

Eagle Wing



The Magazine of Groomsport Presbyterian Church

Spring 2018

The *Eagle Wing* was the first emigrant ship to leave Ulster for America. She sailed from Groomsport in September 1636, carrying 140 Presbyterians in search of a life free from persecution in the New World. Fearful weather, however, forced them to return home after two months at sea. Although she did not reach her destination, the *Eagle Wing* became the inspiration for others to make their attempts and since those days, several million people have left our shores, taking with them their culture and traditions. These cultural links with America are celebrated each year at the North Down Eagle Wing Festival in July.

Our church magazine takes its title from this significant piece of local history. In 2002, Jennifer Hulme, a member of the congregation and well known local artist, created the cover design, which strikingly depicts the symbols of the wing, sail and cross.

We seek to be a welcoming community of God's people

*We believe our mission is to hear and share His Word and
to reflect God's unconditional love - as we proclaim
and celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ
and strive to be a welcoming, serving and reconciling
community."*

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LETTER FROM THE MANSE

The title of the first sermon that I ever preached in Groomspoint Presbyterian Church was 'The Audacity of Hope', borrowing this from the title of a book written by President Obama.



Without making any political judgments, I think it would be safe to say that, under the new President, for some in the USA hope is in short supply. And yet, of all the nations in the world, possibly in all of history, the USA is a nation that gave so many people hope. It's no wonder that over 100 towns and cities in the USA are either called Hope or have Hope in their name - such as Hope Valley or New Hope.

Easter is a time of hope. Not a false hope, or even a 'hope so', but a sure and certain hope. It is a hope for resurrection life. A hope when all may seem hopeless.

The celebration of Easter is the celebration of the hope of immortality. On that first Good Friday, when Jesus died on the cross, all hope seemed to be gone. The disciples thought it was all over. Despondently, some of them went back to their old occupations. But the cross was not the end. Yes, Jesus died - truly died - but Easter morning came, when the women who went to the tomb were told, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here, he has risen!"

Because Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, we who trust Him have the same hope for ourselves. For if being a Christian is only of value to us in this life, we should be pitied more than anyone. But the fact is, Christ actually did rise from the dead; and because he rose from the dead, he guarantees that those who sleep in death will one day also be raised. You see, death came into the world because of a man - Adam; the resurrection from the dead will also come through a man - namely Jesus.

Because all of us are part of fallen humanity, we all die, so all in Christ will be made alive. Each, however, in this order: Christ rose first; then when Christ comes back, all his people will live again.

This is the Christian hope. A hope that is based on the fact of Jesus, the one who died and was raised to life.

May you know something more of this eternal hope, especially at this Easter season.

Wishing you God's blessing, and this sure and certain hope.

Your minister in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Paul'. The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and personal.

CONGREGATIONAL RECORD



BAPTISMS

31 December 2017 Mason Matthew, son of Matthew and Melissa McGovern

“The promise is to you and to your children”



DEATHS

5 January 2018 Mrs Joan McAdam, Cranley Lodge (24)
20 January 2018 Mr Scott McAlpin, 4 Lineybrook Court (24)
21 January 2018 Mr Hugh Patton, 31 Springwell Crescent (9)
22 January 2018 Mrs Elizabeth McAdam, 22 The Brae (12)
22 January 2018 Mrs Sheila Warwick, 1 The Barn, Stockbridge Lane (3)
February 2018 Mrs Iris Brunt, 28 Ashley Gardens (14)
4 March 2018 Mrs Joan Steele, Clandeboye Care Home (22)

“Blessed are they who die in the Lord”

No one is exempt from tragedy or disappointment ~ even God was not exempt. Jesus offered no immunity, no way *out* of the unfairness, but rather a way *through* it to the other side. Just as Good Friday demolished the instinctive belief that this life is supposed to be fair, Easter Sunday followed with its startling clue to the riddle of the universe. Out of the darkness, a bright light shone...

The cross of Christ may have overcome evil, but it did not overcome unfairness. For that, Easter is required - a bright clue that some day, God will restore all physical reality to its proper place.

—Philip Yancey, *Disappointment With God*

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News from the Pews...

BOXING DAY SWIM

Boxing Day morning 2017 saw Sharon Goldie, Bethany Thomas, Max Montgomery and myself brave the cold waters of Ballyholme Bay, to raise money for the Endo-Urology department of the Ulster Hospital.



Thank you to all who supported us - we raised £435. Anyone wishing to join us next year will be very welcome!



Easter chicks have also been sold, so thank you to my faithful band, who knit these chicks and their hats... not forgetting Bobby, who completes the end result by stuffing the head and inserting the creme egg!!

£25,000 has been raised over the past eight years and has been used to buy vital equipment for the unit.

Thank you,
June Kirk



Our annual Christmas Gift Day Service was held on Sunday 10th December



The Christmas Lunch was, as always, greatly enjoyed!





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EDITORIAL

Although Easter is early and it's not long since our last issue, we have received plenty of items for this *Eagle Wing*, so thank you for them all. You'll find news from members currently far from home, and from several former Interns. There are reports on the Carol Service, the pantomime, the AGM, and The Leprosy Mission service. We're reminded that Storehouse still needs our support. Football and rugby fans (and there may be a few...!) will enjoy Brian McClelland's story, while fans of social media will welcome the news that we now have a Facebook presence. Summer has sent us one of her comic pages, created on her ipad. Denis Campbell, inspired by the view from the door of the church, reflects biblically on how beautiful surroundings can evoke worship. Christa, writing from Myrtle Beach, picks up on the fact that Easter Sunday this year falls on April Fool's Day, and Rev Dalzell urges us to embrace the sure and certain hope of Easter.

"We are fools for Christ's sake," wrote St Paul. In the upside-down Kingdom, the world's wisdom is reversed. Unbearable burdens become weightless; despair becomes hope; death becomes life.

The church of St Nicholas, in the tiny Dorset village of Moreton, has twelve etched windows designed by glass artist, Lawrence Whistler, to replace originals destroyed in a wartime bombing raid. He also designed and donated a thirteenth window, depicting Judas, but some parishioners were so upset by the portrayal that it was felt it would be inappropriate to accept it. Whistler entrusted it to a local museum, on condition that if opinions changed, the window was to be returned to the church. Eventually, the congregation reconsidered, full agreement was reached, and the window was finally installed in 2014, fourteen years after the artist's death. It can only be viewed from the outside of the building, and in a dark scene, shows a man hanging from a tree, coins falling from his hand. But the man is looking upwards; a shaft of light shines down, illuminating the infamous pieces of silver – which, as they hit the ground, turn into flowers. Whistler called it 'the forgiveness window,' and it was this concept – what one parishioner described as "the hint that even Judas might, at the moment of death, have sought and found God's forgiveness" – alongside the religious view of suicide, that so scandalised many who originally saw the design. Over the years, however, it became a symbol of reconciliation in the parish, and interestingly, locals and visitors alike have since returned only favourable comments.

On Good Friday night, a despairing Judas didn't wait for hope to burst from the tomb two days later; he had forgotten what he'd learned from Jesus, or in his self-loathing, felt the promised salvation could never be his. But if we believe in the topsy-turvy Kingdom, is it not possible to accept that even Judas *could* be redeemed? Dare we share Whistler's vision of divine light piercing deepest darkness, revealing units of treachery transformed into the flowering of forgiveness? In human terms, that may well seem foolish – but isn't such crazy grace exactly what we would wish for our sinful selves in our own Judas moments?

And with this saving power of God comes that certain Easter hope.

