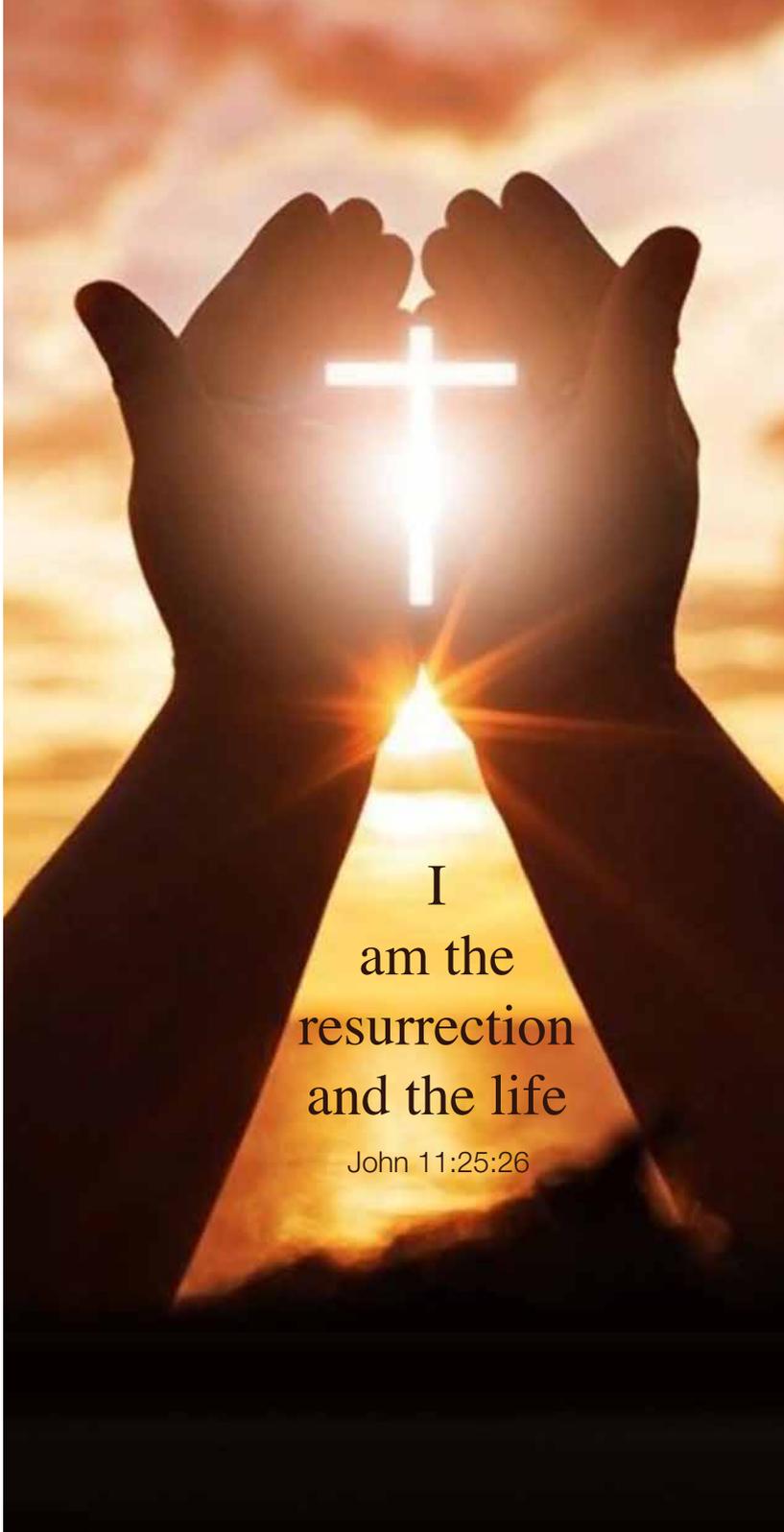


CONTACT

April - May 2020
groomspointparishchurch.org



I
am the
resurrection
and the life

John 11:25:26

Church Officials



Rev Duncan Pollock

Rector of Groomsport Parish Church
028 9146 4476

Rector's Hour

Please note that the Rector will be available in the Vestry office on Tuesdays from 6.00pm – 7.00pm, for short meetings to sign passports, driving licence documents etc., or to arrange a lengthier meeting for another time.

Rector's Recess

Whilst our Rector is always available to his congregation at all hours of every day, it is hoped that, where possible, the period between lunchtime Friday and Sunday Services may be void of contact so as to allow him family time, quiet reflection and preparation for the week ahead; emergency requirements and visits excepted.



The Rector's Warden

Gary Keenan
gary@groomsportparishchurch.org

The People's Warden

Ken Boyd
ken@groomsportparishchurch.org

The Rector's Glebe Warden

Billy McAneney
billy@groomsportparishchurch.org

The People's Glebe Warden

Tony Anderson
tony@groomsportparishchurch.org

Treasurer

Florence Mcaneney
florence@groomsportparishchurch.org

Secretary to Select Vestry

Heather Pentland
heather@groomsportparishchurch.org

Church Hall Bookings

David McKnight
david@groomsportparishchurch.org

Gift Aid Secretary

Ian Sloan
ian@groomsportparishchurch.org

Parish Archivist

Barry Greenaway
barry@groomsportparishchurch.org

Verger / Caretaker

Susan Moore
028 9127 1311

Organist

Stuart Tanner
stuart@groomsportparishchurch.org

Parish Office

Amanda McWhinney
028 9127 1311

Hall Problems

Billy - billy@groomsportparishchurch.org
Tony - tony@groomsportparishchurch.org

Sunday School

Maggie Townsley
maggie@groomsportparishchurch.org

As from 25 March, we have been obliged to close the Church and the Church Office. We want to keep in touch with each other however, and you will be receiving the occasional telephone call from members of the Select Vestry just to see how you are getting on.

