

THE PARISH OF ST PETER AND ST JAMES

BELFAST

PARISH NOTES

FEBRUARY 2026

Rector:

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



*Enjoying cracker jokes
at the Christmas Lunch*

GOD . LOVING . PEOPLE

RECTOR'S NOTES



WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY

On Sunday 1st February, which is both **St Brigid's Day** and the **Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany**, there will be a choral celebration of Holy Communion at 10.30am.

On Sunday 8th February, we will be celebrating **Candlemas**, formally known as "*The Presentation of Christ in the Temple*." Technically, this Principal Holy Day falls on Monday 2nd February and by rights we should transfer it to the Sunday before, but we will bend the rules slightly this year so that we can reflect upon it at our Family Service at 10.30am and at Choral Evensong at 3.30pm on this second Sunday of the month. Normally, this Sunday would liturgically be called the **Second Sunday before Lent**, historically known as *Sexagesima*, which is the sixtieth day before Easter (not including Sundays).

On Sunday 15th February, it is the **Sunday before Lent**, historically known as *Quinquagesima*, which is the fiftieth day before Easter. There will be a choral celebration of Holy Communion at 10.30am.

On Sunday 22nd February, which is the **First Sunday in Lent**, there will be a choral service of Morning Prayer at 10.30am. As I know you love the Latin names for these days, you will be delighted to learn that historically it is known as *Quadragesima*, which is the fortieth day before Easter.

Throughout the month, our **mid-week services** are at 10.30am each Wednesday. These will be celebrations of Holy Communion. On the last Wednesday of the month, which is 25th February, we will use the old form of the liturgy from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

Of special note is 18th February, which is **Ash Wednesday**. As this date is the beginning of the season of Lent, there will be a special Penitential Service which will include Holy Communion. Please note that there will not be the imposition of ashes.

PARISH ACTIVITIES

The **Discipleship Group** will meet at 7.30pm on Thursday 5th February in the Minor Hall. As we will be reflecting upon our sinfulness during the penitential season of Lent later during the month, the appropriate theme for our discussion will be “What is sin?”

The **Bible Fellowship** will meet at 7.30pm on both Thursday 12th and 26th February in the Minor Hall. We have finished our study of the Exodus, and will now turn our attention to the Book of Judges. This book covers a period of a few hundred years, from just after the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites, until just before the establishment of the monarchy under King Saul.

The **Bereavement Group** will meet at midday on Wednesday 11th February in the church. This lasts around 45 minutes, and includes prayers and a discussion on a relevant theme.

The **Prayer Group** will meet at midday on Wednesday 18th February, which is Ash Wednesday, in the church.

The **Morning Bible Study** will meet at 11.30am on Wednesday 25th February in the Minor Hall. We will begin a study of the Acts of the Apostles. As this group meets only once a month, this will undoubtedly take us through much of this calendar year. Feel free to come along as often as you can.

REGISTERED MEMBERS

Every year in February, we update the list of Registered Members of the parish, and this will take place at 7.30pm on Monday 23rd February in the Minor Hall. This is a special meeting of the Select Vestry, and only the Trustees are required to attend.

Registration forms for new members are available at the back of the church and they need to be completed and returned to a Churchwarden or myself prior to Monday 23rd February. There is a form for registration as a Resident Member, and a form for registration as an Accustomed Member.

Technically a parishioner is any person who lives within the parish boundaries, whether or not they attend worship in St Peter's. However, those who do come to church may register their membership, which gives them the right (subject to receipt of a donation to parish funds) to take part in meetings of the General Vestry. Such a person is registered as a Resident Member.

Anyone who lives outside the parish, but who attends worship in St Peter's, may also apply for registration. This too gives them the right (subject to receipt of a donation to parish funds and if attendance requirements are met) to take part in meetings of the General Vestry. Such a person is registered as an Accustomed Member. If you are currently an Accustomed Member, please ensure that you have (or will have) attended worship in St Peter's at least once since 23rd November 2025.

It may be of interest to those who have recently begun worshipping in St Peter's, that a person may be a Resident Member of one parish, and at the same time an Accustomed Member another parish, as long as recorded donations are made to both parishes each year. Note that you can be an Accustomed Member of only one parish, not two or more.

The purpose of the annual Review Meeting in February (which must not be confused with the General Vestry which is held

closer to Easter) is simply to update the list of Registered Members. We do so by removing the names of those who have sadly died during the prior twelve months, or who have not made a recorded donation to parish funds during the prior twelve months, or who have sent a letter asking for their name to be removed.

