

SUMMER 2021

SAINTS *Alive!*

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THE MAGAZINE OF ALL SAINTS' PARISH, ANTRIM

GOOD vs BAD... HABITS!

We have mixed ideas about habits. Many of us will think of a habit as being a negative thing. It could be picking our toe-nails or leaving the dishes in the sink. Not great for those who share our homes. These are careless habits - things that we do because basically we couldn't be careless. There are, however, good habits such as holding the door open for others, clearing up after ourselves or dropping a few coins in the charity box.

Could we include going to church in these lists? If going to church is a habit it is certainly a good one! While primarily involving worshipping God in his house we also catch up with friends, support charitable work and pass the faith of our parents and grandparents on to the kids. Surely that worth a few hours of anyone's time.

One of the saddest things that I can hear as a priest is someone who says 'I do not need to go to church, God is with me all the time.' I just think that is so sad. Yes, God is with you and me all the time. Even so, he loves to hear us come to praise him in his house.

Without an "us" to sustain the costs and ministry, many small churches

are in the situation where they are looking at closing within a generation. Then who will baptise the children and confirm the young people? Without the Mothers' Union who will support those who need a friend? Who will marry us and bury us? Without the Sunday School (Funday Club) who will teach children the stories of our faith? Without a local church where can the person seeking God hear about him if there is no preaching or Bible study?

clear. Just as there is one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, there is also one body - one "us", not many "me".

There will be some things we will miss about church in our living room - breakfast during the service could be one. Listening to the sermon in our PJs, nipping out to get a coffee refill during the prayers. They were fun habits, but not ones to build our lives around. If we do, we will be following an imaginary god who

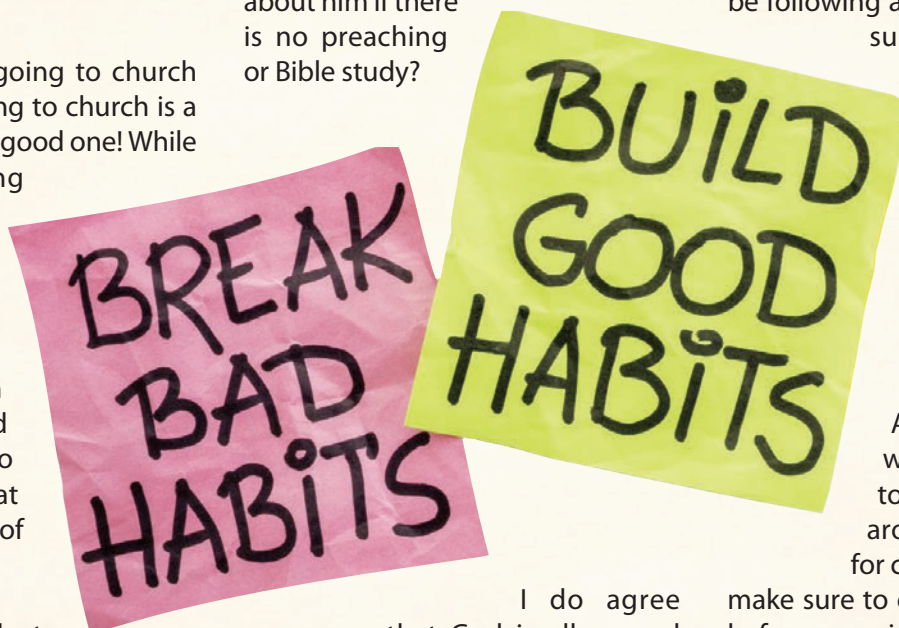
suits our habits rather than the Holy God who expects our devotion and heartfelt worship. As Christians our most important habit is meeting together for teaching, fellowship and praise.

As things ease up, we do look forward to being able to come around to your homes for coffee and chat! Please

make sure to change out of the PJs before we arrive.

