
JOHN 1:14
**Armchair Christmas Quiz**

All proceeds going to Christian Aid via Bishops’ Appeal especially the worldwide Covid-19 relief funds. Christian Aid/Bishops’ Appeal are charities which provide emergency and long term aid wherever it is most needed in the world. ENJOY the Quiz and Please Give Generously.


Very Revd. Denis Sandes, Ballyhasty, Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary E53 HX85

| Name: |  
| Address: |

| ANWERS: Creepy Crawleys and associates! Example: Sounds like mother’s sister! ANT |
|---|---|
| 1. | LBJ’s wife! |
| 2. | Could be a tractor? |
| 3. | Hen’s hubby and fish! |
| 4. | Run away |
| 5. | Pilot version of example? |
| 6. | Military version of example! |
| 7. | Good with Wild Honey, says John |
| 8. | All of us Bad! |
| 9. | Expensive Coat |
| 10. | Lots of legs? |
| 11. | Found in Old style Chemist shop. |
| 12. | Equestrian fly? |
| 13. | This fly is a heavy lifter. |
| 14. | Welsh Fly? |
| 15. | WW2 Fighter plane |
| 16. | Good for fishing |
| 17. | In the Russian Navy? |
| 18. | Pale Veg |
| 19. | Correct mark |
| 20. | This fly can sing |
| 21. | Rhymes with house |
| 22. | This fly is a young lady! |
| 23. | Jumps on the lawn: |
| 24. | Papa on stilts? |

Please feel free to copy this and/or email it among your friends.

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Please feel free to copy this and/or email it among your friends.
All communication is mission and witness. Our diocesan strapline, Transforming Community, Radiating Christ lets everyone know the purpose of all our communication. n:vision is one of the Diocese’s tools of communication and in this Christmas issue n:vision includes different expressions of mission and witness.

How did God the Creator choose to communicate with creation? Through his Son, Jesus Christ the Word of God, who came to be one of us. Jesus Christ is both the Messenger and the Message of God’s infinite love for the world - the perfect communication. John 3:16.

For communication the importance of ‘words’ is obvious but, in Christ, communication is lived out in his whole life of mission - word and action, which should inspire our speech and written word, our body language, humour, art, behaviour and our interaction with others.

Russell Baker, Pulitzer Prize-winning American Journalist wrote: When speaking aloud, you punctuate constantly - with body language. Your listener hears commas, dashes, question marks, exclamation points, quotation marks as you shout, whisper, pause, wave your arms, roll your eyes, wrinkle your brow. In writing, punctuation plays the role of body language. It helps readers hear the way you want to be heard.

As I know most of the n:vision contributors I imagine them speaking as I edit their writing. My aim is to allow their communication to come alive through my editing (especially punctuation and grammar). If you know some of the contributors to this issue then try to ‘hear’ their voice and ‘see’ their body language as you read their articles and the parish notes. There are some real heart-searching moments, inspiring moments, ‘laugh-out-loud’ moments - enjoy!

It is my fervent prayer that the joy and glory of Christmas dispels the darkness and gloom of Covid-19 with all the accompanying restrictions on our movements. We travel in hope and in the light of Our Lord and Saviour, Immanuel.

Rev Canon Katie McAteer, the Editor
E: kmcateer51@gmail.com

In this issue...
E3 - Scripture in Action
Engage - Equip - Empower...

An E3 Worker for the North West. For some this has been an answer to years of prayer, for others it prompts the question “what is E3?” For me, it was something I was excited about, but never imagined I would have the privilege of being a part of in the way that I am.

As a school pupil I saw E3 workers from other areas support and encourage their local Scripture Union (SU) groups and I so desperately wanted it for my school and my area. I attended prayer events; praying for our local schools and for an E3 worker for the North West. I couldn’t wait to have a school’s worker supporting me as I lead our SU committee. Little did I know then that the job would be advertised about four years after that prayer meeting, just as I was looking for a job. God may not always answer our prayers in the way we want, but His way will always be immeasurably more than we could have imagined.

The E3 Schools Project is run by Scripture Union Northern Ireland and aims to work with local churches to minister to their local schools. At the heart of Scripture Union is Psalm 78:4 which says, “We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.” I love this vision of telling children and young people the “praiseworthy deeds of the Lord” because, while many children and young people have heard of God, they aren’t aware of His Lord because, while many children and young people have heard of God, they aren’t aware of His Lord because, while many children and young people have heard of God, they aren’t aware of His Lord because, while many children and young people have heard of God, they aren’t aware of His Lord because, while many children and young people have heard of God, they aren’t aware of His Lord because, while many children and young people have heard of God, they aren’t aware of His Lord because, while many children and young people have heard of God, they aren’t aware of His Lord because, while many children and young people have heard of God, they aren’t aware of His Lord because, while many children and young people have heard of God, they aren’t aware of His power, and the wonders he has done. I love this vision of telling children and young people the “praiseworthy deeds of the Lord” because, while many children and young people have heard of God, they aren’t aware of His power, and the wonders he has done. I love this vision of telling children and young people the “praiseworthy deeds of the Lord” because, while many children and young people have heard of God, they aren’t aware of His power, and the wonders he has done.

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The three E’s explain the three main aims of the project; to engage, equip and empower. We aim to engage school pupils with the opportunities and resources that may lead them to encountering Jesus through His word, praying that they can make an informed decision about Jesus and His truth. We do this primarily through assemblies, RE lessons and SU groups. In the current climate, engaging is slightly different as we cannot physically visit schools. However, we continue to engage through producing online assemblies, creating RE lessons and even “zooming in” to SU groups.

Secondly, we equip Christian pupils and teachers by giving them support and encouragement to facilitate growth in Christian maturity and to encourage them to be salt and light in their schools. We do this through providing training opportunities and distributing resources. One way we equip pupils is through our pupil leadership conference, “Making your Mark”, which is for those serving on their SU committee. Currently we are focusing on how we can equip in the midst of this “new normal” and so we are running 6 online training sessions called “Times like These.” These range from training how to produce online assemblies to family discipleship. Check out the Scripture Union Northern Ireland Facebook page for more information on these. We also equip SU leaders through gathering them to share ideas and to pray in cluster groups. This is proving essential at the moment as staff can feel isolated and in need of creative ideas to keep their SU running in a way which abides with current restrictions.

Finally, we empower churches to actively pray, support and get involved in Schools ministry by partnering with the project. This is achieved through running empowering workshops, distributing prayer news and giving presentations to help others catch the vision of the project and learn about how they can get involved.

This is the beauty of school’s work; it is an opportunity to reach all children and young people. Children and young people don’t have to go to church, but they do have to go to school. It’s the place where they spend most of their time and where they are open to learning. School years are some of the most formative years in our faith development. It’s a time when many are searching for something more and the E3 project aims to give them the opportunity to hear God’s good news, prayerfully expecting that they will choose to be in relationship with Him.

In Ephesians 5:16 Paul encourages the church to “[make] the most of every opportunity” and therefore, while schools are open to us, we want to make the most of those open doors. It is currently still a legal requirement for schools to teach religious education and hold a collective act of worship. This is a massive opportunity for us to serve our local schools; through equipping staff with RE lessons which fit the curriculum, or by coming into schools and taking an assembly.

While I am the E3 worker for the North West, the E3 project only works with the involvement of the local church. Therefore, here are three easy ways you can get involved:

1) Pray: I would love you to join me in praying for our local schools. One of the easiest ways to do this is to subscribe to my monthly prayer news. If you would be interested in receiving this send me an email at rachelm@suni.co.uk

2) Act: perhaps you would like to volunteer to help with an assembly, an RE lesson or an SU group. Or maybe you can think of other creative ways to serve your local schools. There are lots of small things you can do, but they make a big difference.

3) Give: you can give financially to secure the longevity of the project, or maybe you could give of your time to promote E3 through existing connections you have with schools and churches.

All your support and prayers are very much appreciated. I look forward to working in partnership with the local church as we aim to make God’s good news known to those in our local school communities.

Rachel Miller, E3 North West
Facebook Page: E3 School’s Project-North West
Email: rachelm@suni.co.uk

The E3 Project in the North West covers Derry-Londonderry, Limavady and Strabane
Dear friends,

Christmas, 2020, is going to be quite unlike any other Christmas in living memory.

You have to go back over a century - to December 1918 - for the last time when the holiday was disrupted by a pandemic. Back then, it was Spanish Flu, which claimed tens of millions of lives. Today, it’s Covid-19, which has already killed well over a million people.

For all the disruption to people’s day-to-day lives, many are looking ahead nervously to the festive season and wondering how the coronavirus will affect their Christmas plans.

While Easter is the highlight of the Church calendar, Christmas is the great family occasion - the time when ports and airports are thronged with sons and daughters, children and grandchildren, making their way home to their loved ones. It is, undoubtedly, the most joyful time of year - usually.

As I write, though, joy is thin on the ground. Our churches in Raphoe are closed. Those in Derry are open, but with severe restrictions in place. Nobody knows exactly what the last week of December may bring.

At the beginning of the pandemic, as the community rallied together, I heard someone saying we had to anticipate uncertainty. That’s easier said than done. Uncertainty, separation from loved ones, and fear of the virus have all taken their toll. The second wave is leaving people discouraged, anxious, fearful even.

