

OCT - NOV 2023

GROOMSPORT PARISH CHURCH

CONTACT

www.groomsportparishchurch.org



**Let us not become weary in doing
good, for at the proper time we will
reap a harvest if we do not give up.
Galatians 6:9**

From The Pulpit

From our Minister, Elliot Swattridge

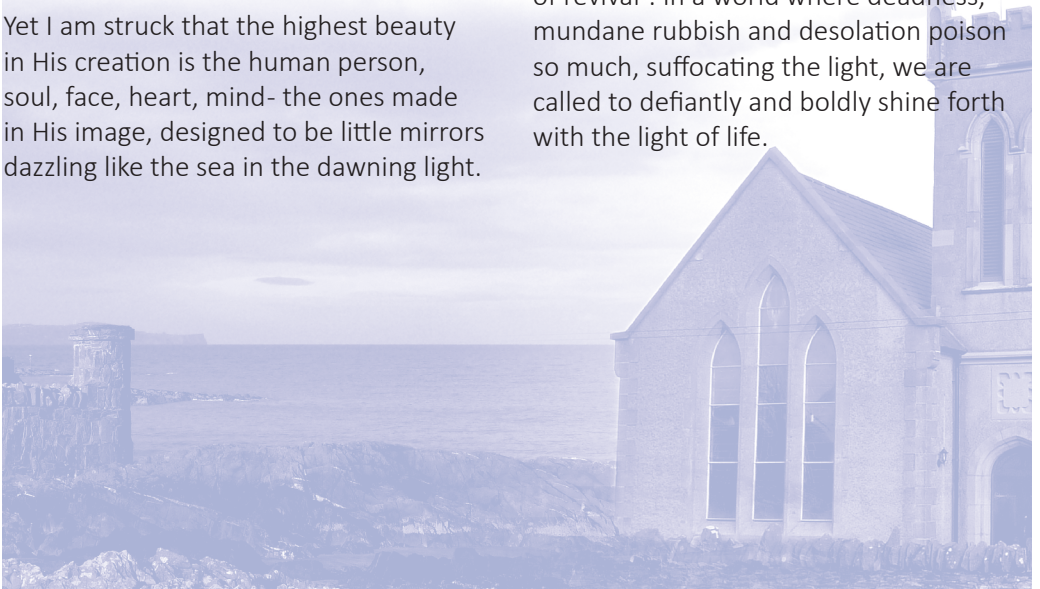
Dear family in Christ,

As I write this, we have been in Groomsport just over a month, and there's so much I could say! The way I have been overwhelmed with the beauty of the rainbow colours of the sky over the waters after sunset, the moon turning to fiery orange one Monday night, the glimpses of the Aurora, the friendly splashing of the pre-dawn surf, the beauty of the hearts of every one of you who has shown me such undeserved kindness. The sheer romance of the heart of God in surrounding us with extravagant beauty- what could He want with us in surrounding us with artistic glory that makes every human art gallery seem mundane in comparison? How much we must mean to Him!

Yet I am struck that the highest beauty in His creation is the human person, soul, face, heart, mind- the ones made in His image, designed to be little mirrors dazzling like the sea in the dawning light.

The capacity for love that exists in our soul is dizzyingly vast. The heavy tragedy is how we have turned our wondrous capacities and used them for evil and cruelty in our world- but God created us for wholehearted love. Each person unique, unrepeatable, is a living colour, a hue of stained glass through which Christ longs to shine His light to illuminate our world in a way only they will. If only we could imagine how beautiful our world would be if everyone shone with the colour they were created for- how teeming with life!

Why are we here on this earth? What mission have we been entrusted with? These are questions I wrestle with more and more! Yet the phrase that comes to mind for me right now is "beacon of revival". In a world where deadness, mundane rubbish and desolation poison so much, suffocating the light, we are called to defiantly and boldly shine forth with the light of life.



"I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,

but will have the light of life."

(Jesus in John 8:12)

What a phrase that is, the "light of life"! Life that is so overflowing and filling that it is a form of light- the sort of light that darkness flees away from forever. The One who created the blazing sun calls Himself a light, a light filled with life- and imagine how powerful this 'life' is that is compared to the vast solar globe that roars at 15 billion degrees centigrade at its core and which is 1.3 million times the volume of our home planet. This is the One who says "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10) What must the fullness of life be when it is found in the One who dreamed it up in the first place, and in whose eyes the sun is less than a sparky ember from a campfire?

So our calling is wondrous- literally, if we understood it, we would be awestruck with wonder.

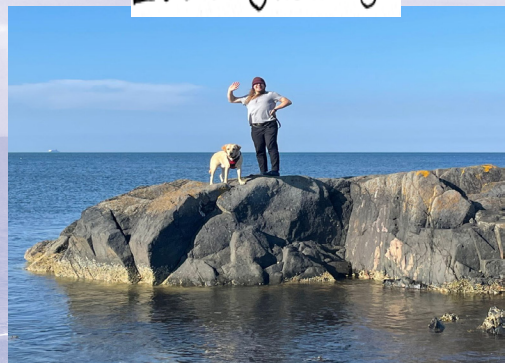
We, the people of Jesus, are called to be a beacon, blazing with the "light of life", brighter than the greatest supernova flash. We follow the One who defeated death in His own body's new life from the grave- the King of Revival. God's beautiful dream for us is for us to be the heralds of life, a beacon of revival, a channel through which the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of life, can flow and flood this nation with new life.

God has moved in the past in many ways to fill nations with His glorious light and bring many people from death to life in Christ- He has done this in our own nation more than once- in a great movement we often call 'revival'. Don't you yearn for His Spirit to do it again? Can we, as even just a relatively little gathering of God's people, shine bright as a beacon of revival to this nation?