The Parish Office will also be closed, but if you want to contact the Church, you can ring:

The Rector – 02891 464476
Gary Keenan, The Rector's Church Warden – 07887 706449
Ken Boyd, The Peoples' Church Warden – 02891 465103

Do keep looking at our Parish Website
(groomsportparishchurch.org)
and our Parish FaceBook pages.

Closing the Church is heartbreaking, but take comfort from some words from that lovely evening hymn, "The day thou gavest";

*So be it, Lord; thy throne shall never,
like earth's proud empires, pass away;
Thy kingdom stands, and grows for ever,
till all thy creatures own thy sway.*



From the Rector

Stiff upper lips and a big box of tissues were in evidence at number 22 on Saturday last. The afternoon film was that great war epic “In which we serve” with a veritable roll call of great British actors – Noel Coward, Celia Johnson, John Mills, Richard Attenborough, Bernard Miles to name just a few. “In which we serve” is just one of many films produced during the Second World War to encourage the nation to “keep calm and carry on”. And after Bernard Miles’ character’s wife and mother-in-law died in a direct hit on their home during the blitz on Plymouth, well I howled like a new born baby!

Playing the Captain, Noel Coward holds a service on board HMS Torrin to commit the dead of his crew to the sea. He used words very familiar to us: Eternal Father strong to save, the 23rd Psalm, collects for the dead from the Prayer Book. It made me reflect (as well as weep), think and pray.

I reflected that since 1945 we have experienced a wonderfully benign state of affairs in our country. Yes, there was the madness of the troubles; there was the industrial unrest of the 70s; we have experienced our fair share of wars, Cyprus, Malaya, Borneo, Korea, The Falklands, and of course Iraq and Afghanistan. There have been economic and financial shocks to the system. Yet, on the whole, as Harold MacMillan famously observed, we have never had it so good. Covid 19 seems to have put paid to all that. We now live in very uncertain, dangerous, times and, it seems to me, we are running around like headless chickens. The generation of “In which we serve” would be astounded at our lack of backbone.

The present crisis has made me think. I don’t understand stockpiling loo rolls, bulk buying rice and pasta. I don’t understand how people can be so selfish, not just in

their shopping habits, but in their ignoring of advice about social distancing and social isolating. The evidence of civilian life in World War Two was that people did what they were told, on the whole, and realised that they were all, all involved in a titanic battle against the evil of Nazism. We are all, all involved in a truly titanic battle against Coronavirus. Don’t people understand this?

And prayer? In the face of such a calamity as Covid-19, everyone is entitled to ask “Where is God in all this?” Christians are not immune to such thoughts and doubts and it is a common prayer of mine, “Why, God?” More importantly my prayers are centred around a call for God’s mercy on His creation. As I understand it Covid-19 was both avoidable in its genesis and inevitable in the face of humankind’s arrogant assumption that he/she is in control. Coronavirus proves to us that we clearly are not in control

As Christians we have a duty to worship a wonderful mighty God. We also have a duty to pray for God’s creation. During these difficult, uncertain and dangerous times, we have another duty – to keep the faith. We have to show our world, our small circles of families and friends, that we do believe in a loving God; that we do believe that God’s love was displayed in the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus; and that we do believe in the life giving Holy Spirit by who’s power and grace we will overcome.

Despite all our hopes, we have had to close our lovely little Church. It is no longer open for private prayer. The Rector and Faith have put together some prayers which they hope you might find helpful.

You will find these in the centre pages which you may wish to pull out.

Duncan

Holy Baptism

Hudson Munro Todd - 2nd February

It was wonderful to celebrate Candlemas (The Presentation of Christ in the Temple) by having a baptism in Church. Hudson is the son of Stephanie and Andrew Todd, long time members of Groomspoint Parish Church. Hudson is a brother for Grayson, Austin and Hayden. And in addition to being another grandson for June and Trevor Campbell, Hudson is the latest great grandchild for Ruby Campbell.

We pray God's blessing on Hudson, his brothers, his mum, dad and all his wider family circle.

Announcements



Better Late Than Never

Maybe you have all been waiting to hear the low down on the new Church Administrator. Well, all I can say is 'better late than never'.

At the end of last year, I had been exploring my options with regard to finding some new employment. After spending years working in my husband's business and doing the odd freelance website job, along with writing the Groomspoint Gleanings in the Spectator, I decided it was better that I made efforts to get a 'real job'. Then as

if it was perfect timing, I saw the advert in the newspaper for the job of Parish Administrator. I duly filled in the 'very tough' application form and sat an even tougher test and then an interview in front of a panel of three, very thorough, Select Vestry members (you know who you are). My knees were knocking and I probably talked far too much, but the panel must have liked me enough to give me a chance. Before I knew it, I was hired!

The new role was a nice fit for me as I had already been working alongside Zandra the previous 12 months while we updated the Parish Church website. Fast forward to today, I am really enjoying working in the office. Everybody has been so kind to me and very patient as I have had to learn new skills, and now, I feel like I have been working in the Parish Church forever.

In the wake of the madness going on in the world, the Parish office is a little place of sanctuary. Sure it can get a little busy, especially when groups are using the halls, but something about being there makes me appreciate the job I do. The week goes fast when I am in the office and no two days are ever the same, Duncan keeps me

Announcements

right and Heather (Select Vestry Secretary) makes sure I am never idle.

I am a Presbyterian and learning about the traditions in the Church of Ireland has been interesting, it's very different to what I am used to. I am now often on the receiving end of some cheerful banter over the fact I am Presbyterian and that I now refer to the Parish Church as 'my Church' or as 'us' when speaking about the things that 'we do'.

I am not alone when I am working, aside from the regular visitors I get from the organisations and members of our congregation there is one other important staff member I need to mention. I am not sure how many of you know this, but I share my office with Arlene. Arlene joined the team very soon after I started in January. She was brought in to meet me by Susan McNair; Arlene takes up quite a bit of room, she tends to flounce and is partial to a few pints of water each week, in fact, Arlene is thriving in her new office. Arlene is a very large (*Dracena marginata*) plant and is loved by everyone who visits. Why don't you pop in and meet Arlene?

My youngest daughter, Summer, has also visited the office to see what I do. On the day of the Pancake Party she decided she needed a few minutes 'quiet time' while I was busy doing something. When I returned to work the next day, I found several funny post-it notes stuck in obscure places. One of those post-it notes gave David (Hall Manager) a fright, he found it stuck to my office door and it said something like 'ADawg'. David came in to see me the next day and very quietly asked me if someone was up to no good.

We had a laugh when I told him what had happened.

All the funny stories aside, I have to give thanks to Elaine who used to work in the office as a volunteer. I have much admiration and appreciation of what she has done for the Parish Church. I trust that she continues to be a valued member of the congregation and helps to organise several of the clubs within the church.

With that I will close ...

Amanda

*Through love, serve one another.
Galations 5:13*

When things return to normal, the Parish Office will be open

Tuesday 9:00am - noon,

Wednesday 9:30am - 12:30pm,

Thursday 9:30am - 12:30pm.

Email address is

office@groomsportparishchurch.org.

Next Contact Edition

Our next edition of the G.P.C. Contact will be out first Sunday in June.

Tara Brown

Groomsport Parish Church
CONTACT

Announcements

Groomspport Parish Church Community Annual Shopping Trip to Newbridge Silver Outlet and Kildare Village Outlet

Saturday 1 February saw 48 ladies from the Church, the village and the surrounding area, board the bus at Groomspport, Sprucefield and Banbridge, all clutching their euros in excited anticipation. Prior to the trip had I arranged for 20% off vouchers for Newbridge and 10% off VIP passes for Kildare.

In addition, one lucky shopper won a 50 - euro prize for Newbridge in the draw on the bus.

At the last minute the coach company changed from McAvoy's to Coach Connections and we were very happy with our unexpected driver.

At Newbridge most people enjoyed a delicious lunch, did a little shopping and managed to get upstairs to see "The Museum of "Icons."

After three and a half hours of shopping at Kildare, it was obvious, as people boarded the bus with multiple shopping bags, that this had been one of the most successful shopping trips to date.

We returned to Groomspport round 8.00pm after a very successful day, perhaps a little tired, but delighted with our purchases- yet again asking the date of the next trip!!

Heather Pentland

DON'T LOOK BACK

How can we make a fresh start?

"No one who puts a hand to a plough and looks back...." (Luke 9:62). One who guides a plough does not look back or into the immense distance - but to the next step that must be taken. Backward glances are not a Christian thing to do. Leave fear, anxiety and guilt behind. And look to the One who gives you a new beginning.

D.Bonhoeffer

Announcements



Mothers' Union – March 2020

Our speaker at the February meeting of MU, was Rev John McKegney. A number of our members are well acquainted with John from earlier church connections, particularly Barbara and Hester – as the photograph below shows. The topic of John's presentation was the Armagh Railway Disaster of 1889. It was a Sunday School outing to the seaside which ended in horror with the loss of 89 lives – men, women and children. The victims were enjoying the traditional Armagh Methodist Church excursion to Warrenpoint. This was such a sad day in the history of Northern Ireland – if you have never heard of it, there

is a very detailed archive on the internet. Just google it.

Our next meeting on Monday 16 April, will be on a lighter note. We are delighted to have Elaine Graham as our speaker – her topic Upstairs, Downstairs with Flowers. Elaine has spent many years working in some of the most notable family homes in Northern Ireland. She is also very talented at flower arranging, so we have much to look forward to. As always, guests are welcome to any of these meetings.

Mae - Branch Leader



Announcements



Walking For Softies (More Like Strolling Really)



Saturday 22 February was a cool damp morning, for The Softies visit to a new location for us, Hillsborough Forest Park. But we are an intrepid bunch. So suitably clothed in waterproofs and walking boots, we eased our way around this delightful and beautiful

park, with its pristine lake and historic military Fort. As usual the craic was lively and the jokes well-worn, and some even managed to survive a lowly rope bridge along the way. The best bit was our later retreat to the nearby and glorious Mill Farm restaurant, where we consumed some of the best scones and coffees we have encountered so far on our travels.

Ian & Zandra 07968401386 or 07968401387



Vestry Notes February/ March 2020

The Vestry agreed that this month's magazine had been particularly good. The Quiz, the trip to Kildare, the Men's Breakfast and the Pancake Party had all been very successful events, reaching out to many from outside the Church. Forthcoming events are the Art Exhibition and the Fun Day. In future the words "suggested donation" will go on all Event tickets rather than a ticket price. It was agreed a present should be bought for Elaine to acknowledge the years of service she has given to the Church. As the Christmas Appeal for the Children's Hospice had raised £1,488, it was agreed it should be made up to £1,500.

The Rectory tenants have signed up for at least another year.

The Church and Hall boilers have been serviced. In future they will be serviced regularly. To avoid condensation problems, the temperature of the Church should always be 5 degrees above that of the external temperature.

The large radiator planned for the church, will be installed beside the door in the near future. The storm glazing work on two of the Church windows will be carried out after Easter.

East Down Construction has received their final payment for refurbishment of the Church.

A bricklayer will be building a wall around the protruding gas pipe in the Churchyard.

