

Donaghadee Methodist Church Magazine

Winter 2025



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

website: www.donaghadeemethodist.com
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Editorial

When I decided I would take my car and a friend to Normandy, I was greeted with comments suggesting it might be a bit much at my age! However, most of my friends know that if I get negative comments I'm more likely to follow my instincts, and go anyway. So, one day at the beginning of September, we left Belfast about 09.30am and arrived at Dublin Docks at 2pm, just a short time before boarding began.

Irish Ferries have a fleet of very comfortable ships, lots of things to do, a cinema, live music and a choice of very good restaurants, with snacks or fine dining.

Leaving Dublin at 4.00pm we got a very different view of the scenery from Howth Head in the north across Dublin bay to the Wicklow Hills. So much different to the view from the car.

Following a good night's sleep we arrived in Cherbourg, it was a beautiful day and much less traffic than I envisaged. We made our way to Bayeux only to discover that the tapestry building had closed that day for a two year renovation! Nevertheless we enjoyed two days of site seeing before heading to the Palace of Versailles, for two days. We saw some

beautiful architecture and gardens but there is also much heavier traffic, so I was pleased to park up and discover sites on foot.

The remainder of our holiday was spent admiring Monet's Garden, visiting the beaches of Normandy and museums and memorials about the Normandy Landings. We booked three nights near the beaches, and had a leisurely time touring.

Two days before we were due to leave we got an email from Irish Ferries cancelling our return trip, due to an unexpected storm, (we enjoyed blue skies) as it turned out we never saw any rain. However this involved a change of plan, we booked Brittany ferries to Southampton spent a night there and drove to Cairnryan to get ferry to Belfast, arriving back in Donaghadee at 03.30am. We lost our last two days due to this storm, but that only means we can go back to France and see all we missed next year!

Mary

Ministers letter

As I am writing this, I am in the middle of making preparations for advent as this Sunday is the first Sunday in advent. How is it that time of the year again already? I have been told more than once recently that I know I'm getting older because doctors are getting younger and time is going by quicker.

That can certainly happen in the season of advent. There is so much to be done in the run up to Christmas. Presents to be bought and delivered. Cards to be written and posted. Social events to go to. Family to catch up with that we perhaps haven't seen all year. Christmas dinner to shop and prepare for. Carol concerts and church events to attend. Where does the time go? Advent and Christmas are seasons that can pass by in a flurry of activity if we aren't careful.

I ask that this year you try and not let that be the case. Advent marks the beginning of a new church year. It's a time of spiritual preparation and expectation as we reflect and remember the birth of Christ and look

forward with hope for his coming again, let's not rush that.

It gives us an opportunity to remember and reflect on what the Christmas story really means to us. It also gives us an opportunity to respond in a practical way and as a congregation you do that so generously by supporting the Foodbanks reverse advent calendar appeal and also an appeal for the Simon community through our MWI this year. You also give generously each year to the BCM Toy Appeal. Thank you.

It also gives us an opportunity to share a story that we know and love so well. Christmas is slowly and subtly becoming less and less about the story of the saviour child in the manger and more and more secular with people saying Happy Holidays or Seasons Greetings with the child in the manger being pushed to the side. Perhaps we could each think of someone that we could invite along to one of our Christmas events or services, that they might not just hear of the "magic" of Christmas but also the "miracle" of Christmas too.

Rev Louise McKee

MY CLAIM TO FAME

The story of how Donaghadee was supplied with Electric street lighting.

Donaghadee Gas Company had the contract to supply street lighting to the town, but when this expired in 1925, the council called for new tenders for electric lighting.

Frank Humphreys (my grandfather) put in a tender to supply eighty street lights for £225 and the tender was accepted. It had to be ready by 1st September 1927.

He ran into serious trouble when the general strike in Britain happened in 1926. This stopped work on much eagerly awaited equipment.

