

Dear all

Are you melting yet? I don't know about you, but I don't like the intense heat, and even the vicarage is hot. I'm sorely tempted to sit in the choir vestry – that is the perfect temperature for me.

This weekend will be one of very mixed emotions for Ordinands. The Feast of St Peter (Petertide), which is on the 29th June, is the major time for ordination in the Church of England. This year those completing their courses are not able to be ordained, and those who have completed their diaconal year are unable to be priested – which is the culmination of their calling. I can't imagine how frustrating it must be. Do pray for them in this unusual place to be. In the meantime, the practice of the CofE is to licence Ordinands as lay ministers in their title parish, and they will be ordained as deacon in due course. Those currently deacons will be priested as and when they are able – perhaps at Michaelmas (St Michael & All Angels, 29th September).

I have just received the latest email from our bishops. 3 significant paragraphs are as follows:

...The virus is still very active and for some considerable time yet to come we must learn to co-exist with it as part of everyday life: in our decision making, our praying, our serving of others, our worshipping. In our nation, no community or city is free of the virus and our decision making needs to reflect this. It is therefore entirely to be expected that it may take longer to make decisions, and then to implement them, than in the past, or than many would like now. We suggest to you that key factors in your decision making about re-opening of churches for worship are safety and sustainability. We will not be returning to 'normal' for many months. Indeed, we may never return to the 'old normal' and will therefore need to take decisions and steps now that enable us to move well to the 'new normal', as it emerges. Moreover, our decisions now will help to shape this 'new normal'. In practical terms, this will probably mean a phased opening of some churches or some openings delayed for now while decisions are made about whether it is safe and sustainable to be able to open the doors. These are hard decisions.

The beach pictures of yesterday, then, are a reminder that not everything can happen at once. Most significantly, at the moment we are unable to make fully informed decisions as we still do not have all the information.

The national church is still waiting for the government guidance. Once that is received the national church will then be able to issue updated guidance on public worship, weddings, baptisms, funerals, communion, confirmation and general access to buildings. There will also be a risk assessment template to assist in decision making. We hope to receive those documents early next week and get them to you with some local advice as soon as we can.

Our pre-recorded church service for this Sunday can be found at https://youtu.be/8_cX3gcQx2c. Hymns with YouTube links can be found on the [attached sheet](#).

Don't forget our Rose & Sweet Pea show website. You can log in and enter competitions (by photo!) or take part in the raffle – all of which raises invaluable funds for the church. The link is <https://rose-and-sweet-pea-show.wishpondpages.com/>

Order of events:

3.30pm live on Facebook – competition prizes announced.

4.00pm live on Facebook – raffle draw

Various times – Red Sky not quite live!

Also don't forget that the church is now open for private prayer Monday, Wednesday & Saturday 10.00am-3.00pm. Please follow guidelines clearly posted, and let me know if there are any issues. It may be possible to open up for individuals on another day if you have a particular reason e.g. to light a candle on an anniversary.

As mentioned previously, Nick Fawcett reached 100 coronavirus prayers, and has decided to stop at that significant number. Here is his final prayer:

Lord,
have the right decisions been taken?
Have we got this crisis under control?
And can we look forward to finally putting it behind us –
to a time when it is just some ghastly memory
we can cheerfully confine to history?
Just as important:
have the right decisions been taken for the future –
economic,
social,
practical –
sufficient to safeguard jobs,
businesses,
livelihoods,
so far as it is humanly possible?
We cannot know,
not yet at least,
for there is no clear-cut right or wrong way,
no answer all agree on
or way forward commanding the assent of all.
We can only hope ...
and pray ...
trusting our leaders,
and those who advise them,
to think carefully,
choose wisely
and act responsibly.
Grant that this may be so,
not just for here,
but across the world.
May the end of this pandemic indeed be in sight,
so that together we may look forward to better days,
and such a time as we have lived through be avoided in future years,
for our sake,
our children's,
and that of generations to come.
Hear us,
help us,
hold us,
heal us.
Amen.



Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark