

JULY - AUGUST 2022

GROOMSPORT PARISH CHURCH

CONTACT

GROOMSPORTPARISHCHURCH.ORG

*As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat, summer
and winter, day and night,
shall not cease.*

Genesis 8:22



Church Officials



Rev Duncan Pollock

Rector of Groomsport Parish Church
028 9127 1311

From the Rector

Home, so the old saying goes, is where the heart is. You would have thought that after over 21 years in Groomsport, I would by now consider this as my home. I've lived here longer than anywhere else in my life, including Bristol, my home city. I've been privileged to live in some lovely places around the country and beyond. Approaching retirement, there has been some discussion as to where we might settle in retirement. The Yorkshire Dales? Scotland, especially as Billy is working there? Bristol, still a beautiful city and close to some of my brothers and sister? The Costa del Sol, especially Nerja?

Home is where the heart is, and it has been difficult to reach a decision as to where my heart really is. Of course, there have

been all the practical issues to consider as well: housing, moving, establishing or re-establishing friendships and relationships. Having lived a peripatetic life for 50 years, I can't with any confidence regard any one place as the place I want to live. Perhaps that seems ungrateful to the wonderful people of Groomsport who in these past years have cared for me, taken me to their hearts and loved me. Why wouldn't I want to stay here, especially as we have been privileged to live in our own home for some years?

Of course, we will stay in Ballyholme! It has become home to us almost from the moment that Billy entered "Tiddlywinks", his pre-school playgroup. We have a lovely home, and everything we require for a

*"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His peace."
Amen!*

comfortable life is on our doorstep. Why would we move anywhere else? I might be retiring, but I'm not leaving, not moving anywhere else.

But there is still a sense of restlessness. I don't know, a kind of wistfulness for something I can't quite pin down. In "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe", Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy, are bitten by the Narnia bug. They can't wait to get back into Narnia (except for poor Susan, who moves to the USA and regards Narnia as a silly childhood fantasy). Narnia remains the place where their hearts are. There, at the very end of the story (The Last Battle) they meet up with old friends from down the years. There they recognise they are truly at home. It's new but familiar, comfortable but still exciting.

The truth is, I suppose, best summed up in those words of St Augustine, "Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee." Our lives on earth are part of our pilgrimage. On our journey, there are many resting places, places where we can sojourn for as long as is necessary. Retirement will be just another stage in my pilgrimage. And, do you know, I really do hope I don't lose that sense of restlessness!

And thank you for being a part of my pilgrimage. I leave Groomsport a better person than I was when I arrived 21 years, 6 months and 24 days ago. On behalf of Janice, Billy and myself. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Duncan

P.S. Thank You!

I was, am, completely overwhelmed by the send-off you gave me yesterday. Not only is June 26th the anniversary of my ordination, but it will now be the date that I took my leave of Groomsport Parish Church as your Rector. I am not very good at accepting thanks. I believe that I have done nothing out of the ordinary; I have just tried to be as good a Rector as I could be. But I do accept your thanks and your love with grace.

Janice, Billy and I have been stunned by your generosity. We will treasure your gifts and the memory of a day that I was dreading, but which I thoroughly enjoyed, and which will be recalled with great joy and thankfulness. Once again, "Goodbye". God be with each and every one of you.

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Sunday Services For July and August

Trinity 3 - St Thomas

3rd July

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Service of the Word
6:00 pm Evening Prayer

Trinity 5

17th July

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Service of the Word
6:00 pm Evening Prayer

Trinity 7

31st July

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Morning Prayer
6:00 pm Compline

Trinity 9

14th August

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Parish Communion
6:00 pm Compline

Trinity 11

28th August

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Morning Prayer
6:00 pm Holy Communion

Trinity 4

10th July

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Parish Communion
6:00 pm Compline

Trinity 6

24th July

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Morning Prayer
6:00 pm Holy Communion

Trinity 8 - The Transfiguration

7th August

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Service of the Word
6:00 pm Evening Prayer

Trinity 10 - St Bartholomew

21st August

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Service of the Word
6:00 pm Evening Prayer

Mid Week Services

There are no mid-week services during the month of July.
The first Wednesday of the month, Holy Communion is celebrated in the Chapel at Mount Stewart at 10:30 am.

Sit in silence for a few moments and let the heavens speak to you of the glory of God. Think of the vastness of the astronomical distances of space, and the sheer size of it all. It may stun you and frighten you - but let it also comfort you, that our God can make such a universe.

Sheelagh Brown - Day by Day

Holy Rest

It is hard to credit that Charlotte had been a member of our Parish family for only six years; she was so much a part of our lives. It was extraordinary to hear her read the lessons in Church at the age of 96. Anyone hearing her would have been full of admiration for her courage in undertaking the task. And when she told us "This is the Word of the Lord" who would dare doubt it!

