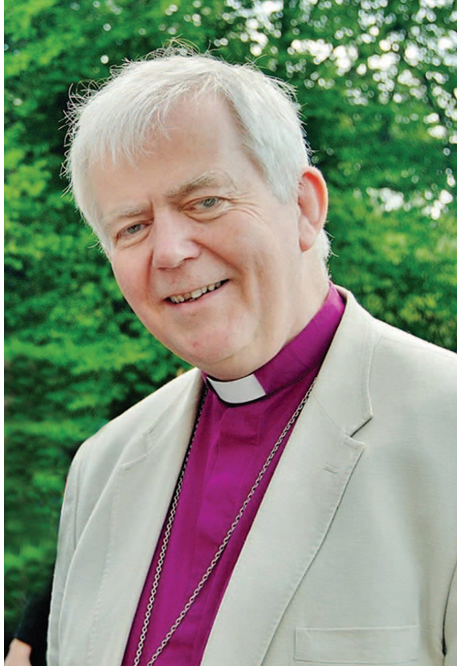


The Bishop of Salisbury



Cathedrals have the power to convene people. For Salisbury, this was never more striking than at Pentecost, the weekend of 19/20 May.

On the Saturday it was the Royal Wedding. As the preacher said, “Two people fell in love and we all showed up”. The BBC put up a big screen on the west lawn and 3,000 people came. Lots brought picnics and became part of BBC Radio Wiltshire’s morning broadcast. There was a great atmosphere. Some of the Stewards commented that opening the cathedral’s west doors made a connection between the inside and the outside. The crowd cheered the preacher. On other Saturdays even the couples who get married at a civil ceremony in the Medieval Hall come to be photographed in front of the cathedral. Cathedrals and churches are

the place in our society to make solemn vows and pray for God’s blessing on all that lies ahead for the couple. Every wedding makes us remember our own.

Inside the cathedral Les Colombes, the 2,500 white paper doves by Michael Pendry, were a beautiful and inspiring addition above the nave. This art installation by a German was originally to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War but the doves took off as a response to the poisoning of the Skripals. They have brought Salisbury together. The paper doves, many made by members of the cathedral’s congregations, visitors and even some prisoners in HMP Erlestoke, are all over the city. They are a sign of our determination to make peace in response to a reckless attack and violation of the city.

In the early evening 41 people came to the cathedral from across the diocese to be Confirmed. They were supported by a congregation of over 300. The doves were a beautiful representation of the gift of the Holy Spirit, divine energy come down among us, a gift of communication between very different people who in our world speak different languages and want different things. Never has the world more needed such God-given unity.

On Sunday the Friends of the Cathedral ran Open Gardens in The Close. 1400 people came to explore places not normally open to the public. An army of people baked cakes and came to The South Canonry to sell teas, cakes and ice creams and second-hand books to raise money for medicines in South Sudan.

As well as the usual Sunday services for Pentecost, in the evening the cathedral





was nearly full for 'Thy Kingdom Come', the culmination of nine days of prayer initiated by the Archbishop of Canterbury to mark the period from Ascension Day to Pentecost. It was organised by Salisbury Churches Together but particularly by St Paul's. It was an ecumenical event, as Pentecost should be. People came from 80 churches.

A cathedral has a unique power to convene people in our society. It gathers people for good and puts us in touch

with the energy and life at the heart of creation. In Salisbury the cathedral is the building around which the city lives. More than any other body in the city it has the capacity to form partnerships and celebrate our common life in ways that will help recovery from what took place on 4th March. The cathedral witnesses to the creative life-giving love of God and gives hope to the world around.

+Nicholas Sarum