

AREA DEANS' AND LAY CHAIR'S NOTES JUNE 2020 AMERSHAM DEANERY

CLERGY MOVEMENT

At Gerrard's Cross with Fulmer James Forward and Ross Mungavin are to be ordained Deacon shortly and join the staff team.

Rev James Leach moves to a House for Duty post in August.

Canon Tim Harper's retirement is postponed until some time next year.

UNDER LOCKDOWN:

WORSHIP

All parishes have provided or shared in online worship in their own way, from all singing all dancing prerecorded services, Zoom meetings, storytelling from leather armchairs to audio services on the phone. It is quite remarkable how non techy types have managed to rise to the occasion. One size does not fit all, and the diverse efforts are widely appreciated.

FUNERALS AND WEDDINGS

After an initial rush the need for mass quick funerals we were told to expect did not materialise. Guidance on attendance and singing from local authorities and the diocese at the Crem conflicted and continues to do so! While churches are now open for small socially distanced funerals it is apparently down to local ministers to decide on what may be done. At this point no weddings, civil or religious are permitted by government regulation. Couples wishing to Qualify by attendance are total stymied!

OPENING OF CHURCHES

The press gave the impression that we could simply fling wide the doors! In practice wardens are bound to follow precise but complicated safety rules. Most parishes are doing wonders opening in a limited way for private prayer at set times.

SCHOOLS

Our church schools have set the standard in opening for the children of key workers under lockdown. As this lifts, it has been a mammoth task to prepare schools to meet the distancing and hygiene regulations issued by the DofE. The medics say children are not a vulnerable group but can be carriers. Head teachers found the main problem to be the fears of staff. Many have elderly or vulnerable relatives at home and have been reluctant to return. However, most schools are now operating for Reception, Year 1 and year 6 in some way, and have plans to provide at

least some in school time for all other children before the term is done. There are major concerns on how some pupils will have lagged in learning, and the government is drawing up a catch-up strategy. Our head teachers tell us that another serious problem is one of parental anxiety, which the parents then take out on the staff. Please remember staff and students in your prayers.

FINANCE

Our deanery treasurer will report to Synod on how we are managing. It is expected that as a whole the Deanery will meet parish share in full this year.

ZOOM MEETINGS

We have held clergy chapter meetings monthly to support and encourage each other.

Bishop Steven will be leading one of them on 16th July.

Bishop Alan has led a weekly Archdeaconry meeting with Area Deans and Lay Chairs to share issues, concerns and responses to the pandemic.

Diocesan Synod met (see report)

Tim Harper

Co-Area Dean. June 2020