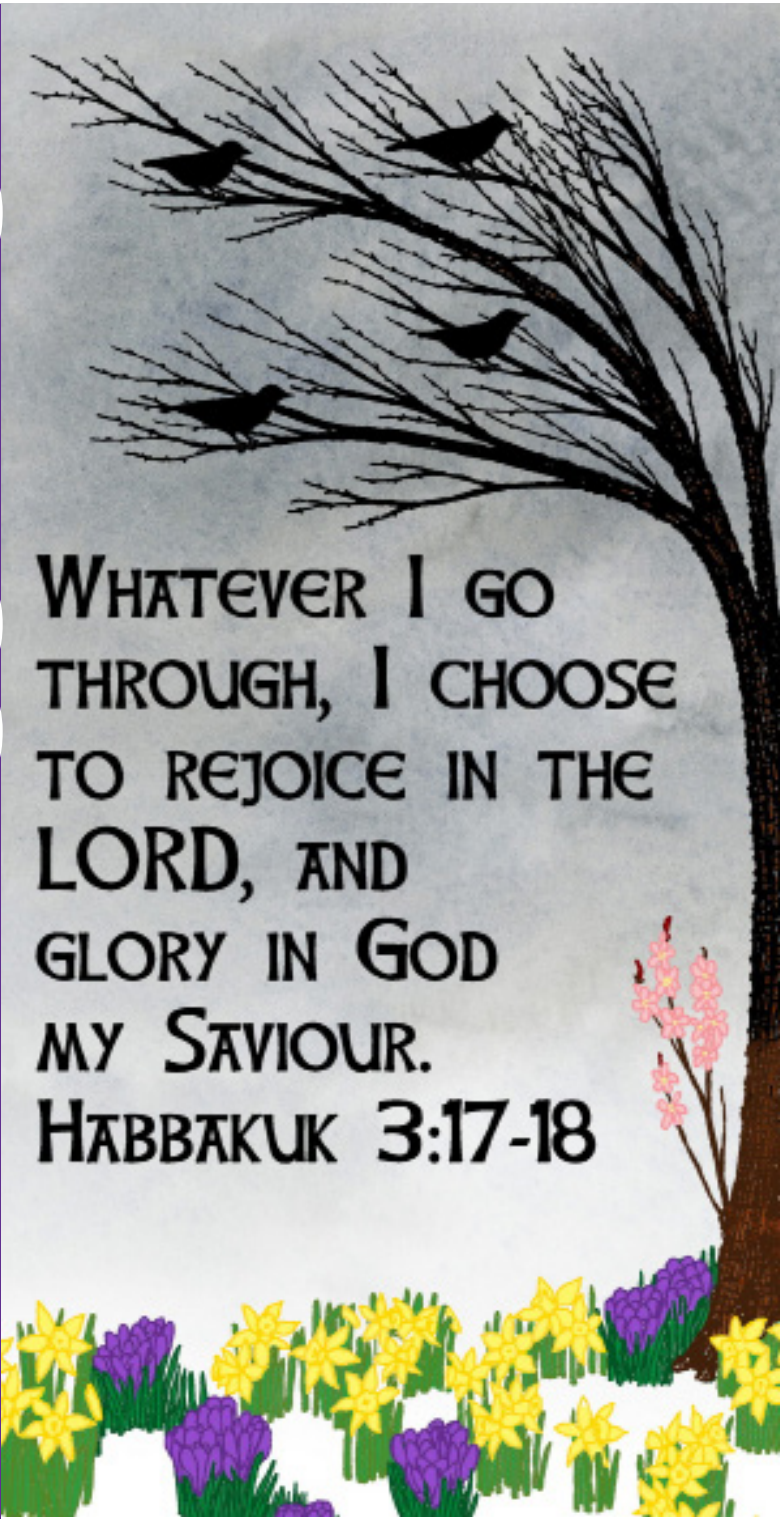


# CONTACT

[www.groomsportparishchurch.org](http://www.groomsportparishchurch.org)

An illustration of a tree with several black birds perched on its bare branches. The tree is set against a light grey background. At the bottom of the image, there is a field of yellow daffodils and purple crocuses. A small branch with pink blossoms extends from the right side of the tree.

WHATEVER I GO  
THROUGH, I CHOOSE  
TO REJOICE IN THE  
LORD, AND  
GLORY IN GOD  
MY SAVIOUR.  
HABBAKUK 3:17-18

# From The Pulpit

*During the interregnum, a number of ministers are leading our services. In this issue we share a little about Canon Walter Laverty..*

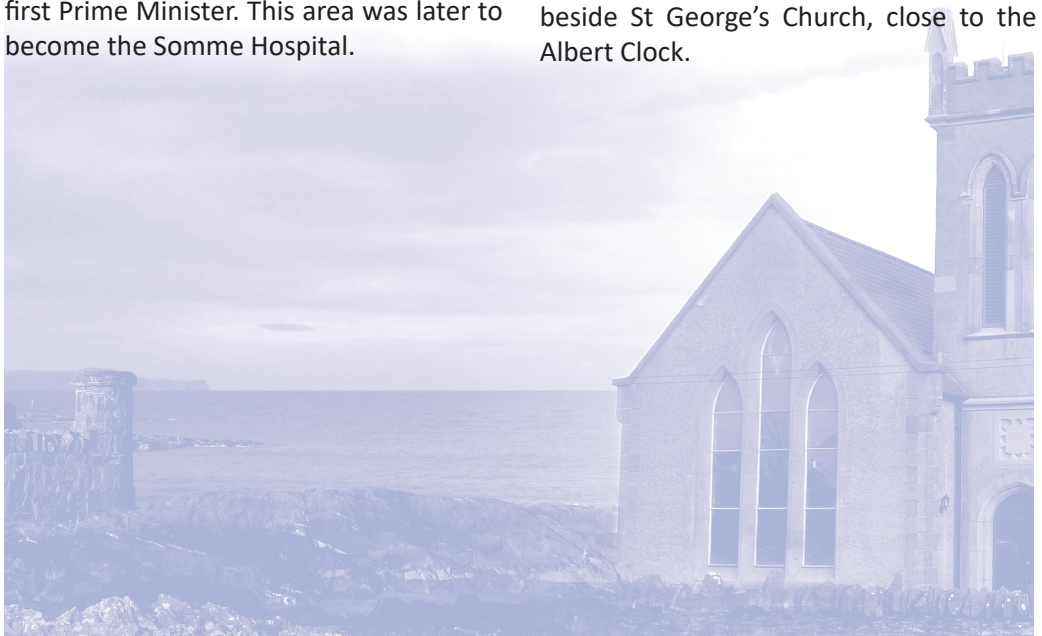


I grew up in Tillysburn Park, off Holywood Road. Long ago, before the houses were built, the area had served as the private driveway to the home of James Craig, our first Prime Minister. This area was later to become the Somme Hospital.

