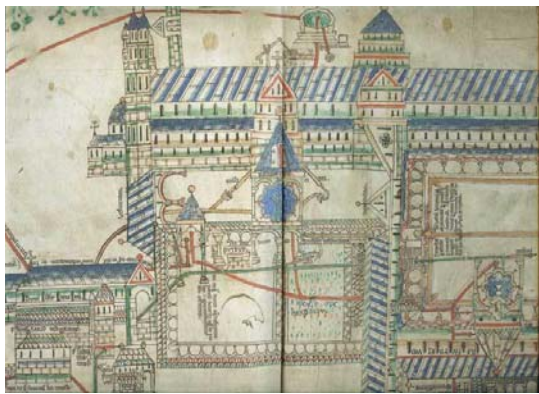


Dear Friends,

June 2025

I am writing this in the middle of Holy Week - a time of reflection and remembrance. Remembering for the Christian, as it is with the Jewish Faith, is more than just looking back to the past. Remembrance for Jews and Christians is not like looking at a photograph album or reading faded correspondence from a lover or friend; no, remembrance is a participative act. In fact, the English word reminds us that we are RE-membering. That is, putting things back together, or making things whole again.



This is so true of Canterbury Cathedral which, since the arrival of Saint Augustine in England in 597, has had a mission to remember. The building, itself, is a testament to the retelling of the greatest story ever told through stone, wood, glass, textiles, and so many treasures. And we must never forget that some of the greatest treasures are actually human beings who have, in their lives, told that story in fresh and new ways. I am not simply thinking of the great Archbishops of Canterbury, or the Deans and Canons, or even the musicians - but those who consider themselves friends of Canterbury Cathedral - yes, you and me included! For Canterbury is not a museum, but a living community that makes it possible for the retelling of that story over many centuries and re-interpreting it for future generations.



Canterbury Cathedral proclaims afresh in each generation the story that it is built to proclaim. Our role as American Friends is to support that mission and to bind up our own stories with the stories of countless pilgrims and worshippers and, yes, even tourists who have left their mark on that holy place. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will read about our recent pilgrimage there from the USA. It was a joy to spend some precious days in the Cathedral precincts and, once again, to hear the story re-told for another generation.

If you have visited the Cathedral Treasury, you will have seen the amazing manuscript that depicts the ingenious and complicated medieval system of pipes that provided the monastic building with running water and separate from the dirty water. The Water Tower currently has a brilliant interpretation of the use of water in the medieval cathedral, by the simple use of projected images onto the ancient stonework – another way that *the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation*.

Elsewhere in the newsletter you will see that we need your email addresses and other information as we attempt to re-invigorate the life of FOCCUS – please respond positively to this, so that we can keep in touch more regularly and share more news of our beloved Canterbury Cathedral.

A very Happy Easter to you all!

FOCCUS is going digital! Send your email to administrator@canterburyus.org and get all the latest news from Canterbury. Or go to <https://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/get-involved/foccus/> and sign up. Get the latest on pilgrimages, events, Friends gatherings, and all that's happening at the Cathedral.

Message from Dean David

As I write this, the roses are blooming in the garden at the Deanery and evenings are growing ever lighter. It seems that summer has finally come to Canterbury, and at the Cathedral, we are also entering into a time of change.

I have now been Dean for just over two years, and I have been busy addressing many of the behind-the-scenes things at the Cathedral to put our house in order and to make sure we have a solid base from which to build. It is an incredible privilege for me to live, worship and work in a place which carries the weight of history so lightly, but it is also a great responsibility. As many of you will be aware, the Cathedral receives no funding from the Crown or the Government, and our grant from the Church of England makes up only 0.01 percent of our budget. As Dean, one of my roles is to ensure the Cathedral's financial future, and the preservation of our many traditions for the next thousand years and beyond.



