

St Columbanus

Ballyholme



Operation Deep Clean
Phase One: Complete!
100 years young

..On the way *together*..



The Parishioner

Dec 2016 / Jan 2017

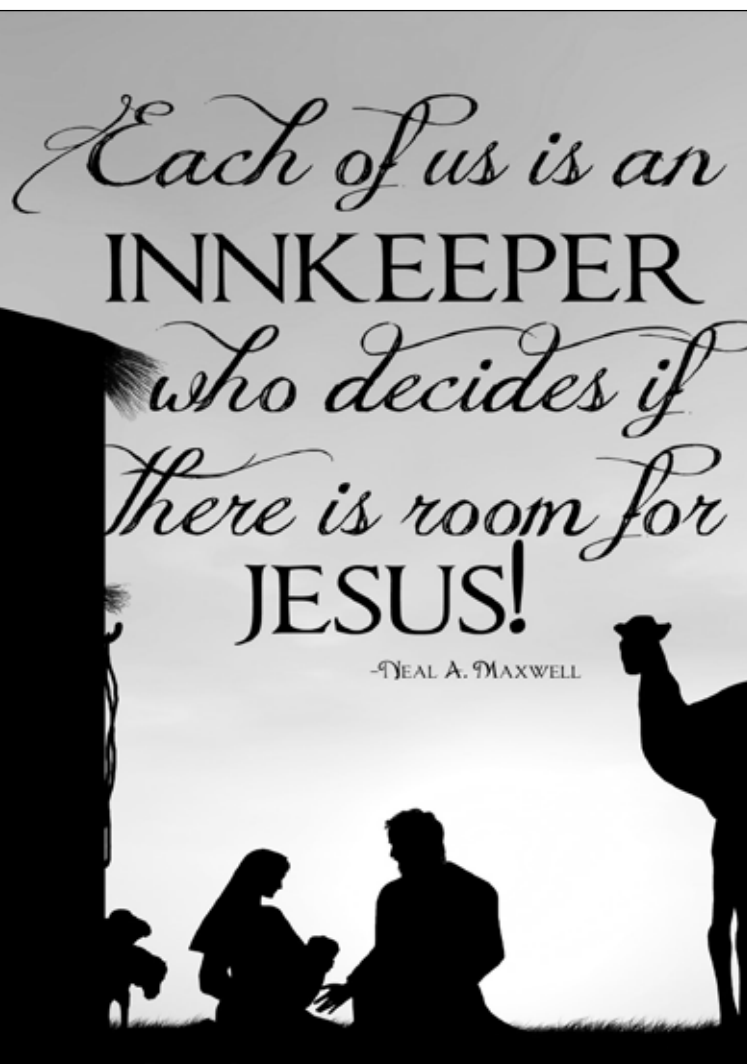
The Church is open every weekday morning for private prayer and meditation



The Rambling Rector

Home in time for Christmas. That was always the plan – to be back in Church for December. Lots of us make the holiday season a finishing post. We want to complete chores X, Y and Z then warm our feet by the Yuletide log. Well I've two things to say to that. Firstly, while our restoration project was not just necessary but vital, at no point did it feel to me like a chore. The objective was exciting: to preserve what we love about our Church building while making it fully fit for purpose for the twenty-first century. The team was enthusiastic: Vestry, Glebewardens, Staff, Churchwardens, Choir and then our Architects and Contractors saw the need and worked the vision through. The people of God were energized: encouraged to have their say and kept fully informed at every stage, our Church family prayed and gave and rejoiced in doing so. Secondly, while everyone loves warming their feet by the Yuletide log, there's not a lot of that in the Christmas story. Largely because Christmas is not the finishing post but the starting line. God didn't complete the task at Bethlehem. He began it there.

SED.



**“Prepare ye in your hearts
a home
where such a mighty
guest may come”**

It's been such a momentous year and one in which the commitment and loyalty of our parishioners has been demonstrated beyond measure.

As 2016 draws to its joyful festive close, please receive these few lines as a genuine expression of gratitude to everyone who has pulled together so willingly and graciously and made St Columbanus once again ready to receive our Heavenly King and Saviour Jesus Christ.