There was also a little gatehouse at the entrance at Tillysburn Park which St Mark's Church later used as a Sunday school before it became a shop.

I was taken there at the age of four and on returning home, I declared to Mum "I want to be the funny wee man who doesn't know how to put on his collar!" All through my childhood I did not want to be anything else.

After school, I worked for three years for a plumbing and hardware firm, Joseph Blair and Sons. Most of the work involved setting up contracts with large building firms, where I learned a lot. The site of Joseph Blair is now a multi-story car park, beside St George's Church, close to the Albert Clock.



At the age of 21 I began Theological College in Dublin, then at the age of 24 was ordained for the curacy of St Donard's, Bloomfield. It was a daunting experience to stand in the pulpit and preach to many people who were at least twice my age. There is no way I would inflict any of those sermons on anyone today!

After St Donard's, I transferred my curacy into a neighbouring Parish, to St Patrick's, Ballymacarrett. This was a very different learning curve and experience to what I had previously known. It was there, I met Barbara, who was in the choir and was training as a nurse at the Ulster Hospital. We married in St Patrick's in 1979 and our son Mark was born in 1981. Shortly afterwards I was appointed the Rector of my first Parish, Upper and Lower Kilwarlin, which is cross country between Hillsborough and Moira. I was there for four years and learned much about country life. It was in Kilwarlin that our second child Rachel was born in 1984.

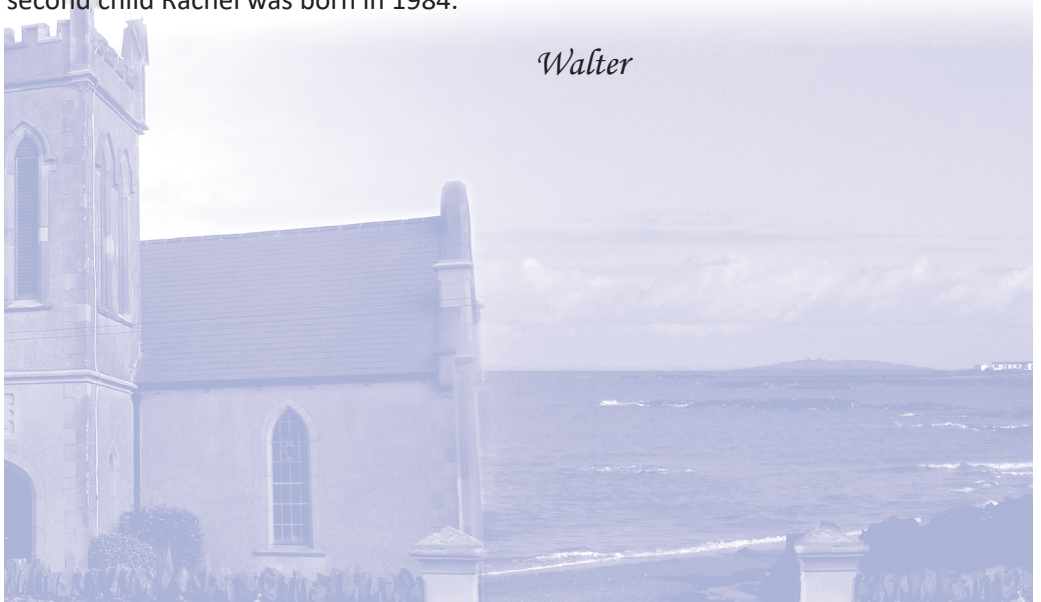
In 1986 I was appointed Rector of St John's Orangefield and remained there for almost 28 years until my retirement in 2014.

Barbara and I now live in Dundonald close to the Ulster Hospital. In retirement it is a pleasure to be able to help out during vacancies in different Parishes in the diocese. These have included St Molua's, Stormont, and St Dorothea's, Gilnahirk. Also Kilcoo and Castlewellan, Ardmore near Craigavon, and Aghalee Parish.

As a family, we worship in St Columba's, Knock, but I'm afraid I must rate amongst their worst attenders!

Over the past few months, it has been a very great privilege to serve you in Groomsport and to get to know many. It is my prayerful wish, that guided by the Holy Spirit, you will soon have someone in charge and move forward into the new year, filled with hope and God's blessing for the future.

*Walter*



# Contact Us

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## The People's Warden

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## The Rector's Glebe Warden

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Co Down  
BT19 6JR

office@groomsportparishchurch.org

028 91271311



# February & March 2023

## Fourth Sunday after The Epiphany

*29th January*

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

## Third Sunday Before Lent

*5th February - Candlemas*

8:30 am Holy Communion  
10:30 am Family Service  
6:00 pm Evening Prayer

## Second Sunday Before Lent

*12th February*

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

## Sunday Before Lent

*19th February*

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

## First Sunday in Lent

*26th February*

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

## Second Sunday in Lent

*5th March*

8:30 am Holy Communion  
10:30 am Family Service  
6:00 pm Evening Prayer

## Third Sunday in Lent

*12th March*

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

## Fourth Sunday in Lent

*19th March*

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

## Fifth Sunday in Lent

*26th March*

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



Tuesdays 7:30 pm - Compline  
Thursdays 11:00 am - Holy Communion  
10:30 am on the first Wednesday every month - Holy Communion  
is celebrated in the Chapel at Mount Stewart.

