

The Chapter Letter



SUNDAY 29 MARCH – SUNDAY 5 APRIL

Be still and know that I am God

For many of us the past week has been one of frantic busyness. The Government, companies and institutions have been holding daily briefings and communicating radical and often painful decisions as we come to terms with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

There has been stress at the supermarket, parents having to juggle work and home schooling and the generational challenge of getting to grips with modern technology in order to work remotely from home. Even the church has taken to video conferencing, live streaming worship and learning to serve creatively in very different circumstances.

At the very least it is unsettling and disorientating to find ourselves locked out of the Cathedral and barred from gathering for public or private prayer and worship. We have been working hard to provide resources to enable spiritual nurture and give the means to pray together from our homes. I know of one resourceful friendship where they telephone each other every day and say Morning Prayer over the phone.

Whilst some of us, in responding to the implications of the current crisis, have had very little space or time this week, others have been plunged into solitude and isolation.

Throughout the Bible a repeated refrain are the words: "Fear not! Do not be afraid!"

My own recent experience, during the eleven months I spent away from the Cathedral often feeling isolated and with long empty days stretching ahead of me, is that God is faithful, resourceful and compassionate. We need not be afraid. My daily prayer was to be constant and fruitful.

One of many reflections during that time was on the nature of wounds as portals for healing and transformation. Sites of regeneration and new life.

Another piece of study was into the life of Bishop Edward King who in his encounter with adversity wrote: "these woundings are rather prunings for greater beauty and richer fruit."

Be still and know that I am God.

As the period of national lockdown progresses whether we crave stillness or find it forced upon us, let us create time to pray, and anticipate greater beauty and richer fruit. May we gain fresh insight and deepen our compassion and love for one another, especially those who are afraid or vulnerable.

DEAN CHRISTINE

BIBLE READINGS

Sunday 29 March
Fifth Sunday of Lent

Eucharist
Ezekiel 37: 1-14
Romans 8: 6-11
John 11: 1-45

Mattins
Jeremiah 31: 27-37
John 12: 20-33

Evening Prayer
Lamentations 3: 19-33
Matthew 20: 17-end

Sunday 5 April
Palm Sunday

Eucharist
Liturgy of the Palms
Matthew 21: 1-11

Liturgy of the Passion
Isaiah 50: 4-9a
Philippians 2: 5-11
Matthew 26: 14-end of 27

Mattins
Zechariah 9: 9-12
Luke 16: 19-end

Evening Prayer
Isaiah 5: 1-7
Matthew 21: 33-end

Sunday 12 April
Easter Day

Eucharist
Jeremiah 31: 1-6
Acts 10:34-43
John 20: 1-18

Mattins
Exodus 14: 10-18, 26-15:2
Revelation 15:2-4

Evening Prayer
Song of Solomon 3: 2-5; 8:6-7
Revelation 1: 12-18

The Chapter Letter

During these unusual times, we have decided to bring you the Chapter Letter weekly so that we can keep in touch with news from the Cathedral and community, share resources for home worship and information which we hope you will find useful while we cannot welcome you into the Cathedral.

If there is anything that you think should be included in the Chapter Letter, please email Michelle Andrews on communications@lincolncathedral.com

Also, if you know of anyone that does not have access to the internet, but would still like to receive the Chapter Letter, please let Michelle know and she will endeavour to print and post a copy to them.

From the Subdean:

The Miracle of the Feeding of the 5000 is a familiar story and I happened to be reading the passage from St. Mark's Gospel (Mark 6.30-32) in my private prayers this last week.

St. Mark describes the location of the miracle as a "deserted place" and yet within the narrative he also includes the detail that Jesus asks the multitude to sit down on the "green grass". It's a small point but not one to write off. For centuries the Jewish people had seen the fulfilment of God's purposes for the world, as a time when the deserts of the world would become fruitful places; the wilderness of the world would become once more a Garden of Eden. For example, Isaiah wrote, *He will make her wilderness like Eden; her desert like the garden of the Lord.*

In St. Mark's story the presence of Jesus transforms the wilderness into a garden, the desert has become a fruitful place. Lost in the desert, in the wilderness, of this world's sin, its complexities, its confusions, its anxieties and tragedies, they came seeking help from the one who walked with God, who taught with authority, who loved with generosity. In his presence the wilderness of this fallen and broken world became the Garden of God.