The current list of Registered Members (last updated in February 2025) is pinned to the noticeboard at the back of St Peter's. Take a moment in the coming weeks to see whether or not your name is on it. If not, and if you make a recorded donation to parish funds, then please fill in a registration form. If you are currently a Registered Member, then please make sure that you have made a recorded donation to parish funds in the last twelve months, to ensure that your name remains on the list.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Thank you to everyone who made our services and activities at the end of last year so meaningful and enjoyable. Everything that happens in our church or our halls requires some level of preparation, and there is often a team of people behind the scenes who bring it to fruition. I am very grateful to Robert Thompson for once again providing our Christmas Tree, and to his assistants for decorating it. For our acts of worship, we had our Parish Readers, our Choir and our Organist, our lectors, our intercessors, our Churchwardens, our Parish Administrator, our Refreshments Team, and the members of our Altar Guild, all doing their bit to ensure that from the moment you walk through the door of St Peter's, everything was ready to enable you to praise God and to have fellowship with one another. Thank you to everyone involved.

One of the highlights of the year, particularly for parents and grandparents, is our **Nativity Service**, which was held on the Sunday before Christmas. Unlike schools which can devote time to regular rehearsals, we need to find a way of involving the

children without requiring too much from them in terms of preparation. How we do that is different from one year to the next, depending on the age and ability of those involved, but I think we struck the right note this time around. We had about fifteen children dressed up and taking part, and I am very thankful to them and their parents.

It was lovely to have **Christmas Lunch** on Sunday 21st December in our own halls, prepared by Judith Cowan and her team of helpers. As anyone who has cooked a Christmas Dinner for six people will tell you, the idea of cooking for over sixty people sounds challenging! And yet Judith and her assistants did amazingly, and we were all treated to a lovely festive three-course meal. Thank you so much to them for all that hard work.

A special word of thanks to our choir, who – in addition to their regular duties – led our praise at our **Advent Carol Service, Nine Lessons & Carols, and Choral Eucharist on Christmas Eve**. These services appeal not just to our regular members, but to the local community as well, and they showcase the care and excellence with which our worship of God is conducted. Thank you to each chorister, and to our Choir Master Robert Thompson, and to our occasional guest organist Tristan Russcher.

WILL YOU OPEN GOD'S GIFT?

It's ironic that so many people in this world have no sense of God, no awareness of God—and yet, God desperately wants us to know him. We have, of course, the Bible to reveal something of God to us, and the Bible stories themselves tell us about dreams and visions, and similar forms of divine revelation. But to truly reveal himself, he chose to do the thing that we are here celebrating tonight: he immersed himself in this world; he inhabited his creation; and he became a little baby boy.

You might think it would take another thirty years or so for that child to grow up and begin to actually reveal something about God

to us. But the truth is, the nature and the will of God are there in the story of his birth: we see his humility, his rejection of worldly values, his preference for the poor and the outcast, and of course the proclamation of the angel Gabriel that he came to save us. And the funeral ointment myrrh (the third gift of the Wise Men) points towards the mechanism of that salvation, which will be his death.

So the Birth Story is not just the stuff of children's nativity plays. It is a summary of the Good News, and it tells us that this little baby boy is unlike any other. He is, instead, the only person who could reconcile God and humanity—and that is God himself. And we see that in the description given to the child by the angel: "He will be called Emmanuel, which means, God is with us." Jesus is, literally, God with us.

Emmanuel is just one of many ways the Biblical writers describe Jesus. St Paul, writing to Titus, describes him like this: "The grace of God has appeared." Now, grace is a word every Christian should know. It means God's love for those who do not deserve it. But when Paul says "the grace of God has appeared" he isn't saying that an idea has appeared, as if someone has thought up a new concept. He is describing Jesus as the living embodiment of grace. He is saying that Jesus is the love of God wrapped in flesh and blood. Perhaps more famously, St John, in his Gospel, describes Jesus as "the Word." "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." And he explains that this "Word" is God himself.

So we find in Scripture different words, but the same truth being proclaimed: that in the person of Jesus, God has come close. God is with us. But here's the problem. Spend any time in religious circles and you'll hear people narrowing the meaning of that word "us." You will hear "God is with us"—meaning the ones who go to church every Sunday, or the ones who go to the right church, or the ones who give the most money, or the ones who look the holiest.

But that exclusive interpretation of the word “us” is not what Scripture says. St Paul makes it clear to Titus: grace brings salvation to everyone. Not to the few. Not to the self appointed deserving. Not to the religious elite. But to all. And the Nativity story proves it. Shepherds were welcomed. Wise men were welcomed. Mary and Joseph, poor and ordinary, were welcomed. The only person excluded, King Herod, chose to exclude himself.

