



To

- licensed clergy
- those holding PtO
- LLMs
- members of Bishop's Council
- members of the College of Canons
- members of the Cathedral Council
- churchwardens

The Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple
2 February 2021

Dear all

Mothering Sunday is a marker half-way through Lent and traditionally Refreshment Sunday. With our worship mostly online or very socially distanced, it's a bit of a challenge but I hope you are making something of Lent's very strange pattern this year. We have had a bewildering experience of

wilderness, so a drink of water in the desert will be very welcome. We have also experienced some marvellous moments in these strange and isolating times. It has been challenging and I thank you for all those occasions when you have gone the extra mile. It feels good to have everyone back at school, that the days are lengthening and Spring is in the air. Easter is round corner.

The government's timetable is very heavily couched with 'not before' so we are going to have to see how it goes rather than make definite plans on the basis of the provisional dates but it does seem possible for us to think a bit further ahead. I am longing to get back to corporate public worship and am glad that the cathedral is beginning to open up again for services that require the careful organisation we got used to before the third lockdown. No doubt it will be greatly appreciated if churches can be open for Easter in whatever way is possible but decision making about that remains local as you are the only people who know what is possible safely in your own context.

The bishops will continue to provide sermons each week to support local worship online until the Sunday after Easter Day. There has been quite a lot of use of these and we hope they have helped reduce the load on those who otherwise would be preaching week by week. By continuing a week further than we originally planned, we hope it will help those leading worship to get an Easter break.

The Chrism Eucharist on Maundy Thursday at 11.00am

The Chrism Eucharist and renewal of ordination vows is one of the great diocesan services of the year. The requirement for social distancing as well as the government's guidance that we should not travel means the service will be online again this year but it will be live from the cathedral and I hope you will join me online for it. The links to the service will be sent at the beginning of Holy Week. Oils will be distributed after Easter to each of the rural deans for onward distribution.

We recognise that part of the significance of this service is to be together at the start of the great three days at the heart of the Christian year so there will also be an opportunity after the service for clergy to gather online, probably by Archdeaconry. Again, the link will be sent at the beginning of Holy Week.

This being my last Holy Week and Easter as Bishop of Salisbury, I am glad to be preaching the three days at the cathedral. Services will be online and if you are able to make use of them locally, please do.

There are a number of other practical matters I need to draw to your attention.

APCMs

I have received a small number of requests for APCMs to be delayed so that they can take place after the expected easing of restrictions on meeting from not before 21st June. However, the deadline for APCMs has already been extended to the end of May and I am not going to permit a further extension. This year Deanery Synod representatives will become the electorate for General Synod. We need to know who they will be for that process to take place and for there to be time for candidates to become known, for there to be hustings and the opportunity to find out what the candidates for General Synod represent.

Condolence book

Please could I remind you that it would be wise to have in the parish office a book suitable for use as a book of condolence for whenever it is needed. Unless you are prepared, you might find it difficult to respond immediately whenever it is needed. There is no need to use a specialist supplier but one such is [Barnard and Westwood](#) who have available loose leaf books which might be helpful should a page be defaced. You will each know, or be able quickly to sense at the time, what is appropriate in your own setting.

On the death of a leading national figure, the national Church will rapidly issue appropriate liturgical resources and the diocesan website will also carry guidance on matters such as the use of flags and bells. The cathedral's website will set out details of the response of the diocese's mother church.

Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy

[The Guidelines](#) were published in 2015 and all clergy should be aware of them. Mostly they seem like common sense but they can become particularly significant when there is a complaint. If you have not had a look at them recently, I encourage you to do so as their main purpose is to help support good practice.

My retirement

Thank you to those who were in touch following the announcement that I will be retiring on 3rd July. It looks as though it will be possible to invite at least some people to the cathedral for Evensong that day but it is impossible at this stage to know how many we will be able to welcome. The service will be online so at the moment that is the most definite part of the plan.

Clergy Day - Wednesday the 7th July at Bryanston

Life goes on. Bryanston School is booked for the annual clergy day on 7th July and it is hoped that the day can be arranged within Covid guidelines for clergy to meet up at last. Bishop Karen and Jonathan Triffitt are working on plans and promise that, if it can go ahead, the event will have even more of a laid back feel than usual giving an opportunity for everyone to worship together and enjoy the surroundings in a relaxed way. Please put the date in your diary.

Time off

Finally, with the country opening up again, many of you, I hope, are thinking about holidays. Please consider taking the annual leave you need and plan for some good breaks, whether it be a series of short breaks to catch up with family and friends or a longer holiday over the summer. May I suggest that as deaneries you discuss this and work out a system of cover (for Sundays and occasional offices) amongst yourselves to enable much needed holidays to happen? Retired clergy once vaccinated should be able to assist again soon and online offerings which continue can be shared more widely. If there are any problems getting Sunday cover from April onwards, please do be in touch with either the Ramsbury or Sherborne offices.

Pray for one another

I am very conscious of a number of our colleagues who are sick at the moment. Please remember one another in your prayers. The Diocesan Cycle of Prayer is a way of doing this in such a way that no one is left out. Sally Ruffer in my office is grateful to those of you who respond to her requests for prayers at the first time of asking.

Through this time of pandemic I have missed congregational singing and there has been a simplicity to this Lent. I love this nineteenth century American

Shaker song, the tune of which Sidney Carter used for Lord of the Dance.

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained,
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.*

God's blessings in this holy Lent.

+Nicholas Sarum
