

St Columbanus

Ballyholme



ST. COLUMBANUS' COLLEGE



From St. Columbanus to
St. Columbanus' College
Restoration Funding Update
Keep Fit



..On the way *together*..



The Parishioner

Dec 2015 / Jan 2016

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



The Pedalling Parson (temporarily)

Actress Linda Bellingham who died of cancer last year had hoped against hope for 'one last Christmas'. So her husband cooked a turkey dinner for 16 people in October. What is it that makes this season so desperately longed-for? Undoubtedly Christmas reveals something about ourselves. The cynics might say it reveals how greedy some people are and how ready to seize upon the glee of Christmas Christianity whilst conveniently forgoing the gore of the full-blown Easter version. Personally, I prefer to see Christmas as revealing our generous side. It also plays on our natural desire to be together with the ones we love, however stressful the reality of that may prove! Underpinning all of which, are events at that stable in Bethlehem. Into a world of uncertainty and instability, where so often we feel exposed, vulnerable and ultimately all too mortal, enters the Christ Child. It's a birth which ushers in the end of death and the beginning of life for all those who come to Him in simple faith and trust. How else are we to respond, if not in wonder and worship?

See you at Church this December and, from 3 January, see you at St Columbanus College.



My chains fell off... NOT THERE YET!

So wrote Charles Wesley in his classic redemption hymn 'And can it be'. If you

don't immediately remember, the line is: "*My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth and followed thee.*"

I can't honestly say I was in the mood for hymn singing that October night at the far corner of Towerview when I suddenly found that Bella's chain was hanging loose. It was about twenty to nine and while at least it wasn't raining, no amount of pedalling would get me anywhere! Still, all in a good cause. Which in case anyone needs reminding, is not my personal fitness. Basically, I donated my car, the second most valuable thing I own (after our house down the country) to the Restoration Harvest Gift Day. Until we have sufficient funds pledged to cover our costs for the most valuable thing our parish owns, namely, our beloved St Columbanus Church, I will endeavour to cycle my rounds of the parish as a reminder of the task at hand. As you will see from the Treasurer's update, the response so far has been extremely encouraging. The target is very much in sight, but until the rest of our active congregation get around to responding we remain NOT THERE YET.

Thank you to all those already involved. Pledge forms are available from the back of Church and may be returned to the Parish Office.

Jill Boal: Diocesan Reader Emeritus

In a typically quiet and understated way, our Diocesan Reader Jill Boal hung up her blue scarf on 22 November which significantly was the last Sunday of the Church's year, the festival of Christ the King.



It was a difficult decision after 23½ years, but for various personal reasons, Jill thought it time to retire before she became unreliable! Although a familiar face at morning worship, Jill also preached and led regularly on Sunday evenings, and in several other parishes besides Ballyholme in the wider diocese and beyond. Jill hopes to continue to sing in the choir and, having been made Diocesan Reader Emeritus by Bishop Harold, she has promised not to see us stuck! Alongside her husband John (our first deputy organist) Jill will also be a regular at 8.30 and on Wednesday mornings.

For now, our thanks to Jill for all she has given so richly to the parish which means so much to her.

A presentation to Jill on behalf of the parish will take place over coffee between the services on Sunday 6 December.

Restoration Funding Update – November 2015

We have been “*on the way*” for the past 10 months to raise the money required to fund the restoration project. Now is a good time to update you on the progress so far. As at the 1 November 2015, the Church has raised:

One off cash donations (Including £7,500 from the Harvest giving day)	£56,051
Bank of Ireland Savings account (Accumulation of Standing Orders and Legacy monies)	£45,448
Legacy (held in savings account, matures April 2016)	£100,000 + interest

In addition to the figures above, there is £3,200 per month in standing orders accumulating in the bank. Additionally, gift aid will be claimed in December on all eligible donations.

There has been some expenditure and up to now £33,598 has been spent in 2015 on Architect fees, surveys and the project to move the NIE electricity substation.

Thank you for your generous support which has enabled the Church to reach this point on the journey. RL



The Wednesday Club

Our November speaker, Madeline McAllister from the Down Museum in Downpatrick, gave us a very interesting and amusing talk on “Frills and Flounces”. through the years. She had some examples of early underwear, which raised a wry smile or two amongst the ladies.

The winner of this month’s draw was Margaret Lockhart.

Don’t forget, Christmas lunch on **2nd December at 12.30pm**. Please remember to bring a small gift for Santa’s sack.

Looking forward to seeing you in December Sue

Memories.....

I remember the cheese of my childhood
And the bread that we cut with a knife,
when the children helped with the housework,
and the men went to work not the wife.

