

ST Finnian's

MARCH 2024



*Please see inside for details
of special services in March
for Lent, Holy Week & Easter
as well as events over
St. Patrick's weekend.*

Dear Friends

I wonder how the season of Lent sits with you? Do you look forward to this intentional period of 40 days for renewing and deepening your spiritual life or do you find it all a bit heavy and oppressive? All this talk of the cross and self-denial and going deeper with God sounds so out of touch with how many of us tend to think these days. Maybe in the past you gave up sweets and chocolate or alcohol for the 6 weeks, you tried to make it a weekly pattern to go to the midweek Lenten service but now you are wondering why you bothered? Most people you know don't seem to care about these things and having heard about these events over many years, you don't expect any remarkable new insights to be coming your way anytime soon. Sometimes I meet people who get a bit nostalgic about the days when it used to mean something to them. They left behind their religious practice some years ago but they have deep-rooted memories of the music, the midweek services, the Holy Week services and the joy of Easter day. They saw the physical changes in the church as the colours changed, the altar was stripped and they felt the

mood of solemnity and sadness on Good Friday and how that was transformed into joy with the celebrations on Easter Sunday. The Easter eggs were broken up and devoured, the church windows were decorated, the days were getting longer. A spirit of hope was generated as people celebrated these things together. Personally I always approach the season with a mixture of excitement and apprehension. I get excited about the opportunity to refocus my thoughts on God and turn my heart afresh towards Him. I get the chance to wonder again at His mercy and His tender kindness towards me and His desire to invite me home again. He longs to welcome me even after I have been away for a while. I may have showed up physically but perhaps my head and my heart wasn't in it. I take these weeks to bring both the best and worst of myself before Him and ask Him to teach me and help me to go again. I get apprehensive too about stripping back all those little crutches that can insulate me from a sense of dependence upon him. It might be the sweets, the chocolate, the drink after a challenging day.

I get worried about the services I have planned. Are they relevant, will they be applicable to people's lives? What about the guest speakers? Will they bring inspiration? Will anybody care enough to turn up to hear them? Sometimes I make it far too much about me and far too little about Jesus. The Lent that stands out vividly in my memory was the year Lucy was born. I had big plans and wanted to capture the hearts and imaginations of our parishioners in the parishes where I served and all of a sudden my circumstances changed. Vicky had to go to hospital weeks before Lucy was born. Lucy herself had to be delivered early with a number of complications and all my great plans were overtaken by events unfolding before me. A parishioner who was terminally ill at the time took me to one side and said he would bring the churches together to do something very different. He directed a passion play that reflected on different events in the last week of Jesus' life. I spent much of Lent going up and down to the hospital and had to ask big questions. Does the life, death and resurrection of Jesus have anything to say

to the human condition in the midst of bewilderment, confusion and suffering? If it does I need to know right now as these things are going on which are outside my control. I was amazed at how God used all sorts of people to show me just how vital and important all these things are. They ranged from nurses and doctors who looked after us as a family in those challenging weeks, to farmers who took time out of their busy day to drive us to the hospital and collect us. There were anonymous people who left soup and casseroles and bread on our doorstep at night, there were children in schools and frail elderly people in nursing homes who prayed and wrote cards and why did they do these things? They did them because Jesus lived, died and rose again and because his presence lived within them. That's why we want to proclaim Him, share Him and take every opportunity to remind people of just how centrally important He is in all things. May you discover this in a fresh and powerful way over this season of Lent.

With very best wishes.

Jonathan Pierce (Rector)
Telephone 02890 793822

SPECIAL SERVICES IN MARCH

On St. Patrick's weekend there will be special Diocesan celebrations in Downpatrick on Saturday 16th March. The Holy Communion service at 9am in Saul will be followed by a prayer walk to the cathedral for a special celebration service at 12 noon. The preacher will be Bishop Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster, author of *Lighting the Beacons*. Each parish will receive a beacon which will be lit at our evening service on 17th March at 7pm. On 17th March at 11am we hope to have a special gift morning as we offer our thanksgiving to God following the completion of the accessibility project and seek to rebuild our financial resources after that considerable capital project.



Each Thursday in March at 7.30pm we will continue our short 35 minute devotional services for Lent. They will follow a series of reflections about some of the blessings we find in the spirituality of St. Benedict. (Thursday Zoom prayers will not take place.)

HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES

From Monday 25th March to Friday 29th March at 7.30pm each evening we have special Holy Week services using the liturgies from the book written by our former Bishop Harold Miller called *Week Of All weeks*. We will be inviting a range of interesting speakers to share their spiritual journey as we reflect on the journey of Jesus towards Calvary in the final week of his life and the events that unfolded. **On Good Friday at 12 noon there will be a special service for children and young people. It will last 20-30 minutes and will be incorporated in to a day of prayer on Good Friday.** The church will be open from 7am and we will invite people to take responsibility for maintaining a presence of prayer throughout the day as we pray for our church, our land and the world. On Easter Day there will be services of Holy Communion at 9am, 11am and 7pm.

From the Registers 2024

Christian Burial

30th January - Michael Armstrong

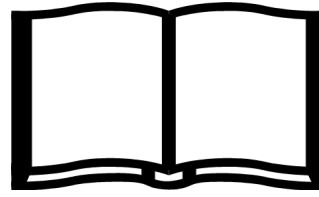
5th February - Daphne Keers

15th February - Kathleen Robinson

Holy Baptism

28th January - Ezra McElevey (son of Shannon & Stephen)

18th February - Lottie McMillan (daughter of Olivia & Martin)



Confirmation classes

Please speak to one of the clergy if you would be interested in taking part in confirmation classes. There will be classes for teenagers in the Coffee Bar each Sunday from 4.30-5.30pm. If there are adults who have never been confirmed and would like to take that step of faith, please don't hesitate to contact us and we will make arrangements to facilitate preparation.

Easter General Vestry

The annual business meeting of the church, the Easter General Vestry will take place after Easter this year. A date will be announced in the next magazine.

FLOWER DONATION ROTA

MARCH

3th Mrs M Corbett

10th Mrs M Carleton

17th Mrs M Seeds

24th Miss C Hamilton

31st Mrs B Wilson



Services for March



Sunday 3rd March (3rd Sunday in Lent)

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

Sunday 10th March (4th Sunday in Lent)

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

Sunday 17th March (St. Patrick's Day)

- 9.00am Holy Communion
- 11.00am Gift Service
- 7.00pm Evening Prayer (Lighting the Beacons)

Sunday 24th March (Palm Sunday)

- 9.00am Holy Communion
- 11.00am A Service of Wholeness & Healing
- 7.00pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 31st March (Easter Day)

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

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.

Hello everyone

Here we are nearly halfway through Lent already. How time seems to fly. I was thinking of a Joni Mitchell song called "The Circle Game", a coming of age song on this theme:

"Sixteen springs and sixteen summers gone now
Cartwheels turn to car wheels through the town
And they tell him take your time, it won't be long now
'Til you drag your feet to slow the circles down"

In an average lifetime we will live through about seventy Christmases and seventy Easters.

Whilst our individual experiences and memories of those seasons will be unique to ourselves, they are universal in the sense that our focus is on Jesus, His birth, death and resurrection. A communion hymn puts it like this:

"Once, only once, and once for all,
His precious life he gave;
Before the Cross our spirits fall,
And own it strong to save.
One offering, single and complete,
With lips and heart we say;
But what he never can repeat
He shows forth day by day."

As we approach the second half of Lent, Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter Day, I wish all our members a very blessed and peaceful Easter.

Dates for your diary: -

Thursday 7th March - 8.00pm Table games and Easter Craft (after midweek Lenten Service)

Tuesday 12th March - 7.30pm Praise Service St. Andrew's

Thursday 21st March - 7.30pm Festival Service Dromore Cathedral. Bus departs Knockbreda Parish 6:30pm. Members who wish to go please contact Liz Walker or myself.

Angela Harvey Branch Secretary Mobile No:07596 075081

Liz Walker Branch Leader Mobile No:07774 617549

BOYS' BRIGADE & ANCHOR BOYS



***The Company & Junior Sections of St. Finnian's BB
on their recent Ten-pin bowling outing.***

Please note the following dates in the lead-up to Easter: -
Monday 18th March: Company/Junior sections off for
St. Patrick's Day

Tuesday 19th March: - Anchor Boys last night before Easter

Monday 25th March: - Company and Junior sections last
night before Easter at the Holy Week service.

Monday 8th April/Tuesday 9th April: - All sections return.