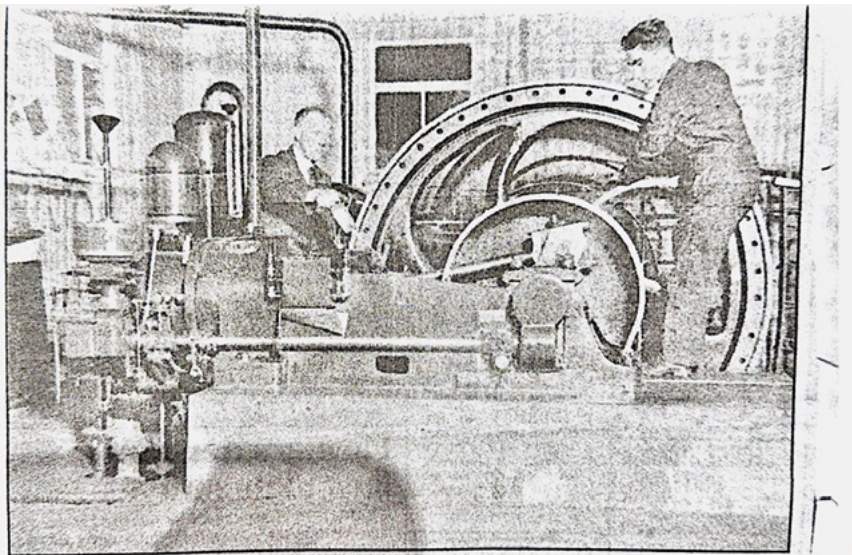
While he waited for this he erected a power station off East Street.

Because of the strike, the gaslight had to stay on until the 22nd of December, when James Taylor Strange, chairman of the council switched on the new miracle lighting.

He chose his text “The Lord said, ‘let there be light and there was light.” and Donaghadee was illuminated, a full three years before Bangor.

The Donaghadee undertaking lasted only a few years. By 1934 the electricity board was formed and began buying up all the local undertakings, including Donaghadee, and my grandfather could go back to farming.

Loy Brown.



Owner Frank Humphreys and mechanic Albert Thompson oiling one of the three generator engines at Donaghadee Electric Company's power station at East Street.

Harvest Service at the Farm

Harvest is for me a very special time of the year. As a farmer you see what hard work and patience together with God's help can achieve.

It was nice to be able to celebrate this special time with our church family by hosting the annual harvest service on our farm. The sun was shining, though it could have been warmer! Hopefully everyone was comfortable and enjoyed fellowship in our beautiful countryside.

Rev Louise and Andrew kindly decorated our shed to create a perfect setting for the Service. We are grateful to John Caldwell who is willing to help in which ever way he can and as always provided the PA system which worked smoothly.

Our Service was conducted by Rev Louise who reminded us all to give thanks to our Lord for all his goodness and abundance of food, cultivated by farmers but watered and fed by God. We also recognised that throughout the world many starve, have no home and are living in countries afflicted by conflict and war.

After the Service the congregation enjoyed fellowship when we shared food prepared on the barbecue by our 2 resident chefs! Over the years I always appreciated the expertise of John Caldwell at the barbecue. This year since John had another commitment I had to search for an assistant and am very grateful to Brian McAuley for being my apprentice, many thanks Brian. The ladies who served the food did a great job so many thanks also.

To everyone who helped be it loading and unloading tables, chairs, equipment etc your assistance was appreciated.

For me no trip to a farm would be complete without a look around the tractors and machinery be they old or new and it was a pleasure to have a few of my big toys on display which the men in particular seemed to enjoy. Livestock have been central to me throughout my farming life and it was nice to have available some calves, cows and a horse for all to see and enjoy. The ‘wee’ calves were of particular interest to some ladies.

Being on a farm for the Harvest Service is special and I hope everyone enjoyed the day as much as Christine and myself. Thanks again to all and God Bless.

James Kennedy

Donaghadee – Blooming Marvellous
“Consider how the wildflowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.” — Luke 12:27

My father was a very keen gardener with an abundance of knowledge about all things horticultural. I therefore feel something of a fraud writing about Donaghadee’s achievements in the various competitions when I confess to knowing absolutely nothing about flowers. My contribution is usually making the case for funding — and, of course, the fortnightly 6am watering run to make sure the hanging baskets don’t run dry! So it was something of a challenge when Mary Todd asked me to write this article for the church magazine.

2025 has been a particularly special one for Donaghadee. The town has:

- Won the Best Kept Small-Town Award for the first time;
- Won the Town Category of the Translink Ulster in Bloom Competition for the fifth year in succession;
- Been awarded a Gold Medal in the Britain in Bloom Competition organised and judged by the Royal Horticultural Society;
- Winners of our category in the Pride of Place Competition. This is an all-island competition that acknowledges the work that communities are doing across the island of Ireland. The competition focus is about people coming together to shape, change and improve daily lives in their communities. It takes account not only floral excellence but also community spirit and environmental care.

These awards are pleasing and a reflection of the caring and supportive community in which we live. They belong to everyone — our fantastic volunteers, local traders, community groups, churches and schools — all of whom have contributed time, creativity and energy throughout the year. While it's nice to receive recognition, the real reward is something deeper: a strengthening of community spirit, a sense of shared purpose and a growing love for the place we call home. The flowers and displays that brighten our streets are much more than decoration. They are signs of hope,

generosity, and collaboration — small acts of beauty that remind us how we can care for creation and for one another. As we work together to keep Donaghadee blooming, we are, in our own way, tending the garden that God has entrusted to us.

May the beauty we see around us — in the colours of summer, the hands of volunteers, and the smiles of those who pause to admire — remind us of the Creator's goodness and of our calling to nurture, protect and rejoice in His creation.

John Caldwell

MWI

Monday 6 October saw the first meeting of the new session of the MWI, when Pastor David Gordon from Friends of Dohnavur, was welcomed and gave a passionate and enthusiastic talk on the life and times of Amy Carmichael, one of the World's greatest and respected missionaries.

By way of background, Amy was born in Millisle, where some of us have our roots and are amazed and full of admiration for someone who left our little

place here and ended up in India a journey today, many would find daunting.

The Carmichael family was well known in Co Down, providing employment to the local community in their flour mills and were members of Ballycopeland Presbyterian Church. When Amy was 16, the family moved to Belfast, which meant not only a change of home but also a change of Church, to Rosemary Street Presbyterian. It was during that time, Amy was introduced to the world of the underprivileged in the slums of Belfast and where Amy met some ‘Shawlies’ girls who worked in the Belfast mills, in filthy conditions for little pay. They couldn’t afford to wear beautiful and expensive hats that ladies dressed in, as part of their ‘Sunday best’ church attire. Instead, they wore shawls or scarves to cover their heads and became known as the ‘Shawlies’. It was Amy’s involvement with the Shawlies and her passion to win the Shawlies for Christ, which led her on to form an outreach centre in January 1889, for her work among the mill girls in Belfast, which she named the ‘Welcome Hall’, to later become the Welcome Evangelical Church.

After a few years, Amy moved to England and from there moved on to overseas missionary work, despite

suffering from neuralgia. Initially Amy travelled to Japan, staying for 15 months but returned home for health reasons, however, after a brief period of service in Sri Lanka, Amy left for India, for her health and where she chose to stay to continue her work as a missionary. Amy never returned home again. In India, Amy lived amongst the people she had come to serve and with a small group of Indian Christian women, moving from place to place, preached and taught, with many turning to the Lord. It was in 1901, a 7-year-old girl who had escaped from a Hindu temple, told Amy of the practice of dedicating little girls to the gods and training them to be temple prostitutes.

Amy made it her mission to save such children, as well as others who had no one to care for them or were being abused and so the Dohnavur Fellowship came into being. Amy went on to make a home for these girls and young women, as well as boys from 1918-1984, bringing them 'up to know and serve the Lord Jesus Christ and His witnesses'. This woman created a family for the children. Amy was the mother, known at Dohnavur as 'Amma', spreading her love and loved by all in return. As you can imagine, the 'family' grew, as did the activities, with baby nurseries leading on to cottage homes, schools

for all ages from toddlers to teenagers, a dairy farm, sewing rooms, workshops to name a few activities and also a hospital to serve the Dohnavur Fellowship family and surrounding villages.

Amy was an extraordinary woman, who, despite suffering from ill health, served the people of India for 55 years, forming an orphanage for the children during that time. Not only did she care for these young people, Amy had over 30 books published. In 1981, many years after Amy passed away, the Fellowship, in partnership with other Christians, formed the Santhosha Educational Society, to administer a co-educational, English-medium boarding school, primarily for the benefit of the children of missionaries of Indian nationality. The Santhosha Vidhyalaya School opened in 1982 on the Fellowship's own premises. Amy left an incredible legacy and the work she started continues on to this day.

Liz Brown and Ruth McAuley
Donaghadee MWI

COFFEE AND CHAT

Hello,

My name is Alvin some of you may know me. By the end of Covid I had Retired from work and also given up my other interest. I had been a Watch Commander in our local fire station and Scout Leader.

Suddenly, I found myself sitting at home far too much. Fortunately, my friend, John, suggested that I called into the Methodist “Coffee and Chat” on a Wednesday morning-open to all from 10 to 12 noon.

I went along thinking I wouldn’t know anybody as I am not a member of this Church. How wrong I was! I know many people and some new friends were soon made.

The welcome was great as was the chat!

With the tea and treats, you just can’t beat this wee group. So if you are free on a Wednesday morning, why not come along and join us?

