



Welcome to St Mark's Parish, Dundela

Church of Ireland



Connections
Autumn 2021

Connect with St Mark's



Parish Contacts

Please contact the Rector if you wish to talk, have a garden visit or go for a walk, as well as for baptisms, weddings or funerals.

Rector Revd Canon Helene T Steed

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To find out more about St Mark's

Visit our homepage: <http://dundela.down.anglican.org/>



A Message from Helene, Rector in St Mark's

Have you ever watched the TV quiz show Only Connect? Two teams compete as they try to make connections between unconnected things and it is very, very difficult. The last 18 months have proved challenging for us as we longed to connect with family and friends but being prevented due to Covid. But it is changing. This summer has seen eased restrictions and new opportunities to gather both outdoors and indoors, reminding us how essential human contacts are. We enjoy a bit of craic, and we need the support from family and friends.

In St Mark's we look forward to connecting and reconnecting with you as autumn approaches. Join us for a walk; log on to Zoom for one of our book club evenings; come along and learn how to ring bells in the belfry; or learn a new craft – why not knit a scarf for the cold winter months? It is an opportunity for us to make new friends and acquaintances.

Every year as the autumn term begins, there is something fresh ahead of us. Energy is in the air as we embrace new opportunities, a new term and a new start. Why not connect with God afresh? God gives us that additional fortitude and meaning to life. In our daily lives we know how essential a good connection is. Before the car can be driven, a message comes up on the screen: connecting. And off we go. Our phones or other digital devices require internet connections to function properly. Connecting with God adds a dimension to our lives.

God desires to connect with us. To help us to connect, God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ. As individuals and as a community, we are encouraged to deepen our relationship with God. "I call you my friends", Jesus said. Ultimately, if we are to flourish and be fully ourselves, then we need to be gathered in Christ. The quality of our relationship with God affects our whole life, and it is meant to be the key to how we treat each other. In this regard, to be truly human, it is necessary to connect to the Divine by loving God. Perhaps this can be summed up in the following two words: 'Only Connect.' As E. M. Forster wrote in *Howards End*:

Only connect! ...

Live in fragments no longer.

Only connect...

Welcome to connect with God and the St Mark's family at our services (in the church building and on Facebook), at Sunday School and in our Study Group, meeting on Zoom. If you wish to discuss faith and how to connect with God afresh, please contact me and I will welcome a conversation with you.

May God bless you and your loved ones



Connecting through walking

Many of us have found renewed energy and enjoyment in walking in the fresh air over the past year or more, St Mark's walking group provides regular family friendly weekend walks, followed by coffee. Our walks are suitable for all ages and fitness levels.

Saturday 25 September Hillsborough Forest Park. Family Autumn Ramble. Meet in the Forest Park carpark, 2.00 pm.

Saturday 9 October Ballyholme to Groomsport. Meet in Pickie carpark, 1.30 pm.

Sunday 24 October Connswater Greenway. Meet in Lidl Connswater carpark, 2.00 pm.

Saturday 6 November Lisburn Towpath. Meet in Lisburn Civic Centre carpark, 2.00 pm.

Sunday 21 November C S Lewis celebration walk, with a Narnia trail and a reading on the lawn at St Mark's to finish. Meet at The Wardrobe sculpture, C S Lewis Square, 2.00 pm.

We are also delighted that Eileen Anghel has agreed to host two midweek local history walks this autumn, on **Tuesday 12 October** and **Tuesday 9 November**.

Did you know

Our local area is connected to an ancient Irish King?

Bear Grylls is connected to the Belfast Ropeworks Company?

Meet at the Parish Hall at 1.30 pm to walk and learn about the fascinating history that surrounds us in East Belfast. If weather is unfavourable, Eileen will share with us in the hall.

For more information and if you need a lift to any of our walks please contact : Hannah Nelson 9065 1916



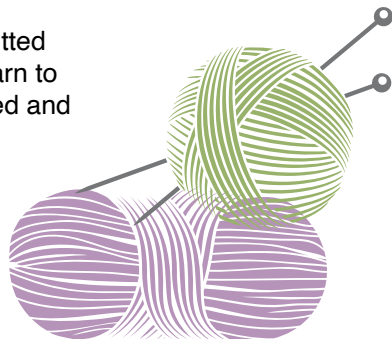
Connecting through creativity

St Marks has a very active craft group, our Creative Stitchers, who meet in the parish hall on the second and fourth Tuesday each month from 7.30 pm to knit, sew, embroider, crochet, and do whatever else people are working on, and there is always time for a chat.

This season we hope to be working together on some knitted blankets and patchwork cushions. If you would like to learn to knit, we have plenty of wool and needles to get you started and friendly help to fix any dropped stitches!

If you would like to get involved, or learn a new skill you might be wanting to start, why not come along, you won't know unless you give it a go!

Contact: Ann Clark 9029 2205



Connecting through gardening by Sarah Bass

It's difficult not to mention 'that' word when we talk about Sunday School in St Mark's post-lockdown. Beginning with a consonant near the start of the alphabet? That 'C' we've all had to deal with this year? That's right...carrots! Whether you like them boiled, mashed, raw or grated and made into a delicious cake, they probably make an appearance in your house at least once a week.

Here in St Mark's we feel incredibly lucky and grateful to have wonderful grounds surrounding our church. Our Sunday School met every week during lockdown on Zoom, but once the restrictions lifted and we were allowed to meet in person we decided to make use of our grounds for our sessions and in our teachings. Part of our teaching since April was to think about God's creation and how we have a responsibility to look after our world. One way we can do that is to grow our own vegetables and so the St Mark's Sunday School Vegetable Patch was born!



Thanks to donations from very enthusiastic parishioners our children got their hands dirty and planted potatoes, onions, carrots, radishes, lettuces, broad beans, courgette, squash and strawberries. It's safe to say that some veg we have grown has been successful and others less so. Some have been harvested and eaten and some suffered with the very hot weather we had in July (note to self – remember to get the children to water the plants more regularly). One of our most successful harvests was when some of our carrots were used by Hannah to make a delicious carrot cake. It was served outside in our grounds following our family service on 4th July and was gone within minutes!

So what about the vegetable patch come September and the start of our new year of Sunday School? Most of our harvesting will be complete by then and the beds will be empty for the winter. We'll be planning though. We're looking forward to finding out from the children what they'd like to grow next year. The St Mark's Sunday School Vegetable Patch is here to stay!

Have you got green fingers or do you just love to be outside? If you or your child is interested in learning how to grow vegetables, please get in touch with our parish office to let us know. We're looking forward to developing this initiative over the next year, working on our wildlife trail and continuing to make our grounds a welcome peaceful space for the whole community. We'd welcome your help and participation, whether you are a parishioner of St Mark's or just visiting.



Connect with a Great Big MUDDY WORLD

Join us in the church grounds for this family event on **Saturday 2 October** between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon. Great Big Muddy World is a self guided trail, giving families the opportunity to wander, wonder and explore God's creation. There are things to look out for and find as well as ideas to ponder as you go.



Connecting through books

Our Book Club has continued throughout lockdown and beyond, meeting on Zoom to discuss a wide range of thought-provoking books. In September we gathered virtually around the book *The Choice* by Edith Eger. Edith, a ballerina and gymnast, is a survivor from Auschwitz. This personal and captivating book tells us about hope in the most hopeless of situations. It challenged us to think about guilt and denial; hope and resilience; fortitude and courage. One sentiment in the book stood out: remember no one can take away what you have put in your mind and heart.

If you enjoy reading, why not join us for the following Book Club nights at 8.00 pm on Zoom.

Tuesday 5 October: *Mr Standfast* by John Buchan

Tuesday 2 November: *The Bell* by Iris Murdoch

Contact: Revd Helene Steed 07342 720350 or parish office for Zoom login details.

SECOND HAND BOOKSTALL

We have a large selection of donated books on display in the foyer of the Parish Hall, which we would love to share with you.

Please call in during office hours, and have a look, take anything that interests you, and leave a donation in our Honesty Box. **Happy reading !**



Connecting through bells and music

You may have heard our bells ringing daily at 11 am to punctuate the fact that St Mark's Church is praying for our community? You may have noticed that now multiple bells are ringing together on Sunday mornings, pealing our call to worship?

In addition to our bell tower's impressive 300 feet stature, our bells provide more than an aural signature, they provide a signal that Christ is alive!

Our present set of ten bells was manufactured by John Taylor & Co Founders Loughborough England in 1955 and was the generous legacy gift of James and Mary Hannah Newell, bearing the inscription "TELL IT OUT THAT THE LORD IS KING Px XCVI"

Our ringing team is now under the experienced leadership of Don and Denise McClean, who will teach and train interested ringers. So, why not join us to learn a new skill within a social setting? No previous experience is required, and all ages are welcome (although those under 18 will require parental supervision). The tower has 46 steps, so there are certainly aerobic benefits to ringing as well!

St Mark's Tower Bell Ringers will meet on **Wednesday evenings** from 7.30 to 9.30 pm, starting on **15 September**. High interest is anticipated; therefore, an additional training date will be scheduled, so please don't let potential timetable issues put you off. Register your interest by contacting Beth Aiken at stmarksdundelamusic@gmail.com or come along on the first evening. And, should you know of any living relatives of the Newell family, please contact Beth as there are plans underway for a 70th Anniversary Tower Bell Festival to be held in 2025.



Boo! in the Pews

Join us in the church pews for a fun and spook-tacular afternoon of special music, fancy dress and activities for all ages on **Saturday 23 October** from 5.00 to 6.45 pm. Musicians from St Mark's will entertain you with music from Harry Potter, Star Wars, James Bond and more!

Fancy dress is encouraged for children and adults, and there will be a parade of costumes with prizes. Should Covid regulations allow, a spaghetti supper will follow in the hall, free of charge.



Autumn Connections for all age groups

Sunday School : We meet during the 10.00 am Sunday service in church, moving outside or to the hall for our teaching and games. Ages 0 -11.

Contact: Yvonne McMaster 9042 2836 or email sundayschool.dundela@gmail.com



YF : This group for 8 -14 year olds meets for Bible study, games, quizzes, crafts food and fun. We have a new email to keep you connected with what's happening, youth.dundela@gmail.com.

Rainbows, Brownies and Guides : Our groups are so excited to start back in meet on Monday nights, from **20 September**. Rainbows at 5.15 pm and Brownies/Guides at 6.30 pm. Contact: Heather Ellison 90659278

Evergreens : Although this group of seniors has been unable to meet in recent times, Lorna and Joan send their best wishes and hope everyone is keeping well and safe. Please consider attending our Wednesday afternoon service and if you would like to chat, do contact Lorna.

Contact: Lorna Symmons 07732 538578

Men's Group : Will host 'Voyage of Faith' on **Thursday 14 October**, 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, in Parish Hall. We are delighted to welcome Dr Steve Aiken OBE MLA to talk about his voyage through faith and Christian witness from the start of his Royal Naval career as a (very) Junior Sailor in Belfast's very own HMS CAROLINE, through three decades of service, including commanding nuclear submarines, to the present day. And, yes, he'll also talk about HMS VIGIL!

This fascinating evening will be open to everyone, with refreshments to follow.



Mothers Union : We will join the Wednesday afternoon service in church on **20 October** and **15 December** at 3.45 pm, followed by a cup of tea and time to chat afterwards. Contact: Ann Clark, Branch Leader 9029 2205

Mums and Chums : Our toddler group meets on Wednesdays at 10.00 am for a walk to a local playground.

Music at St Marks : Our Music Group welcomes instrumentalists to play together at many of our services. Contact Sarah Bass: 07731 422002.

Scottish Country Dancing : Pre Covid a weekly class for Scottish Country Dancing took place on **Thursday evenings** from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm from September to March. In the coming weeks, it is hoped that the situation will have improved enough to allow the classes to restart. Watch parish social media for updates. The class is run by the Belfast Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, an international organisation active in 5 continents with 32,000 members.

If you've never tried this form of exercise, you might be surprised just how approachable it is, and how much fun can be had. The best part is you don't need any special clothing or equipment, and you don't need to come with a partner. If you want to get back to a little bit of exercise and have fun along the way, why not give it a try when classes restart shortly. As a bonus, we also celebrate Burns night – not to be missed!
Contact: John Campbell 07923 492357

Study Group : The study group meets on the second and fourth Wednesday from 8.00 to 9.00 pm on Zoom, exploring different aspects of life and faith.

For more information on all our Autumn connections visit Facebook or Instagram, or contact the parish office or Rector, see the inside front cover for details.

Throughout the summer we enjoyed Readings on the Lawn from Stephen Allen, who has an amazing talent in bringing stories to life. Stephen will entertain us again at the end of our Walking Group's Narnia trail on **Sunday 21 November**.

Let's get connected

What would you like to see happening in your community?

Have you skills or time to offer others?

Why not share your ideas with us, maybe we can help?

Please contact the parish office or the Rector.



Practical connections in challenging times

Many in our community continue to face challenges as the Covid 19 pandemic continues. In St Mark's we want to be here to listen, to provide emotional and spiritual support and to help practically where we can. Phone or call in to our office if you have a question, or make contact with any of the following organisations who also offer support.

The Larder is an emergency food bank assisting up to 150 people every month. Referrals are made by churches, local agencies and social services. **Louise Ferguson** told us "The Larder has worked hard in the past year to keep pace with changing rules and needs, with the support of local businesses, individuals, streets and church communities, like yourselves. Whilst there was an initial surge in referrals at the start of lockdown, we have now settled to an average of 60-70 visits to our doors each week.



We have been able to allow people back into the building to choose their groceries from the small range that we have and have also been able to provide more fresh fruit and vegetables. We have given out blenders in order for people to make use of the soup packs we offer, containing all the ingredients and a simple recipe for a weekly soup. We have also run projects providing ingredients and a recipe for a slow cooker meal plus a slow cooker where necessary. Moving forward the Larder is keen to focus on removing barriers to people accessing and cooking with fresh fruit and vegetables and to be part of the conversation about food justice in East Belfast". All contributions including financial are welcome, but especially fresh fruit/vegetables, nappies Size 3, 4 or 5, toiletries and biscuits. Big demand always for pasta sauce and tinned foods – meat, fish, tomatoes, fruit, custard, rice pudding. Donations can be left at St Mark's Parish Hall on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9-12 noon.

Email: thelarder2018@gmail.com

Good Relations Week 2021 is celebrating *Brighter days ahead for young people* to shine a light on the peace-building and cultural diversity efforts of young people and the challenges they are facing. Good Relations Week runs from **Monday 20 to Sunday 26 September 2021** with a colourful programme of face-to-face events and online content. More information at **www.goodrelationsweek.com**

East Belfast Covid-19 Reference Group – ensures people are connected to support services. See the information booklet ***East Belfast: A Connected Community*** on their website **www.ebcda.org** **Helpline 07783 631114**, 9.30 am - 4.30 pm Monday to Friday.

British Red Cross – Our Connecting Communities service is available to adults 55+ in Greater Belfast area. Feeling lonely and need a friendly chat, or socially isolated and struggling to cope with the demands of life? Free and confidential coronavirus support line, any day 10.00 - 6.00 pm **T: 0808 196 3651**.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Call free on **0800 328 0006** for help with debt counselling and budgeting, to help you find a practical, confidential lasting solution to any financial problems, that may be weighing you down.

Health and Well-being

Helplines NI – This website details helplines that provide information, advice and guidance on a wide range of health and wellbeing needs, including some new ones that specifically relate to the topic of COVID-19.