Living as we do at this time with the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions placed upon us, the world can seem like a desert, a wilderness in need of transformation into a fruitful and bountiful garden.

The Feeding of the 5000 is rightly called a miracle: from very little, much was enjoyed. I suspect that what was also happening is that, by the grace of God, people's hearts were opened to share what they had with their neighbour and to help those less fortunate than themselves.

At this time similar acts of kindness enable the wilderness to bring forth life, and we have seen that by the number of people who have volunteered to assist the NHS and other relief organisations at this time. Pastorally we can all do our bit by having a telephone conversation with someone we know to be alone; helping a neighbour; providing food for those who would otherwise go without; and other acts of kindness and generosity.

Pastorally at the Cathedral many I know are helping their neighbours by such acts of kindness; and John Campbell (Dean's Verger) and I, along with others, are actively contacting members of the community by telephone and assisting those with particular needs. Please do contact either one of us and we shall try our best to help wherever possible. I shall update you on a regular basis about other pastoral support being offered at this time.

May God bless you and may you find a little green grass amidst the wilderness,

JOHN PATRICK, SUBDEAN

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Worship & Mission

A prayer

The doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked. (John 20.19)

Ever present God,
be with us in our isolation,
be close to us in our distancing,
be healing in our sickness,
be joy in our sadness,
be light in our darkness,
be wisdom in our confusion,
be all that is familiar when all is unfamiliar,
that when the doors reopen
we may with the zeal of Pentecost
inhabit our communities
and speak of your goodness
to an emerging world.
For Jesus' sake.
Amen.

Home Worship Resources

While we are not able to hold services and pray in the Cathedral, our clergy continue to pray on behalf of all.

We have also put together a selection of resources to help you continue to worship in your own home.

These can be found on our website at - <https://lincolncathedral.com/worship-music/home-worship-resources/>

They include prayers, readings and psalms, links to other online resources as well as videos of reflections and music

We also encourage you to follow us on Facebook and Twitter where we will also be posting prayers, videos and more information about the Cathedral.

The Dean's Verger Writes

Prayer Continues

The Cathedral community of Lincoln Cathedral continues to offer prayers daily, please join us in praying for; **the sick** including; Lucinda, Suzanne, Mike, Lesley, Sersha, Audrey and Elizabeth Anne, and **the departed**; Nigel, Nicola, Brian, Brian and John.

In our cycle of prayer we uphold; Bishop Grosseteste University the University of Lincoln and all schools associated with the Cathedral at this time.

Upmost in our prayers at this sensitive time are all those affected by Coronavirus, those suffering and those caring for sufferers and their loved ones.

Community

Volunteer Announcement: Death of Nigel Burn

It is with great sadness we inform you of the unexpected death of Nigel Burn, Cathedral Roof Guide Leader and Floor Guide, on Wednesday 25 March.

Nigel was an extremely personable and knowledgeable guide and was always looking at how we could develop and improve our tours so that our visitors would enjoy our Cathedral as much as he did. Nigel made a great contribution in life not just to the Cathedral but also through his involvement with Lincoln Castle and other historical groups. He will be sorely missed.

We hold Nigel, his family and friends, in our thoughts and prayers

Events

You will already be aware that all events have been cancelled until 31 May, and the management team will keep future events under review.

It has also been decided that our Flower Festival, Vision, will now be held in 2021. The new dates will be Monday 26 July to Monday 2 August 2021.

Anyone who has already bought tickets will be contacted in due course and offered the opportunity to move the tickets to the new date or receive a refund. More details about this will be issued in the coming days.

InHouse

The latest edition of InHouse, the journal from the Lincoln Cathedral Community Association, is now available. It can be downloaded from: <https://lincolncathedral.com/latest-edition-of-inhouse-now-available-3/>

Blue lights

On Thursday 26 March you may have noticed that the Cathedral was lit blue. This was to show support and solidarity for NHS and all frontline staff, and to demonstrate to them that they remain in our prayers.

There has been a hugely positive response with coverage in the local and national press, and also from NHS staff themselves who have said how much they appreciated the gesture.

The most important way that we can all support the NHS at the moment is to follow advice and stay at home.