Dear Charlotte died peacefully in Croagh Patrick Nursing home, just six weeks shy of her 100th birthday.

Our hearts go out to Faith, her sister, Joan and Joan's husband, John.

May Charlotte rest in peace and rise in glory.

Holy Baptism

Theo James Anthony Zeller
20th May

Theo is the grandson of Bob and Lynne Zeller, of The Hill Groomsport. Theo's parents are James and Stephanie, who now live in Sheffield, although both hold dual citizenship – British/Canadian. It was a joyful family occasion and we pray God's blessing on Theo, James and Stephanie.

Conor Young
19th June

Another grandson for Maureen and Noel Taggart and a brother for Ryan, who was baptised in our Church in 2015. The covid-19 pandemic has seen Conor's baptism pushed back too many times. Now nearly two years old, it was a delight for the Rector to officiate at a lovely, intimate family occasion.

Little Hugo spent the first week or so of his young life in hospital in Dublin. He was born with a serious heart problem that needed specialised surgical intervention. A frightening and traumatic experience for his parents, Louise and Michael. However, thanks to the skill of the doctors and nurses who cared for him, little Hugo is not quite as little as he once was! Our prayers go out to him, and his mum and dad, praying that he will continue to grow in strength.

*Let the little children come to me;
do not stop them; for it is to
such as these that the
kingdom of God belongs.*

For some weeks we have been praying for a little lad called Aidan.

Aidan was born on 21st May at the Ulster. It quickly became clear that Aidan was very sick. He was transferred to the Royal Victoria Hospital, and from there to a special unit in Dublin. Aidan had to undergo open-heart surgery to correct the problem, and you can imagine the heartache for his mum and dad, Katie and Gary.

Aidan is quite a little fighter and he is now home.



Aidan was baptised before his move to Dublin, but it was a special privilege for us to hold a special service of blessing for him on Thursday 23 June.

Keep praying for Aidan, that he will continue to gather strength. Pray too, that as the future throws up further challenges, he and his family will be given grace and courage to face them.

*A baby makes love
stronger, the
days shorter, the nights
longer, savings smaller,
and a
home happier.*



Vestry Minutes

The Rector and the Vestry Secretary met with the Area Dean, Canon Simon Doogan to plan Vestry meetings during the interregnum following the Rector's departure. He will chair Vestry meetings from 1 August.

The Office bearers of the Select Vestry met with the Rector to discuss protocols for the interregnum. These protocols were shared and unanimously agreed by the entire Vestry on 6 June. Worship will be shared between Rev Tim Wright and Faith. The need for patience and communication between Vestry members was emphasised for the Church to continue to run smoothly. The Rector will hand his keys over to his Warden, Mae Burke, who will secure them until the new incumbent is appointed.

The Council gave us a grant to help celebrate on the Platinum Jubilee weekend. The new hymn board numbers were ready and were to be dedicated at a Sunday service.

It was agreed that a registered engineer should examine the gas box outside the Church to assess if it should be replaced for access purposes. Tony was treating the weeds around the Church. A new vacuum cleaner was purchased for the Church.

Solar panels were installed on 19 May. Batteries will be supplied late August/early September.

John Minnis was the agent chosen to be responsible for the sale of the Rectory. A draft brochure will be sent to RCB in Dublin. The Vestry is also charged with finding a dwelling suitable for a new incumbent and we are no longer

necessarily bound by stringent RCB criteria.

The Select Vestry gave permission for Ashley Medical Centre to use the Halls again.

The Rector has very kindly donated his biblical commentaries and many spiritual commentaries to the Church. They will be located in a library in the Avril Morley room. The organ will be moved to the Maxwell Hall.

Many Select Vestry members attended a Bishop's Service for Select Vestries in St Marks Newtownards. It can be viewed online.

Shot glasses will continue to be used for Holy Communion and will be discussed at the August Vestry meeting. The only exception will be at the Rector's final 8.30 Communion Service on 26 June when the Common Cup will be used. Masks will be used when singing and moving around until 26 June.

A large screen has been installed in the Canon Tyney Hall.

A professional kitchen cleaner will be employed at the beginning of June.

Arrangements have been made for a formal photograph to be taken of the Rector for "The Rogues' Gallery." A group photograph was taken at the end of the meeting.

The Rector's Warden will convene a small group to discuss producing a pro forma for permission for photographs to be taken.

The Rector's prayers at the end of the meeting included prayers for

the future well-being and spiritual growth of the church and for the Select Vestry during the interregnum.