To Staff Team and Select Vestry, Churchwardens and Glebewardens, Children's Church, Crèche and Youth Leaders, Choir members, musicians and singers, magazine and web team, counters, those who visit and drive and cook and garden and serve and above all to those who take their part faithfully in the praising and praying:

**A Blessed Christmas
and a Hope-filled 2017**

Home Visits & Communion Calls

With all that's been happening since September and a number of funerals this autumn, I have made every effort to keep up with the regular round of sick calls and pastoral visits to our home members and those in nursing care. As the winter sets in it is more important than ever that no one is left out. Please don't risk leaving it to my memory or intuition to know who might be feeling forgotten. Get in touch straight away if you are aware of anyone who would appreciate a visit, especially if they end up in hospital. Likewise Christmas Communion: bringing the sacrament to parishioners who loved the Lord and His Church over a lifetime remains one of the great joys of my ministry. **SED**



Joy

Just Older Youth

One Hundred Years Young

Born in Dublin, Mrs Owen Anderson celebrated her 100th birthday on 6th November with lunch at Bangor Golf Club surrounded by her loving family some of whom had travelled from South Africa, Majorca, England and Scotland so that they could be part of Owen's special day. Owen had a career in the Bank of Ireland Head Quarters in Dublin where she met her future husband and married at the age of twenty. The couple were blessed with three children Peter, Valerie and Roger, grandchildren and great grandchildren followed.

The family moved many times within the south of Ireland. Each time on arrival in her new hometown Owen joined the local Church of Ireland Church always becoming actively involved.

She moved to Bangor to be near her daughter and joined Saint Columbanus. Owen was presented with a card and bouquet of flowers from her Church family.

Karen



The Wednesday Club

Our meeting in November was attended by 25 ladies, including 2 visitors.



We had a very interesting talk on Belfast Stores – Robbs, Robinson Cleavers, Anderson McAuley (remember them?) and many more. Our speaker was Norman Wetherall, who illustrated his talk with pictures of the stores dating from the 1800's, right up to the present day.

The ladies were reminded that next month was our Christmas lunch, and that they should bring a small present for Santa's sack. Our monthly draw was won by Margaret Kerr.

See you next month

Sue



Communion Lunch

Please put a note in your diary that our next informal Communion followed by a light lunch is on Tuesday 13th December at 12.00pm. Lifts can be arranged by ringing me on 9127 4704. As always all are welcome and we look forward to seeing some new faces as well as familiar ones.

Blessings
Karen

MU News

A huge thank you to our very creative visitor from our November meeting, Sheelagh Mason. Last year we enjoyed her sharing of her love of patchwork so much we invited her back this year to inspire us for the Festive Season. She did not disappoint us, for she had done her Christmas Decoration Homework indeed!!

Teeny-weeny buttons threaded in a particular sequence to emerge as mini Christmas trees complete with tiny pots was our first bauble to dangle. Next we saw little wreaths made from wire, beads and pearls. Stars were another motif she shared using Christmas fabric. Finally it was our turn to create. Sheelagh had prepared little felt heart shapes in different sizes and contrasting buttons, then armed with needle and thread we stitched our very first bauble for Christmas 2016!! Thanks to everyone, a great night's entertainment and we welcomed quite a number of new faces to our group.

Remember the December meeting is our Church Service followed by festive cheer in the Parish Centre. Monday 12th December 7.30pm in our newly refurbished welcoming church with great sound, vision and warmth!

(Unwrapped Christmas Gift for senior members of the Parish can be brought along for collection that evening or left into the Parish Office before then. Thank you.)

Don't forget our New Year Meal in Bangor Golf Club, Tuesday 10th January 7.15pm for 7.30pm (final payment please at the Church Service on 12 December)

Best wishes to everyone from all the Mothers' Union committee for Christmas and the New Year, looking forward to seeing you at our Service in December and the New Year Dinner.

Yvonne Manogue, Branch Leader



Restoration 2016: Dedication of Gifts Service

Date: TBC

Many new pledges to the Restoration appeal have been received over the past few weeks. There have also been a number of enquiries in response to our invitation to sponsor a new Church chair in addition to other gifts towards specific items in memory of loved ones. As these donations continue to come in, we are extremely grateful for all your generous gestures of support. Our intention at this stage is to arrange a special service of dedication in the new year – the date to be decided by the availability of our former curate the Reverend Alistair Morrison. This would be an opportunity for our St Columbanus church family to acknowledge all the pledges received, to dedicate what's been newly restored or acquired, to thank God for his loving provision and to remember before him those precious people whose lives and faith meant so much.



