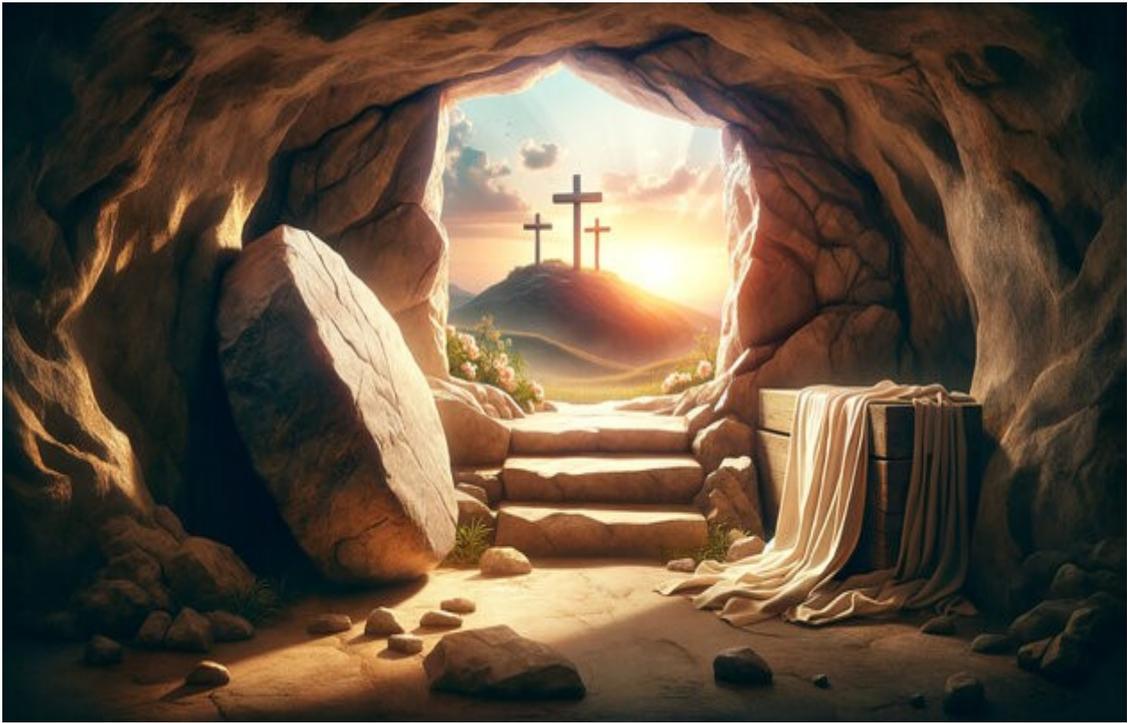


# ST Finnian's

**APRIL 2026**



*Catching hold of  
the hope of Easter.*

*See inside for details of  
our Holy Week &  
Easter services .*

# Dear Friends

One of the things that I have been reflecting on is how the events of Easter changed the perspective of Jesus' disciples. Holy Week is an intense time when we walk with Jesus through the events of his final week on earth prior to his crucifixion. We think about His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey. We see him confronting the moneychangers in the temple precincts and how he engages in debate with those who are curious about Him and what He is about. We get drawn into the atmosphere of the Last Supper and all that it represented as Jesus celebrated it with his disciples and we are moved when we see him wash his disciples' feet. We feel the sting of betrayal as Jesus leads a posse of soldiers into the Garden of Gethsemane and Judas betrays his master with a kiss.

There are the harrowing events of Jesus' trial and how he is mercilessly tortured and mocked by soldiers, before his agonising crucifixion and death.

Sometimes we draw a line at that point, unable to deal with or process more of this intense sequence of events. There is a remarkable twist however that

changes everything. Three days after Jesus' crucifixion when women go to anoint his body with spices, they discover the stone is rolled away and the tomb is empty.

There is an angel or angels there depending on which Gospel account you read and they are saying, He is not here, He has risen just as He said He would. What's more, we are invited to share in his victory over the grave as His followers. Death has been defeated.