What wonders might our Lord of life work amongst us, "if My people pray"?

So much life to you all,

Elliot Swatridge



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October and November 2023

The 17th Sunday after Trinity

1st October

Harvest

8:30 am	Holy Communion
10:30 am	Harvest Service
6:00 pm	Harvest Hymns with Paul Dalzell

*Coffee in the church hall after the 10.30 service.
Hosted by Susan and Freddie McNair and Maureen
Taggart and Hester Louw. Everyone welcome.*

The 4th Sunday before Advent

5th November

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

*Coffee in the church hall after the 10.30 service.
Hosted by Jim and Pat Love and William and
Florence McAneney. Everyone welcome.*

The 18th Sunday after Trinity

8th October

8:30 am	Holy Communion
10:30 am	Parish Communion

No Sunday evening service in church as
Elliot will be taking the evening service at
the Presbyterian Church at 7pm. Everyone
welcome!

The 3rd Sunday before Advent

12th November

Remembrance Sunday

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

The 19th Sunday after Trinity

15th October

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

The 2nd Sunday before Advent

19th November

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

The 20th Sunday after Trinity

22nd October

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

Fourth Sunday in Kingship

26th November

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

The 5th Sunday before Advent

29th October

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

Tuesday 6 pm - Prayer for Revival

7 pm - Compline

Thursday 11 am - Holy Communion



**10.30 am on the first Wednesday of
every month - Holy Communion is
celebrated at the Chapel in Mount
Stewart.**

Welcome Elliot!

Monday 21 August was a very special day in the life of our Parish when the church was packed to capacity for the Service of Introduction of our new Minister, Rev Elliot Swattridge. Joining the congregation were Elliot's wife Nomi, family members, clergy, our local MLA and other invited dignitaries, marking this as a very special occasion.

The service which was led by Archdeacon Ken Higgins and the Rt Rev David A McClay, Bishop of Down and Dromore, commenced with a procession of clergy during the opening hymn, Be Thou My Vision. The bible readings by Bert Smith and Daniel Jones, from Isaiah Chapter 62 and John Chapter 15 were chosen by Elliot. As many of you know Elliot was keen to ensure that all of the hymns were chosen by the congregation so after a straw poll, Be Still For the Presence of the Lord, I the Lord of sea and sky, Thine Be the Glory as well as the processional hymn were selected. Jubilate sang a lovely version of Thy Perfect Love- a very moving anthem.



A friend of Elliot's and Nomi's from Greystones, Nomi's hometown, the Ven. Ian Horner, Archdeacon of Kilmore gave the address. Speaking on the reading from John Chapter 15, based on 'I am the true Vine', he reminded us of the need to remain connected to God, the source of all life.

Following the call to Elliot to serve as our Priest in Charge by Bishop David, Elliot promised to faithfully serve Christ and his Church in Groomsport. He then addressed the congregation explaining that the parish's commitment to prayer, which he is passionate about, had attracted him to the post. He talked of the view of Blackhead Lighthouse which he could see from his window and how it reminded him of Jesus's proclamation 'I am the light of the World' and how through a deep connection to God our Father we could all be His light in the world. He told us that he didn't want to follow his own agenda but was inspired to see what God was doing in Groomsport and then join in. The Bishop closed the service with The Blessing.





Following the service everyone retired to the Canon Tyney Hall for refreshments some informal speeches and a chance to meet Elliot. Daniel and a group of young people played some traditional Irish music, which was very entertaining and rounded off a very special evening.

We wish Elliot and Nomi God’s blessing and best wishes for their ministry with us.



September Vestry Minutes

The Select Vestry were pleased to welcome Rev Elliot Swattridge to his first meeting. Elliot began the meeting with a reading and prayer.

Heather reported that she had written a number of thank you letters to ministers who had covered frequently during the vacancy. Elliot spoke about his Service of Introduction and shared how humbled he had felt, how welcome he and Nomi had felt and how impressed he had been with the level of organisation.

Following discussion about a proposed Art Exhibition in the Autumn, Barry is to follow up with discussions with David McKnight, the Hall Manager. Maureen is available for any discussions.

Elliot has introduced a new item onto the Agenda – Minister's reflections. He used a sprig from his garden to explain how, apart from bringing our own requests to God, we should also be looking to see where people do not have God in their lives. He is very keen to encourage prayer and is looking forward to starting a prayer group on Tuesday evenings before Compline. He is also looking forward to going into Towerview School in October. He finished by expressing thanks to everyone and, in particular, to his Warden, Bert, who had been so encouraging. Elliot would like to be known as the Minister of Groomspoint Parish.

Kate has arranged for 12 people to have First Aid Training on 7 October.

Florence gave us the good news about a legacy from the estate of the late Rita Humphries and some further good news that we are substantially in credit with our gas bill. She also reported on the steady building of our Projects Fund. Elliot wished his thanks for all her hard work to be recorded.

William thanked Tony for covering when he was ill. He will pursue the removal of the wall at the side of the Church as requested by the Gas Company. He will arrange for the Church Board to be changed to say-Minister, Rev Elliot Swattridge.

The pew leaflet will remind people of the availability of hand sanitisers when entering the Church and the Halls.

Elliot will follow up on a request for Groomspoint Guide Company to use our halls on a temporary basis, if we have suitable accommodation.

Barry raised the issues of lighting in the Maxwell Hall and the Avril Morley room and sound quality in the Church – these have been put back to the next meeting.

William asked for permission to use the Halls for the Village Remembrance Service.

The Vestry agreed that all cupboards in the Canon Tyney Hall should be locked.

Events

The Events Team is working on the programme for the incoming year. Your ideas would be very welcome to help us ensure we keep the programme varied and interesting for you. The events give us all a chance to get together for a chat and a bit of fun , so join in and invite your family friends and neighbours along. Everyone is welcome. The events help us to contribute to much needed funds for our church.

This year's programme will include events which you so clearly enjoyed in previous years and hopefully a few new ones. Here are some dates for your diary for the remainder of this year. More information will be available in due course.

27 Oct - Quiz Night

18 Nov - Kildare Shopping Trip

25 Nov - Sale and Coffee Morning

1 Dec - Christmas Lights switch on

16 Dec - Christmas Afternoon Tea and Luxury Ballot

The Quiz- Zandra and Ian are once again setting the questions. This is one of the favourite events of the year so get the date in the diary.

The Kildare Shopping Trip - This has always been popular but this year we have decided to move it forward to November to help with your Christmas shopping. More later from Heather.

Sale and Coffee Morning- We hope you can help us by donating unused gifts . These can be left in the box in the porch of the hall. We will also need goodies for the cake and jam and chutney stalls so start cooking!

Christmas Tree Lights Switch on- This event is being funded by Ards and North Down Council through Discover Groomsport. This year the service will be held in our church and as the Presbyterian Halls are closed for renovation the supper, arranged by the Presbyterian Church, and of course Santas grotto will be held in our halls.

Christmas Afternoon Tea and Luxury Ballot - Back by popular demand , our Christmas Afternoon Tea and Luxury Ballot. Further information will be provided later but in the meantime get the date in your diary.

Some other highlights for the incoming year include the Breakfast for the gentlemen of the parish in February . Be prepared gents! We are also planning an Art Exhibition in May and look forward to seeing the work of our local artists on display . We might even be lucky enough to feature Bert and the Raving Micks early in the new year so keep looking for our updates as the year progresses.

We are looking forward to catching up with you as we enjoy these events together.

Dear my family in Christ,

So... we're finally here! I feel I ought to begin by quoting the eminent Bert Smith, "The eagle has landed!" (Although after all the recent showers we feel more like ducks!) But seriously, we appreciate your patience so much over the last few months as we wrapped everything up in Croydon- one of my final roles being 'The Multicolour Man' sharing the Gospel through colours with many very excitable primary school children! Yet so colourful and wonderful has also been the beautiful sea views from the wonderful home you so kindly made so welcoming for us, which all three of us love, and the incredibly warm welcome we have already received from everyone we have bumped into!

We are a family of three... I'm from the little town of Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire in England, and my truly wonderful and inspiring wife Nomi comes from another picturesque seaside town, Greystones in Co. Wicklow down south- and we are both delighted to be on the island of Ireland! She is a children's therapist and currently completing her Masters. You'll probably bump into both of us on a beach walk with our wonderfully friendly and enthusiastic third member of our family - the golden labrador Wesley- named of course after the poet and hymnwriter Charles Wesley. Turns out he loves the local kelp here as an eco-friendly endless source of chew toys! We have been splashing around with him on the beautiful beaches here and meeting so many dog friends along the way.



So I just wanted to send this letter to you all to properly say 'Hello there!' as we begin to dabble our feet in this new adventure together! I love to think in pictures, and as I write this I see Blackhead Lighthouse shining across the Belfast Lough, and isn't this perfect for us? Just as Jesus proclaimed, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12), He also said to us, "You are the light of the world." (Matt. 5:14) Where does this light come from? Like a lantern filled with a flame, we are bright only insofar as the One who is Light dwells in us. What if we fully took to heart the fact the One who is within our heart and souls is Light infinitely brighter than any sun? For "...greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4) We have a shining Treasure glorious beyond any other to share with the world- and His Name is Jesus Christ.

"Very well," you might say, "but what's your plan?" Well, have you ever heard the saying, "Mission is seeing what God is doing and joining in"? As far as I can, I want to come open-handed, abandoning any silly little agenda of my own- except that we seek Him in prayer and see where God takes us when we let Him take the helm!

For the “human mind may devise many plans, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established.” (Proverbs 19:21) Like the early glow of the dawn breaking over the horizon, and like the earliest seedlings that come up in bare soil after a rain shower, God is already at work here in Groomspoint and beyond, and invites us to see the little shoots of new life, and tenderly nurture them. So I want to take this gentle, nurturing approach that honours and includes, respects and listens to everyone- for we so often hear the gentle whisper of His Spirit through our siblings in Christ. My greatest longing is to worship our majestically beautiful Lord Jesus with all the capacity of our human hearts, and to see more and more precious lives join in with this worship, by coming to know and love Him forever- nothing less than great revival across this whole nation and beyond.

The expositor Matthew Henry perceptively quipped, “When God intends great mercy for his people, he first of all sets them praying.” The earliest signs, the littlest seedlings, of a life-changing move of God are a people who really love to spend time with Him in prayer! He gives us both the desire to pray and the ideas of what to pray for. So as we begin, I would love to invite everyone reading this is to talk to God about this simple question:

Lord Jesus, what is Your Spirit laying on your heart to pray for next?

If anything comes to mind, whether tentatively or burning strong, please do tell me about it as would love to hear! As we move into Autumn, I am also hoping to

begin a new prayer meeting on Tuesday evenings before Compline, so watch this space. Can we be like the “watchers on the walls” of Isaiah 62, crying out for His Church, that “her vindication shines out like the dawn”?

This is fuelled by God’s wondrous delight in us, so great that Isaiah also cries out, “as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you!” What an invitation: to speak openly to the One who dwells brightly within us, rejoicing in us as His people with such beautiful and overwhelming love. And what belonging: to be connected to Jesus, part of His own body like branches of a vine, utterly dependent, attached in heart and soul, where He kindly reassures us, “Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5) We don’t have to do any of this on our own- and indeed we can’t even if we wanted to!

I am amazed at the privilege it is to be amongst you all, and look forward to chatting, laughing, praying and sharing life, Communion and worship with you all. Let’s gently and lovingly nurture those seedlings of Christ’s new life in one another!

“To this You belong.” Yes, this is the One to whom we belong!

With every blessing in this One,

Elliot Swatbridge

The Woman of Purple by Carol

My name is Lydia and I come from Thyatira. I sell purple dye which, as I have learnt, is valued very highly by our Roman rulers. These days only the Emperor is allowed to wear purple, but some of the important senators may wear a purple stripe to denote their position. Strangely we women are allowed to wear purple - if we can afford it! As you may imagine this is very good for my business and has made me a wealthy woman. So, I am very fortunate, and I have a large household to run my home for me.

One day I had gone down to the river outside the city gates at Philippi with some other women to the place of prayer, as we have no synagogue in Philippi and we can use the Krenides river for our special washing.

I have long been a believer in the one, true God but had not heard of Jesus, however a man named Paul, accompanied by his friends Timothy and Silas, came to talk to us while we were there and told us all about Jesus and his saving power. My heart was opened to hear his words and I decided that I would ask to be baptised along with my whole household. As they were travelling around the area I urged Paul and his followers to stay at my home. I have the space and what use is all the money that I have made from the Romans if I cannot do some good with it?

Eventually they carried on with their journey and I didn't hear from them for some time. Later they returned to see me and told me of their terrible experiences; being publicly flogged and then thrown into prison in stocks. Miraculously God saved them, sending an earthquake to release them from prison and they were later cared for by the very man who had imprisoned them. He too, like me believed after this and he and his household were baptised. You may imagine how I felt hearing this amazing story and how concerned I was for my new friends.

It felt really liberating to be able to put my money to such a good use, Paul and Timothy work tirelessly and if they can come back here to my home and be fed and cared for I think there is no better use for my wealth.

N.B. This story is from Acts chapter 16. Those of you who have been following the recent rerun of the wonderful "I Claudius" on BBC will perhaps have observed that Emperor Augustus sometimes wears entirely purple, particularly on special occasions and his senators have a purple band around their white togas.



Thoughts of a blow in *by Cynthia*

We're getting some late summer sunshine at last! After a mainly wet July and August, some clement weather is very welcome before autumn draws in. Inevitably these sunny days have coincided with the start of the new school term. Why is it always warm and sunny during exam time and when the schools go back? That's a question for someone wiser than me to answer!

I do miss the happy sounds of the little ones next door playing football outside during the day, although they make up for that omission at weekends and in the evenings. This return to routine reminds me that September is a time for new beginnings and a change of schedule.

It's been lovely to bump into neighbours' grown-up children when walking along the road and being able to congratulate them on passing vital exams to enable them to return to further education. Talking of which, Jack, my godson in England (now nearly nineteen!), wrote me a lovely email to share his fantastic A-level results, plus some photos of an intrepid few weeks spent in Peru over the summer! I'm delighted that all his hard work has paid off and that he'll be heading to Sheffield mid-month to study Zoology.

With such good news in mind, it's a timely reminder that we are leading up to Harvest Festival, an opportunity to count our blessings in all sorts of ways. The idea of harvest doesn't need to be literal

although I'm sure local farmers have been struggling with the physical harvest after our erratic weather over the summer.

This relaxed, mellow sunshine has put me in a grateful, reflective frame of mind. I'm fully aware that it's fleeting, and a return to normality will signal autumn routines and upping the pace of life in general! When I was looking for an appropriate quote this thoughtful verse from "September" by William Wordsworth seemed to encapsulate that sense of an enjoyable pause before the seasons inevitably move on.

"Departing summer hath assumed

An aspect tenderly illumed,

The gentlest look of spring;

That calls from yonder leafy shade

Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,

A timely carolling."

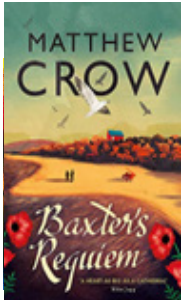


Book Stall *by Carol*

I have a wonderful selection of fascinating and unusual books for you which I have been reading during the last month. There's humour, pathos, adventure, discovery and tension. Something, I hope, for everyone.

Baxter's Requiem Matthew Crow

"I'm afraid it's not good news, Mr Baxter". So begins this story as the doctor visits the ninety-four year old in his retirement home. Not, you may think a particularly enticing start to a story, but bear with it and you will be rewarded with a witty, touching and charming story of love, loss, memories and learning. Baxter is a wonderful character, learned, a splendid raconteur, sometimes sardonic but caring and thoughtful. He



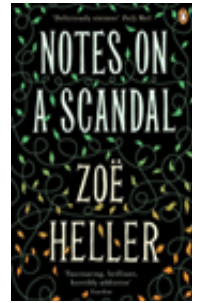
also remains a man who can find real enjoyment in good food, music and friendship. He is not, however, a good patient at the Melrose Retirement home where he has been forced to go after falling downstairs at his home. He challenges

authority at every turn. On arrival he announces that "It's like being dead and paying for the privilege!" He dislikes the 'limp' meals he is served and regrets the fact that his wide circle of friends has diminished "incrementally in an inevitable carousel of overpriced wreaths, tuneless hymns and hastily defrosted vol-au-vents". He befriends an unhappy nineteen-year

old who has recently joined the staff at the home, and together they, embark on an extraordinary, moving and entirely unauthorised adventure. I can warmly recommend this story, it had me laughing and sighing in equal measure, and I suspect that, like me, you will come to love Baxter.

