

the **voice**

*He is
Risen*

The Magazine of Agherton Parish Portstewart
The Church of St. John the Baptist

Christ triumphant, ever reigning



April and May 2021 Edition

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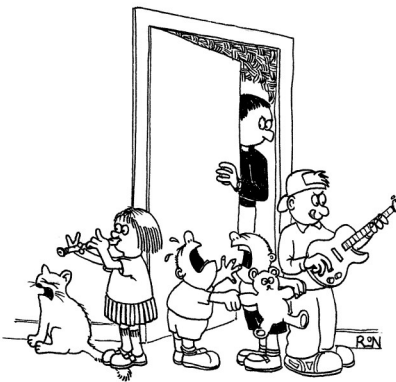
Ministry to the Sick

Please inform the rector if parishioners are in hospital, going into hospital, are being transferred or discharged.

Please contact the office
Tel: 028 7083 3277



A.P.C. Chuckle Box



Kevin took himself off to his study to pray for peace



...rumours that we would be giving out easter eggs are unfounded - er, there aren't any left!

The Rector writes

In this Magazine I want to be **positive** ... I want to look forward to times when I can share, once again, with friends and family face to face. It's so strange for us, in the Rectory, to have no-one 'over the door' in such a long time. Keeping up with our friends, this year, meant sharing over the phone or over Zoom with all the difficulties that brings, even when half the time our audio was muted! True friends are hard to find and this year we have all relied on them in the days when we felt overburdened under the weight of restrictions.

"Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a good fire?" – C.S Lewis

What are true friends? True friends stick closer than family, and often know you better. They pray bigger things for you than you pray for yourself. They believe with you when your faith is weak. They make space for you when life falls apart, and they rejoice with you when all is well. Most importantly, true friends remind you in every encounter who and what is most important – they point us to a life thankful to God.

Having good friends is like the building of a strong house called "Companionship". In the strong house of companionship joy is **always** deepened. Somehow a great meal is more satisfying when shared. We naturally celebrate with our friends the common things we enjoy together.

The sharing of a **Christian life** with a friend is a great joy because together we discover and rejoice, God is the greatest! We were made for Him, to enjoy Him at the centre our hearts and lives. Like any other joy, our joy in God will be fullest when we share it with

other people. Christian friends help us enjoy God because His name is on our lips.

Obedience to God takes more courage than we can muster alone. Without the faithful encouragement of Christian friends, we easily shrink back into stagnant apathy, not wanting to wilfully disobey, but also too afraid to keep stepping out in faith.

Encouragement isn't flattery, or superficial inspiration.

En-courage-ment is giving *courage* and strength to others for the intimidating task before them. Good Christian friends can **offer** a bigger vision for why obedience matters for God's kingdom. Good Christian friends can **affirm** that their obedience glorifies God and together, with you, faith grows. Whatever form it takes, encouragement motivates others to continue running the specific race God has marked out for them.

Alone, we grow discouraged and weary. Like the paralytic, in the parable of Jesus healing the man let down through the roof, we need the help of other believers to carry us to God. Like everything else, the end goal of our friendships should be to see God and His glory increased. May God Bless each one of us with Good Christian Friends as we share the joy of the empty tomb and the power of death broken.

Let those be thy choicest companions who have made Christ their chief companion. – **Thomas Brooks**

Revd Malcolm



Organising your wedding

Weddings are very special occasions in the life of any family and in the life of the church. When considering getting married please check possible dates with the Rector **before** confirming arrangements. It is expected that couples will make a regular commitment to the life of the church in preparation for marriage.

Flowers and Nature in Easter

I have often wondered about the different flowers and greenery that our talented flower arrangers use to create such lovely displays in church. Even though the physical building of the church is closed, we can only imagine the wonderful displays which would have been for Easter this year.

As our thoughts turn to Easter time, I realised that a variety of vegetation, shrubbery, a garden, and flowers either appear along the way or are associated with Easter.

When Jesus arrived, in triumph, at Jerusalem riding on a donkey the people could not roll out a red carpet as we might today for celebrities. Instead, they used palm leaves which were strewn along the way where He passed. The palm branch is a symbol of victory, triumph, peace and eternal life. You should also have received a palm cross with your magazine - a link not just with the palms at Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem but also of His sacrifice and resurrection.



We know that as the following week, Holy Week, unfolded that adulation turned very sour. Jesus became a 'wanted man' and by the Thursday the pressure on Him had mounted so much that he sought solace in a garden. That garden was Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Probably not manicured or landscaped, but with the cooling shade of olive trees, shrubs and maybe some wild herbs or flowers blooming, perhaps this would have brought

peace, silence and a soothing fragrance from the trees and flowers in bloom. Some researchers believe that some of the roots of the oldest olive trees there today could date back two thousand years to the time when Jesus was there.

By Friday things had turned very ugly and after His trial, in a gesture of mockery and scorn, some Roman soldiers put local thorny shrubs to use making a circlet to form a crown. This they jammed onto Jesus' head



drawing not only blood, but a brutal and humiliating contrast with the laurel wreaths that Roman Emperors wore. In their warped way they thought this was apt for the 'King of the Jews'.

There have been other links with Christian traditions, for example Bird's Eye Speedwell, these are small flowers of an intense blue and are also known by their Latin name *Veronica chamaedrys*. The Latin name refers to Saint Veronica, the woman who gave Jesus her veil to wipe his face while he was carrying the cross on the way to crucifixion.



A rose with 5 petals symbolizes the 5 wounds of Christ inflicted on Him during His crucifixion, the colour of the rose is also significant – a white rose represents Christ's purity and a red rose His sacrificial blood.



The flower which represents Easter Day is the white lily or Easter Lily. The single flower stem originating from a single bulb in the ground is a symbol of Christ's resurrection from the tomb. The trumpet shaped flower represents a trumpet sounding the message that 'Jesus has Risen!' This flower represents love and hope.



So, looking at nature we can see a lot of Easter symbolism in God's creation and certainly here in the northern hemisphere, when we look to nature at Easter time, we see the signs of resurrection of the natural world after the deadness of winter.



Alicean

Giving in Grace: an update

In the last magazine we reported that, despite the challenges of the past year, the positive response to Giving in Grace by so many parishioners ensured that Freewill Offering contributions showed a significant increase in 2020. That generous financial support for the work of our parish has continued in the early months of 2020 – a big thank you to you all.

To facilitate the work of our recorders, may we remind those who normally subscribe by envelopes and wish to keep up their contributions, that cheques should be sent to the Treasurer, Agherton Parish Office, 19, Church St, Portstewart, BT55 7AH. As FWO and Building Fund contributions are lodged in separate accounts, cheques for Freewill Offering should be made payable to *Agherton Parish Church* and cheques for the Building Fund to *Agherton Parish Building Fund*. Thank you again for your support and co-operation.

Why Easter will never go away

How do you make sense of the Resurrection? Dead men don't rise, so why believe that this particular dead man *did* rise?

At the end of St Luke's gospel we read that: "they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement" (Luke 24.4). This is highly significant. The Gospels do not show us a group of disciples who were in a receptive frame of mind. After the crucifixion, they were in hiding, frightened and scattered. Then suddenly, they came out of hiding and were totally different; excited, joyful. By Pentecost they were confident, with one firm message: 'You crucified Jesus, but God raised Him up!'

How did they know this? Because of direct personal experience. Some of them had visited the tomb of Jesus: it was empty. Others claimed to have seen and touched the risen Lord. Were they hallucinating? People can hallucinate in groups – when taking drugs, for example. But of course, each one will see a different hallucination. But the disciples all saw the same thing. Or rather, the same person. Jesus.

Were they lying? Jesus had died a humiliating death as a criminal. Perhaps they wanted to rescue His good name. So, did they pretend they had seen Him?

This theory has a big problem. Their preaching led them into trouble with the authorities. They were beaten and imprisoned and some of them killed. People will die for ideas and causes which they believe in passionately. But not for things they have made up. We might suffer for our convictions, but we will not suffer for our inventions.

