

# St Columbanus

Ballyholme



Holy Week and Easter  
Monday Morning Coffee  
Communion Lunch  
World Leprosy Day



..On the way  
*together..*


# The Parishioner

March/April 2026

2026 is a triennial year for the Church of Ireland. You can read what that means later in the magazine, but it gives me a chance once every three years to acknowledge gratefully the faithfulness of our Select Vestry and other St Columbanus office-bearers. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, insists Romans (12:6), which was St Paul's way of saying that whoever we are, and whether we know it or not, God has blessed us with a unique talent or skill to put at His disposal. That's true of each and every one of our Vestry members, but I would extend it to each and every one of our parishioners too. Which means that if you're reading these words, maybe this is your year... Do Vestry's responsibilities fit the 'boring but important' category? Never! It might be about the buildings, the heat, the light, the health and safety and safeguarding and those kinds of everyday vital things, however when God calls and equips, He takes what's ordinary and domestic and makes it divine and heavenly. Don't believe me? Ask in Church or the Parish Office for a Nomination form and find out...


**SED**

## Down & Dromore St Patrick's Day Celebrations 2026



**COURAGE**  
IN THE  
**LINE**  
OF  
**FIRE**

ST PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATIONS  
TUESDAY 17 MARCH 2026

Photo credit: ADF International

Please join me in Down Cathedral on Tuesday 17 March 2026 for our annual St Patrick's Day Festival Service followed by a complimentary 'Picnic in the Pews'.

You are also welcome to attend the Holy Communion Service at Saul and to join the pilgrimage from Saul to Down Cathedral.

Our speaker will be the Finnish MP, Päivi Räsänen. Mrs Räsänen is a determined and courageous leader who stands by Christian values and freedom of speech.

+DAVID

### PROGRAMME

- 9.15am Holy Communion at Saul  
*Preacher: Mr Ian Bingham, Director of CARE NI*
- 10.15am Prayer Pilgrimage from Saul to Downpatrick
- 11.45am Festival Service in Down Cathedral  
*Preacher: Mrs Päivi Räsänen, Member of the Finnish Parliament*  
Wreath laying ceremony at St Patrick's Grave
- 1.00pm Complimentary 'Picnic in the Pews'

### TRANSPORT TO SAUL

Please park along the Mall leading to the Cathedral in Downpatrick and board one of the private buses.

Buses to the communion service depart between 8.15 and 8.45am. The last bus for the 35-minute pilgrimage leaves at 9.45am. The last bus from Saul to the Cathedral leaves at 10.40am.

FIND OUT MORE



*Photograph reproduced with the kind permission of ADF International*



# JUMPIN'

## Dates 2026

**Easter Jumpin'**  
8th - 10th April

**Summer Jumpin'**  
10th - 14th August



# JUMPIN'

## Stay With Me

Holy Week draws us into the most intense and revealing days of Jesus' life. From the crowds and hosannas of Palm Sunday to the quiet sorrow of the cross, these are days that ask us not to rush, not to look away, and not to remain at a distance.

This year in Ballyholme Presbyterian Church we are marking Holy Week with a simple invitation: "Stay with me." They are words Jesus spoke to his disciples in the garden, but they are also words he continues to speak to us — an invitation to remain, to watch, to pray, and to walk with him through the last days of his earthly journey.

Each evening we will gather for a short, reflective service, using scripture, silence, prayer and music to help us slow down and attend to what these days really mean. Rather than trying to explain everything, the services are shaped to create space — space to listen, to reflect, and to be present with God.

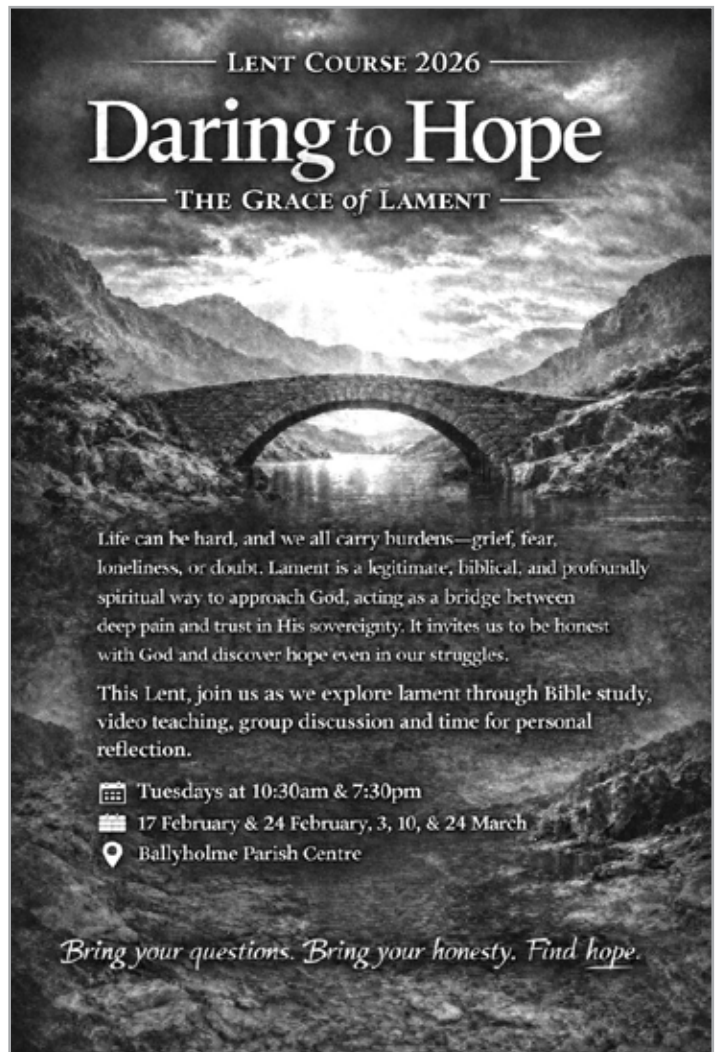
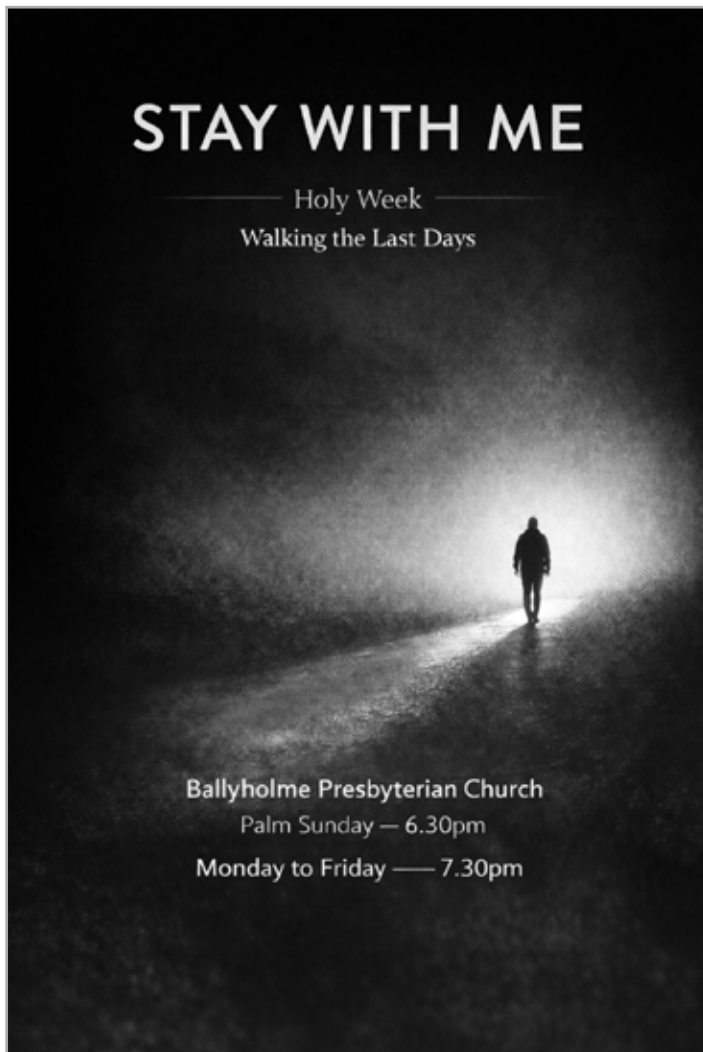
You are welcome to come to one evening or to journey through the whole week. Whether Holy Week is deeply familiar to you, or something you have not engaged with before, these services offer an opportunity to step aside from the noise of everyday life and to encounter again the depth of Christ's love.

Holy Week is not about spectacle or performance. It is about staying — staying with Jesus in the darkness as well as the light, trusting that the story does not end at the cross, and that even in the shadows, God is at work.

Palm Sunday at 6.30pm, and Monday to Friday at 7.30pm.  
All are very welcome.

### Rev Peter Lyle

Below is the poster for Holy Week along with one for the Ballyholme Parish Lent Course.



# muddy Church

As always, the NATIVITY play was a great success and highlight of the Muddy Church year.

All the children, from the tiniest chicken to the brightest angel were an absolute joy to watch!

As you can see, donkeys were a popular character choice!

Since their return in January they have enjoyed dramatizing popular New Testament stories, e.g. Lazarus.



## Blast!

Our focus this term has been the “I am” statements of Jesus...we have had great discussions about how Jesus is the “Bread of Life” and created our very own cocktails as we thought about “Jesus, the Living Water”

## Paula



## BAPTISM

**11th January 2026**

Oscar Herbie Moore,

Rory Alexander Moore,

Clara Kate Moore,

sons and daughter of Ross and Jemma Moore

Diocesan Synod is the main annual business meeting of our Diocese and it is attended by the Bishop, clergy and lay representatives from across Down and Dromore. Its purpose is to discuss important matters relating to the life and mission of the church. It normally takes place in June at different churches within the Diocese.

I became a Diocesan Synod Representative in 2023 and have attended two meetings, one in East Belfast and one in Magheralin. Simon very kindly offered me a lift on both occasions.

The day usually begins with Holy Communion and an address from a guest preacher. The Bishop will then give his 'review of the year' highlighting past achievements and successes and giving us some challenges to reflect on and inspire. After a break for lunch, which is provided, we review the Diocesan Reports and any notices of motions to consider. There may also be other guest speakers.

Synod meetings are a great opportunity to find out what is happening across our Diocese and over lunch and tea/coffee breaks there is the chance to meet and chat with other representatives. I found the day went in very quickly because of the amount of business to get through. The meeting is very well organised thanks to the Diocesan staff and we get all the paperwork well in advance.

Diocesan Synod Representatives are elected every three years. This year we will be seeking people to fill these important roles so this is your opportunity to become involved.

**Christine Johnstone**

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## **Mission News**

Big thanks to everyone who helped organise and took part in the quiz. Over £800 was raised for our much needed funds.

We plan to run a Summer quiz mid June. Probably Saturday 13th June. Save the date with further details to follow.

We have decided to lend our support to the funding of Christians Against Poverty in the Bangor/Ards area. Jonny has very much been the lead on this one.

CAP is an experienced Christian charity working with others in the voluntary sector to support those in debt and financial distress. In extreme cases homes may be at risk due to mortgage default. They do superb work and are supported already by many of the Churches in the area. We believe we have been guided by God in our plan to help financially.

Please pray for this and our other projects.

**IH**





By the time you are reading this, Christmas will be a memory, however I felt it would be remiss not to include a short piece on the wonderful Christmas Communion Lunch which took place on 11th December 2025. We were delighted to welcome 38 senior members of our congregation to celebrate Holy Communion together, followed by a light lunch. And to make it really special, we were joined by the Junior School choir from Ballyholme Primary School, who came along to entertain. Not only did the children sing Carols and Christmas music which was wonderful, they also played musical instruments, which highlighted their musical talents. The children were so enthusiastic and excited for Christmas. It was a lovely way to finish our lunch and send everyone home feeling very uplifted.

Thank you to Simon, Johnny and all the volunteers, especially our new team of caterers Caroline, Winifred, Linda, Sharon, Catherine, Olwyn and Pamela, and our voluntary drivers, who all made the lunch possible. Also a big thank you to Mrs Rothwell, teaching staff and wonderful Ballyholme Primary School Junior choir.

## **DATES for your diary:**

**Easter Communion Lunch will take place on Thursday 26th March 12.30pm.**

**Summer Communion Lunch will take place on Thursday 11th June 12.30pm.**

If you would like to join us, please contact the Parish Office. We would love to see you. An invitation will be sent nearer the time for you to respond re attendance, dietary requirements and if transport is required.

I look forward to seeing everyone in March.

## **Margaret**





flying both forwards and backwards sparked such collective soul-searching—or inspired such resolute declarations of, “Well, I think you’ll find...”

Agatha Christie also featured prominently throughout the quiz, keeping participants alert and proving that even fictional detectives could challenge the congregation’s powers of deduction. Ronnie McClements presided with his usual wit and charm, deftly handling protests, clarifying ambiguities, and gently reminding everyone that the evening’s purpose was enjoyment above all. His rulings were met with applause, theatrical groans, and appeals. Lively debate ensued over alternative spellings, obscure technicalities, and spirited interpretations of exactly what the question intended to ask. By the end, £872.87 had been raised, pride was modestly bruised, and consensus emerged that the evening had been a resounding success.



Ian Hardstaff oversaw proceedings with a sharp eye for fairness, ensuring the spirit of friendly competition endured throughout the night. Trevor Smyth kept the scores with meticulous care, though, as is often the case, a little controversy lingered over the results—we may never know for certain which table actually won.



For those already plotting strategies for the next challenge, rest assured: another quiz is scheduled for Saturday 13th June, just enough time to swot up, sharpen your wits, and perhaps brush up on your Agatha Christie knowledge.

### **Rev Jonny**

More photos and details of how some of the money raised is being used is included in the Mission News article elsewhere in this magazine.

## A Morning of Joy and Connection with our Neighbours living at the Marine Court Hotel



On a cold December morning, members of the parish Missions Committee gathered on Bangor's High Street to host a Christmas celebration for the women staying at the Marine Court Hotel. The YMCA—long a place of welcome and refuge—generously opened its doors, and for a few hours the space was filled with warmth, conversation, and laughter.

