

**AGM Easter Vestry Meeting**  
**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017**  
**Churchwardens' Report**

Revd. Adrian, John, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to give my report on the services and events held over the past year.

The average attendance at church services was as follows:

- 9.00 am Holy Communion (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in month): 5
- 10.00 am Big Breakfast (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in month): 37
- 11:30 am Morning Prayer: 74

During the year, we had:

- 4 Baptisms;
- 0 Weddings; and
- 5 Funerals

It was a year of change for everyone as we held our Sunday services in the church hall as we waited for the insurers to agree what damage had been caused by the fire, and what needed to be replaced. Discussions regarding this seemed to go on forever, and indeed this proved to be a very stressful time for our Rector Adrian, Ian McConaghie (Project Manager), the builders, and members of the Select Vestry.

During this time, neighbouring churches offered us the use of their premises for baptisms or funerals, and indeed we prevailed of the use of Dunmurry Presbyterian Church for a few of these services.

Unfortunately, the Rector's health deteriorated and he was ordered to take sick leave by the Bishop from 1<sup>st</sup> May, returning to his duties on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2016. During his absence, the church was left in the capable hands of John and the Revd. Alastair Mallon.

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July saw a Commemoration of The Somme. The rector and his family were on a well-deserved holiday from Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July, returning on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August. Again, Revd. Alastair Mallon and John looked after the parish over this period.

John took his well-deserved holiday from Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September, returning for services on 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

By early October, the church was completely gutted, and a ready for work to commence.

On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October, we were invited to join the Harvest Thanksgiving Service with Dunmurry Presbyterian Church with tea afterwards, for which our Vestry members provided traybakes. The following Sunday, we held our own Harvest

Thanksgiving Service, at which there was a fantastic turnout with 121 people present, followed by a Harvest lunch.

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, we were given an insight into the building and restoration work carried out in the church to date.

The Act of Remembrance was carried out at our Remembrance Sunday service on 13<sup>th</sup> November with a good attendance of 87 people. That afternoon at 3.00 pm the Orange Lodge, Dunmurry True Blues, held a service in the hall.

Early December was a busy time for us as the Dunmurry Christmas Tree Lights were switched on by Santa himself on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 7.00pm, followed by hot drinks and mince pies on what was a cold, wet night.

Next day saw our annual Christmas Craft Fair in the hall from 2.00-5.00pm. again the hall was beautifully decorated, Santa was in his grotto, the kettles were boiling, people filled the hall and everyone enjoyed the day.

The second Sunday in Advent, 4<sup>th</sup> December, saw a visit to our morning service from Bishop Alan Abernethy, who offered his continued support and prayers to the parishioners during what has been a very testing time following the fire. He spoke very positively about the way we, as a church, were coping and of our plans for the future of this parish, and it was good to know that we hadn't been 'forgotten about'. There was a wonderful turnout with 113 in total present that day.

On 11<sup>th</sup> December at Morning Prayer, the Rector had to 'wear two hats' as he was also the organist for the day.

The following week being the fourth Sunday in Advent saw the Nativity Play performed by the children of the Sunday School, under the guidance of Christine and some of the parents who kindly volunteered, or were coerced! A great turnout of 118 came to watch and to also hear about the meaning of the Christingle, and homemade kits were handed out for people to take home, make, and light at their Christmas tables.

The annual service of Nine Lessons and Carols was held that evening at 6.30pm with 69 present. Again, this was a lovely service for all and a great deal of work and effort from Allen and the choir was apparent.

The Rector held a communion service for residents in Ashley Lodge on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December at 11.00am and 15 people attended. The residents, some of whom cannot get out to church services, were very grateful for this opportunity and enjoyed a chat over a cup of tea after the service.

On Christmas Eve, we held a Family Holy Communion service at 6.30pm rather than the usual Holy Communion service at 11.30pm, as some parishioners didn't want to walk through the village late at night. A total of 65 people attended, which is a much higher turnout than at the later time over the past few years.

An early Communion service at 9.00am on Christmas Day was held, with 25 people present. Again, this was a change of time as we have previously held a Christmas morning service at 10.30am – perhaps 9.00am was too early for some people as numbers were down.

We were invited to join a Churches Together Service in St Anne's Parish on 22<sup>nd</sup> January at 6.30pm for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Following the service we were treated to light refreshments and a chance to catch up with each other.

A service of Prayers for Healing was held after the 11.30am morning service on 29<sup>th</sup> January at 12.45pm, at which those present were given the opportunity to have a prayer said for either themselves or a family member, and to be anointed with oil. 19 people stayed for this short service.

Palm Sunday saw an increase in numbers at the 11.30am service, with a total of 81 in church.

On Good Friday morning, the Rector, assisted by John, held a Holy Communion service for the residents of Ashley Lodge, with a total of 15 people present.

A Tenebrae service was held in the hall at 7.30pm and some members of Dunmurry Presbyterian Church joined us. Although there were only 43 attendees, I'm pleased to say that they didn't outnumber us this year! It was a lovely service of meditation, readings, and music – mostly from the choir, but the congregation did join in with a couple of hymns.

Easter Sunday, just last week, began with a Dawn Service at 7.00 am in Jubilee Park led by the Rev. Linda Ballard, some 70 plus attended and they enjoyed a hearty cooked breakfast provided by St Anne's Parish afterwards. Our 11.30am service saw a great turnout of 112 people. We even had to beg for orders of service from some as we hadn't enough to go around, which is always a good sign. We had to scrape the barrel with seats too, poor Bob was sitting on a very low camping chair with his knees up at his chin!

Of course, not only were we celebrating Easter, we were also promised an Easter egg hunt after the service, thanks to many of our congregation who provided them, we were inundated with eggs and bunnies, it was tremendous, and a sneak peek inside the church to see the building, restoration, and changes to date. I think I can honestly say that everyone was bowled over at the workmanship and skill that has been committed by the team of men and women working alongside Ian. It is still St. Colman's, but boy has it been enhanced, and hopefully by seeing it, some fears have been allayed. It will once again be a beautiful building, inside and out, that we are proud to worship in and call our church.

Without a shadow of a doubt, we are indebted to Adrian for his vision of how our church building could be improved and made into a useful space for others to use, just as we hope to do with our halls when all work is completed. He has continually worked behind the scenes, liaised with builders, plumbers, electricians, architects, heritage people, *etc.* Luckily for him and us, he has had the full backing of the Project Manager, Ian McConaghie, and the help and support of John attending weekly site

meetings with the team. We appreciate all of this and hope you don't feel that you're taken for granted.

And so we are edging closer to the 'Big Day' – September 10<sup>th</sup>, which will be here in no time. Now that we've had a glimpse of St. Colman's it is up to each one of us to continue to support our Rector and his family (Christine must have the patience of a saint!), the Select Vestry, the choir and the organist, the leaders of our organisations, and not forgetting each other.

Please think about what you can offer to St. Colman's, could it be your time, which is precious to us all, when we get our dementia café up and running, helping at CLCGB on Tuesdays, singing in the choir, joining the Vestry, helping out at fundraisers, helping the workforce team? The list is endless, and new suggestions are always welcomed. It's not just about turning up on Sundays and putting an envelope on the plate, it's about coming together and forming a close family and being an integral part of the wider community, as somewhere where everyone feels welcomed and included. I would love it if some of our younger members were able to be more involved – their suggestions and actions are key as they are the future of our church. We're soon going to have a beautiful new church and improved facilities in our halls. If everyone were to donate a little time and effort, together we could help our church realise its full potential, both for our church family, and for those in the wider community of Dunmurry and beyond.

We have all heard Adrian speak of the wider community and how we could involve them into the family of St Colman's, we need to reach out into society and not be insular in what we do. He and the select vestry have plans for the future of this church but they will only become a reality when we all get behind him, support him, keep encouraging him and thanking him for what he has already done for us, and what he wants to continue to do for us. We are extremely lucky to have such a visionary leading us. So as in any relationship it's a two- way thing, we all need to give and take and I think that is something we could all take on board so that this relationship can stand the test of time. Think about it the next time we ask for help for a fundraising event or to come along to such a thing, if somebody has taken the time and effort to organise it wouldn't you be doing your part by coming along to support it and not leave it for someone else to do it, do you want to be a giver or a taker.

And so I would like to finish by thanking Adrian and Christine for their support and hospitality over the past year. Thanks also to the members of the select vestry for their continued support and help when Bob or myself have been absent. Thanks to you the parishioners who come along to church whether old or new to this parish, we hope that you are made to feel welcome as you walk through the front door and continue to do so, at least the churchwardens are doing their job if that's the case!! I would like to thank my other half Bob for his support throughout this past year, he is a joy to be with, what more can I say. We have both enjoyed our time as churchwarden and if you were at our Easter service you would have seen our four mini churchwardens in their special red hoodies, who helped hand out books and take the collection, they were super.

We as a church have lots to look forward to over the coming months and I hope that everyone takes their opportunity to be a part of it however large or small, because

without us there won't be a church for the future, we the people are the church, not the building. Our future is in our own hands and we must use them for the good of this parish, as I said earlier it's all about giving and taking which could see this relationship being a marriage made in heaven.