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*As Iron Sharpens Iron, So One Person Sharpens Another. Psalms 27:17*

### 7 Facts About St. Patrick

While millions of people celebrate St. Patrick's Day every March, most have no idea who he was or what he did. St. Patrick isn't the patron saint of wearing green, not getting pinched, and drinking until you throw up. In reality, he was a former slave who used innovative methods to spread the gospel to an unreached people group. Here are seven things you may not know about him.

**1. His birth name was Maewyn Succat** - After a childhood in England, he was kidnapped by pirates as a 16-year-old and taken as a slave to Ireland. There, he tended the flocks of a Druid chieftain.

**2. As a slave, he turned to Christ** - Maewyn had been unconcerned with Christianity previously, but in captivity, he began to follow Christ. After six years, he escaped from slavery and returned to his homeland.

**3. As a free man, he returned with the gospel** - He became a priest—but he felt a burning desire to take the gospel to the land where he had been enslaved. Pope Celestine agreed and gave him the name "Patritius," or Patrick, derived from two Latin words meaning the father of his people.



**4. He wasn't Ireland's first missionary** - Palladius, sent five years earlier, had not been very successful. Patrick's experience with the culture and language helped him see more progress. Estimates are he baptized 10,000 Irish people and planted 300 churches.

**5. He never officially attained sainthood** - At his death, reportedly on March 17, 460, Patrick had spent decades ministering to the Celtic people. Though never formally canonized by the Catholic Church, he was recognized by local leaders as a saint for proclaiming the gospel across Ireland.

**6. He evangelized leaders** - Patrick focused his attention on the chiefs and other influential people, including his former slave master, Milchu. As these people were converted, they could sway others. Successful missionaries today still recognize the value of Patrick's strategy.

**7. He was countercultural within culture** - Patrick knew the Irish people. He loved the Irish people. As a result, he reached them for Christ—despite being beaten, robbed, and threatened with death.

# The Necessity, Importance and Power of Prayer

## What is Prayer?

We must address this fundamental question first! Prayer's most straightforward, uncomplicated definition is "talking to God." Prayer is a two-way relationship in which man should talk to God and listen to Him. Prayer can be audible or silent, private or public, formal or informal.

Prayer is direct, honest communication with God. Prayer is the primary way for the believer in Jesus Christ to communicate his emotions and desires with God and to have an intimate, passionate, personal relationship with Him.

All prayer must be offered in faith, *"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind."* James 1:6

All prayer must be in the name of the Lord Jesus, *"In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you."* John 16:23

And all prayer must be in the power of the Holy Spirit, *"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."* Romans 8:26

God wants us to talk with Him about everything. Worry about nothing; pray about everything. *"do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* Philippians 4:6-7

That's a long answer, but I think I covered 'What Prayer is'?

## What prayer is not

Prayer is not some mystical practice whereby we call on some ancient cosmic force! Prayer is not meditation or passive reflection; you don't have to wait for any particular time or position to be in to pray...you don't have to be in church. You don't have to kneel down and bow your head.

Prayer is not something you do when you want something.

Prayer is not an effort to "channel" God's power for our purposes so that he will give us what we want!

Prayer is not a complaint department.

# The Necessity, Importance and Power of Prayer cont.

Prayer is not a magic formula. It is not a particular keyword or "Mantra."

Prayer is not a one size fits all kind of thing. Prayer is for different hours, days, months, years, and seasons of our lives.

Prayer is not ... the pursuit of feelings, experiences, a great name, or reputation.

***And, believe it or not, prayer is not all about YOU!***

## **The Necessity of Prayer**

*"IN any study of the principles, and procedure of prayer, of its activities and enterprises, first place, must, of necessity, be given to faith. It is the initial quality in the heart of any man who essays to talk to the Unseen. He must, out of sheer helplessness, stretch forth hands of faith. He must believe, where he cannot prove. Moreover: when faith ceases to pray, it ceases to live." E. M. Bounds*

Prayer controls our conduct, and our conduct makes our character. Conduct is what we do; character is what we are.