For the past four years, the Marine Court Hotel has offered refuge to people fleeing fear, exploitation, and harm. Some residents had been there for months; others had arrived in Bangor only hours earlier, carrying their few belongings into unfamiliar surroundings. In recent years, the Marine Court has also been the focus of public protest, with residents subjected to hostility and dehumanising rhetoric. That morning, however, offered a different perspective. We met mothers and survivors whose laughter over bingo, pleasure in small gifts, and tender care for their children revealed a common desire for safety, dignity, and

belonging.

We reflected briefly on why Christmas matters to Christians: that God's light enters the world not through power, but through vulnerability. That truth was already before us, made tangible in two newborn babies—fragile and held close—who embodied, in their very dependency, the profound mystery of the Incarnation: God entering our world, not with force, but in tender humility.



This gathering built upon relationships nurtured by the late Sandra Griffiths, whose compassion laid the foundation for our parish's ongoing connection with the Marine Court. Christmas invites us to see differently: to find God not in exclusion, but in welcome. Though the morning did not resolve every challenge, it created space for joy, attentive listening, and shared humanity—a glimpse of the Kingdom we proclaim.

We are grateful to all in the parish whose generosity made it possible to offer each woman and child a small gift. Through your kindness, hope was made tangible, laughter found room to flourish, and the love of Christ reached further than words alone could express.

**Rev Jonny**





We started our new year meeting in January by welcoming Annika Hunter as our guest speaker. Annika, who is a student at the University of Ulster and also a member of our church youth group, travelled to Romania last year with the Christian youth organisation 'Exodus Coleraine'. During their time away, the group were involved with a range of youth and community work, and it was most interesting to listen to Annika recount the impact and value of their service.

The draw this month was won by Laura.

In February, we began our meeting with a fun game of 'Bingo', which came to an exciting completion when a 'Full House' was announced! Everyone was then ready to enjoy a cup of tea and some treats. We were delighted to welcome Freda and Pat to our club.

The draw this month was won by Sylvia.

We will meet again on Wednesday 4th March at 2.00pm and everyone is very welcome.

### **The Wednesday Club Team**



Happy New Year from the MU Team!



Our first meeting took place on 14th January with our Annual Dinner hosted as usual at Bangor Golf Club. They provided us with a delicious 2 course menu in the cosy surroundings of The Broadway Room. It's lovely to have a room just for ourselves as we can enjoy a few "after-dinner games" with prizes of course! Thanks to all involved with the arrangements especially Irene McKay, who is a marvellous cashier!!



Our February Meeting is traditionally referred to as "Our Overseas Evening" where our speaker usually is someone with an Overseas project to share with us.

On Monday 2nd February we invited Janet Wilson to share all about a project that she initiated at least twenty years ago, which has grown from strength to strength.

Janet explained that over 25 years she visited Kenya as part of development programme for empowering communities, from these visits grew a charity called GIFT International... (Grassroots Initiatives Funding & Training). It is now a registered charity. Green trees for the plains was an idea which developed needing water and growth over 25 years (from small seedlings). Now a saw-mill is in action with off-cuts of wood going to make bee hives; in 2011 Beekeepers from Randalstown visited the project to train people in the communities.

Now The Honey Centre has been built from just one beehive in 10 years. As well as 5 different schools with teachers and resources, a bursary scheme has been set up and Oscar, aged 22, the son of an illiterate forest person, now guides and empowers other young people in his care.

At the moment Children with Special Needs are receiving little boxes containing “knitted teddies” just for them. New beds have been provided for dorms; a cattle project is funding baby clinics.



Janet has turned her attention to young women’s health, and after a chance meeting with a “max-fax” surgeon, a clinic for Cleft-palate conditions has been set up too. An absolutely amazing evening to be part of - imagine all this from one tiny tree seedling nearly 30 years ago.

Thank you to all the members for their generous donation of toiletries for Women’s Aid and the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald brought along on that evening.

### Some dates to note for your Diary

MU Meeting **Monday 2nd March**, find those boots... An evening of Line Dancing!

**Monday 30th March** let’s meet up at Ballyholme Presbyterian for Holy Week service, see details elsewhere in this magazine.

**Annual Afternoon Tea**, hosted by MU on **Saturday 25th April** 2.00pm - 4.00pm  
Save the date, ask your friends, more details later, tickets from Parish Office.

That’s all the news for now!

Many Blessings

**Yvonne & The MU Team.**



## **Annual General (Easter) Vestry Meeting** **Sunday 22 March 2026 12.45pm**

Please join us for this year's AGM and parish lunch, after the third service on Sunday 22 March. Not only is it a welcome chance for members of different congregations to get together, but stewardship, reporting and accountability are an essential part of being God's church. Reports will be presented by our Honorary Treasurer and our Glebewardens, with the opportunity to respond and ask questions. New appointments are also a traditional part of Easter Vestry proceedings. To expedite matters and ensure no one is pounced on to fill a vacancy on the day, we operate a nominations systems (closing date 15 March) and nomination forms for Select Vestry and Diocesan Synod are available in Church on Sundays or in the Parish Office during the week. Please bring 'Any Other Notified Business' to the Rector's attention the day before the meeting at the latest.

