

St Paul's Church

Dear all,

QUEEN ELIZABETH II 1926-2022



It was with great sadness that we received the news yesterday of the death of Her Majesty after 70 years as Queen of Commonwealth and Country. This is a huge collective loss that will impact us at a time when there is such uncertainty sweeping our nation, and, indeed, the world. The Queen has been a stabilizing influence across many decades and is engrained in every aspect of our lives, not just in the ceremony but also in the day to day such as on our currency and our postage stamps.

In her stabilizing influence she has managed to find a balance between the formal and informal. I am sure we all remember the part she played in the 2012 Olympics and the James Bond sequence with Daniel Craig, and then more recently at the Platinum Jubilee celebrations and the appearance with Paddington Bear. She has also been very clear about the importance of her Christian faith and the strength that that has given her to carry out her God ordained duties.

It was not that many weeks ago that I was in Westminster Abbey and saw the chair in which Her Majesty was crowned, and the spot in the Abbey where that took place, the Cosmati Pavement. I was struck by the poignant painting in the gallery, by the artist Ralph Heimans, which depicts the Queen wearing her State dress and robe, alone in the Abbey, and standing at that spot where this all began so many years ago.

As we give thanks for her long reign, and longer life, I have no doubt that many will want to pay their respects in one way or another. Some may travel to London others may seek out their local church. Here at St Paul's Church the building will be open from time to time for private prayer and reflection. Flowers and tributes may be left outside at the foot of the cross – these will be removed prayerfully, a few days after the funeral.

A Book of Condolence is available in the church for those wishing to leave a personal tribute. This will close at 5pm on the day following the funeral. There is also the availability of an online National Book of Condolence which can be accessed here;

<https://www.churchofengland.org/remembering-her-majesty-queen>

With regard to our services these will continue as usual but will reflect the current situation as we go into this period of mourning before the State Funeral. At the time of writing no official statement has been made but the likelihood is that it will be on Monday 19th September.

Whether you can attend any of these services, or none, I do hope that you find a way that is right for you to remember the life and work of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Please also take time to remember in your prayers all of the Royal Family mourning their loss and, of course, as he is now, King Charles III.

Rev Chris

**Gracious God, we give thanks
for the life of your servant Queen Elizabeth,
for her faith and her dedication to duty.
Bless our nation as we mourn her death
and may her example continue to inspire us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING

HARVEST

St Paul's Harvest Service will be on Sunday 2nd October and you are invited to bring to that service perishable or non-perishable goods for distribution.

COMMEMORATION SERVICE

There will be a COMMEMORATION SERVICE, in St Nicholas Church on Sunday 6th November at 2.30pm. At that service the names will be read out of those that have died in the past year and for whom funerals have been conducted by me or Rev Anthea. All are welcome to attend and if you would like the name of a loved one commemorated then please let me know.

EARLY RETIREMENT

Just in case some of you have not heard, it was announced in church last Sunday that I will be taking early retirement in February next year (You can read the full text below). My last service at St Paul's will be on Sunday 12th February and then my last service at St Nicholas will be the following Sunday, the 19th February. There will, of course, be conversations about next steps and I will do my best to keep you updated with any news.

Dear all,

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In the meantime, it is important that I bring you up to date with my position here at St Paul's, and indeed my presence in Maidstone Deanery. As you know I was licensed as an interim minister here in summer 2021 for a period of two years.

I believe that my main remit was to give some sense of direction and cohesion to St Paul's as we all emerged from the pandemic. Within that a significant proportion of my time was to be given to the supervision and development of Anthea as she journeyed to ordination, both deaconing and priesting, and then beyond.

In many ways I feel that I have fulfilled that brief and further forward movement is essentially part of a bigger deanery discussion, and I am pleased to say that Anthea is very much part of those discussions.

On a personal level I have had a developing sense of a new direction, not just in ministry, but life generally and I have been thinking, and praying on this for a little while now. That has culminated in me having come to a decision that shortly after my sixty second birthday I am going to take early retirement in February 2023.

You, as a church, have a solid grounding with your churchwardens, PCC, administrator, lay leaders and, of course, Anthea and I firmly believe that your part in the wider deanery picture is assured. These coming months offer the opportunity to consolidate that position and to see how wider discussions develop.

Rev Chris

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

All services are in church, zoom is available for some services.

SUNDAY 11th SEPTEMBER – TRINITY 13

10 am All Age Communion – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 18th SEPTEMBER – TRINITY 14

10 am Experimental Sunday – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 25th SEPTEMBER – TRINITY 15

10 am Holy Communion – Rev Anthea (Zoom)

SUNDAY 2nd OCTOBER – TRINITY 16

10 am Café Service – Gwyn

EVENTS

SATURDAY 10th SEPTEMBER

10-6 pm FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES RIDE & STRIDE - (please sponsor our Striders – form at the back of the Church)

SATURDAY 10th SEPTEMBER

10.30-1 pm MU Coffee morning in aid of Church Fund

THURSDAY 15th SEPTEMBER

10.30 am FELLOWSHIP – Seaside Outing – Herne Bay

FRIDAY 23rd SEPTEMBER

7 pm Craft Group - Church

SATURDAY 1st OCTOBER

5.30 for 6 pm Harvest Supper (*sign-up sheet at back of church*)

PRAYER RESOURCE

week beginning Sunday, 11th September 2022

‘There is nothing that makes us love someone so much as praying for them.’ (William Law)

This week we give thanks for:

- Food banks and for all those working to alleviate food poverty as food prices and household bills rise.
- The prayers of our Church family and the difference those prayers make; God listens to all of us when we turn to him.

Please pray for:

- Peace in Ukraine: may the church in Ukraine, Russia and across the wider region be a voice for peace and have the resources needed to help people who are vulnerable.
- An end to the current fighting in Ethiopia: for a willingness for all sides to engage in peace talks and for a lasting ceasefire agreement.
- The encouragement of tree-planting, forest protection and eco-system restoration around the world – an initiative called the ‘Communion Forest’ which was launched at the Lambeth Conference.
- The United Kingdom’s new Prime Minister: for wisdom in addressing the challenges we face.
- Our Church family, especially all who are struggling; and for Joan, Gilly, Hazel, Edith, Pat, Alice, Jill, Trevor, Tony, Maureen, Carol and Margaret; and for Ruth, Helen, Meaghan, Libby and Richard.
- Ourselves, for the grace to welcome, include and share.

You may like to use this prayer during the week:

Lord, may your blessing surround me each day, as I trust you and walk in your way. May your presence within guard and keep me from sin. May I go in peace, in joy and in love. Amen.