CHURCH MATTERS

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

Here everyone matters

FEBRUARY 2025

CHURCH OF IRELAND
ST. PATRICK'S
& ST. JOHN'S
UNITED PARISH OF
WHITEHEAD & ISLANDMAGEE



Lamentations 3:22-24 *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."*

February Services & Readings

Each Wednesday there is a service in St Patrick's Church at 11:30 a.m. You are all welcome to come and join in prayer for 30 minutes.

Sunday 2nd February - Presentation of Christ in the Temple
8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m. & 12 noon Holy Communion Two
Sunday Readings - Epistle - Hebrews 2:14-18; Gospel - Luke 2:22-40
Reader for the Epistle - Colin de Fleury / Joy Kerr
7:00 p.m. Compline
Weekday Readings: Malachi 1 - 4, Nahum 1 - 3; Psalms 91 - 100; John 13:1 - 14:31

Sunday 9th February - 4th Sunday before Lent
8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m. MESSY CHURCH
10:30 a.m.& 12 noon Morning Prayer Two
Sunday Readings: Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 138; Luke 5:1-11
Reader for first Lesson - Jack McKinney / Jim Reid
7:00 p.m. Compline
Readings: Joel 1 - 3, Psalms 101 - 110; John 15 - 16

Sunday 16th February - 3rd Sunday before Lent
8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m.& 12 noon Morning Prayer Two
Sunday Readings: Nigel Tilson / Maureen Reid
Reader for first Lesson - Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalm 1; Luke 6:17-26
7:00 p.m. Compline
Weekday Readings: Ecclesiastes 1 - 6; Psalms 111 - 118; John 17 -18

Sunday 23rd February - 2nd Sunday before Lent
8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m.& 12 noon Morning Prayer Two
Sunday Readings: Isaiah 55:10-13; Psalm 92:1-4,12-15; Luke 6:39-49
Reader for first Lesson - Trevor Peoples / Ann Thompson
7:00 p.m. Compline
Weekday Readings: Ecclesiastes 7 - 12; Psalms 119 - 121; John 19 - 20

Sunday 2nd March - Sunday before Lent

8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m. & 12 noon Holy Communion Two
Sunday Readings - Epistle Galatians 1:1-12; Gospel Luke 7:1-10
Reader for the Epistle - Corrine Logan / Alan Hayward
7:00 p.m. Compline
Weekday Readings: Jeremiah 1; Psalms 122 - 130; John 3:1-36

Wednesday 5th March - ASH WEDNESDAY - First day of Lent

11:30 a.m. Penitential Service
Readings - Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-18; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
7:00 p.m. Service for Ash Wednesday
Readings - Isaiah 1:10-18, Psalm 102; Luke 15:11-32
Weekday Readings: Jeremiah 2 - 4:18; Psalms 131 - 136, John 4:1 - 54

Sunday 9th March - Lent 1

8:30 a.m. Holy Communion One
10:30 a.m. MESSY CHURCH
10:30 a.m.& 12 noon Morning Prayer Two
Sunday Readings: Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16;
Luke 4:1-13
Reader for first Lesson - Heather Cupples / Sara Henderson
7:00 p.m. Compline
Weekday Readings: Jeremiah 4:19 - 7:20,; Psalms 137 - 150;
John 5:1 - 6:40

Messy Church

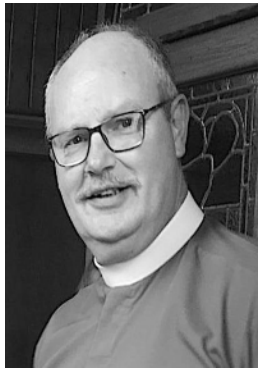
Dates for your diary up to Easter 2025
Starting at 10:30 a.m. in St Patrick's Parochial Hall,
Edward Road., Whitehead.
Come and join us for fun, games, crafts, singing and food as we discover what the Bible says to us.

Sunday 9th February

Sunday 9th March

Sunday 13th April - Palm Sunday

A message from our Rector



We have lived through it and survived to tell the tale. Storm Eowyn has come and gone. Probably the strongest and fastest winds we have ever experienced. There has been damage and disruption all over the country. Trees have been blown over, including one at St John's, Islandmagee. Fences flattened. Buildings have suffered damage to roofs and windows and walls. There has been a great deal of disruption to power supplies and transport. Even though the storm is over we are still living with the consequences.

