

ST Finnian's

MARCH 2026



*An invitation to become
a closer follower of Jesus
during Lent.*

*Please see details of
our Lenten services
inside the magazine.*

Dear Friends

I recently heard an interview on the radio with a lady who was a superfan of the band Depeche Mode. They have been together as a band over 40 years and as this lady was celebrating her 60th birthday, she planned to see them 3 times over the course of a year in different European cities. Since her teenage years, she reckoned she had seen them play live over 50 times. She struck me as someone who was truly dedicated as a follower. She had all their albums and every book that had been written about them. We sometimes see similar levels of dedication among sports fans who will follow their team to matches home and away, week in, week out. It takes a lot of commitment to be such a dedicated fan as there will be difficult seasons, bad results, losses of form and perhaps relegations to a lower league to cope with on that journey. Lent is a season in the church's calendar when people have the opportunity to think about what it looks like to be a dedicated follower of Jesus in an increasingly divided and complex world. Churches both locally and globally will often put on programmes to help people

to think about this question and we in St. Finnian's are no exception. This year we are looking together at what it means to be a follower of Jesus over the 6 weeks of Lent. We will be looking at some of Jesus' teachings in Matthew chapters 5-7 and using the writings of a renowned German theologian and pastor called Dietrich Bonhoeffer who died in a German concentration camp in 1945 as a result of his opposition to Adolf Hitler and the rise of Nazism in Germany. Ryan, our Curate, will be looking at Bonhoeffer's teaching on following Jesus, much of which was written in prison. These are the proposed sessions which will take place on Thursdays in church at 7.30pm beginning on 19th February.

Week 1: The cost of discipleship – cheap grace v costly grace.

Week 2: Community - Christian community means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ.

Week 3: The day together– the responsibility of the gathered body.

Week 4: The day alone - the responsibility of the individual disciple.

Week 5: Servanthood and mission.

Week 6 : Confession and Communion.

Much of the teaching will come from Jesus' teaching and Bonhoeffer's classic books - "Life Together" and "The Cost of Discipleship." During Holy Week we are inviting a number of guests to share what following Jesus looks like in their daily lives. The line-up remains to be confirmed but we are excited to have some very diverse and interesting people to share their experiences with us. We hope that if people invest 35-40 minutes of their time on Thursday evenings, it will help people to grow in faith and understanding and think about these things in their own lives. If I were to summarise my own ambition for Lent 2026, it's how might I become a closer follower of Jesus? There is always so much to learn and we are grateful to Ryan for sharing his research and scholarship and hopefully stimulating much thought among us. We hope you will be able to join us on this special journey.

With very best wishes.

Jonathan Pierce (Rector)

Telephone 02890 793822

EASTER GENERAL **VESTRY**

The Easter General Vestry, the Annual Business Meeting of the church, will take place on Tuesday 14th April 2026 at 7.30 pm in the Huston Hall. At this meeting, a new Select Vestry will be elected and the Rector and Treasurer will present annual reports. Everyone is welcome to attend.

PRAYER MEETINGS BY **ZOOM**

This month, prayer meetings by Zoom will not take place due to the Lenten services.

PRAYER WARRIOR

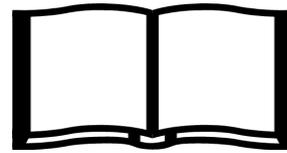
Do you have a concern or problem and would like someone to pray for you? If so, contact Robin by text or email, he will be willing to help. Your contact will be completely confidential and no details will be passed on to anyone else unless you want them to.

Mobile:07513947504

Email:robmill24@gmail.com

From the Registers

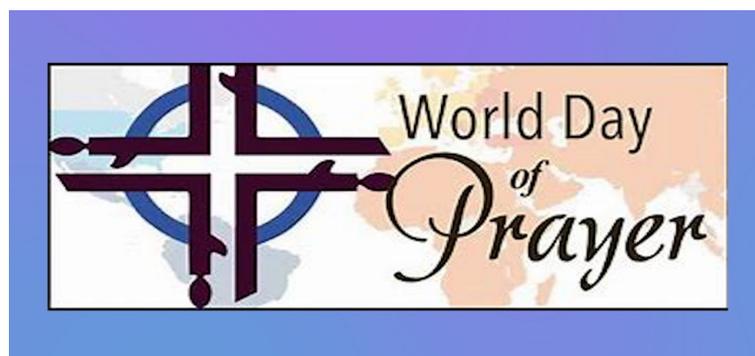
Christian Burial



9th February (in Roselawn) - Diane Henderson



Our midweek Lenten services will begin on Thursday 19th February and will take place each Thursday at 7.30pm throughout Lent. This year we are considering what it means to be a follower of Jesus through some of Jesus' teachings in Matthew chapters 5-7 and using the writings of a renowned German theologian and pastor called Dietrich Bonhoeffer. See the Rector's letter for more details.



St. Finnian's is hosting the annual World Day of Prayer service in this area on **Friday 6th March at 8.00pm.** Ladies from the local churches will be leading the service. The theme is "I will give you rest, come" and is based on the experiences of Christian women in Nigeria. We hope to welcome you ALL as we join our neighbours in a great wave of prayer encircling the world.

Julie Cunningham
Secretary WDP, Belfast East1

**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 the service and also for tea/coffee, scones and friendship afterwards in the Sextons' Room.

CREGAGH CRAFTERS



**The Craft Group will finish for Easter on Tuesday 24th
March and will resume on Tuesday 14th April.**

We meet on Tuesdays from 10.30am - 12.30pm in the Huston Hall. Coffee/tea and a warm welcome are always on offer!

Janet Johnston (07711885203)

Divine Healing Ministries' Service

The next Divine Healing Ministries' service will be held on Tuesday 24th March at 7.30pm. The guest speaker will be Dr Stephen Rodgers, Kingsway Church, Dunmurry.

Norman Sleator

LADIES' FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Hello Ladies

Our meeting on Wednesday 11th March will be lunch, the venue for which is still to be confirmed. We will keep you informed.

We are welcoming Eric Woods on 25th March at 2.00pm to speak about Beguines and Beguinages. These unfamiliar terms refer to medieval laywomen living in semi-religious communities in clusters of houses around churches.

They continue to exist helping those in need, though mainly in secular communities. This promises to be a very interesting afternoon. As usual, tea and biscuits will be on offer.

We look forward to seeing you.

Julie Cunningham (Tel: 07814928398)



FLOWER DONATION ROTA

MARCH

- 1st Mrs M Corbett
- 8th Mrs M Carleton
- 15th Mrs J Logan
- 22nd Miss C Hamilton
- 29th Mrs B Wilson





Hello everyone

Here we are in the season of Lent again and approaching another Holy Week and Easter! Hopefully the weather will improve and the lighter nights are on the way. Driving through town on the daily commute when I'm sitting at red lights, I have time to glance at the billboards (now mostly electronic.) One that was notable at Christmas time was from Lunns and showed a picture of a lovely gift box, red and gold trimmed with ribbon and bow. The caption said, "Every gift begins with a story." The story Lunns were thinking of presumably was of a ring or necklace marking the love of say a fiancé for his beloved one. Mind you, I'm not sure many of us could afford many of the high-end items on offer at Lunns! This reminded me of the story of the best gift ever given, God's gift of his Son Jesus as a baby to the world celebrated at Christmas and culminating in the Passion narratives, Good Friday and Easter. As Mothers' Union members, one of the main aims is to promote married life. So when you got engaged and chose a ring or one was chosen for you, you will remember the joy and excitement of those days followed by getting married and adding a wedding band to your collection! As we come to our March meeting, we are looking forward to our speaker who will be talking about jewellery and offering an opinion and valuation of some of the pieces which members may bring. It should be an interesting evening. The Bible says many things about treasure e.g. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it." Matthew 13:45-46 or "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, ... But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21. When we look at our precious rings and bracelets and associated memories etc, it will help us ponder the heavenly treasures too.

Branch Meeting Thursday 5th March 2026 7:30 pm

Speaker - George Gribben.

Festival Service: - Monday 23rd March at 7.30pm - Seagoe Parish Church, Portadown.

Diocesan Holy Communion Service - Thursday 2nd April at 10.30am - Knockbreda Parish Church.

Angela Harvey Branch Secretary mob 07596 075081

Heather Leckey Branch Leader Mob 07833 905017



Mothers' Union Midday Wave of Prayer March 2026

March 2-4 March: Yei in South Sudan; Luweero in Uganda; On the Lake in Nigeria; Grafton in Australia; Armagh in All Ireland and South Kerala in India

5-7 March: Bujumbura in Burundi; Maseno South in Kenya; Ihiala in Nigeria; Cameroon; Calgary in Canada and Ysabel in Solomon Islands

9-11 March: Awerial in South Sudan; Mityana in Uganda; Uyo & Ajayi Crowther in Nigeria; Rupert's Land in Canada and Patna in India

12-14 March: Port Elizabeth in South Africa; West Ankole in Uganda; Nomadic Mission & Ekiti-Kwara in Nigeria; Worcester in England and the Episcopal Church of the Philippines

16-18 March: Kajo-Keji in South Sudan; Tarime in Tanzania; Dutse & Akoko-Edo in Nigeria and Canterbury in England

19-21 March: Antisiranana in Madagascar; Busoga in Uganda; Yola & Oke-Ogun in Nigeria; Algoma, Canada & Jabalpur, India

23-25 March: Rokon in South Sudan; Kampala in Uganda; Kaduna in Nigeria; Koforidua in Ghana; Brisbane in Australia and Peru

26-28 March: Central Zambia in Zambia; Southern Highlands in Tanzania; Ogbaru & Badagry in Nigeria; Bermuda and Chandigarh in India

30-31 March: Toamasina in Madagascar; Mukono in Uganda; Ikwerre & Ife East in Nigeria; Down & Dromore in All Ireland and Delhi in India

MOTHERS' UNION FESTIVAL SERVICE

The MU Festival Service will take place in Seagoe Parish Church, Portadown on Monday 23rd March at 7.30 pm. An Area Coach has been organised and will depart from Knockbreda Church car park at 6.00 pm arriving back to Belfast at approximately 11 pm. The cost is £7 per person and to save collecting cash on the coach, perhaps you would bring payment to our March meeting. This Annual Service is a lovely occasion with the Branch banners being processed and we look forward as always to your loyal support from this Branch. If you would like to go and have not already added your name to the list, please let me know.

Angela Harvey, Branch Secretary

BB/ANCHOR BOYS HOLIDAYS

The Anchor Boys will not be meeting on Tuesday 17th March due to St. Patrick's Day and will finish on Tuesday 24th March for the Easter break.

Company and Junior Sections will finish for Easter with attendance at the Holy Week service on Monday 30th March. Both the BB and Anchor Boys will resume their meetings week commencing Monday 13th April.

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 28th March.** See you then! **Jim Haughey, Glebewarden**

CHANGE IN SERVICE PATTERN

Normally on the 5th Sunday of the month we have a Service of Wholeness and Healing but because of how Easter falls this year, we are having the Service of Wholeness and Healing this month on the 4th Sunday of the month. Palm Sunday will be observed as part of a service of Morning Prayer on the 5th Sunday of the month.

Next month our Connect Service will be on the second Sunday of the month as Easter Day is the first Sunday of the month. On Easter Day there will be celebrations of Holy Communion at 9am, 11am and 7pm in church.

ST. FINNIAN'S TODDLERS

St. Finnian's Toddler Group has had an extraordinary start to our 2025/2026 year and as a result we have a large number of children registered to attend. In order to ensure safety and comfort to all attending, we unfortunately have to close our registration books to new children at this time, for this academic year. We will be maintaining a waiting list and hope to be able to accommodate those interested as soon as possible. **Please text Heather on 07740095615 to register interest.** Please note that if you have completed a registration form for 2025/26, you continue to be very welcome to attend on Mondays.

The Toddler Team appreciate your understanding.

