

CHRISTMAS 2017

SAINTS *Alive!*

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THE MAGAZINE OF ALL SAINTS' PARISH, ANTRIM

WILL YOU HAVE ROOM FOR HIM IN YOUR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS?

The story's told of a mother, who woke her son one Sunday morning and said, 'Get up - you're late for church!' He replied, 'I don't want to go. I've no friends there, the music's awful, and the sermons are boring!' The woman replied, 'You've got to go - you're the Vicar!' Seriously, why should we go to church?

Over the past year or so, the numbers at our services have suffered a sharp decline and on one Sunday in October, we just scraped past 100 people at our 11.30am service. For a parish which ministers to over 700 families, just 100 people coming along to our main Sunday service is a sad reflection on us all. We have been keeping a really careful check on our numbers and on a good Sunday, we might have 20 people at 8.30am Holy Communion, 140 at 11.30am Morning Prayer at 30 at 6.30pm Evening Prayer. We rarely break a combined total of 200 worshippers at our three services. When you take into consideration that about 20 people attend church twice, 180 people attending on an average Sunday out of almost 2000 people who claim allegiance to All Saints', is poor.

I do not want to give an entirely negative review of All Saints because the organisations that meet in the Parish Centre are thriving and our finances are in good shape, but what can we do to improve on our attendance figures? Simple. If your attendance has lapsed somewhat, by coming along, you can make a difference.



As our curate Aaron said recently, Jesus is not just for Christmas, but for life.

Here are some good reasons for going to church

- 1 It is the only organisation that still deals with issues like salvation, death, judgment, grace, and purpose.
- 2 It adds value and dignity to human life. Come along and hear about God's love and acceptance of you.
- 3 It is where you find compassion, healing, and community. All Saints' is a parish where everyone is welcomed and valued. Your attendance at church is vital to the family feeling factor of who we are.
- 4 Unlike other institutions, it has motivated the most lasting, unselfish, essential, courageous endeavours on earth. Things like missions, schools, hospitals, food banks, rehab centres, and orphanages. You can help fund such worthy causes.
- 5 And finally, 'why go to church?' Because Jesus loves the church - and so should all of us.

As we celebrate his Birth at this Christmas season, can I encourage you to find room in your Christmas schedule, not just at Christmas, but in the coming weeks and months, to come along and worship and hopefully, together we experience a growth in the numbers of those attending our services.

CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE

Sunday 17 December 2017

11.00am Family Lessons and Carols for Christmas (*this will be followed by coffee and mince pies*)

6.30 Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight

Christmas Eve - Sunday 24 December 2017

11.30pm Midnight Holy Communion

Christmas Day - Monday 25 December 2017

8.30am Holy Communion

10.30am Nativity Play and Family Communion

There will be no service of Holy Communion on Wednesday **27 December**.

There will be no services of Evening Prayer on Sunday **24 & 31 December**.

FUNDAY CLUB HOLIDAYS

There will be no Funday Club on **24 and 31 December**. Club will resume on **7 January 2018**. Prize Giving will be at the Family Service on Sunday **21 January 2018**.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Our **Hospice Coffee Morning** raised **£351.20** - a magnificent sum for a very worthy cause

Please continue to support our **Smartie Tube Appeal** which helps to fund our link with St John Theological College in Kitwe, Zambia where we are aiming to send **£6,000** per year to support The Rev Dr Keith Scott. To date, the tubes of Smarties have raised **£1014.31**.

FREEWILL OFFERINGS

The Hon Treasurer wishes to close the books for the year ending December 2017 on Sunday 31 December. Freewill Offering Envelopes for 2017 received after this will be recorded in your total for 2018.

If you wish to make your donations by Standing Order, please contact the Hon Treasurer, Cynthia Cherry on 028 9446 3173 or the Parish Administrator, Audrey McClements on 028 9446 0042

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS

What did December 25 originally celebrate? For some time before the coming of Christianity, December 25 was a time of pagan celebration. The pagans knew that at this point in their calendar the shortest day and longest night had passed, that little by little the sun would rise higher and remain longer in the sky, bringing with it the promise of spring. Prior to this day occurred the week-long Roman feast called Saturnalia (December 17-24), held in honour of the deity Saturn. This festival brought hopes for peace, happiness and goodness that supposedly occurred during Saturn's reign. Emperor Aurelian (A.D. 270-275) quickly capitalized upon the heathen worship of the sun and in the year A.D. 274, officially declared December 25 as the birthday of the Unconquered Sun (*dies natalis solis invicti*).

