



PLEASE JOIN US AT THE MANSE



*Queens Jubilee
Garden Party*

**FRIDAY 3RD JUNE
DROP IN BETWEEN
1.00-5.00PM**

DONAGHADEE

METHODIST

CHURCH

Minister: Rev Louise McKee
07801032280

Manse: 34 Breckenridge, BT21 0JA

Circuit Steward: Geraldine Chivers
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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*

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Cover

The cover is a real invitation. Please come!

Editorial

Welcome to the Church Birthday issue of the magazine. I believe we are two hundred and nine this month - the church, not the magazine! Thank you again to all who have contributed.

Since the last magazine we have lost two stalwart members of the congregation, Maureen Parks and Mervyn Arnold. They both contributed a great deal to the life of the church and they will be sadly missed.

It is great to have a sense of normality in the church once more with the easing of restrictions. This month we were able to have a breakfast to bring the men together again for the first time in years – very successfully, with 18 men and Rev. Louise present - and we are all looking forward to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee garden party in the manse. Make a note in your diary for Friday, 3rd June.

On a personal level, I would like to thank everyone who sent cards and best wishes and, above all, prayed when I was injured. Thank you, each and every one.

We hope to bring out another magazine in the Autumn, so please have your articles ready and, until then, enjoy the Summer and come back to the work of the church relaxed and refreshed.

The Editor

Minister's letter

Since our last magazine came out there has been a lot happening in the life of our church. We have celebrated both Christmas and Easter. We have enjoyed chatting over coffee, as well as making crafts while chatting...and drinking coffee. We have welcomed speakers to join us in worship and we look forward to welcoming the Rev Dr Sahr Yambasu, the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland at the end of May. We have much more to look forward to. Not least the gentlemen as they look forward to joining in breakfast this week, but as Spring makes way for Summer, with bright evenings and (hopefully) warm sunshine we look forward to what the new season has to bring.

There have also been some changes as we welcomed some new people on to the Church Council at our Congregational meeting. The council is vital in the running of our church, and I am so grateful to all who hold position in any way and how they contribute to the running of our church. It is important that you know who is on council as they represent you in the decisions that we make. You are of course welcome to speak to me at any time regarding church matters. But please do acquaint yourself with the congregational representatives and know that you can also

approach them with anything that you would like to be discussed by Council.

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Chair | Rev Louise McKee |
| Secretary | Mrs Kathryn McDaid |
| Circuit Steward | Mrs Geraldine Chivers |
| Treasurer | Mr Kit Chivers |
| Property Steward | Mr Robert McCready |
| Manse Steward | Mrs Ruth Kirk |
| Congregational Reps | Mr Alfie Breadon |
| | Mrs Helen Johnston |
| | Mr James Kennedy |
| | Mr Robert Watson |
| | Mr Maurice Wray |
| | Mr John Wright |

Another change has been the complete relaxation of COVID restrictions, which has brought a little bit more normality to our services. So normal in fact I have to say that the congregation has fallen into old habits as the entire congregation has found their way back to the back of the church! So please feel free to use pews at the front as well! We are of course remaining vigilant and if someone wants to be socially distanced, we can still accommodate that as it is important that we all remain safe.

It has also been lovely to be able to invite the congregation to come forward to the communion rail as we share together in the sacrament of Holy Communion. I want to take this opportunity to say that this is an extremely important part of

our worship, and it is important that all can participate fully. Therefore, we would like to make gluten free bread available to those who would like to receive it. Please speak to me and let me know if you would prefer to receive gluten free bread and this can be arranged.

This week past and a couple of times before Christmas I preached on questions that God poses to us. This led to conversation with someone who mentioned the verse, ‘What does your Lord require of you?’

“And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

and to walk humbly with your God.” (*Micah 6:8*)

This made me think forward to the celebration of the Queens Platinum Jubilee which will be celebrated at the beginning of June. Queen Elizabeth II has been the reigning monarch of the United Kingdom for 70 years and on the day of her coronation she vowed to serve this country:

“I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.”

She has remained true to that vow for 70 years and will continue to do so every day of her life, a life lived in true service. We will have an opportunity to gather together on Friday 3rd June to celebrate this momentous occasion with a Garden Party at the manse.

We, however, continue to remember the words of Micah, that we are required to live lives of justice, mercy and humility in how we treat people and in all we do. May you know God's blessings over this next season.

Rev Louise McKee

Circuit Steward's update

When we marked the seats and movement routes around our church building to comply with COVID-19 social distance advice we could not have imagined that eighteen months later we would be trying to remove stickers without removing varnish from the seats and floor. Now we are meeting together for worship and activities without mandatory masks. My thanks go to Jenny Watson for her faithful stewarding assisted by Joe Wright or Fred Finch upstairs and to Leonard Kirk, who has managed a small team to deliver online services during lockdown with the installation of a new system and numerous equipment problems.

