



He is Risen

EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

There's something really special about Spring arriving after a long, dark, cold winter; we can't wait to comment on the '*stretch in the evenings.*' After

months of darkness, Spring gives us all a bit of hope.



As Christians, Easter comes at just the right time – because as we're ready for a bit of brightness and a bit of hope, the message of Easter is that ultimate hope is found in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Easter means hope!



This year, maybe you feel like you need hope more than ever – but you also don't want to be patronised, you don't want anything trite or forced. God understands.

Usually at this time of the year we might read through the Gospels to focus our minds on the Easter story, and that's a great thing to do.



However, if you're finding that a little bit difficult this year perhaps I could point you to the Psalms?



For thousands of years, God's people have turned to the Psalms when in need for hope. In the Psalms we see the honest cries of God's people, unvarnished and authentic. We see that it's not just ok, but it's good to tell God just how we're feeling, whether that's praise or lament.

As we read these ancient poems, hymns and prayers of real people to God, as words are given to help us express our emotional reality, our heads are also lifted up from the darkness around us, and towards the hope that only comes from Him.



Reflecting on his cancer diagnosis in a helpful article for The Atlantic, pastor Timothy Keller writes that in the midst of his diagnosis:

'The Bible, and especially the Psalms, gave voice to our feelings: "Why, O Lord, do you stand far off?" "Wake up, O Lord. Why are you sleeping?" "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?"'

As we read the Psalms, we see this brutal honesty throughout. If this Easter you feel a bit parched and need of refreshment, could I suggest some Psalms that help point you to the hope that we have in Christ at Easter time.



In Psalm 118 we are reminded of Palm Sunday and that *“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”*

In Psalm 22 we are reminded of the pain and agony of Christ on Good Friday.

In Psalm 23 we are reminded of the hope of the resurrection that we *“will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”*

In Psalm 24 we think of Christ’s ascension and the call to lift up our heads away from the chaos and pain of the world around us and instead to the King of Glory.



Keller writes later in his article:

‘Most particularly for me as a Christian, Jesus’ costly love, death and resurrection had become not just something I believed and filed away, but a hope that sustained me all day.’

The really good news though, is that Jesus is not just an example that we strive towards, but He is the anointed King who through His life, death and resurrection, has won forgiveness for His people and gives that perfect record to us.

He is the one who gives real life to us when we trust in Him by faith. This is the hope that sustains us.



As we turn to the Psalms, they point us to the events of that first Easter. Though they may not mention Jesus by name, they clearly point to and anticipate what He would come to earth to do.

The Psalms offer us the chance to lift up our heads because they deal honestly with our emotions, give words to our laments, show us how to live and create a desire within us to dwell with God.



But the Psalms most clearly lift up our heads as they point us to our Saviour and help us to fix our eyes on Him.

Philip Boyd

ORGANISATIONAL NEWS

Transformers

As we head towards the start of another school term, we give thanks to God for the children that faithfully attend each week. We are very fortunate to have two young people who stayed with us instead of leaving when they entered Year 8. They are a great help to the leaders.



May I ask for continued prayer for safety for the leaders and children. We feel very privileged that the parents allow us to look after their children for an hour every Thursday evening.

If you know children of primary school age that would like to attend, bring them along Thursdays 6.30pm to 7.30pm or call myself on 07599704176.



Heather Sergeant

Storehouse

The Storehouse ministry continues each week providing practical and financial help to those in need during these difficult times.

Thanks to your generosity, I was able to forward £100 to the CAP Centre at Willowfield at Christmas for their Christmas Hamper Appeal. James Myles, Centre Manager, passes on his thanks.



Thank you all for your help in this outreach

Alan Bousfield

Senior Members Fellowship

As the Senior Members Fellowship continue to meet each month we would like to share with our church family our programme until May.



We are very pleased to have Philip, our minister, join us in March to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to give our humble thanks for all that Jesus has done for us, especially for giving His life as a sacrifice on the cross.

