

St Columbanus

Ballyholme



Restoration 2016
Christmas Photos
Match of the Day?
Storehouse Stories

..On the way *together*..



The Parishioner

February 2015

The Church is open every weekday morning for private prayer and meditation

The Rambling Rector

We get out of bed, we go to work, we get back into bed again. Okay, there's slightly more to life than that. Most days we find time for some personal preening, a couple of meals, a spot of shopping, laundry or housework – if we're really lucky a conversation or two. Czech leader and playwright Václav Havel was quoted recently in *The Wall Street Journal*: "The tragedy of modern man is not that he knows less and less about the meaning of his life, but that it bothers him less and less." I'm afraid I often see a second level of tragedy, when people only discover the truth of Havel's words through bad news. With a world of personal responsibilities and financial commitments bearing down on us, even if we do manage to make some space for worship and for prayer, it's so easy to allow the grind to win – to say that the treadmill is all there really is. And then something awful happens. And the passing emptiness of the things we allowed to control our lives mocks us and laughs at us. Because all the way along, God was offering us life. It was ours for the taking. SED



Parishioner Donations

As you know, the *Parishioner* comes to you free of charge.

To help with our overheads we always enclose an envelope with

the February issue by which we hope you can make a contribution towards our running costs. If all of our 650 recipients gave £10 we would certainly cover ourselves, but please bear in mind that only 30% currently make a gift. About a third of you are paying for the other two thirds!! Please return your envelope by the collection plate on Sunday and do bear in mind that the full text of the magazine is now available on the parish website. If this is the format that best suits you why not consider cancelling your paper copy and you won't have to worry about the envelope at all!

Adult Confirmation Preparation: Lent 2015



Already this year a few adults have come forward who would like to prepare for Confirmation on the evening of Palm Sunday. If you have never previously been Confirmed (or Baptized and Confirmed), perhaps because you come from another Church tradition, or because it was something you just never got round to, now is your chance! As he does each year the Rector will offer a simple course of preparation through Lent. Please contact the Office (91274912) to lodge your interest or speak directly to Simon himself (91274912). Likewise if you would just like some more information before making up your mind, even just to get a flavour of what might be involved. Confirmation Service: Sunday 29 March 6.30pm



Word & Worship

Digging Deeper

a lesson in Prayer from
Psalm 80

Special guest

The Rev Stephen Smyth

Sunday 1 February

at 6.30pm in
the Kajiado Room



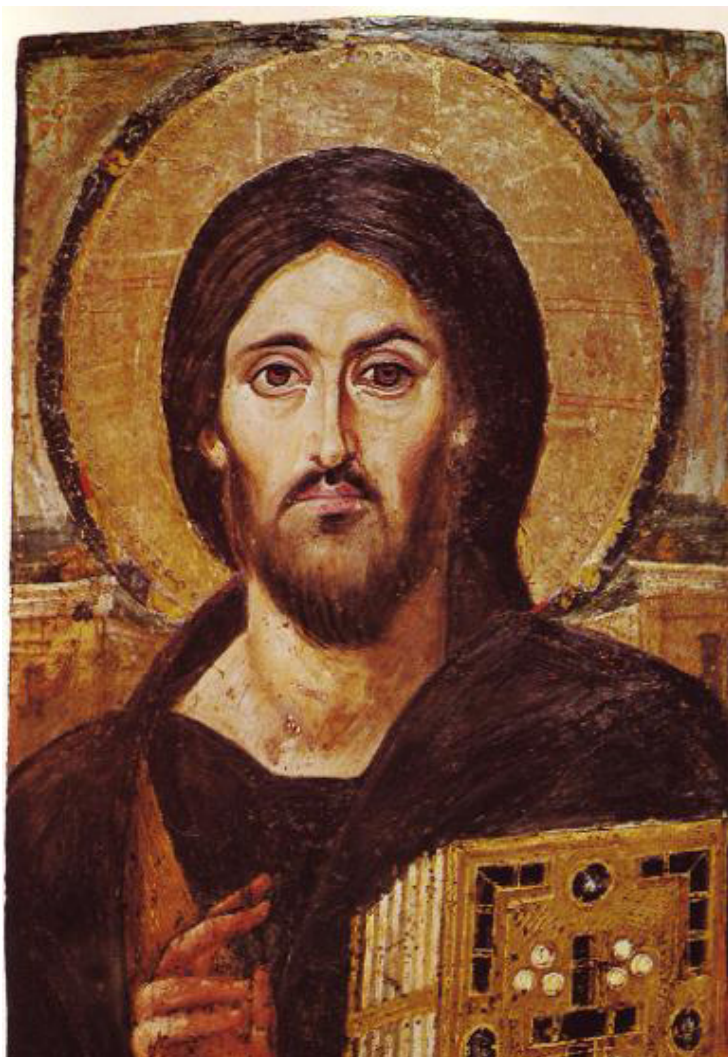
With Valentine's Day and romance in mind...

