

To: All Clergy, Lay Readers, Lay Representatives, Vestry Secretaries and Treasurers – and for passing on to your congregations...

From John Mitchell, Diocesan Secretary

11th September 2020

News from the Diocesan (Virtual) Office

In the three months since our last quarterly update from the Diocesan Office, all office-based staff have continued to work from home (details at the end of this newsletter), with postal deliveries being redirected to Christine Hughes or myself for subsequent dissemination by opening, scanning and emailing, or for physical redirection, with anything labelled ‘Confidential’ being posted on to the addressee. Christine has made occasional visits to the office in the meantime, and we are pondering whether it *might* be possible to reopen the office in a very limited capacity (with no visitors, and subject to full risk assessments and social distancing) once Bishop Kevin is at last able to be based in Glasgow. All being well, it’s hoped that Bishop Kevin’s move will take place in October, when he and Elspeth return from holiday, and can at last end their long wait to join us. On which subject...

Message from Bishop Kevin



Dear Friends

As I write, parts of the Diocese are entering partial lockdown – again. There is a lot of confusion as to what ‘partial’ means and why certain things are allowed, and others are not...

The scriptural text we need, more than any other at this time, is from Luke’s Gospel –

‘Fear not Little Flock’. That is the text that Bishop Richard Holloway chose to ‘preach me in with’ on 4th July, and the text of his sermon is attached to this letter so that you can all read what he would have said to us. It was also the text that I chose for the Provincial Eucharist from our cathedral on the Feast of St Aidan.

‘Fear not little flock’ is what we all need to remember at this time, and it was a coincidence that Bishop Richard independently chose the same text. As the saintly William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury once said: ‘When I pray, coincidences just happen. When I fail to pray, no such thing happens.’ **There** is the scripture from Luke’s Gospel and **there** is the plan of action. Fear not little flock – Prayer and love, the very essence of God and of life with God: Love will find a way of conquering fear.

Remember in the 1982 Liturgy of the Eucharist we say, at every celebration: “There is no room for fear in love.”

When we closed our churches at the beginning of the pandemic, we did so in Love, not Fear. Life with God has meaning and purpose; **love** has meaning and purpose.

We closed our churches to prevent Covid 19 being transmitted. That was a loving response to the crisis, because in love we have the best interests of the other at heart. Purpose, to prevent transmitting the disease. There is no room for fear in love, that is the love that Our Lord Jesus Christ lived and died, but rose again to prove. The Holy Spirit is with us and in us, and so I remind you - 'Fear not, little flock.'

And the gossip –

Elspeth and I hope to finally move physically to Glasgow in the second week of October. Sadly, as you know, our move was delayed because for 4 months no work could be done on the house due to the pandemic. Then the rules meant that some tradesmen were not allowed to work together – so a plumber cannot work while the joiner is trying to encourage the decorator to paint... The text – 'Carpenter from Nazareth – joiners wanted.'

Many thanks to Elliot Glenesk, Diocesan Surveyor, for organising all these works and to all in the Diocese who have helped with this project – you are doing a great job!

The calendar for the autumn is beginning to be put together but everything remains provisional and of course, subject to restrictions and change. This includes the virtual General Synod at the beginning of December. There is no such thing as 'normality' and remember, it will almost certainly be Advent and Christmas with no carols, no singing etc.

The Scottish Episcopal Church is not above or beyond the law of the land. The meaning and purpose of that law is to safeguard all our people. As disciples of Jesus we comply, not in fear but in love.

September is the month when Elspeth and I have a holiday and this year, with sadness, we have cancelled our trip to our beloved Italy. We will spend part of the holiday packing up the house and office in Oban so we are ready to move house. There seems to be an awful lot of stuff ... We will also spend some time in York and will tour the abbeys of Yorkshire. It is fascinating that Cistercians were great plumbers, so I am looking forward to picking up many hints and tips!

Elspeth and I would like to say a huge thank you to you all for your warm welcome, and we look forward to meeting you all in person and to visiting all the charges of the Diocese. Many thanks also to all of the Diocesan staff and officials who have been so helpful and patient since I became your Bishop in July.

