

St Columbanus

Ballyholme



From the archives
Restoration 2016 Update
Have you pledged yet?
Children's Room Explained

..On the way together..



The Parishioner

March 2015

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

“Pope berates Curia for 15 types of sin”. His Holiness certainly has a knack for grabbing the headlines! These sins apparently included (i) a sense of immunity among some officials who believed themselves to be beyond reproach, (ii) the “Martha-ism” of those who worked excessively, (iii) petrification of those who developed “a heart of stone” or “stiff neck”, and (iv) the functionalism of clerics who became like accountants or businessmen. With the launch of the appeal for Restoration 2016 I’m particularly conscious of (iv) so please help me out by making your pledges as freely and enthusiastically as you can – especially with Lent now under way! But what prompted Pope Francis to list off his cardinals’ and superiors’ spiritual shortcomings in the first place? In his own words, his hope was to stimulate “a true examination of conscience”. If that isn’t at least part of Lent for all of us, then it’s a pretty superficial exercise. Okay, Lent is not about makeover, it’s about Passover. On the cross Christ has paid the price for our mis-choices and mis-priorities. But it’s still up to us to see those mis-choices and mis-priorities for what they are and to do something about them.



Bishop Harold would like you to join him at Down Cathedral for the annual St Patrick’s Day Festival Service.

On this historic occasion our special guest will be The Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury. You are also welcome to attend the Holy Communion Service at Saul and to join the pilgrimage from Saul to Down Cathedral. Overflow seating will be available during the Festival Service.



Programme

- 9.00 am Holy Communion at Saul
Preacher Dom Mark-Ephrem (Holy Cross Monastery, Rostrevor)
- 10.00 am Pilgrimage from Saul to Downpatrick
- 11.45 am Festival Service in Down Cathedral
Preacher The Most Revd Justin Welby
- Wreath laying ceremony at St Patrick’s Grave
- 1.15 pm Irish stew lunch in the marquee

Transport to Saul

Between 8.00 and 8.45 am, private buses will leave from the Mall for the Communion Service and pilgrimage.

- The last bus for the Communion Service leaves at 8.45 am.
- The last bus for the pilgrimage leaves at 9.45 am.

Parking

Parking is available at Down High School, a 5 minute walk from the cathedral.

RSVP by email by 11 March:

info@downanddromore.org

Sabbath Moments

*(Inspired by participation
in a Lent House Group)*

Sabbath Moments
are not to be confused
with Senior Moments;
those maddening occasions when
we can't remember what to buy,
or go upstairs and don't know why,
or wonder where we parked the car
or where our keys and wallet are.

No, Sabbath Days
are much more clear;
one in seven throughout the year,
like clockwork, one might almost think.
But life is ever on the brink
of chaos and the unforeseen,
of consequence we did not mean,
all of which can soon deplete
the steady pulse of godly beat,
until each day appears the same
and Sabbath comes but just in name.

Oh for the best
of Sabbath rest,
for which our hearts are yearning;
Come healing peace,
let clamour cease,
in Christ, our hearts returning.
Come moments of renewing.

By David Williams

Parish Family Lunch and Easter Vestry



In accordance with chapter 3 of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, our annual General (Easter) Vestry meeting in Ballyholme takes place at

12.45pm on Sunday 22 March in the Parish Centre over a parish family lunch.

Constitutionally, as you know, we are free to conduct elections to the Select Vestry in whatever way we see fit. Written nominations will be invited ahead of the meeting in the hope that we will receive at least 12 names. It is up to you to stand yourself or to propose someone else to stand and the basic commitment is one meeting a month.

Nominations will close on Sunday 15 March. Forms will be available from the Churchwardens on Sundays, from the Parish Office on weekday mornings and from our Honorary Secretary Leslie Adams (91466690). We will take a digital photograph to use on the voting paper. So far as the agenda for the meeting itself is concerned, in addition to the elections, the adoption of the parish accounts and the submission of any reports, 'any other notified business' should be brought to the Rector's attention the day before the meeting at the latest. Please plan to be part of this important day in the parish calendar.

Holy Week Services

30th March - 4th April at 8.00pm

The Holy Week services this year will be held at 8pm each evening in Ballyholme Methodist church.

The speaker will be the Rev Bert Montgomery and his general theme is "Get Real", during which he will be sharing thoughts on Creation, The Church, Personal Faith and God's Call.

Holy Communion will be celebrated on Thursday evening, and breakfast will be served in the church hall after the Dawn Service on Easter Day.



WHERE IS YOURS?



