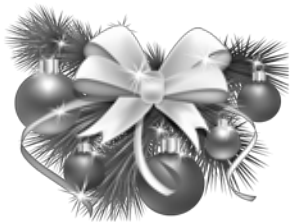


St Columbanus

Ballyholme



Finance Update
Book Swap
Operation Shrubbery



..On the way
together..

The Parishioner

November/December 2022

As our new King needs our prayers, so, plainly, do our new Prime Minister and Chancellor. Please Lord 10 million people in the UK will not enter 'fuel poverty' this winter. Please Lord those folks who survive on the state pension will not have to spend a third of it on energy bills. And please Lord no families will be forced to choose between heating and eating. If anyone reading these words finds themselves in hardship over the coming months or knows someone else who is, contact me now. The Bible story that comes to mind is Elijah and the widow of Zarephath. It begins "*When Elijah came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks*". For how it ends, read 1 Kings 17:8-16 but if nothing else hear Elijah's words to the widow as they ring out through Scripture no fewer than 366 times: "*Do not be afraid*". To the saints, martyrs and faithful-departed whom we remember with thanksgiving in November, Do not be afraid was a way to face death in hope and trust. Because of Advent and Christmas, it's our way as followers of the risen Christ to embrace life in all its fullness.

SED



A Service of Remembering: Sunday 4 December 6.30pm, with the Reverend David Bell

This poignant annual service is one many look forward to as Advent comes around and thoughts turn to those loved ones we will miss at Christmas. It is the simplicity people find moving, reading through the list of names and thanking the Father as we do so for the ones we have lost, and who rest in the peace which Christ extends to all those who look to Him for comfort and hope.

A phone call during lockdown led me to this year's preacher. The Reverend David Bell, Rector of Ardtrea in the Armagh Diocese, had telephoned asking could he visit St Columbanus on the occasion of his thirtieth anniversary of ordination. David is a much-loved former curate of Ballyholme, having been deaconed for us in 1991, before moving to a second curacy at St Patrick's Coleraine. As fondly remembered for his musical gifts as his pastoral ministry, I did not think twice about inviting David back to the place and families where it all began for him, and where he had such a happy start.



Names may be added to the special page on the Sundays leading up to December and only the names included there will be read out during the service. This is also the point in the year when parishioners get in touch to make new additions to our Book of Remembrance. A form is available from the Parish Office, and we ask a small fee before approaching our ever-willing in-house church calligrapher. The Book is left open in Church all year round, at the page displaying the most recent entries.



Christmas Carols at Ballyholme Shops Thursday 15 December 5.30pm

The Heatherlea Bakery is our meeting point for an event now firmly embedded in the community calendar. For one precious hour every December, with our neighbours from the local churches, we try to bring some festive Christian cheer to the streets and shops of Ballyholme.

If you've never joined us before, please lend us your voices this year and bring your family and friends to share in the fun. In keeping with tradition, the Heatherlea opens late serving mince pies and mulled wine until we can eat and drink no more!



BALLYHOLME PARISH

23 November is St Columbanus Day, and what better month to launch our new branding and parish website. After much stopping and starting and toing and froing through the pandemic, we are pleased finally to unveil our new look graphics, and to go live with our streamlined, phone-friendly website.

Ballyholme Parish, St Columbanus Church – hence the white dove...

As you will know from our new *Jewels of Ballyholme* booklet (available from Church or the Parish Office) Columbanus means ‘white dove’ in the ancient Irish. Our patron was the sixth century Bangor Abbey monk who sailed from our local shores with twelve companions and is credited with fanning the flame of Christianity back to life and growth in continental Europe. That’s an image and example we rightly cherish in Ballyholme. It reminds us of our call to be an outward-looking, Christ-centred church, bound by the peace of the Father and serving adventurously in the joy of the Spirit through the worst that life can throw at us! Hence a brand-new white dove image, specially created, over the white words ‘Ballyholme Parish’. It says it all.

www.ballyholmeparish.co.uk

We are anxious to acknowledge the expert co-operation of respected industry professionals Thought Collective. In particular we record our gratitude here to Sam Bell and Ryan Mitchell, the latter a fondly remembered former parishioner. Their patience knows no bounds, not to mention their faith perspective on our needs as a church, and their very wonderful generosity. The uncertainties of the last few years have been as rough on Thought Collective as they have on us. All the more touching then, that they have steered us through to our new look entirely pro bono, a very substantial gesture for which we thank them and thank God.

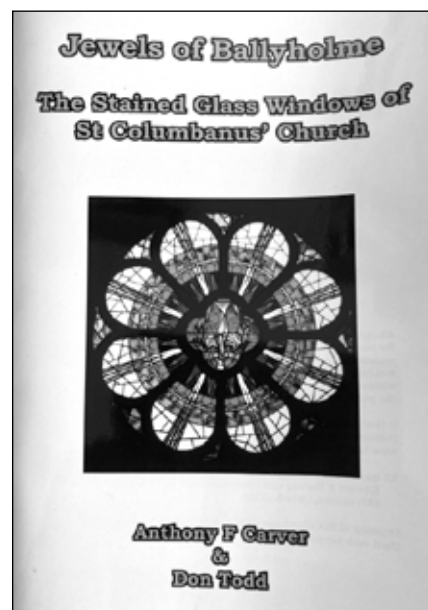
Our webmaster

Credit for the final version of the website, and the one quietly responsible for the lion’s share of the content input, is our resident IT expert Robbie Jackson. If you haven’t seen

Robbie’s handiwork yet, please check it out and, while Robbie is still at the finishing touches stage, do get in touch if you spot something that needs correcting or that we may have overlooked.

Welcome signage

Our next step is some new welcome signage for the top of the Church lawn (similar to that of Ballygilbert Presbyterian) and for the Parish Centre and upper Church carpark. It’s all in the name of making our presence felt in the community and online as attractively as possible, so please pray that new people will search, find and feel invited to join our revitalised church family.



muddy Church

Autumn is drawing to a close; the days get shorter as winter approaches, yet the children still have lots to do at Ballyholme Parish.

Muddy Church has been well attended with lots of painting and play for our younger children, we even built a shelter for Ukrainian refugees!

Our children are full of joy and love, and I was very blessed when they gave me a beautiful gift for my birthday and a wonderful celebration!



Our new P7 group has been welcomed by the older children, they are full of ideas about what they want to study and learn, they were particularly pleased when sweets every week was made a part of their contract!



Our new 'mums and tots' group has also been a success running on Thursday mornings (10-11am). Although the main focus is song-time with Paula, there is also a story, craft time and free play. The little ones are loving the music and numbers are growing. Everyone is most welcome!

Paula



What's next??

Christmas is coming, so we will be auditioning for our NATIVITY PLAY!

Rehearsals will start - Sunday 20th November

Nativity Service - 18th December

Family Carol Service - 24th December



Now the risk from Covid has receded, we hope for good, the Parish Health and Safety Committee has recently revisited our non-Covid health and safety arrangements with the aim of ensuring everything necessary is being done to keep life and worship in St Columbanus free from mishap.

One of the promises in our formal H&S Policy is to provide all those involved in the running of the Parish and its organisations with regularly updated training in First Aid, or First Response as it has more recently been described.

The changed priorities created by Covid meant we were unable to gather for refresher courses over the period of the pandemic but we are pleased to report that the evenings of 6 and 12 September saw a resumption of training.

Nineteen representatives of our various organisations ranging from Clergy to Church Wardens, and from Guides to Table Tennis were instructed by the experienced and returning father and daughter team Maynard and Dawn. The sessions were light-hearted and participative but most of all thorough, dealing with a host of emergency situations and importantly including comprehensive instruction in the application of CPR and the use of our defibrillator.

Let's hope that with Parish life and activities returning to normal the need to apply our first aid skills will be few and far between. But if required our First Responders are equipped and ready!



Kelly's presentation on Sunday 25 September





On a beautifully sunny Saturday in September a steady stream of people of all ages came with books to swap for other books. Good for the planet and great fun to have a leisurely browse through the books. Factual, fiction, vintage and modern, children's and teenage books, every topic under the sun.

People came with books and left with smiles having had a coffee and a chat all on our front lawn. Tony Carver gave free tours of the Church Stained-Glass Windows, which were really enjoyed by all who went on the tour. We had a free craft table for children with loom band and bookmark making.

Donations from the Book Swap are going to Cancer Focus NI and Joanne Boal came to represent the charity. £400 was raised and the left-over books go to Oxfam where they will raise even more money. Do look at the photos on the Love Ballyholme Facebook page. Our thanks to everyone who volunteered and supported this event.

Rev Jan Stevenson & Ballyholme Connect



Christmas Appeal for Storehouse



The trolley will be in the Church porch in the run-up to Christmas for you to bring your donations on Sundays.

tins: tuna, custard, sweetcorn, beans, rice pudding, soup

jars: baby food, jam, pasta sauce, diluting juice, breakfast juice, long life milk, coffee

boxes: cereals, biscuits, sugar, pasta, tea bags, jellies

bottles: washing-up liquid, cleaning products and other items including male and female toiletries, nappies, wipes

Christmas fayre: mince pies, small Christmas cakes and puddings, chocolates, bottles of Shloer, and other treats that help to make Christmas special



It was as much the speed and circumstances of Her Majesty's passing that made it all feel so unreal.

