

# ST Finnian's

**DECEMBER 2023**



*See inside for details of our  
Christmas services  
and events.*

# Dear Friends

Each year the marketing for Christmas seems to get earlier and earlier. This morning in the first week of November as I picked up some groceries after the school run, the supermarket had some festive music playing and there were all kinds of displays with Christmas treats and bargains on offer. We tend to get a bit sniffy about this in the church, muttering about how the secular world has hijacked our festival and is exploiting it for commercial purposes. The truth is that Christians, in celebrating the birth of Jesus, have borrowed from many traditions around this time of year. Our current celebrations with lights, presents and Christmas trees are often an amalgamation of traditions rather than ones exclusively developed by the Christian community. As a Christian, I always welcome the opportunity the season brings for conversations about Jesus, who He was and why He is important and why we celebrate Him. The much-loved services and carols which we enjoy at this time of year are a terrific opportunity to invite others along to our services. In the coming weeks, each household in the parish should receive an invitation and

card detailing some of our special services and events and we would love to not only invite you along, but to use it as an opportunity to invite others too. The world is full of sadness and war and if we believe we have heard and discovered Good News that can bring hope into our situation, it's a wonderful thing to be able to share that and make it available to others. I recently had a conversation with someone who heard I did a little bit of running and cycling to keep fit. They invited me to give them a shout for a training spin some time and I loved the warmth and spontaneity of that invitation. It was just a natural part of the conversation and it was generous and opened the door to further conversation and friendship. We always have so much to learn and be enriched by in our conversations with others. Christmas is one of those special opportunities for the church and God's people to invite people along to things which are non-threatening and good for the soul so let's make the most of that. As this magazine goes to print we are hopeful that the building project will soon be coming to its conclusion.

Although it has had its challenges, there has been something very powerful about worshipping together in the hall over the past few months. People have worked really hard, constantly setting up for the next service and event. Organisations and Sunday School have continued to meet and there has been a real spirit of warmth and worship and togetherness. We are grateful to everyone, not least our technology team, who have been able to broadcast those services to those who are housebound or in hospital and who tune in faithfully from other places and that is something very special. In saying all of that it will be lovely to be back in the church again and we hope that the work will make our building accessible to those with mobility issues and will be a special place for the services of worship during the Advent and Christmas celebrations.

The Cregagh Crafters have been very busy this term. Apart from their incredibly poignant display for Remembrance Sunday, they will be hosting a special craft fair and coffee morning in the Parochial and Huston Halls on December 2<sup>nd</sup>

from 10.30am -12.30pm.

There will be opportunities to purchase creative Christmas gifts and enjoy some festive cheer and good company and all are welcome. December and Christmas can be very sad and difficult seasons for those who are journeying through grief and loss and we are very mindful of those who are finding this time of year very painful. Perhaps you are aware of some one who is finding it tough and you could pop in or invite them out with you and it is the small things that can make such a big difference. It's also a month when we look forward to welcoming people home from other places as they spend some time with family after perhaps a spell studying overseas or working abroad. It would be wonderful to welcome you to worship if you can join us.

The midweek Advent services on three Thursdays in December at 7.30pm offer a special opportunity to press the pause button and open our hearts afresh to our Saviour and we hope that these three half hour services will be a source of hope and encouragement.

Our Curate Andy will be leading our devotions in a thoughtful and engaging way each Thursday at 7.30pm and we hope you can join us.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a peaceful and happy Christmas and every blessing for 2024.

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

### **HOME COMMUNION**

If anyone is unable to make it in person to our services over the Christmas season and would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact the clergy. We would be delighted to come and share that special service wherever you are.

### **PRAYER MEETINGS BY ZOOM**

Our parish prayer meetings by Zoom on Thursday evenings will not take place during the month of December.

## **SEASON OF ADVENT**



For the first three Thursdays in December, we will be having three Advent meditations in short half hour services **on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December at 7.30pm.**

Our Curate Andy, will lead reflections on Bethlehem, Shepherds & Angels and Good News.

All are 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.

