



**Welcome to**  
**St Mark's Parish, Dundela**  
Church of Ireland



**A Spring in your Step**  
**Spring 2024**

## Connect with St Mark's

The staff team in St Mark's



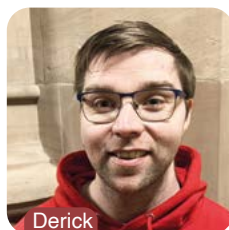
Helene



Elaine



Kathy



Derick



Yvonne

Karen



Brian

Arthur

The welcoming wardens

Senior and junior verger

## Parish Contacts

Please contact the Rector if you wish to talk, have a visit or go for a walk, as well as for baptisms, confirmations, weddings or funerals.

**Rector:** Canon Dr Helene T Steed

**T:** 028 9065 9047 **M:** 07342 720350

**Email:** [dundela@down.anglican.org](mailto:dundela@down.anglican.org)

**Parish Office:** Heyn Hall, 2 Sydenham Avenue, Belfast, BT4 2DR

**T:** 028 9013 7436 Please take note of our new number

**Email:** [office.dundela@down.anglican.org](mailto:office.dundela@down.anglican.org) or [dundela@gmail.com](mailto:dundela@gmail.com)

**Office hours:** Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 9 am - 12 noon

## To find out more about St Mark's ...

visit our website and follow us on social media. You can also sign up for our weekly newsletter or emails about events, even if you don't consider yourself a parishioner.

**Visit our homepage:** <https://dundela.down.anglican.org/>



# A Message from Helene, Rector in St Mark's

Some animals are more mesmerising than others. Kangaroos and wallabies fall into that category. There is something happy and joyous in their appearance that brings a smile to my face. They radiate vigour and energy and they have quite some stamina. A kangaroo's top hopping speed is 43 miles per hour, which they only tend to use for short distances. Hopping at a moderate speed of just over 9 miles per hour maintains energy and consistency. No matter their speed – they have a spring in their step.

Springtime is a cheerful season when many of us walk more energetically, with a spring in our steps. We may decide to embrace something new to enhance and enrich our bodies and souls. It is tempting to hop into these new endeavours at top-speed, but maybe this year we need to adopt a more sustainable and moderate speed to build up our endurance.

There is one person in the Bible who is described as a man walking with a spring in his step – Moses. My impression is that his spring was moderate. Throughout his lifelong walk, he maintained time in God's presence. He listened to God's direction, as he led God's people on a forty-year long journey from captivity to freedom. Despite the people's grumbling and challenging behaviour, he kept on walking, walking with a spring in his step.

There are plenty of opportunities for you to increase your spiritual and social stamina on offer at St Mark's. Our services, groups and activities are open to everyone. Welcome!

Blessings,

**Helene**



## Services in St Mark's

**Wednesday 3.45 pm**

**Sunday 10 am and 6.30 pm**

Looking forward to seeing you!

# Join us for worship and fellowship

**This year Lent begins on Valentine's Day and what an excellent combination as both capture what can be done in the name of love.**

Join us for our service on **Ash Wednesday 14 February** at 3.45pm, when we pause around the theme 'Preparing ourselves for God's love at Easter'.

Our Wednesday afternoon services will continue throughout the Spring, with music, poems and art as aids to challenge our thoughts. We look forward to a visit on **Wednesday 15th May** when a visiting choir from Holy Comforter Church, Charlotte, North Carolina will sing Evensong.

After each Wednesday service, please join us for tea and a chat at the servery.

## First Sunday services

A slightly more informal worship experience with time for a chat together over a cup of tea or coffee in our new welcome area.

**Sunday 3 March:** 10.00 am Thinking Day, we will welcome all our Rainbows Brownies and Guides to church to think about 'How to spring into the future'.

