St Mark's
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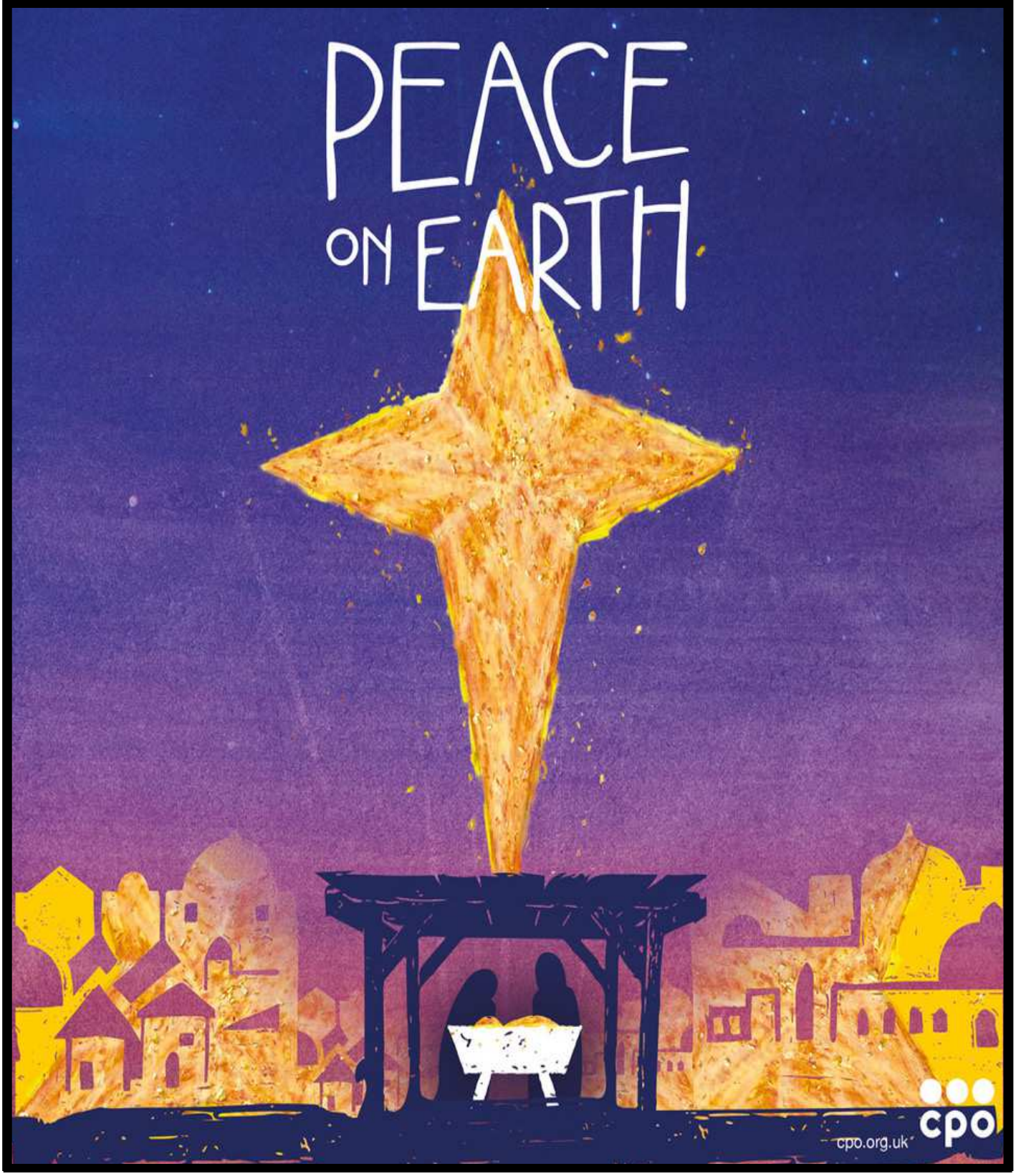
for Christ's Kingdom

PINNACLES

DECEMBER/JANUARY

" … And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Is. 9v6)



Please support Belfast Central Mission's Christmas Toy Appeal

New Toys and gifts such as

Educational Toys
from ages birth - 3 years

Clothes for
from ages birth - 5 years

Books
small books are better

Chocolates & Selection Boxes

Stationery Items

Dolls
Barbie or Baby

Football Accessories
not linked to any tem

Gifts for children
aged 8 - 12

Toiletries & Vouchers
for aged 16-18

Collection on Sunday 4th December in St Mark's

Please do not gift wrap and no soft toys. Thank you!