Following the June meeting, Maureen spoke on behalf of the Select Vestry to offer a sincere and warm tribute

to him.

William and Jim provided a lovely farewell barbecue following the meeting – the highlight being a cake with the colours and logo of the Arsenal football club.



Note of Thanks

I was fully immersed in church life at Holy Apostles, Leicester. Then, in 2008, I moved to Groomsport, where I knew no one outside of Phillip's family. Walking into a church for the first time is daunting, but Duncan Pollock welcomed me. He had already been instrumental in supporting Phillip's family through some sad times. Now he was making sure I was helped to

become part of this church family. This village and parish church will be all the poorer for his leaving and Duncan, you will be sorely missed. However, you, Janice and Billy, deserve time together and time to enjoy the rest of your lives. Thank you and God bless you richly.

Elaine and the Mawhinney family.

Tales From The Archives

Since October 2020 the Archives have catalogued over 100 items many of which are multiple, taking the collection to over 2000 items.

Amongst the recent arrivals are the following, in the order in which they were catalogued:

- The Will of Sir James Hamilton and a description of Groomsport Harbour c. 1625 (transcript)
- The Funeral Service of Sir James Kilfedder in Bangor Parish Church: 1995.
- Groomsport Parish Halls leaded glass panels: copies of the original drawings by David Eslar: 2011.
- Sermons of Rev. Ernest Harris (Rector 1913-38) delivered in 1934/35: transcribed by hand by Lucy Oughton, mother of Maureen Lightbody.
- Mystery photograph of a young girl dated 1914 whose surname may have been Niblock.
- The permanent insert from the old Church Noticeboard: blue background and gold print.
- Historic Buildings Survey of Groomsport Parish Church by Department of Communities: 13th April 2010: giving it B1 listed status.
- Letters from Lesley Clarke of Sheringham, Norfolk in response to our virtual services in 2020 and 2021.
- Charles Hay Walsh, Rector 1944-68: a set of books signed by him.
- A Lord Wharton Charity Bible of 1861: two owner inscriptions of 1861 and 1869.
- The Lodge, Groomsport c. 1865: historical details (2011).
- Book of Common Prayer (Church of Ireland) dated 1926.
- Groomsport Primary School: The School Handbell: IMO Ella Nesbitt 1981.
- HM The Queen: Platinum Jubilee 2022: Daily Mail Souvenir Issue.
- Groomsport Primary School lapel badge.
- History of Groomsport Parish: CD Patterson: hardback copy donated by Patrick Freeman, grandson of Rev. George Freeman, Rector 1938-44.
- The Gerald Williams Theological Book Collection: early 20th cent.: donated by Patrick Williams.

To these items are added the routine collection of all Select Vestry Minutes, a full photographic record, Special Services (service cards), Weekly Service sheets and Press Cuttings (Spectator) pertaining to Groomsport Parish Church and the village.

Most of these items are available to view by arrangement with the Archivist.

I am happy to carry out searches and to make available items on request (subject to any legal restrictions and the Archivist's discretion). My email address is below and elsewhere in this edition of Contact or messages can be left at the Parish Office during office hours.

There is also a contact messaging service on our website.

The Parish Archive is as much a Village

Archive. We welcome anything pertaining to Groomsport Village and district and donations of artefacts will always be acknowledged.

Barry

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Solar Panels

Groomsport Parish has installed solar panels on the roof of the Canon Tyney Hall to play our part in energy conservation, combatting global warming and reducing electricity costs by aiming at electrical self-sufficiency for the Parish Halls. We are very grateful to the National Lottery and the Benefact Trust for their financial support in this endeavour which will be complete by the end of June 2022. Support from the National Lottery has already enabled us to secure the heritage of the Parish Church as part of the Groomsport Village community. We gratefully acknowledge that National Lottery grants are only possible because of National Lottery players.

This further support will enable us to provide a vibrant and sustainable environment for use by the entire village community. The installation was carried out by Solarfix NI.



Table 3: Grants awarded in Ards and North Down

Organisation	Location	Project summary	Amount awarded	Funding programme
Groomsport Parish Church	Ards and North Down	Groomsport Parish Church is using a £10,000 grant to install renewable energy technology on the hall, which is used for community activities. This will reduce both running costs and the organisation's carbon footprint while keeping the building open to the many local clubs and groups who use it in the local community.	£10,000	Awards for All Northern Ireland

Confirmation

A service of Confirmation is a major event in the life of a Parish. It is even more significant for those being confirmed. A Confirmation service hadn't been held in our Church for some years, so Sunday 1st May really was a red-letter day for us.

Bishop David joined us and encouraged our candidates in their Christian discipleship. There will be days when they get things wrong, he suggested, but they were to keep faith with our living, forgiving and loving God.