Yet we have survived. Repairs will be made, and life will go on, pretty much as before. Storm Eowyn will become part of our memories, something we judge other storms by; we will say, "It was a bad storm, but not as bad as Eowyn." In the same way we judge the summers by those long, hot summers of the 1970's (if we are old enough to remember them).

This is how our life is. We weather the good times and the storms and difficulties of life and we move on. But have you ever thought how different our lives would be, how much more difficult to deal with the bad times, if we did not have our faith? It may not always be to the forefront of our thoughts in times of difficulty, it may not be the first thing on our minds when we face the storms of life. For many it is a bit like having a good insurance policy, when things go wrong and we need it, it is there for us. It does not stop things happening, it makes it easier to cope them after they have happened.

Over the years I have seen this, both from my pastoral care of others and from my own personal experience, that our faith is hugely important. Some times it is the faith that others have, their prayers and the support and help they offer us, that upholds us, that strengthens us and our own faith. Some times it is our own faith that provides for us, and for others around us. We, and they, weather the storm together, in faith.

Like with a good insurance policy, it is important to keep our faith up to date and make sure it is fit for purpose. Each year (I hope) we check up on our insurance and see that it is providing the cover we need. Our faith is no different. We need to examine our faith and see if there is anything that we can do to make it better. The traditional ways we use to improve our faith are Bible reading and prayer. But there are other ways,

ways that some will tell us are easier and produce better results. The good news is that these ways are free, and available to you as members of this Parish!

First among them is the sharing of our faith with others. I am not talking about being an evangelist and going out to preach to others about Jesus. Sharing our faith starts as we gather for worship. We meet with others who have a faith and we share in an act of worship together. We sing hymns and songs of praise to God. We hear his word read and proclaimed. We pray for those in need, and for ourselves. This is the starting point.

We can go further, we can meet outside our normal worship to discuss matters of faith - there are details in this magazine about our Monday and Wednesday groups - which are really friendly and you can come and listen without having to speak. These chances to share and learn, in an informal setting, about our faith are very important to growing and developing our faith; to make sure it is as good as it can be.

Rather than just reading the Bible many find it very helpful to use Bible Reading Notes as a guide. These can be for daily use, or for less frequent occasional use. They are for people at different stages of life and faith. The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) and United Christian Broadcasters (UCB) provide some of the better known ones, and can both be found on the internet. Bible Reading Notes provide a facility for people to read a Bible passage and some extra information about it and how it applies in our lives and then guides us in a short prayer. All the hard work is taken out; we do not have to plan a series of readings for ourselves nor try to understand the meaning of a passage and how it applies. This is done for us in small passages and notes that are easy to read and follow. There are plans specifically designed for women by women, for young people, older people and for every one. You can read them alone or with others. You can talk about them to others who are reading the same notes.

All these things will help deepen and develop your faith - but only if you do them.

I hope and pray, that as we journey together in faith through this year, that we will be able to support and encourage each other. That our faith will help strengthen the faith of others. That we will all grow in faith, sharing with each other and being witnesses for Jesus Christ and our faith in him to others in our community.

Every blessing to you all, and all whom you love. *Mark*



(A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT)

"I made you wonderful"

Kia Orana!

Our sisters in The Cook Islands welcome us and lead us for the Day of Prayer 2025. This group of 15 islands in the South Pacific Ocean has a rich and colourful Māori heritage and a deep connection to nature. Join with us as we pray together and reflect on the theme 'I made you wonderful'.

LOCAL AREA CHURCH SERVICE
(SHARED BY ALL THE LOCAL CHURCHES)

Friday 7th March 2025 in St John's, Islandmagee at 8:00 p.m.

It would be wonderful to see as many parishioners there as possible as we are hosting it this year.

It is always a great and moving service.



This Brand New Day by Abimbola T. Alabi

This brand new day I go in faith,
But I know not what lies in wait,
So dear God, this morning I pray,
Take control and lead the way.

I do not see with these two eyes,
I cannot tell where danger lies.
Please, dear Lord, be my guide.
Let me not stray from Your side.

Show me today the journeys to make.
Steer me on the right paths to take.
Grant me grace to discern your will,
For when to strive and when to be still.

Help me to love and trust You more
And radiate Your love to my neighbour.
Then bring me back safe and sound,
And let my praise for You abound.
Amen.



Mouse Makes

"**Love** is
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _,
love is _ _ _ _ _.
It does not, _ _ _ _ _
it does not _ _ _ _ _ _
it is not _ _ _ _ _ _.
it does not
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
others, it is not self -
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
it is not easily
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _,
it keeps no record of
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.
Love delights in
_ _ _ _ _ _ _
it always
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _,
_ _ _ _ _ _ _,
_ _ _ _ _ _ _,
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from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The steadfast **love** of the Lord never _ _ _ _ _ _ _;
His _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
never come to an end;
they are new every
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.
Lamentations 3:20-23

*I pray... you will understand... the greatness of Christ's **love**,*
how _ _ _ _ _
and how _ _ _ _ _
and how _ _ _ _ _
*that **love** is.*
Ephesians 3:18-19

God is **love**.
whoever _ _ _ _ _ _ _
in **love** _ _ _ _ _ _ _
in God, and God
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ in them.
1 John 4:16

Give _ _ _ _ _ _ _
to the Lord, for He is
_ _ _ _ _,
his steadfast **love**
endures
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
Psalm 136:1

HOW DOES GOD LOVE ME?

God sent me a saviour:
He sent His one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him.
1 John 4:9

God gave me His spirit:
He has given you the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His **love**.
Romans 5:5

God called me His child:
See what great **love** the Father has for us that He would call us His children.
1 John 1:3

DID YOU KNOW?

Jesus told us to:
***LOVE** the Lord your God with all your **heart**, all your **soul** and with all your **mind**.*
Matthew 22:37
***LOVE** your neighbour the same as you **love** yourself.*
Matthew 22:39

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PATIENT • KIND
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JUST • TRUTHFUL
TRUSTING • LOYAL
HOPEFUL
PERSEVERES
ENDURES
HUMBLE
SELFLESS
PROTECTS • DEFENDS

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More stories of Hope from Ukraine

Hope for Brighter Futures: Ilya's Story

For young people like Ilya, the war has only added disruption to an already interrupted childhood. For many, this disruption started with the Coronavirus pandemic when schools were closed and children became isolated at home. Now, due to safety concerns, many schools continue to remain closed. A majority of Ukrainian youth are not receiving a full-time, in-person school education. In certain regions, an entire generation has missed out on vital educational and social development opportunities.

That's why we're (Word Relief) are teaming up with local partners like the New Hope Center in Zaporizhzhia to walk alongside vulnerable children and youth during this difficult time. Through training, life coaching, group games, art therapy and sporting events, the New Hope Center is creating opportunities for youth to connect in meaningful ways. This will strengthen their spiritual, economic and social futures — in the midst of war and, hopefully, long after war has ended.

Ilya shared what this experience has been like for him:

"I had the opportunity to go to a camp away from Zaporizhzhia as a part of this project and take a break from the fear of war. I liked being in this team of other young people. My mental health improved and I was inspired thanks to the people around me."

At a time where nothing feels "normal," these opportunities for young people like Ilya to connect, learn and grow together are essential for the future of Ukraine.

(Kelly Hill and Jack Curham) https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/hope-ukraine-3-stories-hope-midst-war#

Why Does Salt Matter?



Until fairly recently in human history, salt was one of the most sought after commodities. The ancients believed that salt would ward off evil spirits. Religious covenants were often sealed with salt. Salt was used for medicinal purposes, to disinfect wounds, check bleeding, stimulate thirst, and treat skin diseases.... When Jesus calls his listeners "the salt of the earth," he is saying something profound, something easy to miss in our twenty-first century context.

First of all, he is telling us who we are. We are salt. We are not "supposed to be" salt, or "encouraged to become" salt, or promised that "if we become" salt, God will love us more. The language Jesus uses is 100 percent descriptive; it's a statement of our identity. We are the salt of the earth. We are that which enhances or embitters, soothes or irritates, melts or stings, preserves or ruins. For better or for worse, we are the salt of the earth, and what we do with our saltiness matters. It matters a lot. Whether we want to or not, whether we notice or not, whether we're intentional about it or not, we impact the world we live in.

