

Parish of Carrickfergus and Whitehead

Pastoral Plan



2022 - 2025

Introduction

As you will be aware, a 3-year Pastoral Plan for the Carrickfergus and Whitehead Parish was developed in 2017. In 2021, the PPC determined that an Annex should be developed to extend the existing Pastoral Plan until a time when the impact of the pandemic had reduced. In early 2022, the PPC were keen to commence activities in order to develop a new Pastoral Plan. Through a series of listening exercises, directed focus groups and questionnaires in January to March 2022, we, the PPC, sought out the views of many groups and individuals from across our parish to ensure the plan content was relevant and reflective of our parish community. The actions, suggestions, observations and wishes from those exercises have been distilled into this document, our new Pastoral Plan.

These new actions have been aligned under the same five core themes that were used in the previous plan (Open, Welcoming Community; Faith and Worship; Our Parish Priest and Lay Ministries; Lay Participation and Passing on the Faith). The PPC will use this plan as a living document that will guide our parish actions and activities over the next three years to ensure we are continuing to deliver on our Mission Statement to “develop a vibrant and inclusive spiritual community which welcomes active participation”.

I am delighted to share this pastoral plan with you, which was approved by the PPC on Monday 3rd October 2022. I hope you enjoy reading the plan, that you recognise elements from your contribution and will support our Parish in realising the actions to which we have committed.

Paddy Stewart

(Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council)

Parish Vision Statement

“We would aspire to a vision of our Parish as a community with Jesus as its centre and committed to spreading His Kingdom where each person feels he or she belongs and has a role to play, based on Prayer, Scripture, Sacraments and Liturgy, with an ongoing programme of education and formation in the faith and with an opportunity for personal growth, structured and supportive, in which priests and people are partners, reaching out to those in need, tolerant and respectful of people who hold other views and philosophies and actively promoting ecumenism; a community which is a sign and source of Justice, Hope and Love.”

Pastoral Council Mission Statement

We, the Pastoral Council of Carrickfergus and Whitehead Parish, inspired by the love of Jesus, will develop a vibrant and inclusive spiritual community which welcomes the active participation of everyone in the faith life of our parish and the Loughshore Region Pastoral Community.

1. Open and Welcoming Community

As a community of faith, hope and love, we open wide the doors of our Church to all without exception through the following actions:

- ◆ Ensuring Safeguarding is continued in our Parish through ongoing vetting and training of all adults who are involved in relevant parish activities. Everyone involved in ministry with children and vulnerable adults will be vetted and trained again as a result of their break in service during the Covid 19 pandemic
- ◆ Continuing to develop the communications strategy of our parish through our parish website and social media and by formalising a Parish Communications Team
- ◆ Establishing a Young Parents and Family Group to continue building relationships with the younger generation and providing social outreach and support to young families
- ◆ Recommence hospitality after Mass in both churches to re-establish relationships
- ◆ Develop involvement in the Mass through the identification of altar servers, encouraging young families to participate in the Offertory Procession and recruiting new junior readers
- ◆ Designing and constructing a Parish Welcome Pack that can be distributed to new or returning parishioners
- ◆ Re-establishing a post-Covid appropriate visitation team to reengage with those parishioners who may be housebound or unable to attend Mass

2. Faith and Worship

We celebrate and participate in the saving work of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and are strengthened to proclaim and live the Gospel. To place faith-development at the centre of parish life, helping the community to grow in its ongoing conversion to Jesus Christ. We want to support our parish through welcoming our existing members and attracting new members, ensuring there is ongoing training to support all of them in their pastoral activities.

We will do this by:

- ◆ Identifying how we can best appeal to the various age groups within our parish
- ◆ Promoting adult catechesis classes that are detailed in “Our Parish Priest and Lay Ministries” theme
- ◆ Developing connections with other faith bodies and maximising the support of Diocesan groups like the Living Church and Living Youth
- ◆ Encouraging greater parental involvement in sacramental preparation e.g. the “Do This in Memory” programme
- ◆ Reaching out as best we can to parishioners who no longer associate with the parish
- ◆ Revising the delivery of Prayer Groups to provide in person and online options
- ◆ Maximising the support and sharing the resources of our Pastoral Community, specifically in how we develop youth activity

3. Our Parish Priest and Lay Ministries

In the previous plan, we looked at how we supported and nourished our Parish Priest and the lay ministers in their life and ministry in the service of the people of God. As the Church has evolved through and after the pandemic, the PPC recognise the need to further support our Parish Priest by equipping more parishioners with the relevant skills so that they can further enhance current lay ministry.

In order to support this theme, we will:

- ◆ Establish a new parish catechesis group and programme of activities to support our parishioners in the exploration of their faith, further developing the understanding of aspects of Church, including the meaning of the Mass
- ◆ Develop a programme of activities that support the sharing of faith journeys from a range of parishioners, showing the relevance of faith in our everyday lives

4. Lay Participation

Our parish is distinguished by faith, worship and service, whereby the laity and our priest live out the commitment of their Baptism, working together to build the Kingdom of God on earth. We want to continue in our ambition to promote a culture of co-responsibility between priest and people at every level of life in our parish.

In order to increase lay participation across all areas of parish life, we will be:

- ◆ Creating awareness among parishioners of the need to increase lay participation
- ◆ Seeking to utilise the wide range of talents, gifts and skills that our parishioners have, encouraging and supporting those willing to contribute to the life of our parish
- ◆ Reviewing and refreshing our parish groups contacts and sharing this with our parish to promote and encourage involvement in these groups e.g. Parish Cell Groups, Liturgy Group, Hospitality and Music
- ◆ Hosting a Parish Groups Open Day to showcase the range and depth of activities that our Parish provides
- ◆ Assisting parish groups in future-planning

5. Passing on the Faith

Ensure all members of our Church are supported in their relationship with God throughout their lives as they grow in faith together.

We recognise the need to appeal to a wide range of people and have therefore focused our actions on two specific groups to help our parish address this theme.

I. Passing on the Faith to our children and young people through:

- ◆ Connecting with children (aged 0-11) and young people (aged 11-18) to enhance their awareness of belonging to a parish community
- ◆ Reaching out to young adults to ensure they have a peer community that supports them
- ◆ Providing a family / children's Mass
- ◆ Establishing stronger, closer links with our primary school
- ◆ Working on activities that keep young people interested and involved in Church life, specifically where they have not attended church in some time and/or they have moved onto further education
- ◆ Enhanced communications – using social media to attract and inform young people about their faith and Church activities
- ◆ Raising awareness of our primary school on the website and especially with new parents to our parish
- ◆ Establishment of a youth group

II. Passing on the Faith through Families by:

- ◆ Following up with parents after the sacraments of Baptism, First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation to maintain and strengthen the family's connections with ongoing parish activities
- ◆ Ensuring our parish has the capacity and resources to welcome new members of the Church and support the renewal of the faith



The Parish Pastoral Council of Carrickfergus and Whitehead

Fr Peter Owens PP, VF (President)

Paddy Stewart (Chair)

Stephen Lavery (Vice-Chair)

Julie Elliott (Secretary)

Patrick Quinn

Siobhan Gilmore

Bob Sweeney

Mary McCormack

Paul Smith

Marian Frampton

Tom Moore

Petar Segó

Parochial House,

8 Minorca Place, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim, BT38 8AU

Tel: 028 9336 3269

Email: carrickfergus@downandconnor.org

www.carrickparish.org