



GUILDFORD
CATHEDRAL



Stag Hill REVIEW OF 2024



On behalf of the Cathedral Chapter I wish to thank all of you for your ongoing and valuable relationship with the life of Guildford Cathedral.

For the past twelve months we have been blessed to have had the interim leadership of our dear colleague, The Venerable Stuart Beake, and under Stuart's wise and faithful counsel the cathedral has been a place of deep blessing to so many. This is also true for colleagues, both lay and ordained here on Stag Hill. I offer my sincere thanks to all of them.

This Review contains so many stories of the past twelve months and in it, it sets the scene for 2025. I am looking forward, as the new Dean, to working with you in 2025 and to meeting new people and welcome all people to Guildford Cathedral.

With every blessing

Bob Cooper, Dean of Guildford



Bob Cooper, Dean of Guildford

2024 was an exciting year for Guildford Cathedral. It has seen us install an Archdeacon,

As a supporter, we would like to say a huge thank you for helping us this year and pick out some highlights to sum up 2024 for you to see what your support has helped us achieve.

A TOUCH OF GRANDEUR

Guildford Cathedral is a striking building. The red brick exterior is unmistakeable, and the graceful exterior is a beautiful background to official events. Across 2024 we held graduations for the University of Surrey, Farnborough Technology College, School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) and Adult Learning Programme Surrey (ALPS). We also hosted a service for the Installation of the Archdeacon of Surrey, Catharine Mabuza, and a service as celebration of the Surrey Joint Services Charity, which saw county officials, military guests and army cadets, sea cadets, RAF cadets and police cadets come together for a service of celebration and recognition of the contribution of the armed forces to the life of the country, the Commonwealth and beyond.

OPEN TO ALL

Guildford Cathedral's outreach work continued to make a significant impact in 2024. Our schools programme welcomed 17 visits, covering topics from the Kingdom of God, the Easter story, the Bible, peace, and remembrance. We also launched 'Nativities Around the World', using international nativity sets in Cathedral workshops and outreach visits, reaching an additional 270 children beyond our usual sessions.

Along with our colleagues at the Diocese of Guildford, we ran another successful Eco Day for Key Stage One (aged 4-7) pupils, hosted a week of leavers services, and the Advent Art exhibition, which this year was on the theme of Light in the Darkness.

We strengthened links with local schools, collaborating with the Diocese of Guildford's Schools Department. New developments included:

- Encouraging 'free play' creative responses through Duplo, drawing, and chat mats.
- Developing a Philosophy and Ethics morning for Years 10-13 in partnership with the Guildford Theology Hub.
- Expanding outreach workshops for schools unable to visit due to transport costs.

Another exciting development last year was bringing the Diocesan Godly Play Library to the Cathedral! Godly Play is a wonderful way of teaching bible stories and liturgical traditions through play. Both our schools and families staff members have been trained and are now certified 'Godly Play Practitioners'! We have been including elements of Godly Play in workshops, children's services and visits where possible.

Cathedral Tots continued to thrive, offering a welcoming space for young children and their guardians, while Family Fun Days provided creative activities with a community focus. In 2024 we started a new collaboration with one of our mission partners, Home Start, to reach more low income families and welcome them to these events. Canterbury Care Centre also ran a session for their clients, an annual visit they cherish.

Monthly Coffee Concerts attracted a diverse audience, including local care home residents and school groups, offering an accessible way to experience live music. These concerts have showcased the talents of local choirs, young professionals and our own Cathedral musicians. We are grateful for the support of the Borrow Charitable Trust for their continued support of these concerts.

EVENTS

Guildford Cathedral's grounds are busy all through the year, welcoming visitors, pilgrims and audiences. Complementing the church year, we also host many events. Some notable events from 2024 include celebrating with Safeguard Coaches for their centenary, and with Guildford Hong Kongers for Chinese New Year. We also welcomed the Royal Marine Band for an evening of music, and Carrot Productions brought back their sell out show of 'The Snowman' with live orchestra at Christmas. These events bring people up the hill that haven't been before, and number of new visitors say they came for an event and wanted to come back for a visit.

We also support other charities. We are the venue for a number of charity abseils throughout May and June, and in December we hosted Light up a Life with Phyllis Tuckwell which included a service in the Cathedral followed by the projection of names of loved ones onto the West End of the Cathedral.

ART AT THE CATHEDRAL

Sitting alongside our worship, events and outreach, we also host art exhibitions throughout the year. Our exhibitions are free to enter and open to the public during Cathedral opening hours.

A notable exhibition from 2024 was the Postbox Topper exhibition which saw a selection of the best hand made post box toppers displayed in the bays around the Cathedral. This was the first of its kind on this scale in the UK. These toppers came from all over the country, a couple even travelling to Guildford via the London Underground. This wonderful exhibition was fun and colourful, attracting a significant number of visitors from far and wide. We also offered knitting and crochet classes for those who wished to learn or develop these skills. This proved so popular, we are in conversation to host another next year.

We also showcased local artists, with groups West Surrey Artists and Art Now showcasing their artwork in the autumn.

FUNDRAISING

With costs rising across the board, our fundraising team worked hard in 2024 to bring in as much financial support as they could. This included writing applications to trusts and foundations but also included running events. Rock Choir held a fundraising concert for us in March. This was a free concert that gave members of the choir the opportunity to sing in the Cathedral. Concert goers were invited to make a donation towards the running costs of the Cathedral.

In April, two individuals went the extra mile to raise funds for the Cathedral. Chorister Neve ran a bake sale in support of Music on the Hill, and one of our Virgers, Nicola, ran the virtual marathon (the full 26.2 miles around the streets of Guildford). Huge thanks to both for their willingness to use their talents to support us.

In June, we had two very different events. Julie and Amanda, the Teddy Bear Ladies from BBC's Repair Shop launched a book called 'Bartie Bristle and Other Stories', a charming collection of stories for teddy bear lovers aged 4 to 104. They hosted a book signing event in Season's café and donated all proceeds to the Cathedral. It was a lovely afternoon as people of all ages brought their beloved bears and came to listen to Julie and Amanda talk, telling how the book came about and then reading from the book. Julie and Amanda, also came along to our Christmas Fair for the day, signing books, once again to help fundraise for the Cathedral.

We also welcomed back Red House Rhythm and Blues duo for an evening of Summertime Blues. Canon Chris and his blues partner Danny (Mission Enabler for the Diocese of Guildford) performed a variety of blues hits, and Matthew Hollingshurst performed his own solo set before joining the Red House duo to finish the evening. Season's café provided an inspired menu. It was a lovely summer's evening with good food and great music.

In September, fundraiser Karen undertook the mighty Three Peaks Challenge, attempting to climb up the highest peak in Scotland, England and Wales, plus travel between, within 24 hours. In her own words, she 'conquered 2 and $\frac{3}{4}$ peaks in just over 24 hours' – still quite an achievement! Our thanks to Karen for being willing to attempt this challenge and doing so to raise money for us.

Our final fundraising event of the year was the return of Quiz for a Cause. This year saw more quiz teams sign up, and Quizmasters Chris and Kathy, ably supported by Karen ran a quiz with rounds including Food, TV Detectives and British Politics. Again, supported by Season's Café, the evening was a huge success.

In an echo of the Cathedral's origins where the 'Buy-a-brick' campaign saw local people band together to ensure the completion of the Cathedral, in January, we were blessed by an outpouring of public support when one of our Sentinel Angel doors at the West End of the Cathedral was vandalised. People from the local community and further afield donated and we raised enough to cover the cost of replacing this panel. Plans are well underway for the new piece of glass to be etched and installed.

We are grateful to the trusts and foundations who have supported us this year and enabled us to continue the work we do.

The John and Ruth Howard Charitable Trust
Vibrated Corn
Atlas Fund
St Christopher's Educational Trust
Charles Stanley
Cathedral Music Trust

We are also hugely grateful to all the individuals who have supported us throughout 2024.



Red House Rhythm and Blues with Matthew Hollinghurst



Guildford HongKongers



Julie and Amanda reading from Bartie Bristle



Schools Eco Day



Sunset over Guildford Cathedral

MAKING A JOYFUL SOUND

Guildford Cathedral's musicians packed an incredible amount into 2024, contributing richly to worship and the wider musical life of the Cathedral.

