

ST Finnian's

JULY/AUGUST 2020



**A call to prayer for a safe
return to public worship
in the near future.**

**(It is important to follow
Government guidelines
to keep everyone safe.)**

Dear Friends

It is hard to believe this is our fourth magazine since lockdown began. I think we are now entering week 14 at the time of writing this. I hope everyone is keeping well and positive in these challenging days. A friend of mine who is a young widow described lockdown very powerfully in a blog post she wrote recently. She said while we are all in the same boat, we have very different cabins.

I'm conscious that for some, lockdown has been a very positive experience where they have had the opportunity to get many jobs and projects completed they don't normally have time for. They have had the chance to spend more time with their immediate family and it has brought people closer together. For others too it has been a much more challenging experience. There are some who have been unwell and had to self-isolate and look after themselves when they feel absolutely awful. Many with underlying medical conditions have had to cocoon at home for the past 3 months and feel the

sense of isolation acutely. While some are very content in their own company, others love to have regular interaction with others and desperately miss that human contact. Some too are in very uncertain positions regarding their income and employment and this causes enormous stress and anxiety as people try to return to a new normal. I don't know what you look forward to the most when we are eventually permitted to go about again. Maybe it's the freedom to go and see some of the people you love the most in the world, to share a meal or a coffee with them and give them a big hug. Maybe it's experiences you miss like a meal out or a trip to a café you love going to. Maybe it is getting back to a sport you play or the opportunity to worship together as a church community again.

The one question many people have been asking me when I telephone them is, when are we going to be able to do this and it's a question I can't answer at this point.

There is a road map in the Republic of Ireland for returning to various activities and the return to church looks like it is potentially coming in early July. As yet we have nothing definite on the table here though we recently received a document from the Diocesan Office encouraging us to think about all the restrictions and conditions that we have to comply with whenever we open our doors again. The document stressed it was at an undetermined date. Putting in place all these measures is going to be quite a process. We are considering the document carefully at vestry level and we will not be opening the doors before we believe it is safe to do so and we have done all in our power to comply with the guidance and ensure everyone's safety as far as is humanly possible. This is quite a responsibility and we would ask for your prayers and your patience as we do all that we can to make that possible. It will involve discipline and cooperation on all our parts as we observe social distancing.

Our numbers will probably be initially restricted as we adhere to the 2 metre rule though I understand that families can sit together when we are permitted to assemble again. We won't be allowed to have prayer books or hymn books and we will have to wipe down hard surfaces between services. We don't know if we will be allowed to sing initially or whether we will have to wear face masks. It is not easy to make plans with this lack of certainty and a definite timeline and I understand that people are feeling impatient with this. We will be continuing for the foreseeable future to provide online services and to make it possible for those without internet access to be able to phone in to our designated number to hear a recording of the Sunday service.

Normally in the July/August magazine I am wishing those who might be heading away on holiday well and encouraging them to support the local congregation wherever they happen to go.

I usually say that it's a good opportunity to maybe experience worship that is different to our own and to enjoy that experience.

While I suspect many of us won't be straying too far this summer, you certainly have plenty of choice when it comes to online services. I know many have been taking the opportunity to tune into services from different places on a Sunday and that's a great thing to do.

Linda in the office has been working hard to try to ensure that those who can't download the magazine will have one posted to them and we want to reassure everyone of our ongoing prayers in these days. As the restrictions begin to lift I am very happy to come and pray with those who might like a conversation in the garden or indoors when we are permitted to do so. In the meantime, I will continue to pray through our parish lists every Sunday morning in the church, praying for protection and blessing for you and your household. We have been encouraged to see

people participating in the weekly parish prayer meeting via Zoom on Thursday evenings at 7pm and Thursday evening is also the time when we usually record a Facebook Live in the church and remember in prayer those we have been asked to remember. In a time of uncertainty when we don't have definite answers to many people's questions about the reopening of church, we remind you that while the doors are closed, the church is very much open for business. We want to encourage people on their faith journey using resources on our website and Facebook page, through the experience of public worship recorded weekly and sharing devotional resources in this magazine and through the twice weekly blogs on the internet. We're incredibly grateful to people for phoning regularly and providing pastoral support to each other and praying for one another and it's beautiful to hear how faithfully people have been doing this and how much it means to people.

We will endeavour to communicate to people as soon as we know further about when it is safe and permissible to gather together again. Please pray for Bishop David and others who are trying to make these important decisions based on Government advice, the weight of responsibility upon those in authority is very great at this time.

In the initial stages we may have to hold less services to allow for proper cleaning to take place after each gathering and my thoughts at this stage are that we will be gathering at 11am and 7pm when permitted to do so.

