

News from the Parishes

Church of the Ascension, Annahilt



Magherahamlet Parish Church



March 2020



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The Rector writes....

My dear Parishioners

With Easter coming in April this year, your March magazine coincides with the observance of Lent. You are familiar with the origin of many of our Lent customs. Shrove Tuesday pancakes were once a way to use up the eggs and fats in the home before Lent began – hence the French name Mardi Gras. The next day, Ash Wednesday, would see people going to church and participating in worship to mark the beginning of the penitential season.

The Eastern Orthodox celebrate Lent slightly differently, with a long lead-in period and no Sundays off fasting. Because they believe increased fasting must be accompanied by increased prayer, there are many extra services with more Bible readings than usual. Orthodox laypeople go for six weeks or more without eating meat, fish, dairy products, or any wine or oil except on Sundays.

More importantly, the Orthodox say Alleluias in greater number in Lent, whereas in the Western churches we stop them altogether until the First Communion of Easter. The Orthodox view is that fasting should be joyous, and that any sense of unworthiness should be balanced by our hope that God's great forgiveness applies to us. So why might we embark on this period of mixed self-denial, giving alms, awareness of our own mortality, meditation upon Jesus' sacrifice for us, some of it played out via the giving up of chocolate or the taking on of extra devotional reading?

The "forty" days (approximately) correspond to the time Jesus spent in the wilderness before the beginning of his ministry. As we know, forty was a convenient round number in Biblical terms, meaning a **considerable length of time**. (There are many instances of threes, sevens, forties, and seventies, and other multiples of these.) Lent continues through Passiontide and into Holy Week, when we remind ourselves of the events of Jesus' last week on earth, culminating in his death and resurrection. There will be the customary talks by an invited speaker in Holy Week. Along with the sombre tone of Good Friday, there is bare wood everywhere as the Holy Table is stripped and flowers are removed. The mood changes on Sunday morning, when the First Communion of Easter is held.

The Easter celebration is for everyone, whether they have left their chocolate only mostly uneaten, or even if they gave up on their Lent book a couple of weeks ago. To delve into how we might feel at the end of this time of preparation, we could look at

the texts set in the church for the weeks leading up to Lent, the wonderfully named Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima (derived from seventy, sixty and fifty days before Easter respectively – it’s approximate, again). One of them is the parable of the sower and the seed. Jesus gives us a clear image of planting time in Galilee – but with an inefficient sower who drops a shocking amount of seed on inhospitable places: paths, rocks, weedy areas.

Those listening in Jesus’ time would have been stunned by this waste (they knew enough to be careful where they threw their precious seeds even though they had to scatter them by hand), but it gives us a vivid image of some seeds struggling in vain and others being able to produce a huge yield. As Jesus himself explains the meaning of the various terrain, we see that the underlying message is to be able to hold on to God’s word in any and all situations.

As we prayerfully decide what to take on and what to drop, as we bookmark our Bible reading plans, let us remember that it’s not about earning points by doing things, like collecting gold stars on a celestial chart. We ask God for the very things that enable us to do what God wishes and rest in Him. So my prayer for us all is that we should each have a holy Lent, not being driven by fear and doubt but motivated by our awe at God’s love, waiting on his word for any change we could make. That way we can expect our Lent to be different, to learn something new about ourselves and our faith.

As Jesus says, “When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do,” (Matt 6:16) so let us wish each other a Joyous Lent.

Your sincere friend and Rector

Robert Howard

Thank you....

..... to all who subscribed to the following special Church Collections:

Annahilt

Leprosy Mission £246.65

Magherahamlet:

Leprosy Mission £167.00

...to all who supported the events following the Services in support of the Church Missionary Society:

Light Refreshments in Annahilt £295.75

Famine Lunch in Magherahamlet £238.00

New Bishop's First Visit

We were delighted to have our new Bishop, the Rt Revd David McClay in the Church of the Ascension on Ash Wednesday 26 February. It was his first scheduled visit to the Group of Parishes. A sizeable congregation representative of both Annahilt and Magherahamlet was in attendance, a fact commented on appreciatively by the Bishop in his opening remarks.

The Service followed an Order to mark the beginning of Lent and included a celebration of the Holy Communion. The Bishop presided with the Rector also officiating. Two hymns were sung, 'Forty days and forty nights thou wast fasting in the wild' and 'O merciful Creator here'.

The special preacher was the Bishop whose sermon was an exposition of the Old Testament reading from Joel 2 .He emphasised the call on God's people to sound an alarm, to pray for a spiritual awakening in the land. The spiritual health of a nation is the responsibility of God's people. He suggested that it's time that the church again carried that responsibility.

The Bishop concluded with a call to Action in three ways:

1 That we humble ourselves, committing ourselves to a life of private prayer and the daily discipline of seeking God wholeheartedly.

2 That we call those around us back to a life of worship and meeting together. It's a call for all ages and all people.

3 That leaders especially walk humbly, leading others into true repentance towards

God for the spiritual poverty of our nation and often the church in the west today.

A final reminder that God is merciful towards those who seek Him, when we seek him with our whole hearts.

Following the Service most members of the congregation went to the Parochial Hall for Light Refreshments served by the Mothers' Union. The Bishop took the opportunity of circulating and meeting as many parishioners as possible.

The Rector expressed appreciation of the Bishop's presence in our Group of Parishes so early in his episcopate. The Bishop suitably replied, in particular thanking all who provided and served the refreshments. He then brought the evening to an official close with prayer.

CMSI Lenten Boxes

Church Missionary Society Boxes are included with this month's magazine. As an exercise of the discipline of self-denial and as a contribution to the missionary work of the Church, you are asked to set aside what you can in these boxes during the penitential season of Lent.

Parochial Annual General Meetings or Easter Vestries

Please note the Annual General Meeting or Easter Vestry of each parish in the Group:

Annahilt	Monday 23 March	8.00 pm	Parochial Hall
Magherahamlet	Wednesday 25 March	8.00 pm	Parochial Hall

As usual, the past year will be reviewed and the Churchwardens and Select Vestries for another year will be elected. As this is a triennial year, Diocesan Synodspersons (those who would represent the Group of Parishes at the Diocesan Synod) and Parochial Nominators (those who would represent the Group of Parishes on the Board of Nomination to appoint a new Rector if a vacancy arose during the next 3 years) will also be elected.

While only registered Vestrypersons may vote, attendance is open to all parishioners. The meetings are occasions when we may learn more about what is happening in our own parish, diocese and the wider Church, as well as participating in the annual and triennial elections afterwards.

Saint Patrick's Day, 17 March 2020 – Down and Dromore Diocese. Invitation from Bishop McClay



Please join me on Tuesday 17 March for our annual St Patrick's Day celebrations which begin a special season of prayer in the diocese. I very much look forward to seeing you in Saul and Downpatrick and welcoming our guest speaker at the Festival Service, Bishop Andrew Forster.

+ **David**

Programme

9.15 am **Holy Communion at Saul**

Preacher: Ven Roderic West, Archdeacon of Dromore

10.15 am **Pilgrimage from Saul to Downpatrick**

11.45 am **Festival Service in Down Cathedral**

Preacher: Rt Revd Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe

Wreath laying ceremony at St Patrick's Grave

1.15 pm **Lunch**

Irish stew lunch for all in the marquee

Transport to Saul

From 8:00 am private buses will leave from the Mall for the communion service and pilgrimage.

The last bus for the communion service leaves at:
8.45 am

The last bus for the pilgrimage leaves at:
9.45 am

The last bus from Saul to the Cathedral leaves at:
10.40 am

Parish Website launched: AnnahiltAndMagherahamlet.org

A new website has been created to provide information on church related activities and organisations for parishioners and the wider community alike. It contains a list of upcoming church services and events as well as downloadable versions of the parish magazine, so you can keep up to date with parish news any time, whether you are using your PC, tablet or mobile phone to access the web. The site will be continually developed, so if you have any submissions, suggestions or requests relating to the website, these can be sent to admin@annahiltandmagherahamlet.org. We hope you find this new service a useful and informative resource. The site address is annahiltandmagherahamlet.org or alternatively use the QR code below or on the rear cover.



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"'

Sunday 1 March **Lent I**

Saint David's Day

10.00	Parish Communion	Annahilt
12.00	Parish Communion	Magherahamlet

Sunday 8 March **Lent II**

8.30	Holy Communion	Annahilt
10.00	Morning Prayer	Annahilt
12.00	Morning Prayer	Magherahamlet

Sunday 15 March **St Patrick's Day**

10.00	Parish Communion	Annahilt
12.00	Morning Prayer	Magherahamlet

Sunday 22 March **Lent IV (Mothering Sunday)**

8.30	Holy Communion	Annahilt
10.00	Family Service	Annahilt <i>Service Sheets</i>
11.30 am	Family Service	Magherahamlet <i>Service Sheets</i>

(Please note earlier time)

Sunday 29 March **Lent V (Passion Sunday)**

10.00 ‘The Cross of Christ’ Annahilt *Service Sheets*

A Devotional Service of Readings, Anthems & Hymns for Choir & Congregation

12.00 ‘The Cross of Christ’ Magherahamlet *Service Sheets*

A Devotional Service of Readings, Anthems and Hymns for Choir & Congregation

Women’s World Day of Prayer

Friday 6 March at 8.00 pm, Edengrove Presbyterian Church, Ballynahinch

From the Parish Registers

Christian Burial

‘In Christ shall all be made alive’

22 February 2020

Esther Ferguson, Kinedale Park, Ballynahinch

Following a Service in the Church of the Ascension, Annahilt burial took place in Dundonald Cemetery.

Esther was born in Belfast on 21 March 1937, daughter of Joseph and Lila Foster and was educated at Ashleigh House School. In May 1955 she began training as a nurse.

The story is told of how Esther and another trainee nurse went into the Operating Theatre for the first time all gowned up. The surgeon about to perform the operation lifted up his foot to Esther, anticipating that she would remove his footwear and replace it with appropriate surgical boots. Esther didn’t realise what was expected of her and exclaimed ‘Aren’t they a lovely pair of shoes!’. The surgeon found himself having to change his footwear himself.

Esther became a popular member of her Set with her culinary skills by making

apple tarts which she shared with other trainees. She went on to specialise in midwifery. In due course she was introduced to one Jack Ferguson on a blind date and they married on 24 April 1962 in St Donard's Church, Bloomfield.

During those years when Jack was studying at C of I Divinity Hostel in Dublin, Esther could not have been more devoted in her support of her husband in his determination to rise to the challenges of being a mature student and progressing through the various steps to Ordination. She visited him in Dublin every weekend during term time, on each occasion bringing him a tin of biscuits! Just how much Esther loved her cars also became apparent in Jack's years at the Hostel. The cars of the few who had their own transport were considered dull and ordinary but Esther always arrived each week in her Beetle!

Following Jack's Ordination in 1965 he served his title as Curate Assistant of Dundela Parish, Belfast, with Esther also fully participating in the worship and other activities there. During that time their long-awaited hope of a child was fulfilled. No event was more exciting for Jack and Esther than the birth of John who became the light of their lives. Some years later there followed the birth of Christopher who very sadly died in infancy but always remained very close to Esther's heart.

In 1970 the family moved to Annahilt when Jack was appointed Rector where they lived and served for six very happy years. Throughout her time here Esther served as Enrolling Member of the Mothers' Union Branch, an organisation in which she also served in St Brendan's Parish, Sydenham, after Jack was appointed Rector there in 1976.

In each of the Parishes in which they served, Jack and Esther were there among the people whoever and wherever they were, especially by the hospitality they so generously offered.

In the episcopate of Bishop Julian Mitchell, Down & Dromore diocese was renowned for hosting a Pilgrimage to Down Cathedral on St Patrick's Day, an event at which every diocese in the Church of Ireland was represented. The representatives walked the pilgrimage route behind their respective diocesan banners. What was affectionately known as 'the Kerry Bus' transported the pilgrims each year from the dioceses of Ardfert & Aghadoe in the South West of Ireland. Jack & Esther thoughtfully and generously entertained these

pilgrims from Co Kerry who had travelled such a great distance to be in Downpatrick each St Patrick's Day.

Wherever Jack was called to serve, Esther supported him completely without reservation or complaint, participating fully in the ministry of the Parish while maintaining her own job as a District Nurse & Health Visitor. Their annual holidays, which they loved, were a welcome break as they travelled widely, particularly to many destinations in Europe. They also drove extensively by car throughout Ireland, stopping at various viewing spots, enjoying the scenery and happy in each other's company. At home they relaxed watching TV, a pastime Esther continued with a particular passion for the various 'Soaps'!

Retirement became inevitable in 1994 when declining health made it impossible for Jack to continue in full time ministry. They came to live in Ballynahinch and returned as much valued and appreciated members of Annahilt Parish. Esther's devotion to Jack continued in the care she gave him over a long period of illness, taking him out in the car every day unless prevented by sickness or extreme weather.

Esther always kept a beautiful home with nothing out of place. She always looked well with a wonderful dress sense and colour co-ordination. Notwithstanding her own ill health over many years her cheerfulness and smile were infectious. Her determination to live life to the full knew no limits.

We extend our deep and prayerful sympathy to Esther's son, John and Beverley, her grand-daughter Megan and the entire family circle in their great loss.

Holy Communion, Annahilt



Date	Bread & Wine	Reading
1 March	Ben McKeown, Victoria McGregor	Katy Dunn
15 March	Dylan Ewing, Holly Dunn	Jamie Galbraith

Flowers for the Churches

Annahilt

March

1	
8	Mrs B Harrison
15	Mrs J Bradford
22	
29	



Magherahamlet

Church Cleaning, Annahilt

March

6- 7	Mrs A Patterson	
13 - 14	Mrs E Crawford	Mrs M Finlay
20 - 21	Mrs A Maxwell	Mr R Maxwell
27 - 28	Mrs M Clarke	Mrs H Logan



April

3 – 4	Mrs L McCambley	
10-11	Mrs E Ogle	
17-18	Mrs J Guiney	Mrs H Cardosi
24-25	Mrs B Harrison	Mrs E Harrison

May

1- 2	Mrs M McCauley	
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Mothers' UNION

Annahilt

On Monday 17th February, on the occasion of our Visitors' Evening, we were delighted to welcome as our guest speakers, Louise and Victoria McGregor who gave an excellent presentation, highlighting their experiences of volunteering with the organisation Habitat for Humanity in Malawi. Victoria and Louise described the extremely stark living conditions for underprivileged families in this area and illustrated the difference that the provision of a very simple house could make to alleviate some of their hardship. A great turnout of ladies from the local church organisations also contributed greatly to the success of this evening. Thank you to everyone for your support.

We are very sorry to record the death of Mrs Esther Ferguson, a former Enrolling Member of our Branch during the period her late husband, the Revd Jack Ferguson was Rector. We subsequently enjoyed her resumed membership of the Branch when they re-joined the Parish following his retirement in 1994. We extend our sincere sympathy to her son John, also Beverley, her granddaughter Megan and the family circle at this sad time.

Our next branch meeting will take place on Monday 16th March at 8pm when our guest speaker, the Revd. Canon Robert Howard will give a talk on St. Patrick. We welcome all visitors who wish to attend.

On Wednesday 18th March at 8pm the Mothers' Union Diocesan Festival Service will be held in St. Marks, Newtownards and we would encourage as many members as possible to attend.

Magherahamlet

At our last meeting in February we were delighted to welcome Michael Vladeanu as our guest speaker. He gave an excellent illustrated talk on 'Camp America - My experience' and gave very informative answers to questions raised afterwards.

All members are also invited to the Diocesan Festival Service at Saint Mark's Church, Newtownards at 8.00 pm on Wednesday 18 March.

LISBURN FOODBANK

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

Parishioners may leave items for the Foodbank in the basket in Annahilt Church Porch, on the FIRST and SECOND Sunday of each month.

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.

Larchfield Community Development Association

Big Breakfast



Saturday 28th March 2020

10am – 12.00 midday

Legacurry Orange Hall

Juice, cereal, cooked breakfast, tea/coffee & toast

Admission £7.00

Proceeds in aid of 2020 Charity

Registered as a Charity with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC103278

Annahilt Lunch Club

From 12.30pm

**The Pheasant Restaurant
Annahilt**

Everyone welcome

On Tuesday 24 March 2020

Parish Magazine

Any contribution for the next edition of the Parish Magazine should be left with the Rector or Roger Maxwell (roger.maxwell1@btinternet.com) by Sunday 22 March 2020.



www.annahiltandmagherahamlet.org

Registered as a charity with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
NIC103246 (Annahilt) and NIC102122 (Magherahamlet)