Marriage is....

- not always just a word; sometimes it is a sentence.

- a very good way to promote civilisation, according to Socrates, if you get a good partner you will be happy, if you get a bad one you will become a philosopher.





Lent Course "The Jesus you never Knew"

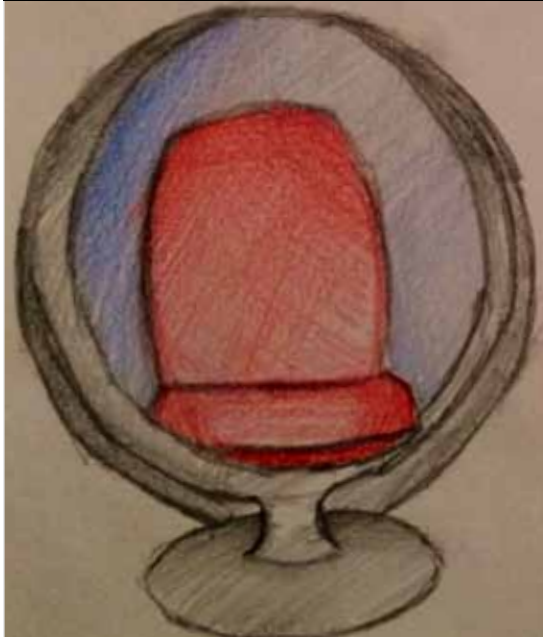
Shrove Tuesday 17 February, 24 February,
2 March, 9 March at 10:30am
Ash Wednesday 18 February, 25 February,
3 March, 10 March at 8pm

Leaders: Alistair Morrison and Simon Doogan
Venue: Kajiado Room.



explore

WHERE IS YOURS?



11 - 18 OCTOBER 2015

When.....

When God gave out brains
I thought He said trains
And I missed mine.
When God gave out looks
I thought He said books
And I didn't want any.
When God gave out noses
I thought He said roses
And I asked him for a big one.
When God gave out legs
I thought He said kegs
And I ordered two fat ones.
When God gave out ears
I thought He said beers
And I ordered two long ones.
When God gave out chins
I thought He said gins
And I ordered a double.
When God gave out heads
I thought he said beds
And I asked for a soft one.
Gee, am I a mess!

Confirmation will be happening on Palm Sunday, March 29 2015

NOW is the time for anybody interested to get their name down.
Confirmation in Ballyholme Parish is for anyone in Year 10 and older.
The programme for those getting confirmed begins at the start of
February 2015, and promises to be interactive, fun and interesting.
For more information or to put your name down, contact the Parish
Office on: 028 9127 4912



Tollymore and the Tea Pot crisis

Happy Days! The weather did exactly as forecast and by the time we got to Tollymore car park, our eleven strong group could see the sun beginning to peep through the clouds.



Tollymore was the first Forest Park to be opened in Northern Ireland (1955). Lying in an easily accessible location on the northern side of the Mourne, Tollymore has two rivers, the Shimna and the Spinkwee, 16 bridges, the oldest of which dates from 1786 and five designated way marked walks. We did a combination of the Mountain and Drinns Trails. The Drinns are two peaks, the highest being 225m with views over the Northern Mourne, Slieve Croob and Dundrum Bay.



With the prospect of snow on the higher peaks, Robbie and Stephen set off at a pace and reportedly had lunch in the snow on top of Commedagh. By the time we got to the gate to the hills on the outer boundary, there was blue sky and the clouds were lifting off the tops. The second half of the walk took us round the back of the Drinns to the Lake and near to the Mill Pond and back to the car park.

Refreshments were had in the Balloo coffee shop, remembered by a lengthy struggle to replace the Tea Pot lid without breaking it! Isabel was the victor, having spent some 15 minutes on the task.

The next outing is Drumee Countryside walk on

7 February, starting and finishing in Castlewellan. It's six miles on road, paths and tracks. Meet at 9.30 in the Church car park.

For more info on the walk visit www.walkni.com/walks/359/drumee/



Betty



Aladdin in the Web Theatre

St Columbanus Parishioners played a large part in the Upstage Downstage production of Aladdin which ran in the Web Theatre from 11 - 15 November 2014.

Ian Bell, Director and Timmy Bell, Choreographer coached and moulded a very talented cast of 35 young actors to produce an excellent show which was thoroughly enjoyed by good audiences totalling about 400 over 5 nights.

