

# ST Finnian's

**JANUARY 2021**



*HAPPY NEW YEAR*

*How might we make more  
of Jesus in our lives  
and church  
in 2021?*

# Dear Friends

As a new year dawns few of us are likely to forget 2020 in a hurry. It was the year a global pandemic brought much of life as we know it to a standstill. Back in March when the first lockdown was announced it was hard to believe the footage we saw of busy bustling cities like New York, London, Paris and Madrid deserted of people as airports, businesses and shops closed their doors. It was hard to fathom that as we collected the children from school one Friday in March that would be their last day for that particular academic year. Some of us had to learn really fast to stay one step ahead with the home schooling programme as our teachers went online with their learning platforms. People had to deal with challenging restrictions as they planned and cancelled and replanned weddings. Holidays had to be cancelled and reorganised as people became familiar with phrases like quarantine and self-isolation. Elderly people and those with underlying health conditions were advised to cocoon or shield themselves from contact with others.

Some have still not been able to see parents or grandparents as nursing homes and hospitals introduced very strict visiting policies and in some cases had to close all contact with the wider population because of the deadly outbreaks of coronavirus. Perhaps the saddest experience of all has been the severe restrictions around funerals. Very limited numbers have had to gather at funeral homes, in cemeteries, and thankfully in more recent times, in churches to say farewell to loved ones. People haven't been able to come into each other's houses and hug and hold one another or shake hands to express their sympathies. Ceremonies have been reduced in length to minimise contact with others and it has left a vale of sadness throughout the world as so many people have lost their lives to this virus.

The church too has had to learn to do things in a whole new way. Everything is measured in risk and so we sit two metres apart from each other unless people are part of our "bubble".

Singing isn't permitted apart from the occasional use of a socially distanced choir which is currently prohibited again. Books had to be taken out of the church as the liturgy and hymns appear on screens in front of us if we are in the building or we watch or listen to services from the safety of our homes. Church buildings have been closed for months on end, organisations have not been permitted to gather and clergy not allowed to visit in people's homes unless there are special circumstances. We have had to conduct vestry meetings over Zoom. We have gathered our Sunday School over Zoom. The Messy Church team also has produced events online to introduce children to the life of faith. The technology team have worked unstintingly to make services available online, to broadcast and livestream services that couldn't otherwise have taken place. Devotional materials have been made available on the church's website and Facebook page and through the parish magazine that is posted rather than delivered to those who are unable to download it over the

internet. Parishioners have tried to support each other through phoning people they maybe never knew before and this pastoral support has been a real lifeline to those who have had much to contend with in this difficult year. As January approaches and we welcome 2021 my overwhelming sense is one of thankfulness. I'm thankful of course for the news today as this magazine goes to print that the first vaccinations are taking place across the province. I'm thankful for the incredible support I have had from my family and parishioners as together we have tried to navigate these new and challenging situations. I'm encouraged to see people taking hold of the gifts God has given them and using them to make a real difference for good in the lives of others. I'm grateful for the way God has provided for and met our needs in terms of financial resources. It has been such a blessing that the Vestry had the resources and the vision to invest in equipment that has been such a lifeline to many who feel very isolated and to enable us to reach a global audience.

We are blessed to have those with the technical skills to operate this equipment and help to make it happen so willingly. I'm grateful for the massive efforts that go in each week to oversee the upkeep of the church's property and buildings. I'm grateful to the hardworking teams who act as stewards and cleaners and take those important records for contact tracing in the event of anyone getting ill. There are people who are counting our Free Will Offering, teaching in Sunday School, staying in touch with our organisations, organising flowers and collecting groceries and prescriptions for those unable to go out. Did you know there are people who gather each week to pray for the life and witness of our church and for situations around the world? There is an individual who has made himself available to pray for any situation people want prayer for simply by lifting the phone and asking him to pray for us? There are singers and musicians who have recorded hymns and songs and made them available to enhance our worship.

People are maintaining our accounts and finances, ensuring our governance is in order and ordering supplies of sanitiser and oil and other commodities we need to keep functioning.

Linda in the parish office has kept working throughout this pandemic producing this magazine, gathering devotional material and overseeing all our administration.