After the service Bishop David joined our newly confirmed and their families in the Canon Tyney Hall for a quite magnificent tea. We have to thank Heather and Helen and their team for all the hard work they put into making the tea a truly joyous Parish family event.

Confirmation is not an end, however. Our candidates will need our help and prayers as they try to live out their faith and keep their confirmation promises. Remember in your prayers:

Ben Adams, Matthew Adams, Gordon Boyd, Michelle Boyd, Hannah Johnston, Amanda McWhinney, Ethan Quinn, Amelie Stephenson, Shaun-William Townsley.

"God the Holy Spirit, who has begun a good work in these our friends, direct and uphold them in the service of Christ and his kingdom. God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve and keep them."



BBQ and Fun Day

After months in the planning, the week of the Family BBQ and Fun Day arrived and we were watching the weather forecast with a great deal of trepidation.



Wind and rain seemed to be on the agenda and it was certainly the wind that we had to contend with most. As a result of the weather the Bouncy Castle, which we knew the children were looking forward to, was cancelled due to safety concerns. It was a disappointment but nevertheless it turned out to be another great day in our calendar of events, thanks to all those participating. The bonus was that we raised over £1000 for church funds.



Preparation started on the Friday when we moved all of the equipment needed,

books and DVDs for sale and prizes to the Meadows. Early Saturday the tents were to be erected. This proved to be no easy feat, primarily due to a lack of instructions for putting up the gazebo and the wind which was constantly hampering progress. But our hearty band of volunteers persevered and by lunchtime we were ready.



The event started in the church halls with a treasure hunt. Tricky clues led those taking part through the village and up to the Meadows. The winner was our Rector, who, as a vegetarian, won a voucher for a local butcher!



The BBQ went down well with the usual burgers and hot dogs with all the trimmings, followed by tea or coffee with a homemade traybake. A disco ran throughout the afternoon with music we all knew and could sing along to. It certainly lifted our spirits and had a few hips moving.



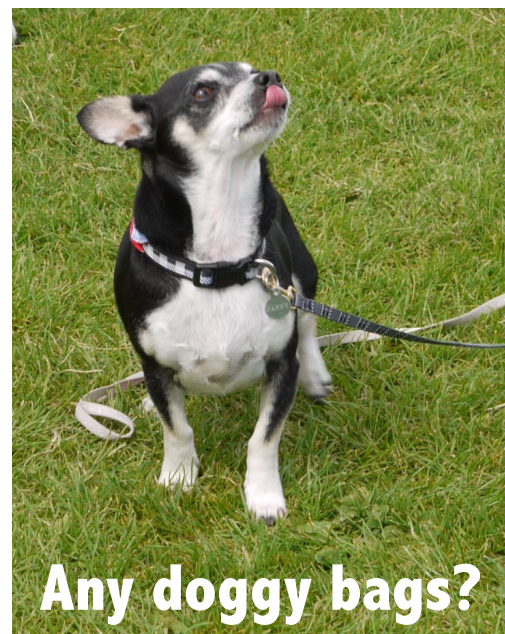
A tombola and ballot raised a lot of interest with some very good prizes available. There was plenty of time to browse the book and DVD sale. The children really enjoyed the face painting and a range of competitive games.



While we had to duck for cover at times and some were cosily wrapped up in blankets, it was great to be able to spend time together again at a Parish event and to enjoy each other's company. Maybe next time the weather will be a little bit kinder to us!

Thanks to William and his team for another successful event.

Maureen



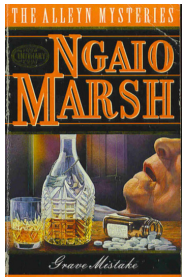
Any doggy bags?

Book Corner

At last, I have spent time on the bookshelves and added a number of 'new' titles. The labels have been replaced, many of the gaps filled and a good many thrillers added to the top shelf. After our Fun Day on 11th June, the spare books have had an airing and some will find their way onto the shelves as space emerges. Of course, the books below will also be displayed once the Contact is printed and distributed so if any of the titles below appeal to you, make sure you get down to the hall early!

Please don't forget that I am always grateful for a contribution from you, if you can provide the book that you have reviewed. It doesn't have to be long - or complimentary! Just share your thoughts. This particular collection below is extremely varied and contains some really original writing.