# A Word from Canon Simon Doogan

*You are probably aware that the Select Vestry has been very busy selling the old Rectory and purchasing a new home for our next minister. This has been a very busy and very stressful time, especially for Dorothy McKnight the sub committee Chairman. However, I am glad to report that we are now the owners of a beautiful property with sea views in Cove Avenue.*

*It is now the turn of the Trustees who have advertised for our next pastoral leader. I would ask you to continue to pray that the right person will be led to make an application and that the Trustees are guided to make the right choice.*



## **Parish Vacancies: Three 'Ps' (four, really)**

A prayer during the vacancy of a parish.

Almighty God, the giver of every good gift, look graciously, we beseech thee, on thy Church, and so guide with thy heavenly wisdom the minds of those to whom is committed the choice of a minister for this parish, that we may receive a faithful pastor, who shall feed thy flock according to thy will, and make ready a people acceptable unto thee; through Jesus Christ, thine only Son our Lord. Amen

*Book of Common Prayer 2004 page 149*

The best interests of every vacant parish are served where all concerned unite under the Lordship of Christ to find the person he is calling to lead God's people into their next stage of growth and ministry.

## **Partnership**

A spirit of trust, co-operation and patience is essential through what can feel for everyone like a rather tense time of waiting. In order of their involvement, the lead parties in all appointments are as follows:-

### The Bishop

Every stage is overseen by the Bishop on behalf of the diocese and parish. The Bishop invites the Area Dean to provide pastoral cover and the Diocesan Curate to arrange Sunday worship cover. Ultimately it is the Bishop who licences the clergy to serve, providing they are professionally and personally qualified.

### The Select Vestry

Chaired through the vacancy by the Area Dean, the Select Vestry ensures the worshipping, witnessing life of the parish is maintained. It also attends to its Constitutional requirements in terms of providing a suitable rectory and guaranteeing a stipend so that an appointment can proceed without delay.

The Commission is a standing committee of the Diocesan Council, representatives of which meet with the Select Vestry in order to explore its vision and ensure it meets its Constitutional requirements (above). Once the Commission reports back positively to the Council, their work is done.

Parochial Nominators/Trustees  
(exceptionally)

These local church representatives draw up a parish profile, suggest names, meet with prospective new rectors and attempt to find a suitable candidate for Nomination to the Bishop.

**Process (& Privacy)**

For good reason, not least to ensure the new relationships that come with every new appointment start well, appointment processes are conducted under the strictest of confidence, usually after an oath of secrecy. Once underway, formal Minutes are not recorded, and no running commentary is offered. Names or other personal information should never be disclosed (remembering GDPR requirements) and Select Vestries should not seek or expect progress reports from the Nominators/Trustees over and above general statements on progress. The only clergy name which should ever emerge afterwards is the person finally nominated. No voting or other details should accompany the announcement or seep out later.

The primary responsibility of everyone concerned is to pray that the Lord will raise up the right person. It's often been said, that a parish gets the rector it prays for. Little can go wrong if the entire vacancy, from the previous incumbent's retirement service to the new Incumbent's Institution Service, becomes a matter of concerted and heartfelt prayer.

*Father surround our Parish  
with your love:  
We are not a great Cathedral  
or Minster;  
We do not have a choir of  
world renown;  
We might not set the world  
on fire, but dear Lord,  
we are loving and faithful.  
Father surround our  
Parish with your love;  
Lord Jesus enable us to  
live your Gospel;  
Holy Spirit empower us to  
be the disciples you  
would have us be.  
Bless our Bishop, our Vestry,  
our Trustees and bless that  
person destined to be  
our new Rector.*

# Annual Easter Vestry Notes

## Annual Easter Vestry

### Sunday 19 March 2023- Nominations

The Annual Easter Vestry will take place in the halls immediately following Morning Prayer on Sunday 19 March. It will be chaired by Canon Simon Doogan, Area Dean. Canon Doogan has suggested that nomination forms be distributed and returned before the meeting. You will find one enclosed with this magazine or they will be available in church. Please complete and return to Heather by Sunday 5 March or it cannot be included.

The outgoing Vestry members are as follows:

Rector's Warden - Mae Burke

People's Warden - Bert Smith

Rector's Glebe Warden - William McAneney

People's Glebe Warden - Tony Anderson

Secretary - Heather Pentland

Treasurer - Florence McAneney

Select Vestry Members: Maureen Taggart, Dorothy Anne Crawford, Helen Parkinson, Kate Murray, Dorothy McKnight, Jim Love, Gary Keenan, Barry Greenaway, Stephen McCullough, Ken Boyd.

On the nomination page, you are simply proposing Select Vestry members, NOT office bearers. You will notice that you need their prior consent so that they can sign the form.

## Minutes 2022 and Accounts

It is hoped that Minutes of last year's meeting and the Accounts will be available in Church by 12 March.

**Any queries must be submitted to the Secretary or Treasurer by 9.00 am on Friday 17 March so that any relevant enquiries can be made prior to the AGM. This can be done through the office.**

## Grant Aid

The total amount raised in grant support for Groomsport Parish projects from 2018 to date is £175,800. If you would like to know any more about how the church benefits from these grants please contact Barry.

## Sunday School

What a joy to see our Sunday School back in Church and taking part in the Service. They look very smart in their hi-vis yellow vests keeping them safe and standing out on their walk up to Church. Thanks to Mothers Union for funding the cost of the vests.





# Vestry Minutes

It was agreed the Christmas church services had been excellent. Canon Doogan was thanked for all his visiting during the Christmas period.

The story of the Clavinovas is reported in a separate article.

Florence is keeping the Select Vestry informed about rising energy costs. William has been asked to research the lift difficulties in the Halls. Barry has offered to research grants. The original date stone is now in place in the church.

Mask-wearing would seem to have disappeared. Mae's suggestion of introducing a dual system in Holy Communion services seems to have worked well – it has meant kneeling at the Communion rail and being offered the Chalice containing wine (which acts as an antiseptic with the silver), or grape juice in the shot glasses for those who still feel uncomfortable about the common cup. People should be reminded about using the hand sanitiser.

Kate, Heather, and David McKnight have been meeting to review the protocols and applications for the use of our halls. The Select Vestry has authorised the new documents. David will meet the leaders of all groups to talk face-to-face about the changes.

Charity giving was postponed until the New Year when it was agreed to support CSMI as usual and this year to give £300

each to RNLI, Alzheimer's, Motor Neurone, Combat Stress (PTSD) and JDRF (Type 1 diabetes research for young people).

Numbers at Morning services have been steady. Despite the numbers at Evening Service being low, no changes will be made during the interregnum.

The Church now has a new Rectory so the process of advertising the vacancy has begun. (See Canon Doogan's paper on the subject.)

Barry's idea of a glass cabinet to display items from the archives and a notice board outside the halls have been put on hold.

At the January meeting, it was agreed the Annual Easter Vestry will be on Sunday 19 March following Morning Prayer. The list of Vestrymen is available for inspection in the office.

A subcommittee has been formed to prepare the rectory for the new appointment. It is made up of Dorothy, William, and Tony (Chair).

## Photographs

We have, photographs of those who attended Rev Duncan Pollock's last service in Groomsport Parish. Please let Amanda know if you would like a copy of your photograph. Permission was granted, at the time, for all photographs taken on the day.

# *No, You're Not Seeing Double!*

In the last magazine, I reported that the Select Vestry had agreed to the request of the organist to purchase a Clavinova (a digital piano) for the church. I also asked if anyone would be interested in donating to this venture.

While I was in Scotland, I was contacted by two people – Patrick Freeman the son of a previous Rector of Groomsport and Colin Crozier, one of our parishioners. Many of you will remember Colin donning a red suit for many years at the Christmas Fair. Bear in mind that when I received these two calls, the Church Clavinova had already been purchased.

Patrick was ringing from England to offer us a new Clavinova used a handful of times. Colin was ringing to offer a donation of £500 towards the cost of a Clavinova.

Following a few chats with each of them,

I am delighted to report that Patrick was willing to donate his Clavinova for use in the church halls and Colin was willing to pay for the cost of transporting it from England.

On your behalf, I have written to both men to thank them for their generosity and I hope you will enjoy reading Patrick's account of his experience of Groomsport. The photo of Santa should bring back some happy memories.

Now perhaps you realise why you're not seeing double!! The first photo is Maurice sitting at the Clavinova in the Church and the other photo is of Maurice sitting at Patrick's Clavinova in the hall.

Now the pressure is on Maurice and Jubilate to introduce us to the fabulous sound these instruments can make!

*Heather*



Colin Crozier as Santa Claus



The Gifted Clavinova

I was born on 2nd May 1942. My father was Rector of Groomsport and had been instituted in 1937 shortly after marrying my mother Helen in the same year. Before my second birthday, my father was holding a meeting of the Select Vestry on the 18th April 1944 in the Old Rectory, when he suffered a stroke. One of the vestrymen was a doctor, and he arranged an immediate transfer to Bangor Hospital, but sadly my father died.

Prior to my mother and I leaving the rectory, the parish had a collection to set up a fund for my further education. This was not to be accessed until after my eighteenth birthday. I was always grateful to the parish for their generous fund which was raised for my benefit. My late mother and I continued to keep in contact with many of the parishioners, in particular, I remember the Martin family from Moor Farm.

I eventually qualified as a dental surgeon in 1965 and after 10 years in practice, I moved to live in England to set up a practice in Somerset. This was where

my wife and I raised a family. I retired from practice in 1999 and five years ago I made contact with the Groomsport Parish Church again where I was invited to attend the service to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the parish.

In September 2021 my wife sadly died and I decided to move closer to my family in Sussex. I played the organ in earlier life, and always had an interest in music, so when I moved to a retirement apartment I bought a Clavinova. However, despite my initial enthusiasm, I couldn't raise enough interest to regularly play the instrument.

When I received a copy of the Groomsport Parish Contact magazine I was interested to read of the decision to buy a Clavinova and a request for help to buy it. I immediately thought that my Clavinova could be used in a practical way, and it would finally be a way of thanking the parish for their generosity to me 78 years ago. I am so very happy to have provided the Clavinova as a gift and as thanks for the generosity provided to me all those years ago.

*Patrick Freeman*



Rev George Freeman

# Child Contact Centre

In today's society apparently one in three marriages or relationships end up in divorce or separation, resulting in many babies and children having no contact with one of their parents.

Child Contact Centres are a place where a parent or family members can meet up with a child or children in a safe environment. Contact Centres are generally open once a week and in this area, there is one in First Bangor Presbyterian Church and one in Streaton Presbyterian church in Newtownards.

They provide a warm, safe, friendly environment for parents to meet their child or children. The Centres are run by a coordinator who is supported by trained volunteers. The initial handover of a child from one parent to another often has to be done very sensitively as some parents are not happy to have direct contact with each other.

I became a volunteer almost seven years ago. I knew nothing at all about contact Centres until I was introduced to them by Maggie Smith (Bert's wife). She has been a volunteer for well over ten years. I initially had three evenings of training and courses are organised regularly to update this training.

In this local area, there are approximately thirty volunteers with their ages ranging from high teens to one faithful volunteer who is well into her eighties. There are students, mothers, grandmothers,

great-grandmothers and several men.

As a volunteer, I find it really rewarding to see relationships develop between a parent and a child or children who may have had little or no contact previously. Often we come across a young inexperienced dad who meets his child for the first time. It is wonderful to see how with a little encouragement his confidence grows and he is able to get to know his child. As well as being rewarding, it is enjoyable working as a member of a Child Contact team.



Volunteers in this area are well looked after and we are given the occasional treat. At Christmas, we are taken out for a Christmas dinner, a Spa Day at the Culloden and lunch in the members' dining room at Stormont. This is an opportunity for the team members to get to know each other and we volunteers do appreciate this.

Anyone who would like to volunteer or find out more may contact Maryanne Doherty our co-ordinator by email on [mdoherty.nccc@gmail.com](mailto:mdoherty.nccc@gmail.com) for further information.

*Rosemary Smith*



## Soup & Scones

On the first and third Thursday of every month Pauline Harrison, Cathie Brown and Gordon Boyd host a special 'coffee morning' where you can get a nice bowl of homemade soup and some freshly baked scones. Although this event was not intended to be a fund-raiser, it has raised over £400 in donations so far and this will be put to a good cause, although what cause has not been decided yet. Thank you to everyone who helps out and thank you, especially, to those who turn up on the day for the delicious food.

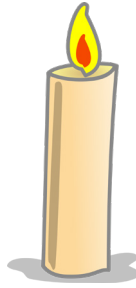


## Storehouse

Thanks from Storehouse has been extended to all of the churches for the tremendous support they have given throughout the year and including the harvest appeal. This support has enabled storehouse to help well over 2000 people in 2022. Storehouse also is helping refugee families and the International Meeting Point in Belfast and other homeless charities.

Keep up the good work, don't forget you can drop off donations into the halls on weekday mornings (11 am - noon) or the Church on any day of the week.

## Candlemas



In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2nd February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'. At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So, where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was, is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

# Caspar's Camel Man

The books tell you all about our masters, but you don't hear about us. Do you imagine that these learned men travelled all that way - my master, Caspar and I came from Persia - on their own? Who do you think looked after the camels and the food and the tents? No, there were a lot of us and we were needed.

At first, it seemed like an adventure, getting away from all the routine drudgery that we faced, but after a few weeks I began to long for home and the wife, there was no one here to look after me or say a kind word now and again. Not that the master was harsh, he was very fair, but not a practical man. Always had his head in an old map or manuscript. We weren't too sure about this journey, the master said that we had to travel to a faraway

country. A star had suddenly appeared in the sky which would lead us. They said a new king had been born and that was what the star meant. There was a new star, that was obvious, it was bright and somehow different from the others and it moved quite clearly, not like a shooting star, but not slowly like the other stars as the night progressed.

As we journeyed we met up with others until there was quite a large group of us - good really, there's safety in numbers because the journey wasn't easy. Our masters sat round the fire we built each night discussing the star and the journey, while we settled the camels and checked that they were all fit and well.

Eventually, we came close to Judea, our



destination or so Caspar told me. We had to wait outside the palace walls while they went in to talk to Herod, the king. They came out rather disturbed and talked a lot that night between themselves. I don't think they much cared for Herod, even though he was a king. The next day we set off to the nearby town and they noticed that the star had stopped moving. We were all puzzled because we had left the grand palace and buildings far behind, this didn't look like somewhere that a king would be born.

After some searching they found an outhouse where the animals belonging to an innkeeper lived, the star had stopped right overhead and from a distance, we could see a glowing light coming from this building. Our masters went in and some of us saw that they brought all sorts of expensive gifts to give to the new king, and they knelt, in the straw in their fine gowns. We couldn't understand it.

Much later they came out, they were quiet and very thoughtful, but when I looked at my master, his face was glowing,

it was very strange, but I knew something special had happened to them all. That night they sat up late, planning where to go next. There was a whisper that Herod wanted them to go back, to tell him about the new king but the next morning they were all clear that we were to keep as far away from the palace as we could and set off on the return journey by a different route.

All this happened a long time ago and I am an old man now. I told my children about it all when I got back and now I tell my grandchildren. It seems that we were part of something very special though we didn't realise it at the time. This baby was Jesus Christ and he was the son of God and now from all the countries that we travelled from there are Christians as they call themselves. I am a Christian too now, and it feels very special to have played a part in telling all the world about the son of God.

*Carol Walters*

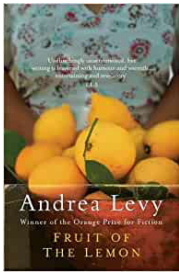
***'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?  
For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.'  
When they had heard the king, they set out; and there,  
ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,  
until it stopped over the place where the child was.  
When they saw that the star had stopped,  
they were overwhelmed with joy.  
On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother;  
and they knelt down and paid him homage.  
Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of  
gold, frankincense, and myrrh.***

# Book Stall

A happy and healthy New Year to all my readers! I have some interesting books to review for you this month and I hope you enjoy them as much as I have. I try to put the reviewed books on the top shelf of the bookcase once the Contact is distributed with the reviews in it but forgive me if I am sometimes a little late with this - as was the case in November. The books reviewed below will, I hope be placed there in good time.

## Fruit of the Lemon

*Andrea Levy*



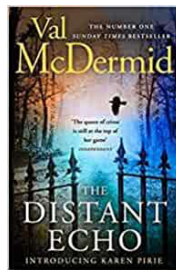
I had previously read "Small Island" Andrea Levy's award-winning novel about the experiences of Jamaican immigrants to 1950s Britain and found it moving and revelatory. This story I enjoyed in a rather different way. We get to

know Faith, born in London and living with her loving but rather overwhelming family there. She gets a flatshare which she hopes will bring her more independence and as her first, initially promising job ends suddenly, is able to get a job at Television Centre. She feels that her life is really beginning. Working in the wardrobe department turns out to be rather less challenging and interesting than she had imagined but it is only when she manages to progress to the role of dresser, that the first inklings of discrimination impinge on her. In fact, she has become so inured to the way she is usually treated that she is not sensitive to it in the way that many twenty-first century people belonging to an ethnic minority are. Her life starts to change rapidly.

Her parents announce that they are considering going back to Jamaica, she learns at work that "they didn't think the actors would like a coloured person putting their clothes on" and suddenly she is faced with questioning her life. Her mother's sister, Aunt Coral, still living in Jamaica, invites her to stay for a holiday and she finds herself in a place where she is no longer a minority. As she gradually gets used to a strange way of life, a different climate and is the recipient of endless stories of her family background she begins to understand who she is. Coral is the family aural historian, though it is evident that she is not an altogether reliable narrator. When it is time to return to London Faith is clear about who she is and where she fits, the story does not tell us but it seems very likely that she will make her way with much more confidence. For those who like a family tree, there are several in this book! The book is filled with insight, humour and compassion.

## The Distant Echo

*Val McDermid*



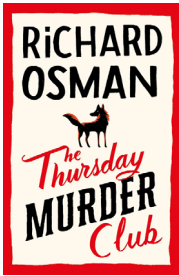
This was recently dramatised on ITV, as I was reading it at the time I started to watch it but gave up because I did not like the characterisation of Karen Pirie, the detective in this story. However the story itself is well worth reading if you enjoy detective fiction. On a bitterly cold snowy night in St Andrews, four drunken students making their way back home after a night out, stumble across the body of a woman who has clearly been attacked. Inevitably



they are suspects when the police arrive and although never charged the weight of the suspicion attached to them haunts them for many years. Twenty-five years later we meet these now middle aged men as the police start on a “cold case review”. The four are still suspects it appears, but, when two of them die in suspicious circumstances it seems that possibly the murdered girl’s rather violent brothers may be conducting their own justice system. The only possible escape for the two remaining suspects is to find out who was really behind the murder. A well crafted story.

### The Thursday Murder Club

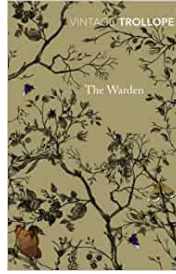
*Richard Osman*



You will probably have heard of this as before its launch it was very heavily publicised. Possibly you have read it. If not, do give it a go. Set in a very comfortable retirement village four new friends have added to the list of available activities enjoyed by these active retirees. They have formed a club which meets on Thursdays and investigates old unsolved murder cases. These are not just any old people. Amongst them we have a nurse, a trade union leader, a psychologist and an ex MI5 officer whose remaining influence proves to be invaluable to the group. The characters are delightful, the story very convincing as a detective story and the humour wonderful. Richard Osman has ticked all the boxes for me, I loved every minute of this book and was sorry when I came to the end. As Val McDermid has said

it’s a “warm, wise and witty warning never to underestimate the elderly”!

### The Warden *Anthony Trollope*



This caught my eye when I was tidying up the spare books that we have stored. I thought I would reread it after many years. I thoroughly enjoyed it. This is the first of a series of six books dealing with the fictional cathedral

town of Barchester. This first one is the shortest and is a delightful story of church politics. The eponymous warden is Septimus Harding a well-respected and loved clergyman whose wardenship is of an almshouse for aged and impoverished working men. His gentle ways and placid disposition are no match for a young and zealous new arrival in the neighbourhood whose determination to apply utter rectitude and correctness to all the doings of the diocese are morally correct but utterly heartless. It is a perfect example of faith without charity. Written in 1855 it is slow-moving but nevertheless a really good read and one I would recommend. I have followed the reading of this with three of the sequels which each deal with a slightly different group of people in the diocese.

### Safe Haven *Nicholas Sparks*

Safe Haven by Nicholas Sparks. I had never read Nicholas Sparks before so didn’t know what to expect. For those who enjoy a good romance, this will be a popular choice. Katie suddenly appears in the small North Carolina town of Southport. She is quiet, unforthcoming about her history and lives in a remote cottage outside the town. Consequently, mystery surrounds her and it becomes gradually apparent that she is afraid of something.

We learn slowly that she has escaped from an unendurable life. Inevitably there is a young widower with small children who takes an interest in this solitary woman, but she, with good reason, is very wary of forming any personal relationships. This for me became a real page-turner. It is well-written and very gripping with a mysterious element to it which adds to the tension.

*I hope you find something to appeal to you amongst these varied books. Perhaps you were given a book at Christmas that you have read? One way I will accept new additions to the bookshelves are if they are accompanied by a review - food for thought?*

*Carol*

## *World Day of Prayer*

**Friday 3rd March 2023**

**The 2023 World Day of Prayer will be held in Groomsport Presbyterian Church.**

**The service will commence at 11:00 am. Tea and coffee will be served in the Walter Nelson Hall, before the event at 10:00 am.**

**The World Day of Prayer Coffee Morning will be held at Groomsport Presbyterian Church Halls on Saturday 11th February from 10:30 am to noon.**

*Please come along and support these events.*



# Thoughts of a Blow In ...

This time of year always seems to bring proof that time really does fly. With all the commotion and preparation for the run-up to Christmas, all of a sudden, here we are on the other side of that festival and already in a brand new year!

Following the celebration of Christmas, both in church and spent with friends and family, the long month of January can stretch rather dauntingly before us. Everything seems grey and flat as we return to the reality of our routines, without even the festive Christmas lights to brighten the long, dark nights.

Perhaps reflections on the warmth and joy of Christmas can help us weather the winter until we are safely through to spring. After two years, when most of us necessarily pared down our Christmas socialising, it was such a pleasure to be able to relax with some restraint. I thoroughly enjoyed spending Christmas Day with friends and catching up with their news. It was lovely to see everyone, especially the young people in the extended family. I've known them since they were children (time flying away again!) Now they are all grown up, studying or working and scattered in all

directions. It was a real treat to catch up face-to-face with their busy lives, careers and activities.

In the flurry of post-Christmas gift thank yous, it was also lovely to hear from my godsons over the water via their mum. As she was writing the email, she reported that Jack, at eighteen, was determinedly piecing together a second-hand Lego set he'd snagged online. His task was to painstakingly check that out of the hundreds of pieces, no vital one was missing. That's dedication!

Between the rain and snow showers, I've caught glimpses of the children next door in the brief period they've been able to play outside, usually alerted by their giggles. When possible, they've been making enthusiastic use of the new football goalposts that Santa brought them. Always fun to see!

For our verse this month, I couldn't resist a bit of Shakespeare. I hope you segue as smoothly from the winter to the spring as these lovely lines from *A Winter's Tale*.

