

The Columban

ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH, KNOCK, DECEMBER 2024 - JANUARY 2025



Share the Love, Joy, Peace
and Hope of Christmas



100TH
E D I T I O N



RECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Parishioner,

Congratulations to our Editor, Billy McAlpine on this the 100th edition of The Columban under his pen and watchful eye.

Through its pages each month we have the benefit of engaging, informative and educational articles. There are occasions when there is so much happening in St. Columba's that Billy has a challenging task to ensure that he has space for all the articles! Once Billy releases a Columban to be printed, he starts work on the next edition. I thank Billy who is supported by Ann, the contributors, our Graphic Designer, Mike Fee and Printers, Mad Colour, the magazine distributors and our Parish Administrator, Karen Patterson for all their dedicated hard work. We are very fortunate to have such a well edited and printed magazine which is an invaluable parish resource. We look forward to many more editions of the Columban from Billy's desk.

SHARE THE LOVE, JOY, PEACE AND HOPE OF CHRISTMAS

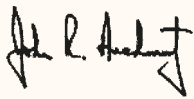
These are busy days as we work through an ever-increasing number of "to do" lists with our Christmas preparations. How we can feel utterly exhausted in the midst of our rushing around during this month that we run the risk of having no energy left to welcome the Christ child into our lives. It's not easy trying to navigate the many queues throughout Belfast and our local community not to mention trying to get a car parking space where there can be a lack of love, joy, peace and hope all around us!

With such busyness, St. Columba's offers us much needed spiritual peace and strength to keep us focused on the true meaning of Christmas. I encourage you to ensure that there is space on your "to do" list for attendance at our Advent and Christmas services. There will be inspirational music, enthusiastic carol singing, familiar bible readings and great fellowship in our beautifully decorated

church. All those who enter through our open door as illustrated in our beautiful parish Christmas card designed by Jayne Martin, can be assured of a very warm welcome. As we receive the love, joy, peace and hope through the birth of Christ this Christmas may we then share it with those around us. How we all need to embrace and share those fine qualities of the Christmas story which can make a real difference to us and those around us. Now that would make a good New Year's resolution!

Caroline, Charles and Henry join me in wishing you God's richest Blessing for Christmas and throughout 2025.

Yours in His service,



PRAYER is an extremely important aspect of our Christian worship. It is our private way to connect with God on a personal level. We encourage you to spend time in prayer every day, as the power of prayer should never be underestimated.

Each month, Canon Ken Smyth carefully prepares a wonderful "prayer pull-out" for our Columban magazine, to assist you with your personal devotions.

Liz McCaughey prepares a list of people we pray for, which is read during prayers at our 10.30am Thursday morning Holy Communion service. If you would like to join the prayer chain, or have someone whom you feel prayers would be beneficial for, please contact Liz on 07849 554079



PARISH PRAYER

God, our Heavenly Father, make the door of our Church wide enough to welcome all who need human love, fellowship and a Father's care; but narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and hatred. Here may the tempted find help, the sorrowing receive comfort and the penitent be assured of your mercy. And here may all your children renew their strength and go on their way in hope and joy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Bishop Thomas Ken 1637-1711

SERVICES IN DECEMBER

Sunday 1st 8.15am	The First Sunday of Advent Holy Communion Epistle 1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13 Timothy's encouraging report Read by: Ronny Martin Gospel Luke 21: 25-36 The coming of the Son of Man	(Purple)
10.30am	All Age Worship <i>followed by refreshments</i> Reading Luke 21: 25-36 The coming of the Son of Man Read by: Alex Kerr	
7.00pm	Advent Carol Service	
Wednesday 4th 8.00pm	Compline Service for Advent	(Purple)
Thursday 5th 10.30am	BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE <i>followed by refreshments</i>	(Purple)
Sunday 8th 8.15am	The Second Sunday of Advent Holy Communion Epistle Philippians 1: 3-11 Paul's prayer for the Philippians Read by: Alan Boyd Gospel Luke 3: 1-6 The courier of the King	(Purple)
10.30am	Holy Communion <i>followed by refreshments kindly hosted by Lucy Armstrong for School Aid, Romania</i> Epistle Philippians 1: 3-11 Paul's prayer for the Philippians Read by: Richard Caldwell Gospel Luke 3: 1-6 The courier of the King Intercessions Patrick Good	
Tuesday 10th 8.00pm	Compline Service for Advent	(Purple)
Thursday 12th 10.30am	Holy Communion <i>followed by refreshments</i>	(Purple)
Sunday 15th 8.15am	The Third Sunday of Advent (Purple) Holy Communion Epistle Philippians 4: 4-7 Call to joy and prayerfulness Read by: Karen McAlpine Gospel Luke 3: 7-18 John's summons to repentance	

10.30am **Morning Prayer** followed by refreshments kindly hosted by
Railway and Model Club

1st Reading Zephaniah 3: 14-20 The glorious Gospel of
salvation

Read by: David Beattie
2nd Reading Luke 3: 7-18 John's summons to repentance
Read by: Geoff Launchbury
Occasional Prayers Karen McAlpine

