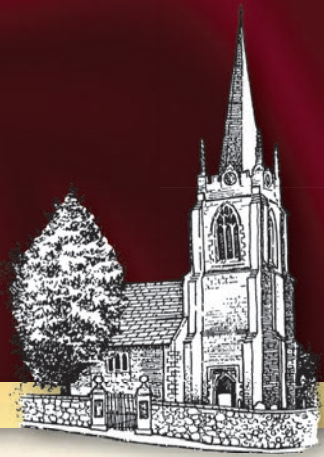




AUTUMN 2026

SAINTS *Alive!*

antrim.connor.anglican.org

THE MAGAZINE OF ALL SAINTS' PARISH, ANTRIM

WHAT IS A CHURCH?

There is a well rehearsed debate around the question 'is the church a building or is it people.' Those who haven't a high regard for architecture will say that the church is people. I would argue that unless we have a physical building which provides a place in which we can worship, it is highly unlikely that a gathering of people to worship will ever happen. Such is the love in which All Saints' Church is held, the feeling of loss following the fire on 25 December 2024 was felt by many outside our parish because All Saints' Church is viewed by many as Antrim's unofficial cathedral.

For those of us who have the joy of worshipping there week by week, All Saints' Church has been central in all those moments in our lives which have been hallowed and sanctified by the very fact that they took place within the four walls of a church building. We can all recall our moments of joy and celebration such as the baptisms of our children or the marriage of two people in love as it says in the Prayer Book, 'in the sight of God and in the presence of this congregation.' Or at the end of our days, there has been no



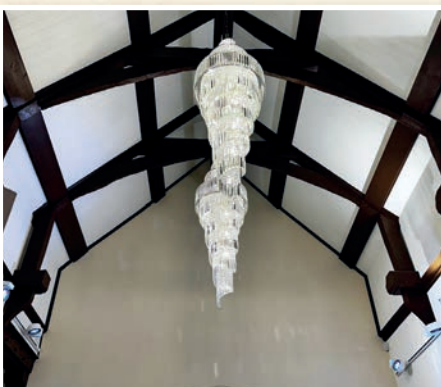
better place for a time of thanksgiving for a life that has come to the end of its earthly journey as we say our farewells.

All Saints' Church has been the venue for these momentous occasions as well as the place where week by week we can focus on our faith. It is the place where we offer up prayers and praises and it is the place where many of us have learned more and more about God's love for us as expressed in Jesus Christ. All Saints' Church is our special place where together we can find help, support, healing, comfort, friendship, the answers to our problems - the list is endless. It is will be so good to be able to worship there once again in the very near future and we can continue to hallow its sacred walls with our prayers and praises.

The process of restoration has been lengthy. The first few months following the fire were among the most stressful

of my ministry as we waited for the insurers to agree to cover the cost of the fire damage. I am so grateful to have had the support of Irene Gates our Hon Secretary and Brian Neill our Hon Treasurer throughout this journey. Ian Maconachie our restoration specialist has simply been a God send as he has done his utmost, along with Felix O'Hare Contractors to deliver a church building that will take your breath away when you enter it for the first time after the fire.

It is important to conclude with a word of encouragement and say what has been done has not restored a museum piece. Yes All Saints' Church building has important historical and architectural significance, but more than that, we need to ensure that we have restored a living place of worship where the Church of Ireland community in this locality can come together and move forward from strength to strength. We look forward to seeing you, not only on 8 November at 11.30am but in the weeks and months to come.



Ian Maconachie

You're invited to

ALL SAINTS BIBLE STUDY

The CHOSEN SEASON 5

Join us as we watch and explore
The Chosen Season 5 together.

- TEA & COFFEE**
and friendly chat
- WATCH TOGETHER**
The Chosen Season 5
- DISCUSS TOGETHER**
with a friendly discussion afterwards

FAITH. FRIENDSHIP. DISCUSSION.
Everyone welcome!

**STARTS MONDAY
5TH OCTOBER** **7PM**
IN THE PARISH CENTRE

A time to grow in faith and community together.

ALL ARE WELCOME - BRING A FRIEND!

