

Dear Friends

It has been a wee while since my last email update, life has, as you all know, been very busy and at times very confusing.

I seem to have developed a completely different pattern to my week and month than anything in my previous ministry.

I have weekly meetings with the Scottish Government, working to get our churches open and then keeping them open. Also working towards programmes to alleviate the social and community pressures Covid has brought.

I meet weekly with the Church of Scotland and The Roman Catholic Church and once a month with Scottish Church leaders and also with other faith leaders. This pandemic has brought us all closer together.

My weekly pattern also includes a meeting with the College of Bishops, for information exchange but primarily for mutual support through all of this.

I have tried to keep in touch with congregations and clergy, both here in the diocese but also in other parts of the country, while seeking to work my way through the rules to allow me to continue with the process to elect a new Bishop of Argyll and The Isles.

Amidst all of this I have also had to work hard at maintaining my worship life. When I am continually having to record and live stream services in different places and in different styles then it is easy to forget the primary purpose of worship. Giving thanks to God.

I am therefore thankful to the Cathedral and others who have kept the daily round of worship going, allowing me to dip in and at times to lead that worship. I have also enjoyed visiting congregations as they have opened up. Please remember I am coming to worship with you, not to check up on your cleaning procedures!

Can I also once again thank you all for your careful and prayerful decisions about whether you can or can't open or in fact whether you should or shouldn't open. Thank you for those who watch and pray at home, those who Zoom their worship and those who write and send out prayers and news.

One of the questions I ask the civil service each week is "when can we sing again?"

For when we can that will make such a difference to our worship. It is amazing how keen on singing everyone has become now we cannot do it.

Finally can I continue to ask you to be kind and caring of each other, checking up on the welfare of each other and please don't get grumpy, we are all struggling with this, we need each other.

These are a short set of notices, I will do a further update when I am back at work.

- The Bishop will be out of the office from 8th October until the 26th October, I am on annual leave. Please contact The Dean or the Synod Clerk or if looking for appointments please contact Louise or Douglas.
- This is AGM season, I know some Charges are considering digital meetings, while others are seeking to delay the date of their meetings. Please do what works best and remember that if you want to delay your meeting then you need to ask the Bishop, he is nearly always very amenable!
- Christmas is coming; I suspect that Christmas will be a difficult period for many. I would wish to have a full digital programme of Christmas events, the Province will provide a number of events as I know a number of Charges in the Diocese will also do that. I will try and find ways of filling in the gaps and will be asking around the diocese for volunteers to help with these services and events - so why not volunteer now!!