thevoice

The Magazine of Agherton Parish Portstewart
The Church of St. John the Baptist



June / July / August 2021 Edition

SUMMER EDITION 2021

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Ministry to the Sick

Please inform the Rector if parishioners are in hospital, going into hospital, are being transferred to discharged. Please contact the office on **Tel: 028 7083 3277.**

Organising your Wedding Day



Weddings are very special occasions in the life of any family and in the life of the church. When considering getting married please check possible dates with the Rector **before** confirming arrangements. It is expected that couples will make a regular commitment to the life of the church in preparation for marriage. Please contact the office on **Tel: 028 7083 3277.**

CONNECT By Michael Wilson



What goes on in our hearts, is this connection we all have, with each other The carbon copy fears and loves and joys, that the cord that runs all the way back to Eve that runs through us all, the connection of God, lattices across the pews, connects us all, that shines through the bricks and mortar, of this holy word. That what connects the poor to the rich, the young to the old the high to the mighty is a relationship with God, this connects us through time, connects us across distance, spins patterns under cathedral roofs and across the high streets and sleepy streets of suburbia and the press of streets of inner cities places we remember, through all the seasons, fads and fashions. Love itself, loves us, and its through this love, I tell you all, as well tell each other, of what goes on in our hearts. Brothers and sisters, when we return to the Father, across life's ocean

to the gilded shore.

THE RECTOR WRITES... By Revd Malcolm

The summertime is here and with that comes the hope that regulations will continue to ease. I am going to resist the phrase "We will soon be back to normal", because it is unlikely that any of us will go back to how we were. Things have changed for us as individuals and for our church: **FACT!**

As life opens again, many in the world of 'church and its people' seem hyperfocused on getting people **back to church**.

That is understandable as it has been a long, exhausting season of church closures and now the restrictions mean that we are only back in church in quarters, keeping two metres apart so that we 'love each other' and connect by keeping a safe distance.

We long for 'normal' but, when I consider what is ahead, bringing people back is **NOT** a vision that would get me or anyone else excited about the mission of Agherton.

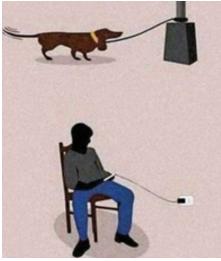
Moving people forward is a vision! As we begin the summer series of both online and in-church worship, it would be a backward step to lose all that we gained in the last year. The online broadcasts, the updated website and our very own youtube channel along with how parishioners connected in new ways certainly proved how we continued to grow together.

I read this recently and it certainly gave me food for thought: "It's hard to move people forward if you're obsessed with getting them back".

Bringing people back isn't a vision. Moving people forward is vision. We need to bank the positives of the last year and look forward to a new energised Agherton.

The continuation of the theme of Connecting to God and to each other will be the at the forefront of all we do. Bringing a renewed mission and sense of purpose to Agherton is the benchmark we must reach rather than how close we got to being Agherton prior to covid. Please continue to pray for our parish and for the future as we set out our vision and a strengthened connection to God and each other.







THEVOICE

Church Flowers

Anyone wishing to donate to the cost of church flowers for the rest of the year should choose a date and notify Leisa in the office on **T: 028 7083 3277**. The weekly cost remains at £20.



Contributions for The Voice Magazine

If you would like to contribute to the production costs of "The Voice", you may do so by using the envelope provided in this edition. Envelopes should be returned to the Parish Office.

