed, and in that time was defeated through disciplined measures, although the global pandemic remains a threat, and one which is especially sharp because of their nature as a remote location where hospital facilities are limited.

The measures designed to combat COVID-19 meant that many of the traditional ceremonies connected with the conflict were cancelled for the year, but we did mark the end of the war with respectful socially distanced ceremonies in Stanley, and Mount Pleasant Complex, which is the HQ for the British Forces in the South Atlantic Islands (pictured).

What is our pastoral task in all of this, as agents of peace and reconciliation? I know some would feel there is a danger that ceremonies of this kind could run the risk of glorifying war – the very opposite of what we would want to stand for. Or, perhaps, resemble a strange 21st century version Shintoism

where we uncritically venerate our forebears, but without ethical debate or thinking about the contemporary context.

As a Christian minister, part of our call is the pastoral task of bringing order into chaos – a central motif of the opening of Genesis, where God begins the creative task of separating and organising – light and darkness, waters, sky, and earth – and creating and naming, giving purpose and making meaning from what has been made. When we organise gatherings around contested events for communities who may still be in pain, part of our task is to attend to these kinds of things within people with memory, thanksgiving and hope.

Memory, because remembering with humility and honesty, but also honouring those who suffered or died is important, not to glorify war but to acknowledge the reality and cost of it, and because those who do not learn from the past are doomed to repeat the same mistakes in the future. The Falklands, like any conflict, is a patchwork of individuals' small moments and memories that for them are often big and defining moments, which can need care in their handling. Thanksgiving, because we are grateful for peace where it has come at a price, and for those who have lost their lives. And hope because whatever we do in these moments does need also to look for the future, and imagine and hold out for a world where conflict has been replaced by reconciliation – even if, as in the Falkland Islands like elsewhere, reconciliation is not an easy word even now.

The Gospel of Christ challenges us to imagine our stories in the middle of a bigger story where God places our moments into a cosmic narrative of creation, reconciliation and redemption. We may not always easily imagine how that will be worked out in our time – but the arc of scripture, beginning in the order out of chaos we see at the beginning of creation, dares us to believe that we can be a part of that ministry, and that it can.

The Revd Dr [Flt Lt] Chris Hodder

Chaplaincy Team, RAF College Cranwell

The Revd Dr Chris Hodder is a member of the RAF Chaplains' Branch, which in turn is a member of the Community of the Cross of Nails through St Clement Danes Church in London. RAF Chaplains are committed to encouraging reflection about the importance of peace, reconciliation, and ethical decision making amongst all those who work in UK Defence.

CCN Thought for the Week for 5th February – Hans Jørgen Morvik, Bergen Cathedral Congregation

A year ago, just before the pandemic started reaping big changes, the five churches of Bergen Cathedral Congregation joined the CCN, our first partner in Norway. Here they give us their perspectives on nearly a year of Covid-19.

I suppose everyone in Norway is tired of Covid, and wants to speed up the vaccination program. “Why do we have to queue up with EU? We have money enough to buy vaccination ourselves,” “Vaccination nationalism” has been increasing during the past month, and not only in Norway, I understand. It’s as dangerous as any other form of nationalism, and something we as churches must stand up against.



Norway is a remote country, sparsely populated with people who normally trust both each other and the government. That has given us a much lighter burden to carry through the pandemic than most other countries. Schools and universities have been closed periodically. So have shops and restaurants. Organized sports and other leisure activities has also been closed. But we have not had any massive outbreaks of Covid. A few hundred new cases are detected every day, but the total of Covid-19 victims in hospital care has never exceeded 200 for the whole country. And we've had fewer than 600 reported deaths until now.

Knowing this, many people ask; "Why do the churches have to be closed? Why can we visit the shopping mall, but not our church?" We have to answer that although not every restriction seems logical, there is a reason for it. Outbreaks of Covid have not happened more than once in a church, but have done several times in the houses of other religions. It may not be fair, but we must accept the restrictions in solidarity with our friends from other denominations and religions, and stand together to fight the pandemic.

The same solidarity must be shown when it comes to vaccination. The restrictions I'm tired of, will not be lifted just because I am vaccinated. Not because my family, my friends, and all the people I normally meet are either. To get back to a more normal life it doesn't help if "Norway (or any other country) comes first". It doesn't help if our trade partners, and the countries we want to travel to, or have



visitors from, still must keep harsh restrictions. The most important lesson the pandemic has given us, is how much we depend on each other: friends, neighbours, countries.

For me, this is an example of what CCN is about; Solidarity. Praying and caring for each other. And hopes for a better future. "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6.2)

Hans Jørgen Morvik

Rector of Bergen Cathedral Congregation

CCN Thought for the Week for 12th February – Josefine Ufkes on her distance-internship with Coventry this year

My experiences of living and working as an intern for the CCN during lockdown



When I started my internship for the CCN and Coventry Cathedral last September, I was still able to travel within the country and therefore to commute from London, my home in England, to Coventry for two days a week by train. Unfortunately, this changed quite quickly due to the increasing numbers of COVID-19 infections worldwide, as late summer and its warm weather left us for a more uncomfortable autumn and winter. Hence since November, I have continued to support the work for the CCN remotely, as so many others had to work from home as well.

Every Wednesday, I look very much forward to my weekly check-in with Alice, my supervisor in Coventry and coordinator of the CCN, which I now only get to see via Zoom. Through our chats, I feel more connected to the Cathedral and the work there, even from a distance. She always makes sure that I am doing well during these times, gives me the latest update about how things are proceeding at the Cathedral and for the team and provides me with tasks to help her with. Lately, I have been able to take part in several meetings, like the Coventry pilgrimage – online this year, yet still very enriching and connecting – or staff- and board meetings. This way, I can get an impression of what working for and with the lovely people in the CCN means. Although I have only met most people related to this work via Zoom, I still get the feelings of familiarity and joy whenever I recognize a friendly face on my screen. An idea of how widely spread the network is I did get by working through the CCN's partners and friends lists and their websites to update our member lists. I was amazed by the diversity in countries, languages, forms of communities and denominations that all come together in the idea of reconciliation and peacemaking, each in its individual way.

For me, another important part of my understanding and learning about reconciliation, the CCN and Coventry's story has been the reading I have done about it so far. Oliver Schuegraf's book "Reconciliation" was the perfect starting point for me, connecting Coventry's past with the CCN's work today and our faith, beliefs and values as sources of hope and motivation to take action and part in this work. As I started researching for a short film about one of the newer CCN partners, a church in Demmin in Germany, I was handed the book "Promise Me You'll Shoot Yourself: The Mass Suicide of Ordinary Germans in 1945" by Florian Huber. It sounds as shocking as it is, focussed on the city's cruel past in post-war times, when so many Germans saw no other way out of their misery than committing suicide. While reading about Demmin's background story, I once again understood the importance of the CCN's aims – to heal the wounds of history, to live with difference and to build a culture of peace. I am currently reading another book, not directly linked to Coventry as a place, but to its meaning for sure, "Reconcile" by John Paul Lederach, who tells incredible stories of his experiences working in international reconciliation and connecting it with the biblical message to Christians. I have not come far with my reading yet, but it is as captivating as it is inspiring.

While I am working remotely and England is still under the current lockdown restrictions, most of my spare time is spent in the house I live in, Lioba House. There, I am truly blessed with my five housemates, girls that are either volunteering like me or completing their master studies in London. Now that we all are staying at home, I feel once more that we are each other's biggest support. We cook and eat together, share each other's company on daily walks around the neighbourhood and brighten up the everyday life with game and film nights. Everyone is experiencing the same situation in such different ways. To talk about how we are feeling, to share concerns as well as hopes has a huge uplifting impact on our state of mind. However, the time we live in turns out to be quite a challenge. The connection to and the support from my home and family have made the past months a bit easier. Yet I feel so much gratitude for the opportunities and chances I was blessed with so far. To meet the wonderful people from Coventry, London, and many other places, to get to know the work of such an impressive global network on the one hand and with a team that is so heartwarmingly caring on the other – these things will be captured for a lifetime and I would not want to miss any of it.

