

Groomsport Parish Church

CONTACT

June - July - August 2020
groomsportparishchurch.org

GOD
IS LIGHT;
IN HIM
THERE IS NO
DARKNESS
AT ALL.

1 John 1:5

Church Officials



Rev Duncan Pollock

Rector of Groomsport Parish Church
028 9146 4476

Rector's Hour

There is no Rector's hour at present due to social distancing rules. It will resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

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
office@groomsportparishchurch.org

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



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.*

Closed but not Shut!

We have taken the first tentative steps in the re-opening of our Church. With the help of Vestry members we are able to open the Church for personal and private prayer three days a week. Days and times are published below. At present we can only admit two people at a time into the Church and there are some social distancing and hygiene rules to obey. These rules are set out on the Church and Church Hall gates. In addition, the Church will be manned during

its opening hours, so do be guided by the host caring for the Church.

There is no guidance as yet as to when we will be open again for Sunday worship. However, the Rector is investigating the possibility of holding a “drive in” service in the Village. If it is possible to hold such a service, details will be published on our Parish website and we will try to keep parishioners informed as best we can.

Church Opening Times

The Church is now open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10am until 4pm

From the Rector

For misbehaving in class Mr Graydon set me the task of writing an essay entitled “The path to hell is paved with good intentions.” Clearly I had tried to justify my actions by coming up with some cock and bull story that what he, Mr Graydon, had perceived as wilfulness, was actually me doing someone else a good turn. Of course, in the end there was only going to be one winner in that particular argument and Mr Graydon duly had his essay.

With lockdown came a great flurry of good intentions: we weren’t going to eat off trays in front of the TV; we were going to learn to play chess together; there would be three bike rides a week; buckets of loving kindness would be lavished on the garden and we would sort out the photos not just from India but from the holidays we’ve shared over the years. Of course, none of this has been accomplished. Lockdown has brought indolence, at times inertia and great clouds of boredom. And I suspect I am not the only one who has occasional bouts of cabin fever. The path to hell is indeed paved with good intentions.

Motivating myself to get up and get on has proved much more difficult than I had imagined, without the normal routine of ministry: I can’t visit our friends in hospital or care homes. I can’t knock on doors. I can’t attend Deanery meetings, or meet with colleagues; dammit, I can’t even conduct services! And despite lots of help with online skills, I am not someone who finds sitting in front of a computer screen in any way fulfilling. Zoom meetings and virtual services are not my “forte”.

Yet I have rediscovered something which has proved immensely valuable and something which has given my life

a much needed framework. Flouting the guidance given, I go into Church every morning and say the office of Morning Prayer. What started out as a relatively short exercise lasting 20 minutes or so has, without thinking, quietly expanded into an hour of quiet prayer and contemplation. This has proved more than enriching. And I’ve stopped feeling so guilty (well nearly!). My guilt arises from a wandering mind. As I sit in quiet contemplation my mind begins to wander. I will be saying the Venite, yet my mind will be full of people places and things. I will be reading oh so familiar passages of scripture and yet my eye will be caught by the gap where the radiator by the door should be and then I go into a whole reverie about jobs that need doing around the church. I struggle to pull myself together, but by the time I get to the Collects for the day, my mind is away again.

Through all the meanderings of my mind, something has come through very powerfully. God doesn’t mind! My worrying about jobs not done, my wondering about Mrs X in Nursing Home Y, my fretting about the next recording of a service, is all me being me and that “me” is loved. I have rediscovered something that St Paul discovered all those years ago, and which is as true today as it was then: “My grace is sufficient for thee.” The path to hell may well be paved with good intentions, but God’s grace will steer us gently away from that path. Paul writes that he was told by God himself, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” In these strange times lets us hold on to that grace with both hands.

Stay safe and God bless you.

Duncan

Births, Marriages, Deaths & Announcements

Holy Rest

Simon "Tim" Matchett - 2nd April,

Tim was out walking with his wife on a lovely Spring evening in Ward Park, when he suffered a massive heart attack. Despite the best efforts of all those who tended him at the scene, and in ICU at the Royal Victoria, Tim died two days later. He was 52. We hold Sonia and her children in our hearts and prayers

Basil MacNamee - 24th April,

Basil had been a faithful member of our 8.30am congregation for the last two years. Basil had been a consultant cardiologist at Craigavon Hospital and enjoyed golf and had been a significant member of the Northern Ireland cricketing community. He accepted his final illness with great grace. Our condolences go to his sons.

"Rest eternal, grant them Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them."

Announcements

Church Finances

You will not be surprised to learn that our finances have been under some strain as a consequence of the lock down. Many of you are still managing to get your envelopes to us and others have replaced their envelopes with a direct debit or a standing order. If you would like further information on giving directly, please do not hesitate to contact the Wardens, Gary and Ken. If you are not sure what to with Free Will Offering Envelopes, again discuss the matter with Gary and/or Ken, and they will be able to advise you.

Gary Keenan, Rector's Warden,

07887 706449

Ken Boyd, Peoples' Warden,

07764 636413

Thank you

Thank you

In January, Amanda took up her position as Parish Administrator. Within a few short weeks she was wielding a camera, acting as director and editor. In addition, she has become the brains behind our Parish Facebook pages and Parish website; she has had to tangle with YouTube and cope with the Rector and the Organist as they both bring their own personal spin to the "virtual" services.

None of this was in Amanda's job spec, and yet she has risen to the challenge of the times with grace, humour and masses of patience. Thank you Amanda!

Thank you, too, members of our Select Vestry. Once lockdown became a reality, members of the Select Vestry have kept in touch with parishioners by 'phone and mail. They have helped with the mail shots

Announcements

Thank you

that have been produced more or less fortnightly since lockdown began. And of course, even though the Select Vestry is unable to meet in session, the Vestry has had to help in the routine decision making of our Church administration. Thank you too, the Church Wardens, Glebe Wardens, Treasurer and Vestry Secretary who have been a great support to the Rector in these difficult times.



Thank you the Select Vestry!

And thank you Stuart, for all that you have been giving to our online services. The response from those who have been following our services, from all around the world, make special mention of your contribution. Thank you Stuart!

PS

Please don't stop praying for our Church, its congregations and Parishioners during these strange times. Prayer draws us all closer together, even if we cannot see each other across the pews. Please pray for the vulnerable of our Parish, those in nursing and care homes. And do remember to pray for the sick, the struggling and the suffering. In this season of Pentecost, may they and all of us be touched by the gracious presence of God's Holy Spirit.

Duncan



PPE Factories

Three couples in our congregation have responded to the call for much needed PPE resources and are making good use of the Lock-down period. Noel and Maureen Taggart, Tony and Heather Pentland and Walter and I have been making parts for

Announcements

Face Shields. A local joinery company, DC Contracts, has repurposed its workshop and is assembling the components which are then supplied through a Facebook Account – DC Face Shields. The masks are distributed throughout Northern Ireland to front line workers in Hospitals and Care Homes. The demand continues and 15000 masks have already been distributed at the time of writing. Ann Blachford has put her excellent sewing skills to good use by making Scrubs for another local initiative called North Down Scrubs. I'm sure there are others doing great work during this difficult time, so do let us know of others.

Maureen's 95 miles by 95 Birthday.



Ninety-four year old Maureen Lightbody, isolated in her seaside bungalow, daily followed the amazing progress of Captain Tom Moore. Not wishing to compete with the former soldier, she felt that women and the Royal Navy, also ought to 'do their bit'. During the war, as an 18-year old signaller with the Wrens, Maureen helped dispatch the armada of American ships from Belfast Lough on route to the Normandy beaches. Now she's set herself the task of walking a 'mile' a day until her 95th birthday in July.

