Eagle Wing

The Magazine Of
Groomsport Presbyterian Church
Christmas 2020

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**."

Presbyterian
CHURCH IN IRELAND

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Message from the Minister

Written 29th October 2020

This past week a song that came into my head has the first line, "Who knows what tomorrow brings." You may remember it from 1982, a duet that was sung by Joe Cocker and Jennifer Warnes for the film, 'An Officer and a Gentleman'. The lyrics of this song, perhaps for many, are a reflection of the present endurance test called, Covid19. "The road is long, there are mountains in our way, but we climb a step every day." Sadly, as I write, it appears that we have taken several steps backwards in this pandemic, we are slipping even as we try to climb. Nonetheless, you and I know we have no choice but to "climb a step every day."

As followers of Jesus Christ, we do not climb these steps alone but, with faith in Christ, are assured that God is with us, never to leave us or forsake us, no matter what tomorrow brings.

At present, we are thankful for the opportunity to meet each Sunday, albeit in a restricted way, to worship together. However, we know that the Christmas services, we enjoyed in years gone by, will not be possible this year. Having said that, I hope that we will be able, with the on-going work of our 'team', (webmaster, Amanda McWhinney, sound editor Chloe Dalzell, organist & choirmaster, John Ekin, sound recordist, Richard McCreedy), to create recordings for our website/CDs, and for the services of worship, that will warm our hearts and continue to encourage us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus. In these may we be strengthened in our faith as we worship our God.

Vol 49. No 2, Christmas 2020

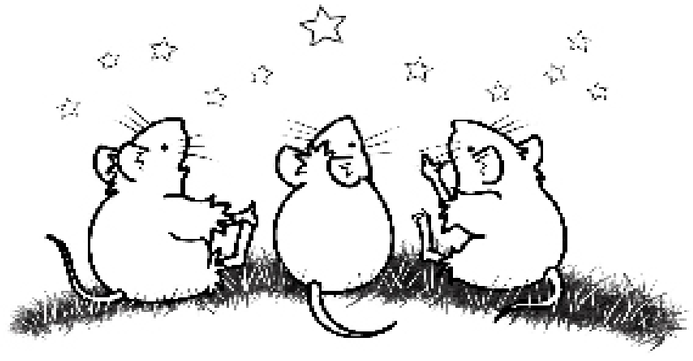
Already we have collected the Christmas shoeboxes to help others who are in need around the world and, by the time you read this, there will be details on how to give to the Christmas Tree Gift Appeal.

May I encourage you this Christmas, that in whatever way we are permitted to celebrate, to again, with joy-filled hearts, give thanks for the birth of Jesus, God with us.

One final thought. "Who knows what tomorrow brings" is the first line of the song with the title, 'Up where we belong'. In Isaiah chapter 40 we read these words, "those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles." As God's children, that's where we belong! So let us not lose heart but continue to trust our God who has revealed his great love for us in Jesus, whose birth we continue to celebrate. In faith may his love lift you up where you belong.

Wishing you God's peace this Christmas and his steadfast guidance for the New Year.

Your minister



Congregational Record

DEATHS

5th April - Mrs Maragret McClean, District 18
25th April - Mrs Maragret Alexander, District 17
28th August - Mr Victor Cambley, District 21
5th October - Mrs Rosemary Wood, District 24
3rd December - Gilbert McCutcheon, District 20

"Blessed are they who die in the Lord"

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs Maureen Murray

We warmly welcome these new members to our fellowship, assuring them of our interest and seeking from them their active support.

EAGLE WING

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It was with great pleasure that Margaret and Alan Chestnutt welcomed their second grandchild during lockdown. Harry was born on 28th May and is the son of Michael and Karen and baby brother to Sophie who needs no introduction to Groomsport. Hopefully you will all get to meet Harry soon.

Well Done Sophia!

In June 2020, Sophia Farrington, then a P5 pupil at Grange Primary School (June & Lowry's granddaughter), achieved reading three million words, as part of a National Reading Programme called Accelerated Reading.

Editorial

Who would have thought that at almost Christmas I would be here editing another lockdown magazine? I certainly didn't, and back in March, like everyone else, I naively thought that this period of difficulty would all be over in a few weeks. This period of 'difficulty' somehow turned into a period of sadness and extreme hardship for so many people. My heart goes out to those who have lost loved ones and are grieving. I also think about the families who have lost jobs or are struggling financially, money does not come easy and bills still have to be paid regardless of the pandemic.

In October, the Outreach Committee had a Zoom meeting and they decided it was time we got back in touch with everyone. It looked like things were starting to ease and people were beginning to feel more normal again. The Committee suggested that we put together a 'mini' Eagle Wing and help people reconnect. When the government announced this circuit breaker, also that it was to be almost as severe as the one we had back in April, I had an image in my head that the magazine would not happen. However, this Eagle Wing will be out, and just in time for Christmas.

As it happened, this issue of the Eagle Wing has ended up not being the 'mini' version that everyone had anticipated. There are some interesting articles. I hope you enjoy them as much as I have. Earlier in the year Michael and Julie Steele travelled to Knysna, they have shared some wonderful times and photographs. the Goldie family stayed home, they found a renewed enthusiasm for family activities as well as a love of baking. There has been a baby born and a lovely poem written by Margaret Johnston for her 90th birthday.

You might also need to put your thinking cap on for the puzzles at the back. For our younger members, throughout the magazine there are some mini-pictures to colour, as well as on the back cover. Brian McClelland has been busy; his imagination spurred on at the thought of cheering up his grandchildren during the summer lockdown, the tongue twister story had me entertained.

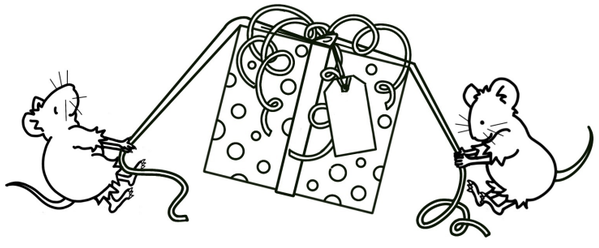
A last-minute outreach article made it into the magazine. Just three days before going to print, the Sunday School leaders arranged a collection of gifts for Belfast Central Mission. There was an outside drop off point set up for Christmas gifts, many people turned up to donate and the project was a success. Well done, to all who were involved. This event demonstrates that good things can still happen even during hard times.

