

The **Methodist** Church 

Donaghadee Methodist Church



Magazine - Christmas 2021

Minister: Rev Louise McKee
07801032280

Circuit Steward: Geraldine Chivers
028 9188 9180

Pastoral Coordinator: Robert Watson
028 9146 3772

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 cover picture, commemorating this year's Harvest Thanksgiving at the Kennedy farm, was kindly contributed by Mitchell McDade.

Contents

Editorial	<i>The Editor</i>	4
Minister's letter	<i>Rev Louise McKee</i>	5
Services in December	<i>Circuit Steward</i>	7
Harvest 2021	<i>Ann McDade</i>	9
Tribute to Fred Taylor	<i>Matthew Taylor</i>	11
Tribute to Billy Fergie	<i>His family</i>	12
Lest I forget	<i>Bill Brown</i>	14
Reflections	<i>Maeve Lennie</i>	15
Politically correct	<i>Anon</i>	16
Envelopes for 2022	<i>Church Treasurer</i>	18
Thought for the Day	<i>John Magowan</i>	20
MWI meeting	<i>Helen Johnston</i>	22
C S Lewis	<i>Mary Todd</i>	24
No excuse for abuse	<i>MWI President</i>	24
Church buildings	<i>Kit Chivers</i>	26
Connect Counselling	<i>George Thompson</i>	27
The Christmas card	<i>Bert Montgomery</i>	29
Recent deaths		31

Editorial

Welcome to our Christmas edition of the magazine. We squeezed another one in because we wanted to remember our wonderful Harvest service and we are grateful to Ann McDade for her account of it and to Mitchell for his drawing.

It is good to know that the home Bible study groups are to begin again.

Will the ladies of the Congregation please note that the members of MWI have decided to meet in the afternoon instead of the evening so those of you who hated going out at night can join us at at 1:30pm. (to accommodate grannies who do the school run) on Monday, 6th December. Please come, because we would love to welcome new members and see all the old ones back. The speaker will be Alison McCaw and her subject will be “Supporting the families of Donaghadee”.

We all know that the lockdowns have led to an increase in domestic violence and the All-Ireland President of MWI Joan Strong has chosen for her project this year “No excuse for abuse”. As our church has been designated a Safe Place we wanted to share something of the project, so we have included a shortened version of her letter. Would you please also note that the January meeting of MWI will be on the second Monday, not the first.

You will see that Bert has interrupted his autobiography to write a poem. We are grateful to him and to all our contributors for their continued support. But we would like to hear from you, the reader. Why not read and **write!**

It is with great regret that we remember the passing of Fred Taylor and Billy Fergie. We will think of them both with love and affection and are grateful to the writers of the tributes.

We now look forward to Advent and the Christmas services and we wish you all a very blessed Christmas and a peaceful and (hopefully Covid-free New Year.

The Editor

Minister's letter

November is the month in which we traditionally 'remember'. We begin the month with All Saints' Day, when we remember those who have gone before us in the faith. People who have led and guided us, helped us to learn to pray, to understand scripture and disciplined us in our faith journeys. People who have left a lasting impact on our lives and faith.

On 11th November we remember those who gave their lives in the World Wars and every conflict since and indeed those who still risk their lives today for our safety and freedom. This year we thought about how animals have been involved in most conflicts helping those fighting, suffering alongside the soldiers they serve. During the first world war over 8 million horses and countless mules and donkeys died. It is also thought that over 100,000 racing pigeons served during World War I and over 200,000 during the second World War. Other more unusual animals have served including elephants,

camels, oxen, bullocks, cats, canaries and even glow worms! Despite horrific wounds many of these animals continued their work with amazing dedication, courage and loyalty to their handlers.

As a congregation we remember the sad loss of members of our own congregation and local community in recent weeks. It can feel at times like sadness and grief is pressing in on all sides with no escape, we can feel alone with our thoughts and emotions. As I write this I am preparing for the first Sunday in advent. A short period of preparation, preparation to celebrate Christ's coming as a little baby to his faithful and obedient parents. The child who was to grow and experience a normal human life, who understands all that we go through. The Christ who wept over the death of his friend Lazarus. The Christ who is Emmanuel: God With Us.

You will be receiving an advent devotional book which has been produced in collaboration with Rev Cheryl Patterson, Glenburn Methodist, and Rev Ken Connor, Cregagh Methodist. Hopefully this little resource will help you to make the most of the time of preparation in the days leading up to Christmas. In this magazine we have also included a list of all the services of worship that will be happening. As I have already mentioned there has been a lot of sadness in recent months, so Christmas is not always easy. If Christmas is going to be a difficult time, please do come along to the Blue Christmas Service which is an opportunity to acknowledge our pain and grief before God whether it be recent or from many years ago. Allow God to minister to you in your sadness and pain as He reminds us that He is with us in all things.

And so, as we move into this Advent may our God be with you, Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Rev Louise McKee

Services in December

Last year the Church Christmas tree went up, but we were prevented from meeting together by the pandemic, which has impacted every aspect of life over the past year. As we enter the season of Advent, we are thankful for the vaccinations which allow us to meet together in the church. Our Minister has planned a programme of services to include all members of our church family.

On **Sunday 5th December** at 11.00am we shall have a special Nativity presentation and we invite all the younger members of the congregation to come. This is our opportunity to bring new toys, unwrapped, which will be distributed by the Belfast Central Mission to families in need of help to provide gifts for children and young people at this time.

Commented [1]:

On **Sunday 12th December** at 11.00am there will be Morning Worship with the Rev Louise McKee and at 3.00 pm a 'Blue Christmas' Service. This is a service of comfort for those who find the holiday period difficult because they have suffered loss or hurt. If you know someone for whom Christmas is a difficult time please bring them to join us for this service.

Commented [2]:

On **Wednesday 15th December** the church hall will be open from 10.00 -12.00, and everyone is invited for a Christmas Coffee and Chat.

Sunday 19th December at 3.00pm will be our Candlelight Carol service with tea and mince pies after the service. There will be NO MORNING SERVICE.

Commented [3]:

Sunday 25th December at 10.00am will be our family service so please join us to celebrate the birth of Christ!

Commented [4]:

Sunday 26th, Boxing Day: NO MORNING SERVICE

Commented [5]:

Friday 31st December at 4.00pm: New Year's Eve 'Last Light' Service. This will replace our traditional late Watchnight Service. We encourage as many people as possible to join us as we reflect on the year that is past and prepare for the year ahead.

Commented [6]:

Sunday 2nd January at 11.00am: Covenant Service (and also our usual collection for the Food Bank).

Commented [7]:

We are still in a pandemic and infection rates in Northern Ireland are much higher than we expected by this time, so restrictions may be reintroduced in the future. If changes have to be made, notice will be put on Facebook and the Donaghadee Methodist Church website and we would ask you to pass on the message to those who do not use social media. Please make a note of the time changes and plan to join the church family as we celebrate Christmas together.

Harvest 2021

The last Sunday in September is always the Harvest Thanksgiving at Donaghadee Methodist Church, and pandemic or no pandemic, we would celebrate!

In years past I loved to see the church colourfully decorated. I did worry that the flowers would have wilted overnight and the melon at the top of the arrangement, which I had carefully balanced on two bananas the previous day, might fall down when Robert struck up with a rousing hymn.

This year, the Church Council promised us something different:

HARVEST IN A BARN ON A REAL FARM
– and bring a warm coat!

Sunday 23rd September brought a beautiful morning. As we drove along the shore road a colourful poster pointed the way to the Kennedy farm. The congregation arrived to see the barn beautifully decorated. There were twinkling fairy lights and arrangements of flowers, fruit and vegetables in front of a pulpit made of straw bales. I doubt if Rev Louise had ever preached from a straw pulpit before.

The chairs had been transported from the church and were socially distanced. Even the sound system was there. Nothing had been forgotten. A quick glance at the order of service told me that the hymns were those I associate with harvest and love to sing. I did my best to “raise the song of harvest home” in spite of the mask and my glasses steaming up.

The call to worship directed our thoughts to God’s goodness and his promise of salvation: “Come, you thankful people,

come.” In her sermon Louise spoke about the wedding at Cana, where Jesus turned the water into wine. This wasn’t any old wine, but the very best wine, and much more than was needed. This message was all about God’s ABUNDANCE.

