

Eagle Wing



The Magazine of Groomsport Presbyterian Church

Spring 2021

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
old things have passed away;
behold, all things have become new.
2 Corinthians 5:17*

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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Message from the Minister

18th March 2021

St Patrick's story is, of course, an important story for Ireland, the story of the slave who returned as a missionary to share the good news about Jesus Christ. The dates of Patrick's life cannot be fixed with certainty, but there is general agreement that he was active as a missionary in Ireland during the fifth century.



As I write this, yesterday was St. Patrick's Day, 17th March, the supposed date of St Patrick's death. However, I am very conscious that by the time you read this, it will be May. Some two months will have passed. In the light of our experience of the past year and more, it is very hard to even imagine what life might be like in May, but I know we are all hoping that restrictions will be greatly eased, many more people will have received their first jobs and a good number their second.

I am also hoping that many more of us will be able to be back to worship together in person and that worship restrictions being eased will soon become a reality.

And on a very ordinary but most profound level, how lovely to be able to meet freely again with family and friends, and to enjoy a walk that may be accompanied by stopping off for a coffee!

However, lots of water must flow under the bridge between my writing of this

and your reading of it and so, with St Patrick fresh in my mind, I want to close with a prayer that has been attributed to St Patrick, which I believe is very appropriate for these times which we continue to live through.

*May the strength of God pilot us.
May the power of God preserve us.
May the wisdom of God instruct us.
May the hand of God protect us.
May the way of God direct us.
May the shield of God defend us.
May the host of God guard us
against the snares of evil
and the temptations of the world.
May Christ be with us,
Christ before us,
Christ in us,
Christ over us.*

*May thy Salvation, O Lord, be always ours
this day and for evermore. Amen.*

Your minister



**BLESSED ARE ALL DURING THIS TIME WHO HAVE PURE HEARTS;
ALL WHO STILL HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE; ALL WHO
WORK FOR PEACE AND WHO MODEL MERCY**



**MAY YOU KNOW COMFORT. MAY YOU KNOW CALM. AND MAY THE
GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF GOD, AND
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BE WITH US ALL. AMEN**

Congregational Record

DEATHS



29th December - Bill Robinson
16th January - Ethel McKechnie
23rd January - Shirley Lyle-Hall
24th April - Christopher Young

"Blessed are they who die in the Lord"

NEW MEMBERS



Mrs Edna Robinson - District 2
Mr Peter Keith - District 11

EAGLE WING

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The Belfast Central Mission wish to thank all in Groomsport for their generosity in donating toys for distribution to needy families at Christmas. The number of gifts from everyone was beyond anything they expected. They were able to distribute gifts, in total, to a record 3500 families this year. They want their thanks communicated to members of the Presbyterian congregation and Groomsport community.
Thanks to all.

I would like to say a huge Thank You' to Rev. Dalzell and the many kind people who supported me with prayers, cards, phone calls and gifts after my surgery.

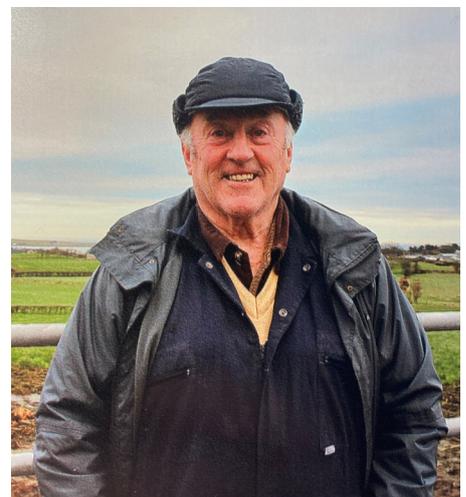
It was truly overwhelming and very much appreciated! I have done remarkably well and have completed my treatment with virtually no side effects. I give thanks to God and to everyone for all the love and care that has been given to me.

Margaret McCreedy

Rev Paul Dalzell and members of our church family.

We would like to express our sincere thanks for all the flowers, letters, cards and many phone calls of support the McCutcheon family received following Gilbert's passing. The contact was very much appreciated. We do hope and pray for better days ahead, when we can all meet up at Sunday worship once again.
In God we put our trust and faith.

Nessa and Gillian.





Christian Aid 2021

10-16 May

Mervyn Nelson

In 2020, for the first time ever, as far as I am aware, there was no door to door collection by Christian Aid Volunteers in the village.

We have all been living through the strangest times most of us have ever known or remember for the past year. But that has not stopped some people from achieving great things, like Captain Tom and what about all the scientists, who in record time, have invented and made available the vaccines.

Life, however, is still not as it used to be and so Christian Aid week in the village is going to be different too.

Christian Aid envelopes will be distributed to every house in the village and available at the morning services in the Parish and Presbyterian Churches on the 9th of May.

Each envelope will contain details of how you can contribute and where you can leave your filled envelopes for collection between the 10th and 16th of May.

Christian Aid's groundbreaking work began in 1946 when founded by British and Irish churches to help refugees following the Second World War. Since then, and now in its 75 years, it continues to provide humanitarian relief and support for poor communities worldwide while highlighting suffering, tackling injustice and championing people's rights.

Your contributions will help continue that work.

Please return your filled Christian Aid Envelope to either Groomsport Parish Church Halls (Weekday Mornings) or The Presbyterian Church Office (Wednesday Mornings) or to the Spar shop in Groomsport before Sunday 16th May 2021. If you wish you can contribute on line to www.justgiving.com/GroomsportCAweek2021. Thank you for your continued help and support for Christian Aid, it is much appreciated.

Thank You Groomsport!

"Operation Christmas Child" called us and shared that over 21,000 shoeboxes were sent out from Northern Ireland including ours from Groomsport of course.

This year they were sent to Albania, Serbia and Belaruse. If anyone ordered a box on line it was sent to Nigeria. Altogether over 250,000 needy children received a Christmas box from folk in the UK which was a wonderful acheivment.



Editorial

A lot of time has passed between the last issue of the Eagle Wing and this one. A lot of things have happened in the interim, locally, nationally and internationally.

