

THE FRIENDS of ARUNDEL CATHEDRAL

CELEBRATION OF VESPERS SUMMER 2022

It had seemed a long time, much more than 2 years ago, that The Friends had been able to enjoy their traditional summer event of sung vespers. Two summers of prohibited gatherings made the thought of this year extra special. It was important everything was just perfect. And it was! The weather, always a worry, could not have been better. High pressure ensured the celebration was blessed with wonderful warm sunny weather. It has been noted many times before that there is nothing as beautiful as the evening sun filtering through the beautifully restored Cathedral's Rose window, or as spiritually inspiring as the beautiful voices of the cathedral choristers under the masterful direction of their Director of Music, Elizabeth Stratford. The combination of both - choir and sunshine - is always indescribably uplifting, and so it was this evening.



Members and guests included the Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Susan Pyper, attending in an informal capacity, and Her Grace, the Duchess of Norfolk. Her Grace read a short extract from the letter of St James - the subject of the subsequent homily. They were treated to a liturgy that combined prayer, choral music, reflective moments and periods of communal intercessions. Members and their guests confirmed how moving was the whole experience.

Bishop Richard was unable to officiate as he was dealing with outstanding confirmations, but guests were pleased that Provost, Canon Anthony Churchill, was able to stand in to lead the service, and to hear Canon David Parmeter preach a deeply thoughtful homily. He referred to the short, but powerful reading emphasising the purity of divine wisdom, which makes for peace, is kind, and full of compassion. He went on to develop the universality of the link with prayer. He reminded the congregation that whoever they were, from whatever Christian belief that they must never lose heart. Prayer was central to Christianity. He repeated the invitation to those who do not share Catholic beliefs but are "of good will to be present and to share the liturgy". "When situations are unclear, people and events unpredictable, and our own resources both spiritual and material feel depleted ..." "there is no hot line to solving life's dilemmas instantly.....but

there is grace which helps us to love, to understand, to forgive and to hope". In view of national events over the summer since July, which have created so much uncertainty and anxiety for so many people, there could be no more reassuring words of comfort.

After the service by courtesy of His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, Honorary President, Friends and guests were invited for a social gathering in the Collector Earl's Garden. The



glorious evening summer weather, with not even a hint of a breeze, made for a perfect evening. Old friendships were renewed, and new friendships established. Glasses of



'fizz' and canapes were served by choristers and trustees to the accompaniment of a gentle, light jazz band provided by the locally based Stardust Sussex Jazz band. For those



who wished there followed a conducted tour of the gardens by head gardener, Martin Duncan. Participants were very complimentary about how informative and interesting it was. "Such a knowledgeable specialist", "such creative imagination", "I learned so much", "How good of him to give up his time for us" were just some of the many compliments about the tour and how much it was appreciated.

This year's event more than made up for the two-year gap. It was wonderful. It is hoped that, by holding events like these others will be encouraged to join The Friends to help support the maintenance of the priceless heritage of our Cathedral, and to join the celebrations next year in 2023, of the 150th anniversary of its consecration. More information from: www.arundelcathedralfriends.uk tel 01903 884567