54 surveys have been received and will be collated over the next month.

A formal vote of thanks was recorded for all the work Dorothy Anne Crawford has done with the Church flowers over many years. It is hoped that a coordinator can

be found to arrange a rota after Lent.

Vestry members were issued with a pro forma, outlining who should be keyholders in the Parish. New locks will be fitted some time after the Easter Vestry. All keyholders will sign for their keys and will give an undertaking not to have any copy keys cut. This process is solely about the security of the Church and the halls.

The Select Vestry authorised the Rector to proceed with headed notepaper. Following Amanda's investigation into colour copiers for the office, a subcommittee was formed to do further research.

Work on the new store is finished and it is now functional.

Easter eggs will be bought for the Sunday School children and £100 was agreed to take the children on an outing to the Ark farm.

The Rector will inform parishioners next Sunday that at Communion Services that, because of Corona Virus, should they wish not to take the cup, that will be perfectly fine. Hand sanitisers will be placed at the door and on the Credence Table. There will be no shaking of hands.

Permission was given for the purchase of folders for the singing group, Jubilate.

Permission was given to Probus to continue to use the halls until Easter time.

The number of pew leaflets will be increased for Family Services.

Jenny gave notice that she will be unable to cook breakfast after the Easter Dawn Service this year.

The Rector thanked the outgoing Vestry for all their hard work during the year.

NHS and Rainbows



Around our area there has broken out a rash of signs. People have put out on their fences, their gates, great big signs, made out of old sheets. “Thank you all our NHS workers.” “Thank you our brave NHS staff”. My wife, being a retired nurse, really appreciates the backing and the understanding of the public for these special people who are generally the unsung heroes of our nation. The other signs are rainbows, in the windows of homes all over the place. I don’t know whose idea it was, but I think it’s a wonderful initiative. It brightens up the neighbourhood and reminds me of an eternal truth.

After the great flood, God promised Noah that he would never again do anything as drastic as wipe out all living creatures from the earth. The story is in the book of Genesis:

“My bow I set in the cloud, sign of the covenant between myself and earth. When I cloud the sky over the earth, the bow shall be seen in the cloud....The bow shall be in the cloud; when I see it, it will remind me of the everlasting covenant between God and all living things on earth.”

Genesis 10:13-16

Covid-19 is not God’s punishment on a wicked sinful creation. The Rainbow is there to remind the God of all creation that he would never again do anything so catastrophic. It’s there to remind us that he has made an everlasting contract with us and every time He sees the rainbow He’ll remember that promise made all those years ago to Noah.

Now, you’ll have to excuse me, I’m away to put a rainbow in my front window!



Events Update



Men's Breakfast

On 15 February, the ladies of the Parish held a special morning for the men of the Parish. The men enjoyed a fry and lots of chat. Our Guest Speaker was Dr Tony Macaulay – author, broadcaster and Peacemaker. Tony gave a very entertaining talk and read from his book “The Paperboy”. There was a lot of laughter throughout, and many copies of his books were sold – signed by Tony. At the end of the morning, Shaun William thanked Tony for giving up his time and providing us all with such a great morning. Many thanks too, to all the hard working ladies.





Spring Concert – featuring Maeshine.



“I give thanks for the wonderful blessings in my life. Sight and people that warm my heart, harmonious sounds and fragrant scents that uplift me; I recognise the beauty of life. I feel gently at peace”.

These are the words of Inge, one member of the duo Maeshine who entertained and uplifted us at our Easter Concert which was held in our beautiful little church on Friday 13th March. Despite our serious concerns over the coronavirus pandemic, a decision was taken to proceed with the concert, and we were delighted that we had an audience of just under 60 people. The music was tranquil, mystical and exotic – the lyrics, all written by either Inge or Anna - were life-affirming.

The concert was followed by a delightful supper in the Tyney Hall, with home-baked quiche, salads and Pavlova, all home-cooked by Pauline and served by the ladies of our parish. Thank you to all who worked to make the evening such a success. We are also happy to say that £620 was raised towards Church funds.

Heather and Mae



Some Prayers for use at home.

Despite our all our hopes, we have had to close our lovely little Church. It is no longer open for private prayer. The Rector and Faith have put together some prayers which they hope you might find helpful.

For the morning

Lord, speak to us, that we may hear your word.

Lord, move among us that we may behold your glory.

Lord, receive our prayers that we may learn to trust in you.

O come let us sing out to the Lord; let us shout in triumph to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his face with thanksgiving and cry out to him joyfully in psalms.

For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth and the peaks of the mountains are his also.

The sea is his and he made it, his hands moulded the dry land.

Come let us worship and bow down and kneel before the Lord our maker.

For he is the Lord our God; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

We take a moment to remember our failings and our sin. We crave and pray for God's forgiveness.

Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you.

We are not worthy to be called your children.

We turn to you again.

Have mercy on us and all your children.

Bring us back to yourself as those who were once dead

but now have life through Christ our Lord.

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our failings and sin.

May our loving God heal and strengthen us by His Holy Spirit. May our loving

God raise us and all humanity to new life in Christ our Lord. Amen.

We pray this morning for those we love

Our family and friends wherever they be this morning

We pray for our neighbours both near and far

We give thanks for all the very many blessings of my/our life.

The Lord's Prayer

God bless me this new day. God bless those who awake today fearful and
frightened.

God bless those we love and those who love us.

God's blessed love surround us this day and forever.

Amen

At Lunchtime

God our Father, you gave us your Son, Jesus Christ, to share our life on earth,
to grow in wisdom, to toil with his hands, and to make known the ways of your
kingdom.

We pray for our country, this Island of Ireland and our Province

We remember our Queen and all who hold authority under her.

