

Donaghadee Methodist Church Magazine

Autumn 2025



**PUP
IDOL!**



The Methodist Church
In Ireland



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The Minister and the Pastoral Co-ordinator 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
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Editorial

For a change we've seen a lot of the sun this summer. Donaghadee Community Development Association gave us a "bumper summer festival" and mostly we were blessed with good weather. The festival provided many activities from fitness programs, to water-based fun in the harbour. There was such a diversity of activities, market, dog show, etc. Something for everybody from 9yrs-90yrs, from late June to mid-September.

Louise and Andrew did a great job organising a dog show in the church car park. There were over 30 dogs of all sorts and sizes, all dearly loved by their owners.

Many local businesses supported this summer festival, and there really was something for everyone.

I hope you enjoy reading about all the adventures that some of our congregation enjoyed this summer.

I'd like to thank everybody who contributed to this magazine.

Mary

Ministers letter

I hope you have all been enjoying the summer season. Whether you've managed to get away for a few days or enjoying some of the nice weather we have had here at home in Donaghadee. Andrew and I were fortunate enough to get away at the end of June and spent a lovely week on the beautiful Greek Island of Corfu. It was my first time on an aeroplane since the covid lockdowns, so it was lovely to enjoy and be reminded of the beauty of this world we share with others.

At the start of June, I attended the Methodist Church in Ireland's Annual Conference in Portadown, along with Andrew who was our rep. As always it was great to catch up with colleagues that I don't have the opportunity to see very often and to share in fellowship and worship

with Methodists from across the Island. The theme of conference this year was 'Compelled' this is also the theme for our President, Rev Alan Wardlow's year in office. It is taken from 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, ¹⁴For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

We are being encouraged this year to respond to what God might be asking of us as people who, 'Live wholeheartedly, as followers of Jesus for the transformation of the world'. A statement that at first glimpse seems an audacious one, yet it simply invites us to trust that little is much when God is in it, and challenges us to be bold in our expectation, faithful in our prayer and generous in our actions. As such we are encouraged to be more active in evangelism and winning people for Christ.

One important piece of business that affects us as a society directly was the passing of the newly formed 'Ards & North Down Circuit'. This means that the 4 former circuits of, Bangor & Holywood, Newtownards & Comber, Glastry & Portaferry and Donaghadee have now amalgamated to become one larger circuit consisting of 9 societies (Bangor, Holywood, Primacy, Regent Street, Movilla Abbey, Comber, Glastry, Portaferry and Donaghadee) with the Circuit Superintendent being Rev Philip Corrigan. It has been agreed by conference our governing body, but some aspects of the larger circuit are still being worked out. It will most likely not affect us on a 'day to day' basis but I will continue to keep you informed on any progress or changes.

It being Andrew's first time officially at the entirety of conference it was good to hear his impressions of the proceedings. "A lot of it was putting faces to names having heard Louise talk about various people and their roles and now getting the opportunity to meet them in person. It was interesting to see how various topics were discussed and debated, including the Comprehensive Assessment and how various parts of the wider church are funded and how this may change going forward. It was

good to hear from some of the different teams within the church such as IMYC and World Development and Relief and the work they do. It was also good to hear about the different schemes and projects individual churches have in place to involve people within the congregation and the community like the LEGO church in Londonderry which can inspire other churches including us to do something different. Portadown was a great host for conference as we were able to continue the discussions of the day over dinner at Holy Smokes BBQ shack which I would highly recommend!!”

This year we decided as a council that we would take part in the Donaghadee Summer Festival by organising a couple of events. The first of those events was a hugely successful dog show ‘Pup Idol’ which was held on Saturday 2nd August in our carpark. Over 30 dogs registered for the event many online in the lead up and some on the day of the event. We had many different breeds from the very biggest Bernese Mountain Dog and German Shepherd to the very smallest Chihuahua and Poodle with everything in between. We even had a little Jack Russell therapy dog who was encouraging others to train to have their dogs become therapy pets.

They were judged in 10 categories including best puppy, golden oldie, most handsome lad, prettiest lady, best trick and dog most like its owner. The winner of each category then went on to the final category of Best in Show. This was won by Kelly Norwood with Alfie the Terrier who had won our golden oldie category. A big thank you goes to Mr Peter Martin, MLA who came along to do the judging.

This was a really fun morning with so many people involved from within the church whether picking up barriers, helping set up, registering the dogs and helping to make and serve cups of tea and coffee. Many members of our community were within the church grounds and were interacting with members of the congregation and it was wonderful to see. There have been lots of very ‘pawsitive’ comments received about how fun a morning it was and can’t wait for the next one.

It's great to see how putting on an event like a dog show has had such a great reaction from the community. Each dog that was entered got a little doggy bag which included, treats, a tennis ball, a poo bag holder that was printed with 'Donaghadee Methodist Church' and a leaflet that let them know about different activities that go on in our church throughout the year. To hopefully carry through with this connection we now have with some of the doggy community in Donaghadee we will be holding 'A Blessing of the Animals' in October which they have all been invited to within the leaflet. This will be a time of worship and giving thanks to God for all of our animal companions who will be very welcome to come along.

We also have another event coming up in the festival calendar on Sunday 24th August. 'Make a Joyful Noise and Dramatic Deeds', when Play it by Ear drama group will be joining us along with a worship team from the 'HUB' (Methodist and Church of Ireland Chaplaincy at Queens). This will be a time of dramatic story telling and sing along hymns and songs and will be held at Lemons Wharf (by the kid's playpark along the front). So please put it in your diaries and come along for a fun and music filled afternoon.

Starting in the Autumn it is my intention that there would be a monthly Newsletter which will outline any activities for that month, update the congregation on any relevant information and perhaps we could share any special news or celebrations such as birthdays or anniversaries. This will be available in hard copy form in the church or by email. I have an email list that was used during covid for the weekly service sheets so I will initially use it unless anyone who was on that list lets me know that they do not wish to receive the Newsletter. Alternatively, if you would like to receive it by email so you don't miss out, please send an email to deemethodistnewsletter@gmail.com asking for it to be sent to your given email address.

It has been a busy summer but hopefully there has been time for rest and restoration and may you continue to know His blessings.

Rev Louise McKee

20th May 2025 – A Right Royal Day Out

When my husband John was awarded the BEM in the King's Birthday Honours List in 2024, we were thrilled. He was to receive his medal from Gawn Rowan Hamilton, the Lord Lieutenant of County Down, at Hillsborough Castle—and, to our delight, also invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

The medal ceremony took place on 24th September 2024, with John allowed three guests. Naturally, our daughter Fiona and son Peter made the cut—thankfully we only have two children, so there were no awkward choices!

In January 2025, an official letter arrived: the King was hosting two garden parties in May, and we could choose which to attend. Soon after, a formal invitation from the Lord Chamberlain confirmed that His Majesty had invited John and one guest (me!) to Buckingham Palace.

A three-day trip to London was being planned. A kind invitation came from friends to stay at the RAF Club in Piccadilly. This was arranged. I had my dress and sandals purchased—hat optional, so I opted out. That is, until the last minute, when I gave in and bought a feathered clip for my hair. John looked very smart in his suit.

The day dawned glorious. A black cab whisked us up Constitution Hill to the palace gates, where our invitations and passports were checked. We walked past the palace and out to the gardens. My trusty walking stick came in handy—there was a fair bit of ground to cover. Near the catering tent, we found a small table with four canvas chairs. Later, we learned there were around 8,000 guests and not nearly enough seats. Good timing on our part!

We were soon joined by a friendly couple from Wales. As we chatted, I joined one of many long queues for refreshments—tea and coffee served along with dainty finger sandwiches, sweet and savoury pastries, and delightful little buns.

At 4pm sharp, a brass band struck up the National Anthem, and I stood to see who was arriving. It was none other than William and Catherine—the Prince and Princess of Wales—accompanied by a colourful procession of Beefeaters. They made their way slowly down a long avenue, surrounded

by a square of guards, greeting the crowd as they went. The grass verge was at least eight people deep with phones held aloft for photos. I wisely stayed put in my comfy chair, while John ventured off several times trying (and failing) to get a better view.

Throughout the afternoon, our table saw a rotating cast of guests—two London ladies, a pair from Suffolk, and later two from Ripon who proudly told us their knitting club had raised money for charity by knitting... a tank! I heard a Northern Ireland accent from an adjoining table, a BB officer from Templepatrick who had been awarded the BEM. His wife, a GB officer had been awarded the BEM the previous year!

After 5pm, we wandered into the wider gardens and discovered the path where the Royals would depart at 6pm. We found a couple of green plastic chairs and settled in—only to realise staff were putting a cordon up just ahead of us. A brief dash forward gained us a slightly better view, but the crowd was already two-deep.

Then disaster struck — I realised I had a chair, my stick, but no handbag (with our passports inside!). John heroically dashed off to look for it. I flagged down a palace official, who consulted with two colleagues. They were all very polite but seemed nonplussed. Just then, John returned, handbag in hand. Crisis averted!

A kind lady suggested I show the officials I had it, so I made my way through the crowd and held up the handbag. All three officials gave a loud cheer. Mortifying!

Moments later, the Royal party swept past: William and Catherine, Sophie and Edward, Zara Tindall, Princess Eugenie, and a couple of unrecognised faces. I caught a quick glimpse—but poor John saw nothing all afternoon. His words? “Well, at least *you* had a good time.”

And I did. It was such a joyous occasion—smiles everywhere, strangers chatting like old friends, and a real sense of celebration.

John may have received a medal from the King, but I got the job of writing about it. So, this has been my tale.

Pat Caldwell

May 2025

THERE ARE SNAKES IN AFRICA

Last month, I visited family in Durban, South Africa. Whilst spending time with my sister I had an experience that I will never forget.

One afternoon, we were chatting in her spare bedroom, when we spotted a very large snake sunning himself on her lawn. I took a picture and we quickly closed the windows, as it slithered into the nearby bush veld.

Five minutes later we heard a 'plonk' coming from her sitting room. My sister went through to investigate and shouted that the snake was now in her house. In the meantime, we had sent the photo through to a knowledgeable friend, who positively identified it as a large black mamba, which is the most venomous snake in Africa. Not only does it move at 10 miles an hour, but if bitten and not treated with anti venom, death can occur within an hour.

My sister decided to phone the snake capture team, and they said they would be there in 30 minutes. They told us to close the windows and to not take our eyes off the snake. We spent that half an hour (which seemed like an eternity) banging a broom on the ground and shouting "hamba" which means "go away" in Zulu. During this time the snake climbed to the top of the curtains, went under and over the sofa, and reared it's head at us in an extremely aggressive manner. He was a very angry snake.

By the time the snake catchers arrived, he had wedged himself behind a corner cabinet. They could not get him to go into the snake tube, and eventually managed to control him with snake tongs. He was a fully grown 7 foot male, who was transported off in a large pillow slip, to be released elsewhere.

My sister and I, each sat down to a large medicinal brandy, and I was relieved that I now live in Northern Ireland where all the snakes have been driven out by St Patrick

Moirá Datson

Jenny's craft and coffee group.



PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

25th May was an important day for Donaghadee Methodist Church when we had a visit from our President, Rev. Dr. John Alderdice and his wife, Ruth.

In her welcome, Rev. Louise stated that the President had been one of her lecturers and tutors in College and it was a great pleasure to see him again. In his response the President said that he was delighted to be back in Donaghadee and stated that he brought the greetings of the whole of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

He reflected on their presidential travels which had allowed them to see places and people outside their own local setting where God was at work in hearts and lives, transforming individuals and communities. The theme that he has been following for the year has been 'for the transformation of the world'. The disciples in the time of Jesus on earth thought that the transformation of the world was limited to their immediate circumstances, such as the overthrow of the Roman occupation of their land and the restoration of Israel, but in fact Jesus wanted them to understand that this was something greater. His work was intended for the benefit of the entire world.

In his address the President pointed out the banner beside the pulpit and it showed the Methodist orb which symbolises the whole world. He stated that the gospel is the good news for the whole world with the cross at the centre. It is through the message of the cross that we can be transformed as individuals by the power of The Holy Spirit.

The transformation of the world is our calling as Methodist people hence the claim of John Wesley that he saw the world as his parish. Our calling is to share this Good News of Jesus in the world around us in our homes, streets and workplaces. We are here for a purpose.

After the service the President and his wife joined the congregation for a communal meal.

Jack Lennie



Riding for the disabled

Having been brought up in the country, the Balmoral show was a must! At that time it was held at the Kings Hall in Belfast.

After returning home having had an enjoyable day, I started to look through the programme. I noticed an article asking for volunteers for riding for the disabled. I contacted the number and decided I liked the sound of it and thought I would give it a go. The nearest branch to me was Bangor branch, meeting on a Wednesday morning at 10:30 at Birr house Craigantlet.

It was a real eye opener, children from a special needs school arrive by bus and were generally very excited. However, it can be a bit challenging as most of the children have never seen or been near a real horse or pony before.

The volunteers tack up the ponies and bring them down into the riding school. They then go to the mounting block and help the child onto the pony. Sometimes a child refuses to get on the pony, but through time and gentle persuasion they can often come round and discover how much they enjoy it.

Health and safety is a very big factor. The pony is not allowed on the sidewalk unless there is a leader at each side of the pony. As they progress over the weeks we have had children being able to trot and compete in exercises. Before the first ride the children are matched with riding hats and boots during my 17 years as a volunteer we have held a few fundraising events, including film nights, cardboard sales, and quizzes. We have a parent's day where we invite parents and friends to watch what their child has achieved. I need to say the parents are very emotional and cannot believe how well they have progressed. Many tears shed. The group is still running and I wish them every success.

Roberta Brown

LAKE COMO

This June I spent a week staying with my daughter, Victoria, who lives on Lake Como in Italy. We tend to have an image of sunny climes, during my time the weather was quite overcast with showers. However, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise, presenting us with an ideal opportunity to get out and about without melting in the typical summer heat.

The highlights of my trip were manifold: we visited the city of Milan and its impressive Gothic cathedral, as well as the adjacent and beautiful Victoria Emmanuel shopping arcade, built an honour of Italy's last king. The price tags in the high-end shop windows were also fit for a king so I took it in all as spectator rather than a fashionista shopper!

Close to Milan is a town called Monza, which is best known for hosting a Formula One Grand Prix race every year. Did you know that the race track is actually located within the park and it represents the largest world park in Europe? Needless to say, we just admired the Royal Villa inhabited by Queen Margarita of Savoy in the 19th century.

Music also played an important role during my stay thanks to our visit to the splendid Villa d'Este Hotel in Cernobbio for an exclusive evening of opera singing. Surprisingly all of the artists were from Asia and the Italian maestro told us that these people keeping the tradition of Italian opera alive. After the concert we were picked up by Adriano, Victoria's husband, f. who treated us to Lakeside nighttime spectacle returning to Como by boat.

The penultimate day was memorable to say the least and I understood the meaning of the phrase a typical day in Italy. To set the scene, there had been a lot of rain on the lake for a couple of weeks resulting in flooding into

the town which rendered the main thoroughfare completely closed to traffic.

This created a huge amount of chaos with traffic jam stretching over 5 miles that day. I had walked into Tacoma that morning to have a last look around and then decided to take the bus back to the apartment. As my stop approached, I pressed the button to indicate to the driver that I wanted to get off. This was to no avail as he sailed past before finally coming to halt a mile down the road without so much as an apology. So, I was obliged to retrace my tracks crossing two busy tunnels quite unsuitable for pedestrians! None-the-less I managed to make it back, a little hot and bothered just in time to set off by Car to visit Carlotta, renowned for its breathtaking gardens. It is home to some amazing variety of plants. Before visiting the gardens, we caught our breath in the Orangery where we were treated to a atmospheric four hand piano concert, overlooking the lake performed by two lady pianists. Afterwards we wandered around the lush greenery with the heady smell of jasmine pervading the air. At dinner that evening in the town of Lenno, located in the Gulf of Venus we talked about how exhilarating the whole day had been.

