

PULSE

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McQuiston

Jesus Centred - People Focused



EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

I don't know about you but I haven't received many awards during my life. There is one though which stands out in my mind. It's a little gold lapel badge which I received for giving blood.



When I was medically able to, I gave blood, or to be precise platelets and plasma, from my blood once a month.

As I laid back on the couch, I could see a poster in the blood donation suite at the City Hospital which said:



"You give us an hour, and we'll make it last a lifetime."

First I was injected with a local anaesthetic, then a large needle went into my arm for about an hour.

All sorts of things happened in a big machine while I lay back, read a book, drank coffee and ate biscuits!



All in all it was a very relaxing way to spend part of my day off, as well as being very rewarding.

I wear my badge with pride! My platelets were used mostly for patients with leukaemia who cannot produce platelets for themselves; I did it for them.

Giving blood also makes me think of the One who gave His blood for me. No anaesthetic for Him!

He refused the pain-deadening wine mixed with gall; no specially designed needle - a crown of thorns and nails in His hands and feet drew His blood; no comfortable couch - He gave His blood while nailed to a cruel Cross.



Why did He do it? That question has several answers.

- He did it out of obedience to His Father's will (Phil. 2 vs 8)
- He did it to satisfy God's justice (Rom. 3 vs 25 - 26)
- He did it to defeat Satan (Rev. 12 vs 11)
- He did it because He loved me (Gal. 2 vs 20)

No wonder Peter speaks of the precious blood of Christ! (1 Pet. 1 vs 19) Remember the poster?

Jesus didn't give His blood for just an hour, and through His blood He offers us much more than a lifetime.

If we go wholeheartedly to the Cross and there trust in Him who died and rose again, He offers us life that is eternal (John 3 vs 14 - 16) and the forgiveness of sins (1 John 1 vs 7).



William Rees penned these words:

*Here is love, vast as the ocean,
Loving kindness as the flood,
When the Prince of Life, our Ransom,
Shed for us His precious blood.
Who His love will not remember?
Who can cease to sing His praise?
He can never be forgotten
Throughout heaven's eternal days.*

Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Colin Burcombe



SPECIAL SERVICES

2 April @ 11am

Messy and Vintage church

4 April @ 2.30pm

Senior Members' Communion service

7 April @ 7.30pm

Good Friday Communion

9 April @ 11am

Easter Day service

30 April @ 11.30am

Marathon Day service

4 June @ 11am

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

THE HUSBAND OF POVERTY

There was a knight of Bethlehem
Whose wealth was tears and sorrows;

His men-at-arms were little lambs,
His trumpeters were sparrows;
His castle was a wooden cross,
Whereon He hung so high;
His helmet was a crown of thorns
Whose crest did touch the sky.

Henry Neville Maughan

ORGANISATIONAL NEWS

Storehouse

The Storehouse continues this important ministry of helping those who are trying to feed their families in these hard times of rising costs. Your contributions of either food or financial support is much appreciated by those who receive it.



John McCandless, our Community Worker, distributes the food as he visits those in the district. Donations can be left in the premises either on a Sunday or Tuesday of each week.

Many thanks for all your continued support in this work.

Alan Bousfield

Transformers

Since Christmas the attendance has been generally good, but it can fluctuate. We have 18 children on our roll plus three Year 8 children who have stayed with us. We thank God for the children and their parents that bring them in all weathers, even in the snow!



We have great fun each week playing games, making crafts and we always have a Bible story followed by toast and juice before they go home. None of this would be possible without our small band of leaders and helpers who give of their time each week. We would appreciate prayers for the leaders - Karen, Caroline, John, Ken, our doorman Billy and Sheila who makes their snacks and does the roll.



We pray that the children see something different in us and want to know what it is, then we can tell them of the love that Jesus has for all of us.

Jesus loves the little children.

Heather Sergeant

Senior Members Fellowship

We are so pleased to continue to meet once a month for fellowship with one another, enjoy our treats and a cup of tea. In January we shared a lovely meal provided by Daffine and her team of caterers. We concluded our meeting with music played by Etta Halliday on piano and singing thanking God in prayer and praise.



In February, we had a speaker from Kids for Schools who spoke of the work going on in Tanzania. She told us of how God meets the needs of families through Christian giving and using these gifts to help make a difference in the lives of those in need.



