

foccus

Friends of Canterbury Cathedral in the United States

March 2022

Dear Friends,

In light of Dean Robert Willis' announced retirement, there is much to reflect on regarding what he has taught us not just about Canterbury Cathedral, but also the ways in which it instructs our Christian faith generally. I have long marveled at his unique ability to read the building as a metaphor of faith, and want to offer by way of gratitude one example of what I have learned from him.

One day over tea in the deanery, Robert talked with me about how pilgrims who have the good fortune to spend several days in residence at Canterbury often find themselves drawn to a particular chapel or corner of the Cathedral that becomes a personal favorite—a place that is a quiet, centering refuge amidst all the other activity of the Precincts.

Some are drawn to the silent recesses of the crypt. Others are drawn to chapels with particularly compelling themes, such as the Chapel of the Martyrs of Our Time in the east end. Still others are drawn to the soaring vaults and dramatic vistas of the Quire.

Personally, I find myself most drawn to the Chapel of St. Anselm, located just off the south aisle of the Quire. The architecture is beautifully Romanesque, and the space is bathed in a special quality of light that streams in through its expansive south-facing windows.

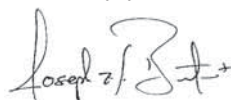
In the 2021 video series, “The A-Z of Canterbury Cathedral,” Precentor Max Kramer began with this chapel, describing it as evoking the “intellectual emptiness of pure light.” (This wonderful series, featuring people from throughout the Cathedral community, is available on YouTube.) The Anselm Chapel’s simplicity and pureness, Kramer noted, reminds us that God’s light is “the illumination by which we can see everything else.” Indeed, as a constant reminder of the mystery that lies within all things, I made the desktop image on my computer a photo I took of evening light reflecting off the carved stone of the chapel’s apse.

Even more striking to me, however, is the marble altar that dominates the space, given in 2006 as a gift by the people of the Regione Autonoma Valle d’Aosta in Italy, Anselm’s birthplace. Created by Stephen Cox, the altar is formed from the green marble of Aosta: a sharp rectangular block with interplays of void and solid, strikingly marked by striations of white that have uncanny cruciform overtones.

The abstractness of the form, set within the delicacy of the Romanesque architecture and in the ever-evolving light of this spiritual space, is for me among the most powerful “icons” anywhere in the Cathedral—and exemplary of Dean Willis’ architectural vision. But of course, the point is that the Cathedral is filled with many such images of the divine, and each visitor is invited by the space to find a personal place of sacred refuge somewhere within.

For Canterbury is not just one thing, it is many things; and so it is something unique to every person who visits, prays, or worships there. Dean Willis has helped countless visitors to see and experience that layering of meaning in ways that they might otherwise have overlooked. Yet it is precisely that transcendent depth that keeps me returning, both in person and in mind—and what has drawn so many people over the years to its ineffable spaces.

Faithfully yours,



The Rev. Joseph Britton
Interim Chair



NEWS ON FOCCUS TRUSTEES

Gideon L. K. Pollach is a returning trustee to the board of FOCCUS. Gideon is the rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Cold Spring Harbor, New York, a parish in the Diocese of Long Island. Prior to his work on Long Island, Gideon was for many years the Head Chaplain at the Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Virginia and led the mission and service learning programs there. He was ordained a priest while serving at St. Bartholomew's Church, New York City, by former FOCCUS chair, the Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee.

Through his association with the Canterbury Scholars program, Gideon has been deeply connected to many provinces in the Anglican Communion through common mission and ministry, notably in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, India, and Kenya.

Gideon is happy to return to the FOCCUS board in this critical time in the life of the church and of the Communion as we all seek faithful pathways beyond the constraints of this COVID pandemic. He is a regular and enthusiastic participant in the Cathedral's Garden congregation.



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Join FOCCUS's Facebook

Friends of Canterbury Cathedral in the United States has a Facebook group. Facebook, the world's largest social networkingsite, 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 in the United States into the site's search box.

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DEAN OF CANTERBURY TO RETIRE ON EVE OF 75th BIRTHDAY



The Dean of Canterbury, The Very Revd Dr Robert Willis, has announced that he will cease to be Dean at midnight on 16 May 2022, the eve of his 75th birthday.