There one minute, appointing our new Prime Minister, and gone the next, to usher in ten unforgettable days of thanksgiving, remembering and Christian worship on a scale many thought could never happen in our modern secular United Kingdom. May none of us ever doubt again, the power of one simple Christian soul to touch not just our

nation but the whole world. And without missing a constitutional beat, King Charles set off around the palaces and cathedrals of the home nations to lead the tributes and reach out to a whole new generation seemingly inspired by his mother's example of faith and service.

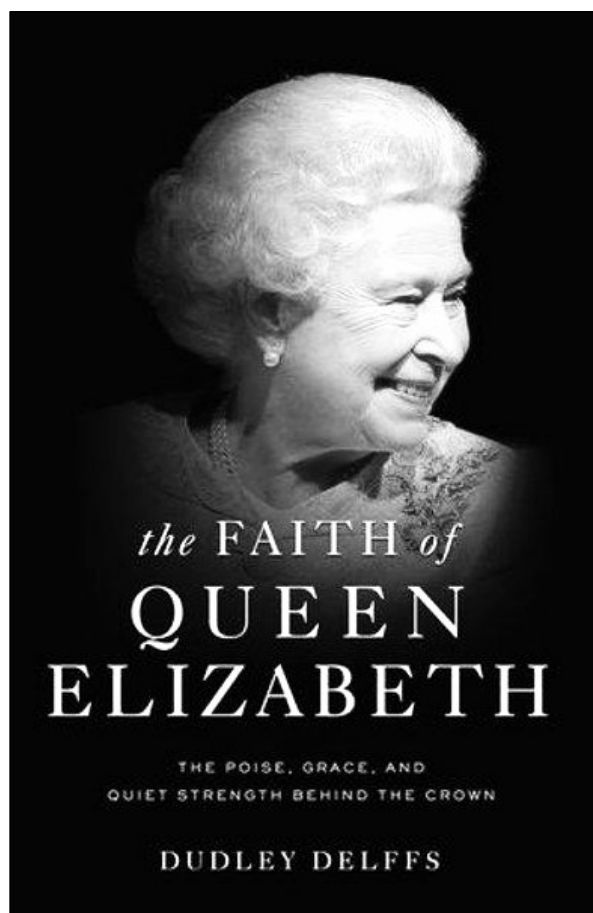
Thank God, the motor for our Church bell had been replaced this summer! It rang not only on the night of the Queen's death in customary lament, but for an hour the next day as bells up and down the country greeted the accession of the new king. In addition to prayers for the royal family and King Charles at all our services on both Sundays during the period of National Mourning, we hosted two evening services of reflection. The first was a united service with our Ballyholme neighbours, the second was on the eve of the State Funeral. There was also a diocesan service of thanksgiving in the presence of Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant at Down Cathedral.

More than once I heard it remarked that, to the consternation of countless authors down the years, only one royal biography was ever authorised by the Queen herself. Indeed, she went one stage further, and wrote a foreword for the book. It was called *The Servant Queen and the King she Serves* and it was published by Scripture Union, in conjunction with the Bible Society. But there is another book which came my way a couple of years ago I would recommend very warmly for your Christmas list, unauthorised though it is: *The Faith of Queen Elizabeth* by Dudley Delffs.

I re-read it very quickly ahead of joining the commentary team for Radio Ulster's coverage of the State Funeral and two simple quotes I think are worth reproducing here. The first is from former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who said the Queen showed that being religious "is not eccentric or abnormal".

The second is from Sir Winston Churchill, recipient of the last State Funeral in 1965. Churchill rarely called on the name of God either casually or profanely, but what he said about the Queen was this: "I regard it as the most direct mark of God's favour we have ever received in my long life that the whole structure of our new-formed Commonwealth has been linked or illuminated by a sparkling presence at its summit."

SED



Hooray, children & young people are helping to run Café Church!



A good idea, a God idea or both? We the Café Church Core Team think it is both a good idea and a God idea to invite children and young people onto the team that lead Café Church. After all they know what young people are facing in school and at home. We know Jesus’s message is for all ages, and we will benefit from the creative input of young people. Tess Crothers, Imogen McIlwaine and Hope Stevenson have joined the decision-making team that runs Café Church.

Millie Bellew, our new Diocesan Children’s worker, led Café Church on Sunday 2nd September and then led a seminar where we discussed how to involve our young people in all aspects of church life.

