

AUTUMN 2023

# SAINTS *Alive!*

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THE MAGAZINE OF ALL SAINTS' PARISH, ANTRIM



Shoe shops and supermarkets have been advertising that it will soon be time for going 'Back to School' for a new academic year. For the younger pupils there is the excitement of meeting up with friends again after the lengthy holidays. For the older pupils, the excitement levels may not be as high instead there may be some anxiety about new subjects and exams at the end of the year. For the teaching staff, the Back to School signs are probably an annoyance reminding them that the whole merry-go-round begins again much too soon.

Often the summer months in church are a time when our attendance drops away as we don't have Funday Club and people are away on holidays. However, the numbers at church over the summer months have been encouraging with over 150 in church on Sunday 13 August at our two services. It is also encouraging to see so many people in the past while finding All Saints to be their spiritual home and several have commented on what a friendly bunch we are.

Sadly this is not something that is being experienced in many churches throughout the Diocese. An overall decline in numbers worshipping and increasing difficulties in meeting all the costs of running a parish are two factors that are becoming more prevalent for many parishes.

The clergy team wish to express our thanks for all your encouragement and support. All Saints has a very full programme of activities and although we are kept on our toes from Monday to Saturday it is a great place for us to be your pastors and your priests.

We do our best to keep up our visiting, but annoyingly, it can be the first thing that can be overlooked as we try to keep the various activities and preparation for services up to date. If you ever need to have quiet conversation about any issue which might be causing you or a family member concern, we are always available – you will find our contact details in the Who's who section at the back of the magazine.





## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### FUNDAY CLUB

Resumes with registration on  
**Sunday 3 September**  
at 12.00 noon in the Parish Centre

### UNITE

Family friendly contemporary  
worship resumes on  
**Sunday 3 September** at 6.00pm

### EVERGREENS

Resumes on  
**Tuesday 12 September** at 11.00am

### MOTHERS' UNION

First meeting on **Thursday 14 September** at 7.30pm with a celebration of Holy Communion and an illustrated historical talk on the architecture of All Saints

### TOTS 'N' US

Resumes on  
**Friday 15 September** at 9.30am

### NEXT STEPS

Resumes on  
**Sunday 17 September** at 7.00pm

### CONFIRMATION

Confirmation will take place on  
**Sunday 19 November** at 11.00am

## THE EXTRA MILE BUCKET UPDATE

The weather over the past months has had its extremes which has had such devastating effects. We have witnessed people having to deal with floods, people fleeing from their homes in the Ukraine and most recently the fires in Hawaii. Our latest Extra Mile project is to purchase 2 Shelter Boxes.

The contents of a shelter box will vary according to local needs and conditions, for example a tent, or some lengths of tarpaulin to waterproof a damaged roof. Included also would be some basic tools, blankets/groundsheets, lights, water carriers and purifiers, cooking utensils, whatever ShelterBox considers necessary in each situation. ShelterBox works in conjunction with other organisations, such as Rotary International and Relief Aid.



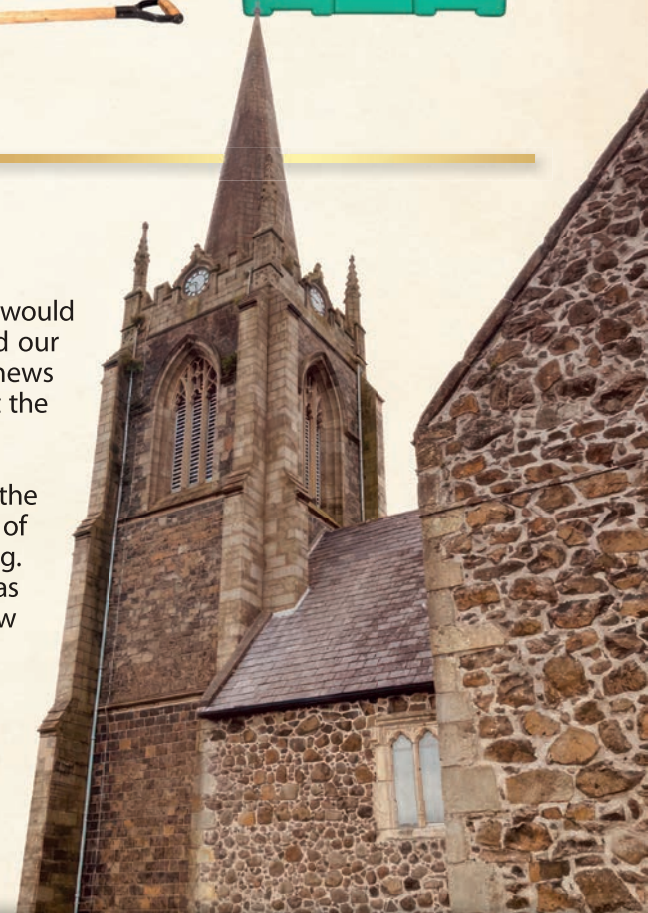
**£590 provides one shelter box and so far we have raised over £1,200.00**

