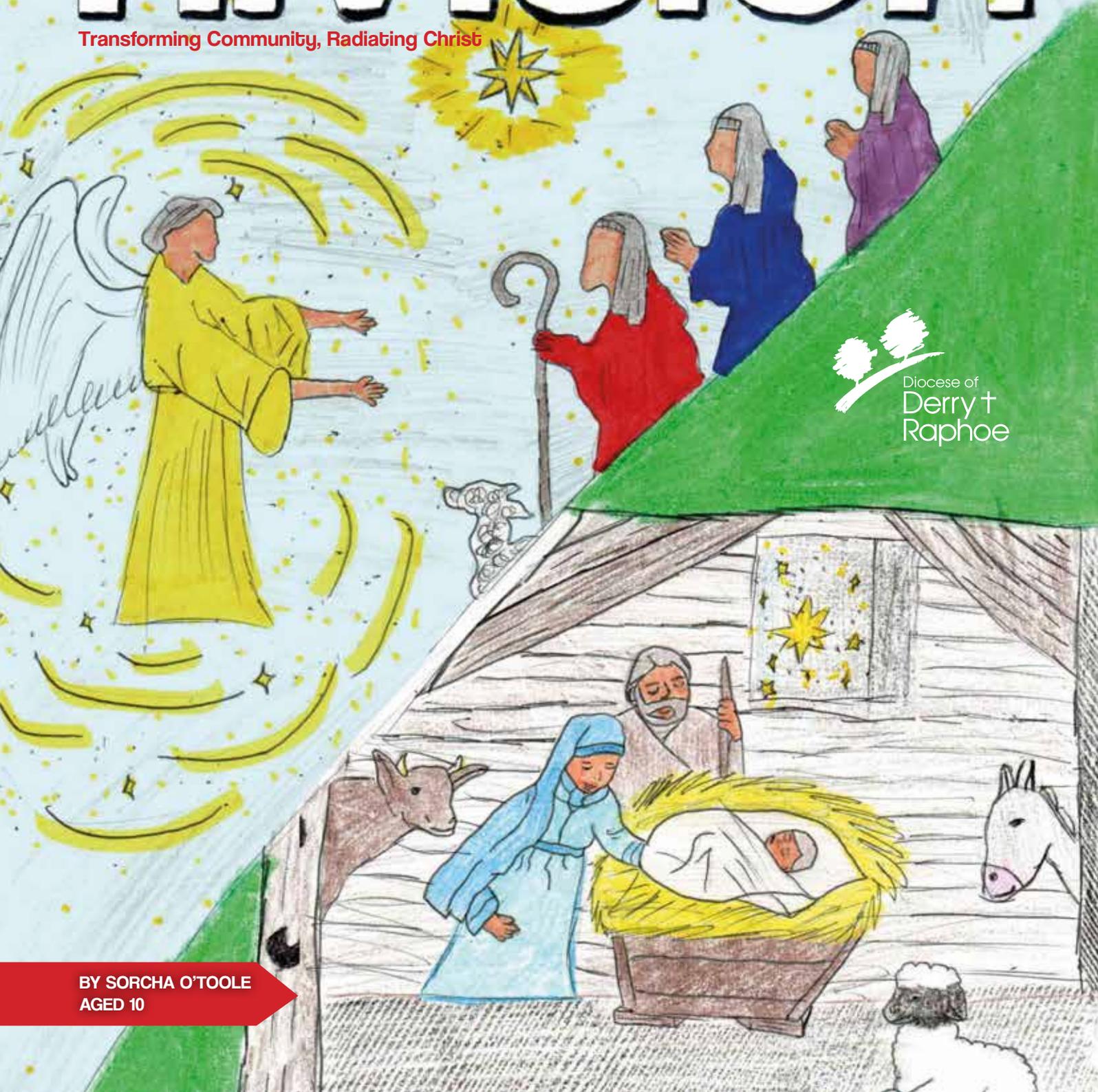


Issue 71 / Christmas 2022

# n:vision

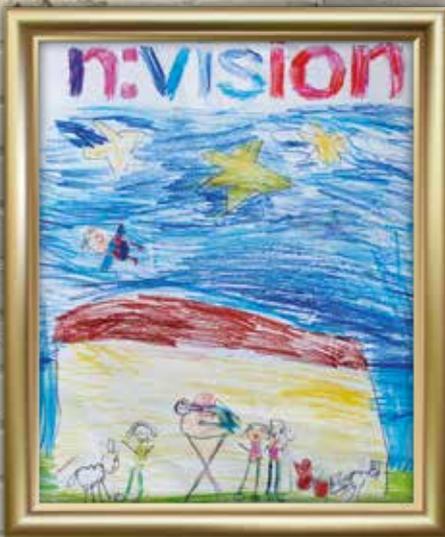
Transforming Community, Radiating Christ



  
Diocese of  
Derry +  
Raphoe

BY SORCHA O'TOOLE  
AGED 10

# Cover Competition *Winners!*



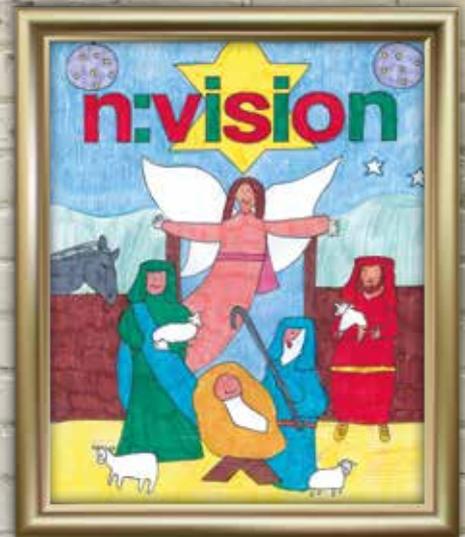
**HIGHLY COMMENDED  
SHONA LESLIE, AGED 5**

*Well done to all entrants!*

Did you know that the carol 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night' was written by Nahum Tate, an Irish poet, hymnist and lyricist? Born in Dublin in 1652, Nahum Tate wrote the popular carol in 1700.

Thank you to the 40 young people who entered the competition to design the cover of the Christmas issue of n:vision.

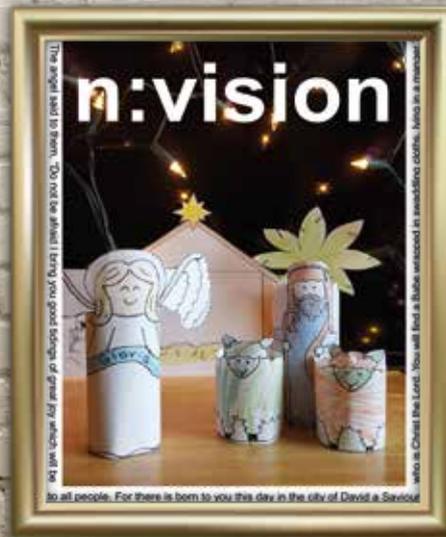
Throughout n:vision you will find extracts from all the entries.



**HIGHLY COMMENDED  
ALEX HAMILTON, AGED 8**



**HIGHLY COMMENDED  
RACHEL ROBB, AGED 9**



**BEST GROUP SUBMISSION  
DESERTMARTIN SS**



**HIGHLY COMMENDED  
CALEB FERGUSON, AGED 9**

# Editor...



The liturgical season of Advent preparation is upon us - the 'getting ready'. We all celebrate Christmas in different ways. We are very familiar with the tinsel-type Christmas which is without any obvious religious significance and which seems centred on material things. Unfortunately, it often leaves people stressed out and in a state of exhaustion by 25th December.

By contrast, there is the Christmas season which is an important time for spiritual reflection on the amazing meaning of the Christmas message. It is comforting to ponder deeply the stunning mystery of Christmas which can be summed up in one word, "Incarnation". What does that mean? It simply means that divine love is revealed to us as Immanuel, God-with-us, our embodied God in real human form. At Christmas, Christians celebrate the fact that God freely chose to come amongst us as a real but vulnerable flesh and blood new-born baby called Jesus Christ, who grows up to live in our midst and who dies to show us the redeeming power of divine love. Happily for us Mary and Joseph readily said 'yes' to parenthood. (On page 23 read of an adopted child who is cherished today by someone's 'yes' to parenthood - the blessings of Christmas continue.)

Thankfully, that is not the end of the story because, as Christians, we can take comfort from the fact that Christ is risen and glorified. He is forever one of us and present to us. He is especially there alongside suffering people. He is there with the sorrowing villagers of Creeslough and with those enslaved, starving or abused. This Christmas he is with those struggling to survive the cost-of-living crisis and the effects of climate change. He is there with everyone working throughout the parishes of our Diocese of Derry and Raphoe to give support and comfort to all in need.

As editor I thank all who have contributed in any way to this production of *n:vision* and I wish everyone the peace, happiness, rest and enjoyment of CHRISTMAS - however you celebrate.

**Rev Canon Katie McAteer, the Editor**  
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Parish Notes to be sent to [pauljosephmcfadden@gmail.com](mailto:pauljosephmcfadden@gmail.com) by **Wed 1 March 2023**

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(depending on Government and Diocesan guidelines at the time)

*Disclaimer: Views expressed in n:vision may not be those of the Church of Ireland or the Editor.*

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# Bishop Andrew writes...



*Dear friends,*

**Very few of us, I'm sure, can recall a more turbulent year than 2022. For many, it has been very bleak indeed.**

The spectre of war haunts Europe again. Ireland has become home for thousands of Ukrainian refugees who've been forced to flee Russian bombs and bullets. Many of our Church of Ireland schools in Donegal have responded to God's call, by offering loving support to frightened Ukrainian children and their bewildered parents.

We have all, to a greater or lesser extent, been affected by the cost-of-living crisis. It has delivered the severest squeeze on household incomes and personal finances in a generation. For the most vulnerable, that means a stark choice: whether to eat or heat.

The political chaos at Westminster and stalemate at Stormont have instilled a sense of instability and anxiety in people. The passing of that great constant in our lives, Queen Elizabeth, brought a cloud of sadness

to many. The heartbreak of Creeslough, and the anguish of its people - whose lives were changed, in an instant, by a random and devastating explosion - touched each and every one of us. And all the while, slowly, almost imperceptibly, COVID has again become an unwelcome part of daily life.

In the midst of the relentless bad news, where and how are we to find strength and resilience? I think the answer is in a little verse in what's known as the Christmas Gospel, John 1:3. *'The light shines in the darkness.'* No matter how dark things may seem, the light of Christ continues to shine. His light can bring guidance and support, comfort and hope.

For 70 years, the Queen's 3pm broadcast was an intrinsic part of Christmas Day in many homes. The tradition began with George V, 90 years ago this year, and has been continued by every monarch since. 1939 was a particularly dark year. The world was at

war. Fear and danger were an everyday reality. And that winter King George VI made these words of the poet Minnie Haskins famous in his Christmas Day address:

I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, *"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."*

And he replied, *"Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way."*

This Christmas, as we reflect on another bleak year, may that Almighty hand guide and uphold us all.

As we turn the page to a New Year, I pray that each of us will know the light of Christ deep within and put our faith in Him for whatever lies ahead.

**+Andrew Derry & Raphoe**



# Christmas made for sharing...

**Ok - it's time to fess up - I love Christmas! There, I've said it. Happy memories of childhood Christmases could be the cause of this disposition, as I ponder on thoughts of generous grandparents and eccentric uncles in a home full of love and laughter.**

My mind strays back to crackling real open fires (we'd never heard of central heating or ozone layers) and the excitement of Christmas Eve in a packed chattering house, with my mother and grandmother busy in the kitchen as they prepared food and trimmings for the following day's Christmas table. And what a table it was, laden with honey glazed ham and a golden turkey that, unlike today, you never saw from one end of the year to the next.

My very first memory of a hymn is when I was three years of age - listening to the choir voices as they sang 'Silent Night' and in my own innocent, immature way, feeling that this was the best moment of my life. I spoke at that church a number of years ago and mentioned that story - as a consequence, the Rector kindly and thoughtfully arranged to change the final hymn to the very same 'Silent Night'. I had to fight back the tears that were battling to flow from my being - it wasn't easy and I

think I might have failed miserably.

Another confession - I love Christmas advertising, and those ads just can't come quickly enough as far as I am concerned. When I hear complaints about Christmas coming "sooner and sooner every year", I nod seriously and sagely, but secretly my 63-year-old heart jumps for joy! Come on M&S I say - do your thing!!!

For me, to borrow the phrase used by a well-known confectionary company, *Christmas is made for sharing!* This encompasses everything, not just the giving of presents. Who do you know is spending Christmas alone? Invite them on the day and have a gift under the tree.

My favourite Christmases have been when guests I didn't know were invited by my wife or children - what a privilege to share the joy of the day!

With the war in Ukraine still raging, we may have additional opportunities to spread the invitation even wider and with more cultural diversity. Sharing the happiness and joy of that day is more rewarding than I can describe, as together we have the potential for fellowship, engagement and learning from other cultures.

But let's not be naïve, for some families Christmas (the season or the day), can be a conflicted affair with memories of past hurts or arguments coming to the fore, personality clashes making themselves known. A bittersweet time when loss is crystalised by that empty chair or that missing voice. We are allowed our moments of sadness on these occasions as well as our joy.

Christmas can also be a time of healing and renewed strength, perhaps a time to stretch out that hand of friendship or to utter a forgiving word.

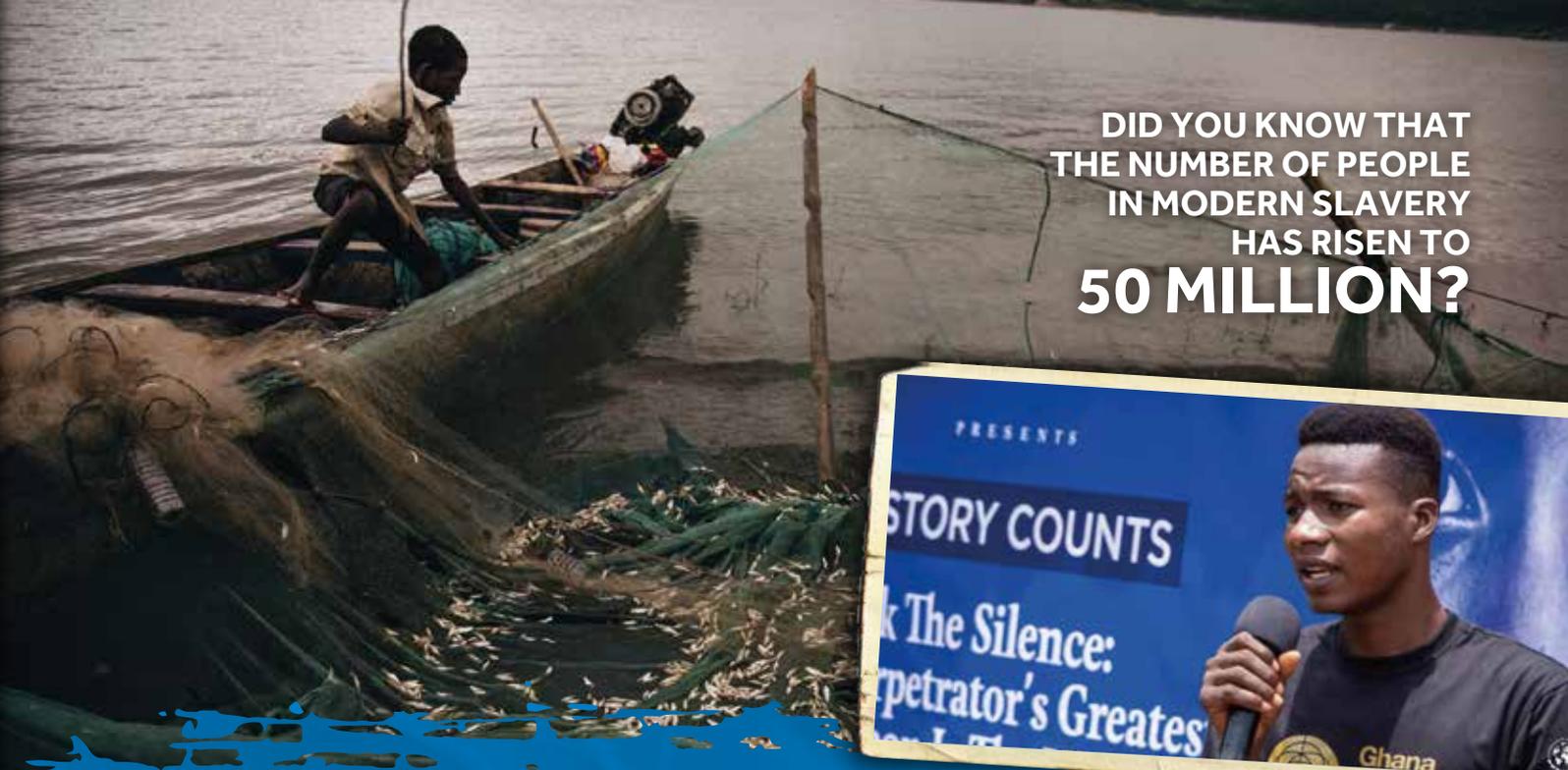
Let's make certain our primary joy is opening up to an authentic Advent, a celebration of God's precious gift: the birth of Jesus, that ultimate act of generosity and the best gift of all.

Have a blessed Christmas.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NIV).*

**Geoff Scargill**

**Geoff is a Trustee of St. James' Church - Crinken (Dublin & Glendrough Diocese)**



**DID YOU KNOW THAT  
THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE  
IN MODERN SLAVERY  
HAS RISEN TO  
50 MILLION?**



**INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION (IJM)**

# **FREEING THE SLAVES**

Modern day slavery can appear in different guises - such as what can happen to young women from Romania who are tricked by the false promise of a job in UK, but instead suffer sexual exploitation at the hands of their traffickers, when they arrive; or children in the Philippines suffering some of the worst abuse imaginable which is then put online and streamed to viewers around the world; or children being sold into the fishing industry, taken to Lake Volta in Ghana and forced to do dangerous jobs on fishing boats, instead of being in school. It's happening on the other side of the world. It's happening on our doorsteps. The reality of slavery in our world today is unimaginably dark.

One story that has always stayed with me is the story of Courage Hope who grew up in Ghana. When Courage Hope was a boy his mother was tricked by a man offering to take him to school. Instead of the opportunity of an education, he was trafficked into the fishing industry on Lake Volta in Ghana.

He was forced to do things no child should do. Forced to dive down deep into the water to untangle fishing nets caught on submerged tree branches. He was beaten, and once almost drowned. Courage Hope asked himself "Is this how my life is going to end?"

This was Courage Hope's life for 5 years, until the International Justice Mission (IJM) team and local police found and rescued him. Every child deserves a safe childhood, free from trafficking. IJM is one of the world's largest anti-slavery organisations, and works alongside local authorities in 24 countries around the world, tackling slavery at its source.

The vision is to create systemic change through working in partnership with authorities, justice system officials, aftercare providers, churches and communities. IJM has worked with police and partners to bring over 350 children, like Courage Hope, to safety from trafficking in Ghana. Today, Courage Hope leads a network of survivors

advocating for an end to child trafficking. Although he still finds it difficult to talk about, Courage Hope wants his story to lead to change.

It's phenomenal to see the incredible change that's possible when local authorities, communities and churches work together to create systemic change. IJM has seen trafficking decrease by up to 86% in places where it has worked, and even during the pandemic, it was still possible to bring survivors to safety - 9967 individuals in 2021 alone.

This Christmas, we are inviting you and your church to bring hope to dark places; to take a stand against slavery and injustice. Every pound your church gives will be doubled in the month of December. If you would like to find out how you or your church might get involved please contact: [ben.mcmechan@IJMUK.org](mailto:ben.mcmechan@IJMUK.org).

**Hannah Elliott**  
*Ireland Director IJM*

# {DOMESTIC ABUSE}



**Domestic abuse happens every day of the year, and Christmas Day is no exception. While we are enjoying the fun and festivities and meeting up with family and friends it is a time of anxiety, fear and violence for others.**

On Christmas Day last year there were over 100 incidents of domestic abuse reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland, rising to 145 on Boxing Day and 170 on New Year's Day.

Domestic abuse charities like Women's Aid receive their highest number of referrals in January from women for whom the Christmas season has been a nightmare. And it is expected that this year will be no different.

The reasons for the spike in domestic abuse are complex but we know that domestic abuse is made worse by financial pressures, increased use of alcohol and people cooped up together in the house.

Survivors report that the anxiety begins in the run-up to Christmas. Women living with financial abuse and control start planning earlier, to ensure that there are gifts for children and family.

This can mean depending on charities such as Women's Aid or borrowing from family members to ensure that Santa's sack is full on Christmas morning and to purchase decorations and food.

Women are often working against a tide of jealousy, possessiveness and control of an abusive partner. Many women hide the gifts for fear that they will be sold by their

abuser before Christmas or smashed up on Christmas Eve in jealous rage.

One woman told Women's Aid about coming downstairs early Christmas morning to find the turkey, ham and other food strewn around the kitchen floor, stamped on and destroyed.

While alcohol is not the cause of domestic abuse, it makes things worse. Families already walking on eggshells around an abuser are facing a time of increased anxiety.