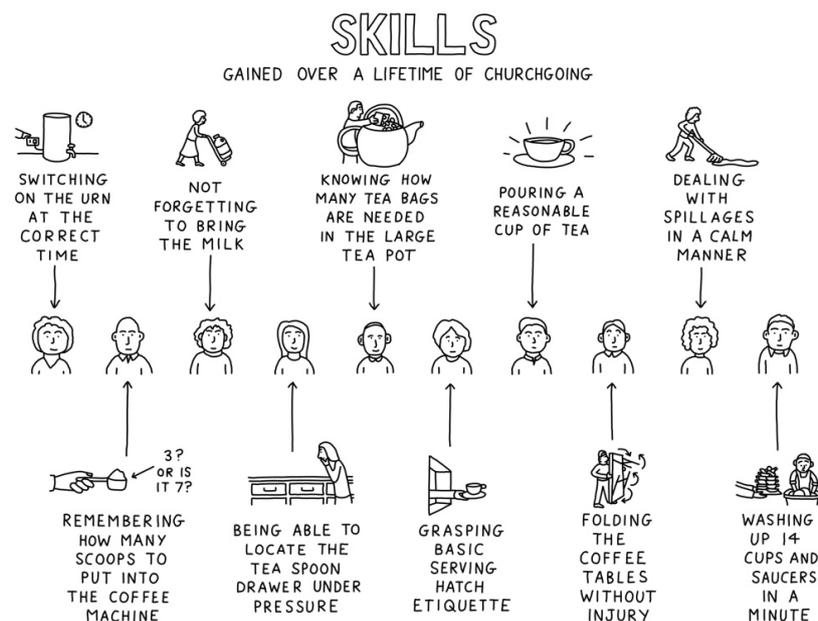
As we receive our vaccinations and the lockdown eases, the weather improves, the sky brightens and we emerge from the darkness of winter, some of us will be struck with the renewed beauty of the world; like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon, we explore the new and bright horizons.

This issue of the Eagle Wing magazine is definitely a thinned down issue. I have not been in contact with any of the past interns, I figured that everybody would still be in a state of self-preservation with regard to family and work. I have hope that the next issue will be a bumper one, so please bombard me with all your stories of what you are doing now that lockdown is easing. If you wish, you can share your dreams of things that you have planned for the months ahead.

The thing I have missed most has been travel; my jets have been cooled with regard to foreign holidays. My last holiday was 'lockdown in Tenerife' and what a trip that turned out to be! I am grateful for everything we have here, especially our beautiful countryside, could you imagine being 'stuck in a tower block'? My heart goes out to those who have been in that situation.

This issue sees a 'from the heart' tribute for Gilbert, our much loved and missed Elder and stalwart of Groomspport Presbyterian. A large part of this magazine is about the mission work of the church and it shows that inspite of lock down, the needs of others are still great. Thankfully we have still been able to help others, the kindness of the congregation has shone through the darkness. The work the Mission Committee do is just a drop in the ocean, but like the 'starfish story', there are many starfish out there; the congregation has however, at least made a difference for a few.

Amanda



William Gilbert McCutcheon

26th May 1942 – 3rd December 2020

A tribute by Rev Dr Roger Purce

The church and wider community heard with shock of the passing of Gilbert McCutcheon from Covid-19. It brought home the reality of the pandemic. The restrictions on funerals saw socially distanced family and friends gather for a short service outside his home on a cold, bright sunny December morning before the cortege made its way to Clandeboye. Neighbours lined the road to pay their respects and members of the congregation stood outside the church that Gilbert loved and served for a lifetime. In normal times, the church would have been full for Gilbert's funeral. While the family say Gilbert was no greater singer himself and that he would not have wanted much in the way of eulogy, he would have wanted a congregation singing the hymns that expressed the faith that shaped his life.

Gilbert was born on the 26th May 1942, on the family farm at Ballyminetra. He was the middle child of William and Lily McCutcheon, his sister Freda and then Howard some eight years later. Gilbert attended Bangor Central Primary and Bangor Technical College. He enjoyed football and learned to play the piano and organ. In 1954 his father had to go into hospital, the farm was let and the animals sold. A few years later, when Gilbert was fifteen, he left school to work on the farm. It was the kind of mixed farming that, due to increased specialisation, has disappeared. There were pigs, poultry, dairying and some arable. Gilbert's particular interest was arable farming and he started growing potatoes.

He met and married Nessa on 2nd April 1964 and they bought Isle Hill where arable farming - potatoes, sprouts and cabbage were the mainstay along with turkeys at Christmas. When Howard was twenty, he was left on his own in the home farm following their mother and father's deaths. Howard said that it would have been very difficult without Gilbert's constant practical help and support.

The family grew with the arrival of Gwen and Gillian. As with many Ulster farmers of his generation, he was not hands-on when the children were small. As the girls say, once they were able to walk and talk and own a pair of wellingtons, they were old enough to work on the farm!

Gilbert had a very strong work ethic which was shared by Nessa and instilled into Gwen and Gillian. One bitterly cold December day, I called at the farm - a tractor was working a field of sprouts where the new bungalow now stands. I waited at the fence as the tractor approached. Two figures, hardly recognisable with all the overcoats and hats they were wearing to ward off a cutting east wind, were working, one driving the tractor, the other cutting the sprouts. When they came close, I was surprised to see Gilbert driving the tractor (and giving instructions) and Nessa cutting the sprouts! They were well matched.

Over the years, many students got their first taste of work helping with harvesting, all of whom stayed the course, two of whom are now elders in Groomsport.

Gilbert was very supportive of Gwen and Gillian through university and in their careers. He was liable to do things on the spur of the moment. Once, when Gillian was performing at a concert in Athens, he decided to go and listen to her concert. Gilbert headed off to the airport, only for him to ring Nessa to tell her he had forgotten his passport and wanting her to meet him somewhere to hand it over. Nessa didn't know where to meet him, so Gilbert arrived home, got the passport and made the flight.

Some of the highlights of church life were barn dances - one in their new cold store - and barbecues.



Gilbert was always ready to help in practical ways, whether in fundraising or the annual clear-up in the church grounds, where Gilbert in his boiler suit with landrover and trailer was ever-present.

Gilbert had a reputation for cutting things fine getting to church on Sunday morning – thus the late Arthur Watterson’s comment, ‘Here comes Gilbert, we can close the doors now.’