The cheese never needed a fridge,
and the bread was so crusty and hot,
The children were seldom unhappy
and the wife was content with her lot.

I remember the milk from the bottle,
with the yummy cream on the top,
Our dinner came hot from the oven,
and not from the fridge in the shop.

The kids were a lot more contented,
they didn’t need money for kicks
Just a game with their mates in the road,
and sometimes the Saturday flicks.

I remember the shop on the corner,
where a pen’orth of sweets were sold
Do you think I’m a bit too nostalgic,
or is it....I’m just getting old?

Anon

St Columbanus Story - ‘Mary McAleese & The Man Who Saved Europe.’

Don’t forget, if you did not manage to see the TV programme at the end of November, made by Declan McGrath, either on BBC NI or RTE, they will be available to watch on the iplayer.

As Declan said in the article on the web site “*I hope that you were able to tune in to see either the Irish language version (with subtitles) of Mary McAleese & The Man Who Saved Europe shown on BBC NI on Sunday 22nd November, or the English language version, shown on RTE One on Tuesday 24th November. As parishioners of St Columbanus, you should take pride and feel a certain sense of ownership in the film, not only because it highlights the magnificent achievements of your patron, Columbanus, but also because a trip to your church was key to making it happen.*”



December

6th: Jill Owens, Daphne Moore, Barbara Wallace

13th: Elaine Elborn, Jacqui & Neil Devlin

20th: Charlie Robinson, Nicole Watson

27th: Yvonne Manogue, Janice Hewitt, Vicky Hayes

January 2016

3rd: Ann Reynolds, Susan & Jonnie Stockton

10th: Tony & Jan Carver, Glynis McSorley, Peter Robinson

17th: Gillian & Geoff Young, Ann Shaw

24th: Michael & Sharon Hatch, Pat Davidson

31st: Kelly, Ann & Karen

December

6th Violet

Davidson,
Judith Bell,
Aileen Smyth

13th: Violet Davidson,
Katherine Newman, Rachel Brittan

20th: no crèche

27th: no crèche

January 2016

3rd: no crèche

10th: Violet Davidson
Christine Boyd, Leanne Young

17th: Katherine Newman,
Ann Browne, Catherine Darragh

24th: Aileen Smyth, Anca Buzatu, Colette Pike

31st: Violet Davidson,
Rosemary Thompson,
Michelle Rice



December

6th: Stefan Andreasson,
Sarah Benton,
Emma Darragh,
Fiona Oliva

13th: Janet Boal, Neil & Jacqui Devlin, Heather Dickey

20th: Gillian Fletcher, Deborah Galbraith, Catherine Nuttall

January 2016

10th: Debbie Hunter, Allison Jamieson, Gillian Jones, Gail Kerr

17th: Carolyn & Mark Larmour, Kelly McCullough, Janice McDonough

24th: Trish McGrugan, Rhonda Magennis, Margaret Moorhead, Catherine Nuttall

31st: Amanda Thompson,
Sarah Tweedie, Geoff & Gillian Thompson



Walkers' Winter Wanderings



By the time you read this we will have been to

Mossley and will be looking forward to our annual Christmas walk and lunch on 5th December. This year we will take a short walk to Groomsport and back and then get all smartened up for the Christmas Lunch at the Esplanade Restaurant.

In January we head for so-far unexplored territory on Hudy's Way in the low Sperrins. It is reputedly named after Hudy McGuigan, "a bit of a local character who would ride his horse around stark naked. And there was one time he tried to fly off a mountain with a pair of goose-feather wings. Did he succeed? Well - he came down to earth with a bang, let's say..."

More info from Betty on 91465372

FUNERAL

22nd October

Elizabeth Wilkinson, late of Movilla Nursing Home Newtownards.

Percy French Players

Present an evening

with Percy French & friends

On

**Saturday 5th December
7.00 – 9.30pm**

In the Parish Centre

Suggested donation £5
(in aid of

Parish Restoration Fund)

Limited seating: book with the Parish Office

*Light refreshments
will be served*



December

6th Audrey Carroll

13th Pamela McNutt

20th Christmas

27th Christmas

January 2016

3rd: Susan Stockton

10th: Susan McNair

17th: Agnes Officer

24th: Jacqui Devlin

31st: Pat Shannon

Parish Office: 91274912

Rectory: 91274901

Curatage: 91271922

Prayer Line: 07531806167

Transport: 07599794968

Church Readers Rota:

John 91467243 or Freda

91467624





Just Older Youth

1 Corinthians 13 – a Christmas Version

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child. Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband. Love is kind, though harried and tired. Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way. Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. Video games will break, pearly necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust, but giving the gift of love will endure.

Thursday 17th December is the date for our Christmas Communion Lunch. Starting at 12:30pm in the Parish Centre with our Communion Service. This is followed by lunch and then the children from Ballyholme Primary School will entertain us singing Christmas carols.

As usual, we look forward to seeing many familiar faces, but would love to see some new folk. If you feel you would like to join us, please ring me at the Parish Office and I can arrange lifts.



Pat, Valerie and Joy



Geraldine



Nancy, Campbell and John



Harry, Jill and Marian



Davy and June

Thinking about a holiday for 2016?

How about...

5 nights in Kenya as guests of the Diocese of Kajiado...

including 2 nights in the Chyulu Hills at Oltiasika...



and a trip to the Amboseli Game Park...



Plus...

3 nights in Uganda as guests of Kiwoko Hospital...



in and around £1250 pp* inclusive of flights and board (*ball park figure, exchange rates allowing!) Warm welcome, royal hospitality and the sights and sounds of the off-road safari of a lifetime! The invitation has been received for a team of 5 people to visit in October 2016

Please contact the Parish Office for more information and personal recommendations from dozens of Ballyholme parishioners!

Keep Fit

Readers of a certain age may remember Diana Moran better known as "The Green Goddess" or Mr Motivator, both keep fit experts who appeared on our television screens encouraging us to get up from our sofas and exercise along with them. Closer to home, Pat Peel takes keep fit classes



for men and ladies on Monday mornings in the Columbanus Room in the Parish Centre. Classes last 1 hour, the men's session starts at 10:00 o'clock and the ladies' session starts at 11:00 o'clock.

One bright sunny Monday morning I went along to one of Pat's classes. When I arrived the men's class was doing floor exercises aimed at improving muscular strength and endurance before they moved on to stretching exercises and relaxation. There was calming music softly playing in the background and Pat's soothing tones explaining the moves. Although the Columbanus Room is carpeted it would be useful to bring along an exercise mat or even a beach towel to make lying on the floor more comfortable.

Before the ladies' class began Pat asked me if I was used to exercising. The only exercise I get is gardening, housework and a 30 minute walk along the Lagan towpath in my lunch break from work. I was relieved when Pat told me just to take things at my own pace as she is aware of participants' capabilities and limitations.

The ladies' class started with some gentle warm up exercises before moving on to more energetic moves designed to improve cardio-vascular fitness. I found the hour passed very quickly thanks to the upbeat soundtrack which included amongst others, tracks by Abba and I think a song from Grease. The only problem I had was telling my left from my right when we were doing the moves! Perhaps next time I'll wear a pair of wellies like Jimmy Cricket's with "L" and "R" on them to keep me right!

After the class Pat told me that she has been interested in keep fit since her Girls' Brigade days. She first started the men's keep fit classes in St Columbanus about 15 to 20 years ago when a group of men suggested they would like to do something to keep active and get fit and they readily embraced the concept of exercising to music. The ladies class was formed about 5 years ago. There are about 7 to 8 members in each class.

The men and ladies I met were all very friendly and I would feel like going back again on a Monday when I'm off work. You pay £3.00 each time you attend which seems to me to be good value for a 1 hour session.

Pat said that new members are always welcome. No one is made to feel uncomfortable if they cannot manage the moves perhaps due to health issues. You don't need to be experienced, anyone can join in and I can certainly vouch for that!

Christine Johnstone

Saturday 30 January 2016

7.30 pm in Parish Centre

Tables - maximum of 8 people
Book through Kelly in the office
£5 per person

Proceeds to support Parish Mission Partners



See you on the 3rd: Ballymacconnell here we come!

If all goes according to programme and all necessary approvals are granted, then from the first Sunday of January and for the duration of our building work at Church, St Columbanus College Ballymacconnell Road will become our spiritual home-from-

home. Our intention is to offer a full Sunday morning programme of worship (8.30, 10 and 11.30) alongside Children's Church and Crèche.

St Columbanus College has a long history of serving our local community. 40% of its current pupil intake comes from a non-Catholic background and we have parishioners there both as students and members of staff. Suffice to say, the Principal and College Board have taken great pains to roll out the red carpet for us. In fact it would be no exaggeration to say that they have extended us every hospitality in their power. We have been given keys to open and close up, and the school's new heating system will be programmed to keep us cosy and comfortable.

Many of the access improvements we hope to make to our own Church premises are already in place at St Columbanus College. The on-site car park is far larger than our own in Grove Park, with the possibility of dropping people off right at the front door. Once inside, everything is on the level. Toilets are located in the entrance foyer which itself is adjacent to the main assembly hall. The Crèche room is right next door and there will be ample gathering-space at the rear of the hall to accommodate our mid-morning refreshments between services. There is a fully functioning audio visual system, much of it newly installed last summer.



Our plan is to set up for worship on the Friday afternoon/evening and then pack everything away again at the end of the 11.30 service. We have permission from Bishop Harold not to meet for Sunday evening service for the duration of the build. Under the current timetable, works to the Church are scheduled to take between 10 and 11 months. We move out of the Parish Centre at Easter. The Parish Office will relocate to the Rectory until the Parish Centre renovations are completed at the end of the summer.

Every effort will be made to make things feel like Church but we would ask for your patience and understanding if, inevitably, some things are a little make-shift. Arrangements are in place with other local parishes to accommodate funeral and wedding services as needs be. There will be lessons to learn along the way for all of us and no doubt improvements can be made as we go. With that in mind, please get in touch at any stage with suggestions and feedback.





Working, learning and living together

Paul begins his letter to the Philippians with a prayer of thankfulness for the believers. Why? Well, verse 5 gives us the answer...for their 'fellowship in the Gospel'. Paul and the

Philippian church had a solid relationship that had its foundation on Christ and therefore shared common ministry goals.

It has been a privilege to host a number of people from all over the world in the last few weeks, people from Ballyholme in Northern Ireland, London, USA, Singapore, Nigeria and Burma! Kiwoko is a rural hospital in the middle of nowhere and yet it seems to have the ability to pull a crowd from anywhere!

What is it that draws people here?

The Ballyholme group who made up the Kiwoko Mission Experience Team Abroad (META) 2015, jumped on the merry-go-round at the end of August, specifically to minister to our staff children, *Afaayo Kids* (children who attend the clinic suffering from HIV) and to see what the Wilson family 'do'. The META not only took part in two crazy weeks of children's ministry but also took part in prison ministry, music lessons and the Big Sale (which raised money for ministry in Kiwoko and Karamoja).



It is always wonderful to watch people from different backgrounds socially, professionally and spiritually, as they're introduced to and challenged by the life and witness of staff and the local community here at Kiwoko. The team worked incredibly hard in a hotter climate than normal, but more than that, they built solid relationships with the Ugandan teams here. In a short time the teams moved from being two groups of Irish and Ugandan to being three groups of leaders running the different three different age groups: Climbers; Tolerance; Runners. We were united by a common goal of ministering to the children and celebrated our cultural differences with lots of banter (a strong similarity between Ireland and Uganda.) Does it get any better? I think the Psalmist said it best in Psalm 133:1



"How good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity."

The farewell dinner was a mix of happiness (to be together for the evening and look at photos of the last 2 weeks), relief (that the programme came together and worked), thankfulness (for all that we had learned from each other) and deep sadness (that we hadn't got longer to build on our new friendships). Sharon, one of our staff nurses who works on antenatal, had most of the ladies in tears as she

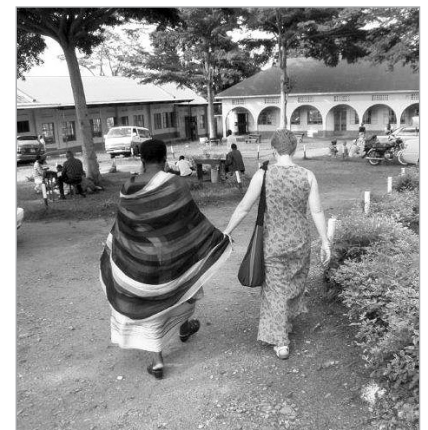
attempted to thank the team, in particular Laura Jeffrey, her music teacher for the two weeks. She stood, struggled to hold back tears, failed, sat, wiped her face, tried again and so it continued for several minutes! It was nearly too much for one evening!

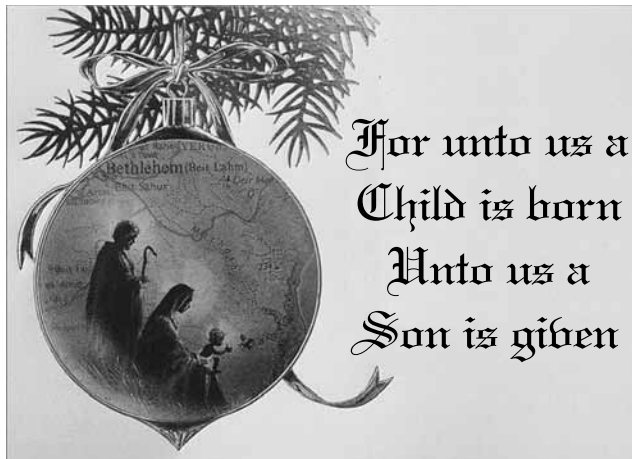
Question: What will bring members of the META back to Kiwoko?

Answer: Relationships. Partnership. Fellowship in the Gospel. Mention any of these answers and you would be right!

Thank you members of the 2015 META and thank you CMSI for sending a great team!

Denise Wilson





For unto us a
Child is born
Unto us a
Son is given

Name him “Jesus”...

It remains my very great joy to serve Christ in Ballyholme as your Rector.

I know it remains yours to serve Him on the Staff Team and Select Vestry, as Churchwardens and Glebewardens, as Children’s Church, Crèche and Youth Leaders in the Choir on Sundays, in and around the Parish Centre through the week, compiling and delivering the magazine, driving, visiting, caring and remembering, giving in all the ways that you do.

None of you does it for the thanks, any more than I do, but your support, encouragement and prayer over the last twelve months are greatly appreciated. Joy to you this Christmas and peace this coming New Year!

SED

...for he shall save his people from their sins

Serenity Prayer

God grant me the **serenity** to accept the things I cannot change; **courage** to change the things I can; and **wisdom** to know the difference.

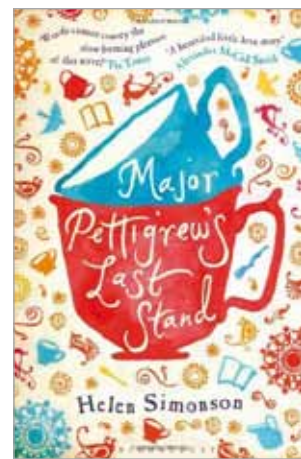


Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)



Major Pettigrew’s Last Stand
by Helen Simonson

Although this book was highly recommended to me as a ‘must read’ I initially thought it was a story about some crusty Army Officer fighting a rear guard campaign on foreign lands. And while it is true that the eponymous Major is indeed fighting a battle, it’s one of an entirely different nature. He values morals, decency and a desire to “do the right thing” by his fellow villagers in the sleepy little village of Edgecombe St Mary. When his brother dies, the Major develops an increasing companionship with the village shopkeeper Mrs Ali, over a shared love of books and the death of their partners. But this friendship leads to raised eyebrows and much gossip in the close knit community.



There are laughs a-plenty in this charming book especially during the fraught encounters between the Major and his adult son Roger, who has the emotional depth of a shallow puddle. Despite the comedy, this is also a poignant love story and, as one critic raved, “Once in a while a novel is written which is that rarest and loveliest of things: life-affirming. This is one of those books.”

I definitely second those sentiments and, as to the question, Do the Major and Mrs Ali live happily ever after? Well, you’ll just have to read this little gem of a book to find out! RL



The Opening of Register of Vestry Members will take place after the **14 January 2016** Select Vestry meeting

To add your name to the Register, Forms of Declaration for both Resident and Accustomed (non-resident) members of the congregation must be submitted before the opening of the Vestry meeting on 11th February 2016.

Forms are available either from the Churchwardens on the relevant Sundays or the Parish Office on weekday mornings.

Around the Parish



Mission Lunch



Mission Events



Baby Boomers Quiz



Coffee Morning



Friday Lunch



Wine Tasting



Brownies



Youth Activities



My favourite place

I found it very difficult to choose a “favourite place” as I have been lucky enough to visit so many interesting, exciting, beautiful places in the last fifty or so years. Very few have disappointed and most have fascinated. However, I have realised that there is one essential ingredient in all my favourite places – that is water, be it sea, lake or river, there must be water otherwise I feel claustrophobic.

I do love the Italian lakes and in particular a little historic town called Limone on the north-west shore of Lake Garda. We have stayed there many times and never cease to be impressed with the beauty of the town and its picturesque setting nestled at the foothills of the Dolomite mountain range. Our hotel sits on the edge of a cliff, a short lakeshore walk from Limone centre. Each morning we step on to our balcony looking at the shimmering lake as it comes to life.

Little ferry boats call at the jetty to take passengers to visit other small towns around the lake. As the day goes on, various yachts, wind surfers and kite surfers appear with their colourful sails and kites dashing across the blue water. Thankfully, there are no speed boats to spoil the tranquil scene.

Limone is a good base for trips to Riva and Verona. Whilst in Verona it is a must to experience the Opera performed in the ancient open air arena. The atmosphere is electric and the stage settings amazing. There are also plenty of opportunities for keen walkers in the area, with trips further into the Dolomites for more serious hiking.

