



Douglas Union of Parishes with Frankfield

Advent & Christmas 2020

From the Rector:

This Christmas will be like no other we have experienced, after a year that has been unprecedented in our lifetime. Yet some things do not change. In this edition of PARISH MATTERS you will see a cartoon reminding us that the first Christmas was a quiet affair, unnoticed by most of a busy world. While the gospels tell us of census collection for taxation purposes to support an occupying Roman army and civic officials, the real action of universal significance was happening in the

quiet corner of an outhouse. It involved a vulnerable young woman and her confused husband. The visitors were humble men who had an occupation that was not highly valued. They came in from the fields and were the first to understand the significance of this birth. Others were travelling too, but from a very different culture and religion. They too were outsiders, but in a different way. Everyone else passed by oblivious to what God was doing in the world through this unique child.

Maybe this Christmas, as we don't have the same opportunity to shop,

attend concerts, enjoy office parties and sing carols in packed churches, we might see the Nativity with fresh eyes.

Remember, worship is available online in the parish if you are not in a position to attend church. Remember Christmas is not one day but 12, so there is ample opportunity for you to get to church given all the services on offer in our buildings between Christmas Eve and Epiphany on 6th January. Remember, the Christ child is with you in your homes and most importantly in your hearts in this most unusual year.

God bless you all,

Adrian

On-Line Services for December and Christmas are available on the Parish YouTube channel. You can search for Douglas Union with Frankfield YouTube

There will be a Carol Service available on 20th December, a Crib Service on 24th December and the Christmas Service available at 9pm Christmas Eve.

A favourite Advent Hymn

Hymn 133 – Long ago, prophets knew Christ would come, born a Jew.

This is one of my favourite hymns sung during Advent. For singers, it can be tricky to come in on the right beat with its seven note octave introduction, but when you get started it is a great and familiar tune, which is easy to sing so everyone can join in enthusiastically! The tune is PERSONENT HODIE. It is very traditional and the earliest known source of it was found in a manuscript dating to around 1360. The arrangement in our hymnal is a strong unison version by Gustav Holst, who is perhaps best known as the composer of 'The Planets'.

The words of this hymn were written by Fred Pratt Green in 1970. It sums up 'God's timeless plan' over the centuries, starting

with the prophets of the Old Testament, who looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. Verse three focuses on Mary. We can have a sentimental view

of her, but this verse reminds us that though, as a young woman, she was afraid of the consequences of bearing a child outside wedlock, 'she believed, she obeyed'. This is a strong and determined young woman prepared to put her trust in God no matter what the personal consequences. Verse 4 points very much towards Christmas. The 'stable door stands ajar' so that the shepherds can enter to see and worship the Christ child. We are also told that Bethlehem 'shines like a star', suggesting the journey the Magi or Wise Men are on from the East as they search for the promised Saviour and king.

But perhaps the thing I like most about the hymn is the question it poses for us all. The chorus talks of



ringing bells and singing choirs. The first three times it is sung it ends with a question, 'who will make him welcome?' It is an important thing to consider, in fact probably the

most important question you will ever ask yourself. It goes right to the heart of our faith and what it means to be a Christian. Are we all so busy and preoccupied that we bypass the essential meaning of what this season is really about? I hope not. The last time we sing the chorus the mood changes and the words are different. 'Jesus comes! Jesus comes! We will make him welcome.' How precisely you will do that this Christmas, which will be different from normal in a whole host of ways, I will leave for you to consider. Only you can decide.

A. Wilkinson

Church Services for Christmas are as follows:

Sunday 20 December	8.30	Holy Communion	Blackrock
	9.45	Service of the Word	Passage
	10.00	Service of the Word	Frankfield
	11.15	Service of the Word	Douglas
Christmas Eve	7.00pm	Holy Communion	Passage
	9.00pm	Holy Communion	Frankfield
Christmas Day	8.30	Holy Communion	Blackrock
	10.00	Holy Communion	Frankfield
	11.15	Holy Communion	Douglas
Sunday 27 December	11.00	Holy Communion	Passage

St Luke's School

Reflections on School Life since Lockdown:

by Olwen Anderson



When schools closed suddenly on March 12th this year, the sense of shock reverberated throughout the entire school community. Parents collected children that afternoon, not knowing what to expect over the coming days and weeks. We scrambled to prepare work, pack schoolbags and organise teacher resources while also maintaining a sense of outward calm. Some pupils were delighted to have two weeks 'off', others were anxious about the uncertainty.

Over the following weeks and months teachers, pupils and parents learned many new skills, while also becoming adept at using Google Classroom. Teachers worked tirelessly to create meaningful learning experiences under very challenging circumstances. Parents too, most working from home, were helping their children log on each day to complete assigned work. We were delighted that, at the end of the summer, our Sixth Class had enough material for their teacher to create a 'Lockdown Book' chronicling their work and life during lockdown. A copy of the book was given to each pupil leaving the school as a graduation gift.

