



NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS 2017

Successful Christmas Tree Festival

What a great way to usher in the Christmas season!

The church filled with 40 Christmas trees provided and decorated by a wide range of organisations, businesses, schools and individuals and buzzing with visitors from far and near.

Following the opening service on Thursday evening, 16th November, the Festival ran from Friday 17th at 10am through until the closing service on Sunday 19th at 7pm. While Friday was a relatively quiet day things certainly took off on Saturday which was very busy throughout the day and Sunday afternoon continued in the same vein. It was a wonderful opportunity for outreach to the local community and attracted visitors from places as far away as Loughgall and Cookstown!



We were also thrilled to have the Donaghadee Community Choir taking part in the opening service and a well supported musical evening on Friday night featuring Festival Brass and our own Andrew and Molly McBride in great voice. Throughout the Festival a team of ladies were on hand to provide refreshments in the church hall and this also proved to be very popular especially with the Saturday and Sunday visitors. The teas were also an excellent fund-raiser and contributed significantly to the overall income.



In addition to the various Christmas trees, organiser Christine had arranged a magnificent exhibition of Christmas patchwork in the Curragh Room and this proved to be a very popular attraction for many of our visitors.



Financial footnote:

The festival was also a financial success with income in excess of £5,000 which, after expenses, leaves some £3,000 for distribution to Church, Scout Group and the Children's Heartbeat Trust.

This was a major effort by very many people and a warm word of congratulations and thanks are due to organizer Christine Rankin and all who helped in any way.

A Chocolate Christmas

You may remember at this time last year I told the children in church the Christmas Story with the names of chocolates hidden inside it. This year, I've had another go at it, with a few more added in. So, as you read, how many chocolate bars and sweets can you find in the story? I'll give a prize (chocolate of course!) to the first person who gets them all. So enjoy the Christmas Story with a few goodies hidden inside!

A long time ago, God made the moon, the stars, the galaxy, everything! God filled it with people, people he made, people He loved, people like you and me, people who were all special to Him. And He gave these people everything. But the people wanted to do things their own way, so they did a breakaway from God...and that's when the trouble started and everything started to go wrong....really, really, rocky. And because people had chosen their own way instead of God's way, everything got really haribo'll (horrible!)......

Many years later, an angel suddenly turned up and spoke to a young woman called Mary. "Don't be afraid", said the angel, "This isn't a teaser. You're going to have a son, the Son of God, call him Jesus, a name that means He'll save His people; He'll make them friends with God again."

Joseph, Mary's fiancé, was a bit confused, but you couldn't hope to meet a kinder man, so he decided to look after Mary and God's baby. So the story goes that Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem. It was a long and difficult journey, certainly no picnic, and with Mary expecting the baby, Joseph was worried she'd flake out on the way. They finally found a place to stay – and by morning there was baby Jesus asleep in his mother's arms.

All sorts of visitors started to show up and that certainly gave Mary and Joseph a boost! Firstly some shepherds: they'd been up on the hillside all night long looking up at the Milky Way, when some angels appeared like a starburst across the sky and told them to go and see God's promised Saviour.

"Tell everyone", said an angel, "Don't whisper, shout it out, God is here!" So straight as an arrow (arrow!) they headed for Bethlehem to find the baby Jesus. They were so excited they did a little twirl when they saw the special baby!



Further away, some Wise Men were looking up at the planets in the sky: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, when they saw something amazing, a bright new star.....So without so much as a timeout the kings packed up their bounty – presents for the special baby - and came to see Jesus. They didn't find him at King Herod's palace, but those wise men were smarties and they didn't give up....And when they found Jesus they brought out their gifts: Gold, frankincense and myrrh....

And here's the Crunch (ie)....The baby Jesus is the Son of God, sent by God into the world. He is God's gift to you: But you can only taste how good the gift is if you unwrap it for yourself. I hope you do choose Jesus, but in the end, it's your selection!



Enjoy the chocolates and have a blessed Christmas!