11 - 18 OCTOBER 2015

Magazine Contributions

Thank you to everyone who has given towards the cost of The Parishioner via the annual brown envelopes – so far!

Since the cost to print the magazine last year was £3,000, perhaps those of you who haven't quite got back to us yet could rummage around and find your brown envelope from last month – though please, we're not fussy, any colour of envelope will do!

All outstanding contributions will be very much appreciated.

From the Archives

We have obtained a few old photographs from around 1967 or 1968, of our Brownie pack at camp. One of these is shown on the magazine cover. If you were there, or know who was, let us know.

We do have another, with names, which we hope to include in a later issue.

Following the Parish Presentation by Architects Knox & Markwell on 6 January 2015, questions about the proposed Children's Room have highlighted the need for clarification



about what the room is and what it is not.

Some seem under the impression that we are creating a new 'crying chapel' type facility and this was never the intention. Also, a number of different names for the room are in circulation and some of these may be slightly misleading.

For nearly as long as anyone in St Columbanus can remember, a crèche has been on offer at one of our Sunday morning services. In its current 10 o'clock form the crèche is valued and used by many although not by

all – and that is entirely fine.

Put simply, the intention behind the new Children's Room is to offer a purpose-built, permanent crèche facility which is appealing to children, helpful for parents and leaders, and available for use at all services and throughout the week. In many respects it is more of a re-location and improvement than the creation of a completely new facility.

Provision: worship at St Columbanus

There has never been any disagreement in Ballyholme: our children should be provided for on a Sunday morning as fully as possible. At 10am there is a clear understanding that children will be both seen and heard. We want to affirm this very strongly but also to stress that children are absolutely welcome to be present at all our services.

No desire to shepherd children out of Church is intended by the new room nor should one be inferred. Every effort will continue to be made to send out this signal. Whether at 8.30, 10.00, 11.30 or 6.30 on Sundays, or at any other services or events during the week, we believe the Children's Room will greatly enhance our child-friendly welcome.



Priority: our vision for children at Ballyholme

In terms of children coming to church generally, there are as many different approaches to this as there are families and it is something people do have strong feelings about. Suffice to say during the 2009 'Have your say' consultation a number of clear requests for a Children's Room closer to church were lodged.

It was apparent in 2009 that while our parish needed to raise our focus on families and young children we were somewhat limited by our resources. Back then crèche met in the Choir Room and while that was less than satisfactory at least it was close to the toilets and within slightly easier reach for pushchairs.



Purpose: what the Children's Room is for

It remains the most frequently expressed concern of parents, especially parents of newly baptized children, that they feel everyone is looking at them when their child is noisy. Sometimes they don't know where to go or what to do and sometimes they just stay away altogether. While we cannot cater for every individual need, the new Children's Room will make life easier for those who wish to avail of it.

As stated earlier, the new Children's Room is not about ushering children out or silencing them in any way. The opposite is true. It is about valuing them, improving the amenities currently on offer, and allowing the children to own a space, especially since there will be no need to set the room up or to take it down immediately after use as at present.

We want to decorate the new room attractively and also to name it, something like 'Noah's Ark' – all suggestions welcome! It needs to have a clear role and place at the heart of all we do.

Position: the right location

Over the last five years, alternative positions for this room have been exhaustively considered. Many of the options were ruled out as being too confined or hidden or unworkable in terms of the natural movement of people around the buildings.

We do not want the new room to be a restriction but an airy, enjoyable, freeing space. The hope is that the room itself will open out to the new Welcome Area – and that it will have its own toilet and/or baby changing facility very convenient.

There are several other advantages to this position

- A visible location at the centre of our worshipping life expresses the value we place on our children and their place at the heart of our church family.
- It reinforces a positive vision for an ever fuller integration of church generations.
- Research suggests that children being able to see and hear adults worshipping encourages their assimilation and aids their spiritual growth. In other words, it is a very good thing for the children using the Children's Room to be close to the worship service. Screens and speakers will help with this additionally.
- Adults using the room will feel more connected to the service in Church.



Perspective: the view from the Church

Although the room is at a right angle to the congregation and not visible to the whole church, some are anxious that there may be a potential distraction for worshippers, especially during the sermon. Others have pointed out how difficult glass is to keep clean, especially when young children come into contact with it! It should be noted that there will be no direct access to the Children's Room from Church. Nor will the room extend or protrude into the nave of the Church. It will come only as far as the existing red-brick perimeter wall (visible behind the organ pipes).

In order that the new room will still be visible and part of church but less potentially distracting (for everyone: children, leaders, parents, the wider congregation), a number of options will now be considered:

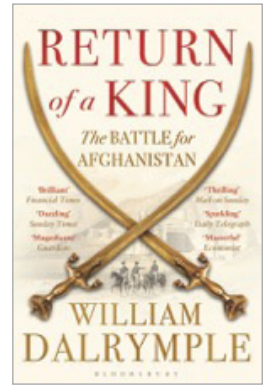
- frosted glass
- decorated glass
- glass that does not necessarily go all the way from floor to ceiling

Please note that the photos have been provided by Architects Knox and Markwell from other projects and are for illustrative purposes only.



I have been a fan of the bestselling author and historian William Dalrymple since I read his first book, which he wrote when he was 22 years old. Now his eighth book, *Return of a King: the first battle for Afghanistan* is superb. British army personnel and their allies have been dying in considerable numbers in Afghanistan, but it's not for the first time.

Dalrymple tells the story of how the British government in 1839 interfered by giving military assistance to oust Dost Mohammed (Barakzai Dynasty) and to reinstate Shah Shuja (of the Sadozai dynasty) as ruler of Kabul, a position he had lost way back in 1809. At first, British policy appeared to achieve positive results. However, revolt against the British led to them abandoning Kabul and suffering almost total annihilation as they tried, in appalling weather conditions, to retire to India in late 1841 a "rare moment of complete colonial humiliation", which Dalrymple skilfully describes. The author's excellent, carefully researched and very readable book is a reminder that the recreation and study of the past can offer important advice for future generations: some of it practical. It may also be moral: respect the customs of others, and avoid imposing yourself or your standards upon those of very different cultures. This epic story of imperial ambition and hubris is a lesson for our own times.



HM



I love to walk the beach in the early morning, hearing the waves and thinking of God's never-ending faithfulness.

I love to get engrossed in a good book and

be transported to a different time, place and circumstance.

I love to have a glass of wine and a simple meal with friends round my table with laughter, tears and a bit of craic.

I love to sit in front of a roaring fire, listening to the wind and rain and knowing that I don't have to go out again.

I love to see the family coming to visit and I love the peace when they have gone!

I love to get out into the garden, tidy it up, feel the soil beneath my fingernails and then get scrubbed clean again.

I love people watching, preferably with a cappuccino and a window seat in a good cafe.

I love to spend time with my husband, even if he is disturbing my reading by calling out his crossword clues!

I love to talk to God and thank him for this gift of life, which only He can give.

Each day is precious and only through age and difficulty have I come to realise this.

Jan Carver



Streetreach Bangor!

If you are in Year 8 or higher, and you want to do something worthwhile with your Easter holidays, get involved in Streetreach!

1st – 4th April 2015.

There will be loads to do, including gardening, painting, running a Kids club and a community fun day. You will make loads of friends, bless local people and give God glory.

Contact jade@ballyholmeparish.co.uk for more info, and like

'Streetreach Bangor' on Facebook.



God's Grace

I did not know His love before
The way I know it now.
I could not see my need for Him
My pride would not allow,
I had it all, without a care
The 'self-sufficient' lie
My path was smooth, my sea was still
Not a cloud was in my sky.

I thought I knew His love for me
I thought I'd seen his grace
I thought I did not need to grow
I thought I'd found my place
But then the way grew rough and dark
The storm clouds quickly
rolled
The waves began to rock
my ship
I found I had no hold.



The ship I had built myself
Was made of foolish pride
It fell apart and left me bare
With nowhere else to hide.
I had no strength or faith to face
The trials that lay ahead
And so I simply spoke His name
And bowed my weary head.

His loving arms enveloped me
And then He helped me stand
He said "you still must face this storm
But I will hold your hand"
So through the dark and lonely night
He guided me through pain
I could not see the light of day
Or when I'd smile again.



Yet through the pain and
endless tears
My faith began to grow
I could not see it at the time
But my light began to glow.
I saw God's love in a brand new light
His grace and mercy too,
For only when all self was gone
Could Jesus' love shine through
Anon

Just Older Youth

The Wednesday Club



27 of our members braved the cold to attend our February meeting. Our speaker was Gemma Eaton, who was able to help us find ways of building our family trees, by explaining what records were available on



Gemma with some of our helpers

line and on file at PRONI, which is now situated in the Titanic Quarter in Belfast. She brought with her a wee handout, with all the tips we would need to get started.
Off you go, girls!

