

The Archbishop of Canterbury has today tested positive for Covid-19 and has also been suffering with mild pneumonia since last week. He will therefore not be preaching at the Service of Thanksgiving for The Queen's reign at St Paul's Cathedral on Friday this week.

The Archbishop was diagnosed with mild pneumonia on Thursday last week and, under medical advice, was continuing to work but with a reduced schedule to allow for rest and recovery. However after developing symptoms over the weekend the Archbishop tested for coronavirus this morning and confirmed he has Covid-19.

Following medical advice and national coronavirus guidance, the Archbishop is resting at home and avoiding contact with others, and has cancelled all engagements this week.

Lambeth Palace has informed Buckingham Palace of this news and conveyed the Archbishop's regret that he will not be able to participate in the service. The Archbishop of York, the Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, will instead preach the sermon in his place.

The Archbishop was also due to light a beacon at Lambeth Palace on Thursday evening as part of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacons events. The Lambeth Palace beacon will be lit on the Archbishop's behalf instead so that Lambeth Palace can still participate in these celebrations.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, said today: "I am deeply saddened to be missing the historic celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. However, I will be praying for The Queen and giving thanks for her extraordinary seventy years of service to us all. I will also be praying for our nation at this time of celebration and thanksgiving. May The Queen's example bring us together in unity and care for one another.

"For those attending Friday's service at St Paul's Cathedral, and the millions watching on television, I hope this joyful occasion will inspire us with The Queen's profound commitment to fostering unity and peace among all people and to promoting care for the natural world that God has given us. Led by the love of Jesus Christ, The Queen has lived her life for the benefit of others: I pray we find inspiration from Her Majesty over the Jubilee weekend and long into the future.

"Meanwhile as we continue to live with coronavirus, I pray too for all those who are still suffering and everyone who continues to mourn loved ones they have lost during the pandemic. May you each know the love and comfort of God."

"As we prepare to celebrate the first Platinum Jubilee in our nation's history, may God save The Queen, and bless her with the knowledge of our profound love and gratitude for her service to us all."

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