More incidents occur when one or both people are drinking, and when alcohol is involved the abuse is more severe. Christmas is one of those times of year - along with major sporting events - when there is a sharp rise in domestic abuse. Meeting with family and friends is a part of Christmas that most people look forward to but often abusers feel threatened by the presence of others. It is not unusual for survivors to relate how they tried to avoid family and friends at Christmas, further isolating themselves.

Christmas is a very emotive time of year and it is a prime time for abusers to pressurise for reconciliation. Survivors relate how they felt under pressure to include their abuser in Christmas celebrations, sometimes for the sake of their children, only to experience further abuse.

Many of the women who contact the police, Women's Aid and other organisations for help, get away and make a new life. It is often a difficult journey, not knowing what the future holds. But one thing they can count on is a peaceful, safe Christmas.

## **For support and information please contact:**

**Foyle Women's Aid:** 028 71416800 for advice, information, emergency accommodation.

**Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline:** 0808 802 1414 (NI) 1800 341 900 (RoI) for 24 hour free/confidential advice for all victims of domestic abuse.

In an emergency always contact the **Police on 999, Garda on 112.**

# MINISTRY

## *of all God's People...*



***“Ministry is God's work. He gives it to whom he chooses. And the recipients of the responsibility may include those whom we thought were least qualified.”***

At this year's Diocesan Synod, a presentation was made to show not only the great variety of ministry being carried out within this Diocese, but also how we as a Diocese wish to support people in their ministry. From the person who washes the dishes in the parish hall kitchen to the Bishop of the Diocese, we all need support and encouragement at times. We also need to be confirmed in our ministry in whatever form that ministry takes.

Those who attended the Synod were given several brochures describing how to get involved in Children and Youth ministry; Parish and Diocesan Reader ministry and Ordained ministry, including a new form of ministry being introduced within the Diocese in the near future - Ordained Local Ministry. Four people have been selected and are going forward for training, two in first year and two in second year. We look forward to hearing more about this ministry in the future.

We also were given a presentation of how the Diocesan office is able to support Select Vestries in their work, from how to deal with a dangerous tree to completing annual returns for the various Charity Commissions.

Gavin, our Diocesan Accountant and Administrator, is available at the end of a phone or email to give assistance and he assured us that if he doesn't know how to deal with your query, he will know someone who will! So please feel free to get in touch with him at any stage.

During the presentation we also heard about a proposed Centre of Mission within

the Diocese which will be in partnership with Church Army. This Centre of Mission based in the Waterside area of the city, will be a training ground for evangelism and pioneering ministry within the Diocese. Plans are at an advanced stage and Canon Paul Hoey stated that it was hoped this new Centre of Mission would be up and running soon.

Other presentations were made by the new Safeguarding Officer for the Diocese, Jocelyn McKeown, who gave us details of how she hopes to support parishes by making certain that we are meeting the various regulations to ensure that our ministry is safe and secure for all.

Canon Judi McGaffin from The Diocesan Clergy team also made a presentation on how this group offers confidential support to clergy and their families in order to address the sense of isolation and vulnerability that may arise from demanding Parish ministry, to share their burdens and to be encouraged in their ministry.

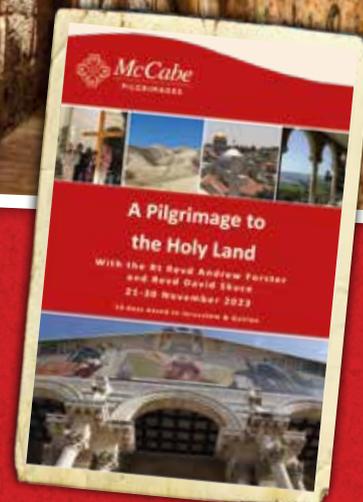
There were other presentations from the Girls Friendly Society, Mothers' Union and Church Army on how they offer support and ministry within their organisations.

As a Diocese we wish to encourage the ministry of all God's people and we encourage you to take that step of faith - use your gifts and help build up the kingdom of God within this Diocese. Support is there for you so feel free to avail of it.

***Canon Robert Boyd***  
***Diocesan Director of Ordinands***

# A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

with the Rt Revd Andrew Forster and Revd David Skuce.  
21-30 November 2023 10 days based in Jerusalem & Galilee



It is always very moving to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. There is so much to see and experience and learn together. St Jerome said: 'Five gospels record the life of Jesus. Four you will find in books and the one you will find in the land they call Holy. Read the fifth gospel and the world of the four will open to you.'

We invite you to come and know this for yourselves whether you are new to the Holy Land or have been many times before; there are always new sights and sounds to reflect upon. Reading the gospels will never be the same again and by visiting the Holy Land we are standing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters there too. To have the chance to meet the 'living stones', the local Palestinian and Israeli Christians who are the ongoing, living church in the region, is humbling. Our pilgrimage will include the sites where the most important events in Our Lord's life and ministry took place: in Jerusalem and the surrounding area and further north in Galilee. We hope that if you have never been on pilgrimage to the Holy Land before you will choose to join us and, if you have been before, we welcome you back. Our journey is a life-changing as well as faith-changing experience. We invite you

to journey with us and to share in this great opportunity to see those places we read of in the Scriptures.

## TOUR INFORMATION

*For bookings received by 31st March 2023, we offer a £200 discount off the full tour price.* The price is per person based on sharing a double or twin room with ensuite bathroom. We stay in two family owned and managed hotels. In Jerusalem, the three star Golden Walls Hotel overlooks the Old City walls and is within walking distance of the Holy Sepulchre. In Tiberias, we stay at the four star Ron Beach Hotel right on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The tour is on a full-board basis with buffet breakfast, lunch and evening meal included daily.

Touring is by airconditioned coach and we will be accompanied by a local guide who will share leadership responsibilities and look after the formalities of hotel check-ins, etc. All entrance fees are included as well as gratuities; these will be disbursed locally to those that help us on our journey. Flights are with Lufthansa between Dublin Airport and Tel Aviv and all airport and security charges are included. A complimentary visa is issued on arrival in Israel.

## NOT INCLUDED

**Travel Insurance:** this is essential.

**Optional Excursion:** to Masada and the Dead Sea is £105 per person.

**Single Rooms:** are at a supplementary cost of £575.

**Travelling Alone:** Many of our passengers travel alone and are willing to share a twin room. We accept a limited number of bookings on a 'guaranteed share' basis.

**PASSPORTS, VISAS AND HEALTH**  
Please ensure that your passport is valid for at least six months beyond the end of this pilgrimage.

## TO MAKE A RESERVATION

To reserve your place, please contact Revd David Skuce, The Rectory, Horn Head Road, Dunfanaghy, Co. Donegal. Tel: 0863404847 (ROI) or 07764221963 (NI), email: dskuce56@gmail.com for a booking form and details of payment options (cheque or card).

A Brochure with full details (tour itinerary etc) is available from the Diocesan Centre.

# INSPIRATION INSPIRES TRANSFORMATION!

*How does God restore the years  
that the locusts have eaten?*

"I am proud to be a member of Mothers' Union", guest speaker, Rev. Rosie Diffin announced to Mothers' Union members who had gathered on a dull, dismal, autumnal day for a Prayer Breakfast in An Grianán Hotel. In stark contrast to the weather outside, the atmosphere inside the hotel was buoyant, bright and noisy, as members from across Derry and Raphoe were able to 'meet again' and catch up with friends they hadn't seen for some time.

As a member of Mothers' Union for 37 years, Rev Rosie spoke with authority, warmth, humour and positivity on the theme, 'Transformation Now'. Basing her talk on Joel Ch 2 v 25, where God promised Joel he would restore something that seemed impossible to restore, "the years the locusts have eaten", she stated that some things in life can be restored. For example, money, property, cars, paintings and even fractured relationships can be restored, but time is different, it can't be restored.

Referring to the pre-pandemic days when things were so different and comparing the past couple of years during the pandemic, to the locust infestation in the book of Joel, when the harvest was wiped out for 4 years, she asked members the questions, "What do the lost years look like?" and "How do we transform?" For members, and those in our churches she said the years seemed

fruitless, painful, and many are grieving people who have lost loved ones.

Just as the Lord answered Joel and his people saying, "The fruit of the Spirit is love", Rev. Rosie reassured members that the fundamental truth remains that God is still in our midst with his people and his Spirit is working within us. 'Transformation' she said begins with each member and although we have a massive task ahead, He will direct us in our fruitfulness. Setbacks will happen, just as Joel and his people had setbacks over 4 years of failed harvests, we too must persevere with the hard work, and we will be restored.

Rev. Rosie encouraged members through recent stories of transformation. Needing to get back to ordinary things and restore confidence following the pandemic, her parish organised the hire of a bus to take parishioners on a day trip, set up a group called 'Connect' to meet every second week, and, as an extension of the group, set up a lunch club where parishioners meet for soup and rolls in a safe warm place for a few hours. A line dancing group followed, where all ages now enjoy low impact exercise and socialising together.

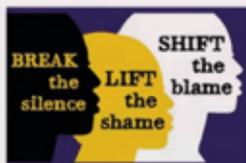
Praising the work Mothers' Union undertakes, she reiterated the need to

recognise who needs help and then take time to understand them. 'Transformation' will come, it may be nothing grand, but being there for people, showing we care and knowing that God is there, He will honour and be there for us'.

Derry and Raphoe Mothers' Union are continually inspired by creative stories of transformation. Looking forward MU invites you to join them as they take part in the annual *16 Days of Action Against Gender-Based Violence*.

A dedicated time of prayer and reflection to mark the **Global Day of Activism** will take place in **St. Columb's Cathedral at 12.15pm on Saturday, 26th November**. The main speaker will be Ruth Garvey Williams who has undertaken fascinating research in churches across Ireland in relation to domestic abuse. We look forward to welcoming Bishop Andrew and civic representatives from across the diocese. Parishes are invited to mark this period with prayer, meditation and talks highlighting domestic abuse.

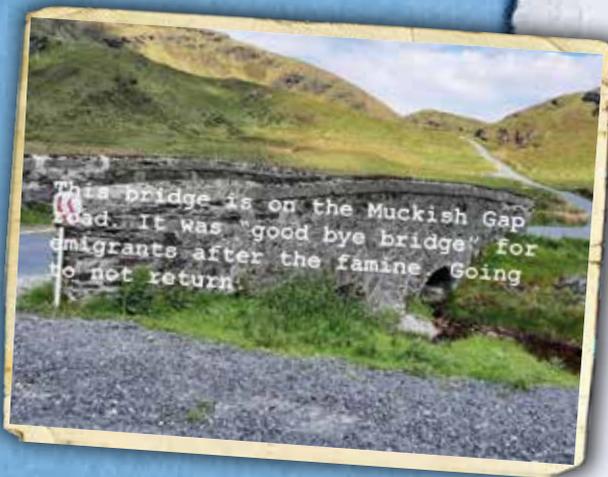
*"And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'" Matthew 25:40*



# The Bridge of Tears

I was born in Rooskey, Creeslough away back in 1945. I had my Primary School education in the Church of Ireland school in the town. I was the Church of Ireland Dean of Raphoe Cathedral from 2003 to 2013. I roamed much but Creeslough has always been my roots. I commend my thought and poem to you.

John (Very Rev. John Hoy)



*Here's a thought for thee. Yes for thee  
Sit down by the mountain and by the sea,  
Meditate on the Lord's perfection  
He will pour upon you from His collection  
Of blessings stored just for this  
He will hold, and enfold and He will kiss  
All your hurts and all you miss,  
All your pain may not be gone  
But He will be there as you go on.*

*There is that "Bridge of Tears"  
In Donegal with Muckish near  
Family gap, deep as Muckish Gap  
O'er brown warbling valley brook  
Forced partings, they their homes forsook  
Family and friend their journeys took  
Departing friends, departing sadness  
In the midst of all life's madness  
Many a long desolate backward look  
Wracked in pain and tears as bodies shook  
Each face a mirror of the other  
Internal pain our visage mars  
Mirrored only by our Saviour's scars*

*My Christian walk is not perfection  
I have known deep felt dejection.  
Will all this be the death of me  
Amidst His pain Jesus Christ did see  
His Mother; — He left in another's care  
"Woman, behold your son",  
"Son, behold your mother"  
Emigrants leaving, in that heartache share.*

*"This pain, this pain  
I say it again "this pain"  
My way as craggy as a Muckish path  
It cuts my feet, is this my soul's death?  
To walk on up this bill,  
Yes! Up this bill  
It takes all, it takes all my will.*

*Before now I've been to Muckish top  
With family and friends we didn't stop,  
Encouraged by each other's care  
We didn't flop until we got there.  
We picked our way over mossy stone  
I traversed craggy path amidst my own  
Yet it seemed to me I was quiet alone!  
Suddenly on a mound of stone!  
That giant cross stood there strong  
Where it's been, so very long.*

*The Cross can be for me the place  
Where all my woes with Him I face  
He was despised rejected by friend  
His family too did not comprehend  
He speaks to me, yes to little me  
"Where you are, there I too will be  
I am your guide on rough mountain side  
Here I am with my arms open wide".*

*"I am the Friend of the Bible sages,  
Travelling on their lone pilgrimages,  
I was their Rock of Ages,  
They were pressed in on every side,  
In Me, you also can find your guide".*

*Crossing his desert Moses smote the Rock  
Water gushed out to the people's shock  
The Spiritual Rock that accompanied them,  
Was Christ as the living water forever flows,  
How He comes no one really knows.*

*Brother, sister I bear you scream  
Your shattered dreams  
Your thousand screams  
Come to me and sit by my stream  
The water flows over rock and stone  
Each one of us to dejection prone  
Drop your tears from some bridge parapet  
The love and the hurt we cannot forget.  
Tears mingled in that living water  
They flow from you, your cares do matter  
But held in Christ it all seems better.*

*Come with me across your foaming sea.  
Not Atlantic, but life's vast ocean  
This is not some magic potion, —  
I'm in Christ's boat,  
we will stay afloat  
Do not fear I'm always near.  
Listen! listen! in your ear  
"Do not fear, do not fear!"  
With me we are fellows in a ship.  
He holds us up as we go down  
With Him beside and inside  
We will not drown.*

*We — will — not — drown.*

# CPR

When Gordon accepted the youth pastor position at his church, he was informed that he needed to complete a CPR training course. Not really his thing but reluctantly he signed up for a course run by his local leisure centre.

Anyhow, despite his reservations, he decided to make the best of it and even though he didn't take the instruction too seriously, he somehow managed to pass the CPR exam. Gordon became a lifesaver, although he'd very little confidence in his ability to actually save someone's life.

A few weeks later whilst driving to work Gordon witnessed a traffic accident. Immediately he jumped out of his car to see if he could help. As he did, he heard someone yell, "Does anyone here know CPR?" Nervously he answered, "I do!" and he stepped forward. Then he saw a man who appeared to be unconscious on the ground. So, he shouted for someone to call 999 before beginning to examine the victim. Then he checked to see if the man was breathing and found nothing.

Gordon, kind-of knew what he was supposed to do, but suddenly the reality of the situation hit him. "What am I doing here?" he wondered, "I can't do this, for I don't remember a thing from that silly CPR class!" He backed away for a second or two to collect his thoughts. It was then he noticed how dirty the victim was and at once he decided, "there's no-way I'm giving him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation!"

Then the gravity of the situation overtook him. This man was dying. He had to do something. So, Gordon knelt down, cupped his mouth over the man's and began giving him quick breaths. He checked for a pulse and found that the man's heart was beating. He checked for breathing but still nothing.



The man wasn't getting oxygen, so Gordon repeated the breathing process only using more forceful breaths. The onlookers encouraged him and some even prayed. After what seemed like an eternity the man started to breathe on his own - just as the Paramedics arrived. They thanked Gordon and assured him that his CPR had saved the man's life.

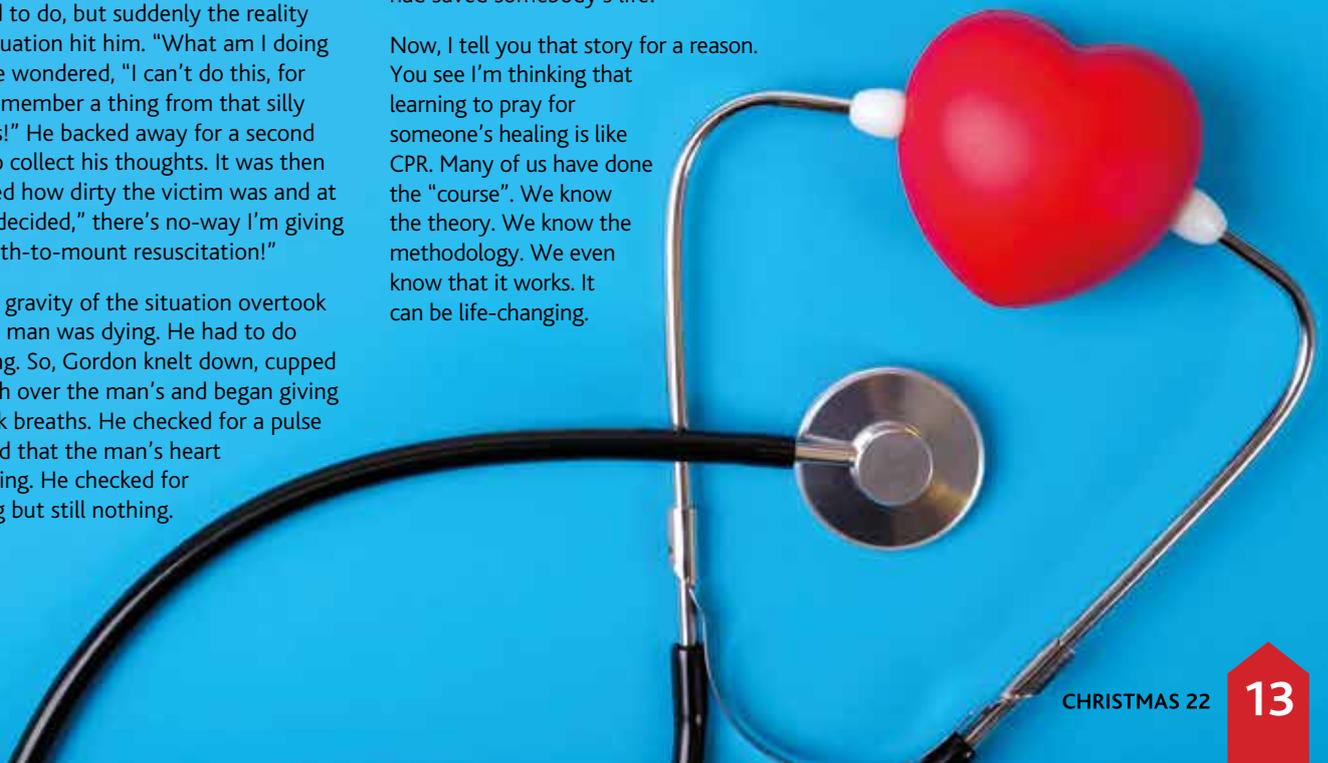
He walked away from the incident overwhelmed that he, and the training that he'd believed was a waste of time, had saved somebody's life!

Now, I tell you that story for a reason. You see I'm thinking that learning to pray for someone's healing is like CPR. Many of us have done the "course". We know the theory. We know the methodology. We even know that it works. It can be life-changing.

But the greatest obstacle we face is that, like Gordon, we're inclined to believe we can't do this - so we don't! Whereas, in spite of himself, Gordon stepped forward and used what he had learned to save a stranger's life and a dirty stranger at that!

Folks in the Ministry of Healing, which is a ministry for all, we need to be prepared to do likewise!

**Rev Carmen Hayes**  
**Ministry of Healing**





# “What must I do to be saved?”

**Acts chapter 16 verse 30:**

**In Acts chapter 16 verse 30 we have a question, a question asked by a Roman jailer who found that the doors of his jail had all been thrown open after Paul and Silas had sung hymns and prayed.**

He was about to take his own life until Paul called out to him and assured him that everyone was exactly where they should. The jailer's response to Paul and Silas' assurance that all was well, was to ask "What must I do to be saved?" What prompted him to ask such a question?

Maybe he had heard the proclamation of the slave girl, whose deliverance had landed Paul and Silas in jail; "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." That phrase "to be saved" is a stumbling block to many when it comes to placing their trust in the Lord Jesus as their own personal Saviour. The Apostle John records these words of the Lord Jesus spoken to Nicodemus, "I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." In his translation of the Bible into contemporary

language, Eugene Peterson translates verse 3 of John 3 like this; "Jesus said; "Take it from Me, unless a person is born from above, it is not possible to see what I am pointing to - God's Kingdom."

When the jailer asked his question he got this reply; "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household." - verse 31. Some people may see this as referring to a corporate Salvation but this is not the case. Salvation is personal choice. We are told that once the jailer had tended to their wounds, he and his family were baptized. The jailer realised that he wasn't right with God, and he had, as many do today, no hope of heaven. In a eureka moment when he realised that everything Paul and Silas stood for and said was the truth, he responded to that truth.

Our world and our country today are, as former Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli

said, full of "Lies, damned lies and statistics", and sadly people are being swallowed up in the quagmire, not knowing who they should believe. But (here is the 'but') we have the truth and it is contained in God's Holy and Precious Word. Its message is unchanging; it is the same yesterday, today and forever. It is the Good News, which is "God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) - i.e. they will be saved for all eternity.

Christmas is just around the corner. This Christmas 2022, amidst all the tinsel and glittering lights, ask the Lord Jesus into your hearts and homes to be your Lord and Saviour and thereby be assured of your place in heaven.

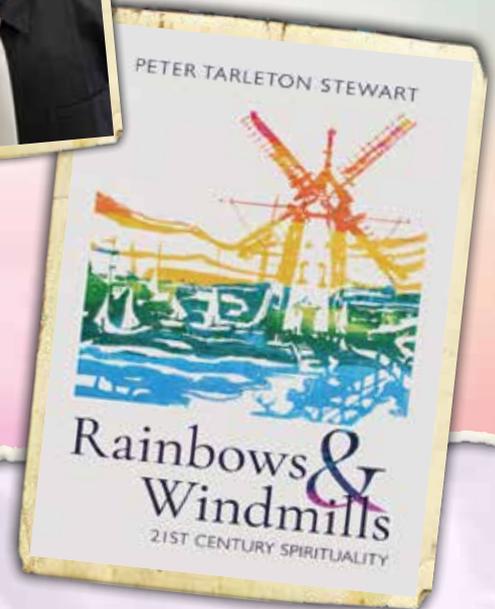
*Rev Arthur Burns*



# Rainbows & Windmills

## 21ST CENTURY SPIRITUALITY

By Peter Tarleton Stewart



**In this largely autobiographical book Peter Tarleton Stewart, better known as Canon Peter Tarleton, takes the reader through the development of his personal spirituality. He grew up in a Rectory in rural Northern Ireland, and his last post was as Rector of Maryborough in Co. Laois in the centre of the Republic of Ireland. Peter makes the point that everyone has her or his own personal spirituality.**

Peter developed his spirituality from contact with others of all faiths and none. He recounts how he saw the innate goodness of people as he interacted with staff in the UK's National Health Service and as a Chaplain in the Prison Service in many locations across England. Peter observed and experienced the spiritual gifts of people as diverse as cleaners and porters in the NHS, and how they applied them generously in their daily work.

Rainbows and Windmills is full of insights into spiritual development. Peter reminds readers that they are responsible for their own lives and, as part of that, for their own spiritual growth. To help develop personal spirituality he encourages readers to adopt practices such as fasting and silent meditation. He suggests that fasting gives our digestive system a break. This also increases our inner space and allows our perceptive and intuitive senses to develop. Peter reminds readers that prayer time in worship provides a focus for

a community, especially at healing services. Individuals presenting for themselves and on behalf of friends or relatives find this ministry spiritually uplifting.

Peter Tarleton Stewart reserves some strong criticism for churches. He states that Christian leaders have damaged spirituality by failing to challenge the assumptions that live at the heart of Christianity (as they do at the heart of every religion). He cites the "great commission" in Matthew 28:19 "go into the world baptising in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" as an example. He contends that this is a later addition to the text and that when Matthew's Gospel was written Baptism was in the name of Jesus alone.

Peter wonders why babies have to be baptised to wash them free of original sin and questions that humans are born sinful. He puts this down to a combination of a misunderstanding of the events in the Garden of Eden and St. Augustine's development of a doctrine of original sin. Surely a God of love who "created humankind in his image" would not create humans as sinful from birth.

The author reminds readers that the Bible is not one book but a library of books written at different times for a variety of audiences in various contexts. It is not the divine plan for

the people of God. He points out the damage done by selective quoting of passages, giving as an example the use of verses in Acts 17 and Deuteronomy 32 by white South African churches to justify apartheid.

Peter suggests that the development of a person-centred spirituality poses a challenge to churches. In his view the churches need to change. They need to move from demanding adherence to a set of beliefs to encouraging questions that lead to growth. We have inherited a three-tier faith model, with hell down below, people in the middle, and heaven above. Today we know that this is not scientific so the question is why the churches encourage believers to look on their faith world in this way.

In his final chapter Peter Tarleton Stewart gives two hallmarks of a spirituality for today - that it is authentic and alive; and that it resonates with the world. It is the message of "Rainbows and Windmills" that we have the choice of grasping the insight that this provides, and taking responsibility for our own lives and our spirituality.

Rev. Martin O'Connor

# This Christmas, share the joy of a plate piled high...

**The climate crisis has increased the risk of hunger during Malawi's annual lean season but mother-of-five Fyness Tembo is able to weather the storm, thanks to a Christian Aid project.**

As the nights draw in, we start to be filled with the hope of Christmas. Before too long, we'll see bright lights twinkling on trees. We'll wrap up warm and sing our favourite carols. And we'll enjoy that special, once-a-year meal with our loved ones.

The joy of Christmas dinner is something that families in Malawi love too, as Fyness Tembo, a caring mum of five, explains: *"We celebrate Christmas by eating chicken and rice. After eating rice, I feel very happy and satisfied. I wish I could eat rice every day."*

Sadly, many families in Malawi will struggle even to put their staple food of maize porridge on the table. That's because December falls during one of the toughest times of the year - the country's 'hunger season' which is getting worse due to the climate crisis. Extreme weather means that the old year's meagre harvest runs out several weeks before the new harvest is ready. Hotter temperatures and drought, as well as destructive downpours and floods, are playing havoc with the growing seasons, causing poor crop yields and food shortages.

Until recently, Fyness (50) would struggle to find enough food for herself and her family and there have been times when she was so desperate that she had to beg for food. But Christian Aid's local partner provided Fyness with seeds, tools and training and today she is growing soya, groundnuts, maize and beans - enough to eat and surplus to sell for a cash income.

Fyness also received fruit tree saplings and soon she will have her own fruit. She said:

*"Together there are seven fruit trees. I know in the future I will have fruits. My children and I will no longer struggle to look for wild fruits in the forest. We will get them at home."*

In rural Malawi, it falls to women and girls to collect firewood for cooking and heating water. Fyness used to walk for 6 kms to collect firewood which lasted for only two days before she needed to make the trip again. Christian Aid's partner has provided Fyness with a stove which consumes only a quarter of the firewood of an open fire, cutting her workload and reducing the number of trees that need to be felled. Fyness and the others in her community are now making and selling cook stoves to generate additional income. The new cook

stoves are giving hours of time back to mums for better tasks than finding firewood.

In the past, her children's school attendance was erratic because there was no money for uniforms or school fees. Fyness told us: *"Most of the time they skipped school or started school late. I had no idea where I could find the money to help them."* Since receiving help from Christian Aid's local partner, Fyness' children are in school and receiving an education.

Although climate change has exacerbated hunger and hardship, Fyness is able to weather life's storms, thanks in part to the village savings and loan scheme set up by our local partner. Fyness saves some of the



**"In the past, I was lacking food. I struggled to find food. But now, with farming, I have food and I am able to take care of my children."**

**Fyness Tembo**



money she makes by selling her farm produce and cook stoves, and uses her income to repay small, low-interest loans. She says:

*"With the money I saved in the village bank, I have been able to start buying iron sheets to put a new roof on my house and I have sent my children to school."*

This Christmas, Fyness is grateful that she has enough nutritious food to feed her family, a fuel-efficient stove to ease the task of collecting firewood, and soon she will have the security of a new roof on her home. Most of all, she is happy that her children are in school and receiving the education they deserve.

This transformation has been made possible because of the love our supporters and sponsoring churches show for their global neighbours.

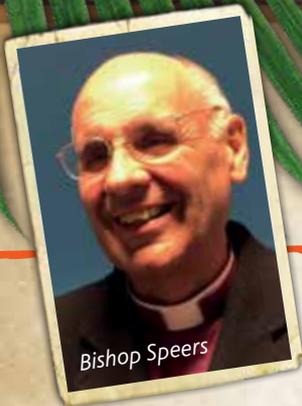
**If you wish to make a donation, please visit: [caid.ie/ChristmasAppeal](http://caid.ie/ChristmasAppeal)**

**Without gifts of love, it wouldn't be Christmas. Your gift this Christmas could help another mum like Fyness to lift her family out of hunger.**

- **£10/€11 could provide seeds so families can grow their own food**
- **£30/€34 could provide 10 fuel-efficient cook stoves**
- **£50/€57 could provide 12 chickens**
- **£100/€114 could provide 100 fruit trees**
- **£1,000/€1,139 could train 75 people to farm in ways that suit the changing climate**
- **£3,500/€3,986 could provide an irrigation kit**

*The righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food?' ... And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'*

**Matthew 25:37-40**



# Our Mad Life

## Volleyball and Vertigo

**Dear Friends,**

**Immediately after the national conference of the Men's Society I set off with the clergy and their wives from across the diocese to the Petite Plage just north of Mahajanga for a week of Training and Fellowship.**

All these meetings back-to-back was to save travelling expenses and time.

I gave up within minutes of arrival at the conference centre of allocating the sleeping accommodation and was more than grateful when one of the rural deans, who had arrived early, announced that it was a simple job and he would do it. He did so to everyone's satisfaction. What I couldn't cope with was that two of the three cooks we paid turned up with grandchildren. I have got used to mothers arriving with babies and toddlers but I still have no idea what the expectations are on sleeping accommodation. Happily, the RC Sister in charge of the conference centre had designated a lovely ensuite bedroom for the bishop and her word was law.

Prior to the event, on the insistence of the diocesan treasurer, I had meticulously worked out a menu, priced this according to the

quantities required and ordered it all including the charcoal for the cooking stoves. As always I had not included extra mouths to feed since I thought I knew how many I had invited. My learning curve never seems to flatten out.

When the bus arrived at the seaside with the clergy and spouses and all the luggage, including the large cooking pots for the rice, there were whoops of delight as all explored the site and the beach it was situated on. Nobody had been there before and all were thrilled by it.

Our daily programme was simple: 6 am Morning Prayer, breakfast, a Bible study on the first epistle of Peter, discussion groups, mid-morning break and snack after which I led a session on one of the "Lambeth Calls". At noon I celebrated Communion and preached. Our cooks worked hard and there were generous amounts of excellent food.

After lunch was free time until the afternoon snack. I had worried a lot about how to organise team building games, etc. All quite unnecessarily, as a marvellous time was had by all with tug of war, football and of course, swimming.





After Evening Prayer we discussed another Lambeth Call which always led into far ranging discussions. There was a unanimous request that I book the same place for a week next year.

And so to Diocesan Synod the next day. I always preach on the gospel appointed for the day. It was the story of the disciples having toiled all night and caught nothing being requested by Jesus to launch out into the deep and let down the nets for a catch. It seemed an appropriate way to launch the synod to call the members to launch out into the deep ...

The days were again full starting with the 6 am service (no morning or afternoon break!) and ending with 6 pm Evening Prayer. The big change that was fiercely debated and voted through is that the diocesan finances are to be centralised. Each parish, starting in December, must send its quota to Bishop's House and the next month the priest will receive his stipend in proportion to the money received. Again much of the debate arose from the Lambeth Calls and here the week together at the Petite Plage showed its worth with informed discussion.

It was late on the Saturday night that we got the final synod report to the printers who worked to have it ready by the end of the Sunday morning concluding service! The proceedings came to a final end with a lunch at Bishop's House in high spirits. We ended by singing "Auld lang syne" - Malagasy version which has several verses, each with a different action of togetherness.

And so concluded a month that had started in Canterbury and continued without a break with the Men's Society National meeting, eight days of clergy and spouses' training and the residential Diocesan Synod. I was really exhausted and, after

a tidy up took myself off to recuperate at a beach hotel for two days. Alas, too little too late! The next day I had an extreme attack of vertigo at a graduation party here in Bishop's House. As I was violently ill there was no disguising the fact - to the great alarm of the guests.

My protestations to the contrary were completely ignored and a doctor was summoned who instantly injected me and declared I needed three days total bedrest and no food in her private clinic!! Thus my first Sunday without engagements found me in bed on a drip, and total rest that morning included having over 50 visitors.

Facebook had done its worst, as far as I was concerned. Back at Bishop's House on Tuesday night I was feeling weak but I made a spectacular recovery once I had some food and was feeling fit on the Sunday and able to lead a three-hour long Confirmation service. What a relief. So much to be thankful for.

Who can doubt that your support and prayers have carried me through. THANK YOU.

**Love and Prayers**

+Hall  
[hallspeers@gmail.com](mailto:hallspeers@gmail.com)

# Derry + Raphoe Youth



## Claire Hinchliff writes...

**Christmas feels like a magical time of year, which excites so many people. It almost feels like we just want it to be Christmas NOW.**

To me it feels like Christmas is happening earlier and earlier each year - there were Christmas things in the shops in September! There are Christmas trees put up on the first of November. It's almost like a race to make Christmas happen earlier, faster. We all feel the need to get ready for Christmas - get the tree up, decorate the house, put lights everywhere, buy and hide presents so your family don't know what've you got for them, and prepare lots of food.

### **Is that what you think it means to get ready for Christmas?**

Most people seem to have forgotten a special time that comes before Christmas. After all, Christmas doesn't actually start until Christmas Day and then runs until the 6th January. It's the season of Advent which starts Four Sundays before Christmas. And remember there's something really cool about this - the season of Advent marks the start of the Christian year. It is a season of expectation and preparation as the Church looks forward to celebrating the birth of Christ. Each year the Church's year restarts with this special time of getting ready for Christmas. Christmas is so special that we need four weeks to prepare. For many Christians, our preparation for the coming of Christ is a powerful reminder of the real meaning of the coming season. With us, Advent falls at the darkest time of the year, and the natural

symbols of darkness and light are powerfully at work. Many churches use an Advent wreath of candles to mark the Sundays of Advent, lighting a new candle each week.

### **So what do we do during Advent to get ready if it isn't all about the decorations, lights and food?**

It's about making ourselves ready. Ready to understand just how special the Christmas message really is for each one of us. We want to use this time to try and get as close to God as possible so we can really understand just how special Christmas Day actually is and what it means for us.

### **So exactly how do we use Advent the best way we can?**

Well it starts with time - and we have four weeks before Christmas Day. Spending some time with God each day and using that time to reflect on who you are, what you believe, what you think is important. Last year on our Instagram account we put up a little thought every single day of December to give us all something to think about. It ranged from Bible verses, a prayer or something from an Advent devotion. You could read through one of the Gospel books in the bible - the book of Mark is only 16 chapters long! The Bible is not just some random thoughts written down with nice ideas. When the Bible was written, it was inspired by God. It is powerful because it instructs us and it helps us to think and believe following God's word. Don't just let the Bible be a remote idea, but really get into God's word.

If you have the Bible app on your phone, there are so many devotions for teens, adults and families with hundreds of topics. I'm going to be sharing some Advent devotions online so you might have a look at those. You don't need to overcommit - start with a few minutes each day. Use your phone to pray, listen to music, draw, write, paint, create, walk and pray, Bible-journal (did you know it's ok to draw, write, highlight in your Bible?!) There are so many ways and one for each of us, no matter what we like to do. We can spend time with other people learning and growing together.

Christmas is all about the start of God's promise being seen on earth. For hundreds of years the world had been promised someone who would come to bridge the gap between people on earth and God. For too long there was a separation - people had to speak to God through priests in temples, follow specific rules on how to stay spiritually clean and behave in certain ways. But all that was changed with the arrival of a tiny baby.

This tiny baby would grow up to be someone who would teach about love and kindness, about treating everyone with care, about how we should love God with everything we have and are, and most importantly - about how we get close to God by accepting God's free gift of love. No matter who we are, God loves us. Jesus' birth was for us.

*Claire*

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## Children's Ministry the real reason for Christmas...

**At Diocesan Synod the point was raised about how we can encourage children and families to focus more on the real reason for Christmas, as opposed to all the additional extras and pressures that we add to the event.**

This is something I have been thinking about for a while, especially this year with the cost-of-living crisis and other factors that may have an impact on our celebrations.

To kick off this thinking about Christmas and the real story I asked the children of the diocese to design the cover of n:vision based on the theme of the Shepherds in the Gospel of Luke. I am sure you can agree they did a fantastic job, and it is brilliant to see their creativity.

I decided to concentrate on the shepherds because the significance of God revealing the news of the birth of Jesus to this group is often overlooked. Shepherds were not highly thought of at the time of Jesus. They were smelly, social outcasts and unimportant. God clearly thought otherwise, sending his angels to share the

greatest news with them - and allowing them the chance to share the joy and news with others. How can we share this news and joy with others at this time of the year, at home and in our community?

*Read the Story* - using the Bible and other versions of the story, take time to remember what we are celebrating. Bob Hartman has released *Rhyming Christmas*; part of the rhyming Bible series which allows children to join in the rhyming story and see the story come alive. You can even watch a YouTube video of the song *It Begins in Bethlehem* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bn8c5CZ0MY>). The *Lion Storyteller Christmas* book tells the Bible story in an engaging way but it also tells Christmas stories from around the world, and includes Christmas traditions.

*Download the Apps - That Advent Puppet App* - this is a free digital Advent Calendar set in a school. Puppets explore different parts of the Christmas story from the 1st of December. Each day you open a new door and watch a short video. These are very funny and engaging.

*Bible for Kids* is an interactive Bible App where the children can read the story, listen to the story, and take part in different activities. Again, this is a free app.

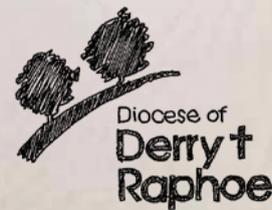
*Lectio for Families* - a short 10-minute daily devotion. There are readings, prayers, memory verses and activities. This can be used all year round and focuses on different themes and readings. This app has been produced by *21/7 Prayer*.

*Share with others* - can you make or send Christmas Cards that show the nativity story? Can you invite family members to a nativity play or carol service in church? Can you tell someone part of the story of the first Christmas? Can you share the free apps with others so they can engage with the story?

These are only a few examples of different ways to engage with the Christmas Story - I hope you find them useful and you are able to spend some time as a family enjoying the true meaning of Christmas.

*Kirsty McCartney*

# Diocesan noticeboard!



## Christmas Tree Festival

ST MARY'S CHURCH OF IRELAND  
STRANORLAR  
FRIDAY 2ND TO SUNDAY 4TH DECEMBER

<b>CONCERT OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC</b> 8pm Friday Dec 2nd Featuring Donegal Abbey Singers & Finn Valley Male Voice choir €10 on the door	<b>CHURCH OPEN</b> Sat 12-6pm Sun 2-5:30pm	<b>CAROL SERVICE</b> 6pm Sunday Dec 4th A Carol Service for the whole community followed the result of the tree voted the most popular
	For Details Contact Aubrey Oliver. Tel: 074 9131353 Mobile: 087 2788291 E Mail: sabooliver@yahoo.co.uk	

## CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING & SALE

£5 entrance inc. Tea/Coffee & Tray Bakes  
 In aid of funds to repair the ceiling in the Deanery.

Christmas Musical Entertainment

**SATURDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**  
 10.00AM-1.30PM  
 IN SAINT COLUMB'S CATHEDRAL

St. Anne's Church, Ballyslin presents

## Patrick Feeney CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Friday 16th December 2022  
 Tickets €25

DOORS 7pm • CONCERT 8pm • UNRESERVED SEATING

## A Festival of Christmas Trees

In St John's Church of Ireland, Dunalong, Bredry  
 Friday 9<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2022  
 In Aid of Dunalong Parish Church Repair Funds

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022**  
 Church Open 2pm - 5pm  
 Opening Service at 7.30pm with The Revd David McBeth and friends

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December**  
 Church Open 11am - 6pm  
 Seasonal entertainment

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December**  
 Church Open 2pm - 5pm  
 Closing Praise Service at 7.30pm  
 With Choirs from local schools  
 Guest speaker Rt Rev Andrew Foster  
 Bishop of Derry and Raphoe

Light refreshments available each day  
 Everyone welcome

# Adoption Transforms Family Life...

*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. (Jeremiah 29:11)*

Hello, my name is Ann and I'm an adoptive parent. It's almost 15 years ago since we brought our beautiful daughter home and I doubt that I will ever do anything more worthwhile in my life!

**Our journey began**, my husband and I, with our desire to be parents and the realisation that it wasn't going to happen. We pinned our hopes on IVF and embarked on a treatment that left us mentally, physically and emotionally drained.

There was grief and loss for the baby or babies we would never know, babies with my husband's blue eyes. In the midst of all the herbs, acupuncture, detoxes and cures, I started to realise that there were other paths to parenthood, which were not dependent on biological reproduction. Adoption gave us the possibility of becoming parents. From its roots in infertility, grief and loss, adoption became a healing process for us. We lost the dream of our biological child as our adopted daughter lost her biological parents and her biological parents lost their child. However, **out of the midst of these losses, has come so much joy and, love** which has transformed our family life.

We were naïve when we started to enquire about adoption. The process felt a bit like a tidal wave of emotions, paperwork, and hope. The adoption preparation course was a good starting point. We learned about the children who needed families, and the difficult starts and experiences that they had in their short lives. With this knowledge we were better equipped to decide if adoption was right for us. Only then could we start fulfilling our dream of adopting a child to love, and for whom we could provide **a forever home**. This information about the difficulties and challenges that these children faced, presented us with worries and was the

source of long conversations between my husband and I. Lots of 'what if's and wondering if we were up for the challenge? There was also the worry in the back of my mind - would I be able to love them enough and in the same way as I would a biological child, just because I didn't carry the adopted child in my womb?

