

# ST Finnian's

**APRIL 2021**



*Join us on our journey to the  
cross this Lent, Holy Week  
& Easter.*

*Details of our online services can  
be found inside the magazine.*

# Dear Friends

The season of Holy Week and Easter is always a high point in the life of any Christian community. It represents really powerful things to us like the emergence of hope and life after death. It's a season that is not without its challenges when we walk that road of suffering with our Lord Jesus Christ during the last week of his earthly life.

We are confronted with difficult and challenging things not least the reality of our own sinfulness and our potential to betray Him and forsake Him at the first hint of trouble.

We see the way however, that Jesus continues to reach out in love and grace and compassion to forgive and reinstate. We see his heart for humanity, his willingness to suffer and to die to enable us to find restoration and forgiveness and the possibility of a fresh start in our lives.

As we see cautious signs of hope that society will emerge from the restrictions of lockdown as the population gets vaccinated and the desire to get children back to school and young people back to university, it is so important to hold on to hope.

As yet we don't know when the restrictions will be lifted for resuming public worship but the Executive hopes to make some decisions as this magazine goes to print. The dates being discussed are Good Friday and Easter weekend but, as is so often the case, we have to ask you to keep an eye on the church's website and Facebook page.

We do have plans for special services which will be streamed during Holy Week and there is a slight possibility we will be allowed back into the building on Good Friday. Normally Good Friday is a prayer vigil for the life of the parish and we encourage the congregation to pray in the church from 7am until our evening service at 7.30pm.

This year I am asking people to pray in their homes rather than come to the building and in this month's magazine there will be some pointers for your prayers. Can you commit yourself to take some time on Good Friday to pray for half an hour or an hour for the life and witness of our church?

Can you spend some time before the Cross of Jesus reflecting on all he has done for you, hearing his call to return to Him, to seek His pardon and peace and to witness to his love and mercy in your daily life? Perhaps you are uniquely positioned to impact someone else for Him, to share the hope and purpose he has brought to you and can bring to them if they have not yet encountered Him.

I'm delighted this year that in the midst of the uncertainties of whether we can gather in person for Holy Week services, our neighbour and friend Reverend Adrian Green has agreed to be our preacher. Adrian originally agreed to share with us back in 2020 but as we entered lockdown and had to scramble, like all churches, to build a system of recording services and develop our online presence, we had to postpone his visit to us. This year Adrian hopes to explore some of the remarkable and glorious paradoxes of Holy Week with us. On Monday evening he will be looking at the paradox of strength out of weakness.

On Tuesday he will be looking at the paradox of glory out of shame. On Wednesday he will be examining the paradox of testimony out of mockery and on Thursday, the paradox for Jesus of being separated from, but sent to, the world. On Good Friday it will be the paradox of loyalty out of nowhere.

The services from Monday to Thursday will be streamed from the church at 7.30pm as will the Good Friday service but we don't yet know if we will be permitted to gather on Good Friday or Easter Sunday so we will follow the guidelines on this as they become clear to us. At this point I want to say a huge thank you on all of our behalf to our technology team who have worked tirelessly on all our behalf to facilitate and enable our Sunday services and our Lenten services to take place. There has been a heavy burden on the shoulders of Mike Johnston and Peter Cooper who have adapted our system so that one person operates our cameras and records the services and streams them to keep everyone safe.

They have also supported grieving families through livestreaming funeral services, enabling family members and others who couldn't attend because of the restrictions, to feel part of these services and occasions. We are also very grateful to Gillian Stevenson managing our website, Alison Young managing our Facebook page, and Chris Sanlon overseeing our telephone service to facilitate those who don't have access to the internet. Linda Campbell in the office has also been sourcing prayers and resources for our magazine and ensuring its distribution in challenging circumstances. Barbara Carlisle our Sexton has also been present to facilitate funeral services which are the only occasion alongside weddings, we are permitted to be open for public worship at present. I always encourage people to make a special effort to be present at our Holy Week and Easter services. It is such a moving and powerful thing to share this sacred journey of the last week of Jesus's earthly life and go with Him to his death

and emerge with Him into resurrection. In this most challenging of years we need His help, His life and His hope as we look to a new horizon. May His light and love be poured out upon you as we go forward with our eyes fixed on Him.