As I leave you to enjoy your magazine, I would like to share a closing thought. I desire that this Christmas will bring us all a renewed enthusiasm for life. There is still plenty of good work that can be done even in times of adversity, keep the faith.

This is my command - be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9)

Merry Christmas!

Amanda



Well Done Anna Purce

Ards and North Down Borough Council this year organised an 'In Bloom' painting competition in the summer. There were two categories, with one of them being '10 & Under'. Anna Purce, who is only seven years old, won the prize with her painting of trees, flowers, bees and a Bangor Swan.

Anna and Mayor, Trevor Cummings.

Congratulations

Sam and Doreen Ferguson celebrated their diamond 60th anniversary on 30th July. They received a card from her Majesty The Queen.

No nativity this year because the Three Wise Men face a travel ban. The shepherds have been furloughed and can't work. The Inn Keeper has shut under tier three regulations and has had a slump in bookings. Santa won't be working as he would break the rule of six with Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Donner and Blitzen.

As for Rudolph, with that red nose,
he should be self-isolating and taking a test!

Outreach Report

Roy McWhinney - Outreach Convener

'You never miss the water until the well runs dry!'

What a year 2020 has been and maybe what we have learned (I hope) is not to take things for granted. Reading the stories in the Bible of plagues and famines, who would have thought it could happen in this modern age to us?

Outreach comes in many forms. At the start of the year, we had our pantomime wonderfully bringing together people of all ages, church and non-church folk as a community to create a fantastic show for all to enjoy.

In all the adversities our wee country has endured we still had our Church services, the beacon of light that shone and got us through what troubled us. However, Covid-19 was not that charitable.

The church closed its doors and we couldn't meet as a congregation to worship together. So too did our organisations, activity groups and even our much-beloved summer coffee mornings.

Reverend Dalzell produced and still does deliver Sunday sermons over the internet via our website which are available all week online. These services are still provided weekly on CDs to those congregational members who are not online. Thanks also must be given to the Reverend Dalzell and our intern Heidi who made phone calls (Rev Dalzell still does) to members of the congregation to keep in touch to keep that light shining.

Our 'in person' coffee mornings were replaced by virtual coffee mornings. Though nowhere near the same as meeting in person, however we are very grateful for small mercies.

As we go to print, our Church Outreach is still ongoing. Children belonging to our congregation, and also including all Sunday School children, got a delivery of an advent calendar. There will also be a distribution of over 700 Christmas cards from our congregation to Groomsport homes entitled Joy, Love and Hope with a personal message from the Reverend Dalzell inside. The photograph on the front of the card showing our church and Christmas tree was given to us by kind permission of Maureen Irwin.

On Saturday 5th December, the Sunday School teachers held their annual Gift Appeal to support Belfast Central Mission to help those who are needy and vulnerable throughout Northern Ireland. The congregation and the local community supported the gift appeal very well. A huge thank you goes to everyone who donated gifts and also to those who helped on the day.

As we come to the end of 2020 let's not forget to keep our outreach going. As we roll into winter; we must all do our wee bit. It can be a simple thing like picking up the telephone, making that call to shine the light into someone's day.

Thank you all for your effort and support, may we continue to be
'A welcoming community of God's people'.

Today Lord I am 90!

A Poem written by Margaret Johnston on her 90th Birthday

Today Lord I am 90! I'm so grateful for the years
Of happiness, fulfilment, laughter, joy and tears.
For wondrous LOVE that rests on me both night and day
And forgiveness for the many times that I have gone astray.
With your help and inspiration so many things I've done.
But, there are some that lie unfinished so please
May I live to 91?
And if by then, I need more time, for further things to do
Could I perhaps dear Lord live on to 92?
Many journeys I would make and places I would see
If I was fit and healthy, could I live 'til 93?
I like to walk along the beach and gaze across the shore
How grateful I would be dear Lord to live to 94,
And if by then I'm still alive, I'd like to stay to 95.
I love to watch my family grow, they're such a super mix
How I'd adore to see them all when I am 96.
In church our praise is lifted high, we pray to highest heaven
I know I will be there some day – meantime I'm 97.
I wouldn't be a burden, for that I'd really hate
But I'd love to be around you know when I am 98.
99 is really old, I can't think how that would be!
A century of living might be just too much for me.
Dear Lord forgive my foolish dreams, take all my thanks instead
For I have led a goodly life, in which I have been led.
It's not for me to know how long or ask for extra days.
I trust that you will bring me home
In your time, God be praised.

2020 – What A Year!

Happy New Year, we all said at the start of 2020! Little did we know what lay ahead!

As a family, we had a very busy start to the year when we moved house on the 2nd January to Groomsport! It was all very exciting.

I celebrated my 50th birthday in January with a family meal. A couple of weeks later, my husband Andy, took me to New York for a few days to celebrate my big birthday. AMAZING!

A couple of weeks later I went to Krakow with my sister Audrey & two friends for another birthday treat! Another absolutely amazing place. During all this time I was also busy rehearsing for the panto as I was Aladdin. As soon as we came back from Krakow, we were straight into the panto.

Little did we know that a few short weeks later we would be talking about coronavirus & going into lockdown. Words that all too soon became familiar vocabulary.

I decided to write a diary during this time as I thought in years to come, we might not remember how we put our time in & what we did to keep sane. I have written a few lines each day journaling what we did, where we walked to and what we saw. I regularly took photos when out and the family got used to me saying, “hold on now until I get a selfie”.

At the start of lockdown, I was knitting my Easter chicks and now I’m starting on my Christmas hats. I have kept significant things to remind us of specific occasions, such as an Easter card Beth sent us, the chicks I knitted for my girls etc. I have stuck so many things into the diary to look back on.

We have watched the seasons change and appreciated the beauty around us. We had been blessed with good weather which we enjoyed; we, as a family, walked every day and played lots of games. We are so lucky to live where we do.

Jordan discovered baking and has become a star Baker in our family! Thank goodness we could walk to burn off the buns and cakes.

A day out to Tesco caused great excitement as I had to put clothes on (not my gym leggings!), put makeup on and brush my hair!

I look back at extracts from my diary and it makes me smile. We spent a lot of quality family time together.

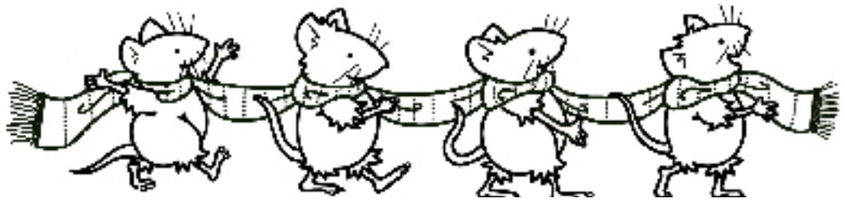
These certainly have been ‘unprecedented’ times but we have survived them. At the start, I said I wasn’t going to dwell on what I didn’t do but enjoy what I did do! I had never heard of Zoom or who knew you could video call on WhatsApp! The things I have learned to do.

This pandemic isn’t over and we have a long way to go to get through it. Wearing a mask is automatic and social distancing is second nature. Whoever would have thought we wouldn’t be allowed to give hugs?

I hope my diary will bring a smile to my girls in years to come. It’s certainly given me pleasure writing it!
2020 ... the year that nothing was normal!

Take care everyone and stay safe.

Sharon



The Tuesday Club

As with the other organisations, we have had no meetings in the Walter Nelson hall since February. However, over the past few months, the committee has taken groups of three or four people out for afternoon tea at various venues, to give our members a chance of meeting up and getting to know other members. These have been highly successful, and although we abide by the rules as set down by Stormont, we hope to resume these outings in December. One or two of our members have been admitted to nursing homes, and we keep in touch with them whenever possible, although we cannot visit them at present.

Our membership stands at fifty-six, with four men joining us over the past year. There is no organisation specifically for men, so an invitation is extended to those who live alone, no matter what the circumstances. This invitation applies to the ladies too. Get in touch with me, Mary Cargill, on 91474098. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Here’s hoping we can meet again next year.

Mary Cargil

As you all know, since March we have been unable to meet together for Sunday School and Bible Class, but throughout the lockdown period we have kept in touch with our children and with the support of parents have continued weekly Sunday School lessons at home.

We are indebted to Heidi, our last intern, for helping to research resources and programmes. We selected Together at Home programme which we were able to adapt to what we felt was suitable for our children.

Each week we wrote a letter to the children and included links to online videos that families could use to watch a Bible story and sometimes we added in a song, with plenty of actions that the children could join in. Heidi then took on the time-consuming task of printing and preparing the weekly packs for mailing, right up to the end of June when it was time to have a break for the summer. Thank you, Heidi! As the new season began in September, we restarted Together at Home Sunday School, sending lesson materials and activity ideas home biweekly. We thank Julie for printing the packs, as she has returned to the office on Tuesday mornings.

Thank you also to parents who have encouraged their children to take part and worked hard at completing a great variety of activities! The leaders did not forget the Bible Class members and sent them home Bible reading notes. We hope to able to send out a special Christmas pack to the participating children.

It has been lovely to hear back from the children as they have emailed us great pictures of what they were doing. You can view some of the children's work in the gallery section of our website and our Facebook page.

As we are now looking forward to a very different Christmas, we want to thank everyone who has supported our Christmas Gift Day Appeal by bringing gifts for the Belfast Central Mission. We were, of course, unable to have our usual Gift Day Service when the children play a huge part in what we considered the start of our Christmas celebrations. We would like to thank everyone who contributed gifts for needy families in Belfast. The Christmas gifts were gratefully received and were needed more than ever this year. Thank you again.

Keep the ongoing work of Sunday School and Bible Class in your prayers. Please give thanks for the young families who have engaged in Sunday School activities throughout our enforced closure.

Wishing you a very Happy Christmas from us all and looking forward to recommencing, face to face Sunday School at some point in 2021.

Keep safe and well!

Audrey, Sharon , Jordan , Paula , Fiona and Margaret

St Joseph The Carpenter

Rev Michael Burgess

When St Paul wrote about the birth and humanity of Jesus to the Philippians, he described it as an emptying and a humbling. Jesus humbled Himself, he wrote, 'and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.' In obedience and love Jesus followed the will of His Father through His ministry from baptism to the cross and Easter beyond.

But what about that period called 'the hidden years', after the Holy Family's return from Egypt? The Gospels tell us of only one event in that period leading up to adulthood: the pilgrimage to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12. For the rest of those 30 years, He lived with Mary and Joseph 'growing in wisdom and in divine and human favour.' Just as He followed His heavenly Father's will in His ministry, so in these growing years He followed the guidance and teaching of Mary and Joseph.

This painting highlights one moment in those years of growth: 'St Joseph the Carpenter' by Georges de la Tour. 'Highlights' is the right word, because this painting captures the strong contrast of light and darkness. Georges de la Tour lived from 1593 to 1652 in Lorraine. He was part of a Franciscan-led revival in that area, and this work from the 1640s captures St Joseph and the Christ-Child with Franciscan tenderness and insight.

We can see the tools of Joseph's trade on the ground. He leans over them, hard at work on a piece of wood. Jesus is sitting by his side, his face lit by the candle, which lights up the carpenter's shop. As well as contrasting light and dark, there is the contrast of young and old, and the thought that the child learning from the old man is also the one who can teach us. De la Tour was particularly fascinated by light and shadows cast by a candle or a lantern. Here the artist shows the candlelight illuminating the face of the child Jesus who will grow up to the Light of the world.

As this New Year begins, we can think back to the light from the Bethlehem manger we celebrated at Christmas. We can look ahead to the light shining from the adult Jesus through His teaching and healing. Here in these hidden years, we can celebrate the light of wisdom and divine favour, as Luke calls them, shining on the face of the child Jesus. We pray for that light to guide us through this New Year. When the way ahead may look dark and uncertain, let us pray that God's light will make clear the path ahead.

The graphic is a faithful photographic reproduction of a two-dimensional, public domain work of art. It can be found at:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Georges_de_La_Tour._St._Joseph,_the_Carpenter.JPG

Hi everyone.

It has been a difficult year for all of us coping with the restrictions of 'lockdown' and not being able to meet in fellowship in the many ways that we have been used to. We could never have imagined, this time last year, how the whole world has been turned upside down by this coronavirus. Many people have struggled here at home with loneliness, anxiety and depression, worrying about their jobs and keeping their businesses afloat. Thankfully we live in a wealthy country and our government has been able to step in and prevent our economy from total collapse. Overseas it has been a different story with poor countries struggling to cope with fragile health systems and already vulnerable communities. Whether at home or abroad, the need to reach out beyond our own difficulties has never been greater. Groomsport Presbyterian Church mission committee has met regularly (via Zoom) during the pandemic to see how we, as a congregation, can live out our faith and continue to show the love of God in seeking to help others. Many of our plans had to be cancelled. However, with the approval of our Kirk Session, we were able to give urgent donations to several projects we had hoped to support this year.

Sightsavers, a charity that aims to prevent blindness caused by trachoma and river blindness - both nasty infections treated with low cost antimicrobial drugs.

The Sunday School project, Crecor Huntos, teaching young people in Spain to put into action what they hear and learn from the Bible.

Masks for Malawi, this charity aims to support local tailors who manufacture masks to help reduce spread of the virus in the community.

Hope Christian Trust, supporting a Christian school in Gaza.

Fresh Light Counselling, the PCI Christian counselling service.

Taps and Toilet Twinning, Tearfund projects to improve clean water supply and improve sanitation, both to reduce risk of water-borne infections.

Storehouse North Down, regular collections each Wednesday morning are going well.

Open Doors, this charity works in over 60 countries, supplying Bibles, training church leaders, providing practical support and emergency relief, and supporting Christians who suffer for their faith.

You can learn more about these charities and projects by visiting our church website.

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The committee would like to thank the congregation for their generous response to many appeals over recent months. Through these appeals, we have been able to help the people of Beirut begin to rebuild their lives after the devastating explosion in August. We were able to support the food voucher scheme of our sister Presbyterian Church in Knysna, South Africa. The vital work of Christian Aid was also supported and through the United Appeal our Presbyterian Church in Ireland has been able to continue its mission work at home and overseas. And finally, the response of the congregation to The Samaritan's Purse Christmas Shoebox Appeal has been amazing. This year, despite the pandemic, we have received around 130 boxes to send overseas, more than 40% up compared to last year. Thank you, everyone, for your kindness and generosity.

Your support of our church mission encourages people to grow in their faith as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, so the Good News of the Gospel can be shared. Thank you.

GPC Mission Committee – Maureen Stewart, Maureen Irwin, Rosalind MacNeice, Ivan Crawford and Michael Steele.

The Shoe Box Appeal

Maureen Irwin

Dear Friends,

You might be interested to know that one of our neighbours in Groomsport, Mr Walter Hope, volunteered to go out to Lebanon just after that awful explosion near the Docks in Beirut a few months ago. Walter went with a team of Medics and administrators under the auspices of the Samaritan's Purse in a huge Boeing full of medical and other supplies. They were to help the badly damaged hospital and in fact to set up a temporary Field Hospital in the outskirts of the city.

While working in a deserted building, the team were able to reach out through the local church and the Christian Mission Alliance to some of the people in the area. Then an amazing thing happened, they found a few shoeboxes among the equipment and were able to give them to some little children they had befriended.

The children were obviously thrilled with such a lovely surprise gift. Walter was able to hand out the last one to a little beggar girl, called Sarah Aya, who cared for her badly injured father. Each morning, Sarah could be seen at the crossroads, when the traffic lights changed, she would be asking for a little help from the stationary drivers.

As you can see from these photos, the children were all totally surprised and delighted with their shoeboxes.

The Mission Committee would really like to thank you so much for supporting the Christmas Shoebox Appeal once again this year. As you can see in the photo we were able to send out approximately 130 boxes to Samaritan's Purse for children in need. An impressive total of 17661 boxes were sent from Northern Ireland.

Last year our consignment went to the Middle East. I wonder where our boxes will go this year?

Open Doors

Open Doors is an international ministry serving persecuted Christians and churches worldwide. It originated in 1955 when a young Dutchman went to Warsaw and discovered the existence of persecuted churches there. After which he travelled throughout Eastern Europe bringing Bibles and encouraging believers. He became known as Brother Andrew and in 1967 the book 'Gods Smuggler' made him known worldwide.

In the '70s, the work of Open Doors had moved beyond the Soviet Union and spread to Africa. In the '80s to China and Saudi Arabia. Increasingly Open Doors began supporting the Christian church in the Muslim world.

In 1978 the first training manual for leaders, on 'how to resist persecution', was produced for Christians in Asia, then in the 1990s, a training institute was set up for pastors in Sub Saharan Africa. In this digital world, much is being done online, thereby getting to remote and isolated areas.

Today, working in 60 countries, OpenDoors provides relief aid, leadership training, livelihood support and community development projects for hundreds of thousands of Christians around the world. In the late 1990's Open Doors began developing more targeted advocacy work. They began approaching the powerful on behalf of the powerless, from speaking to the Prime Minister to equipping the local churches to know their legal rights.

Every day 260million Christians face harassment, exclusion and abuse for following Jesus. They live in countries where it is illegal to own a Bible, where following Jesus means arrest, imprisonment or even death.

The top ten countries where Christians most at risk are as follows:

1 North Korea
2 Afganistan
3 Somalia
4 Libya
5 Pakistan
6 Eritrea
7 Sudan
8 Yemen
9 Iran
10 India

Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, said: "Open Doors has shown the true signs of the presence of the Spirit of God in that it has been faithful to its vision and foundation but adaptable as the world around it has changed. Today it is one of the most credible, powerful, authentic and determined advocates of the protection of Christians but also generally of religious liberty."

Would we as a Church be interested in getting involved, prayerfully, practically, to be a lifeline to many of the worlds?