Maureen's mile is not a statute or even, more fittingly, nautical mile, she's going back to Roman times when a mile was one thousand paces. Each day she'll venture out for her daily exercise, adhering to social distancing rules, and walk around a large playing field adjacent to her home. (To be precise she's walking 0.8 of a mile)

Maureen says the challenge is personal out of respect for what Captain Tom has achieved, not just in terms of money, but awareness. "If my daily 'mile' can do something worthwhile no matter how small I will be content" says Maureen, "this is not a competition, it is something, like the war, that we are all in together."

Maureen lost her husband to cancer in 1987 and has seen so many people being affected by this indiscriminate disease. Now in the midst of the Covid 19 crisis, she knows that it can be a stressful and anxious time for people living with cancer. This makes the work of Macmillan even more significant and important, they need regular donations to continue their amazing work at this difficult time. The funds raised by Maureen will be used to support the work of Macmillan in Northern Ireland.

At time of writing Maureen had raised a tremendous £11,291! Her initial target was £1000. Please support her on her Just Giving page.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/maureenlightbody>

**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

Announcements



Mothers' Union – June 2020

I hope you are all keeping safe and well at this difficult time. We are all having to be patient staying at home and keeping ourselves safe as well as others. As I write this, we know that Northern Ireland will be in lock-down until the end of May with ongoing restrictions over the following months. Some of you will be cocooning and not able to get out. My thoughts and prayers are with you all.

It has been a blessing that God has blessed us with such wonderful weather during the past few months and if you are like me you will have noticed – more than ever – the beautiful birdsong, green fields, shrubs and trees coming into bloom.

Our branch is trying to keep in touch with all members through our telephone calls from the Committee Members and I know from talking to many of you that you are so grateful for these calls. As I undertake my daily walk around the village, I bump into quite a number of you, and although we are social distancing, we have great conversations.

We know that we have many very industrious members in our branch, who over the years have been knitting and putting together soap bags, etc. Some of our members are also contributing to the PPE effort and helping to make Face Shields and Scrubs for Hospitals and Care Homes. Hester Kelly is our extremely hardworking co-ordinator of the Women's Aid effort in North Down and she has written a piece for our June

Contact. As you will see, we have been contributing both at branch and Diocese level in any way we can at this difficult time when it is not possible to provide food items, toiletries, etc.

Some of you will have received a copy of 'Families Worldwide' from MU Headquarters and will have noted that, like to most charities, MU is concerned about finance. Branch Leaders also received a lovely heart-warming and uplifting letter recently from Roberta McCartney, our Diocese President. Roberta informed us that a per capita contribution has been sent on your behalf from Down and Dromore Mothers' Union.

We all miss our church, and the warm fellowship which we experience there. However, it is terrific that we can access our Sunday services online and we are so grateful to Duncan and his team of helpers who make this possible. The services are spiritual, the music lovely it is very special to be reminded of the beauty of our church through the pictures.

Just think of the words of that lovely children's hymn:

*"Jesus bids us shine with a pure, clear light,
Like a little candle burning in the night;
In this world of darkness so we must shine,
You in your small corner and I in mine."*

It is hard to envisage when we will meet again as a branch, but we will remain positive. We live in a most beautiful part of the world for which we are eternally grateful. We are also a small community, relatively speaking, which makes things easier. So just remember, He is Watching Over Us

Mae - Branch Leader

Announcements

North Down and Ards Women's Aid

Over the last number of years Mother's Union, and indeed our Church Family, have generously supported North Down Women's Aid Refuge and Resource Centre... that support has always been very much appreciated by the Women's Aid Team!

Due to the Coronavirus and the restrictions this has placed on our normal day to day living, and with the very real worry about cross infection, our usual donations of food items, toiletries etc., can no longer be accepted at the Resource Centre. The Centre is now closed in adherence to Government regulations and the staff are working from home.

To enable the many people who wish to continue to support Women's Aid a Wish List has been set up on Amazon. All products on the Wish List are items Women's Aid feel would be beneficial to the Women and Children who use their services. There is also a facility that can be used to make monetary donations.

Over the last weeks, Mother's Union at Diocese level has donated £250.00. This



has been used to purchase some items requested by Women's Aid, eg Towels and Gift Cards to allow the purchase of much needed food items. Our own Branch of Mother's Union has also donated £50.00 which I have used to purchase Towels for the Refuge.

