

ST Finnian's

NOVEMBER 2023

*November—
an important month
of remembrance*



Dear Friends

We normally associate the month of November with some very significant occasions for remembering in our parish life. On 5th November at 7pm at our evening service we will be taking the opportunity to remember with thanksgiving those associated with our parish who have died in the past 12 months. Families will be invited to this special service and while it is always a very poignant occasion, it's good to have the opportunity to think about the Christian hope of a life beyond this life. On the following Sunday, 12th November at 11am, we will have our annual service of remembrance where we remember those who gave their lives during times of war and in subsequent conflicts since. It's an important occasion to remember those who paid that ultimate price for our freedom and to pray for peace in troubled parts of our world. That's a big need as we hear the terrible news of ongoing loss of life and immense suffering in Ukraine, in Israel and Palestine at the present time. As we remember at these special services, which will most likely take place in the church hall as the work continues on our church building

and grounds, there are a number of other ways we remember at this time of year. I am very mindful of a lot of appeals and collections for situations of need and charities and our church is involved in quite a number of these. I am constantly struck by the generosity of those who want to help in whatever way they can and I wanted to make a few suggestions in this month's letter. With the best will in the world it's not possible to do everything and to support everything. I therefore want to suggest praying about the things you have a particular heart or concern for and, if you are in a position to do so, make a contribution to that. We are continuing to navigate a cost of living crisis and I'm sure many households have noticed the steep rise in prices as they pay grocery bills and purchase things like school uniforms, fuel, gas and electricity. We have a long standing relationship with Christians Against Poverty and Heather, our CAP Champion has included an article in this month's magazine by James Myles who oversees the work of CAP in this area.

The ways to contribute are outlined in James' article. He is coming to speak at our morning service on Sunday 26th November.

Some people will have already been involved in our Harvest appeal for tinned goods through The Larder food bank in East Belfast and those contributions have made an enormous difference to people who find themselves in very challenging circumstances locally.

Others have filled shoe boxes through the Samaritan's Purse which will make their way across the world to children who might not otherwise receive any gifts over Christmas. Some people too have been involved in the Bishops' Appeal collection for those affected by the floods in Libya or some are longtime supporters of the work of Fields of Life in East Africa.

There are others who may not have much disposable income due to personal circumstances but who volunteer incredibly generously with their time. Their prayers and these contributions are every bit as important and meaningful as financial ones.

One of the areas of parish life

that we place great significance upon is the care of parishioners who are going through tough times for all sorts of reasons or who might be housebound or living at this time in nursing homes or sheltered accommodation. At various points we have had training for those interested in giving time to pastoral visiting and we hope to run some training in this area in December on 3 consecutive Sunday afternoons. We want to familiarise volunteers with the church's policy on Safeguarding Trust, to do a little training on listening well and praying with and offering spiritual support to those we visit. Many volunteers have great gifts in this area. If it's something you might be interested in, please speak with Andy or myself as we do all we can to ensure no one feels forgotten or isolated in the things they are dealing with and facing.

As November prompts us to remember people from our parish family who have died and some of the painful times in our shared history, it's also a time when we remember those in need both locally and globally in different ways.

We remember, as we enter the sacred season of Advent, a time of waiting with expectancy and hope for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. More details on our special Advent services can be found opposite.

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

PRAYER MEETINGS BY ZOOM

Our parish prayer meetings by Zoom will continue on **Thursday evenings at 7pm.**

If you would like to join us, send an email to zoomtostfinnian@btconnect.com or contact the Rector.

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

SEASON OF ADVENT



Angels and shepherds: There's a Time and a Place for Everything

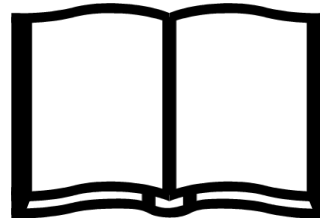
O Holy Night

On the day of Jesus' birth, the citizens of Bethlehem were busy welcoming the visitors who flocked in for the great census. For shepherds though, it was business as usual. Census or no census, the sheep needed watched. However that night the shepherds had visitors of their own as angels arrived to announce the Saviour's birth. This Advent we shall be thinking about that wonderful night and asking ourselves what the angels, the shepherds and even that little town of Bethlehem can teach us as followers of Christ in 2023.

Join us for a Late Evening Office, a short service on this theme, on Thursday 7th, 14th and 21st December at 7.30pm.

From the Registers 2023

Christian Marriage



29th September - Heather McKnight & Andrew Potter
(in St. John The Baptist, Helen's Bay)

Wednesday morning communion & prayers for the sick



The Wednesday morning communion service with prayers for the sick takes place on Wednesdays at 10.30am. **Please note that due to the ongoing work in the church, the service takes place in the Huston Hall.**

Tea/coffee and scones will be served afterwards.

Return of books and pew seats to the church

Access works currently underway in the church and grounds are due to end around the second week of November and thereafter normal church worship will be resuming.

There will therefore be a need for an evening operation to retrieve all the books and pew seats from the choir vestry where they have been temporarily housed, to be returned to the church.

We will be making an announcement at the appropriate time for an early evening gathering to carry out this task – the previous gathering to remove the books etc. generated a terrific response from parishioners and the task was carried out very quickly.

Hello everyone

The short days and dark nights are with us as we have officially left summer time behind a few days ago. On 1st November each year it is All Saints' Day when the church remembers and celebrates all the saints famous or not who have gone before us in the faith. Each Sunday this month is marked as a countdown (no not to Christmas!) but to Advent. It's as if we are being urged to get ready for Advent. Last November our monthly meeting focused on members' favourite Bible verses and hymns/worship songs. As we couldn't possibly fit in every verse or hymn we are using this November meeting to select more verses and hymns which will be read out and sung. Often God uses the Bible verses and hymns remembered from long ago in childhood (thank you Sunday School teachers past and present) and presently to build us up and to help us keep going. I'm sorry to report I have not read the Bible in a calendar year as intended but have started again in ordinary days to pursue this afresh. The Bible is a treasure trove of wisdom and instruction e.g. Proverbs, Psalms, the Gospels, Paul's letters etc. I used to have a little booklet with verses for every season of the soul, similar to the guides in the Gideons' Bible. I'm sure everyone has at times read the Bible where verses have jumped out at us, they seemed so personal and at other times we read a passage and nothing out of the ordinary occurs. So we just store it in our mind and believe God will bring it to mind and use it for our good in due course.

Dates for your diary:

Thursday 2nd November 2023 7:30pm More favourite Bible Verses and Hymns



Saturday 25th November 10am time tbc at Temple Golf Club, Boardmills, launch of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. Cost £15 includes a light breakfast. Contact Liz or Angela to book.

Monday 4th December 7.30pm Diocesan Carol Service at Knockbreda Parish Church. Contact Liz or Angela if your name is not yet on the list.

Thursday 7th December 7:30pm Advent Supper with our Parish Choir in the Huston Hall

Please see the MU November Midday Prayers at the back of the magazine.

**Angela Harvey,
Branch Secretary - Mob 07596075081**

CHURCH OF IRELAND MARRIAGE COUNCIL

The Church of Ireland Marriage Council offers subsidised marriage and relationship support and counselling throughout Ireland. The Council's list of recommended counsellors can be found at: www.ireland.anglican.org. Additional counsellors may come onboard from time to time. Counselling can be provided in person or online to suit with the locality. If you live in a location that is not covered by counsellors, please contact Aisling Sheridan at: Aisling.Sheridan@rcbdub.org.



CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR & COFFEE MORNING

SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER 10.30AM - 12.30PM

St. Finnian's will be holding a craft fair and coffee morning on Saturday 2nd December in the parochial and Huston Halls. Cregagh Crafters have been busy making hand-knit scarves, hats, Christmas decorations and lots of Christmas gifts. In addition, we will be having "guess the weight of the cake", ballots and lots of lovely Christmas goodies to enjoy with your tea/coffee. There will also be a jigsaw swap — bring along a jigsaw or two that you have completed and take away another challenging one. If you can supply something for the ballot or some traybakes, please contact **Heather Leckey**
Tel: 07948829799. Any queries regarding the Cregagh Crafters should be directed to **Janet Johnston**
Tel: 07711885203



MESSY CHURCH



We hope you all had a wonderful summer despite the weather. This November, the Messy Church team is planning to hold our next event for all children, aged 3 -11yrs, and their parents/guardians. The team has already started planning our crafts, activities, songs, stories and food.

