

“LET HIS LIGHT SHINE”

*“The Saviour, yes
the Messiah, the
Lord has been born
today in Bethlehem.”*

Luke 2vs11



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

**Sunday 1st December – 11am Christmas Tree Service –
(gifts for the Belfast City Mission)**

**Sunday 22nd December – 11am All-age Christmas Service
6pm “Candlelit” Carol Service**

Wednesday 25th December 10.30am – Christmas Day Service

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This magazine is published to let you know what is happening in our Church. Not every member of the Church can attend on a regular basis, so it is important that those at home should be kept informed. If you have articles or news of a special anniversary or birthday, including photographs, please give them to Barbara McCartney in the office or alternatively email them to Rosemary Black (Editor) rosemaryblack@gmail.com

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Reflections from the manse.



Growing up my favourite time of the year was always Christmas, it was a time when we would come together as a family. I remember my grandmother coming down to stay overnight on Christmas Eve to help my mum prepare and cook the turkey and ham. My grandfather would then arrive on Christmas day, weather permitting, on his Vespa and hopefully if mum was not watching he would take the grandchildren up and down the street on it. We would all sit gathered around the Christmas tree opening our presents and eating Toblerone. Later in the day my other grandparents would arrive and we would talk and listen to festive carols on the record player.

In the run-up to Christmas I would constantly pester my mum and dad about when we could put up the tree. They would usually give in about 2 weeks before Christmas. As a family we would all have fun detangling the lights, lifting out the baubles and decorating the tree, then placing it in the front window so that as we came home the tree would be shining out for all to see.

For me the tree has always represented the meaning of Christmas. The angel on the top reminds us of the angel Gabriel who told Mary and Joseph what was going to happen. The gifts are a reminder of God's gift, Jesus, how he was given freely to be our Saviour. The lights remind all of us of how Jesus is called the Light of the world. Just as I would turn into our street as a child and see the tree lights guiding me home, how true it is now – that Jesus is the Light who guides us all. And in the same way on Christmas day as a family we would gather around the tree, how God gathers us into His family through Jesus. Christmas is still my favourite time of the year because of what the tree reminds me of. I pray that as you see various trees this year or as you put up and decorate your own tree, you too would be reminded of these truths.

From the manse family – myself, Ann-Marie, Anna and Luke – We wish each one of you - Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May you know God's blessing.

Jeff

Isaiah 9v 6 (New Living Translation) “For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

CHURCH MEMBER RECORDS September 2019 - November 2019

COMMUNICANTS BY TRANSFER

Amy Mills David Mills

NEW COMMUNICANTS BY PROFESSION OF FAITH

Thomas Gibson William Orr

BAPTISM

15th September 2019 - Maisy Eliza McClimond, daughter of David and Sara

DEATHS

4th October 2019 - Mr Samuel Alexander Steel

MARRIAGE

26th August 2019 – