

News from the Parishes

Church of the Ascension, Annahilt



Magherahamlet Parish Church



April 2020



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The Rector writes....

My dear Parishioners

I would like to think that over the years you have got to know me as a 'People person', that is, one who wishes to be present in person with you sharing in your joys and sorrows. Now instead, I am physically distancing myself from people, staying in touch by phone and email and praying for them as they come into my mind. These are challenging days for everyone as we try to follow best practice to stay safe and protect the most vulnerable in our community from the coronavirus.

We do have a duty of care to those deemed to be most vulnerable in the senior age bracket or those with underlying medical conditions who may be more susceptible to this virus. This is why, for the foreseeable future, all Sunday services and weekly activities in the churches and halls are suspended.

Our magazine tends to find its way pretty well into the home of any person who has declared themselves a parishioner. Therefore in this magazine we will find the words of some hymns and prayers that may serve as a useful devotional resource in these troubled times.

One of the aspects of the present crisis that concerns me most is the degree of isolation that may be experienced especially by our senior parishioners. It's very challenging to be asked not to visit our elderly parents or grandparents and keep ourselves as an individual or family unit to ourselves. By doing what we think to be helpful by visiting, we may be in fact exposing people to a greater risk. For this reason I am going to look in the coming days at setting up a team of people who might undertake to telephone a small number of people regularly especially in that more vulnerable age category. It cannot be underestimated just how important these phone calls and little cards or letters will be to people especially those who don't use technology or smartphones. For those who are well and can collect groceries or prescriptions for those more vulnerable, please offer to do so and we hope those little clusters will be able to support and help each other as the need arises. For those wishing to help in that practical way, I would like to alert you to a very inspiring Facebook page called "help the vulnerable". They are making a huge difference to many people through the pooling of resources and helping in those practical ways.

We respectfully remind people that if they are displaying any symptoms of the virus

like a runny nose, a cough or a fever they should please stay at home along with their household and self-isolate for 14 days. If the symptoms persist, please phone your GP or 111 for further advice.

May I please encourage everyone to pray in these days for the British and Irish Governments and the Northern Ireland Executive as they make difficult decisions on a daily and even hourly basis? May I ask you to pray too for the medical professionals on the frontline looking after people who are very ill and putting themselves at risk in the process? May I ask you to pray for our children and grandchildren who are off school for what may be a long time? Please pray too for small businesses who are so reliant on their customers for cashflow and for the many people who have been laid off work during this crisis. I have noticed how some have been able to set up their business online to supply people. It's good to offer custom to those ventures if we are in a position to do so or to shop locally and support our local retailers, who will find these days very difficult to manage.

Churches are no exception to this in terms of their running costs. If people are in a position to do so, making contributions by standing order, organised by you with your bank, is a very helpful way to stabilise parish finances at such a precarious time. The details of how to do this will be found in this magazine. If it is helpful to speak to either of our Honorary Treasurers, you will find their details also included.

As Christians we do have a unique resource through prayer to cry out to God and ask for his help in this time of great need and anxiety. This is why we want to use this month's magazine as a springboard or resource to mobilise the prayers of many. Pray on your own, pray with your household or family. Our heavenly Father longs to engage with us in these troubled times. I am reminded of two things as I conclude. The first is a verse from a hymn which begins "Brother, Sister, let me serve you". It says

"We are pilgrims on a journey
and companions on the road.
We are here to help each other,
walk the mile and bear the load".

Some people's load is particularly heavy in these times. Through prayer and phone calls and messages we can help each other to get through. I'm also reminded of some verses from Psalm 139 verses 7- 10. In those verses the psalmist writes that no matter what we face – both in the good times and the worst of times, God's spirit is with us. There's a lovely picture in verse 10 of how God's right hand will hold us fast. That's an excellent illustration to keep at the very forefront of our minds if we are feeling

anxious or afraid, if we can't sleep for whatever reason, God's right hand will hold us fast.

May I wish you strength, peace and an overwhelming sense of the presence of God. I want to reassure you that so long as I am well and not a risk to anyone, I am willing and available to minister to you especially in times of adversity, while observing Government and Public Health guidelines which are in place for all our benefit. I'm also conscious of the power of the telephone. Twice since the present crisis unfolded our new Bishop has contacted me and prayed with me over the phone. I suspect there will be quite a bit of that type of contact in the coming days, weeks and months.

With my very best wishes,

Your sincere friend and Rector

Robert Howard

Devotional Resources for the Coronavirus Situation

The following pages contain some hymns and prayers that may be of help at this time:

Christ be beside me (Hymn CH 611)

Christ be beside me,
Christ be before me,
Christ be behind me,
King of my heart.
Christ be within me,
Christ be below me,
Christ be above me,
never to part.

Christ on my right hand,
Christ on my left hand,
Christ all around me,
shield in the strife.
Christ in my sleeping,
Christ in my sitting,

Christ in my rising,
light of my heart.

Christ be in all hearts
thinking about me,
Christ be on all tongues
telling of me.
Christ be the vision
in eyes that see me,
In ears that hear me,
Christ ever be.

What a friend we have in Jesus (Hymn CH 627)

What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Jesus is our only refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!

In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.

May the mind of Christ my Saviour (Hymn CH 636)

May the mind of Christ, my Saviour,
live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling
all I do and say.

May the Word of God enrich me
with his truth from hour to hour,
so that all may see I triumph
only through his power.

May the peace of God my Father
in my life for ever reign,
that I may be calm to comfort
those in grief and pain.

May the love of Jesus fill me
as the waters fill the sea;
him exalting, self abasing:
this is victory.

May his beauty rest upon me
as I seek to make him known
so that all may look to Jesus,
seeing him alone.

May I run the race before me,
strong and brave to face the foe,
looking only unto Jesus
as I onward go.

Devotional Prayers

Preserve us O Lord while waking and guard us while sleeping that while we are awake we may watch with Christ and when asleep we may rest in peace.
(from the Service of Compline)

Lord Jesus you travelled through towns and villages curing every disease and illness. At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care. Heal us from our fear which prevents nations from working together and neighbours from helping each other. Heal us from our pride which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders. Lord Jesus you travelled through towns and villages curing every disease and sickness, come to our aid now that we may experience your healing love.

Lord Jesus, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow. Be with the families of those who have died from the virus. May they know your peace. Be with the families of those who are sick. As they worry, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace.

Be with the doctors and nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace. Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with clarity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve.

Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace as they work together to achieve it on earth.

Wherever we are Lord, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or just a few, please stay with us as we endure and mourn, as we persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace. Lord Jesus heal us we pray in your precious name.

Amen.



The Bishop, the Rt Revd David McClay's Palm Sunday Call to Prayer

As part of the [Palm Sunday call to prayer for Ireland](#) between 3–4.00 pm made by church leaders and para church leaders from across the island, Bishop David invites everyone with a connection to any of the churches in our diocese to do three things on Palm Sunday 5th April from 3.45 pm – 4.00 pm.

1. To place a cross or draw a picture of a cross in the time leading up to 3.45 pm from 3.00 pm onwards (where appropriate, involving children in this activity) placing the cross in the window or putting the picture of the cross on a window in your home facing outwards.
2. If you physically can to then please kneel.
3. Pray aloud or silently as appropriate while kneeling (if you can) or sitting the following two prayers:

Prayer A

Heavenly Father,

We pray for all those on the frontline of the fight against Coronavirus.

For doctors, nurses, pharmacists and all medical staff, especially those we know (name any known to you).

For all those working in essential services (name those known to you).

For those who are sick, those who have been bereaved and those living alone who may be afraid (name those known to you).

And for all of us,
That we may know the peace of God that passes all understanding
(name family and close friends).

Lord God help us to hear and to heed your voice as you lead and guide us daily.

God Almighty enable us to know your presence and your power in our lives that we would see you at work more and more as each day passes.

We cry out to you asking you to intervene and halt the spread of this virus.

We ask for your wisdom and enabling for all involved in research to find a vaccine.

We pray for a new wind of your Holy Spirit to blow across this island with healing and hope, repentance and faith towards you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, leading to the salvation of many.

In your love and mercy, we pray that you would bless us with a new awareness of your presence with us, your love towards us, your kindness and care for us and for all those for whom Jesus lived and died.