**Sunday 7 April:** Meet Thomas, who dared to stick out his neck and ask questions.

**Sunday 5 May:** Go, with a spring in your step.

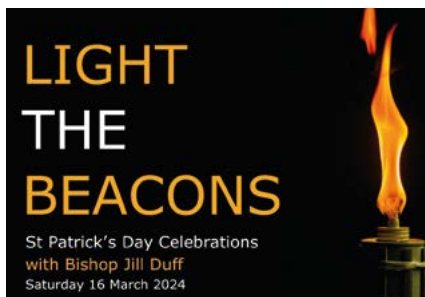
**Sunday 2 June:** Treasure in jars.



## Walking in St Patrick's footsteps and lighting beacons of faith

You are warmly welcome to the Diocesan St Patrick's Day festivities on **Saturday 16 March**, beginning with a service of Holy Communion in Saul parish church and a pilgrimage walk to Downpatrick. The main festival service will begin in Down Cathedral, Downpatrick at 11.45 am with speaker Bishop Jill Duff from Lancaster. 'Light the Beacons' is the theme, focussing on prayer for a re-kindling of the fire of faith that Patrick lit in Ireland almost 1600 years ago, and a symbolic fire will be lit outside the Cathedral. Each parish will be given a beacon and a container of oil which will be lit the next evening at St Mark's.

On **St Patrick's Day, Sunday 17 March** join us for a special 6.30 pm service in St Mark's, starting in the church building in prayer and reflection and moving outside around the firepit where we light our beacon of faith. We will then join together in the Parish Hall for a St Patrick's supper, and some céilidh dancing, suitable for all ages. *Please register with the Parish office for catering purposes.*





# Holy Week and Easter in St Mark's



**Wednesday 27 March 3.45 pm** Holy Communion, with hymns.

## **Maundy Thursday 28 March 7.30 pm**

On this night we remember how Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, a meal we know as Holy Communion. We recall how Jesus at his last earthly meal told his friends and followers to love one another as he washed their feet. We strip the altar, the communion table, of all decoration and before leaving the church listen to the passage of how Christ prayed in Gethsemane.

## **Good Friday 29 March 12 noon – 3.00 pm**

Come and consider some of those who were present leading up to the crucifixion and those standing at the foot of the cross. The church is open for you to come and go, for private contemplation with readings, reflections and prayers every 15 minutes. At 2 pm, for the last hour, we focus on the cross as we sing and pray some of those hymns and prayers that are associated with Good Friday.

**Good Friday 7.30 pm** A service of Reading the Passion, Jesus' last earthly days, concluding in darkness as the Tenebrae candles are extinguished one by one.

## **Easter Sunday 31 March**

**Dawn Service at 8.00 am** Join us at the Easter Garden beside the church and at the 'open tomb' we will ponder the significance of a robin. Breakfast is served after the service.

**Easter Parish Communion Service at 10.00 am.** Celebrating the Resurrection, a joyous service followed by refreshments and an Easter Egg Hunt in the church grounds.

**Evening Communion and Praise at 6.30 pm.** Stepping out on the road to Emmaus.

**Have you lost the habit of coming to church? Don't know anyone? Not sure what to do?**

**Why not take a step this Spring and our team will warmly welcome you to our services or other activities. If you need a lift please contact the office to arrange.**



# Church for all the family

As we reach out this year to encourage families of all ages to feel welcome to spend time with us, here we highlight some new activities for you to consider.

## Sunday School

Our very bouncy Sunday school group meets every week, leaving part way through the 10.00 am service to learn about Jesus and what it means to step out and follow him. This Spring the children will prepare the ground in the vegetable patch for sowing, and will study the CMS Ireland children's resource "Hands Out", learning about the challenges faced by refugees in many parts of our world. On the second Sunday each month, our 'senior' youngsters aged 10 and over will have a bonus session with Rector Helene to explore where they are on their faith journey and discuss questions like "Why do we come to church?" and "Why do we do what we do in church?"

Contact: Yvonne McMaster 028 9623 7622 or email [sundayschool.dundela@gmail.com](mailto:sundayschool.dundela@gmail.com)



## YF : Look what's in store for Spring

Board games and gaming nights, flipping pancakes, 'bring your mum to YF' night, outings, breakfast and more – our Youth group are up to all sorts this Spring. We meet most Sunday evenings from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm in the Parish Hall. Anyone aged 10-18 is welcome to join us, even if you've never been before. Find out more from Sarah at [youth.dundela@gmail.com](mailto:youth.dundela@gmail.com).

