

St Columbanus

Ballyholme



Restoration → Transformation
Alistair heads west
Parents & Toddlers Special
Plus all the latest photos

..On the way *together*..



The Parishioner

February 2016

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

The Pedalling Parson (temporarily)

The recent Columbanus TV documentary reminded me that there are always two dimensions to the work of Christian ministry. Firstly, there is leading worship and prayer, calling the people of God together for praise, teaching and fellowship. Secondly, there is moving the spiritual community on, taking it forward under the Lord's prompting, leading and energizing. Like most things in life, the challenge is striking the balance. So far as I am concerned, our soon-to-depart curate Alistair Morrison got it just right. Many of you will remember Alistair's sermons and prayers on Sundays and his weekday visits to you at home or in hospital. But on arriving in Ballyholme in September 2012, Alistair immediately saw the need and potential in terms of our parish buildings and felt the Lord had put him exactly where He wanted him to be. As our restoration work draws closer, Alistair's 18 pre-Ballyholme years in conservation architecture remind us that God wastes none of our life experiences and longs for us to put our skills and expertise at His disposal. The US Embassy in London will determine the precise timing of Alistair's departure. We will try hard to get him back to Ballyholme to cut the ribbon!



SED

Restoration 2016 – hold everything!

Those of you who were in Church in December will know from announcements and the *News in the Pews* that despite our best efforts, the onsite start-date of January and our Sunday move to St Columbanus College had to be postponed. We can update you now on progress made over the Christmas and early New Year period (prior to the copy date for this February edition of *The Parishioner*) on the four reasons why a delay became unavoidable.

1. NIE Substation – essential preliminary relocation
The contractual delay with NIE which resulted in a lengthy postponement (first October, then January, now the spring) has at last been resolved. The work is currently being rescheduled.
2. Tendering process – over-budget
As anticipated the tenders came over budget, consequently we are currently looking at ways to phase the building programme into what will be for us affordable components.
3. Planning application – delay
A couple of days before Christmas we finally received word that our planning application had been successful. Permission has been granted without conditions and we are now free to apply for Building Control.
4. Shortfall in parishioners' monthly pledges – for bank borrowing
Pledges continue to come in as we add to our current monthly total of £3500. Cash gifts of course remain welcome, but early soundings from the banks confirm that unlike ten years ago when we built the Parish Centre, our borrowing in 2016 will be directly proportional to our monthly pledges.

At the time of going to press we have yet to meet with the Design Team to finalise the re-programming of the works. We hope to give a more detailed update in the March magazine.

Lose your glasses or your car key? Or both?

Two somewhat unusual pieces of lost property were handed in this Christmas. Firstly, in the run up to the holiday, someone accidentally attached their glasses to a gift they were presenting to the Staff Team. Then on the Sunday before Christmas (20 December) a car key complete with electronic security fob was recovered from the back of one of the Church chairs at the end of the Candlelit Carol Service. Please contact the Parish Office to claim these two valuable items.





Leaving Belfast meant that I no longer picked grandchildren up from school and so had more time to pick and choose activities. I had often thought about working in a food-bank and some research on-line led me to Storehouse North Down. I contacted Helen Sloan who is the manager and she invited me to come along, giving me location, days and times. That was over two years ago and now going there has become routine.

I have chosen to go on a Monday, which fits in with my present schedule and I see the same volunteers each week. This brings a feeling of belonging and a sense that we are all working with a common purpose. I used to ask myself why people smoke and yet can't buy food and other judgmental thoughts like that. Since I started to work in the food bank, I no longer question other people's situations, but rather pray for those receiving bags of food, that their lives would be made a bit easier. I go shopping each week with a credit card, knowing the bill will be paid, but not everyone is so fortunate. Very little can upset the balance and very often people find themselves in difficulty through illness, losing their job or other unforeseen circumstances. I am constantly amazed at people's generosity at giving food to keep the shelves replenished. There is nothing as bad as going to a shelf, only to find there are no treats or breakfast juice. What is not there cannot be given out, so we rely on everyone to play their part.

I love seeing a card from a recipient of food saying thank you and explaining a bit about their circumstances. All the hard work is worthwhile when we see how much this food means when times are tough.

Coming up to Christmas is always a busy time and we work every day to get hampers out with a bit extra, like selection boxes and boxes of biscuits.