So yes, there was trepidation, but through it all we had a very strong desire to experience the joys of parenting. All adopters have to go through an assessment process which involves home visits by an assigned social worker. The prospect was daunting. However, the assessment process wasn't judgemental. The aim was always to prepare the ground honestly for the adopters. On the way we learned a lot - we learned about ourselves as individuals and as a couple. We learned about the children and their needs. Many questions were answered and the mystique was taken away.

Through it all our social workers were knowledgeable and supportive, and they reassured us that they would continue to be a support to us even after our child came home. At last we got the call! The social workers wanted to talk to us about a little girl who needed a forever home. I remember the first time we met her. We left the meeting and both of us said that from the moment we met her, we just knew that **she was our long-awaited daughter**.

We thought we were prepared. We had read a lot. We had longed for this. But nothing prepared us for the day we became parents. When I think about the last 14 years, it's been a rollercoaster...I have had to reach down inside myself and find skills I didn't know I had. Some of my new skills include tigress, protector, negotiator, researcher, psychic, playmate, clown, peacemaker! Adoption is different from other types of parenting, yet in a way no different! It challenges you, it stretches you and it makes you realise that you can and will do anything for your child.



Along the way, we've come to realise that this is exactly how it was meant to be. **This is the child we were meant to parent**. There have been, and continue to be, tears and challenges. And through it all, our daughter has given us so much fun, laughter and joy, more than we could ever have thought possible! Adoption changed our life forever, adding depth and dimension more than we could possibly have imagined at the outset.

Today we have a sense of gratitude and awe. **Gratitude** that our daughter is in our lives and has the opportunity to live her best life. And **awe** that our funny, loud, creative, stormy, brave and beautiful daughter never gives up, despite the challenges that life throws at her. "Way to go, my precious daughter! I'm right with you"

## **EDITOR'S NOTE:**

**Adoption services NI - Family Routes** is a voluntary adoption agency operating in Northern Ireland. Family Routes is a service provided by our parent body, the Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility (NI). Office: Ground Floor, Unit 2, 18 Heron Road, Belfast BT3 9LE. Tel 02890736088. Email [info@familyroutes.co.uk](mailto:info@familyroutes.co.uk) Web [www.familyroutes.co.uk](http://www.familyroutes.co.uk)

**Adoption services Rol - PACT** is an adoption agency accredited by the Adoption Authority of Ireland to undertake adoption assessments with prospective adopters on behalf of Tusla Child and Family Agency. Arabella House, 18d Nutgrove Office Park, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14. Tel 01-2962200. Email [info@pact.ie](mailto:info@pact.ie) Web [www.pact.ie](http://www.pact.ie)

# Zero Waste North West...



zero  
waste  
nw.org



Ruth O'Callaghan writes...

Zero Waste North West is a local manifestation of a global movement and is a voluntary group who work in the community, in schools and with businesses to model Zero Waste Circular Economy practice, using creative, innovative and fun methods to transform people's relationship to waste.

Zero Waste North West (ZWNW) began from a campaign to stop an incinerator being built in Strathfolye. ZWNW then became part of a larger network in Europe called Zero Waste Europe.

ZWNW also works with the local council to support the implementation of a Zero Waste Circular Economy Strategy, unanimously adopted by Derry City and Strabane District Council in December 2017. In November 2020, Derry/Londonderry became the first city region in the UK or Ireland to become a candidate city region for Zero Waste, Europe's new accreditation process, and also to be one of its pilot city regions to harness the learning from the process.

ZWNW recognises the climate emergency and the need for a shift to a circular economy.

Throughout the years ZWNW has worked with local people, businesses and councils helping to reduce waste and highlight the importance of a circular economy, not only locally but worldwide.

In 2018 ZWNW opened one of the first zero waste shops in Ireland, The Useless shop. ZWNW began working with local schools and formed ZW Juniors, creating the 'no to straws' campaign.

ZWNW also worked with local festival Stendhal to create a Zero Waste Festival, and created its own festival called **The Enough Stuff Festival**.

Zero Waste North West created a platform for environmental activists to speak out, thus giving them more support within the **Environmental Gathering**.

Zero Waste North West is a team of volunteers doing what they know with great passion, love and respect for the planet. Members have planted 1000s of trees, hosted litter picks, and joined the **Greta Thunberg Movement** with Further for Fridays.

ZWNW founded **The Hub**, located at 84 Spencer Road, Derry in October of 2021 with a small team of dedicated volunteer members. We have made it into something magical, a hub of activities, providing ideas about how to protect our planet, while providing everyday essentials.

- *The Useless Shop* - a plastic free shop
- *Our Fairtrade shop* - Fairtrade food
- *LifeCycles* - saving bicycles from landfill, repairing and rehoming them, promoting cycling

- *The Nappy Library* - lending reusable nappies
- *The Environmental Gathering* - activists standing together
- *Craft Corner* - saving unwanted scraps to make something beautiful
- *Zero Waste Parents* - raising our kids in a clean world
- *Little Footprints and Parent Peer Support* - come for a chat while the kids play
- *The Toy Library* - no need to buy new toys, just borrow them
- *Local Makers* - local people thinking of the planet in their product
- *Further for Fridays* - The Greta Thunberg Movement (every Friday on the Guildhall steps at 3.30).
- *Special 'monthly meets'* when everyone is invited on the first Thursday of the month from 6pm, either on Zoom or at the Hub on Spencer Road.

Zero Waste North West Hub is open most days from 10am but please check <https://zerowastenw.org/> or the Facebook page for changes. Please feel free to call in and chat if you're passing. **Zero Waste groups can be found throughout Ireland.**

*"It's not at all preachy or intimidating. It's such a welcoming space run by local people supporting each other's ideas for kinder ways of living. It has really helped us as new parents by signposting us to greener enterprises locally that give us options and actually make our lives so much more joyful."*  
Maeve Leahy

*"The Zero Waste Hub is the circular economy in action. It's great to have a safe space that provides ethically sound goods and services for people, and somewhere that people who care about sustaining life on Earth can meet and share ideas. I think it's fantastic - just to sit on the sofa there and absorb all the great work that goes on there, have a wee chat, read the signs on the walls, find out about upcoming events and ongoing projects. It's just the 'bee's-knees'".* Conall Morrison

# The Right Support at the Right Time

## The Rev Claire Henderson introduces Inspire Wellbeing

Everyone needs a hand now and then. There's no shame in it. This has been especially true over the course of the last few years. Things have been very tough, there's no denying it, and people are under a lot of pressure.

Fortunately, hope exists. Charities, churches and community groups throughout Northern Ireland are committing themselves to assisting those in need, their sense of solidarity a vital component in keeping people well. Each organisation, big or small, has a role to play in caring for the most vulnerable amongst us.

One such service we wish to highlight is *Inspire's Advocacy for All*, which was launched in April 2022. This service is all about empowering individuals in these trying times.

The start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 exacerbated health and social inequalities.

The shadow of poverty fell on households throughout Northern Ireland and it became a significant driver of mental ill health, substance use and addiction.

Changes have also been creating worry and anxiety for many years. Now, with people already facing the effects of austerity, the rising cost of living has arrived to compound further their concerns. Families everywhere are making really difficult choices. But there is hope.

Society faces a variety of challenges at the moment. That's why our service is all about directing people to the support they need, when they need it, whatever their problems. Open to everyone aged 18 and over, Advocacy for All connects them with trained mental health advocates in their trust areas, professionals who are equipped to help.

We understand that people are concerned that many factors will affect their wellbeing;

financial struggles, relationships, loneliness and isolation and both physical and mental health. Our *Advocacy for All* service is here for you, encouraging you to find the right support at the right time. Regardless of the query, the service is committed to helping people overcome these obstacles, all of which can seriously affect mental health.

Crucially, the service points people in the direction of the information and local support best suited to their needs and helps them develop the confidence needed to speak up for their mental health.

If you wish to get in touch with Advocacy for All, you can do so in the following ways:

**Freephone - 0808 189 0036**

**Live webchat via [www.inspirewellbeing.org/advocacy-for-all/](http://www.inspirewellbeing.org/advocacy-for-all/)**

**Email - [hello@inspirewellbeing.org](mailto:hello@inspirewellbeing.org)**

**Rev Claire Henderson**



**inspire**

wellbeing, ability, recovery





# News for the pews...

## *Parish in Focus...*

### *Kilcronaghan, Ballynascreen & Sixtowns*

**Kilcronaghan, Ballynascreen & Sixtowns is a community of believers who seek to live out the values of the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe by:**

- *Growing deeper in our relationship to God.*
- *Growing closer in our relationships and fellowship with one another.*
- *Growing wider by sharing the Good News of the Kingdom of God with everyone, by word and deed.*

If the last three years have taught us anything, it is that the Church still has a vital role to play within the community. We do, however, need to be more creative in our ministry and be less fixed in our ideas as to how we 'do mission.' This means that we need to be more attentive to the needs of the community we serve and more willing to go the extra mile to meet those needs.

Chuck Van Engen, who served as a missionary in Mexico for many years, wrote: "The Church doesn't do mission; the Church is mission."

As Christians, the heart of our mission is to help people come to know Jesus. Alongside this, we are also called to minister to those who are vulnerable, or feeling isolated and anxious, as they look towards a future with spiralling food and energy costs.

When we read the Old Testament, we find that there is great concern for the physical well-being of the community. There is concern for health, basic needs and social justice. In the Old Testament a lack of social concern was seen as being the outworking of rebellion against God. Whereas true godliness is described in terms of caring for the needs of others. (Micah 6:8; Ezekiel 22:29; Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Proverbs 31:8-9; Proverbs 31:20).

In the New Testament the call to care for the community continues. God encourages us to care for others. We are to focus on building a community of love in word and actions (Galatians 6:2; John 15:12-13; 1 Peter 4:8-11).

To create a community of love by word and action is a fantastic manifesto around which to build parish life - but how do we make this a lived reality?

The answer to this very much depends on the needs of the community we serve. One size does not fit all. However, some widespread issues include loneliness, mental ill-health, a sense of feeling isolated from Church and community, and a deep anxiety around the increasing cost of food and energy.

We all need to be surrounded with people

who genuinely care for the well-being of others, and we who are Christ's Church are to be those people. We should want to make our communities better places for those who are finding life difficult, and this can be achieved through small initiatives as well as larger projects.

In the Spring of 2021, as things began to open up after two years of heavy restrictions, it became clear that there was an incredible loneliness and mental anguish among the older people in our local community. I will never forget hearing one parishioner say: "Rector, these are the last years of my life and I am living them like this." A comment that really highlighted the reality of just how difficult the period of isolation was for the older generation.

After speaking with my Select Vestry, we decided to hire a coach, run a free trip to Donaghadee Garden Centre, and then spend some time in Donaghadee for an ice-cream and a walk along the seashore. This was a day I will never forget! We were like birds let out of a cage for the first time!

As things slowly opened up even further, we decided to build on this initial outing. We established a group called **Connect** which was for people who are at home during the day. Connect meets on alternate Thursdays

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



'Tis the season to be jolly fa la la la la la la la... 'Oh hello my friends, it's great to be back. I have been so busy decorating my house with Christmas decorations, planning gifts for my family and friends, but most of all I have been preparing to celebrate. My celebration will centre around the birth of Jesus, God's Son, as he is the reason for our Christmas season.



# CJ News

NUMBER 33



The birth of Jesus - the Saviour of our world. But how did the news spread? How did people hear that God's Son was born? Back in those days there were no newspapers or televisions or social media for announcements to be made or important information to be shared.



In Luke's Gospel, the shepherds are the first to hear about the birth of Jesus. Being a shepherd at that time was not considered as a high-ranking job or important. The Jewish leaders often complained about the shepherds, as the nature of their work meant they could not always keep to religious rules, for example not work on the Sabbath day. The message of Jesus was for all people, even those not considered important at the time. Let's hear about how the shepherds heard the great news about Jesus.



Some shepherds, who lived near Bethlehem, were out at night in their fields watching over their sheep. They were worried a bigger animal might come and hurt the sheep, so they sat on a hill watching their sheep together. Suddenly, there was a bright light. Now this wasn't just any bright light. The light was so bright that the shepherds had to close their eyes for a minute because the light hurt their eyes.



When they opened their eyes to see what was going on, a beautiful angel was standing in the sky just above them with arms opened wide.





The shepherds looked at each other in disbelief; but realised it must be real because they were all seeing the same thing. It wasn't just one of them. All at once they suddenly felt very afraid, but they didn't run because they were too surprised by what was happening.



Then the angel spoke to them and said: "Do not be afraid. I am here to bring you good news for all people. Today in Bethlehem, a baby has been born, He is the one that will save the world. You will know the baby because He will be wrapped in cloths and laying in a manger."



Suddenly, just as quickly as the first angel came, there were a large group of angels who together said, "Glory to God, and peace to all people on earth." After they spoke, they left. The shepherds were amazed and excited. Did everyone know this news, or just them? They felt they had to go to see this baby the angels were talking about.



The Shepherds ran as fast as they could, and soon found Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. The shepherds fell to their knees when they saw Jesus. They were filled with joy that they had found the special baby.



The shepherds only stayed for a short while because they knew that Mary was exhausted after giving birth to Jesus and needed her sleep. As soon as they left, they began telling everyone they met about what they had seen, and of the arrival of this very special baby for the whole world.



**JESUS**  
 IS THE  
**REASON**  
 FOR THE  
**SEASON**

Isn't it amazing how people found out about Jesus and were able to continue to share this good news with everyone to ensure that the world knew that baby Jesus had been born as the special baby who would live and die for each one of us.



**KEEP BUSY!**



Colour Me!



**The Shepherd's Story Spot the Differences**

Compare the picture on the top with the picture on bottom. Circle the 12 things that are different.



## RICE KRISPIES SNOWMEN RECIPE

### Ingredients

For the snowmen:

- 200g white mini marshmallows
- 100g Rice Krispies
- 25g butter

For decoration:

A variety of sweets (e.g. broken up chocolate or chocolate chips for eyes, Tic-tacs for carrot nose, Smarties and 'shoelace' sweets for ear muffs, multi-coloured sweet belts for scarves)  
20g white chocolate

### Method

1. Place mini marshmallows and butter into microwavable bowl. Heat in microwave on high for 15-20 second intervals stirring in between.
2. Once melted, pour in the Rice Krispies. Stir quickly and make sure they are evenly coated.
3. Grease your hands with a little butter.
4. Take a handful of the mixture and roll into a ball. This is the body. Roll a smaller sized ball for the head.
5. Place the head onto the body and press down gently to keep it in place.
6. Keep making snowmen until the mixture has all been used.
7. Melt the white chocolate in the microwave and use this to attach the sweets to your snowmen.



## CANDY CANE SHEPHERD CRAFT

1. Using toilet roll tubes or A5 sheets of coloured card to make your own tubes.
2. Draw a face and stick it on the side of the tube.
3. Stick a pipe cleaner through the side of the tube for the arms.
4. Use a piece of material and an elastic band for the headpiece.
5. The pipe cleaners are bendy enough for you to wrap them around the candy cane.

The perfect gift! Put a smile on someone's face!



WHAT DID ONE  
ANGEL SAY TO THE  
OTHER ANGEL?  
HALO THERE!

**A challenge for you!**  
Instead of snowmen could you use your sweets and make a shepherd instead?

# CJ OUT AND ABOUT...



The young people in St Mura's National School continue to be busy. They participate in 'Praises Time' with Canon Judi McGaffin and have completed this wonderful display on 'The Lost Sheep'. So creative, demonstrating wonderful talent, well done!



Here you can see some of the unique craft pieces completed by the parishioners of Fahan and Buncrana for 'Praises Time' with Canon Judi. These ideas are linked to the theme of 'Time to wake up, be honest and carry the cross'. Isn't it just brilliant to see all of the hard work being completed in our Diocese.



They also looked at the story of the 'Pharisee and the Tax Collector' and how Jesus wants us to pray. They used the word 'JOY'.

## Jesus Others Yourself

They found out they should pray with a good heart like the Tax Collector.

The Young People in St James Donemana have been working hard exploring parables. They studied the story of 'The Persistent Widow'. They found out that Jesus told this story to teach about prayer. Jesus told his followers to keep praying and never give up. They made prayer hands.

These Parables explored prayer.

This Christmas time think about all those people you should pray for at this time. Some people may be alone, others may have relatives who have died or are sad for another reason.

I will pray for...

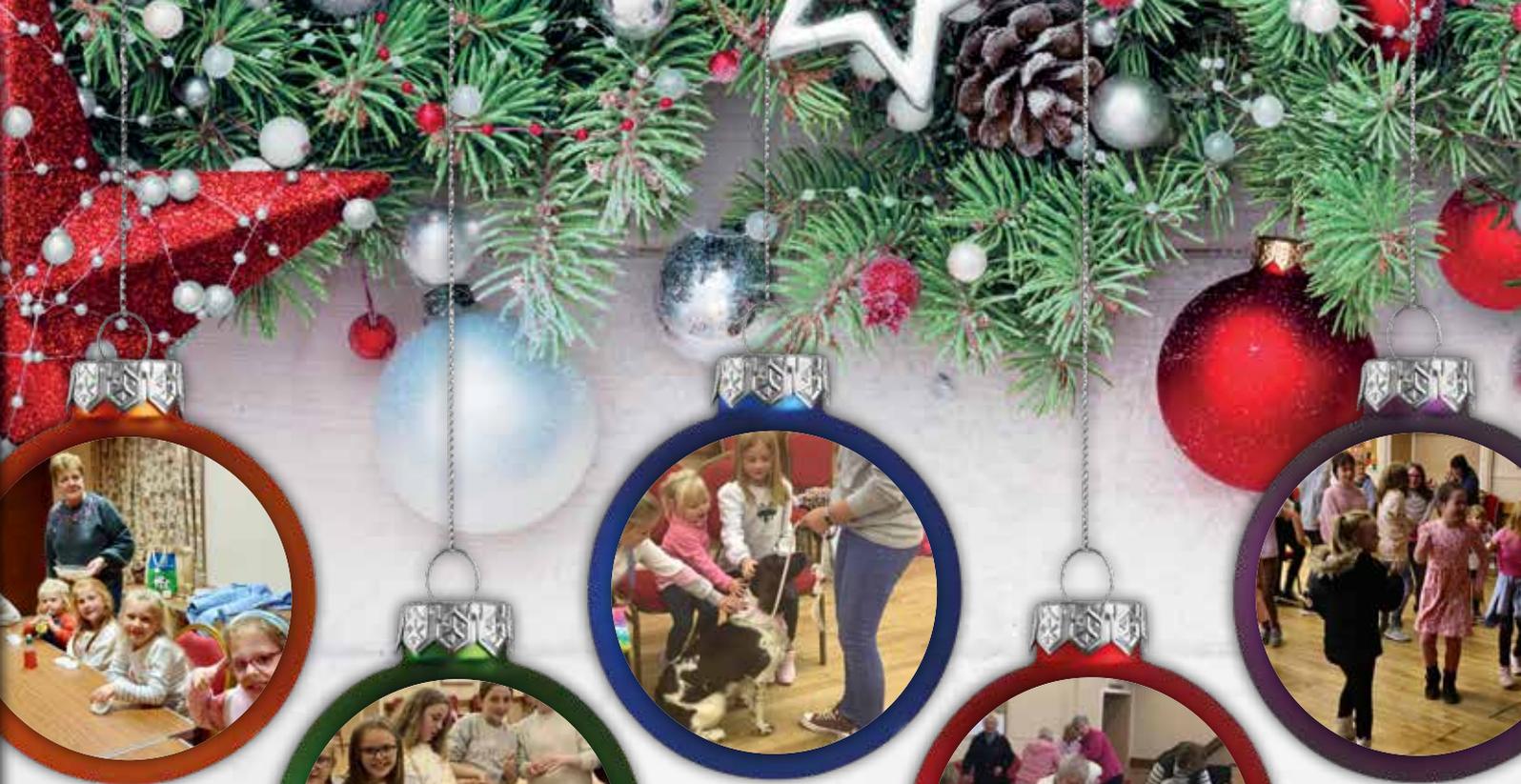


## MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Contact me on email  
[cj@derryandraphoe.org](mailto:cj@derryandraphoe.org)

Thank you for linking in with CJ News. It has been great having you. I wish you all a blessed Christmas and a wonderful 2023





at 10.30am, for tea/coffee and some home-baked treats. We have craft mornings, as well as a little low-impact exercise (e.g. line dancing), and we invite different speakers.

During the summer months, we take Connect outdoors (Connect Spring-Forward) as we go for gentle walks and then enjoy tea/coffee. If the weather is good, we enjoy our refreshments outside and if it is wet, we meet in St Columba's Church, which is nearby.

More recently, someone volunteered to expand Connect, by holding line-dancing lessons four evenings each month. This has been an incredible success. While we won't be putting on a performance any time soon, there is laughter and fellowship, and those who don't feel able to join in the lessons just come along to watch and chat.

