



PULSE

Volume 56 Number 3

Christmas 2016



EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

It is still early in November as I write, but I assume that by the time you are reading this, the big box of Quality Street will have been opened, the Christmas tree will be up and you will have heard Slade's 'Merry Christmas Everybody' about a dozen times in the shopping centre!



People often remark to me that the true meaning of Christmas has been lost amidst all of the commercial trappings. The message is often hidden under the tinsel and fairy lights and this unique celebration of the birth of Jesus is observed as just one of many celebrations at this time of year.



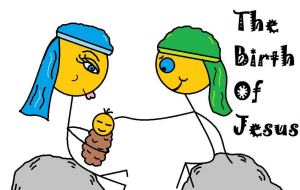
I shared with you last year that one of my friend's favourite slogans around this time of year is 'Jesus is the reason for the season'. It's catchy and I can understand what she means by it... but can I suggest that, 'We are the reason for the season' or maybe more appropriately, 'Our sin...'?

The birth of Jesus marks a significant point in God's rescue plan for the world! For people like us, lost in sin, there is little hope because our sin separates us from God.



God had a rescue plan right from the very beginning. He knew that we needed a Saviour. Jesus is that Saviour, who would make us right with God and ultimately pay our penalty on the cross by removing the sin barrier between us and God.

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We give thanks that God rescued us by humbling Himself as a baby born in a manger! We celebrate that God dwelt amongst us but Jesus didn't stay in the manger.



Our minds look forward to Easter when we will reflect on the reason that Jesus came, to free us from our slavery to sin, and restore our relationship with God!

So, this Christmas time, when you hear someone say '*Jesus is the reason for the season*', remember... '*Your sin is the reason for the season*'.

Rejoice this Christmas that God came to rescue you from your sin so that you might find forgiveness when you repent and believe in Jesus as your Lord!



For now, as a church family, we rejoice and we celebrate His miraculous birth; knowing that this is not the end of the story... it's just the beginning!

Alan Marsh



SPECIAL SERVICES

14 December @ 6.30pm

Community Carol service

18 December @ 11am

Family service

18 December @ 7pm

Carols by candlelight

20 December @ 7.30pm

Carol service with Shed & Ladies Fellowship

25 December @ 10am

Christmas Day service
(No evening service)

1 January @ 11am

Morning worship
(No evening service)

8 January @ 11am

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

15 January @ 11am

Ladies Fellowship service

5 March @ 11am

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

ORGANISATIONAL NEWS

McQuiston Senior Members Fellowship

The Senior Members' Fellowship (SMF) meet every Tuesday at 2pm rain, hail or snow and there's a warm welcome for everyone, newcomers or 'old hands', as we gather for a lovely tea, a great speaker and a time of fellowship.



Just a few of the guests welcomed already this term are a master baker with recipes to share, a missionary who helps young Cambodians trafficked in the sex trade and Lady Syliva Hermon. Still to visit are the children of Nettlefield PS Choir, the Rev. Noel Agnew talking about his love of the high seas and an old friend, the Rev. William Sinclair, former assistant minister in McQuiston.



It's the highlight of the week for around fifty people but there's always room for more! However, because of the age of some of our members, several in their 90s and a 100th birthday coming up soon, we need your help with transport.

Could you join the team to offer a lift for some members who can't otherwise get? We're depending on your help McQuiston! We'd love you to join our team of amazing volunteers who keep the show on the road every week.

"Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent." (Psalm 71:9)

Leta Halliday

LADIES FELLOWSHIP

We are part of Presbyterian Women and meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. This year the Rev. Robert Beggs spoke on our theme *"This Is the Day"*, Raymond and Linda Wray told us about Oasis Village, an Orphanage in Zambia run by their daughter and son-in-law, and we had an interesting talk by Firemen for Christ.

We are looking forward to our joint Carol Service with SHED on 20 December. We would be delighted if you could join us in the New Year.



Sheila McAllister

19th Company Boys' Brigade

We began the new session on Friday, 8 September after a recruitment drive amongst the boys who attended the Holiday Bible Club in August. We were delighted to see our prayers answered as a number of new recruits joined us and at present we have 9 Anchor Boys and 9 Junior Section Boys on our roll.



September also saw some staffing changes with Glenn Wasson taking a year off as he is teaching English in France. Grace Price has joined to give Brian Erskine a helping hand in the Anchor Boys and Richard Hughes is now helping in the Junior Section. The Company owes a big thank you to Grace and Richard for volunteering to help in the BB and to the all the other officers and leaders who serve God so willingly and passionately in this work.

We are still looking for more volunteers to help in all sections so that we can begin a Company Section in 2017. If you can help in any way please speak to myself.

