

# Parishes of Swords Clonmethan Kilsallaghan Donabate and Lusk Newsletter November 2020

## Notes from the Rector

### Online Church Services

We had considered stopping the online services in October. However, Dublin went into Level 5 and the churches were shut again, making the decision for us. We are now resolved that we will keep the online services going for the rest of this year, including special Christmas services. The exact format will be decided closer to the time but it will be in line with government regulations. We are very grateful to everybody that contributes to the services and draw special attention to David Scott ([www.davidscottsinger.com](http://www.davidscottsinger.com)) for his wonderful singing each Sunday. You can find the services by typing Donabate, Lusk, Swords, Kilsallaghan into a YouTube search bar.

### Parish Registers – Bereavement - George Skerrit

Deepest sympathy is extended to the staff of Saint Ita's Hospital, Portrane, and to Sandy Skerrit, Australia, on the death of George Skerrit. George spent his whole life in Saint Ita's Hospital, as his father worked in Saint Ita's and then George became a patient there from an early age. A service of thanksgiving for George's life was held in Rock's Funeral Home Swords by the Rector on the 29th September, and burial took place in Saint Jerome's Cemetery afterwards. May the peace of love of God continue to surround you all.

### Harvest Celebrations

The Harvest services for Saint Patrick's Church, Donabate and Saint Columba's Church, Swords, took place on the respective Sundays of the 27th of September and the 4th of October by YouTube. The two churches were decorated beautifully for the YouTube services. We thank Thelma and Brian Scott for decorating the Church so superbly and for reading the lessons in Donabate and many thanks go to Hanneke Van der Does who made a stunning Harvest floral arrangement for Swords. We also thank Niall Minto and Stephen Vincent who recorded the services. Stephen also read the lessons. And we're grateful to David Scott who sang so beautifully at both services.

### Confirmation 2020

The Confirmation Service for this group of Churches will take place as soon as HSE and government guidelines allow. Please continue to pray for: Christian Coyle, Josh Kennedy, Ruby Barnes, Zoe Cox, Ella Barry, Chelsea Gozie, Molly Kingston, Rachel Foley, Olivia Baker, Harry Goodwin, Chidubem Uzoegbu, Ryan Ennis, Ellen O'Leary, and Rachel Blake.

### Illness

We continue to remember in our prayers all those who are ill. In particular at this time, we pray for Maud Keogh and Cecil Lee.



## Notes from The 45th Company Girls' Brigade by Captain Caron Neale

Congratulations to our newest Commissioned Officer Katie O'Connor! She was presented with her certificate at the Girls Brigade Ireland AGM Zoom meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October.





## **Notes from the Boys' Brigade, 7th Dublin Company by Captain Stephen Vincent**

Right from the time when we had to close back in mid-March, along with the rest of the country – and most of the world – the BB, both at central, national and Company levels, has been working and planning how to cope in this time of uncertainty.

Along with governments around the world, we have found that reopening Activities is proving trickier than shutting them down! However, the BB, as represented in our community by the 7th Dublin Company, has survived two World Wars, a Civil War, Spanish Flu, Tuberculosis, and Emigration over its 129 year history, and the Leaders are determined that we won't let a Pandemic stop us either!

The return to Activities has so far taken place through some "online/Zoom" items, such as "Fantasy Football", a Quiz, and a "Dingbats" (catchphrases) evening. More along these lines are planned.

"Face-to-Face" Activities are of course somewhat trickier. Along with standard Risk Assessments for activities being carried out, we now need to have "COVID-19 Assessments and Procedures" to keep everyone safe in that regard. These can often be more onerous than the "normal" Risk Assessments. However, the Leaders are very happy to undertake these to ensure that Boys – and Leaders – can have safe and enjoyable Activities.

Recently, before the Level 5 guidelines came into force and while it was permitted to do so, we held a Face-to-Face Activity for the Senior Boys, in the form of an Adventure Day Out to Sea Caves in Sutton, near the beginning of the Howth Cliff Walk. This had originally been scheduled for last March! While there were only six of us on this first Activity, we had a fantastic time. A pictorial record, both in photos and "action" videos, of some of the day's happenings should be up on the BB and 7th Co.'s Facebook page by the time these notes are published. As they include a couple of "EPIC FAILS" by the Leaders, no doubt they may find their way onto YouTube as well!

There are three main Caves in this area (which not many people seem to know about). Having "Ziplined" our backpacks down from the top of the rocks to the stony "beach" below (the Activity was timed for Low Tide of course!), we scrambled down about 10 vertical metres via the rocks to the caves. There are three main caves in this area. One goes in for about 30 metres, one has separate entry and exit points, necessitating a crawl through, and the third one, by contrast, we could actually walk through fully upright, on our way to "The Restaurant" in the cove beyond, where a series of large boulders and ledges meant we could all eat our lunch "Socially Distanced" (but no table service!).

All in all, we spent four very active and happy hours, outdoors and with Dublin City on our doorstep, and within only a kilometre of our start point. There is adventure to be had everywhere, if one knows where to look for it!

Hopefully more adventures can be reported on soon, once government health regulations allow. We would be delighted to welcome new Members to the 7th Dublin.

Contact Stephen Vincent on 086 822 7987 to find out more.

**The Square Tower at Swords**  
**by Eric Wolfe**  
**photographs by Margaret Quinlan**



The square tower is one of the historic buildings belonging to the grouped parishes. It's also known as the Norman tower, although it's not Norman, or as the bell tower. It stands beside Saint Columba's church in Swords. Together with a stone church, it was constructed in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century on the site of a monastery founded by Saint Columba in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century.

A handful of funerary monuments from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century stone church building are preserved in the 'modern' (i.e. only two hundred year old) church. Nothing else of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century church remains. In the photograph to the left, a triangular scar on the side of the square tower can be seen, marking where the roof of that now vanished church used to connect with the square tower.

The presence of fireplaces, cupboards, and other features in the tower show that it was originally a residential building, probably for clergy, as well as being a bell tower.

Today, the square tower has a lower ground floor room, currently used for storage, a first floor room from where the bells can be rung, and a top floor room which contains the bells and the clock

mechanism. Access to the upper floors is by way of a very narrow spiral stone staircase. Evidence would suggest that other floors were present at one time in the building, as doorways from the staircase lead out to floor levels that no longer exist.



Some parishioners may be aware of a carving which is on the stone at the base of the square tower. As can be



seen in the photograph to the left, the stone was laid on its side. It appears to have been reused as building material when the square tower was constructed. This stone was pointed out to Margaret Quinlan, conservation architect, when she recently visited the tower. Margaret stated that the stone may be part of a cross slab, similar in design and age to the one shown here, which was found at Clonmacnoise. The monastery at Clonmacnoise in County Offaly was founded by Saint Ciarán in AD 455.

The stone is on the exterior of the square tower and visible any time. If you can't find it, when we are back in church, please ask and we will be happy to point you in the right direction.

Recommended reading: Brian Scott's book "Saint Columba's 1818-2018 – A Parish History."



## **Counselling Services**

In the middle of a global pandemic, not to mention all the other issues that are currently flaring up in the world, it's not surprising that everyone is stressed. The option of pastoral care is always available to you. Contact Reverend Neal by email on [nealphair@hotmail.com](mailto:nealphair@hotmail.com), or by calling 087 614 3951 or 01 895 6747. Here are details of two mental health services that might be of use to you or to someone you know.

### **MyMind Service**

I would like to bring to your attention a government funded online counselling service for people experiencing poor mental health during this pandemic. This service may well be of benefit to clergy and parishioners alike.

This is free to all who need it and can be accessed using [www.mymind.ie](http://www.mymind.ie) (Covid-19 Project).

Individuals can access HSE-accredited counselling and can choose a counsellor that meets their needs (bereavement, addiction, loneliness, depression, etc).

The website [www.mymind.ie](http://www.mymind.ie) also has counselling services available outside of the Covid-19 Project, which while not free of charge, may be of benefit to someone known to you.

+Michael  
Archbishop of Dublin & Glendalough

### **Fingal Counselling Service**

Fingal Counselling Service is a community-based voluntary counselling service providing confidential, non-directive counselling. The service offers a safe and confidential environment where clients are encouraged and supported while working through their difficulties. This service can be a lifeline to people when they are most vulnerable

We are located in the BASE Resource Centre building, beside Saint Cronan's Church and schools, on the Brackenstown Road in Swords. We are open and accepting new clients.

If you would like to speak to a counsellor, please call us on 01 8902596. More information about our service is available online at [www.counsellingatfingal.com](http://www.counsellingatfingal.com)

We continue to adhere to the Government and HSE guidelines regarding Covid-19. When you contact us to make an appointment you will be advised of the necessary steps to take to ensure your safety and the safety of everyone in the service

Denise  
Fingal Counselling Service



**To all Members of the Church of Ireland  
From Archbishop John McDowell &  
Archbishop Michael Jackson**

This is a critical moment in our collective effort against the coronavirus.

In following the call of our Lord to love our neighbours as ourselves, we all have a responsibility – and the power to make a difference – in containing the virus through our everyday choices and actions. A return to restrictions is a reminder of our own limitations and the complexities faced by those in political leadership. We, like countless others, pray that there will be brighter days ahead. This situation, as with many recorded in Scripture, will pass but until then, this is a journey on which we all must continue together.

We thank all members of the Church of Ireland who have kept faith in these times and acknowledge that the Church's ministry of care never stops even when the strongest lockdown measures are in place. Indeed, parishes across the island are to be commended on how they are responding creatively in sustaining services of worship and meeting personal and pastoral need.

While more patience, compassion and discipline will be required in the coming months, we can be confident that this can be a time of renewal as we take up opportunities to be carriers of hope, to serve and care in local communities which will become more familiar to us.

Over the shorter days and longer nights, we should consider how acts and words of kindness can continue to help front-line workers, who deserve our continued support and gratitude; people who will be facing renewed restrictions whilst living alone; and all who are especially at risk through age or another vulnerability.

What we can bring with us into the months ahead: a faith in the God whose love never fails his people; hope that the Earth and all within it is the Lord's; and the love of a natural world where God offers to us the beauty of the lilies in the field and mourns the death of every sparrow – how much more do we matter to him.

Alongside this message, we commit to praying the following prayer daily with an invitation for others to join with us:

Heavenly Father, Lord of all creation  
We thank you for all you have given us.  
Enable us to become better stewards of your creation,  
Thinking always of our legacy to future generations.  
Mindful of the unequal burdens borne by the old and the sick in this emergency  
Inspire us also to be unsparing in giving ourselves in the service of our neighbour  
And in support of all who continue to work on the front-line  
In government, in hospitals and care homes, and in the community.  
All this we ask in the Name of your Son, the servant of all.  
Amen