## Last Sunday Praise

Join us on the last Sunday of each month, 6.30 to 7.30 pm in the church for a time of contemporary worship, led by our Youth Fellowship Group. Let's praise God together through music and singing, teaching, prayer and communion, with the opportunity to chat together too. We would encourage parishioners and visitors of all ages to try out this new evening opportunity and to support our young people, **Sunday 25 February, 31 March, 28 April (St Mark's Day), 26 May and 30 June.**



# Messy Church

Hannah and her team of helpers look forward to welcoming children, parents and grandparents to our Messy Church afternoon this Spring. Bring the kids along to learn together through stories, crafts, games and activities about characters and events in the Bible.

**Messy Footsteps** Saturday 9 March 2.00 to 3.30 pm

Let's follow in the footsteps of St Patrick, learning about how he brought faith to Ireland. Be prepared for lots of green creative fun, shamrock badges and party food too. Dressing in green is encouraged!



## Easter Trail

Our popular family Easter Trail will take place on **Easter Saturday 30 March**, from 11.00 to 2.00 pm, all around our Church grounds. Bring your children along to learn about the Easter story, in this self guided interactive tour, with fun crafts and thought provoking questions about God. Hot dogs will be served from 12.00 to 1.00 pm, with tea and coffee throughout, and our friendly team from Sunday school will be on hand to show you the way. **This is a free event and a great opportunity to bring along a friend or neighbour.**



## Building towards Easter at Lego Club

Lego Club is back, by popular demand, and meets on Wednesdays 4.00 to 5.30 pm in the Parish Hall, for children over 5 (with accompanying adults if desired). In preparation for Easter, the club will work together to help make a variety of scenes related to the Easter story, which they hope to put on display, as well as some fearsome dragons, connecting with the story of St George. Please sign up for Lego Club through the office.



*Thank you*

Thank you to all who supported our Lego Exhibition and Christmas Tree Festival, with funds going towards our ministry with children and young people. If you are interested in helping out occasionally at events or clubs, which can be rewarding and a lot of fun, please contact the office, and Elaine can take you through our volunteering guidance.



## Mums and Chums

We meet on Wednesdays from 10.15 am to 11.30 am, for play, singing, chat and coffee in the parish hall. We are now part of an initiative, Eastside Early Learning Community, organised by Save the Children, Sure Start and Eastside Partnership, bringing together church toddler groups in the area. It is exciting to have this opportunity to connect with other groups, and in our first session of 2024 almost 20 little ones enjoyed a visit from a storyteller, and receiving some lovely new books, funded through the project. All pre-school children and their carers welcome, contact Norah on 07923 024194 for more details.



## Jumping into the Kitchen with Karen



Also back after a very successful Autumn introduction is our cooking club, aimed at sharing basic cooking skills with young people aged Primary 6 to Year 10. We conquered how to chop onions, carrots and celery, then mastered soups, shepherds pie, apple crumble and Christmas pudding – all delicious! Karen is offering another 5 week programme on **Tuesdays, beginning 19 March**, continuing **9, 16, 23 and 30 April** 4.00 pm - 5.30 pm Parish Hall. There will be new recipes including decorating an Easter Cake, with all ingredients provided. We have places for up to 10 children, £15 each. Please register with the office to book a place for your child.

## Rainbows, Brownies and Guides

Our guiding groups returned after Christmas full of enthusiasm and meet on Monday evenings, for crafts, games, stories and fun, Rainbows at 5.15 pm and Brownies/Guides at 6.30 pm. Rainbow leader Heather Ellison (028 9065 9278) told us how the girls love playing and being part of a team, and hopes to expand her team of leaders so more girls can attend.

Brown Owl Fiona shared what the 20th Brownies packed into the Autumn - badge nights, a Jelly Baby 'architecture' evening, Scottish dancing, Halloween and Christmas parties and a special visit from a gentle little horse called Summer. As they step into the Spring/Summer season, the girls wasted no time getting back into the swing of things with a Dance Fit evening, with some of their parents joining in the groove! The leaders are so grateful for everyone who supports the group, and are pleased to announce that there are a couple of available spots for any 7 to 10-year-olds eager to join the fun.