If I could sum up the *necessity* of prayer into one reason, it would be: prayers help us grow closer to God. When we pray, we welcome God to be in every part of our lives. The more time we spend talking and *listening* to God through Prayer, the more we draw closer to Him and know more of Him. And consequently, God naturally draws close to us too.

When we pray, we also bring ourselves into line with God's will. We are asking Him to lead us and help us in our journey through life, and we are more able to discern the will of God for our lives.

God is good and asks us to trust Him completely. In prayer, we say, basically, *"Not my will, but yours, be done."* The key to having our prayers answered is praying according to the will of God and in accordance with His Word. Prayer is not seeking our own will but aligning ourselves with God's will more fully.

## **The importance of prayer**

The importance of prayer in our life is crucial to our growing stronger in our faith and being obedient to God.

Our instructor in prayer is, of course, Jesus Christ. Prayer is essential because Jesus Christ did it. *"And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed."* Mark 1:35 Jesus Christ was a man of constant Prayer during His ministry. Our Lord Jesus Christ started and ended in prayer.

Prayer is the medium through which God's children communicate their heart desires to their Father. They are empowered through prayer. A common saying is that *"a prayerless Christian is, indeed, a powerless believer."*

# The Necessity, Importance and Power of Prayer cont.

Prayer is a privilege. Prayer is a miracle. Prayer is an excellent gift from God.

True Prayer is Prayer in which we pray to God as He has commanded us to pray.

True Prayer is Prayer in which the sinner is humble before God.

Prayer is praise. Prayer is worship. Prayer is an active dedication, an acknowledgment of our commitment to God.

Prayer is an acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and our trust in Him. In prayer, we give God His proper place. We acknowledge Him as the Creator and the Provider. And we look to Him to help us and to supply our needs.

Here are the main types of prayers in the Bible:

The prayer of faith.

The prayer of agreement (also known as corporate prayer).

The prayer of request (or supplication).

The prayer of thanksgiving.

The prayer of worship.

The prayer of consecration.

The prayer of intercession.

I could write several thousand words on each type of prayer. Still, your personal research would be more beneficial in learning how, when, where, and why you need each kind of prayer.

## **The power of prayer**

If there is an answer to experiencing power in prayer, it is praying from a place of reality. Don't try to hide the truth of your situation from God and how you feel about it.

The power of prayer is simply this, the power of Almighty God, who hears and answers prayer.

The power of prayer must not be underestimated. Prayer holds power. God has not changed, and neither has prayer.

The power of prayer isn't in the person praying. The power of prayer absolutely does not flow from us. The power of prayer is not based on a particular direction we face or a specific position.

of our bodies. The power of prayer doesn't come from using artifacts, icons, candles, or beads. Instead, the power resides in the God who is being prayed to. It is an open heart, humble, and filled with awe of who our mighty God is.

# The Necessity, Importance and Power of Prayer cont.

The power of prayer comes from our omnipotent God, who hears our prayers and answers them.

Whatever the answer to our prayers, the almighty God we pray to is the source of the power of prayer. He can and will answer us according to His perfect will and timing.

We must recognize the need for God's power. This is the same power that created the heavens and the Earth. This is the same power that parted the Red Sea for Moses and Jesus used to heal the sick and cast out demons. That power raised Christ from the dead and brought a baptism of fire to the first Christians.

By ourselves, we can do nothing. The scriptures confirm this. In John 15:5, Jesus says, *"Apart from me you can do nothing."*

Prayer works because God wants our complete dependence on Him. He wants us to recognize that we cannot exceed our limitations without Him.

We need to grasp the full potential of the power of prayer available to the believer in Jesus Christ. We regularly go about our daily lives and forget that we are united with Jesus Christ. We are related to Him as our head, and we are His Church, designed to express the fullness of His power on Earth.

God has incomparably great power. Jesus Christ is seated at God's right hand. Jesus defeated Satan at the cross, and we are called to enforce Jesus Christ's authority on Earth through Prayer.

## **Is there anything prayer cannot do**

There is one thing that prayer, faith, or anything else can't do. Prayer cannot take the place, override, overrule, or set aside the will of God. You can pray as much as you want, for as long as you want, as loud as you want, with great enthusiasm, and as much faith as you can get together, but it will not change one iota what God has willed to do.

When you pray, please talk and for sure, shut up and be quiet and listen.

***"The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*** Philippians 4:6-7

*Alywin Mitchell*



## Self-Control

Self-control has always been a bit of a paradox for me. On one hand, it is so important that I manage myself, so I DON'T do things that are wrong or bad, things that sabotage my true desire to live a good life. But on the other hand, it is also important for me TO do things that are beneficial and important, so I eventually create a life I love living.

Luke 6:45 says that what we speak and do is brought up out of what we have stored in our hearts. Even before we were consciously aware of ourselves as unique persons, we were storing up thoughts and feelings. Our entire life we have made daily deposits into our inner being, we have been storing up a mixed bag of goodness and evil. And as we live our life, we draw out of that stored up “way of being” what we’ve been depositing.

Another way to think about this is that we have planted seeds of thoughts and feelings, and our behavior is the plant that has grown from that seed.

When we encounter Jesus and are “born again”, we are given an opportunity to empty all of the evil we’ve deposited into the store house of our heart. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” NASB.

But we still have the momentum of the life we’ve been living. It is as if we have been planting weeds our entire life. All we know is weed seed. And even after we’ve experienced the love and presence of Jesus in our lives, we continue sowing weed seed because we just aren’t aware there is a different possibility.

We have the habit of putting bitterness into our heart. Of speaking angry words (even silently in our own minds). We also have the habit of sowing negative self-talk into our heart; telling ourselves we are worthless, not enough, broken....

Yes, we ARE a new creation, but a new creation with old habits of thinking and feeling. And shifting those old habits is part of the work we get to do in order to reconcile every aspect of our life with the new life we have been given.

## Self-Control cont.

True self-control begins with our thoughts and feelings. When we take responsibility to manage our thoughts, to intentionally direct our self-talk and habits of feeling into agreement with God's thoughts and feelings about us, our heart begins to transform into a treasure house full of faith, self-love, peace, and hope. We learn to sow seeds that will grow something beneficial rather than weeds.

THEN, what we do looks different. Instead of outbursts of anger, we experience empathy and peace. We speak in a way that creates peace rather than violence. Instead of self-harm, we experience self-love. We behave in a way that improves our well-being and that of those around us.

Eventually self-control becomes an internal guidance or GPS system that directs us more and more toward responsibility, calm, generosity, peace, and a life full of connection, adventure, and well-being.

Instead of biting the bullet to white knuckle out holding back intense anger.... All of that energy is able to flow into being and doing what we most want. Into becoming the best and highest version of ourselves.

And it all begins with the thoughts we think habitually, moment by moment. Thoughts of faith, rather than fear. Thoughts of self-acceptance and love, rather than self-hatred and shame. Thoughts of order, rather than chaos.

"Controlling" one's behavior will always be difficult if one's thoughts and feelings haven't shifted. If you've sown weeds of anger, self-hatred and bitterness, outbursts of intense and ugly behavior will follow. But once new habits of thinking and feeling have been created, new desirable behavior naturally follows, just as a stalk of corn grows up from the corn seed that was planted.

*Kendana Heston*





## God's Grace Provides all the Self-Control You Ever Need

Growing up I struggled with the same things everyone does. School, boys, work and feeling lost at times. Most times I just didn't feel worthy of God's grace or love. I had been abused most of my life so I felt dirty, unloved and out of control. I started drinking when I was 14 and found out that I could really drink. I didn't get drunk very easily so it became a trademark, so to speak, of who I was. I was the one who could outdrink the boys. Talk about a lack of self-control! In fact, I was so out of control that my world just started getting harder and harder to deal with. So, instead of leaving God, I would pray every night for forgiveness, guidance or some sort of sign to stop. My prayers were pathetic and self-serving. I was just feeling sorry for myself. God was always something I believed in but I was more afraid of judgement. I also believed in hell and I didn't want to go there. What I didn't realize was all the begging in the world wouldn't change the emptiness I was feeling. I just kept trying to fill the void with my own lack of self-control. When I believed that my prayers were not being answered (which they ABSOLUTELY were or I wouldn't be here) I changed my life once again. I stopped drinking and replaced the drinking with working out. It became an addiction as bad as the drinking, but I thought I was in control. I decided when and how often to work out. I controlled all my food intake to a certain number of calories per day. Guess what? I was out of control again!

This all led me into failed relationships, failed attempts to change my life and I still blamed everything on my lack of self-control. I just knew EVERYTHING happening in my life was my fault. You might ask how I know my prayers were being heard as I stated above. Because not once in my life did God EVER forsake me and leave me in a horrible situation when I listened to Him, trusted Him and believed He wanted only good things for me and my life. Every time I thought I was going to be stuck in my own personal hell once again, I listened to God and He removed me from the situation. I still had not been born again. That would come much later. So, in 2014 it was finally game over. God had plans for me and they were not to continue down the path I was on. Because I just couldn't fully trust His voice and vision for my life, He stopped me in my tracks. Since I've already shared this story, I won't do it again. All you need to know is that I suffered a traumatic brain injury that kept me in bed for SEVEN years. In that time, the Holy Spirit started really talking to me. See God knows ALL your trials, all your bouts with addiction, anger, suffering, pain, etc. It is His will that we prosper in ALL things.



## God's Grace Provides all the Self-Control You Ever Need Cont.

It says in 1 Kings 2:3 ...that if we walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies...that YOU may prosper, in ALL that you do, and wherever YOU turn. (KJV) God is asking us to trust Him with everything so that He can give you everything!

Observe what the LORD your God requires:  
Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees  
and commands, his laws and regulations,  
as written in the Law of Moses.  
Do this so that you may prosper  
in all you do and wherever you go.

**1 Kings 2:3**



We are not meant to control our lives without the help of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are spirit beings just living here a short time in this body. God can take any problem that you have, any lack of self-control or self-discipline, and remove the obstacle(s) if you trust in Him that is the name above all other names, the name of Jesus Christ. I am a shining example of that! He took me out of the pit of confusion, worked around my faults all of my life and then took my injury and turned it into the most beautiful bond of trust between God and myself that I could ever imagine. Now there isn't a day that goes by that I don't ask for guidance. A day that I don't ask what can I do for you God? How can I be of service so that you can bless me to be a blessing for others? You see, Jesus died so that I would have grace to get through anything that the devil sets before me. Satan has no power. If you want to experience real power, then trust in God. Get to know your authority He has given you upon this earth. Then the two of you can walk together healing the sick, delivering people from demonic forces such as addiction, hatred, judgement and self-imposed bondage.

You see, in the bible, every time the people trusted God and did not rely on themselves, God set the captives free. Paul was in a Roman prison waiting to die yet he rejoiced. He knew His God was greater than anything he could ever face as a person. In your darkest times, sing and thank Him. Trust God to take you through the fire. He will always say Yes and Amen when you ask with a willing heart and in Jesus name. Paul was told, when his dreams of all the Christians he had killed was haunting him, my grace is sufficient for you. That means Paul was forgiven so forgive yourself and trust in Jesus!



*LeAnnMcGranahan*

# Just For Laughs!



- What kind of spells do leprechauns use? Lucky Charms!
- Where do leprechauns live? In lepre-condos.
- What do you call a frog that jumped into a pot of gold? A leap-rechaun.
- Why do leprechauns love to garden? They have green thumbs!
- What do you call a leprechaun prank? A saint pat-trick.
- What happens if a leprechaun falls into the ocean? He gets wet, of course.
- Why do leprechaun always borrow money? Because they're always a little short.



