

CHURCH MATTERS

The monthly newsletter of the Church of Ireland
United Parish of Whitehead & Islandmagee.

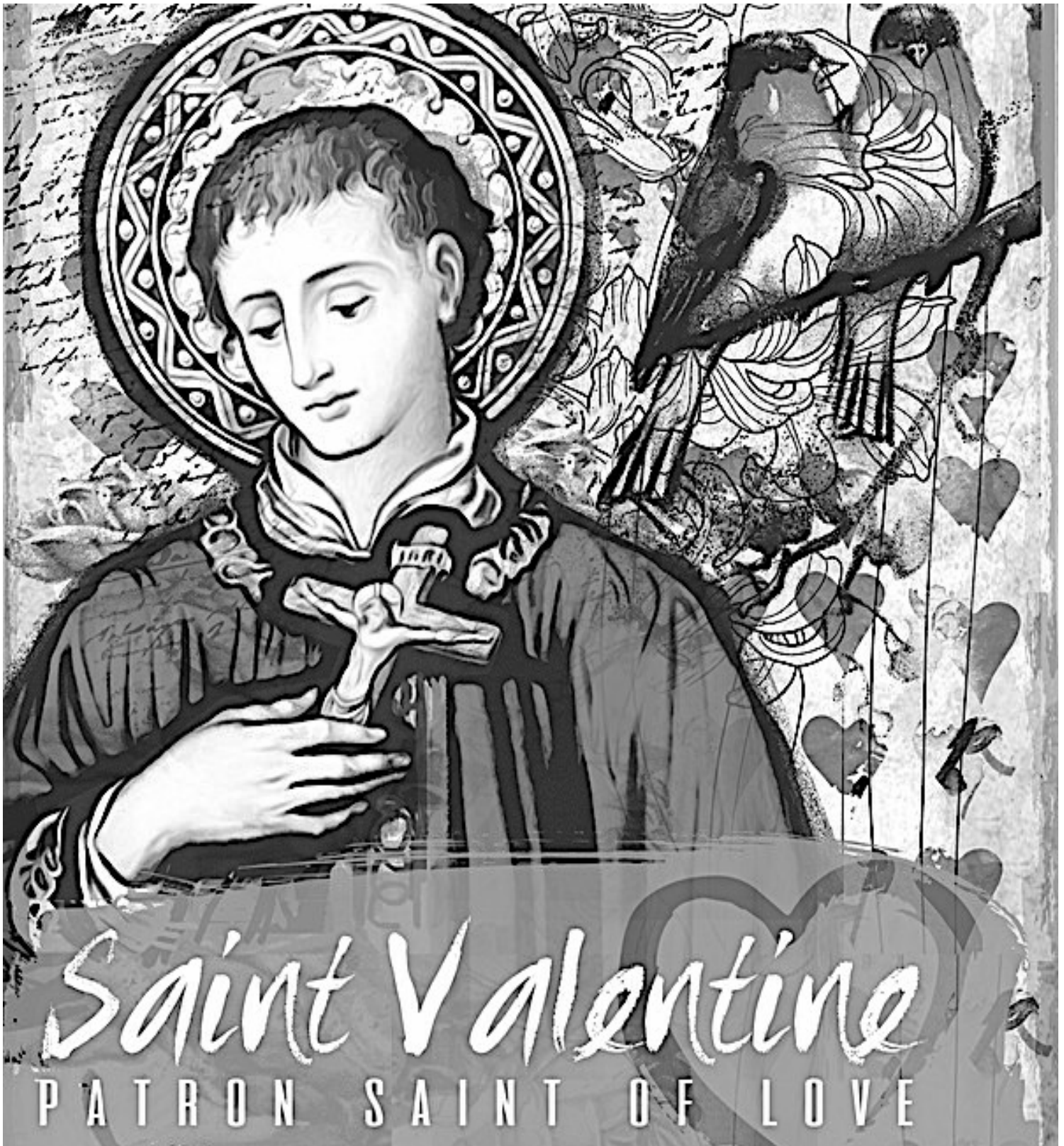
Here everyone matters

February 2023



**ST. PATRICK'S
& ST. JOHN'S**

UNITED PARISH OF
WHITEHEAD & ISLANDMAGEE



February Services & Readings

Worship and services - Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m.

All readers - read the first reading from the "Sunday Readings" lists

Sunday 5th February - 3rd Sunday before Lent - Septuagesima

8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m. Holy Communion Two
12 noon Holy Communion Two
Sunday Readings Epistle 1 Corinthians 2:1-12; Gospel Matthew 5:13-20
Readers for first Lesson - Judith de Fleury / Joy Kerr
7:00 p.m. Evening Prayer/Compline
Weekday Readings: Isaiah 58:1 - 62:5; Psalms 74-90; Mark 9:30-10:52

Sunday 12th February - 2nd Sunday before Lent - Sexagesima

8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m. Morning Prayer
10:30 a.m. **Messy Church** in the Parochial Hall
12 noon Morning Prayer
Sunday Readings - Isaiah 49:8-16a; Psalm 131; Matthew 6:24-34
Readers for first Lesson - Colin de Fleury / Jim Reid
7:00 p.m. Evening Prayer/Compline
Weekday Readings: Isaiah 62:6-66:14; Psalm 91 - 107:32; Mark 11&12

Sunday 19th February - Sunday before Lent - Quinquagesima

8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m. Morning Prayer Two
12 noon Morning Prayer Two
Sunday Readings - Deuteronomy 11:18-21, 26-28; Psalm 31:1-5, 19-24;
Matthew 7:21-29
Readers for first Lesson - Jack McKinney / Maureen Reid
7:00 p.m. Evening Prayer/Compline
Weekday Readings: Ruth 1, Deuteronomy 7; Psalm 107:33- 113; Mat-
thew 5, John 1:29 - 51

Wednesday 2nd March - Ash Wednesday (First day of Lent)

11:30 a.m. Penitential Service (BCP 1926)
Readings - Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Psalm 51:1-18; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
7:30 p.m. Service for Ash Wednesday (BCP 2004)
Readings - Isaiah 1:10-18; Psalm 102; Luke 15:11-32

Sunday 26th February - 1st Sunday of Lent

8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m. Family Service
12 noon Family Service
Sunday Readings - Matthew 4:1-11
Reader for first Lesson - The Rector
7:00 p.m. Evening Prayer/Compline
Weekday Readings: Deuteronomy 8:1 - 11:28; Psalms 114 - 121; John 2:1 - 4:26

Sunday 5th March - 2nd Sunday in Lent

8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m. Holy Communion Two
12 noon Holy Communion Two
Sunday Readings - Epistle - Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; Gospel - John 3:1-7
Readers for first Lesson - Corrine Logan / Ann Thompson
7:00 p.m. Evening Prayer/Compline
Weekday Readings: Jeremiah 1:1 - 6:19; Psalms 122 - 136; John 4:27 - 7:13

Sunday 12th March - 3rd Sunday in Lent

8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m. Morning Prayer
10:30 a.m. **Messy Church** in the Parochial Hall -
12 noon Morning Prayer
Sunday Readings - Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; John 4:5-42
Readers for first Lesson - Heather Cupples / Bill Rafferty
7:00 p.m. Evening Prayer/Compline
Weekday Readings: Jeremiah 7:1 - 13:11; Psalms 137 - 150; John 7:14 - 8:59

CHOIR

We are interested in forming a Choir to lead the worship in Church for various special services throughout the year. To learn special pieces for the major festivals (Christmas, Easter, Harvest etc.). Brief rehearsals on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in St Patrick's. I know there has been some discussion amongst people but if you are interested let the Rector know.

