

Bishop's Guidelines 2022

Introduction

These Guidelines are meant to answer many basic questions, but if clergy or churchwardens are still unclear about these or other issues, they should feel free to ask: their Rural Dean or Archdeacon, the Registry or the Bishops' Office. We are in this together, and we are here to help and support each other.

This material replaces the Regulations issued under my predecessor. We are aiming now to offer advice to clergy and churchwardens, but not to be fully comprehensive. Some of what follows is prescribed by law, but other points are my interpretation of the Church of England's rules as to how they should apply in this diocese.

I am not duplicating what is easily available elsewhere. Each parish should have and use the material listed below, which these Guidelines interpret and supplement for diocesan use. Much of what follows has come from my bulletins and letters over the last twelve years, often updated over that time. My successor may see some things differently, but these Guidelines remain in place until he or she says otherwise.

+ Donald

December 2022

Printed material which parishes should hold and use

The Canons of the Church of England 2022

(the Canons are part of the Laws of England, and bind clergy and church officers)

Anglican Marriage in England and Wales: a Guide to the Law for Clergy

(2010 edition, updated by the third supplement, available online under the "regulation changes" section of the Faculty Office website)

Church Representation Rules 2022

Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy (2015 edition)

Online Material

The Faculty Office

www.facultyoffice.org.uk/special-marriage-licences/clergy/news

(full legal advice on marriage matters: click the three links for news, regulation changes, and guidance)

The Diocesan Registry

www.peterboroughdiocesanregistry.co.uk

(legal advice on churchyards, faculties, marriages, and much more)

A selection of topics

1. Clergy care and conduct

a) Time management and leave

In a number of dioceses, bishops have started instructing clergy to take two consecutive days off once a month, as well as a full day off in the other weeks. This is in addition to the normal annual leave allowance. I have been asked if I intend to do the same. My answer may seem a strange one, and I'm very happy to discuss or explain it, but it represents a firmly held position.

I have no intention of telling clergy how many days off to take, or how to configure their days off or their annual leave. To do so would make me a manager, and would make the clergy employees. (I am referring to parish clergy; chaplains and some diocesan staff are employees and come under different arrangements.) During my 26 years in parish ministry, and now over 20 as archdeacon or bishop, I have rejoiced in the freedom we have to organise our own lives: to have lunch at home sometimes, to share in children's bedtime or the school run or see children in a school play during the daytime, to go out for a walk or to the cinema or read a novel on a "working" day when I feel the need to do that. I have never counted my working hours in a week, or even my days of leave per year, and I have never felt the need to do so. I know that I work hard at my ministerial calling. I am a priest and bishop 24/7, and I am also a husband, father, brother, friend - and a person with my own needs - in the same way. (I tried to be a 24/7 son too, when my parents were still alive). I rejoice in holding these duties, joys, responsibilities and privileges together. I delight in our strange and somewhat unusual status, as neither employed nor self-employed, but "office holders". I am perplexed and a little saddened when parish clergy want to be employed and line managed, or see their calling as in some way analogous to a job. To the parish clergy I would say, Give yourself wholly and joyfully to the various callings, responsibilities and privileges the Lord has laid on you; Look after yourself as well as others, taking the time you need for refreshment, recreation, and rest; Work hard, pray hard, love well, care for those in your charge including yourself.

b) Pastoral Care of the Clergy

From time to time we all face personal or relationship problems. Sometimes they are triggered by health issues, by the actions or reactions of others - and many other factors besides. There is no shame in this; it is part of being human in an imperfect world. Please speak to someone rather than holding on to such worries. That could be a family member or friend. It could be another member of the clergy, especially my chaplain who will prioritise such conversations.

We also offer confidential support (even I don't know who is being supported, unless you choose to tell me). Canon Nicholas Gandy is our *Clergy Pastoral Care and Counselling Adviser*. He is available to talk to anybody in the Diocese in confidence about issues around relationship difficulties, family matters, work stress, illness, bereavement or any concern that might have raised intense feelings and emotions which are proving difficult to navigate. He is not a registered therapist or counsellor but a priest of over thirty years' experience. He can signpost people on to more

specific professional services available to clergy and their families. Any recommended counselling service or individual qualified therapist will initially be funded by me, but is fully independent and completely outside church structures.

c) Clergy illness

If you are off sick for more than a few days, please obtain a sick note from your GP and forward it to the Bishops' Office or to the Diocesan Secretary. We can claim sick pay to help with your stipend (which will continue uninterrupted).

d) Clergy debt

I hope you are aware of the excellent work of Christians Against Poverty. CAP works in partnership with local churches of all denominations to run debt counselling centres. In 2021 it supported over 13,000 people out of debt. It is not an evangelistic organisation, but still sees people come to faith in Christ as a direct result of its work.