Since writing this, Fine has returned home to Germany for several weeks and is working for us and her other intern project remotely from there, just as well as she was from London. We still hope that we get her back before too long, however!

Josefine Ufkes

CCN Thought for the Week for 25th February – a new Cross of Nails for the Augustinerkloster in Erfurt, Germany

Today, 25th February, at 6pm is a time of memorial at the Evangelical Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt. This has long been a date to be remembered for the victims of a bombing attack in Erfurt on 25 February 1945, and by extension today's victims of war and violence. Today it remembers also the theft of the monastery's Cross of Nails in July last year under unexplained circumstances. As many know, the Crosses of Nails that are blessed and presented from Coventry Cathedral today are made by inmates of the prison (JVA) Würzburg, and this one (pictured) had been set up at the place of silence in the House of Reconciliation. Here, today, a replacement Cross of Nails will be placed after its presentation in the Augustinian Church, the costs both times having been met by the circle of friends of the Augustinian monastery.



“After the shocking theft, we are pleased that a new cross is now coming to the empty space. We have not stopped praying for peace in recent months. The Cross of Nails is not only an impressive reminder of the destructive power of war, but a commitment to reconciliation and understanding today,” says Augustinian pastor Bernd S. Prigge. He recalls that the cathedral provost from Coventry had handed over such crosses to former enemies after the Second World War. “What a strong sign,” Prigge said.

February 25, 1945 is considered the blackest day at the Augustinian monastery, when English bombers dropped two air mines on the building. In today's House of Reconciliation was the cellar of the former monastery library, where 268 people aged between 3 months and 83 years had sought shelter. The

force of the detonation was so great that the building collapsed. 267 people died and a girl and a dog were rescued.

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the city began the terrible clean-up work. The reconstruction of the church, the heavily destroyed West Wing, the arcade house and the guest house began as early as 1946. With great effort and despite difficult political conditions, the monastery was rebuilt stone by stone with its historical structures preserved. The library and warehouses remained as ruins.

In 2002 the foundations of the library were restored and partially reconstructed, and a key wall, threatened with collapse, rebuilt. In the summer of 2008, reconstruction began at a cost of around 5.1 million euros: a sure sign of the importance of preserving the old and creating new things. On 27 August 2010, the former library was re-opened, with, in the basement of the building, a memorial and meditation room, the “place of silence”. In 2008, the Evangelical Augustinian monastery, now an important peace and reconciliation centre, became the first member of the international Community of the Cross of Nails in Thuringia, eastern Germany. The Lutheran site is thus part of this worldwide movement for peace and reconciliation. Membership is practised, among other things, by a weekly devotional on Fridays at 12 o’clock.

www.augustinerkloster.de

This post is taken from an article originally appearing in EKMD | Pressestelle Erfurt | Gestohlenes Nagelkreuz wird im Augustinerkloster zweifach ersetzt

CCN Thought for the Week for 13th March – a new, second Cross for Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg



Earlier this year, a new Cross of Nails made its way to Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg, to broaden the message of reconciliation that was celebrated there 25 years ago when they received their first Cross of Nails from Coventry. This new one will have a particular role to travel between different organisations in the area, and to involve the community directly through its story as it goes. Britta

Däumer tells a little of this background:

Dear CCN friends,

Greetings from the “Sauerland”, a rural region in the low mountain ranges of North Rhine-Westphalia, the home of the Cross of Nails centre at Nordhelle for the past 25 years, and also from our new Superintendent, Dr. Christof Grote, who joined us in late 2020.

Our organisation is perhaps a little unusual as our Cross was presented, in May 1996 by John Petty, to not one but three organisations in our Church District (Evangelischer Kirchenkreis Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg):

- The parish Herscheid, for its work with refugees;
- The Children’s and Youth office of the Church District of Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg, for their memorial rides and international meetings;
- The Protestant Education centre Haus Nordhelle in Meinerzhagen, for their work with prisoners, and their peace forum, and more.

Since joining, we’ve felt responsible for conveying the message of reconciliation to the next generation. The first CCN International Youth Gathering was organized by our centre in 2002 and took place at the Haus Nordhelle. This has now been followed by five more youth conferences, which we were always jointly responsible for planning (Pfr. Hartmut Ebmeier/Britta Däumer).

Haus Nordhelle was the physical home of the Cross until 2019, when the adult education centre was sold, so we needed to think about our future as a CCN Centre. The parish of Eiringhausen in Plettenberg, within the church district, became the Cross’s new home. In Eiringhausen people come together in services, prayers and events to meet, discuss and pray for reconciliation.

In order to make the work in the church district (Lüdenscheid-Plettenberg) better known and to involve more parishes and institutions, we’ve asked for a second, ‘mobile’ cross of nails. This is something that has been successful elsewhere, with its involvement of several other organisations in a defined area who each act as host for the Cross for a defined time. This new Cross of Nails will change location annually to a different church or organization in our Church District active in reconciliation work, and act as a catalyst for further events about the cross of nails and reconciliation in those places.

We are so very grateful to be part of this worldwide community.

Britta Däumer, January 2021

CCN Thought for the Week for 19th March – Sarah Bourne, St Mary’s, Banbury

The Joy of Community

An unexpected blessing of the past year resulting from the pandemic has been the opportunity to share meetings, services and experiences across the world. Zoom really has made the world a smaller place!



Thanks to the German CCN Board, every 1st Friday in the month we have been able to share the Litany of Reconciliation and an update with CCN partners in Germany, Austria, Hungary, South Africa, the Netherlands, Belgium, North America, and the UK. (My apologies if I have missed your country from this list!) I am gradually becoming familiar with the regular and new faces which appear on the Zoom screen each month. It is such a pleasure to feel that we are able to connect as a community, and to hear each other’s challenges and joys.

In my own context at St Mary’s Church in Banbury (which is currently not a CCN partner organisation), we have a similar opportunity to meet up with other people from across the world on a regular basis. Last April in the early stages of the first lockdown, the Holy Spirit moved us to offer a weekly online service of Compline via Zoom on Wednesday evenings, followed by a discussion group in the Zoom Room. Blessed as we are with some remarkable technological experts in St Mary’s congregation, we decided to live-stream the service on Facebook at 8 pm, and then “come off-air” for the subsequent discussion group. After a quick catch-up with the individuals in the group, we use Table Talk cards as a basis for our weekly discussions. Remarkably since our first Compline on 22nd April 2020, we have consistently had a Zoom Room congregation of over 20 people, which I am quite sure would not happen at in-person weekday Compline in church! Our regulars check in from around Oxfordshire, as well as from across England, south west Scotland, the Scottish borders, and Norway.

Since the New Year, we have developed Wednesday evenings further. Every 3 to 4 weeks, we invite a “guest speaker” to attend Compline and then share with us some of their life and experiences in their current setting, related especially to their church context. The first week I asked my father (retired in Scotland) to talk to us about his 60 years as a priest with particular reference to the Ministry of Healing. Subsequently we have welcomed visiting speakers from Germany including Maite (a previous CCN intern from Coventry Cathedral) and Cornelia (CCN partner based in Berlin), and Sue (CCN partner located in Brussels). Our group relishes hearing about life in other countries, especially while we are unable to travel. The wonders of modern technology have allowed us to benefit from the amazing network nurtured by CCN. This sense of building a relationship with fellow Christians across the globe is extraordinary.

