

Broadwater Beacon

Aghalee Parish News
Christmas 2024



Unto us a child is born.

PARISH CONTACT DETAILS

Rector: Rev Paul McAdam

39 Soldierstown Rd, Aghalee, BT67 0ES Ph: 028 92 09 09 89

Church-wardens: Hilary Wilson (07872 070517)

Stephen Montgomery (07427 574030)

Secretary: Norman McAlister (028 9265 2587)

Treasurer: Elizabeth Reid (07974 821303)

E-mail: aghaleeparish@gmail.com

Website: www.aghalee.dromore.anglican.org

Scan here :





Dear friends,

Advent and Christmas brings a season of light and hope as we wait for and celebrate the coming of Christ.

During Advent (the four Sundays leading up to Christmas) we are going to introduce a beautiful, meaningful tradition that is used in many churches around the world - lighting candles in an Advent wreath.

I have invited some of the children of the congregation to light the candles during our Sunday morning services - a different family each week; and each candle has a significant meaning ...

- I. Hope - the Prophecy Candle
- II. Peace - the Bethlehem Candle
- III. Joy - the Shepherd's Candle
- IV. Love - the Angel's Candle

The lighting of candles represents the hope of the Advent season -

the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

(John 1:5)

It also represents the light of Christ coming into our world at Christmas.



Get 2025 off to a great start by joining us for our New Year Walk on New Year's Day.

We leave from the church car park at 11am - walking along the Broadwater towards Aghalee. It's a 'there and back again' route; so you can walk as far and as fast as you like; turning round when you reach the end of the tow-path, or when you meet friends coming the opposite direction - or just whenever you've walked far enough.

Some refreshments will be available in the church hall on return, to warm your hands and hearts.

All welcome! Invite a friend!



I hope to see you at some of our services and events during the coming weeks - and I would really encourage you to make a special effort to invite others along with you.

May the light and hope of Christ shine in your hearts and homes throughout Advent and Christmas and into the New Year.

Yours in Christ
Rev Paul McAdam



Christmas Services

Sunday 22nd Dec.

11am Christmas Family Service

All Ages Welcome

Christmas Eve

Tuesday 24th Dec.

11:30pm Midnight Communion



In this service, we hope to have a short simple Nativity involving the Sunday School. Please come wearing your Christmas jumper!

Christmas Day

Wednesday 25th Dec.

10am Christmas Service

*Children welcome;
bring your presents -
we'd love to see what Santa
brought you!*

If you, or anyone you know, are unable to attend services during the Christmas period, and would like to receive Holy Communion at home - please contact Rev Paul as soon as possible, to arrange a suitable time.

Sunday 22nd Dec.

6:30pm Carols by Candlelight

a candle-lit service
of readings and carols
with contributions from our choir.





Girls Friendly Society

The girls have been very busy over the last couple of months working towards their choral speaking and singing competitions on **Saturday 30 November 2024** in Magheralin Parish Church. They also have enjoyed some cookery making afternoon tea for the leaders and also Paddy's Pizzas.

The girls filled 24 shoe boxes which have been sent to Blythswood to be distributed to children and adults in countries such as Bulgaria, Ukraine and Romania this Christmas.

We would like to thank all those members of the parish who donated shoe boxes to this very worthy cause.



Before taking a break for the Christmas holidays, we are going to the pantomime – Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs on **Mon 2nd Dec**.

After the Christmas break, we will be working towards our Bible Study Competition and Arts & Crafts competitions. We would like to wish all our girls and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and we look forward to hearing about what Santa has brought them!!!



Church Lads' Brigade

The boys have also had a busy and enjoyable autumn season. On Sunday 6th October, we took part in the Regimental Parade and Service at Ballinderry Parish Church. As usual, there has been lots of games & sports—and also crafts, learning about Harvest and Remembrance.

For the first part of this year's Scripture course, we've been learning about

God's Prophets - Isaiah (& King Hezekiah), Jeremiah and Jonah.

Thanks to Tommaso Siciliano, we've also completed some of the badgework towards our First Aid badges.

GFS / CLB will end this season with their Christmas Parties on 16th Dec 2024; and begin again on Monday 13th January 2025.





SOLDIERSTOWN TOTS

Tots meets on Mondays, 10:30am - 12 noon in the Youth Hall, for pre-school children and their adults. Below - enjoying great fun with Play-Doh!



Looks like its not just the children who love to see Santa arriving! He'll be dropping by at the Tots Christmas Party on Monday 16th December.

After a Christmas break, Soldierstown Tots will begin again on Monday 13th January 2025.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

It is so good to have our Sunday School open again under the new name of Jigsaw. The Jigsaw course has been devised for Sunday Schools by the Diocese of Down and Dromore and we are grateful for the help and support given by Millie Bellew, the Diocesan Children's Development Officer.

We meet each Sunday during service-time, apart from special services such as Harvest and Remembrance, when we remain in church. Children join in the first part of the service before going to the youth hall for our own activities.



Connecting God's Big Picture



We have now completed our first unit of work: God's World, where we looked at topics such as Creation, Noah and the Wise and Foolish Builders. Why not take a look at our noticeboard, to see what we're doing!

We believe that Sunday School should be child-centred with fun activities which enable the children to learn and grow in their faith.

We are so lucky to have such lovely children joining us each Sunday. Although our numbers are small, the children more than make up for it with their enthusiasm and willingness to learn. They are a credit to their families.

New members are always welcome to come and join us!

- Jennifer, Elaine, Cathy & Sandra.

LADIES' Fellowship

October meeting - June Todd spoke on 2 very different ladies from the Old Testament, Esther & Gomer. Followed by interesting group discussions & shared open feedback.



November meeting - Anne Lavery (our birthday girl) demonstrated a Christmas wreath. Then the Ladies, under the watchful eye & patience of Anne, made their own. There was a great array of arrangements.

Enjoy displaying them ladies!



Saturday 25th January 2025 - All ladies welcome for coffee & scone.
@ Brownlow House Lurgan Time: 10.30
Tuesday 18th February 2025 - Beetle Drive evening @ 7.30 pm
This evening is open to everyone

Wishing all Ladies a Blessed Christmas with family & friends & thank you all for your fellowship.

Aghalee Parish



September - Patty Gilbert gave a very informative talk about organ donation and the work of the N.I. Kidney Patients Association.

October - the men enjoyed an outing to the Ballance House.

November - Rev Brian Cadden shared his experiences of walking the Camino Ingles (The English Way), to Santiago de Compostela.

December - The men's group are going to Vic-Ryn for a pre-Christmas Breakfast; on Wednesday 18th December. Meet at the church hall at 10am to share transport.

January - Harry Thompson will tell us about his work in Uganda with 'Fields of Life' teams.

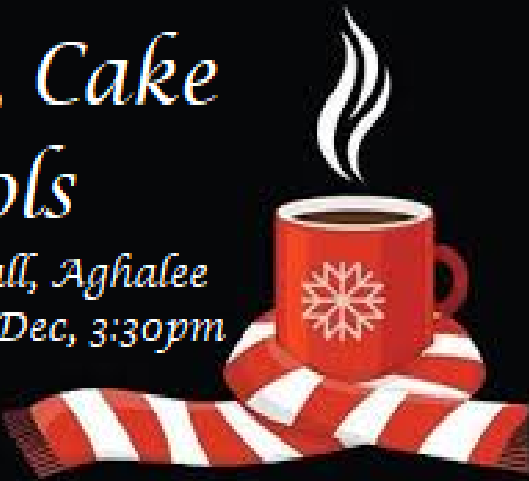
The men's group meets monthly on a Wednesday morning in the Youth Hall; or as arranged.

All men of the parish and friends welcome.

Coffee, Cake & Carols

Parochial Hall, Aghalee
Sunday 15th Dec, 3:30pm

All Welcome



Just a relaxed afternoon to enjoy a chat over a cuppa, sing a few carols and get in the Christmas mood. Spread the word and invite friends - especially any who wouldn't normally attend church - All welcome to our afternoon of Coffee, Cake & Carols.

Mothers' UNION

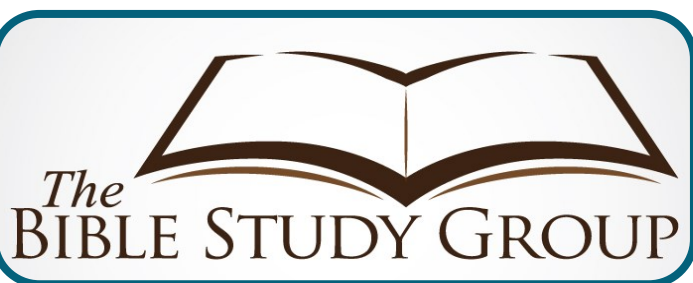
Christian care for families

Our Mothers' Union meets monthly for lunch and fellowship.

We are all looking forward to our Christmas Dinner in December to round up this year.

Our meetings will continue again in the New Year.

We wish all the parishioners a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.



