

To licensed clergy, those holding PtO, LLMs and Licensed Lay Workers in the Diocese of Salisbury

15 September 2020

The Feast of St Cyprian

Dear sisters and brothers

The beginning of September still feels to me like the start of a new year. With our schools back and the beginnings of greater social interaction, there is a cautious lift of mood. It was a joy for me to be in Wimborne Minster a week ago celebrating their patronal festival and their 900th anniversary which helped put things in perspective. It was great that their choir was back at a distance and their singing was joyful albeit not without its difficulties. Choirs are back in the cathedral and a number of other churches too.

I have not written since before the holiday break. For those able to get away, I hope it went well. For those who stayed at home, I hope you got a proper break and feel refreshed as the winter could be challenging. If you were unable to get a break, it is very important that you do so in the near future for the wellbeing of yourself, your family and your people. If you are in difficulty making the necessary arrangements, do please be in touch with your archdeacon for help and support.

Worship outdoors

Churches across the diocese have been wonderfully adaptive this year. Worship at home and online and the service of our communities and of those in greatest need have together been a deeply impressive witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank you for that witness.

As part of that imaginative approach, I know that many benefices have been holding services out of doors because more can be accommodated and some feel safer in the open air. Canon B40 provides:

No minister shall celebrate the Holy Communion elsewhere than in a consecrated building within his cure or other building licensed for the purpose, except he have permission so to do from the bishop of the diocese: Provided that at all times he may celebrate the Holy Communion as provided by Canon B 37 in any private house wherein there is any person sick, or dying, or so impotent that he cannot go to church.

I have, therefore, given blanket permission for the celebration of Holy Communion out of doors in the diocese for a period of one year from the 7 September 2020 so that those who wish to do so may hold eucharistic worship outside while we remain restricted in the use of our buildings.

I share the sense of frustration that many feel at the restrictions that are placed on the use of church buildings while other secular environments are not subject to similar restrictions. I know that a question exercising many is how we shall mark or celebrate the coming seasons of Remembrance, Advent and Christmas when large congregations can usually be expected to gather. I wish that I could write to say that the signs are that further relaxation is likely in the foreseeable future but I cannot. The government has made the 'rule of six' and the national Church is still negotiating how, if at all, its current guidance is to be amended in the light of the new regulations made yesterday. How each benefice will cope must remain a local decision made within the guidelines current from time to time. Much as I might like to, I cannot issue local guidance that relaxes the national guidance and the law. As the Church in our communities, we have a responsibility to model good practice. Do please share your ideas with each other through your archdeacons, in Chapter or Deanery Synod or in whatever forum is appropriate.

Confirmations

Confirmations are treated as one of those 'life events' at which numbers are limited by the government to 30. I have been very saddened that we can't have large diocesan confirmations for the time being. Confirmation is a significant step in the journey of discipleship and one that we should do our best to encourage those committed to our care to take. Bishop Karen, Bishop Andrew and I do, however, encourage you to organise local confirmations for those whom you have prepared. We will be pleased to come on a Sunday so that the confirmations may be included within 'routine communal worship' without the same limit as for services which are 'life events'.

APCMs online

One or two parishes have raised concerns over whether they have a building sufficiently large to accommodate their APCM with social distancing. I have executed an instrument that makes temporary provision to allow APCMs to take place online. Do please let your archdeacon know if you propose to hold an APCM online. This variation applies for the period limited to the 31 August 2021 unless revoked meanwhile. As you will know, APCMs this year must take place by the end of October.

Safeguarding

As you are aware, all PCC members are charity trustees whether or not the PCC on which they serve is registered separately with the Charity Commission. You will know that churchwardens and deanery synod representatives are *ex officio* members. Currently only those parishes with an annual income over £100,000 are required to register separately with the Charity Commission. Charity trustees are eligible for DBS clearance at enhanced level (but without barring information) at no charge.

The Charity Commission strongly recommends that all charity trustees in charities which directly work with children and vulnerable adults are asked to apply for DBS clearance. Many people in our congregations are vulnerable for all sorts of reasons (some of which we may not even be aware of) so, by definition, all our PCCs are charities which directly work with children and vulnerable adults.

The Church of England has applied, and communicated through its Practice Guidance, a slightly different requirement: that those PCCs which are registered separately with the Charity Commission and in which the PCC sponsors or approves in its own name work with children or young people or vulnerable adults should ask their PCC members and churchwardens to apply for DBS clearance.