To help us plan for this future, we launched a new Strategic Plan in January which lays out our vision for the Cathedral's direction over the next ten years. Within these pages, you will read clearly our commitment to support our communities, to protect our historic fabric and the natural world, and to be a place of hope and sanctuary to all who are in need. In these times of political turmoil and economic uncertainty, it is ever more important that the Cathedral is a place of faith, pilgrimage, curiosity, and welcome.

You can find the plan on our website, and I hope you will take the time to read it. Our ministry at Canterbury Cathedral should 'inspire life in all its fullness', and we will return to that message again and again as we begin to carry out the work to deliver on our ambitions.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF FOCCUS

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The Rev. Canon Samuel Van Culin

To accomplish our aims, we will need the support of the entire Cathedral community: those who worship with us, our visitors, all of our Friends and supporters both in the UK and internationally, and all of those who hold the Cathedral dear in their hearts. Members of FOCCUS will have a key role to play in this; you are both our supporters and our ambassadors – spreading our message of hope and need to others who might be able to play a role in the Cathedral's future. I am hugely grateful for this.

I was delighted to meet many of you when I was in Texas and New York in May, but over the next months, there will be other opportunities to connect as I am in the process of planning a series of trips that will take me across the US. And, of course, I will also look forward to welcoming you to Canterbury whenever you can join us, and to sharing with you the wonder of this place.

Blessings,
David

Dean Robert Willis

Dean of Canterbury Cathedral 2001–2022, died on 22 October 2024 while visiting friends at the Berkeley Divinity School, Yale. A long-time supporter of FOCCUS and its efforts, he often visited the United States to strengthen and expand American support for the mother church. He was a noted hymn writer and became globally prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic with his Morning Prayer services on YouTube, accompanied by beautiful gardens and curious cats. These services gave inspiration and pleasure to many thousands around the globe. Before becoming Canterbury's dean, he was Dean of Hereford 1992–2000. Educated at the University of Warwick and then at Oxford, he ministered in Shrewsbury, Salisbury, Tisbury and at Sherborne Abbey before his leadership of those two English Cathedrals.



Deborah Hailey, retiring FOCCUS Administrative Assistant

Debby Hailey, daughter of the Rev. John Harper who founded FOCCUS in 1993, stepped in as the part-time Administrative Assistant for the organization in 2008 after her father retired as Chair of the Board of Trustees. A life-long member of St. John's Episcopal Church, Lafayette Square, Washington, DC, Debby has been responsible for managing the administration of the Board, organizing its twice-yearly meetings, following through on correspondence, producing appeals and this newsletter, and completing necessary financial transactions. The contacts she made and the advice she gave rendered her contributions invaluable. After 16 years of devoted service to FOCCUS, Debby has decided to retire so she could spend more time with her grandchildren. Her wisdom, energy and spirit will be missed. Thank you, Debby!



Ralph Olson

Thank you, Debby, for your many years of devoted service to FOCCUS! During the 9 years that I've served as a Trustee/Treasurer, I always enjoyed working with you and will miss your always wise advice and professionalism. You kept the FOCCUS "train" running on time!

Sam Van Culin

Debby and the Harper family have made FOCCUS possible! Her father, the Rev. John Harper, founded it and her mother, Barbie Harper, supported it from the beginning. Debby herself took on the job of administrative secretary 16 years ago and has helped to build FOCCUS into the reality it is today. We are indebted to Debby and enormously grateful for her years of dedicated service and friendship!"

Mary Anne Grammer, incoming FOCCUS Administrative Assistant

Mary Anne Grammer, who splits her time between the Berkshires in Massachusetts and New York City, has been selected as the new part-time Administrative Assistant for FOCCUS. She brings some three decades of experience as a teacher and coordinator of special education, with a background in elementary through high school settings. Raised as a Roman Catholic, she discovered the Episcopal Church through her late husband. Mary Anne has since been active for many years in her home church, Grace Episcopal Church, Great Barrington, MA, as member of the Vestry and Clerk and leader of parish ministries. Her love of the Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church suit her well for her new responsibilities with FOCCUS.