A message from our Rector

Each year we have a new opportunity to start afresh, as the new years starts. Nothing will be truly the same, many things will be similar, but not the same. Everything changes, even if ever so slightly. We will have a birthday, just as we do every year, but we will be another year older. We will note the date of each passing day, we will get used to it being 2023 rather than 2022.



This starting afresh we usually tie up with New Year's Resolutions, which for most people only last through January. So here at the beginning of February why not stop and take a look again at ourselves at the beginning of the new year and see if we can improve ourselves and be better than we were last year.

All of us, without exception - self included, can improve on these three things. Our Prayer Life, our Bible Reading, our time spent in the Worship of God.

Our Prayer Life - none of us pray enough. I am not talking about the formal, kneeling down with hands folded and eyes closed to pray. I am talking about the quick prayers for friends and family and others when we meet them. When was the last time you said (quietly within your self) a prayer of thanks when you met some one that you hold dear? Do you pray, "God thank you for ____." as you draw near to them? Do you ask God's blessing on them ("God bless ____") as you part? You easily could, and you know you should. If you can do this frequently and regularly between now and Easter you will do this for the rest of your life without even noticing that you do it. The benefit your prayer life, and to those you pray for, will be immeasurable. Try it, do it, continue with it for each person you meet.

Our Bible Reading - we do not read the Bible enough. Almost all of us have a mobile phone, a phone that is more than just a phone. You can get a free app for daily Bible readings for your phone. It will send you, free, a daily bible reading, you don't even have to look it up! All you need to do is read it - when you may have your phone in your hand or beside you any way. I do not want to advertise or recommend one app over another but they can easily be found (we all have family members who can help with that and it may get them reading the Bible as well).

Our Worship of God - this is not restricted to Sunday's only, even though Sunday in Church is the main time and place we worship God. There is an article later in the magazine about going to Church. Here are some facts you might want to consider when reading that article.

Each week there are five services that you can attend. The first is on Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m. in St Patrick's for a traditional Holy Communion service with no hymns.

The second is at 10:30 a.m. in St Patrick's for our main service of the day. This is either Holy Communion, Morning Prayer or Family Service with the option of Messy Church in the Parochial Hall on the second Sunday of the month.

The third is in St John's at 12 noon, following the pattern in St Patrick's. The fourth is at 7:00 p.m. in St Patrick's and is usually Compline - night prayers. We are planning special Sunday Evening Services in the Parochial Hall (singing favourite hymns and such like) to be held on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m..

The fifth is a brief service on a Wednesday morning in St Patrick's at 11:30 a.m. At present this service is The Litany but in the past (and may be in the future) it has been Matins (shortened form of Morning Prayer) and other special services.

The attendance on a Sunday evening and Wednesday morning is very poor - usually the Rector and one other person. I am loathed to stop these services, because at least one other person is willing to come and pray/praise God at these times, and because once stopped they may never start again and our worship and prayer will be the poorer.

Here is a way to manage Prayer, Bible reading and Worship all in one. Some years ago the Church of Ireland brought out an app for phones called Daily Worship from the Church of Ireland. It costs 89 pence and gives you options for Holy Communion, Daily Prayer (morning or evening) the Late Evening Office or Compline (night prayer) each day, with the correct prayers and Bible readings for the day. It does require you to open the app each day - but that is not hard to do.

This year, as we enter the 116th year of St Patrick's and the 428th year of St John's let us see if we can build up and improve our Prayer Life, our Bible reading and our Worship of Almighty God together.

May God bless you all at the beginning of this year.



Table Quiz

Ballot Prizes to be won
Friday 24th February at 7.30pm
 Form a team up to 4 or we'll group you with other players

£4 Individual ticket

Bring your own refreshments

PRIZES FOR THE WINNERS

**At St Patrick's Parochial Hall
 Edward Road, Whitehead**

For further information contact
Inez Moore
Tel: 028 9337 8927
 Proceeds to Church Funds
 Registered Charity No NIC102649

CMS Ireland Project



Over many years we have had a link with CMSI and we have supported their annual project through Lent. We will be doing so again this year. The project this year will focus on Nepal, where we have also had links.

So please do try and join in during the Sundays of Lent. Take a collecting box and bring it back at Easter to go where we cannot go and do what we cannot do to support the mission work of God's Church.



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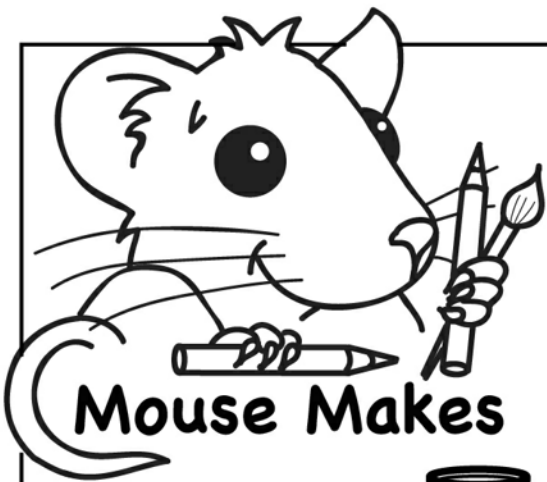


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What was the special meal
Jesus was preparing to eat?



Matthew 26:18

What did Jesus take,
bless and break?

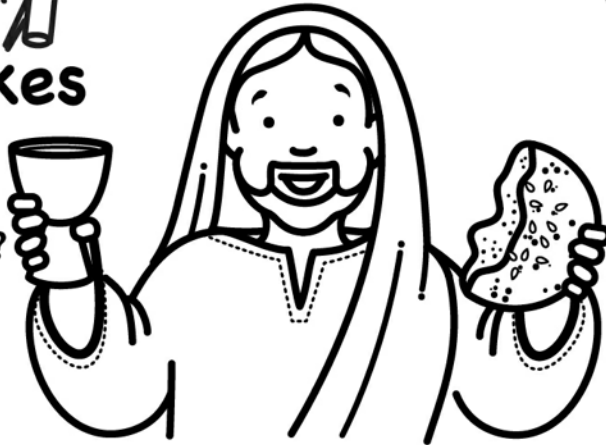
Matthew 26:26

What did Jesus give
thanks for and share?

Matthew 26:27

What did Jesus say
this represented?

His -----
Matthew 26:27-28



What did Jesus say
this represented?

His -----
Matthew 26:26

Jesus instructed his disciples to continue
to break bread and share the cup "in



of me."