On the 11th May the Connect Management Board met for a meal in Donaghadee Golf club to mark the retirement from the board of Rev Bert Montgomery (acting Chairman), Ken Halliday (Treasurer) and Jack Lennie (Secretary). Ken and Jack had both been founder members. George Thompson, the Director paid tribute to the service they have given over the years. Rev Louise McKee has taken up the position of Chairman, Eleanor Halliday the Treasurer and Tracey Wray

as secretary, supporting George and his team as they reopened the service to serve the local community after lockdown.

We have a new roof on the church, storm glazing to keep the driving rain from getting through the window frames and a ventilation system to keep the building dry. After the building has been tested by heavy rain, we will repair the damaged plaster and make good the inside of the sanctuary.

On 29th May we will celebrate our Church anniversary service with a visit from Rev Dr Sahr Yambasu followed by a BBQ lunch in the car park. We will still be COVID aware as we share food and fellowship together.

We try to show that Donaghadee Methodist church is active in the community, the ladies painted stones, some of these are now in permanent displays around the town, the boat floral display on the Parade survived the storms and bloomed throughout the year. This display will be replanted over the next few weeks so if you are passing feel free to remove a weed or anchor a plant that the wind has disturbed.

In September we hope to be back to normal when we reopen organisations. If you have any ideas of what you would like to see happening in the church in the next year please pass on your ideas to the Minister or a Church Council member. It is your church and together we can bring the message of the gospel to Donaghadee

Geraldine Chivers

Are you listening?

I have recently enrolled on a course at Edgehill House Belfast entitled ‘‘Introduction to Healthcare Pastoral Visiting.’

Often, as members of the church, we can be led to visit those in the congregation who are in some sort of need - physical, emotional or spiritual. Indeed you may be glad yourself that in these circumstances, that someone is willing to share with you. You may feel that this is, perhaps a role that only a fully trained minister is qualified to do - however you may be the very person that God wants to use in that particular situation.

One of the most difficult things to do when visiting someone is to listen attentively, without interrupting, thereby giving the person freedom to express their feelings.

During a session on ‘‘Communication’’, we were discussing the importance of listening and were given the following article. This I feel goes to the very heart of what real pastoral care should be.

‘‘The one service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as love for God begins with listening to his Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them. It is God’s love for us that he not only gives us his Word but also lends us his ear. So it his work

that we do for our brother when we learn to listen to him. Christians so often think that they must always contribute something when they are in the company of others, that this is the one service they have to render. They forget that listening can be a greater service than speaking.

Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians, because these Christians are talking when they should be listening. But we who can no longer listen to his brother will soon be no longer listening to God either; he will be doing nothing but prattle in the presence of God too. One who cannot listen long and patiently will presently be talking beside the point and be never really speaking to others, albeit he be not conscious of it. Anyone who thinks that his time is too valuable to spend keeping quiet will eventually have no time for God and his brother, but only for himself and his own follies.

Brotherly pastoral care is essentially distinguished from preaching by the fact that, added to the task of speaking the word, there is the obligation of listening. There is a kind of listening with half an ear that presumes already to know what the other person has to say. It is an impatient, inattentive listening that despises the brother and is only waiting for a chance to speak and so get rid of the other person. This is no fulfilment of our obligation and it is certain that here too our attitude to our brother reflects our relationship to God.

It is little wonder that we are no longer capable of the greatest service of listening that God has committed to us.

Christians have forgotten that the ministry of listening has been committed to them by him who is himself the great listener and whose work they should share.

“We should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the Word of God.” {Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, pp 75-76 (SCM 1984)}

In conclusion, delivering Pastoral care to others in our congregation is not just the responsibility of the Minister, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and Pastoral visitors.

It is my prayer that, as members of Donaghadee Methodist Church, we will all reflect on Bonhoeffer’s words and seek to put them into practice.

Robert Watson

Reflections

I don’t know if you have ever watched the children’s television programme ‘Coco Melon’? Our three youngest great grandchildren, under two, are addicts! Because we have been living with family we have seen quite a lot of the programme, and you will find yourself waking up at 3am with one of the songs running through your head and refusing to let you get back to sleep.

There is one song that I find very significant. It is “What are you thankful for?” and ends with the idea that the things you find to say thanks for never end.

