

Magherally Annual General Vestry - 17 April 2023

An address by the Rector Rev Karen Salmon:

At last year's Easter Vestry I shared three specific areas of rebuilding that I believe God wants us to give attention to as a church family. The first is our faith, the second our relationships and the third our finances. Together we have worked hard on these:

1. Our Sunday and Thursday worship services, with increasing numbers of people attending, Stories of Hope weekend, Alpha Courses, Dare to Hope Group, Services of healing and Into the Light, the Bible Course, Youth Fellowship, Summer Madness, Saturday Night Live and confirmation group, Sunday School, Connect Group, Forever Mine stage play, our Holy Week prayer stations, Tenebrae and various Bible reading resources, have helped build faith in our church family this past year. Glenn, Lynn, the choir, Rita our lay reader, Ronnie our licenced preacher and Stu our deacon intern have played significant roles in this, but there is more to do. A SOMA mission team will join us in June, Connect groups and two Alphas are planned for January. Helping people live well with Jesus at the centre of their lives is at the heart of building faith, so it has been a real joy to see you grow and develop as followers of the Lord Jesus.
2. The Jubilee BBQ, Strawberry and Daffodil Teas, Menopause Café, Salsa evening, Quiz, soup lunch, after church tea/coffee times have helped nurture friendships within our church family and across our two churches. Plans are in place for an after church bring and share lunch to celebrate the King's coronation in May and a church family picnic in June to celebrate our Sunday School children. Our events are aimed at encouraging, supporting and providing a place of safety where strong relationships and friendships, within and across age groups, can be fostered and built. I am committed to building a relationship with each of you through home visits. I have been to each of your homes, although not all of you were home when I called. Please do say if you would like me to call or you are welcome to meet me at the rectory. Stu and I have come alongside people facing significant life challenges, supported the bereaved with a 'living with loss' course, walked with those facing physical and mental health challenges, as well as those facing death.
3. Our finances are improving, thank you for your generosity. The church hall requires some essential maintenance and our beautiful church building is seriously impacted by damp, which we need to tackle. Our harvest gifts, Easter draw, cars and coffee evenings, and the church fete raise substantial funds for the church and for charity. We have generously supported Water Drops, Friends of Cancer, Newry Hospice, Kidney Research, CMS Egypt, Air Ambulance, Cancer Focus, Be Positive children's charity and the Bishop's Appeal for Ukraine, Turkey and Syria. Despite giving away more money than any other year, our finances remain healthy. Building our church family by adding more people is another way to build a healthy financial base, so please do think about who you could invite to come along to church with you. Magherally is becoming known as a warm, welcoming church family; a happy place for new people to easily fit into. Our church wardens Colin and Dorothea played an important role in this.

Members of the select vestry have worked hard this year. Mike on communication. Justin and his team on furnishings, fabric, health and safety. Philip, Heather, Briony and Carol on finances. John and his team have put in hours of hard work making the grounds beautiful, Mickey and his team have made significant improvements at the graveyard. The safeguarding panel and others on vestry put in many hours behind the scenes. My sincere thanks to each of you.

My final encouragement is the same as I shared last year; Colossians 2:6-7 *"so then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness."*