Thank you and God Bless you all

+ Kevin

Text of sermon originally prepared by Bishop Richard Holloway for the enthronement of Bishop Kevin in St Mary's Cathedral on 4th July 2020

Luke 12.32

**Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's
good pleasure to give you the kingdom**



60 years ago, though not quite to the day, on another sunny, summer Saturday, I was ordained to the priesthood in this cathedral, along with 10 others. Many women were present in the congregation of 500 that day, but none of them knelt before Bishop Francis Moncrieff, to have him lay his hands on their heads and say to them, in the words of the Scottish Prayer Book, ‘Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and work of a Priest in the Church of God’.

Given what we now know about the demographics of human sexuality, there were probably about 25 gay people in the congregation that day, but none of them would have been ‘out’; nor would any of them have thought that it would ever be possible for them to be married to a same-sex partner here in the cathedral of which they were such faithful members.

Neither of these examples of structural inequality would have troubled anyone present that day, in what was then an institution, like all the others in society, that was unselfconsciously dominated by straight men – or allegedly straight men. On the contrary, most Churches in Scotland at the time would have offered theological justification for that ancient inequality. It was how God had ordered it.

No, it wasn't inequality that was troubling the Scottish Episcopal Church that year; it was something else entirely. 1960 was the 400-hundredth anniversary of the Scottish Reformation, and we weren't sure how to respond. For the Kirk, it was obviously a year of celebration. For the Catholic Church, which had been ejected from Scotland after 1000 years, it was a year of mourning. But what was it for us, the Scottish Episcopal Church? We were miserable because we believed that we were the true Church of Scotland, but we had been robbed of our supremacy because of our Jacobite history and loyalty to the Stuarts. Like the Prince over the water, we were waiting for the call to come back and resume our ascendancy. It was sad, pathetic almost, but for lovers of lost causes and failed dreams, it was not lacking in romance, and it appealed to my ardent young heart.

So we didn't do very much to celebrate the Reformation, but Francis Moncrieff invited Michael Ramsey, then Archbishop of Canterbury, to preach to us at a special service here in the cathedral. I can't remember anything from his sermon, but I can remember every word of his text. Large, craggy and kindly, he filled this pulpit as he leant towards us and quoted Luke, chapter 12:32: ‘Fear not little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom’ – and a sigh of comforted unreality

went round the cathedral. Might not the little flock of Scottish Episcopalians one day be given back the kingdom that had been stolen from them? The problem was that while we might have understood Ramsey correctly, when he seemed to promise us a recovery of status and significance in Scotland, we certainly misunderstood Jesus, because that was the opposite of what Jesus meant by the kingdom of God. What did Jesus mean?

A theological term that might help us understand what Jesus was up to is the Greek word *prolepsis*, meaning to throw ahead or anticipate. Political reformers often urge their followers *to be the future they long for and act as if it were already here*. One way of thinking about the work of Jesus is to see it as the creation of an eschatological community that would live God's end time *now*. He taught his disciples not only to pray that God's kingdom would come on earth as it was in heaven, but to live *as if it were already here!* They were to be a proleptic community, marked by two characteristics rare in the power structures of the world. The first was radical forgiveness at both the personal and political level, the kind of forgiveness that deflects the harm we constantly do each other by refusing to let it break us apart. The second was to see the world from the bottom up not the top down. God's kingdom was downside up. It was identified with the rejected, the despised and ignored. With those at the bottom, the victims of power; not those at the top, the wielders of power. During the Covid Emergency we have glimpsed that radical vision in action. We have realised that it is the ignored and unappreciated who make it possible for society to function at all. We have been given a glimpse of what it might mean to actualise the downside-up vision of the kingdom of God, to make it come on earth as it is in heaven, where the last are first and the first are last.

The Church, in most of its manifestations in history, has never been what Jesus meant by the kingdom of God, though sometimes it has allowed itself to become the instrument of that kingdom, one of its enabling agencies. And that is its great opportunity today. In its increasing weakness and marginality, it can, maybe for the first time, become an instrument of the kingdom, a broken community working with other broken communities to heal the world.

Beloved Kevin, I know that beneath your confident and competent exterior you are feeling daunted today, called as you are to this new ministry in difficult circumstances and in uncertain times. My plea to you, as one who has known and admired you since I lured you to St Salvador's in Edinburgh in 1987 - where Francis Moncrieff also served - is to make friends here in this friendliest of cities and work with them, not to increase the prestige of the Church but to bring in the kingdom. You and Elspeth have a genius for hospitality and a gift for friendship. Use them; use them prodigally. You will find many allies here in this big-hearted, friendly city, in both its secular and faith communities. Join them in working for a better world. Be a servant of the kingdom.

And have fun!

Other Diocesan News...

A note from the Diocesan Treasurer, Bob Burgon, mainly for Church Clergy, Treasurers and Vestry Secretaries, but of potential interest to all...

I am writing to highlight a couple of issues that have raised their heads over recent weeks and to which vestries might want to give some consideration.

Rathbones (formerly Spiers & Jeffrey).

I am aware that some congregations use the investment services of Rathbones, as does the Diocese. Clients of Rathbones will have been informed of an increase in investment management fees with all portfolios being subject to a minimum annual fee of £2500 + VAT per annum, as from 1 October 2020. In many cases this fee will be greater than the income earned from investment portfolios and congregations may wish to evaluate the ongoing benefit of continuing to use Rathbones.

While I am not authorised to offer investment advice, I have been asked to prepare an “information sheet” on possibilities on alternative fund management provision. If this is of interest, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Insurance

The cost of insurance premiums for church properties has long been a bone of contention for many congregations. The market seems to be dominated by Ecclesiastical Insurance and its sister company, Ansvar; some congregations may use Congregational and General, another church insurance provider.

I have been made aware that Trinitas Church Insurance is emerging as a viable competitor to Ecclesiastical and a copy of a guide to ‘Buying Church Insurance’ is available should any congregation wish to have some of the complications of comparing providers explained. Please remember that you may have entered into a long-term agreement with your existing insurance provider and accordingly it may be that no change can be made until that current agreement comes to an end. Again, should you wish a copy of the Guide, please contact me.

Church Accounts

We are entering the period of annual account preparation and I would urge all congregational treasurers to look to providing a copy of their 2020 accounts to the Diocese by 30 November. I appreciate that with COVID-19 some comparative figures may look strange but the more time that is available to the Diocese to consider the financial impact of the pandemic on congregations then the more time I will have to assess the implications for ongoing quota. It would also be gratefully appreciated if ‘electronic’ copies could be sent in addition to the ultimate signed paper copies.

Should you have questions on any of the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Bob Burgon treasurer@glasgow.anglican.org 07929 603391

Bishop Kevin: Meeting People Across the Diocese

Whilst there have been many frustrations for Bishop Kevin in having to start his Episcopate at a time when meeting people in person has been impossible, one positive to emerge has been the fact that – through Zoom video conferences – he and Elspeth have been able to meet far more of us in July than would otherwise have been the case. Although they are clearly eager to visit as many of our churches in person as soon as possible, they embarked upon a marathon of 8 lengthy Zoom meetings over a fortnight to meet the Diocesan Council and each of the 7 Regional Councils, thereby introducing themselves to over 150 people (and a great many charges) much more quickly than if they'd been driving to every church in the Diocese every week! I've had many comments and emails from participants in these events who have been hugely encouraged and motivated by the humour, the love, and the warmth generated across the meetings, and by the sense of hope for the future that Bishop Kevin's arrival has heralded. It has been lovely to hear such enthusiasm.

Bishop's Lent Appeal 2020

Many thanks to those charges and individuals who've been contributing to the Appeal for **Glasgow City Mission**. The collection has now (just) exceeded **£10,000**, a highly encouraging total in a very difficult year, but further donations have recently been arriving due to the reopening of churches, so please continue to send these as they make their way to your charges. Instructions on how to do this were in the previous office update, but please contact me at diocesansecretary@glasgow.anglican.org if you need a reminder.

Reopening of Churches

At the time of writing, approximately 75% of our churches had reopened for worship in varying patterns throughout the Diocese, and more may have done so by the time you read this. Please also note that St Mary's Cathedral is now open again for in-person services and will be continuing to provide online worship at www.thecathedral.org.uk/worship. Our thanks go to all clergy and laity who have helped prepare our buildings for our new, socially distant, forms of worship in accordance with government guidelines to ensure the safety of all.