Thomas describes the impact of salt on all that it touches.
Salt doesn't exist to preserve itself; it exists to preserve what is not itself…. Salt is meant to enhance, not dominate. Christian saltiness heals; it doesn't wound. It purifies; it doesn't desiccate. It softens; it doesn't destroy….

One of the great tragedies of historic Christianity has been its failure to understand this distinction. Salt *fails* when it dominates. Instead of eliciting goodness, it destroys the rich potential all around it. Salt poured out without discretion leaves a burnt, bitter sensation in its wake. It ruins what it tries to enhance. It repels.

This, unfortunately, is the reputation Christianity has these days. We are known as the salt that exacerbates wounds, irritates souls, and ruins

goodness. We are considered arrogant, domineering, obnoxious, and uninterested in enhancing anything but ourselves. We are known for hoarding our power, not for giving it away. We are known for shaming, not blessing. We are known for using our words to burn, not heal.

This is not what Jesus intends when he calls us the salt of the earth…. Salt at its best sustains and enriches life. It pours itself out with discretion so that God's kingdom might be known on the earth—a kingdom of spice and zest, a kingdom of health and wholeness, a kingdom of varied depth, flavour, and complexity.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes concrete the work of love, compassion, healing, and justice. It's not enough to believe. It's not enough to bask in our blessedness while creation burns. To be blessed, to be salt, to be followers of Jesus, is to
take seriously what our identity signifies.

Reference:

Debie Thomas, *Into the Mess and Other Jesus Stories: Reflections on the Life of Christ* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022), 164 165, 166. https://cac.org/daily-meditations/why-does-salt-matter/

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Heavenly Father

Hear our simple prayer for our Rector Mark.

We thank you -

For all he does for our churches and communities, St Patrick's, Whitehead and St John's, Islandmagee

For his sense of humour and for those serious moments when he challenges us from the pulpit encouraging to walk closer with you and reach out to others

For shepherding his diverse congregation from the kids in Messy Church to those of us who are a little older and everyone in between.

We pray

For his family, supporting him in his work

For Mark personally, for his good health, and strength to carry on

That he continues to enjoy his ministry.

Help us to be mindful of him and keep in our prayers

Amen



St Valentine – His power of healing and his letter of love

One popular legend describes St. Valentine as a former bishop of Terni, in central Italy. While under house arrest by judge Asterius, the two men discussed their respective faiths. Asterius brought his adopted blind daughter to St. Valentine and asked him to help her see again. Valentine, praying to God, laid his hands on her eyes and the child regained her sight.

Immediately humbled, the judge converted to Christianity and released all his Christian prisoners – including Valentine.

Years after his release, Valentine was arrested once again for evangelising and sent to Claudius II. The emperor was said to have liked him, until Valentine tried to persuade him to embrace Christianity. Claudius refused commanding that Valentine either renounce his faith or face death. On the day of his execution, he wrote a note to Asterius' daughter – the child he had healed from blindness and befriended. According to legend, he signed the letter "from your Valentine".

Happy St Valentine's day and don't forget all your loved ones.

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Check how you did on page 25

Letter of thanks from our Treasurer

I just want to express my sincere thanks to all who help me out in my role as Honorary Treasurer. Those who help to count the Free Will Offering envelopes, do so very ably and conscientiously. Those who provide me with receipts in timely fashion and those who total up all the areas of fund raising through the year have been such a help to me. Also those individuals who contact me with changes that need to be made with the paperwork, ensures that everything is kept up to date. I really appreciate the church members working together so well.

Our records go to an accountancy firm for auditing, each year. The accountancy staff have also been a big help in keeping me right.

The treasurer's role is fairly routine and a matter of keeping things up to date and following accepted standards. The records have been computerised and mean that I can do the work from home. I have been in the role for four years. I mention this because I intend to do this voluntary duty for a maximum of five years. (Presuming I will be voted in, this Easter Vestry!)

