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tidings



CHRISTMAS ISSUE 2020



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CHRISTMAS ISSUE 2020

The magazine of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry

www.tuam.anglican.org

COPY DEADLINE

All submissions for the Easter Issue of Tidings, including advertisements, must be in by **Friday January 29th 2021**

VIEWS EXPRESSED

Views expressed in Tidings are those of the contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Editor or the magazine committee.

DIOCESAN MAGAZINE

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THE BISHOP WHITES . . .



new born child, the Saviour of the World, we glimpse that incarnation.

Furthermore, we are reminded that God's ways are not our ways. God is to appear in the little and the insignificant so that only the humble can find him. He appears on the margins of society alongside the poor, the outcast, the stranger – in a stable, in a little town like Bethlehem, far from the glamour and sophistication of the great centres of the world.

This Christmas is going to be a difficult one for so many. Those who are facing debilitating sickness, those who are bereaved, those whose businesses have collapsed, those who are faced by mounting debts, those whose relationships lie shattered. As the God whose birth we celebrate identifies with those in need, may all who are in any kind of trouble feel the strength and peace of his presence at this time and may we all determine to identify more fully with those who need our love and support and understanding and human kindness.

In the chaotic and challenging world which is ours this Christmas as we feel in some ways impoverished, excluded, isolated from our loved ones, perhaps we too might use the opportunity to view the wonder of Christmas with new eyes – the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us - for God is with us – no matter what! That is indeed something really positive to hold onto as Christmas 2020 approaches.

May God bless you all, this Christmas . . .

+Patrick Tuam

With the festivities inevitably compromised for us all, perhaps we might give more thought to the enormity of this reason for the season. God, becoming one of us. The 'Incarnation' is almost too much for most of us to grasp so we focus on the humanising of God's son in the account of the birth of the babe in Bethlehem. In the image of the young woman, and the



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DUE TO COVID 19 RESTRICTIONS, ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ARE PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

DECEMBER

Sun 6th Claremorris Service, 12noon – to be confirmed
Sun 6th Service of Vespers in Galway
Wed 9th RB Meeting, Dublin/via Zoom
Thurs 10th Institution of Canon Jen McWhirter in Westport, 8pm
 (by invitation only)

2021

JANUARY

Sun 3rd Claremorris Service, 12noon – to be confirmed
Tues 26th RB Week, Dublin/via Zoom
Thurs 28th Diocesan Board of Education Meeting, via Zoom, 7.30pm

FEBRUARY

Mon 1st Diocesan Finance Committee Meeting, via Zoom, 7.30pm
Tues 2nd Diocesan Glebes & Property Committee Meeting,
 via Zoom, 7.30pm
Thurs 4th Diocesan Council Meeting, via Zoom, 7pm
Sun 7th Claremorris Service, 12noon – to be confirmed
Wed 17th Ash Wednesday, Diocesan 'Read all about it' begins.
Thurs 18th Diocesan 'Read all about it', Day 2
Fri 19th Diocesan 'Read all about it', Day 3

MARCH

Thurs 4th Annual Clergy and Readers' Quiet Day, Tuam, 10.30am
Sun 7th Claremorris Service, 12noon – to be confirmed
Tues 9th RB Week, Dublin/via Zoom



DIOCESAN VIRTUAL SERVICE

A reminder that our weekly Sunday Diocesan Virtual Service will continue throughout Advent and Christmas and on into the New Year. There will also be a service for Christmas Day. Renewed thanks to the Dean for his editing skills and to the clergy, readers and parishioners for their contributions. The services can be accessed on: tuam.anglican.org

ANNUAL CLERGY & READERS QUIET DAY

For all clergy and readers – diocesan & parish

in St Mary's Cathedral, Tuam / or by Zoom if necessary
 on Thursday 4th March 2020 at 10.30am

Lead by: The Rt Revd David Chillingworth
 formerly Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church and Bishop of St Andrews



SEPTEMBER ORDINATIONS

On Sunday 13th September in St Michael's Church, Ballina, Bishop Patrick Rooke admitted two candidates to the Office of Deacon; Revd Caroline Morrow and Revd Clive Moore.

Because of Covid-19 restrictions, this was an ordination like none before. The congregation was limited to 50 people which meant that only a handful of family, friends, parishioners and diocesan clergy and readers were able to join Clive and Caroline for this most significant occasion in both their lives and the lives of their parishes and the diocese. Similarly, all the hymns were listened to and not sung and communion was in one type only with social distancing being observed throughout.

The Old Testament Lesson was read by the Diocesan Director of Ordinands, Revd Canon Jen McWhirter, the Epistle by Revd Caroline Morrow and the Gospel by Revd Clive Moore. The preacher was Very Revd

Lynda Peilow, Rector of Galway and Kilcummin. Archdeacon Stephen McWhirter led the Litany and the newly ordained were each vested with their stole by the Archdeacon and Dean Alistair Grimason. We were delighted to have Bishop John Fleming of the Catholic Diocese of Killala with us who represented our ecumenical partners.

Revd Caroline will serve in the Parish of Killanley and Revd Clive will serve in the parishes of Crossmolina and Ballycastle.

On Sunday 20th September, Paidi Delaney was admitted to the Office of Deacon at St Nicholas Collegiate Church, Galway by the Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry, The Right Revd Patrick Rooke. The first lesson was read by Paidi's, wife, Steffi, the epistle reading was led by the Diocesan Director of Ordinands, Canon Jen McWhirter and Paidi read the

gospel. The preacher was the Very Revd Lynda Peilow, Rector of Galway. Music was led by a quartet from the St Nicholas Schola Cantorum led by the musical director Mr Mark Duley. When the service was over the full choir sang for the first time outside as the bells peeled out. Again, because of Covid-19 restrictions, numbers in attendance were restricted, but Paidi's family were there to support him, and the parishioners who have supported Paidi on his journey to ordination were in attendance. Fr Tudor representing the Romanian Orthodox Church was in attendance, along with many of Paidi's other friends and colleagues. Paid will serve as OLM deacon in the Galway group of parishes.

Three Ordinations to the Priesthood took place in TKA on Sunday 27th September; Revd Karen Duignan, Revd Carole Reynolds and Revd Maebh O'Herlihy. The service took place in St. Nicholas' Church, Galway. Bishop Patrick Rooke administered the Sacrament of Ordination in the context of the Eucharist. The Old Testament lesson was read by Revd Karen, the Epistle by Revd Maebh and the Gospel by Revd Carole. The preacher was Revd Canon Jen McWhirter, DDO. The music was led throughout by the choir of St. Nicholas' with Mark Duley directing and playing the organ. As per 'the new normal', Covid-19 restrictions demanded that the numbers in the congregation were restricted. There was no singing other than the socially distanced choir. And when it came to the laying on the hands, only the bishop and three other priests for each candidate,

all individually and separately, laid their hands on those being ordained. All the other priests present raised their hands in blessing from a distance. The newly ordained priests will serve in various parishes across TKA. Revd Karen will serve in Easkey/Kilglass alongside Archdeacon Stephen McWhirter; Revd Maebh in Dugort, Achill Island specifically and also across Aughaval (Westport) parish alongside Revd Canon Jen McWhirter and Revd Carole in Kilcummin (Oughterard) parish alongside Provost Lynda Peilow.

Paidi Delaney



Patrick Delaney was born into an Irish-Canadian/Irish-American family in Detroit, Michigan, USA. His family moved to Los Angeles, California when he was young and he was raised in the sunny diversity of the west coast. Patrick was a punk rock musician as a young man,

something which often comes as a surprise. After graduating from the University of California, Los Angeles, he moved to Dublin to study at Trinity College. He moved to the GDR capital, Berlin in 1988 to work at the Humboldt University. After completing his D.Phil., Patrick worked as a translator and news reader and played traditional Irish music with his future wife, Steffi.

Steffi and Paidi married and lived in Berlin with their two daughters before moving to Galway more than 25 years ago. Since moving here, Paidi, Steffi, Molly and



Kay have lived on Tamhain, in the Gaeltacht, and in the suburbs of Galway. Mr Delaney has been a library worker at NUI Galway since the previous millenia. Patrick began his Church of Ireland career ringing the bells of the Collegiate Church of St Nicholas and now heads its School of Campanology. He has also served as candle bearer and crucifer at St Nicholas, and as a Diocesan Reader here in the Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry. He has been a church warden, and a member of the Select Vestry at St Nicholas, as well as a member of TKA Diocesan Council. Patrick values silence and contemplation, tries to live simply and wishes nothing more than to continue to serve Christ in the years to come in the people of the parish of St Nicholas.

Carole Reynolds



Carole was born in Dublin, the youngest of three children. On leaving school she trained as a dental nurse. She married Michael in 1981 and they have three children, Sam, 36, Emma, 33, and Phillip, 31. At present Sam and Emma are living in New Zealand and Phillip lives in Kent, England. At present, Carole is employed by National Parks and Wildlife Service in Connemara National Park, Letterfrack as Education Officer. Her job involves travelling to primary schools



in Galway and Mayo informing them about all aspects of our natural biodiversity, Irish Mammals, Birds, Butterflies etc. During the summer months when the schools are closed, she runs children's activities in the Park and also takes guided bogland walks. In 2014, Carole became a member of the select Vestry in St. Mary's, Roundstone and was commissioned as a Diocesan Reader in May 2017.

Karen Duignan



Karen has been married to Liam for 23 years and they have two daughters – one just finished in college and the other just starting. I farm a small herd of Angus cattle and she is also a part-time secretary. She says she accidentally became a Parish Reader about 10 years ago

when one Sunday morning nobody turned up to take the service and it seemed like a good idea at the time. But once she came under the eye of the then Bishop, Richard Henderson there was no escape for her! She trained as a Diocesan Reader, being one of the first under the new training course run by the Church of Ireland Theological College and an English university.



She has enjoyed travelling for the past number of years meeting people in all the different parishes and helping wherever she was needed. She says it has been 'fun' and sincerely hopes it will continue to be. She says she reached ordination in a very roundabout way but believes God has a sense of humour and her ordination is the culmination of a lot of pushing and prodding by Him. She is happy to put the rest of her life doing what He has asked her to do.

Maebh O'Herlihy

Maebh was born and educated in Dublin. She moved to Brussels, Belgium in 1973 and lived there for twenty one years. Her daughter, son and grandson



Ordination of Caroline and Clive



still live in Brussels. She studied Theology and Catechetics in Louvain University and was R.E. teacher in the European Schools. She was one of the early parishioners in a newly planted English speaking community which in turn was part of a group of nine ecumenical Christian Churches working together. She completed further studies in Psychology and Counselling in Belgium and the UK and was a Counsellor in the European Schools. While in Brussels she was involved in the Direction of Retreats, training of Sunday School teachers, and the Healing Ministry of the Church as well as President of the English speaking World Day of Prayer Committee and European President of a world-wide Alumnae Association working in the area of human rights in many countries. She returned to Ireland and has lived on Achill Island for the past nineteen years. Since moving here she joined the TKA Diocese of the Church of Ireland. She has gone on to complete further studies in Theology, in Galway, St. John's College, Nottingham, Church of Ireland Theological Institute and Edgehill College/Queens University. She was previously a Diocesan Reader and Ordained Deacon. She serves the church in Dugort and is also Co-ordinator of the Sacred Path, Centre of Spirituality.



Clive Roy Moore



Clive has been a parishioner in St Michael's, Ballina all his life, where he has served as a church warden and parish reader. He is the son of William (now deceased) and Elizabeth Moore, brother of Irving and Myrtle, and uncle to Ethan and Kyle. He attended St Michael's Primary School in Ballina and Sligo Grammar School and has worked in a builder's provider for the last thirty one years. He is happiest when watching rugby

and, a keen reader himself, he is most likely to give you a book as a present as he believes he can find the perfect book for everyone. He may be wrong about this. Clive is very much looking forward to serving in the parishes of Crossmolina and Ballycastle and is indebted to his parents and those who taught him at school for his formation in faith, and the clergy past and present, those servants, shepherds, messengers, sentinels and stewards whose influence, example and latterly encouragement have made his fulfilment of his call to ministry possible. He asks you all to pray for him in his undertaking.



Caroline Brigid Morrow



Caroline has been married to Cyril since 1978, they celebrated their 33rd wedding anniversary in early September. They have been blessed with two children, Richard lives and works in New Zealand, whilst at this present time Rebecca is working from home due to the pandemic. Caroline was born and raised in Ballina and attended local schools. As a young girl she had a dream to work as a purser with a shipping company on the high seas but the only drawback for her was that she had no sea legs so that never came to fruition! She is happiest when she is pottering about in the garden and polytunnel and believes there's nothing like the taste of fresh garden produce to get the taste buds tingling.

She has been a member of Diocesan and General Synod as a lay member for the past three years and has also been a lay member on Standing committee. She now looks forward to working with her colleagues on these committees as a clerical member in the future. She was commissioned as a parish reader in January 2017 and this began a journey which has culminated with her being ordained a deacon to serve in the parish of Killanley.

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**WISHING YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY 2021!**

BALLINA CHURCHES TOGETHER

Ballina Centre of Mission

bctballina@gmail.com

Tel: Emma Rodrigues 087 4347612



These are certainly challenging and unprecedented times. Once again, we find ourselves in 'lock down' in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The road ahead requires resilience and the ability to cope effectively with uncertainty and change. In our work in the town of Ballina, we see the lives of people being impacted and people need support in so many ways.

Pastoral care: Uncertain times such as these cause people to experience anxiety and fear. In our roles as Church Army Evangelists, we continue to bring hope, friendship and practical care to those in need. We remain connected to families and individuals by phone, post and on-line. We find ourselves once again adapting to the restrictions in order to protect ourselves and those we serve in the community.

"As for any of us in crises, hope is the one thing that is everything" Craig D. Lounsbrough.



In the midst of difficult times, it is still possible and indeed essential - to maintain hope. Hope can be that telephone conversation ... a message on WhatsApp ... a bunch of flowers on the doorstep or a card in the post to those living in nursing homes. Reach out to call a friend (maybe one that you've not called in ages), family or neighbour who is experiencing loneliness or isolation. Acts of kindness and generosity make the world a happier place. In helping others, we help ourselves.

At present, we continue to reach out to the lonely, those struggling with their mental health and others with practical needs. Through volunteering with St Vincent De Paul, Marian has been able to provide fuel and food to a lady in need. She has a serious underlying medical condition and lives alone in isolation. She also has personal debts, but through the generosity of the St. Vincent de Paul, the financial burden has been lifted from her and she is much more at peace in herself. She also asks for prayer and has joined with us for worship on-line.



Emma is continuing to help a lady who recently came out of hospital. She phoned requesting help. Emma was able to connect her to meals on wheels and to a local carer agency. This lady lives alone and found herself in total isolation due to COVID restrictions.

Traveller community- Marian has befriended several Traveller families. Many of the women have suffered domestic violence or lost their husbands because of tragic circumstances. One particular lady's life has been shattered and her heart is broken. She is a widow and she has no children. She is in early thirties and she will never remarry out of respect for her deceased husband. Every day of the year, she visits his grave. Sadness and grief overwhelm her heart.

Another young mother also lost her husband a few years ago. She is also a widow and has three young girls. She is illiterate and poor. Recently, her father-in-law committed suicide, so it is tragedy upon tragedy. We work to bring a listening ear, friendship, hope and love to these women. Above all we endeavour to tell them about God's love for them.

Syrian families- Emma continues to support one family who recently had to take refuge in the local women's refuge due to domestic violence issues. The links we have with St Vincent de Paul have helped and provided another Syrian family with a much-needed cooker.

Bus/Tent- Due to Covid-19 restrictions and now a second lockdown we had to stop using our Bus/Tent outside in Penney's car park on Friday/Saturday, Sunday evenings. After the first lock-down, we brought the bus to the car park and gathered outside. Our gatherings included people who always came along and new people joining us. It was very encouraging. We spread out the chairs and enjoyed many cups of coffee and tea. People came to chat and sing (Jim Reeves songs), to share cheesy jokes and to find community. Many of these people have lived difficult lives, faced challenges, and have suffered with both physical and mental health. They used to attend the Dolmen Centre for support, but that has been closed since March. One lady, who used to volunteer at the centre began coming to the bus along with her daughter. They both now in the process of becoming BCT volunteers.

Chalk art- Recently, we returned to the pavement outside St. Muredach's Cathedral on the banks of the river Moy. Once again, through the medium of chalk-art, we brought messages of hope and words of scripture for people to read. This is a very popular area for walking and as many people walk around the



two bridges which span the river. On this sunny day in October, many people thanked us for those encouraging words. Some conversed, took prayer booklets and with others we prayed.

Halloween gift bags for families: We were unable to run our annual Light party in the Presbyterian Church Hall this year. Instead, we decided to give out activity bags and goodies for the children in two housing estates. Each bag was filled with colouring sheets, a craft for making a paper lantern, crayons, markers, crisps, chocolate and sweets! Something for everyone in the family.

Christmas goodies bag appeal- This Christmas, we hope to bring Christmas Bags of Hope to families, children and those living alone. Through the Big Blue Bus ministry, we have made contact with many people in the community and this year we want to bless everyone. Some of these will be men who live alone or may have addiction problems. We also know many

single mums, who provide for their children, but do not have much for themselves. We will also reach out to families in Mill View, Greenhills and Oak Lawns estates, where we ran kid's clubs.

Missional community- We brought our (post Alpha group) Bible study back on zoom on Thursdays at 7:30pm. We also brought the men's group from the bus (on zoom) and have a time of worship, prayer, and Bible study on Wednesday evenings at 8pm. We have had a few new people start to attend this. Our prayer group has continued through zoom on Sunday evenings.

We ran one walk and reflection in Belleek woods on the 3rd of October. We had hoped to run more walks and reflections, but this had to stop due to restrictions.

Fundraising- Thank you all who supported and donated towards our Nephin climb which we did on the 12th of September. It was a great team building exercise and we raised €1885 towards Ballina Churches Together.

'GLORIOUSLY ORDINARY' – is a new book from Praxis Press which explores mission in contemporary

Ireland. This book was written and edited by Ruth Garvey Williams and is being released at the Praxis online conference on 14th November. Marian and Emma, along with others were involved in co-writing this book with Ruth. It is a collection of stories, experiences, learning and reflections of people living, and ministering in different parts of Ireland. This book seeks to unpack what it means for us to embrace incarnational mission in contemporary Ireland and to consider what it might mean for you as an individual or in your parish, church, or faith community. This book will be available on Amazon and Teach Solas (online Christian bookshop) and Christian bookshops nationwide from 14th November.

Online conferences- On 10th to 12th November Emma will attend the Church Army leadership conference on zoom. Marian and Robson (Emma's husband) have been attending Church Army training on zoom from 6-8th of November.

Condolences- It was with great sadness we heard Anne McCormick from Ballina Methodist Church died on 14th October 2020. Anne was a huge supporter of Ballina Churches Together and was part of it from the beginning. She will be sadly missed by us all.

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READ ALL ABOUT IT....DIOCESAN FUND RAISER



This year has been like none other in living memory, or at least in my living memory, and because of a huge number of different factors we have seen the giving to Bishops' Appeal drop quite dramatically. While this is, most probably, not surprising, there are still projects and areas of the world which depend on support from Bishops' Appeal.

The last two projects which have been undertaken by the Diocese have seen a huge amount of money raised for the Diocese of Kajiado through CMSI Ireland. There have, however, been changes at CMSI and this year saw, amongst other things, a return to Northern Ireland by Ronnie and Maggie Briggs, our mission partners in Kenya.

Ronnie and Maggie have been working hard since their return home and have set up a new charity



called Water Drops which aims to support development projects in Kenya, mostly around the provision of clean water for communities which struggle with water provision. Because of their experience in Kajiado, the first projects to be funded through Water Drops are projects in that area and as a Diocese we would like to support one of these projects in a place called Imaroro, somewhere the Diocesan Team visited when we were there in 2017. This project will see a bore hole drilled and a pump house installed so that people from the surrounding area can access fresh, clean water.

As a Diocese, the vision is that we would raise the £10,000 for the solar pump house which will be connected once the well has been drilled. However, we understand that parishes have been stretched, nearly to breaking point, this year due to a Covid-19 related fall in plate collections,

donations and other fundraising activities. So we are proposing a Diocesan fundraiser to take place over the first 3 days in Lent 2021. This will see the whole of the Bible read in a combined Diocesan effort via Zoom continually over 72 hours from 6am on Ash Wednesday, 17th February 2021. Each parish will be given responsibility for several hours and members of each parish will commit to read a certain number of chapters during that time. The Zoom link will be available for anyone who wishes to watch and it is hoped that a minimum donation of €10 per chapter can be raised. Parishes will then have until the end of February to collect all donations and return them to the Diocesan Administrator.

The details will be made available to clergy very soon but we ask you all to get out your gargling mix and get ready for the biggest Bible read the Diocese has ever seen!

Stephen McWhirter
 (Chair, Diocesan Mission Group)

DIOCESAN SYNOD



On Saturday 19th September 2020, based at a hub in Claremorris and using the ZOOM platform, TKA became the first diocese of the Church of Ireland to hold its' Diocesan Synod during the Covid-19 era.

It was a very strange and even surreal experience to be logging-in and doing our business on-line, disembodied faces and electronically distorted voices on computer screens across the diocese sharing a single meeting space, but overall what needed to be accomplished was accomplished. The necessary business was completed and that in record time.



The meeting began with a virtual celebration of the Holy Communion. Then, all the various bits and pieces having been 'laid on the table', Bishop Rooke addressed the Synod. Not unsurprisingly, Covid-19 hovered in the background of most of the bishop's remarks. He began by reflecting on the adverse impact that Covid-19 had made on the lives of ordinary people. 'The pandemic and subsequent lockdown has had major implications for us all. Some two-and-a-half thousand people across the island of Ireland have lost their lives and as a Diocesan Synod, we extend our sympathy to their loved ones.' He also thanked those who had offered practical help to others during the crisis saying, 'What it is to be a good neighbour took on a whole new meaning,' adding 'we will remember the heroic efforts and the acknowledgement shown to all our essential workers.' The bishop also commended those who had found new ways to communicate the faith and

maintain the worship of the church in TKA during lock down.

Reflecting on internal changes in TKA, bishop Rooke highlighted the six ordinations, to diaconate and priesthood, that took place in the past year. He also spoke about parochial administrative changes which have come about, reducing the number of cures from 8 to 5 'which will result in significant financial savings and ensure that most of our clergy are working in teams alongside other ordained colleagues. In fact, we will have more diocesan clergy than we've had for many a year across the Diocese as a whole.'

Discussions with Limerick diocese relating to our amalgamation have had to be placed on hold though various gatherings of clergy and laity were held before Covid-19 began. 'Fostering relationships is surely as good preparation as any for our future amalgamated dioceses. So, step by step the partnership is beginning to happen.'

Speaking of mission, Bishop Rooke commended the work of outreach, fresh expressions and pioneering in TKA, specifically the Ballina Churches Together Project run in partnership with Church Army. Commending the leaders of this project the bishop said 'I want to place on record our admiration for the courageous pioneering spirit of Emma, Marian and all those who have worked alongside them and supported them in all kinds of ways.' He added, 'God forbid that we should become a Diocese that looks only to maintaining what we've got with no heart and no imagination for fresh expressions of ministry.'

The bishop also encouraged us to redouble our efforts in supporting overseas mission projects, specifically through Bishops Appeal.

Drawing his remarks to a close, the bishop mentioned our diocesan national schools. While expressing some concern about the circumstances of three of our five schools, Bishop Rooke said, 'a lot of very good work goes on in our national schools and we can feel proud of the contributions they make to their respective communities.'

Needless to say, TKA Synod 2020 will long be remembered for being very different and something that we never want to have to repeat. That said, we got over line and fulfilled all righteousness. Done and dusted. Next challenge!

Alistair Grimason



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ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS – A LEARNING COMMUNITY

Our strategy of Alternative Pathways has been growing over the last three years although Covid-19 pushed the pause button for us in pursuing the trajectory we were on. But maybe you are still at a loss as to what an Alternative Pathway of church is. An alternative pathway (also known as a Fresh Expression) is a new group where the members see it as their church. It is Christian, church, has a name and some form of leadership, meets regularly (around once a month) and seeks to engage with non-church people (that is, people who don't come to traditional Sunday church). So, holding concerts in your church and an annual pet service are not fresh expressions of church but regular missional events and are very valuable parts of our regular church life and we should encourage them as mission.

Covid-19 though in many ways fed straight into the Alternative Pathway narrative as we had to find alternative ways of doing things. Consequently, YouTube, Facebook live, Whatsapp, and Zoom, suddenly became important. Now, we all thought that this would be over sooner than would appear to be the case and so we are pressing the play button again. We continue to look for new ways of communicating and enabling worship and maybe, the pandemic will force us to look at things we would never have even

thought of at the beginning of the year.

The diocese is therefore looking to create a Learning Community from the original group who pioneered this form of ministry three years ago. Given that we now have many meetings where we don't have to travel and can join from the comfort of our own sitting rooms we are looking to expand the group so that we can come together virtually to help one another facilitate some Alternative Pathways in our community, while upholding the current guidelines of social distancing etc. If you think that you would like to come and share in the future, come and join us. Maybe, you are a person who likes to think outside the box, come and join us. If you think I could never do that, come and join us. Why? Because, as the First World War Kitchen poster said, WE NEED YOU. Alternative Pathways do not have to be complicated. A pioneer in this area of church life said, 'What's in the fridge!' and what he meant was, Alternative Pathways come from what we have, not what we do not have. Come and share what is in your fridge.

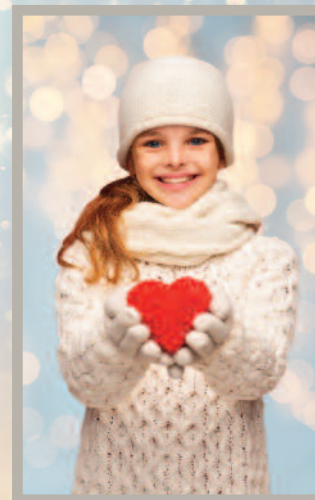
If you want to come and be with us either call me, the bishop or chat to your local clergy.

Andrew Ison

CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT HOPE IN THE FACE OF THE HOPELESS.

COVID-19 might bring Christmas Cards back like it was in 1990, so have that ball of string on standby, as An Post delivered much needed good news: "Recognising the increased restrictions in nursing homes across the country and to bring a little joy, An Post will ensure free delivery of all card and letter mail posted to and from residents of Nursing and Care Homes in the State until January 31st 2021".

Nurse Mary Weir leading the frontline staff at Moyridge Nursing Home in Ballina is hopeful she gets overwhelmed with Christmas Cards intended for those residents that rarely get any mail or visitors if ever. Write FREEPOST where the stamp should be placed. And address the envelope as follows:



Moyridge Nursing Home
Mrs Mary Weir,
Ballina, Co. Mayo

Keep the text inside the card simple. Don't worry about too many going to the one care home as Mary will share with the other care homes locally if that is the scenario.

Arthur Sweeney



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MOTHERS' UNION

Although we are all so restricted in our travelling and in our gathering Mothers' Union endeavours to continue its work by making and maintaining connections in various ways. By the time of publication, the results of the member "Christmas Card Competition" may be known. The "Thank You to Frontline Workers" initiative is currently ongoing. The AFIA project is available for consideration within our diocese. As much as possible branches are continuing in supportive outreach with projects such as emergency bathroom bags for hospitals and giving trees to support families at Christmas. Feedback has informed us that projects such as these are even more appreciated at this time than ever as for example with restrictions in place family may not be able to support the person in hospital as they would have done in the past.



over the world wear black on that day in solidarity with victims of abuse continues to be supported by Mothers' Union members. Badges may also be worn in support of this campaign.

Particularly in this diocese a "Mums in May" grant application was made and a grant was received to support victims of domestic abuse. To this end it is intended that all of that grant will be spent in cooperation and consultation with the organizations "COPE" in Galway and "Castlebar Women's Support". It is acknowledged also that individual branches have been supporting the work of these organizations and women's refuges on an ongoing basis.

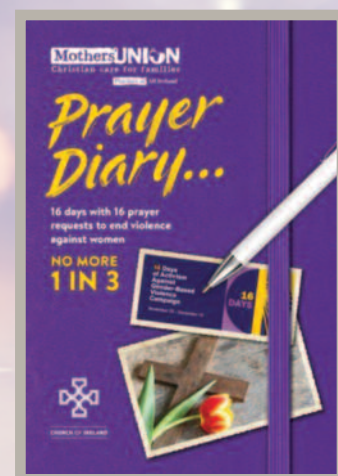
Branches are encouraged, where possible, and if they have not already done so, to support the usual "Overseas" giving to the diocesan fund which in the end results in the support of the work of Mothers' Union overseas. This work aims to improve family life where it can be most difficult. Access to education and skills is a significant empowerment with the potential to open the door to positive lifechanging experiences and a bright future.

Thinking forward to 2021 it is currently planned to have a virtual online All Ireland "Women's Get Away" instead of the usual weekend. Needless to say, as with everyone else everything is being done throughout the organization to adapt to the changing circumstances of the current climate. The "Mums in May" fundraising walks are still being planned with AI President June Butler.

Thanks are due to the members, branch officers and diocesan officers who have happily learned new communication skills and who have used their ingenuity and given time to cope with current unusual circumstances while working for Mothers' Union. We prayerfully look to a blessed time ahead and we journey into 2021 with renewed "Hope and Confidence"

Please see mothersunion.ie for more information.

Myrtle Nairn



The organization continues its support for the 16 Days of Activism Against Domestic Abuse and Gender Violence, mainly against girls, campaign. It is intended that a 16 Days Prayer Diary for the period 25th November-6th December will be distributed within the diocese. The "Thursdays in Black" campaign where folk all

BELLS "7 MINUTES BELLS AT 7PM FOR SEVEN NIGHTS AT ST NICHOLAS COLLEGIATE CHURCH"

As part of St. Nicholas' Collegiate Church, celebrations for the 700th anniversary a special initiative was run and at the end of September the church bells pealed out for 7 minutes at 7pm for 7 days.

The newly formed campanology school has been very busy over the last year bringing the sound of the bells to Galway City and had a particularly popular ringing in of the New Year, last New Year's Eve. The bells have brought welcome hope and solace as they rang out at 12 noon every Friday during the pandemic and lockdown, for frontline workers, and all those navigating through isolating, lonely or difficult times. There was an overwhelming public response. The sound of the bells ringing out assures people that they are not alone. They have brought assurance to many, with the live streaming being viewed locally and internationally, ensuring that those who are not local can still hear and witness it all.

'The church is in great need of financial support at present; this year has been challenging as we have had to close our doors to visitors and were not able to hold our fundraisers, said the Rector, the Very Rev Lynda Peilow. We are working hard also to ensure that St Nicholas' will be around for another 700 years, and

awaiting the completion of a conservation management plan, she continued.

The bell ringing will be streamed live on our facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/stnicholasgalway> and people were encouraged to donate to St Nicholas on line - details available on their Facebook site.

Gerald wrote this poem, The Bells of St. Nicholas, as a tribute to the landmark church at the heart of Galway city.

The bells of St Nicholas
reverberate through a fragile
morning, and over broken glass
the cat is poised to climb
the Post Office tower or wait
there for hours until you
all out her name.

So mornings were the same
stretching to find the sky
lowered around this sleeping
city, the bells of St Nicholas
reach across bed sitting rooms
to the caravan parks
and over rooftops of quiet hotels,
a flight of gulls descend in tattered glory.

TIDINGS – NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Tidings is distributed free within the Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry however, if you would consider making a modest contribution towards the production costs we would be most grateful as our advertising only partially covers the costs.

Also, at this time we are looking to centralise the administration and in future Tidings finances will be run through the Diocesan Council account. So, if you are making a donation, please send a cheque to the Diocesan Administrator, Mrs Heather Pope, 11 Ros Ard, Cappagh Road, Galway - payable to the United Dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry Dioc Council No 1 a/c and write Tidings on the rear of the cheque.

Or, alternatively via online banking using the bank account details below, with Tidings in the notification section depending on how your bank does this. Thank you for your support and stay safe.

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HISTORIC OCCASION FOR ST NICHOLAS'

On Sunday October 25, the first in a series of five live streamed concerts, entitled Abendmusik, will be broadcast from St Nicholas' Collegiate Church.

The concerts are part of Music for Galway and Galway 2020's SoundScapes Re-Imagined, and will focus mainly on choral music. This first show - Journey of the Spirit - featured baritone Gyula Nagy, pianist Finghin Collins and the Resurgam choir under director Mark Duley.

The programme for the evening was Brahms' 'Four Serious Songs', Bach's 'Komm Jesu Komm', Schütz's 'Aus der Tiefe', and Orlando di Lasso's 'Cum Essen Parvulus'. There was also be a choral improvisation, 'Through A Glass, Darkly', with Resurgam exploring the words of St Paul, where singers individually throw out ideas, followed by a collective response.

Abendmusik, meaning "evening music", takes its name from the famous concerts that took place on Sunday afternoons in St. Mary's Church, Lübeck, in northern Germany in the 17th century. These concerts offered the Lübeck townspeople music based on religious themes but presented in non-liturgical settings.

Tickets for the upcoming shows are available via www.musicforgalway.ie. Abendmusik concerts in 2021 are: February 14; March 7; and April 2. Each concert will have a different theme and feature a short, newly commissioned choral work, from Irish composers.

LOCKDOWN? WHAT LOCKDOWN?

By Dean Alistair Grimason

One of the consequences of Covid-19 restrictions is the occasion bout of apathy, a surge of listlessness that sweeps over one and expresses itself in a 'taking of the knee' to television bubble gum. Nota Bene the deepening of societal affection for the likes of Netflix!

Thus it was that one evening, post the RTE News depression-fest, I and two daughters in their late 20s found ourselves watching 'Reeling in the Years'. The year that was a-reeling that particular evening was 1972. Needless to say, 'The Troubles' featured heavily. One stand-out scene comprised footage of a massive car bomb in Belfast. At the end of the programme one of my daughters turned to me as said, 'Was it REALLY like that dad?' And it suddenly struck me that these two, young, well educated women had not a single clue about what it was like, 'REALLY' like, to grow up and live in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s, 1970s and beyond.

On reflection I don't know why I should have been particularly surprised at this. Down the years of living and ministering in the Republic of Ireland I have found it commonplace. On more than one occasion I've been asked by this or that society or association to speak to them about 'Northern Ireland of The Troubles' as if it were a conflict in a far away land like Korea or Vietnam rather than something that happened, and to degree is still happening, just 100 or so miles up the road. And to answer the question 'Was it REALLY like that?' Well.....yes. It REALLY was like that. Though it was much more subtle than bombs going off and bullets flying. But I don't want to get ahead of myself.

I grew up in the 1960s in the thriving market town of Dungannon in County Tyrone. I had loving and caring parents. We lived in a small semi-detached house on the edge of a housing estate. And it was a happy childhood of bicycles and footballs and fishing rods and freedoms the like of which children today can only dream about.

1968/69 changed all that. To be sure, the world was in a bit of turmoil at the end of the 1960s. And in my small corner of that world the Civil Rights Movement took off. It began on my doorstep in the nearby villages of Caledon and Coalisland and quickly escalated and spread to much of Northern Ireland. But, and here is the scary bit, while at the start it was a small bit novel and even exciting, it soon became an irritation and eventually just normal. A whole society simply accepted that they would be frisked going into shops, their cars would be searched on almost every journey, soldiers with guns would walk the streets of the towns, bombs would explode at unexpected moments and people they knew, even family members, would either be hauled out of their beds in the wee small hours and taken to jail or murdered on the daylight streets. This was our 'new normal' growing up in Northern Ireland post 1968. And it lasted, give or take, for 30 years.

Now, I don't 'enjoy' the current lockdown any more than anyone else. But it is small potatoes compared to those days of my youth. And here is where that 'subtlety' marks the difference. In these times we know the regulations. I don't need to spell them out. Back then, a lot of the lockdown experience was inside our heads, though it played out in real life. And it was much more oppressive. Now we can go shopping or exercising, albeit within 5km, with a fair degree of certainty that we will come back, that we will find shops open and supplying in the main streets, that our friends and family members will be safe in their daily round. Back then there were no such assurances. Our lockdown was one of living constantly on tenterhooks. Wrong time - wrong place was something we lived with every moment of every day. It was a psychological lockdown driven by anxiety.

Let me put personal flesh on these bones: My aunt had a bakery. A small family affair. It was blown to bits, rebuilt with a lot of effort, then blown to bits again; when he left the Tyrone Courier, my father had a filling station and corner shop. He was intimidated into closure during the Ulster Workers Strike in 1974; my cousin, with whom I fish regularly, was a member of a judo club which was run by the local R.C. Boys Club. One evening a knock came to his door and his mother was told that if Brian didn't leave the club, bad things would happen; my canoe

instructor was murdered because he was a member of the RUC Reserve; my then girlfriend's father was a part-time member of the UDR. His day job was as a senior Civil Servant. Every evening he arrived home, he would sit down in his armchair, take out his personal weapon, a 9mm automatic pistol, clear the pistol's chamber and set it on the table beside him. In the morning he would check underneath his car for a bomb.

Once, myself and two friends were camping on the bank of a river; fishing of course. When darkness fell we saw a torch light getting closer and closer along the river bank towards us. It was an Army foot patrol. Nice young English lads, children not much older than us. They searched the tent, drank a cuppa with us and went on their way.

My first parish posting was to a curacy in North Belfast, a real 'hot spot'. One night in the middle of the night I got a call to a parishioner who was dying in the Royal Victoria Hospital. I knew I could get there by two routes. One short and iffy. One much longer but much safer. I chose the former. Collar on, I chose to drive through The Ardoyne, a notoriously disturbed area. I was stopped by men with balaclavas and guns. I rolled down my window and a guy asked who I was and where I was going. Before I could utter a word, another guy with a balaclava and a gun said, 'It's okay. That's the Protestant minister. Let him away.' And off I went.

These, and many more incidents besides, was our 'normal'. A nervy, walking-on-eggs, internalised lockdown with no rules other than to literally keep your head down and hope in the Grace of God, and no visible end in sight. Oh, we weren't beating our fists against the wall every morning. But someone once said to me that, at some level, all of us who lived through that are slightly 'basket case'.

You see, I hear folk moan and whinge about Level 5 for 6 weeks and I smile to myself. What we're being asked to do now is really very small in the great scheme of things. Yes: it hurts. For some people it hurts a lot. But we and ours won't get blown up or catch a stray bullet as we go about our daily lives. So, let's try to keep things in perspective. Ireland 2020 is not a war zone. It's a temporary inconvenience that will come to an end.

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PARISH NEWS



ACHONRY GROUP

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take a break for festivals. Yes, it would be very sad not to celebrate Christmas in church but it would, I believe, be safer for all of us not to do so unless we have gone back to Level Two or below.

Since being not allowed to have services in church I have gone back to celebrating the Eucharist each Sunday at 11.00 a.m. and putting some notes and prayers each week on the parish page of the Diocesan Website. Many thanks to Dean Alistair Grimason for his unfailing help making this possible. You can read the notes by going to www.tuam.anglican.org/achonry/

Virtual Carol Service

Whether or not we are in Church at Christmas there is planned a virtual Carol Service on Sunday 20th December at a time to be announced. It is being organised by Ian Callanan a composer of Church Music here in Ireland. More details can be found at <http://iancallanan.com/christmas/>

Last time I wrote these notes we were looking forward to Harvest and having Bishop Patrick with us. That, of course, didn't happen and nor did the Art Exhibition all because we were moved to Level Three restrictions. Now, as I write, we're all at Level Five and yet again I can't give you a list of what services to expect over the next few weeks or even what will happen at Christmas.

I did hear a rumour that maybe if we were back to Level Three there might be some dispensation allowing us to have services at Christmas. To be honest I hope that such a dispensation would not be given. – Coronavirus does not make exceptions or



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As I sit in my study to write on this very damp and dismal November day Christmas seems like it is very far away. And yet it is in the forefront of the minds of a great many people who are wondering what Christmas 2020 will be like. What level of restrictions will there be? Will we be able to go to church to celebrate the birth of the Christ-child rather than watching online? Will we be able to travel to see family or will family be able to travel to see us? Will we be able to re-open our shops, and if so, will we get the Christmas shopping done in time? Some of these questions may well be answered by the time Tidings appears but even with the best case scenario being played out Christmas 2020 is certain to be different that of other years. What will not change, though, is the, 'good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people' (Luke 2:10). If this pandemic has taught us nothing else it has taught us to be thankful for small mercies, to find happiness in the small everyday things and that joy is perhaps a state of mind rather than a physical condition. Through all the struggles of the last months, and as we face an uncertain future, we should never lose sight of the hope we have in the birth of an infant son to a peasant mother at that first Christmas so long ago.

Balla roadway

After 8 years or so the road re-aligning project at Balla has now been completed. This saw the road being straightened along the wall of Holy Trinity graveyard and the new verges being planted. The graveyard is cared for beautifully and it is looking very well (see photos). Our thanks to everyone involved.

Westport Eco congregation - Candle on 4th October

The Westport Eco-congregation candle for the season of creation was blessed in St Mary's, Westport on Saturday 26th September, the theme being 'Our common home'. Some members of the committee were present for this. It then travelled to Holy Trinity, Westport, and was lit as part of the Harvest Festival



service on Sunday 4th October. The chair of Westport Eco-congregation, Mary Manning, spoke to us after the candle had been lit about climate justice and the need for each of us to take action in our own small way to make changes which will positively affect the life of our planet.

Podcasts and services

As restrictions continue so too will the twice weekly podcasts. The Revd Maebh O'Herlihy has started to record some of the podcasts and I would like to thank her for her support. The online diocesan services have been extended until the end of January as well. No-one knows yet what Christmas services will look like, but information will be sent out via parish email when we know what's happening! So, watch this space.

Christmas services

If we are allowed to have services in church over the Christmas period it will be my hope that we will have a carol service of sorts in each parish on 19th/20th December at the usual times and that services for Christmas will be as follows:
Christmas Eve 6.00pm Turlough Parish
Christmas Day 10.00am Christchurch, Castlebar
Christmas Day 11.30am Holy Trinity, Westport

Please watch the twice weekly parish email for further details.

Whether I am able to see you or not between now and then remains to be seen, so I'd like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and pray for a peaceful and slightly less fraught New Year.



ST. THOMAS, DUGORT

Achill Island
Ordained Local Minister:
Revd Maebh O'Herlihy
Tel: 087 2789912
E-mail: maebhoh@gmail.com

Although the church has been closed since late August, there has been a lot of splendid activity taking place in the grounds.

We are extremely grateful to the very kind people from the local community who have worked to give the church grounds and the old cemetery a beautiful restorative tidy-up. We would like to thank Patrick Gallagher, for his amazing clearance work on the church grounds, Dorrie Darlington and Padraig Lavelle for organising the council pruning machine to clear the driveway and Fred Applebe for treating the weeds.

John Sweeney has brought the students of Transition Year in the local Secondary school to St. Thomas. Over two days last spring and a further two days this autumn they have done amazing clearance work up the mountain on the paths and shrubbery of the Old Graveyard. We are looking forward to seeing John and the students back with us again as soon as restrictions permit.

Our heartfelt thanks also go to the frontline workers – doctors, nurses and community volunteers, who have worked so hard to look care for the Island community during the recent surge of Covid-19 here. We thank God that these patients are recovering, and we pray to God that these frontline workers may continue to be supported by His love and care.

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Since coming out of lockdown we have managed to maintain our usual Sunday worship within all of the restrictions and guidelines. In addition, for those who would still have placed themselves at high risk we maintained our online presence and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. A frustration is that we have no universal platform by which we can reach everyone. Not everyone has access to the internet, Whatsapp, E-mail or even a smartphone and so inevitably someone misses out. However, we encourage one another to call someone every now and again to see how they are but one thing we can all do is pray for those who we don't see and I would encourage to take the opportunity to make space for prayer and especially prayer for others. This second lockdown is going to be hard for many. Last time the lockdown came with an air of novelty, exceedingly good weather and lengthening days. This time around the weather is miserable, the nights long and we know through our experience that it can be hard. So please, pray that we can all get through this safely.

Since our last edition we have had just the one funeral, that of our dear brother Bertie Cole on Sunday September 20th. He was 84 years old. Bertie had been unwell for many years with various ailments but his death still came as a surprise. Indeed, I had only been to his house the day before to share Holy Communion with him and his wife Sarah. While he was tired, we had no idea that the next 24 hours would unfold as they did. However, one think is for sure is that Bertie knew his destination and would be happy to go and meet his Saviour. However, it still leaves a whole in the lives of those left behind, most notably, Sarah, and their children, Margaret, Richard and Alan and we hold them in our prayers. The Lord blessed us with great weather that weekend enabling a service in the yard of the homeplace on Saturday evening where everyone adhered to the guidelines and the sun shone. The funeral took place in St Paul's church on the Sunday afternoon in beautiful sunshine and he was finally laid to rest in the churchyard. Bertie was always great 'craic', known for his jokes. He had

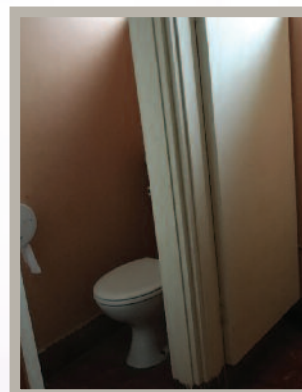
served the church down through the years and only stepped down from the Select Vestry a couple of years ago. In a community like ours he will be missed.

St Paul's School

Over the first half term, our school life has been a game of two halves with half the school down at the community centre, the Teeling Centre and the other at school. The photo shows the fence Nigel Bourke



and I put up in the carpark for safety and security reasons. Why? Because our toilets have been refurbished. That might not seem like exciting news



Old Toilets



New Toilets



Compromise Toilets

to you but it is music to our ears. Long before Covid, the toilets needed updating as little had happened since the seventies. Making the school ready for operation under Covid regulations meant that there was no choice. If the school was going to

open in September the toilets needed to be changed. After discussions with the Department of Education eventually we got the go ahead but the work couldn't be completed by the start of term, hence the split to allow school to open. Fortunately, work was completed by half term and with some rapid reorganisation school opened on November 2nd with Covid friendly (or should that read unfriendly) toilets as our pictures show. Not the greatest of images but for us a delight. Many thanks go out to all those who made this possible!

On a totally different front we are pleased to welcome Sharon Livingstone to the team as our SNA. The start of the year cannot be what she might have expected but she has taken it in her stride.



GALWAY & KILCUMMIN

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 Oughterard
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 Revd Carole Reynolds Tel: 087 6067848
 Revd Dr. Paidi Delaney Tel: 089 9779649
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A note from the Rector

I hope this finds you all safe and well. We are all navigating through Level 5 in our own particular way. It certainly is challenging and yet having had the privilege to witness and glimpse the work that our front line staff do, together with the circumstances that they are working in, there is no doubt the demands of many rest on a few. While we understand and support the Level 5 decision, as many of you do, that doesn't mean it is easy, we are grappling with many known unknowns. Wherever you are on that journey you will have good days and bad days. Be gentle with yourself and others, everyone meets their challenges in a different way.

We all deal with circumstances and situations in our own way, but rest assured you are not alone. The clergy and your family and friends are thinking and praying for you. Perhaps if you are feeling alone you will find the courage to pick up the phone and chat

with loved ones or friends - let them know honestly how you are feeling. Set yourself targets each day, and perhaps the person you phone or text needs to hear from you as much as you need to chat with them. If we can at all we should try to focus on the good we are doing by adhering to the restrictions; keeping one another and the vulnerable safe and quietly affirming the tireless work of our front line workers, who no doubt are facing an exhausting few months. Every moment of everyday has huge potential, and it may be that we come to see life, nature, people in a new light. And so we continue, but held in God's hand, enveloped in his love and focussed on caring for ourselves and each other. Stay Safe and Every Blessing.

Chatty Crafters - The chatty crafters are now meeting via zoom on a Thursday morning - this may be an opportunity to chat and connect with each other. Make a cuppa, tune in and craft and chat, or just chat. It is primarily about friendship and fellowship.

Ordinations - Through September we had the joy and experience of hosting and being part of some historical and memorable services. It certainly continues to be a 700th year to remember for St Nicholas'. A special thank you to everyone in front and behind the scenes - those who cleaned the churches, flower arrangers, stewards, choir, organists and churchwardens.

Mólsceal - There was much publicity following on from the bell ringing initiative. We were delighted that An Nuacht, TG 4 and Mólsceal were keen to film and report from the church. It was a great honour and an opportunity for us to reach out and show that ministry continues in church albeit outside the walls.

Gradam Awards - Bhronn Kenneth Deery Príomhfheidhmeannach Galway Chamber Bronnadh Speisialta na Moltóirí - urraithe ag Judy Greene Pottery, ar St. Nicholas' Collegiate Church, Galway. St Nicholas was delighted to be awarded the judges special prize for a high standard and will shortly be presented with a Judy Green pottery award piece in the Gradam Awards. The Gradam awards is run by Gallimhe na Gaeilge and it encourages the use and introduction of Irish in the organization and in our case, the church. This was the first time St Nicholas had entered. We were in the 'other businesses' category, and the first good news was that St Nicholas' was a finalist. The Rector and Catherine Moore Temple were interviewed by three judges and the winners were announced live by the Mayor of Galway on Galway Bay FM during the Keith Finnegan show.

Needless to say there was much delight and excitement.

Online worship – We continue with our online Sunday service on zoom. It is great for us all to be able to connect together at 11am Sunday morning. At least this time, zoom is now familiar to us and we have maintained our 11am gathering even as the churches reopened with limited numbers, and should the connection be poor we have all become tolerant and accustomed to the nature of unpredictable internet connections. We will use the original order of service booklet as sent out by the diocese back in March. If you would like a link please feel free to contact us.

Calendar – A calendar is currently in production marking the 700th anniversary and the beginning of the 701st year of this medieval building. The calendar will cost 10 euro and will be a keepsake in a historic year and a practical gift.

Christmas Fayre – This year the Christmas Fayre will proceed but virtually and will be launched on the parish website and face book page. The virtual shop will have Christmas cakes, plum puddings, chutneys, marmalade crafts and decorations for sale.

Christmas Giving Tree - The Giving Tree we know is an important part of the parish and the City's charitable giving. This year it will go virtual and an idonate button will allow people to make a donation. We are in contact with the organizations so that the money can be used to meet their needs.

St Nicholas Parochial Schools News - Well done everybody! We have had a great term in school. Everything has gone very smoothly. We would like to thank all of our wonderful pupils and parents for their continued support. School assemblies at the moment are happening by zoom. It is even more special now as the Rectors dog 'Scout' can join in!

We send our thanks and support to our wonderful team of teachers who have worked so hard to make the transition back to school so easy for the children and parents alike. Well done to our Principal Wendy Lynch and her team.

Christmas Services

At the time of writing these notes, we are navigating a way through Covid-19 restrictions and as a result, Christmas services will be announced in December.



A note from Revd Carole

Sunday, 27th September was a very special day, the day of my ordination to the Priesthood. It was a day that we were not sure was going to take place due to Covid-19 and the restrictions that were in place. Even with the restrictions in place a was such a joyous occasion and it was a privilege to share the day with Maebh and Karen. Unfortunately for the three of us, only a small number of our families and friends could attend. A week later, on Sunday, 4th October, I was in Kilcummin Church in Oughterard, with my parishioners and the Rector to celebrate my first Eucharist. It was another very special occasion, apart from it being my first Eucharist, it was also the first time the church had been open since the original lockdown began back in March. I look forward to being with them all again when the Churches reopen. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support, help and kindness over the last few years on this journey I have been on, a journey which is only just beginning.



A note from Revd Paidi

The day of my ordination as a deacon was unexpectedly dry and sunny, buíochas le Dia. It was a good day, with friends from work and meditation, fellow parishioners and Steffi and Kay all there – and a four-person choir! Thank you to everyone for your support! When Bishop Patrick laid his (properly sanitised) hands on my head, I was made a deacon, called to serve the people. But, for the moment, we've had to press pause on the usual deacon-y things like doing the rounds of the hospitals or visiting the people of the parish. The pandemic has changed all that, for a time. This just means that we're called to be more creative and use the resources available to us, above all, the ubiquitous Zoom! If the Chatty Crafters can meet on Zoom (and they certainly can!), then there's nothing stopping our new Meditation and Reflections on Thursdays at 8pm from meeting the need for quiet prayer and contemplation, followed by an equally quiet spoken Compline at 8:30pm. Just the start.

KILLALA

St Patrick's Cathedral, Killala
St John's, Ballycastle (Dunfeeney)
St Mary's, Crossmolina
Priest-in-charge: Vacant
Tel: 096 60829

As we look to the Christmas we are reminded of the words of the prophet Isaiah (7:14), when he tells us,

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

Immanuel means, 'God with us'. These words, while familiar, are bound to hold special meaning for us in this year as we don't know as yet whether or not the restrictions will have been lifted enough for us to visit family and friends or to go to Church over this coming Christmas time. But even if we find we are unable to do so we can still welcome the Christ-child into our homes and lives, as we live with the hope that we will be able to return to more normal patterns of life in the coming year.

Worship at this time

This year has been one of disruption not only in our own homes and society but also in the life of the Church and our patterns of worship. I would like to thank all involved in the worshiping life of our parishes. To the Rev'd. John Farr as he visits on the second Sunday of each month to help out with Communion services in the Killala Union, and to Rev'd Clive Moore as he begins his ministry in the parishes of Ballycastle and Crossmolina.

Our prayers are of course with Arthur as he studies at the Theological Institute, may this be a time of blessing for him as he prepares for Holy Orders; and finally thanks to all who support worship in the opening and preparation of churches for services and for the diligence of all who serve on the Select Vestry.

If we cannot meet over the Christmas period I would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you and your families a Happy and Blessed Christmas, please stay safe and well and may we all pray for a prosperous New Year in a world that is free of Covid-19.

Christmas Services

If we find ourselves in a position where we are able to worship in church each Parish will have a simple Carol Service on the Sunday before Christmas and a

Celebration of Holy Communion over Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Given the restrictions of a 72 hour break between services there will be no worship in church on the Sunday after Christmas.

St Patrick's Cathedral, Killala
Sunday 23rd December 2020
The Fourth Sunday of Advent
Carol Service at 10.00am

Friday 25th December 2020
Christmas Day
with Bishop Patrick Rooke
Holy Communion at 10.00am

Sunday 27th December 2020
The Sunday after Christmas
NO SERVICE

All this information will be available and updated in the bi-weekly newsletter sent from 'The Archdeacon's Study' to parishioners throughout the Kilmoremoy and Killala Unions. If you do not yet receive this newsletter and wish to do so please contact me on vensj@mcwhirter.ie and I will gladly include you in the mailing. Our worship continues online with our diocesan worship each Sunday morning and we have a full complement of seasonal and festival services led by the Bishop and the diocesan clergy team.

Parish Register

Christian Burial
Mary Gardiner, Killala Nursing Home, formerly Ballintean, 2nd November 2020 aged 81. Cathedral Church of St Patrick, Killala followed by interment in Mullafarry graveyard. Service conducted by Ven. Stephen McWhirter.



CROSSMOLINA AND BALLYCASTLE

Revd Clive Moore
E-mail: 1clvmoore@gmail.com
Phone: 087-6563238

"You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again." (Psalm 71 verse 20)



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Contact: Revd Andrew Ison
E:rev.andrew.ison@gmail.com T: 89 2221483

I am trying not to take it personally. It is just a few short weeks since my ordination and the churches are closed again in compliance with level 5 restrictions. Of course, I'm not implying that there is a correlation between the two events (I certainly hope not!). Also I absolutely support all necessary measures to keep everyone safe in these difficult times and sadly these measures are necessary, but as I write this in the first days of November I can't help thinking of the poem "November" by Thomas Hood:

No sun - no moon!
 No morn - no noon -
 No dawn - no dusk - no proper time of day.
 No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
 No comfortable feel in any member -
 No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
 No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds! -
 November!

This November we could probably all add to the list of "no's" and absences we are noticing and of course "no churches open" would make the list for many of us. The thing about Thomas Hood's poem is that it captures a mood very well but strictly speaking is a little unfair to poor November! Most of the things he lists as absent are actually still there, just not so obviously so, you have to make a bit of an effort to experience them (and even those things that are absent we know will be coming back). Church is still happening, not as we would prefer it perhaps, but still happening. The clergy of the Diocese still provide content online which can be viewed or listened to every week and pastoral visits occur over the phone. Those of us who can manage the technology have the opportunity to assist those who could do with a hand to access these services and we are rewarded with a variety of worship styles and content when we do so. We can appreciate this blessing in much the same way as some of us grow to appreciate a crisp frosty November morning for its' own attributes even if our preference is for balmy summer weather!

By the time you read this of course November will be ebbing to its' conclusion or may even have passed and the church will be preparing to enter, or already have entered into the season of Advent. A new church year begins and this time of preparation and waiting will be like none before for most of us. Those of us who complained in the past about the encroaching "commercial Christmas" which seemed to overshadow Advent every year, have an opportunity to explore and engage spiritually with "waiting" in a

way we never imagined we would have to! I pray that we will all find some time each day to engage with Christ in prayer and scripture remembering that he came into our world because his love for us is something he takes very personally.

Because of the restrictions I have very little news of parish events in either St. John's, Ballycastle or St Mary's, Crossmolina. Unfortunately St. Mary's was due to have their Harvest Service a week after the Level 5 restrictions came into effect but prior to that St. John's did have a Harvest themed Service of the Word. Although it wasn't quite the same as our traditional packed evening services it did lift the spirits to hear the traditional hymns being played and reflect on how even in these difficult days we find so much to give thanks to God for.

Please keep in your prayers the family of Oliver Jackson (known to everyone as "Bob") who sadly died on the 6th October in his 93rd year after a brief illness. It was a privilege for me to assist Archdeacon Stephen when he gave Bob Holy Communion in his home shortly before his passing, and so appropriate that the harvest hymn "We plough the fields and scatter" was played at the funeral service of this man who lived his life attending to the rhythm and seasons of farming and country life. Bob was well liked and well respected in the parish and community and he will be greatly missed by all who worship at St. Mary's. We extend our sympathies to his wife Agnes, sons and daughters Sandra, Sheila, Stanley, Valerie, Robert, Yvonne, and their families including his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The congregation of St John's was also greatly saddened to hear of the passing of our sister in Christ Ann McCormick on the 15th of October. Ann was a member of the Methodist community who was involved in many inter-church initiatives and I think probably played the organ in most of the Church of Ireland churches in the Kilmoremoy and Killala Unions on various occasions over the years. We extend our sympathies to her husband Donal and all the McCormick family, especially her sister-in-law Heather Bourke.





KILMOREMOY UNION

St Michael's, Ballina (Kilmoremoy)
Killanley Church, Castleconnor
Kilglass, St Anne's, Easkey
Rector: Ven. Stephen McWhirter
Tel: 096 60829 & 085 875 9921.
www.stmichaelsballina.killala.anglican.org
www.kilmoremoy.killala.anglican.org

As we look to the birth of Christ in Luke's Gospel he tells us; 'And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered' (Luke 2: 1) Indeed it was this momentous decree that enabled the young couple to travel from their home town of Nazareth in order that the scriptures might be fulfilled that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, the city of David.

These words of scripture have new meaning for us in this most unusual of years, we are becoming well used to the great decrees of government and we all wait with bated breath to see what decree will be made about our own Christmas this year!

I, like everyone else, wonder if I'll be able to go to church, if I'll be able to see family; however our God is the God of surprises, and who knows in the years to come I may look back on this Christmas as the most special in memory! If we find ourselves over the Christmas period still in a position of lockdown, unable to celebrate in the ways that we are used to, without family around and the neglect of our own family traditions, let us take stock of the first Christmas and the Holy Family.

Mary and Joseph were displaced, no family support and nowhere to stay and Mary ended up giving birth to this precious baby in the isolation of a stable. Now I know



that as we look to the nativity story presented to us in schools and churches we can be fooled into thinking that the stable was a pretty busy place that first Christmas morning. However if we read Luke's Gospel, Chapter 2: 1-20, we quickly see that they were only visited by a couple of shepherds who stayed only a few minutes; so excited where they to get out to tell of this wondrous event.

In this modern day we can all say, and many often do, that Christmas has become too commercialised.

Let this year, however it turns out, be a year to pare back and take stock.

Let this year not be about parties and spending too much.

Let this year be the opportunity to spend less but shop locally to support local businesses.

Let this year be the one we value relationship more and take time by whatever means to tell people how important they are to us and how much we miss them. Let this year be about that precious baby born in a stable, who gave up all for us.

Worship at this time

This year has been one of disruption not only in our own homes and society but also in the life of the Church and our patterns of worship. I would like to thank all involved in the worshiping life of our parishes to the Revd John Farr as he visits on the second Sunday of each month to help out with Communion services in the Killala Union, to our own clerical staff: Revd Karen, Revd Caroline and Revd Clive, whose contributions for their own parishes of responsibility you can read in this issue of Tidings. Thank you also to our Parish Readers, Norman, Nichola, John and Amanda for all they offer so willingly in support of services of our worship. Our prayers are of course with Arthur as he studies at the Theological Institute, may this be a time of blessing for him as he prepares for Holy Orders; and finally to all who support worship in the opening and preparation of churches for services and to the diligence of all who serve on the Select Vestry.

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Christmas Services

If we find ourselves in a position where we are able to worship in church each Parish will have a simple Carol Service on the Sunday before Christmas and a Celebration of Holy Communion on Christmas Day at

their normal times. Given the restrictions of a 72 hour break between services there will be no worship in church on the Sunday after Christmas, December 27th.

St Michael's, Ballina
Sunday 23rd December 2020
The Fourth Sunday of Advent
Carol Service at 11.30am

Friday 25th December 2020
Christmas Day
Holy Communion at 11.30am

All this information will be available and updated in the bi-weekly newsletter sent from 'The Archdeacon's Study' to parishioners throughout the Kilmoremoy and Killala Unions. If you do not yet receive this newsletter and wish to do so please contact me on vensj@mcwhirter.ie and I will gladly include you in the mailing. Our worship continues online with our diocesan worship each Sunday morning and we have a full complement of seasonal and festival services led by the Bishop and the diocesan clergy team.



ST ANNE'S, EASKEY & KILGLASS PARISH

Revd Karen Duigan
Phone: 087 2200 638
E-mail: kgduigan@gmail.com

Congratulations to John and Audrey Shannon on the safe arrival of their granddaughter Stella Audrey in Australia. I am sure she will bring much joy to her parents Jean and Tim. We wish them every blessing for the future.

Old Photos!

There are several photo albums in our house. When I was little, I used to occasionally present them to my Dad and sat and listened to his stories as I looked at photos of some amazing places. Dad served in the RAF from 1945 until 1952 and most of that time he was in the Middle East. He had pictures of aeroplanes, tanks, mounted soldiers, deserts and cities. One of my favourite photos was one of him standing against a column in front of the Church of All Nations on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. In 1990 I managed to visit Jerusalem, hotfooted it to the Church of All Nations and badgered someone to photograph me

standing in the same spot. It gave him great pleasure to see his daughter standing in there over 40 years later. Nowadays taking pictures with our phones is something we all do. These photos then languish in the memory chip of the phone, they are rarely printed so that someone years later can leaf through the pages of an album and get pleasure looking at places and people they may never see. Think of people who would love to see them and perhaps get some new ones printed and put in an album. Who knows who will be looking at them in 40 years time.



KILLANLEY - CASTLECONNOR

Revd Caroline Morrow
Phone: 087 2053996
E-mail: cmorrow1963@gmail.com

Ordination

I was ordained Deacon on September 13th at St Michael's Church in Ballina and what an introduction to my ministry! Within three weeks of the ordination, lockdown number 2 came into effect and worship has moved online once again. So, having being given the pastoral and liturgical care of the parishioners in Killanley, I have to get my thinking cap on and discover new ways to pastor to the folks. For now I have made a decision to personally write to the parishioners each month. A handwritten personal letter to each family. So, to all of you I say keep an eye out for the "letter from the pastor". Services will continue online for the foreseeable future. These can be accessed on the Facebook page: Killanley Church.

Bereavements

Maisie Chambers. Virginia. Co. Cavan and formerly of Castleconnor National School, Quay Road Ballina. Maisie passed away peacefully at Cavan General Hospital on September 3rd. She had moved to Cavan some years ago and resided with her niece in Virginia. She had been a teacher in Castleconnor national school and had moved into St Michaels School to continue teaching when Castleconnor school closed down. When news of her death reached Killanley, many of her former pupils spoke of her fondly. Memories of her cycling to church on a Sunday morning and latterly walking down to the church where she slipped in quietly. She had a sharp mind and a great wit. She was a strict but fair teacher and, in latter years, still took a keen interest in the many

young children that attended church. She was laid to rest after a funeral service in Bellasis Presbyterian Church, Cavan. We extend our deepest sympathies to her brother Fred, sister in law Ruth and her nephews and nieces.

We also remember in our prayers Trish and John Gawley as they mourn the loss of Trisha's aunt, Carmel Kavanagh. Carmel passed away on October 16th after a brief illness and was laid to rest in Ardagh cemetery after her funeral mass in Ardagh Church.

Christmas Arrangements

Usually at this time you would be hearing about Carol Services and Christmas Services but with the restrictions, no one can predict what will happen. That being said, all we can do is hope and pray that we get to celebrate the birth of Jesus in church. So, I am going to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy, Holy and Peaceful Christmas.

OMEY GROUP

Christ Church, Clifden
St Thomas', Ballinakill
St Mary's, Roundstone
Priest in Charge: Vacant
Tel: 091 21147
www.omeygroup.ie

The churches in the Omev Group of Parishes have closed their doors once more following the most recent NPHET health guidance. Sadly, this occurred before the Harvest Festival which had to be cancelled.



Classical guitarist John Feely at the Clifden Community Arts Festival 2020

Christ Church played host to a small number of concerts as part of a greatly reduced Clifden Community Arts Festival earlier in September. The schedule included six concerts at Christ Church which were coordinated with the assistance of Isobel Marinot-Wood. Isobel's daughter Alice helped out in the smooth running of the concerts as part of her transition year school work experience.

The boundary wall to the east of Christ Church has been completed by local stone mason Michael Walsh. This restoration has greatly enhanced the church yard while also providing renewed shelter and security. Work continues on the wall to the front of the church. Tree surgeon Alan Linane has carried out some well needed pruning around the perimeter. More recently, a small team of volunteers met to plant several hundred bulbs as a sign of hope for the future and to enhance the church for all our members and visitors.



Boundary wall at Christ Church, Clifden

The parishioners of St. Thomas's in Moyard were saddened at the passing of Christopher Cully who was one of their oldest and most loyal members. Christopher's funeral and burial was held at St. Thomas's on the 17th September. There was a supportive attendance inside and outside the church which was gladdened with some glorious sunshine. Christopher was born in nearby Ross and he spent his school holidays in the Rectory beside the church. He travelled widely and settled in Zambia for many years but he longed to return to his beloved Connemara with his wife Elizabeth. The couple eventually came back to settle in Moyard in 1991. Christopher became a reader and a churchwarden and he was also a member of the select vestry and the Synod. We extend our sincere condolences to Elizabeth, he will be greatly missed by us all.

St. Thomas's church exterior has been completely re-rendered in lime and it is a fine accomplishment of workmanship as well as a vital protection from the elements. It is hoped that work will commence on the interior of the church as soon as the health guidelines allow. In the meantime, there is a large store of bulbs to be put into the ground ahead of Spring.

St. Mary's Church in Roundstone celebrated their last service of Holy Communion under the auspices of Canon David Williams who kindly travelled from Clonbur. Work is continuing on the re-pointing of the west wall while the church is closed. A new drain has been put in place at the base of the tower and this has proven effective in recent weeks as the weather has become more inclement. Work has also taken place in the church yard to clear some bushes which has revealed the impressive tomb of Daniel Bowden-Smith, deceased in 1849 and a former Governor of Bengal.

Holy Trinity Church in Errislannan has closed its doors but work has also continued on the church grounds. The aim is to cut back the considerable undergrowth in order to fully identify the listed gravestones. It is also planned to begin the pointing of the external walls of the church to protect them from the elements.



Errislannan Church yard

Sadly, the judges of the John Betjeman Award were forced to postpone their visit due to the Covid restrictions. This award celebrates excellence in the repair of places of worship of all denominations and faiths. Holy Trinity Church has been shortlisted along with just three other churches in Ireland. We await a rescheduled date pending the lifting of restrictions nationwide.

Debbie Watkins

SKREEN GROUP



Skreen
Christ Church, Dromard
St Mary's, Kilmacshalgan, Dromore West
Priest in Charge:
Canon Noel Regan
Phone: 071 9166253
Mobile: 086 8875714
Email: revnoelregan@hotmail.com

Harvest Thanksgivings

We were so fortunate to have held harvest services in the three churches in our Group on Sunday 4th October. The following day we were in lockdown.

The three churches were really lovely, decorated with symbols of so much that we take for granted, our food and the beauty that is all around us in flowers, trees and those things that add so much to the quality of life. A big thank you to those who provided the offerings and decorated. These services were well attended considering the restrictions.

Bereavements

The funeral of Mr. Arthur Brett took place in St. Mary's Kilmacshalgan on Sunday 13th September. Arthur had lived his whole life in the family home at Dunbeacon. A quiet unassuming man who had farmed all his life. He together with his wife Victoria and son Stuart were regular attenders at the parish church. Sadly Arthur's health deteriorated and for the past two years he was a resident in the Nursing Home in Enniscrone where he was very well cared for. We extend sympathy to Vic and Stuart and the extended family at this sad time.

On Sunday 20th September the funeral service of Mr. Adrian Pearse was held in Christ Church, Dromard. Adrian's death as a young man caused great sadness within his family and also the entire community. One who was outgoing, friendly, kind, loved outdoor sport and very much a family man. His wife Sarah and daughters Ella and Katie and his lovely home at Coillte Lyney were his whole life. To his wife Sarah, daughters Ella and Katie, father-in-law Dermot O'Hara and his family we extend sincere sympathy at the untimely death of Adrian.

To all who are bereaved we pray that you will have the strength to meet the days to come with steadfastness and patience, not sorrowing as those without hope.

As we go to print it is impossible to predict how things will be nationwide for Christmas. If churches are open again our Holy Communion services will be as follows:

Christmas Eve 8.30 pm. Dromore West

Christmas Day 10.00 am. Dromard

Christmas Day 11.15 am. Skreen

In the mean time do keep safe and I look forward to seeing you all soon again. Blessings all.

Wedding:

On the 15th August 2019 St. Mary's Kilmacshagan was the setting for the wedding of Caroline Harte and Robert Martin of Rathbarron. It was so nice to see the church so beautifully decorated and also packed to capacity for this very happy occasion. The reception was held in The Radisson Hotel, Rossespoint Road. We wish Robert and Caroline every blessing as they journey together through life.



STRAID PARISH, FOXFORD & CLAREMORRIS

Priest-in-charge: Canon Andrea Wills
Tel: 094 9256403; Mobile 086 261 7572
Foxford: 10.00 a.m. every Sunday
Claremorris: 12 noon in McWilliam
Park Hotel – 1st Sunday of the month
andrea.wills@gmail.com

Each Sunday from 5th July when restrictions on church services were lessened until 4th October a service was held in Foxford Church with HSE and Church protocols in place. That short time on a Sunday morning was important, contemplative and special. We had planned to have harvest hymns and prayers at service on 11th October but that was not to be. We look forward to when we can meet again for worship.

We are grateful to Sue Baird for offering to do some inside painting and touching up during lockdown.

We have missed the children at service but are glad that the schools are all open. The Maloney children all attend Foxford National School now, Hugo having joined his older sisters. Mr. McHugh and all the staff at the school are to be congratulated on how well they have managed all the extra precautions necessary during this pandemic with a school of over 250 pupils.



On Wednesday 11th November at 11.00 a.m. Fr. Martin Convey P.P. and I held a short service of remembrance at the War Memorial in Straide. We had not been able to have our usual gathering and service on Remembrance Sunday. Flowers were laid by John Reid, Chairman of the Straide and District War Memorial Association. Sheets of rain and just the three of us made for a poignant ceremony. It had not been advertised. Just as we finished we were joined by a serving member of the Irish Army. He comes each year on 11th November at 11.00 a.m. to pay his respects.

Mrs. Matilda Johnston from Enniskillen spent a lot of



time with her daughter June Elliott in Kilkelly where she runs June's Café. Mrs. Johnston who was in her 90's was very attached to her church. She was a great-great grandmother and she died peacefully in Castlebar hospital on 7th October. After prayers at her home the funeral cortege headed to Co. Fermanagh where her funeral service took place the following day in Derrylin Parish church. Our deepest sympathy to June and all the family.

Our prayers continue for all those who are sick at this time and especially for those who await tests and results. May they know God's love and seek strength from him and find peace and healing in his presence.



TUAM GROUP

St Mary's Cathedral, Tuam
St Mary's, Cong
St John the Baptist, Aasleagh
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I hardly know where to start. And that's not because there is so much to report and announce. Quite the opposite in fact.

We were trotting along quite nicely and then in the first week of October the infection numbers soared and the shutters came down. Followed very quickly by the portcullis being dropped and the drawbridge being very firmly raised. At the time of writing there's 4 weeks left at Level 5, they say. I'm not counting any chickens. I've done that before and been disappointed. And even IF we revert to some sort of Level 3 'plus' at the beginning of December (as is being whispered in the corridors of power), that will still mean that our churches will remain closed for worship. Quite where that might leave Christmas is anyone's guess at this point. We 'lost' The Feast of the Resurrection, are we to 'lose' The Feast of the Nativity as well? It doesn't bear contemplation. Meanwhile, in Northern Ireland, just a couple of hours up the road, the churches are all open for worship. And their incidence of Covid-19 is, comparatively, much worse than ours. It is truly bewildering. But every government across the world is struggling, even floundering, to find the best way to cope. And each, in their own way, is stumped. There's simply no silver bullet!

We did manage to celebrate Harvest in St Mary's Cathedral, Tuam on 4th October, on the morning of the very day that NPHET dropped its bombshell. And I would like to say a huge 'thank you' to everyone who decorated the cathedral for the service, however and whenever they did it!

We must record our immense thanks to those who have been able to continue to contribute financially to the ongoing work of ministry in the parishes. At the same time, to those who are not in a position to do this, we want to say that we understand that the restrictions have brought difficult times for many.

For the foreseeable future, we gather for worship online every Sunday. The Dean is doing his live stream on the St

Mary's, Cong Facebook page at 10am. The recorded Diocesan Worship Video is posted every Saturday on www.tuam.anglican.org and remains there during the following week.

Christmas

As was noted above, at this juncture we simply do not know where we will be with regard to Christmas worship in both Cong and Tuam. To paraphrase Voltaire, if all goes for the best in the best of all possible worlds, there will be some sort of Carol Service on 20th December at 12 noon in Tuam and at 4pm in Cong. Hopefully on Christmas Day Holy Communion will be celebrated in Cong 10am and in Tuam at 12 noon. But please be aware that right now, these services, dates and times are very much provisional and not in the least bit certain. Should the worst come to the worst there will be some sort of online presence of Christmas celebration and worship and plans are in hand to provide that. Announcements will be made as and when.



In conclusion

When ruminating on an insult to throw at the year about to pass behind us, I turned to the king of all insults, William Shakespeare, and came up with this, from 'As You Like It':

'I do desire that we may be better strangers.'

There were other of The Bard's insults I could have used with regard to 2020 but a lot of them are not printable in a diocesan magazine. Suffice to say that we will all be glad to be 'better strangers' to 2020; to have it well and truly behind us. We can only hope and pray that 2021 will bring softer rain and gentler sunshine to our lives. So may we take the opportunity to wish all our parishioners and friends good health and continued safety as we struggle through these hard days and weeks. Have as good a Christmas as you possibly can. And until we meet again.....properly!.....may God hold you all in the palm of his hand.



CHRISTIAN AID
CHRISTMAS APPEAL
Climate change brings drought and hunger
to Ethiopia. But your love brings hope.



Father-of-five Mekonnen Sofar (38) lives in Ethiopia's South Omo region. Every day, he digs in a dry riverbed to find water for his cattle.



Mekonnen's story

Mekonnen Sofar kneels in the sand, determinedly digging with his hands into the dirt of the dry riverbed, in search of water. He is thirsty and desperate with the dry hole more than a metre deep. Mekonnen knows that if he does not strike water today, some of his livestock may die.

The effects of climate change are real in the village where Mekonnen lives with his wife and five sons. The

rains have stopped, drought has dried the rivers, and crops no longer produce a harvest. Even the honey bees have disappeared.

Mekonnen worries that his way of life as a pastoralist herdsman will not last much longer as the climate crisis worsens. Many of his livestock have already died, and hunger has forced him to sell off some of his remaining animals.

"The changing climate has made it too difficult to live around here. My farm and my animals are no longer enough. A number of people have died because they dig deep with sand above their head and the sand collapses on top of them. Even small children. We pray for rain but when there's no rain, we have to dig. Some people have shovels but most don't – we use our hands."

Mekonnen desperately needs a reliable water source to keep his animals alive and maintain his livelihood. Each day that passes is another day of digging and another day of desperation.

This Christmas, will you stand with families like Mekonnen's, living on the frontline of the climate crisis?

- €28 will plant elephant grass to feed livestock.
- €59 will teach 12 farmers how to grow drought-tolerant crops.
- €117 will buy three goats to give poor families an income. (Goats tolerate drought well.)
- €555 will help build a community pond from which Mekonnen can draw water for his animals and crops.

You can donate online at www.caid.ie/ChristmasAppeal or by telephone on 01 496 7040



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This is Sligo Grammar School, a Church of Ireland co-educational boarding and day school situated in the heart of Sligo Town, on the banks of the Garavogue River, a stone's throw from Lough Gill and Yeats' Lake Isle of Inisfree. The setting beautifully combines the easy pace of country life with the buzz of a small but vibrantly cultural urban centre

The school takes full advantage of all the beautiful North West coast has to offer. As well as going on field trips to experience the history, geography and ecology of the area, students are encouraged to make use of the river, lake and ocean through timetabled and extra curricular activities. We have a kayaking club and a rowing club, while surfing is part of our TY programme. Other sports offered include rugby, hockey, soccer, basketball and athletics.



Sligo Grammar School offers over 20 subjects at Leaving Cert. level with consistently excellent academic results. In 2018 over 60% of our students were offered University places both at home and abroad.



Sligo's rich cultural heritage is reflected in extra-curricular activities such as debating and public speaking, music, choir, chess, and evening trips to the theatre.

Throughout the year lunchtime concerts, public debates, the school musical and focus events such as Wellbeing Week, and Seachtain na Gaeilge allow our students to develop their skills and grow emotionally and intellectually.



Sligo Grammar School offers a rounded education which values all intelligences. We pride ourself on our friendly, family atmosphere. The wellbeing of our students is important and our pastoral care team includes a Transition Year, Junior and Senior School Co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain and Matron.



Bursaries, scholarships and grants are available.

Contact the school for details at: admin@sligogrammarschool.org or phone 071 9145010 and visit us at

www.sligogrammarschool.org

Headmaster: Mr. Michael Hall M.Sc B.Ed