Toddlers will finish for the Easter break on Monday 23rd March and will meet again on Monday 13th April.

CRECHE

During the 11am service there is a creche available for younger children who are not yet old enough for Sunday School. Feel free to bring your children to the Huston Hall before or during the service.

Services for March



Sunday 1st March (The 2nd Sunday in Lent)

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

Sunday 8th March (The 3rd Sunday in Lent)

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

Sunday 15th March (The 4th Sunday in Lent)

- 9.00am Holy Communion
- 11.00am Morning Prayer (Youth Group in Coffee Bar)
- 7.00pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 22nd March (The 5th Sunday in Lent)

- 9.00am Holy Communion
- 11.00am A Service of Wholeness & Healing
(Youth Group in Coffee Bar)
- 7.00pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 29th March (Palm Sunday)

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

YOUTH GROUP

This month, Youth Group will meet on Sundays 15th and 22nd March at 11am in the Coffee Bar.



ST. FINNIAN'S HISTORY PROJECT 1932-2032

Many thanks to everyone who has already submitted such a variety of interesting stories, memories and photographs to the St. Finnian's 100th anniversary history project. We would be most grateful to continue to receive your stories about the people, events and changes in the parish so do please have a think about anything that might be relevant. We would also like to gather information from the last 25 years of all the new initiatives that have been developed in the parish for example, the Ladies Friendship Group, Messy Church, Cregagh Crafters, Pickleball and Pilates. Any contributions can be submitted on a word document. Please contact Linda in the church office by email, phone or post or email stfinnians100years@outlook.com

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**](mailto:stfinnians100years@outlook.com) or contact Linda with your name and details.

Thanks to Trevor Smyth for providing the fourteenth article in this history series about Wilson Crawford and the Boys' Brigade.

ST. FINNIAN'S HISTORY

TREVOR SMYTH

WILSON CRAWFORD & THE BB

Not too many years ago, a young first year Company Section boy in the 74th Belfast Boys' Brigade Company was asked the question: "Who founded the Boys' Brigade?" Without the slightest hesitation, he replied: "Mr Crawford." Now while not quite as old as the founder, Wilson was so influential in the BB that the young man's reply was not far off the mark in terms of St. Finnian's. Wilson played a major part in the post-war rebuilding of the organisation in the Cregagh area.

His enthusiasm and dedication saw him organise the Life Boys as leader-in-charge and support Jack Gardiner in the Company. Between them, they provided so many opportunities for young men from the Cregagh and Downshire Estates and the rapidly expanding housing areas of Rochester, Tudor, Merok and Glensharragh.

In the austerity of the 1950s, boys between the ages of 8 and 18 were able to participate in interesting, educational, sporting and fun activities including the introduction of summer camps at McCormick's farm in Ballywalter.

When Bill Bradfield replaced Jack Gardiner as Captain, Wilson ensured a seamless progression by providing a solid link between the previous and new Captains. The dynamic duo took the 74th into the 1960s with a willingness to move with the times. Trips, camps, visits, badge work, Group and Battalion events - Wilson and Bill managed to come up with something innovative every time. With the Life Boys and the Junior Section, as they became known in 1966, Wilson, ably supported by Junior Officers such as Dorothy, Muriel, Avril, Kathleen, Alistair and Ian, frequently accompanied by Bob Cooke, tried everything to broaden the boys' experiences.

Nature rambles in the Castlereagh Hills and Cregagh Glens were regular occurrences and it was no great hardship to take 15 or 20 boys by Corporation bus to “climb” the Cave Hill. Gannaway, Portrush and Whitehead were among the exotic locations for days out and on one occasion, provided the additional excitement of climbing Torr Head in a hired minibus which, at a crucial moment, was discovered not to have a handbrake!

Working with the older boys in the Company Section, Wilson was the driving force behind the introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh Award to the Company. His camp craft and map skills were vital in the Expedition Section and the training he provided saw 9 boys progress from Bronze level to achieve the Gold Award in the late 1960s.