Welcome, Mary Anne!



*FOCCUS has a new address: FOCCUS, C/O St. Thomas Church, 1 West 53rd St., New York, NY, 10019.
917-733-8882, administrator@canterburyus.org*

Canterbury, an early Anglo-Saxon Center of Leadership and Scholarship

By Powell Hutton

Two unlikely holy men, one from Anatolia and the other from North Africa, came to Anglo-Saxon England in 669 CE, forming a partnership that transformed the English Church through their leadership and organizational skills, and founding an internationally respected center of learning and scholarship at Canterbury.

Theodore, later St. Theodore of Tarsus, left his homeland for Constantinople, where he became fluent in Latin and Greek, studying among other subjects, interpretations of the Bible, Roman civil law, and Greek philosophy, as well as topics less familiar to us today—astrology, use of the horoscope, and how to compute Easter. In his late 50s, he arrived in Rome and met another gifted scholar, Adrian, later St. Adrian of Canterbury, some 30 years his junior.

Adrian was Abbot of a Benedictine monastery when Pope Vitalian asked him to become the Archbishop of Canterbury. Adrian demurred and recommended Theodore, to which the Pope consented on condition that Adrian become Theodore's companion, assistant, and advisor. So, in the spring of 668, with Theodore newly consecrated as Archbishop, the two set out for England. The journey took them over a year, in part because one of the local kings suspected Adrian of being a Greek emissary sent to stir up trouble with the warring Franks.

Once at Canterbury, Theodore found the English Church beset by bitterness and jealousies over jurisdictions and the controversy about how to schedule Easter. In spite of the Synod of Whitby of 664, which decreed conformity by following the Roman method of calculation, many churches had continued using an earlier Ionian (Irish) practice, which yielded different dates. Theodore abolished that practice.

He and Adrian were both commanding personalities and strong administrators, and they traveled widely throughout the island to impose order and reinvigorate Canterbury's authority. Church organization was out of balance. Many bishoprics were vacant. Dioceses varied in size, prestige and power, since they were usually coterminous with local kingdoms, and ones like Northumbria were many times larger than smaller ones. Theodore broke the Northumbrian see into four, provoking a major dispute with the bishop of York, one of many such that lingered between the two. Some 60 years later, the Venerable Bede wrote that Theodore "was the first Archbishop whom all the English obeyed."

Under their firm hands, scholarship at Canterbury became formally established. Theodore made Adrian the Abbot of the Monastery of Saints Peter and Paul (later St. Augustine's). Together, they established a school that provided instruction in both religious and secular subjects, in Latin and Greek, and in sacred music, a model for subsequent institutions they founded elsewhere. The Canterbury school attracted scholars far and wide and bore lasting fruit, producing priests, missionaries, bishops and archbishops with a profound influence on the subsequent development of England and its culture.

In a statement attributed to King Alfred the Great, two hundred years later, "wise men there were in the country, both laymen and ecclesiastics ... how the clergy in those happy times were diligent both to teach and to study, and how foreigners then came hither to acquire learning and wisdom." Canterbury provided the light and leadership for those "happy times."

Photo credits: Wikipedia and Franciscan Media



FOCCUS Returns to Canterbury

By The Rev. Dr. Robert Flanagan

We are delighted to report that FOCCUS made a pilgrimage to Canterbury Cathedral this March for the first time since before the COVID-19 pandemic. Over a dozen pilgrims spent a week (March 8-14) at our mother church. Led by board members Katherine Grieb, Robert Flanagan, and Bob's wife Lanie, the faithful pilgrims from across the US resided at Canterbury's Lodge, which had Cathedral views out each window. One pilgrim remarked how wonderful it was to open their bedroom curtains and find the magnificent Cathedral still there and beaming in the morning sunshine.

