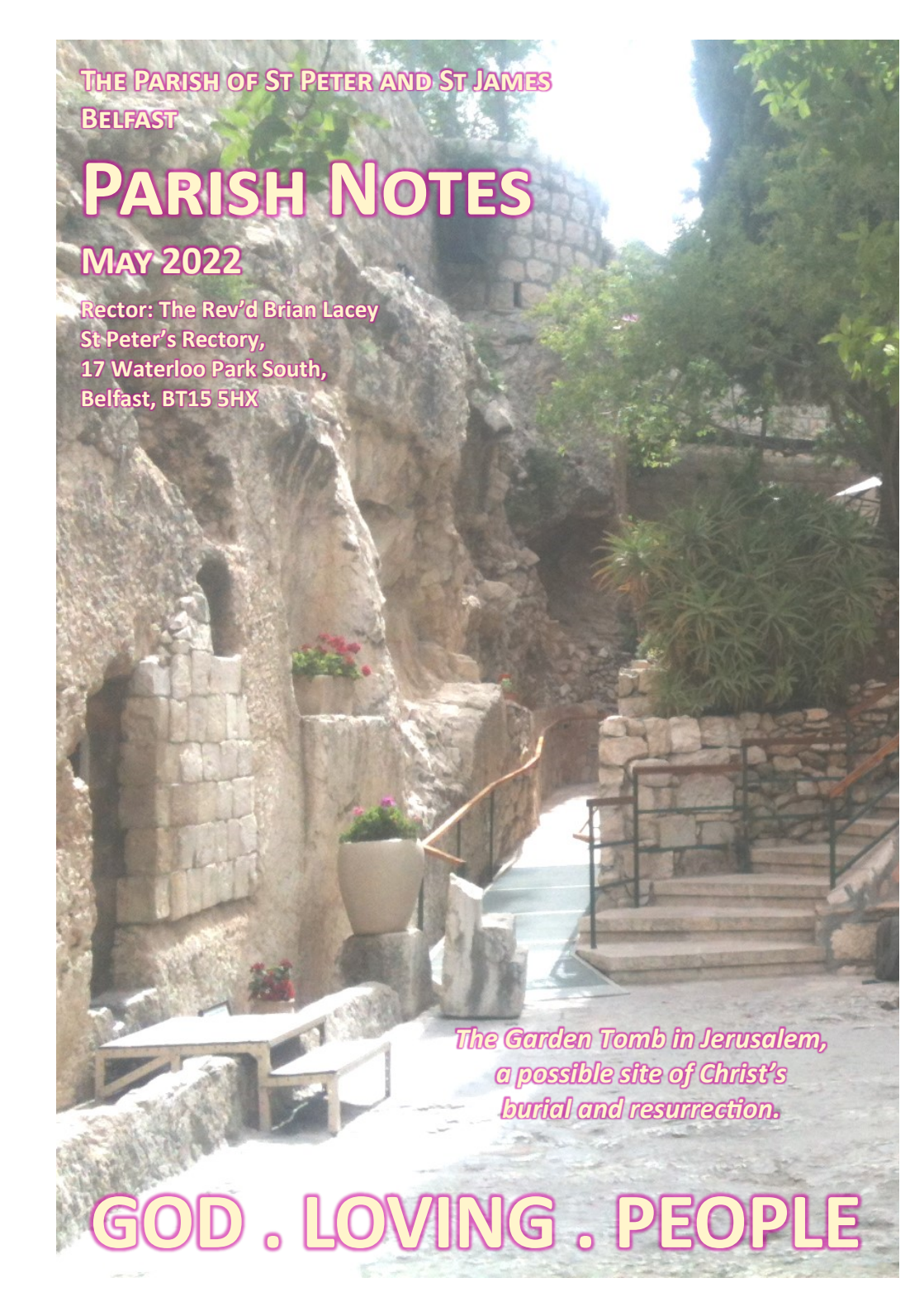


THE PARISH OF ST PETER AND ST JAMES
BELFAST

PARISH NOTES

MAY 2022

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



*The Garden Tomb in Jerusalem,
a possible site of Christ's
burial and resurrection.*

GOD . LOVING . PEOPLE

Spread the word ...

We are trying to engage more with the local community and would like to leave copies of Parish Notes in some public spaces. If you have access to such places, eg, doctors' or dentists' surgeries, leisure centres, coffee shops etc, please let our parish administrator, Anne Cromie, know and she can provide you with as many extra copies as you like. **Let's not hide our light under a bushel!!**



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RECTOR'S NOTES



SERVICES IN MAY

On Sunday 1st May (Third Sunday of Easter) there will be a **Family Service** at 10am, followed by a celebration of **Holy Communion** at 11am.

On Sunday 8th May (Fourth Sunday of Easter) there will be services of **Morning Prayer** at 10am and 11am. The 11am service will be Mr Graham Chipperfield's last service in St Peter's as part of his training placement as a Diocesan Reader. At the same time, I will be in St Paul's (York Road) in my capacity as Rural Dean, in order to chair their Easter Vestry meeting.

On Sunday 15th May (Fifth Sunday of Easter) there will be a **Scripture Service** at 10am, followed by a celebration of **Holy Communion** at 11am.

On Sunday 22nd May (Rogation Sunday) there will be a service of **Morning Prayer** at 10am, followed by a **Service of the Word for Rogationtide** at 11am. The word "Rogation" comes from the Latin word "rogare" which means "to ask", and this is the time when we ask God to bless the crops for a good harvest later in the year. Nowadays, particularly in the city, we also pray for commerce and industry as well as agriculture.

On Sunday 29th May (Sunday after The Ascension) there will be a **traditional-language celebration of Holy Communion** at

10am, followed by a **Service of the Word for Ascensiontide** at 11am. The Ascension marks the end of our Lord Jesus' face-to-face encounters with humanity.

Could the mid-week congregation please note that there will not be a service in St Peter's on Wednesday 16th May, and instead the mid-week celebration of Holy Communion will be moved to 10.30am on Thursday 17th May for The Ascension Day.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Christian Church, with a small number of exceptions, is a voluntary organisation. We depend upon the generosity of our members' time and effort in order to sustain our worship, mission, ministries, and management. Currently, we are looking for volunteers to:

- ◆ **prepare and lead the prayers of intercession** during services of worship. Training and support will be given, as there is a specific way in which Anglican prayers should be constructed for public worship.
- ◆ **set up for Holy Communion**, and take care of our silverware and linen as a member of our newly formed Altar Guild.
- ◆ **paint the exterior walls of the courtyard** leading into the halls. We would like to do this by the end of June.
- ◆ **cut the grass and do some weeding around St James**, as often as you are able.
- ◆ help with **grass cutting and weeding around St Peter's**. This could be done once a month, or whenever suits you.
- ◆ **brush, mop, and/or polish inside St Peter's** once a month as a member of the "Holy Dusters".
- ◆ **clear out junk** (hoping we find some treasure in its midst!) from the halls at St James. We would like to do this by the end of June.

- ◆ serve on the **Fabric Committee**, meeting four times a year to ensure that Church property is being pro-actively maintained.
- ◆ serve on the **Finance Committee**, meeting four times a year to examine parish finances in detail, and to make recommendations to the Select Vestry concerning our income, expenditure, and investments.

If any of the above interests you, then please speak to me directly. There are always many other ways in which to serve the Church, and periodically I'll bring these to your attention. But please do let me know if you have any particular skills that you would like to use for the benefit of the parish and we'll gladly find opportunities for you to employ them.