We have Sunday services at 10.00am & 12.00 noon and Wednesday at 11.00am. As lockdown restrictions ease and confidence increases, it would be good to have our services as full as possible.

Every Blessing
Peter



I do agree that God is all around us, all of the time, but talking about his nature (his presence everywhere) is not the same as talking about his personality (a loving God who calls us to be his family). Although there are many differences in practice between the Old Testament and the New, God's desire to see his people gathered before him in praise and worship is unchanging and very



A PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE MOST REVD JOHN MCDOWELL ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH

Brothers and sisters in Christ, as a Church family we have come through a great deal since St Patrick's Day 2020 when the first lockdown came into effect. Many restrictions, a number of subsequent lockdowns and all the weariness these have brought. For centuries parish churches have stayed together by worshipping together, so not being able to do that (at least as we would have wished) had the potential to cause a great deal of long term damage to parish life.

I know that as individuals many people have suffered much, with demoralising periods of isolation, lack of contact with those who we love and even desolating bereavements. But as a Church we have come through this dark period a good deal better than most people anticipated. I was able to thank the clergy for the part they played in that effort in a Zoom meeting last week.

I simply want to say a very heartfelt "thank you" to every parishioner in the Church. Thank you for your faithfulness to God and His Church and for living out your vocation as disciples of Jesus Christ during a very uncertain time. Thank you for finding ways of sustaining the Church by online participation, by community involvement, and by giving of your substance as you have always done. These have been testing times for parishes and you have not allowed the test to wholly overwhelm you. Perhaps it's a little bit of an exaggerated parallel but I think we can look to St Paul's words in 2 Corinthians for inspiration "...we are hard pressed on all sides but not crushed; perplexed but not in despair... struck down but not destroyed..."

We can say this only because you have been faithful, and have done what you could to maintain the life of your parishes. When we could not meet I have no doubt you prayed and persevered. When we returned to worship, those of you who were able, came back with joy. As far as I can tell you have served God and your parishes cheerfully. And God loves a cheerful giver.

That is not to say that everything will soon return to the way it always has been; or even as it was on St Patrick's Day 2020. There could yet be setbacks. And as a very wise Irishman once said "Things must change in order to remain the same". We cannot say with 100% confidence that Covid-19 has been defeated; but it has not beaten us in our believing lives. The terrible scenes in other countries, and especially in India, are truly heart rending and I know that we will all be doing what we can to relieve that suffering.

But for now, for us, thank you for all you have done and I trust will continue to do to "build back better" in the parishes which lie so close to your hearts, and for the God who you love and serve. It is my sincere prayer that you can have a refreshing summer, enjoying the beauties of our own countryside and seaside and that you can join with me in saying "Thanks be to God".

John



MAUNDY MONEY HONOUR FOR PADDY WALLACE

We had hoped to record our congratulations to Paddy Wallace in our Easter edition of *Saints Alive*, but a press embargo did not allow us to publish our best wishes. Sadly, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Paddy did not have the opportunity to receive the Maundy Purse in person as, in keeping with arrangements last year, it was sent in the post.

By tradition, Royal Maundy takes place every year on Maundy Thursday. The reigning monarch gives a gift of money to the elderly - to one man and woman for each year of the monarch's life - that is 190 purses this year! In days gone by, they would also wash the feet of the poor in memory of Jesus washing the feet of the Disciples, but that hasn't happened since the late seventeenth century. The recipients are chosen from the local community and, in normal times, distribution of the Royal Maundy takes place at a different cathedral each year. Paddy was nominated for the Royal Maundy by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison. Her citation reads.

Paddy has been an active member of the parish of All Saints', Antrim, for many years. Over those years she has served diligently and humbly in a number of roles. She is well-known throughout the diocese and the whole Church of Ireland, having served firstly as Connor Diocesan President, and then as All-Ireland President of the Mothers' Union. In these roles she endeared herself to many across the island with her unique blend of warmth, encouragement and professionalism.

