



May 2020

Dear Friend,

I hope this monthly letter finds you safe and well. It is good to be able to write with an update about life at the Cathedral during the Covid-19 emergency. Our city, our county and all its people continue to be in our thoughts and prayers each day.

Our life of worship has remained at the heart of the Cathedral's life - but how different these 50 days of Easter have felt from other years! For eight weeks the residentiary clergy have said Morning and Evening Prayer in their homes; then on Saturday May 17th, with no little rejoicing, those services and the daily Eucharist returned to the Cathedral building. To comply with the social distancing requirements, only one member of Chapter is present each day but it is good to be back in the Cathedral and to have the bell rung each day to mark the way the Cathedral continues to be a centre of prayer for God's people here in Cumbria.

Our staff are being wonderful. We are grateful to those who have been furloughed under the Government's Job Retention Scheme for their understanding; and we are grateful too to those who have continued in post and taken on the demands of these extraordinary times. Since writing to you after Easter, Ms Sharon Parr, who has been Director of Strategic Operations here since 2016, has finished work at the Cathedral and moved to take up a post with the Financial Ombudsman Service. The Chapter and many members of the Cathedral staff were able to gather virtually to say thank you to Sharon for the remarkable contribution she has made to the Cathedral at a critical time. When Sharon arrived we had just submitted our Stage 2 Lottery Fund bid to bring the Fraternity back to life, thanks to her strategic skills and energy the project has moved from development to delivery and now stands on the very cusp of being operational. We are tremendously grateful for all Sharon has done and wish her well for the future.

Recognising the importance of this senior management role in the life of the Cathedral, the Chapter lost no time in taking forward the appointment process for Sharon's successor. In line with the new Cathedrals' Measure, which will be approved by General Synod later this year, the new post will be called Chief Operating Officer. I hope to have news of this appointment when I next write.

We have also said farewell to Mr Craig Carruthers who has been Head of Visitor Services since 2018. Our much stronger digital profile, our new website and the development of the new Welcome Centre in the Cathedral are all evidence of Craig's skill, creativity and hard work. He was also able to help us with arrangements for the live-streaming of the Sunday Eucharist. We thank him very sincerely.

Live-streaming of the Sunday Eucharist on Facebook continues each week. It has been good to have positive feedback. From Sunday May 18th the service was live-streamed from the High Altar in the Cathedral and while we are not yet allowed to use the Cathedral organ to add music to this offering, we are glad to have included hymns thanks to the playing and singing of Mr Stephen Crookes our organ scholar. I am sure you will be glad to have at least a glimpse of the interior of the Cathedral.

Within the Cathedral precinct, some of you will be aware that we were able to light the Cathedral blue on May 7th as a tribute to the NHS and all that is being done by key workers during the emergency. There is a video recording of this event on the Cathedral website.

Cubby Construction Limited and their subcontractors returned to site on May 11th to complete the final tasks of the capital and landscaping work programme on the Fraternity. We expect to hear a date for the delivery of the lift which will allow access to both floors of the Fraternity. How long this has been an ambition for everyone who knows the Fraternity building! We are glad to hear that the manufacture in Sweden of critical parts of the lift mechanism and their delivery to Cambridge was not affected by the lockdown period.

The end of lockdown is clearly going to be a gradual and staged process. Clergy returning to the Cathedral for daily worship – behind closed doors – is the first step in easing the restrictions that have been in place for the last two months. The announcements made on May 11th suggest that the earliest we can expect public worship to resume is on July 4th – and only then if the five criteria are consistently met during the coming weeks. What is clear is that the Chapter will be taking all possible steps to make sure that the Cathedral building is as safe a space as it can be for those who gather for worship here when the time comes. It is also clear that for the rest of this year life is going to be different but the Chapter is determined to do all it can to allow the Cathedral to play its part in the life of the city and county. We are very grateful for the generous support many are giving to the Cathedral to ensure we can be a powerhouse of prayer and an effective centre of worship and mission.

Canon Michael has kindly produced a further paper with resources for prayer and reflection which can be found [here](#) The Archbishops' 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative (which takes place between Ascension and Pentecost each year) also has valuable suggestions for both prayer and action in these unprecedented times. You can find these resources [here](#)

With the assurance of our prayers,

Yours sincerely,

Mark Boyling,
Dean of Carlisle