In response to the latest hike in fuel prices, we have decided to meet at 12 noon on alternate Thursdays, for Connect Lunch Club. On these Thursdays we serve soup, wheaten bread, rolls, tea/coffee and biscuits.

We have now registered our hall as a safe warm place which has been added to the national map of places and times. People can meet to stay warm in a safe environment.

Alongside all of this, we have been working to rebuild relationships with our children and young people. In 2021 we re-opened our Sunday school and introduced the **'Jigsaw'** programme. This offers a more interactive style of learning and has been a great success. It is a much more enjoyable experience for teachers and children alike. We are thankful that our Sunday school is currently growing at an incredible rate.

In 2021, we also decided it was time to re-open our **Girls Friendly Society**. Our concerns over whether or not the girls would return led us to hold a 'Big Night Back'. This involved bouncy castles, party food, games and crafts. Thankfully this idea worked! The girls did return and our numbers are steadily growing.

We now supplement the regular youth and children's work by holding seasonal outreach programmes such as Messy Christmas, Messy Easter, a Holiday Bible Club, and a Light Party close to the Autumn mid-term break.

There is lot's happening and lots still to do. For that reason, I am so thankful to be serving in a parish where so many are willing to help with the work of:

- *Growing deeper in our relationship to God.*
- *Growing closer in our relationships and fellowship with one another.*
- *Growing wider by sharing the Good News of the Kingdom of God with everyone, by word and deed.*

*"In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it."*  
(Marianne Williamson)

***Yours in Christ***  
***Rev Rosie Diffin***

## ERRIGAL & DESERTOGHILL (GARVAGH)

Rector: Rev Carmen Hayes

Tel: 028 2955 8226

Facebook: St. Pauls Church of Ireland, Garvagh



It's Monday, it's the 31st of October, it's Halloween and it's almost the deadline date for the n:vision parish notes. I cannot believe it's that time again. I mean it's literally only a blink since I sat down to write the last article, the one about our, "Old but Beautiful" Flower Festival, which has now been and gone and went!

The parishioners and I would like to take this opportunity to say a BIG THANK YOU to everyone who in anyway supported this event, helping to make it the success that it turned out to be. I'd also like to say an equally BIG THANK YOU to all of the folks connected with St Paul's and Moyletra for all of the hard work they put into the even. What a team. I am so proud!

But alas, as good as it was, sadly it is over, meaning it's time for us to move on to whatever's next on our to-do list in preparation for Remembrance Day, Advent, and here's where I feel obliged to break one

of my own (unwritten) rules, Christmas. You see I never like to use the "C" word until we are at least in November, it's just too early, it's almost criminal! (But you will of course be reading this in November or early December)

Which reminds me of a wee story - It was the "C" word (Christmas) and so the judge was in a merry mood as he asked the prisoner, "What are you charged with?" "Doing my Christmas shopping early," replied the defendant. "That's no offence," said the judge. "How early were you doing this shopping?" "A few hours before the stores opened," answered the defendant.

### A few items on our to-do list:

We plan to hold a sale/coffee morning on a Saturday in November.

The "Stars" will appear on the Christmas Tree again this year - an initiative in which the parishioners get the opportunity to take

a star from the tree, purchase a little gift, place that gift back under the tree, and some one less fortunate will receive that gift before Christmas.

Our young people's Annual Nativity Service and Christmas Party (with a special guest appearance) will take place over the weekend of 16th to 18th December, and the much loved Nine Carols and Nine Lessons will also on take place on the evening of the 18th.

Moyletra will once again have its own Carol Service this year on the Sunday afternoon of the 11th December, at which the Glenkeen Fife and Drum Band will play and lead us in our worship.

Over the Christmas weekend there'll be a Service of Holy Communion on the Saturday evening at 9pm and a Family Celebration Service on the Sunday morning at 10am. Everyone is Welcome!"

## THE PARISHES OF CHRIST CHURCH BUNCRANA AND ST MURA FAHAN

Rector: Rev Canon Judi McGaffin

Tel: 0769361154

Facebook: Fahanandbuncranachurchofireland

*"Cherishing and connecting with all God's children"*



The summer moved into the autumn with a wonderful harvest celebration. It was made even more special as it was - to the date - 60 years since Mrs Anne Moore began playing the organ in St Mura's Fahan. We had a wonderful congregation in Christ Church Bunrana from all parts of the community helping Anne to celebrate!

Then on the following Sunday - as it was 60 years to the Sunday that Anne started her uninterrupted organ career in St Mura's, we celebrated again. Anne watched by her

extended family and church family planted a tree in the grounds of the church - and again we enjoyed cake!



In the last full week of October we celebrated our 8th Prayer Week! This year we considered the 5 Marks of Mission - Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform and Treasure. The week began on Sunday 23 October with an afternoon of hymn singing - to celebrate Anne's tremendous service to playing the organ in St Mura's. There were guest organists, singers and more tea and cake! This was another wonderful community event and raised much needed funds for the restoration of the organ.

Then each night of the following week we were helped to reflect on each of the marks of mission by Rosemary Dunne (recently retired Head Teacher of St Mura's National School), Willie McKinney from Tidy Towns

Buncrana, Rev Adam Pullen from the Stranolar, Meenglass and Kiltcevogue group of parishes, Jacqui Armstrong from the Mothers' Union and Alan McCracken from the Movice, Donagh, Culdaff and Cloncha group of parishes. Each evening through prayer and reflection - as well as wise words from our speakers, we considered how each of us individually and as a church and wider community could help to further each of the marks of mission. And again we had tea and cakes!!

We completed our prayer week with a visit to Dunfanaghy and stopped for a final prayer service on All Saints Newtowncunningham kindly led by Canon David Crooks, who also played the organ as we committed ourselves to serving God and each other.

We now look forward to preparations for Christmas and the birth of Jesus. Our preparations will include Advent-online, a Christmas tree festival in Buncrana (9-11 December) a concert on Friday 9 December in Christ Church Buncrana by the North West Opera and a service of 9 lessons and carols on Sunday 18 December at 7pm in St Mura's Fahan.

Keep an eye on our parishes facebook page, fahanandbuncranachurchofireland for further information on our regular online and in-church worship as well as special events as we move through the next few months.

## AGHADOWEY

Rector: Rev Louise Crawford-McCafferty  
Tel: 07725908117  
Facebook: St Guaire's Church Aghadowey

40 Brone Road, Garvagh BT51 4EQ  
Email: [louiscrawfordmccafferty@yahoo.com](mailto:louiscrawfordmccafferty@yahoo.com)



In the Christmas story, God takes the risk of incarnation. The flesh God chooses is not that of a warrior but of a vulnerable baby, a claim that has often brought me to tears of wonderment. My knowledge of that infant's fate — a fate shared by so many who have devoted their lives to love, truth, and justice — brings tears of anger and grief, along with a primal fear of what *might* happen if I followed suit.

As someone who believes that 'there is that of God in everyone,' I know I'm called to share in the risk of incarnation. Amid the world's dangers, I'm asked to embody my values and beliefs, my identity and integrity, to allow good words to take flesh in me. Constrained by fear and all sorts of things, I often fall short — yet I still aspire to

incarnate words of life, however imperfectly. Christmas is a reminder that I'm invited to be born again and again in the shape of my God-given self, born in all the vulnerability of the Christmas story. It's a story that's hard to retrieve in a culture that commercialises (*nearly to death*) this most holy of times, and in churches more drawn to ecclesiastical bling than to the riskiness of the real thing. But the story's simple meaning is clear: An infant in a manger is as vulnerable as it gets. What an infant needs is not theological debate but nurturing. The same is true of all the good words seeded in our souls that cry out to become embodied in this broken world. If these vulnerable but powerful parts of ourselves are to find the courage to take on flesh — to suffer yet survive and thrive, transforming our lives along with the life

of the world — they need the shelter of unconditional love, God's love in Christ. As we celebrate Christmas, the best gift we can give others — whatever their faith or philosophy may be — is a simple question asked with heartfelt intent: What good words wait to be born in us, and how can we love one another in ways that incarnate the Incarnation?

God bless your Christmas-time, hopefully with family and friends but always with God. Amen.

You would be most welcome to join us for Nativity Service on 11th December, Christmas Eve at 11pm and Christmas Day at 10.30am





## ARDARA, GLENCOLUMBKILLE, GLENTIES, INNISKEEL & LETTERMACAWARD

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

Summer seems to have passed so quickly, and autumn is but a blink. The seasons merge one into another and so the year passes. But let's face it, it is not unusual for us to have three seasons in one day here on the Atlantic coast! In life there are also seasons often varying in lengths and intensity. The shadow of Covid 19 is slowly passing and I have noticed a growing confidence with people slowly returning to church and lingering after the service to engage in fellowship. The Harvest Thanksgiving services were well attended

with most people remaining behind for a cup of tea and a chat. Inniskeel held a harvest supper directly after the service at which 80 people sat down together to share a meal of Thanksgiving.

Our attention now turns towards Christmas with celebrations commencing on Sunday, 11 December at 7 o'clock in St. Conall's Church Ardara, when the pupils of Wood School, after too long a break, will hold their annual nativity play which will surely brighten up the dreariest of winter days.

In addition to the usual services, services of Holy Communion will take place in Glenties 6.00pm. and Lettermacward 7.00pm. on 24th December and on 25th December in Ardara 9.30am and Inniskeel 10.45 am. These are joyful services when the children and grandchildren of the parishes returning home for the festive season, come together to worship in extended family groups. Life can be difficult, and when it is, we need to remember that joy, strength and understanding are to be found when we come together in fellowship.

## ARDSTRAW, BARONSCOURT, BADONEY UPPER & LOWER AND GREENAN

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



## BALTEAGH, CARRICK, TAMLAGHTARD AND AGHANLOO

Rector: Rev Rhys Jones  
Facebook: Aghanloo, Balteagh, Carrick and Tamlaghtard @TamlaghtardCofl

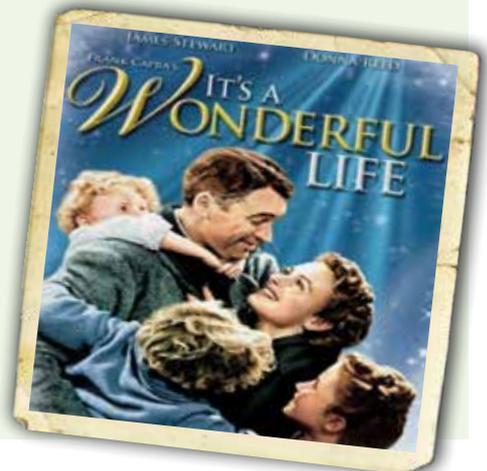


Five. That's the number of Academy nominations received in 1946 by perennial Christmas favourite *It's a Wonderful Life*. And what a marvellous film it really is. It is the story of hope's victory over despair, joy over adversity, peace over turmoil, and true love's triumph over hopelessness.

It is in so many ways the quintessential Christmas story. Those themes of hope, joy, peace, and love, aren't just the foundation of our Advent celebrations and praise; they are the very essence of and the gift of the Christ child we gather to adore and

worship on Christmas Day. In Emmanuel... *God with us* and among us, we receive not just a superlative life...but a purposeful life, a forgiven life, a redeemed life; lives characterised by *hope, joy, peace, and love*. For those reasons we can justly claim that in God made flesh it's more than just a *wonderful life*...it is in fact an eternal life.

As a busy year in the witness and work of our parishes draws to a close, I want to thank each of my parishioners for their support and endeavour throughout. Bless you all.



May the peace of God rule in your lives. May hope strengthen your faith and resolve each day in Christ. May your joys be fulfilled and your prayers answered. May you have healing, health, happiness, and prosperity in the new year. And may the love of God radiate throughout your every moment of every day always. Samantha, Gethin and I, and all the Rectory family wish you a wonderful & Merry Christmas and happy New Year. Amen.

**14 Dec** and culminate with a special service of Holy Communion in the **Diocesan Cathedral of St Columbs on December 21st** during which the vestry and parishioners of St. Cadan's will present the Tamlaghtard Chalice (dated 1680) to the Cathedral for display purposes. Why not join us as together we bring our Advent mid-week worship to a special close? Everyone welcome.

### Advent Study

Join us in an exploration of some of the themes and motifs of this most special and holy season in a study series to be held at the Rectory on the dates listed below. As always this promises to be an open and welcoming time of fellowship, discussion, laughter, & tea. Study commences each week @ **7.30pm**. Everyone welcome - it would be great to have you join with us. Rev Rhys.

Week 1/ Monday 7th Nov:  
**'Hope'** fulfilled in the Annunciation  
Week 2/ Monday 14th Nov:  
**'Faith'** in adversity & fear  
Week 3/ Monday 21st Nov:  
**'Joy'** even on the periphery  
Week 4/ Monday 28th Nov:  
**'Peace'** reconciliation in Christ

### 9 Lessons & Carols

We again welcome the wonderful Hamilton Band to Drummond Cricket Club to lead us in our annual service of readings & carols on **Sunday 11th December at 4pm**. It promises to be a fabulous afternoon. Everyone welcome.

**Senior Citizens Christmas Dinner Wednesday 14th December in Christ Church Limavady Parish Hall at 12 noon**. It will be preceded by a short service of Holy



Communion. There is no set cost but there will be an opportunity to make a donation towards the cost of the meal. As Christmas approaches, I really hope that you take advantage of this opportunity to meet around a table of fellowship and I encourage you to do so. From the beginning of this month each parish church will have a 'sign-up' sheet to register your intention to attend our dinner. Alternatively you can simply contact me directly. I ask that you book your place early in order to provide a clear indication of numbers for catering purposes. Bless you all. Rev R.

### Christmas Services

On Christmas Eve we celebrate the Eucharist in Carrick Parish Church at 6pm and in St. Canice's Balteagh at 10.30pm. On Christmas Day we join in a combined service held in St. Lugh's Aghanloo at 10.30am. Please do plan to attend these important services as together we welcome the Christ Child into our midst.



### Musical Extravaganza

Our recent concert with the band of 2nd Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment proved an extraordinary success for its host parish St. Cadan's Tamlaghtard. A packed church enjoyed a wonderful night of military music, fellowship, & celebration. A huge thank you to all involved!

### Mid-Week Advent Services

@ **7.30pm** in Carrick Parish Church each Wednesday of Advent on the following dates: Wednesday **30th Nov, 7th Dec,**

## ST. TIDA'S, PARISH OF BALLYSCULLION, BELLAGHY

NSM in Charge: Rev Brian Hassan





## CAMUS-JUXTA-BANN (MACOSQUIN)

Rector: Rev Paul Lyons

[www.camus-juxta-bann.org](http://www.camus-juxta-bann.org)

Facebook: St Mary's Church @camusjuxtabannconnections

After two years of restrictions and fear, it's a joy to look forward to celebrating Christmas together as a church family. Below are the Christmas events and services @ St Mary's.

On **Thursday 1st December 4.30pm** we'll switch on the **Macosquin Christmas Tree lights** at the church. We are grateful to Macosquin Primary School Choir for joining us and singing some carols and to Millar Catering for providing a free poke of chips for each child! We'll also have some hotdogs for everyone.

On **Sunday 11th December 6pm** at the **Christingle** service we remind ourselves about the Christmas message.

On **Sunday 11th December at 4pm** we plan to hold a **Family Party** for children in KFC (Kids For Christ) and their parents, along with any other young families in our church. We will have fun, games, craft and make Christingles in the Upper Hall. After eating we will all go together to the Christingle Service in church.

On **Sunday 18th December 10.30am** the **Young People retell the Christmas story**. It's one of the favourite church services in the year with all the kids taking part. They'll be practising in the weeks leading up to Christmas so we'd encourage all parents to make sure their kids are at KFC each Sunday.

That same day at **6pm** we gather for the annual **Service of Nine Lessons and Carols**

by candlelight. Again this year the choir will help to lead the worship. We're looking forward to the adult and kids' choirs singing together! On **24th December 11.15pm** we gather for the **Christmas Eve Communion** service by candlelight.

On **Christmas Day 10.30am** the **All Age Family Celebration** is followed by a short communion service. This 30 minute service helps adults and kids to remember the reason we celebrate Christmas. The young people are welcome to bring a Christmas gift and show the congregation what Santa brought them!

As I make plans for these services I am aware we are also living through times of great political and economic uncertainty. We are not sure how they will impact our lives over the coming months. But there is something that never changes, the assurance and hope of the Christmas message. For at the heart of Christmas is God's love, peace and revelation.

We read in Matthew 1v21 Mary was told by an angel, *'You will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'* The name Jesus means, 'The Lord saves.' Christmas is about God's love for the world. He sent his Son to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins so we can know forgiveness and eternal life.

In Luke 2:14 a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel praising God and saying, *'Glory to God in the highest and on*

*earth peace to men on whom his favour rests.'* Saint Paul tells us God's peace passes all understanding. In the storms of life God is the one we can trust. He is a rock and the source of comfort and strength in times of trial.

In Matthew 2:11 the wise men, *'On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary and bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, incense and of myrrh.'* The wise men's gifts reveal to us who Jesus is.

Gold was a precious metal and in biblical times was a gift for a king. For the wise men they came to worship Jesus as the King of Kings.

Frankincense was a resin found in incense and used as part of sacrifice offerings and in worship. For the wise men they came to worship Jesus as the Son of God.

Myrrh was used to embalm a dead body. For the wise men they came to worship Jesus as the Saviour of the world.

As we journey towards Christmas this year may the events of the Nativity bring you and your family love, peace and revelation.

Happy Christmas from the Lyons family.





## CAMUS-JUXTA-MOURNE (STRABANE)

Rector: Rev John White

Facebook: Christ Church, Strabane @ChristChurchStrabane

Our Vision... 'Preach the Word... be shaped by the Word'.

"A Christmas Alleluia" is a contemporary song by Chris Tomlin celebrating the day of Christ's birth. It recalls the scene and song of the angel hosts of heaven, singing, "All glory to our God and King!" And it calls us to sing "Alleluia," which means "Praise the Lord!" We give praise because "Christ, the Saviour of the world... has come!" We sing "Alleluia" because Christ's is the highest name of all.

Psalm 146 is a rousing song of praise that celebrates God's faithfulness. And today, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we are reminded in this psalm to praise the Lord and put our trust in him alone. For God "reigns forever . . . for all generations."

We are reminded in Psalm 146 that God is the Maker of all things and that "he remains faithful forever." With the coming of Christ,

God fulfils his promises to send the Messiah, the Saviour; he is faithful forever.

Christ our King is born! And because of his birth, life, death, and resurrection, he demonstrates his supremacy over all. He comes to uphold "the cause of the oppressed" and to give "food to the hungry." He "sets the prisoners free . . . gives sight to the blind," and "lifts up those who are bowed down." And because Christ reigns for-er, we sing "Alleluia"; we "praise the Lord all [our] life."

*Alleluia, Lord Jesus Christ! We give you praise for coming to bring your kingdom to this earth. May we praise you as long as we live. Amen.*

### Christmas In Christ Church

#### Sunday December 4

Christmas Carol Concert with Strabane Brass Band 6:30pm

#### Tuesday December 13

8pm, Marie Curie Community Carols, Alley Theatre

#### Sunday December 18

11:30am, Children's Nativity Service of 9 Lessons and Carols, 6:30pm

#### Saturday 24th December

11pm, Christmas Communion

#### Sunday 25th December

10:30am Christmas Celebration

## CAPPAGH & LISLIMNAGHAN

Rector: Rev Canon Derek Quinn Email: derekquinn2@aol.com

Tel: 028 8224 2572

Facebook: Cappagh Parish Church @CappaghParishChurch



## CHRIST CHURCH CASTLEDAWSON

Rev Canon Colin Welsh: Rector and Rural Dean

Tel: 028 7946 8235

Email: colin.welsh@talktalk.net

Facebook: Christ Church Castledawson





## CASTLEROCK, DUNBOE AND FERMOYLE

Rector: Rev Chris MacBruithin

Facebook: Parish of Castlerock & Dunboe @CastlerockDunboe

This autumn has been a special 'Season of Invitation' in Christ Church and St Paul's. We were all heartened to see old friends and new returning to services on 'Back to Church Sunday' on 28th September. On the following Sunday 2nd October our guest preacher at our Harvest Thanksgiving services was Diocesan Youth Officer Claire Hinchliff. Both churches were beautifully decorated, and a whole van load of donations was received by Causeway Foodbank.

A social high point in parish life was the Beetle Drive in October, with great fun had by old and young, and good chat over a cup of tea. So good in fact that our newly constituted social committee has already plans for a Christmas Quiz, a walking treasure hunt and a 'Can't Cook, Won't Cook' night with Paula McIntyre.

our Facebook page @CastlerockDunboe in November, and our annual Carols by Candlelight for all the community is in Christ Church at 4pm on Sunday 18th December.

Look out for our Advent programme - a Parish Advent Calendar will appear on

## 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](http://www.cccmsp.org)

Facebook Page: CCCMSP @cccmsp

Our Vision: Transforming Community, Radiating Christ.



