

APRIL 2026

St Philip and St James
Holywood Parish Church

Parish Office
9am-1pm
Monday to Friday
71 Church Road
BT18 9BX
Tel: 9042 3622
www.holywoodparishchurch.co.uk
info@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk

St Philip and St James
Holywood Parish Church

PARISH STAFF TEAM

VICAR
The Rev'd Canon Gareth Harron
Tel: Parish Office 9042 3622
garethharron@btinternet.com
Mobile: 07711 885317

ASSOCIATE MINISTER
Rev Thomas Murray
thomas@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk
Tel: 9042 3622

VICAR'S SECRETARY
Pauline Clarke
Tel: 9042 3622
pauline@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk

PARISH YOUTH WORKER
Lorcán Speier
Tel: 07413 183448
lorcan@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk

ORGANIST & CHOIR DIRECTOR
Edwin Gray
Tel: 07796 170075
edwinjgray608@gmail.com

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP COORDINATOR
Simon Burrowes
Tel: 07832 769099
simon@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk

CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY WORKER
Emily Parker
emily@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk
Tel: 07387278505

SELECT VESTRY OFFICE BEARERS

VICAR'S CHURCH WARDEN
Stephen Evans

HON SECRETARY
Heather McCord

VICAR'S GLEBEWARDEN
Colin Maxwell

PEOPLE'S CHURCH WARDEN
Rosie Baillie

HON TREASURER
David Clements

PEOPLE'S GLEBEWARDEN
Leslie Allen

MAGAZINE

The magazine is created by volunteers from the Parish. Please send content to **editor@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk**

Please contact the office for information about advertising, content or subscriptions. Subscription: £1/issue or £10/year.



The Vicar Writes

The March meeting of our book club, which I heartily recommend by the way, looked at John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley*.

The book charts Steinbeck's grand (and not so grand) tour of the United States in a bespoke camper van in the early 1960s. He talks about the places and the people he meets along the road. I read it at face value and, liking travelogues in the wry style of Bill Bryson, thoroughly enjoyed it.

But Linda, the group's facilitator, enlightened us that over the years people have been suspicious that the work is as much fiction as non-fiction - that the author spent time in hotels and with family while purporting to have been isolated in his van. Does this matter, we ask ourselves, if it is a good read and a good story?

As I write this, we are about to enter Holy Week. You might be reading it in the Easter season having heard again the mega-story: the resurrection narrative of Jesus - written by his close followers and those who knew him.

It is healthy to approach the story asking whether it is true, because it certainly matters! The apostle John, one of the eye-witnesses, says that he writes his gospel "that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20)

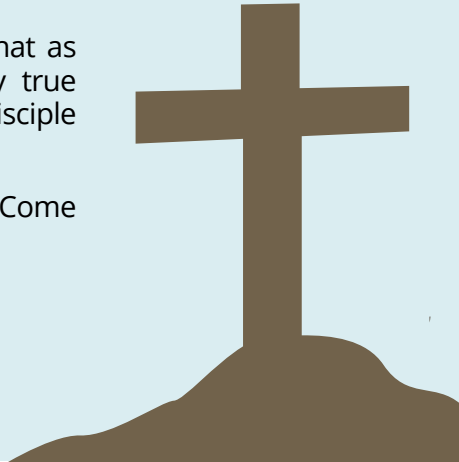
I have to say that, for me, it reads as a credible account of the unique event that is the resurrection and the effects make a difference for you and me.

I pray you are having a good Easter and that as you ground your faith in this wonderfully true story you may go deeper in your faith as a disciple of Jesus.

The next book club is definitely just a story. Come and join us.

Yours in Christ

Gareth



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Notes from the magazine team

Dear readers,

Welcome to spring, longer days, warmer evenings and the April parish magazine!

Firstly, my apologies to anyone trying to get in touch with Emily by phone - her number has now been corrected on the inside cover of the magazine.

Monday 23rd was a busy evening for staff and volunteers at General Vestry. Thank you to all the nominees, voters, vote counters and refreshment servers! Special mention to Lorcán who managed, in real-time, to update nominations and elected representatives on the screens for attendees to follow along. He managed all this while also being nominated (and accepting) a role as the under 30s Diocesan representative! Thank you to everyone who plays a part in parish life.

In the magazine this month you'll find a very special new feature - *At the Church Doors*. Having read my invitation (plea?) for the opportunity to celebrate marriages in our church, the Cinnamonds responded and I'm immensely grateful. I was so encouraged by reading their memories and, personally, my smile will now linger a little longer every time I see the cherry blossom tree in bloom. I'd love to hear from anyone else willing to share their wedding day memories. The service doesn't have to have been at our church. Any church, any year - let's celebrate love! If your anniversary isn't for a few months, don't wait to get in touch - we can schedule it for later in the year and it makes my job as editor easier.

Another feature I'd love contributions for is the 'In Conversation With...' series. If you know someone with an interesting story to tell, please consider approaching them with a cuppa and a notebook - with their permission of course!

All that said, there's no shortage of content in this issue to enjoy so please sit back, enjoy and I wish you all a very happy April.

Sally



2026 - 2027

EASTER GENERAL VESTRY APPOINTMENTS

Vicar's Church warden:
Stephen Evans
People's Churchwarden:
Rosie Baillie

Vicar's Glebe Warden:
Colin Maxwell
People's Glebe Warden:
Leslie Allen

Select Vestry

Marc Ballard
Brian Beatty
David Clements
Peter Crookes
Jayne Forster
Adam Glover
Will Keown
Heather McCord
Chris McIlroy
Jenny Noble
Raymond Orr
Gavin Pantridge

Parish Nominators

Jayne Forster
Hazel Mullan
Colin Maxwell
David Hughes

Please pray for all who serve the parish

Diosecean Representatives

Jayne Forster
Heather McCord
Tom Mullan
Brian Beatty
Lorcán Speier

STAFF TEAM NEWS



Having begun to get to know Thomas, Jodie and their children, we are now adjusting to news of their moving on. We pray for the Murrays as they prepare to move to the parishes of Castledawson and Ballyscullion (Bellaghy) in the early summer.

This announcement was quickly followed by the appointment of the Rev'd Ryan Scott to the associate role this Summer.

The Rev'd Ryan will join us with his wife Romy and son, William, this summer. They are coming to us from Oakwood Parish in North London. This is an exciting addition to our staff team. Once again please keep this family in your prayers.



A note of thanks following General Vestry

Gareth writes,

"I was surprised when Jayne Forster interrupted my carefully scripted running order to put me on the spot at this year's General Vestry. What followed was unnecessary and sincerely appreciated. It has been an honour to serve Holywood Parish these last 10 years.

Ruth and I were very humbled by the kind words and incredibly generous gifts. Thank you to the outgoing Select Vestry for their kindness and all their hard work for the parish. May God bless you.

Gareth and Ruth."



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KIDS

We had a brilliant time at our GIGGLE event in February, where we explored the story of Noah through crafts, stories, snacks and action songs. We learned that we can place our hope and trust in God through the ups and downs in life.















If you have any questions about children's and family ministry at Holywood Parish, please contact Emily Parker, Children's and Family Worker **emily@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk**

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

What an entertaining evening we had at our March meeting when the guest speaker was Dr Rosie Hickey, Heritage Officer for the Strand Arts Centre. Rosie took us on a journey from the opening of the Strand Picture House in 1935, through its reinvention as the Strand Variety Theatre in 1984 to the present-day Arts Centre with restoration work due for completion this autumn.

