



HOLY TRINITY
CHURCH



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NOVEMBER 2024

**A Bible in their hands
A Saviour in their hearts
A Purpose in their lives**

www.holytrinitycarrick.org.uk

HOLY TRINITY CARRICKFERGUS

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Letter to Parishioners

Read: 1 Kings 16.29-17.1 Elijah: the Weatherman



Dear friends,

I want you to imagine the scene in Samaria. King Ahab and Queen Jezebel are holding court in the “ivory house.” The “ivory house” is completely inlaid and overlaid with ivory. If it were a house today we would say it was over the top and flaunting wealth for the sake of flouting wealth. A little bit like that chef, Salt Bae, who puts gold leaf on his steaks and charges something like £350 a time for them. That is Ahab and Jezebel. A caravan laden with riches has just arrived from Sidonia, from Jezebel’s father. It is laden with gold, silver, fine jewels and the finest Persian chariot horses for Ahab. In return for such Ahab sends wine, barley, wheat, olives, olive oil and grapes to Sidon. It seems a fair trade to him and to Ethbaal, Jezebel’s father. However, things are about to change but we will come to that in a moment but keep that imagery of opulence untold. If you are struggling to imagine such, think of Smaug, the dragon in *The Hobbit*, lying on his hoard of treasure in the film.

Let me set, briefly, the history of how we have arrived at this moment in the life of Israel. Ahab is the 10th king of Israel. The book of 1 Kings opens with David on the throne. Although he was sinful and disobedient he was described as a man after God’s heart. I think I am correct in saying he is the only one described thus in the Bible. David is followed by his son Solomon. Solomon starts brightly enough but because he took 700 foreign wives, in disobedience to God’s command, his heart was laid astray and he worshipped pagan gods. He is followed by Rehoboam, his son, but Jeroboam, a commander of the army, leads an unsuccessful rebellion and the kingdom is divided into the 10 Northern tribes, Israel, with its capital Samaria, and two southern tribes Judea, with its capitol Jerusalem.

Jeroboam built shrines at Bethel and Dan. He is followed by his son Nadab and we read in 1 Kings 15:26 that, like Jeroboam, he sinned against the Lord God. He was assassinated and replaced by Basha who we read of in 1 Kings 15:34 as a king who sinned against the Lord God. Elah succeeds Basha and is likewise described in 1 Kings 16:13. He was assassinated by Zimri, who only reigned for 7 days but is similarly described in 1 Kings 16:14. A king for seven days and the only epitaph of his reign “he sinned against the Lord God.” Omri succeeds Zimri and what a dreadful epitaph he is given in 1 Kings 16:25 - he sinned more against the Lord God than any of the kings before him. Omri is the father of Ahab and if it were possible 1 Kings tells us that he sinned even more against the Lord God. It is not the greatest picture is it?

Ahab marries Jezebel, a Sidonian, who worships Baal. Ahab built a temple to Baal in Samaria and raised Asherah poles to the goddess Asherah. This temple to Baal is an affront to the Temple of God in Jerusalem and by raising Asherah poles it just adds injury to insult. We are told that Ahab did all of this to please his wife.

In 1 Kings 21:25 we are told that no one else had devoted themselves so completely to doing wrong in the eyes of the Lord God as Ahab had. All of this because of Jezebel who arrived in her marriage with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah in tow. We also read in 1 Kings 18:4 that she persecuted, i.e. martyred, the prophets of the living God. All in all this is not a nice portrait of the kings of Israel till this point.

Baal - was a fertility god. He was not just the god of the Sidonians but widespread in the ancient near east. In Deuteronomy 6:14-15 we read that the Lord God tolerates no rivals and in Deuteronomy 32:37-39 God had given His people this warning upon entering the Promised Land. Baal worship was easy to understand and very attractive to the people of the Age, and even today. In essence the more you gave to Baal in terms of sacrifice and worship the more he was expected to bless you, a very materialistic bargain. Sound familiar? Baal was considered the god of the weather and the weather was of key importance to an agricultural based society. He was also considered the god of fertility and his shrines had temple prostitutes both male and female. Baal worship appealed to

human price and human lust. One further aspect of Baal worship, which no doubt will horrify us, was that human sacrifice was also part of the worship. Mostly infants were sacrificed for fertility blessings.

