

The Parish Church of Saint George



PARISH MAGAZINE

An open door in the heart of the City



NOVEMBER 2024

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Editorial Team: William Odling-Smee, Selby Nesbitt, Tony Merrick.

From the Rector's Desk



Dear Friends in Christ,

I am delighted to be able to tell you that our Organ Restoration Appeal has met its target of £100,000 and that the specifications for the restoration work have now been finalised. This job is going out to tender this month and hopefully we can select a specialist organ company to restore the organ by early in the new year. No doubt there will be more monies to be raised in due course, but I am extremely grateful to everyone who has supported our appeal so far. Their response has been magnificent and very generous and reflects well on the drive and hard work of all those who have led this campaign. Our sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone involved and all who have supported this undertaking.

After our recent very successful and enjoyable pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk, I would like to remind you that our Belfast Walsingham Cell meets on the last Thursday of each month at 1:00 PM for the Eucharist, followed by lunch. This monthly meeting keeps the Cell in touch with each other and with the day-to-day life and witness of the Shrine. It is a very relaxed and pleasant gathering to which everyone is welcome.

Advent begins on 1st December this year and I like to try and visit all the housebound members of the parish and bring them Holy Communion during the season. If you would like to receive Holy Communion at home, in hospital or wherever you reside, then please do ring me on 079 0279 2080 to make arrangements. If you know of anyone who might appreciate a pastoral visit at any time, whether they are a parishioner or not, then please have a word with me or call me on the mobile number above.

I am very grateful to Simon and Harriet Fleming for kindly agreeing to run the Sunday Club for children in the parish, on Sundays from 11:00AM to 11:45AM. Harriet is particularly keen on making the Sunday Club 'fun' for children and so there will be lots of craft activities, toys and stories to keep the children interested and enjoying themselves. Please spread the word about the Sunday Club for children aged from toddlers up to 12 years old.

Please remember that our Remembrance Sunday service begins at 10:50AM on 10th November, with the annual Act of Remembrance.

Yours sincerely in Christ

Brian Stewart

PARISH NOTICES

ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY CHARITY BREAKFAST

Scott Harte would like to sincerely thank all those who supported the recent Charity Breakfast organised by the Rotary Club of Belfast East. The total amount raised in aid of the Alzheimer's Society in Northern Ireland was £11,000. Well done everyone!
Scott

ORGAN FUND UPDATE

Members of the St George's Organ Committee are delighted to announce that our organ fund now holds £98,909, with every prospect of reaching £100,000 by the end of November. We thank everyone who has contributed to the fund, in any way.

Initially we thought that £100,000 would cover all the organ renovation costs; however, our organ builders, together with our own musicians, reckon that the final bill will be considerably more. We expect to receive quotations for the exact cost by the end of the year; in the meantime, and with your help, we will continue to fundraise.

We would appreciate your support at two forthcoming fundraising events. First, on **Friday December 13th at 7 30pm** there is to be a **concert** in the church featuring our own choristers. This event will be followed by refreshments in the hall. Then in February or early March, we will organise a **parish lunch**. Details of the lunch will be announced early in the new year.

Of course you can contribute to the Organ Fund at any time, by putting your donation into a yellow envelope and marking it "ORGAN FUND," then add your name and address before putting your envelope on a collection plate. Or you could complete a STANDING ORDER. You will find these forms at the back of the church. When completed, please give the form to Douglas McIlldoon, Selby Nesbitt or to one of the wardens.

Thank you.
St George's Organ Committee

FROM THE ORGAN LOFT

BUY A CAROL FOR CHRISTMAS; PROCEEDS IN AID OF THE ORGAN FUND

Fund raising can often been quite a chore, there are so many worthy causes and it's often difficult to make discerning choices. There is little doubt that the music heard weekly in St George's is of a continually high standard, that similar would not be found in many other parish churches in Ireland, and certainly not a choir as young as ours. To enable a choir such as ours, we have to focus on training, on repertoire and on continually improving our techniques as singers in order to create the choral blend that we achieve weekly. However, were it not for the support of the organists and the variety of timbres available from the organ, much of our repertoire would not be possible.

The organ is in disrepair, this is not news, but it is becoming increasingly unreliable in certain divisions and the tender for renovations is now ready to be sent to prospective Organ builders.

As you will read in this magazine, the fund raised so far is really astonishing and very much a demonstration of the commitment of parishioners to the ongoing life of the church and its musical liturgy.

We are trying to come up with a few other, smaller fund raising ideas to help to continue this work. Those who use FaceBook will have seen the 'Buy a carol for Christmas' opportunity online. This is a way for you to make a donation, to choose a piece of music for the choir to perform at the concert on December 13th, or to sing as a motet or anthem during Advent and Christmas. If you'd like to be part of this, either follow the link on the FaceBook page or copy the link below into your web browser.

<https://forms.gle/fVVNy4L7CdmM5Qtn8>

Should your favourite carol not be on the list, you're welcome to ask me to consider adding to it.

Thank you all,
David

CLOSED MINDS AND CLOSED BLINDS

"The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" is an ancient opening psalm line known to countless generations of choristers and singers. Modern cosmology is arguably now one of the most friendly sciences for the Church to embrace.

Advent 2024 officially begins on the 1st of December but UK shops typically now stock Christmas goods from September to October onwards. Children marvel at-'The Wise Men'-following a star. But billions of other stars in outer space are also evidence of design. John Keats (1795-1821) reflected: 'When I behold, upon the night's starred face, Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance'.

A modern Oxford astronomer called Geoff Cottrell wrote: 'Observational Astronomy: A Very Short Introduction'. The final sentence of the book's preface points to the infinitely odd fluke-if there is no cosmic designer-of intelligent creatures arising in an intelligible universe. The book's preface ends with a penetrating observation and a question: 'How is it that we modern humans, mere specks in an unimaginably vast cosmos, and who have only been around for about 200,000 years, have devised ways of seeing galaxies so remote in space and in time that they emitted their light over 13 billion years ago, when the infant universe was only a few million years old?'

'The Milky Way Chocolate Bar'-and-'The Milky Way Galaxy' both display evidence of design. Does the hard atheism of Richard Dawkins & Co often demand closed minds and closed blinds? I might check out some of those Belfast discount stores laden with Christmas gear, and buy a large pack of Milky Bars. Machiavellian mischief will possibly see me distributing them to Advent (or Halloween) contacts, and asking: 'Who made The Milky Way? 'The Charismatic Renewal movement has been a force for ecumenical good in a wide range of regards. But did some celebrity figures, such as the late John Wimber (1934-1997), sometimes overemphasise the weird and wonderful? G K Chesterton (1874-1936) famously suggested that the supernatural and natural were fused or welded together: "Take away the supernatural, and what remains is the unnatural."

I love to tease atheist contacts with some form of festive card or text greeting. The 2024 winter one may be: 'Open your mind and open your blinds'. It's also good to remind sceptics about the limited range of central worldviews available. This reminds me how I latterly saw a distinguished Anglican cleric vanish from the mouth of Church Lane beside St George's. The proximity, both of a tattoo shop and tobacconist's, was potentially a point of concern. But then I noticed the presence of a sandwich shop, and inner shalom was restored. Reflecting patiently on the night sky, should surely in a very similar fashion, steer one away from the twin perils of hard agnosticism or hard atheism.

James Hardy

MOTHER KNOWS BEST

by Paul McLaughlin



Our English teacher Mister Morris had asked for the impossible. At the end of the graveyard shift of the last two class periods of a sleepy Friday afternoon, he had given a group of twelve-year-olds, myself included, the ‘whole weekend’ to come up with their favourite poem. And explain why it was their choice.

“Think about it”, he said as an epidemic of yawns, like dominoes falling one after one, spread across the ancient desks. “I look forward to Monday”. And with that, he struck a match, lit a cigarette and disappeared temporarily in a cloud of sulphur and smoke.

The poem wasn’t mentioned and certainly not even thought about at all on the bus ride home from town. Football and comics were the main, usually the only topics of conversation, apart from the occasional character assassination of masters. I learned much later that a euonym is the term for a name that is well suited to a person. We back-stabbed such euonym-deserving characters as Stoneface, The Boot and either or both of the two Jocks on the staff with a free-flowing use of invective picked up from older lads.

I reached home before four o’clock to find my mother up to her elbows, literally, in dough, flour, eggs and a combination of all three. There would be icing-topped cinnamon buns and apple tarts for Halloween tea. Fish first as always on a fast day with big floury potatoes that made it a day worth ‘suffering’.

Back in those very different days of the early 1960s, we were encouraged to suffer a heck of a lot in the name of our faith and to offer up those sufferings for all manner of worthy causes. My mother’s favourite was the holy souls in Purgatory who desperately needed our offerings to set them free.

Mother was a kind and practical person who told me that any little sacrifice that I could make, like giving up sugar in my tea or sweets for Lent would make a big difference to those less fortunate, with extra cash given to the ‘black or white babies’ fund that helped orphans and children at home and in the foreign missions of Africa and Asia. But that the greatest gift would always be that which went to the holy souls.

I can’t say now that I understood even a little of her simple explanations, but her sincerity and what I recognise now as down-to-earth piety won me over every time. Helping others was good, even leaving out food and drink for our relatives that gone before us on Halloween. This was in the days when there was still a spiritual element to the Eve of all Hallows when the faithful departed were

remembered fondly, particularly our own family members, and long before the marketing men had spawned ghouls, ghosts and commercially viable vampires.

I listened to my mother talking about our grandparents who had passed on, seeing them in my mind's eye. Black and white photographs of men and women, the parents of my mother and father who would not be forgotten. People of whom I had only fragile, childish memories, but at least one of whom had 'visited' me only days after my birth and his death.

"Not a ghost," said my mother who witnessed this apparition with my father as they lay in bed and the soft blue light hovered over my sleeping head, the 'cot lit up like Royal Avenue on a Saturday night' according to my father. "A visitation", she said, "From a loving grandfather who had so wanted to see his newly born grandson."

I felt both warmed and a little humbled by this special treatment. I had heard the story many times over the years and it did not diminish with the telling.

Remarkably, I still feel the sense of that being a significant moment in my life. I can't explain it, just as I can't explain the faith that has stayed with me, despite my worst efforts on many occasions, and one for which I give thanks.

My mother said I had the faith of a peasant and should treasure it. No greater compliment as far as I am concerned.

By the way, I asked for her favourite poem just before she returned to her baking. "Ah", homework," she said, "You'll have decide that one for yourself."

MUSIC LIST November 2024

Sunday 3rd November

11:00AM Eucharist

Processional Hymn	473
Gradual Hymn	83
Offertory Hymn	461
Recessional Hymn	391

5:00PM Evening Prayer

Thursday 7th November

7:30pm All Souls Eucharist

Requiem - *Fauré*

Sunday 10th November

11:00AM Eucharist

National Anthem	489
Processional hymn	417
Setting	Darke in F
Psalm	127
Gradual Hymn	491
Offertory Hymn	353
Communion Hymn	309
Motet	Libera me - <i>Fauré</i>
Recessional Hymn	354

5:00PM Choral Evensong

Hymn	466
Responses	Hunter
Psalm	46
Canticles	Sumsion in G - ATB
Anthem	Hear my prayer O Lord <i>Tomkins</i>
Hymn	244

4th Sunday before Advent

Parish Choir Holiday

Choir Holiday

3rd Sunday before Advent

Remembrance Sunday

Parish Choir

Choral Scholars

MUSIC LIST November 2024

Sunday 17th November

2nd Sunday before Advent

11:00AM Eucharist

Parish Choir

Processional Hymn	333
Setting	Stanford in C and F
Psalm	16
Gradual Hymn	304
Offertory Hymn	376
Communion Hymn	94
Anthem	And I saw a new Heaven - <i>Bainton</i>
Recessional Hymn	433

5:00PM Choral Evensong

Chamber Choir

Hymn	244
Responses	Ayleward
Psalm	95
Canticles	Purcell in G minor
Anthem	Faire is the Heaven - <i>Harris</i>
Hymn	254

November 24th

The Sunday before Advent

Christ the King

11:00AM Eucharist

Parish Choir

Processional Hymn	334
Psalm	132: 1-12
Setting	Missa Princeps Pacis - <i>Lloyd Webber</i>
Gradual hymn	394
Offertory hymn	433
Communion Hymn	290
Anthem	Let all the world - <i>RVW</i>
Hymn	476