The summer involved much logistical planning in preparation for re-opening in late August. We were delighted to welcome our pupils back, providing them with a much needed sense of normality. After an extended period of closure, we all have a renewed appreciation for the importance of the school experience in the lives of children.

Schools have coped well under difficult circumstances but we do have challenges including the loss of the 'whole-school' feeling. To counteract this, our weekly assembly has moved to an intercom assembly or, when weather permits, an outdoor socially distanced assembly with Archdeacon Wilkinson.

Our focus has now turned to creative ways of doing the usual in a different way. Our annual Christmas Fair has become 'All the Fun of the Fair' with 6th Class organising socially distanced activities for each class. Our annual Christmas service has moved online with the 'Eight Classes of Christmas' video, each class recording a short piece and parents accessing this online.

So many of our extra activities are on hold. However, pupils are very resilient and school staff are ever hopeful so we look to the future with hope and expectation of a better year ahead.

Christmas Quiz 2020

Can you work out the names of the Christmas carols or songs who have all lost their vowels?

There are 2 prizes: for the first correct entry delivered to the Rectory and the first correct entry emailed to adrianwilkinson3@gmail.com

Example :

hrkthhrlndnglssng: Hark the herald angels sing

1. wynmng
2. whtchrstms
3. tcmpnmdnghtcl
4. cmllfythfl
5. sntclsscsmngttwn
6. ntssbrnsn
7. lttldnky
8. swmmmykssngsntcls
9. gdchrstnsllrjc
10. whlshphrdswtchd
11. jnglbllrck
12. smdthwntrssnw
13. wwshymrrychrstms
14. thfrstnwill
15. jythwrld
16. hlynght
17. nthblkmdwntr
18. ndlcjbl
19. llwntfrchrstmssy
20. drvngmfrchrstms

Christmas in Sweden by Barbro McCutcheon

Christmas – Jul in Swedish – conjures up such a feeling of warmth. In Sweden, where winters are dark and cold, we won't talk about climate change here, it is very much anticipated.

Although it is still Advent on the 13th December, the feast day of St. Lucia is for many the

beginning of Christmas. The story of the mediaeval saint in Sicily and a legendary Swedish woman who gave all she had to the needy, has got mixed up. St. Lucia, with a crown of lights on her head, and her



attendants are all dressed in white and sing hymns and carols while serving coffee and gingerbread biscuits. This takes place in homes, schools, hospitals, anywhere where people want to celebrate.

In the kitchens the food preparations are on the way, pickled, salted fish, ham and gingerbread biscuits in all kinds of shape and the ever popular cinnamon buns.

Christmas Eve is the big day for family get togethers. If you are lucky there is a knock on the door and Santa himself appears. He asks the children if they have been good. You can guess what

the answer always is and the brimful bag is delivered. In our home it was always my father who handed out the presents. For each member of the extended family he also wrote and read out a long poem about our activities during the year. It was always exciting and

sometimes nerve racking! We were also trying to make a similar effort, not always very successful, but it added to the fun.

Christmas morning meant early Morning Service after which a very big and active

youth club gathered in the parish hall for coffee and of course cinnamon buns. My father was a Lutheran priest in an inner city parish in Stockholm. All the families, clergy, choirmaster, organist and sexton lived in the same block of apartments with the parish all in the basement. To say that we knew a few people would be an understatement. It certainly was an invaluable experience.

Swedish winters being dark and cold, snow was very welcome by those of us who loved winter sports. We kept our skates at school and went skating on the school skating rink at every break.



The Christmas season continued with visits to the family and friends. Nobody would say 'How did you

get on over Christmas?' on St Stephen's Day. Christmas decorations would not be taken down until after Epiphany, when the Christmas season would often come to an end with a children's party.

I feel very privileged to have grown up in one tradition and lived most of my adult life in another.



Bishops' Appeal

This year it has not been possible to distribute Bishops' Appeal envelopes.

If you would like to support their world aid and development programme please go to their website

www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org

and you can donate on line or give by bank transfer.

Your support would be much appreciated.

Memories of St. Luke's Church Douglas by William Bateman

My parents came to live in Douglas in 1960, and I attended St Luke's Church. One Sunday, Con O'Driscoll, the Church Warden asked me if I would like to go to table tennis which was held in the original school. It involved clearing away the desks to put up the table tennis table. It was great fun attended by young and old and friendly matches were arranged with other clubs such as Innishannon, Crosshaven etc.

The social was a regular parish event, with each parish allocated so many nights. It was a great get together and many couples met each other there and subsequently married. I met Patricia at these events and she became my wife 54 years ago.

The parish events included a fete where stalls and fun events were arranged. Mrs Ross, Patricia's mother, was the matriarch of the cake stall every year and worked very hard to ensure her stall raised the highest contribution.

The Harvest Thanksgiving was one of the highlights of the church year, and it was beautifully decorated with flowers and the fruits of the labours of the farming community.

