

## **Coventry Cross To Celebrate 63<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Of Its First Prayer Service In Minden**

*Celebration To Include Special Service On December 10, Christmas Cookie And Gingerbread House Decoration*

**Minden, NV**—Coventry Cross Episcopal Church, the oldest church in Minden, is celebrating the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the first service held at the church after it was moved to its current location in 1954. The celebration will take place at the 10 a.m. service on Sunday, December 10, 2017 and continue afterwards with decorating Christmas cookies and making graham cracker “gingerbread” houses.

Participants at the anniversary celebration will use the 1928 prayer book, the one in use 63 years ago during the church’s first service in Minden on December 5, 1954. The service also will include special musical selections. In keeping with the old-fashioned atmosphere, women are encouraged to wear dresses and hats to church and men are encouraged to wear ties. After the service, in addition to Christmas cookies and the “gingerbread” houses, attendees can enjoy hot apple cider, coffee, and tea.

Coventry Cross Episcopal Church was originally located in Smith Valley. Its journey to Minden from Smith Valley began in late September 1954. The building was transported up Jack Wright Pass, a mountain road that gained almost 1,000 feet in elevation. As the people transporting the church approached Minden, they were forced to take a circuitous route along narrow dirt roads in order to avoid power lines crossing Main Street in Gardnerville. It took ten days to move the building the 40 miles between the two locations. Coventry Cross Episcopal Church arrived at its current site at the corner of Esmeralda and Eighth Streets in Minden on October 8, 1954. The officiants of the first service on December 5, 1954 were Vicar John Thomas and his guest, the Reverend Henry Brandreth of St. George’s Church of England in Paris, France.

Today, Coventry Cross Episcopal Church retains its unique historical ambiance. The focal point of the church is the Tudor cross that stood for five centuries on the porch of the Cathedral of St. Michael at Coventry, England. Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Jenkins, a Nevada bishop, received the cross as a gift in 1930 when he preached at the Lambeth Conference, an assembly of bishops that occurs every decade. This gift saved the cross from destruction in World War II, when the Cathedral of St. Michael was almost completely destroyed by the Germans during the Coventry Blitz of November 14, 1940.

Bishop Jenkins gave the cross to a church being built in Smith, Nevada. The cross was placed on the Rood beam above the altar. Bishop Jenkins dedicated Coventry Cross Chapel, named for the cross from England, on July 27, 1941. The three-foot tall, granite cross is carved with 28 Tudor roses and a giant blossom sits where each of the cross’s three points meet in the center. The cross was originally a red color but was eventually stained dark brown. Today, it remains on the Rood beam of the church in Minden. For information about the 63<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary event, call Coventry Cross Episcopal Church at 775-782-4161.