Thankfulness is vitally important. A day that begins with thanks runs more smoothly than one that begins with complaints. It is not that there are fewer problems but that we view things differently and if we are thanking God for all that we have there is no room for feeling cheated of what we don't have. Look at Eve: instead of being delighted with all the fruit in the garden she became obsessed with the one thing she *couldn't* have!

We can be thankful even in the midst of pain. When I was in hospital I was able to thank God for all the things that could have happened but didn't. Do you remember “Count your blessings”? Sometimes when life seems particularly grim, if we try to count our blessings we end up being surprised by all the things we have to be thankful for.

I'm not saying it is easy. Thankfulness is a discipline that needs to be practised, but it will end up transforming life. No matter how bad things are we have God's love, grace, mercy and forgiveness to say ‘Thank you’ for. Also, the world is full of so much beauty that there is always something to thrill our soul.

To quote from Sarah Young in ‘Jesus Calling’:

“Let Me teach you thankfulness. Begin by acknowledging that everything – all your possessions

and all that you are – belongs to Me. The dawning of each new day is a gift from Me, not to be taken for granted. The Earth is vibrantly alive with my blessings, giving vivid testimony to My presence. The secret of being thankful is learning to see everything from My perspective. It is impossible to praise and thank me too much. Thank Me for this day of life, recognising that it Is a precious, unrepeatable gift. When you thank Me for the many pleasures I provide, you affirm that I am the God from whom all blessings flow.”

When we wake in the morning let us remember that “this is the day that the Lord has made” and rejoice in it. The rest of the day will look different, no matter what problems we encounter, because by being thankful we acknowledge all that God has done for us and make Him central in our lives.

Maeve Lennie

Mervyn Arnold (died 28/01/2022)

Mervyn Arnold was born in Belfast in 1926. He moved to England as a child, where he had to undergo major and dangerous surgery at the age of 8. At the outset of war, his parents moved him back to Millisle for safety.

As a young man he was a keen sportsman and played cricket for Muckamore. He always loved the outdoors life and travelling abroad. He later said that he would have liked to

have worked out of doors, or perhaps to have been a missionary, but he followed his father into the shirt-making business of Steele and Glover. There he won the respect and affection of his employees. When the firm finally closed in 2001, it was the last shirt-maker in Belfast.

In 1970 he married Eileen Ogle, and their son Niall was born the following year. Mervyn was a successful businessman, but he enjoyed quiet pursuits and had a talent for painting. He was always a committed supporter of the church and was generous towards its young people. His health deteriorated in his 90s, and he was not able to attend church latterly, but his mind remained sharp and he maintained a keen interest.

Niall concluded his funeral address, “Mervyn sought gentleness and peace in all his dealings, with a quiet contemplative faith, and now he knows ‘the peace of God that transcends all understanding’, which Paul spoke of, in all its fullness”.

Maureen Parks (died 21/02/2022)

Maureen Parks was born in Belfast in 1933, followed a couple of years later by her brother Raymond. At the onset of war, the two children were moved out to their aunt’s farm in Lurgan, where they enjoyed the country life. As a girl, Maureen was a keen member of the Girls’ Life Brigade (later the GB).

She attended Belfast High School and went from there straight into the RUC. Her father had been a military man and after the war served in the Indian Army. She joined the Special Branch, where her intelligence and meticulous attention to detail meant that she was highly valued. Living where she did, in the triangle between the Ardoyne, the Shankill and the Crumlin Road, was not without risks and she had to look under her car every morning, but she thoroughly enjoyed her work. The esteem in which she was held was shown by the strong presence of RUC colleagues at her funeral.

While in Belfast she attended Crumlin Road Methodist Church. When she retired, she and her lifelong friend Kathleen Johnston moved to Donaghadee together. Kathleen sadly passed away a few years ago. Despite having some health problems in her later years, which made it increasingly difficult for her to get out to church, Maureen's death was unexpected and will be a great loss. She always helped to distribute the Methodist newsletter, and until recently the weekly ladies' Bible Class was held in her house.

In her funeral address, Rev Louise reported that "The thread that has run through any conversation I have had with Maureen was her strong faith. A faith that never questioned but always stood firm".

The Penny-Farthing Scheme

I am not one of those church treasurers who regularly pesters the congregation for more money. In fact, it is more than seven years since I last stood up in church and asked you to help me out. All that time, people have been giving generously and the church has been paying its way.

But I am afraid things have turned against us, and we are going to have to raise a little more to pay the bills – especially the church's electricity bill, which has risen out of sight.

The Penny-Farthing Scheme is my suggestion for how we might do it. It is a fact that most members who give through the envelope scheme put in a note every week, and it is nearly always the same value of note. If it is a £5 note, it is likely to stay a £5 note, because the jump to a £10 note is a big one, which members could not afford; and likewise, if it is a £10 note it is unlikely that it will suddenly become a £20 note.

