

January 2022

Dear friend

In this first letter of 2022, I want to begin by thanking you for all the ways you participate in the life, worship, work and witness of the parish. Thank you for praying. Thank you for giving. Thank you for your support and for being involved in the ministry and mission of the parish during the past year, a year that has been challenging for so many of us.

**Thank You**

As I've been thinking and praying about this letter and the year ahead, my thoughts turned to Nehemiah. He had an extremely important role, he was the king of Persia's cupbearer, responsible for the safety and quality of the king's food and drink, tasting it first to make sure it wasn't poisoned. Although Nehemiah had grown up and was living and working in Persia, his heart was in Israel, the homeland of his ancestors.

The nation of Israel had been defeated by the Babylonians many years earlier, they took many of the people of Israel to live as exiles in a foreign land. Then, about fifty years later, the Babylonians were defeated by the Persians, and they allowed some of the exiles to go back to their homeland.

When Nehemiah heard news that the walls of Jerusalem hadn't been repaired, he was deeply troubled, he wept, he mourned, he fasted and he prayed. The king noticed that Nehemiah was sad and downhearted, and he asked what was wrong. Nehemiah prayed as he explained that the city of his ancestors was in ruins. The king gave him permission to go to Jerusalem and he provided resources to help repair the walls.

**Repairing  
the Walls**

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he inspected the walls, and then told the officials and people what he was planning to do. The leaders and the people responded positively and enthusiastically, believing that God would help them complete the task. Amazingly, despite the size of the task and the challenges encountered, including opposition by some, many people were involved and the work of repairing the walls was completed in fifty-two days, demonstrating that God was at the centre of what was being done.

After the walls had been repaired, there was a time of spiritual renewal. When the people heard the Book of the Law, God's Word, being read and explained they recognised how far they had drifted from obeying God's Word. They repented of their sins and reaffirmed their commitment to God and to his ways.

**Spiritual  
Renewal**

We may not be involved in rebuilding physical walls, as we move into the next phase of the pandemic and signs of light at the end of the tunnel, but we will be involved in building and rebuilding as a Church family and community. It has been great to welcome more people back to in-person services, programmes and activities, and we look forward to welcoming many more people, including welcoming new people into our Church family and community. Please do invite and encourage others to join us.

Many of us may have been troubled and saddened by our own experiences and the experiences of other people. Please do follow Nehemiah's example and bring those things to God in prayer. Engage with God as we process past, present and even future emotions and experiences. May you know His comfort and consolation, His grace, His goodness and His guidance, and the Holy Spirit's renewing and restoring presence and power.

**Engaging  
with God**

When the people were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem they worked enthusiastically, willingly giving of their time, their energy, their expertise, their skills and their resources. I pray that we will have similar enthusiasm and dedication as we partner with God in the work of building His Church and establishing His kingdom, that we will give willingly of our time, energy, expertise, skills and resources.

And as we engage with God, His Word and His Spirit, may these next weeks and months be a time when we recognise the ways in which we fail to hear and respond to God, a time of repentance, a time of rebirth, a time of recovery, a time of restoration, a time of renewal, and a time of revival.

May the Lord bless you today and in the coming days.

*Roderc*

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

## Anna Williams

Unfortunately, Anna has broken a bone in her foot and currently her foot is in plaster. Please pray for her and for her recovery and healing.

## Lent Alpha Course

**Begins Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 7.30pm | Holy Trinity Church Hall**

We look forward to gathering in person as we discover more about what it means to follow Jesus.



Each session begins with tea and coffee etc., followed by an engaging film clip, and the opportunity for questions and discussion. We aim to create a warm, relaxed atmosphere and look forward to welcoming you. Come and join us, invite others!

## Confirmation in 2022

We are planning to begin our Confirmation Course in February. Further information will be announced at our services. Those who are considering Confirmation this year should be 14 years or over on 30-06-2022. They should be attending Church, Sunday Space/School, and Inspire.

It is anticipated that young people preparing for Confirmation attend the Diocesan Confirmation Weekend in Castlewellan 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> March. Please contact Ava for further information.

Adults who are considering being confirmed are asked to contact the Rector or the Parish Office.

## Sunday Services

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 welcome more people back to our in-person services as we worship 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 use the designated pews.

## Wednesdays

10.30am Holy Communion Holy Trinity Church

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 continue to be available from 10.30am on the parish website ([bchurch.co.uk](http://bchurch.co.uk)), Facebook, YouTube, and the 'dial-in' number 028 4040 0345.

## 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.'

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