The congregation recognised his love for Groomsport congregation and the centrality of faith in his life when he was elected to the eldership and ordained on the 9th May 1971. He was assigned a district and kept in contact with members of the congregation. He had a concern for people. One member of his district was well into her nineties and had memory problems. The front door was not locked and Gilbert let himself in and asked the lady if she knew who he was. “No”, she replied, “but I know one thing – you need your hair cut.”

One of the important aspects of eldership is sharing in decision making and giving wise advice. Gilbert was thoughtful, intelligent and insightful. What he said was always worth listening to in Session. He gave his honest opinion and was undoubtedly straight talking. There were no back doors in him, but he accepted if others didn’t always agree and was prepared to change his mind if what he said proved wrong. I, and I am sure David Irwin and Paul Dalzell, valued his open, carefully thought through advice and the friendship on which it was based.

Gilbert loved to travel. The family visited all six continents. Some of the highlights were travelling by Concorde to New York and going to South America on a farm visit. One Christmas, there was a special treasure hunt in which Gwen and Gillian had to go into the fields to get the vegetables for the Christmas lunch, where they would find clues for the treasure hunt. The girls weren’t particularly interested, but it was suggested it was worth their while going. “If they don’t go”, declared Gilbert, “they won’t get the prize.” They went. The prize was a Christmas/New year Caribbean cruise for the family.

After some health issues, Gilbert sold the farm in 2005 and retired, building a new home for himself and Nessa, the garden of which tells of his imagination and landscaping skill. Gilbert continued to take land at Orlock to grow barley and work as hard as ever.

There were three interlocking and almost inseparable aspects to Gilbert’s life - family, farm and faith represented in the church. To each of those, he committed himself fully. In St Matthew’s Gospel, as Jesus ministry drew to a close, he told a parable that perfectly illustrates Gilbert’s attitude to life. Three servants were called by their master who was going on a long journey and given varying amounts of money - one was given five thousand gold coins, one two thousand coins and one one thousand coins. The man left on his journey; two of the servants worked with what they had been given and one fearful and lazy servant buried what he had been given in the ground. Gilbert couldn’t understand that servant, his attitude was to always work with what you have been given. There is nothing you can’t achieve with hard work. Instinctively he sided with the servants who invested wisely and who heard Jesus commendation – “well done good and faithful servant.” There is no better or more fitting epitaph for Gilbert.



The International Meeting Point is funded by the Presbyterian Church and reaches out to asylum seekers and refugees in the City of Belfast. The IMP offers a wide variety of help and services to those who come through its doors: serving food and drinks in the café, offering legal advice, running English classes, taking people shopping, helping the unemployed find jobs and leading Bible studies. The need for help has increased greatly during the coronavirus pandemic and the leaders at IMP are struggling to provide care to some desperate and often traumatised people. Groomsport Presbyterian Church has long supported the IMP in a variety of ways and delivered a further supply of bicycles in December.

In a letter from the IMP their director, Keith Preston, said ‘We cannot express in words our deepest thanks for the bikes that you brought down. We have been able to bless many through your generosity’.



Recently, the Mission Committee heard from their deputy director, Mr Henry Coulter, via Zoom. He gave an update of their work on the Lisburn Road. We were moved by some of the distressing stories recounted by the asylum seekers but were equally impressed by the continuing dedication of the IMP team to continue their support despite the current difficult circumstances. In response the committee has provided £500 from our mission fund to support the immediate need at IMP.



The mission committee was also keen to provide some practical support. When asked what would be particularly useful, Henry advised that there was a need for men’s toiletries. Once again our congregation has responded promptly and a large supply of toiletries was left down to our church hall on Saturday 27th March. Thank you again for your kindness and generosity. Please keep the work of the International Meeting Point in your prayers.

Dr Michael Steele (Chair, GPC Mission Committee).



133a Lisburn Road
Belfast
BT9 7AG
21/12/2020

A project of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Dear friends in Groomsport Presbyterian Church,
We can't express in words our deepest thanks for the fantastic bikes that you brought down to us last weekend. We have been able to bless many through your generosity. Many of the new asylum seekers have started in Belfast Metropolitan College and need bikes to get there.



This year we can't have our usual Christmas dinner on the 25th due to current restrictions. However, we are thankful that we are able to give groceries, gift vouchers and bicycles to families. This Christmas many families are really struggling and just knowing that people care, lifts their hearts. Recently we visited a family who is facing incredible difficulties. When the mother saw the food, she started to cry.



At present most of our work is on a one-to-one basis. This has allowed us to spend more time with individual families helping them fill out forms and make phone calls. Over the last few months a number of young men and women have arrived from Eritrea. They have been delighted to get a bicycle.

Thank you for all your help as we seek to share the love of Jesus in practical ways this Christmas.

With prayers and appreciation

Keith Preston
Leader of International Meeting Point





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30/03/2021
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A project of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Dear Paul,

Can you please pass on our immense appreciation for the donation of the toiletries that were delivered to us this week? The amount is absolutely incredible and we are so so thankful.

~~This will last us for some time. Thank you. The generosity of the Groomsport's congregation is a wonderful encouragement to the whole team.~~



We continue to see a lot of people coming in on Tuesdays and Thursdays for food, toiletries and bedding. These people come from 28 different countries. It is a wonderful opportunity to engage with families as they struggle to settle into life in Belfast. Being able to come alongside these people and show them the love of Jesus in practical ways is a privilege.

We are delighted that after Easter we will be able to start socially distanced Bible studies again in the centre. We hope to engage more with the large number of Eritreans that have come to Northern Ireland. We have We will continue give out food and meet people's needs on a one-to-one basis.