Built in the Art Deco style and featuring a curved exterior like the bow of a ship with interior curved walls and porthole shaped windows, the Strand's design was greatly influenced by its proximity to the nearby shipyard of Harland and Wolff. Rosie likened entering the cinema to boarding an ocean liner and being transported to a different world, a world of luxury and glamour. The image she showed of blue velvet chairs, royal blue and gold carpet and gold décor sparked much conversation about cinema going in its heyday. The ABC Minors club which ran from 1949 to the 1970s also proved a major talking point with everyone marvelling that up to one thousand children were entertained every Saturday morning with no parents present!

Today work is nearing completion to restore the Strand and preserve its Art Deco heritage as the oldest surviving cinema in Northern Ireland. With many architectural features including the façade, entrance and foyer retained, there will still be a Saturday Minors club along with upgraded facilities for film, theatre and live events.

Rosie's presentation of archive material interspersed with stories gathered from local people recalled the golden age of cinema in Belfast, Bangor and probably of most interest to us the two cinemas in Holywood.

For many it was a wonderful trip down memory lane, so it wasn't surprising that the most often heard conversation opener during supper was "do you remember?" We look forward to the new era of the Strand when, with its name in neon lights atop the roof, it becomes once again part of the landscape of East Belfast.



Photo credit: Strand Arts Centre

Future events

As the date for our next meeting falls during Holy Week, members are asked to meet in the church for the service at **7.30pm on Wednesday 1st April.**



Monday 4th May

Mothers' Union will again have a stall at the May Day Fair, selling baked goods and preserves.

Wednesday 6th May

Our monthly meeting on The History of Newtownards from a Market Trader with guest speaker Clive O'Neill.

Wednesday 13th May

Our spring outing to The Grand Opera House to see Belfast Operatic Society's production of "Guys and Dolls".

World Day of Prayer Service
6th March 2026

This year's World Day of Prayer Service was prepared by the women of Nigeria. A beautiful service held in the First Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Church. We listened to stories of 4 very different women of Nigeria who have struggled, with God's help, to survive in very difficult circumstances.

Our team from most of the churches in Holywood played their parts and, with the accompaniment of Michael on the electronic organ, praises were sung appropriate to the theme and prayers given. The theme was "I will give you rest, come" from Matthew 11:28-30. The table was spread with foods and items from Nigeria.

Our small congregation was very generous in their donations, giving in total £412. This money will go to various educational and missional schemes throughout the world.





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Men's Society

After Billy opened our meeting with due solemnity and decorum, Leslie our Fire Warden Alarmist sounded an alarm, "Fire. Fire. Everyone out."

The 'fire' was successfully doused, everybody was accounted for, and we made our way back into the warmth of the Priory Room.

Our guest speaker, Mrs Aly Harte, a famous artist, very kindly came to the meeting armed with an easel, paints, brushes and a prepared blank canvas for what can be described as a 'red letter evening'. Aly painted her interpretation of St Philip and St James in acrylics. At the end of the meeting Aly very kindly presented the painting to the Men's Society. The piece, mid creation, is shown below.

We have a very enthusiastic membership and the meetings are fully attended every month. To adapt a marketing phrase highlighting quality and value, familiar to certain generations, "If [this brand] made Men's Societies, ours would be the tops."

If you have any queries or questions regarding attending the group don't hesitate to get in touch.

Robert Bussell, Hon Secretary. robertbussell@me.com 07710762323







The Church of Ireland GAZETTE

Reflections and highlights on the Church of Ireland's monthly magazine, by Betty McLaughlin

Belfast Cathedral marks Racial Justice Sunday

A special service held on Racial Justice Sunday in Belfast Cathedral marks the Church of Ireland's clear commitment to promoting inclusivity and equality. The service was conducted in seven different languages, and incorporated liturgy and hymns that reflected themes of globalism, togetherness, and positive growth, in the hope that the Church should (in the words of preacher The Reverend Eileen Cremin) be a "shining example of what justice should look like."

Racial Justice Sunday was first marked in Britain in 1995, as an initiative of the Methodist Church in response to the murder of Stephen Lawrence, and has subsequently been promoted by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). Since 2017, it has been held on the second Sunday of February. In 2025, the Church of Ireland General Synod approved a resolution encouraging each diocese to hold one Racial Justice Sunday service in a format and venue of its choosing, and the Church's resolution to highlight issues of racism and inequality has gained further visibility in recent times with the help of the Primate's Reference Group on Ethnic Diversity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice, which has organised broadcast services on RTE television in the last two years. The service at Belfast Cathedral continues this tradition; it was recorded for RTE television and will be broadcast at a later date.

The congregation was welcomed by The Most Reverend John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland. The Very Reverend Stephen Forde, Dean of Belfast, greeted the congregation, and encouraged them "to call to mind all whose voices have been silenced and unheard, whose stories have been untold, and whose value has not been recognised". The Dean was unequivocal in his support for the purpose of Racial Justice Sunday, stating his belief that the Church must "recommit ourselves to the work and ministry of racial justice and reconciliation".

Christ Church delegation attends Northern European Cathedrals Conference

The Biennial Northern European Cathedrals Conference (NECC) drew a strong turn-out in early February, when delegates from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Scandinavia, Iceland, the Baltic nations, the Netherlands, and Germany assembled in Exeter Cathedral. Drawing on the theme of *Cathedrals: Seats of Wisdom*, the conference aimed to explore cathedrals as "places of Northern European identity and culture, wisdom, and rootedness", as well as considering what the accumulated wisdom of cathedrals might offer to local communities in the face of social and geopolitical challenges.

A delegation representing Christ Church Cathedral Dublin, and comprising The Most Reverend Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin, The Reverend Canon Paul Arbuthnot, and Mr Tom Little (Director of Music at Christ Church Cathedral), were in attendance.

New Mission Director for CMS Ireland
Church Mission Society (CMS) Ireland have announced the appointment of Ms Linda Abwa as their new Mission Director. Throughout a robust recruitment process, the Society expressed the hope that the new Mission Director would "lead the organisation with wisdom and discernment in the next phase of its development."

Ms Abwa has been a Partnership Co-ordinator with CMS Ireland for 11 years, with a focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, and South Sudan. She joined CMS Ireland after a period of mission partner service in Nigeria with Mission Africa.

The Chair of the Church of Ireland's Council for Mission, The Reverend Tim Wright, stated, "Linda will build on the great work of her predecessor, Jenny Smyth, in supporting churches as they engage in mission throughout this island and the wider world. Her passion and experience of the Church overseas as well as her love for the Church of Ireland mean that CMSI can confidently look to the future. I look forward to serving alongside her on the Council and the Association of Mission Societies as we seek to make known the God of mission." Mr David Reynolds, CMSI's Chair of Trustees, added, "The Trustees look forward to working with Linda as she brings her expertise and enthusiasm to her new role."

We are particularly grateful to Jenny Smyth, as she retires, for her contribution in making the transition as seamless as possible.

Subscribe to the *Church of Ireland Gazette* for access to the full articles.

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www.gazette.ireland.anglican.org or call 028 9266 7580

exodus

FUNDRAISER LUNCH
SUNDAY 19TH APRIL

The cry at the beginning of the Book of Exodus is "Let my people go". That was about delivery and freedom but some of our young people have heard God's call to go and serve in different parts of the world this summer.

Five young people will be heading off with the local charity Exodus this year to visi Romania, Hungary and South Africa. They value your prayers but each young person is required to raise a proportion of the trip's cost.

Some of the group have come together to offer parishioners a simple lunch on Sunday 19th April. The plan is to eat at 1.00pm after morning services. There is no charge for this event but donations will be very gratefully received and divided between the young people taking part.