What about the 'swoon' theory? That Jesus didn't die on the cross, despite terrible wounds? That He recovered in the tomb, and then escaped? That the disciples nursed Him back to health? But Roman soldiers knew when

a man was dead; and there was the guard on the tomb. Also, the events which followed simply don't fit. If the disciples had been hiding Jesus all along, they would have kept very low-key, and out of the way, so that the authorities did not come after Him again. Besides, to preach that God had raised Jesus from the dead – which is exactly what they did preach – would have been a lie. Beatings and threat of death would soon have loosened their tongues. Inventions crumble under pressure; convictions hold fast.

Another reason for believing in the Resurrection is this: Jesus' continuing impact. Thousands and soon millions of people in every generation since have shared an inescapable sense of being 'accompanied' through life. Though unseen, they identify this presence as the Risen Lord.

Sometimes this experience of meeting Jesus is gentle and fitful. Sometimes it is dramatic and life changing. This reminds us that the resurrection of Jesus is not just an interesting historical puzzle. It is a vital, present day reality. It brings wonderful comfort, assuring us of the central Christian truths: death is dead; Jesus is alive; God is love.

This central notion was captured, most movingly, by the great Albert Schweitzer: 'He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: "Follow thou me," and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the suffering which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who He is.'

Have a joyful – and a challenging – Easter.

Leave your dandelions alone

When mowing your lawn, avoid cutting your dandelions. That is the advice of the president of the British Ecological Society, Prof Jane Memmott. It will help to save the bees.

She explains: “Dandelions are a fantastic source of pollen and nectar for the early pollinators in particular. If they were rare, people would be fighting over them, but because they’re common, people pull them out and spray them with all sorts of horrible things when they should just let them flower. If you leave the lawn to three or four inches, then dandelions, clover and daisies can flower and then you end with something like a tapestry, and it’s much nicer to sit there and watch the insects buzzing about.”

Prof Memmott encourages everyone to get a bee hotel for their garden. “There’s nothing nicer than sitting in a chair with a glass of wine and watching the bees going in and out of your own personal little beehive. Even just a potted plant on a doorstep will provide lunch for a bee or a fly or a butterfly.”



Operation Christmas Child 2020

Operation Christmas Child would like to thank all who contributed in any way to make this year's Appeal so successful. Between shoeboxes packed by donors and handed in at our Collection Points and those done online the number of boxes from N. Ireland came to approximately 21,000. The boxes from here were sent to Albania, Moldova and Serbia. Boxes which were contributed online went to Nigeria. In addition the people of N. Ireland made a financial gift of £15,000. Our thanks go out to everyone who packed boxes whether in person or online and who gave money.

Returning to In-Church Worship

As we put together this latest issue of the magazine our Select Vestry has decided to wait until 2nd May 2021. We will be returning to the previous quarter of the parish attending on their appointed Sunday each month as before. We look forward to the times when we can all be back together, which hopefully is not too far off.

Surnames A - D	2nd May	Surnames E - L	9th May
Surnames M inc Mc	16th May	Surnames N - Y	23rd May
All Sunday Surfer families	30th May		

Annual Easter Vestry

Following Diocesan Guidelines Agherton Parish intends to hold its Easter Vestry on **Wednesday 5th May at 7pm in church.**

Please note from the Diocese:

"We would encourage that the meetings are kept as short as possible and that only the formal business of the presentation of the accounts and elections be held.

- If anyone wishes to stand for any position but are unable to attend, then they should notify the Chairperson of their willingness to let their name go forward for election but send an apology for the attendance at the meeting.
- Appropriate Public Health Authority guidance should be followed in holding the meeting at a suitable socially distanced basis."

Answers for Crossword Puzzle on pages 14 & 15

ACROSS: 1, Cosmic. 4, Thomas. 8, In his. 9, Delaiah. 10, Falwell. 11, Water. 12, Recovered. 17, Sidon. 19, Radiant. 21, Centaur. 22, Broil. 23, Eleven. 24, Prison.

DOWN: 1, Cliffs. 2, Scholar. 3, Issue. 5, Holy war. 6, Moist. 7, Sphere. 9, Deliverer. 13, Candace. 14, Deacons. 15, Psyche. 16, Stolen. 18, Dance. 20, Debar.

Remember



Remember me when you swim at the Strand,
When you walk on the Prom that I walked along,
Sea spray on your face, briny taste on your lips,
And on the horizon a glimpse of ships.
And know that I love this place.

The boats in the harbour bob and bow,
Safe and secure from the sea's mighty power,
The fishermen's nets spread out to dry,
And the fresh fish for sale to all passers-by.
And know that I love this place.

Rock pools with starfish, anemones too,
These are the memories I bring to you,
Of mothers and sisters and brothers too,
Oceans of love now borne on the wind.
And know why I love this place.

The harbour wall where we challenged the waves,
The gunshot with boom, that startled our ears,
The hill where we played in the watery caves,
The herring pond thrilled with diving displays.
And know why I love this place.

Port-na-happle for swimming, the diving was great,
The fun that we had was really first rate,
Goodies for after from Dempsey's nearby,
And home by the castle walk well satisfied.
And know why I love this place.

Why do I love this spot on the map?
Where the sea washes smooth the rocks on the shore,
The seals and the dolphins dive and display,
And the cormorant dives for his dinner each day.
And know why I love this place.

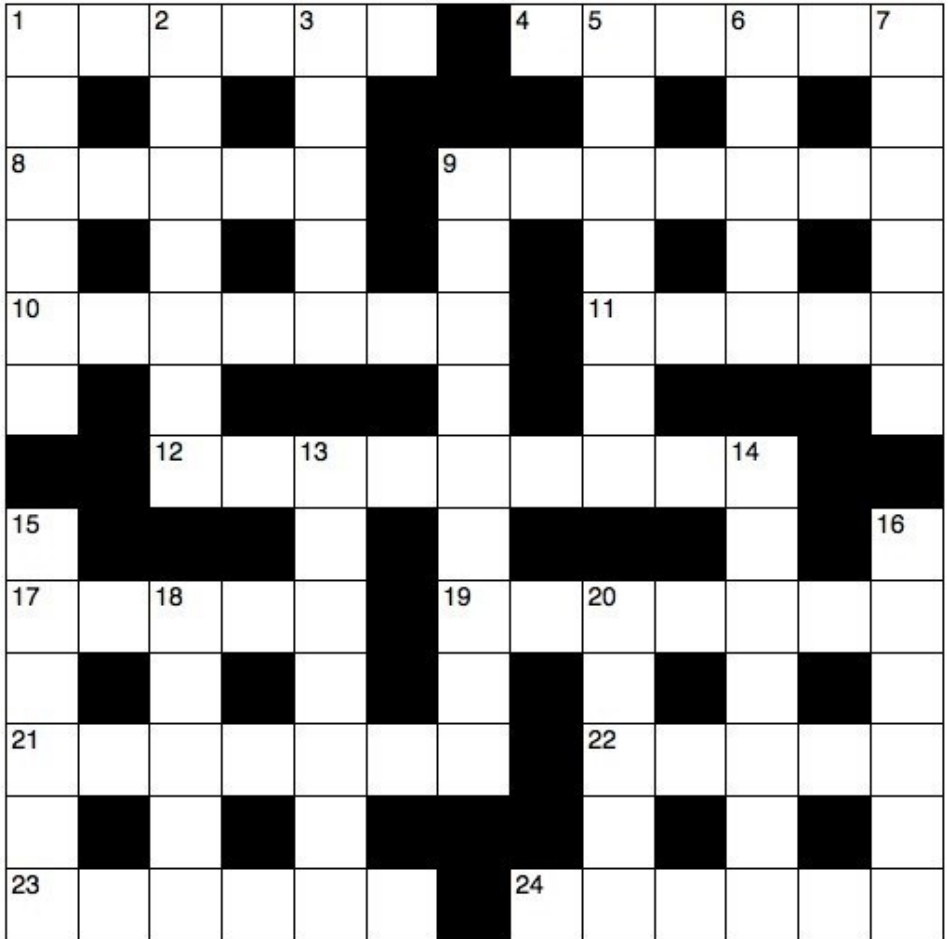
The bar-mouth of the Bann edged with bright golden sands,
The sand dunes covered with tall waving grasses,
Full with mysterious hillocks and hollows,
And memories of children – of long ago.
And know why I love this place.

