

1st Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church

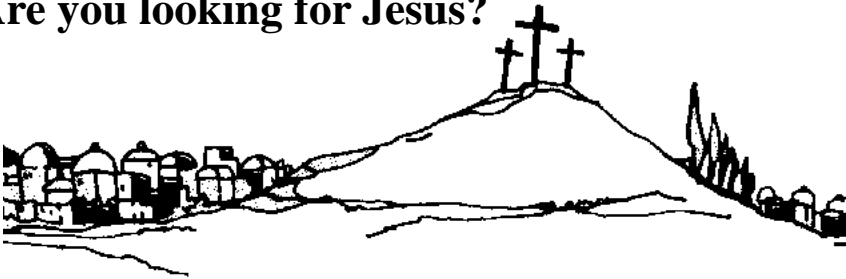


The Link Magazine

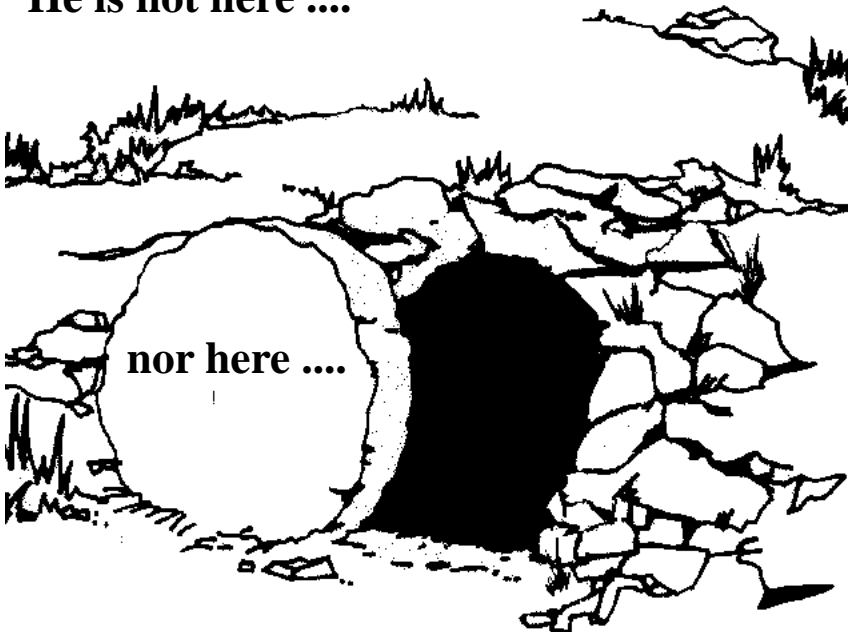
Vol. 18 No. 3

March 2009

Are you looking for Jesus?



He is not here



for behold He stands among us in all His risen
power. Seek Him now while He is near.

The Manse
Ballyeaston

March 2009

Dear friends,

It is difficult for us to imagine what it must have been like for the disciples after Jesus' crucifixion. They must have been completely demoralised. They had left jobs and even families to follow Jesus Christ, and now he is dead. Yes Jesus had said that he wouldn't always be with them, but nothing could have prepared the disciples for the events of that first Good Friday.

However, after Jesus rises from the dead, the disciples would have moved from feelings of complete devastation to that of sheer exhilaration. As everything that Jesus had predicted came true, we can imagine the disciples being filled with new hope and invincible faith. In one weekend they would have experienced every human emotion that is possible to experience.

In three days the disciples move from the depths of despair to the heights of excitement, and within a short time span we too can go through some of the highs and lows in life. We can experience the joy of achievement, the happiness of family life, the fulfilment of work and the satisfaction of using our ability, but along with these we can also know the pain of bereavement, the anxiety of sickness and the stress of personal difficulties.

Yet in all circumstances it is possible for us to possess by faith the wonderful hope the disciples must have known on that first Easter Day. Through his death and resurrection Jesus has secured this eternal hope for us. It is not 'a pie in the sky' hope, but rather the secure hope of forgiveness, salvation and knowing God is at work.

This Easter I pray that we won't just remember but that, through faith, the hope of Jesus Christ will be a living reality in our lives. The miracle of this hope is that, just like manna from heaven, we can experience its resurrection in our hearts day after day. Only this hope has the power to motivate us and keep us following Jesus Christ.

Like David in Psalm 62, may we too be able to say, "Find rest, O my

soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I shall not be shaken”.

Wishing you the hope of Christ at Easter time.
Your friend and minister,

Eddie McDowell

PRESBYTERIAN ORPHAN & CHILDREN'S SOCIETY SAYS THANKS

Reproduced on page 22 is a letter I received from Paul Gray, Secretary of the Society. As you will see the Society was thrilled with the sum of £1195.56 which our congregation gave towards their work. I would like to endorse what Paul has said and thank you so much for your generosity and support.



The challenge given out in the September issue of 'The Link' was, "Would you like to change a child or a young person's life?" Your contributions will go a long way to achieving this.

Many thanks.

Jean Woodside

EASTER SERVICES

In addition to our normal Easter Sunday Morning Service at 11.30am we will be holding a special service to mark Good Friday (10th April) at 8.00pm in the church. It is hoped that you will make an effort to be present as we remember those events leading up to Christ's death on the cross and of course his resurrection on Easter morning.

***A COFFEE MORNING AND CAR BOOT SALE
will be held in the Lecture Hall / Hall Car Park
on Saturday 28th March 2009 from 10.00am to 1.00pm.
There will be something for everyone, including a cake stall,
a nearly new (or new) stall and more, plus all those
'car boots' to plunder for bargains.
Admission: Cars £5 Coffee £3. Everyone welcome.***

CHURCH RECORD

BAPTISMS

JAKE JAMES, son of Lyndsey Woodside, 26 Rathmena Avenue,



DEATHS

16th January, Mrs Jean Shaw, 21 Victoria Manor;

26th January, Mrs Sadie Stewart, Rathmena Care Home and formerly of Ballycorr Road;

1st February, Mrs Elizabeth (Lil) Smyth, Rathmena Care Home and formerly 15 Toberdowney Bungalows, Ballynure.



NEW FAMILIES

Cecil and Sally McCrea of Kilbride Road, Doagh

(All addresses are Ballyclare unless otherwise stated)



GIRLS' BRIGADE

Yet again we are fast approaching the end of another busy GB year. Preparations are now well under way for the annual Display after completing various types of badgework over the last few months.



Once again could I take this opportunity on behalf of the Captain and Officers to thank everyone who has been involved in helping out during Girls' Brigade this year, your assistance was greatly appreciated. A big thank you to all involved in organising events for the girls. It does take a lot of time and preparation to be able to complete badgework including scripture, crafts, flower arranging, first aid and all the other various activities which the girls get the opportunity to experience. The girls also took part in the District Scripture Quiz held in 1st Larne in February and they did very well on this occasion.

As already mentioned we are fast approaching the Display, which is being held on Friday 3rd April at 7.00pm in the Secondary School. The rehearsal night will be on Monday 30th March in the School with each Section meeting in the school as follows;-

Toddlers 6.30 – 7.00pm

Explorers 7.00 – 8.00pm

Juniors 8.00 – 9.00pm

Seniors and Brigaders 9.00 – 9.45pm.

Tickets will be sold in the normal way, i.e. 2 tickets per family, priced at - Adults - £3.00, Children - £1.50.

Please note the following:-

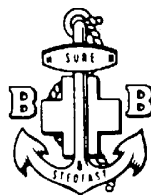
The Annual District Parade is being hosted by Woodlands, Carrick on Sunday 5th April. All girls in the Company Section will be given details closer to the time. We would ask for a full turnout on this occasion.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the Display and also to enjoying our well-earned summer break and we hope to see all the girls back in September for the new session.