We pray for those who have the awesome responsibility of governing our nation,
especially in these dark and dangerous times

We especially pray for all those working to keep us safe, our doctors, nurses
and health care workers.

Almighty and merciful God, who in days of old didst give to this land
the benediction of thy holy Church; withdraw not, we pray thee, thy favour
from us, but so correct what is amiss, and supply what is lacking, that we may
more and
more bring forth fruit to thy glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We believe in God the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is
named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith and fills us with
his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship
of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.

Amen

In the Evening

The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.

Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, you that by night stand in the

house of the Lord.

Lift up your hands towards the sanctuary and bless the Lord.

The Lord who made heaven and earth give you blessing out of Zion.

Loving Father, bless our Parish Church and all those of my friends who worship there.

Touch with your healing hand all those who, this night, are sick, struggling, suffering.

Grant peace of heart mind and soul to those who are dying

Be with those who sit by the bedsides of loved ones.

And help us to pray for those who will die this night unloved, uncared for, unprayed for.

In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy,

Help us to trust your love, to serve your purpose and to praise your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep;

If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.

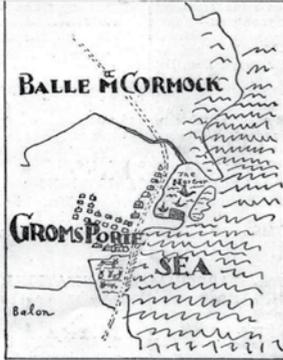
If I should live for other days,
I pray thee, Lord to guide my ways.

The blessing of our loving God be with me and those I love
and with those I have prayed for, tonight and always.

Amen

Tales From the Parish Archives March 2020

Greetings everyone. This time around I'm featuring, a 17th century map, the Parish Bell (1867) and a fine calligraphic record from 1977.



Early Days of the Plantation Groomsport and Neighbourhood in 1625. (Original in Bangor Castle).

This map dates from 1625 and is known as the Plantation Map. The original is held in Bangor Castle. The most interesting features are the apparent existence at that time of "The Hill" and the main road/path to Donaghadee which runs around Orlock Head, not as it is now. Notice also the route of the stream near the present Brae and how little the natural topography has changed in nearly 400 years



The Parish Bell dates from 1867, the date carved into the beam supporting it in the Church tower. Its origin however has an interesting story

attached. It was ordered by Colonel the Hon. Edward Ward of Bangor Castle who co-founded Bangor Grammar School in 1856 and was a close friend of John Waring Maxwell, our earthly founder. Cast in the Whitechapel Foundry in London (still operating) it appears to have been one of two bells ordered by Edward Ward as the receipt obtained by Ian Sloan from London shows. The other bell was bound for Bangor Castle. It seems that, since Ward was ordering one anyway, JWM asked him to order a second for Groomsport. Thanks to Walter Burke for this photograph. It is one of several.



This fine piece of calligraphy which is unsigned records the donations of chairs to the refurbished Halls in 1977, forty - three years ago. It was left, literally, at the Archive door and I would very much like to be able to credit its discovery and authorship. The interesting question is what happened to those chairs since the ones we have now are certainly not 43 years old!

Feedback is welcomed.

Barry

Barry Greenaway - Groomsport Parish Church Archivist
12 Ballymacormick Road
07515699389 - barryg144@btinternet.com

Pancake Party

Shrove Tuesday was an afternoon of fun for the children. After helping to make the pancakes, children, parents, grandparents and friends sampled the delicious warm pancakes. All served with a choice of fresh fruit, maple syrup, lemon juice, chocolate sauce, or a combination of everything!

When everyone had eaten enough, Shaun William organised pancake races, where the children ran races flipping their pancakes at the same time. A few landed on the floor, but were quickly picked up again and the race continued. A great afternoon was had by all.





AFRICAN PALMS



The African Palms project was started in 1965 by Fr Alan Talbot an Anglican priest who served for 6 years as a missionary in the diocese of Masasi Tanzania.

His aim was to give really poor villagers the means to earn some extra money to supplement their meagre income.

The Palm Crosses are made from dried branches of the dwarf palm *Hyphaena coriacia*. These grow wild in the Masasi area, so are not cultivated or chemically treated, furthermore no trees are cut down in the work of collecting the Palm Leaves for plaiting the Palm Crosses.

The work of making the Palm Crosses does not interfere with the villagers normal work of producing the food they need to live, it provides some additional income.

The crosses are sent once a year to the UK where they are sorted and packed.

Over the years the number of Palm Crosses sold has increased and in 1986 African Palms Ltd was formed, which is a company owned by the African Palms Association a charitable trust formed at the same time.



Any profit made by the company is transferred to the trust and used for health and education projects in the Masasi area.

At present the trust is working on a project to get clean water supplies available in all eight of the villages where the Palm Crosses are made. This is an exciting project! On a

recent visit, villagers who make the Palm Crosses without exception told us how this would make a huge difference to their lives.

Past projects have included other water projects, hostels, and safehouses, work on clinics (dispensaries). Books and desks for schools, and working to improve special needs schools.

The important thing about the project is that they are helping themselves and not relying on charity.



AFRICAN PALMS

African Palms Ltd
46 Brandon Street
London SE17 1NL

tel. 02077030719
email. enquiries@africanpalms.co.uk
web. africanpalms.co.uk



My Visit to Fort Erie

I began my working life in Shorts, in April 1961, and retired 42 years later having enjoyed every minute of it.

I spent my first year in the Apprentice Training Centre, then 3 ½ years as an apprentice Turner moving around various centres. I joined the Inspection Department in August 1965 as an Inspector. I spent the rest of my career there. I was promoted a few times and ended up as a Quality Manager in the Goods Receiving Department.

