

# *Eagle Wing*



*The Magazine of Groomsport Presbyterian Church*

**Christmas 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



From the year 2000 to his passing in 2016, Ray Tomlinson, a USA computer programmer, received numerous awards in science and computing. He is considered to be a world renowned innovator because he was the first person to use, in a particular way, a symbol that many of us now use without thinking! That symbol is the @ in our everyday emails. Ray Tomlinson was the first person to send an email.

Way back in 1971, Tomlinson was experimenting with ways people and computers could interact. When he sent a message from his computer through a network to a different computer, using the @ symbol, he had sent the first e-mail. The Internet Hall of Fame, in its account of his work, commented, "Tomlinson's email program brought about a complete revolution, fundamentally changing the way people communicate."

Now, almost half a century later, it is estimated that there are about **124.5 billion** business emails sent and received each day, while there are about **111.1 billion** consumer emails sent and received each day. It is further estimated that, of all the emails sent, almost 50% are spam or viruses.

A basic rule governing email use is: "Don't open it unless you trust the sender."

As we approach Christmas, we celebrate the greatest message of all. A message that was sent not by email, or written on paper, but a message that came in a person - Jesus. God had sent earlier messages through people called prophets but sadly, again and again, their message was rejected by so many.

Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us:

*Going through a long line of prophets, God has been addressing our ancestors in different ways for centuries. Recently he spoke to us directly through his Son.*

God wants us to trust him enough to "open" his final "email", his final and complete message in his Son, Jesus. To listen to him, to believe in him, to trust him, to follow him!

Christmas is the unforgettable message of love, redemption, and hope sent by God. Because of this, in Groomspoint, we are so glad to celebrate the birth of Jesus. And so, may I extend to you an invitation to join with us in the different services during December.

Happy Christmas!



## CONGREGATIONAL RECORD



### DEATHS

28 September 2018 Mrs Gladys Glass, 64 Ballymacormick Ave (20)  
23 October 2018 Mrs Sheila Humphrey, Bryansburn Home (14)  
Mrs Sarah Ferris, Blair House, Newtownards (5)

*"Blessed are they who die in the Lord"*

### PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

...WE TURN TO YOU, GOD OF OUR LIFE  
GOD OF ALL OUR YEARS,  
GOD OF OUR BEGINNING...  
WE DARE PRAY THAT YOU WILL DO FOR US  
AND AMONG US AND THROUGH US  
WHAT IS NEEDFUL FOR OUR NEWNESS.  
GIVE US THE POWER TO BE RECEPTIVE,  
TO TAKE THE NEWNESS YOU GIVE...

*Walter Brueggemann*

### USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Minister</b>	<b>Rev. Paul Dalzell</b>	<b>07909 896123</b>
<b>Princeton Intern</b>	<b>Ryan Pearce</b>	<b>07577 000978</b>
<b>Church Office</b>	<b>Tues, Wed &amp; Fri 9.00-1.00</b>	<b>9146 2552</b> <b>gportpc@googlemail.com</b>

## MISCELLANEOUS



Best wishes to Anne and Ian McDonald,  
who are looking forward to their Golden Wedding Anniversary  
on Boxing Day

God throws open the door of this world — and enters as a baby. As the most vulnerable imaginable. Because he wants unimaginable intimacy with you. What religion ever had a god that wanted such intimacy with us that he came with such vulnerability to us? What God ever came so tender we could touch him? So fragile that we could break him? So vulnerable that his bare, beating heart could be hurt? Only the One who loves you to death.



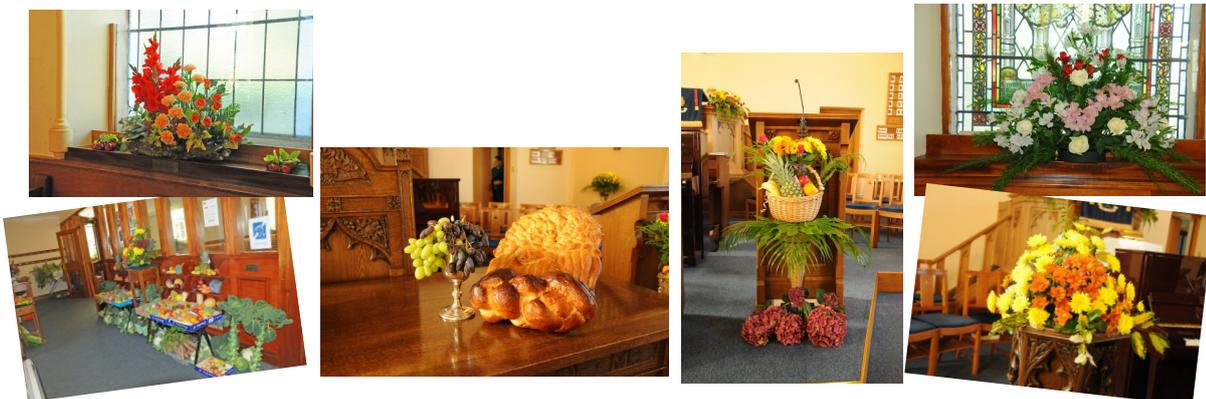
### CHRISTMAS AID

Christian Aid's seasonal fundraising appeal  
has as its theme this year  
*Be a peacemaker.*

By supporting Christmas Aid,  
you can stand together  
with those on the frontline of peacemaking,  
bringing healing, wholeness and hope to people affected  
by violence and conflict.

<https://www.christianaid.ie/christmas-appeal/christmas-appeal>

*The church was beautifully decorated for our recent Harvest Thanksgiving services*





## EAGLE WING

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Church

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### EDITOR

Susan Ekin  
(028) 91451536

ADVERTISING  
(028) 91462552

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### USEFUL CONTACTS

#### Minister

Rev Paul Dalzell  
07909 896123  
minister@pauldalzell.uk

#### Clerk of Session

Elaine Nixon-Shepherd  
(028) 91270268

#### Sunday School

Margaret McCreedy  
(028) 91464361

#### Organist & Choirmaster

John Ekin  
(028) 91451536  
johnlekin@hotmail.com

#### Church Secretary

Julie McClurg  
(028) 91462552  
gportpc@googlemail.com

## EDITORIAL

This Christmas issue of *Eagle Wing* is possibly the largest we've ever had, and we are very grateful to all those who have contributed. The articles reflect the life of the congregation, and its various activities; as always, we report on events and experiences both local and global. Rev Dalzell has recently returned from Princeton, having appointed Heidi Biermann as next year's Intern, and you can read a little about her on page 12. Of course, Ryan will be with us for the remainder of his year – and he shares here what Christmas means to him. Ryan and Heidi are the latest representatives of our long-standing and ongoing partnership with Princeton Theological Seminary; we make a point of keeping in contact, and several former Interns have been in touch, telling us about life for them after Groomsport.

And we're delighted to hear that there is, indeed, 'life after Groomsport' for two other people: Doreen Purce has written to tell us how she and Roger are enjoying retirement. It was good to have them both with us for the Special Recognition Concert on 24<sup>th</sup> November, when we acknowledged John Ekin's 30 years as Organist and Choirmaster, and the church choir's contribution to worship.

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1918 Armistice triggered much media interest and many acts of public remembrance and reflection. But most huge, incomprehensible events – past or present – only become truly accessible through personal narratives, and two of our members have been exploring these. Alan Pinkerton attended Bangor's cenotaph service on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November, when the names of local men who made the supreme sacrifice were read out – including several sets of brothers; and Margaret McCreedy shares the amazing discovery, made only this year, of a Great War link to another family closely connected with Groomsport.

Meanwhile, Brian McClelland, during a holiday in South Africa (near another Belfast), visited a battlefield associated with a different war – but found a 100-year reference there, too. Hazel and Stanley Megahey have also recently returned from South Africa, bringing the latest news from Knysna Presbyterian.

Our younger folk have been active, too: read about a visit to Airtastic trampoline and adventure centre; the many activities that the Brownies have been enjoying; the Sunday School's Christmas Gift Day; and Adam's experience in Canada.

At home, the Events and Mission Committees are busy; the Tuesday Club and PW have full programmes for the coming months; on page 13, you can find out about our new, updated website – if you haven't already visited it, do go online to check it out. Please note also the information about Gift Aid and Storehouse. In all these ways, our congregation witnesses, and makes a difference in this world.

Thomas Merton wrote, "Into this world, this demented inn, in which there is absolutely no room for him ... Christ comes uninvited;" Frederick Buechner said, "Once we have seen [Jesus] in a stable, we can never be sure where he will appear." We may indeed live in a 'demented inn', but the wonderful reassurance of Christmas is that Christ comes to the manger out in the stable, regardless – even if we don't make room for him, even when we neglect to invite him, and often, where we don't expect him.

*Wishing all Eagle Wing readers a very Happy Christmas.*

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION CONCERT

SATURDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER

This was a celebration of the contribution to our worship - week by week - of music in Groomsport Presbyterian. As a congregation, we are known for our love of singing, so the praise element of the service is very important. Our church choir, directed by our Organist and Choirmaster, John Ekin, faithfully leads the hymn singing in weekly services, and prepares special items for the three major festivals of the church year – Harvest, Christmas and Easter. As John has just recently completed his thirtieth year in this role, the Kirk Session wished to mark this milestone, and also acknowledge the dedicated service of all members of the choir.

A decision was taken some months ago by Session to host a concert, to which congregation, choir members, their families and friends were all invited. Award-winning choir, The Miskelly Chorale was asked to provide the musical entertainment, under the talented leadership of their Director, Mr Edwin Gray. Formed just six years ago, the Chorale – eighteen young female voices – has already established a reputation for performing a varied, and often challenging, repertoire; winners of several top choral festival classes, the choir has also made guest appearances in Stockholm, and in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh. It was particularly special to have The Miskelly Chorale in Groomsport on this occasion, as two of its founder members have personal links to the congregation: Steph Murray is the granddaughter of the late Herbie, much-missed Groomsport choir tenor; and Carolyn McDowell is John Ekin's younger daughter.



The programme contained something for everyone – from sacred and secular, to swing and light-hearted pieces, several items with a Christmas flavour, along with some poignantly reflective songs and a number of exquisite choral works by leading contemporary composers.



Also performing was acclaimed local harpist, Ruth Corry, who charmed the audience with her skill, as she presented a range of beautiful pieces written by composers both traditional and contemporary – including herself.



Edwin Gray, as well as directing the choir, also gave two wonderful solo performances on the church organ. He was ably assisted by his wife, Marjorie, who turned the pages for both her husband and for Judith Kimber, the choir's exceptionally gifted accompanist.



Rev Paul Dalzell led the tributes to the church choir and organist. He began by reading the names of those choir members who have served thirty years or more – some achieving over 40, 50 and even 60! Paul has been Minister here for only twenty months, but spoke of his genuine appreciation of John Ekin's contribution to worship in the church, and his choice of hymns. Rev Dr David Irwin then told how, having heard that John was no longer organist in Hamilton Road, he had asked him to try the post in Groomsport 'for six months,' following the death of their former organist. He spoke of preaching, in retirement, in other churches, where choirs are now very small or no longer exist, pointing out how fortunate Groomsport is to have a large choir still leading weekly worship. Rev Dr Roger Purce, Senior Minister of the congregation, also gave a personal tribute, reflecting twenty-four years of working alongside John in the preparation of worship, acknowledging John's sensitivity to service themes, ability to choose appropriate praise items, and skill in finding choral pieces ideally suited for the church choir to perform.

Clerk of Session, Elaine Nixon-Shepherd made a presentation to John, remarking on long-standing connections between their two families, and her own many years as a choir member.



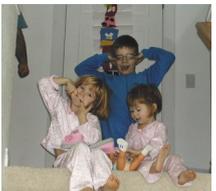
In replying to all the speakers, and thanking the Session for hosting such an enjoyable event, John reiterated the good working relationships he has had with each of the ministers – wondering if those six months David Irwin talked him into were not nearly up! referring to the almost telepathic connection between Roger and himself when it came to service preparation over a very special twenty-four-year partnership; and finally – having expressed relief that Paul Dalzell had not arrived in Groomsport carrying a guitar! – acknowledging the swift establishment of a fine, new working relationship. He also paid tribute to all members of the church choir – whether for many years or a short time – and to Choir Chairman, Alastair McQuoid, for his loyalty and support over twenty-eight of the thirty years. He finished by thanking the congregation for their support for the musical tradition of the church – and describing them as 'the best hymn-singers in the world!'

The evening concluded with the singing of *The day Thou gavest*, and the Benedicton, followed by supper in the church halls.

## WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME ...



Growing up, the Christmas season was my favorite time of year...and growing up in the US, it seemed to last forever, as stores began displaying wares by late October. In my family, the Christmas season kicked off with our Thanksgiving celebration, a day to gather in gratitude with friends and family. There was an anticipation, excitement, and buzz that seemed to grow through the day as the roast turkey and fixings — all GF of course — were consumed, the leftovers packed away for later sandwiches, and the apple and pumpkin pies demolished. Soon, we realized something: Christmas was coming!!! Advent was on our doorstep, gleaming with promise as our family began preparing for our favorite season — the celebration of Jesus' birthday.



As kids, we didn't really understand the notion of "Advent" — the four weeks before Christmas, spent waiting and anticipating Christ — but we certainly understood the excitement as our birthday grew closer. To help make the story of Jesus' birth more real to us, my parents taught us to celebrate Jesus' birthday just like we celebrated our own birthdays. We talked about it, we counted down, we planned, and we waited anxiously. Jesus' birthday was interwoven into most of our family traditions. When we decorated our house, we had one room (the kitchen) decked out, not in Christmas garland and lights, but in birthday attire. It was always filled with paper chains and birthday-themed decorations.



To help us mark the days leading up to that special day, each preceding day was marked off on our Advent calendar. Each evening, we unwrapped a small book and my dad read it to my sisters and me. My mom somehow found 28 different stories about Jesus' birth and we read a book a night. At the start of each Christmas season, she would wrap them up again and we would read them in whatever order we unwrapped them in again.



Even our Christmas gifts were linked to Jesus' birthday. We exchanged gifts to help Jesus celebrate His birthday. We gave gifts to the poor in honor of Jesus' birthday. One Christmas, my parents even tried to be extra "biblical" about our presents by giving us three presents each, claiming "if it was good enough for Jesus..." To top off the celebration of Jesus' birthday, we even baked a big chocolate iced birthday cake that we decorated with sprinkles and candles and ate for dessert with our neighbors on Christmas Day, after singing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus, of course.



As I have grown up, Christmas has richly impacted my faith. I remember the first time I truly grasped the significance of what we were celebrating: that Christmas wasn't just Jesus' birthday but a celebration of God becoming incarnate. My family was attending a candle-lit midnight Christmas Eve service. As the clock struck midnight, we began singing *Silent Night*. My dad put his arm around me as we held our candles aloft, and we softly sang those familiar lines together:

*Silent night, holy night,  
all is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child,  
holy infant, so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.*

That song and that moment are dear to me, in part, because *Silent Night* was the song I chose at age 3 for my father to sing to me after prayers at bedtime, and he sang it my entire life.

And as we stood there, closely linked by song and memory, the true meaning of Christmas became real as well. I somehow understood that our Father, who loved his son — Jesus — as my father loves me, sent that same son to live and die for *ME*. God didn't leave us to languish in our sin, but came close at Christmas to atone for my sin.



Jesus willingly left the Father in order to bring many more to glory. It was in that tender, peaceful moment with my dad that I grasped a bit more the true meaning of Christmas.

I'm sure, like me, you all have fond and meaningful Christmas memories, richly interwoven with our lives across the years. There is so much personal and familial significance in this upcoming time, yet it is not the perfect season, year in and year out — some years will be colored by arguments and family issues, by loss and separation; others will be shaded by memories of better times gone by. Despite the imperfection, there are moments when we grasp the deep joy of Christmas, and we look forward expectantly in hope.

This truly is the reality of Advent. It is a time to recall Jesus Christ, come to earth as a babe in a manger; it is time for hope-filled expectation of the day when that same baby will return in power and in grace to finish his work in the world, and it is time to consider what place Jesus has in your life now. We live in the time of the now and not-yet of Jesus' coming in this world.

So, as we step into this familiar season of Advent, I hope that you are encouraged to stop and reflect, and remember that Christ has come, and he worked, lived, and died in this world. He is active in your life today through the Holy Spirit. And Christ is coming back to right all wrongs and finish bringing his kingdom into this world. So, let us not forget, during this upcoming season of Advent, the memory and the promise that Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, has come and will come again to put the world to right. And on that day, we will stand with John the Apostle in saying, "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." (Rev 21:20)

Grace and peace be with you through this Christmas season,

*Ryan*



*Advent does not lead to nervous tension stemming  
from expectation of something spectacular about to happen.  
On the contrary, it leads to a growing inner stillness and joy,  
allowing me to realize that he for whom I am waiting has already arrived  
and speaks to me in the silence of my heart.*

**Henri J.M. Nouwen**

## REPORT FROM PRINCETON 2018

Rev. Paul Dalzell and Catherine travelled to Princeton on 12<sup>th</sup> November for Paul to interview nine applicants, who were interested in the internship for 2019-20. The applicants came from a variety of backgrounds, with different experiences and aspirations, including a gentleman from Ghana and a lady who was born in Zambia. At the completion of the interviews, the post was offered to Miss Heidi Biermann, a 23 year-old from Washington State, and candidate for ordination in the Presbyterian Church USA. Heidi plans to be with us for September 2019.



Some highlights of the week also included a heavy snow fall on the Thursday - which caused a few hours of major disruption right along the North East of the USA. Also, following the kind invitation of Rev. Ryan Irmer, a former Groomsport intern, Paul was privileged to preach on the Sunday in Slackwood Presbyterian Church, Lawrenceville, where Ryan is the Senior Minister. Paul and Catherine enjoyed meeting up again with Ryan, Amelia and Alison, and sharing with them and the congregation over a 'Fellowship Lunch' after the worship service.



*The task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.  
(Source unknown)*

**OUR NEW WEBSITE**

by Amanda McWhinney

Groomsport Presbyterian Church has a new website. Like anything in life, there comes a point when you need to re-do what you have, in order to keep things looking fresh. That is exactly what we have done.

The preparations started earlier in the year, when there were discussions with Session and Committee about getting a new website put together. There were plenty of ideas, but then the next challenge was to find someone to do this difficult task.

At some point in August, I am not sure if I volunteered for the project, or if the project found me. After working in e-commerce off and on over the years, I realised I had the skills required to take the plunge and go ahead with the construction of the new site. Working on the church website is very different from worldwide drop shipping; it has been a steep learning curve.

Over the next few weeks, I played around with design ideas and layouts before finalising the things we needed, before the actual site build would begin. In October, the hard work began. A website committee was set up and we had discussions over content and layout. By the end of the month, the majority of the site was up and running quietly, to ensure that there were no issues, in preparation for the official launch. Eventually, everything came together and we launched the new site on 4th November. No one was more relieved than myself.

The plan for the new website is to keep it updated; there is nothing worse than visiting a website and finding material which is several months, or even years, out of date. We



are also hoping to have fresh content added onto the site regularly. Rev Paul Dalzell will be writing extracts from his sermons, in the hope that if you need encouragement, comfort or inspiration, you can visit the site and find something to help. Events will be highlighted, and the mission projects we support will also be on



the site. You will be able to download and read current and past issues of the *Eagle Wing* magazine; the weekly bulletin will be available to download prior to Sunday services. There is a password-protected members' area, where you can log in to view rotas, sign up for readings, or check when the next committee meeting is.

Over the next while, there are plans to add more to the site, so please do check back and see what is happening. New ideas will be welcomed - pass on your suggestions in writing to any member on the website committee: Alan Chestnutt, David Purce, Fiona McCreedy, Richard McCreedy, Rev Paul Dalzell and myself.

In closing, I will add that we also have a new domain name. Visit our new site at

[www.groomsportpresbyterian.com](http://www.groomsportpresbyterian.com)

Don't forget to bookmark it!

## LIFE AFTER GROOMSPORT

Here we are in the third year of Roger's retirement - where does the time go? Retired folk often say, "I don't know how I had ever time to work - I am so busy" - how true!

While Roger very much enjoyed his ministry, he is now enjoying the freedom to do things as and when he likes. He has become very good - well, fairly good! - at DIY, even better at cooking, and enjoys looking after our much smaller gardens - both here in Portballintrae and in France. In the past year, I have had three stays in hospital and I was so grateful that he had the time to be my main carer. Who knew he would make such a good nurse?!



Could I also take this opportunity to thank those of you who took time to phone, to send cards and call to see me, both in hospital and in Portballintrae? It was very much appreciated by us both. Thankfully, I am so much better now and almost back to 100%.

Roger is now Vice President in our local Probus group, as well as a member of the Portballintrae Residents' Association committee.



When in France, as well as chief gardener, he is also the resident "pool man" and has become quite the expert in pool maintenance! It is sometimes an ongoing battle to make sure that salt and pH levels are correct - you practically need a degree in Chemistry!

Of course, he still keeps up his main hobby of shooting and enjoys the winter months at home, when he can also do some deer stalking in Scotland. Unfortunately, fishing has fallen a bit by the wayside, as we are now mostly in France during the fishing season but, as the French would say - "c'est la vie!"

He now has time to be involved in The Genevan Clerical Group - a group of ministers who meet in Ballymena every month - and Friends of the Way, an ecumenical group which meets on the north coast. He has also been part of the group of people who issued the *Cry from the Heart* document, which was released to the press after the disastrous decisions taken by the General Assembly. We both have become extremely worried by the direction in which PCI is going. While respecting decisions which have been voted on in the General Assembly, we are less than happy about the way these decisions were reached. We are also appalled by directives from PCI, trying to deny us freedom of conscience and the right to dissent - a basic Presbyterian belief. As a denomination, we are seen as cold and unwelcoming by many in our society, lacking in grace and also very insularised. It is a long way from the church into which Roger was ordained. However, we hope by being involved with a few different groups, we can see a way forward to creating a more loving and accepting church, where all are welcome. We know some of you in Groomsport feel exactly the same way as we do.

We are very fortunate to have a home in France, and it is wonderful to be able to spend more time there. Argens-Minervois is a small village on the Canal du Midi, between Carcassonne and Narbonne, and lies between the Pyrenees and the Black Mountains. The way of life is chilled out and relaxed. Of course, we are also blessed by (mostly) beautiful weather.

We love being able to explore our local region - Occitanie (formerly Languedoc Roussillon). The area is steeped in history - from before the Romans (who made bricks from our local clay - just try digging a hole in our garden!) to the Cathars and the Albigensian Crusades. The place is littered with former Cathar castles and strongholds.

Of course, it is also the biggest wine-producing region in France, and we love seeing the progress of the vineyards through the seasons. As I write this, we have just returned from France and had been watching with interest *la vendange* - the gathering of the grapes. While it is mostly done by machinery, we have seen some of the finer varieties of grapes being picked by hand - a very intensive and time-consuming harvesting.

We are just about an hour from Spain, so make the odd journey over the border as food, plants, etc, are much cheaper there. The Mediterranean is only 45 minutes from our doorstep, so we like to go there for a walk along Narbonne Plage, and sometimes just sit and watch the world go by! We also try to take some longer trips while we are away, and last year we were able to take a return trip from Paris to Venice on the Orient Express, plus drive down to Granada to visit friends.



We are now members of Bushmills Presbyterian Church and are enjoying getting to know a new congregation - who have made us very welcome. Roger has done a bit of preaching there. Also, he has preached in Gracehill Moravian Church, which he really enjoyed. Many of you will know that Jared is now working with the Moravians.

When in France, we worship with a group called ESCF - the English Speaking Christian Fellowship. It is a small group of people - mostly English Methodists, but other nationalities and denominations as well. Roger has done a bit of preaching there, too. They usually have their own members take the Sunday services, so you sometimes get a very wide and differing theological perspective on things! However, again, we have been made very welcome. They also have a wide programme of activities from Bible Study, Pilates, Craft Group, Ladies' Lunch group and a table quiz, which is held once a month. Every week, we get an email from them giving their week's programme and also prayer requests. I must say, too, that they kept me very much in their prayers during my latter illness - it was very comforting to know.

While we do keep busy, we also miss Groomspoint, although we do manage to keep up fairly well with what is going on. It is good when we get to meet up with some of you. Please do feel very welcome to visit with us, either in Portballintrae - or in France! We have had visits from some of you in both places so - do not be strangers! We are looking forward to having the Irmers stay with us in France for a few days in June 2019. As this update is going into the Christmas edition of *Eagle Wing*, we send our very best wishes to you all for a very happy Christmas, and a peaceful and healthy 2019.

*Doreen & Roger*

Contact details: doreenp26@googlemail.com      rpurce@googlemail.com

Tel (Portballintrae) 02820732489

# Presbyterian Women

Ladies of all ages are welcome to come along and join us on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month at 8pm in The Archie Agnew Hall. You will receive a warm welcome, friendship and fellowship.

Our programme for the New Year is below.

14 <sup>th</sup> January	Our intern, Ryan Pearce
28 <sup>th</sup> January	Work night for Malawi
11 <sup>th</sup> February	Glastry Ice Cream
25 <sup>th</sup> February	Bible Study for the Women's World Day of Prayer
11 <sup>th</sup> March	The Singing Chef
25 <sup>th</sup> March	Final night and AGM

In addition to our meetings, we are pleased to announce that we are having a

**Christmas Coffee Morning  
on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November  
from 10.30 - 12 noon**

*Jennifer Boyd (Secretary)*  
02891 465760  
jenniferboyd@mail.com



## THE TUESDAY CLUB GROOMSPORT

Thank you, everyone who supported us in our first fundraiser – the concert held in our church on 19<sup>th</sup> October, with the Police Choir of Northern Ireland and guests. The final total was £2547 - I didn't expect to receive that amount. Watch this space for our next fundraiser on Friday 3rd May!!



Meanwhile, here is our programme for the first six months of next year. The film club is for everybody, and is free of charge.



Mary Cargill 028 9147 4098



### PROGRAMME 2019 *(1st Tuesday of month, unless otherwise indicated)*

JANUARY     **DAVID AND MAUREEN IRWIN – TRAVELLERS' TALES**

FEBRUARY    **COMBER CRAFTERS**

MARCH        **AIR AMBULANCE**

APRIL         **AGM + SHORT TALK**

MAY            **JOHN SHEPHERD**

### REMAINING FILM SHOWS: *(3rd Tuesday, unless otherwise stated)*

JANUARY    **MRS BROWN** (Judi Dench & Billy Connolly)

FEBRUARY   **THE QUEEN**    (Helen Mirren)

MARCH       **THE SOUND of MUSIC** (Julie Andrews)

*All meetings/film shows at 2.00pm in the Archie Agnew Hall*

**There will be a free outing for our regular members – those who attend faithfully every month. More details in next *Eagle Wing*.**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School and Bible Class meet as usual each Sunday morning at 10.15 am. For the past few weeks, we were practising for our Gift Day service on 9th December, when the children took part in what has always been a happy start to our Christmas celebrations. As is our custom, we laid gifts at the foot of the Christmas tree; these were then taken to the Belfast Central Mission for distribution to many needy families.



This year, as the number of children attending is small, we invited the members of the congregation to bring gifts also, if they so wished. We appreciated that adults may not have wanted to bring their gifts forward, so the children collected these and placed them under the tree. We know that all gifts are most gratefully received by the large team who sort and allot them.



Please keep the work of the Sunday School and Bible Class in your prayers, and encourage any children you know to come along and join us.

Margaret McCreedy, Sunday School Superintendent  
028 9146 4361

### THE CYCLE OF GENEROSITY



When we open our hands – figuratively speaking – to allow something to pass through our fingers, rather than holding on to it in tightly clenched fists, we create a cycle of generosity.

Kansas pastor, Jack Wellman, explained that if our hands are open to receive, give and receive again, God can give us new blessings:

“God cannot pour more,” he said, “into hands that are already clinging tightly to what they hold.”

## AIRTASTIC *by Ellis McWhinney*

On Friday 2nd of November, Ryan Pearce took us to Airtastic. We started the night, a handful of teenagers, at 7:00pm. We all met up at Airtastic, where we all were excitedly talking as the forms were being filled in.

The evening included a battle - of Summer versus Ryan on the balancing beam. Summer won - but Ryan was good, too. We also had some challenges on the hanging logs and the climbing wall. I had a really difficult game against Matthew, where we had to hit the other person's target while jumping on a trampoline. After three minutes, I sadly lost 3:2. It was really difficult and we were really tired afterwards.



Back at the church hall, Ryan taught us how to play a new card game, called Spoons. The point of the game was to collect four of the same card and then pick up a spoon from the middle of the table; but then, when the first person got a spoon, everyone had to pick up a spoon, and the person without a spoon at the end was put out and lost the round.

We spent some time talking and getting to know each other, while we ate pizza and crisps.

I'm sure everyone is happy to find out we all had an incredible night - and can't wait for the next one!

Thanks to the church for arranging an amazing night.

Special thanks to Ryan and Fiona for taking us down to Airtastic, and helping to arrange it - and any future events.

*A young boy, at the end of a fun-filled day at an event in his church, prayed:  
"Friday was brilliant, thank you, God!  
What have you got in mind for Saturday?"*

## 1ST GROOMSPORT RAINBOWS, BROWNIES & GUIDES

We have had a fantastic year, but the most exciting part has to be that we now have the Guide section for 10-14 year-olds up and running again after a long absence. They started in January with six girls, and now have fourteen on their roll. There have been visits to the local fire station; the RNLI station; campfires on the beach; emergency shelter making; cookery; crafts; badge work - and planning the Brownie Hallowe'en party. Such a busy group of girls!



