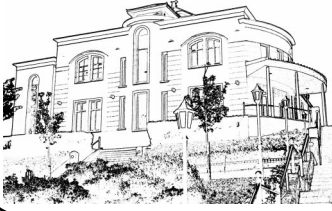


1st Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church



The Link Magazine

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Vol. 21 No. 2

December 2011



**“AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH,
AND DWELT AMONG US, AND WE
BEHELD HIS GLORY, THE GLORY
AS OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF
THE FATHER, FULL OF GRACE
AND TRUTH.” JOHN 1 : 14 (KJV)**

Telephone: (028) 9332 2578
E-mail: emcdowell@presbyterianireland.org

The Manse
10 Lr Ballyboley Road
Ballyeaston

November 2011

Dear Friends,

Christmas can be a time filled with hope and expectation. The children have hopes of presents from Santa, and adults have hopes for happiness and peace. We look forward to the safe return of family and to all of those special moments with friends and neighbours.

We have high hopes for Christmas and the New Year beyond. And why shouldn't we? Without hope life would lose its whole flavour and motivation. But all too often our hopes can be put on hold or even completely ruined. The past year may have had many disappointments, but then we need to remember that we are still never without hope.

For example, the virgin Mary could have believed that all her hopes for the future were ruined. Her hopes for a respectable marriage were gone. Yes, an angel did tell her everything that was going to happen, but then she was still unmarried, pregnant and living in a society where women have very few rights. If she tells the world about an unborn child conceived by the Holy Spirit, they will think she is out of her mind.

Mary's hopes may have been dashed, but she still finds the wherewithal to praise God. She says, My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. Mary can praise God simply because she chooses to believe God and to go along with his plans for her life. Just like Mary, we too must choose to trust in God in all circumstances. When we allow God to enter our lives, then he comes to encourage us and to bring renewed hope.

When our hopes are in Christ alone then we can never be completely overwhelmed or disappointed. Mary recognises this truth. The child in her womb is the Saviour of the world, and she rejoices. Through Jesus Christ the hopes of the humble, the poor, the needy and the hungry will all be satisfied. She says: He has brought down rulers from their thrones, but lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, but sent the rich away empty.

If we only look to find fulfilment and hope in presents, food and sentiment, then there is little doubt that we will be left feeling unsatisfied. For all the trappings of Christmas can never fulfil the deepest needs and yearnings of our lives. Only Jesus Christ can give us that sure hope of forgiveness, salvation, joy and peace. May all of our hopes be in Him, through Him and for Him this Christmas and always.

“For I know the plans I have for you”, declares the Lord. "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". (Jeremiah 29:11)

Your friend and minister,

Eddie McDowell

STUDENT PLACEMENT

Mr Ross Kernohan, a first year student for the ministry of our church, will undertake a placement in 1st Ballyeaston for eight weeks from January through to March. Ross is married with one child born earlier this year. Prior to being accepted for the ministry, Ross worked in information technology. We look forward to having Ross with us and pray that he will feel very welcome and at home with us in Ballyeaston.

PLANNING TO GET MARRIED?

Anyone who is planning to be married in 2012 should already have contacted the minister by this stage. If you are planning to be married in 2012, 2013 or later, then please do speak to the Rev. McDowell as soon as possible in order to avoid disappointment. The minister is the first person who should be contacted, as it is possible the church building could already be booked for another wedding or event. Please note that the Presbytery Marriage Preparation Course will be held in High Street Presbyterian Church, Antrim on Thursdays the 2nd, 9th & 16th February 2012 from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. Please contact the minister for more details.

ENQUIRY CLASSES

Enquiry classes for those who would like to know more about the Christian faith or who are thinking of becoming communicant members of the church will commence in the Manse at 3.00pm on Sunday 29th January 2012.

CHURCH RECORD

BAPTISMS *'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.'* Mark 10 :14

- 2nd October Zoe Crothers, daughter of James and Joan Crothers, Kelburn Park, Ballyclare.
- 23rd October Chloe Ruth Robinson and Katie Louise Robinson, daughters of Alastair and Ruth Robinson, Huntingdale Crescent, Ballyclare.
- 30th October Katie Anne McCartney, daughter of Richard and Valerie McCartney, Speerstown Road, Moorfields.



MARRIAGES *'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.'* Psalm 127 : 1

- 25th November Jayne Kathryn Gault, Calhame Road, Ballyclare & Aaron Christopher Gault, Huntingdale Court, Ballyclare



DEATHS *'Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ..."'* John 11 :25

- 24th September Mrs Ellen (Nellie) Wilson, Whappstown Road, Moorfields



NEW FAMILIES

Mr Robert McFarland, 21 Adelaide Avenue, Whitehead



BOWLING CLUB

The 2011/12 Season kicked off on Wednesday 14th September. Membership of the Club remains pretty consistent at around the 20 mark. We are always looking for new members and you will be made very welcome on a Wednesday evening in the Lecture Hall.



As well as playing our League matches in the East Antrim League, the Club has entered two cup competitions - the United Feeds Charity Cup and the East Antrim League Cup.

The Club is hoping for another successful and enjoyable season.

Denis Currie (Club Secretary)

THE GIRLS' BRIGADE

The Girls' Brigade is well under way for another year. Our session started in September with most of our girls returning and a few new members along the way - we currently have in the region of 150 girls, Associates, Sub-Officers and Officers enrolling.



The sections have all been working hard towards their badgework and scripture classes, with even our Toddlers having their weekly Bible story. Jayne Davis keeps our Toddlers very busy each week with a full programme of crafts, games and singing - girls you all sing Mr. Noah built an Ark so beautifully.

Explorers are being led this year by Mrs Claire McConnell, and as always they are kept very busy each evening. The girls are enjoying a varied programme including scripture, crafts, PE, singing and choral speaking. Alison Hall and Linzi Craig have been giving the girls some cookery lessons which have been enjoyed by all and there is no excuse for losing your place in your favourite book, girls, with the lovely bookmarks. Claire has been bringing young son Hamilton along and the girls have enjoyed seeing him grow week by week!

The Juniors have a new leader this session, Miss Elizabeth Woodburn, who has kept the girls busy with a full programme of events, including crafts, where the girls have made houses from cleaning cloths - they even made extras knowing you will all come along to the PW sale in early December to purchase one - or maybe two. The girls have also had another successful hair styling night and are finding out how to grow in God, with the aid of a spectacular sunflower in the MacConnell Hall - do please take the time to read their efforts.

The Seniors also have a different leader this year - Mrs Claire Sempey. Again our Seniors have a packed programme of scripture, games and crafts and had an evening involving lots of handwashing - they underwent bacteria and germ tests on their hands - lots of soap needed that evening. A movie night was thoroughly enjoyed by all and the girls are getting geared up to make up Parcels of Care to send out to our troops serving on the frontline in Afghanistan. Our previous leader, Dawn Tan, has moved to China for a few years and we would like to take this opportunity to wish Dawn God's richest blessings in this big adventure for her family.

The Brigaders again produced items for the harvest - this year they had a go

at putting together a 'Hug in a Mug' gift for the elderly in our congregation - ensuring plenty of hot tea in the colder months, with a slice of angel cake on the side. They have also been learning about GB Africa and sending prayers to GB girls in Tanzania, Swaziland etc. The Brigaders are also organising a fund-raising event to take place at the end of January - this will be a fashion show and we hope we can count on your support - more details to follow soon. We require some models - please do not be shy - your GB needs you - we particularly require some gentlemen to strut their stuff on the catwalk!