Many people in the coming months will be preparing to move on to a new stage in their education, maybe moving to second level or third level and our thoughts and prayers are with you as you prepare for that transition. We're conscious too that many may be nervous about returning to church initially and asked to shield by their doctor because of underlying medical conditions.

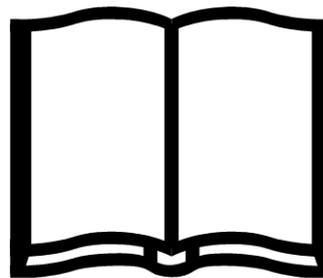
Please do comply with the guidance you have been given and be assured that services will continue to be available both online and through the telephone service. We would hate you to feel anxious or unsafe when we return and having watched some countries having to impose restrictions again after relaxing them, we will be moving forward with caution.

In all of the uncertainty we are glad to place our hope in the one who has promised to be our anchor in the storm, Jesus of Nazareth, and we look to Him for steadiness and reassurance and we continue in our mission to make Him known and share His love with others.

Much love to everyone.

Jonathan Pierce (Rector)
Telephone 02890 793822

From the Registers



Christian Burial:

26th May 2020 Herbie Seeds

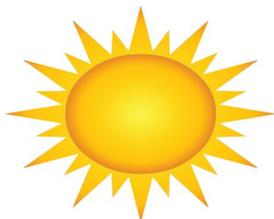
28th May 2020 Peggy Kennedy

In these times of severe restrictions around funerals, please hold the Seeds family and the Kennedy family circle in your prayers. We hope, when circumstances allow, to have services of thanksgiving for any families who would like to have that opportunity.

Services for July/ August



As yet we have no definite date to re-open but when we are allowed to do so, our aim is to have services at 11am and 7pm.



SUMMER WORK WEEK

The Summer Work Week would normally be arranged at this time of year but we feel that it should be postponed until we feel more confident that the coronavirus is under control. We hope to arrange the work week some time later in the year when it is safe to gather to work together.

Karen Gately

Devotional Resources for the Coronavirus Situation

The following pages contain some prayers and Bible readings that may be of help at this time.

God of all hope we call on you today.

*We pray for those who are living in fear:
Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other's
reactions to them.*

*May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and
peace.*

*We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.
For those people who are worried about attending
worship.*

*For those needing to make decisions in order to
care for others*

*For those who will feel more isolated by not being
able to attend.*

Grant us your wisdom.

*Holy God, we remember that you have promised
that*

*Nothing will separate us from your love -
demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.*

Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.

Amen.

*Loving God,
If we are ill, strengthen us.
If we are tired, fortify our spirits.
If we are anxious, help us to consider the lilies of
the field and the birds of the air.
Help us not to stockpile treasures from
supermarkets in the barns of our larders.
Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of
others more vulnerable than ourselves.
Fix our eyes on your story and our hearts on your
grace.
Help us always to hold fast to the good,
See the good in others,
And remember there is just one world, one hope,
One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for
everyone.
In Jesus we make our prayer,
The one who suffered, died and was raised to new
life,
In whom we trust these days and all days,
Amen.*

Matthew 6:25-27

²⁵ 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

*Prayers for the sick and lonely and those caring
for them*

Loving Jesus, you are compassionate to those in need and heal the sick in body and mind. Look kindly on those who are fearful at this time. Help us all to put away all thoughts and actions that separate us from you and from one another. Give us grace to live our lives, confident in your promise that you are with us always.

Amen.

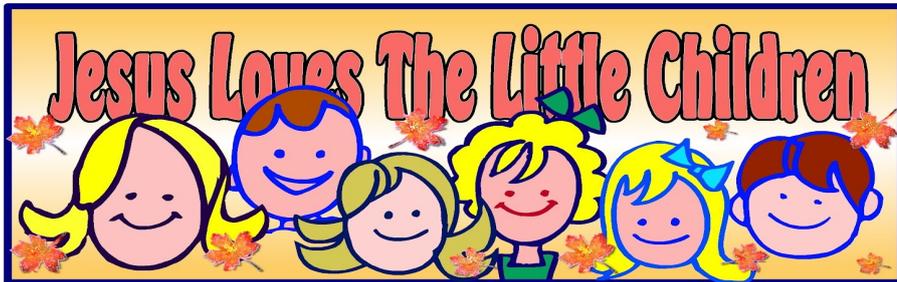
**Almighty God,
healer of the sick and strength of the weak,
look with mercy on all those who suffer at this time.
Bring healing to those who are sick,
bring peace to those who are anxious,
bring strength to those who care for them,
and bring wisdom to our leaders
that our whole society may journey together through this
difficult time with determination and generosity,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Amen.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