With appreciation

Henry Coulter

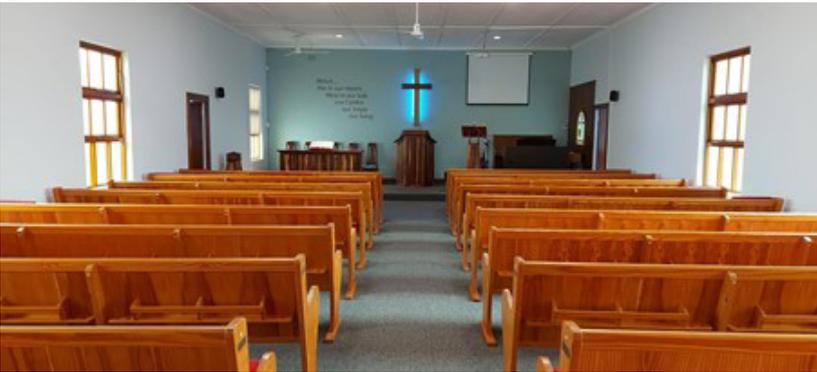
Knysna Presbyterian Church

Dr Michael Steele



In the last Eagle Wing magazine, I wrote an account of our visit last year to Knysna Presbyterian Church in South Africa. It was a privilege to meet their minister and his wife, Tim and Veronica Hawkrigde, and also join in worship with the congregation. We were made to feel very welcome. The members were keen to learn more about Groomsport Presbyterian Church. They wanted us to know how much they appreciated our friendship and fellowship in Christ despite the physical distance that separated our two congregations. At that time, none of us appreciated what the impact of the looming pandemic would have on all our lives. The coronavirus has spread across the world, respecting

no borders, causing serious illness and leaving devastation in its wake. Poor countries have suffered particular hardship where health systems were ill-prepared to cope with the additional pressures of Covid 19. Like ourselves, South Africa has experienced a surge of coronavirus cases in recent months, but thankfully, their numbers are also declining rapidly. This is partly due to the lockdown measures, although other factors may be at play. The vaccination programme is only getting started using the single dose Johnston & Johnston vaccine procured through the Covax scheme. This programme strives to supply low and middle-income countries with proven Covid-19 vaccines to ensure equitable access around the world.



Like ourselves, Knysna Presbyterian church suspended gatherings in church and Tim has been broadcasting a weekly online service. Many of us have enjoyed listening to the KPC service as well as our own each Sunday. There is currently a link to KPC on our website and their service can be accessed by clicking on this link. In many ways, this has brought our two congregations closer together and has been a rare positive outcome from the coronavirus pandemic.

Barring unforeseen setbacks, KPC is planning to re-start Sunday worship in their church on Good Friday and we will have gathered together for a communion service in our own church on Easter Sunday.

It has been a difficult year for KPC with the Malawian members being impacted particularly badly. Many of these folk are migrant workers and relied on casual labour to generate an income for their families. Most of this work dried up in the early days of the pandemic, and the Malawians were unable to access any state benefits in South Africa. KPC has been supporting these families for many months through a food voucher scheme and our church has been privileged to support this during the hard times. Thankfully some work is now available and reliance of the food voucher scheme has significantly diminished.



*Jesus...Fire in our Hearts, Wind in our Sails,
our Centre, our Hope our Song*

During lockdown, KPC has been trying to attend to some essential maintenance to their sanctuary. This started with fixing wood panelling (damaged from historic damp), but like all such repairs, more serious issues were uncovered. The wooden floor of two-thirds of the church was full of woodworm and the support beams were rotten. An entire section of the church, including the sound desk was in danger of collapsing beneath their feet. Thankfully this has now been repaired with fill and reinforced concrete, ensuring that it is now safe for members to return to worship. Other repairs and decoration have been undertaken, which will ensure that the church is now in good order for the years to come. Tim has kindly sent some up to date photographs which we have included with this article. As he said in his email, 'God has been good. Donations from our members and friends fully covered the extra costs. The campus is now looking great. Thank you for your prayers and support.



Together is a wonderful place to be...





GAZALIGHTHOUSE

Regenerating Soil And Soul

The beauty and bounty of God’s creation is increasingly showing signs of abuse and neglect. Mankind has been given stewardship of the earth and its resources, as image bearers of the Creator God who made all things good, and who commanded us to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. Genesis 2 gives the account of man being formed out of the ground אֲדָמָה (Adamah) and placed in the garden to cultivate בָּדָא (Bad’a) and to keep שָׁמַר (Shamar) it. These Hebrew verbs are the same words used for the primary responsibilities of the priests in the tabernacle of God. They were set apart to serve and protect, preserve and guard the sacred space. Paul uses similar vocabulary in his letter to the Ephesian church, referring to the husband nourishing and cherishing his wife, serving and protecting her, just as Christ does the Church. Understanding this primary role is fundamental to understanding who we are and what we are called to do.

Signs of abuse and neglect abound in Gaza today. As one of the oldest cities in the world, homes and neighborhoods, schools and mosques, cities and communities, all show definite signs that the primary and fundamental role of man to serve and protect has not been followed. Water is contaminated, air is polluted, garbage and graffiti are everywhere. The ground is littered with toxic debris, and sewage flows directly into the sea. Violence characterizes the overall environment, the young and the poor being the most vulnerable to trauma and neglect. Overcrowded camps, now housing third and fourth generation refugees, continue to grow in numbers with no space or room to expand. The garden has been spoiled and the Creation tragically abused.