Things have changed undoubtedly. But the central truth of the Christmas message remains unaltered and undimmed. Jesus is Emmanuel. God is with us, shining a bright light in the darkness of the pandemic. God loves us. He cares about us. He is here to help us through these difficult days.

Clearly, there won’t be much opportunity for fellowship this Christmas, but we can still invite God into our lives. We should place our trust in Him.

This will all pass, some day. We will meet again. We’ll worship together again. We’ll sing together again. And as hard as it is to believe, right now, there will be bright days again. In the meantime, let’s do our bit: let’s follow the rules, listen to the scientists, stay safe, love our neighbours - and let’s stay close to God.

+Andrew Derry & Raphoe
Diocesan President Jacqui Armstrong updates n:vision on this year’s 16 Days.

Are you walking on eggshells? What has been happening in Ireland in 2020? Sad to report - domestic abuse incidents in Ireland continue to increase. Pandemic times have brought to the surface what is now termed by the World Health Organisation, a “shadow pandemic”. In Ireland alone Women’s Aid has seen a 43% increase in calls to their helplines since March 2020. It is estimated one in three women and girls worldwide experience gender-based violence, including domestic abuse.

The PSNI respond to a domestic abuse incident every 17 minutes and Divisional Protective Services Units have been rolled out in all Garda divisions. In effect, specially trained officers are now available across the island to ensure that when victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence present to the PSNI or the Gardaí - at perhaps their most vulnerable moment - they are met with professional and expert assistance.

Refuge services and helplines tirelessly work to provide help, support and guidance to victims past and present. Community engagement and advocacy play an important role in combatting and supporting victims of domestic abuse and gender-based violence.

In this Mothers’ Union continues to play its role through advocacy, prayer and practical matters. Each year, beginning on the 25th November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ending on the 10th December, International Human Rights Day; we are actively engaged in the international campaign, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

Throughout the year branches support refuges, according to local needs, providing items, home start packs and vouchers for families that have just arrived. The response from members has been phenomenal.

CRITICALL is a new initiative to support people emerging from domestic violence circumstances compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic. Starting in Dublin and spreading to volunteer centres in other counties, CRITICALL coordinate donations of items and deliver directly to refuges. People have volunteered their holiday home or second property as a safe haven and letters of courage and hope are welcomed for those emerging from domestic abuse. Mothers’ Union is delighted to have assisted in getting a CRITICALL drop off centre up and running in Cork.

Advocacy in 2020 has included calling on the Northern Ireland Assembly to hasten the introduction of the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill, and in the Republic of Ireland to encourage further resourcing to enable the full implementation of all aspects of the Domestic Violence Act 2018. This work is ongoing. Leading assemblies and workshops in secondary schools is stalled at the present time. Schools with which Mothers’ Union have engaged will be receiving 16 Days bookmarks. Each Mothers’ Union member will also receive two bookmarks and is invited to pass one onto another person. Why?

Well, experience has taught us that keeping the conversation going is pivotal to keeping domestic abuse high on the agenda. Individually we may not create a huge impact, but as Mother Teresa, reminded us we can do small things with great love. Together, our actions contribute to the creation of safe spaces, openness and understanding. Together we can challenge the stigma surrounding domestic abuse, tackle the root causes and offer better supports.

In 2020 the annual All-Ireland Mothers’ Union 16 Days Prayer Vigil is moving from a series of dedicated events to individual homes. Mothers’ Union have produced a 16 Days Prayer Diary which highlights the issues involved, together with the positive work taking place across the Church of Ireland in highlighting and combatting domestic abuse and gender-based violence.

The 16 Days Prayer Diary is informative, and thought-provoking, drawing its readers into reflection and prayer accompanied by simple points of action. A copy can be downloaded at: http://www.mothersunion.ie/files/16-Days-Prayer-Diary-for-Interactive.pdf. Copies may also be ordered from Mothers’ Union by contacting allirelandmothersunion@gmail.ie. Postage costs will apply.

Worldwide, in 2020 Mothers’ Union is hosting a Global Day of Action on Saturday 5th December. This Global Day is centred around that disturbing statistic that “1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced domestic or
sexual abuse”. Mothers’ Union, as a leading women’s organisation, believes this to be unacceptable. We, male and female, are created equal and, as Christians, we are destined to portray God’s kingdom in love. Jesus came that we might have life to the full - may we continue to work resolutely towards this goal in 2021.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

The 16 Days of Activism and Global Day of Action will be framed in the context of prayer and action with a series of online events:

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM...

Wednesday 25th November:
Online Morning Prayer - 8am.
Worship to mark the start of the 16 Days of Activism - Facebook Live and YouTube.
ZOOM Evening Service - 8.20pm.
Derry & Raphoe Worship for first evening of 16 days of Activism.

Sunday 29th November:
Online Morning service from St. Brigid’s Church, Castleknock. Speaker: Ifra Ahmed, Ambassador for ending FGM (female genital mutilation) and gender-based violence.

Saturday 5th December:
GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION. Online Protest launch - 9am. Throughout MU social channels including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
Online “Cup of Tea for No More 1 in 3” - 11.30am. Join us with a cup of tea as we take time out of our day to reflect and pray for our “No More 1 in 3 campaign.” This will be followed by Midday Prayers - Facebook Live and YouTube.

Sunday 6th December:
16 Days online service from Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh - You Tube.

Thursday 10th December:
Online Compline - 8pm Worship to mark the close of the 16 Days of Activism Facebook Live and YouTube:

Loving Lord, your care and love are ever present in our lives. We pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world who live in situations of abuse and violence.

Give them hope in their hopelessness; help them find strength in their weakness; grant them freedom from their oppression; transform their brokenness into wholeness; and heal their wounds, visible and invisible. Grant us all the courage and wisdom, grace and humility, to act at all times with compassion and care. And grant all who are harmed by abuse or coercion, peace through justice. This we ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THOSE WORKING TO END SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

God bless you with insight to recognise violence in all its forms, and courage to name it, speaking out for justice. The Lord Jesus bless you with compassion for the vulnerable, and grace to stand with them, sharing his strength. The Holy Spirit bless you with a prayerful heart, and power to breathe peace, transforming the world. The blessing of the holy and glorious Trinity, eternal Wisdom, living Word, abiding Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

(With thanks to the Anglican Church of Austrália)
I have been writing poetry for some time now and, quite by accident rather than design, I was asked to speak at a church ladies’ group. I have to confess, the first speaking engagement caused my heart to have a few extra beats (and still does to this day).

Word got around and soon I was taking a lot of groups on a journey of part of my life and faith via poetry. My family and friends were always asking me to compose poems for special occasions and we had many trips down memory lane.

My husband Bertie has always wanted me to print my work but I never had the confidence. Recently he suggested that I produce a book in aid of charity and that was the prompt I needed. It was a very strange feeling to approach a printer about printing my own work but the thought of raising funds for the RNLI and my own church restoration fund spurred me on.

Choosing which poems to publish took a while and my book is an eclectic mix of humour, sadness, inspiration, disappointment and hope. The feedback I get from people has been good and quite often they say that they have never laughed and cried so much from page to page. There has also been quite a number of people who have returned to purchase extra copies for presents.

My most poignant message was from a lady who was in hospital with Covid 19 and she requested a copy of my book. She said she read a lot of it out to the ward where there was laughter, tears and clapping. One of her fellow patients died two days later and she was telling his wife about how he had enjoyed the poems she had read and when she gets out of hospital she wants to purchase some for his family. I was deeply touched.

People asked me why I chose the title ‘Second Bite of the Cherry’ and I tell them it becomes clear as they read a particular poem.

The cost of the book is £7.99 or £10 if postage is required. I can be contacted at mcclementspat@hotmail.com or on 07734186321. In some cases I can arrange for collection or delivery.
When I was a youth worker one of the jobs that was delegated to myself and the young people was the making of Christingles.

Oranges were gathered, red tape sourced (because it is so much easier than ribbon); sweets discussed at length and twice the amount needed bought because there needed to be an incentive! The dedicated time for making Christingles always allowed for great discussions and lots of laughter. The significance of what we were making was often forgotten until the actual service when we handed out our hard work with the warnings to be careful with candles and watch the cocktail sticks!

Christingle services started out as a Moravian tradition in Germany in 1747 when children were given a candle with a red ribbon tied around it. This was a reminder of Jesus as the Light of the World. Missionaries brought the Moravian Church to England in the 1700s and they continue this tradition of Christingle Services to this day. The Christingle as we know it has been adapted and developed and it is thought one of the first services took place in 1968. John Pensome, who is also known as Mr Christingle, developed the service to promote the work of, and to fundraise for, the Children’s Society. This society still produces service ideas each year – 2020 being no exception. This year the Children’s Society have partnered with Messy Church and have provided ideas for a service that can happen while families are in their bubbles, and one that can be done at home - both provide an opportunity to think about Jesus as the Light of the World and can be found at https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/messy-christingle-2020.

Christingle services can take place at any time during the season of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. Each aspect of the Christingle has a different meaning that helps us focus on Jesus as the Light in the darkness. But what does the Christingle mean?

The orange represents the world. The four cocktail sticks represent the four seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter. This is to remind us that God is always with us. Another idea is that they can be used to represent the four points on a compass. This reminds us God is with us wherever we go. On each cocktail stick there are sweets and treats to remind us of the provision God has made for us and that he will always provide. Traditionally these treats have been dried fruits like raisins, but now are commonly sweets - jelly tots and dolly mixtures work particularly well.

Around the middle of the orange there is a red ribbon (or red electrical tape). This is a reminder of the sacrifice Jesus made for us with his crucifixion.

The last aspect of the Christingle is the candle. This is a reminder that Jesus is the Light of the World. A light that shines in the darkness, a light that cannot be diminished. For me the highlight of the Christingle service occurs when all the Christingles have been handed out and they are lit. It is a health and safety nightmare but seeing the light spread across the church is something to behold and a very special moment.

Christingle services are a great way of engaging people of all ages and allowing us a time to think about all that God has done, and will continue to do, for us. It is also a great way of spreading the light of God. Families are encouraged to take their Christingles home and light them again safely so others can share in the light. As we approach the season of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany lights are everywhere and play an important part in our celebrations. Why not add a Christingle into the mix and allow this symbol of the Light of the World to shine brightly for all to see?

- Kirsty, Diocesan Children’s Officer
Mekonnen Sofar kneels in the sand, determinedly digging with his hands into the dirt of the dry riverbed, in search of water. He is thirsty and desperate with the dry hole more than a metre deep. Mekonnen knows that if he does not strike water today, some of his livestock may die.

The effects of climate change are real in the village where Mekonnen lives with his wife and five sons. The rains have stopped, drought has dried the rivers, and crops no longer produce a harvest. Even the honey bees have disappeared. The conditions have become unbearable.

Mekonnen worries that his way of life as a pastoral herdsman will not last much longer as the climate crisis worsens. Many of his livestock have already died, and hunger has forced him to sell off some of his remaining animals to feed his family. Yet, in the face of prolonged drought, he persists. He recalls stories of friends and fellow herdsmen who have dug so deep to find water that they are killed by collapsing sand.

“A number of people have died because when they excavate, they dig deep with sand above their head and the sand collapses on top of them. Even small children. We pray for rain but when there’s no rain, we have to dig.

Some people have shovels but most don’t - we use our hands. The changing climate has made it too difficult to live around here. My farm and my animals are no longer enough.”

Mekonnen desperately needs a reliable water source to keep his animals alive and maintain his livelihood. Each day that passes is another day of digging and another day of desperation. This Christmas, will you stand with families like Mekonnen’s, living on the frontline of the climate crisis?

• £25/€28 will plant elephant grass to feed livestock.
• £53/€59 will teach 12 farmers how to grow drought-tolerant crops.
• £105/€117 will buy three goats to give poor families an income. (Goats tolerate drought well.)
• £500/€555 will help build a community pond from which Mekonnen can draw water for his animals and crops.

You can donate online at www.caid.ie/ChristmasAppeal or by telephone on 028 9064 8133 (Belfast) or 01 496 7040 (Dublin)
Kawite Koyrita rises with the sun to gather water for her animals from the community pond. In the morning light both her pregnant belly and warm smile glow in expectation. Hope has returned to her community like a spring in the desert.

Today Kawite will make breakfast for her family, send her youngest children to school, and tend to her business of trading goats and sheep. After she completes her chores she’ll meet with her community savings group to dream of ideas to empower other women in her village to thrive like her.

Kawite’s smile has not always shone so brightly. For the past ten years Kawite’s family struggled to make ends meet as the effects of the climate crisis ravaged her village with prolonged drought and hardship. “When I was young, the wells were full, and going to collect water didn’t take much time,” she explained. “When the climate changed and the rains stopped, the water disappeared.”

Kawite and her daughters travelled up to five hours every day to fetch water, and her children often missed school or went hungry. As the burden of prolonged drought became unbearable, Christian Aid and our local partner worked alongside the community to build a pond from which they draw water for their animals and crops.

Kawite and her community were provided with drought resistant seeds to boost the harvest, elephant grass to feed the livestock, and goats and sheep to help the women build livelihoods.

The women in the village have also established a savings group which provides loans to women so they can buy essentials, empowering their community from within.

The community pond saves Kawite hours of precious time that she can spend at home with her family, and the other support from Christian Aid’s partner has enabled her to put food on the table and build a better future for her community, her ten children, and her baby on the way.

“The pond is not only for me. It has changed the life of this village.”

Lisa Fagan, Christian Aid
That's when I get a sense of what's on the agenda for the Sunday ahead.

But of course, that could all change. Indeed, much of it could, and has, changed as late as a Saturday evening, if a major story has happened somewhere in the world. *Sunday Sequence* is the product of a great team effort - a very small team of Adam Nixon and me, led by our producer Seamus Boyd. It’s a very democratic process - everyone has their say, everyone pitches in their ideas, and agreement on the final running order is usually by consensus. Our desks and minds are cluttered with ideas - and the programme is a very fertile ground.

Almost everything we do in our lives has an ethical, moral or religious underpinning. Why do we give to one charity but not another? Should someone living in pain have the right to choose when to die? What sacrifices do we need to make in our own lives if the planet is to thrive?

Personal choices. Government choices. An infinite number of decisions are made every hour of every day which have ethical and moral implications for us and society. What *Sunday Sequence* tries to do is get under the skin of those decisions and host intelligent and curious debates and discussions. Hopefully by the end, we all think a little bit more and question our previously held beliefs. We’re not fans of black and white discussions. We live in the grey, the nuance. There never is just two sides to a story - no one has the monopoly view on a subject. There have always been three, four, five sides to a story. Perhaps those views weren’t always heard. We aim to give them a voice.

The other thing we don’t like on *Sunday Sequence* is noise! Confrontation, aggression, disrespect - they have no place on our programme. We’re on your radio at 8.30 on a Sunday morning, so you need a gentle start to your day. Radio can be background noise for so many. People aren’t really concentrating on every word that is being said. That is why we try to make a programme which makes you want to turn up the volume, to listen a little bit more closely, to make you remain rooted to the spot until it’s finished. For me it’s all about stories and people. People with great insights and expertise, but also people who have remarkable resilience, courage and hope.

That has been witnessed on the programme since March, when we began our Living Through Crisis slot, which is broadcast after the news at 10am. We have heard from people who have lost much through illness, bereavement, addiction, imprisonment, depression. But they have dug deep to find a strength and belief that they can survive, recover and continue living. I know they have helped so many people over the months to deal with the worst aspects of the Covid-19 Pandemic. My background is in news and current affairs - I have been a journalist for nearly 30 years. I love news, but sometimes it does feel a bit like Groundhog Day. *Sunday Sequence* allows me to broaden my horizons and discover a richer and deeper selection of issues and stories - domestically and globally - and I think it’s one of the few radio programmes on this island where you will hear such stories being explored in this way.

The programme has had a long and cherished history on the BBC Radio Ulster schedule. It has had many wonderful presenters and I am honoured to contribute to and continue its legacy. There is a real sense of satisfaction at 10.15 each Sunday morning, when the red microphone light goes off, that we have opened up a small bit of the latest ethical dilemma and perhaps told you something you hadn’t known.

I hope *Sunday Sequence* continues to occupy a special place in the hearts and ears of our audience too. From all of us on the team, may you all have a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

*Audrey Carville*
"I want to talk about Kenya, a country I absolutely adore. Sir Steve Cram, former world champion and Olympian, is one of the key people behind a very small northern charity called COCO (Comrades Of Children Overseas) and they do a cycle ride which, honestly, makes a safari look like your living room. I’ve done the cycle ride 3 or 4 times now and you go into, you know it’s like Back to the Future - “roads, we don’t need roads”. We go that far - beyond electricity, beyond running water and we go to this school, the Maasai Academy.

You know when you’re cycling up a hill, you don’t know where it ends, so you don’t know what’s going to be at the top. Sometimes it opens up and there’s a massive expanse, but one of the worst moments of one cycle ride was when I got to the top of one of these hills and, as it broke, a gazelle jumped over the top of my front tyre. We’ve had to wait half an hour just to let herds of zebras cross over. We’ve had to leave our camp while the Maasai went in and cleared a lion out. You know it’s an absolutely sensational place!

But it’s also interesting the relationships you can strike up. The chief of the tribe is called Moses. Moses speaks Swahili and I speak very bad English.

On one of the cycle rides on day 1, I pulled my hamstring and had to stop riding. So I ended up in the point vehicle with Moses and we formed this wonderful friendship over 3 or 4 days. I had this little speaker and I thought we’d connect through music. At first everything I put on, it didn’t matter what it was, it didn’t work. Moses just grunted in a way which I know meant ‘no good’. Oasis? Moses grunted. I thought I’d try something else so I put on a bit of Elvis Presley - Moses grunted. He loved Erasure - absolutely loved Erasure so I spent 3 days going through the middle of what is the most stunning, beautiful country playing Erasure with him.

The funny thing is we still hadn’t really picked up any words but he has my number and I have his number. About once every 3 months my phone rings and it’s Moses (it comes up ‘Chief’ on my phone). He goes ‘Colin’ and I go ‘Moses’, and he laughs and I laugh, and we hang up. Every 3 or 4 months. ‘Colin’! ‘Moses’!

