

BISHOP'S BULLETIN No 19

To the Licensed Clergy of Peterborough Diocese

13 July 2020



Dear friends

Warm congratulations to Jun and Simona Kim (Jun is Rector of Abington, Northampton) on the birth of Elijah, a brother for Emmanuel.

Please pray for Yvonne Desroches, to be ordained deacon in September to serve at Emmanuel Weston Favell. She has had a stroke, and will be off work for some time.

Also pray for Andrea Watkins, Rector of the Spencer Benefice, who is facing investigations and probable brain surgery.

Deepest sympathy to John Knight (retired priest) on the death of his wife Jill.

Delayed re-opening

Some of you have seen the legal advice on the C of E website about re-opening for public worship. The lockdown regulations suspended the normal requirements for Sunday worship, but that suspension is now lifted. The local parish can suspend worship for a short period for good reason, but needs the Bishop's permission to do so for longer. I intend to treat this matter pastorally, and leave much to the judgment (and the health and potential vulnerability) of the local clergy and lay leadership, certainly until September. So, if you are intending to re-open in September, you can take it that you have my agreement. We'll look beyond that nearer the time.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

This is a major project I believe we need to undertake. I have asked Bishop John, and I am delighted that he has agreed, to lead on this for us, assisted by my chaplain, Canon Tim Alban Jones.

It is probably easiest to get the negative point out of the way first. This is not about clergy or clergy families' mental health or wellbeing. That is already covered through our counselling service, for which you can contact Canon Nicholas Gandy (without having to go through me or my office). For more "routine" pastoral care for clergy, Canon Tim Alban Jones is a good first port of call.

The idea here is that as clergy we need to be better equipped to recognise and address mental health issues among our congregations and communities. All the indicators, and expert advice, suggest that such issues are already on the rise, and will continue to be, largely as a result of the coronavirus crisis.

This will involve (at least):

- signposting clergy to appropriate training (“mental health first aid” courses are gaining popularity);
- possibly buying in such training as part of our CMD menu;
- ensuring that we as clergy are skilled at differentiating between those issues which can appropriately be dealt with by good pastoral care, and those which might need specialist help;
- raising the profile of the diocese and our parishes as safe places for those with mental health needs: ensuring an appropriate welcome, fighting stigma, and educating congregations and communities in these areas.

I am conscious of a number of parishes already doing good work through “wellbeing café” ministry, and in other ways. If you or your parish are involved in these initiatives, Bishop John will be glad to hear from you.

We can look forward to hearing more from Bishop John on this from September onwards.

Bishop John	<i>Mental Health & Wellbeing</i>	email +John
Canon Nicholas Gandy	<i>Counselling for Clergy & Families</i>	email Nicholas
Canon Tim Alban Jones	<i>Enquiries and Pastoral Support</i>	email Tim

Taking a break

We all need our breaks, holidays, and time off. (I’m allergic to the phrase “annual leave” which makes us sound like employees of a clock-watching business, claiming our workers’ rights: but that’s just my quirkiness!) I am taking a week off now, so you will be spared a bulletin next Monday: you might want to breathe deeply, and prepare for a bumper edition in a fortnight’s time! The sermons, Psalm reflections, and the [YouTube channel](#) will continue unaffected, as I produce those a few weeks ahead. Do have some good breaks, or holiday, or time off, or even annual leave if you must, over the next few weeks.

With love in Christ

+ Donald