If you look for a moment at verse 34 of the above passage. It is possible that this is what is referenced here. Hiel, rebuilding Jericho, sacrificed both his first born and his youngest at the beginning and end of the works. Fulfilling the word of God spoken in Joshua 6:26. Such sacrifices at the building of houses etc still occurs today. I remember hearing of such happening in Uganda. All to bring luck and prosperity.

Well that is the history and the scene in to which enters a man called Elijah. We know nothing of his parents but I believe we can deduce that they were godly people because their son's name, Elijah, means The real God is the Lord. We know he was a Tishbite. Elijah was from Tishbi a region in upper Galilee and he lived in Gilead. From the NT we know that Galilee was an area that was looked down upon by many in Israel. It was considered a place of uneducated and uncouth people.

Elijah enters the scene. Opening lines are important. "It was the best of times and it was the worst of times..." so Dickens begins A Tale of Two Cities. Elijah's opening lines surpass Dickens. This strange little man, wearing strange clothing, speaking with a thick Galilean accent, speaks two oaths and a weather forecast.

First Oath: - "In the Name of the Lord, the living God of Israel." Can you imagine Ahab and especially Jezebel's reaction. We worship Baal and this little man is speaking of the living God of Israel. I want you to take a moment and consider what Elijah has just done and said here.

He claims God's authority for what he is about to speak. In the very citadel of Baal he speaks the Word of God. In the most hostile of environments Elijah speaks the Word of God. It has been 20 years since the deaths of Baasha and Elah (1 Kings 6:1-12) where Jehu had said their death was punishment by God for their sinful kingship. We have heard how Ahab was worse than any king before him in the eye of the Lord God. Was God powerless against Baal and therefore against Ahab? Elijah is about to warn Ahab that the delay in his punishment is about to come to

an end. It is not going to be a popular message. Ahab is not going to call Elijah to the front and tell him to take his choice from the wealth of the Sidonian caravan before them.

Elijah tells them he speaks in the Name of God. The Name of God is God's character and who He is. Hence we are commanded not to take God's Name in vain. When Moses asked to see the glory of the Lord God in Exodus 33, God hides him in the cleft in the rock and pass by and Moses request is answered when God reveals His glory by declaring His Name. It is in that Name, the glory of God, that Elijah speaks to Ahab, Jezebel and the people for Israel who have gone after Baal and Asherah.

The second part of his opening line is so important. Elijah says the Lord God is the living God of Israel. He is reminding them that they belong to God through the Covenant, signed and sealed in circumcision. They do not belong to Baal but to the living God of Israel. That is a timely and important reminder to Ahab, to the foreign queen Jezebel, and to all who are gathered before Elijah at this moment. You belong to the Lord God he announces.

Second oath - Whom I serve. Having reminded them of the Covenant with the true and living God Elijah now places himself as the servant of the living God. The Covenant promise is reaffirmed by him in these words. The people of Israel were called in the Covenant to serve the true and living God and no other. They have gone off after Baal and Asherah and Elijah by stating "whom I serve" is reminding them of where they should be also. Elijah is not there speaking his own words and he is not there on his own authority or courage. He is standing there as the servant of the true and living God of Israel. He defines himself as the servant of the Lord God whilst all around him are worshipping Baal and Asherah.

The weather forecast. I do not know about you but after such an introduction I was expecting hell fire, brimstone, sulphur and damnation to be the next words out of the mouth of Elijah. However, Elijah pronounces judgement on the weather.

Elijah tells them you worship Baal, the god of the weather, depicted as “sun god.” Well, you can have all the sun you want. No rain for three years. Baal is the god of fertility in your eyes - well let us see how he copes and how your harvests go with no rain for the next three years? Where did Elijah get the idea to speak such words. Let me suggest to you he got them from Deuteronomy 28:20, 23-24. Here was God’s solemn word in the Covenant with Israel. James 5 tells us that Elijah prayed and it did not rain for three years. Literally James says: “he prayed in prayer” which is a Jewish idiom for saying he was earnest in prayer. No dew nor rain for three years. They worshipped Baal whom they believed controlled the weather and therefore the success or failure of their harvest - now the test has come.