1 Corinthians 11:24-25



SUPPER
LAMB • LORD
DISCIPLES
TOGETHER
EVENING
ROOM • JAR
WATER • TWELVE
JESUS • CHRIST
NIGHT • TOOK
THANKS
BLESSING
BROKE • GIVEN
COVENANT
DRINK • EAT
FORGIVENESS
SINS • HOLY
COMMUNION
EUCCHARIST

O R F B R O K E J H O L Y C
R O O M B C U P T O O K E H
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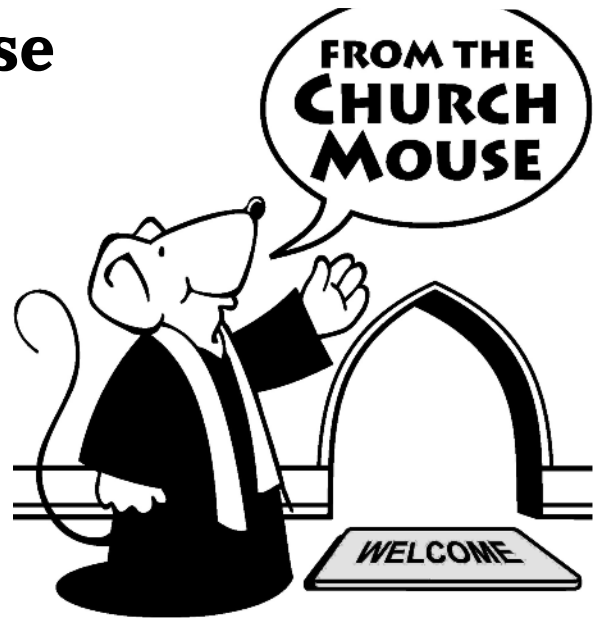
Find the words from the questions too!



Letter from Church Mouse

Trapped! The very word throws me into a wobbly and I've been hearing it disturbingly quite a lot recently.

I recently heard that the play 'The Mousetrap' by Agatha Christie, is now celebrating a 70 year run at a London theatre. Then I heard a sermon preached during Advent that mentioned 'trapped', and I began to wonder if there were any traps lurking in St Patrick's to catch me? I haven't seen any but if I had, would I be tempted by the titbits of cheese or more enticing, a Mars bar? I'd hope not because - well you know the answer



Every Sunday I hear, 'Lead us not into temptation'. Temptation can be hard to resist but sometimes resist we must if we are to have a life which God calls us to have.

Talking of trapped I can recommend a book by Colin Heber-Percy, 'Tales of a Country Parish: From the vicar of Savernake Forest'.

The book is a series of reflections on life during lockdown. In it is a description of the author finding two butterflies trapped in the church. He clasps them in the cup of his hand, so they are trapped, takes them outside and releases them. He describes their release: 'The butterflies twist and flicker up into the blue. They are like a prayer, and I haven't said a word'.

We must close now by wishing all my readers a very Happy New Year

Stay well.

Church Mouse

Riddle

In spring they put on their cover and by summer they're fully attired. As it gets cold, they throw it all off, until, in winter, they are quite naked.

What are they?

Answer on page 35

Treasurer's Report year ending December 2022

Happy New Year to all our readers!

I just wanted to express my sincere thanks for all your financial support for the work of St.Patrick's and St.John's churches. Without your donations, the church would not be able to continue to serve this community. My thanks also extends to all who support me in my role as treasurer. Your cooperation and encouragement is much appreciated.



It has been a busier year in terms of fundraising due to the lifting of Covid restrictions and thankfully, a 'more normal' one. We have been able to pay all our bills on time. That being the case, our level of donations is down by over £5,000 and our costs continue to rise. **For example, to keep the church open, we need to raise over £6,600 per month.**

If predictions for 2023 come true, we will be watching our finances more closely than ever before. **That is why I would like you all to consider your level of giving to the church.**

When reading how the early church managed money, in Acts 4 v32 to 37, we can see what is expected of us-:

“The whole congregation of believers was united as one - one heart and one mind. They didn't even claim ownership of their own possessions. No one said, ‘That's mine, you can't have it'. They shared everything in common.....”

Our faith and where we worship are a common bond between us, and I don't mean just the buildings!

Fundraising helps to build relationships with each other by working together on projects. One of the projects this year was to enhance St.John's graveyard with seating and improve the garden areas. This has provided visitors with a place for quiet reflection. (Thanks Austin for leading this one)

Free Will Offering envelopes have been used for many years. A church member pops into the envelope what they can afford and this contribution is recorded against a FWO number which again is recorded to the giver's name and for Gift Aid purposes. If that's how you want to continue, **please do**, but I would like you to consider that this involves a rota of people who faithfully spend time emptying the envelope, recording the amount and preparing the lodgement. I then do a lodgement in the post office. Those who use this system provide a significant proportion of churches funds, however, could this be more efficient?

Regular donations through your bank's Standing Order system is something you may consider. It means that cash isn't handled and only involves the treasurer recording the giving from a bank statement. **However, donating this way can be part of a forgotten piece of your finances. Maybe you haven't reviewed it for years. As our costs are steadily rising, so should our giving.** If you haven't reconsidered your contributions in the last couple of years, could I ask you please, prayerfully examine your giving?

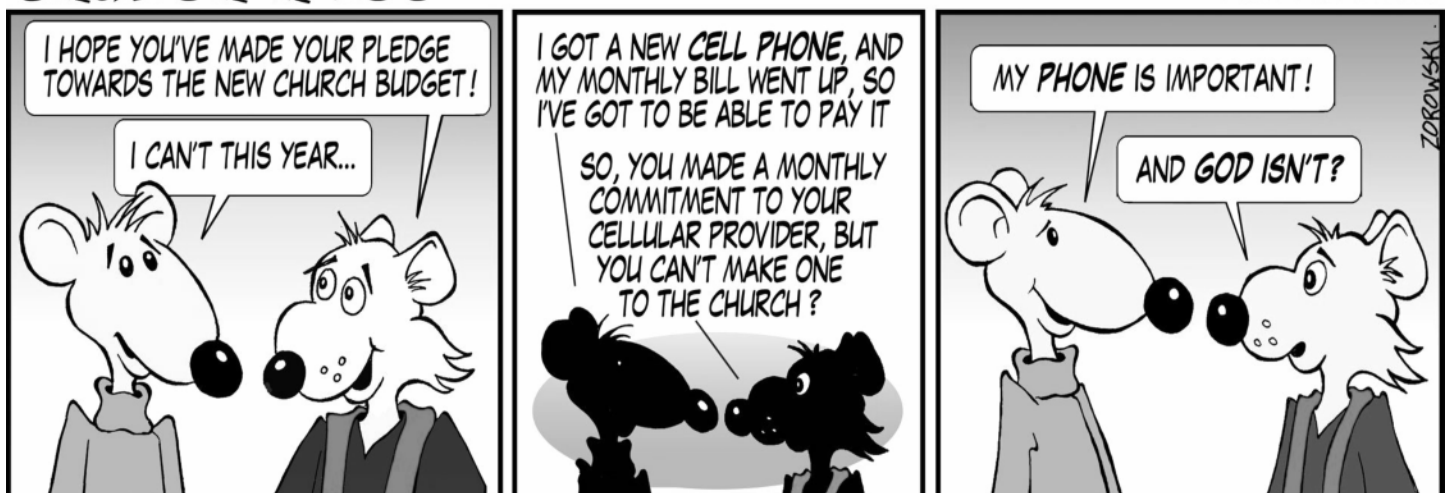
The purpose of an Anglican church in Whitehead is to be a beacon of light and hope, not just for its members but to the wider community. I pray for continued guidance as to how our Rector, Select Vestry and Church family continue to do this.