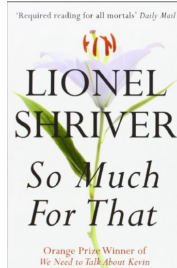
Grave Mistake Ngaio Marsh



Dame Ngaio Marsh was born in New Zealand and wrote over thirty detective stories. She was more or less a contemporary of Agatha Christie but, at least in my estimation, wrote rather better detective stories (despite the huge appeal of both Miss Marple and Poirot!) than her more famous peer. In 'Grave Mistake', the wealthy Sybil Foster, twice widowed, disturbed at her daughter's engagement to an unsuitable man and apparently suffering from a debilitating disease, had, to most observers obviously committed suicide. However she clearly was not of a suicidal disposition and

Chief Superintendent Roderick Allen is determined to demonstrate that, against considerable opposition. The first love of Ngaio Marsh was the theatre and so, very helpfully, at the beginning of this book there is a cast of characters with a brief explanation of who they are. Something I find increasingly useful if there are many characters in a story! This has a terrific plot, a fascinating cast of characters and is written with intelligence and humour, recommended for detective story aficionados.

So Much For That Lionel Shriver



This is an extraordinary book, but not for the faint-hearted. The basic subject matter is the impact of illness on family relationships. Having said that let me immediately say that it is written with such vigour and humour that it is as hard to put down as it is, in places, to read. The foundations of the novel are based on the family of Shep Knacker, the hero of the story. A skilled and conscientious handyman, he builds up a thriving business with his friend Jackson and sells it for a million dollars, thus giving him the opportunity for which he has longed. His plan is to leave "the American dream" with which he is thoroughly disenchanted and live a simple life in an undeveloped part of the world where his hard-earned money should last him and his family as long as they live. Several places have been visited as a family for research purposes, but his wife, Glynis, has always voiced an objection for one reason or another. As the book

begins, Shep has taken the bold move of booking one-way tickets for the family and he tells his wife, who he loves dearly, that he is determined not to be put off any longer and that he will be leaving for their paradise with or without them. At this point, Glynis remarks that she will need his health insurance.

For all the challenges faced by our health service, this book will make you supremely grateful for the service we have. Each chapter begins with a simple bank statement and as Shep, of course, abandons his plans of escape, we note how rapidly his large account shrinks. 'How much is one life worth?' This is just one of the questions this book throws up. Because it is not simply one life, but one set of demands as opposed to others which every family faces. Shep has an ailing father, a demanding and impoverished sister and a feeling that it is his responsibility to support those of his family who appear to need it; the challenges are multiple and compounded by the difficulties in the life of his friend Jackson, an armchair politician and father of a daughter with a life-limiting condition. It is hard, given the description that I have given you, to explain the draw of this book but I am so very glad I read it. There is much to learn, not least the challenge that many of us face, being there for a friend or family member approaching the end of their life. Ultimately and perhaps surprisingly this book is uplifting and warm-hearted. I cannot recommend it too highly but I should warn you that there are some very graphic descriptions.

This Is Going To Hurt Adam Kay

I feel that this is a very important non-fiction book and should be required reading for any politician or senior



administrator in the health service. Based on his diary entries as a young doctor, 'House Officer' in a hospital, they reveal the gruelling hours, the futile referrals, the utter lack of support and the frightening need to make decisions, some life and death, when utterly exhausted. The diary entries were in fact something recommended to all young doctors in a hospital setting, to note down interesting or challenging cases that they encounter - known as "reflective practice". The entries are shocking, distressing, hysterically funny and often almost unbelievable. I was fascinated by the stories, moved by the challenges and rendered helpless with laughter by turns as I read the book. I must add though that, choosing to work in obstetrics and gynaecology as Kay did, there are some very specific and detailed descriptions, not to mention lots of blood in the accounts - so, not for the squeamish. Also, I should warn readers that the book is liberally peppered with extremely strong language which many may find offensive.

Having travelled with Adam Kay through those early years and as far as his promotion to Senior Registrar I can forgive him for the strong language and I am not squeamish so I am really glad to have read this book. If you can bear the medical details and language I think you will too, it is well worth reading. Adam Kay's decision to leave the health service is a great loss to the medical profession, but no one who reads this book would blame him.

Enjoy your reading!

Carol

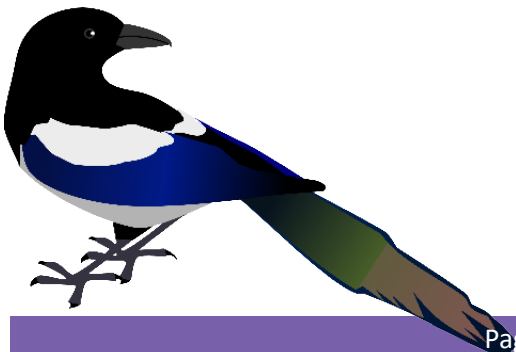
A Bird In The Hand ...

I had just returned from Church after a wonderful service of the Trinity delivered by Duncan our Rector. Mae and I were chatting over a cup of coffee in the drawing-room when I heard it. I say I, but strictly speaking, it was Lucy our little dog, who had also become very interested in this strange phenomenon. It was a sort of scraping and a sound of falling soot in the wood burner. I continued to drink my coffee there it was again. I reflected back to yesterday and remembered that while watching television Lucy had also heard this strange noise and I put it down to seagulls on the chimney top.

This time I went to the stove and opened the doors. I noticed a slight fall of soot. I got a torch to investigate in case we had a blocked chimney. I shone the torch up to the damper and noticed a foot - a bird's foot.

Quite a large bird's foot!! I got the fire tongs but the attached bird was not amused, as the foot was immediately withdrawn to above the damper mechanism.

I thought for a moment and decided that the only way forward was to remove the cement sealer around the outlet pipe and try to push it up the chimney to release whatever was lurking in the pipe.



After some time fiddling and poking the old, very hard, cement out, I started to wiggle the pipe around and up the chimney. This proved to be extremely hard work, but it started to move. As the pipe slowly moved up the inmate began to assist by cheeping loudly, encouragement, I like to think. Then, all of a sudden a head appeared, sooty, dirty, and probably traumatised. It took one look at me and disappeared back up the pipe, only to stick out a very long, slightly iridescent tail feather. I say iridescent but it was really a sooty sort of colour.

I managed to wiggle the pipe up another centimetre and lo and behold, out popped a very large and extremely dirty adolescent male Magpie.

I am not sure to this day which of us was the more surprised, but it took off around the drawing-room, followed by a soot trail and headed for the window.

Our front windows were closed so I managed to grab it by both of its legs and rushed to the French door at the back of the room. The bird in its excitement then left with not so much as a thank you!

Meantime, Mae is nagging me to clean up the sooty mess as the bird dashed from floor to ceiling before it escaped!

Walter Burke

Stop Press! But then four days later... the same noise from the chimney... yes, another magpie down the chimney! One for sorrow, two for joy... except for the mess to clean up. Anyway, it made Mae and myself laugh out loud.

St Thomas the Apostle

Confused and Doubting

Thomas, one of Jesus' 12 apostles, was an impulsive, confused, honest sceptic. Jesus could understand and work with such a man. Thomas' impulsiveness was evident when Jesus prepared to visit Lazarus in Bethany. It was a dangerous trip to make, because of the Jews, but Thomas urged his fellow disciples: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." (John 11:16) Instead, Jesus brought Lazarus back to life.

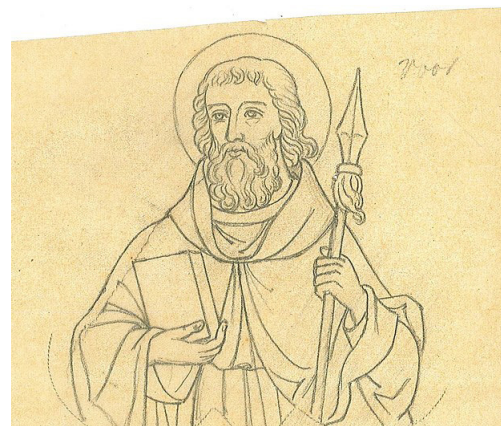
Thomas' confusion is shown in later talks with Jesus. He was not really sure where Jesus was going long-term (John 14:5). But Jesus accepted this confused commitment, and began to untangle it, patiently explaining: "I am going to my Father", and "No one comes unto the Father but by me."

Finally, Thomas' honest scepticism is revealed after the Resurrection, which he flatly refused to believe – unless he could touch the wounds of the risen Jesus. Sure enough, Jesus appears – but instead of

scolding him, shows him the wounds. Thomas responds: "My Lord and my God"(John 20:26).

Thus Doubting Thomas' honest doubts, turned to honest faith, have become a reassurance for thousands of men and women across the centuries, who also want to follow Jesus, but who require some proof of this amazing event – the Resurrection. In Doubting Thomas' complete affirmation of faith, after meeting the risen, crucified Christ, they can find support for their own faith.

Ancient legends tell how Thomas went on to India as a missionary. There are rumours that Thomas even built a palace for a king's daughter in India, and thus he is the patron saint of architects. It is believed that he was martyred by a spear on 3rd July, 72 AD in Mylapore, near Madras. 46 ancient churches in England were dedicated to him.



*Almighty and eternal God,
who, for the firmer foundation of our faith,
allowed your holy apostle Thomas
to doubt the resurrection of your Son
till word and sight convinced him:
Grant to us, who have not seen,
that we also may believe
and so confess Christ as our
Lord and our God;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

Walking With Softies

Our April walk took us to Crawfordsburn Country Park. Unfortunately, it was a damp drizzly morning, but that didn't dampen our spirits. We walked along the coastal path chatting constantly. As usual, we finished up in the cafe for our now compulsory coffee and scones! We all enjoyed the morning despite the weather.



