

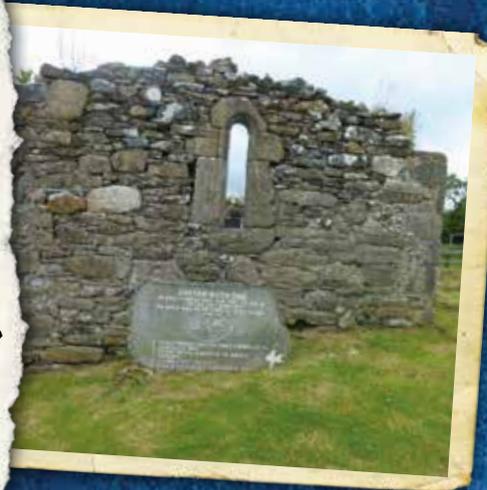
Issue 64 / Easter 2021

n:vision

Transforming Community, Radiating Christ

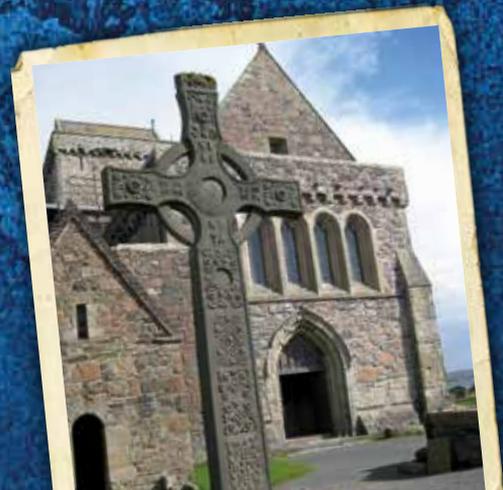
Let's Journey
to the Cross and
from the Cross

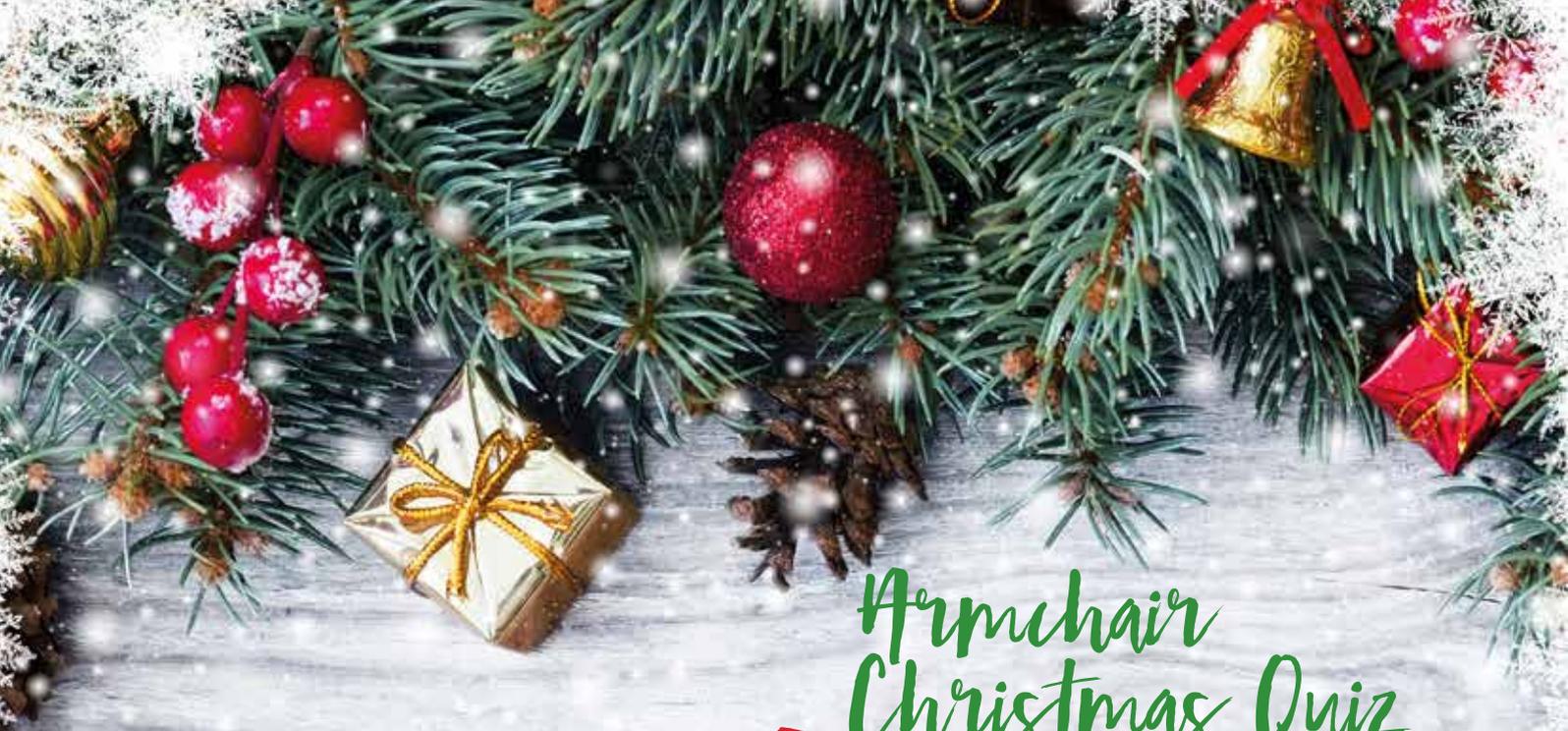
from Derry and Raphoe to
Jerusalem (and back again)
and from Gartan to Iona



1500th

ANNIVERSARY
of St Colmcille/Columba





Armchair Christmas Quiz Answers...

Many thanks to the many Diocesan Magazines which supported our Annual Armchair Christmas Quiz. Entries were up this year (over 250) with about half correct! Thanks to the generosity of so many people we made over €2000. There was a great spread of entries, from all corners of the Island, and a few from the UK. The prize winners were spread from Donegal to Wicklow! The proceeds, as usual, go to two charities, Christian Aid, and Bishops' Appeal.

These are the winners:

1st: Gillian Cheately, Ballykeefe, Limerick
2nd: Hazel Dickson, Castle Road, Kilkenny
3rd: Charlotte Daniels, Kilmoganny, Co. Kilkenny
4th: Emma Delahunt, Riverstown, Birr

Prizes for "Having a good shot!"

1st: Jennifer Lazenby, Grangemellon, Athy, Co Kildare
2nd: Sheila Buchan, Meenagorey, Donegal
3rd: Prize donated to Bishop's Appeal
4th: Joyce Barrett, Gibstown, Donard, Co. Wicklow

The Quiz seemed to be quite difficult this year, not least because I didn't realise quite how many insects there were, and how many different species might fit a particular clue! The world war fighter plane I intended was the Mosquito, not realising that there was a Spitfire sawfly!

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?
- LADYBIRD
CATERPILLAR
COCKROACH
FLEA
FLYING ANT
ARMY ANT
LOCUST
WEEVIL
LEATHERJACKET
CENTIPEDE or MILLIPEDE
BLUEBOTTLE
HORSEFLY
CRANE FLY
DRAGON FLY
MOSQUITO
MAY FLY
RED ADMIRAL
CABBAGE WHITE
TICK
WARBLE FLY
LOUSE
DAMSEL FLY
GRASSHOPPER
DADDY LONG LEGS

Editor...



The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners. (Isaiah 61:1)

'Release' is a recurring theme in this issue of n:vision. There are articles on release from poverty, debt and mental ill-health. There are features about the Bible which help our readers to unpack and release the Word of God into our lives. We have reached the end of the first year of the age of Covid19. I suspect that most people feel that we are gradually being released from a very dark place. Thank God that we are assured of his presence wherever we are.

Many are already looking toward Easter because this year it may mark the possibility of release from yet another lockdown. However, **every** year Easter means release - release from fear of death; release from slavery to sin; release from the captivity of self-importance and self-reliance.

The shadow of the Cross shortens and shrinks away as Christ Resurrected, the triumphant Light of the World, rises high above Calvary and proclaims his reassuring victory over sin and death.

Happy Easter!

Like spiritual vaccines that nurture and safeguard our spiritual lives, Christ has graciously provided us with his Word, his Sacraments and his Church to foster, protect and promote the growth of his Kingdom here on earth.

n:vision continues to journey around the globe. In times of restriction we are still able to walk (metaphorically) to Jerusalem, to the foot of the cross and back from the empty tomb to continue the Church's work of mission, at home and abroad.

To play our part Christians must be missionary in outlook and service like Columba, aka "Colmcille", whom God inspired to build up his Church here in Donegal and Derry, and to share the Good News of the Gospel well beyond our shores. In this edition of n:vision we take justifiable pride in celebrating across our Diocese of Derry and Raphoe the 1500th anniversary of Columba's birth as we rejoice in the great work which God in Christ wrought in the life and times of our own local missionary, Colmcille, Dove of the Church.

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

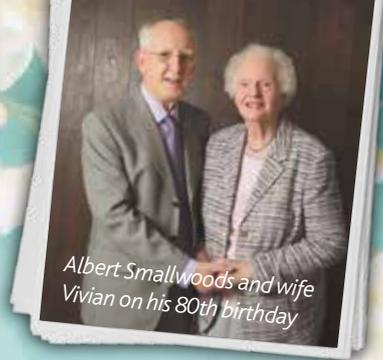


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A “Willing” Man of Faith



Albert Smallwoods and wife Vivian on his 80th birthday

Albert Smallwoods knew poverty and hardship as a child. His father was often unable to work due to illness, so the family had to scrape by on just a few pounds a week.

In the years since then, Albert has raised hundreds of thousands to end poverty and save lives in the world's poorest countries. Now aged 83, he has pledged to leave a gift in his Will to Christian Aid. Albert Smallwoods from Derry/Londonderry is a lifelong humanitarian, a leading Church of Ireland layman and a stalwart supporter of Christian Aid. His life of service to his church and to more than 40 charities was recognised with the award of an MBE. In fact, Albert has received so many plaudits and awards that his wife has dedicated an entire bedroom of their home to display them. But his early years were tough: *“My father, Joseph drove a horse and cart, delivering goods from the railway station to shops and offices. His asthma meant that he couldn't work for many months at a time and often we wouldn't even have the money to buy coal. My mother, Elizabeth looked after the home and family. She was very house proud. But she suffered illness for many years and died when she was just 53. I was the third of four children - I'm the only one left. We lived in a small house on the Dungiven Road without electricity or running water. There was no bathroom, just an outside toilet. I was born two years before the outbreak of the Second World War and I remember the blackouts and the food rationing. An air-raid shelter was built immediately outside our front door, so close that it blocked our light and we lived in near-darkness. Times were hard then.”*

Albert began his career as an apprentice engineer at the Londonderry Electric Light Station aged 15, before moving to Coolkeeragh Power Station where he was engineer-in-charge from 1970 until his early retirement in 1994. But it was his decades of unpaid work for the Church of Ireland, Christian Aid and dozens of other charities

that earned him an MBE in 1992 and saw him named 'Pensioner of the Year' a decade later. He has also been made a Knight of the Order of St John and in 2005, he was among eight people from Northern Ireland selected to attend a special reception at Buckingham Palace to mark UK Year of the Volunteer. A member of Glendermott Parish near Altnagelvin Hospital, Albert recently completed 50 years' service in a variety of positions in his parish. His Christian faith and his compassion for those living in extreme poverty led him to become involved with Bishops' Appeal - the Church of Ireland's World Development Committee which raises funds to support the work of Christian Aid and other agencies. For 40 years, he sat on the board of Bishops' Appeal, raising funds throughout the Derry and Raphoe diocese and travelling by train to Board meetings in Dublin. And he's proud of his staying power: *“I didn't just stay with an organisation for 5 years, I stayed for 40 or 50 years.”*

During those years, Albert persuaded churches in the Derry and Raphoe diocese to support Bishops' Appeal: *“I used to ring them up and make a nuisance of myself. By the time I'd finished, 100% of the churches were contributing to Bishops' Appeal.”*

He recalls two fundraising campaigns in particular: *“We raised £60,000 for projects in Kenya but then we set ourselves a target to raise £100,000 to buy mosquito nets for Nigeria. I doubted we would ever reach that target because the £60,000 for Kenya had been a real struggle but former Bishop of Derry and Raphoe Ken Good told me to have faith. In fact, we raised £117,000. Those mosquito nets help to prevent malaria and saved countless lives. I had faith.”*

Between 1990 and 1998, Albert also helped to govern Christian Aid Ireland, serving the maximum eight-year term on its board. In 2007, he visited Christian Aid projects in India, an experience that has stayed with

him since: *“I couldn't believe the poverty. There were no toilets, no running water. Children without clothes or food. Women carrying basins of cement on their heads. You have to see the conditions there to believe them. It was really shocking.”*

On his return home, Albert spoke in churches throughout the Derry and Raphoe diocese and gave interviews to radio stations and newspapers, inspiring others to support Christian Aid's work. So, why has he decided to leave a gift in his Will to Christian Aid? *“I want to carry on my life's work after I'm gone.”*

Albert has been married to Vivian since 1974. The couple have two daughters, Gillian and Nicola and four grandchildren. What do his family think about his decision to leave a gift in his Will? *“They're all for it”,* he says simply. And then unprompted, he offers this reflection: *“I've really enjoyed my life. I'm grateful because when I was 19, I had rheumatic fever and a heart murmur. My GP said he doubted I would see 50. I'm now in my 80s, so I feel very blessed.”*

Deborah Doherty, Christian Aid Ireland's former Head of Supporter Engagement knows Albert well: *“He is a man of great integrity and honesty, and a man of his word. If he agreed to take on a role, he would complete it to the very best of his ability. There was no such thing as attending 2 meetings out of 4; Albert would attend every meeting, even during the Troubles and despite having to travel home late at night - whether or not there was snow on the Glenshane Pass. I never once saw him lose his temper or raise his voice. He is a very reliable person and a very generous person.”*

But Albert saves his last words for his wife of 46 years: *“I want to acknowledge that the work I've done to support charities and my church wouldn't have been possible without the kindness and support of my wife, Vivian. She's been my rock throughout and to her I express my heartfelt thanks.”*

Lisa Fagan, Christian Aid Ireland

Bishop Andrew *writes...*

'Praying our Way to Recovery'



Dear friends,

The early success of the Covid-19 vaccines, the arrival of Spring and the imminent and glorious good news of Easter have, I hope, given most of us a sense that the worst may be behind us. We know there will still be difficult days ahead and that the sad legacy of the last 12 months will live on. Recovering from the trauma and fear of Covid-19, and the grief and deprivations that it has carried in its wake, is a process not simply a moment.

We are people of hope, though, not of fear. Perhaps, just perhaps, we are turning a corner after the torturous journey of the last year. And perhaps, as Easter - the season of hope - draws near, it is time to try and understand how we can live with the awful legacy of the pandemic while also looking forward with positivity as God's people in God's world.

I recently came across some helpful material from CPAS - the Church Pastoral Aid Society - that aims to help individuals and church communities to begin the process of recovery after crisis (you can find them at www.cpas.org.uk). One of their resources takes four words that we associate with Christian discipleship and uses them to help us reflect on our experiences. Why not take a little time and think through each word, and how it can help you respond to the pandemic?

THANKSGIVING is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, St. Paul writes: 'Give thanks in all circumstances.' Thankfulness can help us to look at the world around us in a different

way; it nurtures an attitude of gratitude. For example, I'm thankful for having my family around me, and for the incredible love and sacrifice of those on the frontline of healthcare. What are the things you are thankful for - the small everyday things, as well as the bigger things?

LAMENT is about being honest with God: honest about how we are feeling; expressing to Him our pain and hurt; lamenting the difficulty of our experience. I often read the Book of Psalms but recently I have found myself strongly drawn to the Psalms of lament. Psalm 42 - 'I say to God my rock, "Why have you forgotten me?"' - is a cry from the heart at a time of deep distress. And Psalm 13 asks a question that I am sure has been on your lips: 'How long O Lord?'

Yet, in the midst of anguish, it finishes with these beautiful words of hope: 'But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.' As we lament, think about what you are missing and what you long for - the little things as well as the big things: the embrace of a grandchild or a visit to a coffee shop. We can lament because of the disappointment, heartache and grief of the pandemic. I mourn the loss of a dear uncle, who died after contracting the virus in May. So, lament - be honest with God.

LEARNING. 'See, I am doing a new thing!' says Isaiah 43:19. God often teaches us through difficult and trying experiences. What have you discovered through this experience

that, perhaps, can only be learned at a time like this? What have you learned about God, about life, about yourself? What will you do differently as a result of the pandemic? When we look at the lives of the disciples who journeyed with Jesus, they were constantly learning from him. So, it is only natural that modern day disciples, like you and me, should also be learning, changing and growing.

PRAYER. Through prayer our relationship with God grows and flourishes. Philippians 4:6 says: 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.' In prayer we can bring our whole selves to God - all that is going on around us and all that concerns us in our world. Who are the people you want to pray for? What are the issues of concern that you want to bring before God? Our diocesan booklet, 'Hope in the Pandemic', can help you to pray. If you would like a copy, contact the Diocesan Office. I am convinced that we have to pray our way through this unprecedented time. And, as we begin to recover, keep prayer at the forefront of your daily life.

Thanksgiving, lament, learning and prayer, four words rooted in Christian discipleship that I hope will help you travel down the road of recovery.

Yours in Christ,

+Andrew Derry & Raphoe

The whole story of the Bible in 750 words...

BY ROBIN STOCKITT

Grove Books ran a competition to write the story of the Bible in 750 words which our very own Rev Dr Robin Stockitt (Rector of Donagheady) won.

tick...tick...tick...tick...

At times the beat quickens, during moments of high anticipation, but then it returns to its steady rhythm, without pause, without hesitation, day after day, year after year, unending.

It is the pulsing life blood of love flowing from the heart of God towards all that he has made. One day this God will visit his creation in person. He himself will go and participate in the life of humanity. He will laugh and cry, encourage and admonish, educate and confuse, suffer and die, and rise again to the surprise, delight and dismay of the people with whom he lived. But this is to rush ahead to the end of the story.

The story of the Bible begins with a beautiful friendship. God and humankind faced each other, eye to eye, with mankind keeping in step with the heartbeat of love. God and his people would walk in harmony, shoulder to shoulder in sweet communion in the cool of the day. It was like this at the beginning for Adam and Eve given paradise to enjoy and look after. And there were holy moments of great intimacy too for Abram, Moses, Elijah, David, Isaiah, John and Peter. These were ordinary humans who felt the pull of the heartbeat of love upon their souls and responded to it. And yet the struggle to hear and to heed God's voice was often lost by those very same people who had followed God's insistent call so carefully. At times the struggle was lost by a whole nation,

God's chosen nation, Israel, despite the pleas and warnings of the prophets, God's spokespeople, who bravely stood up in his name. "These people, whom I love to bless", announced God one day, "will be a vehicle for blessing to spread to the whole world. They are blessed, not because they are more loved, but simply so that others might, through them, discern and enjoy me too".

God took these people, a collection of unknown tribes, and through an extraordinary tale of enslavement in Egypt, rescue and deliverance across a harsh desert, shaped them into a people that belonged to him. But alas, all too often, the blessing was kept to themselves and thereby it began to decay. The prophets came to call them out of their stupor and stubborn rebelliousness. 'Come back', they cried, but no one listening. 'Be merciful' declared one of the prophets. But no-one heard. But God longed for the closeness, the intimacy and the freedom that he had always intended for the people he had made. It grieved him that so many had turned their back on him and could no longer bring themselves to look him in the eye. 'These people whom I love so dearly', said God, 'have lost their way and are walking away from me. It is as if they are entering a long dark tunnel, from which they will not be able to find a way of escape. I must go myself to find them, to rescue them, even if it means going to where they are, into that tunnel, that place of darkness. So God sent his Son on a mission. To seek, to find, to save, to bring his people back home. He called

himself Emmanuel, God with us, or Jesus, God the Saviour made flesh. He chose to come in disguise, as an infant in an unknown village to a simple peasant girl. He came to those who had lost their way, who had become deaf to the pulsing beat of love, who were blind to the yearning of God for them. This Jesus, God's own Son, would enter their darkness to find them. He would even enter death for them, in order that they might know, that nothing could ever stop God's great search to bring the captives home. For three days all was quiet. The darkness was complete and those who had followed this Son, believed that all their secret hopes and longings had disappeared too.

Yet God, full of surprises, broke through the stone which now had blocked the entrance to that tunnel and set his Son free. Slowly, ever so slowly, the people came to realise that in God's great drama, forgiveness, reconciliation, and a new beginning were available for all. When Jesus rose again, everything became new. God's people were no longer those who simply named themselves, 'Israel'. Jesus had flung the doors of kingdom of heaven open wide for all to enter, young and old, black and white, male and female. The community that gladly walked through those doors of welcome, were known as 'the ones who heard the call', who recognised that the heartbeat of love had never stopped.

tick...tick...tick...tick...



Derry & Raphoe Ministry of Healing...

The Derry and Raphoe Diocesan Ministry of Healing Team has six members:

Chair: Rev Paul Lyons, Camus-juxta-Bann Parish (Macosquin)

Secretary: Rev Carmen Hayes, Errigal Parish (Garvagh)

Treasurer: Mr Brian Seaton, Christ Church, Culmore, Muff & St Peter Group of Parishes (Londonderry)

Rev Heather Houlton, Conwal Union (Letterkenny)

Canon Katie McAteer Christ Church, Culmore, Muff & St Peter Group of Parishes (Londonderry)

Mrs Gillian Millar, Kilrea, Tamlaght O'Crilly Upper & Lower Parish

Our aim is to encourage and equip the church in our diocese in the Ministry of Healing. Like many other ministries the pandemic has brought many limitations to what we have been able to do. Yet the committee wanted to continue to make the Ministry of Healing available. To facilitate this, a regular diocesan Facebook healing service (every two months) began in November 2020. This service was led by Rev Paul Lyons and members of his parish. The theme was 'Our Mental Health Five A Day'. In this service we were reminded that NHS research and Scripture agree in how we can look after our mental health:

1. Communicating with other people builds a sense of belonging and self-worth. In Proverbs 16:24 we read, "Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body."