5:00PM Choral Eucharist

Men's Voices

Setting	Merbecke
Hymn	134
Hymn	457
Hymn	433

CALENDAR November 2024

November 3

4th Sunday before Advent

9:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

11:00am

Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: Ruth 1: 1-18; Hebrews 9: 11-14; Mark 12: 28-34

Reader: *Warden*

Intercessor: *George Woodman*

Servers: *Banji Akinyele, Steven McQuitty, Mark Claney*

Tea and Coffee: *Betty Flynn, Dot Lutton*

5:00pm

Evening Prayer: The Rector

Lessons: Daniel 2: 1-48; Revelation 7: 9-17 (*Geoffrey May*)

November 6

10:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

November 7

All Souls Requiem

7:30pm

Choral Eucharist: The Rector

November 10

3rd Sunday before Advent

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

9:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

11:00am

Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: Ruth 3: 1-5; 4: 13-17; Hebrews 9: 24-28; Mark 12: 38-44

Reader: *Mark Claney*

Intercessor: *Pam Tilson*

Servers: *Omolewa Akinyele, Mark Claney, Tony Merrick*

Tea and Coffee: *The Bannon Family*

5:00pm

Evening Prayer: The Rector

Lessons: Isaiah 10: 33 - 11: 9; John 14: 23 - 29 (*Eleanor Maynard*)

November 13

10:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

November 17

2nd Sunday before Advent

9:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

11:00am

Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: 1 Samuel 1: 4-20; Hebrews 10: 11-14, 19-25; Mark 13: 1-8

Reader: *Meisam Khalili*

Intercessor: *Fr Tom Layden*

Servers: *Tony Merrick, Jonny Calder, Mark Claney*

Tea and Coffee: *Mina Kelly, Richard Oldfield*

5:00pm

Evening Prayer: The Rector

Lessons: Daniel 3: 13-30; Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43 (*Paddy Sloan*)

CALENDAR November 2024

November 20

10:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

November 24

The Sunday before Advent Christ the King

9:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

11:00am

Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: 2 Samuel 23: 1-7; Revelation 1: 4b-8; John 18: 33-37

Reader: *Janet Sandikli*

Intercessor: *Janet Sandikli*

Servers: *Banji Akinyele, Steven McQuitty, Jonny Calder*

Tea and Coffee: *Valerie Roberts, Holly Ferres, Shanin Bahreini*

5:00pm

Eucharist – Order 1: The Rector

Readings: Jeremiah 23: 5-8; John 6: 5-14 (*Fr Graeme Pollock*)

November 27

10:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

November 28

1:00pm

Eucharist: The Rector & Fr Graeme Pollock

The Walsingham Group meets at this Eucharist – all welcome

LEST WE FORGET

Dear mother I pray
That my fear will be gone
When the order is given
And the trumpet is blown
But the letter's unfinished
And the pages are lost
When the telegram counts
The impossible cost.

This is a poem I wrote in honour of my grandfather, Paul, who served 3 years and 53 days with the Royal Irish Rifles in the Great War before being wounded and repatriated. It seems appropriate for this month.

Paul McLaughlin

LEST WE FORGET

Dig and we did with the order given
Our gaiters unloosened
And jackets undone
With the smell of the gas
Drifting over the trenches
Away from the East
Whence the Hun would come.

Ruddy faced farmers
And white collar heroes
We lived in the mire
With our hopes in vain
Till the shock of the shells
And the crack of the rifles
Followed us over the top once again.

Then running and falling
And dodging the wire
And watching the dead
Under harvesting fire
As acres of sky
Turned black as the bodies
Like liquorice washing
Hung over the wire

The crying is muted
The praying abated
And God fills my arm
With the blood of the pain
To the rear I am guided
Burned, blasted and blinded
But blessed that
I'll not be target again.

A distant young summer
Is molten and muddied
The stripes on field jackets
Are barbed now and bloodied
The stench is of soldiers
Unknown and unwilling
Whose voices are lost
In the song of the killing

While the wind speaks of martyrs
And barter for peace
The battle hymns echo
No final release
For the boys are forgotten
Before they are men
As the generals skirmish
On blackboards again

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