So this will involve someone having a think about taking over the role. Obviously, I would guide that person through the paperwork and be available to support whoever wants to take over the duties.

To carry out these duties for years is, I feel, unfair to the person in the role. I think it is fairer to the whole church if we all take on some responsibility for certain periods of time.

I have thought about this for quite a while and for personal reasons, I will unfortunately be unable to continue for any further time. Please let me or Rev. Mark Taylor know if you feel you can take up the role in 2026.

Thanks again everyone. Yours faithfully,

Sandra Thompson

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This months parable, **The Shrewd Manager,** on the next page, relates to Sandra's role with support in the church, what a coincidence. Thank you Sandra

Prayer for Wisdom in Stewardship

Lord God, You are the ultimate provider of all good things. Grant us wisdom to steward our financial resources in a way that honours You.

Help us prioritise our spending and investments according to Your will, so that we may glorify You in all we do. Bless our efforts and multiply our resources for the growth of Your kingdom. Amen. **Proverbs 3:9-10**

https://prayersbase.com/prayers-for-finances-for-the church/

The parable of the Shrewd Manager



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS





ONCE JESUS TOLD A STORY ABOUT A RICH MAN...

...AND HIS SERVANT, WHO MANAGED THE RICH MAN'S PROPERTY.





THE RICH MAN HAD HEARD THAT THE MANAGER HAS BEEN WASTING MONEY.

SO HE CALLED THE MANGER TO ACCOUNT FOR HIMSELF!





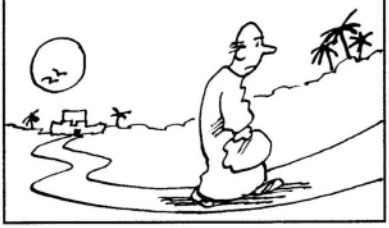


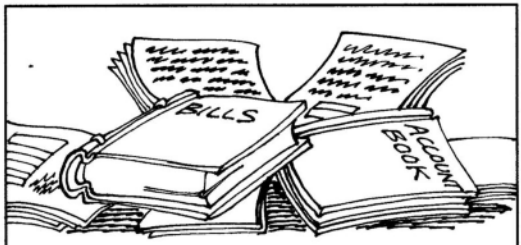
THE MANAGER AGREED TO LET THE RICH MAN'S TRADERS FIDDLE THEIR BOOKS!



SO THEY ALTERED THEIR DEBTS - AND STAYED FRIENDS WITH THE MANAGER.

JESUS EXPLAINED THAT THE MANAGER HAD BEEN WISE IN MANAGING HIS FUTURE... EVEN THOUGH HE WAS BEING DISHONEST.





JESUS WAS TRYING TO ENCOURAGE THE PEOPLE TO THINK ABOUT THEIR OWN FUTURES TOO. BUT IT'S A HARD PARABLE TO UNDERSTAND!

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Press Releases 16 Jan 25
Church of Ireland



*Archbishops welcome announcement of proposed * ceasefire and release of hostages in the Middle East*

Archbishop John McDowell and Archbishop Michael Jackson have welcomed the announcement of a proposed ceasefire and release of hostages in the current conflict in the Middle East. The full joint statement from the archbishops is as follows:

'This represents a fragile moment of opportunity, with the prospect of an end to the war in Gaza and the release of all hostages. We pray for blessing on peace–makers in every community in the Middle East who build bridges and reconcile relationships between those divided by conflict.

'Beyond every number mentioned in reports of casualties in the region is an individual human being made in the image of God with value and dignity, regardless of their nationality or background. The needs of people who mourn or who have been displaced and injured must be foremost in our thoughts and prayers at this time.

'We hope that this development will lead to a just and lasting peace, the full supply of humanitarian aid to relieve extreme suffering now, and the healing of physical and mental wounds. This requires leadership which relentlessly pursues a desire for peace, over and above any lesser gain, for the well–being of the people who live in the lands in which Our Lord found his earthly home.'

***Now agreed by Israel Security cabinet, Long may it last.**

A Celebration of The Nativity



I am sure, like me, you were putting away the Nativity Scene on some day in January. Often it would have childhood memories. It could be something home-made, possibly that the family worked on together. We parcel it up very carefully, ready for the next year. For many, it is a very precious part of your home's Christmas decoration.