CHRISTMAS GIFTS & FOOD BANK COLLECTION

On Sunday, December 4th we shall collect gifts to contribute to Belfast Central Mission's Christmas Toy Appeal. New toys and gifts are appreciated (no cuddly toys please). Vouchers are also welcomed.
Please see the graphic above for more information and thank you in anticipation!
As the Food Bank have requested food to be available over the Christmas period to be delivered to them by Saturday 3rd December, there will be a combined collection for the months of November and December on Saturday morning, 3rd December (10am-12noon). Thank you always to everyone who supports our Food Bank collection. The first collection of 2023 will take place on Saturday 21st January from 10am-12noon.

DRIVE THROUGH DROP OFF

(FOR ARMAGH FOODBANK)

SATURDAY 3RD DECEMBER & 21ST JANUARY (10AM - 12NOON) CROZIER HALL

Rector's Letter.....

Dear Friends,

Maybe, like me, you are finding the approach to Christmas a little different this year. Lots of things are happening as they normally would. As I write, Armagh's Georgian Weekend is approaching. We are planning a Christmas Market, Advent sermons, Christmas visiting, events and services, and in our house we are having the annual debate as to when to put up our Christmas decorations. But what seems strange this year is that we are in the midst of a Football World Cup!

This year's World Cup has been debated like none in living memory. There are many reasons why teams and fans feel conflicted about what should be one of the greatest sporting events of this decade. There is a sense that it is hard to be really excited about this World Cup, even if we are a football fan.

But beyond the World Cup, perhaps the approach to Christmas this year involves particularly mixed feelings for us personally. On one hand we might want to be excited, especially as it is a Christmas without restrictions like those of recent years, but alternatively, this may be a Christmas with added financial worries, the absence of a loved one or the outcomes of strained relationships.

Whilst miraculous, the circumstances of the Lord's birth were far from ideal. The events and message of Christ's birth are reason to encourage joy, even if the notion of a festive season is hard to be motivated by. During Advent and Christmas our sermons will focus upon names attributed to Jesus, revealing something of his identity, character and mission. One of the names that should instil joy in the heart of every believer, despite the imperfections of our world, is 'Immanuel' (Matt. 1v23). Meaning 'God is with us', the person of Jesus, Immanuel, was the embodiment of God's promise of relationship with all who trust in him. Our circumstances can be difficult, but we can know that through faith in the One who became one of us, we are never alone.

Amidst the many feelings we might be experiencing right now, may we know encouragement. With names characterising Jesus that we shall also consider during the weeks ahead, we too should be inspired by the message of the angels; "'*Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.*'" (Lk 2v10&11).

Yours in Christ, *Malcolm*

THE FIRST THURSDAY CLUB

Our December meeting, on the first day of the month, will be a buffet Christmas lunch. We are having outside caterers and there will be a small charge for this meal.
Most important to note that the meal will be served in the Windsor Room at 1pm (not at our usual time of 2.30pm). Entertainment will be provided and all members are most welcome.

MONTHLY MID WEEK SERVICE

On the first Tuesday of each month (11.30am) a Service of Holy Communion takes place in St Mark's. This is intentionally offered for people who find it difficult to attend services on Sundays. If you would like to join us you will be very welcome. Services will take place on Tuesday 6th December and on Tuesday 3rd January and a light lunch is then offered in the Crozier Hall.

GLOW

An action packed term of GLOW Youth Club will conclude on 9th December with a trip to the Pantomime in the Market Place Theatre. We shall reopen on January 13th (7.30pm - 9pm) in the Crozier Hall. Glow is intended for young people from School Year 6 and into secondary school. Everyone is invited to join in!

MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE

Some dates for the diaries of future Brides and Grooms! During March, on four Thursdays (2nd, 9th, 23rd & 30th) a Marriage Preparation Course is planned to take place in The Venue, Crozier Hall. This is a very relaxed opportunity which we very much hope that you will enjoy. Invitations to those whose weddings will take place in St Mark's from the Spring of 2023 to 2024 will be sent out in due course. For any further information, please contact Malcolm or Sarah.

CONFIRMATION

A Service of Confirmation is planned to take place in St Mark's on Sunday 26th March (10.30am). Young people of School Year 10 and above are invited to consider if they would like to be confirmed. To begin our preparation a planning meeting will take place after the 10.30am Service on Sunday 8th January in the Crozier Hall. Candidates and parents are invited to attend when we shall agree the most suitable day for meeting after school in the Crozier Hall for Confirmation Classes. For any further information, please speak to Malcolm, Sarah or Sunday School leaders.

SCHOOL SERVICES

During December and January we are very much looking forward to hosting some very special services offered by local schools. We are incredibly pleased to be able to accommodate these services again!

On Wednesday 14th December (7pm) Lisanally Special School will be with us for their Carol Service and on Tuesday 20th December (10am) we shall also host The Armstrong Primary School's Carol Service. Both are incredibly joyful services focused upon the great wonder and meaning of Christmas. Everyone will be very welcome!

On Sunday 8th January (6.30pm) The Royal School Armagh Scripture Union's 'Celebrate' Service will again take place in St Mark's. This is always a most encouraging service which is led by pupils and staff and the speaker on this occasion will an old Armachian, Rev'd Trevor Johnston. Again, everyone will be most welcome!

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SUNDAY SCHOOL

Christmas Party

The Creche and Sunday School Christmas Party will take place on Tuesday 13th December from 6.30pm to 8.00pm in the Crozier Hall. All children are warmly invited to attend this party for a night of fun, food and games along with a special visitor!

Christmas Nativity

The Sunday School children will be participating in the Christmas Nativity on Sunday 18th December. All children are asked to be seated in church by 10.15 am please. We would like parents/guardians to be aware that as the Nativity takes place at the front of the church, their children will be visible in the service livestream on YouTube.

Once again, this year we have decided that instead of the children giving gifts to the Sunday School leaders at Christmas, parents/guardians may wish to give a donation to the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice. There will be an opportunity to contribute to this very worthy cause at the Children's Nativity Service. We hope you will be able to join us for this service to listen to the Christmas story told by the children.

Christmas Holidays

There will be no Sunday School on 25th December 2022 and 1st January 2023. Sunday School will resume on Sunday 8th January 2023. At any time, new members are more than welcome to join us.

We would like to wish all the children and their families a very Happy Christmas and every blessing for 2023.

HOLY COMMUNION AT HOME

During the week beginning 11th December, Malcolm and Sarah will be calling with Parishioners who would like to receive Holy Communion at home before Christmas. If for health reasons you or a member of your family is unable to attend church and would like to receive Holy Communion, please do get in touch with the Rector (37522970). Those who have received Holy Communion at home previously will automatically be contacted to make arrangements.

AYAC RESIDENTIAL

A Diocesan Mini Residential for young people of secondary school age is planned to take place from Saturday 22nd January (afternoon) to Sunday 23rd (afternoon).
At the time of writing details are being finalised, therefore please keep an eye out in Pew News for more information! Further details will be available from Malcolm or Sarah in due course.

Curate's Corner....

Dear Friends,

During Christmas perhaps you have many traditions that you like to celebrate with your family. When I was younger one of our traditions as a family was buying a new board game for Christmas. Still to this day I love playing a good board game. Of course we all have our favourites whether it's classics like monopoly or Uno, or whether it's something new like ticket to ride or jungle speed. On the other hand perhaps you have one's you just don't enjoy, for me that's scrabble (mostly because my Dad always won). But for a moment I want us to have a look at a word that isn't normally associated with Christmas, it would get you 14 points in scrabble. That word is obedience.

When we think of the word 'obedience' it's usually in reference to something we've done wrong meaning we've been disobedient or its referring to following a set of rules. Obedience isn't usually a word that would normally be at the forefront of our minds concerning Christmas.

Recently at our women's group, Alive we looked at a character study on Mary. As with all our studies at Alive we briefly looked at Mary's life and then discovered what we can learn from her for our lives today. It's fair to say that we know a lot about Mary's life but take a moment to remember when you were 14 years old. You were most likely still at school, it was an awkward age you were growing out of childhood but not quite yet an adult. Take a moment to think, what if you had experienced at 14 what Mary did when she was that age? Mary, the mother of Jesus is one of the most recognised and influential people in the Bible. Her story is miraculous, and she is a woman of courage, strength, tenacity, and immense faith. While she is best known and celebrated for giving birth to Jesus the Messiah, Mary had many qualities that we can learn from today, one being that she was obedient.

After the angel Gabriel visited her, despite what lay ahead of her she was obedient to God's call in her life: "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "*May your word to me be fulfilled." - Luke 1:38*

The task she had been given wasn't an easy one, her reputation and impending marriage was at stake and yet Mary responds with this obedient example of trust without limits. Mary was fearful of what was to come but despite this she trusted God with her life. Her desire to serve was greater than her fears. We too may have fears in our lives, especially when responding to God's call. But we can be inspired by Mary's story in that she trusted God to lead her.
Despite what Mary was going through she never ceased praising God. Her songs and praise rang louder because she understood the power of praise. In the midst of our own trials we can still praise God for being our provider and never leaving our side. Being Jesus' mother was a great honour for Mary but it also brought her great suffering, watching her son endure ridicule and die on a cross. Mary carried a weighty burden and responsibility. As any mother would, Mary wanted only what was best for her son, but also endured great pain and suffering watching her son suffer.