In this new session we have continued our programme with a large range of activities in various categories - MIND, BODY, COMMUNITY, CREATIVITY and most importantly SPIRITUAL. You can see some of the results of our work on the notice boards in the concourse of the halls. At time of writing we are looking forward to our Enrolment service and Christmas Parties.



Please be aware that we are still recruiting boys from ages 4-11 who are free on a Friday night - they will have a great time. Please continue to pray for all the officers and helpers as we seek to advance Christ's Kingdom among boys in McQuiston. Pray for good behaviour and commitment from the boys as other events and activities on a Friday night seek to keep them away from the BB.

Thanks as ever to the congregation for all the help, support and interest in the work of the 19th Company of the Boys' Brigade.

Jim Ross

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community Carol Service

We are looking forward to holding our third Community Carol service on Wednesday, 14 December at 6.30pm.



A warm invitation is extended to members of the church and the local community to join with us to sing carols and hear again those familiar Bible verses which point us to Christmas.



We will also be led in song by the choirs of Elmgrove and Euston Street Primary schools. Refreshments will also be served.

Please put this date in your diary and plan to attend.

John Shivers

Operation Christmas Child

A massive thank you to all members of the congregation who contributed in any way to this year's Christmas Shoe-box Appeal.



Over 120 shoe-boxes were filled and will bring hours of great delight to children around the world. Given the difficult financial times in which we live this was a fantastic effort.

Roberta Graham

Presbyterian Herald & Reach Out



From February 2017 Reach Out is amalgamating with the Presbyterian Herald. An invitation is issued to Reach Out readers who do not subscribe to The Herald to join us.

The Herald is the main communication tool of the Presbyterian Church to let congregations know what is going on in the Church throughout Ireland. If you would like to subscribe to the Presbyterian Herald in 2017 the cost is £10 per year, please contact Sheila McAllister.

Presbyterian Children's Society

2016 celebrates the 150th anniversary of the Presbyterian Children's Society. During that time it has provided grants to those in need. Circumstances have changed over the years but one thing hasn't - the grant has remained what it always has been, a symbol of Christian love and concern for others.



Regular grants are given to families for their children and additional grants given at Summer and Christmas to help at these peak expenditure times. Last year the Society gave £560,000 to Presbyterian children in need, helping around 385 families.

In 2015 McQuiston donated £335 to the Society. If you would like to contribute please mark any donation "Presbyterian Children's Society".

Sheila McAllister

Free Will Offering

Please note that if you wish your Free Will Offering or giving to other funds to be credited to 2016, these must be received no later than Christmas morning, Sunday 25 December 2016. Any monies received after this will be credited to 2017. If you are not planning on joining us on Christmas morning, the last date to place your envelop in the offering plate will be Sunday, 18 December.



Organisational Accounts

Please note that all Organisational Accounts should be audited and returned to myself no later than Sunday 22 January 2016.

United Appeal

At the time of writing, I am pleased to report that our United Appeal giving in 2016 is up 40% compared to the same period last year at £6,650. However, we are still somewhat short of our honorary target of £12,208. May I further encourage you to give as generously as you can before the end of the year in an effort to close the gap.



Tim Graham

WHAT GIFT SHALL I GIVE?

It is impossible to miss the approach of Christmas 2016 as we go about our daily lives. Shops, larger stores and malls have been festooned with the trappings of Christmas for some weeks now.



The decorations and lights tell us that the hustle and bustle of the season has begun. Lists are being prepared, arrangements to celebrate are being organised, cards and gifts are being purchased.



A lot of money will be spent – pleasing especially to retail business owners and restaurant owners! This, for many people, becomes the busiest and most stressful time of year.

Of course the Christmas trees, lights and decorations help to brighten what can otherwise be a dismal, cold and damp time of the year. Children especially enjoy the colour, anticipation and excitement of Christmas.



Also, at this time of year, family reunions become very special. The majority of us participate in the large-scale buying or making of gifts to give to one another – and there is joy in doing so.

Aside from the Christmas meal, ‘gifts’ usually become central to what Christmas means. This generally starts in childhood with the anticipation of ‘what will Santa bring’ and develops and continues throughout life.

These become priorities. However, sadly, for too many folk around the world the true meaning and focus of Christmas is missing.



Recently I read of a family who were participating, like ourselves, in the Christmas experience. One evening the grandparents took their grandchildren to town to see the lights, the Christmas tree, Santa, the toys etc.

At one point during the evening their attention was taken by the question of one of the children, a six year old, who asked *“I wonder what Jesus wants for a birthday present this year?”*.