During a Select Vestry meeting in January, Mark mentioned how many Nativity Scenes the churches of St. Patrick's and St. John's have. Each one is different and holds memories for those who enjoy them being displayed during the Christmas season.

So what about displaying many of the Nativity Scenes that we have, in St. Patrick's during 2025's Christmas? Instead of a Christmas Tree exhibition, this would be a Nativity Scene display. The church would be open to visitors during specific dates, to enable the viewing of these scenes and could help with raising church funds.

Can I ask you to give this idea some thought?
We would set up display areas in the church and would ask you to compose a brief summary of why this Nativity Scene is special. It would take place during December. If you would like to be involved in this event, please contact me and we can have a chat. My telephone number and e-mail is on the back of this magazine.
Many thanks,
Sandra

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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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Be thou my vision-The story behind the hymn

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Be all else but naught to me, save that Thou art
Be Thou my best thought in the day and the night
Both waking and sleeping, Thy presence my light

Be Thou my wisdom, be Thou my true word
Be Thou ever with me, and I with Thee, Lord
Be Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son
Be Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
Be Thou my whole armour, be Thou my true might;
Be Thou my soul's shelter, be Thou my strong tower,
O raise Thou me heavenward, great power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise
Be Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Be Thou and Thou only the first in my heart
O high King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven, Thou heaven's bright sun
O grant me its joys, after victory is won;
Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be Thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

The story behind *Be Thou My Vision* begins with St. Patrick. When he was just sixteen years old, pirates kidnapped and sold Patrick into slavery in Ireland. He grew up knowing the Gaelic language and Irish customs. He also became a Christian. Years later, he escaped returning to his family in England but Patrick returned to Ireland and become a missionary!

What does all this have to do with *Be Thou My Vision*? On Easter Sunday in 433, the local Irish king issued a decree in observation of a pagan Druid festival that prohibited anyone from lighting a flame or candle. Patrick, refusing to honour anyone but Christ, stood against the king. Patrick risked his life by climbing to the tallest hill in the area and

lighting a huge fire. The ancient Irish people woke up to see Patrick's defiance of the king. Patrick wanted to show the world that God's light shines in darkness, and that only He deserves praise.

Years later, an unknown composer wrote a melody, in honour of Patrick's heroism. Called, "Slane," the now-forgotten composer named it after the hill where Patrick shined his light: Slane Hill. While the story behind the melody is legendary, the history behind the lyrics is much more obscure. Tradition tells us that an Irish poet from the 6th century named St. Dallán Forgaill wrote a Gaelic poem entitled *Rop tú mo Baile,* in honour of St. Patrick. Borrowing from another medieval poem, *St. Patrick's Breastplate*, Forgaill's lyrics referred to God as his "battle shield" and "high tower," phrases that still exist in the modern version today.

Because no other historical evidence connects Forgaill to the poem, it is impossible to verify the actual origin of the lyrics to *Be Thou My Vision*. As a result, most hymnals attribute the song to "Anonymous." As the years passed, *Slane,* and *Rop tú mo Baile* fell into obscurity. But in 1905, nearly fifteen hundred years after St Patrick lit a flame on Slane Hill, the forgotten hymn re-emerged. Mary Byrne, a 25-year-old university student, discovered the 14th century copy of *Rop tú mo Baile* and translated it into English for the very first time. At that moment, the now-hallowed lyrics, "Be thou my vision... oh Lord of my heart" sprang from the forgotten pages of time. Later in 1912, an Irish woman named Eleanor Hull set the words to music. The melody she set it to was none other than "Slane," the medieval tune written in honour of St. Patrick. The hymn became famous overnight and appeared in its first hymnal in 1919. In 2019, the world celebrated the 100th anniversary of the modern version of *Be Thou My Vision.*

The story behind *Be Thou My Vision* is the story of the Gospel. In God's timing, He took what the world ignored and made it something beautiful. https://www.bayviewbiblechurch.org/post/the-story-behind-be-thou-my-vision

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Sudoko - How did you get on?

