



## Important updates from the Diocese of Chester.

### ISSUE No.20

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## From Bishop Keith and the Archdeacons

It has been such an encouragement to hear the stories of people returning to their church buildings for public worship, and in many cases the emotional reaction to walking back into the places that have such significance in our walk with God.

However, we also recognise that we remain in a time of challenge and the risk posed by the pandemic is still very real. As a result, many congregations have decided that they are not yet ready to return to church for public worship. We hope you have all understood that the invitation to re-open is, at least for now, permissive and not prescriptive. Take your time, do it carefully and properly, following all the guidelines on the [diocesan Coronavirus page](#) and completing the necessary risk assessments.

It has equally been a tremendous joy to see the way that other patterns of ministry, particularly online worship, have been received, for example by those who for whatever reason would not normally be in church. Many churches are rightly considering how it might be possible to continue

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offering ministry in that form, even when buildings are open once more. And as you decide on how and when to re-open for public worship, please do remember those for whom the need for social distancing will prevent them from returning physically to church for the time being.

The national church has issued guidance to parishes about how to comply with the Canons during this period of transition, in [the annex to this guidance note](#).

The guidance says that PCCs can pass an appropriate resolution to delay re-opening for public worship for a few weeks. In this diocese, PCCs should feel able to use such a local resolution to delay re-opening until any point up to Sunday 6 September.

If your parish wishes to delay re-opening for public worship beyond 6 September, you will need permission from the bishop. In order to seek this permission, the PCC should pass the resolution to that effect set out in the national guidance, and send this to your archdeacon in the first instance.

We wish you every blessing and rest in this summer season.

+Keith, Ian and Mike

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## Practicalities and Policy

An archive of past announcements and changes to policy can be found on the [Coronavirus webpage](#) of the diocesan website.

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### The latest updated and new guidance from the Church of England

These documents were published on the afternoon of Thursday 23 July:

- New [Face coverings](#) document
  - New [Safer Churches – Helping public places to reopen safely](#) document
  - Updated [Baptisms](#) document
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- Updated [Weddings](#) document
  - Updated [Funerals](#) document
  - Updated [Holy Communion](#) document
  - Updated [Confirmation services](#) document
  - Updated [Ordinations and Consecrations](#) document
  - Updated [Conducting public worship](#) document
  - Updated [Individual private prayer](#) document
  - Updated [Opening cathedral and church buildings to the public](#) document
  - Updated [Mission and ministry with children and young people](#) document
  - Updated [Test and Trace](#) document
  - New [Holy Communion and the distribution of the elements](#) document
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### [Banns of marriage](#)

The Diocesan Registrar, Lisa Moncur, has prepared an update to information about reading wedding banns at Sunday services. There are also details about the fee for a common licence.



## From our parishes

During the pandemic, a number of clergy have turned to poetry to record their thoughts and reflections.

Speaking in May as part of [a short interview thinking about poetry and the pandemic](#), the Revd Alec Brown, Rural Dean of Great Budworth, said poetry is able to capture and communicate a sense of what people are experiencing because of its immediacy and accessibility.

Here he reflects on the current situation and the anticipation of better times to come in a sonnet titled, "Nearly there!"

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## Nearly there!

Slowly but surely, and carefully, we're getting there,  
though I know that for some it's taking too long  
while over the road at the Pub  
they're worried the punters might break into song;  
and for us with no singing or choir it won't be the same,  
but once through the door you'll be glad you came,  
after carefully cleansing your hands and following the directions and signs  
you're back in the place where you've spent so much time,  
which for so many people means so very much  
and where for almost a thousand years  
prayer has been offered in good times and bad,  
in happiness and sorrow, in laughter and tears;  
and yes, it will be different  
but God remains constant and will banish our fears.

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## Prayer

The team at Foxhill is continuing to coordinate prayer for the Diocese of Chester. If you require prayer, Text or WhatsApp to 07513 170210, or [email your prayer](#) to Foxhill.



Download the [latest prayer sheet from Foxhill here](#), and read previous [prayer sheets here](#).

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## A Northumbria blessing...

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,  
wherever He may send you.

May He guide you through the wilderness,  
protect you through the storm.

May He bring you home rejoicing  
at the wonders He has shown you.

May He bring you home rejoicing  
once again into our doors.

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