Not everyone agreed with Aurelian's findings and Christian continued to research the possible date of Jesus's birth. Some churches had been celebrating Jesus' birth on January 6, others April 20, May 20, March 29, and September 29. Finally so much confusion reigned that Saint Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, about the middle of the fourth century, inquired of the Roman bishop, Julius, regarding the correct date. Julius wrote to Cyril and reported that he personally favoured December 25. Obviously refusing to accept this date as valid, Cyril and the Jerusalem church continued celebrating the event for many years on January 6.

In A.D. 354, two years following the end of Saint Julius' reign, the new Roman bishop, Liberius, ordered all his people to celebrate December 25 as the correct day of Christ's birth. With the passage of time this date became the more popular and was soon adopted by most of Christendom.

FAMILY SERVICE CHANGE OF VENUE

We are going to be holding our monthly Family Service in the Parish Centre, beginning on Sunday 21 January at 11.00am. We will begin with refreshments and then move into a time of worship with the aim of finishing by 12.00noon at the latest. Part of the benefit of belonging to a church is being a member of a family and getting to know one another, young and old is very important and beneficial. So please, do make an effort to talk to someone whose face you may know, but that is all. Our worship will be a little more informal and there will be activities for young and old together.

NEXT STEPS

When we started Next Steps I had always planned three things for them. The first was to establish the group, to get some sort of cohesion among the team. They needed to feel comfortable around each other in an environment that was neither a youth club nor Scouts. We developed a 'drop in centre' atmosphere and mixed it with a programme of food, interactive games and chat, and we threw in the occasional team outing or event. You can have all the bells and whistles you like in order to dazzle a group, but what keeps them together after week one is twofold: variety and relationship. One of the joys of such a group succeeding is seeing them bring their friends and then these new guys deciding to stay too. Building relationships take time, but in the end it's about getting in there with them and being interested in the details of their lives. That for me is demonstrating God's love.



The next thing part of the development, which is where we are now, is taking the team and integrating it with something larger than themselves. Connor Diocese is forward thinking in how to bring its many youth groups together for all in one events. Our team had their first proper feel for this when they went to Castlewelan for Connor Takes the Castle. Fun, food and mayhem. And God was the central focus. They had a blast. And as I write this we are in final preparations for bringing them to our Connor's Christmas Cracker in Ballymena, a night full of team games.



The third thing is a year away yet so I'm unable to comment on that yet. But just to highlight one other thing, Next Steps did themselves proud at the Christmas Tree Festival. Tree 7 was The Jesse Tree, a tree of their own construction and design. Melanie and I only guided, the rest is them. We are very proud of their tree and indeed of the team. We wish you all a Merry Christmas from all the gang.

Aaron

CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Joseph | Shepherds |
| Mary | Watch |
| Bethlehem | Flocks |
| Baby | Angel |
| Born | Appeared |
| Wrapped | Afraid |
| Clothes | Sign |
| Manger | Glory |
| Room | Peace |
| Inn | Earth |

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

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Planning for this mammoth undertaking began this time last year when Aaron and I visited St Columba's Parish in Knock to view their festival. It was most helpful to learn about all that putting on such a festival entailed. On our return we devised a theme that could include all the groups and organisation that are associated with All Saints' and also planned to include the local schools. We also thought that the impact of the festival would be more effective if we included Macmillan Cancer Support and Lough Neagh Rescue as part of the fund raising aspect. At our early committee meetings it was great to feel the enthusiasm of all who were going to be involved. When we returned from our summer break, each of the organisations had already begun to formulate their designs and as the Festival drew ever closer, the excitement grew more and more. We began with an empty church at 9.00am on Monday 27 November and by midnight on Wednesday 29 November everything was in place.

