

The Cathedral Church
of St Michael, Coventry

An Ecumenical Service Dedicated to
Children and Non-violence



Saturday 14 October 2006 at 2.30pm

*Dedication of
The Coventry Charter for Children and Non-violence*



The Band of the 13th Coventry Scouts under the leadership of Roy Nowell MBE

You are invited to hang messages on the tree as you arrive

Order of Service

THE GATHERING

The Lord Mayor of Coventry, Councilor Shabbir Ahmed and Mrs Rakizen-ul-Nisa

Mr David Bradnock representing Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, and MPs are led to their seats.

Representatives from Faith Traditions are led to their seats.

THE PROCESSION

Heralds carrying the Coventry Charter process from the Ruins of the Old Cathedral, accompanied by lantern bearers.

They are followed by a procession of children in historical and national costumes symbolising progression towards children's human rights

*A young person carries a copy of
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

Representatives from organisations, schools and congregations process with banners and balloons as the processional hymn is sung

Everyone sings

For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies:
*Source of life to thee we raise
This our song of joyful praise*

For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower,
Sun and moon and stars of light:

For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above,
Pleasures pure and undefiled:

For the joy of human life
For the heart and mind's delight
For the mystic harmony

Linking sense to sound and sight:

For each perfect gift of thine,
To all people freely given,
Graces human and divine,
Flowers of earth and buds of heaven
Dix: Adapted by WH Monk (1823-89)
FS Pierpoint (1835-12917)

THE GREETING

Welcome and Introduction to the service

LIGHTING OF CANDLES

Representatives of different faith traditions are invited to light their candles from one large candle as an act of solidarity and respect for all children

Faith Representatives: We light these candles as a symbol of the sacred respect held by each of our faith traditions for the human dignity of every child.

All: May the wisdom of God enlighten us all.

THE PEACE

Dance of Peace: Children from Wyken Croft Primary School, Coventry

Bishop John: May the peace of the Lord be with you

All: And also with you

We exchange a greeting of peace

CELEBRATION

In this part of the service we celebrate and give thanks for children and young people; for their views and ideas, and the contribution they make to families and communities.

Flowers are brought forward as a symbol of celebration. A candle is lit.

Bishop John: We light this candle to celebrate children and young people.

All: May this light shine as a mark of respect for children and young people everywhere.

The READING:

Mr David Bradnock representing Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands

Matthew 18: 1-5; 19:13 -14 *from the Inclusive New Testament*

The disciples came up to Jesus with the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?" Jesus called for a little child to come and stand among them. Then Jesus said, "The truth is, unless you change and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Those who make themselves as humble as this child are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. Then small children were brought to Jesus so that he could lay hands on them and pray for them. The disciples began to scold the parents, but Jesus said, "Let the children alone – let them come to me. The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Solo: You lift me high (*from 'Be yourself'*) Helen J. Hicks

A short silence

A young person's request

An adult's response

Everyone sings

We sing a love that sets all people free.
That blows like wind that burns like scorching flame,
Enfolds like earth, springs up like water clear.
Come, living love, live in our hearts today.

We sing a love that seeks another's good,
That longs to serve and not to count the cost,
A love that yielding, finds itself made new.
Come, caring love, live in our hearts today.

We sing a love, unflinching, unafraid
To be itself, despite another's wrath,
A love that stands alone and undismayed
Come strengthening love, live in our hearts today.

Tune: Woodlands June Boyce-Tillman (born 1943-)

DEDICATION

This part of the service is dedicated to all children and young people who are suffering from violence, neglect, humiliation, injustice and conflict.

Babies are brought forward to watch as a pitcher of water is brought forward and poured over pebbles as a symbol of dedication to end violence against children.

A candle is lit

Bishop John: We light this candle to remember all children and young people who are suffering from violence

All: may this light shine as a symbol of our commitment to ending violence against all children.

STORIES FROM CHILDREN ACROSS THE WORLD

This poem was written by girls and boys who were child delegates at the All-Africa Conference on Children and Non-violence. The children represented six countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, and read their poem at the conclusion of the Conference.

The poem is read by pupils from John Gulson Primary School

Violence, violence, violence
Why do you need to focus your eyes so much on the African children
Why do you want to ruin the fruits of tomorrow
We the African children are tired of all violence, corporal punishment, and gender inequality.

Violence, violence, violence
Where do you come from
Who are your parents
Why are you the enemy of peace and love
Oh, God we wish one day, violence and peace could have a peaceful talk

Violence, violence, violence
You made us the children of Africa
lose all hope in life.
You made our future useless.
We are the future leaders and doctors,
teachers, parents, leaders.
Why do you violate us?

We the African children want peace and non-violence, love, care and unity
Give us peace today if you want good fruits tomorrow!