If you would be interested in “visiting” our discussion group, please contact me. And if you find quiet Night Prayer helpful to concluding a busy Wednesday, do listen on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/stmaryschurchbanbury/>

Sarah Bourne

Chaplain for the Arts at St Mary’s, Banbury sarahbourne@banburystmary.org.uk

CCN UK Board Trustee

CCN Thought for the Week for 1st April – the Very Reverend John Witcombe



Last week many of us in the UK were on our door steps with candles, or torches, or the light on our phones marking a year of lockdown. I wonder what you were thinking, if you were one of those, like me, pausing for that shared moment?

This week, Holy Week, a week in which we remember the central events of Jesus' life, begins with his triumphant entry into Jerusalem through cheering crowds, then passes through escalating levels of confrontation with civic and religious authorities to his death, and finally concludes as he miraculously returns from death with a message of love and hope for all humanity.

The hope of a shared future is something to cling to as we reflect, a year on, on all that has happened since I wrote at Easter a year ago, with a picture of the Reconciliation Statue in the ruins of our old Cathedral. That statue represents the coming back together of two people, falling into each other's arms after a time of enforced separation. It remains a poignant reminder of all we have lost, and all we long for whilst the pandemic continues.

This letter has a different picture though – the great baptistry window in our new Cathedral. It has at its centre a blaze of light, bursting through the natural blues, greens and reds of our experience. It represents hope – hope for all to share. But the journey to hope starts with honesty.

At a time like this, I believe we need to be doing three things. We need to be thankful: thankful for all those who have helped us, our communities, and our nations through this last year. Here in the Cathedral, we give thanks for those who have helped us continue to offer worship in innovative new ways online, those who have supported our Cathedral community, and who have helped us steward our resources to safeguard our future. Farther afield, in our communities and cities across the world, we give thanks for those who have cared for us and helped life continue – through our health services, and many other front-line workers from shopkeepers to delivery drivers, to all those who have maintained other essential services.

We also need to mourn. To mourn the loss of lives and livelihoods – those we love who are no longer with us, and those others whose jobs or other roles have been lost. We mourn the loss of our dreams for this time, whatever they may have been. There have been real losses in this year, and that has led to a sense of melancholia – a grief that is hard to articulate, but which pervades our shared life. It can help to be honest about that.

Yet we can also commit to hope ... practical hope, if I can put it that way. We can commit this week to play our own part in rebuilding our communities, nation and world, drawing on the hope we have in God. As each day goes by, little by little, brick by brick, smile by smile, touch by touch, we look forward to our shared future.

We can unite in honesty, and also in hope. Here in Coventry, and farther afield, we are glad of the promise of the impact of widespread vaccinations, enabling us to mix and mingle once again. We will never quite shake off the impact and far reaching effect of this extraordinary year – but we know that

together we are stronger, and together with God we can be honest about all that has happened, but also hopeful about all that is to come.

I look forward to sharing with you in the coming months as we emerge from lockdown. And I invite you to share the joy of this season of hope springing out of death, a journey from loss to new life.

Our Easter services in Coventry Cathedral will include these special services – all of which will be online if you would like to join us, live or later:

9.00am Good Friday Service of readings and reflection on the Cross

5.45am Easter Sunday Early morning service of lighting the Easter Fire, baptism and communion

10.30am Easter Sunday Celebration service of Holy Communion

I wish you a joyful and peaceful Easter.

Very Revd. John Witcombe

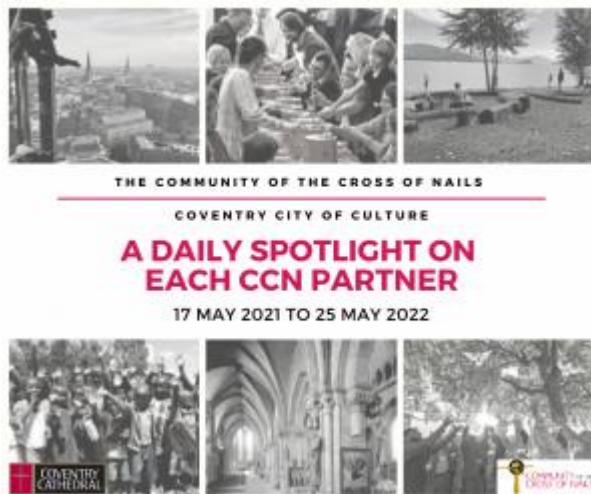
Dean of Coventry

CCN Thought for the Week for 15th May – welcome, Coventry UK City of Culture year!

As excitement mounts in Coventry about finally reaching the launch date of Coventry's UK City of Culture year this weekend, from this Monday we'll be highlighting through the twelve months the linkages that many outside organisations have with the city via Coventry Cathedral's own partnerships around the world through the Community of the Cross of Nails.

In terms of active partners, there are currently in the region of 250 across the CCN, and growing! even as we all emerge from Covid-19 – that's one approximately every weekday. Our intern this year, Josefine – herself on placement with us because of the existence of the much-valued CCN partnership with ARSP – has scheduled a partner to each weekday over the next twelve months, on anniversary days or significant dates where we can, and we'll be highlighting – very briefly – that partner on our facebook page and also by brief mention at the midday litany at the Cathedral. For those without Facebook access, we'll publish regularly a monthly booklet of all partners featured as a viewable pdf on our website.

While UK City of Culture is a cause for optimism and celebration in Coventry, we're otherwise in the midst of anything but certain or, for many, safe and secure times. Around the world, and in our own communities and back yards, life is hard for very many of us, and having worked with this wonderful network now for five years, I never cease to be inspired and encouraged by the breadth of commitment and adherence to our core principles – healing the wounds of history, learning to live



with difference and celebrating diversity, building a culture of peace – by each and every one of our partners. From the very smallest faith communities and charities to those in very high profile city centre locations or with high levels of public awareness, each is working tirelessly to reconcile their community needs in really difficult times.

The year will finish with the 60th anniversary of the consecration of the new Coventry Cathedral building, and a chance to reflect again on the renewed hope and life that this building represents to so very many of us. Over the year that leads to the 25th May 2022, we hope that featuring our partners in this way will remind others of the breadth of the network's partner base, and help us all reflect on unity and community.

With our blessings, and our thanks to each and every partner as we journey forwards together. Meanwhile, for those wanting to know what's happening on the cultural side of things, all you need to know is here: Home – Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 (coventry2021.co.uk) – enjoy!

Alice Farnhill

CCN Co-ordinator

CCN Thought for the Week for 21st May on the Covid-19 situation in India – Kasta Dip, India Peace Centre



As India struggles with a massive and severe second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the loss of lives is mounting up alarmingly. To date, the nation has lost over 2,87,122 people to this virus and these are just the official numbers. India has now confirmed Covid-19 cases of 2,57,72,440 and still counting as of 20th May 2021. India broke the daily record of coronavirus deaths on 18th May 2021, with official data reporting 4,529 people succumbing to the virus, leaving a nation numbed by the scale of devastation and loss. The

daily confirmed cases are the highest in the world with more than 4,00,000 cases being reported every day for the last three weeks. Hospitals are overburdened and medical personnel are finding it hard to cope up not only because of the sudden and massive increase in the number of cases, but also especially in the light of lack of medical supplies particularly oxygen. Many patients have died because of lack of oxygen at the right time. Crematoriums and graveyards are packed as people line up the bodies of their loved ones for the last rites. Parks are being converted into crematoriums to deal with this new reality. Thousands of dead bodies were recently found floating on Ganges believed to be of those whose families could not afford their cremations and burials.

The churches in India too have suffered losses and many Bishops, Pastors and leaders have been lost to Covid-19. It is estimated that over 500 pastors and Church leaders have succumbed to Covid-19. Churches have been unable to meet for months now, a situation seen last year also, and have faced financial hardships as their pastors and evangelists are solely dependent on the offerings of the congregations. Therefore, it is a desperate situation.