Rev Janice

Mission Planning

During 2017 Session have been engaged in looking at Mission planning for the future life and witness of our Church here in Donaghadee. We have looked at who we are as a Congregation, Worship, Pastoral Care, Fellowship, Discipleship and Mission both local and Global.

Our 20/20 vision document has been reviewed and we have been encouraged by how much of what we envisioned has been achieved. However there is no room for complacency and in our recent Bible study of Revelation and the Seven Churches of Asia Minor we have been reminded of how easily we can become dead in our faith. We can become neither hot nor cold but lukewarm which is fatal for the spiritual life of any Congregation. We are urged to go back to our first love and so as we approach Christmas and the New Year let us rejoice in the coming of Christ into the world and let us go into the new year with a clear desire to be missional throughout our community.

Early in 2018 Session will bring forward a mission plan which all of the Congregation can sign up to as we seek to be better disciples of our Lord and Saviour.

With every blessing to you all at Christmas and in the New Year.

Sandy Dalzell

Church Life

It has been a busy autumn with the Festival of Christmas Trees and by the time you receive this, the Christmas Fair will be over and the tree in the forecourt officially lit to the sound of the choirs of Donaghadee Primary School.

The Rotary Carol Service will take place on the 10th December at 7pm featuring Donaghadee Male Voice Choir and our traditional Carols by Candlelight will be held the following week, 17th December at 7pm.

Various events are being considered and in the planning stages for next year. Some of the possibilities are: A movie night in January; A quiz night on 16th February. An auction in May. Messy Church in July with a barbecue. Golfing/putting towards the end of the summer. A possible coffee morning and also a day out by coach for the congregation. All ideas and suggestions for the last named will be welcome.

Please keep an eye to the announcements for dates and join us for the various events if you can.

Sharron Watts

PW(Afternoon)

We extend sincere thanks to all members of our congregation/PW/and friends who donated so generously to our recent 'Love in a box' appeal. We sent 90 boxes and 17 bags of beautifully knitted blankets and clothes to Romania through Blythswood Care. These gifts will bring much happiness to people who would otherwise receive very little at this Festive Season. **Thank you.**



Collection Day with Mary Bibb, Blythswood (left)

Community Carol Service

The Annual Community Carol Service was held in our church on Sunday evening, 3rd December when we welcomed a packed church to hear the Donaghadee Primary School choirs. In addition to our local church leaders, Lady Sylvia Hermon and the Mayor took part and shared the 'switching-on' ceremony for the town Christmas Tree.

"What is a Good Presbyterian.....?"

The following article caught my eye in the November edition of the Presbyterian Herald under the heading "In this month – November 1991" and it is reproduced here with the permission of the Herald editorial team. Tom J.

"As I see it... by Alf McCreary

A few days ago, I described someone to my wife as a 'Good Presbyterian'... Afterwards, I began to think about what I really meant by 'Good Presbyterian'...

The 'Good Presbyterian' is not necessarily someone who knows theology backwards. Lord preserve us from those kinds of Presbyterians who know the letter of the law but whose spirit has been frozen in a lifetime's winter of self-righteousness and moralising. Nor is the 'Good Presbyterian' automatically someone who takes the floor at Church councils and Assemblies, who divides the Church in to evangelical and liberal wings, and who demolishes an opponent by a clever jibe and is oblivious to the other person's hurt or embarrassment...

There are many 'Good Presbyterians' in high places, but many more are unsung heroes. These are the people who keep their local church going by attending, by providing flowers or finance, by volunteering to take charge of the freewill offering or Christian Aid or Tearfund, who visit the sick, give comfort to the bereaved, who try to be good neighbours, and who can be depended upon to help in the daily affairs of life as much as in a crisis.

And one more thing – I believe that the 'Good Presbyterian' is tolerant, that he or she gives the benefit of the doubt, is not too concerned about labels and has an unerring instinct to search for good in other people whatever their background..."

Gift Aid Convenor

The church benefits by several thousand pounds each year from tax refunds on gift-aided donations – for each £1 donated we can reclaim 25p – so if you are a tax payer and have not signed up for gift aid please speak to Albert Small who has agreed to take responsibility for this aspect of our church financial arrangements.

