

Diocese of Brechin: Lockdown News Bulletin – 13th April 2020

Dear brothers and sisters,

Alleluia, Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia! We have arrived at a Easter Day like no other, as we enter another week of 'lockdown' in Scotland. The unprecedented situation with the Covid-19 virus has changed all of our lives beyond recognition: and we need to be so, so mindful of those who are ill, those who care for them and all who work to allow us to be fed, cared for medically and cared for pastorally. We enter the Easter season with the joy of the resurrection, but after a Holy Week unlike any other in modern Christian history: unable to leave our homes, unable to gather and worship, but trying to be safe and protect the NHS.

Our church communities have prayed and worshiped apart (and online) – and we have travelled through Holy Week and to Easter Day. On that day, a very significant ministry has come to an end, with the retirement of the Rev David Shepherd from St Mary Magdalene, Dundee. A tribute to his ministry is included in this bulletin.

May I wish you every blessing this lockdown Easter Season: and as you know the love and grace of God in this joyous season, please pray for all those who suffer and are anxious: Stay at Home and Stay Safe!



Online worship

Many churches are continuing to offer online worship for congregation members and I would encourage you to find something that works for you. Watch out for Canon Kenneth Gibson's compline on Facebook (and tell me about things you find so we can share them).

The Scottish Episcopal Church continues to offer 'national' worship, with details at:

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

The next service is the Second Sunday of Easter at 11am – with Bishop Anne of Aberdeen and Orkney.

A good way to see the services in on YouTube – search for 'Scottish Episcopal Church' - <https://www.youtube.com/user/scottishepiscopal>. Copies of the liturgy are also posted.

Diocesan renewal of ministry vows by "Zoom" – Maundy Thursday



Over 40 of the clergy, lay readers and lay ministers of the Diocese gathered by 'Zoom' to renew their ministry vows in a special Diocesan service with Bishop Andrew at 11am on Maundy Thursday.

The picture to the left shows some of those taking part in the service as they appeared on the computer screen. The ordained and lay leaders of the diocese are doing pastoral work and leading the spiritual life of our charges, so they renewed their commitment to this work, even at this strange and worrying time.

The Rev David Shepherd – retirement from ministry at St Mary Magdalene, Dundee

Easter Day 2020: the Rev David Shepherd retires after over 40 years as the Rector of St Mary Magdalene's Scottish Episcopal Church, Dundee. Patricia and David start this new phase of life with the prayers and thanks of his charge and the diocese. The lockdown means celebrations in person will be delayed for a little while!

David started his ordained ministry as a curate at St Paul's cathedral, Dundee, in 1968, and his ministry at St Mary Magdalene started in 1979. After his retirement on Easter Day, Bishop Ted Luscombe (who was Provost for some of David's curacy and the bishop who instituted him to St Mary Magdalene's) wrote the following tribute:

Bishop Ted writes:

I can remember clearly the day of David Shepherd's Institution in June 1979. The church was dark and dismal, and many of the lights were not working. Neither he nor I could have imagined that it was the beginning of a ministry that would last more than forty years. It really was an act of faith.

The great pity is that we are not meeting in Saint Mary Magdalene's to mark his retirement. Otherwise, we could have seen for ourselves the miracle that, under his guidance, has transformed it into the place of beauty that it now is. But — of great importance though that is — the building is not the Church. The Church is people. And it was to their care that David was instituted all those years ago. Saint Peter was never licensed as Rector of a Scottish Episcopal Church, but he did receive from the Lord the same commission that is given to every minister of God's word and sacrament — "feed my lambs; tend my shearlings; feed my sheep."

So many christenings in Saint Mary Magdalene's! —The Baptismal Register shows no less than eight hundred and sixty lambs nourished and in their baptisms given the grace to lead Christian lives. And even in these recent months there has been more nourishment, in the shape of a splendidly produced volume of Bible stories for children.

And then the shearlings, those young and sometimes wayward, members of the flock. In those halcyon days in Saint Paul's Cathedral in the seventies. Who could ever forget David's Sixty-Nine Club, with a hundred and fifty young people meeting in the hall every week! His six years as Chaplain to Anglican Students in the University of Dundee, some of whom have remained in touch.

—"Feed my sheep." —The ordinary day-to-day of the flock. Visiting, teaching, preaching, comforting and ministering to them to the end. Nearly thirteen hundred funerals, nearly all of them loved by their Shepherd, and loving in return.

Beyond Saint Mary Magdalene's, David's Hospital Chaplaincy has been exemplary. You knew that if he was asked to visit, it would be done. And then, Saint Serf's Retirement Home in Newport. His sixteen years Convenorship saw a major extension built, the books balanced, and a home of which the Church was proud.

A great Anglican priest of the nineteenth century, a contemporary of Bishop Forbes, memorably described the work of parish ministry in three words — Prayer, Grind, Love. That has been the mainstay of David Shepherd's ministry, immensely supported by the love and faith of his wife, Patricia.

Now he is retiring from the active (sometimes, perhaps, too active) ministry, we can echo the words of the Psalmist, "He fed them also with a faithful and a true heart, and ruled them prudently with all his power." — A good reason for thanksgiving, a cause for a Te Deum laudamus.