### **Who can stand for office?**

Any Christian over the age of 18 who is a member of the Church of Ireland and whose name is on the General Vestry list as a subscribing parishioner of St Columbanus Ballyholme. As we're registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, all Select Vestry members must complete Trustee Details and Declaration forms. But these are the technical requirements. What we need is a healthy mix of people, men and women, younger and older and from all of our congregations, who are ready and willing to serve and get involved in a range of different roles as outlined below.

### **Annual Vacancies: Select Vestry**

Select Vestry meetings happen ten times a year and are never overlong. We start at 7.45pm and the vast majority of our meetings end by 9 o'clock. There is always an agenda and many items are fixed month by month. New Vestry members are sometimes surprised by how much we cover on a night, but that's only because a lot of the work is done before we get there. Reports are prepared and circulated ahead of time and for larger projects sub-committees are formed. Select Vestry comprises no more than 12 members. Our two Churchwardens and two Glebewardens and our clergy are also members ex officio, with the Rector taking the Chair.

### **2026 Triennial Vacancies**

In the Church of Ireland, certain positions become vacant once every three years and so across the country this year parishes will also be appointing representatives to their Diocesan Synod, the General Synod and Parochial Nominators. Each church must elect serving members and supplementals who act as reserves in the event of serving members withdrawing from the list. Synod Members and Nominators do not have to be members of Select Vestry.

### **Diocesan Synod**

This is the main business meeting of the diocese (Down and Dromore has more than 80 parishes), held annually and in-person. Members serve a 3 year term; our outgoing members are 1 Stefan Andreasson, 2 Suzanne Beech Griffin, 3 Andrea Kelly and 4 Christine Johnstone. Our outgoing Supplementals are 1 Larry Cheshire, 2 Yvonne Manogue, 3 Ian Bell and 4 Trevor Smyth. Each parish also appoints junior representatives and for us that's Andrew Watson and his supplementalist Heather McKee.

### **General Synod**

The Church of Ireland North and South comprises eleven dioceses and has an AGM which also meets annually (two days in-person, one day on-line) for the three year term with the Archbishop of Armagh in the Chair. Membership of the General Synod is secured by Diocesan election. If no one from Ballyholme is nominated for General Synod, then no one will be elected. On 1 January 2026 prospective nominees must have attained the age of seventeen years and not have attained the age of seventy-four years. As to the process: 1. an individual decides they would like to be on General Synod and chooses to get nominated – some individuals are encouraged to be nominated 2. a nomination form is obtained, completed and signed by two Diocesan Synod members (not necessarily from the same

parish) and submitted to the Diocese 3. the Diocese collates the nomination papers and then voting papers listing all the nominations are sent out to all Diocesan Synod members in May; 4. these votes are counted after Diocesan Synod (usually in June); and 5. successful candidates participate in their first General Synod in 2027, probably in May. Outgoing General Synod Members from Ballyholme are Roy Lawther, Kelly McCullough, Andrew Watson, Paula McIlwaine and Denise Wilson.

### Parochial Nominators

Should a vacancy in the parish arise, we need four parishioners who, in conjunction with the Bishop and the wider diocese, will seek to appoint a new Rector. This involves a series of meetings, the preparation of a parish profile and travelling out and about around the Church of Ireland to meet prospective candidates. The number 1 elected Nominator becomes the point of contact for the diocese and the spokesperson for the parish once what's called the Board of Nomination has been formally called and sworn to secrecy. For the last three years our Nominators have been 1 Don Todd (who served during Ballyholme's 2007 vacancy), 2 Karen Baker, 3 Roy Lawther, 4 Jacqui Devlin. Our outgoing Supplementalists are 1 Leslie Adams, 2 Caroline Gillan, 3 Kelly McCullough and 4 Michelle Savage. Roy Lawther has kindly agreed to convene a meeting to agree our eight names before the Easter Vestry so to express an interest please email him on robert.lawther@btinternet.com by 15 March.

**Please consider serving or nominating someone else to do so – seeking their agreement first, of course!**

## For Men in the Middle of It All: You're Not Alone



Life in your 30s, 40s, and 50s can feel like a constant balancing act—work, family, commitments, expectations. At St. Columbanus, we are truly grateful for the many men who attend worship each Sunday. We don't take that lightly, especially given how many other demands compete for your time. Still, meaningful companionship isn't always easy to find, and there are few opportunities to connect with other men at this similar stage of midlife.

That's why we want to begin a men's group by listening, not with a pre-packaged program. The first gatherings will be simple and conversational—a chance to connect, share what this season of life looks like, and talk honestly about what would be most helpful. Together, we'll shape what this group becomes, guided by the voices in the room.

If you're looking for a place to connect with other men, be heard, and help build something meaningful for this stage of life, we invite you to join the conversation.

Time and place: Monday 23rd March 2026 at 7.30 pm in the Church Centre

Contact: Rev. Jonny Watson tel. 07570547352



Our warm thanks to St Columbanus's long-standing unofficial Health and Safety officers Leslie Adams and Trevor Smyth who retired from our Health and Safety Committee at the end of December 2025.

Over the last 15 years or so parishes across the Church of Ireland have recognised their formal responsibilities in this area and things have become much more rigorous and organised. What people may not know is that Ballyholme was at the vanguard of that movement. The paperwork now used in many parishes across our own

Diocese started life in Ballyholme, and much of it was the handiwork of Leslie Adams and his early collaborators. No one will ever know the hours that Leslie spent researching online, and then copying and pasting to adapt for church-use documentation which is now taken for granted in many congregations.

From its inception, Leslie was the Committee's lynchpin. New and self-taught in the world of Health and Safety, Leslie took on the responsibility as an adjunct to being Honorary Secretary of Vestry. A number of other well-known parishioners have assisted over the years, each bringing valuable insights and experience. In its earliest days, the late Joan Dales brought a career in nursing and Larry Cheshire did the same from his years with the Housing Executive. As an architect, the late Harry Thompson was extremely well-placed to help, but important contributions have also been made by Ted Coyle and latterly Carl Griffin.

Leslie's most enduring partnership however was with former civil servant Trevor Smyth. Trevor had been his union's health and safety rep so it was a brief he was familiar with and he also served for many years as a volunteer with St John's Ambulance. They often met in the Choir Room (or perhaps you spotted them in Café Suburban from time to time!) but for those with eyes to see, their legacy is all around us – and will be much appreciated by their successors Brian Kelly and Neil Devlin. It will now fall to them to review and update our documents, to oversee inspections of our Church and Parish Centre site, and to report every month to Vestry.

Ballyholme's bespoke Health and Safety Policy and Guidelines are available on the parish website. If you ever have any H&S concerns, please contact the Parish Office and our thanks again to Leslie and to Trevor for their loving care and concern for all our parishioners.

## FUNERALS

### **January 2026**

**6th:** Edith Humphries, late of Ballyholme Court

### **February 2026**

**5th:** Mary McNinch Barr 'May', late of Cotswold Drive

**16th:** Diane Joan Dornan, late of Belgravia Gardens



The Parish Centre is a shared space and as Christians we are here to serve each other in simple practical ways. Currently, we have 18 separate hall users, some of them are church organisations, others are paying guests. This is a polite reminder please, that our expectation is that all hall users will endeavour to leave the room they have used in the state they found it or better.

**Vax and Moppy live behind the door  
of the Metro Room  
(the youth room between  
the kitchen and the Columbanus Room)**

Trudi our Sexton leaves the entire Church and Parish Centre immaculate for us once a week. However, she is not full time, she does not work every day and she is not resident on the premises. In other words, if you and your organisation is using the Parish Centre in the evening, our facilities will not get cleaned again before they are back in use the following morning. In the case of the main hall, for

example, Tiddliwinks are in from 8.00am five days a week. Likewise, if you are meeting in the afternoon, another group will probably be along that evening. Take this task in turns in your groups, indeed you should factor it in to your timings the same way you would making your cup of tea and washing up afterwards.

Please don't switch the lights off and lock up until you are satisfied that the floor is clean to step onto and the surfaces have been wiped for the next arrivals. If it isn't, then please go and find Vax or a damp cloth from the kitchen and do the needful. Often, the main foyer is forgotten, even though it sees the most footfall and is the first space people see. Thanks everyone for your co-operation and your consideration.

## **Parishioner Envelopes**

We know how much you value our parish magazine so thank you for responding to our once-a-year whip-round to help defray costs.

An envelope should be enclosed with this copy and we hope you can make a contribution towards our overheads by returning it via the collection plate on Sunday or to the Parish Office through the week. Printing costs continue to creep up and last year came to £3186 – while the contents of your envelopes came to £719! We will shop around for a better price on the printing side but in the meantime, if you don't already contribute it would help us greatly if you did. Please think of each copy of this magazine as costing £1 and remember that you receive six editions a year.

Thank you and please show your encouragement to our faithful production team (especially Sylvia Davenport) in your envelopes. Please also be aware that the magazine is available on the parish website under 'Resources'. If this is the format that best suits you, why not consider cancelling your paper copy and you won't have to worry about the envelope at all.

What a difference it would make if everyone that read The Parishioner made a contribution towards it!





When Hilary McClay got in touch last autumn to encourage Area Deaneries to meet for a united prayer gathering at some point in 2026, the churches of our deanery agreed that there could be no better time than the start of the year. Tuesday 20 January was our chosen evening, and we arrived to refreshments at 7pm with the prayer itself taking us through from 7.30 to 9pm.

