

## BISHOP'S BULLETIN No 26

### To the Licensed Clergy of Peterborough Diocese

2 November 2020



Dear friends

Here we go again! In case you haven't seen the official government elaboration of the new lockdown rules as they affect churches, here it is.

#### ***Weddings, civil partnerships, religious services and funerals***

*Funerals can be attended by a maximum of 30 people, and it is advised that only close friends and family attend. Linked ceremonial events such as stone settings and ash scatterings can also continue with up to 15 people in attendance. Anyone working is not included. Social distancing should be maintained between people who do not live together or share a support bubble.*

*Weddings, civil partnership ceremonies will not be permitted to take place except in exceptional circumstances.*

*Places of Worship will be closed, unless they are being used for:*

- *Funerals*
- *To broadcast acts of worship*
- *Individual prayer*
- *Formal childcare or where part of a school*
- *Essential voluntary and public services, such as blood donation or food banks*
- *Other exempted activities such as some support groups.*

That is straightforward. Assuming it is passed by Parliament on Wednesday (and as the Labour Party is supporting it, there doesn't seem any doubt about that), it will come into force on Thursday 5 November until at least Wednesday 2 December.

The fact that some religious leaders and groups have challenged whether places of worship are places of infection is entirely irrelevant. You and I and your PCC must obey the law.

It is not entirely clear, however, and the bishops are seeking urgent clarification on the second bullet point. We are sure that broadcasting includes both live streaming and recording for later transmission. We are not at all sure who is allowed to be involved in the broadcast, beyond the person leading the service: lesson readers, preacher, intercessor, servers, choir ... ? As soon as this is clarified, the Church of England website will be updated with the answers. Do keep an eye on that [here](#).

I am well aware that this is all happening as we approach Remembrance Sunday – just as the first lockdown started with Mothering Sunday. I wish I could give clearer guidance now (and that the government had given that in time for us to announce in church yesterday), but we are where we are. You will have my prayers and my support as you do your best to implement these new rules and lead your people in remembrance and in worship over the coming weeks.

## **Bishop John**

This is just to let you know that Bishop John isn't well at the moment. If you need to be in touch with him, please go via his PA [Suzanne Carter](#), or if you simply need a bishop, please contact [me](#).

## **Bulletins**

I don't want to be guilty of filling your inbox with unnecessary or unwelcome mail, but I have a sense that, with this second lockdown, I ought to resume weekly bulletins rather than fortnightly. There may or may not be enough news and guidance to fill them, but I am very conscious of the fact that we all need support in these times, and I want to offer that to you as best I can. Let me know, via my PA [Joanne Gibson](#), if you have strong feelings either way.

With love in Christ

+ Donald

PS. I attach a letter from our Archbishops and the Bishop of London, and commend it to you.