

December 2021

Dear friend

Preparations have been made and are being made as we look forward to Christmas. Although, some of the preparations may not be the same as in previous years, what is at the heart of Christmas remains unchanged, as we prepare to celebrate one of the most amazing events in history.

Christmas Carols

Christmas trees have been up in some homes since the beginning of November. Christmas lights have been switched on in many of our cities and towns. Christmas carols are being played in shops and supermarkets, in cafes and restaurants, and in many other venues.

Many of us may have a favourite carol, a favourite because of the words, the tune or a personal memory. Sometimes a carol reminds us of a relative or a friend because it was the person's favourite carol. 'Mary's boy child' was the favourite carol of one of my uncles, so hearing it inevitably reminds me of him.

Although some carols may have personal associations and memories, their purpose is to remind us of God and focus our attention on Him. At Christmas we remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus, the coming of the Son of God into the world. He was called Jesus because He came to save people from their sin. He would suffer and die on the cross, and be raised to life again to make it possible for those who repent of their sin and turn to Him and trust in Him, to be saved, to know a restored relationship with God.

One of the carols that has increased in popularity over the years is 'O Holy Night.' The first verse of the carol reminds us of the significance of the Saviour's birth.

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

O Holy Night

The coming of the Son of God into the world helps us recognise and see our value and worth to God. As you read this and as you celebrate this Christmas, know and realise your value and worth to Him. God sent His Son into the world to suffer and die to make it possible for you to know a restored relationship with Him. His coming has brought a thrill of hope that can cause the weary world to rejoice because of a new and glorious morn.

A thrill of hope

Her Majesty the Queen, in her address to the General Synod of the Church of England, which was delivered by the Earl of Wessex, said, 'The last few years have been particularly hard ... for many, it has been a time of anxiety, of grief, and of weariness. Yet the Gospel has brought hope...'

The hope, the assurance of the gospel is that God loves us. The hope, the assurance of the gospel is that you, I and other people can know a restored relationship with God through repenting of our sin and putting our trust in Christ as our Saviour. The hope, the assurance of the gospel is that when we put our trust in Christ, God the Holy Spirit comes to live within us to help us become more like Jesus, to help us live out our faith with conviction and confidence in the challenges of daily life. The hope, the assurance of the gospel is that when we put our trust in Christ, nothing can separate us from God in this life or in eternity.

May the Saviour's birth truly be a thrill of hope for you this Christmas season and in the coming days.

Roderic

(Please see overleaf & the other enclosures for information about Christmas Services and Events, and about...)

Carol Services and Christmas Services - Please see enclosed leaflet.

Sunday Services - Please see enclosed leaflet for information about services on Boxing Day.

8.30am Holy Communion	Holy Trinity Church	10.00am Morning Service	St Patrick's Church
9.45am Morning Service	Holy Trinity Church	10.00am 'All-age' Service	St Patrick's Church Hall
11.30am Morning Worship	Holy Trinity Church		

It's great to see so many people back at Church worshipping God together. We are continuing to observe social distancing. Everyone is requested to wear a face covering (unless exempt), to hand-sanitise at the entrance and fill up designated pews/seats, starting at the front.

Wednesdays

10.30am Holy Communion Holy Trinity Church

People attending services are requested to bring a piece of paper with their name, contact number, and the names of anyone from their household who attend the service with them. Our pattern of services will be kept under review, and further changes made in due course.

Sunday Space/School

Children come to Church with their parents and leave partway through the 11.30am service for Sunday Space. The 'All-age' contemporary service in St Patrick's Church Hall will continue for the time being.

Online Sunday Services

Our online Sunday services will continue to be available from 10.30am on the parish website (bchurch.co.uk), Facebook, YouTube, and the 'dial-in' number 028 4040 0345.

The Well | Wednesday 1st December at 8.00pm | Holy Trinity Church

A mid-week opportunity at the beginning of December to spend time in God's presence worshipping together, to be refreshed by God's Spirit and renewed by God's Word. Come to The Well to be encouraged and inspired in our walk with Jesus - all are welcome!

Love Remembers - Afternoon Tea

Sunday 12th December at 2.30pm | Holy Trinity Church Hall

The Christmas season can be very difficult for those who have experienced the loss of a loved one, even if the bereavement was some time ago.

Individuals and families who are grieving the loss of a loved one are invited to Afternoon Tea in the Hall on Sunday 12th December at 2.30pm. We begin with a short time of Thanksgiving and Remembrance and conclude with Afternoon Tea. All are welcome. Come, invite others.

Pastoral Care and Support

Please contact me or the Parish Office (028 4062 2744/info@bchurch.co.uk) if you, or someone you know, need help or support, or phone me (028 4062 2612 or 07933096720) if you would like to talk or would like someone to pray with you.

Please keep in touch with family, friends and neighbours as we seek to provide help and support to one another, and be 'the Church at the heart of Banbridge and Seapatrick.'

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the ministry and mission of the Church during this year, and to everyone who prays for the life and work of the Church. Thank you to everyone who gives generously to support the ministry and mission of the Church, your giving enables us to make a difference in many people's lives.

(All our services and activities will be subject to Covid 19 regulations and guidelines.)