Lindsay Arthur

THE BOYS' BRIGADE

It is hard to believe that the end of another B.B. year is fast approaching. In December the Anchor Boys and Junior Section attended the Annual Battalion Carol Service in Holy Trinity Church, Carrickfergus. The Junior Section football team were 3rd in the area competition. Congratulations to the Junior Section uni-hoc team who were runners-up in the Battalion competition.



Preparations are now well under way for the Parents' and Friends Evening which is to be held on Saturday 28th March at 7.00p.m. in the Brann Hall, when it is hoped there will be a good turn-out of parents and friends.

Jennifer Dickey

BOWLING CLUB

The Indoor Bowling season is once again coming to an end. This season the club has not had the best of luck and has lost some games by a matter of a couple of shots. As a result the club is lying in the bottom half of the East Antrim League. With four league games left to play and improved results, the club could finish in the top half of the League.



This season the club has played four younger members in most of the games. They range in age from eleven years to thirteen years and as the season has gone on they have all shown great improvement in their play. Maybe next season with more practice, the team will once again be challenging for the higher league positions, but, whatever the results, the club members still enjoy playing bowls.

Christopher Craig

HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB

Hi Folks,

I have been enjoying my time in 1st Ballyeaston and wish to thank you all for your warmth and hospitality. My time in 1st Ballyeaston is about to come to an end, but you haven't quite seen the back of me yet!! 1st Ballyeaston are going to run a Holiday Bible Club from **Wednesday 1st-Friday 3rd July** with a Family BBQ on the Saturday and a Family Service on the Sunday.

The Club will take the form of Bible stories, games, quizzes, singing, juice and biscuits and other fun things. There will be lots of opportunities to get involved behind the scenes and on the week itself, so don't book your summer holidays that week!! We need men, women, children...young and old!! We need people of all talents, people who can play piano to those who can play the spoons... people who like to act the eejit and those of you who are serious... people who can make a good drink of juice and those who can act as crowd control! No matter what gifts and talents you have... we can use them!!

As I am involved in leading another team I will use the same theme that we intend to use there, but as that hasn't been decided yet I can't let you know what that is. An example of one I have used in the past is Pyramid Rock on the life of Joseph and there was an Egyptian theme, so the hall was decorated with pyramids and palm trees. This year's new programmes aren't out yet, but when they are and we have decided, we can let you all know.

At this stage I would ask you to pray for the work of the club. That God would see fit to use us for the advancement of his Kingdom. That boys and girls will come along and that the congregation itself will be built up and encouraged. Also, it is very nice to be asked to be involved in the work and witness of the congregation, and I personally am looking forward to see you all uplift the gospel banner high.

Remember the words of the Psalmist.. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day! That's the work we are involved in!

Any questions or ideas please don't keep them to yourself!

Thanks and every blessing.

Scott Moore - Club Co-ordinator

LORD, TEACH ME TO PRAY!

“I have a confession to make.

Are you ready?

Here it is:-

I don't know how to pray !



I've learned some things from wise people and good books but the fact that I have learned this stuff and still don't know how to pray makes me feel useless. When it comes to prayer I'm like a beggar telling another beggar where to find bread when I myself don't have any bread to offer”.

These are the words of a second year Master of Divinity student at Princeton Theological College and it shows that while for some prayer comes easily, many people - even theology students - have difficulty. I'm sure that most of us at some time have been tempted to skip our prayer time because we were too busy or not in the 'right frame of mind', even though we know it is such an important and fundamental part of our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

In her book “Lord Teach Me To Pray in 28 Days” Kay Arthur says, “Where we should be strongest, we're the weakest”. And she asks the question, “is this why so many who profess Christ live such impotent and ordinary lives?”. It has been said that Christianity is not a religion, it's a relationship. Now we know the one thing that is absolutely essential in a relationship is communication. It follows therefore that prayer is necessary for the Christian because it is through prayer that you and I communicate with our Heavenly Father. There are countless decisions to be made, wisdom to be sought, resources that are needed, transgressions to be mended, love and appreciation to be communicated. Some time ago an advertising campaign had the strapline, “it's good to talk”. Well if it's good to talk to our friends and family, how much more important is it to talk to God and it should come as no surprise that in the Bible we are told to pray without ceasing.

Why don't we pray more often?

“I'm too busy”, “I don't know what to say”, “I'm not worthy”, “I don't know how”. Any or all of these could be our reason but no matter what we say, our predicament is basically the same - we do not fully appreciate the importance and power of prayer. Prayer should be as important as the steering wheel on

your car and yet in many cases it is more like the spare tyreseldom used except when something goes flat.

If you are reading this, the chances are that you have read some of the previous Link articles on the subject of prayer, maybe going back to those written by the late Bobbie McCaw. Bobbie challenged us to pray regularly for the Minister and Kirk Session as well as the various organisations and their leaders and he was a faithful and devoted 'prayer warrior'. Wouldn't it be a fitting tribute to him if every one of us in the congregation became faithful in prayer for our leadership, our children and young people, the sick and housebound, the elderly? And wouldn't it be great if there was an increase in the number of members attending the Mid-Week and the Sunday morning Prayer Meeting, to join with their brothers and sisters in this church family for prayer.

I would recommend the book by Kay Arthur I referred to earlier, as a good Bible based, practical and easy to follow guide that I have found helpful. It will help you to know how to pray, what to pray and what to expect when we pray.

I have found that writing this article has challenged me to look at my own prayer life and I hope it will also be a challenge to anyone reading it - if we are followers of Christ then we should have a hunger and thirst for the things of God:

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” Matthew 5:6

“As the deer pants for the waterbrook, so my soul pants for You, O God.” Psalm 42:1

“O God, earnestly I seek You. My soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”
Psalm 63:1

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord.”
Philippians 3:8

Of course there are many times when we don't feel like praying, when we can't think what to say to God or how to get started. Here is a basic guide that

may be of some help to you in your prayer life:

o Praise God: Praise sets the tone and reminds you who God really is. Try looking at some of the Psalms and reading them out loud to get you started. (Try, for example, Psalm 8; Psalm 19; Psalm 148.)

o Confession: A good relationship strengthens with honesty. No sane doctor would offer a cure without hearing what hurts. Admitting your faults promotes spiritual healing.

o Listen: Sometimes it's easier to talk than to really listen. Easy, but not smart. Quiet times are often where you will find direction. Listening allows God to speak to your soul.

o Ask for Help: This part becomes more meaningful when you take the time to praise, confess and listen. This is when you literally learn to stop worrying and start praying.

o Give Thanks: Sometimes this step will not be easy; but giving thanks recognises that God is looking out for you and has your best interest at heart. You are saying, "I trust you".

Think about it. You have a unique opportunity to be in a relationship with God: One that can make a real difference in your life and the life of anyone who comes in contact with you. So, what are you waiting for? And what about God? Maybe He's been waiting patiently for you for a long, long time.

Robert Woodside

FLOWER ROTA 2009

April 5th Mrs R Patterson

April 12th Mrs M Strain

April 19th Mrs H McAuley

April 26th Mrs B Irvine

May 3rd Miss W Todd

May 10th Mrs J McKeown

May 17th Mrs M Houston

May 24th Mrs M Boyd

May 31st Mrs O Cree



June 7th Mrs N Millar

June 14th Mrs L Gordon

June 21st Mrs M Waugh

June 28th Mrs C McDowell

July 5th Mrs H Patterson

July 12th Mrs S Drummond

July 19th Mrs D Agnew

July 26th Mrs V Baxter

Sept 6th Mrs M Davis

As a congregation I am sure we all appreciate having flowers in the church each Sunday and we would thank all those involved in providing and so tastefully arranging them Sunday by Sunday.

Editor

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS (POCVA)

POCVA checking

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) is registered with 'Access Northern Ireland' in order to facilitate POCVA checking. This is now carried out by using 'Disclosure Forms' and, with effect from February 2008, superseded the original approach to vetting. Access Northern Ireland was established jointly by government and the PSNI to make the process of child protection vetting more efficient and also more effective in protecting the children and young people in our care.

There are 3 main stages in the POCVA checking process: Identification Verification; a Disclosure Form and a Disclosure Certificate. It is PCI policy to check only new leaders (i.e those appointed since 2005) and also all Leaders in Charge, regardless of whether they have been appointed since 2005 or not.

To that end I will be contacting all organisation leaders within First Ballyeaston throughout March 2009 to talk about the POCVA process. Those who are required to be checked by Access NI will then be required to complete an 'Application Form for Leaders'.

With regard to 'identification verification' formal identity checks are required as part of the process so please do not be surprised to be asked to show your passport, driving licence, etc. Thankfully, the Taking Care Office has supplied clear guidance on how to complete the forms and what is required from leaders. Prior to the Application Forms being submitted to Church House, Reverend McDowell and I will meet with leaders to go through PCI Child Protection guidelines. This is the penultimate part of the process.

The final stage is the Disclosure Certificate - once leaders have been checked by Access NI they will receive a Disclosure Certificate indicating their status.

Leaders within our congregation who were checked under the original vetting procedures (pre 2005) do not need to be checked again. However, it is expected that most of our leaders will need to be processed under the current arrangements. There will be no direct financial charge for Disclosure.

We are fortunate to have guidance and support from the team at the Taking Care Office at Church House. The Taking Care website contains a host of invaluable information for leaders, parents and carers in relation to working with children and young adults. The site also contains very useful links to other sources of information in this area; www.presbyterianireland.org/takingcare

Another important organisation is the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). Part of the UK policing structure, CEOP is dedicated to eradicating the sexual abuse of children. PCI has worked with CEOP to provide training to congregational designated officers and I would encourage you to check out their website www.ceop.gov.uk

Should any of you have any queries in respect of POCVA please contact me on 02893 323565.

Adèle Davidson
Designated Officer



CHILDREN'S CHURCH ROTA

22nd March	Lynsey Foster	Martha McClenaghan
29th March	Laverne Gordon	Liz Agnew
5th April	Laverne Gordon	Liz Agnew
12th April	Sharon McConnell	Claire McDowell
19th April	Sharon McConnell	Claire McDowell
26th April	Sandra Agnew	Irene Downey
3rd May	Sandra Agnew	Irene Downey
10th May	Sharon Bell	Claire McConnell
17th May	Sharon Bell	Claire McConnell
24th May	Carol Conn	Heather Patterson
31st May	Carol Conn	Heather Patterson
7th June	Thomas McKnight	Jean Currie
14th June	Young People's Day	
21st June	Thomas McKnight	Jean Currie
28th June	Claire McConnell	Heather Patterson

More volunteers would be really helpful. If you feel you can help for 2 weeks once or twice a year please speak to Heather Patterson or Robert Woodside.



March

	Leaders	Helpers
22nd	Claire McConnell Arlene Boyd	Megan McAuley
29th	Martha McClenaghan Rachel Baxter	Sarah Faulkner

April

5th	Pauline Watt Pamela Wilson	Claudia Kirk
12th	Claire McConnell Irene Downey	Lauren McClintock
19th	Jacqui Coulter Helen McAuley	Sian Agnew
26th	Sharon McConnell Claire McDowell	Danielle McClenaghan

May

3rd	Amanda Shaw Jean Currie	Melanie McAuley
10th	Martha McClenaghan Arlene Boyd	Finlay McConnell
17th	Pamela Wilson Sharon McConnell	Emma Patterson
24th	Irene Downey Jacqui Coulter	Megan McAuley
31st	Helen McAuley Claire McConnell	Lauren McClintock

June

7th	Claire McDowell Amanda Shaw	Sarah Faulkner
14th	Arlene Boyd Pauline Watt	Claudia Kirk
21st	Heather Patterson Martha McClenaghan	Sian Agnew
28th	Jean Currie Rachel Baxter	Danielle McClenaghan

The creche for pre-school children is held in the Patterson room, on the upper floor of the vestibule, throughout the service each Sunday. Creche is now very well equipped. If anyone wishes to warm a bottle, a microwave is available, provided by the closure of the Tuesday Club account. This has been gratefully received, as has the television with DVD player purchased for use by creche from the Children’s Church “5p collection”. If anyone has suitable DVDs these would now be useful. A number of toys and some items of baby equipment have been donated recently and are being well used each Sunday by the babies and children who have been coming along. The provision of a creche is made possible by the contribution of all the volunteers on the rota and this is much appreciated by parents. If anyone would like the opportunity to come and help some Sunday, to see if you would enjoy being part of the team, please speak to me. If anyone on the rota finds that a date does not suit, please either try to swap or contact me on 93352440. Thank you.

Jean Currie

ARE YOU TYPE 'A' OR TYPE 'B'?

Today is the day.....It's food shopping day...what does it mean for you?

Type A: - For the last 2 evenings you have been deliberating over what delicious, healthy meals you can prepare for your nearest and dearest in the week ahead.

You are super organised and have a list fully prepared of all the ingredients needed to follow those tried and tested recipes and of course your usual two new recipes per week.

You do enjoy entertaining and are very relaxed at hosting dinner parties for 10 or 12 people, in fact you much prefer it when the house is full to bursting.

Type B: - Here we go again....once more unto the breach...Lets see.. I know the basics...bread (white only!) milk, beans, soup (tomato of course!) and lets not forget the vegetables... even if they do appear to only be for decoration (I do try !!)...and fruit.... well, better stick to grapes, apples and just for a change maybe bananas too.

Oh dear... I've just remembered we're supposed to be having 4 people for dinner.....whose idea was that?...Can we put them off?...not really ... I will have to look for some inspiration while whizzing my way round...Who am I kidding, I don't have time for that.... I just need something that looks and tastes homemade but takes the same amount of time to prepare as frozen fish and chips !!!...

With this in mind here are 2 recipes to follow for an Easter meal:

Main course: Roasted Lamb with Garlic and Rosemary

Dessert: Lemon Meringue pie

(For those type Bs, skip the next page....)

Type A

Roasted Lamb with Garlic and Rosemary

Serves 6-8

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1 Leg of Lamb (c.4lb) | 3 large cloves garlic, peeled and thinly sliced lengthways |
| 1 small onion, peeled | 2 large stems rosemary, cut into 24 small sprigs |

- o Preheat oven to gas mark 5, 190°C, 375 °F.

case and leave to go cold.

Meringue: 2 egg whites 4oz (100g) Caster sugar

Place egg whites in a large bowl and whisk into stiff peaks. Gradually whisk in the sugar, a spoonful at a time, to make a stiff glossy meringue. Spoon it on top of the tart and spread it out, making a good seal with pastry edge. Bake for 15 minutes until lightly browned.

Especially for those of you who are **Type B**

Roasted Lamb with Garlic & Rosemary

- o Talk to your friendly butcher...nicely...as he may have a leg of lamb which he could season for you OR
- o Head to the refrigerator in the local supermarket where you can get a leg of lamb, boned, rolled and seasoned with Garlic & Rosemary.

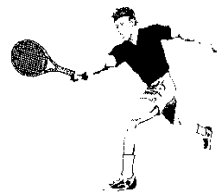
Lemon Meringue

o Head to the baking aisle of your local supermarket where you will find meringue nests (allow 2 per person). Beside this you should also find ready made fillings for lemon meringue or tarte au citron, which can be poured into the meringue nests. Top with cream from fridge and after taking your frustration out on the nearest bar of chocolate i.e. flake, sprinkle it over the top or use a packet of mini eggs placing a few on the top..your kids'll love you forever !!!!!!!!!!!!!

Claire McDowell

BADMINTON CLUB

The Badminton Club meets on Tuesday evenings from 7.30 -9.30pm approximately, so if you would like to come along and have a game, you will be made very welcome. For further information speak to Doreen Elliott, Florence Norris, Helen Faulkner or myself.



