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Friends of Canterbury Cathedral in the United States

March 2021

Dear Friends,

I looked back with some amusement at Dean Robert Willis' letter from a year ago, in which he outlined all the great events that were planned for 2020 — including the decennial Lambeth Conference. How optimistic all the plans seemed, and how much has changed since what now seem like those days of innocence!

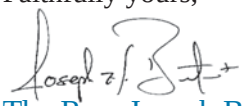
And yet, it is also remarkable how much has remained constant. In a recent online message from the Dean, he emphasized that, "At this holy place, our life of prayer continues." He went on to recite how the daily rhythms of Morning Prayer, Evensong, and the Sunday Eucharist are still very much in place, albeit by livestream.

This consistency even in the midst of adversity reminds me of other similar stories, such as how the life of prayer continued in the Cathedral even in the worst days of the blitz, when it would have been easy to cower in fear. But there is something about the courage and determination with which the clergy and people of Canterbury keep their prayers going, that evokes that same confidence of the psalmist, who wrote in Psalm 62, "For God alone my soul in silence waits; truly, my hope is in him."

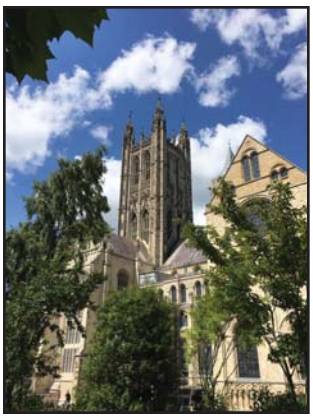
In these difficult and uncertain times, such resoluteness on the part of the Cathedral community is an emblem to us all of the even greater steadfastness of God, the one who is our stronghold "so that we shall not be shaken." And perhaps this is the mission given to Canterbury at this moment: simply to be there, as a sign of hope and confidence to us all.

So as we all look forward to the day when we may be together once again physically in such sacred precincts as Canterbury, I invite you to join me in continuing to support the life that is still very much active there, even in these times of necessary closure. And with that invitation also comes the warm encouragement to join in the Cathedral's prayer life yourself by going to www.canterbury-cathedral.org. You might even as an extra get a horticultural lesson thrown in by the Dean from his garden!

Faithfully yours,



The Rev. Joseph Britton



Join FOCCUS' Facebook

Friends of Canterbury Cathedral in the United States has a Facebook group. Facebook, the world's largest social networking site, allows users to share ideas, discussions and photos with people of similar interest.

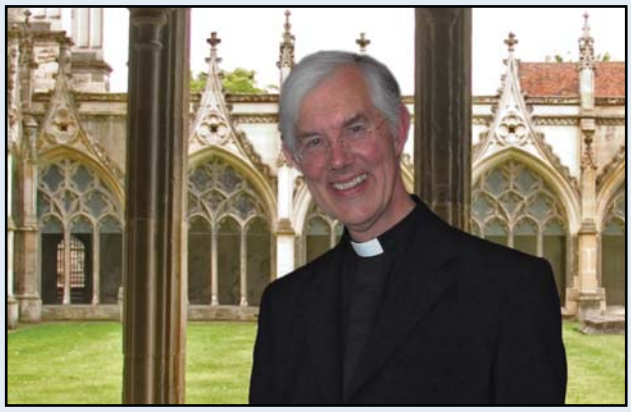
The FOCCUS group is a great way to keep up with the latest news from Canterbury Cathedral. The creators search news sites to bring you news of interest concerning the Cathedral. In addition you can post your thoughts and share photos of your trips to Canterbury.

If you are not a member of Facebook please consider joining and then become a member of the FOCCUS group. If you are already a member of Facebook, type Friends of Canterbury Cathedral into the site's search box.

www.facebook.com
http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=90862204701&ref=mf

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

The Very Reverend Dr. Robert A. Willis



Looking back over the past twelve months and trying to remember what life was like in January 2020 have become increasingly difficult. At the time, we were optimistically planning for all our Thomas Becket activities to be ready for the two great anniversaries – the 800th anniversary of the consecration of his new shrine in July 1220, and the 850th anniversary of his martyrdom in December 1170. We were also planning the decennial Lambeth Conference of bishops of the Anglican Communion here in Canterbury at the end of July 2020. Words like lockdown, social distancing, and family 'bubble' were not in our regular vocabulary, and self-isolating was not a concept with which we were familiar. The year that unfolded saw the cancellation or postponement of all these planned events, and the new terms became part of our daily vocabulary.

Different nations had different experiences and timetables of partial or total lockdown for periods of time as the year proceeded, but the need to combat the pandemic became a task shared by the whole human race. It has meant that travelling to be together physically has largely been replaced both locally and internationally by virtual communication, and our patterns of life and worship have changed accordingly. Meetings by 'Zoom', 'Microsoft Teams', and the like have become commonplace, and worship on-line has become more common than gathering together in our churches.