2. Being physically active raises your self-esteem. In 1 Corinthians 6:19 we read, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?"

3. Learning new skills boosts self-confidence and helps to build a sense of purpose. Proverbs 9:9, "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning."

4. Giving to others creates a sense of reward and helps connect with other people. In Philippians 2:4 we read, 'Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.'

5. Paying attention to the present moment by sharing your thoughts and feelings will positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges. In Proverbs 12:17 we read, "An honest witness tells the truth, but a false witness tells lies."

In January's service Canon Katie McAteer and Mr Brian Seaton taught from the story of the healing of the bleeding woman in Mark 5:24-34. In this service we were reminded we can reach out to Jesus at any time. The Lord calls us his son/daughter and God's touch in our life brings love, forgiveness, healing and relationship. We are always invited into that '**touching place**'

The next online services will be led by Rev Carmen Hayes & Mrs Gillian Millar in March and Rev Heather Houlton in May. Please do listen in.



The Virus of POVERTY

As a teenager of 14 in the early 70s I knew everything. This knowledge primarily consisted in the absolute certainty that my parents knew nothing, that my teachers were dull and uninspiring and I alone, had a unique insight into the world and the general torment of teenage suffering. I had an opinion on most subjects and even felt a responsibility to express a view on subjects I had yet to even vaguely encounter during my brief existence on the planet.

To recite every record in the top 30 was a doddle. The names of every DJ employed by Radio Luxembourg slipped off the tongue, and once, I even answered a question correctly on University Challenge - that was one in the eye for Bamber Gascoigne I can tell you. My wisdom and knowledge was almost as expansive as my favourite pair of 'elephant flairs' (with apologies to those who never lived in the 70s). Even the subject of poverty was not outside my scope of knowledge and I remember insisting that there was, in fact, no poverty in Ireland! How could there be? We had a stable

democracy with a Social Welfare system to uphold those who needed help. No problem!

My father, a generally undemonstrative soul, helped distribute Christmas Hampers each year for a local charity and following my proclamations on the absence of poverty in Ireland, invited me to accompany him on his city centre route. As distribution was to take place on Christmas Eve I was less than pleased but my patient father eventually cajoled me into joining him, so on a cold, wet, drizzly day we wended our way into Dublin city centre. Why, I might even enjoy the experience! I could go into various descriptions of what we encountered but, suffice to say, inner city Dublin almost 50 years ago was more than enough to persuade me of the error of my ways, and I can still vividly remember the stark scenes that assaulted my naïve south Co. Dublin sensibilities. Dark cold rooms without heating and poor, if any, cooking facilities as well as bathrooms, descriptions of which are best left to the confines of the imagination along with furniture that would have looked more at home in a skip. The only impressive parts of that day were the people we met - their

polite struggle for dignity was striking and a sharp lesson for this ignorant teenager.

That level of poverty was obvious at that time and impossible to disguise. It was raw and unforgiving with any notion of a Celtic Tiger being merely a laughable optimistic mirage. Ireland today has come a long way - our position on most comparison charts has improved considerably and, as reported in December 2020 by The Irish Times, our position in the Human Development Index Ranking in terms of quality of life (taking into account longevity, education and income) puts us in second place, just behind Norway. For heaven's sake, we're ahead of Germany, Sweden, Australia and the UK amongst others!

And yet, poverty in Ireland has not gone away. I'm not going to throw percentages at you of how many children are in poverty or unemployment rates or indeed any of the other statistics that fail to present an empathetic face to a reality that still haunts many an Irish family. The stats, good, bad or indifferent can say what they want, but the 1000 plus General Grant applications we in



... but the vaccine is here!

Protestant Aid received last year tell their own story. And while those stories are not always as obvious as those I came across almost 50 years ago, they are as real and heart-breaking.

The official Government approved poverty measure used in Ireland was developed independently by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and is based on lacking two or more items from an 11-item index. This index includes such basic items as two pairs of strong shoes, a warm waterproof overcoat, a roast joint once per week, a home that is adequately warm etc. Many people with whom I have conversations can chalk up 9 or 10 of the 11 criteria without difficulty, let alone the two or more needed to define what we know as 'consistent poverty'.

Images of poverty are no longer the Dickensian pictures of the workhouse or children climbing up a chimney - it is struggling to pay a utility bill; it is feeling a pit in the bottom of your stomach as the insurance bill lands on your mat (or computer); it is that suffocating feeling that you cannot catch up with your bills

or give your children good food and warm clothes. These difficulties very often manifest themselves in mental or physical health problems and in our applications we have seen where these issues are becoming more pervasive.

Financial distress is not an alien or unknown force - it can hit our next-door neighbours, our friends, our cousins, our brothers and sisters. It can reach our own front door. It can often creep up stealth-like and catch us unawares, taking us by surprise. It is like a virus, making no distinction between age groups, denomination or location.

Covid-19 has exacerbated financial struggles for many individuals and families as we have seen but, **if financial problems are a virus, then I am happy to say that donations to Protestant Aid have provided something of a 'vaccine'**. We are so grateful for the number of regular donors who have increased their giving in the face of increased need and we are happy to report that in 2020 100% of this help was distributed in grant aid.



INVITATION

Asking for help can often be awkward, but if you are in financial difficulty, please contact your Rector regarding a General Grant Application to Protestant Aid - the process is discreet, emphatic and confidential.

If you have any questions please contact us directly at: info@protestantaid.org

Geoff Scargill, Head of Charitable Services at Protestant Aid

*Protestant Aid,
202A Merrion Road,
Dublin 4, D04 R9W8*

Derry & Raphoe Board of Social Responsibility

How a Pandemic changed the landscape of **debt**...

We've been talking about COVID-19 all year. In that time we've coined some new phrases like social distancing, self-isolation and support bubbles. We've gained a new appreciation for aisles full of toilet roll and we all know someone who's made a loaf of sourdough.

Some of us have experienced a slower pace of life, whether it's reduced social calendars or not having to commute into work. Others have been rushed off their feet, such as our key workers or those trying to juggle work and home schooling. Some have been able to save more, or pay off that credit card, whereas others have struggled to get by on an 80% wage, or really felt the extra costs of being at home all the time. It's interesting that our collective experience of the pandemic has been both unifying and polarising.

At **Christians Against Poverty (CAP)**, we are watching this pandemic shift the debt landscape. Those able to work from home and earn a full wage during lockdown also had fewer opportunities to spend. No more money spent on commuting or eating out. Bank of England statistics showed that £7.4bn of consumer credit was repaid in April 2020, the largest net repayment since records began in 1993. Figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) revealed that people saved 8.6% of their income in the first three months of 2020, more than the 5.4% of savings made in the same period in 2019.

Sounds like good news, right?

Wrong. Sadly, this isn't the experience for everyone. Some groups in society, such as the under-30s and those on low incomes, have been hit hard by the pandemic. This is because many work in sectors impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. According to the Resolution Foundation, low income households were twice as likely as richer ones to have increased their debts during the crisis. At CAP, we know how the impact of debt spans across the social, physical and financial spheres of life. Problem debt can have a real impact on living standards, with many clients telling us that before seeking support from CAP Debt Help they would frequently go without food, heat or light.

Sadly, the UK is seeing more households starting to struggle to afford these daily essentials because of COVID-19. According to a YouGov report, of those who consider themselves financially distressed, 37% say they've eaten less than normal, and 31% have reduced the number of showers or baths they're taking. Here at CAP, many clients have felt the impact of increased household bills. Others have struggled with being put on reduced hours, with one client saying, 'I've had about £400 decrease in wages - I can't pay into my CAP Plan anymore.'

On one hand, the pandemic is causing the rich to get richer, giving people the chance to save more money and pay off their debt. On the other hand, the pandemic is leaving

those already struggling on low incomes to deal with unavoidable income shocks. We've seen something similar to this before. After the 2008 financial crisis, we started to hear more about the growing number of people needing to use foodbanks. As a nation we became more aware of UK poverty, seeing the growing economic divide between the wealthy and those on low incomes. Today's financial crisis is no different; some people will be hit hard whilst others will profit.

That is why Christians Against Poverty is going to be needed more than ever. We are working tirelessly to ensure we can help as many people as possible. We are gearing up in anticipation of the many more households falling into problem debt because of COVID-19. At the same time, we are working with the Government and creditors, to help them understand the impact that COVID-19 is having on some of the UK's lowest income households. We are campaigning for changes that would make a real difference to our clients, such as keeping the £20 Universal Credit uplift. CAP's heart is to not only help people with their financial circumstances, but also to share the love of Jesus. We are here to bring the good news to people in isolation, people struggling with mental health challenges, those facing relationship breakdown or experiencing joblessness. We are here to bring hope to those who feel as though there's no way out, because even in the most testing of times, with God by our side, there is always hope.



DEBT: 7 REASONS PEOPLE DON'T ASK FOR DEBT HELP...

In 2020, we saw over 2,200 people become debt free. We know that our debt help service works, as we've seen it in action for 25 years. Yet so many people put off asking for debt help. In fact, 30% of our clients waited 3 years and longer before seeking help!

1 *Why do so many people put off seeking debt help?*

Shame, embarrassment or guilt. Shame at getting into debt, embarrassment at what people will think, guilt at past decisions that may have led to debt. Shame, embarrassment and guilt can keep people trapped in silence and isolation, believing they can solve their issues by themselves, when actually it's better to access debt help before things start to spiral out of control. There is no shame in asking for help.

2 *Self-reliance*

Believing that with more time and hard work, it is possible to get out of debt without any help. Believing it is their issue, and they should deal with it alone. No one should deal with the weight of debt alone. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

3 *Fear*

So many people in debt are fearful of opening their post, answering the phone and opening the door because of enforcement agents wanting to collect money. The thought of more demanding letters and bills can be overwhelming. If this is the case for you please don't hesitate to call; our friendly team will offer you a listening ear and a solution, not judgement or criticism.

4 *Feeling overwhelmed*

The stress and worry of debt can be overwhelming. At times it might feel easier to ignore it rather than confront it. However, asking for debt help could ease the stress and the burden. Even just having someone else who knows about your situation, ready to listen and help you find a solution can help lift the weight of debt from your shoulders.

5 *Too many other things going on*

Often debt isn't the only pressure people are grappling with. Debt is often paired with: unemployment, a relationship breakdown, lone parenting, mental ill-health, a physical disability, a learning

disability, being a victim to fraud or financial abuse, a childhood trauma, grief, a struggle with an addiction; and sometimes a combination of several of these. A culmination of these difficulties can lead to putting off asking for debt help.

6 *Thinking no one can help*

Debt can lead to hopelessness, believing there is no way out of the constraints of debt. There is a reason our strapline is 'always hope'. We've helped thousands of people who have found themselves in all sorts of difficult and complicated situations, and can testify that no situation is beyond hope.

7 *Not knowing where to get help*

Sometimes the problem isn't a reluctance to ask for debt help, but not knowing where to get debt help. Most CAP clients are referred to CAP by word of mouth, through friends and family, which is why it is so important to spread the word about what we do to those who may need our help. The first step is often the hardest. To ask for debt help is intimidating. But our friendly team will give you a listening ear and provide a solution.

If you're struggling with debt today, don't wait any longer, call free on 0800 328 0006. We'd love to help you.

The King said... "You did it for me"



What a privilege we have as Mothers' Union members to serve others and know we are doing it for The King of Kings!

During the month of November and again in February Mothers' Union in Derry & Raphoe operated an *AFIA (Away From It All)* Pandemic Scheme with the approval of Bishop Andrew and Mothers' Union Trustees.

The scheme proved a lifeline to families who are experiencing the financial fall-out from this pandemic. This situation could not have been imagined a year ago; successful businesses closed; secure jobs lost. People found themselves in a financial crisis they never imagined, and resources disappeared. Meanwhile, deaths continued to sweep our parishes as tragedies continued in our communities.

Aware that families in this Diocese were in financial crisis, Mothers' Union took a leap of faith, sought approval, and obtained grants to offer a confidential, anonymous scheme to reach out and comfort others, as urged in Matthew 6:3 'do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing'. Rectors were informed of the scheme and given an application. Those who responded were able to bless families and be blessed themselves.

Families spoke of the unexpected kindness and thoughtfulness of Mothers' Union who organised the gift which for many helped with grocery shopping and essentials at the beginning of December amidst all the other pressures in their lives.

During February (the month of love), we

added an extra category to the scheme. Clergy could identify parishioners whose problems were so vast that the scheme could not help them, but a gift of love (not a necessity) would let them know that someone cared about their situation.

Gradually we are emerging out of this dark place. We hope for a brighter future as we continue to support those in need and endeavour to be kind to those we meet, placing our trust in God who richly provides us with everything we need.

Mums in May '21 in 21'

Join us for our All-Ireland Triennial Fundraiser and help make a difference to the work of Mothers' Union! YOU can make a difference - every little helps!

'21 IN 21' Sponsored Walks

This year Mums In May challenges members and friends to walk '21 in 21' - this can be 21 yards, 21 laps, 21 furlongs, 21 kilometres, 21 miles or 21 something else... let your imagination run wild...

To support '21 in 21' Individual and/or Branch Sponsorship Forms are available.

June Butler, All-Ireland President...

is undertaking '21 IN 21' in each diocese, in the form of 3 x 7km/mile walks.

Due to Covid -19, details have not yet been released, but three walks are planned in Castlerock, Londonderry and Stranorlar areas.

JUST GIVING Page:

A JUST GIVING PAGE has been set up for Mothers' Union, so friends and family may contribute to June's walking extravaganza. See our Diocesan or All-Ireland Facebook Page and website for details.



Count Your Blessings

Don't we have so much to give thanks for? Why not raise money for Mums in May by placing money in a jar for each daily "Blessing" listed during the month of May.

Count Your Blessing Charts have been forwarded to each branch and are available for download at www.mothersunion.ie

52

Get the BIG story of the Bible with Bible Society NI

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:36-37).

Over the course of the past 12 months our everyday lives have been turned upside down and tossed from the reality we once knew, under the domination of one topic - COVID-19. Every corner of the earth has been impacted. Societies have stood still. Schools have been shut, hospitals overrun, supermarket shelves emptied, and workplaces and churches forced to adapt to new online worlds. This virus, its restrictions and new vocabulary has all too often overwhelmed our minds with questions about how we exist, how we live, and how we can make the most of these days. Nowhere, perhaps, have these questions been more deeply wrestled with than in the Church.

How can we, individually and collectively as the Body of Christ, love God with all our heart, soul and mind in a moment of history when our whole beings are so profoundly affected by the present circumstances?

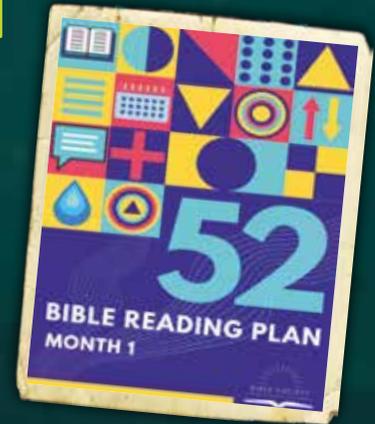
At Bible Society NI we believe one way to do this is to spend time reading and studying the book which is unlike any other book in the world - the Bible! We believe passionately that God, the maker of the heavens and the earth wants to speak to us and reveal himself to us through the words contained upon every page of the book he inspired. Yet, if we're being honest, though we know the benefits of feasting on the Bible, all too often

reading it can be a bit of a struggle. Sometimes the Bible feels too big, too hard, too complicated, and maybe even too irrelevant to our everyday 21st century lives. At other times we can feel too busy, too scared of turning our devotions into a box-ticking exercise, or even too much of a failure that reading it might only make us feel even worse before God.

So what can we do about it? How can we read the Bible in a way which will help us hear God's voice, make sense of these days and live out the greatest commandment Jesus spoke of to the teachers of the Law? To help answer such questions and inspire generations within the Church to engage more meaningfully with the Bible we have created a new Bible study resource called "52".

Designed to take readers on a journey of discovery through the BIG story of the Bible, without getting bogged down, 52 explores 28 Old Testament and 24 New Testament passages - the 52 - and applies them to our everyday lives. Each month's guide comes packed with the weekly passage and a timeline of where it fits into the Bible's BIG story, as well as study questions, activities, prayers, journal pages and lots more. In our early experience of creating and sharing this resource, we have come to learn that it is an ideal resource for use within families, Sunday Schools, Y.F. groups and even small group ministries.

The best way to use 52 and discover more of God's BIG story as contained within the Scriptures is by setting some time aside each day and doing just that! Why not:



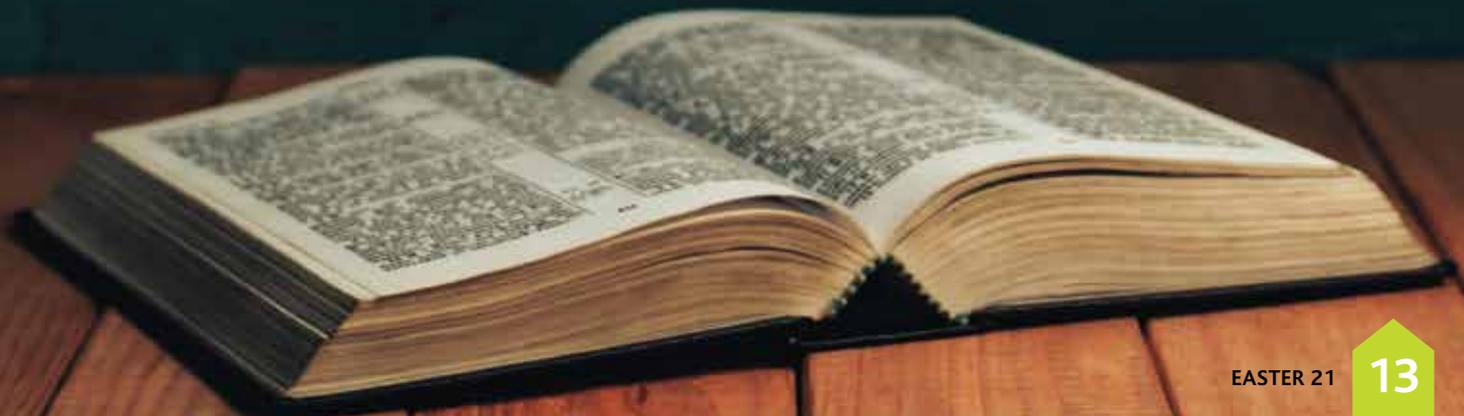
READ - Grab your Bible and read the daily passage. Each week there are also 2 memory verses to learn and further passages to study that will take you even deeper into the Bible's BIG story.

LOOK - Go deeper into each week's passage by using the 3 simple study questions provided each day and note how God is speaking to you on the journal page.

LIVE - Each week we have 1-2 easy challenges designed to help you put into practice something you have just read. Why not check them out and give them a go!

PRAY - Spend some time each week giving thanks, saying sorry, praying for others and yourself. Use our guided prayer and craft your own - God loves it when we talk to him.

52 is currently being released monthly and will be available free of charge from Bible Society NI's website throughout 2021. Simply visit: <https://biblesocietyni.co.uk/2020/12/14/52-bible-resource/> to download your copy today.



A LOOK AT THE COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH HEADLINES

DR HANNAH SCOTT



The COVID-19 pandemic has, understandably, dominated the headlines lately. One of the things that's been reported on and discussed most is its impact on mental health and its effect of living in a new world governed by lockdowns and social distancing measures.

As an academic in mental health research, I've followed the research behind the mental health headlines closely, and can give you a more detailed look at some of the news we've been hearing about over the past year.

Within weeks of our first national lockdown being introduced last March, I was asked to work on a project that reviewed the initial international data that was coming out about how people with pre-existing mental health conditions were coping with countries' lockdown measures.

We found that people who already had mental health conditions like anxiety or depression weren't the most affected by the pandemic, as they often already had effective coping strategies for dealing with challenges and stressful life events. An exception to this were people with Contamination Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), whose symptoms can

be triggered by fear of spreading germs or catching an illness, and so were made worse by concern about a new and highly transmissible virus. Lots of people with eating disorders also found it difficult to manage their diet, as panic-buying and difficulty transporting food could make it hard to access food that they felt comfortable eating.

On the other hand, in the U.K. we saw a big increase in people who usually had good mental health reporting that they had symptoms of depression and anxiety at the beginning of our first national lockdown, although the numbers of people reporting these symptoms decreased over the summer. Although there have been some news stories about suicide rates during the pandemic, we don't have any accurate data about this yet, as the U.K. releases information about suicide rates once a year, with a time lag of a year. The good news is that early international research from Spring 2020 suggests that rates have not risen significantly.

I currently work on a project that aims to understand the mental health of healthcare workers over the course of the pandemic. Given the strain on the NHS last Spring and this Winter, we know that people who work

in healthcare have faced extremely stressful situations at work. Although you might have seen articles about the challenges to the mental health of frontline workers like doctors and nurses, our research also looks at how non-clinical staff, like porters, administrators and cleaners are coping. Our most recent study suggests that non-clinical staff have impacted mental health at least as much as frontline staff, although we don't know exactly why that is yet.

It's still too early to tell what the lasting impacts of this pandemic will be on our mental health, but as we start to rebuild, researchers will be working to make sure that mental health support is at the heart of our recovery.

