

News from the Parishes

Church of the Ascension, Annahilt

Magherahamlet Parish Church



December 2023 & January 2024



Rector: The Revd Canon Robert Howard
15 Ballykeel Road, Hillsborough
BT26 6NW
Tel: 028 9263 8218
E-mail: jrobert.howard@btinternet.com
Website: www.annahiltandmagherahamlet.org



The Rector writes.....

We are currently in what I shall describe as the ‘season of hard slog’ in the lead up to Christmas! Our church Christmas Fair is now over but services are coming hard on its heels. And, of course, there’s our own personal Christmas preparations also – Christmas puddings and cakes already baked, likely still need to be iced; there are still presents to buy, gifts to wrap, cards to write and trees to decorate. I know that when I set out from the Rectory on Christmas Eve for the midnight First Communion of Christmas, I end up heaving a sigh of relief! I feel there is nothing more I can do by way of preparation and I can get on with enjoying Christmas.

But whereas for many in our society, Christmas ends on Boxing Day, let’s remember that in the church liturgical calendar it is on Christmas Day when the season of Christmas **begins!** The twelve days of the Christmas season (made famous by the carol of the same name) run from Christmas Day to 5th January, or Twelfth Night, when we traditionally take down our Christmas decorations.

I love the Christmas season, not just because it normally provides the opportunity to catch up with family and friends, but also because the quieter pace allows me to reflect on what it is really all about, God coming to earth in the person of the baby Jesus. There’s an amazing beauty and simplicity in that. If we have rushed through Advent without taking the time to reflect upon the nature of God’s coming to us, do let us take the time to ponder this Christmas season. As the bible tells us in Luke chapter two, verse 19, ‘Mary (following the birth of Jesus and the visit of the shepherds) treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart’.

When the Christmas season is over, we turn our thoughts to the Epiphany and the showing forth of God’s glory to the world. The Epiphany season, which begins on 6th January and the visit of the wise men to the child Jesus, is celebrated in most churches on the nearest Sunday which this year is January 7th. You may be wondering, haven’t we just celebrated their arrival at Christmas, and often we do. But let’s remember that the wise men embarked on a long journey to find Jesus and to bring him their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. That’s why we celebrate this symbolically later in the church calendar. Which leaves me with the question, how are you, how am I, going to show something of the glory of God to others in 2024? I know that our Bishop, the Rt Revd David McClay will be helping us contemplate this when he visits us in both Annahilt (10.00 am) and Magherahamlet (3.30 pm) on the 1st Sunday in Advent, 3 December.

Which just leaves me to wish you and your loved ones an enriching and fulfilling Advent, a peaceful and blessed Christmas and a hopeful New Year.

Your sincere friend and Rector

Robert Howard

Thank you.....

To all who contributed to Magherahamlet Harvest Appeal. £2143.80 was raised.

To all those who took part in the recent Annahilt Fund Raising Quiz. £373 was raised

To all who in any way supported the Christmas Fair in Annahilt. To date £2842.21 has been raised.

To all who contributed to recent special collections:

	Annahilt	Magherahamlet
Bishops' Appeal collection for Gaza	£295.00	£210.00
Relief from flooding in Libya	£54.00	£113.00
Relief following Moroccan earthquake	£81.00	£226.00
Poppy Appeal	£214.25	£191.00

To all the various volunteers who have assisted in the Church cleaning, as well as all who provided flowers for the Churches during the past year.

The cleanliness of the Churches for public worship does not go unnoticed and is much appreciated by all.

The floral arrangements which are given each week are also valued and admired by all who worship in both Churches.

To Colin Robinette and William Mathers for their ongoing assistance in the online recording and transmission of Services.



The season of Advent

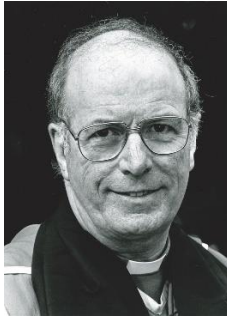
‘Advent’ means ‘coming’ and marks the four weeks leading up to the celebration of the Nativity and the coming of Christ. It is traditionally a season of penance and preparation before Christmas. The official Church liturgical colour is purple, a symbol of penitence. Weddings used to be forbidden during this season, as they once were during Lent.



