

Diocese of Brechin: News Bulletin

27th October 2020

'Levels' for Covid-19 Restrictions: from Monday 2nd November

The Covid-19 Advisory Group of the Scottish Episcopal Church is reviewing the Scottish Government new [Strategic Framework](#), which should take effect from Monday 2nd November.



The document is due to be debated by the Scottish Parliament during the course of this week and will not be finalised until after that debate has been completed. This may be by today (Tuesday 27th October).

The draft Framework envisages a 5 level Tier system (0 – 4) with Level 4 being the level at which the strictest conditions would apply. In the initial draft, places of worship will be able to remain open regardless for all levels, but with current cap of 50 attendees at a service of worship reduced to 20 at level 4. For smaller congregations this may make little or no practical difference, but for the larger churches it will be important to be aware of the level at their location.

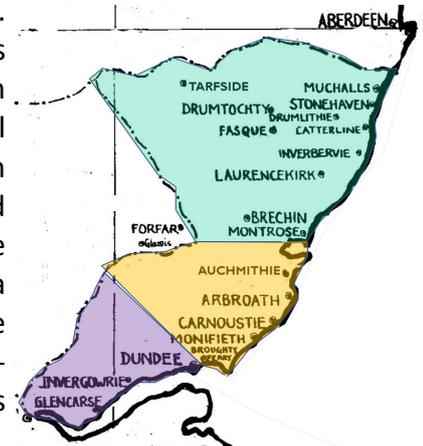
There are also travel restrictions for levels 3 and 4— with people asked to remain in their own local authority and people from levels 0-2 asked not to travel to level 3 or 4 areas. This may impact on e.g. travel to church services if they take place across a local authority boundary. Work travel is permitted: but the detailed circumstances for this will be reviewed and amplified in the next few days.

Further communication will be made by the Advisory Group once the Government's Framework is finalised.

Churches Open in Brechin Diocese

As of early October, most of the churches in the Diocese of Brechin have now re-opened for worship un-

der the Covid-19 restrictions. Some of the smaller satellite churches in the north of the diocese are worshipping in a 'parent' church building. From the applications that I received for permission to re-open, the safety measures have been very well applied in all cases. Worship remains very different, with no congregational singing, communion in one kind only and with spacing and face coverings: but it is a privilege to be able to gather and worship, even in this time of pandemic.



If matters change this winter under the new 'levels' we will communicate as quickly and clearly as possible!

Bishop Andrew

Contingency Planning: A New Part of Our Life as Churches

All churches are encouraged to plan for the possibility that their worshipping and pastoral life may be affected by Covid-19 and the new levels. If a service leader or person with pastoral responsibility tests positive for Covid-19 or has to self-isolate due to contact tracing, please plan for who might be able to step in. The bishop and dean are working on some training and resources that could be used to assist if no experienced authorised minister is available to lead worship at short notice. Watch for announcements about this.

If services have to be cancelled at short notice, please have the means of communicating this worked out and ready to go. If a church goes into level 4 and numbers have to be more severely limited, have the planning for communicating and managing this worked out.

Some guidance on this planning will be coming from the diocese this week: but please be thinking about this now!

Reflections on Ordained Life by Rev Roxanne Campbell

It was interesting to begin ordained ministry toward the end of 2019 and just a few months later to have lots of the things an ordained person would usually do taken away by the pandemic.

Serving as a transitional deacon at St. Ninian's during this time was fortuitous as there was a lot of 'service' to be given and volunteering opportunities during lockdown which allowed me to learn about and reflect on these areas of ministry.

Given all that has been postponed or missed this year, I was thankful that the Michaelmas ordinations could go ahead and my own priesting was able to happen at the end of September.

There were practical challenges around the service - such as the restrictions on numbers, not being able to hug friends or share refreshments post-service. All necessary, of course, and ultimately loving actions in the face of an infectious pandemic, but nonetheless lamentable.



Roxanne Campbell, Priest, with Dean Fay and Canon Kenneth

However it was a blessing that we were able to livestream the service - meaning friends who would not ordinarily have been able to join us were able to be present. I am very grateful to Bob Main for giving up his Saturday afternoon to enable this to happen. The team at St. Ninian's were also wonderful - ensuring that all of the appropriate COVID safeguards were in place and that this was done well.

Lots of people have asked how being a priest feels. A recent post from a new priest in another province resonated well. They said something to the effect that their ordination to the priesthood felt 'like wearing a made to measure suit for the first time'.

And in some ways it does feel just like this: it feels just right. But, as with a new suit, there's work to be

done - working out how to wear it, what I can and can't do in it. Where it might chafe and need to be worn in.

After all of the study and the reflection leading up to this point it might be tempting to think - well that's it, I've arrived at my destination! But there's never any such finality! Just like entering ministry training, and my diaconal ordination, the discernment and reflection does not stop with my priesting. Curacy is still about formation, and indeed, as we are often reminded, formation is lifelong. Now is just the beginning!

Since my priesting, I'm now placed at St. Mary Magdalene's where I'll serve the rest of my curacy. I'm grateful to have spent the last year at St Ninians. I'm excited to begin this new chapter in my ministry and to be alongside and learn from Kenneth and the people of St. Mary Magdalene's as they discern their next steps in their journey.

Abelour Children's Charity Provides Urgent Assistance Fund

Aberlour's Urgent Assistance Fund can provide cash grants to help families with children (aged 21 and under) who are suffering extreme hardship, including the impact of the Coronavirus. Applications must be endorsed and submitted by a sponsor, acting in their professional capacity. This support is usually via cash grants to assist with a range of needs, such as food, prepay power cards, clothing, bedding, or other essentials. Due to limited funds and high levels of applications, the average grant we give is usually around £50 per child. For more information please visit the following: <https://www.aberlour.org.uk/service-category/urgent-assistance-fund/>

Church Life in Lockdown:

Online worship

The Scottish Episcopal Church continues to offer 'national' worship online even as some live worship starts to become possible: this will continue indefinitely even as we start to plan for physical gatherings. The two services, which are led by SEC clergy and lay readers from around the Province, are:

- Thursday—'Service of the Word' at 6.30pm
- Sunday—Eucharist at 11am

There are more details and downloads of previous weeks' services at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship/>

News to share? Please send to...

Elliott at office@brechin.anglican.org