The little town consists of hilly cobbled streets with soft sandstone buildings adorned with tumbling bougainvillea surrounding a picturesque town square and a pretty little harbour. The sun always seems to shine here while we relax and enjoy our delicious Italian ice creams.

After dinner on the terrace, we watch the sun go down behind the mountains and look forward to another day spent in this little haven.



Maureen Johnston



How do I begin to express my sincere thanks to you all for your ongoing support towards Storehouse North Down? Today I am feeling truly humbled and almost tearful with thankfulness. Over this past week primary schools have dedicated their harvest services to us and together have supplied us with over 40 trolley loads of food and toiletries. Congregations like yourselves who regularly donate to us, have responded mightily to harvest collections. A local community association invited us to share our work with them and a generous donation was received. A local business held a Storehouse Spa Day and had a tremendous response. Farmers from across North Down and the Ards Peninsula each week provide us with fresh vegetables. There isn't a day throughout the

year that I don't give thanks to our almighty God for providing Storehouse week in and week out what is needed.

I am thankful also for the dedicated volunteers both in churches and in Storehouse who so unselfishly give of their time to kindly care for others.

Since September 2012 we have distributed over 5,200 hampers to people in our communities who have fallen on difficult times many through no fault of their own. The value of these hampers adds up to an incredible quarter of a million pounds! When we calculated this we were staggered, never did we think that this would have been possible – but God knew!

The week before Christmas, God willing, we will distribute approximately 400 hampers across North Down to families who are living on the edge of financial hardship. In each hamper there will be a £10 meat voucher and, with heartfelt thanks to the farmers, fresh vegetables too.

Thank you so much for entrusting us with your food donations enabling us to change lives.

“Together we have imitated our Lord, united with Him in our compassion for others.”

Have a blessed Christmas and New Year.

Helen Sloan, Manager, Storehouse North Down

The trolley will be available for donations throughout Advent

Lighten our darkness
a service of remembering
Sunday 6 December 2015 at 6.30pm



Many families feel the loss of a loved one very keenly at Christmas, particularly if it's the first year without them. As the festive season comes around again, we would love you to join us for a simple service of thanksgiving and reflection for those whose presence we

will miss so much.

Our first service of remembering was held in November 2013.

So many people found it helpful that we arranged a second in 2014, moving it to the beginning of December. The response was even more positive.

The mood of the worship is one of gratitude and hope in Christ. The act of remembering itself is low-key and dignified. People add names to a roll as they arrive at the service or at some stage before, and then all we do is read out the names we have received before the cross.

As in previous years, anyone who wishes may lift a pebble from The Font, as symbolic of the person being remembered. Some people take these pebbles home, others return them to The Font as they leave Church and then later we return them to the sea at Ballyholme beach.

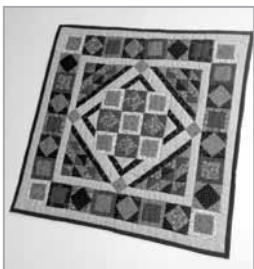
Our preacher this year is a guest specially invited by the Rector, the Reverend Stuart Bell. Recently retired from more than forty years of ministry in the Church in Wales, Stuart is a sensitive pastor and a gentle communicator as well as being an experienced broadcaster.

Only to add that everyone is welcome. It may be you have lost someone recently or it could be a pain that goes back a way longer. Perhaps you want to show support for family and friends – whatever your situation: please feel this service is for you.



At our October meeting we had five Fishermen's Wives talking about their lives, how they had met their husbands and suddenly realised after a short time that they hadn't a clue what being a fisherman's

wife entailed. It seemed to have been a huge culture shock for each of them. Their husbands could have been away for weeks on end and then they were left to cope with families on their own. They all had a different tale to tell but all said it was a lonely and worrying life, especially in the winter when they listened to the howling wind outside and knew the seas would be very rough. But, like everything else they soon got used to being alone. Some of their tales were poignant and others had us howling with laughter. These lovely ladies encouraged us all to eat more fish each week and as most of us admitted, we didn't eat as much fish as we really should and we vowed that we would change! Have we? They had brought fresh fish with them and cooked some for tasting in little or no time which went down a treat. They also brought some fish for sale and were delighted to have sold it all. All agreed that it had been a very good evening indeed.



At our meeting on Monday 2nd November: "a fabulous night, out of this world, unbelievable" were some of the comments I heard after our evening of "QUILTING OLD AND NEW". The quilts shown were exquisite. At least 15 if not more, large quilts were displayed, together with smaller quilts, wall hangings and even Christmas decorations. Had we known beforehand the treat we were going to have, we could have invited other Mothers' Union Branches to come along.

