

RECTOR'S NOTES

SERMON SUMMARIES

On **St Patrick's Day** (transferred to Sunday 19th March) I spoke about the legend of St Patrick banishing the snakes from Ireland. I poured the cold water of science over that particular myth, by explaining that Ireland has never had snakes because—like New Zealand, Iceland, and the far flung extremities of the earth—snakes were unable to migrate here after the last Ice Age. The legend of St Patrick and the snakes therefore has a metaphorical meaning: the snakes represent the ancient druids and their pagan religion, which St Patrick supplanted with the Christian Gospel. Although the druids left no written records about their own beliefs and practices, we do know that they were openly hostile towards St Patrick and his missionary activities. But what was the message that Patrick was preaching that would have so infuriated them? Firstly, Patrick would have proclaimed the self-worth of all people. Whether male or female, powerful or powerless, slave or free, every person is loved and valued by God. Secondly, he would have preached a direct encounter with God through prayer, rather than through the mediation of the druids. Thirdly, he would have taught that the true religion that God wanted was not secretive, magical rituals, but rather kindness and compassion. And fourthly, he would have given the people hope that there was a better world to come because of Jesus Christ, after the many horrors they faced in this world.

On the **Sunday before Lent** (Sunday 26th February) our Student Reader, Alan McCracken, preached on the parable of the wise and foolish builders. Leading into that parable, Jesus tells the crowds that on the Day of Judgement, many will claim to have fulfilled their Christian duty, and yet Jesus will tell them that he never knew them. What is then, beyond actions, that Jesus wants from us?

The parable of the wise and foolish builders then uses the idea of a strong foundation of a living relationship with Christ as the difference between those who only claim to follow Jesus, and those who truly do. In the storms of life, the faith of the people who have a genuine relationship with Jesus will hold firm, whereas for those who just go through the motions of religious observance, their faith may be weakened or destroyed. What Jesus wants from us, therefore, is not just to act like Christians, but more importantly to have a stable and loving relationship with Christ.

ANNUAL MEETING

Our **Annual Meeting** (officially called the "Easter Vestry") will be held on Sunday 2nd April following a half-hour service of worship at 11am. We call that day "Mission Sunday" and this gives us an opportunity to remember the purpose of the Christian Church, before we get down to the business of receiving the accounts and electing our officers and representatives for the year ahead. All parishioners are welcome to remain in the church for the meeting, but only registered members may take part in the elections.

There are a lot of positions to be filled by **election** this year: the People's Churchwarden, the People's Glebewarden, two People's Sidespersons, twelve members of the Select Vestry, three members of the Fabric & Furnishing Committee, three members of the Finance & Administration Committee, three members of the Events & Organisations Committee, four Parochial Nominators, four supplemental Parochial Nominators, three members of the Diocesan Synod, and three supplemental members of the Diocesan Synod. In addition, I make a large number of appointments for other positions, such as Rector's Churchwarden, Rector's Glebewarden, two Rector's Sidespersons, five members of the Mission & Ministries Committee, and various other roles relating to worship and pastoral ministry.

During the meeting, registered members will vote to support six charities throughout year. The Select Vestry has already produced a short list of fourteen charities from which we would like the registered members to select the final six, which will include three secular charities and three Church charities. Your choices of secular charities are: Dementia NI, the NI Children's Hospice, the Multiple Sclerosis Society, the NI Society for the Blind, the Royal National Lifeboat Association (RNLI), Arthritis Research, and Cancer Research. Your choices of Church charities are: the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Christians Against Poverty (CAP), the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Church of Ireland Orphans & Children Society, the Connor Diocese Ordination Fund, and the interdenominational Dock Café in the Titanic Quarter. To be clear, you will vote for three charities from each of those two lists, and we will support those six charities until Easter 2018.

At some point during or after the Annual Meeting, we will raise funds for the Simon Community by providing soup and bread rolls, for a recommended donation of £2. This initiative is called "**Soup for Simon**" and many churches are taking part in order to help the homeless.

FRANK DILLON

In February 2015 we appointed Frank Dillon as our part-time Children's & Families' Worker, using a little bit of money from the St James' Endowment Fund. The position was for one year, which could be extended up to a maximum of three years. Since joining us, Frank has become an important and much-loved member of our parish family, and he has formed meaningful relationships with old and young alike. Coming from Willowfield Parish, which couldn't be further from St Peter's in terms of demographics and churchmanship, Frank not only brought new ideas to us, but also broadened his own understanding of the Church's mission and ministries in different contexts. Although the Select Vestry recently agreed to extend Frank's contract for a third year, concluding in early 2018, we knew that he would most likely have to leave us earlier than that in order to find full-time work following the completion of his studies at Belfast Bible College. Sadly his departure has come sooner than we expected, and he is due to take up the post of Youth Pastor in Hillsborough Parish in early April. I have thoroughly enjoyed Frank's presence and ministry amongst us, and I'm sure I speak for us all when I wish him all the best for his ministry in Hillsborough, and much love and happiness for both him and his wife Bethan in their future together.

SICK LEAVE

I am extremely thankful for all those who have covered for me, or assisted me, or expressed concern in recent weeks whilst I have been recovering from illness. Since January I had been under the weather with a particularly nasty and persistent dose of the cold, and unfortunately it weakened my immune system to the point where I became susceptible to shingles in early March. I can honestly say I've never experienced pain like it, and as the shingles were on my face, it means that I am both sore and unsightly! I am reliably told that there will be painful after-effects for some time yet, but I am determined not to allow this to affect my ministry unnecessarily. I would therefore appreciate not only your prayers during the coming months, but also your patience and understanding as I try to do as much as I can, whilst trying to avoid pushing myself too hard.

SERVICES IN APRIL

The start of April marks the beginning of the end of the penitential season of Lent, as we have two weeks of **Passiontide** (which includes Holy Week) prior to the celebration of Easter. This is a very important time of year in the Christian calendar, and there is no shortage of church services for us to immerse ourselves in the passion narrative.

Sunday 2nd April is **Mission Sunday**, in which we will take stock of the purpose of the Christian Church. The service at 11am will be a shortened form of Morning Prayer, following which we will remain in the church for our Easter Vestry meeting. Please note that there will be no evening service that day.

Sunday 9th April is **Palm Sunday**, in which we begin the journey of Christ's last few days on earth.

Throughout **Holy Week**, which follows Palm Sunday, there will be a service every evening at 7.30pm, in addition to our regular midweek service on Wednesday morning. Each service will be different: Compline, Evening Prayer, Late Evening Office, Holy Communion, and Tenebrae.

Sunday 16th April is **Easter Day**, which is perhaps the most important day in the Christian calendar. I encourage all parishioners to attend church to worship the Risen Christ on that date. Note that there is no evening service.

There is one other Holy Day in April, which is the feast day of **St Mark the Evangelist**. We will commemorate him in a celebration of Holy Communion at 7.30pm on Tuesday 25th April.

CHURCH SERVICES IN APRIL

PASSIONTIDE

SUNDAY	2nd APRIL	MISSION SUNDAY
9am	Holy Communion	traditional, said, Resurrection
11am	Morning Prayer	modern, sung, Nave
WEDNESDAY	5th APRIL	MID-WEEK SERVICE
10.30am	Holy Communion	modern, said, Resurrection
SUNDAY	9th APRIL	PALM SUNDAY
9am	Holy Communion	modern, said, Resurrection
11am	Morning Prayer	modern, sung, Nave
6.30pm	Late Evening Office	modern, said, St James
MONDAY	10th APRIL	FIG MONDAY
7.30pm	Compline	traditional, said, Nave
TUESDAY	11th APRIL	HOLY TUESDAY
7.30pm	Evening Prayer	modern, said, Nave
WEDNESDAY	12th APRIL	SPY WEDNESDAY
10.30am	Holy Communion	modern, said, Resurrection
7.30pm	Late Evening office	modern, said, Nave
THURSDAY	13th APRIL	MAUNDY THURSDAY
7.30pm	Holy Communion	traditional, sung, Nave
FRIDAY	14th APRIL	GOOD FRIDAY
7.30pm	Tenebrae	modern, sung, Nave
<u>THE SEASON C</u>	OF EASTER	
SUNDAY	16th APRIL	EASTER DAY
9am	Holy Communion	modern, said, Resurrection
11am	Holy Communion	modern, sung, Nave
WEDNESDAY	19 th APRIL	MID-WEEK SERVICE

Morning Prayer *modern, said, Resurrection* 10.30am

23rd APRIL **SUNDAY** Holy Communion

9am 11am 6.30pm

TUESDAY

25th APRIL 7.30pm Holy Communion

26th APRIL **WEDNESDAY** 10.30am

SUNDAY 9am 11am 6.30pm

Holy Communion 30th APRIL Holy Communion Morning Prayer

Holy Communion

Holy Communion

Choral Evensong

Morning Prayer

Compline

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

modern, said, Resurrection modern, sung, Nave traditional, said, St James

ST MARK THE EVANGELIST traditional, said, Chancel

MID-WEEK SERVICE modern, said, Resurrection

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER modern, said, Resurrection modern, sung, Nave modern, said, St James

CHURCH SERVICES IN MAY

3rd MAY WEDNESDAY 10.30am

9am 11am

9am

11am

6.30pm

6.30pm

MID-WEEK SERVICE modern, said, Resurrection

SUNDAY 7th MAY Holy Communion Holy Communion

10th MAY WEDNESDAY 10.30am Holy Communion

14th MAY **SUNDAY** Holy Communion **Morning Prayer Evening Prayer**

MONDAY 7.30pm

Holy Communion 17th MAY **WEDNESDAY**

15th MAY

10.30am Holy Communion

SUNDAY 21st MAY Holy Communion 9am 11am Holy Communion Compline 6.30pm

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER traditional, said, Resurrection

modern, sung, Nave traditional, sung, Nave

MID-WEEK SERVICE modern, said, Resurrection

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

modern, said, Resurrection modern, sung, Nave modern, said, St James

SAINT MATTHIAS traditional, said, Chancel

MID-WEEK SERVICE modern, said, Resurrection

ROGATION SUNDAY modern, said, Resurrection modern, sung, Nave traditional, sung, Nave

WEDNESDAY	24th MAY	MID-WEEK SERVICE
10.30am	Holy Communion	modern, said, Resurrection
THURSDAY	25th MAY	ASCENSION DAY
7.30pm	Holy Communion	traditional, sung, Nave
SUNDAY	28th MAY	THE SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION DAY
9am	Holy Communion	modern, said, Resurrection
11am	Morning Prayer	modern, sung, Nave
6.30pm	Late Evening Office	modern, said, St James
WEDNESDAY	31st MAY	VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
10.30am	Holy Communion	modern, said, Resurrection

SELECT VESTRY BULLETIN

As many of you now know, our Families' Worker, Frank Dillon is leaving to take up a post at Hillsborough Parish Church as a full-time Youth Pastor. On behalf of the Select Vestry, I would like to wish Frank well in his new role. He will be missed throughout the parish, and in particular, by the children and young people he has ministered to over the past two years.

Given that the Select Vestry has funding for youth ministry up until February 2018, we will continue to avail of this, but we will seek to divide the role between two people, each contracted at six hours a week for a six-month period. They will be jointly responsible for helping with Sunday School, Family Services, children's events, and caring for the pastoral needs of the children and their families. Longer term however, we will explore our funding options for employing ministry workers who not only cater to young people and children, but who also provide general ministry services for all age groups.

With the next General Vestry meeting fast approaching on 2nd April, further changes in the running of the parish can no doubt be expected. The Select Vestry has been preparing for the upcoming meeting, with the Annual Review completed, and the Annual Report now being finalised. The Select Vestry has worked hard this past year to take care of the administration and finances of the parish. If anyone feels a calling to assist with this important work, or indeed, the important work undertaken in any other role, I would again encourage them to put their name forward at the upcoming meeting.

Gareth Larmour, Hon Sec to Select Vestry

April Dia	ary					
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday Thursday		Friday	Saturday
30 9am Holy Communion 11am Morning Prayer and Sunday School 6.30pm Holy Communion						1
2 Mission Sunday 9am Holy Communion 11am Morning Prayer and Sunday School Sunday School Easter Vestry	m	4 10.30am Crafty Goodness 6pm Beavers 7pm Cubs	<i>5</i> 10.30am Holy Communion and refreshments 2pm Bridge 6.30pm PhysioPilates 7.30pm Choir	6 10am Little Cherubs 2.30pm Parish Prayers 6pm Rainbows 7pm Brownies 8pm Guides	7 10.30am PhysioPilates 11.30am Bible Study 4.30pm Speech and Drama	00

15 Holy Saturday 10am Decoration of the church for Easter	22	29
14 Good Friday 7.30pm Tenebrae	21 10.30am PhysioPilates 4.30pm Speech and Drama	28 10.30am PhysioPilates 4.30pm Speech and Drama
13 Maundy Thursday Communion Communion	19202110.30am10.30am10.30am10.30am10.30amCommunion and14.40amHistorical Society10.30amFereshments4.30pm6.30pmand DramaPhysioPilatesand Drama	27 10am Little Cherubs 6pm Brownies 7.30pm Bible Study 8pm Guides
12 Spy Wednesday Wednesday 10.30am Holy Communion and refreshments Tomunion and refreshments 2pm Bridge 6.30pm Late PhysioPilates 7.30pm Late Evening Office Bpm Choir	19 10.30am Holy Communion and refreshments 6.30pm PhysioPilates	26 10.30am Holy Communion and refreshments 2pm Bridge 6.30pm PhysioPilates 7.30pm Choir
11 Holy Tuesday 7.30pm Evening Prayer	18	25 St Mark 10.30 Crafty Goodness 1pm Events Committee 7.30pm Holy Communion
10 Fig Monday 7.30pm Compline	17	24 Deadline for material to be with Anne for May Parish Notes 7.30pm Select Vestry
<i>9</i> <i>Palm Sunday</i> 9am Holy Communion 11am Morning Prayer and Sunday School (tea/coffee) Traidcraft stall 6.30pm Late Evening Office	16 Easter Day 9am Holy Communion 11am Holy Communion and Sunday School	23 9am Holy Communion 11am Morning Prayer and Sunday School (tea/coffee) 6.30pm Compline

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Our church garden

From our Calendar, Spring has now officially arrived and we hope that 'Paddy' has turned over the stone the right way. This means that weeds etc. are now appearing above ground.



We are again pleading for help in the Church grounds. Volunteers are not being asked to work a forty hour week. What we are asking is that persons (] hope in the plural) take over the management of their part of the grounds and be responsible for weeding, picking up rubbish which blows into the grounds and general gardening in your area. You make your own time to attend and how many hours per week you wish to devote to this task. There are brown and black bins in the grounds to dispose of the waste appropriately.

The parish Cannot afford to employ professional gardeners and we are sure you will all agree that we don't want our beautiful grounds to become overgrown and an eyesore. We are on show from the Antrim Road by those travelling by bus or on foot.

PLEASE, PLEASE give this careful consideration and don't leave it to others. I am asking for about one hour per week per volunteer from March to October each year.

Please speak to us any Sunday after Church or ring 9077 8428 or email noel_innisfayle@msn.com.

Many, many thanks.

Annette and Noel Beattie 🚪

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Ladies' Guild

Owing to Holy Week there will be no Ladies' Guild meeting on Tuesday 11th April.

On Tuesday 9th May we will be visiting Kilcoan Gardens, Islandmagee. The bus will leave church at 1.30pm and will be back at church by 5pm. The cost for this is £15 and includes return bus travel to Islandmagee, access to the gardens, a floral demonstration and tea or coffee with home made treats. If you would like to go with us please see me by no later than Easter Day. *Anne Stewart, Hon Sec (tel 9096 6597)*

Soup for Simon

Our Annual Easter Vestry meeting will take place after a shortened version of our 11am service on Sunday 2nd April. Soup and bread will be available between the

service and the meeting in return for a £2 minimum donation—all proceeds to the Simon Community. Please support.