BLESSED ARE THE
REFUSE COLLECTORS

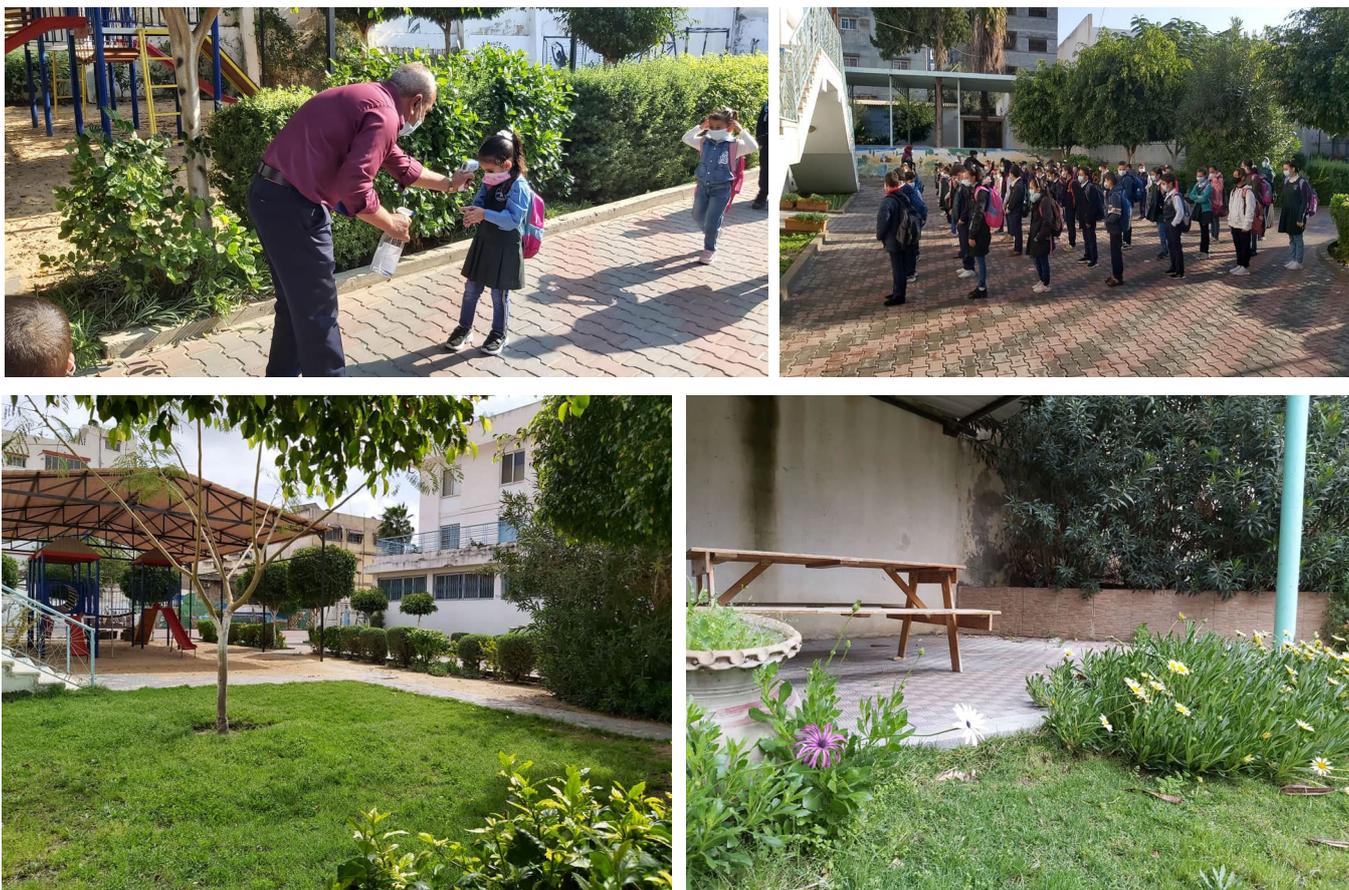


FOR THEY WILL SEE
GOD DESPITE THE
MOUNTAINS OF WASTE

This Is Gaza.

At the Lighthouse School we've understood our vision and purpose in the context of Genesis 1 and 2. It may sound crazy, but we see the space we inhabit in the center of Gaza City as (a type of) the Garden of Eden. Reclaiming lost territory and regenerating soil and soul is our responsibility. The primary role in which each staff member functions, whatever their position may be, is to serve and protect. The students are welcomed into a place of beauty and bounty, ordered around a structured system that helps to insure a healthy environment where they can learn and grow.

The children are reminded often at the Lighthouse School that they are 1.) loved, 2.) safe, and 3.) free. All three are core values, understood in the context of Genesis 1-2 and the Creation story where Adam and Eve enjoyed freedom, safety and security in a beautifully structured garden and in personal relationship with a loving God. These core values may be in short supply in the rest of Gaza, but they are growing in abundance at the Lighthouse School.



Acts of kindness effect the human heart much like organic material effects the soil. Jesus gave multiple reasons in His Parable of the Sower for unbelief and unproductive lives and highlighted the importance of the "soil." Last month the staff at the Lighthouse School, everyone from teachers to janitors, received an unexpected bonus with their salary. \$100 was given as a gift to each staff member.

It would take another couple of pages to describe the economic difficulties and challenges in Gaza and the daily financial struggles families face, even those with dependable work. Suffice it to say every dollar, or every shekel, is needed. Lighthouse staff have been paid in dollars since the school opened in 2005, and the exchange rate that first month was NIS (New Israeli Shekel) 4.50 to \$1.00. Today the exchange rate is NIS 3.3 to \$1.00. A \$500/month salary in 2005 would yield NIS 2250/month. Today that same salary yields NIS 1650, a net loss of NIS 600 or nearly \$150/month. The \$100 extra given last month didn't make up for the net loss, but the gift was nevertheless appreciated, and as mentioned already, very much needed.

Maha, a wife and mother of three, exemplifies the divine calling in Genesis 2 to “serve and protect” in her role as a teacher. She loves Jesus and loves her students and has taught 1st grade at the Lighthouse for twelve years.

When she received her bonus last month, she decided she wanted to pass along this act of kindness to her students. As much as the extra money would have helped the family budget, she used a part of her blessing to bless others. Gifts were bought, wrapped and shared with an excited and surprised group of first graders. It wasn't a holiday, a birthday, or any special occasion, simply an act of kindness from a grateful heart. A small but significant act, the love of God expressed through a simple gift. Much like the soil in the greenhouse, over time these acts of kindness build up in the hearts of the students, like spiritually organic material that allows the seed of God's word to eventually take root and grow in the human heart.



Gaza is a difficult place to grow tomatoes. It's also a difficult place to plant the seed of the Gospel and witness significant growth and harvest. Over time, however, by preparing the soil and soul, regeneration occurs, abundance breaks forth and the beauty and bounty of God's Creation is reclaimed and restored.

Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one...for we are God's fellow workers. I CORINTHIANS 3:7-9

**BLESSED ARE THE
TEACHERS**



**FOR THEY REMAIN
STEADFAST AND
CONSTANT IN
DISTURBING TIMES**

Sunday School

Margaret McCreedy

It has been really trying not being able to meet in person and we know that both parents and children have found this second lockdown very difficult.

We have, however, continued to send out two lessons and activities per month. It has been good to hear from some children and to see pictures of the work they have been doing and also the fun they had in our short spell of snow.

As it seems we may not be meeting for a while so we will continue with our "Together at Home" Packs. We are praying that there will be a return to some sort of normality for Sunday School soon.

A big 'thank you' to all the children and to the parents also. Please keep the work of Sunday School in your prayers.

Flowers

Margaret Johnston

One day, hopefully, sooner rather than later, we will begin to use the Walter Nelson halls again. It saddens me to realise that I am no longer able to manage the second-hand books sale, which in the past has realised over £1000 for the Marie Curie fund.