Momentarily the grandparents were lost for words. Despite all the glitter and abundance of things that were surrounding him, the mind of this child had wonderfully focussed in on the Person who is central to what the celebration is about – JESUS.



The grandparents were then amazed at the immediate response of the little boy's sister, "*Jamie – Jesus doesn't want a present. He wants our love.*"

Such was the simplicity, understanding and wonder of two little children and yet what a profound conversation.



Jesus said on one occasion and continues to say to us this Christmas, *'The main thing that I want from you is that you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind', and secondly, 'that you love your neighbour as you love yourself'*. (Matt 22 vs 37-39)

As a priority this Christmas, let us remember – 'OUR LOVE IS THE GREATEST GIFT WE CAN OFFER TO JESUS – OR TO ANYONE!' This will indeed make a 'Happy Christmas 2016'.



Anna Johnston

McQUISTON WEBSITE

Many of our readers will already be aware of the McQuiston website, www.mcquistonpc.org, and the various items of news that appear.



I would like to draw your attention to the recent Archives section. Here you will find many past order of services and historic documents, however there is plenty of space for other items.



If you have any documents of historic note, old church magazines etc., please contact me and I will arrange to get them copied and uploaded to the website.

John Shivers



World Development Appeal 2016



Launched in the autumn of each year, the World Development Appeal (WDA) aims to raise £500,000 or more, for sustainable development projects overseas. All proceeds will be channelled through PCI's aid agency partners, Christian Aid and Tearfund and this year the two projects that will benefit are based in El Salvador and Brazil.

"The WDA began in 1980 in support of sustainable development work in some of the world's poorest communities. Today the Appeal represents a long-term and generous commitment on the part of PCI members and congregations across Ireland to this work," said Rev. Dr. Katherine Meyer, Convener of the Church's World Development Committee.



"The theme of this year's Appeal is '*Reclaiming Hope*', a feeling that resonated with those we met in El Salvador and Brazil. This year highlights the additional challenges created for sustainable development in post-conflict situations. At the same time, we continue to focus on all the ways in which the effects of climate change continue to make themselves felt in almost every aspect of sustainable community development," Dr. Meyer said.

Talking about each of the projects, the Minister of Christ Church, Sandymount in Dublin said that almost 25 years after the formal end to the 12 year civil war in El Salvador, the country is still recovering from the long-term after-effects of the conflict.



"The high levels of poverty, which formed the background to the civil war, are still being played out in its aftermath. Our partner in the Central American nation is the Programme for Capacity-Building and Reconstruction in El Salvador, known as PROCARES, which has been one of Christian Aids' partners since 1998."

“PROCARES is working with returning refugees who were resettled in the Jiquilisco Bay region on the country’s southern coast. In the face of severe climate volatility, ongoing coastal erosion, and ruined infrastructure, this new community began to reclaim the land,” Dr. Meyer said.



The 2016 Appeal will also support ACEV (Evangelical Action) in Brazil, who are working with some of the country’s most isolated populations in the semi-arid northeast of the country.

“This part of Brazil has seen few glimpses of the rapid economic growth experienced in other parts of this vast nation. Here the climate is semi-arid, and for people living in the region, access – or lack of access – to water shapes almost every other aspect of their lives,” Dr. Meyer said.

“Working in partnership with Tearfund and local churches, the 2016 Appeal will help to support ACEV as it continues to focus on the provision of wells and their maintenance. Training in agriculture will also make the best use of the new water systems, as will the development of planting crops best suited to a dry climate.”



Welcoming the launch of the 2016 Appeal, Presbyterian Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar said, “As those who belong to the Lord Jesus, we have a concern for His creation and people and when we see a need at home or overseas, especially when it comes to the poorest and most marginalised, we should be faithful and true to respond.

“This is our 36th WDA and last year congregations across Ireland raised over £559,140 for projects in Bangladesh and Ethiopia among others. I have no doubt that this same spirit of generosity will bless the people of El Salvador and Brazil, enabling them to reclaim the hope that we all seek.”



Envelopes will be distributed to the congregation on Sunday, 11 December and can be returned on either Sunday 18 or 25 December. Your giving will enable us to support some of the world’s poorest people in building a way out of poverty and into a life of dignity and greater freedom.

Joan Gardner

OBITUARY

John McMillen

The following tribute was read by Mr J C Shivers, Clerk of Session at the meeting of the Kirk Session on 25 October 2016

I advise the Kirk Session of the death of one of our Elders, John McMillen who passed away peacefully on Thursday, 20 October. He was 78 years old.

John was a lifelong member of our congregation being baptised here and attending our Sunday School and Boys' Brigade.

As a child John lived in Portallo Street and attended Bloomfield Kindergarten private school.

He served his time as a fitter at Harland & Wolff before entering the drawing office at the shipyard.

