

## The Friends of Arundel Cathedral

### 2022 Advent Vespers



As one of the wettest and windiest Novembers on record drew to a close, the weather for this year's Pontifical Advent Vespers, was determined to wash and blow away the previous ecclesiastical year. Civic leaders from across the Diocese were undeterred and joined with members and friends for the amazing joyful musical celebration provided by the Cathedral choir under the direction of Elizabeth Stratford. This year we had an excellent number in the choir, although the congregation was not as large as some years. The High Sheriffs of West Sussex, Surrey and East Sussex, and civic leaders from across the Diocese joined the celebration.

For the first time for a few years the Dames & Knights of The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem were able to process in with the clergy to Handel's splendid "And the glory of the Lord" from the Messiah. The first Advent candle was lit, the light was blessed and thanks given to the Lord our God who is worthy of all thanksgiving and praise.

The Bishop gave a reminder that this was a season of expectation and hope, which in the current time is a much needed emotion. He advised that, strictly speaking, singing carols before 25th December was not liturgically correct!



The music was the true highlight of the event. Of particular note was 21 year old Ella Blair, currently in her final year at the University of Chichester, studying Vocal Performance. She is one of The Friends choral scholars at the Cathedral and sang Vivaldi's famous setting of "Nulla in mundo pax sincera", the translation of which is 'in this world there is no honest peace free from bitterness; peace, sweet Jesus, lies in Thee.' This seemed a very appropriate sentiment in our troubled world. Ella recently applied for a place on the postgraduate diploma performance course at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, however, at her audition she was offered a place for the Master of Arts course during interview (a higher level than the diploma)! She will be with us until the end of the current academic year, but lives in Hampshire, so it is hoped that she will come back to visit from time to time.

Following the service, The Friends served excellent wine and delicious and plentiful canapes, at the back of the Cathedral, accompanied by lively conversations as many friendships were renewed and new friends made. Sadly, Canon David was unable to join us as he was recovering from Covid. A splendid and enjoyable evening was had by all.





