

## BISHOP'S BULLETIN No 40

### To the Licensed Clergy of Peterborough Diocese

28 February 2021



Dear friends

#### June and Beyond

**Freedom**, they cry, forgetting to read the small print. Yes indeed, all things being well, the coronavirus restrictions will be lifted in the summer. But I doubt that we will going back fully to what we remember pre-2020. Working groups of scientific researchers and advisers are studying all sorts of topics, including whether annual autumn covid vaccinations will be needed, whether face coverings and social distancing might need to be maintained through next winter and beyond, and more.

Are the American scientists right that the new California variant is even more transmissible than the South Africa one? Is Angela Merkel right in saying that Germany is now seeing a third wave of the pandemic? Is the rapid increase in cases in France another sign of this? Look at the figures and graphs for the flu pandemic of 1918-1920, which had four waves over a full two years. Yes, thank God for the researchers and the drug companies: we have effective vaccines, and more on the way. These will greatly decrease the death toll, and the pressure on hospitals, but they can only dampen the effects of the pandemic, and they will be playing catch-up with new variants. Yes, thanks to doctors and medical science, we now have much more effective treatments for covid-19, thus less need for intensive care, and higher recovery rates. We won't see anything like the appalling death rate of a century ago. But covid won't be over by this summer.

Please don't let brides-to-be think that they can have a packed church later this year. They might be able to, but it is quite possible that one-metre distancing and mask wearing will be a condition of "unlimited" numbers in church for public worship and for baptisms, weddings and funerals. The same could well apply to other public gatherings, and even for celebrations and services at Christmas. I very much doubt that we will be back to using the common cup at Holy Communion during 2021: I'm deeply sad about that, but want to be realistic rather than blindly optimistic. It is better to be cautious than to raise hopes then disappoint people.

#### Hebrews Q&A

Chrys Tremththanmor, our CMD Officer, has kindly arranged a couple of Saturday morning Zoom meetings for questions and answers on my Lent Bible studies on Hebrews. The first, on 13 March, is for those who will have seen the whole series of seven talks by that date. The second, on 17 April, is for those who will have gone

through the studies week by week during Lent. Please make these meetings known if you are using, or encouraging private use of, the Hebrews studies in your parish.

People will need to book in advance to attend, but that is easy and free:

13 March: [book here](#) 17 April: [book here](#)

It would help to receive questions in advance, so they can be grouped thematically. There may be time for live questions on the day, but advance questions will get priority. Please email questions to [Chrys.Tremththamor@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:Chrys.Tremththamor@peterborough-diocese.org.uk)

### **Maundy Thursday – 1 April**

As last year, we won't be blessing the oils on Maundy Thursday, but we will have two Zoom services, one for each archdeaconry, for the Reaffirmation of Ordination Vows. We will send out links nearer the date, but please note the times: 10.00-10.40 for Northampton Archdeaconry, 11.00-11.40 for Oakham Archdeaconry. This will be Archdeacon Gordon's last Holy Week with us before he retires, so I have asked him to give the homily at both services. I will lead, and Bishop John will pray for us all.

### **Episcopal Visits**

Bishop John and I are receiving requests to come out to services over the summer. We are looking at diaries and the emerging rules for the relaxation of lockdown, and have some preliminary conclusions. We are bearing in mind the general principle of not travelling too far or becoming vectors of transmission from one community to another, and also the question of how to prioritise our visits. Our initial thinking is that we will prioritise: summer ordinations, late summer and autumn licensing of new Readers and Lay Ministers (some on these in person, some by Zoom), and catching up on confirmations (which haven't happened since March last year). We will also want to be available for preaching online as well as for visits, because we want to encourage online worship to continue. More details next week, but you might like to think about encouraging and preparing candidates for confirmation over the autumn and winter.

### **Paul Barber**

I am sad to report the death of Paul Barber (85), Bishop of Brixworth from 1989 until his retirement in 2001. Paul and Pat then moved to Street in Somerset, where he served as honorary assistant bishop in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. In 2018 they moved back to their home area in Surrey. Paul died on 22 February with Pat at his side. A memorial service will take place when possible: more information at [PEBMemorial@gmail.com](mailto:PEBMemorial@gmail.com).

With love in Christ

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