Also, in the hall, the plants and flowers at the entrance have added to the welcome. Again, I am no longer able to look after them.



Remembering the sermon on 21st March, there must be several church members with talents able for one or the other of these pleasant duties.

Please ring me on 028 9146 533, if you are interested.

Bowling Club

Jean Wilson, Secretary

Our members have been missing the fellowship & craic on Wednesday nights for over a year now. I hope everyone is keeping well, staying safe and God willing we can all meet up again whenever restrictions are lifted. Members will be notified through the church announcements.

Any new members interested in joining us when we resume, just come along to Walter Nelson Hall on Wednesday evenings at 7:15 pm and you will receive a warm welcome.



Outreach

Roy McWhinney, Convenor

Until recently, we were unable to meet again as a Community of God's people however, many have still been practising great outreach.

Even though the church had been closed, we have been able, thanks to the Reverend Dalzell and his production team, to produce an excellent online service. For members of the congregation unable to access it online, 29 CD copies are distributed weekly.

The Reverend Dalzell has also been busy with his 50 weekly phone calls to the congregation. Others in the congregation too, have been phoning their District and social groups.

December started with an edition of our Eagle Wing magazine being distributed by the Elders and District representatives. Thanks goes to the contributors and Amanda McWhinney for her compiling, graphic design and editing. Also, not forgetting those who proofread, distribute and contribute to make this happen.

Foreseeing the popular Christmas Gift Service would not be able to be held as before, the Outreach Committee proposed using the Saturday prior to the service to collect donations of gifts for The Belfast Central Mission.

Dr Michael Steele liaised with the Sunday School leaders, who then arranged for the Walter Nelson Hall as the drop off point for the donations. The Outreach Committee assisted with the 'spreading the word' by mounting a banner at the Walter Nelson Hall event with the date and time. There were further announcements in church; The Spectator newspaper, Groomsport Gleanings community announcement section and social media posts such as our Facebook page along with other social media posts.

Success came (again) in the form of having two carloads of donations!

During December, the Outreach Committee proposed advent calendars for the Sunday School children. The Reverend Dalzell kindly delivered these alongside his regular Saturday delivery of the Sunday Service CD disks.

December also saw the design and distribution of nearly 800 Christmas cards to households throughout Groomsport. Our very own Maureen Irwin took the photograph on the front of the card showing the church with the Christmas tree. Inside the card was a special message of hope from the Reverend Dalzell. This was complemented with our contact details and the 2021 calendar on the rear.

Zoom 'coffee mornings' meetings have been held prior to our virtual Sunday Service when we were unable to meet; additionally, a zoom coffee evening was held during the week with time of prayer throughout winter.

The Outreach Committee had planned to distribute an Easter card throughout Groomsport, but due to Presbyterian Ireland's guidelines, we could not do so this year – but maybe next year.

However, we produced an Easter message banner that was mounted at the Walter Nelson Hall for the local community and visitors to view.

So as Jesus instructed his disciples to go out and spread his message, I wish to give my thanks to all those in the Outreach Committee and those within our congregation who have done the same.

How Are We Doing Financially?

An Update From The Treasurer

At the end of August, I sent a letter to the congregation outlining our financial position. I thought it might be worthwhile to provide a further update of the position at the end of 2020.

Back in August, our income was down about 40% from the previous year. We were running a deficit for the year of about £60,000. I asked members, if they felt able, to consider whether they might bring their contributions up-to-date. I am glad to say that my request resulted in a significant upsurge in contributions.

By the end of the year, our FWO contributions had fallen by only about 5% from the previous year, our total income by about 7%. The result was that, although we had been looking at a deficit in excess of £60,000, actually it turned out to be only about half of that (£31,000). It was agreed, that this deficit would be made up (along with an injection of £20,000 for the Mission Fund), by a transfer from the McCaw Trust, which was effected in February.

Bearing in mind the trauma that was 2020 and the fact that we could only attend services for a brief period, I think this was a great result. Many organisations of which I am aware have struggled just to survive in these crazy times. We continued to donate to charities in a much worse position than us, from Bangor to places as far-a-field as Malawi and South Africa. I believe that it is right that we are a giving community of God's people as a comparatively wealthy church.

In my August letter, I also commended contributing by monthly standing order as safer and more convenient. I'm grateful that our numbers contributing in this way have more than doubled during the year. If you would like to consider paying in by monthly standing order, please contact me and I can give you the simple mandate form.

Perhaps, I could give a gentle reminder to those contributing in this way that it is easy, if you so wish, to increase your monthly payment by getting in touch with your bank. Also, if you would like to apportion some of your monthly contribution to the Mission or Property Funds, just let me know the breakdown and we can easily make that alteration.



As I'm sure you will appreciate, it has not been an easy time to take over as your Treasurer. However, I would like to close by first thanking all those who help out in managing our finances. I would also like to say how much I have appreciated all the little messages of support that people have sent me with their contributions over the last few months. It's been good to have the opportunity to communicate with so many generous folks, many of whom I didn't know.

Chris Thompson

The Story Behind The Song

Betty Jeeves

In The Garden by Charles Austen Miles 1868 – 1946

Charles was born on 7th January 1868 in Lakehurst, New Jersey. He was a devoted Christian who read his Bible and lived by it. He attended college and studied to be a pharmacist, which he worked at for several years. He also served as editor and manager at Hall-Mack publishers for 37 years. His hobby was photography and he would read his Bible in the darkroom while waiting for his photos to develop.

One day he was reading John Chapter 20 and verse 14 really hit him; he thought, 'How would I feel seeing the empty tomb and how would Mary have felt?' He wrote the hymn 'In The Garden' and it was published in 1912. In his lifetime, he wrote 398 songs. He died on 10th March 1946 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, aged 78. According to his great-granddaughter, Charles wrote this hymn in a cold, dreary, and leaky basement in Pitman, New Jersey. The basement didn't even have a window, let alone a view of a garden.