ANTRIM RBL BADGES



Over the past few years Gregory Esler has been designing imaginative commemorative poppy badges for the Antrim Branch of the Royal British Legion. This year's design features All Saints' Church.

200 of these badges will soon be available to purchase for £5 and all proceeds will be donated to the RBL Antrim Branch. Gregory and his partner Kim McLernon, who is the People's Churchwarden, have been regular worshippers with us over the past few years.



LITTER PICK

Thankfully Sunday 21 June was a warm and sunny occasion on which to have our parish litter pick. One of goals of our application to The National Heritage Lottery Fund was to improve the environment and the litter pick was an excellent way to clean up the areas surrounding the Parish Centre. Upwards of 60 parishioners and friends took part and gathered around 50 bags of rubbish. We are most grateful to Antrim and Newtownabbey's Councillor Paul Dunlop who arranged the delivery of the litter picking equipment. The pickers enjoyed hot dogs and ice cream supplied by the Yew Tree Deli.



All Saints Presents

BLEND

Food, chat & friendship

FREE TEA OR COFFEE

LARGE OR SMALL FRY, EGGS BENEDICT

UPSTAIRS IN THE TOP OF THE TOWN
10AM 4TH SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH

ALL SAINTS' GRAND RE-OPENING

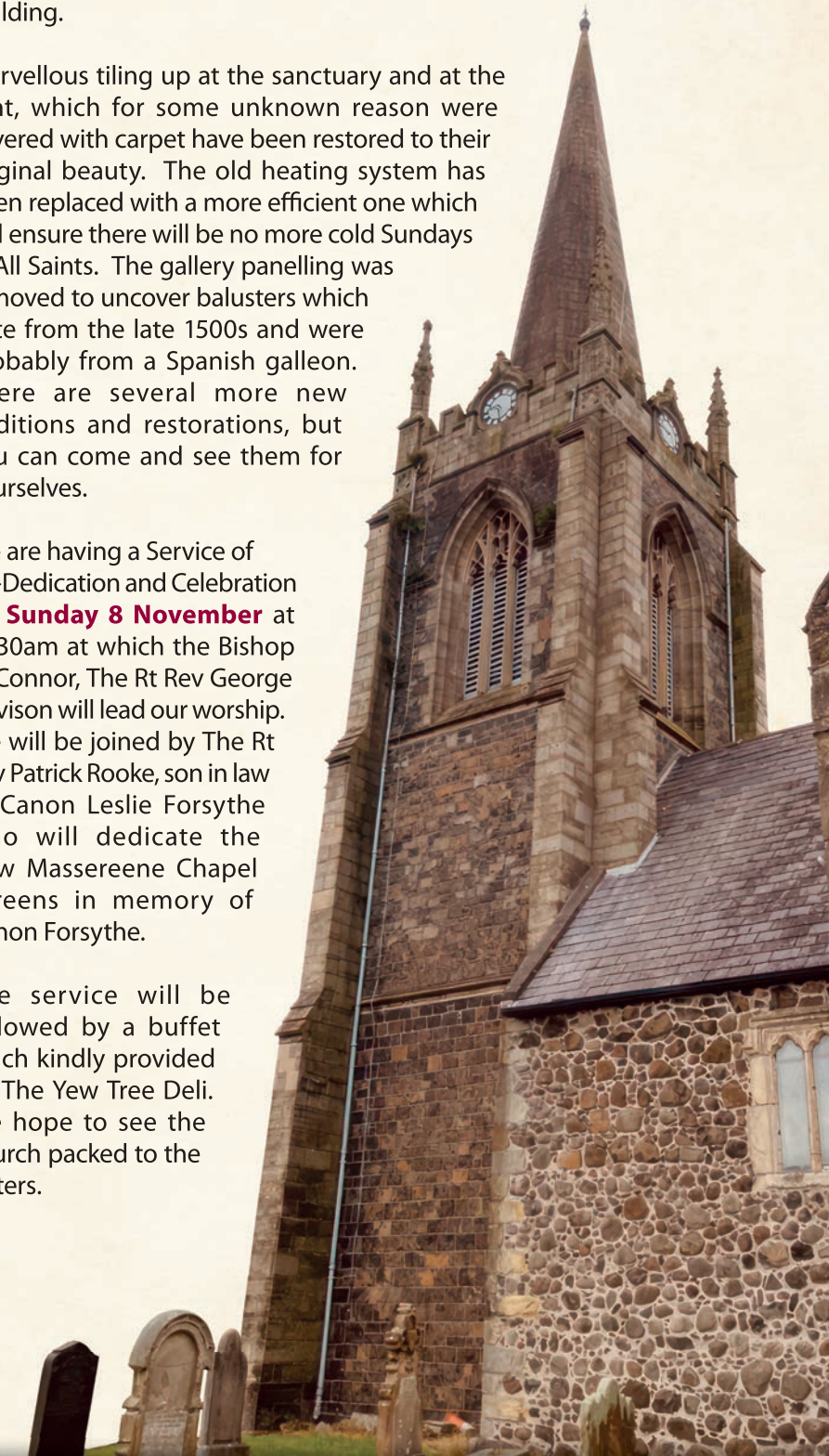
The fire restoration work is now almost complete and Felix O'Hare, our contractor, is confident that the interior of the church will be finished by the end of September, but the reopening will not take place until November when the tower restoration work will be completed.

