

THE Ambassador



'So we are ambassadors for Christ...' 2 Corinthians 5:20

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND - DIOCESE OF ARMAGH

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2021



Diocese of Armagh
ONLINE
Bible
Studies
for 2021
with
Archbishop
John McDowell
IN 2ND CORINTHIANS

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PRICE £1.25

Clergy Appointments

13TH DECEMBER 2020



Canon Shane Forster to be Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh and Keeper of the Robinson Library.

It is anticipated that Canon Forster's Installation will be on Sunday 14th February 2021.



The Rev'd Elizabeth Cairns to be Archdeacon of Ardboe, with immediate effect.



On his appointment as Dean, Canon Forster will relinquish the Armagh Diocesan Prebendal stall in the St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. He will be succeeded by **the Rev'd Malcolm Kingston, rector of St Mark's, Armagh, as prebendary of Yagoe in the National Cathedral.**

Commenting on the appointments the Archbishop said:

I am delighted that Canon Forster has accepted my invitation to take up this senior position within the Cathedral and Diocese. Canon Forster has served his entire ministry in the Diocese of Armagh and has acted in the senior role of Chaplain/Executive Chaplain to four Archbishops. His faith formation took place in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast and he is familiar with the Irish Cathedral tradition. As Keeper of the Armagh Robinson Library the new Dean will have an important part to play in the development of the Library as it adjusts to post-Covid life. I look forward to having Shane, Kathleen, Timothy and Emma as neighbours here on the Hill of Armagh.

Archdeacon Elizabeth Cairns, who was brought up in the parish of Milltown, in the Diocese has over thirty years of ministerial experience, first as a Church Armagh Evangelist and following ordination, as a priest in the Diocese. She has assisted in and had the care of parishes in the Diocese of Connor, the Diocese of Down

and Dromore as well as here in Armagh. The Archdeacon is well known for her pastoral sensitivity and her cheerful common sense. I look forward to working with her as she takes up this important role as an executive officer of the Archbishop and a senior priest in the Diocese.

The Rev'd Malcolm Kingston has also served his entire ministry in the Diocese of Armagh and occupies a number of important offices within the Diocese and the city. It is a mark of the respect in which he is held by his clergy colleagues that he has been elected recently as one of the Clerical Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod. It is entirely fitting that he should succeed Canon Forster as the Armagh Diocesan member on the Chapter of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

Canon Shane Forster commented:

Canon Forster said, "I am deeply humbled and honoured to have been invited by the Archbishop to be the next Dean of Armagh. It is a great responsibility, and I am acutely aware of the historical significance of Armagh as the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland, the place

where St Patrick built his first 'Great Stone Church'.

Rev'd Elizabeth Cairns commented:

I am deeply honoured to accept the Archbishop's invitation to take up the role of the Archdeacon of Ardboe.

To say that it came as a total surprise is an understatement, but one that I am extremely humbled to be offered.

Rev'd Malcolm Kingston commented:

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Archbishop for his very kind invitation to represent our Diocese on the Chapter of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. I have had the pleasure of getting to know the Dean of St Patrick's through serving together on the Church of Ireland Standing Committee and I look forward to meeting colleagues in ministry at Chapter meetings as we contribute to the witness and mission of the Cathedral. I also would like to thank my family, as well as the staff team and parishioners of St Mark's, Armagh, for their continued support and encouragement as together we seek to serve amidst times of distinct challenge and yet opportunity for Christ's Kingdom.

Cover Photo:
Winter scene of the
Palace Demense,
Armagh. Picture
courtesy of Rev
Malcolm Kingston.

THE Ambassador

COPY DEADLINE

The deadline for the next edition of "The Ambassador" (February/March) will be 12th March 2021. **No items will be accepted after this date.** Material will ONLY be accepted by e-mail to magazine@armagh.anglican.org as an attached 'Word' document.

VIEWS EXPRESSED

Views expressed in the Ambassador are those of the contributor and are not necessarily the views of the Editor or the magazine committee.

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DESIGN & PRINTING

The Ambassador is designed & printed in N. Ireland by Graphic Answers
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THE Ambassador

Archbishop's Letter

Dear Friends,

Even in ordinary times it can be difficult to write something a few weeks in advance of publication and for it still to say something vaguely relevant or worthwhile when it is read. I've found it even more difficult to do so during the pandemic, largely through concern that the situation will have changed so dramatically in the intervening weeks that what I've written is not only out of date, but misleading. Who knows what further restrictions or (less likely) easing of restrictions will have happened since I've written these words at the beginning of January.

On the other hand there is a sense in which nothing has changed. We are still having to react to the twists and turns of virus and, if we are honest, I think bewilderment, confusion, and in some cases real fear, persist. The development of two vaccines has undoubtedly been a remarkable achievement and fully justifies the sense of jubilation being expressed by researchers and scientists. However I think we all know that it will take a long time-many months- before the effects of vaccination are widespread enough to allow for some kind of return to anything like normal social living.

For believers the other factor that hasn't changed is the goodness of God. Novel coronavirus and the disease which it spreads have developed as the result of certain human actions and decisions across a very wide range of areas. For instance it is what is known as a "zoonotic" disease, which means that it spreads from animals to humans. It is human beings who have widened the range of foods that we feel are desirable to eat. Rather like our exploitation of the earth's mineral resources we have wanted to subject everything around us (including bats) to our own use and pleasure, often not appreciating (or not caring) what the consequences will be.

It's as though we all have enough scientific knowledge or intuition to know that the earth's animal, vegetable and mineral resources are neither limitless nor infinitely manipulable but not enough moral or ethical will to work through what the consequences of those limitations are.

Perhaps such careful ethical (or as we would say godly) living has ever been properly emphasised by the Church. In the past there has been much theological discussion about, for instance, chastity in terms of our sexual relationships, but not very much about a chaste attitude to the created world; a restraint that respects the natural dignity of all created things.

To some degree the whole Jewish Sabbath is where this idea of our limitations is concentrated. In the Hebrew Scriptures it is not only people who are to have a Sabbath rest, but also the land itself, so that it is not exhausted by the human impulsion to get as much out of a thing or a person as is possible. It extended also to the practice of Jubilee, when debts that very obviously were not going to be paid were "written off" and where that most complete form of human exploitation and domination ie slavery was mitigated. In the year of Jubilee slaves were released.

In the Old Testament Israel was the nation and the people called by God to be a witness in the world to his character, including his care for the creation. When the time was right God became a person and in doing so identified himself with that creation. In the Creed we recite week by week, that Jesus was true God of God...of the same substance of the Father..and was made man.." means anything, it is that God is irrevocably bound into his creation and that he would never abandon it.

Much emphasis has, quite rightly, been placed over the past ten months on how interconnected we are as a human race. That we have a responsibility for each other, including a responsibility to consider how what we do for our own benefit (and it may well be locally beneficial) affects others who we will never meet. No purely economic or political system that history has known has ever been up to achieving that breadth and depth and length of vision. But it is the witness of the Hebrew prophets and belongs to the prophetic vocation of the Church.

Of course it must be exercised with humility, life long repentance and a sense of reality, but the Church (ie you and me) would be doing less than justice to the God who has, we believe, reconstituted as a the new Israel, if we didn't make his character known in this way.

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9am & 10am Holy Communion (Rite 1)

Sunday 7th February – The Second Sunday before Lent

- 11.00am Sung Eucharist (Rite 2) (Men's voices) Setting: Darke in F
Anthem: Lord, for thy tender mercies sake (Farrant)
Sermon: The Reverend Canon Jim Campbell
- 3.15pm Choral Evensong (sung by the Armagh Diocesan Singers)

Sunday 14th February – The Sunday before Lent

- 11.00am Morning Prayer (Rite 1)
Sermon: tbc
- 3.15pm Installation of the Reverend Canon Shane Foster as Dean of Armagh and Reverend Elizabeth Cairns as Archdeacon of Ardboe – T.B.C.

Sunday 21st February – The First Sunday in Lent

- 11.00am Sung Eucharist (Rite 2) (Men's voices) Setting: Merbecke
Anthem: Turn thy face from thy sins (Attwood)
Sermon: tbc
- 3.15pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 28th February – The Second Sunday in Lent

- 11.00am Sung Eucharist (Rite 2) (Men's voices) Setting: Rutter In D
Anthem: Wash me throughly (S S Wesley)
Sermon: tbc
- 3.15pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 7th March – The Third Sunday in Lent

- 11.00am Sung Eucharist (Rite 2) (Men's voices) Setting: Modal Eucharist (White)
Anthem: Hide not thy face (Farrant)
Sermon: tbc
- 3.15pm Choral Evensong (sung by the Armagh Diocesan Singers)

Sunday 14th March – The Fourth Sunday in Lent

- 11.00am Choral Matins (Rite 1) (Men's voices)
Anthem: Call to Remembrance (Farrant)
Sermon: tbc
- 3.15pm Choral Evensong (sung by the Armagh Diocesan Singers)

Sunday 21st March – The Fifth Sunday in Lent

- 11.00am Sung Eucharist (Rite 2) (Men's voices) Setting: Merbecke
Anthem: Surely He hath borne our griefs (Handel)
Sermon: tbc
- 3.15pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 28th March – The Sixth Sunday in Lent (Palm Sunday)

- 11.00am Sung Eucharist (Rite 2) (Men's voices) Setting: Miss de Sancto Albanian (Willan)
Anthem: Hosanna in the Highest (Palestrina)
Sermon: tbc
- 3.15pm Evening Prayer

All of the above services are subject to change in line with current government guidelines.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Wednesday 17th February: Ash Wednesday

Services to be confirmed

Wednesday 17th March: St Patrick's Day

Services to be confirmed

NEW DEAN APPOINTED

The Archbishop has appointed Canon Shane Forster as Dean of the Cathedral and Keeper of Armagh Robinson Library. It is anticipated that Canon Forster's Installation will take place in the Cathedral on Sunday 14th February. We look forward to welcoming Shane and his family to the Hill of Armagh.

ARCHDEACON OF ARDBOE

The Archbishop has appointed the Reverend Elizabeth Cairns as Archdeacon of Ardboe with immediate effect. Reverend Cairns will be installed as a member of the Cathedral body on Sunday 14th February.

We also congratulate our neighbour, the Rev. Malcolm Kingston, on his appointment as Canon of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

The Cathedral family is most grateful to those who enabled services to continue during the inter-regnum in these difficult times, and especially Canon Jim Campbell and the Venerable Donald McLean for conducting the morning services, and the Chapter for Evening Prayer.

Services are all subject to continuing Coronavirus protocols and the Lockdown directives.
Precentor Porteus

ACTON, DRUMBANAGHER & LOUGHGILLY

Rev'd Graham Spence
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BAPTISM:

18th November: – Hannah Elizabeth Sterritt (Drumbanagher).

25th November: – Molly and Lucy Brown (Loughgilly).