Café Church continues in the main hall every first Sunday of the month and although aimed at families it is for every member of our church, young or older. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Rev Jan Stevenson & Café Church Team



More Pictures from Café Church on Sunday 2nd September



Why not come along and join in the fun at any of these Christmas events. Everyone is welcome.


Come along

**SATURDAY 10TH
DECEMBER**

**CHRISTMAS
BAZAAR**

Bargains, biscuits & a host of other Christmas treats!


10 am - 12pm at Ballyholme Parish




**Switch on of the
Christmas Tree
Lights
in Ballyholme**

**Friday 9th
December at 5pm**

**Choirs from
Ballyholme PS
& St Columbanus
College**



 **GIFT
VOUCHER** 

11TH DECEMBER 2022

**CHILDREN'S
GIFT DAY**

WE WOULD LOVE TO
RECEIVE PRESENTS FOR
BOYS AND GIRLS THIS
YEAR






The Alpha course recommenced in early September with an enjoyable day away, a chance to go to a new location and explore the next stage of our study.

We managed to secure the use of a property in Bangor that was just perfect for our needs and meant less travel for everyone.

Catering for the day was excellent with morning coffee on arrival, lunch and afternoon coffee provided by Patricia Todd, ably assisted by her daughter Julie - the apple crumble was particularly good!

It also happened to be Billy Davidson's birthday so we were also able to have some of Billy's birthday cake!

You may think all we do at Alpha is eat. As enjoyable as that is, we still managed to complete 3 Alpha sessions covering all aspects of the Holy Spirit. Michelle Savage, Jan Stevenson and myself led one session each, giving Jan a little bit of a break!

The excellent video presentations prompted plenty of discussion, and prayer, and everyone who attended came away with something from the day.

We are now back to the parish centre to complete the last few weeks of the course.

However, there will be another Alpha being run soon, so if you are interested then talk to Simon, or Jan.

Don Todd



CHRISTMAS STAMPS

Christmas is coming soon, along with cards and pressies (if we have been good), so could I ask you to save your stamps for me, so I can send them on to the RNIB to help train much needed guide dogs. Just pop them into an envelope and leave in the parish office, where I will collect them.

Thanks to everyone who has already given stamps, your contribution is very much appreciated

Sue Bleakley



If you park routinely above the Parish Centre, you may not be aware of the transformation currently underway for our nearest neighbours at 70 Groomsport Road. Within a few short days, the redundant Co-op premises next door to St Columbanus had been completely demolished. The first building materials for the new houses have been delivered and we can all now watch with interest as those homes start to take shape, and hope that eventually they will bring us some lovely new parishioners!

Our Glebewardens were in contact with the demolition contractors to draw their attention to the drainage line which serves the main Church building. They hope to arrange an early meeting with the building contractors (Blue Build) to ensure that parish activities are not adversely impacted by parking etc. Site deliveries and vans parking may be a concern, particularly on days when there are funerals. While securing our boundary is another important consideration, a retaining wall is included in the scheme that received final planning permission.

The Wednesday Club

We reopened our doors for the new season at the beginning of September when we welcomed back our regulars and a few new faces.



The ladies spent the afternoon catching up with cheerful chatter, and as always, scones, cakes and a welcome cup of tea.

Lillian Finch was the winner of our first draw.

In October, following the passing of Queen Elizabeth, we watched the dvd of "The Queen", which was enjoyed by all. We were glad to welcome Sybil to her first meeting and look forward to seeing her again.

This month the draw was won by Florence Curry.

Next meeting is on 2nd November, please feel free to join us. We start at 2 ish and finish around 3.30 ish.



First came the clearance. It took a dozen parishioners armed with pick-axes, ropes and all manner of heavy-duty, man-shed weaponry to prepare the site. In the end we removed four



trailers-full of green waste, described by someone in-the-know as “plants as good as weeds”! It took nothing short of a Kango hammer to dislodge the foundations of the blue pilgrim board.

Even before the soil was turned over and the preliminary planting begun, the new concrete trim and elevated mini-platform was a noticeable improvement on what had been there for so long. As one parishioner remarked at that stage: “Flo’s corner is looking

well” – a reference to the late Mrs Flo Huggins whose gift has made the re-landscaping possible.

The volunteer work-party saved us at least a day of paid labour, so a huge thank you to all involved. The design team comprised Margaret Moorehead, Harry Thompson, Steven Nickell, Tony Carver and bringing his horticultural expertise to the project, Derek McClure. As for the kerbing and flagging, hats off to, in their own words, “two Free Presbyterians from Cullybackey”.

By the time you read this, the work should largely be done.

Our lower church carpark flowerbed at the back of the

Parish Centre is oft-admired, a pleasure to look at, and a real labour of love for the parishioner who tends it so faithfully. At long last it will be lovely to complement that at the front of the Church, effectively our ‘shop-window’ to the community, with something comparably handsome.



Save the Date

The Missions Committee invites you to join us for our Saturday evening quiz in the new year:-

**28th January 2023 at 7.30 pm in
the Parish Centre**

Come along and bring your friends.

A great evening was had at our September quiz. £823 was raised in support of those who have fled Ukraine.



**Quiz
Night**

‘Though he was rich’ – your open-hearted response!

As this financial year draws to a close, we have good news to report on the ‘Though he was rich’ appeal launched back in January to plug the hole in our parish finances after two difficult years.

Why we give

It’s at Advent and Christmas that the self-giving of God takes 3-dimensional shape in the coming of Jesus. For every Christian, faith is about the free gift of God’s grace through the one who became poor for our sakes, and our response to that gift. The Father gave His Son to us as the first fruits of His love, and so we give the first fruits of our time, service and money to Him in gratitude – that’s the bedrock Bible principle of all Christian giving.

Two difficult years

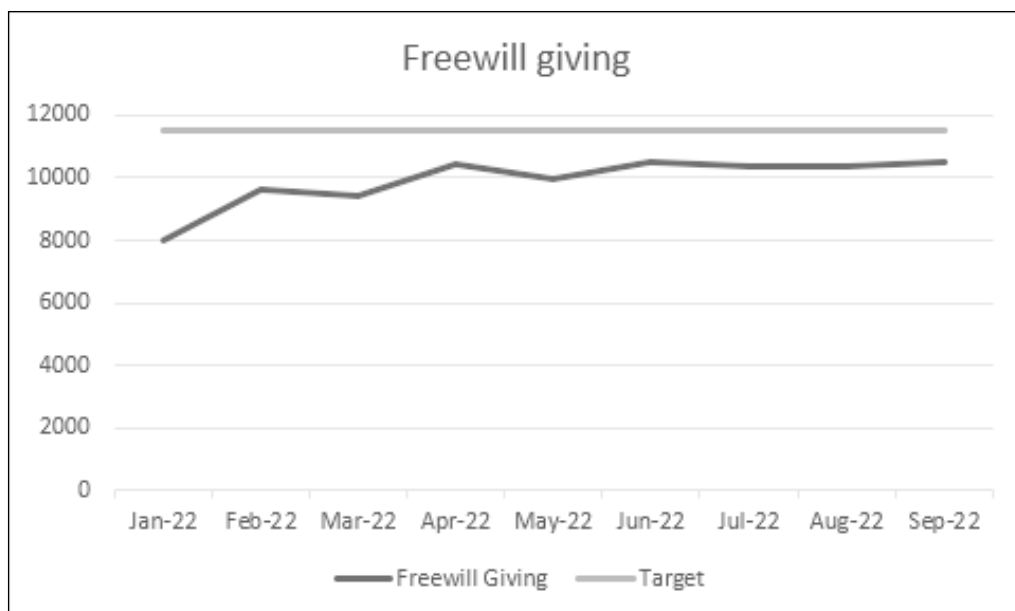
The Pandemic proved a rough ride for many churches and the charity sector as a whole. To refresh your memory, we experienced two successive ‘in the red’ years, with current account deficits of (approximately) £22,000 in 2020 and £40,000 in 2021. We had no choice but to borrow from our building fund, but on the clear understanding that every penny would have to be paid back because that money is ‘Restricted’ for Phase Two of Restoration 2016.

Monthly Giving

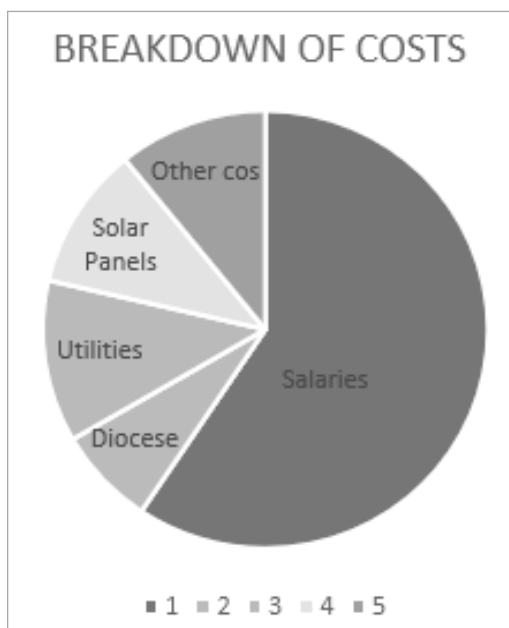
Our target was to secure enough in monthly Standing Orders to cover our staff team pay-roll of £11,500. In answer to our prayers, we have seen our income grow steadily every month since then. Based on the last six months, praise God the average monthly electronic giving to our current account has increased from £7,800 to £10,300. Numbers returning to church and weekday activities have risen, and so has our income. A little way to go then, but nearly there!