In contrast, our May walk took place on a beautiful mild sunny morning. We had planned to visit the Titanic Quarter, but on hearing that street marches had been planned to Belfast City Hall, we made a last-minute change and went to Castle Espie near Comber. There were few other people there, so we had the place to ourselves to enjoy the wonderful setting and watch the wildfowl. We walked around the perimeter, while some ventured through the children's play area in order to find the Secret Swamp! We were disappointed when Andrew didn't manage to have a ride on the Zip Wire! As it was such a beautiful morning, we had coffee at a table outdoors.

Although we usually finish our walks at the end of May, we decided we would meet over the summer this year, but on a weekday morning rather than on a Saturday. Everyone is welcome to join us, even if you only want to come for the refreshments afterwards.

For information about future walks, feel free to contact Ian on 07968401387 or Zandra on 07968401386



Thoughts of A Blow In...

As we pass through spring into the very start of early summer, life is relaxing and beginning to feel tentatively like a return to some normality. Many friends are planning foreign holidays or extensive family visits across the water over the summer months with a sense of confidence and expectation that was unthinkable only last year.

Then there are all the welcome harbingers of the natural world with an abundance of wild garlic and bluebells replaced by cherry blossom and early summer flowers, together with plenty of birdsong echoing around our gardens. Walking down the road the other day, I was delighted to see a group of guillemots enjoying splashing around and skimming across the water, a sure sign of late spring!

But it is exam season, and my godson's younger brother is fretting over his GCSEs with all the pressure of gaining the necessary points to access his choice of school or college. I've also been chatting to a neighbour's son and lent him some books to help with his AS level Drama, which he was very grateful for, whether he'll read them or not!

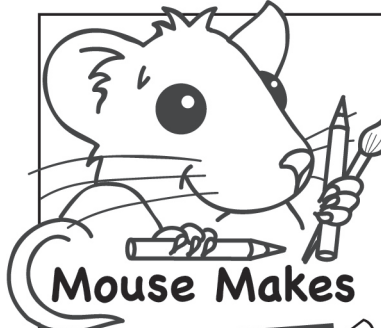
Young Emma from next door knocked on my door the other day due to a minor domestic crisis. The children had been baking with their mum and were so over-enthusiastic with their quantities that they had run out of bun trays! I was not only able to supply her with any spare muffin tins but also received a chocolate cornflake bun, which seemed like a more than fair exchange.

However, along with the welcome greetings of this sociable season, there are always life changes and goodbyes, and one that is very close to our parish and our hearts with the retirement of our dear Rector, Duncan. Thank you for all you have done for us over the years, and wishing you the happiest of well-deserved retirements.

I couldn't resist these lovely words by Francis King, so suitable for the promise of summer, even with our unpredictable weather!

Cynthia

On this June day the buds in my garden are almost as enchanting as the open flowers. Things in bud bring, in the heat of a June noontide, the recollection of the loveliest days of the year - those days of May when all is suggested, nothing yet fulfilled.



Mouse Makes

Cross out all the X to find the bible verse:

NXOXWXTXHXERXEXA
 XRXEXMXAXNXYOXT
 XHXEXRXTXHXIXNXGX
 SXTXHXAXTXJEXXSXU
 XSXDIXDX.WXEXRXEXE
 XVXEXRXYXONXEXOXFX
 TXHXEXMXTXOXBEXW
 XRXIXTXTXEXNX,IXSXU
 XPXPXOXSXETHXAXTX
 TXHXEXWXOXRXLXDXI
 TXSXEXLXFXCXOXULX
 XNXOXTXCXOXNXTXAI
 XNXTXHXEXBOXOXKXS
 XTXXHAXTXWXOXULX
 DBXEXWXRXIXTXEXEN
 X.JXOXHXNX2X1X:2X5X

What did Jesus turn water into?

 John 2:1-11

Who's mother-in-law did Jesus heal?

 Matthew 8:14-15

How did Jesus get out to the disciples in the boat?

 Matthew 14:22-27

Who did Jesus raise from the dead?

 John 11:38-44

How long had the woman at the synagogue been disabled?
 _____ years

What did she do after she was healed?

 Luke 13:10-13

Who did Jesus heal when his ear was cut off?