I was asked to go on the vestry as I was the cemetery treasurer. This I did for 32 years. The cemetery

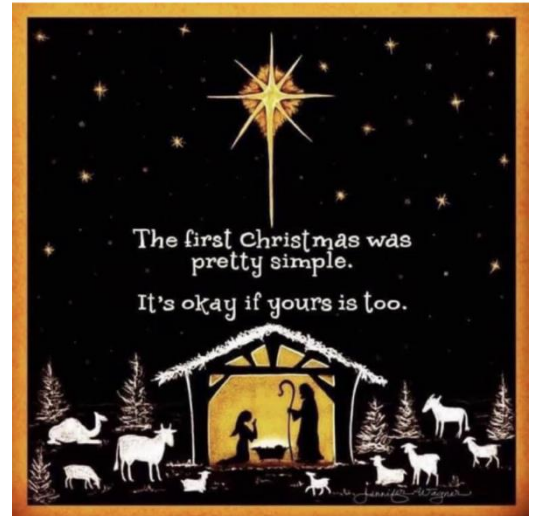
was looked after by the Sexton Tom Good for 25 years, and then by Jim Jackson. It was kept in pristine condition, which was highlighted by an article written by Maureen Fox in the Cork Examiner. She described it as a very peaceful place.

Canon Packham decided the parish needed a hall, and a committee raised the necessary 15000 cost in quick time. It was to prove beneficial for many occasions none more so than it provided space for the new school. This was done when the original school was demolished to make way for a new school to accommodate a growing number of pupils.

George Macilwraith was the driving force behind the school and worked extremely hard together with a committee to raise the cost of it. Bill Macilwraith the architect also did sterling work in helping to bring it to fruition. Our 4 children got a great start in life from attending the school.

St Luke's to me is my church, my parents, relatives are all resting there as are Patricia's parents and grandparents. It's a church that is part of our lives, and it is to the Archdeacons' credit that he has provided services and communications while the virus is active.

We wish St Luke's well in the years ahead.



Thank you to all who contributed recipes and bought the parish cookbook. To date we have raised €1650 (after printing costs) for parish funds. There are still a small number of books left – contact the Rectory if you want to purchase one. They cost €10.

They are also available after church services until they are sold

Life in Beirut by Maxine Reid

As we touch down at Rafik Hariri Airport, Beirut, Lebanon in July 2018 the city is beautifully lit. Who is to

know the country is without 24/7 electricity, something the Western world takes for granted.

Beirut is very cosmopolitan, along the shores of the Mediterranean. Both Muslims and Christians live peacefully side by side. A lot can be learned from the West here in Lebanon. It is a wonderfully open city, where we have fully integrated among the Lebanese people. If only I focused on learning Arabic. Inshallah (may God be with us) a wonderful word in Arabic.

South of Lebanon borders Israel. The "I" word as it became known as. Lebanon is officially at war with Israel, and we may never speak it's name. 350 Irish troops are deployed in South Lebanon as peacekeepers with the UN. As, a result, a grab bag took priority in our closet in the hall. This was normal life, a change of clothes, a small amount of money and fresh water.



Boom, the explosion on 4 August 2020, Beirut Port, happened. We, as a family were very lucky we were not at home. We have COVID19 to thank for that. We were just out of lockdown so I booked a mini break to a hotel 15km north of Beirut, so my husband, Colm, could still commute to work.

This photo was taken one hour before the explosion, it was such a lovely view of Beirut Horizon. At 6pm, local time the sonic boom vibrated through our hotel room. I could see the explosion in the distance. My heart raced, was Colm Ok? Where is the grab bag? Are security on the way? Luckily, we were all ok? If we had been at

home in our apartment in Achrafieh, Beirut, 5km from the Port, things could have been different (See picture 2) We even had a small sea view of the Port from our rooftop apartment. We

were made homeless. A 2 day mini break turned into a 10 day stay in a hotel. Then another move to another hotel. 10 days later, the boys and I return safely back to Cork. Colm is still there in a new apartment, still among the very resilient Lebanese people.



Lebanon and Beirut, has so much biblical history. Let's take a quick tour. Downtown Beirut is built on old ruins. You can still make out the mud flat roofed houses described in the Bible. Here also stands the Blue Mosque and St Georges Church side by side. 40km north of Beirut lies Byblos (Jbeil). Byblos a Hebrew word meaning "well of God" is one of the oldest cities in the world, dating back to Canaanite civilisation. It was now a must see tourist spot in Lebanon. Mostly, christians live here. We also have



Maghdouche, 50 km south of Beirut "Our lady of Awaiting" or "Our lady of mantara". A sacred cave where it is believed the virgin Mary rested while she waited on Jesus. Lastly we have Cana (Qana), where Jesus performed his first miracle at the wedding, turning water into wine. Lebanese wine is a must try. Located close to the border of Israel, in an area historically known as Upper Galilee. Now this is a Christian pilgrimage site, and predominantly inhabited by Muslims.