



The Bishop of Chichester
The Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner

6 May 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

You may have seen reports that yesterday, Tuesday, the House of Bishops agreed to a phased approach to lifting restrictions on the use of churches, in line with Government advice.

It was also agreed that the decision on the timing of when to implement revised advice would be made by individual Diocesan Bishops.

In view of the forthcoming statement by the Prime Minister on Sunday, I intend to delay issuing any further advice until next week. Until then, please retain whatever practices you have put in place.

Clearly, the disciplines of social distancing and corporate hygiene will continue to be a priority for us all, being especially mindful of the vulnerable members of our congregations. It is encouraging to know that we are now planning for how to emerge from the present lockdown restrictions. Further patience and self-restraint will, however, still be asked of us as we look to long-term recovery.

But for now, let us pray for the sick and those caring for them, for the departed and those who grieve, and for those who are lonely or who live in fear of violence and abuse.

Let us give thanks for the grace of generosity, courage and endurance that we have witnessed in so many ways across our communities and in wider society.

And let us draw inspiration from the celebration of VE Day 75, from the many examples of self-sacrifice, determination, and common purpose that marked the recovery of new life and hope across Europe after the catastrophe of the Second World War.

And may the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory in Christ, restore, support, strengthen and establish us. To him be the power forever. Amen.

+Martin