

May 2022

Dear friend,

As we approach the assembly elections, posters have been placed in prominent positions in urban and rural settings. Parties and politicians are keen to tell us about their policies and promises as they encourage us to vote for them.

Assembly Election

Although those elected may not be able to fulfil all their policies and keep all their promises, it is extremely important that we exercise our democratic right and cast our votes on Thursday 5th May. Pray for wisdom for yourself and others as we vote and pray for those who will be elected.

Sometimes we can be critical of politicians for failing to fulfil their policies and promises, but what of the promises we've made and failed to keep? The promise to go somewhere or do something which we haven't kept because we forgot or something else became more important. The promise we made to keep a secret, but broke when we shared the secret with others.

Broken promises often cause disappointment, hurt and pain. I pray that you will know God's renewing grace and power where the consequences of broken promises continue to impact on your life.

Some of the promises we make are private and personal, and some are public. Some of us have made promises as parents/godparents at a baptism or made promises at our confirmation.

Broken Promises

We've all made promises, including promises to God, but are they promises we've kept and are endeavouring to keep, or are they promises that have been or are being forgotten or ignored?

Since I've referred to the promises of baptism and confirmation, what of the commitment, the promise members of the congregation make at every baptism and confirmation service.

'You have heard these our brothers and sisters respond to Christ. Will you support them in this calling?' The congregation answers: **'We will support them.'**

How do we, how do you support and encourage them? Do we/you pray for them? How are we/you endeavouring to make Church a warm and welcoming place for children and young people, for all people?

If we are followers of Jesus, what are we doing to help people come to faith in Christ and grow and mature as followers of Jesus? What are we doing to nurture our own faith and our relationship with God and what are we doing to nurture the faith of others and encourage one another to live out our faith in daily life?

Growing and Maturing

How are we praying for the life, work and witness of the Church? Are there ways in which you could be involved, in which God is calling you to be involved as a leader/helper to support and develop our youth and children's programmes and initiatives, or some of our other programmes/initiatives?

What of our giving? For some people, talking or writing about money can be a touchy subject, but is our money under our control or God's control? Let's give back to God what's right, not what's left.

The Bible tells us and reminds us repeatedly that our God keeps His promises and fulfils His word. He calls us into a relationship with Him, through faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour. Being a follower of Jesus doesn't mean that we are exempt from adversities and challenges. Being a follower of Jesus can be costly and challenging as we seek to be faithful to Him and live in obedience to the Word of God. However, when we are followers of Jesus, God the Holy Spirit is with us and within us to guide us, to sustain us, to encourage us, to empower, to equip us and so much more.

Let's trust God with our lives and with our futures, fulfilling His calling upon our lives, knowing that He goes into the future to prepare the way, and in kindness He follows behind us to spare us from the harm of the past. (*Psalm 139:5*)

Roderic

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

Andrew Irwin

The date for Andrew's service of introduction as curate of the Parish of St Paul and St Barnabas, York Street, Belfast is in the process of being finalised. Information about this service and about Andrew's farewell service and presentation will be announced in due course.

Sunday Services

Holy Trinity Church 8.30am Holy Communion | 9.45am Morning Service | 11.30am Morning Worship
St Patrick's Church 10.00am Morning Service

We are continuing to observe social distancing at our services. Everyone is requested to wear a face covering (unless exempt), when entering and leaving Church, and when singing. Face coverings may be removed at other times during the service, but please be mindful of those around you as we continue to love our neighbours, knowing that some people are vulnerable and cautious.

Sunday Space/School

Children come to Church with their parents and leave partway through the service.
(10.00am St Patrick's / 11.30am Holy Trinity.)

Online Sunday Services

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

Wednesdays

10.30am Holy Communion Holy Trinity Church

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 22nd May at 6.30pm in Holy Trinity Church.

Worship Night

As we seek to love God with our whole hearts, it is good to gather together to sing God's praise, listen to His Word, and dwell in His presence. Our Worship Night in April was a great evening of encounter with God and fellowship with one another, and we're looking forward to the next one in June. Please keep an eye out for more details on our website and our Facebook page.

Informal Afternoon Tea for those who have been bereaved during the past few years Friday 20th May at 3.00pm | Holy Trinity Church Hall

It would be helpful, for catering purposes, if those who are planning to attend contact the Parish Office by Wednesday 18th May.

Bishops' Appeal - Ukraine

With more than 11 million thought to have fled their homes in Ukraine, our support continues to be much needed. As a church family, we're committed to continuing to pray for those caught up in violence or fleeing their homes, and to supporting humanitarian responses through the Bishops' Appeal.

The Bishops' Appeal is channelling funds through Christian Aid and Habitat for Humanity, who are working on the ground to provide relief, to find shelter for refugees, and to work for long-term solutions to an evolving crisis. There are opportunities to give to the Ukraine Appeal in church on Sunday, or through the office.

Need Help or Require 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.'