

CONTACT

TRINITY CHURCH REACHING OUT

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

On holy night the stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth

In this issue:

Harvest Thanksgiving

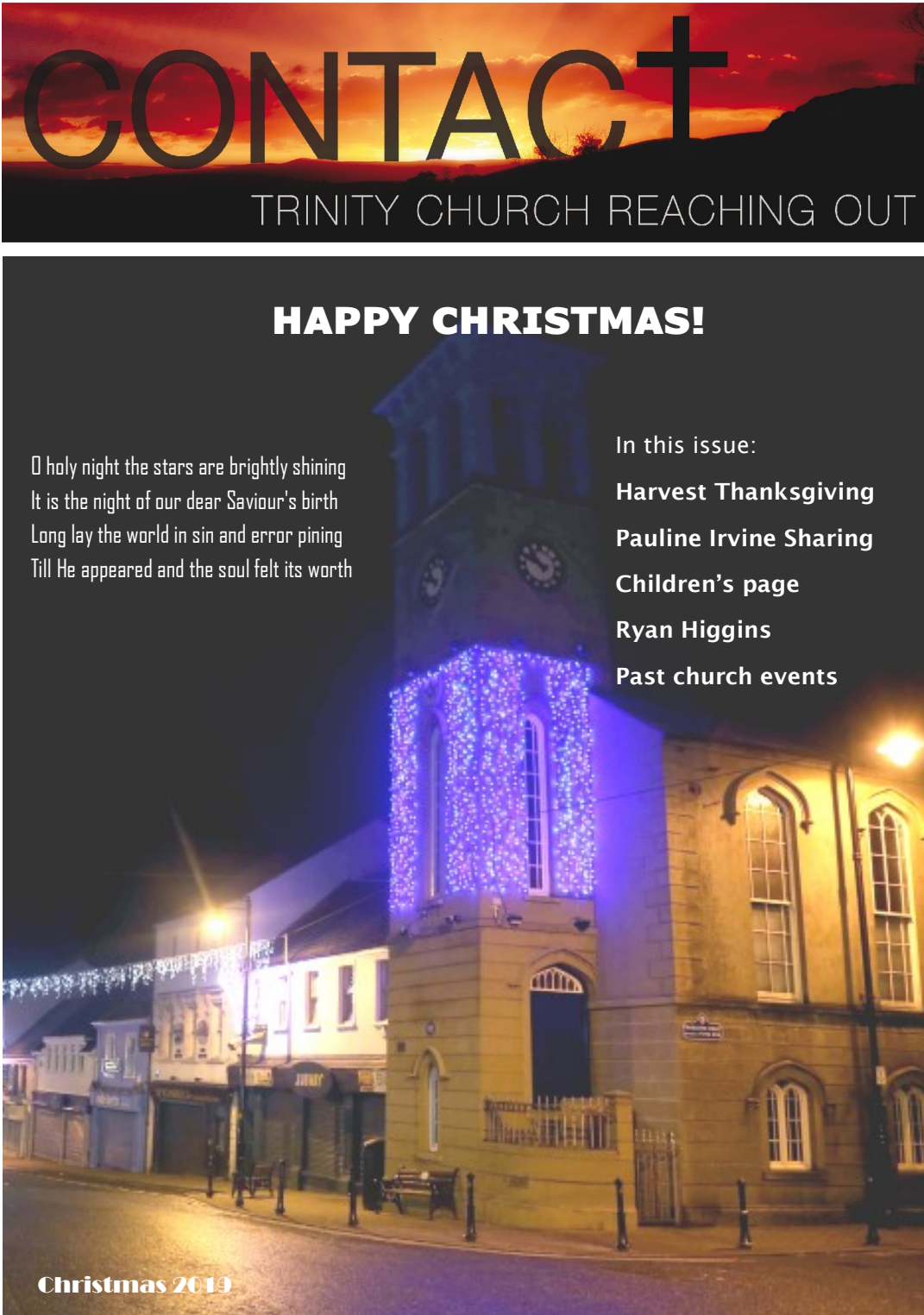
Pauline Irvine Sharing

Children's page

Ryan Higgins

Past church events

Christmas 2019



Editorial

This year I have again got my bike out and gone for varying distances around the North Coast with friends for my enjoyment. Having the right equipment helps to make the journey enjoyable. On the road there are many level stretches of road, where the effort required is less and then there are climbs and areas where you are challenged and increased effort is required to make it back home.

