

# St Columbanus

Ballyholme



Books for Kiwoko  
Wilsons to Primacy  
Easter Scavenger  
Hunt  
Cafe Church



..On the way  
*together..*

# The Parishioner

May / June 2021

# The Rambling Rector

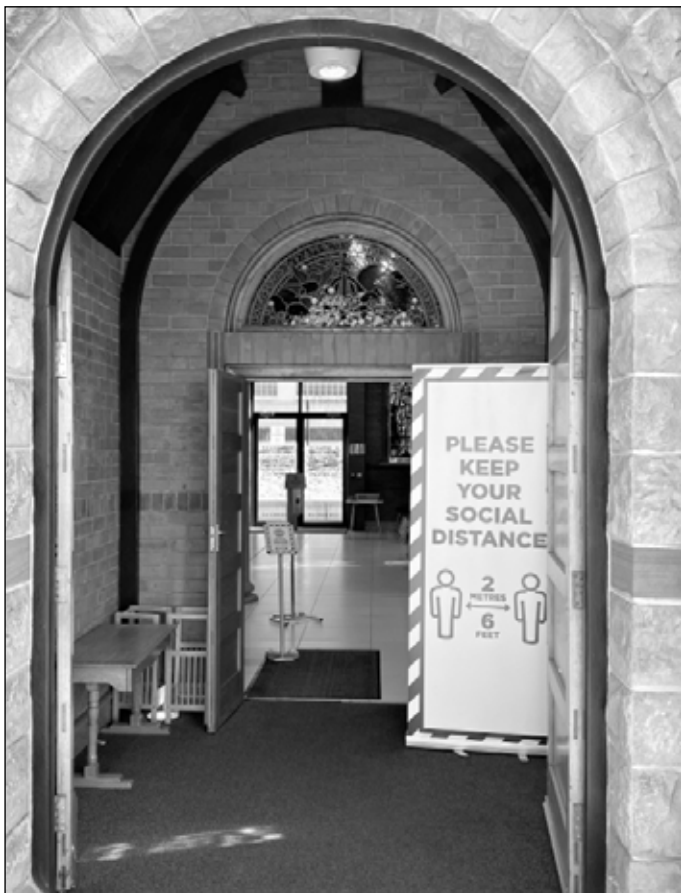
Sociologist Rodney Stark studied the explosive growth of the early Church in *The Rise of Christianity*. One reason for that growth, he submits, is that when epidemics took hold in those first few centuries, the wealthy pagans would run for the hills. The Church of Jesus Christ, meanwhile, stayed put, caring for the sick and witnessing through the terror, sometimes even at the cost of their own lives. Over the last twenty years, Christianity's reputation has taken a battering. The aggressive and anti-institutional arguments of the New Atheists, the horrors of clergy abuse of children, the change in attitudes to gender, sexuality and family life and the identification of religion with global terror have all contributed.



Yet through this pandemic, as previous ones, I would like to think the Church has shown itself to be reliable, compassionate, unafraid to run towards the crisis rather than away. I'm not saying we have been on the frontline against Covid-19, certainly not in the West. But I think a pretty good case could be made for saying we have done our bit as essential workers. Ask our list of sick and bereaved families.

*For to this we have been called (1 Peter 2:21).*

**SED**



## Hands, Face, Space, Fresh Air

We reopened for worship on Easter Day on a first-come, first-served basis, fully in line with public health obligations and with our risk assessments freshly reviewed.

Our Health and Safety Committee have again reviewed procedures with the Staff Team and key volunteers to include ventilation after services.

Here is your personal checklist for coming and going, and it is crucial that you complete a track and trace card every visit.

Remember please:

- \* **keep your distance**
- \* **wear a mask**
- \* **use the hand sanitiser**
- \* **be early and stay 'bubbled-up'**
- \* **don't bunch up, inside or outside**
- \* **wash your hands at home afterwards**

## Do we have your telephone number?

At the start of Lockdown, Bishop David made a haunting observation to the clergy of the diocese. When all this is over, he said, there will be those who remember that the Church made contact with them, and there will be those who remember that the Church did not.

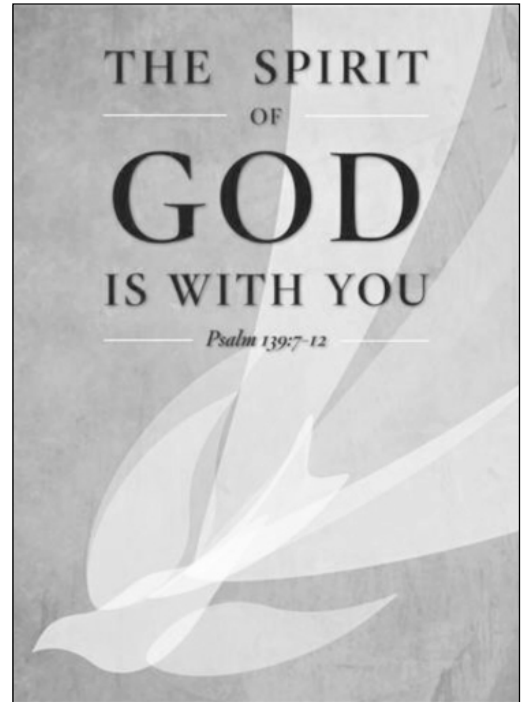
While we have done our best to stay in touch with our regular congregation members, with the exception of those who didn't want us to, but the simple fact is: we do not have a functioning telephone number for everyone in the parish. Many of you no longer answer your landline or have done away with it entirely.

If you have not been contacted, rather than feeling overlooked, please forgive us and make a point of helping us out. We are updating our database all the time so please call or visit the Parish Office and furnish us with your latest details.

### Eating in the 1950s

For those of you who are old enough to remember, enjoy.  
For the rest treat this as a history lesson!

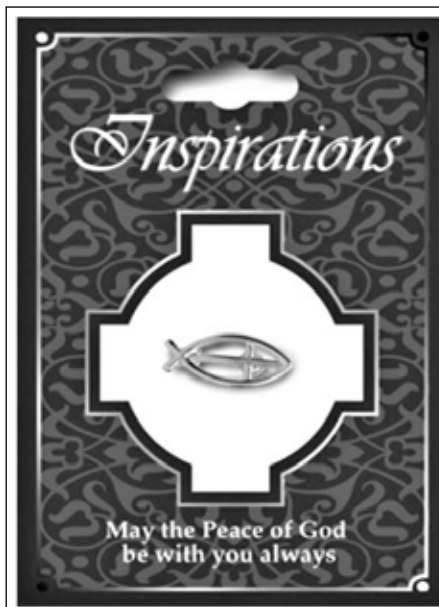
- Pasta had not been invented.
- Curry was a surname.
- A takeaway was a mathematical problem.
- A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.
- Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time.
- All crisps were plain; the only choice we had was whether to put salt on or not.
- Rice was a milk pudding, and never, ever part of our dinner.
- A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining.
- Brown bread was something only the poor ate.
- Oil was for lubricating, fat was used for cooking.
- Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.
- Coffee was Camp and came in a bottle.
- Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.
- Only Heinz made beans.
- Fish didn't have fingers in those days.
- Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi.
- None of us had every heard of yoghurt.
- People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy.
- Cooking outside was called camping.
- "Kebab" wasn't even a word, never mind a food.
- Prunes were medicinal.
- Surprisingly muesli was readily available, it was called cattle feed.
- Pineapples came in chunks in a tin; we had only ever seen a picture of a real one.
- Water came out of the tap – if anyone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it, they'd have been taken away.
- The one thing that we never ever had on our table in the fifties ....was elbows!



### Nana's Little Helper



### Easter Gifts for Seniors





## Muddy Church

Our children continued to meet for outdoor Muddy Church, when we could, having lots of fun playing games in the car park, hunting for Thanksgiving Pumpkins and making Christingles for Christmas.

Sadly, since Christmas we have not been able to meet face to face, but I hope that will change again soon. I will message the details of anything planned through the WhatsApp groups.



## Online Children's Church

Since the beginning of Covid-19 the Children's Church team have been facilitating online material for our children. Each week, a short Sunday school lesson can be found on our YouTube channel, and there have been regular Zoom meetings. These Zoom meetings are a lot of fun! We have enjoyed lots of different games, chatting about what is special to us, and super crafts. Jenny helped the children to make beautiful Mother's Day



Jars filled with loads of messages about why we love our mums, and in the run up to Easter we gathered seeds and soil to create an Easter garden. We end each Zoom with a short Sunday School lesson and time of prayer.



## Something to look forward to?

Jumpin' may look a bit different this summer, but we hope to run live events for as many children as possible the week beginning 16th August...save the date! Check WhatsApp and Facebook for details.



It was a Good Friday like no other; from out of nowhere colourful Easter eggs, rabbits and chicks appeared in windows all over Ballyholme. Beside them was a solitary letter, to be collected to crack the code. Boys and girls downloaded their clues from Love Ballyholme Facebook page and the hunt began. Starting at the shops then onto Morningside, down the Esplanade to Waverley Drive and back to our church...Some found all 14 letters, some did not, but the phrase "hopping bunnies" became the phrase on many lips.

Easter Monday 2-4pm saw a steady stream of 90-100 children collecting Easter prizes from the front steps of our church. (Adhering to all the Covid rules.) What a lovely thing it was to see children and parents who really appreciated a safe, fun outdoor activity for their kids. Ballyholme Parish has just moved up a notch in our locality and gained the accolade "The Church That Gives Away Chocolate"!



An Easter Colouring Competition saw entries flow into Boots, all works of art that made choosing a winner from each of the four age categories very difficult. A huge well done to everyone who entered!

What next I hear you ask? Well litter picking on the beach, of course! Saturday 8th May at 10am at Banks Lane carpark opposite Ballymacconnell Road. Litter pickers, gloves and bags supplied. A way to visibly serve our community, come together outdoors all socially distanced. Show our care for our environment and our love for God who made it. Family friendly, this is definitely for everyone to join in.

### **Jan on behalf of Love Ballyholme Team**



**The Wedding of Rachel Savage and Jonathan Crawford on 19th December 2020**

**A huge thank you to Oli Gass from Creative Gardens Donaghadee who kindly donated the two magnificent Christmas trees which adorned the chancel and the flowerbed outside Church.**



## Andrew Gowdy: Children's Books in aid of Friends of Kiwoko

It would be fair to say that Covid-19 and lockdown restrictions haven't been much fun for anyone, with some families experiencing tragedy arising directly from the virus.

Sharon and I have been both working remotely trying to find the delicate balance of parenting, managing two demanding jobs and home schooling. I think we managed it successfully.... for one whole day!

Back in January 2019, I visited Kiwoko Hospital in Uganda with a group from Ballyholme Parish. We were guided by Kiwoko veteran Rory Wilson and I am sure everyone on the trip would agree that without him, the experience would not have been the same.

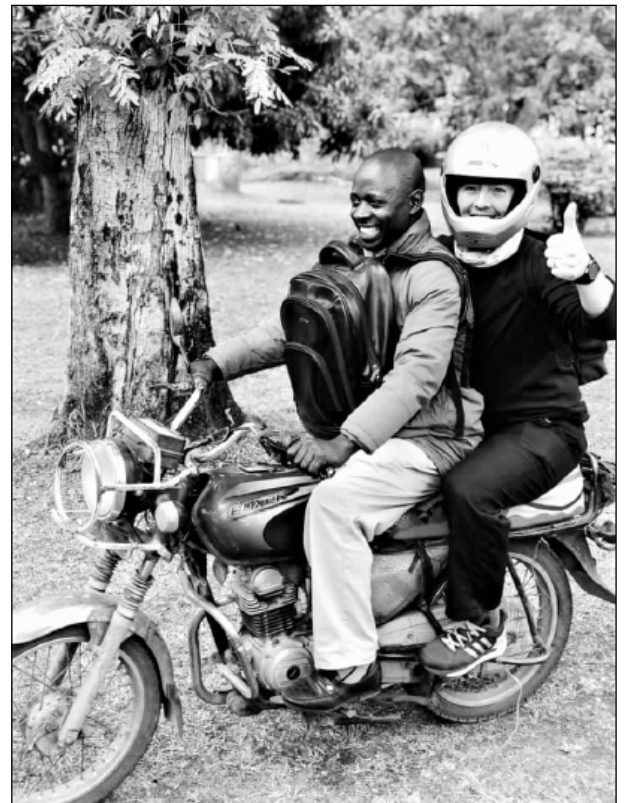


We witnessed first-hand the hardship that the doctors, nurses and volunteers face on a daily basis. In Northern Ireland we take running water and access to basic medicines for granted; however in Kiwoko it is a very different story.

One day I ventured out into the community with my guide, who was called Vestus. This was my first time on a motorbike (and probably my last!) Vestus is a community volunteer and it was his role to check in on patients that were too sick to visit the hospital. He introduced me to many people and families who were visibly struggling to survive and sadly, some other people who were not taking their medication as they did not want to survive any longer.

To provide some context on the scale of the hospital, it has a catchment area of almost 1 million people and delivers 3,000 new-born babies each year alongside 5,000 operations. It has an operating budget of £1.5million for the year, which is the equivalent of less than one day's running costs of the Belfast Trust.

Our group's remit was to better understand the challenges the hospital faced and once home, raise awareness and funding through our various networks. We have raised over £20K so far which enabled the hospital to install a new bank of solar panels. With regular mains power outages and the high running costs for diesel back-up generators, a reliable energy source was key to maintaining surgeries and treatments. Being able to produce its own sustainable power supply means a reduced reliance on mains electricity. All of our fund raising was done through the local Northern Ireland registered charity "Friends of Kiwoko Hospital" ~ [www.fokh.org.uk](http://www.fokh.org.uk)



As Covid-19 spread across the globe and lockdowns became the norm, our face to face fundraising events for the charity were just not possible. This led me to the idea of writing children's story books, which would allow me to raise funds without the need for face-to-face events. I had always fancied a go at writing children's stories and regularly complained to Sharon about the quality of some of the books we had bought for Robyn and Benjamin. This was my opportunity to have a go at writing and illustrating.

## Andrew Gowdy: Children's Books in aid of Friends of Kiwoko Cont.d

I have written three books so far on the theme of 'The Adventures of Benjy & Willis', which are largely true stories based on our family trips across Northern Ireland. Willis is Benjy's toy monkey who is forever getting lost on our trips with big sister Robyn having to find and rescue him.

All of the profits from the book sales will go to the Hospital's Children's Ward. I am asking for a minimum donation of £15 for a pack of three books. After printing and postage costs:-

- \* **1 book pack pays for the safe delivery of a new-born baby**
- \* **5 book packs pay for the hospital care of a child with life threatening meningitis**
- \* **10 book packs pay for the salary of a children's nurse for 1 month.**

The books are dedicated to all the doctors, nurses and volunteers at Kiwoko Hospital. The hard work and dedication undertaken by the staff when caring for their patients and community is truly remarkable.

For more information and how to make a donation and order your book pack please visit [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/benjyandwillis](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/benjyandwillis)

**Andrew Gowdy**



## Love Your Neighbour?



What a strange time we are living through. More time at home than many of us would like. For some of us that has meant more connection with our neighbours, resulting in a greater appreciation of our local community. Most of us are coping but some are finding it really tough. Studies are saying some people and some families are struggling. And we know it has been difficult for many elderly people cut off from friends and family.

The four Ballyholme Churches plan to call to every home in Ballyholme in September 2021 to show our concern for everyone here. We will ask how each household is coping and if there is anything we, the local Churches, can do to support them? We will offer them a gospel of John with Ballyholme Bay on the front cover with the four Churches' details on the back.

These same studies are saying that the people who are coping best are the people who are connected to their neighbours and are doing something to help others. Please let me know if you would like to join one of the 3 teams – 1. Prayer team; 2. Putting Gospels in letterboxes team or 3. Chat to home-owners team?

Join us for an evening of orientation and planning on Wed 15th Sept 2021 at 7.30pm. We plan to go round all the houses in 2 sessions – Sat 18th at 10am & Wed 22nd at 7pm. This will be a real opportunity to show love to our neighbours.

**Rev Jan Stevenson (Community Pastor)**



As mentioned in the March Lockdown Letter, 2021 saw us praying farewell to the latest in a long line of Ballyholme parishioners God has raised up to serve the wider Church. Such occasions are always bittersweet: we're glad for the person and the Church receiving them, but none of us likes goodbyes! Denise's story in Ballyholme begins of course with her famous husband.

When I first arrived in Ballyholme in 2008, Rory Wilson was this shorts-wearing, trombone-playing, stethoscope-wielding enigma. Formerly at the vanguard of our St Columbanus Youth Fellowship, Rory had been sent out from Ballyholme to Uganda to serve God as Medical Director of Kiwoko Hospital. On Rory's return 12 years later, I got my chance to experience something of the spiritual buzz there was about the parish in those heady earlier days. But Rory did not come back alone... (the photo below with Ian and Robbie Clarke was taken at their Kiwoko Farewell).

Having got to know Denise and in due course Gideon on their months of home assignment, it was plain to see that Denise was a special, godly and highly gifted lady, and that seeking to serve the Lord was the mark of them all as a family unit. Every time the Wilsons came home from Kiwoko, Denise and I would speak about what she was going to do vocationally speaking in the future, what the next step would be for her in terms of ministry. Having been in fulltime Christian work ever since her nurses training, Denise was more than open to the idea.

Selection, training and commissioning as a Diocesan Reader with Paula McIlwaine marked a very definite milestone. But for Denise it was quickly plain that there was more to come. Well that more to come duly came, in the shape of Christ Church Primacy where Denise began as fulltime Community Pastor on 1 February. It is an interim appointment for Primacy as they are currently unable to support a full-time clergy person. However with outreach and building up their family-base as top priorities, for Denise it is a case of the right place and the right time.

While I couldn't be happier for Primacy, I couldn't be unhappier for us, because since their return to Northern Ireland the Wilsons have thrown their heart, soul, prayer and energy into Ballyholme. They have been such a big part of what God is doing here: the services and the Bible Studies, the prayer times and the Missions Committee, the Kiwoko Trip and the Festival of Faith, the Marriage Course and the Alpha Course not to mention Vestry – the list goes on! What's more, they have done it with a brio and sense of fun we could all learn from.



But we don't want to dwell on how much we're already missing them, because now it's Primacy's turn to know the benefit. The other thing of course is that it won't end with Primacy. The loss we feel, is one they will feel down the line, and I'm sure at that stage they will be every bit as thankful to God as we are. Thank you Lord, for Denise, Rory and Gideon Wilson.



Saying goodbye to Ballyholme as we transferred to Christ Church Primacy was not as difficult as it might have been. That comment may startle and disappoint you, but hopefully my explanation will appease any sense of offence! During our 10 year stint with CMSI we had to say goodbye to Ballyholme frequently, in fact, during that last few years we said goodbye annually! The sadness was always offset with the comfort of knowing that like a boomerang we would always come back 'holme'.

So, yet again as a congregation, you have sent the Wilson family out with the assurance of love, support and a sense that if it doesn't work out, there is always a welcome on the mat! I am happy to report that we have been welcomed warmly by the church family at Primacy and look forward to a complete easing of lockdown so that we can really pursue God's plans for the church and the community there. During the last couple of months I have been chatting to folk via phone, Zoom and the odd doorstep visit or prayer walk with those who are able. It has been a little more difficult for Gideon and Rory as we have not been meeting face-to-face but hopefully that will change soon! Thank you to those who picked up the responsibilities we carried at Ballyholme – you know who you are!! Thank you for the cards and gifts that you lavished on us. Most of all thank you for the prayers, that have prevented me from feeling completely overwhelmed and actually allowed me to enjoy the challenge of this new ministry. Finally, a big thank you must go to Simon (who is now my boss!!!) for your endless patience and wisdom.

We continue to pray for Ballyholme and look forward to bumping into you around the village. Who knows you may see us back again someday!

**Denise, Rory and Gideon.**



Hello everyone, seems such a long time from a face to face meeting! Bet we wouldn't even recognise each other - new hairstyles? Longer? New colour? Greyer?

Enough of that! As long as we are still in good spirits and are keeping well, we have MUCH to be thankful for. I hope most of us have been able to avail ourselves of at least one dose of the vaccine, and can look forward with hope for the next wee while.

I have included a couple of updates from the MU diocesan website from the Down and Dromore website, take a wee peep for yourselves if you wish. I like the idea of 21 activities in 21! So let's have a little think and see what we come up with. How does that sound?

In the meantime, keep safe, look forward with Hope...

**Many Blessings and good wishes from Yvonne & the Team.**



### **June Butler Walks for "Mums in May"**

This year Mums in May challenges members to walk '21 in 21' – this can be 21 yards, 21 laps, 21 furlongs, 21 kilometres, 21 miles or 21 something else...knit, sew, bake - let your imagination run wild. Or you can think about walking 21 of your chosen lengths virtually and ask friends and family to support you.

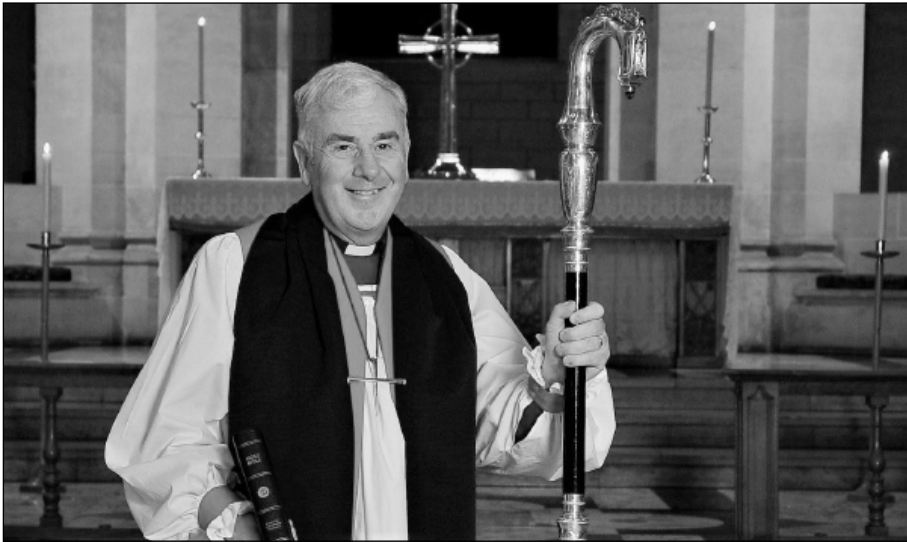
June Butler, All Ireland President, began her "21 in 21" walks on 24 March on her own home turf. Then on 27 March she was joined by our Diocesan President, Roberta for part of her walk on the towpath of the former Newry Portadown Canal from Scarva to Poyntzpass.

### **World Day of Prayer**

It is hoped that the World Day of Prayer Service which was due to be held in our Church in March can now be held in late June. Due to Covid-19 we cannot commit to a date at this time.

Ruth Ruttle and Roberta Munnis  
Ballyholme Church Representatives



**Sunday 3 October (pm) at Bangor Parish**

St Columbanus has a turn-about hosting arrangement with St Comgall's, and this time we will make our way to Hamilton Road for what will be Bishop David's first season of Confirmations, more than 18 months since he started his episcopal ministry in Down and Dromore.

**Young People: third year secondary**

We know a number of young people are hoping to prepare for Confirmation this time; some have been waiting since last year and the start of lockdown. Andrew Watson, our Youth Worker, has a list of names already but will be glad to hear from anyone in third year secondary school or older who is keen to explore the public commitment to Christ which is at the heart of Confirmation, or Baptism and Confirmation for any young person who has not already been Baptised. The hope is to meet a number of times in June and early summer, and then in September before the service itself.

**Adults**

If you have never previously been Confirmed (or Baptised and Confirmed), perhaps because you come from another Church tradition, or maybe because it was something you just never got around to, now is your chance! As he does each year, the Rector will offer a simple course of preparation, hopefully face-to-face as that becomes possible over the next few months.

Please contact the Office (91274912) to lodge your interest or speak directly to Simon himself (91274901). Likewise if you would like some more information before making up your mind, even just to get a flavour of what might be involved, don't hesitate to get in touch.

**Christian Aid Week 2021**

This year Christian Aid week is slightly different. We will be delivering the envelopes but we will not be collecting them due to current restrictions.

Instead we will have collection points for envelopes to be left in by donators. We would really encourage more volunteers to help with the distribution of the envelopes. You could get your steps in and help a good cause.

The collection points will be EuroSpar at Ashbury Shops in Ballycrochan, Clear Pharmacy in Thornleigh Gardens and the St. Columbanus Parish Office (9.30 to 12.30).

If you wish to kindly volunteer to help deliver the envelopes please contact: Ballyholme area - Susan Stockton 07790359991. Ballycrochan area - Fiona Oliva 07856678877.



### Bringing families together through Crazy Covid times and beyond!

Ok. Let's be honest, the past year hasn't been super!

The "Current Unpleasantness", to borrow from the author Marian Keyes, has brought many many challenges to all our lives, changing things in ways we couldn't have imagined a year ago. If I'm being honest, and if I think about it too much, my brain hurts, and the sadness could be overwhelming. Working in the health service I have found the best way to cope with this change is little by little, and to focus on the change that has been for the better, rather than mourning the loss of what was.

At the beginning of the first lockdown, we were all struggling to get our heads around brand new terms like "social distancing", "R-number" and the hand sanitising and no hugging reality, with a direct impact on how we met and also worshipped. But from this has sprung something that I could not have foreseen as being the gift it has become, in the form of the marvel that is Café Church!

As a mum of three teenage daughters I struggled to get everyone to gather, to watch church online, but I have never once struggled to get them to go to Café church, with its fun, relaxed atmosphere, and clear simple message that appeals to all ages. Its informal approach, with no-one expected to sit quietly at all times, is also perfect for my teeny niece and nephew, allowing their parents to relax too, not under pressure to keep kids "seen but not heard", whilst also involving them in all aspects of the service. From craft to music to active audience participation, all whilst sipping



our coffee! Throw into the mix delighted grandparents, able to pray and worship with their children and grandchildren in a safe environment, whilst handing over snacks to grateful recipients, and the recipe is complete...

One daughter said that she enjoyed it because, "it's more interactive... and the songs are good!", whilst another reported it is, "fun and really lively, and Granny brings biscuits"! Personally, I have loved the interactive and varied approach to prayer, making it applicable and personal for everyone.

This little monthly pocket of joy in the hall of Ballyholme Parish has become a place of gratitude for my extended family and me during these tricky times, but surely proof that fruit can be borne from the most testing of times.

**Julie Monaghan**



### December - The Christmas Walk

What a wonderfully bright morning Saturday 12 December turned out to be! Following a week of incessant rain, the Walkers gathered in winter sun and a cloudless sky which lasted throughout the day. Just off the Bangor to Newtownards carriageway beside the Somme Centre we began our walk heading steeply up a well-worn path to explore the area known locally as ‘the Lead Mines’.



For some it was a first visit to this area of rough hill, exposed rock and the remnants of a little known industrial past. Yet from the late 1700s to early in the 20th century these Mines on our doorstep were the biggest concentration of such activity in the Island of Ireland. Seven shafts were sunk to mine a seam running North/South for a mile or so on lands owned by the Clondeboye and Londonderry estates. Three of these were sufficiently deep to require massive steam engines to prevent flooding and lower and raise the miners to depths exceeding 100 fathoms.

Our first mine connected sighting at the top of the approach path was the ruin of a giant windmill. An information board told us the newly established mining companies converted this from its original purpose milling grain to grinding and washing ore from the mines using water channelled from the recently created Mine Dam. The processed ore was then carted to Bangor on horse drawn wagons and shipped to North Wales for smelting.

Heading downhill and then up again with Strangford Lough sparkling beyond us in the winter sun our next stop was the massive 50-foot square grey stone chimney at the South Shaft. Safety has resulted in the area around this shaft being fenced off but some of our group remembered reports from years gone by of dogs falling in and being rescued by the Fire Service. Heading towards our next stop at the Mine Dam the Bog Shaft chimney, low down at the southern extremity of the seam, came into view. Never very productive, its low-lying southern position and powerful engine prevented flooding by pumping thousands of gallons into the boggy ground beyond.



We stopped briefly at the Dam which we are told was created by blocking off a pre-existing bog. Now a fairly sizable lake, it features as a fishing attraction on tourist web sites, but time and weeds seem to be taking their toll.



From the Dam we headed towards Clondeboye Wood. County Down Spectator readers will have seen recent correspondence railing against the destruction of habitat in this area, something which became obvious as we picked up the trail which would take us eventually to Conlig. To avoid the mud and gutters churned up by bikes and quads we headed into the forest and for a time enjoyed easier going on a woodland path strewn with fallen oak leaves before emerging at the North Shaft chimney – a classic rounded red brick memorial to the skills of our ancestors.

Moving on through Clondeboye Forest on part of the Ulster Way we passed Clondeboye Golf

Clubhouse and descended into Conlig village, trudged the old road past Assisi and some two hours



after starting arrived back at base for our usual packed lunch augmented by a selection of Christmas treats. Big thanks to all who helped create the party atmosphere. Highlights (literally) were Jem and Stephen's Christmas lights, mince pies, crackers and Santa hats!

Believe it or not we weren't finished yet! A quick car journey took us to Island Hill near Comber for a short stroll round the island with super views across a still sunlit Strangford Lough.

Then homeward bound, sharing Christmas wishes, and hopes for happier days in 2021, and maybe hopefully our traditional Christmas dinner outing!

**Leslie**

### January - Ballygilbert Loop

About twenty trusty members of St Columbanus walking group gathered at the Crawfordsburn Country Park Centre on Saturday 2 January for a walk to Ballygilbert and back through Crawfordsburn village. The weather was cold but dry and some of our members fortified themselves with a carry-out coffee before setting off in two socially distanced groups just after 10am.

Our route took us down to the beach and then round to Helens Bay where some hardy souls were taking a very cold bathe in the sea! Turning inland we headed



up the Clandeboye Way that links Helens Bay to the Clandeboye Estate. It was built by the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava who had plans to develop Helens Bay as a seaside resort. We passed under the railway at Helens Bay station. Traces of the Marquis's private entrance and staircase to the platforms can still be seen today.

Passing on the scenery was pleasant and the trees lining the route gave us some shelter from the cold breeze but the going underfoot became very wet indeed. Eventually we reached the main Belfast – Bangor road

close to Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church. The road was followed for about 100 yards before we turned left and headed for Crawfordsburn village along Meadow Way. This laneway was usually impassible in the past and was still very muddy in parts.

Having reached Crawfordsburn we returned down Crawfordsburn Glen to our starting point at the Park Centre. The walk finished with a rather cool socially distanced picnic!



Below are photos of some of the beautiful flower arrangements created by Vikki Hayes and her band of helpers for the Church re-opening on Easter Sunday. I am sure you will agree they are gorgeous and the talented people involved in their creation are thanked for their hard work and for giving their time so we all can enjoy these beautiful flowers.



**Volunteers Needed**

Volunteers are needed to join the Flower Rota to arrange the flowers in the Church. If you can help or want information on what is required contact Vikki Hayes on 02891455774.

**Easter 8.30am Communion Service**



# YOUTH-news

youth [youth] (youths) news [nooz]

As I sit down to write this article, thinking about everything we've been doing at Youth this year, it feels like a very long time since I did the last one. It also feels like a very long time since we've been able to see young people in person, yet thankfully that seems to be drawing to a close and I expect it won't be too long before our normal programmes can recommence in one form or another.

That's not to say we haven't been seeing young people at all, though. Since the start of January, we've run Youth Fellowship on Zoom every Sunday night; and admittedly at the start of the term, I had been a little unenthusiastic at the thought of months of YF on Zoom (because who doesn't feel 'Zoomed-out?'). And yet, as is often the case with young people, my expectations were totally blown out of the water.

We switched our Zoom format from games and then a talk on Philippians to games and then a Bible study on Philippians; and it was this Bible study format that totally transformed our Sunday evenings and made me (and hopefully everyone else) look forward to it each week. We worked our way through the book of Philippians over about 10 weeks, taking it slowly and talking about what it was saying about God, about humans and what it meant for our lives. These were really helpful questions to ask when we were reading it – and indeed, they are very helpful in approaching any Bible passage. I loved seeing the young people develop their understanding of their faith and grow in confidence with the Bible as we went through the weeks.

It was also great to be able to chat at the start of each meeting, and the small but consistent group who came on every week allowed it to feel a little more relaxed and 'normal'. It just goes to show that God can work in any circumstance or situation, and all of us as leaders were hugely encouraged each week by what the young people were telling us in our conversations as well as what they were learning in the Bible study.

The same as above goes for our Friday Bible study with the sixth years, too. They have had to cope with a lot more uncertainty than would normally be associated with that time in their lives. Rather than just wondering how they will do in their exams or whether they'll get the grades they need, they've also had the uncertainty of how those grades will be assigned – and so they have had to work at every test and assessment as if it was a real A-Level. It has been good, then, to get to check in with them every Friday and study the Bible together, as well as just have a good laugh.

I'm hoping that by the time this magazine comes out we will be back to normal programming. We as leaders can't wait to get back to our usual programmes and I hope and pray that our next magazine report will be filled with stories and pictures of all of the great things we've been able to do.

**Andrew**

## **Spring into Life Parish Weekend:**

**new dates - 5 to 7 November**

Whilst still a long way off and although it's a year when every plan feels extremely slippery, we have set some new dates for our long postponed Parish Weekend.

Full capacity remains our objective – it's all about being together – so everything will depend on the lifting of social distancing requirements.

In the meantime let's do our best to keep the prospect of Spring into Life and especially our speaker Jasper Rutherford alive in our diaries and our prayers!



**MAY 2021****Sunday 2nd May Easter 5**

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

**Wednesday 5th May**

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

**Sunday 9th May Easter 6**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Morning Service  
 11.30 Holy Communion  
 6.30 United Service  
 Ballyholme Methodist - Online

**Wednesday 12th May**

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

**Sunday 16th May Easter 7**

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

**Wednesday 19th May**

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

**Sunday 23rd May Pentecost**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Parish Communion  
 11.30 Morning Prayer

**Wednesday 26th May**

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

**Sunday 30th May Trinity Sunday**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Wholeness and Healing  
 11.30 Wholeness and Healing

**JUNE 2021****Wednesday 2nd June**

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

**Sunday 6th June Trinity 1**

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

**Wednesday 9th June**

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

**Sunday 13th June Trinity 2**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Morning Service  
 11.30 Holy Communion  
 6.30 United Service  
 Ballyholme Presbyterian - Online

**Wednesday 16th June**

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

**Sunday 20th June Trinity 3**

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

**Wednesday 23rd June**

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

**Sunday 27th June Trinity 4**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Parish Communion  
 11.30 Morning Prayer

**Wednesday 30th June**

10.30 Holy Communion - Church

**FUNERALS****January**

**4th:** Daphne Hamill, late of Pinewood

**22nd:** Muriel Gillespie, late of Kingsland NH

**February**

**3rd:** Fairena Montgomery, late of The Beeches

**4th:** Flo Huggins, late of Fairview Gardens

**March**

**25th:** Freda Shields, late of Third Avenue

**May 2021**

**2nd** Jane Fitzsimons

**9th** Heidi Doogan

**16th** Joan Larmour

**23rd** Flower Fund

**30th** Lilian Finch

**June 2021**

**6th** Pat Davidson

**13th** Alwyn Aiken

**20th** Lilian Ward

**27th** Audrey Caroll

