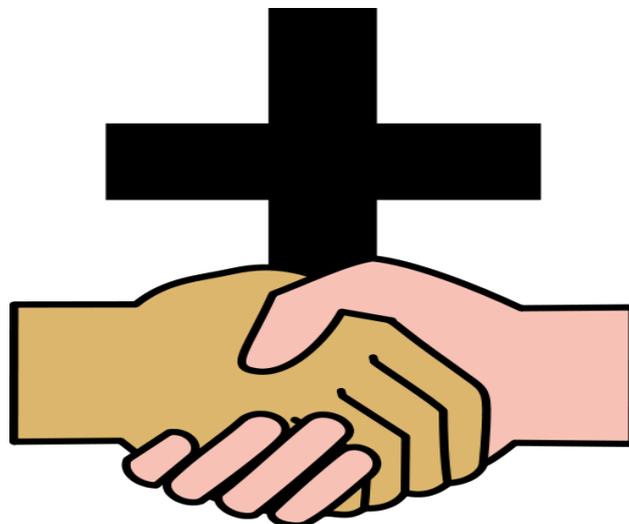


ST Finnian's

JANUARY 2020



RECONNECTING WITH CHURCH



Dear Friends

Reflecting back on the past couple of months of church life I made a rather shocking discovery today.

As someone who has tried to keep reasonably fit all of my life and who has been blessed with good health for almost half a century, I discovered that during the past couple of months I have only exercised about 3 times. I usually try to exercise 2-3 times per week but in the past 2 months I have only done so 3 times. I could offer various excuses for this like most of the family have been unwell for part of the last 2 months, it has been a busy season in the church's calendar, there have been some unexpected things that have cropped up demanding my time and attention but even as I write these things they are ever thus!

Now I didn't set out at the beginning of November intending to stop exercise but as the weeks have gone on it becomes easier and easier not to bother. It's not that I don't know about the importance of looking after my body, I have even organised talks about

mental and physical health for the season of Advent in church but somehow it has managed to slip down my list of priorities.

It's a time in the church's year when we try to deliver invitations around the parish encouraging people to come along to some of the Advent and Christmas celebrations that will take place in the coming weeks. Many people who don't come at other times of the year like to try to come at Christmas time. In recent years I have been having conversations with people who have let church slip or go from a place of importance in their lives. It's not something they intended to do, it's not that they don't think it's important but somehow they have got out of the way of it and it feels hard to come back. Maybe they're conscious of being away for a while and fearful of what other people might think. Maybe they left to try another church and it didn't work out and now they don't go anywhere. Maybe they had a disagreement with me or one of the clergy and feel it's hard to come back.

There are many of course who would dearly love to be worshipping with us but health and personal circumstances are preventing them from doing so. I recently met someone at our Wednesday service whose new job means they often work on Sundays and I admire those who are doing what they can to avail of midweek services on Tuesday nights or Wednesday mornings because Sundays are difficult. Sometimes people are unable to come because they are caring for and supporting family members in bad health who cannot be left on their own.

These are very different circumstances from some of the others I have mentioned. As I think of how easily I have slipped away from exercising I think of those who have stood in church in recent years after preparations at home to say they would like to encourage their children in the life of faith and for their children to be welcomed into the family of the church through Holy baptism.

My question to myself and to all of us who maybe find our

spiritual life is drifting, is how can we encourage one another to come back without inducing guilt or shame? The new year is a great time for making a fresh start. It would be lovely to see the church as a collective family coming home to the heart of God as a worshipping community, as a place where we might encourage and support one another on the journey of faith. We realise that our presence matters to other people. Even if you don't know someone's name and all they do is say good morning to you, it's important to look out for each other. Maybe people aren't coming because something difficult has happened but if you're aware of that please make touch with that person. Is there anything you can do that could be of help? At the very least and yet most importantly you could pray for them and for all they are dealing with in their lives. This morning I attended a beautiful school concert in Lucy's school. I'm always moved to see the children who have special needs maybe walking in a frame in public for the first time or speaking a line of narration or singing as part of the choir.

Every single child in the school appears on the stage at some point in the performance. Every member of staff is involved from teachers and classroom assistants to matron and the school nurse. To me it's always so much the richer an event because absolutely everyone is involved and everyone works together to help these amazing children flourish and shine and tell the story of Jesus's birth and explain why its important in the most unique and inspiring way.