Malcolm Downey

One beautiful Sunday morning, the minister announced to his congregation: "My good people, I have here in my hands three sermons...a £100 sermon that lasts five minutes, a £50 sermon that lasts fifteen minutes, and a £10 sermon that lasts a full hour.

"Now, we'll take up the collection and see which one I'll deliver."

THANK YOU!

A really big thank you to all those who came to the meeting on 29th January in connection with the members' survey conducted at the end of 2008. The results were explained, with the help of Chris Hollies from Evangelical Ministries who had provided the survey forms. It was clear that there are areas where First Ballyeaston is strong, and - yes - other areas where there is plenty of room for improvement.

But, possibly more important was the discussion that followed and the opportunity to hear members' views on relationships and worship in First Ballyeaston, and on how people would like to see God work in our church and in their lives. Thanks to all who took part for your interest, suggestions and encouragement.

Where Now?

Well, at the end of the evening we had a lengthy list of comments and suggestions, which have given the Kirk Session plenty to think about. Some ideas were very radical - others were very practical ! We cannot follow up on every suggestion - but we are making good progress on some. There was a strong view that we needed more opportunities for fellowship; that we should encourage our young people; that we needed more for men in the church; and that we need to learn more about our faith and put it into practice. So here are a few things that we have planned:

Bread & Cheese Lunch - On **Sunday 24 May** David Farrow the Director of Thompson House in Belfast will be the guest speaker at our morning service. Thompson House is run by the Presbyterian Church and offers hostel and bed-sit accommodation to men when they are leaving prison. There will be a Bread and Cheese Lunch after the service and the funds raised will help contribute to the work of Thompson House.

Men's Breakfast - In what will certainly be an interesting morning, Roy Walker, the manager of Ballymena United, and former manager of several other Irish League clubs, will be the guest speaker at a men's breakfast. This will be at an away venue on **Saturday 30th May** - full details in due course.

Children's Bible Club - And, not forgetting the kids, there will be a Holiday Bible Club **at the start of July**, followed by a barbecue for all church members - see Scott's article on Page 6 for more details.

Alpha Course - Looking ahead to the **autumn**, we are planning to run an Alpha course. This course has been strongly recommended by other churches and will be a tremendous opportunity to learn more about the Christian faith.

Special Weekend of Services - And looking even further ahead, the new Moderator, **Stafford Carson from First Portadown**, is coming to speak on the **second weekend in February 2010**. Now the Sunday is St. Valentines Day - so there's no prizes for guessing what the theme will be !!

We need your help!

These are just some of our thoughts and plans - but we would like to do more and we need your help. At the meeting on 29 January there was desire to move forward as a congregation - building our fellowship and deepening our relationships with God and one another.

The Minister and the Kirk Session can do their bit - but they cannot do it all. Help is needed - for each of the above events, but especially the Children's Bible Club, the Bread and Cheese Lunch and barbecue - but also for the choir & music group, for the Sunday School, for visiting the ill or elderly; forand the list goes on.

Will you help? What is your talent - would you be willing to use it in your Church - to God's glory? Please tell us what you could do.
Thanks!

Euel Agnew

SENIOR MEMBERS' AFTERNOON

Arrangements for the Senior Members' Afternoon have not yet been finalised but what I can tell you at this stage is :

- o it will be on Saturday 20 th June 2009 commencing at 3.00pm;
- o it will be held in the MacConnell Hall;
- o there will be a programme followed by tea at around 5.00pm provided by our church Catering Group;
- o all senior and housebound members of the congregation are invited. If you do not feel up to sitting through the programme (whatever it may be) you can still come for your tea at 5.00pm;
- o invites confirming the details will be issued nearer the date through your District Elder.

Sam Waugh (Tel: 9332 3708)

**Christian
Aid Week**
10–16 May 09

Keeping hope alive: 'education for life'



Christian Aid/Hadi Brachar

Nadia Kabula (left) has completed a tailoring course with Christian Aid partner Humanité Nouvelle. She says it has given her 'education for life'

Eighteen-year-old Nadia Kabula's story is not an extraordinary one. For many people in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), life is a struggle.

Following ten years of conflict, malnourishment and preventable diseases still claim thousands of lives each week. Christian Aid partner organisations are helping to rebuild lives and livelihoods in some of the DRC's most vulnerable communities.

After the greatest challenge of Nadia's life, Christian Aid partner Humanité Nouvelle was there to help her focus on the future and the hope of a better life.

Nadia's father died suddenly two-and-a-half years ago. Her grieving mother, Brigitte, struggled to provide for her six children. Even though Brigitte works gruelling 48-hour shifts, some weeks her transport costs total almost as much as her weekly salary.

Nadia was profoundly affected by the death of her father, whom she adored. And his death had immediate practical implications. There was no money to pay for her schooling, so she had to drop out and care for her younger siblings while their mother worked.

Families like Nadia's often hear about Humanité Nouvelle's tailoring course through their local church. The course helps poor girls to develop skills to support themselves and their families. Nadia explains why girls in similar situations turn to sex work: 'They need to pursue their education and, with a lack of means, get desperate.'

It would have been easy for Nadia to despair. But instead Humanité Nouvelle 'have given me education for life', she says. She completed the course and now helps to teach the new intake of girls.

Nadia still takes care of her siblings, as well as being a mentor at Humanité Nouvelle. Her mother describes her as 'a blessing... [without her] things would be very hard'. And it's not just her family who speak so positively of her – her pastor also talks about the inspiring influence of her gospel singing.

Nadia is confident that she can earn a good living from sewing and she is clear about her priorities: 'If God helps me... I will do all I can to take care of my siblings and my mother.'

As collectors we can be inspired by Nadia. Even in difficult circumstances she is planting seeds of hope around her.

And Nadia's mother has a message for us: 'You volunteers should not be discouraged when you're turned away from houses. You should carry on because without that money it would be very difficult for... children from destitute backgrounds to get training, get a job and secure their future.'

Your time and money are more valuable than you know. You could give a chance of a brighter future to another young person like Nadia, and support them to bring hope to the people around them.

The ripple effect of collecting at Christian Aid Week is immense – by taking part you are working alongside people like Nadia to help change the world. In the DRC:

- £5/€6.50 could buy six yards of material, from which a three-piece woman's outfit can be made
- £10/€13 could provide a girl with enough material to complete a 12-month tailoring course
- £40/€51 could pay the monthly salary of a tailoring instructor.



Find out more about Christian Aid Week by visiting www.caweek.org

PW GROUP NEWS

As our first session as PW Group comes to a close we reflect on the events of the past few months. Since the last issue of "The Link" we have joined in January with our friends and neighbours in 2nd Ballyeaston.



In February we had a 'colour analysis' evening which enlightened us as to the colour which suits us best.

March is a busy month with our PW Service and Evening of Praise taking place on 1st March. We thank members of the congregation who supported these services. The annual Women's World Day of Prayer service was held in St. John's Church of Ireland, Ballyclare on the 6th March. At our monthly March meeting we heard about the work of the Christian charity AMARA Aid from Jim and Iris Stewart. They support different projects in Africa, from rainwater tanks and medical equipment to Bibles for the Congo. Their son Paul is at present in Rwanda. His day job, working for an American charity, is spent meeting with coffee farmers helping them achieve the very best from their crops. In his private life God uses him to communicate between Northern Ireland and the projects which Amara Aid support.

Our April meeting, on 7th, will deal with the election of Office Bearers for 2009/10 session which will be our 40th Anniversary Year and the Theme will be 'All things New'. This will be launched at the Annual Meeting on Thursday 7th May in Church House. We hope to have our 40th Anniversary Service at morning worship on Sunday 20th September 2009. Please put this date in your diary now and plan to attend.