If you follow elite or high level sport as I do, results are everything. We see managers being sacked and demands being made for coaches' resignations after a few defeats and you see confidence dropping among the players. They become afraid to play and express themselves in case they make a mistake and the opposition take advantage. When chances present themselves to attack or increase a lead, nervous teams tend to hang back and try to defend their lead. The opposition often sense that fear and try to sow seeds of doubt and secure different advantages that will dent the team's confidence.

It's remarkable at times the way a coach can instil belief, give a team confidence and shape and structure and help them to manage the difficult periods of a game. When I think of difficult seasons in my own life or in the lives of people I know and care about, Easter offers a transformational message. It tells us we are not alone in those seasons and while they will present challenge, difficulty and sometimes despair and great sadness, they will not have the final word. Jesus' resurrection speaks of a new dawn, about light in the darkness and hope triumphing over despair. It's a powerful message right now with our world in such a state of turmoil and unrest. In these confusing days, we allow Jesus to take us by the hand and to lead us forward, to reassure us that when the world is doing its worst, he is able to do more than we can ask or imagine. We hope you can join us for some of our special services and celebrations over Holy Week, Easter and the weeks following.

Christ is risen, Alleluia!

**With very best wishes.**

**Jonathan Pierce (Rector)**

**Telephone 02890 793822**

## **PRAYER MEETINGS BY ZOOM**

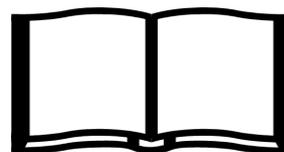
After Easter, our parish prayer meetings by Zoom will resume on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April at 7pm. If you would like to join us, send an email to [zoomtostfinnian@btconnect.com](mailto:zoomtostfinnian@btconnect.com) or contact the Rector.

## **EASTER GENERAL VESTRY**

This year, our Easter General Vestry takes place on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm. This is the Annual Business Meeting of the church at which the Rector makes a report, the Honorary Treasurer makes a report and a new Select Vestry is elected to serve for the coming year. As this is a triennial year, there will be elections to serve as parochial nominators and synod people. It's an important meeting in the life of our church and you are warmly invited to attend.

## From the Registers

### Christian Burial



26<sup>th</sup> February - Adele Andrews

9<sup>th</sup> March - Marion Chambers

13<sup>th</sup> March - Caroline Darragh



**From Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March until Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April there will be special services each evening at 7.30pm.** There will be visiting speakers from different backgrounds sharing how the path of discipleship has impacted their lives from Monday to Thursday. On Friday there will be a prayer vigil in church from 7am to 7pm. There will be a special service of Tenebrae on Good Friday evening at 7.30pm to help us to engage in a powerful way with the significant events unfolding in this last week of Jesus' life. This year there will be no youth service at 12 noon but we hope to have an all-age family service to celebrate Palm Sunday on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March at 11am. There will be no Sunday School that day but we hope the children will come and be part of our special celebration. We hope to set up an art table at the back of the church on Good Friday so children are very welcome to come to be part of our day of prayer and maybe write a prayer or do a drawing as we invite people to come aside and take responsibility for praying in the church for a half hour or longer. Our world is in great need of prayer at this time and we hope that people will sign the list and utilise some of the prayer resources that will be available on the day on Good Friday.

**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.

**Please note that the service will not take place during the Easter week (8<sup>th</sup> April) but will resume the following week (15<sup>th</sup> April).**

**CREGAGH CRAFTERS**



**Due to the Easter break, the Craft Group will not be meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> March and 7<sup>th</sup> April. Our meetings will resume again on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April.**

Come along on a Tuesday from 10.30am - 12.30pm with whatever craft you are interested in. Advice, 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 28<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm. Speaker to be confirmed.

**Norman Sleator**

## **LADIES' FRIENDSHIP GROUP**



Hello Ladies

Isn't it lovely to see brighter days encouraging us to go out and meet with friends?

**PLEASE NOTE CHANGES OF DATES FOR APRIL MEETINGS**

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup>** - no meeting - Easter.

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> - 2.00pm** - we welcome Dr Lauren Smyth whose talk is entitled "The Women of Clifton House". This impressive Georgian building in North Belfast has had a chequered history and remains a residential home and heritage centre.

