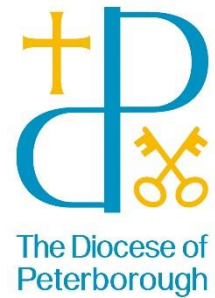


BISHOP'S BULLETIN No 31

To the Licensed Clergy of Peterborough Diocese

14 December 2020



Dear friends

Thank you so much for all you are doing to keep Advent and to prepare for Christmas. I am very conscious of how tough this year has been, almost overwhelmingly so for some, and very grateful to you all. The Lord bless you.

Ups and Downs

On Wednesday we should hear about any ups or downs in the three tiers version of snakes and ladders. There has been strong rumour of London having to go up into tier three. When I last looked, Peterborough and Northampton both had higher rates of infection than London. Changes will come into effect on Saturday, and the new arrangement on the board will last until 2 January at least. The five-day Christmas relaxation, wise or foolish as it may be, will apply to all tiers.

Christmas Bells

The Christmas relaxation of covid restrictions, from 23 to 27 December, includes freedom for ringers to make their joyful noise, under certain conditions. Provided that no more than six ringers are present, that they wear face coverings, and that they stay at least one metre apart, bells can be rung on any of those five days. However, they need the incumbent's permission, so it is up to you to decide what is right in your situation (and I will support you, whatever you decide), and it is suggested that 20-minute sessions ought to be the maximum, rather than longer peals.

Care Home Vaccinations

A few weeks ago I wrote about ministry in care homes, and the possibility of being tested for covid if you are a regular visitor. Care home staff are now eligible for vaccination as part of the first priority group. If the matron or manager sees local clergy as part of their team, they can include you on that vaccination list. It might be worth asking. (If you are an anti-vaxxer, I don't want to know, and please don't tell your people!)

Leprosy Mission Carol Service

Forgive me one paragraph of pre-Christmas self-indulgence. The Leprosy Mission has been near to my heart for a very long time, and in recent years I've been privileged to serve as a vice-president, one of the public faces, of the organisation. In late January I was able to travel to Bangladesh with Pam Rhodes, Songs of Praise presenter and another Leprosy Mission vice-president, and a few of the leadership team of the Mission in this country. We saw much of the wonderful work in both Dhaka and Nilphamari (where the Leprosy Hospital is funded by the England and Wales Leprosy Mission), meeting leprosy sufferers and leprosy workers, and seeing projects which rehabilitate people back into their communities, against a background of great stigma and prejudice. This year's Leprosy Mission Carol Service, online of course, is led by Pam Rhodes, with me preaching (every carol service should have a sermon in my firm minority opinion), and focuses on the work at Nilphamari. It is just under 45 minutes (a good length for a service), and is available [here](#).



A leprosy clinic in the slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh, as a young man is diagnosed with the disease – entirely curable if caught at this early stage.

Bishop John

Please keep John in your prayers. He is likely to be off work until mid-January at least. I will of course let you know when there is more news.

With love in Christ

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