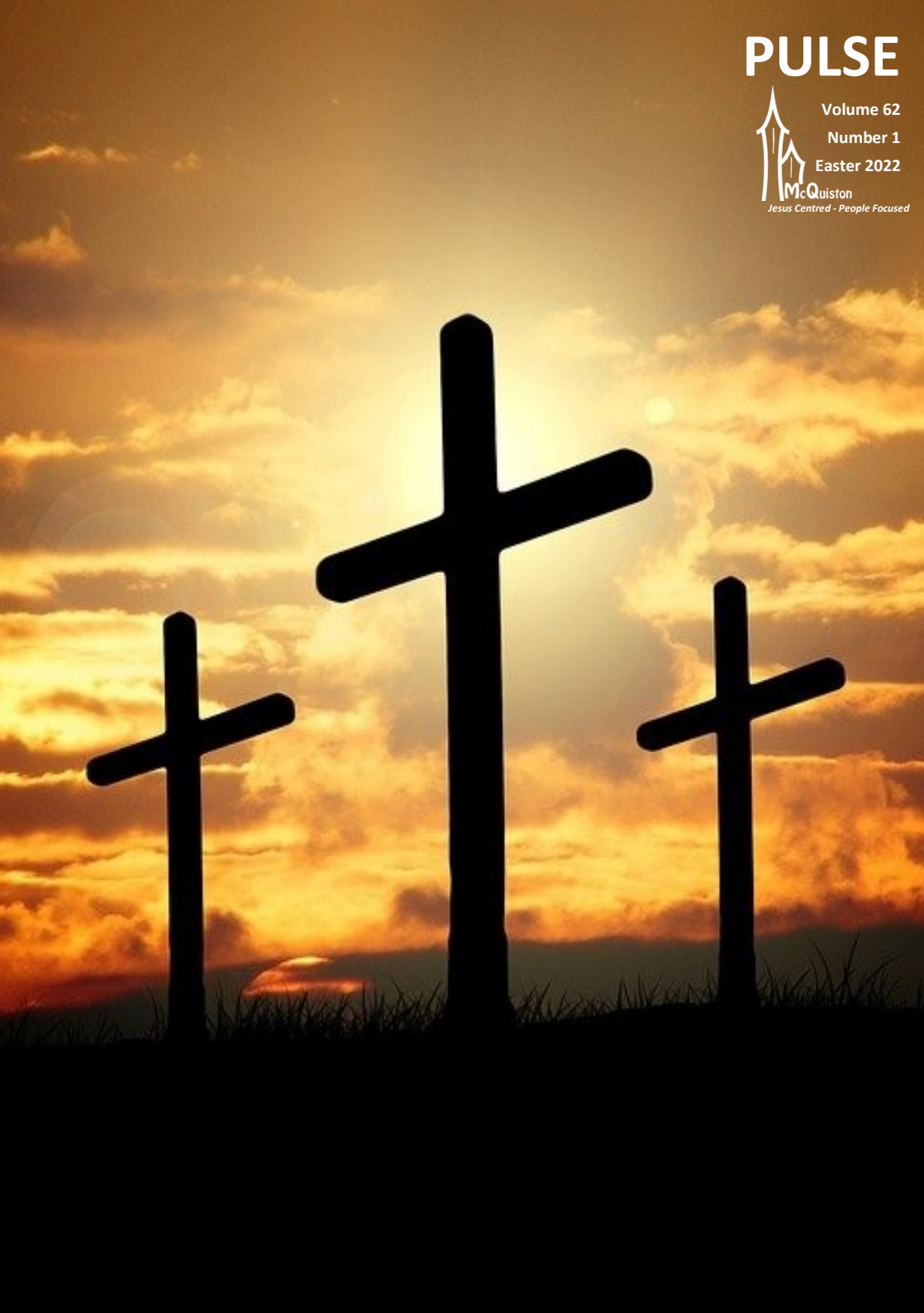
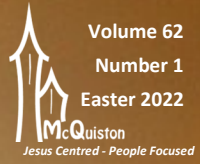


PULSE

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EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

In recent weeks we have all been through a range of emotions from outrage to quiet tears and then profound sadness as we have watched the invasion of Ukraine unfold.



We have seen the pictures of devastation inflicted on cities in the east and south of the country and most of all the extreme suffering of the people.



As always in war, it is the old, the women, the disabled and the children who seem to suffer most with cries for justice.

The world seems paralysed and polarised with some, even now out of their own national interests, refusing to condemn Mr Putin and his regime or risk economic action against them.



Add to this the threats of escalation coming from the Kremlin, the pandemic still refusing to depart and the cost of living crisis; it all adds up to perhaps the most uncertain times we have lived in for well over half a century.



This uncertainty unsettles us and we go about our daily lives with an underlying anxiety about the future. In such circumstances the words of the Psalmist surely find resonance in our hearts and bring some assurance to God's people, *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*



From that two things follow, first a renewed confidence and peace that if God is present with us then *"we will not fear though the earth gives way"*. Secondly that commands our fears and in trust brings peace *"Be still and know that I am God."*

If these were simply words and not the word of God then we would expect them to be empty of power, a hollow if well meaning attempt to reassure. However, because this is the word of God, the Holy Spirit applies it to our troubled hearts and He gives strength and faith.

Add to this the hope of the approaching Easter season when we remember the death of Jesus to atone for human sin.

As we celebrate the resurrection which secured the hope of those who follow Him in faith, it brings a certainty to us that the writers of the song In Christ Alone captured in these words....



*"No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me.
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand".*

I hope this is the peace we all find this Easter, peace in a troubled world, but more than that, peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Robert Beggs

SPECIAL SERVICES

15 April @ 7.30pm

Good Friday service

17 April @ 11am

Easter Day service



17 April @ 7pm

Easter Day service

24 April @ 11am

Rev L Rutherford

22 May @ 11am

Rev L Patterson

5 June @ 11am

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

12 June @ 11am

Rev A Stewart

26 June @ 7pm

Final service of Rev R J Beggs



ORGANISATIONAL NEWS

Storehouse

Please continue to support this ministry sacrificially as you can. In these days when the cost of most things increasing it has become much harder for many on low incomes to make ends meet. Currently many items are needed to replenish our store of food , personal hygiene and cleaning materials.



Items can be left in the church hall any day of the week between 9.00am and 3.00pm. Many thanks to all who contribute, financially or by donating food and other items; it is very much appreciated.

Alan Bousfield

Transformers

Since Christmas our numbers have been steady at around 10 children each week. Sometimes we do have more which is great. Our two young helpers who stayed with us after officially leaving Transformers are a great help to us. They take over the planning and running of the games and tidy away any equipment that has been used. We thank God for the boys that they wanted to stay.



Easter is nearly upon us when we will look at the death and resurrection of Jesus, and how important it is for us all to get to know Jesus as our friend. This is a very important message for us all.

We appreciate the congregation praying for us and it is very important that we pray for the children that they would come to know Jesus personally. Also, that they are kept safe as they are out playing now that the nights are getting brighter.



Everything that we do in Transformers is to honour our God.

Heather Sergeant.

McQuiston Lunch club

The Lunch Club has not restarted and as we need helpers it looks unlikely of this happening in the near future. If anyone would be willing to come down on Tuesday mornings from 10 am until 1.30pm please leave your name at the Church Office (90458155).



Sheila McAllister

Senior Members Fellowship



It is with thankfulness that we update our church family of how Senior Members are continuing to meet each month. In our March meeting we were delighted and blessed to have John McCandless share God's Word with us, reflecting on the blessings we each receive daily from our loving God.

We are so pleased that our Seniors have been able to share fellowship around God's Word. We are looking forward to our Easter Service on 12 April at 2.15pm as we share the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper together. It will be very special for us to have the Rev. Beggs conduct this service for us before he retires in July. We will very much miss him and his family.



We continue to pray for each other and it is with sadness we remember those in our church family who have been bereaved and are suffering at this difficult time in their lives. We share our thoughts and prayers to encourage them that Jesus is always near in times when we don't know what to pray for.

*"Peace I leave with you
My peace I give unto you
Not as the world giveth give I unto you
Let not your heart be troubled
Neither let it be afraid."
John 14 vs 27*

Every blessing to all,

Eileen and Hilary

So, if the Son sets you free,
you will be free indeed.
(John 8:36)

Has mankind developed at all since prehistoric times, before human civilization developed and started writing things down? In certain respects, the events around the world recently, especially in Ukraine, make one wonder.