The days were full. Many pilgrims started each day with Morning Prayer and Eucharist, and after a sumptuous meal in the Lodge's restaurant, the pilgrims gathered for their daily activities. The pilgrims immersed themselves in spiritual and intellectual endeavors, learning more about various spiritual practices and the history and preservation of a centuries-old building. They visited St. Martin's Church, which dates back to the sixth century and was the locus of the founding of the Christian Church in England. The pilgrims also visited local Norman Churches, discovered more about Richard Hooker, and visited the Black Prince's tomb and artifacts within the Cathedral. Not surprisingly, they explored in depth the life and martyrdom of Thomas Becket. The stained-glass window restorers and the Cathedral's librarian fascinated the group with in-depth discussions about their unique work. The pilgrims also received daily spiritual guidance and activities, allowing them to richly explore their spiritual journeys in the shadow of or inside one of the Anglican Communion's most holy sites.

The pilgrimage has deepened and strengthened FOCCUS's relationship with Canterbury and its leadership. The pilgrims and their leaders had private receptions and discussions with Canterbury clergy and a fabulous dinner with Dean David Monteith. Such pilgrimages benefit FOCCUS as much as the pilgrims in that the work of Canterbury becomes tangible and real. The board better understands the needs of the Cathedral, and Canterbury's leadership knows the commitment and capability of its US friends.

Photos by Jeffrey Breitman



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stay@canterburycathedral.org

Website:

www.canterburycathedrallodge.org



Pilgrimage at Canterbury Cathedral

Torin Brown, Pilgrim Officer

I am happy and privileged to have recently been appointed as Pilgrim Officer at Canterbury Cathedral. Whilst studying Theology, I worked part time at the Cathedral as a Welcome Shepherd, which put me directly in touch with pilgrims visiting Canterbury.

From my personal experience of arriving at Compostela and therefore having sensitivities to how pilgrims might be feeling, I started greeting them, stamping their Pilgrim Passport, arranging a blessing for them, and taking a photo at the pilgrim stone in the Cathedral precincts. I was overwhelmed by their stories and experiences, and I am delighted to now be working at the heart of the pilgrim mission here.

"I have taken comfort and strength from the peace and fellowship of walking with people I love and thought about the many pilgrims who have gone before me."

A pilgrim on arrival at Canterbury Cathedral



Pilgrimage as a religious ritual to a sacred space is an ancient practice, that appears to be enjoying quite a renaissance in our post-pandemic, climate sensitive era. It can bridge the gap between the sacred and the profane in extraordinary places where the veil is believed to be especially thin. It is a practice that continues to exert influence because it provides a space where the big questions of life and death, and the suffering to which man is the tragic heir, can be offered up for profound contemplation.

People from all backgrounds seem to be turning back to the old ways in this yearning for meaning, and Cathedrals and shrines can represent the *axis mundi* for this. They seek and play a pivotal role in the transformational power of pilgrimage, because who can help but be moved by the transcendent mysteries of such spaces.

It is so exciting to hold this role, at what was once as big a pilgrim destination as Rome and Compostela in its medieval heyday. Over the next few months I will be featuring on BBC Radio interviews, hosting a pilgrimage exhibition, recording podcasts and of course, continuing to welcome pilgrims on arrival at the Cathedral, sharing our mission far and wide.

I am also keen to know more about pilgrim's motivations, so have been collecting data to help shape the mission at Canterbury, whilst also working with other cathedrals and strategic partners, to get a broad picture of pilgrimage across the UK. Pilgrimage is undoubtedly growing, and interestingly our findings so far show that the main reason for pilgrimage across the board is 'spirituality'.

Sanctuary and hope lie at the heart of the Cathedral's new strategic plan with the aim of being the premier site of pilgrimage in England, and my role here will help deliver that aim by raising the profile of pilgrimage and the pilgrim welcome here at Canterbury.'

Torin's post has only been made possible by the generosity of a donor and worshipper based in the US, and the Cathedral is incredibly grateful for their support.