CAP has recently launched a new, discreet debt service for clergy and church leaders. Debt is a big issue for clergy across the denominations, and the hope is that by providing such a confidential service more will feel comfortable coming forward for help, advice and support. Research shows that clergy who are insecure about their own money are less able to preach and teach about money in their churches.

As well as the debt advice, CAP is now also making the materials from its CAP Money course available to clergy at no cost. This is an extremely helpful additional support to help clergy manage their finances before becoming overwhelmed by debt.

Clergy who are in debt or have money worries are of course still welcome to contact their bishop or archdeacon. We will do all we can to support, and in some cases can access help from the clergy charities. But this initiative from CAP is very welcome, offering professional debt counselling without the need to go through the diocese.

Details of the CAP Money Ministers service are at www.capmoney.org/ministers and the confidential phone line is on 01274 760780.

e) MDR Scheme

We get regular questions about how our Ministry Development Review works, so here is as simple an explanation as I can come up with.

Most parish clergy serve under Common Tenure, which has very clear rules in a number of areas (compared with the older Freehold system which simply has guidelines). Under Common Tenure, the Bishop has to provide an MDR scheme for the diocese, ensuring that all eligible clergy have a review of their ministry at least every two years by or on behalf of the Bishop. In the years since this has been in place, we have tweaked our scheme a couple of times, and what we now do is this:

We run a three-yearly programme of MDR. Each year, about a third of our incumbents and associate/assistant priests have a review with a member of the senior staff (Suffragan Bishop, Archdeacon, Dean, or Bishop's Chaplain), a third meet a member of the diocesan team tasked with providing the ongoing training which forms part of MDR, and a third have a pastoral visit from me to their home. My visit is not part of MDR: it is something I choose to do, and is strictly pastoral, normally with no written

record; but for convenience it forms part of the three-year cycle. Glitches do happen in any rota, not least when people move or are on sabbatical or off sick, and occasionally people have been asked to take part in two of these meetings in one year and none in the next, but we do our best to keep to the cycle. All the MDR meetings, both with senior staff, and on the training theme, are recorded on a written report, signed by the priest and the reviewer. I read all of these, and they go into your file. If training or other needs are identified, we seek to meet them, and the clergy are invited to highlight any issues they want especially drawn to my attention.

f) Retired Clergy and Clergy Widows

We try to keep an accurate list of retired clergy and clergy widows in the diocese, not least so we can invite them to an annual event, but also to offer pastoral care and the chance to get together with others. But, apart from those retired clergy who have permission to officiate, it is hard to keep those lists up to date. If you are aware of any such people in your patch who we might not know about, particularly if they have moved in from another diocese since their retirement, please let my office know so we can check they are on our lists.

2. Safeguarding

Safeguarding must continue to be a priority. I have two matters for your attention.

First, safer recruitment. This really is important. We can no longer just seek volunteers, or even choose people, and put them to work with children, young people, or in other church roles. Our recruitment must always bear in mind the principles of safeguarding. This is in our policies, and is included in our regular training.

Second, DBS renewals. Clergy and Lay Ministers currently need their DBS certificate renewing and to complete new training every three years. We will lose our licenses to minister if this is not done. When you are asked to go through the process again, please do so promptly. With the online system, this is quicker and more straightforward than it used to be. But it is absolutely essential.

3. Ministry

People ask from time to time whether we have a diocesan strategy or vision. I am not a fan of detailed strategy at the diocesan level. The parish is the natural unit of church life and growth. Deanery and Diocese do matter in lots of ways, but people come to faith through, and experience most of their church life at, the parish or chaplaincy level. The Bishop and Diocese should enable, facilitate and encourage strong, faithful and viable parish life. I want to encourage parishes to develop their own lives and strengths within a culture of unity, growth and mutual respect.

I have produced a paper entitled "Ministry in the Diocese of Peterborough" setting out how I see the culture of the Diocese. This goes alongside every parish profile to clergy who are considering posts in the diocese. The paper is regularly updated, and I include the latest version here.

Ministry in the Diocese of Peterborough

Warm greetings as you explore the possibility of ministry in Peterborough Diocese. This letter is intended to supplement the profile carefully prepared for each role, providing further information and a wider perspective.

Dioceses vary in their culture and their approach to ministry and mission. Here in Peterborough Diocese we are committed to our parishes and clergy, we have expectations and aspiration for growth, and we work together to serve those in our communities. In the last few years we have developed the Gen2 project (more information can be found on our website <https://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/about-us/children-youth/gen2-project.php>) which seeks to change the culture of our church, prioritising younger generations and seeing them as fellow disciples.