Life can be described in many ways like a cycle. There are many twists and turns on the road and hills to be climbed and different challenges to be met and conquered.

When we are young we think ahead to all the milestones in life to be achieved - the first day at school, the exams to be passed, the driving test, the first year at University, finding a partner for life, having children - all these goals to be achieved. The list can be endless, but at the end of the lists we make, where do we need to prioritise? We need a peace in our lives, a joy and a hope. This is where our spiritual thinking should be awakened. There is a joy and a peace that comes from knowing the Saviour. This stands us in good stead for the future. I said at the beginning it is important to have the right equipment for the journey. In the cycle of life, equipment is needed to survive.

Praise God, we have His Word as our guide to enable us to live our lives for Him. We also have the key to it all - John 3 v 16 - the most famous verse in the Bible to help us make a conscious decision for Christ. In the



summer and the winter of our lives we need Jesus.

Think of the words we often sing in church:

**Knowing you Jesus, knowing you
There is no greater thing
You're my all, you're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love you Lord**

Do you know Him? I trust that you will find Him if you don't. You know He's only a prayer away!

Thanks again to all those who have contributed to the magazine this time around. Thanks to Doreen for the Children's pages and may I take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful and blessed Christmas.

Kenneth McAuley

kennethmcauley36@gmail.com

The Minister's Desk

Christmas 2019



Dear Friends

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. Luke 2 v1

Have you ever thought how amazing it is that God shapes history according to His sovereign will? We see this truth in the birth of Jesus. Over 700 years before the birth of Christ the prophet Micah (Micah 5:2) wrote that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. When the time came God so ordained things that the Messiah's mother Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth; and hence in order to fulfil His word, God had to bring Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem that first Christmas. In order to do that God put it in the heart of Caesar Augustus that all the Roman World should be registered, each in his own town. This must have caused huge upheaval for government officials and many families, and yet as we know, in the midst of the chaos God was

working out His master plan. I wonder if you have ever felt small and insignificant in the world, where your opinion doesn't seem to count for much and where all the news is of the big political, economic and social movement being shaped by those who seem to have lots of power and prestige? If you have so wondered, don't let that make you disheartened or unhappy. For it is absolutely clear in Scripture that all the big political forces, without their even knowing it, are being moved by God, not for their own sake but for the sake of God's Kingdom. Mary and Joseph had to be moved from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the birth of the Messiah and so God moved the entire Roman Empire, just to bless His children. Let us not think for a moment that because we experience adversity, that the hand of the Lord is shortened. It is not our comfort, or our entertainment or our prosperity that the Lord seeks for us. Rather it is our salvation and holiness that

He seeks with all his heart. And to that end, He rules the nations of the world. As Proverbs 21:1 says: "*The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.*" He is an amazing God who cares for His people whom He has chosen in Him from the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4) We have great cause to rejoice that, unbeknownst to them, all the kings and prime ministers and parliaments and presidents and premiers of the world follow the sovereign decrees of our Father in heaven, that we, His children, might be conformed to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ.

It is my prayer that you will know the peace of God reigning in your heart this Christmas and throughout 2020.

Yours in Christ's service

David Irvine

Jesus, Others, You

The perfect formula for JOY is Jesus, Others, You. It really works! When you put Jesus first in your life, you stay with Him and have the joy He promised His followers (John 15 v 11). When you are concerned about others and helping and encouraging them, you have no time to wallow in self-pity or self-concern. You see the needs of others, and your heart goes out to them. As you help them spiritually, emotionally, or materially, you will experience a joy unknown to self-centred people.

Sometimes the LORD lays on your heart someone you should contact. Often the person will say "I'm so glad we had this chat!" I needed someone to talk to, someone who would encourage and pray with me." We receive a blessing and the joy of knowing we have helped someone.

In Matthew 10 v 39 - 42, Jesus says if we give a fellow Christian a cup of cold water because we are His disciples, we will receive a reward. We don't do it for reward but blessing will result. Where do we fit into this? With Jesus and others first, we will have great joy!

Stepping Stones

There are many stepping stones in
life

That we have stood upon,
On some our stay was shorter
While on others it was long.
But each taught us something,
Not apparent at the time,
For He who planned the stepping
stones
Has planned your life and mine.

Sometimes a step brought sorrow,
But was only for a while.
Another brought us blessing
And the sunshine of God's smile.
And, if at times we stumble
'cause the way ahead's not known,
We must learn to turn our stumbling
blocks
Into His stepping stones.

And as we learn to step upon
Each stone in simple faith,
Knowing for each step we take
We'll find sufficient grace.
'Til we complete life's journey
Upon its stepping stones,
We have God's blessed assurance –
Each step brings us nearer home.

Submitted by Eileen Callaghan

"In Christ"

My LORD enables me to stand
He holds me fast with His strong
hand
I need not fear, I know His calm

Because my life is in His plan
Each breath I take is in His will
Each step I make I hear Him still
"Come unto me, I know what's best,
Come unto me I'll give you rest".

You may be here, without this peace
You don't know God, there's no re-
lease
The Saviour calls - He is the way
And all your sin, He died to pay
One heartfelt prayer is all it takes
Your life turned round for Jesus' sake
Admit your sin, fall on your knees
And rid yourself of this disease

He will come in and make you new
You know now what you have to do
Just call upon the Saviours' name
Then live your life and let Him reign
Blessings will follow on and on
Each day begins in perfect song
The Master's voice will lead you
through
His ways are best, for He knows you

At end of days when life runs out
You'll know what life was all about
Your future now is so secure
You're richer now and never poor
In heaven's home you'll take your
place
And you will see the Saviour's face
Your treasure's great, it's all laid here
You'll surely enjoy eternal years

Kenneth McAuley

MDF Coastal walks



Sunset at Portballintrae

This year again, MDF organised a series of Coastal walks for all the congregation to attend. Our first outing was to Castlerock for a walk along the beach followed by tea and coffee in Crusoes. This was a great success and thanks to the staff of Crusoes for keeping open for us. Our second walk was from Portballintrae along the path behind the beach to the railway. This was followed by a BBQ and Mark Watt led us in a few songs (included was the beautiful sunset recorded above). This was a huge success. Our third planned walk at the White Rocks had to be cancelled due to the inclement weather. We all agreed that this was the best course of action on the evening. Hopefully next year we will be able to carry out all the walks without hitch.



MDF Coastal walks



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MDF BOWLING - Portrush



MDF TRIP TO ALDERGROVE



ALDERGROVE TRIP



SUNDAY SCHOOL BREAKFAST



This year the Sunday School again opened with their annual breakfast. This was in the main hall and was well supported by Parents and children who attend the Sunday School.

It always proves popular and it is encouraging to see new faces coming along for food and fellowship. Our Superintendent, Bertie Quinn is always happy to see new children coming to join the Sunday School.



Again our Holiday Bible Club was well supported with an average of 100 children in attendance per night.

Thanks to all the leaders for their hard work before, during and after the event.



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WHO IS IN CHARGE?

If you have had occasion to visit a vast open plan office of a large organisation, with over 100 desks, you may feel like shouting - who is in charge here? Many people ask the same about this world, but the Bible is clear - God is!

Consider **Matt 10:29** Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

Not even a sparrow can die apart from God's permission! This teaching of *Providence* is well summed up in the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) and also in our older hymns.

27. Q. What do you understand by the providence of God?

A. God's providence is His almighty and ever present power, whereby, as with His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures, and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things, come not by chance but by His fatherly hand.

Consider the hymn by John Ryland (1753-1853) a Baptist pastor in Bristol.

1. Sovereign Ruler of the skies!

Ever gracious, ever wise!

All my times are in Thy hand,

All events at Thy command.

2. He that formed me in the womb,

He shall guide me to the tomb;

All my times shall ever be

Ordered by His wise decree.

3. *Times of sickness, times of health,*

Times of poverty and wealth;

Times of trial and of grief,

Times of triumph and relief.

4 *Times the tempter's power to prove,*

Times to taste a Saviour's love:

All must come, and last and end,

As shall please my heavenly Friend.

5. *Plagues and deaths around me fly,*

Till He bids I cannot die:

Not a single shaft can hit

Till the God of love thinks fit.

6. *O Thou gracious, wise and just*

In Thy hands my life I trust:

Thee, at all times, will I bless;

Having Thee, I all possess.

