

# Living Hope

News from  
Holywood Parish  
June 2020

down  
to  
earth

# A letter from the Vicar



I've been reading a book about time recently. It's a theoretical physics book which may not sound that inspiring. The author doesn't claim to have a Christian faith but I find it impossible to read it and not be awestruck at the concept of time which the bible talks about in many different ways.

Many people feel that time has felt relatively different over the last few months- with some struggling to work out what day it is. We have probably used our time differently to normal- with many of our regular routines being suspended.

It is nearly time, we feel, for churches to be permitted to welcome back parishioners to Sunday services. The Church of Ireland has issued (very long) guidance about how we can do that. However, with the current social distancing guidance the capacity of the parish church is hugely reduced. The Select Vestry and staff are working on the practical arrangements and we will not return until we feel we have done everything necessary from a health and safety perspective but look out for notices over the coming weeks.

If you have not been able to view our services online this is a timely opportunity to remind you that DVD 'Digests' of recent online services are available by request from the parish office. If you don't have a player for these we will happily provide one too. When 'in-Church' services resume we will be endeavouring to stream then all live so people can join us from home.

From an outward looking perspective, it is now possible for us to visit you at home but for the time being this will be by appointment. Given that these are both outdoor and socially distanced meetings there's also something of a dependence on the weather and we appreciate that you may not have space for a particularly private conversation. If you would like me or Ken or one of the pastoral team to call with you please get in touch with us or the parish office. If you have any other practical needs it is our privilege to help.



We have already begun to send people out from the church building on Friday afternoons. Individually, in socially distanced pairs or household groups they are praying for our town and leaving the simple message that Jesus cares.

With no newsletter or magazine over the next few months, we hope you will continue to catch up with parish news through the website and facebook page. I hope I will have the chance to see many of you in person very soon,

Yours in Christ, Gareth

# A truly global pandemic

## Pray for our partners across the world

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### Maridi, South Sudan

From one of the newest countries in the world, Bishop Moses calls the current circumstances ‘a crisis on top of a crisis.’ Hand washing is difficult without soap and clean water! Physical distancing is hard when you live in poverty.



There is little infrastructure apart for the church in large parts of South Sudan, where the clergy and evangelists have also been working on awareness programmes including hygiene and distributing food and Mother’s Union have been combating domestic violence. There are 4 ventilators in a country of 11 million people. Civil servants and teachers are not receiving any salaries. Please pray for our brothers and sisters facing these challenges.

### Asha, New Delhi, India



As we go to press COVID19 related deaths are rising in Delhi. Asha has been able to procure face shields, gowns and head coverings to keep the teams in their clinics safe.

Placing a high value on education as a route away from poverty, Asha has been supporting students whose college and school careers have been badly affected by restrictions. Dr Kiran Martin says, “Our children must come out of the pandemic healthy, strong, secure, and confident. It may sound hard during such trying times, but I think loving our children is the most powerful and transformational act during these hardest of times.”

### Kkalwe, Uganda

We hoped that a team from the parish would be heading out to Kkalwe this summer. Sadly that hasn’t been possible but Pastor Paul (right with his family) keeps us up to date.



While the village has not had any confirmed cases- and there is limited compliance when it comes to the wearing of face masks and handwashing- the closure of schools, churches, markets and public transport has taken its toll on community life.

If home-schooling is a challenge here with access to computers etc. things are much more difficult in Uganda. Telephones, however, have been a help to maintain the network of church life. Paul says that through it “we share and experience the word of God.”

# A question of... questions



We have hosted three Parish Quiz sessions on Zoom over the last couple of months. Questions have tested contestants' General Knowledge, History, Geography, Arts, Science and, of course, Sports' knowledge plus a few other things as well. A manageable, well behaved bunch have logged in each evening determined to shine and win wonderful prizes made available by our sponsor. Only problem being our sponsor kept on forgetting to buy the wonderful prizes, or if he (Rev. Ken) did, they were eaten before they could be awarded!

Following complaints from some contestants about the lack of prizes to the Quiz Union Inquiry Panel - AKA "Quip" - any future quizzing in the parish will be carried out under the watchful eye of the "Quip" officials. A fourth quiz will take place on Friday 26th June. All those interested in taking part are advised to keep an eye on the parish Website and Facebook page for more details.

The question is: can anyone beat the 3-time winners the Donnelly Family or will they make it 4 in a row???

## A question of support

Many people have established new routines over the last few months in order to reach out to family members and others and we continue to be inspired by stories of neighbourliness and expressions of love. However, there are still needs in our community and some will only become apparent in the coming months as we hope to emerge from the lockdown.

Giving help is one thing but acknowledging we need it can be another. We cannot afford to be shy about admitting that life has been difficult and despite talk of shielding and forming bubbles none of us thrives in isolation.

If we cannot help directly we may know people who can- we have great relations with the other churches in Holywood as well as community groups and others, so whether it is a personal need or if you would like to help someone else please get in touch with us through the parish office and we will do our best.

Thank you to everyone who has offered voluntary help through the parish over the last few months and to the Select Vestry who continue to serve our parish as fresh elections have not yet taken place.



A Select Vestry Meeting on Zoom at the end of May

# The Change We Desire

Rev Ken McGrath

What has changed for you in these past few months?

I'd say pretty much everything has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Whole countries "closed" overnight with little or no dissent. Restrictions were imposed on our liberty and movements but welcomed, even embraced, by a normally "rights-conscious" free thinking populous. A strange unity and adoration was granted to an institution which until recently was thought to be failing: The NHS. That has been a welcome change from the cynical depiction we had become used to and to which we may even have been party. Strange times indeed.



And then these words pop into my head - "Tell me the old, old story of Jesus and his love," a poem turned hymn composed by Katherine Hankey in 1866 which invites us to consider a story:

- so simple even a child can understand it.
- so unique yet it is for everybody.
- so old yet it is new every morning.
- so true it is always complete.
- so pure it brings new life.
- so comforting it releases its hearers.
- so awesome it demands a response.
- so down to earth yet it comes straight from heaven.

The 'old, old story' is so perfect that not even a dot or a dash needs to be changed! Instead, it changes us!

Change is one of the few certainties in our world. Henry Lyte's line in "Abide with me" is true: "Change and decay in all around I see." But the hymn immediately adds, "O Thou who changest not, abide with me."

May he, Jesus, abide in us and change us increasingly into his likeness. That is the change we all must desire.

## Storehouse North Down



Food enquiries can be made to 07526 541168

Over the next couple of months, donations to Storehouse can be dropped off between 12.00noon and 2.00pm on Wednesdays:

Parish Centre, Church Road	24th June and 12th August
Bangor Rd Presbyterian	29th July and 26th August



# Just can't wait to be King?

Paul O'Neill writes to our young people.

"The times we live in hang in the balance. As we've seen recently, nations can be turned upside down in an instant. Be it through the uprising of people groups, economic instability, natural disasters or the rise of alternative religions, there is a great shaking happening throughout the world and those things we thought to be eternally solid evaporate quickly. The question is, who will carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to turn the nations back to God? It's time for a generation to arise who know their God and carry His message to the ends of the Earth." - Colin Dye, June 2011 in Olly Goldenberg's *The Josiah Generation*,

I highly recommend this inspirational book about Josiah. He was 8 years old when he began to reign as king. What type of king would he be? How could someone starting off so young make any significant impact?

Josiah is one of the few biblical kings who did what was right in the sight of the Lord, turning to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might. He restored the house of the Lord and removed idols, altars and worship places to false gods. He brought the nation back to following God.

It would have been so easy for Josiah to follow his fathers and continue the disgraceful legacy of the generations before him. Yet, as he grows in the knowledge of the Lord he is troubled and upset by the state of the people and how they broke their covenant relationship with God - so he breaks the status quo and decides to do something about it.

I see this same spirit in the generation God is raising in His church today: young people hungry for truth, a faith and relationship with God which is not shallow but deeply rooted in love. They are not limited by the same sense of fear or inadequacy I had when growing up.

It's been incredibly encouraging to pray and study the bible with our young people during lockdown. Each Friday on Zoom different members are sharing Bible verses and stories through which God has powerfully spoken to them. I am so inspired by how they communicate the good news of God's love.

Our HPY Zoom sessions are open to anyone going to or continuing at Secondary School, from Year 8 - 14.

You are so welcome to join us on Fridays at 7.00pm - look out for the link to Zoom on our instagram and Facebook pages!

Contact  
Paul O'Neill,  
Parish Youth  
Worker,  
on 07545  
383603



# Children's and Family Ministry with Angela Megarry (and the Rev'd Henry Bird)

The grounds of our parish church have been an oasis for residents in central Holywood in recent weeks. We are delighted to welcome visitors to the church green. We would like to decorate the grounds with some homegrown artwork and are inviting people to create a piece of bunting for display. Download the pennant template from our website and personalise both sides of it with a message about how you have known God's blessing despite the lockdown.

This is open to children (with parental/guardian's permission) and adults! You should not write your name on the bunting. Please cut them out and leave them at the parish centre by Wednesday 1st July.

The online Church service for Sunday 28th June will have lots of input from children and young people in the parish. Please watch on YouTube or Facebook and send us a message to let us know you have joined us.

Thank you to all the children and leaders who have taken part in online programmes over the last few weeks. Please look out for more exciting plans over the summer.



Paul and Angela heading off to do some home visits



You can contact Angela Megarry  
our Children's and Family Worker,  
on 07443 334690



 St Philip and St James  
Holywood Parish Church

## Parish Life Online



Until guidelines from the Assembly permit us to gather once again, there are many opportunities to 'meet' online. Please join us.

	Event or Group	Platform
<b>Sunday</b>	Services at 11.00am	Website
	And evenings as advertised	YouTube
		Facebook Live
<b>Monday</b>	Parish Fellowship Bible Readings	Zoom
<b>Tuesday</b>	Live Contemporary Worship with Simon Burrowes	Facebook Live
<b>Wednesday</b>	Parish Prayer Meeting	Zoom

Detailed log-in details for these meetings are usually shared through our parish facebook page, [www.facebook.com/hollywoodparishchurch](http://www.facebook.com/hollywoodparishchurch), but if you prefer things by e-mail please contact the parish office. It is also possible to dial in and participate in Zoom meetings as a local rate phone call.



Gareth Harron, Vicar 07711 885317  
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