‘PLEASANT PLACES’

by Denis Campbell



As a newcomer to Groomsport Presbyterian Church, I have been much impressed by the view from the main door. In fact, I can assert without fear



of contradiction that few churches in Ireland or anywhere else have such an outlook. At worship, we are **enriched by hearing God’s Word read and expounded; by sharing in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper; by seeking God’s help in prayer; by singing God’s praises;** and at the end, by receiving the blessing. Then, as we

leave, we receive a second benediction. What a view! There is the harbour below us, with boats bobbing up and down in the tide. Beyond, there is the wider expanse of sea stretching to the horizon, with ferries and merchant shipping progressing in and out of Belfast Lough. To our left lie the low hills of County Antrim and to our right, if the day is clear, bonny Scotland is also visible. On sunny days, the blue of the sea, the green of the trees and the brightly coloured boats all combine to make a pretty picture. It does you good just to stand there and take it all in.



If you want a Bible text to make a caption for the picture, why not look up Psalm 16, verse 6? In the King James Bible it is rendered,

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places.

(The word ‘lines’ refers to boundary lines around a portion of land.) In this Psalm, the King of Israel is asking for God’s help and, as he does so, is recalling God’s blessings in times past - which include the gift of ‘pleasant places.’ Of course, the Psalmist was not at all like Wordsworth wandering through the idyllic lake-side scenery of Cumbria. For Israel’s King, concern for the welfare of his nation was paramount. ‘Pleasant places’ had to have sufficient water, fertile land for farming and defensible hills on which to build fortresses. The religion of the Old Testament is never ‘airy-fairy’ and is always rooted in day-to-day needs.

Nevertheless, the beauty of God’s creation is never far away from the Biblical writers. Just think of that other Psalm, with its blissful picture of

God as Good Shepherd:

*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

And if you prefer your Biblical beauty more exotic than this, why not consult that delightful collection of love poems known as *The Song of Solomon*? **There you will find ‘pleasant places’ in abundance:**

‘For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs and the vines with the tender grape give good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.’

Living in North Down, we are richly blessed. We never need to travel far before arriving at a pleasant view, whether of landscape, or seascape, or rugged coastline. Our capricious weather means that these scenes are constantly changing from hour to hour and from minute to minute, constantly surprising us with new enchantments. We should never grow tired of taking in all this beauty.

Viewing ‘pleasant places’ gives rise to pleasant thoughts, and that really is important in a world full of ugliness. God forbid that we should spend too long contemplating industrial wastelands, or sectarian malice, or terrorist outrages. A local poet who knew how ‘pleasant places’ can give birth to pleasant states of mind was John Hewitt. He attributes his own cheerful disposition to the ‘lovely thoughts’ which passed through his mother’s mind while he was in the womb. And where did she entertain those lovely thoughts? In North Down, of course!

*Those summer months she waited for the day
the doctor’d fetch me, my small mother sped
to a secluded seat upon the bank
beside the Lough somewhere near Helen’s Bay,
to fill her mind with lovely thoughts, she said;
for such thoughts I perhaps have this to thank.*



Enjoy the lovely view and thank God for it!

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT 2017

The 'Carols by Candlelight' service is one of the highlights of our church year. It is always well attended by members and visitors alike. In 2017 it was extra special, and I believe not many of the congregation knew why. It was because this was the 30th anniversary. Our esteemed organist and choir master, Mr. John Ekin, has led this event for all of 30 years and must be congratulated for his tremendous dedication and hard work.



I remember it was a cold, dark evening on December 17th 2017; as we entered our church building, however, the warmth of the greeting at the door prepared us for the spectacle inside. There were, it seemed, hundreds of lit candles arranged in groups that were firmly fixed at the end of each pew. The result increased any anticipation as we took our seats and watched the church become full. The choir members, 39 in number and dressed for the occasion in black and white, took their places behind the instrumentalists already assembled – who, when present, give a welcome addition to any service. John took his seat at the organ and our minister, Rev. Paul Dalzell, gave the Call to Worship. The choir sang the introit, *Carols Sing* (Martha Puckett), which set the scene for all the excellent music to follow. The choir sang seven further items, beautifully rendered, and there were seven carols for us all to sing joyfully together.



Having the projector and screen was of great benefit, as we were not burying our heads in hymn books, straining to read the words. Instead our heads were lifted high, making a greater sound.

The nine Bible Lessons were read by our minister. I, for one, was moved by the clarity and meaningfulness of his rendering and could not help but listen intently.

After the concluding prayer, the carol *Hark! The herald angels sing* was sung by all and the Benediction ended the service. Once again, the wonderful Christmas story had been revealed in words and music.

On the way out, a visiting retired minister said to me, "The atmosphere during this evening has surpassed every other carol service I've been to this season." I agreed, and thought how listening to a great choir carries our minds and hearts up to God, creating a holy atmosphere. The choir, led by John, had rehearsed for many weeks. In thanking them, we also remember how well they serve us throughout the year. Our praise and worship depend on their devotion. As we left the church, I admired the candles again, and gave a thought to the faithful few who had erected them and were now going to dismantle.

We will all have memories of previous candlelit services. One year, a minister announced from the pulpit that there was to be a 'Candles by Carol Light Service'! One artistic member, a Mrs Pearl Geddis, constructed from polystyrene many Christmas scenes which were displayed in the window recesses. They were much appreciated and were used for many Christmas services, until some other members, who had had a Christmas wedding in the church donated their decorations to the congregation.

As I conclude, I realize that the choir is already preparing for Easter. Thank you, John.

Margaret Johnston



Beautiful floral arrangements by Mrs Pat Miller also greatly added to our Christmas services

MANNERS - RESPECT - WORSHIP

As a member of Groomspoint Presbyterian Church, I greatly appreciate our talented and dedicated organist and choir, who are also enjoyed and appreciated by visitors to our church.

Morning Worship begins when John enters and begins to play an organ prelude. Unfortunately, it can be almost inaudible - due to the continuous buzz of congregational chatter, which should stop when John enters the church and begins to play.

This is - or should be - a time to relax, enjoy the music and prepare oneself for the service quietly, reverently, anticipating a time of blessing.

When we go to the Opera or Ballet, the conductor enters, raises his baton, the audience falls completely silent and the overture begins.

How much more should we show respect, reverence and anticipation in God's house, where He is present, and we have come to worship Him?

Sheelagh Dalzell



SUNDAY SCHOOL AND BIBLE CLASS continue to meet in the Walter Nelson Hall complex at 10.15am. Our curriculum is based around the basic Bible stories with which our children are becoming less and less familiar.

Unfortunately, Paula - who teaches our youngest children - has not been with us since the beginning of December, as she had to have surgery. We are indebted to Julie Steele, who initially agreed to take the class for a month. Thankfully, Julie was able to continue with us when Paula was unable to return as early as expected. Paula is now well on the way to recovery and hopes to return soon. Very many thanks to Julie for so ably taking over.

Also, I had to have a hip replacement early in January and must say a huge thank you to Fiona and Sharon, who said they would cover for me. I, too, am recovering well and hope to be back very soon. I really miss being with the children.

Thanks also to all children and parents for your support of The Leprosy Mission.

Please continue to uphold the work of Sunday School in your prayers and encourage any children who have not been coming along to do so. We will be delighted to welcome them.

Margaret McCreedy, Superintendent 028 9146 4361

Thank you to everyone who was so thoughtful and caring while I was recovering from surgery. I was truly overwhelmed by the cards, calls, visits and kind words I received
Margaret McCreedy

In Sunday School, we were learning about the work of The Leprosy Mission and raised money to buy protective glasses for children with leprosy. These cost £5. We also made some "crazy glasses" for ourselves!!!



CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE

World Leprosy Day 2018

Leprosy is often considered an ancient disease, yet one new case is discovered every two minutes. Those who contract the disease are often rejected by their community, and sent to live in one of the thousands of leprosy communities that still exist today. The **Champions for Change** project aims to create Leprosy Champions - people from within these communities who will learn how to fight for the social, financial and educational rights of leprosy-affected people, often living in severe poverty and with disability as a result of leprosy. For £30, a Leprosy Champion can receive the training that will transform their lives, and the lives of the leprosy community they live in.

At the morning service on Sunday 25 February, we welcomed Judith Carson, a volunteer with The Leprosy Mission NI (TLM-NI), as our guest speaker. Judith has visited both India and Nepal with The Leprosy Mission and she shared with us her experiences of some of the work and projects which TLM-NI is involved in. There are 3 million people, globally, living with the disability of leprosy, with 54% of cases found in India. 250,000 new cases are diagnosed every year and 10% of these cases are children. Since 1982, 16 million people have been cured by Multi Drug Therapy (MDT).



Judith spoke with the children about the everyday difficulties people with leprosy face, especially when their hands and eyesight are affected. She got the children involved, trying to open packets of sweets while wearing gloves - which proved hard; and even more difficult was using oven-gloves and being blindfolded.

Children who have leprosy, or who are from a leprosy family, have no chance to go to school. The *Catch them Young* programme gives these children access to education, including books and uniform. £50 keeps a child in school for one year. After school, they enter the Vocational Training Programme for one year to learn a trade such as mechanics, computing, beauty therapy or tailoring. Tailoring is popular and the students compile a portfolio of all the things they have made, and take this to job interviews. The mission team asked the tailoring students to make them some outfits. One of the girls made Judith an outfit which cost £6 to make; she was going to include this in her portfolio and, because she had made an outfit for a white person, she said this would increase her prospects of getting a job.



Lives can be transformed by corrective surgery to correct claw hands and dropped feet, and prosthetic limbs are provided when amputation is required. Occupational therapy helps people learn to write again - or even for the first time - following surgery; and also to pedal a bicycle or work a treadle sewing machine - and subsequently they can apply for jobs. The shoes originally provided by TLM - made from tyres - created a stigma and, as a result, people didn't wear them, so feet

became infected, and in the worst cases, amputated. TLM worked with a sports company in Delhi to design new shoes; after 6 months, people can come back and have these replaced free.



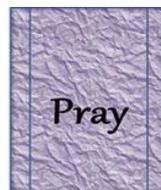
Old tyre shoes

New sports sandals

There is a great deal of fear associated with leprosy - people diagnosed with the disease can be stigmatised, rejected by their families and communities. They may lose their jobs and end up without a source of income; some lose their homes. Even today, leprosy-affected people may end up living as outcasts in leprosy colonies. The Leprosy Mission cares for the whole person - we are a holistic charity, focusing on the physical, social, spiritual and psychological needs of leprosy-affected people.

Judith told us of the volunteers building a house for a family who had been affected by leprosy. Dad, Danesh, and two of his children had the disease; he had four daughters with no prospect of marriage, had lost his job and was about to be thrown out of his community. The village leader came to visit and was amazed to see that a team of white people, mostly women, had built a house for Danesh and his family. 'Lives Transformed': because he has a brick house built by white people, Danesh is now highly respected in his community; he has a new job; two of his children are in the *Catch Them Young* programme; one daughter is in the vocational training scheme; two daughters are married, and he has a new grandchild.

In closing, Judith challenged us all to **Stand in the G. A. P.**



We already give generously and TLM-NI are thankful for our generosity. Can you Act? Would you be willing to go on a TLM Mission Team to help build a house, work in a hospital or work in one of the Leprosy Communities? We can all Pray. In the next 20 years, the vision is to see the transmission of leprosy eradicated completely. Currently, scientists in the USA are working on a vaccine and it is hoped clinical trials will start soon. Please pray for this work and for the day when people's lives are transformed from despair to hope. The prayer of TLM-NI is

*Give us O Lord concern of heart and mind,
a love like yours which cares for all mankind.*

Thank you for your continued support of the work of
The Leprosy Mission - Northern Ireland.

Stephanie McCreedy (TLM secretary)



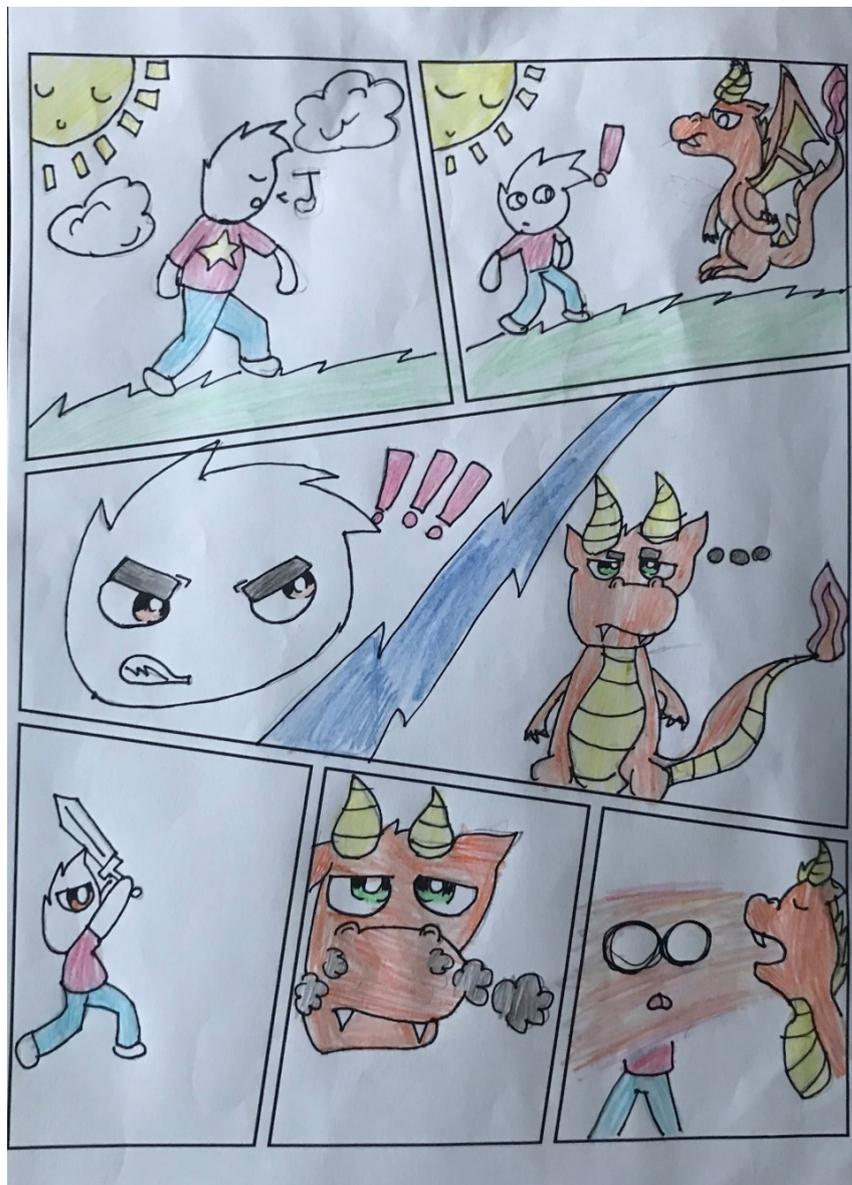
COMIC ART by Summer McWhinney

I have been going to different art classes recently. I'm trying to improve my drawing skills. My favourite things to draw are cartoons, especially Pokemon characters.