In appreciation of God’s boundless gifts to us we sang “O praise him, Alleluia” and “For the fruits of all creation, thanks be to God”. We shared the blessing to conclude this wonderful service.

Now there were noises from outside and wonderful smells wafting into the barn. James Kennedy and John Wright are busy turning burgers and sausages. Quickly the queue forms. Nobody worried about a wobbly plate or how to eat onions without cutlery. The food was GREAT. I was serving and noticed the number of people returning for seconds, and thirds. There was not a single sausage or burger left. A cup of tea or coffee to finish and whet the over-worked vocal cords. The craic was mighty!

Now was the time to explore a real farm. The ladies drooled over the two calves, born just a few days earlier, and talked to the sheep. The men were fascinated to see some of James Kennedy’s vintage tractors on display, beautifully presented. What a lot of work must have gone into them!

We all joined the Minister in thanking those who had worked so hard to make Harvest such a success. Special thanks to James and Christine, who were wonderful hosts. And, thanks to the Methodist Newsletter, there is now not a Methodist in Ireland who does not know that the Minister of Donaghadee Methodist drives a tractor.

Looking back on Harvest 2021, I will remember the congregation coming together to give praise for all God's blessings and to experience the fellowship of the folk at Donaghadee Methodist Church.

Ann McDade

Grandad's Tribute (Fred Taylor)

For those who don't know me I'm Matthew Taylor, Fred Taylor's grandson. On behalf of my family, I would like to thank everyone for all the cards, gifts and visits to my grandmother's house at this tough time. It means a lot to me to see all the members of the church family show how much they cared for and loved my grandad.

My Grandad lived a life of joy and happiness. Whenever I sit and reflect and think about him, I found that his main priorities were his family, church and the community, all of which he loved greatly. When reflecting on my childhood memories with him, all of them are archived with love and laughter and will never be forgotten. Being with Grandad was always so much fun. We loved to laugh together, and he will always be adored.

Knowing Grandad well, I knew one part of his life was Church. Having Jesus in his heart led him to becoming a full

Member of the church family in Donaghadee Methodist in 2016, which then inspired me to become a member of the church family in 2018. Speaking to other members of the church family, they all expressed that Grandad was a valued member and was part of the core in the church throughout the years. When having conversations, I can recall the main points coming from them are that everyone knew him either through him waving from his pew or grandad collecting the offering. No one would be missed if Grandad was there.

To conclude, I just want to say, Grandad, I will always miss you, but I just want you to know that I have so many wonderful memories of you and they will never be forgotten. I will always think of you with a smile on your face

Love, Matthew

Billy Fergie

Billy Fergie, who died last week, was the heart and soul of this church for most of his long life. He taught Sunday School and Christian Endeavour, he was a Captain of the Boys' Brigade and a member of the Quarterly Board that was the forerunner of the Church Council.

At his thanksgiving service his family remembered him as a warm and wonderful father, devoted to his wife Nancy and their children, Helen, Angus and Gillian. He was particularly

caring for Gillian, who passed away recently and was also remembered at the service. Gillian had special educational needs but was a beautiful and happy child, full of laughter.

Billy was passionate about music and sport. The family home was full of music, which was passed on through the generations. Emma, accompanied by Helen on the piano, gave a lovely rendition of 'Be still, my soul', at the service. Billy taught himself to play the guitar and was for several years a member of the 'Harbour Lights' group with Charlie Bell, Hugh Herron and Brian Mills.

His sports were cricket, rugby and golf, and when he was not playing them, he loved to watch them on television. He was said to be remarkably fleet of foot on the cricket pitch, and surprisingly light on his feet as a dancer.

Billy was the Post Office Telephones engineer for Donaghadee and the Ards and is remembered to have driven his van as though it was a rally car. His children loved to ride with him and encouraged him to speed up over the hump in the Ballyhay Road so they could experience the thrill of bumping their heads on the roof. He loved to travel and took his family to beauty spots all over the island of Ireland.

He loved his church and had many good friends here who will never forget him. He was a man of a deep faith that sustained him to the end.

