

ST Finnian's

FEBRUARY 2025



*Thinking about our
personal & church
spiritual health check*

Dear Friends

I recently had a service on the car and as part of that process I was sent a video from the garage. It was called a vehicle health check and the mechanic discussed the overall state of the car. He pointed out a few significant things. The thread on one of the front tyres was dangerously thin and needed to be replaced and he was able to show that the brake pads would need renewing after another 3,000-4,000 miles.

Car services are becoming increasingly sophisticated as are any recent dealings I have had with garages. When I was considering changing the car about a year ago I went online and enquired about a few cars that seemed suitable.

Within about 12 hours I had a phone call from a salesman who had identified cars that he thought might meet our needs and he subsequently sent videos and invited me over to test drive them. It was a very speedy response.

In this instance I was grateful for the call from the service manager highlighting my need to get a new tyre in order to stay safe. I wonder what sort of conclusions an expert might make if our church was sent in

for its annual service?

There are things that are encouraging and positive. There seems to be a wholehearted engagement with worship and often visitors remark on the atmosphere of prayer they feel when they enter the church. People speak warmly of the welcome they receive and appreciate the pastoral care they receive from fellow parishioners as they journey through some of life's very challenging experiences.

There are difficult things we notice too. There is an absence of young people and young families. Is this because the worship we offer is not engaging them or is it because they are busy on Sunday mornings with other activities? We have a sporting son and some of his activities have started to occur on Sunday mornings which is tricky to navigate when you want faith to be a family activity, something we practice all together.

Unfortunately I don't think there is a quick fix to this issue. It's not quite as straightforward as going to a tyre centre and replacing like for like and then you are good to go for another period.

Over recent years we have been trying different approaches with mixed levels of success. We notice a good response to one-off outreach events like community fun days, a specific invitation Sunday, outreaches for various seasons like Christmas or Easter but these don't translate into regular attendance at worship. I recently took a call from someone who was going through a very difficult time. They had struggles with their mental health, their finances were in a difficult place and the presenting issue was that they had no food, the cupboards were bare. They had no connection with the church but knew instinctively that the church might be a good place to look to for help. It was possible to make an immediate response and bring in some groceries and food vouchers and point the person to a local food bank and some activities in the church where they might find some community and connection in their isolation. It was possible to pray into the immediate situation but there was also a sense that something ongoing would need to happen if that situation was going to change.

In leadership, you recognise that you don't always have all the answers and that solutions may take some time to take effect. There are times when we feel discouraged, disheartened and frustrated that our solutions are not working as we would hope them to be. In recent months we had been trying to establish a youth group in church to encourage our teenagers in the faith. It has been hard to get volunteers to help with that and we understand how challenging it can feel to engage with those in their teens if we are considerably older than that ourselves. Andy, who was trying to lead that response, has himself left for a new calling so maybe we need to explore getting external help or paid help for this area of our church life. Its sense of importance is highlighted when parents ask if there is anything the church can provide to nurture their teenager or child in the faith. What about our personal faith if we were to get it examined under a health check? Have we been through sickness or depression or circumstances that have caused us to question God's presence or his goodness?

Have we struggled with things we always found strength from like Bible reading, prayer and going to church?

As this magazine goes to print I hope to attend the biannual clergy conference. The Bishop brings the clergy away for 3 days for a time of teaching and worship and prayer as we try to think about God's call to reach out to the world around us with His hope and His love.

I hope there will be inspiration and encouragement to be found there. As we enter soon the season of Lent, perhaps it will give to each of us opportunities to do a spiritual health check and to attend to those things that might be in urgent need of our attention. With very best wishes.

Jonathan Pierce (Rector)
Telephone 02890 793822

PRAYER MEETINGS BY ZOOM

Our parish prayer meetings by Zoom continue on Thursday nights 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, contact Robin by text or email, he will be willing to help. Your contact will be completely confidential and no details will be passed on to anyone else unless you want them to.

Mobile:07513947504

Email:robsmill24@gmail.com

CRECHE

A creche is now available during the 11am service. Feel free to leave your children over to the hall at any point before or during the service.