Wednesday 18th **Compline Service for Advent** **(Purple)**
8.00pm

Thursday 19th **Holy Communion with Carols for Senior Parishioners** **(Purple)**
10.30am followed by seasonal refreshments

Sunday 22nd **The Fourth Sunday of Advent** **(Purple)**
8.15am **Holy Communion**

Epistle Hebrews 10: 5-10 The only true sacrifice

Read by: Ronny Martin

Gospel Luke 1: 39-45 Mary's visit to Elizabeth

10.30am **Holy Communion**
Epistle Hebrews 10: 5-10 The only true sacrifice

Read by: Chris Heatley

Gospel Luke 1: 39-45 Mary's visit to Elizabeth

Intercessions Barbara Laverty

7.30pm **FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS**

Tuesday 24th **Christmas Eve** **(White)**
11.15pm **MIDNIGHT EUCHARIST**

Epistle Hebrews 1: 1-4 God's one and only son

Read by Henry Auchmuty

Gospel John 1: 1-14 The Word became flesh

Wednesday 25th **Christmas Day** **(White)**
10.15am **Family Communion**

Gospel Luke 2: 8-20 The shepherds and the angels

Read by: Evie Greer

Thursday 26th **Saint Stephen** **(White)**
10.30am **Holy Communion**

Sunday 29th
8.15am

The First Sunday of Christmas
Holy Communion

(White)

Epistle Colossians 3: 12-17 The new life in Christ
Read by: Clergy
Gospel Luke 2: 41-52 The boy Jesus in the Temple

10.30am

Christingle Service

Reading John 1: 1-5
Read by: Jack Moore

Online Services

The audio recording of our 10.30am service each Sunday can be found on our parish website www.stcolumbas.down.anglican.org under "Church Service Recordings".

DECEMBER FLOWER ROTA

Sunday 1st Christine Johnston

Sunday 8th Margaret Grahame

Sunday 15th Nan Hillier

Sunday 22nd **CHRISTMAS FLOWERS**

Sunday 29th David Deane

JANUARY FLOWER ROTA

Sunday 5th Christine Johnston

Sunday 12th The Launchbury Family

Sunday 19th Fiona Haldane

Sunday 26th The Mason Family

Sunday 19th
8.15am

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany (White)
Holy Communion

Epistle 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11 Spiritual gifts

Reader Michael Sadlier

Gospel John 2: 1-11 The wedding at Cana

10.30am

Morning Prayer *followed by refreshments hosted by Mums & Tots*

1st Reading Isaiah 62: 1-5 The vindication and salvation of Zion

Reader Joyce Stevenson

2nd Reading John 2: 1-11 The wedding at Cana

Reader Esther Templeton

Occasional Prayers Karen McAlpine

Thursday 23rd
10.30am

The Conversion of St. Paul (Transferred) (White)
Holy Communion *followed by refreshments*

Sunday 26th
8.15am

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany (White)
Holy Communion

Epistle 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a One body with many members

Reader Ronny Martin

Gospel Luke 4: 14-21 The beginning of the Galilean ministry

10.30am

Holy Communion

Epistle 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a One body with many members

Reader Melissa Rutherford

Gospel Luke 4: 14-21 The beginning of the Galilean ministry

Intercessions Heather Brehcist

Thursday 30th Saint Brigid (Transferred) (White)
10.30am Holy Communion *followed by refreshments*

Online Services

The audio recording of our 10.30am service each Sunday can be found on our parish website www.stcolumbas.down.anglican.org under "Church Service Recordings".



Our children's Christmas Party will take place in
Campbell College Junior School on

**Saturday 7TH December, from
3pm-4.30pm.**

Come along for some fun and games, scaven-
ger hunt, picnic, and

meet the very special visitor
from the North Pole!

***Adults: please speak to a leader or Sunday
School teacher to see what you need to do.
Please bring along your picnic and a bag for
your rubbish. Thank you.***

Clergy Parish Visiting

It is always a great privilege for the Clergy to visit parishioners in their homes. If you would like to request a Clergy Visit, please telephone the Rector (028 9047 1514) or Canon Walter Laverty (028 9573 8743). In addition to requested Parish Visiting, the Clergy will be visiting parishioners in the following districts during January:

Rector Canon Laverty

Ballymorran Road, Killinchy

Millmount, Dundonald

Thornyhill Road, Killinchy

Gorsehill Road, Moneyreagh

Abbey Park, Belfast

Hillmount Cottages, Moneyreagh

Alt-Min Avenue, Belfast

Ardvarna Park, Belfast

Ballyhanwood Road, Dundonald

Barnetts Road, Belfast

Bell Rotary House

Belmont Avenue

Hospital Visiting

It is always a wonderful privilege for the Rector to visit parishioners when they are in hospital. This is only made possible by keeping the Rector or the Parish Administrator informed of when people are admitted, which ward they are in, and when they are discharged.



PLEASE HELP US TO HELP YOU by keeping us up to date.

While we appreciate that this can sometimes slip parishioner's minds in the stress of hospital life and illness, it is important that we are kept up to date so we can schedule visits. St Columba's has a wonderful church family which we always want to help, and this is only made possible when we are kept informed of changing circumstances.

Contact: **The Rector:** Tel 028 9047 1514 or email rector.knock@down.anglican.org

Or **Karen Patterson:** Tel 028 9065 6891 Monday- Friday, 9am-1pm or email office.knock@down.anglican.org



During this time of preparation for Christmas, the world can feel empty and sad for many people. The wars and unrest across the world, the changes to the climate, the cost of living, and many other news headlines can deepen the sense of loss and loneliness. Adding in the change of season to shorter days and darker nights feeling longer, the pressure can

sometimes feel over-whelming. This is further exacerbated by the loss of a family member or friend, making it a difficult time for some people.

Blue Christmas is a service of comfort and reflection. It is a way in which we can recognize the depth of worry or sadness and help process those negative feelings of loss or grief. By doing so, we can embrace the love and light of Christ, and make our peace with our circumstances. It provides us with hope for the future and comfort in knowing that we are not alone in our pain or suffering.

Everyone is welcome – bring along friends or family members if you wish, and help to make peace with your sadness, grief or worry.

Join us on Thursday 5th December at 10.30am for our Blue Christmas Service.

Did you know...

...that The Gospel according to St Luke is comprised of 24 chapters.

This means that if you read a chapter each day, beginning on the 1st December, you will have read Luke's account of the entire life of Jesus by Christmas Eve.

So when you celebrate Christmas Day, you will understand the real reason for the season!



Thought for the Month

Moving into retirement after over forty years in full time employment I have had time to reflect.

I grew up in East Belfast moving from Marmont Park to Glenmachan at the age of thirteen. I enjoyed a happy childhood playing with friends who lived locally, many of whom I am still in contact with today. I went to Strathearn School and as a family, we attended St. Mark's Dundela. As the 'Troubles' were at their worst at that time, our social life mainly revolved around the Church Community with Parish activities such as the

Choir, Guides and Badminton , all weekly events. On Saturday nights my father ran the Church Youth Club and engaged other parents to police the windows to ensure no alcohol made it into the Church Hall!

Family, cousins and friends filled our days before mobile phones and technology. I recall family picnics, days out, holidays and visits to grandparents in London – a happy childhood despite the situation in Belfast at the time. We regularly played in a field which is now Parkway Dual Carriageway - how times have changed!

Growing up, I was always taught that people are more important than possessions; a lesson made very clear at the start of Prep 7 when my priorities went very wrong! I was appointed a Junior School Prefect, told of my responsibilities, given my badge and told

to "wear it with pride". After school that day, I kept my uniform on, just to make sure everyone saw the badge! When bedtime came, to my horror the badge had fallen off my tunic. Where could it be? Everyone came out to search but unfortunately, it wasn't to be found. I went to bed very upset dreading my fate with the Headmistress the next day. It was a sleep less night however next morning at first light, the badge was located at the back door by my father – to my great relief! A lesson well learnt that it is never worth getting upset over things, even it was my cherished Prefect badge.

At university I judged the Eurovision Song Contest, joined the Student March



against cuts in Education and led a party of Guides to participate in the wedding of Charles and Diana. After graduating, I joined the Management Training Scheme with Marks and Spencer in London. The hours in retail were long and we worked hard dealing with the public and learning the importance of people and customer service. Royalty, TV stars...everyone had to be treated well.

After eight years, I returned to Northern Ireland as Personal Manager of the Altnagelvin Group of hospitals before joining Ulster Carpets, a family-owned global business. I was made a Board Director for Human Resources – a challenging and interesting role where teamwork and people were at the heart of the job.

I stumbled across John when he was Curate in St. Mark's Dundela and I was one of the Churchwardens. We married in St Mark's Dundela in 1999 when John was a Rector in Armagh Diocese, a great celebration with family and friends, and I moved to a country village for the first time – not quite East Belfast! I discovered very quickly that DIY was not one of the Rector's strengths and the Glebewardens in all our parishes have come to our rescue on more than one occasion!

Shortly after Charles was born in Armagh, we moved to Carryduff where Henry was born. Six years later, we were on the move back to East Belfast to St. Columba's in BT5. This was both exciting and daunting – the Rectory was huge and the boys were determined to stay in Inchmarlo (although they won't admit that today!) Parishioners and friends made us very welcome and filling the Rectory proved easier than convincing Charles and Henry that Campbell College would be a better option. Being in a position to raise the boys in the community where I grew up has been an amazing privilege for us as a family. The boys have had the opportunity of making friends and enjoying the same social circle as their cousins and the wider family. They have also enjoyed their Granny's close involvement in their academic and social lives and we benefited from her help with school pick up.

Growing up here in St. Columba's, Charles and Henry have been able to enjoy a childhood similar to mine, with the benefit of a close community and the people within it.

Looking back over the years at home and at work, without doubt, it is people;- family, friends and the kindness of the Parish community that make a real difference.

Caroline Auchmuty

Our sincere thanks to Caroline for sharing these 'Thoughts' with us.

The February 'Thought for the Month' will be written by Ronny Martin.

PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD

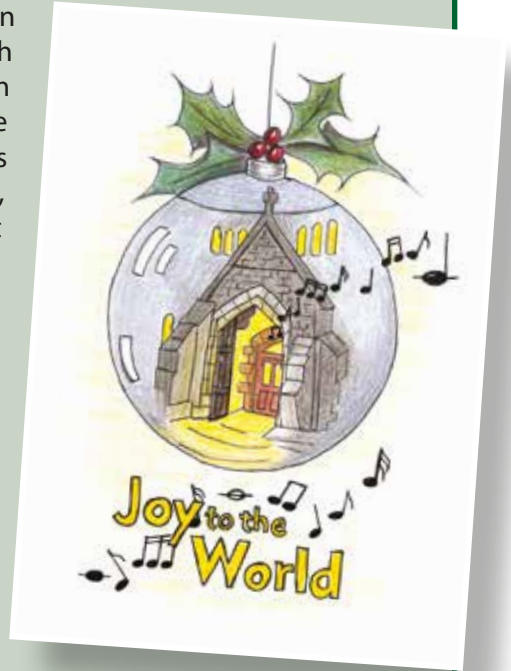
Our Parish Christmas Card focuses on a shiny Christmas bauble topped with holly, depicting the brightly lit open church door and the sound of "Joy to the World" drifting out. It closely resembles the church door here at St Columba's, with the bright lights shining out and our choir singing a most joyous Christmas hymn. The bauble represents the world, surrounded by a halo of light, as Christ shines his light around the world to overcome darkness and sustain us in our faith.

The hymn "Joy to the World, the Lord is come! let Earth receive her King" is based on Genesis 3 and Psalm 98 and was written in 1719 by English minister Isaac Watts. It is enjoyed around the world for its simple praise and easy lyrics, making it a firm favourite of adults and children alike.

Our church door is always open with a warm welcome for everyone as we share our friendship, fellowship and faith to all. The music drifting out is a lovely way to remember all of the music of Christmas, as we come together for our Advent and Christmas services. Our musical traditions are enjoyed by all, and we look forward to welcoming everyone to our services. There is a great choice of services available during December as we prepare to welcome Jesus into the world and we invite you to join us for as many as possible.

I thank the Art Club for the submission of their work for consideration, and especially thank Jayne Martin for her beautiful design which was selected for our Parish Christmas Card this year.

THE RECTOR



Prayers for your thoughts and comfort



The next two months include many significant events in the Church and secular calendar. Examples include Advent – the beginning of a new Church year : Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus with it's message of peace and goodwill : a New Year in January when many resolve to be more positive in living their lives : Epiphany, traditionally recalling the visit of Wise Men to Bethlehem, and Christian Unity Week when we focus on that which unites us as Christians. The prayer material in this issue focuses on these occasions. In addition, you will find prayers in which we seek God's help and encouragement in facing personal challenges, as well as praying for a world and community with its difficulties and opportunities. Please note the inclusion of two forms of the 'Grace' which would be suitable for gatherings at mealtimes on Christmas Day.

Hopefully, you will find some helpful material as you pray in daily times of reflection.

ADVENT commencing on 1st.December

Almighty God, who, in many ways spoke to your people through the prophets. Make us ready to receive Christ as our only Lord, and, with thankfulness to praise him, now and always. **Amen**

CHRISTMAS (1)

God of love, open the hearts and minds of many in our world this Christmas to the good news of Jesus Christ, so that those whose lives are insecure, or empty or purposeless, may find in the one born at Bethlehem, all that they need. We pray in his name. **Amen**

CHRISTMAS (2) (A 20th. Century American source)

Lord God, when the songs of Christmas joy are stilled: when the star in the sky is gone: when the kings and princes have returned home: when the shepherds are back with their flocks – then may the work of Christmas begin, which is to find the lost: to heal the broken in spirit: to feed the hungry: to release the oppressed: to rebuild the nations: to bring peace among all people, and to radiate the Light of Christ every day, in every way, in all that we do and say. This is when the work of Christmas begins, with your help.

Amen A 20th. Century American source

CHRISTMAS (3) A prayer for family and friends

God our Father, we thank you for our homes, our families and our friends: for laughter and sorrow shared: for the knowledge of your presence in good times and bad. As we think of loved ones nearby, in other countries and places who are unable to be with us at Christmas, and also recall the lives of loved ones in your closer presence, so bind us together in your name. **Amen**

CHRISTMAS (4) A Christmas Blessing

May the joy of the angels
the eagerness of the shepherds
the perseverance of the wise men
the obedience of Mary and Joseph
and the peace of the Christ child
be ours (yours) this Christmas. **Amen**

GRACE (1) for Christmas and other occasions

Creator of the universe, you give us the gift of food to nourish us. Bless this food that human hands have prepared. May it satisfy our needs, and encourage us to be more responsive to the cries of the needy. In sharing together, may we come closer to one another. **Amen**