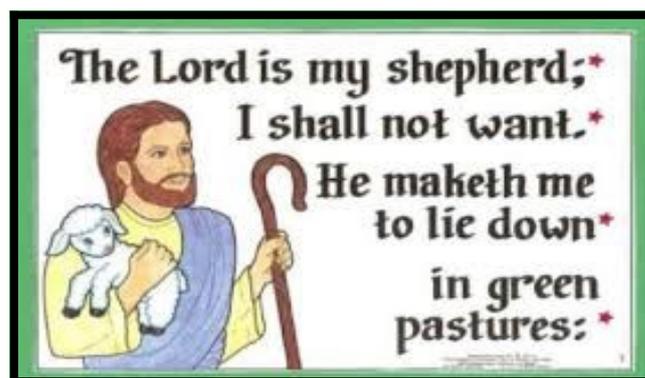
Prayers with children



Have I not commanded you?
Be strong and courageous.
Do not be afraid; do not be
discouraged, for The Lord your God
will be with you wherever you go.
Joshua 1:9



Thank you God that you are with me wherever I go. Your presence gives me the confidence to be strong and courageous. Help me not to be worried or discouraged, but to remember that you are with me. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**



Thank you God for being like a shepherd. Thank you for giving me everything I need. Please refresh my soul. I trust you to guide me along the right paths. Even when I am afraid and worried, I know that I don't have to fear evil, because you are with me, comforting and protecting me. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESOURCES - FOR USE AT HOME



Useful Website List

Let Their Light Shine! (<https://lettheirlightshine.com/>)

Bible stories, craft and creative ideas for toddler groups, children's ministry and families.

The Kitchen Table Project (<https://kitchentable.org.uk/>)

The Kitchen Table Project aims to help parents become more confident in discussing faith at home. They provide simple ideas and pointers in how to make this part of everyday life.

Free Bible Image (<http://freebibleimages.org/>)

This website produces free Bible images that can be used as PowerPoint slides and in worship material. There are photographs, cartoons and drawings.

Illustrated Ministry (<https://www.illustratedministry.com/>)

Illustrated ministry produce the most amazing and beautiful illustrations that can be purchased and printed off to make wonderful works of art.

Roots on the Web (<https://www.rootsontheweb.com/>)

Roots provide weekly material to help enhance worship. This includes Sunday School material. You have to sign up for and pay for the material but it is excellent. You can access some free material.



Hello Everyone

As I write this note I can see my copy of our branch programme pinned up on the notice board next to the 2020 year planner and I have been thinking about how very different our year turned out to be. Our branch activities would normally have ended by now with an outing in early June. Plans would have already been underway for the next branch meeting in October which was to include our Triennial elections but all of this has to be on hold for now too. I am so aware that the necessary restrictions due to Covid-19 have been very difficult for many but isn't it amazing how lockdown has shone a light on how important our relationships with family and friends are. We really value our times together chatting on the phone, talking by Zoom or more recently catching up through a socially distanced chat! Although we cannot meet up with each other in church or at branch events, it has been wonderful to hear about how our members are still connected and are keeping in touch with each other and with others by telephone, through social media or through the post. It is amazing also that many of the messages of encouragement which are circulating generally between family and friends by WhatsApp, by e-mail or by Facebook include Bible quotations and prayer. I have been wondering if, like me, others have become a bit more courageous about sharing the reason for our hope? Many of you have been in touch to say how much you appreciate the Mothers' Union Midday prayers which I have been including in the church magazine since lockdown and at the end of this note you will see the prayers for July 2020. The prayers for August will not be available until mid-July and I plan to deliver them to members as soon as possible after that. I have also included another Mothers' Union prayer which I have found helpful in framing my prayers during this time and which I hope you find useful too. As you pray for those who have been bereaved I know you will continue to remember Margaret (Seeds), whose husband Herbie died recently and Julie (Cunningham) whose mother Peggy Kennedy died recently as well as both their families.

I hope you enjoy a lovely summer.

Blessings.

Clare

Loving Lord

We pray for your love and compassion to abound
as we walk through this challenging season.

We ask for wisdom for those who bear the load
of making decisions with widespread consequences.

We pray for those who are suffering with sickness
and all who are caring for them.

We ask for protection for the elderly and vulnerable
to not succumb to the risks of the virus.

We pray for misinformation to be curbed
that fear may take no hold in hearts and minds.

As we exercise the good sense that you in your mercy provide,
may we also approach each day in faith and peace,
trusting in the truth of your goodness towards us.

