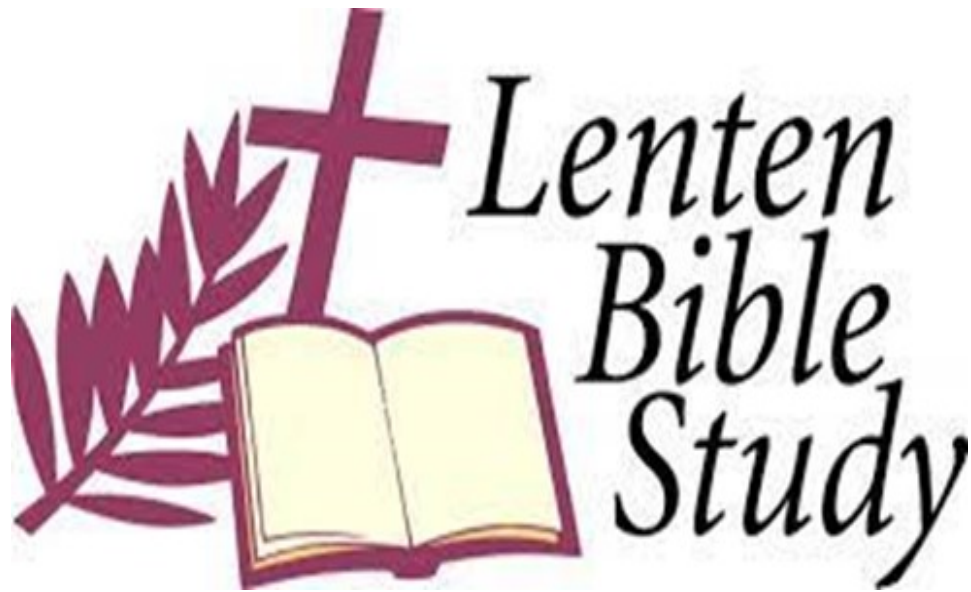


ST Finnian's

MARCH 2023



*Learning to hear the voice
of God,
a series of teachings helping us
to read the Bible.
(see inside for further details)*

Dear Friends

As this magazine goes to print we will have entered the season of Lent. It's a season in which we recall the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ as He gave his life for us. It's a season in which we are invited in the service from our prayer book to observe these 40 days by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting and self-denial and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

One of the fundamental challenges of this invitation is to read God's Word for ourselves regularly. Most of us haven't had the luxury of theological studies and we feel perhaps overwhelmed at where to start. It all seems so complicated and hard to understand. We don't know the history or the context of many of the books in the Bible. We recognise there are different genres of literature on display, but how can we interpret or understand what's going on? On the first 5 Thursdays of Lent, we are hoping to run a series of 5 sessions to explore this central Christian discipline of reading the Bible. The Lectio course introduces us to a method of opening ourselves up to Hearing God's Voice as we read and

meditate on the scriptures.

The facilitator, Pete Greig will share some teaching and inspiration and interview someone who has made Bible reading and meditation a central part of their life with God. There will be some materials to take away and reflect upon in the week ahead. Much of the material is based on a book called *How to Hear God: A Simple Guide for Normal People* written by Pete Greig. I hope to use it as my own Lenten book this year and it might be useful for those who want to explore the topic this Lent in some more depth.

The weekly teaching on this topic will be framed in the context of a Late Evening office on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm beginning on Thursday 23rd February. During the season of Lent our prayers over Zoom will be suspended and we hope to be able to livestream these sessions from church as an alternative. I loved the simple heartfelt desire behind the course to equip us as a church to grow in prayer, discern God's voice and fall in love with the Bible. We hope you will be able to come and really benefit from the series during Lent.

There will also be a series of Holy Week services beginning on Monday 3rd April each evening at 7.30pm from Monday to Friday. Our Curate, Andy will be teaching us all about the events in the last week of Jesus's earthly life and their significance for us today as we follow the special liturgies for this season. As this magazine goes to print, the terrible news has reached us about the devastating earthquakes and significant aftershocks which have struck Turkey and Syria. We know that many lives have been lost in this terrible disaster and it's estimated that 23 million people in both countries will have been impacted. Words fail us at a time of such incomprehensible suffering but we do ask people to pray for the situation. It's hard to know what to pray when we feel overwhelmed by the scale of the suffering and the pain.

