

CHRISTMAS 2022

SAINTS *Alive!*

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THE MAGAZINE OF ALL SAINTS' PARISH, ANTRIM

THE GREATEST RISK

I didn't realise how dangerous Christmas was until I read the following statistics:

- In 2017, hospitals reported four broken arms after accidents from pulling crackers
- On average, three people die each year from testing nine-volt batteries on their tongues
- Five people were injured in accidents involving out of control Scalextric cars
- Eighteen people suffered from serious burns in 1998 while trying on new jumpers with lit cigarettes in their mouths
- On average, one person per year dies each year watering their Christmas tree with the lights switched on
- 142 people were injured in 1998 by not removing all the pins from their new shirts
- 543 people were admitted to A & E units after opening bottles of beer with their teeth.

For Mary and Joseph, that first Christmas was not without its own dangers. They faced a sixty mile journey over rough roads to register in Bethlehem, all the while worrying if Mary could hold on and not give birth in a dusty ditch. It would have been a terrifying experience for them, especially for Mary who was in her mid-teens and without her mother to guide her through the birth. Giving birth today in a thoroughly clean hospital today is not without its challenges. How much more frightening it must have been for Mary and Joseph who were still trying to come to terms with what they had been asked by God to do – to bring into the world and care for his Son. Their journey was difficult but that was only the beginning. Soon, they faced another lengthy journey into exile in Egypt because of the threat of Herod's persecution.

Two of the names given to the new born child have special significance. **Jesus** from Hebrew roots translates as the one who saves and **Immanuel** translates as God with us. In coming to be with us and to save us, God, in Jesus took the

greatest of all risks. He took on the vulnerability and the helplessness of a child. His earthly family were migrants who had to flee the persecution of a despotic king, Herod Antipas. Later as Jesus in his ministry began to point us to the love of his Father, he faced continual opposition from his own faith community because he didn't fit their picture of what a Messiah should be and do.

Sometimes life can be incredibly unjust, unforgiving and cruel. It can be bleak, and dark. In Jesus, God chose to be born at a time when human life was cheap. He was born into a lowly estate, with no privileges and was executed at the tender age of 33 for daring to tell us that his Father was a God of love and acceptance. If this story was written by a human we would dismiss it as nonsense, but that is what we believed happened in Bethlehem in the stable of an inn all those years ago. Throughout his life he knew nothing of status, riches or privilege.

In Jesus, God with us, we have a Saviour who understands all the issues we have to endure in this life because he went through them himself. He knew grief when his friend Lazarus died, he was frustrated, he was hungry, he was tired and exhausted with the demands on him physically and mentally, he felt the pain of rejection when his disciples left him to die on his own. He is not a distant Saviour, but one who wants to share in our triumphs and more so in our times of tragedy.

At Christmas we can either find that we have no room for him because of our busy schedules, or we can wonder if he is really there at all in the midst of the mess of our lives. Hopefully we can find time to join the shepherds and the Wise Men and look at and look into the manger this Christmas and see this amazing thing that has come to pass. And if our life is going through a time of darkness, may the light and the love of the Christ Child shine upon us and give us some hope for the future.



CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE

Sunday 18 December

11.30 am Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Tuesday 20 December

7.00 pm Youth Organisations Carol Service

Saturday 24 December CHRISTMAS EVE

10.00 pm First Holy Communion of Christmas

Sunday 25 December CHRISTMAS DAY

8.30 am Holy Communion
10.30 am Family Christmas Service

Sunday 1 January NEW YEAR'S DAY

8.30 am Holy Communion
11.30 am Christmas Readings & Carols

FUNDAY CLUB HOLIDAYS

There will be no Sunday School on **18 December, 25 December** and **1 January**. Funday Club will resume on **8 January 2023**.

FREEWILL OFFERING ENVELOPES

The Hon. Treasurer wishes to close the books for the year ending December 2022 on **Sunday 25 December 2022**. It would be greatly appreciated if you could have all outstanding FWO envelopes for 2022 in by this date if you wish your contributions to be recorded in the 2022 year.

SMARTIE TUBE APPEAL

Smartie tubes will be distributed at our services over the Christmas period. Although the Rev Dr Keith Scott and his wife Lyn have retired from their posts at St John's Theological College in Kitwe, Zambia, we are continuing to support the students who are studying to be future clergy in the Church of Zambia. The fees for one student are £600 per year and we are committed to sponsoring two students for the next few years. So please keep on saving your 20p pieces.



CHARITY UPDATES

The collection for the **Big Coffee Morning** for the Northern Ireland Hospice raised **£430**. Many thanks for your generosity.

The current **EXTRA MILE PROJECT** is to raise money to purchase fuel vouchers for local families supported by Women's Aid for the region covering Antrim Borough Council Larne and Newtownabbey. Donations can be placed in the green bucket at the churchwarden's table. Current total stands at **£2,674.66**. Can we reach £3,000 before Christmas?



ANTRIM FOODBANK

In association with the Oasis Group we have been joining with churches in Antrim in supporting the food bank project which has provided much needed practical care for families in the Antrim area who are enduring difficult times. As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, it would be good to think about those from whom Christmas will be a time of difficulty. Families are referred to the food bank through Social Services to Oasis who provide them with a food parcel. Please consider bringing an item or two from the list below and leave it in the box in the porch. This is a marvellous way of showing God's love in a very practical way. I hope we will give it our fullest support.

Grocery List Suggestions:

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|---------------------|----------------------|
| ■ Selection Box | ■ Rice |
| ■ Mince Pies | ■ Cuppa Soup |
| ■ Christmas Pudding | ■ Tinned Fruit |
| ■ Tins of Sweets | ■ Hot Chocolate |
| ■ Gift Vouchers | ■ Cereal |
| ■ Tea Bags | ■ Slipper Socks |
| ■ Coffee | ■ Hot water Bottle |
| ■ Tinned Soup | ■ Toiletry Gift Sets |
| ■ Tinned Ham | ■ Toilet Rolls |
| ■ Tinned Soup | ■ Soap |
| ■ Gravy Granules | ■ Shampoo |
| ■ Savoury Snacks | ■ Roll-on Deodorant |
| ■ Pasta | |

MAKE A DONATION AT OUR NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS SERVICE

ALL SAINTS' PARISHIONER FEATURES IN BBC'S 'NURSES'

Maria Betts one of our Funday Club and Next Steps leaders is a District Nurse and featured in a current BBC1 NI series 'Nurses,' and the episode which featured Maria at work can be viewed on BBC's iPlayer. The four-part observational series gains unprecedented access to nurses across a wide variety of health settings and disciplines in Health and Social Care. Filmed over 12 months, it gives viewers an insight into the health service in Northern Ireland through the eyes of these nurses as they share their experiences caring for patients.

Maria is married to Peter and they have two children, Austin (12) and Charlotte (10). The family have been members of All Saints' since 2010 and both children were baptised in the church.

Maria started her nursing career 20 years ago after working as a nursing auxiliary for three years. She qualified with a diploma from Queen's University in 2003 and completed her degree the following year. In 2019, Maria obtained a specialist practice qualification in district nursing and took up the post of District Nursing Sister in Antrim. She also completed a Masters' Degree in Nursing in 2020.

"The District Nurse role is vast and complex," says Maria. "I oversee the

caseload and manage staff." The biggest challenge in recent times, she says, has been Covid-19 which had a massive impact on the role. "Where other services stepped down, district nursing stepped forward and filled gaps. Where shielding patients may have previously gone to treatment rooms or other appointments, we visited with them at home," she explains. The role has its rewards too. "Having one patient in the day tell me how valued nurses are is very heart-warming and makes it easy to get up in the mornings," Maria says.