The time is to pray earnestly and to extend relief and hope to a nation that is gasping and struggling. We believe that as Children of God, Christians have been called by Him to pray for the world at this time and to act in generous ways so that the poor, needy and marginalized would be cared for.

Through this letter, we are appealing to you to help strengthen our hands as we seek to reach out to people and communities with oxygen concentrators. Therefore, we would like to appeal you to send us some oxygen concentrators, if possible, so that we can lend a helping hand to our neighbours and help our gasping nation breathe again. If you are not able to do this then please consider making some financial contributions to this initiative. We can overcome this crisis together with God's help and your generosity!

Kasta Dip

Director, India Peace Centre

CCN, Asia

CCN Thought for the Week for 28th May – “This Feather continues to fly” by the Right Rev. Logan McMenamie

This Feather Continues to Fly

Off the north east coast of Vancouver Island you will find Cormorant Island. It is a 30-minute ferry trip from Port McNeill to Alert Bay on Cormorant Island. Alert Bay is made up of two communities: The Municipality of Alert Bay on one side of the ferry terminal and the 'Namgis First Nation on the other side. The two communities live well together. Alert Bay had the largest Anglican Residential School in Canada. St. Michael's ran from 1929 until 1975 during which time 9,000 children went through the school. Residential schools were a joint venture of various churches and the government. On Vancouver Island the Anglican Church was involved. It was a colonial enterprise that existed throughout the British Empire. The goal was assimilation of the Indigenous population. Children were forced to leave their homes by the government. The church helped willingly, along with the police, as an instrument of empire. The children were stripped of their traditional clothing, their hair was cut and they were forced to speak English; their traditional languages were suppressed. They were subject to physical, sexual, psychological, cultural and spiritual abuse. The goal was to make them Christians and good citizens of the empire. The Kwakwaka'wakw word *kwala'yu* (child) literally means 'my reason for living.' Thus the horror of the losing children from the community and family caused a generational trauma, a trauma that is still felt today. Healing the wounds of this particular piece of history will be a multi-generational journey.

In 2015 the First Nations communities who had been subject to this abuse arranged for a demolition of the school which still stood on 'Namgas territory. Chief Bobby Joseph of Reconciliation Canada, himself a survivor of St. Michael's, brought together leaders from the communities to be part of the event. There were approximately 600 survivors of the school who gathered with their families.

We as a diocese were present with a 10-ft x 30-ft copy of our primate's, Michael Peers, apology that was given in 1993. This banner was attached to the outside of the school. I was present as the Bishop of the Diocese of British Columbia (our colonial name as we now refer to ourselves as the Diocese of Islands and Inlets). I was asked to speak. I apologized that we were part of a system that failed to

recognize the Creator in the land, the sea and the sky. We failed to see the Creator in the First Nations people. We failed to see the Creator in their language, traditions, culture and spirituality. We failed them and we failed the Creator and for that I was truly sorry.

Following my apology, I was given an eagle feather, a symbol of honour within the First Nations tradition and one seen as a connection between the Creator and the people. I carried that feather during my ministry as Bishop until my retirement in 2020. Subsequently the diocese elected and installed its next Bishop. It is a tradition that the outgoing Bishop at the service of installation passes on the diocesan crozier to her/his successor. The crozier is a large 6-ft rod made of silver. It is heavy. It also comes with the heaviness of colonialism and the history of empire. I felt I needed to give to Bishop Anna something that would reflect the work and ongoing ministry in the diocese of reconciliation and de-colonization. An eagle feather would honour this work and the ongoing prominence of the ministry of reconciliation. I contacted the Elder, Alex Nelson*, who had given me the eagle feather at the demolition of St. Michael's School and asked if it would be appropriate to pass it on. He said that he believed "that this feather practices the freedom to fly, from person to person, from place to place, from this world and that world, from Spirit to Spirit." He said: "It will, therefore, remain sacred and so is appropriate." In January of 2021 I passed on the diocesan crozier to Bishop Anna. I then honoured her by passing on the eagle feather with an invitation to carry on the work of healing the wounds of history.

* Alex is from the Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw First Nations in Kingcome Inlet. He is a survivor of St. Michael's; during my time as Bishop and to this day is a confidant, a friend and a wise Elder.

The Right Rev. Logan McMenamie

Vancouver Island BC

Canada

CCN Thought for the Week for 12th June – limited edition Cross of Nails necklaces



Several years ago, we were approached at Coventry by a couple from Germany who had been so moved and inspired by the Cross of Nails' message of hope and reconciliation that they had seen in the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin, that they wanted to produce and sell quality Cross of Nails necklaces, of a quality and type not then available.

A few years further down the line, and in this year following Coventry's 80th anniversary commemorated alongside us by the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, these beautiful hand-crafted sterling silver necklaces are now for sale from St Clare's at the Cathedral, and can be ordered and sent to you anywhere in the world.

Available in six finishes: silver polished or matt, gold-plated polished or matt, and black polished or matt, the necklaces, on a matching chain, come in a presentation box with a copy of the litany of reconciliation; these are quality jewellery and would make a beautiful gift or souvenir.

More information and to order: stclaresatthecathedral.org/shop



CCN Thought for the Week for 23rd July – some thoughts on ‘Community’

Last week we were so pleased to host participants from Journey of Hope to Coventry for the final module of this year’s reconciliation leadership training programme. It was a real treat for us all to meet in person, after several online modules.

As a team, we’ve not had a big group of this type to Coventry for over 18 months, and for us it made a really nice change! For social distancing reasons the Nave provided the space we needed, and what a special circle location for it it was, in front of the choir steps.



In preparing for the day we pondered on the nature of community, and what it means. Communities ... networks ... movements – how do they differ? What variation is there in their calling? And with our own communities, the CCN and Together for Hope – one of course well-established, and widespread; one still very new and small – beyond the facts and the numbers, what can we share about community from their example? To what extent should we steer their growth, and to what extent let them evolve organically?

But beyond growth: how do these communities maintain energy? Where does the ‘power’ reside, and where does decision making and/or responsibility lie? Who speaks for the community? And what does each community look like: how does it meet, collect together; what does it do? What impact should it demonstrate?

It’ll be different for any community, as it will be for the community of practice that emerges from this Journey of Hope cohort. But it comes back to people, ultimately: cherishing all those who come forward, letting those with energy and ideas flow, honouring past practices and history while keeping an eye open to new ways of doing things (as we have all had to over the past year). Celebrating difference and diversity – of course, one of our core values. ‘Treading lightly’ was one element that we considered – letting a community develop its own rhythm and character without too much direction from the centre.

Practicalities are never far away, and money is so often a factor in the background. Happily, for Together for Hope, an amount of money from our German CCN partners is enabling, beginning earlier this month, a few hours of staff time to be spent in taking Together for Hope forward for the next few years. This is so welcome, all the more so as we emerge – slowly – from Covid-19 restrictions and aim for life to be more back to normal in September.

We look forward to more discussions with next year’s Journey of Hope travellers! And wish this cohort well as they form their virtual Community of Practice.