Can I suggest we pray for the **people** affected – asking for God's comfort for those suddenly grieving the loss of loved ones, those who have lost homes, those injured and scared. Can we pray for the **peacemakers** – for resilience and resources for NGOs,

frontline workers, search and rescue teams etc. Can we pray for **politicians** – for wisdom to co-operate and communicate well, making good and speedy decisions for those worst afflicted. Can we pray for **pastors** – for strength as they process their own trauma whilst also seeking to bind up broken hearts, caring for the poor, arranging funerals and trying to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the face of such devastation. Sometimes the only thing we have to offer are our feeble prayers and we trust God hears and will respond to the cries of our heart.

On Sunday 26th February we hope to have a Lenten lunch of soup and bread after the 11am service. Any donations received will be go to the relief of those affected by the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.

Wishing you and your families a blessed Lent and thank you for your prayers.

With very best wishes
Jonathan Pierce (Rector)
Telephone 02890 793822



From the Registers 2023

Holy Baptism

26th February - Katie Semple

(daughter of Scott & Sinead)



For the first five Thursday nights during Lent, we are running a series of studies to explore the central Christian discipline of reading the Bible. **These studies about Lectio Divina will begin on Thursday 23rd February at 7.30 pm in the church.**

PRAYER MEETINGS BY ZOOM

Please note that the prayer meetings by Zoom will not take place during Lent and Holy Week. The meetings will resume again after Easter.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

WHEN? *Friday 3rd March*



WHERE? *St. Finnian's Parish Church*

The annual World Day of Prayer service is being held in our church on Friday 3rd March at 8.00pm. This year's service has been written by the Christian women of Taiwan with the theme "I have heard about your faith".

We will be participating in a wave of prayer beginning at dawn in Tonga, and travelling west, to end at dusk in American Samoa.

Everyone is welcome to join us in this worldwide act of Christian fellowship and then enjoy a cup of tea and chat with friends.

Julie Cunningham

07814928398

CONCERT IN KNOCKBREDA PARISH CHURCH

Knockbreda Parish Mothers' Union are hosting a concert in Knockbreda Parish Church with Comber Brass and The Swing Gals on Saturday 11th March at 7.30pm.

Tickets are priced at £12 and are available from Liz Walker,

Tel: 07774617549.



CHURCH BUILDINGS & GROUNDS - GENERAL MAINTENANCE

The church premises require regular maintenance to keep them in good order, so it is an advantage to have a regular schedule for works both for buildings and grounds. This gives people an opportunity to volunteer a few hours each month to assist in the upkeep of our estate.

Accordingly, the **last Saturday** of each month is designated as a work morning, duration from 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.

The next date is Saturday 25th March 2023.

See you then!

**Jim Haughey
Glebewarden**

Wednesday morning communion & prayers for the sick

Just a reminder that the Wednesday morning communion service with prayers for the sick starts at 10.30 am. Feel free to join us in the Sextons' Room afterwards for coffee and scones. Everyone is very welcome.



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

Services for March



Sunday 5th March (2nd Sunday in Lent)

9.00am Holy Communion
11.00am Connect Service (in Huston Hall)
7.00pm Holy Communion

Sunday 12th March (3rd Sunday in Lent)

9.00am Holy Communion
11.00am Morning Prayer
7.00pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 19th March (4th Sunday in Lent)

9.00am Holy Communion
11.00am Holy Communion
7.00pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 26th March (5th Sunday in Lent)

9.00am Holy Communion
11.00am Morning Prayer
7.00pm Evening Prayer





The next Messy Church will be held on Friday 2nd June from 3.30pm - 5.00pm in the Huston Hall. More details will appear in next month's magazine.

SANCTUARY MENTAL HEALTH COURSE

How can a church become a sanctuary—a place where individuals living with mental health challenges feel safe, supported, and a sense of belonging? The Sanctuary Course was created to inspire and equip communities of faith that are asking this important question. Developed in consultation with mental health professionals, theologians, and people with lived experience, this eight-session study guide explores key mental health topics and examines meaningful ways to offer companionship, support recovery and promote wellbeing.