Pat and John Peel, Pat and Harry Williamson, Laura Gilbert and Roberta Munnis looked after Front of House. Harry and Ann Browne, Adam Bell, Susan and Emma Stockton all ensured back stage ran smoothly. Harry and his team built a super set and Ann sourced and organised props which gave a real Middle Eastern feel to the Web. Eleanor Bell looked after costumes and make up. Jonnie Stockton played the Sultan in his first role on stage and would like to thank the whole team for their support, and Susan for making my robes. Emma helped her dad Jonnie by applying his make for the first (and maybe last time!). Leah Williamson was a super dancer, singer and senior member of the cast, putting in very brave performances, and helping the younger members. Conor Johnston stole the show as the Genie playing the part with great confidence and humour. The whole cast was lifted when the genie ran down the stairs and lit up the stage. Well done Conor and hopefully we will see you on much bigger stages in the future.

Huge thanks also to all from St. Columbanus who came to see the show and boost the enthusiastic audiences.

Jonnie Stockton

“A small gift because God really loves you”

*As promised in last months' magazine,
a fuller article from Helen and the Storehouse team*

The agencies who request hampers from us -CAP, St Vincent de Paul, FASA, Simon Community, Women's Aid, CAB, Mental Health teams, Health Visitors, Social Workers, North Down YMCA, Community and Tenants Associations and many more tell us of the great difference having access to emergency food has made to their work. Often I find myself saying “this is not a hand out but a helping hand to get folk over the difficult time they are going through”.



We are blessed at Storehouse with a large number of volunteers from many backgrounds, in fact everyone at Storehouse is a volunteer. When someone comes in to request an emergency hamper, perhaps reeling from shock at a visit they have just been on, we stop and pray for the situation and all who are involved in it. It has been a God given privilege to be able to pray and today, as I write this, I had the humbling experience of being present when one of our volunteers and a recipient of a hamper gave his life to the Lord. His life is very tough but I do believe our Lord will change his life. He doesn't have any family in Bangor but at Storehouse he has found love and support.

So my friends, you can see it is not just about handing over a bag of food, it is much, much more. Here are two letters we received recently –

“I am a 48 year old mother of two grown up sons. My eldest has left home which leaves my youngest son who is twenty-one. He has attended college since he was 17. When he turned 19, he was no longer entitled to EMA, which

meant he had no income at all.

I am on Job Seekers Allowance. My income to keep a house and my son, as he wanted to stay at college, is £142 fortnightly. Out of this I pay back £26 for a crisis loan I had taken out leaving me with £116. I pay £20 every fortnight for electricity, £16 for TV Licence and £31 to CAP (Christians Against Poverty) for debts I had got myself into. This leaves me with £49 per fortnight for my son and I to live on. I have oil central heating but cannot afford to run it.

Margaret continues to volunteer and be supported by Storehouse. She has applied for jobs, her son, although unwell at times, continues with his course. Margaret is also attending an Alpha course. We continually pray that her circumstances will improve.”

“Me and my partner are hard workers and proud to say so, we had both been working full time and everything was going okay. I was bringing home £1600 per month after tax and my partner £1700 per month after tax.

We booked our wedding for Summer 2015 and we bought an ex-council house which needed work doing to it but all stuff we could do, we were so happy, our first home and getting married and bargain hunting for bits and bobs.

Then the end of May 2014 things started to take a turn for the worse for us when my full time hours were cut down to 16 hours per week due to cut backs, I was gutted and struggled, then my partner's hours were cut to 20 hours and then to 16 hours so our wages have both dropped down to £460 per month which has hit us hard. With both wages we just cover the mortgage and insurances, car insurance and petrol to get me to work. We are left with around £20 per week to get gas and electric.

We have cried and both of us are applying for jobs full time but no joy and not through not trying as I have applied for 296 jobs within the Health and Social care sector. We have spoken and decided we are not doing Christmas and if we don't get full time jobs soon we will have to cancel our wedding. We don't live a fancy lifestyle, very basic to be honest.

A friend told me about the Storehouse and at first I didn't want to ring as I have always worked and felt embarrassed and cheeky, but things got so bad I phoned and they invited me down, I cried to Helen and Pauline, but these ladies have helped me so much getting us food hampers but also giving me hope that things will change. I now help to put these hampers together and feel like I have made friends with people who understand my situation.

What storehouse does for people like me is amazing; they are all stars and angels in my eyes.

Sarah continues to volunteer at storehouse and has been sign posted to other agencies for assistance. It is our plan to get her help with her CV and job interview skills. As I write she is attending a job interview and we pray that she will be successful this time.

Thank you for all your donations given in love.

Helen



Just Older Youth

I had to move and how it hurt! Leaving my home, the apple trees, lilac, white cherry, the turkey oak with its enchanting fuzzy nests for the acorns, knowing they would be destroyed to make room for apartments; my friends, the children who waved when they passed my window; St Christopher's, where I was useful and belonged – I thought my heart would break!

Today, St Christopher's is closed and the building is used by "Boring Wells", but the Rector (now retired) visits me and we chat about old times and mutual friends, some of whom I see at Christmas, while others send cards.

Now, I live near Jill and John (Boal, my daughter and son in law) and have found new friends at St. Columbanus. The Mothers' Union, Cinema Club, The Wednesday Club, Friday lunches and best of all, the Communion lunches in the hall keep me involved.

Yes, I miss my old home – I suppose I always will, but I am content here and find that I am glad I moved.

Joyce Stock



The Christmas Communion Lunch

As has become the tradition since the beginning, our parishioners who attended the Holy Communion and Christmas lunch in the Parish hall, were entertained by Ballyholme Primary school choirs and musicians. They put on a great show that was enjoyed by everyone and are to be congratulated on the standard of their performances. Well done.

Below are some of those who attended enjoying themselves.



Muriel and May



Trevor and Davy



Simon, Basil and Freddie



The Wednesday Club

Our first meeting after the Christmas break was attended by 28 ladies, on a cold, wet January day. Our speaker was Maureen Neill from the Macular Society. She gave us a very informative and interesting talk about this eye complaint and the options that were available to sufferers.

The winner of our draw this month was Margaret Kerr.

Looking forward to seeing you in February, and any new people who would care to take the plunge and join us - you will be very welcome.

Sue



Happy helpers at the Friday Christmas Lunch

Le jeu avant tout

For over two decades the annual Boxing Day football match between the 'Oldies' and the 'Youth' of Ballyholme Parish has taken place with players of all ages and abilities turning up to show off their skills. This year proved no exception with oversubscribed teams on both sides. The Oldies were managed by Alistair 'Ferguson' Morrison while the Youth were led by player/manager Craig 'Pardew' Armstrong. For the second year running the Oldies had to draft in some ringers in the form of ex Ulster and Scotland International Simon Danielli and Trinity Youth Worker Rob Gamble.



The match started off in its usual high tempo pace and the Oldies took an early lead as Stephen Baker Jnr set Gamble up with a skilfully placed flick. The Oldies kept up this momentum as another four goals were added from Jennings, Danielli and two from

Baker. If it were not for a great block from Andrew Morrison, S Owens would also have found himself on the scoreboard for the Oldies. Despite this strong start from the Oldies, Youth Team Captain Jamie kept his team's spirits high. John Darragh was moved to left back and managed to keep Danielli quiet for the remainder of the half, though before half time much to the dismay of the youngsters, Baker completed his hat trick (which he celebrated in his usual understated fashion....).

The second half started much brighter for the Youth who scored two goals in quick succession courtesy of Adam Craig and Matty Bell, with special thanks to 'leaky tap' Whiteside in defence. Craig's half-time hairdryer treatment and the addition of Ben McCullough to midfield seemed to have worked! Further goals would have followed had it not been for a last ditch tackle from D Owens and a great display of skill from Rankin in goal. The Oldies were speechless, could the Youth be making a comeback? And even more worryingly could their 'mature' bodies handle it? Alistair displayed his ability to work under pressure and reshuffled his team which seemed to do the trick as



G McCullough set up Gamble for his second. Jennings and Danielli grabbed another one each while Adam Craig stormed through with his second for the Youth. Gamble looked to have completed his hat-trick only for Whiteside to steal the glory by tapping over the line of an open net in true Boxing Day Spirit and could not hide his delight. The game certainly didn't disappoint as Baker Jnr scored another two and Sam Jean-Baptiste scored a screamer from just outside the box to make the final score 12-4 to the Oldies.



As usual the football was entertaining and all those who took part enjoyed themselves. A big thank you to all the players, especially those who turned up for the first time and to Stephen Baker Snr for the often thankless role of referee. Thanks also to all of the supporters and Don Todd for the team photos. Until next year....

P.S. We missed you WMB!

S Baker



Around the Parish



Christmas Bazaar



Carols by Candlelight



Children's Church Nativity



Coffee after Nativity

Restoration 2016 Parish Presentation by Architects Knox & Markwell 6 January 2015

A large number of parishioners came together on the evening of the Feast of the Epiphany for what will go down as a very significant meeting in the life and history of Ballyholme parish. People from across the range of services and age groups met to hear more about plans for the restoration of our beloved Church building in 2016. The spirit on the night was one of honouring and valuing the past and looking forward to new opportunities in the future.

From 7.30pm there was an opportunity to mingle over the drawings, tea and coffee in hand, and people were encouraged to linger after the meeting for as long as they wanted to as well. The Rector opened proceedings at 7.45pm with a Bible reading and prayer on the Epiphany theme of worship and gifts. He then welcomed Architects Knox & Markwell (AKM) and introduced Brian Knox and Judith Hamilton, both of whom remained available for questions and conversations until the last parishioners left the hall. (Copies of the drawings are still available to view in the Parish Centre.)

