

SEPTEMBER 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

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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

As some of our young people prepare to move into 3rd level education and a new phase in life, I recall my experience of freshers' week when it was probably much simpler than today.

I recall signing up for a number of things that I never really engaged with after that week. Looking at some universities these days the variety of different societies and interest groups is incredible:

Newcastle University has a 20 minute society where people are randomly sent a text message giving them 20 minutes to arrive at a location for a spontaneous trip or event. Durham has an assassins society which seems to operate like the TV show *Traitors*.

But if I was an undergraduate at Liverpool I could be tempted by the Biscuit Investigation Society which is dedicated to the scientific testing and systematic tasting of biscuits.

Over the last few days I have been contacting the coordinators of groups of volunteers who serve in parish life. Even that list of coordinators equates to a very significant number of people!

I have asked them in turn to encourage everyone who works with groups, as committee members, doing practical and admin jobs around the place etc. to come along to our services on the morning of Sunday 13th September. I am aware that we may miss someone and for that we are very sorry but please accept this as your warm invitation to come.

'Serve Sunday' will allow us to thank all those who fulfil these roles, but, you're right - there are lots of areas where we need even more help, so there will also be displays highlighting some of our needs and plenty of people to talk to.

Scripture is full of lists of gifts which can all be used to God's glory. Romans 12, for example, encourages us to lay down our lives in worship and says: "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully." (Romans 12:6-8)

Thank you everyone. I hope to see you on Sunday 13th

Yours in Christ

Gareth



Notes from the magazine team

Last month I talked about the buzz of excitement as people head off on holiday but one August Sunday I caught myself looking among the congregation and realising how many world perspectives, cultures and experiences we have sitting right beside us on the pews - giving us the opportunity to learn from other cultures by simply talking to our neighbours. Whether people were born in different countries or spent some time in other places, the richness of the plurality of experience in our community should not be overlooked.

I'm sure many others will have shared the horror I felt when reading a BBC news article about a hate attack in Holywood this summer. I pray that our church can be a place of safety, love and acceptance to everyone, and that we can bring God's love to the people we encounter in our everyday lives as we strive to be a Down to Earth church.

This month's magazine is packed full of examples of parishioners doing just that, and opportunities to engage with upcoming events. In fact, some people have been so busy that you'll notice you get two magazines in one this month! A dedicated Exodus Newsletter has been produced to showcase the work of our young people across Hurgary, Romania and South Africa. If you're reading the printed version of the magazine, please make sure this newsletter hasn't slipped out before you get a chance to read it!

Closer to home, the children's ministry team, led by Emily, have been hard at work this summer bringing God's word (and a lot of fun) to kids in Holywood, the Mothers' Union have been on the radio, and the Quills have been continuing their work even while on holiday in Scotland.

You'll find details in the magazine about upcoming opportunities to get involved - look out for the Storehouse Harvest Appeal, Serve Sunday, our next Welcome Lunch, and even an invitation for Christmas preparations! There are also two music concerts to add to your diary on 20th and 23rd October when Fischy Music and Festival Brass (in aid of Asha) visit Holywood.

As well as Sunday services, there are opportunities to explore and strengthen your faith by engaging with Parish Fellowship, consider Confirmation and, if you haven't already, joining a Fellowship Group as they restart again after the summer. Anyone interested in joining a group should speak to Tom Mullan.

Happy reading,
Sally

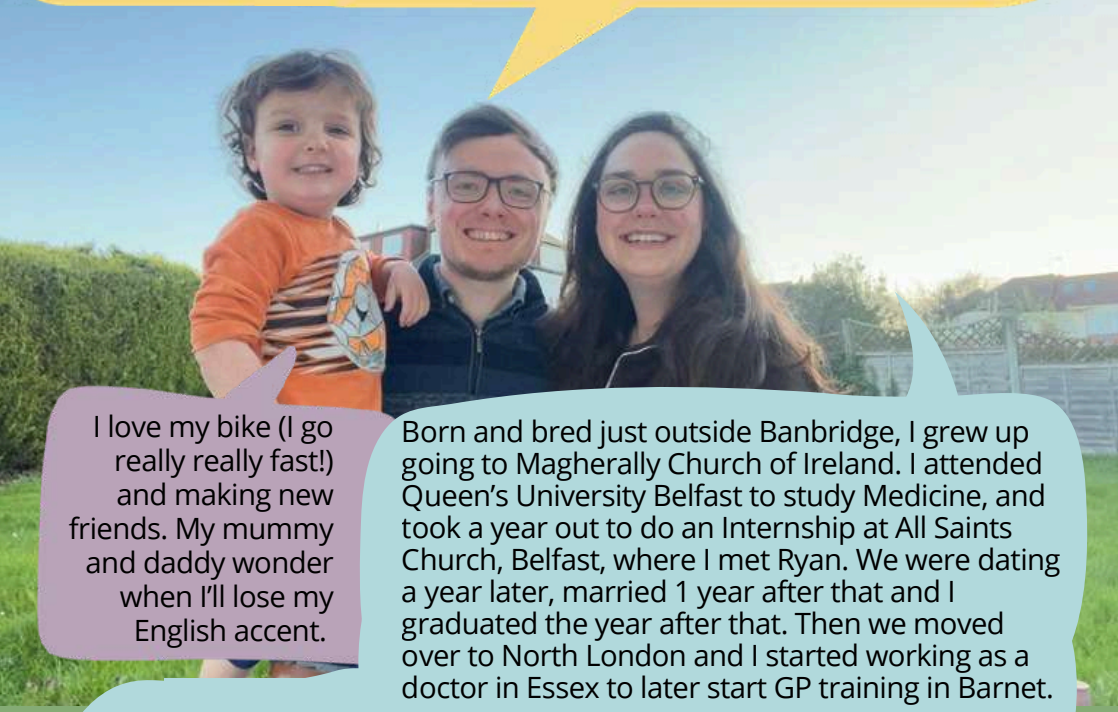


Material for the October edition should be sent to editor@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk by Friday 25th September 2026. Thank You.

An Intro from The Scotts

Ryan, Romy and William

I'm originally from mid Ulster but spent most of my childhood growing up in the beautiful area of Florencecourt, Fermanagh. My first degree was in physics at Lancaster University. Since then, I've worked in a few churches across a range of roles before heading back over the water to spend 4 years at Theological College in North London. Post-ordination I served 3 years at St Thomas' Church in Oakwood. I love any opportunity to get stuck into God's word and delight to see people finding new life in Jesus. When not working, I love reading, scenic walks and occasional exercise.



I love my bike (I go really really fast!) and making new friends. My mummy and daddy wonder when I'll lose my English accent.

Born and bred just outside Banbridge, I grew up going to Magherally Church of Ireland. I attended Queen's University Belfast to study Medicine, and took a year out to do an Internship at All Saints Church, Belfast, where I met Ryan. We were dating a year later, married 1 year after that and I graduated the year after that. Then we moved over to North London and I started working as a doctor in Essex to later start GP training in Barnet.

William came along a few years later and has brought endless joy, fun and laughter. I have managed to transfer my GP training and have started working in a GP surgery in Bangor. I'm enjoying living in Holywood and all the amenities it has to offer – especially the coffee shops, the charity shops and Johnny the Jig.

I'm looking forward to getting to know the parishioners in Holywood and share in the new life that Jesus brings.

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150 Years of Mothers' Union

Mary Sumner Day on 9th August is when Mothers' Union members remember their founder, Mary Sumner. 150 years ago, she formed a group to support mothers from all backgrounds in bringing up their children. That meeting was the birth of what was to become a global organisation working to transform the lives of women all over the world: Mothers' Union.

This year on Mary Sumner Day we celebrated the 150th anniversary of Mothers' Union. Sunday Worship on BBC Radio 4 broadcast the programme entitled "If you only knew your power" to focus on the influence of Mothers' Union. In our own church Helen and Linda led the prayers at the morning services, while in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin there was an All-Ireland service of Holy Communion marking this important milestone. Lady Christine Eames, a former worldwide MU president, gave the address at this service. She compared the vastly different world of 150 years ago to the present day and encouraged members to continue translating their faith into active service and community support.

As we reflect on Mary Sumner's vision and her passion for the role of women in bringing about a better society, we look to the future and encourage anyone interested in finding out more about Mothers' Union to join us at our meetings which take place on the first Wednesday of each month.

The first meeting after the summer break will be in church at 7.30pm on Wednesday 2nd September for a service of Holy Communion, followed by supper in the parish centre.

Barbara

Church Flowers

On Sunday 13th September, flowers will be arranged by Gil Walker, on behalf of the Walker Family, in memory of Arlene.

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Men's Society Update

Annual Soirée and BBQ

Our year of events restarted in August and was another very successful evening.

It's actually a sublime recruiting evening, and to that end we welcomed four new members to the Society. The atmosphere was celebratory with bunting, music speakers and twinkling lights, which added to the conviviality of all present. If you look closely at the pictures you might see yourself or someone you know. To any gentleman wishing to know more about the Men's Society, please get in touch with me, any member, or the Parish Office.

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













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facebook: laurawalkerballetschool
Royal Academy of Dance Syllabus

Maridi and the Quills

Social media updates from Maridi tell a very stark story of the challenges of life in the region.

Amidst items about local and national politics and articles on football tournaments there are reports on:

- New mothers sleeping on the floor of the county hospital because of a shortage of beds.
- Missionary Aviation Fellowship having to suspend flights for some weeks due to the poor quality of airstrips.
- Humanitarian Aid convoys being attacked and burnt out on the roads.



But there are some signs of building new hope and a future. In the vestry of our parish church in Holywood there is a brick brought from South Sudan (then just Sudan) by Archbishop Marona. It is encouraging to see a new school dedicated to his memory taking shape today. We hope that Bishop Moses and Mama Rejoice from Maridi may be able to visit us here in the near future. Please pray for them in their leadership roles and for God to strengthen his people across South Sudan.



Staying connected, even on holiday.



Andrew and Joanne shared about their incredible work with Joanne's parents' home church in Eyemouth.

As Andrew and Joanne continue their work here at home with friends and family, their current prayer requests are:

- for rest and renewal
- for deep physical and spiritual refreshment
- that they be a mutual source of encouragement to one another.

Reminder that CMS Ireland's Ignite conference takes place at Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre on Saturday 12th September. You can register at www.cmsireland.org



Parish Fellowship Autumn 2026

Have you ever asked questions like:
What happens to Christians who have died before Christ returns?
How should we live as we await Jesus' return?
Why do Christians suffer and how should they respond?

These are the kind of things we will be exploring as we work our way through Paul's letters to the Thessalonians this Autumn.

The season resumes in the parish centre on Monday 21st September. The group meets for prayer from 7.00pm to 7.45pm and then in bible study mode from 8.00pm. Please come and join us.

Harvest Thanksgiving 2026

Harvest Sunday, 11th October will bring a focus on Generosity. Along with our Serve Sunday focus in September, Harvest will hopefully highlight some of what we call our 'compassion' ministries, things like Equipping for Life, TLG (Transforming Lives for Good), Zarephath, Storehouse, Wednesday lunches, as well as our international links.

Our harvest preacher this year will be Canon Stephen Lowry. Stephen's most recent parish before retirement was Killaney and Carryduff. He has links with many clergy associated with our parish. Stephen began his ministry in curacies with Jimmy Monroe and Ken 'Fanta' Clarke. Gareth was Stephen's curate in Dromore Cathedral and Raymond was one of his predecessors in Carryduff.





Storehouse North Down

Harvest Appeal

As our church fills with displays of abundant harvests, please consider bringing an few extra items for the trolly.



A full list of items required is available at storehousenorthdown.com

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

- Liquid soap
- Shampoo
- Tinned meals
- Tinned veg
- Tinned meat
- Cooking oil
- Cleaning supplies
- Baby food
- Tinned fish
- Long life milk
- Jam
- Soup

The Church of Ireland GAZETTE

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

Unrepresented: The problem with a monocultural House of Bishops

'You know what I like about you? You're tall.' So said an attendee at a funeral taken by my training rector, a man over 6 feet tall. This clergyman looked the part, nice and imposing in a cassock. He was what a minister ought to be.

It's a funny story, but it reveals that we all have an idea of what a rector should look like. In his brilliant book *Ghost Ship: Institutional Racism and the Church of England*, the Reverend A.D.A France-Williams recounts the story of a woman who, having been greeted at the vicarage by a black man in a clerical collar, later sent a note addressed to 'the vicar', expressing regret at having missed him, but complimenting the 'nice young man' who had answered the door in his stead. Except, France-Williams was the vicar. He just didn't look the way she thought a vicar would. And so she looked past him - he was invisible to her.

It is reminiscent of The Rev'd Philip McKinley's anecdotes of former Bishop of Meath and Kildare, The Right Rev'd Pat Storey, being mistaken for either the bishop's secretary or the bishop's wife. She didn't look how people thought a bishop should look, and so, even at a bishop's conference, people looked past her in the hopes of spying the 'real' bishop.

Optics matter. In the western church, bishops and vicars have historically looked a certain way: white, male, well-educated, with the right kind of accent, the right kind of schooling, the right connections. In the age of bishops, PhD's are helpful (we don't know why but we like them in a bishop). The rag-tag group of fishermen, tent-makers, tax collectors and revolutionaries who led the early Church have mostly been replaced by an upper middle-class set of people who would fit as well in a boardroom or at an Oxbridge high table as they would in the episcopal seat.

The problem is, God is not a white man of a certain background, and neither are his people. Representation is important for communicating the fullness of who God is. If we are to believe the Genesis account, women represent half the godhead. Women are formed differently by the expectations of Western society - to be less confrontational, more empathetic, and more ready to listen. Women reflect God's image differently. A sole woman in the House of Bishops thus provides a very limited reflection of God's image.

By contrast, God seems deliberately to have chosen unlikely and diverse leaders: Miriam, a former slave; Deborah, a married judge, perhaps with a baby on her knee; Esther the beauty queen; Huldah the Prophetess; Mary Magdalene, historically described as a prostitute; Lydia, a businesswoman; and many men of diverse professions, occupations, and ethnicities.

When I read the Bible, I see myself represented. Shouldn't we be able to say the same of the episcopate?

The full article by Revd Rebecca Guildea, Rector of the Garrison Group of Parishes in the Diocese of Clogher since 2022, is available in the Gazette.

Andrew Orr elected Bishop of Cork

Archdeacon, parish priest, school chaplain and environmental advocate, Orr brings to the episcopate a breadth of experience accumulated over more than thirty years of ministry. The Bishop-elect was born in Belfast and educated in Sullivan Upper School before studying geology and physical geography. It is not the most obvious route to the episcopate, but it has left its mark. Long before environmental issues became commonplace in church debates, he was arguing that care for creation was a matter of discipleship. Notably, Andrew Orr is the third pupil of Sullivan Upper School to become a bishop of the Church of Ireland, following Kenneth Clarke and Andrew Forster.

King's Birthday Honours for Enniskillen Priests

The Very Reverend Kenneth Hall, Dean of Clogher and Rector of St Macartin's Cathedral, has been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours List for his services to peacebuilding.