I'd love for our church to be such a community where we work together to grow closer to God and share his love so I'm not getting at you in this letter if you are one of those who have maybe drifted away in recent months and years. I'd love you just to know that you are missed and we'd love to see you come back and flourish and grow as you become the person God wants you to be and seek out his purposes for your life.

May I say thank you to all who made our Christmas celebrations so meaningful and wish you a blessed 2020.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Pierce (Rector)

Telephone 02890 793822

ROOT SOUP

This month we hope to have Root Soup lunches on **Thursday 9th and Thursday 23rd January.**

If you are free at any point from 12 - 1.30pm you would be welcome to come along and enjoy some good company and a delicious home made lunch lovingly prepared and served by our friends from Root Soup. Feel free to invite a friend or neighbour. **The suggested donation is £4.**





Prayers for the Bishop Designate

Please hold our Bishop designate David McClay in your prayers as he prepares for his ordination in St. Anne's Cathedral on Saturday 25th January at 3.30pm. Remember too his wife Hilary and his family and the clergy and people of Willowfield as they prepare for a period of transition.

Raymond's institution

Raymond was instituted as Rector of St. John's, Lurgan by the Archbishop's Commissary Archdeacon Roderic West on Tuesday 10th December. It was a great encouragement for Raymond to see so many parishioners and friends from St. Finnian's and we wish him every blessing as he begins his ministry there.

Andy Hay

We look forward to welcoming Andy Hay, a student from the Church of Ireland Theological Institute on a 9 week placement beginning in January. Andy will be assisting at some services and preaching as part of his placement with us and I know everyone will encourage him and make him feel very welcome among us.

Save the Date.....



**Ladies' Quiet Morning
Saturday 4th January 2020**

Theme " Only one thing is needed....."

We invite all women of the parish to join us, the members of Mothers' Union, for a Quiet Morning on 4th January 2020 led by one of our members and Diocesan Lay Reader, Gillian Stevenson. We look forward to taking this short time out at the beginning of another year to think about what is needed as we continue on our journey of faith. The morning is planned to begin with tea or coffee and scones from 10.00 am until 10.30 am and to end with a celebration of Holy Communion in the church at 12:00 noon. We look forward to sharing the morning with all women of our parish.

Clare, Branch Leader

PRAYER WARRIOR

Do you have a concern or problem and would like
someone to pray for you?

If so, text Robin who will be willing to help

This is completely confidential and no details will be passed
onto anyone else unless you want them to.

Mobile: 07513947504



Services for January

Sunday 5th January (2nd Sunday of Christmas)

8.30am – Holy Communion
10.00 am – Connect Service in Hall
11.30am – Holy Communion
7.00pm – Evening Prayer

Sunday 12th January (1st Sunday after Epiphany)

8.30am – Holy Communion
10.00am – Holy Communion
11.30 am – Morning Prayer
7.00pm – Evening Prayer

Sunday 19th January (2nd Sunday after Epiphany)

8.30am – Holy Communion
10.00am – Connect Service in Hall
11.30 am – Morning Prayer
7.00pm – Evening Prayer

Sunday 26th January (3rd Sunday after Epiphany)

8.30am – Holy Communion
10.00 am – Morning Worship
11.30am – Holy Baptism
7.00pm – Holy Communion

LADIES OPEN DOOR FRIENDSHIP GROUP

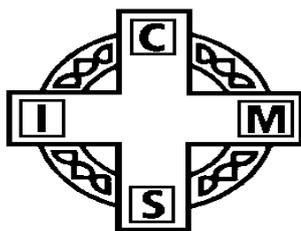


We finished 2019 with 25 members going to Parliament Buildings for Christmas Lunch. The Members' Dining Room was beautifully decorated, the staff were very attentive and the meal was lovely. All in all I think everyone really enjoyed the occasion. As the 1st of January is New Year's Day our first meeting in 2020 will take place on Wednesday 15th January when we will have some home grown fun in the form of a "Who wants to be a Millionaire" quiz. Don't panic, it will be on a team basis and will include 50/50, phone a friend and ask the audience options. Our meetings start at 2.00 pm in the Huston Hall and a warm welcome is extended to anyone who would like to come along. I hope you had a lovely time at Christmas and that you have a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

Joan

Proposed Accessibility & Car Parking Scheme – Update – December 2019.