Tradition has given its own flavour to each of the Advent Sundays. The Sunday next before Advent was known as ‘Stir up Sunday’, so named because it was the day for ‘stirring up’ Christmas puddings. The second Sunday was known as Bible Sunday when our focus was on the reading, preaching and distribution of God’s Word as revealed in the books of the Bible. The third Sunday is the ‘Gaudete’ Sunday from the Latin word for ‘rejoice’. On that day everyone took a break from the penitential theme. A rose coloured candle is lit on this Sunday.

In our Churches an Advent wreath is often among the decorations made with evergreen branches such as holly, yew or pine. The four Advent candles are fixed into the wreath along with a white candle which represents the Light of Christ coming into the world at Christmas.

Advent calendars are still popular today, usually a card with twenty-four small doors, one to be opened each day from the first day of December until Christmas Eve. Each door conceals a picture, which originally had biblical themes. Every morning children open one door to see a pretty picture or find a chocolate inside. This popular tradition arose in Germany in the late 1800s and soon spread throughout Europe and North America.



Sermon preached by the Rector on Sunday 29 October 2023 in Annahilt and Magherahamlet in remembrance of the ministry of the Rt Revd Dr Gordon McMullan, Bishop of this Diocese 1986 - 1997

All of us here today come with a sense of loss and sadness. We have lost a man who for some 17 years was our father-in-God, our former bishop, our friend – the Rt Revd Dr Gordon McMullan. Notwithstanding his somewhat early retirement in 1997 and his quite low public profile since, we mourn his passing and will miss him. And that is good. At the same time, I know that he would want this worship to be shot through with the beams of God’s glory. For the promise of glory which sustained Dr McMullan throughout his life found its source in that great truth which was the bedrock of his whole life and ministry – the great truth which we celebrate today. “Jesus said, I am the Resurrection and the Life. Those who believe in me even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” Today we celebrate the life of a man who did believe this and who embodied it –and who in an extraordinarily gracious way was able to help so many of us to believe, to trust, and discover our own truest lives, through that great promise.

Bishop McMullan loved to see. He loved to see into. He had a prophetic gift of seeing deeply, of capturing a vision. A senior cleric once said, ‘Bishop McMullan, he could see around corners, meaning he had the gifts of wisdom and foresight which allowed him to be well prepared for what was experienced by those around him as an unforeseen crisis’. And of course this gift was the perfect one for the ministry he exercised both as a parochial clergyman in the parishes of Knock and of St Brendan’s, Sydenham and then as a diocesan Bishop first of all in Clogher and later here in Down & Dromore – exercising the ministry of *episcopo*.

In the New Testament, the Greek word *episcopo* has **two** meanings. Firstly it means seeing, or looking around and over. It is close to the word panorama. It is about standing back and seeing. It is the psalmist’s prayer to be set upon a rock that is higher than I. It’s standing in a high place where you can really over-see. The word in this sense is used many times in the Acts of the Apostles. The ‘high’ place for Bishop Gordon was the room where he prayed and studied each day.

I believe that his faithful, attention to prayer was not out of virtue but out of need. With those times he could see and with his vision renewed, amazing things could

happen. And we all know and give thanks to God for some of the fruits of his vision. The building up of the church in this diocese and beyond. Not least during his leadership of Down & Dromore during the Decade of Evangelism in the 1990's.

The word *episcopus* has a second meaning in the New Testament. It's found in the Letter to the Hebrews and the First Letter of Saint Peter. Here, it means, "see to it that." It means "pay careful attention and ensure that things are done right that need to be done." Theologian Ian Paul writes that to exercise *episcopus* as the New Testament describes it, is to have the helicopter-like quality and ability to rise up high and see the overall lie of the land, but then to drop down low and attend to particular things that need to be dealt with.

Bishop McMullan did not try to avoid this often-demanding part of episcopal ministry. As a diocesan bishop, both in Clogher and in Down and Dromore he was often immersed in many and different tragic situations during the years of 'The Troubles' not least attending the seemingly unending cycle of funerals of murdered members of the Security Forces. The Bishop focused all his pastoral, administrative and spiritual gifts on what needed to be done, however painful, to bind up the broken-hearted and renewing the hope and the vision of the bereaved families and the diocese in general.

And, of course, he loved homing in on the particular. He loved visitations. He really knew the parishes, and had an amazing memory for names. He liked to see what was going on, and he didn't miss much! But more than anything else he wanted to see – YOU. Following his election as Bishop of this diocese but prior to officially taking up duty, he honoured a commitment he had already given as Bishop of Clogher to act as visiting Preacher at the annual Saint Patrick's Day Service at Downpatrick. That was the occasion at which I met him for the first time. I recall him asking me 'What's your name?' Where are you working? And so forth. And in the years which followed he got to know his clergy really well. Bishop Gordon was one of the people I could name in my life who really **saw** me. He was able to focus on the talents and virtues I might offer in ministry but also my fears and frailties. He called me out. He challenged me to do things I never would have dared to do on my own." For instance, it was he asked me to be a come a Prison Chaplain. Before he did so, I would NEVER have envisaged myself in that role. Those ordained for service in this diocese were asked to come for Post-Ordination Training at the See House on the first Monday of each month. Of course, he was always there, participating fully in both the worship, the training and the social aspects of the occasion. This included breakfast and later Coffee in the course of the Morning. It was an opportunity he took to continue to get to know us. Often he could see, what I would call the potential in another person, that they might not necessarily seen themselves.

Bishop Gordon, who so lived his life in the power of the resurrection, longed to challenge and help others to come fully to life, to glorify God by becoming the unique and wonderful person God had made them to be.

Dr McMullan was very gifted in so many ways. But as with all of us, these gifts had their shadow side. He was a gifted and forceful leader with a clear vision. But he could also be impatient with those who took a different point of view to his, sometimes disagreeing with them sharply. Although he never lost his sense of humour. He really

could be quite mischievous as well as disarmingly funny.

Today, let us give thanks to God for the gift of the Rt Revd Gordon McMullan, our father-in-God, our sometime bishop, our friend. Thanksgiving for his family as we extend our deep sympathy to his sons Philip & Stephen, Thanksgiving for the staff and people of this diocese where he served and which he loved. Thanksgiving especially for his late wife Kathleen who loved and supported him so faithfully in his ministry over very many years. Thanksgiving for all those far and wide who have been touched and blessed by his gracious life and ministry. Thanksgiving now to Almighty God who created him and redeemed him through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Holy Communion in Church

There will be four celebrations of the Holy Communion in the Group of Parishes over the Christmas period.



There will be a SAID Communion Service on the Second Sunday **BEFORE** Christmas, 17 December, at the later time of **9.30 am**. This may be of particular interest to those who usually attended the early celebration prior to its suspension at the beginning of the Pandemic. In present circumstances it may also suit those who prefer a shorter and 'quieter' act of worship.

On Christmas Eve, 24 December at **11.15 pm** the First Communion of Christmas will be celebrated.

On Christmas Day, 25 December at the earlier time of **11.30 am** the Parish Communion of Christmas Day will be celebrated in Magherahamlet Parish Church.

On the first Sunday of Epiphany, 7 January 2024 there will be Parish Communion in Annahilt at 10.00 am and in Magherahamlet at 12.00 noon.

Private Communion at Christmas

Any parishioners who are ill or housebound or who otherwise are not in a position to attend church and would like Holy Communion in their own home before Christmas should contact the Rector who will only be too pleased to make the arrangements. Tel 028 9263 8218.

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"' Psalm 122 v1

Sunday 3 December

Advent I

10.00 Parish Communion Annahilt *Service Sheets*

Preacher: The Bishop

with Dedication of improved and enhanced Church and Hall facilities
and offering of Gifts for children in need.

12.00 *No Service* Magherahamlet

3.30 pm Carols and Readings for Advent Magherahamlet *Service Sheets*

Preacher: The Bishop

Sunday 10 December

Advent II

Bible Sunday

10.00 Morning Prayer Annahilt

12.00 Morning Prayer Magherahamlet

Sunday 17 December

Advent III

9.30 am Holy Communion Annahilt (SAID SERVICE)

10.00 *No Service* Annahilt

11.30 am Service of the Word Magherahamlet *Service Sheets*

With offering of gifts for children in need

3.00 pm Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols Annahilt *Service Sheets*

Guest of Honour: The Mayor

followed by seasonal refreshments in the Parochial Hall

7.00 pm United Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols Spa Presbyterian Church
followed by seasonal refreshments in the Arnold Hall

Sunday 24 December **Advent IV (Christmas Eve)**

10.00 Family Christingle Service Annahilt *Service Sheets*
11.30 am Family Christingle Service Magherahamlet *Service Sheets*
11.15 pm The First Communion of Christmas Annahilt *Service Sheets*

Monday 25 December **Christmas Day**

10.00 Family Service Annahilt *Service Sheets*
11.30 am Parish Communion Magherahamlet *Service Sheets*

Sunday 31 December **Christmas I (New Year's Eve)**

10.00 Morning Prayer & Litany Annahilt
11.30 am Morning Prayer & Litany Magherahamlet

Sunday 7 January 2024 **Epiphany I**

10.00 Parish Communion Annahilt
12.00 Parish Communion Magherahamlet

Sunday 14 January **Epiphany II**

10.00 Family Service Annahilt *Service Sheets*
12.00 Family Service Magherahamlet *Service Sheets*

Sunday 21 January

Epiphany III

10.00 Parish Communion

Annahilt

12.00 Morning Prayer

Magherahamlet

Sunday 28 January

Epiphany IV

World Leprosy Day

10.00 Morning Prayer

Annahilt

12.00 Morning Prayer

Magherahamlet

Sunday 4 February

Presentation of Christ in the Temple

10.00 Parish Communion

Annahilt

12.00 Parish Communion

Magherahamlet

Sunday 11 February

Sunday before Lent

10.00 Family Service

Annahilt

Service Sheets

12.00 Family Service

Magherahamlet

Service Sheets



PRAYER WARRIOR

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

Flowers for the Churches

Annahilt

Magherahamlet



December

3

10

17

Mr & Mrs R Carlisle

The Rector

24

The Rector

The Rector

31

The Rector

Mrs F Magorrian

Church Cleaning, Annahilt

Month

December

1-2

Mrs E Crawford

8-9

Mrs S Chapman

15-16

Mrs J Guiney

22-23

Mrs H Hill

29-30

Mrs A Maxwell



Mr S Shapman

Mr H Cardisi

Mr T Hill

Mr R Maxwell

January

5-6

Mrs L McCambley

Mrs E Harrison

12-13

Mrs J Bolas

Mr A Bolas

19-20

Mrs E Crawford

26-27

Mrs S Chapman

Mr S Chapman

February

2-3	Mrs J Guiney	Mr H Cardosi
9-10	Mrs H Hill	Mr T Hill
16-17	Mrs A Maxwell	Mr R Maxwell
23-24	Mrs L McCambley	Mrs E Harrison

March

1-2	Mrs J Bolas	Mr A Bolas
8-9	Mrs J Guiney	Mrs H Cardosi



With the closure of direct services in the local area, five experienced Social Workers set up a not-for-profit Community Interest Company called STAR NI to continue providing support to children and families impacted by sexual abuse. STAR NI is based in Millennium Court Arts Centre in Portadown. Our mission is to create a safe and nurturing environment where children feel comfortable and safe enough to explore their thoughts and feelings.

STAR NI has now been running just over one year. They are continually working with more children and would love to be able to give them Christmas gifts with our support.

This year, at our Advent Sunday Service in **Annahilt on 3 December (10.00 am)** and at the Family Service **Magherahamlet on 17 December (11.30am)** we are asking whether you might consider donating a gift which should be new, wrapped and with some indication of the age of the child for whom it is intended and whether it is for a boy or a girl. Alternatively, if you would like to donate the money you might have otherwise spent on a Christmas gift, this would go directly to the running costs of STAR NI and would greatly assist us as the company is kept up and running.



If you would like to know more about STAR NI, you can find the organisation on Facebook and Instagram.

As always, STAR NI thank you so much for your ongoing support, it is greatly appreciated and makes a big difference.



Dear Mothers' Union Members and Friends,

I would like to begin by expressing our thanks to the Mothers' Union members of Annahilt and visitors who took part in our Creative Crafts evening in November and made it a very enjoyable occasion for all. Our special thanks goes to Barbara Oliver for providing the materials and expertise to create a Festive table centre decoration and we also had a lot of fun assembling our gift bags.

Our Annahilt Mothers' Union Christmas Party will be held on Tuesday 5th December in the Parochial Hall at 7.30pm. Visitors will be very welcome and the entertainment will be provided by Music Therapist Karen Diamond.

Our first meeting of 2024 will take place on Monday January 15th at 8pm in Annahilt Hall when we will confirm activities for the remainder of our programme.

On 15 November, Magherahamlet members met in the hall where Sinead Dornan gave a talk and demonstrated Avon cosmetics. We were greatly entertained. Members also enjoyed some retail therapy by buying some of the products as we were getting ready for Christmas. A great night of friendship and laughter was had by all.

On 25 November Magherahamlet Branch was well represented at a Prayer Breakfast, one of many events organised by MU in support of the Global Campaign against Gender Violence.

We look forward to attending the MU Advent Carol Service in Knockbreda Parish Church, Belfast on Monday 4 December at 8.00 pm.

Magherahamlet members Parcel Night will take place in the Rectory on Wednesday 13 December at 8.00 pm

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Prosperous New Year.

With very kind regards and every blessing

Beth
Esme

Avril / Sally
Frances / Avril B

Wave of Prayer for Mothers' Union

Lord, we pray for Mothers' Union worldwide.

1-2 Mpumalanga in South Africa; Central Buganda in Uganda; Zonkwa in Nigeria; Bo in Sierra Leone; Newcastle in England and Barrackpore in India

3 – 5 Akot in South Sudan; Southwest Tanganyika in Tanzania; Aba & Irele-Ese Odo in Nigeria; Coventry in England and Cuttack in India

6 Mothers' Union worldwide

7 – 9 Namibia; Mount Kenya South in Kenya; Northern Izon & Ijebu North in Nigeria and Durham in England

10 – 12 Lusaka in Zambia; Shyogwe in Rwanda; Sokoto & Ikka in Nigeria; Ely in England and Karimnagar in India

13 Mothers' Union worldwide

14 – 16 Fianarantsoa in Madagascar; Central Tanganyika in Tanzania; Calabar & Igbomina in Nigeria; Derry & Raphoe in All Ireland and Banks & Torres in Vanuatu

17 – 19 Lui in South Sudan; Embu in Kenya; Orlu & Awori in Nigeria; The Murray in Australia and Medak in India

20 Mothers' Union worldwide

21 – 23 Archbishops, Bishops, and all clergy in the Anglican Communion

24 – 26 Refugees, internally displaced families and those living in a climate of fear

27 Mothers' Union worldwide Sheran Harper & MU Trustees

28 - 30 All involved with the responsibility of caring for and supporting family life.

31 Mothers' Union worldwide

Final Blessing

**May our lives be filled with joy throughout this precious season
as we celebrate the wonder of the Nativity. Amen**

Midday Prayers 2023: December: Celebration of Nativity

Monday: Celebration of Nativity

Give thanks and rejoice in the glory of Nativity! Praise God for his gift of a Saviour.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. *Isaiah 9:6*

Jesus, Lord and Saviour, we thank you for this season of celebration the renewal of your love for us we pray for all your people that today even in the darkest corners your lamp may be lit and your light may shine giving joy and peace. Amen

With wonder and joy we celebrate the Nativity. of our Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Tuesday: Proclamation of the prophets

Give thanks and rejoice in the proclamation of Nativity! Praise God for his promise of a Saviour.

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" *Isaiah 52:7*

Speak to us afresh, Lord. Open our ears to the message of salvation, echoing down the years in a newborn baby's cry.

Together we proclaim the joyful tidings: Our God reigns!

We celebrate anew the fulfilment of words uttered in ancient times which deepen our faith in God's promises to us.

With wonder and joy, we celebrate the Nativity of our Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Wednesday: Rejoicing of Mary

Give thanks and rejoice in the blessings of Nativity! Praise God for his plan of salvation.

Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!' And Mary said: My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

Luke 1:45-47

We glorify the Lord with open hearts and voices

Listening, like Mary, we open our minds **Let us rejoice, God is with us**

Watching, like Mary, as God surprises us **Let us rejoice, God is with us**

Responding, like Mary, to God's promise of freedom **Let us rejoice, God is with us**

We rejoice in God our Saviour. Holy is his name.

With wonder and joy we celebrate the Nativity of our Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Thursday: Song of the angels

Give thanks and rejoice in the song of Nativity! Praise God for his tidings of a Saviour.

The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.' A great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God.

Luke 2:9, 13

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth grace and peace to those on whom his favour rests.

The angels' song rings out: the Saviour is born. We join our voices with theirs to sing of God's love to his people, and to proclaim his faithfulness to every generation. For his word is dependable, his promises secure.

With wonder and joy we celebrate the Nativity of our Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Friday: Joy of the shepherds

Give thanks and rejoice in the certainty of Nativity! Praise God for the birth of a Saviour.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Luke 2:20

We praise God for the truth of his word which draws us to the stable of salvation; the birthplace of Love incarnate in all his hidden glory.

As we linger in the presence of the Holy our lives are filled with the joy of salvation; a sacred gift to share abroad, that all may receive through faith.

With wonder and joy we celebrate the Nativity of our Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Saturday: Celebration of Nativity

Give thanks and rejoice in the glory of Nativity! Praise God for his gift of a Saviour.

My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.

Luke 2:30-32

A child is to be born within one nation but for all nations. Our God will be revealed, the Son of David born in humility. Love will come down to earth as servant-king and vulnerable.

We will sing of your love forever, and proclaim your faithfulness to every generation for by grace incomparable our salvation is here. ©John Birch

With wonder and joy we celebrate the Nativity of our Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Amen

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

Domestic abuse in all its forms was the difficult topic highlighted at Down & Dromore MU's Prayer Breakfast on Saturday 25 November. The event was one of many to take place on the Mothers' Union's Global Day of Action as part of the campaign, *16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence*.

MU is also continuing to build on the *No More 1 in 3* campaign, when branches and members around the world hold events to show that MU believes domestic abuse is unacceptable.

The keynote speaker was Detective Chief Inspector Heather Campbell of the Rape Crime Unit in the PSNI and head of the MARAC team, a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment organisation, relating to Domestic Abuse.

Also in attendance were Tina Henry, (Senior Worker, Women's Aid Refuge Armagh Down), Emalyn Turkington (CEO North Down and Ards Women's Aid), Baroness Ritchie, Lady Eames and Bishop David and Mrs Hilary McClay.

The Revd Duncan Pollock, Down and Dromore MU Chaplain, shared a Bible reading before All Ireland President, June Butler, spoke briefly about the work MU is already doing to combat domestic abuse locally.

Every branch supports work with women's refuges and June encouraged every church to participate in the *Rise Up Challenge* which aims to better equip parishes to help the victims of domestic abuse by raising awareness and pointing them towards help. Northern Ireland has the highest rate of domestic abuse in the UK and every 16 minutes the PSNI field a call.

Det Insp Heather Campbell reiterated the scale of the problem. 33,000 incidents were reported to the police in last 24 months, but domestic abuse is hugely under reported, especially by male victims.

She also highlighted new legislation to make coercion and control, psychological, emotional, and financial abuse criminal acts. Stalking is also now an offence as is non-fatal strangulation.

Additional legislation reflects societal changes and crimes facilitated by technology such as grooming, cyber flashing, the threat to release private images and voyeurism.

Heather said that the service is victim-led with good work is being done by trained officers to create a safe place for victims where they know they will be listened to. This includes children who are witnesses to domestic abuse in the home. She said that arrest and prosecution rates were high and that the police had many tools at their disposal.

Heather finished with the following advice:

- Realise – this can happen to anyone.

- Refer out – many people doing great work. Place cards in appropriate places.
- Refer up – cast your care on the Lord and he will sustain you. Ps 55:22

Financial matters

Annahilt Giving in Grace

A reminder to anyone who has yet to return their forms these are welcomed as soon as possible. Apart from the giving aspect of the form the Parish is required to have accurate records for Parishioners so it is important we have your up to date contact details.

For those Parishioners who have requested that they would prefer future magazine availability to be notified via email, this will be introduced early in 2024.

FWO envelopes Annahilt

These will be available in church from the second Sunday in December. If you are unable to collect them, contact Patricia who will make alternative arrangements.

Gift Aid

For those parishioners who currently Gift Aid their subscription-are you still a tax payer? If not, please contact the Parish Treasurers to update Parish records.

If you are a tax payer and do not currently Gift Aid your subscription (FWO) the Parish could benefit from an additional 25% income at no cost to you. Again, please contact the Treasurer.

Contact details

While we try to keep contact details up to date, sometimes parishioners move house and we don't have your new address.

Some no longer have or use landline telephone numbers and only use mobile numbers. It would be helpful if your details have changed, if you could contact Patricia (Annahilt) on 028 92665310, Mobile 07713 257 691, email patriciaapc@btinternet.com or Hillary (Magherahamlet) on 028 44811361, email hillary.edgar01@btinternet.com with up to date details. The vast majority of contact numbers we hold are landline numbers.

Your contact details are only used for Parish purposes.

Finance Matters – Magherahamlet

If you are a UK taxpayer, you can boost the amount of every donation you make by giving through “Gift Aid”. This is an Income Tax relief scheme created to help charities like our church get the most out of funds that they receive. Gift Aid enables the church to recover the base rate of tax on your donation. The scheme adds 25 pence on each £1.00 you give at no extra cost to you.

We would ask all taxpayers who give to parish funds to give through “Gift Aid”. All that is required is the completion of a “Gift Aid Declaration” form. If you have recently stopped paying tax then any existing Gift Aid declaration needs to be cancelled. Please contact the Treasurer, Hillary Edgar on 028 44811361 should you require a “Gift Aid Declaration” form or need to update an existing Gift Aid Declaration.

Lunch Club

The Lunch Club will **not** meet in December.

The next time we meet will be Friday 26 January 2024, followed by Friday 23 February and, as Good Friday falls on Friday 29 March, we will meet on Friday 22 March in the Pheasant at the usual time of 12.30pm.

Numbers are creeping up and it is a very relaxed and enjoyable occasion, giving retired and semi-retired members an opportunity to connect with each other. If you would like the opportunity of enjoying a lunchtime meal in the company of established friends or perhaps some new ones, do come along. Please contact Violet Swarbrigg (Telephone 028 9263 8952) for further information.

Larchfield Community Development Association

Extends an invite to anyone who would like to join them for a Scottish themed evening on Thursday 18th January 2024. The Royal Scottish Dance Society will give a demonstration of Scottish Dancing and then invite those attending to take part in some dancing. A similar event was held locally last year by another organisation and it proved a great night's craic. The event starts at 8pm in Legacurry Orange Hall, 2 Glebe Road. Admission £5 including supper.

All welcome.

LISBURN FOODBANK

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.

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.

A particular request from the Foodbank is for items listed below:

- Long life milk
- Sugar
- Custard
- Rice pudding
- Small diluting juice
- Jam
- Biscuits
- Porridge

In addition, we have been asked over the Christmas period to provide bottles of Shloer and small selection boxes

YOUR HELP WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

Parish Website: AnnahiltAndMagherahamlet.org

Parishioners are reminded that the website annahiltandmagherahamlet.org has been created to provide information on church related activities and organisations for parishioners and the wider community. Although circumstances have changed considerably since the various lockdown periods the website continues to host online services each Sunday. It also contains a list of upcoming church services and news from our group of parishes, as well as downloadable versions of the parish magazine. 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.



www.annahiltandmagherahamlet.org

Parish Magazine

Any contributions for the next edition of the Parish Magazine should be left with the Rector or Roger Maxwell (roger.maxwell1@btinternet.com) by Sunday 21 January 2024.