I love going to Storehouse and knowing giving up an hour means people can feed themselves and their families.

Jan Carver



Behold the Lilies

An often overlooked element of our worshipping life is the weekly choice of flowers for our Church sanctuary. Though most of us take it for granted, were God's House suddenly not lovingly dressed for divine service by the person whose turn it is on the flower rota, we would all notice very quickly!

It's a ministry which gladdens

everyone's hearts and managing it for the last 35 years has been Daphne Hamill. Quietly and faithfully, Daphne has put her love for flowers to the service of her Christian faith but for the past little while, in the interests of ensuring that her tradition continues, she has been on the look-out for a kindred spirit. Daphne is delighted that from the end of January just past, Vicky Hayes was prepared to take over her mantle. Like Daphne, Vicky is a member of Bangor Flower Club and has also served as Churchwarden. A daughter of the Rectory, Vicky cares very much about the appearance of our Church and will now be our go-to Ballyholme flower lady – with Daphne on hand for advice when necessary. Our sincere thanks to Daphne for her dedication over so many years, and our best wishes and encouragement to her new protégé. The old Collect for the Marriage service talks about Christ 'adorning and beautifying' the wedding at Cana with His presence. There's certainly a sense in which Church flowers serve the purpose of 'adorning and beautifying'. Yet they are also a recognition of the divine presence which Jesus promises his followers every time two or three gather in His name.

Retirement

After over 50 years in the church choir, at 90 plus, Marsden FitzSimons has reluctantly decided to hang up his choir robes. To mark the occasion, Stanley Officer, on behalf of the choir, presented him with a voucher for a meal at the Crawfordsburn Inn, (to be shared with his wife, Beth), and a bouquet of flowers (definitely for Beth!). Stanley briefly summarised Marsden's interest in singing – being involved in Bangor Operatic and the Percy French Society, and also remarked on the fact that Marsden had played tennis regularly at Ward Park, until last year.

We wish him a long and happy retirement.





Joy

Just Older Youth

Blessed are they.....

Blessed are they who understand
My faltering step and shaking hand.

Blessed are they who know my ears today
Must strain to hear the things they say.

Blessed are they who seem to know
My eyes are dim and my answers slow.

Blessed are they who look away
When my tea was spilled at the table today.

Blessed are they who with a cheery smile
Will stop to chat for a little while.

Blessed are they who never say
"You've told that story twice today".

Blessed are they who know my ways
And bring back memories of yesterdays.

Blessed are they who ease the days
And care for me in loving ways.

Blessed are they who make it known
I'm loved, respected and not alone.

The Wednesday Club



The Christmas meeting in December was enjoyed by a good turn out of nearly all of our members. After lunch we were entertained by Towerview P S choir and then Santa gave out some pressies to our ladies. Our first meeting after the Christmas break was at least on a dry



day - a contrast to our previous weather! We heard our speaker Stephen Cameron give a very interesting talk on the sinking of the MV Princess Victoria off the Copeland Islands, despite his computer giving him some bother through his presentation! The winner of our draw this month was Barbara Gass. Sue

On Thursday 17th December, we held our annual lunch and Communion Service for the elderly parishioners in the Parish Centre. After lunch, we were entertained by Ballyholme Primary School, who sang and played their instruments, much to the enjoyment of those who attended.



Maisie, enjoying her book at the Monday morning Christmas coffee in the Kajiado room.



Muriel and Ann

My Favourite Place

My favourite place now let me ponder.
Where on this earth could that be I wonder?
I've travelled far, I've travelled wide
By air, by road, by foot, by tide
From north to south, from east to west
It's difficult to contemplate where's best.

I have been blessed, I am aware
Of the privilege to travel and the sight to stare
On God's creation so diverse and vast
That will leave numerous memories engraved
to last.

Such as the Falkland Isles often bleak and bare
Greenland's Icebergs so awesome one must take care
Angkor Watt far in the East
To a West African home of mud and bowls of rice
from which to feast

I've experienced heightened senses; they're etched on my mind
Amazing moments unique in kind
So, after pondering the years of travel
My favourite place, I must confess
Well, for me, Ballyholme is definitely best.

