

## **Pastoral advice from the College of Bishops for Phase 2 – revised following First Minister’s Statement 18 June 2020**

The guidance that the Advisory Group has been working on in relation to our churches has been in regard to the safe opening of our buildings, but the College of Bishops is very aware of questions being asked in relation to the pastoral ministry of our churches outside of our buildings; in other words the day-to-day life of ministry. The advice that follows in this document applies in Phase 2 of the Scottish Government’s Route Map.

Phase 2 involves a further relaxation of existing restrictions which are detailed fully elsewhere. From the 22 June places of worship can reopen in certain limited situations, which are detailed today by our Advisory Group in the accompanying document *Emerging from Lockdown: Phase 2 Guidance*. There is also a general relaxation that allows members of one household meeting members of two other households outside. We CANNOT, however, meet people from another household indoors.

This change might have an impact on pastoral visiting, but it is clear that only visiting/meeting others outdoors is permitted in Phase 2. No resumption of conventional pastoral visiting to people’s homes will be possible in Phase 2 at present as announced by the Scottish Government.

Other aspects of the pastoral life of the church:

- We should continue to provide Provincial, Diocesan and Local Services online where possible, such as streamed or recorded from homes and churches. Consideration should be given to those who cannot access the internet, for instance by highlighting the existence of telephone access to online worship, and the provision of paper copies of liturgies/pewsheets where these are available.
- We should continue to utilise various existing forms of communication, including e-mail, social media platforms, posted letters, and telephone calls, to keep members connected. These can be used to keep in touch in the following ways:
  - Inform about Church building opening plans & times (if a church chooses to open);
  - Provide newsletters, texts of prayer services and scripture, and other useful leaflets, either electronically or delivered to family homes;
  - Make telephone calls to connect to, and pray with, the isolated;
  - Highlight recorded services that are available e.g. on local radio, or by telephone;
  - Provide lists of services that can be joined in with at home;
  - Draw attention to online worship and support, where available.
- Essential mission and outreach activities (e.g. food/poverty support projects) should continue only in line with Scottish Government and local authority guidance.
- There should be no formal outdoor activities for church and congregation e.g. worship, picnics, and fundraising events. Phase 2 as announced will not permit any such large-scale meeting of households, even outdoors.
- There should be no job interviews or visits to be held for applicants for posts. The Scottish Government’s Phase 2 guidance suggests that only two households can meet indoors, so conventional interviews are not yet possible. The interview

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process also presents potential problems with travel and accommodation, which should be avoided.

There will remain considerable work required to provide ongoing pastoral care and produce information and worship resources. Please be kind to yourselves and to those who are volunteering. We must pace ourselves through what looks certain to be a long process. And please remember, no cleric should undertake any outdoor visit if they have any concerns for their own health or wellbeing.

**+Mark, Primus & Moray, Ross & Caithness**

**+Kevin, Argyll and The Isles**

**+John, Edinburgh**

**+Anne, Aberdeen & Orkney**

**+Andrew, Brechin**

**+Ian, St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane**