

THE PARISH OF ST PETER AND ST JAMES
BELFAST

PARISH NOTES

JUNE 2021

Rector: The Rev'd Brian Lacey
St Peter's Rectory, 17 Waterloo Park South, Belfast, BT15 5HX

A photograph of Anne Cromie, the Parish Administrator, sitting at her desk in the Parish Office. She is a woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a blue cardigan over a floral patterned top. She is smiling and talking on a mobile phone held to her ear with her left hand, while her right hand rests on a computer mouse. The desk is wooden and has a black keyboard, a large computer monitor, and some papers. In the background, there is a large Ricoh photocopier, a bulletin board with various notices and a calendar for June 2021, and some framed pictures on the wall.

*Anne Cromie, Parish Administrator,
at work in the Parish Office*

GOD . LOVING . PEOPLE

IN MEMORIAM SAMUEL HUNTER



On Thursday 14th May 2020, Sam Hunter died in the Royal Victoria Hospital. Despite the Lockdown, his wife Joyce was able to be at his side. A short funeral service was held in Wilton's Funeral Home on the Shore Road in Newtownabbey on Wednesday 20th May. Sadly, the Covid-19 regulations meant that he was unable to be given a much more appropriate send-off. Samuel is deeply missed by his family and friends, and we continue to uphold them in prayer. We pray for his wife Joyce; their children Christopher, Mark, and Julie; grandchildren, Lucy, Ella, Andrew, and John, and great grandchildren, Ben, Evie, and Abigail, and for the wider family circle. Even in the sadness of commemorating Sam's death, we also have reason to rejoice as two more great grandchildren have been born in the last year: Sam and Emily.

Whenever appropriate throughout this year, we will include photos of members of our congregation who died during the Coronavirus Lockdown, to mark their anniversary.

RECTOR'S NOTES

SERVICES IN JUNE

Maybe it's just me, but I'm finding myself double-checking what Sunday it is at the beginning of each service, as the Covid Lockdowns have erased any sense of what time of year it is! Lent and Easter seem to have come and gone in the blink of an eye, and now—quite surreally—we find ourselves entering Ordinary Time. This is a long stretch of the year, taking us through the summer and autumn months, and coming to an end mere weeks before Christmas.

At the end of June, we have the first of our two patronal festivals. Although St Peter's Day remains steadfastly on 29th June (which is a Tuesday, this year), we celebrate Petertide on the last Sunday of the month, which is the 27th June.

Throughout the month, we will continue to have only one service on Sundays, at 11am. Please make every effort to regularly join us for worship, as it creates a lovely atmosphere of praise and peace in the church when we are all gathered together. Adults must continue to wear facemasks (unless exempt from doing so) and we must all observe social distancing and hand hygiene rules.

ANNE CROMIE

On Monday 3rd June 1996, a former rector, the Rev'd Charles McCollum, asked Anne Cromie for secretarial help in the evenings, after her young children had gone to bed. Over the subsequent years, this role developed from the Rector's Secretary to her current position of Parish Administrator—a change in title and duties that was also reflected in the relocation of the Parish Office from the rectory to the parish halls.

Over these twenty-five years, Anne has been a dedicated, conscientious, capable, and highly valued member of staff, who has been a friend and confidante to both the clergy and parishioners.

On behalf of the entire parish, may I congratulate Anne on her milestone of employment, and express our deep appreciation for all of her work.

SELECT VESTRY

Our Easter Vestry meeting was held after the morning service on Sunday 9th May. At the meeting, our new Select Vestry was appointed/elected for the year ahead. The purpose of this committee is to manage our human, physical, and financial resources. In addition to myself, the new committee consists of Daphne McClements (Rector's Churchwarden), Dora Hanna (People's Churchwarden), Victor Davis (Rector's Glebewarden), Quintin Mulligan (People's Glebewarden), Yvonne Crozier (Honorary Secretary), Ashlee McCune (Honorary Treasurer), Adam Alexander, Noel Beattie, Jill Bradley, Peter Coiley, David Cromie, Olivia Dornan, Cheryl Hurson, Rosemary Johnston, Matthew Lambert and Sarah McCusker.

First of all, may I offer a word of praise to those members of last year's committee who opted not to seek re-election. They are Colin Bell, Brian Davison, and Sandra Hutchman. Each of them have been excellent and valued members of the committee in their own particular ways, but by stepping down, they have enabled newcomers to join, and this is always a great sign of a healthy church. Those newcomers are Adam Alexander, Cheryl Hurson, and Sarah McCusker.

FILMING

After a few intense weeks, Netflix has moved on to other locations to continue filming their blockbuster movie. I found it to be a very interesting experience for me personally, as I

based myself in the Parish Office to supervise our property and to answer any questions that the production crew had. Despite what you might think, it was certainly not all glitz and glamour. There was no hob-nobbing with Hollywood stars, and no—I will not appear in the film! What I did do, however, was enjoy spending time with staff members behind the scenes, working in security, health & safety, lighting, props, set design, stills photography, costumes, make-up, catering, armoury, and so on. These conversations were interesting, not just because I was given little insights into how movies are made, but also on a more personal level, many of them opened up to me (perhaps as a Christian minister) and shared their thoughts and feelings about life. For that reason alone, I am glad that we permitted them to use St Peter's, because it gave an opportunity for them to encounter the Christian Church (the people, not just the building) and to find a little bit of peace in the midst of all the stresses and challenges of the movie industry.

CHRISTIAN AID

During Christian Aid Week, Jill Bradley and her group of walkers set themselves the challenge of walking 20 miles over the course of four days. In doing so, they have raised sponsorship so far of £725.00 and we hope and pray that more will come in. All monies raised will go towards helping to fight injustice and poverty throughout the world.

If you have not already made a donation, you can do so by writing a cheque to "The Parish of St Peter & St James", and writing "Christian Aid" on the back. You can also use a Christian Aid envelope which is available from the back of the church, or place cash/notes in a plain envelope with "Christian Aid" written on it. We can then send one cheque to Christian Aid from all of us.

Many thanks to Jill for once again coordinating this year's fundraiser.

WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?

Some expressions of Christianity will tell you that God wants to give you money and fame and all sorts of worldly success. And for goodness sake, who wouldn't want that? Who wouldn't want to have a nice, easy life. But that's not what the Bible says. And it's not what we should expect from God. Having a luxurious life on Earth, is not what God offers us. Instead, what he does offer us—as we read in John's First Letter, is “eternal life”.

Now, I imagine that if I asked you what “eternal life” means, many of you would probably say “life after death” or “getting into heaven” or something like that. And certainly, the word “eternal” does mean “for ever”, so the implication is that part of you (your soul, or your spirit, or your consciousness or whatever you want to call it) will carry on living even after your physical body has died. But there's more to eternal life than simply continuing to exist.

Because existing is not necessarily a positive experience for some people. Think about the times when you've heard people complain that their life is difficult, that they are simply going through the motions, when they find no joy in anything they do, when they have no sense of hope for a brighter future, when they feel trapped by the circumstances in which they find themselves—sometimes people in such a predicament will say “I'm not really living; I'm just existing.”

And it's an interesting distinction between “living” and “existing” because it suggests that life should be much more than going through some sort of monotonous routine of “sleeping, waking, eating, working, sleeping, waking eating, working, sleeping ... ” and so on. It suggests, rather, that life is something to be enjoyed—not endured. Life is something to be treasured. Life should be about contentment and fulfilment.

Now, if you can understand that difference between “living” and “existing”, then that will help you to understand “eternal

life.” Because whilst it does of course refer to “life after death”, it is also about having a “fulfilled life” in this world, which has purpose and meaning. So eternal life is as much about living in this world as it is about life after death.

So bear that in mind when you read the verse that says, “God gave us eternal life” because its about the here and now as well as what happens after we die. Saint John went on to write, “This life is in his son.” This eternal life is in God’s son. In other words, our eternal life is dependent upon God’s Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

And in the verses that follow, we learn that the means of receiving this eternal life, which God wants to give us, is by believing in the name of Jesus. “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Now don’t be confused by the idea of believing in a name. John doesn’t mean that the sound of the name “Jesus” is in itself powerful. You will sometimes hear Christians using the name of Jesus as some sort of mantra or invocation, but when the Son of God walked the earth, he was never called Jesus. That’s an English word based on the Latin “Jesu” which is based on the original Aramaic name “Yeshua.” So if there’s actually power in the name itself, it would be in “Yeshua” or something similar, rather than “Jesus.”

But that’s not what Saint John is talking about here. It’s not the sound of word which is important, but rather—what the name represents. And the name Jesus represents the power of God to guide and to heal and to reconcile and to energize. And it’s our genuine conviction in that power of God, working through Jesus, which sets us apart and identifies us as Christians. And with that belief comes eternal life. And Saint John says if you believe, then you will know that you have eternal life.

But how do you know? How can one tell? Well, it comes back to the nature of what eternal life is. As I said, it’s not just

something that we will experience when we die. It is something to be experienced now, here on Earth. And what I want you to be mindful of, is that if your belief in the power of Jesus is genuine, then that will seriously affect and transform your life. Because Christianity is not just about believing something; it's about allowing those beliefs to shape who you are, and how you act and react in the world.

So what I want you to ponder is: how is your life different because of the power of God? Are you able to find peace—even joy—when times are tough? Or are you always overwhelmed by the difficulties and tragedies of life. That's an indication of whether you truly believe in the power of God. Do you feel valued by God, even when nobody else thinks highly of you? Do you base your self-esteem on your identity as a child of God, rather than allowing other people to determine your worth? That's another indicator. Do you have a purpose in life? Do you see life as an opportunity to love and learn from our creator? Do you see the world as a mission field in which helping those in need is central? Or do you just go through the motions of making ends meet and getting through the week, keeping yourself to yourself, and hoping that winning the lottery will make everything alright.

The point is, that if you have eternal life, then it will show in your life now. If you believe in the name of Jesus, then the power of his name will be evident in who you are and what you do. And if it isn't—and only you will know whether or not it is (it's not for me or anyone else to judge) then I want you to receive it from God today. I want you to receive the free gift of eternal life that God is offering you: the free gift of a life of purpose, meaning, and value, which extends from this world into the next.

Is that what you are longing for? Am I talking to you? Do you want that eternal life? All you need to do is take it in the name of Jesus.



CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

**Presented to
St Peter's Church**

Thank you for your donation of 43
filled shoeboxes and £320.00.

Blythwood Ireland wants to
recognise your fantastic support
and your valuable contribution



Thank you for helping us make
a real difference in the lives of
so many people!

Date: *May 2021*

Christian care for body and soul

Pause for Thought and Prayer

Rosemary Johnston

Ambulances in Israel—by *Daphne McClements*

'You may recall the disaster in Israel several weeks ago where thousands of Orthodox Jews were celebrating the festival of Lag B'Omer at the foot of Mount Meron. The men and boys were leaving when a human error in the design of the building at the exit resulted in over 40 deaths.

Fortunately ambulances were in action.

These are run by Magan David Adom (meaning Red Shield or Red Star of David).

It is the equivalent of the British Red Cross.

It was founded in June 1930, employing

over 1200 people and helped by over

10,000 volunteers. MDA is run jointly by

Muslims, Christians and Jews and is Israel's

only National Blood and Emergency Service saving the lives of all of Israel's citizens regardless of religion.



I was on the Council for the British Red Cross for 6 years and lived in Lod in Israel for three months. I can only see a benefit from understanding each other regardless of class, creed or colour.'

At the time of writing Israel has again descended into turmoil and tragedy as the war with Gaza escalates and Israelis and Palestinians fight over land etc, and the ambulance crews are again being sorely tested and in danger as they are caught up in the extreme violence.

We, in this country, know only too well how easily things can get out of control and how young people get caught up in the mayhem. It is also worrying when leaders are unable or unwilling to try to calm things down. May we pray for the ambulance crews; for world leaders and diplomats; and for those, many unseen and unsung, working so hard to bring about an end to hostilities, and especially for the peoples of Israel and Gaza that they may see an end to their ongoing nightmare.



Jill Bradley (middle) and her group of walkers pictured outside St James' church where they stopped for a well earned coffee break.

PARISHIONER CONTACT DETAILS

For speed of communication and to keep our records up to date please send your email address to the Parish Office at:

annecromie@stpeterbelfast.org

Also please don't forget to let us know if you move house, change any of your telephone numbers or your email address. Thank you.

Parish Notes On-line

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

*Please send material for the July/August issue of Parish Notes to:
Anne Cromie, Parish Administrator, St Peter's Church,
Fortwilliam Drive, Belfast BT15 4EB
or email: annecromie@stpeterbelfast.org
by Monday 21st June. Thank you.*