

ST Finnian's

FEBRUARY 2022

*Spring is coming, the dawn of
hope.*



*Please see inside for plans
to reopen some
parish organisations
& activities.*

Dear Friends

I had a lovely message with a photo from a friend of mine on Facebook recently.

She had a lovely panoramic view of the fields around her house and the sky was darkening although there was sufficient light to take in the view.

The photo was taken at 5.30pm and she simply said in her message, "Isn't it great to see the welcome stretch in the evenings?".

The arrival of spring, the emergence of flowers from the ground, the stretch in the evenings are all important signs at this time of year. They remind us of better days ahead, they point to hope and beauty and colour and we welcome these things after another very challenging year in the grip of the pandemic.

Alongside those visible signs of spring coming, there are hidden things too. Farming friends tell me of their preparation for the lambing season. Gardeners are sowing bulbs that will hopefully yield an array of colour as the year progresses. People are cautiously making plans for holidays either at home or further afield.

We have learned in recent years that nothing is guaranteed.

Restrictions and regulations can change or be introduced in a very short space of time. All the events we have planned may have to be postponed or held in different ways.

This does not take away however from the plans we have been making to reopen more of our groups and organisations to meet in person. Our chief focus in doing this is to enable people to meet safely and rekindle that sense of community that we have all missed through our limited contact with each other over the past 2 years.

As this magazine goes to print, the Men's Society and Mothers' Union are planning on a couple of gatherings in the coming months. The Ladies Open Door Friendship Group is meeting for the first time this week and the St. Finnian's Toddlers reopened yesterday after the Christmas break. The Boys' Brigade, Pilates class and Sunday School have reopened and another Alpha course and the weekly prayer meeting have resumed online.

Plans are afoot for the next Messy Church in March and discussions are ongoing with the Bowling Club. Covid has revisited the Rectory this week reminding me that as we cautiously reopen we must never lose sight of those basic things we are all continually encouraged to do – wash our hands, wear our masks and keep our distance.

The changing regulations mean that while one member of our household has to isolate, the rest of the household can go about their business so long as they do daily lateral flow tests that return negative results. As with the previous visit from COVID-19 during half-term week, I feel very grateful for the professionals working in the Public Health Agency who telephoned when we recorded our positive lateral flow test. They wanted to check in to see if we, as a family, were doing ok, that the person who tested positive was not experiencing too much distress and to guide us about what to do and when the infected person could return to their daily activities. They could not have been more helpful or caring and

sometimes we are inclined to take such people for granted. Our children's schools have likewise been very helpful in keeping us right in terms of the correct procedures and protocols. We are very blessed in this country to have such an infrastructure and we ought not to take it for granted. It would be good to pray regularly for those whose job it is to offer this advice to people, that they would be clear and well informed and help people through what can be a stressful and uncertain time.

One of the other little signs of hope and encouragement recently was the addition of a new member of our Sunday School teaching team. Through the pandemic we have tried to offer Sunday School through a rota of teachers and it is always helpful to have more people on that rota. Our new Sunday School teacher attended Sunday School herself as a child and teenager and is willing to get involved and put something back in, which is always encouraging to see. Sometimes people have that desire to put something back in.

All sorts of gifts and skills are needed. For those who are of a practical nature, our Glebewardens are looking to introduce a monthly work party on Saturday mornings to keep our grounds tidy and tackle some of those jobs that arise around the church grounds. That's a great way to get together socially in a safe way in the open air and enjoy creation and show our love for the church so if you can help in that way please come along on the last Saturday of the month. We are always interested in those who can sometimes help with giving a lift to people who may need it for appointments or any other reason so that's a great thing to get involved in too if you can help in that way. In last month's magazine we mentioned our hope to recommence our Wednesday morning Holy Communion service with prayers for the sick so we can offer that opportunity to gather to worship and pray in person. We hoped to start after the Clergy Conference which incidentally has had to be postponed because of the rising infection rate at present. We are trying to respond wisely

and thoughtfully and will be looking at how things are mid-February so please do keep an eye on the Website and Facebook page.

The Annual Register of Vestry Persons is now open. If you have never registered and are not registered as a member in any other church and contribute to church funds and would like to register here, please let the Churchwardens know if you would like a form.

This enables you to vote at the Annual Business Meeting of the church at the Easter Vestry which is normally held in the month of March or April.

We look forward, as Spring comes, to the dawn of these signs of hope.

With very best wishes.