GRACE (2)

To God who gives our daily bread
A thankful song we sing
And pray that He who sends our food
May fill our hearts with praise. **Amen**

EPIPHANY commences on 6th.January

Lord God, who guided the wise men to the worship of the infant Jesus, we pray that you will lead the wise, the great and the humble of every nation, to a realisation that in you is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. **Amen**

DAYS of significance in ADVENT, CHRISTMAS & EPIPHANY

St. Stephen (26th December) The first Christian martyr Read Acts 7

St. John the Evangelist (27thDecember) Thank God for St. John's Gospel

The Innocent Day (28th December) Read St. Luke 2 v.16 We recall the abuse of children in every age

The Naming of Jesus (1stJanuary) Honour his name as a baptised Christian

The Conversion of St. Paul (25thJanuary) Read Acts 9 v.1 to 9

Note:- Prayers or Collects for all the above can be found in the Book of Common Prayer

NEW YEAR

God of all time, who makes all things new, as we begin to take our first steps into the future, where nothing is safe or certain, hold our hands as we journey onwards. May our dreams or shalom (peace) when all will be peace, be our guiding star. **Amen**

CHRISTIAN UNITY WEEK 18th - 25thJanuary

Heavenly Father, in whose eyes the Church is one in spite of human prejudice, intolerance and failings. Give us your disciples such regret for our divisions, such love for one another and such devotion to your service, that we may find again our unity in Christ **Amen**

WORLD PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you have given your peace to all people, regardless of their colour, race creed or any other perceived differences. We ask you to help those in whose hands are the various governments of the world to work more resolutely to achieve reconciliation, so that each may respect the rights of the other. We ask it in your name. **Amen**

A NEW ZEALAND (Maori) PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord, lead us from death to life: from falsehood to truth: from despair to hope: from fear to trust: from hate to love: from war to peace. Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe. **Amen**

Note:- As many world leaders will be assuming responsibility in government in December/ January please pray for them, and for our own political leaders. You may wish to use the Prayer of St. Francis- Lord, make me an instrument of your peace..... If you have not access to the words, please ask the clergy.

A PERSONAL PRAYER

Grant O God that I may speak with integrity but lovingly, that the greatness of Christ may shine out in my person, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

FINALLY - Think of these things!

'To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.'
Ecclesiastes 3

'Brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.' Philippians 4

'Lord, make me see your glory and presence in every place' Michelangelo
c.1500



Holy Communion for Senior Parishioners

in St. Columba's Parish Church

on Thursday 19th December at 10.30am

With Christmas carols and seasonal refreshments

Everyone welcome.

MUMS AND TOTS

We finished our autumn term with the children making scarecrows and hedgehogs with Barbara as shown in the photograph.

In December we will be making Christmas decorations and learning Christmas songs before we finish on Friday 13th. We will return on 10th January 2025.

Wishing all our children, parents, carers and volunteers a Happy Christmas

Joyce



School Aid, Romania

In January 2025 I will be travelling to the town of Brasov in Romania with the charity School Aid Romania, with a group of 20 pupils from my school, Methodist College.

During the week we spend there we will be involved in

- Delivering food parcels to a village which gets no support from the government
- Visiting an abandoned baby unit to deliver nappies, blankets and baby clothes.
- Delivering cleaning materials and food to orphanages where we will also spend time playing with the children and giving them toys.

The Rector has agreed that I can fundraise after the service on Sunday 8th December, with proceeds from coffee and refreshments going to School Aid Romania.

Thanks in advance for any donations.

Lucy Armstrong



St. Columba's Art Club
invites you to an

EXHIBITION

&

SALE of PAINTINGS

in the church hall on

Saturday, 7th December

10.00am - 4.00 pm

Tea/Coffee

Ballot



A Christmas Reflection

Canon Walter Laverty

I don't believe it! I am writing this on Armistice Day and already have seen a Christmas tree in the window of a neighbour's house. Likewise, I'm sure we know of those who buy Christmas presents in mid-summer. I could never be that organised!

By the time you receive this edition of "The Columban" we will only be a few days away from the Advent Service (Sunday 1st December). These four weeks before Christmas are traditionally a time of preparation and have all kinds of ancient customs of their own. In many churches, the Advent wreath is the focus of marking time before Christmas. Every week of the four weeks of dark December a candle is lit as we recall the great biblical heroes of our faith. As one candle is added to another, the wreath burns brighter until the large white central candle is lit on Christmas Day. This visibly draws our attention to Christ as the one true light. Alternatively, in many homes there will be the Advent Calendar – perhaps even with a sweet behind each door. If it's a religious calendar there will be a picture or biblical text.

Last week, at the parish Bible study, we came across a verse in 2nd Corinthians, the book we have been studying since September. The verse reads as follows "You know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2nd Cor. 8 V 9). The context is that St Paul was encouraging the Corinthian church to be generous in their giving to help the struggling church in Jerusalem. We, too, are reminded to be as generous as possible at any time but especially at Christmas since we are only too aware that many will have financial difficulties throughout these winter months.