Hall first made headlines in 2012 when he jointly hosted an historic visit from Queen Elizabeth II with The Right Rev'd Monsignor Peter O'Reilly, Roman Catholic Parish Priest of St Michael's Church. The visit of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to County Fermanagh marked the first time the British monarch stepped inside a Roman Catholic Church on the island of Ireland.

In a joint statement, they expressed their gratitude for the recognition, but were keen to stress that they view the honour as 'belonging to many people across our community who, over many years, have chosen friendship over suspicion, encounter over separation, and hope over fear.'

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

Visit the *Gazette* website for more information:
www.gazette.ireland.anglican.org or call 028 9266 7580

St Philip and St James
Holywood Parish Church

KIDS

STELLAR

SHINE JESUS' LIGHT

We had a blast at our Stellar Holiday Club in July, learning about how to shine Jesus' light. There were amazing bible adventures, galactic snacks, songs, games, crafts and more. Thank you to our brilliant team of volunteers, it could not have happened without you!













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**










DAY 4








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Hi everyone,
I want to share this letter of thanks from Dr Kiran updating us on Asha's ongoing work in Delhi. With this new project, Asha is reaching out to mothers and children in Lal Bagh slum where the desperate living conditions almost defy belief. She sends her thanks to all of you for your unwavering and generous support.
Hazel

Dear Friends,

Today has been one of the most emotional days I have experienced in a very long time. One year ago, we began visiting Lal Bagh with our mobile health van. In my 39 years of working in Delhi's slums, I can honestly say that Lal Bagh is one of the most desperately poor communities I have ever encountered. The children are malnourished, the mothers struggle daily to feed their families, and the living conditions are almost beyond imagination.

As we spent time there, it became increasingly clear that healthcare alone was not enough. Hungry children cannot grow. Hungry mothers cannot stay healthy. Nutrition had to become our next step. Finding even a small space proved incredibly difficult. For months we struggled for permission, electricity, funding, and a team large enough to make it happen. With the generous cooperation of the local MLA, who has been supportive throughout, we were finally able to erect a simple temporary shelter. Today, that shelter came alive.

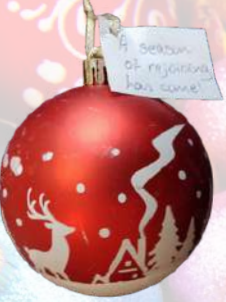
Together, the MLA, our team, and I served every woman and child with our own hands. Watching them eat until they were full, seeing them enjoy fresh, nutritious food and whole milk, and then holding the little children in my lap while feeding them spoon by spoon was something I will never forget. Their smiles said everything.





As I looked around the room, my heart was overflowing with gratitude. None of this belongs to Asha alone. It belongs to every friend around the world who has believed that love, expressed in practical ways, can change lives. Today, because of you, children who so often go hungry experienced not only a nourishing meal, but also the dignity of being loved.

Thank you for making today possible.
With much love,
Kiran



Christmas 'Craic-ers'... in October!

For the past couple of years on the Sundays leading up to Christmas, we've enjoyed giving folk a Christmas bauble with a seasonal message as they've left the church. It's nice to put a smile on people's faces and, in this often secular world, to focus on the centrality that Jesus is the reason for the season.

An idea has been floated that we extend this project to create sufficient message baubles to enable us to share them among festive shoppers in the High Street on a few Saturdays before Christmas. Hopefully they'll be given out alongside information relating to our Candlelight service, concerts etc, so that people will know a warm welcome awaits them within our church walls.

It is estimated that we would need to produce around 1000 baubles. This will be no mean feat as each bauble will have a little card to be cut out, a message added, laminated, ribbon added, all of which will take time and effort.

As they say, "Teamwork makes the dream work" and with lots of enthusiastic hands, it should indeed be possible to reach our target.