TODDLERS' GROUP

The Toddlers' Group will not be meeting on Monday 10th February due to the school mid-term break. We will resume again on Monday 17th February.

BB/ANCHOR BOYS



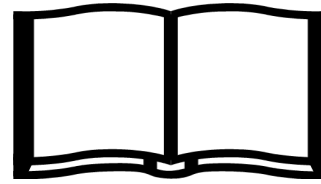
The BB Company and Junior Sections and the Anchor Boys will not be meeting week commencing 10th February due to the school mid-term break. Both the BB and Anchor Boys will meet as normal week commencing 17th February.

From the Registers 2024

Christian Burial

16th January - Adelaide Dawson

24th January - Norah Stranix



Hello everyone,

This year's World Day of Prayer service, written by the Christian women of the Cook Islands, will be held on Friday 7th March at 8.00pm. All the Churches in the Cregagh and Castlereagh area have been invited to St. Bernadette's Church, Rosetta Road. With the title, "I made you wonderful," this service invites us to recognise that God created each one of us with great attention and loving care. We are unique and special and should cherish all aspects of who we are and of those around us. Everyone is welcome to join us as we participate in a wave of prayer which encircles the globe.

Julie Cunningham



Hello friends

Our next Messy Church date is **Friday 28th February**. It will be a little bit different from our usual session as we have a drama group called "Play it by Ear" coming to visit us. The theme will be "loaves and fishes" and we are excited to see what will happen that day. As usual, there will be tea, juice, biscuits and food provided. We will start at 3.30 pm and finish at 5.00 pm. DV. We look forward to seeing you all then.

God bless. **Messy Church Team**

KEN SLOAN

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Jono, Andy and all our friends in St. Finnian's for all your prayers, support, kindness and special messages as well as to all who attended Ken's funeral on 3rd December. Thank you also to the ladies and gentlemen who provided refreshments and a very warm welcome in the hall following the service. The outpouring of love has meant everything to us and we cherish the memories of celebrating Ken's life in such a meaningful way.

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to you all.

**Margaret, Aaron, Suzanne, Matthew and
Ken's brother, Dougie.**

THANKS FROM ANDY

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for the lovely evening you gave me on Sunday 22nd December. I also want to thank you all for the incredibly generous gift. I have been bowled over by your kindness. It has been a pleasure living, worshipping and working alongside you and I wish you all the very best going forward. **Andy**

CONGRATULATIONS TO ELIJAH SAUNDERS

Congratulations to Elijah Saunders, a member of our Sunday School who has been chosen for the Ireland under 13 ice hockey team. Elijah will travel to Halifax, Nova Scotia in March with the team and it is hoped to hold a fundraiser coffee morning on Saturday 15th February. Keep an eye on the church notices/website/Facebook page for further details.

DIVINE HEALING MINISTRIES' SERVICE

The Divine Healing Ministries' service will be held on Tuesday 25th at 7.30pm. The guest speaker will be Dr Stephen Rodgers. Everyone is very welcome. **Norman Sleator**

Services for February



Sunday 2nd February (The Presentation of Christ in the Temple)

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

Sunday 9th February (The 4th Sunday before Lent)

9.00am	Holy Communion
11.00am	Holy Communion (SAMS)
7.00pm	Compline

Sunday 16th February (The 3rd Sunday before Lent)

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

Sunday 23rd February (The 2nd Sunday before Lent)

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

Wednesday morning communion & prayers for the sick



The Wednesday morning communion service with prayers for the sick takes place on **Wednesdays at 10.30am.** Everyone is very welcome to join us for tea/coffee, scones and friendship in the Sextons' Room after the service.

Register of Vestry Members

The Register of Vestry men and women will be updated in January 2025 and reviewed at the Select Vestry at its meeting on Tuesday 18th February 2025. 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, Mrs May Lavery, whose email address is secretarystfinnians@outlook.com

MIND MATTERS

The speaker for the next Mind Matters mental health programme event will be Rev. Lucy Burden from Mount Merrion parish who will speak on the topic of "Burnout". We will meet on Thursday 27th February at 7.30pm in the Huston Hall.

