

The Pointer

July - August 2026

Rev Andy Hay
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**The Magazine of the Church of Ireland Parishes of Clonallon & Warrenpoint
with Kilbroney in the Diocese of Down and Dromore**

Parishioners are reminded to notify the Rector of anyone they know who would appreciate a pastoral visit while in hospital.



Due to data protection measures, members of the clergy have no access to hospital patient lists and the designated chaplains are not permitted to share patient details unless expressly given permission to do so.

Do not assume that the Rev Andy is notified so please make contact with him directly.



Lectors

Warrenpoint

Kilbroney

5 July	Dorothy Major Andy Hay	Patric Harris Karl Teggarty
12 July	Emma Cooper Evelyn Greer	Bethlehem Beck David Beck
19 July	Stephen Cooper Elizabeth Hanna	William Graham Stewart Nash
26 July	Christopher Cooper Dorothy Major Andy Hay	Alanah Donaldson Timothy Alexander Joan Thompson
2 August	Emma Cooper Evelyn Greer	Pauline Coffey Jonathan Heyhoe
9 August	Stephen Cooper Liz Farnan	Rosie Teggarty Liz Farnan
16 August	Emma Cooper Dorothy Major	Stewart Nash Patric Harris
23 August	Hugh Tyrrell Christopher Cooper Evelyn Greer	Elizabeth Hanna Alanah Donaldson William Graham
30 August	Dorothy Major	Karl Teggarty
6 September	Evelyn Greer Andy Hay	Joan Thompson Timothy Alexander



The Church of Ireland is committed to ensuring all children and vulnerable adults are protected from harm.



Cover photograph: taken in the Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon park by Elizabeth.

Honorary Secretaries

Clonallon and Warrenpoint : Evelyn Greer
sec.wptcoi@outlook.com

Kilbroney: Rosie Teggarty
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The Lectionary readings are on page 7

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this summer edition of The Pointer. While the summer can be an exciting time, we open this edition with words we should never have to say:

Followers of the Lord Jesus stand against any act that would isolate, scare or damage any human being. Racist acts that have been carried out in the name of patriotism, and even in the name of Jesus, have no place in this country and certainly have no place in the church.

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that the stranger, the refugee, the enemy and the neighbour are to be loved. There is no way around this. As Tim Burns, a colleague in the Church of Ireland, reminded me this past week, The bible simply does not allow for us to treat fellow humans in any other way.

There has also been the devastating news about that well known, respected Christian, Jeffrey Donaldson, who was found to have committed unspeakable crimes. On this, may I simply remind you that if you have any concerns about the wellbeing or safety of someone in the church, please contact Social Services on 028 3756 7100. If it is an emergency please call 999. If you simply need information, advice, or if you have been upset by this news, you can call me.

In the meantime, how do we process and understand all of this terrible news? We do this in the person of Jesus.

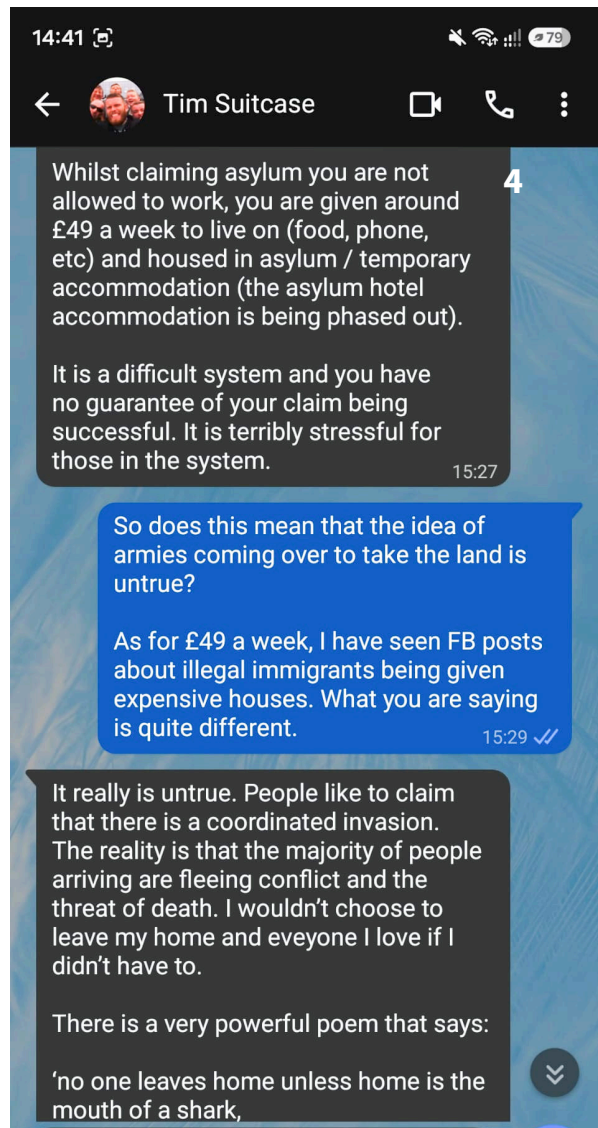
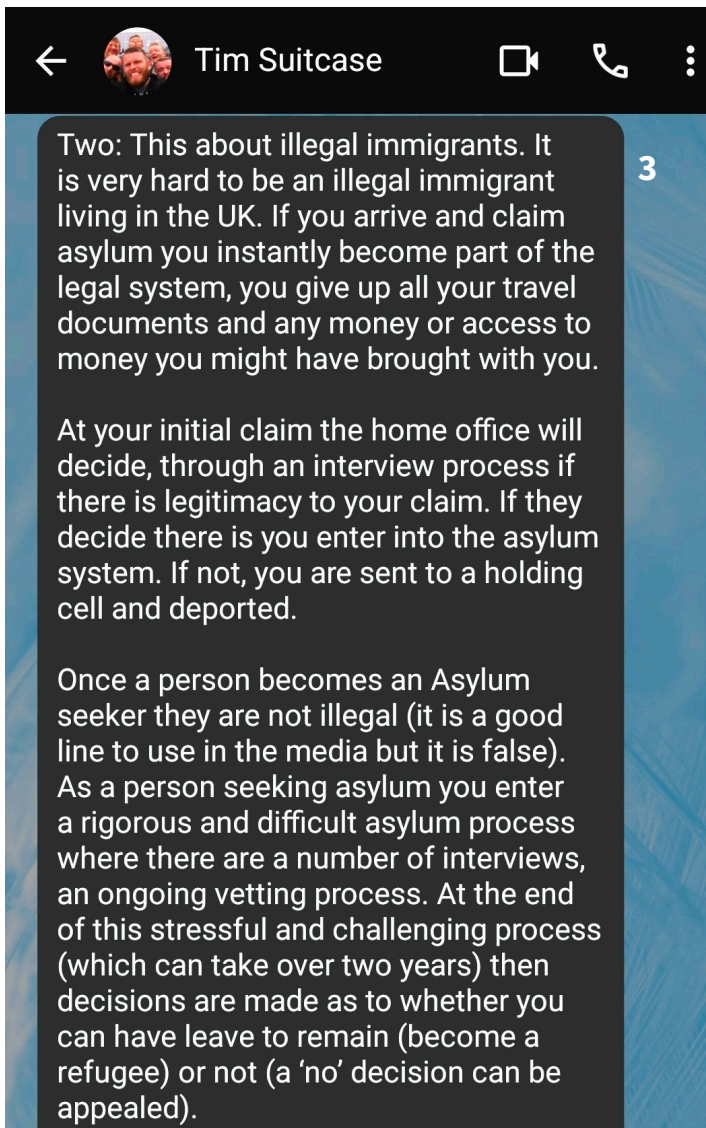
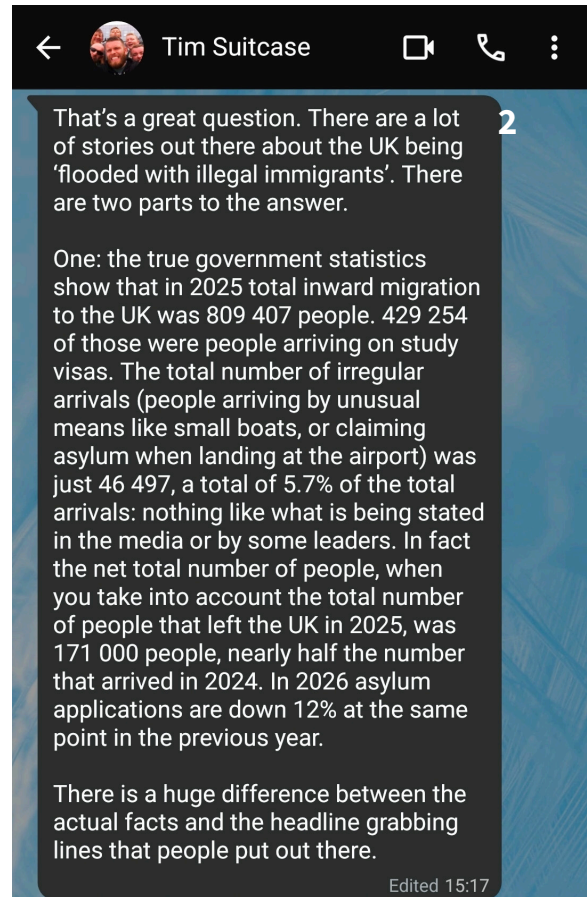
*Lord Jesus, you know about love and joy.
You know about despair and suffering.
When we are scared and confused
give us the courage to speak out and
bring light into the darkness.
Give us the courage to confess our sins.
Give us the courage to walk in your way of light and justice.
Be present to us in your peace
as we pray these things in your dear name,
Amen.*