St Paul's argument was taken to another level. He was reminding his hearers of a deeply theological implication. Christ was enjoying the rich life with his Father in heaven; but laid aside that "richness" to be born into a humble human family and have an animal feeding trough as a cradle! St Paul continued to say that Christ did that for their sake so that they could become "rich" in the faith and knowledge of God. Likewise, that message comes down to us as well. Our Christmas joy is only complete when we recognise the great sacrifice Christ made for us by coming into the world so that we would have hope of salvation and receive, through our faith, the free gift of God's grace and the promise of eternal life.

May we use the Advent season to reflect on that thought among all other thoughts. In doing so, the timeless message of Christmas will fill our hearts and lives with the true and lasting joy that the secular world will never understand!

May you and yours have a blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Walter, Barbara and Mark.



Ladies Guild

For our November meeting we had a 'Matinee' showing of 'The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society'. The film was set during the German occupation of the Channel Islands and a cast of familiar actors told the touching story of how a small group of people coped with the difficulties of living in that period.

Our thanks go to David Deane for once more being our sound engineer for the afternoon

It is almost time for our annual Christmas Lunch which will be held at Shandon Park Golf Club on Tuesday 10th December. We look forward to welcoming our members along with guests to enjoy sharing fellowship at this season.

I would remind members that all menu choices must be returned to Joan Madill **no later than 3rd December** in order that numbers can be confirmed with the venue.

In January we will welcome a speaker from the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service.

On behalf of the committee I wish each of you and your families Blessings and Peace at Christmas and in the New Year to come.

Eleanor

St Columba's Afternoon Group

Please join us on

Monday 9th December at 2.30pm for

'A Christmas Festive Fun Event'

followed by a Seasonal Afternoon Tea

Please bring a small wrapped present

(worth £2 - £3) for the Secret Santa

Christmas hats or antlers are optional



We had a very interesting evening with Dr Ken Addley from the Northern Ireland Air Ambulance Service as he explained the work that this amazing emergency service provide in the province.

On Wednesday 13th we attended the Mothers' Union meeting in St Dorothea's. The "Kidz 4 School Charity", which works to provide education for children in Tanzania, told us about this important and interesting work. We had a lovely afternoon with our near neighbours.

Diary Dates.

Christmas Tree Festival Saturday 30th November leaving the church car park at 10.00 a.m.

Advent Carol Service Monday 2nd December 7.30pm, St Mary's Comber

MU Christmas Evening Tuesday 3rd December 8.00pm, parish hall. We will be making a simple floral decoration using a bottle clip. Bottle clip lights and materials will be provided at a small charge. Please bring a bottle of your choice, the clip fits a selection of wine or soft drinks bottles. Looking forward to seeing everyone's creations.

7th January, 8.00pm Church service for Epiphany

May I wish you all a blessed Christmas and happy new year

Barbara



Pauline, Barbara, Angela and Dr Ken Addley.



Church hall cleaning rota

2024

- December 8th** Fiona and Robin Haldane
- December 22nd** Christine and Ian Johnston

2025

- January 5th** Joyce Stevenson and Yvonne Robb
- January 19th** Clare and Jim Best

Wishing all the wonderful volunteers a very Happy Christmas and Happy New Year

Nan Hillier

Finance

In December, to make a final Christmas gift to the parish use the white envelopes which are in your box of church envelopes.

This year, we will be using the white envelopes towards our Hall Fund so that we can upgrade the toilet facilities in the church hall.

We will also be splitting the collection at our Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, on Sunday 22nd December at 7.30pm, between the Dean's Sit Out and our Church Hall Fund.

Thank you for all of your incredible financial support during 2024, and for your loyal support of the ministry of St Columba's.

A little reminder...

New church envelopes for 2025 were delivered to every house during October along with your Columban magazine. **Please make sure that all donations for 2024 are received by Sunday 29th December. Any received after this date will be allocated to your 2025 giving.**



Please make sure that following your final donation for 2024, any OLD envelopes are destroyed as they are no longer valid. Thank you. you.



Stuck for a Christmas Gift idea?

Copies of our beautiful parish book pictured above are still available to purchase for £10 at the back of church each Sunday. The inspirational pictures of the gorgeous stained-glass windows are of great interest to many people.

A perfect gift for friends, neighbours or family, or even for your own personal use, this book explains the stories behind each of the beautiful windows. Get your copy while stocks last!



Railway and Model Club

Things are progressing within the club. Members are actively working on their individual projects.

We will be hosting the after-service refreshments on the 3rd Sunday in December. We plan to have a Christmas themed model train up and running too.

By the time you read this we hopefully will have had an outing for our Christmas lunch. All being well we will have been in Poacher's Pocket on 25th November. The lunch is a joint venture incorporating members of the Forum and guests who are not already involved in the Model Club. As far the club projects are concerned, we hope to be in a position by the New Year to undertake a major project on the original layout first built when the club was founded in 2014. More details and updates in due course.