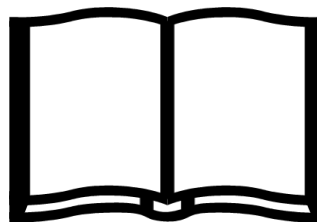
**Mobile: 07513947504**

## From the Registers 2023

### Christian Burial

17<sup>th</sup> November - Irene Richardson

(in The Church of the Pentecost, Mount Merrion)



### Wednesday morning communion & prayers for the sick



The Wednesday morning communion service with prayers for the sick takes place on Wednesdays at 10.30am. Tea/coffee and scones will be served afterwards.

**Please note there will be no service on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> December.**

## **DIVINE HEALING MINISTRIES (DHM)**

Given the slight delay in the building works, DHM services will recommence on the last Tuesday in January 2024 (30<sup>th</sup> January).

**Norman Sleator**

## **CHURCH OF IRELAND GAZETTE**

The subscriptions for the Church of Ireland Gazette are due for renewal. The cost for 2024 is £47.50. If you wish to receive the Gazette next year, please contact Linda in the church office on Tuesdays/Wednesdays between 9.00am - 2.00pm. (Tel: 028 90792793)

Alternatively, email [office.cregagh@down.anglican.org](mailto:office.cregagh@down.anglican.org)

**PLEASE ADVISE BY TUESDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> JANUARY 2024.**

## **Hello everyone**

Christmas is fast approaching again. It has come around so quickly! Does the season fill you with dread (so much to do and so little time to do it in) or delight (decorating our houses, spending time together, exchanging gifts, going to Christmas services and concerts)? For me it's a bit of both. The Advent and Christmas preparations in church bid us to slow down, shun stress and try to keep it simple as we refocus on Jesus and rejoice in his birth and reflect that it points forward to his death and resurrection at Easter. I think we all could agree that overspending and overeating at Christmas can leave us feeling anxious and flat. However Christmas is a wonderful opportunity to reach out to family, friends and neighbours with a small gift. CDs and books make great presents as they can be played and read repeatedly. In our world there is so much suffering, in Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, natural disasters in many places and poverty which robs people of so much potential, it seems only right to continue to support mission agencies in far off lands. Our MU Midday Prayers help us do just that. Closer to home we think of homeless people and those struggling with debt. The shoe boxes and grocery items to the food banks are on their way and other agencies such as the Simon Community, the Salvation Army Toy Appeal, Crisis at Christmas to name a few, work hard to alleviate poverty and loneliness. The Mothers' Union supports vulnerable women via the Women's Aid Refuges in Bangor and Newry all year round and with a gift for the mums and children at Christmas. MU also does wonderful work in the local Women's Prison at Hydebank with a craft outreach and they too will receive a Christmas gift from our organisation. Through our Branch members, Liz was able to donate seventy toiletry bags to the Ulster Hospital. The Cregagh Crafters knitted and crocheted blankets also donated via MU to the UH. The team who provides tea and coffee after the weekly Wednesday 10:30am communion service has donated the proceeds to our Branch funds. Our grateful thanks to all the groups mentioned above.

Finally, you will be aware the MU is promoting a campaign against gender-based violence which can be heightened in the Christmas/New Year period as families struggle with money worries and try to deal with unrealistic expectations of the holiday period. Let's remember them as we remember the One who was born into poverty for all our sakes.

**Dates for your diary:**

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 7.30pm** Advent Carol Service in Knockbreda Parish Church.

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 7:30pm** Advent service in the church followed by Advent Supper and carols led by the choir in the Huston Hall.

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2024 10.30am** in the Huston Hall. Clare Stewart on her walk of faith and Holy Communion as we rededicate ourselves for the year ahead.

At the time of going to print, the MU December Midday Prayers are unavailable. Instead, there are some Christmas prayers at the back of the magazine.

Liz Walker, our Branch leader, myself and the Committee wish you a joyful Christmas and peaceful New Year.

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





**SATURDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 10.30AM - 12.30PM**

- Wide range of handcrafted goods made by the Cregagh Crafters
- Ballot for an amazing handmade Tweed Teddy
- Jigsaw Swap and Guess the Weight of the Cake

**CRAFT FAIR IN THE  
PAROCHIAL (UPPER) HALL**

**TEA/COFFE AND DELICIOUS TRAY BAKES IN THE  
HUSTON (LOWER) HALL**

***Come along and join in the festive fun***





## **CHRISTMAS WISHES**

We hope that everyone enjoyed our November activity day and can use the crafts you made to decorate your houses this Christmas. Please look after yourselves and think of ways to help others over the next few months - the world would be a much happier place if we all tried to follow Jesus' example every day.



**Messy Church Team**

## **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 9am to 11am, for anyone who might be available. Work would include general light duties, tidying up, pruning, spraying, brushing etc. During the recent works in and around the church, we were not able to carry out any maintenance work. Normally we would not have a work day in December but there is something of a backlog now to be made up, so we plan to have a work day on **Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> December 2023.** See you then!

**Jim Haughey**  
**Glebe warden**

## **MISSION BOX CONTRIBUTIONS**

If you would like your Mission Box contributions to be included in the 2023 distribution to charities, please leave your box at the back of the church **by Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December.**

**Brian Lavery (Hon. Treasurer)**

# **THE BOYS' BRIGADE & ANCHOR BOYS**



## **The last meetings before Christmas are:**

**Company and Junior Sections: -**

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December

**Anchor Boys: -**

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December

## **New Year return: 2024**

**Company and Junior Sections: -**

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January

**Anchor Boys: -**

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January

## **ST. FINNIAN'S CHURCH FIELDS OF LIFE PROJECT (CATERING TEAM)**

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to helping at the funeral teas over the last year. Either by setting up tables, providing sandwiches and traybakes, serving and kitchen duties: your help is invaluable and really appreciated. It is a privilege to offer support to families in difficult times as they face a bereavement. We also support Fields of Life as outlined by John Downey in the October church magazine. If anyone is interested in helping our team in any way, please contact me. Thank you.

**Helen McKnight**

**07907725571**

**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](http://WWW.SAINTGEORGESSINGERS.CO.UK)**

# CREGAGH CRAFTERS



The craft group has had a very busy term. We sent 23 blankets to the Ulster Hospital Casualty Department. The poppy display included hundreds of knitted, crocheted, felt and leather poppies. It was displayed in the Huston Hall on Remembrance Sunday. Everyone has been working very hard producing hats, scarves and Christmas decorations for the Craft Fair and Coffee morning on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Lots of chat and tea, coffee and buns each week.

**The group will finish for Christmas on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December and restart Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January.**

Drop in for tea/coffee to see what we are up to. You will be welcomed by the amazing crafty ladies who have all become friends.

**Janet Johnston**

**07711885203**



## **LADIES' FRIENDSHIP GROUP**

### **Season's Greetings Ladies,**

Advent is upon us and our thoughts are inevitably turning to Christmas festivities. We are only meeting once in December. This will be for Christmas lunch at Knock Golf Club on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> at 1.00pm. **If you wish to attend please contact Helen before 1<sup>st</sup> December.**

If we don't see you this month, Helen, Caroline, Dorothy and I wish you all a very happy Christmas.

**Julie 07814928398**

**Helen 07907725571**

## **FLOWER DONATION** **ROTA**

### **DECEMBER**

3<sup>rd</sup> Mrs P Moore

10<sup>th</sup> Mrs C Bell

17<sup>th</sup> Christmas

24<sup>th</sup> Christmas flowers stay

31<sup>st</sup> Christmas flowers stay



## **ST. FINNIAN'S TODDLERS**

The St. Finnian's Toddlers' Group will be meeting on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December at 10am for a Christmas party with Santa. **This will be our last meeting of 2023 and we will return on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024.**



# Services for December



## **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent)**

- 9.00am Holy Communion
- 11.00am Connect Service (Huston Hall)
- 7.00pm Advent Carol Service

## **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent)**

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

## **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent)**

- 9.00am Holy Communion
- 11.00am Morning Prayer
- 7.00pm A Service of 9 Lessons & Carols

## **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December (Christmas Eve)**

- 9.00am Holy Communion
- 11.00am Morning Prayer
- 11.00pm The First Communion of Christmas

## **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December (Christmas Day)**

- 9.00am Holy Communion
- 10.15am A Family Celebration of Christmas

## **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas )**

- 9.00am Holy Communion
- 11.00am A service of hymns & readings for Christmas telling the story of some of our favourite Christmas carols

**NO EVENING SERVICE**



## St. Finnian's Pilates



Winter has arrived, the nights are well and truly drawing in and the temptation is to close the curtains, turn up the heating and have a cosy evening in. I would definitely agree with this except, that is, for a Wednesday evening when the best thing you can do is come along to Pilates. An issue I've come across more frequently in recent months has been the need for a more 'user friendly' set of exercises for people who for one reason or another cannot take part in the usual mat-based sessions. It's increasingly important, as the years roll on, to continue with some form of exercise to maintain muscle mass and strength and to improve balance. One of the strengths of Pilates is that it can be adapted to an individual's needs and can accommodate a restricted range of movement. In particular this includes chair-based exercises that have been designed for those who have difficulty with balance or getting down to and up from the floor. I was very fortunate to be invited to attend a recent workshop with other qualified Pilates instructors to explore this and we were able to come up with seated and standing versions of the original 34 mat-based exercises that can offer a safe alternative when, and if, required. Possibly the most enjoyable (and amusing) part of the workshop was the final session when we were asked to teach a number of the exercises to each other. This brought home to me the need to ensure that the instructions help the individual carry out each exercise safely whilst adhering to the underpinning principles, particularly alignment and centering. It also allowed me to understand that these alternatives are not an 'easy' option and require the same levels of concentration and control and can offer the same benefits. Pilates is for everyone regardless of age or physical condition so, as I sign off, I'd encourage everyone to give it a try. **The classes will finish on 13<sup>th</sup> December for a Christmas break and will resume in the New Year on 3<sup>rd</sup> January.** We meet 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](mailto:jcwworth@yahoo.co.uk)

## **Samaritan's Purse Christmas 2023 St. Finnian's**

I don't know about you but when I was a child I remember lying in bed on Christmas Eve night thinking that morning was never going to come. The excitement to see what Santa would bring had my heart in leaps and bounds. Such joy as I flung open the living room door to see the small chair filled with wonderful gifts – a typewriter, a fluffy red V-neck jumper, a book and a huge selection box – wow! One year I remember longing for Adidas 'Kick' black and white trainers, boy I wore those trainers until they resembled bananas and you couldn't even see the stripes on the soles.

Friends you know so well that not everyone has the same excitement on Christmas morning that most of us in the Western world do. Samaritan's Purse seeks to try and fill that gap through their Shoe Box Appeal. The idea being that you pick a boy or a girl from a choice of three age groups and fill that box to capacity with lovely treats. Colouring books and pencils, face cloths, pyjamas, hat, scarf, gloves, toothbrush, yo-yo, blow up football and fidget toys to name just some things. People even include a photo or a map of who/where the box came from. They then enclose £5.00 in each box to cover all the transportation and distribution costs to take the shoe box to its final destination - which could be absolutely anywhere in this world. I would like to thank each and every person who put such love and care into filling a box for one of these marginalised children; I know they will be so very gratefully received. Just over 2000 years ago this earth received the most amazing Christmas gift that has ever been given to mankind; our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is in His name and to the glory of God our Father that we seek to share that love and kindness with as many of our brothers and sisters in need from across the globe as we can. **Wishing each and every one of you a Christ-filled Christmas. Love and Blessings to you and yours. "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'**"

*Charmaine Robinson*



## **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 26<sup>th</sup> 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**

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH, CALEDON.

# Christmas Tree Festival

**Thursday 30th November 2023**

1.00pm - 9.00pm    Teas 2pm - 6.30pm

Opening Service @ 7.00pm

**Friday 1st December 2023**

12 noon - 9.00pm    Teas 12 noon - 7pm

An evening of Christmas Music @ 7.30pm

**Saturday 2nd December 2023**

10.00am - 9.00pm    Teas 10am - 6pm

Santa's Grotto 10am - 6pm

**Sunday 3rd December 2023**

11.00am - 7.00pm    Teas 2pm - 6pm

Closing Service @ 7pm | Santa's Grotto 2pm - 5pm

For group catering or further information please contact:

**07909 985 813 or 028 3754 8490 or 07849 963 506**

## **RCB Roadshows**

The Representative Church Body (RCB) which is based in Dublin held roadshows in October and November to update Parishes on a number of administrative and legal procedures which apply to their day to day activities.

David Ritchie, the Chief Officer of RCB, gave some background on what RCB does and how it is managed.

