**CLOSING A CHURCH BUILDING: SUGGESTED CHECKLIST**

**Preparing to announce the closure**

1. Consider what the parish will offer to the congregation of the closing church, once the building is closed.

Examples: hold services in another building, regular home group, regular coffee and catch-up, arrange transport to a service in one of your other centres.

1. Who in the community should be *confidentially* informed in advance, eg ministers’ association.

Will other churches in the town welcome our parishioners to their services?

Which community groups/churches might assist in pastoral care of the people during and after the closure process?

Which groups and organisations might benefit from understanding the full story in order to address any community dissatisfaction?

1. Assign (and equip/train) people to provide ongoing pastoral care for the affected congregation during the closure process. Consider also others in your parish, who may be fearful, angry, and perhaps asking ‘are we next’?

**Announcing the closure**

1. Who should be present when the closure is announced in services, e.g. wardens, parish councillors?

Who will be praying *while* the announcement is happening?

Both the people making the announcement and the people receiving the news need to be supported and prayed for during this whole process.

1. What is the timing to announce the closure around all the parish’s centres? Will the affected centre be told first? All centres on the same day?
2. As well as announcing the closure in services, how else will it be publicised to parishioners and the wider community?

Examples: pew bulletin, parish website, parish Facebook page, local paper, community social media

1. Who will monitor local papers/social media and respond (if needed) to negative comments about the parish?
2. Who will note and follow up with any parishioners who are absent on the day the closure is announced?

**Finances, nuts and bolts**

1. Is any money set aside in separate accounts, bequests etc for the centre that is being closed? What will happen to it?
2. People may ask for items they (or their families) have donated. Wardens need to be ready to respond to such requests, in consultation with the clergy, parish council and the Diocese.

**The final service**

1. Which past clergy, former parishioners, local dignitaries etc should be invited to the final service? Do you want to put out a general invitation to the whole community?
2. Which closing liturgy will you use? You might wish to use ‘Liturgical suggestions for closing a church building’ which is available from the Diocese. This includes a special litany of thanksgiving which can allow you to include and honour the work of people who have been involved in the centre in many capacities.
3. For those who are unable to attend or are too angry/upset to attend the final service, how might you help them to say goodbye to the building?

Example: invite them to come individually on another day.

**After the final service**

1. Who will monitor local media/social media and respond to any negative comments about the closure?
2. Arrange the deconsecration with the Bishop’s office. Suggestion: keep it low key.
3. Put in place whatever you have agreed you will offer in this community after the closure.
4. Continue pastoral care for the congregation if still required.
5. As a parish council, review how the closure process went, and feed back to the Diocese anything you think might help other parishes to do this compassionately and well.