



WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

From the Dean of Worcester
The Very Reverend Peter Atkinson MA, DLitt (Hon), FRSA

15 January 2021

To all members of the Cathedral community

Dear Friends,

As you may have heard by now, the Chapter has cancelled all public services in the Cathedral until further notice. This is in response to the sudden and very serious surge in the Covid infection rate in our region, and in Worcester in particular. After consulting both the Bishop and the City Council, we came to the decision that this was the most responsible course of action, and the one most supportive of all those in our City doing their best to contain the further spread of the virus. We hope and pray that this will not be for long. The Chapter keeps the situation under review daily, and we long, as you do, for the day when we can again celebrate public worship in the Cathedral.

We will continue to offer daily worship livestreamed to the Cathedral Facebook page, and available later both on Facebook and on the Diocese of Worcester website. There will continue to be a livestreamed celebration of Holy Communion every weekday at 8 a.m. On Sundays there will be a livestreamed Sung Eucharist (with organ and a cantor) at 10.30 a.m. and livestreamed Choral Evensong (with a core lower-voices choir) at 4 p.m. A Sung Eucharist will be livestreamed at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday 19 January (St Wulfstan's Day), Tuesday 2 February (Candlemas), and Wednesday 17 February (Ash Wednesday). As all these plans are subject to potential further restrictions or changes in Government regulations, please keep an eye on the Worcester Cathedral website. The Cathedral Website and Facebook page will also keep you in touch with other Cathedral news, reflections, and opportunities for learning.

Until further notice, we will keep the Cathedral open for individual prayer from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day from Monday to Saturday. The residentiary canons and I continue the daily cycle of morning and evening prayer. We continue to keep a list of the sick (which is on the altar at every Eucharist) and of the recently departed. Canon Stephen Edwards keeps these lists and he will be glad to receive names from you to include in our prayers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have worked so hard in recent months to maintain the life and work of the Cathedral – our office staff, headed by our indefatigable Chief Operating Officer, Val Floy; our organists, lay clerks and choral scholars; our vergers, service team, and stonemasons; our new team of welcomers; and all those of our volunteers who have been able to continue to make their contribution. Some have spent time on furlough, some have had to isolate, many have had to work from home, some have been ill. All have continued to do all they could to support the life and work of the Cathedral.

This was especially evident over Christmas. We managed to offer no less than seventeen choral services in the week up to Christmas Day, for as many people as we could accommodate inside the Cathedral, and for many more who viewed the services online. We were able to welcome as many people as we safely could to view the Christmas trees in the cloister, with only the final few days cut short by fresh Government restrictions.

I would like to thank the residentiary canons for their sterling work in keeping the weekday live-streamed services going. There is no technical staff supporting this – just a solitary priest in an empty Cathedral, with a mobile phone on a tripod and a microphone. Things occasionally go wrong, and then we are grateful for the tolerance and forgiveness of our viewers.

The residentiary canons and I would also like to thank all those, especially among the regular worshippers, who have supported and encouraged us with your prayers and your good wishes. Messages of appreciation are enormously appreciated in return. Many of you have generously responded to our repeated appeals for money. This letter is not one of them – but you will be hearing from us again! We have magnificently weathered the past year; but the year ahead, from a financial point of view, may be even more tough.

Let us continue to support one another in prayer, and with messages of friendship and good will. Let us continue to live out our Christian lives in all the ways open to us – in meditation and reading, in care for our neighbours, in generosity to those in need, in cultivating a habit of gratitude. As we approach the Feast of St Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester and founder of the present Cathedral building, let us ask God for the grace, like him, to ‘live simply, work diligently, and make God’s kingdom known’.

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.