New Diocesan Centre

Building warrants were approved and issued in the summer, and five competitive tenders were received just before the last Diocesan Council meeting on 29th August, during which gathering our Diocesan Architect Rebecca Cadie briefed Council Members (our Trustees) on the issues and costs surrounding the tender process. The Diocesan Property Committee will be discussing the tenders in further detail with the Project Consultants and Architect during their September meeting, with a view to reconvening the Trustees for an eventual decision on the most appropriate tender to accept. It is hoped that building works might therefore begin later in the autumn, but it will clearly be some way into 2021 before our long-anticipated move might be able to take place.

Clergy and Charge News

Rev Heller Gonzalez will be instituted by Bishop Kevin as Rector of **St Augustine's Dumbarton** on 22nd October, and – although he has already taken up his post – an equivalent ceremony will take place at **St Mary's Hamilton** on 28th October for **Rev Matthew Little**, who is now Rector at this joint charge with **St Andrew's, Uddingston**. Both events are obviously subject to government guidelines on attendance and social distancing.

Meanwhile, we say thank-you and a fond farewell to the (always colourfully clothed!) **Rev PJ O'Maoil Mheana**, Rector of **St Paul and St John's, Airdrie** since 2017, who departs for Canada in November, having been appointed the Rector of Holy Trinity White Rock, British Columbia, in the Diocese of New Westminster. He tells us that: "My last service in Airdrie will be on 15th November, after which I board a plane to Heathrow and fly to Vancouver on 16th November. Then after two weeks of isolation I will be installed on St Andrew's day by Archbishop Melissa. It has been a joy to serve here in Glasgow and Galloway and I look forward to the next great adventure." We wish 'PJ' every blessing and offer thanks for his time with us.

Also departing the Diocese, this time for a well-earned retirement (in Herefordshire) is **Rev David Gifford**, Rector of the **Heartland Group Team Ministry (St Mary's Port Glasgow, St Fillan's Kilmacolm and St Mary's Bridge of Weir)**. David, a member of Diocesan Council since 2017, has been Rector there since 2014, after joining the SEC from the Diocese of Oxford, and has delayed his retirement date slightly (to 31st October) to ensure that the ongoing restoration of St Mary's roof is completed before he leaves. We wish David and Francine the happiest of retirements and thank them for their service in Glasgow and Galloway.

Another imminent retiree from the Diocese (on 22nd November) is the **Rev Canon Sandy Montgomerie** who has served as Interim Priest for the **North Ayrshire** group of churches since 2017 (**St Andrew's, Ardrossan, St Andrew's, Irvine and St Peter's, Dalry**). Sandy was baptised, confirmed and priested in **St Andrew's Ardrossan**, where he served in Non-Stipendiary Ministry after his ordination in 1996. He was our Ecumenical Relations Co-ordinator from 2005-12, and was heavily involved in the very successful Porvoo link with the Swedish Lutheran church from 2007-16. He was also recently proud, as part of his Diocesan CMD programme, to be awarded an Open University BA (Hons) Degree in History at the age of 72! As well as offering 'holiday cover' for the Diocese of Europe in Tenerife over a four year period, he has served two 4-year terms as a Trustee on the Diocesan Council, and, although retiring soon, he intends – after a period of rest and reflection – to continue offering his services as a member of Rev Sally Gorton's team of 'covering clergy' across the Diocese. So he's not stopping altogether!

Finally, we offer warmest congratulations to **Rev Lee Johnstone** (Curate at **Christ Church, Lanark**) and **Rev Harriet Oxley** (Curate at **St James the Less, Bishopbriggs**), who are now Mr & Mrs Johnson, having been married in the garden

of St John's Rectory, Dumfries, on Saturday 4th July. The very obvious limitation on guest numbers at least had the advantage of saving Lee from entertaining a large gathering with his groom's speech, but this will be, apparently, a pleasure deferred until a larger celebration is allowed in the future. May Lee and Harriet share much love, happiness and many joyous ministries between them.

Diocesan Synod 2021

We are considering options (including dates) for either a virtual or physical Diocesan Synod in 2021, but it's clearly difficult to make decisions at present. The plans for the virtual General Synod on 5th December will give us some pointers if that is the route we decide to follow.

