

THE PARISH OF ST PETER AND ST JAMES  
BELFAST

# PARISH NOTES

FEBRUARY 2024

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



*Robert Long*  
*Lay Ministry Apprentice*

**GOD . LOVING . PEOPLE**

## Parish Notes On-line

The Parish Notes can be read  
in full colour on our website.

Visit [www.stpeters.connor.anglican.org](http://www.stpeters.connor.anglican.org)  
and click "Parish Notes".

Please note  
these dates for  
the following  
meetings:

### SENIOR OFFICERS

Friday  
2nd February  
11am  
in the  
Clergy Vestry

### SELECT VESTRY

Monday  
19th February  
7.30pm  
in the  
Minor Hall.



**Cavehill**  
COFFEE

Cavehill Coffee, Mount Lennox,  
683 Antrim Road, BT15 4EG



## Fortwilliam Greengrocers

Fruit & Vegetables  
Fruit baskets & Bouquets  
Fresh Flowers & Plants

575 Antrim Road  
Belfast BT15 3BU  
Tel 028 9077 1013

## Prayer

If you would like your name  
added to our prayer list please  
get in touch with  
Rosemary Johnston or  
Daphne McClements.  
Contact details on back cover.

*Please send material for the March  
issue of Parish Notes to:*

Anne Cromie,  
Parish Administrator,  
St Peter's Church,  
Fortwilliam Drive,  
Belfast BT15 4EB

*or email:*

[annecromie@stpeterbelfast.org](mailto:annecromie@stpeterbelfast.org)  
*by Monday 19th February.*

*Thank you.*

## LOUISE FRANCES HAIR

Discover the secret to fabulous hair! ✨

Our small bespoke salon offers unparalleled cutting and coloring skills.

Treat yourself to a transformation that will leave you smiling like never before.

Scan to Book your appointment today!



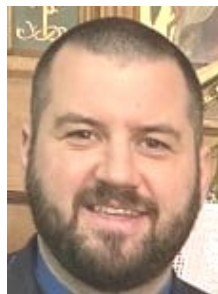
Room 2 Mount Lennox BT15 4EG 07533171701

## Family News

Congratulations to our choristers, Rory and Rebecca Douglas Smith who tied the knot on 23rd December. We wish them every happiness and blessing for their future together.



# RECTOR'S NOTES



## SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

In no time at all since Christmas, the month of February brings us Lent! The first two Sundays of the month are given the traditional names Sexagesima and Quinquagesima, which mean “sixtieth” and “fiftieth” respectively, and refer to the number of days (excluding Sundays) until Easter. Lent itself begins on Ash Wednesday, which this year falls on 14<sup>th</sup> February, which is also St Valentine’s Day!

On 4<sup>th</sup> February, which is **Sexagesima Sunday**, there will be a Family Service at 10am, and Choral Eucharist at 11am, and a special service at 6pm called “Advent to Candlemas”, marking the end of the three seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.

On 11<sup>th</sup> February, which is **Quinquagesima Sunday**, there will be the traditional form of Holy Communion at 10am, followed by Choral Matins at 11am. Our guest preacher at the 11am service will be the Rev’d Will Sutton.

On 18<sup>th</sup> February, which is the **First Sunday in Lent**, there will be Morning Prayer at 10am, followed by Choral Eucharist at 11am.

On 25<sup>th</sup> February, which is the **Second Sunday in Lent**, there will be Holy Communion at 10am, followed by Choral Matins at 11am.

As always, there will be a celebration of Holy Communion at 10.30am every Wednesday. On 14<sup>th</sup> February, which is **Ash Wednesday**, the service will include prayers of penitence and preparation for the Season of Lent.

## **REVIEW MEETING**

On Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> February, there will be a special meeting of the Select Vestry to review the list of Registered Members of the parish. If your name is already on the list (which is pinned to the noticeboard at the back of the church) and you have made a recorded Free Will Offering to parish funds in the last year, then you need take no further action. If your name is not on the list, but you would like to be registered, then you must complete and return a registration form, and ensure that you have made a recorded donation to parish funds in the last twelve months. There is a “resident” form for those who live within the parish boundaries, and an “accustomed” form for those who live beyond them. If in doubt, ask me which form you need.

## **EASTER VESTRY MEETING**

The Easter Vestry will be held at 11am on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April, following a short service of worship in the church. Any member of the congregation is welcome to stay for the meeting, but only Registered Members may speak or vote.

## **THANK YOU**

Despite the colds and flus circulating in December, it was lovely to celebrate Advent and Christmas in so many ways. Thank you to all who helped organise, and who attended, the Cavehill Community Choir concert, the Christingle Service, Parish Afternoon Tea in the Lansdowne Hotel, our Nativity Service, our service of Nine Lessons & Carols, our mid-week Christmas Party, and of course our celebrations of Holy Communion on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

As ever, we are all grateful for the beautiful music ministry of our Choir, led by Robert Thompson, and – perhaps not stated often enough – for our two Churchwardens, Daphne McClements and Margaret McKenna Black, who made sure that the church was open and ready for all of our events.

## CONFIRMATION

The service of Confirmation is considered to be the second part of the service of Baptism, particularly for those who were baptised as children. In a child's baptism, it is their parents and godparents who make promises to raise the child in the Christian community. At Confirmation, that same child takes ownership of their Christian faith, and has hands laid upon them by the Bishop, invoking the Holy Spirit. This is often considered to be the moment when permission is given to receive Holy Communion, but that invitation is open to all baptised persons, whether confirmed or not. Confirmation is really about making the public declaration that you accept the central beliefs of Christianity and intend to lead a Christian life.

It is customary for younger teenagers to be confirmed, but there is no upper age limit. I imagine that most people who were brought up within the Church of Ireland have already been confirmed. For "blow-ins" from other denominations, it's possible that they were not. That's precisely the reason why I was not confirmed until my late twenties. Whether you would like your teenage child confirmed, or you yourself would like to be confirmed, please let me know now. The service of Confirmation will be at 11am on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June this year. There will not likely be another such service for a few years, so please do avail of this opportunity.

Adult candidates for Confirmation will be required to attend a class once a month on a Thursday evening at 7.30pm: 1<sup>st</sup> February, 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, and 6<sup>th</sup> June. Attendance at all four sessions is obligatory.

Children will be required to attend a class once a month on a Sunday afternoon at 3pm: 4<sup>th</sup> February, 17<sup>th</sup> March, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 26<sup>th</sup> May. Attendance at all four sessions is obligatory.

Please contact me at **brianlacey@stpeterbelfast.org** or 90777053 as soon as possible to book a place.

## CHARITIES

Thanks to your generosity in 2023, our parish has sent cheques for £322.95 to each of the following five charities: TearFund, Prison Fellowship NI, Friends of the Cancer Centre, Air Ambulance NI, and SANDS (Stillborn and Neonatal Death). This is in addition to our fundraising for Christian Aid, Child Aid and the Royal British Legion. Thank you so much for helping these charities.

## HEATING AND SEATING

Given that I wear two layers of clergy vestments over my clothes in church, and sit on a well-cushioned seat, it's not always easy for me to appreciate the level of discomfort increasingly felt by many in our congregation. However, at this time of year when St Peter's is particularly cold, it is a reminder that something needs to be done. It is simply no longer tolerable to expect a congregation to wrap up warm in order to worship God. Accordingly, the Select Vestry is now actively examining new comfortable seating and a heating system which will warm the air rather than merely the tops of our heads. I would hope that over the course of the next year, we will make some progress in resolving this.

## DISCIPLESHIP AND BIBLE STUDY

Our monthly **Discipleship Group** will resume at 7.30pm on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February in the Minor Hall. This month we will be learning about the Sacraments.

Our **Bible Fellowship** will meet at 7.30pm on Thursdays 8<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> February.

Our mid-week **Bible Study** will be held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February in the Minor Hall, from 11.30am for one hour. Accordingly, there will be no sermon at the prior celebration of Holy Communion. We will be continuing our study of the Book of Micah.

## WHEN GOD OPENS A DOOR, WALK IN!

Every single day, God opens a door of opportunity for each of us. It might be something simple: such as an opportunity to do something kind for someone else. Or it might be something profound: such as a possible new career path, or a new relationship. Sometimes we're not aware that a door of opportunity is opening for us, but sometimes we are. Sometimes we are fully aware that we are being offered the chance to do something new, something different. I wonder how aware you are of such opportunities? And I wonder what your response is to them? Do you embrace them gladly, or do you slink away from them, afraid of what might be.

Listen to the response of Mary, the mother of our Lord, when she is told that she will become pregnant: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for He has looked with favour on His humble servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed, the Almighty has done great things for me ..."

Here we have—in a very strict society—a young, unmarried woman, who has become pregnant. And the father is not the man to whom she is engaged to be married. If you were in her shoes, your initial feelings might not be jubilation. Indeed, when her fiancé Joseph discovers what has happened, we are told that he had strong reservations, and it required an angel in a dream to tell him that it was all going to be alright. And Joseph's fears were not unfounded, as in the culture at that time, Mary could have been killed: stoned to death for this violation of the law.

Mary, however, does not seem to have expressed such feelings of fear. Or, at least, they aren't recorded in Scripture. Her main concern is with the mechanics of how the pregnancy would happen, rather than with the repercussions of it. And once she is told what will happen, she accepts it, and—more importantly—she revels in it, praising God in the words of the Magnificat.



Those words are similar to, but by no means an exact match for, the words of another woman in the Bible. Listen to this: “Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman. Let your servant find favour in your sight.” That was said by Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel. And they are mirrored by what Mary says a thousand years later, “He has looked with favour on his lowly servant.”

There are other similarities between the words of these two women, although their circumstances were quite different. Whereas Mary is simply told that she will be the mother of Christ, Hannah was begging God for a child. Indeed, she resorts to making a deal with him. If God provides her with a Son, then she will dedicate that Son to God for the rest of his life. And that’s what happened. She became pregnant (by her husband, I should make clear), and give birth to Samuel. And, in accordance with her promise, when he was old enough, she sent him to live and work at the Tabernacle with Eli, who trained him to become a priest. And he ended up being a very important priest, and a prophet. To him, God gave the responsibility of choosing the first King of Israel, who was Saul, and again choosing Saul’s replacement, who was King David.

Now, there’s an interesting question to be asked: What would have happened if Hannah had not begged God for a child? What would have happened if Samuel had never existed? Would God simply have chosen someone else to anoint the Kings of Israel? Or was it God’s plan all along that Hannah would have a son, and it was merely her years of uncertainty and waiting which led her to feel the need to beg God for a child?

That question is interesting insofar as it raises the issue of how God acts within his creation. Does everything happen according to a grand plan? Is human free will just an illusion? Or does he have an end goal in sight, but he constantly changes how and what he needs to do to achieve that goal, in response to what we humans are doing of our own genuine free will?

Now, let's think about our own lives in that context. Do you think that everything that has happened in your life—good or bad—has happened because God needed it to happen? Or, have the events of your life come about as the result of your decisions, and the decisions made by other people concerning you, sprinkled with a bit of good luck here or bad luck there?

I would be content with an answer which lay somewhere between those two positions. I think God allows his creation to unfold, generally speaking, without his direct intervention, and yet—sometimes, he intervenes in order to keep our lives on track, or to keep the plan for the entire world on track. That sort of middle ground enables God to be in control, but not at the expense of our free will.

Indeed, if you want to delve deeper into this line of questioning, you might ponder what God would have done if Mary, on hearing the news that she was to be the mother of Christ, had said “no thanks”.

If Mary had genuine free will, then “no thanks” was certainly a possibility. Or did God choose Mary because he knew that she would say “yes”? Thus preserving Mary's free will, whilst at the same time ensuring God's plan of action.

Maybe I'm overthinking it. The upshot of it all, is that Mary felt safe enough to say “yes” to God, despite the terrible repercussions that could have befallen her if the people around her (not least Joseph) had not similarly been willing to do what God wanted, rather than what society might have expected of them.

The challenge for us, then, is to ponder whether we would do the same. When God opens doors of opportunity for us; when he invites us to be part of his plan for the world; when he asks us to do his work—do we look for the negatives, do we fear what might happen, do we dwell in our uncertainties, or do we say “yes, Lord. Thank you for choosing me.”

## PAUSE FOR THOUGHT AND PRAYER

by Rosemary Johnston

### *Mother Earth—What have we done, and are still doing to you?*

In our incessant and relentless search for valuable resources, we have ruthlessly exploited our planet—because we need what it contains. We have drilled; we have quarried; we want to explore the Arctic Circle to get at whatever minerals we need/want. We leave behind great scars on the Earth's surface, some visible from space. We have destroyed caves, of great spiritual importance to the Aborigine people who have been there for 46,000 years and they knew how to care for the land—all gone at the press of a button by the mining company Rio Tinto PLC. Apparently the land there is full of iron ore and, of course, we really need that. In South America it is copper being mined—deep down—with more destruction involved—but we really need this too. So we are all contributing to the destruction of our planet. For example, batteries for electric cars need lithium, so we may have cleaner air but at what cost to the planet? If we look round our homes and at our smart phones etc—which, of course we cannot do without, then where does it end? The earth's resources are finite but we keep on and on exploiting them because our way of life demands that we need to. And then there is the Amazon Rain Forest, the lungs of the planet, being destroyed for farming. By the way, do you know where a lot of soya comes from? Forest trees are cut down to make way for a lot of trees which are planted to grow soya beans—because we need it, and apart from its use in cookery it goes to feed animals—very large quantities of it. So, there is a huge and ongoing need/demand for these precious resources. As we in the richer west suffer storms/floods the people living on small islands are being swamped by sea level rise; parts of Africa and elsewhere have become so hot they are becoming uninhabitable and droughts can last for years. Tragically, too many people in the west either deny the danger of climate change or choose to ignore it. Meanwhile thousands of penguin chicks on Antarctic islands are no more—because it rained. I don't have an answer to our problems. I wish I had.

*Heavenly Father, our planet is in trouble  
and we are not capable of saving it on our own.  
We look to you to guide us so that we take better care of it  
so that it is fit for future generations to survive on  
and that they do a better job than we have done. Amen.*

# War on the Dnieper: History rhyming again

*by David Cromie*

I recently started reading ‘The Wars of Louis XIV’, by John Lynn. The subject and book are interesting in themselves, fascinating even, but for me, the most interesting part lies in Louis’ motivations and excuses for wars. As I read, I kept thinking - where have I heard that before? The answer lies in the present war in Ukraine. Reading Lynn’s book, one could easily think a certain V Putin had read it too and decided to try Louis’ penchant for war himself. Everything we see today: brutal attacks and cynical policies; lies; secrets; advancing military technology; the abuse of religion; ignoring the opinion of others; denying historical truths, the pursuit of personal and national glory – it’s all there. For that matter, anyone reading Thucydides’ ‘History of the Peloponnesian War’, 431–403BC will be on equally familiar ground. As Mark Twain, one of history’s more astute commentators, quipped, “history doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.”

This is the third time I have ventured a few thoughts on paper about the war in Ukraine, and who is to say I shan’t make a fourth in February 2025. Every Sunday, we pray for peace, understanding, compassion, even common sense, but it never seems to make much difference, the war grinds on, thousands perish and elsewhere new conflicts spring up to threaten the global order we had once thought so permanent.

In truth, the only way I can make sense of it all is to remember that in this world there are two laws, God’s laws and the laws of mankind. God’s laws are immutable, drastically simple and quite beyond our mortal capacities to obey. On the contrary, the laws of men can be obeyed by most law-abiding citizens, but are often set either in the exhaustion of post war lethargy or in the light of political expediency - grand-sounding, but hollow and easily bent or ignored by those who want to re-shape society and the world to suit themselves. There is another difference: the laws of men apply only during our lifetimes, whilst those of God apply both to life as we experience it now and to life in the world to come.

Jesus kept coming up against this very human struggle between divine and man-made laws and definitions. We remember the attempt to trap him with the issue of paying taxes to the Romans – his response, looking

at a coin, was to tell the Pharisees to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's. Remember too, the woman caught in adultery whom the temple bigwigs wanted to kill in obedience to their interpretation of the law, Jesus scared them off by advising that he who was without sin should throw the first stone, and then told the woman that she was forgiven, under God's law, and to sin no more. Just as tellingly, the Roman Centurion who believed in God had his daughter restored by Jesus, but he wasn't told to deny the emperor, or stop being a soldier. And, as we know, Jesus submitted to death through the decision of a kangaroo court playing fast and loose with the laws of the Jews and Rome – his answer was the ultimate statement distinguishing between the laws of God and men: "forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."

Getting back to Ukraine and for that matter, Gaza, Myanmar, Sudan and other troubled places. The wars of men are just that, wars of men, even though they often have a so-called 'religious' element to them. As long as there are men, subject to the powers and inclinations of this world, there will be wars and plenty of them - history will continue to rhyme. But for us, as Christians, there is another dimension, one proof against war, persecution and death; it is the eternal Kingdom of Heaven, to which we can aspire, but which we cannot enter, except through the mercy and forgiveness of God. And those may only be achieved through striving to obey God's laws: to love God with all we have and are and to love our fellow man as ourselves.

We are weary with the Ukraine war, we are appalled by the Middle East situation and we know and, seemingly, care rather little for the Sudanese situation or that in Myanmar. In truth, these conflicts seem barely to impact us directly, aside from a dose of inflation. Yet for the people living with them, the experience of death and destruction is very real indeed and our growing weariness with their hardships must be hard for them to take.

So, as we enter year three of the Ukraine War, we should redouble our efforts to remember and understand what is going on in our world and what people are suffering. We must pray for just and lasting peace (whatever that might look like) and do what we can to alleviate suffering. War may be endemic in this world, but so too is the love of God; and if we cannot obey the law of God and continually (and without weariness) show compassion in His name to those in extreme danger and distress, how on earth can we expect it for ourselves?

## World Day of Prayer

This year we are hosting the World Day of Prayer. Our service will be held in the Main Hall on Friday 1st March at 2pm. The theme for the year is '*I Beg You ... Bear With One Another in Love*' and has been prepared by women from Palestine.

The service is open to all and will as usual be followed by a cup of tea and a goodie or two. (As expected, I am hoping for some volunteers to set out and serve the tea. If you would like to help please let me know).

It would be lovely if you could join us. Looking forward to seeing you.

*Anne Stewart*



## Cavehill Community Choir Concert

This 80-strong choir, as the name implies, is cross community and under the expert leadership of Donal McCrisken, gave us a most enjoyable evening. We were pleased to open our doors to host the concert which was in aid of our chosen charities for this year. Whilst most present were from the local community, two people travelled from Boston USA!! Two others mentioned that even though they had passed by the church for years on the way to the bus stop, it was their first time inside and they were very impressed.

Thanks to all (no names mentioned in case we have forgotten someone), who assisted, before, during and after the concert including the reception. Not all were ladies, we hasten to state, as at least five very well domesticated men assisted. I must give special mention one person who donned rubber gloves, and took over the sink and dishwasher. We are prepared to give you a glowing reference should you wish to work in the Lansdowne next door! Just ask!

The event raised, after expenses, the sum of £1,346.

Thank you all once again for all your ready assistance. The event couldn't have been run without your help.

*Noel Beattie*

SERVICES IN FEBRUARY	OFFICIANT	LECTOR	PREACHER	INTERCESSOR
<b>SUNDAY 4TH FEBRUARY—SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY (GREEN)</b>				
10am Family Service	Rector	Rector	Rector	Henry George
11am Choral Eucharist	Rector	Ashlee McCune	Rector	Dora Hanna
6pm Advent to Candlemas	David Cromie	TBC	-	David Cromie
<b>WEDNESDAY 7TH FEBRUARY (GREEN)</b>				
10.30am Holy Communion	Rector	-	Rector	Daphne McClements
<b>SUNDAY 11TH FEBRUARY—QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY (GREEN)</b>				
10am Holy Communion (1662)	Rector	David Cromie	-	David Cromie*
11am Choral Matins	Rector	Nigel Macaulay	Rev'd Wes Suttton	David Cromie
<b>WEDNESDAY 14TH FEBRUARY—ASH WEDNESDAY (PURPLE)</b>				
10.30am Penitential Service	Rector	Robert Long	Rector	Rosemary Johnston
<b>SUNDAY 18TH FEBRUARY—THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT (PURPLE)</b>				
10am Morning Prayer	Robert Long	Daphne McClements	-	Robert Long*
11am Choral Eucharist	Rector	Robert Long	Rector	Robert Long
<b>WEDNESDAY 21ST FEBRUARY—LENT (PURPLE)</b>				
10.30am Holy Communion	Rector	-	Rector	Quintin Mulligan
<b>SUNDAY 25TH FEBRUARY—THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT (PURPLE)</b>				
10am Holy Communion	Rector	Dora Hanna	-	Dora Hanna*
11am Choral Matins	Dora Hanna	Anne Stewart	Rector	Dora Hanna
<b>WEDNESDAY 28TH FEBRUARY—LENT (PURPLE)</b>				
10.30am Holy Communion	Rector	-	-	Timothy Wilson

# ROBERT LONG

*In Christ alone my hope is found.*

Hello everyone, my name is Robert and I am your new part-time Lay Ministry Apprentice. Thank you to all of you for welcoming me to St Peter's. Thank you also to your rector, the Rev'd Brian Lacey, for this opportunity to serve the Church in a lay capacity.

A little about me: I was born in Belfast Royal Victoria Hospital and raised in Rathcoole, Newtownabbey, along with my younger brother David, by Mum, Margaret and Dad, Bob. I am a member of the Parish of Rathcoole where I was baptised by the then rector, the Rev'd Brian Moller in 1983; and involved throughout my childhood and early youth as a regular Sunday worshipper and Sunday School attendee, the Boys' Brigade and badminton club. I give thanks to God for my parent's perseverance and commitment to the Faith, for bringing David and me up in the Church, for their example of Christian living and witness, and for their participation in the Church, and especially their prayers. I have happy memories of Church life from the Church family summer bus trip to Portrush, the Christmas sale, summer fête, and the annual Boys' Brigade trip, to name but a few.

After leaving school in 2000, I was employed in retail while studying construction. I have been employed as a Land Surveyor, an Architectural Technician, a CAD operative, an Architects' Assistant for the Civil Service, a Maintenance Officer for the Housing Executive, and a short time acting-up as a Maintenance Manager overseeing a district team. I also spent a short while with a Housing Association employed as an Asset Officer—inspecting dwellings and arranging repair work and adaptations. I have spent some time unemployed too, which has been really humbling. I have also worked with my hands undertaking woodworking, building work and outdoor jobs.

I admit to having been foolish with life. I had been too busy living life, working and earning, having a career, and enjoying all the pleasures of the world and, to my shame, leaving God, His Son Jesus, and His Church out of it. For a long while I was oblivious to my peril. However, over time and for several years, I could sense something was not right in my life and it came to a low point. God had got my attention. I had come to a place of repentance in my whole-heart to say sorry to God, seek His forgiveness and mercy, repent of my sins—change my ways, and believe and trust in Jesus. I examined myself through God's most perfect law and found myself guilty, and deserving of His wrath, so aware I was of my sinfulness. The birth of my son Caleb and the sudden death of his maternal grandmother Jacqueline struck deep in my soul and prompted



me in spirit to further seek more of God and more for God.

In the early part of 2019, with the help my baby son Caleb, I returned home to St Comgall's church in Rathcoole, seeking spiritual sanctuary, a deeper relationship with Jesus, and a place to express my gratitude—to say thank you to God for his forgiveness and mercy, all because of what Jesus did on the cross for me. I sought to worship Him and to seek his leading and direction from now on in my life.

I cannot help but believe that it was the Holy Spirit that moved me to become more involved in the parish. I had a sense—a deep feeling of overwhelming gratitude to God and a burning desire to do whatever I could to help His church, and I willed to do it, I delight to do it, and I rejoice doing whatever I am called to do for the Lord Jesus and His Church. I was reading God's word daily and listening intently to the then rector, the Rev'd Arlene Moore, preach and teach, and pray Sunday by Sunday, and sensed this pull—an unshakable call and desire to offer to read the Bible. Just as my mother and father, and others had done. I enquired with the rector about Parish Readership and found myself becoming a Parish Reader. I was commissioned on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019 in the Church of the Holy Spirit, Mossley. A week prior in the same parish church, in front my family and my church family, I confirmed my faith and trust in Jesus, in a Confirmation Service that was full of the joy of Holy Spirit.

Becoming more involved in the parish I said “yes” to the role of Rector's Church Warden, joined the Select Vestry, became a charity trustee, became part of an organising committee, and became the Honorary Secretary. I help the magazine team to create the magazine and distribute it to the parishioners. As a Parish Reader, I assist in the leading of worship services, lead the prayers of intercession, read the Bible, and prepare the audio and lyrics for hymns and worship songs. It has been a joy and a privilege to have visited some of our older parishioners who are unable to come to church services. As part of a team, we organised a family fun day, and a Christmas event. The Glebe Warden and I worked together on the parish rectory to refurbish it for occupation, which included replacing the kitchen work top, which I had never done before, but with God's help we did it. Another enjoyable project was building the memorial bench to Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, including constructing a concrete platform for it. Another memorable project was making a memorial surround for a pear tree planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative. This consisted of stones painted with the names of past parishioners who had died, and set in a cement surround. Please do call in to have look, avail of the memorial bench and take time to reflect and enjoy the view of the Cave Hill.

It is my hope that my involvement in my home parish will serve St Peter's well in my role as your Lay Ministry Apprentice. I understand the role will be primarily to provide pastoral support to you the parishioners throughout the week either at home or in hospital, and to participate in traditional Anglican services of worship, and help with the development and implementation of Christian outreach ministries in response to the needs of the community.

I am excited to meet you all, to see and hear what Jesus is doing in your lives and in the parish, and to explore where God is leading us all and what may develop over time. I have particularly enjoyed the Discipleship Group that meets once a month, it has been thoroughly enlightening and enjoyable as we journey together through the Holy Bible and discuss aspects of the Christian Faith.

I am humbled to be able to read the Word of God during Sunday worship and to assist at Holy Communion and share in that special fellowship with all my brothers and sisters in remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the flip side, I would be lying if I said I was not a bit daunted, maybe even a little scared: wary of my level of experience in a formal lay capacity, and the challenges that this may present, along with the weight of expectation. Although out of my comfort zone, whatever we face, we face it together with the help of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Knowing it is to His glory.

Like you, I am just an ordinary person responding to God, listening and discerning His call. I am dad to 5 year-old son, Caleb, and along with his mum, Louise, we are raising him in the Christian faith. I love God's Word, the Holy Bible, its study, complimentary devotionals, and conversing with people about Jesus. I don't have a hobby as such, but I do like sports, mainly football. I used to run a bit in the past completing the Belfast and Dublin Marathons. I play indoor bowling sometimes. I like animals, a bit of DIY, and I like to draw. I like a good walk, especially in the hills for a good vantage point. I also enjoy a bit of gardening and in the last few years discovered I like to sing, but it might just be noise!

I look forward with joy to meeting many of you during pastoral visitation as your Lay Ministry Apprentice and journeying forth in faith together—serving, worshipping, and glorifying God.

I take this opportunity to thank my family for all their loving support, and the Rev'd Brian Lacey and the Rev'd Arlene Moore, for their spiritual guidance and direction along this path.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the love of God; and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

# North Belfast Historical Society

15th February at 7.30pm in the minor hall

Twins, Karl and Nathan Hughes, who set up the community group “Restore Glandore ATC” which focuses on the protection and restoration of old buildings in north Belfast and publicising their historical significance, will be our speakers.



Everyone welcome.

*Daphne McClements*

## Altar Guild Rota for February

Date	Time	Set-up	Wine Cruet	Wine Chalice	Colour	Location
Sunday 4th Feb	11am	Rector	David Cromie	Dora Hanna	Green	Chancel
Wednesday 7th Feb	10.30am	Jim Wilson	Robert Long	Rosemary Johnston	Green	Resurrection
Sunday 11th Feb	10am	David Cromie	David Cromie	Rector	Green	St James'
Wednesday 14th Feb	10.30am	Kathryn Hennessy	Margaret McK Black	Robert Long	Purple	Resurrection
Sunday 18th Feb	11am	Robert Long	Dora Hanna	Robert Long	Purple	Chancel
Wednesday 21st Feb	10.30am	Margaret McK Black	Robert Long	Dora Hanna	Purple	Resurrection
Sunday 25th Feb	10am	Dora Hanna	Dora Hanna	Rector	Purple	Resurrection
Wednesday 28th Feb	10.30am	Rosemary Johnston	Margaret McK Black	Robert Long	Purple	Resurrection

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

to those with birthdays in February:

Michele Cole, Hilda Sherwood, Janice Knowles.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

*If you would like to add your name to our birthday board, you'll find it on the notice board at the back of the church, alternatively, you can ask Anne, our Parish Administrator, to add it for you. No years mentioned!*

# Reflections on an Advent Retreat

*by Nigel Macauley*

Towards the end of November, I attended an Advent retreat organised between the Church's Ministry of Healing and the Commission on Ministry. The retreat was held at the Mount Saint Anne Retreat and Conference Centre, home of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary – they were most welcoming.

I decided to attend this retreat as I felt it important to take time to be still, to devote a period of time to silence, reflection, and contemplation of God and one's relationship with Him. While it's certainly not a requirement to attend a retreat to spend time in such reflection and prayer, it was helpful to set aside time in a place away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life – allowing me to devote my heart, mind, body, and soul to Almighty God.

The retreat was very well structured, with activities planned to explore our relationship with God, how He interacts with us and we with Him. Prior to each session there was a 10-minute moment of silent mediation and contemplation. Sitting in silence, complete silence, can at first be an unsettling experience. As human beings we are social creatures, and often try to fill a void with sound or activity. This is where we need to “switch-off” and let go of the control that we think we have and be receptive to God speaking to us.

To this end it is important to put distance between ourselves and our busy lives. God often comes to us when we are alone, and we should be open to hearing His message. In such moments there can be a wide variety of ways God speaks to us. For example, when Moses was keeping a flock, he led them out beyond the wilderness, God chose this moment on Mount Horeb to speak to Moses at the burning bush. Likewise, Christ is often described as going off alone to pray to God, such as He does in Matthew 14:23, prior to His walking on water.

In the Convent of San Marco in Florence, there is a fresco that depicts The Annunciation, in which the Archangel Gabriel visits Mary to bring her the Good News of Christ's coming into the world. This fresco acts as a “still” or snapshot of a moment of great intensity and emotion. What is very apparent from this image is the gaze that exists between the two, the stillness, devotion, and adoration from each unto the other.



On the last night of the retreat, following evening compline, one of our

number received the sad news that her uncle had died. In that moment we all prayed in silence for her and her family. This was a deep silence and I know that in that moment I felt that God was with us, and I knew that He was and is with the family in their time of sorrow.

When I set out to write this article, I reflected upon the view from which it would come. After all, over the three days and two nights there had been so much covered. Initially I had been tempted to send through two pages of black blankness, but other than the consideration of the amount of toner that would be used, I felt that slightly more explanation was required. In this increasingly secular world, we often hear of the importance of making time for ourselves, and while this is true, we must more so make time for ourselves to be still with God.

“Be still, and know that I am God!” *Psalm 46:10*

## 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](mailto: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 addresses. Thank you.

## FLOWER LIST FOR FEBRUARY



25TH CAROLYN HILDITCH IN MEMORY OF HER MOTHER

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.

**If your business would like to advertise in our Parish Notes please contact the Parish Administrator, Anne Cromie.**

**Contact details on back cover.**

***If you would like to support the worship, mission, and ministries of St Peter's, please deposit your FWO envelope or loose money in the box at the back of the church. If you prefer to donate by Apple Pay, Google Pay or by credit/debit card, please scan this QR code on your phone. Thank you.***



# Pilates

## PhysioPilates

Standing & Lying  
exercise

**Wednesdays**

6.30–7.30pm

**Fridays**

10.30–11.30am



## GentlePilates

Standing & Sitting  
exercise

**Thursdays**

10.30–11.30am



£80/term of 10 consecutive classes or £9/session  
All adults aged 18 to 108 welcome

*\* Check with your Doctor if you are worried about any health issues \**

## Improve

Fitness ~ Strength ~ Flexibility ~ Mobility

Breathing control ~ Posture ~ Balance

~ and you will have fun ~

## Reduce or Prevent

Back problems ~ Stiffness ~ Pain ~ Falls

Embarrassing leaks ~ Stress

**Sandra Hutchman** MCSP HPCP DipPhysEd (Physiotherapist)  
Tel: 028 9514 9564 Email: [sehutchman@hotmail.com](mailto:sehutchman@hotmail.com)

# PhysioPilates and GentlePilates

*Sandra Hutchman*

After retirement, I was very fidgety and needed some purpose and activity in my life. I decided to put my physiotherapy experience and learning to good purpose, in order to continue helping people. So, I combined this acquired knowledge with my studies in modified Pilates to teach PhysioPilates classes and I have never regretted it. The participants are such friendly, lovely people.

- ◆ Exercises are slow, precise and sustained.
- ◆ In standing, sitting, kneeling or lying.
- ◆ Your whole body is exercised.
- ◆ The main focus is on your abdominal, spinal and pelvic floor muscles.
- ◆ Breathing control is an integral part of Pilates.
- ◆ You will progress at your own rate.
- ◆ You are in control of what and how much you do.
- ◆ Wear loose comfortable clothes and socks.
- ◆ Bring a mat—not necessary if you are coming to my Thursday class.
- ◆ If you have a resistance band, please bring it.
- ◆ There will be a health questionnaire to complete initially.

