



15th March 2023

Unique Easter Day Vigil at Dawn

A unique and symbolic Christian tradition will be brought to life at St Peter's Church in Carmarthen this Easter Sunday.

Worshippers are invited to follow in the footsteps of the earliest Christians and gather for an outdoor Easter Vigil at dawn within the grounds of the historic parish church where a Paschal Fire will be lit, and prayers shared at the blessing of the Paschal Candle.

True to tradition, the Exultet - the ancient hymn of triumph, will be sung in celebration of Christ's resurrection, the liturgy will be bilingual and there will be a Litany of the Saints, and a renewal of Baptismal Vows.

The Easter Liturgy at dawn has its roots deep in the Early Church and signifies an experience of new life - the symbolic passage from darkness into light and the offer of hope to the faithful. Traditionally, early Christians would keep watch through the night and reflect on the glory of God. Christians used the hours of darkness for prayer before celebrating Christ's glorious resurrection at daybreak.

The Revd Canon Dr Matthew Hill believes St Peter's Easter Vigil will be a deeply meaningful and moving experience and may possibly be the only Easter Vigil of its kind for miles around. He welcomes worshippers to gather outside the church in the darkness just before the dawn to share in the unique and truly atmospheric tradition.

"We will light a fire in front of the tower to light the Paschal candle and then process into the darkness of the Church, lighting our own candles from the Paschal candle as we walk," explains Revd Hill.

"There will be readings, the Easter Gospel, the Litany of the Saints, and a sermon. The Gloria will be sung in true celebratory style with rapturous bell ringing and euphoric clapping.

“Following the Eucharist, we will all enjoy a celebratory Easter breakfast of fresh coffee and croissants.”

The Dawn Vigil will begin at 5.30am and will replace the usual 8am communion. St Peter’s will later be resplendent with music, flowers, bells, and joy at the Easter Sunday Sung Eucharist at 10.30am.

St Peter's Church has a history stretching back nearly a thousand years and houses many features of historic interest which include some of the finest wall memorials in Wales. It is the oldest building in continuous use in Carmarthen.

For more information contact the Church Warden, Nigel Evans, on:
stpeters.warden@gmail.com

Full list of Holy Week Services

Compline at St Peter’s Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday night at 20.30.

Maundy Thursday

St Peter’s

19:00 Sung Eucharist with Choir, foot washing, and stripping of the Altar.

Llanpumsaint

17:30 DOT’s session

18:30 Eucharist

Christchurch

18:30 Agape Meal followed by Eucharist with foot washing and stripping of the Altars.

St David’s’ Abergwili

18:30 Agape Meal and Eucharist

Good Friday

St Peter’s

Devotions begin at Midday, 14:00- 15.00, Veneration of the Cross, and Communion from the Pre-Sanctified Elements.

Llanpumsaint

Morning, Stations of the Cross Outside

Abergwili

14:00- 15:00 Good Friday Service

Christchurch

10:30 Passion Play

14:00-15:00 Hymns and Devotions

Easter Day

St Peter’s

05.30 Easter Vigil at Dawn –this is in place of the usual 08:00 celebration. The Vigil will include the Paschal Fire and blessing of the Paschal Candle, singing of the Exultet, Litany of the Saints and renewal of Baptismal Vows. A breakfast of coffee, croissants and pastries will be provided.

10.30. Easter Day Sung Eucharist with Choir.

Otherwise, it is intended that all churches in the LMA will have a celebration of the Eucharist at the time at which they would usually celebrate it on a Sunday.

ENDS