<https://helplinesni.com>



COVID Wellbeing NI Online Support Hub for the mental and emotional wellbeing of people across Northern Ireland during and after the pandemic, with information, self-help guides and support <https://covidwellbeingni.info>

Other sources of help by phone

New Text-A-Nurse Advice Service for Young People - A new service aimed at 11-19 year olds; a secure and confidential text messaging service for advice and support. Delivered by the School Nursing Teams between 9 am-5 pm Monday to Friday. Response to messages within 24 hours **Belfast Trust Text-A-Nurse: 07507 328290.**

Advice NI - T: 0800 915 4604 (free*) Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Advice Space - T: 0300 1233 233 Mon-Fri 9am-4pm

Age NI – T: 0808 808 7575 (free*) Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Church's Ministry of Healing – T: 028 9079 5832 Mon-Fri 9am-4pm.

East Belfast Community Counselling Centre - T: 028 9046 0489 9am-5pm.

Home-Start South & East Belfast - T: 028 9045 9429

NI Domestic & Sexual Abuse Helpline - T: 0808 802 1414 (free*) 24 hr.

Samaritans - T: 116 123 (free from any phone) 24 hr

Shout - Text: 85258 (free on all major mobile networks)

Pennies from Heaven by Linda Allen

I remember once hearing an old proverb that went something like:

“Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves”.

I'm not sure how that translates with plastic cards and electronic banking nowadays.

Not too many pennies about!



The saying came to mind recently whilst planning a fundraiser in support of St Marks community development link project in Nairobi. During the winter lockdown we knew there would be no face-to-face fundraising events in the near future. However, I knew a few folk who were using the lockdown to de-clutter and they agreed to donate their former fashions. These we photographed and sold via online shopping sites.

Initially I wondered if it was really worth the bother and hassle of all this photographing and posting? After all, prices were so low.... a few pennies per item. But how wrong I was! Little by little the funds built up. Penny by penny they increased. The pennies were being looked after and the pounds were mounting up!

It was a lesson to me not to dismiss the small and insignificant. Sometimes those are the very things which are so valuable. We were raising an average of £200 each month. It was a real delight to be able to forward the money to the community project to help feed and educate folk who are in real need.

If you are de-cluttering and want to donate good condition clothes then simply email the parish office and we can arrange collection. You will be re-investing in the lives of others.

Connecting with our friends in Kenya

We have been receiving regular updates from our CMSI partners in the community in Kayole, Nairobi, where sadly there have been a number of Covid related deaths. However we are thankful that in early August a vaccine camp was organised and now most of the community have had their first dose. Children are returning to the Tujisaidie School to catch up on lost education and receive their regular meals again, and a plot of land has been purchased next to the school to develop a safe and weatherproof playground. Antony continues to coordinate food distribution to vulnerable households, and daily bananas and porridge for the smallest children. He has also organised a Race for Books, running to raise funds for a library of 10,000 books for the community, along with an ambitious plan to plant 1000 trees.



Our friends are connecting through food, through learning together, all the while considering their environment, and we are blessed to be able to support them from afar. Thank you to everyone who supported our recent book and clothes sales or attended our 'Wedding Belles' fashion video screening.



Sparkle and Shine! Flower Arranging Fun

We are blessed in St Mark's with a talented team of flower arrangers who decorate the church weekly but also coordinate stunning showcase events like our 2018 Flower Festival. On **Friday 26 November** Johann Henderson will lead a team of NIGFAS arrangers in presenting Sparkle and Shine, an evening of Christmas floral demonstrations, when you can gather some tips, and have an opportunity to win the beautiful creations they make on the night. Tickets only £10, and in these times numbers will be restricted, so do book early.

And if you would like to help with creating the flower arrangements in church, or to donate towards the costs in memory of a loved one, please contact Johann to discuss. Johann Henderson 07918 916438



'New Spring' Banners Unveiled

During February and March fabric and artistic crafters worked on producing panels for two banners for our church to illustrate the theme "New Spring – what does it mean to you?" There was no limitation on medium used, or interpretation of the title. What resulted were two wall hangings each containing 18 panels. The panels were constructed using embroidery, drawing, knitting, 3-dimensional fabric and other materials, painting, patchwork, and beading - a fantastic illustration of varied and talented engagement from 20 or so individuals.

Today, the banners are displayed in church reflecting the result of working together to create something greater than the sum of the parts. This was a fantastic project to be involved in, and all the contributors are justly proud of what was achieved.