*Cynthia*

*You'd be so lean, that blast of January  
Would blow you through and through. Now, my fair'st friend,  
I would I had some flowers o' the spring that might  
Become your time of day.*

# Groomsport Lights Switch-On

After a few years of reduced celebrations, we were delighted to be able to restore the full programme for the switching on of the Christmas tree lights in Groomsport on Friday evening, 2nd December. Working with our friends in Groomsport Presbyterian Church, the event started with a lovely well attended family service, followed by the switching on of the tree lights by Alan Chambers our local MLA and a well-known personality in the village. Music by the Symington Memorial Silver Band around the tree made it a very festive event and raised excitement levels as over 120 children started making their way to our halls in the hope of seeing Santa.

In the halls, the band continued with their Christmas music, while an array of festive food was served and a range of



activities were in place including face painting, balloon shaping, crafts and art materials and of course the candy floss machine to help entertain, while the children waited patiently to see the man himself in his beautifully decorated grotto. Santa along with his elf spent time talking to each child and of course gave them a goodie bag to take away. From the comments received and the smiles on faces, everyone seemed to enjoy their evening

Our thanks go to Ards and North Down Borough Council for their invaluable financial and practical support before and at the event, to local traders who helped supply the food, and to all those who worked along side both churches to make the event such a success.



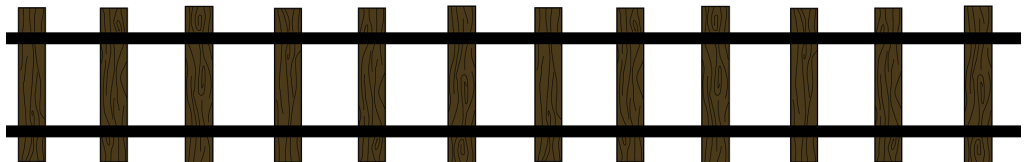
## TRAIN LINES

**FROM MY CARRIAGE WINDOW  
I CAN SEE  
THE PASSING BRANCHES, OF A TREE,  
SO STARK AND BARE,  
OF LEAVES SET FREE,  
REACHING UP TO THE SKY, INQUISITIVELY.**

**BUT LOOK,  
A NEST,  
IN PROFILE TELLS,  
OF LAST YEAR'S SPRING,  
AND EMPTY SHELLS,  
ITS ARCHITECTURE STRONG AND SOUND,  
A CELTIC KNOT SECURES THE ROUND.**

**SO, COME ON WINTER'S COLD AND RAIN,  
YOU WILL FOREVER LONG, REMAIN,  
FOR NOW I KNOW THAT SPRING WILL COME,  
WITH LEAVES, FLOWERS, BIRDS, AND WARMING SUN,  
AND WE WILL SEE THE NEW NESTS AGAIN,  
FROM THE BANGOR TO BELFAST TRANSLINK TRAIN**

*By Adeline Cully*





# Walking for Softies

Our walk on 30th October was to take us to the Titanic Quarter in Belfast, or at least that was the intention. We gathered as usual at Bangor Railway Station. Unfortunately, however, the wet and windy weather delayed the trains but also resulted in the cancellation of trains stopping at Titanic. Disaster! But no. Like the ever-resourceful Baldrick, we came up with a cunning plan! We instead took ourselves off to Crawfordsburn Country Park. And there, among the doggie walkers and steaming anoraks, we managed to console ourselves with lashings of coffee and their sumptuous choice of scones. But the weather gods are not all contrary. The rain soon stopped and we were able to enjoy a short walk together, before heading back to the cars and the drive home.

But we are a determined, if not stubborn, bunch of strollers. Nor had we forgotten Titanic. And so it was the following Saturday we again met, and this time succeeded in catching the train to the Belfast Harbour Estate. And there, the sun was awaiting us and the rain kept well away. We enjoyed a fascinating walk as far as The Great Light, the awesome optical mirror and light, which was at one time perched on top of the Copeland Island lighthouse. As ever, the craic was great and a memorable morning was had by all.



In November, we found ourselves at Delamont Country Park near Killyleagh - a first time for most of us.

Again the weather could have been better, but that didn't detract from our exploration of this little-known but beautifully located and cultivated 200-acre park, which lies just south of Killyleagh.

Afterwards, we took ourselves off to The Conservatory Cafe at Balloo, where we were regally treated with steaming coffee and mouth-watering scones, all served with a smile and a warm welcome.



If you'd like to join us in our next jaunt, or simply meet us for coffee afterwards, then simply contact Ian or Zandra, 0796 8401386. You will be welcomed among friends, and may find yourself wanting to come again!

Our January walk will be to Kiltonga Bird Sanctuary in Newtownards, followed by Hillsborough Forest Park in February.



# Christmas Afternoon Tea

After many years of running a very successful Christmas Fair, and over the Covid period an online Christmas food sale, the Events Team thought that for 2022 it would be lovely to run an event which would allow us to get together to enjoy each other's company and have some festive cheer. We, therefore, decided on a Christmas Afternoon Tea and given the event is also a fundraiser for the church, a small number of stalls. Menus were debated, hall decorations discussed and the stalls agreed as being gifts, cakes and jams marmalades and chutneys, all of which had been popular in previous years. We were also very happy to include the Twelve Days of Christmas Ballot, which with some fantastic prizes, has always been well supported.

The event was arranged for 10th December and on the day it was all hands on deck decorating the halls and preparing the food. It is safe to say that the hall and tables looked fantastic, thanks in no small part to the lovely table decorations prepared by some of our team. Before the Afternoon Tea was served, those attending had the opportunity to visit the stalls to buy gifts and Christmas goodies. Then it was down to the main event for a glass of mulled wine and an array of festive food including cream scones, a range of sandwiches, mince pies, shortbread and a wonderful lemon posset for dessert.

The tea was followed by the Christmas Draw. We all had our eyes on a number of the prizes, hoping for the best, but

eventually, the twelve numbers were drawn and the lucky winners received their luxury items including jewellery, bags, and food hampers.

The entertainment for the afternoon was ably provided by our own Jubilate who sang several Christmas pieces and then had us all join in singing Christmas carols. It was a fantastic end to the event and sent everyone off looking forward to the Christmas period. Our thanks go to Maurice, Vanessa and the Choir.

Thank you to all who contributed items for the stalls and those who supported the event. Without you, it would not have been such a success or raised over £2300 for church funds. In particular a big thank you to the Events Team who worked so hard planning, preparing the food, decorating the hall and managing the ballot.