I really enjoyed my time in Como and thanks to my daughter. I got to experience the taste of the Italian way of life as well as keeping fit by walking more than 15,000 steps every day.

Fred Finch

Antarctica Memories

The penguins. They were my most lasting memory. Even though our ship was larger than the Titanic and some nearby icebergs were larger than our ship, it's the penguins I remember. But let me start at the beginning.

On 20th January 2025, Katherine dropped me off at Belfast City Airport for my flight to Amsterdam, where I would join a 13.5-hour flight to Buenos

Aires. I met my brother and sister-in-law – along with 10,000 other people - at the cruise terminal in Buenos Aires. We spent the night in port and the next evening we left for Antarctica.

Our ship was the Sapphire Princess, commanded by Captain Todd McBain, an experienced ship's master from Canada. Shortly before our cruise ended, Captain McBain gave a farewell address to the passengers. To give a flavour of the cruise itself, here are some excerpts of his address:

“We are now coming to the close of our remarkable adventure of 18 days, that included exploring the most untamed wilderness on earth. We hope that our 4,813 nautical mile odyssey has provided you with memories that you will cherish for many years to come.

“Together we experienced an environment that can be as harsh as it is beautiful, featuring almost alien landscapes, and as close as any of us will come to visiting another world. It is reserved for only the most adventure souls, and as such only a tiny fraction of humanity has ever laid eyes on it. It is the Holy Grail of destinations. It was truly an extraordinary Antarctic season, and it seemed only fitting that the finale was the proverbial cherry on the sundae. Not only were we fortunate enough to see areas for the first time in the 21-year history of Princess expeditions to Antarctica, but we were also blessed with favourable conditions that allowed us to do what no ships even half our size have ever done before - such as the circumnavigation of Deception Island. We also took full advantage of rare perfect conditions at McKellar Inlet in Admiralty Bay to see, for the first time close up, the unforgettable chain of unnamed glaciers that appeared as though they had been painted on canvas - and yet nature reminded us in no uncertain terms who is in charge as we fought a way through the narrow Neumayer Channel in a blinding snowstorm with gale force winds, as we made our way towards the wreck of the Guvernøren, a whaling factory ship that sank in 1915.

“Then the expedition was capped off with the very rare opportunity at Elephant Island to get a huge ship in close enough to see the site where the survivors of the British ship Endurance lived for 4 1/2 months and to be able to actually see the statue of the Chilean Navy captain Luis Pardo, whose

ship rescued the Endurance survivors. The pictures of the elephant seal looking up at the bust of Captain Pardo have become one of my all-time favourites in my Antarctic seasons.

“Ours was truly an adventure, unlike any other in the world of large vessel cruising, and yet our journey showed us so much more, including a full transit of the Strait at Magellan and early arrival at the most southern city on earth, Ushuaia, known as “Fin Del Mundo”: “the end of the world”; also the Chilean fjords, the Beagle Channel, and the uniqueness of Port Stanley. A true adventure.”

The morning after Captain McBain gave this address, we arrived at Montevideo Harbour – just across “the world’s widest river” (actually, an estuary) from Buenos Aires – where we spent the day. And the next morning we arrived in Buenos Aires, where I caught the flight home.

But back to the penguins. When we were at the Falkland Islands, we went to the Bluff Cove Penguin Rookery, where we saw hundreds and hundreds of Gentoo and King Penguins. When we arrived at the rookery, because of bird flu we had to sterilise our feet on mats laid out on the grass. The penguins were in a roped-off area, and we could see them from a short distance. However, while the others were looking at the nearby ‘museum’, I went back over to the penguins just in time to see eight King Penguins decide to explore. They waddled as a group outside of the roped-off area and straight towards where I was standing. They headed over to the bird flu-prevention mats and started playing on them. One of the Bluff Cove staff members told me that he had never seen them do that before.

Someday I may forget the icebergs. Someday I may forget the ports of call. Someday I may forget the Sapphire Princess and Captain McBain. But I’ll always remember the penguins.

Tom McKnight



Caravanning in Scotland

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.” That is what the Psalmist wrote at the beginning of Psalm 121. Looking up to the hills / mountains he asked himself the question “Where does my help come from?” and then He answered it “My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”

Psalm 121 is one of our favourite psalms and it was often in our minds on our caravan holiday this year to Scotland.

We began the holiday with a few nights near Glasgow. Glasgow’s original motto from the 1600’s was “Lord, Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the word and praising thy name.” Regretfully it is now shortened to “Let Glasgow flourish.”

We then moved to the Cairngorms for five nights, where we were able to take the mountain railway 1100 metres into the mountains. From there we had spectacular views of the Grampian Mountains, Loch Morlich, Caledonian Pine Forests and the Strathspey landscape.

On another day we visited Ballindalloch Castle where we enjoyed the estate with its River Avon and Spey walks and beautiful gardens. We both love flowers so this was a feast for the eyes. Jesus told us – “See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith?”

On Tuesday 1 July we took a train trip to Inverness and celebrated our 48th wedding anniversary!

Our next place for six nights was remote Kinlochewe where we were well into the Western Highlands. Our caravan was in the shadow of Beinn Eighe. Highlights here were the Victoria Falls (called after Queen Victoria who loved the place), Gairloch, Poolewe with its National Trust Inverewe House and Gardens, Torridon and Shieldaig. The roads are

something else as they are single track with passing places. A breathtaking trip was the Applecross Loop Drive which was done on a damp, low cloud day. We travelled into Applecross by the coast and out by the mountain single track pass, a very challenging drive at any time but almost frightening in low cloud. It is called the Bealach na Ba Pass (Scottish Gaelic for Pass of the Cattle). Drive it sometime, if you dare!

Most days we met Tesco delivery vans delivering from their Dingwall supermarket 40 plus miles away!

Our next place in the Highlands was Morvich where our site was in the Glenshiel valley at the southern end of Loch Duich. Here we had great weather and enjoyed visits to Eilean Donan Castle, the picturesque village of Plockton and the beautiful island of Skye. We went onto Skye two days once by the (new) bridge at Kyle of Lochalsh, another day by the old single track mountain roads and turntable ferry that takes four cars at a time (the last working turntable ferry in the world. (Google it!)

On the three Sundays that we were away we attended Church of Scotland services – Grantown on Spey, Gairloch and Kintail. Coincidentally the Minister at Kintail is from the Shankill Road in Belfast, he was a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland who served the united Presbyterian / Methodist congregation in Waterford, a Chaplain at the Northern Ireland Hospice, then a staff member at Corrymeela before moving to ministry in Scotland. He looks after seven small churches stretching out 50 to 60 miles from his manse remember what I said about the roads.

Too soon we were on the slow road south to Glasgow and then on to Cairnryan for the boat back home.

We were grateful for our time away and safe travels, glad that in all of life (work and leisure) our help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Joan and Aian Ferguson

METHODIST WOMEN IN IRELAND - DONAGHADEE

Our MWI Branch in Donaghadee Methodist is a thriving branch and the envy of many other Methodist Churches who, sadly, have seen the closure of their MWI Branches.

Each year at Easter, MWI holds an Easter Envelope Offering Appeal which was co-ordinated here in our church here in Donaghadee by Mary Todd. The North Eastern District Officers would like to thank Mary for her role in this and also extend thanks to the members of the Congregation who generously supported this appeal. The money raised is distributed by the Irish Methodist World Mission Partnership to mission partners to support evangelism, discipleship and training of church leaders. In 2024, the Easter Offering collection was used to fund the International Discipleship mission of Melissa Newell in Ecuador, the provision of relief during the humanitarian crisis in Haiti and, in collaboration with the Bible Society NI, the provision of bibles to both prisoners and security forces in Honduras.

Donaghadee is part of the MWI North Eastern District and, on 20 September 2025 the District will hold a Ladies' Day Event in Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Coffee and lunch will be served, there will be times of praise and two speakers have been invited. The morning session will be led by Mrs Lindsay Robinson (wife of Gavin Robinson, MP). Lindsay is passionate about good mental health and wellbeing for all. The afternoon session will be led by Mrs Caroline Bradley from Care for the Family, a Christian Organisation supporting families.

Our 2025/2026 programme for Donaghadee MWI is currently being planned and speakers sought.

As usual, we will meet on the first Monday of the month at 1.30pm. Our first meeting of the new season will be on Monday 6 October 2025.

The speaker for the October meeting will be Pastor David Gordon who will deliver a presentation about the life of Amy Carmichael. Amy was born in Millisle and became a famous Christian missionary who opened an orphanage and founded a mission in Dohnavur, India.

In November we will have a visit from The Simon Community, Northern Ireland's leading homeless charity.

In December we will create floral decorations which will be used in the decoration of the Church for the Christmas season. Seasonal refreshments will also be served.

Further details of the programme will be available in due course on the noticeboard in the Church porch.

The MWI mission statement is "To Know Christ and to Make Him Known." This is our aim in Donaghadee and we warmly invite all women within our congregation to join with us as we move into our 2025/2026 season.

A favourite hymn

AMAZING GRACE

Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found. Was blind but now I see.

T'was grace that taught my heart to fear. And grace my fear relieved. How precious did that grace appear.
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers toils and snares, I have already come,
Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

When we've been here ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise, than when we first begun.
Author John Newton 1725 – 1807

It is believed that this hymn is the most popular one in the world, maybe this is due to American congregations introducing it to the nation. Then it was picked up by folk and country music groups, not to mention military pipe bands, so enjoyed by secular and spiritual audiences.

John Newton was born in London in 1725, his mother died when he was 6 years old, after that he was brought up by his stepmother following his father's re-marriage. He was taken to sea by his father when he was 11 years old, and spent the rest of his youth working on slave trading and cargo ships.

Following a time as a slave in Sierra Leone, he was rescued and was returning to Britain when his ship ran into bad weather. Eventually it reached a safe haven in Lough Swilly in Ireland. During the voyage he had prayed for deliverance but subsequently waxed weak and strong in following his Christian beliefs.

He still captained slave ships for a few years, but eventually, left the sea due to ill health and became an ordained minister. Later supporting William Wilberforce abolishing the use of slaves.

As the United States grew and people found their way west, they took this hymn with them. The tune, New Britain, is familiar to us and was used by William Walker in his 1835 song book. It is said that the hymn is sung about 10,000,000 times-annually all over the world.

There is much to learn about John Newton, and many biographies have been written, about him.

Now for something lighter. In 1950s my father was away for months as a captain on oil tankers, and the Egyptians deciding to block the Suez Canal meant the journey was much longer round the Cape. So, when he came home, he had lots of tales to tell, and this is one of my favourites, which had me giggling as he tucked me into bed whilst mother was shouting "don't excite her she's supposed to be sleeping".

Mary

I'm fine thank you.

There is nothing the matter with me,
I am as healthy as I can be.
I have arthritis in both my knees
And when I talk, I talk with a wheeze.

Sleep is denied me night after night,
But every morning I find I'm all right.
My memory is failing, my heads in a spin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

How do I know my youth is all spent?
Well my "get up and go" has got up and went.
But I really don't mind, when I think with a grin.
Of all the grand places my "get up" has "bin!"

"Old age is golden" I've heard it said, But sometimes I wonder as I get into bed.

With my ears in the drawer, my teeth in a cup,
My eyes on the table until I wake up.
'Ere sleep overtakes me, I say to myself
"Is there anything else I could lay on the shelf."

When I was young my slippers were red, I could kick my heels over my head.

When I was older my slippers were blue, but I could dance the whole night through.

Now I am old my slippers are black,
I walk to the store and puff my way back.
I get up each morning and dust of my wiffs
I pick up the paper and read the "Obits"
If my name is still missing I know I'm not dead,
So I have a good breakfast- and face what's ahead.
Annon