 Luke 22:47-51

Mouse Makes

Find these words in the word search

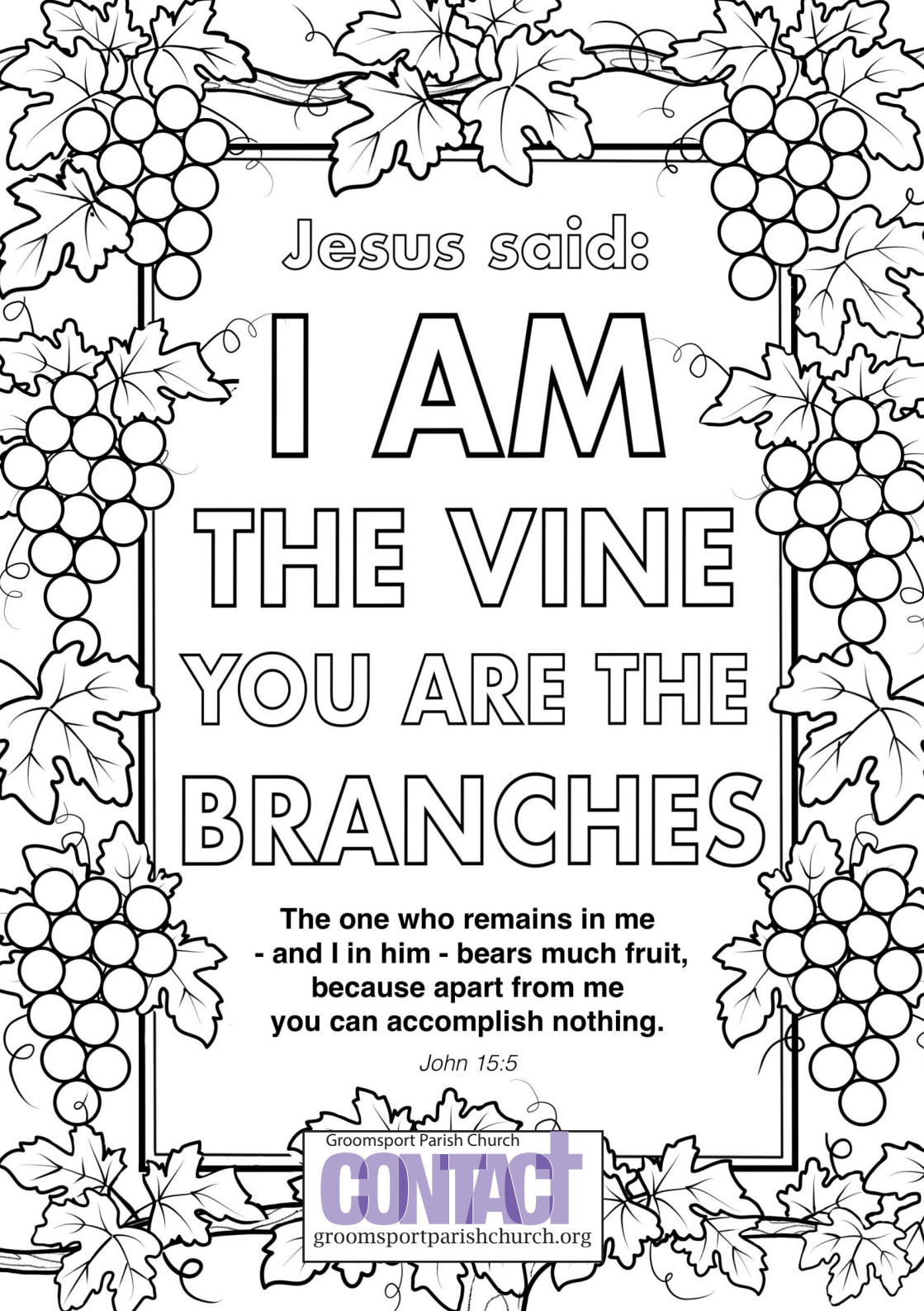
JESUS • MIRACLE
 DEAF • HEAR • BLIND • SEE
 PARALYSED • WALK • SICK
 HEALED • DEAD • RAISED
 MUTE • SPEAK • DEMONS
 CAST OUT • STORM
 CALMED • WATER • WINE
 FISH • MULTIPLIED

DID YOU KNOW?
 Jesus fed thousands of people from a few loaves and fish, ... not once but twice!

READ
Matthew 14:13-21
 AND
Matthew 15:32-39

In each story...
 How many loaves and how many fish did Jesus have?
 How many people were fed?
 How many baskets of broken pieces were left over?

DID YOU KNOW?
 There are over
37
 miracles of Jesus recorded in the Gospels.
 How many of them do you know?



Jesus said:

I AM THE VINE YOU ARE THE BRANCHES

**The one who remains in me
- and I in him - bears much fruit,
because apart from me
you can accomplish nothing.**

John 15:5

Groomsport Parish Church

CONTACT

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