We have in the past received so many generous welcome donations from individuals over the years. We really appreciate the donations and are happy to incorporate them where possible in our projects. Thank you so much.

From everyone in the club to you all we wish you a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

John Robb. Chairman 07956061929

Private Holy Communion Services

It is always a privilege for the Clergy to conduct private Holy Communion services for those housebound parishioners who will not be attending Christmas services in St. Columba's.

Please telephone the Parish Office (Tel: 028 9065 6891 Monday – Friday 9.00am – 1.00pm) **by Friday 6th December**, to make an appointment if you would like a private Holy Communion service in your home.

A Thought for Christmas

These notes are prepared on a dull and misty day in November when communities in our country and beyond are preparing for Christmas.

Last year, at least one council decided to greet its citizens with colourful banners wishing citizens a 'Happy Yuletide.' Was this an old-fashioned way of greeting people, or, a desire to be as politically correct as possible, and consequently, to offend nobody?

'Happy Yuletide'! What is the origin of that greeting? Well, it can be traced back to pre Christian times, when a mid-winter celebration associated with the themes of light, fire and feasting was commonplace in Ireland and elsewhere. The shortest day was observed as the nativity of the sun, after which the sun grew stronger in the sky. Maybe those who identified with such beliefs could be called the original 'sun worshippers'!!

There is no evidence in the Bible or elsewhere to suggest that Jesus was born on 25th. December. However, by the 5th. Century a religious leader like St. Augustine, was urging Christians not to celebrate the solemn day 'like the heathen on account of the sun, but, on account of him who is the Son of God – Jesus Christ.'

When I was ordained over fifty years ago, many conservative Christian congregations did not observe Christmas Day, simply because the date of the birth of Christ is not mentioned in the Bible. Our Christian tradition, along with many others, encourages people to share their faith together at Christmas time. Of course that does not preclude us from singing secular songs with sentimental words like that made known by Nat King Cole:- 'Jack Frost nipping at your nose : Yuletide carols being sung by the choir.'

I'm aware of very few, if any, of my non believing friends who take exception to the greeting 'Happy Christmas' I'm sure that opinion could be extended to the vast majority of those of other religions or none.

I trust that many parishioners and readers of the Columban can celebrate and observe the true significance of a great Christian festival which, we acknowledge, on 25th. December - the awesome fact that God came amongst us as a humble and vulnerable baby.

May the hope, the peace, the joy and the love represented by the birth in Bethlehem fill our lives and become part of all that we say or do. Whatever your circumstances may be in a troubled world, I, and my wife, Jenny, wish you a Happy Christmas.

God bless you.

Ken Smyth (Reverend Canon)

MEN'S FORUM



“50 Notable People from East Belfast”

On Wednesday 13th November the Forum hosted a talk by Peter McCabe on the lives of some of East Belfast's more prominent citizens, past and present. It proved to be an interesting and successful evening and it was well received by all who attended, Many also took the opportunity to talk to Peter afterwards whilst refreshments were served. Our thanks to you all for your support on the Forum's first venture since its formation. We continue to meet each Monday evening at 7.30pm in the hall. Our doors are always open and we guarantee any visitors a warm welcome as well as a cuppa. Thank you all again for your support. It only remains for me to wish each and everyone of you a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful prosperous New Year.

John Robb



PAUSE

Today is bright and sunny though very cold. The leaves are still falling but are dry and rustle when kicked. This is the end of autumn and we must prepare for winter.

Hopefully you will be reading this on or before the First Sunday in Advent, when we begin preparations for Christmas Day. Shops have been preparing for Christmas for some time!

The last meeting of PAUSE in 2024 will be on:

Tuesday 3rd December 2024 at The Poet for tea/coffee and scones at 10.30am

The first meeting in 2025 will be on:

Tuesday 14th January 2025 at Hillmount Garden Centre for refreshments at 10.30am.

If you are free please come along. All are welcome. Come on your own or with a friend. If you require further details or help with transport please contact me.

Eileen (028 9020 3684).



FEBRUARY 2025 MAGAZINE

Any articles or photographs for publication in the **February** parish magazine should be handed or emailed to the editor, **Billy McAlpine**, by **Wednesday, 9th January**

His contact details are:-

10 Old Quay Court, Holywood BT18 0HT
Tel: **9042 4390** Email: **colmaged@outlook.com**

We all love to see photographs of people enjoying our Church activities. So we can all benefit fully from this and for reproduction purposes, it is very important that photographs are clear and in focus.

Many thanks

PARISH ORGANISATIONS


New members are always welcome at any of our organisations!