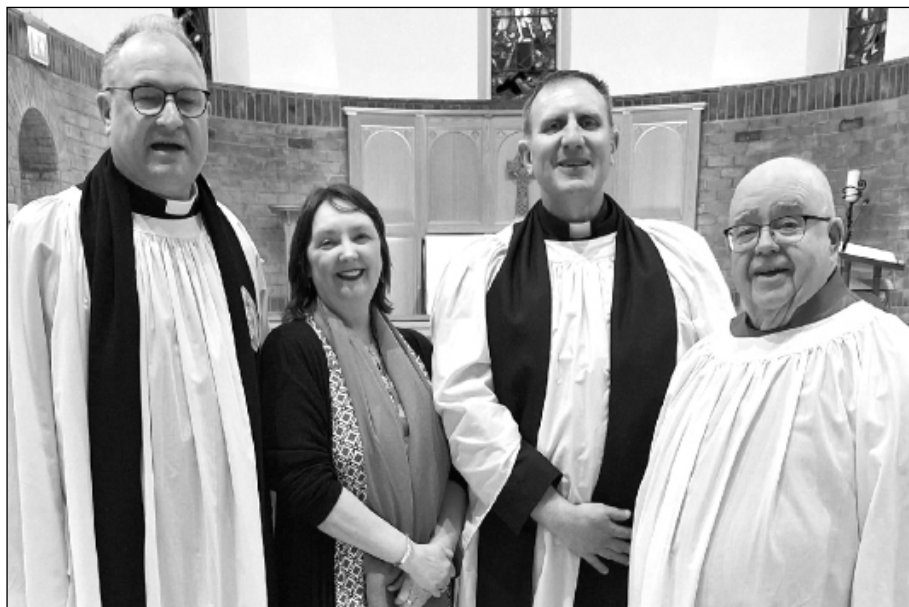
The Clandeboye patch comprises Glencraig, Helens Bay, Carnalea, Bangor Abbey, Bangor Parish, Primacy, Ballyholme, Groomsport and Donaghadee. Our venue was the Church and rooms of Christ Church Primacy and they offered us a versatile space under one roof – all the more welcome on what turned out to be a dreich old wintery evening! Our time together opened with praise and Iona Community worship and closed with more praise and Late Evening Office. The theme we chose was 'Meander with Moses'. Texts from Exodus, Acts and Deuteronomy inspired ten separate prayer stations, laid out creatively by the nine parishes of the Deanery and we explored them individually for about 45 minutes.

Moses' birth and rescue from the Nile, and his upbringing in the household of Pharaoh, focussed our prayer on maternity care and newborn babies, fostering and adoption, and the work of our local schools. Stations on Moses' killing of the Egyptian, his flight to Midian and his marriage to Zipporah prompted intercession for the world's war and conflict zones and the pressures on marriage and family life that are all around us, especially in the current economic climate. The burning bush encounter turned our prayers to God's direction and guidance and our personal life and career choices, while Moses' showdown with Pharaoh and the ensuing plagues drew us to prayer for advocacy and justice issues such as trafficking, exploitation and the environment.

Deliverance was the natural focus of the Passover and crossing of the red sea, with a range of concerns readily presenting themselves for prayer including addiction, debt and domestic violence. From the giving of the Ten Commandments we prayed for our foundational call to love God and our neighbour. God's wilderness provision of manna, quail and water from the rock was an opportunity to thank God for the growth and fruit we see in current moves of the Spirit such as the Quiet Revival. Our final station, Finishing Well, took us from the legacy of Moses to the hopes and dreams we have for witnessing and working for the Kingdom in our own personal and parish situations.

The mood felt prayerful throughout and, with opportunities for both collective and personal prayer, liturgical and informal, as well as praise and silence, the aim was that all participants could share and contribute. Reactions at the end were universally positive and appreciative, but there was also a clear sense that we had met with God in a real and vital way and were offering 2026 to His blessing and anointing.





On World Leprosy Day, Sunday 25th January 2026 we welcomed Judith Carson, Chair of The Leprosy Mission NI Board of Trustees, as our guest speaker. Judith gave a clear, interesting and thought-provoking talk on Leprosy today and how we can help those suffering. Judith underlined the fear, feelings of rejection, worthlessness, stigma, shame and the life-changes that suffering from Leprosy brings. Judith outlined some alarming statistics:-

- Almost 200,000 newly diagnosed cases every year,
- 10% of those are children,
- Leprosy is prevalent in 124 countries with 78% found in India, Brazil and Indonesia.
- Every 2 minutes someone hears the 3 devastating words YOU'VE GOT LEPROSY!

