

St Columbanus

Ballyholme



Advent Gift Appeal
Easter Vestry Reports
Christmas is Coming



..On the way
together..

The Parishioner

Dec 2020 / Jan 2021



Given the situation, if I were to wish you the best Christmas ever, would you feel I was slightly over-egging the eggnog? Christmas 2020 will be the same only different. What many of us usually look forward to most is getting the family together. As we will miss that at home, we will miss it in Church. Forced to forgo the traditional parish parties and dinners, and the joyous full-church seasonal services, after the privations of this year, festive freedom next year will feel all the more wonderful. That said, celebrations in extremis often yield the most lasting memories. There's also a possibility that the essentials of the season might speak to us more clearly and personally. An angel. A young girl. A wedding plan interrupted.



Another angel. A call to be registered. A soon-to-be father and mother with nowhere to stay. A baby. A sky full of angels. A group of shepherds. A star. A king. A foreign diplomatic delegation. God enters the passing vagaries of our world, so we may enter the lasting assurances of His. Global pandemic notwithstanding then, I wish you the best Christmas ever. And, God with us, an even better New Year.

SED

Hands, Face, Space

As the months wear on, we want to reassure you that our public health obligations are being conscientiously fulfilled and our risk assessments kept fully updated. The Health and Safety Committee are regularly reviewing procedures with our staff team and key volunteers, and extra care has been given to our arrangements for Christmas. Your personal checklist for coming and going remains the same, and it is crucial that you complete a track and trace card on every visit.

Remember please:

keep your distance

bodies, chairs and tables should be 2 metres apart at all times

don't bunch up

at the doors, on the steps, in the porch or even the carpark

wear a mask

remember to bring your own but we have spares if you're stuck

be early and stay 'bubbled-up'

numbers are limited with a Church service maximum of 67

use the hand sanitiser

it's available at all entry points and at other places too

wash your hands when you get home

and help our teams clean chairs and other surfaces if you can

'go' at home!

toilets are for emergencies only

Church Centre

During the restrictions announced for the two weeks from 27th November the Church Centre will continue to open daily. You can still bring items for the storehouse on Mondays and Thursdays. Kiwoko Christmas cards will be available from the office and donations to the Children's Gift Appeal and the Advent Gift Appeal can be left at the office.



Christmas cards for Kiwoko Hospital.

With this year's challenges for developing new cards, we are simply selling some of the previous year's Christmas cards in aid of Kiwoko Hospital.

They are on sale in packs of 10 for £5. The greeting card carries seasonal greetings to your friends and support for the needy patients in Kiwoko.

The 'alternative gift' card is for sale costing £10 each. Cards are on sale at services in the weeks ahead or catch Rory or Denise (07761411159.)

In addition they are available from the Parish Office Monday -Thursday mornings.

Thanks for your ongoing prayers and support.

A favourite phrase of my Mum's when I was growing up and things weren't going well was, 'This too will pass'. When she uttered these words I always felt reassured that whatever the dilemma I found myself in, it wouldn't last forever.

Who would have thought when we entered lockdown at the end of March this year that things would be much the same 9 months later, but then as all Mums know, 9 months can change things forever!

We have so very much missed seeing all our dear friends coming and going from the Parish Centre. I know we have kept in touch with you by telephone and doorstep visits but it's just not the same as being together and meeting face to face.

As we approach Christmas 2020 the message of hope triumphing over darkness is more vital than ever. Hope is just not for the life to come but for the here and now. And so we look forward with hope and expectation to the day, when as a Church family, we can smile at each other without masks and rejoice when we no longer have to fear human contact.

Christmas teaches us that when things seem dark we can trust the everlasting light. If you are lonely this Christmas may you feel the touch of the Christ Child and know that we your Church family continue to uphold you not only in our prayers but in practical ways too, as and when you need us. Just let us know.

With love and blessings,

Karen

A Christmas Prayer

My prayer for you this Christmas
 Is like a special gift
 I choose to ask for peace and joy
 And there's more on this yuletide list.
 I know you need both hope and love
 To fill your life anew
 And so I take these special things
 And wrap them up for you.
 I ask that you would know how much
 You're loved and held so dear,
 As I take a ribbon of grace
 And tie a bow around the year.
 And on the label I will write
 My promise just for you
 'You're in my prayers this Christmas
 time and the whole year through'.
 Anon.



The Adoration of the Shepherds by
 Guido Reni (c1640)



Have you heard our children playing outside during the 10 O'clock service?

No, they have not started a new revolutionary movement, rather, they are simply enjoying the outdoor activities of MUDDY CHURCH!

I have moved Children's Church outdoors, where there is plenty of fresh air and children can have the freedom to run and wander around. There is so much beauty and evidence

of God outside, it makes perfect sense to use the church grounds as our new meeting place!

Not put off by the damp ground or autumn temperatures, 30 children signed up for our prayer walk and were happy to make frog jumps and to roar as a lion. They drew things that they were worried about on our waves, followed the footsteps of Jesus up the hill and jumped for joy on our hopscotch squares, giving thanks to God for all things good!

Sadly, the circuit breaker lockdown thwarted my plans for the second Muddy Church, but we were not put off by the rain on 8th November. On Remembrance Sunday we organised socially distanced painting stations and decorated stones with poppies. After a few outdoor games (to give the paint time to dry), we laid our poppy stones down on the grass bank as an act of remembrance.


I am loving Muddy Church, it is so good to spend time with the children and I believe that this fresh idea is the safest way to meet face-to-face at this difficult time.



However, I am aware that a number of families are still preferring to stay home on Sunday mornings and, with this in mind, I have continued to use zoom on café church mornings in order to keep in touch with these children. I'm sure you can agree that Jenny Porter and the Birkett twins stole the show at our fancy-dress meeting!