Always keen to move with the times, Wilson and Bill embarked on a series of “foreign” summer camps in the 1960s and 1970s. Every one of those camps on the west coast of Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man has produced a wealth of stories, some of which might not be repeatable! Every camp also strengthened the bond between Officers and boys and generated a unique comradeship which has lasted over the years.

Throughout his 50 plus years association with the BB, Wilson experienced joys and great sorrow such as the deaths of some very close friends. He embraced change, moved with the times in activities and provided outstanding leadership. Everyone who came into contact with Wilson had their own special story - the chickens of Leven, the Barmouth Ladies, rice pudding, hill walking in Port Erin. In big things and in small, Wilson enriched the lives of so many young men through his time, energy and experience he devoted to them. In all that time, he did not lose sight of the objective of the BB and through his genuine love and concern for the boys in his care, he was a living example of “the advancement of Christ’s kingdom among boys.”



Chair Pilates

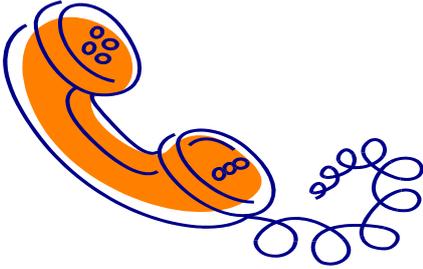
Quite some time ago I had written briefly about 'off the mat' based Pilates, and in this article I'd like to talk in a bit more detail about Chair Pilates which is an enjoyable and beneficial alternative to most traditional forms of exercise that require you to get up and down from the floor. If you have mobility issues, the thought of regular public classes can be intimidating and can put you off but the good news is that there are a number of simple seated exercises that will keep you going and allow you to live well and have a healthier later life. The benefits include improved strength, coordination, mobility, flexibility, balance, breathing, concentration and posture. The sad fact is that we lose around 3-8% of muscle mass every decade after the age of 30 so it's important to keep using our muscles so that they remain as strong and flexible as possible. A very important aspect of later lives is being able to balance and help prevent falls as we grow older and there are a number of balance exercises that can be performed whilst using the chair for support and to ensure safety. One example would be to start by placing both hands on the back of a chair and raising one leg to lift the toes off the ground and gradually building up to taking one hand off and maybe even both hands whilst keeping the chair handy if you begin to feel too wobbly. As with all the exercises, there will be scope to progress to more challenging balances. Just as for mat Pilates, the starting point for all the 'chair' exercises is correct posture and engaging the pelvic floor and abdominal muscles and so it is important to learn how to sit. Sounds ridiculous because we all sit all the time, don't we - but do we sit correctly? The following instructions show how. Once on the chair, sit slightly away from the back so you're not leaning or slouching; then place your feet hip-width apart with the knees directly above your ankles. Next gently tilt the pelvis forward and back until it is in a neutral position and it is helpful to imagine the pelvis as a bowl of water - tilt forwards and it spills out the front, tilt backwards and it spills out the back - so the aim is to keep the imaginary water in the bowl. When in this position, the next stage is to engage the abdominal and pelvic floor muscles the way you would do when setting up for mat Pilates i.e. gently pull the tummy in towards your spine (somewhere between a third and halfway) and then contract the pelvic floor muscles by imagining stopping passing some urine or breaking wind by pulling in gently front and back - it sounds strange but it is the best way to describe it - and this will activate the deep abdominal muscles. Congratulations, you're now ready to perform all the exercises safely to gain the maximum benefit. I'll not go into detail about them but I would like to mention the simple 'sit to stand' exercise which strengthens the muscles in your thigh and core, including the back and gluteals and which is so important to us as we age. Hopefully this will whet your appetite to learn more about chair Pilates. Until the next time, stay safe and keep moving. **We meet on Wednesdays at 7pm in the Huston Hall. A small donation of £3 per class is requested for church funds. If you want to find out more about Pilates, contact me - John Waterworth by phone (+447941368546) or email at jcwworth@yahoo.co.uk**

CONTACT DETAILS

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Curate: Tel: 07594890019

Email: ryan.stfinnianscregagh@gmail.com



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 3rd March.**

Don't forget to check out the church website:

www.stfinnians.org



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