I went to a comic club in Bangor last week with my brother and my best friend. The artist was teaching us all the techniques for doing comics, and we also made a comic strip.

I make animations on my iPad by hand drawing the animations frame by frame. I make comics, too, and draw all my own characters.

Here is one of my comic pages. In this comic, a man is walking along, then he comes across a dragon. The man is scared by the dragon so he brings out his sword, but the dragon is having none of that and breathes fire on to him to stop him.





SLEEPING BEAUTY

This year, in February, the Turnstones performed the pantomime *Sleeping Beauty* to packed audiences. The fun and laughter, with boos, cheering and hissing, brought the pantomime to life.

Rehearsals began last September, when Director Elaine and myself held auditions for much sought-after parts. For some, this was daunting - but others found talents they didn't know they had. Whether it was acting or sewing, painting, selling tickets or making tea, there was a part for everyone to play. Rehearsals began on Monday and Wednesday nights over the winter months, when laughter and fun were heard from the back of the church, new friendships were made and fellowship was enjoyed by all.

In November, the children became involved, with singing and dancing rehearsals every Saturday afternoon in the Walter Nelson Hall. Once again, the children made new friends from other local schools and soon all were working as a team with great enthusiasm. They couldn't wait! Costumes were made and fitted, staging was put into place, tickets started to sell - but still, many of the cast had words to learn. As we hit February, everyone moved up a gear and the anticipation of the performances became imminent. On 12th February, rehearsals moved to the stage in the Walter Nelson Hall and nerves set in as we approached the first night; but with final, supportive words of encouragement from both producer and director, the curtain opened in King Basil and Queen Rosemary's palace.



The performances were well supported by appreciative audiences, and both cast and backstage teams went home each night tired but happy. On the last night, we had our annual 'Oscar' awards and red carpet event, hosted by Mandy McEvoy, where everyone could relax and enjoy social time together.



This year, we had over 81 people involved in the pantomime, ranging in age from 6 to 80-plus. All mixed together, and young and old supported each other during rehearsals, and at each performance. All the hard work paid off, and we were delighted to be able to present a cheque for £2000 to Marie Curie.

Turnstones would like to thank the church organisations which kindly gave up their evenings for two weeks, in order to allow us into the halls for final rehearsals. Thank you to all who sponsored, supported or helped this popular church and wider community event.

It takes teamwork to pull off a successful event and that sums up the Turnstones - a great team of people who support each other, laugh and have fun together.

Ann Williams (Chairperson)



*Dear Turnstones,
Congratulations and thanks on behalf of myself and all four audiences who were privileged to enjoy 'Sleeping Beauty.'
It was tremendous, and a tribute to every single person involved.
For over forty years, the fun and fellowship produced from this talented Groomspport Village Group have been outstanding.*

Long may you continue !

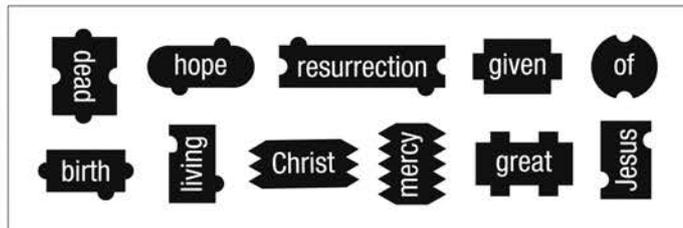
*Margaret Johnston,
Founder Member*

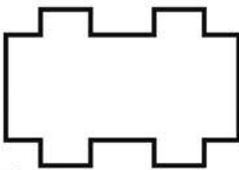


> NEW LIFE <

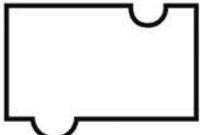
How did God work through Jesus to give us new life at Easter?

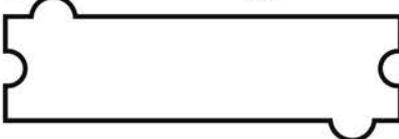
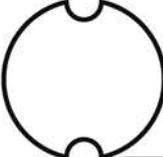
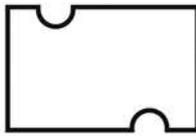
Directions: Use the puzzle pieces from the box to complete 1 Peter 1:3, NIV.

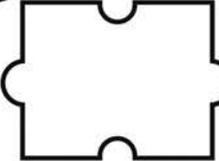


In his   he has

 us new  into a

  through the

 from the .

1 P E T E R 1 : 3 , N I V

Answer: In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3, NIV

BROWNIES

Brownies had great fun making these Marshmallow Snowmen!

(Makes 12)

You will need:

350g white chocolate

25g dark chocolate or tube of dark chocolate

36 marshmallows

Sprinkles

12 wooden skewers



1. Melt each chocolate separately in a bowl over a saucepan of gently simmering water.
2. Once melted, remove the bowls from the saucepans. Carefully push 3 marshmallows close together onto each skewer.
3. **Gently hold each "snowman" over the white chocolate and spoon the chocolate over, turning the skewer until coated.**
4. Place on some baking paper and decorate with sprinkles for buttons and a nose.
5. When the chocolate is slightly set, use the dark chocolate to make eyes and a mouth.
6. Leave to set completely.



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Annual Congregational Meeting, which took place on Tuesday 6th March, was a well-attended and most enjoyable occasion, held in the usual friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

The meeting opened with Rev. Dalzell welcoming us all, and following a scripture reading and prayer, the formal proceedings began with the Kirk Session Report given by Elaine Nixon-Shepherd. This was most informative, providing details of the many church-related activities during 2017. Presentations, with grateful thanks, were made to John Boyd and Jane Black, both of whom have recently retired from onerous duties in our church's financial matters.

The Finance Report followed, which was the "maiden speech" given by our new Treasurer, Mandy McEvoy; she helpfully, and most articulately, outlined the state of the church's finances, also paying tribute to the work of the Finance Sub-Committee. Mandy inspired us by her appeal to us to regard our givings as an appropriate response to the many blessings we have received from God.



Lowry Manson (Property Convenor) presented the Property Report, providing the congregation with details of all the property-related issues which had arisen during 2017, including the exciting plans for quite extensive refurbishment to be carried out to "the Wee Manse" at 25 Main Street.

For the record, the adoption of the Reports was duly proposed, seconded and passed by those attending.

The Rev. Dalzell reported how he was settling in to his job, having enjoyed his first year as our Minister. He paid tribute, in particular, to John Ekin, as Organist and Choirmaster, and the choir for leading worship throughout the year in such an encouraging and uplifting manner. Rev Dalzell also expressed his thanks to his colleague, Rev Denis Campbell, for all his much-appreciated pastoral care to the members of the congregation.



Formal proceedings concluded, entertainment was provided by Michelle Baird, a soprano who had been with us at our AGM six years ago. The church hall rocked and rolled as Michelle performed a delightful programme, put across in her inimitable, professional fashion, much to the appreciation of her audience. Michelle had a wonderful backing orchestra (on tape, or whatever the new technology is) and sang many favourites, such as *Will ye go Lassie, go?*; *Lipstick on your collar*; one of my all-time favourites, *All that jazz from Chicago*; *Over the rainbow*, and concluding with the wonderful *Time to say goodbye*. Rapturous applause was all the encouragement needed for Michele to provide the encore, *We'll meet again*.

The "usual lady suspects" provided an enjoyable light supper to round off a most successful evening - and with all the chatting afterwards, it rather seemed that those who attended did not have a home to go to!

Alastair McQuoid



Groomsport Presbyterian Church now has a Facebook page!

Our Facebook page is designed to host a variety of posts that will be of interest to our congregation and followers. This will include church news, events, recipes, photographs, light humour, updates from projects we have sponsored around the world – whatever you feel is of interest to our congregation and followers.