**N.B.** If you are worried about any health problems, please consult your doctor before commencing PhysioPilates.

**Physiotherapists** know that poor posture, injury, repetitive movements and stress may cause imbalance and misalignment of the body, which can lead to pain. This problem may be ameliorated by strengthening the core muscles of the lumbo-pelvic region (lower torso) and also by re-educating and re-aligning any faulty areas, where possible.

**Joseph Pilates** (born in Germany in 1880) suffered from asthma, rickets and rheumatic fever, so he was a sickly child. He participated in many forms of rigorous exercise and meditation, so that he became extremely fit as a teenager. Subsequently, he went on to devise fitness programmes for prisoners of war, hospital in-patients and elite sports people. The Pilates method is a mind-body centring technique, which emphasises the importance of beginning movement from a central core of stability. It requires a lot of concentration to perform the slow, precise, flowing movement and controlled breathing. I love the classes and hope you will too.

# PARISH CONTACTS

Rector:	The Rev'd Brian Lacey	90 777 053	brianlacey@stpeterbelfast.org
Honorary Assistant Priest:	The Rev'd Dr Ken Houston	90 771 830	-
Associate Minister:	The Rev'd Andrew Irwin	9600 5015	andrewirwin@stpeterbelfast.org
Parish Administrator:	Anne Cromie	90 776 706	annecromie@stpeterbelfast.org
Organist and Choir Master:	Robert Thompson	07590 851564	robertthompson@stpeterbelfast.org
Ministry Apprentice:	Robert Long	07535 775360	robertlong@stpeterbelfast.org
Parish Reader:	David Cromie	90 775 669	davidcromie@stpeterbelfast.org
Parish Reader:	Dora Hanna	95 733 374	dorahanna@stpeterbelfast.org
Rector's Churchwarden:	Daphne McClements	07730 127350	daphnemclements@stpeterbelfast.org
People's Churchwarden:	Margaret McKenna-Black	07732 651569	margaretmckblack@stpeterbelfast.org
Co-ordinator for Intercessors:	Rosemary Johnston	90 840 534	-
Co-ordinator for Flowers:	Sandra Davison	07738 403667	sandradavison@stpeterbelfast.org
Rector's Glebewarden:	Victor Davis	90 771 197	victordavis@stpeterbelfast.org
People's Glebewarden:	Michael Moore	9050 81777	michaelmoore@stpeterbelfast.org
Co-ordinator for Groundskeeping:	Noel Beattie	90 778 428	noelbeattie@stpeterbelfast.org
Honorary Secretary:	Yvonne Crozier	07525 134947	yvonnecrozier@stpeterbelfast.org
Honorary Treasurer:	Ashlee McCune	07801 556386	ashleemcune@stpeterbelfast.org
FWO & Gift Aid Secretary:	Noel Beattie	90 778 428	noelbeattie@stpeterbelfast.org
Baby Sensory:	Heather Trojan	07590 928384	belfastnw@babysensory.co.uk
Reverement Group:	Dora Hanna	95 733 374	dorahanna@stpeterbelfast.org
Bible Study:	The Rev'd Brian Lacey	90 777 053	brianlacey@stpeterbelfast.org
Bridge:	Florrie Greer	90 776 812	florriregreer@gmail.com
Brownies:	Lee Kennedy	07871 875985	lee_kennedy@btinternet.com
Crafty Goodness:	Daphne McClements	07730 127350	daffersmclements@btinternet.com
Glandore Dog Training Club:	Ann Purse	07979 326041	ann.purse@sky.com
Guides:	Lee Kennedy	07871 875985	lee_kennedy@btinternet.com
Historical Society:	Timothy Wilson	07928 850108	williamtim@hotmail.com
Kids' Church:	Cheryl Hurson	07725 644118	cherylbleakley@hotmail.com
PhysioPlates:	Sandra Hutchman	95 149 564	sehutchman@hotmail.com
Priority Singers:	Phillip Bolton	07821 906920	bolton390@btinternet.com
Rainbows:	Lee Kennedy	07871 875985	lee_kennedy@btinternet.com
Speech & Drama:	Claire McGrogan	07793 045071	clairekieran99@yahoo.co.uk
Unslim:	Karen Flannery	07773 758524	Flannery-Karen@hotmail.com
Walking Group:	Jill Bradley	90 842 998	jill.bradley1@btinternet.com

Produced by the Parish Office of St Peter and St James, Belfast

[www.stpeters.connor.anglican.org](http://www.stpeters.connor.anglican.org)

[www.facebook.com/stpeterbelfast](http://www.facebook.com/stpeterbelfast)

HMRC Charity Recognition No: XN45475

Charity Registration No: NIC101020