The winner of this month's draw was Betty Rainsford and we were very pleased to welcome Maud to her first meeting.
See you next month.
Sue



Betty receiving her prize from Ann



Don't miss out our next Communion lunch, taking place during Holy Week on **Tuesday 31st March** at 12.30pm in the Parish Centre.

All are welcome, so please come along and bring a friend.
Need a lift or more information?
Please ring me at the Parish Office 91274912

God Bless
Karen

In place of cabbage

A woman confided in her minister that when she sent her husband to buy a cabbage for lunch, he had fallen and broken his leg. "That's terrible!" said the minister. "What did you do?" "I opened a can of peas", she replied.





In recent months I have had the privilege to be involved with various people as they have wrestled with issues, with life overseas and with their relationship with God. I have been

reminded that we are God's workmanship, still a work in progress. We have insecurities and fears to struggle with no matter what part of the planet we live and work on. Living in the, at times stressful, setting of another culture can more easily uncover such things. What is your perception of a 'missionary'?

A quirky eccentric person? Someone who always seems to be talking about God? Someone who dresses in an old fashioned way and wears sandals? An everyday ordinary person? Someone who strikes you as 'holy' whatever you may think that looks like? I would say that in our own way we are all a bit quirky or eccentric – I think you have to be a little unusual to help you cope in a strange culture! It is enjoyable to acknowledge and accept that fact and then try to live in harmony in a small community. As for dress code.... have you seen my husband...?

Many people admire individuals who have gone to work abroad because they have taken a risk and there is a perception that they have sacrificed careers, big salaries and the comforts of modern day living and technology.

It can be difficult for people at home to relate to their Mission Partners, usually because a degree of time has passed between visits and there often isn't time to get into the 'nitty gritty' of life with them. The Mission Partners fly in for a visit and share mostly the highlights of their recent term overseas. It is right and good to celebrate what God has been doing, to encourage supporters that God is answering their prayers and give accountability for how funds have been used. We don't often share about our moments when we have a crisis of faith, backslide or when we wonder if we got it wrong and perhaps it was right for us to stay at home instead of work overseas.

We are all a work in progress and the selection committees send us out knowing that we are not perfect but confident that we have the potential to do more good than harm! The selection process does not however eradicate our old hurts, anxieties, poor coping strategies and yes wait for it – major character flaws, so we pack them with our other baggage as we go to work overseas. The stresses of learning to live and find one's place in a new culture can certainly bring out the good, the bad and the ugly in us.

Africa (and I am sure other developing countries) has a way of exposing our weaknesses and strengths and magnifying them which can be great and awful all at once. For example, I hear my doctor friends and husband bemoaning the fact that they have just lost their temper with staff yet again, most times it is totally justifiable, but still... what kind of witness is it? In the same morning they will save a life or bring a new baby into the world after a difficult delivery or see someone come to faith.

We wonder what people in our churches at home would think if they had been there when we lost our temper; when we have our bad days and wish we were anywhere but here; when we have compromised; when we struggle in our faith. Would people understand our failings and humanness or would they be totally disillusioned? Despite the fact that we are living the dream of serving God overseas, we do feel responsible to our supporters and we fear letting you down by our conduct or the decisions that we make. We couldn't be here day to day if it wasn't for you holding us up in so many ways. We do not see many souls coming to Christ daily. We are basically doing what we would do if we lived in Bangor – being a family, working, playing, worshipping and trying to be a witness for Christ as we go about our daily lives. Certainly there is more openness from people in Uganda to listen when you offer to share the Gospel, but even then I am shocked to acknowledge that I haven't shared the Gospel with anyone on a one to one basis for a long long time! (Please don't sack me CMSI!). (I hope that readers of this blog haven't decided to stop supporting future soup lunches or missionary appeals!)

As we journey along together in partnership for the Lord and you get to know more of our character flaws and failings, please hang in there and keep praying for us, 'confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you (us) will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.' Phil 1:6

Denise Wilson



Restoration Project: March update

Following the presentation of the Restoration Project to the Parish on 6th January 2015, Architects Knox and Markwell (AKM) attended the January meeting of the Select Vestry. Judith Hamilton of AKM outlined the Architect's responses to issues raised during the presentation on 6th January (see February edition of The Parishioner). Many of them continue as work-in-progress, but solutions/options are being developed subject to eventual approval, and within our overall budget. AKM's responses included the following:

- **Vestry Facilities** - A newly built cupboard for housing Communion Table frontals and a safe for the Church Silver will be provided adjacent to the Chancel.
 - **Toilet Provision** - Male, female and disabled toilets will be provided off the Welcome Area in the new Annex building.
 - **Seating Capacity** - New seating in the church will be flexible allowing space to be created as required. The proposed seating layout actually provides us with a marginal increase in those who can attend any one service.
 - **Kneeling at Prayer** - Additional space will be provided every fourth row for those who wish to kneel.
 - **Existing Stonework** - The existing stonework is in reasonable condition, and it would not be cost effective to clean, as the stone would be dulled down again by impurities in the air within a few years of being cleaned.
 - **Safe Access in Parish Centre Car Park** - A second entrance gate from the upper carpark allowing for a new one-way system is proposed. However, the implementation of this one-way system would depend on costs. A second solution would be to limit the use of the car park to Blue Card holders only.
 - **Insulation to Church Roof** - It is planned to install insulation at roof level in the church, however to do so raises issues of controlling condensation and how the ceiling would be finished after roof level insulation had been installed.
 - **Securing Premises** - The existing security railings and gates will be reconfigured to ensure the premises are secure at night.
 - **Children's Room** - See separate article on pages 4 & 5.
 - **Circulation Space to Area at Rear of Nave** - The new seating arrangement will provide a good amount of free circulation space just inside the entrance porch of the church.
 - **Ventilation and Extract to Proposed Kitchen** - Provision for ventilation and extract will be installed along with Velux windows to provide natural lighting.
 - **Choir Seating** - Choir seating will be tiered in the new location by providing a number of raised steps to improve the visibility of the Choir to the congregation.
 - **Choir processing and recessing** - The choir would use the existing Choir Room for robing and then make its way down via the new Annex to proceed into the church.
 - **Communion Rails** - The existing Communion rails will be removed and new removable rails provided at the steps to the extended semi-circular dias. The new rails can be removed should the dias area be needed for a children's presentation or drama.
 - **Storage** - Additional capacity is planned at various locations.
-

- **Circulation Space Adjacent to Kajiado Room** - Additional circulation space will be provided in the newly formed corridor adjacent to the Kajiado Room.
- **Ease of Access between Proposed Upper and Lower Levels** - A new staircase and passenger lift will be installed to provide access for both able bodied and disabled persons.
- **Visual Presence from Groomsport Road** - The new glass doors facing onto the Groomsport Road on the proposed Annex will enable passersby to see that the church is a busy, active community. AKM were asked to provide a feature wall in the porch at the new Groomsport Road entrance.

Following AKM’s presentation, and taking on board the above comments/changes, it was unanimously agreed by the Select Vestry to proceed with an application for planning permission. The plans to be submitted for planning permission will show the purpose, size and overall external shape of the proposed new annex. However, the usage and layout of internal spaces may change as the design process develops.



Signing of the contract with the Architect

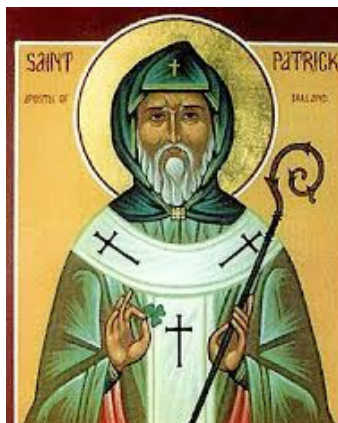
Around the Parish



Parish Quiz



17th March St Patrick's Day – beloved apostle to Ireland



St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. If you've ever been in New York on St Patrick's Day, you'd think he was the patron saint of New York as well... the flamboyant parade is full of American/Irish razzmatazz.

It's all a far cry from the hard life of this 5th century humble Christian who became in time both bishop and apostle of Ireland. Patrick was born the son of a town councillor in the west of England, between the Severn and the Clyde. But as a young man he was captured by Irish pirates, kidnapped to Ireland, and reduced to slavery. He was made to tend his master's herds.

Desolate and despairing, Patrick turned to prayer. He found God was there for him, even in such desperate circumstances. He spent much time in prayer, and his faith grew and deepened, in contrast to his earlier years, when he "knew not the true God".

Then, after six gruelling, lonely years he was told in a dream he would soon go to his own country. He either escaped or was freed, made his way to a port 200 miles away and eventually persuaded some sailors to take him with them away from Ireland.

After various adventures in other lands, including near-starvation, Patrick landed on English soil at last, and returned to his family. But he was much changed. He had enjoyed his life of plenty before; now he wanted to devote the rest of his life to Christ. Patrick received some form of training for the priesthood, but not the higher education he really wanted.