In November, a baker's dozen of St Columbanus walkers headed to Armagh. We were close to Maurice's home place and he was able to guide us along the by-roads between destinations.

Our first stop was Gosford Forest Park on the outskirts of Markethill. We set off on the 4-mile Cruntagh Trail which mostly follows the perimeter of the forest park. It was a bright sunny day and walking in the forest sheltered us from the keen northerly wind that was adding to the autumn leaves below our feet.

An unscheduled detour brought us to Gosford Castle – a somewhat curious building with a varied history. It was built for Archibald Acheson, the 2nd Earl of Gosford, in the first half of the 19th century in “Norman revival” style. With 150 rooms, it was thought to be the largest stately home in Ireland. It was sold by the Acheson family in the 1920s and since then has been a prisoner of war camp, a hotel and an army barracks. It is now a number of private apartments.

Returning to our path, Robert pointed out the birds of prey, soaring over the neighbouring farmland, looking for food.

The last part of the walk took us through open parkland. This reminded Leslie of his visit to the international Scouting Jamboree held there in 1989. One of the organisers of the event was Mark Larmour of St Columbanus Parish.

After lunch, we travelled a few miles to Clare Glen for a delightful 2.5 mile walk along the Cusher River. The glen is famous for its bluebells, so some of the walkers plan a return visit next Spring.

Our last destination was the Tea Room in the village of Scarva, where we admired the extensive display of flowers in the main street. Refreshed, we returned to Bangor having had a wonderful day out in unseasonably bright November weather.

The next outing is on 3rd December. We meet at the car park at 9.45 am for a walk in Scrabo Country Park followed by a festive meal in The Esplanade.

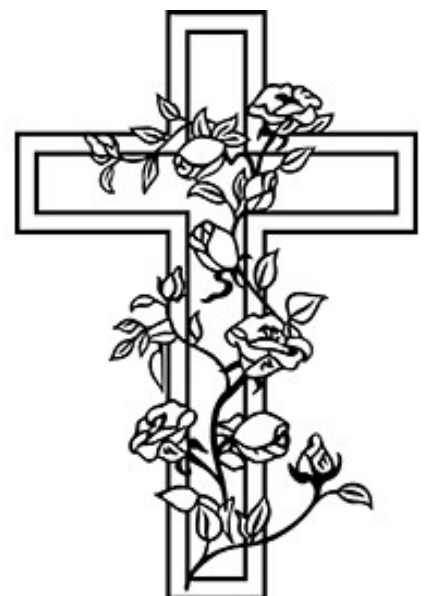
Peter Gibson



Lighten our Darkness: A Service of Remembering with Canon Stewart Wright

11 December 6.30pm

This annual opportunity to give thanks for lost loved ones has found an important place in the life of our Church family, especially since we moved it last year to Advent and the build up to Christmas. If you haven't experienced it before, maybe because you have been bereaved only recently, Lighten our Darkness is a simple service of gratitude and hope which includes a reading of the names of those who have recently died whom we want to remember before God. Bringing our message this year will be our much loved former curate Canon Stewart Wright. Stewart has recently retired as rector of Letterkenny in Co Donegal. He brings not only memories of his pastoral experience with us at Ballyholme but, as many of you will know, shortly after leaving St Columbanus Stewart and his wife Eva lost their young son Philip to cancer. Please join us for what is always a service full of poignancy and healing.



Phase One: complete!



On time and on budget: in every sense an answer to prayer. While the work was underway some of us had a worry that people might return to Church, look around them and say: what took so long and what cost so much? The lion's share of what's been done falls into the category of maintenance and repairs to the fabric and fixtures of the building. The more cosmetic aspects of the project were only the tip of a very large iceberg!

First things first, we had to make good and re-weatherproof the roof. Water was getting in at a number of points, especially where the 'lid' of the building met the walls of the nave. Substantial re-leading work was required and portions of the tiling were also in need of attention. The decorative Celtic cross on top of the building turned out to be cracked down the middle and faced with the choice of repairing or replacing it, the sensible choice seemed to be the latter. Another important element in the exterior programme was the guttering and downspouts which were cleaned, replaced where necessary and then re-painted.