Rev Canon Katie McAteer, Pastoral Director  
E [pastoral@cccmsp.org](mailto:pastoral@cccmsp.org)  
M 07813 885145



Mrs Angela Dobbins  
Parish Administrator  
E [administrator@cccmsp.org](mailto:administrator@cccmsp.org)  
O 028 71358925

Our vision verse:

Hebrews 10 verses 24-25 '**...let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another...**'

'Christ Church Open Door' ministry to the local community has been welcoming people from our local community as well as attracting those who are visiting our city. We are planning to expand this ministry to include 'Holy Trinity Open Door' in Culmore and 'St Peter Open Door' in Belmont. If you are interested in becoming involved in any of these initiatives, please contact the Rector. Offering a welcome is an important first step to building good relationships.

We have seen some new members join us recently and do continue to welcome them and reach out in friendship. If you are one of our newer members, you are very welcome and if you have any questions please speak to any of the clergy or other parishioners.

Holy Trinity, Culmore celebrated a new chapter in our worshipping life in Culmore in October when the Bishop dedicated the new organ. If you haven't heard Marion leading our musical worship on the new organ come along on the 1st or 2nd Sunday in Culmore at 10:00am.

It always takes time to establish new healthy habits. I hope you have been joining me in prayer for the ministry and mission in CCCMSP, by praying the words of the Lord's

Prayer each day. Although we don't gather to do this, it is an act of fellowship to invite the power of God, in a fresh way, to move in our lives and community.

The Season of Remembrance is a time when we recollect the Communion of Saints and remember all those who have died. This is challenging time of year for many people who have lost loved ones in the world wars and in conflicts here in Ireland, and in other countries. Please take some time in the coming months to pray for peace, peace of mind for those who live daily with mental ill-health and peaceful relationships across our society and in the wider world.

Yours in Christ, Robert+

## CLONDEHORKEY, CASHEL & MEVAGH

Vacant

Rural Dean: Rev David Skuce

## CLONDEVADDOCK, ROSSNAKILL, PORTSALON & LEATBEG

Vacant

Rural Dean: Rev David Skuce

## CLOONEY

Rector: Rev David McBeth

Email: [allsaintscloney@btinternet.com](mailto:allsaintscloney@btinternet.com)

Facebook: All Saints Clooney



Curate-Assistant:  
Rev Andrea Cotter

At Christmas, we all like to give gifts to our family and friends to show them just how much we love them. At Christmas, God gave us the costliest, most precious gift we could ever receive: His only begotten Son. Jesus came as a baby, was born in a stable and died for our sins, 33 years later, on a crude wooden cross. Then, on Easter morning, God raised Him from the dead! What gift could you give him that He really *wants*? A prayer? A song? Going to church on Christmas Eve? Good, but not enough. At Christmas, the only gift that is *worthy* of being given to Him, the only gift He really hopes for, is that which is most precious to you — and most costly: your heart, your life, your love, your future. Perhaps you've withheld this special gift from Him, but now is the time to change that. At this special time, don't withhold from Him the only gift He really desires from you.

Over recent months, at All Saints, we ran a very successful Alpha Course with parishioners and members of the local

community meeting each Friday night in the All Saints Centre. The parish also hosted its Annual Mission in October. The guest speaker was Rev Russ Parker from England. Worship was led by our own praise band, 'Beloved', with special guest singers each evening.

The annual Country Music Night, featuring Gerry Guthrie, David James, Joe Moore, Kenny Archer and other supporting artists, was once again a tremendous success, providing another sensational night of Country entertainment.

As a Garrison church, All Saints hosted special Remembrance Services and concerts to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice during past wars and conflicts. On Thursday 10th November, the Ulster University Choir led the worship for an Act of Remembrance Service. On Friday 11th November, we held a cross-community concert and Act of Remembrance in Lisneal school, featuring Kildoag Pipe Band, Churchill Flute Band, The Swingtime Starlets and Lisneal Choir. On Sunday 13th November,

the Royal British Legion joined us for an Act of Remembrance Service. At our 6pm Remembrance Service, Bryan Philips, who lost both his legs while serving with the Army in Afghanistan, gave an emotional talk on how his injuries affected his life and the lives of his family, and how his faith gave him the courage and strength to carry on.

The Parish Praise Service takes place on the 1st Sunday of each month at 7pm. Our guest speakers over the past months have included Jonny Campbell from Alpha, David Armstrong from Crosslinks, Neville Jones from Abaana Ministries and Rev James Boyd of Mossley Parish. The speakers have all been excellent, and we take this opportunity to invite you to come along to our monthly Praise Service.

God has richly blessed the parish with a charity shop and café. Both have exceeded our wildest expectations. The charity shop and café have become a hub to help support parishioners and members of the

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local community who are struggling with the current economic crisis. Owing to their success, the parish has decided to share some of its blessings by supporting four charities – Hope Northwest, Foyle Foodbank, SAMS and Crosslinks – by donating £1000 to each. This is something the parish hopes to continue to do on a regular basis.

#### Dates for the December Diary

**Sunday 4th and 11th: Gift Sunday.**  
Parishioners are invited to bring gifts

marked man or women which will then be distributed to local nursing homes and the local community.

**Sunday 11th: Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance** for those who have died in the parish and the local community over the past year.

**Sunday 18th:** During the morning service, the Sunday School will stage a Nativity Play; at 7pm we will have a service of Nine Carols and Lessons with worship led by the Britannia Band.

**Christmas Eve:** Community Nativity Play at 6pm and Christmas Eve Holy Communion at 11pm.

**Christmas Day:** 10am Holy Communion and Family Service. Toys welcome!!

Every Blessing for Christmas and the New Year.

## CONVOY, MONELLAN & DONAGHMORE

Canon David Ferry in charge  
Mob: 004478 1398 3772

#### Canon Ferry writes:

During Advent and the Christmas season we have many opportunities to radiate Christ in the community in which we live. Consumer advertising raises the profile of Christmas to the extent that every family will be inundated with the latest offers, the most sought after commodity and no doubt advice about how we can all have a happy Christmas.

But the advertisers will say little about the birth of Christ or about a God whose love was demonstrated so vividly in the birth, life, death and resurrection of this Holy Child. In the lead up to Christmas many things will seek to crowd our lives and it is easy to lose the impact of the birth of a Saviour on our world and on the lives of countless people.

The challenge and opportunity is ours to radiate the real meaning of Christmas and

to proclaim again what the Birth of Christ means to us as individuals, as a parish and as a community of faith.

May it be to God's glory that we, making a special effort, will find in the midst of the Christmas rush that quiet place, where we may hear again with a renewed consciousness those words of God's good news, 'Do not be afraid. Behold I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people, for unto you is born in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord'.

Lynn and I take this opportunity to thank you all for the very warm welcome we have received to the parish and wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and may God in his love richly bless you all in 2023.

#### Remembrance Sunday

Across the parish in our Remembrance Services there a real sense that people

understood the tremendous sacrifice that was made by so many in defence of peace in the world. We thank all our parishioners for the way they participated in the worship and as in past years the Royal British Legion will be supported by their generosity. Lest we Forget.

#### Private Communion

If you know of anyone who is ill or housebound and would appreciate Holy Communion at home this Christmas please let Canon Ferry know as soon as possible with a name, a telephone number and of course the Eircode! His number is Tel. 07813983772

For information regarding our Christmas Services and other dates for your diary see our parish newsletter.



## CONWAL UNION WITH GARTAN

Rector: Rev David Houlton

Facebook: The Parish of Conwal Union @ConwalParish



Associate Priest:

Rev Heather Houlton



It was lovely to at last be able to have a more-or-less normal autumn in Conwal and Gartan. Church Services in both churches have run without interruption by lockdowns. Conwal Sunday School has begun to rebuild after 2 1/2 years when only a few outdoors family activities were possible. The Youth group has been meeting regularly in Bonagee, and the Youth work run by the Genesis Project has continued in Church Hill.

It has been particularly good to be able to hold special services normally - Harvest Thanksgivings at Conwal (two on 25th Sept) and Gartan (9th October) were particularly well attended and church members were delighted to welcome Revd Chris Mac Bruithin as our guest preacher. Remembrance Sunday was once more a time when we remembered the people of Donegal who gave their lives in the world wars and more recently in Ireland's

peacekeeping deployments or on duty with An Garda Siochana.

Plans for Advent and Christmas are given below. As always we rejoice with the parents of those recently baptised: Paige and Callie; we celebrate with the families of those who have married: Nicola Moore and Hugh Herrity; and we mourn with the family and friends of Frances Russell - may she rest in peace... and rise in glory!

### Plans for Christmas 2022:

#### Sun 27th Nov

10.30am Advent Sunday Service at Conwal Parish Church  
12.30pm Advent Sunday Service at St Columba's, Gartan

#### Thur 8th Dec

7pm Gartan National School Christmas play and Carol Service at St Columba's, Gartan.

#### Wed 14th Dec

Evening Conwal Singers' Christmas Concert at Conwal Parish Church.

#### Sun 18th Dec

10.30am Sunday School Christmas Play at Conwal Parish Church.  
12.30pm A Service of Lessons at St Columba's, Gartan.

#### Sat 24th Dec

7pm A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols by candlelight at Conwal Parish Church.  
11.30pm Midnight Communion Service at St Columba's, Gartan.

#### Sun 25th Dec

8am Traditional Christmas Communion at Conwal Parish Church.  
10.30am Family Christmas Communion at Conwal Parish Church.

## CUMBER UPPER, CUMBER LOWER, BANAGHER AND LEARMOUNT

Rector: Rev David Slater

Tel: 028 7133 8214

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



=It began on 8th August this year – the annual beginning of the attempt to ruin Christmas. In a shop, there it was over the tannoy and wafting between the aisles – “*Away in a manger*”. It is now November and it is full steam ahead – boxes of Celebrations, plastic trees, turkey clubs, Old Spice gift packs, cards with pictures of drunken Santa and bars of nougat (a confectionary created by dentists designed to increase their profit margin by removing every filling from the human

mouth and if you leave it for six months before opening, so much the better, you can also break your front teeth as well – what is wrong with Turkish delight – at least your teeth rot slowly?) Try as we might though, on our annual path of Christmas destruction, desecration even, we have never succeeded in ruining Christmas. Hooray to that, because Christmas is a miracle, a miracle that we are slow to see, ground down as we are by “*Away in a manger*” played incessantly since the 8th August.

A miracle that dawned again on a helpful neighbour – a young clergyman nonetheless – in the following Christmas tale.

The young clergyman and his wife had to do all the things you do on Christmas Eve. They string the lights and hang the ornaments. They supervise the hanging of the stockings. They tuck in the children.

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They lug the presents down out of hiding and pile them under the tree. Just as they're about to fall exhausted into bed, the husband remembers his neighbour's sheep. The man asked him to feed them for him while he was away, and in the press of other matters that night he forgot all about them. So down the hill he goes through knee-deep snow. He gets two bales of hay from the barn and carries them out to the shed. There's a forty-watt bulb hanging by its cord from the low roof, and he turns it on. The sheep huddle in a corner watching as he snaps the baling twine, shakes the squares of hay apart, and starts scattering it. Then they come bumbling and shoving to get at it with their foolish, mild faces, the puffs of their breath showing in the air. He is reaching to

turn off the bulb and leave when suddenly he realizes where he is. The winter darkness. The glimmer of light. The smell of the hay and the sound of the animals eating. Where he is, of course, is the manger. He only just saw it. He, whose business it is above everything else to have an eye for such things, is all but blind in that eye. He, who on his best days believes that everything that is most precious anywhere comes from that manger, might easily have gone home to bed never knowing that he had himself just been in the manger. The world is the manger. It is only by grace, and with the eyes of faith, that he happens to see this other part of the miracle.

Miracle it is. The Word made flesh. Jesus is the Word made flesh. Ultimate mystery: "God from God, Light from light, true

God from true God ... For us and for or salvation, He came down from heaven .. and was made human" - the words of The Nicene Creed. As we look closely at the child in His mother's arms, smelling as we do of Old Spice, mince pies, mulled wine and, if we are not careful, cynicism, what we see is the Resurrection and the Life that she holds in her arms. Mystery indeed, but the birth of this child into the darkness of the world has made possible, not just a new way of understanding life, but a new way of living life. (Adapted Frederick Buechner)

From everyone in Cumber Upper, Cumber Lower, Learmount and Banagher have a very Happy Christmas and avoid the nougat.

## DERG & TERMONAMONGAN

Rector: Rev Peter Ferguson

Tel: 028 8167 1362

Facebook: Derg Parish Church. Termonamongan Parish



Deacon Intern:  
Rev Claire Henderson



Advent is a time of waiting and watching patiently, with expectation. Our Advent readings this year are from Matthew and we begin by recalling our faith history, remembering the faith of our ancestors, waiting in hope for the coming of the Messiah. We do not know the time when he will come again but we need to be watching and waiting in expectation. If we look at the world in which we live, we recognise like our ancestors a world in need of a Saviour.

So, if we take this into the context of our own lives what does it mean to be watching and waiting patiently? Well, if we think about it, our lives are full of watching and waiting - waiting for the bus or the train, waiting at traffic lights for the red to turn to green, waiting for that letter or email that you have been anxiously anticipating. In the watching and the waiting if we have eyes that see and ears that hear we will experience God's presence in all that is happening around us. The watching and the waiting give us the

opportunity to notice things around us that we are often too busy to see. You may look more closely at someone's expressions or how they speak, seeing how everyday experiences can challenge every part of them.

Advent is a time of watching and waiting but in HOPE. This advent season as you are going about your daily life, why not take a few moments to sit back, watch and wait, being still and more aware of the presence of God as we wait for the joyous Saviour's birth.

*"In this day, this season, miracles will grow within, unfurl, bear fruit. And the heart that makes time and space for Him to come will be a glorious place. A place of sheer, radiant defiance in the face of a world careening mad and stressed. Because each day of Advent, we will actively wait. We will wait knowing that the remaking of everything has already begun."* - Ann Voskamp, The Greatest Gift

**MU Christmas Meeting** - Tuesday 27th Nov @7pm in Derg Parochial Hall - we'll be putting

together hampers for clergy to deliver to the housebound.

**Ignite Christmas Party** - Thursday 1st Dec in Derg Youth Hall, with Claire Hinchliff.

**Sunday School and Parish Family Christmas Party Social with Santa** - Saturday 3rd Dec 10.30am - 12.30pm.

**A life of Grace** - Queen Elizabeth II through the decades - Saturday 10th Dec 11am - 4pm in St Bestius, Killeter.

**Sunday School Nativity Play** - Sunday 18th Dec.

**Carols by Candlelight** - Sunday 18th Dec @ 7pm in St Bestius, Killeter with seasonal refreshments afterwards.

**Christmas Eve Holy Communion** - St Bestius @ 7pm, Derg @ 8pm.

**Christmas Day Family Service** - St Bestius @ 10am, Derg @ 11am.



## DESERTMARTIN AND TERMONEENY

Rector - Revd Philip Benson

Tel: 07850 345156

Facebook: St Comgall's, Desertmartin & St Conlus, Knockloughrim - Church of Ireland

Email: dtparishes@gmail.com

Web: dtparishes.com

### Bible Study

Our new weekly Bible Study has begun on Tuesday evenings, at 7:30pm, in the Desertmartin School Building. The group is relaxed and aimed at a level that suits everyone. Over the next few months, we will be reading through the Gospel of St Luke. All welcome.

### Sunday Service CDs and DVDs

We are now recording our Sunday Services for YouTube and Facebook. Once again we can also provide video DVDs and audio CDs

of these services. If you are housebound or know of some who would appreciate a copy of the services, so they can watch or listen at home or in hospital, please speak to Rev Philip.

### Termoneeny Sunday School

We are excited that Sunday School will be resuming at Termoneeny. We plan to begin in December with two "taster" sessions for the children, then resume properly in January. Please note that Sunday School at Termoneeny will take place during the

Sunday service at 10:30am. The children will remain with their families in church for the first part of the service, then they will go out to Sunday School in the Methodist buildings, which lasts for the rest of the service. Children of primary school age can be left with the leaders; however, if your child is younger, you are most welcome to go out to Sunday School with them.

Children of secondary school age are welcome to be helpers. We will distribute consent forms over the next few weeks.



## DONAGHEADY

Rector: Revd Capt Richard Beadle

Tel: 028 7151 0666 Mob: 07392 844 721

Email: stjamesdonagheady@gmail.com

On the night of my institution to St James, I was asked to make formal declarations in the vestry. To everyone's amusement and my horror, I struggled to say Donagheady in the Donemana way! Despite some language issues my wife Pauline and I are settling into our new surroundings rightly. Here's ten early observations and discoveries I have made.

- *The village has a great sense of community, evident in the many groups seeking to serve the local community in fabulous ways.*
- *A thick Donemana accent can be hard to understand!*
- *Presbyterians have often married Church of Ireland and vice versa.*
- *Relations with our Catholic neighbours are good, though there is always work to do – like the rest of this island there is a painful history. Time on its own is not a healer.*

- *Church leaders seek to work well together here, something I rejoice in.*
- *The fish & chips are to be recommended and the portions are huge - yet to try the Chinese.*
- *Sheep invade Donemana on a Saturday morning.*
- *Cricket pitches appear in all sorts of places.*
- *I appear to be the only Crystal Palace supporter (still looking).*
- *It can rain and flood nearly as much as Fermanagh!*

Nearly two months in as I write this, it is a privilege to be here and know God has called us to this place. This is a parish full of potential and challenges and there is much work to do for all of us.

Soon it will be Advent and Christmas and special services include the following. We would love to see you.

### Sunday 18th December 11am Nativity Service

**Wednesday 21st December 7.30pm Blue Service.** Christmas is not laughter and joy for everyone. On the darkest day of the year we remember this with a small quiet service for those who find Christmas difficult. We remember the bereaved and those struggling.

### Thursday 22nd December 7.30pm Traditional Carols and readings

### Christmas Eve 11.30pm Christmas Communion Service

### Christmas Day 10am Christmas Communion Service

**New Years Day Sunday 1st January 11am Christingle Service.** We welcome the new year with this service for the whole family.

Every blessing to you all.

## DONEGAL, KILLYMARD, LOUGH ESKE & LAGHEY

Rector: Venerable David Huss, Archdeacon of Raphoe

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Vacancies and illnesses among the clergy have left Raphoe diocese resembling a Swiss cheese for much of 2022. Hopefully it will soon be more like a Christmas pudding, crammed full of good things and with no gaps! Please pray that all parishes will be provided with pastors to feed and care for the flock.

### Harvests

We were pleased to have our four harvest services, with Bishop Andrew, Rev John Montgomery, Mrs Georgina Armstrong and Mr Sean McClafferty as preachers. Well done to the decorators, tea providers, musicians and others who did good work.

### Sunday Schools

Top marks to our Sunday School teachers who have been hard at work to ensure that Laghey and Donegal Sunday Schools are now running on the first and third Sundays of each month. Please be sure to bring your children along. Confirmation is expected to

take place around May or June 2023. Please indicate your intention to enrol young people for confirmation by emailing the rector.

### Mid-week events

It has been a delight to join with the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches for a joint Bible study group looking at the twelve apostles. We have also been running the Marriage Course, helped by Brian and Sandra Ross, which has been going well.

### Mustard Seed

The tea room continues to be busy, and the work of providing groceries and other practical help to people in need goes on. Many thanks to the volunteer team and to Louise our excellent manager.

### Christmas

At the time of writing these notes, Christmas services have not been finalised. We hope to return to a full range of Carol services, Communion etc. Please keep an eye on our

website and social media pages, and make sure you are receiving the weekly Parish Update which is sent out by email, post or WhatsApp as well as being posted online. If you are still not receiving the Update, get in touch!

Wishing you a very happy Christmas when it comes.

### Baptisms

Sophia Cochrane, 19th June, Donegal  
Zoey Alcorn, 26th June, Donegal  
Molly Butler, 30th October, Killymard

### Marriages

Stephen Horan & Emma Stewart,  
17th June, Lough Eske  
Thomas Ferris & Marlene Holden,  
27th June, Lough Eske

### Funeral

Kathleen Irwin, 30th October, Killymard.

## DRUMCLAMP & CLARE, LANGFIELD UPPER & LOWER

Rector: Rev Robert G. Keogh

Tel: 028 8167 1433

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

Facebook: Drumclamp ClareandLangfield



### Drumclamp Parish Auction

This year we had our best result ever and it was great to get back to normal after the covid pandemic. The auction is a great opportunity to recycle goods within our community. We thank all those who helped and supported the auction.

### Langfield Youth Club

It is good to see Langfield Youth Club well supported and up and running after being closed during the pandemic. The youth club meets on Fridays, 7:00 - 8:30 pm Juniors,

and 8:30 - 10:00 pm Seniors. We thank the two youth club leaders Mary Davis and Helen McSorley and the team of parents for their help in running the youth club.

### Langfield Parish Jubilee Celebrations

We all thoroughly enjoyed celebrating our late Queen's jubilee. The Jubilee Celebrations were well attended with a special jubilee service in Lower Langfield Parish church followed by a cup of tea in the church hall. Our thanks go to all who organised and worked for this event, those who put up the colourful bunting in the

church, hall and grounds, the choir and our organist Janette, those who provided tea in the church hall. A copper beech tree and two jubilee roses were planted in the church grounds and a commemorative plaque was erected in the hall porch to mark this event.

### Safeguarding Trust

Thousands of children visit Church of Ireland premises for worship and other social, educational and recreational purposes each week. The Church's ministry to them is a priority for the Church and it is only possible

because of the voluntary commitment of adults who are prepared to take responsibility for the children in their care.

Safeguarding Trust: the Church of Ireland's Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children, is designed to protect and enhance that ministry.

Safeguarding Trust: the Church of Ireland's Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children is designed to enable all parties

within the Church of Ireland to fulfil their proper responsibilities within this ministry:

*Safeguarding Trust serves to:*

- *create a safe environment which will promote healthy and fulfilling participation of children in spiritual, educational and recreational activities and minimise the possibility of harm, either deliberate or accidental.*
- *encourage safe practices for those who work with children.*

- *set out the appropriate responses and procedures in the event of an accident or incident taking place.*
- *safeguard those who work with children from the consequences of unfounded accusations.*

The Parish Panel members are the Rector, Brian Nethery, Claire O'Neill and Helen Rankin.

## DRUMACHOSE, LIMAVADY

Rector - The Reverend Canon Aonghus Mayes



## DRUMHOLM, KILBARRON & ROSSNOWLAGH

Rev Canon Brian Russell: Rector and Rural Dean  
Tel. 0749734025  
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## DRUMRAGH & MOUNTFIELD

Rector: Revd Graham Hare  
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[www.drumragh.derry.anglican.org](http://www.drumragh.derry.anglican.org)  
Facebook: St Columba's Church Omagh @stcolumbsomagh



Curate: Rev Alexander Chisnall

## DUNGIVEN & BOVEVAGH

Rector: Rev Mark Loney  
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[www.dungivenbovevaghparishes.com](http://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*

## EDENDERRY & CLANABOGAN

Rev Canon Robert Clarke: Rector and Rural Dean

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### Saviour's Birth

It's Christmas time at our house, and we're putting up a tree. I wish I could find some simple way to remember God's gift to me. Some little sign or symbol to show friends stopping by. God's special babe was born one day but really came to die. Some symbol of His nail-pierced hands, the blood He shed for me. What if I hung a simple nail upon my Christmas tree? I know it was His love for us that held Him to a tree, But when I see this simple nail, I'll know He died for me. It may seem strange at Christmas time to think of nails and wood, But both were used in Jesus' life to bring us something good. From manger bed, to crown of thorns, to death on Calvary, God used the wood and nails of man to set all people free. *Anon.*

### Parish Supper

After the enforced Covid interlude, we are looking forward to our annual Parish Supper this year in Edenderry. This will be held in our Parish Hall on Friday, December 2, gathering at 7 for 7.30pm. We hope to have the pleasure of musical entertainment provided by the Alistair Stewart Ceilidh Band.

### Christmas Eve/Day Services

The Church services on Christmas Eve/Day

will be celebrations of Holy Communion:

Christmas Eve - Edenderry - 11.00pm

Christmas Day - Edenderry - 8.30am

Clanabogan - 10.00am

### Carol Services

In Edenderry, our annual Service of Christmas Lessons and Carols will take place on the Sunday before Christmas Day, 18th December at 11.30am. Carol Service in Clanabogan - details to be confirmed.

### Ban on Christmas

Bill Jamieson, a few years back, wrote an article in *The Scotsman* in a December edition on the topic, 'The state is trying to kill off Christmas'. He wrote:

*'People have long bemoaned the commercialisation of Christmas. But there is another, graver threat to the spirit of this religious festival: a growing assertion by the state that Christmas would be better celebrated without Christianity at all. In very recent years the Scottish Parliament banned its officials from sending Christmas cards with a religious theme. Church officials in High Wycombe, meanwhile, were prevented from advertising a carol service in local libraries for fear it would offend non-Christians.'*

*'Such are the sacrifices demanded by the 'high priests of social inclusion'. The card that best*

*captures the new manners was the one sent by the then Culture Secretary, Tessa Jowell. This was a postmodern collage featuring ethnic tribal dancers, a television set, a train and the word 'Goal'. Short of sending out an entirely blank card, Ms. Jowell has got this new manners approach bang on: none of the images is Christian, or even seasonal.*

*'Is this how the modern state would have us celebrate Christ's birth: with meaningless prattle as proxy for faith?'*

### The Right and Blessed Spirit

The hymnwriter and preacher Charles Wesley admirably summed up the Christmas spirit in his well-known hymn

'Love Divine, All Loves Excelling':  
Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of Heaven, to earth come down.  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,  
All Thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,  
Pure, unbounded love Thou art.  
Visit us with Thy salvation;  
Enter every trembling heart.

### Christian Greetings

The rector wishes all readers a blessed, healthy and happy Christmas.

## FAUGHANVALE

Rector: Rev Canon Paul Hoey

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Mob: 00447712873322

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Facebook: [St Canice's Parish Church @StCaniceParishChurch](#)



### Celebrating The Light

Many of us are doing our best this winter to save on heating fuel and to economise on our use of electricity. I wonder if there

will be as many cheerful lights as usual this Christmas. Even if there aren't, we can make sure that the Light of Christ continues to shine out into every corner of our community

by bringing gifts, if we can, for children and families in need, and by inviting people to visit our festival **Christmas Nativity Scenes.**

### Giving And Sharing

As in previous years, anything we receive at this year's **Gift Service** will be used to support **Kinship Care** and the great work they do with children and families. Visit their website [www.kinshipcareni.com](http://www.kinshipcareni.com) to get a flavour of the difference our gifts will make. We appreciate that people who might like to give will not be able to do so this year because of the current cost of living pressures. The Select Vestry has set aside some funding to support parishioners who would benefit from financial help. Please don't hesitate to speak to the Rector, in strict confidence, about this. There are times for giving, and there are times for receiving. Both can bring blessing. In the words of a hymn we often sing:

*"We are pilgrims on a journey  
and companions on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load"*

### Thrift Shop

The great work at **New Beginnings** continues, thanks to our fantastic team of volunteers and the support of the local community. We've had a very successful year and will be sharing some of the proceeds with local charities.

### Time Capsule

As our year of celebration for our 200th anniversary draws near to an end, we will be planting a time capsule to give future generations an idea of the interesting things we experienced in 2022. We welcome ideas for items to include.

### Christmas Services

**Tuesday 6th December 7.30pm** –  
Altnagelvin Hospital Choir's Annual Carol Service, with a retiring collection for the Kevin Bell Repatriation Trust

**Sunday 11th December 11am** Nativity and Gift Service



**Sunday 18th December 11am**  
Carol Service

**Christmas Eve 11:30pm** Midnight Communion

**Christmas Day 10:30am** Christmas Family Service followed by Communion.

## GLENDERMOTT & NEW BUILDINGS

Rector: Rev Canon Robert Boyd

Tel: 028 7134 3001

Facebook: [Glendermott and New Buildings Church of Ireland](#)



Curate Assistant:  
Rev Johnny Lowden



The planning for Christmas is well advanced in many homes and parish life is no different. From The Sunshine Hour Christmas dinner to the Christmas Eve mid-night Holy Communion Service and everything in between. The Sunday School children are busy practising for their Nativity plays at the moment with just a few Sundays to go until the big performances. That reminds me of a story about a little girl who was examining a Christmas crib with her grandmother and commented, *'Granny, it's really nice, but there's one thing that bothers me: is the baby Jesus ever going to grow up? He's the same size He was last year!!'* The birth of Jesus must be the most well-known birth in the world, but are we really growing in our understanding of this story?

The birth of a baby is a time of great joy

and excitement and Jesus' birth is good news for all people! He is none other than the King of the universe, who has come as our Saviour. To experience this joy, we must let go of self-centredness and living as our own saviour. His deliverance and wholeness is a real cause for joy!

*'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'* (Luke 2:14). We may feel anything but peace with God, ourselves, or even with those closest to us at Christmas. How can a Jewish infant born to a peasant family in first century Palestine be the source of peace between God and man in the 21st century? Jesus came to establish such peace through His death on the cross. Trusting the Prince of Peace in our lives brings peace with God. If we ignore this message of Christmas, we won't benefit from it. As the

carol says, *'Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King.'*

I pray that in the midst of the busyness of Christmas we all take the time to remember to be joyful, and remember that the baby did in fact grow up and become our Saviour. May we give him the honour and worship that he deserves.

This is the first Christmas for the Rev Johnny and his wife Emily in the Parish and we thank God for their ministry among us so far. We are being blessed by their ministry and they have settled very quickly into a busy schedule within the Parish.

Rev Johnny and Emily, and May and I join in wishing all of you a very happy, blessed and peaceful Christmas-time.



## GWEEDORE (CARRICKFINN & BUNBEG) & TEMPLECRONE

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

When I reflect on the year past, several place names come to mind:  
**Creeslough, Ukraine, Pakistan, Somalia.**

And then I ask, Why these place names?  
And the answer comes:  
**Disaster, War, Flood, Famine.**

It is a sad reflection of the year when we saw vaccination for covid and an end to lockdown, but are impacted with inflation and worries over ever increasing bills. The good news is, God brings us out of darkness into light. Jesus is the light that shines in darkness.

During Advent, many of us light candles on the Advent wreath, not just to brighten dreary winter days, but to remind us that Jesus is the light in our lives. On the four Sundays of Advent, we light candles of:

### **love, joy, hope, and peace**

which are four wonderful results of a relationship with Christ. On Christmas Day, a fifth candle is lit and reminds us that Christ, the light of world came to save us from the dark times in our lives and in the world.

Jesus is our light in dark times.

My wish for this Christmas;  
*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13*

We live a world that is in a state of crisis and chaos. We need our lives to be filled with joy, hope and peace. All this having been made possible by the love that came down at Christmas, Jesus Christ our Saviour.

May we rejoice in his love, may we celebrate our freedom, may we cling to the hope he brings us - not just at Christmas, but every moment of every day.

### **Christmas services are:**

Family Communion service in St Crone's Parish Church, Dungloe, at 6.30pm on Christmas Eve.

Holy Communion in St Patrick's Parish Church, Bunbeg at 8.30pm on Christmas Eve.

and a Service of Holy Communion in St Andrew's Church, Carrickfinn at 10.00am Christmas Morning.

I wish you every blessing this Christmas.

## INVER, MOUNTCHARLES, KILAGHTEE & KILLYBEGS

Rector - Vacant  
In Charge during the Vacancy - Venerable David Huss, Archdeacon of Raphoe  
Tel: 074 9721075

At the time of writing, Inver & Mountcharles Churches are putting final touches in place for their fundraising Gospel Concert featuring The Ballybay Country Gospel Group with Pat Doherty and 'Folksy' Gerry. Inver N.S and Inver GFS will open the evening's event with some choruses. We trust this went well and all who attended enjoyed the fellowship of the occasion. We are very grateful for all the support we receive within our parish and community and from further afield.

Work is now completed on St. John's Church, Inver's church spire and the refurbishing of the gates of both there,

and at Christchurch Mountcharles work is underway.

As the pupils of Killaghtee N.S. and Inver N.S look forward to their Christmas holidays and all that that entails. They are also all hard at work preparing for Christmas services. Killaghtee N.S. are holding their annual School Christmas Service on Tues. 13th Dec - this year in Dunkineely Methodist Church at 7pm with all welcome. Meanwhile the pupils in Inver N.S. are preparing their Nativity Play for inclusion in the Inver & Mountcharles Parish Carol Service.

Inver Union Mothers' Union has once again

held a collection for the Donegal Women's Domestic Violence Service as part of their involvement in the '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence'. Members will also be joining with the ladies from The Methodist Women in Ireland, Dunkineely for their Joint Carol Service followed by an 'Evening Tea' and some Christmas themed fun and fellowship.

St. Peter's Church, Killaghtee will be having a hall full of crafters for their Craft Fair on 26th Nov. in the Church Hall at 11am-4pm - giving everyone the perfect opportunity to pick up that unique Christmas Gift.

Inver Union GFS held their annual collection of toiletries and small gifts for the residents of Harbour Lights Nursing Home and the patients of Killybegs Community Hospital and are delighted, that after an extended break due to Covid 19 restrictions, they will be able to travel to this year's Panto in the Balor Theatre.

Young and old alike are looking forward to the Christingle Service in St. John's Church, Killybegs on Christmas Eve. This service is always a lovely beginning to our Christmas Day Services.

To find out more details on our Christmas Services and other up and coming parish

events check out our Facebook pages - 'St. Peter's Church of Ireland Killaghtee', 'St. John's Killybegs' and 'Inver and Mountcharles Church'

Georgina Armstrong

## KILLOWEN (COLERAINE)

Rector: Rev Donard Collins

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Facebook: Killowen Parish Church @killowenparishchurch

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



*'How good is the God we adore, our faithful unchanging friend His love is as great as his power, and knows neither measure nor end'*

In welcoming parishioners and friends, old and new, weekly to Killowen, we give thanks for the Lord's blessing in 2022, and trust Him for all to come in 2023.

### 30th October 2022 - 505th - A Lutheran Thanksgiving

Killowen Parishioners and guests met on Sunday 30th October to recall the 505th Reformation Anniversary, with personal reflections of Luther's life. In recalling this great spiritual awakening, we considered how Luther's call for a biblical and Christ-centred life relates to our present distressed world.

### Coleraine - 'Remembrance 2022' (13th November 2022)

As one community, Coleraine's Clergy joined with the Royal British Legion, our townspeople, and wider organisations, in an Armistice Act of Remembrance. The sacrifices in World Wars, and conflicts since,

remain dear to the memories of all. Prayers conveyed a deep gratitude for past devotion to duty, in our own age of migrant victims and global distress, in aspiring peace to the nations.

### Killowen Services for Christmas 2022 & New Year 2023

#### Sunday 11th December

10:30am - Morning Parish Communion in Killowen  
6:00pm - Christmas Lessons + Carols with Downshire Brass Band

*Join Downshire Brass in an Evening of Seasonal Praise & Music held in Killowen Church - Carols, Readings, and festive songs*

#### Sunday 18th December

10:30am - Music & Songs of Christmas: with Coleraine Fife + Drum Band

#### Saturday 24th December

8:00pm - Christmas Eve Communion

#### Christmas Day - Sunday 25th December

10:30am - Christmas Day Prayers and Praise at Killowen

#### Sunday 1st January 2023

*'The Lord is faithful'*

10:30am - Morning Prayer on First Sunday of 2023

God bless, and best wishes to all from Killowen, at Christmas.

Donard Collins





## KILREA, TAMLAGHT O'CRILLY UPPER & LOWER

Rector: Rev Gary Millar

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

I begin with a word of thanks to Rev Richard and Timmy for their continued ministry during my time of illness and recovery and to everyone who has supported us as a family in prayer during this difficult time.

December is a time of excitement, preparation, and celebration. Very often one of the phrases we hear ourselves say is, "I don't have enough time". It's amazing that in the run up to Christmas time seems to go quicker and become more precious. Despite that, we always find time to eat 3 times a day, watch that favourite TV programme, whether live or on catch up, or go to that Christmas party. However, when it comes to the things of God, like going to church, prayer, reading our Bible or serving others, we can easily find a dozen excuses not to have the time to do them. During Advent and in the lead up to Christmas we prepare to celebrate the most incredible event ever, the Word becoming flesh - Jesus coming to dwell among us; God saying this is how much I love you; and that Jesus will come again to gather us unto himself. Therefore, it seems to me that the things of God should be a priority, that we should make time for going to church, prayer, read

the Bible and serve others. Jesus said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and then all these things will be added unto you". This year let's not make the other things our priority but the God who offers us life and salvation. The one we sing about when we proclaim, "O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; Oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!"

I encourage you to make time this year and join us for our additional Advent and Christmas services (other Sunday services as per normal apart from Christmas and New Year's Day):

### **December 4**

7.00pm Service of Lessons and Carols in St Nossonus Church, Innisrush

### **December 11**

7.00pm Service of Lessons and Carols in Tamlaght O'Crilly Parish Church

### **December 18**

10.00am Service of Lessons and Carols St Patrick's Church Kilrea  
5.00pm Christingle Service St Patrick's

Church Kilrea  
7.00pm Kilrea Town Churches Carol Service, 1st Kilrea Presbyterian Church

### **December 24**

9:30 pm United Christmas Eve Communion Service in St Patrick's Church Kilrea

### **December 25**

9.30am United Christmas Day Service in Tamlaght O'Crilly Parish Church

### **January 1**

11.00am United Communion Service, St Nossonus Church Innisrush

On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day parishioners across the KIT Group of Parishes are encouraged to attend whichever service(s) best suit their personal family obligations. On Christmas morning children are encouraged to bring their toys to church.

Best wishes and blessings  
Gary



## LECKPATRICK & DUNNALONG

Rev Canon Paul Whittaker: Rector and Rural Dean

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Email: revpaul07@btinternet.com

Facebook: Parishes of Leckpatrick and Dunalong Church of Ireland

### **Harvest Gift Days**

We had two lovely Harvest Thanksgiving services at the end of September in Dunalong and early October in Leckpatrick. Thank you to all those who

helped decorate the churches and provided the flowers fruit and veg for each church.

### **Widows and Widowers**

The Widows and Widowers afternoon tea

was on Thursday 13th October at 2pm in the Milliken Hall. It was an afternoon of entertainment and fellowship and a good time was had by all. Thank you to the team who baked and served sausage rolls, scones,

sandwiches and tray bakes. Also thanks to the Rector who provided the music.

### Parish Bingo

A Dunalong Parish Bingo night will take place on Monday 28th November at Bready Cricket Club from 7.30pm.

This is a fund raiser for the maintenance project in Dunalong Church. All Welcome!

### Christmas Bobbles

Sale of Christmas Bobbles from October 2022 £6 each or two for £10 in aid of Dunalong maintenance project.

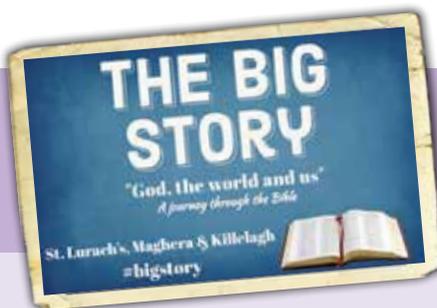


## MAGHERA & KILLELAGH

Rector: Rev Jonathan Brown  
Mob: 07307 859336 Tel: 02879 636031  
[www.magheraparish.co.uk](http://www.magheraparish.co.uk)

This term we've been exploring together the Bible's 'Big Story'. We began with creation and have been working our way through the Old Testament story each week. As we now start looking towards the Advent and Christmas seasons, our series is naturally taking us to the theme of hope for the one to come, found in the Prophets, for the whole story drives us towards the hope for the child of promise, the one through whom salvation will come and all God's blessings will flow.

We're planning that each Sunday morning throughout December will be a community and family-friendly, 'all age' service that will involve all the generations. We really intend this to be a 'family Christmas' - whether you're single, married, old or young - everyone is welcome into the church family. In addition to these 'all age' services in the mornings, we're complementing that with



a parish Christmas dinner and traditional carol services in the evenings as well as an outdoor carol-singing event in the run up to Christmas Day itself! It's shaping up to be a busy time for us in St Lurach's & Killelagh!

Beyond Christmas and into the New Year, we have a concert and a 'Gospel' music night planned; a 'Big Breakfast' just before Lent; an outdoor 'Sheep Hunt' in the rectory grounds, as well as a new Alpha course beginning in mid-January. Lots to look forward to and be excited about.

This Advent and Christmas, may the Lord pour afresh his hope into each of our hearts and draw us tightly into his warm embrace.

**4th Dec:** Killelagh 10.00am "Hope longed for"  
St Lurach's 11.30am All Age: "Hope longed for"



**7th Dec:** 7.00pm Christmas Dinner

**11th Dec:** St Lurach's 11.30am Nativity  
Killelagh 6.00pm Advent Carol Service:  
"Hope dawning"

**18th Dec:** Killelagh 10.00am "Hope upon us"  
St Lurach's 11.30am Christingle - "Hope and Love in the World"  
St Lurach's 6.00pm Nine Lessons and Carols: "The 'Big Story' of Hope"

**21st Dec:** Rectory 6.30pm Carols by Moonlight

**Sat 24th:** St Lurach's 11.00pm First Communion of Christmas: "Hope arrived"

**Christmas Day:** St Lurach's 10.00am  
All Age: "The Gifts of Hope"

## MOVILLE, GREENCASTLE, DONAGH, MALIN & CULDAFF

Bishop's Curate - Rev Alan McCracken

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Facebook: [Moville Upper and Lower Donagh, Cloncha, and Culdaff](#)



As we write this Christmas edition the Advent season will soon be upon us as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The origin of the word "Advent" is from the Latin word *adventus* which translates as "coming" or "arrival".

In the Christian Church advent is the period of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, and the celebration of the new life when someone accepts Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and also the anticipation of Jesus returning again in the last days to consummate his eternal Kingdom, (Acts 2:17, Hebrews 1:2, Revelation 1:7).

As Christians we are reminded of Advent with the lyrics from this famous hymn, *O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear: Rejoice! Rejoice!* This hymn represents our preparation and waiting during the season of Advent. It is a time to reflect on

our spiritual life over the past year, and to reconnect with God and the Church.

