

Diocese of Brechin: News Bulletin

Weeks of 21st Dec & 28th Dec 2021—Christmas '21



Have a Blessed and Safe Christmas and New Year—from Bishop Andrew and all at the Diocese of Brechin

Omicron: Church Guidance Issued by Scottish Government on 16th Dec.

The Scottish Government re-issued 'Places of Worship' Guidance on 16th December 2021. The changes are described in the Advisory Group note [here](#). One legal change has been made: choirs/music groups—must space by 2m (up from 1m) or be separated by screens to sing without masks.

Most churches have already taken action, but as a reminder, the Advisory group paper includes:

- Lateral Flow Tests before attending church;
- As churches must 'have regard' for distancing requirements, revisit risk assessments and go back to 1m distancing between households;
- Manage, as before, 'pinch points' where people gather/queue;
- Take care with e.g. hymn books/service booklets, going back to previous practice such as disinfecting or single use sheets;
- Consider suspending refreshments at services/events or changing some bigger events to online/streaming;
- Paying attention to face coverings, hand and respiratory hygiene and ventilation (where applicable).

The FAQs will be re-issued by the Advisory Group this week (check at <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/coronavirus-updates/>), with guidance on pastoral visiting, meetings etc. The general advice is that great care must be taken with the Omicron variant. Online activities are ideal, but in-person, if judged necessary, are possible with great care.

These changed measures feel like a backwards step in our journey through the pandemic and are very hard the week before Christmas, but they are designed to keep worship and other church activities safe in the presence of the virus. As we take care, the College Bishops have issued a [pastoral letter](#), urging you to take care of yourself and of others. +Andrew

Companionship News:

Bishop Betsey Monnot consecrated as Tenth Bishop in the Diocese of Iowa

Bishop Betsey Monnot was consecrated as the tenth Bishop of Iowa on Saturday 18th Dec 2021. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry of the Episcopal Church in the US led the service, with US bishops and clergy from the diocese and elsewhere. No in-person presence from Scotland was possible with travel risks, but the live-streaming of the service was followed worldwide.



Bishop Monnot at her consecration on Saturday 18th Dec
(Photo: Diocese of Iowa)

On Sunday 19th December, she was 'seated' in her cathedral, St Paul's Des Moines.

More news and full coverage is on the Diocese of Iowa website:

<https://www.iowaepiscopal.org/consecration-rsvp>

We look forward to welcoming Bishop Betsey to Brechin Diocese in due course, as part of our ongoing companionship relationship.

Companionship continued: Covid and political situation in eSwatini—help still needed

As reported before, the position in Eswatini remains very precarious. The help that Brechin Diocese provides, especially in funding the Neighbourhood Care Point (NCP) scheme, is greatly valued in the Diocese

of Swaziland, especially now that matters are so hard in the country. If any churches are able to provide donations to support this work, please send them via the usual channels, or contact the [Diocesan Office](#) if you wish to know more details.

Virtual Pilgrimage of the Holy Sites of Bethlehem: Thurs 23rd Dec 2021, 5pm

St Salvador's, Dundee, working together with a Christian tour guide in Bethlehem, is excited to extend an invitation to a unique opportunity to attend a 1.5 hour virtual pilgrimage of the Holy Sites of Bethlehem - just a few days before we celebrate the coming of the Messiah – our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



During our pilgrimage we will see the Church of the Nativity and the nearby Shepherd's Field. We will hear about the "status quo" between the three major Christian denomination (Armenian, Orthodox and Roman Catholic) as well as an interactive discussion on the history, politics and religious significance of the various holy sites including the ancient tradition of 'the Milk Grotto' and the modern, so-called 'security barrier' - the wall that separates Bethlehem from Jerusalem.

Our pilgrimage will be led by Imad Nassar, an Armenian Christian and long-standing friend of the SEC: he spent time in Edinburgh reading for a degree from Heriot Watt University. Imad and his family have found it increasingly difficult during Covid lockdown given that tourism and pilgrimages to Bethlehem are his primary source of income.

Tickets are free at <https://tinyurl.com/ChristmasPilgrimage>. For your free ticket select 'General Admission' as your ticket type but, if you wish, you may give a donation to support Imad by selecting 'Donation' as your ticket type to give via Paypal. Either method, your personal ticket will then be emailed to you.

Contact Fr. Gary (gary.clink@brechin.anglican.org) for more information.

The Dundee Nativity 2021

"Courage for the call" – the story of Joseph is now online. You can find it by clicking

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/656543172> or

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/s4Hn2FHgLEY>



Also available on DVD. Contact Director Allan Webster for more details—[email](#).

It is free to use. Do watch it and share it with others.

We wish you and yours a joyful Christmas. From the Dundee Nativity Steering Group and Platform Arts

Brechin Diocesan Training Sessions: 'Pastoral Care' Training for lay members: January 2022

From Dean Fay. Following the successful Zoom training sessions held earlier this year, and as requested by some of those participants, the next training to be offered is three lay training workshop sessions on 'Pastoral Care'.

These will be held on Zoom on Sundays 16th, 23rd and 30th January 2022 at 2.30pm each day.

The titles for the 1hr 45min sessions are:

- Week 1 – The stories that form us
- Week 2 – The God who calls us
- Week 3 – The community that sustains us

They will be led on Zoom by the Rev Liz Crumlish, an associate of the Institute of Pastoral Supervision and Reflective Practice. We are very fortunate to get this input and I would be grateful if you could put these dates in your diary and as many people as possible would sign up for this.

If you could email flamont53@sky.com to register interest and Dean Fay will send you the ZOOM link for the sessions.

Any news to share in the Bulletin?

Email the office on office@brechin.anglican.org