Would those Branch Members attending the Young Members' Carol Service in our Church on Monday 7th December, please remember to bring their gift for distribution to the housebound as these gifts will be wrapped the following evening on 8th December. Those not attending on that evening, please leave your gift beforehand in the Parish Office or give it to any committee member. The postponed Christmas Dinner will be held on Tuesday 5th January 2016 at 7.00pm in Bangor Golf Club, The Area Meeting will be held at St. Gall's Church Hall on Monday 18th January 2016 at 7.30pm.



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL
FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE MOTHERS' UNION

Where is your chair?



In case you missed it, October saw the launch of a year-long parish initiative which we hope more and more of you will get involved with each month.

Where is your chair? is an invitation to everyone in our Church family, adults, young people and children, to make a short space for God at some point each weekday. With Ballyholme specifically in mind, we have produced a series of simple devotionals in the hope that people can find a quiet chair somewhere, read a brief portion of scripture, and then think and pray about it.

The idea is that as we prepare to be restored physically in terms of our buildings and premises, so too we would ask God to restore us spiritually. We want to put ourselves at God's disposal and allow Him to make us the people He wants us to be, inside as well as outside!

Some people have asked for a steer on the sections left blank marked 'Listening' and 'Doing'. By listening, we mean trying to be still and silent for a short period. It's about allowing the Holy Spirit to focus our attention on one point or thought personal to our individual situation. The doing part is for us to decide is there some practical action God is calling us to by way of a specific response. An 'I must do this' or 'I must do that' sort of moment.

Take a look if you've not done so already. Online access is available through the Where is your chair? section of the parish website www.ballyholmeparish.co.uk but please get in touch if you would like us to email you the link each week as a prompt. Likewise, let us know if you need a paper copy. We are producing four-week booklets for a number of people and would be glad to add to the print run.

Here's one from a number of lovely responses from those already involved:

"I gave it a try and found it a very worthwhile experience. I think the idea of it being edited to appeal to the different groups should have a goldilocks effect: it's not too... And not too... It's just right. I want to say well done."

HOLY



COMMUNION

Don't forget Wednesdays!

Just to remind you that at 10.30 each Wednesday morning there is a simple service of Holy Communion in the Kajiado Room.

For some people who get to Church every Sunday, Wednesday offers a moment of stillness in the middle of a hectic week, a chance to come together prayerfully in God's presence for a spiritual top-up.

For others, Wednesday is the new Sunday. Perhaps they're away or busy at the weekend. Or maybe it's the ease of access to the Parish Centre. The light and warmth of the Kajiado Room make for a relaxed mood and they certainly lend themselves to coffee and chat afterwards!

Apart from the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year, we hope to continue our mid-week services through to Holy Week and the start of the Parish Centre renovations.

Please consider yourselves warmly welcome. There are often between 30 and 40 people present but we can always make room for a few more!

Ends, Beginnings and Inseparable Love

At the end of one year, and the beginning of another, we cannot help but reflect, remember and envision. We hold in our minds the significant moments of the past year – joys, sorrows, frustrations and milestones. The Anois residential over half term will go down as one such milestone, with 24 young people and 4 leaders travelling to Wilson's Hospital School in Mullingar to have fun, learn, question, talk honestly and grow in faith. It was an incredible time together.

An opportunity for our young people to reflect is Christmas Eve. The fun of practicing for the 5pm service, the service itself, our amazing Chinese banquet afterwards and ending with the candlelit late night service provides intentional spaces to be real with each other. Over food we can share moments of failed resolutions, letting ourselves down, hurting others or distancing from God, as well as the times of laughter, life, faith and goodness.

As we venture into the New Year we go with the knowledge and experience that the love of God in Christ is our absolute constant, and therefore we always have hope. In the dark moments and the bright moments of the year to come, God goes before us and is always with us. The unconditional love of Jesus sustains and secures us. We stand on the truth that “nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely *nothing* can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus has embraced us.” (Romans 8:38-39, The Message).



Kids' corner

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! Fairy lights and holly wreaths, wrapping paper and tall green trees... I even spotted a red-nosed reindeer at the Ark Farm!

Of course, as lovely as all of these things are, we know that there is an even lovelier reason behind all of these sparkly things, and we at Children's Church will be telling that beautiful story in our nativity play. So we will be very busy with casting calls and costume hunts, preparing for the bright lights of the chance!

The Nativity play will take place on Sunday 20th December at 10am - and of course the children will be amazing! Cameras at the ready!



What do you call a snowman
with a suntan?
A puddle.

Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?
A mince spy!