Peterborough Diocese serves around a million people. There are two Archdeaconries, Northampton in the south and Oakham in the north. The two Archdeaconries have similar characteristics. Most of the communities are rural, but with two significant urban populations: Peterborough and Northampton. Northampton is the second largest town in the UK, with a population of 225,000. In addition, there are the towns of Corby, Kettering, Rushden, Wellingborough and Daventry, not forgetting the market towns of Oakham, Uppingham, Oundle, Towcester and Brackley. The Archdeacon of Northampton, Richard Ormston (since 2014) and the Archdeacon of Oakham, Alison Booker (since 2022) work together to support the whole diocese.

During the last 12 years, the diocese has gained a sense of identity and unity, believing the parish is at the centre of our ministry and that the diocesan officers are there to support that parish ministry. Support includes pastoral care from bishops and archdeacons plus, teams available to provide additional 'on the ground' support including Gen2, Mission, Education, Stewardship, Lay training and ongoing ministerial training.

In January 2023, with Bishop Donald's retirement, we began our Vacancy in See. The Acting Bishop of Peterborough is John Holbrook (the Suffragan Bishop of Brixworth since 2011). As a diocesan family, we are praying for the appointment of our new bishop and looking forward to the person God is calling to lead us in this next period of our diocesan life.

Clergy morale is important to us. Bishops visit all licensed clergy in their homes every three years on a purely pastoral basis. We talk about "shared episcopate" and encourage rural deans, parish clergy and chaplains to be leaders in mission, confidently getting on with ministry. We are increasing the number of ordinations and of parochial clergy.

We believe in church growth. All our senior staff saw growth in their earlier parish ministries, and it is our expectation for every healthy church. Interdependency and a shared belonging and commitment to mission are important and each local unit

should have its own aspiration to being a growing, viable, missional, serving and worshipping community.

The bishop and the dean, Chris Dalliston, work closely together, presenting the cathedral (even though it is situated geographically towards one end of a long and narrow diocese) as the spiritual centre of diocesan life. Clergy come to the Renewal of Ordination Vows and the Blessing of Oils on Maundy Thursday, followed by lunch. There is also a Cathedral Day of teaching and worship in the autumn. Retired clergy come to the cathedral for a summer Eucharist and lunch while Ordinands join the senior staff for two social events each year.

As a diocese we are committed to giving our clergy good, well maintained housing, and appropriate ongoing training and support.

In turn, we look for certain commitments:

- to share with the bishop in the cure of souls, and to work strategically for growth in numbers among the worshipping community
- to enable the full participation of children and young people in the whole life of the church, and to develop mission among the younger generations
- to be involved in both church and other local schools as far as possible, actively seeking opportunities for mission whilst offering a chaplaincy role, leading collective worship or serving as a governor (but not as chair)
- to teach Christian discipleship including the principles of giving
- to take seriously the pastoral and missional opportunities of occasional offices, aiming for good working relationships with funeral directors and others
- to be involved in deanery and diocesan activities and in the life of their local community
- to promote and enable lay ministry in both church and community
- to take part in our ministry review process, consisting of a three-year rolling programme: a pastoral visit to your home, a formal review by a member of the senior team, and a review of training needs.
- to engage with the continuing ministerial development programme offered by the diocese and in personal study, nurturing your own spirituality
- to hold a current DBS certificate, to undergo safeguarding training as required and to follow and promote the diocesan safeguarding policy.

We look forward to meeting and welcoming those who share our values and want to serve the Lord, the Church and the Gospel with us.



Bishop of Brixworth, Acting Bishop of Peterborough

a) Deliverance Ministry

Deliverance Ministry should always take place under strict guidelines and supervision. Our diocesan deliverance team includes people with professional skills in mental health, as well as many years' experience in this ministry. I am grateful to those who are involved in this ministry as Advisers and other members of the team, but I stress that requests for advice or help in this area should always be made through my chaplain, as this ministry in the Church of England is rightly exercised directly under the bishop's authority. It is also, again rightly in my view, given minimum publicity.

b) Clergy Moving On

If you are leaving the diocese for a post elsewhere, please let my office know as early as possible. In some cases we may need to ask you to sign a Deed of Resignation, in most cases we will want to ensure that your stipend payments and pension contributions continue uninterrupted. We give you up to a month after you finish work to clear your house, and we will pay you during your moving leave and for a short break before you start your new job.

c) Lay Ministry

You will be aware that lay ministry is becoming increasingly flexible. The categories we have used in the past, such as lay pastoral minister, licensed evangelist, lay worker, are blurring into each other in various ways. I am glad to see this, as it reflects the way that ministry is. We all have areas of specialization or particular gifts, but at times we simply have to do what needs doing. It seems strange that a lay pastoral minister who has been supporting a family through illness and death cannot then take the funeral, even if the ordained minister isn't available. It seems odd that licensed evangelists are not licensed to preach. And it seems odd to make rigid distinctions between roles. So we have made a number of changes.

The two-year lay ministry course is becoming more flexible. Those training mainly for pastoral ministry will be able, if they wish and their incumbent agrees, to do the module on funeral ministry which was previously restricted to those training as Readers. Similarly, training in preaching will be open to those training as evangelists. At the end of two years, everyone who completes the course satisfactorily will be licensed as a Lay Minister at the late September service in the Cathedral. There will be no distinction on the licence between different ministerial functions. We will know, they will know, and their incumbent will know, which modules they have studied. Their working agreement will specify the range of ministries they will be involved in. Their job title within the parish will be decided between the incumbent and themselves. For some that might continue to be "Pastoral Minister" or "Evangelist." Others may go for "Lay Minister" or "Parish Nurse" or "Parish Visitor" or "Funeral Minister" or whatever else seems appropriate in the local context.

Some lay ministers will then do an additional year of study, either straightaway or in the future, to train as a Reader. Readers will continue to be the senior lay ministers, whose training has covered all the options. Readers are admitted to the Order of Readers, and, like priests, they remain in that order for life – although, like priests, they can only minister when they are licensed. Their status as Readers is transferable across the Church of England, and even in some other parts of the Anglican Communion, whereas other lay ministers are only recognized as such in their own diocese, and they cease to be lay ministers if they are not re-licensed regularly.

Those who were trained under the previous more rigid pattern are able, if they wish, to broaden their ministries by doing another module or so from the options available, and changing their working agreement. This is part of the lifelong learning culture which we are introducing to lay ministry, and which is one of the reasons for the training elements of our annual Celebration of Lay Ministry in the Cathedral.

d) Lay Workers

Like Readers, Lay Workers are admitted to office as well as being licensed. In this diocese the main distinction between Lay Workers and Lay Ministers is that Lay Workers are usually in paid posts, and their training is matter for the Bishop's discretion rather than always following a set pattern. Examples will be lay chaplains in schools, hospitals, or prisons; diocesan or bishops' office staff with a preaching or pastoral ministry; deanery youth ministers. Like Lay Ministers and Readers, they are licensed for three years at a time, and must be up to date on safeguarding.

e) One-year courses

To add to the confusion (or, I hope, to the clarity) we are continuing to offer one-year courses, such as for lay worship leaders and children's ministers. These have been a great blessing to many parishes. Those who complete the course receive a certificate signed by me, but their ministry is authorised within the parish rather than licensed by the bishop. These are valuable ministries, and I am happy to see more people trained for and exercising them, but the care, oversight (and discipline if necessary) is entirely the responsibility of the parish clergy, whereas a licence from the bishop necessarily brings people under diocesan authority.

f) Paupers' Funerals

These are the responsibility of the local authority if there is no estate or family able to pay the normal costs. In recent years what is offered has reduced in ways which many of us find quite distressing. There is no minister and no service, apart from anything else. I remember doing a number of these funerals in my parish days, but clearly times have changed.

It occurs to me that some of the clergy would be very willing to say prayers and read scripture over a coffin, even if only the funeral director is present, even out of doors at a graveside, even for no fee. I hope we all would.

Just a thought for the clergy: you might like to ask your local funeral director if they get many of these paupers' funerals (also known as local authority funerals or public health funerals). If they do, you could offer to conduct a minimal service at no charge.

g) Permission to Officiate

I am sorry to say that we have come across cases of retired clergy being invited to minister when they do not have Permission to Officiate. This is a serious breach of our national and diocesan safeguarding policy, and could lead to unpleasant consequences for the incumbent who invites or permits their ministry. I realise that, more often than not, incumbents have simply assumed that a retired colleague has PTO; or, knowing that they had it some time ago, assumed that they still do. However, I have to stress that it is the responsibility of the incumbent (or the rural dean during a vacancy, or an incumbent's illness) to check that PTO is currently in place.