Remembrance Sunday took place on Sunday 13th November with some of the Officers and girls on parade for the laying of the poppy wreath in the Church vestibule. GB feels very privileged to be allowed to take part in this ceremony each year.

The Annual Enrolment Service took place on Sunday 20th November. Our Chaplain, Rev. Eddie McDowell was unable to lead the service this year as he is on missionary work in Nigeria but we are grateful to the Rev. Dr. J H MacConnell agreed to take the Service. The Seniors and Brigaders practiced their singing most earnestly for this occasion and didn't they do well! Approximately 130 girls were enrolled and we would take this opportunity to thank the parents for their continued support in sending their girls to GB each week.

A special word of thanks to all our helpers in all Sections of Girls' Brigade - we are very appreciative of all your hard work and I hope you are finding it rewarding and worthwhile.

Clothing Collection - as a Company we would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who filled a bag/bags with unwanted clothing and shoes. To date we have raised £400 for GB funds. Please do continue to support us by passing your unwanted items to us - place into a black bag and send with your child to GB, pass to an Officer, or leave in the church vestibule. Again we thank you for your continued support.

Christmas party preparations are well underway and further information will be sent home with the girls closer to the time. Provisionally we have planned Toddler, Explorer and Junior parties for Friday 16th December and Senior and Brigader parties for Monday 19th December - please note these are still provisional dates and are still to be confirmed.

Christmas holidays will be as follows:-

Toddlers, Explorers and Juniors Friday 23rd December 2011

and Friday 30th December 2011.
Return Friday 6th January 2012.

Seniors and Brigaders

Monday 26th December 2011 and
Monday 2nd January 2012
Return Monday 9th January 2012

Please keep in mind the date for our Display which is Friday 30th March 2012 in Ballyclare Secondary School. There will be details about tickets and further information nearer the time. We would appreciate a prompt return of Sunday School and Church cards to enable us to prepare awards in a timely manner for the Display - latest dates are Friday 2nd March 2012 for Toddlers, Explorers and Juniors and Monday 5th March 2012 for Seniors and Brigaders.

We would like to wish all our members, their families, friends and our entire church family a very Happy Christmas and God's richest blessing in the New Year.

Sharon Bell (Officer & 'Link' Representative)

PW GROUP NEWS

We would like to thank all who contributed to the mission boxes this year. The total to date is £1,206.34. If your box hasn't yet been opened this



year, there is still time. Just pass it to our Treasurer, Mrs Lily Hill. To any member of the congregation who does not already have a mission box and would like one, please ask our Treasurer or any PW member. The monies raised from these boxes are allocated to the Mission Fund for the work at Home and Overseas.

Many thanks to those who continue to support our Christmas Fun Day and Sale it is much appreciated.

The remainder of this session's programme is as follows-

Tuesday 10th January

Tonight at 8pm in the MacConnell Hall, Susan will be looking at 'Whose Wings are we Under'. Psalm 91:4 'He will cover you with His feathers. Under His wings you will find refuge'.....

Tuesday 14th February

This will be our visitors' night in the Lecture Hall. Speaker - Brian Givens from 'Christians Against Poverty' at usual time of 8pm.

Friday 2nd March

Women's World Day of Prayer at 7:45pm venue still to be confirmed.

Tuesday 13th March

We are back in the MacConnell Hall at 8pm where Wilma will be looking at 'Under His Wings at the Cross' - as we come to the cross of Calvary, we can bring all the things that prevent us from entering into the new life that he offers. God enables us to rise to new life in Christ both here and in heaven.

Sunday 1st April

Our annual PW Morning Service at 11:30am will be conducted by Doreen Draffin, Deaconess, Whitehouse and NI Hospice.

Our evening praise service at 7:30pm will be led by The Police Male Voice Choir. The charities we will be supporting this year are the N.I. Hospice and Crossroads Caring for Carers NI.

Every meeting is open to all ladies of the congregation so plan to come along, its just one night per month, you will be made most welcome.


This concludes our programme for another session and we would like to wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and God's richest blessing in the New Year.

Elaine Witherhead (PW Group Secretary)

FLOWER ROTA

January 2012	Mrs A Grimason	March 4 & 11	Mrs J Woodside
February 5 & 12	Mrs E Witherhead	March 18 & 25	Mrs M Strain
February 19 & 26	Mrs M McNeilly		

Thanks to all who provide flowers each Sunday to adorn His house.



WIDER WORLD

Now is the time to order your copy of **Wider World** for 2012, the magazine produced four times a year by '**Presbyterian Women**'. The cost is £5 for the four copies and is paid in advance by the end of December. If you are interested in receiving copies, please place your order with Miss Wilma Todd before the end of December 2011.

PRAYER TIME



I love the story in Acts 12 verses 12-17:- We have Peter who has just escaped from prison with help of the angel of God, finding his way to the house of Mary (mother of John Mark). Inside there are people praying for him. He knocks the locked door and the servant girl Rhoda, is so overjoyed to hear his voice that she runs off to tell the others instead of opening the door. "Peter is at the door!" she excitedly shouts, but they tell her that she is mad, and don't believe her. She eventually gets them to the door where Peter has been waiting and continuing to knock! They are astonished when they see Peter and make such a racket that he has to motion to them with his hands to calm down.

Answered prayer is not always as dramatic as that but often we are still astonished that our prayers are answered.

Being on the receiving end of prayer makes me feel humbled and whatever the load, it feels lighter,--- so thank you Cecil for thoughts and prayers in the September issue of the Link. Thanks to all who prayed for the Sunday School. Thanks to the prayer groups and to those I know who are praying for me. Thank you loving Father God who keeps me safe and shows such love and is the strength in all things I try to do.

I found this prayer in a Church library book:-

Dear God,

I hold up all my weakness to your strength,

My failure to your faithfulness,

My sinfulness to your perfection,

My loneliness to your compassion,

My small pain to your agony on the cross. Amen

This is an adaptation of a prayer that Keith, a life-sentence prisoner, found scribbled on his prison wall.

(Favourite Prayers page 72)

When Peter had calmed his friends down he told them what God had done in bringing him out of prison. May we forever remember what God has done for us. In all the excitement and noise of Christmas we are on the receiving end of His love. - Love to the weak, the failures, the sinful, the lonely and the suffering.

Margy Davison

PRESBYTERY REPORT

The Winter session of business of the Templepatrick Presbytery began with the Moderator's Communion Service in First Ballyeaston church on September 13th. Rev McDowell's term of office as Moderator will end at the March 2012 meeting.

Points from recent meetings which may be of interest to you are -

a Christians Against Poverty (C.A.P.) Centre is to be opened in Antrim in April 2012. While the main funding for this will come from First Antrim and Greystone Road congregations, other congregations in the Presbytery will contribute £150 each in the first two years, after which this will be reviewed.

A Board of Mission Overseas event will be held in Muckamore church on 18th March and the 2012 Presbytery Weekend will take place on 15th and 16th September, picking up on the General Assembly's theme for 2012-13 "A Prophetic Voice".

