



The Diocese of Lincoln

Ad Clerum

17 March 2020

Dear friends and colleagues,

We write at a time of considerable uncertainty, in which, necessarily, advice and guidance about how to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic is changing rapidly.

Our first concern is to assure you of our prayers and our love, and of the fellowship that we feel with you all, as we seek to serve God's people in Greater Lincolnshire together.

We are attaching with this letter the text of a message from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. They write to outline the current national approach that is being urged on the Church as we seek to respond to the virus. Please read it and act on it. A key idea, for us, is that 'we may not be able to pray with people ... but we can certainly pray for people'. They make the point that the church is changing, for an unknown period, but certainly for months. They invite us to respond to the changed and changing circumstances in which we find ourselves with the faith, hope, love and resilience which we know well characterise the people of the Diocese of Lincoln.

Clearly, there will be many questions to answer, and issues to resolve, as we all seek to respond to the spread of the virus. We as bishops, with our staff colleagues, and with our Edward King House team, will aim to respond to you as swiftly and as accurately as we can. We know that you understand that in this volatile context, however, it can take time to achieve the clarity of answer that you deserve, and we will always seek to provide the best answer that we can, even if not always the fastest.

In addition to a personal response, our intention is to provide a daily update with latest advice and a digest of what is happening across the diocese. Our plan is to publish this online at www.lincoln.anglican.org and via email each weekday, beginning tomorrow.

We would also encourage you to check the Church of England website regularly at www.churchofengland.org. You will find some answers to an extensive range of frequently asked questions there, together with links to resources for worship that are appropriate for this time.

Following government advice, we have decided that staff from Edward King House will work primarily from home until further notice. This means that over the next few days we will be developing a range of ways in which to continue to offer service to the parishes, clergy and lay ministers of the diocese. We will be postponing non-essential face to face meetings, training and courses, and we advise you to take the same approach with meetings in parishes.

Finally, we know that many of us are vulnerable to the virus, either because of age, or health issues, or because our work exposes us to other people. Please take care of yourselves, your families and your friends, wherever you can. We do care best for others when we are able, also, to take care of ourselves.

St Paul wrote that nothing 'will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8.39). At a time in which what is called 'social distancing' is being required from the people of the world, we want to say that what is actually being required is 'physical distancing' – and that we can all be close to each other, and to God, in prayer, in love, and in many other ways – as God is close to us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol and followed by the name 'David Court' in a cursive script.

The Rt Revd Dr David Court
Bishop of Grimsby
Acting Diocesan Bishop

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol and followed by the name 'Nicholas Chamberlain' in a cursive script.

The Rt Revd Dr Nicholas Chamberlain
Bishop of Grantham