A message from Paula

Greetings from London to friends in Westbury sub Mendip! I gather you are finding all sorts of ways to keep in touch and support each other in the village through these strange and unexpected times.

Little did I imagine when I moved to London from Westbury in January that Easter would find St Paul’s Cathedral closed to the public, to worshippers and to the clergy. Plenty of people have been involved with providing some online resources, but my role has mainly been in keeping in touch and supporting the Cathedral community - though many of our staff are now furloughed.

However life has not been without its compensations - I am loving exploring London on foot and (an unexpected bonus with quiet roads) on my bicycle, and every day I am discovering something new be that the grave of William Blake, the church where my parents got married or the house of Jane Austen’s brother. Even in the City of London there are a number of green spaces and flower beds, and the Thames is only five minutes’ walk away.

But I am so aware that hidden away from all these delights are the hospital wards with all the struggle, pain and anguish they contain. I have volunteered and been registered to be a hospital chaplain at St Barts, which is only 5mins away, but at the moment it is not permitted for us to go on the wards because of the risks of cross-infection. I co-ordinate prayer requests for the Cathedral community, and a number of people have lost family members.

I live amongst a community of Cathedral clergy and a few other staff, and I feel well supported. We are very lucky in having a communal garden where we can see each other (with appropriate social distancing of course). Saying Morning Prayer by Zoom is now a part of my life - as are Zoom meetings for work and play (I have joined a quiz team in Sheffield and a book group in Leicester).

I hope you are all keeping well and finding ways to make the most of this time.

This comes with my love and my prayers

Paula