

~ 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 Charity -

Bishop's Appeal has helped us choose a project run by Christian Aid in Ethiopia where they have been working for 33 years, and is a trusted partner. The project, over two years, will help harvest rainwater to irrigate crops, plant protected gardens to produce seed and restore sanitation where none exists. Above all, Christian Aid is bringing hope to people worn down by despair and hopelessness - practical help which will provide food and sanitation so that families can thrive and children grow up healthy, and having enough to eat. Please note that the Mission appeal remains open until the 30th December.

Donations to:

Limerick & Killaloe Diocesan Council for Mission
IBAN: IE44OFI9045591214337 BIC: BOFII2D

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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 2021
St Stephen's Day
(Year C)**

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=QAU5Xg-o-eM>
- 2) Away in a Manger
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HREMQUWW9KME>
- 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>

1 Samuel 2: 18-20, 26

Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy wearing a linen ephod. His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, 'May the Lord repay* you with children by this woman for the gift that she made to* the Lord'; and then they would return to their home. Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favour with the Lord and with the people.

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.

Colossians 3: 12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a

complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Luke 2: 41-52

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents* saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

Commentary

1 Samuel 2:18-20,26

Elkanah has two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah has borne him children, but for many years Hannah has been childless. Even so, Elkanah has loved her. After years of Peninnah's taunting, Hannah could take it no longer. During an annual pilgrimage to the temple at Shiloh, she has sought out Eli the priest; before him she has vowed that if God granted her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord. Further, he would refrain from drink and not allow his head to be shaved throughout his life. Eli has interceded with God on her behalf and she has trusted in God to grant her wish. After returning home, a son has been born to her and Elkanah. When Samuel is old enough (probably aged three or four), she has taken him to Eli, to serve in the Temple. Now we read of Samuel's childhood. A "linen ephod" was an apron, a light ceremonial garment worn by a priest – so Samuel is now a priest. The couple continue to visit the temple annually ("yearly sacrifice", v. 19), perhaps on the Day of Atonement. Hannah's "gift ... to the Lord" (v. 20) is her son. As repayment for Samuel's faithful service, "the Lord took note of Hannah" (v. 21) by giving her five more children. Samuel grows up not in a home and family but "in the presence of the Lord", in the temple. Samuel's fidelity is contrasted with the evil ways of Eli's sons, who even lie with women who have sacred duties (v. 22). The sons' misdeeds are known in the community (v. 24). They sin against God by their disregard for Eli, by their irreverence, and their greed and arrogance concerning sacrificial meat – so God has to punish them (v. 25). On the other hand, Samuel grows in spirituality and popularity in the community (v. 26). Eli's sons die when the Philistines defeat Israel in battle (4:11).

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.

Colossians 3:12-17

The author has already begun to describe the true Christian life. In what is probably an early baptismal instruction, he has called on his readers to "Set your minds on things that are above" (v. 2). When Christ comes again, they will be seen as being with him in power (v. 4) but those who follow evil ways will suffer the wrath of God (v. 5-6). The author has told them: "you have stripped off the old self with its practices" (v. 9) and "have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator" (v. 10).

Now he tells them, chosen by God as they are, what virtues, ethical qualities, are expected of them:

"compassion" (v. 12) is sympathy for the needs of others and "meekness" is gentleness and consideration towards others. Christ's forgiveness of them (and us) is a model for their conduct towards each other (v. 13). The primary quality for the Christian is "love" (v. 14).

In v. 15, the word translated "rule" literally means be umpire or referee: so may "the peace of Christ" be the reference point for your consciences, as it is for you all in the Church ("one body"). May the understanding, the knowledge, of the way Christ works be yours, and may sharing this in the community lead you to deeper understanding ("wisdom", v. 16); may you show your thankfulness to the Father through the Son in worship. In all your words and actions, speak and do as though Christ were doing them.

Luke 2:41-52

This is the only passage in the Bible that tells of Jesus' boyhood. On the "festival of the Passover", Jews celebrated both Israel's deliverance from Egypt and the Festival of Unleavened Bread, a symbol of the start of a new year. Jesus' family is pious. He is now "twelve years old" (v. 42); in another year, he will officially become a man (now celebrated by Jews in the bar mitzvah). After the eight days of the festival, the "group" (v. 44, probably the whole village) begins the journey back to Nazareth. Joseph and Mary find Jesus in the outer court of the Temple "among the teachers" (v. 46), experts in Jewish law. Respectful of the law, he not only listens and asks questions, but also answers their questions. V. 49 marks a turning point in the gospel: these are the first words of Jesus we have; for the first time Jesus' father is named as the Father – until now, Joseph has been called his father. Note "must": the relationship between Jesus and the Father requires obedience. Parents do reach the point where they do not understand their children (v. 50); here Mary and Joseph do not comprehend that his relationship with God takes precedence over being their child. Upon return to Nazareth, he obeys his parents in everyday life. In spite of not understanding, Mary "treasured" (v. 51) what Jesus says – as his mother and also as the model believer. Jesus continues to grow physically and in understanding, preparing himself for the mission that lies ahead of him (v. 52).

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The Post Communion Prayer

Merciful Lord, we thank you for these signs of your mercy, we praise you for feeding us at your table and giving us joy in honouring Stephen, first martyr of the new Israel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**