You might be sitting reading this thinking Alan what on earth has this got to do with us in 2024 facing a cost of living crisis and an unprecedented period of wet weather all year? A little sunshine would be nice.

Well let me draw out some things for you.

Godly parents - we know nothing of Elijah’s parents and yet from his name we can deduce that they lived in the fear of the Lord God and brought Elijah up to do the same. He certainly knew the Covenant and the Torah. The importance that we all play in our children and grandchildren’s lives cannot be underestimated.

Secondly, Elijah lived in a hostile environment for those who served the true and living God. Baal worship and Asherah worship dominated. Not like the UK today. You do not believe me? Ask yourself this question - what dominates the lives of people today? What dominates entertainment, the TV, films, internet etc? Would you not say our society is dominated by the following: Sexual identity and behaviour, superstition, violence and the sacrificing of our children to every ungodly and anti-God idea, philosophy and whim of society. You don’t think we sacrifice children any longer? Abortion? Children being sexualised and exposed to material that only a few decades ago would have had you up before a judge and sentenced to imprisonment.

We live in the days of Baal and Asherah - where superstition and all that follows it are rampant. Where astrology is mainstream and to say “God says...” is absolutely ridiculed and mocked. Think for a moment the significance of the phrase “The Bible says...” we use that phrase when we teach a memory verse to our children at the Holiday Bible Club. Do you realise how counter-cultural that phrase actually is today? How by using that phrase we are stating, against this world, that the Bible has authority to speak in to our lives and in to this world.

Thirdly, I learn from Elijah that there is no favourable place in which to serve the living God except where He has planted you. God is sovereign and therefore it is no accident the family in which you were born and live, the job you have, the marriage, the children, the society in which you live and the fact that you worship here at Holy Trinity. So serve Him exactly where He has planted you. Elijah described himself as a servant of God. Your identity is in Christ, bought and sealed with His precious blood, you are His servant. We are all called to serve Him, not just those in leadership here at Holy Trinity.

Speak the Word of God, even in to the hostile situation. Elijah spoke what God called Him to speak - the Word of God from Deuteronomy. We are called to speak, not our words, but God’s Word - Christ Jesus. Our words are - repent and believe in the only true Saviour, Jesus Christ.

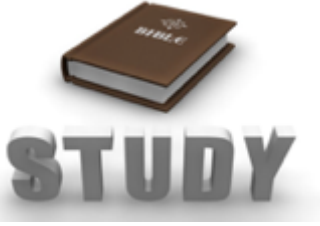
Our drought is not the lack of water but the spiritual drought from knowledge of the Word of God and of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. That drought leads to a lost eternity. We are called to address that drought in our own lives, in the lives of our children and in the life of our community.

God bless
Rev Dr Alan McCann

Alan's Bible Study & Prayer Time

Bible Study continues on Wednesday's at 1.00pm. We will continue our study in the Psalms.

Please note the following day and times for prayer times and bible study:



Wednesday's

1.00pm-2.00pm - Lunch time Bible Study in the

Bennett Room

7.30pm-8.00pm - Prayer Time - Kerr Room

8.00pm-9.00pm - Bible Study

Everyone will be very welcome.

God bless

Rev Dr Alan McCann

Young At Heart



Our next get together will be held on Monday 4th November at 11.00am. As usual we will start with a chat and cuppa and then we look forward to our speaker Vic Wooton telling us about his visit to the National War Memorial Arboretum in

England.

If you wish to order for our Christmas lunch, please see Liz Adair. The cost is £9 and we would need that paid to Liz by the end of November.

God Bless

Yvonne and her team

Harvest Appeal

The Select Vestry have decided that this year's appeal will go again go towards the refurbishment of the toilet block. The toilets are 32 years old, and we would hope to have the work completed by Christmas. Please use the envelope on the entrance table if you can pay direct into this account, please use the reference harvest.

Sort 950261 Account 00157511 Holy Trinity Church No 2 Account

Samaritans Purse Christmas Boxes - Operation Christmas Child.



