

April 2022

Dear friend,

The weather has been amazing during the past few weeks, it wasn't what many of us were expecting. We weren't expecting the Covid 19 pandemic and the pain and the pressures that many of us experienced during the past two years. Many people weren't expecting Russia to invade Ukraine and the terrible consequences of that conflict. When people attended the Oscars or were watching on television, they weren't expecting Will Smith to hit Chris Rock.

## Unexpected Things Happen

Unexpected things happen in our lives. Sometimes they are challenging, difficult or frustrating; at other times they can be delightful, encouraging or wonderful. A conversation, a phone call, a message or an email can bring bewilderment and uncertainty, or they can bring joy and hope.

In Psalm 23, David refers to his relationship with God and then expresses his reliance and dependence on God when life was good and when life was tough.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want  
He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters,  
He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the darkest valley, (through the valley of the shadow of death)  
I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

In the good times and the difficult times, may our relationship with God be so real and meaningful that we rely on Him and depend on Him at all times and in every season of life.

## Rely on God

Jesus is the one who has made it possible for us to know a real and meaningful relationship with God. Being a follower of Jesus doesn't exempt us from difficulty or danger, from sickness or suffering, from unexpected things happening in our lives.

There are many instances and examples in the Bible of unexpected things happening, unexpected things in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Unexpected things in the life of the first followers of Jesus, unexpected things as they witnessed and participated in Jesus' earthly ministry, unexpected things when Jesus spoke about going to Jerusalem where He would be put to death and be raised to life on the third day.

Jesus received an amazing welcome when He rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. No doubt many were shocked when, for them, the unexpected happened with Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, and surprised three days later when Jesus was raised to life.

These things weren't a surprise to Jesus. They were the main reason why the Son of God came into the world. Prior to Jesus' birth, Joseph was told to call Him Jesus, because He will save people from their sins. In many ways, the surprising and unexpected thing is that God loves us so much that He sent His Son into the world to pay the penalty for our sin. Jesus' crucifixion, death and resurrection have made it possible for us and others to know a restored relationship, when we repent of our sin and put our trust in Him as our Saviour.

## God Loves You

God loves you, is the central and core message of Good Friday and Easter. As we respond to His love, through repenting of our sin and trusting in Jesus as our Saviour, may we know the presence and power of God the Holy Spirit living with us and within us. In every aspect and season of life, including the unexpected things of life, may we be aware of God's love and faithfulness, as we live to honour Him and serve Him.

May the joy and hope of the Easter story be a blessing to you and those who are near and dear to you.

*Roderic*

(Please see overleaf and the other enclosure for further information and the April Bible Readings.)

## **Worship Night | Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April at 7.30pm | Holy Trinity Church**

During Lent we have been using the Psalms in our prayers, and we have been focussing on Prayers in Psalms at our Wednesday evening services. As well as being a pattern and providing inspiration for our prayers, a number of Psalms encourage us to praise the Lord, to exalt Him and to praise His name.

Psalms 150 encourages us to praise the Lord with a variety of musical instruments, as well as with our voices. We would love you to come and join with us as we worship God together, as we lift our hearts to God in praise and prayer.

## **Presentation to Andrew Irwin**

Last month we offered our congratulations and best wishes to Andrew following his appointment as curate of the Parish of St Paul and St Barnabas, York Street, Belfast. It is anticipated that his service of induction will be in May. Please continue to pray for Andrew and for the parishioners of St Paul and St Barnabas.

An envelope is enclosed, for those who wish to contribute to a presentation to Andrew. Please return to Parish Office, or place on collection plate, on or before Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April. We wish Andrew every blessing as he prepares for this next stage of ministry.

## **Anna Williams**

Anna continues to recover and hopes to be back this month. Please pray for her and her healing and recovery.

## **Wednesday Evening Lent Services | Holy Trinity Church | Prayers from the Psalms**

Our Lent series continues on Wednesdays at 7.30pm as we look at some of the prayers expressed in the Psalms.

## **Forty Days of Prayer**

At the beginning of Lent, I invited parishioners to join with me in using part of the Psalm or part of one of the readings for the day as a basis for our prayers. I hope that the Psalms and readings have helped to prompt our thinking and our prayers and been a means of developing our intimacy with God. The readings for April are enclosed with this mailing.

## **Confirmation in 2022**

Please continue to pray for the young people from our parish who are preparing for Confirmation. This year's Confirmation Service is on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May at 6.30pm in Holy Trinity Church. Adults who are considering being confirmed are asked to contact the Rector or the Parish Office.

## **Easter Vestry | Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm | Holy Trinity Church Hall**

All parishioners are invited to this meeting, which provides an opportunity for parishioners to hear reports about Parish life, including parish finances and to elect members to the Select Vestry for the coming year. Please pray for wisdom and guidance for all involved.

## **CAP Money Course | Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April at 7.00pm | Holy Trinity Church Hall**

CAP Money is a simple, yet highly effective money management course, helping us to budget using a cash-based system that really works. Running over three evenings, this course can help all of us to have more control of our finances, so we can save, spend and prevent debt. The service is open to everyone and is completely free. Please contact the Parish Office for more details.

## **Parish Fete**

Our annual Parish Fete is normally held on the third Saturday in June, but unfortunately, that hasn't been possible for the past two years. This year, Armed Forces Day NI is being held in Banbridge on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June, which will include a service at the War Memorial followed by a wide range of activities for people of all ages at the Rugby Club. Consequently, the vestry has decided to postpone the Fete until next year.

## **Bishops' Appeal**

Thank you to all who have contributed to Bishops' Appeal as we seek to provide help and support to refugees fleeing from the conflict in Ukraine, which is threatening the lives and livelihoods of civilians across the country. £3,000 (approx.) has been given to-date. This money has been transferred to the Bishops' Appeal Fund and will be channelled through Habitat for Humanity & Christian Aid.

(Please see leaflet for information about Services, including Holy Week and Easter Sunday)