Some facts may help. Not every priest receives PTO on retirement. PTO only lasts for three years at a time, and lapses unless it is renewed. PTO can in some circumstances be rescinded before the renewal date. Nowadays the issue or renewal of PTO requires recent safeguarding training as well as a clear DBS check. The application process for first PTO, or for renewal, has necessarily become more complicated than it used to be – which is putting some people off renewing. It is not acceptable to assume that PTO is in place, or to believe an assurance that it is, without seeing the certificate and checking the expiry date.

The best way to check is very simple: ask to see their PTO certificate and check the dates, or contact the bishops' office and ask.

h) Permission for Occasional Ministry

It is good to develop the gifts of your congregation and you may on occasion want to offer an opportunity to hear someone preach. This is to be welcomed. It is important that you yourself are present at the service. Should you find yourself wanting to ask someone in this way more regularly, you should also ask them to consider the Lay Worship Leaders certificate or LLM course.

For all invitations to Licensed Lay Ministers, Readers, Clergy or Bishops who do not hold my licence or permission to officiate, you need to contact my office to seek permission. We will check that they are in good standing in their own diocese before giving permission. Normally you will get an answer within a few days at most.

i) Sermon Series

A number of clergy have mentioned to me the 'tyranny of the lectionary' on Sundays. I commend to you the provision from the Common Worship that during 'ordinary time', following consultation with the PCC, the parish priest "may from time to time depart from the lectionary for pastoral reasons, or preaching or teaching purposes." (Rule 7 Common Worship, p 450). Sermon series, teaching through a book of the Bible or looking at Christian themes, can be very beneficial. If you haven't done this before, *New Pattern for Worship* gives some very good ideas for starters (pp 54-56), but there is great scope for creativity. If you would like to discuss ideas, please contact my chaplain, who will be pleased to talk to you.

4. Confirmations

a) Confirmations

- The Bishops are very happy to confirm at the main service in parish churches on Sundays, however small the numbers are. We are of course also willing to take deanery, benefice, or combined confirmation services if that works for you.
- Every Easter Eve we also confirm in the Cathedral at the 8pm Vigil Service, and clergy from the Diocese (or from Yaxley Deanery in Ely Diocese) are welcome to bring candidates.
- There is no need for the candidates to wear special clothes.

b) Booking a Bishop

For any requests for a bishop's visit, for confirmations, celebrations, or just a "normal" Sunday, please contact the Bishops' Office. Sunday mornings tend to book up six to twelve months ahead, though afternoons and evenings are often more flexible.

c) Bishop's Charity

I find it helpful to have a nominated charity to which I can send gifts which I receive from time to time. Collections at confirmations have gone to the Bishop's Charity: please send them to the DBF marked "Confirmation Collection for Bishop's Charity".

5. Holy Communion (including Admission of Children and Communion by Extension)

a) Hygiene at Holy Communion

A number of newly-emerging diseases in recent decades have raised concerns about Holy Communion, particularly in relation to sharing the common cup. In some parishes new practices have been developed, particularly during the covid situation. In others little has changed. This section is intended to bring about best practice in all our churches and chapels.

The Church of England has always taught that Holy Communion should be offered and received as both bread and wine, from a shared plate and a shared cup. This still remains our normal practice, and it need not change. Catching any illness through receiving Communion is extremely rare, and the antiseptic qualities of both silver and alcohol have frequently been noted. However, when someone is clearly infectious, or when there is a major health concern, it makes sense to take sensible precautions.

Less well understood is that in our normal human contacts, including in church, the hands are a far more likely source of cross infection than the mouth or lips. We cough into our hands, we touch so many things with them, we eat from them, without always taking proper precautions. I wholeheartedly commend sharing the Peace in our worship, but I note that it is a more likely source of infection than receiving Communion. The same applies to coffee and fellowship after worship, and to eating together on other occasions, both of which are good things.

The practice of intinction, dipping the bread into the wine, has spread widely in our churches in recent years, as an honest attempt to protect ourselves from others' germs, or them from ours. Intinction actually presents greater risks than drinking from the same cup. Unhygienic fingers and fingernails all too often dip into the wine. Small pieces of bread break off, creating a real hazard for those who are gluten intolerant.

Another practice, less widespread but still to be found, is of receiving the bread direct onto the tongue. People may have been taught that the consecrated bread is too holy to touch, or they may have learnt this habit for other reasons. The risk of the minister's fingers touching the recipient's lips or tongue, and passing germs to others, is very real.

In many churches, "lavabo" is practised: a ceremonial washing of the minister's hands immediately before the Communion. This clearly has symbolic significance, and I don't want to stop anyone doing it, but it is of no value as a hygiene precaution. To get

hands clean enough to handle food, they should be washed with soap and hand-hot water for twenty to thirty seconds, or with an alcohol based gel or fluid.

