

ST Finnian's

OCTOBER 2020

**A call to prayer and humility as we
learn to do things in a new way.**

*“Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him and he will do this:
He will make your righteousness
shine like the dawn, the justice of
your cause like the noonday sun.*

*Be still before the Lord and
wait patiently for him.”*

Psalm 37:5-7a

Dear Friends

As we enter the season of Autumn in these strange times, one of the things we find most challenging in the church is how difficult it is to plan things. I like to have a plan and to order events as far as possible and in these times this has proved to be a real test. There are normally fixed events and services based on the church's year but we are discovering that we need to learn to do all these things in a new way. This month sees a number of such events and while we are thinking about how best to do them, we are conscious that our plans may have to change according to the ever-changing regulations and Government guidelines. **The first event I'm thinking of is our Easter Vestry.** This is the annual business meeting of the church at which the accounts are presented and a report is usually given by the Rector about the projects and plans we are pursuing as a church at the present time. A new Select Vestry is elected to serve for the incoming year and take decisions about the church's finances, furnishings and fabrics. As this is what is called a

triennial year there will be people elected to serve in various capacities and represent the parish at Diocesan Synod. Others will be elected to serve as parochial nominators in the event of a vacancy in the parish. These are important positions and I would ask people to pray for all that happens and all who are elected to serve at our **Easter Vestry Meeting on Tuesday 13th October at 7.30pm in the church building.** We are mindful that some may not be able to attend because they are shielding and this year we are advised that attendance should be restricted to those who have registered on the annual Register of Vestrypersons. This is open to anyone over the age of 18 who is not registered in any other parish and who contributes to church funds. This meeting was scheduled to take place prior to Easter but because of lockdown it was postponed and in recent communication from the Diocese it was asked that parishes try to hold the meeting between 1st and 16th October. There is the possibility of re-electing the existing Select Vestry and

co-opting others to serve where people have given notice of a need to stand down so we hope the meeting will be quite short and will of course comply with social distancing and the current guidelines with respect to gatherings.

The second event I'm thinking of is our Harvest Thanksgiving services on Sunday 25th October. This year our Harvest preacher is Bishop Michael Burrows who is the Bishop of Cashel, Ossory, Ferns and Leighlin. Bishop Michael is a former chairman of the Bishops' Appeal Advisory Committee which channels resources to projects in the poorest countries in the world in the areas of health, education and rural development as well as relief in times of natural disaster. Bishop Michael has kindly agreed to preach at both our 11am and 7pm services. We are mindful that normally our church would be decorated for this occasion with flowers and fruits which would then be distributed to parishioners who are housebound. This year with the restrictions around COVID-19, it will not be

possible to decorate the church in the usual way. We hope to have one or two floral displays but we are encouraging parishioners to bring some tinned food or non-perishable items which will be given to a local food bank to assist families and individuals going through very challenging economic times during this pandemic. More details will be made known in the coming weeks about what items to bring and how this will unfold practically. The collection on the day will be given to the work of the Bishops' Appeal which like most charities at the present time has seen its income fall substantially which affects its capacity to respond to very worthwhile projects around the world with agencies like Tearfund, Christian Aid, Fields of Life, CMS, The Leprosy Mission, SAMS and others. We are also mindful of Harvest being a popular service for visitors and those who attend more occasionally. The current capacity of the church is around 55 allowing for a combination of households who come sometimes as families and individuals.

Could I ask people who are more mobile to perhaps consider coming in the evening on Harvest Sunday to facilitate those who might find it easier to come out in the morning please? We would love to see a full capacity at both morning and evening to welcome Bishop Michael who is a very gifted communicator. The service will be live streamed to facilitate those who may not be able to come in person and we are very grateful to all our stewards and technology team for making this possible alongside our cleaning team who do an amazing job wiping down all pews and surfaces in between our morning and evening services. We really miss our choir and our organist who lead our music so beautifully in normal circumstances. They would normally be practising special music and anthems for these services and as yet we are still not permitted to sing in the normal way so we don't know what will unfold in the coming months. Please remember Mark and the choir in your prayers who work so hard all year round and at present are

very restricted in what they can do because of the pandemic. **The third event I'm thinking about is our annual Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance.** This would normally happen on the first Sunday in November in the evening time. **This year All Saints Day falls on 1st November.** We usually write to parishioners who have lost a loved one during the past year and invite them to this special service in which we name those who have gone before us and give thanks for their lives and honour their memories in a floral tribute. Because of the current restrictions, this service too will be happening in a different way. We hope to write to families bereaved in the past year inviting them to send 4 representatives from each family. We will be holding two services on that day, 1st November at 11am and 7pm to remember and honour all who have died in the past year and to reflect on the Christian hope which underpins our faith in the midst of heartbreak and loss.

This will mean that the services on Sunday 1st November will be opened primarily to those who have been bereaved in the past year and live streamed and made available on recordings to the wider parish family. There is no fairer way we believe to observe this very special service and so we ask parishioners who haven't been affected by loss in the past year to make way for those who will come and to follow the live stream or recording on that day. My heart goes out to all those families who have had to endure the pain of loss during these difficult months of lockdown where funeral services were unable to happen in the church building and with very restricted numbers present. We are studying the recent guidelines issued in connection with reopening our church halls and trying to set in place all the things necessary to follow these guidelines and keep people safe. This is our chief concern, to open the halls and resume activities only when we believe it is safe to do so. We recognise how uncertain and challenging this is for our

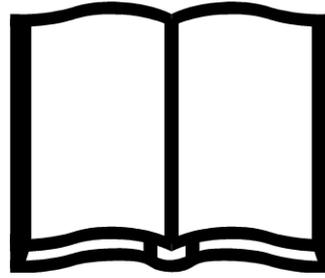
organisations and parishioners who find their activities a real source of fellowship and community. It is not easy to restrict things but we have a duty of care not just to ourselves but to all who cross our doors and people's safety is paramount. In the midst of the planning challenges and thinking through doing things in new ways, we are mindful too of new opportunities. We see people's pastoral gifts shining through as they care for each other. We see servant hearted people helping in practical ways with cleaning, stewarding and technology. We are seeing spiritual engagement through the services, our online Alpha and prayer meeting. We see regular children's activities posted on the website and Facebook page by the Boys' Brigade, the Sunday School teachers and the Diocesan youth officer. We look forward to our second Messy Church online this month and we'd love to say thank you to all who are praying for the life of our parish in these days.

With very best wishes,

Jonathan Pierce (Rector)
Telephone 02890 793822

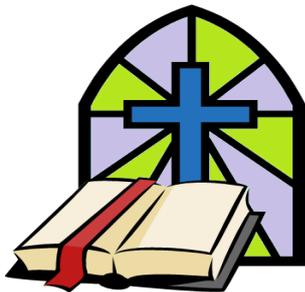
From the Registers

Christian Burial:



16th September 2020 Dr Roddy Evans

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



Service of Remembrance

On the first Sunday in November at our 11am and 7pm services (on 1st November this year) we are holding our annual Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for those who have died

in the past year. It is always a poignant service in which we give thanks to God for those people who have been part of our church's life. The Book of Remembrance is always updated at this time of year and should be returned to us in time for this special service. Family members and friends of those who have died are invited to submit photographs which will be displayed that evening at the back of the church and these photos are asked to be submitted to the Rector **by mid-October**. Due to the current restrictions, the two services on 1st November will be opened primarily to those families who have been bereaved in the past year. They will however be live streamed and made available on recordings to the wider parish family. The Rector's letter at the front of the magazine provides more detail.



Unfortunately, as a result of COVID-19, none of us are “off to the BB” just yet. Normally at this time of the year, we would already have started this year’s planned programme. Regrettably, this year, our planning is focused on how to welcome the boys back to face-to-face activities in a COVID-safe environment. We are currently

immersed in an ever-changing sea of regulations and advice from Government, the Education Authority NI, The Boys’ Brigade authorities - local and national, and the Church leadership. As with the post-lockdown return to church worship, to work and to school, we face the challenges of sanitising the environment and equipment, socially distancing Officers, boys and parents, identifying and responding to vulnerable members and implementing a meaningful programme of activities for young minds and bodies. We are well underway with planning and are awaiting official approval from the Government and the Boys’ Brigade UK. We will keep you updated on progress.

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 on to anyone else unless you want them to.

Mobile: 07513947504

Prayers for the Coronavirus situation

Almighty and merciful Father, who show your love to all your creation.

We come before you asking for a quick control of the coronavirus currently ravaging our world.

Hear graciously the prayers we make for those affected by the virus in various parts of the world.

Grant healing to the sick and consolation to the bereaved families.

We pray that an effective medicine to combat the sickness be speedily found.

We pray for the relevant governments and health authorities that they take appropriate steps for the good of the people.

Look upon us in your mercy and forgive us our failings.

Amen.

To our brothers and sisters who have contracted and are suffering due to coronavirus,

we pray that God's healing hand may rest upon you.

To medical doctors, nurses and the supporting staff who are in the frontline of the fight against COVID-19, may the Lord sustain you and inspire you

to render your life-saving services with due care, love and compassion.

To all those who have lost their loved ones due to the coronavirus outbreak, we convey our deepest sympathies.

We pray that God may grant all bereaved families his consolation and strengthen their faith and hope in Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord.

Amen.

Lord, we pray for those who need ongoing medical treatment who are forced to wait at this time.

God, please watch over their health and help them to stay positive and patient.

We pray that we overcome this global crisis and that after this pandemic, we build a more just and humane world.

Amen.

Prayers for learning environments

Dear Lord, we pray for the children and teachers who have started back to school. We pray for their health and safety as classrooms and schools have been modified to allow for proper social distancing and hygiene. We pray for the caretakers and cafeteria workers, as well as the office staff who are essential employees at schools; we pray that you would keep them safe and protected from the virus. Please protect the families of the children and teachers as they return home each day; please slow the spread of the virus so that it would not infect these families. Lord, we also pray for energy and rest for the children and teachers so that they are able to plan their lessons and effectively teach all their students, also that the children will be able to learn and keep up with their lessons. We also pray for their spiritual growth, in Your name, Jesus.

Amen.

Lord, we pray for the students who have returned to colleges and universities across the country whether in person or virtually. We know these students are trying to get degrees so they can eventually have a job and it can feel overwhelming when plans change or seem to be delayed. This can cause stress and fear over the future for students and parents, especially financially. Please come alongside parents and students to reassure them of your presence and peace.

Remind them through Your Word that though things may not go the way we plan or hope, there is purpose in everything because You are sovereign over all and You work through all circumstances. Help us to rely on You for all of our concerns, whether they are financial, academic, spiritual or others. Holy Spirit, please grant these students the self-discipline to complete their classwork through virtual means and safety when they come in contact with other students. We pray that these students would not disregard precautions that need to be taken out of a false sense of security. We also pray that our students would not be fearful but hopeful about the future and that they would be content with what they currently have and the direction they are heading in. Help us to think of others more than we think of ourselves, and help us look to You, God, above all other things. May our troubled minds rest on the things above and find joy in Your steadfast love for us. In Your name,

Amen.

Hello everyone

It is hard to believe that it is now September and we are entering Autumn. Normally we would be looking forward to our opening service and of course the Harvest Supper. Unfortunately the Down and Dromore Area service which was to take place on 17th September in St Finnian's is on hold and we are looking forward to hearing our own Canon Jonathan Pierce speak at the service when it is rearranged. Mothers' Union continues to work strongly on both local and worldwide fronts. Internationally we are continuing with literacy, financial and parental education, community development and working with prisoners, refugees and those fleeing from domestic violence. Locally, members are keeping in touch with each other and our indoor members are supported regularly with prayer. We continue to offer short breaks to families and those who deserve to get away or have a special experience (the Away From It All scheme with referrals from the clergy). Members have been busy sewing scrubs and face masks, organising food parcels and keeping in touch with each other. The Action and Outreach team have provided ongoing support to the Mount Merrion 'Grub Club', delivered emergency soap bags to hospitals (supplied by various branches) and supported the Women's Aid centres in Bangor and Newry.

Mini Bootcamp and Lunch Giveaway in Cregagh



**Roberta McCartney (D&D Diocesan President) &
Clare Stewart (D&D Action & Outreach Co Ordinator)**

It is still uncertain when branch meetings can resume but we will keep our members informed of any key messages arising in the future. Please let Clare, myself or any of the Committee members know if you require assistance during this time. Also if you know of anyone who is ill, please inform us. I know you all enjoy the Mothers' Union Midday Prayers which I have included for you to use.

Carol Bell ,Secretary

Mothers' Union—Midday Prayers—October 2020
Building hope and confidence.
Diversity.

Monday: Celebration of diversity

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Genesis 1:31

**God of all peoples and nations
we praise you for the wonderful differences
of colour and culture, of creeds and clans
that make up the human race.**

God of all flora and fauna we rejoice in the
manifold beauty of your creation;
of scents and sounds, of pattern and design
that make up the natural world.

God of all gifting and talent we praise you for
the riches of skills and abilities;
of music and arts, of crafting and science
that enhance our lives together.

**Lord of heaven and earth,
we celebrate the diversity
of your wondrous creation.**

**All you have made is very good;
we bless your holy name.**

Amen.

Tuesday: Unity in diversity

There before me was a great multitude that no one could count,
from every nation, tribe, people and language,
standing before the throne and before the Lamb...

And they cried out in a loud voice:

'Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'

Revelation 7:9-10

**God of all peoples and nations,
we pray that through your wondrous grace
we may be a shining example of unity in diversity.**

May differing styles of worship and diverse doctrinal stances,
shared in mutual humility, enrich and bring spiritual depth.

May sharing of vision
and distinctiveness of mission,
outworked in a variety of ways,
empower and bring great joy.

**So hope may be given
to a complex world
in the name of Christ.**

Amen.

Wednesday: Diversity of gifting

We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.
In his grace, God has given us different gifts
for doing certain things well.

