

Winter 2024



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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

Harvest on the farm

We are grateful to James and Christine for the use of their farm again this year. This year the sun came too.

We are also grateful to all the members of our congregation who set up the chairs, prepared and cooked the food and decorated the barn.

Editorial

As the new editor of the church magazine, I am very aware that I have big shoes to fill. I feel very under qualified to do so. Nevertheless, Maeve has done so much for our church congregation that it seems wrong not to keep it up. Below is a tribute to Maeve.

Maeve Lennie

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the sudden death in February of Maeve. She had many roles in our church over the years from Editor of the church magazine, Class Leader, MWI President and committed member right up until her death, bible study leader and mentor to many and administrator for Connect Christian Counselling from its inception and most importantly a friend and someone who reached out to new members welcoming them into our church family and her bible study classes.

Maeve's in-depth knowledge of the bible and its teaching was evident in her preaching and classes. She was such an avid reader and always adding to her understanding and interpretation of scripture.

Maeve was very special to all in our church family but even more special to Jack and the family circle. We thank God for the life of Maeve and continue to keep Jack and the family in our prayers.

Minister's letter

Folks, I am very happy to be writing another letter to you in our Church Magazine. This has been a particularly hard year with a number of very sad losses from our congregation. Not least the former editor of our Church Magazine, Mrs Maeve Lennie and I know more will be said about that later in the magazine. I am, therefore, very grateful that Mrs Mary Todd has taken on the mantle of editing our magazine. As a minister I often find myself in the position of having to find people to do jobs and ask people to take on roles within the congregation. So, I was more than happy when Mary came up to me one day to say she wanted to take something on. I hope you along with me will thank Mary in doing so and support her in the role by keeping her supplied with interesting articles that we can all share.

I have found in recent years that a number of the conversations I have with people about church – whether they are church goers or not – centre around the issue of decline. This is of course a serious and real concern, one which many churches of differing denominations are experiencing, and we recognise that we are indeed an aging congregation. But it's easy to focus on the negative when there are in fact pockets of growth that we don't always hear about.

We show concern when there are no youth in our churches when in fact there are generations above them who are missing, including my own generation. The question is how do we reach any of these generations in a society that no longer holds the same respect for the church.

As Christians and as a church we are called to mission. We are in fact commissioned by Jesus to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. That has been done for many years and still continues across the world, but we find more and more today that people in our own communities need to hear the good news of the Kingdom of God.

I shared recently with our Church Council a model for mission that is by no means new, but I believe is very helpful in understanding a church's role in building the Kingdom of God in their particular situation. We are to Look UP, Share IN and Reach OUT. I have added it to the image of the cross to help visualise it.

As a church community we Look UP as our relationship with God is primary, joining in worship, learning together from his word. We Share IN as our relationship and fellowship together as a community of believers is strengthened through Coffee & Craft, Coffee & Chat and the Walking Group as examples. And we Reach OUT to those around us as you generously donate to the Food Bank each month and we create space for people to come in at Toddlers and for a cuppa. But notice there are 2 arms reaching out!

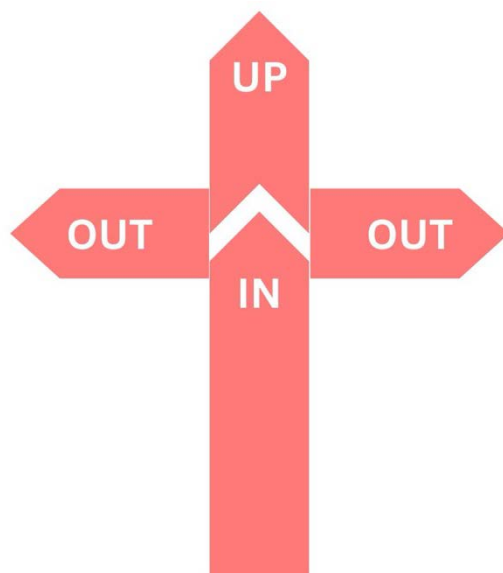
This was a model that Jesus used, He often spent time alone with his Father in prayer looking up. He shared intimately in fellowship with a small group of 12 men, his disciples and he then sent them out to minister to others.

As a church I believe that it is important that we keep on top of these 3 aspects of our faith because if one or more is neglected

we can become out of balance. For example, if we focus mainly on Up and IN but struggle to express OUT this can become very cosy. It may feel nice and comfortable, but it has very little impact for the Kingdom. On the other hand, if we concentrate in the IN and OUT but don't look UP we become powerless because we have no real relationship or intimacy with God from whom we get our strength. Finally, if we look UP and OUT but neglect fellowship with other believers it can be a very isolating experience. We need a good balance in all of these areas of church and our own lives.

It's important that we continue to consider these 3 aspects of faith in our lives and as a Methodist congregation in Donaghadee. We may be small and may not have a lot of resources but God can still use us mightily just as he uses the mustard seed and the yeast. So how can he use us to the glory of His Kingdom in this place?

Rev Louise McKee



Church Finance

It has been an interesting year for myself to say the least. I didn't expect to be dusting off my old calculator again but I was delighted to be asked and to agree to becoming the new Treasurer of the Church. I always like to keep busy and am happy to use my experience as an accountant to help out.

Grace and I have been in Donaghadee for two years now. It was definitely the right move. It's a wonderful place full of kind and generous people. We've been made to feel very welcome especially by the church congregation. We would like to thank everyone for this.

I'd like to extend a special thanks to Kit for all his help over the past few months. He knows the role so well and has helped me so much. I continue to lean on him and expect to do so for a good while yet (sorry Kit!)

Thanks also to the counting teams for their hard work on Sundays.

As for the Church finances:

Weekly income is slightly down in the year to the end of October 2024 compared to the same period in 2023, although the difference is not significant. The congregation continues to be very generous each week. As a result, the income from GiftAid is down slightly but this continues to be a valuable source of income.

Expenditure is similar to last year although more has been spent on repairs and maintenance. This is mainly due to the installation of two new windows and also some treatment of woodworm.

As for 2025, we expect to be spending a considerable sum on the church building. We are fortunate to have funds in the church's Reserve account and also investments which would be looked at for paying for any major works.

Thanks again for everyone's kindness and help. There will be more detail in the 2024 report and accounts which will be prepared after the year-end.

Chris Mayor
Treasurer



PROMISES

What is a promise?

The dictionary definition of the word “promise” includes the words – pledge, vow, guarantee, assure.

Many of us can remember as small children being asked to promise to behave in church or when visiting grandparents. The request was often followed by Mum and Dad promising a visit to the sweet shop on the way home.

As we grew older we may have joined youth organisations where we were required to make the relevant promises before we were fully enrolled.

Those who became members of the services had to promise allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen, and if joining now to the King.

Before starting work certain professions, eg practising as a lawyer, nurse or teacher, it is a condition that applicants promise to adhere to the relevant Code of Conduct for the job.

When getting married, couples make promises to each other as part of their vows.

Often we can be disappointed when someone promises to do something for us and forgets to do it.

However, it is the promises we make to God that I want to look at briefly.

During a service of Infant Baptism promises are made by the parents, and Godparents to bring up the child in the Christian faith, and by the members of the congregation, who promise to support them.

When we are received into full membership of the church, we make promises before God and the congregation.

The responses we make in the Annual Covenant Service are a prime example of the promises we are asked to make before God.

Each year, as a Local Preacher I have to promise to stay true to the teachings of scripture and the doctrines of the Methodist Church.

The response in these various situations is often, “With God’s help I will”

God must be constantly disappointed when we don’t keep these promises. However, we are only human, and all the promises we make are so easily broken.

BUT we have a God whose promises are sure and certain and will not be token. Someone has said that there are at least 3,573 promises in the Bible.

I outline just a few. (Quotes from Living Bible)

When you need guidance and direction

Psalms 32 v 8 “I will instruct you and guide you along the best path for your life.”

When you need the strength to stand firm.

Isaiah 41 v 10 “Fear not. Do not be dismayed. I am your God”) I will strengthen you. I will help you and uphold you with my victorious right hand.”

Robert Watson



Elizabeth -Guide Dog Volunteer (by Tom McKnight)

For over ten years, my late wife Elizabeth was a Guide Dog volunteer. She was what was known as a Volunteer Boarder (now “Fosterer”). In 2012, shortly after she started volunteering, she wrote the following article for the Hollywood Methodist Church magazine, which I later shared with the Methodist Newsletter. I would like to share it with you now, in her memory. She wrote:

“I like asking God for jobs to do. At the end of last year I asked God if he would make it possible for me to work with animals. Before we came to Hollywood, our Labrador Sam died and I was really missing having a dog around. Two months later I saw an advert in a newspaper for volunteer boarders with Guide Dogs. I sent an email and inside a few minutes I received a phone call from Guide Dogs and a visit from Jess, a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor.

