

ST Finnian's

JANUARY 2024

*Wishing all our parishioners a
very Happy New Year*



*Please join us for our
radio broadcast on
Sunday 14th January at 10am
(see details inside)*

Dear Friends

January can be quite a challenging month as people head back to work and school after some time away. Perhaps we have spent more than we normally do on presents and luxuries and the thoughts are anxious about the credit card bill that will be dropping its way through the letter box.

Sometimes there are determined resolutions as we buy gym memberships, put all the remaining chocolates and biscuits into the bin and declare this to be the year you are going to take yourself in hand.

The days are still dark, the weather often cold and it's not all that tempting to put on the trainers and attempt to walk or jog off the excesses of the previous month. There may be concerns also about the year to come. What will it bring to our families, our friends and indeed the world around us? Are there things we should do to build up our resilience, to enable us to cope? Are there skills we should learn to navigate our way more competently and cost effectively through life in 2024?

All of these are important and legitimate questions as a new year dawns. As I get older I try to gain a bit more perspective.

The reality is that I'm unlikely to smash all the goals and resolutions I might try to set myself. That doesn't make me a failure or a bad person but it tells me something about the unrealistic expectations I often have of myself. Wanting to take more exercise or eat a healthier diet will not be a silver bullet for personal happiness and fulfilment but will have longer term benefits, not just for myself, but also for those who are close to me. Very often I find myself praying at this time of year. I pray for wisdom in setting priorities for myself and the church I am privileged to lead. How can we radiate Christ's presence to those around us? How can I equip people to bring Him into their homes and workplaces and communities. How can I follow him more intentionally myself and forgive myself when I don't get these things right? One of the things I have discovered is that success will not stem from my own efforts and endeavours. They can only carry me so far. What's much more likely to lead to success is a shared journey with others. If I want to grow closer to Jesus and live more completely and effectively for Him, it's good to

have the company and companionship of a community who want the same thing. Someone else might come up with a great initiative we might all benefit from sharing in. Sometimes we need to do more. Sometimes we need to do less. Sometimes we simply need to ask for some help if our pride will allow us to take that radical step.

One of the things which I've been thinking about in December is how to connect with missing generations from the church. When we see fewer children and young people or adults in their 20s 30s and 40s, what might draw them back or invite them in for the very first time?

Sometimes it's nothing more complicated than a personal invitation. Sometimes it's providing a venue and a safe space to talk about the things that are most important.

Underlying it all is genuine heartfelt prayer that people might encounter Jesus.

We are looking at various possibilities including an in person Alpha Course in late January to explore questions about life and meaning and purpose. We're going to hear at a clergy conference about a

course called "One to One" which equips ordinary people, even shy people to come alongside others and share why faith is important to them. If you have ideas about connecting with people and creating that safe space whether in the church or in alternative venues, please let us know.

The parish has the privilege of being invited to share our morning service on Radio Ulster on Sunday 14th January. This means the early communion will be at 8.30am and the main morning service will be at 10.03am coming straight after the 10am news! We would ask the congregation on that Sunday to be seated by 9.40am. While it's a lovely opportunity and will require scripts and precise timings and all the rest, I try to encourage people on these occasions to remember that it's our Sunday service and we are just inviting others at home, in hospitals and nursing homes or travelling in their cars, to join with us. May God be honoured and glorified in all we seek to do together in 2024.

With very best wishes.

Jonathan Pierce (Rector)

Telephone 02890 793822

**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.

DIVINE HEALING MINISTRIES (DHM)

A Divine Healing Ministries' service is planned for Tuesday 30th January when the speaker will be Bro. David Jardine, founder of DHM.

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

PLEASE ADVISE BY TUESDAY 2ND JANUARY 2024.

Hello everyone

Following hard on the heels of Christmas, we are moving towards a New Year. I always think on New Year's Eve as we hear Big Ben striking down the last seconds of the past year and passing into another, as well as being celebratory, these are very solemn moments. Looking back we are grateful to have safely come this far and naturally wonder what the coming year will bring. Last January I mentioned in the magazine that I would attempt to read the Bible in one year. As I reported in a recent article, sadly, I didn't get anywhere near completing this task. So, I will make the pledge to try again in 2024. As this new season begins in a changing and uncertain world all we can do is put our trust in the Lord who is unchanging in his goodness, love and mercy towards us. In response, in the words of a Chris Tomlin song, "Take my life and let it be, consecrated to Thee. Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise".

Our next meeting is on Saturday 6th January at 10:30am.