But by 435, well educated or not, Patrick was badly needed. Palladius' mission to the Irish had failed, and so the Pope sent Patrick back to the land of his slavery. He set up his see at Armagh, and worked principally in the north. He urged the Irish to greater spirituality, set up a school, and made several missionary journeys.

Patrick's writings are the first literature certainly identified from the British Church. They reveal sincere simplicity and a deep pastoral care. He wanted to abolish paganism, idolatry, and was ready for imprisonment or death in the following of Christ.

Patrick remains the most popular of the Irish saints. The principal cathedral of New York is dedicated to him, as, of course, is the Anglican cathedral of Dublin.

Puzzle Time

There are 5 houses in 5 different colours. In each house lives a person of a different nationality. The 5 owners drink a certain type of beverage, smoke a certain brand of cigar, and keep a certain pet. Using the clues below can you determine who owns the fish?

The Brit lives in a red house.

The Swede keeps dogs as pets.

The Dane drinks tea.

The green house is on the immediate left of the white house.

The green house owner drinks coffee.

The person who smokes Pall Mall rears birds.

The owner of the yellow house smokes Dunhill.

The man living in the house right in the middle drinks milk.

The Norwegian lives in the first house.

The man who smokes Blend lives next door to the one who keeps cats.

The man who keeps horses lives next door to the man who smokes Dunhill.

The owner who smokes Blue Master drinks chocolate.

The German smokes Prince.

The Norwegian lives next to the blue house.

The man who smokes Blend has a neighbour who drinks water.



Answer on page 14

On Monday 2nd February we welcomed Mary Munyangahu from Killyleagh to speak to us at our 'Overseas' evening. Mary spoke and showed photographs of life in Rwanda during the genocide. Not a pleasant picture to see. Mary also spoke about life in Rwanda and the change of lifestyle for their family now living in Northern Ireland. Mary's husband, Jerome, is Rector of Killyleagh Church of Ireland. Mary also spoke about the new Charity Shop which has been opened in Downpatrick named 'Bird of Paradise' and was extremely grateful for the many donations of items which the members had brought along for the shop. Many thanks also to the members for all the toilet bags supplied for the Ulster Hospital.

On Sunday 1st March 2015, the Mothers' Union will serve the tea/coffee between services. On Monday 2nd March at 8.00 p.m. we are having a Fashion Show with a difference. Admission £3. There will also be a Scarf Sale and of course the usual supper will be served. We would value your support for this fund raising event towards Branch funds.



On Friday 6th March the Women's World Day of Prayer will be held at Groomsport Presbyterian Church at 11.00 a.m. Tea/coffee will be served in the Walter Nelson Hall opposite the Church from 10.00 a.m. This year the Women of the

Bahamas have prepared the Service.

On Wed. 25th March the Annual Diocesan Festival Service will be held in Lurgan. The preacher will be the Bishop of Meath and Kildare, the Most Revd. Pat Storey, first lady Bishop in the Church of Ireland. From Monday 30th March Holy Week services will be held this year in the Methodist Church, Brooklyn Avenue.

On Monday 13th April we are having a Movie Night not in the cinema but in the Church Hall.

Forthcoming events: Sat 9th May Outing to Lurgan and Thurs 21st May Indoor and Senior Members Annual Tea Party in St. Mark's Newtownards. Our Overseas Sale and Coffee Morning will be held this year on Sat 6th June.

Ruth Ruttle (Branch Leader) Ph. 9145 0130



A religious war that no one acknowledges

"This century's "greatest story never told", says John L. Allen Jr in *The Spectator*, could well be the "global war" against Christianity. Journalists report individual atrocities – the deadly attacks on churches in Pakistan and Kenya, for example – but they don't draw attention to the larger narrative. Which is this: fully 80% of acts of religious discrimination in the world today, according to the International Society for Human Rights, are directed at Christians. From India to Nigeria, from Burma to North Korea, people are being killed for their Christian beliefs: one study puts the average kill rate over the past decade at 100,000 people a year. Some of the worst violence has occurred in Iraq, where a mere 150,000 of the 1.5 million Christians who lived there in 1991 remain. Most have fled, but a "staggering number have been killed". Why has this "global war" been overlooked? Because the victims are non-white and poor? Because many of us, calling to mind the Inquisition, think of persecution as a thing done by Christians, not to them? "Whatever the motives for silence, it's well past the time for it to end."



During Lent, the shopping trolley will be in the church every Sunday for your donations of food, cooking oil, cereal, loo roll, shampoo, tinned/dried potatoes, tomato sauce, long life milk etc, for the North Down Storehouse but all donations are much appreciated.