Notes on a Scandal Zoe Heller

I remembered watching this when it was on television some years ago and decided to read it when I noticed it among our books in the hall. I should say from the beginning that the story involves the taboo subject of a



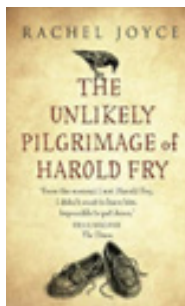
relationship between a pupil and teacher, which some of you may prefer not to read. The main thrust of the plot however is the rather sinister figure of Barbara Covet, a long standing member of staff at the school who becomes convinced that the new teacher, the somewhat bohemian and unconventional art teacher Sheba Hart, is to be a kindred spirit. Barbara is a solitary, aging woman with little in her life and she becomes obsessed with Sheba. The story is told by Barbara so the illicit relationship is described by her as she uncovers it and sets herself up as Sheba's defender whilst trying to draw Sheba away from her foolhardy passion and into close relationship with herself. What initially seems to be a sordid



forbidden relationship quickly becomes a sinister unveiling of a driven, misguided woman. This is not everyone's cup of tea, I acknowledge, but it is quite addictive and extremely powerful.

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

Rachel Joyce



I saw the film of this book recently in Bangor with a friend so was delighted to find it to read and review. This really is an unlikely story as its title suggests; it is touching, amusing in parts, beautifully observed and despite not exactly being action

packed it becomes hard to put down. At least I found it so! One morning as Harold and his wife of many years sit down to breakfast, he opens a letter from an ex colleague which tells him that she is in a hospice and she is writing to say goodbye. Inevitably he is at a loss to know how to reply, he has not seen her for many years but was fond of her and deep down feels that he owes her a debt. After breakfast he leaves his almost permanently irritated wife, Maureen, to her vacuuming, and sets off, with a rather inadequate note to Queenie, his ex-colleague, to the nearest letterbox. In an altogether out of character moment when he reaches the letterbox he hesitates, then decides not to post it there but to walk on to the next box. He stops at a petrol station to buy a snack and it is here that he meets his first

stranger in a chapter entitled "Harold and the Garage Girl and a Question of Faith". This encounter is destined to have a profound effect on him and the letter remains un-posted. Shortly after he makes a phone call from a box to the hospice where Queenie is now, leaving a message for her that he is on his way to see her, walking, and that she must wait for him. As the sketched map at the beginning of this book makes clear, Harold lives in Kingsbridge on the South West coast of England and Queenie's hospice is in Berwick-Upon-Tweed on the North East coast of England. As his walk continues, Harold reflects on his life, at home, at work, with Maureen and the tragedy which has served to keep them apart for many years. Alongside this, the normally reserved Harold meets and befriends many people all of whom are beautifully described and well rounded, In addition to this his journey, the countryside and the weather are depicted in wonderfully evocative writing. I have to recommend this story.

Enjoy your reading and I hope you find something to please you amongst the books.





Opportunities Made Available (OMA): Chris and Gloria Dima, Gulu, Uganda

OMA is a social help group run by Chris and Gloria. The Parish has been supporting it for a number of years. We built their website and paid for its initial upkeep. Our early donations allowed them to buy two sewing machines. These and subsequent purchases have enabled OMA to teach young girls (many of whom had dropped out of school and lived on the streets), new work skills which they can use to support themselves and their families.

However OMA is now struggling financially. The Dimas finance most of OMA with their own money. Unfortunately Chris and Gloria's recent bouts of ill health have reduced their income. They are unable to pay the rent on their premises. Ultimately the Dimas and the girls they support, could end up on the street.

The work of OMA has been inspired by Chris and Gloria's deep Christian faith, and their unflinching commitment to help those in great need across their community. They have undoubtedly enabled many young girls to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty and destitution, which had become a cruel and unyielding feature of their and their families everyday lives.

Chris and Gloria have appealed directly to our Parish for help. We cannot in all truth turn them away.

Many of us of course have our own domestic pressures to face. But if you would like to help OMA with a financial contribution, however modest, then please speak to Elliot or the Wardens who will be happy to help.

From the Select Vestry



At Canon Dougan's last Select Vestry meeting with us, he was presented with a glass etching of the church. The Rector's Church Warden, Bert Smith, made the presentation and gave a few words on behalf of the Select Vestry to thank Canon Dougan for his guidance during the interregnum.

The Tuesday Club Sponsored by Spar, Groomsport

Thank you to everyone who came along to our open meeting in September. By all accounts it was an enjoyable experience and James Gillespie was very interesting.

Just to let you all know, we intend to have another one or two open meetings, possibly in December and definitely March. There will be ample notification about these nearer the time.

The Tuesday club is specifically designed for people who live alone, for whatever reason. If you would like to give us a try, come along to the Canon Tyney Hall on the first Tuesday of every month (12 months). You might enjoy it!



Harvest Special! Dates for your diary!



Sunday 1st October at 6pm, Paul Dalzell will be joining us at Groomsport Parish to preach with us from Luke 12:13-21

On **Sunday 8th October at 7pm**, Elliot has been invited to Groomsport Presbyterian church for their Harvest service. Anyone from Groomsport Parish is welcome to attend as there will be no 6 pm service that evening in Church. Let us show our support to their church fellowship too!



The Parish of Groomsport Archives are a full record of the Parish from its creation as a Chapel of Ease in 1842. In addition, items pertaining to the village and district are also included.

Any archive should be supplied with every document, photograph or otherwise formatted item which pertains to the organisation which it represents. This should happen as a matter of course. The Parish Archives are no different.

The Parish Archives Catalogue presently numbers over 500 entries, many of which contain multiple items. Amongst these can be found:

1. Select Vestry Minutes from 1871 to 2022. There are earlier volumes from 1842, presently held in Dublin.

2. Baptismal Registers from 1876 to 2004 and Marriage Registers from 1869 to 1982. These Registers have all been digitised and are available for enquiries.

3. A Photographic Archive of Groomsport heritage from 1800's to the present. This includes photos of the contents of Cockle Row.

4. A collection of Bibles from 1861 to the present. These include lectern Bibles presented by parishioners and some special editions. The theological library in the Parish Halls is part of this collection.

5. The Visitors Book in the Church Porch. This is part of the Archive collection.

Since it was installed in 2016 it has been signed by visitors from every continent on Earth.

6. A full photographic record of all major events/features which have taken place in the Parish since 2014, together with some earlier items.

The Parish Archives catalogue is available for consultation by arrangement with the Archivist. Contact Barry at:

barry@groomsportparishchurch.org

or

phone 02891271311 to leave a message.

D.B.G.



*Groomsport Parish
Church c. 1890*

Walking for Softies

As we have just started our new season of Walking for Softies, we thought it would be interesting to reflect on the walks we had during the past year. We had eight walks in total. Everyone will naturally have their own favourite walk, so we can mention only a few. We began with a gorgeous day at Hillsborough, bright and sunny, but cold with a trip to Dobbies' Garden Centre for coffee and a browse round the place. Closer to home was the Kiltonga Bird Reserve (the duck pond to you and me) at Newtownards, where we enjoyed watching the ducks, and afterwards the coffee and scones at the town's Strangford Arms Hotel. Delamont Country Park near Killyleagh was a new experience for many of us. A regular favourite of ours has been Antrim Castle Gardens, and our visit there last season was no different.



Our final walk before the summer break, was to Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, a first for many and especially memorable on a beautiful, warm, sunny morning. The swings brought back long forgotten memories to one or two of our group!

And so our new season began last month, with an expedition to the beautiful Montalto Estate near Ballynahinch. More details about that will be in the next Contact magazine. Come and join us whether you are on your own or with a friend. For a stroll or simply to enjoy the coffee and craic afterwards, please speak to Ian or Zandra and we will be delighted to help you. **Phone: 07968401387 or 07968401386.**

Confidential Bereavement Support Group

As mentioned in our Parish letter, we are now able to provide you with details of the new group which had its first gathering in the Maxwell Hall on Thursday 14 September at 2.00pm and will be on the second Thursday of the month thereafter.

We are so fortunate to have Muriel Cairns, one of our own parishioners, leading the group. Muriel is a retired Social Worker, working with the elderly and vulnerable adults. She has experience volunteering with Childline and Relate and is currently working as a volunteer in Belfast Trust Bereavement Team. Muriel is keen to stress that gatherings are completely confidential, and anything discussed will not leave the four walls of the Maxwell Hall.

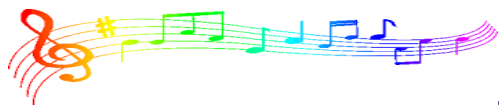
She also wishes you to know that the group welcomes **all ages** and **all those who have lost someone important to them**.

You can either just turn up or you can give Muriel a call on 07976 239 896 if you would like further details.

Sing for Fun!

This is a new enterprise which Pauline Harrison and Mary Cargill have decided to try out. It is intended to bring together dementia sufferers and their carers, and anyone else interested in singing for fun for one hour each month to sing songs and enjoy a bit of a change from “normal” everyday life. Join us on Tuesdays at 2 pm in the Tyney Hall. We hope that you will support our venture so that it may become a regular event. If you want any further details, give either of us a call.

Mary- 028 9147 4096 or
Pauline- 07745 191808





QUIZ NIGHT

Yes, we are back! Our Parish quiz in the Church Hall will be a fun night and a chance to enjoy some craic. Tables will consist of 6 people. Bring your friends or come on your own and join another table.

Light refreshments will be provided at the interval, but feel free to bring some snacks and nibbles to help you concentrate! Bring soft drinks if you wish, but please note that consumption of alcohol on the premises is not allowed.



**Friday,
27th Oct 23
@ 7.30 pm**

**Suggested
donation
£5 pp**

Clubs and Activities in the Church Hall

Monday

<i>First Monday in the month</i>	Select Vestry meeting	7.30 pm	Contact Heather 07834 771075
<i>Second and Fourth Monday</i>	Chattering Needles	7.30 pm (Starting 9th Oct)	Contact Jenny 07748 580541
<i>Third Monday in the month</i>	Mothers' Union	7.30 pm (starting 18th Sept)	Contact Faith 07802 494260

Tuesday

<i>First Tuesday in the month</i>	The Tuesday Club	2 pm	Contact Mary 07359 373770
<i>Second Tuesday in the month</i>	Sing for Fun	2 pm (further details in magazine)	Contact Pauline 07745 191808 or Mary 07359 373770
<i>Every Tuesday</i>	Prayer for Revival	6 pm	Contact Elliot 07957 724965

Wednesday

<i>Every week</i>	Mojos Club	9.30 am	Contact Elaine 07791 569432
<i>Every week</i>	Scrabble Club	2 pm	Contact Elaine 07791 569432
<i>Every week</i>	Crafty Stitchers	2 pm	Contact Susan 07867 782395
<i>Every week</i>	Silver Spurs Line Dancing Club	8 pm	Contact Gillian 07968 225619

Thursday

<i>First and Third Thursday in the month</i>	Coffee, Scones and Soup	11 am	Contact Pauline 07745 191808
<i>Second Thursday in the month</i>	New Confidential Bereavement Group	2 pm	Contact Muriel 07976 239896
<i>Every week</i>	Jubilate practice in Church	2 pm	Contact Maurice 07752 569999
<i>Every week</i>	Thai Chi	3.30 pm	Contact Janet 07703 360385
<i>Second and Fourth Thursday</i>	Bangor Art Club	7 pm	Gordon 07583 027517
<i>First Thursday in the month</i>	Groomsport Masonic Lodge	7.30 pm	Contact Jonathan 07876 687517
<i>Every week</i>	Chess Club	7.30 pm	Brendan 07871 037506