Looking for space? Our halls may offer what you need.

In St Mark's we are blessed with some fabulous spaces. Many of you may have walked through our grounds, to visit our Easter Garden or the Wildlife Trail, or just to sit a while in peace – please feel welcome to continue to enjoy your time there. You may have attended services or concerts in our stunning church building. As Autumn approaches (and while Covid restrictions permit) we are delighted to be able to re-open our halls for a wide range of uses, and would like to encourage you to visit and see our facilities. We have two large halls, one downstairs with a stage area, and one on the first floor, along with two smaller rooms suitable for meetings and lectures. Our kitchen is available for making refreshments, and for small cookery classes. The halls can now be booked for occasional events or regular activities, and a wide range of activities are welcomed. Please contact the parish office for booking details.



Parish Readers

A group of our new Parish Readers met in the Rectory garden to celebrate the completion of their training. Parish and lay readers support the Rector with services, readings, prayers and sharing insightful thoughts, and we look forward to hearing from them.

The West Window

On the 25th September this year it will be one hundred years since the dedication of the West Window in St Mark's. This window is a War Memorial dedicated to the men of the parish who lost their lives in the First World War. The window depicts the four figures of the Patron Saints of Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, and the four great warriors of the Old Testament – Joshua, Gideon, David, and Judas Maccabaeus. The wording in the window reads from the top left:

*'Their seed shall remain for ever,
Their glory shall not be blotted out
Their bodies are buried in peace,
But their name liveth for evermore.'*

You are welcome to visit and take a tour of all our beautiful windows.



Our Worship in St Mark's

Sunday 26 September : 10.00 am Harvest Thanksgiving

Join us for a service when we thank God for food and those producing it, as well as for so many other good things around us. This service offers an opportunity to reconnect with God afresh.

Our Family Services on the first Sunday of the month have a Narnia theme this autumn. In C. S. Lewis' captivating imaginative world, we find inspiration to deepen our faith.

3 October: *The marsh-wiggle Puddleglum and holding on to faith.*

7 November: *Kings and Queens of Narnia.*

5 December: *Always winter – never Christmas, until the spell begins to break.*



Sunday 7 November : 5.00 pm Remembering Our Loved Ones. An opportunity for us to remember our loved ones, thank God for their lives and ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen us in our grief.

We invite you to join us for worship, in person or online

In person

We meet together in St Marks Church on Sundays at 10.00 am for a single service that is open to everyone. Wearing our face coverings, sanitising hands and keeping social distance in the pews, we are able to benefit from being in one of the largest churches in Ireland where we have plenty of space. The words and prayers appear on screens, and we are fortunate to be able to listen to our talented team of musicians, who help create a calming and uplifting spiritual atmosphere.

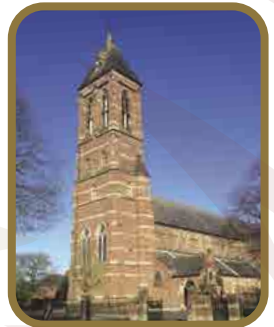
The church is also open on Wednesday afternoons from 3.00 to 4.00 pm for private prayers, with a service of Evening Prayer at 3.45 pm. This can provide a moment of calm and reflection in the middle of a busy week.

Online

Did you know ? You can access our services live on Sunday morning on Facebook, or watch a recording later, as well as a recorded midweek service of Late Evening prayer on Wednesdays. You don't need to have a Facebook account, simply go to our website <http://dundela.down.anglican.org/> and click on the Facebook link (f) at the bottom of our home page. Alternatively type the Facebook address into your browser <https://www.facebook.com/CSLewischildhoodchurch>

On Zoom

We hold an evening service every Sunday at 6.30 pm on Zoom. You can download the Zoom App on a laptop, an ipad or tablet, or on a smart phone. We share our Zoom log in details for all our activities through our weekly email newsletter, so simply email the parish office to have your name added to our email list.





If you would like to receive reminders of parish events, please send your email address to the parish office and we will add you to our notification list.