At a time when all Charities are experiencing financial problems through loss of income and donations, I would just like to thank our very faithful and generous Church Family and Mother's Union Branch for their continued love and support.

Love and thanks,

Hester.

Amazon details:

Refuge:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/15D4OT2UT3YHX?ref_=wl_share

Community based Services:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/3295QDYPM6FSR?ref_=wl_share

Children's Services:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/OYJB6REKGBFV?ref_=wl_share

Monetary Donations:

paypal.me/ndawomensaid

Northern Ireland triplets (86) are forced to spend birthdays apart for first time ever because of coronavirus

Belfast Telegraph 7th April 2020, by Mark Bain



Close bond: from left, Marigold Milliken, Iris Bull and Primrose Page on their 85th birthdays

For three Belfast sisters, the Easter weekend should have been the time for a big family celebration.

But the UK's oldest surviving triplets will instead, for the first time the family can remember, celebrate their birthdays in isolation in light of the Covid-19 guidelines.

Primrose Page, Iris Bull and Marigold Milliken all turn 87 on April 16, having been born on Easter Sunday 1933, and have been almost inseparable ever since.

All three still live not too many miles apart in Bangor, Holywood and Castlereagh.

Instead, the wider family will observe the new social distancing norm and will be making phone calls from around the country, with cakes and cards left on doorsteps.

"It's going to be a different sort of birthday for the three of them," said Page McLaughlin, Primrose's granddaughter.

"We had plans to all get together as usual on Easter Sunday but that's not going to happen now as a result of the coronavirus outbreak in Northern Ireland. My granny and aunts are all still living in their own homes and given their age and health conditions, they know we can't all be with them this year."

Born in the south east of England, the triplets moved to Belfast with their parents and older sister Marguerite not long after the end of the Second World War.

"My great-grandad John Bull had been in the Royal Air Force, but moved to Belfast with the family while working for Shorts," said Page.

Though the celebrations will be muted, Iris Bull said that even though the family

can't be together, they'll be with each other in spirit.

"We're always there for each other," she said from the isolation of her Castlereagh home.

"I look a little like Primrose but the three of us always had to fight for our own identity and I think that did us a lot of good over the years. We tried hard to stand out and we're all stronger for it.



"We've enjoyed separate lives, but together.

"We have our ups and downs like all sisters do, but we're still looking out for each other.

"I do recall during our days at primary school when I got punished instead of Primrose and she never spoke up, but I forgave her a long time ago for that!" she laughed.

"You'd think there would be battles over boyfriends to tell, but that was never the case. We were lucky we never went after the same boys, and that the boys always liked one of us and not the others!

"We all try to stay as active as we can, though that's been difficult lately," she said.

"I write and have had stories published, Primrose still plays piano marvellously and Marigold started knitting shawls for stillborn babies some time ago and she's still at the knitting today so we've

all got our specialities," she added. "We try to keep our minds active too. Reading newspapers, doing crosswords, that all keeps us in shape!

"We're very big into family celebrations but we'll just have to wait for the next one and make up for lost time when we can. There's a new baby in the family and we were all supposed to meet her when she came over from Scotland at the end of March so that was a disappointment, but we'll make up for lost moments soon enough," she said.

Primrose worked as a ward sister and superintendent in the health service, Iris for the civil service and as a school administrator, and Marigold was a BT telephonist.



"My grandmother married Wilbur Page and that's where I get my name from," said Page.

"They had two children, my mother Rosalind and her brother Timothy. Marigold also has one son, Edward," she added.

"Family occasions like this become all the more precious as the years go on so of course we'd all love to be together, but the best way we can think of showing them we love them all is by staying away.

"Sure we will make it up to them on their 88th birthdays next Easter!"

Belfast Telegraph

Well, if ever we were to understand the full implication of that old adage, "Just take a day at a time", surely we must know all about it now. Who could ever have imagined that when our new Vestry was appointed on Sunday 15 March, two days later, the new Vestry would be holding an Emergency meeting, social distancing in the Church, to take decisions to close the Church and discuss how we could keep our Church alive and how we would keep in touch with all our members. Indeed it was very poignant that that meeting was held in the Church Building. In fact things were happening at such a pace those first few days, changes were happening almost on an hourly basis. It became clear that we would be unable to meet as a Vestry because of lockdown, but it was also very clear at that meeting that we had a new Vestry desperate to support the Rector in all that needed to be done.

The Rector asked permission for a lamp to be lit in the sanctuary until the end of the crisis. It was agreed the Rector would send a letter to everyone on the Parish list, explaining what we were doing and why. At that time it was agreed the Church would remain open for private prayer. The phone would be manned in the Church office five mornings a week. The Rector would divide up the Parish list among Vestry members and they would make telephone or written contact, ensuring that all Parishioners knew who to contact if they needed help of any sort. The Rector would be in Church each day to offer prayers. Prayers could be left in the prayer bowl. The Parish website would be kept updated with current information.

Vestry Notes June/July/August 2020

At the Annual Easter Vestry the following appointments were made:



Gary Keenan
(Rector's Warden)



William McAneney
(Rector's Glebe Warden)



Florence McAneney
(Treasurer)



Heather Pentland
(Secretary)



Ken Boyd
(Peoples' Warden)



Tony Anderson
(Peoples' Glebe Warden)



Helen Parkinson



Bert Smith



Zandra Sloan



Jim



Maureen Taggart



Kate Murray



*Dorothy Anne
Crawford*



Jenny Craythorne



Dorothy McKnight



Hester Kelly

Tales From The Archives Summer 2020

Due to current conditions the Parish Archives have been operating from 12 Ballymacormick Road for the last two months with the Broom Cupboard in the Tyney Hall being devoid of human presence. Nonetheless the show must go on: so, this time around I am telling the tale of just one item, but a rather special one. It is the earthly authority by which the Parish of Groomsport exists – our Licence to Conduct Divine Worship. The Parish holds one of two hand written copies signed by the then Lord Bishop of Down, Conor and Dromore The Right Reverend Richard Mant and dated 26th November 1842. I have transcribed verbatim the Licence below, since the photograph here is too small to read easily.

Richard, by Divine permission Lord Bishop of Down and Dromore. To all persons whom it may concern, Greeting. Whereas a new Church has been lately erected at Groomsport in the parish of Bangor and in our Diocese of Down and the same is now ready for the celebration of Divine Service therein: License is hereby given to the Incumbent of the parish of Bangor and his Curates publicly to celebrate Divine Service and to administer the Holy Sacraments in said Church according to the rules and ceremonies of the United Church of England and Ireland during our will and pleasure or until such time as it shall be

lawful and convenient for us to consecrate the same. Given under our hand this twenty sixth day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty two and of our Translation the twentieth.

The document is signed: Richard, Down and Connor and Dromore. To one side is the Registrar's entry which reads: This License was issued and recorded in the Registry Office of the Diocese of Down and Connor by the direction of the Ordinary on this day of November 1842. It is signed William J. Higginson, Registrar. Noteworthy is the reference to the "United Church of England and Ireland" and the fact that the Registrar does not mention Dromore with which Down & Connor united in 1842, although the Bishop does.

According to Wikipedia, Richard Mant was born in Southampton, the son of a Headmaster. He was ordained in the Church of England and after several postings in England was Bishop of Killaloe & Kilfenora before coming to Down and Connor. He died on 2nd November 1848 in Ballymoney.

It is my belief that the date of 26th November should be celebrated annually as the foundation date for Groomsport Parish Church, perhaps using Advent Sunday as an appropriate occasion. Any feedback?

Stay safe and stay well.

Barry



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

Thoughts of a Blow In...

Firstly and most importantly, I do hope that everyone is keeping safe and well in these difficult and worrying times.