We have tried here at Canterbury to continue patterns of worship on-line daily, and I am very aware of how many of you each day join me for Morning Prayer or the canons for Evening Prayer, either through the Cathedral website or through our YouTube channel. Of course, I know that this will never feel the same as being together, but it does have the advantage of crossing national boundaries right across the world and being accessible whenever people are ready to watch in their different time zones.

Like all organizations, the Cathedral has found a financial challenge in the lack of visitors, the dearth of commercial activity in the Cathedral Lodge & Shop, and the absence of events in the building itself. It is very difficult to make plans when the stop/start nature of lockdowns defies guesswork. On the other hand, we are in good heart and are constantly encouraged by the flow of international gratitude for the daily services. We realise just how many 'friends' are out there daily engaging with us in their thousands, and we want so much to thank each of you for staying connected, for your contributions, and for your personal messages of appreciation.

This is a time when we need to encourage each other so we can come together through the difficult months ahead and emerge at the end, not only with thanksgiving, but also with a sense of new lessons learned and new ways of communicating the good news of Jesus Christ right across the world.

ARCHBISHOP THOMAS CRANMER, A FOUNDING FATHER OF ANGLICANISM

By Powell Hutton



King Henry VIII of England, remembered for his many wives and his break of the Church from Rome, had many helpers. Hilary Mantel, in her trilogy of Thomas Cromwell, has given us a rich portrait of the time's political currents, and those who piloted the waters had to have quick wits and strong constitutions … and a little luck.

One of these was Thomas Cranmer. Born in the Midlands, he spent three decades at Cambridge University as a preacher and biblical scholar. Cardinal Wolsey selected him to be a diplomat in Europe, and on the Continent, Cranmer saw the strains and possibilities of the Reformation. They were lessons and contacts he maintained throughout his life.

Cranmer helped argue successfully at the Holy See for the annulment of Henry's first marriage to Catherine of Aragon, after which his rise was rapid. In 1532 Henry appointed him Archbishop of Canterbury, where the issue of preserving royal (as opposed to papal) supremacy over the Church was paramount. As Archbishop, he was responsible for establishing the basic doctrinal and liturgical structure for the new Church, and his work in that regard is largely how we remember him today.

Because of the power struggles during Henry's rule, most of his work was done under Edward VI's short reign of 1547-1553. Cranmer changed canon law, composed articles of faith, and was the key mind and hand in developing *The Book of Common Prayer.* He changed doctrine and discipline in multiple areas, eliminating celibacy of clergy (he himself was married twice), rejecting transubstantiation, and downgrading images and the veneration of saints in places of worship. He drew up articles of faith that went through multiple variants, until the *Thirty-nine Articles* were approved in 1562, six years after his death.

The Book of Common Prayer is his primary legacy to us today, the first complete liturgical guide in the English vernacular. It laid out the form of services for daily, Sunday and occasional worship. Evensong, a masterpiece, is the most regularly performed service in the Anglican Church. Cranmer was not the only author, but his was the guiding hand, and his is the incomparable language that pervades it. His scholarship informed breadth of detail and the color of the imagery. His collects are jewels of prayer.


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Photo credits: Wikipedia

As Diarmaid MacCulloch informs us in the majestic *Christianity—The First Three Thousand Years,* Cranmer's words have been recited more than any of Shakespeare's speeches or soliloquies. *"Fragments remain even with the unchurched: 'for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part', or from another resonant moment in human experience, 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust'."*

Cranmer did not live to see the flowering of his work. Mary I (Bloody Mary) reimposed Catholicism in England when she ascended the throne in 1553. He spent his last two years in prison and, despite recanting his faith which should have led to exoneration, Mary was adamant that he be burned at the stake as a heretic. In his final public appearance in 1556, he renounced his recantations. As the flames swept around him, he first thrust "that unworthy hand" that had signed his earlier statements into the heart of the fire. It took Elizabeth's accession in 1558 to solidify what Cranmer had initiated.

VOICES FROM CANTERBURY

Joanna Luck, Head of Fundraising
by the Reverend Dr. Anne Gavin Ritchie, FOCCUS Board Member

1. You are now the Head of Fundraising for Canterbury Cathedral. How are your duties different from your previous role in Development?

Like so many organisations over the past year, the Cathedral has been through huge change in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. We went through a management restructure to help facilitate better communication and planning, and to ensure that we are 'fit for purpose' for the future. I joined the Cathedral as Head of Development in July 2019, and my role focused on leading the Cathedral Trust, which is a separate legal entity raising funds for Cathedral projects. The Trust had previously raised significant sums for The Canterbury Journey and Grand Organ Project, for example. Following the recent restructure, I secured the new role of Head of Fundraising. This has a broader remit, so as well as leading the Trust team, I also now have responsibility for all donors to the Cathedral, and the overarching Fund-raising Strategy. I am keen on building closer relationships with our supporters – whatever the size of their donation – and demonstrating how their support really does have an impact. I also sit on the Cathedral's newly streamlined management team.