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Throughout the month of June, we will be running a Friendship Club in the halls at 12 noon each Wednesday. The Club is aimed at anyone of any age, living in the local area, who would like to get out of the house and meet new people. You do not need to be a member of our congregation, so please come along and invite anyone you think might be interested. There will be a light lunch and fun activities. The first gathering will be on Wednesday 1st June. Please speak to me if you would like more information, and particularly if you would like to help with cooking, cleaning, or setting up.

HOLY WEEK REVIEW

From Monday to Friday of Holy Week, there were special services each evening. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, there were services of Compline. Having given a reflection on the Bible reading on Monday myself, it was lovely to have a change of voice to listen to, as Graham Chipperfield spoke on Tuesday, followed by David Cromie on Wednesday.

On Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, there were services of Holy Communion and Tenebrae, respectively, accompanied by the Parish Choir. Particularly on Good Friday evening, the music was suitably poignant, and it was a reminder—if we needed one—of how talented our choirmaster, Robert Thompson, and our choir are! Our gratitude goes to all of them for their dedication and hard work.

Similarly, we're very grateful to Sandra Davison, our Coordinator of Church Flowers, and the team of ladies who decorated the church for Easter Day.

May I thank everyone who has been working in recent weeks, whether publicly or behind-the-scenes, to bring glory to God through the sustaining of our Anglican tradition in St Peter's.

SELECT VESTRY

Congratulations to those parishioners who were elected at the Easter Vestry (on Sunday 3rd April) to serve on our Select Vestry for the next twelve months or so. They are: Adam Alexander, Geraldine Amruth, Noel Beattie, Jill Bradley, David Cromie, Yvonne Crozier, Victor Davis (Rector's Glebewarden), Dora Hanna (People's Churchwarden), Matthew Lambert, Daphne McClements (Rector's Churchwarden), Ashlee McCune, Sarah McCusker, Michael Moore, Peter Mulligan (People's Glebewarden), and Quintin Mulligan. Three of them—Geraldine, Michael, and Peter—are newcomers to the Select Vestry. Of course, as we welcome the new, we must sadly say goodbye to the old! We are extremely thankful for the contribution over the last year of Peter Coiley, Olivia Dornan, Cheryl Hurson, and Rosemary Johnston. However, if you're a dab hand at mathematics, then you'll have worked out that there is one seat left on the Select Vestry which needs to be filled by cooption at the first ordinary meeting.



I wish to put on record a particular word of thanks to Rosemary Johnston, who has served on the Select Vestry for many years, including as Honorary Secretary. Her contribution to discussions has always been wise and well-considered, and we will miss her experience and thoughtfulness. And—I must add—her great cups of tea!

DIOCESAN SYNOD

The annual meeting of the Connor Diocesan Synod will be held on Thursday 16th June in St Anne's Cathedral. In addition to the clergy, every parish sends two or three lay people who are elected every three years. From St Peter & St James, we send Aaron Crozier, Wes Holmes, and Samuel Cromie. In the event that they are unable to attend, our supplementalists are Ashlee McCune, Quintin Mulligan, and Rebecca Delaney.

GENERAL SYNOD

The General Synod will be held on Wednesday 4th, Thursday 5th, and Friday 6th May in the Assembly Buildings in Belfast. Consisting of hundreds of representatives from across the island of Ireland, it is the supreme legislative body for the Church of Ireland, which means it determines the policies and practices of our Church. It is, for example, the only body competent to revise the Book of Common Prayer. Membership of the General Synod is elected by the Diocesan Synods, so we represent the Diocese of Connor rather than our individual parishes. As such, I am the only person from St Peter & St James who will be attending this year.

Matters to be discussed include: (1) changing the Constitution to

more easily permit General Synods, Diocesan Synods, and General Vestries to meet electronically—rather than in-person—if needs be; (2) changing the Constitution to define more clearly who may serve as a Parochial Nominator; (3) enabling full interchangeability of ministry between clergy of the Church of Ireland and clergy of the Moravian Church; (4) identifying ways in which the Church can support members of our society who are in need of housing; (5) developing a policy on prohibiting discrimination in the Church.

WHAT HAPPENED TO CHRIST'S BODY?

It's easy to understand why the men disbelieved the women who probably burst into the midst of them on the Sunday morning with the news of Christ's resurrection. As far as the men were concerned, Project Jesus was over. He had stood up for the common people against the religious elite; he had challenged and undermined the authority of the rich and powerful; he had presented himself as the man who could save and heal the broken ... But now, he was dead.

On Friday afternoon, less than 48 hours before the women came with their good news, Jesus had died on the cross. By all accounts, it was a brutal way to die, not just for Jesus, but also for his friends and family (most of whom were women) who could do nothing but watch in horror. And yet, now on Sunday morning, some of those same women return to the hiding place of the disciples, with reports that Jesus had risen from the dead. "Idle tales" is what the men thought. Nothing but rumour and gossip and wishful thinking.

Whether Saint Peter immediately believed the news, we do not know. Perhaps it was more curiosity than certainty, which made him run to the tomb to see for himself. And there, just as the women had said, he discovered that the tomb was empty. Jesus had gone. But unlike the experience of the women, who encountered angels (or men in dazzling white, depending on the

gospel) Peter was not—at that time—given any further insight into what had happened. Instead he simply went home. And I imagine that on the way, his mind must have been racing as he considered the three possibilities:

1) Jesus had risen from the dead, and the women had had a supernatural encounter with angels at the empty tomb, just as they said.

2) Jesus was dead, and his body had been removed by persons unknown, who—perhaps dressed up in white clothing for effect—had lied to the women about the resurrection.

3) Jesus was dead, and his body had been removed by persons unknown – maybe even by the women themselves – who then told lies (either purposefully or inadvertently) to the other disciples.

So, let's deal first with the possibility that Jesus' body had been taken from the tomb and hidden somewhere else. There are three issues that this raises. How was it done? Who did it? And why did they do it?

Let's start with "how?" We know from elsewhere in the gospels, that the Jewish leaders (who had clamoured for Christ's death) had been concerned that if Jesus' body disappeared, then this would lend credibility to the lies (as they saw it) that Jesus had claimed. And this would then provoke an enthusiastic reaction amongst the disciples, which could lead to rioting in the streets of Jerusalem, and result in a severe clamping down by the Romans. The Jewish leaders had therefore asked for Roman guards to be stationed near the tomb, to keep watch, in case the disciples stole the body and then claimed Jesus had risen. So, getting past the guards was the first hurdle.

Then, any would-be thief would need to open the tomb. The gospels tell us that there was a large circular stone rolled over the entrance. If you've ever been to the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, you may remember that there's a channel, a gully, outside the tomb, in which the circular stone would have sat, so that it could be rolled back and forward. But that's not to say that it would be an easy job. The stone would have been at least six feet in

diameter, if not more, and would have been exceptionally heavy. Indeed, it was designed to be so, in order to prevent looters and vandals from getting inside. In fact, Saint Mark's Gospel records the women as having asked each other the question, "Who will roll away the stone for us" while they were walking to the tomb. So, rolling away the stone (without anybody hearing or seeing you do it) was the second hurdle. And it would have required a few strong people to do it.

This then begs the next question: "Who would have done it?" There are only three groups of people who could have stolen Jesus' body: the disciples, the Jewish leaders, and the Romans. We can discount the Romans because what possible motive would they have? As far as they were concerned, Jesus was just another crucified criminal. We can also discount the Jewish leaders. As I just explained a moment ago, it would have suited their purposes much more if the dead body of Jesus had still been in the tomb, because of course they could then point out that there was nothing special or miraculous about him. It would make sense, to some degree, if the disciples themselves had stolen the body of Jesus.

But this then begs the next question: "Why?" It might seem obvious that the disciples would want to be vindicated by the empty tomb. But stealing Jesus' body would have been a very hollow victory, and they wouldn't have been celebrating for very long. We know from the history of the very early Church, that they were persecuted; they were arrested; they were put on trial; they were executed. I'm not sure how many people would go through all of that, as part of nothing more than a childish prank against the Jewish authorities.

So, for Peter, having run to the tomb and discovered it empty, having thought through the options, it probably made most sense that the women's claim that angels had told them that Christ had risen was true. But what did that mean? What did actually happen to Jesus?

Well, it might be easier to say what didn't happen. The body of Jesus did not re-animate, which is to say: his dead body did not

simply come back to life. (Or if you're cynical, you might think perhaps he had just been in a coma for 48 hours, and then woke up). It can't be that, although the post-resurrection body of Jesus did have the wounds in his hands and his feet where the nails had been hammered into the cross, he was not suffering from the understandable physical and emotional stress that he had endured from Thursday evening until Friday afternoon. This included a prolonged period without sleep while he was put on trial (at least three times) by the Jewish leaders, then King Herod of Galilee, and finally Pontius Pilate. He was slapped; he was whipped so hard that he had no energy to carry the cross to the place of execution; he was hoisted up and nailed to the cross; he would have struggled to take a breath, and he would have been in excruciating pain. There is no way that, 48 hours later, he would have been up and about, behaving normally. Certainly, he wouldn't have been standing around in the garden, which is where (in other gospel accounts) Mary Magdalene finds him, and wrongly assumes he must be the gardener.

Now, you might say: But sure, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Maybe the same thing happened here? Maybe Jesus' body was miraculously healed. Well, OK. Certainly, over the weeks after the resurrection, Jesus walks, talks, and even eats with his disciples. So it was definitely him, and his body functioned like everybody else's. But re-animation doesn't explain what happens next. First of all, on the road to Emmaus, Jesus appears to two of his disciples, who walk and talk with him for several miles, before recognising him. So there was something different about his appearance. And the same could be said for his encounter with Mary in the garden. Second, he appeared from out of nowhere amongst the other disciples, first when doubting Thomas is absent, and again when he is present. On both occasions, it is noted that the doors were locked. The implication is either that Jesus can pass through solid doors, or that he can appear wherever he wants. Either way, his body was able to do things that a normal person's can't. And then, later, Jesus is seen ascending

into heaven, which can mean only one of two things: Either his old earthly body flew up into space, or else his resurrected body transitioned from this physical world into the spiritual realm. And then even later, he appeared to Saint Paul on the road to Damascus as a spiritual being, surrounded by light.

So although the resurrected body of Jesus was largely recognisable and to some extent the same as his earthly body, there was also something markedly different about it—something supernatural.

There are two aspects of this which are important.

The first is that this new body links the physical world to the spiritual world. So, in the same way that Christ's death served to bridge the gap between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of humanity, his resurrection bridged the gap between this world and the world to come. The second is that he showed us what we too will become. We will be identifiably ourselves in the next world, and yet the old body will become new, and the limitations and suffering which we experience now, will be gone. These two things are the foundations of our salvation, our sanctification, and our Christian hope. Because with every beat of our heart, we are one second closer to escaping the pain of this world, and entering the eternal joys of the next. We are one second closer to being made perfect through Jesus Christ.

But what I want you to note is, that although Jesus calls on us to follow in his footsteps on the path to resurrection, he never told his disciples to voluntarily give up this world, in order to enjoy the afterlife right now. For us, that time of transition—through death—will inevitably come, whether through accident or illness or old age. In the meantime, we are called not to dwell on the future, but to live in the present, and to point all who are in despair towards the hope that we have been given through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead... and to make this world—as much as we are able—a foretaste of the beauty and peace and love of the perfect world to come. So that, just as Christ lived our earthly life two thousand years ago, we live out his Risen life today.