Tuesdays in October will be transformed into "Tinsel Tuesdays" with a small work party producing message baubles ad infinitum! There'll be craic, a cuppa and biscuits freely on hand - a pleasant way to spend a constructive hour.

The dates are the **6th,13th 20th and 27th October**. If you could come along even for just one of these, it would be a great help and much appreciated. We aim to meet from 10-12 noon in the Parish centre, but even if you can just drop in for part of a session, that would be wonderful.

Rosemary Maxwell

WELCOME LUNCH

SUNDAY 18TH OCTOBER 1.00PM PARISH CENTRE

Contact the Parish Office
welcome@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk
Please let us know any food allergies or intolerances





Wednesday lunches

2nd and 16th September 2026

Parish Centre
12:30pm

Please contact the office to book your place

PrayerLine



We have a group of intercessors which faithfully prays (in confidence) for issues brought to them. If you would like them to pray for you please contact the clergy or the parish office.

Updates to prayer requests are particularly welcome too.

Confirmation 2026

We have recently received confirmation about a change to the date of this year's Confirmation service. The bishop now plans to visit us on the evening of Sunday 22nd November.

Ahead of the start of classes for younger candidates we will be meeting with the families of anyone who wishes to explore confirmation after Evening Worship (the 7.00pm Service) on Sunday 13th September.

This will give Gareth and Lorcan an opportunity to explain what Confirmation is, answer any questions and outline the preparation process. We will schedule classes in order to accommodate as many people as possible.

Adults are also encouraged that confirmation is a really meaningful experience comprising public affirmation, faith building and openness to the work of the Holy Spirit. If this appeals to you, please speak with one of the clergy by the 14th September.

fischy music are coming to Belfast and we'd love you to join our Family Concert!

Sing along with 'Build Up', 'You Are a Star', 'God Beside' and lots more Fischy Music favourites.

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www.fischy.com

Scottish Charity No SC028474



Fischy Music is a Scottish, 28-year-old, child-centred and creative charity based on Christian principles. They nurture the emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing of children through song. Stephen Fishcbacher the founder of Fischy Music said on a recent episode of *Songs of Praise,* "All we do comes from a Jesus root of kindness, unconditional love, authenticity and humour".

I, Kate Robertson, was brought up on Fischy songs in my home, I have sung them over and over again with our own girls growing up and I now use them in my classroom every single week. The songs carry a powerful message, they build up children's confidence and help them to process all kinds of emotions. We are privileged to have Suzanne (current CEO of Fischy music) and Rachel (Events Leader), bringing Fischy music to Belfast this October. I would encourage you to invite your family, friends and neighbours, buy a ticket, come along and enjoy the 'All Age Concert'. I have no doubt it will be a joyous occasion of both music and song. You willl leave with a smile on your face and warmth in your heart.

Send my poem to the magazine

Have something you want to share in the magazine? Send it to **editor@holywoodparishchurch.co.uk**



From the registers



Bereavements

29th July 2026 Beryl Miller

17th August 2026 Juanita Trail

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:9

Parish Book Club



18th September	***Ghost Wedding*** by David Park
23rd October	***The Correspondent*** by Virginia Evans
20th November	***Wuthering Heights*** by Emily Brontë
18th December	***The Things We Never Say*** by Elizabeth Strout

3.00pm in the Parish Centre

Serve Sunday

Sunday 13th September

down to earth

Every Gift Matters

September 2026

Sunday 6th September
The Fourteeth Sunday after Trinity

8.00am	Holy Communion Form 1
9.45pm	Holy Communion
11.30am	Holy Communion Form 2
5.30pm	Choral Evensong
7.00pm	Evening Worship

Sunday 13th September
The Fifteeth Sunday after Trinity

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

Sunday 20th September
The Sixteeth Sunday after Trinity

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

Sunday 27th September
The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

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

Weekday Communion service every Wednesday at 10.30am

MORE ONLINE

SIGN UP FOR DIGITAL UPDATES