

BISHOP'S BULLETIN No 20

To the Licensed Clergy of Peterborough Diocese

3 August 2020



Dear friends

Lockdown phase two?

You will be aware that the loosening of the lockdown, the new freedom, has been slowed down or even reversed. Local restraints, more foreign travel requiring quarantine on return, self-isolation if you have symptoms increased from seven to ten days. Another example concerns our church services as (if!) we return to our buildings. Last week I told you, reflecting the high-level advice I had received, that those speaking aloud in church may remove their face coverings if they are suitably distanced from the congregation. Since then, there has been a rethink, and the anxiety about church services becoming “super-spreading events” has won out. So the official **instruction** (upgraded from **advice** by the Prime Minister last Friday), is that face coverings must be worn at all times during indoor worship. This includes the preacher, the wedding couple, the mourner, me and you. The only exceptions are small children, those with breathing problems or some disabilities, people at the moment of eating the communion bread, and when someone needs to lip-read.

Stop press. Further representations and discussions are going on. It is possible that there may be further tweaking to the regulations in this area over the next days or weeks. If you are using your church building in August, stay alert and do the right thing.

A number have asked about outdoor worship. The virus spreads much more indoors, and distanced outdoor events seem to be acceptable. Strictly speaking, Holy Communion requires episcopal permission to be celebrated out of doors. I hereby give permission for public worship, including Holy Communion, to be conducted out of doors in any parish in the diocese for as long as coronavirus restrictions are in place. This is of course conditional on following the guidance, which is [here](#).

APCMs and Annual Accounts

There is advice on how you can hold an APCM in the autumn. However, unless you know that you will have very small numbers, you would probably not be able to do so within the current rules on social distancing and indoor gatherings. I am, therefore, going to sign an order permitting parishes to increase the current extension to a full year. If you held your APCM before lockdown, that is fine. Similarly, if you are able to

hold one safely in the autumn, good for you. In those cases, your archdeacon can authorise the incumbent to admit newly elected churchwardens. The full-year extension will be available for those who need it: this is unusual, but it has been done for many local council elections, and for this year's General Synod elections.

If you are not holding an APCM this year, but need to submit your accounts to the Charity Commission, you can find advice [here](#).

Clergy Pay Slips / P60s / P11Ds

The Church Commissioners inform us that "Our Westminster office is closed and we have no access to post, and can not issue any paper information, i.e. paper pay statements/ P60s/ P11Ds to clergy".

Please don't shoot the messenger!

Sunday Sermons

I have now recorded Sunday sermons up to the end of September, including an extra for Harvest, which can be celebrated any Sunday in the autumn. Each sermon is based on the gospel for the day (Harvest is on Luke 17:11-19 which is one of the set gospels). The sermons are available in video or audio format, and are yours for the asking to use in Sunday worship – but please not to go public before the day itself. You can of course have them in advance: in fact, because of my office and staff holidays, it would help if you could get your requests for any date in August or September to Joanne this week or next. Email [Joanne Gibson](#) with your request.

Until September ...

I plan to leave you in peace now, with no more general bulletins or letters until Monday 7 September. Bishop John and I, and most of our staff, will each be taking some time off during August – as I hope you will. But you can always contact us in an emergency, either on my office number 01733 562492, or by emailing my Chaplain [Tim Alban Jones](#).

As our transatlantic friends say, Happy Holidays!

With love in Christ

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