A Drumhead Altar

A drumhead altar is assembled at the beginning of the Armed Forces Day open air service in Green Dragon Square in the city centre. It serves as a focus for all those gathered. In the 1700s, when soldiers were about to go into battle, drumhead altars were assembled as places for gathering, reflection in the face of difficult times ahead, and for remembering fallen comrades. Lacking any means of transport to take the soldiers to church, the Regimental Padre would conduct a service in the field and use the Regimental drums, piled neatly, and draped with appropriate colours (national or regimental flags, for example) to create a platform upon which he could place a Bible, a cross, bread and wine, to conduct a formal service.

This type of altar creates sacred space “in the field” during armed conflict, and now in public places like Green Dragon Square. As drums fall silent they become an altar table where the sacrifice of Jesus is remembered and enacted in broken bread and wine that is shared. It is a table of meeting where God and humanity meet, where earth touches heaven. It is a ‘thin place’, as Lord George MacLeod described the sacred space of Iona off the west coast of Scotland. This was the place on the edge of things from where Columba and his followers evangelised northern Britain in the 7th century. Drumhead altars were also places on the edge, for people who stood in the thin place between life and death.

You will remember the child’s question at the dinner table: ‘Where is God?’
‘God is everywhere, little one.’
‘Is God here?’
‘Yes, God is here.’
‘Is God in this cup?’
‘...Yes.’
And the child covers the cup with her plate and says, ‘Gotcha.’

God is not confined to the container of a church building. We know this because we experience and meet with God in all sorts of places – in a conversation, in a place of beauty, as we pray or read, as we contemplate a painting… I wonder where you were conscious of experiencing God recently in a place outside the Cathedral building? What is it that made that space sacred?

Worshipping in the Grand Hall invites that question for us as a Cathedral community – what is it that makes the space sacred on a Sunday? We are also discovering that a shop unit in the Highcross where the choirs sang at Christmas, and Swithland Woods at a Together with service in the Spring can be sacred spaces.

In the hills near Limerick in Ireland there is a ‘mass rock’ where Catholics met to celebrate the mass under the Penal Laws of 1695 and in Cromwell’s campaign. In the Staffordshire Moors there is a chasm used as a secret place of worship for Lollards, reforming Christians who were opposed to many practices of the Roman Catholic church and who were persecuted for their beliefs. These places became sacred for Christians gathering to worship and to remember Jesus, and maybe our relocating outside our cathedral doors is an echo of Christian experience before us.
In the ancient story of the patriarch Jacob dreaming the ladder between heaven and earth whilst on the run from his family, he wakes up and takes the stone that has served as a pillow with the words, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it!’ And he was afraid, and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’ (Genesis 28:16-17).

Our scriptures, our tradition and our experience remind us that, there is nowhere that we can go where God is not.

```
Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your right hand shall lead me...
even the darkness is not dark to you...
```

Psalm 139:7–12

This is good news as we consider the weeks news of deaths at sea – whether it is five or five hundred – each has been noticed and grieved by God, each person still within reach of God and held in sacred space. It is good news as people gather in Green Dragon Square, and as we gather week by week in the Grand Hall inviting the Spirit of God to meet us in our day to day.

```
O thou who camest from above
the fire celestial to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart!
```

Charles Wesley

Canon Karen Rooms  Acting Dean of Leicester
News from Leicester Cathedral

Armed Forces Day

The Bishop of Loughborough, Saju Muthalaly, and The Revd Canon Karen Rooms, Acting Dean of Leicester, will be leading the Service for Armed Forces Day this Saturday at 1.00pm in Green Dragon Square (behind Leicester Market).

A 250-strong parade will make its way from Jubilee Square at 12.15pm to Green Dragon Square before the service, which will conclude with a flypast by a Lancaster Bomber at around 1.30pm.

Full details are available [here](#).

Diocesan Vacancy

The Shaped By God Together Programme Officer role is vacant following the resignation of the previous post-holder. This is a role that is fully funded by the national church for three years and involves being part of the team running the process of forming Minster Communities across the diocese. All the information about the role is available on our [website](#).

I would be grateful if you could share this as widely as possible, particularly in any networks or with contacts who may not otherwise be closely connected with the diocese already.

It is an ideal role for someone who would like to develop their project management skills, who is energised by enabling good processes and can work well within complex systems with an eye for detail. We are able to offer funding and support towards professional project management qualification or equivalent. I am happy to have conversations with anyone who might be interested.

Claire Bampton
Diocesan Programme Manager
Cathedral Walking Group

Summer is here and it’s time to enjoy the sunshine, so, mark your diary for Thursday 6 July when the Cathedral Walking Group will be visiting St Peter and St Paul’s Church at Preston, Rutland at approximately 2.00 pm.