United Appeal

The final 2017 appeal on behalf of United Appeal is issued with this copy of the Newsletter. The work supported from this appeal was well explained by Rev. Janice on 3rd December and in the enclosed leaflet. In making your response, we ask for your prayerful consideration of the wider work of our Church both at home and overseas.

PW Fellowship

We've enjoyed an interesting and successful year so far and are pleased to report an increase in membership. Rev Janice was our speaker in November and, following a short DVD presentation entitled 'Women's ministry in the Presbyterian church', a lively discussion took place on a women's role in our church as we see it (apart from the obvious tea-making)! Our 'Water of Life' tree at the Christmas tree festival, imaginatively constructed using many bottles of water, has been much admired so thanks to those involved – well done! We look forward to our Christmas party in December with games (including Snowman Beetle), singing carols and enjoying a special supper. Our January meeting will take the form of a musical evening with Elma and in February we look forward to an evening of humour and nostalgia with local writer Hugh Robinson.

Traidcraft helps to support craftspeople and growers worldwide. Thank you for purchasing goods from the catalogue – not only were you supporting Traidcraft but also donating to Tearfund. Through sales £90 has been donated to Tearfund this year, an increase on last year – your generosity is much appreciated.

Anne Johnston

The Girls' Brigade

Our annual Enrolment Service was held on Sunday 26th November 2017. The theme was "The old, old story" and the girls told this through verse, songs and Bible readings. We would like to thank everyone who helped us in any way with this Service. It is much appreciated. Also a massive thank you and well done to all the girls who took part in the Service so well and with such enthusiasm.



Our Christmas party is on Thursday 7th December and our usual special guest will be in attendance. There will be no GB on 14th, 21st or 28th of December. We will start back on Thursday 4th January at the usual times.

We would like to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Jennifer MacDougal

Diary Dates:

Sun. 17th Dec. 11am - Sunday School Nativity

7pm - Carols by Candlelight

Sun. 24th Dec. 11am - Christmas Eve Service

Christmas Day - 10.30am - Short Family Service

Scout Group

The Scout sections have all been busy with their programmes. Squirrels have been learning about animals this term and in October they had a visit from 'The Birdman' accompanied by the owl, a boa constrictor, corn snake, gecko and a giant cockroach. In November they made edible snowmen and marshmallow reindeer – "yum, yum." They also made Christmas decorations and cards. Their Christmas outing is to Streamvale Farm to see a special visitor and enjoy fun and games.



Beavers enjoyed participating in their cycling badge and are completing their communications badge. They also completed the first stage of their emergency first aid. They also enjoyed Beaver Rally Day at Rumble in the Jungle outside Moneymore despite the inclement weather. Their Christmas visit is to Crawfordsburn to hear the Christmas story and meet a special visitor.

Cubs have had a busy term and have focused on safety, particularly farm safety in conjunction with the DARD guidelines.

Scouts have been out and about – camping, taking part in the first ever NI Scout Mud Run, County climbing day and the County quiz when they gained a credible 3rd place. They have also been concentrating on their global and personal skills challenge badges.

Beavers, cubs and scouts had trees in place during the Festival of Christmas Trees with beavers and cubs making their lovely decorations for the theme which they will take home to put on their trees. A sincere thank you, to all the leaders, parents and young people who were involved, in the many different aspects of that particular weekend.

5000 purple crocus bulbs were recently donated to the Group by the Rotary Club in Donaghadee to highlight the need to eradicate Polio. These bulbs were then divided among the young people and their leaders to plant in their gardens/pots or give to someone they know. The remaining bulbs have been given to Crawfordsburn Scout Centre to be planted among the trees.

We extend our warmest congratulations to one of our scouts who recently moved to Copeland Explorers on being selected as part of the NI Contingent for the next World Scout Jamboree in 2019 being held in West Virginia, USA. Aoife will no doubt have an amazing experience and we wish her an incredible journey.

Christine Rankin (Group Scout Leader)