Thank you to everyone who took a shoe box or two. If you wish to donate £5 or more towards the postage, please give money to Drew, don't send the money direct or place into the shoe box. Thank you.

Please return boxes before 27th October 2024.

Scrap to money to Crosslinks

Any **scrap metal** such as; kitchen utensils, car parts, unwanted trampolines, garden gates, tools of any kind, central heating boilers, etc, etc, collected and redeemed for cash, proceeds to **Crosslinks Missionary Society**.

Contact : Lynn Rodgers, 07970974604.

LIGHT (Sunday School)



Hi parents/guardians. Just a quick note to keep you up to date. Rehearsals for Christmas presentation will hopefully commence Sunday 24th Nov & continue Sunday 1st December, 8th December, 15th December. The presentation will be Sunday 22nd December. If your child

can't attend any of these dates, can you please let me know in advance. 4 weeks for 50 mins or so each, isn't too long to practice as you can appreciate, so it's important to keep me up to date or indeed, if you do not wish your child to be included. There will be NO CLASS on Sunday 29th December. Start back 5th January 2025.

Thankyou as usual for your co-operation.

Chrissi McDermott & the team.

Storehouse



Storehouse continue to help those in need within our community. Please contact me if you have items of unwanted furniture and I will gladly arrange a collection.

Thank you for your support.

Donna Harrison

Trinity Tots - Toddlers Group



Thursday mornings, 10.00am - 11.30am
for play, chat, snacks, singing and craft.

Hi everyone, we have all been enjoying our Thursday morning activities together. Our little ones love playing, singing and snack time, and their carers enjoy snacks and chat too. Adults and children join in the craft activities with great enthusiasm. Every meeting finishes with chasing bubbles from our bubble machines - you should see the joy on their wee faces!

We would love to have a few more helpers and ask that you do please give some thought to joining, even for a few sessions each month.

God Bless
Trinity Tots Team

Carrickfergus Food Bank (JVC Church)

Please place non-perishable donations into the 2 black bins in the entrance hall. The food is delivered monthly.

Thank you for the continued support which is very much appreciated.

Select Vestry

If anyone wants an item raised at the Select Vestry please contact:

: secretary@holytrinitycarrick.org.uk

Drew Buchanan: treasurer@holytrinitycarrick.org.uk

or any member of SV. This includes booking the church hall for any events.

Hon Secretary

Prayer Team

Alison Allen, Joan Harvey & Libby Todd



Two members of the Prayer Team will be meeting in the Prayer Room on Sundays after the service to lift your prayer slips. Two members will also be available at the front of the church to pray with you at this time each week. We will rotate in these roles so you will see different faces from week to week. Please do ask if you would prefer prayer in the privacy of the prayer room. The slips will continue to be lifted weekly and on 4 occasions as previously (usually over 4 weeks but may be over a longer period). Therefore, please do continue to make use of our prayer request box situated in the front hall of the church. As always, be assured that information on the slips remains confidential. We would encourage you to complete a prayer slip after you have attended for prayer so that we can continue to pray for your situation when we meet together.

If you would be interested in being part of the prayer team we ask that you consider this and know that we would dearly love to have your support. Please do approach one of us.

On behalf of the prayer team

Fields of Life

At the start of the summer, I had the privilege of travelling to South Sudan to visit some Fields of Life partner schools.

South Sudan is ranked as one of the most fragile countries in the world. Today, at least **2 million children are estimated to be out of school in South Sudan**, making it the country with the highest rate of

out-of-school children globally. Tragically, **75% of them are primary aged girls.**

Despite the challenges, I was encouraged to witness how Fields of Life's Thrive South Sudan programme, through partnership with the local church, is reaching those who need it most.

Visiting Downey College in Ibba was a highlight of the trip for me. On a very hot day, standing under the tin roof of a classroom, 90 students smartly dressed in school uniform harmoniously joined their voices together in a welcome song led by the head girl - **a memory that will stay with me.**



Two things stood out to me from Downey College:

1. It was such a joy to see teenagers truly thriving at school.

After the morning classes, the students poured out of the classrooms to join the queue for lunch. The staff served large portions of steaming hot beans and posho (mashed maize) on to their plates.

The students carefully carried their plates, full to the brim, to the shaded areas outside the classrooms to sit and eat. I noticed how they were sitting with friends, laughing and enjoying spending their lunch break together, just like I remember doing in my school days in Northern Ireland.

“I am fed” is just one element of the Thrive programme. **We want to see every child receive a meal at school every day.** Rather than providing supplies of food, Fields of Life seeks to encourage schools to set up school farms, so that they can harvest their own crops and have sustainable food sources for the future.

Thanks to your support, Downey College is now growing crops like maize to provide food for their students. This has not been without challenges - the recent heatwave in South Sudan had a devastating effect on the crops. Even though they are not yet able to provide a meal every day, they are working towards expanding their farmland so that they can supply a daily lunch.

What does the impact of Thrive look like? For me, it simply looks like teenagers sharing a meal together in a safe place where they have the freedom and the opportunity to pursue quality education.



2. Girls' education continues to be a key challenge

For my colleague Monica, our Head of Programmes in East Africa, this was not her first visit to Downey College. When she first visited in 2022, she was shocked to discover that out of a school population of 42 students **only 3 were girls**. Upon her return in June 2024, Monica rejoiced to find that the number of female students had **increased to 27**, with there now being an overall total of 90 pupils.

Monica shared, *“On my recent visit to South Sudan, I was overjoyed to find the three girls I had met at Downey College in 2022 still in school. The girls are working hard to keep in school despite the challenges. One of them had to repeat a class, but she is very committed to finishing secondary school so this did not stop her. They have been such an inspiration that the girls’ number at Downey College has increased nine-fold. The school feeding programme has been a big attraction for more girls to join.”*



At every school we visited we noticed that the enrolment numbers were lower for the older classes. **Keeping students in school, especially girls, is a challenge for all our partner schools.**

The Thrive programme seeks to address the key barriers to girls’ education and help our partner schools support girls to complete

their education. Through community training on the importance of education, as well as menstrual hygiene training and the provision of toilet facilities, we hope to see the number of girls attending secondary school grow in similar ways to Downey College.

It was a privilege to spend time getting to know our local partners. We were humbled to see how God is at work through our church partners in South Sudan as they passionately advocate for education in their communities. Working alongside my East African colleagues, I was encouraged to see how closely they work with the local communities, church leaders, teachers and parents, and how they go above and beyond to bring sustainable change.

Thank you for partnering with Fields of Life so that schools in South Sudan can be a place where teenagers thrive and where girls can defy the odds for a brighter future.

Joy Wilson
Fields of Life



Fellowship Café at Holy Trinity



Every Thursday
10.30am – 12.30pm

Every year we set aside time to raise funds for a specific cause. It is the only time of the year we are about money. This year we have chosen to support the work of

Horatio's Garden

in the grounds of the Spinal Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital. It is a garden area along with art and craft workshops where patients and their families can relax and enjoy outdoor life following spinal surgery.

A couple of our team have benefitted from the skills of the staff at the Spinal Unit.

All our profits during November, along with any other donations, will be passed on to help maintain these gardens.

If you are unable to visit the café but would like to contribute please pass you donation to any member of our team. Please be generous.

If you still haven't visited us, please call in any Thursday morning. A warm welcome awaits.

If it's good company and a chance to sit and chat then fellowship café is the place to be. If it's peace and quiet to sit and read a book then we can accommodate that as well. So, no reason not to call in.

You can keep up to date by following us on facebook at:
"Holy Trinity Fellowship Café"

Yours in Christ's service,

Maurice Langley

God is good † all the time

C.M.S Ireland Used Postage Stamps



Keep saving those used stamps (remembering to leave a small envelope border) and pop them in the box on the church table or hand them to me. The money raised from their sale continues to support Christian based projects in Africa.

Yvonne Best

Creche Rota –November 2024



3 rd Nov	L Ross	L. Baird
10 th Nov	C. Lafferty	G. Fittis
17 th Nov	M. Lunn	L.Kerr
24 th Nov	NO CRECHE FAMILY SERVICE	

Many thanks,
Laura Kerr

Carrickfergus Baby Bank

We thank you for the support and ask for donations of nappies, new baby grows, wipes, lotions, baby bath shampoo etc. Please place the items into the bin provided. The contents are delivered each month.

