

## THE FRIENDS OF ARUNDEL CATHEDRAL

### SUMMER VESPERS 2021

We were disappointed this year, at very short notice, at having to cancel arrangements for our post vespers service social event. Traditionally our generous patron, His Grace The Duke of Norfolk, has given us permission to hold this part of our annual get together in his lovely Collector Earl's Garden, but our disappointment was more than made up for by the spiritually uplifting nature of the vespers itself and, notwithstanding the extension of the restrictions and socially distanced seating, the reassuring numbers of members and guests attending. We were pleased that we were again honoured by the presence of Mrs Susan Pyper the Lord Lieutenant of the County, and Her Grace the Duchess of Norfolk. Once more the early evening sunshine smiled down on us through the beautiful West facing Rose Window - and how proud we are that 'The Friends' have contributed to its very costly refurbishment – and the music provided the most wonderfully uplifting sense of joy and



hope. Our choral scholars and choristers were in fine form under the masterly direction of Elizabeth Stratford, the Cathedral's Organist and Master of the Choristers. After the service many of the congregation commented on how much they had enjoyed it and hoped to be able to come again next year.

During the service The Friends were proud to witness their much respected Chairman, Patrick Burgess, being awarded the highest of ecclesiastical honours. On behalf of Pope Francis the Bishop appointed Patrick a Knight of The Pontifical Equestrian Order of St Gregory the Great. He is now a Knight of the Holy See. The Bishop congratulated Patrick on the recognition of his exceptional contribution to the work of the Church and for his significant and many activities supporting voluntary endeavour over a wide range of need.

In his homily The Bishop went on to refer to the significance of this years' reading, from Nehemiah, which was taken from the liturgy for the Dedication of a Church. He reminded us about the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year of the dedication of our own Cathedral Church in 2023. He went on to talk about the importance of scripture. Nehemiah describes the reaction of the Israelites who, after returning from a long period in exile re-discovered their

original Scrolls of the Law. The congregation was invited to imagine what it would have been like not having the security of a written text and having to hold their faith teachings in their minds and hearts while in exile. The importance and value of reading the scriptures has also been emphasised by Pope Francis who reminds us of the value of , reading and allowing silence and quiet in our lives so that God’s word can truly find its home in us.



The Bishop concluded “A building like this proclaims the Christian faith. It proclaims that the Word of God is alive and active. If we can learn that lesson from this building, if we can learn that lesson from the prophet Nehemiah, it’s a lesson that will stand us in very good stead and enable us better to proclaim the wonder of the Gospel to a world that needs to hear it. Listen to God’s Word as those people did in Nehemiah’s day. Rejoice that we can read it and hear it. Rejoice that we can also put it into practise”.



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