The Brownies currently number 27, and they are looking forward to starting work in the New Year on the lovely new badges, which have recently been introduced. They had their annual pack holiday at Lorne in April and, as usual, it was a fun, energetic and noisy couple of days. The girls never cease to amaze me on "the cube," their favourite activity. It involves climbing ladders, walking across ropes, swinging from hoop to hoop and launching themselves into mid-air - all at a rather scary height, while attached to a harness. The trust they have to place in the instructor takes some of them a little time, but they all get there. Many of them reach the very top, which is level with the tree tops!



The Rainbows are the largest section this year, with 30 girls on their roll. They enjoy lots of games, crafts, singing and badge work. The highlight of their year was their first ever sleepover in April, in our church halls. They had such a wonderful time that they have decided to have another one in December. However, the Brownies and Guides got to hear about it and wanted to join in, so we are having a rather large sleepover... I suspect ear plugs might be required! We'll have some photos for the next issue of *Eagle Wing*.

All this would not be possible without so much help. We are very blessed, not only with our warranted leaders, but also with a great bunch of 14-18 year-olds, who give of their time.

Your encouragement is also very much appreciated.

*Elaine Carmichael*

**BROWNIES & RAINBOWS 6.30 pm, GUIDES 8.00 pm**  
**THURSDAYS, WALTER NELSON HALLS**



## COFFEE MORNING 10<sup>th</sup> November 2018

After a wet and windy week, it was nice to have a beautiful, sunny Saturday morning for our Leprosy Mission coffee morning. Thank you to all who came, helped, and supported our coffee morning, enjoying coffee, scones, tray bakes and chat, and raising £400.

Thanks to Judith Carson, a volunteer with TLM-NI, who joined us for the morning, bringing a 'shop' of Christmas cards, gift items and stocking fillers - shop sales totalled £240. A wonderful combined total of £640.00. Thank you again for your continued support of the work of The Leprosy Mission (NI).



## Recycle 4 Charity Programme Update

Mobile phone recycling via Recycle 4 Charity will no longer be available in the New Year.

Please continue to recycle your used inkjet cartridges using the box in the vestibule.

Makes you can recycle include HP, Dell, Lexmark, Canon, Samsung. Epson and Kodak are **unsuitable** for recycling.

Over the past 30 years, TLM Stamps and Collectables has raised more than £1 million to benefit people affected by Leprosy. In our Autumn *Eagle Wing*, we read that TLM-NI raised £5317.00 in 2017 through recycled stamps.



It only takes a few seconds to rescue a used stamp from an envelope destined for the recycling bin. With Christmas fast approaching, and the increased use of postage stamps, please remember to rescue your used stamps and place them in the box on the vestibule table. Thank you to Mrs Thelma Thompson, who undertakes the recycling of used stamps in Groomsport.

Stephanie McCreedy

## EVENTS COMMITTEE: Coffee morning for Moderator's Appeal



To support the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Moderator's Appeal - Indonesia Tsunami 2018, the Events Committee held a Coffee Morning on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October. Once again, the members of the congregation were very supportive. Scones, buns and traybakes arrived in bountiful supply.

It is events like this that bring to mind the story of 'The Feeding of the Five Thousand,' when Jesus made an appeal and his congregation rallied to his support for others. Just like then, we were all amply fed, with some in reserve.

Most importantly, £450 was graciously raised for the Moderator's Tsunami Appeal from the morning. So a big 'thank you' to all who helped out, and to those who generously donated.

At going to print, the Events Committee is planning a Christmas Family Film Show in The Walter Nelson Hall on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December. This will be a free outreach event, open to all, getting us into the mood for the Christmas season by bringing families together at this wonderful time of year.

With some events currently under discussion for 2019, the Events Committee will welcome any ideas that can reach out, not only to the congregation, but to the local community, young and old alike. Please contact any member of the Events Committee with your thoughts.

Roy McWhinney,  
Convenor, Events/Outreach Committee  
Tel: 07739 347885 Email: rmcwhinney@btinternet.com

Committee members: Alastair Boal, Margaret Caughey, Rosemary Gillespie, Sharon Goldie, Hilary Knight, Rhoda Martin, Marjorie Moore, Stewart and Mary Holland, Roy and Amanda McWhinney, Michael Steele, Audrey Thomas, Jackie and Sandra Todd, Ian Wilson



*When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news,  
my mother would say to me, "Look for the helpers.  
You will always find people who are helping."  
To this day, especially in times of disaster, I remember my mother's words  
and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers —  
so many caring people in this world.*

Fred Rogers



## NEW MISSION COMMITTEE

Do you sometimes wonder what happens to the money that you put into those white Mission envelopes each month? I certainly do - and if you are anything like me, getting some feedback really helps! And so, when the Session asked me to chair a new Mission Committee for our church, I was more than happy to get started. I have been joined by a small group of enthusiasts: Maureen Stewart, Rosalind MacNeice, Maureen Irwin and Ivan Crawford. We were particularly pleased when one of our roles was to raise awareness of 'mission' within our church family.

In many ways, I feel that we have always been an outward-looking church, and when I spoke to the congregation in early October, I was able to highlight some of the things that we do week by week and month by month. We support The Leprosy Mission; Fairtrade; Storehouse; the Belfast Central Mission at Christmas; we send boxes to Malawi – these are only a few examples. We have also been a generous congregation when responding to the United Appeal, World Development Appeal, and urgent appeals by the Moderator in response to natural disasters. Most recently, we have responded to the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia. It is always heartening to see large crowds coming to our Saturday coffee mornings and giving generously of their time and money.

However, I don't want our committee to be just about raising money, important though that is. We are keen to bring news of the work that goes on in our wider church family, both at home and throughout the world. I have learned a lot about the mission work of our Church in a short period of time. I knew little of the work that we do in Ireland to support the frail elderly; young people on the streets of Belfast late at night; the homeless; people with addictions; anxious and vulnerable visitors from overseas who come to work or study, or even flee cruel and oppressive regimes. Across the world, our Church currently supports 33 adults engaged in mission in varying ways, serving in 11 countries in the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe. In addition, approximately 140 Presbyterians, from 70 congregations across Ireland, are serving with around 30 independent mission agencies in over 55 countries worldwide. You can learn about all these projects by visiting the PCI website and clicking on 'Mission'. The web address is [www.presbyterianireland.org/mission](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/mission)

Mission is interwoven into the fabric of our Christian lives. As our minister reminded us in a recent sermon, doing good works is not a 'means to an end,' but a response to the grace that has been given to us by God through the gift of his son, Jesus Christ. Grace has been defined as "the love and mercy given to us by God because God desires us to have it, not necessarily because of anything we have done to earn it."

As a committee, we have already met twice. It is a busy time of year, but we have thought carefully about what we have been tasked to do and are already looking ahead to next year. We will be doing a regular presentation during morning worship - called 'Mission Focus'. This will be no more than monthly, but we hope to highlight important mission work of our church. We have also considered supporting a few specific projects, which may not have a high profile but are important none the less. We are always open to ideas, so please feel free to approach any of the committee to have a chat about what you would like us to do. We would ask for your prayerful support for us, and also for the wider mission of our Church here at home and throughout the world. Thank you.

*Michael Steele* 02891 274559  
Email: [msteele@doctors.org.uk](mailto:msteele@doctors.org.uk)

## GIFT AID

### Do you pay Income Tax?

If the answer to this question is 'yes', then please read on.

### What is Gift Aid?

It is a very simple, convenient way for us, as a congregation to receive monies from HMRC (Income Tax) without any liability on you - provided you are a tax payer, young or old.

### What are the benefits?

For every 80 pence you contribute to the church through the FWO, Mission or Property Fund, we are entitled to claim 20 pence – yes, a return to us of 25%.

### How much must I give?

It does not matter how little or how much you give, we only claim on the amount you contribute; the only requirement is that you must be a tax payer.



You sign a Gift Aid Declaration form once, which entitles us, the congregation, to claim any monies you donate to Freewill Offering, Mission and Property Fund or Special Appeals.

### How much tax must I pay?

It does not matter how much or how little Income Tax you pay. If you contribute £500.00 towards Church funds in the year, we will claim £125.00 in Gift Aid; the only stipulation is that you pay more than £125.00 in tax in that year.

### PLEASE NOTE:

***If you have signed a Gift Aid declaration in the past, but now find that you no longer pay Income Tax, please advise me.***

*Fred Nesbitt,*

**Gift Aid Convenor**

**028 9146 7411**

**nesbitt99@hotmail.co.uk**

## WHAT HAPPENS TO MY DONATION TO STOREHOUSE?



Recipients are referred to Storehouse by statutory bodies, which have assessed their needs. We at Storehouse make up 'hampers' (several plastic bags), filled with essentials, plus a 'treat' if possible – e.g. a packet of sweets. A family of four would receive more than a single person, so we welcome tins and packets, both great and small.

The hampers are collected by the agent who has requested them, and delivered to the clients. Storehouse helpers do not know where, or to whom, the hampers are delivered. We are given a number, which we write on each hamper; this will contain enough for at least three days, and a further one may later be provided if necessary. Storehouse is a charity fighting food poverty across North Down. Our aim is that nobody should be hungry.

**CHRISTMAS HAMPERS** will be packed during the **week beginning 10 DECEMBER**.

Donations in advance of that date will be especially welcome:



All food must be within *Best Before* date. We estimate that at least 500 hampers will go out that week.

**And please also remember:**

*Our shelves will then be bare, and our need for food and other donations will be even greater than it was before Christmas!*

Sheelagh Dalzell



## YMCA Camp, British Columbia, Canada, Summer 2018

*by Adam Steele*



After I finished school last year, we had an enjoyable family holiday in British Columbia, Canada. This was not my first visit there, but it only reinforced my awe and admiration for this part of the world. I suppose I was lucky in that my dad lived on Vancouver Island when he was a child, and we still had a lot of family friends and some relatives living out there. So I had already been privileged to visit many beautiful locations, such as Banff, Lake Louise and Victoria on Vancouver Island. I was, therefore, determined to make a return trip on my own this summer, at the end of my gap year.

