

St Davids Cathedral

Message to all on the Electoral Roll, Volunteers and the Parish from the Dean, Sub-Dean and Wardens

It's been the strangest Easter ever. Certainly the strangest Easter we've ever experienced. The usual run of events has been disrupted, our usual Holy Week events cancelled and we're learning to live a new 'normal' kind of life that's way out of our comfort zone. For the first few days of the lockdown, it felt like Christmas, then a realisation that the empty streets and the lack of freedom of movement was going to be a bit of struggle. Many of us feel confused, scared and bored all in equal measure and none of us know what the future is going to look like, let alone whether things will go back to the way they were before. The hardest thing of all has been to see the cathedral silent and lifeless during what is normally for us THE busiest week in the Church calendar.

When Jesus was crucified, it was a huge political event – Pilate needed to keep order, Herod wanted to keep his authority as a pocket ruler in the region, and he needed to keep the religious leaders on side in order to do that - nobody wanted Rome involved. The disciples didn't see it coming, and overnight, they become fugitives, wanted men and women, locked away in the upper-room unable to go out. Lockdown. Their lives are turned upside down and their new norm is scarily like ours, and they wished for things to go back to how they were before, when Jesus was alive. But things could never be the same again – they would never be the same again.

Jesus appears to some of them on that first Easter Day when he rises from the dead and then eight days later, whilst they're still on lockdown, he appears in their room again and he says, "Peace be with you" or "Shalom" and it's the kind of peace which is deeper than just wishing someone a nice day – it's the peace that passes all understanding and which gives you the sense that even though things are tough and topsy turvy at the moment, they will turn out to be OK in the end, we just have to trust Jesus and in the peace and healing that he brings.

Cathedral Clergy and Pastoralia

The Dean, Minor Canon Sophie and Minor Canon Gill have been self-shielding and self-isolating since the lockdown, so whilst saying the offices at home, emailing and videoing is still possible in quarantine, the boots on the ground has just been Canon Leigh.

Please contact Canon Leigh (01437 720456) with any queries, or just for a chat – this is hard for us too, not being able to see people and we might be having tough days too, so please give us a call, you know our numbers. Maggie Rose, People's Warden is also available as a point of contact should you need to get in touch (01437 729339).

If you would like support in saying the daily offices, or any spiritual/prayer support, please let us know.

Social Media

Those of you on Facebook and Twitter may have seen that we have been sharing on social media various resources for prayer and reflection and also through the Cathedral's new YouTube channel, which can be found at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCncOKz_Y5XSh4CO9aR6qEnQ. Please subscribe so that you get to hear about updates and premiers! The new Cathedral website is also now live and available at <https://www.stdavidscathedral.org.uk/>

First up was the community-wide dramatised version of the St Matthew Passion Gospel which we'd usually have heard in the Cathedral after our usual procession down from Cross Square, with donkey and blessed palms. A huge thank you to everyone who took part, 'together, apart' and especially to Sian Richardson, Pencarnan for pulling it all together. You can find it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3S2GpHGR0AM&t=2s>

The Dean recorded an introduction to Holy Week, which you can watch at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBTV04_8MzU&t=10s

And every afternoon, we had reflections from Dean Sarah, Canon Leigh and Revd Sophie, on the 'Seven Last Words' of Jesus from the cross:

Palm Sunday <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IMNURzBbjE&t=16s>

Monday in Holy Week <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnGNJq-bp7U>

Tuesday in Holy Week https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0B2Y-J_0vM

Wednesday in Holy Week <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OeMfoOjC7fU>

Maundy Thursday <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6wW063hfyc>

Good Friday <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycG5PUHJWAE>

Holy Saturday <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAW6EDjbae8>

Then in the evenings we had the opportunity to enjoy pre-recorded organ pieces from Simon Pearce and some solo pieces from his son, Christian, and on Easter Day from Lowri Richardson. These can be found here:

Monday in Holy Week <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOcs4J1wEfA>

Tuesday in Holy Week <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3XvhvBYWYA>

Wednesday in Holy Week <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2e-HKFTBVY>

Maundy Thursday https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1h8s9tV5_Q

Good Friday https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Le_X6V-tAU

Easter Day

On Easter Eve there was a service released through the Diocese, our YouTube Channel and social media, jointly from Bishop Joanna in Abergwili and the Cathedral:

And on Easter Sunday morning Bishop Joanna celebrated the Eucharist in her home at 10.30am. At the moment of writing this, its not known whether her attempt to live stream worked, if it did, it will be available on the Diocesan Facebook page and YouTube Channel. https://youtu.be/V_A2krX57II

Some people have asked why we have not been doing more so far, to which there are a number of answers! It's a crowded market out there: there's no shortage of other Cathedrals, and other clergy, streaming services, sometimes twice a day. There are plenty of good

opportunities to join in that rhythm of worship. We're also conscious that while some of it is done very well, that's not always the case. And we've also not been short of 'exposure' given the BBC1 Sunday morning Worship (April 19th, May 17th, June 7th). So St Davids has quite a profile out there! We also want to support what the Bishop is doing through these times.

Therefore, our aim has been to look for what does NOT duplicate what is already out there, or risk getting lost among what everyone else is doing; and instead try to find what 'adds value' through offering things that are different, and quality. We also don't want to commit ourselves to anything that is unsustainable, if this continues for a rather longer haul. Once the lockdown is relaxed to allow clergy back into their buildings, we will be looking to live stream daily services from the cathedral, and generally expand what we do online.

Our resources here are modest, in personnel and in equipment, though we are looking to invest in the latter in the near future. If you have any ideas for what we might do, please let us know.

We are thankful that for security-related reasons – Jenny Kitchell, the Dean's Verger, continues to visit the cathedral daily to make sure all is in order. We however must demonstrate that we are not 'going to work' needlessly, and so encourage others to stay home as far as possible. Though many of us have the privilege of living within the Close, we do not know exactly where in this valley David himself lived and prayed; but we do know that Jesus said to his followers after his resurrection that 'I am with you to the end of time' and therefore he meets us equally in our homes, on our daily walk, in our work whatever that may be, and wherever we find ourselves. It is a privilege to worship within the Cathedral, but there is no reason why we cannot do so equally in our homes – and perhaps there is treasure to be found through a growing a sense of prayerfulness within our homes through these hard times.

If you have not yet discovered the 'Cathedral Community Chat' WhatsApp group and would like to join in the banter, please send a WhatsApp message to Canon Leigh (07970 723907) and he will sign you up.