January began with the Epiphany Carol Service, setting the tone for the year ahead. This was followed by the launch of the Music Patron Scheme (MPS), where Katherine Dienes-Williams spoke about the importance of music within the life of the Cathedral and within the lives of the choristers who are nurtured and developed. Thanks to the generosity of our Patrons, the MPS had a brilliant start, helping to sustain the many elements that create such beautiful music. Also in January, we welcomed children to a sold-out Chorister Experience Day. Thirty-eight children, aged 5 to 12, enjoyed a taste of life as a chorister, experiencing a choir rehearsal, trying on a robe, and enjoying an organ demonstration. The day concluded with Choral Evensong alongside the Cathedral Choir.

February saw the arrival of Lent and a significant milestone as BBC Radio 3 broadcast the Ash Wednesday service live from the Cathedral. The broadcast received wonderful feedback from both those attending in person and those listening online.

March was filled with music. Leading up to International Women's Day and Women Composers Sunday, we featured pieces by female composers, including Ethel Smyth, Fanny Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann, Pia Rose Scattergood, and Katherine Dienes-Williams. This initiative celebrated female composers past and present, inspiring the next generation. The monthly Coffee Concert showcased Organ Scholar Jeremy Wan's talent, and the girl choristers visited St John the Evangelist, Merrow, to sing Choral Evensong, and St Catherine's School, Bramley, for their annual weekend of workshops ending with a concert. The boy and girl choristers also played a key role in the Installation of the Archdeacon of Surrey and provided the music for Holy Week and Easter services. After a fitting all of that into March, **April** was quieter for our choristers while they took a well-earned post-Easter break.

In **May**, the celebration of Pentecost saw our musicians display their flexibility with a malfunctioning organ leading to adapting the service to work with piano accompaniment. We also celebrated Dr Barry Rose, OBE, ninetieth birthday with a special Choral Evensong sung by our girl and boy choristers directed by Barry Rose himself.

June brought further collaboration as we welcomed the choir of Holy Trinity for a stunning Choral Evensong. The choir supported the Ordination service, and outgoing Organ Scholar Jeremy Wan gave a memorable valedictory concert.

July marked the end of the academic year, with a special service on 7 July installing new choristers and bidding farewell to those moving on. **August** offered a well-deserved summer break for our young choristers, though the Cathedral still enjoyed musical highlights, including a Coffee Concert by Lay Clerk and Lead Chaperone Peter Hicks, who stepped in at the last minute.

September saw the return of the choir year, welcoming Organ Scholar George Baldwin. We also installed new Head Choristers: Alex and Marcus for the boy choristers, with Alex and Theo as Deputies, and Bella as Head Chorister for the girl choristers, with Molly as Deputy.

With term well under way, in **October** we welcomed the chamber choir from George Abbott School as part of our Evensong Project. We ran a pilot of this project earlier in the year, and with generous funding from the Cathedral Music Trust this project continues to grow. In this project, we link with interested state schools or colleges. Katherine or Asher visits and teaches them music for Evensong, as well as imparting advice and inspiration to students who might consider pursuing music as they advance through the education system and beyond. The school or college choir is then invited to sing Choral Evensong with the Guildford Cathedral choir, giving them the opportunity to sing the music in the setting it was written for, and also to sing alongside and learn from the boy and girl choristers and Lay Clerks.

November was another full month, starting on 1 November with a Eucharist for All Saints followed by a Requiem Mass for All Souls on 2 November. On 8 November we welcomed Gordons School for the second Evensong Project service of the term. This was quickly followed by the Country Service of Remembrance and a Requiem Mass for Remembrance on Sunday 10 November. Alongside this, our choristers also found time to record the Digital Advent Calendar that is shared on our social media channels throughout December.

For the second time this year, our musicians proved their versatility and adaptability when Storm Bert knocked out the power in the Cathedral on Sunday 25 November during the Bishop of Dorking's sermon. Although we did get power back, the organ took a little time to reset. With true professionalism, Asher quickly set up the grand piano and Katherine ran down the hill in the wind and rain in her cassock to pick some piano music for the final voluntary!