Every time I visit the church, I am left speechless by the quality of the work that has taken place. When you visit the church for the first time, I think you will be amazed at the restoration. Our beloved church has been meticulously restored, but there are several new additions which greatly add to the beauty of the building.

Marvellous tiling up at the sanctuary and at the font, which for some unknown reason were covered with carpet have been restored to their original beauty. The old heating system has been replaced with a more efficient one which will ensure there will be no more cold Sundays in All Saints. The gallery panelling was removed to uncover balusters which date from the late 1500s and were probably from a Spanish galleon. There are several more new additions and restorations, but you can come and see them for yourselves.

We are having a Service of Re-Dedication and Celebration on **Sunday 8 November** at 11.30am at which the Bishop of Connor, The Rt Rev George Davison will lead our worship. We will be joined by The Rt Rev Patrick Rooke, son in law of Canon Leslie Forsythe who will dedicate the new Massereene Chapel Screens in memory of Canon Forsythe.

The service will be followed by a buffet lunch kindly provided by The Yew Tree Deli. We hope to see the church packed to the rafters.





BUSY BUILDERS FOR JESUS

Our annual Holiday Bible Club was once again facilitated by Chris and Ross, better known to us as Play it by Ear. The theme for the week was 'Busy Builders'

This year the holiday club looked at Jesus' parables and how they can teach us to build our lives on God's love and truth for us. Each evening we explored different parables including the Wise and Foolish Builder, The Friend calling at midnight, The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son and The Parable of the Talents.

Through their imaginative use of story telling, games and fun, Chris and Ross helped the children (and leaders) know more about the God who is with us in difficult times, the God who wants to answer our prayers. They explained that when we experience God's love, this should shape how

we see and treat those around us. The final evening was a challenge to reminding us that as we build our lives on God's truth and love, we don't just build it for ourselves, we build it to share with others.

The success of such an event is reflected in how the enthusiasm at the beginning of the week is still there by the end and we had consistently over 25 young people each evening. I am most grateful to all our leaders who gave up five nights to be at the parish centre as well as all the planning they undertook behind the scenes.

Funday Club will resume in the Parish Centre on Sunday 13 September from 12.00 – 12.45pm. Please do bring your children along to help them grow in their faith.





TOWER RESTORATION UPDATE

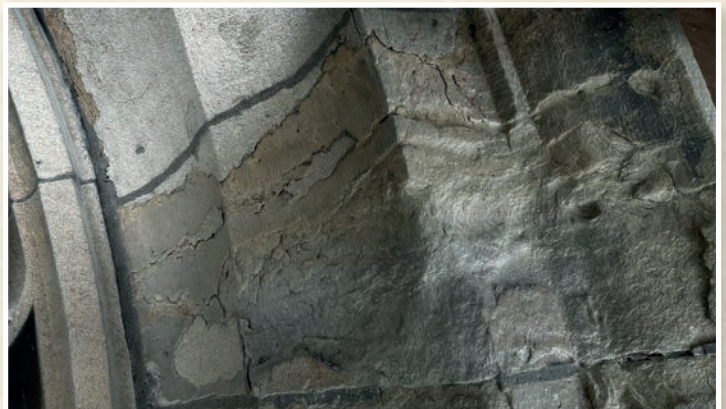
We began the process of analysing the stone work around the church tower following an inspection report we received in 2021. We commissioned McCollum Conservation to carry out a more detailed report and it outlined the need for considerable repairs.

Our tower and spire was constructed in 1815 with the help of a £1,500 grant from the Board of First Fruits. Although the spire was largely rebuilt in 1980 when a considerable section of it needed repaired, there has not been the need to do much further restoration work over its 200 year life span. However, the McCollum Conservation Report highlighted the need for repairs to the soft sandstone which forms the buttresses of the tower as well as the need to replace the rainwater goods.

It is only when, with the aid of scaffolding, allowing close access to the stones that you can see the degradation that photos from drones do not reveal. Over the years the harshness weathering of wind, rain and frost have taken their toll.

With replacement stones costing upwards of £1,000 each, the bill for restoration is huge. The current work to the front (north) façade is costing over £350,000 and it has suffered the least weathering. A rough estimate would be that the east and west elevations would cost a combined total of £900,000 with the south elevation to Riverside costing £600,000. These figures are estimates and the final figure needs to include VAT and professional fees.

We have the blessing of worshipping in one of Ireland's finest churches, but along with that we also have the responsibility of being stewards of the building. We have always responded well to such challenges and will begin to look at what grant funding is available to finance these restoration repairs and examine how we can phase them over several years.



A GLOBAL CELEBRATION: MOTHERS' UNION MARKS MARY SUMNER DAY

On 8 and 9 August, Mothers' Union members around the world came together to mark Mary Sumner Day and celebrate 150 years of Mothers' Union. From cathedral services and picnics to creative displays, fellowship and thanksgiving, members reflected on Mary Sumner's legacy and the difference Mothers' Union continues to make in families and communities.

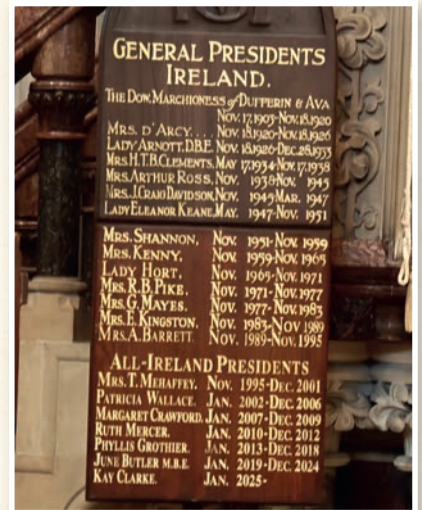
More than 550 people travelled from across Ireland to Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, on Sunday 9 August, including members from Zimbabwe and Malawi. The Festival Eucharist, celebrated by Archbishop Michael Jackson, reflected on Mothers' Union's past, present and future. The service theme, 'Join Us, Join In', was described by All Ireland President Kay Clarke as 'more than an invitation to mark a milestone. It was a call to share in God's mission to belong, pray, serve and witness to Christ's love in our homes, churches and communities.'

Leading the service, former Worldwide President Lady Christine Eames reflected on the organisation's journey but also set a challenge for the future, saying: 'We have worked together, we have prayed together through good times, through bad times.' Looking ahead, she asked: 'What will you and I hand on to those who come after us?' Something for us all to reflect on as we start to close our 150th anniversary year.

At the beginning of the service the Vicar, who served for three years as All Ireland chaplain, presented the Rev Alistair Doyle to Archbishop Jackson to be commissioned as his successor. Irene Gates, our Hon Secretary was a member of the choir who led the worship with their inspirational singing. Paddy Wallace, who was All Ireland President from 2002 – 2006 was named on the new Presidents' Board.