Sunday	Sunday School <i>Junior nursery to P5</i> <i>Senior P6 and over</i>	2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th Sundays at 10.30am	Superintendent: Lynn Ryan 07955 479065
	Crèche	2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th Sundays at 10.30am	Lindsay Rothwell 07710 590574
	Choir	9.30am	Dr Joe McKee 07976 294574
Monday	MU Afternoon Group	2 nd Monday each month 2.30pm	Joy Montgomery 9029 5427
	Men's Forum	7.30pm	John Robb 07956061929
Tuesday	Ladies Badminton	10-00am - 12 Noon	Gillian Popplestone 07730479478
	Ladies Guild	3 rd Tuesday each month 2.30pm in the church	Eileen Anderson 9020 3684
	Activity Group	Except 1 st Tuesday 7.30pm	Maureen Irwin 9079 5155
	Mothers' Union	1 st Tuesday each month 8.00pm	Barbara Laverty 9573 8743
Wednesday	Bible Study Group	2.30pm - 4.00pm	Eileen Anderson 9020 3684
	Railway and Model Club	2.00pm to 4.30pm	John Robb 07956062929
Thursday	Art Club	9.30am	Carole Crothers 07979093956
	Scouts	7.30pm to 9.30pm	Iain Hall 07799 474111
Friday	Mums and Tots	10.00am	Joyce Stevenson, 07772128944
Bi-monthly	Pause	As arranged	Eileen Anderson 9020 3684
Monthly	Youth Etc. <i>(11-15 years)</i>	As arranged	Jonathan Martin, 07980 885990
	Young Families	Social events as arranged	Rachel Stewart 07812 247343

WHO'S WHO IN ST. COLUMBAS

Parish website: www.stcolumbas.down.anglican.org

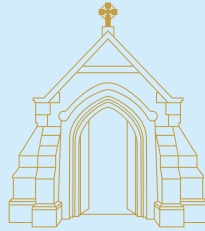
Rector	The Reverend Chancellor John R Auchmuty	St. Columba's Rectory 29 Kings Road BT5 6JG 028 9047 1514 rectorknock@down.anglican.org
Assistant Priests	The Reverend Canon Ken Smyth The Reverend Canon Walter Laverty	3 Mount Royal Bangor BT20 3BG 028 9145 8706 6 Hanwood Heights Dundonald BT16 1XU 028 9573 8743
Diocesan Lay Reader	Karen McAlpine	readercolumba@gmail.com
Rector's Churchwarden	Rosemary Allister	07880 504928
People's Churchwarden	David Connery	07801 738114
Rector's Glebewarden	Ian Johnston	07850 999909
People's Glebewarden	Mark Wilson	07714 658911
Honorary Sexton	John Proctor	028 9087 0526
Assistant Honorary Sexton	Geoff Launchbury	028 9028 1204 07814 498 241
Select Vestry	Rector, Churchwardens, Glebewardens, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Assistant Hon. Treasurer, David Craig, David Kelly John Kerr, Louise Mercer, Martin Moore, Nigel Morrow, Scott Rutherford, Jim Stevenson, Richard Whiteside	
Honorary Secretary	John Macpherson	10 Sandhill Gardens BT5 6FF 028 9028 2076 jdmacpherson@hotmail.com
Honorary Treasurer	Brian Acheson	028 9042 4892
Assistant Honorary Treasurer	Victor Dukelow	028 9029 0625

Gift Aid Secretary	Jack Dunlop	028 9065 4103
Parochial Nominators	Victor Dukelow, Patrick Good, Elizabeth Leonard, Linda Wilson	
Diocesan Synod members	Patrick Good , Dr. Elizabeth Leonard Charles Auchmuty (Under 30)	
Organist and Choral Director	Dr Joe McKee	07976 294574
Assistant Organist	Brian Clements	028 9079 3641
Magazine Editor	Billy McAlpine	028 9042 4390 colmaged@outlook.com
Parish Webmaster	Dr Jonathan Stewart	office.knock@down.anglican.org
C of I Gazette Distributor	Moranne Noad	028 9079 3704
Bible Reading Fellowship notes	Joan Madill	028 9065 6591
Church flowers	Eleanor Launchbury	028 9028 1204
Premise's Convenor	Stewart Beckwith	028 9048 6622
Crucifer	Mark Lavery	028 9573 8743
Parish Office Administrator/ Financial Giving Secretary	Karen Patterson Office hours: Monday to Friday 9.00am-1.00pm	 028 9065 6891 office.knock@down.anglican.org

Safeguarding Panel

The Rector, Select Vestry and parish leaders are committed to upholding good practice in the parish's ministry with children and young people. Should you have cause for concern or suspicion regarding child welfare in the parish please contact:

The Rector 02890471514 Patrick Good 02890656908 Elizabeth Leonard 02890653162



ST COLUMBA'S KNOCK

*An open door to friendship,
fellowship and faith*

YOUR attendance can strengthen YOUR parish!



CHURCH CAR PARKING

When parking to go to church services or Parish Organisations please be sensitive to the residents in the local community by taking care not to block entrances or pavements. Thank you!



Facebook

St Columba's Knock is now on Facebook. 'Like' our page to see updates on events, services and photos. Search coiknock on Facebook or Messenger to find us easily.

For those who are new to St Columba's and would like more information about the life and membership of the parish, please give your name and phone number to our Churchwardens or contact the Parish Office during office hours Monday-Friday, 9.00am-1.00pm on 028 9065 6891.