The Festival has been a marvellous opportunity for building relationships within the parish and strengthening bonds between members. It has also been

an opportunity to give something back to our community. There have been many highlights including the opening concert and the concluding carol service, the wonderful atmosphere within the church with gentle music in the background offering time for contemplation and the admiration of the imagination of everyone who designed the trees. So many people have commented on what a fantastic group of talented people our church is fortunate to have as its members.

The Festival could not have taken place without the generosity of our tree sponsors and those who advertised in our brochure, as it took almost £3,000 to stage the event. Alongside this, the generosity of the time given by so many volunteers who put up the trees, cleaned the church and hoovered, those who took care of the catering and provided the buns, our choir and musicians who performed in the concert and those who staffed the church over the four days of the festival. It has been a wonderful event and thanks to everyone who contributed to its success.

Stephen and Aaron





TREE 1
THE CREATION TREE



TREE 2
THE FALL



TREE 3
THE CHRISTINGLE
TREE



TREE 4
THE WORD OF GOD
IN THE SCRIPTURES



TREE 5
SILENCE



TREE 6
THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN
DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT



TREE 7
THE JESSE TREE



TREE 8
THE ADVENT
CALENDAR



TREE 9
THE ANNUNCIATION



TREE 10
JOSEPH



TREE 11
YOU SHALL CALL HIS
NAME JESUS



TREE 12
THE IMMANUEL TREE



TREE 13
NO ROOM
AT THE INN



TREE 14
AWAY IN A MANGER



TREE 15
CHOIRS OF THE
HEAVENLY ANGELS



TREE 16
THE SHEPHERDS



TREE 17
THE CANDY
CANE TREE



TREE 18
THE STAR TREE



TREE 19
ANGELS



TREE 20
GOLD, FRANKIN-
CENSE AND MYRRH



TREE 21
THE ST NICHOLAS
TREE



TREE 22
PRESENTS



TREE 23
CHRISTIAN AID



TREE 24
LOVE CAME DOWN AT
CHRISTMAS



TREE 25
JOY TO THE WORLD



TREE 26
PEACE



TREE 27
THE NATIVITY TREE



TREE 28
THE MEMORY TREE

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL CONCERT



PARISH REGISTERS

HOLY BAPTISM

BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

10 September	Elijah David Joseph Jack	son of Joanne Miller & Matthew Ralson 45 Niblock Oaks, Antrim
	Emily Sally Jayne	daughter of Claire Brownlees & Jason Weir 74 Tarragon Park, Antrim
17 September	Ella Catherine	daughter of Emma Corbett & Adam Brady 7 The Meadows, Randalstown
15 October	Harvey Michael Raymond	son of Joanne Jennings and Patrick Wilson 97 Donegore Drive, Antrim
	Sophie Kendra	daughter of James and Rachel Crockard 77 Portlee Walk, Antrim
19 November	Cora June	daughter of Courtney Paxton 382 Firmount Drive, Antrim
	Ashton Paul	son of June Paxton and Paul Trethowan 14 Oakdale Manor, Antrim

HOLY MATRIMONY

WE CONGRATULATE

23 September	Joseph McCracken Christina Kitson	56 Tannaghmore Road, Randalstown 11 Grant Avenue, Randalstown
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CHRISTIAN BURIAL / CREMATION

WE SYMPATHISE WITH THOSE WHO MOURN FOR

22 September	Jim Montgomery	16 Culnafeigh Green, Antrim
30 September	Violet Moffett	72 Brantwood Gardens, Antrim
24 October	Olive Pankhurst	18 Riverside, Antrim
28 October	Andy Reid	9 Greenview Avenue, Antrim
31 October	James Rainey	4 Menin Road, Antrim
31 October	Billy Harris	50 Hillside, Antrim

BABY JESUS

A girl of ten years went with a group of family and friends to see the Christmas light displays at various locations throughout the city. At one church, they stopped and got out to look more closely at a beautifully done nativity scene. "Isn't that beautiful?" said the little girl's grandmother.

"Look at all the animals, Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus."

"Yes, Grandma," replied the granddaughter. "It is really nice. But there is only one thing that bothers me. Isn't baby Jesus ever going to grow up... he's the same size he was last year."

THOUGHT FOR CHRISTMAS

from the Bishop of Derry, the Rt. Rev. Ken Good

Christmas is a time for generosity and goodwill. This season can draw the best out of all of us. In Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* even the grumpy and self-centred miser, Ebenezer Scrooge, discovered that great joy and delight could flow from sharing good things with others at Christmas. The moment when gifts are exchanged on Christmas morning, with all the excitement and expectation that that entails, is a central part of the day. Often much thought and effort - not to mention cost - have gone into choosing the right gift, and we discover that it can be more blessed to give than to receive.

It's two thousand years since the first Christmas gifts were exchanged. In Matthew's Gospel, we read how the Magi followed a star that led them to the Saviour's birthplace. When they found the baby Jesus, they were overjoyed. They bowed down and worshipped him. And they presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Recapturing the wonderment that the Magi felt at Christ's birth is central to our candlelit carol singing, our Christmas worship. They were among the first people to recognise that something highly significant had happened in the arrival of this child: a momentous gift had been given by God to humankind.

And they responded with worship and generosity.

Years later, Jesus spoke of the gift he wanted to give to all of his followers, not only on one day of the year, but every day: *'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'* There is remarkable generosity and goodwill in his gift of inner peace and freedom from fear.

There are many in our world who are troubled and who are afraid for all sorts of reasons. We remember them especially at this time of year and we use the opportunity to give generously to ease their burden. Keep them in your prayers, please.

Yes, the generosity of Christmas presents counts for so much in this season of generosity and goodwill, and yet Christ's presence in our lives matters far, far more. That's the greatest gift that any of us can receive. My hope this Christmas is that, just like the Magi, in finding the baby Jesus we will discover the peace of Christ. His Christmas presence is a life-changer, forever. Happy Christmas.

WHO'S WHO

Vicar: The Venerable Dr Stephen McBride, The Vicarage, 10 Vicarage Gardens, Antrim
Tel: (028) 9446 2186 E-mail: archdeacon@connor.anglican.org

Curate: The Rev Aaron McAlister MTh, 7 Beechfield, Antrim
Tel: (028) 9446 3469 E-mail: aaronmcAlister@btinternet.com

Parish Administrator: Audrey McClements - Church Office
Tel: (028) 9446 0042 E-mail: all.saints2@btconnect.com

Vicar's Churchwarden: Valerie Houston **People's Churchwarden:** Wendy Smyth

Vicar's Glebewarden: Paul Smyth **People's Glebewarden:** Cecil Barton

Select Vestry: Jacqueline Adams, Sylvia Barton, Cynthia Cherry, Trevor Davies, Noreen Hurst, William Hurst, Mervyn Kidd, Audrey McClements, Brian Neill, Claire Thompson, John Wallace

Hon Treasurer:	Mrs Cynthia Cherry, 6 Rosevale, Antrim	Tel: 07703 547 647
Parish Recorder:	Mr Brian Neill, 13 Vicarage Gardens, Antrim	Tel: (028) 9446 3708
Caretaker:	Mr C Barton, 40 Oaklands, Antrim	Tel: (028) 9446 5770

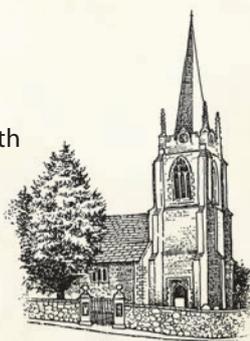
The Clergy will be grateful for any notification of serious illness in the Parish and for information regarding the admission and discharge of parishioners from hospitals outside Antrim

SUNDAY SERVICES:

8.30 am Holy Communion
11.30 am Morning Prayer
Parish Communion on
1st Sunday of each month
6.30 pm Evening Prayer
Holy Communion on
4th Sunday

FAMILY SERVICE:

11.00 am 3rd Sunday
of each month



MIDWEEK SERVICE:

11.00 am Wednesday Holy Communion
in the Parish Centre

FUNDAY CLUB:

11.30 am Junior and Senior in Parish Church and later in Church Hall. Children leave Morning Prayer at appropriate point in the Service. No Club on 3rd Sunday (Family Service).