

DONAGHADEE METHODIST CHURCH



HARVEST 2022

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The Ministers and the Pastoral Coordinator are always grateful to be kept informed about members suffering illness or bereavement.

website: www.donaghadeemethodist.com

*for up-to-date information about church activities
and to watch church services online*

Cover

The ‘pulpit’, made out of bales of straw, at the church’s Harvest Festival at the Kennedy farm on 25th September

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Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter edition of the Church magazine. We are fortunate that life has returned to normal, although Covid19 is still around. It looks as if we are going to have to live with it as we do with 'flu'. However, everything is starting up again - MWI, Men's Breakfast, Coffee and Chat, Coffee and Crafts, as well as the possibility of Bowls and a Mothers and Toddlers group.

As a church we have had a good year with one of the highlights being the garden party at the Manse celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Little did we think then that by the time this edition of the magazine came out the Queen would be gone! On a personal note, we will treasure the card which we received from her on the occasion of our sixtieth wedding anniversary a few months ago. We join with the rest of the world in paying tribute to one whose faith grounded, upheld and guided her.

We would also like to pay tribute to Rev. Winston Graham who passed home on the same day as the Queen. Like her, he was full of wisdom and compassion, to which he added humility, and all of us who knew him when he and Blanche were members of our church will miss him and remember him with love and affection. We assure Blanche and the rest of his family of our sympathy and prayers.

Thanks to all who have submitted articles. We are always looking for new contributors and submissions from former contributors. If you would like to recommend a book or share something important to you, please do so. As you will see, Pat Caldwell has let us have an interesting account of their experience of ‘Hope Street’.

We probably won’t be having another issue of the magazine before the Spring and I would like to recommend two books by Delia Smith – ‘A Feast for Advent’ and ‘A Feast for Lent’. Perhaps you know her only as a writer of cookery books but I can assure you she can provide a spiritual feast second to none.

Have a good Covid-free winter and a peaceful and blessed Christmas. I hope to hear from you in the new year.

The Editor

Minister’s letter

Autumn is kind of an odd time of the year. We long for bright, ‘sunny’ summer days which feel like they were a long time ago, as we look ahead to dark winter nights. But that then brings the thoughts of warm cosy jumpers, crisp walks

along the sea front, hot chocolate and roaring open fires. Tasty, warming stews and soups with Christmas not far off on the horizon.

That paints quite a nice picture of the months ahead but for many that is not how it is going to look. We have the threat of the tail end of storms that reach us here and can cause flooding and destruction to property. There will be people who are unable to afford a warm coat, never mind heat their home during this financial crisis in which we find ourselves. There will also be those whose cupboards are empty because they can't afford to buy any food and may not even be able to afford to cook it if they do have any.

The weeks and months ahead seem bleak and without hope for many. But we are never without hope, because we have a God of hope. It has been said that *the edge of disaster and the brink of a miracle are the same place*. Exactly because that is when God can reach out to and through his children here on earth. It is at times like this that the Christian church steps up as the hands and feet of God through the work of Foodbanks and other charities such as The Salvation Army, BCM and East Belfast Mission. Through neighbour reaching out to neighbour and communities helping one another.

We can and must be a part of this, spreading the message of faith, hope and love within our local community as we continue to support the foodbank, as we check in on those around us where we live, as we open our doors in the coming

months to young children and families at Parent & Toddlers. Even if it is something as simple as having our doors open, so our local community have somewhere warm to come and spend the afternoon and have a warm cuppa in their hand.

We are never without hope because our God of hope will always reach out his hand to those in need. Christ opened his arms wide on the cross that we would have forgiveness and hope. He rose again that we might know redemption and hope. The Holy Spirit was sent that we might know God dwelling within us and the comfort and hope that brings.

God will never abandon us in our time of need and he will never abandon this world in its time of need...it might just be that he needs a little bit of our help (our hands and feet) along the way.