In our suffering, God wants us to fully depend and lean on God. Within our own strength, our personal suffering can attempt to consume us, but we must fully rely on the Holy Spirit to guide, carry, and sustain us through times of adversity.

In the unknown Mary continued to trust God It is easy to trust God when things are going well and your next step is clear. The greater test for us all is to trust God when our next steps are unknown and we are unsure how to move forward. Mary decided to trust God during her uncertainties and fears. She didn't lean on her own understanding or limited perspective. God gave Mary an extraordinary blessing in birthing Jesus the Messiah. She was unsure of exactly how God was going to use her, but she trusted in who God was more. Like Mary, God is calling us to practice trusting Him daily with our lives and His purposes for us. With limited information and control, we must continue to trust God's path and provision.

Continued overleaf...

Mary surrendered to God's plans not only for her life, but the life of her child. She allowed Jesus to minister in both familiar and uncomfortable settings. Mary surrendered her child over to God and his ultimate will. To fully surrender our lives daily to God takes greater trust, humility, and a reverence for His sovereignty. It is not easy to do because we battle against our human frailty each day. However, God will give us the courage needed to surrender every aspect of our lives into God's capable hands. We should shift our attention from our circumstances to a renewed assurance that God's will is best. Similar to both Mary and Jesus, surrendering to God's will is not easy, but necessary for our spiritual growth and maturity.

So may we be challenged in however we feel about this season to be obedient to God within our lives, regardless of what that entails.

Every Blessing,

Sarah

FUNERAL TEAS

Since the relaxing of Covid mitigation measures it has been possible to host Funeral Teas in the Crozier Hall, however catering has been provided by external providers. We would very much like to be able to offer Parish catering again, however, for this to happen we need to create a new Catering Team. If you might be interested in offering some assistance, please do contact Caroline in our Parish Office. If we have sufficient interest a meeting shall be called to make necessary arrangements. For any willing help, we would be incredibly grateful.

YF3

Like those attending mid week services in The Windsor Room this term, Youth Fellowship has also been focusing upon the Psalms. It has been really good to learn together! Intended for young people of secondary school age YF3 meets on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month (5pm - 6.30pm) in The Venue. Our dates for December are the 4th and we finish up with a Christmas Special on18th. New members are more than welcome!