The Presbytery Prayer and Divine Healing Ministry Services will be on the following Wednesdays at 8.00pm in the churches listed -

30th November - Killead

25th January - 2nd Randalstown

28th March - Templepatrick

30th May - 1st Donegore

Joan Chesney (Representative Elder)

SUNDAY SCHOOL

This session we have studied Moses and some of the "I am" sayings of Jesus. We decided to have an Open Sunday-School/Family Day on October 23rd. This was the first of the "I am" sayings- Jesus said "I am the light of the world". There was great participation by the teachers and helpers. Michelle took the opening, Carol played the piano, Lynsey took the offering prayer, I did the lesson, Sian and Emma took the new chorus we are learning and Danielle did the closing prayer. Anne and the Bible class organised the refreshments at the end. The children sang so well and it was great to see everyone working together. Arlene helped out with the opening when I was away on holiday. Anne also did a stint on the second week while I was away. Danielle took my class during my absence and it was refreshing to hear and see these dedicated people pulling together as a group.

We will be doing a Nativity Play in the Church this year so parents please

make sure your children attend the practices.

Dates to remember -

November 27th - Practice for Nativity Play

December 4th- Practice for Nativity Play

December 11th - Dress Rehearsal

December 17th -Saturday - Christmas Parties (3-5pm & 7.30 - 9.30pm)

December 18th - Sunday School as usual at 10.30am

December 18th - Nativity Play in Church at 11.30am

December 25th - No Sunday School

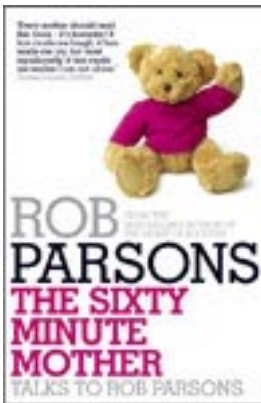
January 1st 2012 - No Sunday School

January 8th - Sunday School recommences.

Please do continue to remember the work of the Sunday School in your prayers, both for the young people and for the teachers that all may be blessed and upheld in this important work.

Margy Dawison (Sunday School Co-ordinator)

Family Matters



Don't you just wonder sometimes how every mother you meet seems to be coping with the pressures of 21st century living and you don't!!

Well this book is for you.!!!

This book is meant as an encouragement to mothers the world over, that we all face the same pressures. Whilst written by a man, it is based on his discussions with mothers from all walks of life.

It is a very easy read, some parts hilariously funny while other parts are really touching and heart felt.

It covers issues like:

- o Why do I sometimes feel so guilty?
- o My children are teenagers now - what happened?
- o Should I work full-time or stay at home?
- o I love my kids - but is it all right not to like them occasionally?
- o Single mums: the challenge and the hope.

Claire McDowell

Prayer is the burden of a SIGH, the falling of a TEAR,
the upward glancing of an eye, when no one but God is near.

SEASONAL CONTEMPLATIONS

I pressed my nose to the window pane as I watched the children play
'Twas the year of twenty eleven and would soon be Christmas Day.
Yes Santa soon would reappear but will he visit here,
Will there be anything in the sack for any of us here.

My daddy's work came to an end back in the month of May,
Now he reads the job prospects each and every day.
Poor mum has lost her self respect, she can't cope with the strain,
All the bills are piling up, no one knows her pain.

I hear her cry in bed at night, how will we ever cope?
Dad tries to reassure her for he just lives in hope.
Mum would say when she was young, the neighbours seemed to care,
No matter how little they had themselves, they were always willing to share.

Now people have their grandeur of one kind or another,
Do they ever stop to think of us who God said was their brother.
Our little family left alone, does no one see our plight,
I prayed for just a little help as I lay in bed at night.

And sure enough God spoke to me in a very subtle tone,
He promised his love and assured me that we'd never be alone.
I learn my views in life are wrong the more to God I chatter,
He's forever pointing out that things don't really matter.

So Christmas time this year for me won't be like any other
But I'll be content to have the love of mum and dad and brother.
And then of course there's Jesus, the centre of it all,
And if I make Him Number One, I'll really have a ball.

*(Thanks to Marlene for this touching poem and a reminder perhaps of
earlier days for some. Editor)*

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Quite a few packs remain of the Christmas cards prepared last year, 3 based on the church and local scenes together with one based on drawings by members of the Children's Church. Packs of 12 of these cards (3 each of the 4 designs) costing £5, are now available in the church vestibule on a Sunday morning and will also be available at the PW Christmas Sale or contact a member of the Church Committee. All profits are going towards Church funds.

COOKERY CORNER

Butter Plum Pudding

3/4lb breadcrumbs	juice of orange & lemon
1lb butter	6 eggs
1/4lb flour	1/2lb raisins
1tsp Baking Powder	1/2lb sultanas
1tsp Salt	1/2lb currants
1lb soft brown sugar	1/2lb cherries
1/2lb cooking apples	1/2 glass whiskey or brandy
1/2tsp ground nutmeg	1/2tsp spice
1/2tsp cinnamon	1/2tsp ground cloves



Method

Cream butter and sugar, add crumbs, dry ingredients and eggs. Add spices, flavouring and floured fruit. Put into greased bowls, tie down, steam for 3 hours. On the day to be used, steam for 1 hour. If made in one bowl, steam initially for 5 hours and 3 hours on day to be used. Can be steamed completely so that they heat in the microwave in a few minutes for use.

Roulade

3 egg whites 6oz sugar 3 level tsp cornflour 1tsp vinegar
vanilla essence

Method

Whisk egg whites with a pinch of salt, add sugar, cornflour, vanilla essence and vinegar. Put into a lined swiss roll tin and cook for about 25 minutes at 140°C. Turn out onto sugared foil when ready to serve, fill with cream and a filling of your choice, roll and decorate top.

Points for Prayer Handbook

***Get your 2012 copy now and keep up to date
on the work of our Presbyterian Church at
home and abroad and its prayer needs.***

***Make sure of your copy by placing your
order with Mrs Margy Davison today!***

Price - still only £1.50

DWELL NOT ON THE PAST

*Dwell not on the past
For it belongs to yesterday
Just choose the happy memories
To help you on life's way
And cast aside the pain and grief
And heartaches you have known
For these unhappy memories
Weigh you down like leaden stone
And nothing you will ever do
Can change what's in the past
For life goes ever forward
And the journey goes so fast
You never can obliterate
What life has led you through
So strive to live in comfort
With a past you can't undo
The rest of life's before you
By the past do not be led
For it's not that time that matters
It's this day and those ahead.*

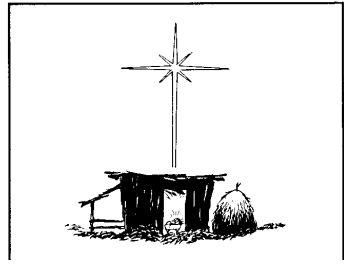
CHRISTMAS SERVICES

4th December - Morning Service - Gift Day : for the Salvation Army.

11th December - Morning Service - Focus on World Development. Evening at 7.00pm - Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols

18th December - Morning Family Service with Nativity by the Sunday School.

25th December - Christmas Morning Family Service at 10.30am.



