



WORCESTER
CATHEDRAL

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL UNDER LOCKDOWN

by Canon Michael Brierley

Dominating the skyline, and viewable from the Malvern Hills, Worcester Cathedral represents the heart of the city and county. How have the building and its community been faring in the shutdown? In a series of articles written specially for the *Worcester News*, members of the cathedral 'chapter' – the governing body – talk about life under the lockdown. Today's article is by Canon Dr Michael Brierley, who is responsible for the cathedral's services of worship and music.

The shutdown came upon us gradually, he writes. First, we introduced extra measures for hand hygiene; then we held communion services distributing just the bread and not the wine; then only the clergy were able to go in for services; and soon after that, the building was closed for worship completely.

Yet the vibrant life of faith goes on. The cathedral clergy started livestreaming worship each day from their homes. These services have engaged far more viewers than ordinarily would have come to the cathedral and have attracted a huge number of warm and appreciative comments from around the world.

Our musicians, too, have raised spirits: on an entirely voluntary basis, they have been providing a recital each evening from their homes. These book-ends – service in the morning, music in the evening – have provided structure to the day for hundreds of cathedral staff, worshippers, volunteers and members of the public, and given us new insights into the Easter season.

Sadly, baptisms and weddings have had to be postponed, and funerals – at gravesides and crematoria – have to be very limited, but the cathedral clergy, along with parish ministers, have become adept at broadcasting reflections online, as they did for VE Day last week.

Happily, by the time you read this, clergy will be able to livestream services on their own from inside the cathedral once again, and the gradual shutdown that came upon us will be slowly lifted. We will emerge from the lockdown different from before, but ready, as ever, with the resources that we have, to respond to people's needs and lift their hearts.

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