May we and may many respond to you with all our hearts in love and faith.
We pray this in and through the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

Amen

Prayer B

Almighty and merciful God who in days of old didst give to this land the benediction of thy holy Church; Withdraw not, we pray thee, thy favour from us, but so correct what is amiss, and supply what is lacking, that we may more and more bring forth fruit to thy glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Bishop says:

“I welcome this initiative and with it the opportunity for Christians across this island to cry out to God for our land that He would heal, that He would bless, that He would come among us with His grace and mercy and saving love. I have in recent weeks provided a number of prayer resources. This call does not replace them but simply adds another opportunity for all of us in Down and Dromore Diocese to join with others in praying fervently and in a unite way into our current situation and for Ireland this Palm Sunday.”

Yours in His love
+ David, Down & Dromore

Postponement of the Easter Vestry

The Easter General Vestry which was scheduled for Monday 23 March in Annahilt and Wednesday 25 March in Magherahamlet has been postponed due to the coronavirus situation. We are awaiting guidance from the central church as to when and how it might be rescheduled.

AN ALTERNATE WAY OF CONTRIBUTING FUNDS TO THE PARISHES

The Rector in his letter this month asked parishioners to consider donating by Standing Order or Direct Bank Transfer in this time of uncertainty.

We would encourage parishioners to avail of this method which will help sustain the ongoing overheads of our grouped parishes.

Please contact Patricia (Annahilt) or Hillary (Magherahamlet), details as below, who will advise you of the necessary information you will require to set up a standing order or direct transfer and also give you guidance if necessary.

Annahilt - Miss Patricia Halliday Email: patriciaapc@btinternet.com
Telephone: 028 9266 5310 Mobile 07713 257 691

Magherahamlet - Hillary Edgar Email: hillary.edgar01@btinternet.com
Telephone: 028 4481 1361

PRAYER REQUEST

Do you have a concern or problem and would like someone to pray for you? If so, contact the Rector who will be very willing to help. This is completely confidential and no details will be passed onto anyone else unless you want them to. Telephone: 028 9263 8218

LISBURN FOODBANK

The Foodbank provides emergency food and support to local people in crisis in the Lisburn area.

During the present government ordered restrictions it is not possible to leave items for the Foodbank at Church. However, if parishioners would like to continue to donate at this time, and it is hoped that many will, they may wish to know that the collection points at the two supermarkets, Tesco and Sainsbury's, are permanent points and will allow people to continue to remember those who rely on the Foodbank in a very practical way.

Coming up to Easter a particular request from the Foodbank is for items listed below:

Easter eggs / chocolates
Diluted juice
Coffee
Sugar

The Lisburn Foodbank is providing an essential service to those within our community who are experiencing difficult times, often due to circumstances beyond their control.

YOUR HELP WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

Election of the new Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland



The Rt Revd John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher, has been elected by the House of Bishops as the new Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland. He succeeds Archbishop Richard Clarke who retired on 2nd February this year.

Bishop McDowell (aged 64) was ordained in 1996 and has served as Bishop of Clogher since 2011. He was previously Rector of St Mark's, Dundela, in East Belfast (2002–2011), Rector of Ballyrashane (1999–2002), and Curate of Antrim (1996–1999). He has also served as an Honorary Secretary of the General Synod (2008–2011) and is currently Chairman of the Church of Ireland's Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue.

Speaking on his election, Bishop McDowell said: 'I am overwhelmed by the confidence which my fellow bishops have placed in me to fill this ancient office. I look forward to working with them in the time to come and

to serving the people of the Diocese of Armagh and the Church of Ireland in whatever way I can.'

The translation will take effect from Tuesday, 28th April, and the enthronement date will be announced in due course. Upon taking up his responsibilities as Archbishop of Armagh, Bishop McDowell will be the 106th in the succession of abbots, bishops and archbishops of Armagh since St Patrick.

We warmly congratulate the Bishop of Clogher on his preferment to the Archbishopric of Armagh and Primacy of All Ireland. The Archbishop-elect was scheduled to spend Holy Week in our Group of Parishes. Unfortunately, present public health regulations have made this impossible. However, we are very pleased that Bishop McDowell will address us on line at our mid-week Services on Monday 6, Tuesday 7 and Wednesday 8 April

Church Services in the Parishes of Annahilt and Magherahamlet

'I was glad when they said to me: "Let us go to the house of the Lord"'

Unfortunately, it is not possible to worship together in either the Church of the Ascension, Annahilt or Magherahamlet Parish Church during the present World-wide Medical Emergency. However, we do invite you to join in worship on-line.