Rosalind MacNeice

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Return To Worship

Lowry Manson - Property Convener

INTRODUCTION I have been asked to write an article for the Christmas 2020 Eagle Wing to give the congregation an insight into the various issues relating to our 'Return to Worship', with our first service after the lockdown, being held on Sunday 20th September 2020. However, long before that date, there was a very significant amount of work undertaken, whick I will cover in this article. I want to note that I am writing this at the end of October/ beginning of November 2020 and this article will not be read until late December and things may have had to change in the interim, depending on the seriousness of Covid-19 during November and December.

BACKGROUND At the outset of the lockdown, around the middle of March, a decision was made concerning continuing with Ian McDonald's employment, as our part-time caretaker, rather than putting him on furlough. This was to prove very beneficial later when it came to the time when we were permitted to open the church for private prayer.

In mid-May, it appeared that the NI Executive was considering opening up churches for private prayer. In anticipation of this event, Ian and I were already considering how best we could open up the church again, to satisfy all the necessary Health & Safety and other related requirements. Following lengthy discussions with Ian on 15th May, I then emailed Rev Paul Dalzell and Alastair McQuoid, our Clerk of Session and suggested a meeting with Ian and me in the Church on Monday 18th May, to discuss the possible opening up the church for private prayer. This vital meeting on 18th May, involved a 'risk assesment'. We agreed that, with the Session's blessing, we would open the church for private prayer from Wednesday 27th May 2020. We also agreed on some measures, including a 'one-way system', selecting the pews on the Donaghadee side of the church to be used for prayer time. The provision of hand sanitisers at the entrance lobby and also signage to indicate the route to be taken within the church and most importantly, that the 2-metre social distancing measures would be strictly applied at all times.

THE PCI GUIDELINES & FURTHER MEETINGS Right from the time that there were indications that churches were going to be allowed to open for private prayer, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland were very good at sending out helpful publications to all ministers. One such was an eleven-page document sent on the 13th June entitled " GUIDELINES FOR GETTING READY TO GATHER AGAIN." Also, the PCI sent out a six-page checklist concerning the " RESUMPTION OF CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES", which we had to complete before we reopened the church. These were well written and informative documents, which we found to be very useful. They helped to form the basis of a further meeting held on 25th June, when Rev Paul Dalzell, Alastair McQuoid, Ian McDonald and I met to discuss the possible return to worship. This meeting covered the 'indicative dates' for the reopening of churches in NI, all the latest information from the PCI, the 'physical preparation of the church', the 'clear communications regarding H & S issues' and the creating of a 'safe environment', for those wishing to worship in our church.

Then on 7th July, there was a Session Meeting held in the church and I was given the opportunity to present our ideas. This presentation included everything from the arrival at the church, the seating arrangement, the service itself and then afterwards, 'exiting of the church'. It is important to note that the general feedback we were getting from the elders and Rev Dalzell at that time, was that while a number of people were interested in coming back to church, the indications were that there should be no rush in doing so. In addition, a more formal survey was then undertaken by the Elders to try to determine more accurately the likely number of our members who would attend church again and this indicated that around 83 people were interested.

At the Session meeting on 7th July, it was proposed that a working group should be formed to look at the return to worship issues. I invited Dr Michael Steele and Ann Williams to join the four of us, who had already been meeting to discuss these matters. The first meeting of the Working Group (later renamed the Task Group) was on Tuesday 11th August 2020, when we reviewed the latest PCI's guidelines, which included planning ahead, preparing our Buildings and practising socially distanced worship, along with many other issues. We looked at the available seating arrangements, taking account of the required 2-metre social distancing measures and it was agreed, that subject to the Session's approval, Sunday 20th September would be our Target Date for resuming Sunday Worship in the church.

This date, along with all the other arrangements, was subsequently agreed by Kirk Session. Rev Dalzell and I agreed to the various necessary protocols, which were then issued to everyone in the congregation. At the same time, Ian and I spent a significant amount of time trying to sort out the best possible seating arrangements, for both downstairs and in the gallery. Numbers varied depending on what permutation was adopted. Still, we believe the current layout is working well and takes into account the numbers of couples who wish to attend church, as well as all the single people.

At the August Session meeting, I gave a report from the Task Group on the return to worship issues and by this stage, face coverings had been recommended by the PCI. Further meetings of the Task Group were then held on 22nd September in the church and again on 20th October, when we had a Zoom Meeting.

AVAILABLE SEATS IN THE CHURCH (with the 2-metre distancing measures) At our Task Group meetings from 22nd September onwards, we were able to review our church services and I confirmed to the group the total numbers that we can safely accommodate in the church, taking full account of the 2-metre social distancing measures was 83. The actual numbers that have been attending the Worship Services range from 57 up to 78, that is up to Sunday 1st November 2020. The review of the services by the Task Group on 20th October concluded that everything was going according to plan at that stage, with no real difficulties experienced. Rev. Dalzell has also indicated that the feedback he has been getting is complimentary and our members feel safe worshipping in our church each Sunday.

REGISTRATION And lastly, just a word or two about the registration of those wishing to attend church the following Sunday and what happens, after you have either emailed or phoned the Rev Paul Dalzell, hopefully well before the 1.00 pm deadline on Wednesdays. Rev Dalzell very helpfully produces three typed Lists of the members who plan to attend church and these are divided into three timeslots. Ian and I then meet to carefully look at these numbers, then how we can arrange for those of you who like sitting downstairs, to do so, and for those who do not mind being in the gallery, to be allocated to sit there. We also consider those with special needs.

We also try our very best to accommodate late changes to the original registration lists. Thankfully, to date, everything has worked out well in relation to the registration and the subsequent seating arrangements. In closing, I would like to thank everyone, who has attended church since 20th September 2020, for fully accepting where they are asked to sit and also adhering to the returning to worship protocols.

If you would like to attend any Sunday Service please contact Rev Dalzell by phone or email, no later than 1:00 pm on the Wednesday before.

The Story Behind The Song

This article was given to me by Queenie Hughs for inclusion in the Eagle Wing Magazine. The piece is beautifully handwritten by Queenie's dear friend Betty Jeeves. I felt this piece was of particular significance because this year could be described as being a 'Year Of Sorrows' for many. Families have lost loved ones through Covid, many people are out of work and there are so many issues caused by the events of this year.