Microsoft Licences for Non-Profit organisations

I'm pleased to draw the attention of all charges to the fact that Microsoft offer significantly reduced (and, in some cases free) software licence costs on their Office 365 subscriptions to non-profit organisations. The Diocesan Office already benefits from this, as do several charges. Further details are available at:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/nonprofit/office-365-nonprofit-plans-and-pricing?activetab=tab:primaryr1>

Lay Ministry: a note from Rev Les Ireland – plus notes on Zoom Assistance

Licensed Lay Ministry "Reflection Time": each year the diocesan "Prayer and Spirituality" group organises a day of reflection on ministry for all those in licensed lay ministry – Lay Readers, Pastoral Assistants and Eucharistic Assistants. This year we have no choice – we are going online!

Date: Saturday 10th October, 10am – 12.30pm.

The programme includes: Welcome and worship; Reflections on Ministry (and lack of) during a pandemic; An Introduction to the voice of Scripture; Pause for reflection, or tea or coffee or eating biscuits...; Reflective Bible Study; Conclusion and final worship.

All in Licensed in Lay ministry are welcome. We will send out the "Zoom" access nearer the time to all people on the mailing list. We know there are people who do not use the internet, or whose connection may not be that strong. When we send the access details we will also send details of how to phone in to the meeting for those who would like to – if nothing else they will be able to hear what is happening. Please pass on details to those you may know who can't do the streaming or internet thing!

This year, anyone is welcome to simply join in. However you are welcome to let us know you'll be joining us by emailing: Les949@btinternet.com

Zoom guidelines for Scottish Episcopal Church use <https://bit.ly/328iTIp>. **Getting started with Zoom** on Windows and Mac (<https://bit.ly/3lZExqc>), iOS (<https://bit.ly/2DDe54r>) and Android (<https://bit.ly/2FgS3EN>). **Learn how to join a Zoom meeting** on PC <https://bit.ly/2GE3es5>.

Digital Mission

As well as his involvement with charges creating or developing their own websites, Petko Marinov maintains our ever-increasing presence on a wide range of media outlets, with frequent information updates and thought-provoking items, so please check these out as below, and get in touch with him if there's anything you'd like to see included in our output...

www.facebook.com/GGEpiscopal/ and <https://glasgow.anglican.org/>

In particular, if you haven't looked at the website or Facebook page recently, be aware of the posts on **Anti-racist** resources and online discussions at

(<https://glasgow.anglican.org/2020/06/08/anti-racism-actions/>) Or on

Environmental issues (<https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/piskycareforcreation/>).

Or take a look at the fascinating **Episcopal Stories (past and present)** –The legacy of

the Christian witness of Lilius Graham - (<https://glasgow.anglican.org/2020/08/15/the-legacy-of-lilius-graham/>) or take a **digital pilgrimage to Stonehaven jail** (with its

hugely important Episcopal links) at (<https://glasgow.anglican.org/2020/08/06/digital-pilgrimage-and-the-episcopal-story-behind-stonehaven-jail/>).

And check out the recently updated **Diocesan Map**, which is now colour coded by Regional Council areas, and allows you to zoom into any area, select any charge, and be directed to its website! The map is at... <https://bit.ly/GGEpiscopalMap>

As ever please contact Petko at digitalmissioner@glasgow.anglican.org if you have any questions about anything digital or would like to share Good News from your community with the Diocese.

Diocesan Office Staff

Everyone remains working from home at present. We can be reached as below:

Christine Hughes (most general enquiries, usual days Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri) – 07754 167468
christine@glasgow.anglican.org and also office@glasgow.anglican.org

Marion Noble (for enquiries regarding property matters, usual days Mon-Wed) – 07544 834021
marion@glasgow.anglican.org

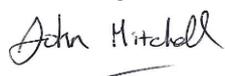
Iolanthe Stack (for enquiries regarding finance, usual days Wed -Fri) – 07544 833643
iolanthe@glasgow.anglican.org

My own mobile number is 07798 662711, and I am similarly happy to be contacted with any queries by phone or at diocesansecretary@glasgow.anglican.org

In Conclusion...

And, as ever, please let me know if you need any further information on anything contained in this newsletter, or on any Diocesan matter.

Kind regards



John Mitchell, Diocesan Secretary (diocesansecretary@glasgow.anglican.org)