**During Advent the Moville group of Parishes will be hosting a variety of worship services.**

Sunday 27th November 2022 - our annual Advent candlelit service.

Mid-week Advent service on a Wednesday night @ 7pm across the group of parishes.

Sunday 11th December @ 2pm in Cloncha Malin, Claire from the Diocesan Youth Ministry team will be leading our service for all our young people as this year we are doing something different. This year we will be using Virtual Reality technology in which the young people will explore a Bible scene or play an immersive game followed by a short lesson. The music for this service will be led by Parish Reader Katie Turner.

Our services of Nine Lessons & Carols will begin on Sunday 18th December 2022.

Also this year I am very pleased to announce Clodagh Warnock with the school of music orchestra from Moville Community College will be leading the hymns for our Carol service.

### Christmas Eve

Service of Holy Communion - Culdaff @ 4.30pm, Greencastle @ 6.30pm.

Looking forward in our Parish ministry the New Year is looking good we have plans to start a youth group and put together a youth praise band. The name for our Youth Ministry will be **M** (mission) **A** (and) **R** (religious) **S** (songs). **MARS** inspired by our young people during Confirmation classes this year. All parish events can be viewed on our Facebook page.

I would like to wish each and everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

*God's Blessing Revd Alan McCracken.*

## RAPHOE, RAYMOCHY & CLONLEIGH

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

Email: [dwtcrooks5@gmail.com](mailto:dwtcrooks5@gmail.com) Facebook: [St Eunan's Cathedral @cathedralraphoe](#)

Best wishes to Darren Tease and Rachel Goudie who were married in the Cathedral by Rev John Hay on 22nd July, and to Darren Cronin and Hazel Parke who were married in the Cathedral on 13th August

The death of Ann McFarland, aged 52 years after a long illness caused great sorrow. To her husband and her nine children, we extend our very deepest condolences. Her burial at Raymochy Parish Graveyard was particularly traumatic, given the very young age of the younger children and

grandchildren. We also sympathise with the family of Mr Hugh Gillespie who was buried in Clonleigh Graveyard on 3rd October.

The death of Alexander (Ally) Freen has deprived the Cathedral Parish and the much wider district, of one of its most notable and much-loved characters. Ally, aged 85, was just always there! He would be in the Consistory Court before services, with that great big beaming smile to welcome friends and strangers alike. He had served on the Select Vestry for countless years, and was

People's Church Warden, a role which he fulfilled with great conscientiousness. He did more for St Eunan's Cathedral than only God knows. His enormous Funeral on 18th October, and the numerous tributes paid to him were a testament to this great servant of the Church of God. We sympathise deeply with his wife Frances, with his family, Alexander, Cynthia and Ian and with all the grandchildren. Ally took a great interest in the Cathedral Hall, the church and the graveyard.

He will be sorely missed, and we thank Almighty God for his long life of service to his church.

The painting of the west wall of the Cathedral revealed the weak state of the plaster. This has had to be stripped back to the stone, revealing an old door, which will be preserved in the completed work. The Select Vestry and Glebes Wardens are to be highly commended for all the work they are doing to get this seemingly never-ending work completed.

The Service of Thanksgiving for the completion of renovations at the Cathedral has had to be postponed until the work is finally complete. The Service of Dedication of the new heating system and commemorative plaque in memory of the late Jim and Doris Bonar at Raymochy Church on Sunday 23rd October, was a lovely occasion. We remember Jim and Doris with great affection. The church is now warm and comfortable for the approaching winter and is looking really well.

The Christmas Tree Festival will be held

from 25th to 27th November. All the services and other activities for Advent and Christmas will be announced nearer the time.

Once again, as Rural Dean, may I express the gratitude of all of us for the great help given by Canon John Deane and Mr Peter Clampett.

## ST. AUGUSTINE'S, LONDONDERRY

Rector: Rev Nigel Cairns  
[www.saintaugustines.co.uk](http://www.saintaugustines.co.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/weechurch](https://www.facebook.com/weechurch)



We're always amazed at how quickly time passes by.... guilty as charged as Advent begins and the Christmas season rolls! Services over the next few months largely remain in the well-established pattern of morning worship on Sundays at 11am and Holy Communion on Tuesdays at 10.30am. On Advent Sunday there will be readings, music and hymnody to focus our minds on the 'now and not yet' themes of Advent. Scripture, meditation and music will consider how Christ is received as a baby at Christmas, and also emphasise how we might receive Christ in our hearts, in our lives and at the end times, when we ponder either His return or our entering His nearer presence - whichever happens first. These familiar Advent themes will dominate the services until 11th

December, when we will be delighted to have the children and young people leading the morning service, as they retell the Christmas story like only children can! On 18th December the Service of Lessons and Carols will firmly set the scene for Holy Communion on Christmas Eve at 11.30pm and Holy Communion again on Christmas Day at 10.30am (note the earlier time). Once the new year turns, we settle back into our normative pattern of worship with the exception of New Year's Day, which will be Morning Prayer rather than Holy Communion. On 12th December, we are looking forward to welcoming the congregation and guests from the Emergency Services Carol Service (held in St. Columb's Cathedral) to the halls at St. Augustine's for refreshments.

The Winter Concert Series at the wee church will run throughout the Christmas season, with a few ambitious plans already in the pipeline. At the time of writing it is too soon to confirm, but suffice to say that a few popular names will return to St. Augustine's on the light classical and operatic front, together with more contemporary music programming taking us through Winter and towards the Spring. Keep an eye on our

facebook page and also check out Music Capital for the Winter/Spring line up. [www.musiccapital.org](http://www.musiccapital.org) The Henry Girls (Christmas evening performance followed by family matinee), Duke Special and Victoria Geelan are all on the programme.

Additionally, St. Augustine's was pleased to welcome Warren Smyth and the Avoda Praise band. It was lovely to reconnect with our good friend Eilidh Patterson again, who was the special guest artist on the evening. St. Augustine's Church Café and Flea Markets will feature in the coming months also, with the café reverting to its winter opening on the day of the markets only - usually the last Saturday of every month. That said, there's always an extra market day on the lead up to Christmas; 10th December, 17th December, 28th January, 25th February, 25th March. As always, prayer requests can be made through the church café.

In terms of building and improvement work, the congregation is pleased to be able to complete the storm glazing on the

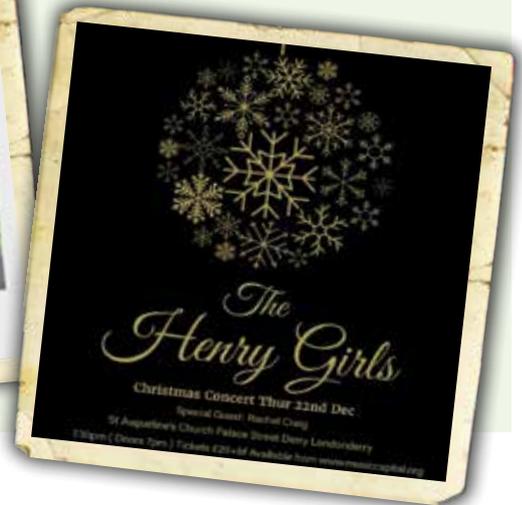
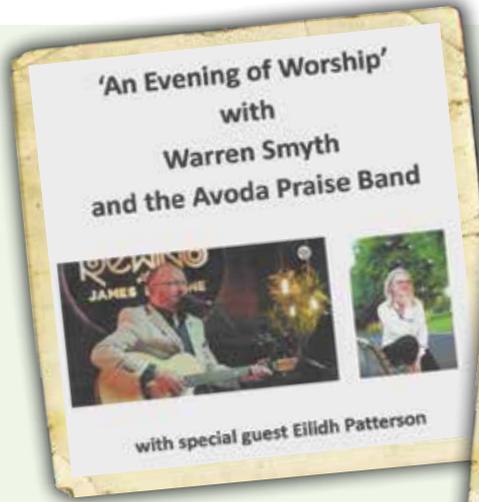
*Continued on page 54...*



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west and north sides of the church in the coming months. Additionally, there will be new floor covering fitted in the vestry following some damage caused by flash flooding earlier in the year.

Season's greetings and blessings for 2023 from everyone at 'the wee church on the walls.'



## STRANORLAR, MEENGLASS & KILTEEVOGUE

Rector: Rev Adam Pullen

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

Facebook; Stranorlar, Meenglass & Kiltreevogue Cofl @smkcofi



I actually love Christmas, I always have, which helps when you are a rector! For me it is highlight of the winter. I do not look forward to the dark nights, the cold days and even more rain. For myself and many others it can be a very dark time of the year. Then there is the news which is rarely good, the shadow of Covid 19, the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living. It can seem a dark time, yet at the darkest time of the year we have the good news and the arrival of the Light of the World, Jesus. I remember the opening words of the Christmas Gospel.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

This year we will be celebrating the arrival of Jesus with the return of the Christmas Tree Festival to Stranorlar. It will be so good to see trees from many organisations and people from across the community. Whilst I love the trees, it is the gathering that I love the most and the warmth of the fellowship. Speaking of fellowship, this year sees the return of the Carol services in Kiltreevogue and the candlelit carol service in Meenglass.

Returning to the image of the light shining in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it - we as a group of parishes will be sharing the light by taking part in the Finn Valley Christmas Appeal with people from across the community. This appeal helps the most needy at this time of year.

Our part in this appeal will be to collect biscuits and selection boxes to go with vouchers, to help practically share the light

of goodness, kindness and generosity this Christmas.

So wherever and with whomever you celebrate Christmas this year I hope that you will know the light of Christ.

Rev Adam Pullen



## TAMLAGHTFINLAGAN & MYROE

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## TAUGHBOYNE WITH CRAIGDOOISH, ALL SAINTS & KILLEA

Rev Canon David Crooks: Rector and Rural Dean

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The very sudden death of Mrs Betty McElhinney on Sunday morning 16th October has brought great distress and sorrow to her family. We sympathise deeply with her family, with her daughter Josephine and David and their children Sarah and Rachel, with Sandra and Robert and their children Katie and Gemma, with Carol and Nigel and Nicole, and with her son Robert, and Tanya and their children Ellen and Lalya, and with her sisters Sally and Kathleen. It was always such a pleasure to visit Betty in her wee cottage at Roughan, and we well remember her late mother, Liz, and her husband Sandy. May Betty rest in peace, and God bring comfort to all her family.

Derek Peoples had endured grave illness over many years, including two liver transplants, and lengthy periods in hospital. He died of his final illness on Sunday 23rd October. His huge funeral

at Monreagh Church was a tribute to the esteem in which he was held, and to the affection we all had for a man who bore so much with such Christian fortitude and dignity. All those years, his wife Anita supported him with immense loyalty. She has also been bereaved in the death of her father Mr Billy Witherow recently. To Anita, and their son Gary, and the grandchildren Thomas and Sarah, and to Rev Mervyn, Bertie, Drew and his sister Ruth and the whole family, we offer our most prayerful condolences at this time. The eloquent tribute of Derek's brother, Rev Mervyn, said so much about Derek. The connection of the Peoples family with Taughboyne Parish extends at least as far back as the early 18th century, and probably much further. Derek had served the Parish of Taughboyne as a member of the Select Vestry and as Treasurer for many years.

It seems as if at last we can get back to some form of normality during Advent and

Christmas this year. There will therefore be the usual Advent Wednesday evening services. This year it will be the turn of Killea to host the Carol Service on Sunday 18th December at 11.00am, and of Craigadooish to host the First Eucharist of Christmas on Christmas Eve. This has usually been at 11.15pm, but in 2019 it was held earlier in the evening, which proved to be preferable to most people. The Service will therefore be at 8.30pm. All other details of sales, services and Advent and Christmas activities will be announced in a news bulletin nearer the time.

## TULLYAUGHNISH, KILMACRENNAN, KILLYGARVAN & GLENALLA

Rector: Rev Canon Harry Gilmore

Tel. 0749151013 Email: [tkkgparishes@hotmail.com](mailto:tkkgparishes@hotmail.com)



## TEMPLEMORE, ST COLUMB'S 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



### Forthcoming Services and Events in Saint Columb's Cathedral:

#### Sunday 27th November 2022 / The First Sunday of Advent

7.30pm Candlelight Advent Procession  
'Darkness into Light'

This well established and much-loved Service of readings, hymns and anthems on the theme 'Darkness into Light' is extremely moving and inspirational. The Service begins with the Cathedral Choir singing in the Gallery, with the Cathedral in darkness, and then gradually making its way to the Chancel. By the end of the Service the Cathedral is fully lit. Over the past years, due to COVID-19 protocols, this Service was scaled down but this year we will (DV) be able to return to the 'full version' of the Service.

#### Saturday 3rd December 2022

2.00pm The Service of Thanksgiving to mark the Shutting of the Gates  
Preacher: The Reverend David McBeth,  
Rector of The Parish of Clooney,  
Londonderry

#### Saturday 10th December 2022

10.00am - 1.30pm Christmas Coffee Morning and Sale, including Tea/Coffee and Tray Bakes, in Saint Columb's Cathedral. Admission - £5.00. Proceeds in aid of funds to repair the ceiling in the Deanery Dining Room  
7.30pm Altnagelvin Hospital Choir Christmas Concert

#### Monday 12th December 2022

7.30pm The Joint Emergency Services Christmas Carol Service

This Service recognises the work and contribution to society - particularly in the City of Londonderry - of many of the Emergency Services, including Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Foyle Search and Rescue, and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

#### Friday 16th December 2022

7.30pm St Columb's School of Music Christmas Concert

#### Sunday 18th December 2022 / The Fourth Sunday of Advent

11.00am Sunday School Nativity

Presentation / Children's Celebration  
7.30pm Festival Service of Nine Lessons and Carols is the traditional celebration of the Nativity of our Lord in words and music

#### Saturday 24th December 2022 / Christmas Eve

11.30pm Holy Communion (Order One)

#### Sunday 25th December 2022 / Christmas Day (The First Sunday of Christmas)

8.00am Holy Communion (Order One)  
with hymns  
11.00am Festival Choral Eucharist  
(Order Two)  
Celebrant and Preacher: The Right Reverend  
Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe

#### Saturday 31st December 2022 / New Year's Eve

11.00pm Holy Communion (Order One)

#### Sunday 8th January 2023

4.00pm Carols of The Epiphany  
At this Service we will celebrate the  
Epiphany in carols, hymns, anthems  
and readings.





## URNEY AND SION MILLS

Rector: Rev Jonathan McFarland

Facebook: Parish of Urney Christ Church and Church of the Good Shepherd @urneparish

What a mess!

That seems to be the thinking on everyone's mind, especially as we look back on this past year.

Covid-19, Russia's war in Ukraine, the cost-of-living crisis, inflation and political instability; the list seems to go on and on.

We could be tempted to believe that it was a lot better when Jesus was born.

When we sing Christmas carols, enjoy hearing the greatest story ever told all over again, we can dream of a fantasy that we associate with a picturesque, snowy

white Christmas that was very different from the reality that Mary and Joseph actually experienced.

The truth is that things were in a big mess two thousand years ago as well.

Matthew records how Mary, an unmarried young woman, was found to be pregnant and was facing public disgrace and a life of ruin.

God sent an angel to the young man she was engaged to, Joseph, and told him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, for the child conceived in her was from the Holy Spirit.

The angel told Joseph that,

*"...she will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."* (Matthew 1:21 NRSV)

As we approach Christmas, in a world that is truly messed up, in a climate of fear and uncertainty, may we all take heed to what the angel of the Lord said to Joseph, not to be afraid, to trust in Jesus to be our Saviour and to look to the future with the attitude, that no matter what happens, God is with us!

May God's richest blessings be on you and your family this Christmas.

*Jonathan*



## DUNFANAGHY, RAYMUNTERDONEY & TULLAGHOBEGLEY

Rev David Skuce, Rector and Rural Dean, Kilmacrennan East & West Rural Deanery

Facebook: Holy Trinity, Dunfanaghy @holytrinitydunfanaghy



### Extracts from my sermon on

#### Sunday 9th October

Being ordained produces unexpected opportunities to pastor, often at unforeseen times, and especially at times of great loss. Little did I think yesterday morning, that I would be sitting next to An Taoiseach, Michael Martin, in the evening and that there would be many people from different areas of political, civic, and local life, both locally and nationally assembled for the service in St Michael's, Cresslough. It was a very moving service and at the very start ten candles were lit, in recognition of the ten people who had lost their lives in the explosion.

With what happened on Friday afternoon – many people have been hurt. Many people will have been broken. Many people are hurting and will be hurting for many days, even weeks or months to come. There will be many unanswered questions. With what happened afterwards we need to show our gratitude and appreciation to many different people from various walks of life.

Immediately after the explosion, lots of people, many local people with their own personal skills and expertise and none –

descended upon the village of Cresslough. They did whatever they could to try and rescue the people who were injured or had lost their lives. They tried to remove debris and rubble with their bare hands – even with the possibility of risk to themselves and others. As the evening progressed large machinery was brought in. Slowly and meticulously, two diggers started to remove the debris. It was amazing to watch the material being painfully and painstakingly removed bit by bit. When most of this was cleared away the metal girder, just above the checkout till, had each nut and bolt slowly removed. Carefully everything was slowly removed until the last body, that of 14-year-old Leona Harper was retrieved. The family had to wait ages for this to happen.

During the night people from near and far waited and watched. People from the gardai, fire service, civil defence, ambulance service, coast guard waited to see what they could do. Many businesses from near and far provided food and water to feed all the people who were here. Hotels, restaurants, and cafes have provided food and accommodation. Many people did what little they could to help everyone out. The response of people in Cresslough and neighbouring area and further

afield within the county and beyond needs to be acknowledged.

### On Wednesday 12th October, 2022 @ 10.00pm I was invited to say a few words in St Michael's, Cresslough

Thanks to all the clergy and in particular John Joe for allowing me to assist in various services. We all worship the same God but in a different way. With all that has happened to each and every one of us, we need to remember that God is suffering along with us. Despite the horrendous events of Friday afternoon, we have seen a lot of goodwill and the response of so many people has been fantastic. Despite the pain let us never forget our memories of our loved ones, as we thank God for their lives no matter how long or how short. Those memories will never be taken away from us. We remember in our prayers those who are still in hospital. In closing I ask, what is the real role of the parish priest? It is the shepherding of their flock. Over the last few days John Joe has certainly shown to us all that he knows his flock, and his flock knows him. We thank Almighty God for what has been done, is being done, and will be done, here in this area and further afield.

St Michael's Church, Cresslough

Everlasting God,  
you have ordained and constituted the ministries  
of angels and mortals in a wonderful order:  
grant that as your holy angels always serve  
you in heaven, so, at your command,  
they may help and defend us on earth:  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

PAUL MCFADDEN  
DIOCESAN PRESS OFFICER

*And finally...*

# ... a tidal wave of prayer

**"This was different to anything else," Fr John Joe Duffy said, as he recalled the explosion in Creeslough, four weeks earlier, which killed 10 people - including eight parishioners. The local curate had agreed to speak to n:vision about an incident whose randomness had shocked people.**

Having grown up in a fishing family in Burtonport, Fr Duffy was no stranger to tragedy. He listed some of the trawler disasters of his childhood - the Evelyn Mari, the Carraig Úna, the Skifjord - which between them claimed 16 lives. His own father drowned in a fishing accident in Burtonport harbour. Death was "part and parcel" of life in fishing communities, but Creeslough was different.

"This was unfolding before your very eyes. When the urban search and rescue people asked everyone to be silent, and switch off their phones, every one of us - with bated heart - was hoping to hear, 'Help' or 'Yes'". "I've heard people say that for a few days they were angry with God. For me, my faith

just strengthened. You could see the Holy Spirit acting, from the very first moment, up at that scene. People were acting in a Christ-like way. The people who first responded loved their neighbours enough to give up their lives for them, because they rushed into a building that was totally unstable."

The Creeslough tragedy touched people across Ireland and beyond. "Pope Francis sent some rosaries to me to be distributed to the people," Fr Duffy said. "He was being briefed on it through a classmate of mine, Fr Eamon McLaughlin, who works in Rome and comes from our neighbouring parish of Carrigart. And then I was standing up at the scene [of the explosion] and I heard that King Charles had sent a message [of sympathy] to this community."

Fr Duffy is among scores of people who have sought counselling. "I felt that I didn't necessarily need to go to counselling but one of the things that it brought up was that disappointment in me that I couldn't do more and be more present....you were attending the wakes of eight people, and two

people from outside the parish, and you just couldn't give enough time to those families."

On Facebook the Creeslough curate was praised as, "the right person at the right place and time". "I was merely carrying out my vocation as best I could," he said, "but surrounded by a good team of fellow priests: Rev David [Skuce, the Rector of Dunfanaghy], Fr Pat [McGarvey], Fr Paddy Dunne, and then the lay people from the parish, and our bishops, Bishop Alan and Bishop Andrew. We were all working together and trying to do our best."

"I believe what we were looking at, there, was a tsunami of grief and sadness, and then I believe there was a tidal wave of prayer - if I can use that imagery - that came in, and was lifting me and lifting the others. I was carried by God and by those that he sent to help me....I was in this place at this time for what reason I don't know, but I believe that the hand of God is in all things."

n:vision  
cover **Entries!**



**GLORY**  
TO  
**GOD**