During the autumn season, we studied and discussed the epistle of James.

Bible Study will continue as arranged in the New Year - meeting on Wednesday evenings at 8pm in the Parochial Hall, Aghalee.



A cup of tea / coffee is available every Sunday before the service - from about 10:15am.



World Day of Prayer Fri 7th March 2025

Our local service will be held in

St Patrick's & St Ronan's Church,
Magheralin, at 8pm.

This year's theme:

'I made you wonderful'

Psalms 139v13-18

... prepared by the Christian women of
The Cook Islands.



Choir practices continue each Thursday at 7:30pm.

New singers are always welcome in the choir - please speak to Vivien for further details.

CONCERT

King's Chorale

Fri 14th March 2025

Save the date - details later !



FREE-WILL OFFERING SCHEME:

All adult members / parishioners are encouraged to contribute to parish funds, by subscribing through the Free-Will Offering scheme. We reserve the right to remove from the parish list, those who neither attend nor subscribe to parish funds.

ENVELOPES FOR 2025:

Envelopes are being distributed with this magazine (except for some whose magazine has been posted to them - envelopes can be collected from church—or please ask a family member or friend to pick them up for you).

NEW SUBSCRIBERS:

If you do not yet have a set of envelopes and would like a set for next year, please contact us. Alternatively, you can contribute by Standing Order or bank transfer.



THANK YOU!

The rector and select vestry would like to thank everyone who subscribes to parish funds.

Your on-going generosity is very much appreciated.

Please continue to give generously to the work of God's kingdom!



END OF FINANCIAL YEAR:

Your contributions are always appreciated no matter when they are received. However, please note that **only those contributions which are lodged BEFORE the end of the financial year (31st Dec) can appear in the accounts for the year. It would, therefore, be very helpful if your giving for 2024 could be completed by Sun. 22nd Dec.**

We realise that there is one more Sunday in the year (29th Dec); but your co-operation would ease the burden for our finance team!

Also—to avoid confusion or offence - please do not hand in 2024 envelopes in January!

Instead, please use only your new set of 2025 envelopes from 1st Jan. onwards.

STANDING ORDERS / ELECTRONIC BANKING:

Many parishioners find it easier to subscribe to the parish by setting up a Standing Order for on-going regular donations.

You can also use electronic banking to make a one-off bank transfer to the parish account.

Our treasurer can provide you with the details of how to do this.

If you have any queries about any financial matter—please contact our Honorary Treasurer, Elizabeth Reid -

Phone: 079 7482 1303.

Email: aghaleeparish@gmail.com



The Generosity Initiative

During February, we will take part in a diocesan project called 'The Generosity Initiative', which is designed to help congregations think biblically about the generosity of God and how we should respond. The course is written and will be delivered by Keith Gardiner (Diocesan Fundraising Officer for Church Growth; pictured above).

Keith says: "While most people would approve of the concept of generosity, we often find it much more difficult to put it into practice,". Over the course of four Sundays, Keith will encourage us to think through the implications of what it means to live generous lives."

The topics covered will be:

1. The Generosity of God;
2. Being Generous with Our Time and Talents
3. Being Generous with Our Treasures
4. Being Generous with Our Talking.

RENEWAL OF GIFT AID DECLARATIONS:

Over the past ten years or so our Gift Aid has been claimed annually via the Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland - and they hold our signed declaration forms. (The RCB charge the parish for this service).

This year we have introduced a new computerised accounts package which will enable the parish to claim Gift Aid directly from HMRC.

To enable this, we therefore need to obtain new Gift Aid Declarations from all those who are eligible.

If you are a UK tax-payer, you can 'Gift-Aid' your Free-Will Offering. This means that for every £1 you give, **the parish can claim back 25p from HMRC - and it costs you nothing extra.**

Please complete a Gift Aid form (even if you have already done so in the past) and return it to the Treasurer or Church Wardens. Forms are included with your FWO envelopes. Further forms for additional family members are available from the Treasurer.

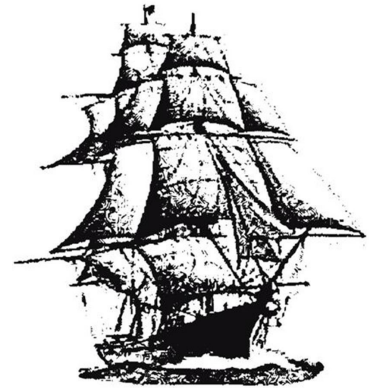


Aghalee Parish Heritage Project

In October, Simon Walker gave an excellent talk in the church, about the life and work of Bishop Jeremy Taylor. Then, in November, we enjoyed a concert by the band 'Live Issue' - pictured below.