So will you join me in praying for the weeks and months that lie ahead. For our Church, our congregation, all of the activities that we have planned. For our local community and schools. That God may use us as his hands and feet in this place as we seek to serve him, with thanks for the grace which we have each received.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

Rev Louise McKee

Circuit Steward's update

Over the past few months, the numbers of people returning to our church service has been increasing and we are able to meet at our mid-week activities. We are grateful to Leonard and his team for keeping the services online for those who can no longer join with us in person. We don't have social distancing in place, but I would encourage you to still use the sanitizer and refrain from hugs and kisses as you enter church to keep from spreading flu-type infections over the winter. We will keep the sanctuary well ventilated, but you understand that there is a balance between letting air in and keeping the heat in. As the weather gets colder you might need to keep your coat on during the service, but we aim to keep the building comfortable.

With rising costs of fuel and food and the result of long-term isolation due to COVID the church can offer a warm place for social activity over the winter. We have Coffee & Craft, Coffee & Chat, Bible studies, Men's breakfast, MWI and a Walking Group all started, and we are looking at reconvening the Bowling club and a Mothers' and Toddlers' group if there is interest. You have been given the church calendar of events so keep it handy, join as in many activities as you can, bring a friend and remember the activities in prayer.

The church stewarding and counting teams are now in place. We will be collecting our offering as part of the service, the many online subscribers will pass the plate and the prayer of dedication reminds us that we are stewards of the gifts God

has given us. The communion offering for the Benevolent fund will be a retiring offering on a plate at the church exits.

As a church we comply with legislation concerning the property maintenance and Health & Safety of the building users. If you find any piece of faulty electrical equipment or situation likely to cause injury, please let Robert McCready or the Circuit Steward know so it can be investigated.

The new church roof and storm glazing has made the sanctuary dry, but it will be sometime before it is ready to replaster and paint. We will also replace the ceiling and improve the insulation. The Wesley Hall and No.8 are not in such good condition, but we are waiting to see what building work we should undertake with our limited resources to improve disabled access and make the premises more suited to our needs.

We all have family commitments and appointments, so don't feel you have to attend every Bible study or coffee morning. Join us when you can and you will be made very welcome.

Geraldine Chivers

Harvest on the farm

On Sunday 25th September we celebrated Harvest Festival at the Kennedys' farm on Craigboy Road. We were welcomed to the service at a beautifully decorated barn displaying the fruits and flowers of the fields. About 85 of us from

Donaghadee led by the Rev. Louise were joined by the Rev Ken Connor and 20 of his congregation from Cregagh Methodist Church.

The ‘Call to worship’ asked us to give thanks for God’s steadfast love and faithfulness. The opening hymn “Come, ye thankful people, come” reminded us that “All the world is God’s own field”. We had two readings from scripture: Ps.65, vv.9-13, “He waters the earth for His people and sends rich harvest of grain”, and Mk.4, vv.21-33. Following the children’s story, with visual aids of corn-on-the-cob, we had the hymn reminding us of a loving and creative God who put the colours in the rainbow, gold in the sun, sparkle in the stars, silver in the moonlight and scent in the roses.

For our sermon, the guest speaker was the Rev Ken Connor from Cregagh. In the reading from St Mark we saw the comparison of the parable of the sower: first the seed, then the shoot and so forth. Jesus is, of course, the one who plants the grain. By using stories like these Jesus allows for the listener’s response. The seed is the word of God, powerfully filled with the Holy Spirit. The Kingdom of God grows individually and we are all in a partnership with God: we are in it together. We must sow the seed everywhere, even if we consider our seed small like the mustard seed, we are to wait patiently. We may not always see the results of our sowing: someone else will do the ‘watering’, while another does the ‘reaping’. The harvest is God’s timing.

Our final hymn reminded us to bless our Creator and worship Him in humbleness, praising the ‘Three in One’. Following the service, we had time to see the farm animals, especially the new-born calf. All enjoyed the great barbecue and a time of fellowship with the church family.

Special thanks to James and Christine for decorating the barn and moving all the chairs there and back, and to all who worked hard (notably chef John Caldwell) to provide the tasty food. Many others helped unseen, but noted by God! Truly it was a day of thanksgiving.

Winifred Thurley



Methodist Childcare Society

The Methodist Child Care Society is the means by which we can reach out to families within the Methodist Connexion in Ireland who are experiencing financial hardship. Given the current financial situation facing the country it is likely that there will be an increased need for support.

Donaghadee Methodist Church has been very generous in its support for the Society over many years. The Coronavirus Pandemic had a negative impact on the amounts contributed over the past few years but this year we hope to see “normal service resumed”. As has been the practice the collection on

Christmas morning will go to Childcare and individuals may if they wish use the special envelope which will be available in the pews in December. Some of you will have the tubes for saving during the year and you may continue to use these should you wish.

Pat Caldwell

Reflections

Do you know (I suspect you do) that the Bible is a best-seller? Sometimes that is hard to believe, especially when you teach, because most children and teenagers have no understanding of Biblical references.

It has had many uses, including being used as a flower press, because the old family Bibles were very heavy. I can remember when the Rev Dr Donald Soper came to speak in the Donegal Square church it was picketed by members of Ian Paisley's church and a Bible was thrown – possibly by the Rev Ian Paisley himself – at Donald Soper's head. He caught it and then remarked that he had seen the Bible used for many things, but never before as a missile!

It may not be a missile, but it is a weapon. In Paul's address to the Ephesians on the armour of God he refers to "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God". There is now an increasing number of translations ranging from the King James version to the Living Bible and The Message, and

many different formats. I remember hearing a story about an elderly woman who wanted to hide her money where the family would not find it, and she chose the Bible because no one would open it!

It doesn't matter what your copy of the Bible is like. It can be leather-bound with gilt edges, a hard-back or a paper-back or what a friend referred to as "my tatty old Bible", but if it is not opened and read you may as well not possess it. The Bible is the word of God and the New Testament is the account of the deeds and teachings of the 'Word made flesh'. It is there, not just to be read, but to change you and show you how to become more like Jesus.

To quote Paul again, in his letter to Timothy, "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man or woman of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work". You can know the Bible from cover to cover and be able to quote freely from it but unless we pay attention to what God is saying and are changed we do not benefit. We don't come to the Bible to have our ideas approved but to hear God speak to us and to discover His will for our lives.

One way of discovering what the Bible has to say is to come to the Church Bible Study or join one of the Bible Study House Groups. The Groups are always ready to welcome new members and we would love to see you.

With every blessing, love, Maeve.

Church finance

Things are not getting any easier for the church, any more than they are for us as individuals. We are all facing steeply rising prices. Even with a bit of help from the Government, our electricity and gas bill is likely to double next year from £4,000 to £8,000. And everything else is going up too. I had to tell the Church Council that unfortunately we were going to be in the red this year, and probably more so next year.

Nevertheless, we have reserves to cover a few bad years, and we are still going ahead with all the usual church activities. If we have to spend a bit more money to keep people warm, well, that is important! And we are looking after the church buildings. We fixed the roof last year, and now we need to replace the church ceiling (not least, to stop all the heat escaping through the holes in it). We need better insulation and a more energy-efficient lighting system. There is going to be no choice in future: we shall have to do everything we can to save on energy.

We need to get some work done on the roof and guttering at No.8 – with old buildings like ours the work is never-ending – and you will have seen that the skylight in the Wesley Hall has collapsed and will need to be replaced. Many thanks to Geraldine and her sister Norma Best for effecting a temporary repair to keep the water out until we can find a builder to fix it (see back page).

We are having an insurance inspection shortly, and no doubt that will come up with more things we need to repair and make safe. One bit of good news is that we hope to have a new gate to the car park before too long, thanks to James Kennedy and Alfie Breadon.

So, please keep up your regular offerings, because the church needs them for the work it is called to do. We have lost a number of faithful and generous donors in recent years, and they will be hard to replace.

Kit Chivers, Church Treasurer

Thanksgiving

...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Four centuries ago (1620, to be precise) a group of serious-minded Christians left Plymouth for the ‘New World’ seeking religious freedom and to escape persecution in England. After two months of battling Atlantic storms, the Pilgrims (as they were much later referred to) landed at Cape Cod, Massachusetts – many miles north of where they had intended going. Their first winter saw more than half of them dead due to malnourishment, cold and disease.

Thankfully, some native Indians came to their aid and

taught them to hunt forest animals and grow crops such as corn, squash, vegetables and wheat. They had a bumper crop that first summer of 1621 and, subsequently, set aside three days of thanksgiving to God for his blessings. Instead of being angry and bitter with God for a horrible sea crossing where most of them suffered terrible seasickness, and many died of cold and hunger, the survivors praised and thanked God for his love and providence. They echoed the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 92:1 ‘It is good to give thanks to the LORD, And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High...’

In 1863, during the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a federal holiday. He called it a national day of ‘...Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens’ to be celebrated each year on the fourth Thursday in November.

Thanksgiving is a worthy celebration of God’s abundant material provision because it is important for us to show gratitude and be thankful to God. 1Thessolonians 5:18 tells us ‘...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.’ For Christians, however, every day is a day of thanksgiving – not only for our physical necessities, but also for God’s abundant grace in giving us his Son, Jesus, as our Saviour and King!

Prayer: *Thank you Father in heaven for blessing us abundantly in so many physical ways – but especially for giving us your precious Son who has made our redemption and salvation possible. In his name. Amen.*

John Magowan

New Road gets a glimmer of Hope

It was the end of March when a letter was hand delivered to my porch. It stated, “Dear Resident, My name is Alistair, I’m the Location Manager for Hope Street. We have decided that your property is of particular interest for a scene and we would be keen to discuss the project further with you. Please contact me if you are interested in taking part”. “No way!!” thought I (I didn’t even ask John).

A week later and a second letter arrived in the porch - this one, along similar lines but signed by Conor, Assistant Location Manager. “No way” thought I, a view shared by my neighbour Heather who had received a similar letter.

John and I went off in the caravan for a few days without giving any further thought to the letters. Returning we had hardly got through the door when Heather called to report that during our absence a team from Hope Street had called with her and were very keen to film a full day in her house including “a dramatic end”. She had relented and agreed but the scene required our co-operation as the houses had to be

adjoining. Conor would be calling with us within an hour or so to discuss this in detail.

The clothes, duvets and other items we had packed into the caravan were still littering the lounge floor when Conor arrived. He explained that the scene involved our hallway and porch and would take about a half day – “That’s OK” I thought – not invasive, a minimum of disruption. Wrong!! We agreed the date and the technical team called within a few days to take photographs and install a CCTV camera.

The appointed day duly arrived, damp and drizzly, and the team started to appear from 7am. There must have been around 30 involved – some of these we had expected like actors, cameramen, the director, producer, but then you also have the make-up team, the script supervisor, first aid, technicians and general assistants. The front of our house was jam-packed. An hour or so later and Kenny Gracey from Tandragee arrived. He provides animals for many films in Northern Ireland including Game of Thrones and for this scene had been asked to produce two red setters. The scene involved the police calling at the door and when it opened the two dogs were to come bounding out in attack mode. So much for the plan, but as we all know film and TV actors are told to avoid working with children or animals and, yet again, this proved to be correct. Try as they might no one could get the dogs into “attack mode”, rather they ambled out wagging their tails! After several re-takes all we got was a muddy hall

and porch and a freezing house as the door had been left open!! Shortly after noon, all was finished, the team packed up, I cleaned the floor and thought “That’s that”. Wrong again!!