Leprosy leads to permanent irreversible disability if not treated in time but "LEPROSY IS CURABLE!" If not cured, Leprosy can lead to many complications including total loss of feeling (pain included), inability to work and loss of income and even amputation. The Leprosy Mission is a Global Network (working in 27 countries) dedicated to defeating and eradicating leprosy and transforming lives. It has three goals which it calls its TRIPLE ZEROS:-

- Zero Leprosy transmission by 2035
- Zero discrimination of those suffering from Leprosy
- Zero disability (long term)

While leprosy does not kill, it does destroy people's lives but... In 2024 over 5,000 people were cured of leprosy. Over 50,000 were treated in the Leprosy Mission hospital in Nepal.

£24 helps to cure a person suffering from Leprosy

£133 as a one-off gift provides a year's training at the Mission's Vocational Training Centre.

JESUS healed people with Leprosy. In today's world he is calling you to do the same by supporting the fantastic work of the Leprosy Mission Northern Ireland.

Please Help!  
Thank You!

Trevor Smyth  
Ballyholme Parish Leprosy  
Mission Coordinator



**The Leprosy  
Mission**  
Northern Ireland

**PERSONAL COLLECTION BOXES ARE AVAILABLE TO TAKE HOME  
FROM THE BACK OF CHURCH OR THE PARISH OFFICE**



## St. Columbanus Walkers



### January - The Ballygilbert Loop

The first walk of 2026 attracted 15 walkers who met at the centre in Crawfordsburn Country Park at 10.00. It was a beautiful sunny morning with a light dusting of snow. We set off and walked the four mile Ballygilbert loop returning to the Centre at midday where we had refreshments in the cafe. A grand day out!

**Maurice**



### February - Quoile Walk



Twelve Walkers and three dogs travelled to the Quoile Bridge car park near Downpatrick for the February outing. After some drizzly rain they started on the trail which led along the path on the river bank to Steamboat Quay where there was a large bevy of swans. The group then walked back to Quoile Castle and the visitor centre (which was closed) and had a picnic lunch. The walkers met up again on the return to Bangor at McCanns at Balloo near Killinchy for refreshments. A grand out, cloudy but mainly dry and light winds.

**Maurice**

# YOUTH-news

youth [youth] (youths)

news [nooz]

The last few months at Youth Fellowship have brought with them some rather dramatic changes to the way we run things. In the lead up to Christmas, the leaders and I (all independently, it would seem) began to realise that there was a particular need that we were not meeting. Young people are spiritually hungry, looking for a relationship with God and a deepening of their faith; but YF as it was – unstructured free time with a short talk in the middle – did not cater for this.

After much discussion with the leaders at YF, we collectively decided to turn YF from essentially a ‘youth club’ into a ‘youth fellowship’ proper. We still meet on Sunday nights, though from 7.00-8.45pm rather than 7.00-9.00pm; we start and end the evening with some structured games, and the remainder of the time being devoted to worship, Bible teaching, small-group discussion and prayer. The idea is to provide an opportunity for those who want to deepen their faith or those who want to explore Christianity to do so, and we think the structured nature of it makes it more inviting to younger teenagers, or those coming on their own.

We’re very excited about it and it has been going well so far. Your prayers and support, as ever, are incredibly appreciated.

**Andrew**



**MARCH 2026****Sunday 1st March****Lent 2**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Cafe Church - Parish Centre  
 11.30 Morning Prayer

**Wednesday 4th March**

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

**Sunday 8th March****Lent 3**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Good News at Ten & Children's  
 Church  
 11.30 Parish Communion  
 6.30 United Service - Ballyholme  
 Presbyterian

**Wednesday 11th March**

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

**Sunday 15th March****Lent 4 Mothering Sunday**

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

**Wednesday 18th March**

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

**Sunday 22nd March****Lent 5**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Good News at Ten & Children's  
 Church  
 11.30 Morning Prayer

**Wednesday 25th March**

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

**Sunday 29th March****Lent 4 Palm Sunday**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Good News at Ten & Children's  
 Church  
 11.30 Morning Prayer

**APRIL 2026****Wednesday 1st April**

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

**Friday 3rd April****Good Friday**

12 noon Good Friday at the Cross

**Sunday 5th April****Easter Day**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Holy Communion  
 11.30 Holy Communion

**Sunday 12th April****Easter 2**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Wholeness and Healing  
 11.30 Wholeness and Healing  
 6.30 United Service - Ballyholme Parish

**Wednesday 15th April**

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

**Sunday 19th April****Easter 3**

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

**Wednesday 22nd April**

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

**Sunday 26th April****Easter 4**

8.30 Holy Communion  
 10.00 Good News at Ten & Children's  
 Church  
 11.30 Morning Prayer

**Wednesday 29th April**

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

**April 2026**

**5th** EASTER

**12th** Liz Henderson

**19th** Margaret Magee

**26th** Heidi Doogan

**Help is needed to decorate Church for Easter please on Saturday 4th April from 10.00am. Any offers of help and/or flowers will be very much appreciated.**  
**Thank you.**

**March 2026**

**1st** Sybil Robertson

**8th** Ruth Ruttle

**15th** Karen Baker

**22nd** Sue Bleakley

**29th** Liz Foye