But first, those who wish to join me for lunch will meet at the Horse and Jockey Public House, St Marys Road, Manton, Rutland, LE15 8SU.

A table has been booked and we are best to pre-order our lunch, but the pub is about to change its menu so a copy will be forwarded as soon as we can to all who book in.

This church is a delight, from its fine Norman arches, the beautiful chancel and its many interesting features this church deserves a visit. The afternoon sun lighting up the chancel through the southern windows is a fine sight. Interested? Book in now by sending an email to Mick.McQuade@ntlworld.com

After the visit we will go for a short ramble around local footpaths for about 1½ hours.

As usual, this is a pick-and-mix event, pick the bit(s) that you want to do.

Mick McQuade

Cathedral peregrine rescued

One of our young peregrine falcons needed a helping hand after flying the nest and getting stuck in Jubilee Square.

She flew to the ground but was not strong enough to fly back up, so members of Leicestershire and Rutland Ornithological Society took her home.

"The urge to fly is very, very strong, but sometimes they leave too early, before the wings are strong enough to give them enough lift to get off the ground," said Jim Graham, who runs the peregrine project.

Read more on BBC News.
## Services this week

While the Cathedral is closed for building works, our services take place in St Martins House (Sunday mornings) and in St Nicholas' Church, Leicester (Monday to Friday). The Cathedral will also be Together with other churches on some Sunday afternoons.

All are welcome to our services. Services of Morning Prayer are also live-streamed.

### MONDAY 26 JUNE

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>(St Nicholas)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Choral Evensong</td>
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### TUESDAY 27 JUNE

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<td>5.30pm</td>
<td>Evening Prayer</td>
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### SATURDAY 1 JULY

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.00pm</td>
<td>Ordination of Priests</td>
<td>(St Mary’s Church, Melton Mowbray)</td>
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### SUNDAY 2 JULY

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Sunday Eucharist</td>
<td>(St Martins House)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.45am</td>
<td>Ordination of Deacons</td>
<td>(All Saints’, Loughborough)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.00pm</td>
<td>Choral Evensong at St Peter’s Church, Langton</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.30pm</td>
<td>St Nicholas Eucharist</td>
<td>(St Nicholas)</td>
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Together with

Our thirty-seventh service out with parish churches in the City and County, as part of Together with Leicester Cathedral, will take place on Sunday 25 June 2023.

Join us at 4.00pm for a Choral Evensong at All Saints' Church, Shawell (Church Lane, Shawell, Lutterworth, LE17 6AL).

We are enjoying our visits to other parishes on Sunday afternoons for Choral Evensong with our Cathedral Choirs, clergy and members of our Cathedral community. It is wonderful to connect with people across the Diocese and to make new friends as well as continue existing relationships. Do join us if you can and spread the word to your friends too! The next few dates are below.

2 July: Choral Evensong for Petertide, at St Peter’s Church, Langton, 6.00pm
17 September: Choral Evensong, at St Mary’s Church, Charnwood, 4.00pm
24 September: Choral Evensong, at Benefice of Burrough on the Hill, 4.00pm

For information about future dates please visit the Cathedral website or contact Canon Emma Davies or Head Verger Bev Collett.
In my reflections on May’s Questions Together session, I noted that our discussion led us to share how scripture might have inspired us or provided us with comfort during difficult times, sharing examples of specific passages or stories. Our June session provided us some more space to explore what the Bible means to each of us, as we were led by Alison in reflecting on key questions that we might have about what the Bible is and how we can approach our Bible study. There was also space to explore perspectives on some particularly challenging questions: is everything in the Bible literally true, for example? How can we approach parts of the Bible that may feel personally challenging in different ways, too?

We also had some interesting discussions on more practical questions. Is there a difference between reading a physical copy of the Bible and reading the Bible online, for example? Is one ‘better’ than the other? We aim to finish our sessions by exploring how we might answer a question that others might pose to us outside of church, too, this month considering how we might respond to a friend or colleague who has asked how to get started in reading the Bible. We suggested specific examples of books, such as the gospel of Matthew, as good potential starting points, as well as encouraging the person to consider any Bible stories they may already be familiar with. We also discussed how we might support the person to identify if there is anything they are specifically looking to learn or explore, and to suggest relevant passages that could relate to this. Junior Church also suggested that helping the person find a local church could be an important starting point – reading the Bible with others is a really important way of learning from and with other Christians, and creates opportunities for us to encounter God in new ways by exploring perspectives and viewpoints that might be quite different from our own!

We are still in the early stages of our Questions Together journey, but it is really exciting to be working with you all on building a space in which we can share and learn together in such an open, friendly group environment, growing in our discipleship together. There have been some great suggestions for future topics, and plans for our sessions leading up to the autumn look to be really interesting! Each month we are joined by a guest who leads us in some of our group reflections, and I would love to hear from you if this is something that you might be interested in, too, especially if you have a particular area of interest or topic relating to faith and discipleship that you could lead us in exploring together!

I’m feeling really positive about the development of this group, and inspired by all that we are hearing and seeing of God in our discussions. If you are interested in coming along to a future session but feel a bit unsure, please know that you are always very welcome – there is no pressure to talk or share, but your supportive presence as a listener would always be appreciated. Our next session will be focused on exploring questions we may have about Jesus – please let me know if there is anything in particular you would like us to discuss!

**Our next group session will take place after the service on Sunday 23 July, upstairs in the Grand Hall at St Martins House following coffee (approximately from 12.15pm onwards).**

Jude Taylor
Discipleship Officer
Sat 29 July | 10am–1pm
Join us at The Stable House in North Kilworth to explore our theme of *Summer Growing* together surrounded by the wonderful South Leicestershire countryside.
£15 per person (with limited number of free places)
Book via [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)
PLASTIC IN PARADISE

A TALK BY OUR ORNITHOLOGIST IN RESIDENCE

DR ALEX BOND

Principal Curator and Curator in Charge of Birds, Natural History Museum, London

SATURDAY JULY 1st: 6:00PM

World renowned scientist Dr Alex Bond returns to give a talk about his work on the impact of oceanic plastic pollution on sea birds and fragile ecosystems, and will discuss his most recent research expedition.

The event will end with a Q&A

Please be aware, due to the nature of Alex’s work, some of the images in this presentation will be graphic, but warning will be given before each image is shown.

FREE EVENT: St Nicholas Church, Leicester City Centre, LE1 4LB
MEET AN ORNITHOLOGIST
(A BIRD SCIENTIST)

Drop-in:
Saturday
July 1st
2pm-6pm

Come and meet one of the world's top scientists. Ask him about his work, hear him read his recent children's book, or just have a chat!

young scientists and budding bird watchers are very welcome but must be accompanied by an adult

FREE EVENT FOR ALL AGES

DR ALEX BOND
PRINCIPAL CURATOR & CURATOR IN CHARGE OF BIRDS AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, LONDON

At St Nicholas Church, Leicester City Centre, LE1 4LB
Cathedral Choir
Farewell to Cerys Rogers

Today we bid a fond farewell to one of
the longest serving members of the choir,
Cerys Rogers. It was early in 2013 that
Cerys’s mum, Sam, phoned the office,
having seen the invitation on the back of
the order of service for the 2012 Police
Carol Service to “get in touch if you know
a child who loves singing”.

Well, Cerys’s love of singing has been
apparent throughout her decade with
us. She and her peers were the first year
of Junior Girl Choristers to sing regular
services independently of the Senior Girls
and having to learn to be leaders while still
in Year Five, not to mention the extra work
that group put in in order to sing at the
Reinterment of Richard III, meant that they
were very accomplished singers indeed by
the time they moved up to the Senior Girls’
Choir three years later.

Covid got in the way of our taking full
advantage of what promised to be a
vintage year for that choir when Cerys’s
cohort was in Year 13, so I was delighted
(and relieved!) when she announced her
intention to stay in Leicester and it’s been
a pleasure to hear her voice bloom in the
past couple of years particularly. That’s
also enabled her to join Leicestershire
Chorale as a Choral Scholar, giving
her the opportunity to sing with a really
excellent adult chamber choir.

Her kind and caring nature, evident
from an early age, made her an obvious
candidate to be a Choir Chaperone, a
role which she has discharged for the past
eighteen months or so with diligence and
commitment.

Cerys, we will miss you hugely, but are
delighted for you that you have this
opportunity to move to London and know
that you’ll keep in touch, not least because
your brother Jenson (a bump when you
attended your first practice) has just started
as a Probationer. Our thanks therefore
also to your parents, not only for all
they’ve done to support you (particularly
on the transport front) during your time in
the choir, but for signing up for another
decade of the same!

You go with our love and prayers, and
we’ll look forward to seeing you when you
come back to visit family.

Admission of Choristers

On 11 June, we invested no fewer than
13 choristers in their surplices and thereby
formally admitted them to full membership
of the Cathedral Choir. All but one of these
children came from Sacred Heart Catholic
Voluntary Academy or Stafford Leys
Primary School, and we were delighted
that teachers from both schools, including
Stephanie Ong and Kate Burrows, who
work so hard to maintain such an excellent
standard of singing in those schools, were
able to attend the service.