We are very much looking forward to hearing Clare Stewart speaking about her journey of faith. We would also congratulate Clare as she has just begun the latest step in that walk, as she has commenced training to be a Diocesan Lay Reader. We wish her every success. Following this, as we celebrate Holy Communion, we will all as members of our Branch, rededicate ourselves to the aims of Mothers' Union for the year ahead.

The Midday Prayers are not available at the time of print.

Advance Notice: Thursday 1st February 2024 7:30pm Talk on the life of Sir Hans Sloane (Doctor, Botanist and Collector of British Museum Fame) by Clive Scholar.

Angela Harvey,
Branch Secretary - Mob 07596075081

CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR/COFFEE MORNING

A big thank you to all who helped make the Christmas craft fair and coffee morning the success that it was, approximately £3500 was raised. From the hard work of the Cregagh Crafters who made decorations or knitted scarves, chocolate orange cosies etc, to those who made tray bakes or supplied items for the ballot and to those who made up the hampers, thank you. A special mention must be given to Tom Davies for baking the cake for "guess the weight" which was won by Ann Gray. Thanks also to Brown's Funeral Directors, Rosetta for their contribution of pastry. A great buzz was experienced in both the Huston Hall and the Parochial Hall as people enjoyed themselves. Thank you to everyone who came to support the event.

Heather Leckey

PRAYER MEETINGS BY ZOOM

Our parish prayer meetings by Zoom will resume in January 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

THANK YOU

On Sunday 26th November, we returned to church for worship following the completion of the building works which began in August. Their purpose was to make the church building and grounds more accessible for everyone. In particular the permanent ramp was much needed to replace our unwieldy portable ramp which had to be set up and dismantled for every service.

During the time of construction, the contractors made every effort to ensure that we could be on site and continue with our services in the halls. We are grateful to all those who carried out the work with minimum disruption and thankfully without any incidents. In particular we would thank Mark the site Foreman for promptly dealing with any matters arising and co-ordinating the subcontractors and site team.

We had been planning this work for some time before it was delayed by Covid and when we met again in July 2022 it was decided to review the agreed plans. The Parish meeting in November 2022 confirmed the new priorities and the process began.

This work could only take place because of the generosity of a number of individual parishioners who had made generous bequests or donations for the original proposals which allowed the Select Vestry to proceed with the plans.

The Parish had some matching funds to carry out the work and it was decided to make applications for grant funding to Trusts to help meet some of the costs. We were delighted during November and December to receive the good news that 3 applications were successful and would express our thanks to each of the Trusts who have supported our "Accessibility Project". The Garfield Weston Foundation awarded a grant of £20,000. The Benefact Trust awarded a grant of £4,800 and the RCB Church Fabric and Development Fund awarded £1,300. For each of these applications we had to provide details of our proposals, the cost and our budget.

Now having received the grants we have to report back on the work done and the difference it has made. We are also very grateful to families who have recently been bereaved who have made donations to the Building Fund in memory of their loved one. Although the Bowling Club has closed this year following a decline in numbers, Angela and George decided to donate the Club's funds to the Building Fund to support the new developments. We thank them for this important contribution and have safely stored the bowls for a future time. On 2nd December our first fundraising event was held. This was a very successful Craft Fair and Coffee morning which involved a lot of hard work on the part of the teams who organised the event. This was enjoyed by a large crowd which generously supported the superb craftwork produced by Cregagh Crafters followed by a warming tea/ coffee and traybakes. Thank you to everyone involved in setting up and supporting this special event. There was a lot of preparation to make the church ready for the builders coming on site and everything had to be moved and later covered up while the work was carried out. The reverse process was then required for the reopening of church with much cleaning to clear the fine dust. Volunteers were busy on both of these occasions when many hands made light work. Your enthusiastic teamwork was much appreciated and quickly helped set up all the furniture, books, and kneelers for use on Sunday. Thanks also to Rea sound and the technical team for ensuring that the audio visual equipment was restored in time for the streaming of the first morning service on 26th November. On the 25th November, the morning before the re-opening of church, as the work team were about to leave, Alison, a representative of James Brown, undertakers, called to the church with three beautiful bunches of autumn flowers as a gift with the message: " To everyone at St. Finnian's Parish Church. Wishing you God's Richest Blessings on the re-opening of the church Sanctuary". These were arranged at the back of the church beside the Wardens' seats and have been much admired. The company also donated traybakes for the refreshments at the Craft Fair/ coffee morning.

We are very grateful to the company for their kind thoughts and generous donations.