The new door was cut on day one to give the contractors access inside the building with their earth-moving machinery for lifting the floor. New, more efficient heating for our Church was one of Restoration 2016's most urgent elements and following input from parishioners the decision was made that the budget should be stretched to include an under-floor system. Faced with a choice between carpet and tiles, the advice came back that in the interest of heat conduction and the Church's acoustic, tiles would be preferable. The new door itself answers the concern that Canon Mercer shared with me when I showed him our first set of plans: that from the day and hour of St Columbanus's consecration, the lack of a usable second door was a worry. The landscaping and lighting outside the new door and all around the outside of Church should make a real difference, especially to people making their way down the slope through the dark winter months.



There was one major surprise in Restoration 2016. It was when the organ and choir stalls came out to reveal an original portion of the Church which only a tiny handful of parishioners can even remember. On first sight, a number of people have reacted to it with an audible "wow"! It's as though we've been walking past the windows on the outside for years without noticing them because what we should probably describe as 'the south transept' was clearly part of the original footprint of the building. Not only does the decorative seam of red brick follow the line of the newly revealed south transept but so did the old Parquet flooring. The suggestion from those with long-enough Ballyholme memories, is that every Church of Ireland parish needed an organ and in the days before digital instruments, the pumpwork had to go somewhere. Some who have known and loved our building for a long time have already remarked that while they had always thought of St Columbanus as off-centre and slightly unfinished, it has a new sense of balance and completeness about it.



To improve sightlines, the eagle-eyed among you will have spotted that the pulpit and lectern have swapped sides. The addition of a dias with a new and removable curved Communion rail means that people will no longer have to climb any steps to receive the Sacrament. It will also offer a new raised area

for children's presentations, choirs and such like. All along, the plan was that our brass Celtic Cross and Holy Table should remain a recognisable focus at one end of the building, almost a cathedral-style 'high altar'. The addition of a plain wooden but removable Holy Table in the dias should make our celebrations of Communion more visible and connected for the whole congregation. Likewise the new elevated position for the Font. It's still at the back and on our way in to Church, but it's now in a direct line with the Holy Table and under the rich colour and symbolism of the Holy Spirit and Patrick windows.

Speaking of which, it turned out that our collection of Irish saint windows and our Pentecost rose-window were badly in need of attention. The sanctuary 'incarnation' windows were fine but most of the others needed completely re-framing and substantial re-leading. Many have already remarked on the new glow and richness of the colours and all that remains now is to commission three new windows for our south aisle! The Mothers' Union have already approached Vestry about the one next to the pulpit but by all means, expressions of interest in the other two (the mirror of St Brigid and the Agnus Dei/Lamb of God windows) are most welcome.



Such a major overhaul of the building afforded us the opportunity to renew our wiring completely and to replace our halogen lighting system with a much more cost-efficient LED one. To do away with the clutter and hazards associated with exposed wires and cabling, much of our new wiring has been tracked onto the timber of the ceiling. What looks like wooden beams running length ways along both sides of the nave are actually metal tracking boxes painted to blend in with our wonderful wooden roof. The new floor meant we were also able to track-in the hardwiring for our new PA and Audio-Visual system and keep things as unobtrusive as possible. Our watchword with the screens was "low key". We never wanted a huge blind-style projector arrangement for the chancel. Waiting for as long as we have before installing the new system has meant a more efficient, better value-for-money set-up which keeps intrusion and cabling to a minimum.

Which only leaves to mention those parts of the Church the congregation rarely sees. The Vestry is still small but the addition of new storage at various points around the inside of the Church means we have been able to strip out the walls of the Vestry, replace the sink and create at least the illusion of slightly more space! However the upstairs WC has been completely transformed and there is now good storage for cleaning materials and flower arranging paraphernalia.

The much talked about re-siting of the electricity substation coupled with the laying of one side of the foundation for the link building, leaves the way clear for Phase Two: lift, loos, reception space and youth and children's suite. Whenever we are in a position financially to begin Phase Two, the site is ready and waiting. On reflection, while I was disappointed last Christmas that we couldn't do



everything we needed to do in one go, tackling Phases One and Two together would have been even more disruptive and for longer.

For now, all praise and glory to Christ: the One who draws us to worship Him, meets us in Word and Sacrament and fires us by His Spirit to be His servants and witnesses in our local community and even to the ends of the earth. Through the worst of the upheaval and earthworks, I mean it when I say that restoring St Columbanus has been not just a duty and a joy but a delight from start to finish.

