



The Diocese of Southwark

The Bishop of Southwark

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To all Incumbent Status Clergy

Eve of the Feast of James the Apostle, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Communion by Extension in Public Worship

As you know, in Southwark we have always been clear that Communion by Extension should only be used for home communions, hospital visits, and so forth, and not used in public worship. This is important in order to preserve the integrity of the Eucharist and in a Diocese with more Priests than worshipping communities it should be possible.

However we are now living through uniquely strange times which offer distinctive challenges. Some Parishes, for instance, may depend on retired Clergy who are now unable to preside owing to the need to shield. It thus seems right to me to offer, under clear conditions, a temporary relaxation of this rule.

I am enclosing the necessary paperwork and background documentation which has been prepared by Canon Mandy Ford. In short, it is for the Incumbent (or, where because of a Vacancy or for some other reason there is no Ordained Incumbent, the Area Dean at the request of the Wardens) to make an application for a Reader, Lay Worker (including lay CA officers) to be able to conduct public services of Communion by Extension.

This is to be done on the basis of prior reflection and conversation, and the permission exercised under appropriate supervision, so that the theological integrity of the Eucharist is preserved. This permission, when given, is for twelve months from the date of this letter, and I hope that after this period we will be able to revert to the position where Communion by Extension is again restricted to private worship.

The arrangement for those in Deacon's orders (including members of the Permanent Diaconate), and for those Curates Licensed as Lay Workers at Petertide in anticipation of Ordination to the Diaconate, will be slightly more permissive, because the training and supervision arrangements for them are already firmly in place. Thus by this letter I am giving permission for those in this category to conduct public services of Communion by Extension, subject to the approval and oversight of the Incumbent (or Area Dean in a Vacancy) for one year from the date of this letter.

I express my gratitude to all who have worked so hard to keep the worshipping life of their Parishes in a flourishing state, and who are now grappling creatively and sensibly with the challenges of re-opening Church buildings, and I trust this dispensation will be of help.

With my prayers and heartfelt thanks for our partnership in the Gospel,

The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun
Bishop of Southwark