Our perception of the ancient past is generally of cruelty, ruthlessness and conflict (as people sought to protect themselves and extend their boundaries). Then we think of later biblical times.



In the New Testament we learn about Saul (later known as Paul) and what his leadership meant within society.

It strikes me, when I read the Bible story of Saul (a member of a Jewish sect which strictly observed the rites and ceremonies of its beliefs and practices) that he had no doubts about himself.

From his birth, background, education, lifestyle, position within society, he lived out a life (as he saw it) completely devoted to God, exemplified in his words and actions. As a result, Saul was single-minded in how he hated and despised the people who called themselves 'Christians'.

He was committed to the violent persecution of the early Christians in Jerusalem and in foreign cities.



We are told that he went from house to house, dragging out, and putting into prison, men and women (who sometimes were put to death).

He also travelled around synagogues, the churches of that time, to find followers of Jesus to punish or to destroy their lives.

It took the miracle and gift of conversion, by the power of Almighty God, to bring Saul to his knees, open his eyes to what he was doing – resulting in repentance, submission, obedience and service for the Lord.



Does the above description of the persecutor (Saul) of the early Church remind us today of a present-day powerful, single-minded, ruthless man leading his people to destroy the citizens of Ukraine who stand firmly against him?



We are appalled as we view, not only the incredible destruction of the fabric of society in Ukraine, but particularly the dreadful loss of life and suffering, creating millions of refugees, as one less powerful nation tries to escape the persecution by another stronger state.

How did the early Christian Church survive? Only by the mercy, compassion and power of Almighty God. In Ukraine (as well as around the world) today's disciples of Jesus continue to pray and to live out, by word and humanitarian action, what believers are required to do in all circumstances.



In this year's period of Lent we, as individuals, are called to reflect, repent, 'wait upon God', praying for the unfolding of His will in our own lives, and over the dreadful events in our present day world.

It is widely reported in our news that, if the war continues much longer, Russia has the greater power and ability, technology, manpower and equipment to take over Ukraine.

Let us remember, as in the case of Saul, that our Lord is in control. He has said in the past *"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit"* shall His will be accomplished *'on earth as in Heaven'* (Zechariah 4:6).

Jesus had to go to the cross to save us from the hatred and evil of sin with which all our lives are marred. His sacrifice was immense. Therefore, we have freedom, a hope, and can rejoice as we celebrate this most special of times in the Christian calendar, Easter.



We can sing, with the Apostle Paul, *'What is our hope in life and death? Christ alone, Christ alone.'*

As we rejoice in having Jesus as our hope this Easter and for eternity, let us live out our purpose in life, as we share this 'Good News' in word and action.



Continue to pray for Ukraine, and for peace. Wishing you a blessed Easter.

Anna Johnston

COMMUNITY OUTREACH UPDATE

Helen Keller was an author of many Christian books who lived in the late 1800s despite the fact she was totally blind. When asked, "Is there anything worse than being blind?" She answered *"Yes, having your sight with no vision!"*



These past couple of years at McQuiston, we have been praying for exactly that; to seek God's will and His ways as we seek to serve Him in this community; a vision of His plans for us to serve Him further post Covid-19.



As I look around this congregation I see our organisations, our teaching and times of worship doing exactly that, serving the young and not so young in search of a vision from our loving God.

Working in and around the community, my work has been ushered, more and more (a vision if you like) into reaching out to ethnic minorities. Indeed you, as a congregation, have been a great support and encouragement in this by your giving in many ways.



Linda, Robert and myself have been testing, searching and giving this much prayer and thought over past months and the result is that we have opened an Internet Cafe in the DD Boyle room for a few mornings each week to kick start the opening of our halls to embrace refugees and asylum seekers in East Belfast.

We got a generous donation of laptops from one of our members and from a neighbouring church. God is good and using our technical guys (Ken G and Phil) we have it up and running. Sheila McAllister and I are there to welcome people as they arrive.

Easter is just around the corner and we are busy with our celebration goodies to be delivered in the community and a well supported Easter competition in the two local schools.