Transfer & Topping-up

As you know, the parish has switched to Danske following last year’s let down by the Bank of Ireland. Thanks to everyone who has now stopped their Bank of Ireland Standing Orders and set up new ones with Danske. If you haven’t done so yet, please make the transfer as soon as you can and, as you do, consider topping up how much you give, to ensure we stay on top of a recently announced rise in wage costs along with universal increases in utility bills.



‘Though he was rich’ – your open-hearted response! Cont.d



Covering Costs (see pie-chart)

Thank the Lord for our solar panels! That said, we still have our gas to pay, so as ‘household bills’ bite for all of us, your continued and consistent giving to Church remains vital. Also, the Church of Ireland has just agreed a 9% rise in ‘Minimum Approved Stipend’ which is traditionally passed on to other non-youth worker pay scale staff. This is a correction which had been postponed for the last two years and which will now catch up with us at the worst possible time.

The Building Fund

An additional thank you for your faithful and hopeful giving to the building fund. At the time of writing it sits at £351,324, with an additional £62,000 owing from our current account (see above). Vestry would love to repay some of that debt at the end of this year – utility bills allowing! – but it will only launch Phase Two when the building fund reaches £500,000. At that point, parishioners will be invited to re-pledge to the new project to cover the remaining costs.

Special Gifts

Sensing the sharpness of our situation, a number of parishioners have come forward with very sizeable one-off donations this year. The timing of these loving, without-fanfare gestures has proved providential on every occasion. Pressing needs have also been attended to thanks to legacy gifts, such as £10,000 worth of renovations to the Curatage at Beverley Gardens and the £2500 re-landscaping of the shrubbery.

2023 Envelopes

These will be available to collect in the Parish Centre from the start of December. Lockdown precipitated a further reduction in the number of new boxes issued with many parishioners transferring to Standing Orders to ensure their giving was not interrupted. Only 23 to 25 envelopes are counted on average each month now, but we value very much the vital support of those parishioners who prefer to give in this way.

Thank you for your generous response to the love of our generous God!

**IF YOU’VE NOT ALREADY DONE SO,
PLEASE NOW STOP YOUR BANK OF IRELAND STANDING ORDERS
AND START NEW ONES WITH**

Danske Bank

**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**

FUNERALS

5th September - Lorraine Nixon, late of Millbrook Lodge Nursing Home, aged 106

15th September - Paul Arthur Cockram, late of The Somme Nursing Home, Belfast, aged 101

14th October - John Edmund Andrew Crawford, late of Mullaghboye Nursing Home, Donaghadee

A Busy Start for MU in Belfast & Ballyholme

Even before our very first Autumn meeting took place in the Parish Centre several MU members boarded the Belfast train for a Friday night in the city...the reason for our adventure was to join in the 2022 MU Gathering based in St Anne's Cathedral and the Waterfront Hall.

How alive and welcoming our city looked that sunny Friday evening, shops open, pavement cafes open, families, office workers all out enjoying the buzz! We strolled through all this busyness to St Anne's Cathedral, feeling proud of our city, happy that MU delegates from "over the water" would be caught up in this warm welcome too!

The splendour of St Anne's added to the event and it was wonderful to enjoy fellowship and celebrate Communion with MU members from around our Province and beyond.

Next morning Ruth, Janice and I boarded the train again, this time bound for the Waterfront Hall. Again a breathtaking venue, a well planned programme and interesting speakers all made for a very enjoyable day. It was fascinating to share in the stories from near and far about many projects undertaken under the umbrella of MU. In our branch we felt thankful for playing a small part in this outreach with our support of Women's Aid, Ulster Hospital and various Residential Settings with our Lockdown project - "twiddle muffs".

At the close of this Saturday event, York was announced as the venue for 2023.

We felt proud of the Belfast Gathering 2022 and give thanks for our All Ireland MU President Mrs June Butler and the various organising committees for all their preparation to make the event so memorable.



Fired-up with enthusiasm, our minds turned to our opening meeting for Ballyholme MU. We wanted to begin the season with an entertaining speaker and a delicious supper! Something to welcome returning MU members and also something to whet the appetite of some new friends.