We take this opportunity to wish everyone an enjoyable summer and look forward to September. We pray that some more new members will come and join us and make the most of every opportunity to learn more about God and how to serve Him.

Margaret Waugh

CHOIR

The members of the choir would like to thank the congregation and friends who purchased their Fireside Quiz. You still have time to complete and return it to Wilma before 31st March but do remember to put your name and address on the sheet.

Margaret Waugh

LOOKING AT THE CROSS

In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career,
I saw one hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed his languid eyes on me,
As near his cross I stood.

Sure, never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke.
My conscience felt and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins his blood had spilt,
And helped to nail him there.

Alas! I knew not what I did:
But now my tears are vain;
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?
For I the Lord have slain.
A second look he gave, which said,
'I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid,
I die that thou mayst live.'

Thus while his death my sin displays
In all its blackest hues;
Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon too.
With pleasing grief and mournful joy
My spirit now is filled,
That I should such a life destroy,
Yet live by him I killed.

John Newton



Stumbling Block or Stepping-Stone?

Isn't it strange that princes
and kings
And clowns that caper in saw-
dust rings
And common people like you
and me
Are builders for eternity?

Each is given a bag of tools,
A shapeless mass, and a book
of rules;
And each must make, 'ere life
has flown,
A stumbling block or a
stepping-stone.

—R. L. Sharpe

Mrs Jean Woodside
17 Victoria Road
Ballyclare
BT39 9JE



8 January 2009

Dear Mrs Woodside

I was thrilled to receive the outstanding collection of £1195.56 from our friends in First Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church. This is another tremendous achievement by everyone involved and sincere gratitude is conveyed to you for your dedicated efforts and hard work on our behalf, and to all concerned for both their wonderful generosity and their inspiring interest and support.

Everyone is aware of the troubled financial times we live in. However, in such times it is the vulnerable who suffer the most. It is therefore good to know that the Society continues to make a real difference to Presbyterian families and their children. One measure of the help we give is through unsolicited letters from recipients. Here are just a few comments we received during the year:

One mother writes *"could you please convey my deepest thanks to the Society. Words cannot really express how much security that you have given to us as a family The grants really go a long way in ensuring that the children's physical and material needs are met ... The Society has really, really looked after us and for that I am eternally grateful."* Another writes *"I would just like to say thank you for your kind donation. It took a lot of pressure off me and was an answer to prayer."* And this from a minister about a grant to a family in his congregation - *"Just to acknowledge, with deep appreciation, the kind interim grant for this family. It will make such a difference and augment the application of God's love in this area"*.

It is clear that God identifies with those who are in need and First Ballyeaston Congregation have shown that they are a Presbyterian community which cares for those children and families who are vulnerable and facing an uncertain financial future.

Very many thanks once again to you for your hard work and continued dedication, and to all our very generous and caring friends thank you for supporting the Society with such a marvellous collection.

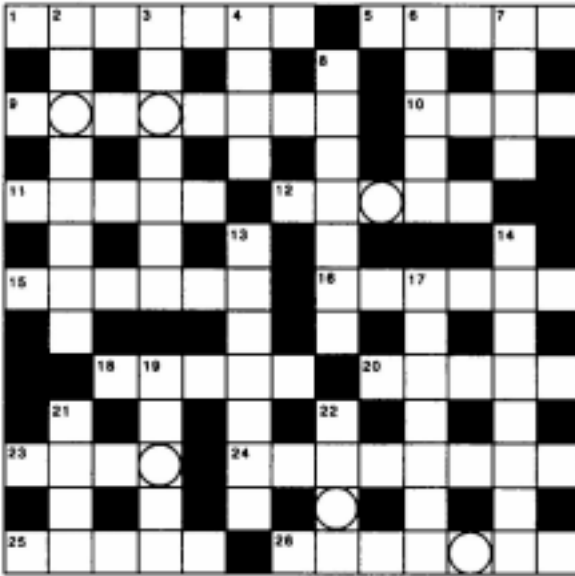
Kindest regards,
Yours sincerely


Paul Gray, Secretary

A wonderful collection! Thank you for your hard work and thanks to everyone for their generosity & support.

5th Floor, Glengall Exchange, 3 Glengall Street, Belfast BT12 5AB Telephone (028) 90323737

STORY CROSSWORD - WHO IS HE?



As you read this New Testament story of one of the disciples of Jesus, you'll see that some words have been replaced by a reference in brackets. Try to find the missing words, then enter them into the grid. (A = Across, D = Down) Then place the circled letters in their right order to give you the disciple's name.

He was known as the doubting disciple of Jesus, although devoted in his (17D). On one occasion he would have (2D) with Jesus to an (10A) of Judea where the religious (13D), expressing (4D), had tried to stone them.

He was not (16A) put off with (18A). In the (5A) room, in reply to a (3D) from Jesus that he was going to (1A) a place for them, with a little (20A) he asked the Lord 'We don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'

But when Jesus said: 'I am the way, the truth and the (21D)', his questioner (24A) he needed a much (9A) faith. Suffering (15A) depression when Jesus was crucified, he was not at the cross.

On the day of resurrection when the (19D) disciples said they had seen the Lord, he answered: 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were... I will not believe.'

Yet (7D) in his doubt itself, lay a (11A) of faith.

Later he went (23A) the other disciples to their meeting place. After they (8D) and had locked the door, Jesus (22D), and with (14D) said '(6D) be with you!' And as he turned, the one who doubted (25A) him say, 'Stop doubting and believe.'

He who until then had not believed in the (12A) Lord Jesus, confessed 'My Lord and my God'. He knew (26A) from further doubt.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THOSE IN NEED

The Old Age and Presbyterian Women's Funds of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland provide assistance to older people in the form of quarterly grants together with special grants at Christmas. The current annual grant is £1,000 and the special grant at Christmas is £195, reviewed annually.

The Funds also provide one-off grants in special circumstances where there is an immediate need for help and the items needed are not covered by normal statutory benefits, allowances or grants. Such items would include travel allowances to visit a close relative in hospital or at home or attend the funeral of a close relative; assistance with the purchase of laundry and household equipment where needed to meet special circumstances; assistance with the purchase of a wheelchair, walking aid, bath aids and similar items; the fitting of hand rails and similar safety equipment and purchase of specialist furniture where recommended by the relative health care professional. Assistance can also be given with the purchase and fitting of security and safety devices such as a burglar alarm or smoke alarm together with matters such as the purchase of long life light bulbs, draft proofing and insulation of homes and the replacement of boilers and heating appliances. These are examples only and other areas of need can be considered. You do not have to be a recipient of an annual grant to apply for a Special Needs grant.

The following criteria apply in relation to receiving assistance from the Funds: in relation to the Old Age Fund, applicants, male or female, must usually be 60 years of age and over and for the Presbyterian Women's Fund applicants must be female. In addition, applicants should meet some of the following requirements to receive a grant - be living at home; have an income of less than £12,000; be in receipt of Income Support, Attendance Allowance or Pension Credit; not have savings in excess of £16,000; not be in receipt of significant financial assistance from other family members; have medical needs that require extra expenditure and be under the pastoral care of a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Applicants will be asked to provide some information regarding their personal and financial circumstances which is retained in the strictest confidence. Applications must be made through the congregational minister who must be prepared to support the application and any payments will be passed back through him. If you or someone you know is in need and would possibly be eligible under one of the Funds, please contact your minister, the Rev. McDowell, who will be able to provide additional information.

NEW CHURCH COMMITTEE

Following the election held in February, the following have agreed to serve on the Church Committee for a three year term (*listed alphabetically*)

Mr Andrew Agnew	Mrs Ann Gardiner
Mr Samuel Agnew	Mr Brian Gardiner
Mrs Marilyn Boyd	Mr Uel Gordon
Mrs Orvil Cree	Mr James Houston
Mr John Cummings	Mr Brian McNair
Mr Colin Davidson	Mrs Heather Patterson
Mr Malcolm Downey	Mr David Potts
Mrs Susan Drummond	Miss Wilma Todd
Mr Murray Elliott	Mr Ivan Watt
Ms Yvonne Fisher	Mr John Waugh

The first meeting of the new Committee is on Tuesday 17th March following the annual Congregational Meeting at 8.00pm.