Glynis McSorley



Slated by Teri Terry

In a Future London, the government has increased security to limit rebel attacks. A form of security is "slating" the minds of young offenders under 16. Kyla Davis has been slated but gets pieces of her memory back, which isn't normal. All slated are given a levo, a wristband which tracks their mood to try and prevent them showing acts of violence, but Kyla's levo stops working as it should. The government keeps increasing security even more; they start evicting and killing innocent people. This book is about Kyla's curious personality, leading her to find out information and secrets that could have her evicted. She has to try and make the world a better place through acts of betrayal, loyalty and kindness. She has to decide between what is right and what is safe and be careful not to hurt the ones around her.



Slated is the first of a trilogy. Throughout the trilogy she has to change her identity and stay hidden, she has to keep secrets from the people who are closest to her and can't give in, or they will be put in danger. She finds out more and more about her past as the story progresses but every secret has a twisted ending behind it.

Abbie Monaghan (Age 13)

From NOT THERE YET to GETTING THERE

At the end of August 2015 I gave my car to the restoration appeal. On Sunday 13 September, on a bike recovered from a skip, I cycled up the nave of St Columbanus with three words on my back: NOT THERE YET I want to thank the secret Santa who continues to tuck chocolate and sweets into the bags on my bike most Sundays – whoever you are! More broadly I want to thank everyone for their support since September. You have really entered into the spirit of the thing.

Truth be told, I've not got nearly as much work done on the bike. Once Alistair leaves I'm afraid it's going to have to be back to four wheels. But in the meantime I got a new high-vis jacket for Christmas, one that reads GETTING THERE.

In taking our flesh to die on a cross for our sins, God has given the world universally and us individually everything we need. In terms of our restoration project, even though we were not ready to start on 3 January as we hoped, we have come a very long way.

We are gathering momentum with every passing week, and so as I said in Church on Christmas morning: Glory to God in the highest. By His grace we are GETTING THERE.

SED



FROM MOSSLEY TO BELFAST LOUGH

Saturday 21 November saw a group of 10 walkers, including welcome newcomers Sean and Annette, setting out from Bangor railway station on their twice postponed expedition to the Newtownabbey Way. Our train journey took us via Belfast Central to Mossley West where a visit to the famous Mossley Mill was part of our plan for the day.



Arriving at the Mill we stepped back in time and with the aid of sepia photographs and mill machinery discovered the story of its owners and its workers. The overall impression was very much one of a strong community, which sadly disappeared with the Mill's closure in the 1990s. Converted from cotton to linen in the mid 1800s a succession of owners provided a school, good quality housing, a swimming pool and employment for hundreds of workers. The men's and women's hockey clubs founded in the early 1900s survive today as some of the most famous in Ireland.



Taken over by Newtownabbey Council in 1996 the Mill has been lovingly restored and, in addition to the museum, houses Council offices, a restaurant, the Mill Theatre, a conference centre and most important from the walkers' point of view the excellent Yarn Coffee Dock!

Dragging ourselves away from the museum and coffee we set off on a relaxing downhill 3 to 4 mile walk along the Newtownabbey Way eventually reaching the shores of Belfast Lough at Whiteabbey. On the way the well-marked route consisting of surfaced paths and board walks took us through almost constant woodland including Monkstown Wood and under the famous Bleach Green Viaduct carrying trains to Ballymena and beyond. At Whiteabbey a short distance along the shoreline took us to a picnic area which proved an ideal spot for lunch with a view of the many vessels plying up and down Belfast Lough.

Fifteen minutes walk took us to the railway station at Whiteabbey then the train back to Belfast and Bangor on another day enjoying each other's company and blessed by fine weather in the midst of a fairly inclement period.

Leslie

Wet (Very) Walkers in January

The dozen walkers who turned up on the very wet second Saturday in January were either daft or rufty tufty. We prefer the rufty tufty description! "The better part of valour is discretion" said Shakespeare's Falstaff and indeed it was so when we decided against Hudy's Way in the Sperrins and opted for the easier option of walking to Groomsport via The Point and back by the road. But rain shows no mercy no matter the location.

Having safely negotiated the virtually full tide along the wall on Ballymacormick Beach, we set off in increasingly heavy rain round The Point. (BBC weather said it wouldn't rain till lunchtime but Hill's forecast (www.forecast.co.uk) was the accurate one!) It was soggy and muddy but none of us were in above our boots as we made our way eastwards to Groomsport. Using an umbrella hiking is a good idea, and those who brought theirs were somewhat drier than most of us, and envied by those without. Having made Groomsport intact, our plan changed as of necessity and we had coffee in the Groomsport coffee shop. All of us that is except the intrepid Robert and Gilbert who chose to walk on back. Very rufty tufty!