In the converted porch the church's Foundation and Consecration stones have been covered up for protection. After lengthy consideration it was agreed that the texts of these important stones should be preserved and Mrs Jacquie Brachi, the calligrapher who inscribes our Book of Remembrance, has made copies to hang in the entrance porch together with the original photographs of the day of Consecration of the Church, 10th September 1932, the Saint's day of St. Finnian of Movilla. We thank Jacquie for her beautiful transcriptions of these important events in our Parish history.

Since the decision to proceed with the work, the Select Vestry has been very busy looking at plans and costings, working with Consarc, the architects, liaising with the planners and many other tasks. We thank all those involved in making decisions, overseeing the work, co-ordinating arrangements and acting as the link with the contractors to ensure that a good job was done. We hope that all those who come to worship in the church or halls and to join in the many activities on offer can make use of the new accessible arrangements which will enhance our Parish buildings and site.

Finally we thank Billy and John for faithfully maintaining the grounds during the work period and look forward to our new grass in the spring.

SELECT VESTRY





ST. FINNIAN'S TODDLERS

Our last few meetings of 2023 saw us all having fun for some special birthdays and at our Christmas party. We were delighted that Santa and his elves found the time to join us at such a busy time of year.



Happy New Year everyone and we look forward to seeing you all again at our first meeting of 2024 **on Monday 8th January at 10.00am.**



FWO ENVELOPES 2024

The Free Will Offering (FWO) envelopes for 2024 are now available at the back of the church. As part of our ongoing efforts to save costs and cut down on paper wastage, we have only ordered envelope numbers from 1-300 this year. If your envelopes were numbered between 301-400, you will have a different number for 2024. Your envelope number will appear on the top right of the envelope box label and should match the number on the envelopes inside. Your contributions will continue to be noted against your name under your new number.

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. The next date is **Saturday 27th January 2024.**

See you then!

Jim Haughey
Glebe warden

To all our past participants, we really enjoyed your company last year and we hope to see you all again on our next date,
Friday 23rd February 2024.



Messy Church Team

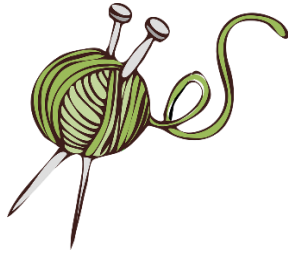
THE BOYS' BRIGADE & ANCHOR BOYS



The boys of all three Sections of the BB Company brought a busy session to an end with some Christmas celebrations. However, before their partying, they took some time to think of others by making Christmas cards for loved ones. Activities resume in January with the Junior and Company Sections back at 7.00pm on Monday 8th and Anchor Boys back at 6.45pm on Tuesday 9th.



CREGAGH CRAFTERS



Cregagh Crafters had a very busy autumn term. **We will be back on Tuesday 9th January.** We plan to make scrappy lap blankets for the Ulster Hospital Casualty Department. All are welcome.

Janet Johnston
07711885203

Register of Vestry Members

The Register of Vestry men and women will be updated in January 2024 and reviewed by the Select Vestry at its meeting on Tuesday 20th February 2024.

The individuals recorded in the Register may stand for election to the Select Vestry at the Easter General Vestry and may vote in the election.

Anyone wishing to be registered must complete a Form of Declaration by 13th February so that their name may be added to the Register. Forms are available from the Churchwardens, on the Parish Website, and from the Secretary to the Select Vestry, Linda Leonard whose e-mail address is strathmore614@ntlworld.com

LADIES' FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Hello Ladies,

2023 has passed and we can now look forward to a fresh start. With that in mind our first guest's talk is entitled "Inspirational Thoughts for 2024". For this we are pleased to welcome our Rector, Jono, on Wednesday 10th January at 2.00pm.

Our second meeting in January will be on Wednesday 24th when we will continue to go forward with a positive outlook. Our speaker then will be Jim Bailey, whose theme is "Five Steps to Wellbeing".

While we look forward to seeing our "regulars", we invite all ladies of the parish to get out of the house and give our group a go. We are a friendly bunch and would love to welcome you and share time with you.

Helen, Caroline, Dorothy and I wish you all a happy and healthy 2024.