It has not mattered that people have been paying the same amount for years, because inflation has been very low and a £5 note has basically kept its value. But we are now in a world where prices are rising very fast – especially the gas and electric bills – and a £5 note does not go as far as it did.

I'm not asking members to go straight from £5 to £10 but suggesting – and this is the Penny-Farthing Scheme – that members should aim to put a coin in the envelope alongside

the usual bank note. A £1 coin along with a £5 note may not seem much, but if everyone did it, in proportion, it would increase our giving by 20 per cent and balance our books for the year.

So, let's see how many people we can sign up to the Penny-Farthing Scheme, and maybe those members who pay by standing order and who haven't revised their orders for a number of years could see if they could also make a small adjustment. It doesn't need to be anything dramatic, so long as everyone does their bit.

Church Treasurer

[Note by the Editor: For the benefit of younger members, a farthing was a very small coin that was a quarter of an old penny, and a penny-farthing bicycle had a big front wheel and a small back wheel; so 'big coin, small coin' is what we call "the Penny Farthing Scheme".]

Jesus died for thee

Why do you seem to disbelieve,
Why is your soul cast down,
And say you cannot clearly see
Your title to a crown?
You may have a sinful heart,
Its vileness still you see,
But Jesus came to save the lost
And he has died for thee.

You understand and do believe
Christ is the only way,
And God the Father hears your prayer
When through his Son you pray.
His deed of love upon the cross
By faith your soul does see,
Be not afraid, poor weary one,
Since Jesus died for thee.

You say your conflict with the world
Does oft lead you to sin,
And Satan whispers in your ear
How vile you are within.
Yes, Satan bids you look within,
By faith look up and see
A bleeding saviour on the cross
And say he died for thee.

Look to the cross for all your strength,
The bleeding Lamb adore,
And let it be your constant cry
For grace to love him more.
O never seem to doubt that love
Which flows so rich and free,
Your only safety is in Christ,
For he has died for thee.

By the celebrated 19th Century local poet James Munce, who also wrote in Ulster Scots. Contributed by John Wright.

God's love that won't let go

'For I am sure that neither death nor life...nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord'. Romans 8: 38,9. (ESV)

A well-known hymn I have grown fond of is: 'O love that wilt not let me go'. It was composed by Scottish minister, George Matheson, who was informed by doctors at age 19 that he was going to go blind. After relating the sad news to his fiancée, she decided she could not be married to a blind man, and, subsequently broke off their engagement.

George began to study theology and had a successful ministry career in the Church of Scotland up until his death in 1906. He never married, and the deep hurt of his broken engagement remained with him for many years. On the day that one of his sisters got married, Matheson wrote this hymn. He recorded the account of that experience in his journal:

"My hymn was composed in the manse of Inellan on the evening of June 6, 1882. I was at that time alone. It was the day of my sister's marriage, and the rest of my family were staying overnight in Glasgow. Something had happened to me which was known only to myself, and which caused me the most severe mental suffering. The hymn was the fruit of that suffering. It was the quickest bit of work I ever did in my life. I had the impression of having it dictated to me by some inward voice than of working it out myself. I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes, and equally sure that it never received at my hands any retouching or

correction. I have no natural gift of rhyme. All the other verses I have written are manufactured articles; this came like a day spring on high...”

The first and fourth verses of the hymn are especially inspirational:

O love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O cross, that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

Although having lost his sight, and what might have been a happy marriage, George Matheson didn't end his life a loser. He experienced the love of God that would never let go of him, and he looked forward to his Saviour's promise of 'life that shall endless be.'

Prayer

Thank you, Father in heaven, for the life and example of George Matheson who lost his sight at an early age, and suffered the pain of rejection from his fiancée. Help us to be strong in faith when trials and difficulties come our way. In Jesus' name.
Amen.

John Magowan

Methodist Women in Ireland (MWI)

Yet another strange year, still affecting many aspects of our life, and of course MWI too. We only met three times throughout autumn and spring, but we were able to have our MWI service at the end of March with Dorothy Cranston leading us. It was good! Actually, it marked the beginning of getting back to a more normal service, as we were able to have people taking part, either reading or leading in prayer.

Since then we met casually over a cup of tea to decide where to spread our support. Our President's project this year was Women's Aid and our meetings reflected this and other local work with vulnerable families in Donaghadee through Home Start. One of our group knitted some "Worry Monsters" (see back cover) for Women's Aid to use with children from abusive family situations. Children, at night, write their worries on a piece of paper and place it in the Worry Monster's mouth. In the morning their worries would be away! Oh, that it could be so easy!! Others from our group and members from the Craft group worked away on vests and blankets for the container ministry. We continue to support worthy causes and Missions.