BURIAL:

30th November: – Evelyn Shields (Loughgilly).

4th December: – Florence Halliday (Drumbanagher).

1st January: – Baby Lucy Elizabeth Lowry (Loughgilly).

MRS EVELYN (EVA) SHIELDS

Eva Walker was one of a family of eight brought up at Aughlish Cottages, Potstick Row, Scarva. She married Loughgilly man Basil Shields in 1963 and together they created a successful oil distribution business. Sadly, though the partnership ended with Basil's untimely death, in January 2000. Eva's daughter Michelle and her son-in-law Robert subsequently joined her in the business, but Eva remained involved right up until just about a year ago when her health began to show signs of decline. Across the years Eva served in various capacities in Loughgilly. She was a member of the Select Vestry for more than thirty years only stepping down for health reasons in 2019. She served as a Parochial Nominator for many years. In earlier years she was involved in the work of the Mother's Union and the Girls Friendly Society. She played a key role in the organisation of the Annual Coffee Party. She was also involved in the distribution of flowers and vegetables at the conclusion of harvest services and flower festivals and helped clean the Church building afterwards. On top of all that, she was a most generous financial contributor to the work and ministry of Loughgilly where she worshipped faithfully week by week. Eva bore her final illness with great courage and passed away in Craigavon Hospital, where she had received exceptional care from medical and nursing staff. To her daughter, son-in-law, grandchildren and the extended family circle we extend our deep and prayerful sympathy.

MRS FLORENCE (FLORRIE) HALLIDAY

Florrie Loughlin was one of a family of three brought up in Poyntzpass. The Loughlin family, (parents Edmund and Sarah, son Ernest, and twin daughters Ida and Florrie), attended the local Presbyterian Church, where Florrie's father was an Elder and the young Florrie played the Church organ. At the conclusion of her education, Florrie went

to work with the Post Office and served in Poyntzpass, Belfast and Banbridge. In 1958 she married Charles Halliday from Jerrettspass and the marriage was blessed with two children, Elizabeth and Andrew. Charlie and Florrie were happily married for 56 years until Charlie's death 4 years ago. Florrie was a great home maker and baker. She won the Cooking Section Cup at Newry Show on four occasions, 1987, 1991, 1992 and 1993. Florrie also loved her garden and when she was able, she loved cutting the grass and tending the flowers and shrubs in the rockery. Her faith was also important to her. She was a founding member of Drumbanagher Mother's Union and she attended Church faithfully Sunday by Sunday up until a few years ago when her health began to decline. She was a kind and gentle Christian lady who loved her Church and was very appreciative of the ministry she received there. On Saturday, 26th September 2020, Florrie celebrated her 90th birthday surrounded by cards and many floral tributes and other gifts from family and friends. She passed away peacefully at her home on 2nd December 2020. We extend our deep sympathy to her daughter Elizabeth, son Andrew, son-in-law Herbert, grandchildren and all the family circle in their bereavement and loss.

BABY LUCY ELIZABETH LOWRY - We continue to surround Lucy Elizabeth's family with our prayers.

God of compassion, you make nothing in vain and love all you have created; we commend to you Jonathan and Lauren's daughter Lucy Elizabeth, for whom they poured out such great love, for whom they cherished so many hopes and dreams. We had longed to welcome her amongst us; grant us the assurance that she is now encircled in your arms of love, and shares the resurrection life of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, Father of all mercies and giver of all comfort: we pray, for those who mourn, Lucy Elizabeth's family: - parents: Jonathan and Lauren, grandparents: Uel, David and Margaret and the family circle. Be gentle with them in their grief. Show them the depths of your love, and a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven. Spare them the torments of guilt and despair. Be with them as they weep and help them to know that there is a greater light where all tears will be wiped away. O God the giver of all comfort, look down especially on Lauren, who has known the joy of new life within, and the desolation of losing that life; do not hide your face from her distress, but hear her when she calls to you; dispel the darkness which surrounds her and renew in her hope,

faith and love, for the sake of your Son who brought peace to the grieving hearts of mothers, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

We greatly appreciated the time and care given by parishioners to decorate our Churches for Christmas while maintaining compliance with Covid restrictions.

ST. MARK'S, ARMAGH

Rev'd Malcolm Kingston
Telephone: 028 3752 2970



THANK YOU

Thank you to all who have been so generous in supporting a number of appeals in recent months. The Harvest Appeal was soon followed by the Diocesan Hospice Appeal, annual Advent Bishops' Appeal contributions, the Christmas Toy Appeal and the monthly Food Bank appeal. Along with Carol Singing outside homes and a local Residential Home, it was lovely to witness participation in all of these initiatives, reaching out with the love of God in a practical manner. Thank you to all who gave and assisted in any way.



ONLINE INITIATIVES

Of late all of our services and activities have been online. We praise God for the technology that has enabled, and continues to facilitate Services of Worship, Sunday School, Youth Fellowship, Alpha Course, House Group, a special Day of Prayer, Select Vestry meetings and a Book Club. We look forward to the day when we can meet in person again, but in the meantime, please do keep up to date with all that is happening via our Parish Website, as well as our Facebook and Instagram accounts.

SERVICES

At the time of writing it is hoped that onsite services shall resume on Sunday 7th February, although this aspiration shall be reviewed at the end of January / beginning of February.

When congregational worship resumes, the following Sunday services will be available :- 8.30am in the Crozier Hall, 10.30am in St Mark's (livestreamed) and 7pm in St Mark's.

Upon reopening, Wednesday services will also take place in church at 7.30pm.

During periods of online services only, Sunday Services are available from 10.30am and 7pm.

Friday night services continue to be available from 9pm online. Online Services are always available via our Parish Website or YouTube Channel.

LENT

Lent Services begin on Ash Wednesday (17th February, 7.30pm). Further details shall be available on Pew News Sheets and in Pinnacles (Parish Magazine) which are available to download from the Parish Website. Restrictions will determine if the services shall take place in church. In any case, midweek services are also recorded at home and become available from our Website and YouTube Channel on Fridays at 9pm.

ST PATRICK'S DAY

A Service of Holy Communion is planned to take place in St Mark's on St Patrick's Day at 9.30am. Restrictions permitting, everyone will be most welcome to join us in worship as we thank God for witness of St Patrick.

GENERAL VESTRY MEETING

The annual General or Easter Vestry Meeting is planned take place in The Crozier Hall on Monday, 22nd March 2020 (7.30pm). Please refer to Pew News for an updated position in the approach to the meeting. Everyone is invited to join as we reflect on the year past, elect Select Vestry Members and look forward with faith together.

RETIREMENT

During recent months, two of our Parish Readers have retired from their role of ministering during our Sunday Services.

Mr Ronnie Watt was commissioned as a Parish Reader on 8th February 1987. He has been incredibly faithful in leading worship in our Parish Church for 33 years. He was particularly committed to assisting with the 8.30am Holy Communion Service and offered beautifully prepared intercessions weekly. Ronnie is an inspiration to all who know him. His is a living and evident faith and in appreciation of Ronnie's very long standing commitment to the ministry of our Parish, amongst other gifts, he was presented with a most beautiful painting of the church sanctuary by Rev'd Canon Jim Campbell.

Mrs Barbara Campbell began her Parish Reader Ministry in St Mark's, Portadown. Upon moving to Armagh in 2015, following

her husband Canon Jim Campbell's retirement, Barbara resumed her ministry as a Parish Reader in St Mark's. Barbara is characteristically someone whose desire is to help and her compassionate character was always evident in her thoughtfully prepared intercessions. We are very grateful to Barbara for her willing participation and also wish her a very happy and healthy retirement. A gift for Barbara is being arranged!

CONGRATULATIONS

As a Parish we were delighted to receive the very happy news of the birth of Lilly Topley on 30th December 2020. Lilly's Mum and Dad, Erin and Matthew are very much involved in the ministry team of St Mark's. Matthew serves as a Deacon Intern as part of his training for the ordained ministry and Erin helps with children's ministry here as part of her work for CMS Australia. Both Matthew and Erin have been amazing contributors to what we have been able to do of late, especially in times of restriction. Lilly is truly blessed in her Mum and Dad and wish them every happiness together as a family.

APPOINTMENT

It was very much with mixed feelings that we learned on Sunday, 10th January that our Curate Assistant, Rev'd Geoff Hamilton, has been appointed to become Rector of Kilhorne Parish (Annalong). Geoff is a very natural encourager. His energy and passion is infectious! He ministers with a deeply pastoral heart. Both Geoff and his wife, Jill have wholeheartedly offered so much to our ministry during the past year. Jill's contribution to our Children's Ministry during the past year has been amazing. We will truly miss both of them!

However, we are also delighted for the parishioners of Annalong who have been faithfully awaiting a new Rector for a long time. Their prayers have been answered and whilst we would have loved Geoff and Jill's presence with us for longer, we rejoice in the work that the Lord will enable through them and for His Kingdom. Geoff's service of Institution is planned for 22nd April.

BALLINDERRY, TAMLAGHT & ARDBOE

Rev'd Canon Barry Paine
Tel: (028) 7941 8500



CHRISTIAN BURIAL:

7 November: Eileen Moore (Ballinderry)
21 November: Etta Paine (Tamlaght)
22 November: Brian Bullimore (Tamlaght)
20 December: David Carruthers (Tamlaght)

CHRISTMAS PAST? We are indebted to

parishioners for their valued assistance through a challenging and different season. To the four Carol Service readers in each of the parishes observing the appropriate regulations, our decorators and organists our heartfelt gratitude for bringing some semblance of normality to proceedings.

THOUGHT FOR 2021: 2020 was a year dominated by a Virus. Not one of us could have anticipated the devastation that this virus referred to as Covid-19 would cause. Many of our parishes and local communities have not been exempt from the pain of serious illness and bereavement due to the virus. Words cannot begin to express what so many families have experienced in the past twelve months. It has been 'a time to weep.....a time to mourn'. Ecclesiastes 3:4. We in the Church weep and mourn alongside so many families. At well we thank God daily for the immense efforts of members of the NHS staff. The love, care and compassion shown by them in the most challenging of situations is difficult to articulate. We must remember the cost to their physical bodies and their mental health. They are being crushed by the level of work loads and the expectation of their own professionalism. They must receive the necessary aid and support during and after this pandemic. At present we have many walking wounded in the NHS. We are ever so thankful for them.

2021 is the year of the Vaccines! Hope. There is still along way to go before we emerge from the dark tunnel but there is light! Even with the vaccines many persons lives will be changed and disrupted due to unemployment. The economic impact upon many households has been and will be ruinous. Somehow the government will have a real challenge to rebuild people and businesses. The reinvestment that will be required will be unprecedented. We pray that they will be brave in their endeavours for all peoples.