Another advantage is that, with the recent unpleasant weather, we could have got information out that would have been of help, should you or others have had a loss of electricity, etc.

This can now also help us to have an outreach further afield from Groomsport. We can share our wonderful news with our previous interns and they can share theirs **with us.** **'Like them or loathe them,' we have to embrace modern communication methods to reach out to our congregation and to others.**

At this moment, our Facebook page has been set up as a private group, so no-one outside the group can read the posts or submit anything.

To join, simply insert Groomsport Presbyterian Church into the Facebook search bar at <https://en-gb.facebook.com> and this will bring you to our home page. Our administrators will approve your application within 24 hours.

All posts will be vetted before being published. In the event that we would have any issues with postings or members at any time, they can both be removed – this gives us another level of protection.

Don't worry – this will not affect our *Eagle Wing* magazine publications. So go ahead: embrace technology and join our Facebook page today!

Roy & Amanda McWhinney

In today's society, it is unthinkable to live without social media, interacting with people online and around the world... Sharing the good news today should be across all spheres of influence and an important one is media... I think (Jesus) would use it to get in touch with people, to drop them a note of encouragement, and to connect them with others. It would never be about Him. Jesus would use it to glorify the Father and lead people to Him. People need to see Jesus in us. They need to see that my social media identity is identical with my real-life identity...Now is the time for Christians to have our online identity match our true identity.

***Evi Rodemann* (Executive Director, Mission-Net, European youth mission movement) writing for the website *Gospel Life*, a resource of the Billy Graham Center
<http://www.gospel-life.net/>**

TWO BELFAST BOYS (on a Collision Course)

by Brian McClelland

Drive down the Sydenham Bypass on the way to Belfast, and looming up on your left will be a familiar landmark – namely, the Oval, home of Glentoran Football Club. Now old and more than a little decrepit (not me, the ground!), the Oval was once a lush grassland upon which a lion roamed. Now, this was no ordinary lion; this was that very rare breed, a British Lion from east Belfast.

The British Lion in question was famous rugby star, Mike Gibson. Content to maul the Glentoran players in training, young Gibson could not be tamed into putting pen to paper and signing professional forms for the club. But how did it come about that a world class rugby player – arguably the best player ever to don the green shirt of Ireland, at the very peak of his skills – could even contemplate switching codes?

“I had a passion for football since school days,” Mike revealed to me. “My school, Campbell College, was a rugby-playing establishment, and consequently football was frowned upon. However, unofficial games of football were organised by a fellow pupil, Gordon Burns, another football fanatic and, of course, later to be chairman of ITV’s long running game of intelligence and endurance – *The Krypton Factor*.”

On a personal basis, I was privileged to play schoolboy rugby against Gibson. He was out-half for Campbell, while – playing open side wing forward for junior Methodist College teams – it was my dubious pleasure to mark him. Many years later, I would be happy to play on the same football team as Gibson in a friendly game at **Campbell’s grounds. We were playing for the Law Society and I remember Gibson scoring a hat-trick (and missing many more!).**

At the same time as Mike Gibson was turning out for Campbell, another young lad from east Belfast was playing rugby for Methodist College on Saturday mornings, and pulling on the football jersey of Boyland Youth Club in the afternoons. He was Jim Nicholson, who hailed from Lomond Avenue in Strandtown. Jim had attended Strandtown Primary School, and we had clashed once or twice when I played football for Euston Street Primary.



One Saturday morning, around the autumn of 1957, I was playing on the same Methody Medallion (under 15s) rugby side as Jim Nicholson (*on left of picture*). The year before, Nicholson had been good enough to play in a Medallion Shield winning side against the **auld enemy, RBAI. Groomsport’s very own Stanley Jackson had also played on that Methody team. I’m sure Stan would agree** with me that Nicholson was a marvellous centre three-quarter –

strong, fast, and the owner of a wonderful goal-kicking boot. Our opponents that particular Saturday were Campbell College, and a certain Michael Gibson.

In the first half, a loose ball was hacked deep into the Campbell half. Chasing back, a brave young Gibson threw himself down on the ball, only to be caught simultaneously by the boot of Nicholson, who had been following up hard and fast. Gibson groaned in agony on the ground, his clavicle broken (collar bone to you and me).

“The collision with Jim Nicholson was an accident, but it did encourage me to follow his football career with great interest,” Gibson told me with a wry smile. A mere three

years later, at the tender age of seventeen, Nicholson would make his debut both for Manchester United and Northern Ireland.

Who would have believed back then that those two young protagonists from east Belfast, Gibson and Nicholson, would amass an incredible 122 international caps between them at their chosen sports of rugby and football?

Nicholson became a Busby Babe at Manchester United's academy of football skills, groomed to assume the mantle of the late, great Duncan Edwards, who had died in the Munich air disaster of 1958. Gibson, on the other hand, mixed rugby and education in the cloistered surroundings of Trinity College, Dublin, and Cambridge University. He played in three varsity games at Twickenham against Oxford University, but had a sneaking regret that he was unable to double up at football. He told me, "At that time, football varsity games between Cambridge and Oxford were played at Wembley, and it was always my ambition to play there."



*Daily Mail headline,
23 January, 1967*

By the time Mike arrived at the Oval in the seventies, he had three British Lions tours and over forty international caps behind him. Was there ever **the slightest possibility that he would sign for the Glens? "I really enjoyed the training and the chat," Gibson confessed. "There were some grand players around at the time, but my rugby commitments were such that there was never a realistic prospect of playing any competitive football."**

However, I must relate that Mike, to his great credit, put his rugby commitments aside on one occasion, at least. In the early seventies, I was an officer with the Life Boys at McQuiston Memorial Presbyterian Church on the Castlereagh Road. Our annual display was fast approaching and we were short of a Guest of Honour. I suggested that Mike Gibson would be the ideal choice, being a famous local personality. Mike was approached, and readily agreed to perform the role on a particular Friday evening in April.

About a week or so before our display, Gibson rang to say that he had been picked to **play for an Ulster team against an Ulster President's team at Ravenhill on the very same evening.** After a short chat, Mike assured our officer-in-charge that he would adhere to his original promise of being Guest of Honour. Needless to say, the young Life Boys were thrilled to parade before such an illustrious guest. In the circumstances, though, the officers felt more than a little guilty at holding an honourable sportsman to his promise.

While writing this story, I discovered that Gibson, though never turning out for **Glentoran, had the club in his blood. His grandfather was John "Jap" Walker, who won a League Championship with Glentoran in 1912/13 and an international cap for Ireland against Scotland, while playing for Bury in 1910. Furthermore, Gibson's uncle was Harry Walker, a famous footballer with Belfast Celtic in the 1940s.**

Mike has never lost his love for football, and informed me a while ago that the Glens result was the first one he looked for on a Saturday. Essentially, though, the game is the thing to fulfil the greatest need of those blessed with sporting excellence – the need to compete at the highest level. Given the ability and ambition of Nicholson and Gibson, I have little doubt that each could have become an international star at the **other's chosen sport.**



HELLO FROM ABERDEEN!

I can't believe I am halfway through my second year in Aberdeen - time flies! I am preparing for **more of my exams at Easter, so we don't get any** Easter holidays, unfortunately, but I hope to be home for some of my study leave.



I have just finished my third placement, which was in Orthopaedics at Woodend Hospital. I was also allocated to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (ARI), to the Trauma Unit and Emergency Admissions Ward.