If you're interested in reading more about mental health research in the UK, you can read blogs about recent research at [The Mental Elf website \(https://www.nationalelfservice.net/mental-health/\)](https://www.nationalelfservice.net/mental-health/). If you're finding your mental health difficult to cope with, the NI Direct government website lists mental health resources across Northern Ireland (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/mental-health-support>). You can also call the Samaritans, free of charge, on 116 123.

Diocesan Alpha Course

By Venerable David Huss

A year ago, most of us clergy thought 'Zoom' was something we did when going from one church to another on a busy Sunday morning. But over the past twelve months another type of Zoom - the online video meeting platform - has proved to be a wonderful tool for bringing people together during the pandemic. Zoom and similar systems have enabled all sorts of meetings to take place, from the hundreds who gathered online for General Synod in December 2020 to the countless Christmas calls among families separated by lockdown.

One of my 'Zoom highlights' of the past few months has been running two online Alpha courses, first in the Parish and then for the Diocese. In both cases I was overwhelmed by the interest people showed in meeting together to talk about God, life and Jesus and I was pleasantly surprised by how quickly people of all ages and stages not only mastered the technology but also formed great relationships in the discussion groups that are an integral part of the course.

The Derry and Raphoe Alpha saw around 30 guests join with 13 hosts over 11 Thursdays for an hour a week to watch a video presentation and then chat in groups of around 5-6 people - all totally online. Although most participants lived within the diocese's geographical orbit, others joined us from as far away as California and there was a wonderful mix of people from different church backgrounds and life experiences. Feedback after the course showed that for several people it had been a life-changing experience in which they had made a positive step of faith in Christ, or sometimes had

Alpha

'gone over in ink' a commitment that had previously been there 'in pencil.'

Not everyone completed the course and some struggled with the intensity of on-screen interactions or the frustration of technological hitches. An in-person course definitely has added dimensions and remains the 'gold standard' but nonetheless it was amazing how Zoom opened up new possibilities and enabled some people to participate who might never have found their way to our halls, homes or other traditional venues.

Some quotes from our guests:

"Thank you so much for this wonderful experience."

"The talks were informative and the small groups encouraging (and funny!)."

"Positive experience in difficult times, timing perfect, thanks to all who made it happen!"

"It's been something to look forward to during lockdown."

"The course has strengthened my Christian faith."

"Thank you so much for organising Alpha. It was a truly amazing experience & gave me lots to think about... in a good way."

"My group were just so lovely."

"I've enjoyed getting to know other people in the diocese."

"I learnt from other people's comments and stories."

"I've been challenged."

"I've felt loved and encouraged."

Invitation

I would encourage any parish or organisation to run Alpha online. It's easier than you think, and I'd happily talk you through the details. Above all, it provides a simple, friendly and faithful way to introduce people to Jesus. There's no greater need, or greater joy, than that!



1500th ANNIVERSARY

Churches and communities unite to celebrate the 1500th anniversary of St Colmcille/Columba...

2021 will see a year of activities and events to celebrate the 1500th anniversary of St Colmcille, also known as Columba. During this year we will reflect on the life of Columba as communities come together to celebrate a shared heritage, and his legacy and cultural influences.

Born in Gartan, Donegal in AD 521, he later moved to Derry where he established his first monastery. He then moved on to Scotland where he founded the renowned Iona Abbey which was a focal point for the spread of Christianity throughout Scotland, and to this day is a celebrated focus for Christian pilgrimage. The celebratory year was launched on 7th December 2020, at a number of Columba related sites: St Colmcille's Abbey near Churchill, St Colmcille's Church Glendowan, Longtower Church in Derry, and St Canice's Oratory, IOSAS Centre, Donegal. In addition, Ulster University and Éigse Cholm Cille, the Irish language literary society based at Magee campus, hosted a virtual conference for schools to mark the 1500 years since the birth of Colmcille.

The Church leaders in the North West came together with the Churches Trust to produce a film called 'Columba @ 1500'. The film gives accessibility to the Church leaders at a time of great restriction, touching the hearts of the whole community, all demographics, showing cohesion and a unity in celebration. Columba@1500 can be viewed via the

following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvvXBGUGxuYE&feature=youtu.be>. Church leaders involved included Bishop Andrew Forster, Bishop Donal McKeown, Bishop Alan McGuckian, Rev Thomas Bruce, and Rev Richard Johnston.

During 2021 there will be an extensive programme of activities inviting collaboration between churches and communities, across Derry City & Strabane and Donegal Council areas, and indeed throughout the island of Ireland and Scotland. Some of the planned activities to date include:

- **Cross-border Exhibition** and accompanying events programme exploring a variety of themes associated with the saint, his life and legacy in the Tower Museum, Derry (April - September 2021) and Donegal County Museum (September 2021 - February 2022).
- **Colmcille Digital Schools' Folklore Project** coordinated by the Donegal Library Service and Libraries NI in association with The Nerve Centre. Children from five primary schools in Donegal and five primary schools in Derry will gather folklore about Colmcille on a cross-generational basis. A selection of the stories will be recorded and transformed into an animated story on the life and lore of Colmcille that will culminate in a showcase event in April 2021.
- Production of an **Educational Resource Pack** for primary schools on the life and legacy of Colmcille. The pack will consist of an illustrated information booklet and worksheets and will be distributed to schools in early 2021.
- **American Conference for Irish Studies** at the Magee College campus of Ulster University celebrating the shared heritage originating from Columba.



- Cross-border production, by An Grianan Theatre of **Brian Friel's play 'The Enemy Within'**. Set on the island of Iona in the autumn of 587 A.D., the play examines a period in the life of St. Colmcille as a man having worked in his ministry for many years and settled in his monastery in Iona, is still subject to the demands of his turbulent family clan in Donegal. The production directed by Caitríona McLaughlin will run for one week in Letterkenny before undertaking a three-week tour of Dublin, Belfast, Sligo, Longford and Derry City in May - June 2021.

- Composition and arrangement of a **Colmcille-related suite of musical works** for orchestra and voices by Donegal Youth Orchestra conductor and composer Vincent Kennedy in partnership with Donegal Music Education Partnership. The premier performance of the newly-commissioned work will take place in the latter half of 2021.

There will be many other events and activities originating in the heart of communities. Individuals and organisations are invited to partake in as many of these occasions to ensure that we pay fitting tribute to the unifying force who is one of the patron saints of Ireland, is patron saint of Derry, and who has left us with legacies in the literary, artistic, and spiritual world.

Fiona Fagan CEO Churches Trust



Scripture Union Northern Ireland has chosen to mark 1500 years since Colmcille's birth with a series of 4 RE lessons for KS2 entitled 'The Way of the Peacemaker.' This is a video-resource, suitable for remote or classroom learning. The lessons will explore the life of Colmcille and biblical principles of peace as they work through one of the Saint's famous prayers.

To access the resource please email rachelm@sunl.co.uk

See these links:

<https://www.derrystrabane.com/Subsites/Regeneration-/Columban-Heritage-Audit>

<https://www.donegalcoco.ie/yourcouncil/communicationsoffice/pressreleasefromjan2021/fundingopenforcolmcille1500commemorations/>

<https://www.highlandradio.com/2021/01/29/new-grants-scheme-for-colmcille-1500-commemorations/>

<https://colmcille.net/colmcille-1500-educational-material/>

<https://www.facebook.com/gartanns/videos/150140743112909>

<https://www.facebook.com/gartanns/videos/1521388844736980>

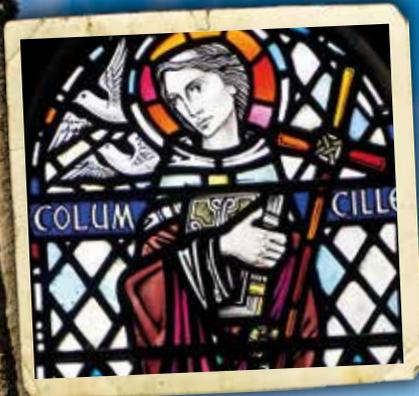
The year of celebrations was inaugurated by a Service of Night Prayer in St Columba's Church, Gartan and Morning Prayer at the St Colmcille's Abbey site led by Bishop Andrew together with RC Bishops Donal McKeown (Derry) and Alan McGuckian (Raphoe) and the Presbyterian convenor Thomas Bruce on a fine crisp morning (see photo below). Later on that morning the schools packs and competition was launched by the Bishops. These were put together by a small team of teachers including Claire Murray, deputy principle of Gartan (COI) National School. Outside Gartan NS in Tirargus, where Columba's father Fergus was raised, the children sang (socially distanced) a song they had written about Colmcille. This is available on the school's facebook page and was commended by the Bishops. With the hard lockdown after New Year attention has

turned to organising when activities would be possible. Donegal County Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council are working closely together to coordinate and promote events and celebrations and have appointed a project coordinator who is coordinating, promoting and offering funding for all the different local St Columba organisations' plans for 2021.

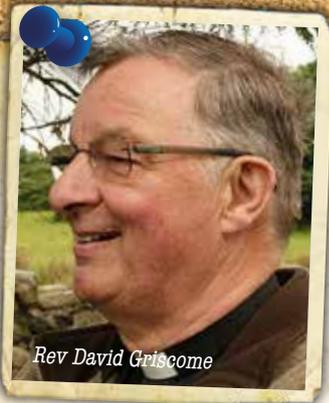
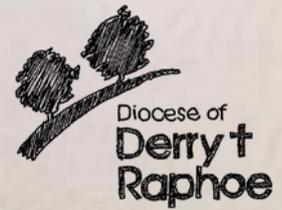
Derry and Raphoe's plans

Covid permitting, include a higher profile diocesan celebration at Columba's homeplace at 3pm on **Sunday 6th June**, an ecumenical walk of the new St Columba's Way led by Bishop Andrew and finishing at St Columba's Cathedral, Derry in September, and a Cathedral celebration of St Columba at St Eunan's Cathedral, Raphoe on his anniversary date in early December. The new St Columba's Way starts in Glencolumbcille and wends its way around County Donegal visiting Columban sites and taking in Falcarragh and Tory Island, Ards Friary, Glenveagh, Gartan, Kilmacrenan, and Raphoe before heading for Derry. A promotional film has been commissioned by the Roman Catholic diocese to encourage pilgrims. Plans are in place by other churches to give pilgrims a copy of St John's Gospel in English and Irish - reflecting Columba's love of the Scriptures and to offer pilgrims opportunity to pray and learn more about St Columba and the Gospel when visiting churches along the route. Additional events will be announced throughout the year as it becomes more certain what events can be run safely.

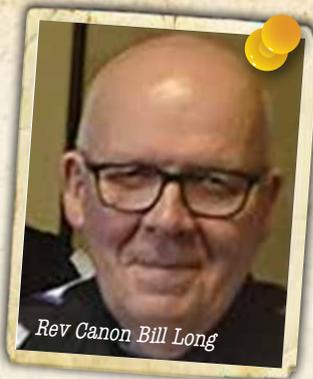
Rev David Houlton
Rector of Conwal Union and Gartan



Diocesan noticeboard!



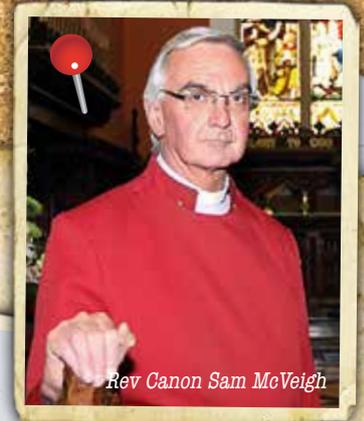
Rev David Griscome



Rev Canon Bill Long



Rev Mike Dornan



Rev Canon Sam McVeigh

Retirements...

The past year has been one of the most demanding of our ministry in Derry and Raphoe. It has given me, as a relatively new Bishop, the opportunity to see and appreciate the immense contribution made by clergy as they go about God's work in our Diocese.

Sadly, time has caught up with some of my brothers in ministry and they have recently - or soon will have - retired from active ministry. Drumachose Parish won't be the same without the steadying hand of Rev Canon Sam McVeigh, who retired in January after 30 years service there. Likewise, Rev Mike Dornan's genial leadership is already being missed in Desertmartin and Termoneeny, following his retirement in October last year.

Our ranks are about to be depleted still further, with the well-earned retirements of Rev Canon Bill Long (Convoy, Monellan and Donaghmore) at the end of March and Rev David Griscome (Clondevaddock) on Easter Sunday.

I thank all of them for their unstinting service to their parishioners and the Diocese, and their faithful witness to God's word. I wish them all long health and every happiness in their retirements.

The periods of vacancy which follow such departures can be unsettling for parishes at the best of times. In our current circumstances, the sense of unease and uncertainty may be heightened further. I want to assure all our parishioners in Limavady (Drumachose); Desertmartin and Termoneeny; Convoy, Monellan and Donaghmore, and Clondevaddock that they are very much to the fore in my thoughts and prayers.

As we journey towards Easter, we do so trusting in God's plan and secure in the knowledge that the best is yet to come.

+Andrew Derry and Raphoe

Central Communications Board photography competition Highly Commended Brian Robinson, Tamlaghtard Parish with the caption, 'When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it,' from Exodus 24:15



Two men who have featured a number of times in n:vision now have a mural on a gable wall in Derry. The mural depicts a touching moment when Richard and the Dalai Lama greeted each other using a Buddhist blessing by touching heads



So what have you been doing in Lockdown?

My son (10) was getting hassle down the park from a group of boys, they stole his scooter and gave him abuse but 2 teens stepped in and made sure he got his scooter back and warned the kids. I've been down and collected my son. So thank you to whoever it was that stepped in to help showing that not all of our local teens are out to cause havoc. (Rosyth Billboard)

Note on Facebook from a proud mum:
So proud of Sean, standing up to the bullies, and getting the wee guy his scooter back.

Editor's note: Sean was baptised in Christ Church, Londonderry and lives in Scotland.



Dunlalong parishioners are celebrating double success for their local club, Bready, at Friday evening's Irish Cricket Awards. Alana Dalzell, the 19 year old captain of the Women's Team, picked up the 'O'Neill Sportswear Female Club Player of the Year Award'. Alana also plays regularly for the Bready CC 3rd XI as part of the seam attack and, late in the season, was called into the club's 1st XI, making her 'Senior' debut against Strabane. Trevor Hamilton 'collected' the Turkish Airlines 'Spirit of Cricket Award' on behalf of Bready Cricket Club for its support to the local community in Dunlalong during the pandemic. The club's 'Cricketing Cooks' - led by Trevor Hamilton - provided more than 3,000 meals to the elderly and vulnerable, while players from the club provided pharmacy and grocery deliveries for housebound families.

Two Church of Ireland clergy can argue as to which of them made the greater contributor to the awards, Dunlalong's Rector, Rev Canon Paul Whittaker - who announced the successes in church this morning - or Newbuildings' curate, Rev Iain McLeavey, who is the Bready club chaplain.

Book Review:

GOOD GRIEF

Embracing life at a time of death

by Catherine Mayer, journalist, feminist and political activist, and her mother, Anne Mayer Bird, arts publicist

HarperCollins Publishers (2020)
ISBN: 9780008436100

'Grief is more than the price of love. We must learn not just to live with it, but to make it welcome.'

These words, by Catherine Mayer, are the beating heart of this extraordinary book. Catherine and her mother, Anne, were widowed within 41 days of each other. Their widowhood was followed almost immediately by the first lockdown, which left each of them alone with soul-searing grief, apart from one day each week when they met in Anne's living room. This large, ungainly room which had been tacked on to the main house some years before, became a sacred space in which they learned, in Catherine's words, 'to embrace what we can't touch: each other and the lovely dead.'

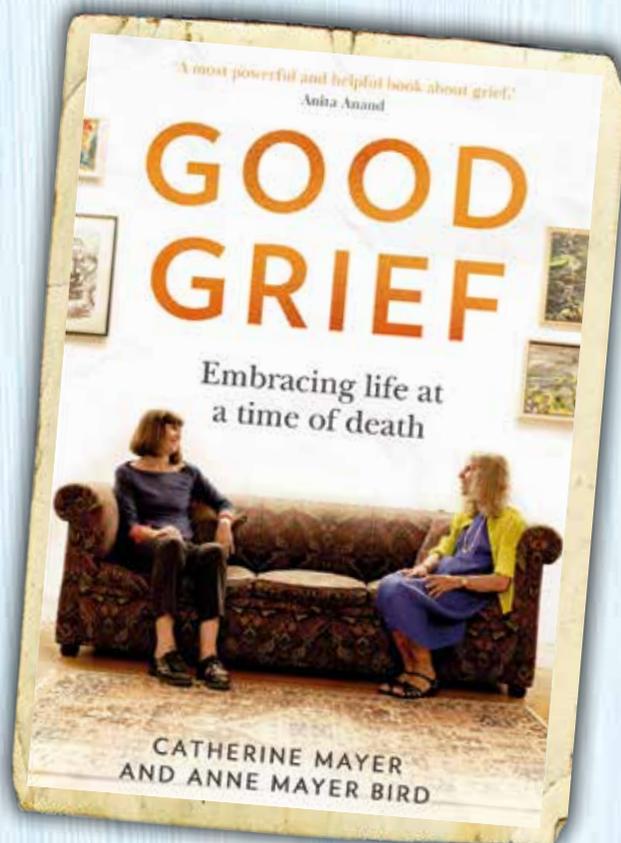
'The lovely dead.' What a touchingly beautiful way to describe the two men they loved so deeply and passionately and whose loss they are now mourning! This book is above all else a powerful, uplifting celebration of love and life. It looks with indomitable courage into the face of grief, and embraces it. Catherine and Anne believe profoundly that the heart-rending grief they are experiencing is the inevitable outpouring of their love and loss, and as such, they welcome it.

Anne, Catherine's 87 year-old mother, writes letters to her dead love, John, in

which she brings him up to date with all the news events which have happened since his death. She includes all the little triumphs she has had in completing tasks which used to be his province, and which are now her responsibility. The letters weave in and out of Catherine's narrative effectively creating a texture which is warmly intimate and heartbreakingly poignant at the same time.

Catherine unflinchingly describes times when she is, as the Irish poet and spiritual philosopher, John O' Donohue puts it, "unexpectedly ambushed by grief." These ambushes threaten to rip her heart out, but for both Catherine and Anne grief is more than the price they must pay for love. It is love itself and they embrace it fully. Catherine can say with palpable sincerity, "We are extraordinarily lucky, my mother and I. We have each other and we have this room."

This book, with inordinate practicality, forensically details, examines, and generously offers advice on the stumbling blocks which get in the way of the grief-stricken and impede forward movement. Catherine and Anne come up against bureaucratic intransigence, legalistic procrastination, etc. and all this as they

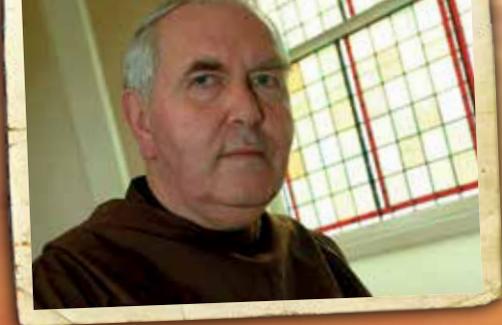


are trying to navigate their way through loss and challenges never before encountered, including a Britain fast becoming ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic.

'Good Grief' is not without flashes of humour, some hilarious and side-splitting, some black and caustic. It is, more than anything else, a book of extraordinary generosity and courage in its laying bare of personal profound grief, its beautiful relationship to love of the deepest kind, its universality. It is an intelligent courageous book written by two intelligent, courageous women.

By Mary Murphy





A life in the day of ...

Brother David Jardine

Inviting God into Everything...

In 2008 the ministry that I worked for at that time developed a relationship with the Church in South America, principally in Colombia and Bolivia. We must have conducted ten missions in those two countries in the years that followed. They were all wonderful experiences. But the mission to Bolivia in 2018 was possibly the toughest of all. We were working at 13,000 feet, sometimes 15,000. That brought challenges by itself.

But in 2018 there was an even bigger challenge. I had received a yellow fever injection just before I left Belfast. Temporarily it had a very bad effect upon me. I was tired all the time, sometimes exhausted. So I decided that the only way I could survive, and minister effectively, was to draw on the grace of God moment by moment. If I was sitting in a church, waiting to go up to preach, I asked God for the strength to walk up the steps to the podium, for the clarity to speak effectively in Spanish, for the grace to speak with vitality, for the strength to minister to the large number of people who would come for prayer. I went through the whole mission like this, within myself drawing on the grace of God, asking God moment by moment to

give me the strength and love I needed. The mission seemed to go very well, but I was sure the other members of the team would have noticed that I was below par. So on the journey home I explained to them how I had felt tired all the time, sometimes exhausted. Their answer surprised me. Every one of them said, "We would never have noticed." And I said to myself, 'Wow!' I was struggling the whole time, and I was very aware of the struggle. But drawing on the grace of God moment by moment was so effective that my colleagues did not even notice that something was wrong. During the pandemic, especially during lockdown, I have at times gone back to this way of praying - drawing on the grace of God, inviting God into everything, even as I speak on the telephone asking God to give me a love for this person and the right words to speak.

Jesus promised that he would be with us wherever we go. We need to take advantage of this wonderful gift and make the effort to stay in touch with Him. There are times when I very much need to pray for my own needs, and that is all right. But I prefer to spend much more time looking outside myself - mainly praising God, glorifying God and blessing other people. We are told

in Psalm 34 v. 1 'I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be on my lips. 'When we practice this it takes our eyes off ourselves, and focusses them on God. I also like to bless other people. I have a personal rule that I always endeavour to turn thoughts into prayers. When someone's name comes into my mind I try to say, 'John, I bless you in the name of Jesus. 'It only takes five seconds, but if we go about praying like this we could be praying for literally hundreds of people every day. We can pray this way watching the TV, listening to the radio or reading the paper.