This is a blessed time as we approach Easter and worship and honour our God with thankfulness.

*Jesus paid it all,
All to Him we owe,
He washed us by His precious blood,
And made us white as snow.*

In April we will be joined by Anna from East Belfast Forum where we will share some board games. The month of May we will see us travel to Tullyglass House to share a meal together followed by a drive around the Antrim coast. This will conclude our session until September 2024.



A special thanks to all our committee who contribute each month. We also give a big thank you to John McCandless for all his help, his special gift in sharing God's word and activities we shared.



All we do in Senior Members is to the glory and honour of our God. May you all have a blessed summer and as always, new members are most welcome.

Eileen and Hilary

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to Nathan Donnell as a Summer Assistant who will join us from June to the end of August. Nathan is a first year student at Union College, is married to Zara who is expecting their first child over the summer and is a member of Elmwood Presbyterian, Lisburn.



Belfast City Marathon

This year we are celebrating the 41st running of the Belfast City marathon on Sunday 5 May. It will start at Stormont Estate and follow the many roads around Belfast before completing at Ormeau Park.

As the run will pass the outside of the church, we are looking for volunteers to serve water, tea, coffee and snacks from 8.30am. Given the large number of participants and looking back to last years event it was quite hectic! If you can help in any way please contact myself.



The service on Sunday 5 May will therefore start slightly later at 11.30am.

John Shivers



Important Information

Due to changes of hospital chaplaincy services since COVID-19, the Minister is no longer notified by the Chaplain when a parishioner has become a patient.

If you are aware of a member of our congregation being in hospital please let Rev. Philip Boyd (07584024337) or your Elder know, or send details to the church office at churchoffice@mcquistonpc.org. It is also most useful if you would also include the name of the hospital and the ward number.

John Shivers

Pastoral Visitation

In our previous article for Pulse we were getting organised for Christmas. We delivered Christmas plants to our church family who reside in care homes namely Towell House, Dunlady House, Giboney House and Bloomfield Care Home. A big thank you to all those green fingered folk who did the planting for us to deliver.

Pastoral
CARE

We are now approaching the most important time in the Christian calendar when our Lord Jesus died for our sins that we would be forgiven and through Him would have eternal life; Hallelujah what a Saviour! As we enjoy chocolate eggs and time with our loved ones, let us remember the real meaning of Easter.



Eileen and myself will continue to visit you, God willing, in the months ahead. Thank you for the welcome we always receive when we call to see you in your homes and care homes.



We wish you and your families a happy and blessed Easter. As we have said before you are all valued and prayed for. Love and God's richest blessings.

Hilary and Eileen

SPECIAL SERVICES

24 March @ 11am
Messy Church



29 March @ 7.30pm
Good Friday Communion

31 March @ 11am & 7pm
Easter Day services

7 April
No evening service

5 May @ 11.30am
Due to Belfast Marathon

2 June @ 11am
Sacrament of the Lord's Supper



Outreach

After our successful Christmas shortbread deliveries, the outreach team have been planning further initiatives.



An Easter Art competition for the children in Euston Street and Elmgrove Primary schools is currently taking place and, as in previous years, we expect hundreds of entries. Look out for them to be displayed in McQuiston.



We have been asked to provide small gifts as prizes to the children in Euston Street Primary. Once a term, the Principal presents prizes to kids who have perhaps made a special effort in school work, their attendance has improved or for good behaviour.

If you would like to help with this by either buying a small gift, e.g. pencil case, felt tips, water bottle or to make a donation please speak to either myself or John McCandless.

Linda Wray

Presbyterian Children's Society

This year we were again able to send £300 to the Society in addition to the £1,000 donation from our Harvest collection in October. Many thanks to everyone who donated.



Needless to say they were delighted for our continued support which is greatly needed.

Shelia McAllister

EASTER



Sunday 24 March

We would love to invite you to join us on Sunday 24 March at 11am for a fun filled messy time finding out what Easter is all about 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!