All this may seem negative, but I don't want to put anyone off receiving Holy Communion, one of our Lord's greatest gifts to us, a means of grace, our spiritual food and drink. In order that we can receive Communion, and share it, with confidence, I issue the following instructions and guidance.

b) Instructions for those presiding at or distributing Holy Communion

- The ministers are to welcome people to communion, when necessary assuring them that appropriate hygiene precautions are in place, and helping them to understand the Bishop's guidance for worshippers.
- An alcohol based gel or fluid must always be kept with the communion vessels, and in the travelling kit of those who minister in different churches. This must be used to wash the hands of everyone who will touch, break, or distribute the communion bread. This washing will follow any sharing of the peace, receiving of the collection, and lavabo ceremony.
- The ministers must put the communion bread onto the recipient's hand, not into the mouth.
- The decision about intinction rather than the common cup is for the senior priest (incumbent, managing chaplain, etc), though it will be wise to consult others. If the intinction route is chosen, that will be for the whole congregation rather than a few, and the minister who distributes the bread must intinct rather than those who receive.
- After the service, the communion vessels must be washed in hot water.

c) Guidance for worshippers at Holy Communion

- The Church of England encourages worshippers to receive Holy Communion faithfully and regularly, as taught by our Lord Jesus Christ. We normally use a shared plate and a shared cup.
- The Church takes hygiene very seriously. The chances of catching an infection by receiving Holy Communion are very low indeed, but this guidance is issued to reassure, and to reduce the risk even further.
- Intinction, where those receiving the bread then dip it into the wine, is unhygienic, poses a risk to those who are gluten intolerant, and is not to be practised. If the clergy decide in a particular situation that intinction should take place, this will be for the whole congregation, and the minister who distributes the bread will intinct it before handing it to the worshipper.
- Similarly, the practice of receiving the communion bread directly onto the tongue or into the mouth is unhygienic. The minister will place the bread onto the worshipper's hand.
- There is a very small risk of catching an infection by hand to hand contact at the Peace. Any worshipper concerned by that is encouraged to carry a hygiene gel and use it after the Peace or before the Communion. Alternatively, it is good practice for worshippers to use their right hand to shake hands during the Peace, then the left hand to receive the communion bread and pass it to the mouth.
- For your reassurance, the ministers of communion will have washed their hands with an alcohol gel or fluid before serving you.
- Those who are worried about receiving infection from the communion cup, or who have a mouth or throat infection, should simply refrain from taking the wine.

Although we practice communion “in both kinds” (bread and wine), we receive all the benefits of Holy Communion even if we are only able to receive in one kind.

d) Eucharistic Assistants

- Many parishes have lay people licensed as Eucharistic Assistants to help with the distribution of Holy Communion. This is a good practice.
- These licences used to be issued by the Bishop, but the rules have changed so that the necessary permission can be granted at the parish level if the bishop agrees. This bishop does agree, so Eucharistic Assistant licences are now issued by the Incumbent or Priest-in-Charge following PCC agreement for each named person. There is a template on the diocesan website which parishes may wish to use.
- Licences are limited to five years, and must specify the expiry date, though they can be renewed with PCC agreement.
- Those who are taking Holy Communion outside the Church, to retirement homes or to the sick, must have a DBS check in addition to the Eucharistic Assistant licence.
- Under the new rules it is permissible to licence children who have been confirmed or admitted to communion before confirmation; this provision is intended mainly for services in Church Schools (in which case the Head Teacher’s permission is needed instead of the PCC’s); in the case of a child, permission is also needed from a parent or guardian.
- It is good practice for Eucharistic Assistant licences to be displayed in the vestry, or somewhere where they can be checked.
- Any questions on this should be addressed to my Chaplain.

e) Admission of Children to Communion before Confirmation

This is a practice which I warmly commend, having seen excellent fruit from it in a number of parishes. Canon Pete White, our Director of Children and Youth, has helpful information and materials for parishes considering this. As a diocese, we are meant to keep a list of parishes which use this provision, and to ensure that suitable preparation and follow-up are in place. Unfortunately, our records are far from complete, and we need your help.

It would be very helpful if you could all be in touch with Pete to let him know either:

- if your parish admits children to communion before confirmation; or
- if you might be interested in doing so

f) Children as Eucharistic Assistants

As above, children may serve as Eucharistic Assistants, distributing the elements at Holy Communion. This needs a few words of explanation, and some guidelines.

This only applies to those parishes where children are admitted to receive communion before confirmation, and only children so admitted will be eligible to serve as Eucharistic Assistants. Selection will be, as for adults, a matter for the Incumbent with the agreement of the PCC.

