



St Philip & St James' and St Thomas'

**The Rector
writes ...**

CHRISTMAS 2013



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How is the Parish? How is the Parish doing?

Two questions that I am frequently asked by parishioners when chatting to them, or by friends or acquaintances. How do you answer that? Usually, they follow up their initial question with something like 'How many parishioners do you have?' or 'How many do you have in church on a Sunday morning?' or 'Do you have many in your Sunday School?' or ...

Now, thanks to the census held throughout the Church of Ireland in November, and the questionnaire, that I had to complete, I could quote numbers and figures at them. And, of course, the statistics as outlined in the article 'How Are We Doing?' on pages 14 and 15, give a certain flavour and picture of people's involvement and how they feel about their parish. As parishes we would be foolish to ignore or downplay what they are indicating to us; we need to pay attention to the figures and to work through them, and the implications and the issues that they highlight for us as a group of parishes.

The statistics can tell us how many baptisms, weddings, and funerals there were and how many were confirmed; they can tell us how many participate in the worshipping life of the parish and of how many contribute financially to the parish. The can give us quantities which prompt the question: is the quality of what we do good enough? If the quality of what we do was better, would that be reflected in the quantities?... in the numbers? Would the statistics be different?

The quantity and the quality are connected: a big congregation adds a vibrancy, an energy and a warmth to the worship; in turn worship that is vibrant, enthusiastic and warm attracts people to it. People offering a warm welcome attracts people.

We sometimes look for the BIG thing or the BIG name, to make an impact, or to effect change...

Yet, at Christmas, we celebrate a little person! A baby, who like all babies, was not able to

walk, or talk, sit up or stand up by himself. Others had to help him, to nurture and nourish him and help him to become the Christ, whose impact on the world is immeasurable.

He started life in a grotty stable, with no big fanfare. He didn't 'make good' in terms of becoming wealthy, or affluent. People were not attracted to him because of what he had, but because of the warmth of his personality; the warmth and charisma of God shining in. and through him. They were attracted by what he said, by how he cared and healed; how he looked out for, and reached out to, the sick the marginalised, the forgotten and the hidden.

And it started with a baby... one baby...

Alan and I wish you a very Happy and Blessed Christmas, and a contented and peaceful New Year.

Gillian



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday 22nd December 2013



‘A Quiet Christmas’

‘A Quiet Christmas’ will be in St Thomas’ Church at 10.00. This is a service specially designed for those who may want a more meditative approach to Christmas, or who, for differing reasons—possibly bereavement or illness or whatever—may find the ‘razz-ma-tazz’ of Christmas a bit over-powering. As you might imagine, ‘quiet’ and ‘children’ do not normally go together(!), so we are asking parents to bring their children to the all-singing, all-dancing Christingle Service that morning in St Philip and St James’ at 11.30.



Christingle Service

The Christingle Service is in St Philip and St James’ Church at 11.30. This is always a very special service, using the old Moravian custom of Christingles.

Carols by Candlelight

will be at 19.00 hours, in St Thomas’ Church, and will be followed by non-alcoholic mulled wine, - mindful of being responsible towards those who will be driving - and mince pies, in the Parish Hall. This is always a wonderful Service as we lead into the celebration of Christmas.

There will be a collection in aid of Protestant Aid—see page 8.



Friday 20th December 2013

Boosterstown National School Carol Service

This will take place at 12.15 in St Philip and St James’ Church. All are welcome to this service. We would ask parents to bear in mind that this is a carol service and therefore is an act of worship, not a concert. The service is followed by refreshments in the Parish Hall organised by the parents.

Tuesday 24th December 2013 - Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve, there will be the usual Candlelight Service of Holy Communion in St Thomas’ Church, at 23.30 hours, to which Santa and ALL his helpers will be very welcome!



Christmas Day

On Christmas Day, there will be the usual services to celebrate Christmas:

8.30 in St Philip and St James’ Church, 10.00 in St Thomas’ Church and 11.30 in St Philip and St James’ Church.

Sunday 29th December 2013

8.30 Holy Communion in St Philip and St James’ Church and a United Service with Holy Baptism in St Thomas’ Church at 10.30.



REMEMBERING THOSE WHO DIED IN WORLD WAR

August 2014 is the 100th Anniversary of the start of the Great War. Over the past number of years, Mike Lee, a parishioner of St Philip and St James' Church has been doing a huge amount of research into those parishioners of St Thomas', St Philip and St James' and Christ Church, Carysfort Avenue. who died in World War One. His aim is to commemorate the sacrifice of the forty-one young men and one woman, who "left all that was dear to them" to fight, to save lives and die for what they believed in.

His book will contain the name, a short biography, including details of their war service and where they perished, and also hopefully a photograph of each of the forty-two fallen will be included.

On the Sunday nearest the 100th anniversary of their death, we will remember them in our church services, and on the service sheet, we will include the research about that individual that Mike has found.

The thinking behind this is three-fold: one, to remember those young people who died; two, to remember the tragedy that war is and the huge cost to ordinary people and the devastation to families; three, to commit ourselves to do what we can to work for peace and justice.

While Mike already has a lot of information on many of the names below, he would be grateful for any further information about any of the names below. Mike can be contacted by e mail at mikelee2653@gmail.com or 087-2562376.

The names of those who died in World War One from our group of parishes:

St Philip and St James' Church

Benjamin George Beatty
Walter Blackwell
Douglas P.C. Cole-Baker
L. Wilfrid Callaghan
Arthur Crawford
Louis Godfrey Doran
Guy W. Eaton
Donald L. Fletcher
Sydney G. Hannam
John Frederick Healy
Joseph Bagnall Lee
Thomas A.E. Morton
Frederick H. Norway
Donald Seymour Smyth
J. Vernon Y. Willington

Godfrey Bingham
John MacDonald Bradley
Arthur N. Callaghan
V.A. Butler Cranwill
William R. Crawford
Robert Victor Drought
Arnold L. Fletcher
Geoffrey M. Fleming
Eric W. Harris
Robert Ernest Lee
Thomas C. Mainwaring
James N.H. Murphy
Walter L. Prentice
Mervyn J. Williams
Arthur C. Winsor

St Thomas' Church

John Arnott
Lucas H. St. Aubyn King
Percival St. George Charles Westby

William Magee Crozier
Florence Balfour Olphert

Christ Church Carysfort

John Charles Bishop
Charles Linton
T. Frood Perrin
Philip A. Purser

John H.F. Leland
Thomas McCormick
Joseph A. Poulton

In addition, some parishioners have approached the Rector saying that they lost a family member in World War One, and that they would like them remembered on the Sunday nearest the 100th anniversary of their death. If you would like to do this for your family member, please contact Gillian so that they can be remembered and if you have details about them, those can be included in the service sheet.



REGISTERS

Holy Baptism:

Lia Riley Coghlan, the daughter of Lorraine Carroll and Simon Coghlan, and little sister of Toby, was baptised on Sunday 22nd September 2013, in St Philip and St James' Church, at the united family service to mark the start of the school year. Lia took it all in her stride as lots of children's faces peered at her and wanted to hold her hand! Lia's godparents are Robin Coghlan, Niamh Kissane and Bernadette Whyte, and Lia's granny Bev Coghlan did one of the readings.

Charles (Charlie) Michael Meredith Cahillane, the son of Sarah Meredith and Gearóid Cahillane was baptised on Sunday 24th November 2013, in St Philip and St James' Church. Charlie's granddad, David Meredith and his granny Geraldine Cahillane did the readings. Charlie's godparents are Davina Meredith, Pádraig Cahillane and Fionnuala Shields.

We warmly welcome Lia and Charlie into the family of God and wish them every blessing as they travel on their respective journeys of faith.

In Memoriam:

Charles (Chas) Richard Martin Meredith died at home on Wednesday 9th October 2013, following an illness. Charles was a solicitor by profession but was also a noted jazz musician. His other great passion was for railways and he was enthusiastically involved in the railway reservation society. His funeral service took place in St Philip and St James' Church on Wednesday 16th October 2013, followed by cremation at Mount Jerome Crematorium.

Sympathy:

We extend our sympathy to John McDonnell and his family, on the death of his father Charles; to the Rev. George Dyke on the death of his wife Doreen;
to Charles Pearson on the death of his father Derek;
to Brian Abbott and his family, on the death of his mother Betty;
to the Millea and McDowell families on the death of Mary Millea-McDowell.

CHRISTMAS STARS



Crystal Christmas Stars with an engraving of St Philip and St James' Church.

€10

in aid of RAISE the REST of the ROOF!

Available from the Rev. Suzanne Harris or the Parish Office.

ST. THOMAS' INDOOR BOWLS CLUB



St Thomas' Indoor Bowling Club recommenced in September with an extra ordinary general meeting where we adopted the revised rules for the club. In October we held our doubles competition which was deferred from April 2013. This was a very competitive evening and the successful winners were Barbara Plant and Mike Hayes. Bill Semple our captain presented them with the trophy and the evening ended with a supper of brack and grapes and goodies as the date was 31st October!



Association matches have already got under way and the ladies in the Hope Cup are very happy to be through to the next round having defeated the ladies in Tallaght. Unfortunately the men were not so successful, their match was very close with a draw after playing 21 ends; this meant they had to play a deciding end and the men from St Paul's North King Street went through to the next round. We have further matches between now and Christmas which will keep us well focused.

We are delighted to welcome 3 new members, they will be a great asset to the club. We now have quite a number playing on Thursdays and Saturdays.



We look forward to our Christmas Fun Night on Saturday 14th December and wish our members a Very Happy Christmas and Happy Bowling in the New Year.

BISHOP OF MEATH AND KILDARE

In the Spring edition of the Parish Newsletter, I wrote a little piece about the two new bishops, Archdeacon Leslie Stevenson and the Rev. Ferran Glenfield, who had been elected for the Diocese of Meath and Kildare, and for the Dioceses of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, respectively.

Days before his consecration, which was scheduled to take place on St Philip and St James' Day (1st May 2013), following a pastoral visit from the Archbishop of Dublin, the Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe, and the Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry, Archdeacon Stevenson withdrew.

Those who had been present at the Electoral College in January 2013 were called to meet as an Electoral College at the end of May 2013. That meeting, having not managed to reach a two-thirds majority vote in both houses (clerical and lay), voted to pass the appointment to the House of Bishops.

The House of Bishops met in September 2013 and elected The Rev. Pat Storey, Rector of St Augustine's Church in Derry, as Bishop of Meath and Kildare. Pat is the first woman to be elected as a bishop in the Church of Ireland; the General Synod in 1990, voted in favour of women being ordained to the priesthood and the episcopacy, and now twenty-three years after that vote, we have a bishop who is a woman.

Pat has many qualities which equip her well for this new challenge in her ministry. Pat was consecrated (ordained) as a bishop in Christ Church Cathedral on St Andrew's Day (30th November 2013) in a moving and poignant service with fantastic music.

We wish her God's blessing as she begins her new sphere of ministry.



A NOTE FROM OUR CURATE

Christmas is officially upon us now that Advent has started. It was really lovely to have the first day of December as the first Sunday in Advent as it seemed to be the perfect start to our Christmas preparations.

As we think of cards, presents, turkey and puddings with cream may we remember the real meaning of Christmas - the inn, the stable, the baby Jesus and God's greatest expression of **LOVE**.

Amid the hustle and bustle of the commercial build up to Christmas may we find the spiritual peace, joy and solid assurance of God's deepest love for us.

God bless, Suzanne

MONK GIBBON HALL TO LET!



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**There is availability in the
The Monk Gibbon Hall,
Foster Avenue**

for afternoon and weekend lettings!