Around the Parish



Operation Deep Clean
A Well Earned Coffee Break

*Happy
Christmas*

Monday Morning Coffee



Wednesday Club



Refugees

Refugees

They have no need of our help

So do not tell me

These haggard faces could belong to
you or me

Should life have dealt a different hand

We need to see them for who they really are

Chancers and scroungers

Layabouts and loungers

With bombs up their sleeves

Cut-throats and thieves

They are not

Welcome here

We should make them

Go back to where they came from

They cannot

Share our food

Share our homes

Share our countries

Instead let us

Build a wall to keep them out

It is not okay to say

These are people just like us

A place should only belong to those who are

born there

Do not be so stupid to think that

The world can be looked at another way.

(now read from bottom to top)

Brian Bilston

I came across this poem by Brian Bilston quite recently. It is such a thought provoking and clever piece of writing that it probably needs no further comment but it reminded me of the poem "Entirely" by our great local poet Louis McNeice. At the end of it he concludes that nothing is ever 'entirely'. The conclusion that McNeice reaches may be the approach needed to deal with the social problems the world is facing today.

WMB



First Aid Training at St. Columbanus.



To complement the advances that St. Columbanus has made in recent years in enhancing the safety of all those using the Church and indeed any of our facilities, the Select Vestry's Health & Safety Sub-Committee organised a formal First Aid training course for staff and group leaders. The 6 hour programme, held over 2 nights in October, was delivered by the father and daughter team of Maynard Porter and Dawn Grady, themselves recognised Red Cross first aid trainers. The course content, presented in a clear but light-hearted manner, covered a range of first aid topics, with particular emphasis on CPR and the use of the defibrillator in cases of suspected heart attack. All participants had the opportunity of hands-on practice on dummies and each was formally assessed on their competence. The reward for the 25 parishioners and staff who took part, aside from the personal satisfaction of completing the course and attaining new skills, was the presentation of the formal certificates. In thanking Maynard and Dawn for the delivery of the course, Simon highlighted the strides the Parish had taken in the last 4 years in general health & safety measures and the provision of wheelchairs, first aid kits and the defibrillator, and culminating in the formal qualification in First Aid of so many staff and group leaders.

Larry Cheshire



Operation Deep Clean



Does this scenario sound familiar to anyone? The builders have finished work on your new conservatory/sun room/extension etc but before you can move your furniture in and start enjoying the extra space there is a lot of cleaning and tidying up to do. So it was just the same in St Columbanus Church after the builders left at the beginning of November.

Simon's request for a work team to help clean the Church resulted in a wonderful team of willing volunteers of all ages who turned up early one Monday morning all dressed appropriately for some serious cleaning.

There was plenty to be done, there were floors to clean and Teddy our youngest volunteer aged 3 at the time (his 4th birthday was the following week) was a dab hand with the Dyson!

Then the floors had to be mopped, some opted for the electric steam mop while others chose the traditional mop and bucket. There were loads of windows to clean both inside and out. The new cabinet for the sound desk and the lecturn got a bit of a polish and the Baptismal font got the once over too! I had a look at the new sound desk and to my untrained eye it looked like the control panel from the Starship Enterprise but I'm sure to someone who knows about these things it's really quite easy to use.

The volunteers were all very grateful for the tea, coffee and scones and it was good to get a break and a much needed sit down before getting back to work again.

Everyone I spoke to was amazed by the transformation in the Church. It's so much brighter thanks to the new lighting and white floor tiles and it seems more roomy inside. The new extended Chancel and Communion rail means no more steps to climb to receive Communion and now that the weather is turning a bit colder I'm sure we will all appreciate the new underfloor heating. CJ



December

4th: Mothers' Union Team
11th: Mark & Carolyn Larmour, Jean Law
18th: Susan & Jonnie Stockton, Pat Davidson
25th: Christmas Day

January 2017

1st: Ann & Harry Browne, Patrick Crothers
8th: Fiona Jackson, Ann Reynolds, Ann Shaw
15th: Jem Moran, Joy Hamilton, Irene Bell
22th: Tracie Andreasson, Heather Johnston, Ella Walker
29th: Jill Owens, Daphne Moore, Barbara Wallace

FUNERAL

November:

10th Adelaide Wallace, late of Kingsland nursing home
16th Nancy Baker, late of Abbey View nursing home, at Bangor Abbey

Creche Rota

For details of creche helpers rota please see News in the Pews



Ballyholme Churches

Community Carol Singing

Ballyholme Methodist are hosting this year!
 Tuesday 20th December, at Sheridan Bakery
 5.30-6.30pm

December

4th: Gail Kerr, Carolyn Larmour, Mark Larmour, Kelly McCullough
11th: Jacqueline Devlin, Neil Devlin, Gillian Fletcher and Deborah Galbraith
18th: Emma Hamilton, Debbie Hunter, Allison Jamison and Gillian Jones



January 2017

8th: Paula McIlwaine, Helen Crothers, Michelle Savage, Jenny Campbell
15th: Sarah Boyd, Caroline Gillan, Trish McGrugan, Rhonda Magennis
22th: Amanda Thompson, Sarah Tweedie, Geoff and Gillian Young
29th: Stefan & Tracie Andreasson, Sarah Benton, Heather Dickey



December

4th Jacqui McCabe
11th Yvonne Manogue
18th Christmas
25th Christmas

January 2015

1st Susan Stockton
8th Pat Shannon
15th Jacqui Devlin
22nd Agnes Officer
29th Flower Fund

Parish Office:

91274912

Rectory:

91274901

Prayer Line:

07531806167

Transport: 91466198

Church Readers Rota:

Freda 91467624

Michelle 91271327

Web Site www.

Ballyholmeparish.co.uk



A Cozy Christmas

little ones and tall ones, come along with your families and teddies to cozy up and hear the Christmas story together!

Ballyholme Parish

6.30pm

Wednesday 21st December



Confirmation Classes will begin in early 2017. Confirmation is for all those in Year 10 and older.

If you or your child are interested in going through confirmation, please contact the Parish Office or let Billy know.

Watch out for more information in the News in the Pews.

Confirmation





This last term has been an adventure – we learned about the armour of God, how God is greater than our fears, the miracles of Jesus and some great rehearsal time – here is some info about the next term's plan!

Jigsaw Term 2 plan

8 th January	God Keeps His promises - Abraham
15 th January	God Keeps His promises – A baby for Sarah
22 nd January	God Keeps His promises – Isaac
29 th January	God Keeps His promises
5 th February	All Age Worship
12 th February	God Knows Us - Isaac + Rebecca
19 th February	God Knows Us - Jacob + Esau
26 th February	God Knows Us – Jacob + the Angel
5 th March	All Age Worship
12 th March	God Hears Our prayers – Naomi + Ruth
19 th March	God Hears Our prayers – Jonah
26 th March	All About Mums!
2 nd April	All Age Worship
9 th April	palm Sunday presentation
14 th April	Good Friday Praise Party
15 th April	Easter Sunday Family Worship

Come and join the celebration!

Nativity Play

Sunday 18th December, 10am





You all know what goes on with children's church - But what is crèche all about?

Creche is a place of joy and noise! It's place of colouring, songs and toys and lots of chatter.

It's a place for making friends – friends that the tinies will see in Toddlers group, in Bubbles and maybe even in their big schools. It's a place for our community for the littlest members of our church, and everyone under the age of three is invited to join.

How does it work? You go to our newly restored church as usual and take the chance to enjoy our lovely new toddler space (it's a great stop for your prams too!), and then when the children leave for Children's Church, bring your tiny one up to the Columbanus room where leaders and helpers will be there to entertain and look after your young folk – then go back to the rest of the service! The leaders will take your details and you can rest and worship God knowing that your little one is being cared for and

If you have any questions, get into contact with Laura or Rachel Brittain via the Parish Office.



A huge thank you to **Joan Dales & Violet Davidson** for their years of organising Children's Church and Creche volunteers! These ladies have been keeping us organised for years and as they step down, we would like to thank them for all of the time and energy they have given to us.

Libby Beech and Rachel Brittain will be taking over, so if you have any rota queries get in touch!

Christ Is The Light Of Christmas

Christmas joy and lights aglow;
Christmas songs to warm and cheer
Excitement is on the children's faces
As anticipation fills the air —

But for some, it can be lonely
When loved ones have passed away,
Memories are all that linger
As the years begin to fade

But Christ's light should never dim;
It should ever shine out bright
Our ray of hope in this troubled world
Is our joy of eternal light

Christmas, when spent with Jesus,
Can warm our hurting hearts,
For as His light shines within us,
Its glow warms our deepest parts.

