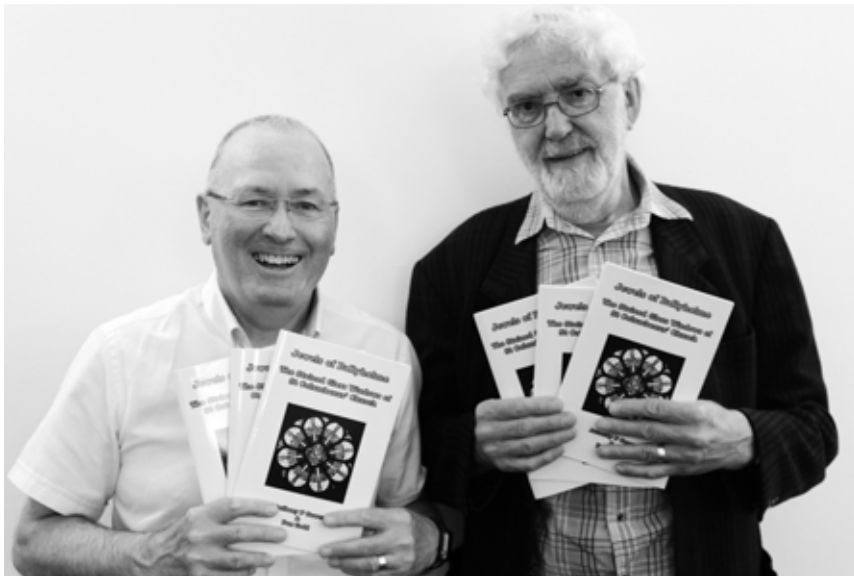


# St Columbanus

*Ballyholme*



Karen's Farewell  
4 Peaks Challenge  
Jewels of Ballyholme



# The Parishioner

July / August 2022

A parishioner brought home a church notice-sheet from Menorca recently, according to which, all commercial airliners are equipped with Instrument Landing Systems to assist pilots with take-off and landing in poor visibility. A pilot not switching on his ILS, posits the notice-sheet, makes about as much sense as a Christian trying to stay the course without prayer and worship. *The Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd*, promises Revelation 7:17, *he will guide them to springs of the water of life*. I love our own holidays when they come, and to hear of you enjoying yours, especially your experiences of church in other places. Often the talking point is whom you have met. Strangers brought together by a shared faith are frequently startled to discover the people and places they have in common and how many other things besides. Wherever you go this holiday, make time for worship and fellowship and you will quickly realise how badly the last couple of years have knocked all of us off course. The fashionable phrase for what we need to do is 're-centre ourselves'. Our friends in Menorca might say: it's time we switched the divine ILS back on.



SED



### **8.30am Holy Communion Order One**

### **10.30am Summer Sunday Combined Service**

including 3 July & 7 August Café Church in the Parish Centre  
(or the lower church carpark if it's sunny!)

and a children's activity in the Parish Centre on Communion Sundays

### **7.30pm United Epilogue Service**

hosted in turn by the four Ballyholme congregations

**July and August see a welcome return of the combined morning service.**

**Please plan to be with us every Sunday!**



## Just Older Youth

### The Wednesday Club



The Wednesday club met for the last time this season at the beginning of June, and together we celebrated her Majesty's Jubilee with a party.

We started off with our ladies making and decorating a silver crown (which they wore with pride), followed by a jubilee quiz, which tested their knowledge of what they knew about the queen.

Prizes were awarded for the best crown - judged by Kelly, which was won by Etta, and the quiz prize which went to Sadie, our newest member.

After all their hard work, they settled down to enjoy their afternoon tea, which went down a treat.

Simon joined the party at this stage, and paid tribute to Karen, who was retiring at the end of June. She will be missed by us all.

We were all looking forward to enjoying the hopefully lovely summer, and will meet again on the 7th September, when we hope some more new ladies will join our merry band.



**Easter Communion Lunch**



### Sue



# muddy Church

**Another academic year has passed,** and Muddy Church has kept the children happily involved every Sunday. Our time together is activity filled and this year even saw our very own Ballyholme Oscar awards!!! We learnt a number of different bible stories e.g. Jesus calms the storm, and have spent time creatively crafting and playing games based on biblical themes.

Our leadership team grew with the addition of Rhonda Mitchell Barrett and Karen Toogood; the gifts and talents they bring along are definitely a blessing to the team and the children. Meanwhile, the core team continue to bring their positive energy and ideas as they devise and run our Sunday programme.



## Plans for September?

I have a couple of new ideas for September...

**TUNE TOTS** – Toddlers and babies love music and learn so much from singing. I would like to create a place for carers to bring along their little ones for a time of singing and craft.

**BLAST** – Bible Learning and Sharing Together  
This would be a new group meeting during the Good News at Ten service for our P7's. Muddy Church has been great for bringing all our primary children together, it has been lovely to watch the older children look out for the tinies, but I do feel that the P7's need something special for them to engage with.

**Paula**

## Ann Browne – Rector's Churchwarden

For most of us Ann will be a very familiar face around our church given that she served as Sexton for around twenty-five years. By nature, Ann is very helpful and works away quietly when she sees things that need a bit of attention. She started to help the existing Sexton when she saw some jobs she could do, maybe a bit of weeding here and there and so when the Sexton retired Ann took over the job. At that time the Rev Alan Abernethy was the minister. She got a lot of help and practical support from her husband Harry in fact she referred to them as a 'pair'. Harry was always on hand to help with moving chairs, washing floors, fixing screws and he was often seen using the dishwasher. She said he was a great help to her and that he enjoyed the work too.

Ann retired from the role of Sexton in December 2019 and so we were all very pleased to welcome her back as Rector's Churchwarden when Simon announced her appointment at Easter Vestry.

She told me she was surprised, delighted and honoured to take on the role of Churchwarden. She is looking forward to meeting familiar faces, getting to know new faces, making connections with people and looking out for anyone who looks like they could do with a bit of help or guidance. She is enjoying the opportunity to chat with people as they arrive for the services.

Ann told me she is still getting used to the early morning starts which are part and parcel of being Churchwarden.

She especially loves to see the children happy to be in church and their parents relaxed knowing that the children can be themselves and don't have to sit still and be quiet.

She knows many of the children from her years working with the Brownies. When Ann brought her granddaughter down to join Brownies there was no place for her unless Ann became a helper and now thirty years later she still enjoys helping with the Brownies. She also helps with the Friday lunches, the Wednesday Club, the Communion lunches and is part of the Flower Team.

St Columbanus has always been Ann's church. This is where she was confirmed and married, her children and grandchildren were baptised here and one of her grandchildren was confirmed here also. Ann certainly has a great connection to our church and it is lovely to see her welcoming us as we arrive in church each Sunday.

In whatever spare time she has Ann enjoys knitting, walking and swimming.

## Peter Craig – People's Churchwarden

Originally from Kilkeel, Peter attended Kilkeel Primary School before boarding at Coleraine Academical Institution and then studying Civil Engineering at Queen's University.

He has lived in Bangor for almost forty years. Now recently retired he is hoping to enjoy past interests and pursue new ones. Peter is looking forward to serving as people's Churchwarden.

I would like to wish Ann and Peter every blessing as they carry out their responsibilities and play their part in the smooth running of our church services.

## Christine Johnstone



# SUMMER

Between the main services on the Sunday of our parish weekend, an informal launch was given to a brand-new, in-house publication. *Jewels of Ballyholme* is a worthy celebration of our precious stained-glass windows in words and pictures by parishioners Tony Carver and Don Todd.

For Tony, the book was a lockdown project. Since arriving in the parish, Tony has fallen in love with our windows and acquired a whole new interest in the Celtic Christian history they point to. Making recourse to old Select Vestry Minute books, Tony's text is a combination of the story of each window and a spiritual reflection on its theme, incorporating verses from Scripture and hymns in a series of highly accessible and devotional descriptions.

Over many years Don has made numerous attempts to capture the variety and feeling of our windows photographically but be prepared to see the colours and detail in a whole new light. Some of the windows proved harder to capture than others, but if a blanket needed to be held up against the outside of the window or additional light was required inside, then so be it. For such a slim volume, the finished quality of the images is even better than we had hoped for.



While we envisage every family in the parish being keen to possess a copy, *Jewels of Ballyholme* will also make a lovely memento for the Columbanus diaspora, not to mention the ideal Birthday gift or Christmas stocking-filler! The book is dedicated to Marsden FitzSimons who enjoyed nothing more than giving tours of our windows to busloads of French and Italian tourists. Once the pilgrim trail opens up again, we anticipate a whole new market!

Think of *Jewels of Ballyholme* as the essential companion volume to Canon Mercer's parish history and buy your copy from the Parish Office or the back of Church for £5 each.

### "Though He was rich" Summer Update

Your help with plugging the hole in the parish finances continues to come in.

Praise God, the figures are moving steadily in the right direction.

Our request to all parishioners remains twofold:-

#### 1. set up new Standing Orders with Danske Bank and cancel your existing SOs with Bank of Ireland

Danske Current Account "Parish of Ballyholme"

**Sort Code 950229 Account Number 11063162**

Danske Building Fund Account "Parish of Ballyholme"

**Sort Code 950229 Account Number 51121367**

#### 2. increase, if you can, your Standing Order to our Danske current account

our target remains £11,000 per month to cover payroll



Your support is vital in what is a difficult financial climate for us all. Thank you.

**"Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." 2 Corinthians 8:9**



30 May was the night our former parishioner and Youth Worker the Reverend Sam Johnston was finally instituted as Rector of Comber. St Mary's, the church on the square, was the venue for a joyous community celebration attended by family and friends, and led by Bishop David McClay and Archdeacon Ken Higgins.

First introduced 2½ years ago as Minister in Charge, Sam's recent 'upgrade' reflects growth and progress made by Comber parish since 2019 in acquiring a new rectory and securing adequate finances to cover the costs of a full-time clergy incumbent – both essential elements constitutionally before any parish can appoint a new rector.



In a lovely gesture of gratitude, Sam invited our own rector to preach him in, at a service delayed for four weeks – you've guessed it – because Sam tested positive for Covid!

## Garden Force



If you have noticed it, we have too! The church porch shrubbery needs taming, and for some time now we have been thinking about a small-scale re-landscaping project. Thanks to a kind donation from the estate of much-loved and long-standing parishioner the late Mrs Flo Huggins of Fairview Gardens, we hope we can attend to the job this summer. Truth be told, 15 years ago the council erected the tourist board sign with permission but no consultation so the precise choice of site was theirs. We are looking at pushing the sign further back into the flowerbed, primarily so that we

can use the space at the front to place a Christmas Tree. If we can install a secure electric point for that purpose, all the better. The need for ground cover to reduce weed-invasion is also on the agenda. Speaking of which, if you pass anything that offends your eye weed-wise or rubbish-wise in the meantime, please feel free to do the needful! Keeping our Church and its grounds looking cared-for is very much a congregational responsibility rather than a labour of love for the faithful few. It is also an important witness to visitors, neighbours and passers-by!

## Christian Aid Week



A total of £3,018.72 was raised this year for Christian Aid. A big thank you to everyone who assisted with the organising of the collection. Also thanks to all our parishioners who donated to this very worthy cause, helping to ensure they can continue to carry out their good work.

At 2pm on Saturday 16th April lots of families came for a fantastic afternoon of fun. 133 children collected prizes for doing the Scavenger Hunt; which ran for a week beforehand. We had 300-400 people come to the Funday and stay for refreshments, the bouncy castle and activities for their children. Easter Crafts including jewellery making, card making, egg decorating and glitter tattoos all meant the children really enjoyed themselves and their parents could relax and talk to neighbours and friends. 80 children took part in egg rolling races on the slope down the side of the church. The church was open for people to come in and have some quiet space. Everyone commented on how beautifully the church was decorated for Easter.

The Love Ballyholme committee would like to thank Ards and North Down Borough Council for supporting this event financially.

**Rev Jan Stevenson**







Who knew a drumming circle would be so therapeutic? All the adults and children loved learning how to drum together. We sat in a circle in the lower carpark and Siobhan from Releasing Rhythms taught us how to drum.

**Rev Jan Stevenson**



## The Alpha Course

We meet every Wednesday at 7.30pm for a light supper, an inspirational video and conversation about what our faith means to us. There are 12 people on the course with an all-hands-on-deck approach to setting up and tidying away. The group is starting to get to know one another better and it is wonderful to be able to talk about life and faith with friends. Alpha is such a brilliant course for those who have been Christians for years as well as those who are exploring faith.

Do let me or Simon know if you would be interested in joining the next Alpha Course.

**Rev Jan Stevenson**



"I wonder how many cups of coffee have been served from this Parish Centre? I'd really love to know!" This has been a question asked a few times recently by someone who we all know and love and who will begin her well-earned retirement next week - Karen Baker.

So, I began to think, I too would love to know the answer. I have "employed" a computer boffin to formulate some sort of equation to arrive at an estimated number! My husband Gareth has come up with a figure using some crude calculations from our records of hospitality; that have included Monday Coffee, Friday Lunches, funeral receptions, Harvest lunches, Easter vestries, Rectory garden parties and Diocesan-wide events like Deacon Ordinations (to deliver hospitality to well over 200 people in one evening alone), so for a bit of fun and as a distraction for me while I adjust to flying solo without my work BFF, I would like to invite you to guess how many cups of tea/coffee have been poured since Karen first



started working here in November 2004.

There will be a box in the foyer of the Parish Centre for the next few weeks, please write your name, your mobile number and your guess on a piece of paper, pop it in the box and the person who guesses closest to the figure without going over will win a prize! The magic number and the winner will be announced in Church on the last Sunday in July.

Eighteen years ago, Karen's position as Pastoral Assistant to the Elderly was the first of its kind in the Diocese and there is no doubt that Karen was exactly the right person for the job. The scale of the seniors' ministry here is unmatched thanks to Karen and she has been so successful in making her vision a sustained reality via her unwavering personal faith and her passion to provide a welcoming place for her seniors to have

fun, food and fellowship with one another. She has a true gift of warmth, compassion and kindness with just the right amount of humour. I have witnessed how calm and cared-for she can make someone feel by grasping their hand and holding it tight. Karen knows instinctively how to feed the soul spiritually as well as the body with tasty nourishment and treats.

The transept, the pulpit and the pews are all important spaces for us, but I often think that people can see the Church at its best in its kitchen! It is a popular misconception that God only dwells in the sanctuary and amongst the pews, I believe that we could all agree that the Church kitchen has to be one of the holiest places on earth!



Karen "Baker by Name, Baker by Nature" has always had the skill not only to make delicious soups, scones, buns, cakes and traybakes, but also make the big decisions... how many should be made in the first place!! Karen would be liaising with bereaved families who would try their best to anticipate the number of guests, and there have been times when her core teams of helpers (including myself and Ann Browne over the years) have panicked and worried that we would run out of food for everyone who turned up, yet somehow there was always enough, and Karen would simply say "God always provides".





And God has been so good to us in our beautiful Ballyholme bounties that we have been able to offer visitors and treasured guests, thanks to Karen and her volunteers, we have become both famous and envied within Christian hospitality circles all over the country!

The kitchen is a place of solidarity and honest talk. It's easy to be there in that sacred space, brewing tea, buttering scones; a fellowship exists there that transcends the fact that these are all simple tasks. Steam flushing faces fondant pink, whilst drying dishes, relationships have been formed and strained sometimes too... but the laughter, it was the best of all, tears-running-down-your-face kind of laughter!

Karen's Church kitchen is a place where staff and volunteers alike can talk about the real struggles and worries of life, the discussions can be every bit as meaty during times of trouble and sweet at times of joy. I'm certain I can vouch for Karen and Ann and the extended team here that we can learn so much about how we can hold each

other together while stacking china and scouring pans.

I am quite sure that all whom Karen has encouraged to help out via the practical arena of the kitchen and parish halls, have realised how humbling it is to serve; whether it's providing buns as a shorthand for people's grief for a funeral tea, or placing yellow long stemmed roses in vases on tables, we soon realise that the physical and the practical holds real weight. Many of us know too that pumping those tea and coffee flasks for upwards of one hundred guests in a short space of time is a work-out in itself!!

There is as much love in a homemade broth, a precisely baked sponge or a kitchen cleaned as in a carefully worded script. Then, when the funeral reception is over, all of the biscuit tins and tupperware with sticky white labels of ownership are gathered back up by the faithful folk who stepped in to help out...ready to get the next call from Karen again sometime down the line. I know that Karen was always so very grateful for every bun and the gracious hands that made them!

And so, we celebrate Karen and we thank her for all the time that she has given us, all the coffee, love and kindness she has poured for the parish for the glory of the Lord. We would like to wish her, Stephen and her treasured family lots of fun and happiness, we hope she can enjoy every moment and now maybe it's time for Karen to count how many cups of coffee we can pour for her!



**Kelly McCullough**

## Karen's Retirement

A parish reception and presentation was held for Karen between the main services on Sunday 26 June. A report and pictures will be included in the September/October magazine. Until then, in celebration of Karen's ministry as our Pastoral Assistant to the Seniors and thanking God for all she has done for our parish, we thought we would reproduce the speech made in the hall by Kelly McCullough our Parish Administrator, along with extracts from the Rector's morning sermon. The photographs show Karen in full flow at the Monday coffee and scones, the Friday lunches, the Wednesday Club and the Communion lunch. What an 18 years it's been!

Extracts from a sermon preached by the rector on the text Luke 9:62

Well you all heard today's Gospel:

*No-one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.*



There is, I'm afraid, no sieving out the seriousness and sadness from Jesus' words in Luke 9 but don't worry: that's not the tone I'm going for as we say our fond farewell to Karen Baker after 18 years as our much-loved Pastoral Assistant to the Seniors. Seriousness and sadness are the last words any one would associate with the person I want us to think of this morning as Ballyholme's gladden-your-heart First Lady.

Yes, if you're thinking I'd already said all I was going to say about Karen back at the Easter Vestry, think again – and wait till you hear Kelly McCullough's contribution over coffee. But from the day and hour Karen joined the

ministry team of Ballyholme let me tell you not once did she look back. Not once did she say, no, or I'm not doing that or sure I've done enough already or but tomorrow's a Saturday or a Bank Holiday!

One of the things I hope for very genuinely is that Karen has no sense in her retirement of looking back regretfully on what more she could possibly have done. Between visiting people and phoning people and making meals for people and arranging receptions for people not to mention, latterly, cleaning the church before, after and



sometimes even during services, there is nothing more Karen could possibly have done, at any stage. Granted, Karen and I both wish we could have connected our two buildings and doubled the size of the kitchen, but sure we need something to keep us humble!



Naturally for Karen there have been the ups and downs, the fat years and the lean years as Jo-Jo-Jo-Joseph might have put it, but it's all been worth it because for Karen, from day one, it's been about the following. 9 May just past, when Karen found herself up at A & E the day after our parish weekend was the first time in 18 years she had to cancel anything. Suffice to say, her last two months in post were not the last two months she wanted, they were not the last two months she deserved, yet I know you'll all agree that what Karen deserves now more than anything is a healthy, happy retirement, a chance to do all the things she wants to do in her own time and on her own terms. These last few years have been Stephen's, it's Karen's turn now.

A survey a few years ago of people in and around the 60 mark asked which age category they fell into. The vast majority put themselves down as middle-aged. As a follow-up question, they were asked to name all the people they knew who were 120 years old! What I would say to that, as a 52 year old, is however long we have already lived, it's only the start, only the Lord breaking us in. For all of us today, Karen included, it's what's still to come that counts to God. What's ahead of us always seems more important to the Lord than what's behind us.

There is a quotation I've been saving up for Karen's farewell. I used it at Sam Johnston's Institution in Comber because it's all about the pastoral ministry and it's from a new book by Canon Stuart Bell who led our Festival of Faith a few years ago. This book of Stuart's has helped me a lot, since Karen





told me she was retiring. He stresses, for example, how basic it is for God's people to eat together and how there can't ever be enough of that. He insists, furthermore, on how vital it is to wait for God to raise people up for ministry roles from your own congregation and to watch out for Him doing so. And again and again he says that every genuine work of the Spirit in the Body of Christ starts with one disciple stepping out in faith, trusting God to show the way. Tick, tick, tick I think there Karen!

But then he quotes these lines and please don't feel offended by this language or in any way stigmatised by its sentiment:-

“During the great Decian persecution of 250 AD the Church in Rome had under its care a great crowd of widows, orphans, blind, lame and sick folk. The heathen prefect broke into the Church and demanded that the congregation should hand over its treasures to the state. Laurentius the deacon pointed at the crowd of poor and sick and maimed and lonely and said: ‘These are the treasures of the Church.’”

Whether Karen has heard those words before or not, she knows their truth instinctively because she was living them out long before she joined our payroll, ever since she first responded to those words of the Saviour Karen: *Follow me.*

**SED**

**Photos from Coffee Morning for the Ladies Night Away**



**Photos of Belfast Community Gospel Choir Concert**



By the time our parish weekend finally came around, everyone could feel the sense of relief. Not only did people want to be together and feel safe about doing so, but for many it amounted to the first normal-feeling, relaxed and fun church event for more than two years. The consensus seems to be: it was just what the divine doctor ordered.

### **God sees us**

Our speaker Jasper Rutherford went to town imaginatively on our Spring into Life theme. He began with the Egyptian slave girl Hagar in Genesis 16. God appeared compassionately to Hagar following her rejection by Abram and Sarai, and so Hagar gave God the name ‘You are the one who sees me’. Turning to John 4, Jasper then brought in the Samaritan woman with five husbands who was too embarrassed to draw water from the communal well at any other time than in the full heat of the day. Yet in Jesus, God came to her too.

Sharon Gowdy, Nikki Gullen and Jenny Whiteside spent several hours transforming the main hall for Friday night’s Gain and Sustain Fashion Event. Trade was brisk in the Kajiado Pop-Up shop and the sale rails made a second appearance on the Sunday morning between the 10 and 11.30 services. Pulled-pork on Friday night, turned into bacon butties on Saturday morning - you say potato? No better man to MC our rugby breakfast than parishioner and Head of Sport for BBC Northern Ireland Neil Brittain. Neil interviewed special guest and former Ulster Rugby star Pete Browne about faith in the locker-room. Jasper’s take home point was that God’s love precedes our performance.



### **Taste and see**

Drumming and all forms of African percussion were the order of the day for our children and parents on Saturday afternoon. ‘Releasing Rhythms’ had us learning an array of beats



and sequences, not to mention African rumble waves. The weather was so good we just had time to run off a quick explanatory note to the neighbours and set ourselves up outdoors. Taste and see that the Lord is good was Jasper’s message, illustrated memorably with a Jacob’s cream cracker! Come Saturday night,

no one present will forget the sheer joy of the Belfast Community Gospel Choir. Whilst our toes didn’t stop tapping, it was the movement of so many of our other body parts that we weren’t expecting! Hope was what we needed, and hope was what we got - with the volume turned up to 11. The less said about Jasper’s singing voice, the better!

His preaching voice however, held all three morning congregations in rapt attention. If anything, folks were frustrated that our services couldn’t run on and on – proof, if it were required, that the Holy Spirit was moving among us and stirring our hearts to quench their thirst in the living water. Even the Assembly elections seemed a million miles away for those three busy and memorable days in May – well if not a million, then quite a few hundred!





**Summer Appeal for Storehouse**

The trolley will be in the Church porch during the Summer for you to bring your donations on Sunday mornings.

Items that are needed include:

**Tins:** Tuna, meats, custard, sweetcorn, beans, fruit, soup

**Jars:** Baby food, jam, pasta sauce, coffee

**Drinks:** Diluting juice, breakfast juice, long life milk

**Boxes:** Cereals, biscuits, sugar, pasta, tea bags, jellies

**Bottles:** Washing-up liquid, cleaning products

**Other Items:** Male & Female toiletries, nappies, wipes

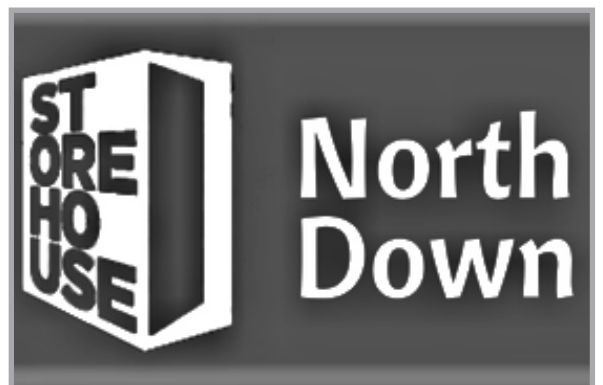
**Easter Jumpin 2022**



**Tiny Visitors at Monday Coffee**



**Fashion Show**



Sunday evening 22nd May marked the end of a weekend spent completing the 4 Peaks Climbing Challenge.

I joined a group of 23 people of varying age and ability who represented 17 parishes from across the Down & Dromore Diocese.

The aim of the challenge was to summit the 4 highest peaks of Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland in one weekend starting with Ben Nevis on Friday, Scafell Pike and Snowden on Saturday (yes, two in one day!) before travelling back to Newcastle to climb Slieve Donard on Sunday afternoon.



We encountered all four seasons over the three days with snow at the top of Nevis, rain on Scafell, gales on Snowden and sunshine on Donard!

Having endured very early starts (Nevis and Scafell), late nights (head torches essential on the way down Snowden), my highlight was when all 23 of us assembled at the summit of Slieve Donard on the final day.

Collectively we had all faced our own ups and downs (excuse the pun) over the weekend so it was both exhilarating and emotional that we gathered together in prayer and gave thanks to God for keeping us safe and sharing the gift of landscape, nature and fellowship.

To give you an idea of the achievement, not to mention the determination involved, here are a few stats - 4,261m (14,000ft) climbed, 90,000 steps counted (2 million for the whole team), 46km of walking over 20 hours, 900 miles (18 hrs) driving in the mini-buses, 14 hours sleep over 3 nights, and a lot of aches and pains...

As added motivation and incentive, I decided to support a charitable cause through sponsorship. I was privileged to have been given the chance to visit Kiwoko Hospital in Uganda with a group from Ballyholme Parish back in 2019. The Christian work and outreach they do left a lasting impression.

Over £750 has been raised for 'Friends of Kiwoko' and I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Parishioners, well-wishers, friends and family for the support, donations, comments, likes, posts and encouragement.

### Steven Nickell

Steven's 'Just Giving' page can be found at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/steven-nickell>





As a recently elected lay member of the General Synod for Ballyholme Parish, I had the privilege over the course of three days in early May to attend my first Church of Ireland General Synod in the Assembly Buildings in Belfast. As a novice attendee, I was comforted by the fact that our parish was also represented by fellow parishioners more experienced than I in the affairs of the Church, namely Roy Lawther, Paula McIlwaine, Andrew Watson, and Denise Wilson. With a day job as a scholar of government and politics, one occupational hazard is that whenever introduced to an organisation the inner workings of which one has little experience with (in this case, The Representative Church Body), one tends immediately to think in terms of, “where is power located in this organisation?”; “who wields that power?”; and “to what ends and with what consequences is that power and influence exerted?”



While these are interesting questions that are no doubt relevant for understanding the body that is the Church of Ireland, I was very pleased to first and foremost experience a warm and welcoming gathering of fellow Christians where representatives of the Church from across the island engaged constructively on the many issues facing the Church and its members. Among other acquaintances that I had happened to run into, I had the fortune of meeting my old friend and former colleague at Queen’s, Professor Emeritus Brian Walker, now a lay representative from Drumbeg Parish. Such encounters were a reminder of the fact that no organisation of any size can thrive without its members meeting and working together, and this was clearly felt by other members as well: there was a real sense of excitement and joy in the ability to meet again as the most onerous restrictions resulting from the pandemic have now been phased out.

My general impression of General Synod was that it seems very well represented both in terms of geography (across the island) and gender (men and women alike participating and making their presence felt in various functions and roles), if perhaps somewhat less so in terms of younger people and the emerging if yet modest ethnic diversification across the island and in the Church itself. But, importantly, the discussions and decision-making throughout the three days represented a wide range of concerns and challenges. These many issues, some controversial but most of them not, were discussed with both insight and humility, and with a healthy helping of kindness, wit and humour interspersed throughout the discussion as well. They were engaged with in earnest and received a fair hearing, and the proceedings were greatly facilitated by being presided over expertly by the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Reverend John McDowell. To conclude, attending General Synod was certainly a rewarding experience, and a vivid illustration of the words of St Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another”.

**Dr Stefan Andreasson**

### **Oh! what a Coffee Morning!**

How lovely it was to have coffee, chat and home baked treats. The hall looked gorgeous with the bunting up and roses on the tables. There was a fantastic atmosphere, it was so good to meet up. We raised £275.00 which will be used to keep the cost of the Ladies night away as low as possible. A big thank you to all who came, to all who brought delicious buns & traybakes, and to those who organized and ran it. See photos on page 13.

**Rev Jan Stevenson**

This time last year we were asking Parishioners to sponsor a solar panel to fund the cost of the solar panel system installation and following a very generous response, sufficient money was raised to allow the scheme to progress.

At that time we were not to know how world events would unfold and the impact they would have on global energy costs.

We were not to know how important the installation of solar panels would prove to be in assisting to reduce our electricity costs.

There are a number of factors which were in our favour in relation to gaining maximum benefit from



the installation of solar panels. We had a large roof area on the Parish Centre, the roof was directly south facing with the optimum inclination angle of 30 degrees and the electrical systems in the Church and Parish Centre are linked. Although the solar panels are installed on the Parish Centre roof, they will contribute to the electricity demand in the Parish Centre and the Church.

Solar energy must be used as it is generated, otherwise it will be exported back into the Utility network. A unit of electricity currently costs 26.23 pence per unit, however each unit is sold back to the Utility at approximately 5.00 pence.

To reduce the amount of solar energy which we export, a storage battery was incorporated into the system which allows the stored energy to be used in the evenings.

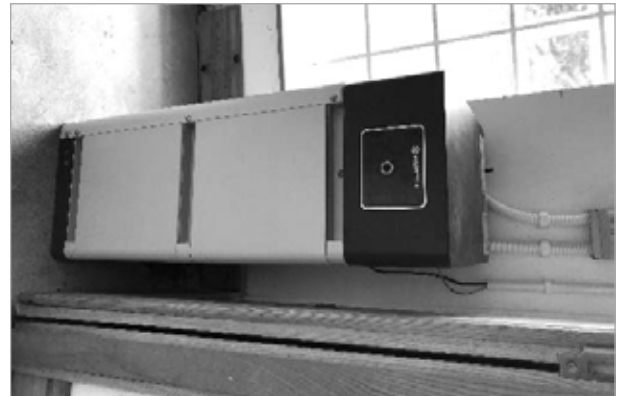
The inverter is the interface between the solar panels, the storage battery, the electrical equipment within the building and the utility network.

The inverter initially directs the solar energy to charge the battery following which the solar energy is directed into the electrical installation to power the electrical equipment. If more energy is being generated than being used within the building, the surplus is exported.

The system was supplied and installed by Solmatix Renewables who are based in Gengormley and the system was completed at the end of January 2022.

The maximum capacity of system which can be installed without planning permission is 12 kilowatts, which almost fills the south facing roof of the Parish Centre.

At peak output (maximum sunshine) for a period of one hour, 12 kilowatt hours or 12 units of energy will be generated by the solar panels.



**Battery**



**Inverter**

In the period from 30 January to 3 June 2022 a total of 4,566 units have been generated by the solar panels. A total of 948 of the generated units were exported.

A total of 3,618 of the generated units have been used within the Church buildings with a saving of 3,618 units x 26.23 pence = £949.00.

The income from the exported energy was 948 units x 5.00 pence = £47.40.

The total cost benefit from the solar panels so far is almost £1000.00.

The scheme has proved to be a very worthwhile exercise and a further update will be provided in 2023.

**Ivan Humphreys**

Hello everyone, just a little update from Mothers' Union. Firstly Janice, Lynne and I divided up the "twiddle muffs" into 16 parcels: how colourful they looked! We wrote little notes to accompany the knitting. We compiled a list of local residential settings, then we set off with our joyful bundles.

We covered a wide area, stretching from Somme Residential Care home near Holywood to Mullaghbuoy in Donaghadee and many places in between!

We were very well received, in fact, we may have some reorders on our books, it was very special to be part of sharing some love and joy in our community.

Our final meeting before the Summer break was held in Surburban, a favoured coffee shop in Ballyholme. Thanks to the proprietor Peter Graham for producing a delicious "Afternoon Tea" in the evening!

BUT even more important than the tea, the scones and the cake were THE HATS!



THE HATS, all sorts of shapes and sizes decorated with feathers, ribbons, bows and even fresh flowers.

Quite a collection, I think you'll agree from the photographs... a few prize winners in various categories and an Awards Ceremony as well!

A great evening to celebrate life post-covid. We look forward to meeting again in the Autumn and warmly invite any new members who'd like to join us.



Can I share 2 dates for September

Friday 23rd September St Anne's Cathedral Service

Saturday 24th September Meeting/Concert Annual Gathering in Waterfront Belfast.