Up until now the Diocese of Salisbury has not put these requirements into place but it has been explained to me by the Safeguarding Team that this is (and has been) a matter of some concern for them for a while. Following consultation with the Bishop's Staff and the Senior Leadership Team at Church House, I have decided that, with effect from the 2021 APCMs, all PCC members (including churchwardens) in PCCs which are registered separately with the Charity Commission (ie those with an income of more than £100,000) will be required to apply for DBS clearance. After the 2021 APCM, those parishes will need to ask their elected PCC members and church wardens to apply for DBS clearance. No churchwarden or other PCC member in such parishes may be admitted to their office until such clearance has been obtained. A DBS clearance is generally considered in the Church of England to be valid for five years so, where PCC members and/or churchwardens remain in office, they will not need to renew their clearance each year. Any new churchwarden or PCC member who is elected in subsequent years will, however, be required to apply.

The diocese's safeguarding team will be preparing procedures to implement this change that should be published in the new year in time for the 2021 APCMs. I am writing to you now by

way of a 'heads up' so that it does not arrive out of the blue.

This is another step on the journey of making our Churches safer places.

Ordinations

We delayed this year's ordinations from Peter-tide to almost Michaelmas in the hope that we would be able to gather in reasonable numbers to support the candidates who will be made deacon and ordained priest. These services, too, are limited by the government's guidelines that identify them as 'life events'. The concern is that people travel from a wide variety of communities to be together in one place and that any spread of the virus could be more difficult to contain than in a local event.

Therefore this year's ordinations will be taking place in six services:

on Saturday 26 September

- two services with me in the cathedral for seven deacons at each;
- two services for priests with +Karen at St Mary's Swanage and St Aldhelm's Radipole;
- one service for priests with +Andrew in Edington Priory;

and on Monday 28 September

- one service for a priest from the Channel Islands with +Trevor Willmott, the Assistant Bishop who currently oversees the Church of England in those islands.

Please remember the ordinands in your prayers and welcome them into the diocese in their new roles.

To be made deacon

Ali Alexander

Salisbury St Thomas and St Edmund

Sharon Boyle

Wimborne Minster and the Wimborne Villages

Adrian Burholt

Wellsprings

Helen Croud

Bridport

Karen Franklin

Canford Magna

Katie Jackson

Broughton Gifford, Great Chalfield and Holt St Katharine

Gerry Lynch

Devizes St John and St Mary

Leila Mather

Charminster, Stinsford and the Chalk Stream villages

Matthew Smith

Corfe Mullen

Caroline Spindlow

Warminster Christchurch

Sally Taylor

Hamworthy

Nick Webb

St Aldhelm

Nick Wells

Wimborne Minster and the Wimborne Villages

Helen Williams

Wareham

To be ordained priest

Joy Albone

Canalside

Fiona Beale

Beaminster Area

Bev Hervé

St Matthew Cobo and St Marie Castel, Guernsey Roger Leake

Roger Leake

Chalke Valley

Matt Renyard

Radipole and Melcombe Regis

Richard Saint

Southbroom St James

Solveig Sonet

Swanage and Studland

Lyndon Webb

Broadstone

Sudans emergency appeal

Thanks be to God and to the many generous donors to the COVID-19 emergency appeal for the Sudan and South Sudan in July. It is a great blessing and raised £78,600 for which the Archbishops of Khartoum and Juba have given thanks. In addition, there have been a number of local appeals for link dioceses. Friends of my family have given a further £50,000 to set up an additional fund in honour of their and my parents for any one, or any combination of one or more, of the following purposes:

- the provision of education,
- the improvement of physical and/or mental health especially training in hygiene and/or the design and construction of toilets (with doors which do not require hand touching for opening after the use of any associated hand washing or other sanitising facilities), and
- provision of photovoltaic electricity.

And finally...

Diocesan Synod last week faced and began to map out a response to the challenging issues facing us in relation to setting the budget for next year and beyond. Every local Church is facing similar issues. In the middle to late autumn, the bishops will begin a series of online meetings to recognise and give thanks for what has been and to help us face the future with confidence. In present circumstances, it is all too easy for the Church to be self-absorbed. I am so grateful that we continue to point beyond ourselves to God and the Kingdom of God and thank you for our partnership in doing this.

For all that has been, Thanks.

To all that will be, Yes.

Dag Hammarskjold

+Nicholas Sarum