Many thanks.

Sandra Thompson

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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***St. Brigid of Ireland
celebrated on
1st February
Compassion and love***



Brigid, you could say, was the female Patrick of Ireland.

Historical facts about this first abbess of Kildare (AD 525) may be scarce, but her 'Lives', written from the 7th century, tell many anecdotes and miracles which over the centuries have become deeply rooted in Irish folklore. Brigid came from a village near Kildare, of parents of humble origin, and is said to have been baptised by Patrick and became a nun at an early age. She is credited with founding the monastery of Kildare, a powerful influence for Christianity in Ireland.

The miracles attributed to Brigid show her to have been a woman of great compassion and generosity. There are stories of how she could multiply food, especially butter, for the poor. Other stories tell of her changing her bathwater to beer, in order to satisfy the thirst of unexpected visitors. Even her cows gave milk three times the same day, to enable visiting bishops to have enough to drink.

Brigid's cult grew rapidly in Ireland, where it became second only to that of Patrick. In England, there were at least 19 ancient church dedications in her honour (the most famous is St Bride's Fleet Street). There are many more dedicated to St Brigid in Ireland of course. There is also St Bride's Bay, Dyfed, which underlines the strong connection between Irish and Welsh Christianity. St Brigid is patron of poets, blacksmiths, and healers. She is usually depicted with a cow lying at her feet, which recalls her phase as a nun cowgirl.

Saint Valentine's Day

14th February

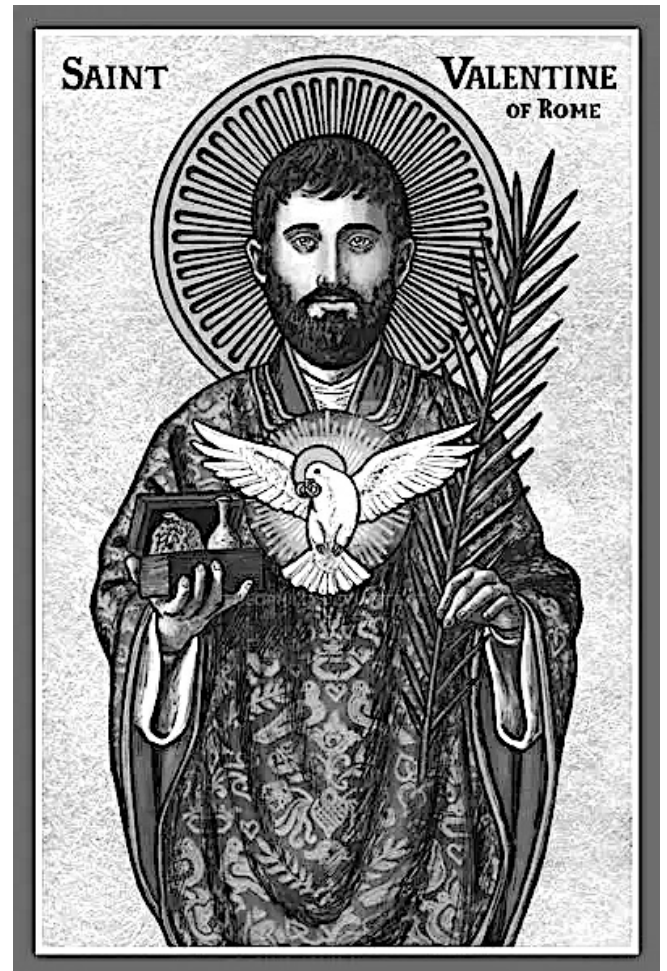
There are two confusing things about this day of romance and anonymous love-cards strewn with lace, cupids and ribbon: firstly, there seems to have been two different Valentines in the 4th century - one a priest martyred on the Flaminian Way, under the emperor Claudius, the other a bishop of Terni martyred at Rome. And neither seems to have had any clear connection with lovers or courting couples.

So why has Valentine become the patron saint of romantic love? By Chaucer's time the link was assumed to be

because on these saints' day - 14th February - the birds are supposed to pair. Or perhaps the custom of seeking a partner on St Valentine's Day is a surviving scrap of the old Roman Lupercalia festival, which took place in the middle of February. One of the Roman gods honoured during this Festival was Pan, the god of nature. Another was Juno, the goddess of women and marriage. During the Lupercalia it was a popular custom for young men to draw the name of a young unmarried woman from a name-box. The two would then be partners or 'sweethearts' during the time of the celebrations. Even modern Valentine decorations bear an ancient symbol of love - Roman cupids with their bows and love-arrows.

Valentine after his execution was buried in Rome in the 3rd century.

In 1835, Pope Gregory XVI gifted the exhumed remains of St Valentine to an acclaimed Irish preacher visiting Rome, Father John Spratt. The relics - thought to include bones and a sample of blood - were taken to the Whitefriar Street Carmelite Church in Dublin in 1836, where they still remain to this day to be a focus of veneration for young lovers seeking a blessing on St Valentine's Day..



SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY CUP CAKE RECIPE

INGREDIENTS: SERVINGS 12

- 100gms butter
- 200gms sugar
- 4 eggs, separated
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- ½ pint of milk
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 350gm flour
- Vanilla frosting
- Heart sprinkles

PREPARATION TIME 10 MINS.

COOKING TIME 50 MINS

PREPARATION

Cream the butter, add sugar and continue creaming.

ADD YOLKS OF EGGS.

MIX FLOUR, SALT, AND BAKING POWDER. ADD ALTERNATELY WITH MILK. BEAT EGG WHITES AND FOLD INTO MIXTURE.

BAKE AT 400°F OR 200 IN GREASED MUFFIN PANS FOR 20 MINUTES. LET COOL, THEN FROST AND DECORATE



Small Prizes Needed Urgently

Please can you donate any items that you think would make suitable prizes for our Table Quiz Nights.

e.g Wine, Sweets, Chocolates, Boxed Toiletries, Stationary, Unwanted Christmas or Birthday Gifts

If you can help, please leave your donations in church for attention of Inez Moore or The Rector /Any Vestry Member. Our first Table Quiz is on Fri 24th February. Many thanks

The Language of Love

Valentine's Day reminds us of the importance of expressing our love to those close to us. But how can we go beyond simply offering flowers and a card? Jesus says: '*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another*' (John 13:34). How can we express love like Jesus in our everyday relationships to our partner, children, neighbours or work colleagues?

Listening

We need to listen to others, just as Jesus did. He asked questions of people and waited for them to process their answer. According to James, '*everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry*' (James 1:19). How well do we listen to others? How often do we find ourselves already thinking of what we want to say before somebody's finished speaking? Listening takes time; don't rush it!

Touching

Jesus reached out to touch the untouchables in His world, including lepers, the sick and children. This was completely out of character for rabbis of His day. For us today, a warm handshake may be of value. Of course, it should always be an *appropriate* touch – helpful for the other person, not just for ourselves.