At the outset the Rector expressed the gratitude of the Parish and the Vestry to a number of key people and groups. First and foremost, he acknowledged the unforeseen and altogether providential arrival of the Reverend Alistair Morrison as our curate assistant. Coming from twenty years in the building industry and with a wealth of experience in the world of conservation architecture, the Rector described Alistair's arrival as the kick-start the project was waiting for.

The Rector thanked the members of the initial Design Brief Team for their two years of preliminary work: Stephen Baird, Ian Bell, Ann Browne, Richard Gillan, Geoff Hewitt, Margaret Magee, Patricia Robinson, Jonnie Stockton.



Next in line for thanks was the Building Sub-Committee for their eighteen months work (so far) on the technical side: Stephen Baker, Ian Foster, Geoff Hewitt, Ivan Humphreys, Alistair Morrison, James Perry, Christine Rankin

Latterly the Finance Sub-Committee were busy on the appeal publicity: Roy Lawther, Mark McBride, Kelly McCullough, Susan McNair, Patricia Robinson, Jonnie Stockton, and the rector also mentioned additional work from Jade Irwin and Alistair Morrison on the leaflet.

Finally, the Rector thanked the Liturgical Sub-Committee for their input on the interior of the Church building: Ian Bell, Jill Boal, Ann Browne, Christine Johnstone, Carla Kells, Margaret Magee, Christine Rankin, Patricia Robinson.

Gratitude was also expressed to those who in the few short weeks since the appeal publicity was circulated were already committing financially to support the project. A number of pledges had already been lodged.

Recapping on the progress made to date, there was a reminder of the journey so far

- 'Have your say' in 2009: 160 people discussing the needs of the parish as they saw them
- Vestry subsequently tasked a group to look at how well our buildings meet those needs

- This group developed what became a working Design Brief
- A Level Survey was commissioned to measure the vertical differences across our site and establish floor-to-ceiling height possibilities for a proposed new annex
- A Feasibility Study was commissioned to consider the viability of the overall project
- A Quinquennial Survey by the diocese established the condition of the existing buildings
- Based on the Feasibility Study, Vestry agreed a budget of £1.25 million, to include 10% of building costs going to designated mission projects
- Vestry initiated a design competition for the appointment of an architect-led design team
- Parishioners nominated nine firms of architects
- By means of a pre-qualification questionnaire we ended up with a shortlist of four firms
- These four firms competed on the basis of the Design Brief
- Vestry agreed the appointment of AKM
- Questionnaires were gathered by AKM from our various parish user groups
- December 2015 our financial appeal for Restoration 2016 was launched

The Rector reported that before Christmas AKM had supplied a draft estimate of costs. The figure presented was higher than our budget (our budget figure was not released to the four competing firms of architects). Currently the Building Sub-committee are working with AKM to eliminate elements from the scheme to bring the cost down, while endeavouring not to compromise the basic vision. The Building Sub-Committee will report back both to the Honorary Treasurer and the Vestry, on the understanding that we omit what we can't afford and add things in if we can. Ultimately it is the Vestry's task to ensure there is no financial black-hole.

Those present were reminded by the Rector that unavoidably at this stage there are a number of 'X' factors:

- parishioners' pledges need to come in before we can gauge where we are financially
- we don't know how much financial assistance we will be able to secure in grants
- we are also clarifying our position with regards to VAT
- the final builders' tender price is a key figure which cannot be known at this stage
- it remains to be seen how much we will need to borrow and how much that will cost in terms of borrowing interest rates
- Planning Permission will be applied for on a fuller scheme than we may finally run with but invariably the planning authorities will also make stipulations with cost implications

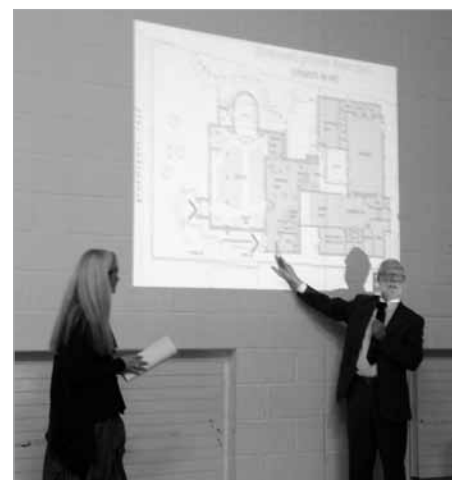
AKM made its presentation using PowerPoint and included a full selection of photographs and plans. Suffice to say AKM took us systematically from where we are to where we want to be. All areas of the proposed scheme were fully illustrated and gently and carefully explained, starting with the fabric needs of the buildings (the roof and windows in particular) and the plan for the interior of the Church itself.