**Yours sincerely,
Jonathan Pierce (Rector)
Telephone 028 90793822**

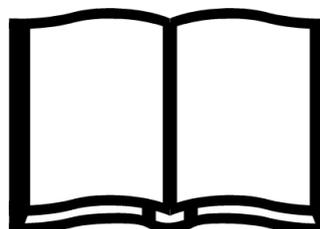


From the Registers 2022

Christian Burial

12th January - Dorothy Miller

13th January - Sylvia Kane



WORLD DAY OF
PRAYER
FRIDAY 4TH MARCH

This year's service has been written by the Christian women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with the title, ***"I know the plans I have for you"***.

We haven't had a home-grown service since 1945 so this is a bit of an occasion. The overarching theme is hope which is particularly relevant in these uncertain times.

**Our service will be held in St. Anthony's Chapel,
Woodstock Road at 8.00 pm.**

Everyone is warmly invited.

Julie Cunningham
Secretary, East Belfast 1
07814928398

REGISTER OF VESTRY
MEMBERS



Please note that the annual review of the Register of Vestry Members will be carried out at the meeting of the Select Vestry to be held on **Tuesday 22nd February 2022.**

Any person wishing to be registered as a Resident or as an Accustomed Member must complete a Form of Declaration. The forms will be available on the Parish Website, Facebook page, from the Churchwardens and from the Secretary to the Select Vestry, Linda Leonard, whose e-mail address is strathmore614@ntlworld.com

Completed forms must be returned to the Secretary to the Select Vestry, preferably by e-mail or by post to 6 Rosepark West, Belfast BT5 7RF before the date of the meeting – 22nd February 2022.

PARISH PRAYER MEETINGS

BY ZOOM

Our Parish Prayer Meetings by Zoom are continuing on Thursday evenings. During these meetings, we pray for our province, our church and the world around us.

If you would like to join us at 7 pm on

Thursdays just send an email to zoomtostfinnian@btconnect.com

or contact the Rector.

Ladies' Open Door **Friendship Group**



Hello Ladies

You are all very welcome to join us for February's meetings of the Friendship Group. On Wednesday 9th Margaret Rankin will tell us how her family visit to Australia took an unexpected turn due to COVID-19.

On Wednesday 23rd Johann Henderson will give a flower arranging demonstration. We look forward to seeing you.

Julie Cunningham



ST. FINNIAN'S MIXED INDOOR BOWLING CLUB

The bowling club is happy to announce that the bowlers will be resuming their activities on Wednesday 2nd February and every fortnight thereafter from 2 - 4pm in the Huston Hall.

All equipment is provided. Covid regulations will be complied with - please remember to bring a mask.

Feel free to come along - everyone is very welcome.

We play for fun!



Services for February



Sunday 6th February (4th Sunday before Lent)

11.00am Morning Prayer
7.00pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 13th February (3rd Sunday before Lent)

11.00am Morning Prayer
7.00pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 20th February (2nd Sunday before Lent)

11.00am Holy Communion
7.00pm Holy Communion

Sunday 27th February (Sunday before Lent)

11.00am Morning Prayer
7.00pm Evening Prayer



For where two or three
*gather in
my name,*
there am I with them.



Matthew 18:20

BOOK ONLINE NOW

Remember to book online for Sunday Morning Services

Just a reminder that if you would like to attend the Sunday morning 11am service, it is still necessary to book online using the online registration form available on our Website and Facebook page. If you don't use the internet, you can reserve a place by phoning Linda in the parish office on 028 90792793 on either Tuesdays or Wednesdays between 9am and 2pm. Alternatively, you can reserve a place with one of our Churchwardens the previous Sunday. The 11am service will continue to be livestreamed on YouTube to enable those who can't attend in person to worship with us. The dial-in service will also continue to be available for those who don't use the internet on 028 93447225.

General Maintenance



The church premises require regular maintenance to keep them in good order, so it would be an advantage to have a regular schedule for works both for buildings and grounds. This would give people an opportunity to volunteer a few hours a month to assist in the upkeep of our estate. Accordingly, the **last Saturday** of each month will be designated for a work morning, with attendance programmed for, say 9.00 am to 11.00 am, for anyone who might be available. Work would include general light duties, tidying up, pruning, spraying, brushing etc.

We will be meeting on Saturday 26th February 2022.

See you then !

**Jim Haughey
Glebe warden**

2022 - 90 YEARS OF WORSHIPPING TOGETHER AT ST.FINNIAN'S



The Clergy

This month, we are continuing our theme of looking at the history of our church. Since 10th September 1932, when the church was consecrated, St. Finnian's has had four Rectors.

