

Christmas in St. Mary's 2015

Christmas has been celebrated in St. Mary's Church, Loirston Road, since the church was built in 1864.



Over the years the tradition of a community Christmas Carols and scripture readings service has become well established. This

special service will be held again this year at 7.00 pm on Christmas eve and all Cove residents are warmly invited.

Readers may be surprised to discover that the congregation's preparations for Christmas begin with the first Sunday of Advent which falls on 29th November this year. This date also marks the beginning of the annual Christian calendar which differs considerably from our more familiar, secular calendar. The congregation will mark the season of Advent during the following four Sundays and Advent will come to an end on Christmas day. Advent means arrival or coming and the season recalls the arrival of the Christ - Child into the world. For Christians this a time of expectation and excitement as they marvel at the nature of and the true meaning of the Christmas story.

Advent is celebrated very sensually in the Christian tradition with the use of colour, candles and music. Each of the four Sundays has it's own unique association and

reminds believers of the elements of the Christmas story, gradually and effectively. The centre - piece of the celebration is an Advent wreath, which supports five candles. The wreath and the candles all possess a rich, symbolic meaning and recall the preparatory period of the arrival of the Christ - child, both visually and meaningfully. At the annual Carols and readings service on Christmas Eve the fifth candle will be lit and this will herald the arrival of Jesus into the world as 'The light of the world.'



Readers may also be surprised to learn that the 'twelve days of Christmas' begin on Christmas day and end on 6th January, in the Christian calendar, with the season of Epiphany. This date recalls the revealing or showing of the baby Jesus to the Magi from the east thus affirming the authenticity and genuineness of the story.

Epiphany essentially means insight or revelation and this season will come to it's natural conclusion on Wednesday 10th February which is otherwise known as Ash Wednesday and which, of - course, follows Shrove Tuesday, the beginning of the Lenten season leading up to the celebration of Easter forty days later. Shrove Tuesday is when we all enjoy our pancakes!

The St. Mary's congregation wishes all Chronicle readers a very happy Christmas and a prosperous and blessed 2015!

Hector I. Mackenzie.