The Select Vestry can now report that approval has been received from the Diocesan Council and the Representative Church Body to allow stage 1 of the Car Parking and Access scheme to proceed. A meeting has been held with Consarc Design to discuss detailed design and a programme for the works has been agreed. It is hoped to issue an invitation to tender in April with a commencement on site in June and completion in September. Depending on the order in which the works will be carried out, it may be necessary to hold services in the Hall over the summer period. There will also be restrictions in the movement of traffic in the grounds. It is intended that a meeting of parishioners will be held to explain the scheme in detail and to launch the fund-raising campaign.



Church of Ireland Men's Society

The next meeting will be held on
Thursday 16th January 2020 at 8.00pm.

**The Guest Speaker is Dr Eamon Phoenix
whose subject will be
"The Partition of Ireland and its consequences"**

We are fortunate to welcome this well-known and respected historian to cast a little light on our past and to show how it has affected our present.

We hope that all members of the Men's Society will be able to attend what promises to be an interesting and enlightening evening.

In addition, a special invitation is extended to the rest of the congregation to join our members for this occasion.

ST. FINNIAN'S MIXED

INDOOR BOWLING CLUB

Meets on Wednesdays at 7pm

Enjoy an evening of bowls, fun, fellowship, chat and tea & biscuits

Bowls provided -

WE BOWL FOR FUN





We all really enjoyed the Advent Supper and our thanks to the Committee for providing the lovely supper. Many thanks to Mark and the Choir for leading the singing - everyone had a great time. Special thanks too to our Firefighters Jono and Janet for their quick action in putting out the napkin fire... artificial tealights for next year me thinks folks.

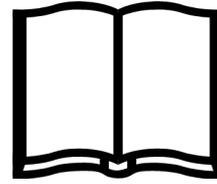
Our next meeting is on **Thursday 2nd January 2020** when our Speaker will be Emerald McKnight. The title of her talk is 'Count our blessings' and Emerald will be sharing with us how God has been her support through trying times. We will also be having our annual 'Bring and Buy' sale at this meeting. Please note that the **Ladies Quiet Morning will be held on Saturday 4th January 2020 from 10am – 12.30pm** in the Huston Hall. The speaker will be Gillian Stevenson and the theme is ' Only ONE thing is needed..'

All ladies of the parish are warmly invited to attend.

Our annual dinner this year will be on **Thursday 6th February 2020** in Belvoir Golf Club. The cost is £18 (payable in January) and the menu choices will be available at the January meeting. I hope everyone had a lovely Christmas and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and peaceful New Year.

**Carol Bell,
Branch Secretary**

From the Registers



Christian Burial: 10th December - John Baird

FLOWER DONATION ROTA

JANUARY

5th Mrs H McKnight

12th Mrs D Smith

19th Mr R Hamilton

26th The Bowlers



Hello everyone

Just a quick update to let you know that St Finnian's Messy Church will be continuing in 2020. We have a slowly growing, (more volunteers welcome) but always dedicated, team. We are planning to hold 4 events this year. **The dates are:**

Friday 28th Feb 2020

Friday 29th May 2020

Friday 25th Sept 2020

Friday 27th Nov 2020



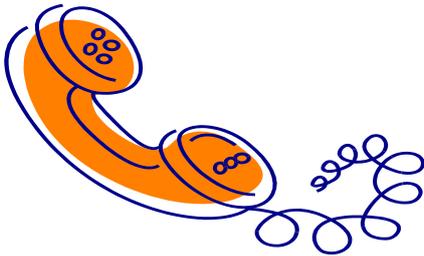
There will be a meeting in January to discuss our plans. The date / time will be confirmed so please keep an eye on the announcements .

Thank you, Jill.

CONTACT DETAILS

Rector:

Telephone 028 90793822



Church Office Hours

Tuesday 9.00 am – 2.00 pm

Wednesday 9.00 am – 2.00 pm

TELEPHONE 028 90792793
office.cregagh@down.anglican.org

Magazine

Please send articles for inclusion in the **February** magazine to **office.cregagh@down.anglican.org** or telephone Parish Office 90792793 by NOON on **Tuesday 14th January.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

www.stfinnians.org



Find us on Facebook!
[Facebook.com/StFinnians](https://www.facebook.com/StFinnians)

Registered with
The Charity Commission for
Northern Ireland NIC101977