Canon Charles W.A. Huston



Canon Huston was born in Drum, Co. Monaghan in 1892 and had trained as a teacher in Dublin. He had already progressed well in his teaching career when he decided to enter the Ministry. After his ordination as priest in 1921, he joined All Saints' Parish in Belfast. He arrived in Cregagh in 1928 as the curate-in-charge and was the chairman of the Committee that was established to develop a vision for a new church in Cregagh. Canon Huston played an integral role in the development of St. Finnian's. His was no mean task but he had a determined missionary spirit. Despite the challenges of the time - high unemployment, large families and low incomes, Canon Huston and the Committee succeeded in their goal of bringing a new church to the area. Canon Huston retired in April 1966 after 38 years' service. He was the founder of St.Finnian's, a man of stern quality who lived in total obedience to the rules and procedures of the church. It was he who suggested that the church should be dedicated to St. Finnian. Canon Huston is therefore woven into the history and the name of our church.

Bishop James Mehaffey

The Rev. James Mehaffey was born in Portadown, Co. Armagh and instituted Rector of St. Finnian's on 23rd July 1966. Prior to this he had been Rector of Kilkeel. He was democratic in his approach and had a regard for the importance of the individual that informed all his ministry. Gradually, through his belief in an open society, he led the parish towards a greater participation by the laity in the spiritual life of the parish. Lay people read the lessons and led the prayers and parish groups were formed which met regularly in people's homes for Bible study and discussions. This all helped to strengthen the parish and people began to care more for their own fellow parishioners. This was shown through schemes for visiting the sick and elderly, a Wednesday service for prayers for the sick and a monthly Sunday meal for pensioners by the Mother's Union called "Autumn Leaves." Canon Mehaffey (as he was later to become) continued to grow the church, reaching out not only to the local community and schools but also forging links with small, remote parishes in the west of Ireland as well as local churches of other denominations. In August 1980, it was announced that Canon Mehaffey had been appointed Bishop of Derry and Raphoe bringing his 14 years of ministry in St. Finnian's to an end.



Canon Noel Battye

The Rev. John Noel Battye was born in Kilmacthomas, Co. Waterford. He came to the parish with varied and extensive experience. Rev. Battye was instituted Rector of St. Finnian's on 28th November 1980 having come from his previous role as Bishops' Curate of Knocknagoney. In 1982, the church celebrated its Golden Jubilee and the Select Vestry, led by Canon Battye was determined that worship



in the church would become more of an inspiration and that people would reach out to their neighbours near and far. A major project was undertaken for our neighbours in the parish with the sponsorship of a house for the elderly. The aim of the house was to provide a home for elderly people with comfort, security and friendship in a familiar district. This is St. Finnian's House on the Cregagh Road and the house is still there today 40 years later providing the service it was intended for. Canon Battye was devoted to the parishioners of St. Finnian's. He had the gifts of language and a great sense of fun and he will always be remembered with love and thankfulness. Canon Battye retired in December 2008 after 28 years of devoted service to St. Finnian's.

Canon Jonathan Pierce

Rev. Jonathan (Jono) Pierce was instituted as Rector of St. Finnians on 12th October 2009. Earlier in his career, he served curacies in the parishes of Knockbreda and Taney and worked as a House Assistant in the L'Arche community in Dublin. Prior to his appointment to St. Finnian's, he was Rector of Kilmore and Inch (Diocese of Down and Dromore) from 2003. Over the past 12 years, Jono has led the parish faithfully through a time of changing demographics which presents challenges in the life of a church. He has been instrumental in encouraging the church to grow in new ways such as encouraging the introduction of Messy Church to attract new families to the church. Most notably he has led us all steadfastly through the past 2 years of great upheaval during the COVID-19 pandemic striving hard to keep us together as a church family. He has been devoted to the congregation and has had to lead the way in embracing new technologies to ensure that worship can continue in the church. This technology has also been of great benefit to people isolating and indeed allows people from across the world to be part of our church services.



Prayers for renewal and fresh beginnings

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." (Isaiah 43:18-19)

*Father, thank you for a fresh start today.
Thank you for the reminder of "renewal" that
spring represents to us in the earth.
You "spring forth" a new thing! I am excited and
expectant of your goodness in this spring season.
Thank you, Father. Prepare me for all the new and
wonderful things you have for my life.
Help me to let go of the old things that hold me
back, the things that do not bring me life, the
things that keep me living in the past.
I will cling to my new identity in Christ.
Help me to keep "springing forward"
in my journey with you.*

Amen.