I spent 13 weeks on this placement, getting up at 5am in the dark and cold winter months. I worked from 0700 until 1915, but it is most unusual to finish on time, sometimes not until 2200. We had a lot of deep snow before



Christmas which caused an increase in numbers of people of all ages falling - from young girls falling while on a date (ice skating on a lake), to the elderly falling going to the bin. We had to open an extra ward called the Winter Ward, which caused huge pressures on staffing levels. We were also struck down with the flu, which resulted in ARI being shut to admissions and put on black alert. This meant that patients were transported up the road to ourselves – some

who were due to come in for all kinds of operations (not just ortho) and people who were at higher risk of catching the flu. Luckily, I got my flu jab before the epidemic started and I cannot stress enough the importance of getting such an injection for the sake of yourself and those around you.

This year has been a big step up, with a lot more responsibility and **knowledge gained. I feel like I should know things now, but I really don't!** I feel that, in this profession, I will never stop learning. I have found some patients to be extremely challenging, and often it is the relatives who can cause an uproar. In the future, I should write a book on etiquette for hospital visitors!

During my last placement, I took part in a number of palliative care cases. I found them to be my favourite aspect of nursing to date. I enjoyed getting to spend time with the patients and family when they needed someone there to support and guide them through the process. I often find it extremely difficult to switch off when I come off duty, and often spend my journey home on the bus deep in thought and worry about what the next day will bring. Being on the same ward for a number of months gives me the opportunity to develop a good professional relationship with both my patients and colleagues. I have had multiple occasions when I have needed the assistance of another member of staff, and knew that, by shouting their name, I could rely on them to come.

I have really enjoyed having Mum, Dad and Andrew over to visit at different times, as Mum and Dad are both now preoccupied with the Beagle puppy we got in the summer! She is a handful in herself.



Mum can somehow clean dishes better than I can, so I invited her over to help and to do some extra meal preparation to last me another week! I guess **she can be helpful sometimes...**

I also loved visiting Andrew in Durham for a long weekend and spending time catching up - and visiting plenty of coffee shops! It was great to see other parts of the country and get away from Aberdeen, as it can get quite **lonely. I had missed spending time with someone from home, so I didn't** have to translate all the Northern Irish sayings into a version that the Scottish understand!

I must get back to my studies! I absolutely love getting letters from people in the church, so please feel free to write to me!

Sending lots of love,

Catherine Poxon

x

PRAYER FOR EASTER

Lord,
Thank you for spending 33 years with us:
for announcing Love
from the high heavens;
for introducing Love in an
obscure manger setting;
for living Love in a family
framework;
for sharing Love with the poor
and deprived and diseased;
for showing Love to the
unlovable and unloving;
for letting little children
feel Love in your arms;
for suffering on a cross
because of Love;
for loosing Love upon the
world to take up
residence in us;
for your Love that will
not let us go. Amen.



Forrest Nees



By Adam Steele



Hi Everyone,

Well, I can't believe I'm actually here in Costa Rica now. I have been so looking forward to going with Raleigh International and I thought the departure date would never arrive. It is nearly three weeks since I left Belfast in the snow and ice. I was really worried that my flight would be delayed and I would miss my connecting flight to Miami but, thankfully, I got away on time. It was a long journey, but great to meet up with the Raleigh folk in Managua Airport.

Our first few days were fairly relaxed, getting to know some of the large group of volunteers. The Raleigh base is in Masaya, which is about 30 minutes' drive from Managua. We learned about the way of life in Nicaragua and Costa Rica and what it would be like when we went to our different projects. The biggest thing to adjust to is the temperature –



very hot! It is often over 30 degrees C by mid-morning. I'll not complain too much as I'm sure it is still cold at home. The scenery is very beautiful, with lots of green vegetation and lakes. On our third day, we had a trial trek to help us get used to carrying our rucksacks in the heat. It was a chance to see a bit more of the countryside.

For my first project, I have come to the Horizontes experimental forest in north-west Costa Rica. This was a long drive by bus from Masaya - and the usual delays at the border. For each project, we are divided into smaller groups. There are twelve in our group, six guys and six girls. We are all getting to know each other and are getting on well. Not everyone is from the UK. There is one volunteer from Costa Rica itself, as well as a guy from southern Ireland. There is also a volunteer from the Netherlands. Each member of the group takes it in turn to be in a leadership role, organising our work and also the cooking. So far, I have prepared two meals, something that is quite novel for me and I'm sure a surprise for my parents! The



food is mostly vegetarian, so my diet is a lot healthier. There are no McDonalds or KFC to be seen!! We also have to wash our clothes by hand – no automatic washing machine here.

The work is hard but rewarding. We are clearing undergrowth and constructing a path to improve access to the park. Costa Rica is a well known destination for keen bird watchers and the government wants to develop the tourist industry in a sustainable way. The local people are very involved

in the development of the park and it will generate income for them. We have been working alongside some park rangers and getting to know them well. They have taken pity on us and offered us actual beds in their camps. So far, we have been sleeping on the ground, with a thin mat and sleeping bag. This week, we visited a local school to give a talk about global warming and the effects it has on our climate. The kids were very well behaved and friendly.



We will be in the forest park for another week before we return to Masaya for a short interlude. After this, we will be starting on a 'water and sanitation' project somewhere in Nicaragua. This will be for another three weeks. Finally, we will do a 260km trek, either in Nicaragua or Costa Rica. Most of the group are not looking forward to this but the trek is spread over two weeks and it will be a good way to finish our time off here in Central America. We have been promised some stunning scenery.

I am always mindful of your support and prayers and I look forward to seeing everyone on my return.

Adam



In 1938, Scottish minister, George MacLeod, began the Iona Community to connect more working people with the church. Members, now spread worldwide, strive for peace and justice.

This prayer from the Iona Community offers praise to each member of the Trinity:

We have heard about you, God of all power.

You made the world out of kindness, creating order out of confusion ... We have heard about you, Jesus Christ ...

the poor man who made others rich;

the healer who let himself be wounded ...

the Savior who died and rose again ...

We have heard about you, Holy Spirit.

You broke the bonds of every race and nation, to let God speak in every tongue ...

you showed how love made all things new.

history of Christianity and has so many chapels and monasteries. We were able to see an actual service, which was incredible.

I have added some photos of a few places we visited. We ate in local restaurants with the guides and sampled the local delicacies – some which were good, and others which the children found challenging!!

We visited Stalin's museum, which was very interesting and it showed all sides of Stalin – the positive and the negative (I have added a photo of Stalin's railway carriage which he travelled in, armoured and with bullet-proof glass).



Georgia is a country very proud of its history and varied landscape, from vineyards to mountain ranges. We were told there is a real problem with employment and the men traditionally do not work! We saw many, many lines of men standing along the roadside in hope that they would be picked up for work that day; the women have the regular jobs in shops, restaurants etc. It was eye-opening to see the poverty and the way the Georgian people lived; the streets of Tbilisi Old Town were cracked and unfixed, due to many earthquakes and aftershocks.



Ian also has run his first half marathon; all runs have to start early here due to the heat, and he completed it in a great time. Now he has the bug and has entered a 12 km run up the Al Ain mountain range in March!!! I am happy being the support team!



Good bye for now and we look forward to seeing you all in Groomsport over the summer.

Maureen



Firstly, on behalf of Storehouse, I say ‘thank you’ to everyone who contributed to the trolley in the porch in 2017; to the PW at their Christmas party; and to the many other members of the congregation who support Storehouse. The need, unfortunately, becomes greater every year and is met only because of continuous generosity.