Also, feel free to check out our YouTube channel, where I post a Sunday School lesson every other week.

Paula



“ONCE IN
OUR WORLD,
*A STABLE HAD SOMETHING
IN IT THAT WAS BIGGER
THAN OUR
WHOLE WORLD.*”
- C.S. LEWIS

*What a year, and we've a way to go yet!
It's been the first full-blown global crisis of most of our lifetimes
but as Christians we proclaim the God who responded
to our confusion, sin and heartache
by visiting us, dying for us, and rising again to give us hope.*

*Thank you everyone in our St Columbanus family
for your worship and prayer, your encouragement and support throughout
2020.*

Christmas and New Year Blessings!
Simon D.

**For the grace of God has appeared,
bringing salvation to all...**

Bishop David has invited every parish in Down and Dromore to hold an Advent Gift Appeal and so with this edition of The Parishioner you will find an envelope by which to respond. Many of us will save money this quieter festive season, so please pray about how much you can give.

If you are thinking this probably reflects the exceptional year we have just lived through, you would be correct. The simple fact is that with all churches forced to close for more than three months in the spring, and with weekly attendance dramatically reduced by socially-distanced worship, covering the costs of ministry and remembering those in need has not been easy. To say that whatever you can give will be much appreciated is a colossal understatement.

10% of what you give in your envelopes will go to Down and Dromore's link Diocese in Maridi, South Sudan. A further 10% will go to the Down and Dromore church planting fund which supports new congregations in places like the Braniel (Belfast), the Glen (Newtownards) and Killicomaine (Portadown). The remaining 80% is for us to allocate and the Select Vestry has identified three areas which everyone will recognise as core to our Ballyholme Parish ministry:-

Youth & Children

No Easter or Summer Jumpin' this year and no Xcess for the teenagers in August, meant the loss of £5000 income for our youth and children's programme. With no prospect of a Christmas Bazaar this year to top-up their kitty, for the first time Andrew and Paula had to approach Vestry with a request for a small monthly allowance.



The Church at the Heart of the Community

Rev Jan Stevenson has made a series of visits to our local businesses to explore new ways of building community in Ballyholme. A number of avenues have opened up, all with a view to serving those businesses, supporting the vulnerable in our area and showcasing the Church. Seed money in the order of £1000 is now required to get several outline plans up and running.

Kajiado & Kiwoko

It is hoped to reschedule our Harvest Soup Lunch and January Missions Quiz post-Covid. However the £5000 normally raised every year by the Missions Committee will not be easy to make up. We are conscious too that our mission partners are suffering the effects of the Pandemic in places with considerably less infrastructure and government help than we have and certainly no furlough scheme.





On Saturday 26th September, Ballyholme ladies had the pleasure of hosting Mrs Hilary McClay. While we couldn't fulfil our original plan of a ladies breakfast due to Covid restrictions, we still managed to offer coffee and snacks, thanks to the efforts of Karen and Kelly. Thanks also go to



Paula McIllwaine who led the ladies in a sacred moment of unaccompanied worship. Approximately 40 ladies attended to hear from Hilary and have a bit of catch up with one other.

Hilary spoke from Luke 1:39-45 reminding us that God desires an intimate relationship with His people. God knows our situation in life and speaks, therefore we need to make space to listen and respond to His voice. There was an opportunity given to receive prayer ministry for those who wanted it.

Hilary shared not only from the Word but also about her own life experience and the changes that her husband David's appointment to Bishop had brought to their lives. It was a very uplifting morning.

We look forward to hearing more from Hilary in February (6th-7th) when we hold our first Ladies' Night Away. To find out more or book a place please contact the Parish Office, as registration is now open.

Denise Wilson

Ladies Weekend

Some ladies when they hear the words 'Ladies weekend' will immediately be put off and think, 'Not for me, thank you.' And I want to say that I can understand why you might say this especially if you have never been to a Ladies Weekend or if you have and it was not a great experience.

But I want you to take a moment and read this and see if I can change your mind. If you are fully on board then read along and get excited!

I grew up in a church that always had weekends for everyone, youth, young adults, family, mens and ladies and all the weekends I attended I loved. I confess I am one of life's joiners, I love to get in and get involved (although as the years have rolled on I am much fussier about what I join). My experience of these weekends will compound my enthusiasm for our Dromantine weekend.

Here are my top 3 reasons why I love a Ladies Weekend:

- 1. Meet new people in the church family** - *I always loved seeing a different side to the folk I was in church with on a Sunday when I ate with them, chatted to them, spent time with them and worshipped with them.*
- 2. Great fun** - *my greatest memories of all the weekends was laughter! I have vivid memories of howling with laughter with my sister and friend who I came with. I remember laughing as one of my favourite babysitters accidentally passed wind as she was telling us hilarious stories about the good old days in our church! I remember laughing at meal times and with the speakers as they inspired us with their experiences with God.*
- 3. Meeting God in a new way** - *each weekend gave me a new experience with God, each one bringing me closer to Him. The women who were chosen to speak were each unique and brought a new perspective. I still have one of the Thankfulness notebooks we made at one of the weekends. Our worship to God was simple and honest and yet wonderfully refreshing.*

A night away for some can seem overwhelming and for others it will be just what we need. A single room with ensuite, all your meals made for you, time for relaxation in stunning nature and spending time with God, nothing hurried, approx 27 hours that you will never want to get back as it will be time well spent!

Forms are available from the Parish Office, all details are included on the form. If you want to chat to me about the weekend please do!

Paula McIllwaine

Many people refer to the Ballyholme shops as “The Village” and what a vibrant community of businesses it is! During lockdown we all have shopped locally and since restrictions have eased, we have enjoyed seeing one another drinking coffee sitting outside on the pavement or queuing for one of the great shops.



I have been calling into and asking the business owners, “How as one of your local churches can we support you at this difficult time?” All have appreciated being asked and said our custom and prayers are much appreciated. We have discussed with them how to bring a little festive cheer this Christmas when things are challenging. One of the initiatives we are exploring with Michael Conroy (Conroy@holme hair salon) is putting up a Christmas tree and decorating

it with messages from local children to loved ones they may not see this Christmas. Rob from Rob’s Trees is seen here discussing with Michael & his wife Tracey how to put up the tree.

United Carols are going ahead on Thursday 17th Dec @ 5.30-6.30pm and everyone is most welcome for what is always a special event in the run up to Christmas.

Rev Jan Stevenson (Community Pastor)



Storehouse North Down Foodbank

Storehouse North Down Foodbank would like to thank all who have supported them during this difficult time of COVID pandemic. We continued to operate throughout lockdown with a very reduced but hard working team of volunteers.

Up to the end of October we have given out £75,800.00 of groceries, which helped 3319 adults and children who were having a difficult time due to the virus and loss of income. Due to increased donations we have been able to include meat vouchers. Many thanks to those who donated cash to enable us to buy the vouchers and also to buy groceries that we had run short of.

Many, many thanks to all the members of your church for their continued support at this time.

From the 7th December to the 15th December we will be giving out our Christmas hampers. We will be giving out in excess of 200 hampers.

These hampers will be food for 7 days as well as Christmas goodies such as mince pies, shortbread, Christmas puddings, Christmas cakes, large tins of ham as well as chocolate goodies and bottles of Shloer. We would appreciate any donations of these goodies.

Again many, many thanks for all your support.



Lebanon Appeal – Ballyholme Total: £955.27

Thank you everyone who gave to our retiring September blue-bucket collection in September. We're delighted to announce that the Down and Dromore appeal for Lebanon raised £27,547.47. This is an amazing total given the challenges facing many of our local communities at this time. Thanks to the generosity of the 77 parishes in the diocese, the Open Doors project to support Kurdish refugees in Beirut City is now totally funded with £20,000.

The remaining £7,547.47 has been allocated to Open Doors' relief efforts in the region. Kurdish refugees from Syria are among the most vulnerable in Lebanese society and are being provided with medicines, medical and psychiatric services, and essential humanitarian aid and food.

Eddie Lyle, President of Open Doors UK and Ireland writes:

"Although the media have forgotten Beirut and moved on, thankfully the people of God have not. Bishop David's compassionate call to action was both timely and prophetic. The Centre of Hope is exactly what it says that it is. A place of sanctuary, a place of mercy where food and medicines are distributed. It is also a place of hope where the life transforming message of a risen Saviour is being witnessed to practically and spiritually. It's a miracle that such a place exists, and for the Kurdish Christians and seekers who have lost absolutely everything the generosity of the churches and parishioners of the Diocese of Down and Dromore is a truly remarkable intervention. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Open Doors ask us to keep praying for their local partners as they continue to provide spiritual and practical support to Syrian refugees in Lebanon and the wider region. This support is particularly vital in the face of acute food insecurity caused by the damaged port not being able to receive imports of basic necessities.



Sunday 11 October – the week before Harvest – was the date of our postponed AGM and thank you to everyone who joined us in Church for the hour it took to work through our reports and appointments. Following the Rector's remarks (as published in the March magazine) a report was given (from the pulpit!) by Ivan Humphreys outlining the various projects overseen this year by the Glebewardens. This was followed by the final report of Roy Lawther our outgoing Honorary Treasurer (see summary).



The Rector underlined the debt of gratitude owed to Roy by our whole parish after 10 years of prudent but forward looking service as Treasurer. Roy's successor Liz Grant made a socially-distanced presentation to him on behalf of the congregation at the first meeting of the new Select Vestry.

Please remember all our new parish office-bearers in your prayers:

Select Vestry

Stephen Baker
Ann Browne
David Crooks
Billy Davidson
Jacqui Devlin
Roy Lawther
Paula Lown
Gareth McCullough
Yvonne Manogue
Trevor Smyth
Rory Wilson



Rector's Churchwarden Libby Beech
People's Churchwarden Larry Cheshire
Rector's Glebewarden Steven Nickell
People's Glebewarden Ivan Humphreys
Honorary Secretary Christine Johnstone
Honorary Treasurer Liz Grant

Parochial Nominators

Don Todd
Rachel Brittain
Roy Lawther
Karen Baker

Supplemental Parochial Nominators

Rory Wilson
Jacqui Devlin
Leslie Adams
Caroline Gillan

Diocesan Synod Members

Trevor Smyth
Stefan Andreasson
Suzanne Beech
Denise Wilson
Andrew Watson (under 35 rep)

Supplemental Diocesan Synod Members

Leslie Adams
Jim Shaw
Margaret Magee
Freda Woods
Ben Cavan (under 35 rep)



Financial Review

The following is a summary of the report given at the General Vestry on Sunday 11th October 2020.

Unrestricted Funds

Overall the Parish income this year was £207,061 down from £211,742 last year. Expenditure increased from £201,049 to £206,465. This gave the Parish a closing capital balance of £596.

General Fund Income

General income is from the following sources:

- * General giving from standing orders, collection plate and FWO reduced from £171,833 to £165,314.
- * Property related income, which includes renting the Curatage and the Bay was up from £8,340 to £13,836.
- * General Parish income from sources such as hall rental, magazine donations and catering was slightly down from £23,492 to £23,157.
- * The Parish did not receive any unrestricted legacies.

Expenditure

Overall expenditure was up from £201,049 to £206,465.

The main areas of expenditure are:

- * Clergy staffing costs which increased from £62,130 to £68,008.
- * Staff costs rose from £62,801 to £67,227.
- * Repairs and maintenance increase from £20,771 to £22,073. In addition, £42,387 was spent on essential repairs to the parish hall boilers, installing lights in the car park and Rectory.
- * Premises costs, including heating, lighting, rates etc. increased slightly from £20,771 to £22,073.
- * General Parish expenses e.g. consumables, postage and printing reduced from £20,584 to £19,248.
- * The Diocesan levy remained the same at £21,157.
- * Financial costs decreased from £7,655 to £1,253.

Designated Funds**Development Funds**

The Development fund started in 2016 and throughout the years voluntary giving to the restoration project and now development funds by way of monthly standing orders, donations or fund-raising events came to £50,026 in 2019. The Parish also received legacies amounting to £96,645. On average there is £3,485 of monthly standing orders going into the Development Fund, amounting to just over £41,832 per year.

Missions

Income into the Missions fund was £4,235 and £17,553 was given to charitable causes.

Youth Fellowship

Income into the Youth fund was £6,905 and £6,041 was used for activities relating to youth and children.

John's gospel stands as something of an anomaly when compared with the other three gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Many of the healings and parables with which we are so familiar simply do not get mentioned in John; and in asking ourselves why this is the case, we also find the reason why John's gospel has been delivered to your door.

With the emphasis taken off the actions of Jesus somewhat, John (the gospel-writer) has been able to fill this small book with the life-giving words of Jesus Christ, a man whose life and teaching made such an enormous impact on the world that millions still follow him today.

This gospel includes some of Jesus's most famous and, frankly, outrageous claims. He claims to offer life in all its fullness (chapter 10 verse 10); he claims to be the source of true satisfaction (chapter 6 verse 35); he claims to be God in the flesh (chapter 8 verse 58); and perhaps most famously of all, he claims to offer eternal life (chapter 3 verse 16).

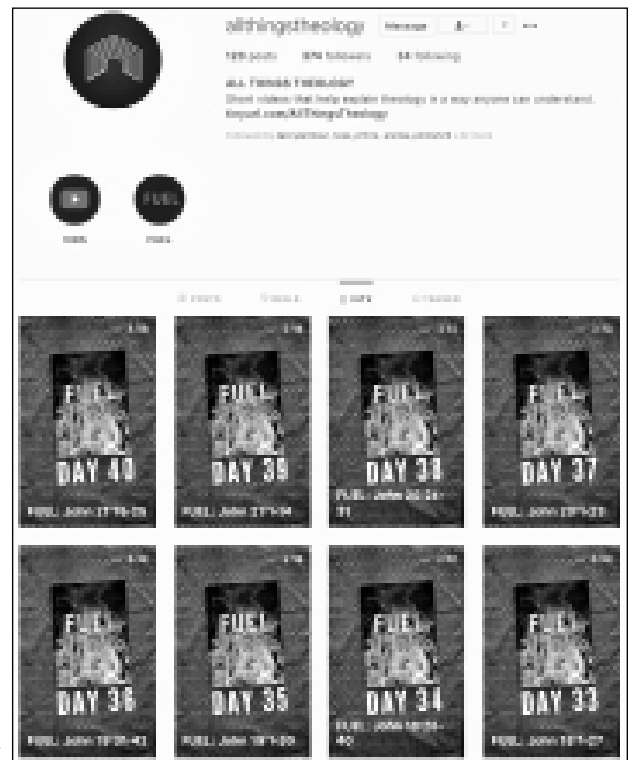
This astounding book has been changing lives for over 2000 years, and we believe that it can do the same for you. You might, however, be thinking to yourself, "how do I go about reading and understanding this?" – a fair question. First and foremost, we want to point to the work of God the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus refers to as a revealer of truths (chapter 14 verses 17 and 26; chapter 15 verse 26). If you pray and ask God to help you understand the Bible, we believe that He will do just that, giving insight and understanding to grasp what it means.

The second tool we would like to point out to you is the amazing resource that is the internet. Although there are likely many less than helpful pages on the internet, there are many great ones too. On bible.com (yes, that's a real website) you can find an online Bible with numerous study plans and guides. The website enduringword.com also has helpful notes on John's gospel.

Finally, if you happen to be on Instagram (or even if you're not), you can go onto the account '@allthingstheology' where our youth worker Andrew Watson has made videos which take you through a 40 day John's gospel study plan. They include questions for some deeper thoughts and Andrew's thoughts on the passage for the day. You can follow the link below to get there.

We hope and pray that you will read and understand this John's gospel, and in doing so come to know the wonderful one about whom it was written.

These copies of John were supplied to our church free of charge by a donor to the Diocese of Down and Dromore, and we would love it if you read it or even pass it along to someone who might not have a copy.



and thanks to everyone for their contributions.

This will go towards helping our mission partners at home and overseas as they also go through these challenging times.

If you haven't yet remembered to leave your tube down, you can still leave it on the collection plate or down to the office.

The special Advent appeal is of course now open for donations.

Rory Wilson for the Mission Committee

Harvest Smartie Tube Appeal

Thanks to everyone who contributed to mission funds through our Harvest Smartie tubes. Our contributions totalled £1694. This is a great effort

From the beginning of December, wine will again be distributed to the people of God at all services of Holy Communion in Ballyholme. After the bread has been distributed, disposable (but recyclable) individual plastic cups will be offered, which, if they are happy to receive it, parishioners will lift themselves from a tray brought to them in their seats. The empty cups will then be dropped in a bowl. This welcome but strictly interim provision follows detailed guidelines from the House of Bishops issued in October, a summary of which follows:

Background

“As long ago as last February in the context of the worsening Covid 19 situation, it was recommended that until further notice Holy Communion in the Church of Ireland would be in one kind only.

Church members were reminded that communion in one kind, for example during times of contagion, has always been seen as fully sacramentally efficacious in Anglicanism, although we would readily acknowledge that it brings with it an experientially diminished engagement with worship.

Not being able to receive in both kinds has become a matter of concern in some parts of the Church of Ireland. In our deliberations we have needed to consider and balance a number of factors, including:

- the explicit command of the Lord to his friends in the Upper Room
- the formularies of the Book of Common Prayer, and the provisions of the Articles concerning communion in both kinds for the whole people of God
- the long and cherished place of the common cup in Anglican Eucharistic practice
- the public health requirements of the present time

Interim Advice

The goal of the church remains the restoration of the common cup. The bishops advise where there is a genuine desire, on the part of both clergy and lay people, to restore Communion in both kinds in the near future to act as follows.

- having received professional medical advice, we do not recommend the use of intinction at public worship in any circumstances, and base our view both on a myriad of health considerations as well as on seemliness
- we regard the use of individual cups as licit where this is considered generally desirable and acceptable to the clergy and congregation
- the provision of these cups and their consecrated contents to communicants must properly combine both seemliness and social distancing
- communicants should be reminded to consume the entire contents of the cup
- there should be respect for those who prefer to continue to receive the consecrated bread only

This advice remains valid until Pentecost 2021 (Sunday May 23) at the latest.”



FUNERALS

October

2nd: Olive McNulty,
Formerly of Richmond
Lodge

Every time we publish the Standing Order form in the magazine, more of you switch over from envelopes and so with this double Christmas and New Year issue at the end of a truly tumultuous 12 months, we do so again.

After the October edition, one parishioner got in touch to say that the latest Coronavirus restrictions and a recent personal health scare had prompted her not only to set up a Standing Order for her Freewill Offering for the first time, but to increase her giving. She wanted, as she expressed it, to 'put her house in order' and to ensure that whatever the restrictions on her movements over this period, she was continuing to give to the Church she has loved so much over so many years. The reason she increased her giving was in response to a sense that with church being closed for so many months and so many still self-isolating at home, our finances have probably been stretched.

2020 has certainly been a rockier year for our bank account than we've been used to of late but at various moments parishioners have stepped forward with special one-off cheques and cash gifts. Some gave towards specific expenses, others to general parish running costs. Both unexpected income streams have been a lifeline. Then there's the discretionary fund with people passing money to the Rector for families who find themselves short, possibly caught up in the economic chaos of Coronavirus. As the Rector said at our postponed AGM, without the move to electronic giving our situation doesn't bear thinking about. Last year we reduced our FWO envelope print run to just 84 and we would dearly love to cut it even further.

If you have been trying to think of ways to help us as a parish, aside from prayer, one of the best ways is to set up a monthly Standing Order and to increase your giving – even just a little. Thank you for your continued support as we continue to build Christ's kingdom in Ballyholme.



Spring into Life

Friday 19 to Sunday 21 March 2021

"the water I give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life"

John 4:14

Of necessity, attendance at Christmas Services in Church this year is going to have to be on the basis of first come, first served. Since July the Church has been meticulously measured out for socially-distanced worship with single chairs, pairs of chairs and groups of two, three and four chairs, all carefully cleaned between services. This gives us a maximum capacity of just 67.

What about a booking system, you say.

Every manageable booking system we looked at required a single-chair only lay-out, and cut our capacity drastically. The best solution we can come up with is to relay the main Christmas services to the main hall of the Parish Centre, thereby doubling the number we can safely accommodate.



Deck the halls with boughs of holly!

Worshippers arriving after Church has filled up will be directed to the Parish Centre where every effort will be made to make the hall feel festive and special and to create an atmosphere conducive to worship. At the Midnight Service, Holy Communion will be served in both venues and in both kinds, wine as well as wafers (see article).

Given the exceptional circumstances we would ask that you understand our predicament and forgive those who may have the hard job of telling you there is no room in the Church – maybe even, no room in the Parish Centre either. Please plan to come, plan to stay wherever you are offered a seat, and plan to offer your hearts to the Saviour of our pandemic-stricken world!

Did you miss the chance to be the angel Gabriel?

NOW'S YOUR CHANCE!!

nativity@cafe church
20 December - 9.30 or 10.30am

Bring Your Own Halo!
(all nativity characters welcome!)

GIFT VOUCHER

13 & 20 DECEMBER 2020

CHILDREN'S GIFT DAY

THIS YEAR, THE CHARITIES WHO USUALLY DISTRIBUTE THE DONATED TOYS CAN'T - BUT THEY CAN DELIVER VOUCHERS FOR SMYTHS, TESCO, ASDA AND SAINBURY'S.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GIVE TO THE APPEAL, AND YOU ARE ABLE TO GET A VOUCHER, THEY WILL BE COLLECTED AT CAFE CHURCH, 6TH DECEMBER.



Day after day, in the Temple court, the old man, Simeon, and Anna, the prophetess, sat together, talking of times past, and looking towards the future. They were waiting for the Saviour, the promised One, the anointed One, who would be sent to redeem Israel. They were waiting for the time when they would be called home by the Lord they loved and served.

The crowds came in and out – traders with their animals, money-changers with their scales, travellers from far, looking round, wondering at the splendour of the Temple. During the great feast days the families came, hushed voices, children awed and silent, until they joined in the great thanksgiving psalms.