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> - 2.00pm** - our guest will be local author Brian Johnson. We will have the opportunity to purchase his latest book of humorous tales, poems and limericks. All proceeds of sales will go to the Motor Neurone Disease charity (MND).

As this will be the last meeting before our summer break, our usual tea and biscuits will be upgraded to afternoon tea.

We hope that you can join us.

We wish you all a pleasant summer and look forward to seeing you in September.

**Helen, Caroline, Dorothy**

**Julie 07814928398**



## **Hello everyone**

By the time you read this we are in the last week of Lent known as Holy Week. Usually, we have our Branch meeting on the first Thursday of the month, in this case 2<sup>nd</sup> April. As you know, it is traditional not to have normal parish activities in Holy Week. It's as if we put down our routines, pause and come towards completing the Lent journey together at our special services. Maundy Thursday falls on this date and we remember the last night of Jesus' life and the Last Supper with his disciples. Hopefully as many of us who can, will gather together on that date at 7:30pm in church as a group of women, individuals yes, but bound by our common aims in Mothers' Union of promoting marriage and family life with all of its joys and challenges within the context of the Christian faith. How's your Lent journey been? Patchy, inconsistent, a burden? but also a welcome realisation in our vulnerability (mine has been both strands at the second week), in God is patient with us and that Lent is "the story of a God who draws near" - quote from Anders Bennett's Lent Book, "Crossroads to Hope." He reminds us the winding road from "ashes to alleluia" may not be straightforward or quick, but we belong in God's story.

Heather and I and the rest of the Committee wish you a Happy and Blessed Easter. Enjoy the holiday with your family and friends.

Other dates for your diary:-

Diocesan Holy Communion Service Thursday (Maundy Thursday)

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026 to be held in Knockbreda Church at 10:30am

Indoor Members' Tea Party Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026 2pm at

Magherahamlet Parish Church. Our Bishop, Right Revd. David will preach at the Holy Communion Service.

We look forward to our next Branch Meeting on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May at 7:30pm when we hope our Diocesan Chaplain The Reverend Duncan Pollock will talk to us amongst other things about the history and meaning of the Prayer Book and the significance of the clergy robes etc. This event will take place in the church followed by supper in the Huston Hall.

If anyone needs lifts to these services or events please let us know.

**Angela Harvey Branch Secretary mob 07596 075081**

**Heather Leckey Branch Leader Mob 07833 905017**



## **Mothers' Union Midday Wave of Prayer April 2026**

1 April: Toamasina in Madagascar; Mukono in Uganda; Ikwerre & Ife East in Nigeria; Down & Dromore in All Ireland and Delhi in India

2-4 April: Umzimvubu in South Africa; Lweru in Tanzania; On the Niger in Nigeria; Cape Coast in Ghana; Ontario in Canada and Limerick & Killaloe in All Ireland

6-8 April: Cueibet in South Sudan; Gahini in Rwanda; Wusasa & Ibadan in Nigeria and Christchurch in New Zealand

9-11 April: Nord Kivu in DR Congo; Kigali in Rwanda; Kiteto & Kubwa in Nigeria; Perth in Australia and Kuranagala in Sri Lanka

13-15 April: Yirol in South Sudan; Ruvuma in Tanzania; Nike & Benin in Nigeria; Canberra & Goulburn in Australia and Dogura in Papua New Guinea

16-18 April: Kindu in DR Congo; Mount Kenya West in Kenya; Egbu in Nigeria; Te Pihopatanga O Aotearoa in New Zealand; Cork, Cloyne & Ross in All Ireland and Eastern Himalayas in India

20-22 April: Kinshasa in DR Congo; Victoria Nyanza in Tanzania; Ahoada & Warri in Nigeria; Oxford in England and Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea

23-25 April: Kisangani in DR Congo; Kagera in Tanzania; Awka in Nigeria; Sunyani in Ghana; Manchester in England and Popondota in Papua New Guinea

27-29 April: Port Sudan in Sudan; Muhabura in Uganda; Niger Delta West & Yewa in Nigeria; The Northern Territory in Australia and Chennai in India

30 April: Aru in DR Congo; Kigezi in Uganda; Ikeduru in Nigeria; Ho in Ghana; York in England and Guyana & Suriname in Guyana

## **FLOWER DONATION ROTA**

### **APRIL**

5<sup>th</sup> Mrs B Carlisle  
12<sup>th</sup> Miss G Stevenson  
19<sup>th</sup> Mrs L Campbell  
26<sup>th</sup>



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## **BB/ANCHOR BOYS HOLIDAYS**

Due to the Easter break, the Anchor Boys will not be meeting weeks commencing 30<sup>th</sup> March and 6<sup>th</sup> April.

Company and Junior Sections will finish for Easter with attendance at the Holy Week service on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March and will not meet on 6<sup>th</sup> April.

**Both the BB and Anchor Boys will resume their meetings week commencing Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April.**

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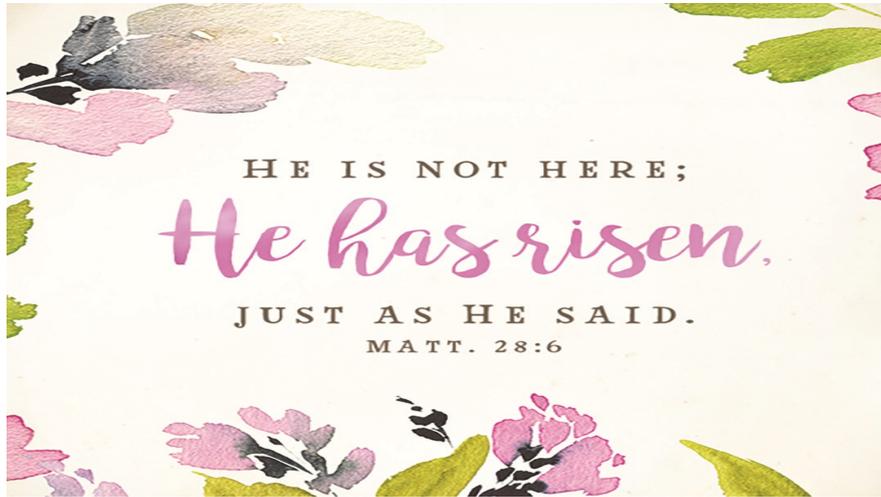
## **ST. FINNIAN'S TODDLERS**

Due to the Easter break, our Toddlers' Group will not be meeting on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March or Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April.

**Our meetings will resume again on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April.**

We meet from 10.00am - 12 noon in the Huston Hall to enjoy play, arts/crafts, singing, chat and a cuppa.

## **EASTER - CHANGE IN SERVICE PATTERN**



**Please note that this month, our Connect Service will be held on the second Sunday of the month (12<sup>th</sup> April)**

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.**

### **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.

### **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**

# Services for April



## **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April (Easter Day)**

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

## **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April (The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter)**

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

## **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April (The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter)**

9.00am Holy Communion  
11.00am Holy Communion (Youth Group in Coffee Bar)  
7.00pm Compline

## **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April (The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter)**

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

## **YOUTH GROUP**

This month, Youth Group will meet on Sundays 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> April 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](mailto: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 Heather Leckey for providing the fifteenth article in this history series about the St. Finnian's Choir from the 1990s onwards.

# **ST. FINNIAN'S HISTORY**

## **HEATHER LECKEY**

### **ST. FINNIAN'S CHOIR—1990s onwards**

After having sung in the 10am choir for a few years, which meant attending one service per Sunday, I decided to join the robed choir in 1989. This meant attending twice on a Sunday and special services such as Advent and Lenten midweek services and any others that came along. It wasn't long until I realised what I had been missing, not only the music at the major festivals but just how lovely the service of evening prayer is.