W. I. Paul BDS (QUB)
Dental Surgeon

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PICK OF THE LITTER By Sam McConnell

Some parishioners have written in earlier copies of "The Voice" about their pets – well this is about a different type of litter. With Covid 19 having taken over much of our daily life and routines for over a year, an ease in lockdown comes as a welcome relief. Under guide lines we can go out for walks, meet people and have the odd takeaway coffee. Portstewart Community Association has been busy and had organised a litter cleanup in our lovely town on 17/04/21 between 10am and 11am. What better way to get out into the fresh air, have a good walk, meet other people and do something useful at the same time! (Adhering to Covid 19 guidelines) We met at the bandstand at the Crescent and Nigel Handforth supplied us with picking lances, high viz jackets, bin bags and took a note of names etc and the areas to be covered. Around 40 volunteers turned up, women, men and children of all ages and different nationalities all keen to tidy up. We covered the lower prom along the rocks, cliff walk, harbour hill, along the sea shore as far as Amici. Lever Road, Strand Road, Church Street and the lane off Mill Road (which was littered with bottles). to name but a few. Even with the Council providing extra bins in the area, 40 bags of rubbish were collected. Lots of discarded face masks, cable ties, plastic bottles, crisp packets, glass bottles, beverage takeaway cups, napkins etc. were collected. It was satisfying to have had a hand in tidying up our town. It is the intention apparently with the ease in lockdown that PCA will try to have this event each month, so keep a lookout for the notice on social media. Take care everyone.

THE PARISH REGISTERS

CHRISTIAN BURIAL

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord"

22 March Mr Marcus Hemphill 13 Whyns Crescent, Portstewart 10 April Mr John Grant Madelyane Court N.H., Portstewart

Sympathy is extended to all who have lost loved ones in recent times.

IN CHURCH WORSHIP GOING FORWARD

The re-opening of in church worship in our quarters has been very successful in May with each Sunday being full to capacity. Given that we cannot predict for the next three months how restrictions will be lifted the following decisions have been made by the Select Vestry.

June - Continue in quarters each Sunday July - Continue in quarters each Sunday August - Continue in quarters each Sunday

If we need to change because restrictions reduce to 1m or disappear, we will bring them into effect on the 1st Sunday of the next month. The announcement of any such change would be communicated on the church notice boards, on our facebook page and on the parish website.

SAFEGUARDING TRUST

In accordance with the recommendations in "Safeguarding Trust, the Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children" a Parish Panel has been appointed to implement some of the responsibilities identified in the Code. These include:

- Interviewing persons willing to serve as workers in the parish
- Advising workers on their responsibilities in respect of the Code
- Being an immediate contact point for workers when a suspicion, complaint or allegation of child abuse is made about a worker with children on parish premises or in a parochial organisation, in accordance with the procedures set out in these guidelines
- Advising the Select Vestry in respect of its responsibilities

The Parish Panel Members are: Revd Malcolm R.K. Ferry (Rector), Mrs Maureen Glover (Secretary), Mrs Vera Graham (Training), Mrs Lorraine Gamble, Mrs Jacqui Clark.



PARISH GROUPS - CONNECTING AGAIN

Craft Club

During lockdown, our members have certainly missed our regular meetings and seeing one another. We have been kept busy by our group leader Olive who has tirelessly kept the crafting going remotely. We are really looking forward to getting back into the Parish Room on a Tuesday evening and plan to resume our meetings in September. The kettle will be going on and a selection of goodies will be enjoyed as we catch up with each other's news.

Mothers' Union - Faith and Friendship Evening

Our meetings will resume on Monday 20th September at 7.30pm. We will meet in the Parish Centre Hall to finally catch up with our friends in Mothers' Union over a cup of tea and cake. New friends will be made welcome as we pick up our exciting programme of events and reestablish our Mothers' Union group in person.

Little Surfers - Parent and Toddler

Hello everyone! It feels like we haven't had a parent toddler meet up in a very long time! And with the way things are going, it may be September before we are up and running properly, but do watch our Facebook page

www.facebook.com/littlesurfersagherton in case there is a new announcement for reopening before that. A lot of our toddlers are by now starting nursery or even school this September, but we look forward to welcoming new parents and caregivers with under fours for a fun morning with lots of hot tea, hot toast and good chat! We were very fortunate to receive funding from the Cromie Institute both in 2020 and 2021 to upgrade some of our older toys – and who knows what else! We understand that it will have been a long 18 months for most of you, with many lockdowns and restrictions during these early years when your week was originally full of get-togethers with other parents and their children. There is a saying – the days are long but the years are short – it's very true! We can't wait to be back to help make your day a little shorter @ If you'd like to volunteer at Little Surfers do get in touch via the parish office! Looking forward to seeing you all soon I hope. Christine and the Little Surfers Team x





Women's Fellowship - Renew, Refresh, Rejoice

This will be our theme when we next meet - hopefully we will be able to have our first meeting on **Tuesday 5th October**. We will Renew our friendships and catch up on all our news, Refresh our commitment to God and Rejoice in being together again and God's goodness to us over difficult times. See you all on 5th October.

Sunday Surfers

Sunday Surfers are hoping that September sees the start of the new Sunday school year (restrictions permitting) and we look forward to seeing our Surfers, young leaders and confirmation group. New Surfers are very welcome. We look forward to getting together over the summer for some fun, chat and friendship! Watch this space! Keep in touch by the website and Facebook!

True & Lively Words Reading Group

Depending on the level of interest, our fortnightly group will resume meetings in the autumn. The aim is to read a book chosen by the group at home and to discuss the themes at our meetings. We normally listen to part of the book in an audio version and then, led by the group leader, consider different opinions. If you would be interested please contact the office by email at **aghertonparish@hotmail.co.uk** or phone **028 7083 3277**.

Men's Society

Men's Society will commence on **Monday 20th September** at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre - everyone welcome - **New Members welcome**.

Knit and Natter

Knit and Natter are looking forward to welcoming everyone back on **Wednesday 8th September** at 2.30pm - **New Members welcome**.



After months of lockdown, the Sunday procession probably needed some practise.



"After a year of working from home, Anthony will seize any opportunity to put on a suit"

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PARISH NURSES UPDATE By Noelle McNinch

When Eileen and I started working in Agherton little did we know what lay ahead. Instead of the planned Mother's Union meeting on 16th March we received the news that all was cancelled.

We gathered all our necessities, taking them home to our makeshift offices. Over the past year we have had many phone conversations, provided proactive and reactive advice, organised supplies of food and medicines, supported parishioners in time of grief, made referrals and took part in online services. It has been our privilege to have had the chance to be part of this service and, although not ideal by phone, we stood in faith that God would direct our paths and He has.

In an effort to combat loneliness and empower the recipients during the pandemic we created and delivered activity bags, taking all necessary COVID precautions. Bags were distributed on four occasions, each season had a theme and each bag had a gift, tasks to complete, health information and a spiritual reflection.

Autumn (care of self) included hand cream, puzzle books, leaflets on fire safety, wellbeing, gentle exercises. Interaction with Sunday surfers via encouragement cards and messages.

Winter (care of birds/animals) included candy canes, tissues, a decoration to give to someone, fat balls/cereals to assemble for birds, leaflets on home accident prevention, carbon monoxide awareness and Christmas safety.

Spring (observe newness of nature) included Smarties with task card, sunflower seeds, a knitted cross, leaflets on sun safety, COVID scams.

Summer (thinking of others) included Thank you cards to give, protective lip

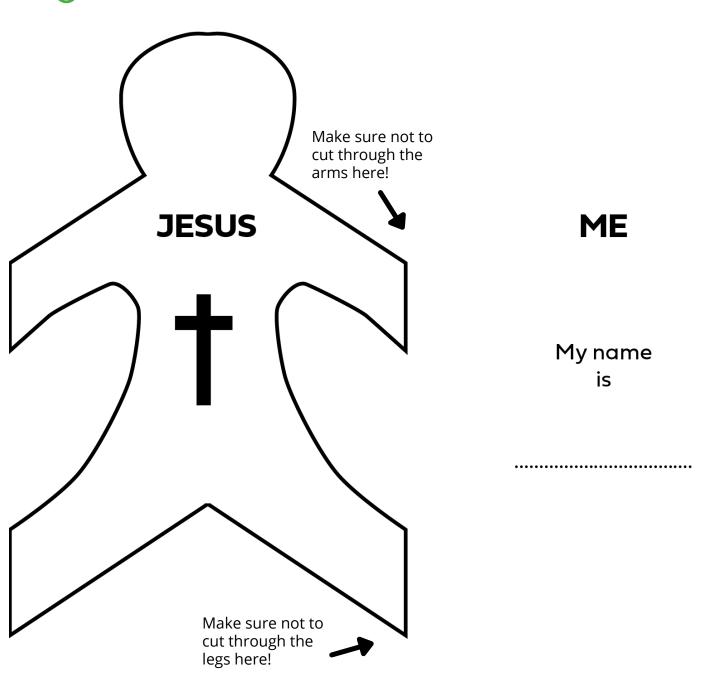
balm, provisions





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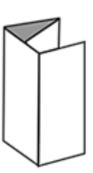
AGHERTON PULL OUT ACTIVITY FOR EVERYONE!



HOW TO MAKE YOUR AGHERTON PAPER CHAIN Read all instructions first

- Pull out the centre page of the magazine.
- Roll fold the page, so that you can see the cross and Jesus on the top.
- Now cut out the figure, but **do not** cut through the arms or legs.
- Take a photo and email it to aghertonparish@hotmail.co.uk
- Or drop your chain into the office postbox and we'll connect each of them together.
- Lets see how long we can make our Agherton family paper chain and see how far it stretches around the Church!





MY FRIENDS

AGHERTON FAMILY

•••••

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THEVOICE

QUESTION TIME - LEISA DUFFY

Can you tell our readers a bit about your background?

My family link to Agherton and Portstewart stretches back to my great, grandmother, Alice Orr Campbell, who was born in 1879 and baptised in Agherton. Both of my parents were in the Church Choir (41 years later and my mum is still there!) and I was baptised and confirmed in Agherton. I studied at Ulster University where I gained a degree in Visual Communication. I lived and worked in Belfast for 12 years but returned to Portstewart in 2005 when I went into business for myself as a graphic designer.



What attracted you to working in the parish office?

I enjoy connecting and communicating with people and I found that working from home combined with lockdown had left me very bored and isolated. My mum happened to mention that the church was looking for an office administrator and the idea of doing a job that involved working closely with the parish community while putting my design skills to use really appealed to me. I was delighted to be offered the post.

What is your typical day like?

I'm not sure I have a typical day at the moment, although I think that will change once the restrictions are lifted. I am working mainly from home so it's very important to be able to keep connected with each other through the online technology that we have. I deal with all the enquiries that come through by email, post or over the telephone and after that, every day is totally different! I could be designing posters one minute and then coordinating the running order for the online broadcasts the next. That's what's so great about the job, it definitely keeps me on my toes!

What are the challenges of your job and which aspects do you enjoy?

The main challenges so far have been preparing the online services for compline and holy week. Having never used any movie making software before I was completely thrown in at the deep end but with help of Revd Malcolm and the broadcast team, I was able to cobble together the first compline broadcast and then progressed on to the nightly holy week broadcasts, after that I could nearly give Steven Spielberg a run for his money! I find the work interesting and varied and I enjoy being able to use my design skills to help connect and communicate with the parish.

Almost all your time in post has been during the unusual circumstances of lockdown. Are you looking forward to experiencing the role in more normal times?

I'm looking forward to the restrictions easing and meeting everyone from all the groups that will be starting back again. The office is missing the energy and buzz of people and although I have already met a few parishioners I am looking forward to meeting more of you in the near future!

P.S. I'd like to say thank you to Alicean Handforth for all her help and kindness during handover and the last few months... I've got big boots to fill!

AGHERTON BRANCH MOTHERS' UNION





All Ireland President June has embarked on her "21 in 21" campaign, walking 21 kilometres in each of the 12 dioceses in Ireland to raise money for the All-Ireland "Mums in May" fund. This fund, originally set up in 2014, helps supports local MU projects and an All-Ireland fundraising campaign is organised every three years specifically for "Mums in May".

AIP June aims to achieve her "21 in 21" by walking three separate seven-kilometre walks in each diocese and has asked Connor to identify and plan the walks for this diocese. The number walking with AIP June will depend on whatever is allowed at the time of each walk but at the moment, June aims to walk only with one other person and she would like to start and end her walk each day in a church for a short time of reflective prayer. A small working group in Connor MU has identified the following walks:

- Belfast City walk from Stranmillis to St Anne's Cathedral on Tuesday 13th April, 10:30hrs
- **North Connor** the coastal path from Portrush to Portstewart, starting at Holy Trinity Church, Portrush and finishing in Agherton Church, Portstewart on Monday 26th April, 10:00hrs
- **Mid Connor** from St Jude's Church, Muckamore to All Saints' Antrim (Date TBC)

Walk 2 'Mums in May' Walk in North Connor Diocese

Our party of walkers met on a sunny Monday morning at Holy Trinity Parish Church in Portrush. The rector, Canon Peter McDowell set us on our way with the Mothers' Union Prayer. Our group included All Ireland President June, Regional coordinator for National Churches Trust Nina, Kim & Alicean from Agherton Parish and Jean & Kay from Ballywillan Parish.

The walk took us along the promenade towards the coastal walk leading to Portstewart. The sea breezes were gentle and refreshing as we made our way along. Beautiful yellow gorse, wild violets, sea pinks and red campion created a lovely backdrop on one side with the crashing sea and swooping kittiwakes, cormorants, gulls on the other.

Along the way we came across a little card with a photograph of a lost sheep, but thankfully our little flock knew where they were heading. We passed the grave of the unknown sailor, which has been tended by local people for about 200 years and a piece of war time history in the form of a giant arrow that the RAF used to get their bearings on the way to protect the convoys in the North Atlantic during the second World War conflict.

The time passed quickly, and we hardly noticed the 2 hours disappearing during our socially distanced walk, it was very enjoyable to meet other members and to learn a little bit about each other.

Our walk took us along the promenade in Portstewart and then the cliff walk as far as the old Ice House used for hundreds of years by the local fishing community.

We arrived at Agherton Parish Church around midday and were met by Revd Malcolm Ferry, his wife Carol and another Agherton branch member Rosemary. Connor Diocesan President Sally and her husband Bob joined the walking group at Agherton, and we were directed to socially distanced seating. The small group sat back to listen to a recording of Agherton's Lockdown Choir performing Allegri's Miserere Mei, Deus, Revd Malcolm then gave a short reflection based on the church windows, paying particular attention to the feet of the images represented. We closed with a prayer followed by the Mothers' Union prayer again.

All Ireland President June said a few words about the Mums in May 21 initiative and encouraged all present to take this back to their branch members.

Should anyone like to contribute to this fundraiser please use the Just Giving Link –

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mumsinmay21.