Having consistent contact from church has been such a boon for all of us, be it a phone call from a kind volunteer, online church services or, those regular newsletters through the post with printed prayers and vital information. We are blessed to have Duncan, the Select Vestry and everyone who contributes their time and prayers to make Groomsport Parish Church such a vibrant and caring community.

As we are easing into summer, it is a huge relief for us all to see some of the restrictions of lockdown being carefully and gradually lifted. Watching the odd sea swimmer, a sailing boat on the lough, or hearing about friends finally getting their golfing fix is heartwarming, and we even have a spell of fine weather to coincide with this.

Throughout lockdown, watching the children next door playing in the front garden (after their home-schooling, of course) has been a source of joy and amusement. The other day, the two younger ones were playing hide

and seek outside. Emma, who is now eight, couldn't find her younger brother anywhere and was standing around looking very puzzled.

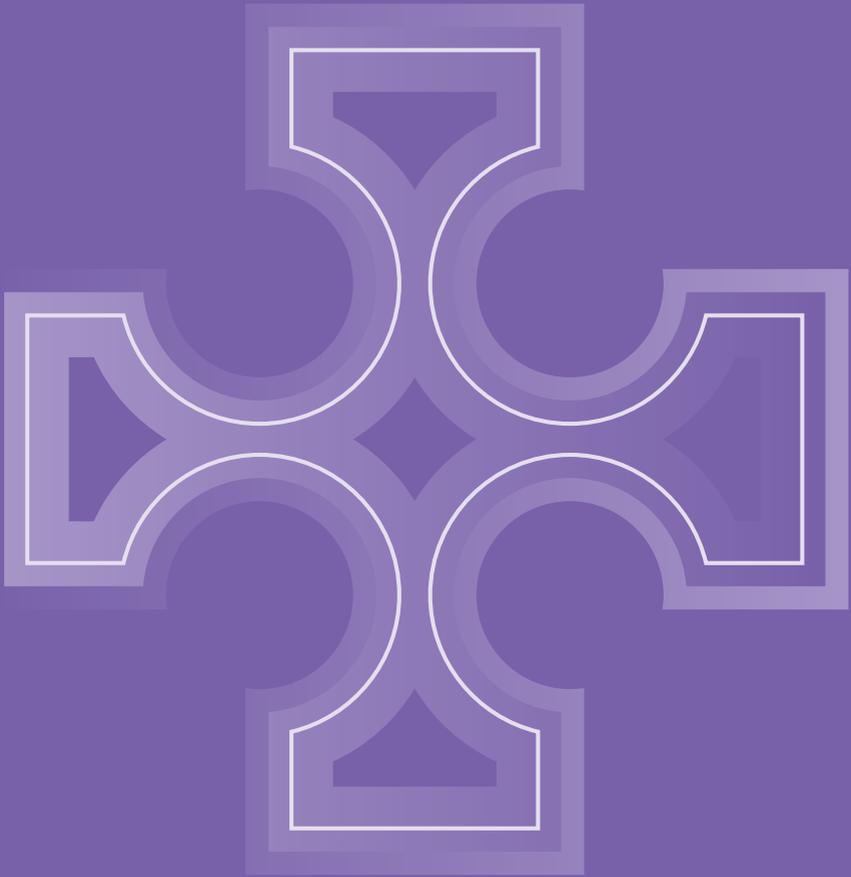
Suddenly, Leo emerged from the trunk where they keep their outdoor toys and gave her such a fright before she started giggling. How he fitted his long legs in the box, I have no idea!

They have also been so good at distributing cake to the neighbours for me, as a bit of baking cheers everyone up. The system is that I have left labelled plates outside my front door, then, I have waited for the clatter of feet and excited voices. There is always the inevitable squabbling about who is going to take which plate. "No, I want to take that one," or, "It's not fair, you did it last time!" This just adds to the whole amusement of the ritual. They take great pride in being the neighbourhood cake elves, bless them.

In looking for a suitable verse for the time of year and these extraordinary circumstances, this old English proverb seemed to fit the bill. Wishing everyone a safe summer and do take good care.

Cynthia





Groomspout Parish Church

CONTACT

groomspoutparishchurch.org