With very best wishes.

**Yours sincerely**  
**Jonathan Pierce (Rector)**  
**Telephone 02890 793822**

### **ALPHA ONLINE**

During the pandemic we have hosted 2 Alpha courses online. This 12 week course offers people an opportunity to explore the meaning of life through looking at key elements of the Christian Faith. Each session lasts an hour from 8-9pm and involves watching a video followed by a discussion about the content of the video. We use Zoom technology to facilitate the course so you would need to download the Zoom app for your computer or smartphone. **We hope to begin a new course on Wednesday 14th April and all are welcome.**

## **PRAYER POINTS FOR THE PARISH ON GOOD FRIDAY & THROUGHOUT THIS MONTH**

- 1.** Give thanks to God for His faithfulness and for sustaining us as a parish during this past year. For how he has provided for us financially, for the technological skills and equipment that have enabled public worship to continue online and in a recorded form.
- 2.** Give thanks too for each other, for the pastoral network of support and phone calls that has developed and the parish prayer chain and Prayer Warrior which supports people at this time.
- 3.** Give thanks for Jesus and all He has done for us on the Cross, for his victory over death and His Holy Spirit who enables us to serve and follow him and for the peace and joy of His presence.
- 4.** Please pray for Bishop David leading the Diocese in these extraordinary times and his wife Hilary. Give thanks for the series of online devotions on the Book of Nehemiah and pray that we will take those lessons to heart as we rebuild our churches after this season of lockdown.
- 5.** Please pray for all our parishioners who have lost loved ones during this lockdown. Pray for God's presence to bring peace and healing in the pain of loss and that people would offer support and help as best they can in these restricted circumstances.
- 6.** Please pray for the process of appointing a new curate. St.Finnian's has been allowed to enter this process and we would ask you to pray for the candidates and parishes who are seeking to find the right people to fill those roles, for the discernment of the Holy Spirit as interviews and visits take place in the coming months. We pray that God's guiding hand would be upon the whole process.
- 7.** Please pray for the whole process of emerging out of lockdown when we are allowed to do so, for the safety of parishioners, for wisdom in restarting activities and organisations and planning our worship that it might meet people's needs and bring glory to God and draw people into His kingdom.
- 8.** Please pray for our online presence through Messy Church online, through services, through blogs and podcasts. May all of these things glorify God and make him known to a wider audience.

**9.**Please pray for our children and young people returning to schools and universities, we hope, in the coming weeks. Pray too for their spiritual lives and for the outreach of our Sunday School in endeavouring to keep them connected and to keep that faith dimension of their lives nourished.

**10.**Please pray for our parishioners in nursing homes and sheltered accommodation who have had restricted visits and contact with family during this past year. May they be conscious of God's love and care and the love and support of their families.

**11.**Please pray too for those who have been nursing difficult health conditions at home and those caring for them.

**12.**We pray for link missionaries with CMS, SAMS and Open Doors working with the persecuted church in difficult global situations trying to recover from the pandemic.

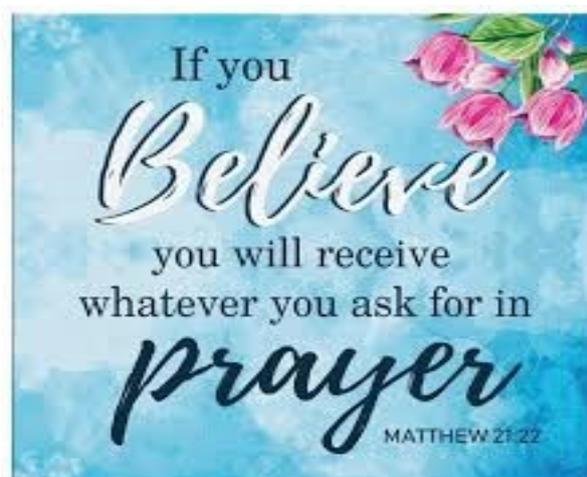
**13.**We pray too for our links with Divine Healing Ministries and the Church's Ministry of Healing as they seek to safely resume their activities in person in the next few months.

**14.**We pray for those who feel stressed and worried with financial concerns and for the right help and support to be available.

**15.**As we need to reschedule the Easter Vestry which is the annual business meeting of the church, we pray for all who will be elected to serve on the Vestry and for the right people to be raised up to serve as Churchwardens, Secretary and Treasurer.

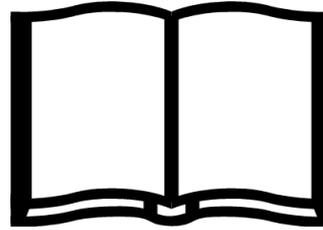
**16.**We pray for a sense of God's peace in the lives and homes of all our parishioners and all who are connected in any way to our church community.

**17.**Please pray for our online Alpha courses. We hope to begin a new course on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 8pm.



## From the Registers

### Christian Burial 2021:



25<sup>th</sup> February

Raymond (Ray) Fisher

15<sup>th</sup> March

James (Jim) Humphreys

19<sup>th</sup> March

Ivy McBride

20<sup>th</sup> March

Kaye McDowell

23<sup>rd</sup> March

Desmond Logan (Rev.)



*May the glory and the promise of this joyous time of year bring peace and happiness to you and those you hold most dear. And may Christ, Our Risen Saviour, always be there by your side to bless you most abundantly and be your loving guide.*



## **Prayer resources for the pandemic**

God of love, help us to maintain community bonds and solidarity with our sisters and brothers, especially with those who are in sickness and need, and help us to be a family for those who are without a family.

God of healing, we pray for those who have been infected and for their family members, give them the courage to face this moment of illness; we pray for all healthcare workers who are spending so much time and effort to manage this pandemic competently and generously, for scientists who are continuously working hard on vaccines in a short time; give them all strength and vision to face and try to stop this pandemic.

**Amen.**

For those who are unwell and concerned for loved ones  
for those who were already very anxious  
for those whose immune system is suppressed  
for those vulnerable because of underlying conditions  
for those in the 'most at risk to coronavirus' categories  
for those watching their entire income stream dry up  
for those who have no choice but to go out to work  
for those who are afraid to be at home  
for those who are more lonely than they've ever been  
for those who are bereaved and grieving.  
God be their healer, comfort and protection,  
be their strength, shield and provision  
be their security, safety and close companion.

**Amen.**

Heavenly Father, please strengthen our hearts, and remind us to encourage one another when the troubles of life start to overwhelm us. Please guard our hearts from depression. Give us the strength to rise up each day and fight against the struggles which seek to weigh us down.

**Amen.**



## ***FROM KILLING FIELDS to FIELDS OF LIFE***

Rev. Trevor Stevenson's book 'FROM KILLING FIELDS to FIELDS OF LIFE' tells of the hardship and suffering of the people of Uganda and in East Africa as a whole. It is a story spanning over 25 years which tells of the dedication and amazing work of the Fields of Life. Through their work, hope and a future were brought to people where once only poverty existed.

**The book is available from John Downey.**

**Tel. 90448757. Mob.07817465234.**

**Email [jwdowney@btinternet.com](mailto:jwdowney@btinternet.com)**

The cost is £10 and all proceeds go to the work of Fields of Life (FOL). This will be delivered to your home. If you wish, you may also order direct from FOL.



## The mystery and the history of St. Finnian's church bell



I wonder when you come to church on Sundays and you hear the church bell ringing out, do you ever give the bell a second thought? Traditionally church bells were used to call worshippers to church for services. When St. Finnian's was consecrated in 1932, the church didn't have a bell. In 1934, the Vestry spent some time pondering on the offer of a church bell from St. Patrick's, Dublin. In the end they refused the gift since it might cause a nuisance to the local residents. The church office was contacted recently by a lady called Marian Hardiman from the Monivea Heritage Association in Co. Galway. Marian was researching the whereabouts of the bell from the Monivea Church of Ireland which was removed from the church tower when the roof collapsed in 1955 and was transported to Belfast. Marian believed that the bell may have been re-installed in a church in Cregagh and wondered if it was St. Finnian's. Wilson Crawford, one of our long-standing parishioners, was contacted to see if he knew anything about the bell. Wilson said that he remembered that the bell came from somewhere outside Galway. It did indeed seem to be the same bell. Our Rector's Glebewarden, Jim Haughey kindly went up into the church bell tower to see if he could find any mention of Galway but to no avail. He did see an inscription around the outside of the bell at the top "Hodges Dublin 1861". Further research has shown that the bell was made by the Thomas Hodges foundry in Middle Abbey Street, Dublin which cast many single bells. Finally an obscure reference to the bell was found in the book "St. Finnian's, Cregagh—The story of the first fifty years". This stated, " a bell, a gift from the parish of Monivea, Co. Galway , was installed in 1957." St. Finnian's donated £20 for the bell to the Parish of Athenry. The bell has been faithfully ringing out in St. Finnian's for 64 years — that was £20 well spent!

## History of Monivea (origin of St. Finnian's church bell)

Monivea, situated 27km east of Galway city, was a planned village built at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the mid 1770s with the intention of providing a workforce for the production of linen cloth. The Ffrench family originally arrived in Ireland through Co. Wexford with the Normans in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and they spread to the West of Ireland, becoming one of the fourteen merchant Tribes of Galway. They were people of wealth and status and were very active politically. Many of them were elected to the Westminster Parliament. The male heirs down through the years were all named Robert, Acheson or Patrick. In 1609 Patrick Ffrench purchased a tower house and lands at Monivea from the O'Kelly Old Irish Clan and a substantial house was added to the original tower. By the 1800s the Ffrench family owned over 10,000 acres of land in East Galway and had further extended Monivea Castle into a grand mansion nestled within a woodland setting surrounded by a demesne wall. Outside the demesne wall, the Irish tenants farmed the land and paid rent to their Landlord. Many were employed by the Ffrench family as house keepers, butlers, cooks, garden staff, stable boys, blacksmiths, carpenters as well as a large staff of maids, a Governess, a nurse and others. Typical of many aristocrats at the time, they travelled widely by ship overseas and they hunted and entertained with similar local Landlords. They owned a home at 3A Lower Grosvenor Place, London across the street from the Royal Mews. They were close friends with the Royal Family during the mid to late 1800s and indeed up to the 1930s. The Ffrench family changed their religion at least twice over the centuries – mostly to facilitate their success in the legal and political professions when Catholics were not allowed to participate (during the time of the Penal Laws).

By the time of Oliver Cromwell's arrival in 1649, the Ffrench's are recorded as being Catholic but this subsequently changed to Church of Ireland. They lost their castle and lands to Cromwell but later re-purchased it and remained at Monivea until 1939.

Robert Ffrench (1716 – 1776) was a very progressive landlord. He laid out a plan for the building of a village at Monivea outside the entrance to his estate. He built a nursery and a Charter School. He was granted £100 from the Linen Board towards the construction of the bleach mill, the purchase of flax seed, looms and spinning wheels.

A team of workers were brought from Co. Armagh to weave and spin the linen. His wife was Lady Nicola Acheson of Markethill, Co. Armagh. The wide greens of the village were used as a bleaching area. A windmill and a flax mill still survive to this day on the east of the Ffrench estate.

