

Diocese of Brechin: Lockdown News Bulletin

28th July 2020

Greetings from Bishop Andrew

Welcome to this latest bulletin for the Diocese of Brechin as we emerge, as a nation, from lockdown. The news is still full of the pandemic worldwide and there is a great deal of anxiety in Scotland as shielding approaches a possible suspension this week and other restrictions are, cautiously, lifted. As Christian disciples, we are called to show God's love and to care for all around us: this applies especially so at the present time. Work still goes on in churches to help the most vulnerable in society and we all have a part to play in support, action and prayer. Please do continue to focus on following the guidelines, making good judgements that protect others: and remain faithful to our loving God in all we do.

Blessings,



Emerging from Lockdown: Face Coverings in Church?

As the Covid-19 lockdown is slowly eased in Scotland our churches are starting to consider re-starting in person worship. This remains a local decision for a vestry to take having assessed the local risks and produced a plan. It is very important to emphasise that no church HAS to resume worship. The plans being submitted are all of a very high quality: but an issue that has to be explored is the use or otherwise of face coverings.



There is no legal requirement to wear a face covering in church, unlike shops or public transport. The Govt guidance says they should be worn if 2m physical distancing will be hard to achieve.

There are, of course, many issues to consider in making this decision:

- Wearing face coverings in church gives a positive public safety message and can be seen as a sign of care;
- In non-eucharistic services it might be wise for the congregation to wear face coverings throughout as there is no need for them to be removed;
- in services of Holy Communion, removal and replacement of face coverings during the service is necessary;
- The hygiene of removing/replacing face coverings and sanitising hands each time as stated in the Phase 3 Guidance is complex and may require additional guidance and training for the congregation;
- In large, spacious, well-ventilated church buildings where physical distancing is relatively easy to achieve and there are minimal 'pinch points' for access, the congregation may have no need to wear face coverings at any time, with only the welcomers and priest at the distribution of communion masked;
- In smaller churches and where access is more constrained, it might feel safer for face coverings to be worn as the congregation arrive and depart or possibly even whilst sat in their physically distanced places during the service.

Care must be taken when dealing with people who cannot wear face coverings for medical or psychological reasons. This is a very sensitive area that churches need to handle carefully.

If the Covid situation in Scotland becomes worse, then there is always the possibility that the use of face coverings may become more widely mandated by the government. For the moment, the use of face coverings in church remains optional: but the use of them can be seen as a sign of care to others.

For guidance on this and all other aspects of church opening, please contact the bishop via the office on office@brechin.anglican.org.

A note from the Diocesan Treasurer

As we begin to move towards (hopefully) a new sort of normality with the start of re-opening of Churches, I wondered how Churches had fared in the lockdown?

If any church is finding itself in any financial difficulty please let me know and we can see what can be done to help.

allanmargaretduffus@btinternet.com



Northern Cluster: Baptism in St James' Stonehaven

Canon Dr Joe Morrow CBE QC LLD FRSE was the officiant at St James' Stonehaven patronal festival and a baptism on Sunday 27th July 2020. The large building, with relatively easy physical distancing, had limited numbers for the service.

It was reported that baby Magnus was more interested playing with the water as he was baptised!



We believe this is the first baptism in an SEC church since the easing of lockdown has allowed limited worship to be resumed.

Hope Beyond: Funding Support from Allchurches Trust

Allchurches Trust has launched a new grants programme – Hope Beyond - aimed at enabling churches and Christian charities to meet changing need within their communities as the longer term impact of Covid-19 becomes clearer.

Funding projects that will enable people, organisa-

tions and communities to flourish in life after lockdown, Hope Beyond will help churches, Christian charities and communities to adapt to the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic - building resilience and encouraging hope.

<http://www.allchurches.co.uk/what-we-fund/hopebeyond/>

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

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

Church Life in Lockdown: Online worship

The Scottish Episcopal Church will continue 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 will be:

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

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

News for the Bulletin

If there is anything you would like to share from your church, requests for help or other items of new for future bulletins contact Elliott on office@brechin.anglican.org

Prayer Points

- The NHS, Care Homes and all key workers
- Food banks and food distribution and all volunteers supporting them.
- For all who are shielding.
- Politicians — called to make difficult and vital decisions with integrity
- Clergy leading a very different ministry as churches start to plan for the next phase
- Those who have died