Throughout the presentation, priorities of welcome, access, safety, flexibility, visibility and audibility were repeatedly underlined. Where relevant, AKM provided visual examples of parallels and precedents from other similar-type church restoration schemes it has been involved with.



AKM complimented the parish on the thoroughness of our Design Brief and on the huge amount of effort expended by so many. By the end of the presentation (more than half an hour in total), everyone present felt that AKM understood the spiritual integrity of our building. Brian and Judith strongly conveyed their respect for our Church of Ireland tradition and Celtic history in St Columbanus, and they took pains to insist that their primary aim is to conserve and enhance, rather than to desecrate and erase.

Opening the floor to questions, the Rector repeated his statement that there are



certain issues on which no definite answer is currently possible. He reminded the meeting that this is a process which has been ongoing since 2009, and that the presentation and parishioners' responses to it were an important part of that process. At that point AKM started taking notes on what became an extended period of interaction – and a lively one for the Rector, as he raced about the hall passing the microphone to and fro!



For nearly half an hour (and much longer after the meeting formally ended) parishioners asked questions, offered opinions, made observations and requested clarification on a number of practical points (in no particular order):

- Vestry facilities
- provision of toilets for Church, male, female and disabled
- seating capacity in the new interior Church layout
- provision for those who wish to kneel for prayer
- the appearance and condition of the exterior stonework
- safety and access in the Parish Centre car park (the lower car park)
- insulation considerations and options for the new heating system
- the need to secure the premises at night, given vandalism in the past
- the purpose/position of the children's room
- the amount of free circulation space towards the rear of the nave of the Church
- ventilation and extractor fans in the newly configured kitchen
- the new position of the choir in terms of visibility – clergy and people
- how the choir will process and recess in and out of Church
- what will happen to the existing Communion rail
- the need for more storage space
- the best use of the additional space adjacent to the Kajiado Room
- ease of access between the upper and lower levels

Again and again parishioners speaking from the floor paid generous compliments to all concerned for the quality of the overall scheme presented. The mood of the meeting was one of universal appreciation, positivity and excitement.

Drawing formalities to a close, the Rector thanked AKM for its time, care and preparation and then he thanked the parishioners present for their warmth, encouragement and support. At that point People's Churchwarden Jonnie Stockton spoke up on behalf of the meeting to thank the Rector for his leadership and drive, in propelling the whole project forwards over the previous five years.



In reply the Rector expressed his sense that over and above his bread and butter work of pastoral ministry, his responsibility on the macro level was to lead the parish through to physical and spiritual restoration. He then closed the meeting shortly after 9pm, committing the whole vision once more to God in the words of the Restoration Project 2016 prayer:

Father we thank you for our beautiful and beloved Church St Columbanus
and for those whose prayers and generosity bequeathed it to us.

Open our hearts in faith and trust that we may give
in the same spirit of gratitude and sacrifice as those who went before us.

By your Spirit guide and direct our plans to preserve and enhance your house of prayer
for our own generation and those who will follow after us.

To the glory of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



'The Precious Present'

Spencer Johnson, MD

December with Christmas is an emotive time, from extreme happiness for some, to extreme sadness for others, and in between an immense range of feelings.

We have now left behind the twinkling lights and festive colours, for what can often seem the dull greyness of January and February. This can be a reflective period and one which many people find difficult.

'The Precious Present' is a little book (tiny in size) with a big message. It tells of a little boy's quest to find a precious gift. The little boy is inspired by an elderly man and in the opening pages, the little boy begins to learn about 'The Precious Present'. The elderly man explains to the little boy that "It is a gift and it is precious because anyone who receives such a present is happy forever". The book takes us through the young boy's journey into adulthood, as he searches for this mysterious gift.

I find this book to be inspirational. Although it takes little time to read, I am left with a longer time on which to ponder ~ 'this mysterious gift'.

G. Y. McSorley



by Susan Mallon

I have been very blessed in my life and I thank God for all.

Firstly I love my family. My husband Mark, daughters Ciara and Orla and all my extended family especially my very special mother and father-in-law, Maura and Terry.

I love Saint Columbanus Church. When I step into the church building I feel God's presence. It can be very comforting at times and helps me bring my worries to Jesus and leave them with him. I love all the people I have met through the church, to mention a few, Simon and Alistair, Margaret Parr and all the members of our wee prayer group. I think of them as my prayer family.

I love my job as a nurse. I now work mostly with people with complex needs in their own home. I only work for a maximum of 12 hours, the family work 24/7. They are very special people and it is not always easy for them. They do not get many breaks.

I also like to do relief work in a local nursing home. It is lovely working on home turf with local folk with shared friends and acquaintances.

