



**ST. PETER'S CHURCH
TWO MILE HOUSE
NEWSLETTER CHRISTMAS 2020**



CHRISTMAS CEREMONIES

The following are the Christmas ceremonies in St. Peter's Church, Two-Mile-House:-

Thursday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 6.00 pm and 9.00 p.m. (Vigil)
Friday 25th December (Christmas Day) 9.00 a.m. and 11.00 a.m.

Please see below for important information if you are going to attend these masses

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2020

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full". Jn.10:10

Life is endangered and our concern is for our welfare and health, for ourselves and our families. We are putting our trust for a vaccination to combat Covid. We hope it will be the cure. In the meantime, we have to keep to the guiding precautions. Our tensions are high, fear, loneliness, impatience, helplessness, restricted living. We are confused and lost. So many reliable institutions and modern technology are not able to help in the present situation. How long will this go on?

Our celebration of Christmas is most welcome. The opportunity to celebrate hopefully will be an occasion of joy and happiness. The opportunity of meeting family and friends is overdue. I hope the opportunity will come our way and be enjoyed in safety.

The birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God is the reason for our celebration of Christmas. The birth of Jesus brings great joy to believers. The mystery of the birth of the Son of God opens for us the meaning of life. What Jesus comes to show us is God's great love presented in a personal way in the person of Jesus. The presence of Jesus in the holy Family is also an occasion for our family celebrations. I hope you can take part and enjoy our Parish Christmas celebrations. I recommend readings from the Bible about the events and characters around the birth of Jesus.

(Matthew, chapters 1 and 2; Luke, chapters 1 and 2; John, Chapter 1:1-18.)

Wishing you a Blessed, Joyful and Safe Christmas - *Fr. Michael Flattery*



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Update from Parish Pastoral Council Chairperson – Gerard Gallagher

2020 has been a particularly challenging year for our Parish. Yet it has been impressive how people adapted and adjusted to all the changes we had to make. We have had a significant amount of time without public Mass. We have had to implement Covid-19 protocols. Whilst the physical environment of our Church has been modified, it has been amazing to see how parishioners and the Parish Pastoral Council responded.

I would like to say a word of appreciation to our older parishioners who had to stay at home for a lengthy spell. Neighbours and parishioners rallied and supported each other. A year ago, we installed a Webcam in the Parish and we were unsure of how it would be received or used. It has become a valuable asset and is used daily by many to participate at Mass online.

It has also been used for funerals, weddings and First Communion. All these moments went ahead with restricted numbers. Sunday Mass has continued with the core support of volunteers also. The choir has been reduced to a cantor/soloist per Mass and this has been difficult for choir members.

In the Spring all the priests from the Parish came out for the day and with members of the Parish Pastoral Council they visited many of our older parishioners, where possible at the gates of their houses.

Special thanks to the work of John Valentine and Cyril Mongey who provided key support on this project. The restoration of daily Mass – via webcam has been an immense support to people. Thanks to Fr Jackie and Harry Goff for committing to this on a daily basis. Also the work of Monica Sheehan who has helped with the Sacristy duties and support from Patricia Daly also has to be acknowledged.

During this Advent period in the lead up to Christmas we are pleased now that public Mass with a congregation can now take place. Please read our Christmas section. Christmas will be celebrated, but there will be slight changes to this experience, so plan and prepare.

Finally a word of thanks to all the Parish Pastoral Council and other Parish volunteers who really did work hard over the past year. We also remember Tom Kenny a member of our Parish Finance Committee who died during the year.

PPC and Covid-19 Volunteers include – Gerard Gallagher, Shaun Durkin, Caroline Treacey, Joan O'Reilly, John & Mary Valentine, Ruth Berney, Ina King, Dorothy Hennebry, Sheila Choiseul, Maeve Jacob, Margaret & Bosco Cowley, Pat O'Toole, Joe Coleman, Karen Grant, Monica Sheehan, Suzanne Powell, Art Shirran, John Quinn.

Christmas Checklist

It is important to note that the capacity of the Church is significantly reduced to 31 seating positions and a capacity of 50.

- ◆ Priority will be given to the older parishioners.
- ◆ We will not have a booking or first come basis – but stewards will try to assist everyone.
- ◆ Some may choose to attend but stay outside where we have outdoor sound and an outdoor crib; please dress accordingly, wrap up, stay in your family pod, social distance.
- ◆ Mask wearing is now mandatory inside. Please ensure it is worn correctly above nose etc.
- ◆ Sanitiser is available at all doors, you must use this on entry – follow the one-way system.
- ◆ We have added two new times to accommodate as many as we can during Christmas.
- ◆ Parishioners are asked not to congregate after Mass – both inside and outside of Church.

Young People in Our Parish

It has been a particularly challenging year for all the young people in our Parish. They have been disrupted at school, missed some rites of passage, celebrations, and exams. However, the Parish Pastoral Council would like to acknowledge the contribution of our Transition Year Students who volunteered to help reopen the Church for private prayer and subsequently Mass. They ensured that the Church was sanitized daily and helped with stewarding and other requests. Some are also part of the John Paul II Award programme. The following Transition Year students helped. We are now recruiting this year's current Transition Years to volunteer as well. If you are interested contact Karen Grant or pick up an application form in the porch of the Church.

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| • James Choiseul | • Amy Corcoran |
| • Tom Hennebry | • Tom Coleman |
| • Max Barry | • David Grant |
| • Conor O'Brien | • JJ Mahon |
| • Daire O'Brien | • Rachel McKeogh |
| • Grace Moloney | • Anna Choiseul |

If you know a Transition Year student who would like to volunteer – our contact person is Karen Grant.

