

~ Notices ~

Prayers - Prayers are said daily for the welfare of our community, our nation and the world. If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on frkevinobrien@me.com or call me on 065 672 4721.

YouTube - our YouTube channel now has over 120 videos, comprising services, talks and sermons. Please do visit the channel by searching for **St Columba's Church Ennis** and do *subscribe* if you can, we are aiming to reach 100 subscribers before Christmas. Also visit our **Facebook** page: **Drumcliffe Church of Ireland Ennis**

Services in the New Year - as the situation regarding Covid 19 measures remains fluid please note we shall put notices on our website, Facebook and email concerning the opening or closing of our churches. Our online services will, of course, continue.

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com Tel: 065 672 4721

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- Mission Charities -

The two charities being supported this year are below. Women's Aid gives support and sanctuary to women and children suffering from domestic abuse - which has sadly greatly increased during the Covid 19 pandemic. Jigsaw supports young people who are struggling with their wellbeing and mental health - also a prevalent problem during so many months of lockdown and isolation.

Womens Aid **Jigsaw**
www.womensaid.ie www.jigsaw.ie

See the diocesan website for the Bishop's address:
<http://www.limerick.anglican.org>

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A poem by Christina Rossetti

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love Divine,
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and Angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love Incarnate, Love Divine,
Worship we our Jesus,
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

From Verses 1893 entitled 'Christmastide'



**Have a very
Happy Christmastide
and a
New Year
filled with
hope and light.**



1st Sunday after Christmas 2020

(Year B)

Collect

God in Trinity, eternal unity of perfect love: gather the nations to be one family, and draw us into your holy life through the birth of Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen

Suggested Hymns - *For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.*

- 1) O Little Town Of Bethlehem
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUA5Xg-o-eM>
- 2) Away in a Manger
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HREMQWW9KME>
- 3) While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvegJ3wRLFE>
- 4) O come all ye faithful
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSDgapVwyD0>

Isaiah 61:10 - 62: 3

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.
For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.
The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Psalms 148

Alleluia.
Praise the Lord from the heavens; ♦
praise him in the heights.
Praise him, all you his angels; ♦
praise him, all his host.
Praise him, sun and moon; ♦
praise him, all you stars of light.
Praise him, heaven of heavens, ♦
and you waters above the heavens.
Let them praise the name of the Lord, ♦
for he commanded and they were created.
He made them fast for ever and ever; ♦
he gave them a law which shall not pass away.
Praise the Lord from the earth, ♦
you sea monsters and all deeps;
Fire and hail, snow and mist, ♦
tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word;
Mountains and all hills, ♦
fruit trees and all cedars;
Wild beasts and all cattle, ♦
creeping things and birds on the wing;
Kings of the earth and all peoples, ♦
princes and all rulers of the world;
Young men and women,
old and young together; ♦

let them praise the name of the Lord.
For his name only is exalted, ♦
his splendour above earth and heaven.
He has raised up the horn of his people
and praise for all his faithful servants, ♦
the children of Israel, a people who are near him.
Alleluia.

Galatians 4: 4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Luke 2: 15-21

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Commentary

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

The prophet identifies himself with Jerusalem, with the people of Israel now back in their homeland. The people rejoice greatly, for God will save the city and its inhabitants. "Garments of salvation" and "robe of righteousness" probably refer to the garb of priests, so are reminders that Jerusalem is a holy city. The bridegroom's "garland" is a symbol of strength, and the bride's "jewels" symbolize beauty. Israel will be married to God. Once adulterous, she is restored to the state God intended. That God will rescue his people is as certain as new growth in the Spring, but God will continue to be the source of good (godly) life ("righteousness and praise", 61:11). Either "all the nations" will see God's action, or will all have the opportunity to join in receiving it.

After a silence of many years, a time when the people heard nothing from him, God will speak (62:1). He will establish the merit ("vindication") of Israel as suddenly as "the dawn" comes in the desert. Her redemption will come rapidly. All peoples will see the reinstatement of Israel to God's favour; all rulers will see the power of God ("glory"), (62:2); God will call Israel by a "new name", indicating her change in status. To God, Israel shall be a "crown" (62:3) and a "royal diadem": a royal house, a kingdom under him.

Psalms 148

The psalter ends with five hallelujah ("Praise the Lord") psalms, of which this is one. In vv. 1-6 the psalmist invites the heavens to praise God, then in vv. 7-12 he bids all on the earth to do so. Even inanimate objects (e.g. "sun and moon", v. 3) are to praise him. (Ancient cosmology held that the sun, moon and stars travelled on concentric hemispheres above the earth, and above them was God's storehouse of "waters above the heavens" (v. 4), the source of rain and snow.) God commanded that the heavens be created (v. 5). The movement of the celestial bodies are per an everlasting law (v. 6). The heavens shall praise him for creating them and making their existence permanent. In vv. 7-12, the list of created things proceeds from the lowest forms ("sea monsters") to the highest, humans. The "wind" (v. 8, Hebrew: ruah) does God's will; ruah also means spirit. In v. 11, "all peoples" are invited to praise the Lord.

Galatians 4:4-7

Some teachers in Galatia have claimed that a Christian must first embrace Judaism, observing Mosaic law. Paul wrote this letter to rebut this argument, to insist that one comes into union with God through faith in Christ, and not through ritual observances.

In vv. 1-3, he takes the example of an orphaned boy of minor age, an heir: although he owns his dead father's property, it remains under the control of trustees until the date his father set (per Palestinian practice.) He cannot speak or act on his own behalf. So it is with Paul and his readers: before "we" accepted Christ, we had no power to speak or act, being slaves to spiritual elements, celestial beings that control the physical elements of the universe.

For Jewish Christians, that date has come: at the time our Father set ("fullness of time", v. 4), "God sent his Son", born a human ("of a woman"), indeed a Jew ("under the law"). God sent him so that we Jewish Christians might be adopted as God's children, be made part of him. Then v. 6: being his children, he sent the "Spirit of his Son", God's Spirit, to empower us to call him Father. ("Abba", v. 6, is Aramaic for father. Jesus prayed "Abba, ..." in the Garden of Gethsemane: see Mark 14:36.) So, v. 7, you are free from the obligations of Mosaic law, and being his child makes you an heir to God's kingdom, through Christ.

In vv. 8-9, Paul questions how, now that God has chosen them to know him, can they go back to spiritual elements. (Contemporary Jewish belief was that at Mount Sinai the Law was spoken by angels, celestial beings, spiritual elements.) How can they want to be enslaved again?

Luke 2:15-21

Luke has told us of Joseph and Mary's visit to Bethlehem (his ancestral town) to register in the census, and of Jesus' birth. He lies "in a manger" (v. 12), a trough from which animals eat; he is sustenance for all peoples. Shepherds, living in the field with their flocks have heard the angel's announcement of the birth of "a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord" (v. 11). Many heavenly beings have appeared, praising God and pronouncing peace: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!" (v. 14).

Now the shepherds decide to see the glorious event for themselves (v. 15). It is appropriate that the first visitors to the newborn child be shepherds: Jesus is our shepherd. Note "with haste" in v. 16; as Mary set out to visit her cousin Elizabeth "with haste" in 1:39; Jesus will later stress the urgency of his mission. The shepherds look for, and find, the infant where the angel has told them in v. 12, "in the manger" (v. 16). They make known, tell Mary and Joseph – and others – the good news the angel has delivered. Mary and Zechariah have already told us something of the meaning of the birth and the destiny of Jesus in 1:31-33, 1:46-55 and 1:68-79. What the shepherds have been told provides another perspective on this event. Mary tries to understand ("pondered", v. 19) all that she has experienced and been told, especially the great news told by the angels, but she does not immediately grasp the full significance of God's action of Jesus being born into the world. Later, after Jesus as a boy has asked his parents "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (v. 49), she understands a little more. Luke does not tell us directly about Jesus' circumcision but infant boys were named on this occasion; being a Jew, he is circumcised (v. 21). As a member of God's chosen people he will bring salvation to the world. Before Jesus was conceived, an angel has said "you will name him Jesus" (1:31). His name means God saves. The Hebrew and Aramaic forms of Jesus are similar to he will save.

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