RCB was set up in 1870 as the Trustee body for the Church of Ireland after the Disestablishment of the Church in 1869 when it ceased to be the National Church. There are 55 members who oversee the business of the Church. The Chairman is the Archbishop of Armagh. The 11 Bishops, 11 Diocesan Clerical representatives, 22 Diocesan Lay members and 11 co-opted members make up the Committee which meets 4 times a year.

RCB has 10 centralised services to run its activities and provide support to Parishes. These include managing the Church's investments, its properties (3,000), legal affairs, safeguarding and data protection. It provides resources online for Parishes to carry out their administration.

Pauline High spoke about property and explained what Parishes need to do if they are making any changes or are carrying out repairs. This department also advises on graveyards, the removal of trees and Church valuables such as Church Silver used in the Holy Communion service. Church properties are inspected every 5 years- the Quinquennial report – which highlights work which needs to be done. Pauline also mentioned grant funding which is available and for which Parishes may apply if they are doing building work or carrying out repairs.

Janet Maxwell, Head of Services spoke about Governance and the duties which Churches have to carry out under the Charities Act. This covers day to day running of the Parish, accountability for resources and documents, keeping records and ensuring that meetings are properly run and decisions recorded. Each Parish must produce an Annual Report of activities and a financial report.

This department ensures that Parishes have all the necessary policies for their operation and that Church premises and those who use them are insured. Each Diocese has a Secretary who advises on compliance with procedures and legislation. There was discussion on the role and responsibilities of Parish Trustees (the members of the Select Vestry).

There was a presentation on Finance by Kate Williams and on Data Protection by Rebekah Fozzard. Both provided handouts for information and future reference. Rebekah spoke about the need for secure record keeping especially information relating to personal details. She also stressed the importance of having a Safeguarding policy and procedures in place.

The final presentation was on Dignity in Church Life by Eddie Hallisey, the RCB Human Resources Manager. He mentioned 2 new policies: on Clergy Health Insurance and on Parental/ Sabbatical leave. He also referred to the Prevention of Bullying and Harassment.

Delegates had the opportunity to ask questions about each presentation and to share information.

## **CMS Ireland**

Mrs Linda Abwa, Partnership Co-ordinator for CMS Ireland, spoke to the Select Vestry at its October meeting to give an update on the work of CMS in South Sudan and tell the Vestry about a local couple who are going out to serve two terms in the Ibba Diocese. She said CMS very much appreciates its long term partnership with St. Finnian's and the ongoing giving to support its work.

Linda gave some background to the troubled history of South Sudan which lies just north of the Equator in central Africa. The capital is Juba. Most of its income comes from oil. It became an independent country in 2011 after a long and very difficult civil war with the states to the north of the country which now form Sudan. Then in 2013 government troops and rebel factions began to fight in the newly independent South Sudan and many people fled as refugees to neighbouring countries. There is ongoing conflict in a number of areas.

CMS Ireland has been working in partnership with Ibba Diocese for more than 10 years. The Diocese is led by Bishop Wilson Kamani who has introduced many practical sustainability programmes in the local community to help people become self sufficient in addition to running a strong programme of local Mission and community outreach. This is provided by a very active evangelism team which travels out into remote areas to provide prayerful and practical support to families. The Diocese is part of the Anglican Church and shares its Liturgy. In parts of the country ancestral and idol worship still continues.

A new Cathedral has been built and 10 young pastors attend the Bishop Levi College to prepare for Ministry in the community. The College also offers vocational training to young people to help build skills useful in the local area for example bricklaying and joinery.

Bishop Wilson is very involved in peace building and reconciliation. He is particularly keen that the young people should not be caught up in the conflict and has developed a major football tournament for them as part of his community programme.

Fields of Life have provided some support to Southern Sudan. Other initiatives include a tree planting programme funded by the Bishops' Appeal and a bakery and literacy programme funded by the Mothers' Union. CMSI is working to bring various groups together to begin talks on reconciliation and has supported a new Peacebuilding Conference to start this work. In recent years it has also responded to natural disasters by providing emergency food and shelters.

Bishop Wilson is now preparing to welcome two new Mission partners to work in the Diocese. They are Rev. Andrew and Mrs Joanne Quill who are leaving a Parish in Co Tyrone to return to Africa where they have previously worked for 11 years serving in Kenya and Uganda. Andrew will work with Bishop Wilson Kamani and Joanne who is a counsellor trained in trauma care will provide a very important support service for local women.

In thanking Mrs Abwa for her talk Canon Pierce said that it took real courage and was a step of faith for the Quills to go to South Sudan. He noted that the Parish already supports CMS in its annual allocations and said it would be very powerful to have a direct link with the Quills in South Sudan by offering some additional funding to support their work. The Vestry thought that this would be a very positive contact and agreed to provide additional funding for this specific Mission.

## *CHRISTMAS PRAYERS*

### **A Christmas Prayer to Remember the Birth of Jesus**

Lord Jesus, as we celebrate Your birth, help us to remember why You came into the world. You came to save us from our sins and give us eternal life. Thank You for coming down from heaven and becoming one of us. Help this be the centre of our Christmas celebration. We praise You for Your great love!  
Amen.

### **A Christmas Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Heavenly Father, how we praise and thank You for all You have done. Grant this Christmas season that our hearts will be filled with thankfulness for all the blessings You have given us. We praise You for Your Son, Jesus. For His birth and what He did on Calvary. May our hearts be ever grateful.  
Amen.

### **Christmas Prayer for Hope**

Lord, during this Christmas season, we are in need of Your hope. The world can be such a dark place, and we so easily get caught up in all the negativity that is going on. But, Jesus, You are our hope! You came into the world to save us from our sins and give us eternal life. We pray that during this Christmas season, people will come to know You as their personal Saviour. That Christmas time would bring on a whole new meaning for them.  
Amen.

## **Prayer for Christmas Joy**

Jesus, as we celebrate Your birth, we pray that our hearts would be filled with joy. That this Christmas season would be a time of happiness and love. A time when we remember all the good times we've had together and look forward to many more to come. Thank You for our family and friends. We pray that we would all be drawn closer to each other and to You.  
Amen.

## **Christmas Prayer for Peace**

Heavenly Father, we pray that during this Christmas season, people would experience Your peace. That in the midst of all the hustle and bustle, they would take time to slow down and enjoy the simple things in life. And most importantly, they would remember the reason for the season – Your wonderful Son, Jesus.  
Amen.

## **Christmas Prayer for Family Unity**

Lord, during this holiday season, we pray for unity within our families. That we would put aside our differences and come together as one. That we would love and support each other through everything. We pray that the bond between us would be unbreakable and that we would always be there for each other, no matter what.  
Amen.

## **Prayer for Christmas Morning**

Lord, as we enjoy this Christmas morning, we ask that You would be with us. That we would experience Your presence in a special way today. We pray that the joy of this season will fill our hearts and that we will remember the reason for Christmas.  
Amen.

*A Christmas Carol:*  
*Before The Paling Of The Stars*

Before the paling of the stars,  
Before the winter morn,  
Before the earliest cock crow,  
Jesus Christ was born:  
Born in a stable,  
Cradled in a manger,  
In the world his hands had made  
Born a stranger.

Priest and king lay fast asleep  
In Jerusalem;  
Young and old lay fast asleep  
In crowded Bethlehem;  
Saint and angel, ox and ass,  
Kept a watch together  
Before the Christmas daybreak  
In the winter weather.

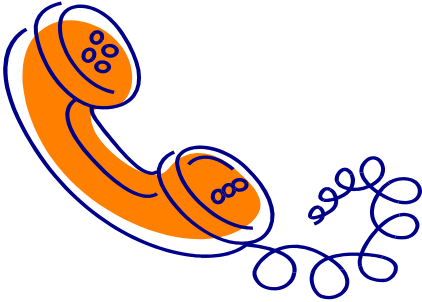
Jesus on his mother's breast  
In the stable cold,  
Spotless lamb of God was he,  
Shepherd of the fold:  
Let us kneel with Mary maid,  
With Joseph bent and hoary,  
With saint and angel, ox and ass,  
To hail the King of Glory.

*by Christina Georgina Rossetti*  
*(1830-1894)*

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:office.cregagh@down.anglican.org)

## **Magazine**

Please send articles for inclusion in the **January** magazine to [office.cregagh@down.anglican.org](mailto:office.cregagh@down.anglican.org) or telephone the Parish Office 028 90792793 by NOON on **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

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



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

Registered with  
The Charity Commission for  
Northern Ireland NIC101977