

Farewell Service
for Bishop Peter Hancock
79th Bishop of Bath & Wells
2014 - 2021



on the eve of Pentecost
Saturday 22nd May 2021
3 pm
Wells Cathedral

Welcome from the Bishop of Bath and Wells

22 May 2021

Dear Friends,

It is strange not being able to meet with you in person to thank you for all that you have meant to Jane and me over the last seven years. However, I hope that this online service will be an appropriate way to conclude my ministry as Bishop of Bath and Wells and I am grateful to those who are able to join in. My hope is that as we gather, albeit online, that the Lord will remind us all of the joys that there are in following and serving Him.

These seven years in the diocese have been a wonderful privilege as I have travelled around the diocese meeting people, sharing in worship, visiting schools and seeking to 'live and tell the good news of Jesus'.

This past year has been particularly difficult for everyone and for me personally it has been overshadowed by the diagnosis of leukaemia. However, I give thanks for the wonderful care which I have received from the NHS, and the support, encouragement, prayers, and cards of so many people. These have sustained and encouraged me in recent months and been a great blessing to both Jane and me.

During this service I shall be laying down symbols of my office but will leave the Cathedral with a deep sense of gratitude for all that has been and with hope for all that is to come.

With warm greetings in the Lord Jesus,

+ Peter Bath and Wells

The Very Rev'd Dr. John Davies, the Dean of Wells, welcomes all who are attending on Zoom and introduces the service.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, today marks the ending of the ministry among us of Peter Hancock as our Bishop in this Diocese of Bath and Wells. Although we cannot gather together physically on this occasion, yet in heart and mind we join together to recall how our lives have been graced by Bishop Peter's presence among us, and to give thanks for his seven years of service here: for his wise leadership, his vision for this diocese, his prayerful pastoral care and his love of the people entrusted to his care.

As Bishop Peter lays down the Diocesan crozier – the symbol of his office - we shall entrust him and Jane into God's keeping, and pray that many blessings will be theirs as they leave us and move on into their new life together.

On this Eve of Pentecost, we seek the promised gifts of the Holy Spirit to refresh, inspire, energise, and lead us forward:

Come, Holy Spirit:

Draw us more deeply into the life of God

Breathe on us, breath of God

bring strength, healing and peace.

Transforming Spirit, work through our lives

To live and tell the story of God's love for all people.

The Collect

God, who as at this time
taught the hearts of your faithful people
by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit:
grant us by the same Spirit
to have a right judgement in all things
and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort;
through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Hymn:

Sung by Wells Cathedral Choir

O thou who camest from above
the fire celestial to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart!

There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work, and speak, and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up the gift in me.

Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat;

till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley

Psalm 138:

Read by Nick May, former Diocesan Secretary

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods will I sing praise to you.
I will bow down towards your holy temple and praise
your name,
because of your love and faithfulness;
for you have glorified your name
and your word above all things.
In the day that I called to you, you answered me;
you put new strength in my soul.
All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord,
for they have heard the words of your mouth.
They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
that great is the glory of the Lord.
Though the Lord be high, he watches over the lowly;
as for the proud, he regards them from afar.
Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you will preserve me;
you will stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;
your right hand will save me.
The Lord shall make good his purpose for me;
your loving-kindness, O Lord, endures for ever;
forsake not the work of your hands.

A Reflection on the Psalm

By Bishop Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton

Song: 'Faithful One'

Paula and the Rev. Sam Denyer

Faithful one, so unchanging
Ageless one, you're my rock of peace
Lord of all I depend on you
I call out to you, again and again
I call out to you, again and again
You are my rock in times of trouble
You lift me up when I fall down.
All through the storm your love is the anchor,
My hope is in you alone.

Brian Doerksen

Reading: Colossians 3, 12-17

Read by Jane Hancock

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

A Contribution from a school in the Diocese

'The Lord Bless you the Lord keep you.

Sermon

The Right Rev'd Peter Hancock, Bishop of Bath & Wells

Anthem:

Sung by Wells Cathedral Choir

Loquebantur variis linguis Apostoli, Alleluia.

Magnalia Dei, Alleluia.

Repleti sunt omnes Spiritu sancto et ceperunt loqui.

Magnalia Dei, Alleluia.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto, Alleluia.

*(The Apostles did speak with many tongues, Alleluia,
of the wonderful works of God, Alleluia.*

*They were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak of the
wonderful works of God, Alleluia.*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the
Holy Ghost. Alleluia.)*

Music by Thomas Tallis

Prayers :

*Led by representatives of the Archdeaconries of
Wells, Taunton and Bath*

A student from the Blue School, Wells, says:

Lord, we thank you today for all that Bishop Peter has done during his time among us, especially his interest in and encouragement of young people; he has helped so many grow in faith: We give thanks for his commitment to safeguarding, and his care for those who have been abused. We pray that good work done among young people in this diocese will continue to grow and come to maturity. We ask that you will bless Bishop Peter with generous gifts of love, as he now enjoys time with his family.