So we thought about how life had taken a new turn with the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, how much film footage & interviews, we had shared in our homes right up to her State funeral itself. We wondered about using Royal Family as a theme and we realised at least 2 members of our congregation who were involved in the organisation of Royal visits to Hillsborough Castle over quite a few years. So we asked Mark Larmour to be the guest speaker! Thank you so much Mark for bringing alive the excitement, organisation and entertaining tales from the many garden parties, visits, investitures and other events. His easy manner and fantastic memory for detail, made for a very enjoyable evening, rounded off with delicious home made apple slices and a Royal Knowledge Quiz, many thanks Janice and Roberta.

By the time you read this we will have had our Opening Service for MU on Harvest Sunday evening with Rev Duncan Pollock, MU Chaplain, as our Speaker. Thanks to Rev Simon and Ian Bell for their part in this service on a very busy day for our Parish Family and Soup Lunch too!

Now we have a great programme planned for this Winter, something Christmassy for 5th December and our annual dinner on Wednesday 18th January 2023.

Our next meeting is on Monday 7th November at 7.30pm cosy in the Kajiado Room (probably saving your heat and light at home!) Please come and bring a friend too!

Many Blessings from Yvonne & the team



September - Walkers in Tollymore

Postponed from the first Saturday in September as a result of a forecast for continuous rain the thirteen walkers who gathered a week later in the Church car park were blessed with a day of non-stop sunshine. We were additionally delighted to welcome Willie's sister Roz and her husband Tony from Halifax,

Nova Scotia, currently on holiday in Northern Ireland. We felt that we had become an international group!

The venue for the day's walking was the well-known and scenic Tollymore Forest Park, but even before our arrival the journey through the fields and villages of County Down, with the panorama of the Mourne gradually coming into view, raised anticipation for the day ahead.



Most if not all of the group had visited the Park before, but on trails combining a mix of sun and shadow, and with early autumn beginning to lay a path of brown under still-green summer foliage, we celebrated afresh the beauty of our surroundings.

Routes in the Park are well marked and allowed the group to easily navigate trails on the banks of the Shimna and in the afternoon Spinkwee Rivers, passing familiar landmarks such as Parnell's and Altavally bridges on the way. We perched on a

dry-stone wall looking out over the mountains for lunch, then regained our starting point by mid afternoon with seven miles underfoot and lots of interesting conversation on the clock!

Heather and Betty took an alternative shorter route passing the Lake (with its ducklings and dragonflies) and the Old Bridge, chatting with a group of Belfast High School girls on their Duke of Edinburgh Silver challenge.

And the chat continued later, when we made our traditional stop for coffee and

cakes in Killinchy before heading back to Bangor, already briefed for our next adventure by train on the first Saturday of October.



Leslie



October - Railway Walk

Another of our 'Railway Walks' this month discharged us at Balmoral Station. With Peter leading we crossed no less than four pedestrian crossings on the Lisburn Road to head up Balmoral Avenue to the junction with Harberton Park - now we were in the Malone area of Belfast.

The area known as Malone comes from the Irish – Maigh Luain meaning “Luan’s plain” or plain of the lambs and is now what estate agents call “a leafy residential suburb of Belfast”. Along Harberton Park we saw evidence of the redevelopment of the Balmoral Showgrounds, with strangely numbered houses going from 25A to 25O. Malone, which is on a ridge, was said to be favoured by the rich as the smoke from the industries in the city blew the other way!

After a few more residential avenues we reached the Upper Malone Road at the House of Sport and crossed the Outer Ring into Clement Wilson Park.

The park was originally occupied by a clog factory, producing goods for mill workers. The 54-acre site was owned by Wilson Management who in 1960 decided to use the factory to produce soft fruit for canning, some of the fruit being grown in orchards on what is now grassland beside Newforge Lane. As the company was on the outskirts of Belfast, factory staff were unable to travel home for lunch and instead walked the surrounding fields which the Chairman Mr R Clement Wilson landscaped into gardens. World War II closed the factory, and the mill race was covered and became a raised walkway which today is the main path through the park, on which we walked to the Lock Keeper's Inn.



Work has already started to restore some of the locks closest to the mouth of the river and the hope is that eventually vessels could make their way from the Irish Sea as far as the Shannon-Erne system. That idea looks a long way off.

We had a pleasant stop for refreshments and the famous carrot cake before heading east along the towpath towards Botanic Gardens and Lanyon Station. Near the Inn is an original Lock Keeper's cottage in which apparently there was a family with many children. The ducks, a robin splashing in the water and a heron standing guard in a tree took our attention.



Botanic Gardens was the next stop and already we could see the first signs of Autumn. It was established in 1828 by the Belfast Botanic and Horticultural Society but unfortunately proved expensive to run and many shareholders felt that the park's horticulture was compromised by financial issues. The site was eventually sold to the Belfast Corporation (now the Belfast City Council) and it re-opened as a public park, known as Botanic Gardens, in 1895.