We have to admit the rest were transported back to Ballyholme by car but no shame in that! It was good to get something done and not have a blank on the calendar. Colin B likened the rain to the horizontal sleet on Carntogether – those of you who were there won't have forgotten that one!

Next planned outing is a 6.7 miles loop walk on the Sallagh Braes near Larne on February 6th meeting at 9am in the church car park. Any alteration will be notified.

P S Too wet for a photo so Cockle Row instead (courtesy Tourism NI)



Betty

Annual Boxing Day Challenge Match

Thomas A. Edison, creator of the light bulb, once famously said 'I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.' A philosophy the young guys embraced, they did not fail to win for seven consecutive years in the annual Boxing day clash, they in fact found seven ways that would not work to beat the older lads. This year was no different, they were fully prepared to discover an eighth way how not to win...



It was a much anticipated fixture that saw an impressive crowd of 9 showing up to offer support from the sidelines. After initial confusion at our usual pitch which a consortium of rather rugged looking folks had claimed as their own, (later reports confirmed they were members of Bangor Elim) the decision was made to relocate to Bloomfield pitches. With time for only a brief warm up, captain Jaime Jean Baptiste led the well organised young guys side in a range of dynamic stretches while in Stephen Baker's older lads side it seemed Robbie Jackson was the only one to do

a proper warm up! The whistle went and a determined Oldies side came out strong. The scoring was opened by Rob Gamble who put the Oldies ahead inside the first 5 minutes with, in Rob's own words, 'a Ruud van Nistelrooy special!' A second came soon after by Roberts, this year's ringer who flew in specially from Chicago and proved to be worth every dollar! All was set for another onslaught. Then, striker Graeme Lawther instilled a glimmer of confidence in the young side with a goal which was followed up with an equaliser from captain Jaime. The young side's supporters went wild when Graeme slotted in another putting them 3-2 up. Conditions were nothing short of treacherous, the swampy pitch only just passed pitch inspection by referee Stephen Baker Sr. The ball was slow moving along the ground, inhibited by puddles dispersed like mines across the surface. The young side adapted well to the conditions and were able to catch up with the Oldies' counter-attacks before anything came of them. Player/manager Craig Armstrong of the young side whipped in a corner kick that zipped off David Owens hand catching the keeper off guard and going in as an own goal. Captain Jaime then scored his second making it 5-2 against the Oldies. Frustrations were mounting amongst Baker's side and the referee was harassed by many off-side claims which he did well not to be influenced by. Coming towards the end of the half Roberts struck again closing the gap to 5-3. Vice Captain G. Lawther responded by scoring his hat-trick leading his team to a 6-3 advantage at half-time.

The mood was very merry amongst the young team at the end of the half and a few premature celebrations began. The half-time Terry's Chocolate Oranges were passed around to re-energise a side that had worked non-stop and utilised their rolling subs well, Samantha Smallwood and Matthew Brown proved to be super-subs! Meanwhile the Oldies were talking tactics and it would show in the second half.

Sam Jean-Baptiste was hungry for a goal all game and his best chance came at the start of the next half with a powerful strike that deflected off the opposition and indeed went in putting the young side 7-3 up! Unfortunately for Sam though it was recorded by the ref as another own goal this time awarded to R. Whiteside, making it 2 OGs for him in as many years! Many of the players in the young side had never been in this position before and their inexperience led to a relaxed and jovial attitude. The Oldies capitalised by scoring the next 3 goals back to back bringing them to just one behind at 7-6. It seemed a certainty an equaliser was coming when Captain Stephen Baker tee-ed up in front of goal, however, his wanton effort soared off in the direction of the corner flag. It was a nervy last 10 minutes for the young side as the Oldies kept pushing forward with Whiteside, Owens, Baker, Roberts and Gamble all fighting for an equaliser. McIlwrath and Vance put in a solid 90 minute shift in the centre back positions keeping the Oldies from any real chances in the closing minutes of the game and Keeper Adam Bell made a number of vital saves for the young side from the start.



A very sporting Oldies side were quick to congratulate the young team when the final whistle went. At 7-6 the young side had only just discovered a way to win - a formula they will continue working on for next year! It was a superb game played in a brilliant spirit. Special thanks to referee Stephen Baker Sr and to all those who came out to support on the day.

A new conversation for Ballyholme

Lent 2016: Restoration to Transformation

So much of what we have done in recent years and what we plan for 2016 flowed from discussions back in 2009 involving 160 parishioners called 'Have your say'. Under God, this was a chance for people with a heart for the future of our parish, in the words of the Old Testament prophet Joel, *to dream dreams and see visions*. As other-worldly and spiritual as this may sound, most of the outcomes were entirely grounded and extremely practical.

Lots of ideas centred on worship and discipleship and this led to the development of our Wednesday morning Communion service and our *Explore* programme of autumn and spring teaching sessions. New inspiration was also in ready supply for our youth and children's ministries. But many of the needs identified had implications for our buildings. These included improved access, toilet facilities and better provision for hospitality and children.

Our first responsibility was to clear £174,000 of outstanding parish debt. Our 'Home Straight Appeal' achieved this by 2013 thanks to the willing response of 300 families. We have spent the years since preparing a feasibility study, appointing a design team and latterly launching our Restoration 2016 appeal and applying for planning permission. Our architects described the brief we gave them as the clearest and most thorough they had ever received.

As you know our on-site **Restoration** work has had to be rescheduled but come-what-may our work of building God's kingdom in Ballyholme – the **Transformation** part of our plans – goes on. Crucially, every member of our parish needs to be involved. Four guiding principles were adopted for Restoration 2016:

- 1) preserve the atmosphere of a beautiful, sacred building that feels like a church;
- 2) make access, welcome and hospitality priorities rather than afterthoughts;
- 3) create a worship space flexible for large and small congregations;
- 4) minimise clutter and create holy space.

Keeping these principles in mind, we now need your answers to lots of interesting questions:

Worship

How effective is our current programme of services on Sundays and Wednesdays? How do we feel about: our praise and music? our all age services? our evening services? our combined summer services? our healing services? our informal, reflective and experimental worship?

Discipleship

What can we do to broaden the appeal and improve uptake on our autumn teaching and Lent courses and our Home Groups? What should we study? When should we meet? Are there ways we can make more of our ongoing ministry of prayer and intercession?

Community

How do we encourage more parishioners to get actively involved in our ministries to seniors, young people, and children? Are there new ideas for what we can offer in terms of our seniors programme, our youth programme and our children's church and crèche?

We plan to set the ball rolling on our **Transformation** theme during Lent and will be assisted by people with first-hand experience in these areas. Above all we need your input and ideas. Please plan to get along to these important gatherings, not least the prayer evenings and be part of this vital new conversation for Ballyholme.



↓ Restoration ↓ TRANSFORMATION

Lent 2016

We need to hear from
YOU!

Meet in church and explore the
way forward for St Columbanus

Ash Wednesday 10 Feb: 8 to 9.30pm

WORSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP

Andrew Brannigan
(Diocesan Development Officer)

Wednesday 17 Feb: 6 to 12 midnight

SEEKING GOD'S HEART

around-the-clock prayer, including a
reflective prayer service at 8pm

Wednesday 2 March: 8 to 9.30pm

COMMUNITY

Julie Currie (Diocesan Children's Officer)
Tim Burns (Diocesan Youth Officer)
John Beattie (Community Consultant)

Wednesday 9 March: 6 to 12 midnight

SEEKING GOD'S HEART

around-the-clock prayer, including a
reflective prayer service at 8pm

Around the Parish



Church Bazaar



Beavers Christmas Party



Towerview Primary Choir at the Wednesday Club



Christmas Nativity Service





Where is your chair?

If you are looking for something new this Lent and you have yet to discover our Ballyholme devotionals written specially for this year of restoration, go to the parish website www.ballyholmeparish.co.uk and take a look at Where is your chair? If you would like to receive an email each week connecting you to the five upcoming days please contact the Parish Office – likewise if you want to order a paper copy (issued every four weeks). Do let us know how you are getting on with Where is your chair? – adults, young people and children we would love to hear from you. One parishioner got in touch before Christmas and gave us permission to reproduce her response in full though anonymously:

“Where’s My Chair and where am I?”

