

Diocese of Brechin: Lockdown News Bulletin

25th May 2020



Updated guidance on coronavirus

Bishops' Advisory Group for Phased Easing of Lockdown

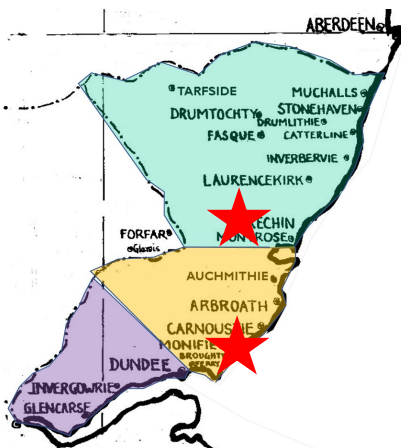
The College of Bishops has previously announced the intention to issue guidance to the Scottish Episcopal Church in connection with the gradual easing of lockdown restrictions. This will help us follow the Scottish Government published 'route map' out of lockdown.

Announced last week: an Advisory Group has now been established in the province for the purpose of producing guidance for local churches on the implications of the reopening of places of worship. The Group will carefully consider all relevant guidance issued by the Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland and will approach its work on a phase by phase basis in order to follow the Government's framework for any future easing of restrictions in relation to places of worship.

The Government route map envisages the possibility of private prayer in churches in Phase 2, "extended groups" meeting in churches in Phase 3 and "mass gatherings" only in Phase 4. It would seem therefore that resumption of full public worship in the form which was "normal" prior to lockdown is still a long way off.

Spotlight on Brechin Church Communities in Lockdown

As lockdown continues, all of our churches are keeping together and in contact in new and creative ways. In the spotlight this week we have St Andrews, Brechin and Holy Trinity Monifieth.



Lockdown news from St Andrew's, Brechin

Keeping in Touch. The Brechin Explorers' Club is an ecumenical childrens' Group. There are usually several workshops on school closure days and a Holiday Club in July. An after-school group runs on a Thursday. There are about thirty names on the after-school register.

At the start of Lockdown, no-one could perceive it was going to last this long, so our plan to keep in touch with the youngsters has been evolving all the time. At first, we updated our Facebook page and invited all the parents to join and encouraged them to post things their children had been doing. The response was disappointing. We aim to reach upper Primary children who probably don't use Facebook, so it was decided to make hand deliveries instead. In time for Easter, we distributed an Easter card, a copy of the Easter story with stickers and large eggs to colour, with the slogan, 'Easter is not cancelled.' We asked the children to colour these and display them in their windows. Approximately every ten days, we try to deliver a packet containing relevant activities. (During our daily exercise with masks on!) So far, the packs have included a pack of chalk to make outdoor rainbows, along with the story of Noah and the rainbow, sunflower seeds with instructions and materials for growing, ingredients for making fruit scones and the recipe, along with a booklet of the Lord's Prayer to colour. This week, the children have been designing cards to distribute to residents in the local care homes.

The Explorers' Team has many willing adults who are able to work away quietly preparing things behind the scenes. This project insures all volunteers are involved who wish to be.

Sometimes, we have a chat from a distance, with the children/parents and sometimes a cautious face peeps out from a window or through the letter box but we always get a smile. A few have posted what they have made on Facebook or Messenger. We hope the children feel cared-for and remembered. Eventually our Club will begin again. Things will be different, but we pray and hope the youngsters will return and that our faith will be strengthened.

Written by Liz Howson and Gill McKnight.

Lockdown news from Holy Trinity Monifieth

Rev Canon Kenneth Gibson writes: The “Ninth Sunday after Lockdown” was last Sunday the 17th May - I hope this way of identifying Sundays does not permanently find its way into the Calendar. As the closure of our churches, with the suspension of ‘normal’ church life, became the new reality, we at Holy Trinity, like so many other congregations around the Diocese and Province, grabbed our laptops, tablets and phones. Over the past weeks, new ways have been explored and tried out in an attempt to keep in touch with one another and, just as importantly, sustain our prayer and worshipping life.

As Priest -in-charge, I made a deliberate attempt to try and not to duplicate what others were doing. To that end, I encourage my congregation to join in with the on-line Sunday Eucharists led by our College of Bishops. Many in the congregation were quite adept at finding material on-line which spoke to them spiritually. I began a daily Post on our Church Facebook page, initially every day, although latterly this has become three times a week. These Posts were also sent by email to those whom I knew could not access Facebook. I also began to do a live Service of Compline at 9pm each evening on Facebook. This seems to have been particularly appreciated over the weeks running up to Easter. At one point it was being viewed by over 300 people from as far afield as Texas and Mongolia. I deliberately chose to do something on Facebook as it was a medium that was inclusive rather than exclusive, such as Zoom where you can only join by invitation. I also felt it was important to do something that was live, unlike YouTube that tends to be pre-recorded. In recent weeks this service has been reduced to three times a week. We held our first Zoom service last Sunday, 17th May, and will do the same this coming week.

Over and above my efforts, many in the congregation have been busy keeping in touch with folk and maintaining community. Along with myself, our two Pastoral Assistants have been regularly contacting our more elderly and vulnerable members by phone and the occasional mailings. We have had two on-line Zoom Coffee Mornings – very popular as there is no washing up to do. A WhatsApp chat group was set up which again allowed a measure of keeping in touch to take place. Before lockdown I would charge my mobile once every two days. Now it needs charged twice a day. That says it all really.

Coronavirus Crisis Resources from Faith in Community Dundee: food and funding information

Faith in Community Dundee has gathered a comprehensive list of available Food Provision for Dundee. The food provision links are projects running in Dundee that are offering help to people struggling with food poverty or provision in isolation. These projects receive donations of food or money and provide food to people in need. Generally, these projects have the volunteers they need to operate: the local authority third sector agencies or national projects are a mechanism to offer volunteering resource if you are able and wish to.

They also included a link to training that was designed by the British Red Cross for anyone who is responding to the coronavirus outbreak. Whether you’ve been deployed by a charity or have decided to lend a hand to a neighbour, it tells you what you need to know to look after yourselves and others.

The information is at the following links:

Food Provision

British Red Cross Training for Coronavirus Volunteers

Other schemes are operating in Perth and Kinross, Angus and Aberdeenshire: check local authority websites and the Courier for details!

Church Life in Lockdown: Online worship

The Scottish Episcopal Church continues to offer ‘national’ worship. Most weeks two services will be:

- Thursday—‘Service of the Word’ at 6.30pm
- Sunday—Eucharist at 11am led by the College of Bishops

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

News to share?

Please share news of life in lockdown (via clusters or directly to the office). office@brechin.anglican.org

Prayer Points

- The NHS, Care Homes and all key workers
- Food banks and food distribution and all volunteers supporting them.
- All of us social distancing or self isolating.
- Politicians—called to make difficult and vital decisions with integrity
- Clergy leading a very different ministry
- All those who have died in this difficult time
- Those who mourn them