Thanks Colin - that’s true relationship and communication - but with a difference.
The winners of the recent Harvest Challenge art competition have been announced. Prizes were awarded in four different age categories and the winners are:

1st Prize (Amazon Tablet) to: Noah Stewart, Holy Trinity National School Dunfanaghy; Polly Leslie, St. John’s Rossnowlagh; John Lyons, St. Mary’s Macosquin; Jake Hewitt, St. Columb’s Cathedral.

2nd Prize (£30 Amazon Voucher) to: Mark Hewitt, St. Columb’s Cathedral; Caleb Ferguson, Derg and Termonamongan; Hannah Leslie, St. John’s Rossnowlagh; Anna Lyons, St. Marys Macosquin; Amy McCann, Derg and Termonamongan.

3rd Prize (£20 Amazon Voucher) to: Shona Leslie, St. John’s Rossnowlagh; Ellie Mae Mahon, St. John’s Rossnowlagh; Joel McCaskie, Lower Langfield Parish; Jodie Parkhill, Bovevagh.

The competition was organised by SEEDS Children’s Ministry and Derry and Raphoe Youth. You can see some of the young artists’ work here: https://www.derryandraphoe.org/?page_id=4576

Ministry of Healing

The Ministry of Healing Team has decided to organise online healing services. In November Rev Paul Lyons led our first service. On Wednesday January 20th 2021 Canon Katie and Brian Seaton will lead A Celebration of Wholeness and Healing on @CCCMSP facebook page at 7pm. In March we are in Rev Carmen Hayes and Gillian Millar’s hands and in May Rev Heather Houlton will lead us.
A new book about mixed marriage couples who left Northern Ireland is the latest publication from the Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association (NIMMA) to tackle the taboo subject. The paperback ‘Exiles for Love’ gives five couples the chance to tell why they left home after marrying ‘across the divide’. It is the third part of a trilogy that has put mixed marriage firmly under the spotlight. NIMMA Chairman Ken Dunn said, “The project will, hopefully, reinforce the message of reconciliation that our first two books, ‘Mixed Emotions’ and ‘Both Sides Now’ are already bringing to local secondary school pupils and also highlight the position of the substantial mixed marriage community in the Province. We are responding to the constant demand for information about both the logistics of mixed marriage and the actual experience itself from prospective couples, the press, the churches and community groups, but the stories of those, who either chose or were forced to leave Northern Ireland as a result of their marriages, are the final parts of an emotional jigsaw. We have shown over the past five years that our young people, in particular, are keen to know more about mixed marriage, how things have changed over the years and how compromise and accommodation within such relationships are like a blueprint for a shared future, but the untold stories of the exiles must also be heard. We see the book as entertaining, as well as educational, and we hope to have it distributed widely to teenagers in our schools”.

Meanwhile, we will strive to offer support, information and pastoral care to all who need them on our helpline 07706285042 or at info@nimma.org.uk

‘WE’VE GOT SOLE!’
MU COMPETITION 2020

In the mid-60s, when times were tough, my Mother bought me a pair of red sandals which I loved. One day my Mother said “you have outgrown those sandals we’ll give them to your cousin”.

My cousin was here on holiday from England with my Aunt and family. I was sad my sandals were given away. Many decades later my Mother took a stroke and needed 24-hour care from the family. During my time with her we talked a lot and many of the conversations were about the past. One night she remembered about the red sandals and why she gave them to my cousin, even though they still fitted me. My Aunt had borrowed money to come to see her elderly parents as her husband had left her with 4 young children. My Father gave my Aunt and family the fare to get back to England and my Mother had given them my red sandals. Ever since, I buy red sandals for the summer. I wear them with pride and remember my kind, thoughtful, wonderful parents.

Most Imaginative Setting Winner: Anne Claire Morrow; Inver Union MU

Most Loved Shoe Winner: ‘Red Sandals’, Viola Duncan, Inver Union MU
Some of you may not know that before I was a minister I used to work in the diagnostic laboratories in a hospital in Swansea, South Wales.

My original Degree was in Microbiology. After university I went on to train to work in the hospital laboratory as an MLSO, (Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer). It was hard, exacting work yet rewarding, knowing that I was helping people. Without that work in the lab the doctors would not have known what was causing an infection. I worked in bacteriology and for a time virology. Believe me, I could tell you a lot of stories that would put you off your dinner!

As you can imagine I have been watching this pandemic with great interest. The cause of this pandemic is a small virus Covid-19, called corona because if you looked down an electron microscope the spikes on the outer layer look like a crown! These spikes are what it uses to attach itself to a human cell. Unfortunately, it is very good at that! It then makes its way inside the nucleus and hijacks the cell to replicate itself again and again. Think of it like a pen or usb drive, a small package with the virus information inside.

Yes, it’s a similar virus to the flu or a cold but the problem for us is that it’s new. It is new to our bodies which can’t recognise it. Our bodies don’t have the ammunition to kill it. That is why it runs amok. It also attacks, amongst other places, the heart and the lungs. Hence people with lung or heart conditions have to be so careful.

We all know by now about masks, social distancing and washing hands. I can’t emphasise enough how important these things are. We literally have the power in our own hands to keep people safe and well, because we can have it before we know, as it spreads via droplets, by our breath and on our hands and on surfaces.

Yet all is not without hope. We have hope in God and we have His help. God has gifted many with the knowledge and skills to develop treatments and vaccines. They are coming, both treatments to help the body to fight this off, and vaccines to give the body that ammunition I spoke about.

When the virus turns up these treatments enable the body to be ready and armed to kill off this Covid-19. We are not there yet, but there is light at the end of the tunnel!
If the name looks familiar it’s because I held a similar position at the then Church of Ireland Theological College from 2000 to 2005, so some of us may actually be old friends (Hiya!).

With that said, I also have a deeper root that goes back to Derry and Raphoe. As a seminarian I spent three months in 1991 serving in the Church of Ireland and the first of those months was spent at All Saints, Clooney with Canon John Mayes. I will never forget the hospitality shown to me by the Mayes’, by Bishop Mehaffey and by the parishioners who took me in and fed me so well that by the end of an Irish Summer I had gained a stone and a half! So, I am very pleased to renew this relationship and I am honored to try and provide some insight into what life is like in America these days.

By the time you read this it will be over a month since our presidential election. God only knows what has transpired between the typing and the reading. I do have my own perspective on the unique brand of chaos that emerges daily from the White House. One that, perhaps out of respect for the office of President, those in the government and in the media have tactfully decided not to raise, but I think it is worth raising now. Please do not misunderstand me; I write as a pastor. There are some who neither need our support nor deserve our disdain, but they may need healing, and they definitely need our prayers.

With all that going on you may wonder how I, as an American, stay reasonably positive. A student of mine in Dublin once observed: “You never met a ritual you didn’t like.” There is truth to that, and during this time of year when we anticipate the annual celebration of the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, I wrap myself in the many cherished rituals of Advent and Christmas. There is some drama hanging over one of them. I have two daughters, ages 13 and 11. As pastor’s kids they have hardly ever missed a Sunday in church and Christmas is always a highlight. My favourite ritual this time of year is that, since they were old enough to walk, my girls have carried in the baby Jesus during the candlelit singing of Silent Night, and placed the baby doll in the manger scene in the front of the church. I am a sucker for this stuff; I cry every time. Last year my eldest announced before the service on the very night, that she was too old for “this sort of stuff.” I begged and cajoled and eventually she agreed to do it. Fast forward to now. At the close of the hardest and most bizarre year ever, will my not-so-little girl help her sister carry in the baby Jesus one more time? These “little” things settle my mind and help me anticipate with hope what I assure you are larger things than doll-carrying. But the little things suggest the greater things. Jesus does come to us through the Incarnation and over the stormy, surging waves of life.

Just one more year Sweetie, please … for Daddy. Tune in next time for the outcome!

God bless, Kevin
For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Most people can think of an encounter during which they experienced a ‘never to be forgotten’ moment. For me, one such moment, came about in a care home, during a Carol Service for residents with Alzheimer’s. As I began to read Isaiah 9:6 I heard Martha, an elderly lady, quietly reciting the verse, word for word. “For to us a child is born.” As she spoke, her appearance began to change, and Isaiah 55:11 came to my mind:

“So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

The incredible words of Isaiah 9:6 had obviously reached deeply into Martha’s life, dispersed the confusion of Alzheimer’s, and brought a moment of clarity and a reassurance of hope.

Isaiah 9 was written at one of the worst times in the history of Israel. Locked in battle against the seemingly relentless war machine of the Assyrian Army, the Israelites found themselves desperate for clarity and a reassurance of hope. Today, this is a sentiment that many people will share in the build-up to Christmas 2020. As the world finds itself locked in battle against the seemingly relentless war machine, Covid19, we all need to experience clarity and hope. Isaiah reminds us that we find such clarity and hope in the One who is the fulfilment of Isaiah 9:6. For a child has been born, a child of promise, a child of hope, the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. Despite the current restrictions which are in place, we can still experience lasting joy, hope, peace and love this Christmas time. This year we are challenged to focus our hearts on that moment when God, the Everlasting Father, became a vulnerable baby, born in a messy stable, born into all the mess of this world. God, the Sovereign One, stooped low to show that He will love us for all eternity. Isaiah brilliantly reminds us, “Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.” (Isaiah 9:7)

It is reassuring for each of us to remember that God is sovereign. He is our Everlasting Father, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. He is in control of all life’s circumstances and, this Christmas time, He continues to care deeply for each of us. The birth of Jesus, just over two thousand years ago in Bethlehem, offers us clarity as to who He is and an eternal source of hope. This Christmas time, God also offers us the fullness of His peace. He is the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings, and He is sovereign. For unto US a child is born, a child of promise, a child of hope, the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

Rev Rosie Diffin, Rector of Kilcronaghan, Ballynascreen and Six Towns
I was preparing to undertake my final placement as a student nurse, when it was announced that the first case of COVID-19 had reached the UK.