We will start at 3:30 pm and finish at 5 pm on Friday 24th November and we would love to see you all again then for 90 minutes of fun.

Messy Church Team

General Maintenance - Saturday work mornings

It is hoped that the access works currently underway in the church and grounds will be completed sometime around the second week of November. This will afford us the opportunity to recommence our regular end of month Saturday work mornings.

It is anticipated that there may well be an extent of 'catch up' needed and any assistance that you may be able to offer will be much appreciated.

The last Saturday of each month is normally designated as a work morning, duration from 9 am to 11 am, for anyone who might be available. Work will include general light duties, tidying up, pruning, spraying, brushing etc.

The next date is Saturday 25th November 2023.

See you then!

**Jim Haughey
Glebewarden**

SAINT GEORGE'S SINGERS PERFORM

J.S. BACH'S

CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

TUESDAY 19TH DECEMBER AT 7.30PM

SAINT GEORGE'S CHURCH,

HIGH STREET, BELFAST

WITH SAINT GEORGE'S SINFONIA AND SOLOISTS

CONDUCTED BY MARK MCGRATH



ADMISSION: £25 (CONCESSION £15 FOR STUDENTS)

(INCLUDING TRADITIONAL REFRESHMENTS)

TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED FROM CHOIR MEMBERS,

AT THE DOOR OR ONLINE:

PLEASE VISIT WWW.SAINTGEORGESSINGERS.CO.UK

CREGAGH CRAFTERS



We continue to meet every Tuesday morning in November at 10.30am. Please feel free to call in for coffee and a chat. We have been busy putting our final touches to the poppy display.

Janet Johnston

07711885203



LADIES' FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Hello Ladies,

Our first meeting in November, on Wednesday 8th at 2.00pm promises to be informative and thought-provoking.

The speaker will be Oonagh Mulgrew from the Royal National Institute for the Blind. The RNIB is a charity whose vision is to create a world where sight loss is not a barrier to leading a full, independent life. It strives to equip people with the skills and support they need to thrive.

An entertaining afternoon is in store on the 22nd when we will be joined by Jim Livingstone. He will talk about the songs and life of his mother, Bridie Gallagher, affectionately known as The Girl from Donegal.

We look forward to your company.

Julie 07814928398

FLOWER DONATION **ROTA**

Please note that donations for the Flower Rota will be resuming as normal from mid-November. Please give any donation to Marion Carleton or Barbara Carlisle.

Thank you for your continuing support.



ST. FINNIAN'S TODDLERS

Important dates: -

Monday 30th October - closed for mid-term break

Monday 11th December - Christmas party and last day until New Year

Monday 8th January - Resume for New Year

Services for November



Sunday 5th November (4th Sunday before Advent)

- 9.00am Holy Communion (Huston Hall)
- 11.00am Connect Service (Huston Hall)
- 7.00pm A Service of Thanksgiving & Remembrance (Huston Hall)

Sunday 12th November (3rd Sunday before Advent) **

- 9.00am Holy Communion
- 11.00am Holy Communion (Act of Remembrance)
- 7.00pm Holy Communion

Sunday 19th November (2nd Sunday before Advent) **

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

Sunday 26th November (The Kingship of Christ) **

- 9.00am Holy Communion
- 11.00am Morning Prayer (Christians Against Poverty)
- 7.00pm Evening Prayer

**** PLEASE NOTE THAT THE LOCATION OF THE SERVICES ON THESE SUNDAYS (I.E. HALLS OR CHURCH) WILL DEPEND ON THE COMPLETION OF BUILDING WORKS AND WILL BE CONFIRMED NEARER THE TIME**



