



Parish Matters

Newsletter of Douglas Union with Frankfield

January 2022

The Rector writes.....

Last year English Heritage called on people to leave up Christmas decorations and keep the halls decked with boughs of holly until February to bring cheer in the dark winter months.

The charity appealed to the public to follow the traditions of their medieval ancestors and leave festive decorations up until Candlemas on February 2. Closer to home, I came across a request from a local politician recently suggesting that the Christmas lights be left on until early February for the same reason.



Candlemas, which has the full name the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was the official end of Christmas in medieval England. It consisted of great feasts and the blessing of candles that were to be used in churches in the coming year.

Experts at English Heritage say evidence that Christmas decorations were kept up until the evening before Candlemas is well documented. Today, in recognition of this long tradition, some churches continue

displaying Christmas cribs until February 2. It is certainly the practice in St Fin Barre's Cathedral. I wonder if we should consider doing the same?

One early 17th-century poem by Rev. Robert Herrick, 'Ceremony Upon Candlemas Eve', describes green foliage including holly and ivy as well as mistletoe being removed. He writes...

Down with the rosemary, and so
Down with the bays and misletoe;
Down with the holly, ivy, all
Wherewith ye dress'd the Christmas hall;
That so the superstitious find
No one least branch there left behind;

The tradition that it is bad luck to keep decorations up after Twelfth Night and the Epiphany is a modern invention, although it may derive from the medieval notion that decorations left up would become possessed by goblins.

I'm of the opinion that, after the year we've all had, we certainly deserve to keep the Christmas cheer going a little longer. While our Christmas tree at home has been disposed of, and the cards and decorations taken down, we are going to leave the outdoor lights up and lighting until Candlemas. Look out for them if you are passing after dark. Maybe you will consider doing the same next year?

In January we always mark **The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**. Due to the pandemic, we have not held our traditional pulpit swaps for two years and opportunities for ecumenical gatherings at a local level have ceased for the time being. We look forward to resuming these activities when it is possible. On Sunday 23rd January, we will be including in our intercessions the people and clergy of the local Roman Catholic parishes and Methodist congregations.

Yours in Christ, *Adrian.*



The **Bible Study Group** met on Zoom in Advent and enjoyed looking at the birth and infancy accounts in the Gospels. Different people led the reflection and study each week. Perhaps in Lent, if we can't meet in person safely, we may try and resume a short weekly study on Zoom, following a similar format. Look out for more information in due course.



Confirmation Reminder: On Tuesday 11th January at 7.30pm the parents of the second group of confirmation candidates will meet together in St Luke's Church with the clergy for an introductory evening. The purpose of this meeting is to outline the programme of classes this year and to discuss the meaning of confirmation and the importance of church attendance. If you have not already given your name to me and are considering confirmation, please get in contact now.

On Wednesday 12th January, the candidates of the existing class which met on Zoom in November and December, will have a class in St Luke's Church at 7.30pm. At least one of the parents of each candidate is to attend this class. It is to look at the topic of Holy Communion and to give some feedback to the candidates on the portfolio of reflections they have submitted to date on the material covered in the Zoom sessions. I will also provide an update on any information I have regarding the confirmation this year. *Adrian*

Outdoor Carol Service (*Report on the Diocesan News Blog*)

Not to be deterred by the very necessary health restrictions which forbade congregational singing in church buildings, the parishioners of Douglas Union with Frankfield moved outside for their Carol Service this year. Working in conjunction with the staff of St Luke's National School, the service was held in the playground between the school and the parish hall on Sunday 19th December at 4pm. About 250 people, some bringing deck chairs and rugs for their knees, gathered to sing familiar carols while wearing masks in a safe and socially distanced setting. On arrival they were greeted by Christmas carols played by the St Nicholas Brass Band, who based themselves in the school general purpose hall where the doors were wide open into the playground. The parish choir, under their director Veronica Tadman, led the congregational singing. The choir also performed the Swedish carol 'Jul, Jul stralande jul,' which was sung in memory of a much loved former choir member Barbro McCutcheon, who was originally from Sweden and died earlier this year.



The 6th class pupils from St Luke's School, under their teacher Elaine Guinane, were also involved and they performed the 'Carol of the Bells' on handbells and sang 'Ring Bells of Bethlehem'.