Tickets need to be purchased for these events (info about this on [www.mothersunion.org/get-involved/events](http://www.mothersunion.org/get-involved/events))

I would say chat about this and then book yourselves a couple of tickets. Any difficulty speak to the Parish Office or me.

Many Blessings,  
**Yvonne & The Team.**

Every parish is required to submit an annual return to the diocese stating that we are implementing Safeguarding Trust, the Church of Ireland's Code of Good Practice for working with children. Additionally, once every three years parishes must undergo a full external audit and on Tuesday 24 May, Diocesan Development Officer Andrew Brannigan visited Ballyholme to conduct ours. Present with Andrew were Paula Lown and Andrew Watson and our Parish Panel for child protection which comprises Libby Beech, Stanley Officer and the Rector.

Access NI remains the first point of entry for all our volunteers, with all our leaders committing to uphold our Church of Ireland policy. Changes in Data Protection legislation over recent years have taken a while to settle down and these very directly affect the information we are allowed to store about volunteers. Andrew Brannigan helpfully talked us through what we need to keep from our volunteers to ensure compliance. He also alerted us to the fact that a regular three yearly renewal of Access NI clearance checks seems to be coming not far down the line.

Another practical out-working of the audit was that five centrally generated Church of Ireland policies were duly adopted at our June Select Vestry meeting. These relate to Anti-Bullying, Communications, Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures, Grievance Procedures and Working in Partnership with Parents. All of these documents may be accessed on our parish website. It also emerged that a First Aid training update should be arranged for later in the year.

Child Protection undergirds all aspects of our children's and youth programme in Ballyholme. On the one side it's about health and safety and risk assessments, on the other side it's about protecting our children and our volunteer leaders by ensuring good practice. Regular training is available both in person and online. Posters in the Parish Centre advertise the names and details of our Parish Panel along with phone numbers for the police and local Gateway team.

Please never hesitate to get in touch should you have any questions or matters of concern.



## **Brownie Leaders**



In September Judith Bell and Andrea Kelly will be moving on and taking the Guides. Thank you for all your help over the years with the Brownies and good luck in Guides.

Brownies therefore need more leaders, we really need a few people who can commit to being assistant leaders. This isn't as scary as it sounds, it means that you become a registered leader and are insured to be with the girls, this is especially useful if one of us can't be there through sickness or family events, it means Brownies doesn't need to be cancelled! We usually get together and make a programme before starting so we know what is coming up each week. If you feel you would like to be more involved, know a family member, friend or colleague that has wanted to give back to the community then we would really love to hear from them.

### **Volunteers Needed!**

Tuesday evenings 6:15pm-7:30 (term-time)

If you can help at Brownies we would love to hear from you!  
Please contact section leader Joanne Brittain 07732 543319.





## April - Blue Lough

Maurice tells me that it's been 12 years since we last walked to the Blue Lough and apart from the path having been widened by walkers avoiding the rougher parts of the track and no ducks on the Lough, it was just as impressive with an all-round view.

Ten gathered at the very welcoming Carrick Little Cottage Café for pre-hike refreshments – this is a café worth making the car trip for, even if you didn't do the walk. Some reckoned that we could work off the calories in the big scones during the day!

Carrick Little lies just before Annalong and is reached along the Head Road. So popular is this access point for the Mourne there are now three car parks for walkers.



We had a very accurate Mourne Mountains weather forecast which predicted outbreaks of rain in the morning and clearing afterwards. It was exactly right, and we had one ten minute shower of rain and hail, and then lots of sunny periods for the rest of the day.

The ten of us headed up the path past the new Glamping Pods, through the Mourne Wall and continued along a level track to reach and follow the edge of Annalong Wood. I remember the last time we did that walk the forest trees were blackened by a fire and they still were no different, though some new growth could be seen. The path follows old quarry tracks in open heathland. Much of the route was originally paved with granite slabs and there is evidence of stone working along the way.

From the spot where the river from the Blue Lough crosses the path you can easily see Slieve Donard in the Northeast and to the east is Slieve Lamagan and of course Binnian to the southwest. The small outcrop of rock close to the path is called Percy Bysshe

Shelley who is believed to have visited the area around 1812. Why and if he ever did seems to be a mystery.

The track rises gently to about 600ft at Blue Lough where we stopped for lunch having met many walkers including two Mourne Rangers who were surveying the path. They told us we should be able to hear the Peregrine Falcons which apparently some years ago were targeted by pigeon fanciers who said they were taking the pigeons. Apparently in the early 1900s the lough was a popular spot for skating, its position in Lamagan's shadow allowing it to stay frozen thicker and longer. Eight rufty tufties took the short walk farther up the track to the saddle (at about 800ft) between Binnian and Lamagan and had a stunning bird's eye view of the Ben Crom reservoir.



On our return we felt the walk deserved another visit to the café where we succumbed to the very tempting deserts!



## May - Howth Head, just north of Dublin

Howth Head, just north of Dublin was our destination for May. With the 7am train to Belfast, a two hour train journey to Connolly Station and half an hour on the DART it was something of an achievement that we all arrived together, but really it was all down to Peter's meticulous planning! And definitely worth it!

We began our Howth walking adventure meeting up with Jim McCaffrey with whom Peter served on the board of a housing association. Jim lives in Howth and gave us background information about the town.

It is an affluent peninsular village and outer suburb of Dublin lying on the northern side of Dublin Bay with the small island called Ireland's Eye a short distance offshore. Howth has been settled since prehistoric times, and features in Irish mythology. It has been a fishing port since the 14th century and has become a busy and affluent suburb of Dublin. After the Viking raids it fell to the Normans in the late twelfth century and in the early 1800s Howth was chosen as a mail packet port, but silting put an end to that and the service was relocated to Dun Laoghaire. In the late 20th century, the harbour was rebuilt with separate fishing and leisure areas. One of the main leisure activities is sailing and Howth Yacht



Club has the biggest membership (2000) of any in Ireland.