At the first parish branch meeting after Paddy was elected as All-Ireland President of the Mothers' Union, she told the members that her most important role was still being a member of All Saints', Antrim, Mothers' Union. This is but one example of Paddy's humility. Over the years she has exercised a ministry of encouragement and hospitality to her vicar, and other clergy and many of the parishioners. Even when holding high offices in the Mothers' Union, she always found time to fulfil many more everyday commitments in the parish such as arranging the Flower Guild.

"Paddy's working life was that of a teacher. In the 1980s she was promoted to the role of vice principal of Parkhall College, Antrim - one of the three secondary schools that then served the town. As such, she was a member of the senior management team that raised the school from being Antrim's third ranked secondary school to



first position in the same rankings. An enlarged Parkhall is now the town's sole secondary school and it is thriving. Its success is largely due to the foresight of that senior management group, to which Paddy made a significant contribution."

Paddy, 80, is married to John and the couple have three sons, Richard, Michael and Hugh. She said the news that she was to receive Maundy Money had been very exciting. "I was quite overawed. I did not expect it in the slightest. I am very honoured," she said.

Paddy is currently on crutches following a hip operation. "This has really boosted me for I was feeling a bit down," she said. "John is really pleased because he knows I have done a lot over the years." She said much of her work in the local community came about through Mothers' Union. "We have been involved in community organisations that support families, and others are continuing that work," she said. Receiving her Maundy Purse in the mail is not quite the same as taking it from the hands of Her Majesty. "I would have loved to meet the Queen, and I am sure I could have managed to travel in a wheelchair, but it is just lovely to have received the honour," Paddy said.



Don't forget you can still view our services live and watch recent services online. Simply visit **All Saints Facebook page** or **antrim.connor.anglican.org** and click on the Church Webcam.

THE MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN

For the past year I had the honour of being the Chaplain to The Worshipful Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey, Councillor Jim Montgomery. Jim's parents, the late Jack and Maud Montgomery were faithful parishioners of All Saints' and many years ago I completed my Queen's Badge in the Boys' Brigade with Jim's brother Nigel. So, I was very pleased when, shortly after he was appointed, Jim asked me to be his chaplain. In my time as Vicar I have been Mayor's chaplain on four occasions, with Paddy Marks, twice with Paul Michael and now with Jim Montgomery. It has been a great privilege to have been in 'the front seat' on occasions such as the granting of the Freedom of the Borough to the RUC, RAF, UDR,

Royal British Legion and superbike champion Jonathan Rea.

Each month I had the opportunity of opening the Council meetings with a scripture reading, a short devotional thought and then prayers in which I tried to incorporate some of the pressing issues of the day and also commend our local politicians and Council officials to God asking his blessing and wisdom on their deliberations. It takes a good deal of courage to take up political office and we are well represented in our local borough of Antrim and Newtownabbey.

This year, due to Covid restrictions, the Mayor was not able to carry



out all the functions he would have hoped for, but I joined him at Mossley Mill for a tribute to merchant seamen, the unveiling of a memorial in Ballyclare to the UDR and the lighting of celebratory beacons on the top of the Mott in Castle Gardens and at the Macedon Point to mark the centenary of the formation of Northern Ireland.



WHO'S WHO

Vicar: The Venerable Dr Stephen McBride

Tel: (028) 9446 2186 E-mail: archdeacon@connor.anglican.org

Curate: The Rev Peter S Blake MTh

Tel: 07591 373405 E-mail: rev.peterblake@gmail.com

Parish Administrator: Audrey McClements

Tel: (028) 9446 0042 E-mail: all.saints2@btconnect.com

Hon Treasurer: Mrs Cynthia Cherry MBE

Tel: 07703 547 647

Parish Recorder: Mr Brian Neill

Tel: (028) 9446 3708

Sexton & Caretaker: Mr Cecil Barton

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