What did the pack of Walkers
say to the Skips?
Merry Crispmas.

How do sheep greet each
other at Christmas?
A merry Christmas to ewe!

The Quiet Corner

His face is vacant and his eyes are dull, yet he drives his geese skilfully. He speaks to them in a soft caressing voice a mother uses to soothe a very little baby. He carries no stick only a large leaf, which he waves slowly to and fro. The scene reminds me of a band of pilgrims or of workers working voluntarily together. They seem to make a harmony of which he is the conductor.

I watch them from my window as they reach the gateway and turn into the field. The daily morning ritual is completed, the journey down the hill from the farmyard signals a new day. The routine is familiar to the few tourists who stay in modest cottages along the route.

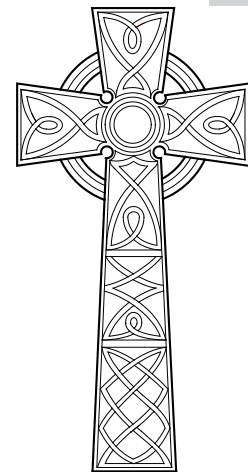
But the next day another boy is in charge. He is a bouncing, loud, bumptious fellow, who carries a switch like a sergeant major. He shouts at the geese.

The result was the geese spread over the narrow lane in a screaming cackling mob: some getting left behind, some falling into the ditch, all of them lost and bewildered. And the more he shouted and beat them the more hopeless the position got.

Sadly the goose boy who had found the secret of how to live in harmony with the geese passed away. They remembered him fondly and said he had done one useful thing each day of his short life. He had done it superlatively well.

They believed that when his soul left his poor, puny body, with its gapingly vacant face, it was found to be a rare and beautiful soul, pleasing to its maker.

BWP



Did you know?

..... that mince pies have been traditional English Christmas fare since the Middle Ages, when meat was a key ingredient? The addition of spices, suet and alcohol to meat came about because it was an alternative to salting and smoking in order to preserve the food. Mince pies used to be a different shape - cradle-shaped with a pastry baby Jesus on top.



..... that it is a family in Wiltshire, the Parkers, who claim to own the world's oldest artificial Christmas tree? It was bought in 1886, and is still put up every year.

..... that the word 'mistletoe' means dung on a tree? The Anglo-saxons thought that mistletoe grew in trees where birds had left their droppings. Mistel means dung, and tan means twig.



Carols at Crawfordsburn

Join Bangor Starsingers for
Carols at Crawfordsburn
13th December 2pm - 3pm
In the Visitor Centre

Also Christmas movies in the
Mini Cinema from 10.30am
Craft stalls & Children's crafts
11am - 4pm

Let's play

Four-year-old to her two-year-old sister: "Let's play Christmas. I'll be Santa Claus and you can be a present and I'll give you away."



Sunday 6th December Advent 2

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Morning Worship & Children's Gifts
 11.30 Morning Prayer
 6.30 Service of Remembering

Wednesday 9th December

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 13th December Advent 3

8:30 Holy Communion
 10:00 Morning Worship & Children's Church
 11:30 Parish Communion
 6.30 Evening Prayer

Wednesday 16th December

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 20th December Advent 4

8:30 Holy Communion
 10:00 Children's Carol Service
 11:30 Morning Prayer
 6.30 Carols by Candlelight

Wednesday 23rd December

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve

5.00 A Family Carol Service
 11.00 First Communion of Christmas

Friday 25th December Christmas Day

8:30 Holy Communion
 10:00 Family Service

Sunday 27th December Christmas 1

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.30 Morning Worship

Sunday 3rd January Christmas 2

8:30 Holy Communion
 10:00 All Age Service
 11:30 Morning Prayer

Wednesday 6th January

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 10th January Epiphany 1

8:30 Holy Communion
 10:00 Morning Worship & Children's Church
 11:30 Holy Communion
 6.30 United Service in Parish Centre

Wednesday 13th January

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 17th January Epiphany 2

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Morning Worship & Children's Church
 11.30 Morning Prayer

Wednesday 20th January

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 24th January Epiphany 3

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Holy Communion & Children's Church
 11.30 Morning Prayer

Wednesday 27th January

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 31st January Epiphany 4

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Wholeness and Healing
 11.30 Wholeness and Healing



**Help needed
 to decorate
 the church for
 Christmas**

**Saturday 19th
 December
 at 10.00 am**

All offers of help, flowers,
 greenery etc, very much
 appreciated

Ballyholme Churches
 Community Carol Singing

**Friday 18th December
 5.30 – 6.30 pm**

Sheridan Bakery, Ballyholme



Come and join us