Planning started early. I used Google to search ‘jobs for young people’ in Canada. I found out about an organisation called NYQUEST, which placed young folk from around the world in summer camps throughout Canada. They had a recruitment fair in Dublin in January, so I headed down to find out more. Fortunately, there was an exhibit by the YMCA, which ran a camp in Elphinstone, located on the Sunshine Coast, B.C. This was just what I wanted and luckily, I was provisionally offered a job. It was the start of a long process of forms, police clearances, etc, and then organising my travel. Part of the training involved a life guard and first aid course. Normally this would be done in Dublin, but I was away in Nicaragua at the time. As a result, I had to stop off in Toronto to undertake this training before heading out to BC. It was a bit daunting negotiating airports, subways and buses, but I always found the Canadians to be very helpful.



Travelling over to the Sunshine Coast for the first time was awesome. Departure Bay, just north of Vancouver, is surrounded by mountains and the scenery is breathtaking as the ferry slips out into the Straights of Georgia. Elphinstone YMCA Camp is not far from the Langley ferry terminal. It is about a 20 minute walk, if you are carrying a heavy rucksack. I had already met up with some of my fellow camp leaders at the ferry terminal so it wasn’t long before I had made friends. There were young folk from all over the world – Australia, Ireland, UK, New Zealand, as well as Canada itself. We were going to be responsible for kids aged 7 to 17, so naturally, we required more training and orientation on arrival. We had to lose all our reservations, as ‘larger than life’ personalities were needed and encouraged.

The camp was set on the coast, surrounded by beautiful mountains and forests. There was an extensive jetty, from where all the water sports were launched; other activities included archery, swimming, canoeing, high and low ropes and overnight camps in the forest. At the start, we had camp fires - but this was halted, due to the prolonged dry weather and risk of forest fires. We could see the smoke blowing down from further north and it was a

constant reminder to be vigilant. This was the second year of severe forest fires in British Columbia. Thankfully, most were contained and there was no loss of life.

I soon settled into camp life in Elphinstone. The children stayed for one or two weeks. We would meet the kids off the ferry and march them up to the camp. There were two camp counsellors for each cabin and we were responsible for about 10 kids. The day started early – around 7:30 – and we would head over to the main hall for breakfast. Meal times were always lively and I had to make sure everyone got their fair share. Of course, I had to make sure there was enough left for me! The rest of the day was filled with activities, with breaks for lunch and dinner. I was mainly responsible for the water sports, but I got quite good at archery during my stay. In the evening, the whole camp would get together for camp songs. One of our leaders, Matt, had a great singing voice and was a good guitar player as well. There was a quiet area set aside for reflection and prayer. Generally, everyone was in bed early, exhausted from all the day's activities.



Sometimes there were themed nights, where we had fancy dress. The favourites were 'Harry Potter' or 'Time Travel'.

Our weeks were long and we only had one day off. We would finish early on Friday afternoon and be back on duty on Sunday. Generally, this was a chance to relax or go into Gibsons to do our washing. It was not all work, though, and I would manage to visit Vancouver with some of my Canadian friends. We had a special weekend trip, where we hired a bus and a group of twelve of us travelled up to Whistler. This is where the 2010 Winter Olympics were held and there are lots of shops and restaurants. During the summer, there is mountain biking and white-water rafting. You can go up the ski lifts and travel on the peak-to-peak gondola. There is one with a glass bottom, if you are that way inclined!



I was amazed at how quickly my time in Elphinstone went in. I had a fantastic time and made lots of new friends from around the world. It was sad to say goodbye, but I still keep in touch with many via social media. Dad came out to join me at the end, and we had a couple of weeks of travelling around and visiting some old family friends. The weather was great and it was a lovely end to my summer in Canada. I know I will be back again someday!



*Have great hopes, and dare to go all out for them. Have great dreams, and dare to live them. Have tremendous expectations and believe in them.*

Norman Vincent Peale

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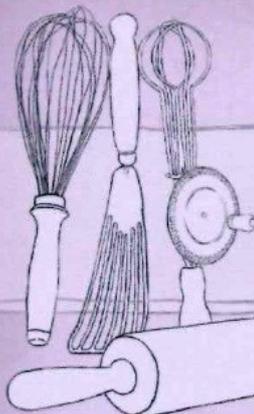


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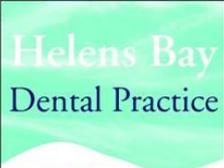
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## KNYSNA UPDATE NOVEMBER 2018

Hazel & Stanley Megahey

We have just arrived back from South Africa. The country is in a state of expectation, with President Zuma having been ousted and President Cyril Ramapossa having been installed. The tone is different, but unemployment is now 28%, with debt going up. There are outside influences, with especially the Chinese filling the vacuum, buying into businesses, quarries, paper mills and, of course, minerals.

Water was a major problem in January this year. Cape Town had only days of supply left in the reservoirs, and 50 litres a day per family was the allowance. Taking baths was banned. Water from washing machines was being collected for toilet use. Dishwashers were sparingly used, if at all. Shower timers were added in hotels and health spas. Notices appeared everywhere, with a plastic bottle display when arriving into Cape Town Airport. Huge roadside notices appeared, asking people to conserve water. Collecting rain water became the norm, and everywhere you could see JoJo plastic water tanks being collected from suppliers. Drilling spikes or boreholes for water appeared in gardens of commercial, tourist and residential units. The lessons of water shortage have hit home. Cape Town is now praising itself on water conservation and the reservoirs are, seemingly, 90% full. Water is now becoming expensive - but the native population have always refused to pay for something which is God-given.

In January this year, Rev Wayne van Heerdeen left Knysna Presbyterian to take charge in Centurion, Johannesburg. Robert Mayne, the Session Clerk and a former Headmaster, kept the church ticking over from the pulpit. Retired local ministers from different congregations played their part. Numbers did fall when members left for different reasons.

In October, the church welcomed Rev Tim Hawkrigde, from a large church in Somerset West, close to Cape Town. Tim comes from a family of ministers - his grandfather and father had charges in Joburg. Rev Tim, in October, was straight into a series on the chapters of Haggai. On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November, he begins a series on Hope.

Tim has changed the format of the Sunday Service, with a bigger vocal input from the congregation when it comes to the prayers of intercession. This has gone down well. What has not gone down well is what the Convenor introduced regarding the Lord's Supper. The bread previously was what we have in most churches, like Groomsport. He decided to bring in a biblical look, with a small soft loaf of bread, which you rip away. The wine is as before, with individual glasses.



Tim's new wife is Veronica. Veronica's husband died years ago, leaving her with three small children. Tim has two grown up sons. Veronica is a qualified minister, who worked as a social worker and an all-job person in their last church. Tim has had his medical problems, but with a smaller charge and Veronica at his side, the outlook is bright for Knysna Presbyterian. A very good calling.

Maria, in Rheenendal, is doing well, and the children go after school for some food, *e'Pap* mostly. The Knysna outreach fund still supports her financially. Maria's son,

unfortunately, has been diagnosed with leukaemia. He has had to go for tests in George, six hours from his home in Port Elizabeth. His health is giving Maria a lot of concern.

Maranatha Pre-school: Cynthia, the Principal, is now getting assistance from Knysna Educational Trust in order to obtain support from the Municipality. This is excellent because, in the past, pre-schools were more a baby-sitting service. Maranatha is training the children to be ready for primary school. The school was to be painted blue inside and attention-grabbing yellow outside. Cynthia's painters got their way, as it's blue outside, with blue and yellow inside. It freshens the inside classroom, kitchen and toilets. With unemployment now at 28%, the only way forward is to start early, with the children being taught discipline and guidance.



Knysna, before we left, had another fire in its outskirts (last fires, June 2017). The fire started in the mountains around George, which is 40km away from Knysna. The Outeniqua Mountains, towards Oudtshoorn, were on fire, fanned by 70 mph winds. It quickly engulfed Rheenendal. Maria and neighbours were put into buses, ready to be evacuated. Many lost their homes, and eight people and two children lost their lives.

The sun was blocked for days with the smoke. Ash was everywhere. It covered the church stand on the Saturday of the Leisure Isle Festival. This fund raising event had Ian Huskinson's marmalade sold out, with orders for more. This is a major funding event for the church and involves a lot of work from Linda Smerdon and Yvonne Roy, who is totally wheelchair bound.



The rain came on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November - lots of it, prayers were answered. Fires were extinguished.



THE WORLD IS ROUND  
SO THAT FRIENDSHIP MAY ENCIRCLE IT

*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*

## FAITH AND FIRE

by Brian McClelland

Belfast is over 6,000 feet above sea level, making it one of the coldest and highest towns in South Africa. Wilma and I were on our way from Johannesburg to Kruger National Park at the start of our holiday, and Belfast was the mid-way point. It looked like a one-horse town to me, as we drove through it. But first appearances can be deceptive. It is a hidden gem, or so the guide books say.

Gems are certainly found around Belfast - black gems that is - in the form of coal and black granite, blots on an otherwise breathtaking landscape, with its unique flora and fauna. Situated in Mpumalanga Province, the region is also renowned for its excellent trout fishing conditions. Richard Charles O'Neill from Belfast, Ireland, owned the farm on which the town was built, hence its name.



During the Anglo-Boer War of 1900-1902, several battles and skirmishes took place in and around Belfast. A number of Victoria Crosses were awarded for actions at Monument Hill, on the edge of the town. The first significant concentration camp to be established by the British was at Belfast. It herded together Boer women, children and old men. Why? In the words of Lord Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief, it was “the most effective method of limiting the endurance of the guerrillas...” To put it another way, it was hoped that by removing the women and children from their homes and farms, the enemy would be forced to give up its struggle.

Private Andrew Hunter, 14613, Queen’s South Africa Medal, Royal Army Medical Corps, was my great uncle. I have spoken of him before in a previous story. I have this rather romantic notion of him in a stretcher-bearer role, risking his life on the rough, stony ground of the veld, saving his wounded comrades under Boer sniper fire from the surrounding kopjes.

And this might well be the case. However, I have discovered since that Andy, during his two years and seven months of service, was stationed very close to Belfast at Middelburg, and then Bloemfontein. Now, both these places had large concentration camps. I have this dark thought that Andy, in his medical role, may well have served in these truly awful places, where abhorrent conditions and disease caused many deaths.

I find it disturbing, for Andy then was but a callow youth, an ordinary teenager from Belfast’s Shankill Parish, caught up in extraordinary events near another Belfast. I have nothing but admiration for him in his role, and how he succeeded in life when he returned home.

We travelled on, excitedly anticipating our game drive in Kruger National Park. In the half-light of a spectacular African dawn, we entered the park in specially adapted 4x4 vehicles.

The Big Five were a trifle shy, but we did manage to “shoot” three of them: lion, elephant and buffalo. Indeed, we also spotted three of the Ugly Five – a hyena and her family, warthog and vulture. Then we were on our way to the battlefields of Zululand, Isandlwana and Rorke’s Drift. I couldn’t wait - I’m a history buff after all, as if you hadn’t noticed! But first, it was onwards and upwards, south through the lush beauty of the tiny kingdom of Swaziland. We climbed past the endearingly named Piggs Peak and descended through green rolling hills to the country’s small capital, Mbabane. Crossing back into South Africa, we entered Kwa-Zulu province.

It was as unexpected as it was uplifting. There, standing in all its quiet glory, was the little Church of St Vincent’s. Recently renovated, and built in 1882 to commemorate the nearby Battle of Isandlwana, St Vincent’s shone like a beacon of hope on that plain of death.



Sweet singing wafted on the warm air – it was a Sunday morning, after all. We entered and, for a few minutes, joined the congregation in worship, enjoying the rapture of the moment. Outside, in a simple little tableau, Sunday School children giggled nervously at strangers in their midst.

The brooding rock that was Isandlwana loomed nearby. Beneath it, on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1879, a British force of over 1,000 men was wiped out by a 20,000 strong Zulu army, armed with cowhide shields, spears and the deadly assegai.



I walked the battlefield in the direction of the Zulu advance, giving an involuntary shiver in the warmth of the sun, as I tried to imagine what it must have been like for the British soldier to face his ferocious foe, in hand-to-hand fighting. The battle was fought in January, when the grass was high enough to provide cover for the Zulu advance; but now, in March, it was dry and sparse, revealing the harsh nature of the ground. Many cairns dotted the countryside, like silent sentinels to war’s futility. The cairns marked mass graves of soldiers, buried where they fell.



We moved down the road a few miles to Rorke’s Drift. It was here, at the mission station, that a garrison of about 140 British troops held out against an estimated 4,000 Zulus. They eventually beat off their attackers, winning eleven Victoria Crosses among them. British authorities at the time made much of the bravery displayed at Rorke’s Drift, in an attempt to deflect attention from the disaster of Isandlwana.

That evening, I received a text from my eldest son, Gavin, who had been following our travels. "Dad, do you know the date of my birthday?" he questioned.

"Of course," I responded, after consulting Wilma, "22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1979."

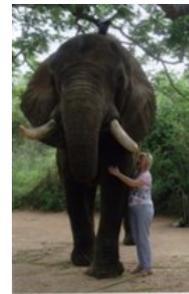
'What's he on about?' I wondered.

"What is the date of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift?" he further queried.

"22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1879," I answered, immediately this time.

Only then did the starkness of his questions strike me with some force: Gavin was born exactly 100 years to the day after the battles. I remember the day well, snow on the ground as I arrived at Newtownards Hospital that evening, the excitement of a firstborn, and not a little trepidation at the responsibility ahead. At Isandlwana, one hundred years earlier, it would have been very hot - a scene of death, not birth.

We continued on our travels, flying south east to George to follow the Garden Route. We saw dolphins at Mossel Bay, went caving at Cango, rode ostriches at Oudtshoorn (I'm fibbing here, but we did enjoy an elephant ride at Hippo Hollow), watched for whales at Hermanus (none turned up, it being out of season), and tasted a little wine at Stellenbosch.



Then it was on to beautiful Cape Town and the legendary Cape of Good Hope, a cable car ride up Table Mountain for fabulous views, a boat trip to Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for over twenty-five years, while not forgetting p-p-p-picking up a penguin at Boulders Beach.

Yet of all the remarkable sights and sounds we had witnessed and experienced on our South African holiday, seared in my memory is the enduring image of a little church, St Vincent's, juxtaposed with a bloody battlefield, Isandlwana: God and war, faith and fire.

*What of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away  
Ere the barn-cocks say  
Night is grown gray,  
Leaving all that here can win us;  
What of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away?*

(From Thomas Hardy's poem, *Men who March Away*,  
written in September, 1914, at the outset of the First World War)

## CONNECTIONS

by Margaret McCreedy

My mother was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1917. Her father was a soldier, fighting for King and country in Flanders. He was killed at the Battle of Cambrai on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1917, aged 24 - never having seen his second daughter, though he did know she had been born and was looking forward to meeting her. Like many thousands of others, he has no grave, as there was nothing left to bury, but the name of L/C J. H. Mitchell is engraved on the Cambrai Memorial. In 2006, Billy and I had the privilege of being the first family members to visit the memorial. This was the most unexpectedly emotional experience I have ever had.

Roger Purce and his family came to Groomspoint in May 1992 and, as a family, we became quite close - Fiona first being baby sitter to 3-month-old Emma, and Richard and David becoming good friends. On 17<sup>th</sup> March 2018, all of us had the great pleasure and privilege of attending the marriage of Emma to Paul Ketley, and it was here that a remarkable knowledge was gained.

As we were leaving the hotel in Canterbury, the day after the wedding, Doreen told me that Roger and she were heading to Cambrai. Knowing that this was not on their usual route to the South of France, of course I asked, "Why?" and was told they were to visit the Cambrai Memorial, where Roger's great uncle's name was listed.

Shortly after, I was speaking to Roger and inquired about this. He told me that his great uncle, Bertie Paden, had been serving with the Royal Ulster Rifles - as was my grandfather. He was a Lance Corporal - as was my grandfather. He was killed on 22<sup>nd</sup> November - as was my grandfather. His name was on panel 10 - as was my grandfather's. Doreen and Roger were given my grandfather's name and said they would look for it.

We had a hire car until late that evening, and decided to drive to the south coast before heading to Gatwick airport. As we were nearing Brighton, Fiona's phone rang; it was Roger. Doreen and he were at the Cambrai Memorial and had found both names. Would you believe - Mitchell, J. H. and Paden, W. H. are together on panel 10, one below the other. L/C W.H. Paden was just 19 when he was killed, having signed up when he was under age.

Had they been in the same regiment? That we have still to discover.  
Did they serve together? Did they know each other? That we may never know.

What a coincidence! Two families connected for 26 years - or perhaps 100 years.  
This was a revelation!



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM



**REMEMBRANCE DAY (2018)  
“WE WILL REMEMBER THEM”**



Recently, there was a remarkable find in a house in Dublin. It was a very old telegram, containing one of the most important messages to be sent in the past 100 years, and the most significant to be sent in World War I. It was the signal from Army Headquarters to the commanding officer of the Ulster Division to cease hostilities at 11a.m. on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918, a century ago. It was carried by a Dublin man, Ormsby Pasley, who was a despatch rider with the Royal Irish Rifles. The message effectively brought to an end four long years of slaughter in northern Europe. Ormsby Pasley realised how important the message was, kept a copy of it and brought it back to Dublin when he was discharged. Recently, the copy of the telegram was found by family members. The date, month and time chosen for the Armistice were later selected to establish an annual day of remembrance.

On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November at 11a.m., I stood amongst hundreds of people, looking at the War Memorial in Ward Park, Bangor. With me were my wife, Aileen, daughter, Julie, and one of my grandsons, 8-year-old Joshua. We, like all the others, were there 100 years after the Armistice. We listened as a bugler played The Last Post. This was followed by two minutes' silence. There was not a sound to be heard, as each individual thought of those who lost their lives in World Wars I and II. Names of those killed in World War I were then read out. Following this, we all listened as the words that have been linked to Remembrance Day for years were read out:

***“They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them.”***

Although the names read out would not have been familiar to many of the people around me, I recognised some of them, as I had included them in a talk I was giving the next day to pupils in Ballyholme Primary School. With each of these names come stories — sad stories, of individuals who lived in Bangor, some with their brothers, and who willingly joined up, left their families, trained and were sent to the front lines in France, not knowing the horrors that would face them. The names I heard included three Hewitt brothers (Ernest, Holt and William), the Hollywoods (James and Arthur) and the Angus brothers (John, Robert and James). All but one of these — Ernest Hewitt, who lost his life on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1915 — were killed in July 1916, some on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, which claimed so many lives on both sides. It is hard to put into words the feelings of their parents, who saw the Bangor telegram boy arrive at their door and hand over an envelope — an envelope that contained information they hoped never to receive.

Many of those who lost their lives in World War I, and whose names are recorded on war memorials, were buried in large cemeteries in France, but many bodies were never found. The Hewitt, Hollywood and Angus brothers are remembered in places such as Thiepval, Vimy and the Menin Gate, where the names of tens of thousands of soldiers

whose bodies were never found are recorded on the walls. Each of these places is visited by individuals and groups each year. Many who died are also remembered in the large cemetery on the Newtownards Road in Bangor. While preparing for my talk to the Ballyholme pupils, I went there and came upon a large number of graves that contain tributes to members of families who had lost their lives in World Wars I and II. These included graves of the Hewitt, Hollywood and Angus families.

