

# Diocese of Brechin: Lockdown News Bulletin

## 15th July 2020

### Phase 3: Limited re-opening of churches for distanced communal worship from 15th July

Last Thursday the First Minister announced that, from Weds 15th July, faith communities could, under strict limitations, start to re-open for communal worship. The Scottish Episcopal Church issued draft guidance for our churches last week and hope to re-issue this with some revisions once the Scottish Government finalise and issue the legislation and guidance. This is all happening rather more quickly than we anticipated, so it is important to remember that we do not HAVE to open yet, and it is very important



that we plan carefully, ensure we are operating within the government guidelines and take account of all those who might be unable to return to in-church worship.

The Scottish Episcopal guidelines are at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/phase-3-guidance-gathering-together-again/>

Key features: the numbers who can attend a service are limited. The 2m physical distancing rule is maintained for churches and this reduces the capacity of our buildings. In addition, the Scottish Government are setting a cap of 50 on the numbers who can attend even if a building could hold more. For funerals and weddings this cap is 20.

There are major limitations on what we can do if we do re-open. The service CAN be Holy Communion, with the president taken precautions to ensure that the distribution of consecrated bread (no wine) is a minimal virus transmission risk. During the service,

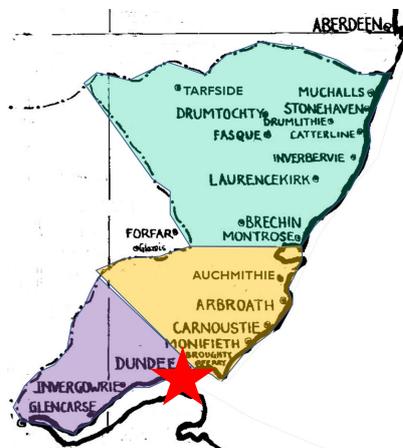
the congregation are not permitted to sing and must maintain 2m distancing for the vast majority of the time. No pre or post service refreshments or social time is permitted. The guidelines above have further details.

Some churches may feel that these limitations on numbers and the way we can worship mean that waiting a little longer until the restrictions are relaxed is the better way to restart in-person worship. This is a perfectly correct decision for a rector and vestry to make: ensuring we include and care for all the congregation is a key factor in our phased return to worship. Pastoral care of the congregation and clergy may require a continuation of online worship and other means of keeping together as congregations.

Please do contact your Rector or local vestry leadership for more information. They can contact the Bishop to discuss the details of what may be possible.

### Tay Cluster, Dundee: St Paul's Cathedral re-opened for private prayer

Bob Main writes: The Scottish Government's announcement that Churches could open for individual prayer was very much welcomed by the congregation of St. Paul's Cathedral in Dundee. Whilst the congregation had met remotely for Sunday worship, there was a real desire to once again be able to physically access the building even



if it was only on a restricted basis.

Whilst there was an enthusiasm to open as quickly as possible, it was realised that this could only be achieved with a significant degree of planning and in accordance with the guidance that had been issued by the SEC. A small sub-group from

the Cathedral's Vestry, led by our interim Priest, Fr. David Gordon, was quickly established and set about the task of putting in place the physical aspects of a plan that would ensure that anyone entering the Cathedral could do so

safely and in accordance with “covid secure” arrangements.

One of the primary issues that had to be considered was the maintenance of social distancing.

It was quickly established that a “one-way” system could be implemented with entrance and exit being gained via separate doors whilst inside, the flow of people was accomplished using a clockwise route using both side aisles. An additional benefit to using this route was that it allowed access to the Votive candle stand in front of St. Roque’s Altar, an option that was felt would be of particular importance.

In addition, it was necessary to physically measure and identify individual pews where people could sit, roping off access to all other seating areas. The acquisition of items such as hand sanitizers, face masks, gloves and suitable cleaning material was also necessary, an issue that proved to be slightly challenging given that everyone else appeared to be doing the same!

The one issue that generated much thought and discussion amongst the group however was when the Cathedral would be physically open. Whilst there was a clear desire to be open as much as possible, it was obvious that this would be totally dependent upon the availability, and more importantly, the sustainability, of volunteers to staff and manage visitors. It was agreed that in the initial phase (for the month of July) the Cathedral would be open from 10.00 – 12.00 on Fridays and 2.00 – 4.00 on Saturdays.

Looking back on the last few weeks, putting these arrangements in place has been a somewhat bittersweet experience. The joy of once again being able to physically access the Cathedral building that we all care for and love so much has been very much tempered with sadness that we have had to close off so much of it to those who enter its doors. These are challenging and unprecedented times, but the fact that we are once again able to make the Cathedral available for access, albeit on a limited basis, is something that we very much welcome and cherish.

## **Ecclesiastical Insurance: Fundraising and Grant Help**

Ecclesiastical Insurance has produced a grant and fundraising hub to offer practical support and guidance to help churches during this uniquely challenging time. Initially these resources will focus on keeping your fundraising going during COVID-19 and guidance on applying for grants. Further fundraising re-

sources will be added to this website over the weeks ahead.

<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/church/fundraising/>

## **SEC Guidance for Churches in Lockdown and in the Pandemic: Check!**

Please keep checking the SEC website for updates for our churches on re-opening buildings and for pastoral guidance from the College of Bishops. Website: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/coronavirus-updates/>

## **Church Life in Lockdown: Online worship**

The Scottish Episcopal Church will continue to offer ‘national’ worship online even as some live worship becomes possible: this will continue indefinitely even as we start to plan for physical gatherings. The two services will be:

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

Details at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship/>

There are also live online worship services at the Cathedral, St Mary Magdalene, St Luke’s, Holy Trinity Monifieth and St Ternan’s, Muchalls (midweek). Online content is shared by many other churches too.

## **News for the Bulletin**

If there is anything you would like to share from your church, requests for help or other items of news for future bulletins contact Elliott on [office@brechin.anglican.org](mailto:office@brechin.anglican.org)

## **Prayer Points**

- The NHS, Care Homes and all key workers
- Food banks and food distribution and all volunteers supporting them.
- A safe easing of lockdown.
- Politicians — called to make difficult and vital decisions with integrity
- Clergy leading a very different ministry
- Those who have died
- Mourners