© By M.S.Lowndes



YOUTH-news

Nothing relaxes me more than sitting down to enjoy a good movie whether it is a comedy, a thriller or a feel good drama. I even have the guilty pleasure of enjoying a good chick flick. However my favourite movies are the ones that inspire and motivate me to be better. Into the Wild is a biographical survival drama based on the travels of Christopher McCandless across North America and his life spent in the Alaskan wilderness in the early 1990s.



McCandless once said,

“The joy of life comes from our encounters with new experiences, and hence there is no greater joy than to have an endlessly changing horizon, for each day to have a new and different sun.”

As I reflect on the words of Christopher McCandless, it resonates in my heart that we are constantly encountering new experiences in the life of our church.

I arrived at Ballyholme Parish to a church that was a building site. I had never stepped inside the church and I waited in anticipation to see what our home would look like when it was finished. In the waiting, I soon came to realise that church is so much more than just a building. In the absence of our building, I witnessed families coming together to serve and ‘make church happen’ in St Columbanus College. As we worshipped and learnt together, I felt a joy in my heart that God has big plans for the Parish of Ballyholme.

November and December were a busy time for all in the church as we moved out of St Columbanus and back into church. We had our Christmas Bazaar and it was great to see so many from our community coming into our church centre to enjoy all the stalls and festivities that were on offer. I really enjoy the festivities and services around Christmas time as it reminds us how amazing our God is that He would send His son to be with us, to serve us and to show us what life in all its fullness is really like. As we walked through the Christmas story throughout December, it is incredible to see so many faces in our church building.

Once Christmas has wound down we are back into our regular routines once again. I have been thinking about the young people of our church and how we can incorporate and engage them more in the day to day life of our church. It is commonly said that young people are the church of tomorrow but I fully believe that young people are the church of today and have a massive part to play in the shaping of our church.

Paul writes in 1st Timothy 4:12,

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

It is my vision to see our young people involved in every area of our church life in the next few years. I understand this will be a process that will not happen overnight but it is a vision that I would love for our church to take on and move towards. My dream is to see our young people being the example of faith, hope and love in our community. I believe that providing opportunities for personal, social and spiritual growth will help develop them into the people God has designed them to be.

We have many opportunities for the young people to be involved in on a Sunday morning. We have installed a new sound desk, cameras and visuals. We need a team of dedicated people who have an interest in sound and visuals that will run these each Sunday morning. We would love to establish a rota and be able to train up the team to produce a professional operation on a Sunday morning. If you would like to be involved, please let me know and I would be happy to chat through all the details with you.

In this new season for our church, I am hopeful and expectant for our church. I believe that we will have a great joy in our endlessly changing parish life. Pray with me for our young people that they will fully embrace the opportunities that will be provided and that they will become the example of believers in their speech, conduct, love, faith and purity. They are the church of today, not just tomorrow.

Home for Christmas. It's what everyone wants, dreams of and plans for – if at all possible. I can't tell you how glad I am that our church family has been able to make its way back to St Columbanus in time for this year's celebrations. Somehow it feels not just that we're coming home, but that Christ is coming home too.

It brings to mind Professor David Frost's post-Communion prayer, which made such a popular arrival into our own Church of Ireland Alternative Prayer Book 1984:

“Father of all, we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace and opened the gate of glory...”

What better image could there be to convey the believer's sense that what Jesus Christ offers is eternal safety and everlasting hospitality? Meeting Him for the first time might equate to being shown in through God's front door – welcomed into His porch as it were. On that basis, perhaps following and imitating Him will turn out to be a tour of room after room after room! When it comes to God's love, there is more and more to discover, and there will always be.

Of course not all of us had idyllic homes to start life in. I'm also conscious of those people who for various tragic reasons and through no fault of their own, have no place to call home. And then there's another reality check to the home image. Take these lines from my favourite hymn:

“In life, no house, no home my Lord on earth might have;
in death, no friendly tomb but what a stranger gave.
What may I say? Heav'n was his home; but mine the tomb wherein he lay.”