Ten Commandments for Christmas

1. Thou shalt not leave Christ out of Christmas.
2. Thou shalt not value thy gifts by their cost.
3. Thou shalt give thyself with thy gifts.
4. Thou shalt not let Santa Claus take the place of Jesus Christ.
5. Thou shalt spend sensibly and responsibly.
6. Thou shalt not neglect the church.
7. Thou shalt not forget the needy.
8. Thou shalt experience Christmas as a little child.
9. Thou shalt prepare yourself spiritually for Christmas.
10. Thou shalt give to missions.

If you try to keep these ten commandments this Christmas, you will experience the true joy and love that the Christ of Christmas offers.

The NEARER I get to JESUS,
the less I have to SHOUT!

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!

Is it Political correctness or do we just reap what we sow?

(This is from an email I received last Christmas and again just as I was finalising this magazine so I've decided to share it with you. *Editor*)

For the first time ever - the Christmas tree in the White House will be called a "Holiday Tree". (Another way of getting rid of Christmas altogether no doubt?) The following was written by Ben Stein and recited by him on CBS Sunday Morning Commentary. (Ben Stein was born in 1944 and is an actor, writer, lawyer, political commentator, and speech writer for two Presidents.)

'MY CONFESSION: I am a Jew, and every single one of my ancestors was Jewish. And it does not bother me even a little bit when people call those beautiful lit up, bejewelled trees, Christmas trees. I don't feel threatened. I don't feel discriminated against. That's what they are, Christmas trees. It doesn't bother me a bit when people say, 'Merry Christmas' to me. I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto. In fact, I kind of like it. It shows that we are all brothers and sisters celebrating this happy time of year. It doesn't bother me at all that there is a manger scene on display at a key intersection near my beach house in Malibu. If people want a creche, it's just as fine with me as is the Menorah a few hundred yards away. I don't like getting pushed around for being a Jew, and I don't think Christians like getting pushed around for being Christians. I think people who believe in God are sick and tired of getting pushed around, period. I have no idea where the concept came from that America is an explicitly atheist country. I can't find it in the Constitution and I don't like it being shoved down my throat. Or maybe I can put it another way: where did the idea come from that we should worship celebrities and we aren't allowed to worship God as we understand Him? I guess that's a sign that I'm getting old too. But there are a lot of us who are wondering where these celebrities came from, and where the America we knew went to.

Billy Graham's daughter was interviewed on the Early Show, and Jan Clayson asked her 'How could God let something like this happen?' (regarding Hurricane Katrina)... Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response. She said, 'I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get our of our government, and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman He is, I believe He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leaves us alone?'

In light of recent events - terrorist attacks, school shootings, etc. I think it started when Madeleine Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, and her body found a few years ago) complained she didn't want prayer in our schools, and we said OK. Then someone said you better not read the Bible in school. The Bible says thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal, AND love your neighbour as yourself. And we said OK. Then Dr. Benjamin Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when they misbehave, because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self esteem (Dr. Spock's son committed suicide). We said an expert should know what he's talking about. And we said OK. Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves. Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with 'WE REAP WHAT WE SOW.'

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell. Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says. Funny how we can send jokes through email and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing. Funny how lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene articles pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace. *Ben Stein*

'TAKING CARE' UPDATE

Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (POCVA)

Congregations in Ireland are helped to comply with POCVA through receipt of comprehensive guidance and resources from the Taking Care Office at Church House. Congregations are kept informed of developments in the Safeguarding agenda both at government and local level. Guidance materials are kept under review and information sheets on areas of specific interest for leaders are routinely updated.

One such area of interest is the communication between leaders and children and young people via the internet. It is recognised that Facebook, Twitter and Formspring amongst others, have become a primary mode of communication for young people and adults alike. The internet can be an excellent and effective tool in youth ministry, if used in the right way. Taking Care has recently reviewed its guidance on this area. We are reminded that care needs to be exercised in the use of the internet as part of our

congregational life. On-line safety awareness is being delivered at schools and we have a responsibility to reinforce this message at youth organisation, club and group level.

Social networking can greatly assist leaders and youth workers to connect with young people, plug events and to engage them in conversation. This is happening across churches through various online media.

Taking Care has provided a list of Do's and Don'ts for congregations to take on board. These are listed below along with 1st Ballyeaston's protocol on social networking:-

- o When setting up an organisation website, webpage or blog, make clear what is available for copying or downloading. Do not refer to inappropriate sites.
- o Websites, webpages or blogs must be made fully secure using passwords, log-in areas, closed groups.
- o Parental permission must be obtained before using any picture of a child/group of children on a website, webpage or blog.
- o Avoid using photos of individual children. It is preferable to use a group photograph. Do not use if a child can be identified by their name or the location they are in. Names and addresses should not be given.
- o Personal email or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers should not be divulged. Leaders should be aware that, by advertising dates and times of events online, there is the possibility that other people, who would not have otherwise heard of events, may turn up without warning. It is safer to notify these events through specific log-in areas for young people to access.
- o Taking Care has identified that youth workers are increasingly communicating with children/young people using email and text messaging and online. Texts and emails should be kept to a minimum and vigilance should be maintained regarding the frequency and number of emails/texts involved.
- o If web access is being provided for children or young people on church premises, then filtering software should be used (eg Netnanny, Cyber patrol or Surfwatch). The Internet Service Provider should be consulted regarding its filtering software. If using the internet as part of an organisation's activities, ensure that parental permission has been obtained.
- o If a Facebook account (or other social networking tool) is going to be

set up by a leader it should be purely for the organisation it will refer to and not be combined with the individual's personal Facebook (or other social networking tool) account. This permits a number of leaders involved in the organisation to have password access to the administration of the page and for postings to be checked. This adds an extra dimension of accountability. Social networking accounts for an organisation must not be created without the knowledge, approval and involvement of the Leader(s).

- o Leaders and volunteers involved in 1st Ballyeaston organisations and groups are required to adhere to the Child Protection Policy. This is extended to ensuring safe behaviour in the virtual world of social networking sites and leaders and volunteers are expected to keep their profiles appropriate for viewing by young people.
- o If young people are to be contacted using these sites this must always be done in a public way. Any communication using the organisation webpage should be kept public or kept logged. Messages incoming and outgoing must be saved. Leaders/volunteers must not use instant chat or private messages, even if a young person sends a leader/volunteer messages using these tools. All contact with young people using social networking should be kept appropriate and not use abbreviations/language that could be misunderstood by a parent or guardian.
- o Social networking should not be used after 10pm in order to maintain a safe boundary between leaders/volunteers and the young persons accessing the site.

Leaders should be encouraged to explore how to safely use the internet to engage with young people. It is recommended that, before creating a webpage or social networking account, leaders discuss these plans with the Designated Officer and that Kirk Session is also involved in any decision making.

On a final note, results have been published of the Taking Care Audit conducted earlier in 2011 across all Presbyterian congregations in Ireland. There were 302 child protection issues reported to the Taking Care Office in the past 5 years. These issues ranged from bullying in a youth club to the disclosure by a child regarding abuse and rape. This is a sobering reminder that POCVA is much more than the filling in of forms for POCVA checking. The Taking Care programme is about making a difference to children, young

The Big Breakfast with Matt Baggott



Rev McDowell,
Matt Baggott
and William
Stewart after the
Big Breakfast.

Matt Baggott with
some Ladies of
the Congregation
at the Big
Breakfast.



Matt Baggott receiving a gift
from William Stewart.

people and vulnerable adults in all of our congregations. Further information on the Audit findings and all POCVA resources can be found www.pcibsw.org/takingcare

Should you have any queries in respect of POCVA please contact me on 028 9332 3565.