My chair is by the window diagonally opposite the television and after breakfast you will find me sitting in it with my Bible and the Where is your chair? paper handout. I enjoy using these devotionals because they are neither condescending nor dictatorial and they allow me to use my own brains. First I read the hymn (sometimes I say all of it) and then the reading and the commentary. Listening brings various results – on October 27th I was reminded of a Guide and Scout St George’s Day Service in 1940. Sometimes there may be only one word, once it was TRUST. Then the Prayers, followed by my own petitions for family and friends and anything in the news which calls to me. Finally “Our Father” and then I am ready to face the day.”



The Reverend Alistair Morrison

Curate-Assistant of
Ballyholme Parish
2012 to 2016

On his final scheduled
Sunday - 28 February
- Alistair will be the
preacher at all our
services. As you know,

Alistair is leaving to get married and settle in the United States. This means he will be the first Ballyholme curate for a number of years whose farewell has not been hotly followed by a service of Institution at some vacant parish up or down the country welcoming the arrival of a brand new Rector and his travelling supporters! Accordingly we know you will want to make a point of joining us for a presentation over refreshments between the 10 and 11.30 services on the 28th. Enclosed with this edition of The Parishioner you will find the traditional curate’s farewell presentation envelope to express a token of your appreciation for Alistair’s ministry among us. Please return it via the plate or box on Sunday or to the Parish Office through the week.

Advanced Notice: Easter Vestry on 13 March

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 13 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 6 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.

Parents and Toddlers Group



On Thursday mornings from 10:00 to 11:30 the Columbanus Room in the Parish Centre is transformed into something resembling a toy shop. Dolls and prams, Lego pieces, toy cars, dinosaurs, toys to sit and ride on and even a pretend work bench with plastic saws, pliers, hammers and wrenches are set out around the room.

This is the scene that met me when I went along to the Parents and Toddlers Group recently.

Parents or grandparents pay £1.50 each time they attend regardless of the number of children they bring along and receive a freshly brewed cup of tea or coffee along with a home baked scone with butter and jam. The children get a drink of juice and freshly buttered toast squares followed

by biscuits. The day I went Ruth Ruttle was in charge of the toaster and she had Jade Irwin to help her cope with the demand.

I spoke to some of the parents and grandparents who told me they enjoy coming along to the Group as it gives them the opportunity for a bit of companionship and it gives the children the chance to develop their social skills before going to school.

I was amazed when Janice Hewitt told me the Group has been running for something over 25 years. It's hard to believe that the children who attended all those years ago could well have children of their own!

The Group caters for children from new born up to pre-school (around 3 years of age) and parents/grandparents are expected to take responsibility for

their own children. I met little Ellie who at around 5 months old was the youngest that day and she certainly seemed to be enjoying herself as she was all smiles!

Towards 11 o'clock Yvonne Manogue got everyone into a circle and led a group singing session. The songs included some of the old favourites that I knew like 'Old McDonald Had a Farm', 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star', 'The Grand Old Duke of York', and 'The Hokey Cokey', plus some that were new to me like 'Three Little Monkeys' and 'Three Speckled Frogs'.

As I was helping to put the toys away at the end, Patricia Todd told me that the children each get a gift at Easter and Christmas. Roberta Munnis is also involved in the Group

but due to conflicting priorities she was unable to be there the day that I went.

If you have any queries or would like to find out more about the Parents and Toddlers Group please contact Janice Hewitt Tel: 9185-7448.

Christine Johnstone



The very first Valentine card - a legend

The Roman Emperor Claudius II needed soldiers. He suspected that marriage made men want to stay at home with their wives, instead of fighting wars, so he outlawed marriage.

A kind-hearted young priest named Valentine felt sorry for all the couples who wanted to marry, but couldn't. So secretly he married as many couples as he could - until the Emperor found out and condemned him to death. While he was in prison awaiting execution, Valentine showed love and compassion to everyone around him, including his jailer. The jailer had a young daughter who was blind, but through Valentine's prayers, she was healed. Just before his death in Rome on 14 February, he wrote her a farewell message signed 'From your Valentine.' So the very first Valentine card was not between lovers, but between a priest about to die, and a little girl, healed through his prayers.



Testing, testing, 1, 2, 3... This is Jade checking in from Kiwoko Hospital, Uganda. While you are all wrapped up in coats and scarves, I am enjoying the beaming sun every day. When the young people are going to McDonalds after YF, I am going to the Rolex stand just outside the hospital gates, embracing the savoury pancake with a fried egg and some onion in the middle.