Sadly, we lost one of our faithful members, over many years, Maureen Parks and we record our thanks for her commitment to our MWI. In fact, her request was that her funeral fund in lieu of flowers was to go to our MWI President's Project. We are finalising sending off funds as we agreed. Recently £500 was collected through the Easter Offering envelopes in

church, which goes directly forward to our Mission Department. Thank you all for your support .

Officially we do not meet up again until the first Monday in October 2022 at 1pm. However, **we will continue to support each other** in whatever way we can. **Phone calls and coffee dates** help keep in touch as we have proved! Perhaps you would like to join us sometimes when it suited you. You would be very welcome. Please feel free to contact either Mary at 07740374442 or Helen 07751795044.

As in the words of a short hymn, “Let there be love shared among us, let there be LOVE”

Helen Johnston

Walking Group

As the clock has gone forward, so the time and day of our walking has moved. **We now meet at 6.30pm on a Monday evening at Crommelin Park.**

However sometimes plans change, if we choose to walk somewhere other than Donaghadee. For example, we already have had a walk along Ballywalter beach followed by coffee (or tea etc) al fresco. (Unfortunately, a bit of a cool breeze curtailed our chatting afterwards!) All experiences!!

Each week is different and alternative venues, when chosen, are mainly led by the weather outlook!! This means staying in touch. So if you would like to join us on one of our walks,

please contact Helen 07751795044 so we do not leave without you. (We also have a Whats App group.) We split into groups as our speed dictates on the night! You will be very welcome. We even have had people bringing their dogs and walking with us! Usually an hour's walk followed by a drink and catch up.

It is good to walk and talk. Maybe you will be interested. That would be great.

My brush with Ukraine

I once hosted the Metropolitan Archimandrite of Kiev on a visit to the churches in South London. There were two top officials of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine: the Archbishop, who was responsible for the churches, and the Archimandrite, who was in charge of the many monasteries. Why did the Archimandrite want to come and see us?

This was in the days of the USSR, when Ukraine was a state within the Soviet Union, effectively ruled by Russia. The Communist government of the USSR had no real interest in the Church but used it as a way to gather intelligence and exercise control over the Christian republics of the Soviet Union.

The Archimandrite was friendly. He gave me a book of photographs of historic churches in Ukraine and a set of LP records of Russian Orthodox church music. Their choirs, which are all-male, feature extraordinary bass singing.

When he left, I was visited by MI5, who were curious about what he was up to. Apparently, like several of the top officials of the Russian Orthodox Church at that time, he was in reality a KGB officer. The best guess was that he was trying to get a feel for how much potential there was for revolution among the immigrant population of South London, where there had recently been a lot of rioting.

He must have been disappointed. Most of the churches he visited were 'black' churches, but the Pastors he met were probably more conservative and loyal to the British Crown than the average Londoner!

Kit

Lessons life taught me

1. Life isn't fair, but it's good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Your job won't take care of you when you are ill. Your friends and family will.
4. You don't have to win every argument. Stay true to yourself.
5. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
6. Make peace with the past so it won't mess up the present.
7. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
8. Take a deep breath now and then. It calms the mind.

9. Get rid of anything that isn't useful. Clutter weighs you down in many ways.
10. It's never too late to be happy. But it's all up to you and no one else.
11. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy clothes. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today *is* special.
12. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
13. Forgive others and yourself.
14. What other people think of you is none of your business.
15. Time heals almost everything. Give time a little time.
16. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
17. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
18. Believe in miracles.
19. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
20. Growing old beats the alternative of dying young.
21. Your children only get one childhood.
22. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
23. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
24. Envy is a waste of time. Accept what you already have, not what you need.
25. The best is yet to come.
26. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
27. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.

Halfway through a Church Committee the Minister excused himself and went to the nearby railway level crossing to see the train from London passing through. When he returned to the meeting, the deputy Chairman expressed surprise at his interest in trains.

“Oh, but I’m not interested in trains”, he replied, “I just like to see the only thing in this parish which moves without my having to push it!”

At Sunday lunch a father asked his small daughter what the Minister had preached about in his sermon that morning.

“He was talking about sin,” she said.

“Oh, and what did he say about sin?” he asked.

“He was against it “, she replied.



Preacher Mrs Dorothy Cranston with Helen Johnston (MWI Chair) and Rev Louise McKee at the annual MWI service on 3rd April.



A 'Worry Monster' (see page 22)