

PULSE

Volume 59 Number 3

Christmas 2019



EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

As I'm writing this it's early November and I have already seen the first Christmas tree of the year in a home.



I was talking to a colleague the other day on the subject of Christmas. Our complaint, if you could call it that, was the difficulty in saying anything new about Christmas that some preacher somewhere has not said in the past and perhaps said many times.



The heart of the problem for preachers is right there... it's the same old story!

But, hold on a minute, is that not the point? Christmas is not a story that has to be reinvented every year for a new sales pitch.

THE *Wonder* OF
CHRISTMAS

Rather it should be affirmed and told again and again because it is an unchanging truth which when we stop to think about it, is mind blowing.



That God set up home among us as one of us; that the eternal ONE limited Himself to the span and reach of a human life to make Himself known.

Thank God it is the same old story!

Will you listen, really listen this year?

For
Unto
us
a
CHILD
is born
Unto us a Son
is given, and the
Government shall be
Upon His shoulders,
and His Name shall be called,
Wonderful, Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace!
Isaiah 9:6

Robert Beggs

A CHRISTMAS VERSE



He had no royal palace,
Only a stable bare.
He had no watchful servants,
An ox and ass stood there.
But light shone forth from
where He lay;
The King of Love upon the hay!

'Kay'



PULSE 2020

Those eagle eyed readers will have noticed that we are currently in Volume 59 Number 3 of the current magazine. Thus, Easter 2020, will be Volume 60 Number 1.



To mark the occasion we plan to publish a commemorative edition marking 60 years of the magazine with examples of past stories and events.

Just last year we endeavoured to have all the past copies bound in a series of books however we are missing some copies from 1975 to 1978.



Should you have copies please contact the Editor John Shivers, who would be happy to take copies.

John Shivers

SPECIAL SERVICES

17 December @ 6.30pm

SHED and Ladies Fellowship carol service

22 December @ 11.00am

Family service

22 December @ 7.00pm

Nine lessons and carols by candlelight



25 December @ 10.00am

Morning worship

29 December @ 11.00am

Morning worship
(no evening service)

5 January @ 11.00am

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

26 January @ 11.00am

Ladies Fellowship service

1 March @ 11.00am

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper



ORGANISATIONAL NEWS

19th Belfast Company Boys' Brigade

At present, as I write, we are looking forward to our Enrolment Service, on 24 November, at which two Company section boys, Jason and Ross, will be leading in prayer, with prayers written by them.



The Company boys have been reading and discussing the various aspects of prayer and the effect prayer has on our daily lives. The Anchor boys will be singing their favourite song and the Junior section boys will lead us in our scripture reading. We hope you have all enjoyed your Company's enrolment.

May I say to all of you a big thank you for all your support both prayerful and financial; we really do appreciate everything. Please continue to pray for us.



I will finish by wishing everyone a peaceful, happy and blessed Christmas.

Brian Erskine

Praise Group

Members of the Praise Group were delighted to be invited back to sing at this year's Music at McQuiston "On the box". We also had the pleasure to participate in Aaron House's Harvest Thanksgiving service where we led the residents in praise.



I would extend a warm welcome to you and your kin this Christmas as we gather for our annual carols by candlelight service on Sunday 22 December.

Phil Kemps

Organisational Accounts

Please note that all Organisational Accounts should be audited and returned to myself no later than Sunday 26 January 2020.

Tim Graham

McQuiston Storehouse.

The Storehouse continues to provide food and help to those who are in need. This important ministry has been a great relief over the past number of years to those in our community who use this service. It is especially appreciated coming up to Christmas when there is extra pressure on household finances.



John McCandless, our new community worker, uses this facility engaging with the local community and is very thankful for our support in this work.



Our thanks go to all who support this work throughout the year by providing food or financial donations. The monies received enables us to purchase electricity or gas top-ups whenever necessary.

Please continue your support in this work as it is greatly appreciated by those in receipt of it.

Alan Bousfield

Ladies Fellowship

The opening meeting of our new session commenced on 17 September when we heard about Firefighters for Christ. They are an international ministry with small groups in various parts of the world meeting together with the mission goal to encourage firefighters to live their lives for Jesus Christ.



At our October meeting we heard about the work of Asia Link, a Christian mission agency connecting churches with ministry among the unreached peoples of Asia.



Our annual Ladies Fellowship and SHED carol service will be on Tuesday 17 December at 6.30pm when we will be joined by the choirs from Elmgrove and Euston Street Primary Schools. Please come along and join with us. Refreshments will be served in the Ballantine Hall afterwards.

Joan Gardner

Transformers

We started back in September with 18 children including 6 new faces. We love new children joining us so that we can tell them about the love Jesus has for them. When new children come, that gives us an opportunity to chat to their parents when they leave their children off and collect them again. We have been able to have some great conversations with them.



Our format remains the same. We start with circle time when the children tell us what they have been doing during the week and we then have a Bible story. Our topic until Christmas is men and women of the Bible but ones that the children wouldn't maybe have heard of before.



We also do craft and worksheets at certain times throughout the year. We pray before going into the hall for some games. We have tried some new games this session including rounders and uni-hockey, but old favourites football and dodge ball still make an appearance.

At the end of the night the children have toast and juice as we wait for the parents to return to collect them. This is a good time to chat with the children and to tell them how God has made a difference in our lives.

As we approach Christmas and all that it entails we take time to remember the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the real reason we celebrate Christmas.



We value prayer for the children and especially the parents, they bring their children each week regardless of the weather and most of them walk round which takes great commitment on their part. We are privileged to be entrusted with their children for one hour each week, something we as leaders don't take lightly.



We welcome all primary school aged children on Thursday nights 6.45pm to 7.45pm.

Heather Sergeant

McQuiston Lunch Club

We continue to meet every Monday at 12 o'clock in the DD Boyle Room. If you would like to come and join this group of men and women you will be made most welcome.



You will enjoy a lovely hot meal and desert at the low cost of £2.50. Just leave your name and phone number by calling the Church Office on 90458155 or simply turn up.

Sheila McAllister

Senior Members Fellowship

The Senior Members Fellowship continue to meet every Tuesday at 2.00pm in the DD Boyle Room. We have tea and goodies, opening devotions and then a visiting speaker or singers to entertain us.



Coming up to Christmas we will have a Christmas quiz before finishing with a Christmas tea and music.

Calling All Seniors! If you enjoy fun and fellowship you will be more than welcome to come and join us each Tuesday afternoon.

Alan Bousfield

SHED

After a very enjoyable Rugby World Cup breakfast in September, we were very encouraged by the message brought to us by Rev. Leslie Addis about men living out their faith in an ever secular society.



November saw local author Aidan Campbell talk to us about the history of East Belfast, and we look forward to finishing off the year at our annual joint carol service with the Ladies Fellowship.



The new year sees us recommence on Tuesday 21 January with a visiting speaker from Barnardo's, before we look forward to the proprietor from popular East Belfast café SD Bells joining with us in February. All men will be made most welcome.

Tim Graham

ANTICIPATION AND EXPECTATION

Soon, in many homes across the world, the countdown will begin on 'the number of sleeps' to the arrival of Santa!



Prior to this, special letters will be written by children and posted to the 'North Pole', homes and Christmas trees will be decorated, cards written and sent, shopping done, gifts parcelled, preparation for school and church carol services and parties to attend! So many things!



It will be a busy and great time of excitement, anticipation and expectation, especially for the younger generation.

The focus of Christmas tends very much to be on children and young folk. The feelings of eagerness and expectation may diminish to some extent as one grows older, especially for parents with the additional workload and demands that are a part of Christmas.



Nonetheless it is difficult, when in the presence of children, and with the brightness and colour of the Christmas season, not to be affected by their bright eyes, wonder and excitement.

A similar experience of anticipation and expectation comes when supporters of football and rugby teams, tennis and golf enthusiasts or pop fans attend matches and events.



They purchase often expensive tickets and travel to a venue - not as a matter of routine or expecting to be bored! Enthusiasm accompanies them and the atmosphere generates response from fans and followers.

Recently I attended a concert by Andrea Bocelli. The SSE Arena was packed and the audience was spontaneous in delight and appreciation of the privilege to see, and listen to, this famous singer in person on stage.



There are many and varied events and experiences in life that generate anticipation, wonder and expectation. It is wonderful to have these feelings and emotions; they make us feel 'alive'.

As Christmas draws closer, how will we approach this special season of the year? Will you, and I, make adequate preparations, just as the children do in anticipation of Santa's visit, to meet again with Jesus?



Will this be a special time of expectation and eagerness because we have, once again, the opportunity to celebrate the birthday of our Saviour? Will we consciously prioritise our Christmas arrangements in order

Priorities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



to experience anew the real meaning of what this season of the year is meant to be?

Although the focus of Christmas should be Jesus, God's wonderful gift to His world, there can be the danger for all of us to leave Jesus to the periphery of Christmas, or to exclude Him altogether. It is very important to arrange time to worship, thank and honour our Saviour. He should be central for all members of the Christian church in the celebration of His birthday.

It will indeed be sad if, at the close of Christmas day – His special day – Jesus has received little or no acknowledgement from us. Most folk would feel disappointed if no-one remembered, or celebrated with them, their birthday!



Move forward then into 2020. Each Sunday we have the freedom and opportunity to attend Church to worship our God, to hear a message from His word and to share in the Lord's Supper.

Do we consider this to be a privilege - to worship the One and only living God with other members of the body of Christ? Or do we see it as routine and mundane, so that we attend perhaps with a lack of eagerness?



It is a privilege because we come into the presence of the Creator of everything in this world, whose Son died to give us fullness of life and who daily sustains us with great love. These are God's gifts to us (James 1 v.17).

Each Sunday, having prepared in advance to meet with God, come with anticipation that this will happen. Expect to hear God speak to you and He will! Indeed the joy experienced in spending time with the Lord enables us to grow and serve Him day by day.



Set as a goal now to journey with our Lord this Christmas, in Church each Sunday, and through each day of 2020 – with anticipation and expectation.

Anna Johnston

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Christmas Outreach to the community

Our annual distribution of shortbread will take place the week before Christmas. This is a great opportunity for us as a congregation to engage with our neighbours and the business community and show our appreciation to them. If you can provide shortbread or want to be involved please speak to either Linda Wray, Brian Erskine or Ken Sergeant.

Christmas Cracker

Christmas Cracker is a respite opportunity for those over 18 years and who have a learning disability. It will be held in McQuiston on Saturday 7 December from 2pm until 5pm.



A range of activities including arts and crafts, sports, music and cookery will be provided. If you know of anyone who would like to attend or help at this event please speak to Linda Wray 07933 278626.

Linda Wray

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. 90 shoe-boxes were filled and will bring hours of great delight to children in refugee camps in the Middle East.

Free Will Offering

Please note that if you wish your Free Will Offering or giving to other funds to be credited to 2019, these must be received no later than morning worship, Sunday 29 December 2019.



Any monies received after this will be credited to 2020.

Tim Graham

Presbyterian Children's Society

The Society exists to help Presbyterian children and families in financial need. It currently provides grants to Presbyterian families including death of a parent, divorce, single mothers or where a parent is in long-term hospital care or prison.



The grants are a tangible sign of a compassionate and caring church. McQuiston Memorial has always been generous in their members giving donations every year.



If you would like to help you can give your gift to your Elder if you do not attend church, or to myself. Thanking you on behalf of the Presbyterian Children's Society.

Sheila McAllister

Christmas Coffee Morning

We are holding our annual Christmas Coffee morning on Saturday 7 December from 10am - 12pm in the Ballentine Hall. Entry fee is £3 with proceeds going towards the Building Fund. Please plan to support this event.



Roberta Graham



Christmas tree lighting service

On Sunday 1 December, together with Mountpottinger Presbyterian, we will have a Christmas light switch on event. This will include the singing of carols at both churches and a light supper afterwards. Further details will follow in the Bulletin.

John Shivers

Messy Church

Christmas Messy Church will be on Sunday 8 December from 2pm to 3.45pm. Everyone welcome. For further details, speak to Kerry or Paula.



World Development Appeal

The annual World Development Appeal of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is really rather remarkable. Year by year, it offers those from Presbyterian congregations across the island of Ireland the opportunity to learn more about and to support the valuable and vital work of sustainable development currently undertaken by our development partners, Tearfund and Christian Aid.



Each year the Appeal highlights a particular project which becomes the ‘lead’ or ‘focus’ project for that twelve-month period and ownership of this lead project cycles between our development partners Christian Aid and Tearfund.

This focus on a particular project gives congregations the opportunity to ‘go deep’ in understanding some of the challenges of sustainable development in a particular location and to see how the partner agency, working with communities there, is seeking to address them.



The 2019 World Development Appeal highlights partner communities in Inhassoro, Mozambique, with a secondary focus on Bangladesh. The emphasis is on the long-term challenges and the capacity-building required for good and sustainable development in fragile places.

Your giving will enable organisations to support some of the world’s poorest people, seeding the hope of a more secure future.

Mozambique is still one of the poorest countries in the world despite the best efforts of government and development agencies to reduce poverty. Mozambique is very vulnerable to natural disasters due to its geographic location. Inhassoro district lies within the cyclone region.



Even if the cyclones do not come, communities in the area are vulnerable to strong winds and either heavy rains, which can cause flooding, or low rainfall which contributes to drought-like conditions.

As such, food security is a major issue for this fragile state. The World Development Appeal 2019 aims to support and strengthen such communities as they discover the resources and potential within them, and to empower them to sow seeds of hope, both in their fields and for their future.

We ask you to support this appeal both prayerfully and financially. You will have received an Appeal envelope with this issue of the Pulse which can be returned any Sunday in December.



Please give generously.

Joan Gardner

UNITED APPEAL



The United Appeal for Mission is at the very heart of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Every aspect of the Church's mission depends to some extent on United Appeal. It supports projects, programmes and staff at home and overseas. It helps congregations and individuals to build God's Kingdom through youth and children's ministry, social action and the training of leaders, for example.

At the time of writing there is still some way to go to meet our target of honour of just over £10,000.

United Appeal boxes are to be returned by Sunday 15 December to myself. 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.



Phil Kemps

WE CELEBRATE YOUR BIRTH

Dear Lord, as we celebrate Your birth,
let us remember that You
are the true reason for Christmas.



Let every sparkling light remind us how You illuminate our lives,
a shining beacon to guide us in our thoughts and actions each day,
and how You light us from within
in the knowledge of Your love and truth.



Let the Christmas trees, standing straight, tall, unbowed,
remind us of Your uprightness, Your goodness, Your perfection,
and Your refusal to bow to worldly temptations,
no matter how great the challenge or trouble.

Lord, as we feast on Christmas treats,
let us remember that You are the sole provider
of everything worth having, that all good things come from You.

And as we enjoy our gifts, let us never forget
that You are the greatest gift of all--our wonderful Saviour,
Counsellor, Giver of an eternal life
whose wonders we cannot imagine.



So as we delight in Christmas, the happiest and brightest of holidays,
let us remember there would be no Christmas without You, Lord,
and let us our hearts be filled with joy, and love and thankfulness,
this Christmas and all the ones to come.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



Joanna Fuchs

VESTIBULE OFFICIALS

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

January

John Shivers, Angela Shivers,
Richard Murray, Irene Murray
Convenor: Joan Gardner

February

Raymond Wray, Linda Wray,
Judith Connolly, Phil Kemps
Convenor: Alan Bousfield

March

Richard Hughes, David Boyd,
Jeanette Boyd, Roy Noble
Convenor: Joan Gardner

April

Ken Galbraith, Brian Erskine,
Sheila McAllister, Craig Wootton
Convenor: Ken Galbraith

AT REST

***“I am the Resurrection
and the Life”***

10 September

Mr Walter Armstrong
Dunlady Nursing Home

26 October

Mrs Ada Fulton
Glenmachan Nursing Home

FLOWERS

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

August

Dorothy Beattie
Claire Fisher
Joanne Kane
Richard Hughes
Roberta Graham
Sadie Ferguson



September

Marie Davidson
Karen Beggs
Anna Johnston
Joan Wootton
Lynn Gardner



October

Claire Fisher
David Graham
Mildred Kerr



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