A minister told his congregation, "Next week I plan to preach about the sin of lying. To help you understand my sermon, I want you all to read Mark 17." The following Sunday, as he prepared to deliver his sermon, the minister asked for a show of hands. He wanted to know how many had read Mark 17. Every hand went up. The minister smiled and said, "Mark has only sixteen chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying."

Pictured right - Beanie Cahoon meets Prince Charles when he recently visited the Community Concerns Building on the Doagh Road, Ballyclare. One wonders what words of wisdom passed between the two - no prize is being offered for guessing but it is an occasion Beanie will not readily forget.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Welcome to this Easter Issue of 'The Link' and with it all the signs of Spring and the hopes of Summer. Winter is over for another year, or at least we hope so, and thoughts are turning to days away and holidays.

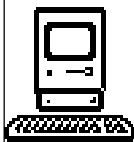
I am reminded by our Clerk of Session's article that this magazine will soon come of age. Yes, this issue completes 18 years in print but more of that in the next issue, hopefully. Speaking of anniversaries, there are two others which we celebrate this year. Did you realise that our present main church building is 175 years old this year. Erected, or at least dedicated in 1834, it was built during the ministry of the Rev. William J Raphael who was also the driving force behind the building of possibly our first manse during the 1820s, initially at his own expense, and the village school which opened in 1840. I like to think of him as the 'master builder' of his time and it is perhaps rather ironic that we should have disturbed his last resting place in September 2004 when the foundations were being dug for the new vestibule; perhaps just to let him see that building for the extension of God's kingdom was still going on.



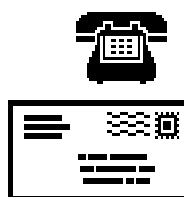
The other anniversary is of a more recent event, yet one which happened half a lifetime ago in 1969. I refer of course to the installation on 26th March 1969 of the Rev J H MacConnell as the eleventh minister of this congregation. Much has been achieved in the years since then, as in the generations that went before, in the up-building of our faith and in the worship of our God and Saviour.

May I say 'thanks' to all who have provided material for this Issue and to my production 'team' for much valued assistance. If you have anything you would like to contribute for a future Issue, do get in touch with me by any of the means mentioned below and by the way have you found us yet on the internet at <http://uk.geocities.com/firstballyeaston> If not, why not?

Sam Waugh



**If you have any comments or material for inclusion, contact Sam Waugh (Editor) by Word of mouth (at any reasonable hour)
Email: sam.waugh@nireland.com
Post: 4 Collin View, Ballyclare BT39 9AR
Telephone: (028) 9332 3708**



OUR GIVING TO GOD'S WORK - A PRESBYTERY PERSPECTIVE

Below is an extract from the report of the Presbytery Finance Committee to the Templepatrick Presbytery at its meeting on 3rd March 2009.

Givings to Specified Sources (WFO, loose collections & Stipend givings)

Congregation	<u>No. of Families</u>		Specified Sources	Average givings per Contrib. Family	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Contrib.</u>		<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
First Antrim	707	426	£178,148	£441.72	£418.19
High Street	418	266	£93,677	£360.69	£352.17
Greystone Rd	379	269	£74,013	£258.31	£275.14
1st Ballyeaston	352	294	£80,416	£253.98	£273.52
2nd Ballyeaston	316	261	£94,196	£346.49	£360.90
Crumlin	130	105	£38,414	£312.52	£365.85
1st Donegore	230	176	£66,162	£362.68	£375.92
2nd Donegore	207	174	£63,577	£387.86	£365.39
Dundrod	238	204	£68,647	£309.42	£336.50
Hydepark	179	167	£55,319	£330.14	£331.25
Lylehill	98	92	£29,789	£292.57	£323.79
Kilbride	505	382	£102,560	£273.92	£268.48
Killead	179	161	£50,577	£298.11	£314.14
Loanends	170	150	£51,548	£307.50	£343.65
Muckamore	238	196	£111,682	£603.85	£569.81
1st Randalstown	153	94	£38,963	£383.19	£414.50
Duneane	89	78	£27,871	£337.61	£357.32
2nd Randalstown	215	156	£73,701	£413.94	£472.44
O C Randalstown	410	318	£107,274	£350.61	£337.34
Templepatrick	314	263	£112,505	£413.60	£427.78
2008 TOTAL	5,527	4,232	£1,519,039		
2007 TOTAL	5,533	4,252	£1,499,302		
2006 TOTAL	5,581	4,402	£1,479,568		

The average givings per family for 2008 across the Presbytery was £358.94 compared with £352.61 for 2007 and £336.11 for 2006.

What does all this mean? On a Presbytery wide basis it is clear that the number of families, both total and contributing, is falling. Generally this is in line with the trend right across the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and no doubt other 'traditional' Denominations as well.

Financially, as you can see, overall total contributions are creeping up very slowly at about £20,000 per year over 20 congregations. If you were to compare these 2008 figures with those of 2007 (see the September 2008 magazine), you will find some degree of fluctuation in congregational givings. The more telling figures, however, are the average givings per contributing family for each congregation and the average givings per family for the Presbytery as a whole.

Our own congregation's givings to Specified Sources in 2008 (£80,416) were up almost £3,000 on 2007 (£77,465), but 2007 was £2,241 down on 2006 (£79,706). Taking a realistic view of the situation, we are in fact just about back at where we were two years ago with no allowance for inflation. Based on contributions per family, we now stand 19th (£273.52) out of the 20 congregations in the Presbytery as against 20th (£253.98) in 2007 and 19th (£259.63) in 2006. The comparable average givings per contributing family across the Presbytery were £358.94 in 2008, £352.61 in 2007 and £336.11 in 2006, a current gap for us of some £85 per family. This has all to be viewed against the fact that in terms of contributing families, we are at present the fourth largest congregation in the Presbytery (in 2007 we were the third largest but have now been overtaken by O C Randalstown).

Are you content with this state of affairs or are you prepared to do something about it? If we don't, I fear our position may continue to deteriorate, especially if running costs continue to rise at the present rate and the value of our pound weakens. As has been suggested by our Treasurer on more than one occasion, if we were all to increase our contributions towards the Freewill Offering by just £1 per family per week, the result would be an additional income of £15,000 in the year which would go some way towards bringing our income to a more realistic level although still only just over half way towards meeting the current average per contributing family across the Presbytery.

At this meeting, congregations were also advised of their United Appeal target for 2009. The target set for the Presbytery as a whole for 2009 is £168,168. This is apportioned to congregations in accordance with the 50/50 formula based on contributing families and Specified Sources. The target set for 1st Ballyeaston is £10,293 as against £10,117 in 2008. Bearing in mind however that we only raised £8,761.46 of this in 2008 through direct giving, we still have some leeway to make up to avoid a continuing drain on our General Revenue Account.

Sam Waugh

BALLYCLARE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Society meets normally on the second Tuesday of each month in Foundry House, the new Community Concerns Building on the Doagh Road. Meetings commence at 7.30pm. New members and guests are always welcome.

7th April 2009* **AGM** followed by **“Donegore Presbyterians from 1627 - 2001”** presented by **Donald Alexander CBE.**

(Please note the change of date, due to Easter.)*

The Summer Walks Programme has not yet been finalised. A copy will be placed on the church notice board in the vestibule in due course and will be available through the Library in Ballyclare.



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 10th - 16th MAY 2009

It seems no time at all since arrangements were being made for last year's CA Week when, thanks to your generosity and support, we raised £740 through the envelopes placed in the pews and with help from 2nd Ballyeaston, a few of us collected £417.20 door to door in the Henryville development on the Ballynure Road. We have been collecting in Henryville now since 2000 when it first was occupied.

No firm plans have yet been made for the 2009 collections but I would expect much the same arrangements will apply although if anyone would be interested in assisting with the Henryville collection please speak to me. Your help would be greatly appreciated - a couple of hours max on two evenings in the week is all it will take.

Most of Christian Aid's work goes on quietly out of the media spotlight except for when an emergency occurs. Through the money raised during CA Week and at other times during the year, this ongoing work can be funded and reserves established to meet immediate needs once an emergency arises and before any emergency appeal can be launched. The story on the centre pages is but one example of the work that is going on around the world.

'Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' Matthew 25 :40b

Sam Waugh Christian Aid Congregational Link

A BIBLE READING PLAN FOR THE WEEKS AHEAD

Reading plan prepared by the International Bible Reading Association (IBRA).

HOLY FOOLS

March 30 2 Samuel 6: 12 - 23

31 Hosea 3

April 1 Jeremiah 32: 6 - 15

2 Luke 20: 9 - 17

3 1 Corinthians 1: 17 - 25

4-5 1 Corinthians 1: 26 - 31

READINGS IN MARK

6 Mark 14: 10 - 25

7 Mark 14: 26 - 52

8 Mark 14: 53 - 72

9 Mark 15: 1 - 24

10 Mark 15: 25 - 47

11-12 Mark 16: 1 - 8

The good news of Jesus Christ

13 Mark 1: 1 - 20

14 Mark 1: 21 - 39

15 Mark 1: 40 - 2: 12

16 Mark 2: 13 - 28

17 Mark 3: 1 - 19a

18-19 Mark 3: 19b - 35

POLITICS OF GOD

Justice, power and the state

20 Isaiah 45: 1 - 7

21 Micah 6: 6 - 16

22 2 Samuel 11: 1 - 27

23 John 11: 45 - 53

24 Romans 13: 1 - 7

25-26 Revelation 20: 1 - 6

Marks of God's kingdom

27 Acts 4: 32 - 37

28 John 17: 6 - 19

29 Luke 20: 19 - 26

30 John 18: 28 - 40

May 1 1 Timothy 2: 1 - 7

2-3 Matthew 5: 1 - 12

ONENESS OF HUMANITY

4 Genesis 1: 26 - 31

5 Genesis 9: 1 - 7, 18 - 19

May 6 Acts 2: 1 - 18

7 Acts 11: 1 - 18

8 Acts 17: 22 - 31

9-10 Romans 3: 21 - 30

All one in God—barriers are taken away

11 Romans 5: 12 - 21

12 1 Corinthians 12: 4 - 13

13 Galatians 3: 22 - 29

14 Isaiah 2: 1 - 4

15 Revelation 7: 9 - 17

16-17 Ephesians 2: 11 - 22

EUCCHARISTIC THEMES

Thanksgiving and thankful living

18 Psalm 116: 1 - 4, 12 - 19

19 Galatians 6: 1 - 16

20 Matthew 10: 40 - 42

21 Luke 24: 44 - 53

22 Matthew 26: 6 - 13

23-24 Matthew 14: 13 - 21

The shape of our life together

25 Matthew 26: 26 - 29

26 Luke 24: 13 - 35

27 Acts 2: 42 - 47

28 John 6: 25 - 35

29 Luke 14: 1, 7 - 14

30-31 Acts 2: 1 - 21

Living Eucharistically

June 1 John 13: 1 - 19

2 1 Corinthians 11: 23 - 26

3 Romans 8: 18 - 25

4 Luke 10: 38 - 42

5 John 3: 1 - 17

6-7 Romans 8: 12 - 17

READINGS IN MARK (II)

Parables and healings

8 Mark 4: 1 - 20

9 Mark 4: 21 - 41

10 Mark 5: 1 - 20

11 Mark 5: 21 - 34

June 12 Mark 5: 35 - 6: 6a

13-14 Mark 6: 6b - 16

Stirrings of conflict

15 Mark 6: 17 - 29

16 Mark 6: 30 - 44

17 Mark 6: 45 - 56

18 Mark 7: 1 - 13

19 Mark 7: 14 - 23

20-21 Mark 7: 24 - 37

BURDEN BEARERS

Friends and supporters

22 1 Samuel 18: 1-4; 1 Sam. 20

23 Joshua 2

24 Ruth 1: 1 - 19

25 Job 2

26 Luke 8: 1 - 3

27-28 John 13: 21 - 26; 21: 20 - 24

Mentors and teachers

29 Exodus 18: 1 - 27

30 Deuteronomy 31: 1 - 29

July 1 Judges 4

2 1 Samuel 3: 1 - 4: 1

3 Luke 2: 39 - 52

4-5 Acts 16: 1 - 5 & 1 Timothy 1

Colleagues and peers

6 Exodus 4: 10 - 17, 27 - 31

7 2 Samuel 23: 8 - 39

8 2 Kings 2: 1 - 18

9 Luke 10: 1 - 9

10 Acts 9: 19b - 30; 11: 22 - 26

11-12 Galatians 1: 13 - 2: 14

Challengers and critics

July 13 2 Samuel 12: 1 - 14

14 1 Kings 10: 1 - 10

15 1 Kings 21

16 Jeremiah 19: 1 - 20: 6

17 Matthew 15: 21 - 28

18-19 Acts 15: 1 - 20

EZEKIEL

The call of Ezekiel

20 Ezekiel 1: 1 - 21

July 21 Ezekiel 1: 28b - 3: 3

22 Ezekiel 3: 4 - 27

23 Ezekiel 4: 1 - 17

24 Ezekiel 5: 1 - 17

25-26 Ezekiel 8: 1 - 18

Words of warning

27 Ezekiel 11: 13 - 25

28 Ezekiel 12: 1 - 20

29 Ezekiel 13: 1 - 16

30 Ezekiel 18: 1 - 18

31 Ezekiel 18: 19 - 32

August 1-2 Ezekiel 22: 23 - 31

Words against foreign nations

3 Ezekiel 24: 15 - 27

4 Ezekiel 27: 1 - 25

5 Ezekiel 28: 1 - 19

6 Ezekiel 29: 1 - 16

7 Ezekiel 31: 1 - 18

8-9 Ezekiel 34: 1 - 16

Words of hope

10 Ezekiel 34: 17 - 31

11 Ezekiel 36: 1 - 12

12 Ezekiel 37: 1 - 14

13 Ezekiel 40:1-4&41:15b-26

14 Ezekiel 43: 1 - 12

15-16 Ezekiel 47: 1 - 12

READINGS IN MARK (III)

Training and disciples

17 Mark 8: 1 - 13

18 Mark 8: 14 - 26

19 Mark 8: 27 - 9: 1

20 Mark 9: 2 - 13

21 Mark 9: 14 - 29

22-23 Mark 9: 30 - 37

Going up to Jerusalem

24 Mark 9: 38 - 50

25 Mark 10: 1 - 12

26 Mark 10: 13 - 22

27 Mark 10: 23 - 31

28 Mark 10: 32 - 45

29-30 Mark 10: 46 - 52

KIRK SESSION REPORT

By now you are all already aware that the Kirk Session have been seeking to find new ways in which our services of worship could be made more meaningful and interesting to everyone who attends. In order to deal with this, a Vision Team was set up consisting of some members of Kirk Session and a few others representing our young people, with a view to considering various avenues of approach and how we in 1st Ballyeaston might move forward in a changing world and society. At a congregational meeting held recently, members were informed of the results of the recent survey carried out in the congregation and were given the opportunity to comment on these results and express their views on what changes they would like to see in our church services. The Vision Team are now in the process of analysing the summary of views expressed at the meeting so as to make recommendations to Kirk Session on how we address the concerns raised.