As tradition had it, in late May most of the members of St. Finnians' Choir plus families, partners and friends, would head away from east Belfast for their annual weekend to Co. Donegal, (other places in Ireland had been visited previously) but the favourite places were Dunfanaghy, Carrigart and Killybegs. En route, a rendezvous point would have been arranged for everyone to gather. Out would come the china and glassware and placed on a well starched tablecloth, (although some of us used plastic cups, plates and wet wipes as we had children with us). After a picnic tea, we continued our journey in convoy. Eventually arriving at our destination, we would get our bearings and call it a night. On the Saturday, Sam (the organist) would have decided on a tour for us to visit local historic sites, usually ending up at a beach or park to have another picnic. After which we would do our own thing. Some of the ladies liked to visit a shop or two followed closely by their husbands, others would go for walks or just have a rest. We all had our evening meal together after which we mixed with the locals and enjoyed the craic. What went on tour stayed on tour!

On Sunday we would go to church, doubling or even trebling the congregation at times. We then would have a light lunch and head back to Belfast.

In 2002, our Choirmaster Mr Sam Lown passed away and our weekends came to an end. Miss Elaine Coey was appointed as organist and Choirmistress, she stayed only a couple of years as she got married and moved away. With Elaine we were introduced to the music of Rutter, which most of the choir members enjoyed singing.

We were fortunate to have our own Jonathan Geoghegan and Paul Berry to step in when we were without an organist and Mr David Beattie, Conductor of "The Beatitudes" also helped at times too.

The next organist who was appointed was Mr Stewart McClenaghan. He remained for a couple of years before deciding he would go abroad and work. Stewart was a traditionalist and taught the choir the likes of "Little Drummer Boy" which was very much appreciated by Eric Hay.

Mr Mark McGrath was then appointed as Organist and Choirmaster in 2009. Daniel Clements under Mark's supervision became Organ Scholar while still at school.

Daniel deputises and assists at services both playing and singing in the choir and now plays the organ in various local churches.

We were lucky enough to have four young Choristers join the choir and we have watched them mature from Choristers to Senior Members. Another organ scholar started, Jonny Hayward who was one of the choristers, but due to the Covid pandemic of 2019- 2020, all teaching had to stop. Jonny was unable to finish as he then went to the Royal College of Music in London to study.

Come along any Sunday 11am or 7pm or festival and hear for yourself the music which Mark has taught the choir.

After the pandemic, worship changed, and services changed and the choir changed.



The choir has diminished in numbers although a couple of new members have joined.

We still manage a SATB (soprano, alto, tenor & bass) choir (which are a very faithful and loyal group) each Sunday and in place of a weekend away, we now enjoy an annual dinner.

We have a rent-a-choir who are a band of loyal and willing persons who supplement the main choir for weddings and funerals and are greatly appreciated by all.

Choir practices are on a Thursday evening at 7.30pm in the church so come along and enjoy the fellowship and craic.

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## **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 25<sup>th</sup> April.**

See you then!

**Jim Haughey, Glebewarden**

## Hello everyone

How are you? Isn't it beautiful to feel some sunshine at last and to see all the daffodils bloom into those hopeful, yellow flowers.



On Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February at Messy Church, Ethan, Helen and Nathan from Crown Jesus Ministries came along to perform a puppet show. It was one with a difference and the theme was Jesus Calms the Storm. Max was our puppet on the boat and like many of us, he gets sea sick and is frightened of the water. He sang, "Here comes the sun", "Time to say goodbye", "The Greatest Storm" (Showman style) and "I Will Survive" along his journey. He gave children and adults such laughs. Helen spoke to the children about how we all get sad, cross and angry at times. Our own heads become a storm of feelings and when we become like this, we just have to reach out for Jesus and ask Him to give us that calm and peace.

**Peace be still.** He hears our every prayer.

She reminded all the boys and girls that our Heavenly Father loves each and every one of us so much that He sent His One and Only Son to bear our sins on the cross.

We enjoyed guessing games and charades and we worked up so much of an appetite that our supper and ice cream was devoured in a flash. Each child took home an Easter egg too. Thank you Crown Jesus Ministries for your wonderful way of bringing God's word alive to our younger folk.

Also a word of appreciation to our faithful parishioners who continue to send crafting materials. It is very much appreciated but at this time there is no room left in our small storage area. Please do not leave any more items.