Paula McKeown

THE POWER AND LOVE OF GOD

During this winter we have experienced several storms, the number of which seem to be increasing of late.



The storm that impacted me, more than all those preceding it, was Storm Isha (late January). There were times during this event that I felt fearful.

The noise from the winds, the battering against the walls, windows and, occasionally, the thought that the roof might take flight! Like many others I was relieved when Isha departed from our shores.



It was the force of the winds that caused such havoc and destruction. Many trees fell across the country, roofs were removed or badly damaged, fences fell, electric wires cut, bins blew away, flooding of grounds and buildings etc.

Approximately 53,000 homes and businesses were without power in NI, vehicles were damaged or destroyed, flights cancelled and a few people very sadly lost their lives.



A remarkable feature to me is that one building in a row or street could be badly damaged, and no others; a few vehicles on a road blown off course or damaged, while others nearby were unaffected.

This also applies to garden damage, flooding incidents, human life.



This particular reality reminded me of how, in the Bible, 'wind' is a biblical symbol of the Holy Spirit. Like the wind, the Holy Spirit can come in suddenly, seemingly from nowhere, effecting change.



The Spirit, like the wind, moves wherever He wants and can be unpredictable, invisible, and yet powerful.

We read in Acts 2 how, on the day of Pentecost, all the believers were meeting together in one place when, suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting.



Look back to when God created this world. Genesis 2 vs 7 tells us that the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. The power of God.

While God is beyond our comprehension, He sent His son Jesus to this world to show what He (God) is like, and gave us the Holy Spirit as a guide, a helper and a support.



At Eastertime we remember the events that led up to the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – for our salvation.



We are told that, on the day of Jesus' death on the cross, from about noon until 3 pm, darkness came over the whole land. The sun stopped shining and the curtain in the Temple was torn in two. The power of the Spirit of God moved in that place.



It can be difficult for us, as human beings, to grasp the facts about the Holy Spirit. It is the presence of Almighty God who, from the beginning of time, and continuing in all of time until the end of time; who is powerful, yet a gentle reality; all-knowing, yet understanding of our limitations; full of pure love, yet forgiving of our failures and weaknesses.



I had a friend who, in her younger days was not a Christian. One night in her bedroom, she was aware of something happening in her mind and heart and, with a sudden inner understanding, knew that the Spirit of God had touched her life. That night she became a devoted follower of Jesus.

For those who are Christians, the experiences of beginning our respective journeys of faith are varied, amazing and wonderful, as the Holy Spirit (like the wind in our atmosphere) has touched and moved in individual lives. The Christian faith is a challenging, yet fulfilling and tremendous way of life.



For those who have not decided as yet to follow Jesus, this Easter is a special time to think carefully about Jesus, who loves us to such an extent that He died for each and every one of us, inviting us to be His son or daughter now and into eternity. What greater love can we find anywhere on earth?

Blessings on you this Easter.

Anna Johnston

MUSIC @ McQUISTON

Saturday 24 February 2024 marked a first for us in McQuiston – our first Music @ McQuiston programme which included only Christian music.



Due to my dislike of the stress that comes with organising Music @ McQuiston events, 2023 saw my procrastination on a scale rarely seen before! Afterall, I do think there is some merit in the accuracy of the life hack: *“Hard work pays off tomorrow... procrastination pays off immediately”*.



With many people eagerly asking me during the summer months of 2023, both in person and through others, if Music @ McQuiston was making a return in October, procrastination pushed too hard, eventually leaving it too late to organise performers at short notice.

I decided, in conference with Rev. Philip Boyd and others, to attempt something new to break up the cold, dark winter months – Music @ McQuiston: “WORSHIP!”, which was presented on Saturday 24 February.



I had the idea to ask 3 friends if they would lead worship on that evening – Dave Whitcroft, Paul Murphy and Brian Houston. Thankfully they all agreed...in principle; next, was the task of organising the programme.



The fly in the ointment, I thought, may have been Brian; not because he is difficult to deal with – in fact, the complete opposite is true, he is a man who is approachable, humble, bursting with a faith for God and a desire to share it.

No, my worry was that, of all who I had asked to take part, he was the only professional musician...he makes his entire income doing music.

And so, did I want to ask him to sit from 7:30pm – 10pm only to actually sing a couple of slots totalling 20 minutes??

We decided that Brian would take the whole second half to himself, and I think, at least judging from the feedback I have heard, it was the right decision.



The first half saw Dave and Paul leading an audience of around 330-350 in worship using a selection of their own compositions along with covers of songs by Brian Doerksen and Hillsong, accompanied by a house band including Jonee Hicks (Drums), Keith Trimble (bass guitar) and Phil Kemps (keyboards/pads).



The second half saw the force of nature that is Brian Houston, solo!! For a full 75 minutes he wowed the audience with a non-stop musical story of the freedom that God's children should have.

Freedom from the bondage of sin, paid for by Christ; freedom from national boundaries drawn out by imperfect humans; and freedom from political prejudices.



His simple message – we are all children of the Yahweh, the One who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end; we are all brothers and sisters of the Creator, and, but for human prejudice, we should be free to live as such!

I AM a
CHILD
OF GOD
JOHN 1:12

As always, these evenings rely on many people volunteering to be the cogs of a larger wheel, and unbridled thanks go to: Paula, my ever-understanding wife (who loses me both physically and mentally at these times of the year), Tim Graham, Angela Shivers and Roberta Graham and their band of merry “tea-ladies”, Johnny Graham, Craig Wootton, Karen Beggs, Phil Kemps, Stephen Briggs, George Sproule (Fitzroy) and Scott Galloway (Ards Evangelical Church).



We are planning to host, once again, “Renewed Faith” on Saturday 18 May 2024 as part of their “Step back in time” tour. The programme will consist of older ‘Gospel songs’ such as Power in the blood, Just a closer walk with thee, The old rugged cross, Nothing but the blood of Jesus and more.



They have already played the Riverside Theatre in Coleraine, and will be at Ardhowen Theatre in Enniskillen later in the year. This will be your chance for you to hear them closer to home, and to bring some friends along too!

Mark McKeown

EASTER POEMS

An Easter Prayer

God, give us eyes to see
the beauty of the Spring,
And to behold Your majesty,
in every living thing.

And may we see in lacy
leaves
and every budding
flower,
The Hand that rules the
universe,
with gentleness and
power.



And may this Easter grandeur
that Spring lavishly imparts,
Awaken faded flowers of faith,
Living dormant in our hearts.

And give us ears to hear,
dear God
the Springtime song of
birds,
With messages more
meaningful,
than man's often empty
words.



Telling harried human beings
who are lost in dark despair,
'Be like us and do not worry,
for God has you in his care.'

Helen Steiner Rice

Without Easter

Without Easter,
there would be no hope
of heaven.



Without the hope of heaven,
there would be no repentance,
no personal transformation,
no attempt to follow Biblical
principles.

Without Easter,
the world would be in
chaos and darkness.



Jesus' death and resurrection
means we can be reborn,
to live better, to do better,
to shine light into the shadows.

Hallelujah!

Happy, Happy Easter.

Joanna Fuchs

www.poemsource.com



AT REST

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

31 January

Scott Irvine
49 Roddens Crescent

9 February

Andrew Ramsey
80 Malone Road
formerly 36 Glendale Ave South

28 February

John Sutton
Bloomfield Nursing Home
formerly 11 Loopland Drive

NEW MEMBERS

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

Mr & Mrs Ernest Boyd
86 Knockvale Park

Mrs Colette Massey
52 Blaris Road, Lisburn

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

NEW COMMUNICANT

“On profession of faith”

Mrs Naomi Boyd
52 Kings Road



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