Congratulations Sienna, Ava-Rose,
Timileyin, Dorothy, Cathy, Freya, Ella,
Lizanne, Jenny, Xavier, Rocky, Samuel,
and Sami! We’re very proud of your
achievements and hope that this will be the
beginning of many happy years of singing in Leicester Cathedral Choir. Welcome too to your families and all who have supported you on your journey thus far.

Thank you also to Rosie for the excellent programme of training that she has devised for these young people and which provides them with such solid foundations for their time as choristers.

**RSCM Bronze Awards**

Congratulations to two more of our older choristers, Beatrice and Rafi, on having passed, with commendation and high commendation respectively, their exam for the Bronze Award (previously known as the Dean’s Award) of the Royal School of Church Music. This is the first of three externally examined awards which test not only the candidates’ singing and musicianship, but also their knowledge of ‘choir in context’, which, in the case of cathedral choristers, covers knowledge of the Church’s year and an understanding of the texts they sing. The RSCM will formally present these choristers with their medals and certificates at the festival taking place on 9 July at St James the Greater.

Chris Ouvry-Johns
Director of Music
Hello everyone,
What a beautiful day it is today. The sun is shining, very little wind, I can hear a lawnmower purring in the background, children laughing and all seems well with the world. I am at my table looking out over my somewhat overgrown but still beautiful garden typing what I hope will be God’s message to you this week.

ALL IS RIGHT WITH THE WORLD.

Well, it obviously isn’t. There’s so much pain going on in the world. So much fighting in countries all round the world. So much pain happening in our towns, on streets just like our own. From the torture and murder of innocent young children, whose lives have hardly begun, to the random stabbing of two students and a school caretaker, to mowing down people standing at a bus stop, on their way to work. This kind of thing doesn’t happen where we live, not on our street, but clearly it does, it could quite easily have happened on your street, but on sunny days like today in my very small speck of a garden

ALL APPEARS TO BE GOOD WITH THE WORLD.

But is it?
Take the crazy flower bed. From my upstairs window all looks well in the garden, flowers in abundance, all thriving. I then go and look a little closer. My border is all perennial quick spreading ‘weeds’, with other plants trying so hard to be seen. Is this not more of a reflection of our world today? The masses seem to be on every news bulletin at the moment. They seem to be on the front page of all the newspapers, getting all the coverage and headlines, while the child screaming for help at the hands of abusive parents is not heard – or if they are they are ignored. How do we help the
parents of random young people murdered in recent days, people who just happen to be their children? I could go on and on. How do I deal with the tension between power in numbers and power in story, and an ever-loving God who is walking the journey with us?

I think God uses all of these options knowing which solution will work best in which circumstance. Sometimes we need space and air to get us through very challenging times, sometimes we need to be swamped by the crowd that might be friends and family, but also might be strangers who make you insignificant for a while. They are around you for a season but when they have left, you realise they have not choked you but fed you in ways you could not have imagined.

**ALL IS RIGHT WITH THE WORLD.**

Well all is clearly not right with the world, but no one ever said the journey would be easy. We are human not divine. We are sinners but we are also redeemed. We are unconditionally loved by God with a love that we cannot begin to imagine, and he walks with us on our journey if we but invite him along bringing with him healing and comfort.

Try and spend some time during this coming week outside, in a garden. Spend time enjoying the lushness of the planting. Breath it in. Give thanks that although there are dreadful things happening in the world, much is well in the world. Perhaps keep a list for a week of all that is good. Remember to look carefully. Good can be found even where the most dreadful things are happening, you just have to look harder.

I pray that your eyes will be opened to find the treasures God has prepared for you. Enjoy your freedom but at the same time stay safe and help others to stay safe too.

Diana
WAYS YOU CAN HELP LEICESTER CATHEDRAL

ONLINE GIVING
Donate online here.

By TEXT
To donate £5, text PLATE to 70970
To donate £10, text PLATE to 70191

INTO OUR BANK ACCOUNT
Account Name: Leicester Cathedral Chapter
Account Number: 03807282 | Sort Code: 20-49-11

BY CHEQUE
Payable to: Leicester Cathedral Chapter
Address: St Martins House, 7 Peacock Lane,
Leicester, LE1 5PZ

SAFEGUARDING

THE ACTING DEAN and Chapter of the Cathedral are wholly committed to the safety, well-being and protection of everyone having contact with our community. We all share responsibility for Safeguarding.
If you have concerns about the welfare or behaviour of an adult, young person or child, please speak to one of the Residentiary Canons or to Linda Green or Kath Rowberry, our Safeguarding Co-ordinators.
The Residentiary Canons can be approached in person or contacted on 07399 523 330.
The Safeguarding Co-ordinators do not publish their contact details. Please speak to a verger if you wish to contact them. You do not need to explain the reason for your request.
All concerns will be responded to proportionately and with discretion.