Little did I know that this would mean that my fellow classmates and I would be deployed to support the frontline staff. From standing on our doorstep applauding those in the health service, I was soon to be joining them. I was then offered my first staff nurse position in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). I was a bit apprehensive as my mum was the Ward Sister in ICU but I knew that I wanted to work in this specialist area, so I accepted the post. As the second wave of the pandemic ensued, staff in ICU prepared for the first COVID-19 positive patients.

Each day we arrive on the unit, make a quick cup of tea and prepare to relieve our colleagues who are finishing their 12 hour shift. Before entering red zones, we are required to dress in full personal protective equipment (PPE). This process is known as donning. Removing PPE is known as doffing. This takes some time, but we get quicker with practice. We usually pair up to get dressed as the correct use of PPE is extremely important in order to protect ourselves, patients and the public. After handover, we introduce ourselves to our patients and begin our day’s work. I have found that communicating with patients is much more difficult whilst wearing PPE - patients cannot see our facial expression and often find it hard to understand us. Therefore, we find ourselves often using non-verbals, like a thumbs-up. During Covid-19 visiting in the hospital has been prohibited, apart from exceptional circumstances. I know I don’t speak for myself, but we all feel saddened by this and try to facilitate virtual visiting through FaceTime as often as we can. We can only try to understand the turmoil that families and friends are going through whilst waiting at home.

Patients, families and staff can also get support from the hospital chaplains who offer virtual spiritual care and prayers through FaceTime, which everyone finds comforting. It is at times like this that we can truly appreciate and be thankful for the advances in technology.

Although working in ICU can be very tough, the level of care the patients receive remains our priority and focus. Everyone finds it very rewarding when our patients improve and leave ICU. However, this is not always the case. When patients die, all of the staff are affected, even more so now when families are not always able to be present at such a sad time.

I have found that my faith in God has helped me to stay strong throughout these uncertain times. At work I often experience many emotions such as sadness, fear and happiness. As a practitioner I can only begin to imagine what patients, their families and my colleagues are feeling. I find strength in faith and prayer. ‘But as for you be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded’ (2 Chronicles 15: 7.)
Derry Raphoe Youth Invites @ Advent

Sunday 6th December live from 4pm on Diocesan Facebook page

Guest speaker - Andrew Watson (youth worker Ballyholme Parish, Bangor). Praise, Prayer, Advent Resources, Interview with Rachel Miller Scripture Union E3 Worker for the NW. This service will be shared on the Diocesan Facebook Page. For the Young and Young at Heart - you are invited!

Zoom Children’s and Youth Leaders
Encouragement Night with Bishop Pat Storey

Tuesday 8th December 7:30pm on Zoom
To join email dryboard123@gmail.com

Organised by SEEDS & Derry Raphoe Youth
Throughout Advent and as we approach Christmas place a star or a battery powered candle or a Nativity Scene in your window as a sign of Jesus the Light of the World. You could also put a poster in your window. Templates are available on Pinterest.

**Christmas Shine the Light 2020**

Every Sunday in Advent take your LIGHT outside at 5pm and Light Up your community. Hold up your star or candle and then sing a carol or play one on your mobile. Say the Advent Prayer & the Lord’s Prayer or simply let your light shine. If mobility is an issue do this in your own home.

“In Him was life, and that life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1:4,5

**Suggested carols - (a reflection on each carol will be placed each Sunday on the Diocesan Facebook Page)**

- 29th November - Joy to the World
- 6th December - Away in a Manger
- 13th December - Silent Night
- 20th December - Once in Royal David’s City
- Christmas Eve 24th - O Little Town of Bethlehem
- Christmas Day 25th - Hark the Herald-Angels Sing

**Advent Prayer**

Heavenly Father, Your Son Jesus is Your greatest gift to us, a great sign of Your love. Guide us as we strive to walk in that love together this Advent. As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, bring us closer to each other and to You. Give us the strength and grace we need every day. Help us always to trust in You. Come, Lord Jesus, lead all the people closer to You. Come and dispel the darkness of our world with the light of Your love. Amen.

4, 3, 2, 1 count the weeks ’til Jesus comes. Each week we add another light. Our hope of Jesus shining bright. We pray, we share, we do our part… To welcome Jesus into our heart.

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” Isaiah 9:2
I gasp in horror while those around me look on in a resigned sort of way and say the obvious. “It has collapsed” was the factual comment when St Andrew’s Church, Ampobibitika, in the northern part of the diocese, literally hit the dust. The first part collapsed while I was speaking at a meeting in the church. It was only a small part of the wall near me, but a bigger section near one of the readers. I was surprised that people were so dismayed that a piece of the wattle and mud had fallen down. They saw a sign which I was unaware of: the termites had destroyed the bottom of the building.

It was several weeks later that the whole thing gave way, luckily while no one was in or near it. This is one of our livelier churches and the only one with a lady (non-stipendiary) priest. Situated on the main road north, it is one of our best church sites so a very public icon of the diocese! To rebuild will cost 12 million ariary, about £2,600, which is utterly beyond the reach of the local community who are all subsistence farmers. I applied to an American charity which builds simple new churches for a congregation of this size but sadly had a flat refusal as they are not taking on new projects during the current pandemic.

On a slightly more positive note, the reported cases of Covid-19 have reduced to a trickle and there have been none in the last few days here in Mahajanga. Apart from wearing masks all the time, Covid is out of the news for most people. It is difficult to hold these things in perspective but I was very struck by the fact that over twice the number of people who died of the coronavirus died of malaria in Madagascar this year. The deaths due to malnutrition and hunger are unknown but significant. Given that we still have bubonic plague here you can see why people are astonished at the panic about Covid elsewhere in the world.

“Doesn’t the beauty of the dawn speak to you of the glory of God?” fellow travellers have sometimes said to me. My honest answer is “No” — it simply tells me my night was too short, or, too long if I have been on the road all night! I would much prefer bed to admiring the light slowly spreading across the sky bringing a rich palette of colour to the world. Sunsets do it for me!

Nevertheless as we set out for Marovoay for the dedication of the new vicarage and farewell service to the rural dean very early on the last Sunday of September I suddenly felt exhilarated in the pristine early morning air as we drove up into the hills with a vast panorama across the great Betsiboka River estuary. I realised that what made this so wonderful was freedom after the months of various stages of lockdown in the Evèché. The new vicarage at Marovoay was wondrously decorated for the dedication. These huge swags of material with their rosettes right across the front and round the sides of the house were made up of just two incredibly long pieces of material, one orange, one white, which had been hired for the occasion.
Our Development Committee deliberated on how best to spend the grant aid to deal with Covid-19. It was decided to provide every church with soap and hand-washing facilities and every member of the congregations with the obligatory face masks. My companion Andry on these journeys is now the chairman of our Development Committee. He and I were startled to discover that not a single member of the congregation and nobody in the massive Sunday market which was taking place in the town was wearing one. We suddenly felt like foreigners from the city who knew little of country ways and reality. The congregation in the church were tightly packed. What is social distancing? What the wealthy people - who have space - do in the cities.

The following weekend I was in Port-Bergé for a Confirmation. Guess what? The face masks that Andry and others had worked so hard to produce and send by expensive express delivery were still in a box in the priest’s home. I began to feel that Mahajanga and the rest of the diocese are on different planets. I was informed that on the Saturday afternoon I would be in church and people would come to see me. At 3pm I was to meet two mayors. Andry pointed out that the water and soap was not available at the church. The rural dean was surprised, “But isn’t that for Sunday Services?”

At three o’clock precisely (such precise timing here is in itself very strange) 23 men and a lady marched into church and took their places in the desks. The Church is two school rooms during the week. Introductions were made with greatly exaggerated courtesy. I really do not like the custom of addressing me as ‘Your excellency my lord Bishop’.

Then the shock of the meeting. The lady at the back was asked to stand up and was introduced as the midwife who is working at the new Bishop Speers hospital! (Pronounced Bee.sop Spees). Who had given permission for this? Who was responsible for this? Obviously, I was meant to be thrilled and flattered at this initiative. I was alarmed. At 3.30pm precisely in trooped a very different group: the local football club, their trainers, etc.

Repeat performance of introductions and speeches. Substance: would I be or could I get them a sponsor? I explained that, sadly, buying football kit was nowhere on my priority list. I appealed to them to look at the building they were in and guess what my priorities might be. Nothing daunted, they were sure that someone of my eminence... had all the contacts. Please, at least tell your friends about us. So there you are, my dear friends, I keep my promise!

Next in, more or less, were the Confirmation candidates for a talk and rehearsal with me. They too, all except two, had walked great distances for this and would have to sleep the night in the church. These occasions are immensely moving for me as I pray over each individual for the gift of the Holy Spirit. (I did get my hands between anointing and laying hands on each candidate but I rather suspect that was seen as a new ritual exclusive to the bishop.)

I read recently, instead of taking all your problems about the church and the world to God, rather pray, “God you have some problems here. How can I help?”

On that note I must thank God and you for immensely generous responses to the last Mad Life. We are now in a position to rebuild St Andrew’s Church, Ambobitika slightly bigger and a lot better.

Love and Prayers

+Hall
Ivan Taylor writes...

Covid-19 has had a undeniable impact on all our lives and, sadly, continues to do so. Not just physically, but financially and spiritually also. We have had to come to terms with and adapt to the ‘new normal’. For some it has been a relatively easy transition. For others less so.

The Lighthouse - a think tank organisation from the University of Sydney - has identified 7 positive outcomes of the Pandemic. One of these is Connectedness - ‘a rejuvenated sense of community and social cohesion... using social media platforms to connect and reconnect. There is a huge wave of formal and informal volunteering where people use their skills and abilities to help others.’ Lighthouse goes on ‘as heartbreaking and frightening as this crisis is, its positive outcomes can be gifts we should not overlook. If we ignore them, all of this becomes meaningless. This crisis will end. We will meet again. We can do so as better human beings.’

As a church we (and other churches) gradually managed to find a way forward through the darkness and into the light as initial Lockdown restrictions were eased. From online worship to drive-in worship services. From in-church private prayer on to in-church services and Communion. Sadly our Tourist Ministry, monthly Flea Market and catering events have not been possible, consequently leaving a dent in our coffers. Fund raising ideas were considered and straight off we looked at ways to expand our already successful SA Deli project. Set up in 2011 it offers a range of branded Chutneys, Curds and Coffee and is an offshoot of the LEAH (Lunch with the Elderly And Housebound) Project which has been up and running since 2009. And so the Deli Soup Kitchen was born.

A range of soups, made in the church kitchen, are containered, frozen and sold to the congregation, family and friends. Pre-ordered, they are collected each Sunday and Tuesday after worship. The price is £2.50 per tub which contains two good, nutritious portions. All soups are coeliac and vegan friendly. The costs of the project are covered by private donations so all monies received go into church funds. Neighbouring churches (with whom we built a strong, lasting bond during our drive-in services) are also invited to avail of the soups. To quote our Rector: “It is with great anticipation that we launch an entrepreneurial and creative approach to fundraising this Autumn season and hopefully beyond. We are so pleased that the skills and talents amongst the congregation are being given so willingly and I am sure the expansion of the SA Deli to include a soup kitchen will go down a treat with our congregation and wider community. I would like to thank everyone who will assist over the coming weeks and months, and I have pleasure in heartily commending this project to you”. Rev Nigel Cairns, October 2020.

The project has been a great success on a number of levels including, additional financial support, the establishment of a renewed sense of community within the congregation and further opportunities for our willing volunteers to continue to utilise their baking and cooking expertise.

It has also proved that St. Augustine’s remains ‘a living, vibrant Church’.

We cordially invite you to scan the QR code to experience a ‘Virtual Tour’ of ‘the Wee Church on the Walls’.

Enjoy!
Email: weechurch@btinternet.com
Mobile: 07980 667613
Soups and “Bits”

Here are a few, simple recipes for soups and “bits” to serve with them. The soups can be made up to 3 days beforehand, covered and stored in the fridge. They can be frozen up to a month ahead. Perfect for Christmas! The bits are a tasty way to use up leftover turkey and ham. Enjoy...

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**Roasted Cauliflower, Bacon and Hazelnut Soup...**

100g skinned hazelnuts; 1 medium cauliflower cut into small florets, stalk finely chopped; 2 tablespoons rapeseed oil; 1 small fennel bulb, chopped; 1 small white onion, chopped; 180ml dry white wine (or water); 1.5 litres vegetable stock (cubes are fine); 250mls whipping cream; 4 slices lean back bacon, roughly chopped; 2 bay leaves

Heat oven to 160c. Spread hazelnuts onto a baking tin and toast for about 10 minutes tossing occasionally until golden. Let them cool, then coarsely chop and set aside. Increase oven to 180c. Toss the cauliflower florets in the rapeseed oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast, tossing once, until lightly browned and tender - approx. 25 mins. Heat a large pot on a medium heat and dry cook the bacon until crispy. Remove with a slotted spoon onto kitchen roll. Cook the fennel, onion and cauliflower stalk in the bacon fat until soft. Add the wine (or water) and cook until almost evaporated. Add the roasted cauliflower, stock and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes until cauliflower is tender. Remove bay leaves and add the cream. Very carefully blend the soup with a stick blender until very smooth. Season with salt and pepper and bring back to a simmer. Ladle into warmed bowls. Top with the chopped hazelnuts and bacon. Drizzle with a little extra oil and serve.

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**Curried Butternut Squash and Apple Soup...**

1 medium to large butternut squash; 2 tablespoons rapeseed oil; 2 small white onions, chopped; 2 tablespoons curry powder (or to personal taste); 1 teaspoon dried ginger; 1 teaspoon turmeric (optional); 2 firm apples, cored and chopped; 1 litre vegetable stock (cubes are fine); 1 400g tin coconut milk; 1 tablespoon lemon juice; Croutons and sliced scallions to serve.

Heat oven to 180c. Halve the squash and remove the seeds. Place, cut side down, onto a baking tray and roast until skin is browned and flesh tender - about 35/40 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large pot and cook the onions until soft. Add the spices and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Chop up the squash, including the skin, then add to the pot along with the apple and stir with the onions and spices. Add the stock and bring to a boil. Turn down heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Add the coconut milk and lemon juice, bring back to a simmer, then ladle into warmed bowls and top with the scallions and croutons to serve.

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**Baked Ham and Tomato ‘Rarebit’**

4 thick slices sourdough or country bread; 400g mature Cheddar, grated; 1 small onion, finely chopped; 2 tomatoes, chopped; 2 medium eggs; 1 teaspoon HP sauce; leftover Christmas ham, thinly sliced.

Toast the bread on both sides, butter while warm and set aside. Turn on grill to medium. Combine the cheese, onion, tomatoes, eggs and HP sauce in a bowl and mix thoroughly. Lay the ham on the toasts and spread the rarebit mix evenly over each slice. Grill until golden brown and bubbling. Perfect with SA Deli Tomato Chutney!!

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**Turkey, Brie and Cranberry ‘Toastie’**

4 slices sourdough or country bread; Softened butter; 2 tablespoons cranberry sauce or SA Deli Beetroot Chutney; 125g Brie, sliced; Leftover turkey, thinly sliced; Baby spinach or rocket leaves.

Spread each slice of bread thinly with butter - don’t be too generous at this stage! Add the cranberry or chutney on top of the butter. Layer the turkey, Brie and leaves onto 2 of the slices and place the other 2 slices on top to make two sandwiches. Butter the outsides, again thinly. Heat a frying pan over a medium heat and place the sandwiches, with the Brie side down, into the pan. Fry for 3 - 4 minutes pressing down a few times with a spatula. Carefully turn the toastie and repeat the cooking procedure. Serve immediately with extra chutney or Mayo (or both!)
The past few months have brought many challenges for everyone around the world not least among all school communities throughout Ireland.

Our school had been focussing on embedding digital technologies within the school curriculum as our focus area under school self-evaluation (SSE) for the past couple of years. Through the support of our board of management and parents’ association and aided by Department of Education and Skills (DES) IT funding, we had enough laptops or iPads to allow each child individual access. We contacted each family to ask whether they would like to borrow a school laptop to support their child in his/her learning during lockdown. Some families were glad to avail of the offer.

We kept in contact with our families through regular text messages and emails. As principal teacher, I was particularly concerned about some of our newcomer families from Eastern Europe who did not have family support living locally and might be feeling quite isolated. When we were allowed to enter the school building once more, I made frequent phone calls to our school families. Some of these phone calls could have lasted up to an hour as sometimes the children wanted to have a chat with the principal to share their news and, on other calls, people just wanted to have a chat, glad to hear another voice. Although everyone had their done their best in this time of distance learning, it was apparent that nothing can or could replace the classroom environment - the interchange, the engagement, the craic - that special atmosphere which you can only find in a primary classroom. We all looked forward to the schools reopening so that some sense of normality could be restored for the children, their parents, their teachers and their entire school community. I sent regular emails to our families, informing them of the safety precautions that would be in place to ensure a safe return to school. I was available to discuss any fears which they might have had. I wrote a postcard to each child telling them how much we were looking forward to seeing them in St Mura’s on the 1st of September.

September 1st finally arrives! The principal teacher is standing at the gate to welcome everyone to school and to ensure that physical distancing is maintained by both children and parents. Newly stencilled footprints and smiley faces indicate the route to the school door. Marie, our Special Needs Assistant, is there to ensure that everyone sanitises their hands properly. Infants say goodbye to their parents at the door as we are minimising visitors to the school. Miraculously, no tears! It’s as if these 5-year olds were experienced hands at coming to school. Their teachers await them in their classrooms. The first school day of the 2020-2021 year begins. A year which promises to be like no other. Many of the children haven’t seen their friends or their teachers except in a virtual sense since the 12th of March. They haven’t been in a classroom for 5½ months. Things are very different since they were last in school and yet they accept it all as if it were the most normal thing in the world. They quickly adapt to the new ways of frequent handwashing, sanitising hands and surfaces, social distancing etc. It seems strange at first that our playground is now organised so that the class bubbles don’t interact during breaktimes and lunchtimes. It’s especially strange in a small school like ours where the children all used to play together regardless of age. Something else to get used to. Again, within a few days, it’s as if this is the way things have always been.