At our midweek Advent service last week, which had to be live streamed to an empty church because of the latest lockdown, the speaker, Dr David Varney, left us with a powerful challenge for 2021. He asked the question "what are you as an individual and you as a church going to do in 2021 to make much of Jesus in Belfast?" He spoke of his experience of running the Alpha course through his church and in the hospital where he works and we are glad to say **a new Alpha course is due to begin on 6<sup>th</sup> January over Zoom for 12 weeks.**

If you would like to explore more about faith and the meaning of life in these one hour sessions from 8-9pm

please email [zoomtostfinnian@btconnect.com](mailto:zoomtostfinnian@btconnect.com) or email the rector at [jonopierce@btinternet.com](mailto:jonopierce@btinternet.com) and you will be sent a link to the Zoom call and the relevant video for that week. Can we make much of Jesus by gathering to worship Him either in person or online? Can we spend more time with Him or start to spend time with Him through beginning to read our Bible with the help of Bible reading notes or online resources from our website? Can we make much of Jesus by resolving in 2021 to do whatever we do for Him in terms of our daily work or our home life or through how we reach out to our neighbours and fellow parishioners? Can we share blog posts or articles or services we have found helpful or inspiring with others by clicking like and share? Can we honour him through generous giving to organisations and agencies that seek to make Him known and make a practical difference in the lives of those who are vulnerable?

As we look back on an unforgettable year can I say thank you for all you have done and encourage you to make much of Jesus in any way you can in 2021.

With very best wishes.

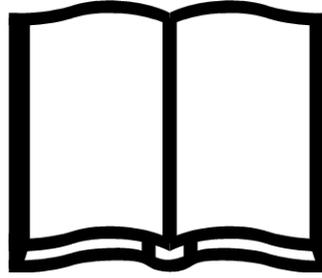
**Yours sincerely**

**Jonathan Pierce (Rector)**  
**Telephone 028 90793822**



## From the Registers

### Christian Burial:



1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 Wynne Sharpe

## 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**



## MAGAZINE BY EMAIL

If you would like to receive your magazine by email rather than by post please email the parish office at **office.cregagh@down.anglican.org**

This can help to reduce postage costs and also helps the environment by saving paper.

# Services for January



## **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas)**

11.00am Morning Prayer  
7.00pm Evening Prayer

## **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany)**

11.00am Morning prayer  
7.00pm Evening Prayer

## **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany)**

11.00am Morning Prayer  
7.00pm Evening Prayer

## **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany)**

11.00am Morning Prayer  
7.00pm Evening Prayer

## **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany)**

11.00am Morning Prayer  
7.00pm Evening Prayer

## **Come and Let Us Worship**

*“O Come let Us Worship and Bow  
Down; Let Us Kneel before the Lord  
our Maker. For He is our God, and  
We are the People of His Pasture,  
and the Sheep of His Hand.”*

***Psalm 95:6-7***

## **Helpful prayers to pray during these uncertain times of coronavirus and Brexit.**

### **A prayer for the gift of love in troubled times**

O God, who has revealed yourself as love, and taught us by your word that whoever lives in love lives in you; in times of trouble and uncertainty renew our hope in this promise; help us to receive afresh your gift of love, that with generosity we may share it in the service of others to promote the common good; through him who is the perfect expression of love,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **A prayer for the vulnerable**

God of mercy, whose Son Jesus Christ lived among the poor and oppressed; hear our prayer for those who are fearful, vulnerable and isolated; be their strong defence in times of need, and grant us the compassion and courage to minister Christ to them, who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

### **A prayer for gratitude**

Lord, thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives, thank you for your goodness and for your blessings over us. Thank you that you are able to bring hope through even the toughest of times, strengthening us for your purposes. Thank you for your great love and care. Thank you for your mercy and grace. Thank you that you are always with us and will never leave us. Thank you especially that a vaccine has been found to help in the fight against Covid-19. We ask for your support for all those who have developed the vaccine and all those who will take part in its distribution.

In Jesus' name,

**Amen.**

### **A prayer for the nation**

God of hope, in these times of change,  
unite our nation and guide our leaders with your wisdom.  
Give us courage to overcome our fears, and help us to build a  
future in which all may prosper and share,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **A prayer for the leaders of the nations**

O God our heavenly Father, whose love sets no boundaries  
and whose strength is in service, grant to the leaders of the  
nations wisdom, courage and insight at this time of change  
and uncertainty. Give to all who exercise authority  
determination to defend the principles of freedom,  
love and tolerance, strength to protect and safeguard the  
innocent and clarity of vision to guide the world into the paths  
of justice and peace.