While reading the article, I went to look the song up on YouTube. I quickly realised that the handwritten article by Betty was almost word for word from Lawrence Chewning's website. I wondered if there was a copyright concern, so I decided to go ahead and message Mr Chenwing through his website, I did not expect a reply. I deliberated if it was best not to include this article at all, given the wording and looked for another piece to put in its place.

Could you imagine my surprise when Lawrence Chenwing replied! We struck up a conversation and he is was delighted that we are going to publish his 'story' in our church magazine. Lawrence went as far as giving me the correct lyrics for the remastered song.

The Anchor Holds - Lawrence Mendez Chenwing Jr

The story behind the writing of this song began in 1992, when my wife and I experienced what we now call our year of sorrows. My father died that year, we were facing health problems, I have come to the point of burnout in pastoral ministry for 19 years and the church that I had helped to plant was entering into the first stages of a devastating split. I was also re-evaluating the focus of my calling. I was weary and discouraged.

Then in the summer of '92, my wife experienced her third miscarriage. We wept as we held the tiny 14-week foetus of our son in our hands, It truly felt as if our visions and dreams had 'slipped right through like they were only grains of sand'. It seemed as if the best years were over.

I was given a sabbatical from pastoring for six months. During that time, my wife and I grieved and prayed. I also began to play the piano again for hours at a time, alone with God. During this time of sadness and uncertainty, the Holy Spirit gave me a song which I had entitled 'The Anchor Holds'. As I would sing it, I began to experience God's comfort, encouragement and hope. Eventually, a fresh vision came and I entered a new phase of calling in my life.

In the spring of 1993, my old friend Ray Boltz heard about the song during a time of sharing together, after one of his concerts in Maine. A few months later, Ray called me and expressed interest in possibly recording it. I sent the song to him 'in the rough' and told him that he was free to adapt it to his purposes. Ray reworked some of the lyrics, shortened it a bit and added a musical bridge. He recorded it for his 'Allegiance' project.

It was released for national airplay in November 1994.

The response to this song has truly been overwhelming; I am so grateful that God can take our broken pieces and make something of value out of them.

I am also thankful to Ray Boltz, who saw the potential of this song and utilised it for God's glory.

Vol 49. No 2, Christmas 2020

The Anchor Holds

Words & Music by Lawrence Chewning & Ray Boltz

I have journeyed through the long, dark night
Out on the open sea
By faith alone, sight unknown
Yet His eyes were watching me

Refrain: The anchor holds
Though the ship is battered
The anchor holds
Though the sails are torn
I have fallen on my knees as I faced the raging seas
The anchor holds in spite of the storm

I've had visions. I've had dreams.
I've even held them in my hand.
But I never knew those dreams could slip right through
Like they were only grains of sand.

[Refrain]

Now I have been young.
I am older now.
There has been beauty these eyes have seen.
But it was in the night, through those storms of my life.
Oh, that's where God proved His love to me

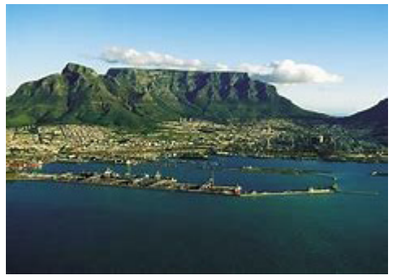
[Refrain]

Out of such heartache comes a hymn of praise in The Anchor Holds. No matter what we do in life we are never alone. In Hebrews 6:19 it says "we have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure".

Jesus Christ is the anchor, he holds us always and will never let us go.

A Visit To Knysna

Michael & Julie Steele



It seems a world away now in more ways than one. Julie and I were invited by our good friends, Hazel and Stanley Megahey, to visit them in Knysna in February this year. How different the world was then with the threat of Covid 19 somewhat distant and seemingly confined to a remote area in central China. Little did we know at the time, how this virus was going to impact on all our lives and create havoc around the globe. Well, that is another story and one which I will sidestep for the moment.

We were met by Hazel and Stanley in Cape Town and spent a couple of days there adjusting to our new surroundings. Our base was an apartment down at the waterfront. When we pulled back the curtain the following morning, we were greeted by a stunning view of Table Mountain towering over the city below. It was topped by its famous 'tablecloth' of cloud which reluctantly evaporates under the penetrating rays of the African sun.

This was a return visit to Cape Town for me but the first for Julie. My first visit had been 38 years ago during a three-month student elective in Northern Transvaal. On that occasion, I was able to take the cable car to the top of Table Mountain. This time we had to abort our trip due to high winds. We weren't too disappointed however, as the alternative plan turned out to be a visit to the wine-growing areas of Stellenbosch and Franschhoek. Enough said!

The drive to Knysna took about five hours. As we left Cape Town, we drove past the sprawling townships that surround the city. This urbanisation was dense and overcrowded but not quite the same as the shanty towns I remembered. There has been a lot of new affordable housing built by the government with utilities of electricity and running water.

It was heartening to see some progress, but clearly much remains to be done. Like many African countries, South Africa deserves better governance and sadly, a lot of the optimism generated by Nelson Mandela has evaporated. I was to see a lot more in the townships surrounding Knysna.

Many of you will know that we have had an association with Knysna Presbyterian Church for several years. One of the reasons for our visit was to foster these ties and deepen our partnership with our sister Presbyterian Church. On our first day in Knysna, Stanley took us to visit their minister, Rev Tim Hawkridge. Tim has been the pastor there for a relatively short time having moved from Johannesburg. He and his wife, Veronica, have grown-up children who have 'flown the nest', so they both are heavily involved in providing leadership and pastoral care to the congregation. In addition to the long-standing members, the congregation has grown by the attendance of many Malawian migrant workers.

These folk feel at home due to their own Presbyterian roots and the use of English as their second language. There are now Malawian elders and regular services conducted in their native language. Julie and I were privileged to attend worship for three Sundays at KPC.