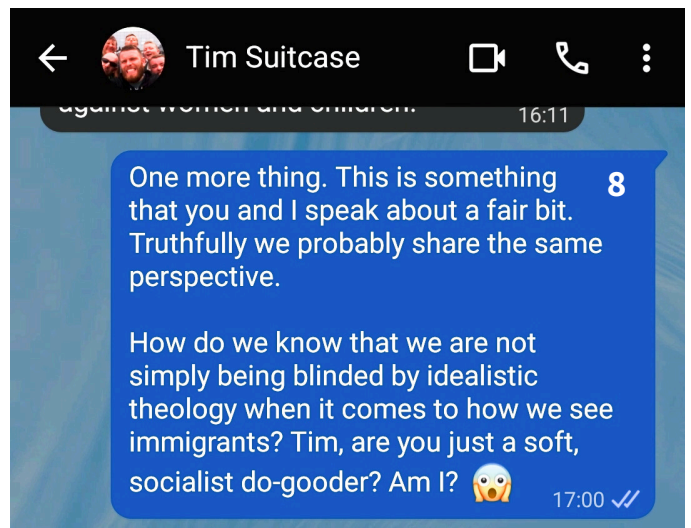
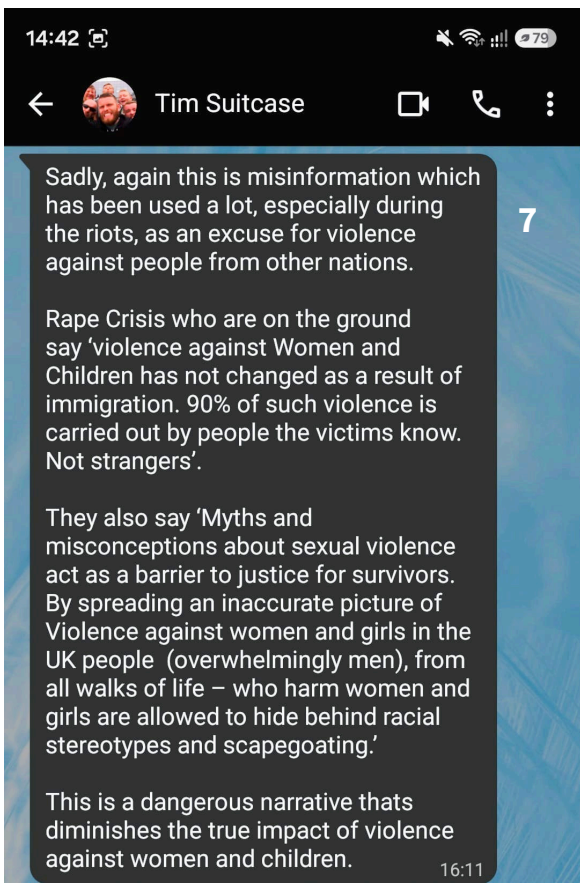
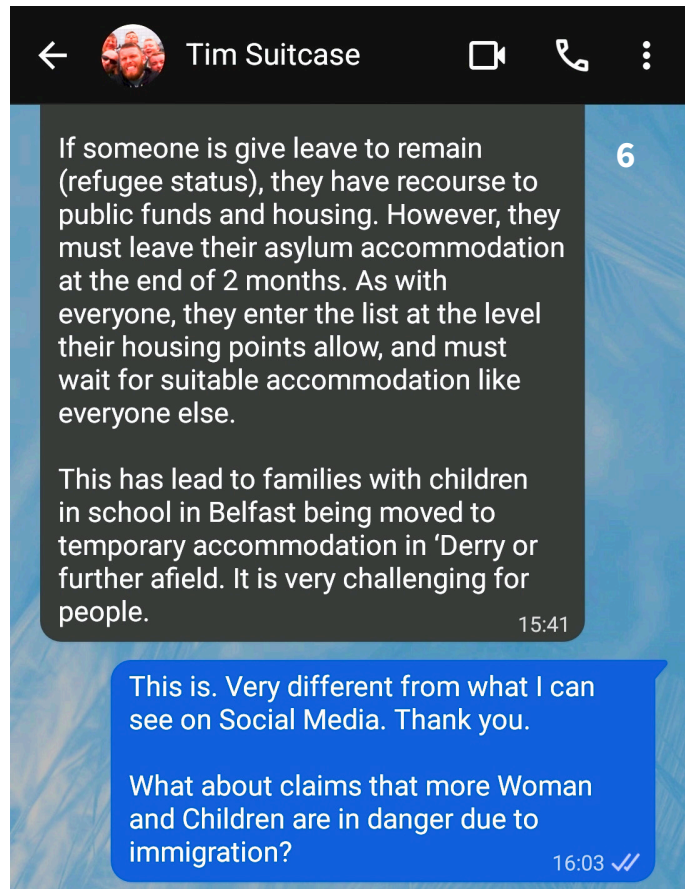
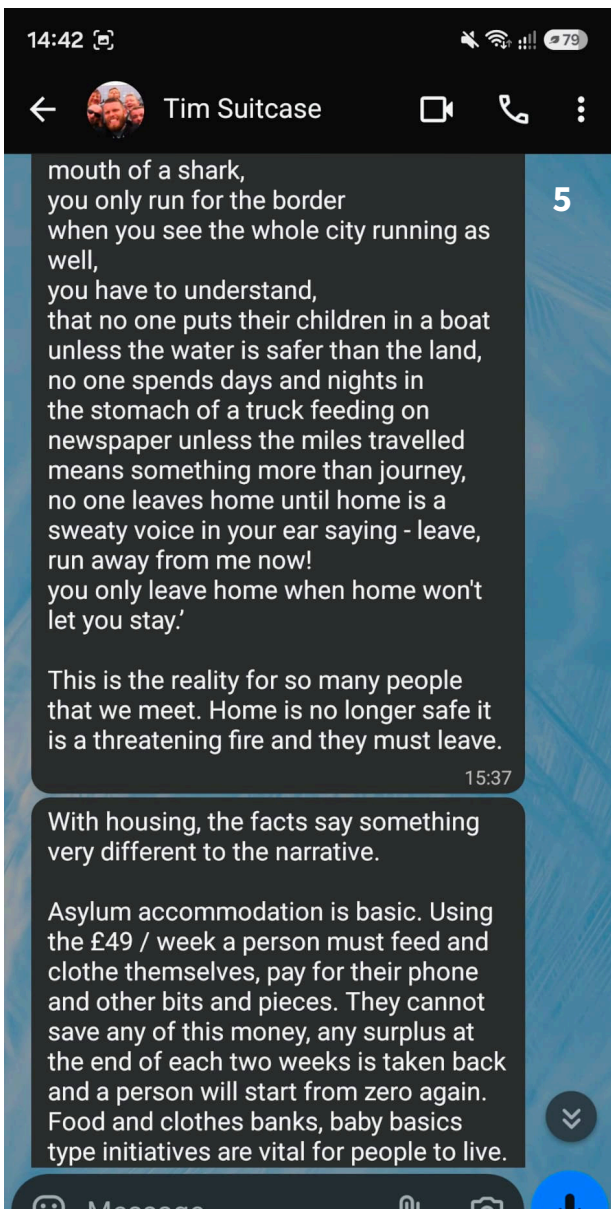
Yours in Christ,
Andy.

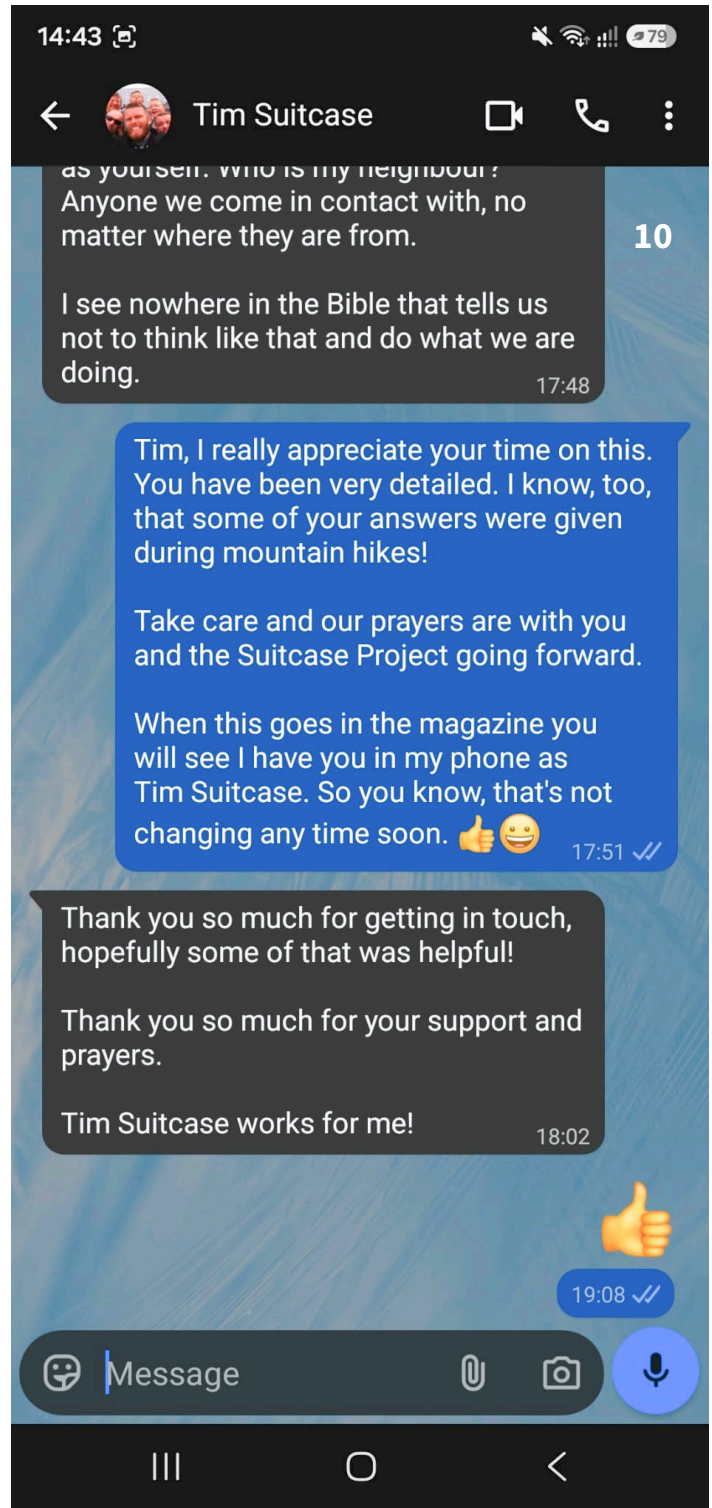
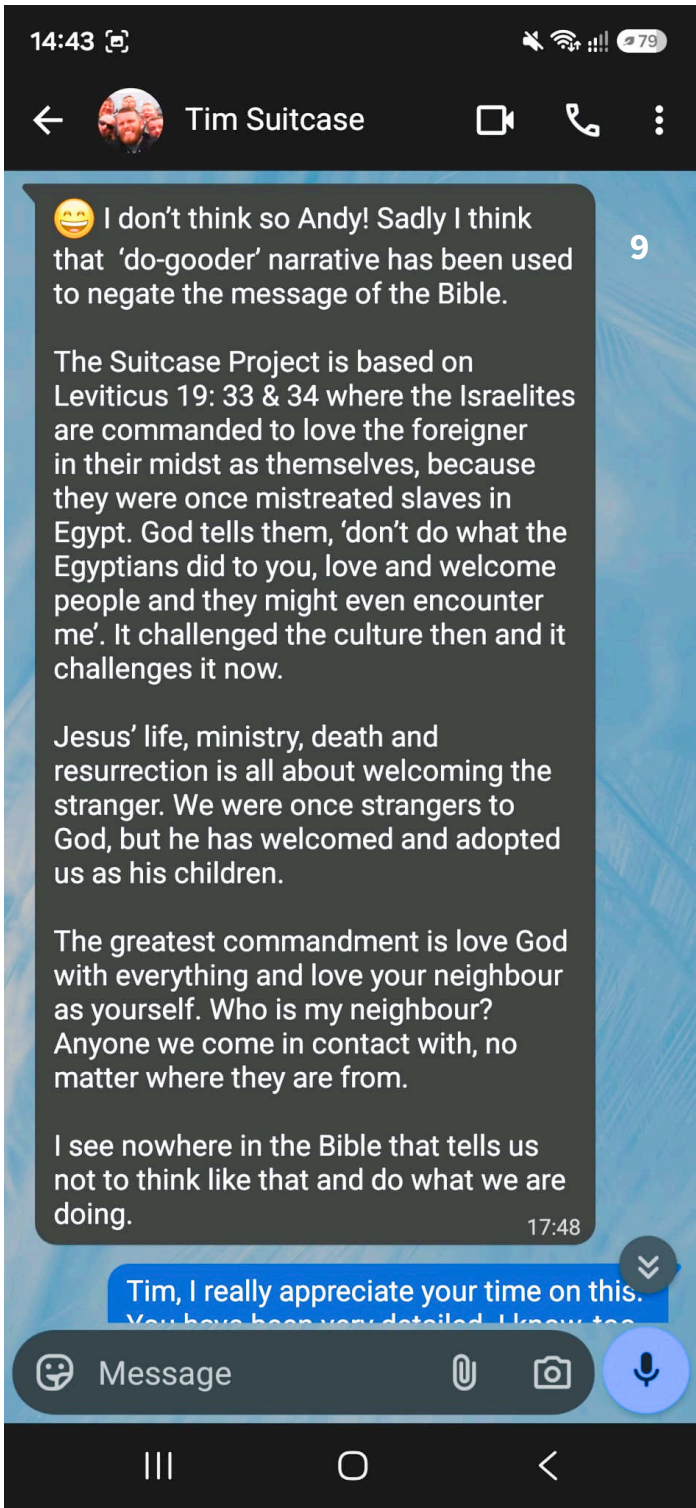
Pages 4-6 have a WhatsApp interview:

The **SUITCASE PROJECT** is a Christian outreach from the Diocese of Down and Dromore with a hub in East Belfast linking into churches in the diocese. It is led by **Tim Burns**. The project seeks to welcome and support Asylum Seekers and Refugees and demonstrate God's love in such a way that people will want to find out about the Christian faith for themselves.

Tim was good enough to chat with Andy via WhatsApp and they decided to share their conversation as a WhatsApp interview.







	9.00 am Clonallon	10.00 am Warrenpoint	11.30 am Kilbroney	Old Testament	Epistle	Gospel
5 July Trinity 5	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Ruth 4:1-11 Psalm 45:10-17	Ruth 4:12-end Romans 7:15-25a	Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
	Wholeness and Healing 6.00 pm in Kilbroney			Luke 18:31 - 19:10		
12 July Trinity 6	Holy Communion	All Age Worship	All Age Worship	Genesis 25:19-34 Psalm 119:105-112	Romans 8:1-11	Mark 9:1-10
19 July Trinity 7	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Festival Praise	Gen 28:10-19 Psalm 139:1-11, 23-24	Romans 8:1-25	Mark 9:31-end
26 July Trinity 8	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Genesis 29:15-28 Psalm 105:1-11, 45b or Ps 128	Romans 8:26-39	Mark 10:1-31
2 August Trinity 9	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Gn 32:22-31 Psalm 17:1-7, 16	Romans 9:1-5	Mark 10:31-end
9 August Trinity 10	Holy Communion	All Age Worship	All Age Worship	Gn 37:1-4, 12-28 Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b	Romans 10:5-15	Mark 11:1-14
16 August Trinity 11	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Genesis 45:1-15 Psalm 133	Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32	Mark 11:15-end
23 August Trinity 12	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Exodus 1:8 - 2:10 Psalm 124	Romans 12:1-8	Mark 12:1-28
30 August Trinity 13	Holy Communion	United All Age Service 11.00 am in Kilbroney		Exodus 3:1-15 Psalm 115	Romans 12:9-21	Mark 12:29-end
6 September Trinity 14	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Exodus 12:1-14 Psalm 149	Romans 12:8-14	Mark 13:1-24
	Wholeness and Healing 6.00 pm in Kilbroney			Mark 7:24-37		

Join us for Bible Week '26

1-4 September at 7.45 pm in

Holy Trinity Banbridge, Church Square, Banbridge BT32 4AA.

Tuesday 1 September: Surrendered in Prayer & Worship
(Acts 13:1-3)

Wednesday 2 September: Surrendered to the Word & Spirit (part 1)
(Acts 11:19-26)

Thursday 3 September: Surrendered to the Word & Spirit (part 2)
(Acts 13:1-5)

Friday 4 September: Surrendered in Radical Discipleship & Worldwide Mission
(Acts 13:6-12)





Most groups are taking a well-earned summer break during July and August, however:

Badminton continues on Mondays and Thursdays, and

Tower Bell practice also continues on Thursday evenings.



Every Sunday: 9.00 am Clonallon, 10.00 am Warrenpoint, 11.30 am Kilbroney.



The Ladies Bible Study will resume on Tuesday, **13th October** at 10.45 am.

The Ladies Guild will meet on Thursday, **24th September** at 11.00 am



From September the Book Club plans to meet on the first and third Thursdays of the month:
3rd and 17th September.



Kilbroney Crafters are taking a break over the summer but plan to gather again on Wednesdays from September. We meet from **3.00 pm until 5.00 pm** and welcome all levels of skill!

Sunday Explorers will also start back in September, meeting during the morning service in Kilbroney.



Handbellers won't meet on Thursday evenings during the summer but they will be playing at the Ulster Fleadh, on the bandstand in Warrenpoint at **11.00 am** on **25th July**.



FREE HANDBELL WORKSHOP
in
KILBRONEY PARISH CHURCH

SATURDAY 18TH JULY
11.00 AM

BOOKING NOT REQUIRED

Festival Praise

19th July at 11.30 am

Saint Bronach's, Kilbroney Parish Church



SUMMER FESTIVAL SEASON

Six weeks. Five major festivals.

15-19 July 2026

Fiddler's Green International
Festival, Rostrevor

19-26 July 2026

Ulster Fleadh, Warrenpoint
**The Kilbroney Handbells
will be on the bandstand at
11.00 am on 25th July!**

1-2 August 2026

Wake the Giant Festival,
Warrenpoint

8-16 August 2026

Loughside Festival,
Warrenpoint

29-30 August 2026

International Curragh
Championships, Warrenpoint

Ec(h)oe(s) Csilla Toldy

An exhibition of film poem
installations:
Ec(h)o, Axis Mundi and Imbolc
and photopoetry created with
photographer Jonathan Heyhoe



Opening Night:
Thursday 2 July 2026 5 pm

Exhibition Ends:
Friday 31 July 2026

Venue:
Down Arts Centre, Downpatrick





Diocesan Synod Summary of Bishop David's Presidential address

Bishop David sets out seven-year vision for Down and Dromore

Bishop David McClay used his Presidential Address at Diocesan Synod to set out a seven-year vision for Down and Dromore, urging parishes to receive the past honestly and to hand on “a beautiful legacy of faith in Jesus” to future generations.