Lord of the years
We bring our thanks today

A representative from Bath Archdeaconry says:

Lord God, we thank you for calling us into the company of those who trust in Christ and seek to do your will and to serve in your Church, and we celebrate with joy our partnership in faith with our fellow Christians in Zambia. As we give thanks for Bishop Peter's leadership, we pray for the tasks that lie ahead of us: Inspire us with your Spirit, refresh our energy, renew our vision, and strengthen us together in mission and in service to your world.

Lord of our lives
Strengthen us in your service.

A representative from Taunton Archdeaconry says:

Faithful God, we offer you the past,
and we are grateful for the memories that will sustain us;
we thank you for good things shared,
for achievements large and small;
we acknowledge also the unfinished business,
and the uncertainty of the future, yet we trust in you.
We do not know whether our days will be many or few.

Help us to put into each day's living
something of warmth and kindness,
integrity, courage and love.
These are the gifts you offer us,
and these will be the sign of your Spirit at work among us

Lord of eternity
Be with us now and always

Hymn: sung by Paula and the Rev. Sam Denyer

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all
Here, in the love of Christ, I stand

In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones he came to save
'Till on that cross, as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin, on him, was laid
Here, in the death of Christ, I live

There in the ground, his body lay
Light of the world, by darkness, slain
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave, he rose again
And as he stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am his and he is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from his hand
'Til he returns or calls me home
Here, in the power of Christ, I stand

Stuart Townsend

Blessing: Bishop Peter Hancock

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

May the Spirit,
who set the Church on fire on the Day of Pentecost ,
make you joyful in the service of the Lord,
empower you to live and tell the story of God's love,
and fill you with his peace.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

Silence is kept as we pray for Bishop Peter and Jane,
for strength, health, protection and peace as they go forward.

The Laying Down of Symbols of Office

The Archdeacon of Taunton says:

Bishop Peter, in strength and in weakness
we have worked together under your leadership;
thankful for all that you have taught us,
we will travel on in faith.

Bishop Peter lays down the Diocesan crozier on the altar

The Archdeacon of Wells says:

Bishop Peter, in times of uncertainty and challenge, we have supported one another in love, and as pastors, have cared for the people of this diocese. In faith we will continue the work of care which we have shared with you.

Bishop Peter places his mitre on the altar

The Archdeacon of Bath says:

Bishop Peter, in times of testing and in joy we have prayed and worshipped together. As our prayers for you continue, and yours for us, may the Lord make good his purpose for you, as you leave us and move with Jane into your new life together.

Bishop Peter places his cope on the altar.

The Dismissal

The Dean says:

Peter and Jane, may the Lord himself be your keeper:
the Lord be your defence at your right hand.
The Lord preserve your coming in and your going out
from this time forth and for evermore. Amen.

Bishop Ruth says:

Let us entrust our Diocese to God's merciful keeping:

Gracious God, we thank you for all your blessings.
Empowered by your Spirit,
we will seek to support one another and grow in love;
we will pray for each other
until our hearts beat with the longings of God;
We will dare to walk into the future you are preparing for us,
trusting in the One who leads us in peace. **Amen.**

Hymn

*During the singing of this hymn, by Wells Cathedral
Choir, Bishop Peter and Jane will leave the Cathedral*

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive Your people's praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,

Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him:
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us -
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Timothy Dudley-Smith



Looking Ahead

As Jane and I prepare to leave Wells we are increasingly aware of all that we will be leaving behind. We shall miss the friends we have made and are grateful for the welcome we have received from so many across the diocese. We shall miss the visits to parishes and schools and the joys of sharing in worship. We shall miss the wonderful countryside and beautiful scenery of Somerset. We shall miss being part of a diocese which is increasingly seeking to be outward facing and looking for ways to serve our local communities. I have been blessed with the most amazing colleagues and I leave knowing that the diocese is in good heart and good hands.

I have enjoyed all 41 years of my ordained ministry across four dioceses, serving in three parishes, as a Rural Dean, an Archdeacon, Director of Mission and Suffragan Bishop.

And looking to the future there is much that we are looking forward to. We are moving to Surrey and this will mean we will be much nearer to family including our four children and five grandchildren. We are excited about the new life which lies ahead for us, although it will be a while before we can become fully involved with what is happening locally, as I shall have to continue to shield for quite a while. We visited our new home recently, to mow the lawn and get things ready before we move. Whilst we were there the local vicar came up the drive to wish us well and to welcome us to the parish.

Today we are saying farewell to Bath and Wells but we do so with a real sense that the Lord is going before and that he will continue to lead and guide us.

May the Lord bless you and keep you and give you His peace.

In His
name,
+Peter
and
Jane



