

Diocese of Brechin: News Bulletin

1st December 2021



Coronavirus
guidance
update

'Omicron' Variant—No Change to Rules

The news is full of the new 'Omicron' variant of the Covid virus. For us as churches there are two key messages:

Firstly: The rules have not changed, so we can continue to operate as before, with the same restrictions as before. If this changes, we will let you know as soon as possible. International travel rules have changed: check on <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/> for details.

Secondly: The government is urging extra care and focus on the existing restrictions. Please take a Lateral Flow test before you attend church (a recent change in government guidance), take care with wearing your face covering, exercise extra care with hand hygiene and be careful with busy social activities. Consider ventilation and a degree of personal distancing, especially at busy events.

The SEC Advisory Group meets next week (week beginning 6th Dec) so any further guidance or advice on responding to the Omicron variant will follow in due course.

Companionship News: eSwatini

Election of a new bishop in eSwatini should take place on Thursday 2nd December. Please keep the diocese and the bishops of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa in your prayers as the bishops make this vital appointment.

The Covid and political situation in eSwatini remains very precarious, especially with the news this week of travel restrictions due to the Omicron variant. There remains ongoing civil unrest and tension with pro-democracy protests being cracked down upon by government forces, resulting in many basic services and resources being unavailable to the ordinary population.

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.



Food delivery at an NCP

The latest report from eSwatini on the work of the NCPs is [presented here](#). The need remains great: 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.

Bishop Alan Scarfe: Diocese of Brechin Retirement Celebration

Sunday 12th December at 9.30pm by Zoom.

An online celebration of Bishop Alan's ministry and relationship with the Diocese of Brechin will take place on Sunday 12th December at 9.30pm (to allow for the time difference) by Zoom. The link and details will be sent out in next week's bulletin.

This will be a liturgical service to allow us to give personal thanks for the many years of support that Bishop Alan has given to the Diocese of Brechin. Please put the date in your diary!

Diocesan Council: Oct 2021 Meeting

Council met on the 26th October 2021. After opening with prayer and approving previous minutes, the following business was conducted.

Financial help for one charge in the diocese was approved to be continued, as that church recovers from the effects of the pandemic on their day-to-day cashflow. The church concerned has made excellent progress in restarting various activities and addressing their financial stability.

The Bishop gave an update on clergy movements and ministry. Since the last council the Rev Jim Benton-Evans had been instituted in Brechin and Montrose with Inverbervie. Fr Gary Clink had been ordained priest at Arbroath. Broughty Ferry were about to advertise and planning was in hand for St Martin's Dundee. The possibility of a funded children and youth officer was also initially explored, with further discussions planned for later Council meetings.

Canon Pat Millar reported on the Companionship links, focusing on the dreadful situation in Eswatini with ongoing civil unrest affecting the most vulnerable in the country. In Iowa, the preparations for Bishop Alan Scarfe's retirement and the consecration of Betsey Monnet as the new bishop are well in hand.

Council reviewed property matters: developing plans for St John's and the Diocesan Centre were discussed and agreed in principle (on which more will be presented soon) and minor issues on the other diocesan properties were addressed. Stonehaven and St Mary Magdalene's Dundee had both been successful in receiving Provincial buildings grants.

Finance, the uneventful situation with safeguarding and the planning for a Diocesan Environmental Working Group were also reviewed by Council, then the meeting closed with prayer and the grace.

Scottish Episcopal Institute Advent Course: 'Reading the Bible Like an Episcopalian'

'Reading the Bible like an Episcopalian' is a series of four talks in the Season of Advent to reflect upon ways in which Episcopalians understand Holy Scripture. Because we Episcopalians, like all Christians, read the Bible from our own perspective and within our own denomination, it is worth probing our own predilections. It is worth asking, in other words, what characterises an Episcopalian approach to the Bible over time, say, from the Reformation until today.

The talks, by Rev Dr Mike Hull, Director of Studies, will address: (1) how we settled on the Bible as the last word at the Reformation; (2) how we pray with the Bible and why Books of Common Prayer came into use; (3) how the Enlightenment affects the way we read the Bible; and (4) how we read the Bible in a variety of ways in our own day.

Time: 7pm to 8pm on the four Mondays in Advent (29/11, 6/12, 13/12, 20/12) via Zoom. Event registration and further information can be found [here](#).

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.

Christingle Planning? 'Shine a Light for Scotland' with Aberlour

Many churches hold 'Christingle' services around Advent and Christmas. These services, using a decorated orange as a symbol of Christian faith, were introduced into the UK many years ago by the Children's society, a charity based in England. In Scotland, the SEC often supports the Aberlour Charity in the same way.



This charity, originally rooted in the Episcopal Church, does very similar work throughout Scotland. Their 'Shine a Light for Scotland Campaign' would be an excellent cause for a Christingle service this year.

Read more at: <https://www.aberlour.org.uk/christingle/>

Any news to share in the Bulletin?

Please send news and photos to Elliott in the office at office@brechin.anglican.org.