Amen

Prayer: Mothers' Union

Image: Elizabeth Perry

Mothers' Union - Midday Prayers– July 2020:

Monday: Songs of hope

Lord of all hopefulness,

we will rejoice with songs of hope

to gladden our hearts and bring praise to your name.

We will give thanks to you, Lord, with all our hearts;

We will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

We will be glad and rejoice in you;

We will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.

He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity.

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

Those who know your name trust in you,

for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Sing the praises of the Lord, enthroned in Zion;

proclaim among the nations what he has done.

Amen. Psalm 9: 2, 8-11

Tuesday: God is good

They celebrate your abundant goodness

and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. *Psalm 145:7-9*

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!

His love is everlasting and extends to all creation.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!

Bringing wholeness and peace beyond understanding.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His arms open wide welcoming home the prodigals.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!

His promises are sure

His kingdom shall last forever.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! Amen.

Wednesday: God is faithful

Lord of all faithfulness we will rejoice with songs of hope to gladden our hearts and bring praise to your name.

Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous;
it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

**Sing to him a new song;
play skilfully, and shout for joy.**

The word of the Lord is right and true;
he is faithful in all he does.

**The Lord loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of his unfailing love.**

We wait in hope for the Lord;
he is our help and our shield.

**In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.**

May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you. **Amen** *Psalm 33:1, 3-5, 20-22*

Thursday: God is love

**I will sing of the Lord's great love for ever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations.**

I will declare that your love stands firm for ever,
that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.

Psalm 89:1-2

To you, O Lord, we lift up our souls.

You are our God—we trust in You alone.

Look upon us with mercy and love—

The same steadfast mercy and love You have shown
toward your people throughout history.

**Make your ways known to us;
guide us into your truth.**

Show us the way we should go.

For you are the God of our salvation,
full of compassion and steadfast love,

and those who wait on you will never be put to shame. **Amen.**

Friday: God is attentive

**Lord of all attentiveness,
we will rejoice with songs of hope to gladden our hearts
and bring praise to your name.**

I lift up my eyes to the mountains –
where does my help come from?

**My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot slip –
he who watches over you will not slumber.**

Indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

**The Lord watches over you –
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

The Lord will keep you from all harm –
he will watch over your life;
the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and for evermore.

Amen. *Psalm 121*

Saturday: Songs of hope

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

**Know that the Lord is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.**

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

**For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.**

Psalm 100

Whatever today may hold,
whatever tomorrow might bring,
the future is secure,
**for Christ is with us,
the same yesterday, today and forever.**

Live each moment with him
in quiet confidence and joyful celebration,
**for he is ours
and we are his
for all eternity.
Amen.**



Donating to St. Finnian's

In recent months many parishioners have taken up the option to give to the parish by Standing Order or Electronic Transfer. Others who are not so internet savvy have forwarded cheques. This has ensured that the parish has continued to meet its financial commitments.

Thank You to all who have contributed in these ways.

If you are one of the parishioners who puts contributions aside on a weekly or monthly basis, please continue to do so. We can't be sure of timescale but at some stage, hopefully in the not too distant future, these contributions will be able to be added to parish funds.

If you have thought about a Standing Order or Electronic Transfer but have not yet got around to it, the parish bank details are: -

Sort code **95-01-34**

Account number **11089757**

Account Name **St. Finnian's Parish Church** (this can be shortened to whatever fits).

Reference Please include a Reference with your payment which should be the six digit number beginning 000 at the bottom right of the label on your envelope box and your surname e.g. 000999 SMITH. **This is not your envelope number. (If you can't find it, let me know and I can help).**

If internet banking is not available to you, please give me a ring and we can discuss alternatives. At the moment we cannot accept donations with either notes or coins. Our count teams are currently not operating and we must have a least two people present when opening envelopes with cash to preserve the auditability of the count. I'll let you know when we can start accepting cash again.

Mike Johnston,

Hon. Treasurer

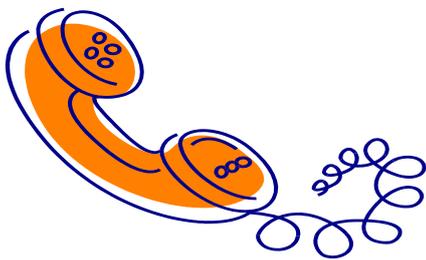
Tel: 028 90402769

Email: m.h.johnston@btinternet.com

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 **September** magazine to **office.cregagh@down.anglican.org** or telephone the Parish Office 90792793 by NOON on **Tuesday 11th August.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

www.stfinnians.org



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