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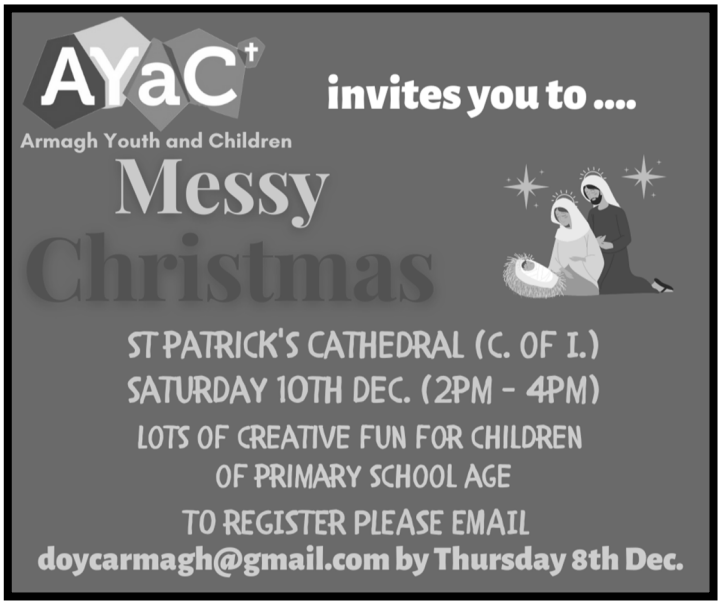
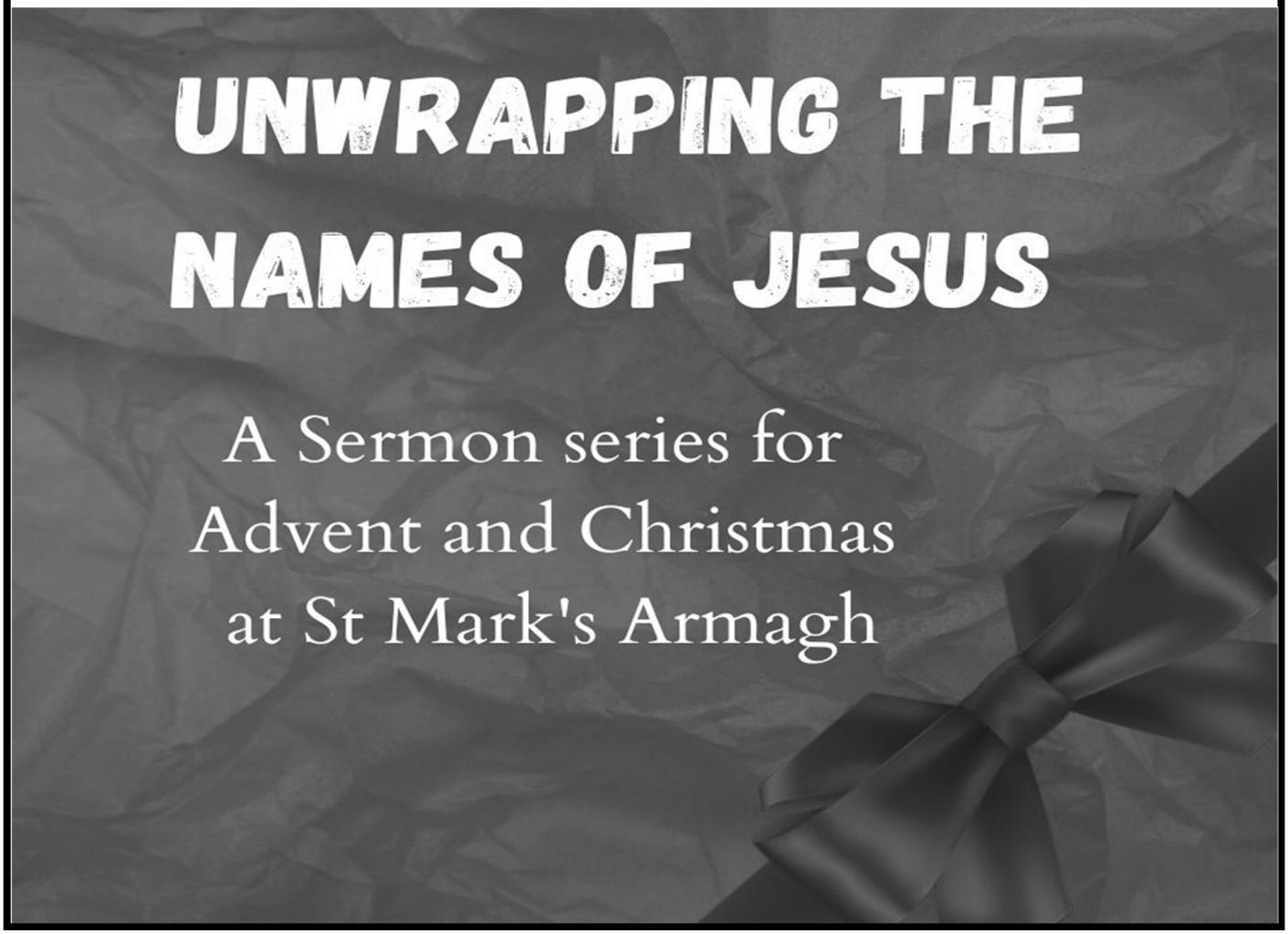


CHRISTMAS & ADVENT SERMON SERIES

This Advent and Christmas our sermons will have a special focus on the biblical names of Jesus.
We'll be comparing names both in the Old Testament and New Testament and discovering what they mean for us today.



DAY OF PRAYER

Our annual Day of Prayer will take place in St Mark's on Saturday 28th January (9am - 4pm).
In place will be a number of exhibits to help guide us as we personally pray for needs global, local and personal. Please feel free to drop in, for even just a few minutes. This is an opportunity for people of all ages to take part in and further details will be available in Pew News in the approach to the Day of Prayer.

UNITED SERVICE

On Sunday 29th January (7pm) we look forward to joining with Methodist and Presbyterian friends in 1st Armagh Presbyterian Church for a United Service.
If you are able, please do come along and join us and note that there will not be an evening service in St Mark's on the same evening.

THE BEREAVEMENT JOURNEY

The Bereavement Journey is a six week programme for anyone who has been bereaved at any time and in any way. The programme was developed some years ago in London, at Holy Trinity Church Brompton and seeks to help anyone who has been bereaved. By means of a series of films and discussion groups it gently guides those attending through the most common aspects of grief, enabling them to better understand their experiences while coping with loss and discern ways of building resilience in response to their grief experience.

Everyone will be very welcome and we are planning to commence the programme on Thursday 12th January at 7.30pm. To help prepare we would be very grateful if you could let us know of your intention to participate by contacting the Parish Office (Tel. : 37523197 / email : sec.stmarks@gmail.com)

For any further details, please feel free to speak to Malcolm, Sarah or Bob. Please be assured that no one who is participating should ever feel under pressure to share their experience or even to talk during discussions, and throughout the programme we will be equally supportive towards anyone who prefers to listen.

LIVESTREAM UPDATE

Unfortunately a Broadband upgrade that was ordered for our Parish has been delayed! However, our provider will hopefully be enabled to install the necessary services in the not too distant future. In the meantime we shall do our best to reduce any livestream issues and wish to thank you for your patience.

CHOIR PRACTICES

A great highlight of any Christmas is the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols and our Parish's Carol Service will take place on Sunday 18th December (7pm). To prepare, Choir Practices will take place on Wednesday evenings from 7pm in the Church. If you'd like to join us, we'd love to see you! For further information, please feel free to speak to any of our musicians or choir members.

CRECHE

Creche is available each Sunday except for Family Services. All children of preschool age are very welcome! Creche meets in the Beresford Room of the Crozier Hall from 10.15am. For further details about Creche contact Claire (37522970).

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CHRISTMAS MARKET

Anticipation is building for what Andy Williams described as 'The most wonderful time of the year'. Christmas is always a busy season but one event not to be missed is our Christmas Market on Thursday 1st December from 6pm-9pm at The Crozier Hall. We have over 30 local businesses and stalls with a range of products booked. There'll be indoor and outdoor stalls featuring crepes, handmade decorations, cake stall and much more.

TEA/COFFEE ROTA

We are very much enjoying having a quick cuppa and some fellowship together in the Crozier Hall after our monthly family services. However, in order for this to continue, we need volunteers for our 2023 rota.

All it takes is 3-4 people each month to have the tea/coffee ready for after the service.

Perhaps you and your family or some Church friends might like to sign up to a month of your choice?

If so, please sign the rota in the Church Porch or contact Caroline at the Church Office (37523197).

FLOWER ROTAS

The flower rotas for 2023 are now on display in the Church Porch.

If you might like to contribute a floral arrangement (over 2 weeks), please contact sign the rota or speak to David who will gladly offer any further information.

Thank you to all who offer floral arrangements to enhance the beauty of our Church.

December/January Service Rota

DECEMBER :

4TH : THE 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8.30am : Holy Communion 2
10.30am : Holy Communion 2
Reader : Wendy Davison
7.00pm : Evening Prayer

11TH : THE 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8.30am : Holy Communion 2
10.30am : Morning Prayer
Reader : Mervyn Adamson
7.00pm : Evening Prayer

18TH : THE 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8.30am : Holy Communion 1
10.30am : Christmas Nativity Service
7.00pm : Nine Lessons & Carols

CHRISTMAS EVE

11.00pm : Holy Communion 2

CHRISTMAS DAY

8.30am : Holy Communion 2

Flower Rota

4th, 11th, 18th & 25th December & 1st January : Christmas Decorations

December Font : Mr Ian McMordie

♦

8th & 15th January : The Kingston Family
22nd & 29th January : Vacant
January Font : Vacant

JANUARY :

1ST : THE 2ND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

8.30am : Holy Communion 2
10.30am : Covenant Service
Reader : Heather Chambers
No Evening Service

8TH : THE 1ST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

8.30am : Holy Communion 2
10.30am : Morning Prayer
Reader : Tom Galbraith
6.30pm : RSA Celebrate Service

15TH : THE 2ND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

8.30am : Holy Communion 1
10.30am : Family Service
7.00pm : Holy Communion

22ND : THE 3RD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

8.30am : Holy Communion 2
10.30am : Morning Prayer
Reader : Heather Chambers
7.00pm : Evening Prayer

29TH : THE 4TH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

8.30am : Holy Communion 2
10.30am : Morning Prayer
Reader : Maureen Watt
7.00pm : United Service in 1st Armagh Presbyterian Church

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Mrs Avril Irwin 07908698761
Rev'd Malcolm Kingston 37 522970

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LETTER OF SYMPATHY

Following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, a letter of sympathy and assurance of prayers was sent to King Charles and the Royal Family on behalf of our Parish. It was lovely to recently receive a message of appreciation which was addressed to 'Everyone in the Parish'.
Photo credit : Lisa Sheridan / Getty.

It was so very kind of you to send me such a wonderfully generous message following the death of my beloved mother. Your most thoughtful words are enormously comforting, and I cannot tell you how deeply they are appreciated at this time of immense sorrow.