Edited from the tributes paid to him by his family

Lest I forget

*Lest I forget a man who meant a world of things to me
This pen I'll let record today for all the world to see.
A tribute which can only hope to touch on what he was
And what he meant to all of us who now must bear the loss.*

*This man did nothing special or famous in his time,
His fame came not from things he did but from things he left
behind.*

*A legacy of advice and love for those who follow on,
Handed down from fathers through the generations gone.*

*It seems like only yesterday that he peacefully closed his eyes
And left this world where he worked so hard to collect his
well won prize.*

*Although of average stature he was a giant among men
Living a life beyond reproach for his three score years and
ten.*

*Not for him the worldly ways where man so often falls,
Instead his home and family took preference over all.
He led by his example and set his standards high,
Hoping all life's problems could be solved in peaceful ways.*

*There's really little danger of forgetting such a man
When all he did, and said, and was, continues to live on.
No son has ever had a better father or loyal friend,
The book of life has surely reached another chapter's end.*

Bill Brown
(read at Billy Fergie's funeral)

Reflections

Do you remember the team-building exercise where you are paired off and one person is blindfolded and the other leads them around - up and down steps, around corners and in and out of doorways. Because you can't see you have to trust your partner to guide you and take care of you.

I remember doing this with Gillian Kingston at a World Federation weekend. She was blindfolded, while I did the leading. When it was over, and she was discussing it with the group she said that she had complete confidence in me because she had known me for a lifetime. You have to know someone before you will be certain about them and trust them completely.

The Christian life calls for total trust. Do we know God so well that we are sure that everything He plans for us is for our own ultimate good? Do we know that He loves us?

How do we know that He loves us? Surely at this time of the year we are certain because we remember "God so loved - - that He gave". His beloved Son was sent into the world as a baby so that He might save us from our sins by dying for us and to be our Emmanuel, 'God with us'.

You remember the words of the worship song 'Be still and know that I am God', and the second verse "In Thee O God do I put my trust".

You know, and then you trust. My reading from “Jesus Calling” for the day I am writing this is very appropriate –

“The light of My Love shines on you continually regardless of your feelings or behaviour. Your responsibility is to be receptive to this unconditional love. Thankfulness and trust are your primary receptors. Thank Me for everything, trust Me at all times”.

Have a truly blessed Christmas and rejoice in God’s love and His gift.

Love, Maeve

Politically correct ‘Night before Christmas’

*‘Twas the night before Christmas, and Santa’s a wreck,
How to live in a world that’s politically correct?
His workers no longer would answer to ‘Elves’,
‘Vertically challenged’, they were calling themselves.
And labour conditions at the North Pole
Were alleged by the union to stifle the soul.
Four reindeer had vanished, without much propriety,
Released to the wilds by the Humane Society.
And Equal Employment had made It quite clear
That Santa had better not use just reindeer.
So Dancer and Donner and Comet and Cupid
Were replaced with four pigs, and you know, that looked*

stupid!

*The runners had been removed from his sleigh:
The ruts were termed dangerous by the EPA.
And people had started to call for the cops
When they heard sled noises on their roof-tops.
Second-hand smoke from his pipe had his workers quite
frightened,*

*His fur-trimmed red suit was called 'unenlightened'.
And to show you the strangeness of life's ebbs and flows,
Rudolph was suing over unauthorised use of his nose,
And had gone on Geraldo, in front of the nation,
Demanding millions in over-due compensation.
So, half of the reindeer were gone, and his wife,
Who suddenly said she's enough of this life,
Joined a self-help group, packed, and left in a whiz,
Demanding from now on her title was 'Ms'.
And as for the gifts, why, he'd ne'er had a notion
That making a choice could cause so much commotion.
Nothing of leather, nothing of fur,
Which meant nothing for him and nothing for her.
Nothing that might be construed to pollute,
Nothing to aim and nothing to shoot.
Nothing that clamoured or made lots of noise,
Nothing for just girls, or just for the boys.
Nothing that claimed to be gender-specific,
Nothing that's warlike or non-pacific.
No candy or sweets, they were bad for the tooth,
Nothing that seemed to embellish a truth.*