"I have a passion for palliative care. I lost my own mum when I was 18 and some aspects of her care were amazing and some less so. I strive to be an advocate for palliative care patient to ensure they have access and receive the highest quality care they deserve."

Maria's dedication to her work was recognised when she obtained the title of 'Queen's Nurse' in 2021 – a title given to individual nurses who have demonstrated a high level of commitment to patient care and nursing practice."

Her faith is very important to her. "My faith in God drives me every day," Maria says. "It's a challenging job and some days it's hard to leave the



Maria Betts, District Nursing Sister, Antrim

feeling at the 'garden gate,' but I have a loving family at home and an even larger family in All Saints' which help me to remain strong. Not all patients have the same belief, but I can provide a listening ear which they can confide in."

Maria agreed to take part in the BBC NI production at the request of her management team. "I thought it was a great opportunity to showcase district nursing, as it plays a key role for delivery a safe service of care to those in their own homes and care homes," Maria says.

This article was written by Karen Bushby, the Diocese of Connor's communications officer and was published on the diocesan website.

THE REV CLAIRE THOMPSON



The Rev Claire Thompson was ordained Deacon on Sunday 18 September by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison. It was a memorable day for Claire and her family and a very proud day for All Saints as Claire, who has been a member of All Saints since her birth, will be serving among us in a place which has helped to shaped in her faith and vocation. It was very special to have the Rev Aaron McAlister as our preacher on the day. It was through Aaron and Melanie's friendship with Claire that the final pieces of Claire's vocation were put in place. Also in the congregation supporting Claire was the Rev Terry Kerr who first encouraged Claire when asking her to take on a leadership role in the youth club - way back in 2000. We wish the Rev Claire God's richest blessings as she ministers among us.

LEARN TO UNPLUG AND UNWIND

As we approach 2023, it is a time when some of us will look at our lifestyles and think once again about New Year's resolutions which will bring us a little less stress such as eating a few less calories and having a bit more down time in our hectic schedules. The following is great advice from 12 November's UCB Word for Today entitled Learn to unplug and unwind

Don't you find it interesting that the most high-tech generation in history is also the most medicated generation? The Bible predicted this. God told Daniel that in the last days 'many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase' (Daniel 12:4 NKJV). That's us!

One researcher says we have trained our brains 'to constantly flit around the universe of messages and information seeking brief hits of excitement. Grazing ceaselessly, we never dig too deeply before moving on to the next distraction... and it ratchets up our stress levels in ways we are only starting to understand.' When was the last time you enjoyed some uninterrupted downtime without feeling guilty and unproductive? Do you even take time to reflect and recharge?



Avoiding burnout requires these:

Recognising the signs. If you tweet and text people all day and yet you're still lonely, technology may be dominating your life.

Doing something about it. Make yourself unavailable for short periods and see what happens. The world won't come to an end, honest!

Realising you have a choice. People who think they should be available twenty-four hours a day exaggerate their own importance, or the control others have over them.

Establishing boundaries.

Rein in the emails and text messages. Do you really need all those FYIs about the same thing?

Telling people, unless it's truly urgent, you answer emails at designated times throughout the day.

Setting a schedule and sticking with it. After a few minutes of surfing the internet, ask yourself, 'Should I be doing this now?'

Jesus said, 'Come ye yourselves apart... and rest a while.' Why? Because when you don't come apart, you fall apart!

What happened to the man
that stole an advent calendar?
He got 25 days.

What was the snowman doing
in the vegetable patch?
Picking his nose!

What do angry mice send to
each other at Christmas
Cross Mouse Cards

How does Good King
Wenceslas like his pizzas?
Deep pan, crisp and even

Why don't you ever see
Father Christmas in hospital?
Because he has
private elf care

Why did no one bid for Ru-
dolph and Blitzen on eBay?
Because they were two deer

What did the stamp say to the
Christmas card?
Stick with me and
we'll go places

WHO'S WHO

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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