The course is held in the coffee bar in the Parochial Hall on Wednesdays from 7.45 pm until 9.00pm.

AN EVENING OF DELIGHTFUL MUSIC

Theo Hayward plays in the orchestra for the City of Belfast School of Music. As part of their fundraising endeavours for a European tour this summer, they will be performing a concert in the church on Saturday 1st April at 7pm. The suggested donation is £10 or £5 for students. Come along if you are free and enjoy an evening of delightful music and support a very worthy cause.



LADIES' FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Hello Ladies

Spring is in the air and when the clocks change at the end of the month we may be thinking of trips out. Our speaker on Wednesday 8th March at 2.00pm is Linda Murray. Her topic, "Tales from Hillsborough tourist office", will doubtless give rise to some chuckles. On Wednesday 22nd March, Esther Ross will be describing her experience attending a Romanian wedding. Esther is a keen beekeeper and was one of our guests last year. She may have some of her delicious honey for sale.

We look forward to seeing you all.

Julie 07814928398

DIVINE HEALING MINISTRIES

I am pleased to announce that Rebekah Alley from Divine Healing Ministries (DHM) will be the guest speaker at the monthly DHM service to be held in St. Finnian's on Tuesday 28th March at 7.30pm.

All are invited to attend these services where 'Jesus will meet you at your point of need'.

God bless.

Norman Sleator

BIBLE BOOK CLUB

Please note that the Bible Book Club will not commence until after Easter. More details will be provided at a later date.

CREGAGH CRAFTERS



The group has been busy making chicks for Easter.



We will meet each Tuesday in March and then take an Easter break on 4th and 11th April.

Cregagh Crafters will resume on Tuesday 18th April.

All are welcome to drop in for coffee, crafting or chat.

The group meets on Tuesdays from 10.30am - 12.30pm in the Huston Hall.

Any queries please phone Janet Johnston 07711885203.

FLOWER DONATION ROTA

MARCH

5th Mrs M Corbett
12th Mrs M Carleton
19th Men's Society
26th Miss C Hamilton



St. Finnian's Pilates



Spring has finally arrived, and hopefully there's a spring in everyone's step too. Needless to say I would suggest that Pilates will help put it there with a low impact exercise system designed to improve your core strength, posture and flexibility. One description I favour is that Pilates is a physical training regime based on the body in its most natural state in motion - movements carried out with the body in correct alignment. At this stage I'll say a few words about a fundamental principle, and one that distinguishes Pilates from other fitness regimes - namely 'Flow'. Movement is by nature continuous - in daily life each movement is connected to another rather than being fragmented, forced and isolated from each other. The concept of flow is brought into Pilates through a focus on slow controlled movements that work the appropriate muscles and groups of muscles in a more natural way. As those who have been to a few of the Wednesday evening classes will testify, slow doesn't mean easy! However, the good news is that each exercise can be adjusted to help you perform them at an appropriate level of effort to enable that flow. I'll sign off now with my usual encouragement to stay safe and keep moving.

The Pilates class meets on Wednesdays at 7pm in the Huston Hall.

Everyone is very welcome and a small donation of £3 per class is requested to go towards church funds. If you have any questions or want to find out more about Pilates, please contact me - John Waterworth by phone (+447941368546) or email at jcwworth@yahoo.co.uk



Hello everyone

The Lent season has well and truly begun, there is St. Patrick's Day on the way, the clocks go forward on Sunday 26th March so the lighter nights, already noticeable since February, will give us a lift as we move into spring. **Our next meeting is on Thursday 2nd March 2023 at 7:30pm** in the Huston Hall and we are delighted that **our past President Clare Stewart will be speaking**. Clare is an All-Ireland Mothers' Union Trustee and will be talking about her work as the Action and Outreach Coordinator. To be honest before taking on the job as Branch Secretary, as an ordinary member of St. Finnian's Parish MU, I wasn't or didn't make myself aware of the work of MU in any depth at Diocesan or National level, so it will be good to hear of the ongoing work in every corner of Ireland. This reminded me of when I was about 8 or 9 years old when I took an old battered Atlas and wrote inside something like: Angela Harvey, 8, Tudor Avenue, Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, Europe, the World and finally the Universe. Notice how I was first in the list not last! Sometimes our view is like the title of a well known book "Your God is too small" and so we need to be aware of the bigger picture which we become aware of at the local level but goes way beyond what we could imagine.