The hall is in a lovely setting, very bright and airy with full kitchen facilities and parking.

It would be suitable to a variety of afterschool activities, i.e., ballet, study, drama, exercise classes, birthday parties, family celebrations, etc.

For more information about our competitive rates and bookings please

contact:

**Deirdre,
Parish Office,
01-2835873**



BADMINTON



BADMINTON

***Are you a wannabe
Badminton Player!***

Now is your
opportunity.

Join St Philip
& St James'
Badminton Club
Cross Avenue,
Boooterstown.

**Contact Maureen
on
01-2809826**



HEALER PRAYER GROUP

Each month there is a time of prayer for those who have asked for prayer, or for whom prayer has been requested. The next Healer Prayer time is Monday 13th January 2014 at 19.15 hours in the Committee Room of the Monk Gibbon Hall at St Thomas' Church.

Details are announced in the weekly newssheet. It lasts 40-45 minutes: the people on the Healer Prayer Group List are prayed for, and the list is updated and fresh lists are placed in each church the following Sunday, for people to take away and to use. Those who take the list, are asked to pray for everyone on the list each day. In addition, in each church, there are sheets, where the names of anyone whom you would like to be prayed for, may be added.

We would particularly ask those who put names on the Prayer Request Lists to come along to the Healer Prayer Group.

Each person's name will remain on the list for 3 months and will then be taken off unless there is a new request for prayers to continue.



ST. PHILIP & ST. JAMES' SUNDAY CLUB



St. Philip and St. James' Sunday Club is up and running and all classes are very well attended. We are delighted to have both Robert Kemmis and Adeleh Davis helping us out at each meeting.

Every meeting we have a collection which goes into **'PIGGY'**, who is a very important part of Sunday Club. The money collected goes to help **'Michelle'** attend school in Africa, she sends us regular updates on her life and is very grateful for our help.

We are all looking forward to our Christingle Service on Sunday 22nd December which will have lots of participation from the children

Our next meeting is on the 12th January and we would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year!



BOOTERSTOWN NATIONAL SCHOOL



It is hard to believe that the first term of the year is drawing to a close. It has been a very active one!

Garda O'Shea came to visit 5th and 6th classes to give a very interesting talk on cyber bullying and the children learned a lot about this very important topic. We had a visit from Clint, a Golden Doodle, who is a working guide dog for the blind. Every class had a chance to meet him and ask his owner questions. Steven Hiles, a parent in the school, organised a hockey workshop over four weeks for every class in the school – our skills have improved and we are really grateful to him for organising this for us.



The PTA arts and crafts sub committee ran a series of craft workshops where the children made beautiful cards and glass candle holders.

They also ran a

Christmas Card competition, congratulations to the winners, Sam Cole (Junior Infants), Hubert Cogan (Second Class), Lou Lou Little (4th Class) and George Davis (6th Class). Their cards were printed and have been sold to raise money for the school library. Thanks to the PTA for organising this.



Our Carol Service will be held at 12.15pm on Friday 20th December, all are welcome to attend and We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and every good wish for 2014.

Carols for Protestant Aid



Over the past year, we have been very conscious of the demands on Protestant Aid, which is a Protestant version of St Vincent de Paul. It does not differentiate between creed or ethnicity regarding those who it helps... although the name can be misleading. They are doing amazing work, helping families of all backgrounds and origins who are finding things tough.

To support their work, we will have a collection at the Carols by Candlelight Service at 19.00 hours, on Sunday 22nd December 2013, for Protestant Aid. The proceeds of the carol singing in the Blackrock Shopping Centre, will go to Dublin SIMON, and the collection from the Sunday night will go to Protestant Aid.

Protestant Aid helps families and individuals who are very much in need of financial assistance, and this situations arise from all sorts of circumstances: the economic down turn, ill-health, marriage breakdown, etc. They are often 'invisible', coping with acute financial stress caused by mounting debts or redundancy, and family pressures with little or no State aid.