Another hymn of this type is No 31 in the Church Hymnary (the Blue Book) *God moves in a mysterious way* by the poet William Cowper (1731-1800) the friend of John Newton.

I encourage you to read and meditate on these classic hymns to be found in the older hymn books.

William McKeown



side by side can be defined as,

'one Christian taking the initiative with another individual to help them know Christ better and obey Him more fully... leaving the results to God.'

Sophie De Witt

Anyone who knows me will know I enjoy a wee chat and it will come as no surprise that one of the things I have enjoyed since moving to the lovely North Coast and Ballymoney is getting to know people in this community. As a Christian, engaging with those around you is key in witnessing and encouraging others in their faith. When a PW event entitled 'side by side' was advertised as an event to encourage women's ministry, I was keen to go along and hear how we might develop this aspect of Trinity's ministry. On Saturday 19th October a group of ladies from Trinity set off to the venue at Kilfennan Presbyterian Church. Similar events had been held in Belfast, Ballymena and Richhill. The purpose of the event was to explore one aspect of what women's ministry can look like in your church for women of all ages and stages of life. The motto for PW is 'Living for Jesus' and its objective is to 'encourage women to become disciples of Christ.' As we meet regularly together, we aim to encourage women to grow in faith, have fellowship together, and use their gifts, time and money in local and global mission. The focus of the conference was to raise awareness of the potential of the relational approach to women's ministry, through getting alongside one another in two's and three's for prayer, discipleship, pastoral care, intergenerational ministry or outreach.

The morning consisted of listening to various speakers on the theme. We also had opportunities around our tables to discuss how we

develop “side by side” ministry in our congregations. Pauline McNeely led the devotion based on 1st Thessalonians 2 v 1 - 12. Her message was a call to get alongside other ladies and develop genuine, loving relationships where we show integrity as we share the gospel. We were encouraged to share wisdom, not our wisdom but wisdom found in God’s word. Pauline Kennedy, Women’s Ministry and PW Development Officer and Rev. David Thompson, Secretary, Council for Congregational Life and Witness shared practical advice on ways in which we might put this into practice. Hazel McCrea and Eleanor Drysdale shared their personal experiences of ‘side by side’ ministry. Tea, coffee and scones were provided, there was a very well stocked bookstall and opportunity to chat to ladies from other PW groups.

As we came away from a very challenging and yet encouraging morning, I reflected on and thanked God for the many people – family, friends, work colleagues and church members whom He sent to be there alongside me when I needed them. I am also very conscious of the fact that there were, unknown to me others who were praying for me or supporting me in subtle ways. It is no coincidence that I received help, a phone call or a visit just when I needed it.

As a Christian faith is central in all you do. I found prayer triplets and small Bible study groups particularly helpful especially when it was impossible for David and I both to attend Bible study/prayer meetings when the children were small. Fellowship with Christians is necessary as we encourage one another in our faith. The influence of others in our lives can be very simple or very subtle but it can have a lasting impact on our lives. God calls us to not only be blessed through the influence of others but to come alongside others and pass the blessing on. There are many examples in the Bible where the drawing alongside one or two other people has been modelled. Jesus with Peter, James and John, Naomi and Ruth. Paul reminds the church at Thessalonica how important it is to ‘encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.’ 1 Thessalonians 5:11. I encourage you to prayerfully seek God’s guidance on who He would like you to draw alongside, then act. It doesn’t require any special gifts except the ones that God gives us to

use to encourage others in their relationship with Christ. It is God's work. As you serve, God will bless you as your relationship with Him will also grow.

If you would like to hear some of the speakers from the conference you can listen to a podcast from the 'side by side' conference in Assembly Buildings online at www.presbyterianireland.org/sidebyside. Here you will also find links to other resources on this topic. I would also encourage the ladies to attend the PW 2020 Annual Meeting which is on 7th May and is being held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast.

The speaker will be Sophie De Wit [conference speaker and author of 'One-to-one' (*Authentic*), 'Compared to her'.] At that meeting the 2020-2021 theme which is *side by side*, will be launched.

By Pauline Irvine





Messy church proved again to be a great event with families with young children in attendance. The usual crafts and fun were had by the children and food was served with an epilogue at the conclusion. Well done to all who took part!

More messy business!





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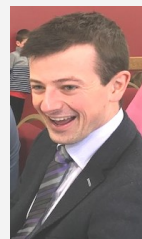
How did you end up there?