Adèle Davidson Designated Officer

WORLD DEVELOPMENT



The theme for this year's World Development Appeal is: 'Let Justice Flow: Thirsting for Justice'. One of the projects this year is the Kigezi Diocese (Church of Uganda) Water and Sanitation Programme which is supported through Tearfund. However the Appeal is also supporting the Life with Dignity - Integrated Rural Development Scheme

in Cambodia which is being supported through Christian Aid.

Following are the Cambodia Project details:

Life with Dignity (LWD) is a local offshoot of the Lutheran World Federation, and the project we are supporting this year is Integrated Rural Development through Empowerment (IRDEP). At present, LWD is operating in four provinces and nine districts. During the first stage, LWD identifies the poorest households in each community and then, over a five year period, helps them to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to lift themselves out of poverty.

Each year the partner households are able to assess their progress using an A - D grading system devised by LWD. This system helps each household, their communities and LWD to set clear, measurable and realistic goals.

The aim of the project is that participating families, within four to five years, will eventually become self-sufficient and independent from LWD. This allows LWD to move on to new communities and implement its programme wherever the need is greatest. Development councils set up by LWD help village people to address interrelated issues such as sanitation, access to clean water, literacy and food security. As a result, they tackle both the causes and symptoms of poverty at the local level.

Sou Et and Em Ouem's story

Sou Et and Em Ouem are farmers, who are proud to say that they are no longer poor. In 2003 they were struggling to survive but thanks to LWD they

now have 2 acres of rice fields, two cows, several chickens and a small fruit and vegetable plantation. Having “graduated” from LWD, they went on to help pilot LWD's bio-gas project in their village. Now they are able to generate enough bio-gas from their cow manure to fuel a gas cooker and three lamps. They and their ten year old granddaughter Kanha no longer have to spend time collecting firewood or buying charcoal. This has allowed Kanha to spend more time on her studies, and her school grades have improved from seven out of ten to ten out of ten.

LWD's holistic and progressive approach to development is working well. It allows households within villages to work together towards development, and enables them to celebrate their achievements for everyone's benefit.

God not only liberates people from hardship but also helps them to flourish so that they might embrace and model a new way of living in the community. In the end this helps to give everyone a more sustainable and enjoyable life.

In the weeks before Christmas, you will be invited to give generously to this year's World Development Appeal: 'Let Justice Flow : Thirsting for Justice'. By supporting this appeal we can make a real difference in people's lives.

Claire McDowell

KIRK SESSION REPORT

The united summer services with 2nd Ballyeaston took place as usual during July and August. During August and into September we carried out some necessary work to the roof timbers and gallery of the church where dry rot was discovered earlier in the year. The services during August and part of September were held in the Church Hall and I want to thank everyone for their patience and endurance during this time. In particular thanks to Anna & Susan who had extra cleaning to do and for those who came to assist with the cleaning up for a wedding during the construction period and on completion of the work.

September saw all the church organisations commencing their winter programmes. Our joint Communion Service with 2nd Ballyeaston took place on the evening of 11th September.

The six week series of Bible studies presented in our church by Desi Maxwell in September/October was very well received by all who attended. This series entitled “What's new about the New Testament” opened up the Bible to us in a very dynamic way. Desi's unique style of teaching gave us a deeper understanding of the Old and New Testaments by creating an

awareness of the Jewish background to the text and helping us to grow in our appreciation of where we all fit into God's big plan. This series of teaching was very informative and has encouraged me to want to explore deeper into God's word. Desi is returning for a second series of teaching in September 2012 and I very much look forward to that.

Following on the success of the Men's Breakfasts in the past, this year we held a congregational breakfast in the Rosspark Hotel on 29th October. Our guest speaker was Matt Baggott, Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Around sixty people attended this event and heard Matt speak about his faith and how he finds God to be both personal and practical in helping him through the good and difficult times in his role as Chief Constable in our province. It gave us an insight into the person that he is, as opposed to what we read in the newspapers.

Harvest Thanksgiving services were held on 9th October. Our own Rev. McDowell conducted the morning service and the evening service was conducted by Rev. Emerson McDowell, minister of Ballylinney Presbyterian Church. Both services were well attended.

The month of November is always a busy month in our congregation. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated at morning and evening worship on 6th November, the Act of Remembrance on 13th November and Girls' Brigade enrolment on 20th November. We were delighted on 20th November to welcome Rev. Dr. MacConnell to conduct the Girls' Brigade Enrolment Service while the Rev. McDowell was on sabbatical leave and to have Mrs MacConnell with us as well.

I am pleased to report that communication with the Glissman family in Malawi has now been established. We have received two E Mails from them and as communication continues it is hoped that we can support them prayerfully and practically in their work in the mission field.

As we look forward to the Christmas season the following special services take place during December:

- 4th Morning Service - Gift Day for the Salvation Army
- 11th Morning Service - Focus on World Development
- 11th Evening Service - Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols
- 18th Morning Service - Family Service with Nativity by Sunday School
- 25th 10.30am - Christmas Morning Family Service.

Finally on behalf of Kirk Session I wish you all a happy, peaceful and blessed Christmas and every blessing for the New Year. I would like to share with

you the following prayer which was written by Robert Louis Stevenson:

“Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.”

William Stewart Clerk of Session

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Dry rot and woodworm in the Church

Work to eliminate the woodworm and dry rot in the Church has now been completed. Unfortunately, extensive woodworm damage had extended through the ceiling of the Upper Room and also the ceiling and roof timbers of the Church. The affected areas have now been treated and the damaged timbers either replaced or repaired as appropriate. Areas of dry rot around the two windows in the Gallery of the Church have now been treated and the plasterwork has now been made good. Some additional work to replace guttering and downpipes on the outside of the Church is still to be undertaken and it is hoped that this will be completed in the near future.

Finance

The total cost for the treatment of the woodworm and dry rot has still to be determined. The congregation has been very generous in donating over £15,000 towards the cost of these repairs.

Thanks

The members of Committee would express their thanks to the following members of the congregation who have raised funds for our Church:

- o Mrs Agnes Grimason for the Fireside Quiz which raised £375.
- o Mrs Susan Drummond and Mrs Anna McIlwaine for the recent Coffee Morning which raised £807.41
- o Miss Gillian and Mrs Beenie Cahoon and Mrs Victoria McKnight for selling cupcakes at the barbecue.

Malcolm Downey Congregational Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

Our **Accounts** are divided into a number of funds, the General Revenue, United Appeal, Property, and Vestibule. On the 13th November the balance in each of the Accounts was:



	Bal. on 13Nov. 2011	Bal. on 1Jan. 2011
General Revenue	- £6,352	£2,961
United Appeal	£7,001	£0
Property	£12,425	£0
Vestibule	£48,853	£25,912

It is almost the end of another year and I have to report that the General Revenue account is now in the RED by £6,352. This account pays for all the running costs of the Church: Assembly Assessments, heat, light, rates, salaries etc. How can this happen? I have warned about the possibilities of this account going into the red for the past year or two. We have used up all our reserves that were in this account and are now running at a deficit. The General Revenue Account, unlike the other Funds, is an unrestricted account which means we can transfer money from it into other funds if necessary whereas the other Funds are 'restricted' and therefore money cannot be moved around. In the first two months of a new year we usually have large bills for Assembly Assessment and Heating Oil. At the 13th November the income to the General Revenue Account was £81,628 whereas the expenditure was £90,942.