- Do leprechauns make good secretaries? Sure, they're great at shorthand!
- When does a leprechaun cross the road? When it turns green!
- Why did the leprechaun climb over the rainbow? To get to the other side!
- What do you call a leprechaun who broke the law? A lepre-con!
- How did the leprechaun win the race? He took a shortcut.
- What did the leprechaun say when the video game ended? Game clover!
- What did the giant say to the leprechaun? Look up!



- What's Irish and stays out all night? Paddy O'Furniture.
- You know you overdid it on St. Patrick's Day when you think you're kissing the Blarney Stone and then it kisses back.
- What are the best shoes to wear on St. Patrick's Day? Lepre-converse.
- How do you know if an Irishman is having fun? He's Dublin over with laughter!
- Why did St. Patrick drive the snakes out of Ireland? Because he couldn't afford a plane ticket.
- Do people get jealous of the Irish? Yes, they're green with envy!

## Words to Grow By (Linda Lewis)

### Trusting God in the Dark

When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark,  
You don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit and trust the engineer.  
Part of walking in faith is trusting God in the dark. We can't see Him but we  
have to believe anyway. We must trust that in every situation, God is  
working things out for our good.

We must stay strong,

Have faith,

Trust God,

Keep believing,

And never lose hope.

***Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6***

Trust God today, no matter how dark your situation.  
God says, "You are coming out!"

## Women Empowering Women (Linda Lewis)

### Trust

To trust God in the light is nothing,

But to trust Him in the dark,

That's faith.

Ladies, if you are going through difficult times,

Keep trusting God!

He knows how to bless you in unexpected ways!



### PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

## Hearing From God (Part 3 from last month)

We have been talking about ways God speaks to us.

We discussed the most common way, which is through **His word, the Bible**. And the next most common way which is **to our spirit**.

This and next month we will talk about less common ways. I will give personal examples of each of those ways.

**Sometimes God speaks to us through people.** Often it is through other Christians, but not always.

When my children were very young, I had a neighbor, Sally, who had Multiple Sclerosis. But she had many other issues as well.

Sally would go from house to house looking for someone to invite her in to visit. She was not socially adept and stayed for hours with very little being said. So our neighbors got to the point they would not let her in.

I felt sorry for her so would let her in even though the visit was almost like trying to visit with a three-year-old. Not like visiting with any of the other neighbors.

I kept thinking of the Bible verse that says, "If you do it to the least of them, you do it to Me."

Neighbors would remark, "Bev, you're so nice to let Sally visit you. None of the rest of us want to let her in."

Letting her visit became the beginning of other things with her.

Sally constantly wanted me to take her places. And I usually did--even though it meant dropping whatever I was doing and getting three small kids and myself ready to go. Most of these trips were not necessary at all.

After seeing someone leave my house, she would call me to see if she could come over because that other person had.

She would actually step out into the street in front of my car when she saw me going someplace--to see if she could go with me wherever I was going.

She called my house continually. She kept her eye on my comings and goings. Nowadays, one might say she stalked me.

## Hearing From God (Part 3 from last month) cont.

During this same time, my children had to go to the doctor on a regular basis for one reason or another. My father was dying of cancer. And I had a health issue that required regular visits to the doctor.

And then, in addition to everything else, I started having pains in my stomach. The only thing that relieved them was to press a pillow against it.

But, still, I kept thinking, “If you do this to the least of them, you do it to Me.”

*Lord, isn't this what I'm supposed to be doing?*

But I felt like I could not handle any more.

At the end of one of my regular visits to the doctor, he looked at me and said, “Now. What else?”

“I've been having pains in my stomach.”

He had me lie down and felt around that area. “Sweetheart, I think the pains are from your nerves.”