Recently, one of my friends got married. At the wedding I had the opportunity to catch up with people from school and others from university, some of whom I have had little contact with in recent years. Of course, the conversation begins by asking “what are you at now?” To which, I would reply “I’m living in Ballymoney working as a Ministry Apprentice and studying part-time”. A common response was one of shock, followed by the question “How did you end up there?”

What you will not know about me is I am an Armagh boy through and through. I love Armagh and until recently hated the prospect of leaving Armagh behind. At university, there was a group of us known as the Armafia (a group name I’m not sure I should be proud to admit ownership of). But nevertheless, that was the group I was apart of. We were Armagh loyal and stuck together. For that reason, “How did you end up there?” is an understandable question.

I find myself asking that very question. How did I end up in Ballymoney? Or more frequently, how did I end up as a Ministry apprentice? Not to bore you with the details, but let’s just say I was that frustrating absent minded child in Sunday school, the awkward teenager in RE who loved to stir the pot, and your stereotypical club football captain. I had little interest in God. My only interest was in accusing and insulting God. When I got saved at the age of 16 years old my friends were bewildered. Suddenly I was going to what they called ‘Jesus camp’ and I was taking this whole God business seriously. However, never did anyone think that I would end up in some sort of gospel ministry. Given my reputation in school that idea would have been absurd to many. Moreover, my public speaking

By Ryan Higgins



ability was lacking to say the least. I was head boy in school and I hated that role because I detested public speaking. Uncontrollable nerves, sweaty palms and a croaky voice were common features of those awful speeches. The question, “how did you end up there?” is an understandable one.

Not long after becoming a Christian I found myself thrown into the deep end, giving youth talks and teaching Sunday school. Through those opportunities people kept encouraging me, suggesting that I might have a gift, prompting me to consider going to university to study theology. Gradually I began to feel a burden for full-time gospel ministry too. However, it was not to be voiced amongst my friends because the whole idea seemed a bit daft. Me doing full-time gospel ministry? No way! I tried to shake the burden and went off to Queen’s University Belfast to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics.

However, it was at University that this burden for ministry grew stronger. But I was, you could say, stubborn and would not admit that this could be the direction my life is heading. Towards the end of university, I started to apply for jobs in the corporate world. However, over the course of a few months I found myself hearing the same passage of scripture preached in different contexts.

I remember after one of those sermons, leaving the meeting immediately, going to my car and breaking down in tears. I was terrified because I started to believe

God was calling me into full-time gospel ministry.

That led to, after graduation, starting a year long internship in Hill Street Presbyterian in Lurgan. The purpose of this was to shadow primarily the Minister but also the Youth Minister. This was a space for me to learn and discern what God was calling me to do. Over the course of the first three months I asked myself nearly every day, what am I doing here? I felt as though I had got it all wrong and on a few occasions I wanted to walk away.

In that time God granted me little glimpse of what ministry is like. He was also teaching me, correcting my false ideas about ministry. The ideas that were shaped by culture rather than His word. To cut a long story short, the burden for ministry resurfaced and could not be suppressed. I finished the year with a sense of constraint—believing this is what God has built me for: full-time gospel ministry. On the other hand, I'm terrified to say those words. Feeling immature, weak, foolish in many ways, not gifted enough, but nevertheless a sense of constraint. A joyful one I must add.

But how did I end up in Ballymoney? I went to seek advice from a wise church leader. After a long conversation, he asked me would I consider going to Cornhill and doing a placement in a church and I said of course. He then told me that Trinity Presbyterian Ballymoney were advertising. Knowing David, hearing a little about the church, it just made sense. I applied, was interviewed, and now you're stuck with me for two years. I am excited for the next two years. I'm looking forward to studying at Cornhill, where we handle God's word each day and become better equipped to teach it.

It is a space for me to ask questions, and learn from wise church leaders. I come away each day truly nourished by the teaching received.

But most importantly, I have settled into life here in Ballymoney. It has been a pleasure to begin to get to know some of you and I look forward to getting to know many more of you. It is a privilege to be a small part of your lives, serving you and my Master. I hope that I will bring some encouragement to you over the next two years, and that I too will be encouraged through my involvement in ministry here. Already I have been encouraged and feel truly blessed to be in Ballymoney. Although, it does seem bizarre in many ways, a shy, nervous boy, leaving Armagh, heading off down this track of gospel ministry. But I know I have ended up here and there, stumbling from place to place, over the last number of years because God has set it out that way. When I reflect on my story, I remember Ephesians 2 v 8-10, I embrace those words, I love those words and find them a great source of encouragement.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2v8-10)

“How did you end up there?” I got saved by the grace of God, through faith alone. It was not my own doing, I cannot boast. I am God's workmanship, created anew in Jesus for good works. Good works that He has mapped out, for me to walk into. “How did you end up there?” In short, by the grace of God. Thankfully I do not dictate the course or direction of my life. He does.



Our Harvest Thanksgiving services were well attended this year and again the afternoon tea proved to be popular with 170 people in attendance. The Ballymena Male Gospel choir sang a number of pieces in the church and some of their members shared. Our speaker at the evening service was Rev. Hugh Cubitt and Rev. Stephen McCracken also took part. The charities supported this year were Macmillan Cancer Care and Mercy Ships. One of our number, Peter Crooks, is involved with Mercy Ships and we were happy to support these two worthwhile charities. The amount raised for both was £1116.

Different organisations within the congregation did windows with a harvest theme relevant to their work. A number of photos show off their handiwork.





*The LORD
will indeed
give what is
good, and
our land
will yield
its harvest*

Psalm 85 v 12





Thank you so much to everyone who packed shoe boxes, donated items and money for this years Operation Christmas Child appeal. The last of the boxes were delivered on 18th November to the drop off centre. The total number of boxes delivered from the church was 143. Well done!



New Years Day walk
At
Portballintrae
11.00am

Refreshments in the church
hall afterwards

Church Register

Baptisms - "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"

27/10/19 Benjamin William Quinn

Jesse Wesley Quinn

Reuben Robert Quinn

Deaths - "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"

**18/6/19 Mrs. Iris McKnight Madelayne Court Care Home
Portstewart**

26/7/19 Miss Linda Lamont Garryduff House

1/8/19 Mrs. Margaret Davidson 23 Hamilton Park

14/9/19 Mrs. Ruby Brown 14 Armour Avenue

26/9/19 Mr. Denis McConville 33 Greenville Avenue

18/10/19 Mrs. Linda Anderson 71 Alexandra Avenue

9/11/19 Mr. Danny Louden 2 Kirk Park

20/11/19 Mr. Albert Louden 34 Balnamore Road

PRAY FOR

January

For David and Pauline and family as they continue to serve God in the plans He has laid out for them at the beginning of a new year. For unity of purpose as we, as a congregation, share in the different ministries within the church. For all who are making new starts in the New Year, whether this is employment, study, setting up home or making new contacts. For those young in the faith that they may be led closer to God through the year.

February

For all those who work with children and youth in the congregation - that they would be encouraged in their efforts to present the gospel. For the increased number of families and young people attending. Thanks for those who give of their time and talents as they teach each Sunday in Sunday School, Bible Class and Children's church as they prepare the themes for each Sunday and the work that is involved in this.

March

For our Easter celebrations, Good Friday Communion, His love through death on a Cross and His triumphant Resurrection that we would know special blessing at this time of the year as we celebrate. Sunday School and Bible Class as they meet. The Boys Brigade, Beehive, Youth Club, Buddies and Bundles, PW, MDF, Bowling Club, Ladies Bible Study, and Time to sow. That all our organisations may be Christ centred.

April

For God's creation and all that this means to us at this time of the year. For renewal in our own spiritual lives as we seek God and apply what we learn from His Word. Knowledge to understand that God is in control of each and every situation, both in times of blessing and trial. For those who govern us that those who know God will use their spiritual insight for the betterment of our country.

May

For our staff as they work to make the church a warm and welcoming outreach. Nora in the office, Rodney as he takes care of the property, Kathryn as she leads the worship in music and song, together with the choir. Give thanks for the opportunities afforded to the congregation to witness. For planned community events to reach people for God. Those who have gone from our church to serve full time.

June

For all those who prepare to serve in summer outreach at home and further afield. For all those involved in CSSM, CEF, PCI, EXODUS and the FAITH MISSION as they seek to witness. Again remember the Irvine family over the summer months that they may enjoy God's blessing and share good times together as they relax on holiday. For ourselves as we all consider our input into church life in September.