The Epiphany is a wonderful season. We recall the journey of the Magi, finding the Christ-Child, presenting their gifts and how, "they returned to their country by another route." Matt. 2:12. It is a season of light and hope for humanity. As we are told to stay inside our homes to save lives may that old Epiphany tradition of Christus Mansionem Benedicat be relevant for ourselves and our families. CMD means may Christ bless this house. What a wonderful thought and prayer. May we ask Christ to bless our homes and save us from all that would harm us.

'The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.' Titus 2:11

'If this is to be a Happy New Year, a year of usefulness, a year in which we shall live to make this earth better, it is because God will

direct our pathway. How important then, to feel our dependence upon Him!' Matthew Simpson.

ASH WEDNESDAY: The beginning of Lent will be marked with a service on Wednesday 17 February at 8pm online.

THANK YOU: To parishioners of Tamlaght parish and friends for the support given to the Blythswood shoebox annual appeal this autumn.

To parishioners supporting the Church week by week by their presence in the respective churches. To the many who have been shielding and participating with our online services.

A big thank you to Sandra Young (Tamlaght) for her incredible work co-ordinating our online worship for the three churches. Sandra has been remarkable for all of us in the parishes.

'You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.' Psalm 119:114.

'But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.' Isaiah 40:31.

'Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.' I Chron 16:11.

May God bless us all in the days that lie ahead.

BALLYMORE

Revd Canon Shane Forster
Tel: 028 3884 0234



CHRISTMAS 2020

The Festive season was somewhat different, yet it managed to retain some of the important elements on a much smaller scale. The Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Communion services were well attended and facilitated through a booking system. Careful cleaning of the church building took place between services and the new fogging machine was put to good use. The online Carol Service and Christmas Family Service had hundreds of views and featured contributions from a wide range of familiar faces. Christmas dinners were delivered to nearly seventy of our older parishioners, there was a gift of shortbread for every Ballymore family household and the children of the S-Club also got a selection box and Christmas activity pack. Thank you to all who helped behind the scenes to make sure everything ran safely and smoothly and that we at least had a flavour of Christmas in difficult circumstances.

FAREWELL

As you will know, it was announced in December that I have been appointed Dean

of Armagh. I am humbled and greatly honoured to have been appointed by the Archbishop to this important role in the diocese. I am also excited about the challenges and opportunities the move to the Cathedral will bring but of course there is also sadness at leaving Ballymore after fifteen very happy years. In normal circumstances a departing rector would have a farewell reception in the Parish Hall and a final service. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and the fact that there are currently no in person gatherings for worship, neither events are possible at this time. My last service as rector will therefore be online on 31st January but I have promised the Select Vestry that I will come back later in the year for a farewell event once the restrictions have eased. At this stage I therefore just want to say a very sincere thank you to all the parishioners of Ballymore for the love, support, encouragement, and friendship which has been afforded to me and to Kathleen, Timothy, and Emma over the last fifteen years. Thank you. I wish you God's richest

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blessing for the years ahead and hope and pray that the next rector will be as happy in Tandragee as I was. God bless. Shane

VACANCY

During the vacancy, the pastoral care of the Ballymore Parish will be in the hands of the Rural Dean, the Venerable Elizabeth Cairns. We extend our prayerful best wishes to Elizabeth in her new role as Archdeacon of Ardboe.

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Rev. Alan Synnott
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Church life is very activity based and therefore when we are writing for the Ambassador we report what is going on in our parishes, this presents a problem when our churches are closed or even when they are open but we aren't engaged in our usual weekly activities. Each week we produce a Bible study and a pre-recorded act of worship and when we are in church, two of the services are live streamed and later put out on the websites. Sadly, more than a dozen funerals in the past ten months have also kept us busy around the parish and I really miss sitting down with the bereaved and just giving each one the time they deserve in their hour of need.

Instead of reporting "goings on" I thought I would thank those who conduct worship in the parish group, without whom church would not be available Sunday by Sunday. First of all our Parish Readers who have answered the call to the liturgical ministry of the church, at present we have two, Mrs Anne Synnott and Mr Mervyn Briggs.

Anne was first licensed in the diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry nearly a decade ago and brings her experience to our parish group, not least in our recorded worship during lockdown periods. Mervyn is a retired public servant and has enthusiastically embraced the training and has visibly grown in leading and participating in worship. In our parish group we could really be doing with a few more coming forward in this area of ministry and I'm sure Mervyn and Anne would be happy to chat to anyone who may feel God's nudge.

I haven't forgotten David Hawthorne, he has moved on and trained to be a diocesan Lay Reader having completed a challenging course of training. This means that David is out and about the diocese leading worship and preaching the good word of the Kingdom and gaining experience as he goes. Jill Hunter has become our Lay Reader in residence and is very well

received, indeed loved, in our parish and I know she loves being with us Sunday by Sunday. Both of these people have busy lives in business and education respectively and it is just wonderful to see them growing in ministry.

The Reverend John Bowley has been a key player on our team and again is well loved in our parish group. John was rector of Ballywalter on the Ards peninsula and brings many years of experience and insight to the pulpit and altar. Due to his seniority, John has had to stay home throughout these challenging months but I hope we will see him again later this year. The Reverend Chris Broddle is one of my oldest friends and we have been colleagues as curates, chaplains, gardeners and once upon a time he was my boss and now I get to torture him, life is sweet. Chris is a scholar of some considerable standing and combines this with a great talent for communication to bring the message of God's grace to us on a regular basis.

This our "up at the front team" and we are all aware that we are the bit of the iceberg that is seen above the surface and I would love to name everyone who does each job across our four church parish group but that would take all the space in the Ambassador. As I thank each of them I commend them to your prayers, I also want to thank each of you for your love and support and all the unseen tasks that are done about the place. God be with you and please stay safe and well, we will soon be back together.

IN MEMORIAM

It was with great sadness that we heard the news of Richard McGrath's passing in late November. Richard had been through a very difficult few years as he battled cancer as well as other serious illness but he was always warm and pleasant and lived up to his reputation as a gentleman. Having visited him in hospital and at home on a number of occasions and knowing how ill he really was, I was always taken aback and impressed when he would show up in church. In the age of the show off, even in terms of faith, Richard's faith was that steady, quiet, genuine expression of commitment and conviction that was demonstrated in the simple act of getting to church even when it hurt. This is an example to us all.

Richard's mother in law, Kathleen Anderson, was seriously ill in the same hospital at the time of his passing. Sadly, Kathleen also succumbed to her illness only a few weeks later. The impact of one loss is traumatic enough, but to lose two precious family members just a few weeks apart is cruel indeed. For Helen to lose her husband and mother in close succession is almost too

much to bear, the close knit family circle are a great support but without doubt this is a very difficult time. As a parish we must uphold them all in prayer and practical support.

Maureen Chambers was a stalwart of St Luke's Belleek and sang in the choir every Sunday of her life until her health deteriorated and she moved into residential care. Maureen always had a warm welcome for her Rector, especially when we would have communion in a room set aside for us by the staff of Ashgrove. Not just a singer but, like many of her generation, Maureen was a keen dancer in her youth and her love of song and music was always to the fore but it was her deep personal faith and her devotion to the worship of Almighty God in Belleek that most marked her out and is her lasting legacy.

On Saturday 9th January 2021, the earthly remains of Harry Dennison were brought from North Down for interment in the churchyard at Bessbrook. Harry was a native of Bessbrook and will be remembered by many.

We offer our, love, prayers and support to all who have lost loved ones recently.

"I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord

CLONFEACLE, DERRYGORTREAVY AND EGLISH

Revd Suzanne Cousins
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In this present brief season of Epiphany, which we are experiencing in the circumstances of a global pandemic, with the churches again closed, perhaps the most important epiphany or 'revelation' we can have is this:

God is not outside of this, our time and experience. God is with us.

This is the Christmas revelation, that Jesus, who came to save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21) is Immanuel, 'God with us' (Matthew 1:23 and Isaiah 7:14) and still with us, by the Holy Spirit. The revelation of Jesus as Saviour and as Immanuel offers us peace, comfort and joy – Christmassy gifts which we need to open and use in this post-Christmas time, when there is much illness in our community, and uncertainty has become a way-of-life. To keep on reminding ourselves that **God who made us, loves us and saves us is also with us** is a great source of daily faith-and-courage-building bread and of spiritual and mental sustenance.

Our location and circumstances are vastly different to those of the (biblical) ancient near east and middle east, but God is still calling us, as he did Samuel, Philip, Nathaniel, and the psalmist who authored Psalm 139. (See <http://bible.oremus.org/?q=155192425>.)

God who made us, still sees us and knows us, still cares for us and still calls us to service and discipleship, as he did the boy Samuel in the temple at Shiloh, and as he did Philip and Nathaniel in Galilee. Nathaniel was seen (under the fig tree) and known by Jesus without Nathaniel knowing that he was seen and known. Whether we know it or not, "The Lord is here. His Spirit is with us." Our parish children seem to accept this comforting truth unquestioningly, that God has not left us on our own.

How do we best feed ourselves with this 'bread' and truth when the churches are again closed and we are distanced from other members of the Body of Christ? Perhaps an easy-to-recall answer is found in these four building-blocks of ministry – Word, Sacrament, Prayer, and Pastoral Care.

WORD – We keep on reading, listening to and hearing the Bible, the written Word of God; and we keep close to Jesus Christ, the Living Word, who is also the Good Shepherd who walks with us, even through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23).

SACRAMENT – We keep participating in the Sacrament of Holy Communion via the online services, in spite of the inevitable theological questions and ambiguities, for the words of the service are strengthening and comforting; they inspire in us praise and thanksgiving; they refresh our spirit.

PRAYER – It has been described as The Christian's Vital Breath. By prayer, both private and corporate, with the help of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26), we keep in close and constant communion with God our heavenly Father.

PASTORAL CARE – Pastoral care (called "the cure of souls" in old Anglican tradition) is freely and lovingly offered by those entrusted by God with the pastoral care of the parish - the rector, working for and with their bishop (/archbishop). But in our parish communities we also offer pastoral care to each other informally in our ordinary and mundane day-by-day interactions. Ultimately, though, our best and purest source of pastoral and spiritual care is Christ himself, the Good Shepherd who "lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

Word, Sacrament, Prayer, and Pastoral

Care: If we keep immersing ourselves in these and participating in these, by whatever means available to us, we will find ourselves renewed and energised to keep on loving and serving the Lord, one another and the world, even in such a time as this.



Psalm 139: 1-3, the children's memory verses from Together-at-Home family resource for 17th January
See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/613930636117980>

The pandemic will continue to press us to reassess how we 'do' church and what are the achievable and absolute essentials. How do we as the church today deliver the ministry of the Word, Sacrament, Prayer and Pastoral Care adequately and effectively in such a different environment, the online environment?

So much is 'on hold' at present – most all of our physical gatherings – and it would be easy to become either disheartened, or to lose motivation to keep faithfully following and serving the Lord day-by-day and to essentially give up. So we need to keep listening and to hear the Lord saying to us, the 21st century church exactly what was said to the 1st and 2nd century churches:

"So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith" (Galatians 6:9); and, "... not neglecting to meet together [in voice and spirit, online? by phone, text, email?], as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). Condensing these verses of Scripture, is this the key message for us as church and parishes to hear from God at this time?

Let us not grow weary in doing what is right... Do not give up.... Whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all... especially for those of the family of faith...not neglecting to meet [in voice and spirit, online? by phone, text, email?]... but encouraging one another... and all the more...

Often we end our children's (KidZoom) sessions with this blessing, below, which was produced early in lockdown. Here it is again. The Lord bless you and keep you and make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you... Amen.

The Kids' Blessing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiWZXLsdE9w>

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DEATHS
David Glasgow

CHRISTMAS
Due to the circumstances we were unable to hold our normal Nativity Service. This year with the help of Play it by Ear drama group we had a virtual nativity. Each family were given parts in the nativity which they recorded at home then forwarded to Chis and Ross to put together. It was a great success and all who took part enjoyed the finished produce. Thank You Chris and Ross otherwise known as Play it by Ear.

CAROL SERVICE
Play it by Ear drama group led the Carol Service and the Christmas story was re-told from the view of the shepherds, the lessons were read by Keith Buchanan MLA and a member of our Sunday school Lucas Carvalho. The service was different but very thought provoking. It was good to revisit the Christmas Story in a different way.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS
This year due to the pandemic it was decided that at Christmas it would be good to help our local care home Corkhill. The parish donated toiletries and they were distributed to the care home and to more senior members of the parish. The two church wardens Deborah Watt (incumbent's) and Bryan Potter (peoples') with Sr. Valerie, delivered the gifts to the care home> They were received by a member of staff and the home owner Mr Gary Watt. Earlier that week oranges and apples were donated to the church and those were given to the care home also with an apple and orange packaged for each resident.
Mr Watt said how grateful the staff and

residents were to receive the gifts.

Each child in the parish received a selection pack, unfortunately there was no Sunday School Party.

On Christmas Eve we had a Holy Communion service when Rev. William Anderson joined Sr. Valerie to lead the service.

Christmas Morning was family service, where the children brought their toys but instead of sharing what they got from the front they showed their toys from their seats. Thanks to a local firm who lent us a fogging machine which made it possible to have the services in church.

DERRYLORAN
 Canon Norman Porteus
 867 62261
 Canon Drew Dawson
 867 37151
 Website
www.derryloran.com



It has been a Christmas like never before as we followed Coronavirus protocols... The church remained undecorated save for a display on the Holy Table and lights on the tower.. There were no Christmas Communion nor parties.. The Parish Hall has remained closed since the first lockdown in March 2020.. Thankfully we were able to carry on public worship in church since July, albeit with 1 service at 11am which we have been streaming live on our Parish Facebook page.

When the rector began Derryloran Online on our Facebook page, he thought it would only be for a short time, but here we are 10 months later! Each day he has been posting daily prayers, verse for the day, bible study and readings, Kidz Korner and Just Thinking... and concluding the day with evening thoughts and prayers. Do check it out! It's amazing how many "hits" there are each day along with our Sunday Service! It's certainly a new way of doing church!

Currently we are in a further lockdown with the suspension of public worship following the failure of the 2 week "circuit breaker" to reduce the R Factor in the spread of the disease. We trust that this further measure will be effective in reducing infection and stopping the spread. What lies beyond that, we just don't know.. We must entrust that future to God's mercy and grace!

Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent falls on Wednesday 17th February, so we hope to have our Holy Communion Service at 7pm that evening. Christian Aid Lunches hopefully will begin again on Friday 19th February in our hall from 12 to 2pm, so please aim to support them in whatever way

you can...

We look forward on Sunday 14th February to the Installation of Canon Shane Forster as the new Dean of Armagh and the Rev Elizabeth Cairns as Archdeacon of Arboe, and congratulate the Rev Malcolm Kingston as new Canon in St Patrick's, Dublin. It's good to have some good news!

By the time Palm Sunday comes round on 28th March, we will have experienced a full year of Coronavirus protocols and precautions. We pray that by then we will have got over the worst of the pandemic safely and availed of the vaccine! We wish you all health and happiness in these uncertain days ahead!

DESERTLYN (MONEYMORE) AND BALLYEGLISH
 Rev. Dr. Adrian N. Stringer.
 028 8674 8200



HOLY BAPTISM

St John's Moneymore
 21st October 2020: Katie-Rose Gemma JOHNSTON
 23rd November 2020: Lewis Adam WENSLEY

HOLY MATRIMONY

Ballyeglish Parish Church
 22nd December: Stephen DONALDSON & Hannah MARTIN
 St John's Moneymore
 24th December: Andrew WALLACE & Jennifer MONTGOMERY

CHRISTIAN BURIAL

St John's Moneymore
 13th November 2020 John SMYTH
 4th December 2020 Margaret LOVE
 6th December 2020 Campbell ELIOTT
 Ballyeglish Parish Church
 31st October Sandra BROWN (Polpatrick cemetery)
 20th December Bryan JONES

COMMENT

At night you may well think of what you intend to do the following day. However, once you wake up in the morning and start your day, you quickly realise that you can't really plan for the unexpected...well, it is the unexpected! If that is the case with each day, it will be even more true when looking even further ahead – next week, next month or next year!

Nevertheless, we make plans. As Jesus mentions, it's good to work out if you can complete something before embarking upon it – as with a tower or a battle. But at the same time we also know that the best laid plans...may not come off at all. In all our

planning we should expect that the unexpected will come along and focus our thoughts instead on the day in hand – that is enough – another one of Jesus' teachings.

This focusing upon today with plans only loosely fixed for the future, is surely a useful way of looking at our personal lives and our church life. In our parishes we can have plans, but only loosely rely on them. We hope to have our Farming Funday on the 8th May this year, but we also know that it may not happen. Focusing upon the day in hand isn't a bad strategy. Someone in the parish told me that she hasn't given up smoking – it's just that she isn't smoking any cigarettes today – a great way to approach things!

Trying to see our way out of this pandemic isn't easy. Yes, there are plans and hope – vaccines, mutations to a 'softer' virus, containment...whatever they are our long term hopes are there. But our real strength is in focusing upon each day as it comes. Our prayers are for today, not only for the future. Our intent on doing something new during any lockdown is for each day, not left for some far off time which never arrives. Likewise our search for the presence of God is for this very day, as is our determination to love and care for others. Then there is, quite simply, the intent to enjoy the day we are in which has generously been given to us by Almighty God.

Living for today is a way to cope with all that is going on – and it's an approach sanctioned by none other than Jesus himself – in short; the Kingdom of God is at hand!

NOTICES

Our thanks to all those who contribute to our services. In-church for those who clean, play the organ, do the fogging when necessary, oversee things through the Select Vestries. Equally, our gratitude to the many people who join in our worship through the WhatsApp groups – readers, intercessors, singers, musicians! Together we have achieved a lot, all things considered! We have held online quizzes, sang carols as a cross community venture at the Rectory (see photo) and tried new expressions of worship such as our online Christingle service.

Thanks as well to those who contribute to the finances of our parishes. St John's in particular is struggling to pay its Assessment – please hold the Select Vestry in your prayers as they seek to address this issue!



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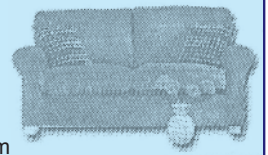
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This year has been a difficult one for everyone; it was even more difficult to those who were bereaved during lockdown and restrictions. In any other year, the families of Robin Jeffers, George Shearer, Mary Shirley, Joy Workman and Derek Higgins would have had the support of many friends in their homes and in church, but Covid-19 changed all that. The families acted within the restrictions and with great dignity. Friends and neighbours, respecting the limited access to the church, made their support known in different ways.

In December, the funeral of Joy Workman took place in Dunany on 8th, just a few hours before the sudden death of Derek Higgins. Derek's funeral took place in Ardee Church on 11th. To all who are bereaved, we offer our prayers and our sympathy.

Some of the Drogheda parishioners requested a Carol service: I thought it could not work, as we are allowed neither singing nor wind instruments. However, Eugene sourced wonderful online performances of the carols (thank heaven for a decent sound system) and Sean organised the readers. It was different, but it worked really well.

Over 50 children's voices were heard in the children's nativity. Ian M put it all together and did the animations. Again, in my, probably biased, opinion, it worked really well. Thank you parents, children, musicians and Ian.

There are no church services in January, apart from the online ones. As there is no rector in Dundalk, the same service goes out throughout the rural deanery. For each Sunday online service until we are back in church, Richard and I will be asking for ten readers, one from each parish. We will use our Parish and Diocesan readers and we are so grateful to our many talented musicians. It is lovely to have recordings from St Nicholas' choir. It is great to see Sandra and Wendy at their respective keyboards and delightful to enjoy some flugelhorn music from Gillian. Thank you to all who wrestle with snail-paced WiFi, with unfamiliar technology, with badly timed power cuts and updates, so that, though apart, we can get some sense of worshipping together.

We have had nine months of church where people have demonstrated their resilience,

where they have risen cheerfully to the challenges. Well done and thank you everyone. It's not over yet, but we are more than half-way there.

We look forward to having Jonathan Hull, our Diocesan communications officer, to record the Diocesan service which will go out on 31st January. Again, it is to be shared between the Dundalk and Drogheda groups.

FUTURE SERVICES

As I write, COVID is at its worst, the future is uncertain and we can only hope that we can celebrate Easter in church.

DRUMCREE

Rev. Gary Galway
Telephone: 028 3833 2503



In the last submission to Ambassador, I challenged each of us, as men and women of faith, to be the Salt and Light in our societies and to positively contribute, rather than allow the negativity and uncertainties to bring us down. I called us to be that 'Salt and Light' and change the Spiritual atmosphere, in our homes and communities.

Matt 5:13-16 says, 'You are the salt of the earth. But if the Salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven'.

Two months on, we are once again in the middle of a "Lock-down" and the realities of socially mixing at Christmas, is now taking its toll and having a consequence. COVID-19 is rampant in our communities and each of us knows families who have been affected and suffered, and our hearts are with those who have lost loved ones at this difficult time. In my lifetime, never has there been such a time when there has been so much need for men and women of faith to rise up and take the authority which God has given us and to REALLY pray.

I recently came across this prayer, it's called the Irish Blessing and I think the words of it say so much. Let's pray it over this land, our families and communities for 2021:-

'Lord your gift of love, your promise of presence, your covenant of hope, are the foundations of ministry. (A project in preparation for centuries but an alliance from the beginning of age). Your people are suffering and as we cry out for blessing for

hope, for strength, for new life, we know that you hear, we know that you care and we know that you are in control. We don't know the hows and the whys, but we do know that You are the same yesterday, today and forever. You promised to never abandon your people and Your promise is eternal. You are calling your church to rise up once again, like Ezekiel. You call your church to prophesy, that the Spirit might come from North, South, East and West, from Connacht, Munster, Leinster, and Ulster; flooding rural valleys and city streets. That Your church might courageously proclaim that dry bones might live because Christ is risen! We lament with those who are broken, embrace those who are grieving, reach out to those who are sick and dying because You first loved us, and because You love us, all that we do, we do for love.

Forgive us for the times when pride creeps in. Forgive us for the moments when we momentarily take our sights off you. Above all, forgive us when we doubt that you could have all this in Your control. You are High King and the victory is won!

Your church has sung a new song. A church divided by human bickering now sings with the unity of the Trinity. We stand on the promise proclaimed so beautifully in the Psalms: How good and beautiful it is when God's people live in unity.....there you command Your blessing, even life forevermore. We release the offering of your people into the hands of women and men that You have gifted for this season. Let Your Spirit flood this nation and let us see Your Holy Spirit continue to transform lives and witness this lands children, born again with new life in Christ: a glimpse of 'Thy Kingdom Come!'

In the powerful name of Christ Jesus, risen from the dead and alive in our midst, we make our prayer. Amen

Every blessing for 2021

DRUMGLASS PARISH DUNGANNON & MOYGASHEL

Rector: VACANT
Rev Elizabeth Stevenson
Tel. 3885 1503
Rev Graham Hare
Tel. 8738 0360

Christmas now feels like a distant memory. The ministry and mission of Drumglass Parish was unique in 2020 as we celebrated the Christs' incarnation, but the reality of Jesus, Light of the World coming to earth to make his dwelling among us is a timeless truth that transforms our reality and shapes all of our hopes for 2021 and beyond. Drumglass Parish is looking ahead to the next few months with expectation, despite the restrictions, as we ask not just "how can we get through this?" but instead, "What could God do through this?".

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In faith we are trusting that the same God who has been faithful in the past will continue to lead and guide, to strengthen and sustain and will indeed remain able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine.

INSTITUTION OF NEW RECTOR

The Parishioners of Drumglass are looking forward to welcoming our new Rector, Rev'd Bryan Martin, along with his family to Dungannon. The institution will take place on 16th February. Please continue to pray for the Martin family as they prepare to move in these challenging times.

ONLINE WORSHIP

Drumglass Parish continues to use our online platforms to engage with each other and our wider community as our doors remain closed for public worship. We are very encouraged by the willingness of so many parishioners who are involved in various aspects of our online parish life. Each Sunday we have a dedicated Drumglass Kids Club which features worship and teaching for our primary school aged children as well as our morning service and plenty of opportunities to pray, learn and grow throughout the week.

PRIORITISING PRAYER

There is nothing simpler but yet nothing more significant in the life of any church than prayer. Building on our Advent initiative which saw us praying alphabetically through our entire parish family, Drumglass Parish will be prioritising prayer in the coming weeks through a number of initiatives including zoom prayer meetings, resources for individual prayer walks/runs/cycles and virtual prayer rooms.

SUNDAY TEACHING

Over the coming weeks, Graham and Elizabeth will be teaching on a special series, "Jesus at Home", looking at examples from the Gospels where Jesus visited a home. As we all engage with our church services from home, we hope that this will give encouragement and hope.

THE NEW DEAN

Parishioners of Drumglass were delighted to learn of the appointment of former Curate, Canon Shane Foster, as the new Dean of Armagh. We assure Shane, Kathleen and the children of our on-going prayers and support as they prepare to minister in this new context and look forward to sharing together in worship at Diocesan events in the cathedral again in the future.

B.E.M. CONGRATULATIONS

In her New Year Honours, Her Majesty The Queen awarded Drumglass parishioner, Miss Maureen McKeown a British Empire Medal. Maureen is well known and widely

respected across Dungannon and beyond and is a life-long parishioner of Drumglass. Her dedication to the life and witness of her church is an expression of her devotion to her Lord. Her selfless attitude to service and her steadfast example are an inspiration to many people. We are deeply proud of Maureen and assure her of the very warmest congratulations of the Drumglass Parish family.

HON. SECRETARY ELECTION

Drumglass Parish were delighted to offer our congratulations to Mr Vivian Suitor on his election as Hon. Lay Secretary to the Diocese of Armagh. Vivian has served Drumglass Parish with commitment and distinction in various roles over many years, including the area of safeguarding and continues to do so in his current role as Rectors Glebe Warden.

Together with his wife Iris, Vivian has served the wider life of the diocese over many years and we are confident that he will approach this new role the same level of steadfast devotion and competent diligence.

BURIALS:

8th December 2020 Mr Freddy Meneely
8th January 2021 Miss Dorothy McGlone

ERRIGLE KEEROGUE, BALLYGAWLEY AND KILLEESHIL
Rev. Naomi Quinn



Christmas was celebrated during our morning worship and on Christmas Eve and Day with restrictions in place. It was still a very special time and good to be able to worship together. Thank you to our select vestry members for all their help in organising for our Services and working through the protocols. Thank you also to our Sunday School leaders for distributing gifts (aware of mitigations) to our children during December.

At the time of writing we will be out of our church buildings for some weeks. Please do keep our parishes in prayer as we move forward. As we look ahead, our prayer group will meet via Zoom, and details will be announced via our facebook page. We have been exploring Mark's Gospel and taking time to pray together. Zoom is a very unusual way to meet together but it has allowed for fellowship and to support one another.

Looking back to September I would like to acknowledge the commitment of our former secretary in St. Matthew's, Errigle Keerogue. Mrs. Jill Eagleson has been meticulous with our administration and we are very grateful

for all her hard work. A presentation was made to Jill at our socially distanced Easter General Vestry.

While we continue through unusual circumstances we look forward to remembering Jesus' precious death and resurrection. We are reminded of the glorious hope that is ahead for all who truly trust in him. Let's keep one another in prayer, and seek to draw ever closer to Jesus.

(Just to note that this has been my first contribution to The Ambassador. This was due to unintentional administration issues, and I hope to pick this up for future editions).

BURIALS:

3 October 2020: Sherna Margaret Cooté (Committal of ashes)
St. Matthew's, Errigle Keerogue

MARRIAGE:

30 October 2020: Stacey McKeown and David McCarragher
St. Matthew's, Errigle Keerogue

KILLYLEA, CALEDON AND BRANTRY
Rev. Bill Atkins
Telephone: 028 3756 8874



FUNERAL SERVICES

22nd November - Kathleen Isobel (Dot) Marshall service at home followed by interment at Brantry aged 98 years
26th November - Robert Cooke, graveside service in Killylea cemetery aged 59 years
19th December - Sarah (Sadie) Armstrong service at home followed by interment at Castlecaulfield
29 December - George Hall masked and muted service in Killylea Church followed by interment in churchyard. Aged 89 years

The Bible is clear; death is an enemy and always brings sadness. Yet it is a defeated enemy; its sting has been drawn and it does not have the final victory. Jesus has promised that he would lose none of those given him by the Father, but raise them up on the last day. We may feel a sense of loss, but if we are in Christ, we're not lost- to die is gain. Thank you to Derreck Mann, chaplain at Craigavon hospital who comforts and prays with our parishioners as well as keeping us informed.

SERVICES

We continue as normally as we can. The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols took place as usual, with recorded readers. Not having seen the children except seated in cars, I was surprised at how much they have grown through the year, and delighted by their clear, mature reading. Despite

restrictions, we celebrated the incarnation with joy.

Drive-in services will continue for as long as the pandemic endures. It remains the safest way to do church, and we are delighted to welcome the cars of anyone who feels unable to attend indoor services. Normality will return sometime; meanwhile we do what we can. Drivers have become expert at leaving the car park quickly and efficiently. Smiles through windscreens is nearly as good as face to face meeting.

KILLYMAN

Revd Mark Lennox
Telephone: 028 8772 6635



The Select Vestry and Parishioners extend our sincere sympathy to Rev. Mark and his family on the death of his mum on 4th January. Mrs Heather Lennox was a blessing to our Parish and fully supported Rev. Mark in his ministry. We will really miss Heather at public worship, Bible Study, Prayer Meetings, Praise Band and at all Parish functions. We assure Rev. Mark and family of our love and prayers today and in the days ahead.

Sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the Christmas Appeal for food to support the Belfast Central Mission. Ruth delivered a car load of donations and they were very grateful for all of our contributions.

Thanks to everyone who read for our Carol Services both In-Building and for the Online one.

Sunday School continues online each Sunday with a video message and materials emailed to all families. If you would like to receive information for your children, please email: standrewskillyman@gmail.com

Rev. Mark would like to thank everyone who contacted him following the death of his mum. The calls, emails, cards and messages have been a source of great comfort.

LOUGHGALL & GRANGE

Rev Pete Smith
Telephone: 07816 881939



ST. LUKES ROOF REPAIRS.

In St. Lukes Parish, Loughgall, work has finally got underway with the replacement of the roof on the 'nave' along with repair work to the church tower. Additional remedial works will also be undertaken whilst the contractor is on site as we ensure that the church is fit for purpose, and a credible witness, for many years to come. The

parishioners of St. Lukes have been very generous in raising a substantial amount of funds for the work along with generous financial assistance from the **Heritage Lottery Funding and the National Churches Trust Cornerstone Grant**, for which we are very grateful.



Special mention also goes to our Honorary Secretary, Mrs Wendy George, for all her continued hard work and commitment, without which, this project would not have been so ably funded.

We look forward to the day when we can return to 'in Church' worship and in our newly refurbished church building, hopefully during April.

In the meantime we continue to worship in the church hall, on line only at the time of writing, which has also undergone significant improvements over the past few months. Our services of worship which can be accessed via our 'Youtube Channel' @ 'Parishes of Loughgall and Grange.'

CHRISTMAS IN LOUGHGALL AND GRANGE

Christmas past, whilst missing many of the

usual activities such as carol services, nativity plays, and school assemblies, was a time whereby we needed a certain 'creativity' in approaching the most wonderful time of the year and the birth of our Saviour.

Our Sunday school in both St. Lukes and St. Aidans provided wonderful on-line Nativity Plays involving many of our Sunday school kids as well as St. Aidans CL&CG Brigade providing a light-hearted video which included some familiar faces, most notably, our Archbishop John! All in all a great effort by everyone involved in all these creative displays. These can also be viewed on our Youtube Channel.

During Advent our housebound parishioners received a gift, card and a 'socially distanced' visit from the Rector which as always, was very gratefully received and appreciated.

In our community doors were knocked and selection boxes offered to those with young kids and large food hampers to others living alone. Again this was warmly welcomed and perhaps for some recipients, a surprise to see the local church willing to engage with those living in the community with little or no association with the church.

Our local foodbank in Armagh continues to receive generous donations of food items and financial contributions from our parishioners and where recently our donations have almost reached the wonderful amount of 1 tonne! A great total and a credit to all our parishioners! Our ministry to the Simon Community Hostel has

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Around the Diocese



Frozen River Blackwater by Archbishop John.



See House and Cathedral in snow



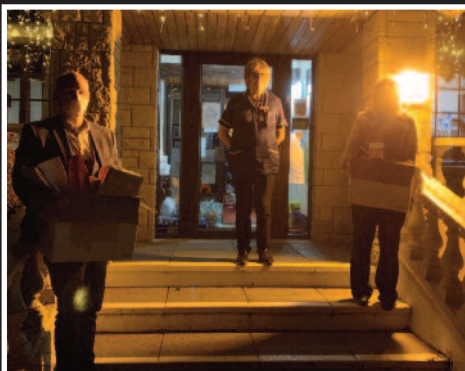
Ballymore Parish Church in the snow.



A gift of a painting by Canon Jim Campbell give to Mr Ronnie Watt on the occasion of his retirement from being Parish Reader.



Revd Geoff & Mrs Jill Hamilton with St Mark's Armagh Christmas Toy Collection.



Crossdernott brining Christmas gifts to local care home.



Crossdernott play it by ear Nativity.



Outdoor service at Desertlyn.

'We must plan for a better society'

Article written by Archbishop John McDowell for the Irish Times – 12th January 2021

Government files under embargo have been opened and people are no doubt looking back, as we do every year, with that customary range of reaction to the political past, running from "I told you so" to "Can you believe it?"

Pity the politicians who had neither foresight nor infallibility, but who had to make decisions in the moment. Perhaps in this year of all years we might also look towards 2021 with much the same feelings, adding only: "Where on earth do we begin?"

There are some signs of hope in relation to getting ahead of coronavirus, but probably a Slough of Despond to wade through first.

We will begin to see for real what the effects of Brexit will be on ordinary life on these islands, and for relationships within and between them. On top of that, we have the anniversary of the foundation of Northern Ireland to look forward to, which, no doubt, will be marked/celebrated/analysed/ignored/vituperated, depending on one's perspective.

Not to forget that, as David McWilliams puts it, our countries owe a shedload of money (to whom we're not quite sure) but we're in for pretty constant reminders that it is owed, I wonder will anyone volunteer to take on a bit more than their "fair share" of that burden? Well maybe there are some people who should, and I'm one of them.

Those of us who have lived through a period of rising prosperity for the past 20 and more years, a banking crisis notwithstanding. Our pension pots might not be as good as we had hoped but we'll not be eating crusts by the roadside.

Perhaps it's worth suggesting a few groups of people who might be uppermost in the minds of politicians and policymakers, as they plot a way forward on behalf of all of us towards a compassionate society that is a bit more than simply "fair".

There are the groups of relative newcomers to this island, who now live here as citizens, asylum seekers and migrants. During this pandemic they have already contributed considerably to our wellbeing as doctors, nurses, care staff, delivery drivers.

If they are an expression of the breadth and depth of our societies, then they should also become a source of that breadth and depth. Our ancient quarrels have not been bred in their bones and they have much to teach us as we pare back the onion layers of prejudice and indifference, as we must do if we are to live in a society that has an emotionally rich core.

And there are those, best symbolised by residents in care homes but not restricted to them, whose needs have never been too far up the policy agenda and not just during the pandemic. This includes, of course, the elderly.

Most of us are going to be old someday and it is in the interests of the whole of society for us all to be able to approach that state of being without paralysing anxieties which then flow through to our families.

Here in Northern Ireland, it was only when I was able to talk about it to my mother, who was born into hardship in 1920, that I was able to get some idea of what the term "National Health Service" meant to her generation. Not having to worry about what to do or where to go when you're sick.

The effect on the mental health and morale of a whole of society was incalculable because it was without limit. That system



of healthcare was devised during a world war, and implemented in its aftermath (in the middle of another shedload of debt). So we know that it can be done – if it is a priority.

Although I've kept it until near the end, there is pre-eminently the simple human priority to ensure that no child lives in poverty. Why would any democratic government not have that as a centrepiece of its social priorities? Why would any civilised society not consider making the necessary sacrifices?

Perhaps these are the questions which should be debated before rushed decisions are made that come to light, to our embarrassment and shame, 30 years from now. "Is that the best you could do?"

Thinking about the helplessness and dependence of children is not just for Christmas. Reflecting on this and its consequences in one of his letters from prison, the Lutheran theologian and martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, wrote, "... we cannot approach the manger as we approach the cradle of any other child. Whoever goes to this manger goes to where something will happen. When you leave the manger you leave either condemned or delivered ... either broken into pieces or knowing the compassion of God coming to you".

Is this the wisdom that will guide the policy of governments? If not, what wisdom will?

continued also with financial gifts, food and clothes gratefully received along with conversations with staff and residents with all due care and caution.

Locally in Loughgall, through the efforts of **Loughgall and District Improvements Association** of which I am delighted be Vice-Chairman, we held a 'Santa Drive-Through Event' in the local Country Park, rather than the traditional gathering at the Christmas Tree Lights Switch-On, given all the restrictions. This was a community event which was enjoyed by over 150 cars and families. Santa provided a gift and I provided a 'Christmas Story' booklet wonderfully produced by the Bible Society. Local resident associations provide great opportunities to have an impact for the Gospel if we are willing to devote some of our spare time to getting involved.

SOME THOUGHTS ON MISSION

Christmas is surely that time and opportunity to reach out beyond the walls of our churches to seeking out those in need. No longer is it perhaps, enough, to expect those in need in our communities to come knocking on our rectory doors seeking help. Jesus is our example, who came to 'seek' and to save. We are called to do like-wise. To be visible and active in our communities with an ear to the ground and our feet in the streets.

In doing so we will know who and where those in need are in our communities if we are active in them. In St. Lukes and St. Aidans, we have a renewed commitment to engaging with all within our communities and in our City of Armagh in this New Year. To seek out those in greatest need and to share the love of Christ in word and deed. At the time of writing I read this wonderful and deeply challenging quote from Mother Theresa on social media, 'Let us touch the dying, the poor, the lonely and the unwanted according to the graces we have received and let us not be ashamed or slow to do the humble work.'

The challenging question which arises then is how willing are we, am I, to get out and get active in the community and city where we live to actually engage with such folk. Those folk who reside in our local homeless hostels, or those who are living in the local housing estates quite evidently in dire need.

Surely this is all our 'calling' as those who profess to be 'Christ-like.' We recall the words of Christ himself as our motivation, as we find them in the Gospel of Luke 19: 10, 'For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost'. Perhaps we need to be willing to engage in the 'seeking' before we might start seeing the 'saving' occur.

It is our continued intention to ensure that everyone living in our communities know that the church is here for them rather than wanting from them. We have plans for more community engagement within this New Year of great opportunity.

Rev Pete Smith

MILLTOWN
 Rev. Geoffrey Walmsley
 Telephone 028 3898 9987



SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES

Hopefully by early February we will be able to meet again for Sunday morning worship. These services will be held at 11.00am in the Parish Hall until the Covid 19 situation further improves. For those who are unable to attend, the service will be available on our Facebook page.

MIDWEEK ONLINE BIBLE STUDY (FACEBOOK)

Each Wednesday morning at 11am we will continue our midweek Bible studies. You are very welcome to join us for these, lasting 20mins approx.

CE

Dear Friends

It is with much sadness and regret that there will be no CE Sunday Service or CE Sunday Lunch due to the Covid situation. After 15 years of CE Sunday followed by Turkey & Ham or Roast Beef dinner it is a great disappointment to us as CE leaders and to all the children who normally take part in Church telling everyone what they had been learning about in CE on a Monday night.

In CE over the years we have learnt about some mighty men and women for God! From Daniel to Moses, Joshua to Helen Cadbury and last year we were learning

about Elijah, how God used Elijah even though his life would be in danger. Elijah stayed faithful to God and God protected him. What a wonderful friendship God and Elijah had!

In these strange and difficult days let us be like Elijah and put all our fears and worries in God's hands.

Sadly, we didn't get to finish our lesson on Elijah last year as we had to finish up early but God willing we will be able to meet together again with the children to hear the end of the story of Elijah.

We just want to thank the parents for faithfully bringing their children to CE and for the children themselves for being a pure delight and it is a great privilege to be able to spend that hour on a Monday night teaching the boys and girls about our wonderful Saviour, Jesus and their need of salvation.

Finally thank you to everyone who has supported the CE over the years especially on CE Sunday and for attending the lunch afterwards every year.

We will miss this opportunity to spread God's message to you all in 2021 and the fellowship together.

The Bible says in: Philippians 4 v 19 *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*
 God Bless,
 Yours in Christ,
 CE Leaders

BB

Unfortunately, we will not be able to meet as a BB family in the near future but trust and pray that we will soon be able to resume our BB fellowship and activities.
 The Anchor Boys continue to meet by



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'Zoom' each Thursday at 7pm. The Anchor Boys just love 'Zoom'. We also had a visit from Santa, on our last night before Christmas.

CHRISTMAS TABLE QUIZ BY ZOOM

We would like to thank everyone who donated money or took part in our Christmas Table Quiz in aid of our link Diocese, North Kivu, D R Congo. Teams were able to 'Zoom' in from home and the total raised was £170.00

A great night was had by all and our congratulations go to the Woods family who won first prize of a Christmas hamper.

RICHHILL

Rev. Gary McMurray
Telephone: 028 3887 0798



THE JOURNEY TO CHRISTMAS LIGHTS UP RICHHILL

Back in December, St Matthew's Church lit up Richhill by turning it into a real life Advent Calendar. The Journey to Christmas told the story of Christmas over 24 days with windows decorated to illustrate each stage of the story. Parishioners and friends got involved to light up their windows in keeping with the theme for each day, with a new window being revealed each day.

A book to accompany the windows was produced, with a short Bible reading, explanation and carol for each day. A QR code with links to YouTube meant that the reader could also hear the carol being sung. A map also directed visitors to each of the windows, which were available each day from 4pm - 8pm. This enabled people to visit in a safe and socially-distanced way.

Pupils at Hardy Memorial School were invited to design an Advent Window based on the themes from The Journey to Christmas. Their work was of a very high standard, making it difficult for the judges to award prizes in each keystone.

While we weren't sure if we'd be able to hold our Sunday School nativity or Carol services, The Journey to Christmas helped us to share the story of Christmas with our local community. Our thanks to everyone who helped by decorating a window.

ONLINE SERVICES

Our services are available to watch on our Facebook page and YouTube channel. DVDs are also available, and are distributed each week. If you'd like to receive a DVD, then please let the Rector know.

UPDATES

Regular updates of what's happening in St Matthew's and our prayer diary are available

at our Facebook page
www.facebook.com/stmatthewsrichhill

SIXMILECROSS & TERMONMAGUIRKE

Rev. Alan Barr
Telephone: 028 8075 8218



SUNDAY SERVICES

- 1st Sunday Holy Communion
- 2nd Sunday Morning Prayer
- 3rd Sunday Morning Prayer
- 4th Sunday Family Service
- 5th Sunday Healing Service.

Proverbs 16:9 A man's mind plans his way [as he journeys through life], But the LORD directs his steps and establishes them. (Amplified Bible)

Last night Liz and I were watching an old episode of the detective show "Lewis". During one scene, in a pub, a reporter flourished a "Blackberry" phone and it was remarked later how cutting edge this technology was. Of course back in the day if, like me, you didn't have a Blackberry or a Nokia phone you were nobody! Over the last 20 years both Nokia and Blackberry have largely disappeared from the shelves, virtual or real, to be replaced by Apple, Samsung and others. Time certainly moves quickly and is very much a one way street. The Herculean efforts of Nokia and Blackberry to reclaim their dominant position in the market, to return to the good old days, have largely failed; and at great cost, financially and in other ways.

As we enter the season of Spring the trees are coming into leaf, the flowers are bursting forth in glorious colour, the birds are singing and hope fills our hearts. The question is: hope for what? There is much talk of a return to normality. The vaccines and the good weather promise relief from lock downs and shielding, the shops and cafes can open, perhaps a week on the beach somewhere warm beckons. Remember though that time is a one way street. We cannot go back to what used to be. As the old hymn reminds us, time is an ever rolling stream which carries us ever forwards. While we cannot go back, we can steer our course forwards. Proverbs 16:9 reminds us that, while we can plan all we want, our ultimate destiny lies in God's hands. We would be well advised to set our face towards God's Kingdom and to make that our goal and destination. As Lent and Easter approach we are reminded that God has already completed His part in making that journey possible. The road lies open, our guide stands ready; time to set out on our journey.

TARTARAGHAN & DIAMOND

Rev. Canon David Hilliard
Telephone: 028 3885 1289



BURIALS: 20th November 2020: Florence Graham, Sandringham Care Home, Portadown, to Enniskillen.

1st December 2020: Paul Hanna, Clantilew Road, to Tartaraghan.

2nd January 2021: Maisie McGregor, Sandringham Care Home, Portadown, to Kilmore.

CHURCH SERVICES AT TARTARAGHAN:

As these notes go to press, drive-in services are continuing each Sunday at Tartaraghan Church Car Park at 11.30am. Only the rector (and his wife) are in the building, but the service is relayed to the car-park. Many people have appreciated this opportunity to "meet" in a safe way for weekly worship. The building may be closed but the church is alive and well.

CHURCH SERVICES AT DIAMOND:

At the Diamond, we don't currently meet in the church but regular services continue to be available online via Diamond Grange Facebook page.

ALL AGES ONLINE: We have had online worship and videos from the Sunday Schools of both churches, the Youth Fellowship, the Boys' Brigade, the Diamond Choir and the Men's Group. All of these have been very much appreciated. Thank you to all who have contributed and to all who have put them together for online viewing. Catch up on Facebook with "Saint Paul's Church Tartaraghan" "St Paul's Diamond Grange Church" and "5th Portadown Boys Brigade, Tartaraghan".

100th BIRTHDAY: Hilda Trueman celebrated her 100th Birthday during the year 2020! We are so proud of our most senior parishioner, and we all wish her well. We extend our best wishes to Hilda, and our prayer is that she may continue in good health and know the Lord's richest blessings.

BRIAN RESTORES A PARISH ANTIQUE:

Brian Mehaffey, parishioner of Tartaraghan, has restored to working order a most unusual piece of parish apparatus - a coin-operated novelty wall machine which dates back to the early twentieth century, known as 'The Clown'. It was undoubtedly used at parish fetes, probably around 100 years ago, to provide novelty and raise money at the same time. It was discovered in the loft of the stables block at the back of the rectory, covered in dust, quite dilapidated and long-forgotten. Over a period of several

weeks, Brian painstakingly restored 'The Clown' to its original splendour. (See photograph in this issue.)

TARTARAGHAN CHRISTMAS LUNCH was delivered to many of our senior parishioners by a team of volunteers on one of the Saturdays in December, having been prepared by a willing band of wonderful cooks! Food hampers were also distributed, these were passed on to young families in the parish. Many thanks were expressed by all recipients.

THANK YOU to all those who decorated the church avenue at Tartaraghan for Christmas, which was much admired far and wide. Thank you also to all who donated to our various appeals in November and December, for the Salvation Army appeal, the Bishops' Appeal, the Hospice appeal and Crosslinks.

THE WALKING CLUB met every Thursday morning until Christmas. As these notes go to press, walks are suspended due to the latest lockdown, but we hope to resume as soon as possible. Full details from Mary Odgers: 07745 625125.

BLESSINGS: May you stay safe and well in these unprecedented times. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

TULLANISKEN AND CLONOE
 Rev. Henry Blair
 Telephone: 028 8774 0919



Normally this copy of the magazine would have me looking forward to all the events of Lent and Easter but at the time of writing we are in lockdown and the church doors are closed at present. It is therefore difficult to look forward to Easter and say what might happen, never mind getting to the point of making firm decisions!

Lent is off course that time of year when we reflect on how Jesus was taken out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit after His baptism and we are told that He fasted for 40 days. Matthew's account of this time gives us the most detail of this time in the life of Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11).

This was a time when He set aside the normal routine of life and took time out to be with God. Often we make little of Lent and see it as a time to give up something that we might lose some weight, but for Jesus the heart of this time was to take time out to deepen His relationship with the Father. We have, I think, missed the point of Lent completely if in the giving up of something we don't use that time to spend more time with God, whether through reading the Bible

or simply pausing to reflect and pray on God's place in our lives.

This year I cannot help but think that Lent has arrived a little early, as lockdown forces us to change our lifestyle, but the question is, "Where is God in your lockdown lifestyle?"

I do understand that lockdown may have made life very busy for you with home schooling and working from home bringing extra pressure to bear, but in the busyness you actually need to make time for God.

At the end of that time in Matthew's gospel we see that Jesus was tested by the devil. This was, if you like, His 'lockdown examination' to see what He had learned through His time.

The three questions put to Jesus and the answers He gives are good ones for us to reflect on as well.

1. *Man shall not live by bread alone.* The challenge is to meet all of the material needs that we have. Perhaps your experience of lockdown has made you more aware of your own attitude to your material needs and to know that just meeting your material needs does not bring a lasting peace.

2. *Do not put the Lord your God to the test.* The devil quotes a promise that God makes in His Word that He will protect his Son, but Jesus' response is simply that we do not need to give God random tests to prove His love for us.

3. *Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.* The only thing that we need to worship, and indeed are called to worship, is God. Worship is declaring our love for God and how important He is to us. During this lockdown as you have not been able to perhaps go to church have you still taken the time to truly worship God as in being practical in helping others and praying or have you allowed other things to receive your worship?

Can I encourage you to pause and look back over your 2020 and your experience of lock-down and ask yourself where has God been in my life and what will I do to change that in Lent this year?

God Bless

Rev Henry

CHRISTMAS 2020

Christmas this year was a very different experience and while we were able to meet together we still had our online services for those who were isolating. Thanks to all of our young people who took part in our online nativity and for everyone involved in our Christmas services.

PARISH ORGANISATIONS

At present none of our parish organisations

have started for the new season, but we will let you know when they will resume.

BIBLE STUDY

As meeting in person has been difficult we have continued with online Bible studies in two formats. We have a short 10-14 minute video that can be accessed through the parish webpage www.Tullanisken.org and also through zoom Bible study that allows us to have some level of questioning and discussion of the passages we are looking at.

TYNAN, AGHAVILLY AND MIDDLETOWN

Rev'd Matthew Hagan
Tel: 028 37568619
mhhagan@hotmail.com



CHRISTIAN BURIAL

Aghavilly

6th January 2021 – George Moore, Armagh.

LOCKDOWN

Due to the on-going Coronavirus Covid-19 Pandemic our Parish Churches were asked to close due to the current serious and worsening situation and also adhering to public health guidance that public gathering for worship and all other in person Church activities are to cease until Saturday 6th February 2021 and this was to be reviewed in late January. Funerals and weddings can still take place with numbers being limited. Having recently had a funeral in the current lockdown it was wonderful that the family were able to have the funeral service in Church compared to the first lockdown where Church buildings were completely closed for such occasions.

During the closure of the Churches for Sunday Services we provide on-line services each week and keep in contact with parishioners through our weekly Sunday services and also through our parish WhatsApp, text messages, emails and phone calls as well.

ON-LINE SUNDAY SCHOOL

On-line Sunday School remains popular with our Sunday Schools meeting each week via Zoom or linking in to the ssarmagh website that was set up through Tynan Rural Deanery in conjunction with St. Mark's Parish Church, Armagh. Hopefully our Sunday Schools will soon be able to meet in our parish halls in due course.

COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT

Additional funding has been secured to provide an additional range of gardening classes this year and funding has been secured to purchase timber to renew the timber surrounds on our existing raised beds and perhaps build additional raised

beds depending on demand. We plan to put the new polytunnel to good use this year and already members are talking about potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, courgettes etc.

AGHAVILLY YOUTH CLUB ADULT KNEE RUGS AND BABY BLANKETS



Aghavilly Youth Club have a range of hand crocheted blankets for babies and hand crocheted knee rugs for adults. Funds raised are for Aghavilly Youth Club. Due to Coronavirus Covid-19 restrictions and fund-raising activities cancelled the Youth Club are trying their best to raise much needed funds for the on-going work of Youth Club and your support will be very much appreciated. Baby blankets £18 and Adult knee rugs £25. Please contact Miss E. Corry on 028 37523579 for further details.



DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

Some activities for Aghavilly Youth Club Duke of Edinburgh's Award have been amended due to Coronavirus Covid-19 Pandemic. Further details will be available in the next issue of the Ambassador magazine.

WOODSCHAPEL

Rev. Ruth Murray
Telephone: 028 7941 8311



A GLANCE BACK

Over the season of Advent and Christmas we had many occasions to be uplifted. Christmas bags were delivered to our senior parishioners and Gifts were given to our Sunday School members. Thank you to all who helped with the preparation and the distribution. We had our Nine lessons and Carols - our readers and singers were displayed on a screen as they had recorded the readings from their own homes, and the carols recorded by our socially distanced choir and organist. Along with many other services - including a "Virtual Nativity" by the Sunday School - they are all still available by clicking the link on our web page or on Facebook.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?



It is our Fogging Machine. Its spray cleanses the church so that a second service may be held sooner than previously possible for us. For example, it was used over Christmas enabling us to worship at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve, 10.30am on

Christmas morning, and then on Sunday 27 December for our regular service at 12noon.

"Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing."
1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 11

FORWARDS WE GO

No doubt there will be more Zoom meetings, more openings and closings, more Orders of Service arriving by post, more purchases of hand sanitizers, more socially distanced hymn singing But we go forward as we are doing - encouraging and building up each other. And hopefully we will continue to find new ways of doing this - sharing ideas with others and trying new ventures that may (or may not be!) successful.

The guidance is constantly changing, but we know God's love is constant -

"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end"
Lamentations chapter 3, verse 22.

Take a moment to look up that verse in your Bible and read a few verses before it and after it.

Take heart!

GFS Around the Diocese

Like everyone, GFS has experienced a year like no other. However, branches have managed to keep in touch by WhatsApp, Zoom and through Facebook. In our different ways we have kept the spirit of GFS alive by 'Bearing one another's burdens'. Some branches have made scrubs and helped in whatever way they could.

We were able to keep contact with our GFS friends across the world and see what they were doing through social media. We were unable to meet in person but we continued in spirit.

We know that during this time prayer has been a tremendous force bringing support and comfort to each other.

We ask you all to continue to pray for GFS across the world: for its girls, leaders and their families and parishes. It does not look as though we will be able to meet in person this season, but we look forward to the day when our meetings and fellowship can recommence.

We thank you all for your support for GFS and look forward with hope.

Around the Diocese



As Covid19 continued to affect church life everywhere, the church organisations at Tartaraghan decided to move outside with their Christmas displays and re-created the Christmas Story in the church avenue. These displays were admired far and wide, with many people stopping to look and take photographs. Pictured are some of the displays, featuring the Angel Gabriel's announcement to the Virgin Mary, a nativity scene and the wise men



Canon David Hilliard took to the bicycle early in December to deliver letters to parishioners with Christmas greetings and giving arrangements for Christmas, calling personally to parishioners within cycling distance for a short chat at the door! He is pictured setting off with a bagful on his back.



Brian Mehaffey, of Tartaraghan parish, is pictured with 'The Clown', a coin-operated novelty wall machine which dates back to the early twentieth century. It was found in the loft of the stables block at the rectory, covered in dust, quite dilapidated and long-forgotten. Brian decided to take on the task of a painstaking restoration, and was delighted with the challenge. It was undoubtedly used at parish fetes in the past to provide novelty and raise money at the same time.



Christmas at Derryloran.



Could YOU be a Short Breaks carer?

The Short Breaks service is designed to provide short breaks, within a family setting, for children & young people with disabilities, where it has been assessed that their parents/carers require a break from their caring responsibilities. Short Breaks can be anything from a few hours a day once a month to overnight stays in the short break carers home.

Our current Short Break carers are people from a variety of backgrounds who are compassionate, caring & willing to open their homes to provide Short Breaks to children and young people with a disability. Carers may own or rent their home, work or receive benefits and may or may not have children of their own, carers may be married, cohabiting or single.

Our current waiting list consists of children who urgently require short breaks but we do not have enough carers to meet this need. To become a Short Breaks carer you do not need any specific skills or qualifications just the willingness to make a positive difference to a child's life. We offer allowances, training, dedicated support and flexibility around your schedule.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic we **URGENTLY** require more carers than ever before given the pressures that parents are currently facing.

We welcome all enquiries. If you would like further information please contact a member of the Short Breaks team today! We would love to hear from you!



Short Breaks Team Contact Details:

T: 028 37 564350

E: shortbreaks.team@southerntrust.hscni.net

W: <https://southerntrust.hscni.net/service/children-with-disabilities/short-breaks-team/>



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On his transfer North, Reverend Geoffrey Walmsley retired from Dundalk Grammar school duties on the 13th November 2020.

“Good Afternoon! We had hoped for a substantially larger audience; but the Pandemic has regrettably prevented us from organising that.

Graeme Treadwell, Chairperson of the Board of Governors, has asked me to say a few words on his behalf and the Governors on this sad occasion, as The Reverend Geoffrey Walmsley leaves us for pastures and congregations new.

It was over six years ago that Geoffrey first came among us, which is hard to believe. He has proved to be an inspired choice of the previous Archbishop Richard Clarke, fitting in wherever and whenever he is needed. Why is this we may ask?

My own observations of his ministry amongst us can be understood through a long list of adjectival superlatives for Geoffrey is: empathetic, inclusive, kind, patient, hard-working, polite, humourous, tolerant and respectful of all.

We have rarely had such an amiable pastor who sits so comfortably amongst us. Never an angry word, everything can be solved through

kindness and respect ... and then we come to your musical talents and television appearances during this Covid-19 era! Is there no end to what you can do? In truth, the answer is that you are multi-talented as well as being a simply super guy.

So looking to the future in a positive way, we can all be thankful that you are only just moving up the road, and therefore there is a strong possibility that you shall visit Dundalk Grammar School often, even if it is only to say “hello” and have a cup of tea! It is easy to say this, but please do act upon this invitation ... You are always welcome here. And so ... “thank you” Geoffrey for all you have done for the community that is Dundalk Grammar School.

The Governors wish me to present you with a crystal-glass memento of your time with us; as well as a small ‘brown’ envelope containing some petrol money to ensure you visit us often for now there can be no excuse not to do so.

May God bless you in your new ministry.”

This address given by Dr Laurence Swan (Governor) took place at the front door of the school at 12.30 hours in the presence of the Headmaster Mr Jonathan Graham with all observing Covid-19 protection regulations.

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Diocese of Armagh

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S LEADERS' ON-LINE TRAINING

JANUARY TO MARCH 2021.

Up and coming on-line initiatives...for Youth leaders.

- 28th January:** "Youth leaders' forum". 7.30pm. An opportunity to connect with each other regarding our youth ministry. Guest speaker, Simon Henry, National Youth Officer for the Church of Ireland.
- 4th February:** "Shaken workshop". 7.30pm. Led by "The Big House", Belfast. This workshop is for all Youth leaders and Clergy in terms of a Biblical support resource pack addressing young people's mental health needs. Free leaders resource guide for all who attend!
- 11th February:** "Youth Leaders' forum". 7.30pm. Keeping creative with on-line youth ministry. An hour's conversation with Mr. Andrew Watson, Youth Minister Ballyholme Parish. Ideas, resources, tips and some honesty regarding on-line youth ministry!

For Children and Sunday School leaders...

The Diocese of Armagh in partnership with the Church of Ireland Youth Department is delighted to be able to offer children's ministry training through a specifically designed version of the "Aurora" programme. Participants can take the whole programme or whatever workshop suits your local needs or interests. All Aurora sessions 7.30pm to 9.00pm.

Aurora training sessions:

- 25th February:** What is Children's Ministry? A look at the theology of children's ministry and children's faith/spiritual development.
- 4th March:** Practical approaches to children's ministry. A fresh look at children's ministry, programmes, ideas and support for Parishes.
- 11th March:** Children and worship. How to engage children and families in Parish worship.

For more information and to book in for any of these sessions, please email or call David Brown on 07557 655 860 or doycarmagh@gmail.com

CHURCH ARMY NOTES

Sr Valerie Thom writes ...

Church army is forever changing, but at the heart of everything is the ethos of our founder Wilson Carlisle Sharing faith through word and action.



Zacchaeus Outreach Project

The exciting news that thanks to Awards for All Community Grant we are receiving funding to renovate the inside of a new bus and thanks to Eurocoach we hope to have a new bus on the road for when the marching season begins again. This large grant will enable us to make space for the defibrillator, an awning for more outside space, replacing the kitchen, seating etc in the bus. With some fund raising we will also replace the bus. All this would not have been possible without the help and support of Eurocoach.



It had been planned that Valerie would do a sponsored exercise bike cycle of 100km but the committee decided that due to the pandemic it wasn't the right time to look for sponsorship but during October/November Valerie did cycle 420 km as you can see from the photo.

other exciting things will be happening as well. It is exciting as the coaches haven't been here for 4 years. As soon as we can we will have booking forms etc. printed up and distributed that will probably be in March/April time.

Again there have been a lot of bands who have had members who have been bereaved suddenly and our prayers are for them all.

Valerie is working with Armagh Bands Forum on joint projects for the future but like so much at the moment a lot depends on the pandemic. The bands forum has been able to access funding for face masks etc. and these will be distributed to band for members and their communities.

The big news is that Liverpool Football Club Foundation are planning to visit in the summer the visit is in the early stages of planning it is hoped to have a day in Markethill, Omagh and Cookstown for training by the coaches and hopefully some



Lasting Legacies



Like many, Bishops' Appeal saw a sharp drop in donations and in its ability to fund vital supports for struggling communities around the world since the beginning of the Pandemic and the closing of church buildings. However, due to the continued generosity of parishes and individuals, combined with the receipt of two generous legacies, the Committee was recently able to fund multiple transformative projects.

Added to these our Mother and Child Advent Appeal was also partially funded by these legacies, which is supporting:

- emergency food for lactating mothers and malnourished children in Nepal,
- adequate shelter for families fleeing conflict in DR Congo,
- training supports for emergency foster parents for children with trauma or disabilities in Cambodia and
- rehabilitation of health clinics for pregnant women in Sierra Leone.

One such legacy donation was from a lifelong advocate of education, so it was our privilege and our honour to direct those funds to support quality education for vulnerable children in Uganda; access to education and inclusive extra-curricular activities for children with disabilities in Kenya; and to Literacy Circles in Burundi for women who never before had the opportunity to access education.

Anyone gifting a donation in their Will can direct their giving based on their life's passions. Bishops' Appeal will identify carefully vetted projects to ensure they not only meet with best practices, are sustainable and are properly monitored, but that the people who are most in need are targeted to access the supports.

Your legacy could fund vocational training for Self Help Group members who learn

basic numeracy, accountancy and business skills to help them grow their small enterprises.


Your legacy could support ante-natal and post-natal care in countries where it is dangerous to have a baby, or to refurbish health clinics that currently have no water or electricity.

Your legacy could fund emergency responses after natural disasters, as well as the longer term response of rebuilding the communities again.

Your legacy could support access to drought resistant seeds and training in conservation farming methods for entire communities where erratic weather patterns are causing hunger, desperation and migration.


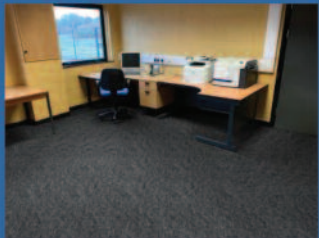
Your legacy could support the provision of a clean water source, the protection of people being trafficked, access to sanitary protects for young women, the safeguarding of creation through the protection of a tribal group or forests and soil. Through our global partners we have the capacity to direct legacies to the causes closest to your heart and for those funds to reach the people who need it most.

Our legacies can be extraordinary. Our life's passion can have an impact on the world's poorest people. Thank you for your support and consideration of the work of the Bishops' Appeal.



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