Speaking

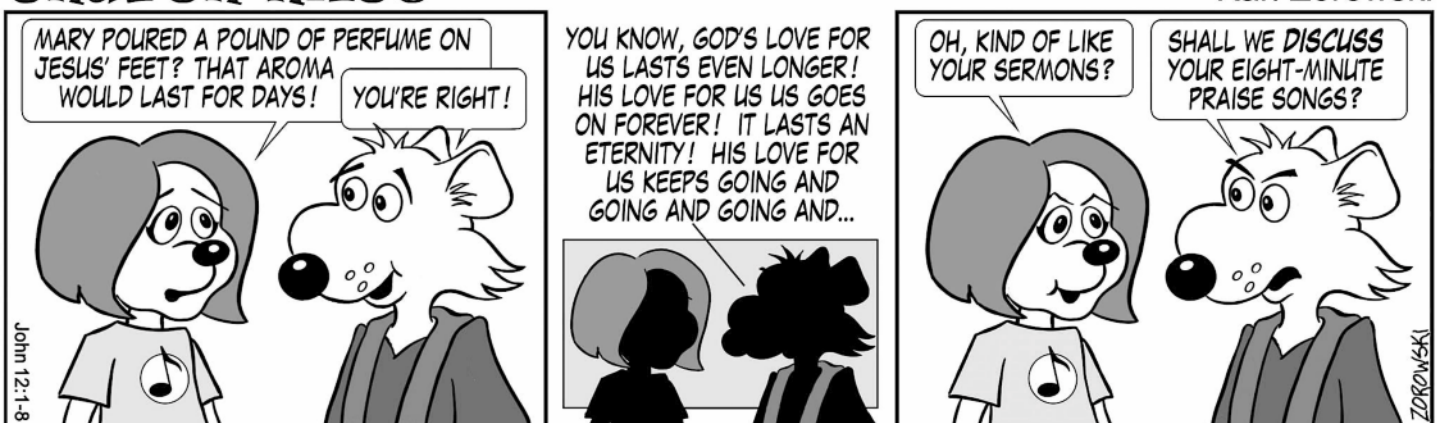
Jesus' conversation was always full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Do we speak words of *grace*, by offering comfort, giving encouragement or expressing care and concern? However, we should also be ready to speak words of *truth*, in asking for forgiveness, seeking reconciliation or addressing conflict. As Paul urges us, don't avoid: '*speaking the truth in love*'.

Where is the challenge for us in expressing love this Valentine's Day?

By Canon Paul Hardingham

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Matthew chapter 18 verses 21-35

Jewish teachers used to say you only had to forgive people three times before getting revenge, so Peter asked Jesus..

How many times do I have to forgive? Seven?



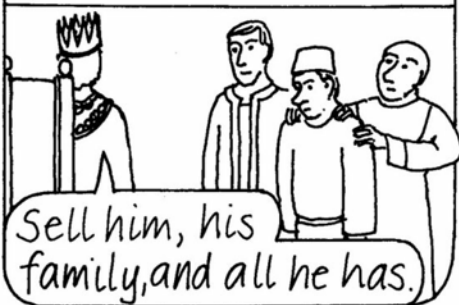
You must never stop forgiving.



A king decided to check his accounts



One servant owed him 50 million silver coins



Please give me more time to pay



Then the servant saw someone who owed him 100 silver coins



Please give me more time



and they told the king.



You bad man! I forgave you so much - why did you not forgive?



So he was put in prison



Jesus ended by saying...



u	h	d	e	b	t	r	g	s	f	s	p
n	c	u	g	i	e	h	t	i	m	e	s
d	o	n	n	v	b	n	r	b	a	v	e
m	i	w	l	d	u	q	p	e	t	e	r
k	n	i	f	o	r	g	i	v	e	n	s
d	s	x	c	m	s	e	r	v	a	n	t
u	b	c	n	h	i	s	d	g	c	j	o
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Sleeping bags for Christmas – Update

Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to our Christmas appeal for sleeping bags for homeless people. The outcome of great collective kindness and generosity is **62 shiny new sleeping bags** ready for delivery to The Welcome Organisation. We have arranged to drop them off in a few days.

Kieran, of The Welcome Organisation, responded, “We are always in need of good sleeping bags and these will be invaluable to our Street Outreach team throughout this winter.”

We might all spare a thought for the two Outreach teams on the streets of Belfast every night to 2am, providing on the ground support for people affected by homelessness. We might hold them in our prayers along with the people they are helping.

Best wishes,
Paul & Scotty Heyes



“DON'T FEEL LIKE GOING TO



CHURCH ANYMORE?”

“I don’t go to church anymore. They’re all hypocrites!” Barbara said to Peter the Church Minister. On more than one occasion Peter had heard this sort of comment. He’d be first to agree the church is made up of people who were not perfect—neither was he for that matter. But each time he heard such comments, his heart would break because he knew the incredible value of sharing Christian life together in the body of Christ -the Church.

Maybe you don’t have issues with anyone at church; you’re just busy on weekends doing other things—good things. Attending your kid’s soccer games, going on family getaways, and fixing stuff around the house, all are “good things” but if they regularly take you away from church attendance, are you allowing the captivity of activity over what God says is more important?

Going to church is not about getting your attendance gold star, nor is it about gaining God’s favour for the week. Church rather is a living body where God

wants you to become a part—for your good and His glory. Let's look at a few good reasons to go to church—even when you don't feel like it.

1. To Participate in Corporate Worship

Worshiping God when you are alone, is a wonderful thing to do, but nothing can replace the beauty and encouragement of also coming together as a Christian family and community to worship God with others who also have His Spirit in them through the redeeming work of the Holy Spirit

Jesus said those who worship God, 'must worship in Spirit and in Truth' (**John 4:24**). In order to truly worship God the way He wants us to, needs some soul searching.

Sadly, since the Covid pandemic more and more church goers have ceased going to church. One has to ask, is the falling attendance the fault of the church, the Minister, or other Christians attending church? What has changed to make so many regular church goers no longer interested in going back to church?

Could it be that the church has failed some of us by not maintaining adequate contact and not being there when we needed it most?

Regrettably a consequence of long term non-church attendance can be to leave us no longer missing church because we find other things to fill the gap. If however we feel the odd prick of guilt at no longer going to church, then allow time to think it over as to what this is telling you. And ask God's Spirit to stir in you a desire to worship God not just privately on your own but as part of God's family.

2. Because Iron Sharpens Iron

That is what **Proverbs 27:17** tells us. Meeting regularly with other believers is a source of encouragement and strength. But know this: when iron rubs against iron, not only does it become sharper, it also causes sparks!

Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (**Matthew 12:34**). When you live in community with other Christians you will get bumped. And what spills out of you is what's in your heart. So going to church actually helps equip us to grow and be better Christians.

Working alongside Christians in a church fellowship is a wonderful way to grow your love for God and for others. And it is also God's way of showing you areas He wants to mature your walk with Christ.

If you've stopped attending church because people hurt you, didn't measure up to your expectations, or are hypocritical, know that the enemy has you right where he wants you. Satan's tactic is to divide and conquer. If he can pull you from the flock, you are vulnerable to his deceptions and attacks. Satan will use your disapproval for God's people to quench your love for God and to dull your faith.

3. To Exercise Your Gift

From preaching to encouraging, hospitality to administration, God equips His children with gifts to serve Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12:6). When a church body is healthy, its members realize they are part of the congregation not only to receive but also to be a blessing to others.

Statistics reveal that in most churches, 20 percent of the people do 80 percent of the work. This is not to guilt anyone into "getting involved" at our church, rather it is to inspire you. Imagine, God has gifted you with a talent so that you can glorify Him as you serve Christ (Ephesians 2:10).

Many see work happening at church and think, They really don't need me. Don't be deceived. A well running ministry may appear to have all its bases covered—and it might. But if you look closely you'll discover many individuals who are doing more work than they'd like simply because today, just as in Jesus' day, "the harvest is truly great but the workers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers..." (Luke 10:2). Your willingness to minister or help in your church with what God has gifted you is likely the answer to someone's prayer for God to send more workers to help with the harvest.

4. To be a Light to Your Community

Jesus said the world will know we are His disciples by our love for one another, so of course Satan wants to destroy any sense of love and community in the body of Christ. When you commit to loving God and loving others, the light shining from your Christ-honouring love is what the Spirit can use to draw others to know Jesus.

Everyone is looking for acceptance and a place to belong. Whether people admit it or not, they all long to be known and loved for who they are. When God's people commit to love each other and readily forgive each other, their love will be a light that shines brightly in a crooked and perverse generation. Let it begin with us.

5. To Bear Each Other's Burdens

Galatians 6:2 teaches us to bear each other's burdens to fulfil the law of Christ. Life can be hard, right? In a moment everything can change. Just when things are going great, a phone call, diagnosis, or a host of other mishaps can leave us feeling afraid and alone. But to those who are a part of a church family they should not feel alone. When life is going great, they have the affirmation of others. And when life throws a curve ball, they're blessed by loving concern, support, and prayer from other members of the church family.

God can use you to be an encouragement to others who are looking for help, but only if you are willing.

6. God himself tells us to meet together

Hebrews 10:25 tells us that it's God's desire to have us all regularly gather together with His people. God wants us to regularly attend church for our own good. He wants you and me, and all His people, to encourage one another

Think of the underground church in other countries. There is the true story told by a man from China explaining how they had to sing hymns no louder than a whisper for fear they would be discovered. Discovery would mean physical abuse, their children and possessions seized, and imprisonment—yet still they met together. Their story should stir our hearts to see the value and incredible privilege we have to meet openly together to worship God and hear the preaching of the Word.

Oh, that God would capture our hearts in a new and fresh way. Let us pray His Spirit stirs in us a zeal and commitment to meet together with God's people in Church to praise Him, love others, and shine brightly the hope of Christ to a generation who is desperate to believe.

Are you someone who used to go to church but no longer attends? Do you know what it is that stops you going now? Would it help to talk it over with Mark our Rector?

It is never too late to begin afresh. We encourage you to come and be a part of our Christian family at St Patrick's and St John's Church and to feel the love and peace that comes from being part of the body of Christ.

Time to smile - Giving up for Lent

At the end of the pre-Lent sermon, the vicar suggested, as an example to the rest of the community, that the congregation should worship in an unheated church for the whole of Lent. As they made their way into the chill Sunday air the vicar addressed one member of the congregation, asking what she had decided to give up for Lent. “*Church,*” she replied firmly.



“He moved here after the Vestry voted to lower the church heating bill. He says it is warmer out here.”

Some hints about prayer this Lent

Rev John Barton

Prayer is instinctive for human beings, even those who don't regard themselves as religious. You are standing at a bus stop in the wind and the rain, thinking 'I do hope the bus will come soon'. It's an inner yearning. It defies logic: either the bus is coming, or it isn't. But we all do it. It's instinctive and it's the raw material of prayer. Hoping for something better is basic. Like all instincts, it needs to be trained.

To whom do we pray? What you pray, and the way you do it will be shaped by your view of God. Christian prayers are fashioned by what we know of Jesus and what He taught about prayer.

We pray by invitation. Again and again, Jesus encouraged His companions to pray. A couple of His parables on the subject have been misinterpreted as instructions to persuade a resistant God to do what we want. Have a look at Luke 18, verses 1-8, about a widow whose perseverance finally persuaded an unwilling judge to rule in her favour. The lesson is that God is *not* like that! Similarly, an unwelcome neighbour who persistently calls for help in the middle of the night gets what he wants (Luke 11:5-13). The lesson? If tenacious lobbying can overcome human unwillingness, *how much more* our gracious God will heed His children's cry.

Pushing at an open door. Jesus is already praying for us. So, when we start to pray, we step on to an already moving staircase. Sometimes prayer seems tougher than it need be. Jesus invited us to be linked to Him, in the way an inexperienced bullock is yoked to a mature ox. Have a look at Matthew 11:28-29, which concludes "for my yoke is easy and my burden is light". When Marion Bartoli unexpectedly won the 2013 Women's Wimbledon final, she said "I believe if you put all your heart and effort into everything you are doing, then God is there to help you."

Is your prayer on the right lines? Try adding "for Christ's sake" at the end. "Please let my marrow win the Gardening Club competition"? No. "Not my will but yours" is the key. So when praying, don't give God instructions, just report for duty.



BOOK REVIEWS

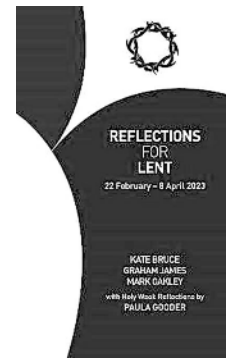
Reflections for Lent 2023 By Kate Bruce, Mark Oakley and Graham James, CHPublishing, £4.99

Reflections for Lent are designed to enhance your spiritual journey through the forty days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday.

Covering Monday to Saturday each week, it offers reflections on readings from the Common Worship Lectionary, written by some of today's leading spiritual and theological writers.

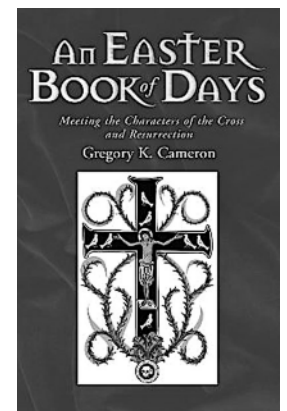
Each day includes: full lectionary details for Morning Prayer; a reflection on one of the Bible readings; a Collect for the day

This volume offers daily material for 22nd February to 8th April 2023. It is ideal for individuals and groups seeking Lectionary-based reflections for use during Lent and Holy Week, or for anyone wishing to try Reflections for Daily Prayer before committing to a year's worth of material. It also features a simple form of morning and night prayer, a guide to keeping a good Lent and an introduction to lectio divina by Stephen Cottrell.



Easter Book of Days – Meeting the Characters of the Cross and Resurrection By Gregory Cameron, Canterbury Press, £10.99

Following the bestselling *Advent Book of Days*, Gregory Cameron turns his artistic, literary and pastoral skills to the Easter story, introducing us to the characters who populate the crucifixion and resurrection.



He explores 25 characters from the stories of Lent, Holy Week and Easter from the perspectives of scripture, history and legend and asks how they can enrich our practice of faith today.

