

Annual Report 2023

2023 was a busy year as usual. The weekly and monthly clubs are all functioning well, but there is always room for new people of course. Thank you to all the leaders of these groups.

Sunday School, Mothers' Union, 2nd Chance Cinema Club, Thursday Craft Group, Bible Study Group, Men's Monthly Meeting, Junior Badminton Club, Guides and Rangers, and Monthly Vestry meetings.

We didn't host our annual Coffee Evening because the 'Big Event' of the year was a Flower Festival (FF) which took place in September. The FF Team and indeed many Volunteers worked tirelessly to arrange the floral stands, under the guidance of our amazing Floral Director (Mark Allen aka 'Ma Fleur'). People worked brilliantly together in hospitality, and to feed visitors well. We had our two local primary schools Culrow and Gorran join us for the welcoming morning and lunchtime celebrations. The Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Mr. Steven Callaghan officially opened the Flower Festival. Bishop Andrew Forster spoke at the opening service, and Rev. William Seale from Kells, Co. Meath was our visitor at the evening closing service.

Our Theme is **Journeying with God's People - From Eden to Paradise**, using Biblical characters to share the story of the Bible. In the Hall we wanted to share another theme based on the people and their faith. This exhibition was entitled Committed to Christ, Committed to Northern Ireland, Committed to the world: C S Lewis, Cecil Francis Alexander, Amy Carmichael, Professor Frank Pantridge, and Sir Arthur Hezlet. Isn't it amazing how people from Northern Ireland have had such a great impact on the world in the spheres of Literature, Science, Medicine, and Military expertise in the past and continue to do so.

In October the Seven Towers Male Voice Choir came to share their musical talents with us and we had a wonderful night of listening and of course joining in singing too. Thank you to Derek Murdoch and his team.

We have such creative people in the parish and we thank God for their many gifts of technology and teaching, especially we thank the leaders for their work with children. We have a **Safeguarding Panel** at church and if you have any concerns about our work with children or vulnerable adults please contact one of the Team. (Names are available on church notices).

Paula McIntyre Cookery Demonstration Evening. We had an amazing time, with old and new friends. The musical entertainment for the evening was provided for by Alastair Coyles, Tim Cairns, Tom Honeyford, Lucy and Dr. John Kerr. Thank you to all the sponsors, too many to name, but we especially thank Paula for her help. She was so very kind to us and we really appreciated her talents - and her humour.

The Tower

Repairs to the Church Tower has been the concern for a number of years now, we have been making applications for grants for the repair work and we hope with the

help of the Conservation Architect we have employed that this work will, we hope, commence early 2025. A detailed survey has been carried out on the tower and we have been informed the cost of repairs will be approximately £160,000. The Flower Festival realised £13,000 and the Seven Towers Choir Praise Service - generated £1,134. We are researching grants but most grants require equal matching. We continue to raise money for the Tower Repairs. David Knox of Springmount Consulting has been helping us all the way, and we greatly appreciate his help.

Church Attendance

Numbers have been slowly increasing again, and we have still a way to go to be preCovid attendance. Family Services are growing in number again and the children are coming back to Sunday School.

Finance

The church's income comes from free will offerings, donations, gift aid, interest and rent from the glebe land. From this income we pay sustentation (money we must pay to the Diocese) plus the usual costs for utilities, insurance, organists etc. This year, in an effort to create efficiencies we changed our insurance providers and who we bank with. Both of these will save money/reduce fees with no loss of service to the church.

Thank you very much to the Trustees, this team of people work tirelessly for you and they are too humble to seek any recognition, but if you are speaking with them appreciation is always good to hear. They are a fun group of people to work with and were **always** willing to offer to help the parish and all the people.

If you have any questions about the Report please bring them to the attention of a Trustee who will endeavour to answer your query.

God bless you.

Rev. Louise Crawford-McCafferty (Rector)