3	2	1	9	6	7	4	8	5
8	4	6	5	3	1	9	7	2
5	7	9	2	4	8	3	1	6
7	5	4	6	9	2	8	3	1
6	8	3	7	1	5	2	9	4
9	1	2	4	8	3	6	5	7
4	6	8	1	7	9	5	2	3
2	9	7	3	5	6	1	4	8
1	3	5	8	2	4	7	6	9



...are you late with your 'Vicar's Letter' again, dear?

Parish Pump Editor: The Rev Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'



The Rectory

St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

I was quite happy to see the young person from your church whom you are encouraging to get ordained – even though we did not entirely see eye to eye.

When I answered the door to someone dressed in T-shirt, jeans and trainers, I naturally assumed he was the gardener; it was only after I had given him the wheelbarrow and shown him where the spades were, that I found out who he really was. His assurance that this is how Jesus would dress, were He to visit in person again, jarred somewhat. I think that a three-piece suit and stout pair of brogues would be far more likely. We agreed to differ.

I was interested to hear that he was a church musician. Wanting to know if he sang tenor or bass, or even played the organ, he told me that he was the drummer in the worship band and provided backing vocals. I felt obliged to comment that I was not sure how that would fit in with Mattins, but he told me that he had never heard of that Service, and only attended Mega Rock Praise. Since I suspected it would not have been written by Cranmer, we moved on.

I had hoped we may have been on safer ground when I asked him whether he preferred early perpendicular or Victorian gothic, but as he had apparently only ever worshipped in your

converted cinema, he was unable to offer any opinion. His reaction to my offer to show him round our late Norman church, prompted him to tell me that he believed all churches should be closed and people should gather in each other's homes, like the early Christians.

In a last despairing attempt to find common ground I asked him if he had ever preached. He was slightly apologetic to admit that he had done so very rarely, as he found it took such a long time to write an hour-long sermon. When I mentioned that I did not think I had ever exceeded eight minutes in my entire life, he gave me such a look of withering astonishment that with heroic Christian charity, I did not beat him over the head with the Bible he was carrying.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Russia invaded Ukraine three years ago this year (24th Feb 2022)

The soldier, above all other people, prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war. (Douglas Macarthur)

There is no instance of a nation benefitting from prolonged warfare. (Sun Tzu)

There is no honourable way to kill, no gentle way to detroy. There is nothing good in war excepts it's ending. (Abraham Lincoln)

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Brasso Club

Keeping our brasses in tip top shape

This small, merry band meets on the third Thursday of each month at 10am, usually for an hour or so. New folks are welcome to join the chat and the cleaning. We aim to keep the shiny things in Church bright and beautiful!

Enter at the front of the Church by the smaller door on the right-hand side.

Cleaning supplies are provided but if you can, bring rubber gloves, cloths, and an old toothbrush for little corners!

Next dates:

Thursday 20th February
Thursday 20th March 2025

Thank you for all you do.



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

You are welcome at our Church!

Come as you are, as you already are…
Come and join us – our doors are wide open
Bring your life's regrets, or fears and disappointments,
or anything that leaves you sad & low…

It's ok if you're divorced
or you've never had a faith!
If you're full of doubt and don't know where to turn.
For our lives can be so different and better indeed,
if we trust in God and leave the rest to Him.

Bring your partner, bring your friend
Bring the ways you want to mend
and discover what God can do for you today!
Whether you're transgendered, bi or gay, there's no shame in being that way
For God loves you more than you will ever know.

Are you battling addictions or other afflictions?
Or mourning the loss of a loved one?
Simply reach out to Christ
For He understands and you'll find healing and hope in abundance

Come as you are, as you already are, because here you will always be welcome.
If you're depressed, downhearted or despairing?
Then let God do the repairing
For our lives can be so different and better indeed,
if we trust in God and leave the rest to Him.

Jo Pawson

We are blessed at both St Patrick's & St John's Church, with a faith community that is loving, welcoming & inclusive. May these qualities always be cherished and shared generously with those who come seeking a faith community, love and acceptance.

February Church Activities

Together in Faith Group

Monday 3rd and 17th FEBRUARY at 7.30pm
Meet in the Boucher Room, Parochial Hall at St Patrick's Church.