We delivered 500 hampers during the week before Christmas, with the aid of, e.g., Health Visitors, Women’s Aid, Community Centres, North Down YMCA, and our willing band of volunteers, who prepared them. Some volunteers have been with us since we started in September 2013 with Hamper No. 1; each one since then has been numbered. In total, over 10,000 have been delivered in the North Down area. After Christmas, our shelves were almost bare. We especially need:

- ◆ Long-life milk
- ◆ Tinned meat/meals
- ◆ Long grain rice + tins to serve with it
- ◆ Small tins of veg & meat are good for single households

Unfortunately, we cannot accept homemade products, eg, jam, cakes, etc. There is one very important rule at Storehouse which must be obeyed – if not, we would be breaking the law and would get into serious trouble with Health & Safety. Each tin, packet, jar and bottle must have a date stamped on it, which is before its sell-by date, preferably by at least two weeks.

The date on each item containing food must be checked by a volunteer as soon as it arrives. If it is out of date by even a day, it has to be thrown out. Dates, especially on glass, can be hard to find – so if you could please check them at home, it would save time and waste. The good news is that there are no sell-by dates on NON-food items, such as toiletries, soap, shampoo, shaving needs, kitchen cleaners, laundry products, etc – all of which we also need.



If you have a question, or would like to visit Storehouse, or to help, please talk to me.

Sheelagh Dalzell
Tel: 028 9147 2594

VISIT TO STOREHOUSE NORTH DOWN

Recently, Paul and I, along with Sheelagh Dalzell, visited Storehouse, in Bangor. We greatly appreciated this opportunity to see for ourselves what the organisation is all about. We also appreciated the time given to us by volunteers - most of whom, I would guess, are retired. Pauline, who helps manage the warehouse, was very kind and explained a great deal to us about Storehouse. She told us the history of the organisation and how it has been offering help to needy families in the Bangor area since 2012.

It was also explained to us how various support agencies throughout our local community work alongside Storehouse to help people facing uncertain futures and difficult situations. It was encouraging to see a list of many local churches, including our own, seeking to help in practical ways those families or individuals who are in real need.

Pauline then gave us a tour of the premises, which were quite a hive of activity. We gained some appreciation of the logistics involved, from cataloguing the 'use-by dates' of the products to packing large food hampers which are filled with a wide range of produce. These also included toiletries and cleaning products. Provision is also made for babies in families, providing nappies, wipes and baby clothes. When making up these hampers, every family's and individual's circumstances are taken into account.



As those working in Storehouse themselves would say, having plenty of food in the cupboards is something we can easily take for granted. But what happens if your salary stops? Or your family circumstances drastically change? You could possibly last a few weeks or months, but then where do you turn? The bills that arrive through your door still need to be paid, clothes still need to be purchased and food, somehow, has to appear on the table each day. For many people, this has become a horrible and grim daily routine. It can be all too easy to criticise people for what we may perceive as mismanagement of money, but very often a crisis can hit, be that illness, redundancy, domestic violence or house eviction leading to homelessness. Storehouse exists, as a charity, to be a real answer for those families and individuals who have reached rock bottom.

I know that all involved with Storehouse greatly appreciate the generous food donations which many members of Groomsport Presbyterian Church continue to make. Your kindness really does make a tremendous difference.

Paul and I are thankful to Sheelagh for taking the time to show us the work of Storehouse and wish her well as a Storehouse volunteer.

Catherine Dalzell

COPYCAT HOBNOBS

Makes 50

Ingredients

290g self-raising flour

290g butter

290g caster sugar

30ml milk

100ml golden syrup

2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda

220g rolled oats



Steps

1. Preheat oven to 180C, line 2 large baking trays with non-stick parchment.
2. Cream the butter and sugar.
3. Beat in the syrup, milk and bicarbonate of soda.
4. With a spoon, stir in the flour and oats, making sure they are all coated.
5. Roll the mixture into 50 balls of equal size. Place on baking trays a little apart to allow for spreading. Bake for approx 12 minutes – keep an eye on them, though – they could be ready after 10 minutes.
6. As they bake, the biscuits will puff up, but by the time they are ready, they will be thin, like Hobnobs.
7. Transfer very carefully to a cooling rack – they will set quickly.

Sent in by Amanda McWhinney



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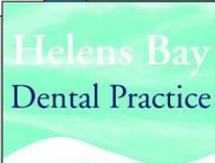
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From the Miller Family:

Greetings from Missouri! Life in the Midwest is, for the most part, going well for the Miller family. Since we last wrote, Mary Erin has gotten more involved in substitute teaching for several of the local schools. I have continued my pattern of taking Mondays off, so while David and I have a guys day, she often takes the day to go teach. It has been interesting learning a new school system here, but Mary Erin has a few friends in the area who are teachers, so there always seems to be work when she wants it.

Life at church continues to be exciting. We are midway through a six-month strategic planning process, taking a long, hard look at how we feel God leading our community. It isn't always easy, but it has led us to many wonderful conversations. I am slowly getting to know other pastors in the area, along with all the local church politics. All in all, it is an exciting time.

I did have a tough week a couple of weeks ago. One of my former students from my teaching days was murdered in early February, and I was thankfully able to attend his funeral. There were quite a few of my former students and teaching colleagues there, which was at least one bright spot. It has been something that has been weighing on my mind ever since.

On a happy note, however, we are getting excited for David's second birthday! As I write this, it is only a few weeks away, so we (I'll be honest — Mary Erin) is deep in party-planning mode. Plans for decorations and food are underway, and invitations are out to all the family in the area (and even a few that really aren't close at all). While we are certainly looking forward to the celebration, I don't know how it could possibly compare with the love you showed us all last year at his first birthday! Just the other day, we were looking back at photos from that day — what a joy!

We wish you all the very best, and know that if you ever want to come visit the heartland of America, we would be delighted to be your hosts.

With much love,

Chris, Mary Erin and David Miller

(Intern 2015-2017)

cmiller@trinityspringfieldpcusa.org



Greetings from the Irmer Family

Greetings from Lawrenceville, NJ! We hope this message finds you all well. We continue to enjoy living in Central New Jersey (we are about 40 minutes from Philadelphia and 1½ hours from New York City). Speaking of that, Alison wears her Philadelphia Eagles sweatshirt with pride after them winning the Super Bowl. And I continue, as a season ticket-holder of the Philadelphia 76ers, to enjoy attending professional basketball games during this time of year. Amelia (not much of a sports fan) enjoys time with friends at their "Book Club" and also enjoys time by our new fireplace in the manse.



My call as the pastor at Slackwood Presbyterian Church continues to go well. It has been wonderful to have our own intern from Princeton Seminary. I'm also grateful that we have a congregation that is willing to try and support new ideas. Whether it be Outdoor Movie Nights, Summer Festivals, or working with our local schools at our Martin Luther King Day Service, there have been a number of new and exciting moments in the life of our church. The challenges we face as a congregation concern two areas:

- 1) We are a small church, and living in America - where so many people are already overextended with their time - makes it difficult to get enough people to accept roles as deacons and elders and to serve on church committees.
- 2) Our nation continues to be extremely divided, and addressing important contemporary issues, while not offending people or dividing our congregation, is a huge challenge.

This was evident last Sunday as I tried to address the public health crisis that we have, as it relates to the epidemic of mass shootings which continue to take place in our churches, schools, concerts, and movie theaters. Tragedy after tragedy, while NOTHING gets done about it. I would appreciate your prayers, not only for our church, but also for our nation and the many people mourning the loss of loved ones who continue to be senselessly taken.

Please know that we continue to think and pray for you all as well. We enjoy reading *Eagle Wing*, we appreciate your emails, and we love your Facebook posts and pictures. In fact, yesterday I saw a post about your upcoming pantomime, *Sleeping Beauty*, and I thought to myself, "Oh, how I wish we could teleport our family to be with you this weekend, and laugh together and enjoy some good craic!" Well, though we continue to be separated by distance, you remain our dear friends and we look forward to a time when we see you again face to face.