Tea & Coffee Rota

Team	Team Members			
1	Ann Calvert	Tracey Bowden	Joanne Hunter	
2	Arlene Macartney	Hannah Hulme	Marilyn Hulme	
3	Lorraine Hagan	John Doherty	Gail Doherty	
4	Yvonne Best	Jennifer Hamilton	Gwen Wilson	Jean Jamison
5	Wenda Gray	Sue Majury	Eva Dunn	
6	Kel McDermott	Drew Buchanan	Karen Buchanan	
7	Lorraine Ross	Maureen Lunn	Adrienne Tasker	

Team	Dates	
1		3 rd Nov
2		10 th Nov
3		17 th Nov
4		24 th Nov
5		1 st Dec
6		8 th Dec
7	27 th Oct	15 th Dec

Karen Buchanan

Welcome Team Rota

Teams	Dates	
Jenny Wightman Karen Buchanan		8 th Dec
Jack Blair Hazel Blair		15 th Dec
Liz Adair Janis Gibson		22 nd Dec
Maureen Lunn Adrienne Tasker		29 th Dec
Eva Dunn Eleanor Steele		5 th Jan 2025
Sharon McNeill Alison Moffett		12 th Jan
Libby Todd Marjory Edgar		19 th Jan
Arlene Macartney Wenda Gray		26 th Jan
Ann Calvert Lorraine Hagan	27 th Oct	2 nd Feb
Joanne Hunter Laura Kerr	3 rd Nov	9 th Feb
Yvonne Best Jennifer Hamilton Gwen Wilson	10 th Nov	16 th Feb
Kel McDermott Maurice Langley	17 th Nov	23 rd Feb
Donna Harrison Sue Majury	24 th Nov	2 nd Mar
Elaine Wright Joan Cummings	1 st Dec	9 th Mar

Karen Buchanan

Holy Trinity Chair Rota

Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5
Kel McDermott	Dougie Hempton	Graeme Hunter	David Sprott	John Fittis
Colin McIlwaine	Simon McDonald	Jim McNerlan	Charlie Killow	Daniel Lafferty
Garry Richmond	Phil Moody	Bert Macartney	Richard Hambleson	
Peter Moffett		Maurice Langley		

Team	Dates			
1		3 rd Nov	1 st Dec	5 TH Jan 25
2		10 th Nov	8 th Dec	12 th Jan
3		17 th Nov	15 th Dec	19 th Jan
4	27 th Oct	24 th Nov	22 nd Dec	26 th Jan
5			29 th Dec	



Please note: Some teams need additional help. If you think you can help, please contact Simon.

Please take note of church announcements regarding organisations using the church and possible need to put out and put away chairs each week. If possible, please liaise with the others in your group.

Thank you
Simon McDonald

BB Heritage Museum

THE BOYS' BRIGADE EAST ANTRIM BATTALION HERITAGE SOCIETY

Christmas Concert



With 3rd Carrick Band and the BB Centenary Choir
Holy Trinity Church, Prospect Road, Carrickfergus

Friday 6th December 2024

Doors 7pm Start 7-30pm

Tickets available from Drew Buchanan.

Sunday Services

Date	Reading Number	Reader	Title & Prayer Leader	Book	Chapter & Verses
3rd November 2024	1st Reading	Helen Annesley	HC	I Thessalonians	Chapter 4 verses 1 - 8
	2nd Reading	Rev Alan McCann	Prayers Libby Todd	Luke	Chapter 6 verses 43 - 45
10th November 2024	1st Reading	Terry Shimmon	Remembrance Sunday	I Thessalonians	Chapter 4 verses 9 - 18
	2nd Reading	Derek Burnside	Prayers Rev Alan McCann	Matthew	Chapter 24 verses 3 - 14
17th November 2024	1st Reading	Colin McIlwaine	MP	I Thessalonians	Chapter 5 verses 1 - 15
	2nd Reading	David Sprott	Prayers Fred Shasko	Matthew	Chapter 22 verses 1 - 14
24th November 2024	_____	_____	Service of the Word	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Colin McIlwaine