Dean Robert was installed in July 2001, and during the coronavirus pandemic he has become familiar to online audiences worldwide via his [daily Morning Prayer videos](#) from The Deanery at

Canterbury Cathedral – and the impromptu appearances of cats Leo and Tiger.

The standard retirement age for clergy is 70 but Dean Robert was granted permission by the Archbishop of Canterbury to continue in office until 75, the maximum age permitted by Church law.

Speaking of his time at Canterbury, Dean Robert said:

These 21 years have been exceptionally happy and fulfilling, and I shall miss Canterbury greatly.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and I had hoped that there could be some kind of extension for me to cover the Lambeth Conference, which takes place in late July and August this year, but, unfortunately, this option has been ruled legally impossible.

In looking forward to the next few months, I'm hoping until Easter that the normal course of cathedral life can resume here and that all farewells can be left until after that time. Until Easter, we will still keep our commitment day by day to the Garden Congregation across the world, which has been a feature of ministry during the pandemic. I am sorry that we will not be here to see the full opening up of cathedral life as the months of Covid restrictions come to an end.

There will be time to express heartfelt affection and gratitude to all who have been part of our life here and across the world during these happy years, but that will be for later as we prepare to say goodbye.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Revd Justin Welby, who was installed by Dean Robert at Canterbury Cathedral in 2013, said:

Dean Robert has been one of the most exceptional deans of the post-war period – overseeing Canterbury Cathedral's life of worship, prayer and witness with creativity and imagination. He is deeply loved not just at the Cathedral but across the Diocese of Canterbury, the Church of England, the Anglican Communion and far beyond.

Over the course of the pandemic, he has brought the comfort and hope of Jesus Christ to many thousands of people around the world through his daily Morning Prayer videos. Dean Robert has been a faithful, prayerful friend to our whole family and we will miss him greatly. In turn, we will be praying for him and all those who have supported him over many years, as he prepares for retirement and the next stage of his ministry.



Photo credit: Canterbury Cathedral

EDWARD, THE BLACK PRINCE

By Powell Hutton

Canterbury Cathedral is the final resting place for 44 individuals in tombs and marked memorials. Most were former Archbishops of Canterbury, the most prominent being Thomas Beckett, murdered there in 1170. One king is interred there, Henry IV of England, as is his Queen, Joan of Navarre. Among the several nobles, however, one name stands out, Edward, the Black Prince. He has come down through history and legend as one of the greatest of English knights and a model of medieval chivalry. His tomb bears witness to his warrior roots, complete with surcoat, helmet, shield and gauntlets. His hands are clasped in eternal prayer.



Edward was born at Woodstock in 1330, the oldest son of King Edward III. As heir to the throne, he was designated Prince of Wales in 1343. He died relatively young in 1376, before his father, probably of dysentery acquired while campaigning in Spain. So, while he never became king, his surviving 10-year-old son did, as Richard II. It was fortunate that Edward showed early interest and aptitude in military skills, because his father was deeply involved in Europe's Hundred Years War.

This long-lasting conflict arose from continuing dynastic rivalries over territories in France. As a consequence of the Norman invasion and cross-channel marriages, English monarchs at the time held major lands on the continent, often with conflicting allegiances. Edward III, for example, was a sovereign in his own right, yet simultaneously as Duke of Aquitaine, he held lands in vassalage to the French crown. During continental succession issues, Edward even made a contested claim for the French throne. Of the three most significant battles in the war, Prince Edward took part in two of them, at Crecy in 1346 and at Poitiers 1356. At the third, Agincourt in 1415, the English were led by Henry V.

It was at the first, Crecy, that the teenaged Edward "won his spurs" commanding the right wing. The battle is a celebrated milestone in military history as the defeat of the finest of European cavalry by sturdy and disciplined English longbowmen, although outnumbered by 3 to 1. At Poitiers, ten years later, Prince Edward led the English to another victory that included the capture of French King John II. A decade later in Aquitaine, Edward became incensed that Limoges, previously under English suzerainty, had switched sides to the French. Edward ordered a vengeful siege and, at the town's capitulation, he ordered key citizens and town leaders put to death, an action that became known as the Limoges massacre, of perhaps as many as 3,000 souls.

When back in England with his family at court, Edward was much lauded for his military achievements and his gallantry. He and his father presided over and were active at jousts and festivals. He always wore black armor, carried a black shield and rode a black horse, perhaps the origin of his being called the Black Prince, though that name didn't surface in his lifetime. Throughout his life, he was called Edward Woodstock. The French may have called him the Black Prince, but for different reasons.

He has been portrayed in plays, films, novels, statuary, paintings, comics and games. A British naval cruiser named the HMS Black Prince served in World War I. The first two lines of the epitaph inscribed around his effigy read: "Such as thou art, sometime was I. Such as I am, such shalt thou be."

Photo Credit: Wikipedia

VOICES FROM CANTERBURY -- Christine Pascall, Visitor Operations Manager

by the Reverend Dr. Anne Gavin Ritchie

1. Your title "Visitor Operations Manager" suggests a complex and challenging role at Canterbury. What is the scope of your position?

A Visitor Operations Manager is another term for "Jack of all Trades, master of none". My team is responsible for all visitors coming to the Cathedral. From tour groups, individuals, families, pilgrims, those who want to do a midday recital, a guided tour or to hold their own service, our mission statement is "to show people Jesus" and that is what we do, through history, through community, and the sharing of knowledge. We were once a Benedictine monastery and "to welcome everyone as if they were Christ" is still our role. I manage 300 volunteers that include welcomers, chaplains, guides and assistants, all who help to give our visitors a special experience. I have two administrators that help deal with the multiple bookings and enquiries that we have. A pre-requisite for any member of the visits team, whether paid staff or volunteers, is that they have to "sparkle" and I am delighted to say that all my team are a real set of "bobby dazzlers."

2. How does facilitating welcoming visitors/pilgrims to Canterbury Cathedral enhance your own spiritual journey? How has the pandemic affected you and your mission?

I had never considered myself a spiritual person. I have always said my prayers at night but considered myself to be too practical to be spiritual. How wrong I was. When I came here I had no idea of the impact this place would have on me. In these difficult times it has been a source of strength. Sadly we lost some of our volunteers, and not just to Covid. Usually you would attend their funeral, talk to their family and friends and there would be a chance to share memories and sense of loss. With Covid restrictions that wasn't possible and the chance to go and light a candle in a place of peace and care has been such a blessing.

When pilgrims let us know when they are arriving at the Cathedral, we take great care to ensure they are welcomed by one of our chaplains and by us at the Gate. The excitement and the joy in their faces is wonderful. You feel so privileged to be part of their journey.

Lastly there is nothing better than after a long day going to Evensong. As you sit in the silence waiting for the Service to begin, the cares of the day melt away. There is such a sense of continuity, of belonging, of just being. I am a very lucky person to do what I love and hopefully pass some of that passion and joy to all who come here.

3. Beyond the Precincts of the Cathedral, what activities most delight and inspire you?

Very interesting question! I am a very simple creature. I am lucky enough to be able to fill my time with three beautiful grandsons and our first little granddaughter, just four months old. I have a garden that brings me peace, pleasure and frustration – in equal measures. I enjoy countryside walking, swimming in the sea and building sandcastles. I would love to say something cultural, clever or in-depth. But I do promise you this - if ever you are passing, fancy kicking off your shoes, lying on the grass enjoying a glass of wine, then my door is always open!



A HISTORY OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL LODGE AND INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTER

During the year 1965 the Cathedrals Advisory Commission visited Canterbury Cathedral and assisted in the ongoing debate as to which space within the Precincts to develop into an Education Centre for the Cathedral's ministry to visitors of all ages. It was decided that the south close of the Precincts that had been developed upon post-World War Two damage would be an ideal location for the proposed education centre. This was practical as the visitors to the cathedral largely remained on the southern side of the precincts, and the buildings that existed there did not harmonise with the Cathedral or its surrounding buildings.

Plans drawn up in 1988 set out a vision for an Education Centre designed to incorporate an audio-visual theatre, rooms for the Schools Department, and lecture and seminar rooms. This design included the site of the Campanile Mound, which would require archaeological investigation and excavation in order to be built upon. For this reason, despite the imaginative nature of the plans, the 1988 design was discarded due to the issues that it would raise both logistically and financially.