St Columbanus Walking Group

THE WALKERS AT MAGHERA OLD CHURCH



Saturday 7 February dawned dry and cold for St Columbanus Walkers, meeting as usual in the Church car park to continue this year's theme of walks in Co Down. We were delighted to see Gem and Stephen Moran back with us fit and ready to ramble! The venue on this occasion was a 'Drumee Country Walk' featuring a starting point in Castlewellan town square, and by dint of back roads, country lanes and bridle paths meandering through the surrounding countryside for around 6 miles.

Scenery in the vicinity of the Mournes is always dramatic and on this occasion, on a gray day, was dominated by a snow line down to around a couple of hundred metres with cloud cover not far above obscuring the upper slopes.

Conversation, as always, played a big part in our meanderings ranging through politics, history and a multitude of stimulating current and obscure topics often resulting in light-hearted solutions to the problems of the world. At around our half way point at the end of a long lane we reached our lunch stop and the highlight of our walk. Maghera old church, now in ruins, was built in the 13th Century and is surrounded by an ancient graveyard with the remains of a round tower nearby. The current Church of Ireland rebuilt in 1887 stands near at hand. Some time was spent plundering through the grave yard where many of the headstone inscriptions have been completely weathered, but we did manage to read one going as far back as 1783! History books tell us that in the 19th century an enamelled



plaque found in the graveyard, featuring Roman soldiers piercing Christ's side, is reckoned to have belonged originally to a member of the Knights Templar. After lunch, and glad to be getting warmed up again, we looped round more country lanes, heading through Drumee townland, then over Bunkers Hill and back to Castlewellan. The Walkers' day is never over of course until we have our famous coffee and 'craic' stop which, accompanied by a fine selection of chocolate surprises, we enjoyed in Killinchy then back to the car park for around 5.00pm.

Our next walk on the first Saturday of March will feature travel by bus to Newtownards and Comber, then walking via Scrabo and Clandeboye to Conlig and bussing it back to Bangor. You would love it - why not come along!

IT'S SPRING-CLEANING TIME!

Need somewhere to get rid of all those things you never use?
Then plan to make use of our

CAR BOOT SALE

on Saturday, 30th May

For more information, get in touch with Margaret Parr on
02891467532



YOUTH - NEWS

youth [youth] (youths) news [nooz]

Capture - Captivity - Conversion - Christianity

“Christ beside me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ within me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me.” - A prayer of St Patrick



What a lovely prayer by St Patrick, but he certainly did not always think this way. Actually, word has it that he was not a Christian at all until... wait for it... PIRATES CAPTURED HIM! Talk about life taking a turn for the worse! Patrick must have been fearful, confused and utterly lost.

His time in captivity was crucial in terms of his faith developing. At the end of the day, when you are in dire straights, you have to draw strength from somewhere. It was only natural that his soul would cry out to God! Often when we have deep needs or big trials in life, we cling to God the most.

Needless to say anyway, Patrick found Jesus and decided to wholeheartedly follow him. He ended up ministering to lots of people, and was even ordained as a Bishop!! We never know what adventures God might take us on when we decide to follow!

When things get difficult, like school work is too hard, someone we love gets sick, we have fall outs in friendships or there are arguments at home, the temptation is to blame God and run away from God. Instead, let's take our cue from St Patrick, who ran towards God and found strength and faith to endure the hard times.



EASTER JUMPIN!

That's right, Tiggers, Wallabies and Rooz, it's almost time to come back for three days of fun and games! This year Easter Jumpin' will be held from Wednesday 8th – Friday 10th April! All children of Primary School age are welcome, but places are limited. Forms are available from the Parish Office - as always, there will be no preferential treatment and places

will be reserved on a first come, first served basis. **Places will only be confirmed upon receipt of booking forms and full payment.**

Payment works in terms of days attended. The cost for Y1 - Y4 is £4 per day, so £12 in total. The cost for Y5 - Y7 is £5 per day, due to the extra evening session, so £15 in total. Please enclose either cash or a cheque (made payable to Ballyholme Parish Youth) along with your form.

Registration will close on Tuesday 31st March for administrative purposes. If you have any questions, please email Laura at laura@ballyholmeparish.com

The Quiet Corner

I am a worrier! Even when things are going well I daren't relax, convinced that something terrible is just waiting to take me by surprise. So, three years ago when my husband, Gerry, and I decided to move house I had plenty of opportunities for genuine worries. Would we choose the right house? Would we be able to sell our present one? Would we miss all our friends? Would we be happy in a new church?