*And fairy tales, while not yet forbidden
Were, like Ken and Barbie, better off hidden,
For they raised the hackles of those psychological,
Who claimed that the only good gift was one ecological.
No baseball, no footballsomeone could get hurt;
Besides, playing sports exposed children to dirt.
Dolls were said to be sexist, and should be passé,
And Nintendo would rot your entire brain away.
So Santa just stood there, dishevelled, perplexed;
He just could not figure out what to do next.
His sack was quite empty, limp to the ground:
Nothing fully acceptable was to be found.
Something special was needed, a gift that he might
Give to all without angering the left or the right.
A gift that would satisfy, with no indecision,
Every group of people, every religion;
Every ethnicity, every hue,
Everyone everywhere ... even you.
So here is that gift, its price beyond worth:
May you and your loved ones enjoy peace on Earth.*

Your envelopes for 2022

Freewill offering envelopes are the church's main source of income. The use of standing orders is increasing, and some members pay by other electronic means or send in a cheque once a year, but we still depend on envelopes for more than

all the other sources put together. To meet our budget for next year, 2022, we shall be aiming at a target of £40,000 from the envelopes.

So, it is important that we get the envelopes out to everyone before the start of the year. Last December it was difficult, because church was not meeting at the time. But this year we need everyone to please pick up their envelopes, or for their friends and neighbours to collect them for them if they can't.

Not everyone needs envelopes. Those who use standing orders and other means of payment are welcome to have a set of envelopes if they ask, but envelopes will not be issued to them automatically.

Almost as important as the envelopes, is the signing of Gift Aid declarations. Anyone who is a taxpayer should please sign one and thereby increase the value of their giving by 25 per cent at no cost to them. Gift Aid is worth more than £13,000 a year to the church and is an absolute lifeline. As Treasurer, I have to sign off our claim to HMRC every six months certifying that everyone I am claiming for is eligible. So, it is vital that I have a full set of up-to-date Gift Aid declarations – they need to be updated because people's circumstances change.

There are many things that go toward making Donaghadee Methodist a church with a future. But being disciplined

about how we manage our money is an essential part of it.
Thank you all for your help and your generosity.

Kit Chivers
Church Treasurer

Thought for the Day: Jesus' healing ministry

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened... (Isaiah 35:5)

It's almost 2000 years since Jesus Christ commenced his ministry in Israel. As the incarnate Son of God his mission, in major part, was to preach the good news of salvation and to heal the spiritual brokenness of people. (Isaiah 61:1-2)

Many at that time suffered from physical infirmities such as blindness, deafness and leprosy; Jesus was moved with compassion at their plight. He reached out in godly love to heal all who sought his help. Oftentimes he would simply touch sick people, or say the word, and they were healed. Some, by even touching the hem of his garment, were miraculously cured of their afflictions. (Matthew 9:20-22; 14:36)

At times, immediately prior to healing people of blindness Jesus did something seemingly unorthodox; some might even

consider it unhygienic today. One such example is found in John 9:6-7: ‘When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.’ Another example can be found in Mark 8:22-25, where Jesus spat on a blind man’s eyes, and after touching them twice, restored his sight perfectly.

If you’re like me, you’ve probably wondered why Jesus would perform such a ritual rather than just speak the word and perform the miracle. In Jesus’ day it was not uncommon for people to believe in the healing properties of saliva and certain clays. Had these men experienced people who previously applied saliva and clay to their eyes as a kind of balm? Perhaps, we cannot know for sure, but what we can be certain of is that Jesus never did anything without good reason.

Modern science has discovered that the main healing properties of saliva are histatins. Although beneficial for helping to close over skin cuts and bruises, histatins have never been known to cure blindness. Only Jesus, by the power of God’s Spirit, could open the eyes of blind people.

Today we don't see many astounding healings as in Jesus' day, but we do witness lots of spiritual healings. The gospel of Christ is being proclaimed around the world, and countless people are repenting of their sins, having their 'eyes opened' and finding new life in Jesus. (Luke 24:46-47). As valuable and encouraging as physical healings are, they cannot replace the satisfaction that comes from experiencing the salvation and spiritual healing we receive when we accept Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives.

Prayer

Thank you Jesus for the wonderful miracles of healings you performed when you walked this earth long ago. Thank you especially for the miracle of opening our eyes spiritually to the wonderful truths of almighty God. Amen.

The first meeting of MWI since lockdown

The meeting was chaired by Maeve, who welcomed us all back after the Covid pandemic, and it was wonderful to be able to all be in the same room, face to face after the long period of restrictions.

