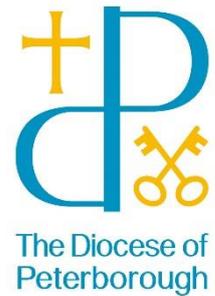


BISHOP'S BULLETIN No 3

To the Licensed Clergy of Peterborough Diocese

23 March 2020



Dear friends

Church Closures

Following the Prime Minister's instructions, I have to direct you to close your churches. I will send out a notice for the church door tonight or first thing tomorrow. Please let your wardens know.

Please cancel any baptisms or weddings currently booked between now and Easter. I know you can do this pastorally. Funerals can continue for now, but with only close family present.

Please move your daily office, all Eucharists, and any livestreamed services, to your home. I hereby authorise all worship to take place in the priest's home.

I have spoken to our Diocesan Secretary, and both the Diocesan Office and Bouverie Court will be closed for the time being from tomorrow morning.

Our clergy roles in this crisis keep changing. We have to keep re-inventing ourselves, and the way we care for our people and our community. This can be very stressful. Please remember that you can contact me or any of the senior staff if you need a chat, or to be prayed with over the phone or a video-call. We are here for you, just as you need to be for your people.

Deputy Registrar

In light of Covid-19, Anna Spriggs our Registrar has, with my approval, appointed a deputy, in case she is ill or away from the office. The Deputy Registrar is James Steward, a solicitor who worships at All Saints, Peterborough. This note confirms that appointment publicly, but also advises you that James might possibly answer any question you put to Anna. (And thank you, Anna, for your forethought in this.)

Key Workers

You may have seen that "religious staff" can be designated as "key workers", whose children can stay in school, and who may have more freedom of movement when

restrictions are imposed. The “staff” wording is to include those faiths which don’t have clergy in the way that we do. The guidance says that such people must have authorisation from their faith leader (that means me, or Bishop John if I am unable to function). It also says that wherever possible children should be kept at home. If you want such authorisation, please ask. I will give it for a day to allow your children into school, so you can take a particular funeral, but I will want your assurance that there was no-one else available to look after your children. Also, you will need to check with local schools to find one willing to take your children for such occasional days.

Pastoral Care

Some of your flock will have heard today that they are particularly high risk, and some of you will have had that message too (one incumbent has already told me that she is). If it is you, please let me know, so I can pray for you, and phone you from time to time. If you hear of parishioners in this category, please pay them special attention. They are likely to be even more anxious or frightened than the rest of us. A reminder, though, that we are not to visit physically during this crisis, but to make real and quality contact in other ways. You may be brave, but you could also be a carrier.

Video messages

I am intending to do a weekly video message, probably just about 5 minutes at a time. Feel free to make this known, include it on your web page or on Facebook, or even insert it into your live-streamed Sunday service. It will be available on the front page of the diocesan website by Friday lunchtime each week.

Further Guidance

Please keep an eye on the [Church of England Coronavirus web page](#), especially the frequently-changing FAQs section. This is genuinely helpful, and will give the currently correct answer to many questions.

Correction

The Surrogate for Towcester Deanery is Diane Whittaker, not Carolyn Oley as stated in the attachment to Bulletin No 2.

With love in Christ

+ Donald

Statement agreed by the Diocesan Bishops of the Church of England

“In the light of the Government’s measures, announced by the Prime Minister this evening, we urge everyone to follow the instructions given. We will give a fuller statement of advice as soon as possible. Let us continue to pray, to love, to care for the vulnerable, and build our communities, even while separated.”

23 March 2020