All along the towpath we could see signs of a previous industrial area of Belfast with evidence of a river trade and associated social life with such places as the tavern

Molly's Ward at the point where the River Lagan becomes tidal at the rapids, a one-time meeting place for the United Irishmen. There was McConnell's Weir, built in 1937 with a barge lock upstream of the Lagan and the Blackstaff River. Siltation increasingly became a problem and in the 1980s the Lagan Weir replaced it. The view downriver towards the Albert Bridge was one we don't often see – high tide on the river, the Gasworks development, the Watersports school on the other side – all could have been in any European capital. A really interesting 7 mile walk through Belfast. Next month (5th November) we have another 'Railway Walk' led by Brian on the Coastal Path from Seahill to Holywood. 9.55 am train. Details nearer the time.

YOUTH-news

youth [youth] (youths) news [nooz]

Looking back, September was a strange, yet also exciting month. First of all, we bid farewell to a few people who have been staples in our youth ministry for a number of years. Ben Cavan, as I'm sure you know, is well into his role of Community Outreach Worker at Ballycrochan Presbyterian; his presence, along with his fiancé Rebekah, is very much missed. We also saw Karl Andreasson and Josh Reddy head off to university – Karl to study Mechanical Engineering at Newcastle University, and Josh to do Medicine at Plymouth University. Finally, Ross Hamilton's presence will become less consistent as, having finished his degree in Youth & Community Work (achieving a 2:1), he enters the world of work. It seemed fitting, then, that we take a day trip to the North Coast with James, Karl and Ross (Josh being unavailable unfortunately) to celebrate their academic successes and mark the end of an era. This was a great day and one which will be a treasured memory for myself, and hopefully them too.

We can't spend all our time looking back, though – especially when there's such an abundance of potential in our new generation of young leaders! The next few years will be an exciting time of raising them up and developing their gifts so that they are able to serve God and the church effectively; it's a very exciting thing to be a part of. Already this term we've had some fantastic talks at YF from Ben Toogood, Ashton Morris and Charlotte Gough – with more to come!

It has also become a focus of ours to ensure that our young people don't feel disconnected from church, and so we have made Emerge to be for Year 8s – Year 11s, and we're encouraging the Year 12s+ to go to church on Sunday mornings (even incentivising by offering bacon baps afterwards!). This is very important as church-attendance is a vital aspect of the Christian life, and we hope that it benefits both their own faith and also the faith of the wider congregation. We're then meeting with them on a bi-weekly basis for Bible study, where we're studying the book of James.

Finally, everything else is running in the same fashion that we know and love. Drop-In has returned on Thursdays, Emerge is back on Sundays – this term we're exploring the essentials of the Christian faith – and there's plenty of thinking and praying going on to work out what else can and should be done for the young people. As always, we appreciate you joining us in prayer and supporting us in whatever way you can!

Andrew



NOVEMBER 2022**Wednesday 2nd November**

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 6th November**3rd before Advent**

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Cafe Church - Parish Centre

11.30 Morning Prayer

Wednesday 9th November

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

**Sunday 13th November 2nd before
Advent - Remembrance Sunday**

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Good News at Ten & Children's
Church

11.30 Parish Communion

6.30 United Service Ballyholme Methodist

Wednesday 16th November

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 20th November**Sunday before Advent**

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Good News at Ten Prayer & Praise
& Children's Church

11.30 Morning Prayer

Wednesday 23rd November

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 27th November Advent 1

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Parish Communion & Children's
Church

11.30 Morning Prayer



Decorating the Church for Christmas

Help needed to decorate the church for
Christmas please.

Saturday 17th December at 10.00am
All offers of help, flowers greenery etc will
be very much appreciated.
Thank you!

DECEMBER 2022**Sunday 4th December Advent 2**

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Cafe Church - Parish Centre

11.30 Morning Prayer

6.30 Service of Remembering

Wednesday 7th December

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 11th December Advent 3

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Good News at Ten &
Children's Church

11.30 Parish Communion

Wednesday 14th December

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 18th December Advent 4

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Children's Carol Service

11.30 Morning Prayer

6.30 Nine Lessons & Carols by Candlelight

Wednesday 21st December

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Saturday 24th December Christmas Eve

5.00 Family Carols

11.00 First Communion of Christmas

Sunday 25th December Christmas Day

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Family Carols

**November 2022**

6th Patricia Todd

13th Ivan Reid

20th Julie Monaghan

27th Ian Bell

December 2022

4th Raymond McCabe

11th Yvonne Manogue

18th Christmas

25th Christmas