



Chester Cathedral

Date:

PRESS RELEASE

A little piece of Russia in Chester Cathedral

A beautiful icon, representing the Mother and Child, was dedicated at a service in Chester Cathedral on Sunday morning. It is now on display in St Werburgh's Chapel where the wonderful depth of colour provides a splash of light on an otherwise dark winter's evening. Two more icons will arrive in the New Year.

The icons were commissioned with the generous funding from the Friends of Chester Cathedral to provide financial support and a tangible expression of the link between the Cathedral and Kondopoga. They were painted at the icon workshop in the parish of Kondopoga in the Republic of Karelia, North West Russia. The icon workshop is led by Mother Julia, who was present at the dedication service.

Chester Cathedral has had links with this parish for some time, supporting the work of the St Gregory's Foundation which provides resources to local people who help each other in Russia and the former Soviet Union.

A wide range of projects have been undertaken to aid this desperately poor region, including initiatives aimed at helping the sick, orphans, young offenders, children, the elderly and rebuilding shattered communities. The parish of Kondopoga has built up a thriving youth programme, as well as a soup kitchen which feeds a hundred people every day, a farm which supplies the soup kitchen, and a sawmill and a carpentry workshop, where the icon boards were produced; this is an extraordinary achievement in this rootless and deprived town.

This year's Cathedral Christmas card is an image of this magnificent and spiritual work of art and is now available in the Cathedral Gift Shop.

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Contact:

Nicholas Fry, 12 Abbey Square, CHESTER, CH1 2 HU

Tel: 01244 500958

E-mail: visits@chestercathedral.com

Fax: 01244 699040