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 in the halls and church and optional pruning, spraying, brushing etc. The next date is **Saturday 22nd February**. See you then!

Jim Haughey, Glebewarden

CREGAGH **CRAFTERS**



Cregagh Crafters will be meeting every Tuesday in February, everyone is welcome to come along. Knitting, crocheting or bring along any sewing project or anything else you would like to do. There is always tea, coffee and plenty of chat. We have a fun morning between 10.30am - 12.30pm. The group was very busy last year. More poppies were added to the display for Remembrance Sunday. 60 blankets are ready to go off to the Ulster Hospital Casualty Department. The charity craft morning in November raised funds for individual's chosen charities. Marie Curie received a donation of £948 from the sale of beautifully made crafts. We were also able to send off £350 to Fields of Life, "I am Girl" project. A great crafting crowd, able to enjoy each other's company and also help others. **Janet Johnston (07711885203)**

LADIES' FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Hello Ladies,

The days are lengthening which lifts the spirits and encourages us to get up and go out. So, twice a month come and spend an afternoon with a friendly bunch.

We're heading to Knock Golf Club on Wednesday 12th for lunch at 1.00pm. If you would like to go, but haven't told us, or require a lift, please contact Helen before 3rd February.

Jim Bailey is returning on Wednesday 26th to lead a session of porcelain painting. An opportunity to display our artistic talents. As always we will be pleased to see you.

Helen 07907725571 & Julie 07814928398



ST. FINNIAN'S HISTORY PROJECT 1932-2032

To celebrate 100 years of St. Finnian's we would like to collect your stories of the people, events and changes in the parish to publish in future church magazines. Do you have: -

- Photographs from over the years
- Old church magazines
- Any material for display purposes
- Information about church organisations
- Anything else that may be relevant

We are interested in your memories, particularly from older members of the congregation and people who have belonged to the parish since childhood. If you would like to write a paragraph or two of around 250-300 words, you can post this to Linda Campbell at the church office or email your story to **stfinnians100years@outlook.com**

We would be grateful if any contributions could be submitted in Word Document format for ease of editing.

If you are aware of anyone who may need help writing their memories, we would be grateful for any assistance from friends and family. If you would like to become involved in the planning and gathering of material for this project then please email **stfinnians100years@outlook.com** or contact Linda with your name and details.

The second article in this history series can be found overleaf. Our thanks go to Rev. Andy Hay for sharing his recent memories.

ST. FINNIAN'S HISTORY
REV. ANDY HAY (Curate 2021-2024)

I arrived in St. Finnian's Parish Church in the Autumn of 2021. I had been in the church before as a part of my training and so I was delighted to be back as Curate and pleased to be working with Rev. Jonathan Pierce.

The church was coming out of 'Lockdown' after the Covid-19 virus and so organisations were starting up. Everything needed risk-assessed and there was a lot to deal with, but everyone did so well. St. Finnian's is such a vibrant place and so it is not possible to write about everything, but I will mention one or two aspects of my time in the Parish.

The Toddlers' Group met every Monday morning and it was a great part of my week. It was a very popular group and so we were always very busy. The loyal volunteers from the church oversaw everything beautifully and I think this was the main reason it was so popular. There was always food, craft, food, singing and food! I enjoyed mucking in and was able to help with the singing. I do not know how many times we sang Old MacDonald!

Messy Church was also up and running in the church and had been very ably run before I arrived. It continued and, again, due to the dedication and love put into it by the volunteers, numbers went up.

During my time in St. Finnian's, a group of parishioners started to volunteer with Lisnasharragh Primary School. Around three mornings each week, this team worked on rotation and gave Literacy and Numeracy Support to the children in this school. I do not know who got more out of it; the kids or the volunteers. I do know that the school saw a real benefit in the children's confidence and attainment. I think what the children saw was that a group of adults felt that they were important enough to give time to. It was amazing.