A warm welcome awaits, and interested families can contact Elaine in our church office for more details.



# Stepping up to the Organ Console





## Welcome to our New Organist and Choir Director, Derick Weir


Derick joined us last October, and stepped out from behind the organ console to introduce himself. He writes :


"I graduated with a First Class Honours degree in music from Ulster University in 2018 and have been working as an instrument and vocal music tutor in the Tyrone/Armagh areas. In September 2023, I became the Musical Director of Dungannon Choral Society, and work as an accompanist with other choirs like Omagh Music Society, Lowry Singers, and the Derg Valley Choir. With my background as an organist I was a scholar in St Bartholomew's Parish Church, Belfast, and have provided cover across the country."

## Fun facts about Derick

 A noted memory in my journey towards a career in music is that I performed in Carnegie Hall, NYC in 2018 under the direction of composer Paul Mealor.

 I previously worked as a chef in Omagh, mostly being in charge of the sweet dishes.

 I am a keen gym enthusiast and am working towards a few fitness goals, including power lifting!

 Favourite quote : "I play the notes as they are written, but it is God who makes the music." - J. S. Bach

**Derick will help lead our Love Songs concert (details below) – do come along!**

## Love Songs

By Candlelight

**Friday 23 February 2024  
7.30 pm in St Mark's Church**

**STRING QUARTET  
BELL RINGERS  
MUSICIANS & SINGERS**

*Well-known songs for all ages!*

**Tickets: £10 adults, children free  
includes light refreshments**

**Tickets available from the office, proceeds to parish funds**

# Spring Growth

Moses, one of the heavy-weights in the Bible, was described as someone with sharp eyesight and a spring in his step throughout his life (Deuteronomy Chapter 34, The Message). One reason for his earthly vigour was his closeness with God. Like Moses, we can do the same - listen to God's word as we read the Bible, listen to his voice as we pray, and join together to study and ask questions.



Our **Spring Bible study** will commence on **Monday 19 February** at 7.30 pm and continue weekly during Lent when we will study parts of John's Gospel. We will gather in the hall, starting with a cup of something before discussing different passages from this amazing book.

## Sunday evenings in Lent

At our evening services we will pause and reflect around some inspiring biblical personalities, men and women who had different ways of relating to God. Some were quiet, others were exuberant, some were word-based, others contemplative. Let's get to know them and see how they can help us on our Christian journey.

**18 February:** John, the beloved disciple

**25 February:** Mary, who sat down and listened

**3 March:** Paul, a man open to the Spirit

**10 March:** Amos, a blunt speaking man

**17 March:** Walking in Patrick's footsteps and lighting our beacon of faith

**24 March:** James, a pillar in the community

## Book Club – Spring Reading

For those of you wanting a relaxed Spring Challenge, why not pick up one of these books and come along to our book club. We meet each month in the Rectory, 4 Sydenham Avenue, with interesting reviews and a cup of tea. Feel welcome to join for any or all of our selection this Spring:-

**Tuesday 5 March, 8.00 pm :** *The Station Sergeant* by John McAllister. A page turning murder mystery, set in Ballymena.

**Tuesday 2 April, 8.00 pm :** *A Severe Mercy* by Sheldon Vanauken. A moving account of the author's marriage and friendship with C. S. Lewis.

**Tuesday 7 May, 8.00 pm :** *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* by Lauren Liebenberg. Two girls growing up in dramatic times of 1970's Rhodesia.

Contact: Canon Helene Steed 07342 720350 or parish office.



# St Mark's Pop Up Café presents Spring Supper Evening and Quiz

Friday 26th April, from 7.30 pm

Parish Hall.

Join us for a hot fork supper and tasty desserts,  
the chance to chat to new friends and old, and then  
compete in a fun table quiz.

Bring a friend, bring your own drinks,  
bring your general knowledge.

If you are new to the area, or to St Mark's, please feel  
especially welcome to come along.

**Tickets £10 each from the office T. 028 9013 7436.**

## Spring Growth in Kenya by Lynn Wilson



*Photo Credits : Isabelle Prondzynski*

Our mission partners in Nairobi have not let the grass grow under their feet since our visit last May. The community leaders have organised an additional food distribution to all the Tujisaidie school children and their teachers for the long school holiday, when school meals are unavailable. Funds were provided through St Mark's so that local artist Mathaga could use his talents to paint fabulous and inspiring murals in the new playground, and the children are loving this area as they wait for the builders to complete an additional wing to the school. The TAF community centre provides temporary classroom space while building progresses, and a group of young vulnerable women meet here regularly now for mentoring sessions as they look to the future. All these small steps of progress are an encouragement for us as we pray for our brothers and sisters and provide whatever practical support is possible. Thank you to all our very generous supporters.



# Spring activities in St Mark's



**Get Strong and Flexible with Lynne** : Mondays and Thursdays 10.45 to 11.30 am. Join our mixed groups for some stretching, mobility strengthening and breathing exercises to music, seated or standing, under the gentle encouragement of tutor Lynne – you'll soon feel the benefit! Stay for tea and coffee in the Parlour Warm Hub on Thursdays too.

**Art and Chat group** Mondays 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm. Meet in the Parlour with fellow artists of all abilities to draw, sketch, paint and chat together over a cuppa. Bring your own supplies and enjoy the company.

**Creative Stitchers** Our Creative Stitchers craft group meet in the parish hall on the second and fourth **Thursday** each month from 2.00 to 4.00 pm to knit, sew, embroider, crochet, and chat. Having created an entire knitted Christmas tree for our festival in December, members are now 'repurposing' the tree squares into warming lap blankets to give away. Contact: Ann Clark 028 9029 2205.



**St Mark's Players** St Mark's Players and Knock Drama continue to work on their next production, *Love's a Luxury* by authors Guy Paxton and Edward V Hoile. The performance has been rescheduled for **Thursday 16 to Saturday 18 May**. If you are interested in drama then come along to the parish hall on Tuesday evenings at 7.30 pm. Further details available from Eileen, M: 07919 597701.

## Musical singing and ringing

St Mark's has a wonderful musical heritage, with a regular programme of concerts and recitals. Our music groups who would love to welcome you, as a beginner or experienced singer or musician. All groups practice in the Church building on Wednesdays, enjoying Musicali-Tea in the new coffee servery at 7.15 pm. Contact : stmarksdundelamusic@gmail.com

**Handbells** Wednesdays 5.45 – 7.15 pm. All abilities are welcome to learn a wide range of music for enjoyment and to complement worship in church. Thank you for sharing your talents at our Christmas services.

**Tower Bells** We are proud of our peal of ten bells in St Marks, and of our ringers who are training their latest recruit aged just 10. We hope you enjoy hearing the bells during practice nights, and when we have visiting ringing teams. Beginners and experienced ringers practice on Wednesday evenings between 6.30 – 9.00 pm. Contact Don (07842 891388) for more information.





**Open Choir** Wednesdays 7.45 – 9.00 pm. Our choir is 'open' to all abilities, and 'open' to attend as your diary allows, supporting services throughout the year. The choir was delighted to join with others in the Belmont Churches Together service for Christian Unity Week in January, and are now working towards some new pieces for Holy Week and Easter.

**Music Group** Grade 3 to professional instrumentalists accompany our First Sunday services, and provide a lovely variety to our worship. We have recently added a new cellist, violins and a growing flute ensemble, and can adapt music for all abilities. Contact Sarah Bass 07731 422002.

### **Warm Hub**

Our 'Warm Hub' will carry on in the Parlour on Thursday mornings right through the Spring, at 11.30 am to 1.00 pm. Join us in a warm and welcoming space for tea, coffee and a bowl of soup, and the opportunity for friendship and chat, the occasional talk or a board game. Our Hub is free to all, Welcome!