Book Club

Book Club meets on the last Wednesday of the month
(Contact Paddy Rodgers tel 07720 404071
for venue & date which may vary over summer)

Wednesday Morning Fellowship Group (Monthly)

Next meeting on WEDNESDAY **5th February at 11am**
in the Boucher Room.
New members welcome. We start with refreshments and fellowship .

Circus Skills Class

Come along and try some light exercise and may be learn a few manual dexterity skills on Tuesdays @ 10.30am - Parochial Hall

Indoor Bowling Club

Tuesdays from 7pm -Parochial Hall

New people always welcome to join in

Parish Announcements

The Select Vestry meeting will be held on Thursday 13th February at 10.00 am at St Patrick's Church

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Counters for February

3rd	February	Colin de Fleury
10th	February	Scotty Hayes
17th	February	Trevor Peoples
24th	February	Bert Thompson

Sunday Refreshments Rota, February

2nd Joan McKinney; 9th Messy Church

16th Inez Moore; 23rd Scotty Hayes

Refreshments coordinator Priscilla Carlisle

Tel 07787561517

Game On Meeting in February

Meeting in the Library on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month 12th and the 26th at 1.30pm

In January some members played Mexican Train, others played Backgammon.

New participants always welcome. Come and join us for Tea and biscuits, even if you don't want to play.

Brasso Club February

Meets on Thursday 20th February at 10am

Bring rubber gloves, some old rags and an old tooth brush if you have one. We use the main church door to enter the church, not the church hall entrance.

Youth Fellowship Sunday Brunch will meet on Sunday 2 February and Sunday 2 March in St Patrick's. We join everyone else in the church for the start of the morning service before moving into the hall for some Bible study, prayer and games. Anyone of secondary school age or young adult under 25 is welcome to join us. If you want to find out, please come along or contact Stephen Martin (stepheneddu@gmail.com)'



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Dear Reader

I hope you had a peaceful Christmas and New Year. For me peace is the baseline and I find that fun, joy and happiness seems more accessible after that.

So what do we mean by Peace, according to vocabularly.com. **' Peace of mind means just what it sounds like: a state in which your brain is calm, at ease, and untroubled by worry. This common phrase describes a feeling of tranquility or state of carefree contentment that can be hard to achieve'.**

I live alone so you would think that peace is easily accessible, but all I need is for the door bell to ring and my two little dogs to go ballistic and my peace is shattered. The person has gone and they are indignant that they did not get to meet them so I have to work to calm them and me down. This disturbance is nothing compared to those living in war zones or where there is natural disaster such as the fires in zones Los Angeles, God help them.

Then I remember the **"Peace that passeth all understanding"**, Philippians 4:7, that refers to a deep sense of calm and tranquility that can be felt even in difficult times. Thank you God. Jesus calls us to seek peace in Matthew 6 v 28

'And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin… But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?"

With this gentle little wrap across our knuckles, Jesus tells us to get out the house and into nature and be thankful - A call to self care

Praying for a Peaceful 2025 for you, your family and friends and for our world where peace seems impossible in their world.

WHO'S WHO IN THE PARISH

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Facebook: St Patrick's & St Johns Whitehead & Islandmagee
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Email: churchofirelandwhitehead@gmail.com
Website: **www.whitehead-islandmagee-parish.co.uk**

CHURCHWARDENS

	St. Patrick's	**St. John's**
Rector's:	Colin De Fleury	John Hall
People's:	Mabel Allen	Pauline Riddle

GLEBEWARDENS

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

SELECT VESTRY (includes Churchwardens & Glebewardens)

Inez Moore - Hon Secretary 7 Donegall Drive 9337 8927
Sandra Thompson - Hon Treasurer 07912478331
Ann Mulholland; Bill Pollock; Alison Higginson;
Janet Peoples Alan Hayward ; Priscilla Carlisle;
Austin Jenkins - Graveyard Manager St John's

Messy Church

in the Parochial Hall on the 2nd Sunday of the month at 10:30 a.m.
Contact the Rector if you plan to come.

Youth Fellowship Leader
Stephen Martin - stepheneddu@gmail.com

Safeguarding Trust Evelyn Powers 9337 2535 Valerie Kincaid 9335 3748

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St .John's: Ann Thompson 9338 2295

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