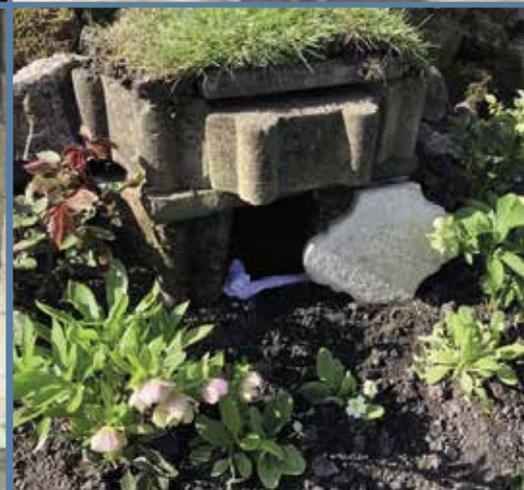


# Southwell Minster

*The Cathedral and Parish Church  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary*



*Annual Review 2020*

# Looking back at 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic of year 2020 saw many changes to the way we all live, work and worship. We have worked hard to adapt and hold on to faith in these uncertain times. As with many cathedrals we learned how to think and pray with imagination to stay connected with all who we serve in the town and across the diocese. For the first time since 1208 churches were ordered to close to support '*Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives*'. This was a difficult and painful.



On 22 March, the Mothering Sunday service was the first to go online. Rapid adaptations were made to the plans for Holy Week and Easter, which included the choir recording from home. Bishop Paul gave his Easter sermon from the Walled Garden and we invited everyone to create a beautiful Easter garden at home. They were a joy to behold.

Our skills and understanding of technology helping us to extend our

reach grew throughout the year. All services were pre-recorded, edited by a professional videographer, and made accessible from the website and YouTube channel. Microsoft Teams was utilised for Morning and Evening Prayer from the clergy's homes, allowing those who would not usually be able to attend to join us.

Looking at the data we have viewers as far afield as the US and Australia, showing God's love truly knows no boundaries.

The wonderful Cathedral staff were severely impacted, and many were placed on Government's Job Retention Scheme for parts of the year. All collaborated brilliantly across the year whilst working from home. Meetings went ahead via video calls and we all learned new skills.

As well as the Sunday Cathedral Eucharist and Thursday evening Compline broadcast online, so were large services, including Rogationtide and VE75. The Queen's Birthday Service, in collaboration with the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff, focused on celebrating the work of the NHS, an area which was placed firmly at the front of people's minds as 2020 drew on.

The pastoral network shone, liaising with Southwell Town Council and other agencies, through the various restrictions and lockdowns, ensuring support was available via the phone to anyone who needed it, especially those in isolation. We

know this meant so much to many and we now have plans in place to replicate this in the future if needed.

The Minster reopened in mid-June, albeit in a restricted capacity. The 'home team' worked hard to ensure safety measures were put in place to keep the Minster COVID-secure upon reopening, for which we were acknowledged with the 'Good to Go' safety accreditation from Visit Britain. We enjoyed significant local and national media coverage for our eagerly awaited reopening, with Channel 4 News filming the first Cathedral Eucharist after lockdown on 5 July – a very poignant service indeed.

Visitor numbers for the year of course dropped, and in most months, we saw only about a quarter of what we would see in a normal year. Although donations reduced, we were grateful to all those who were able to financially contribute.

We were awarded a potential £400,900 from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund in October which was a huge lifeline to the Cathedral and its mission. We were able to return staff to work and cover routine costs as well as deliver plans to support our recovery, such as improving the IT provision for eventual livestreaming from the Minster.

At Michaelmas, the delayed ordinations of nine priests and eight deacons took place over a total of six services, all with reduced numbers attending but nevertheless poignant and profound as these women and men begin their new ministry in challenging times.



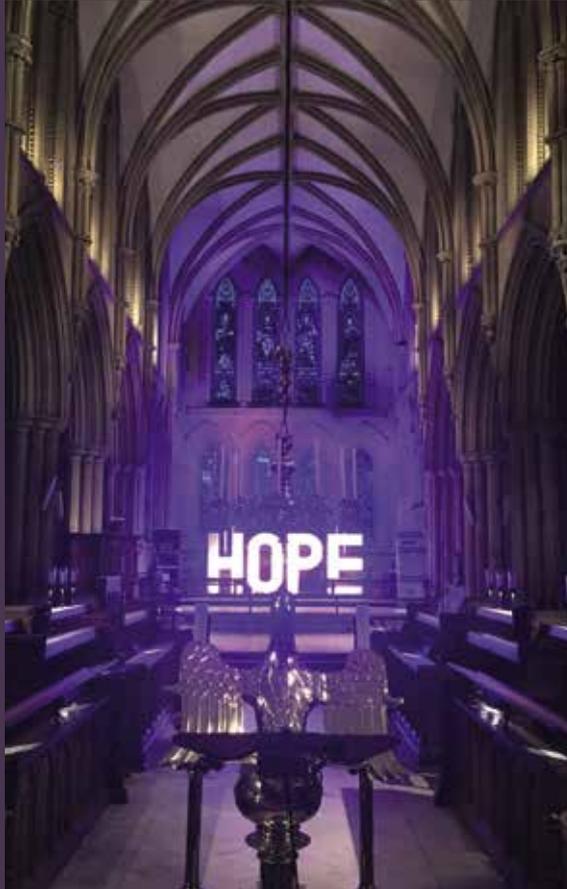
The much-loved Animal Blessing Service was in the Palace Garden on a glorious early autumn day. We gathered with dogs, cats, donkeys, and snakes to celebrate God's creation. While no congregational singing of course was permitted, the Lay Clerks sang. We gave thanks together for the animals and pets that played such an important role in maintaining our wellbeing and mental health during 2020. Such was the success of the service and the positive feedback from the congregation, that we are now looking to host this outside every year.

Also outdoors was the first ever 'Light and Saints' Halloween activity. Families brought carved pumpkins and lanterns and listened to stories about saints, delivered, in costume.

We welcomed back the BBC cameras to film segments of Songs of Praise featuring The Rev Kate Bottley (first broadcast on 4 October), who incidentally, along with four others, will be installed as a new Honorary Canon in the Minster in spring 2021.

The Remembrance Sunday Service was held at the open West door attended by representatives from the various civic and uniformed groups. Although reduced it was no less moving reminding us of sacrifice, compassion and bravery shining through times of suffering and pain.

At the end of the most difficult year, when more than 72,000 people died from the coronavirus, the Minster hosted The Hope Prayer Wall. This simple installation consisted of four 6ft letters, spelling out the word 'HOPE', was situated in the Quire, illuminated in purple, and helped remind us all of the need for hope, in this of all years.



Other landmarks in 2020 include being made a Fairtrade Church, winning a TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice award, and seeing the 'Leaves' project continue with only minimal disruption. The Education Team hosted a crafted Green Man competition which featured some incredible entries and even saw a pancake race held in the Nave between Team Nicola (Dean of Southwell) and Team Richard (Canon Precentor), involving clergy, choristers and the music department. It was wonderful to hear the excited voices of children (and adults too!) fill the air of the cathedral and have BBC East Midlands Today cover the story!



## The Leaves of Southwell

This £2.3m project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, continued. Works to the high quire roof were completed in July and roof tours were offered to the public earlier in the year. In June, the precious carvings in the Chapter House were covered for protection, and conservation work started with the lifting of the 1,500 stone floor blocks in order to undertake essential archaeology before installing power, lighting and underfloor heating. We look forward to work progressing into the garden in 2021 as we further develop the Palace Gardens, already a much-loved community space.



## New clergy and choir robes

An appeal launched in 2019 to replace clergy and choir robes in one colour, and to include for the first-time girl choristers, was concluded in time for the Patronal Festival in February. Our thanks to the Friends and SMCA for significant grants and to various individual donors.



## Organ Recitals

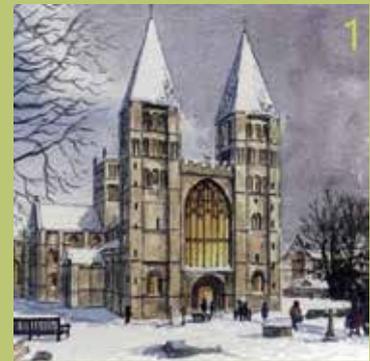
Instead of the usual series of organ recitals, to ensure people still got their organ music 'fix', these moved online. These were extremely popular and have had thousands of views across our YouTube channel and our website. A huge thank you to Paul Provost (Rector Chori), Jonathan Allsopp (Assistant Director of Music) and James Furniss-Roe (Organ Scholar) who each took turns to bring us an outstanding array of recitals by the likes of Bach, Howells, Widor, Elgar and many more.

## The Cathedral Shop

Our popular shop, closed for so much of the year, continued to operate online, with sales figures increasing throughout the year as we approached the busy and important Christmas period. To match shoppers' differing needs and wishes, a 'click & collect' option was brought in alongside the more traditional delivery service, both of which have proved popular and have given us the conviction to continue this dual approach in the future.

## Christmas

The Cathedral Carol Services, attended by over 2,000 in 2019, were limited to 80 in the congregation over five services all sung by the entire Cathedral Choir. One was recorded and made available online.



The first ever musical Advent calendar, hosted via the website, included a daily music video from members of our Cathedral Choir and organists. Also a first - a virtual Christmas Craft Fair - ran throughout December and included 14 different stallholders selling a variety of handcrafted gifts from jewellery to Christmas decorations, children's toys to glassware and much, much more.

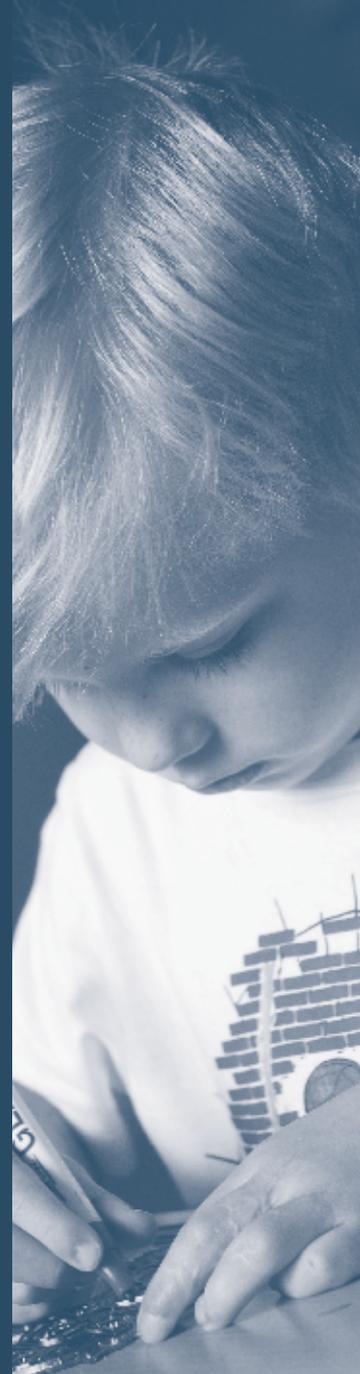
## Children and Families

We only managed one 'Families at Five' in 2020 before the first lockdown but kept in contact with families and offered ideas to keep children entertained. Junior Church continued with a weekly online activity. Resources for families at Easter were available and we kept in close supportive contact with the Lowe's Wong schools (Infant and Junior), The Children and Families Development group met regularly organised and delivered a hugely successful, brand-new outdoor trail using QR codes for Christingle over two weekends in December which was enjoyed by almost 400 people, as well as an outdoor 'Away in a manger' Crib series on Christmas Eve. We are continuing to plan for regular outdoor family events in 2021 and look forward to these becoming a reality.



The Education Team also put on numerous trails and activities throughout the year, many of which have helped keep families entertained during the various lockdowns including a nature trail and a tour of the beautiful stained-glass windows inside Southwell Minster which tell the Christmas story.

Thankfully, in February, just before the first lockdown, the team managed to get in their ever-popular Family Fun Day, a day full of stories, crafting and even an interactive session with a real-life stonemason!



# In closing, from The Dean

'A year we will always remember and prefer to forget' is one way of reflecting on 2020. For all of us there has been loss and anxiety, cancellations of important events, restrictions on everyday life unimaginable before 23 March 2020, and a deep sense of simply missing family, friends, and work colleagues through separation. The longer-term impacts on health and the economy remain to be seen but we know we will never entirely 'get back to normal'. England's cathedrals have witnessed centuries of change and upheaval, and yet they continue to inspire hope, faith and loving service in Christ's name through every season. The year has accelerated the pace of change and the Chapter is making plans for recovery and renewal

as we build a vision for the Minster to continue as a dynamic place of worship and mission.

THANK YOU for your support. You have read how we have kept busy, and we look forward to welcome you back in 2021. Please stay in touch, make sure you are on the mailing list for details of all our activities.

The Very Reverend Nicola Sullivan  
Dean of Southwell