So the birth story reminds us that the love of God is for everyone. For you. For me. For the annoying neighbour we try to avoid. For the homeless person we disregard on the street. For all the people we have written off as not worthy of our respect, our friendship, our trust, or our kindness. The grace of God has appeared, and it is for all. And the reason we can confidently say it is for all is because no one deserves it. Not one of us. We are all equally undeserving of God’s love. And therefore—and this is the good bit—we are all equally loved by him. That is the breadth and depth of salvation. It is a gift from God beyond anything the world can offer to us. And it is the gift which keeps on giving. Because salvation is not the end, but the beginning.

Paul says grace is “training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly.” In other words, grace is not just something to be accepted. It is something that changes us. It refines us. It improves us. It makes us more and more like Jesus: generous, kind, loving, forgiving, merciful. Because Jesus came not just to show us by example how to live; he came to change us from within. He is literally God with us. And he wants to be born within us every day. What a wonderful gift. The question is: are you willing to receive it?

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Please note these dates for the following meetings in February:

Senior Officers

Friday 13th at 11.30am in the Clergy Vestry.

Select Vestry

Monday 23rd at 7.30pm in the Minor Hall.

SERVICE SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

SERVICE	OFFICIANT	LECTOR	PREACHER	INTERCESSOR
SUNDAY 1ST FEBRUARY—SEPTUAGESIMA (WHITE)				
10.30am Choral Eucharist	Rector	David Cromie	Rector	David Cromie
WEDNESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY (WHITE)				
10.30am Holy Communion	Rector	Rosemary Patterson	Rector	Rosemary Johnston
SUNDAY 8TH FEBRUARY—CANDLEMAS (transferred) (WHITE)				
10.30am Family Matins	Rector/ Lucas Todd	-	Rector	Lucas Todd
3.30pm Advent to Candlemas	David Cromie	Daphne McClements	-	David Cromie*
WEDNESDAY 11TH FEBRUARY (WHITE)				
10.30am Holy Communion	Rector	Rosemary Johnston	Rector	Stella Taggart
SUNDAY 15TH FEBRUARY—QUINQUAGESIMA (WHITE)				
10.30am Choral Eucharist	Rector	Heather McCartney	Rector	Dora Hanna
WEDNESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY—ASH WEDNESDAY (PURPLE)				
10.30am Penitential Service	Rector	Rosemary Patterson	-	Rector*
SUNDAY 22ND FEBRUARY—QUADRAGESIMA (PURPLE)				
10.30am Choral Matins	Robert Long	Wes Holmes	Rector	Robert Long
WEDNESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY—LENT (PURPLE)				
10.30am Holy Communion (1662)	Rector	Robert Long	-	Robert Long*

AFTER CHURCH REFRESHMENTS—*Thank you to all who provide light refreshments after services—it is much appreciated. If you would like to help sometimes please contact Sandra Hutchman (contact details on back cover).*



ALTAR GUILD ROTA FOR FEBRUARY

Date	Time	Set-up	Wine Cruet	Wine Chalice	Colour	Location
Sunday 1st	10.30am	David Cromie	Dora Hanna	David Cromie	White	Chancel
Wednesday 4th	10.30am	Kathryn Hennessy	Margaret McK Black	Robert Long	White	Resurrection
Wednesday 11th	10.30am	Jill Bradley	Rosemary Johnston	Robert Long	White	Resurrection
Sunday 15th	10.30am	Dora Hanna	David Cromie	Dora Hanna	Purple	Chancel
Wednesday 18th	10.30am	Jim Wilson	Margaret McK Black	Robert Long	Purple	Resurrection
Wednesday 25th	10.30am	Margaret McK Black	Dora Hanna	Robert Long	Purple	St James



If you're new to St Peter's and would like more information about our parish, or if you would like to register as a member, please contact the parish office.

If you would like to support the worship, mission, and ministries of St Peter's, your donations may be deposited in the box at the back of the church. If you have offertory envelopes or a donation that you would like collected from your home, please call the parish office and we will gladly arrange this for you. We are also happy to provide information if you would like to donate by standing order.

Other ways to donate are by Apple Pay, Google Pay, PayPal or by credit/debit card, please scan this QR code on your phone.

If you need more offertory envelopes please contact the parish office and we will be happy to print a set for you.





PAUSE FOR THOUGHT AND PRAYER

by Rosemary Johnston

‘Forgive us our trespasses ...’