We are now back at school for two months and everything has gone relatively smoothly. If you were to visit our school, you would probably notice all the safety signage and safety measures in place but, in many ways, life at school continues much as it always did. Our school is a place of learning, of engagement, of laughter. We might not have the usual visitors to the school or engage in the many visits which we made to other schools as part of our cross-community studies. We cannot visit our local library or other places of interest at the moment. However, through the use of digital media, we can have our class assemblies with Rev. Judi McGaffin via Zoom. We participated...
in Wainfest, organised by County Donegal Libraries during October where we listened to stories, visited the University of Imagination and were shown how to create fold-up books in Irish. We can travel the world from our classroom through the use of digital technology.

In St.Mura’s, we have always ensured that celebration is at the heart of everything we do every day. We celebrate each child’s birthday with a cake and a rendition of “Happy Birthday”. Since the beginning of September, we have celebrated all the birthdays we missed during lockdown. Thus, 7½ months of birthdays have been celebrated in the past two months. Nearly every day seems to have been a cake-eating and a “Happy Birthday” singing day! Above all, we celebrate the children of St.Mura’s - their resilience, their fortitude, their unfailing good humour and support for each other. They are an example to us all of living in the moment and making the best of how things are. Their parents, their teachers and their entire school community are very proud of them.

Rosemary Dunne, Principal
Richard, Radio & Rainbows...

Seven Amazon Alexa voice-control assistants scattered about his home, near the Donegal border, tell you that Richard Moore is not your average technology user. The Children-in-Crossfire founder has deployed the devices in various rooms about the house to carry out basic tasks - make phone-calls, play music and podcasts and audio-books, play his favourite radio stations.

He does not use the term himself, but Richard is a bit of a technophile. It was that interest in technology - and his love of radio - that prompted him to set up Derry’s independent radio station, Drive 105, just over 10 years ago, to “engage” the community in his home city.

“At a personal level, I have a genuine interest in radio,” he explained. "Radio's something that I have relied on all my life. I find it a great way to communicate with people and to learn things and for people to stay connected. I’m also a musician, and very interested in recording, technology and editing and all that, and I just had a genuine interest in all that which goes on behind the scenes at radio stations, as well. So, when the licence for a new local radio station came up for grabs, back in 2009, it was a ‘no brainer’.”

The 59-year-old, Creggan-born father-of-two is best known for having been blinded by a rubber bullet fired by a soldier in May 1972. Richard was 10 years old at the time and was on his way home from school when the shooting happened. Remarkably, in 2007, he met the soldier who fired the rubber bullet, Charles Innes, and even more improbably they became friends. Richard says, “Being able to forgive Charles - on a profound level, the emotion of forgiveness - has been uplifting.”

“There is a sadness about blindness,” he says. “Not being able to see my children, I find that sad. That’ll always be there. My Mammy and daddy are both dead, and I have my memories, but I’d like to look at photos of them. I miss scenery and colours. Two weeks ago, I was coming home from work and the person I was with stopped the car and got out to take a photo of a magnificent rainbow. I’d like to have seen that.”

His blindness hasn’t stopped Richard from living life to the full. For 14 years he was involved in the family bar business. He travels to Belfast by bus for meetings connected with his charity, typing on his computer en-route. He operates a recording studio at home; is an accomplished guitarist and plays keyboards; he composes music and plays regularly with the Long Tower Folk Group, which he co-founded with his wife, Rita. Recently he started a podcast, ‘What About You?’, in which he converses with others who have suffered in the Troubles.

Richard acknowledges the impact that being blinded has had. “I’ll be 60 next year; at some point I’ll be retiring. Blindness affects that. Most of my life, though, blindness has been a positive experience. There are challenges, but I’ve managed to beat them or navigate around them. Yes, I get stressed, I can take on too much, I can get let down by a funder, I can get crabbit, as they say in Derry - we’re all just human. But I never be in bad form about blindness, that I can recall”.

He can add cycling to the North Pole to his list of achievements. He’s part of a group of friends, the aptly named Raw Hide Club, who take to the roads at weekends, Richard on a tandem with his son-in-law. The North Pole in question is a bar near Clonmany.

“People have made blindness a positive experience for me,” he says. “My blindness has meant I’ve had to engage with people in a different way.”

Richard’s resilience and indefatigability are humbling. The lockdown means our conversation is happening on the telephone rather than face-to-face. But he meets even the coronavirus restrictions with equanimity. “If you’re in bad form, you can hop in the car and go to the shop. I can’t do that. I have to do something else. I’ll get on the treadmill, get the guitar out, go outside and sniff the air.”

I ask him whether - after almost 50 years of blindness - he still sees things in his mind’s eye? “I used to love Christmas tree lights in our house in Malin Gardens. We had a bay window and my mammy and my daddy always put the Christmas tree in the bay window. So, one of my fondest memories is looking down Malin Gardens at our house because the windows used to be steamed up, and the Christmas tree lights would be in behind the steamed-up windows, and it used to create a kind of a watery, bluey, greeny…. all the different colours of the Christmas tree lights...and it was like all the lights were spinning into each other. I look at that with a ‘memory head’ on but I also look at it with a bit of sadness, because I can’t see that anymore. There’s nothing wrong with being sad. We all get sad about something. I’ve acknowledged that sadness will happen, it’s just that I’ll be sad about things that you’ll not be sad about. You can make things as big or as small as you want them to be.”
Radio’s something that I have relied on all my life. I find it a great way to communicate with people and to learn things and for people to stay connected."
Want a good read about a fictional bishop and church goings-on? Then maybe “Bishop” by Ted Woods is the book for you!

Even as a student, Arthur Easterby was tipped to become a bishop. Ambitious and able, he carefully plotted his progress to preferment including marrying his Rector/Archdeacon’s daughter. So it was no surprise when in due course he was elected as Bishop of Daneford, just outside Dublin. What nobody realised was that he also carried a dark secret!

This short novel contains pathos, humour, disappointment and anger - all qualities we find in any community. I recommend it as a good read - a gripping story which displays Ted’s ability to involve the reader in the whole atmosphere of what is happening. One could have an idea about how it might end; but, like me, it is unlikely to be correct. Ted’s first novel will be enjoyed by all, not just those involved in Church matters.

Canon Cecil Hyland

“A super novel; couldn’t put it down!”  Canon Frances Briscoe

“Couldn’t put it down; read the book in one sitting!”
Rev Sheilagh Williamson


Rev Ted Woods is a retired rector who spent all of his ministry in the Church of Ireland. He now lives in Liverpool where his wife, The Rev Anne Taylor, is vicar of St. Peter’s, Formby.

Ted’s first book “AND SOME THERE WERE - Sketches of Some Irish Anglican Prelates and Priests” is available as an ebook on Amazon.
2020 has been a very different year for us all, and we may find that this Christmas could be different from those we have been used to. Communication with others is extremely important. It can help us stay connected to others and stop us from feeling lonely. It can help us all feel healthy and better within ourselves. Communication can show that we care.

Hello my friends, welcome back. I just love the season of Advent and Christmas, don’t you?

I love all the preparations, the lights, the Christmas Carols, surprising someone with a Christmas gift, but most of all I love to get in touch with people that maybe I haven’t spoken to, or seen in a while. Then I can spread some Christmas cheer.

It is important that each and every one of us makes the best of what we can do and communicate with those around us as we celebrate the true meaning of Christmas and the greatest story ever told.

Well, how can we communicate with others during this Christmas season?

I think there are lots of ways that we can communicate with each other. I also think that we can learn much from the Christmas story where the joy of the birth of Jesus was communicated to all who needed to know, and for the world to see and experience.

Unlike today there were no modern forms of communication. The angel bringing this message to Mary was extremely important for God’s plan to work.

The Christmas story is the greatest story ever told to each one of us. About two thousand years ago, in the town of Nazareth, there lived a young woman named Mary. She was engaged to be married to Joseph, a carpenter. One day an angel appeared to her and told her she had been chosen to have a special baby. The baby would be God’s Son and she was told by the angel that she must call him Jesus.

The way this message was communicated was very special and needed to be very clear. Mary had to take this message and live it out in her life to ensure that God’s Son was born for us all.

Communication with others is extremely important. It can help us stay connected to others and stop us from feeling lonely. It can help us all feel healthy and better within ourselves. Communication can show that we care.

Don’t forget you can pull out my special pages from the magazine!
Mary had to communicate to Joseph the message the angel gave her. Joseph supported Mary and so soon after the angel’s visit, Mary and Joseph were married. Mary was due to have her baby when they were told they had to go on a long journey to Bethlehem, where Joseph came from, to be registered, because they had to pay a special tax. Mary had to travel this long journey over the hills of Galilee to reach their destination even though baby Jesus was so close to being born.

At last Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem. It was crowded with other people who needed to pay their taxes. Mary was very tired and needed a place to stay. At each inn, they kept getting the same response. “No room, no room”. Eventually, one kind innkeeper said he had a stable where he kept his animals. They were welcome to stay there.