Meeting in Bangor Abbey at the beginning of a new three-year synodical term, the bishop said

the theme of “Legacy” had been at the forefront of his thoughts. He welcomed members and thanked the parish and rector Canon Ronnie Nesbitt for hosting synod and wished him and his wife Carole every blessing in retirement.

Five years after setting diocesan goals in Discipleship, Leadership and Apostleship, Bishop David reviewed progress and said there were encouraging signs in church planting, evangelism courses, new Bible study groups, Sunday Schools and the training of lay readers, evangelists and future clergy.

The address looked back to the spiritual inheritance of the diocese, from St Patrick’s arrival near Saul in 432 AD to church planting under previous bishops and the evangelistic work of the Decade of Evangelism. Bishop David quoted Archdeacon Mark Harvey’s description of Down and Dromore as standing “on Patrick’s legacy of courageous commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ” and said the greatest spiritual legacy any generation can receive is “a gospel legacy” that is “biblically faithful, Christ centred, Holy Spirit empowered”.

Bishop David also acknowledged painful parts of the church’s inherited legacy. “The legacy that we inherit will inevitably be a mixture of good, not so good, and some things that are dark and even evil,” he said. These, he added, must be “brought into the light, acknowledged, where appropriate repented of, and dealt with” according to God’s word.

Referring to accounts of historic sexual abuse in Mount Merrion Parish and to a recent BBC Spotlight programme, he said such matters called the church “to humility and repentance for the sins of previous generations”. He said: “Abuse - sexual abuse and physical abuse should never have happened.” The bishop added that he had met, listened to and apologised on behalf of the church to those who had come forward and wished to meet.

At the same time, Bishop David criticised aspects of the broadcast, saying it contained “damaging and misleading inaccuracies” and that its treatment of historic and more recent matters had, in his view, been disrespectful to victims of historic abuse.

He told synod that a live historic claim relating to Mount Merrion remained ongoing and that the programme’s content was being examined legally, so he would not comment further on those issues.

Looking ahead, Bishop David returned to the diocesan priorities of Discipleship, Leadership and Apostleship, saying the diocese must “set our sails for the wind of the Holy Spirit”. He framed the next stage of diocesan life around the practical themes of **Scripture, evangelism, growth, prayer, community, mission, children, youth, stewardship and leadership.**

The first cord holding the vision together, he said, was **the Bible**. Marking 500 years since William Tyndale’s New Testament in English, Bishop David urged parishes to make Scripture available to seekers and local communities. He challenged every church to keep Bibles ready to give away and to work with organisations such as the Bible Society to place Bibles and Bible reading plans into every home in their parish.

“Churches built on biblical truth and biblical methods of spreading that truth grow,” he said. Against what he described as decline and revisionism elsewhere, he made a clear pledge: “Not on my watch, and I trust – not on our watch!”

Evangelism was another central theme. Bishop David said real church growth is “always rooted in evangelism and people being saved by Christ forever”. With the 1600th anniversary of St Patrick’s mission to Ireland approaching in 2032, he said the diocese had been entrusted with the same gospel and must place evangelism “at the top of our agenda”.

He urged churches to provide clear pathways for people exploring faith, including Alpha, so that “every man, woman and child” might hear and respond to the good news of Jesus.

On **growth**, he said attendance could rise significantly by 2033 if parishes continued to deepen their commitment to evangelism, prayer and welcome.

Prayer, he said, must underpin that growth. Healthy churches are marked by evenings of prayer, prayer walking and a confidence that the Holy Spirit is at work. Churches must also love their **communities** through mercy ministries, welcome for strangers and care for those in need.

The bishop also highlighted the diocese’s global and Ireland-wide **mission** partnerships. He noted that Down and Dromore parishes had given more than £1 million to mission and outreach and pointed to continuing links with the Diocese of Multan in Pakistan, the Diocese of Santiago in Chile and the Diocese of Maridi in South Sudan, including recent gifts through Fields of Life and support for a new Family Centre in Maridi.

Children, youth and young adults were named as urgent priorities. He said the diocese hoped soon to appoint a new Diocesan Children’s Development Officer and welcomed the appointment of Andrew McClelland as Youth and Young Adults Development Officer. “We will be prioritising providing resources to enable our churches to grow younger,” he said.

Pastoral care, stewardship, digital ministry and the raising up of **leaders** were also highlighted as important for the next stage of diocesan life. The bishop said pastoral ministry today required the church to “get its hands dirty” and for shepherds to “smell of the sheep”.

Setting out a year-by-year pathway to 2033, Bishop David named **2027** as a year of stewardship, **2028** as a year of creating community, **2029** as a year for children’s ministry, **2030** for youth ministry, **2031** as a Year of Prayer, **2032** as a year when every church would hold a ten-day mission marking Patrick’s anniversary, and **2033** as a Year of Celebration marking 2000 years since Christ’s passion, death, resurrection, ascension and Pentecost.

Concluding, Bishop David said these priorities would not be isolated annual projects but blended commitments shaping the whole diocese over seven years. His hope, he said, was that Down and Dromore would grow “younger, stronger, deeper, numerically” and in its calling to extend God’s rule in lives, parishes and communities. Returning to Colossians 1:28-29, he urged synod to make Paul’s words the touchstone for the years ahead: “He is the one we proclaim... so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.”

Some people call me Ruth but I don't mind as we all should be like Ruth. Rev. Andy designated the reading from the Book of Ruth throughout the month of June. I was delighted when my reading included verse 16 in Chapter 1.

" But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God "

How happy all in heaven and earth would be if everyone honoured these words. Ruth 1 v 16 Isaiah 53.

Joan Thompson.

Let us by prayer and intercession with thanksgiving
make our requests to God.

Gracious God,
we pray for peace, justice and reconciliation
throughout the world.

We pray for the honouring of human rights,
and for the relief of the oppressed.

We give thanks for all that is gracious in the lives of
men, women and children.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the renewal of the Church in faith, love
and service.

We pray for David our bishop and for the life of
our parishes.

We give thanks for the gift of your word,
the grace of the sacraments
and the fellowship of your people.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this local community
and for all people in their daily life and work.

We pray for the young and the elderly,
for families, and all who are alone.

We give thanks for human skill and creativity
and all that reveals your loveliness.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are in need;
for the sick, sorrowful and bereaved.

We pray for all who bring comfort, care and healing.

We give thanks for human love and friendship
and for all that enriches our daily lives.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we
pray, to the mercy and protection of God. **Amen.**



Collects

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity 5th July

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
Hear our prayer which we offer for all your
faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity 12th July

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
Pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity 19th July

Lord of all power and might,
the author and giver of all good things:
Graft in our hearts the love of your name,
increase in us true religion,
nourish us with all goodness,
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Eighth Sunday after Trinity 26th July

Blessed are you, O Lord,
and blessed are those who observe and keep
your law:
Help us to seek you with our whole heart,
to delight in your commandments
and to walk in the glorious liberty
given us by your Son, Jesus Christ.

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity 2nd August

Almighty God,
who sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your Church:
Open our hearts to the riches of his grace,
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

25th July – Saint James - Apostle to Spain - Saint James the Greater

James and his brother John were sons of Zebedee and fishermen from Galilee – the ‘sons of thunder’. Coming upon four fishermen working on the shore of the lake, Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me’.

Without further ado or even a second thought, they abandon what they’re doing (and in the case of two of them, James and John, leave their father alone in the boat with the hired crew), and set off with Jesus, they know not where. That is how Mark’s Gospel records the recruitment of four of the apostles of Jesus. Talk about a sudden change of life!

We know from John’s Gospel that one pair of brothers, James and John, and the other two called on the same day, had been disciples of John the Baptist, who had pointed Jesus out to them as the ‘Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’.

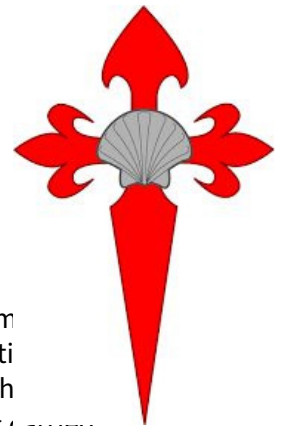
For many of us on the journey of faith the experience of James and John – and the other two, Peter and Andrew – mirrors our own experience. First, we know about Jesus, perhaps as children at Sunday school, or later as adults. Then we begin to ask questions and look for answers. Finally, there may come a time when we hear his calling us to accompany Him on a life of love, service and commitment.

For all four who were called by the lake that day, nothing would ever be quite the same again. But then all those who set out to follow Jesus wherever he leads them are usually in for a few surprises.

James stands out for a number of reasons:

- he was one of the three disciples who witnessed the Transfiguration of Christ.
- he was with Jesus (also Peter and John) when Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead.
- Jesus took him, along with Peter and John, to ‘watch’ with him in the garden of Gethsemane.
- he was the first apostle to die for the Christian faith, when in AD 44 King Herod Agrippa put him to the sword in Jerusalem at Passover time.

In the centuries following his death, James became associated with the evangelising of Spain, and as a powerful defender of Christianity against the Moors. The heyday of the cult of Santiago de Compostela was from the 12th to the 15th century, and the pilgrimage to Compostela became one of the most important of medieval Christendom.



Why is James associated so closely with Compostela?

The 12th century *Historia Compostelana* commissioned by Diego Gelmírez provides a sum of the legend of Saint James, as it was believed at Compostela at that time. Two propositions are central to the legend: first, that James preached the gospel in Hispania as well as in the Holy Land; second, that after his martyrdom at the hands of Herod Agrippa, his followers carried his body by sea to Hispania, where they landed at Padrón on the coast of Galicia, then carried it over land for burial at Santiago de Compostela.

This in time transformed the iconography of James, and his emblems became the pilgrim’s hat and the scallop-shell of Compostela.



The western facade of the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela.

Collect of Saint James the Apostle

Merciful God,
whose holy apostle Saint James,
leaving his father and all that he had,
was obedient to the calling of your Son Jesus Christ
and followed him even to death:
Help us, forsaking the false attractions of the world,
to be ready at all times to answer your call without delay;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Refugees

They have no need of our help
So do not tell me
These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand
We need to see them for who they really are
Chancers and scroungers
Layabouts and loungers
With bombs up their sleeves
Cut-throats and thieves
They are not
Welcome here
We should make them
Go back to where they came from
They cannot
Share our food
Share our homes
Share our countries
Instead let us
Build a wall to keep them out
It is not okay to say
These are people just like us
A place should only belong to those who are born there
Do not be so stupid to think that
The world can be looked at another way

(now read from bottom to top)

Brian Bilston

Collects

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity 9th August

Let your merciful ears, O Lord,
be open to the prayers of your humble servants;
and that they may obtain their petitions,
make them to ask such things as shall please you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity 16th August

O God,
you declare your almighty power
most chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
Mercifully grant to us such a measure of your
grace,
that we, running the way of your commandments,
may receive your gracious promises,
and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity 23rd August

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire, or deserve:
Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience
is afraid,
and giving us those good things
which we are not worthy to ask
save through the merits and mediation
of Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord.

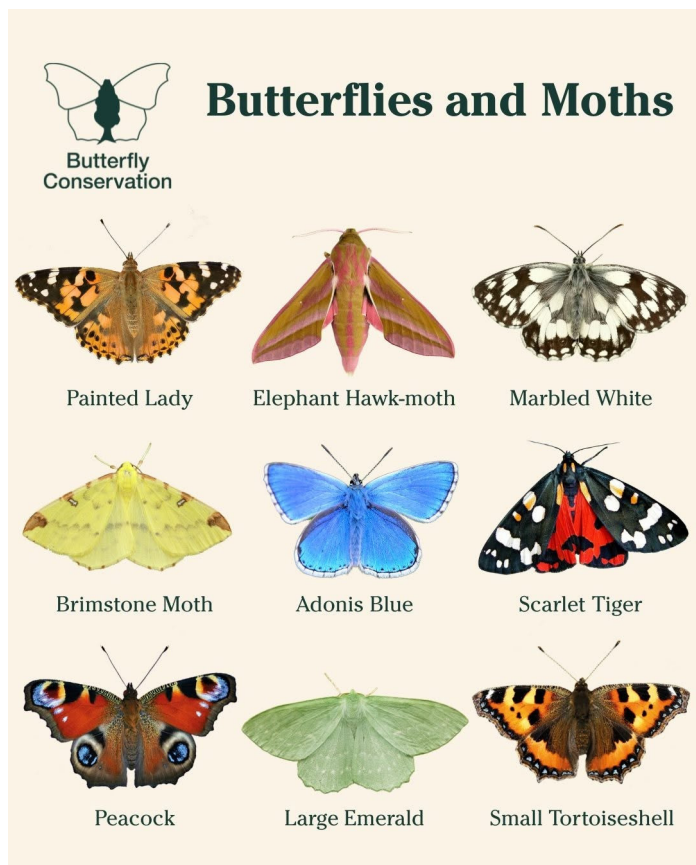
The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity 30th August

Almighty God,
who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to
yourself:
Help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity 6th September

Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
Give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collects from *The Book of Common Prayer*
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Sunday Explorers

As the busy season drew to a close the Sunday Explorers were given gifts. The Rev Andy then thanked Pauline and Serena for their dedication and hard work over the past year.



The notice board, created by the Explorers for Easter, has been given a new look ... the hills are green now, the church, in a photographic collage design, inspired by David Hockney, stands tall to the left. People are drawn towards the fellowship here and there's a welcome for everyone. The image also places the cross at the centre. Do join us each Sunday at 11.30 am.

The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming.

Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements, and to store his few possessions. But then one day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky. The worst had happened; everything was lost. He was stunned with grief and anger. "God, how could you do this to me?!" he cried.

Early the next day, however, he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him. "How did you know I was here?" asked the weary man. "We saw your smoke signal," they replied.

Yesterday I was buying 2 large bags of dog food at Asda. I was about to check out when a woman behind me asked if I had a dog. What did she think I had - an elephant? Since I had little else to do, on impulse, I told her that no I didn't have a dog, and that I was starting the Purina Diet again, although I probably shouldn't because I ended up in the hospital last time. On the bright side though, I had lost 50 pounds before I woke in intensive care. I told her that it was essentially a perfect diet and that the way that it works is to load your pockets with Purina nuggets and simply eat one or two every time you feel hungry and that the food is nutritionally complete so I was going to give it a try again. (I have to mention here that everyone in the queue was enthralled with my story by now.) Horrified, she asked if I ended up in intensive care because the dog food had poisoned me. I told her no; I had stopped in the middle of the road to scratch my fleas and a car hit me. I thought the guy behind her was going to have a heart attack, he was laughing so hard. Asda won't let me shop there anymore.

Benedictine Monks Rostrevor

Services each day

Office of Lauds: 6.45

Office of Terce: 9.20

Eucharist: 11.30

Office of None: 14.15 (Weekdays) / 14.30 (Sunday)

Office of Vespers: 17.30 (Weekdays) / 17.00 (Weekends)

Office of Vigils: 20.30



“Do the next right thing” is a principle encouraging focused, step-by-step action in times of uncertainty, grief, or feeling overwhelmed.

Christian author **Elisabeth Elliot** applied the principle spiritually, encouraging believers to trust God and act on the next right step according to Scripture, reinforcing faith through small, deliberate actions.

Therapists note that even a single small action can diminish feelings of paralysis and help navigate difficult circumstances.

The concept was popularized in cinema culture through the song “**The Next Right Thing**” in Disney’s 2019 **Frozen 2**, sung by Anna during a moment of grief and despair.

The song illustrates finding courage and hope by focusing on the immediate next step, even when the future is uncertain. It portrays Anna's journey through depression. The song has received praise from critics for its message and meaning and it peaked on the Kid Digital Songs chart at number 7. It was inspired by real-life loss and emphasizes resilience, emotional processing, and perseverance.

When life is tough,
we're here to listen

SAMARITANS

Call us free 24/7 on
116 123



9.00 am - 9.00 pm Monday—Friday
10.00 am - 6.00 pm Saturday & Sunday
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A Scientist Reflects: Suffering and the Image of God

Since the cost-of-living crisis in 2021/22, Food Banks have become a necessity for many desperate families. When they are given food, people reveal a variety of emotions: from relief, happiness and hope, through to quiet sadness, resignation, and desperation. Most often they display a mixture of several of these feelings at the same time.

I believe that our cries for answers at times like this, and our deep longing for things to be better, kinder, more just, less painful and chaotic, are a sign that we are made in the image of God. The Bible describes God creating men and women, instructing them to rule over the earth, and giving them the freedom to choose what they will do. The world God made was described as “very good”, but human wrongdoing caused a rift between people and God, and also between us and the rest of Creation.

From a scientist’s perspective, it seems that the potential for accidents, disease and death – for both animals and humans – may have been part of God’s very good creation, and there was a real threat of famine, albeit far rarer than in our current mismanaged version of creation? How would we have managed life in what Genesis describes as an un-subdued world if our relationship with God hadn’t broken down, and evil hadn’t been unleashed? Maybe painful experiences would have been experienced as challenges that brought us closer to each other and to God, rather than bringing us the experience of suffering (which I would define more particularly as involving distress, isolation and fear)? Of course, these are theoretical questions that no one can answer, but perhaps they are worth exploring.

God has already responded to suffering at a root level by taking it on himself. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus broke the power of sin and death. We do not yet see the final results of those decisive actions – the end of suffering for all those who trust him – but we can already feel their impact. For example, many people have experienced the wonderful effect, either in their own lives or by receiving kindness from others, which is described by these words: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

Some of the people who receive food are, in the words of one community leader, “really desperate”, but yet they still trust God to meet their needs. My hope is that the worldwide Church will, with God’s help, be part of the answer to their prayers – demonstrating our true status as people made in the image of God.

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge



In July 1776, there were roughly 2.5 million Americans in the Thirteen Colonies.

Those who went to church worshipped in about 3,228 Christian congregations, made up of about 14 various denominations. These included: Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Dutch Reformed, Methodists, Quakers, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics.

Today, there are about 342.5 million Americans.

Those who go to church, worship in about 325,000 Christian congregations, and can choose from a staggering 200 different denominations, as well as thousands of independent congregations.

A recent survey from the Pew Research Centre found that today, about 17% of Americans would like the government to declare Christianity the official religion of the USA. But two-thirds of Americans believe that churches and other places of worship should ‘keep out of political matters.’

The most popular view (43%) is that the government should “promote Christian moral values without making Christianity the official religion”.

This is followed (38%) by the belief that the government should “neither establish an official religion nor promote Christian values”

“In God We Trust” first appeared on US coins in 1864. In 1956 President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a law officially making “In God We Trust” the national motto of the United States. It remains in place as the USA’s official motto today.



Visit to a Church ...

... The **Evangelische Kirche Rodheim** (Protestant Church of Rodheim),

This is the local church near where Helga's sister lives. All the church pews etc carved from wood from a local forest. The tall candle is lit for every baptism.



The building is open on four weekdays as well as for Sunday worship.

This invitation (translated) is on the website:

Take a deep breath, recharge your batteries. Just being there. Finally have some peace and quiet. Pray. Be close to God. Revel in thoughts. Think of someone. Be interested in architecture and history. Far away from the hectic hustle and bustle of everyday life, this is possible in the open Rodheim church.

The oldest part of the church dates back to the thirteenth century.

A brass plaque installed in 1932 indicates that in 1759 the English General Eliot, son of the 1st British Governor of Gibraltar, was also buried in the church.



The roof needs repair. It will cost €800,000. They have raised €160,000 and hope the the local Dekanat will provide the rest. They had hoped to sell some land but this wasn't allowed as it was part of a bequest.

Their minister has just resigned from the 3 churches to become an RE teacher in a local grammar school to have more time with his family!!!

The slates for the roof are of a particular shape and are more expensive to make.



Patric writes: The organ was built & installed in **1758**.

The church was hit by lightning in **1903** and rebuilt using wood from the local forest.

In **1917** 39 pipes were removed from the organ for weapon production. During restoration these were copied and put back. They stand for the 39 people from the church who fell in WWI

Herr Hisserich who showed us round had wanted to study theology but his father said he had to take over the family business. He sang in the choir for 25 years, preached and helped with services. He is 84 and full of life. When he retired as local butcher a few years ago the people missed him so much that he reopened the shop.

The church has 5 bells. One bell is still rung at 10 o'clock to signal a break for the farmers in the fields, 1.00 pm for lunch and at 5.00 pm for return to the farm to do stall work. This comes from times when there were no watches. Farms are usually found in German villages and the fields are outside them.