This month we come to the season of Lent when we ponder our own misdoings and failures and think about Jesus coming to save us from the consequences of our sins. We seek forgiveness for our own sins but, as Jesus says, we ought also to forgive those who have offended us—not once but ‘seventy times seven’. I must not be resentful, or take umbrage at a perceived offence, or continue bearing a grudge, or misconstrue the motivations of others. Whatever I do or say I must do it or say it through love and compassion. Being harsh with someone when I am so imperfect myself makes me a hypocrite. Bearing a grudge, convinced that I am in the right; i.e. being thrown by thinking why should I make the first move? Sadly we hear of families where some haven’t spoken to each other in years. This must sadden our heavenly Father who wants us all to live together in harmony. Unless someone takes the first step at reconciliation the whole sad situation may continue. But when that first step is taken think of the joy in heaven and in the family/community at this big step; for example, my prayer for the royal family is that each member reaches out the hand of love and forgiveness, kindness and reconciliation. As the Rector very wisely says—we shouldn’t bear grudges as then two people suffer, the person who caused the offence and the one who refuses to forgive. I am still on a learning path and I know God is ‘refining’ me to make me fit to enter his Kingdom. Lent will be an opportunity for me to study the scriptures more closely, especially in the bible classes and extra services, and to appreciate the sacrifice Jesus made for me and for us all. May I also remember the commandment to love one another as Jesus loves us. If I put that front and centre of my life and fix my eyes upon Jesus I know I am on the right path.

*Heavenly Father,
you want only the best for us
and your beloved Son, out of the great love you have for us,
paid the price for the redemption of our sins.
Help us to walk with him in the coming weeks
and to make his ways our ways. Amen.*

North Belfast Historical Society

Thursday 19th February at 7.30pm

Speaker: David Cromie

Subject: What did the Stockton and

Darlington Railway ever do for us?

Our annual subscription is £20.

Non-member £5 to attend a meeting. Everyone welcome.

We look forward to seeing you.



Daphne McClements (Chairman)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

to those with birthdays in February:

Victor Davis, Michele Cole, 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!



to all our parish literature distributors who go out in all weathers to deliver Parish Notes etc to those who cannot attend church. You know who you are and you are very much appreciated. AC

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 addresses. Thank you.

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

Contact details on back cover.

Prayer

If you would like your name added to our prayer list, please get in touch with Rosemary Johnston, tel 028 90 840 534, or go to www.stpeterbelfast.org/prayer and fill out the form.

DO YOU HAVE A FOOD ALLERGY?



When refreshments are being served at church, if you have a food allergy or a special dietary requirement, please inform a member of the hospitality team.

BREW BY THE CAVE

Mount Lennox, 683 Antrim Road

We serve expertly brewed coffee, delicious homemade soups, freshly baked scones, and much more, in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Our café is the perfect spot to soak up the scenery or stop in before exploring Cavehill. We are nestled in nature, offering stunning garden views and a peaceful escape.

Come by and see why we're a local favourite.



Tues 9-3, Wed-Fri 9-4 & Sat-Sun 10-3

Our Church Family

Please let us know about any happy events or exciting news within our parish family. Good news is always worth sharing!



Fortwilliam Greengrocers

Fruit & Vegetables

Fruit baskets & Bouquets

Fresh Flowers & Plants

575 Antrim Road

Belfast BT15 3BU

Tel 028 9077 1013



**Sunday School
is Fun!**



Come
along
and
bring
your
friends!



*Please join us for
Choral Evensong
Sunday, 8th February,
at 3.30pm
followed by refreshments*

TIMETABLE

Sunday

10.30am: Sunday Service and Sunday School

Monday

10.30am: Walking Group
6pm: Glandore Dog Training Club
7.30pm: Select Vestry (4th Monday in month)

Tuesday

10.30am: Crafty Goodness (contact Daphne McClements for venue)
7.30pm: Priory Singers

Wednesday

10.30am: Holy Communion
11.30am: Bible Study (last Wednesday in month)
12noon: Bereavement Group (2nd Wednesday in month)
12noon: Prayer Group (3rd Wednesday in month)
2pm: Bridge Club
5pm: Unislim
6.30pm: PhysioPilates
7.30pm: Choir Practice

Thursday

10.30am: Chair PhysioPilates
6pm: Rainbows
7pm: Brownies
7.30pm: Discipleship Group (1st Thursday in month)
7.30pm: Bible Fellowship (2nd & 4th Thursdays in month)
7.30pm: Historical Society (3rd Thursday in month)
8pm: Guides and Senior Guides

Friday

10.30am: PhysioPilates
4pm: Speech and Drama

*For more information on the parish
please contact the appropriate personnel listed on the back page.*

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, PayPal or by credit/debit card, please scan this QR code on your phone. Thank you.



FEBRUARY FLOWER LIST

15TH 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 practical, flowers should be in keeping with the liturgical colour of the season, particularly during Advent and Lent.