This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **A prayer for Europe**

O God, the Father of all, inspire the peoples of Europe  
with the spirit of justice, truth, and love, that in our dealings  
with one another we may show forth our common humanity  
and our unity in you, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**



St. Finnian's Messy Church went online again at the end of November. Our theme was Advent and was introduced by Jono, along with Maximus the mouse.

We had fantastic crafts from Mark, videos, songs and lots of puzzles and colouring in pages to download. The whole thing was a pleasure to watch and very uplifting.

If you have not yet had a chance to see the online Messy Church, I highly

recommend it (for all ages) - discover your inner joy...



I would like to say a huge Thank You to everyone who gives his or her time, patience, creativity, skill and wisdom, without which there would be no Messy Church.

The team is taking a well-earned break now but hopes to be back in the New Year. If you would like to get involved, please speak to me.

Many many thanks.

Jill McPeak

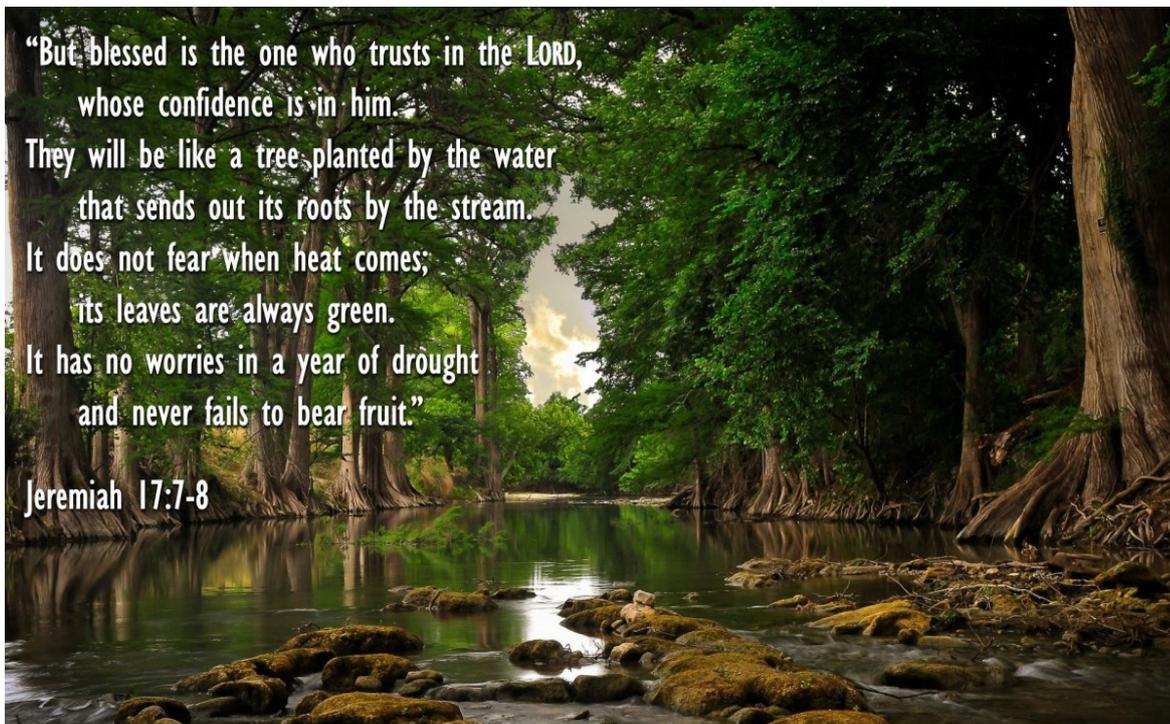
<https://www.stfinnians.org/2020/11/27/messy-church-online/>

## To all members of St. Finnian's Mothers' Union

I hope you all had a lovely Christmas and were able to celebrate as best you could given the current restrictions. We hope to be able to meet at some stage during 2021 and we will of course keep you informed as things develop. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy and peaceful New Year.

The Midday prayers for January 2021 are listed once again for your daily reflections.

**Carol Bell**  
**Secretary**



*Mothers' Union—Midday Prayers—January 2021*  
*Rebuilding hope and confidence.*

**Monday: Rebuilding hope and confidence**

Some of you will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities.  
Then you will be known as a builder of walls and a restorer of homes.

*Isaiah 58:12*

**Loving Lord, we look to the future with faith.**

**Use us to rebuild hope and confidence in those you call us to serve.**

God of compassion, God-with-us,  
be with us in these times of uncertainty.  
Break into our lives, rekindle our hope  
and breathe love into our communities,  
that we might find new ways of supporting  
and upholding one another,  
bearing witness to your inclusive love  
of family, friend, neighbour, and stranger alike.