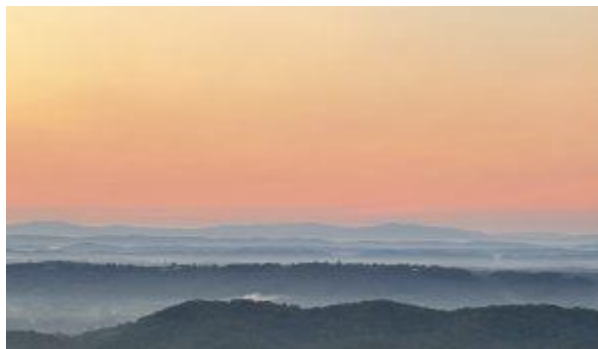
Alice Farnhill

CCN Coordinator

CCN Thought for the Week for 30th July – Walking for Peace

WALKING FOR PEACE

In early June a pastor friend of mine asked me to participate in a walk from his church in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee, to a park in the center of town. He told me that “God had put it on his heart” to pray for peace in our community, our nation and the world. Why not walk around our community, where we live, praying as we walk, he asked? And so, he decided to call this a “Walk for Peace.” Along the way, we made several stops in order to pray. When we arrived at the park, we read scripture, offered prayers for Chattanooga, our country and the world. In between the scripture readings and the prayers, we all joined together in song. After we finished, each church community represented was asked to participate in a similar walk in their community.



The parish I serve is located in Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, a small community near Chattanooga. Within a short walk from our church you pass the local elementary school, a Presbyterian Church, the city hall, fire and police department, a veterinarian’s office, dentist, community newspaper, post office and restaurant. With these places in mind, we designed our walk to stop at each of these locations and pray for each, using prayers from our Book of Common Prayer and other authorized sources. After these prayers were read, we invited prayers from the participants. We ended our walk at the town commons where we celebrated the Eucharist together.

As we were preparing for and organizing our walk, I began to think about the nature and meaning of peace. The Hebrew word we translate as peace is shalom. In defining shalom, my Bible dictionary said the word is a “pervasive concept in the Bible that most commonly relates to a relationship of love and loyalty with God and one another.” This definition informed me as we walked and stopped at each location. At each stop we petitioned God for guidance, wisdom, strength, patience, and grace. Our prayers drew on and strengthened our relationship with God, while simultaneously connecting us to the institution or business where we stopped. As we prayed, we were reminded of the people—fellow human beings and children of God—who worked at and were involved in each place.

It is difficult to describe the deep feeling of shalom I experienced both during and after the walk. I felt connected to, and in relationship with, my community as we paused and prayed at each stop. During the walk, I thought of all the schools I have attended; the churches where I have worshipped; the towns I have called home; the doctors who have brought healing and health to me; the journalists who have broadened my world with their reporting; the civil servants who dedicate themselves to making our community better; and all those who produce, labor, transport and prepare food to nourish our bodies. Though we prayed for our specific community, I realized that these prayers extended far beyond Lookout Mountain. Shalom with and in my community made me aware of my connection to and relationship with the world beyond the borders of my town.

In 2nd Corinthians, the apostle Paul reminds us that “if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation... everything has become new...[and we have been given] the ministry of reconciliation...So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us” (2nd Corinthians 5:17,18,20). Walking through and praying for our community helped me to see more clearly and be connected to the “new creation” that is in our midst. As we finished our walk and worship, I could see in the eyes of my fellow “pilgrims” that this walk had touched their hearts as well. Pausing at these various

landmarks, being still in prayer, remembering their purpose, place and influence in (and on) our community made an impact on them. They saw these places in a new way. Maybe we were all seeing with the eyes of Christ? Maybe this walk for peace opened the eyes of our hearts? Certainly, for each of us it was a vivid reminder of our call to be Christ's ambassadors in our neighborhood and in the world. Already, people are asking when the next walk will take place.

Grace and peace,

Robert Childers

Church of the Good Shepherd

Lookout Mountain, TN USA

CCN Thought for the Week for 13th August – Farewell from Josefine Ufkes, our reconciliation intern



A year of changes

It is almost too hard to believe but my voluntary service at the Coventry Cathedral and with the CCN is dangerously close to coming to an end – well, even though saying at the Cathedral and calling the end dangerous might be not quite right... But still, having settled into the work, the team and the network throughout the past year makes me feel like I've built a strong connection to the place from a distance, and the thought of setting off for a new chapter gets me both excited and nervous.

My experience as the Cathedral's intern was going to be different to previous ones, I knew that as soon as I applied for a year abroad in a time where the world's rhythm paused for a while and then came back at a much slower pace – also known as the pandemic. Even greater was my excitement and gratitude when we heard that the projects would go on and we could actually go, despite all the circumstances and barriers. Throughout this year, we all had to adapt to new arrangements and different realities, so I did too, learning to accept the given and focusing on the good of every situation to be grateful for what I can do. Living in London meant I wouldn't be able to be in Coventry and on site on a regular basis, but it also meant getting to live with other young people and exploring a city that has fascinated me ever since. Working only part time as the Cathedral's intern allowed me to get involved in the incredible work of my second project, the Roma Support Group London, so I got the opportunity to experience not one, but two amazing workspaces and areas. And while working remotely for the Cathedral, I had the time to really become a part of the CCN network to get a much deeper insight into its projects and diverse partners. I would've never thought one could connect with people all over the world by only meeting each other online for a year, brought together through sharing the same beliefs, values and visions. It was truly inspiring to see the passion and dedication that all the lovely people involved in the community bring with them to turn ideas into reality and to enable the network to grow and progress further.

And as much as I enjoyed supporting the CCN, my visits to Coventry always turned out as being highlights of my service. Being on site brought the Coventry Way to life for me, being welcomed into wide opened arms and feeling the spirit of the place as the centre of everything happening there. Every single encounter showed me the strong sense of hospitality that is lived in and around the Cathedral, whether staff, volunteer or visitor. I owe huge gratitude and appreciation to the whole team and Alice in particular, who is not only doing an incredible job with coordinating the CCN, but also with coordinating this ever-changing year of a voluntary service as the patient, positive, imaginative and supportive person she is. Creating this year's internship was a first time for everyone involved to the same extent as it was for me, and it is not a natural course of action that it was such an enriching and precious time to experience. For me, it was a true honour to have worked here.



The litany on Fine's last day in Coventry, with Richard and Cerys

Looking forward, I will certainly take a lot of the past year's experiences with me and will be reminded of my time in England more than once while taking my next steps. In autumn, I will move to Mainz in Rhineland-Palatinate to start my studies in psychology and psychotherapy, and I am much looking forward to this, even though it means to restart all over again. And as frightening as a new start can be, having lived here really changed my perception of it. I feel more confident to face new surroundings, meeting new people and living independently. I've grown personally, learnt to be more patient, optimistic, and flexible. I got to broaden my horizons by listening and learning about the history we can share, issues of the present we can work on and visions for the future we can believe in. And with that said, one thing is for sure: Wherever my way will lead to, Coventry Cathedral will always have a safe and special place in my heart.

Josefine Ufkes

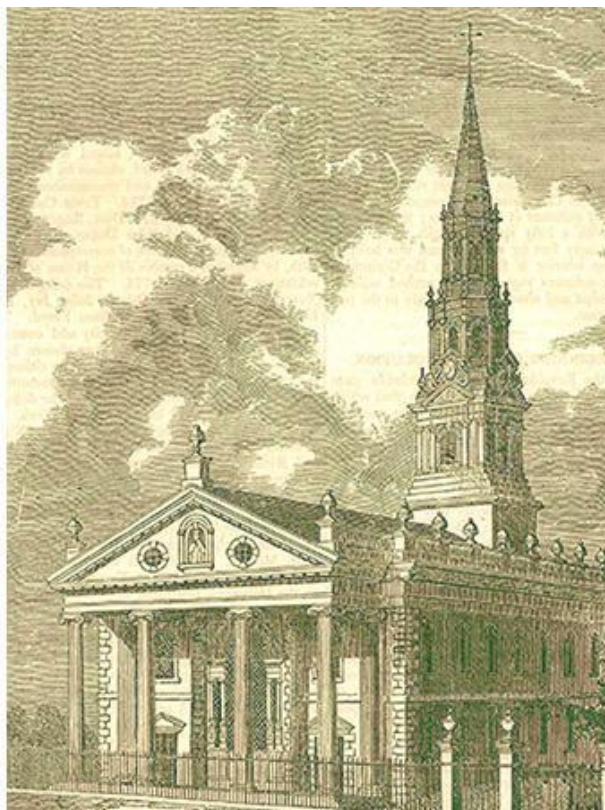
CCN Thought for the Week for 10th September – Remembering 9/11 twenty years on

The world tomorrow will remember the full trauma and tragedy of 9/11, twenty years on.