Obviously with me gone, things are looking quite different in the youth corner of Ballyholme. Sophie Murtagh from Moira has been having a wonderful time standing in for me. Lots of you of course, won't know Sophie, so let me have the privilege (and giggle!) of telling you all about her.

Generally you can hear Sophie before you can see her. She is full of energy and life, with a hearty laugh and eyes that often sparkle with tears as she laughs to the point of crying. She lights up any room she is in as joy emanates from her. This love for life can result in her being a bit of a rascal, but all in good humour! Her heart is big, with space for everyone, and she treats everybody with dignity. This bodes well with young people obviously, as each one that Sophie spends time with feels like the most important person in the world, which is of course as it should be. What stood out to me most about Sophie as I got to know her was her distinct, authentic love for Jesus. Her faith is strong and her foundation is firm. Sophie's actions of continuous kindness flow from a place of closely following Christ. She constantly reminds those around her that Jesus brings life and freedom, that there is purpose in following Him, and that they have worth and purpose in this life through Him.



I have received such a warm and genuine welcome throughout the years that I have been in Ballyholme, and I know that in the short time Sophie is in this role, she will too. She has interesting stories to tell such as the fact that she spent October – December in Togo, graduated from Social Work and completed the full marathon! and would appreciate any offers of coffee or lunch I'm sure! I look forward to returning home and hearing her stories of how kind and welcoming the parishioners of Ballyholme have been to her. Over and out for now, and I will see you all at Easter for some more mayhem! May you know the heartwarming blessing of God. Jade



Jigsaw

Connecting God's Big Picture

Jigsaw - Connecting God's Big Picture!

We're now well into the second term of Children's Church, so it's about time for a little review of the first term!

We have been piloting a new curriculum, made especially for the Down and Dromore Diocese by Julie Currie (Down & Dromore Children's Officer), Lynne Gibson (Student Worker, The Hub) and myself. "Jigsaw" is a curriculum designed to piece together God's big story bit by bit, and over three years will give the kids an interactive look at the Bible from Genesis through to Revelation, with a focus on equipping children to pray. It has been almost as much fun to write as to deliver, and the kids have been enjoying it too!

September took us through the story of God's creation - how God created the world, the stories of Adam and Eve and God's promise to never destroy his creation to Noah. This was a very creative month, with biscuit men and women and rainbow suncatchers amongst other things!

October was a look at the Fruits of the Spirit, using the parables of Jesus to show how we can develop these in our lives. One of the highlights

was using a very beaten mashed up banana and a few other items of fruit to explain the Parable of the Good Samaritan... Honestly! "God Hears Us" was the theme for November, which took us through the life of the prophet Samuel - whose name means "God hears" - right through from the day his mother prayed to have a child until he found David, the next king of Israel. We discussed creative ways to pray, made prayer jars and learned that even though we mightn't see answers to our prayers straight away, God is always listening.

And of course, December was our Nativity! Our wonderful photograph team were on hand and have uploaded the photographs of the kids to the parish website - you can print these from the website or request prints by getting in touch with us. So as you can see, it's been a very exciting few months - with another two and a half years to work through! Please keep

supporting the kids, leaders and families of our church in your prayers!



Laura Jeffrey

The Quiet Corner Time Out



I enjoyed the Mary McAleese programme about St. Columbanus on TV before Christmas. It was very interesting and informative. After watching it I was reminded how our brain can bring out the most trivial things from what has passed through it. Of all the information conveyed in the programme, one of the things that stuck with me was from that part where Mary was carefully examining the pages of the ancient books the monks had transcribed, when she rediscovered the small notes written at the sides of the pages. In one example the monk longed for the work to be finished so he could be outside enjoying the fresh air. In another he had noted that he had taken too much beer the previous night! Adding these extra notes reminded me of a John Gorka song, one of my favourites, "Writing in the Margins", about an American serviceman writing notes to his wife in the margins of his order book because there was no other room on the page. He was just trying to focus on the love of his life and longing for his leave to get back home, whilst trying to put the other boring and time consuming work to the back of his mind. It is very easy to let things take up all of our time but, as these examples show, we can take time out of our routine, to do something different.

How many of us take the time out of our busy lives to read the scriptures that have been provided for us? The "Where's Your Chair?" devotional readings provided as links on the parish website, or as printed copies at the back of the church, presented us with a challenge to do just that. Did you take time out and take up the challenge?

DT



A New Year- A New Beginning. What does this New Year hold for us? At this moment in time, no one knows. It will certainly bring some new changes into our lives. By this time next year,

we hope that we will welcome the changes made to our Parish Church. But for now, we must look forward to what the future holds for us in 2016.

We were deeply sorry to learn of the death of Laurence Manogue and our thoughts and prayers were, and are with Yvonne and the family circle. Yvonne is a valued Committee Member of our Branch.

Because of the renovations to our buildings we have just made plans for our Branch for the next few months which will take us to the summer break. On Tuesday 5th January 2016 we held our postponed Christmas Dinner at Bangor Golf Club when 42 members and the clergy attended. Ruth gave a review of the Branch events for 2014 and 2015. Ruth also indicated that as she had held office as Branch Leader for the past 3 and a half years she felt it was time that she stepped aside and let someone else take on the role. This had been discussed at a previous Committee Meeting and after much thought and consideration Yvonne Manogue agreed to fulfil this position with effect from July 2016. Janice Hewitt has agreed to act as Secretary. Committee Members: Maureen Colgan, Lyla Harkness, Margaret Magee and Susan McNair have decided to step down. Pat Davidson, Heidi Doogan and Ann Shaw have agreed to join the Committee.

Dates for your Diaries

On Monday 18th January, 20 members will have attended the Area Meeting at St. Gall's at 7.30 pm. On Monday 1st February, we will hold our Overseas Night at 8.00pm in the Parish Centre. On Monday 7th March, Roberta Rogers, Action and Outreach Co-ordinator will talk to us about "The Mothers' Union Work at Hydebank Prison". On Monday 4th April, at 7.30pm the Annual Festival Service will be held at Bangor Parish Church. As this is being held on our doorstep, we hope there will be a good attendance.

Ruth Ruttle (Branch Leader) Phone 91450130

Adult Confirmation Preparation

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 (91274901).

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. If there are any candidates, we will find a Confirmation service to attend after Easter at some other parish in the deanery or diocese.



OUR WORSHIP

Sunday 7th February Sunday before Lent

8.30 Holy Communion
10.00 All Age Service
11.30 Morning Prayer

Ash Wednesday 10th February

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 14th February Lent 1

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

Wednesday 17th February

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 21st February Lent 2

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

Wednesday 24th February

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 28th February Lent 3

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

BAPTISMS

December

6th: ETHAN RICHARD BIRKETT, son of Christopher & Ashleigh
27th: ANNABEL MARGARET MABEL ADAIR, daughter of Chris and Emma

February

7th: No crèche
14th: Rachel Brittain, Paula McIlwaine, Leanne Young
21st: Katherine Newman, Ann Browne, Julie Monaghan
28th: Violet Davidson, Judith Bell



February

7th: Mothers' Union team
14th: Mark & Carolyn Larmour, Jean Law
21st: Jem Moran, Joy Hamilton, Irene Bell
28th: Karen, Ann & Kelly

FUNERALS

November

26th: Jo-Ann Coulter, late of Ballymaconnell Rd
27th: Mary Furey, late of Sandhurst Dr.

December

16th: Laurence Manogue, late of Springwell Road
30th: Rita Adendorf, late of McClay Fold

January

19th: Una Bonar, late of Brooklyn Ave



February

7th: Daphne Hamill
14th: Betty Rainsford
21st: Ann McMurray & Marie McKee
28th: Sue Bleakley

*Count your garden
by the flowers,
Never by the leaves that fall;
Count your days
by golden hours,
Don't remember clouds at all.
Count your nights
by stars, not shadows,
Count your years
with smiles, not tears;
Count your blessings,
not your troubles,
Count your age by friends,
not years*

Children's Church Helpers



February

14th: Stefan & Tracie Andreasson, Sarah Benton, Emma Darragh
21st: Gareth & Janet Boal, Heather Dickey, Gillian Fletcher
28th: Jacqui & Neil Devlin, Deborah Galbraith

Parish Office: 91274912
Rectory: 91274901
Curatage: 91271922
Prayer Line: 0731806167
Transport: 07599794968
Church Readers Rota:
John 91467243
Freda 91467624
Web Site www.ballyholmeparish.co.uk