2. What most energizes you in this new role? What are the greatest challenges you face?

I work with a fantastic team – we enjoy each other's company and work brilliantly together. That's really important to me. I still pinch myself that I'm working at the Cathedral – a place that I visited as a child and which is visible from almost everywhere in Canterbury. What an honour! The building itself is inspirational, but so too are the people that work here. In Fundraising, we take pride in helping to make their achievements possible. The challenges are many – especially at the moment, raising funds is hard. There are many good causes that need help, and people are struggling financially. But this makes it all the more important that we tell the Cathedral's stories – 1,400 years' worth – and remind people that we are there for them.

3. How does your spiritual life support you in your work?



I joined the Parish of St Martin and St Paul in Canterbury several years ago. St Martin's is also part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site with the Cathedral, being St Augustine's first chapel founded in 597AD. It is the most amazing place, with the most amazing people. I now sit on the Parochial Church Council so have a better understanding of Parish life. I was confirmed at the Cathedral in 2017, shortly after I was married at St Martin's. You don't have to have a stated faith to work at the Cathedral, but I think mine helps me appreciate what takes place inside the building, and between people. As a leader, I hope I demonstrate fairness and compassion which are shaped by my faith. I often wonder to myself if Jesus walked into the Cathedral Precincts today, what would He think of what we are doing? That is a useful guide, I find!

THE DEAN'S GIFT TO US

By Ralph E. Olson



We have been living through a very difficult time as we continue to cope with the constraints imposed on us by the pandemic. Many of our churches remain closed or have severe attendance limitations. Those of us who enjoyed the church socials, fellowship gatherings and other in-person activities have now adjusted to becoming Zoom or YouTube savvy in order to continue to participate in such events.

I have found that during the past several months, I have been watching Dean Willis' Morning Prayer service each day as a way of centering my focus on the day ahead, and feel like I'm a more active participant in the Anglican fellowship throughout the world. I generally access the Canterbury website after breakfast, type in Morning Prayer and today's date, and spend a half hour or so watching and listening to the Dean as he leads us in Morning Prayer.

Each service begins with the Collect, followed by a Psalm, and then a New Testament reading. Following the reading, the Dean will give a brief reflection on the reading, and then conclude with prayers and some very interesting information about various anniversaries and historical events which occurred on that date. Depending on the weather, the Dean holds the services either from various places in the Deanery Garden, or inside the Deanery.

The Dean is usually accompanied during the service by one or more of his cats, including Monkey, Leo or Tiger. Or he may be in the company of his pigs, Winston, Clemmie and their piglets. He might also be surrounded by a group of chickens, together with the rooster, Russell Crowe! I have heard people say that keeping up with these creatures is one of the highlights of the services!

I commend this service to you, and know that you will find it to be of great help to you in your spiritual life and a way of helping you better connect to Cathedral activities and its ministries throughout the world.

We ask you to continue to be generous with your contributions to FOCCUS, and keep the Cathedral and its clergy in your thoughts and prayers.

INTRODUCING CANTERBURY CATHERAL'S NEW HEAD GARDENER

Steven Edney



Steve Edney and his partner Lou in their home garden.

I am a man of Kent, a gardener through and through, friendly and kind, but also gritty and determined. I spend my life working the land.

I grew up in one of the most deprived areas in the country, where life was hard as a youngster. Perhaps the reason I turned to the soil was my grandparents, both of whom were keen gardeners. One had turned their modest semi-detached back garden into patch to grow fruit, flowers and vegetables, all crammed into a small space. The other had a farm that was growing on a scale bewildering to a boy, and I was always tasked with jobs when visiting either.

My curiosity for plants, gardens and the outdoors followed me into adolescence. We were lucky enough at King Ethelbert's, my secondary school in Birchington, to have an environmental studies lab, which I embraced wholeheartedly. On leaving school, I worked at the Hadlow College of Horticulture. I was hooked straight away, surrounded by enthusiastic, talented horticulturists all of whom had a love for the natural world. Then I went on to study arboriculture at Merrist Wood College in Surrey, where I continued to hone my skills as both a gardener and a tree surgeon. I have worked all my subsequent gardening career in Kent, from the Weald of Kent to North Kent, but mostly I have gardened in East Kent, near my family farm and with my four children looking on with curiosity.

This challenging work and my commitment have led me to work on many exciting projects: plant trials with the Royal Horticultural Society, show gardens at Chelsea (where I have won 4 gold medals and a "best in show"), community projects in deprived areas, and more recently, as a member of the RHS Herbaceous Committee. For 15 years, I was the head gardener at the Salutation Garden in Sandwich, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. It became my plant playground, and I trained many new gardeners there.

Much is now changing at the Cathedral, from the new precinct area to renovation work on the building itself. My hope as Canterbury Cathedral's new head gardener is to create gardens that are home to both people and wildlife. We will start by carrying out biodiversity studies to see what we have now and how we can improve this home for all living things. We want to use plants to create romance and beauty around the already beautiful Cathedral and, over the coming years, to embellish all the green spaces in the grounds.

I am happy to use this occasion to simply say hello to you, our friends and supporters in the USA, from all the Cathedral's gardeners and me.

FRIENDS *of*
CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL
in the UNITED STATES

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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. 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.

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