In the CCN, we'll pray also for St Paul's Chapel in New York City, which became part of the CCN four years later. Already a house of prayer and welcome to all, St Paul's, part of the Trinity Church Wall Street parish, played such a major role in the aftermath of the tragedy, providing the site of an extraordinary, round-the-clock relief ministry to rescue and recovery workers. Although the World Trade Center collapsed just across the street, there was no damage to St. Paul's, earning it the nickname "the little chapel that stood".

On Saturday 11th from 8.40am local time, the Rev. Phillip A. Jackson, Priest-in-charge of Trinity Church Wall Street, will ring the Bell of Hope in St. Paul's Churchyard in a pattern of "four fives" (five strikes, repeated four times), the traditional firefighters' salute to the fallen. Following prayers, the bell will be rung precisely at 8:46am, the time when the first plane crashed into 1 World Trade Center (North Tower). The bell, a gift from London to New York City a year after the attacks, is rung on September 11 anniversaries and to remember victims of terrorism and mass shootings. All may join in via their website below or on Facebook Live .

September 11 | Trinity Church Wall Street (trinitywallstreet.org)



CCN Thought for the Week for 17th September – Robert Childers and Stacy Nelson discuss Coventry and its inspiration

Just ahead of next week's CCN Sunday, and just as we have welcomed new volunteer interns to Coventry this past week, Robert Childers, US CCN Board President, and Stacy Nelson, our most recent US volunteer intern at Coventry Cathedral, had a conversation about Coventry's role in their life choices and overall effect on their lives generally. Robert was at Coventry briefly in the 1980s and Stacy for two years in the 2010's, but for both it was fundamentally transformational: as Robert says, "it pushes you to an edge that expands who you are".

Watch the conversation here!: <https://youtu.be/Wm44ngi6-yw>

CCN Thought for the Week for 24th September and CCN Sunday – the Third Order, Society of St. Francis



This coming Sunday, CCN Sunday, a new partner will receive their Cross of Nails at Coventry Cathedral: the Third Order, Society of St Francis. As we welcome them into the CCN, here they explain who they are, and why their new partnership with the CCN is so important.

This year, the Third Order celebrates the 800th anniversary of its foundation by St Francis. It was founded in 1221 for those who wished to live according to a Franciscan rule of life but who were unable to be members of a religious community by reason of work, marriage or family responsibilities.

The Society of St Francis is a worldwide Anglican Religious Order which consists of a First Order of men and women who live in community under a Franciscan rule based on the traditional vows of poverty, chastity and obedience; a

Second Order (Community of St Clare) which is made up of women who feel called by God to an enclosed life of contemplative prayer, coupled with work so as to be self-supporting; and the Third Order, consisting of men and women over the age of 18 who are lay, ordained, married and single, and of various ethnic and educational backgrounds. Every member of the Third Order (who are often known as 'tertiaries') live according to a Rule of Life whilst in their own homes, in employment, retired, caring for their families. There are 3000 members worldwide, 2000 of whom are in Europe.

Within the context of their lives, tertiaryaries follow Christ after the example of St Francis and St Clare. They look to proclaim the gospel, joyfully pursue justice, peace and the care of all creation and, to spread the spirit of love and harmony, making our Lord known and loved everywhere as they do so.

The life of the Third Order is rooted in prayer (both personal and corporate) and Eucharistic worship is at the heart of their service to the Church and to the world. They recognise the importance of making a retreat regularly and of having a spiritual director or accompanier. They aim to live a simple lifestyle

in solidarity with the poor of the world and seek to serve God in his creation, pledging themselves to the service of others and to respect all life.

Francis' most common greeting was: 'May the Lord give you peace.' It sums up the meaning of his life for his sole desire was to live as closely as he could to the life, work and example of Jesus Christ, 'the Prince of Peace'. Peace, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, love, humility and joy are key attributes of the life of Francis and they also form the substance of the Franciscan charism. This charism is at the heart of the life and understanding of every Franciscan as we too follow Christ after Francis's example.

All this provides a natural fit for the Third Order's partnership with the Community of the Cross of Nails. The Coventry Litany of Reconciliation is a prayer that is at one with the intentions and purpose the Third Order.

The Third Order's partnership with the Community of the Cross of Nails enables the Order to have a clearer focus as it seeks to continue to promote peace, justice and reconciliation within ourselves and in the world. It also enlarges the Order's scope and purposes so as to help to identify ways in which we (individually and corporately) might be able to take practical steps to pursue these causes. It is an exciting step to formally enter into a partnership with likeminded Christian brothers and sisters with whom to share a common cause across the world. Together, we also join in expressing ways that will hopefully be of benefit not only to the church and to society at large, but also and most importantly, to places where war, poverty and injustice rob people of dignity, health, welfare, their homes and livelihoods – and indeed their very lives.

David White, TSSF

www.tssf.org.uk

CCN Thought for the Week for 2nd October – What is the CCN's role in these times of environmental crisis?



In the build-up to COP26 next month we are all, I am sure, aware of how critical it is that we each play our part in securing the future for our planet.

But how might we best do this as a dispersed community? This seems a different question. How do we, as the CCN, collectively, meaningfully take a useful role in helping and encouraging each other make as little damaging imprint on this planet as we can? This has, after all, been a guiding principle since the CCN's earliest days – reconciliation with the earth is a fundamental part of healing the wounds of history, and building a culture of peace.

On Thursday 28th October, in the week immediately prior to COP26, from 2.30pm to 5pm UK time, we'll be on Zoom discussing this question led by Dean John, with the help of brand new CCN partner the Third Order, Society of St Francis who have

long been active in environmental awareness across a dispersed community, and the Sorrento Centre, a Christian retreat centre in rural Canada, affected by extreme climate change even just this year. Grounded in the theology around reconciliation with the earth, we'll also be looking at what various partners across the CCN are doing, or aiming to do, to play their part going forward. What light do

they have to shed on the discussion? And, we'll, hopefully, be coming up with some pointers as to the way forward.

Please do join us – it's free, and all across the CCN are welcome. Email alice.farnhill@coventrycathedral.org.uk, with your full name and the CCN organisation you are closest connected with, to save your place.

Alice Farnhill, CCN Co-ordinator

CCN Thought for the Week for 16th October – the CCN and Environmental Crisis: introducing our speakers for 28th October

A reminder about our discussion session on the eve of Cop26: what role can or should the CCN play in convening, encouraging and nurturing partners as we face an environmental crisis that risks overwhelming us? All are very welcome.

We're so very grateful to our two lead speakers for their time on Thursday 28th October between 2.30 and 5pm UK time (slightly later start time than originally advertised) :



Paul Bodenham is a trustee and former chair of Green Christian, and a founder of Operation Noah. He works as officer for social outreach in the Roman Catholic diocese of Nottingham and is a tertiary – a member of recent CCN partner, the Third Order, Society of St Francis.