In my spare time, I like taking Pilates classes, going to the theatre and walking, even with my rascal of a dog Jess. Finally of course I love holidays. It is lovely having a break from routine and being spoilt for a day or two.

I have a lot to thank God for.

Susan Mallon



Nativity 2014 Photos

The photos from the Nativity service are available for viewing on the Photos section of the Parish website (www.ballyholmeparish.co.uk).

If you would like to have a higher quality copy of one, or more, of the photos of your child, then please make a note of the number(s) and send these in an email to Don Todd (don.todd@btinternet.com) or to the parish office (office@ballyholmeparish.co.uk). The photos will then be emailed to you.

TRUE LOVE

“True love is an act of the will – a conscious decision to do what is best for the other person instead of ourselves.” – Billy Graham

Shops are brimming with red and pink. Heart-shaped balloons, cuddly teddy bears that say ‘I love you’ on their t-shirts, valentine’s cards galore, red roses everywhere and restaurant prices soaring through the roof as they accept bookings for the special day. As I walk around the Shopping Centre and the town, I can’t help but feel sort of... empty. These lovely sentiments are all around me, yet it all seems so commercial, so meaningless. So I ask myself, what is love?



Throughout my teenage years (and beyond) I grew up thinking that love was a feeling. Love was a Disney movie, where there was always a happy ending and music played at exactly the right moment when the perfect words were said. Love was the dream date, where everything was paid for of course. Love was what I could get to make me feel happy. The more I got to know Jesus, however, my concept and understanding of love has dramatically changed and continues to develop and deepen. Jesus’ ultimate expression of love was extreme, painful sacrifice. Here was a man who did not have the beautiful white wedding or romantic relationship. He experienced heartbreaking betrayal by a couple of his close friends. He was questioned and rejected to the point of death. He did not have the opportunity to live a long life on earth, yet the example he set and legacy he left continues to echo and ripple throughout the whole world.



Sacrificial, unconditional, selfless, boundary-breaking love that did not seek its own reward was the love Jesus modelled. He spent time with outcasts, welcomed strangers, cared for the broken, included the excluded and extended the love of God to all people without exception. This Valentine’s season, perhaps we can do something sacrificial for somebody else without regard for what we might receive in return. Forgive somebody. Heal a broken relationship. Provide a gift of money/food for someone in need. Invite a lonely neighbour for dinner. Be creative – you know how you best can share selfless love. May your heart swell with joy as you discover more deeply what true love looks like.

Jade

Working here at Ballyholme Parish, one of the many things I am continually humbled by is the commitment that our parents make to showing their children who God is. From faithfully bringing them to Children’s Church and Jumpin to bedtime prayers and Bible stories, so much effort is made and it’s so wonderful watching this generation of Ballyholme kids growing up knowing how loved they are by the God who made them.



I’m also learning the truth, that as easy as you all make it look, it isn’t always! The world our kids are growing up in often seems to be vastly different to the one we knew, and it presents new challenges and new questions for parents and carers alike. When family time is increasingly being attacked by the busyness of life, how do we make? How do we best handle the “Big Questions” in an age where all kinds of information are so easily accessed by the click of a mouse? And in a society which values faith less and less, what can we do to help our kids develop a real faith in the living God?

On Saturday 7th February, at 10am, we will be offering a chance to explore these questions (and others!) at Faith & Family, a session for parents. This event will provide discussion with guest speakers in the Parish Centre as well as a chance to connect with other parents over coffee. If you would like to come along or ask for more details, contact Laura at laura@ballyholmeparish.co.uk

Laura

The Quiet Corner



Guilty m'Lud.

Guilty of only bringing God into my life when in difficulty or danger.



Reflecting on my childhood and youth, my parents brought me up to go to church as a family, then Sunday school, Church Scout group, and Confirmation. I always remember in my bedroom a picture on the wall showing a ghostly figure of Jesus with his hand on the shoulder of a Boy Scout. However it had no significant impact on me at the time.

I went to sea as a Deck Cadet in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. It was a very busy life aboard, training to be a Navigator, religion was rarely discussed or even mentioned on board- no church on Sunday, but a copy of the bible in the cabin- I never looked at it!

One day, deep at sea in rough weather, I was sent to secure a loose block and tackle on deck forward of the bridge. All was going well until on my return along the weather deck, the sea suddenly came over, taking my legs from under me - I was carried across the deck and stopped only when I struck the

ship side rails. -"Thank God"- several times, and in my mind - I remember the picture on my wall.

Twenty-five years later.

Now in charge of ship, its crew and carrying military personnel to Tromso in Norway.

In winter whilst heading into harbour early morning to offload, with a strong current and in deep water, and a wooden bridge between ship and harbour - also the morning traffic visible transitting the bridge. Suddenly the ship blacked out- all power on board is lost and we are drifting towards the flimsy wood bridge. - I imagined potential disaster! - I prayed! - in my mind - the childhood picture in my bedroom returned.