Anna, Linda, Kerry, Phil and myself have been putting together our Easter handouts and the outreach team will be shortly knocking on doors in the area. We have a summer plan for schools, much like our rock painting activity last year, but this time flowers...watch this space.



Please pray for us as we seek His vision for us in this place.

John McCandless



Senior Members Pastoral Visitation

The weather is improving a little although still a chill in the air. The brighter days show us all the jobs needing done the garden, tidy up, house cleaning etc. The good news is the restrictions are slowly easing but we still need to be careful.

Covid-19 may not dominate the news anymore but it's still about and as church life slowly gets back to some sort of normality returns.

It is also good news that Eileen and myself hope we can visit you inside your homes if of course you are happy with us coming in. There are still no rules about care homes yet but we will continue to call and make inquiries about our folk, speaking to carers and leaving a little gift of flowers etc.



Sometimes the nurse or carer will bring folks to the window or door where they can see us, speak to us or wave to us. It is so important that all of our church family whether living at home or living in a care home are thought of, valued and prayed for.

May God bless you and keep you in his loving care always.

Hilary and Eileen

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Evening Services

Please note that there will be NO evening services during the summer months of July and August.

Belfast City Marathon

This year we are celebrating the 40th running of the Belfast City marathon on Sunday, 1 May. It will start at Stormont Estate and follow the roads around Belfast before completing in Ormeau Park.



As the run will pass the outside of the church, we are looking for some volunteers to serve tea/coffee/water/sweets from 8.30am. If you could assist in any way, please contact myself.

The service on 1 May will commence at 11.30am.

John Shivers

Retirement of Rev RJ Beggs

As you are aware Rev Beggs retires in July and his final service will be Sunday, 26 June at 7.00pm. Should you wish to make a donation for his farewell gift please leave it in an envelope marked as such on the collection plate at the front of the church.



Rev Beggs plans to move out of the manse around Easter and will be moving to Moneyrea. If you require his services, please contact him on his mobile (07946376616) from 25 April.

Presbyterian Children's Society



Many thanks to all who made a donation. We are pleased to say that we were able to forward a cheque for £300 to the society. Needless to say, they were delighted to receive it as all contributions are gratefully received especially now when funds are needed.

Sheila McAllister

VESTIBULE OFFICIALS

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



May

Maureen Russell, Caroline Russell
Convenor: Heather Sergeant

June

Joan Wootton, Eileen Kelso,
Mildred Kerr, Roberta Gibson
Convenor: Sheila McAllister

July

Anna Johnston, Heather Dickson,
Helen Gilmore, Hilary Hawthorne
Convenor: Joan Gardner

August

Ann Anderson, Heather Sergeant,
Joan Gardner
Convenor: Ken Galbraith

AT REST

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

4 Dec 2021

Fred Johnston
67 Loopland Drive

14 January 2022

Mrs Sandra Bailie
7 Newry Street

27 January 2022

Mrs Florrie Smith
Cregagh Nursing Home
(late of Downshire Park North)

15 March 2022

Mrs Rachel (Ray) Orr
5 Ardgowan Street

NEW COMMUNICANT

“On Profession of faith”

6 March

Mrs Elizabeth Noble
66 Ladas drive



DIRECTORY

Rev Robert Beggs

Minister

52 Kings Road

Belfast

BT5 6JL

Phone: 07946376616

Email: robertjbeggs@hotmail.com

Mr John Shivers

Clerk of Session / Pulse Editor

11 Lead Hill Park

Belfast

BT6 9RW

Phone: 028 9079 1246

Email: jcshivers@virginmedia.com

Mrs Hilary Hawthorne

Pastoral Visitor

c/o McQuiston Presbyterian Church

83 Castlereagh Road

Belfast

BT5 5FE

Phone: 07443531326

Rev David Maxwell

Pastoral Associate

c/o McQuiston Presbyterian Church

83 Castlereagh Road

Belfast

BT5 5FE

Phone: 028 9591 0202

Mr John McCandless

Community Evangelist

c/o McQuiston Presbyterian Church

83 Castlereagh Road

Belfast

BT5 5FE

Phone: 07729516576

McQuiston Presbyterian Church

83 Castlereagh Road BT5 5FE

Phone: 028 9045 8155

Web: www.mcquistonpc.org

Email: churchoffice@mcquistonpc.org



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