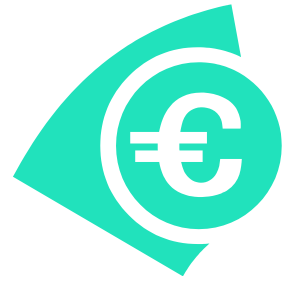
St Nicholas Brass Band played one carol, Silent Night and at the end of the service entertained those who stayed for some seasonal Christmas music as dusk descended. A retiring collection of over

€1000 was taken for a number of charities.

The Rector commented afterwards that *'it was wonderful to see so many parishioners and others gathered together for a service in one place. We are used to packed churches and large indoor services at Christmas in this parish, but Covid has put a temporary halt to all that. This outdoor service allowed people from our four different churches, as well as our ecumenical friends, to meet up and sing and pray together. It was also good to see three generations of some families sit together. While we hope to be indoors for parish and school carol services next year, the service this year is one to remember'*.



CHARITY COLLECTIONS Thank you to those who supported the retiring collection taken at our Outdoor Carol Service last month. The money raised for Christian Aid, St Vincent de Paul and the parish was €1027.08. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the kindness of those parishioners who donated to the Rector's **discretionary fund** last month. As a result of their generosity I



was able to pass on money to a number of families before Christmas. If you are a parishioner reading this and you find your financial situation difficult at present, please do get in contact with me. You are assured of my absolute discretion. I may be able to help with a small sum of money and by pointing you in the direction of the charity or organisation which might be able to provide a grant to you. Don't suffer in silence! Take any help you can receive now. Perhaps in a few years time your situation will have improved, and you might like to donate to the charity that helped you or indeed leave a bequest to it in your will. *Adrian*

Douglas Union Select Vestry will meet on Thursday 20th January at 8pm in St Luke's Church. The secretary will be sending out the agenda and documentation shortly to all members.



Monthly Prayer Meeting Why not join us for a monthly prayer meeting? These are held on the first Thursday of every month at 7:30pm, currently via Zoom but hopefully in person again soon. We use the Late Evening Office as our guide but don't worry, all the prayers and readings are displayed on screen or on a provided sheet. Each meeting lasts for just 30 minutes. We ask for personal prayers or intercessions but there is no pressure on anyone to share unless they wish to do so. What really matters is that each of us is helped to meet the Lord in our own way. If you've never attended before, why not give it a try? Email me (Kieran Hogan) at douglasprayergroup@icloud.com

Services for January 2022



Sunday 9th January	8.30	Holy Communion	Blackrock
1 st Sun. after the Epiphany	9.45	Holy Communion	Passage
White	10.00	Holy Communion	Frankfield
	11.15	Holy Communion	Douglas
Wednesday 12th January	11.00	Holy Communion	Douglas
Sunday 16th January	8.30	Holy Communion	Blackrock
2 nd Sun. after the Epiphany	9.45	Morning Prayer	Passage
White	10.00	Morning Prayer	Frankfield
	11.15	Morning Prayer	Douglas
	11.30	Holy Communion	Blackrock
Wednesday 19th January	11.00	Holy Communion	Douglas
Sunday 23rd January	8.30	Holy Communion	Blackrock
3 rd Sun. after the Epiphany	9.45	Holy Communion	Passage
White	10.00	Holy Communion	Frankfield
	11.15	Holy Communion	Douglas
Wednesday 26th January	11.00	Holy Communion	Douglas
Sunday 30th January	8.30	Holy Communion	Blackrock
4 th Sun. after the Epiphany	9.45	Morning Prayer	Passage
White	10.00	Morning Prayer	Frankfield
	11.15	Morning Prayer	Douglas
	11.30	Morning Prayer	Blackrock

Parish Contacts:

Ven. Adrian Wilkinson, Tel: 4891539. E-mail: adrianwilkinson3@gmail.com (Day off Monday)

Rev. Hazel Minion, Tel: 4361924. E-mail: hminion22@hotmail.com (Only contact if above unavailable)

Parish Office Tel: 4369578. E-mail douglasofficecork@gmail.com

Parish Website: www.douglas.cork.anglican.org

Follow us on Twitter: @DouglasUnion