"For as the earth brings forth its sprouts and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations." (Isaiah 61:11)

*God, I praise You. Your seeds of righteousness and
praise have been planted in the earth.
May I be like a "sprout" in your garden, sprouting
up in hope, as I grow in you.
Fortify me with strength as I "burst forth"
into who I have been created to be in you.
I will praise and honour you, God.
May my life bring you glory.*

Amen.

Prayer of hope during the pandemic

*God of hope, our hearts overflow with gratitude
for your abiding presence during these
exceedingly difficult and troubled times.
May the flames of hope remain aglow among
individuals, families,
communities and nations during the pandemic.
May our trust in you be affirmed, especially as we
continue to navigate each day
the challenges that have confronted us.
Let all that we are wait quietly before you,
O God, knowing that our hope is in you.
By your Spirit, may we be grounded in the hope
that is proclaimed in your word:
you are our rock and salvation, our fortress where
we will not be shaken.
Father, in your name we pray,
Amen.*



St. Finnian's Pilates



Pilates is back for 2022 at St. Finnian's!
Happy New Pilates Year. As of 5th January the class started back and stays in its normal slot of 7-8pm on a Wednesday evening in the Huston Hall. As well as giving the opportunity to learn and practice this form of exercise, the class offers participants a bit of 'me time' where nothing else gets in the way or, as one regular member put it, "the time flies by when you're concentrating so hard on getting all the bits to move in the right direction at the same time!" However, while co-ordination and control are key principles of Pilates, it doesn't matter on those occasions when things don't go quite to plan as this just adds to the fun and makes for a more relaxed atmosphere. Here's to stronger cores and more flexible spines (and less cramp) in 2022.

If you would like to come along, a small donation of £3.00 per class is appreciated with proceeds going towards church funds. **Everyone is very welcome.**

If you want to find out more about Pilates, please contact me by phone (+447941368546) or email at jcwworth@yahoo.co.uk

John Waterworth

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.

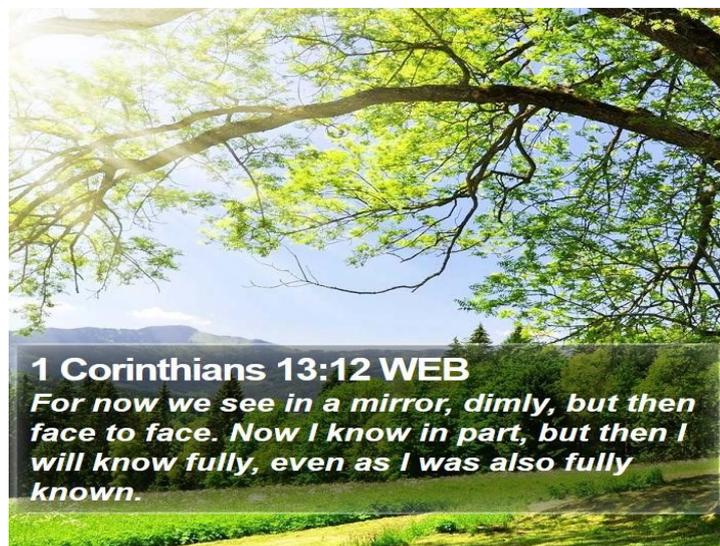
Mobile: 07513947504

Hello everyone

Liz and I are delighted to be your new Branch Leader and Secretary respectively. The new Treasurer hasn't yet been appointed. It's an honour and privilege to be asked to serve in this way and I'm sure the new Committee feel the same. A massive thanks must go to our predecessors Clare, Carol and Helen for their gentle and practical leadership all carried out with humour and goodwill. This also applies to the previous Committee. It was disappointing not to be able to meet in the hall for our Advent Supper. However a letter from Clare and a goody bag with treats including a slice of Christmas cake were delivered by the office-holders and Committee to members on the doorsteps and the feedback was very positive. Who knows, the art of letter writing may make a comeback?! In the next few weeks the Committee will meet to decide on the programme for the rest of 2022. Hopefully the first meeting will be held in the hall on Thursday 3rd March. Having come through a difficult season we are now looking forward to meeting in person, members of a Branch who will encourage and pray for each other locally, whilst aware of our being part of a MU worldwide organisation.

Best wishes.

Angela Harvey
Branch Secretary



Mothers' Union—Midday Prayers—February 2022
Colours of Transformation

Monday: Rainbow

Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day,
so was the radiance around him.