Children in Crossfire is recruiting dancers for a Strictly Come Dancing Fundraiser on 22nd June in Belfast. It is free to sign up and you can join as an individual or as a couple. Professional dance training will be given so no experience required: great chance to get new skills, meet new people, have a good time and raise vital funds for charity. Training begins 1st April—please contact Connor on 07775439227 for more information.

Advent Reflections

Each Wednesday evening during Advent we had a service of Compline in the North Aisle of St Peter's, during which, like last year, some of our parishioners spoke to us about their Christian faith. Here is Alan McCracken's Advent Reflection:

I would like to tell you a little about myself. I was raised in a church-going family—myself and my two brothers were sent to Sunday School every week. We were also in the Boys' Brigade, never missing a meeting and making our parents so proud of us. The Boys' Brigade played an important part in my young life, learning all sorts of crafts and skills but especially learning about God. My mother, to this day, still has all our BB uniforms and achievement certificates in a memory box.

As a young boy, I always wanted to be in the Army, so when I was 17, the Rev'd Ernest Shepherd, the then minister of St John's, signed my papers for me and off I went to a life in the Army. I enjoyed military life—the discipline, the fitness regime and the camaraderie—we were a band of brothers and we still stay in contact. Army life is about the cold, dark, rainy nights—standing in a fire trench getting wet. Like all young men we dreamt of back home, our comforts, or thought of something funny to take our minds off the situation.

I left the army for a short while, came home, and married Karen. We got married in St John's, Whitehouse, by Mr Shepherd.

Today I work for 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Regiment and am also a caseworker for the Armed Forces Charity SSAFA. I get to meet people from all walks of life—young men coming to join up, and veterans who have served and are in need of help.

Sometime ago, I was on military exercise and the padre came out to the field to conduct Sunday service. It was very moving to see combat troops in silence and deep thought—to see soldiers ready for action and showing emotion is very moving. One of the readings was from Ephesians, chapter 6. Let me share a few verses of the passage with you: "Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness." These words from Saint Paul struck home with me, it was then I felt God calling me to be his soldier his soldier in the army of God.

I don't know if you understand what this feeling is like—it just eats away at your insides, making you more determined to serve Jesus. I began to re-read my Bible, absorbing the scriptures—I just couldn't get enough and each day I felt my faith getting stronger and stronger. I knew in my heart that Jesus had a role for me in the kingdom; I wanted to say how can I be part of the kingdom— I'm nothing special, but I can tell you that the feeling would not go away. My life was changing and I just couldn't ignore it any longer; I had to talk to someone and I felt God urging me to call my minister. I made the call and I explained how I felt God was affecting my life—we talked for ages and prayed. I can tell you now that that was the best call I have ever made.

My journey of faith has been a fantastic one so far. I have met new Christian friends and though the road is long and hard, with the support of the church and my band of brothers and sisters, my journey will take the high road of faith.

Jesus has the power to change lives like my own. My education was limited and a Church of Ireland minister advised me to attend Bible College to achieve A level grade in Religious Education. This I did and it was all part of God's plan as it led me to also passing the Church of Ireland foundation course and Selection Conference and now I have been recommended for ordination training.

Ever since I accepted Jesus into my life, everything feels better. I have received a lot of support from family and friends and my own journey so far has influenced and inspired my work colleagues and friends and they want to talk to me about God.

In my life I feel more at peace knowing that God is watching and protecting. For me, the feeling of being filled with the Holy Spirit and serving God is now a major part of my life.

LESSON READERS AND INTERCESSORS

The following parishioners are on the rota to read at the 11am Sunday services. If you are unable to read on your appointed Sunday, please contact the Warden of Readers, Forde Patterson, tel 90 364 183.

A	April	First Reading	Second Reading	Third Reading	Intercessor
1	2nd	The Rector	The Rector	-	Sandra Hutchman
	9th	Philip Williamson	Wes Holmes	The Rector	Noel Beattie
1	6th	Daphne McClements	Sandra Hutchman	The Rector	The Rector
2	23rd	Colin Bell	Forde Patterson	Stuart Lloyd	David Cromie
3	80th	Peter Coiley	Anne Roberts	The Rector	Quintin Mulligan



DECORATION OF THE CHURCH FOR EASTER

15th April at 10am

If you would like to help decorate the church for Easter on Saturday morning, 15th April, please get in touch with Sandra Davison—you can catch her at church or ring her on tel 9443 9230. Alternatively just turn up on the morning! Thank you.

NORTH BELFAST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Thursday 20th April 7.45pm in the Minor Hall

Speaker: Linda Ervine Topic: Hidden history of the Irish language. Everyone welcome.

Parish Notes in colour!



There are full colour versions of Parish Notes on our website. Visit www.stpeters.connor.anglican.org and click on "News".

APRIL FLOWER LIST

9TH HEATHER AND TONY SWAN IN MEMORY OF HEATHER'S PARENTS

16th Easter Day

23rd Joan Walker

Thank you to all who give of their time and effort in beautifying the church with flowers.

PARISHIONER CONTACT DETAILS

For speed of communication and to keep our records up to date please send your email address to Anne at stpeterandstjames@outlook.com. Also please don't forget to let us know if you move house, change your telephone number or change your email address. Thank you.

Holy Dusters Cleaning Rota

27th March—1st April-----Group 8 3rd April—8th April -----Group 1 10th April—15th April -----Group 2 17th April—22nd April----Group 3 24th April—29th April ----Group 4

AFTER CHURCH REFRESHMENT

Light refreshments will be served after the 11am service on Sunday 9th April by the Guides and on Sunday 23rd April by the Sunday School.





A nice suprise!

On 15th March, the regular Wednesday communicants surprised Marie Burrowes by presenting her with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. They just wanted to say thank you for all that she does around the church in her quiet, gentle way.

So, thank you to Marie and also thank you to those who were kind enough to show their appreciation!



ORGANISATIONS - TIMETABLE

Sunday		
11am—12noon:	Sunday School	
Monday		
8pm—11pm:	Badminton Club	
Tuesday		
10.30am—12.30pm:	Crafty Goodness	
2.30pm—4.30pm:	Ladies' Guild (2 nd Tuesday in month)	
6pm—7pm:	Beaver Scouts	
7pm—8pm:	Cub Scouts	
Wednesday		
2pm—4pm:	Bridge Club	
6.30pm—7.45pm:	PhysioPilates	
7.30pm—9pm:	Choir	
Thursday		
10am—11.30am:	'Little Cherubs' Parent and Toddler Group	
2.30pm—3.30pm:	Parish Prayers (1 st Thursday in month)	
6pm—7pm:	Rainbows	
7pm—8pm:	Brownies	
7.30pm:	Bible Study (2 nd & 4 th Thursday in month)	
7.45pm:	Historical Society (3 rd Thursday in month)	
8pm—9.30pm:	Guides	
Friday		
10.30am—11.45am:	PhysioPilates	
11.30am:	Bible Study (1 st and 3 rd Friday in month)	
4.30pm—7.30pm:	Speech and Drama	
For more information on these organisations (including term dates) please contact the appropriate personnel listed on the back page or the Parish Office.		

PASTORAL CARE

If you would like to arrange for the Rector to visit you at home, whether to share your anxieties in confidence, for spiritual advice, for prayer, or for Holy Communion, then please contact him on 90 777 053. This is an essential part of his ministry and he will be pleased to visit you and help in whatever way he can. If the Rector is unavailable, there will be contact details for other clergy on the answer machine. If you or a loved one is seriously ill, particularly if you are admitted to hospital, please inform the Rector. He often visits the hospitals but has no way of knowing who has been admitted unless he is informed. If you are visited by a hospital chaplain and they ask if you would like your Rector to visit, please say "yes" and he

will gladly come to see you.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE SELECT VESTRY WILL BE ON MONDAY 24TH APRIL AT 7.30PM IN THE MINOR HALL



Stall open on Sunday 9th April during coffee time after the 11am service

Please send material for the May issue of Parish Notes to: Anne Cromie, Parish Office, St Peter's Church, Fortwilliam Drive, Belfast BT15 4EB or email: stpeterandstjames@outlook.com by Monday 24th April. Thank you.