Thank you, Kim, Rosemary and MU Committee

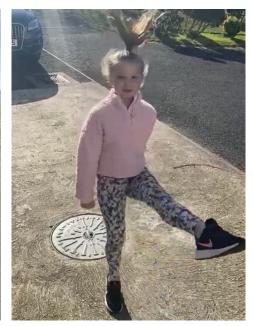




SUNDAY SURFERS DURING LOCKDOWN







LEWIS

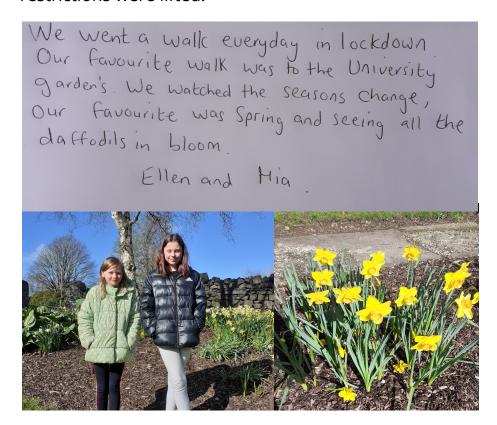
I will always remember the day the prime minister declared lockdown I was super duper sad because I loved playing with my friends and going to school, it also meant that we had to do home schooling and that was extremely difficult to set up because it kept locking out and codes kept changing, the only good thing about lockdown is that I have more time to play with my little brother Joshua. Now that things are starting to open up again, I'm really excited about getting back to church and seeing all my friends. Hopefully we get another picnic □□

JAKE

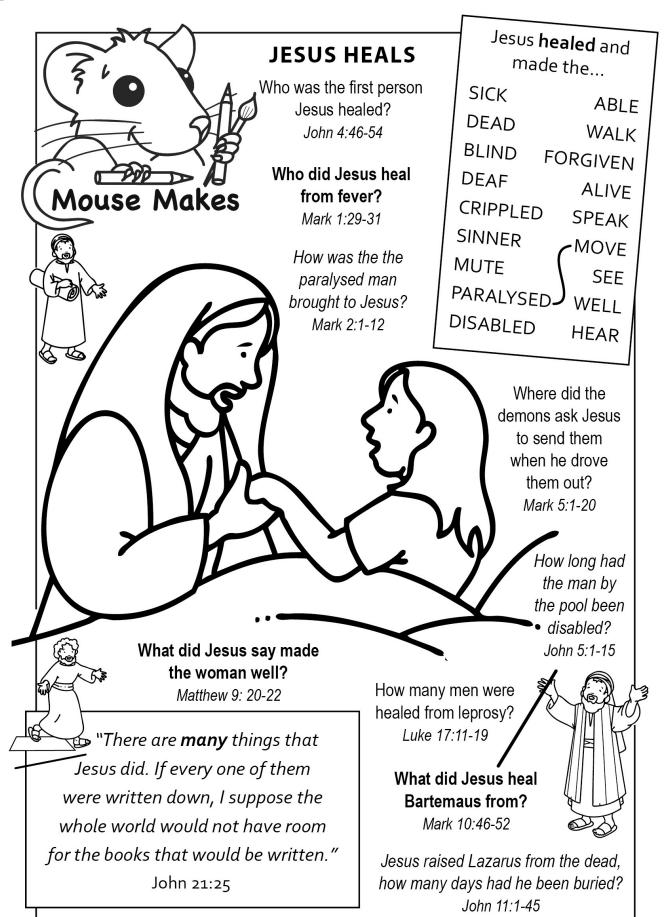
Jake was counting down the days during lockdown until he could get back on the golf course and has played nearly every day since restrictions were lifted.

KATIE

Katie danced every day during lockdown and practiced her routines. She is looking forward to the restrictions lifting and getting back to class.



⊝ CHILDREN'S PAGE



Jun21 © deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk

ONNECTING IN THE COMMUNITY By Mrs Kathryn Taylor - Principal

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Portstewart Primary School decided to incorporate the use of an underutilised polytunnel into the daily routines of those children who attended school over the lockdown period. Each week Governors and staff helped to facilitate groups of children to sow and maintain the polytunnel.

The emphasis was on growing vegetable and fruit crops to develop children's enjoyment and wonder of nature and to contribute positively to their mental health and well-being. The project expanded and a waste area was transformed into a vegetable patch including over 100 potato plants, cabbage, beetroot, and swede crops as well as a composting area and wildflower garden. The children took great pleasure developing their gardening skills and through perseverance and teamwork their sense of self-worth increased knowing they were contributing tangibly to the success of the garden.

The school community was kept up-to-date about the success of the outdoor learning project and parents/carers, families, local companies and residents volunteered help and advice. Each family was able to access the poly tunnel which provided a new place to be during the intensive home school learning period and many families reported that their children loved the quality time spent in the outdoor space with their parents. In addition to children and staff being able to consume the produce grown, the school was able to reach out into the community and offer local families some free, fresh food.

The high levels of involvement from the wider school community has been a success with enriching experiences brought to the children. The feedback from children, parents and staff has been very positive and the school looks forward to further embedding its work on developing the learning experiences of children through nurturing links with the wider community. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought many disruptions to the children's learning; however, Portstewart Primary School has turned challenge to opportunity by growing its community outreach and providing the children (and their families) with fruitful learning experiences that they can enjoy together.





WHO'S WHO IN AGHERTON PARISH

RECTOR

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E: rector.agherton@connor.anglican.org

Day Off: Monday

HONORARY ASSISTANT PRIESTS

Canon H. Gough; Canon W. Quill; Canon W. Lewis; Rev. G. Wilson; Canon M. Roemmele; Rev. S. Jones

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Leisa Duffy Mon-Thurs 9am-1pm T. 028 7083 3277 E. aghertonparish@hotmail.co.uk

CHURCHWARDENS

Rector's - Kim Gillan People's - Ross McLaughlin

SACRISTAN - Mrs D. Hall

HON. SECRETARY

Maureen Glover 028 7083 3277

HON. TREASURER

Rosemary Peters-Gallagher 028 7083 3277

GLEBEWARDENS

Rector's - David Moore People's - Danny Platt

SEXTON - Derek Scott

SELECT VESTRY

newly appointed on 5th May

Rector, Churchwardens, Glebewardens, Frank Dobbs, Wendy Floyd, Rosemary Peters-Gallagher, Maureen Glover, Paul Girvan, Alicean Handforth, Garry Huffington, John Lindsay, Heather Lockhart, Wilf Ridge, Rae Scott.

LAY PEOPLE WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Frank Dobbs (Outreach Diocesan Reader), Brian Shaw (Outreach Diocesan Reader), Wendy Floyd (Parish Reader & Parish Visitor), Wilf Ridge (Office Manager), Jacqui Clark (Sunday Surfers Co-ordinator)

PAROCHIAL NOMINATORS

Frank Dobbs, Wendy Floyd, Paul Girvan, Rae Scott

SUPPLEMENTAL NOMINATORS

Kim Gillan, Rosemary Peters-Gallagher, David Moore, Danny Platt

DIOCESAN SYNODSPEOPLE

Frank Dobbs, Maureen Glover

SUPPLEMENTAL SYNODSPEOPLE

Wendy Floyd, Noel Martin

ORGANIST - Louis Fields louisfields13@hotmail.co.uk

THE VOICE TEAM

Rector, Alicean Handforth (Editorial); Leisa Duffy (Co-ordinator); Rae Scott (Distributor)



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Prayer for Encouragement

Father, At this time of year, we remember Barnabas, a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, who encouraged people to stay true to you – and others to trust you for the first time. Lord, we have gone through difficult days. The pandemic has taught us that we are not in control. We don't know what each new day might bring. As we move into June and the hope of more normality after the restrictions of Lockdown, we too need encouragement. Help us to have courage to step forward with confidence and common sense. Most of all help us to stay true to you and to trust you, knowing that you are the security we need, knowing that you will never leave us or forsake us. Help us to be en-couraged!

AGHERTON PARISH OFFICE

19 Church Street, Portstewart BT55 7AH Tel: 028 7083 3277 Email: aghertonparish@hotmail.co.uk www.agherton.com Office Opening Hours: Monday - Thursday 9am - 1pm



In Jesus name, Amen.