Maeve addressed a few matters that had arisen:

1. Should we consider an afternoon meeting, as this could prove easier for those attending? She asked for a show

of hands, and it was agreed to for a trial period. So, our next meeting is Monday 6/12/2021 at 1.30pm.

2. The President's project this year is "No excuse for abuse" and we agreed to get a speaker from Woman's Aid possibly for our January meeting.

Before welcoming Louise, Maeve opened in prayer and read Psalm 46. Louise then took the chair. It was wonderful to hear from Louise, who has been installed as our Minister. We are all looking forward to her ministry with us.

She pointed out that today was All Saints Day and read from Hebrews 12 v 1. She then pointed out that all our ancestry has led to "us". No matter how far you go back if it were not for the love in the past we would not exist. Louise felt that the church in Seymour Street, Lisburn, has moulded her into what she is today. She then read from Matthew 25 vs 31-46.

Louise's training both in life and in university has embraced a wide variety of situations. Much was spent in overseas work, where she thought was where her vocation lay. However, an interview for placement overseas was not successful and she was guided to work at home. Louise feels that God has spoken to her near water, so we hope she is inspired by the proximity of Irish Sea at Donaghadee!

Louise claims she is very shy and speaking from the pulpit is not easy. We will pray for her. But from what we have experienced so far, Louise seems to have overcome her nerves. We look forward to the future and hope and pray that

we can go forward together, and support Louise in her ministry.

Helen Johnston

C S Lewis

The following quote is from C.S. Lewis, written in 1942, and was used by Mary Todd in a letter to MWI members:

Satan : “*I will cause anxiety, fear and panic. I will shut businesses, schools, places of worship and sports events. I will cause economic turmoil.*”

Jesus: “*I will bring together neighbours, restore the family unit. I will bring dinner back to the kitchen table. I will help people slow down their lives and appreciate what really matters. I will teach my children to rely on me and not the world. I will trust my children to trust me and not their money and material resources.*”

Mary goes on to say, “Doesn’t it ring so amazingly relevant in 2021?”.

No excuse for abuse

Members of MWI are asked to familiarise themselves with ‘the issue of domestic abuse that is impacting women both inside and outside our churches’. We are asked to find out as

much as we can, but it is important that our role is to be a 'signpost', not a counsellor.

How can we support someone suffering from domestic abuse?

We LISTEN, we treat people with RESPECT, we BELIEVE what is said, we must REASSURE anyone suffering from abuse that it is not the fault of the victim and we must SIGNPOST them to seek appropriate help from professional services.

There is also the 'Thursday in Black' campaign, where women are encouraged to wear black on Thursdays to declare themselves 'part of a global movement resisting attitudes and practices that permit rape and violence'.

To quote Ron Clark: "To ignore this violence and humiliation is to ignore the voice of God. To pat the victims on the head and minimise their pain is to slap God in the face. To go to our homes and sleep at night without being compelled to act, while others live in terror, is ignoring our duty to God and neighbour".

(From a letter circulated by the All-Ireland President of the MWI, Joan Strong)

[Editor's postscript: Domestic violence is a criminal offence and should be reported to the PSNI, who are trained to respond appropriately and sensitively.]

In defence of church buildings

For a long time, I used to think that church buildings were an awful waste of money. Why did the Church spend so much on old buildings when there were other, better, ways it could use its money? But I now realise that the buildings are an important part of being Christian. Being a Christian is not just about what you believe. It is about the whole package of elements that make up your Christian identity.

It's like being British or Irish. You have a passport that says you are one or the other, but your British or Irish identity is made up of so much more: it's about language and music and the sports you follow and the stories that make up your family (and national) history.

It's the same with Christianity. A creed is a bit like a passport: a formal document that doesn't tell you much about who you really are. You can have a British or Irish passport, for example, and still identify as African or Asian.

A Christian is someone who identifies as Christian, and that means someone who loves Jesus, loves the Bible and takes its stories to heart, holds Christian values and (at least on good days) acts upon them, loves to worship God with others, loves to sing hymns and be part of a church. Coming to church is part of being a Christian, and for that, you need a church.

That is why church buildings are important: the church in which you worship is a part of your Christian identity.