Please note this appeal is not only to raise awareness of those in need, but also to make those in need aware that assistance is available.



Applications, which are means tested, may be made through the Rector or directly to Protestant Aid.



Collection for Protestant Aid

Sunday 22nd December 2013

19.00 hours

Carols by Candlelight

STEWARDSHIP—THE ENVELOPE SCHEME



Each of our churches operate 'The Envelope Scheme' through which parishioners give to the parish each Sunday, by using the envelopes provided. The scheme allows you to make your donation in a discreet manner and also, helps you to keep a record of your giving. If anyone would like to join 'The Envelope Scheme' then June Burgess from St Philip and St James' or Meriel Armstrong from St Thomas', are the people to contact.

Some prefer to give by Standing Order and if you would wish to do this, please contact the respective parish treasurers: Ian Mullen at St Thomas' and Quentin Teggin at St Philip and St James'.



Carol Singing for Dublin SIMON



As you will be aware, for the past number of years, we have gone carol singing in aid of the Dublin SIMON Community, originally on the Monday night before Christmas, out and about on the roads of our neighbourhood, but last year, we made a change, and went carol singing in the Blackrock Shopping Centre on the Friday night before Christmas, and it worked well, with our



donation to Dublin SIMON being higher than in previous years, so we are going to Blackrock Shopping Centre again this year, on the Friday before Christmas.

The staff there are very keen to do anything they can to support the work of Dublin SIMON, and to facilitate local parishes, and 'kept' our slot for us, and even given us an extra hour!

Friday 20th December 2013 17.00-20.00, and we can keep going until 21.00 if we want. It is a long stretch, so it is hoped that people may come along and sing/collect for even part of that time; and that those who are going socialising that night might still be able to come along and even sing/collect for 1 or 2 hours. Also, it is at an early time which is good for children and of course, there will be no school the next morning.



It would be fantastic to get a HUGE response to this, and to do a little bit at Christmas for the homeless. This is one of those occasions where we are not asking for money—although of course, you may make a donation if you wish—we are asking you to give some time and some energy for others this Christmas.

Please put this in your diary. Bring your children, friends, etc., etc., to make a fantastic and enthusiastic sound for others! If you are concerned that your singing might not be wonderful, and you think that you cannot take part... no such excuse will be entertained!!!!!! You can do an excellent job of rattling the collection boxes.

Carol Singing in aid of Dublin SIMON

Blackrock Shopping Centre

17.00—20.00 hours

Friday 20th December 2013



REGISTER OF VESTRYPERSONS

The Register of Vestrypersons is the ‘electoral roll’ of the parish. If you wish to be able to vote on parish matters, or in elections, such as at the Easter General Vestry, or if you wish to hold office in the parish as a churchwarden, glebewarden, member of the Select Vestry, Parochial Nominator or Diocesan Synodsperson, then you have to be on the Register of Vestrypersons.

It is very simple to do, the Churchwardens have forms available, and all you have to do is fill in the short, simple form, sign it, and give it to a Churchwarden.

The Register is updated at the January Select Vestry meetings of our respective parishes. You may not be on more than one Register at any one time, so if you have moved recently and you wish to be included on the Register in one of our parishes, but you are already on the Register of Vestrypersons elsewhere, you would need to request your previous parish to have your name removed from their Register.

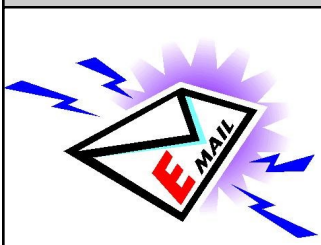
Being on the Register gives you the right to vote, it gives you a say in the decision-making process of our church— democracy is an important part of the Church of Ireland—cherish that right.



Currently, our representative bodies do not reflect the membership of the church and it is an issue that we are being encouraged to address. In order to be able to have the option to respond to that motion, we need a wide variety of people to ‘sign-up’ for the Register of Vestrypersons.