At the end of the year, the church's accounts go to Presbytery and PCI. There will be questions asked as to why the General Revenue Account is in the red.

The table below shows how contributions to all Funds compared to the same time last year.

	2011	2010	Variance
FWO	£55,961	£55,491	+ 0.8%
United Appeal	£5,001	£5,560	-10.0%
Vestibule Fund	£12,793	£13,790	-7.2%
Harvest	£19,300	£20,017	-3.6%

The Roof Appeal

In May we asked members to give donations over and above their usual contributions towards the work on the church roof. £15,645 was raised and £2,876 was claimed back through Gift Aid. A big thank you to all, all 84 families / individuals who supported this fund. Also I would like to thank

those member of the congregation who did some fund raising of their own -see Congregational Committee Report.

Gift Aid

It is important that if you have signed up to Gift Aid you keep Cecil Davis or John Cummings informed if you are retired and no longer paying tax or are paying less tax. We will not be circulating another letter for 3 years regarding this. Gift Aid received on all funds was down on last year.

The Presbyterian Mutual Society Loan

As you are aware, to complete the Vestibule we took out a 10 year loan from the Society. As a Church we had invested £20,000 before the PMS went into liquidation. Over the summer this money was offset against our loan, which means that we now owe £87,210. There will be another £15,000 paid by the end of November. Hopefully this loan will be fully paid by December 2013.

Almost one third of the congregation in terms of envelope holders have not contributed to any of the church funds this year. Have so many lost interest in the work we are doing at First Ballyeaston in the Lord's name? We need the financial support of every member. We also need every contributing member to increase their contribution to all aspects of the Church's work and especially to the Freewill Offering so that we can keep above our expenditure. Remember to always give to God as He has blessed you!

End of Year Arrangements

Contributors

You should have received with your Link Magazine a statement of your contributions. Please check this carefully and if we are in error please contact either John Waugh or myself - contact details in the Annual Report.

Also if you have envelopes for your children that they no longer use, please let me know so that I can amend the envelope holders list for next year and therefore reduce the number of envelopes we purchase in April for 2013.

Standing Orders

Have you considered paying by Standing Order. Think of how much you want to contribute each year to the various funds and divide by 12 to pay monthly. We can either email you a form or post it. For those who already pay by Standing Order please remember to review how much you pay and consider making a small increase next year.

NOTE:- The final date of contribution towards 2011 Accounts is Sunday

25th December. Any money received after 30th December will be allocated to 2012. Because of changes in the reporting of accounts we can not accept contributions to 2011 after the year has closed.

Organisations

All Organisation Treasurers should have their accounts with John Waugh for Auditing no later than 8th January 2012. All organisation contributions to the Church should be made before the 25th December 2011.

Joe Bingham Congregational Treasurer
jm35bingham@yahoo.co.uk

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

A meeting of Children's Church and Crèche leaders was held on Monday 26th September. Appreciation was expressed for the work that Heather Patterson has done over the years in organising Children's Church.



Arrangements, materials and rotas for the year were discussed with those present. Scripture Union materials and workbooks have been purchased for both Children's Church and Crèche leaders to use. Feedback from leaders and children, or parents, regarding these would be appreciated. It is intended that these are available as a resource but not that they have to be used every Sunday.

Parents are asked to note that only children in P1 - P7 should go out to Children's Church in the Galbraith Hall. The Crèche is available in the Patterson Room throughout the service for younger children with a suitable level of adult supervision for this age group. Age appropriate materials are being provided for each group - Crèche, Junior and Senior, so it would be appreciated if parents could help to ensure that children go to the appropriate venue after the Children's Address. We would also ask that parents make leaders on duty aware of any allergies that children have, particularly food allergies, as a snack of biscuit and juice is usually provided.

The help of all the leaders involved is appreciated and their patience sought as I take over organising Children's Church. Young people in Year 8 and above are asked to make me aware if they would like to be included as helpers on the Children's Church rota. If anyone finds that they cannot carry

out their duty they are asked to arrange a swap with someone else or to contact me on 93352440. Thanks.

Jean Currie (Leader)

CHILDREN'S CHURCH ROTA

Date

Juniors P1-P3

Seniors P4-P7

January

1st Children's Church & Creche will all meet together in the Patterson Room

8th & 15th Helen McAuley Andrew Currie / Sharon Bell Zara
McIlwaine

22nd & 29th Adele Davidson Ethan McKnight / Sharon Bell Lucy Bell

February

5th & 12th Laverne Gordon Michelle Rogan / Carol Conn Ryan
McClenaghan

19th & 26th Laverne Gordon Michelle Rogan / Carol Conn Sian McKnight

March

4th & 11th Claire McDowell Lauren McClintock / Pamela Wilson Emma
Patterson

18th Claire McDowell Jack Patterson / Pamela Wilson Kerry
McClenaghan

25th Claire McDowell Laura Patterson / Pamela Wilson Kerry

April

1st Lynsey Foster Jack Patterson / Tom McKnight Ethan McKnight


Herald £10 **ReachOut** £8
(Home/Irish Mission)

Anyone wishing to place an order for the above magazines of our Church, should give their name and money to Mrs Orvil Cree before the end of December. Both these magazines continue to be a source of blessing and encouragement to those who read them, giving lots of information on the home and overseas work of our Presbyterian Church. It is important to renew your order each year as orders are not normally carried over from year to year.

ROOF REPAIRS UPDATE

As reported in the last issue of 'The Link', Gary McKibben Preservation was the appointed contractor to carry out dry rot treatment to the Church roof timbers including replacement where necessary. The works required the replacement of two window frames in the gallery and some additional lead work to the exterior of the roof and the servicing of all rainwater goods. The work is almost complete and necessitated the removal of plasterwork in the gallery which has now been reinstated. The redecoration of the gallery area is now in hand. It is expected that all contractors will be offsite by the end of November. Final costs will be reported in the next issue of 'The Link' but your continued financial support is much appreciated and very necessary if we are to meet our anticipated expenditure.

Roy Baxter (Property Convener)

THE BIBLE v THE MOBILE PHONE

Ever wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our mobile phone?

What if we carried it around in our handbags or pockets?

What if we flipped through it several times a day?

What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?

What if we used it to receive messages from the text?

What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?

What if we gave it to our Kids as gifts?

What if we used it when we travelled?

What if we used it in cases of emergency?

This is something to make you go 'hmm...where is my Bible?'

Oh, and one more thing.

Unlike our mobile phone, we don't have to worry about our Bible being disconnected because Jesus has already paid the bill.

Makes you stop and think 'where are my priorities?' And no missed calls!

When Jesus died on the cross, he was thinking of you!

**WISHING YOU ALL A VERY
HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND
GOD'S RICHEST BLESSING
THROUGHOUT THE NEW
YEAR 2012**



A BIBLE READING PLAN FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

This reading plan is prepared by the International Bible Reading Association (IBRA), publishers of 'Light for our Path' and 'Words for Today' study notes.