L-R: Norma Bell, Kathleen Rodgers, Dianne Innes, Alison Skillen and Irene Gates



CONGRATULATIONS CECIL & SYLVIA



Sylvia Burke and Cecil Barton were married on 20 July 1966 in Second Castledegre Presbyterian Church. They moved to Antrim in 1975 and since then they have been highly involved in the life of All Saints and St Patrick's, Parkhall where they have held a great variety of important roles. We were delighted to celebrate their diamond anniversary (60 years) at our service on Sunday 19 July. We wish Cecil and Sylvia, their daughter Valerie, Son-in-Law Cecil and granddaughter Stephanie God's richest blessing.

NEXT STEPS YOUTH UPDATE

This summer, Next Steps headed off to Summer Madness in Portglenone for a wonderful weekend away! A group of 15 young people and 4 leaders camped together for the full weekend, joining youth groups from right across Ireland.

It was a brilliant time together - packed with engaging sessions, inspiring worship, and plenty of outdoor adventure, including canoe rafting and powerboating on the river! Above all, it was a fantastic opportunity for our young people to relax, share meals at our campsite, and deepen their friendships.



Growing up today can feel complex and overwhelming at times, but we believe our community of faith has something really special to offer. As Psalm 119:105 and Psalm 71:5 (NIV) remind us: ***"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path... For you have been my hope, Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth."***



Having a supportive community and a grounded sense of hope gives our young people a strong foundation as they navigate life.

We would love to invite all secondary school-aged young people in our parish family to join us when we start back in September! It is an open, welcoming space where everyone is accepted, where genuine friendships are built, and where young people are supported as they explore life and faith.

If you know a young person who might enjoy coming along, or if you'd like to share details for a family member, please speak to Peter or Claire.





The former Safeguarding Trust documents which form the Church of Ireland's child protection information have been replaced by 'Safeguarding Church of Ireland' which was launched in May 2026 at the meeting of the General Synod in Newcastle, Co Down.
The new policy documents can be found at www.safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org

The All Saints' parish panel members continue to be:

Archdeacon McBride

Dr Brian Ford

Hazel Dalton

028 9446 2186

028 9446 2378

028 9446 4796

If you wish to go directly to an agency for support or to report an issue, the following are useful
If you are concerned about immediate risk to any child or adult contact the PSNI on **999**. If you are concerned about the safety of a child who is not in immediate danger you can contact the **Northern Health and Social Services Gateway** teams for advice on **0300 123 4333**.

Central Gateway Team

Unit 5A, Toome Business Park Hillhead Road Toomebridge, BT41 3SF Tel: **028 7965 1020**

South Eastern Gateway Team

The Beeches 76 Avondale Drive Ballyclare, BT39 9DB Tel: **028 9442 4377**

If you require social services advice and support out of hours in regards to a potential safeguarding concern for any child or adult contact:

Northern Ireland - Child or adult related concerns

Tel: **028 9504 9999**



Archdeacon McBride

028 9446 2186



Hazel Dalton

028 9446 4796



Dr Brian Ford

028 9446 2378



WATCH ONLINE

YOUTUBE DIRECT LINK

Please type this link into your web browser

<https://www.youtube.com/@allsaints4713/streams>

or **allsaints4713** directly into YouTube. Make sure to hit subscribe to make it easier to find next time.

VIA THE PARISH WEBSITE

Go to <https://antrim.connor.anglican.org/>

Click on the link for church webcam

ALL SAINTS PARISH FACEBOOK

Go to the Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsparishantrim>

Click on "Watch Now"

WHO'S WHO

Vicar: **The Venerable Dr Stephen McBride**

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

Pastoral Administrator: **The Rev Peter S Blake MTh**

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

Curate Assistant: **The Rev Claire Thompson BSc**

E-mail: clairesg1@hotmail.com

Hon Treasurer:

Mr Brian Neill

Tel: (028) 9446 3708

Email: allsaints2treasurer@gmail.com

Hon Secretary:

Mrs Irene Gates

Tel: (028) 9446 6430

Email: allsaints2secretary@gmail.com

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.