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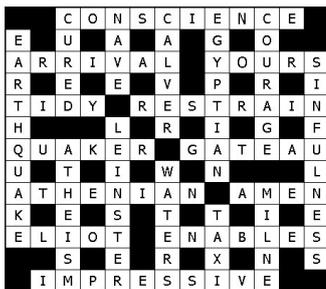
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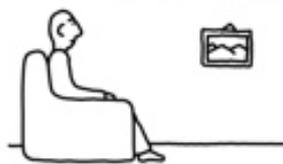
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Sincere thanks to all who support us!

2017

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

BLESSED ARE THE
CORNER SHOPKEEPERS



FOR THEY ARE THE
PURVEYORS OF SCARCE
THINGS

cartoons from CartoonChurch.com

Just For Fun

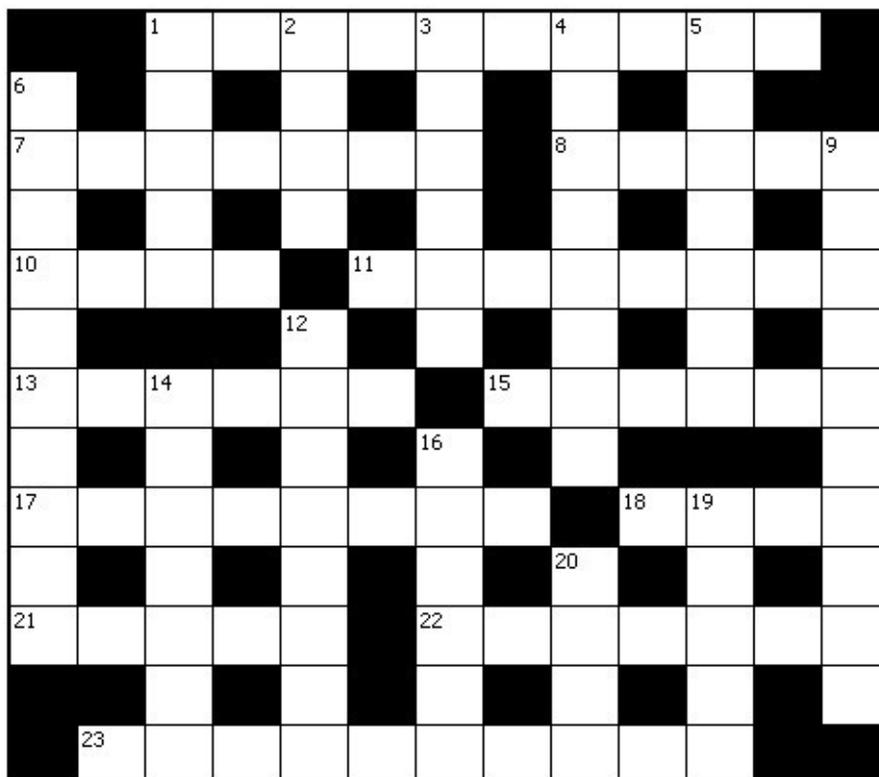
Crossword clues

Across

- 1 Sense of right and wrong (1 Corinthians 8:7) (10)
- 7 Coming (John 11:17) (7)
- 8 'All I have is — , and all you have is mine' (John 17:10) (5)
- 10 Smarten (Acts 9:34) (4)
- 11 Hold back (Job 9:13) (8)
- 13 Member of the Society of Friends (6)
- 15 At ague (anag.) (6)
- 17 Citizen of the Greek capital (8)
- 18 So be it (Galatians 6:18) (4)
- 21 Twentieth-century poet and dramatist who wrote Murder in the Cathedral, T.S. — (5)
- 22 Empowers (Philippians 3:21) (7)
- 23 Imposing (1 Samuel 9:2) (10)

Down

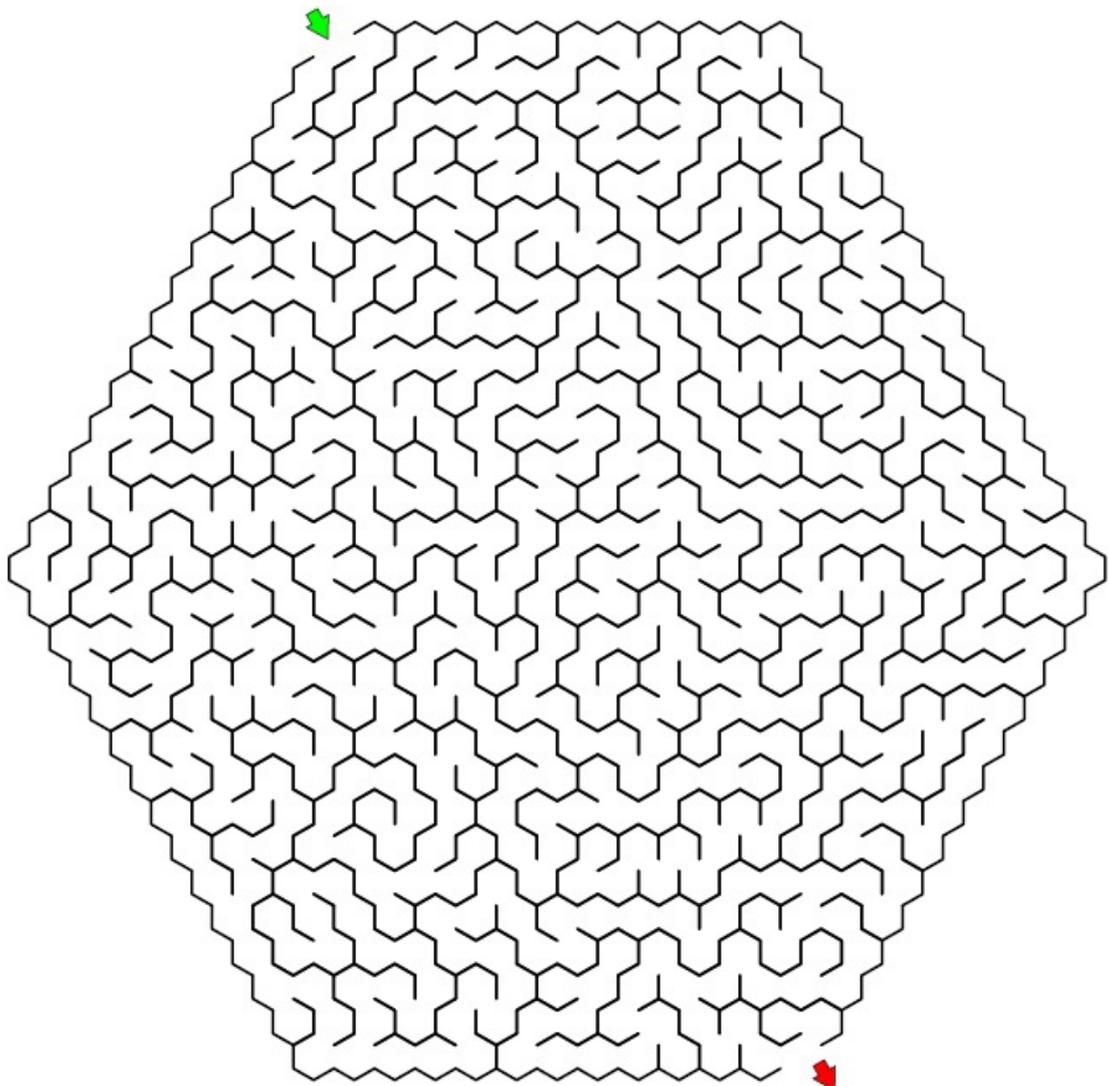
- 1 Healed (Luke 7:21) (5)
- 2 Central space in a church (4)
- 3 Co-founder of Spring Harvest and General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance 1983–97, Clive — (6)
- 4 Moses killed one when he saw him beating a Hebrew labourer (Exodus 2:12) (8)
- 5 Bravery (Acts 4:13) (7)
- 6 It interrupted Paul and Silas singing hymns in a Philippian jail (Acts 16:26) (10)
- 9 Transgression (Psalm 36:1) (10)
- 12 Irish province in which Dublin is situated (8)
- 14 Same hit (anag.) (7)
- 16 'The Spirit of God was hovering over the — ' (Genesis 1:2) (6)
- 19 Author of the immortal stories of Winnie the Pooh, A.A. — (5)
- 20 Cab (4)