## CHURCH TOWER UPDATE

In the spring edition of Saints Alive, I signed off with the hope that work would commence in the autumn. In the intervening months, we re-submitted our application to the National Churches Trust. We have received good news from the National Churches Trust and have been awarded a grant, but at the moment, there is an embargo on what we can disclose about its value.

Alongside this, we have also been included in a new funding initiative by the National Churches Trust. The Last Chance Churches and All Saints is one of only two churches in Northern Ireland that has been selected for this funding. We are one of eighteen churches throughout the United Kingdom that has been included. At present the fund pot is around £500,000. We will know more about the level of funding we might receive by the end of the year.

We are also submitting an application to the National Heritage Lottery Fund. If we are successful in this application, along with NCT funding and funding from Central Church, we will be far along in raising the funds for the work to the tower which we hope will commence in spring 2024.





# THE REV. CLAIRE THOMPSON'S THOUGHT ON ORDINATION

For the last year I have had the privilege of serving as a deacon in All Saints'. I have enjoyed sharing my views on scripture, assisting Stephen and Peter celebrate Holy Communion and help with pastoral duties within the Parish. Although I will always be a deacon, "a member of the clergy who has been commissioned to proclaim the Gospel and to call the church (by word and example) to its ministry of service and healing", on the 10 September, I am going to receive the authority to do more, by being ordained a priest. Although this is an exciting time, it is also somewhat daunting. I will now have the opportunity to preside during communion, bless people in God's name and give assurance of God's forgiveness to all who truly repent, - responsibilities not to be taken lightly.

***"The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him" Psalm 28:7***

When David felt frightened and vulnerable, he turned his pain into poetry, crying out to God for deliverance. When



he was overcome by how awesome and faithful God was, he praised his creator through words of song. David worshipped, stated his anxiety, and asked God for answers in times of doubt. And through it all, he was met with the never-ending love of a personal and purposeful God, who knew him, loved him, and was with him every day of his life. I can relate to this – I pray every day that God may guide and help me to humbly serve you all and there has yet to be a Sunday when I haven't felt uplifted after worshipping our Lord with you.

I have learned a lot during the last few years but I know that I have much more to learn and discern – my journey with you all is only starting. All Saints' is a family filled with God's love, a place where we all can meet in fellowship and share the joys and trials that life brings us. I thank each and every one of you for the encouragement, acceptance and patience that you have continued to show me.

*Rev. Claire*

***Claire's Ordination is on  
Sunday 10 September at 11.00am in All Saints***



## MEMORIES OF EASTER WEEK



## TEN YEARS OF SERVICE

Irene Gates, Choir Honorary Treasurer and the members of the Choir presented the Organist and Choirmaster, Alex McBride, with a presentation bottle of Bushmills Whiskey to mark the tenth anniversary of his service in All Saints.

Alex was initially taught by the late Norman Finlay who sadly died in 2012. Norman had paved the way for Alex to achieve Grade 8 in both piano playing and organ playing. Alex is also thankful to Ian Barbour, former Organist at St Anne's Cathedral for all his encouragement as he helped Alex achieve his Grade 8.





# CORONATION CELEBRATIONS



Thanks to the efforts of Fiona Simpson, our 5th Antrim Scouts financial advisor and Treasurer, we were able to secure a grant of £1,000 from Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to enable us to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III on Sunday 7 May. The funding paid for a sumptuous buffet lunch which was enjoyed by over 130 parishioners. On the day, we were waited upon by members of 5th Antrim Scouts and Explorer Scouts. The Select Vestry purchased the bunting, banners, Union Jack embossed plates, napkins and cups and a magnificent cake. All was set up in the parish centre on the evening of Saturday 6 and the Vicar privately thought that 90 seats were more than enough. O ye of little faith – on Sunday, we had to put out more tables and chairs to accommodate the 130 who came to the centre after an inspirational service to mark the Coronation. The highlight of the worship was the Rev Peter Blake's marvellous sermon.

I was really heartbroken when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II died almost a year ago. Even so, I felt very strongly that I wanted to get right behind our new King and give Him just as much support as I gave to his mother.

You may remember I preached a sermon in which I pointed out that many of the things that King Charles had been criticised and mocked for in the past had since been shown to be serious problems which are the central issues of our day. I suggested that with our support he could be the King for our time.

