



Eglwys Gadeiriol Tyddewi Croesawu

ymwelwyr fel pererinion

St Davids Cathedral

Welcoming visitors as pilgrims



Oddi wrth Y Deon: Y Tra Pharchedig Dr Sarah Rowland Jones LVO OBE

From the Dean: The Very Revd Dr Sarah Rowland Jones LVO OBE

13 May 2020

A Message from Dean Sarah

Dear friends – dear brothers and sisters in Christ of the Cathedral family

It is almost two months since both English and Welsh governments called for public services to cease, and we have had to initiate all manner of new ways of sharing in worship and fellowship together. We are still developing these, with the Tuesday evening Bible Study by Zoom, which Sophie is launching. Some of these have been very moving, often in unexpected ways, and I suspect that in time we will all have found our faith both stretched and grown by the challenges of doing things differently! But at the same time, there is also so much to miss, through not being able to worship together inside the Cathedral which we love so much.

Many people have been asking why the Cathedral remains closed even for the clergy, and we are recording services from our own homes, unlike at other Cathedrals across Wales where recorded or streamed services come from within the building. This is the decision of Bishop Joanna, who reminds us that the Church is actually the Christian community, and not the building in which we meet. Indeed, the roots of the word ‘church’ come from the ancient Greek word ‘ecclesia’, which means ‘a gathered assembly’. Therefore Bishop Joanna has directed that all church buildings in the Diocese of St Davids should remain closed until all of us, as the actual church - clergy and people alike, in solidarity in our distancing throughout this pandemic – can once again gather together for worship.

We know God hears our prayers equally, whether we pray at home, in church, or anywhere else, and whether we are ordained or not! So, although we may long for the time when we can once again be in the Cathedral, I hope you are all nonetheless discovering the nearness of Jesus and his compassionate love, and also the power of prayer, in new and deeper ways, in your own homes.

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At the Deanery, Peter (with our puppy Daisy!) is joining me most days for Morning Prayer, and we have found this a very precious time together. (If you would like prayer resources, the Church of England has an almost identical service to ours, updating the same readings daily, online at www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer, for morning, mid-day, evening and night prayers.)

It also remains a comfort to recall that we here offer our prayers and praises in and around the very same place where St David did the same all those centuries ago, and so many generations have done since.

It should be noted, of course, that most of the announcements made on Sunday by the Prime Minister only apply to England. Here we are bound by the regulations put in place by the Welsh government, on the basis of which the Bench of Bishops of the Church in Wales, and our Bishop specifically for us here, then take their decisions about what should be done. So we wait to hear when current measures may be changed. At present we have no indication of any likely dates. So let us continue to uphold one another in prayer, and use what opportunities we can for being in touch to encourage and sustain one another. I'm very grateful to Leigh, Sophie, Gill and Maggie, especially, for all they are doing to keep everyone connected – and to all of you, who are part of the network of support within and beyond 'Cathedral regulars'.

At least this Sunday morning, 17 May, we can all watch worship from inside the Cathedral, as BBC1's Sunday Worship is one of the services that was recorded here in late March. It's probably at 10.45am, but please do check the schedule as sometimes the time changes, or is different in Wales to England. And it will be available afterwards on iPlayer. Our final pre-recorded service will be broadcast on 7 June.

I'm writing this on Wednesday evening, 13 May, and these words, part of the Evening Prayer reading, seem very apt in these circumstances: 'Come to [Jesus], a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 2:4-5).

In the love of Jesus Christ, whose resurrection we celebrate through this strange Eastertide – may he bless us all with courage, steadfastness, resilience and hope



The Very Reverend Dr Sarah Rowland Jones - Dean of St Davids