She showed slides of the work that was being carried out, building projects like new shower blocks for school children, providing clean water, teaching them new skills, planting vegetables and sewing classes to provide school uniforms for the children.

We give thanks to God for those in Christian witness teams who share the word and love of God with others in this land of Tanzania; we remember them in prayer.

We pray a blessed and peaceful Easter to all our Senior Members and church family. April will be our celebration of Communion remembering Jesus' death and resurrection on the cross for our sins.

"Jesus paid it all.

The debt to Him we owe

*He cleansed us with His precious blood and made us white as
snow"*



Now we have blessed assurance of our sins forgiven when we repent. May we glorify the blessed name of Jesus with God's peace and love at this Easter time.

Eileen and Hilary

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Belfast City Marathon

As you are probably aware the Belfast City Marathon is scheduled for Sunday, 30 April.

As usual, we will be starting the morning service at 11.30am to allow runners and walkers the opportunity to pass our doors and continue on their long route through Belfast.



From 9.00am we are planning to arrange an event outside our doors to offer the various participants drinks of water, tea, coffee, some sweets and fantastic music to keep their legs running together with access to toilets.

Should you be interested in assisting please contact myself and you will be made most welcome.

John Shivers

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



Evening Services

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

EASTER



Sunday 2nd April

WHAT IS EASTER ALL ABOUT?

We would love to invite you to join us on Sunday 2nd April at 11am for a fun filled messy time finding out why we have Easter and why it is so important to us. The fun is for everyone young and old, games, songs, messy crafts, stories, singing, making new friends, chatting and spending time together. There will be something for everyone. Look forward to seeing you there!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH UPDATE

Helen Keller, the blind author and writer was asked, "Is there anything worse than being blind?" She answered, "Yes, having your sight but no vision!"



I love the individual visions of each of our organisations here at McQuiston. Each one tailored to meet the task of reaching others with the love of Jesus.

We as the Community Outreach Team have been meeting people on the doorstep, reaching fringe families, the traders on the road, making contact with the local primary schools and making a difference in the lives of asylum seekers and refugee families, thankfully the congregation supports us in many ways.

Our team visits Euston Street Primary and Elmgrove Primary 4 times a year; working hand in hand with children, planting flowers and decorating Christmas gingerbread figures - what fun we have had with this. We look forward to our Easter competition in both schools, for all pupils from nursery to P7. Last year we had over 400 entries! Teachers too are delighted with our input.



With your help, by providing food, toiletries and financial contributions, we have helped no less than 8 families this year by supporting, encouraging and uplifting them. This included refugees from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Cameroon, Slovakia and Saudi Arabia, that without your help through prayer and giving, they would have struggled and given up. Thank you!

Easter door to door greeting cards and giveaways have been planned and started. Look out for this coming your way. Thank you also for your contribution of shortbread at Christmas. Over 60 packages were distributed to shops, businesses and homes close to the church.



Our Queen's Jubilee Celebration of 2022 in our halls has set the vision rolling for a King's Coronation Celebration; keep an eye on the weekly bulletin for further detail.

Each week Linda Wray and Heather Sergeant continue to "buddy up" with kids and their reading skills - a lovely outreach.



On a personal note I want to thank you for involving me and using me in your vision to reach others with God's love in this place.

Yours as always,

John McCandless



Senior Members Pastoral Visitation

I write this on the first day of spring - Christmas and winter have passed and now we are close to the most important time of year in the Christian calendar, Easter - when our Lord Jesus suffered and died on the cross for you and I.

Eileen and I continued visiting you in your homes and care homes during the winter months. We always enjoy chatting, reading and praying with you and indeed it is a great privilege to be able to do this. I would like to thank you all for your warm welcome each time we call.

As I finish, we hope to see you all during the summer months and remember as I have said before you are all loved, valued and prayed for.



Love and God's richest blessings.

Hilary and Eileen

**Do not be overcome by evil
but overcome evil with good
(Romans 12 vs 21)**

The above scripture verse about evil is perhaps not one to encourage someone to read this article. A story later will explain why the text is being shared.



Evil is a word that we generally don't choose to use or want to use. However, occasionally we are brought face-to-face with it.

The recent violent shooting of DCI John Caldwell was described as evil in the press and by commentators. Decisions and actions of the present Russian President concerning Ukraine are described likewise by many people.



At times someone in court has been described as evil in relation to an act committed. Perhaps you have heard a person say *"I can never forgive him/her for the evil they have done."*



A small group of young people can target another person in their peer group by bullying, with possible dreadful results.