As I sat up, I burst into tears. I told him about Sally and everything I had been dealing with.

My precious doctor said, “Sally is not your responsibility. She is her husband's responsibility. You have all you can handle with your kids, your dad and yourself. She is not your responsibility.”

I knew the Lord had spoken to me through my doctor. I felt the Lord was telling me it was okay for me not to be Sally's everything. The burden was lifted. I was able to keep healthy boundaries with her after that.

I can give you more examples of how the Lord has used others to speak to me.

One I've learned is that the Lord will speak to us about things that have been on our heart and often **things we have been praying about**—through different ways.

Next month we will talk more about ways He speaks to us.

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# Closing Words

## Back to the Beginning

**Genesis 1:26 & 28** <sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,<sup>[a]</sup> and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

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When God first created mankind, He set us up with everything we needed. He then gave us authority over nature. Because we were created in his image, we were supposed to reflect his character. We were to be holy, loving, peaceful, caring and make intelligent decisions. We were also instructed to be fruitful and multiply. We were supposed to cover this huge earth with people like us. People that were also a reflection of God. Furthermore, because we were created in His image, we were supposed to reflect how God rules over the universe by having dominion in the earth.

But that is not the case today. Instead, we allowed Satan to disrupt this perfect design and lure us into sin with doubt and lies. He planted the seed of doubt in Eve’s mind by asking her, “Did God really say you could not eat the forbidden fruit?” Then he lied and told her that she would not die, but instead would be like God if she ate it. When she and Adam bought into the lie, we became broken. We started duplicating brokenness into every generation after that. We went from paradise to poverty. We went from peace to war. We went from knowing who we were, to having an identity crisis. We went from an abundant life to kids now wanting to kill themselves because they are not “liked” on social media. We have gone from complete freedom to prisons being built all over the world to house those that are criminally sinful.

Brothers and sisters, we have to go back to the beginning. To do this we have to first reestablish a firm relationship with Christ. Not just go to church. Not just quote the bible. But love him with all our heart and be obedient to him. When we do this, we will demonstrate all his characteristics and reflect him in the earth. We can then be fruitful and multiply holiness and not brokenness. We can once again reclaim our authority over nature. We can speak things into existence like God did when He created the world. He gave Adam the assignment to name all the animals. Back then naming something meant you were giving it purpose. You were speaking what that thing or person’s function and purpose was. We are supposed to be speaking to things and declaring how they should be.

Stop what you are doing and ask God to help you to reset your life.

*Lonnie Johnson*

Executive Director  
Growth Ministries





## Habakkuk 2:2 ESV

And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it."

**Write Us** – We want to hear from you. We enjoy hearing from you. Here are some things you can write about.

- **Tell us about our magazine**

We want to know what you like about our magazine. What are some of the articles you want to see more of? Are there any specific types of stories that inspire you?

- **Send us something to publish**

Do you write poetry? Do you have a powerful testimony? Do you have a particular scripture that you want to share why it inspires you? Maybe you are an artist and want to share a drawing. Send it to us and let us check it out. If approved we will publish it for others to see. Please refrain from any inappropriate material. We are a Christian organization and will not publish anything that is unsuitable for our readers.

- **Send us your prayer requests or issues you are dealing with**

Are you going through something right now. Write us so we can pray with you. We will respond to your letter with a prayer, scripture and guidance on your issue. We all need someone to touch and agree with us when we are faced with life's challenges.

  
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*Changing the World One Life at a Time*



# Word Search



## St Patrick's Day WORD SEARCH



BLARNEY  
CELTIC  
CHARM  
CLOVER  
DUBLIN  
EMERALD

GOLD  
GREEN  
HARP  
HOLIDAY  
IRELAND  
IRISH

JIG  
LEPRECHAUN  
LIMERICK  
LUCK  
MARCH  
SHAMROCK

PARADE  
PATRICK  
POTATO  
RAINBOW  
SAINT