[Patric and Helga Harris](#)





The Boating Party, Mary Cassatt (1844–1926), 1894, Oil on canvas
35½ × 46 in., National Gallery of Art, Washington

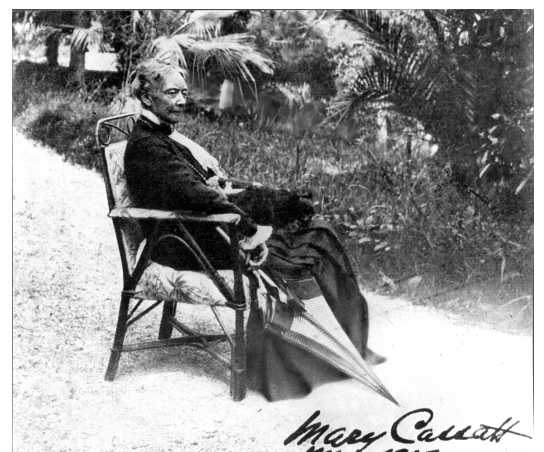
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart

Mark 12:28b-34

At that time: One of the scribes came up to Jesus and asked him, ‘Which commandment is the most important of all?’ Jesus answered, ‘The most important is, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” The second is this: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.’ And the scribe said to him, ‘You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbour as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.’ And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Reflection on the painting

Mary Cassatt was an American painter, born in Pennsylvania, who spent much of her adult life in France, where she became close friends with Edgar Degas. As one of the few prominent female Impressionists, she exhibited alongside the movement’s leading figures. Her work primarily depicted the social and private lives of women, often highlighting the deep, intimate bonds between mothers and their children. In this painting, we see a mother holding her child closely, both gazing at the gentleman rowing the boat. Is he the father, or simply a boatman ferrying them from one place to another? We cannot say for certain. Yet, whatever the circumstances, the painting beautifully captures maternal love, as well as the care and responsibility the boatman shows in safely guiding the family to their destination.



Time and again, the Bible reminds us that love is the greatest virtue we can hold. It is love for our neighbour, our families (as seen in this painting), our friends, but above all, Jesus declares: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart." This, he tells us, is the greatest commandment ... and the second is like it ... "love one's neighbour as oneself."

We cannot love God fully without his help. Within each of us, he has planted a deep longing to love him, a longing that must be nurtured in order to grow. Just as a musician improves through dedicated practice, and a rower (as in our painting) becomes more skilled with each stroke, so too does our love for God deepen the more we give ourselves to him. The more we seek him, the more we will love him ... until our hearts, like the mother's embrace in this painting, reflect the love that God first poured into us.

Fr. Patrick van der Vorst



I am a P7 get me out of here!

What a fabulous send off for our wonderful P7 class! A huge thanks to Liz Farnan, Environmental Educator who organised 'I'm a P7 get me out of here' fun filled activity day. Split into 2 teams, there were lots of challenges and opportunities to win gold stars and be crowned queen or king of the jungle.

A nightline was the first challenge. Both groups followed a guide rope while blindfolded. Lots of cooperation and communication was needed in order to lead us safely to base camp.

Challenge 2 required the teams to leave base camp and search the jungle for the dinosaur egg (watermelon). Once the dinosaur egg was found by the boys team, earning them a gold star, it was cut up and enjoyed.

For the 3rd challenge, the teams were once again sent into the jungle to identify the birds. The girls were the first team to correctly identify most birds winning them another gold star.

Both teams then had the opportunity to explore the jungle and to build shelters from wood and tarpaulin before the wood was gathered, the campfire lit and the marshmallows were toasted.

The girls' team were victorious, crowning Grace 'Queen of the Jungle'. Noah was then crowned 'King of the Jungle'. A fun day was had!



Spot the Difference

-A.Harris

It ought to be straightforward.
Oh, how simple could this be!
*It's writing so the differences
can't be that hard to see.*

Okay, that's fair,
you've made your point.
But try to find them, then.
I bet you it's quite difficult.
You'll never find all 10!

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Pro tip: Use old English at work to reduce conflict

- ✗ **Modern:** "This meeting could have been an email"
- ✔ **Old English:** "why dost thou summon us, when but a scroll had met the need"

- ✗ **Modern:** "Pls fix"
- ✔ **Old English:** "I beseech thee to undo thine mistakes"

- ✗ **Modern:** "Unfortunately, I won't be able to attend..."
- ✔ **Old English:** "Alas, I must forgo this gathering, for fate wills it so"

- ✗ **Modern:** "Could you provide an update?"
- ✔ **Old English:** "Dost thou bear tidings of this affair?"

- ✗ **Modern:** "Are you just stupid?"
- ✔ **Old English:** "Hath wisdom fled thee, or art thou merely cursed with folly?"

- ✗ **Modern:** "As per my email"
- ✔ **Old English:** "As I did scribe unto thee ere aforetime"

Just a splinter!

Last week, I found a splinter in my finger. I knew it would eventually come to the surface.

Three days later, the splinter surfaced. I pulled it out.

Splinters are common. They irritate for a moment, but shouldn't overtake our lives. Only a splinter, after all.

Except... there was still a bit left in my finger.

For three days, it festered. A small irritant turned into a major annoyance.

Every day it irked me, just a bit more than the day before. I lost my sense of proportion.

Today, finally, the last shred of irritation came out. My finger is clean. The pain is gone.

In case the application is not already overly obvious: a festering wound will always ache.

Leave even a scrap of bitterness and irritation, and it may end up distracting your whole body.

When removing splinters of unforgiveness, even where it hurts, don't leave even a shred of irritation in your soul. Confess, repent, heal.

Only One is a wounded healer.

It is Jesus, only Jesus, who takes on the splinters, wounds, sharp edges, gently, painstakingly extricates the bitter fragments, bandages my brokenness, calls me back to life.

Sarah Yardley





18th June once again saw an eager gathering in the Parish Room to enjoy soup and rolls and then dive into another chapter of Mark's Gospel. We explored questions about the Syrophenecian woman's response to Jesus' words recorded in 7:27 **"First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."**

The really good thing about the Book Club is the freedom to explore difficult questions and to listen to each other as we reflect on Mark's writing

This group has become so popular, and it's not just the lunch, that we have decided to meet twice a month. It is just an hour together, but a huge amount is packed into that time.

First and third Thursdays at one o'clock. It is a relaxed time, you don't need to have attended any previous sessions, so just come along and enjoy looking at Mark's Gospel together.

Elizabeth

15th July - Saint Swithun's Day

Saint Swithun is apparently the saint you can blame for rainy summers. It is said that if it rains on his special day, 15th July, it will then rain for 40 days after that. It all began when Swithun was made Bishop of Winchester in 852 by King Ethelwulf of Wessex.

During his life Swithun seems to have done a lot of good. He was famous for his charitable gifts and for his energy in getting churches built. When he was dying in 862, he asked that he be buried in the cemetery of the Old Minster, just outside the west door.

If he had been left there in peace, who knows how many rainy summers we may have been spared. But, no, it was decided to move Swithun. By now, the 960s, Winchester had become the first monastic cathedral chapter in England, and the newly installed monks wanted Swithun in the cathedral. So on 15 July 971 his bones were dug up and Swithun was translated into the cathedral.

That same day many people claimed to have had miraculous cures. Certainly everyone got wet, for the heavens opened. The unusually heavy rain that day, and on the days following, was attributed to the power of Saint Swithun. Swithun was moved again in 1093, into the new Winchester cathedral. His shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the Middle Ages. The shrine was destroyed during the Reformation and restored in 1962

Me: Alexa ... check my bank balance. What Apple products may I buy?

Alexa: Apple juice.

I asked my hairdresser the other day what cut would make me look pretty.

A power cut was not the answer I was expecting!

Doctor: "Describe your average night.

Patient: "They wear suits of armour."

Doctor: "No, I mean at bedtime."

Patient: "They probably take it off."

Dear friends,

I would like to take this opportunity, in this Bumper Edition, to thank Rev Elizabeth Hanna for the gift she has given us of her time and editorial skills. Elizabeth works so hard to produce this magazine and we are so grateful. When you see her, please thank her in person. If she blushes, thank her again!

Andy



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