Well, I decided to send a copy to His Majesty, thinking that it's not good to assume that someone is receiving all of the encouragement you would wish for them when you could add your own voice too.

I was delighted to receive this lovely card in July signed by the King and Queen. Having checked online it seems that the signatures on the card are the real thing. It's a very special item I will get framed and hang in my office.

**GOD SAVE THE KING!**

*Peter*









## 5th ANTRIM CUBS

The aim of 5th Antrim Cubs is that the Cubs learn valuable skills for life, gaining confidence by being encouraged to challenge themselves in a safe environment. The cubs have just completed another fun filled action packed year. They took part in several District events

and competitions such as archery, orienteering and hikes.

We also partnered up with 1st Muckamore cubs and attended a joint sleepover held in our Parish Centre. This was followed with 2 nights under canvas at Crawfordsburn in May.

During this summer camp the cubs participated in many activities such as a midnight walk along the beach, crate climbing, grass sledging, shelter building, fire lighting, and a train trip to Bangor where we all had fun at the Pickie Fun Park, especially on the swans and mini train.





## 5th ANTRIM SCOUTS

The District Commissioner, Steven Martin visited the Parish Centre to present four members of the Scouts with their ten years service badge. Kristy Robinson (Group Scout Leader), Claire Thompson (Cub Scout Leader), Stephen McBride (Scout Leader) and Fiona Simpson (Group Treasurer) were all members at the beginning of the Troup over ten years ago. Joe McErlane was presented by Kirsty with his 5 years membership badge.



In early August, Scouts and Explorer Scouts had a two night camp at the Church of Ireland Parish Centre in Ballycastle. The Rev David Ferguson, a former curate in All Saints welcomed us back to the centre where we had spent a previous camp. Due to the inclement summer weather, we were relieved to be sleeping in the comfort of the parish centre rather than under canvas at the mercy of the summer down pour. Thankfully, there were periods of good weather between showers and the Scouts and the leaders were able to enjoy some time on the beach at Ballycastle as well as exploring the natural and historic delights of Mussenden Temple at Castlerock.



Our visit to Barry's now Curry's in Portrush was as exciting for the young Scouts as it was for evoking childhood memories for the leaders. The sounds and the smells don't change. Sitting on the steps in the summer sunshine enjoying a poke from Morellis was bliss.

Hockey, football and indoor archery were some of the games we were able



to enjoy and Rev Peter's technical wizardry enabled us to enjoy two Marvel movies. The camp finished with a trip to a sodden Carnfunnock where all the attractions were closed due to the downpours. Thankfully, the trip from Ballycastle took place during a sunny period and we were able to



enjoy the unrivalled splendours of the coast road.

What was most encouraging was a comment from a till operator in the nearby Co-Op who mentioned what a mannerly group of young people we had!



# COMMISSIONING SERVICE

A coach full of parishioners along with others making their own way travelled to St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh on 11 June to support the Vicar at his service of commissioning as All Ireland Chaplain to the Mothers' Union. The commissioning was carried out by The Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev John McDowell who had appointed the Vicar. The Vicar was delighted with the number of familiar faces in the congregation who had made the trip and for all the messages of good will that he had received.



## CHANGE YOUR CONCEPT OF GOD

**'He will rejoice over you with gladness.'** Zephaniah 3:17 NKJV

What's your concept of God? When you pray, 'Our Father,' what do you see? Do you see a parent who abandoned you, abused you, or abdicated their responsibility to you? Do you think of an angry father who accused but never affirmed you; in other words, a God waiting to zap you each time you do wrong? If so, you need to change your concept of God. The Bible says: 'The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing' (v. 17 NKJV).

Let's break this Scripture down:

1. 'The Lord your God in your midst.' He is not a distant deity, but an up-close-and-personal Father who loves His redeemed children dearly.

2. 'The Mighty One, will save.' When you consider the word 'mighty', think of Hercules a billion times over and you still won't even be close. Today you may be weak, but He is strong. Your sins may be great, but His saving grace is greater (see Romans 5:20).
3. 'He will rejoice over you with gladness.' Every time God looks at you, He smiles and rejoices. You make His heart glad. Did you know that?
4. 'He will quiet you with His love.' Ever watch a mother holding a crying baby and saying, 'Shush, shush, it's okay, I'm here, I love you.' The baby is comforted, feels secure, and goes to sleep. That's what God does for us.
5. 'He will rejoice over you with singing.' God sings! What does He sing about? You! It's time to change your concept of God!

*UCB Word for Today*

## WHO'S WHO

Vicar: **The Venerable Dr Stephen McBride**

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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