Reminder: MU Festival Service in St. Mark's Parish, Newtownards on Thursday 30th March 2023 at 8pm.

Members can add their names to go at the March meeting and lifts will be arranged accordingly.

Please see the MU Midday Prayers for March are printed on the opposite page.

**Angela Harvey,
Branch Secretary**

Mothers' Union - Midday Prayers - March 2023
Remain in me

Monday: My Father is the gardener

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 Father, 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.

Tuesday: Remain in me

Remain in me, as I also remain in you.
No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain
in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you
remain in me. *John 15:4*

Lord, we would grow with you

New shoots reaching out
Hands stretched upward
Like leaves newly formed
Soaking up your light and warmth
Lord, we would grow with you.

Lord, we would grow with you

In sunshine and rain
In darkness and light
In cold days and summer days
From Springtime to Winter
Lord, we would grow with you.

Lord, we would grow with you

And bring forth fruit
That is pleasing to you
Fed by your living water
Giving sustenance to others

Lord, we would grow with you.

Amen.

Wednesday: Remain in my love

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. *John 15:9-10*

Christ, the true vine, beloved of the Father, we would remain in your love.

Nurture us with your lavish grace to follow your teaching and keep your commands.

Water us with your life-giving Spirit that we may flourish and grow in service to God and his world.

Cultivate within us a heart of compassion reflecting the love of our heavenly Father as we seek to obey his life-giving Word.

Christ, the true vine, beloved of the Father, we would remain in your love.

Amen.

Thursday: Complete joy

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

John 15:11

Christ, the true vine, beloved of the Father, we open our lives to your presence.

Work deeply within that your joy may be in us and our joy may be complete.

As we remain in your wondrous love may we be filled with your perfect joy, that no one can take away;

by which we can know abundance of life.

Christ, the true vine, beloved of the Father,

help us be deeply rooted in you

that the Spirit may bear fruit in us;

that your joy may be in us

and our joy may be complete;

for the growth of your Kingdom on earth.

Amen.

Friday: The greatest love

Greater love has no one than this:
to lay down one's life for one's friends. *John 15:13*

**Christ the true vine, beloved of the Father,
we marvel at your selfless love;
your supreme act of friendship
for a helpless people,
that we may have eternal life.**

Love poured out
on that cruel cross,
a blood offering
so we might go free.

Love poured out,
infusing this world
with rivers of grace
and hope of rebirth.

Love poured out,
and into these hearts,
who drink from a stream
that never runs dry.

**Christ the true vine, beloved of the Father,
we stand in awe of your supreme act of
friendship; we are blessed that you call us
your friends. Amen
Amen.**

Saturday: Love one another

You are my friends if you do what I command.
This is my command: love each other.

John 15:14, 17

**Christ, the true vine, beloved of the Father,
as we remain in your love
and are filled with your joy,
give us the grace to follow your command
to love one another.**

Jesus offers a new-old commandment,
that we should love each other.

With the incredible power
and the unfathomable depth of God's love for us
we can, we must love one another.

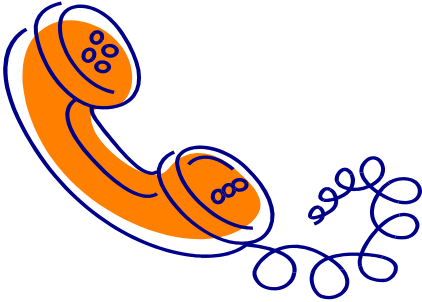
And it is in this
our love for one another
that the world will know
whom and what we worship.

**Come, children of God,
let us love one another.
Amen.**

CONTACT DETAILS

Rector: Tel: 028 90793822

Curate: Tel: 07905368474



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 **April** magazine to office.cregagh@down.anglican.org or telephone the Parish Office 028 90792793 by NOON on **Tuesday 7th March.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

www.stfinnians.org



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