Tim Hawkridge giving his children's address

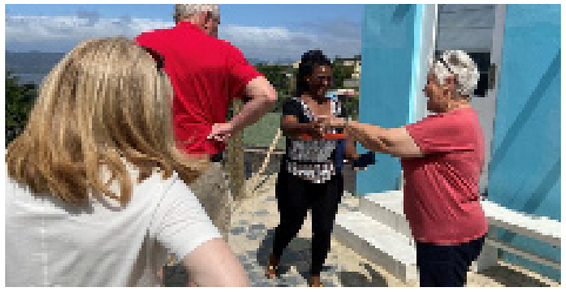
Veronica, Lois, Hazel and Julie

During the first Sunday, I was able to convey greetings from Groomsport Presbyterian Church and tell the congregation a little bit about our church life here in Groomsport. My presentation was nearly aborted by an 'outage' in electricity supply, but thankfully the power was restored just in time! I finished by playing a video message from our minister Rev. Paul Dalzell who expressed our desire to strengthen our partnership and that they may know God's blessing in their continuing witness as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We had a busy programme during our first week. I had the opportunity to visit two health centres and the government hospital in Knysna. Bill Quale, a member of KPC but also the chair of the local Health Board, escorted me around the local townships and I was able to see how 'primary health care' was being delivered there. I was impressed by the dedication of the nurses and doctors, as well as the standard of some of the facilities. The government hospital had recently been modernised and compared favourably with some of our medical facilities. Clearly, there were massive challenges and I was humbled by the expert care delivered and what they were able to achieve with limited resources.

As part of their mission outreach, KPC has supported different projects including a local care home, a pre-school nursery and a feeding programme and homework club for local school children. Hazel and Stanley have written about some of these projects in a previous Eagle Wing article. Another highlight for us was a chance to accompany Lois Kleyn, another member of KPC, who runs a book club for the pre-school nurseries in the townships.

The books are in English, Africans and Xhosa to allow the children to develop early literacy skills. Lois regularly updates the library and travels around the different schools to renew the books. The children are always excited to see her arrive!



During our second week in Knysna, we had a chance to relax and enjoy the area. Hazel and Stanley were wonderful hosts and we had some great times together. Knysna is built around a large sea lagoon and has been a popular holiday destination. We also drove up some steep passes to the 'Oudtshoorn' and along the coast to the Storm River suspension bridge.

The entire trip was a wonderful experience and we have many fond memories. It was a great opportunity to forge friendships and meet the folk of KPC. Some of you will have heard the audio message sent from Rev Hawkridge thanking Groomsport Presbyterian church for their support and prayers. He finished by saying that we are very much in their prayers from week to week. He said that there was so much that we can learn from each other and give to each other, as we seek ways to support the specific callings that God has placed on each of our churches. If you want to listen to Tim's weekly broadcast service, you can click the link which is on our own GPC home webpage.

Carols By Candlelight 2019

A reminder of the carol service in our church last Christmas.

James Has An Adventure In Puddy Muddle Land

Brian McClelland

It has stopped raining, the sun is shining and James wants to play outside with his Grandad, while eating his chocolate cake.

"Grandad, Grandad, I want to jump in the muddy puddles!" cries James.

"OK, but you must put your boots on, and you must watch out for the puddy muddles," his Grandad cautions.

"Grandad, what is a puddy muddle?" questions James.

"James, a puddy muddle is very like a muddy puddle. But when you jump in a puddy muddle with both feet, you go right through it and end up in Puddy Muddle Land, where all sorts of strange things may happen."

James has great fun jumping in the puddles until Grandad stops when he sees a very black puddle ahead, with a fine mist over it.

"James, do not jump in that puddle – because it looks very odd to me," warns Grandad.

James giggles and jumps right in, only to disappear from sight. Grandad, very alarmed, jumps in after him and also disappears from view.

They find themselves floating slowly through the clouds to the ground, and landing in the middle of a family of windmills of all different sizes.

"Look, Grandad, look at all the windmills – they are not moving their arms. What is wrong with them?" "I see them, James. We must be in some sort of windmill country. I think they look friendly enough. Let's go and talk to them and see what the problem is."

"Hello, Daddy Windmill," greets James. "You look very sad. Are you sick?"

"We can't move our arms," complains Daddy Windmill. "We fell out with Mr Wind and he has left us. We are helpless without him to blow our arms and give us life."

"Oh dear me," frowns Grandad. "I wonder how we can help you…"

"Call Mr Wind," pleads James. "He will listen to you, Grandad. Say you will give him my chocolate cake if he will blow again."

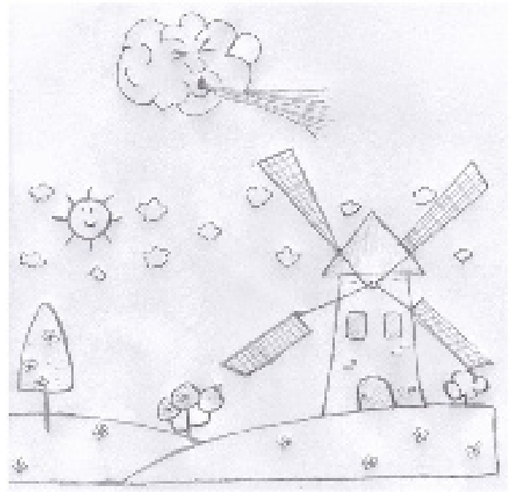
"Yes, James. We will need Mr Wind also, to blow us up into the sky, through the puddy muddle and back home."

"Mr Wind, Mr Wind, the Windmills are sorry they fell out with you!" cries Grandad. "I have some chocolate cake for you, if you will be friends with the Windmills again. Will you help us?"

With a whoosh, Mr Wind appears. "Yes, I will help," he booms. "It was a silly argument anyway, and I really love chocolate cake!"

With that, Mr Wind blows out his cheeks and gives a mighty puff of wind, which sends the arms of the Windmills spinning.

"Hurrah!" shouts James excitedly, waving his arms and spinning around in a passable imitation of a windmill. "The Windmills can move their arms again and we can fly now, up and up through the puddy muddle and home again. Good old Grandad!"



"Give me your hand, James!" shouts Grandad. "Off we go!"

"Thank you, Grandad," sob the Windmills in relief, "and thank you, Mr Wind – we cannot do without you. We will never fall out with you again, and will make you lots and lots of chocolate cake."

Mr Wind blows Grandad and James up and up into the air, until they speed through the puddy muddle with a big splash, soaking them both.