Introducing Jesus – Evangelism for Everyday Life

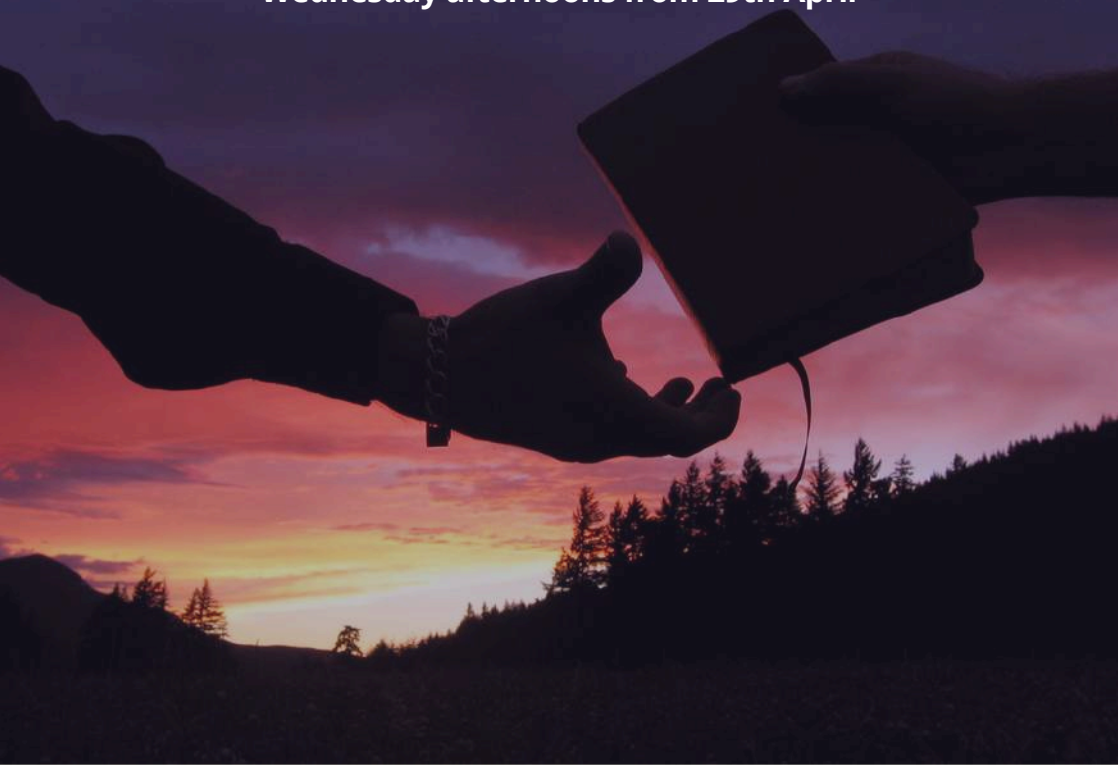
Introducing Jesus is a practical three-part series designed to help you grow in confidence and clarity as you speak about your faith.

We'll explore what evangelism really is, why it matters, and how every Christian can play a part in God's mission. You'll be equipped to build intentional relationships, share your own story of how Jesus has impacted you, and clearly explain the heart of the gospel in simple, everyday conversations. Along the way, we'll also think about how to respond to questions and overcome common fears.

Rooted in the Bible and real life, this series will encourage you to prayerfully and confidently introduce others to Jesus - right where God has placed you.

The series will run twice a week for the sake of flexibility and so we can accommodate as many people as possible:

Tuesday evenings from 28th April
Wednesday afternoons from 29th April



cmsireland
equipping the church in mission

Maridi and the Quills

The diocese of Maridi has enjoyed a busy season of confirmations around their archdeaconries. We are asked to pray that those confirmed will continue into mature discipleship and service. Another need for prayer is the management of the diocesan vehicle - the poor roads and infrastructure and the long distances to be travelled make this is a vital resource.



Photo credit (right): Bishop Moses Zungo



Joanne and Andrew Quill will be returning for a home assignment in April and as one of their link parishes we are looking forward to welcoming them to services at the end of the month.

The effects of the war in the Middle East is one of the subjects the Quills would like us to consider in our prayers. Like us, Maridi has been impacted in terms of rising costs - their fuel prices doubled overnight. Many families were already struggling to survive and this has increased the pressure on their lives. They give thanks, however, for a positive time training local leaders and for Andrew's recovery from Malaria.

ashaactivities

I am aware that many of my reports recently have focused on children and young people but recent messages from Dr Kiran reminded me that Asha's care extends to all age groups.

The elderly have coped with a lifetime of struggle. They have experienced years of poverty as they worked in their small shanties to provide meagre meals and clothing for their families. Now as they have grown older they face loneliness and often live with constant pain, aching joints and failing eyesight. They rarely sought treatment as hospitals were far away and their frail bodies couldn't cope with long waits and the indifference they often met there.

When Dr Kiran became aware of the extent of their problems she realised a solution had to be found to help the elderly. She responded with care, structure and dignity by organizing geriatric health clinics in the slums. They are fully equipped, well organised clinics run by trained nurse practitioners, the health team and Community Health Volunteers. They carry out screening for chronic illnesses that had long gone untreated such as diabetes, arthritis, cataracts and malnutrition.

They provide medical treatments and essential medicines, along with vitamins and mineral supplements that the elderly so desperately need. Dental health and physiotherapy are also provided. Many elderly people have received dentures allowing them to eat comfortably after years of difficulty. Physiotherapists help those suffering from arthritis and mobility issues, restoring movement and confidence.



Old age should never mean neglect or isolation. It should be a season of peace, care and belonging. This is what Asha strive for in each community to ensure they are surrounded by care, respect and affection in their twilight years.

Hazel

Photo (above) taken during the 2020 Holywood Parish Asha team trip. The team were guided round Zakira by Amandi who shared how she had been, and continued to be, supported by Asha.

At the Church DOORS

A new feature celebrating unions throughout the decades

"Nearly all newlyweds pose at the church door on their wedding day - it's the first time they present themselves to the world at large as a married couple," I read in a beautifully handwritten letter addressed to the Parish magazine editor. The writer recalled her joy at a photograph that a couple had sent to the magazine to mark their milestone anniversary, suggesting that the sharing of wedding day pictures from couples in the church could make for an interesting feature. My sincere thanks to Maurice and Alison for agreeing to be the first to share their photo!



Mr & Mrs Cinnamond née Trainor

Married 9th April 1992
Holywood Parish Church

What are your overriding memories of the day?
When we came out of the church, the cherry tree was in full bloom. It always reminds us of that brilliant, happy day with a church full of family, friends and the wider church family.

Who officiated the service?
Canon Jim Monroe and Rev'd Norman Lynas, Dean of Ossory and Rector of St Canice's cathedral, Kilkenny City.

What music did you choose ?
'Praise My Soul the King of Heaven' and 'Love Divine, All Loves Excelling' were our chosen hymns. During the signing of the register the choir of Bloomfield Collegiate sang. The 'Trumpet Voluntary' by Purcell, and Widor's 'Toccata' were played by the organist Dr H Grindle.

What do you remember of the sermon?
'Thought for the Day' on Radio 4 that morning was coincidentally about marriage and a line from it was quoted by Canon Jim during the marriage service before we took our vows:

'We stayed together in the good times because we wanted to and we stayed together in the bad times because we had promised to.'

Maurice and I have really only ever had good times.



Wednesday lunches

1st and 15th April 2026
6th and 20th May

Parish Centre
12:30pm

Please contact the office to book your place



JUST DESSERTS FOR christian aid

Christian Aid Week 2026 takes place from **10th to 16th May**.

Just Desserts is a great way to launch this fundraising effort on 10th May.

Thank you to Rosemary Maxwell and Barbara Harper who will be inviting people to provide a dessert for that day. If you can help with cheesecakes, pies etc. please let them know and adjust your breakfast/brunch routine for the day!



Parish Book Club

17th April **A Rose for Emily**
by William Faulkner

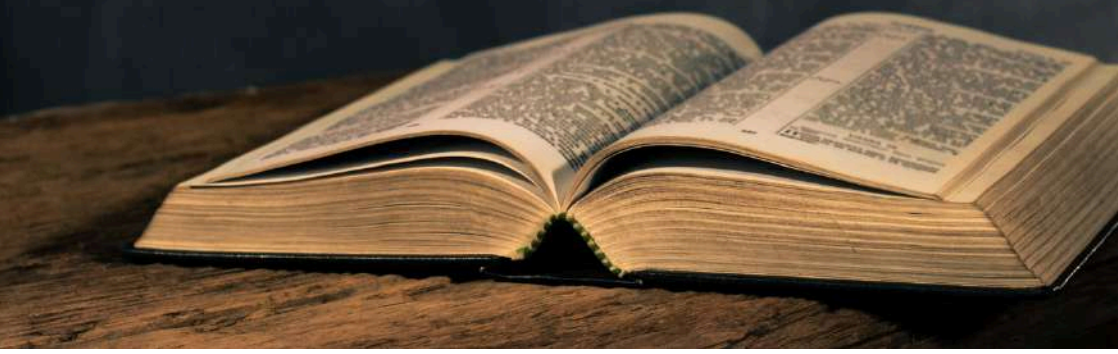
3.00pm in the Parish Centre

Parish Fellowship April to June 2026

In his second epistle, the apostle Peter speaks of scripture and its truth in this way: "We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." (2 Peter 1:19)

One great way to pay attention to scripture is to come together to study it. Having looked at 1 Peter around this time last year we will complete the boxed set this April as we begin a short series. The short book will be cut into even smaller manageable sections.

We start after the prayer meeting on Monday 20th April at 8.00pm in the Priory Room.



Storehouse North Down

As usual, the Storehouse trolley is available at the back of church.



Please consider picking up some extra items when doing your own shopping to add to the trolly.

Cut out and keep this list for your next 'big shop'.

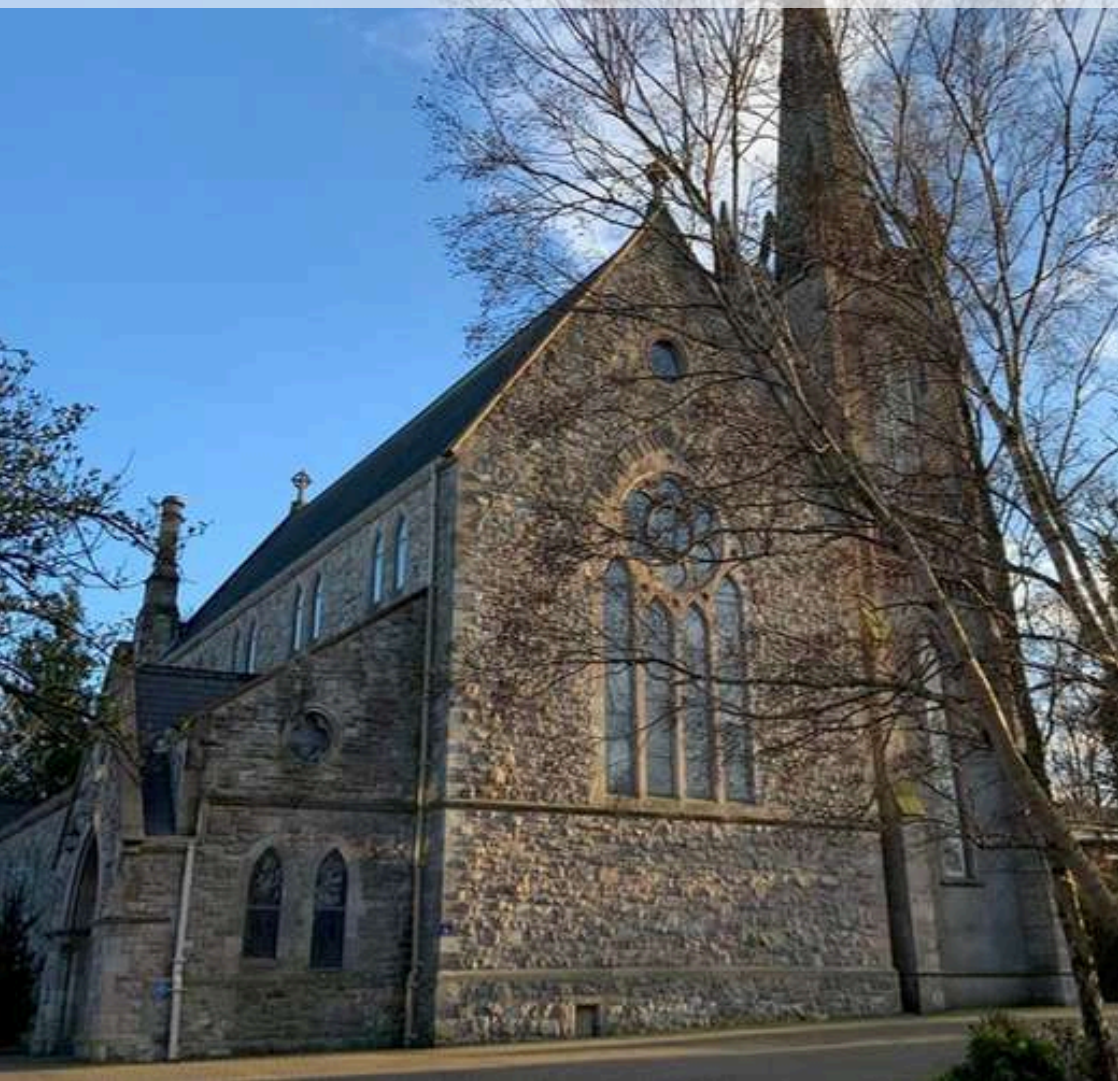
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- Tinned veg
- Deodorant
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Toothpaste (for adults)
- Tinned meat
- Cleaning spray
- Razors
- Noodles
- Soap

STOREHOUSE

May Day Tours

Along with stalls on High Street, the parish church will be open for short historical tours at 11.00am and 12.00 noon on May Day, Monday 4th. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the parish and about St Philip and St James Church.

We would also love to digitise the history book published some years ago into a form which people can view on a tablet/mobile phone and which includes QR links. If you have the technical expertise, time and interest to help with creating this resource please contact the Parish Office.



From the registers



Marriages

28th February 2026 Sian Walker and Jack Flynn

Bereavements

19th February 2026 Brian Markey

7th March 2026 Audrey Majury

18th March 2026 Craig Burrell

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 11: 25-26-2

Have something you want to share in the magazine? A photo, story, report, poem or upcoming event? Send it to **editor@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk**

Do you have (or know someone who has) a big birthday or anniversary coming up? Let us know!



April 2026

Sunday 5th April
Easter Day -
The First Sunday of Easter

8.00am	Holy Communion Form 1
11.00am	Easter Celebration
5.30pm	Evening Prayer for Easter Sunday
7.00pm	Evening Worship

Sunday 12th April
The Second Sunday of Easter

8.00am	Holy Communion Form 1
9.45am	Morning Worship
11.30am	Morning Prayer
5.30pm	Compline
7.00pm	Evening Worship

Sunday 19th April
The Third Sunday of Easter

8.00am	Holy Communion Form 1
9.45am	Morning Worship
11.30am	Morning Prayer
5.30pm	Compline
7.00pm	Worship Night

Sunday 28th April
The Fourth Sunday of Easter

8.00am	Holy Communion Form 1
9.45am	Morning Worship
11.30am	Morning Prayer
5.30pm	Holy Communion Form 1
7.00pm	Evening Worship Holy Communion

Weekday Communion service every Wednesday at 10.30am

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