Bluecoat Church of England School - ideas and reflections in music and dance

From East Asia and the Pacific

“There is a Chinese saying, ‘Gu Cheung Lan Ming,’ that means ‘no sound can be made if only one hand claps.’ We, children are one hand. The community is one hand....We strongly believe that a community with peace, love and unity can be built if we work together for the future!”

East and Southern Africa

“Understand that one person can do something about violence but many people can stop violence.”

From ‘Act Now’, Save the Children, 2005

A short silence

A child’s request

An adult’s request

Intercessions are led by people from Faith Traditions in Coventry. They stand near the candles lit at the beginning of the service. We are all invited to join in by saying the sentence after each prayer.

Loving God we acknowledge that through omission and silence we have not always addressed the reality of violence against children and we have not always addressed the suffering that this violence causes. We believe that religious communities must join with others in finding solutions to end all forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment, and we ask that your light may guide us as we dedicate ourselves to this task.

All: Loving God hear our prayer

Eternal God our Creator, we pray for all children and young people who endure violence in their homes. We pray that we may all work together to support the families in our communities so that all children may grow up in an atmosphere of compassion, loving kindness, encouragement and non-violence.

All: Eternal God hear our prayer

Merciful God, we remember all children in the world affected by the violence of poverty, and armed conflict. We pray for peace for the children of Darfur, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel and Palestine. Fill us with love for all human beings so that we recognise and respect the dignity and human rights of one another. Give us grace to resolve our differences without the use of force.

All: Merciful God hear our prayer

God of love, we pray that we may promote a culture of respect for the human dignity of all children and young people. Help adults to teach children by their own example and thereby develop mutual respect, for respect for one another is a key to non-violence.

All: God of compassion hear our prayer

God of justice, we pray for strength of purpose to work in solidarity towards eliminating all forms of violence against children. Give us insights to read and interpret our religious texts to promote non-violence and peace.

All: God of justice hear our prayer

God of peace we pray that adults will create environments where children and young people are partners with adults in speaking out, resolving conflict and creating peace.

All: God of peace hear our prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen

All

When I needed a neighbour,
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a neighbour were you there?
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,
Were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty,
Were you there, were you there?
I was hungry and thirsty,
Were you there?

When I needed a shelter,
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a shelter,
Were you there?

When I needed a healer,
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a healer,
Were you there?

Wherever you travel,
I'll be there, I'll be there,
Wherever you travel,
I'll be there.

A young person's request
An adult's response

The Address: Bishop John

Ceremony of washing of feet

ALL: Taize Chants are sung as the children's feet are washed:

Adoramus te Domine

Ubi Caritas

Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas Deus ibi est

Where there is charity, selfless love, Where there is charity, God is truly there.

Jubilate Deo

Jubilate Deo, jubilate Deo, alleluia

The singing is led by Helen J. Hicks

HOPE

In this part of the service we look forward with hope. We ask for grace and guidance to speak out on behalf of children, against all forms of violence including corporal punishment. We seek out ways of listening to children and involving them in promoting non-violence for a more compassionate and peaceful world.

Fruits of the earth are brought forward to symbolise hope and fruitfulness in our actions.
A candle is lit.

We light this candle as a sign of hope for the children of the world.

A dance of hope: Lady Godiva of Coventry and children from Coventry Schools

A short silence

A child's request:

An adult's response:

All: Prayer

Merciful God you have called us to work for true justice in our communities, and to be messengers of freedom to those who are not treated as your children. We ask that you will guide us in our endeavours to end all forms of violence against children

including corporal punishment. Help us through your grace to work in solidarity with others in our community to transform the lives of children so that they may live free from fear and threat. May we spread peace, love, compassion and liberation for children everywhere. Amen

Dedication and Signing of the Coventry Charter for Children and Non-violence

The Lord Mayor of Coventry: We commit ourselves to addressing violence against children in all its forms and settings and resolve to work with others towards eliminating all forms of violence against children.

The Charter is signed as the hymn is sung

ALL:

One more step along the world I go,
One more step along the world I go.
From the old things to the new
Keep me travelling along with you.

*And it's from the old I travel to the new,
Keep me travelling along with you.*

Round the corners of the world I turn,
More and more about the world I learn.
All the new things that I see
You'll be looking at along with me.

As I travel through the bad and good,
Keep me travelling the way I should.
Where I see no way to go,
You'll be telling me the way I know.

Give me courage when the world is rough,
Keep me loving though the world is tough.
Leap and sing in all I do,
Keep me travelling along with you.

You are older than the world can be,
You are younger than the life in me.
Ever old and ever new,
Keep me travelling along with you.

Bishop John: Closing sentences and Blessing
Closing procession
Refreshments