The sea in its beauty is cruel and gentle,
It takes people from us and gives so much to us,
We love it or loathe it, but respect it we must,
And when we're away we miss it so much.
And know why I love this place.

Who then created this beauty and power?
From the most gentle ebb to the most powerful tide,
Who in his wisdom saw fit to provide,
This surfeit of beauty that so satiates.
And know why I love this place.



Crossword Puzzle



Across

- 1 Relating to the whole universe (6)
- 4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6)
- 8 'Unless I see the nail marks — — hands, I will not believe it' (John 20:25) (2,3)
- 9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7)
- 10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)
- 11 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36) (5)
- 12 Repossessed (Gen 14:16) (9)
- 17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3-4) (5)
- 19 'Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord' (Ex 34:29) (7)
- 21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7)
- 22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)
- 23 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6)
- 24 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6)

Down

- 1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)
- 2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)
- 3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)
- 5 For example, the Crusades (4,3)
- 6 11 Across is certainly this (5)
- 7 He reps (anag.) (6)
- 9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)
- 13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)
- 14 They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)
- 15 The human mind or soul (6)
- 16 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ' (Graham Kendrick) (6)
- 18 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — ' (Matthew 11:17) (5)
- 20 Bared (anag.) (5)



A prayer for rebuilding hope and confidence

Gracious God, whose loving kindness has no limits,
teach us afresh the way of Christ.

Where we have felt discouraged,
renew us through signs of hope;

where we have been tempted to give up,
grant us strength and faith to face the day;

where we have grown anxious about the future,
give us courage to plant the seeds of tomorrow
in acts of radical love today.

Renew us by your Spirit and set us free to serve you
so that the whole of creation may rejoice in your name.

Amen.

Children's Page

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 26:20-25, 31-35, Mark 14:17-21, 27-31
Luke 22:22, 31-34, John 13:21-30, 36-38

The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus.
One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, had
accepted money from them to betray him.

As Jesus and his disciples ate the
Passover meal, Jesus said



One of you
will betray me.

What do
you mean?

John was sitting
next to Jesus, so
Peter said



Ask him who it is.

So John asked Jesus



Which one of us are
you talking about?

It is the person I give
this piece of bread to.



Jesus dipped a piece
of bread in sauce, and
gave it to Judas.



What you are about to do
you must do quickly.



Judas took the
bread, and left.

Why has Judas gone out?



He's the money-keeper.
He's probably gone to get
something for our meal

They continued
the Passover meal



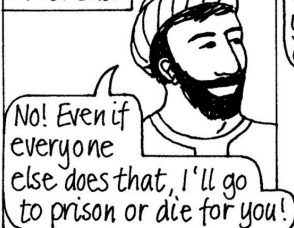
Jesus then told the rest of the
disciples

When the time
comes, you will
all run away.

'When the shepherd is struck,
the sheep scatter.'* * Zech 13:7

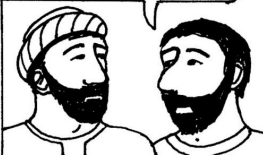


Peter said



No! Even if
everyone
else does that, I'll go
to prison or die for you!

Before tomorrow morning
you will have denied you
even know me 3 times.



Even if I have to die, I
will never disown you!



And the
others all
said the same.



The Parish Registers



Christian Burial ~ 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord'



03 Dec Mrs Maureen Mathes, 30, Westminster Park, Portstewart.
03 Dec Mr Johnny Loughrey, 44, Lever Road, Portstewart.
31 Dec Mrs J McKirgan, 12, Carrickbeg Avenue, Portstewart.
11 Jan Mr Bert Wilson, 23, Movilla Road, Portstewart.
21 Jan Mr Tommy Boyles, 95, Coleraine Road, Portrush.
20 Feb Mr Harry Bennett, 21, Woodvale Road, Portstewart.



Sympathy is extended to all who have lost loved ones in recent times.

Contributions for 'The Voice' Magazine

Each year lots of parishioners contribute to the cost of printing our Parish Magazine, but at present this is impossible. So, later in the year when we are in church again we will be encouraging parishioners to make their normal contributions.

CG Electrical Services

Electrical Installation &
Maintenance Contractors
Proprietor Campbell Guy
19b Kilmoyle Road, Ballymoney,
BT53 6NR

Tel/Fax: 028 2074 1885
Mob: 07725 986 082

W.I. PAUL BDS (QUB)
Dental Surgeon

19 Central Ave, Portstewart BT55
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Tel: 028 7083 4555

GIBSON
CONSTRUCTION



10 Kingarrief Road, Ballymoney

Tel: 028 2075 1118 Mob: 07780 683076

Who's Who

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E: rector.agherton@connor.anglican.org
Day Off: Monday

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Canon W. Lewis; Rev. G. Wilson
Canon M. Roemmele Rev. S. Jones

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Leisa Duffy 7083 3277
Mon-Thurs 9am-1pm
aghertonparish@hotmail.co.uk

CHURCHWARDENS

Rector's - Kim Gillan
People's - Ross McLaughlin

SACRISTAN - Mrs. D. Hall

HON. SECRETARY

Maureen Glover 7083 3277

HON. TREASURER

Rosemary Peters-Gallagher 7083 3277

GLEBEWARDENS

Rector's - David Moore
People's - Danny Platt

SELECT VESTRY

Rector, Churchwardens, Glebewardens, Frank Dobbs,
Wendy Floyd, Rosemary Peters-Gallagher, Maureen
Glover, Paul Girvan, Alicean Handforth, Garry Huffington,
John Lindsay, Heather Lockhart, Noel Martin, Wilf Ridge,
Rae Scott.

LAY PEOPLE WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Frank Dobbs, (Outreach, Diocesan Reader), Brian Shaw
(Diocesan Reader), Rosemary Ridge, (Parish Reader)
Wendy Floyd (Parish Reader & Parish Visitors), Wilf
Ridge (Officer Manager), Jacqui Clark (Sunday Surfers
Co-ordinator).

PAROCHIAL NOMINATORS

Frank Dobbs, Wendy Floyd, Paul Girvan, Rae Scott.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOMINATORS

Kim Gillan, Rosemary Peters-Gallagher, David Moore,
Danny Platt.

DIOCESAN SYNODSPEOPLE

Frank Dobbs, Maureen Glover

SUPPLEMENTAL SYNODSPEOPLE

Wendy Floyd, Noel Martin

SEXTON

Derek Scott

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THE VOICE TEAM

Rector, Alicean Handforth (Editorial); Leisa Duffy
(Co-ordinator); Rae Scott, (Distributor)

Safeguarding Trust

In accordance with the recommendations in 'Safeguarding Trust, The Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children' a Parish Panel has been appointed to implement some of the responsibilities identified in the Code. These include:

- interviewing persons willing to serve as workers in the parish
- advising workers on their responsibilities in respect of the Code
- being an immediate contact point for workers when a suspicion, complaint or allegation of child abuse is made about a worker with children on parish premises or in a parochial organisation, in accordance with the procedures set out in these guidelines.
- advising the Select Vestry in respect of its responsibilities

The Parish Panel Members are: Revd Malcolm R. K. Ferry (Rector), Mrs Maureen Glover (Secretary), Mrs Vera Graham (Training) Mrs Lorraine Gamble, Mrs Jacqui Clark

Sunday Surfers



During Lent members of our Sunday Surfers have been busy fulfilling Lenten promises including the following:

Put an encouraging message for others in your window ✓

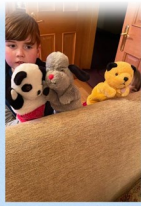
Pray for friends ✓

Read a psalm ✓

Phone family and remind them they are loved ✓

Play hide and seek ✓ Pray for your neighbours ✓

Find John 3.16 the fastest ✓



Agherton Parish Office, 19 Church St, Portstewart, BT55 7AH

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Website: <http://www.agherton.com>

Office Opening Hours: Monday - Thursday 9am - 1pm