Inviting God into everything we do is a great aspiration, but it does require discipline to practice it. The big enemy is a wandering mind. We need to ask God to help us to stay focussed as we move about. It is really worth making this effort. The difference between keeping company with God most of the time and allowing our minds to wander all over the place is like the difference between day and night. If we develop this gift of practising the presence of God, and keep it up, we will come out of the pandemic spiritually different from when we went into it.

LENT 2021...



As part of Lent 2021 SEEDS and DRY issued a challenge to the Diocese - could we journey 3500 miles in Derry and Raphoe which would be enough miles to cover the distance from here to The Holy Land? The answer is a resounding yes!

People from 15 parishes, and a local secondary school pledged to journey over 14000 miles, with some still to confirm their mileage, which means we not only made it to the Holy Land and back, but we also were able to continue on to Iona and back, and once we know how many miles in total we have all completed we will be able to pinpoint our final destination. The journey was not only about physically travelling the distance, but also about journeying spiritually. Each week during Lent we spent some time looking at an intentional journey Jesus took in the Gospel. Jesus intentionally went places, to heal, to meet and to pray.

Let's Journey to the Cross allowed people the opportunity to get outside, get fresh air and enjoy watching the seasons change from Winter to Spring. As part of this journey, we encouraged people to look around them and soak up nature. Muddy Church is an initiative that allows people to do just that - there are lots of resources on their website (<https://www.muddychurch.co.uk/>) which churches can access for free and arrange trails in their local area, but there are also lots of resources that families can easily make use of in their own homes, including Muddy Church from your window. A great one for families to start with is the Building Blocks trail which Lucie Moore

developed in November. This series uses our senses to think about the different ways we can encounter God while outside exploring. Have a look at the Muddy Church website for more information - <https://www.muddychurch.co.uk/building-blocks-qr>

For Lent 2021 we said Let's Journey to the Cross and I think we did that and more - I would like to thank all those who took part and helped us not only achieve our goal but go above and beyond!

Kirsty McCartney, Children's Ministry Officer, Derry & Raphoe



Let's
JOURNEY
to the Cross

GET UP TO SPEED ON THE LATEST SCAMS



Following Scamwise NI or An Garda Síochána on Facebook can help you to keep you safe from scams and to warn others about the latest trends being reported.

Scamwise NI aims to raise awareness of scams and how to prevent them. The partnership has been developed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and a range of other organisations, including public bodies, financial institutions, and voluntary sector representatives, including churches.

More than 10,000 people currently follow the Scamwise NI Facebook page - www.facebook.com/scamwiseNI

Recent examples highlighted on the page include a fraudulent call centre for customers seeking help with their Alexa device, several dating and romance scams, and a caller pretending to be from BT and warning that they were going to disconnect the householder's internet due to unauthorised access.

Similar updates for residents of the Republic are provided on An Garda Síochána's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/angardasiochana

If you're not on Facebook, information is also available at www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/scamwiseNI or www.garda.ie/en/crime/fraud

People who are living alone or who are more vulnerable or naturally more trusting are at the greatest risk of being scammed and exploited, with most scams currently being attempted over the phone. Scammers also use emails, which can appear to be from official sources, or offers in the post, or even turn up on your doorstep to falsely offer help in this difficult time.

Any stereotype of a scammer as a lovable rogue trader is far from the truth. These are criminals seeking to trap anyone into parting with their money - a fraud that often has devastating consequences for the victim and leaves a sense of embarrassment or shame. Police are, though, very keen to encourage

people who think that they may have been the victim of a scam (or an attempted scam) to report this so that officers can help them, and also find out more about the bigger picture of how scammers operate.

The four-step scam test can help you out if you receive a suspicious offer:

Sounds too good to true
Contacted out of the blue
Asked for personal details
Money is requested

And remember: If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

The Church of Ireland, Roman Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, and the Irish Council of Churches are supporting Scamwise NI through the Church Leaders Group.



RICHARD'S CHALLENGE...

Richard Edgar loves a challenge. The Glendermott and Newbuildings parishioner has always been prepared to put in the hard miles and his latest venture is no exception. He is walking the equivalent of the distance from John O'Groats to Land's End to raise money for Africa.

The pandemic has meant that the 864-mile journey (almost 1,400 kilometres) has to be completed virtually, which is why you will find Richard stepping out in the gentle, rolling hills to the north of Newbuildings, or striding along the riverside route that wends its way from the village into Londonderry.

The Newbuildings stalwart is a long-time member of the Scout Association. Its motto, 'Be Prepared', describes his commitment to the Church perfectly: the local Curate, Rev Iain McAleavey, says Richard is always willing to "step up and step out".

"I love walking - and I enjoy a challenge," Richard says. The bright red coat he is

wearing looks like it is designed for serious hikers. "I wore that to Everest Basecamp," he explains. For the uninitiated, Everest Basecamp is in Nepal, at an altitude of almost five and a half thousand metres, and is not for the faint-hearted. "I'd always wanted to 'do' Everest. So, my family arranged the trip for my 60th birthday."

His latest venture might not have the dramatic appeal of a Himalayan ascent, but Richard is five years older and this time he's walking not for himself but for others. "The family signed me up for this walk [John O'Groats to Land's End] for my 65th," he says. "They know I enjoy walking, so I thought I might as well achieve something out of it."

Richard is using the virtual hike to raise money for Newbuildings' link diocese, the Diocese of Matana in southern Burundi. There is a board in Newbuildings Church displaying how years of fundraising by its parishioners has helped the Church in the central African republic. Richard beams

proudly as he looks over the photographs. "Bishop Seth [Ndayirukiye] has a 'Build a church fund' and any money I raise will go towards that."

Richard has always enjoyed walking but he is particularly aware of the mental health benefits of exercising in the fresh air during the pandemic. He is also mulling over in his mind the possibility of a trip to the Diocese of Matana at some point in the future, perhaps involving the Scout Association. That's a matter for another day, though. For now, his focus is on completing his virtual 'John O'Groats to Land's End' trek. He plans to finish it by the third week in April. After that, the world - virtual or otherwise - is his oyster.

Anyone who wishes to support the fundraiser for the Diocese of Matana can leave donations at Glendermott Parish Office or care of Richard himself.

GOODBYE DONEGAL HELLO WICKLOW!

Congratulations Rev Arthur Barrett on your Institution as Rector of the Arklow Group.

Thank you! It's a group of three parishes - St. Saviour's Church, Arklow; Inch Parish Church; St. Brigid's Church, Kilbride

Saying goodbye to your parishes in Donegal in 2020 must have been very different from the normal 'send-off'. What did you miss from that normality?

It was certainly very different indeed! My final service was on the 27th December in Clonleigh Parish Church. There were only about 30 people in church because of the restrictions, but those who were there made it a very special occasion. But it was so hard not being able to shake people's hands, or give a great big 'Goodbye' hug.

How long did you serve in Raphoe and what would you say were the highlights of your ministry there?

I was in Raphoe for six and a half years. It's hard to know what you might describe as 'highlights'. I suppose what I will take with me in my memories are the occasions spent with families at different times - times of celebration and joy, like weddings and baptisms; as well as times of great difficulty and sadness such as illness and bereavement. But I will also always treasure times spent in Raphoe Central and Ray Nationals Schools, whether with the children, or with staff and Boards of Management. I also greatly appreciated my time as an Honorary Secretary for Diocesan Synod, and serving the diocese

in various ways. But perhaps the St. Eunan's Cathedral Restoration Project will stay long in my memory, as I think it galvanised the people of Raphoe in a way that might not otherwise have happened. It was a lot of hard work, but it also brought out the very best 'can do' attitude in the parish.

Getting to know a new parish during a pandemic carries its own particular challenges. How are you making contact with your new parishioners?

The people in Arklow, Inch and Kilbride have made us feel so very welcome. The Institution was an even smaller event with only 8 people there, and no opportunity to meet parishioners, neighbours or fellow clergy. But people have been so kind - there were flowers and groceries in the kitchen on our arrival, and people have left jars of marmalade and tins of biscuits and cards on the doorstep. But mostly I am only able to make contact with people by phone, and of course using 'Zoom' for various meetings.

Does your parish have a monthly magazine and do all parishioners receive the diocesan magazine, The Church Review?

At the moment there is a bi-monthly Newsletter/Magazine which is distributed to all households and I think a good number of households get the Church Review.

Will you be writing parish notes for the next edition?

Yes! It is a monthly magazine and so the deadline comes around very quickly!



At what stage is St Eunan's Cathedral restoration?

The restoration works were due to be completed by the end of December, but due to a number of factors that did not happen. The works still to be done include the replacement of all the rainwater goods (gutters, downpipes etc.), the Galilee porch roof, and all of the internal lighting and electrical works.

How old are the church buildings in the Arklow Group and are any in need of repair?

Inch Parish Church is a Board of Firstfruits church built in 1831. St. Brigid's Church in Kilbride was built by the Earl of Wicklow in 1834. And St. Saviour's Church in Arklow is relatively young, as it was completed in 1899. All church buildings always need repair, but some more than others!!

Arklow seems to be a very active town...

Yes, Arklow is a very busy town, although now by-passed by the M11. In 'normal' times there is always a lot going on, and St. Saviour's Church has been a venue for many musical and cultural events. Arklow also has Ireland's first RNLI station, and I am honoured to be Chaplain to the RNLI here. There are also very good ecumenical relations in the town, and the churches would come together for various occasions during the year.



Prisoners in pandemic

a glimpse of life in Magilligan Prison during Covid-19

Looking back from where we are now to when this began it is surprising that it is just over a year since Covid-19 impacted upon our community within Magilligan Prison and society at large. When we entered 2020 it was like any other start to a year - the only exception was news reports of a new coronavirus mainly affecting China. However, as January and February passed the threat seemed so much more real and present in our jurisdiction.

Through the month of March there was a rise in cases reported in the mainland. Prison management and Headquarters were busy developing further the required contingency plans designed to protect all. It would be fair to say that there was an

uneasiness amongst both staff and the men in our care. The situation became so much more real for us when Governors were on the ground talking to staff and prisoners about what may happen in the coming days and weeks. Some of the predictions were realised towards the end March when the prison service suspended all forms of prisoner community working, home leave and visits. An emergency Conditional Early Release (CER) scheme was introduced by Justice Minister Naomi Long which allowed us to responsibly reduce our prison population to approximately 400. 'Cell doubling' ceased which gave us spare accommodation capacity to identify areas to use as Covid-19 Isolation Units and a shielding area for prisoners more susceptible to effects of the virus. Hand-washing & sanitation

pods were placed throughout the site and we set in place procedures to shield staff who were more Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. Guidance on the Prisoner Isolation Unit was issued with clear procedures in line with PHA guidance in the event of someone presenting with Covid19 symptoms. Track & Trace teams were set up to identify close contacts if someone tested positive and a testing procedure was introduced for staff and prisoners. The next challenge was to fill constructively the days for prisoners within their

residential areas, as by now most of our partner agency staff were not present in person and the majority of workshops and education classes were suspended.

Work at pace commenced in introducing Virtual Visits in place of suspended in-person visits. Magilligan already had limited Skype for approx. 35 prisoners residing in Foyleview (pre-release unit). The rollout of virtual visits to the remainder of the population was extremely quick and allowed Zoom visits to take place in all residential areas. By the end of 2020 the success of this initiative was measured in terms of over 10,000 such visits being delivered (with 100 sessions on Christmas Day alone). Virtual Input Parenting (VIP) slots were made available which allowed extended visits with children to help with homework or to read a story, and those with bereavement issues could seek support via Zoom with Cruse Bereavement Care. Additional support was also made available via Zoom from Quakers, Barnardo's, Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) and The Northern Ireland Association for the Care & Rehabilitation of Offenders (NIACRO).

Prisoners within House2 residential area, led by the H2 Senior Officer and staff, began a 'Sewing Bee Hub' following a request by Rev David Latimer. Huge amounts of material were donated by staff and further amounts purchased. Patterns were supplied by Scrubs NI and this resulted in over 2000 pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) being manufactured - comprising face coverings,



In-house activity packs



NIPS Director General Ronnie Armour & Governor Richard Taylor - Christmas Zoom calls



In-house activity packs

isolation gowns, headbands & wash bags for NHS staff. Distribution of items was diverse - from syringe driver bags for the Day Care Centre at Belfast City Hospital to wash bags and adult/children face coverings for Western Trust Community Team.

In response to an appeal from Social Services, first-night foster care bags were produced. Staff donated items to fill the first-night bags for children of all ages in an attempt to bring some comfort to children in such a terrible situation. Gymnasium staff organised a marathon around the all-weather pitch and the various prisoner residential areas competed in different sessions. This raised £1353 which went towards additional material for the Sewing Hub. An enormous chocolate bar was donated by Chocolate Manor Castlerock - this was raffled - bringing in a further £550 - donated to Cancer Focus NI. A prisoner Safety & Support Team was introduced which, in addition to offering support to more vulnerable prisoners, was instrumental in the introduction of activity packs for prisoners across the estate.

The individual and joint efforts of staff and prisoners in our care has resulted in no confirmed Covid-19 cases within our prisoner population. We had a number of staff cases but thankfully no loss of life. Staff confirmed as positive are supported through

provision of isolation time and each case is internally tracked & traced with confirmed close contacts instructed to commence isolation. With the closure of all community facing prisoner engagement it was always the danger that staff would potentially be the source of Covid-19 entry.

Vaccinations have now commenced for staff and prisoners in parallel with the introduction within the community at large and we continually remind all within the prison not to become complacent in regard to safeguarding measures - hand washing, face coverings & social distancing. Below is some feedback from prisoners and families re virtual visits:

"It's great as I can still get work done in the house while seeing my partner - it feels more normal as that's what would happen if they were out of jail."

"I like that I don't have to travel to any of the jails."

"I lost my job during COVID so I don't have much money at the minute so I am glad virtual visits are running as I would not have been able to visit the jail often due to money issues."

"I love that my husband can see the kids when they come home from school and help with homework questions."

"I like that my partner can see what I have done to the house since he has been away."

"I like that I get to see him twice a week from my own house."

"It's great that the kids can show their Daddy their room and toys."

"I love zoom visits as I don't have to drive to the jail."

Below is some feedback from people in our care who took part in Christmas activities.

"I enjoyed the Christmas activities and my family thought that I was one of Santa's helpers. I would love to do more family activities."

"I felt it was good especially having Santa involved."

"My children thought I was one of Santa's team and this really made the visit for me and my whole family even better. I really enjoyed the whole experience."

"It was great seeing my children. I really hope we can take part in more family fun events."

"It was really beneficial and I still have the picture in my memory of seeing my child's face when they saw Santa."

Richard Taylor / Andy Tosh
Governor / Deputy Governor,
HMP Magilligan

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES...

TEENAGERS FROM STRABANE CREATE MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS THE UK AMIDST THIRD WAVE

Local students at Strabane Academy have worked hard ahead of Blue Monday to produce mental-health materials to help other young people across the UK.

Working alongside Action for Children, as a part of their well-being workshops included in the Blues Programme, Strabane Academy students worked together to create resources to help young people focus on their well-being and mental health. Their work has been recognised as especially important during this uncertain time for students as lockdown commences, closing schools across Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

The 'Looking After Me' Journal, created for 11-16 year olds, will be used by Action for Children, to help teach young people to think about their emotions and how that impacts their mental health. Rhonda Murphy, Services Co-ordinator for Blues Programme said, "These journals give students a medium to express how they are feeling. They include questions and exercises to prompt them to think about their own feelings, but also leaves space to allow them to freely journal about any emotions they want to explore."

"The original idea was to give the journals to students once they had completed the Blues Programme, but I also knew when we were putting it together that it would be a great support and resource for so many other young people, including young carers and young people going into foster care, those dealing with loss or life changes, and young people just needing a medium to express themselves. It's a vital resource for the times we're currently facing as the mental health epidemic grows in Northern Ireland."

Rhonda Dunn, teacher at Strabane Academy said, "We have been fortunate and delighted to welcome the staff from Action for Children into school to complete a range of programmes to support our young people in their mental health and well-being. As a school, we recognise the need to source opportunities for our pupils to ensure they can have the best mental health support that can be offered, while also providing a solid foundation for individuals to deal with any future issues they may face.

"Mental health and well-being is a real issue in our society, and as a school we aim to have in place preventative measures and active support to respond to need. The pupils involved have greatly benefitted from the work of Action for Children and they speak positively about this opportunity and its individual impact.

"We are extremely proud of our pupils and the contribution they have made to the development of the journal. This will not only have a positive impact on pupils in our school community but young people across the United Kingdom."

Since young people returned to the classrooms in September 2020, the Blues Bouncing Back programme, specifically created as a response to the pandemic, has supported 1500 Young People across the Northern Ireland, including those at Strabane Academy. The students who contributed to creating the journals have all worked through the Blues Programme, looking for ways to recognise and manage their own feelings with anxiety.



Abi, who is a Year 11 student at Strabane Academy, helped decide on the various activities and content to include in the journal, following her own experience on the Blues Programme. "I think everyone could benefit from this book. It really can help your mental health and help you to calm yourself by getting your thoughts down on paper. It helps me."

The Blues Programme is an evidence-based, six-week group intervention for 13 to 19-year olds with early symptoms of anxiety and depression. The programme is based upon the principles of cognitive-behavioural therapy and aims to reduce participants' mental health symptoms and boost their confidence. Using early intervention and prevention strategies, young people have the opportunity to learn and practice skills proven to be effective in decreasing mental health symptoms that they can then use both in their current day to day lives and in the future.

The programme has been adapted to be used remotely and is continuing to provide support to young people across Northern Ireland during this lockdown. If you're interested in finding out more, please contact the Blues Team at: blues@actionforchildren.org.uk

DON'T FORGET YOU CAN PULL OUT MY SPECIAL PAGES FROM THE MAGAZINE!



Hello, my friends, I'm glad to be back! I hope you are all well and have been staying safe. I have been keeping myself safe too.

CJ News

NUMBER 26

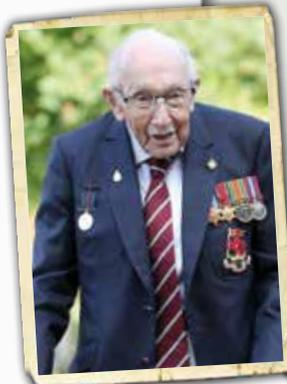
VACCINATE = TREAT WITH A VACCINE TO FIGHT A DISEASE

While I have been staying in my house and following all the rules I have been amazed by all the work being completed by so many people to keep us all safe. This includes supporting all the medical people who are working so hard to care for the sick or make sure they vaccinate people to help to keep them safe from the virus.



As I was thinking, I pondered over the wonderful contribution made by Captain Tom to not only raise millions of pounds to help our doctors and nurses but to also lift our spirits and give us hope that things will get better for us all. I was inspired.

Captain Sir Tom Moore was an army officer who raised money for charity on the run-up to his 100th birthday. He fought in the Second World War and then became an instructor in armoured warfare. After the war he worked in a concrete company and he also enjoyed motorcycle racing.



Captain Tom decided, during the Pandemic, to walk one hundred lengths of his garden to raise money for charity. He wanted to raise £1,000 by his 100th birthday. By his 100th birthday the total raised was more than 30 million pounds!

Captain Tom performed a version of 'You'll never walk alone', making him the oldest person to achieve a UK number one hit.



DID YOU KNOW?

HOPE = A FEELING THAT SOMETHING GOOD WILL HAPPEN

FOR ME, 'HOPE' DURING THIS TIME ALSO SHOWS US HOW MANY ARE...

Isn't this just wonderful? I know this is only one example of how people have been inspired by the actions of others. This is also a sign of hope to us all, that we can make a difference, in so many ways for both us and others.



HELPING OTHER PEOPLE EVERY DAY

HOPE surrounds us all at the minute. Good things are happening because of all the good people helping others.





Through the Easter story Jesus gives us hope even though he suffered terribly so that we could live. Let's take a look.

During his time on earth, Jesus had made many enemies who wanted to stop him from spreading the word of God. Jesus knew that he had only a short time left to live among the people. The Thursday before he died, Jesus invited his disciples to have a meal with him. It would be the last supper together.



On Friday, soldiers arrested Jesus and nailed him to a cross. When Jesus died, his friends placed his body in a tomb and covered the tomb entrance with a HUGE rock.



On Sunday, a friend of Jesus named Mary Magdalene went to visit the tomb. When she arrived she realised the rock had been rolled away! The tomb was empty! Jesus had risen from the dead in the resurrection! This truly is a symbol of great hope to us all. Jesus showed us he was the Son of God.

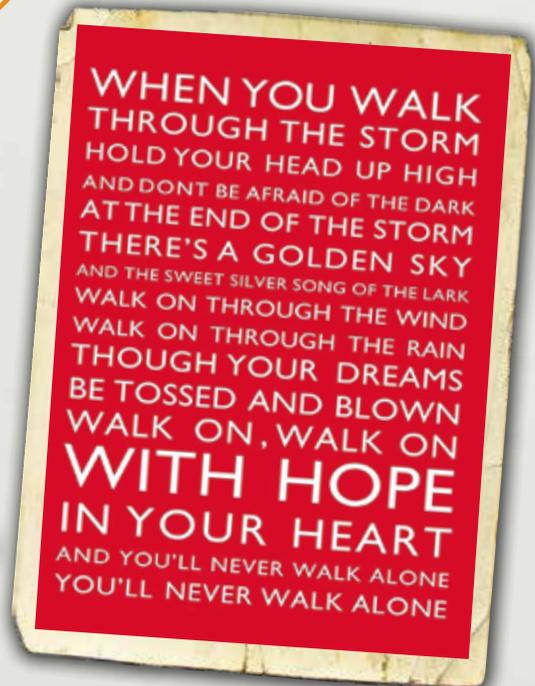
Jesus came back to visit his friends after this. He told them to continue to teach about God and his love for all of us. Jesus told his Disciples to tell the people to believe in him even if they couldn't see him with their own eyes. After this Jesus went up to heaven to live with God his Father.



Through these actions Jesus gives us true hope. He died on the cross for me and for you. Jesus knew what he had to do, he knew what the plan was, and he did it, no matter how hard it was for him or how nasty people were. Jesus did this so that our sins would be forgiven, and we could live our lives.



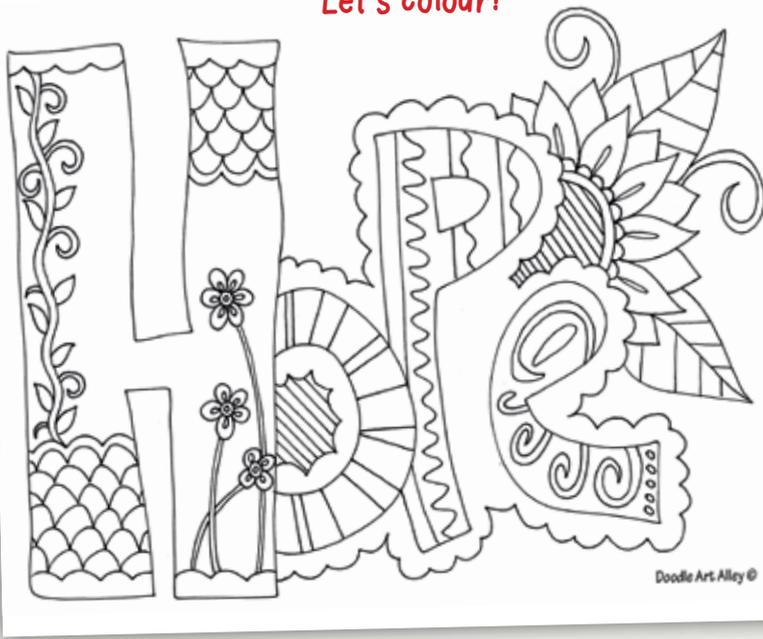
Isn't this just a great message for us? Isn't it great that people are still living this out in today's world? We need to give thanks to those who help us each day and those who are giving us hope for the future.



We must always remember that we don't walk alone. Jesus is with us and gives us great hope.

SOME ACTIVITIES FOR YOU TO DO...

Let's colour!



Easter Word Scramble

Unscramble the Easter themed words and join them to the pictures on the right. We've done the first one for you!

apared	<u>parade</u>	
teaser	_____	
hoccotale	_____	
notben	_____	
geg	_____	
unbyn	_____	
thun	_____	
kichc	_____	
flidfoad	_____	
pingsr	_____	
stekab	_____	
balm	_____	

© www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy

Activity Village

Easter Chicks

Supplies

- Yellow & orange paint
- White, yellow & orange paper
- Black pen, Scissors, Glue,
- Wipes to clean up



Method

1. Coat hands with a layer of yellow paint and make a handprint of each hand on white paper.
2. Coat feet with a layer of orange paint and make a footprint of each foot on white paper.
3. Cut a large oval out of yellow paper for the chicks body.
4. Cut two smaller ovals for the eyes and draw circles on them with a pen.
5. Cut a triangle for the beak and a wavy shape for the top of the chicks head.
6. Put the chick together by gluing the eyes, beak and top to the chick.
7. Cut around handprints and footprints and glue them on.



Easter Egg Brownies

Ingredients

- 185g unsalted butter, extra for greasing
- 185g dark chocolate
- 3 large eggs
- 275g golden caster sugar
- 85g plain flour
- 40g cocoa powder
- 5 fondant filled eggs (e.g. Cadbury's creme eggs)
- 150g mini eggs (e.g. Cadbury's and smarties)

Method

1. Melt the butter and chocolate and leave to cool.
2. Heat oven to 180c. Grease a 20cm square tin with butter. Line the base with grease proof paper.
3. Break the eggs into a bowl and put in caster sugar. Whisk until thick and creamy.
4. Pour the cooled chocolate mixture over the egg mixture then gently fold together.
5. Sieve the flour and cocoa in and then continue to fold the mixture gently.
6. Pour the mixture into the tin and level it out. Out in the oven and bake for 20 minutes.
7. Cut the fondant filled eggs in half. Crush the mini eggs, leave some whole. After 20 mins take the brownie out of the oven, press the fondant eggs, cut side up. Scatter half the crushed mini eggs and then put in oven for 5 mins.
8. Once baked, top with the rest of the eggs, leave to cool. Place in fridge to firm up.



<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/easter-egg-brownies>

CJ... KEEPING IN CONTACT!

Even though I have been socially distancing I have been so pleased that I have been able to keep in contact, in some way, with those around me and especially our Diocese. It is great that activities are continuing that we can all get involved in.

I have been in contact with my friends in CCCMSP (Christ Church, Culmore, Muff and St Peter). All families with young children were sent a Nativity Escape Room pack and were encouraged to use it as a resource for some fun (and learning). Each family held their own Nativity Service of readings and prayer, bringing characters from the story to build a crib scene on their kitchen tables. Isn't this just wonderful? Have a look at their hard work and fabulous creations.



Hello everyone,

We are Kevin and Kylie and Jack and Jill - friends of CJs!
At our PRAISE Time on a Saturday morning at 10am from the parishes of Fahan Upper and Lower we help Rev Judi as we listen to the Bible reading and what it means and we help with the prayers too. After the service we do some art and craft to help people who join in worship with us on a Sunday see as well as hear what the message of the Gospel is! We have been travelling through LENT this year with HOPE - here are some of the wonderful pieces of art and craft that were sent into the Rev Judi (we sent in some too!).



UNTIL NEXT TIME, TAKE CARE AND STAY SAFE!

Contact me on email
cj@derryandraphoe.org



Aren't these just wonderful, could you design a 'Hope' picture just like this?

Happy Easter!

Are We Easter People?

By Ruth Garvey-Williams

Just five minutes walk from my home is a hidden gem I did not value or enjoy until a global pandemic forced me to stay within two kilometres of my home.

Concealed at the side of a stone bridge is a set of steep steps leading down to the Mill River. Once the millrace, this is now free from the trappings of industry, save for the ruined mill buildings on the far bank. Guarded by ranks of fragrant pine trees, the winding river path is bathed in flickering green light as the sun filters through a layered canopy of sycamore, ash, hawthorn and birch. The riverbank is draped with delicate ferns and wild garlic. If there are 40 shades of green in Ireland, every one of them must be represented in this vibrant mini paradise. And yet as I turned to leave this taste of heaven last summer, an ugly discord wrecked the moment. Fresh black spray paint on the brick wall of the abandoned mill screamed a cruel racist message. Life in all its fullness seems unattainable to those who are on the receiving end of such abuse. It was a harsh reminder.

I was the very first baby born on Easter day in one North London hospital. Perhaps that was what gave me my enduring love for Easter: not chocolate eggs and hot crossed buns but rather the thrill of new life, the hope of resurrection and the joyful sound of "Alleluias" in church. I am convinced that as Christians we need to be Easter people, something that is both deeply theological and intensely practical. Jesus says, "I have come to give life and life in all its fullness." (Ephesians 1:23) He beckons us into the fullness of the Him who fills everything in every way. This was always the intention: men and women in perfect harmony with God, with each other and with Creation. And when we are Easter people, we will overflow with that life to those around us.

Part of the problem or part of the solution?

While my 'day job' might involve writing about faith, editing Christian magazines, conducting inter-denominational research or speaking in churches or conferences across Ireland, I also have the incredible privilege of volunteering alongside people of all faiths and none with projects that are supporting those affected by disadvantage, mental illness, loneliness, conflict and abuse in my community. And I am convinced that this is where the real work of Christianity begins. Soon after lockdown first turned our world upside down, we came face to face with the reality of food poverty in our town. The text was stark: parents made unemployed and welfare benefits hindered by bureaucracy... could we help to feed their family? That very first delivery led eventually to the Inishowen Food Bank - a co-ordinated Covid-19 response across the peninsula that has seen almost 400 food parcels delivered from our Buncrana centre alone since March 2020 (and more from centres in Carndonagh, Moville, Clonmany, Muff and Newtowncunningham).

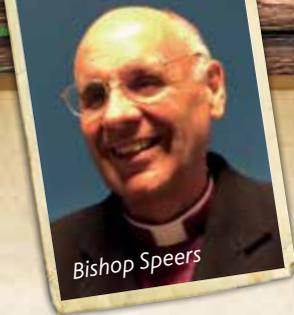
With our normal plans shelved, our responses needed to be tailored to the needs of our community rather than dictated by our own agenda or pre-conceived ideas. It meant stepping into the unknown, yet with a real sense that these were the paths of righteousness God calls us to. We walk in Jesus' footsteps when we deliver a food bank parcel, provide a meal for someone living alone or spend time listening to someone struggling with thoughts of suicide. It is not rocket science (not that I even know what rocket science is). Being Easter people involves looking out for those gloriously ordinary,

Jesus-shaped opportunities that come along in everyday life. That is why this is theological as well as practical. Our faith shapes what we think and how we respond to others. If we believe that every individual is made in the image of God (imago Dei), then we cannot walk by on the other side of the road when we see people suffering. Instead we will share Jesus' compassion, and some of His anger too.

We are like Him, not only when we meet needs but also when we work to expose and oppose the systems of discrimination and injustice that lead to such pain. And to do that we need to listen intently to those whose voices are often ignored or discounted. A recent conversation with a Traveller woman broke my heart. "Sometimes we would be afraid to go somewhere new in case we get refused again. It would be nice to be able to walk in somewhere, sit beside anyone and feel welcome," she told me. This year has stripped away so much. While our normal routines of worship have been overturned, it is clear that we did not cease to be the church just because we were unable to go to church. In the rush to get back to 'normal' I hope we can embrace the lessons of limitation because it is when we serve the 'least of these' that we truly love and worship our Risen Saviour.

Ruth Garvey-Williams is a writer and author who, together with her husband Andrew has been in Christian ministry for the last 30 years. She is editor of Ireland's Christian magazine VOX and serves on the boards of the Evangelical Alliance of Ireland and the Irish Bible Institute. Are we Easter People? features excerpts from Ruth Garvey-Williams' new book "Gloriously Ordinary" published by Praxis Press and available from ruth@vox.ie, on Amazon or through selected Christian bookshops.





Bible Commentary

A Lockdown Here – A Confinement There

“We were buried with Christ Jesus through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Romans 6.4)

As I write this all of us are tired of various stages of lockdown and looking forward to enjoying company again; children playing with their friends, dropping in for a cup of tea, hugging family members, visiting the sick and isolated and mourning and rejoicing together.

The pandemic has reminded us that we are social beings, needing each other. The first lockdown reminded many of the simple pleasures of a local walk, listening to the birds, watching nature renew itself day by day. Suddenly we were more aware of the workers on whom we really rely for the necessities of life, not least our medical care. It also brought a heightened awareness of our fragility in the face of the unknown and ultimately our own mortality.

Have we learned from these experiences? Or are we just exasperated, waiting to get back to our old ways, give or take an extra inoculation every year?

During this last year I have experienced lockdown in both Madagascar and the UK and I can tell you they have been very different - and it wasn't just the way the two governments treated the situation. In both places I have become very aware how big a role governments play in great crises: how seriously they take the word of the experts; how much popularity they are prepared to sacrifice for the common good. Who do we trust? Who do we trust to tell the truth, all the truth?

In Madagascar lockdown (it is called Confinement there) the government immediately closed the main roads. The penalty for not wearing a face mask in public (everywhere) was to be forced to brush the local streets and deal with rubbish. However, after the initial scare and the discovery that Covid-19 could be treated with ventilators, and it was seen not to be causing as many deaths as malaria or famine, people became very resigned to it all. Since the vast majority of the population have no access to medical care they simply, as they have always done, prayed that they would be spared and put their trust in God.

Is such trust too simple for us, especially us Christians here? Is our trust really in medicine: death seen as a failure?

I certainly believe that we must thank God for the wonders of medicine, not least for vaccines. But Holy Week and Easter remind us that we were each baptised into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Most of us don't remember our baptism, just as we don't remember the love and nurture that brought us through our first months and years. That does not take away from the reality of either the gift of God's grace or the sacrificial love of parents. The important thing is how we now use what we have been given in our daily choices.

We have been mysteriously drawn into the Christian community of faith, nurture and transformation into the passionate, self-giving, living Jesus wants for us and lovingly calls to us, "Follow!" Note, we are called to follow, not go ahead and He will catch up later - if needed. This Easter we can usefully ask ourselves, in the light of this last year, some searching questions: Am I entirely the person in God's community of love that Jesus shows me the way to be? Each day do I choose to follow the One who has walked before us from death to life?

As we continue to face an uncertain future, we can take comfort from Jesus' promise "Be sure of this. I am with you always even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28.20)

+Hall Speers





Letter from **AMERICA...**



Dear Friends in Derry and Raphoe,

When we were last in touch I left you with the dramatic question of whether my daughters, particularly my 13 year old, would once again make my Christmas by processing in the baby Jesus to Silent Night during our Christmas Eve (online) Service. Well, it took some begging and a promise that this would be the last time (a ploy I will use every year until it stops working), but they did it. We placed the babe in the manger and knelt in the candlelight while we sang together. It's not easy being sentimental.

If only that were the hardest thing to deal with between December and today. Twelve days after Christmas, on the feast of the Epiphany, a stirred up mob invaded our Capital Building as we all watched in shock and horror as it was happening before our very eyes. It is also not easy to understand the America of 2021. Perhaps it is not easy to understand the anywhere of 2021. As I watched glass being broken and offices being ransacked I could only find myself being thankful that my parents were not alive to see this. Both were WWII vets, Dad in the Navy and Mom in the Nurses Core, and this is not what they fought to preserve. About half of the nation thinks it was one of the greatest horrors we have witnessed in this country; an attack on Democracy itself perpetrated by Americans. About half of the nation thinks it was justified; the disruption of a broken government. Neither side cares for or trusts the other. What does anyone do with that?

Then January 20th arrived. Security was tight and faith was in the forefront. And we received a hopeful sign. As good as Joe Biden was that day, the person who brought tears to the eyes of at least half the nation was a twenty-two year old African American woman named Amanda Gorman. She dramatically and movingly read a poem of her own crafting, delivered it with the poise of someone with vast experience, called us all back to the dream, and gave me hope that the new generation will understand better than mine that the dream really has to be for absolutely everyone or else it is actually a nightmare for those who are left out. And so I have some modicum of hope again for this complex nation of ours. Leaders are emerging that my daughters can support. Joe Biden will settle down the chaos. Then we'll see.

And in the midst of all that I have a new book coming out that will be released on St. Patrick's Day. It is a combination of a theology of worship that is driven by my life story. Here's a link if you are looking for some post-Easter reading!

https://www.amazon.com/Common-Thread-Liturgy-Looking-Forward/dp/1640653678/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Kevin+Moroney&qid=1614174542&sr=8-1

God bless,

Kevin
(Rev Dr Kevin Moroney)

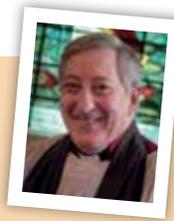
News for the pews...

Facebook details are included for parishes that use Facebook. PLEASE NOTE - you do not have to be on Facebook to access a parish page. Just type the parish Facebook name or address, e.g. @cccmsp into your search engine on smart phone or laptop/tablet etc and click on the parish page.



Templemore, Derry Cathedral

The Very Rev Raymond Stewart: Rector of Templemore & Dean of Derry Tel: 028 7126 2746
Email: deanofderry@stcolumbs.net



The Rev Canon John Merrick
Pastoral Assistant
Facebook: St. Columb's Cathedral



Let's Journey to the Cross

As a diocese we are running 'Let's Journey to the Cross' where we are hoping to journey the approximately 3500 miles from here to the Holy Land. We are asking families to use their daily exercise in their bubbles and local areas, and we will combine all the miles to reach our total!

So our WALK TO THE CROSS is not about meeting up to do a walk but rather families completing the challenge in their own localities and in their own bubbles. It can be a walk, run, cycle - whatever the family is already doing. You let me know your miles and we tally them together to get the total. This will not only be a physical journey but also a spiritual one as each week Kirsty our youth minister will provide an activity to do or a video to watch or some simple discussion questions which will focus on an intentional journey Jesus took in the Gospels.

Over Holy Week there will be daily activities looking at the Easter Story in detail. At the end we hope to have a small token for each family to acknowledge what they have done.

Sunday school asked our 30 families to walk 1 mile per day for the 40 days of Lent totalling 1200 miles. Keep an eye out for more information. We have lots of smiles for the camera.



Clooney

Rector: Rev David McBeth
Email: allsaintsclooney@btinternet.com
Facebook: All Saints Clooney



Glendermott & New Buildings

Rector: Rev Canon Robert Boyd
Tel: 028 7134 3001

Facebook: Glendermott and New Buildings Church of Ireland



Curate Assistant:
Rev Iain McAleavey



"Christ is risen"

Those are the words we will use on Easter Sunday, as God willing, we will be able to return to church for worship. Words of hope and comfort for us all. After a year of lockdown and sad news, we have these wonderful words of hope for the world - that 'Christ is Risen from the dead'. He has defeated death and all will be well for the person of faith and trust.

In the world today there is a glimmer of hope with the role out of the vaccinations. We have so much to be thankful for in the midst of this pandemic - that scientists have used their God-given skills to find a way forward for us. There have been many

who have lost loved ones throughout this pandemic due to both Covid 19 and other reasons, and our hearts continue to go out to those who have not been able to grieve in the usual way and not have the service of thanksgiving for the life of their loved one that they would have wished.

Many others have been affected by the pandemic, with weddings, baptisms, confirmation, and other celebratory occasions postponed. I have brides who have had to change the date for their marriage for the fourth time. We are hoping and praying that this time they may go ahead with a reception venue to celebrate with loved ones, even if numbers are much reduced.

But the Christian hope that 'Christ is Risen' brings hope out of despair for us all. As we celebrate this Easter may we be thankful to God for his love and the sacrifice of His Son who has brought hope into our lives.

At present we are not able to publish any forthcoming events, but we are thankful for social media as the way of communication at present. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for regular updates.

May you have a blessed Easter season as well as a safe one. Hope reigns.

Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Faughanvale

Rector: Rev Canon Paul Hoey
Tel: 028 7181 2462
Mob: 00447712873322

Email: dphoey@btinternet.com

www.faughanvale.derry.anglican.org

Facebook: [@StCaniceParishChurch](https://www.facebook.com/StCaniceParishChurch)



www.faughanvale@derry.anglican.org also on Facebook as St. Canice's Parish Church Sunday Service online at the St Canice's Parish Church page on YouTube.

As I write there is some hope that churches might be able to hold Good Friday and Easter Services. Many of us are longing that this will indeed be possible. Please consult the parish website page for further details. Whether or not it happens, however, Easter can still be a time to celebrate hope and new life. But how can we celebrate when many of us are struggling through lockdown? Someone who can help us answer that question is the thief on the cross beside Jesus. In his dying moments, when all hope, humanly speaking, was gone, he cried out, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Somehow he recognised that

this man next to him, though nailed and tied to a cross, was the only person who could do anything to save him. That's true for us as well. We know much more about Jesus than the convict dying next to Him did. We know that he is the Resurrection and the Life, the one who brings life to all things dead. Even to our wilted hopes.

Easter Vestry

Provisionally, this is planned to take place after the service on Sunday 18 April. It's a chance to get an overview of the opportunities and challenges facing the parish, and to hear how the finances are running, as well as electing members to the Select Vestry. Participation is always taken as an encouragement.

Confirmation

If everything goes according to plan, we hope

to present 10 young members of the parish for Confirmation on Sunday 13th June. It's been an interesting challenge to keep the weekly online sessions going through lockdown. Hopefully we'll be able to do the final ones live after Easter. Please pray for the candidates Josh, Ben, Lewis, Brad, Jack, Alice, Bethan, our two Callum's and Owen.

The taxi driver and the preacher

A preacher and a taxi driver died at the same time. St. Peter, at the Pearly gates, escorted the taxi driver to a huge mansion with swimming pool. Then he led the preacher to a tiny shack. "Wait a minute", asked the preacher. "Should I not be the one who gets the mansion? After all I preached God's word ever week." "That's true", replied Peter. "But during your sermons people slept. When the taxi driver drove, everyone prayed."

Cumber Upper, Cumber Lower, Banagher and Learmount

Rector: Rev David Slater

Tel: 028 7133 8214

Facebook: Cumber Upper & Lower, Learmount, Banagher Group of Parishes



Dungiven & Bovevagh

Rector: Rev Mark Loney

Tel: 028 7774 1226

Mob: 07720 321 283

Email: rev.loney@btopenworld.com

www.dungivenbovevaghparishes.com

Facebook: Dungiven Church of Ireland



'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up' Galatians 6 v 9

Balteagh, Carrick, Tamlaghtard and Aghanloo

Rector: Rev Rhys Jones

Facebook: Aghanloo, Balteagh, Caarrick and Tamlaghtard @TamlaghtardCofI



Samantha and I want to thank everyone across the four parishes for your welcome to us as we settle into our new home and begin ministry among you all. You really have made us feel at home and we are very grateful for all your generous words of blessing. I want to especially thank the respective parish wardens for their continuing kindness and help as I find my bearings in new surroundings and I know God will bless us richly in our future work and endeavours together. It is only right that I extend a special word of thanks to Brian who continues to assist me most ably and who did such a sterling job during the time of parish vacancy. Thank you so much Brian.

I look forward to a future filled with possibilities for both personal and corporate

growth across our churches in the knowledge all we do is for the Kingdom we have been called to serve and glorify.

Lent

Throughout this season of preparation both in our Mid-Week Lenten services of worship and in the daily reflections broadcast each day on the church fb page, we are being challenged in the daily gospel reading for that day to travel toward Jerusalem with Christ. In doing so we must ask specific questions of ourselves: 'What does it mean to deny oneself? What cross have we been tasked to carry? Have we heard and more importantly truly responded to the shepherd's voice and could others look upon us and say that we are following him?'

These and many other questions can enable

Lent to be a special and blessed time where we assess our response to He who calls us and to evaluate with honesty our own discipleship. I encourage you to continue to be part of our services of worship and our daily reflections as we continue to grow in every sense of that term, as God's family here in our own community and beyond.

Re-opening

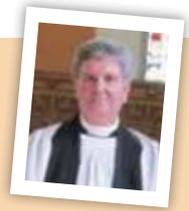
As you can imagine this is a very fluid and ever-changing situation...but I do believe we can look forward to the Spring and Summer with confidence. Please stay connected with developments through the church fb page and social media platforms. The Lord be with you.

'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.'

Drumachose, Limavady

Vacant

Rural Dean: Rev Canon Harold Given Tel: 028 7776 2743



Tamlaghtfinlagan & Myroe

Rev Canon Harold Given: Rector and Rural Dean

Tel: 028 7776 2743

Email: jrgiven77@gmail.com

Facebook: TAMLAGHTFINLAGAN PARISH CHURCH

Best wishes and God's blessing to Canon Sam McVeigh on his retirement at the end of January. He will be very sorely missed by his congregation in Christ Church, Limavady. I will miss him too as we have been neighbours for over twenty years and he has looked after my congregation when I went on holidays. I am sure that I speak for a great many people in the Roe Valley, not just of his congregation, who have been blessed by his ministry and his friendship. To him and Joan, thanks and I hope and pray that you may have many happy years in retirement.

Sadly there is very little to report as far as parish affairs are concerned. I am doing an online service on a Wednesday night at 9:00pm during Lent and a Sunday morning thought. I would love to be able to announce services for Holy Week and Easter, but at this moment that would be

tempting fate. So a thought for Easter will have to do for the present. Last year we were looking at characters around the cross during our Lenten services. There were two which I didn't mention but will do so now. They are the secret disciples, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. These two wealthy, influential men had secretly followed Jesus fearing the consequences of being publically identified with him while he went about his ministry. But now they no longer are secret disciples. They come out boldly as friends of Jesus and are there at the cross when the disciples are nowhere to be seen. It is thanks to them that our Lord's body wasn't thrown into a pit, as was the fate of the robbers who were crucified with him. Thanks to them, his body wasn't taken off the cross by uncaring soldiers, but reverently and lovingly by these two men and helped, no doubt, by the women who had remained with Jesus throughout the whole horrific event.

We can imagine them preparing his body for the tomb. It would have been a hasty affair. Washing his blood stained body, quickly anointing it with spices and ointment before wrapping it in the linen clothes and carrying it to the tomb. A rushed job as it all had to be done before sunset and the beginning of the Sabbath. This was a very brave thing that these two did. Jesus may have died like a criminal but he was buried like a king.

Yes, we have much to thank them for. But how much blessing they missed. How unsatisfactory and incomplete their discipleship was. The thought which I leave with you this Easter is this, secret discipleship cannot always remain a secret. It must at some time and in some way reveal itself, regardless of what it may cost.

Happy Easter.

URNEY (Urnaí) A place of prayer

*Pensive, I stand among the yews
that cradle the treasures of this ancient place,
and try to think of chants from pews
and music played in a sacred space.*

*For this was once a place of sound,
with tolling bell and voices strained.
And to these walls good folk were bound
to hear the word of God proclaimed.*

*A thousand years ago and more
Cognat felt the Spirit's call.
And then, upon Finn's Eastern shore
founded here this hallowed hall.*

*With ancient faith and new-found zeal,
faithful souls were beckoned here
to pray and think and work and heal,
and serve their God with holy fear.*

*This Church of God and seat of learning,
in darksome times a lantern bright,
filled Samthann with a sacred yearning
and many another acolyte.*

*George Irwin
September, 2019*

Castlerock, Dunboe and Fermoy

Rector: Rev Chris MacBruithin

Facebook: Parish of Castlerock & Dunboe @CastlerockDunboe



This 'lockdown Lent' in Castlerock and Dunboe is all about journeys, even if they have to be virtual ones for the time being.

First of all, our Kids' Club is doing a great job of clocking up kilometres from here to Jerusalem as part of the diocesan SEEDS 'Journey to the Cross' initiative. Thanks to Marlyn and team for delivering monthly packs out to each member so our learning can continue at home.

Travel is something many of us are missing these days, so we thought adults too might enjoy a virtual pilgrimage through the Holy Land. Each weekday, we visit a new site (albeit online) with a short reading and thought for the day.

The pace of our pilgrimage will pick up

during Holy Week, with daily services streamed on Facebook @CastlerockDunboe, and a focus on the locations of the events of Jesus' final days in Jerusalem before his death and resurrection:

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
7.30pm Service of Prayer and Contemplation

Maundy Thursday
7.30pm Service of Holy Communion

Good Friday
3pm Stations of the Cross

Easter Day
10am Service of Holy Communion -
He has risen! Alleluia!

Work continues on our graveyard extension at St Paul's, Articlave. Many thanks to our

team overseeing this big project, as well as everyone working on our communications, Covid Response and other teams as they keep things going during this time of great uncertainty. We are delighted to be able to offer Christ Church Parish Hall for the administration of the Covid vaccine to local residents. I for one cannot wait to meet again in person, when circumstances permit.

The Resurrection wasn't just a 'virtual presence' or a metaphorical expression of Jesus' legacy. The Bible makes clear that the Risen Lord had a real, flesh-and-blood resurrection body. Physical presence matters. Being embodied is such a part of our humanity. One day soon, we'll resume our hugs and handshakes!
Yours in Christ, Rev. Chris

Killowen (Coleraine)

Rector: Rev Donard Collins

Tel: 028 7034 2629

Email: killowencoleraine@btinternet.com

www.killowenparishcoleraine.co.uk

Facebook: Killowen Parish Church @killowenparishchurch



"May we show Christ's love + teach his Word."

Camus-Juxta-Bann (Macosquin)

Rector: Rev Paul Lyons

www.camus-juxta-bann.org

Facebook: St Mary's Church @camusjuxtabannconnections



'With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all.'
Acts 4v33

Data-led not date-led...

As I write these parish notes, like many colleagues, I do not know what we will be permitted to do in April and beyond. Stephen Walker, a NI political correspondent said, 'After months of lockdown

everyone wants to know when life can return to some kind of normality. But don't expect dates you can put in your diary for the (Stormont) ministers say their plan will be data-led, not date-led.'

We know that correct information helps the government make good decisions. Similarly during this lockdown I have found the best advice for coping with life's different pressures has been to daily read the Bible. For the scriptures are the best 'data' we can follow and trust throughout all the seasons of life. Even though we can't be together physically as a church at the moment I hope we can travel the same pathway and rediscover again how amazing the Easter message is. As you consider what the resurrection means and why it matters may your heart be stirred with gratitude and trust.

What does the Resurrection mean? It means...

1. Jesus is who he claimed to be. "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in

me will live, even though he dies."
John 11:25

2. Jesus has the power he claimed to have. "No one takes my life from me. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up again." John 10:18

3. Jesus does what he promises to do. "They will mock... and flog... and kill me; but after three days I will come back to life again."
Mark 10:34

Why does the Resurrection matter? Because now...

1. My past can be forgiven. "He has forgiven all our sins... and cancelled every record of the debt we owed; Christ has done away with it by nailing it to the cross." Colossians 3:14

2. My present problems can be managed. "How incredibly great is his power to help those who believe Him ... the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead!" Ephesians 1:20

3. My future can be secured. "This is the way to have eternal life - by knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, the one he sent to earth!" John 17:3

Wishing you and your family a peaceful and blessed Easter.



Aghadowey

Rector: Rev Louise Crawford-McCafferty
Tel: 07890745359
Facebook: St Guaire's Church Aghadowey

40 Brone Road, Garvagh BT51 4EQ
Email: louiscrawfordmccafferty@yahoo.com

Princeton Seminary announced Jürgen Moltmann was coming to speak. There was a real buzz in the air. So I skipped out of work early (with my bosses permission). She knew I HAD to go hear him lecture! I met my friend William Crawley from Radio Ulster (before he was famous he was an "ordinary" student just like me). We got to the lecture room early, or so we thought! It was teeming with people and we had to sit on the floor in the hallway outside the lecture room, bum sore but happy, (delirious actually), just being able to hear this man's voice with his beautiful German accent. Why were we all so excited? Yes he was a great theologian, and we were sure to learn something very profound and we did, but I want to share a little about his life as an encouragement for Easter, especially during this difficult year.

During the World War 2, an 18-year-old German named Jürgen Moltmann was drafted into Hitler's army. Assigned to an

anti-aircraft battery, he experienced the horror of watching fellow soldiers being incinerated in fire-bombings. After surrendering to the British, he spent three years in prison camps, and saw how other German prisoners "collapsed inwardly, how they gave up all hope, sickening for the lack of it, some of them dying."

Moltmann had not grown up as a Christian, but an American chaplain gave him a New Testament and book of Psalms, signed by President Roosevelt. He read the Psalms and found something he desperately needed: **hope**. He became convinced that God was present with him, "even behind the barbed wire."

After being transferred to a camp run by the YMCA, Moltmann learned Christian beliefs, and experienced the love and the acceptance of the local population. They "treated me better than the German army". Moltmann found new life in Christianity after seeing only death in the War. The gospel was life-giving Good News for him, and it can be for us as well.

But wait, there's more. The Risen Christ was moving ahead of Moltmann, leading him into an unexpected future. After the war, Moltmann became a Christian theologian and focused on the ideas that God is present with us in our suffering, and that God is leading us to a better future. Both ideas come out of the life of Jesus, and both come out of Moltmann's personal story as well.

Easter Sunday is the beginning of the "laughter of the redeemed, it is "God's protest against death." God is not satisfied with the way the world is today, and He intends to make all things new. God weeps with us so that we may someday laugh with Him.

May you find HOPE in EASTER this year. The vaccine is a sign of hope, but we remember the greatest hope of all, new life with Jesus because He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed. Hallelujah!

Kilrea, Tamlaght O'Crilly Upper & Lower

Rector: Rev Gary Millar

Facebook: The Parishes of Kilrea, Tamlaght O'Crilly Upper & Lower @kilreatamlaghtocrillyupperlower



Just over a year ago we were thrown into the darkness and uncertainty of a COVID19 world. Overnight everything changed - churches, schools and businesses closed. We were no longer allowed to visit loved ones in hospital or nursing homes or bid farewell to family members at the grave. It seemed that all hope had been removed from us. Yet in the midst of it all the NHS staff, essential workers and people like Captain Tom reminded us that life is precious, it is worth fighting for and we should be thankful to God for every day. To all those essential workers I would like to say a massive thank you.

A month ago, I was given my first dose of the Pfizer vaccine and like many I hope it is a means to an end of the pandemic. As more and more people are vaccinated, and the numbers of hospital admissions decrease, the Government and devolved

bodies have been producing road maps. We have all been asking the same questions: what does the future look like? How do we return to 'normal' life? And what will it look like?

As a Church it is essential to help protect lives, stop the spread of the virus and reduce the pressure on the NHS. At the same time returning to corporate in-person worship and fellowship are essential for the long-term spiritual and mental health of our members. My prayer is that we can return to worshipping together in public as soon as possible, following the guidelines and advice of the Executive. If this past year has taught us anything it is that things can change quickly with this virus. Therefore, when we can re-open our buildings for public worship, we will continue to stream our services for those who are housebound and those who don't feel ready to return to public worship. We will need to remember that things can

and will change as new information is made available and therefore, we must remain flexible for the time being.

I look forward to seeing you all in person when our buildings re-open. In the meantime, pray for those who are involved in the fight against this pandemic, for our Government and Executive members, that God would be glorified throughout all of this and that many would put their faith and trust in the Lord.

The Easter message proclaims Christ is Risen! Alleluia! He remains our hope, our strength and our peace. May you know his presence and peace in your hearts and homes this Easter.

Errigal & Desertoghill (Garvagh)

Rector: Rev Carmen Hayes

Tel: 028 2955 8226

Facebook: St. Pauls Church of Ireland, Garvagh



Friends, as I write this wee article we are in Lent and just four weeks away from the Easter weekend and as yet we don't know what form our celebrations might take. Will we be back in our churches or like last year, will we still be streaming our services virtually on social media? Oh, I do hope not!

Thankfully, there is some light at the end of what has been an awfully long tunnel, for with the vaccine roll-out and all of the data moving in the right direction, an ending (at least to Lockdown) is in sight, "Oh happy days!"

Which reminds me of the story about young Jonathan who had been promised a new puppy for his 10th birthday. He had a tough time choosing one from the dozen possible candidates in his local pet shop. Finally, he decided on one non-descript shaggy pup who was wagging his tail furiously and when asked why he'd chosen that one, he replied, "I wanted one with a happy ending!"

Folks when we think of some of the events across the centuries, many of them might be said to have changed history. For instance, the signing of the Magna Carta, perhaps;

Napoleon's defeat at the battle of Waterloo; the out-break of the First and Second World Wars; the discovery of penicillin; the assassination of President Kennedy; the first landing on the moon; the unravelling of DNA and we cannot forget the most current one, the Coronavirus.

Claims could be made in relation to numerous occasions across the years, with good justification. For many of them have indeed powerfully shaped people's lives, for better or worse, but none will have

anything like the far-reaching influence of the resurrection of Christ, or the same capacity to change lives for ever.

And why? Well basically because we celebrate not simply the one who rose but the one who lives, not just His victory over

death but ours too, not a one-off event but an enduring reality.

Friends that's what Easter is about: life for you, life for me, life for all; and life lived now in a new dimension, transformed totally by His touch; life that will go on being lived with

him for all eternity, Yes this is a message and an event, that has shaped countless lives across the world and throughout the ages, and it goes on shaping lives today! For it's not a happy ending, it's a brand new beginning!

Maghera & Killelagh

Rector: Rev Terence Kerr

Tel. 028 7964 2252

www.magheraparish.co.uk

Facebook: The Parish of St. Lurach's, Maghera & Killelagh



Dear parishioners and friends

What a year it has been so far! It's impossible to ignore the fact that we have had to endure a very rigid Lockdown. The list is long for establishments that have had to close - cinemas - gymnasiums - hotels - restaurants - many offices and commercial units and yes! our beloved parish churches have been closed and await the instruction to reopen. I am hopeful that I may celebrate Holy Communion on Easter Sunday in my parish church amongst God's people. Having said all this, I am convinced that God has had mercy on his Creation and has given us a way out of this pandemic. I believe that the many vaccines have been inspired by God Himself. In my view he gave the scientists wisdom from on high to invent such a potent vaccine against the Covid 19 Virus. Thankfully, the UK

government and indeed our own health service have been superb in delivering the vaccines. I am reminded in the Epistle of James that, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights".

I do believe the vaccine is a perfect gift from on high. Yes! Our faith has been tested to the core and we feel at times like giving up. Our world has been decimated in so many ways. Yet through all of this mess, God has been at work. In our parish halls, the Lurach Centre, we were very fortunate to be able to conduct a vaccination programme led by our near neighbours, the Staff of the Maghera Health Centre. We facilitated the vaccination of almost 500 individuals.

I do feel exasperated when I listen to people berate the vaccines and proudly boast they

will not take the jab. Furthermore, I have sadly listened to fundamentalist Christians tell me the vaccine is the mark of the beast and you cannot be a Christian if you take the vaccine. Of course we all have a free will and no one suggests that the government makes the inoculation compulsory, but I personally believe that the vaccine is a gift from God. I look forward to a day when we can all meet in church to praise God for "His good and perfect gift". God is still on the throne as he works His purpose out for all of us and for His Blessed Creation. THANKS BE TO GOD.

Yours in Christ

The Rev Terence P Kerr

Rector St.Lrach's, Maghera and Killelagh

St. Tida's, Parish of Ballyscullion, Bellaghy

NSM in Charge: Rev Brian Hassan





Christ Church Castledawson

Rev Colin Welsh: Rector and Rural Dean

Tel: 028 7946 8235

Email: colin.welsh@talktalk.net

Facebook: Christ Church Castledawson

If the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from death, lives in you, then he who raised Christ from death will also give life to your mortal bodies by the presence of his Spirit in you. Romans 8:11.GNB

Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed, Hallelujah!

Hi all, by the time you are reading this article we'll likely be on the cusp of celebrating Easter or will have already done so. Of course, although we celebrate Jesus' resurrection every Sunday, Easter Day is the special time when we commemorate the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus, that time when the Holy Spirit revived Jesus and brought Him back to life. (See Romans 8:11). As I ponder the words of Paul I can't help but ask: Post Covid, is our Church in need of Holy Spirit revival?

We often hear people say, "we need revival". Indeed I've often prayed for revival in our land but now that we seem to be coming out of this Covid pandemic, I wonder is it actually our church that is in need of new life?

I'm sure, like most churches, your church has been struggling to maintain ministry, fellowship together and serve as we know we should.

This said, there is no doubt that many have been active in new areas of ministry including the use of I.T for online worship and a range of socially distanced and online activities. I don't know about you but I believe that this whole Covid experience, with its many negative aspects, has brought with it some new openings for ministry and the opportunity for a reappraisal of 'where

we are at' as churches. I wonder if you sense, as I do, a need for us to be revived by the power of the Holy Spirit, for the work that is ahead of us.

If so, let's get on our knees and earnestly seek revival and may it start in our hearts. This Eastertide let's ask for God's resurrection power in our lives and revival in our churches. May we, and them, be brought back to life and given spiritual empowerment to do as Christ would have us do in His name and for His glory.

Let the fire fall.

Easter blessings to you all.
Christ is Risen!
Colin

Desertmartin and Termoneeny

Vacant

Rural Dean: Rev Colin Welsh

Tel: 028 7946 8235



Kilcronaghan, Ballynascreen Tobermore & Six Towns

Rector: Rev Rosie Diffin
Tel: 028 7962 8823

Email: kilcronaghan@derry.anglican.org
Web: <http://kilcronaghan.vpweb.co.uk>
Facebook: Kilcronaghan Parish Church @kilcronaghanparishchurch



It all Began with a String

Did you know that the construction of the bridge over the Niagara Falls Gorge all began with a piece of string?

It was on 30th January 1848, that Charles Ellet Jr. flew his kite from one side of the gorge to the other. Over on the other side, someone caught the kite, attached a stronger string to the kite string, which Ellet Jr. then pulled back across the gorge. This process was repeated back and forth and each time the strength of the string increased. Stronger string led to cord; thin rope; thicker rope and so on, until eventually a steel cable, strong enough to support workers, tools, and materials crossed the expanse. Finally, on March 18, 1855, a fully laden passenger train officially opened the sturdy bridge, over which trains and trucks could easily pass. It all began with a string.

At the time of writing this, Ronnie and I celebrate our first year in Kilcronaghan, Ballynascreen & Sixtowns, a year that has felt very much like building that bridge over

Niagara Falls. It all began with a handshake, or lack off. Soon we would add, sharing the cup at communion, tea after services, singing, home visits, weddings, baptisms, attending funerals and in-church services to the ever-growing list of restrictions.

However, since I am a glass half full person, let's move to the other side of the Canyon now, where it all began, with a stronger piece of string! Or in our case, it all began with those first basic online services, filmed on a laptop balanced on an old milk crate on top of a cardboard box. Soon we would add, phone ministry, i-movies, Sunday school participation, wonderful acts of kindness, lining the streets of our villages to pay our respects at funerals, delivering food parcels, gifts for essential workers, socially distanced 'Fit for Life', a treasure hunt, 'Buy a Brick, Build a Future morning', online Prayer Fellowship, zoom confirmation classes and so the list will continue to grow. The journey towards recovery has commenced and we have so much to look forward to as a church family.

God willing, by the time this is published

we will be back to in-church worship, something we should never take for granted again. I imagine that if you were to draw up a list of all those things you considered to be important at the end of 2019, you would find yourself moved to draw a line through many of those things in 2021. This last year has been a time when we have discovered that small things matter. We have discovered that being a part of our church family matters. It has been a strange first year in the Parish, not at all how I planned it, but then as someone very wise once said: "If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans." That familiar message from Jeremiah 29:11 feels very appropriate: ***For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.***

As we wait for God to reveal those perfect plans to us let's: *"Encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."* 1 Thessalonian 5:11
Yours in Christ
Rev Rosie Diffin

Ardstraw, Baronscourt, Badoney Upper & Lower and Greenan

Rector: Rev Ivan Dinsmore
Tel: 028 8166 1342 Facebook: Ardstraw Parish



Baptism

Baronscourt Parish Church. February 14th 2021. Daisy Rachel Cummings, daughter of Lynsey Hemphill and Timothy Cummings, 12 Lough Road, Drumlegagh.

Burials

Ardstraw Parish Church: January 28th 2021 William Percy Glass, late of 3 West Road,

Newtownstewart. Funeral service took place in Ardstraw Parish Church, followed by burial in the adjoining cemetery. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the funeral service was private for family and close neighbours only. A lament was played at the graveside by Ian Dinsmore in recognition of Percy's many years of membership in the Sinclair Memorial Pipe Band, Newtownstewart.

Andrew Millar

Parishioners in Baronscourt and Gortin awoke on Christmas morning to the sad news that our organist of 26 years, Mr. Andrew Millar had died suddenly on Christmas Eve. Andrew was blessed with amazing musical gifts. He was an outstanding organist, a talented writer

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of music, and a gifted music teacher. He imparted his musical knowledge to many people over a long number of years teaching in Coleraine, Fivemiletown and more recently in Omagh Academy. For a number of years he was organist and choirmaster in Saint Columba's Church, Omagh, and for the last twenty six years here in the Parish of Ardstraw, Baronscourt and Lower Badoney. For many years he played the organ at three services every Sunday, beginning at Baronscourt at 9.30,

moving to Ardstraw at 10.45 and then on to Gortin at 12.15. Andrew had played in the three churches for a quarter of a century until failing health in recent years forced him to cut back on his commitments. As well as his musical commitments, Andrew served for some years on the Select Vestry of Ardstraw Parish, and also as administrator of the parish office and Editor of the Parish News. The sympathy of the parish is extended to Doreen and to all Andrew's family circle. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.