Dr Barry Rose 90th Birthday Celebration

Image: Marie Davey



Post Box Topper



Girls weekend of fun



Safeguard buses



Installation of Probationary Choristers as Full Choristers

Image: Marie Davey



Chorister Easter Egg Hunt
Image: Marie Davey



Announcement of the Dean Designate



Quiz for a Cause winners



Launch of Music Patron Scheme



Installation of Archdeacon of Surrey

Running head-first into **December**, the choir kicked off the season of Advent with the Advent Carol Service on 1 December and then quickly shifted gears for the John Rutter Christmas Celebration on Saturday 7 December. And then, to round of the year, the choir lead us through the joyful Christmas celebrations with a Service of Lessons and Carols on 22 December, Journey to Bethlehem (where some choristers made up the Stag Hill Phil) and the First Eucharist of Christmas on 24 December, and the Christmas Day Eucharist and Lessons and Carols on Christmas Day. Attendance at our services over this period were some of the highest we have seen since 2019, including our highest attendance at two of those services.

While this was happening at the Cathedral, we got a chance to cheer for one of our Changed Voice choristers. Oscar made it through to the final of the BBC Chorister of the Year competition. His beautiful performance of the Sussex Carol was superb, and we are very proud of all he has achieved.

This is just a brief snap-shot of the music here at Guildford Cathedral. There are many more special moments that could be included, such as a trip to York for the boy choristers, or the girl choristers and Katherine releasing a Gen Z video, so we are sure you can appreciate the hard work and dedication our musicians show to making Music on the Hill

LIVESTREAMING

If you are unable to get to our services, we continue to livestream our Sunday Services via our Facebook page and YouTube channel.

AND FINALLY...

Some things that the Cathedral does don't easily fit under the other headings. For example, 2024 was a year of interesting weather. This led to numerous photo possibilities. The appearance of the Northern Lights drove many people to come and photograph the Cathedral at night. The Cathedral against the backdrop of some stunning sunsets was also a photographic gem. And on one particularly misty morning, the Cathedral seemed to float above the clouds.

2024 also saw us host the Theology Hub, an initiative that sees the Cathedral, the University and the Diocese work together. A particular highlight from this year was welcoming Professor Jeremy Begbie to talk about music and theology. The evening included Jeremy playing the piano for us. In 2024, we were pleased to welcome Father Charlie Annis from the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield to lead us through Holy Week with thoughtful reflections. In October, we were delighted to announce the new Dean of Guildford, Bob Cooper, then Archdeacon of Sunderland. Although this meant saying a fond farewell to Interim Dean Stuart Beake, we are delighted to have Dean Bob at the helm!

LOOKING AHEAD

As we reflect on 2024, we give thanks for the dedication of our musicians, volunteers, and community, who make Guildford Cathedral a place of worship, music, and outreach. We look forward to 2025 with hope and excitement, continuing to share God's love and hospitality on Stag Hill. We have some exciting plans including welcoming Jacquie Parkinson back with her new exhibition 'Threads through the Cross' and a fundraising gala dinner in September.

DID YOU KNOW

in 2024?

Not counting our regular services over

117,000 people visited

the Cathedral



GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL



WELL OVER

1,000

services were held, with many sung by our amazing choirs



1,325

pupils learnt something new at our school workshops



1,395

people of all ages enjoyed our free coffee concerts

919

children and their adults came to our **Family Fun Days**

756 people came to **4** fundraising events • **5** free art exhibitions



hours - the number of hours our chorister's rehearsed

318 people climbed the **249** steps to enjoy a Tower Tour

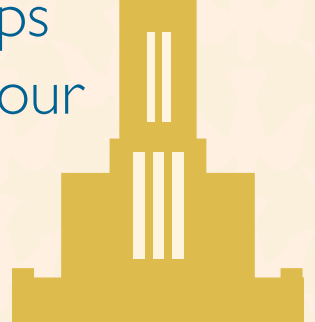


3504

The Cathedral organs were played for 1000 hours - the equivalent of 41 days nonstop!