Anger, jealousy, superiority and pride can act as motivators resulting in evil.

In the Bible, evil is within the category of sin. Although we don't like this term applied to ourselves, the Bible clearly tells us that we are all sinners (with inherent flaws, weaknesses and faults).



If you, or someone you love, has ever been the recipient of harm, to whatever degree, by another, how are you likely to react? Consider this question!

Recently I read a true story told by a young man, whose elderly aunt had her home broken into by, as he had reported, two thugs.

This Christian lady spent most of her time working to help others by making clothes for relief organisations, teaching children in Sunday School and in prayer.

The two young men robbed the aunt at gunpoint, taking all her savings and leaving her, as one would understand, very shaken and upset. In due time she phoned her sister to relate what had happened.



Obviously, there was concern at the effect this incident had on the lady. *"This is very difficult for me",* she said. *"I already have a long prayer list, and now I have two more people to add to it."*



I have to confess that, when I read the response, I was amazed, and it took me a little while to digest the meaning of what the elderly lady had said.

I thought could I seriously react in this manner? Or would I be filled with anger at what had happened to me and be seeking retribution from the culprits. How would you feel?



The Message tells us in Romans 12 vs 19, *Don't insist on getting even; that is not for you to do. "I'll do the judging," says God. "I'll take care of it."*

As we approach Easter, we remember the death on the cross of our Lord and celebrate His resurrection. The amazing free gift of Jesus for each of us, so that we can know, as sinners, lasting forgiveness, peace and fullness of life.



The forgiveness of Jesus is the gold standard. *"My command is this: love each other as I have loved you."* John 15 vs 12

There is a postscript to this story - this lady prayed for the two lads for the rest of her life.

Her nephew then wrote how, on the day of his aunt's funeral, he was speaking to someone from the Young Offenders' Prison.



He was told that one of the offenders who had caused his aunt such a traumatic experience, attended a chapel service in the prison, gave his life to the Lord and became His disciple. How wonderful!

This Easter, let us review seriously what the sacrifice of Jesus means and how we put into practice daily such love that can be a part of changing the world, one person at a time.



Blessings on your Easter.

Anna Johnston

Welcome to McQuiston as our new Convenor of the Vacancy.

Tell us about your family?

I'm married to Anna and we have 5 children ranging from 10-18 years; Asher, Lily, Noah, Jessica and Julia. We have just one pet, a Guinea pig called Theodore.



Have you a favourite hobby?

I love reading, especially books by Lee Child, Patrick O'Brian and David Gemmell.

You have been minister at Mersey Street for almost 20 years, tell us how you came into the Presbyterian church? Any other previous jobs?

My main contact with church as a teenager was BB in my local Presbyterian church in Ballyclare. I became a Christian at a BB mission when I was 15. It wasn't too long afterwards that I became a communicant member there and I went to everything I could! I was also very involved in my Scripture Union at school, then the Christian Union at Queen's. It was in the middle of my second year at Queen's that I received a call into ministry.

When I was at school, I began to work in the Co-op on the Shankill Road. I was there for 5 years working anything from 12-72 hours a week! My love for



that work perhaps contributes to my enjoyment of Olio now. Olio is an organisation (with an app) which seeks to reduce and eliminate food waste. They partner with Tesco and Iceland and I am a volunteer. This means I get to organise and distribute food from Tesco and Iceland to my local community.

As well as working with food, this means I have had many opportunities to get to know neighbours and particularly folk from overseas living in the area. After the Co-op, I worked in a forklift truck firm for 2 years before going to college to train for ministry.

You were involved with Union College. Tell us what you did there?

I taught in Union college for almost 20 years in the Old Testament department. In the past few years, I specialised in Hebrew and taught all of the Hebrew course for the first two years of ministry training. The busyness of being convenor, among other things, made me step back from teaching for this academic year.



What are your initial thoughts on McQuiston?

I'm excited to be convenor of this vacancy and have enjoyed my brief time here so far, especially getting to know some of you and worshipping with you.

What are your thoughts on our vacancy?

We're just past the halfway stage of the vacancy, with the first half having gone so smoothly largely thanks to the Rev. Richard McIlhatton. I'm looking forward to beginning to contact prospective candidates shortly.

Having taught about ⅓ of the ministers in active service in the General Assembly, I'll likely know most of them personally, with a special bias towards the better Hebrew students (ha ha!).



In terms of getting a new minister, there's a balance between making steady progress and not rushing this very important period in the life of the congregation and I hope the Kirk Session and I will judge that well.

What is your favourite piece of scripture?

My favourite passage from the Old Testament is probably Numbers 6 vs 22-27, the passage where we learn the Aaronic blessing. From the New Testament, it is probably John 13 vs 17, the story of the Upper Room.

What is your favourite hymn / praise?

This changes frequently but at the moment I love hymns from Citylight (like *Ancient of Days* and *Yet not I*). I love the simplicity of the metrical Psalms especially the magnificent conclusion to Psalm 72 (verses 17-19) to the tune Effingham. My absolute favourite is a hymn based on Colossians 1 called *Before Creation Dawned*, written by an Irish Presbyterian!

MR SAM McNERLAN RETIREMENT

As many in the congregation know Sam has been our caretaker for over 20 years. Indeed, he was appointed on 5 November 2001, just two months after Robert Beggs had joined us.

Sam has recently had both his hips replaced and is currently recovering at home with plans to retire at the end of May.

We met up and asked him a few questions.



Tell us a little about you and your family?

I've been married to Ellen for 43 years this October. We have two children Gareth and Laura along with two grandchildren, Leah aged 13 years and Jay at 15 years. We lived in the Bowtown Estate in Newtownards and then moved to Ballybeen over 40 years ago.

You have worked as caretaker for over 20 years at McQuiston, but what did you do prior to this?

I have had a number of jobs including a dog handler with Corp Security at the BP Refinery in Airport Road, a plumber's helper at Harland and Wolff, a locker attendant at David Lloyd's and then as a hospitality worker at the Stormont Hotel. I then moved to McQuiston in 2001.



What were your initial thoughts about the McQuiston suite of halls?

The old halls were well maintained albeit some were beginning to show their age and disintegrating – particularly those rooms up the stairs. The congregation was very easy to get on with.

What do you remember about the new halls being built?

During the demolishing of the old halls you had to wear a hard hat. Usually on a Friday when someone came to visit you had the hat on. I remember the dust coming up as the halls were knocked down. Although we had plastic sheets between the church and the halls there was tremendous amount of dust. Sometimes I would have to vacuum the place 3 – 4 times a week.



I also remember the church being broken into – through the ground floor window of the old hall – the theft of Communion wine, the loss of pennies from the Sunday School, the loss of a computer and printer belonging to the Rev. Beggs. Those were strange but exciting times.



You have been known to sing in church, what are your favourite pieces?

Where could I go but to the Lord.

No-one ever could think Jesus.

Various songs by Roy Orbison and Elvis.

I also sang for the old PWA / Ladies Fellowship.

You have recently had both hips replaced, how was that experience?

I had pain for almost 6 years, but the resultant operation has been a great success. The experience was very emotional, but I am now quite mobile and starting to walk again. I also have two rather large scars and a little pain.

Do you have a favourite Bible passage?

Psalms 50 and Isaiah 53. These are two tremendous passages which mean so much to me.

I would also like to thank all of you who have visited me, telephoned me and those who have prayed for me. I enjoyed the job as caretaker and my time at McQuiston. I would love to get back to see the older folk sometime into the future.



UNITED APPEAL

Together we can do more than we ever could do on our own. The United Appeal for Mission is at the very heart of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. As a denomination we are making big differences here in Ireland and abroad.



Every aspect of our Church's mission depends to some extent on the United Appeal. Hundreds of projects and programmes at home and overseas are helping to advance God's Kingdom, showing God's love in action to hundreds of thousands of people.



Thanks to the generous support that Presbyterians like you continue to offer, this work can flourish. Our 2023 target of honour for McQuiston is £9,540. To help meet this target, we are making available United Appeal collection boxes for you to add your spare change to. These will be available to be collected on Sunday mornings in the Link.

Please take one, and once it is filled, return it to, Tim Graham, Joan Gardner or Phil Kemps. Make sure your envelope number is on it so that we can credit to your United Appeal contributions. We would also remind members that if you haven't signed up to Gift Aid and you are a UK Taxpayer please ask Joan Gardner for a form.

LADIES NIGHT

The Ladies Night held on the 22 March attracted some 40 ladies as they participated in making floral arrangements and no bake deserts. A great night of fellowship and fun was had by all. Look out for future events!



