

BISHOP'S BULLETIN No 22

To the Licensed Clergy of Peterborough Diocese

7 September 2020



Dear friends

Welcome back (in the hope that you've had some time away): admittedly to an uncertain autumn, but, as always, one in which we can be sure that our Saviour will walk with us.

For the foreseeable future I will continue to produce and offer two video talks each week: a meditation on a Psalm, which will appear on the diocesan website at Tuesday lunchtime, and a sermon on the Gospel for each Sunday. The sermons will be available two to three weeks ahead of time, by emailing [Joanne Gibson](#). Do make whatever use you wish of these. Back numbers of Psalms and sermons are [here](#).

I don't see national regulations changing as quickly as over the spring and summer, though there will be more local variations on what is and isn't permitted. I therefore propose to reduce these bulletins to fortnightly for the time being. If that gives you major withdrawal symptoms, you can always watch my videos.

New Priests

Congratulations, welcome, and best wishes to those ordained priest in our Cathedral yesterday: Jordan Allen, Sophie Cowan, Jenni Duffy, Kathryn Evans, Patrick Kelleher, Keri Morrow, Matthew Smith, and Alice Watson. The service is [here](#).

Episcopal Visits

Although many churches are now holding Sunday services again (three cheers!) it is unwise to arrange episcopal visits as normal: these can increase congregations, they certainly increase the tendency to socialise afterwards, they could see the bishop inadvertently carrying infection from one place to another. I'm sorry about this.

Obviously exceptions can be made in exceptional circumstances. We are licensing new clergy and readers by zoom, and my video sermons are available.

Confirmation

The regulations on confirmation services are quite strict, so we will not be confirming for the time being, except in the case of emergencies, or situations where there is only likely to be a very small attendance.

Please remind candidates that those who are “ready and desirous” to be confirmed may receive Holy Communion before confirmation if the confirmation service is delayed. I take “ready” in this context to mean adequately prepared by their clergy.

Remembrance

People are asking for guidance on Remembrance services. This will be produced nationally nearer the time, but here are some clues for your early planning:

- there is already guidance for services, both in church buildings and outdoors;
- for civic events you should liaise and take advice from your local authority;
- I think it unlikely that there will be any significant relaxation to the present restrictions by early November;
- it is likely that there will be local restrictions in urban areas at short notice.

The Menopause

You didn't expect me to be writing on this. Canon Sarah Brown, in her capacity as Adviser in Women's Ministry, has produced a survey which I think could be very helpful in our support of one another in ministry. It will go out this week to all our clergy aged 40 or over. I do encourage you, men as well as women, to fill it in.

Churches, Communities, Buildings

The Centre for the Study of Christianity, based at the University of York, has a research relationship with the C of E around mission and ministry. It is gathering evidence to present to government, showing the importance of churches, and the activities and networks which they support for communities across the country.

The short, very specific survey contains three sets of focused questions (one each for clergy, church members, and local communities). The aim is to help the Church of England nationally and locally to:

- assess effects of COVID-19 and lockdown on churches as centres of worship and hubs of support, care, community activities and well-being;
- share creative responses;
- shape planning and future decision-making.

If you can cope with another survey, you have until the end of the month for this one. Do share it with your PCC and parishioners if you think that would be helpful.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MZCDTF8>.

With love in Christ

+ Donald