Kit Chivers

Connect Christian Counselling Service

The past year has once again seen Connect provide a safe, professional counselling service for the community. Since opening in 2003, we have had requests from over 850 clients for our services. The high standard of professional service has been maintained by our team of very dedicated volunteers and supported by the members of our management board. The management board, like the counsellors, are drawn from different church backgrounds, all with a heart for hurting people in our community. We currently have six counsellors and three administration staff, operating on two evenings and one morning each week. Every member of this team is vitally important to the functioning of this very worthwhile service.

The counsellors have between 2 and 6 clients each at any one time. All our team members show tremendous commitment to the work of Connect and they cannot be commended enough for the service they are giving to our clients. We help with many mental health issues such as anxiety, panic, depression, self-esteem, grief and relationship counselling. At the present time the most common issue we deal with is stress, which leads to anxiety and then panic can set in.

We are continually kept busy with referrals from the NHS and of course self-referrals. GP practitioners, Community Mental Health Teams and the McQueen House / Assessment Centre in Newtownards hospital all use our service as a point

of referral. The need for our service is unfortunately still very great and the Covid pandemic has just added to the demand. Connect is affiliated to the Association of Christian Counsellors and they are currently providing free counselling sessions to members of the NHS and nursing home carers, because of stress in the NHS system due mainly to Covid. We have been helping in this venture by providing online counselling sessions. We were fortunate that we could maintain client contact by telephone / video links during lockdown, but the team also reopened a face-to-face service as soon as this was permitted by the Public Health Authority and the Patient Client Council.

We provide some in-house training to help each counsellor maintain their professional body's requirement for a minimum of 25 hours of CPD (continuous professional development) per year. Earlier this year we also applied for charity status in line with the latest government requirements.

Whilst we are affiliated to the Association of Christian Counsellors, our counsellors belong to various professional bodies. In order to maintain our professional status we need to have monthly supervision for each of our practicing counsellors. The external supervisors charge an hourly rate for this service, and along with our insurances and general overheads, the ongoing costs involved in running the service are substantial. We are so grateful to the Lord, as during the last year, we were unable to have our usual fundraising

events, yet He has continued to provide for all our needs and we had sufficient funds to maintain our practice. Many of our clients could not afford counselling so we do not charge fees although we do accept donations. That is why we are so grateful for the continued support from the local community.

Our goal for the year ahead is to continue to provide a safe, confidential and professional counselling service for the community. We are also starting to accept 16 and 17-year-old clients in the near future, as presently we only counsel adults. The Lord has given us a vision for Connect as a ministry, to bring wholeness to hurting people. Please continue to pray and support this very worthwhile work.

George Thompson,
Director of Counselling

The Christmas card

Bert writes: *“This poem was another jolt from God. I was struggling with my sermon preparations for Advent and Christmas. The last thing I wanted was an interruption by our three-year-old daughter with her first Christmas card. I didn’t want to send her away, but I was brief and to the point. The poem attempts to capture what followed.”*

“Daddy, Daddy, Daddy see,
This Christmas Card
Has ‘J’ for me.”

“No, Janice, Jesus has that ‘J’.”

The message was clear: ‘Keep it simple’.

The card unfolds - the usual sight,
A stable dim in candle light.

My usual scene.

Her eyes are bright
Dancing with the candle light.
Oblivious to time and space
She’s standing there within the place.

“Oh Daddy, Daddy see
Little Lord Jesus is looking at me!”

Thank you, Lord, for this child of three
Leading to Your nativity.

Recent deaths

Fred Taylor

Hans Arthur

Alex Gray

Gillian Fergie

John Wilson

Billy Fergie

Christmas and New Year Services 2021 Donaghadee Methodist

Sunday 28 November	11.00am Advent Communion (inc. collection for food bank)
Sunday 5 December	11.00am The Nativity & toy collection for BCM
Sunday 12 December	11.00am Morning worship 3.00pm Blue Christmas Service
Sunday 19 December	3.00pm Candlelit Carol Service & festive refreshments (Please note NO service at 11.00am)
Saturday 25 December	10.00am Christmas Day Service
Sunday 26 December	Boxing Day - NO SERVICE
Friday 31 December	4.00pm New Years Eve Last Light Service
Sunday 2 January	11.00am Covenant service