Worship

Due to the continuing COVID-19 restrictions all services will be online, on Facebook Live until further notice. Join us each week for Morning Prayer at 12 noon on Sundays and Evening Prayer at 8pm on Wednesdays. For those who are unable to receive the services due to poor connectivity the Parish Weekly, containing the sermon, prayers, collects and readings and a short message from the Rector is available by email to parishioners who have email.



Cappagh & Lislimnaghan

Rector: Rev Canon Derek Quinn

Tel: 028 8224 2572

Email: derekquinn2@aol.com

Facebook: Cappagh Parish Church @CappaghParishChurch

R. A. Torrey was an American evangelist, pastor, and writer. Torrey was a close associate of the world famous evangelist D. L. Moody. Like the better-known Moody, Torrey preached in nearly every part of the English-speaking world and he conducted revival services in Great Britain from 1903 to 1905. As well as being a gifted preacher and teacher, Torrey was also a talented and prolific writer, publishing more than 40 books during his lifetime. Recently I came across a moving account written by Torrey about an unexpected encounter with a young boy one day - "I was standing before the window of an art store where a picture of the Crucifixion of our Lord was on exhibition. As I gazed, I was conscious of the approach of another, and turning, beheld a little lad gazing also intently at this picture. Noticing that this mite of humanity was a sort of street urchin, I thought I would speak

to him; so I asked, pointing to the picture, "Do you know who He is?"

"Yes," came the quick response: "that's our Saviour," with a mingled look of pity and surprise that I should not know what the picture represented.

With an evident desire to enlighten me further, he continued, after pause: "them's the soldiers, the Roman soldiers, and," with a long drawn sigh, "that woman crying there is His mother."

He waited, apparently for me to question him further, then thrust his hands in his pockets, and with a reverent and subdued voice and tear-stained face added, "They killed Him, mister. Yes, sir, they killed Him."

I looked at the little, dirty, ragged fellow and asked, "Where did you learn this?"

He replied, "At the Mission Sunday School." Full of thoughts regarding the benefits of Mission Sunday Schools, I turned and resumed my walk, leaving the little lad still looking at the picture. I had not walked one block when I heard his childish treble calling, "Mister! Say mister!" I turned. He was running toward me but paused; then up went his little hand, and with a triumphant sound in his voice and now radiant face, he said, "I wanted to tell you; HE ROSE AGAIN."

His message delivered, he smiled, waved his hand, turned, and went his way, feeling, I presume, that as he had been enlightened, he had done his duty in enlightening another. What a challenge to everyone of us?"

CHRIST IS RISEN! That is the message we need to share this Easter

Drumragh & Mountfield

Vacant, Rural Dean: Rev Canon Robert Clarke Tel: 028 82245525

www.drumragh.derry.anglican.org Facebook: St Columba's Church Omagh @stcolumbsomagh

Edenderry & Clanabogan

Rev Canon Robert Clarke: Rector and Rural Dean

Tel: 028 82245525

Email: rw.clarke@btinternet.com

Facebook: Edenderry Union of Parishes



The Cross

I owed a debt which I couldn't pay.
Christ paid a debt that He didn't owe.
Morality will keep you out of jail, but only
the blood of Jesus will keep you out of Hell.

The Key to Salvation

The following are thoughts on the Cross of
Calvary by the late David Watson:

It's the picture of violence

Yet the key to peace.

A picture of suffering

Yet the key to healing.

A picture of death

Yet the key to life.

A picture of utter weakness

Yet the key to power.

A picture of capital punishment

Yet the key to mercy and forgiveness.

A picture of vicious hatred

Yet the key to love.

A picture of supreme shame

Yet the Christian's supreme boast.

Prayer

*'I never pray more than fifteen minutes, but I
never go more than fifteen minutes without
praying.'* Smith Wigglesworth

*'If a matter is not serious enough to pray about,
then it is not serious enough to worry about;
and if it is serious enough to pray about, and
we have prayed about it, then there is no need
to worry about it.'* James E. Gibbons

The Power of Prayer

This report was published in the Evening
Standard a few years ago: 'Heart attack
patients who are prayed for appear to recover
faster than those who aren't. At the Mid
America Heart Institute in Kansas City, 500
patients admitted with heart attacks were
allotted people to secretly pray for them, a
further 500 were used as a control. Those in
the prayer group had a significantly better
recovery, being 11 per cent better off in
terms of symptoms and test results. Patients

and staff knew nothing about the trial,
ruling out any placebo effect. Not exactly
proof of the existence of God, but it could
be evidence of some kind of subtle force
of human consciousness. The researchers
suggest thinking hard about someone in
hospital with an attitude of prayer appears
to be helpful.'

Positive Outlook

There were two ways David could have
looked at Goliath. He could have said, 'Boy,
he's so big, I'm out of here.' Or he could
have said, 'Boy, he's so big, I can't miss.'
David did the latter.

*'Instead of seeing the soldier on duty next
to him as a galling restriction to the gospel,
Paul saw him as a captive audience.'*
Chuck Swindoll

Drumclamph & Clare, Langfield Upper & Lower

Rector: Rev Robert G. Keogh

Tel: 028 8167 1433

Email: rgkeogh@utvinternet.com

<http://www.drumclamph.derry.anglican.org>

Facebook: Drumclamph ClareandLangfield



This year Easter Sunday will be on Sunday
4th April 2021. All being well the following
services of Holy Communion will be held:
St Andrew's Clare at 9:30am, Langfield
10:45am and Drumclamph at 12:15pm.
Social distancing and the normal Covid-19
protocols will be observed including the
wearing of face masks.

Confirmation services

All being well confirmation services will be

held in our group of parishes on Sunday 18th
April with 6 candidates at each service and
their immediate family (those whom they
live with). Attendance at these services will
be limited to the candidates and their families.
Please remember the candidates in your
prayers. There will be no services of Morning
Prayer or Holy Communion on that Sunday.
The rollout of the vaccines is going
extremely well thanks to the foresight of
the government in ordering them early from

the right companies. The policy of giving
a single dose followed by a second dose
three months later has speeded up the
vaccination program as well as making
them more effective. This is an answer to
prayer in giving the authorities wisdom
to make the right decisions. We hope and
pray that the vaccines will continue to
be effective against the new variants. It
is very important that the vast majority

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of the population takes the vaccinations otherwise the virus will continue persist for longer in our local communities and put additional lives at risk.

Thought for the month

Jesus went up into a mountain by himself to pray: and when evening was come, he

was there alone. (Matthew Chapter 14: 23) Jesus had a very busy ministry with preaching, teaching and healing. People were always seeking out Jesus for help and the only time he seemed to be alone with his disciples was either early in the morning or late at night. In spite of the pressures of his ministry Jesus never neglected his times of prayer alone

with God his Heavenly Father. This was the source of his power and strength, his relationship with God. If it was essential for Jesus as God's Son to pray alone, how much more does the child of God need prayer alone with God as the source of his power and strength for daily living?

Derg & Termonamongan

Rector: Rev Peter Ferguson

Tel: 028 8167 1362

Facebook: Derg Parish Church. Termonamongan Parish



Deacon Intern:
Rev Claire Henderson

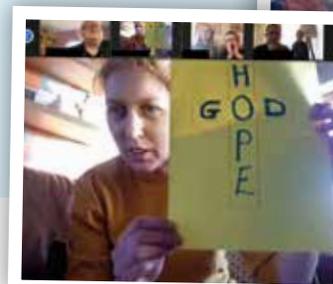


As I look over 2020 and look forward to 2021 I cannot remember a time like this. Coronavirus has affected us all. In many ways we have had to draw strength from God and each other in new ways. I am proud of the many ways we have pulled together with God, for each other and our community.

In light of this I, and we, have been busy with a Parish response to offer the light and hope of the gospel to all. We immediately organised our online services pre-recorded in church and they go out each Sunday on our Facebook page and our YouTube channel Derg and Killeter Church of Ireland. Do join us and encourage others to follow us in worship if they can. For some time I have planned to use a sermon series in the New Year on **Nehemiah - 'When God Revives His People'** - and the timing has been perfect. God's Word always speaks into every situation and this is certainly the case in this. Our monthly services for children and young people have been a great success. Our churches were packed with families

before Christmas at Poppy Kids and Youth (Remembrance) and at Christmas Kids and Youth. Now that we cannot meet in church, we have launched a monthly **Bubble Church** - meeting in our homes / bubbles on Zoom. This series began in January with the title January Blues Buster - a message of hope from Noah. We had so much fun and smiling faces as we enjoyed time together in our homes. These will continue once a month, as well as a weekly Sunday School virtual lesson plan that is shared to all. In December our **Journey to Bethlehem Car Trail** finishing at the stable in Aghyaran and then Killeter Hall with Santa was so special. To be able to meet and see so many smiling faces all connected together on WhatsApp meant so much. This was a socially distant way we could reimagine our annual Christmas Party. The fun and challenges along the way will be remembered for some time. I am proud that as a parish group we were able to find a way for families to enjoy Christmas cheer. Also, our **Virtual Nativity Play** and showing of The Star was well supported. There are plans for a Parish Quiz held on Zoom and we will take part in a **Virtual Easter Play** as an evangelistic opportunity to share the gospel into our community online. I am proud to chair Derry Raphoe Youth Board and work with a hard-working, creative and supportive team. Over Christmas we ran a series of imaginative and community reaching events called **Christmas Shine the**

Light. I am delighted to report that we have developed a series of initiatives leading up to Easter including a Zoom training evening for parents and leaders with Tom Tate from Why Mind. He addressed issues of anxiety among children and young people and how to help them. **Hope from Home** is a photographic competition in March for young people with some very attractive prizes. Then finally we are launching an initiative throughout Lent called **Let's Journey to the Cross**. Our Deacon Intern Claire Henderson is out of ICU and making slow but steady progress in a regular ward at SWAH. We remember Claire in prayer.





Urney and Sion Mills

Rector: Rev Jonathan McFarland
Facebook: Parish of Urney Christ Church
and Church of the Good Shepherd @urneyparish

"The earth, O Lord is full of your steadfast love; teach me Your statutes" Psalm 119:64

May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 RSV)

How are we going to deal with the consequences of the pandemic?
How are we going to pay of the national burden of debt?
How are so many going to deal with the loss of loved ones or the loss of their livelihood or dreams?

Does the Bible have anything to say to all these questions?

The verse above was written by the apostle Paul to a young church that was also facing big questions. This in itself should encourage us by reminding us that God's people have

often faced an uncertain and formidable future. Paul reminds us that in Christ we have a Saviour who continually demonstrates that the things that are impossible for people are possible with God.

On an individual level, someone who is a new convert often thinks it will be impossible for them to resist their old ways and to live up to a new life in Christ. This thinking is so common, but it is defective thinking. It leaves God out of the solution. We, as believers, are not made holy by ourselves. We are made holy by the power of God within us. That power can transform broken lives, lives that seem utterly hopeless and lost. God at work in us can make us sound and blameless. This is God's work, not ours. The only part we play is in the act of surrender to Him. If God can do this for individuals like you and me, He has the power to change nations as well.

And always remember the end: God will continue this holy work within us "until the

coming of our Lord Jesus." All through this letter to the Thessalonians, this has been the great hope set before us. Jesus is coming again. God's kingdom will come on earth. There is only a limited time of testing to go through now. Pandemics are limited. Tears and suffering are limited. The things of this world cannot go on forever.

That is where the apostle leaves us, with the hope of the coming of our Risen Lord Jesus, and the resources God has provided, so that we may live in a new and different way in the midst of this uncertain age.

May God bless you as you continue to trust in Him, our living hope.

Yours in Christ
Jonathan

Camus-Juxta-Mourne (Strabane)

Rector: Rev John White
Facebook: Christ Church, Strabane @ChristChurchStrabane
Our Vision... 'Preach the Word... be shaped by the Word'.

This Time Last Year!

Here we are with the good news that churches can reopen again at Easter. Just 12 months ago the first Lockdown was imposed. Churches, shops, leisure facilities, travel, and just about everything else were closed down.

The reason? A global pandemic which no one was expecting. All of this, of course, changed the course of the world. But this also had spiritual implications.

As we entered the month of March last year, things were proceeding as they had done for years. Lent, Holy Week and Easter plans were being made. There was no indication that the Church, plodding along as normal, was about to enter the most seismic year it had seen for perhaps a century.

The coronavirus epidemic had changed everything:

- Church services would now take place on the internet.

- Church meetings would transfer to Zoom meetings.
- Even when the church did reopen for public worship, protocols had to be followed; hand sanitiser became standard; face masks and distancing were now the norm.
- No more hugging or even shaking hands. Don't touch! Don't come too close!

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The pandemic has brought the world to a halt. Whilst the crisis is terrible, and many are suffering, it also provides us with a unique opportunity to reassess our priorities. We can press the pause button and reconsider our lives.

As Ecclesiastes says for everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven, and what better time for the Lord to get our attention.

- *Do we need to reconsider our priorities, or just try to go back to the way things were February 2020?*
- *Do we grow in our love and desire for the Lord Jesus?*

- *Does worship play a central part in our Christian lives?*
- *And what needs to change in the days ahead?*

However we emerge from this pandemic, I believe God wants to bring us closer to His own heart. This will deepen our love for Him, and our commitment to the spread of His gospel.

While nothing might seem to be moving in our churches, the Lord has been moving deeply. What's more, He is inviting us to move with Him as He does a deep work in all of our hearts.

Out of His deep love for us He is preparing us for this new season. May He help us to make the most of this time.

As Moses prayed, *'So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom'*. [Psalm 90:12]

God bless and stay safe.

Donagheady

Rector: Rev Dr Robin Stockitt

Tel: 028 7139 8017

Email: stjamesdonagheady@gmail.com

Facebook: St James, Donagheady



Leckpatrick & Dunalong

Rev Canon Paul Whittaker: Rector and Rural Dean

Tel: 028 71880397 Mob: 07770691560

Email: revpaul07@btinternet.com

Facebook: Parishes of Leckpatrick and Dunalong Church of Ireland



A Time to Re-build

Bearing this in mind - 'In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to.'

I believe this is the right time to 'Pray, Prepare and Plan.' It was 23rd March 2020 when we entered our first lockdown. Things began to open up in July but it was the first Sunday in August when we re-turned to what we call 'In-Church Worship.' The return of numbers in church was slow but then we started to see things improve as we introduced and implemented the

protocols. We then had another localised lockdown at the beginning of October which led to a province-wide second lockdown.

Thankfully at the beginning of December a vaccine was approved and was starting to roll-out. Another vaccine was approved and then restrictions were eased over Christmas which led to a huge increase in new positive cases and a third lockdown began on 26th December and we are still in it. This one has been the toughest yet, as people are becoming Covid weary and the dark nights and winter weather doesn't make it any easier. We all have had our good days and

bad days. However, I try not to call them bad days, just not-so-good days.

What have we noticed about the Sundays we could return to 'In-Church Worship'.

1. *The return of our parishioners has been slow and this is understandable as the fear of this virus is still around.*
2. *A high percentage of those who have returned to church are over 40 years of age.*
3. *There is a distinct lack of children and young people at church and some have not been to church for almost a year.*

4. *There are very few families returning to church.*
5. *It seems that a lot of people prefer to join in with the service as it is live-streamed on the Church Facebook page.*

The big question of the lips of many Clergy and Lay people is 'How are we going to get our people back to church?'

I think it's inevitable that there are some people who are genuinely fearful of this virus and it will take a long time for them to return. I also think some may never return to 'In-Church Worship' and again I think we will have some new faces in church as the vaccine is rolled out. Carol and I have been listening to Bishop David McClay every day during Lent as he focuses

on the building and re-building of the walls around Jerusalem by the prophet Nehemiah. There are big lessons to be learned from the prophet that we could apply to where we are as the Church in 2021. We need to 'Pray, Prepare and Plan' more than ever. From April 2021 a lot of our activities will have to be out-door or some sort of Gazebo with chairs, tables, sanitizing equipment and PPE as we endeavour to get our children and young people back to church. From April 2021 I will embark on a visitation programme and my aim will be to visit every home in the parish in the next 12 to 18 months to try and encourage people that 'In-Church Worship' is safe and as the vaccine is rolled out it will be even safer. We also have a 12 month Parish diary in place as we begin re-opening, but everything will be data-led.



Valentine's Day

The Heart-felt treats were a real success and the 50 boxes were sold out in 24 hours. Thank you to our volunteers and the bakers whose help was immense.

Easter 2021

We are unsure about when 'In-Church Worship' will return, hopefully Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day.

St. Augustine's, Londonderry

Rector: Rev Nigel Cairns

Facebook: St. Augustine's Church, Londonderry



Apart from installing a smart TV, at long last our youth room is finished! We are delighted with the colourful chairs, tables and new kitchen units. This room is now an attractive and usable space for our young people, which is a massive upgrade for them, because since social distancing became the norm they were meeting outdoors - not so good in the rain! We recently took delivery of our new furniture for our kidzklub zone too, and our leaders are really looking forward to having everything set up and ready for whenever 'in person' kidzklub resumes again. We pray that these refurbishments will be a real blessing to our children and young people.



During the past weeks, we have continued to make improvements to our streaming capacity. Our operators are becoming quite the 'dab hand' with the camera and are now able to incorporate a range of views and angles, which allows our virtual congregation to view the words on our visual screen clearly on their mobile devices. Since the beginning of March, we have been able to stream to our new Facebook page, (St. Augustine's Church - Londonderry), and simultaneously to our Youtube channel. At the beginning of March we were also very pleased to publish our new website www.saintaugustines.co.uk. Why not pay us a visit?

The St Augustine's Soup Project is still going strong, and we were overwhelmed at the interest in our afternoon tea boxes. They sold out in less than 24 hours and went down a treat! Apart from being a good fundraising venture, this initiative was used missionally, providing a little bible verse about God's love to every person who received an afternoon tea box. The initiative also had the benefit of enabling our catering team to work collectively on a church project - all good for the

cohesion of God's family. On Ash Wednesday, many of our housebound parishioners received little plastic wallets containing six envelopes.



Each envelope contained a simple thought for the week - one for each week of Lent. These were well received by all concerned and served to focus our thoughts as we approach Good Friday.

All in all, it has been a busy time for the wee church on the walls.

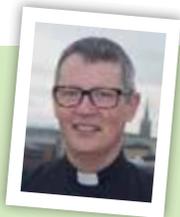
Christ Church, Culmore, Muff and St. Peter

Rector: Venerable Robert Miller,
Archdeacon of Derry
E rector@cccmsp.org
H 028 71352396

Website: www.cccmsp.org

Facebook Page: [@cccmsp](https://www.facebook.com/CCCMSPP)

Our Vision: Transforming Community, Radiating Christ.



Rev Canon Katie McAteer, Pastoral Director
E pastoral@cccmsp.org
M 07813 885145



Mrs Angela Dobbins
Parish Administrator
E administrator@cccmsp.org
O 028 71358925

Hope is a word to hold unto at the moment. Many are looking forward, in hope, to the day when we will be able to say that we have survived the COVID19 Global Pandemic. As I write these notes Bishops responsible for dioceses in Northern Ireland have stated that they hope we might be able to gather for worship on Easter Day! Hope is an important commodity. The Psalmist too sees the importance of hope: Psalm 33:22 'Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.' The focus of our hope is important and in these times our faith is a source of encouragement; the challenges we face do not need to be faced alone - we have God and also each other.

A parishioner mentioned to me, in a phone-call, how they are missing other people; a telephone call is good but being

in someone's company is better. Absence has reminded us of this! As we hopefully return to 'normal' we will continue to do some things differently. When meeting together wasn't possible or permitted we began to stream our services on Facebook; this is a helpful way to encourage one another. This will be something we will continue to do. Knowing we are not alone is an important part of being a supportive community. We want to enable as many as possible to join us for worship and the internet has allowed us to expand the people we reach.

I want to thank Canon Katie for her continued work in editing the parish magazine COMPASS as well as n:vision. The magazine goes to every household in the grouped parishes. Can I use this as an opportunity to ask you to update your details with the Parish Administrator. Our records are in good standing, and it would further help us if we have your email and

mobile phone number. You can email these to Angela: administrator@cccmsp.org

Easter is a time of Hope. Sin and death have been defeated by the death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. At the time we emerge from lockdown and restrictions caused by the pandemic we need hope. The empty tomb of Easter reminds us that Jesus can transform death to life! My prayer is that the hope at the centre of our faith may also be a source of encouragement to you, as we return to being with one another again. The Lord we follow can transform the darkest of times and it is our hope that the difficulties we have faced may be transformed in that same hope to be a source of resilience in the days ahead. Be assured of our continued prayers for you all.

Yours in Christ, Robert+

Moville, Greencastle, Donagh, Malin & Culdaff

Vacant

Rural Dean: Rev Canon David Crooks
Tel: 074 914 0135

Mob: 00447871974658
Email: dcrooks@eircom.net

Unfortunately there is not much to report because of the pandemic. The churches are set to re-open for public worship on Easter Monday 5th April - we wonder why not the day before, so that we can celebrate Easter? At least there is light at the end of the tunnel as more and more people get

the vaccine, and hopefully, fewer and fewer will catch covid and die.

Once all this is finally over, we can hopefully get back to some semblance of normality, and have some parish activities again, and hold our Easter General Vestry meetings.

Please keep John Williams, Maureen's husband in your prayers. John has been extremely ill, and has spent weeks in St Vincent's Hospital in Dublin and in Letterkenny Hospital. Maureen and John and the family greatly appreciate your prayerful support.