St. Finnian's Pilates



As regular readers of my wee missives (and I hope there are a few) have gathered, I like to take the opportunity to expound on one or more Pilates related matters and hopefully engage those who are interested in holistic exercise. Given that the nights are drawing in, it seems apposite to say a few words about sleep and in particular the role that Pilates exercises can play in improving the amount and quality of our sleep. We already know that avoiding caffeine and 'blue light', most notably screens on phones, laptops, tablets and other digital devices in the hour before bedtime is essential to allow the release of melatonin that will help the brain recognise that it's time to go to bed and sleep. However we can also aid this process by engaging in relaxing activities including doing a few gentle Pilates exercises. At this stage I must make it clear that I'm not advocating getting your exercise mat out beside the bed and doing a full Pilates workout, but rather one or two light exercises which can be done whilst sitting or standing, albeit with the proviso that you need to gently engage the core muscles and make sure you're in good alignment i.e. not slouching. The side reach and pelvic tilts are often used as mobilisation/warm ups during classes and are simple to perform, and are a good way of releasing tension, particularly around the neck and shoulders. For the side reach you simply breathe in and raise one arm to the side and overhead and breathe out as you reach over and sequentially bend your spine gently to the side and, with another breath return your spine to the vertical position and lower the arm. If the left arm is raised you bend to the right (and vice versa), and repeat up to 5 times for each side. In the pelvic tilts I would recommend sitting down in a chair with good back support (definitely not the big soft sofa) and rolling (or tilting) the pelvis forward slightly so the lower part of the back arches and just moves away from the chair, and then rolling (or tilting) the pelvis back slightly so that the lower back gently pushes into the chair. In this exercise there's no need to be specific about breathing pattern, but the focus should be on a continuous slow rolling motion for up to 10 repetitions. I should add that these exercises are good for all times of the day if you feel the need to unwind a little. Until the next time, 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 jcworth@yahoo.co.uk

Church Giving and Gift Aid

Everything that happens at St. Finnian's is only possible because of God's goodness and your generosity.

You can increase the effectiveness of your giving at no extra cost to you, by completing and returning a Gift Aid form to allow the church to collect Gift Aid on all your donations whether you donate by using your Freewill Offering Envelope, pay by Standing Order or Electronic Transfer.

We are in the process of updating our Gift Aid register and the Rector will be sending out a letter regarding this to all in the parish. Please take a moment to read this letter and return a completed Gift Aid Declaration Form to the church if this is something that is applicable to you.

Over the course of the last few years many parishioners have switched to making their Freewill Offerings by Standing Order or Electronic Transfer.

If you would like to donate by either of these methods, the parish bank details are:

Account name: St Finnians Parish Church

Account number: 11089757

Sort Code: 95-01-34

Reference: Your banking online screen will invite you to add a reference. Please input the six-figure number at the bottom right of the label on your Freewill Offering envelope box (NOT the three-figure number on your envelopes).

For example, the label will look like:

Mr. A Smith xxx

Church Street

Belfast

000xxx (Please use this number as your reference).

Many thanks to all who give so generously to God's work in our parish.

Brian Lavery (Hon. Treasurer)

CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY (CAP) CHRISTMAS FUND

With Christmas just around the corner, it is time to put plans in place for our CAP clients to make sure their Christmas is as memorable and financially manageable as possible. In speaking to the clients to see how best we can serve them this year, the majority mentioned the struggles they will face with heat & light, toys for the children (one family has 5 children and one 7 children) and clothes to keep warm. It would also be nice to be able to give them a toiletry set as a nice gift and some Christmas treats. I am therefore asking if folk would be willing to provide either:

- Clothes gift vouchers e.g. Dunnes/M&S or toy gift vouchers e.g. Smyths, B&M.
- Toiletry sets (both men & women)
- A financial donation, which can be used to top-up the gas and electricity and purchase some nice Christmas treats (see details below):
 - An on-line direct transfer to Willowfield Parish Comm Assoc 950114/80033383 (Ref: CAP)
 - A cheque made payable to "**WPCA**" and posted to: CAP, Micah Centre, 149a My Lady's Road, Belfast BT6 8FE
 - <https://www.kindlink.com/fundraising/willowfield-parish-community-association/cap-fundraising>
 - QR Code



I will be visiting your church on Sunday 26th November and am happy to collect any donations then. In the meantime, they or any financial contribution could be left with the CAP Champion, Heather Harman. Thank you for your support for these families at what can be a very difficult and stressful time of the year. Let's not forget the One whose life we are celebrating and give generously because He has given generously to us.