A successful partnership was created with Whitfield Partners in 1990 when Sir William Whitfield was approached to assess the possibilities of the Southern side of the precincts. It was at this time that the second element was added to the project – that a residential section could be created to host academics and delegates for conferences and theology courses. The residential section could also be host for pilgrimage groups and other activities that serve the Anglican Communion. The residential ‘wing’ would have a national and international ministry through its provisions, while the education centre would be available for the ministry within the locality and the wider diocese.

By 1995 Whitfield had drawn up proposal plans for the new build within the Cathedral precincts and, after some time of careful consideration and deliberation by various bodies (for example; the Royal Fine Art Commission, the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, and the Canterbury City Planning Department), a financial funding appeal was launched in October 1995.

Following this launch of a public campaign, gifts soon came in for the project, and the intense fund-raising campaign was pursued in the United Kingdom and North America. Canterbury Cathedral had the help of Reverend Dr. John Harper, former rector of St. John's, Lafayette Square, Washington DC, and in Canada, the help of The Canadian Friends of Canterbury. An application was also made to the National Heritage Lottery Fund, with a grant being awarded for £2.25 million towards the building of the centre.

Sir William Whitfield (1920-2019) was the main architect on the project and designed the centre to fit with its surroundings in the precincts. Whitfield studied architecture at Newcastle University and

had designed several buildings on the university's campus in the subsequent years. From 1985 to 1990, Whitfield had held the position of Surveyor of the Fabric of St Paul's Cathedral. In 1981, Sir William designed the new chapter house for St Albans Cathedral as well as the Mappa Mundi Library at Hereford Cathedral in 1996.

The lead work and design of the Centre main auditorium reflects the lead work of the Cathedral's Water Tower and the Cathedral's Apse. The audio-visual building is octagonal in shape thus mirroring the octagonal shape of the Water Tower on the northern side of the Cathedral. The was set in Purbeck ragstone and stock brick along with French limestone, creating the beautiful building that we know and love today.

The building of what became known as 'phase one', which was made up of the Education Centre now known as the International Study Centre, began in 1998 and was opened by His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent on the 18th January 2000. The completed Centre assists the Cathedral's ministry to schoolchildren, students, and visitors as well as providing an appropriate setting and environment for use by the wider community within the Anglican Community.

The Centre was fully completed in 2002 with the addition of the residential wing of the complex. This building project is the largest undertaken at Canterbury Cathedral since the completion of Bell Harry Tower in the 16th century.

The design of the second phase for the International Study Centre incorporates 29 bedrooms, all of which have a view to the Cathedral, a dining room seating 60, a common room and a library. While the design and overall progress of phase two were relatively straightforward, it was not without its problems. The main issue that the contractors had was access for deliveries of materials as there was no direct road access. Following archaeological investigations, a roadway was inserted linking the new site to the Oaks and along the back of Burgate house. The Centre uses this roadway for deliveries to the Cathedral Lodge daily and its use is reminiscent of the medieval lanes lying behind Burgate.

Materials used for the construction of phase two included handmade bricks for the majority of the infrastructure, oak window and doorframes, and lead for the roof. The internal design of the residential wing of the Centre has a distinct modern feeling to it providing a comfortable experience for any guests.

The International Study Centre opened its doors, following an exciting trial weekend with volunteers, to the Primate of the Anglican Communion who visited for a week in April 2002.

Since 2002 the International Study Centre has evolved to adapt to the changing needs of Canterbury Cathedral, and to become an important financial contributor to Dean and Chapter. This is in addition to delivering the original aims of the complex. It is now re-branded as Canterbury Cathedral Lodge, reflecting that, as well as a place of study for the Anglican Communion, it also opens its doors to the general public as a hotel and conference and events venue. We now welcome pilgrims and visitors from all over the globe in their journey to Canterbury. This is in addition to being an important local asset, hosting business and educational conferences, private events and wedding receptions. We expect the Lodge to continue to change and evolve in the years to come, in support of the aims and ministry of Canterbury Cathedral.

Canterbury Cathedral Lodge is delighted to welcome pilgrims from the US to stay in Canterbury. Please do visit our website at www.canterburycathedrallodge.org for more information.

We can be reached at stay@canterburycathedrallodge.org for any enquiries, and to make bedroom reservations.



FRIENDS *of*
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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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