



The Right Revd Ian Paton
Bishop of St Andrews
Dunkeld and Dunblane
Scottish Episcopal Church

St Mark's Day, 25 April 2020

Dear sisters and brothers,

It's been very encouraging for me to hear news from around the charges and to keep you in prayer day by day. The 'altar' that Carrie and I have set up at home looks out down the hill and over the city of Perth. It's the best reredos to have as we remember the world and the people we pray for each day at the Eucharist, including all of you.

But I also know, because I feel it myself, that as we go into the 6th of many weeks of lockdown, it will get more, not less, difficult to keep going. Like many of you, I found Bishop Mark's recent reflection on this realistic and helpful, because he was describing what many of us are feeling. If you haven't seen it, it's at www.facebook.com/840284286362261/posts/1262027567521262/

Communication

The Revd Dr Michael Paterson's regular CMD mailing is providing good resources for us as the crisis continues, some of which are about sustaining ourselves and our congregations as we serve our communities. Please keep sending in your contributions for this, and also for the monthly E-News (media@standrews.anglican.org).

Because so many people cannot receive the E-News by email or see the other material produced online, it would be helpful if charges would print a number of copies each month, and if you send out a regular newsletter or magazine to members, to include with it a print copy of the E-News.

Well-being

St Luke's, the trust that works to support clergy health and well-being, has developed a new set of resources which will be published weekly. They are a series of short papers or videos, to help us understand how the COVID-19 situation may be affecting us. The first one, attached to this email, is on *Trauma*. If you feel affected by anything raised by it, please get in touch, I would be glad to listen and talk about it.

Ministry for Hospital Patients

Patients who are members of your congregation may ask you directly for pastoral support while they are in hospital, or they may ask the NHS Chaplaincy in the Hospital to contact you on their behalf. But before visiting please make contact with the Chaplaincy to check on restrictions to visiting COVID-19 patients. According to Government guidelines, and within these restrictions, patients at the end of life, and after death, are always entitled to receive the ministry of their faith community.

If a patient can't give the name of a particular priest or congregation, but does request SEC ministry, the NHS Chaplaincy will approach local SEC clergy. Some have already indicated, but if other incumbents are willing to be approached in this way when needed, please make contact now with the Lead Chaplain of your NHS Health Region, as listed in the information attached to this email. Chaplains would welcome your offering to help in any way, if only to say you are praying for them and their teams.

At the request of the College of Bishops the Liturgy Committee produced a series of Pastoral Cards, based on the current experimental SEC Pastoral Rites, which can be printed (and laminated if you have that possibility) and carried in a pocket. A zip file containing the cards is attached to this email.

Funerals

The Liturgy Committee, also at the request of the College of Bishops, produced abbreviated Funeral Rites for use at the graveside or crematorium. They are attached to this email.

Being asked to preside at funerals in such difficult circumstances is very hard. Apart from losing someone they love, mourners are dealing with the restriction of numbers attending funeral services. Your ministry is giving much-needed care, as are local Funeral Directors, but their staff may also need support. If you have good relations with local firms, please let them know that you are praying for them, and are willing to help with funeral services as required, and not only those of church members.

At some point when the crisis begins to recede (at least here, and for now) I would intend to offer a funeral Eucharist (a Requiem) for all those in this Diocese who have died, and to do this alongside your own ministry for the departed and those who grieve.

What Kind of Church?

This crisis will take a long time to pass. On a global scale, it will take a very long time, and bring enormous loss. It is obvious that after such a crisis the world cannot simply go back to 'business as usual.' The Scottish Government is asking us to think about what shape our society should take after this crisis. A Government report says, "It is up to us how we move through this crisis and come out the other side." Whatever our political preferences, it is obvious that we are a world in transition.

In this Diocese we have started transitional ministry in various charges. The question they are trying to address is, "*What kind of Church does this community need now, and what role should the Scottish Episcopal Church play?*" But now the whole Church, like the world, is in transition. Do we just go back to life as 'normal'? Or do we take what we have learned during this time – our increased awareness of the presence of God at home and in hospitals, the way we need each other in grief and in joy – to reshape who we are as the Church? It has theological, pastoral, structural, and ecumenical dimensions, that will require long reflection and prayer, as we attend to God.

Diocesan Synod took place just before the COVID-19 crisis took hold, so it seems like a long time ago! In my Charge to Synod, I tried to pose some of the questions we may want to ask, or re-shape, now, so I've attached it to this email in case it's useful.

Our series of CMD study days may sadly have been interrupted, but if you are happy to try it we could gather on Zoom, as many of us did on Maundy Thursday, to have a '**Mini Study Day**', lasting 1 to 2 hours. I'm very grateful to Michael Paterson for agreeing to organise this for us. There will be some input to get us thinking and the opportunity to discuss online in smaller groups. I hope this might happen towards the end of May, so please look out for more information coming soon.

Appointments

Despite the challenge of this crisis to the start of any new ministry, I am delighted to welcome a number of new clergy to the Diocese. The Services of Institution will take place when possible, but most of them have already begun their ministry here.

- *The Revd Kathy Barrable* has been Licensed as priest-in-charge of St Mary, Newport and St Margaret, Tayport. Kathy comes to us after a long ministry in South Africa.
- *The Revd Lesley-ann Craddock* has been Licensed as priest-in-charge of St Mary, Birnam. Lesley-ann has served in England and also in Glasgow and the Diocese of Moray.
- *The Revd Bonnie Evans-Hills* is to be Licensed as priest-in-charge of St Margaret, Leven on 1 May. Bonnie has served in England, and has long experience in international Inter-Faith work.
- *The Revd Gerry Dillon* is to be Licensed as priest-evangelist of the Central Fife Centre of Mission, a partnership with Church Army, and priest-in-charge of St Luke, Glenrothes and St Finnian, Lochgelly. Gerry has previously served the Central Fife Group as non-stipendiary priest.
- *The Revd Steve Butler* will be Licensed as priest-in-charge of St John, Pittenweem and St Michael, Elie. The date will be confirmed once arrangements for his move can be made. Steve comes to the Diocese from the Diocese of Edinburgh.

Retirement

Canon Richard Grosse retires on 30 April as Rector of St Mary, Aberfoyle and St Andrew, Callander, where he has served since 2004, and as Synod Clerk since 2015. Richard and Melanie are obviously unable to move home yet, because of the crisis, and Richard has generously offered to continue to oversee the temporary arrangements he has put in place in the charges during the crisis. It's an unusual start to their retirement, but we wish Richard and Melanie many happy years to come in their new home.

Thank You

for everything that you and your congregations are doing to pray and act for your communities, and especially for those whose stories of deprivation, loneliness and loss usually go unreported and un-noticed. It would be good to keep hearing from you about this, and to keep you in prayer.

With blessings and prayer for Eastertide and today's Feast of St Mark, who long ago encouraged a Church in transition to be faithful to the Good News. May he pray for us too.

Bishop Ian