**"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" John 14:27.**

Have a Blessed Easter everyone.

**He is not here, He has risen, just as He said.**

The Messy Church Team



Hi everyone,

Time for yet another one of my regular discourses on the subject of Pilates which, for this month, looks at one of the lesser mentioned principles that underpin it, namely stamina. This is not something that is normally mentioned in the context of Pilates classes given that the exercises are usually performed only for a low number of repetitions with the focus on the quality of movement rather than quantity. As each exercise is mastered and you learn particular movement skills, it will then be possible to add more progressively challenging exercise options into the programme that will help to build muscular endurance and stamina into your body, while keeping the focus on ensuring the movements are performed properly and safely following the principles of concentration, alignment, control, co-ordination and flow. Having said all this, the one thing that Pilates doesn't specifically normally offer is cardio-vascular work, although what it can do is make you fit for whatever your chosen sport or aerobic exercise routine may be (such as walking (briskly), cycling, swimming, tennis) and help to prepare the body before the activity and rebalance it afterwards. However, performing what is known as the 'Series of Five' in quick succession with multiple repetitions, will increase the heart rate and challenge both your strength and stamina. This term refers to the following exercises: The single leg stretch, Advanced double leg stretch, Scissors, Double straight leg lowers and the Oblique single leg stretch and is definitely part of an advanced workout - not to be undertaken lightly but something to gradually work towards as you progress in your Pilates journey, which I would encourage anyone to consider starting if you already haven't done so. In the meantime, take care 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](mailto:jcwworth@yahoo.co.uk)**

**Please note that there will be no class during Holy Week (1<sup>st</sup> April). Classes will resume again during Easter Week (8<sup>th</sup> April).**



Hello everyone at St. Finnian's

I hope you are keeping well.

I am writing to sincerely thank you for your partnership with Operation Christmas Child throughout the 2025 campaign. Your church's generosity and heart for the Gospel are making a real and eternal difference in the lives of children around the world. Thanks to the incredible support of churches across Ireland, a total of 29,614 shoeboxes were collected in 2025. These shoebox gifts were sent to Serbia and Central Asia, where they were distributed through local churches as a tangible expression of God's love. Each box represents not only a gift, but an opportunity for a child to hear the message of Jesus and be invited into discipleship through The Greatest Journey programme. We are so grateful for your commitment to reaching children with the Gospel and for the time, energy, and prayer that went into your church's involvement. There is no way of fully measuring the long-term impact, but we know that lives, families and even future church leaders can be transformed through your faithfulness.

As we look ahead, we are excited about the 2026 campaign and the opportunities it will bring to continue strengthening church-to-church partnerships around the world. We would be delighted to support you in any way as you plan for this year. Thank you again for standing with us in this mission.

Together, we are making an eternal difference.

Blessings.

**Darryl Nesbitt**

**Samaritan's Purse**

**International Regional Manager Northern Ireland**

**Operation Christmas Child**

# **Saint George's Singers**

Saint George's Sinfonia and Soloists  
present

**an Easter Concert of works by G.F. Handel**

Chandos Anthem: My Song Shall Be Alway  
Vespers Psalm: Dixit Dominus



The Chandos Portrait of Handel, painted circa 1720 by an unknown artist.

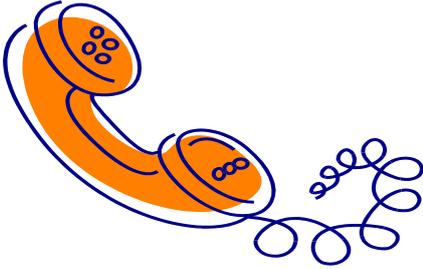
**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April at 7.45pm**  
**Saint George's Church, High Street, Belfast**  
Tickets £20 (Students £10)  
available from Choir Members and at the door  
or by request to: [contactstgeorges@gmail.com](mailto:contactstgeorges@gmail.com)

## CONTACT DETAILS

**Rector:** Tel: 028 90793822

**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 **May** magazine to **office.cregagh@down.anglican.org** or telephone the Parish Office 028 90792793 by NOON on **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April.**

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