"I wonder what Granny will say when she sees the state we are in?" groans Grandad, a little fearfully.

Of course, they don't really mind being more than a little wet – they are home again, and Granny is glad they are safe. But James will be very wary in future about picking the right puddles to jump in!

This story was written during lockdown in April for my grandchildren, Zach, Isla, Rosa and Ruan. I am indebted to Carolyn McDowell, daughter of Susan and John Ekin, for giving the story life with her marvellous illustrations. Grandad looks a real character, so I may have to write another story with him in mind!

Just For Fun

Some puzzles for our young at heart readers, also a colour in page on the back cover.

f	q	z	u	c	s	d	k	w	v	o	n	o
j	f	t	m	d	n	r	t	g	o	d	c	l
p	r	o	p	h	e	t	h	a	f	r	v	f
p	r	a	y	i	n	g	n	s	f	i	l	q
l	w	a	i	t	i	n	g	a	e	s	j	d
a	i	t	i	b	a	b	y	v	r	r	e	n
l	n	f	t	s	m	u	y	i	i	a	s	b
n	s	j	e	v	e	r	y	o	n	e	u	o
d	i	o	m	t	a	d	h	u	g	l	s	p
a	d	s	p	m	i	u	p	r	s	d	i	e
n	e	e	l	f	a	m	i	l	y	c	t	a
n	u	p	e	o	p	l	e	a	d	e	r	c
a	j	h	p	i	n	c	o	u	p	l	e	e

Temple
praised
peace
Jesus
Anna
Israel

baby
offerings
inside
everyone
people
Saviour

Anna
prophet
couple
God
Joseph
leader

family
lifetime
Mary
praying
waiting
world

"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think that the Angel of the Lord Zooming with the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."

5		7				3		6
			4	9	6			
						2	1	
2		5		8	9	6		
4	8		2		7		9	5
		1	3	4		7		2
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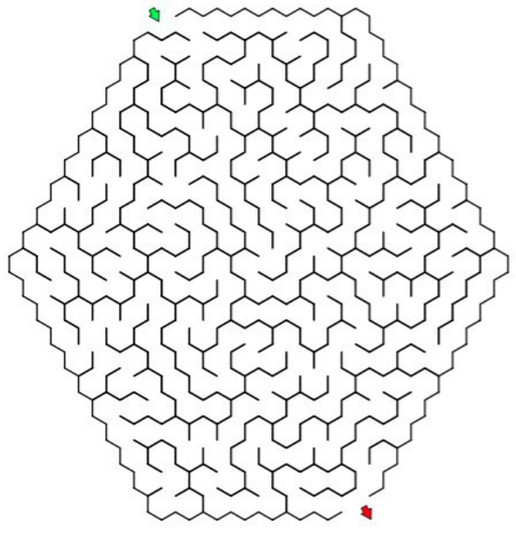
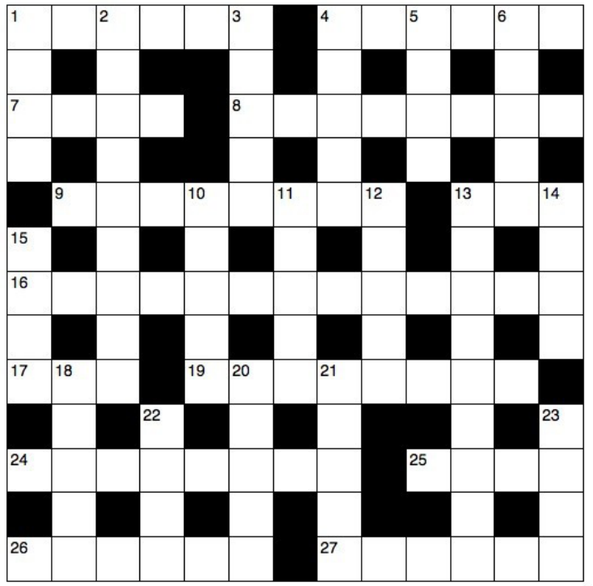
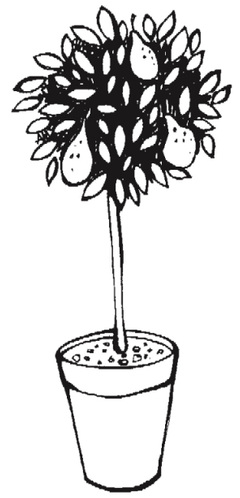




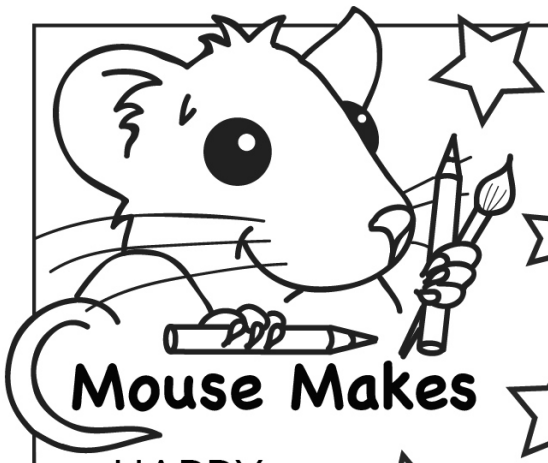


Across

1 Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)
4 'He stretches out the heavens like a — , and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6)
7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Genesis 8:11) (4)
8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)
9 Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8)
13 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)
16 Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)
17 National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)
19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)
24 Able dock (anag.) (8)
25 The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)
26 Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)
27 Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)

Down

1 Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)
2 Conciliatory (Titus 3:2) (9)
3 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)
4 A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)
6 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)
10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5)
11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)
12 Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)
13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)
14 Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)
15 One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4)
18 Narnia's Lion (5)
20 One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash (2 Kings 5:12) (5)
21 Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)
22 Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)
23 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)



Mouse Makes

"I bring you **good news** that will bring great **joy** to all people. The **Saviour** has been born today! ...
Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased".
from Luke 2 vs. 10,11,14

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

Read the Christmas story in Luke 1:1 - 2:21

A picture to colour for Christmas. Colour in one star each day as you count down to Christmas!

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