The Rev'd Michael Shapcott is Executive Director of the Sorrento Centre, a retreat

and conference centre in the Shuswap region of British Columbia, an area of abundant and life-rich lakes, rivers and streams, circling valleys, hills and mountains, lying on the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwepemc people who have lived in harmony with the natural world since time immemorial. The Centre is Anglican in tradition, ecumenical and multi-faith in expression and generous and inclusive in its welcome, aspiring to be a holy place of transformation for learning, healing and belonging. Michael serves as a Deacon in the Diocese of Kootenay, Anglican Church of Canada, and has a long background of engagement in climate and social justice.

Do join us!: email alice.farnhill@coventrycathedral.org.uk to hold your place, and the joining details will be sent out several days prior to the event.

CCN Thought for the Week for 22nd October – the CCN prayer community Wageningen, our newest partner



It's been a long wait of around eighteen months (and kept a few people on tenterhooks until the last moment – the Cross of Nails arrived safely and just in time, finally!), but our newest partner received their Cross of Nails last weekend from Dean John.

The Coventry prayer group in Wageningen is an ecumenical group, supported by three local churches: Roman Catholic, Protestant and Baptist/ Liberal Protestant. The group began in May 2014, inspired by and in cooperation with the Coventry prayer group in Arnhem, with the support of the wider Dutch CCN led by Bert Kuipers.

Prayers including the Litany are held each Friday at noon, ringing church bells at the start; the group started with twelve people and has more than doubled over time since then.

Prayers focus on current conflicts and incidents: war, terrorism, climate and sustainability, poverty and health, inspiration for local volunteers, seeking reconciliation in our personal lives and the local community, and sharing and cooperation in ecumenical remembrance of historic wartime wounds.



Through the town's partnership with the town Gödöllő in Hungary, a prayer group also started in Hungary in 2017; more locally via the "KerkNet Wageningen", the group is connected to a total of eleven churches. Dialogue with Muslims to deepen mutual contact and understanding is an important part of the group's work, as is involvement in peace activities locally: the Week of Peace in September, and the celebration of Liberation on May 4-5th – the treaty of surrender was signed here in 1945, in a hotel next to the Church of St. John the Baptist. It is in a chapel of this church that the Cross of Nails will be located, in line with the memorial shrine of Titus Brandsma, a Catholic priest that died in Dachau (1942) after works of resistance against the Nazi occupation for a free press and against the persecution of the Jews. The chapel is open daily for prayer, meditation and lighting candles.

We're so very glad to have the prayer community of Wageningen among our members – a very wholehearted welcome!

CCN Thought for the Week for 29th October – on the eve of Cop26, the CCN and its role in tackling the environmental crisis



“Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

Francis of Assisi

The reconciliation challenges of climate change are enormous for all of us. Cop26 next month needs to grapple with a global challenge that is all at once mitigation; adaptation; and acceptance of (and recompense for?) loss and damage, so often dealt out desperately unfairly across the globe.

For all of us, the old certainties are coming to an end; there is a very clear form of grief among many at the loss of a ‘familial’ link with nature, of a covenant between us and our maker; an ending of an inheritance. A sense of ‘journeying through an emerging moral landscape’.

There are several main strands here, all so significant: reconciliation between humanity and creator; between the minority and majority world; between the present and the future; and between ourselves.

And there is the evidence that older teens and young adults – those on whom the future disproportionately rests – have such low confidence in the future owing to climate change: over half think the future is ‘doomed’ and three quarters think it is ‘frightening’.

How on earth do we, as a reconciling community, engage, given the gravity of the situation we are now in?

Avoiding isolation – joining together – is one key thread in all this. And this may be where the CCN has a role.

– We have a wide variety of organisations across the CCN – from small to large, from localised to dispersed, with from younger to older audiences and communities of their own; from pastoral to active. There is much that such diversity can bring to the discussion here.

– “All have sinned”: So goes the beginning of our own Litany of Reconciliation. We are already on board with our own complicity and our need to act.

– We are guided in everything by our three themes, that all feed directly into the debate: healing the wounds of history; learning to live with difference and celebrate diversity; and building a culture of peace. These could be a framework to guide us in this context too.

– We are people and organisations that are called to, want to, join together. And we’ve never needed ‘together’ more.

And there is a good case for staying positive; not getting consumed by the enormity of the task. Falling back in love with creation is so important; but also living simply and joyfully, and engaging in acts of hope.

“In the climate emergency, beyond hope and despair, lies a time between worlds: level ground to live and act with courage, love and equanimity. Together let us go there.”

Borrowed Time

With our very grateful thanks to Michael Shapcott and Paul Bodenham for their expertise, guidance and insight in leading our discussion yesterday – an enormous amount of very rich content was shared with us, of which this is only a very short summary. This session is hoped to be the first of much more, which we'll be planning while Cop26 is underway, and hope to share plans about very shortly.

Alice Farnhill, CCN Co-ordinator

CCN Thought for the Week for 3rd December – a Journey of Hope for all of us



We had a small group of reconcilers come and spend time with us on Wednesday this week, a get-together of the Journey of Hope initiative, bringing together on this occasion those in the Coventry region involved in the Community of Practice which follows the core programme.

Having this lovely group of individuals in various forms of ministry with us enabled us to reflect on just how long it seems that it has been since we've had a group sat together in the SMH lounge, talking and reflecting, sharing food, and being able to spend time together supporting one another. It has been a long, long time since it feels like this has been possible – almost all of the past two years. We have really missed it; SMH has been quiet indeed for events of this kind. It felt a little like the dawning of things 'getting back to normal' – although of course, as ever, the

uncertainty around that is something we are all learning to live with.

One of the things that came up in our discussions is the reality that reconciliation is not an event, an end destination, but a journey, a process. This has been said many times before. But "how do we equip people with the resilience to go the distance"? was a pertinent question. And there seems so much resilience needed this particular advent. As I write this, thousands have been without power in very cold temperatures for almost a week now in the north of England and Scotland following particularly vicious storms last weekend. Late last month, 27 refugees died trying to cross the English Channel in the perfectly legitimate quest for a safe and secure life. Chilling proportions of Afghanistan's population face actual starvation – way beyond poverty and destitution – this winter. Covid continues to threaten our health and societies in ever-new ways. Our environment remains in peril with a seemingly waning sense of urgency. There are so many more tragedies playing out as well. So how do we get through these, keep the faith onwards, go the distance – and keep going?

Next year we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the new Cathedral at Coventry. 22 years elapsed from the bombing of the old cathedral, to the unveiling of the new one, an immense amount of waiting. But that waiting forms a part of the story we tell, and while each day is another challenge – those didn't stop when the building was finished – since 1962 that new Cathedral has stood proud, proclaiming that rebirth and reconciliation with the past is possible, can be done, does make a difference, and that commitment to that goal does encourage others.

We look forward to many more visits to SMH – but in truth, there may be a little more waiting to go yet.

Alice Farnhill, CCN Co-ordinator

CCN Thought for the Week for 11th December – CCN awarded the Ecumenical prize of the Catholic Academy of Bavaria



We are so thrilled to have been awarded, with the presentation today, 11th December, in Munich, the Ecumenical prize of the Catholic Academy of Bavaria. Dean John and Bishop Christopher will both be present to receive the award this morning.

The presentation has been, sadly, delayed by a year due to Covid-19. The award states that the International Cross of Nails Community has been given the Ecumenical Prize as a worldwide ecumenical network working for peace and reconciliation in close connection with Coventry Cathedral. Last year – in the year of Brexit – the Catholic Academy deliberately wanted to honour Christian-motivated reconciliation between British and Germans as a model for a variety of forms of reconciliation work across confessional boundaries. Reconciliation on the deep foundation of the Christian message is as important today as it was 80 years ago in the face of growing political, social and religious upheavals.

Oliver Schuegraf, Chair of the German CCN Board, says: “We are pleased that the work of the International Cross of Nails Community receives a special appreciation through the award ceremony. The year 2020 was an occasion to look back with great gratitude on the last 75 years in which reconciliation and friendships have developed across the continent – not least thanks to active reconciliation impulses such as those of Coventry Cathedral. The Cross of Nails Community wants to continue to be a network that is committed to reconciliation and international understanding in the face of new forms of xenophobia and nationalism.”

The Ecumenical Prize, which was founded in 1995, was most recently awarded jointly to Reinhard Cardinal Marx and Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, before that to the Taizé Community and federal president Frank-Walter Steinmeier, among others. The prize is endowed with 10,000 euros, a valuable support for the ecumenical reconciliation work of the International Cross of Nails Community and Coventry Cathedral.

Today’s laudatory speech will be given by the Bishop of Coventry, Dr Christopher Cocksworth. Cardinal Marx will traditionally speak a closing remarks. Bayerischer Rundfunk is contributing a short film about Coventry, and OKR Dr. Oliver Schuegraf, chairman of the German Cross of Nails Association, will represent CCN partners. The morning will be musically arranged by the Singphoniker. After the ceremony, Bayerischer Rundfunk will record an approximately one-hour panel discussion on the topic of “The Culture of Remembrance” with Bishop Dr. Christopher Cocksworth, Prof. Dr. Aleida Assmann and ORK Dr. Oliver Schuegraf at around 1 p.m., which will be moderated by BR journalist Eva Lell and broadcast on BR alpha in December.

It is the intention to use the 10,000 euros prize money for resources for youth outreach in 2022 and beyond.

See also the Nagelkreuzgemeinschaft page here, with links to the ceremony and film.

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-Johannis-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's 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

CCN Thought for the Week for 24th December – the Very Reverend John Witcombe

On Christmas Eve, we all celebrate the bountiful gift given to us on earth in the form of Jesus Christ. Gifts in their widest sense loom large in our consciousness as well, and these words from Dean John,



delivered just a little earlier this month, concern a particularly generous gift and honour bestowed on the CCN very recently for its work across boundaries, by the Catholic Academy of Bavaria : read his words on reconciliation and its importance today.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks for the generous gift of 10,000 euros for the work of the Community of the Cross of Nails, the CCN, which has its heart at Coventry Cathedral.

Reconciliation is needed perhaps more than ever in the world today. We are more fragmented, both between and within countries, and between generations. So, although the CCN was born out of an incredible reconciling commitment over 80 years ago, which issued in the rebuilding not just of the Cathedral but more significantly of relationships, it is still relevant. It is, of course, still growing – and most particularly here in Germany, with new partners joining and waiting to join. I was privileged to take a cross of nails to Demmin, near Rostock, in September last year in a brief window of opportunity in the midst of Covid. They were addressing their wounds of history from the time of the Russian advance and the mass suicides that happened in May 1945. At Easter, we sent a cross to Plauen, because in the end we could not keep delaying – we were able to send a video message to encourage them in their work of resisting the right wing tendency in that town.

We will shortly be celebrating Christmas. Last year, when this award was originally to be presented, marked 80 years since the destruction of St. Michael's Cathedral in Coventry. On Christmas day, just six weeks after the bombing, my predecessor Provost Dick Howard celebrated communion in the Wyley Chapel below the ruins of the Cathedral. He later spoke on the BBC world service, saying, 'Early this Christmas morning, here under these ruins, in the lovely little stone chapel built six hundred years ago, we began the day with our Christmas communion, worshipping the Christ, believe me, as joyfully as ever before. What we want to tell the world is this: that with Christ born again in our hearts today, we are trying, hard as it may be, to banish all thoughts of revenge. . . . We are going to try to make a kinder, simpler, a more Christ Child-like sort of world in the days beyond this strife.' I was able to repeat that celebration, with just two of us present under Covid restrictions, using the same traditional liturgy as Dick Howard has used – and felt the power of his words renewed for us.

The cathedral followed through on that commitment to making a different kind of world, expressed in the exchange of reconciling visits first with Kiel, and later with many or cities including most famously Dresden. Eventually, the Community of the Cross of Nails was born, now numbering over 250 partners in the work of reconciliation across some 25 countries. The story of Coventry's work in reconciliation, as you have noted in the award of this prestigious and valuable prize, continues to surprise and inspire those who learn of it – it should never be forgotten, and needs to continue to be told today.

The Cathedral's commitment to ecumenism, healing relationships between churches, was present from the very beginning of the project to rebuild. For Provost Dick Howard, it made no sense to speak of reconciliation to the world if we could not even practice reconciliation between Christians. When the specification was drawn up for the new Cathedral, it included a 'Chapel of Unity', which would be entrusted to an ecumenical council; that Chapel forms part of the Cathedral Building to this day, but continues to be governed by members of different churches, including the Roman catholic church. The chapel has a view to the Coventry font, a symbol of unity for Christians, but not to the high altar which sadly remains a place of division, as each church retains its own discipline of admittance to the sacrament of holy communion.

Today, our commitment to healing and nurturing reconciliation between Christians extends to working with those of all faiths. The text of the dedication for the Chapel of Unity is 'a place of worship for all faiths' – and at the time, that was only conceived as meaning different branches of the Christian faith. Almost 60 years on from our consecration in 1962, 'all faiths' means more naturally not just those of different denominations, but those of many religions, We have been pleased, in particular, to welcome Muslims into the cathedral for their Iftar celebration – and to allow the Call to Payer to be sung in the Nave. I was delighted to hear a Coventry resident of South Asian origin speak recently of the way "to me, the Cathedral is my mosque'. This message of spiritual hospitality is fundamental to our life in Coventry cathedral, as we share our space with all.

The Cathedral's reconciliation priorities are three fold: healing the wounds of history; learning to live with difference and celebrate diversity; and building a culture of justice and peace. These are at the heart of the Community of the Cross of Nails, and all our partners are working actively for one or more of these priorities. Our partners often share a sense of connection with our own history, in places which have been destroyed by conflict, and have rebuilt their communities, physically and relationships. They also often reach back into troubled parts of their own history – slavery and racial injustice in the United States, the impact of colonialism in schools in Canada, and in other ways in New Zealand Aotearoa. In the Netherlands the network is still strongly impacted by the history of the second world war. In South Africa it is also often about racism.

In encouraging a commitment to reconciliation today, we often use a definition of reconciliation as journeying from a fractured past towards a shared future. All our communities, locally and globally, know the presence of fractures: as Christians we are called to follow Christ in stepping into those cracks or chasms, and inviting the Spirit of God to be at work, witnessing to the Spirit's reconciling presence in our words and actions.

In our Diamond Jubilee year, celebrating sixty years since the consecration of the Cathedral, we are going to be celebrating all that God has done in our past, but also looking to our future. We are gathering a new generation of partners through an international youth conference, through our international networks. We were originally hoping to have held this in person, but we recognise that we may now have to meet digitally – but the advantage of this is that we will be able to achieve a wider reach, and have a smaller impact on the planet, which is a particularly high priority for the next generation for whom the future of the planet is their top priority, understandably. Nevertheless, to offer this gathering will still take significant resources, especially in preparing high quality digital material. It is this for which we are going to use our generous gift – to enable us to inspire and inform a new generation of peace makers, those rooted in reconciliation.

In Coventry Cathedral, we often reflect on the grace of God which allows us to respond to devastating loss with creativity and hope. Just as new life for all emerged from the death of Christ, so an extraordinary new building emerged from the devastating loss of the old Cathedral. It is this hope – that new life can emerge from death – which is the message of the gospel, and which becomes real in the ministry of reconciliation. This is our hope for the next generation, that they are able to breathe in this message and carry it into a grace filled future, and we thank you for helping us to continue to do that.

May we wish all those across the CCN and its communities a very Happy Christmas and a hopeful New Year.