Friday

<i>Every week</i>	Groomsport Art Club	1.30 pm	Contact Elaine 07791 569432
<i>Every Week</i>	Rising Stars Theatre Youth Group	3 pm	Contact Poppy 07711 062137

Saturday

<i>Last Saturday in the month</i>	Walking for Softies	10 am	Contact Ian 07968401387 for details of location
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Sunday

<i>Every Sunday</i>	Sunday Fun Club	9.30 am	Contact Elliot 07957 724965
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Groomsport Parish presents
their annual
**KILDARE
SHOPPING
TRIP**

Saturday 18th November departing
8 am from Groomsport

Pickups if required-
Newtownards
Tesco Knocknagoney
Sprucefield

To secure your place please leave a sealed envelope
containing £25 with your name & number with either
the wardens, Heather or Ashley in the church office.



Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Genesis chapters 39:20-41:44

Joseph's brothers had sold him as a slave
and he had ended up in Egypt. Then he was
wrongly accused and was sent to prison.



Joseph was trusted to look
after the other prisoners.

Then Pharaoh's butler and baker were sent to
the prison. One night they had strange dreams.



..I made
juice from the grapes
and gave it to Pharaoh..

..all the
bread in my baskets
was eaten by birds.

God knows what your dreams mean -
you will be pardoned but you won't.



The two men
left the prison.



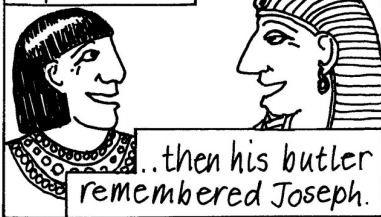
Don't forget me!

But they did

Two years later
Pharaoh had a dream



None of his advisors could
explain it...



..then his butler
remembered Joseph.

So Joseph was cleaned up
and sent to Pharaoh



and then the seven thin cows ate the
seven fat cows but they were still thin.

God says there will be
seven bumper years, then
seven years of famine.



You must choose someone
trustworthy to store the
spare food in the good years



Pharaoh was so impressed
he gave Joseph the job!



Some personal reflections by our Archivist Barry

What then is Christianity? The Bible tells us how St. Paul took the Christian faith to the world beyond Judea, to the Ephesians, the Corinthians, the Thessalonians, the Romans etc. Yet Paul (Saul, Saulus) remains one of the most controversial figures in history. We know that an irrevocable schism occurred between him and the Nazarene family of Jesus together with the surviving disciples. Saul of Tarsus was born of a well to do Hebrew family, he was highly intelligent, a Roman citizen, he never knew Jesus in the flesh and his job was to hunt down rebels and dissidents, including the followers of Jesus/Yeshuah. This occupation he pursued, by all accounts, with dedication and relish. Then, on the road to Damascus he dramatically and miraculously undergoes conversion when he ceases to be Saul of Tarsus and becomes Paul, follower of Christ. Yet in his new persona he was still as much an “enemy” of the family and disciples of Jesus as before. Could it be that Saul/Paul simply saw that he was not going to get what he wanted by persecution and that he would be better to use their ideas for his own ends? If you can’t beat them join them! Or perhaps use them.

Thus Paul, the ultimate opportunist, did achieve greatness in his own lifetime and perhaps amongst his “conversions” the most important one was himself. Certainly he was prepared to die and did so for what he believed.

While James and the disciples made of

Christ’s teachings a new force in Palestine, they were, nevertheless, limited by having known Jesus as a man. Paul did not and there is no doubt that he created what we call Christianity which was summarily hijacked by the Church in Rome just as he had done from James and the other Nazarenes.

Is it the case that the Church’s teachings are still based on the medieval and pre-medieval perception of religious observance: one which suited people whose knowledge, vision and horizons were very limited by comparison with today? Even now with all our knowledge and modern technologies are we really any different, relatively speaking, to our medieval forbears? We see things we do not understand: we are aware of things which are beyond our comprehension. We cling to a perceived reality which fits the limits of our understanding, but the ultimate reality to which we would aspire will always be just beyond our grasp.

We are specks, billions of us, (not to mention the other creatures) on this Earth of ours. This Earth of ours is one of nine or more planetary bodies within our solar system – little more than a large speck on the face of our Sun. Our Solar system is a speck on the edge of the galaxy we call the Milky Way. That Galaxy is a speck within the known universe. The Universe, known and unknown, is infinite – has no end and no understood beginning.

What then is God? What, who, where,

how, when is God? The simple answer is we do not know and because we are ultimately afraid of what we do not know or understand we create an image to which we can relate and which we tell ourselves we do understand. Genesis says God created man in his own image. Rather, we have created God in our image. Gradually over eons of time, from the primeval to the present we have tried to create a structure, religion, recognisable to our finite minds. In doing so we have somehow lost the ability of being able to accept that there is an unknown far beyond our understanding and we have lost the ability to allow ourselves the wonder, freedom and joy of that acceptance. William Wordsworth, who was not a conventional “Christian”, felt it in *Intimations of Immortality* (Stanza 5) and *Lines Composed Above Tintern Abbey*

“And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,

*Whose dwelling is the light of setting
suns,*

And the round ocean, and the living air

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:

A motion and a spirit that impels

*All thinking things, all objects of all
thought,*

And rolls through all things.”

William Wordsworth

Ourselves and Our Prayers

We tend to think of prayer as our simply talking to God. After all, that’s what we have been told and taught from our earliest years. It’s what we did in Sunday School and maybe still do in our daily devotions. In Church we pray together, sharing the words. Yet this is only a part, a lesser part even, of what prayer is or should be. Professor William Barclay was a distinguished Biblical scholar, an exceptionally gifted preacher and a prolific Christian writer and broadcaster for over four decades. This is just a little of what he had to say about ourselves and our prayers, from his book “The Plain Man’s Book of Prayers”:

“Prayer is not a monologue in which we do all the talking; prayer is listening even more than it is talking. The highest form of prayer is silence, when we wait on God and listen to God. We have a low view of prayer if we regard prayer as a way of telling God what we want Him to do; prayer is even more listening to God, as He tells us what He wants us to do. Prayer is not a way of making use of God: prayer is a way of offering ourselves to God in order that He should be able to make use of us. It may be that one of our great faults in prayer is that we talk too much and listen too little. When prayer is at its highest we wait in silence for God’s voice to us; we linger in His presence for His peace and His power to flow over us and around us; we lean back in His everlasting arms and feel the serenity of perfect security in Him”. IWS

D.B.G.

The Story behind the Hymn

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, when the clouds unfold their wings of strife? When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain, will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

Refrain: We have an anchor that keeps the soul steadfast and sure while the billows roll; fastened to the Rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear, when the breakers have told the reef is near? through the tempest rage, and the wild winds blow, not an angry wave shall our barque o'erflow?

Will your anchor hold in the floods of death, when the waters cold chill your latest breath? On the rising tide you can never fail, while your anchor holds within the veil.

Will your eyes behold through the morning light the city of gold and the harbour bright? Will you anchor safe by the heav'nly shore, when life's storms are past for evermore?

Priscilla Jane Owens was born in 1829 in Baltimore, Maryland. She remained in Baltimore throughout her life, dedicating her years to teaching Sunday school at the Union Square Methodist Episcopal Church. Known for her enthusiasm and commitment to Christian education, she penned several hymns primarily for children and young people, aiming to guide them in their spiritual journey including "Will your anchor hold".

Inspiration Behind the Hymn

The primary inspiration for "Will Your Anchor Hold" comes from Hebrews 6:19: entereth into that within the veil." "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul,

both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." This verse beautifully compares the hope in Christ to a steadfast anchor that holds firm regardless of the stormy seas of life.

The Hymn's Message

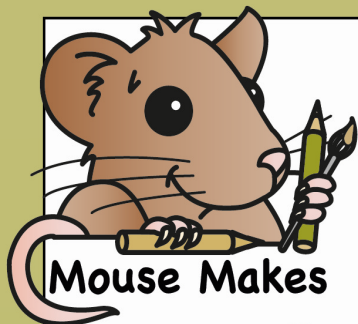
The hymn's lyrics emphasize the symbolism of an anchor, underscoring its stability, reliability, and strength. The repeated questions – "Will your anchor hold...?" – serve as a reflective prompt for listeners, urging them to consider the strength and foundation of their own faith.

Throughout the verses, Owens paints vivid pictures of life's trials, such as the "strains of life" and the "fearful hour." Yet, she contrasts these challenges with the strength and security found in Jesus, the "Solid Rock."

The chorus then answers the hymn's primary question with a resounding affirmation of the anchor's – or one's faith's – stability: "We have an anchor that keeps the soul / Steadfast and sure while the billows roll."

"Will Your Anchor Hold" is more than just a hymn; it's a reflection on the nature of faith in the face of life's storms. Priscilla Jane Owens masterfully weaves scripture, personal reflection, and poetic imagery to remind believers of the unchanging, steadfast nature of Jesus Christ, our anchor. Whenever the hymn is sung in churches or gatherings, it serves as a comforting reminder of God's unwavering presence in our lives, urging us to hold fast to our faith.

Submitted by Amanda from a number of sources.



Mouse Makes



CONNECT THE BIBLE FOOD PAIRS

MANNA

HONEY

OIL

WINE

WATER

FISH

LOCUSTS

QUAIL

LOAVES

FLOUR



What drink ran out at the wedding?

and what did Jesus use to make more?



John 2:3 and 7

What food did God supply for his people in the wilderness?

_____ and _____

Numbers 11:7-9 and 31

After Elijah came to visit, what never ran out?

_____ and _____



1 Kings 17:14

What food did the ravens feed Elijah?

_____ and _____

1 Kings 17:6



What food did John the Baptist eat in the wilderness?

_____ and _____

Matthew 3:4

What did the boy give Jesus to feed 5,000 people?

Five _____

and two _____
John 6:9



FIND THE BIBLE VERSE

Change each letter in this bible verse to the letter **before** it in the alphabet.

NBO TIBMM OPU
MJWF PO CSFBE
BMPOF, CVU PO
FWFSZ XPSE UIBU
DPNFT GSPN UIF
NPVUI PG HPE.

NBUUIFX 4:4

DID YOU KNOW?

As Lot escaped Sodom with his family an angel told him not to stop or look back, but Lot's wife did look back and became a pillar of salt.



READ Genesis 19 v15-26

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

Find the words below and the answers to the questions all in the word search

OLIVES • CHEESE
FIGS • DATES
MUSTARD
RAISINS • WHEAT
SALT • GRAIN
FRUIT • GRAPES
VEGETABLES

GROOMSPORT PARISH CHURCH



Sunday Fun Club

A new meetup for primary school children to come to with their parents/carers & grandparents to explore following Jesus together in a really fun way!

- 9:30-10:30am in Church Hall - Maxwell Hall, 30 Main St, Groomsport, BT19 6JR
- Every Sunday - 1 Oct to 17 Dec (not 29 Oct)
- Preschool siblings also welcome with parent/carer



- Includes:
 - Share & prayer + snack
 - 'What's in the Box?'
 - Creative prayer activity
 - Bible storytime
 - Action songs + Games
- Just come along - no need to book! Free of charge.

All welcome with your children - especially if you've never tried coming to a church before!
We'd love to see you!