“After some intense training I was told I would be getting a dog to look after. Guide Dogs supply everything. Bedding, food, brushes, bowls, leads and collars. Guide Dogs are responsible for the veterinary care of the dogs. Many of you in church will have met Nellie my first dog. She arrived from Scotland where the dogs are taken after they have been with the puppy walkers for the first year of their life. The dogs live with the boarders while they finish their advance training and to get them ready to go and live with their new owners. Nearing the end of her training I had the pleasure of walking around Hollywood, eyes closed being led by Nellie in her harness. It was a very special moment for me!

“After ten weeks Nellie left me to go and start her working life with her new owner. I also do emergency cover and got Nellie

back again for three weeks when her owner needed to go into hospital for surgery. We have also looked after Pip, a three-year-old Labrador, for a weekend – who certainly made himself at home.

“Gem, a black Labrador came to stay with us in September. Gem's personality was very different from Nellie's. She was a faster walker and when doing something she was not supposed to be doing always put her head on your lap while looking at us with those big puppy dog eyes!

“Gem did very well in her advance training and after ten weeks I had to say good-bye to her. I am now waiting for the arrival of our next addition, Tim.

“A guide dog costs fifty thousand pounds to train. The cost to a blind or partially sighted person is fifty pence. The dogs are taken away in the morning for training and arrive home each evening for a well-deserved rest. My dogs have been on trains, buses, in shopping centres, post offices, restaurants and church. At the weekend and when they are not training, we go for a free run usually around Glen Lyon, Redburn or to Ballyholme beach.

“It is hard work and very rewarding. One blind man told us we had given him back his eyesight when he got his new dog.

“Volunteers are always needed. I have volunteered over the years in many roles both in the church and outside. This job is wonderful as I get to be around dogs all the time. The only part that is hard is when the training is finished and they have to leave. But like buses, there will be another one along shortly!”

Since then, she was responsible for boarding (or fostering) thirty-five Guide Dogs. Guide Dogs live their first year

with a volunteer puppy walker (or “puppy raiser” as they are now called), who starts their training. Then they are sent for six months to what I call ‘boarding school’, where they get more intensive training with professionals. And then they have several months of what I call ‘finishing school’, where they get their final training in preparation for their new owner. During this time they are taken out each day for intensive training on the streets and stay in homes to get used to the home environment. That is where volunteer boarders/fosterers like Elizabeth come into the picture. She was to go on to receive a Northern Ireland Guide Dog Volunteer Award in 2015.

I miss Elizabeth very much. But a few years ago Elizabeth adopted the black Labrador Rudolf (Rudi), a retired Guide Dog. After Elizabeth died last January, I was able to officially adopt Rudi, and when I take him out for walks, I am reminded of her and the importance of Guide Dogs in her life.

Tom McKnight

Some pearls of wisdom from Corrie Ten Boom, who was active in protecting Jews during World War II

- Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.
- Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow.
- Memories are the key not to the past, but to the future.
- When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off.

Walking group

What a summer with many wet Monday evenings and curtailed walking! However, we finished with a special visit to Mount Stewart and Freda to round September off. Thanks again Freda.

Now after Harvest we meet on Thursdays at 1 pm at Crommelin Park in Donaghadee.

We aim to walk for an hour and then enjoy a coffee and chat after. Please feel free to join us. You will be very welcome. Don't worry about your pace as we easily can split into two groups.

If you would like more information contact Helen Johnston
07751 795044

MWI

INSTALLATION OF ALEXA BROWN AS MWI PRESIDENT SEPTEMBER 2024

On Saturday 14 September 2024 four members of Donaghadee MWI attended the installation of the new MWI all Ireland president Alexa Brown, which was held in Ballynahinch Methodist Church.

Alexa has chosen “staying connected” to God and each other as her theme for her tenure and more details of this will be communicated in due course.

The President of the Methodist Church, Reverend Dr. John Alderdice delivered an interesting talk about leadership and how important it is to lead, listen and love.

The praise and worship throughout the service was amazing.

