

# CCN Newsletter

## November 2023

Healing the Wounds of History  
Learning to live with Difference and Celebrate Diversity  
Building a Culture of Justice and Peace

## Welcome to our new newsletter for the CCN, ICONS and Together for Hope – the three reconciliation partnerships at Coventry Cathedral.

### Introducing Thought for the Month

As well as news across the three communities each month, we'll share a Thought piece from around our networks each issue: our first one arises from our recent CCN pilgrimage visitors from the five Hauptkirchen in Hamburg (pictured right). One pilgrim in the group was the grandson of Kurt Reuber, artist of the Stalingrad Madonna, known and loved by so many, and it was so good to meet him. Do have a read!



### CCN International Gathering last May

We loved welcoming partners old and new from 9 different countries to Coventry earlier this year - we numbered around 65 across the five days, our first gathering since 2018. Thoughts in the coming months will spring from discussions that took place - do look out for them each issue.



### CCN Sunday in South Africa

Our 5th CCN Sunday took place on 24 September. Our South African partners had a local gathering over that weekend (right), concluding with worship together on CCN Sunday itself. Next year's CCN Sunday will be 29 September - do save the date!



### Welcome to our new volunteer interns!



We're so pleased to have Lea, from near Hanover in Germany, and Blanka, from a small village in southern Poland, with us this year on placement via the German international volunteer agency and CCN partner ARSP. Living in the intern flat here at the cathedral, they are helping us across our reconciliation, events, welcome and schools teams until next summer.

A big thank you to those partners in Dresden and London who hosted visits from last year's interns in June. Read their accounts here: <https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/reconciliation/volunteer-internships-2>

### Join other partners once a month on Zoom to pray the Litany of Reconciliation – all welcome!

- On the first Friday of the month at midday CET, led by our German partners :  
<https://zoom.us/j/881976123?pwd=MVFhQ1Rxb0Y2Y0dZmV01oQT09>  
Meeting ID: 881 976 123 Password: 637997
- On the third Tuesday of the month at midday US EST, led by our North American partners :  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82501462596?pwd=Q1ZmNjNGZmhuek1ORld1RTVPT1liUT09>  
Meeting ID: 825 0146 2596 Passcode: 746888

Contact us at: [alice.farnhill@coventry.anglican.org](mailto:alice.farnhill@coventry.anglican.org)  
<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/reconciliation/community-of-the-cross-of-nails>  
<https://www.facebook.com/CCNCoventry/>



## CCN Newsletter

### November 2023

Healing the Wounds of History  
Learning to live with Difference and Celebrate Diversity  
Building a Culture of Justice and Peace

## News from ICONS (International Cross of Nails Schools)

This term we've completed two sets of Ambassadors student peace training, including the chance to pilot a new programme with Secondary Schools.

We're about to embark on this academic year's first set of online staff Champions Peace training to reach some of our international partners. This promises to be lots of fun, but most importantly helps to establish links between our network partners so they can build their own communication and support each other in the ongoing Teaching and embedding of Peace and Reconciliation education.

For more information, take a look at the ICONS-specific newsletter at the weblink below:  
<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/reconciliation/icon-schools>

### Our new ICONS Partners this year



St Andrews Church of  
England infant school,  
Coventry



St John's Church of  
England Academy,  
Coventry



St John Vianney  
Catholic Primary School,  
Coventry

### Keep up with us through our social media and our website:

For more information, to receive ICONS specific information or to enquire for your school community please email -  
[Jessica.Weale@Coventry.Anglican.org](mailto:Jessica.Weale@Coventry.Anglican.org)

[ICONS Facebook](#)  
[ICONS Instagram](#)  
<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/reconciliation/icon-schools>

## News from Together for Hope

### Welcome to the Ammerdown Centre!

Together for Hope, the CCN's 'little sister' network, is a community of groups from across the spectrum of beliefs, following the same three guiding principles and the model set by the CCN.

Canon Mary Gregory welcomed its third partner, [the Ammerdown Centre](#) in Somerset, in September (above), which joined the CCN also alongside this. Ammerdown now joins Faithful Friends in Sandwell, and Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital Chaplaincy Team in London, as part of Together for Hope.

Together for Hope's Pledge for Transformation was used at Coventry Cathedral's Vigil for Israel and Gaza on 18 October, with a wide attendance across multiple faiths. Read about the service [here](#).



<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/reconciliation/together-for-hope>

<https://www.facebook.com/CovTforH/>

## CCN partners in Ukraine and Israel/Palestine

As we begin November's traditional season of Remembrance, we hold our partners and communities that find themselves in conflict and terror, in Ukraine, in Israel and in Palestine, particularly close to our hearts.

Last month at the Assembly of the CCN German Board, the following was issued:

### Statement on the current Israel-Palestine conflict

*The membership assembly of the Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN) in Germany condemns the terrorist attack on Israel and declares its solidarity with all people who stand up for reconciliation.*

*We grieve and are at a loss in the face of this man-made violence and hope that ways will be found to enable people to live together peacefully and in justice. We suffer with everybody from the fact that hatred leads to such terror.*

*We pray that this terror will not turn into a conflagration that claims even more victims. We encourage everyone not to give up to work for peace and reconciliation - despite the feelings of powerlessness.*

*Our thoughts and prayers are especially with all the CCN partners in the Holy Land who are committed to the third guiding principle of the Community of the Cross of Nails: building a culture of justice and peace.*

### A prayer shared by the CCN partner Musalaha in Jerusalem:

*We pray for the people of Israel and Palestine amid the escalating violence.*

*We pray for those killed and injured by rockets from Gaza in southern Israel.*

*May your rod and staff comfort them.*

*We pray for those who are grieving.*

*May they know your ever-present help.*

*We pray for the protection of those who have been taken hostage by Hamas.*

*As they walk through this dark valley, may they fear no evil.*

*We pray for the civilians of Gaza.*

*May they know that their help comes from the Maker of heaven and earth.*

*And we pray for those in leadership in Gaza and Israel.*

*May you guide them along the right paths.*

*We ask all this in union with Christ and trusting in the power of your Holy Spirit.*

*Amen.*



Assembly of the CCN German Board

Würzburg, 14 October 2023, Membership Assembly of the Community of the Cross of Nails in Germany

Find prayers and resources on the Embrace the Middle East [prayer page](#) .



At the end of October, CCN partner the Evangelical Lutheran Community of St Paul, Odesa, celebrated their 220th anniversary. Please continue to pray for their safety and security. Pictured a thanksgiving service in early October, with visiting minister and member of the CCN German Board, Arne Boelt, from our German CCN partner the Evangelische Lutherische Kirchengemeinde Rostock, also present.

## Thought for the Month: a visit by the grandson of artist Kurt Reuber

One of our recent CCN pilgrimage visitors was Jan Tolkmitt, the grandson of Kurt Reuber, who created the famous Stalingrad Madonna drawing. It was such a treat to meet the descendant of the creator of an artwork that has come to be so symbolic both in Coventry and across CCN partners. Richard Parker, Cathedral Guide and translator, writes:

Jan's grandfather, a priest, doctor and artist, was called up into the German Sixth Army and was sent to the Eastern Front, ending up in Stalingrad at Christmas 1942. This was a desperate situation for the Germans: surrounded by the Red Army, in dreadful conditions and with no hope of rescue, the occupied city was called Fortress Stalingrad and was likened to a cauldron, under continual fire from the Russians. With no provisions, certainly nothing that could evoke Christmas, Reuber felt it his duty to help not only his army colleagues but the local population as well, whose situation was just as bad. He used his drawing skills to build the confidence of the people so that he could treat them.

The result was the Stalingrad Madonna: a beautiful image of a mother sheltering her newborn child in her cloak against the cold. He called it Christmas 1942 in the cauldron, Fortress Stalingrad. It also bears three words central to St John's Gospel – Light, Life, Love. He had only the back of a Russian map to draw on: on one side, red battle lines for the Russian army in Ukraine; on the other, a sublime image of calm, love and security. His colleagues were apparently speechless at the sight of such a powerful image.



Shortly after Christmas the cauldron was overrun and the remaining 90,000 German soldiers, including Reuber, were captured and taken as POWs further into Russia. He died of typhus in captivity in 1944. His drawing, however, made it on to the last flight out of Stalingrad back to Germany, and was returned to his parents. It remained in the family house for decades, where Kurt's children and later Jan, Kurt's grandson, grew up with it. The original hung in his aunt's house, and a replica in his parents'. It had a profound impression on him and the whole family: this image of love and security in the midst of sacrifice, and the magic words Light – Life – Love. But it was also a source of pain and grief for Jan's mother Ute, who like many children had lost her father in the war: the picture was like a missing link which filled the gap in her family. All this changed in 1982, when a journalist got wind of the drawing and its story, visited the family and persuaded them that the drawing could be of wider public interest as an image of reconciliation. In 1983 it was placed on permanent loan in the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, in the centre of what was then West Berlin.

This church became important in reconciliation between Germany and Britain: in 1988 it joined the Community of the Cross of Nails, and in 1990 a facsimile of the Stalingrad Madonna was presented to Coventry as a symbol of reconciliation by the German President Richard von Weizsäcker, together with the Peace Bell which we ring at the beginning of each Sunday morning service. The drawing now stands in the Millennium Chapel on the staircase at the north end of the Cathedral. And to complete the reconciliation circle, another facsimile was presented in 1995 to Volgograd (which had become Coventry's first twin city in 1944).



Jan Tolkmitt and Dean John Witcombe next to the Stalingrad Madonna in Coventry