

**St. Patrick's and St. Andrew's
News and Views
February 2026**



Celebrating the Love of God

The Many Colours of Love

Love is more than red roses or heart shaped emojis. (Though it *can include* these things so *don't knock them!*) February is the month of the year that forces us to think of love in all its colours! As Christians we know that love is the greatest sign of God's life within us. Surely this is a month when we can share that love with the people around us.

*How will **you** show God's love today?*

Jesus drew together ancient Jewish teachings when he said that loving God and loving our neighbour were the greatest commandments.

When I was young, I knew my dad liked the renowned author C S Lewis, so I bought him one of his books. My love for my dad made me choose to give a gift that I knew he would value and read.

When did you last give someone you love a gift that would do them good? Did you ever do it "out of season"?

One of Lewis's well-known books is "The Four Loves". In it he describes five different words that can be included in the word love. A simple 'liking' is a starting point, but then he focuses on four loves which he reckons can be mixed up in all sorts of ways.

He speaks of **family love**: the sort that binds parents to children, and siblings to one another. Having family to support us (and for us to support) makes everyone's lives better. But Lewis warns us that such a love can be all consuming so that common sense doesn't get a look in. We see it when parents go bananas at their children's sports, or husbands begin to worship the ground their wives walk on.

*Family love is a vital ingredient to help us grow confidence and back-bone through life. Knowing somebody likes you makes you feel secure in your weaknesses. We don't always have to be perfect: we are still a son or daughter, a brother or sister. **Love your family!***

Friendship only proves itself to be vital when it is **missing** from your life! How much better is a bit of good news when you have a friend to text or call to

share it. Poetry and song lyrics don't mention friendship as often as they do passion and desire. But it is to friends we turn when life doesn't feel worthy of a poem or a song.

*We all need a few friends, life-long ones are good,
but recent friends are great too.*

Eros. Aha! This is more what Valentine's Day is about, and hence the choice of theme for this letter. Most people were designed by God to find a person whom they could know and love beyond friendship. The passionate erotic love which cements those relationships is good, God's gift to the man who married a wife and the woman who marries a husband. The bible places intimacy in those relationships and no other, though many today dare disagree with the bible.

Preserve intimacy in your marriage to benefit from God's plan for you.

Over the years since the Greek word "agape" was translated "charity" in the authorised version of the bible, charity's meaning has moved to describe support for good causes. But **agape-love** is much richer than that. It is the love which gives, seeking nothing in return. True **sacrificial** love, the love that goes the extra mile, and the love which is given anonymously where the receiver doesn't know whom to thank.

*You won't get a receipt for giving agape-love.
It reflects the **greatest love**.*

Compare the others: affection is usually returned, friendship is shared, and passion follows agreement. But **agape love** - charity in its deeper sense - **is a reflection of Jesus' selfless love: the one who died that you might live.**

As you celebrate Valentine's Day, remember: take opportunities to share love with your families your friends and your spouse. But, above all, love others as Christ loved you, and **invest** in them in a way which **truly enriches** them.

On behalf of the ministry team at Coleraine Parish.

Coleraine Grammar School Carol Services

St Patrick's was the venue for Coleraine Grammar School's series of Carol Services. It was wonderful to see so many young people gathering in this holy place to recall the events of the first Christmas together.

The choirs and musicians filled the packed church with their splendid music and a participating audience of parents and friends on two separate occasions on 17th and 18th December. The Rev Robert Simpson, former teacher at Coleraine Inst, welcomed those present to the event. He concluded the events with the Christmas Blessing.

We thank the staff and pupils for using our worshipping space with such care and attention, and to Greg, our caretaker, for preparing the building and leaving it ready for further worship a few days later.

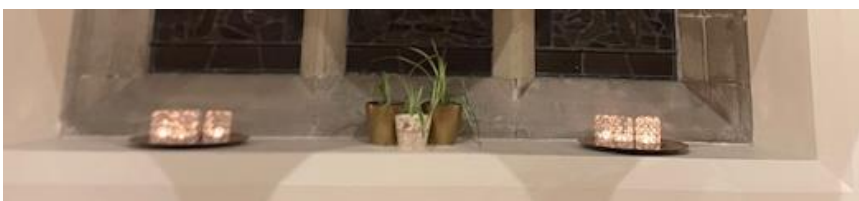


Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

21st December 2025



The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols formed the high point of this year's congregational worship in St Patrick's.



Girls' Brigade

We feature a happy picture of the Girls of our local company which meets at St Andrew's.

Their New Year event was held at Cheeky Chimps

**Happy New Year
Everyone!**



WORD SEARCH

m	r	i	g	h	t	s	o	r	r	y	k
o	c	s	j	t	e	p	p	z	h	a	b
r	s	r	k	a	l	e	a	v	e	g	p
n	c	a	l	l	i	n	g	p	a	p	i
i	b	e	o	k	s	w	s	i	r	r	v
n	r	l	r	e	t	d	t	g	d	i	b
g	o	d	d	d	e	m	a	n	d	e	d
a	u	j	r	p	n	n	s	o	n	s	d
b	g	i	p	n	i	n	h	r	w	t	d
s	h	o	e	a	n	s	w	e	r	e	d
t	t	v	n	i	g	h	t	d	c	x	j
s	h	i	l	o	h	s	a	m	u	e	l

talked	calling	God
Israel	right	speak
Shiloh	ignored	sons
stopped	priest	answered
night	brought	Lord
Eli	heard	listening
leave	sorry	Samuel
demanded	third	morning

Worship in February

Wednesdays

The **weekly communion on Wednesday Lunch times** is a half hour service in the middle of the day that allows those who work in the town, or who are in the business of shopping at our lovely town centre to take time aside for God. It is a communion service with a short address, led by some of the clergy who support our parish month by month.

It is interesting to see how people who *drop in* to see it, quite often become *regular* worshippers! If you're free, why don't you try joining them!

8th February

Rev Simon Genoe is coming as a guest preacher on 8th February to our parish churches. He is rector of Magheralin and Dollingstown near Lurgan. Simon says (on the New Wine Ireland website) "My vision for the local church is about being deep and wide - deeply in love with the Lord, deep in encountering the power of the Holy Spirit, being deeply changed into His likeness - leading us to share the Gospel widely in the power of the Holy Spirit!"

In the afternoon Simon will lead a **Healing Service at 4:00 pm** for both parishes and whoever wishes to come, in St Patrick's. We hope to have special music for the occasion. Please consider coming.

Sundays

Stuart, Paul, Ian and Robert will be leading the **Sunday Services**. Weekly worship has always been the standard expected of followers of Jesus and we hope you make it a priority for you every week you possibly can be there.

The Prayer Room

Each Sunday morning, for a few minutes before the 10:00 am service, worshippers pause at their seats and some in the Prayer Room, to pray for those around them, that God would pour out his Spirit on the gathered people, and speak his life-changing truth to everyone present. *Please spend time in prayer (at your seat or with others in the Prayer Room) to ask God to bathe the people at worship with his love.*

ENJOYING LENT!

As Lent draws near we notice ...

- the chocolate adverts on TV will multiply to distract the small proportion of viewers from self-denial for a few weeks.
- the story of Jesus being tempted will be given yet another new slant from the pulpit
- the Mothering Sunday tradition of the 19th century church will join Christmas and Easter as an excuse for social excess rather than church observance
- the alert worshipper will hear the more restrained melodies and minor keys of tradition Lenten hymns

... or maybe none of those things. For, for the most part, the world doesn't seem to notice. I wonder how **you** can best take up a spiritual discipline for Lent?

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Does a practice like, say, **prayer**, force me to slow down and spend some time thinking of God?
2. Does a practice like, say, restricting some **foods**, make me reflect on how ungrateful I have become for all the provisions I usually enjoy?
3. Will a habit, like giving away **money**, remind me of the source of all wealth and well-being, namely God?
4. Can I restrict my daily intake of **media** or entertainment so that i have more time to read my Bible?
5. Is there something I can do before regular **attendance** at church - e.g. intercessions - that would help the ministry team flourish?
6. Does my discipline come so **easily** that it isn't really a discipline?
7. How can my **example**, quietly performed, inspire others around me to consider the possibility that God is truly real to me?

We hope you have a good Lent, however you choose to observe it. **It starts on Ash Wednesday 18th February.**

Parish Registers

Holy Baptism

21 December - Olive Peden

As for me and my house we will serve the Lord

Funeral Services

13 December – Reggie Patterson

23 December – Stanley Turner

14 January – Maud Audrey McNabb

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord

A Tribute to Reggie Patterson: Steven Benson

The fact that well over 200 people attended the Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Reggie Patterson on 13th December and that a choir of over 40 came together to lead the worship says everything about the regard in which Reggie Patterson was held by the people of Coleraine and the extent to which he will be missed. The dramatic words of Hamlet's lament of his father's death surely resonate here: we "*shall not look upon his like again*".



Perhaps the most moving part of the service was a family tribute from his daughter Diane. Diane recalled family memories of earliest days in what was then the upstairs flat of the "old" rectory (while the then curate, one Jimmy &

Flo Monroe lived below) and also recalled ski trips, holidays abroad, all interspersed with memories of her father's employment achievements, first as Head of Music in Coleraine High School and then setting up a new music department in Limavady Grammar School. The second curate to occupy that downstairs flat in the old rectory was Benny Neill. Together Reggie and Benny supported each other through their Open University degrees.

Education was in Reggie's blood. A course in Stranmillis had set him on the road to professional teaching, but also created the environment in which he was to meet his future wife, Anne O'Neil. Diane relayed 2 comments that she had received about her father since his death: *He was an inspiring classroom teacher, with infinite patience*, and perhaps even more tellingly:

He was a teacher with a rare gift of commanding respect not through stern words but through willingness to treat young people with warmth and humour.

In one of his many music productions at Coleraine High School, Reggie modified the words of The Lord High Executioner's defining song from The Mikado to include: *"St Patrick's organist; we've got him on the list; he never will be missed"*. Even after his retirement Reggie continued to contribute to the musical life of the church by shaping the programmes of the St Patrick's Summer Concerts. From his earliest days at the keyboards of both piano and organ he was also the passionate student, which led him to become the consummate professional. Even if – as Scott Brown reminded us – his days at the trombone were not entirely successful, people used to travel miles just to watch his fingers on the piano when he played for the Gang Show in Belfast. I know only because my aunt was one of them.

But it was surely for choral conducting and singing that Reggie is best remembered in these parts. His appointment at the age of 19 to St Matthew's Church and later St Peter's on the Antrim Road, gave him his grounding in church music. He took his LTCL as a performer on the organ. He was a musical giant. He was unique not just because of his musical talent and skill, but because of a character and personality which constantly exuded love, care, humour, confidence and encouragement.

As Scott acknowledged in his tribute on behalf of the choir, Reggie was both a joy-bringer and a joy-giver. While he never sought any glory or thanks for himself as organist and choirmaster, he was arguably as big an influence on the life and character of St Patrick's as any member of the clergy who presided over his time there. For the 40 odd years he was in post, the maintenance of the highest standard of worship in St Patrick's was his goal. He proposed and executed the most outrageously ambitious music for a parish church choir that didn't employ professional singers.

Who nowadays would dream of tackling both Zadok the Priest AND Parry's I was Glad in the same service?

I hope Her Majesty appreciated that her Silver Jubilee was the excuse for musical ambitions to be realised such a long way from the palace. Those were wonderful days.

Reggie introduced St Patrick's to the festival of Nine Lesson and Carols (eventually candlelit), and many of us remember the impact of the annual Good Friday service based on the publication *The Cross of Christ*. Not that everything musical was sombre. With a wry smile and a twinkle – although only a small one – in his eye, I along with other tenors doing our best in a rather exposed part of an anthem was chastised for the sound I was making and was asked if next time I could make it sound a bit *less agricultural*. This was the essence of the man.

When it comes to paying tribute to those who have been significant characters, their own interests and activities write the story for us. And nowhere is this more evident than in the narrative of the many anthems which Reggie brought to St Patrick's.

One of the most significant for me (and I think the first he presented to the choir on his arrival in Coleraine in the late sixties) was an anthem by William Boyce – a composer from the mid 18th century whose music Reggie loved. With one J A McDonald, one J A Monroe and one D McCandless (Taylor) opening with some delightfully interwoven bass, tenor and alto recitative, the main text of the anthem was: *Behold the heaven, the heaven of heavens, can not contain thee; how much less the house that I have builded* (1 Kings 8). It was a text

about the glory of God and the reminder that no matter how grand the temple we build or how perfect the worship we offer, even our best pales into insignificance in comparison.

This idea, that the worship of the Almighty is at the core of Christian community, is what drove Reggie to the excellence he sought in St Patrick's. It was a silent balancing of both devotion and ambition... but ambition geared to the highest standard of worship.

Sir John Rutter said recently: *A church without a choir is like a body without a soul.* For something approaching half a century Reggie Patterson nurtured and developed that soul in St Patrick's – not for personal gain but because he knew that the divine was deeper and broader than anything that could be explained from a pulpit; perhaps it was only the artist or musician who could connect us with what really mattered. The music that brought him so much joy, had enriched the life of so many others. Reggie's vocation to musical ministry was in every way as valid as the calling of any deacon, priest or bishop to ordination.

Perhaps the most appropriate words to mark Reggie's passing come from the text of arguably the most impressive (and difficult) anthem by composer Herbert Howells, of whom Reggie was a devotee (think of Howells' *A Spotless Rose* at Christmas). The opening and closing verses acknowledge the frailty of this world, but they also recognise that every human life should be seen in another context – one which stands outside of time:

Take him, earth, for cherishing,
to thy tender breast receive him.
Body of a man I bring thee,
noble even in its ruin.

Take, O take him, mighty leader,
take again thy servant's soul.
Grave his name, and pour the fragrant
balm upon the icy stone.

4th-century poem by the Christian Roman poet Aurelius Clemens Prudentius

Dedication of Prayer Room Window at St Patrick's

18th January 2026

It was a privilege to be present in St Patrick's at a joint service with St Andrew's – a service which saw former parishioners and friends join a swollen congregation to give thanks to God for Mrs Violet McCandless, as the window in the Prayer Room was dedicated in her memory.

"In Christ alone, my hope is found, he is my light, my life, my song"

How wonderful to be reminded by our Bishop from the pulpit that the light that shines upon us and transforms our broken lives is the light we find in Christ! He reminded us that it was Christ's life shining through his followers that brightens our lives and reveals his purpose for us. We thanked God for how windows let the sunlight enter our homes and churches, but how much more his truth reveals!

We thank Bishop George Davison for coming to dedicate the window. The refurbishment was made possible through the donors who gave money to the Mothers' Union in lieu of flowers following Mrs McCandless's funeral. We thank the Mothers' Union and Vestry for enabling the repair and improvement to the window.

Present were members of Violet's family, including her children Trevor, Ann, Doreen, Karen and Valerie. They are photographed here with the clergy who led the service.

Also pictured is Mrs Rena Lindsay, MU Branch Leader, with the Memorials Book recording the event.

The extended choir sang "How lovely is your dwelling place" from Psalm 84, a very appropriate conclusion to the act of dedication.



Prayer Pointers

'The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it' (John 1:5)

As we move into a new month, dark winter days continue, we pray for ourselves. We pray, Lord, that your Light, whose arrival we celebrated at Christmas, will not be extinguished in our hearts. Rather, we ask you to shine there so brightly that we and those around us, in church and in our community, will be warmed, cheered and encouraged as we live in our everyday routines.

<i>As we approach the season of Lent, we pray this collect:</i>	Heavenly Father, Your Son battled with the powers of darkness and grew closer to you in the desert: help us to use these days to grow in wisdom & prayer, that we may know your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
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We pray, Lord Jesus, for our Parish, and we thank you for the warmth of our fellowship and the friendship and care we receive from each other. We remember especially those among us who are ill, anxious or grieving and pray that they will find help and comfort from you and through us, your people, as we gather week by week for worship and parish activities.

We pray too in faith and trust, for the resolution of our ongoing parish situation. We thank you, Lord, for those clergy who so faithfully minister God's Word to us from week to week. Father God, bless, protect and encourage them...and show us all how best to support them and those seeking resolution to our situation.

Our world and the society we live in are fast changing and we can feel frightened as we listen to the news and are bewildered by the pace of change brought by technology and artificial intelligence.

We thank you, Lord God, that you are 'the same yesterday, today and forever', never changing and therefore as much in control of affairs as your Word tells us (Daniel 4:35); that your promise 'never to leave us or forsake us' (Matt 28:20) still stands; and that you have given us your Holy Spirit to guide our thinking and understanding (1Cor 2:10). We ask you to help us apply your truth as we pray for what is going on around us and worldwide.

Pray for our mission partners, using the words of Ps 139. Thank Him for His complete knowledge of them and their work, of their joys and sorrows, their hopes and fears. And then bring to Him the latest requests from their prayer letters.

Mothers' Union meets on **Monday 9th February 2026** at 7 30 pm in St Andrew's Church.

The speaker is **Jennifer Smyth** (pictured) from Jenn's Gym. Jennifer has an amazing story of how a freak accident left her in a wheelchair and led her to open Jenn's Gym.



If you want to hear more about her story, please join us. All are welcome.

Rena Lindsay

MU programmes for this year are now available in both St Parick's and St Andrew's Churches.

The General Vestry of St Patrick's and St Andrew's

Membership of the General Vestry of the parish is revised in February each year. A meeting of the Select Vestry receives applications from parishioners who are not yet members of the General Vestry to determine who should be admitted to the General Vestry.

To apply you need to be either a resident of the parish, or to be someone who customarily attends. You also need to be a donor to church funds in a manner whereby a receipt could be issued, i.e. use freewill envelopes or the like, and be over 18 years of age. Those no longer eligible can be removed at this meeting.

Forms are available at both churches, and need to be submitted in time for the Revision meeting on Tuesday 10th February. They may be handed to the wardens for convenience. They are also available by following a link on the Parish website: <https://StPats.co.uk>

CALENDAR FEBRUARY 2026

Tuesday 27th January	Holocaust Memorial Day	
	CMJIRELAND marks Holocaust Day at the Sandel Centre, Knocklynn Rd. at 2:00 pm.	
Sunday 1st February	St. Brigid's Day on Epiphany 4	(White)
	St Patrick's 10.00 am Holy Communion Rev. Canon Stuart Lloyd	St Andrew's 11.30 am Holy Communion Rev. Canon Stuart Lloyd
Wednesday 4th February	(White)	
	St Patrick's 1.00 pm Holy Communion Rev. Stephen Lowry	
Sunday 8th February	Candlemas on 2nd Sunday before Lent	(Green)
	St Patrick's 10.00 am Morning Prayer Led by Rev. Robert Simpson with Preacher St Patrick's 4.00 pm Healing Service with Rev. Simon Genoe	St Andrew's 11.30 am Morning Prayer Rev. Simon Genoe
Monday 9th February	Mothers' Union at 7:30 pm in St Andrew's: Jenn's Gym	
Tuesday 10th February:	Review of General Vestry Membership	
Wednesday 11th February	(Green)	
	St Patrick's 1.00 pm Holy Communion Rev. Frances Bach	
Sunday 15th February	The Sunday next-before Lent	(Green)
	St Patrick's 10.00 am Church Family Service Rev. Canon Paul Hoey	St Andrew's 11.30 am Church Family Service Rev. Canon Paul Hoey
Ash Wednesday 18th February	(Purple)	
	St Patrick's 1.00 pm Holy Communion Rev. Canon Paul Hoey	
Sunday 22nd February	1st Sunday in Lent	(Purple)
	St Patrick's 10.00 am Rev. Ian Ballentine	St Andrew's 11.30 am Rev. Ian Ballentine
Wednesday 25th February	(Purple)	
	St Patrick's 1.00 pm Holy Communion Rev. Stephen Lowry	

"Do to others as you would have them do to you." Luke 6:31