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

Ezekiel 1:28

Christ our Lord,
radiant in splendour and glory,
shine your love into the darkness
and paint our lives with the rainbow hues
of your multi-faceted blessing.
Lift our eyes that we may delight
in the brightness and beauty
of your transformational love
which colours our lives with joy and hope.

**O Christ our Morning Star,
Splendour of Light Eternal,
shining with the glory of the rainbow,
come and waken us
from the greyness of our apathy
and renew us in your gift of hope.
Amen.**

Tuesday: Red

Come now, let us settle the matter, says the Lord.

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

Isaiah 1:18

**Christ, our spotless Redeemer,
who cleanses us from sin,
look upon us with mercy and grace.**

In shame, I come to Christ,
carrying the filthy rags of my sin,
stained in crimson guilt.

In faith, I lay them at Christ's feet,
whispering words of penitence,
helpless to make amends.

In love, Christ transforms my life,
making me clean as newly-fallen snow
with his crimson blood of righteousness

**Christ our spotless Redeemer,
who takes away the sin of the world,
we bring you our worship and praise.
Amen.**

Wednesday: Green

The Lord is my shepherd I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,

he restores my soul. Psalm 23:1-3

When our lives are dull and dry,
the colour drained by the demands we face:

Lord, lead us to pastures green.

Transform our parched souls
into abundant places of fruitfulness
with your verdant refreshment.

Shelter us in leafy shade.

Restore us in times of dryness

by the waters of the Spirit

as we soak in your Word.

Plant us in fertile places.

Transform our barrenness

into lives that will produce

a vibrant harvest of faith.

**Surely your goodness and mercy
will colour all the days of our lives,
until we dwell in your house
forevermore.**

Amen.

Thursday: White

Jesus led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone.

There he was transfigured before them.

His clothes became dazzling white,

whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.

Mark 9;2-3

Chosen One, Beloved of the Father,

lead us to the heights of your presence

that we may behold your dazzling radiance.

**Bathe us in the rays of your glorious truth
that we may be transformed by your perfect love.**

**Open our ears to listen to your voice
that we may be transformed by your words of life.**

Then lead us on by the light of your presence,

renewed in spirit and envisioned in faith;

to works that bring lasting transformation

in the world you have called us to serve.

Amen.

Friday: Sparkling jewels

Afflicted city, storm-tossed and not comforted,
I will rebuild you with stones of turquoise,
your foundations with sapphires.

I will make your battlements of rubies,
your gates of sparkling jewels,
and all your walls of precious stones.

Isaiah 54:11

Christ our King,

you were storm-tossed by those you died to save;
rejected by those you came to build into your kingdom.

Yet now you shine with resurrection glory,
radiating bejewelled light,

as you stand on the foundations of eternity.

So, in your mercy, transform us in our hardships
and rebuild the foundations of our lives,
with sparkling jewels of your love and grace.

**May we shine as precious living stones,
reflecting the light of Christ our King,
and may his light transform the world.**

Amen.

Saturday: Colours of transformation

We all are being transformed into his image
with ever-increasing glory,
which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18

**Take your canvas, God,
and sketch on it
a new life for me.**

**Shape me, style me
and shade me with your Spirit.**

Paint over the old me with all my blemishes and flaws
and then, with Jesus as your model

draw my heart again

and colour it with love.

God, paint over the old me and draw me again
so that I can see the world

from your perspective.

Then, after growth and in wisdom

perhaps one day

someone will look and see in me

your masterpiece

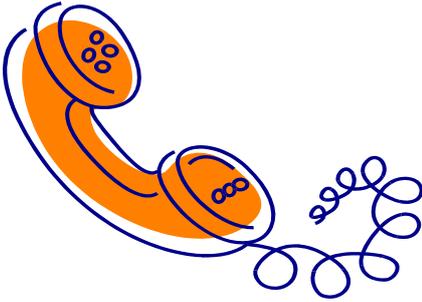
a portrait of the glory of Jesus.

Amen.

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 BY EMAIL

Why not receive your magazine by email and help the environment by cutting down on the use of paper? If you would like to receive your magazine this way, contact Linda in the church office on Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 9.00am - 2.00pm. Tel. 028 90792793 or email office.cregagh@down.anglican.org

Magazine

Please send articles for inclusion in the **March** magazine to **office.cregagh@down.anglican.org** or telephone the Parish Office 028 90792793 by NOON on **Tuesday 8th February.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

www.stfinnians.org



Find us on Facebook!
Facebook.com/StFinnians

Registered with
The Charity Commission for
Northern Ireland NIC101977