Thanks to
National Lottery players



Ulster Historical
Foundation

Getting started with family history.

Tuesday 26th November, 7:30pm in the Youth Hall.

Gillian Hunt of the Ulster Historical Foundation will give a talk on the topic - '**Getting started with family history**'. Gillian will share information and point us to resources that can help in genealogical research. If you have ever wondered about your family roots, or tried to trace your family tree, then this information evening may help you to shed light on the subject. **All welcome - invite a friend.**

Christmas Charity Appeal

During the Christmas period, we would appeal for your generosity in aid of the various mission and charity organisations that the parish supports; including Bishops Appeal - the Church of Ireland's world aid and development program. An envelope is provided with this magazine. You can place a donation on the plate, or pass it on to any of our Select Vestry members, at any time.



We support Lisburn Food Bank on an on-going basis. Donations of food items can be left in the church porch any Sunday. Thank you to all who donated tins of custard and gravy granules during November - in preparation for the Christmas hampers.



Follow us on Facebook:
@AghaleeParish
for all the latest parish info.

From the Parish Registers

Holy Baptism

29th Sept:

***Oliver** Philip Henry Cowley;
son of John and Sheelagh
& brother of Elliot*

Christian Burial

23rd Oct: George Rheins McElwee

24th Oct: Helen Gilmore

18th Nov: William George Johnston

*We offer our sincere condolences
and prayerful sympathy
to all who mourn the loss
of a loved one.*

General Vestry Register

The General Vestry Register for Aghalee parish will be revised at a meeting on Tuesday 4th February 2025 at 7:30pm in the Youth Hall.

The General Vestry Register is the list of those who are eligible to vote at any general vestry meeting of the parish. Every adult member (18+) of the parish, who subscribes to parish funds should be registered on the General Vestry list. The list of existing General Vestry members of the parish will be displayed in the church porch during the weeks before the revision; please check that your name appears on that list.

Anyone who wishes to register, and who has not already signed the General Vestry declaration form, should speak to the rector or churchwardens during January.



MAINTENANCE OF GRAVES: *The Select Vestry wish to remind everyone that maintenance of individual graves is the responsibility of the family concerned. We would further remind you that it is essential to abide by the District Council's recycling policy. Please dispose of dead flowers / spoilt wreaths etc in the correct coloured bin - see the notice beside the church gate.*

Flower Rota



Thanks to Anne Lavery for co-ordinating the flower rota. If you would be willing to provide flowers for the church—please speak to Anne. The full list is on the notice-board in the church porch.

December:

15th Diane Mathers

22nd/29th Christmas

January:

12th Mrs W. Malcomson

26th Mrs G. Lavery

February:

2nd Mrs F. McLorn

9th Mrs S. McLorn

16th Mrs J. Montgomery

23rd Mrs E. Briggs

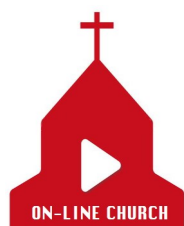
Other Sundays still available!

Services for December 2024 - February 2025

1st Dec	Advent 1	Holy Communion
8th Dec	Advent 2	Morning Prayer
15th Dec	Advent 3	Morning Prayer
22nd Dec	Advent 4	11am Christmas Family Service 6:30pm Carols by Candlelight
24th Dec	Christmas Eve	11:30pm Midnight Service
25th Dec	Christmas Day	10am Christmas Day Service
29th Dec	Christmas 1	Morning Prayer
5th Jan	Christmas 2	Holy Communion
12th Jan	Epiphany 1	Morning Prayer
19th Jan	Epiphany 2	Morning Prayer
26th Jan	Epiphany 3	Morning Prayer
2nd Feb	Epiphany 4 The Presentation of Christ	HC & Generosity Initiative—part 1
9th Feb	Proper 0	HC & Generosity Initiative—part 2
16th Feb	Proper 1	HC & Generosity Initiative—part 3
23rd Feb	2nd before Lent	HC & Generosity Initiative—part 4

All Services - Sunday @ 11am (unless stated otherwise)

All are welcome to worship with us.



Unable to get to church?

Did you know—our service is streamed online most Sundays; you can watch the service on our parish Youtube channel at 11am on Sunday morning, or catch up on it

later, or re-visit recent services -

www.youtube.com/@aghaleeparish6582

Of course—we would rather see you in-person!

Notes for the next Beacon should be with the rector by **Sunday 16th February 2025.**