At that time we were living between Kircubbin and Portaferry and we'd decided to move up the road to North Down. We'd enjoyed our time down the Peninsula and in particular I loved the great variety of birdlife offered by Strangford Lough. It was hard not to marvel at the exuberance of the house martins, which flew from Africa each year to nest in our eaves but I was especially intrigued by the brent geese, which are so associated with Strangford. These geese fly nearly three thousand miles every year from the Arctic Circle to winter on the lough. Their long and dangerous flight across the Atlantic Ocean obviously involves facing great hardship. They fly in the classic V shape with the older experienced birds, which have made the journey before, taking in turns the physically harder job at the tip of the arrow. The migration of the brent geese from Canada to County Down and back is one of the miracles of nature.

Thinking about their remarkable journey reminded me of lines from a poem I had read about a man watching a wild bird in flight:

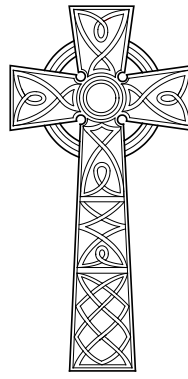
“He who, from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright.”

In all humility I had to recognise that what I was facing was trivial in comparison with the flight of the brent geese “from zone to zone”; although the future seemed uncertain to me, I realised that I really could trust God to “lead my steps aright”.

Looking back I can give thanks to God for answered prayer – He really did guide us. We're happy in our new home, enjoying the delights of Belfast Lough and sightings of a pair of jays; we managed to sell our old house despite the slump in the housing market in 2012; we've made a lot of new friends, not least through our joining St Columbanus; we feel really privileged to worship in such a lively and caring church.

So have I learnt not to worry? I'm afraid that's still work in progress. When feeling anxious I do, however, find myself returning to the words of a chant from the Taizé services I love: “Calm me, Lord, as you calmed the storm/Still me, Lord, keep me from harm.”

Freda Monaghan



Children's Church Helpers March

8th: Gerry McCaughan, Kelly McCullough, Janice McDonagh
15th: Trish McGrugan Rhonda Magennis, Margaret Moorehed,
22nd: Amanda Thompson, Sarah Tweedie, Geoff & Gillian Young
29th: Fiona Oliva, Tracie Andreasson, Sarah Benton, Emma Darragh



March

1st: Ruth Ruttle
8th: Sue Bleakley
15th: Sybil Robinson
22nd: Vicky Hayes
29th: Karen Baker

March

1st: No creche
8th: Heather Glasgow, Ruth Toy, Emma Sutherland
15th: Katherine Newman, Emma McDonald, Catherine Thompson
22nd: Violet Davidson, Ann Browne, Rosemary Thompson
29th: Julie Monaghan, Aileen Smyth, Rachel Brittan



March

1st: Mothers' Union team
8th: Gillian & Geoff Young, Patrick Crothers
15th: Irene Bell, Tracie Andreasson, Maureen Aiken
22nd: Jem Moran, Joy Hamilton, Ann Shaw
29th: Edna Morrison, Gillian Fletcher, Carole Majury



OUR WORSHIP

Sunday 1st March 2nd Sunday before Lent

8.30 Holy Communion
10.00 All Age Service
11.30 Morning Prayer
6.30 Holy Communion

Wednesday 4th March

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 8th March 3rd Sunday in Lent

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

Wednesday 11th March

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 15th March 4th Sunday in Lent Mothering Sunday

8.30 Holy Communion
10.00 Morning Worship & Children's Church
11.30 Morning Prayer
6.30 Ballyholme Churches Together

Wednesday 18th March

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 22nd March 5th Sunday in Lent

8.30 Holy Communion
10.00 Holy Communion
11.30 Morning Prayer
6.30 Evening Prayer

Wednesday 25th March

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 29th March Palm Sunday

8.30 Holy Communion
10.00 Healing & Wholeness
11.30 Healing & Wholeness
6.30 Confirmation

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

FUNERAL

5th February

Joan Foye late of
Ballymaconnell Nursing
Home

BAPTISMS

8th February

HOLLY OLIVIA WALSH,
daughter of Damien & Laura
WOODIE MITCHELL CRAM,
son of Martin and Rebecca



Have you pledged yet?

Restoration 2016

Please return your pledges in the box on Sundays
or through the week to the Parish Office.

Extra leaflets and forms are available at the back of Church.

Thank you to everyone who has committed so far.

£5 per week