Quickly an anchor was let go, then a second one as I did not expect one anchor to hold in such deep water - but it did.

We can all bring to mind difficult situations where it seems the only one to turn to is God. Surely this is not the way it should be. He can be our guide in all that we do in our everyday lives.

Let him put his hand on your shoulder too.

Peter Robinson

Note

The picture on my bedroom wall? (now on the landing) "The Pathfinder" - painted by Ernest Stafford Carlos c.1900 can be found online.



There seems to be many events happening in our Parish during this New Year. We in Mothers' Union, will have our own Special Anniversary. We are looking forward to celebrating the **60th Anniversary** of our Branch. On **Monday 5th January**, Helen

McCann, a member of Bangor Parish Mothers' Union spoke about her collection of "Vintage Powder Compacts" and she also brought with her many other interesting objects which she had collected over the past years 17 years. These were passed around for closer inspection. Helen also has a keen interest in "Mercy Ships" which is an international Christian charity using hospital ships partnering with land based programmes to deliver transformational health care at no charge to the world's forgotten poor. Our thanks to Helen for a very informative evening.

Our Overseas night will be held on **Monday 2nd February** at 8.00pm when Mrs. Mary Munyangahu from Killyleagh will be our speaker. Toilet bags with some essential necessities are usually brought along to this meeting and are distributed by the Diocese to the Ulster Hospital, for patients who may have an emergency overnight stay in hospital.

On 2nd March we are having, as a fund raiser, an evening with **Re-Creation "Spring into Fashion"**. If you would like to model some clothes **with a difference** please let me know. Perhaps you might bring a scarf for sale and buy another. Even though you may not be a member of the Mothers' Union please support this event (Adm. £3.) Having said that, if you would like to join the Mothers' Union, contact me at the phone number below or inquire at the Parish Office. We would be delighted to welcome you to this worldwide organisation.

Ruth Ruttle (Branch Leader) phone 9145 0130

OUR WORSHIP

Sunday 1st February Epiphany 4

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 All Age Service
 11.30 Morning Prayer
 6.30 Word & Worship - Kajiado Room

Wednesday 4th February

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 8th February 2nd Sun before Lent

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Morning Worship & Children's Church
 11.30 Parish Communion
 6.30 6-8 - Columbanus Room

Wednesday 11th February

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 15th February 1st Sun before Lent

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Morning Worship & Children's Church
 11.30 Morning Prayer
 6.30 Ballyholme Churches Together at Ballyholme Presbyterian Church, Ashley Dr

Wednesday 18th February Ash Wednesday

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 22nd February Lent 1

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Holy Communion & Children's Church
 11.30 Morning Prayer
 6.30 Taize for Lent

Wednesday 25th February

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

February

1st: No crèche

8th: Heather

Glasgow,
 Betty Singleton, Helen Crothers

15th: Violet Davidson
 Christine Boyd, Angela McCartney

22nd: Katherine Newman,
 Catherine Darragh, Paula McIlwaine



February

1st: Pat Shannon

8th: Daphne Hamill

15th: Ann McMurray & Marie McKee

22nd: Betty Rainsford



February

1st: Ann Reynolds, Glynis McSorley, Pat Adair

8th: Mark & Carolyn Larmour, Pat Davidson

15th: Susan Stockton, Sharon & Michael Hatch

22nd: Maureen & Lorraine Colgan, Fiona Jackson

FUNERALS

26th November: Olivia Lawley, late of Sandringham Drive

4th December: Philip Clarke, late of Navar Drive

8th December: Moira Kelly, late of Cranley Lodge

12th December: Phoebe Stewart, late of Bryansburn Nursing Home

24th December: John Nixon, late of 82 Tonic Fold

2nd January: Robert Douglas, late of Bryansburn Nursing Home

BAPTISMS

7th December: KENDALL BLAIR SMYTH, son of Christopher & Rachel

28th December: DARCIE YVONNE & ROSIE PATRICIA BRITTAIN, twin daughters of Neil & Rachel

28th December JAMES PATRICK JOHN THOMPSON, son of Patrick & Catherine

18th January: HENRY JOHN WEIR, son of Christopher & Gillian



Children's Church Helpers

February

8th:

Jacqui & Neil

Devlin, Heather Dickey, Gillian Fletcher

15th: Karen Hunt, Debbie Hunter, Allison Jamison, Gillian Jones

22nd Tracie Andreasson, Gail Kerr, Caroline & Mark Larmour



Parish Office: 91274912
 Rectory: 91274901
 Curatage: 91271922
 Prayer Line: 07531806167

Transport: 07599794968
 Church Readers Rota:
 John 91467243 or Freda 91467624
 Web Site www.ballyholmeparish.co.uk