Romans 12:5-6

Lord, we each have some gifts,
but none of us has them all.

We each have something to contribute to others,
and equally something to receive from them in turn.

You call us all to be part of your body
with a unique role to play within it,
as we belong to an interdependent whole
Where every member is of vital importance.

**Teach us, then,
not only to exercise our own gifts wisely
but also to appreciate those of others,
and so may we grow together,
building one another up in love,
to the glory of your name.**

Amen.

Thursday: Equality in diversity

God created humankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them.

Genesis 1:27

**We thank you, Lord,
for in your loving wisdom
you created one human family
with a diversity that
enriches our communities.**

May we always recognise
each member of this human family
as being made in your image and beloved by you,
with worth and dignity.

**May we envision a way forward
to heal the racial divisions
that deny human dignity and
the bonds between all human beings.**

May we affirm each person's dignity through fair access for all
to economic opportunity, housing, education, and employment.

**We thank you, Lord,
for your call and challenge to us
to proclaim that we are all your children,
heirs to your sacred creation.**

Amen.

Friday: Diversity of creation

O Lord, how many and varied are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
The earth is full of your riches and your creatures.

Psalm 104:24

**Lord of creation,
bountiful giver,
we delight in your abundance
with full and thankful hearts.**

One crop, one fruit, one seed,
one flower, one creature, one race.
If all creation was one of each kind,
we would overflow with gratitude and praise.
Yet, Lord, we are blessed by your lavish abundance;
we marvel at nature's diversity.
Creator of heaven and earth,
we give you thanks for nature's rich variety.
Creator of sea and sky
we praise you for nature's wondrous array.

**Lord of creation,
bountiful giver,
we celebrate your abundance
with full and thankful hearts.
Amen.**

Saturday: Celebration of diversity

In Christ all things were created: things in heaven and on earth,
visible and invisible... all things have been created through him and for him.
He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:16-17

**Good and gracious God,
who loves and delights in all people,
we stand in awe before you,
knowing that the spark of life
within each person on earth
is the spark of your divine life.**

Differences among cultures and races
are multi-coloured manifestations of your Light.

**May our hearts and minds be open
to celebrate similarities and differences
among our sisters and brothers.**

We place our hopes for racial harmony in our committed action
and in your presence in our neighbour.

**May all peoples live in peace.
Amen.**



Update on our annual Samaritan's Purse Shoe Box Appeal

Hello everyone

I wasn't sure if NI would be involved in the Samaritan's Purse shoe box appeal this year due to COVID-19. Having spoken to the NI representative, I have been told that there has been a request from many countries to give boxes for the children if possible. Northern Ireland has therefore decided to try to provide boxes, and hopefully St Finnian's will be able to support this need as part of the Belfast appeal.

The question is how?

The Church itself will not be able to facilitate the donation of boxes, so we need to look at a different option. You can therefore complete an online box via the email below. You can choose to virtually fill a box yourself (where you can choose what kind of items go in the box), or you can request to send a pre-packed box. Just click the option you prefer.

<https://shoeboxonline.samaritans-purse.org.uk>

Pack your shoe box Send a pre-packed shoe box

I know this is a very different way of donating boxes this year but I hope you will feel able to get involved.

Thank you.

Jill McPeak



Electronic Donations

For those of you who have thought about setting up a Standing Order or Electronic Transfer and just haven't got around to it, you will find below the details that you need when setting one up.

The parish bank details are:-

Sort code **95-01-34**

Account number **11089757**

Account name **St Finnians Parish Church** *(please use exactly as printed as this will match the account name held by the bank.)*

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 , contact the church office and someone will be in touch.**

Mike Johnston (Hon Treasurer)

Hello All

As you are aware, due to the ongoing concerns regarding COVID-19, St. Finnian's Messy Church went online in June. We are planning to do this again but to allow children to settle back into school, we have decided to move our next Messy Church to half-term at the end of October.

The team at St. Finnian's will be working hard behind the scenes to get all our crafts, worship and activities on to the church website, Facebook and YouTube. Please keep Messy Church in your prayers and look out for us towards the end of October .

Thanks.

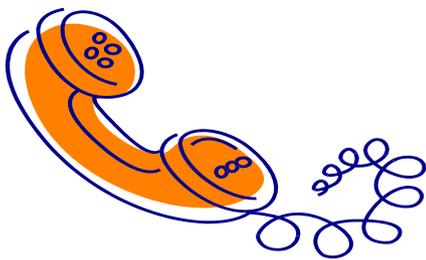
Jill McPeak



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 **November** magazine to office.cregagh@down.anglican.org or telephone the Parish Office 90792793 by NOON on **Tuesday 6th October.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

www.stfinnians.org



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