Love,

Ryan, Amelia, and Alison

(Intern 2014/15) rmirmer@gmail.com

From Katie Nix

By the time you read this, if all goes well, I will have officially completed my doctorate in ministry! This 7-year journey has been beautiful, difficult, formative, and incredible. My graduation will be June 8, and I promise I will be crying tears of joy when I walk across that stage.

As you can see, in preparation for completing my dissertation, our family had to go visit our favorite mouse. We spent a week in Disney World with my sister (who works there) and her husband, and had a wonderful time. I also ran my first half marathon and did not die! It was so much fun that Eric and I are starting to train for another half marathon this October.

The kids are doing great. Elizabeth loves school and is, at least in my mind, the most brilliant kid in her class. Steven is my big little man and when he isn't running around or pretending to be Iron Man, he loves to snuggle on my lap and watch Mickey Mouse Club House. Rebecca is growing up so fast! She is army crawling around the house at alarmingly fast speeds, which makes my life very exciting. Luckily, big sister and brother have already learned the phrase, "Becca, don't eat that!" and swoop in to take whatever tiny toy out of her mouth.



I hope all is going well for you. We love you and miss you.

Katie Nix (Intern 2008/2009)
rev.katie.nix@gmail.com

Use me then, my Savior, for whatever purpose, and whatever way you may require. Here is my poor heart, an empty vessel; fill it with your grace. Here is my sinful and troubled soul; quicken it and refresh it with your love.

Take my heart for your abode; my mouth to spread abroad the glory of your name; my love and all my powers, for the advancement of your believing people; and never suffer the steadfastness and confidence of my faith to abate; so that at all times I may be enabled from the heart to say, 'Jesus needs me, and I am his.'

Dwight L Moody

Hello Groomsport!

A lot has happened to us in the last few months. As you may remember, I was serving a 15-month probationary period at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church in Edinburgh. I have since been called, ordained and inducted into Ibrox Parish Church as their minister. It was my first, and really only, choice of where to go. I feel it is absolutely where God has me to be in this season of life. So Ramon and I have moved through to Glasgow and are settling in on the west coast with



the 'Weegies' of Scotland. I

was quite chuffed that Roger and Doreen Purce were able to come through for my ordination service. I hadn't seen Roger since his visit my final year at Princeton in 2014. It was wonderful to have a bit of Groomsport with me on such a momentous day.



Ramon continues in his work for Blackwood, a home care support company, as part of their digital initiatives team. Providentially, they asked him to move his primary location from Edinburgh to Glasgow just a few weeks before we were to make our move anyway, which was a relief of logistics. Ramon is still hoping to attend university in the fall to earn his Masters and certifications to teach secondary school English here.

Please keep me in your thoughts and prayers as I go through my first year as a solo minister, that I may find balance and pace myself, remembering a career in ministry is a marathon and not a sprint.

Love to you all,

Tara and Ramon Granados

(Tara was our Intern 2013/14) tara.porr@gmail.com

P.S. An article about my ordination was in *The Herald* and Groomsport gets a **mention when I talk about my training. Here's the link if you'd like to check it out:**

http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/15857932.Minister_swaps_her_home_in_Texas_for_parish_kirk_at_Ibrox/

Never think you're just a normal person. If you're pursuing God's calling in your life, he will use you. Even if it's a challenging calling, even if you find yourself in difficult circumstances, he will give you what you need to be faithful to him, even if it's a whole army of people praying for you. Share your story over and over and over so you can remember we serve a mighty God.

Kent Brantley

Happy Easter! As there is not much new news in my life, I thought I'd offer an Easter reflection:



Many pastors have been having fun with the fact that Easter this year is April 1, April Fool's Day. I've heard pastors throw out potential Easter sermon titles along the lines of "Fooled you!" Everyone, including the women who came to the tomb that first Easter morning, assumed that Christ was dead. While Jesus had foreshadowed his resurrection, no one understood what he meant or believed that something like that could happen. So, when the women were told by an angel that Christ was not there, but had risen from the dead, it might have originally seemed like a mean joke. Some were concerned about what had happened to Christ's body. Was it stolen? Why was it not there? They might have expected someone to say, "April Fool, he's still dead." But instead, all who thought that Christ was dead were the ones who were ultimately fooled. Christ was risen and is risen indeed. In the greatest twist and turn of events, Christ who was dead was now alive and continues to live today. Christ triumphed over death and sin, and Christ's "victory o'er the grave" is our victory today. Hallelujah that this is the God we worship on Easter and all throughout the year. We worship the God who has conquered death, is alive, and lives and moves and breathes in us today. God was, is, and always will be alive and active in this world; and while this world may not always look like what God intends for it to be, with God working in and through us, we have the opportunity to be Christ's hands, feet, and lips in this world, helping to shape it to look more like the peaceable kingdom that God intended. If we claim to be people of the resurrection, and put our faith in our God who was raised from the dead, how will we show that to the world and spread God's light in the world? Where is God calling you to serve? How is God calling you to serve? Where is the darkness around you into which God wants you to shine light? Who still needs to know the Good News?

I continue to be grateful that one of the ways you continue to shine God's light around the world is through your support of the Princeton Internship Program. It takes a unique congregation, year after year, to invest in pastors who are "learning the ropes," and to offer such grace and forgiveness with failures, and such encouragement and support in our more successful moments. Not every congregation can do this, and not every congregation is equipped to do this. And while some congregations can do this, to do it well, a congregation must see having an intern not just as some extra help for the installed minister, but truly as a call to serve Christ by teaching, equipping, loving, and serving women and men new to pastoral ministry. Because of your faithful response to this call from God, there are now pastors serving throughout the US and the UK who are thriving in their ministry because of an important foundation laid for them in Groomsport. There is rarely a month that passes that I'm not grateful for something I did or learned in Groomsport and recognize how it influences me as a pastor today. Just the other week, when someone asked me a question about my pastoral prayers, part of my answer recounted a lesson I learned the hard way, early on in my time in Groomsport: *ALWAYS* check the news within a half hour of starting worship, so that pastoral prayers are informed by the latest news! I have done that ever since. Even 13 years on since my year with you all, I am forever grateful for the ways that you serve God through the internship program, and for the many, many other ways that you as individuals — and you as a church — continue to spread Christ's love and light wherever you go.

May Christ's Easter blessings be with you all,

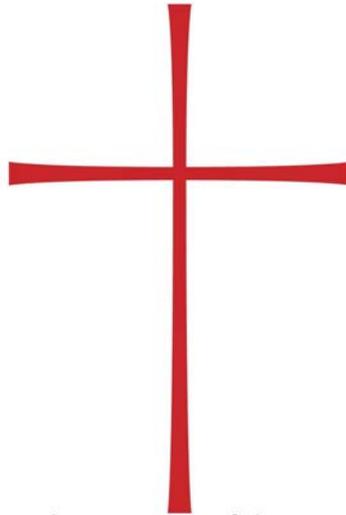
Christa

(Princeton Intern 2004/2005) CBrewer@mbfpc.com



FORTHCOMING SERVICES

Friday 30th March	8.00pm	Good Friday Communion Service
Sunday 1st April	6.30am	Sunrise Service (Meeting at the Halls)
	11.30am	Easter Sunday Service (No Evening Worship)
Sunday 3rd June	11.30am	Children's Day



For the message of the cross is
foolishness
to those who are perishing,
but to us who are being
saved,
it is
the power of God.

1CORINTHIANS 1: 18 NIV UK

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friendship Lunch:

Lunch	1.00pm	Wednesday 25th April
Special Afternoon Tea		Wednesday 30th May <i>(more information to follow)</i>