

The Chapter Letter



4th Sunday before Lent Sunday 10th February 2019

Welcome

A very warm welcome to worship at the Cathedral, with a particular greeting to those who are newcomers or visitors. It is a delight to welcome you.

Visiting Choirs: During this week of half term, with the Cathedral Choir on leave, it is good to welcome several visiting choirs; and the Voluntary Choir sings all the services today. Full details are in the new Services and Music List for February, now available from the rack just outside the Virgers' Vestry.

Wells Angels is a donor programme for supporters who want to help choristers for the long-term. It is already proving popular but we need more support if we are to reach our target of building the funds to £2,000,000 by 2020. Please consider giving the most gifted children this chance and become involved in the musical life of the cathedral by joining the Wells Angels scheme. Pick up a brochure from the table in the North Transept, visit our website or contact the trust's administrator on 01749 834281 to find out more.

Jenny Kingston, Chair Wells Cathedral Chorister Trust

Root Connections Produce Stall: Produce from Root Connections will be on sale near the West Doors after the Cathedral Eucharist TODAY. Come and see what's on offer!

Chris Day

The Cathedral Quiet Day: There will be a Lent Quiet Day on Tuesday 19th March 2019 to be held at Abbey House Glastonbury 10am-4pm led by Revd David Wilcox, Priest Vicar. The cost of the day is £30 which includes lunch. If you would like to attend, please sign the list on the table in the North Transept. Please pay by 20th February by cash, or by cheque payable to 'Wells Cathedral Quiet Day'. For further information please contact Alison Wilcox on 01749 673689.

Alison Wilcox

Working together: It was very good recently to welcome Canon Guy Bridgewater, the new Rector of Bath Abbey, for lunch and tour and a talk. We hit it off! And that augurs well for our efforts to cooperate closely with the Abbey. There is a lot we can do together, especially once the major works at the Abbey have been completed. I will keep readers of the Chapter Letter updated!

John Davies, Dean

In late 2018 the Cathedral Chapter asked Prebendary Matthew Owens to step back from his responsibilities as Organist and Master of the Choristers while certain matters were investigated. Chapter had hoped to conduct this investigation discreetly and without publicity, to protect all concerned. That has proved difficult. The investigation is ongoing and remains confidential. Chapter hopes the investigation will be completed soon.

The Cathedral Chapter

Lent 2019: Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 6th March. The Lent programme this year will have two strands – a book group on a weekday evening convened by the Canon Theologian, Professor David Thomas. And on Sunday afternoons, at Evensong, there will be a series of addresses on the theme ‘Christian Spirituality Explored’:

10th March: The Spiritual Vision of Jesus Christ:
The Bishop of Bath and Wells.

17th March: The Spiritual Vision of St Paul:
Bishop Alastair Redfern.

24th March: The Spiritual Vision of St Augustine:
Professor Gillian Clark, Bristol University.

31st March: The Spiritual Vision of Mother Julian of Norwich:
Canon Melvyn Matthews, Wells Cathedral.

7th April: The Spiritual Vision of the Reformation and Counter Reformation:
Dr David Hoyle, Dean of Bristol.

There will be chances to engage with the speakers, explore the themes, and we hope to add some hospitality too – along with possible exhibitions. More news soon...

John Davies, Dean

Lent Study Group: *Knowing Jesus* by James Alison was first published in 1993. It remains a modern classic, presenting Jesus not so much as an itinerant teacher who is executed, but as the resurrected Christ whom the disciples realise contests tried notions of faith. It is both persuasive and unsettling, and it provides a perfect basis for discussion.

During Lent this year there is an opportunity to explore the book together. There will be four meetings, each centred on one of the four chapters in the book. They will take place in the Chapter Room, each lasting one hour, at 6.15pm on Tuesdays 12th March, 19th March, 26th March and 2nd April. If you are interested, get in touch with me on d.r.thomas.1@bham.ac.uk (don't forget the dot between 'thomas' and '1'). There is also a sign-up sheet in the North Transept.