The first meeting in October was led by Louise, in the form of a quiz.

November, we had the members Fishermen's mission, who updated us on the problems the fishermen faced, many of them are immigrants away from their family for a year at a time, so we are providing gifts for them this Christmas.

December we are making floral arrangements for the windowsills in the church, led by Amanda.

The first meeting £2025 is on 6th January

We have lost a long-time member of our branch, Ann McDaid. A tribute to Ann follows. We will miss her.

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of Ann after a short illness.

Ann was a special lady who was there for Mitchell and the family and anyone she knew who was facing challenges in their life. Many church members and others recall the delicious soup or stew prepared by Ann delivered to their homes. Ann practiced her faith in such practical ways.

Ann had a great creative talent and many years ago was involved with the Sunday School helping the children create pieces of artwork related to the bible story of that day.

Her exceptional cooking skills were evident when she was part of the church catering rotation for many years. Ann ensured all food was expertly presented before being served. She organised the Luncheon Club when delicious soup was prepared by her and those attending looked forward to their lunch. A member remarked to Ann how much she had enjoyed her meringues and Ann always made sure at future events meringues were kept aside for this person.

Ann enjoyed the many activities organised by the Walking Group from coffee, walks in Mount Stewart, visits to the Christmas markets in Belfast and Christmas Lunch in Stormont.

Ann worked tirelessly to help those in need and was always there for anyone who needed support be it food or just a listening ear. She was always beavering under the radar in the background.

Ann was a special person to us all but even more so to Mitchell and the family and we continue to keep them in our prayers.

Our MWI meets on the first Monday each month at 1.30pm, we have a varied programme for the year. You are very welcome to join us.

Finally:

Never argue with a child,

A young girl was telling her teacher the story of Jonah and the whale, and how Jonah was swallowed by the whale.

After listening her teacher replied “But it’s not true. A whale has such a small throat that it could not possibly swallow a human being.”

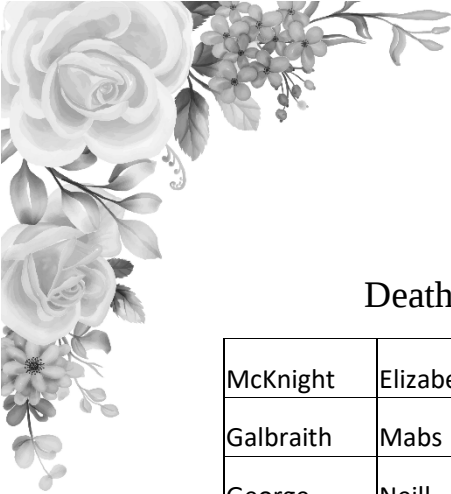
“But it says it in the Bible”, says the pupil.

“But it can’t be true” retorted the teacher.

“When I die and go to Heaven I’m going to ask Jonah” said the girl”

“But what if Jonah didn’t go to Heaven and went to hell?” Said the teacher.

The young girl replied,” Well if you don’t believe what’s in the Bible, then you can ask him when you get there.”



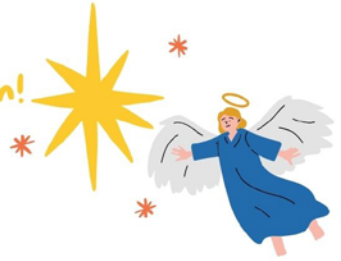
Deaths this year 2024

McKnight	Elizabeth	Mrs	07/01/2024
Galbraith	Mabs	Mrs	13/01/2024
George	Neill	Mr	Jan-24
Lennie	Maeve	Mrs	20/02/2024
Platt	Rodney	Mr	(17) /03/2024
McAuley	Wesley	Mr	07/04/2024
Martin	Jack	Mr	09/04/2024
Tedford	Winifred	Mrs	21/06/2024
McDade	Ann	Mrs	12/10/2024
Gray	Elizabeth	Mrs	



Christmas at Donaghadee Methodist Church

For unto us
a child is born!



Sunday 8th December
11.00am

Toy Collection for
BCM appeal

Sunday 8th December
4.00pm

Blue Christmas
Service

Sunday 22nd December
4.00pm

Carol Service
(No 11am service)

Wednesday 25th December
10.00am

Christmas
morning

Tuesday 31st December
4.00pm

Last light service