The first edition of our church Newsletter, known as “The Link” was produced in 1991 and contains an article by our then minister Rev J.H. MacConnell, part of which is still the relevant view of your Kirk Session today. It reads as follows:

“When our forefathers were choosing a slogan for the Presbyterian Church, they decided on the phrase “Semper reformanda” (always reforming). When the church gets into a rut it is liable to die. We believe that any changes the Kirk Session propose, will be for the ultimate benefit of the congregation of 1st Ballyeaston, but for that to happen we need your support and we need to start today.”

The church newsletter or “The Link Magazine” as it is now called, has been published for the last 18 years, at least 3 times a year. This has been edited since the beginning by Mr Sam Waugh, a job which I am sure the majority of our readers seldom consider. Therefore on behalf of Kirk Session and the congregation, I would convey to Sam and the other members of his family our sincere thanks and gratitude for a job extremely well done, much of it behind the limelight, with meticulous perfection always.

In the month of January 2009, we welcomed Mr Scott Moore, a student for the Christian ministry, who has been assigned to 1st Ballyeaston for a period of 8 weeks. To use modern language, this is a form of work experience for Scott as he prepares himself for service in the Christian ministry.

Some time ago, in addition to the midweek meetings for Bible study and prayer, your Kirk Session began having a short time for prayer on Sunday mornings in the Upper Room, at the back of the church, prior to morning service. This is open to anyone who would like to come along and your presence would be an encouragement to your minister and Kirk Session.

At the time of writing, members of the congregation are casting their votes for those whom they would like to be on the Church Committee for the next three years. The Church Committee shoulders all the responsibility for the material well being of our church property, finances, etc. On behalf of Kirk Session I would convey sincere thanks to all who have given of their time and talents as Committee members in the past, especially the office bearers, and we trust that the same dedication and commitment will be given by those elected to serve on the new Committee.

It has been agreed that United Services with 2nd Ballyeaston will continue this year, the services being held in First during July and in Second during August, with all services for the 2 months starting at 11a.m..

Wishing you God's richest blessing for the months ahead.

Jan Patterson

CHURCH COMMITTEE REPORT

Manse

Work at the Manse has continued with the following items being undertaken:

- o The surface to the rear of the Manse has been replaced with asphalt and a fence has been erected adjacent to the rear door.
- o The lamps up the drive to the Manse were in poor condition and these are currently being replaced.

The following work was postponed last year because of the poor season and it is hoped that this work can be carried out in the near future:

- o Painting the outside of the Manse.
- o Re-seeding the lawn at the front of the Manse.

Church and Halls

Work has been continuing at the Church and Halls. This includes the installation of a fire alarm system in the lower church halls.

A new cooker is due to be installed in the near future in the kitchen in the lower church hall. The members of Committee are extremely grateful to the members of the PW Group for their generosity in purchasing this item for the use of our congregation.

Malcolm Downey

TREASURER'S REPORT



Below is a summary of givings up to the end of February with 2008's figures for comparison. The **General Revenue Account** began with £11,985, which was almost £1,000 less than the beginning of 2008.

	2009	2008	Difference
WFO	£9,543	£8,592	£951
Loose Collection	£141	£115	£26
United Appeal	£1,057	£775	£282
Vestibule Fund	£1,874	£2,799	- £925
	<u>£12,615</u>	<u>£12,281</u>	

Once again we see a small overall increase in the contributions in the first two months.

In the **Vestibule Fund** the year begins with £24,795 in the account. We still owe £210,000 of the Presbyterian Mutual Society Loan. By the end of the year the amount owed will be £30,000 less. This is the 4th year of a 10 year loan. Hopefully by the next 'Link', I will be able to inform you of the final cost of the Vestibule Project.



Financial Crisis

Everybody today has been affected by the 'Credit Crunch', rises in the cost of fuel, loss in the value of shares, etc. The Church is no different and we are loosing money. We have £47,515 invested with the Presbyterian Mutual and like many, don't know how much we will get back.

Please consider increasing your contributions towards the Freewill Offering. £1 per family per week would see an additional income of £15,000.

If you would like to consider contributing by Standing Order please get in touch. Gift Aid is an easy way for us to gain additional funds from the Inland Revenue. If you pay Tax and haven't signed up to the scheme, talk to

either Cecil Davis or John Cummings.

'If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use in giving - large or small - it will be used to measure what is given back to you.'

Luke 6:38

Joe Bingham

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For Your Diary *Continued*

MAY

Saturday 30th Men's Breakfast (*see Page 16*)
Sunday 31st 11.30am Morning Worship

JUNE

Monday 1st Start of General Assembly Week, Church House, Belfast
Sunday 7th 11.30am Morning Worship and distribution of Sunday School prizes.
7.00pm Evening Service
Sunday 14th 11.30am Young People's Day Service
Saturday 20th 3.00pm Senior Members' Afternoon, Church Halls
Sunday 21st 11.30am Morning Worship
Sunday 28th 11.30am Morning Worship

JULY/AUGUST

Wed-Fri. 1st -3rd July Holiday Bible Club (*see Page 6*)
Saturday 4th July Family Barbecue
Sunday 5th July 11.00am Family Service
The **United Services** with 2nd Ballyeaston will be held at **11.00am** in **First Ballyeaston during July** and in **Second Ballyeaston during August**.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 6th 10.30am Meeting of Sunday School Teachers
11.30am Morning Worship
Sunday 13th 10.30am Start of Sunday Schools & Bible Class
11.30am Morning Worship
Sunday 20th 11.30am 40th Anniversary Service, PW Group

For Your Diary



MARCH 2009

Sunday	22nd	11.30am	Morning Worship
Wednesday	25th	8.00pm	Presby. Divine Healing Service Hydepark Ch.
Saturday	28th	10.00am-1.00pm	Coffee Morn & Car Boot Sale Ch Halls
	28th	7.00pm	BB Parents' & Friends Evening, 2 nd B' easton
Sunday	29th	11.30am	Morning Worship
			(British Summer Time begins - clocks forward one hour)
Monday	30th		Rehearsal night for GB Display (<i>see Page 4</i>)

APRIL

Wednesday	1st	8.00pm	Bible Study & Prayer Time, MacConnell Hall
Friday	3rd	7.00pm	GB Display, B'clare Secondary School
Sunday	5th	11.30am	Morning Worship (Palm Sunday)
		3.15pm	GB Dist Parade Service, Woodlands, C'fergus
		7.00pm	Evening Service
Tuesday	7th	7.30pm	PW Group Meet./Election of Office Bearers
Wednesday	8th	8.00pm	Bible Study & Prayer Time, MacConnell Hall
Friday	10th	8.00pm	Good Friday Service - in the Church
Sunday	12th	11.30am	Morning Worship for Easter morn.
Wednesday	15th	8.00pm	No Bible Study & Prayer Time
Sunday	19th	11.30am	Morning Worship
		7.00pm	Service for Farming Community, 2 nd B' easton
Wednesday	22nd	8.00pm	Bible Study & Prayer Time, MacConnell Hall
Sunday	26th	11.30am	Pre-Communion Service
Wednesday	29th	8.00pm	Bible Study & Prayer Time, MacConnell Hall

MAY

Sunday	3rd	11.30am	Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
		7.00pm	Service of Thanksgiving & Lord's Supper
Thursday	7th	7.30pm	PW Annual Meeting, Church House, Belfast
Sunday	10th	11.30am	Morning Worship/start of Christian Aid Week
Sunday	17th	11.30am	Morning Worship
		7.00pm	Evening Service in 2nd Ballyeaston
Tuesday	19th	8.00pm	Church Committee Meet, MacConnell Hall
Sunday	24th	11.30am	Morning Worship-David Farrow, Thompson House followed by Bread & Cheese Lunch
Wednesday	27th	8.00pm	Presby. Divine Healing Service, 1 st B' easton