### **Scottish Country Dancing**

If your New Year resolution to take more exercise is fading, why not give it a fun boost with some dancing. Our class welcomes beginners of all ages, and members will be delighted to guide you through each dance. Thursday evenings, from 7.30 to 9.00 pm, plus Saturday morning skills classes on the second Saturday, finishing their season on **Thursday 11 April**. Contact: John Campbell 07923 492357



### **Walking Group**

What better way to put a Spring in your Step than to head outside for a walk in nature. Our dog and family friendly walks with a coffee stop continue and we try to ensure they are suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Meet at the parish hall.

**Saturday 2 March**

**Comber Greenway** 1.30 pm, with a local history talk from Eileen Anghel.

**Saturday 6 April**

**Floodgates Walk**, Newtownards 1.30 pm

**Saturday 4 May**

**Bluebell wood walk**, Portglenone 1.00 pm

**Monday 20th May**

**Beating the bounds, a prayer walk for this corner of God's world** 5.30 pm to 8.30 pm

For more information and if you need a lift to any of our walks please contact : Hannah Nelson 028 9065 1916 or ask in the parish office to be added to our mailing list.

For more information on all our activities visit [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#), or contact the parish office or Rector, see the inside front cover for details.

# A Spring in your Step – thoughts from parishioners

We asked what putting a 'Spring in your Step' meant to our parishioners and staff – here's what they shared.....

**Robert:** *"When I was a young boy, I was told I needed a Spring in my Step – that is, HURRY UP!! "*

**Elaine:** *"Weight training with Lynne has certainly given me a Spring in my Step."*

**Norah:** *"When we come to set up for Mums and Chums on a cold winter morning and I see some of the children's photos on the mural it warms my heart and I know why I volunteer."*

**Derick:** *"Spring is one of my favourite seasons, although life remains busy, the longer approaching days help make it seem less rushed. A spring walk allows some time for the peace and quiet of nature, or to listen to some music as I do on my travels in my car, which I named 'Clifford'."* If you can guess why, do let us know!

**Don:** *"It puts a Spring in my Step when I ring bells, to let people of all faiths and none know it is Sunday and that God is calling them to think of him on that day. It's the most effective way I know to send out that message."*

**Jacynth:** *"I have a Spring in my Step as I head to 'Ageilty', circus class for older people. Juggling, trapeze, new friends and a cuppa make for an energising time!"*

**Lesley:** *"Seeing dainty snowdrops bursting through the soil gives me hope for longer days and an end to the dark days of winter, putting a Spring in everyone's Step."*

Why not join Lesley and our Flower Guild team on Thursdays when they brighten the church with flowers?

## The Parish Prayer of St Mark's

Please join us as we pray for our whole community.

**Almighty God, you alone can bring growth to your Church.**

**Send your Holy Spirit to give us wisdom in our planning,  
courage in our actions and power in our outreach.**

**May we in St Mark's grow in spiritual commitment to you,  
grow in numbers and in our service to the community.**

**We pray for a new spring. In the name of Jesus,  
Amen.**

## Dates for your Diary



**Easter  
TRAIL**

**Saturday 30 April**

St Mark's church grounds.  
11.00 – 2.00 pm  
Hot dogs from 12.00 to 1.00 pm.  
**Free and open to everyone**



**Love's  
a  
Luxury**

by authors Guy Paxton  
and Edward V Hoile

**Thursday 16 to  
Saturday 18 May 2024  
at 7.30 pm**

Tickets available from the  
parish office



**Save the Date**

We will be holding a plant sale  
on **Saturday 25th May**, and if the  
spring weather permits perhaps  
one or two open garden visits in  
the parish too.

Keep an eye on our social media  
for more details, and contact the  
office if you'd like to offer some  
plants and cuttings for sale.



**Save the Date  
Summer  
BBQ  
and Games,**

**Friday 21 June 6.00 - 9.00 pm**  
BYO food and drinks

**Look who's talking....** Keep an eye on our social media and newsletter, for some interesting talks we hope to host later in the Spring



If you would like to receive reminders of parish events, please send your email address to the parish office and we will add you to our notification list.