FLOWERS IN CHURCH

The Flower List for 2026 is now open for bookings and we would ask that all existing contributors contact the Parish Office to confirm their usual Sunday for the coming year. As there are always some Sundays left available some of you may like to come forward and offer to provide flowers, perhaps to mark a particular occasion or anniversary. It may be a wedding anniversary, the birth of a child or grandchild, to remember the death of a family member, or indeed as an act of thanksgiving for some notable blessing. All such donors will be acknowledged on the church notice board and in the Parish Notes.

We really appreciate all who provide flowers and also those who devote time and energy in arranging them and looking after them mid-week. We try to have flowers that are in keeping with the liturgical seasons, particularly during Lent, so this year bright displays of flowers are not permitted on the following Sundays: 22nd February, 1st March, 8th March, 22nd March and 29th March (15th March is exempt from restrictions). If you need any help regarding floral displays please contact Sandra Davison, our church flower co-ordinator, tel 07738 403667.

Would you have time to join one of our church cleaning groups? If so, there is a sign up sheet at the back of the church.

Further information from Anne Cromie.

Parish Notes

On-line

The Parish Notes can be read on our website.

Visit

www.stpeterbelfast.org

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
by Monday 16th February.**

R	P	Rector: Associate Minister:	The Rev'd Brian Lacey The Rev'd Andrew Irwin	028 9077 7053 028 9600 5015	brianlacey@stpeterbelfast.org andrewirwin@stpeterbelfast.org
A	A	Parish Administrator: Organist and Choir Master: Ministry Apprentice:	Anne Cromie Robert Thompson Robert Long	028 9077 6706 07590 851564 07535 775360	anne Cromie@stpeterbelfast.org robertthompson@stpeterbelfast.org robertlong@stpeterbelfast.org
S	H	Parish Reader: Parish Reader: Co-ordinator for Intercessors: Co-ordinator for Flowers: Co-ordinator for Refreshments:	David Cromie Dora Hanna Rosemary Johnston Sandra Davison Sandra Hutchman	028 9077 5669 028 9573 3374 028 9084 0534 028 9514 9564	davidcromie@stpeterbelfast.org dorahanna@stpeterbelfast.org - sandradavison@stpeterbelfast.org sehutchman@hotmail.com
C	O	Rector's Churchwarden: People's Churchwarden: Rector's Glebewarden: People's Glebewarden: Honorary Secretary: Honorary Treasurer: Assistant FW/O and Gift Aid Sec:	Daphne McClements Margaret McKenna-Black Victor Davis Michael Moore Clodagh Webb Ashlee McCune Margaret McKenna Black	07730 127350 07732 651569 028 9077 1197 028 9050 8177 07565 501702 07801 556386 07732 651569	daphnehmclements@stpeterbelfast.org margaretmckblack@stpeterbelfast.org victordavis@stpeterbelfast.org michaelmoore@stpeterbelfast.org clodaghwebb@stpeterbelfast.org ashleemccune@stpeterbelfast.org margaretmckblack@stpeterbelfast.org
T	N	Safeguarding Trust: Safeguarding Group: Bereavement Group: Bible Study: Bridge: Brownies: Christian Aid Rep: Crafty Goodness: Glandore Dog Training Club: Guides: Historical Society: PhysioPilates: Priory Singers: Rainbows: Speech & Drama: Unislim: Walking Group:	Clodagh Webb Philip Williamson Dora Hanna The Rev'd Brian Lacey Florrie Greer Lee Kennedy Jill Bradley Daphne McClements Ann Purse Lee Kennedy Daphne McClements Sandra Hutchman Philip Bolton Lee Kennedy Claire McGrogan Karen Flannery Jill Bradley	07565 501702 028 9087 8355 028 9573 3374 028 9077 7053 028 9077 6812 07871 875985 028 9084 2998 07730 127350 07979 326041 07871 875985 07730 127350 028 9514 9564 07821 906920 07871 875985 07793 045071 07773 758524 028 9084 2998	clodaghwebb@stpeterbelfast.org philipwilliamson@stpeterbelfast.org dorahanna@stpeterbelfast.org brianlacey@stpeterbelfast.org florriegreer@gmail.com lee_kennedy@btinternet.com jillBradley1@btinternet.com daffersmcclements@btinternet.com ann.purse@sky.com lee_kennedy@btinternet.com daphnehmclements@stpeterbelfast.org sehutchman@hotmail.com bolton390@btinternet.com lee_kennedy@btinternet.com clairekieran99@yahoo.co.uk flannery-karen@hotmail.com jill;bradley1@btinternet.com

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