Throughout this time John continued to study and eventually went to work with the Department of Finance in Churchill House as a mechanical engineer. Later he was to become Assistant Director in the DOE Construction Service in the city centre from where he retired. John was a lifelong learner and gained a master's degree in mechanical engineering.

He also had a great love for badminton playing here in McQuiston and later went on to represent Ulster. John also enjoyed football and played for the McQuiston football team. In later years John's interest turned to golf and he played at Holywood Golf Club.

John first met Lilian at the former Curzon cinema and they were married in Belmont Presbyterian in July 1961 by the Rev. Eaton. For the vast majority of their married life they lived in the Beechgrove area.

Their marriage was blessed with the birth of Peter and later Jill and they had many happy years together. John would often talk about holidays abroad particularly in Spain and the Canary Islands.

John was elected to the Congregational Committee in 1996 and was always heavily involved with the General Purposes Committee. He was later ordained to the Eldership on 6 March 2005.

As an Elder he fulfilled his duties with enthusiasm and faithfulness visiting the families in his District over many years and was always most welcome in their homes. He will also be remembered for quiet words of encouragement to all and would always have been supportive to family and friends.

When it came to the re-development of our halls John had no hesitation in stepping forward to lead on the design and oversight of their re-construction. What we use today is a lasting memory to John's memory.

In 2015 John and Lilian moved to Clonallen Square, Belmont. Only over the last few months as John grew increasingly frail did he move into residential care at Mount Lens Care Home.

We convey our sympathy to his wife Lilian, children Peter and Jill, grandchildren Alex, Tess and Heidi and the wider family circle thanking God for the life of John who knew the joy of his Saviour's love and who served his Lord with faithfulness.

As is our custom I would ask you to rise for a moment's silent tribute to a beloved Elder who has completed his course and has entered into the joy of the Lord.

FLOWERS

Many thanks to all members
of our congregation who
contribute to the church
flowers.

August

Dorothy Beattie
Claire Fisher
Joanne Kane
Richard Hughes

September

Anna Johnston
Marie Davidson
Karen Beggs
Lynn Gardner
Joan Wootton
Margaret Millar
Sadie Ferguson



October

Claire Fisher
Roberta Graham
Margaret Warke
Mildred Kerr
Margaret Bartholomew



For unto you is
born this day
in the city of David a
Saviour
which is
Christ the Lord.
- Luke 2:11

BAPTISMS

***“Suffer the little children
to come unto me”***

16 October

Jacob
infant son of
Alan & Esther Marsh
20 Lord Warden’s Glade,
Bangor

23 October

Hannah Naomi
infant daughter of
Stephen & Rachel Briggs
82 Rodden’s Crescent

NEW MEMBERS

***“Be not forgetful
to entertain strangers”***

Ms Violet Cooke
6 McQuiston Mews

AT REST

***"I am the Resurrection
and the Life"***

10 August

William McCormick
9 Cairnshill Green

20 October

John McMillen
Mount Lens Nursing Home
formerly 7 Clonallen Square

24 October

Mrs Alice Shanks
15 St Patricks Walk

October

Mrs Mary Robinson
Victoria Nursing Home

11 November

Mrs Helen McIlroy
1 Knockmount Gardens

VESTIBULE OFFICIALS

***"Be not forgetful
to entertain strangers"***

January

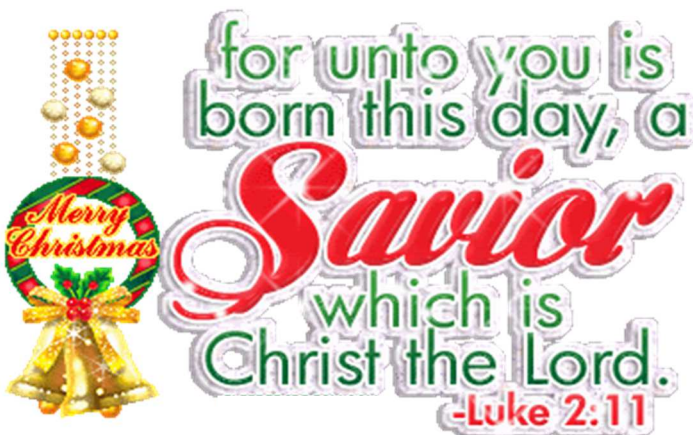
Donald Connolly
John Shivers
Jim Hunter
Jean Hunter
Convenor: Joan Gardner

February

Angela Shivers
Raymond Wray
Linda Wray
Convenor: Alan Bousfield

March

Richard Hughes
Lorraine Hughes
Agnes Somerville
Convenor: Joan Gardner



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