

Diocese of Brechin: News Bulletin

23rd November 2020

Virtual SEC General Synod

Each year the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church meets in Edinburgh to enact the business of the national church. Representatives are appointed to boards of the church, budgets for central funds and quota set, canon law can be changed and reports on the life of the church in Scotland are received and discussed.



General Synod meets 'in person' in previous years

In 2020 the pandemic prevented the three-day in-person meeting in June taking place, so a deferred online Synod is taking place on Saturday 5th December. 12 reps (6 lay and 6 ordained) from Brechin Diocese and the Bishop will attend the 'Zoom' sessions. The papers for one day of 'Zoom' are a reduced set from the three day version, focusing on essential financial and representational business. Please keep your reps in your prayers as they prepare for the meeting and look out for reports from the Synod.

Covid-19 'Levels' - Travelling to/from Church—what is legal?

With the change of travel restrictions from 'guidance' to 'law' last week, questions continue to be asked about what is now allowed. The SEC has 'FAQs' on the [website](#). These include the following:

Question: Is travel to attend worship services in a level 3 or 4 area permitted?

Answer: There is an exception to the level 3 travel ban for attending a usual place of worship. Worshipers can travel to or from a level 3 area. If an area is in level 4 no travel to or from the level area is permitted: this would exclude some members. A cleric, lay reader or paid church employee who need to cross a level 4 boundary to lead worship or perform a function essential for the life of the church would be permitted to do this (if they wished to) under the 'work' exemption.

Question: Can you give some examples of who can and cannot cross a level 3 or 4 local authority boundary to a place of worship?

Example: Priests or other worship leaders can cross any local authority boundary of any level to lead worship in any church. (so locuming is permitted)

Examples: A congregation member who...

- ...lives in Laurencekirk, Aberdeenshire (a level 2 area) CAN travel to worship in their customary place of worship in Montrose, Angus (a level 3 area).
- ...lives in Edinburgh City (a level 3 area) CAN travel to worship in Dunfermline, Fife (level 3).
- ...lives in Helensburgh, Argyll and Bute (a level 2 area) CANNOT travel to worship in Glasgow City (a level 4 area).
- ...lives in Dumbaron, West Dunbartonshire (a level 4 area) CANNOT travel to attend worship in Bishopbriggs, East Dunbartonshire (also level 4) because they would cross a local authority boundary.

Scottish Episcopal Child Poverty Fund

Earlier this year the Scottish Episcopal Church launched a fund to help to target child poverty in Scotland. Grants of up to £5,000 have been made available, on successful application, for a pilot period of one year for congregational programmes specifically focused on the alleviation of the effects of child poverty.

The initiative followed discussion on child poverty at General Synod 2018. The church recognises that child poverty is a wide-ranging and complex issue and encourages its congregations to work with other partners whether ecumenically, with other faiths or with secular groups/agencies. The papers for General Synod 2020 show that the budget set for this fund has not been used: so please be encouraged to apply for eligible projects.

The Fund is managed through the Church in Society Committee of the SEC, on behalf of the Mission Board. In July 2020, the Acting Convener of the Church in Society Committee, Rev Elaine Garman, said of the Fund: "We are encouraging a diversity of initiatives to seek funding. We wish to aid those who are in need, enabling them to access resources and

opportunities, and empowering them to use their skills and gifts. With the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are aware that many families may be struggling to make ends meet, and we particularly encourage congregations to look at how they can assist their communities at this time, and invite them to seek funding from the Child Poverty Fund.”

The criteria for selection are:

- Identification of a real need in the community
- Probable impact of the programme directly improving the circumstances of children and families, and/or indirectly through education and campaigning
- Probability of the proposers being able to deliver the work envisaged
- Development of community links, fostering engagement with the broader community
- Must be led by an SEC congregation or diocese

Partnerships with other churches and/or community groups are encouraged

Application forms for the Child Poverty Fund are available from the Scottish Episcopal Church website. Guidelines for organisations interested in applying to the fund can be found here on the [SEC website](#).

For further information contact Miriam Weibye, Church Relations Officer, at churchrelations@scotland.anglican.org

Clothes Bank at St Luke's Dundee

The nature of the pandemic and 'level' restrictions has changed from the height of the lockdown earlier this year but there is still a great deal of need in our towns and cities. St Luke's in Downfield, Dundee, has been very active through lockdown and into the current phase, working in this area.

Canon Kerry Dixon reports: As well as the food bank St Luke's now has a clothes bank running. People in



need of clothes phone 07434614378 to make an appointment to come. Self-referrals pay £3 and can take up to ten items of shoes and clothes or £5 and can take ten items per family member. Referrals from social work, school or churches etc allow recipients to take 10 items without charge. We have a wide range of clothes and shoes available. We still need clothes rails if anyone has some spare.

If you can help with donations, cash or any other matter for the clothes bank or the food project, please make contact with Kerry by email on the address kerry.dixon@churcharmy.org or use the phone number above.

Church Life in the Pandemic:

Online worship

Many churches have resumed in-person worship even as the pandemic continues. In 'Level 4' of the government restrictions (into which much of the West and Central areas of Scotland have been placed), in person worship is limited to a maximum of 20 and no-one can cross a local authority boundary to attend, so some churches have opted to suspend worship whilst in level 4.



The Scottish Episcopal Church continues to offer 'national' worship online which can support such congregations as well as their own, now well-established,

online offerings. The provincial worship will continue indefinitely even as we have a blend of ways of worshipping. The services, which are led by SEC bishops, clergy and lay members from around the Province, are broadcast on Sundays and take the form of a Eucharist at 11am.

There are more details and downloads of previous weeks' services at:

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

Planning is in hand for Advent and Christmas services that will also be broadcast and available for public access.

News to share? Please send...

If you have any events, ideas with worship or anything else to report, please send copy to Elliott at office@brechin.anglican.org. The Bulletin will come out each week for the foreseeable future.