Julie 07814928398

FLOWER DONATION

ROTA

JANUARY

7th Mrs H McKnight

14th

21st Mr R Hamilton

28th Mrs D Smith



Services for January



Sunday 7th January (1st Sunday after the Epiphany)

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

Sunday 14th January (2nd Sunday after the Epiphany)

PLEASE NOTE TIMES

8.30am Holy Communion
10.00am Morning Prayer (Radio broadcast)
7.00pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 21st January (3rd Sunday after the Epiphany)

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

Sunday 28th January (4th Sunday after the Epiphany)

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



St. Finnian's Pilates



Now that we're moving towards 2024, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year. As we're all aware, this is the time of year when we make New Year's resolutions which usually don't last beyond the first month, especially when they concern exercise and fitness. Most of the time this happens because we try to stick to a regime that is either too tough, or time consuming, or both. I recently attended a workshop for instructors at which it was emphasised that the vast majority of people who will attend classes will not be young highly trained athletes or gymnasts or gym bunnies. They will be real people, like you and me, with normal shapes and sizes and with the wear and tear that is a normal part of life. This is why I would suggest that Pilates would be a good option for the majority of people, as it is a low impact holistic form of exercise that enables practitioners to start at a beginner level with options and adaptations to enable them to gain a firm foundation of technique and body awareness before progressing to intermediate and advanced level exercise over time. So if you're worried about joining us on a Wednesday and being the 'newbie' and looking out of place, please be assured that there are no entry requirements other than enthusiasm and a good sense of humour. In the meantime I'll sign off in my usual way - stay safe and keep moving!

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 jcworth@yahoo.co.uk



***Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain
you; he will never
let the righteous be shaken. Psalm 55 V 22***

In November 2022, our church was the setting for the launch of the Mothers' Union 16 Days of Prayer and Activism against Gender Based Violence, which has been taking place annually since 2014. During the launch we heard about the practical support Mothers' Union members give to local organisations who support victims of domestic abuse. It was during this talk that we first heard about the Safe Church initiative. So what is a 'Safe Church'? A Safe Church empowers churches to recognise and respond to domestic abuse within the church, acknowledging that domestic abuse is a problem that can happen in all walks of life including, unfortunately, church communities.

In April 2023, four members of our Mothers' Union Branch, Liz Walker, Heather Leckey, Barbara Carlisle, and myself, Claire Monaghan along with our Curate, Andy Hay completed the Safe Church webinar training. During the training we discussed the cycle of abuse, how to identify abuse and how to challenge the stereotypes and myths surrounding domestic abuse. We talked about how as a church we don't like thinking about it, but that we need to turn our eyes towards the problem and recognise it. We discussed how some perpetrators use the Bible to control and manipulate their victims with the misuse of religious scripture. We explored the many forms of abuse; physical abuse, psychological abuse, coercive control and financial control and the impact this has on the victim.

On 21st November 2023, myself, Liz Walker and Barbara Carlisle attended the Onus Award Ceremony in Ulster University, where we received our award for completing the Safe Church Training. During the ceremony we heard from Professor Claire Archbold from the Executive Office NI and from Detective Superintendent Lindsay Fisher about the ongoing work to change legislation to make it easier to bring before the Courts, perpetrators of domestic abuse. They spoke about partnering with Onus and how they have brought domestic violence training and awareness into large organisations such as the Civil Service, Belfast City Council and the PSNI along with local Churches through Safe Church. It really was a very informative evening and it was great to meet up with other churches who have completed the training to discuss how we best move forward with this new initiative. So how will we implement Safe Church in St. Finnian's? Our vision is to establish a safe place for victims of abuse to seek help and support, to empower them with strength to access help from the external agencies across Northern Ireland equipped to help. We want to send a strong message out, never to commit, condone or stay silent about domestic abuse. To recognise as a church community that unfortunately domestic abuse can and does happen within churches, to form a Church Community that stands against abuse and creates a place of safety and refuge. If anyone is affected by domestic abuse and would like to speak confidentially to one of our Safe Church Advocates you can call any of us on our mobiles:

Andy Hay: 07905368474

Liz Walker: 07774617543

Heather Leckey: 07948829799

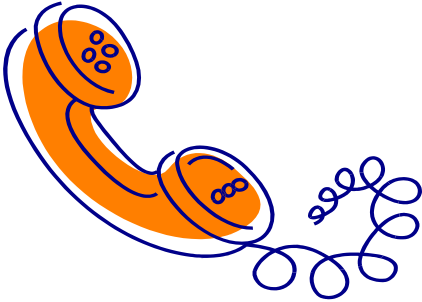
Barbara Carlisle: 07920014878

Claire Monaghan: 07872645015

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 **February** magazine to office.cregagh@down.anglican.org or telephone the Parish Office 028 90792793 by NOON on **Tuesday 2nd January.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

www.stfinnians.org



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

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The Charity Commission for
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