2014 is a triennial year, which means, that in addition to appointing/electing churchwardens, glebewardens and Select Vestries, the parishioners will also be electing Parochial Nominators (whose job it is to find a new rector should a vacancy arise), and Diocesan Synodspersons (who represent the parishes at Diocesan Synod). Parochial Nominators and Diocesan Synodspersons hold office for a three-year period.

So, an important year... and if you want to have your say and be able to vote, you have to be on the Register of Vestrypersons....



EMAIL! ... EMAIL! ... EMAIL!

Email is an efficient, economical and environmentally friendly way in which to communicate and get information out from the parishes to the parishioners. But, inevitably people tend to change their email addresses from time to time, and we also do not have email addresses for some parishioners who are on email. It would help us ENORMOUSLY if we were able to email you. It would cut down on paper and reduce our costs as well as making our communication more efficient. We do recognise that some people are not on email and we are happy to communicate with them via paper and/or phone. But if you do use email, please, email the parish office so that we can have our email address on our records and use it to communicate with you.

The Parish Office email address: mountmerrion@dublin.anglican.org





THANK YOU!

In addition to those who organise special occasions that happen on a 'once-off' basis, there is a large number of people who do all sorts of things to help our parishes tick along, throughout the year, every year.

Churchwardens, glebewardens, musicians, readers, secretaries of select vestries, treasurers of select vestries, select vestry members, flower arrangers, cleaners, gardeners, candle fairies, tea/coffee helpers, Review distributors, assistants at Holy Communion, Sunday Club Leaders, Youth Club Leaders and Assistants, Parish Hall Committees, Diocesan Synodspersons, those who give lifts to church, etc., etc. It's a long list and there's always the worry that someone may have been left out. Please do not be offended if your particular contribution hasn't been mentioned.

Your contribution is most appreciated and as we come to the end of another year; we just want to say "thank you for all who do to contribute to this community".



CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

There are two Christian Meditation Groups meeting each week in the Canon Osborne Barr Room of St Philip and St James' Parish Centre.

On a Tuesday afternoon, a group meets at 3.30pm for approximately 40 minutes and on a Wednesday evening, a group meets at 8pm until 8.40pm approximately, so that the remainder of the evening is free.

These Christian meditations are based on the teachings of John Main OSB and both groups always welcome beginners.

For more information ring Irene on 087-2755423.

PJT YOUTH CLUB



We are beginning to make progress with getting the required number of leaders for our parish youth club, and we are indebted to those who have volunteered. They are at various stages of the Garda Vetting procedure and once this is in place, we will be 'good-to-go'!

However, as you are probably aware, the Garda Vetting procedure can take a number of months, currently approximately five months. I realise that this is very frustrating but we have to comply with child protection guidelines and regulations. As soon as I have further news re the youth club, I will let you know.

Gillian



ECUMENICAL LENTEN STUDY PROGRAMME



We have already had one meeting to arrange the Ecumenical Lenten Study Programme for 2014. Due to the retirement of the Rev. Denis Campbell, Gillian Wylie, (a member of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church), who has chaired the Ecumenical Lenten Series for the past two years, has come on board to help with the planning. Before he retired the Rev. Denis Campbell suggested that we might explore other world religions and the challenges in being a member of a world religion, other than Christianity, in Ireland.

In the final session, it is hoped to explore the relationships in Ireland, between different world religions and Christianity.

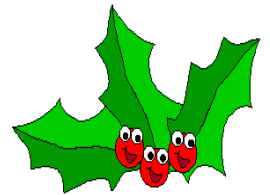
Again there will be four evenings and they sessions will take place in the Stillorgan Park Hotel at 8pm.

The four evenings are:

**Thursday 13th March 2014, Thursday 20th March 2014,
Thursday 27th March 2014, Thursday 4th April 2014,**

Further details will be available in the New Year.

All are very welcome to these talks.



PARISH WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP



The Parish Women's Fellowship meet once a month engaging in various outings, and hosting talks on a wide variety of interests.

Women's Fellowship

We have just had a wonderful evening at the National Concert hall for the ESB Christmas Concert performance which was greatly enjoyed by all who attended.

Our next venture is our annual '**Outreach Auction**' which will be held on **Tuesday 14th January 2014** in the Canon Osborne Barr Room at 8pm in St Philip & St James' Parish Centre.

Please come along and support!



TRUST



In our two parishes, we have an ongoing working relationship with **TRUST**. **TRUST** was founded in 1975 as a private charitable trust (Charity No.CHY7014), and since then has been working with people who are homeless in Dublin. It is a non-political, non-denominational voluntary body which provides medical and related services for people who are homeless, operating out of a premises provided at a nominal rent by the Iveagh Trust Up to 50 men and women call each morning, the majority of whom are sleeping out (age 18 to 85).

TRUST is urgently in need the following items:

MEN'S CLOTHING

**Jeans, Track-suit bottoms, Jumpers, Water-Proof Jackets,
Strong, Sturdy Shoes**

THEY ALSO NEED

Cup-a-soups, Mini-bars (chocolate, etc.)



These items can be left at the back of either Church and are then taken into **TRUST**

We are indebted to Vi Wilson and June Sherlock from St Thomas' and Vi Hoffman and Faith Frankland from St Philip and St James' who liaise with **TRUST** and take the items into them.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

In 2011, we had a Think Tank, in which we looked at our parishes and how we might want them to be in the future. Now, over two years on from that initial self-evaluation, prompted by the census which was undertaken throughout the Church of Ireland over three Sundays in November, it is interesting to reflect upon the various statistics and see what story they tell.

In the Autumn of 2011, there were approximately 177 households in both parishes, of which 104 were described as being actively involved. In November 2013, there are approximately 207 households of which 114 could be described as being actively involved and another 22 which are moderately involved, leaving 71 households who wish to have a connection with the parishes, but who do not participate in the parish community.

In the Autumn of 2011, there were approximately 450 individuals of which 205 were actively involved. In November 2013, there are approximately 556 individuals, with 253 actively involved and 84 moderately involved, with 219 not involved in the parishes.

Despite the growth in numbers, the weekly average attendance has grown only slightly (most of which can be attributed to the addition of the Sausage Service) from 116 to 124, but the Christmas Day attendance has risen to 487 from 372.

HOW ARE WE DOING? ... continued

.../Continued

Statistics have their limits, and while some of the above is encouraging, it also raises many questions, and presents us, as a community of parishes, with challenges.

There is a considerable increase in the number of people who wish to be connected with our churches, which is great, but of those people, a large number do not wish to be, or are not, involved, participating or contributing to the life and community of the parishes. One, has to ask why... Is it because people are too busy? Is the church seen to be there for family occasions such as baptism, confirmation, weddings, funerals but has nothing else to offer?

Is what we do irrelevant or is the way in which we do it, not making connections? As a parish community, these questions are always there, but now with some numerical basis, the questions are even more obvious and prominent.

In both parishes, we have wonderful parishioners who give of their time, energy and effort to ensure that both our churches are places of worship, witness and welcome, and they give of their resources to ensure that both churches are maintained.

There are many who benefit from that in addition to those are actively involved: those who come at Christmas; or to have their children baptised; or to be married; or who would like their funeral in one of our churches; or whose children attend Booterstown National School and have assembly, concerts, graduation ceremonies, etc., in St Philip and St James' Church.

All are very welcome; we want the churches to continue to be places of worship, witness and welcome, week-by-week; to be there when our children want to be confirmed; to be there when our children want to get married; to be there for our children to go to assembly in, and have their concerts and graduation in; to be there for all sorts of family occasions as a support in times of difficulty and to share in the celebration of happy times.

BUT we do need to share the responsibility of the parishes over a wider base, and to share the load of maintaining our churches over a greater number of people. While recognising that a parish is more than about attendance and finance, both give a strong indication of the input of parishioners and their commitment and involvement in the parish.