Sunday 5 April

Lent VI (Palm Sunday)

10.00 Family Service

During Holy Week on Monday 6, Tuesday 7 & Wednesday 8 April there will be a series of addresses 'Watching Jesus' given by the Rt Revd John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher and Archbishop-elect of Armagh

Monday

7.00 pm Evening Service

Tuesday

7.00 pm Evening Service

Wednesday

7.00 pm Evening Service

Maundy Thursday

7.00 pm Commemoration of the Institution of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday

7.00 pm Tenebrae Service

Sunday 12 April

Easter Day

10.00 A Service of Holy Communion to celebrate Easter

Sunday 19 April

Easter II

10.00 Risen with Christ' – *An Easter Devotion of Readings & Hymns*

Sunday 26 April

Easter III

10.00 Morning Prayer

Sunday 3 May

Easter IV

10.00 Holy Communion

GOOD FRIDAY TENEBRAE SERVICE 7.00 pm

What is a Tenebrae Service? The word 'tenebrae' is Latin for shadows. The purpose of the Tenebrae service is to recreate the emotional aspects of the passion story and is one of solemnity.

The service is specially designed for Good Friday. It contains appropriate hymns, a sermon and several scripture readings. The church is in candlelight for the Tenebrae service. There are as many candles as there are readings, plus a white candle. As each reading is read a single candle is extinguished until only the white candle (representing the light of Christ) remains. Then the white candle is put out, leaving the congregation in near total darkness— and near total devastation. At this point, the service ends. There is no benediction and the Service ends in silence.

The purpose of the service is to recreate the betrayal, abandonment, and agony of the events and it is left unfinished, because the story isn't over until Easter Day.

This service has been experienced in our Group of Parishes on Good Friday for ten consecutive years and has been very well received.

The Tenebrae Service which will be transmitted on-line on Good Friday evening at 7.00 pm is also very much a Group occasion for the parishioners of both Annahilt and Magherahamlet. Let us bring our Holy Week observances to a worthy climax this year with a full response by listening online.

Mothers' UNION

Annahilt

The members of Annahilt Mothers' Union would like to say a very sincere Thank You for the wonderful support that they received from the ladies of the local church organisations and also from the members of our own congregation on the occasion of our Visitors evening in February.

The proceeds of our Sale Table together with some very generous donations amounted to £300 and this money will be used to fund Mothers' Union projects both at home and overseas. The success of our evening can also be attributed to Louise and Victoria McGregor's very professional presentation on their trip to Malawi and the provision of a delicious supper which presented the ideal opportunity for everyone to relax and socialise.

Unfortunately we had to postpone our branch meeting on 16 March. This was on account of the current medical emergency and the potential risk to our members. Since then all parochial activity has been suspended. Therefore different arrangements are being made for members to participate in the Holy Week Maundy Thursday service. Members are invited to go online and pick up this Service on our parish website www.annahiltandmagherahamlet.org from 7.00 pm.

We hope you all keep well and if anyone needs any help or assistance feel free to contact either Beth or Esme.

Magherahamlet

Unfortunately the MU Diocesan Festival Service scheduled for 18 March had to be postponed on account of the current health crisis. As all parochial activity has since been suspended other arrangements have had to be made for Holy Week this year. Members are invited to participate in the Holy Week Service on Wednesday 9 April. Members are invited to go online and pick up this Service on our parish website www.annahiltandmagherahamlet.org from 7.00 pm.

On account of the uncertain situation and government restrictions on movement it has not been possible to make arrangements for the Annual Dinner and the Annual Outing with Dromara Branch.

We hope you are all keeping well. If anyone needs any help or assistance feel free to contact either Avril or Ann.

Parish Magazine

Any contribution for the next edition of the Parish Magazine should be left with the Rector or Roger Maxwell (magazine@annahiltandmagherahamlet.org) by Sunday 19 April 2020.



www.annahiltandmagherahamlet.org

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NIC103246 (Annahilt) and NIC102122 (Magherahamlet)