Was the Saviour among the throng?
How would they know who he was?
Would he proclaim himself here,
in the holiest place in all Israel?

Then there were the small families – a man, his wife, perhaps a girl or two, and a tiny baby boy, the first-born son, brought to be dedicated to the Lord according to the laws of Moses. And many of them would come to Simeon asking for a blessing, and hoping Anna

would look into the future and see the fortune waiting for their son.

And then, one day a man came with his wife, holding their baby. Their duties, their sacrifice, completed, they stayed looking around, bewildered by the glory of the place.

Simeon and Anna saw them, and rising, walked towards them. Simeon took the baby in his arms, and said:

'In my arms a babe is lying powerless, helpless, poor. No powerful ruler, no mighty warrior, no wealth, no influential friends: yet I know that in him there is the power to rule people's hearts; the strength to overcome evil; riches enough to give, and give again; and that his life will touch the whole world'.

And Anna prophesied:

'This child has been born for the redemption of Jerusalem', and lifted her voice in praise of God.

And Simeon said:

'My eyes have seen the salvation of Israel; my arms have held the Light of the world; and the hope of my heart has been fulfilled.' 'Lord, let me depart in peace.

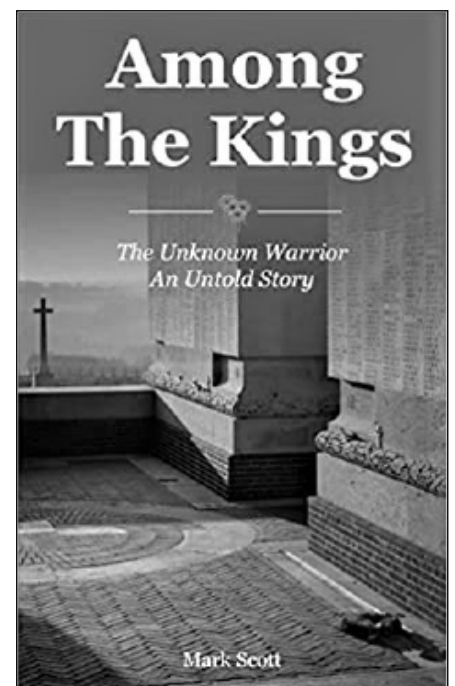
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Among The Kings - The Unknown Warrior, An Untold Story by Mark Scott

The story of how the Unknown Warrior came to be interred in Westminster Abbey is an entirely appropriate conclusion as we draw to the close of a plethora of centenary commemorations pertaining to World War One. As Historian Mark Scott, aided by a notebook meticulously kept by his Great Grandfather, Sergeant Jimmy Scott, began to research the stories of the colleagues whose names appeared in the notebook, a connection was made via his follow-up investigations regarding the selection of The Unknown Warrior. With many thousands of those who perished having no known grave, it was decided that one would be selected to be interred with full pomp at Westminster Abbey on the second anniversary of the Armistice, on 11th November 1920.

Mark's painstaking and at times moving investigation into the journey from a graveyard in France to the Abbey in London, via the Edward Lutyens- designed cenotaph unveiled on the same day, reveals the stringent steps which were taken to maintain anonymity of the soldier selected, to pay a national tribute to those who perished and to provide a focus for those families who had no grave to visit.

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“Love the Lord your God...memorise His laws tell them to your children over and over again. Talk about them all the time whether you’re at home or walking along the road.”
Deut 6:4-7



One of the most precious things we have is our faith in Jesus, yet many of us struggle to know how to pass it on to our children and grandchildren. Café Church is seeking to provide opportunities to tell our children & grandchildren our faith stories. On Harvest Sunday Gideon Wilson told us of a significant moment in his life when he felt God called him to future ministry. Sebi Niblock Hamil has played his beat box with skill; both helping Café Church step forward as a venue for all of us to serve God and grow in doing so.

We have been looking at the theme “Jesus my Life-changer”, how Jesus makes a difference in our everyday lives in school or work or home.

Together we are exploring what it means to chat to God and catch something of what he wants to say to us. God does not wait for us to reach 18 years of age before he uses us! Café Church hopes to give our children and adults a safe space to grow in confidence in hearing what God is saying to us and then doing what He says.



Café Church has proved so popular we have decided to run it twice at 9.30am and 10.30am. We have capped our numbers at 60 to keep everyone as safe as possible. Everyone needs to book, and we operate a first come first serve policy to bookings. The tables and chairs are sanitized in between the services and new craft packs are put on every table. We bring our own coffee and snacks and wear facemasks all the time. It is relaxed and fun and lovely to

come together to experience more of who God is.

Do come and see what all the fun is about!

Rev Jan Stevenson on behalf of the Café Church team

Down and Dromore MU continues support of Women's Aid

Almost everyone will all have read or heard on the news about the tragic rise in domestic abuse cases following lockdown as a result of the Covid 19 epidemic.

MU in Down and Dromore have been faithful supporters of Women's Aid, sending regular donations of bedding, toiletries, clothing, food etc. for over ten years now. Lesley Harvey received a message a number of weeks ago that there was an immediate and ongoing need for basic food supplies for women and families struggling as a result of lockdown. Several members contacted her personally and she took food donations to the Armagh and Newry headquarters.



Following that initial visit, she received a call from MU Trustees in Down and Dromore asking if she would purchase and deliver food supplies on behalf of the MU in the Diocese. Lesley and her son Conor went at the end of May with two trolleys full of cereal, tinned goods, biscuits, juice, pasta, jam etc.

Lesley then received a call from Clare Stewart (Action and Outreach) offering MU toiletry bags as the hospitals are unable to store these due to shortage of space because of the epidemic. Along

with the groceries, these were very gratefully received and will make a big difference to some families who are currently finding life extremely challenging.

Hester Kelly from North Down and Ards Women's Aid writes:

"Many members of our church family and Mothers' Union Branch have been very faithful supporters of North Down Women's Aid. We are truly grateful for it. That support has been of a very practical nature with donations of food items, towels and bedding, colouring books, jigsaws and board games. Donations continue to be gratefully accepted".

We are incredibly indebted to the work that both Hester and Lesley do for Women's Aid in Newry and Bangor, on behalf of our diocese.

The article above was published on the Down and Dromore website in June 2020. The need for donations continues and members are asked to gather up any cosmetics, shower products etc for our usual February appeal for Emergency Toilet Bags and items for Women's Aid.

If we are still not able to meet in February items can be left in Parish Office at beginning of February 2021.

Many Blessings

Yvonne and the MU team.



At the Easter Vestry in October Simon introduced Liz Grant our new Honorary Treasurer so let's find out a bit more about the person who will be taking care of our Parish finances.

Although Liz was born in Belfast, she moved to South Africa with her family at the height of The Troubles. Liz was just two years of age at the time and the family remained there until returning to Northern Ireland when Liz was aged 16. The family stayed in Holywood for a short while before falling in love with Bangor where they settled in 1988.



Liz and her husband Colin have been together for 20 years. They got married in April 2015 and have two children, Cameron is aged 11 and Erin is 6 years of age. Erin loves Children's Church and Cameron has just moved up to Emerge which he finds fun. Erin is "a little performer" and loves gymnastics and Girls Brigade. Cameron loves playing hockey at Bangor Hockey Club and is a keen swimmer.

Liz has attended St Columbanus Church for the past ten years. With working full time, and two children Liz doesn't have much opportunity to get involved in many Church activities herself however she would like to become more involved when things get back to "normal".

Liz is the Chief Financial Officer of a local industrial manufacturing company and is well used to working with payrolls and budgets. When asked about the particular challenges facing her taking over as Treasurer, she said - "I think in the current climate where Church is opened at a reduced capacity the real challenge will be balancing the expenditure with the reduced funds being received. It is really important to get the message out that the Church costs haven't reduced because of Covid-19, if anything they have increased but income from activities e.g. lunches, coffee mornings is no longer being received."

Liz is taking over from Roy Lawther who has been Treasurer for the last 10 years. She said it feels a bit daunting, especially as it is very different from working in industry. Roy and Kelly McCullough have been a great help, offering advice and answering all her queries. Liz told me "At times I'm sure they wished they could switch email and phone calls off!"

I asked Liz what persuaded her to take on the role of Treasurer and she told me she is currently a school governor and she wanted to volunteer in the community. Also, she wanted to become more involved in the Church and had considered applying to join the Vestry. To quote Liz - "When the role of Treasurer came up it seemed as if it was meant to be".

Liz told me she doesn't get a great deal of spare time as she is always taking the children to some activity they are doing. She loves walking and their two cockapoos, Oscar and Dexter, keep the family well exercised. She also loves reading, and the Kindle is never far away.

Christine Johnstone



Freewill Offering Envelopes

2021 boxes will be ready for collection from the Parish Centre foyer during December.

Please remember to look for your name rather than your offering number as it may have changed since last year!

Thank you for each and every donation.



September - The Walkers in the Scrabo Quarries and at the Tidebank

Twenty-one walkers met at the Scrabo Country Park for the September walk and Leslie led us on a fascinating trail through both the Quarries on the side of Scrabo. Welcome to new member Ella Watson.



Along the way he told us much about the quarries. The sandstone at Scrabo has been quarried since at least Anglo-Norman times. The best known are the South and North quarries below Scrabo tower and the boom period was the nineteenth century when railway links were developed. Some rails are still visible in the dense undergrowth. The stone occurs in a variety of colours and was used in many buildings familiar to us today, such as Union Theological College and Methodist College in Belfast. One of the earliest examples is

Greyabbey Monastery. Leslie pointed out a rock face from which after quarrying ceased, the locals managed to extract enough to make fireplaces! He also showed us the rock face from which many rabbits were blown in a gale and ended up on the floor of the quarry; where he played football as a boy – now unrecognisable as a clearing, and deep holes reputedly made by stray bombs during WW 11, destined for the RAF airfield below.

After the 2-mile quarries loop it was up to Scrabo Tower from which the views over Co Down are superb - sometimes in clear visibility you can see as far as the Isle of Man. The 125 ft high monument was built in the mid 19th century as a memorial to Charles Vane, 3rd Marquess of Londonderry and was originally known as the Londonderry Monument.

After lunch it was off to the Tide Bank on the Portaferry Road at the head of Strangford Lough. This is a four mile walk along what is in fact, I understand, a flood defence – it offers



the chance to see lots of birdlife and as the tide was out, we could see sanderling feeding at the water's edge on the mudflats. Some lucky walkers saw an egret.

Afterwards four gathered at the Cloud Nine coffee shop beside the airfield in a tent-like shelter outside. Some customers arrived by helicopter!

Betty Armstrong

November - New paths trodden at Donaghadee

Twenty-three walkers gathered beside Shore Street Presbyterian Church on a dry, fine November morning. We welcomed new walkers, Barbara and Adrian and welcomed back Eleanor, who we had not seen for some months. To comply with the Covid regulations, we split into two groups. The first was led by Miriam. The second was led by Peter and left 5 minutes later.

First stop was at the harbour to admire the many decorated stones that had been placed on the



the terracing during the pandemic. From there we stopped to look at the lifeboat Sir Samuel Kelly that is drying out in a specially created temporary structure – the first stage of its restoration. Leslie recalled, that on the day in 1953 when the Sir Samuel Kelly responded to the stricken Princess Victoria, he saw many ambulances speeding through Newtownards.

From there we went along the coast – the Commons and the Lower Commons – and walked along the Millisle Road into the town. We took the path along the old railway line to Hunt's Park where we admired the old water tower. Donaghadee Railway Station was the end of a branch line on the Belfast - Newtownards - Comber – Downpatrick - Newcastle line which was part of the Belfast and County Down railway. Sadly, the station which was opened in 1861 closed in 1950. Some remnants of the line to Comber can be seen near the Commons where a bridge is clearly visible.



Both groups of walkers included people who remembered the temporary housing that surrounded the water tower in the 1950s. This tower was constructed by Donaghadee Urban District Council around 1912 and provided the town with its first mains water supply. It remained in use until the 1940s, when it was superseded by Orlock reservoir. This tower is important as it is an intact early example of the use of reinforced concrete.

We returned to the town centre and climbed the steps to the Moat. The building on top of the Norman motte was built to store the gunpowder needed in the construction of the harbour in the 1820s. There are aspirational plans to install a camera obscura in the building. Then it was Shore Street again for a socially distanced lunch before embarking on the second part of the outing led by Brian again in two groups.

This took us along a Right of Way from Carnathan Lane off the New Road, along the back of the Golf Course, through some fields and eventually through the western side of the course. The Lane starts in Moat Street and continues to New Road where we picked up the Right of Way. Most of the group didn't know of this track's existence but at just under two miles, it was a good add-on to the 3.7 miles of the morning walk.

Our next outing is on the **second** Saturday (12th) December to Killynether Wood and Island Hill between Newtownards and Comber.

YOUTH-news

youth [youth] (youths) news [nooz]

I'll say this once and get it over with – it's been a strange year. 'Unprecedented', some might say. Every one of us knows it and doubtless has a list as long as their arm of how everything has been different this year; this has been no different when it comes to youth ministry, and all of the restrictions and limitations have made this a rather frustrating year.

For now, though, things feel a little more normal when it comes to youth. We're seeing young people again and this has been such a delight for myself and all the leaders, never mind the young people themselves! So, allow me to share some of the things we've been doing now that we're able to meet again (socially distanced and sanitized of course).

In spite of everything that's going on, we've somehow managed to start two new programmes! The first is 'Answered', a monthly apologetics session where Ben Cavan shares on a topic (for example, how we can know God is real), and the young people ask questions at the end. This has been great so far and we're excited about seeing this continue. The second is an afterschool Homework Club on Thursdays, filling in the gap for young people where extra-curricular activities would normally be. This has been great as it gives them something to go to after school, and they can come and do some homework as well as seeing each other. We even managed to do the first week outside!



Our other programmes are running as usual – YF, Bible Study and Emerge (which alternates weeks with café church). At YF we've been exploring the theme 'Made For...' – looking at how God's way of life is greater than any other way because it's what we were made for. We've heard from our own leaders as well as from guest speakers, including Simon Henry, the National Director for the Church of Ireland Youth Department. At Emerge we've been using a resource from the Big House called 'Shaken', looking into Biblical ways of dealing with and managing difficulty – a rather timely resource indeed

given the year we've all had. Finally, at Bible Study we've been diving into the book of Colossians, slowly working our way through it and finding depths of encouragement, challenge and teaching.

I and the team look forward to everything 2021 will hold, and we have hope that no matter what comes, God is still good and still in control.

Andrew



DECEMBER 2020**Sunday 13th December Advent 3**

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Morning Service & Children's Gifts
 11.30 Parish Communion

Wednesday 16th December

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

Sunday 20th December Advent 4

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Cafe Nativity Service - Church (Book)
 11.00 Cafe Nativity Service - Church (Book)
 6.30 Carols by Candlelight - Church & Hall

Wednesday 23rd December

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve

5.00 Family Carols - Church & Hall
 11.00 First Communion of Christmas -
 Church & Hall

Friday 25th December Christmas Day

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Family Carols - Church & Hall

Sunday 27th December Christmas 1

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.30 Combined Service

JANUARY 2021**Sunday 3rd January Christmas 2**

8.30 Holy Communion
 9.30 Cafe Church - Parish Centre (Book)
 10.30 Cafe Church - Parish Centre (Book)
 11.30 Morning Prayer

Wednesday 6th January - Epiphany

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

Sunday 10th January Epiphany 1

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Morning Service
 11.30 Holy Communion

Wednesday 13th January

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

Sunday 17th January Epiphany 2

8.30 Holy Communion
 9.30 Cafe Church - Parish Centre (Book)
 10.30 Cafe Church - Parish Centre (Book)
 11.30 Morning Prayer

Wednesday 20th January

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

Sunday 24th January Epiphany 3

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Parish Communion
 11.30 Morning Prayer

Wednesday 27th January

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

Sunday 31st January Epiphany 4

8.30 Holy Communion
 10.00 Wholeness and Healing
 11.30 Wholeness and Healing

Our Worship

The services listed above were correct when sent to the printers, however they may be subject to change if further restrictions are announced.

Please check the Church website for details of any further changes to the services listed.

While the Church remains closed an online service will be uploaded to the internet each Sunday.

**December 2020**

6th Raymond McCabe in memory of Jackie and Graeme McCabe

13th Yvonne Manogue

20th Christmas

27th Christmas

January 2021

3rd Flower Fund

10th Susan Stockton

17th Agnes Officer

24th Jacqui Devlin

Help needed to decorate the church for Christmas

**Friday 18th December
 at 10.00 am**

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