James Myles
Centre Manager - Belfast Central
Christians Against Poverty
07599379839

Mothers' Union - Midday Prayers - November 2023
Transformation of the mind

Monday: Transformation of priorities

Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2

**Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that the distractions and busyness of our lives make it difficult to listen deeply to your voice.**

Transform our priorities so that we make space in our lives to be quiet and listen to you.

Jesus, Saviour and Lord,
may the posture of our lives be shaped by listening to you
the goodness of our lives be shaped by love for you;
and the service of our lives be shaped by a humility like yours.

This we pray in your name.

Amen.

Tuesday: Transformation of values

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2

Jesus, seeker of the lost, we confess to becoming so shaped by the values of this age that your call on our lives is increasingly hard to hear.

Transform our values so they are shaped by your concern for the unloved and unlovely, and for the weak and powerless in our society.

Jesus, Saviour and Lord,
may the posture of our lives be shaped by listening to you;
the goodness of our lives be shaped by love for you;
and the service of our lives be shaped by a humility like yours.

This we pray in your name.

Amen.

Wednesday: Transformation of thought

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.
Romans 12:2

Jesus, friend of the poor, we confess that too often any outreach planning is weighed against economic viability.

Transform our thinking so that we risk believing that all things are held together, not by the bottom financial line, but by you.

Jesus, Saviour and Lord,
may the posture of our lives
be shaped by listening to you;
the goodness of our lives
be shaped by love for you;
and the service of our lives
be shaped by a humility like yours.

This we pray in your name.

Amen.

Thursday: Transformation of heart

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.
Romans 12:2

Jesus, bearer of reconciliation, we confess that all too often we harbour thoughts which estrange and make us hostile towards one another.

Transform our hearts
so that we are filled with the desire to forgive one another and make peace.

Jesus, Saviour and Lord,
may the posture of our lives
be shaped by listening to you;
the goodness of our lives
be shaped by love for you;
and the service of our lives
be shaped by a humility like yours.

This we pray in your name.

Amen.

Friday: Transformation of faith

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.
Romans 12:2

Jesus, source of our faith, we confess that we forget all too quickly the words we say, and pray, and sing, in our worship.

Transform our lives so that they remain connected to you at all times and in all places.

Jesus, Saviour and Lord,
may the posture of our lives
be shaped by listening to you;
the goodness of our lives
be shaped by love for you;
and the service of our lives
be shaped by a humility like yours.
This we pray in your name.

Amen.

Saturday: Transformation of mind

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.
Romans 12:2

Lord God, we come as living sacrifices, to offer you our worship and thanksgiving, our praise and our prayers.

Through the power of your Holy Spirit, transform our hearts and minds so we may recognise your presence, hear your voice, know your will, and walk in your way.

May the posture of our lives
be shaped by listening to you;
the goodness of our lives
be shaped by love for you;
and the service of our lives
be shaped by a humility like yours.

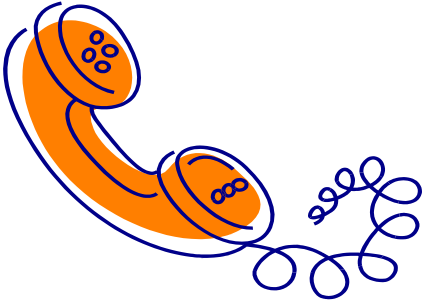
This we pray in your name.

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

Don't forget to check out the church website:

www.stfinnians.org



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Registered with
The Charity Commission for
Northern Ireland NIC101977