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

NOTICES ON HALL WALLS

Recently there have been some notices attached to walls in the Huston Hall with Sellotape. This can remove the paintwork when the notices are being taken down. Please do not attach notices to the walls with Sellotape or Blu Tack. Thank you

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FRIDAY 1ST MARCH



The Christian women of Palestine have written this year's service with the title, "I beg you, bear with one another in love." A very poignant theme given recent events. Our local service will be held on Friday 1st March at 8.00pm in Orangefield Presbyterian Church. It will be led by women from the various churches in the area. A cup of tea will follow to be enjoyed while chatting with friends. Everyone is most welcome to attend.

Julie Cunningham
07814928398

DIVINE HEALING MINISTRIES

The Divine Healing Ministries service will be held earlier this month due to Easter. The service will take place on Tuesday 12th March at 7.30pm and the guest speaker will be Dr Stephen Rodgers. Everyone is very welcome.

Norman Sleator

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, however in order to avoid Easter, **this month the work morning will take place on Saturday 23rd March.**

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 therefore **Saturday 23rd March 2024.**

See you then!

Jim Haughey, Glebewarden

THANKS

Peter, Jonny and I would like to thank Jono, Andy and the many parishioners of St. Finnian's for their kindness, prayers and support over the past few weeks following the sudden death of Michael. To Mark and the choir for their wonderful lead at the funeral service, so many people said how they enjoyed the singing and organ playing. It has been a great comfort for us all at a time when it was much needed. Thank you all. Much love.

Judith, Peter & Jonny Armstrong x

LADIES' FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Hello Ladies,

I hope that you have been cheered by the lengthening daylight and glimpses of sunshine. Our only meeting this month will be on Wednesday 13th at 2.00pm. In a change to the printed programme, our guest will be Miao Cowen. She will talk about her inspirational life, including living in China and undergoing a heart transplant. We look forward to having your company. **There won't be a meeting on 27th as it falls in Holy Week.**

Julie 07814928398

CREGAGH CRAFTERS

Cregagh Crafters meet on Tuesdays from 10.30am - 12.30pm in the Huston Hall. Feel free to come along for crafting, coffee and chat. Everyone is very welcome. **We will finish for Easter on Tuesday 19th March and will resume again on Tuesday 9th April.**
Janet Johnston



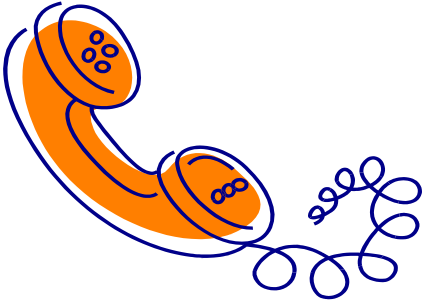


Spring is here and hopefully the better weather too but Pilates at St. Finnian's continues no matter what the season and it's been very encouraging to see the number of people who turn up week after week to be put through their paces. As usual I want to take a few moments to expand on a particular issue that sometimes causes confusion and concern amongst practitioners and clients alike; namely, the difference between 'Classical Pilates' and 'Contemporary Pilates'. Classical Pilates, which is also known as 'Contrology', is the original form of Pilates based on a set sequence of exercises performed on the mat in a particular order using the 34 classical exercises designed by Joseph Pilates. It also focuses on a 'flat back' during the exercises rather than the maintenance of a natural or neutral curve. Contemporary Pilates, which is sometimes called 'Hybrid Pilates' is based on the classical exercises but includes other types of exercise and adapts the exercise and sequence to the needs of users, their body types, physical conditions and any health conditions. It also includes the use of equipment such as exercise balls and stretch bands and focusses on restoring and maintaining the spine's natural curve. At this stage I should point out that the Pilates classes I run fall into the category of 'Contemporary' rather than 'Classical' given that there is a greater focus on maintaining a natural spine alignment, the exercise sequences are not constrained by the Classical sequence, they include using exercise bands and some exercises 'borrowed' from other types such as yoga. However, the core of the classes remains the original 34 exercises and principles as developed by Joseph Pilates. The flexibility offered by Contemporary Pilates makes it a safe and adaptable means to aid restoration and maintenance of a properly aligned spine, as well as improving the condition of the muscles around the major joints. I would definitely recommend it to anyone. That's all for now but, until next time, 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**

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 5th March.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

www.stfinnians.org



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