Alvin

COFFEE AND CRAFT

At the Coffee and Craft meetings this Session we have a special Project ongoing which is to provide the Royal Victoria Hospital Premature Baby Unit with Cot Blankets and Bonding Squares.

Each knitted square measures approximately six inches and two squares are given to the baby's parents with instructions to hold them close so that they begin to smell like you. Then put one in the incubator with your baby and keep one close to your skin. Swap them over daily.

The baby receives comfort from these little bonding squares and we understand the Hospital can never have too many.

If you can knit and are interested in helping with this Project just speak to a member of Coffee and Craft



Seasonal hymns, their background, and meaning.

As Christmas comes again, we recall that this festive season has given us more hymns and songs than any other part of the Church year.

The first carol sung by the Angels, has a note of wonder and joy, and this is the heart of the Christmas message. These hymns come from far and wide not least from Germany.

So we begin with Martin Luther, the great reformer, a gifted musician who loved singing and his hymn books inspired his congregation's renewal of praise.

In later life he married Katherina, a former nun, whom he called "my rib" or "my manager". They were very happy and God blessed them with six children. He was a very caring parent with a great sense of humour. He wrote the carol "From Heaven above to Earth I come" for the children and sung it on Christmas Eve at home. One verse says:-
"Oh Lord, who made and moulded all
How did you come to be so small?"

From our own country, we have the great carol, “Once in Royal David’s City” written by a pioneer in children’s hymns, Cecil Frances Alexander- a gracious caring lady. At that time, she lived with her parents in Miltown House in Strabane. In her regular visits to the school, she discovered that the children found it hard to understand the Apostles’ Creed, so she published her “Hymns for a little children” in 1848, which ran into hundreds of editions. Thirteen of these hymns bring meaning to the creed, including “There is a Green Hill” and “All things bright and beautiful”

In the carol she pictures, the “lowly cattle shed”. Verses 1 and 2, speak of Christ’s humble birth. Verses 3 and 4 tell us of His wondrous childhood-an example to every boy and girl. Verses 5 and 6 speak of his Heavenly glory, “ not in that poor lowly stable”.

It is good to be reminded of Christ coming to earth and for all of us, who have received Him into our hearts as Saviour and friend, then we shall see Him and all his glory “ Set at God’s right hand on high.”

(This article is part of one written by the late Rev Derek Ritchie) Winifred

The carol “ Born in the night, Mary’s child” has an interesting story behind it. On Christmas Eve 1958, a young couple, Joe and Mary arrived in a London Underground station. Before they got much farther Mary’s time was up. A kindly attendant at a filling station gave them a room above the office and went to put the kettle on. Shortly afterwards a paper boy shouted at two ladies “Have you heard? A girl has just given birth to a baby in the filling station”

A local Methodist minister heard of the story and composed the words and music of this hymn.

The local youth clubs were putting on a Nativity play and it was sung as a finale to this. The last line of each verse is meaningful. In this popular carol we read of the Cross, the resurrection, and Christ coming again, as well as his birth. The minister was Geoffrey Ringer- later a team minister in Notting Hill.

Winifred.

Walking Group

At the end of last year I lost my walking companion, my dog Seeley. In an effort to keep walking I joined the ladies Walking Group. In April, I met the ladies at 6:30pm at Crommelin Wood.

We headed for Groomsport where we had our walk in the glorious sunshine. We really enjoyed seeing this little bit of God's creation at its best.

Since then we have had many interesting walks around Donaghadee and I have been to areas of my town that I had not seen before.

The highlight of the outings so far must be the trip to Mount Stewart, for a walk around the grounds as far as each of us was able and back to the home of our kind host Freda and Michael Lemon for afternoon tea. The chat was great and Freda entertained us with many stories of life at Mount Stewart past and present.

For the winter months, the group meet at 1 pm on a Thursday, weather permitting. All abilities are catered for, those who set off a pace, those who like to take it

slow and smell the roses, and even those who would just like to come to the coffee shop for after walking.

As I have found everyone is made very welcome and there are definite benefits to health and well-being.

Fiona Morrison

Deaths in Donaghadee Methodist Church 2025

Mr Wesley Houston	30 th April 2025
Mrs Molly Orr	3 rd May 2025
Mrs Gladys Ingham	28 th May 2025
Mrs Louise Davidson	30 th September 2024

Baptisms

Dashiell Callan McCrae Harvey 30th Nov 2025
Son of Beth and Jack Harvey

As we approach Christmas may I take time to thank all contributors who have willingly provided interesting articles over the last year.

I hope you all have a good Christmas and a happy New Year.
Mary Todd