Follow us on Instagram @canterburypilgrims.

Stay in the Loop! Want to be the first to know what's happening at FOCCUS? Updates, Pilgrimages, news from Canterbury Cathedral? Send your email address to administrator@canterburyus.org, and you'll be sure to stay in the Loop. FOCCUS will never share your email with anyone.

Welcome Sarah Harmer! Newly appointed director of Fundraising at Canterbury Cathedral.

FOCCUS welcomes Sarah Harmer! Sarah has been Director of Fundraising at Canterbury since December 2024. Sarah is thrilled to learn about the history and traditions of the Cathedral, as well as its ambitions for the future as the Cathedral embarks on the next chapter of its history and its new strategic plan.



Before coming to Canterbury, Sarah was the Director of Development and Audiences at the Wallace Collection in London for almost eleven years. While there, Sarah led fundraising and public engagement for the museum, overseeing the Development, Learning, Digital and Communications teams. Previously, Sarah worked within the University of Cambridge, first at Clare College and then at Selwyn College.

Sarah grew up in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia in a very small town, and went to Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania for university before moving to the UK with her husband.

Reach out to Sarah whenever you have plans to come to Canterbury and she'll show you what makes Canterbury special to her. Sarah.Harmer@canterbury-cathedral.org

Reflections on Canterbury Scholars' Program by The Rev. Eric Bailey

I am a recently ordained deacon and third year M.Div. student at Virginia Theological Seminary. In January of this year, I had the privilege of spending twelve days at Canterbury Cathedral, including one full day in London as part of the 2025 New Clergy Conference—often referred to as the Canterbury Scholars' Program. During my time in England, I became increasingly confident that Canterbury has something special to offer the Anglican Communion and the broader Christian world. It's a unique experience to be in the place where it all started.

The program offered participants the opportunity to interact with clergy from across the Anglican Communion and hear how they each experience our common tradition within their own cultural context. We learned from, and often disagreed with, each other; our discussions covered subjects like theology, music, liturgy, preaching and some of the social and pastoral issues facing the different provinces.

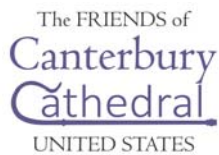
Every day at Canterbury included Morning Prayer, Holy Eucharist and Choral Evensong. Sunday mornings, there was the option of attending an early morning Eucharist using the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. The facilitators and guest speakers offered insightful lectures, group discussions and Bible Studies. Discussion topics included the role of discipleship in the modern world, the relationship between Culture and Scripture, Ecumenism, Creation Care and Canon Law. There were countless opportunities to bond as a group, from meals to chapel to evenings at the lodge.

I am grateful for the support this program has received, directly or indirectly, from the Friends of Canterbury Cathedral in the US (FOCCUS) and Virginia Theological Seminary's Center for Anglican Communion Studies (CACS); namely, for the generosity that makes this program possible. I have left feeling both challenged and inspired. This short trip across the pond has strengthened my sense of vocation and given me a greater appreciation for the work of the Anglican Communion, its networks and mission.

The Rev. Eric Bailey, Transitional Deacon, St. John's Church, Lafayette Square



*The Rev. Elizabeth Fellows, London,
The Rev. Solomon Olusanya, Nigeria,
The Rev. Eric Bailey, USA and The
Rev. Michael Battle, USA*



C/O St. Thomas Church
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New York, NY 10019

Becoming a Friend

Enclosed in this Newsletter you will find an envelope we hope you will use to become a member of Friends of Canterbury Cathedral in the United States.

You can also become a friend by copying and pasting
<https://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/get-involved/foccus/>
into your browser.

Membership includes such benefits as free admission to the Cathedral and personalized tours, notification of FOCCUS events, as well as priority consideration for a place on future pilgrimages. The Friends of Canterbury Cathedral in the United States (FOCCUS) is an independent 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. EIN: 76-0808684

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