During my time there I visited companies all over the UK, Europe, United States and Canada, after Shorts had been bought by Bombardier.

My last visit to Canada was to a small engineering company in Fort Erie, which is on the shores of Lake Erie, and one of the most beautiful places I have ever visited. It is also only a 10 minute drive from one of, in my opinion, the Wonders of the World, Niagara Falls.



My journey began at Belfast International Airport, landing at Toronto and then by car to Fort Erie, where I arrived at my hotel totally exhausted. Next morning I paid my first visit to the engineering company and met their Quality Manager, who would be my contact during my time there. After coffee, I was given a tour of their factory and met their Inspection and Manufacturing Team with whom I would be working.

Rarely was I required to work at weekends, which gave me time to visit all the interesting



areas round Fort Erie and the Falls. In all I spent 7 weeks in Canada and enjoyed every minute of it. My wife Helen came over and stayed for the last 2 weeks. She spent her time visiting places of interest around the Fort. At weekends we would go up to Niagara Falls, and do a boat tour of the "Maid of the Mist", which was absolutely brilliant.



We also spent some time in a nearby town called Niagara on the Lake. It had

Christmas shops open all year round which was amazing. However our visit to the town ended in a rather sour note, when I was given a parking ticket for parking the car in the wrong direction, along with a \$20 fine.



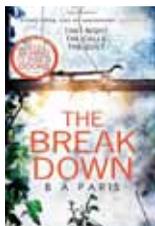
On my last day the Big Boss gave me some small gifts, a company tie, mug and pen, and the offer of a job. I must say if I had been a lot younger I would have seriously considered accepting his offer. Fort Erie and the surrounding area were indeed beautiful!

John Parkinson

Book Stall for April and May 2020

If you have looked at the bookstall recently you will notice that it has undergone a (long overdue) tidy up. Having been away over Christmas, then unwell, then launched into pantomime rehearsals I am afraid the bookstall had been suffering from neglect by me. However, that is rectified and there are many new titles on the shelves in every section, Faith, Thrillers, Romance and general fiction. Do take a look. As I write this we are just beginning to understand the implications of Covid 19, so I dearly hope than in reading, perhaps more than usual you may find some small comfort.

Break Down by B A Paris



A thoroughly engaging and disturbing story. The reader experiences Cass's life unravelling. Having passed by a car in a wooded layby during a thunderstorm, she later discovers that not only did she know the driver of the car, but that a murder had been committed. Truly distressed and following the death of her mother who had been suffering from dementia she begins to doubt her own mental state. The reader suspects she is being manipulated – but by whom? This is a really gripping tale which may well keep you guessing to the end.

Busmen in the Firing Line by Eugene O'Callaghan



You may have seen information about this book in the media recently. A brand new copy has recently been donated to the book stall, for which I am very grateful. As a trade union official, Eugene O'Callaghan devoted himself to representing the workers in the bus industry, primarily the

drivers, seventeen of whom were killed during the "Troubles", simply for turning up for work. This will bring back many memories for those of us who lived through this time.

The Keeper of Lost Things by Ruth Hogan



Anthony Peardew had been a celebrated author of short stories but now spends his time collecting and collating an enormous assortment of lost objects. In his own way he is trying to atone for a broken promise of his youth. Recognising that his life is

rapidly coming to an end and his atonement is unfinished he leaves his house and enormous collection to his young assistant Laura with the hope that she can complete his mission. This has unexpected consequences for Laura who herself has a sad history. The story manages to be infinitely readable, heart-warming but more substantial than it might initially seem. Ruth Hogan demonstrates insightfulness through her very believable characters particularly Sunshine the young neighbour with Down's syndrome who is wiser than her vocabulary suggests. A gorgeous story I expect most people will enjoy.

Chickenfeed by Minette Walters

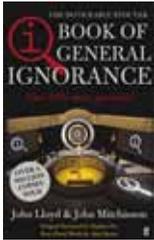


A quick read this time, this novella is only 120 pages long and the print is significantly larger than usual. It's compact enough to slip into a pocket if you are out for a walk and want to sit down for a while! The story is a dramatization of a murder which took place in

Blackness, East Sussex in December 1922. Although the reader knows the denouement from the beginning, nevertheless the story is

absorbing and gripping and if you are like me, much of your sympathy will go to the “murderer”.

The Noticeably Stouter Book of General Ignorance by John Lloyd & John Mitchinson



For those of you who are fans, as we are, of Q.I. now chaired by the delightful Sandi Toksvig, this book is a treasure trove. The contents give you a taste of what is to come. “How many nostrils have you got?” “What is the most dangerous animal that has ever lived?” “What was odd about Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer?” and “Where is the driest place on earth?” Nearly three hundred queries are posed and answered in intriguing detail. This book might be a good idea for a fun family activity while we are spending our time at home. The answers to the questions posed above are respectively: four, the female mosquito, he was a she and Antarctica. The explanations that follow each answer are as intriguing as the answers are surprising.

The Lion Concise Bible Encyclopaedia



Described as an A to Z fact-finder of people, places, events and key themes in the bible this is a compact reference book. It is set out in the conventional encyclopaedic fashion starting with Aaron and concluding with Zophar (one of Job’s three friends who talked to him in his suffering. There are numerous black and white illustrations throughout.

Morse’s Greatest Mystery and Other Tales by Colin Dexter

Was there ever a better television detective than Morse? Maybe you don’t agree but Colin



Dexter detective continues to live in the pages of his stories. This collection of eleven short stories ranges in length from eight pages to over fifty – great for bedtime reading! Ironically the title story is the shortest.

Empire of the Sun by J. G. Ballard



Empire of the Sun by J. G. Ballard. This modern classic which won the Guardian Fiction Prize is set in Shanghai in 1941. Japanese troops have moved in to occupy it after Pearl Harbour. The hero of the story is Jim a twelve year old boy who is searching for his parents among the chaos. He is imprisoned in an internment camp. His experiences there reflect Ballard’s own story, he lived in Shanghai and was interned in Lunghua at the age of twelve from 1942-1945. The story is deeply moving and beautifully written; Anthony Burgess described it as a brilliant fusion of history, autobiography and imaginative speculation. I cannot improve on that description. This is an absolute “must read” book. I confess it is not the sort of book that I readily pick up and read but an Open University course I did some years ago had this on the reading list and it became one of my favourite books. The film made from the book some years ago is also excellent and has a haunting melody throughout which still drifts through my mind.

As always I hope that I have offered a wide enough range of books that you find something to interest you. If not do visit the newly refilled shelves. Keep well and look after each other,

Carol

Thoughts of a Blow In...

Hopefully, the winter gales, storms and constant downpours are on the wane now and we are starting to edge towards spring. As it wasn't raining (for once!) I was just sitting on the sea wall the other day, looking at the waves and enjoying the fresh air and a brief spell of spring sunshine. I couldn't help but notice that everyone who passed me was smiling and greeting each other. A nice day truly does bring us out of our annual hibernation!

We're not quite out of winter yet, but the lighter mornings and evenings are encouraging. When the clocks go forward near the end of the month, I'm sure we will feel that we have suddenly been pushed into the next season – weather permitting!

Then Easter will be upon us before we know it, as it falls in the first half of April this year. With all the alarming events in the news, both abroad and close to home, the rhythm of prayer and worship in and out of church as we build towards such an important festival will matter more to us than usual.

I have only seen the children next door in passing as they dash in and out from school and to and from a huge variety of late afternoon and weekend activities. No doubt young Leo will pop around to see me soon to put in his order for his cake of choice for this Easter!

Hopefully, we will all be able to celebrate Easter Sunday with family and friends, despite everything. That will be an extra special time of coming together. I am just glad of any events, both big and small, that have occurred successfully in the past weeks and it's so fortunate for the organisers and those who had bought tickets and made travel arrangements that they could go ahead as normal.

Wishing you all a safe and blessed Easter time and that everyone keeps as well as possible. While looking for an appropriate few words for the time of year and the circumstances, I came across this proverb from Guinea that seems to fit the season and the current mood.

Cynthia

“No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow.”



Prayer Room

As there are no more prayers from last year available I thought it might be interesting and useful to reflect on what our prayers were five years ago. Here is a small selection of those from 2015.

God help all the people who are daily fighting a progressive disease, especially those with M.S.

Keep us strong in faith O Lord

Please God

Help the afflicted in our country, and be with the refugees in all countries because of war

Pray for the homeless who this very morning are sleeping rough in our towns, Bangor and Newtownards

Here are some of the prayers placed on a globe:-

For the people of the Central African Republic that war and incomprehensible fear may be vanquished by the will for peace.

For persecuted Christians everywhere

For the people of Syria – for the starving children and their despairing parents that they may be reprieved.

For the people in the Crimea and Ukraine

For the people of Israel

Finally a prayer on the Church of England Website today:-

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour, and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you. In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick, and to assure the isolated of our love, and your love, for your name's sake.

Carol

Amen

Jesus Is Alive!

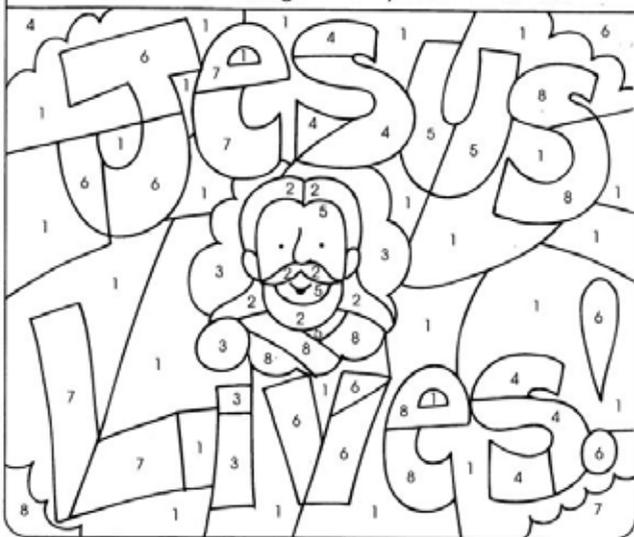
(John 20)

At the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene talked to a man. She thought he was a gardener. But then she saw that the man was really Jesus! He had risen from the dead and was alive again!

Color the picture using the code. Cut it out and tape it up so you can be reminded of this wonderful truth!

BibleBuds

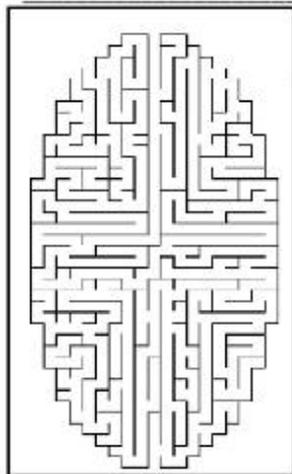
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|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1 = green | 3 = blue | 5 = pink | 7 = purple |
| 2 = brown | 4 = orange | 6 = yellow | 8 = red |