Charles R

Christmas Tree Festivals

St John's, Caledon

Friday 2nd (1pm – 9pm with Service at 7pm)

Saturday 3rd December (10am – 7pm with Santa's Grotto)

Sunday 4th December (2pm – 8pm with Service at 8pm)

St Matthew's, Keady

Friday 9th (from 6.30pm with Service at 8pm)

Sunday 10th (from 11am with Carol Singing at 8pm)

Sunday 11th (from 11am with Service at 7.30pm)

St Mark's Armagh

'Serving together for Christ's Kingdom'

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The Gate Lodge
44 Victoria Street
Armagh
BT61 9DT

Parish Administrator :
Mrs Caroline Nesbitt
Tel: 02837 523197
Email : sec.stmarks@gmail.com
Website: www.stmarksarmagh.org
Registered Charity : NIC103959

Sexton :
Mr David Mansbridge
(Tel : 07873167120)

Contact Details

Rector : Rev'd Canon Malcolm Kingston
St Mark's Rectory, 14 Portadown Road
Tel : 02837 522970

Curate : Rev'd Sarah Parkinson
The Curatage, 6 Ashley Avenue
Tel : 07974252013

Hon. Senior Associate Priest :
Very Revd Robert Townley

Parish Nurse : Dr Bob Brown

Pastoral Assistants : Mrs Adele Geddis, Ms Barbara Wilson

Parish Readers : Mrs Adele Geddis, Ms Barbara Wilson

Rector's Churchwarden :
Mr Gordon Stewart

People's Churchwarden :
Mr Uel Megarity

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9-1pm

Outside of these times, a message can be left on the answerphone (37 523197) or alternatively send an email to : sec.stmarks@gmail.com

Pinnacles notes for February are due in the Church Office no later than Monday 23rd January. Thank you.

CHURCH RECORDS

HOLY BAPTISM

20th November : Sophie Robyn Crowe
Ellie Louise Maginnis

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIFE OF :

30th October : Mrs Josephine (Josie) McCone

1st November : Mr Alexander (Alex) Stinson

'I am the resurrection and the life,' says the Lord. 'Those who believe in me, even though they die, yet shall they live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.'

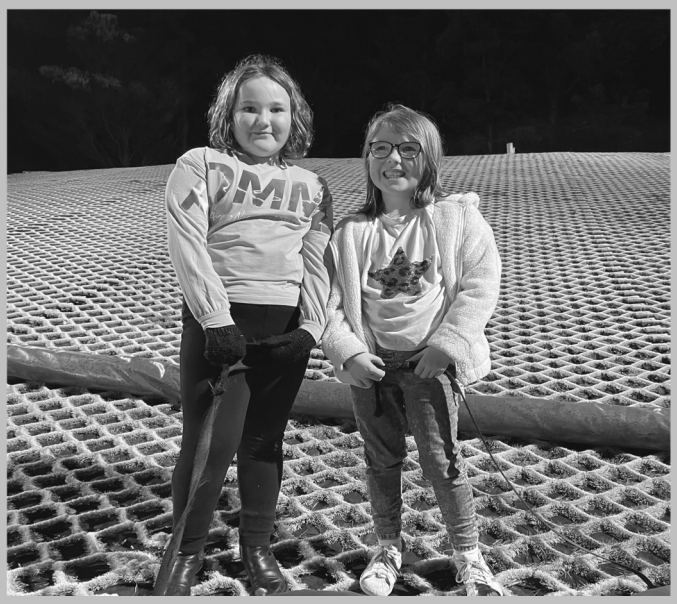
CHI-ME & PILATES

We've be running a light exercise class for 6 weeks and due to keen interest we are hoping to continue the class. We meet on Thursday evenings in The Crozier hall with a certified instructor in Chi-me and Pilates. At 7pm we begin a 30 minute Chi-me class (light exercises for the joints), then at 7:30pm we begin a 30 minute class in Pilates. You'd be more than welcome to come for one of the classes or stay for both. Each evening the suggested donation is £5. If you have any questions please feel free to speak to Sarah.