LITURGY GROUP

Liturgy Updates - Shaun Durkin and Caroline Treacey

In previous years, coordinating the liturgy rosters for Eucharistic Ministers and Readers was a task required just once a year- but as we all well know, this year is not like previous years. Our Mass at St Peter's in 2020 has been a challenging time with multiple occurrences of being 'open', 'closed', 'webcam only', and finally now 'open again' for the season of Advent and Christmas. The use of hand-sanitisers, facemasks, and ribbons cordoning off of the benches in the Church have become an all too familiar scene of worship and ministry.

With so much change, we rely heavily on what endures. Once again, that remains the dedication and flexibility of St Peter's Eucharistic Ministers and Readers. The spirit of teamwork has been clearly evident throughout the year as all our volunteers grappled with the challenge of community involvement versus personal safety. We wish to thank everyone in the choices they have made throughout the year to keep safe and for their on-going dedication to the Parish.

We strongly encourage the faithful to *keep Christ at the centre* of Christmas this year. Clearly it will be impossible for our usual large congregations to assemble for Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. We wish to remind Catholics that the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days remains suspended during the pandemic. But Christmas is about more than just one day. Families are welcome to attend Mass at some point during the twelve days from Christmas Eve to Epiphany. Christmas Masses will also be widely available over webcam and we strongly encourage families to "tune in" from the "domestic churches" of their living rooms and join with those who are gathering in their local churches in welcoming the birth of the Christ-child. Irish Catholic Bishop's Christmas Statement www.catholicbishops.ie

The Eucharistic Ministers and Readers rosters for 2021 are currently being developed, and we are always welcoming of new volunteers to join the teams of Eucharistic Ministers and Readers. We invite those of you who are interested in supporting the liturgy and in contributing to our Parish community in this way, to please contact a member of the Parish Council.

Thanks to Harry Goff and Gerard Gallagher for keeping the music going at mass on the webcam, when there was no congregation.

PRE-SACRAMENTAL GROUP

Update from Sheila Choiseul and Ruth Berney

We celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation for Two Mile House N.S. on the 29th February 2020; this was also the day that the first case of Covid 19 in Ireland was confirmed. Little did we know how much our lives would change when we were celebrating on that day! On the 1st March Killashee N.S. celebrated their Confirmation. We were very fortunate that both schools got to celebrate and have a traditional ceremony. We would like to thank the parents of the First Communion who helped to prepare the church and also Maeve Jacob for the beautiful flower arrangements.

Unfortunately, the First Holy Communion sacrament had to be postponed from its original May date. Thankfully, the children had celebrated their First Penance earlier in the year. We marked the day that the First Communion was to take place, on the 16th May, with a virtual prayer service. We are very grateful to Caitriona Howley for printing all the photos of the children and helping with the readings. We also thank Ms. Imy O'Donovan, the Second class teacher from Two Mile House N.S. and the parent volunteer, Mairsile Kehoe from Killashee N.S. for their help with the ceremony

The First Holy Communion ceremonies had to be changed to take account of the public health restrictions, but we finally got to celebrate the sacrament on Saturday, 26th September. There were four

ceremonies; two for each school. We would like to thank all who helped with these ceremonies; there was a team of people involved, from both schools and the Parish; it was down to them that everything went off so well. We were all relieved that the children got to celebrate such an important day in their lives.

At this stage we do not know what celebrating the sacraments of First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation will be like in 2021, but the schools and parishes will work together to ensure that the children get to receive the sacraments. We are all very disappointed that we can't have the usual preparation Masses, but hopefully the children will still get to attend Mass during Level 3 and lower. We also invite the children to the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve at 6pm.

We would like to thank the principals and staff of both schools for their help with both First Holy Communion and Confirmation preparation and the ceremonies. In addition, we would like to thank the Parish volunteers that helped with the four First Holy Communion ceremonies:

Killashee coordinator - Caitriona Howley,

Stewards: Joan O'Reilly, Karen Grant, Dorothy Hennebry, and John Valentine

Choir: Gerard Gallagher, Harry Goff, James snr., James jr. and Méabh Choiseul

We would also like to thank the priests of the parish for all that they did for the sacraments of First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation, especially this year as we all found ourselves in such a difficult situation. We would also like to acknowledge all the support from Hilda Campbell and to wish her well in her new post. We welcome Trish O'Neill who is the new Sacramental Co-ordinator for the parish and hope she will be very happy in this role. We would like to thank Trish for joining us in Two Mile House for the First Holy Communion in September.

The PPC would like to thank James Sheehan for taking care of the Crib inside the Church and Eugene Brennan for our new outdoor crib.

Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank Monica Sheehan for all the work that she does all year and in particular, for the additional effort she makes for the sacraments. The flowers for the First Holy Communion were all from her own garden and were a fantastic display.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Holy Christmas and we hope that 2021 brings lots of joy and happiness for you all.

CHRISTMAS COLLECTION FOR OUR CLERGY

Envelopes for the Christmas Collection for the Priests of our Parish are being delivered with this newsletter. It will be noted that envelopes will only be delivered twice annually – on the occasion of Easter and Christmas. Please return the envelopes with your contribution during the Christmas ceremonies

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BEST WISHES FOR A JOYFUL CHRISTMAS AND



A HAPPY, PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR