



GOD'S GIFT TO US

His Son, The Saviour



PULSE

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Christmas 2022



EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

Away in a Manger is a very popular Christmas carol. It's sometimes considered to be 'one for the children', but I think just as many adults like it as well.



Our Christmas celebrations can be a mix of joy, excitement and good times, but also stress, worry and loneliness, especially with the current cost of living crisis.

In the midst of all that is going on at this time of year, the last verse



of *Away in a Manger* points us to two reasons why Christmas is important:

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay.

Close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.

Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,

And fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

The first two lines speak of God with us. One of the names given to Jesus is 'Immanuel' and in Matthew 1 vs 23 we are told that this means, 'God with us'.



In Jesus, God entered into the world. The Creator entered into His creation! By this, Jesus shows us that God exists, He shows us what God is like and He shows us that God cares.

God wants to be near to us. He wants to have a relationship with us and to be involved in our lives. It is because Jesus came near that this is EMMANUEL possible.



Through faith in Him, we can experience God with us. Whatever is going on in your life, you can go through it with God, knowing His help, care and peace.

Following on from this, the last line speaks of us with God in heaven. People sometimes think that if we try hard enough and do the right things we can make ourselves fit for heaven. The Bible makes clear that however hard we try, we cannot do it.



This is why it is such Good News that Jesus came to 'fit us for heaven'. Christmas is all about the birth of Jesus and we are told from the outset that *'the Saviour has been born.'*



Jesus went on to live a perfect life, unlike any of us. He then died on the cross, taking the punishment for our sin. When we put our trust in Him, seeking His forgiveness, Jesus takes away our sin and makes us fit for heaven.

God with us and us with God, all possible because Jesus came at Christmas. May you know God's presence with you throughout this Christmastime and may you know the certainty for the future that Jesus came to bring.



If I can help you at any time, please get in touch using the details on the back of the magazine. Please continue to pray for the vacancy. Work is continuing behind the scenes and more updates will be provided in the new year.

Yours in Christ,

Richard McIlhatton

SPECIAL SERVICES

18 December @ 11am
Messy church

18 December @ 7pm
Carols by candlelight

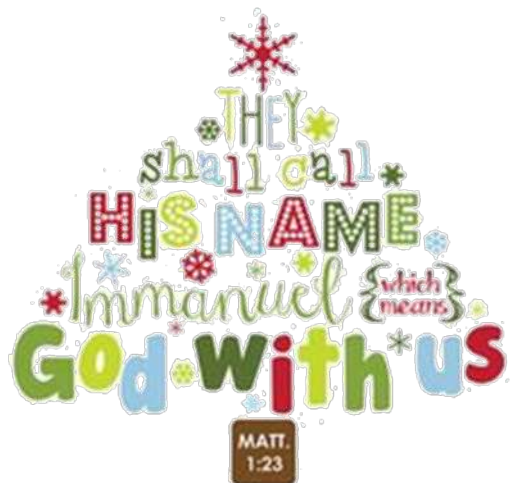


25 December @ 10am
Christmas Day service

1 January @ 11am
New Year's Day service

8 January @ 11am
Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

5 March @ 11am
Sacrament of the Lord's Supper



ORGANISATIONAL NEWS

Transformers

Transformers started back early September with 16 children. We had a few new children join us as well as children who were returning.



We have been keeping our numbers up really well to as many as 18. We have 3 boys in Years 8 and 9 who attend each week to help out, mainly with games but also to help the younger children with craft and filling out their worksheets.



Since September we have made Rice Krispie buns and decorated ginger bread men, we have had crafts and we have sang some children's choruses which went down really well with the leaders as well as the children.

We play games on certain weeks which the children always love. Our nights still finish with prayer, toast, juice and a biscuit. Though all these things are great fun we never forget about Jesus and how He came as a tiny baby to save us and be our rescue plan.

Our last night before we break up for Christmas we have our party. Lots of food and games and a present to take home. As always we appreciate and thank the members of the congregation who pray for the children and leaders.



Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year from all at Transformers. God bless.

Heather Sergeant





Storehouse

The Storehouse continues to carry out the ministry of helping those, who in these trying times are finding it hard to provide for their loved ones. The situation is becoming more serious as the days go by.



Your contributions, either in food or financial support is greatly appreciated by those who receive this service. John McCandless, our Community Worker ensures that the food goes to those in most need.



If you would like to help in this outreach you can leave donations in the church on a Sunday, Monday, Wednesday or Friday whilst the church is open.

Alan Bousfield

Senior Members



The senior members continue to meet once a month and we have been pleased that Leta Halliday has been able to join with us.

As I write this, we are planning our Christmas Tea with some of our members taking part. We also have our annual dinner in January and, as it has been two years since we last were able to have this, we are all looking forward to it. To finish our session off we are hoping to organise a bus run, so much to look forward to.



A very happy Christmas to all of you and your families. God bless you all.

Eileen and Hilary

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Messy Christmas Church

When was the last time you were in a Nativity? Why don't you come along and join us in ours on Sunday 18 December at 11am.



Young or old, you can be a shepherd with a dressing gown and tea towel, wise man with a Burger King crown, or even just put on the Christmas jumper, socks or earrings. Come and join us for a Messy Christmas celebration together.



As Christmas is approaching and all the adverts want us to buy more things, does getting more and more 'stuff' bring us happiness? Most of us seem to act as if we're determined to find out by trying! What does the Bible have to say about having all this 'stuff'?

Please join us at Messy Church, where through our normal mixture of fun, faith and food we'll try to find out what the real meaning of Christmas is.

Kerry Sutton

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 70 shoe-boxes were filled which is a tremendous effort given the late notice this year. These will bring hours of great delight to children in Ukraine.



Harvest Appeal

christians
against
poverty

CAP

Many thanks to all who contributed to the Harvest Appeal. This year 50% of monies received will be donated to Willowfield's CAP Christmas Appeal which will help those in our local community at this time of need.

Free Will Offering

Please note that if you wish your Free Will Offering or giving to other funds to be credited to 2022, these must be received no later than morning worship, Sunday 25 December 2022. Any monies received after this will be credited to 2023.



This year contributions recorded for 2022 are of particular importance. A communicant member must have a recorded giving during this period to be considered eligible for any prospective votes that may take place this coming year for a new minister.

Organisational Accounts

Please note that all Organisational Accounts should be audited and returned to myself no later than Sunday 26 February 2023.

Tim Graham



Presbyterian Children's Society

The PCS exists to help children and families in financial need by providing grants to Presbyterian families for a wide range of circumstances. This year more than ever they need your support.

These grants are a practical expression of our biblical commitments to children and young people and their future. Any donation will be gratefully received. Please give anything to Sheila McAllister.

Presbyterian Herald

As the life and witness of our congregation continue to move on from the experiences of the pandemic, and as we find our way with this 'normal', having the continuity and sense of connectedness the Herald brings to the denomination is a great benefit.



It is now time to renew your subscription but unfortunately due to rising costs the price for 2023 is £18 (£3 increase). The renewal envelope is provided in the current Herald which you can return to me. New subscribers are always welcome.

Sheila McAllister

GO... MAKE... DISCIPLES

In a few weeks time we will celebrate the birth of Jesus (2,000+ years ago).

There is generally wonder and joy when a little life comes into this world. It was no different at the birth of Jesus, although His welcome to life came, from the world's perspective, in unusual ways: poor shepherds arrived, angels from heaven sang and wise men from the East brought gifts.



Seldom at birth is much thought given to what the new life will become in future years. Yet, prior to His birth, Joseph had been told by an angel that the son to be born was to be named 'Jesus' – *'because He will save His people from their sins'*.

Jesus Himself was always focused on what His life on earth was about. Even as a young lad, He told His earthly parents *'I must be about my Father's business'*.



When older He clearly stated that He had come to give His life as *'a ransom for many'*. Also that He had come *'for the lost sheep of Israel'*; and *'I am come that you might have life, life in all its fullness.'*

As Christians and disciples of Jesus, each of us has been given a special calling in life. Jesus' last commission to His disciples was *'Go then to all people everywhere and make them my disciples'*. This can make people feel uneasy!

Possible reactions can be: 'I couldn't go', or 'I have no desire to go anywhere other than where I am'. Without doubt some individuals are called to 'go' overseas, or to some other area, to serve Him, but this does not apply to everyone.

GO
AND MAKE
DISCIPLES

Personally I view the word 'go' in the sense of being 'active'. The Lord wants us in His service whenever, wherever and in whatever way we are gifted and able to actively and intentionally share the 'Good News' of what life is about and is meant to be.

How then are we to 'make disciples'? Let us think about how most things in life are made.

A car, for example, has many people involved in its manufacture. A carton of milk requires various stages of development before it arrives on the breakfast table. What about a Christmas cake? There are many required ingredients, produced by various people and means (from different parts of the world) – before a baker brings them together to make the cake.

The ‘disciples’ Jesus talked about, and yearns to have in His family, are all His creation across the world. Each person so precious in His sight. Yet the work of ‘making’ each one a disciple has been handed down to ongoing generations of the Lord’s committed people.



At Christmas most people enjoy receiving a gift. Each one of us who follows Christ already has received a ‘gift’ to be used in His service in the making of disciples. Can you identify what that special ‘gifting’ from God is for you? If not, seek to do so before this year is out.

Your ‘gifting’ may be in some very visible role(s) throughout life or it may be very low key, but yet essential, in the overall development of a life or lives for Jesus.



The making of the Christmas cake includes large quantities of various fruits, as well as a quantity of flour. Yet the cake needs small quantities of spices and flavourings to enhance the final product.

As each item is so important in the overall recipe, likewise each of us is vital in our service day by day. This does require from us effort, commitment and focus.



The joy and fulfilment is to know that, when used for Almighty God, He will bless our ‘giftings’ in calling individuals into His family, or in helping develop others towards maturity.

As a New Year resolution for 2023, let us aim to think through and be clear, where and how the Lord wants us to utilise the ‘gift’ He has graciously given us.



‘Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations [help the people to learn of Me, believe in Me, and obey My words], baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’ Matthew 28 vs 19 - 20 (Amplified Bible)

Anna Johnston

When we see the news from around the world, it is easy to feel hopeless. Conflict, displacement and food insecurity are just a few of the trials facing millions.



The 2022 Appeal focuses on those who have been forced to flee their homes and on the communities they have ended up in. Almost 90 million people worldwide have fled their homes and journeyed elsewhere in search of safety or a better life.



Many of the places they have arrived in are ill-equipped to host them. Yet, in those places, there are people and organisations who are dedicated to supporting these people on their journeys.

Lebanon

Lebanon is host to the highest number of refugees per capita in the world: 1.5 million refugees from neighbouring Syria are thought to live in Lebanon, having fled the civil war, which has been raging since 2011.

Lebanon is facing its own political, economic and social difficulties, worsened by the effects of Covid-19 and the 2020 explosion in Beirut port. Inflation is soaring, food security is a growing issue and people are being forced into poverty.



The featured project this year is based in a suburb of Beirut that is home to Syrian and Palestinian refugees, living alongside undocumented Lebanese people. It is a bleak area, where life is difficult.

Tear fund's partner, the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD) works with a centre situated in the midst of this suburb, shining a light into dark situations.

The Centre supports whole families, providing education for children, healthcare, psychosocial support and income generating opportunities.

This year's Appeal will support the Centre as it seeks to be a light, changing stories of flight into stories of flourishing.



South Sudan

The Appeal will also support projects in South Sudan, through Christian Aid's partner, the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC).

Following the outbreak of violence in 2013, one in every three people in South Sudan is an Internally Displaced Person. The huge movement of people around the country, with already existing tribal tensions has led to conflict.

The Church's ability to speak into these situations of conflict is unique and the SSCC is working at community level to bring reconciliation across South Sudan.



SSCC provides displaced people with psychosocial support, space and accompaniment to achieve peaceful resolutions at local level.

The Appeal will also support similar projects in other areas of the world.

Prayer Points

Pray for people worldwide who have been forced to flee from their homes



Pray for the communities that are welcoming these people and those who are dedicated to being the light in the darkness

Pray for Lebanon, a country in economic and political turmoil, and the work of organisations like LSESD

Pray for South Sudan and the peacebuilding efforts by organisations like the South Sudan Council of Churches

You will receive a World Development Appeal envelope with your Christmas edition of Pulse magazine. This can be returned on any Sunday in December. Give generously to the Appeal as the Lord enables you.



Thank you for your support.

Pastoral Visitation



As I write this, Christmas is almost here again. The year has flown by so quickly. The good news is that Eileen and myself are now able to visit our members inside of their homes and also inside care homes. We are still being cautious of course as COVID-19 has not gone away.

Our priorities for visitations are those in care homes and those who are unable to come out to church. However, if any member of our church family becomes unwell or is in hospital and would like a visit, please let the church know. One of us on the pastoral team will willingly come and see you.

Always remember you are all valued and prayed for. We wish you and your families a happy, healthy and above all else a blessed Christmas. See you all in the new year God willing.



God's richest blessings,

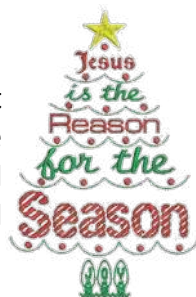
Hilary and Eileen

McQuiston Outreach



December is a busy month for all of us but particularly for those involved in reaching out to everyone in our local community. We want people to know that we are interested and concerned about our church neighbours as we share the Good News of Jesus' birth and tell them that they are most welcome at McQuiston.

We will be spending time with P7 pupils in Euston Street primary school having fun decorating biscuits, we will be delivering Christmas cards in the streets around McQuiston and look out for us delivering shortbread to our shops and businesses on the Castlereagh Road.



A big thank you to all involved. Remember to pray for the individuals who live in the community around McQuiston.

Linda Wray & John McCandless

AT REST

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

19 August

Mrs Ewla Ferguson
Strathearn Nursing Home

10 September

Mrs Violet Boyd
Adelaide House Nursing Home

10 November

Mrs Iris Jess
Beechill Nursing Home

20 November

Mrs Muriel Patterson
Greenville Manor

VESTIBULE OFFICIALS

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

January

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

February

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

March

Richard Hughes, Roy Noble,
Liz Noble
Convenor: Joan Gardner

April

Sheila McAllister
Convenor: Ken Galbraith

MARRIAGES

***“Except the Lord build the
house, they labour in
vain that do”***

23 September

Emma Massey to Kyle McElhatton
9 Coolshinney Road, Magherafelt



OBITUARY

Mrs Helen Ewla Ferguson

The following tribute was read by John Shivers, retired Clerk of Session, at the meeting of the Kirk Session on 27 September 2022

It is with great sadness that I advise the Kirk Session of the death of one of our Elders, Mrs Ewla Ferguson who passed away peacefully on the 19 August 2022. She was just over 92 years old.

Her parents, Fred and Sarah (Cissie) Moore, were members of McQuiston and were delighted that their only child, a daughter Ewla was then baptised within the congregation.

Her name may be a surprise to many – the doctor who delivered her was Dr Ewing and he was assisted by a nurse Laird. Taking the first two initials from Ewing and from Laird you get Ewla.

Ewla was very close to her mother Cissie and would have lived together. Within the church Ewla was involved with the Girls Auxiliary, was a Sunday school teacher and would love working with children. She was also an alto singing within our choir.

Ewla was also a biblical woman and would regularly attended the Bible Study Groups where she would have often led in prayer. She also had a great talent in remembering Bible verses and would often quote them.

People would often have remarked that Ewla was such a kind hearted person who appeared to get on very well with everyone.

During the early part of our Troubles, Ewla, two others from our church and some 20 others, with the support of the Good Neighbour Movement, came together and flew to Holland to ascertain how they managed to live together. The report highlighted the on-going need for working together and the need for greater communication between Protestant and Catholic communities.

On leaving school Ewla worked as a telephonist in Telephone House. She spent her entire working life in BT.

In 1972 the Kirk Session agreed to ordain women within the congregation and three ladies were called – Mrs. Bayna Wilson, Mrs. Ellie Wilson and Miss Ewla Moore. They were ordained in alphabetical order and on 7 May 1972 Ewla became the first female ordained within McQuiston.

Many years later Ewla met Ken, a postman, at a dance. They played bowls at McQuiston and on the 14 September 1985 Ken and Ewla were married here at McQuiston. They made their home at Orangefield. Together they worked on our church records, making a note of new arrivals, those who were deceased and home visits conducted by the minister.

On a lighter note Ken and Ewla would often holiday at a B&B at Vallyview just outside Bushmills. Together they really enjoyed that life.

For the last number of years Ewla, due to ill health, lived at Strathearn Nursing Home, on the Holywood Road, Belfast.

We convey our sympathy to the family circle thanking God for the life of Ewla who knew the joy of our Saviour's love and who served her Lord with great faithfulness.

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

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