JANUARY EVENING SERVICES

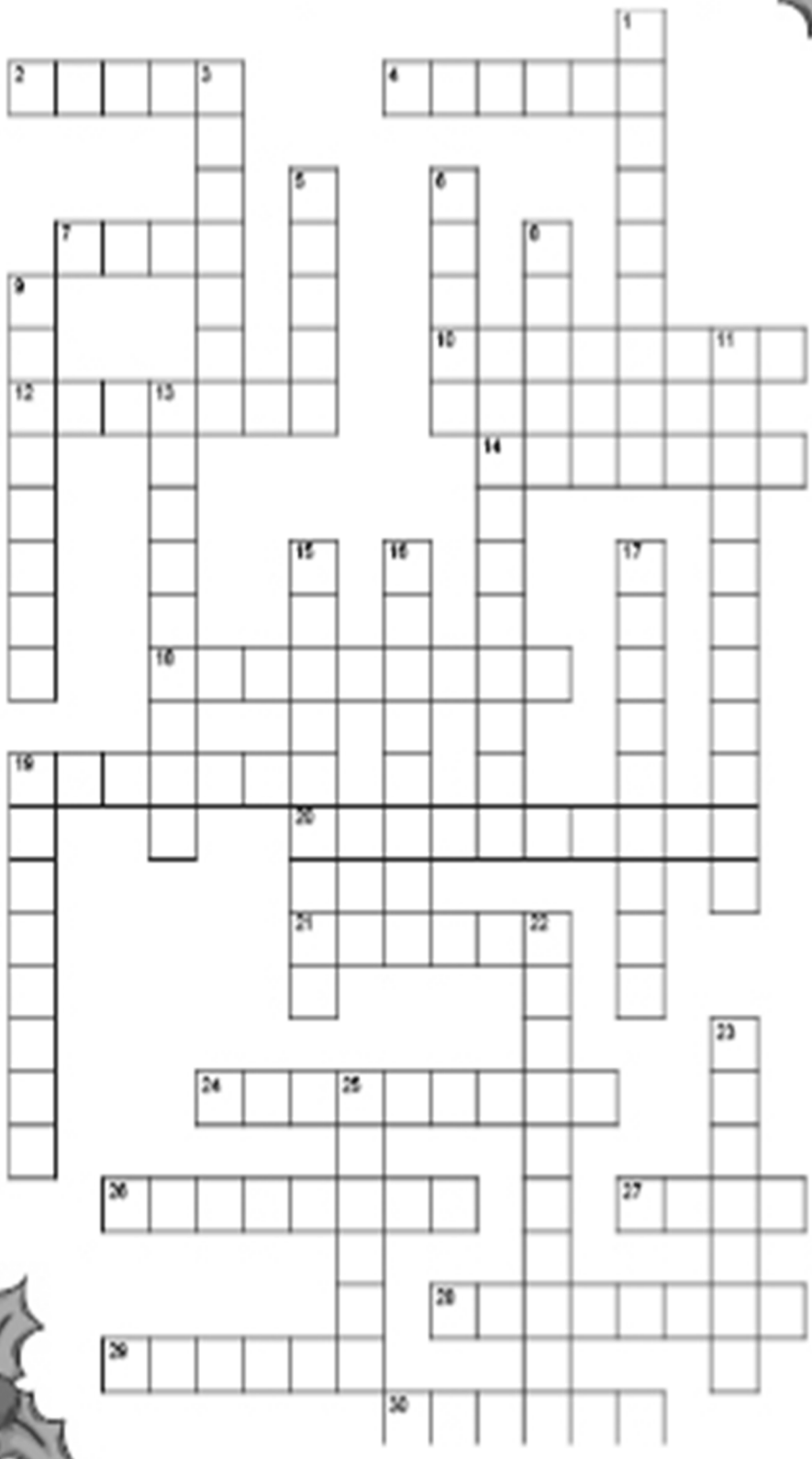
For Sunday evenings in January, please note the following :-
1st January - No Evening Service
8th January - Celebrate Service beginning at 6.30pm
15th January - Holy Communion at 7pm
22nd January - Evening Prayer at 7pm
29th January - United Service in 1st Armagh Presbyterian Church at 7pm
As always, everyone will be most welcome to join us!

GLOW SNOWTUBING TRIP



Christmas Joy

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the crossword grid with the provided words.



4 LETTER WORDS
BELL
SNOW

5 LETTER WORDS
ANGEL
COCOA
ELVES
HOLLY

6 LETTER WORDS
LIGHTS
SLEIGH
TINSEL
WINTER
WREATH

7 LETTER WORDS
CHIMNEY
GARLAND
PAGEANT
RUDOLPH
SNOWMAN

8 LETTER WORDS
CAROLING
DECEMBER
EXCHANGE
ORNAMENT
PRESENTS
REINDEER
WRAPPING

9 LETTER WORDS
CHESTNUTS
CHRISTMAS
EVERGREEN
FRUITCAKE
MISTLETOE
NORTHPOLE

10 LETTER WORDS
POINSETTIA
SANTA CLAUS

11 LETTER WORD
GINGERBREAD

Christmas

AT ST MARK'S ARMAGH

Sunday 18th December

Nativity Service (10:30am)

9 Lessons & Carols (7pm)

Christmas Eve

Holy Communion (11pm)

Christmas Day

Holy Communion (8:30am)

Family Service (10:30am)