Knowing Jesus can be obtained from SPCK at £9.99 (<https://spckpublishing.co.uk/knowning-jesus-pb>), and there may be cheaper copies on Amazon. If you would like me to obtain the book for you, let me know when you get in touch with me. I look forward to discussing this book together.

David Thomas, Canon Theologian

Lent reflections: Lent is a period of the church's year when many set aside time to reflect on theology, God, prayer and the devout life. *Knowing Jesus* by James Alison, is a book which will be pondered by a group.

Individuals might want to tackle another book besides, or instead of, Alison's text. So here are a couple of suggestions, with very brief reviews.

Reconciliation by Muthuraj Swamy (SPCK 2019: £9.99) is a study of a key theme for today's church and world – really it's a spiritual primer, a guide to being a reconciling person. There is a short section for each day of Lent, and throughout there is a deep attention to the example of Christ and scripture. It's a demanding read but very rewarding.

Two other books well worth reading are John Bowker's *God, a very short introduction* (Oxford, 2014, £7.99). There is wisdom on every page. Bowker offers an essentially Christian perspective, but signals many overlappings with other faiths. There is philosophy, poetry and prose. A simple and accessible gem.

The Bishop of Liverpool, Paul Bayes, is a highly thoughtful and compassionate man, whose new book *The Table: Knowing Jesus: Prayer, Friendship, Justice* (DLT 2019 £12.99), seeks to offer a new vision of God and the church. Christ is not seen as the omnipotent Lord in this book, but as the self-emptying, self-giving and very modest carpenter, who is always seeking to remake and mend the world. And he has made a table for his people to gather round. Unfence the table says Bayes, and let all sorts of enquirers and searchers get access, even the most unlikely. It's a book that nicely provokes.

John Davies, Dean

Out and about: Part of a Dean's vocation is to be out and about, both in the immediate locality, and more widely. I've enjoyed a recent visit to our local Freemasons, and on Tuesday I am due to talk to the Wells Probus Club. On Wednesday I'm chairing a meeting in London. On Thursday I'm back to talk to the Cathedral Day Chaplains about their (very important) roles. It's a varied life!

John Davies, Dean

Bristol Diverse Doors Open Day: Sunday 24th February, there will be an opportunity to visit some of the main religious centres in Bristol, to meet people of a variety of faiths, to hear them speak and to ask questions. It is an all-day event, organised by Bristol Multi-Faith Forum (<http://bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk/diverse-doors/>). It costs £5 (for the bus between centres), and bookings can be made by phoning 07789 040267 or emailing info@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk. Next year, we'll arrange a bus from Wells.

David Thomas, Canon Theologian

Readings for next Sunday's Cathedral Eucharist, 3rd Sunday before Lent:

I Corinthians 15.12-20 and Luke 6.17-26

OF SPECIAL NOTE FOR THIS WEEK

Every day at 8am, Morning Liturgy, Lady Chapel			
Mon	11	10am-12pm 5:15pm	Architecture groups refresher training Evening Prayer
Tue	12	10-11:30am 12:25pm 4:15pm 5:15pm	Guides refresher in Cathedral Holy Communion - Lady Chapel Wells Cathedral Song Squad – Education Room Evensong – Choir of St John's College, Oxford
Wed	13	9:30am 2-4pm 5:15pm	Holy Communion – Lady Chapel Stained Glass Guides Meeting – Ken Biggs Room Evening Prayer
Thur	14	10-11:30am 5:15pm	Embroidery Guides meeting - Ken Biggs Room Evensong – Wells Cathedral Voluntary Choir
Fri	15	10:30am-4pm 5:15pm 7-9:30pm	Safeguarding Training – Education Room Evensong – Choir of St John's, Glastonbury Friends Cheese & Wine Party Chapter Room – <i>Ticket only</i>
Sat	16	11:30am 5:15pm	Mothers' Union Commissioning Service - Nave Evensong – RSCM Voices West