I had been looking forward to the filming at Heather’s house which had been scheduled for the following week. John had got up early that morning and gone to the car for something and left the front door unlocked when he returned. He had been working in the upstairs lounge and around 7am was on his way downstairs for a cup of coffee when he encountered a member of the Production team coming in the front door with a roll of carpet protector under her arm. Fortunately for all concerned John had dressed for the day, even at that early hour! “Hello”, she said, “just setting up your lounge for the actors and staff to use while we film next door”. Clearly, there had been a breakdown in communication as we had not been informed! I came down for breakfast at 7.30 to find an actor making himself a cup of coffee and rehearsing his lines!! Quite a surprise. We spent most of the day upstairs having given over the downstairs lounge, kitchen and bathroom to Hope Street, so it was something of a relief when the team packed up and left a full 12 hours later.

However, in spite of all the disruption I look forward to watching Hope Street in the autumn and the episode when our house is shown with the dramatic plot revealed. The series has surpassed expectations with just under 2m

downloads and sales to USA, Canada, Australia and Germany. And of course, it showcases Donaghadee, indeed the town has folks coming from all arts and parts to see the Commodore and other parts of Port Devine, – mind you I’m not expecting any tourists visiting my porch!

Pat Caldwell

Methodist Women in Ireland (MWI)

Hello ladies, it’s that time again! Our first meeting for the year is scheduled for 3rd October at 1.30 pm. We hope that we will see you all again, and look forward to a more “normal” year. Our meetings are due to be held each month on first Monday at 1.30pm.

October 3rd	Bangor Community Food Bank, Speaker Ken Scott
November 7th	At Home meeting
December 5th	“A Swedish Christmas”, Speaker Annika McKillen

For your information, the new all-Ireland president, Mrs Olive Rowe, was installed on 1st October in Enniskillen. We wish her well for her busy year ahead.

Looking forward to seeing you all again. Every blessing!

Helen Johnston and Mary Todd



Walking Group

Change of day and time of walking as the evenings draw in!

We now meet on Thursdays at 1pm in Crommelin Park and aim to walk for approx. an hour and enjoy a coffee together after.

Please feel free to join us and enjoy the craic. Don't worry about your walking pace, as we break into groups if needed.

You will be very welcome.

In His time

“I wait on God to bring to pass all he has promised me,
And as I wait, I rest in faith for what I cannot see.
For in His way, he will provide at just the perfect time
Everything that’s good and right to bless this life of
mine.”

“It is God who arms me with strength and makes my
way perfect.” (Psalm 18, v.32)

As you read these words, may you be blessed as I have been.
Sylvia Taylor

A shining light

On 8th September the sad news came through that our strong
and steadfast Queen Elizabeth II had sadly passed away.

God bless her! She stood strong, getting us through many
turbulent and challenging times such as Brexit, COVID, the
Ukraine war and the energy crisis. We will not only miss her
as our stability in a changing world but as a remarkable
example to follow. She will be so deeply missed, for she was
the very spirit of Great Britain and the Commonwealth.

I believe that the late Queen’s Christian faith was central to
the success of her 70-year reign, and we should all take note
of that.

During her reign she met all classes of people from working folk to Prime Ministers, Kings and Queens, and yet she treated each the same, all with the greatest respect.

There is a lovely verse in the Bible that would characterise the late Queen's life, and it is to be found in Matthew Ch. 5, v.16, where the Lord tells us, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven".

May the Lord help us all to shine our light just as the late Queen did, for she was the guiding light of our nation, and through it may the Lord's name be glorified and His kingdom extended. Amen.