**May our love for those most vulnerable  
in our community**

**become a beacon of hope for all.**

**In faith, hope, and love,**

**in the name of Jesus, we pray.**

**Amen.**

**Tuesday: Plans for the work**

Many are the plans in a person's heart,  
but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

*Proverbs 19:21*

**Loving Lord, we look to the future with faith.**

**Use us to rebuild hope and confidence in those you call us to serve.**

God of sweeping vision,  
expand our spiritual awareness  
to grasp the breadth of your plans  
to minister to those who hurt.

God of minute detail,  
grant us wisdom to discern each way  
that we may fulfil your purposes  
to minister to those who hurt.

God of perfect timing,  
refine our spiritual insight  
to chart your course of progress  
to minister to those who hurt.

**Loving Lord, give us faith to follow your plans  
for rebuilding hope and confidence in those you call us to serve.**

**Amen.**



**Wednesday: Building materials**

All the men and women whose heart moved them to bring material for all the work which the Lord had commanded through Moses to be done, brought a freewill (voluntary) offering to the Lord.

*Exodus 35:29*

**Loving Lord, we bring to you our offerings of love,  
compassion and service;**

**Use them to rebuild hope and confidence in those you call us to serve.**

Thank you, Lord  
for showing us that love  
has no boundaries or end  
but listens, has patience,  
compassion, grace,  
and gives without counting cost.

Thank you for granting us  
a heart for those you love,  
and a willingness  
to step out in faith  
and service.

**Thank you, Lord  
for showing us true love  
can be ours to know and give.  
Amen.**

**Thursday: Tools for the task**

We have everything we need  
to live a life that pleases God.

*2 Peter 1:3*

**Loving Lord, we look to the future with faith.**

**Use us to rebuild hope and confidence in those you call us to serve.**

All I am, and all I have,  
I offer, Lord, to you.

I offer you these hands, that you might use them  
in and through my daily work.

I offer you these feet, that you might lead them  
to someone who needs my help.

I offer you these shoulders if you should need them  
to help lighten another's load.

I offer you this voice that you might use it  
to speak up for those in need.

**All I am, and all I have,  
I offer, Lord, to you.**

**Amen.**

**Friday: Partnership with others**

Two are better off than one,  
because together they can work more effectively.

*Ecclesiastes 4:9*

**Loving Lord,**

**we look to the future with faith.**

**Use us to rebuild hope and confidence  
in those you call us to serve.**

We praise you, Lord,  
for those who work alongside us;  
sharing tasks and sharing vision.

**Loving Lord, we thank you for each other;  
our partners in service and purpose.**

We praise you, Lord,  
for those who walk alongside us;  
pressing onwards for mutual goals.

**Loving Lord, we thank you for each other;  
our partners in service and purpose.**

**As we look to the tasks before us  
show us how to work together effectively  
to rebuild hope and confidence  
In those you call us to serve.**

**Amen.**

**Saturday: Strength from God**

They thought:

‘Their hands will get too weak for the work,  
and it will not be completed.’

But I prayed, ‘Now strengthen my hands.’

*Nehemiah 6:9*

**Gracious God, whose loving kindness has no limits,  
teach us afresh the way of Christ.**

Where we have felt discouraged,  
renew us through signs of hope;  
where we have been tempted to give up,  
grant us strength and faith to face the day;  
where we have grown anxious about the future,  
give us courage to plant the seeds of tomorrow  
in acts of radical love today.

*Richard Andrew, Darlington Methodist District Chair*

**Loving Lord, strengthen, our hands, hearts and resolve  
as we look to the future with faith.**

**Use us to rebuild hope and confidence  
in those you call us to serve.**

**Amen.**



## 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.**

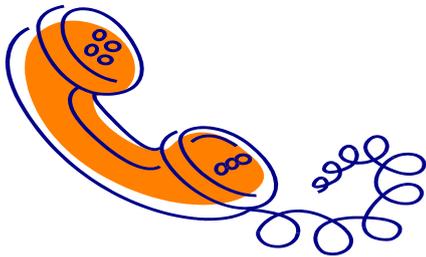
**If you can't find it , contact the church office and someone will be in touch.**

**Mike Johnston (Hon. Treasurer)**

## 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 the Parish Office 90792793 by NOON on **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

**[www.stfinnians.org](http://www.stfinnians.org)**



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

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