In terms of finance, less than 10% of households contribute 30% of income, and 25% of households contribute 75% of income.

This means that 75% of the households contribute 30% of the income. Just think of what an increase in giving from those 75% of families would mean... even an increase of €100 per year i.e €2 a week would make a huge difference.

We are conscious that many families also contribute to the various fund raising activities and some of the 75% may contribute heavily here. However, those 10% and 25% who are the mainstay of our annual income are also heavily involved in our fund raising activities.

BUT, what the statistics do not tell us is...

- in this past year, a group of parishioners did a 'blitz' over two nights on the grounds of St Philip and St James', and a short time later, several small armies of helpers arrived over a ten-day period to paint the corridor and toilets of St Philip and St James' Parish Centre—this was FANTASTIC and
 - enormously appreciated.
- about the parishioner who met a young couple recently moved into the area, and of how that person's welcome and friendship impacted on that couple. When thinking about where they might find a
- spiritual home, because of the connection made with that parishioner, they asked that person where they went to church, and so they decided to come along to see what it was like, and have become part of the community.

HOW ARE WE DOING? ... continued

- about the parishioners who looked after an elderly parishioner who lived alone and had no family
- how many will turn up in Blackrock Shopping Centre to Sing for Simon
- about the parishioners who visit and volunteer in care homes and nursing homes
- about the parishioners who volunteer with support groups or charitable organisations
- about the parishioners donate to TRUST or about those who sort and take items into TRUST
- or about the parishioners who volunteer with support groups, in care homes, nursing homes, help with meals on wheels, volunteer with Habitat for Humanity and fundraise for a variety of charities as well as giving of their time
- about the parishioners who discreetly pass on some of their resources to help others
- about the parishioners who give lifts so that others can participate in worship or in other activities

All of this is part of the story of who we are as a community of parishes... a community of Christians...

We are very conscious that in these difficult times, people may not be able to contribute financially or to increase their giving; but as you may see from the above, your time, energy and involvement is as valued, in fact, more valued, and it is your presence, your time and your energy that makes a vibrant parish.

Some of you may not be sure of how you can help, below, is a list of areas where we need help, practical help.

These are your parishes, and our future... our ability to be a vibrant, caring community is in all our hands...



HELP!

*There are lots of things in the parishes that we need help with...
can you help with any of the following:*

1. A large 'thermometer' to go on the railings outside St Philip and St James' to show the level of fundraising achieved and needed for the roof
2. A 'thermometer' graphic to go in the newsletter and weekly news-sheet showing the level of fundraising achieved and needed for St Philip and St James' Church roof
3. Helping as a leader with PJT Youth Club
4. Helping as a Sunday Club Leader, (even as an occasional substitute teacher)
5. Distributing parish communications, such as this newsletter(!), to no more than 12 households, approximately 4 – 6 times a year
6. Co-ordinate (by email and/or text) young mums to get together once a month (or thereabouts)
7. Filling a skip bag and clearing up after the Autumn Fair or the Summer Sale
8. Helping at a stall at the Autumn Fair and/or at St Thomas' Summer Sale in May.
9. Help with the supper of sausages and wedges after the Sausage Service once a month
10. Help as a leader with Beaver Scouts for boys and girls so that we can start a Beaver Colony



CHRISTMAS SERVICES



Friday 20th December 2013

12.15 Booterstown National School Carol Service
St Philip and St James'

Sunday 22nd December 2013

08.30 Holy Communion
St Philip and St James'

10.00 'A Quiet Christmas'
St Thomas'

11.30 Christingle Family Service
St Philip and St James'

19.00 Carols by Candlelight
St Thomas'



Tuesday 24th December 2012 — Christmas Eve

23.30 The First Holy Communion of Christmas
St Thomas'

Wednesday 25th December 2013 — Christmas Day

08.30 Holy Communion
St Philip and St James'

10.00 Family Holy Communion
St Thomas'

11.30 Family Holy Communion
St Philip and St James'