George Bolton

A Father's love letter

My Child,

You may not know me, but I know everything about you
(Ps.139.1) I know when you sit down and when you rise up
(Ps.139.2) I am familiar with all your ways (Ps.139.3) Even the
very hairs on your head are numbered (Matt.10.29) For you were
made in my image (Gen.1.27) In me you live and move and have
your being (Acts 17.28) For you are my offspring (Acts 17.28) I
knew you even before you were conceived (Jer.1.4) I chose you
when I planned creation (Eph.1.11) You were not a mistake, for
all your days are written in my book (Ps.139.15) I determined the
exact time of your birth and where you would live (Acts 17.26)

You are fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps.139.14) I knit you together in your mother's womb (Ps.139.13) And brought you forth on the day you were born (Ps.71.6) I have been misrepresented by those who do not know me (Jn.8.41) I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love (1Jn.4.16) And it is my desire to lavish my love on you (1Jn.3.1) Simply because you are my child and I am your father (1Jn.3.1) I offer you more than your earthly father ever could (Matt.7.11) For I am the perfect Father (Matt.5.48) Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand (Jam.1.17) For I am your provider and I meet all your needs (Matt.6.31) My plan for your future has always been filled with hope (Jer.29.11) Because I love you with an everlasting love (Jer.31.3) My thoughts towards you are a countless as the sand on the seashore (Ps.139.17) And I rejoice over you with singing (Zeph.3.17) I will never stop doing good to you (Jer.32.40) For you are my treasured possession (Ex.19.5) I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul (Jer.32.41) And I want to show you great and marvellous things (Jer.33.3) If you seek me with all your heart you will find me (Deut.4.29) Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart (Ps.37.4) For it is I who gave you those desires (Phil.2.13) I am able to do for you more than you can possibly imagine (Eph.3.20) For I am your greatest encourager (2Thes.2.16) I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles (2Cor.1.3) When you are broken-hearted I am close to you (Ps.34.18) As a shepherd carries a lamb I have carried you close to my heart (Is.40.11) One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes (Rev. 21.3) And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth (Rev.21.4) I am your Father and I love you even as I love my son Jesus (Jn.17.23) For in Jesus my love for you is

revealed (Jn.17.26) He is the exact representation of my being (Heb.1.3) He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you (Rom.8.31) And to tell you that I am not counting your sins (2Cor.5.18) Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled (2Cor.5.18) His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you (1Jn.4.10) I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love (Rom.8.31) If you receive the gift of my son Jesus you receive me (1Jn.2.23) And nothing will ever separate you from my love again (Rom.8.38) Come home and I'll throw the biggest party Heaven has ever seen (Luke 15.7) I have always been Father and will always be Father (Eph.3.14) The question is .. will you be my child? (Jn.1.12) I am waiting for you (Luke 15.11-32).

Love, Your Dad, Almighty God

Contributed by Mary Todd

Men's breakfast

On Saturday 9th July the men (along with Rev Louise!) held their second breakfast since regrouping, following on from the successful breakfast held in May at the Dinner Bell in the town. This time the group made the short trip to Millisle for breakfast at the newly built Ballycopeland Windmill Heritage Visitor Attraction. It was a great time of fellowship and catching up on stories from yester-year about the windmill and the surrounding area. The breakfast was enjoyed by all and even better with a cuppa. Afterwards some of us took the time to have a look around the little museum area where we could grind some corn by hand and then up to the windmill.

For those who were fit and able enough they also got the chance to climb up to see the inside of the windmill if they managed the steep steps to the top. A great wee enterprise to visit locally and a great morning with the men's fellowship.

The next date for the men's group will be Saturday 15th October with an in-house breakfast at the church halls. There will also be an opportunity to talk about the plan of activities for the group for the year ahead. There may also be some activities that morning in the hall along with breakfast and fellowship.

Andrew McKee



Men's breakfast in the Ballycopeland Windmill cafe

We are in the process of restarting a **Parents and Toddlers** group in our church. If you would be interested in helping out, making a cuppa or chatting to some of the parents, childminders or guardians speak to Rev Louise



Are you interested in Indoor Bowls?

We are looking to start a friendly club for all levels whether you are new to bowls or a master.

Why not come along, try some bowling and enjoy a cuppa and some fellowship. Planning to start late October or early November.

Don't allow worry to kill you. Let the Church help!

Rev Louise and Rev Ken Connor at Demesne Farm



**When the rain begins to fall
And it's comin' in the hall
Who ya gonna call?**



BEST SISTERS!