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



Answers on page 24 & 25
No Cheating!



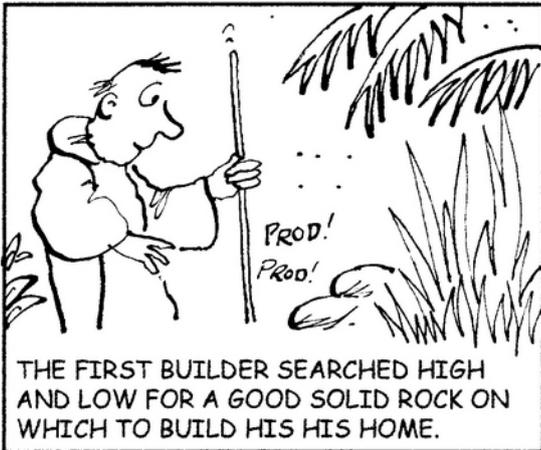
The
Tale of the
**TWO
BUILDERS**



JESUS OFTEN TOLD
STORIES WITH
HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONE WAS ABOUT TWO MEN WHO
BUILT THEIR OWN HOUSES

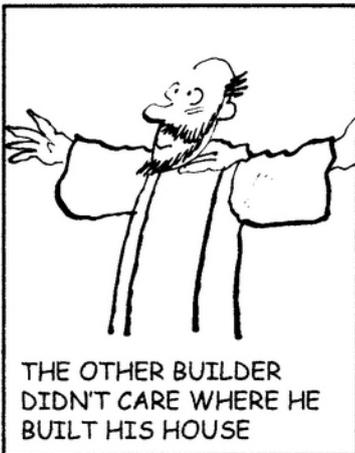


THE FIRST BUILDER SEARCHED HIGH
AND LOW FOR A GOOD SOLID ROCK ON
WHICH TO BUILD HIS HIS HOME.

AT LONG, LONG LAST HE
FOUND THE IDEAL SPOT.



SO HE BEGAN TO BUILD.

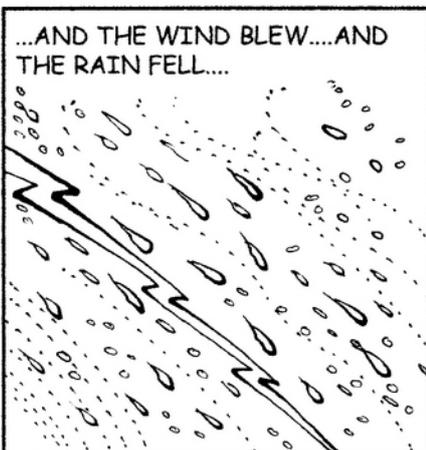


THE OTHER BUILDER
DIDN'T CARE WHERE HE
BUILT HIS HOUSE

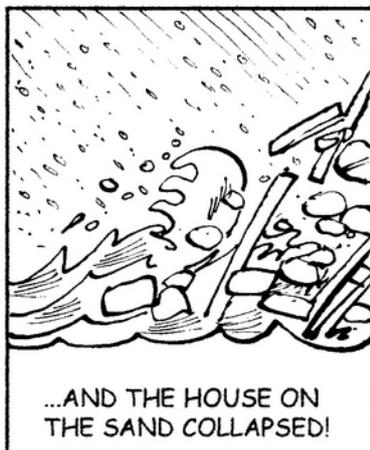
HE THOUGHT SOME NICE FLAT SAND
WOULD BE AN EASY PLACE TO BUILD.



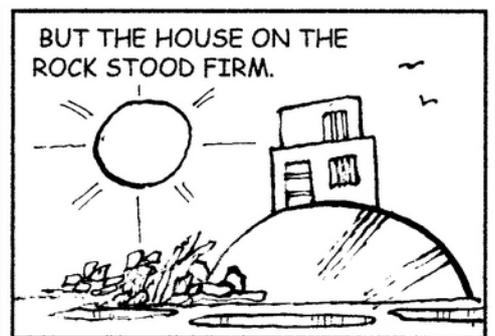
BUT ONE DAY THE
STORM CAME....



...AND THE WIND BLEW...AND
THE RAIN FELL....



...AND THE HOUSE ON
THE SAND COLLAPSED!



BUT THE HOUSE ON THE
ROCK STOOD FIRM.

JESUS EXPLAINED -
'IT'S IMPORTANT OUR LIVES HAVE
A FIRM FOUNDATION.'