HOW MANY WORDS CAN YOU MAKE OUT OF: GOD MADE SPRING



**Spring
Lesson**



**GOD MADE
SPRING
AND THE
ANIMALS!**



ANIMALS IN THE BIBLE

F	H	O	N	T	C	O	N	T	H	G	A	P
G	D	A	P	C	V	X	K	E	V	K	E	R
Q	E	D	P	C	V	O	Y	R	H	A	R	P
N	E	B	O	R	A	H	J	V	U	C	S	L
C	D	O	R	R	D	R	V	E	L	I	F	T
R	O	G	A	S	E	N	V	E	K	A	N	S
T	O	G	H	E	S	A	F	G	G	S	T	R
L	E	M	A	C	E	W	O	U	L	T	D	O
H	J	P	A	E	V	D	D	I	R	H	E	N
E	L	H	L	U	S	H	J	L	O	G	G	P
K	N	T	W	S	H	Z	T	L	O	G	G	P
P	E	T	L	Y	L	E	S	F	O	O	N	C
Q	T	Y	L	Q	E	R	S	X	R	G	B	V
D	A	R	E	S	S	P	U	X	P	F	O	X
N	E	E	V	I	L	L	U	P	K	R	O	D

CAMEL	DOG	DONKEY	GOAT
FISH	GOAT	HORSE	LAMB
OXEN	RAM	RAVEN	SHEEP
SWINE	SWINE	WHALE	



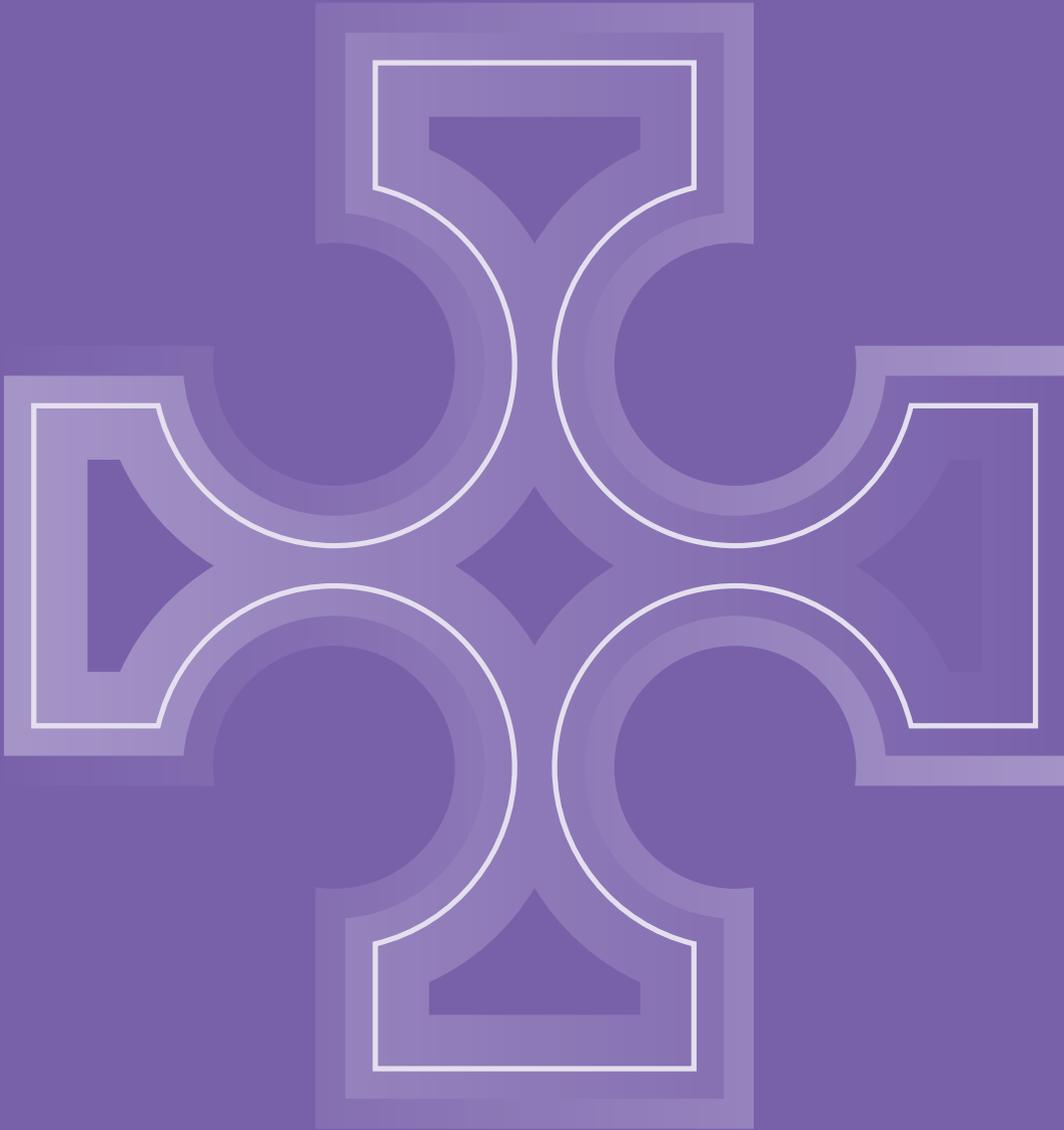
It will soon be Easter. We probably won't be able to celebrate Easter as we have done in former years. Even the sunrise service on the beach is looking a bit suspect (keep an eye on the Parish website - groomsporthparishchurch.org – in case plans change).

But one thing is certain. Easter will happen. The resurrection will be celebrated in our hearts and in our homes if not in Church. God's love has been promised us from the beginning of time, but it was most powerfully demonstrated in the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ Jesus – His Son, our Lord. Let's hold on to that truth and rejoice in it. St Paul writing to the Romans said:

*“Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death? ...
...For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above, nor the world below – there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:35-39*

Nothing can separate us from the love of God – nothing! Not even Covid 19
Despite everything, have a wonderful and Blessed Easter.





Groomsport Parish Church

CONTACT

groomsportparishchurch.org