The linen industry thrived for a time but it did not succeed in the long term. In January 1762 the Board of First Fruits (an institution of the Church of Ireland that was established in 1711 by Queen Anne to build and improve its churches and houses) granted Robert Ffrench £292 towards the cost of building a new church in the village of Monivea.

Construction work began and in October 1769 the Church was consecrated by the Archbishop of Tuam. Robert spent £2 3s 9d on his own pew. He later bought two extra pews, one for the children of the Charter School and the other for his servants and tenants. The Church grounds included the adjoining cemetery which was the resting place for the Protestant community in the Monivea area.

The former Rectory is now the local Garda Station while the Charter School is now McGivern's Mill – a hardware and former grain store.

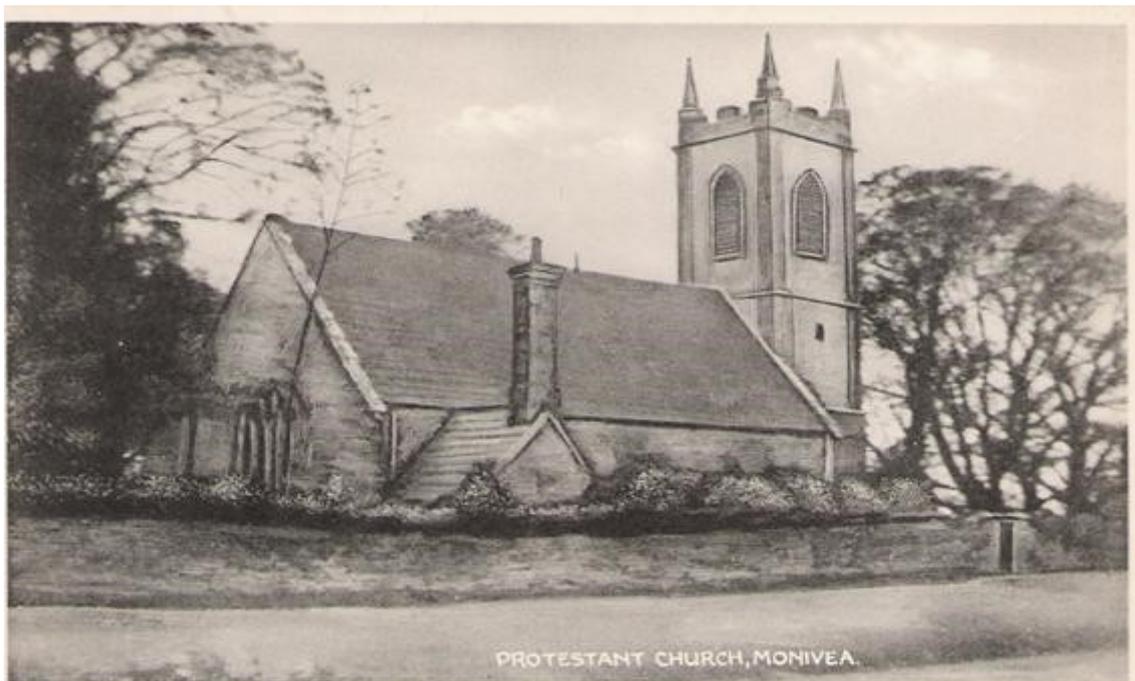
***(Many thanks to Marian Hardiman from the Monivea Heritage Association for writing the article on Monivea, Co. Galway and its connection with St. Finnian's).***

## The Church Bell

By the 1920s, the Church of Ireland building was not in use due to a dwindling population of the Protestant faith. The roof collapsed in 1955. The bell was removed from its tower and transported to Belfast where, as we now know, it was installed in St. Finnian's in 1957. It is recorded that the bell was greatly missed by the people of Monivea - especially as it rang on New Year's Eve. The church spire was struck by lightning in 1979. In recent years, repairs were carried out to a portion of the spire. In the future it is hoped that further work may be carried out as well as a complete survey of the many old gravestones in the adjoining cemetery.

The Ffrench family vault is in the centre of the graveyard surrounded by old yew trees. Acheson Ffrench (the last caretaker at Monivea Castle and brother of the last Landlord Robert Percy) and his wife Annie are laid to rest beside the family vault.

In 1957 three of the stained-glass windows were removed from Monivea and installed in St. Thomas's Church, Dugort, Achill, Co. Mayo where they remain to this day under the shadow of the lovely Slievemore mountain.



Hello Everyone

I hope you all had a lovely Mother's Day and St Patrick's Day . It's lovely that the weather is improving -makes it easier to meet up for a socially distanced coffee and a chat. By now most of you should have had your first vaccination so let's hope we are now on the path out of lockdown.

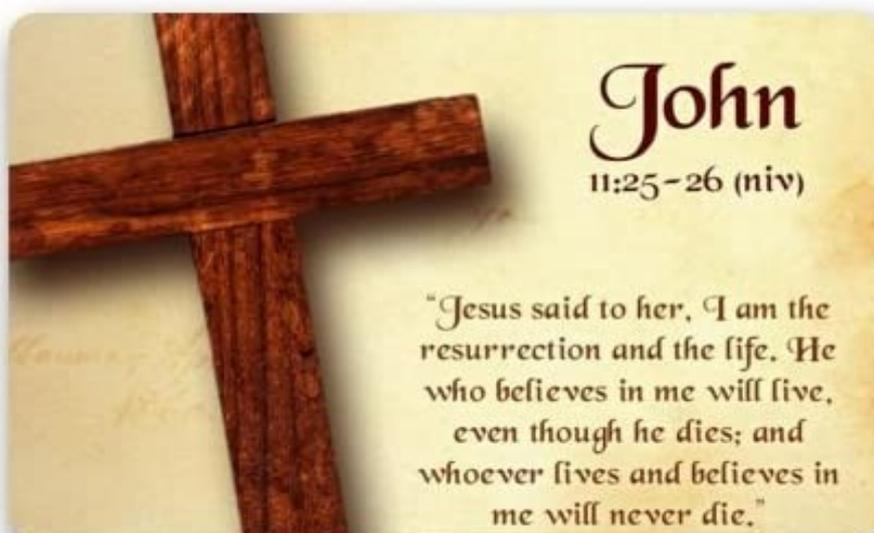
Many thanks to all those members who have provided us with hats and cardigans for the newborn babies. They really are lovely – we have some very talented ladies in our Branch. Unfortunately the hospitals are unable to take the items at present due to storage difficulties but they have agreed to contact us when they are able to accommodate us and we will get them delivered.

By now you should have all received your 'Easter Surprise' from the Branch. My thanks to Hilda, Helen and Angela for helping to deliver them. I hope you all have a lovely Easter , hopefully the weather will be good and you all can enjoy the Easter break.

Best Wishes

**Carol Bell**

**Branch Secretary**



*Mothers' Union—Midday Prayers—April 2021*  
*Rebuilding hope and confidence*  
*“I am” sayings of Jesus*

**Monday: I am the resurrection and the life**

Jesus said: I am the resurrection and the life.

The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;  
and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

*John 11:25-26*

**Christ has died:**

**Christ is risen:**

**Christ will come again.**

As the dawning of hope arises  
we look through the shadows of the cross  
and see the miracle of resurrection.

In our shame over Christ's undeserved death,  
we reach through the shadows of the cross  
and grasp the gift of resurrection.

The Lord is alive; our faith is renewed.

Fear has been vanquished; our future is eternal.

**Hallelujah.**

**Christ is risen**

**and we will rise with him.**

**Praise be to God for the miracle  
of resurrection.**

**Amen.**

**Tuesday: I am the good shepherd**

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me  
—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father —  
and I lay down my life for the sheep.

*John 10:14-15*

Our Lord is the Good Shepherd.

In his goodness he supplies our every need.

**The Lord is our Shepherd,  
and he takes perfect care of us.**

Our Lord is the Good Shepherd.

He leads us into safety  
and gives us strength for the journey.

**The Lord is our Shepherd,  
who grants us rest and restores our souls.**

Our Lord is the Good Shepherd.

He sought us out when we were lost,  
calling us by our names.

**The Lord is our Shepherd,  
and he has carried us home.**

**Amen.**

**Wednesday: I am the bread of life**

Jesus said: I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me will never go hungry,  
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

*John 6:35*

This is love.

Not that you spoke words of comfort,  
walked with the unclean and unloved,  
shared wisdom, bread and fish,  
brought healing into lives  
and challenged the status quo.

This is love.

That you spoke the word of God,  
walked a painful road to the Cross,  
shared living water, bread of life,  
brought Salvation to the world  
and died for the sake of all.

**Bread of life,  
feed us with your salvation  
that we may never hunger again  
but be ready to share your love  
with a starving world.**

**Amen.**

**Thursday: I am the light of the world**

Jesus said: I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,  
but will have the light of life.

*John 8:12*

**Jesus Christ, Light of the world,  
lead us by the light of your presence  
that our lives may brightly reflect your love.**

As we walk in the light of your presence,  
may we journey with you by our side.

As we walk in the company of your people,  
may their fellowship encourage us.

As we walk towards the light of eternity,  
may the glory of heaven spur us on.

**Jesus Christ, Light of the world,  
lead us to share the light of your love  
with those struggling in shadows,  
that we may be a beacon of hope  
in dark and uncertain times.**

**Amen.**

**Friday: I am the true vine**

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.  
He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit,  
while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes  
so that it will be even more fruitful.

*John 15:1-2*

**Abundant God,  
dig deeply in our lives  
to prepare us for acts of service  
that will produce a good return.**

Loving Lord,  
our heavenly gardener,  
we open ourselves to your spiritual nurture.  
Clear away the debris amassed over time –  
the dead works, the lurking selfishness,  
the weeds of doubt and disappointment.  
Draw us close to the truest of vines,  
to the blessing of relationship with Christ,  
that we may yield a fruitful harvest  
of service and love for a needy world.

**Amen.**

**Saturday: Who do you say I am?**

Jesus asked his disciples, 'Who do you say I am?'  
Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'

*Matthew 16:15-16*

Lord, you are the Bread of Life,  
which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

**You are the Good Shepherd,  
who lays down His own life for the sheep in His care.**

You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life,  
the path by which we come to know God the Father.

**You are the Light of the World,  
illuminating the way for all who walk in darkness.**

You are the Resurrection and the Life,  
the source of eternal life for all who believe.

**You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God,  
and our Redeemer and Lord.**

**Amen.**

# Equipping for Life *for a better future*

## **Equipping for Life - Volunteers Required**

Equipping for Life, a Christian charity which assists with literacy skills in deprived areas of Belfast (e.g. greater Shankill Road area and parts of East Belfast), is planning to run primary school homework clubs from September 2021. Many new volunteers are needed to supervise these, so if you are interested in helping or want to find out more, please phone Carole Sleator (Tel. 028 90791362). No teaching experience is required and early interest would facilitate Access NI clearance so that as soon as it is safe, church volunteers can re-enter schools.

Check our website at <http://www.equippingforlife.org.uk>

## **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**



## 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.**

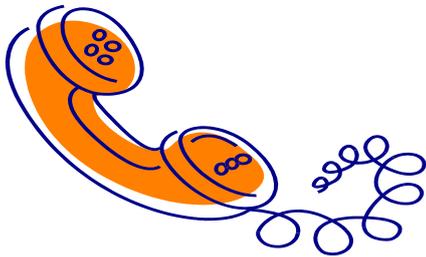
**If you can't find it, please contact the church office and someone will be in touch.**

**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 **May** magazine to **office.cregagh@down.anglican.org** or telephone the Parish Office 90792793 by NOON on **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

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



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