Our own St Columbanus reminded us in Sermon VIII that what we imagine to be our real home in this earthly life is only ever a half-way house, a nest we should feather with caution:

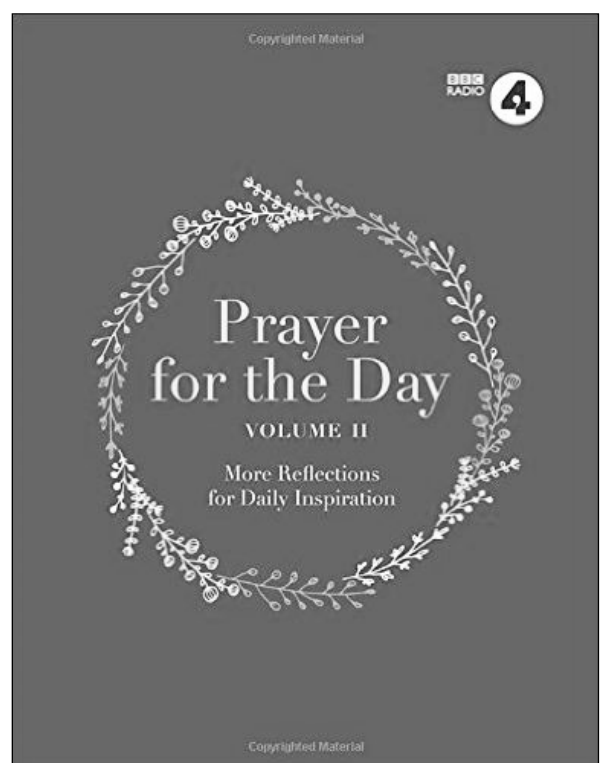
“It is for travellers to hasten to their homeland,
likewise their part is anxiety upon the roadway, and in their homeland peace.
Then let us, who are on the way, hasten home;
for our whole life is like the journey of a single day.”

SED

Prayer for the Day Volume 2

Yup, there's another one! You may recall two years ago I found myself included in a new publication, timed for the Christmas/New Year market. Six mornings a week there is a two minute slot on BBC Radio 4 at 5.43am (between News Briefing and Farming Today) called Prayer for the Day. Some of the larks of the parish hear me from time to time and because it also goes out on the BBC World Service one or two of you have told me that I have even joined you on your foreign holidays! I have now been contributing for about seven years, most recently the June week of the Brexit vote. You can imagine my surprise to receive another email back in September informing me that some of my material was going to be included in the hardback compilation second volume. The first was quite a smart, bedside type book and its companion looks like being very similar. As I said last time, as you would expect with a modern BBC enterprise it's an interfaith collection, reflecting the full range of the UK's religious traditions. But while it's certainly not an exclusively Christian prayer book, it's full of spiritual interest and variety. Again, none of the royalties come to me!

SED



Sunday 4th December Advent 2

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

Monday 5th December

7.30 Community Re-opening Service
 (ticket holders only)

Wednesday 7th December

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 11th December Advent 3

8:30 Holy Communion
 10:00 Morning Worship & Children's Church
 11:30 Parish Communion
 6.30 Service of Remembering

Monday 12th December

7.30 Mother's Union Annual Service

Wednesday 14th December

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 18th December Advent 4

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

Wednesday 21st December

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Saturday 24th December Christmas Eve

5.00 A Family Carol Service
 11.00 First Communion of Christmas

Sunday 25th December Christmas Day

8:30 Holy Communion
 10:00 Family Service

Sunday 1st January Christmas 2

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

Wednesday 4th January

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 8th January Epiphany 1

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

Wednesday 11th January

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 15th January Epiphany 2

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

Wednesday 18th January

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 22nd January Epiphany 3

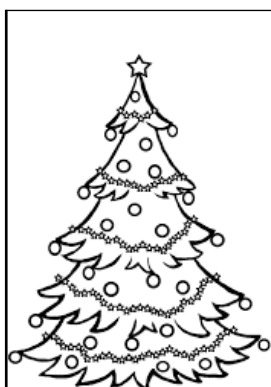
8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Holy Communion & Children's Church
 11.30 Morning Prayer

Wednesday 25th January

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado room

Sunday 29th 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 17th December
 at 10.00 am**

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



**Saturday 28 January 2017
 7.30pm in Parish Centre**

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

Proceeds to support Parish Mission
 Partners