Thanks to John McCandless for facilitating the night and to Engage with Age for sponsoring the event.

Linda Wray

VESTIBULE OFFICIALS

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



May

Roberta Gibson, Eileen Kelso
Convenor: Heather Sergeant

June

Joan Wootton, Mildred Kerr
Convenor: Sheila McAllister

July

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

August

Ann Anderson, Heather Sergeant
Convenor: Ken Galbraith

AT REST

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

25 November

James (Jim) Hunter,
Strathearn Nursing Home

30 November

Mrs Anna McCue,
Somme Nursing Home

10 December

Miss Jean Green,
Dunlady Nursing Home

2 February

Mrs Agnes (Nessie) Buchanan,
Hawthorn House Nursing Home

6 February

Thomas Cooper,
51 Willowfield Drive

10 February

Mrs Emily McCandless,
1 McQuiston Mews

4 March

Miss Elizabeth McCullough,
17 Greer House

13 March

Thomas Beattie
14 Willowholme Crescent



OBITUARY

Mr James Nelson Hunter

The following tribute was read by Ken Galbraith, Clerk of Session, at the meeting of the Kirk Session on 22 January 2023.

It is with great sadness that I advise the Kirk Session of the death of one of our Elders, Mr James Nelson Hunter who passed away peacefully in the early hours of Friday, 25 November 2022. He was just over 97 years old.

Jim hailed from North Belfast and was a member of a large family. Jim had four brothers, John, Norman, George and Bobby and four sisters Florence, Nora, Marion and Sadie. Sadly with Jim's passing only Nora now remains with us. Jim's brother Norman was a Presbyterian minister and served in Banagher PC in Co. Londonderry.

Jim's early days were spent at Jennymount Primary School and then on to Mountcollier Secondary School.

The Hunter family belonged to Castleton Presbyterian Church, York Road, Belfast which was damaged during the war and the congregation joined with York Street to become what is now known as Alexandra Presbyterian. Jim was baptised into this congregation.

He was a BB boy in the Lifeboys at Fortwilliam Presbyterian Church and the Boys' Brigade in Castleton.

Jim had a varied working life. He was a machinist in the Harland and Wolf Shipyard before moving to Short Bros and Harland. He also worked at the British Tabulating Company which was also lovingly called "The Tab". The company became ICL and on its closure he moved to be an instructor in the Government Training Centre at Dundonald where he trained apprentices in use of lathes etc. When the Dundonald site closed Jim was transferred to a Government Training Centre in Londonderry. He travelled to Londonderry and lodged there during the week and travelled home for the weekends.

Jim loved to dance and he met Jean McKibbin in the Gala Ballroom in Belfast. He later was to marry Jean here in McQuiston on 22 November 1965 and set up home at Cherryhill Road, Dundonald. They were blessed with a daughter Karen who married George Wilson. Jim and Jean have a granddaughter Shannon who would regularly attend Sunday worship in McQuiston with her grandparents.

Jim was ordained as an elder on 25 February 1990 and was involved in district visitation and the postal district of the congregation. He was a very faithful worshipper and very rarely did he miss a service. He attended the men's group, The SHED, even though when his hearing was failing it was difficult for him. He did enjoy the fellowship with the group and was extremely fond of a cup of tea and a biscuit. He certainly enjoyed one before the morning service and after the evening service.

Other activities he was keen on included a round of golf and he regularly played in the company of the late Brian McCartney. He enjoyed singing and always looked forward to a visit to the Windmill Club in Comber on a Thursday night in the company of the Bousfields. Finally, he enjoyed his exercise classes in Avoniel Leisure Centre.

Jim was a mild mannered gentleman. It was always a pleasure to be in his company. He had a kind word and a smile for everyone. Even so, Jim was no stranger to tragedy. He suffered heart attacks, broken hips etc and even survived a house fire and was resident in the Stormont Hotel for a while until the house was repaired. He survived it all and I never heard a complaint from him.

Jim had been a resident in Strathern Nursing Home on the Belmont Road since breaking a hip. Dementia was taking its toll and it was there that Jim passed away with Karen by his side, Jean was in hospital recovering from a series of infections.

Jim will be missed by us all but especially by Jean, Karen and Shannon and the wider family circle.

We convey our sympathy to the family circle thanking God for the life of Jim who knew the joy of our Saviour's love and who served his 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 his course and has entered into the joy of the Lord.

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