

To the congregation and friends of the Town Church in St Peter Port

23 December 2025

Dear all,

I write to offer you my very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year, adding my sentiments to those which Penny expressed in the email which was sent last week.

Peter Graysmith

Since Peter assumed the role of full-time chaplain at Elizabeth College, he has generously and selflessly supported the life and ministry of Town Church on an entirely voluntary basis. His faithfulness, hard work and pastoral care, often carried out quietly and at personal cost, have made a real difference.

When Penny became unwell, Peter endeavoured to maintain this commitment. Even when I did not provide the support he might reasonably have hoped for and expected, he continued to serve with integrity and perseverance. I much regret that he has been subjected to unfair criticism in some quarters.

As we look forward to Penny returning to work, I hope that we can better support and encourage Peter in his continuing work at Town Church.

Town Church closure

Town Church will be closed with effect from Saturday 3 January 2026, after the Christmas Tree Festival has been dismantled. The closure will continue, probably until early February, so that the necessary work to replace the lighting system in the church can proceed safely and with minimal disruption to the work. The plan is that closing the church will allow the work to be completed more quickly. I understand that we are expecting the church to be reopened for services on Ash Wednesday. We will, of course, keep in touch with you through emails about the progress of the work, and when services in the Town Church will resume.

I hope that you will take the opportunity during the closure of the Town Church in January to attend services in other churches.

- There has been a warm invitation from St John's church for people from the Town Church to attend services at St John's church, which are held at 10.00 am every Sunday.
- Stephen Le Prevost is planning a couple of services of Choral Evensong, which will be held at St Stephen's church and sung by the Town Church choir. We will confirm the dates and times of these services once the arrangements have been confirmed.
- Those who wish to attend a Prayer Book communion service at 8.00 am will be welcomed at those churches across the Island where such a service is held. These include St Andrew's parish church, St Pierre du Bois parish church and the Vale parish church, each

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of which offers what is essentially a Prayer Book service at 8.00 am on every Sunday of the month.

- There is also a BCP Holy Communion service at Forest church at 5.00 pm on Saturdays.

Churchwardens

As you will be aware, Ruth Abernethy ceases to be the Rector's Warden at the end of December 2025. Sally Henderson will cease to be People's Warden when the building work on the Town Church is completed.

I am grateful to those who have considered taking on these responsibilities. Churchwardens are vital to the effective management of a parish church and the support of the Rector and congregation.

I am delighted that a member of the congregation has agreed to be the Rector's Warden, and look forward to sharing their name as soon as this is possible.

I am in discussion with somebody who is considering taking on the responsibilities as People's Warden, a role which will be undertaken with support from others, so as to share the responsibility.

It may be worth reminding you that the convention in Guernsey is for the ancient parishes to have two churchwardens. The Rector's Warden is, as the name suggests, appointed by the Rector, whereas the People's Warden must be a ratepayer in the parish and is elected at a parish meeting by the ratepayers and electors. In the past, the People's Warden has had particular responsibilities for the church building, and for the proper use of the funds voted by the ratepayers and electors for the maintenance of the church at a parish meeting. However, in practice, since the Parochial Church Property (Guernsey) Law 2015 came into effect, the previous responsibilities of the People's Warden have been shared with the Parochial Church Property Management Board, which has responsibility, amongst other things, for ensuring the good maintenance of the parish church.

Finally ...

I thank all who contribute in so many ways to the flourishing and the continuing life of the Town Church. I hope that this commitment will continue anew in the New Year, both whilst the church building is closed and when we return to the church – because the building is only one aspect of being the Church in St Peter Port, alongside our sisters and brothers in the other Christian communities of St Peter Port.

I thank Tracy Charmley, Joe Thompson and Juliette Robilliard for their assistance at services in recent weeks.

With my greetings and renewed best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

Yours sincerely,



The Very Reverend T R Barker
Dean of Guernsey