## Christmas Luxury Draw Winners

Many thanks to all those of you who supported the luxury draw which comprised of prizes ranging in value from £30 - £180. Prizes were drawn by Faith as follows:

- Christmas Hamper - Stephen McCullough
- Longchamps Purse and make up bag (value £180) - Freda Conway
- Sterling silver bracelet - Trevor Craythorne
- Ladies' cream hooded outdoor jacket - Jim Love
- Tan Bessie Ladies' handbag - Ruby Foster
- Coffee hamper including Stormy cup voucher- Noel Taggart
- Tweedmill woollen throw - Pat McWilliam
- Black Dune handbag - Freda Conway
- Men's padded outdoor jacket - Amanda McWhinney
- Wine by candlelight - Walter Clarke
- Zen leather gloves and scarf set - Freda Scott
- Newbridge Guinness Pot stand - Pearl Brown

# Bible Bite

## A short story from the Bible

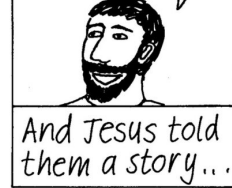
It can be read in the Bible in Matthew chapter 18 verses 21-35

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

How many times do I have to forgive? Seven?



You must never stop forgiving.



A king decided to check his accounts



One servant owed him 50 million silver coins



Please give me more time to pay



Then the servant saw someone who owed him 100 silver coins



Please give me more time



and they told the king.



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



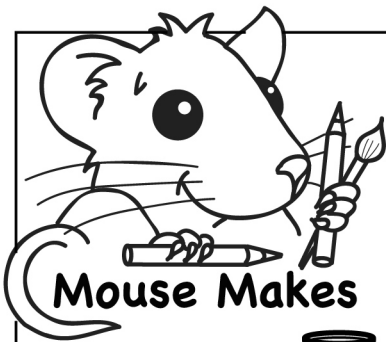
So he was put in prison



Jesus ended by saying...







What was the special meal Jesus was preparing to eat?

Matthew 26:18



What did Jesus take, bless and break?

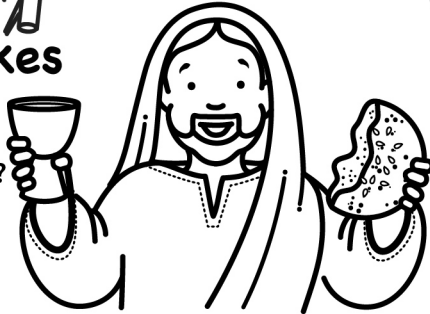
Matthew 26:26

What did Jesus give thanks for and share?

Matthew 26:27

What did Jesus say this represented?

His Matthew 26:27-28



What did Jesus say this represented?

His Matthew 26:26

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



of me."

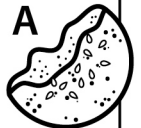
1 Corinthians 11:24-25

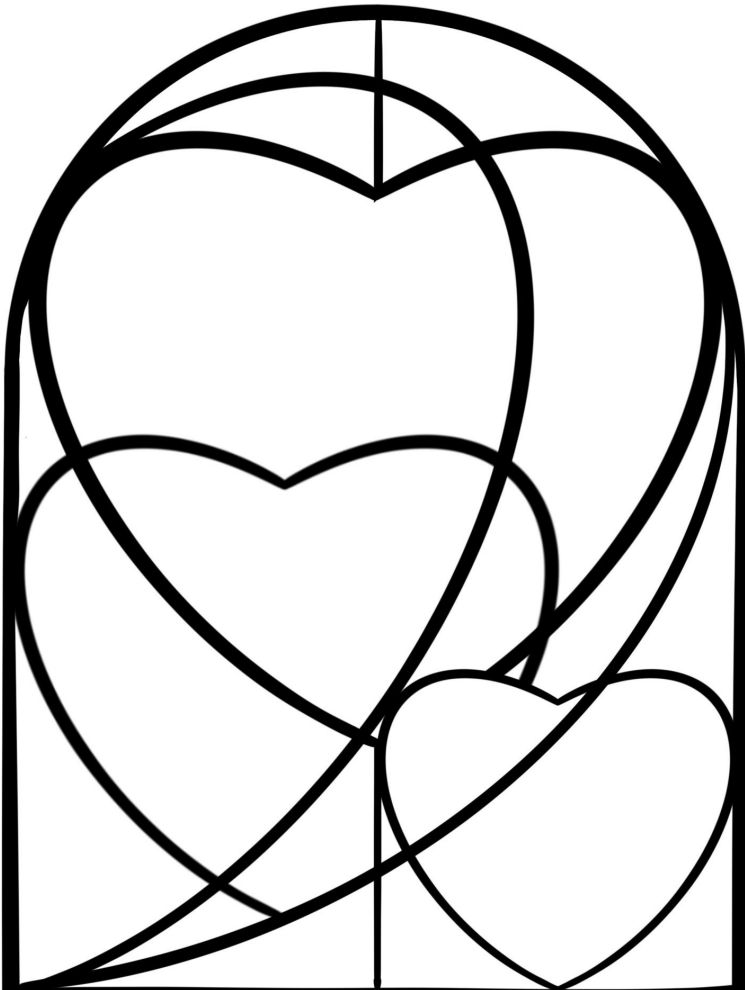


SUPPER  
LAMB • LORD  
DISCIPLES  
TOGETHER  
EVENING  
ROOM • JAR  
WATER • TWELVE  
JESUS • CHRIST  
NIGHT • TOOK  
THANKS  
BLESSING  
BROKE • GIVEN  
COVENANT  
DRINK • EAT  
FORGIVENESS  
SINS • HOLY  
COMMUNION  
EUCCHARIST

O	R	F	B	R	O	K	E	J	H	O	L	Y	C
R	O	O	M	B	C	U	P	T	O	O	K	E	H
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T	H	A	N	K	S	K	L	A	M	B	G		

Find the words from the questions too!





In this is love, not  
that we have loved God  
but that He loved us

1 John 4:10