I believe this to be an appropriate development for those parishes where children regularly receive Holy Communion. It could also be right for Church School Communion services, with the agreement of the Head Teacher. I strongly recommend, though, that if children are included as Eucharistic Assistants, their ministry should

not be restricted to serving other children: they should occupy the role fully, with adults as well as children receiving from them, whether in school or in church.

If you and your PCC want to involve children in this way, I stress the importance of careful selection and training. Canon Pete White can advise on this, and I encourage you to approach him in the early stages of planning such a change:

peter.white@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

g) Communion by Extension

Many of you know this, but for the sake of our newer clergy, I hereby give permission for any parish in the diocese to offer Communion by Extension on Christmas Day and Easter Day, provided the service is led by a Deacon or a Reader, and that the authorised form of service is used.

On other occasions, clergy should request permission for Communion by Extension from me on a case-by-case basis, indicating PCC agreement, that the minister will be a Deacon or a Reader, and that the authorised form of service will be used. My concern will be that Communion by Extension does not routinely replace a full service of Holy Communion. But it is important that Holy Communion should be available in every benefice and in as many churches as reasonably possible every Sunday, and if Communion by Extension allows that to happen, particularly during vacancies or clergy illness or at major festivals, please do not hesitate to ask.

h) Gluten-free Communion Bread

It is right that we offer gluten-free communion bread for those with coeliac disease or gluten sensitivity, but we have to be careful how we do this. Some people have mild sensitivity, but for others it may be a major problem. Therefore, the gluten-free bread must not be on the same plate or in the same container as normal bread, it must not be touched by hands which have touched normal bread, it must not be exposed to the small particles of bread which are there when bread (even sealed wafer bread) is broken. I suggest that gluten free bread should always be on a separate plate or patten, and remain covered until needed, and that the person distributing the bread should offer the plate to the communicant for them to take the bread for themselves.

In some parishes, people with high gluten sensitivity are offered a supply of gluten-free wafers to keep at home. They then bring a piece, wrapped in foil or cling film, to be consecrated on a separate plate at the service, and taken, unwrapped, and consumed by the communicant. I commend this method where it reassures people for whom gluten is a major problem.

If you have not done so, I suggest reviewing the way your parish makes gluten-free communion bread available for those who want or need it.

i) Non-Alcoholic Wine at Holy Communion

There has been a request for clarification about the use of non-alcoholic wine at the Eucharist. This was discussed at the Bishop's Management Group and I am issuing the following guideline.

The firm expectation is that under normal circumstances all wine will be "the fermented juice of the grape, good and wholesome" (Canon B17). Those for whom

any alcoholic wine would be medicinally harmful can be legally and properly provided with non-alcoholic wine. This is wine from which the alcohol has been extracted and is readily available commercially. This is not the same as using unfermented grape juice or other fruit juices, which are not wine and are neither scriptural nor canonical. A very small quantity of non-alcoholic wine can be easily consecrated for such persons in a small chalice (such as the small cup sometimes used in home Communion). This should only be used for the particular communicants for whom it is prepared and not for the whole congregation.

6. Conflict Conversations

Conflict is inevitable, in ministry as in life. We are all called to enable the church to grow. Sometimes this can lead to anxiety and conflict in our churches and relationships. How we handle ourselves in the midst of this is a significant aspect of our leadership. Conflict is never comfortable, though sadly some people seem to enjoy it rather too much. And some run from it, even though the tendency to avoid conflict can seriously weaken ministry and leadership.

We aim to offer "Conflict Conversations" to help. You might want someone to chat with, informally and confidentially, about a particular conflict you are facing (or avoiding, or dreading). You might feel the need for a facilitated conversation – someone being there in the conflict situation to help you deal with it better. You might even have reached the position where some sort of mediation is necessary. The aim of this service is to:

- help you understand what is happening in the conflict and in the wider church system, and your own response to it;
- help you to avoid the escalation of a conflict situation;
- enable healing as early as possible in yourself and the relationship;
- help you and your church grow through this experience.

I commend this initiative to you, and hope it is well used. It could make a very significant difference to our ministry. Please contact the Bishop's Chaplain for further details.

7. Closed and Festival Churches

a) Worship in Closed Churches

In the diocese we have a number of churches which are "closed for public worship" ("redundant churches" was the old legal description but that is now ... redundant). When such a building is still owned by the diocese or is vested in the Churches Conservation Trust it is possible for occasional services to be held with permission from the Diocesan Bishop. I have had a number of such requests and think it would be helpful to make my approach to this question known. Each instance should be the subject of a separate request, but I will be minded to say yes provided that: the relevant incumbent or priest in charge is happy; the proposed service does not clash or compete with other services in the benefice; the request is not for a baptism or a marriage; and that there are no more than four such events per year in any church

b) Festival Churches

You may have seen national publicity about Festival Churches, and we already have a few functioning in that way. The idea is that churches which serve a very small parish population, sometimes even under one hundred people, and can't get more than a handful to their normal Sunday service, move to "Festival Church" status, whereby they only have occasional services on special occasions: maybe Harvest or Remembrance or to coincide with a village summer fair, and maybe for village weddings or funerals. They will be part of a wider benefice, so the requirement for weekly services and regular communions can be observed in other parishes in the benefice. This can work very well, and I commend it in the case of very small communities which cannot sustain a regular Sunday service.

One complication is the calling of banns. If all the PCCs in a benefice agree, I can sign an order to allow banns or marriages which would normally happen in one particular parish to take place in any parish of that benefice.

If you are interested in the Festival Church idea, please talk to your Archdeacon. Contact the Bishops' Office if you want to pursue the idea of an order for marriages and banns to take place in any church in your benefice.

8. Diocesan Registrar

Professional Services to be provided by the Diocesan Registrar

- (1) Giving of advice to incumbents and all other members of the clergy beneficed or licensed in the diocese, properly arising in connection with the discharge of their respective ecclesiastical offices, and giving of advice to chairmen and secretaries of diocesan boards, PCCs and committees on any legal matter properly arising in connection with the business of the respective boards, PCCs and committees.
- (2) Giving advice to churchwardens and secretaries of PCCs on any legal matter properly arising in connection with their duties or official business.
- (3) Giving advice to any person concerned in or with the administration of an election under the Church Representation Rules on any question properly arising under those Rules.
- (4) Giving advice to a bona fide enquirer concerning the law of marriage, baptism, confirmation and burial of the dead according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England.
- (5) Giving advice to persons considering or proposing to make an application for a legal aid certificate for financial assistance from the Legal Aid Fund maintained under section 1 of the Church of England (Legal Aid) Measure 1994(a).
- (6) Acting as Registrar to the Consistory Court of the Diocese except in so far as a separate fee is prescribed by Order made by the Chancellor.

(7) Acting in relation to the following matters on the instructions of the Diocesan Bishop or Archdeacons or on the instructions of a diocesan board or PCCs whose business properly includes such matters:-

- Consecration of a church and burial ground or a church without a burial ground;
- Consecration of a cemetery or burial ground;
- Preparation and registration of documents required under the Consecration of Churchyards Act 1867 for the consecration of additions to churchyards;
- Licensing of a building for marriages.

(8) Work in connection with the following matters:-

- Maintaining the register of patrons under Part 1 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986;
- Searches in and making of extracts from the register of patrons, enquiries as to entries in the register and supplying certified copies of entries in the register, where the search, extract or enquiry is made or the certified copy is requested by or on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop, Suffragan Bishops, Archdeacons or diocesan board or PCCs.

Restrictions on these provisions

The provisions set out above shall be restricted as follows:-

- (a) The Registrar shall not be required to correspond with a third party involved in the enquiry;
- (b) Before giving advice the Registrar shall first consider whether the matter on which his or her advice is sought is one which can conveniently be dealt with by the diocesan secretary or some other person or body in the diocese rather than by the Registrar;
- (c) If a legal dispute arises between parties who are both church officers the Registrar may decline to advise either party, but he or she shall be at liberty to advise both parties with a view to helping them to resolve their dispute if in his or her judgement it is desirable to do so.

Work not falling within the scope of the annual fee

For the avoidance of doubt work in connection with the following matters shall not fall within the scope of the fee but a fee calculated in accordance with the Solicitors' (Non-Contentious Business) Remuneration Order 2009 shall be payable:-

- Conveyancing and drafting of documents;
- Matters relating to individual diocesan, parochial or educational trusts including matters relating to land owned by those trusts;
- Litigation;
- Safeguarding;
- Consistory Court fees as prescribed by the relevant Fees Order and by Order of the Chancellor.

Work undertaken on behalf of a person who is not an official in the diocese or on behalf of a body which is not a diocesan board or council in connection with the following matters:-

- (a) Consecration or licensing of a public cemetery, a private burial ground or a private chapel;
- (b) Licensing the chapel of an extra-parochial place for a marriage of persons living or residing in that place.

Disbursements

If any disbursements and out of pocket expenses are incurred in the course of providing any of the professional services described above the Diocese Registrar shall be entitled to charge for them separately.