332

visitors had guided tours lead by our wonderful volunteer guides



gifts were made using our contactless donation machines

2887

people came to our Advent and Christmas services



around

250

amazing volunteers made it all possible by giving their time



Image: Nathan Paul

Across this year, we have also been generously supported by individuals, either with regular or one-off general donations, or with sponsorship for a specific project or event. To all of you, thank you. We couldn't do what we do without your generosity and support.

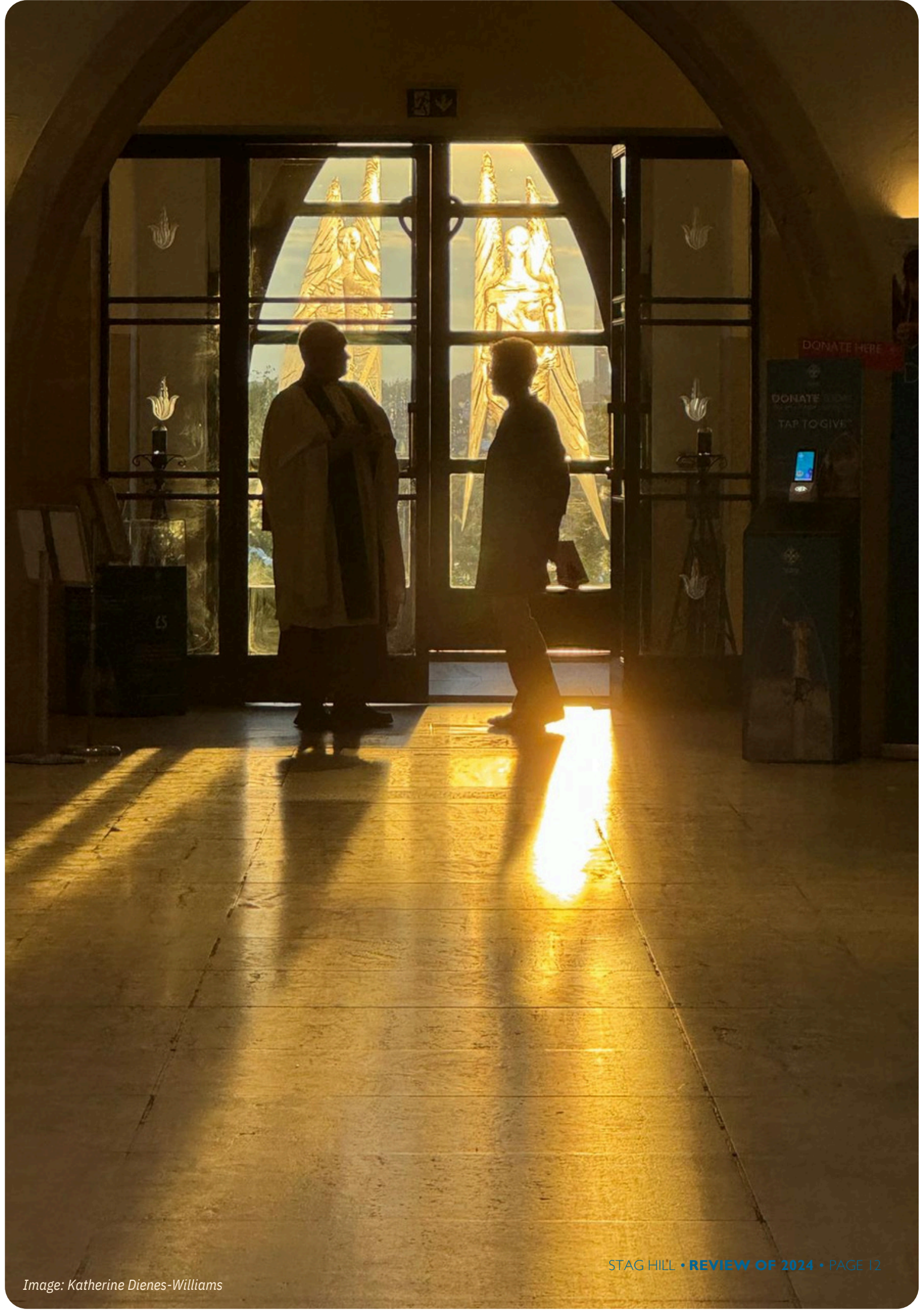


Image: Katherine Dienes-Williams