



Sidney Sussex College

Cambridge, CB2 3HU

A Letter from the Chaplain

Hello, and welcome to Sidney.

I am writing to all incoming graduate students to introduce myself and explain a little bit about what, as a chaplain, I do. If you are unfamiliar with British collegiate universities, you might not know that most Cambridge colleges have a chaplain (usually, like me, an ordained Anglican priest) and a chapel, a tradition that goes back to the very beginnings of the University. In line with that tradition, at Sidney we (normally) maintain a regular round of services that you are always welcome to — whatever your beliefs. Hearing a world-class choir, such as the one we have at Sidney Sussex, sing a choral Evensong is one of the unique delights of Cambridge. It is something you really should experience in your time here. We expect some disruption, and cutting back, of services this term because of COVID, but we still hope to have some opportunities for you to attend. So, watch out for emails to the effect.

Everything that happens in our chapel is open to every member of the College (although this term we will have to limit numbers because of social distancing), and it is important to know that your chaplain isn't there just for religious purposes, or for Christian or religious students. I work closely with my colleagues, including the nurse and the tutorial staff, to provide support and care for every member of the College who needs it. I am available as a non-judgemental, un-shockable, and discreet ear, whatever your concerns or background. Drop me an email; I am always happy to talk.

But a chaplain isn't just there for when you are in trouble. Your graduate studies in Cambridge will challenge and stretch you. Ideas and possibilities will come at you thick and fast. But an education — if it is worth anything — is not just about what you know, but about the sort of person you become. That is also what a chaplain is for. The presence of a chaplain, and a chapel, are an indication that there is *more* to the University experience than acquiring knowledge, gaining qualifications, and improving your job prospects. There are bigger horizons and questions in play, no matter how specialised our research becomes. Part of my job is to help you raise and pursue those questions.

I look forward to seeing you in person.

Best wishes,

The Rev'd Dr Brett Gray
Chaplain and Fellow in Theology