Just a few hours later, Mary gave birth to her son, Jesus, in that stable. She wrapped Jesus in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger full of hay.

Again, an angel played an important part in communicating this message. The shepherds were told exactly what they needed to know, and they left to go and see the new born King.

The shepherds wanted to go and see the baby as they were amazed at what the angel had said. When they arrived at the stable, they were filled with joy at seeing Jesus lying in the manger and knowing that they had been chosen to come and witness this great thing that had just happened. They knelt down and worshipped Him. They told Mary and Joseph how the angel had appeared in the sky and told them that Jesus was to be the Saviour of the world.

On a hillside overlooking Bethlehem, some shepherds were watching over their sheep. A bright light appeared in the sky. They were very afraid. It was an angel sent by God. The angel told them not to be afraid, because he had some good news. He said the Son of God had been born and they would find Him in Bethlehem.

Now this was a very special message to be communicated to others. How would this be done? How would people find out just how special this baby, born in a stable surrounded by the animals, was going to be for us all?

This Christmas time let us all make a big effort to communicate with others. We need to be like the angel and find a way to get the important messages of Christmas, and how we care, out to others. Remember to stay safe and follow all advice given by the adults.
Let's colour!

**MARSHMALLOWS**

**HEART ANGEL**

Activity: You will need cardboard and string.
Cut out the heart and head shapes. Take the large heart and turn upside down. Take the two smaller hearts and face pointy bits towards each other for wings. Tape wings to body. Use the circle cardboard for the head and tape to the wings. Turn the angel over. Draw on eyes, nose and mouth. Punch small hole in head and thread ribbon for hanging.

**CJ's Christmas Communication Challenge...**

Each day of December I challenge you to complete a task where you are communicating and showing you care. Choose a person you know.

- Draw a picture
- Write a letter to a friend
- Write a Christmas card
- Leave a gift
- Donate something to charity

Can you come up with some ideas of your own?

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**Ingredients**

- 12 large marshmallows
- 1 bag small pretzels
- 12 eight inch lolly pop sticks
- 12 red mini M&M’s
- 24 small candy eyes
- 1 cup chocolate or chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

**Instructions**

1. Break the pretzels into antler shapes
2. Melt the chocolate in the microwave
3. Add a small amount of vegetable oil until the chocolate drizzles easily off a spoon.
4. Dip the tip of the lolly pop stick into the chocolate and press it into the side of the marshmallow, slightly off centre so it’s near the back of the reindeer’s head.
5. Dip the marshmallow in the chocolate until it’s fully coated.
6. Set the marshmallow on top of the antlers.
7. Add the red mini M&M nose.
8. Allow the chocolate to set for 1 to 2 hours
9. Use a small dab of icing or melted chocolate to “glue” the candy eyes onto the reindeer.
HEY CJ! We hope you are safe and well. As we find ourselves in strange and challenging times we have decided to set up a virtual way of keeping in touch in Urney Parish. We started by distributing folders to all children at the beginning of September with activities for all ages. Each week we uploaded videos and pictures in correspondence with the folders. Reverend Jonathan McFarland was involved by making videos, playing his guitar, singing some songs and helping the children with their prayers. We asked the parents to send in photos of the children with their completed work and we were able to put together our Harvest display. We thought it would be nice for the parishioners to get a glimpse of all the smiling faces of the children that they may miss from coming out to church. We encourage and support the children and their parents as we help spread the word of God to the homes around the parish. God Bless and stay safe.

My friends from Fahan & Buncrana

Our names are Jill and Jack and Kylie and Kevin. We help the Rev Judi to tell stories from the Bible. We know CJ too! Jack and Jill are brother and sister and Kevin and Kylie are cousins. We all live together on a farm. As we live on a farm we are all very busy most of the year with farm work and of course school work too! We have a pet sheep and a pet goat. The sheep has been helping with some of the stories and the goat will be appearing soon too! When we were off school we helped Rev Judi at the Friday Fun time and now because we are back at school we help her at Saturday PRAISE at 10am on a Saturday morning! We also help the children of St Mura’s National school learn about the Lord’s Prayer! We love to talk – but we know that we need to listen too! We listen to God and then we tell people about him! Some of the wonderful pictures that people have sent to us when we have been thinking about listening and then talking about God are here for you to see. Aren’t they just wonderful!

During Advent challenges will be completed. The advent calendar will be opened each day and there will be a piece of the Christmas story explained and something to do – for an adult, a child or a family.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Take care of yourself and others during this Christmas season. Remember to take time to communicate and show others that you care.

Contact me on email
cj@derryandraphoe.org
Rev Canon Paul Hoey, how did you feel when you heard that you had been nominated to receive an MBE?

Initially, shocked. I received a phone call out of the blue from a member of staff at the Prime Minister’s Office asking if I had had time to consider the email they had sent asking if I would accept an honour if I were to be offered one. Since, however, they had sent their email to an address I had not accessed for some time, I really hadn’t a clue what the gentleman was talking about. Very kindly, he explained what it was about.

I was half-expecting it to be revealed as a very late April Fool joke, but when he said that I needed to respond within a few hours, I realised it was no joke. I took some time to consider this very great offer carefully. I believe that the good that has been achieved in this community could not have happened without a whole team of fantastic people working together, rather than being just down to me. However, I came to see that the award could be seen as recognition of the part that everybody played, and that is very much how I hope it will be viewed. The fact that my late mother received an MBE 24 years ago also influenced my decision.

How has the news been received?

I’ve been humbled and greatly encouraged to receive hundreds of messages of congratulations and good wishes from public figures, parishioners and friends. It was particularly touching to hear from people from every part of the country where I have served previously, and even from people with whom I went to school. However, the reaction which impacted me most was that of my father, who was immensely touched by the fact that his son was following in his late wife’s footsteps.

For what is the award being presented?

“For services to the local community” is the official wording. It’s a recognition of the recent effort to support people in our local community affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. When it began to impact in March of this year, the three local churches, in partnership with Eglinton Community Centre, worked together to organise an amazing team of almost 90 volunteers who delivered groceries and medicines, made supportive phone calls, and delivered meals to those who were having to shield or needed extra support. Feedback was that this was a lifeline for some individuals. We were able to mobilise quickly in March 2020 because of our experience of working together following the terrible flooding in the area in August 2017, which was traumatic for this community.

Around 130 families had to leave their homes for up to a year, and my instinct, at that time, was that rather than local groups working on their own, there would be a deeper impact if we worked together to support those most affected. The whole is definitely greater than the sum of the parts! We secured grants, organised meals, put on concerts, delivered hampers and much more besides. My role in this response is also cited in my nomination.

How will this change things?

Obviously, I will now expect people to bow or curtsey when they meet me! Seriously, I know that the honour won’t change me, other than to reinforce my desire to continue, by the grace of God, to build on the great sense of togetherness that we have in our village and surrounding area. I hope that it will also affirm the calling of St. Canice’s to be a light for the whole community.

Finally, Paul, when will you receive the award.

I’ve been told it’s likely to be next year, subject, of course, to the situation allowing. At least through the long winter months I will have something to anticipate. I shan’t, however, expect that Her Majesty will remember me from the time I accompanied my mother to receive her award!
The Archbishop of Armagh and Chairman of the Church of Ireland’s Commission on Christian Unity and Dialogue, the Most Revd John McDowell, has endorsed and encouraged the use of resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, in January 2021, which are available from the website: ctbi.org.uk

“There could hardly be more challenging circumstances in which to plan for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on 18–25 January. ‘Getting together’ in local settings was in itself a witness to the underlying communion we share by virtue of our baptism and faith in the Crucified and Risen Lord. In large parts of the island of Ireland that will probably be impossible in 2021. In other parts, it will be very limited.

However, clergy and lay people have shown themselves to be imaginative in keeping the worshipping life of the Church alive in general and I trust that new ways will be developed to give some concrete expression to Our Lord’s desire that “…they may all be one”.

The resource material in this unusual year has been prepared by a very singular group, the Grandchamp Community based in the French speaking part of Switzerland. It is a monastic community of women, begun by members of the Reformed Tradition, but now fully ecumenical, sitting outside the formal structures, of any tradition, but with strong links to the Taizé Community. It began when a group of Reformed women rediscovered the practice of silence in gathering around the Word of God. The material they have produced centres on a well-known passage from St John’s Gospel, ‘Abide in me’. I pray that their spirit of silence in the presence of the Word may inspire you as you think about the opportunities for ecumenical witness and worship in the period of silence we are passing through.”

+John Armagh

Editor’s Note:

“Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit”, is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family. Today the community has fifty sisters, all women from different generations, Church traditions, countries and continents. In their diversity the sisters are a living parable of communion. They remain faithful to a life of prayer, life in community and the welcoming of guests. The sisters share the grace of their monastic life with visitors and volunteers who go to Grandchamp for a time of retreat, silence, healing or in search of meaning. For 2021, the sisters are inviting churches across the world to enter into their tradition of prayer and silence that is rooted in the ancient traditions of the Church catholic.

Social Media:

Show your support for Christian Unity by posting unity messages and details of your events to our Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Twitter wall - simply add the #wpcuwall hashtag to your Twitter post (note there is a delay before they appear). You can also find updates about the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on Twitter by following the #wpcu2021 hashtag.