The visibility was a bit disappointing as the mist hid the sun and the view for a time, but we could hear the swell breaking below and hear the foghorn of the Baily Lighthouse – all very atmospheric. The highest point on the Head is Black Linn and the area is mostly wild hillside and heathland, golf courses, cliff and coastal paths. We began the Black Linn Loop at the eastern end of the town and walked steeply up till we joined the cliff path. It winds east on a mostly gravel track along the top of the very high cliffs to the Nose of Howth and then starts to climb round

the headland till near The Summit where we encountered a steep flight of steps.

There were many people on the path walking in the same direction and also towards us – a bit like a road with passing places - we reckoned they had bussed to the top and were walking down. After that we split and nine walked by the shorter route via the old tramline track to Howth Station. Five members of the group returned to the harbour by completing the Black Linn Loop from the Summit. This path started on a couple of quiet suburban roads connected by a rural track. In one garden there was a stunning display of mature rhododendrons in full bloom and elsewhere flowering clematis could be seen climbing trees and hanging over walls.



The signposted path then headed across the middle of the peninsula. It passed the Ben of Howth - the highest point (171 metres) - where the modern telecommunications masts are protected by much older defensive walls. They also passed the quarry which produces the distinctive brown Howth stone which is used extensively in building houses and walls in the area. After descending through a wood of birch trees, and before joining the last section of the Tramway Loop, the walkers had a great view of Ireland's Eye which had emerged from the morning mist.

At sea level those of us who hadn't eaten lunch availed of Beshoff's Fish and Chips, fending off the voracious gulls (mostly successfully), and explored some of Howth before boarding the DART for Connolly and the train back to Belfast. Altogether a most enjoyable day.

# YOUTH-news

youth [youth] (youths)

news [nooz]

Here in the youth-world we are rapidly gearing up for summer, with Summer Madness, Jumpin', X-Cess and Kilbroney Camps all to look forward to! Before we get into all of that, though, it's worth looking back on what has been a really great term.

First of all, we had the Church of Ireland Youth Department's "Youth Forum" – a day down at the City North Hotel where myself and a few young people went to take part in CIYD's discussion about how they can support young people post-lockdown. This was a great day (with a very fancy lunch included) and we all found it very encouraging, especially the message that the guest speaker Suzie shared on Elijah.



We have also started doing trips for our P7s – Year 10s, aiming to go places monthly (though an Ed Sheeran concert somewhat disrupted our plans recently), and that's been great fun, being able to do something specifically for that age group.



Moving on to Easter Jumpin', this was an incredible week as always - our team of volunteers were first-class and helped us to deliver an amazing programme for the children of Ballyholme. Paula and I were so proud of each and every leader and we can't wait to do Jumpin' again with them this summer!



After Jumpin' then, I enjoyed a lovely week off, which included a 4-day trip to London with the Church of Ireland Youth Department. This was a great time to meet and catch up with people involved in youth ministry from all across the Church of Ireland, and the teaching by Harold Miller, our retired bishop was fantastic.

Finally, we have been running two Bible study group on a fortnightly basis for our Year 11 – 14s. These have been a real joy to run, and



we as leaders look forward to them every week that they're on.

Summer is very much in-view now, though, so I look forward to getting into that and sharing all about it soon!



**Andrew**

**July****3rd Trinity 3**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.30 Cafe Church (lower carpark if sunny)  
 7.30 United Service Ballyholme Presbyterian

**10th Trinity 4**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.30 Summer Sunday Communion Service  
 7.30 United Service Ballyholme Methodist

**17th Trinity 5**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.30 Summer Sunday Service  
 7.30 United Service Ballyholme Parish Centre

**24th Trinity 6**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.30 Summer Sunday Service  
 7.30 United Service Ballyholme Methodist

**31st Trinity 7**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.30 Summer Sunday Communion Service  
 7.30 United Service Ballyholme Presbyterian

**July**

4th Adeline Cully  
 10th Kathy Body  
 17th Sybil Robertson  
 24th Maureen Johnston  
 31st Janice Hewitt

**August**

7th Anne Adams  
 14th Pamela McNutt  
 21st Roy Rosbotham  
 28th Anna Gullen

**August****7th Trinity 8**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.30 Cafe Church (lower carpark if sunny)  
 7.30 United Service St Comgall's,  
 Brunswick Road

**14th Trinity 9**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.30 Summer Sunday Communion Service  
 7.30 United Service Ballyholme Parish Centre

**21st Trinity 10**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.30 Summer Sunday Service  
 7.30 United Service Ballyholme Methodist

**28th Trinity 11**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.30 Summer Sunday Service  
 7.30 United Service Ballyholme Presbyterian

## Keeping Safe & Holy Communion

Since we returned to receiving the sacrament at the Communion rail on Easter Sunday, our arrangements seem to have met with general approval and a sense of everyone feeling as safe as they can be under the circumstances. Most parishioners sanitise as they enter church and a number are still more comfortable wearing a mask throughout the service which we fully understand. Our hope and prayer is that things will continue to move in a positive direction over July and August. In the absence of major setbacks, we will follow the Church of Ireland's central recommendations, as relayed in the May/June magazine, and return to celebrating Communion with bread from the paten and wine from the chalice from the first Sunday in September.



## FUNERALS

**June**

**2nd:** Bertrand Styles formerly of Dorothy Avenue  
**6th:** Patricia Fitzsimons late of Bayview Road

## WEDDING

**April**

**30th:** Gemma White-Overtton and Stuart Hill of 19 Blackrock Crescent, Newtownards