FACES OF THE DIVINE

1. Creating God

Text for the week: Genesis 1:1, 10

1 January : Genesis 1:1-19

2 January : Numbers 6:22-27

3 January : Isaiah 65:17-25

4 January : Psalm 104:24-35

5 January : Genesis 9:1-15

6 January : Isaiah 40:1-5

7 January : Genesis 2:1-3

2. Divine lover

Text for the week: Psalm 27:13

8 January : Exodus 3:13-17

9 January : Exodus 20:1-6

10 January : Luke 17:11-19

11 January : Psalm 121

12 January : Psalm 77:11-20

13 January : Psalm 27:7-14

14 January : Acts 10:23-35

3. Incarnating saviour

Text for the week: John 10:10

15 January : John 3:16-21

16 January : Philippians 2:5-11

17 January : John 10:1-10

18 January : Matthew 17:1-8

19 January : Ephesians 2:11-22

20 January : 1 John 4:7-12

21 January : Mark 12:28-34

4. Faithful companion

Text for the week: Psalm 11:7

22 January : Jeremiah 31:10-17

23 January : Romans 8:18-27

24 January : Luke 2:1-7

25 January : Amos 5 :11-15

26 January : Habakkuk : 1:1-6

27 January : Psalm 11

28 January : Acts 2:14-24

5. Inviting host

Text for the week: Philippians 4:7

29 January : John 1:35-39

30 January : Job 28:12-28

31 January : Exodus 16:1-16

1 February : Psalm 23

2 February : Matthew 14:13-21

3 February : Philippians 4:1-7

4 February : 2 Corinthians 3:1-6

READINGS IN MARK (1)

Jesus: teacher & healer 1

Text for the week: Mark 1:35

5 February : Mark 1:29-39

6 February : Mark 4:1-20

7 February : Mark 4:21-25

8 February : Mark 4:26 -32

9 February : Mark 5:1-20

10 February : Mark 5:21-34

11 February : Mark 5:35-42

Jesus : teacher & healer 2

Text for the week: Mark 7:20

12 February : Mark 1:40-45

13 February : Mark 7:1-8

14 February : Mark 7:9-13

15 February : Mark 7:14-23

16 February : Mark 7:24-30

17 February : Mark 8:22-26

18 February : Mark 10:46-52

19 February ; Mark 9:2-9

20 February : Mark 9:30-37

21 February : Mark 10:32-34

TREES

Trees in the Old Testament 1

Text for the week: Leviticus 27:30

22 February : Genesis 1:26-31

23 February : Genesis 18:1-8

24 February : Leviticus 27:30-33

25 February : Deuteronomy 8:1-10

Trees in the Old Testament 2

Text for the week: Psalm 92:12

26 Feb. : Deuteronomy 20:19-20

27 Feb. : Deuteronomy 24:19-22

28 February : Judges 9:8-15

29 February : 1 Kings 19:1-8

1 March : Psalm 1:1-6

2 March : Psalm 92:12-15

3 March : Psalm 104:10-18

Trees in the Old Testament 3

Text for the week: Isaiah 55:12

4 March : Isaiah 10:33-11:3

5 March : Isaiah 41:17-20

6 March : Isaiah 44:13-20

7 March : Isaiah 55:6-13

8 March : Jeremiah 11:14-20

9 March : Ezekiel 31:1-12

10 March : Ezekiel 47:7-12

Trees in the Old Testament 4

Text for the week: Hosea 14:4-6

11 March : Daniel 4:10-17

12 March : Daniel 4:18-27

13 March : Hosea 14:4-9

14 March : Joel 1:1-12

15 March : Micah 4:1-5

16 March : Jonah 3:10- 4:11

17 March : Habakkuk 3:16-19

5. Trees in the New Testament

Text for the week: Matthew 13:31-32

18 March : Matthew 7:15-20

19 March : Matthew 13:31-32

20 March : Matthew 21:18-22

21 March : Luke 19:1-10

22 March : John 1:43-51

23 March : Romans 11:17-24

24 March : Revelation 22:1-7

6. The tree of shame is made the tree of glory

Text for the week: Genesis 2:9

25 March : Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-17

26 March : Genesis 3:1-13

27 March : Genesis 3:22-24

28 March : Galatians 3:6-14

29 March : 1 Peter 2:18-25

30 March : Song of Solomon 2:1-7

31 March : Matthew 21:1-11

READINGS IN MARK (2)

Text for the week: Mark 15:39

1 April : Mark 14:17-31

2 April : Mark 14:32-52

3 April : Mark 14:53-72

4 April : Mark 15:1-15

5 April : Mark 15:16-24

6 April : Mark 15:25-39

7 April : Mark 15:40-47

BOYS' BRIGADE

Christmas Holidays. Junior Section - Friday 23rd and Friday 30th December. Anchor and Company Sections - Monday 26th December and Monday 2nd January 2012.

Annual Parents' and Friends Night - Saturday 24th March 2012 in the Brann Memorial Hall at 7.00p.m.

Jennifer Dickey



GOD'S WHISPERS

The man whispered, "God, speak to me" and a meadowlark sang.
But the man did not hear.

So the man yelled, "God, speak to me" and the thunder rolled across the sky.
But the man did not listen.

The man looked around and said, "God let me see you." And a star shone brightly.
But the man did not see.

And the man shouted, "God show me a miracle." And a life was born.
But the man did not notice.

So the man cried out in despair, "Touch me God, and let me know you are here."
Whereupon, God reached down and touched the man. But the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.

I found this to be a great reminder that God is always around us in the little and simple things that we take for granted ... even in our electronic age.
So I would like to add one more:

The man cried, "God, I need your help!" And an e-mail arrived reaching out with good news and encouragement.
But, the man deleted it and continued crying .

Don't miss out on a blessing because it isn't packaged the way that you expect.

Submitted by Susan Drummond

This brings to mind that passage in 1 Kings chapter 19 verses 11- 13a :
‘The Lord said (to Elijah), “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”’

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.’

May you always be mindful to listen out for that still small voice of calm.

Editor

CRECHE ROTA

Thanks to Jean Currie for all her work over the past number of years in the Crèche. As you have probably realised over the last while we have made a few changes to the Crèche so that pre-school children can have a time to learn about Jesus in a fun and interesting way they can understand. They also spend time doing some cutting & gluing or colouring in which they can take home to share with you. We trust this has been a beneficial change for the children and we would appreciate feedback from you in relation to this.

I thank all those who volunteer on a regular basis to cover the crèche rota and would welcome anyone who would be keen to join us to speak to me at any time. The rota from now until Easter is detailed below and as you can see there are still some spaces. If you can help out on any of the dates please speak to me or place your name on the rota which is on the wall in the crèche room upstairs in the vestibule. If any date doesn't suit anyone please either swap with someone or let me know. Thanks.

Claire McDowell (93322578)

Date	Babies/Toddlers Age 0-2	Toddlers/Nursery age children/Age 2-4		
	Leader	Helper (optional)	Leader	Helper

December

11th	Pauline Watt		Amanda Shaw	Laura Patterson
18th	Nativity Play - No Creche - Toys available			
25th	Christmas Day - No Creche or Children's Church - Toys available			

January

1st	New Year's Day - Creche & Children's Church all together in the Patterson Room			
8th	Irene Downey	Jack Patterson	Heather Patterson	Lucy Bell
15th	Pauline Watt	Jack Patterson	Heather Patterson	Lucy Bell
22nd	Helen McKnight	Rachel Foster	Victoria McKnight	Sian McKnight
29th	Helen McKnight	Rachel Foster	Victoria McKnight	Sian McKnight

February

5th	Claire McConnell		Pamela Wilson	Lauren McClintock
12th	Pauline Watt		Claire McDowell	
19th (HT)	Jacqui Coulter		Claire McDowell	
26th	Jacqui Coulter		Arlene Boyd	

March

4th	Claire McConnell	Laura Patterson	Amanda Shaw	Jack Patterson
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Welcome to this the final Issue of 'The Link' for 2011, as we look forward to Christmas and to the start of yet another year and a leap year at that! This year, 2011, has been one of ups and downs. The state of our economy and that of



of many other countries has been and continues to be a matter of concern with continued talk of austerity measures, cutbacks and ever rising prices of basic essentials. Perhaps, as some economists have put it, we are now paying the price as a country and individuals, of living beyond our means. Perhaps we can take some comfort from the fact that we are still much better off than well over half of the world's population but regrettably those less well off are mostly getting even less well off due to a seeming increase in natural disasters, cuts in aid and the likes of you and me donating less to aid agencies! Even Jesus acknowledged in Matthew 26 that we will always have the poor with us and perhaps he is testing our love for him - 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did (or did not do) for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did (or did not do) for me.' (Matthew 25).

There were plenty of bright spots however during the year, including the Royal Wedding at the end of April and, for many Presbyterians, the final settlement of the long running Presbyterian Mutual saga.

As we remember the coming of the Christ child into the world, and the reason for his coming, let us all give thanks to God and, like the Wise Men, bow down and worship him for he is our God and loving Heavenly Father. The image of the stable and the Wise Men brings to mind another image, that of Holman Hunt's great masterpiece entitled 'I Am the Light of the World' painted between 1851-1853. The painter depicts Jesus standing at a weed bedecked door knocking but there is no handle - the door can only be opened from the inside. Is he knocking at the door of your heart? Are the weeds of neglect and lack of interest keeping you from opening that door or will you open the door and welcome him in. The choice is yours, with eternal consequences!

Sam Waugh

If you have any comments or material for inclusion, contact Sam Waugh (Editor) by
Email: thelink@firstballyeaston.org

Post: 4 Collin View, Ballyclare BT39 9AR
Telephone: (028) 9332 3708





**THE PRESBYTERIAN
ORPHAN & CHILDREN'S
SOCIETY**
.....

The amount raised from the 2011 Annual Appeal for the Society is £1,060 as of the 13th November. This excludes any Gift Aid. A sincere 'thank you' to all who have contributed so generously. Last year's total was £1,246.68, including Gift Aid.

For Your Diary *Continued*

FEBRUARY

- Wednesday, 8th 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
 Thurs. 9th 7.30-9.30p.m. Presby. Marriage Preparation Classes, High St. Antrim
 Sunday, 12th 11.30a.m. Morning Worship
 Wednesday, 15th 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
 Thursday. 16th 8.00p.m. Kirk Session Meeting, MacConnell Hall
 7.30-9.30p.m. Presby. Marriage Preparation Classes, High St. Antrim
 Sunday, 19th 11.30a.m. Morning Worship
 7.00p.m. Evening Service in 2nd Ballyeaston
 Wednesday, 22nd 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
 Sunday, 26th 11.30a.m. Morning Worship
 Wednesday, 29th 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall

MARCH

- Friday, 2nd 7.45p.m. Women's World Day of Prayer Service
 Sunday, 4th 11.30a.m. Morning Worship 7.00p.m. Evening Service
 Wednesday, 7th 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
 Sunday, 11th 11.30a.m. Morning Worship
 Tuesday, 13th 8.00pm Annual Cong. Meeting & Meeting of Church Comm.
 Wednesday, 14th 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
 Thursday, 15th 8.00p.m. Kirk Session Meeting, MacConnell Hall
 Sunday, 18th 11.30a.m. Morning Worship
 7.00p.m. Board of Mission event, Muckamore Pres. Church
 Wednesday, 21st 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
 Saturday, 24th 7.00p.m. BB Parents' & Friends Night, Brann Memorial Hall
 Sunday, 25th 11.30a.m. Morning Worship (**Start of EST - clocks forward**)
 Wednesday, 28th 8.00p.m. Presby. Divine Healing Service, Templepatrick P.C.
 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
 Friday, 30th GB Display in Ballyclare Secondary School

APRIL

- Sunday, 1st 11.30a.m. P.W. Morning Service, speaker Doreen Draffin
 7.30p.m. Annual P.W. Evening of Praise - The Police M.V. Choir
 Sunday 8th 11.30a.m. Easter Sunday Morning Worship
 Sunday 15th 7.00p.m. Service for the Farming Community - 2nd Ballyeaston

For Your Diary



DECEMBER 2011

- Saturday, 3rd 2.00p.m. PW Group Christmas Fun Day & Sale in Church Halls
Sunday, 4th 11.30a.m. Gift Day Service (Evening Service next week)
Wednesday, 7th 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
Thursday, 8th 8.00p.m. Kirk Session Meeting, MacConnell Hall
8.00p.m. Choir Practice - Church
Sunday, 11th 11.30a.m. Morning Worship - Focus on World Development
7.00p.m. **Service of Lessons & Carols in Church followed by tea, mince pies, etc. in Galbraith Hall**
Wednesday, 14th 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
Saturday, 17th Sunday School Parties-Primary 3-5pm ; Seniors 7.30-9.30pm
Sunday, 18th 11.30a.m. **Family Service** incl. Nativity Play by Sunday School
7.00p.m. Carols by Candlelight Service - 2nd Ballyeaston
Saturday, 24th 11.30p.m. Service of Reflections for Christmas Eve - 2nd B' easton
Sunday, 25th **10.30a.m. Christmas Day Service for all the family**
(The Church's Accounts for 2011 close at the end of December. All contributions to be credited in 2011 Annual Report should be with the Treasurer by Sunday 25th December. Any contributions from Organisations should be received before 25th.)

JANUARY 2012

- Sunday, 1st 11.30a.m. Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (**No Sunday School**)
(Organisations are reminded to submit their books and accounts for audit to the Assistant Treasurer, John Waugh, by next Sunday, 8th, at latest.)
Sunday, 8th 10.30a.m. Sunday School resumes
11.30a.m. Morning Worship
Wednesday, 11th 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
Thursday, 12th 8.00p.m. Kirk Session Meeting, MacConnell Hall
Sunday, 15th 11.30a.m. Morning Worship
7.00p.m. Communion Service, 2nd Ballyeaston
Tuesday, 17th 8.00p.m. Meeting of Church Committee, MacConnell Hall
Wednesday, 18th 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
Sunday, 22nd 11.30a.m. Morning Worship
Wednesday, 25th 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
8.00p.m. Presby. Divine Healing Service, 2nd Randalstown P.C.
Sunday, 29th 11.30a.m. Morning Worship
3.00p.m. Enquiry Classes commence at the Manse

FEBRUARY

- Wednesday, 1st 8.00p.m. Midweek Prayer & Bible Study, MacConnell Hall
Thurs. 2nd 7.30-9.30p.m. Presby. Marriage Preparation Classes, High St. Antrim
Sunday, 5th 11.30a.m. Morning Worship 7.00p.m. Evening Service