Fahan Upper and Lower

Rector: Rev Judi McGaffin

Tel: 07834561433

Facebook: Fahanandbuncranachurchofireland

"Cherishing and connecting with all God's children"



We have all had an unsettling year with perhaps the most unsettling thing being uncertainty. Uncertainty about when schools will open / close, when churches will open / close, where we can travel to, who we can meet up with, when a vaccine will be available.

A lot of uncertainty needing a lot of patience and diligence and wisdom and absolute trust in God. The people of these parishes, the wider community and the online virtual community that has emerged over the past year, have shown wonderful resilience and creativity as we have tried to keep hopeful and close to God in these difficult times.

Over the season of Advent we opened two types of advent calendars - ones which told the story of Christmas and had chocolate inside and one that was commandeered by elves and had "things to do" each day of Advent! The young people of the parishes and beyond, and their families, put their acting and production skills to the test and provided us with a virtual Nativity Play - all put together as a wonderfully finished and polished piece by the "Play it By Ear Company". It was absolutely fantastic and was seen through our Facebook page by people all over the world. Well done everyone!

Buncrana Churches Together organised an outdoor Carol Service just before Christmas - which was a great occasion where

Christmas Carols and readings made it feel at least a bit like "life before lockdown"

We were able to open our 2 churches for worship at Christmas and these were joyful occasions as people were able to meet again in our buildings albeit under strict restrictions. Lockdown was imposed again immediately after Christmas but again our communities rallied and our weekly services on Sunday, Wednesday and Saturday continued on Facebook, as has our ministry of art and craft! We have also offered a local telephone service of Morning Prayer or Holy Communion to anyone who can't connect with us via Facebook. Bible study has continued on Zoom too. Pictured, is a flavour of our Advent, Christmas and Christingle art and craft!

You can see it all on our Facebook page!
Fahanandbuncranachurchofireland



As part of Buncrana Churches together we continued and completed the ALPHA course prior to Lent! We had to stall our work on the Lord's Prayer with the students in St Mura's National School - but they are now engaging with our PRAISES Time and I hope that when schools open again we can celebrate all that we have learned over lockdown!

Lent is a time for reflection and we have taken hope as our theme this year. Each household received a pack for personal or family use during the 40 days and we took the theme further online at our PRAISES Time so that we can really celebrate HOPE in all its fullness as it bursts forth on Easter Day!!! You can see the beginning of our HOPE theme in the CJ section of this edition!

Whatever lies ahead of us God is with us - on the mountain tops or in the valleys! Keep safe and take great care *"but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint". Isaiah 40:31*



Tullyaughnish, Kilmacrennan, Killygarvan & Glenalla

Rector: Rev Canon Harry Gilmore

Tel. 0749151013 Email: tkkgparishes@hotmail.com



Taughboyne with Craigdooish, All Saints & Killea

Rev Canon David Crooks: Rector and Rural Dean

Tel: 074 914 0135 Mob: 00447871974658

Email: dcrooks@eircom.net



Serving God Together

The death of Pamela Latta after illness, patiently borne, has brought great sadness to her family. She was only 36 years old. To her father, Ian, her son Ryan and her brothers John and Stephen, our deepest sympathies.

We also sympathise deeply with Jonathan and Anne Williams and Luke on the death in infancy of their son, Leo John.

As we journey through Lent and approach Easter, we can be assured that death is swallowed up in victory, and that we shall enjoy a reunion in the Heavenly places with those whom we have loved in this world.

Our thoughts and prayers are constantly with John Williams who has spent months in St Vincent's Hospital in Dublin and in Letterkenny Hospital. He is now at home, supported so faithfully by Maureen and his family. We hope that he will make a good recovery and be able to live a normal life.

Congratulations and best wishes to Sean McClafferty who was commissioned as a Diocesan Reader on Sunday 6th December in All Saints Church. This was the first visit of Bishop Forster to the parish.

Tanya Elizabeth, daughter of Alastair and Wendy Moore was baptized in Taughboyne Parish Church on Sunday 6th December.

It is very frustrating not being able to return to church and worship as covid continues. Easter Monday 5th April is the date set for re-opening, but hopefully things will change for the better before then.

Parish finances have been devastated by the pandemic. Hopefully we can have the various fund-raising events which should have been held at Christmas, later in the year. Meanwhile, please continue to support the finances by handing in your sustentation envelopes.

Conwal Union with Gartan

Rector: Rev David Houlton

Facebook: The Parish of Conwal Union @ConwalParish



It's Covid-19 All Over Again, Again!

Most places have had two or three lockdowns in the last twelve months, but County Donegal seems to have never really escaped - just finishing one lockdown in time to start the next! So it was that church services stopped in Donegal before the end of September and opened up again for just three Sundays before "last services" were called on Christmas Day. Worse, Conwal Parish Church was being redecorated so we only had the church services for one Sunday in Christmas week. And even then, the very popular Service of Lessons and Carols had to be 'ticket only' - with a strict seating plan. Holy Communion was run with military precision in both Conwal and Gartan.

At least in Gartan we were able to make full use of the brief window of opportunity

to host the Columban Service of Night Prayer on Sunday 7th December, with more Bishops than have been seen together in Church Hill in living memory. We very much enjoyed Bishop Andrew leading the Columban Services.

Appropriately the last Service at St Columba's Gartan was Midnight Communion and at Conwal Christmas Morning Communion - with some individual cups so well designed that even a sleep deprived Rector had a fair chance of not spilling anything! And so it was into Lockdown Again, having deferred all 2020 weddings to 2021, or 2022, and again running out of time for baptisms.

Nevertheless, we have found a lot of interest in our services filmed in the churches. More people probably joined in that way than were allowed to be present in person. So we are

now "broadcasting" monthly from each church as well as twice on Sundays from the Rectory, and we will probably continue weekly prayers online even when the pandemic finally lifts.

Finally, sadly over this period we have lost two long standing members of the parish and mourn their loss with their families, friends and neighbours: John Tinney and Samuel Logue.

Easter Services online

Sun 28th Mar, 10.30am: Palm Sunday Service from St Columba's Church, Gartan
Sun 4th April, 10.30am: Easter Communion from Conwal Parish Church, Letterkenny
Good Friday, 2nd April: Conwal Church will be open 1pm-3pm for private prayers and Meditation at the Cross.

Clondevaddock, Rossnakill, Portsalon & Leatbeg

Priest in Charge: Rev David Griscome

Tel: 074 9192811



Dear Parishioners

"The Day of Resurrection, earth, tell it out abroad". These are the first 2 lines of a song reflecting the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. After a horrific death, Jesus fulfilled his own words to the disciples that "on the 3rd day I will rise again". Gradually over a period of days Jesus showed himself to the disciples proving to them a promise fulfilled. It changed the feeling of loss to that of joy and hope, which gave them confidence in their belief that Jesus was the Messiah.

Today, despite Covid-19 restrictions dictating our lives, the Resurrection hope is in us. We believe that Jesus was (IS)

the Son of God, who through his life, death, resurrection, ascension and coming again, has offered us the Hope of eternal life with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Retirement

I am writing to let you know of my plans to retire on Easter Day, the 4th of April 2021. I wish to express my sincere thanks to members of Clondevaddock parish for allowing me to serve with you. My thanks goes to Bishops James Mehaffey, Ken Good and Andrew Forster for letting me serve in the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe and to Bishops Michael Mayes and Ken Clarke for allowing me to serve in the Diocese of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, 1997-2004. I

wish to thank my fellow clergy for all the support and fellowship you have given to me. I have valued serving God in all the different parishes committed to my charge and again I thank you for all your support.

God's Guidance

Knowing when to step aside is vital in order that God can take a parish onto the next stage of its development and I pray that God will continue to guide and bless you all.

Many thanks
David

Clondehorkey, Cashel & Mevagh

Priest in Charge: Rev Canon George Irwin

Tel: 028 81659531 Mob: 074444642760

Email: wgirwin@btopenworld.com



A Challenging Year

A year ago many people were preparing to implement carefully laid plans and many events were, no doubt, marked out in the diary. And then came Covid19 which probably forced us to ponder the words of Robbie Burns: "The best-laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft a-gley". A piece of advice which tells us nothing we did not already know. Wiser perhaps to ponder the words of Jesus: "seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself." (Matthew 6: 33,34) These words express the quiet confidence and peaceful persistence of those who have learned to take God at his word and have complete trust in his fatherly care. This lesson about learning to live one day at a

time is especially necessary just now. Many good schemes and plans fail because people are so concerned about instant success. There often seems to be an obsession with the need to succeed at all costs, which means that many have difficulty coming to terms with the ups and downs and shocks of life. The world today may seem to be in a mess. But it is a world we must face and seek to reform according to the will of God, and in which we can find peace and hope only if we learn to trust in the resources of our heavenly Father. We must apply ourselves faithfully to the tasks of the present and also lift our eyes beyond the present and trust in the goodness of God to see us through into the future.

Worship

With Sunday worship suspended the Priest in Charge, Canon Irwin continues to broadcast a

Service at 12.00 noon on Sundays. You can tune in to this on: facebook.com/wgirwin.

Finance

Parishioners are to be warmly commended not only for their resilience and fortitude during these challenging times but also, evidently, for their generosity and thoughtfulness. The draft Accounts for both Parishes show that we finished the year 2020 with Bank balances very much on a par with 2019. Considering the difficulties imposed by the Covid-19 restrictions this is a remarkable achievement and a great source of encouragement.

From the registers

Burial

Thursday, 24th December, 2020 Lilian Wilson. Laid to rest at Holy Trinity, Carrigart.

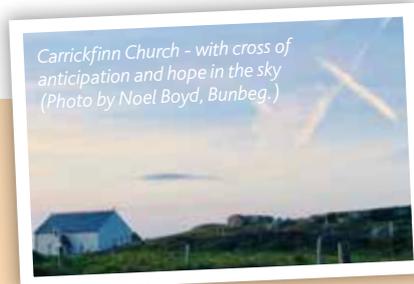
Dunfanaghy, Raymunterdoney & Tullaghobegley

Rev David Skuce, Rector and Rural Dean, Kilmacrennan East & West Rural Deanery
Facebook: Holy Trinity, Dunfanaghy @holytrinitydunfanaghy



Gweedore (Carrickfinn & Bunbeg) & Templecrone

Bishop's Curate: Rev Liz Fitzgerald
Tel. 074 953 1043 Email: ea.fitzgerald@btinternet.com



This time last year I began my piece for n:vision with these words: "It is Springtime; there is a stretch in the evenings and an anticipation for warmer weather and even a bit of outdoor time."

There was no mention of restrictions and not a whisper of not being allowed to go to church. What a difference a year makes. What a year we have had. And what a year to come. I used the word anticipation in my opening. This year we have more than springtime, daffodils, and lambs in the fields to anticipate. We have vaccinations and lowering of restrictions to look forward to in anticipation. At this moment, there are many uncertainties - for school and church, businesses and shops. We need to

be "strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them (uncertainties), for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6)

As we journey through Lent and into Holy week, we will experience Christ crucified, Christ sacrificed for us. We have the wonderful anticipation of encountering the resurrected Christ.

A life of anticipation is one I enjoy - anticipate churches reopening, anticipate restrictions lifting, anticipate visiting, coffee and conversation; anticipate the Lord, the light of my life; anticipate forgiveness and life eternal.

Let us journey on through Lent, into Holy Week and onto Easter, in eager anticipation of meeting our Lord and Saviour - risen, ascended, glorified.

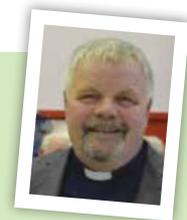
Holy Week and Easter Services

At the time of writing this, I have no idea if restrictions on church worship will have changed. Unless restrictions change, our Holy Week services will be found on "Bunbeg and Carrickfinn Church of Ireland" Facebook page.

Wednesday 31st March - Evening.
Maundy Thursday - Service of the Word.
Good Friday - Reading of the Passion.
Easter Day - Family Service.

Ardara, Glencolumbkille, Glenties, Inniskeel & Lettermacaward

Bishop's Curate: Rev Robert Wray
The Rectory, Lackegh, Portnoo, Co. Donegal
Email: robert_wray@talktalk.net



Drumholm, Kilbarron & Rossnowlagh

Rev Canon Brian Russell: Rector and Rural Dean
Tel. 0749734025
Email: brianrussell117@gmail.com



Inver, Mountcharles, Kilaghtee & Killybegs

Bishop's Curate: Rev Lindsey Farrell

Tel: 074 973 6013 Email: lindseyfarrell@btinternet.com

Facebook: [Inver and Mountcharles Church](#)



Finding New Ways to Share God's Love

1 John 4:16 'God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them'

This has been a very challenging year for our group of parishes, not simply because our church doors have been closed for so long, but also because we haven't been able to show support and love in the usual way. Funerals, ill health and isolation have been some of the greatest difficulties because support can only be offered from a distance. We have missed many of our usual annual parish milestones, and we have sorely missed not coming together physically to worship God.

These are the negatives, but the pandemic has presented some positives. Our services have moved online, a technological feat that I never thought was possible! These have been very well received, and provide

not only a welcome break in the week, but a clear reminder that God is still present. We have also reached out to the community to offer both encouragement and fun.

Our pancake photo competition saw entries received which paled the Rectory efforts into insignificance! And our 'bags of encouragement' offered a reminder to frontline workers across our community that they were truly valued and appreciated, and reminded them that they were being held in prayer by the parish group.

As we look ahead, I see hope and brighter days. Spring flowers are bursting into life and are a reminder that better



things will come. As the vaccine roll out gains momentum, as case numbers fall, as restrictions begin to lift, we too can see the dawn of a better time. But, in the midst of such good news, I challenge you not to forget this period of darkness too quickly. It gives us a much needed reminder of our own mortality, of the fragility of our mental health, of our need of community and of the true blessings provided by God through friends, neighbours, family and many other means. As we begin to emerge from what we hope will be our final lockdown, let us demonstrate our gratitude to God by showing his love to those around us.

'God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them'.

Donegal, Killymard, Lough Eske & Laghey

Rector: Venerable David Huss, Archdeacon of Raphoe

Tel: 074 9721075

Email: donegal@raphoe.anglican.org

www.donegal.raphoe.anglican.org

Facebook: [@DonegalGroupofParishes](#)



Christmas 2020

It was wonderful to meet and share the Lord's Supper at our services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. By holding seven services we could give Communion to over 200 parishioners without exceeding the limits in place at the time. Sadly the onset of a new variant of Coronavirus led to the churches in Ireland being shut from 26th December.

Ongoing Lockdown

The current Level 5 COVID-19 restrictions continue until at least 5th April. By that point we will have met in person on only three

Sundays in six months. This takes a toll on the body of Christ and we need to pray relentlessly for the public health situation to improve to the point where restrictions can be eased. Despite our disappointment at this situation, we acknowledge the need to suppress the virus while vaccination takes place and we will continue to play our part in this effort while also doing all we can to bless our community by prayer, pastoral ministry and practical support. It has been encouraging to see a number of people finding faith in Jesus through online Alpha courses (see separate article in this n:vision).

The Mustard Seed

While the Tea Room remains closed, the Mustard Seed team have been busy receiving and distributing donations through the local Food Bank. Working alongside Tusla (the Child & Family Agency), St Vincent de Paul and Donegal Family Resource Centre we have collected items and delivered essential supplies to families in need. Donegal County Council recently highlighted the extent of food poverty in our county. We also note with concern the increase in 'social poverty' (loneliness and lack of emotional/relational

Continued on page 58...

Continued from page 57...

support) locally and we are trying to address this through online Zoom groups meeting for friendship and Bible study, as well as phoning round the parish and posting out updates. Hopefully when restrictions ease, some kind of outdoor/ takeaway tea/coffee service will be possible at the Mustard Seed in New Row.

How to Connect

Anyone is very welcome to follow us on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram etc. - just look for 'Donegal Group of Parishes.' We have regular online services Sunday, Wednesday & Friday and a weekly 'Kingdom Kids' video.

We also have a recorded service accessible

any time from any phone on 074 9710199 (from UK 00353 74 9710199).

Funerals

14th Feb 2021 Alistair McClay, Laghey
25th Feb 2021 Sandra Simms, Donegal

Stranorlar, Meenglass & Kiltcevogue

Rector: Rev Adam Pullen

Mobile 087 7547880 Email: adam.pullen@googlemail.com

Facebook: [Stranorlar, Meenglass & Kiltcevogue CofI @smkcofi](#)



A Year like no other

By the time you read this we will have been putting services 'on line' for one year! I'd like to begin by saying an immense thank you. Thank you to John Kee, Elsie Stewart, Karl Kee and Brain Bovaird who have helped get the services online, often with last minute hitches and glitches. I would also like to say thank you to Revd Andrew and Joanne Quill and the music team at Holy Trinity Dromore for their technical and music help and to Revd Cliff Jeffers, without whose help we would not have been able to broadcast the services, improving and learning as

we have gone along. For those who have not seen us online we are now able to go live to facebook, and later to Youtube and Dial-a-Service. To say that we have been challenged and we have learnt a lot along the way is an understatement! While, yes, there have been, and are, frustrations, it is heartening to see that we as a church are not removed from the challenges all face in these days. I believe we have risen to these challenges and while the services are not the same as before I am heartened to see blessings. For example, there are 2 sisters who tune in from the UK each week and we have even had people tuning

in from as far away as Tanzania, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia! For someone like myself who is not a Facebook addict it shows that God is still in charge and can use us and any tools put at His disposal to build His Kingdom and share the Good News of Jesus. For me and for you I pray this gives us a renewed hope and inspires us to keep going. While Easter will be different, Easter will still happen, the Church, the people of God, will celebrate our Risen Saviour and we can still say, even from a place of lament, Christ is risen Hallelujah.

Convoy, Monellan & Donaghmore

Vacant, Rural Dean: Rev Canon David Crooks

Tel: 074 914 0135 Mob: 00447871974658

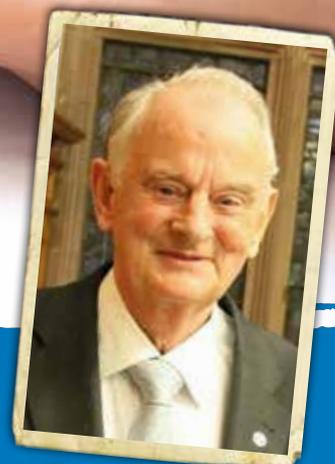
Raphoe, Raymochy & Clonleigh

Vacant, Rural Dean: Rev Canon David Crooks Tel: 074 914 0135 Mob: 00447871974658

Facebook: [St Eunan's Cathedral @cathedralraphoe](#)

PAUL MCFADDEN
DIOCESAN PRESS OFFICER

And finally...



There was that rare mixture of sadness and appreciation across the community following news of the death of the Foyle Hospice's founder, Dr Tom McGinley.

Among those who paid tribute was Bishop Andrew Forster. "I never had the pleasure or the privilege of meeting Tom or of getting to know him," Bishop Andrew said, "but I certainly know of his achievements." When Dr McGinley first conceived of the Foyle Hospice, it seemed almost unimaginable, the Bishop said. "Now, it is an indispensable part of the fabric of this community."

Word of Dr McGinley's great work had, indeed, travelled far and wide. Many 'disciples' had evangelised on his behalf. I was among them.

I first got to know this remarkable man in 2004. Until then, I, like Bishop Andrew, had really only known the doctor by reputation. That changed following my mother's cancer diagnosis. For a three-week period - from November 24th to December 15th - our family were brought into close contact with Doctor Tom and his staff. It was an experience we will never forget.

I was brought up to treat people with respect and to call them by their proper title. Tom McGinley was the first doctor I ever called by his Christian name. He insisted.

From their first day in the Hospice, patients and families are made to feel welcome but 'welcome' doesn't come close to explaining the care and compassion - and, more importantly, the empathy - with which they are received. The Hospice team know what we are going through better than we ourselves do.

Tom McGinley was a driven man. As a GP, he had been haunted by the agonising death of a young patient. The experience prompted him to find out more about 'end of life' care; to visit hospices and practitioners in England; and to specialise in a new area of medicine for him - anaesthetics.

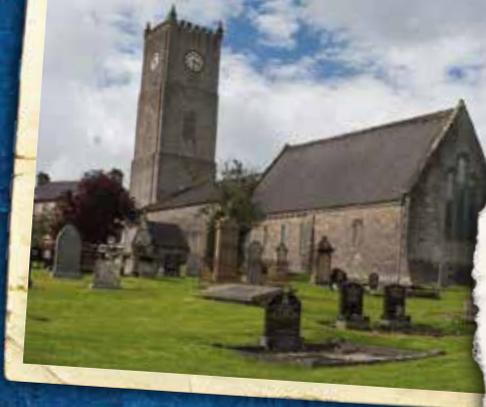
Tom then had to sell his vision to a wider community at a time when money was short and people were deeply polarised. He proved a worthy advocate, persuading the Orange Order to sell him the site, and encouraging thousands of people and

businesses to contribute the cash that enabled his dream to become reality.

It's difficult to explain - and probably impossible to understand, unless you've been through it - but I have warm memories of the Hospice. Often, when I cross the Foyle Bridge from the Waterside, I glance to the right and see the field of horses which we used to watch from my mother's room. There were tears there, of course, but there were uplifting moments, too, even laughter.

Chaplaincy is recognised as a vital part of patient and family care. Tom's friend and ally, Dr Keith Munro, wrote in his book "Building Bridges: a History of the Foyle Hospice" that the institution was "based firmly on a Christian ethic." Talk about 'radiating Christ'!

The Foyle Hospice shows us - as a community - at our very best. I cannot imagine being without it. What a legacy for any man.



n:vision Magazine, Diocesan Centre, 24 London Street, Londonderry BT48 6RQ

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Assistant editor: revpaul07@btinternet.com

THE DEADLINE IS NON-NEGOTIABLE

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(depending on Government and Diocesan guidelines at the time)

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