As well as the familiar figures – Christ Himself, Mary His mother, Mary Magdalene, the disciples, Pilate, the soldiers, and the thieves crucified with Jesus, he explores aspects of the story not found in scripture, such as Veronica wiping the face of Jesus as He carried His cross. Considering biblical accounts alongside folk legends, he also explores the rich traditions that have built up around the cross and the crown of thorns, as well as tales of how the robin got its red breast, or what happened to the disciples after the ascension, creating a richly textured guide to the Easter season.

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Suggesting that members of the congregation join the new church choir at St Patrick's didn't go down as well as the Rector had hoped!

Ukraine – one year on

By the Ven John Barton

On 24th February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine without warning. Ukraine had been part of the Soviet Union 1922-1991 and even before that had been overshadowed and often overpowered by its larger neighbour. In 1932 millions of Ukrainians were deliberately starved to death in a famine, contrived by Joseph Stalin. This genocide, or Holodomor, is commemorated every year on the fourth Saturday in November.

The area had been overrun for centuries by successive external forces, until absorbed by Russia. In 1991, when the USSR was dissolved, Ukraine voted for independence, by a huge majority. There are still pro-Russian minorities in the East of the country, as there were in Crimea before 2014, when it was annexed by Russia.

In the last 12 months, one-quarter of the civilian population of Ukraine has been displaced, with 5+ million refugees escaping for temporary sanctuary in other countries. 95% of them are women and children. They have had to learn new languages (and a new script), find jobs and schools, and become accustomed to foreign cultures. When it seems safe, they want to return home and some have already done so.

The UK government, in partnership with County and District Councils, launched the Homes for Ukraine scheme last year. Would-be homes were inspected, and prospective hosts checked out for suitability and safety. A young Ukrainian woman lived in my home for six months before returning to Kyiv. In that time my pantry and fridge made room for bulgar wheat, lots of mushrooms and Salo, which is the name for slabs of cold cured pork fat, and much tastier than it sounds!

Most Ukrainians count themselves as Christian, including a number of Greek-Catholics, but the majority belong to what was the Russian Orthodox Church, and is now the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The two churches separated after the Moscow patriarchate backed President Putin.

The Archbishop of Canterbury visited Kyiv in December and had to take cover in a bomb shelter when air raid warnings were sounded. He said the people of the West needed to realise the costs of this war were not short term, adding “there must be no way in which we force peace on Ukraine ... Peace is always better than war. But there are times when justice demands the defeat of an evil invasion.”

A Prayer for Ukraine

Heavenly Father, hear our prayers for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine.

We ask for you to be with all – especially children who are suffering in Ukraine and for those who are anxious and fearful. For those who are bereaved, injured or who have lost their lives. And for those who have lost loved ones.

We ask for peace for Ukraine and comfort for all its people who don't know what tomorrow will bring. Lord may your Kingdom come, and Your will be done. **Amen.**

UKRAINE ONE YEAR ON & HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you would like to mark the first year by helping the people of Ukraine, here are some charities from which you might choose:

The Disaster Emergencies Committee (DEC) is an umbrella group of UK charities.

<https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal>

Christian Aid was founded in 1945 by British and Irish churches to help refugees after the Second World War. Sadly, with war back in Europe, it is now back at work on the Continent.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/emergencies/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal-2022>

Barnabas Fund distributes food through local churches to Christians in the poorer areas, both in **Kyiv and in rural regions.**

<https://www.barnabasfund.org/gb/latest-needs/help-ukrainian-christians-in-their-hour-of-need/>

Samaritans Purse has been airlifting medical supplies into the country, distributed more than 45 million kilos of food, and built water systems providing more than 30 million litres of water.

<https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/idr-crisis/crisis-in-ukraine/>

Lighthouse YARNS

Lighthouse Yarns is a luxury high-end wool shop, housed in the old part of The Bank House, in Whitehead. A treasure trove for anyone who loves Yarn, Knitted goods, Crafting, Sewing & Haberdashery. We offer a wide range of brands - from hip Hand-Dyed, locally spun skeins, to traditional brands... Cashmere, Marino, Recycled, Lambswool... you will find something special and unique for any project. Lighthouse Yarns also stocks a lovely selection of Gifts, Patterns, Accessories and Kids Crafts.



The social power of Crafting and Knitting, and it's ability to bring people together, is something that owner, and keen crafter Louise Williamson holds at the heart of her business. Lighthouse Yarns runs many classes and events. Call in, to find out what we're working on now!

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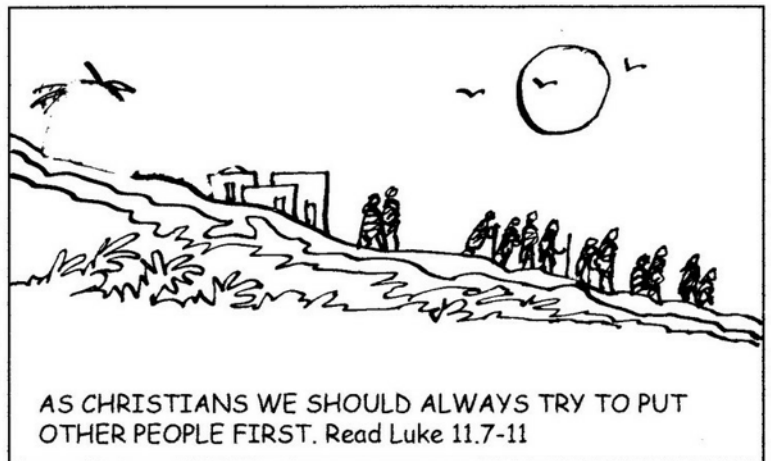
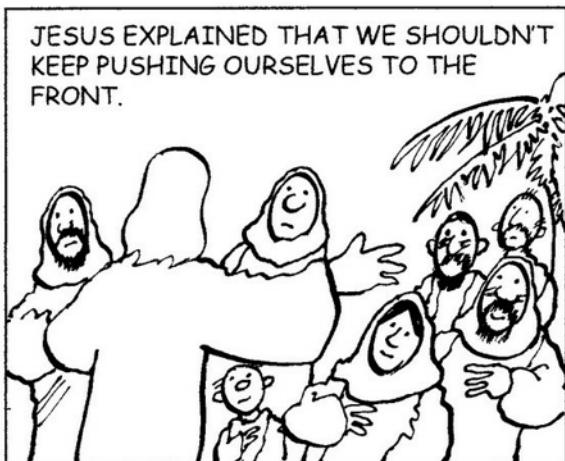
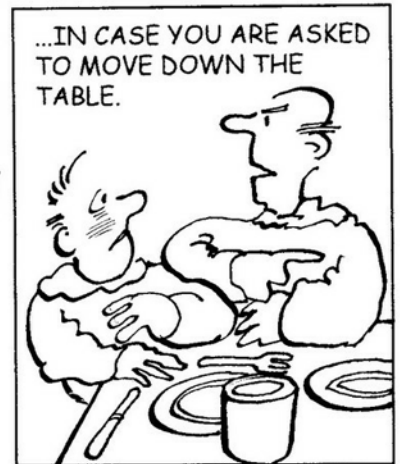
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Minds Body & Sole

A Poem by Ian Cooke

If you've got social media and you're not ok,
Then head over to Minds, Body & Sole UK.
There's always someone who can talk things through
As the most important thing is the feeling of you.

If you want advice or just a natter
This is the place that shows you matter.
You won't be asked for your address or name
And no one will ever lay the blame.

Minds Body & Sole are on a mission
To help all those with depression, anxiety or addiction
Get them on your laptop, computer or phone

This is a place you won't feel alone
So head on over to hear what they say
Get them at MindsBodySole.UK

*(Many thanks to Mabel Allen for sharing this with us)
Ian is married to Mabel's niece.*

**CHURCH IS NOT
SOMETHING YOU GO TO,
IT'S A FAMILY
YOU BELONG TO.**



The Rectory
St James the Least

On why rural churchgoers like to freeze in church

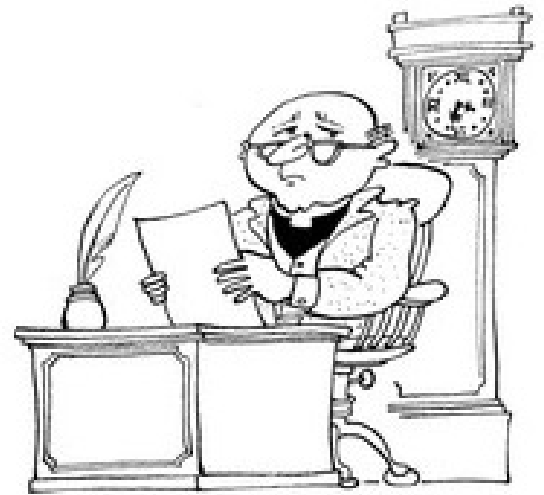
My dear Nephew Darren

Winter certainly exposes the difference between those of you who live in cities and us rural folk. While you bask in your centrally heated flat, with every modern convenience that could be imagined and complain about the half an inch of slush that makes your life so inconvenient, we country folk wear overcoats in our houses, open all doors and windows to let the heat *in* and battle through snow drifts, measured in feet, to get the morning paper.

Colonel Wainwright has acquired a new toy: a snow blower, of sufficient power that I believe it could clear the Antarctic. He kindly volunteered to clear the paths around the church. Working outwards from the church door, the path to the church soon became snow free. Unfortunately, he only realised when his job was complete that the blown snow then formed a five-foot drift under the lychgate. We now have to climb over the churchyard wall and negotiate buried gravestones before we can reach his pristine paths.

Miss Margison, ever meaning to be helpful, decided to unfreeze the pipes in the church hall. A blow torch was not the ideal solution, although the resulting burst did make some rather attractive ice sculptures round the kitchen equipment. The village badminton team that uses the hall has now temporarily changed sport, to ice hockey.

Inevitably, our congregation has soared these past few weeks. There is nothing like adversity for making people want to prove they have the moral fibre to overcome it. Much satisfaction seems to be obtained on discovering who has *not* dared venture out, which is taken as judgement on their strength of character. The Prentices upstaged most people by arriving on a sleigh. Mr Prentice was warmly wrapped in a travelling rug,



while his wife pulled it. As her husband explained, he couldn't possibly let the pony work in such conditions.

What I momentarily thought was applause during my sermon was merely people keeping their hands warm and the hymns were drowned out by the stamping of feet. Our organist complained that the cold made his fingers so numb that he couldn't play properly – although I didn't notice that things were much different from normal.

No, my dear nephew, you continue to fret about your church heating dropping to temperate, and a few flakes of wet snow obliging you to close your carpark for health and safety reasons. We shall continue to triumph heroically over adversity and return home after Mattins, feeling we have proved our Christian commitment by being utterly uncomfortable.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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Answer to Riddle on page 8 is Trees

Joke Why do trees like to try new things each year?

Answer: Because every autumn they turn over a new leaf!



come
as you
are

We would love to see you.
Why not join us at 10.30am on Sunday

You Are Welcome Here

No matter:

- Where you've come from or are going;
- What you believe or doubt;
- What you are feeling or just not feeling;
- What you have or don't have; and
- No matter whom you love!



CHANGING ATTITUDE
IRELAND

Parish Announcements

The next Vestry meeting is Thursday

9th February at 10.30am in the Parochial Hall

'GAME ON'

Weds 1st & 15th February from 1.30pm- 3.00pm

Venue: Whitehead Library

Organiser- Evelyn Powers Tel : 07753 292938

Come and play games for the afternoon in warm room

Counters for February

4th February Colin de Fleury

13th Feb Brian Moore

20th February Trevor Peoples

27th Feb Bert Thompson

6th March Sandra Thompson

Sunday Refreshments Rota

Sunday 5th February Ann Mulholland

12th February Messy Church

19th February Jane Robinson

26th February Priscilla Carlisle

5th March Janet Peoples

Refreshments coordinator Priscilla Carlisle -Tel 07787561517

February Fellowship Activities

Together in Faith-(Formerly House Group)

Monday 6th & 20th February at 7.30pm

We will be looking at the Book of Acts

We meet in the Boucher Room, Parochial Hall at St Patrick's Church.

Book Club

Weds 22nd February @7.30pm

Reading 'Lessons in Chemistry' by Bonnie Garmus

(Contact Paddy Rodgers tel 028 93372439 for venue)

Wednesday Morning Fellowship Group (Monthly)

Wednesday 1st February at 11am in the Boucher Room.
New members welcome. We start with refreshments and fellowship .
The Second Coming of Christ .and questions you've never asked?'

New 'Power in Prayer' Group (Monthly)

Wednesday 8th February at 7.30pm in the Boucher Room

Join us and see how powerful prayer can be .

Also Every Week the following 2 groups meet:

Circus Skills Class Tuesdays @ 10.30am - Parochial Hall

Indoor Bowling Club Tuesdays from 7pm - Parochial Hall

New people always welcome to join in

FROM THE **EDITOR'S DESK**

Dear Reader

Happy New Year

And welcome to our first magazine of 2023. After a very busy Christmas time in our two churches, it is good to be able to look back and say thank you to everyone who supported us.

Of great encouragement to us at Christmas was the way so many of you supported our Christmas Appeal in support of Women's Aid. We received a lovely thank you from the charity just a few days ago acknowledging the difference all our gifts made to the families they care for.

Scotty and Paul Heyes were also delighted with the support you also offered them as you will see in their letter on page 19. Thanks to your generosity a lot of homeless people will be receiving gifts of a new waterproof sleeping bag this year.

Looking forward we have lots of things planned for the coming year so do stay in touch and come and see us when you can at St Patrick's or St John's Church, as you will be made very welcome

In closing thank you to all who contributed to this edition of Church Matters. Please keep the articles coming in.

Stay well and God Bless

WHO'S WHO IN THE PARISH

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George McNeill Diocesan Lay Reader

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Website: **www.whitehead-islandmagee-parish.co.uk**

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People's:	Mabel Allen	William Rafferty

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St. Patrick's- Trevor Peoples St. John's - Jim Reid

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Sandra Thompson - Hon Treasurer 07912478331

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Valerie Kincaid; Maureen Reid; George McNeill;

Priscilla Carlisle; Bertnel Thompson;

Austin Jenkins -Graveyard Manager St John's

Sunday School Leaders

St Patrick's: Frances Taylor St John's: Sara Henderson

Youth Fellowship Leader

Stephen Martin - stepheneddu@gmail.com

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