Sponsored Walk for Christian Aid

Christian Aid Week is almost here again, from Sunday 15th until Saturday 21st May. I think we are well aware of the good work Christian Aid does throughout the world when and where the need arises. At the moment a lot of this work is, of course, directed towards Ukraine. They are helping there as best they can by sending out funds collected for Ukraine to their helpers on the ground, both in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries.



To raise money this year, we in St Peter's are planning to do a sponsored walk again instead of a door-to-door collection. We will follow the same format as last year. Starting on Monday 16th we plan to walk 4 miles approximately each morning until Friday 20th, thus covering 20 miles during those 5 days. We are of course inviting you to sponsor us using the Christian Aid envelope you will find on the church seats on Sunday 15th. If you are unable to come to church but you wish to contribute, then you can send your donation to the Parish Office (please make cheques payable to Christian Aid) or by BACS transfer (with "Christian Aid" in the reference field).

We hope you will be as generous as last year when we managed to raise a total of £1,425, a large proportion of which came from the walk. Thank you in advance!

Anyone wishing to join us on the walk will be very welcome. More information from me, Jill Bradley:

tel 9084 2998

email jill.bradley1@btinternet.com

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT AND PRAYER

by Rosemary Johnston

‘When I needed a neighbour ...’

We live in a dysfunctional world, with many thousands of people caught up in war, civil strife and paramilitary activities. While the news naturally pays much attention to all these horrors, we are all seeing how men and women of goodwill have come forward to help those affected by these desperate situations. The most prominent concern is for the people of Ukraine who have fled their homes in their millions, the majority into Poland, and we have seen the amazing organisational ability of the people there, helping to sort out the mammoth problems unfolding daily relating to accommodation, food, medicines, clothes, etc. And who can forget the Germans at the railway station in Berlin, holding up their placards showing how many people they could accommodate? We in St Peter’s responded gladly to the call for supplies and cash donations, and The Priory Singers raised the impressive sum of £800 at their wonderful concert in the church on 8th April.

We have also seen the dreadful floods in South Africa, where people have come forward to help with search and rescue and to support those traumatised by what has happened to them and their loved ones.

In many local communities there are willing volunteers who help in all sorts of ways such as shopping for people who are housebound; need a lift to attend an appointment or even the garden tidied. Then there are those who work with young people to give them sense of purpose in their lives. Where there is a need there is often, thankfully, someone who will come forward to help.

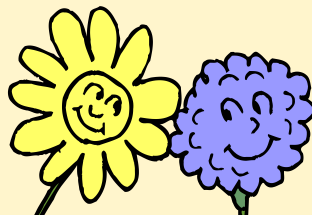
Here in St Peter’s, we rally round to help each other in times of need or to make a friendly phone call to someone on their own who cannot get out. In my own case I am very grateful to those in St Peter’s and from another church who lifted and laid me when I wasn’t able to drive—yes, when I needed a neighbour you were there!

May we give thanks for, and ask God’s blessing on, all the wonderful people at home and abroad who give of their time and effort to help those in need.

SERVICES IN MAY	OFFICIANT	LECTOR	PREACHER	INTERCESSOR
SUNDAY 1ST MAY—THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER—EASTERIDE (WHITE)				
10am Family Service	Rector	Rector	Rector	Rector
11am Holy Communion	Rector	David Cromie	Rector	David Cromie
WEDNESDAY 4TH MAY—EASTERIDE (WHITE)				
10.30am Holy Communion	Rector	Rector	Rector	Colin Bell
SUNDAY 8TH MAY—THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER—EASTERIDE (WHITE)				
10am Morning Prayer	David Cromie	David Cromie	David Cromie	David Cromie
11am Morning Prayer	Graham Chipperfield	David Cromie	Graham Chipperfield	David Cromie
WEDNESDAY 11TH MAY—EASTERIDE (WHITE)				
10.30am Holy Communion	Rector	Rector	Rector	Rosemary Johnston
SUNDAY 15TH MAY—THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER—EASTERIDE (WHITE)				
10am Scripture Service	Rector	Rector	Rector	Rector
11am Holy Communion	Rector	Anne Roberts	Rector	Rector
WEDNESDAY 18TH MAY—EASTERIDE (WHITE)				
10.30am Holy Communion	Rector	Rector	Rector	Quintin Mulligan
SUNDAY 22ND MAY—ROGATION SUNDAY—EASTERIDE (WHITE)				
10am Morning Prayer	Rector	Quintin Mulligan	Rector	Dora Hanna
11am Rogationtide Service	Rector	Sandra Davison	Rector	Forde Patterson
THURSDAY 26TH MAY—THE ASCENSION DAY—EASTERIDE (WHITE)				
10.30am Holy Communion	Rector	Rector	Rector	Jill Bradley
SUNDAY 29TH MAY—SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION DAY—EASTERIDE (WHITE)				
10am Holy Communion (Form 1)	Rector	Rector	Rector	Rector
11am Ascensiontide Service	Rector	Hilary Shields	Rector	Ashlee McCune

MAY FLOWER LIST

- 8TH THE HALL FAMILY
IN MEMORY OF THEIR PARENTS
- 22ND THE DAVISON FAMILY
IN MEMORY OF ARTHUR
- 29TH JOYCE HUNTER
IN MEMORY OF HER HUSBAND



Thank you to all who give of their time and effort in beautifying the church with flowers. If practicable, flowers should be in keeping with the liturgical colour of the season, particularly during Advent and Lent.

Is life getting you down? Would you like someone to talk to?

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NOTICE

Our Parish Halls are to be used as a Polling Station on Thursday 5th May.

Unless you are going there to vote, you are asked to stay away from the halls that day.

Thank you.



Church grounds

by Noel Beattie

In last month's Parish Notes I appealed for some assistance in keeping the church grounds neat and tidy. Five people have responded in a positive manner but we still need a further three people in order to spread the load around. Maybe you intended to continue on from last year but didn't get around to letting me know?

It isn't heavy gardening that is required, just a bit of weeding, maybe some brushing and lifting litter, so please give some thought to putting your name forward—about 30 minutes every fortnight or so from April to October should suffice. All you need is a trowel, a bucket and a kneeler. There is a brown bin available in the grounds for weeds etc. You can help in your own time, just when it suits, and you can bring as many helpers as you like!!

Many thanks for your kind attention to this matter—it would be really a shame to have to resort to professional help.

Many thanks to those who have already signed up.

*Gardening
relieves
stress
and
anxiety ...
just saying!*



Fancy a walk?



The St Peter's walking group meets on Monday mornings at 10.30am in the church car park and returns to the church hall for a cup of coffee at around 11.45pm. If you would like to join the

walkers please contact the Parish Office (tel 90 776 706) for further details. As well as many mental and physical health benefits, walking can help reduce loneliness and isolation.

WHAT SUITS YOU BEST?

Please don't forget to let us know how you would like to receive your Parish Notes in future:

- ◆ *by email, or*
- ◆ *by collecting a copy from church, or*
- ◆ *by having a copy delivered to your home.*

Please communicate your preference to Anne in the Parish Office:

email: annecromie@stpeterbelfast.org
or tel: 90 776 706

Thank you!

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.



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If your business would like to advertise in our Parish Notes please contact the Parish Administrator, Anne Cromie, contact details on back cover.

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 June 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 23rd May. Thank you.*

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Honorary Assistant Priest: Rev'd Dr Ken Houston 90 771 830 skhouston43@gmail.com
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Ministry Assistant (TLG): Mrs Laura Lacey 90 777 053 lauralacey@stpeterbelfast.org

Rector's Churchwarden: Miss Daphne McClements 07730 127350 daphnemcclements@stpeterbelfast.org
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Co-ordinator for Groundskeeping: Mr Noel Beattie 90 778 428 noelbeattie@stpeterbelfast.org

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