There were also young people in the community who were educated outside of school, for a variety of reasons. The Select Vestry gave a generous amount of money to allow members of this small community to begin a gardening club in the church grounds. We became HEdGE - Home Educators Gardening Enterprise. It was a hugely contrived name for a very close-knit group. They were supported and loved by volunteers who fed and watered them. Close friendships were made.

With regards to the weekly activities, it was clear that the congregation had a gift of hospitality. They knew how to welcome people in love. People were met, fed and treated with love and respect.

The worship services were special. Most of the services were from the BCP and we also had Connect. This was a monthly service held in the church hall, and it used a more updated liturgy and the music was led by a guitar-based worship group. In all of the services the worship was lovely.

St. Finnian's was a group that consisted of believers from a number of different backgrounds and traditions and they all worshipped and prayed well together.

During this time, some members of the church began reaching out into the local community in a new way, inviting them to a movie night, a fair and a bacon-buttie-welcome-service. There were Mental Health support and information evenings and Alpha. There was a lot going on.

I enjoyed and learned a lot from my time in St Finnian's.

I learned so much from Jono, the Rector. His manner and quiet approach were a tremendous example, as were his faith and loyalty to the congregation.

I left St. Finnian's in December 2024 and began a new ministry as Priest in Charge (Vicar!) of Clonallon and Warrenpoint with Kilbroney. I took with me many great memories, sound training and a deep affection for the people of St. Finnian's, Cregagh.



Hello everyone

Firstly, a word of thanks to Gillian Stevenson for leading our first meeting of the year on Saturday 4th January 2025. I wasn't there but I believe it went well and proved an interesting morning. It's hard to believe that it has been three years since the present MU Branch Office Holders and Committee commenced their period of office. Time flies so fast! Our next Branch Meeting on Thursday 6th February at 7:30 pm is our Triennial Elections. It is the three-year Business Meeting of our MU Parish Branch. When I worked in Shankill Social Security Office many years ago, I had a work colleague called Linda who was studying for a BTEC Qualification in her spare time. I admired her dedication for working through her lunch times on assignments. Just a casual glance at her lever arch files showed her topics of study were things like: Human Resources Management, Marketing, Law, Economics etc. I remember thinking it would be hard to study topics that seemed so difficult and to me uninteresting. I hesitate to say "Business" meeting as that word "Business" may, if you're anything like me, cause our eyes to glaze over and the old brain to switch off! However, as with most things in life, there are just things that must be done and organised for the well running of our parish activities. I hope as many of our members will attend this meeting. To reduce the load a little we will have a light-hearted activity alongside the serious part. Joan Allen and Carole McGladery are standing down from the Committee and we want to thank them for all their time, efforts, willingness to get their hands dirty, their ideas and experience and we wish them well. At present Liz Walker, myself, Karen Gately and Belinda Law are willing to stand again if elected and we will need some more Committee members to replace the outgoing ones. Availability is as important as any abilities we have and personally I'm still on a learning curve. On a Diocesan level we wish the outgoing Diocesan President, Mrs Mavis Thompson all the best after finishing her term of office. She has served the Diocese faithfully and we also welcome the incoming new Diocesan President Mrs Lynda Thompson, our neighbour from Knockbreda Parish, who is well known in MU circles who will make an able and gracious President.

Advance notice: Thursday 6th March 2025 Start of Lent: Service in church 7:30pm followed by meeting in the Huston Hall.

Angela Harvey, Branch Secretary

Mothers' Union Midday Wave of Prayers February 2025

2-4 February: Matlosane, South Africa; Mumias, Kenya; Eha-Amufu, Nigeria; Ballarat, Australia; Niagara, Canada and North Kerala, India.

5-7 February: Botswana; Marsabit, Kenya; Idah & Jebba, Nigeria; Salisbury, England and Andaman & Car Nicobar Islands, India.

9-11 February: Lainya, South Sudan; Ankole, Uganda; Abuja & Lagos-West, Nigeria; Lichfield, England and Karnataka North, India.

12-14 February: Matana, Burundi; South Ankole, Uganda; Morogoro, Tanzania; Ohaji/Egbema, Nigeria; New Westminster, Canada and Dornakal, India.

16-18 February: Bentiu, South Sudan; Bunyoro Kitara, Uganda; Okigwe-North & Omu-Aran, Nigeria; Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh, All Ireland and Krishna-Godavari, India.

19-21 February: Free State, South Africa; Bondo, Kenya; Ogbia & Offa, Nigeria; Swansea & Brecon, Wales; Argentina and Uruguay.

23-25 February: Wau, South Sudan; Kigeme, Rwanda; Bauchi, Nigeria; St David's, Wales and Mandalay, Myanmar.

26-28 February: Mundri, South Sudan; Madi & West Nile, Uganda; Isikwuatu, Nigeria; Chichester, England and Seoul, South Korea.

FLOWER DONATION ROTA

FEBRUARY

2nd Mrs N Moncrieff

9th Miss A Harvey

16th

23rd Mrs M Saunders



St. Finnian's Pilates



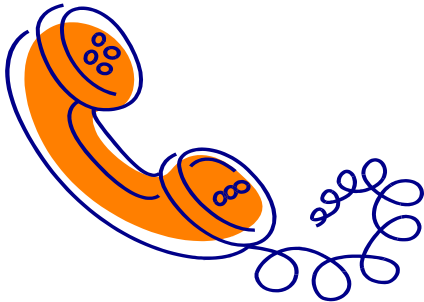
Hi everyone,

Now that we're well into 2025, I thought it would be interesting to look at some statistics about new year's resolutions, and it wasn't too surprising to find that on average only a third of those who made one actually kept to it beyond January. Hopefully the habit of regular exercise on Wednesday evenings will last a lot longer! In previous articles I've been considering the role Pilates can play in different sports, and for this month's article I'll be focussing on racquet sports. To start with I thought it would be interesting to share the following quotation from Pat Cash, a former Wimbledon tennis champion; *"Pilates is the ideal workout, relaxing, soothing, mentally and physically challenging with the aggressive impact on the body. When I have an ailment I head straight for the Pilates studio. It has kept me in one piece for years."* Like many sports, tennis is asymmetrical and Pat had developed a serious muscle imbalance leading to a disc injury requiring surgery. Despite being a super fit athlete and having tried many different fitness techniques that put a lot of strain on his body, he had ignored his deep stabilising muscles and learned to overcompensate through placing even more stress on the rest of the body. Following his back surgery, he was introduced to Pilates which got him back to playing top level tennis again. Racquet sports involve twisting, turning and changing direction at speed, and these place a lot of stress on the lumbar spine and shoulder. Common injuries include shoulder joint impingement problems, tight medial rotators of the shoulders, knee problems and lumbar spine and neck injuries. These are associated with lumbar and pelvic instability, overworked neck, lower back and shoulder muscles. Wrist problems are also common, usually resulting from overworked forearms and wrist rotations from constantly spinning the ball. Exercises recommended specifically for those involved in racquet sports include: Neck rolls, shoulder drops, windmill arms, spine curls, oblique single leg stretches, Roll downs, the Dart and Threading a Needle. In addition, the awareness and practice of good body alignment, strengthening the deep stabilising muscles (having a strong core) and improving your sense of balance will help avoid the common problems and injuries. As I've noted before, the vast majority of us who partake in racquet sports are not doing so at such a high level as Pat Cash but, even for the casual club member, or the recent converts to 'Pickleball', I would suggest that all would benefit from regular sessions that include the Pilates specified above. Until the next time, stay safe and keep moving.

We meet on Wednesdays at 7pm in the Huston Hall. Everyone is welcome and a small donation of £3 per class is requested to go towards church funds. If you want to find out more about Pilates, please contact me - John Waterworth by phone (+447941368546) or email at jcwworth@yahoo.co.uk

CONTACT DETAILS

Rector: Tel: 028 90793822



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 **March** magazine to **office.cregagh@down.anglican.org** or telephone the Parish Office 028 90792793 by NOON on **Tuesday 4th February.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

www.stfinnians.org



Find us on Facebook!
Facebook.com/StFinnians

Registered with
The Charity Commission for
Northern Ireland NIC101977