Although great emphasis was put on World War I at the War Memorial — on which are the words, **Died in the service of their country** — I could not help but think also of those who died in World War II, and whose names are there for all to see. Fortunately, my father, Terence, whose experiences included Dunkirk, emerged unscathed in 1945. Before we went to Ward Park on 11<sup>th</sup> November, I showed my grandson, Joshua, items that my father gave me as reminders of his experiences between 1939 and 1945. These items include recorded interviews, one of which was recorded for the BBC in 1990, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dunkirk. Another involves my mother, Babs, who was in the Red Cross and who witnessed the Blitz of Belfast. She was on duty the night bombs fell on Bangor in April 1941; that night, she cycled to Groomsport as she heard that the house of a friend of her mother had been damaged, but luckily that was not the case. Thankfully, few were killed. Those who died have not been ignored, and references to them can be seen on the memorial in Ward Park. As I stood at the memorial, I could not fail to think about my great uncle, George Baird, who, along with 25 others, was killed when the ship on which they were travelling in 1941 sank after being torpedoed by a U-boat in the Atlantic. I never knew him, but I cannot forget him on Remembrance Day as I place a poppy on the Baird family grave.

While I was in Ward Park on Remembrance Day, members of this congregation attended a special service of remembrance. The names of those who died in World Wars I and II can be seen on the Groomsport War Memorial, which was unveiled in 1924. One of them, William Drennan, was killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. More than three million men fought in that battle; one million were wounded or killed.

**THINK**

*Think of the day when wars broke out,  
When people began to scream and shout.  
The men left home, willing to fight;  
The battlefields were a terrible sight.  
Protecting their country, many soldiers died;  
They did not want to fight, yet they felt obliged.  
As we sit and think on Remembrance Day,  
We must remember those who gave  
their lives away.*

(Source unknown)

The first Remembrance Day was in 1919 — 99 years ago. In the future, let us continue to attend many more services and think of those who died for their country.

*Alan Pinkerton*

***Dear Brothers and Sisters at Groomsport,***

It is with joy and gratitude in my heart that I write this note to you. It has been eight years since I first stepped foot on this beautiful island. I remember the day well. I remember frantically packing my bags in Princeton, New Jersey, worrying about what clothes I would need to pack. Fortunately, it was still in the days when international flights included two large suitcases, and I knew I would need them both since - I had been warned - Northern Ireland experiences such diversity in weather patterns that all seasons might be easily experienced in one day!

I still remember my first glimpse of Ireland, as we broke through the hazy cloud cover - a gem, a brilliant emerald glistening beautifully in an azure sea, with shimmering lakes, and rivers, proud forests and serene and beautiful mountains. I saw it was a paradise; my heart was filled with excitement as we landed safely. I hurriedly retrieved my bags. With anticipation, I rushed to meet Roger, and there he was, standing... talking with another minister. And so began my work at Groomsport. Roger, true to character, decided to stop at the hospital on his way through Belfast, so not to waste time. He graciously allowed me to wait in the car for him as he busied himself with the visit.

It was the beginning of one of the best years of my life. My year at Groomsport, working with Roger, has had a deep and lasting impact on my life, as it has had with many. His theology of love; his true compassion for the sick; his intense work at making sure a large congregation like Groomsport still held all of its members close; teaching me how important it is to remind people - even those who never step foot into the church for worship - that they are still important to us as a Church, and by extension, they still matter to God, who intimately knows and loves them.

Groomsport still, to this day, holds a very special place in my heart. Since Elaine and I have moved back to Northern Ireland, things have not been as straightforward as we imagined they would be – but where would the joy of life be, the adventure of living be, if it all worked out as smoothly and straightforwardly as we planned?

We had never anticipated needing a short-term rental at the very time when No. 25 was not being used by an intern. We both appreciated the use of the house for the months we were there, as we began the process of buying our first home. This took much longer than we anticipated and we were finally able to move into our home, in Bangor, in early September.

We also never anticipated that I would discover God's call on my life drawing me into ministry in the Moravian Church, but here I am. God has prepared me for this time and has helped me find a home where I can be free to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ with liberty, love, and truth. I have found a joy-filled, ancient, and proud church filled with wisdom, grace, and the presence of God.

It is with joy that I can announce to you that I have been called to serve two congregations in Northern Ireland: the first, Cliftonville Moravian Church in Belfast, and the second, Ballinderry Moravian Church in Lower Ballinderry. Each one has exciting possibilities and

opportunities for ministry and outreach.

Everyone at Groomsport has played such an important part in our lives; you are all invited to attend my installation service, the date for which has not yet been confirmed. Should you wish to attend please, contact me either by phone or e-mail.

This is an exciting time in our lives as we get our new home in order, and as I get settled into two new churches.

I am overwhelmed with gratitude for all of my dear friends and fellow believers in Groomsport, who have supported, cared for, and loved me and Elaine since we knew each other.

May God continue to bless you in the work He has before you, and may you find joy in God's grace that is lavished upon you through the love and work of Jesus Christ, in whose name we offer you our greetings and our love.

*Jared and Elaine*

**07983313493 [pastorjaredc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjaredc@gmail.com)**

*(Jared was our Princeton Intern 2009/2010)*

A man watched as a tiny hole appeared in a chrysalis, and the butterfly inside struggled for a long time to force its way out. Then it seemed to stop, as if it had done all it could. The man decided to help, by opening the chrysalis with scissors. The butterfly emerged easily – but with a withered body and tiny, shrivelled wings. Contrary to the man's expectation, the butterfly never developed or expanded its wings; it spent the rest of its short life crawling around, unable to fly.



What the well-meaning man failed to understand was that the restriction of the chrysalis, and the struggle required for the butterfly to go through the tiny opening, were designed by Nature to force fluid from its body into the wings, in readiness for flight once its freedom was attained.

Sometimes struggles are what we need in life – to strengthen us and enable us to fly:

*I asked for strength, and I was given difficulties to make me strong.*

*I asked for wisdom, and I was given problems to solve.*

*I asked for prosperity, and I was given a brain, and brawn, to work.*

*I asked for courage, and I was given obstacles to overcome.*

*I asked for love, and I was given troubled people to help.*

*I asked for favours, and I was given opportunities.*

*I received nothing I asked for – but everything I needed.*

Live life without fear, confront all obstacles, and know that you can overcome them.

*Source unknown*

**Dear Groomsport Friends,**

It's amazing to me that it has been almost seven years since I was with you as your Assistant Minister, because I remember my time in NI so fondly. I think of you often and pray for you.

As for me, I am so grateful my life is always blessedly full. I have just celebrated six years of serving as the solo Pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church in Hanover Park, IL, a small but joyous multicultural community of faith in a suburb of the larger Chicago metropolitan area. There is always something else to do as we continue our journey of faith together, celebrating baptisms, confirmations, weddings, memorials and all the ordinary moments of joy and challenge given to us by God. There is always more to do, putting our hands to work in serving our community. Through the years, I have been so pleased to see the fruits of some of our ministries - mentoring children at a local elementary school and offering emergency assistance to many neighbors. I find a lot of meaning in the work here and wish everyone would be as blessed to have a job where they feel like they are making a difference in the world by being where they are.



Aside from work, I am also very happy to have a significant other in my life. We are coming up on a year together and Jonathan is such a blessing to me in every way. We went to Puerto Rico this past August so he could meet my family and see where I grew up, and my family has almost adopted him already. Jonathan has never been out of the Americas but has grand ambitions to see much of Europe in the future. I have made clear that, should we ever go to the UK, Groomsport is a mandatory stop!



If any of you are ever in the Chicago area, please feel free to let me know. I would love to see you again, and our church would be more than happy to have any of you in worship, if schedules should allow.

My e-mail continues to be [lisamagaly@gmail.com](mailto:lisamagaly@gmail.com)

Have a wonderful, Christ-filled holiday season,

**Lisa M López** (Princeton Intern 2011/12)

*Love does not consist in gazing at each other  
but in looking outward together in the same direction.*

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

***Dear Groomspport Family,***

It seems that 2018 has been quite an exciting year for the Nix family and we look with eager expectation to what God has in store for 2019. As we end this year, I have officially updated all of my paperwork to read Rev. Dr. Katie Nix. The graduation for my doctorate in ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary was a wonderful event and a great way to celebrate the end of this seven-year journey.

Two of the Nix children are now in school. Elizabeth is thriving in 1st grade and she loves to read, play soccer (football), and dress in the most creative outfits. Steven is in preschool and has declared, "I super duper love my teacher!" and that the best part of school is "the snacks!" Rebecca is running around the house. She may be as bald as her grandpa but she has NO problem expressing her desires. Her passion and determination are appreciated... most of the time. Eric continues to be the glue that holds this family together. We recently surprised him with a 40th birthday party that included the local funeral home picking him up in the hearse.

We continue to serve and love our church, Trinity United Methodist, and look with expectation to what God has in store. We miss you all and wish that God blesses you with peace and joy this Christmas season.

***Katie*** (Princeton Intern 2008/09)



*I love these little people,  
and it is not a slight thing,  
when they, fresh from God, love us.*

Charles Dickens

## Greetings from Missouri!

Mary Erin, David, and I have some exciting news to share. In March of 2019, we will be welcoming another child into the Miller family! We are all thrilled (and a bit nervous) about the many changes this will mean, but we know we have a wonderful network of folks all around the nation and world who will be beside us for the journey.

In our last note, we shared some of the health challenges my dad and Mary Erin's mom have been facing. In the time since, they have both had surgery and are recovering. Jeanne, Mary Erin's mom, has recently been able to become more active, after about a month of recovery from surgery, which removed about 95% of the tumor in her pancreas. She is getting stronger, while preparing for another round of chemotherapy. Richard, my dad, has been home about a week (as I write this), after having heart surgery, and a pacemaker implanted. He has at least six weeks of recovery ahead, but hopefully will be able to return to life as normal following.

Thank you for the love and care you have shown our family, and I can't wait to introduce you to our newest in March!

Wishing you all the best,

*Chris, Mary Erin, and David Miller*  
(Chris was our Intern 2015-2017)  
[cmiller@trinityspringfieldpcusa.org](mailto:cmiller@trinityspringfieldpcusa.org)



*David dressed up as a pirate for Hallowe'en*



Considering the staggering height of redwood trees, we assume they must need incredibly deep roots. But these giants have extremely shallow roots, growing only 4 to 6 feet deep.

Instead of heading downward, the roots extend outward — spreading out as far as 125 feet. Stability occurs because the roots intertwine with those of neighboring trees. This network allows redwoods to stand tall despite strong winds and storms.

In a similar way, such interconnectedness keeps the body of Christ standing strong. Psalm 133:1 urges believers to “dwell in unity” (ESV). In order to inhabit one another’s lives, we must share our stories, offer forgiveness and provide encouragement. Through those actions, our roots spread wide as we support our brothers and sisters in Christ.

*The NEWSLETTER Newsletter*

### ***Happy Advent and Merry Christmas from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina!***

As Susan wrote to you all, I was unable to write for the Autumn *Eagle Wing*, due to Hurricane Florence, and so I promised her that I would write a lengthy update, with pictures to catch you up a bit on my news.



Two highlights of my summer were both travel opportunities. As I do most summers, one of those trips was out to California to see family, and we spent most of the time at our family cabin up in the redwoods. I've included a picture of me and my mom at the Charles Shultz Museum in Santa Rosa, CA. We had fun making a Snoopy doghouse in their craft room!

The other travel opportunity that I had this summer was a doctoral travel seminar with Columbia Theological Seminary to NYC and DC to study "The Church in a World of Displaced Persons." In the first week, we were in NYC with our Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, which is located with other denominational bodies across the street from the UN; and the second week, we were in DC at our Presbyterian Office of Public Witness, which is located next door to the Supreme Court and across the street from the Capitol Building. Our time in both locations focused on the church's role with immigrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, and internally displaced persons. In New York, we had the opportunity to meet with mid- to high-level people working in various positions within the UN, listening to lectures on, and engaging in, discussions on topics as wide-ranging as the 70-year refugee crisis in Palestine to the root causes of immigration in Latin and South America — that cause people to seek refuge and asylum in the United States. In DC, we primarily heard from our own staffers about the work that they do, and how they bring the PCUSA's agenda and concerns to our senators and representatives. As part of our class, each of us was asked to meet with our representative, or one of our senators, to do an advocacy visit, expressing our own views; and for those of us who were PCUSA pastors, also expressing the views of our denomination.



An article was written about our class's time at the UN, and if you are interested in reading more, you can do so at: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/columbia-theological-seminary-students-spend-week-with-the-presbyterian-ministry-at-the-united-nations>

Thankfully, we had time for some fun in NYC and DC, too. The fun highlights for me in New York were catching two Broadway plays and a Broadway musical. I find it ironic that I have seen at least 20 plays and musicals in the West End, but had never seen one on Broadway. Now I have crossed that off my bucket list! We also had time in DC to explore its various neighborhoods, and a half-day to explore the Smithsonian Museums.

After a wonderful summer, September took an awful turn for those of us in the Carolinas. No one will ever forget Hurricane Florence, and its effects will be with us for years to come. While it is the wind that gets the attention in a hurricane, it is actually the water that comes with a storm that is often the most damaging. There is danger from storm surge coming off the Atlantic, and often even greater damage when a hurricane moves so slowly that the storm waters stall above a region, with unprecedented levels of rain falling on top of you. While wind often does not cause as much damage, Cat 4 and 5 hurricanes will cause significant damage. All structures, including our homes, must be built to withstand a Cat 3 storm, but a Cat 4 and 5 for a standard home makes it anyone's guess if there will still be a

roof or walls left standing. Thus, when the storm was predicted to hit us at a Cat 4 and potentially Cat 5, (almost) the whole area evacuated. I safely evacuated to a friend's house, two hours' drive west of Myrtle Beach, and I had to stay there a week before the National Guard would let us back into the area. While I was primarily concerned about Cat 4 and 5 winds, since my house is in no danger of flooding, I was personally relieved when, at the last moment, Hurricane Florence downgraded into a Cat 1 storm. However, as it did so, it also slowed to an average of 2 mph. Hurricane Florence was so wide that at one point it covered all of both Carolinas, and that big of a storm moving so slowly that you could outwalk it meant that endless rain in quantities never seen before poured upon the Carolinas. Also, while our houses are fine to withstand Cat 1 winds, that's also Cat 1 at a hurricane blowing through at a normal pace... any strain on a house that extends over days can do damage, and that was a concern for those of us who evacuated.

The evacuation was stressful, not knowing exactly what was going on at home, though my next-door neighbors had chosen not to evacuate and were giving me updates on my house, which fared just fine. At one point, I was able to see on the radar that the eye of Florence quite literally went over my house. Perhaps ironically, the most dangerous part of the storm for me happened the night I got home. The hurricane had largely passed, but we were still getting some outer-band effects of the storm. As I started to put away those things that I had taken in the evacuation, we came under tornado warnings, generally meaning that funnel clouds have been spotted, or that the conditions are perfect for them. I spent most of that night crouched down in my closet. I, thankfully, learned only in retrospect just how close my house had come to being struck by a tornado that night. A large water spout/funnel cloud had formed on the Atlantic and moved inland. It was projected to be right near my subdivision, but just as it got near us, it went into the air, over us, and then landed again just west of us.

But for our area, even with orders cleared to move home and tornado warnings gone, the worst of Florence was yet to come. Florence caused catastrophic flooding in North Carolina during the storm, and some flooding down in South Carolina, but all water must drain to the ocean somehow. North Carolina's waters primarily drain through the rivers in South Carolina. Thus, we ended up in a situation where we knew that our rivers and the Intercoastal Waterway were going to flood to record levels, but the waters wouldn't crest for another 10 days to 2 weeks. One of my congregation members described it as a "slow motion catastrophe." Long after Hurricane Florence had left national and international news cycles, we had not yet dealt with the worst of it. In the end, every waterway flooded to record-breaking levels, higher than in any other hurricane or even our recent 1000-year flood. In some areas, it shattered records so much that it even flooded over the tops of flood-water measuring devices that were never meant to be fully submerged. Areas that occasionally flood were fully flooded, and areas that had never flooded began to flood. At one point, Myrtle Beach was an island, as we were blocked by flood waters to the north, west, and south. In many ways, it was an eerie feeling being in town. If you drove up and down the streets of Myrtle Beach, you would have had no idea that we had even had a hurricane. But it didn't take driving more than 5-10 miles in any direction to know that we were dealing with major problems. You also knew, when you went into a grocery store or gas station, that there were major issues. Not only were we an island, but distribution centers for our food and gas are in North Carolina, in areas that were also turned into islands. Goods were not able to reach us and once something was purchased in a grocery store, or gas was pumped into a car, it was not being replenished. Also because of the flooding, school districts were not able to reopen schools, and our children and youth ended up missing three weeks of school, due to the storm.

In the end, by a true miracle of God, we did not have a single one of our church members flood, though several live in neighborhoods where many flooded. Our church is now

actively working in recovery efforts for homes that did flood, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance will soon be receiving teams to help with the recovery efforts.

Hurricane Florence palpably raised anxiety and stress levels for everyone in our region, and we were all weary and exhausted. As flood waters began to recede and stress and anxiety levels began to lessen, I was happy to escape town for a short while to New Orleans to see my best friend. The following week, I helped to lead our church's women's retreat, and then the last weekend of October, I left for another adventure. I took a 12-day doctoral travel seminar to Taiwan. We were there ten days in-country, with two full days of travel (Taiwan is quite literally halfway around the world from the East Coast of the United States!).



The purpose of the travel seminar was to explore the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT); to visit with PCUSA mission co-workers who live and work there; to visit Presbyterian churches in the cities and in the mountains, visiting Taiwanese churches and the churches of the indigenous tribes; and to see the PCT seminaries and



hospitals. Our days were packed with lots of driving and visits, and we were exhausted by the end of each day, but we were also deeply inspired by the wonderful ministry taking place in the Presbyterian Churches in Taiwan. If I told you all of those inspiring stories, Susan might get upset that my article would take up half of the *Eagle Wing*, but the Presbyterian Church is truly transforming lives, communities, cities, and tribes in Taiwan. We also spent time learning about the political and social history of Taiwan, and I found it interesting that some of the greatest voices in the movement for an independent Taiwan have their roots in the Presbyterian Church.



One thing that I thought might interest you all about the PCT is their logo. I am always interested by the logos of the different Presbyterian bodies. The PCUSA has its cross with a lot of symbolism mixed into it. The PCI has the burning bush that is "burning, but not consumed." Interestingly, the PCT has a very similar logo to the PCI. They, too, have a burning bush, with language around it that says that it is "burning, but not consumed." I've included a picture of it for you to see, along with some other pictures from my time in Taiwan.

Despite arriving home nine days ago (at the time of writing this article), my sleep is still not back to normal, though it's getting closer. I'm also happy, after so much travel from July through early November, that I'm landed in Myrtle Beach for a while. I am not traveling anywhere this year for Thanksgiving, and am spending it alone, but I am looking forward to flying on Christmas Day to see my sister and her family for the week. It is a rarity that I get to spend any part of the Christmas holidays with family, and so this is a treat for me.

I hope that, whatever you are doing this Christmas, it brings you the hope, peace, joy, and love of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas!  
**Christa**

[cbrewer@mbfpc.com](mailto:cbrewer@mbfpc.com)  
Princeton Intern 2004/2005



## FORTHCOMING SERVICES



Tuesday 25th December	10.30am	Christmas Day Family Service
Sunday 6th January	11.30am	New Year Communion Service No Evening Service



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 30th January	1.00pm	Friendship Lunch
Wednesday 27th February	1.00pm	Friendship Lunch
Wednesday 6th March	7.45pm	Congregational AGM
Saturday 23rd March	10.30am	PW Coffee Morning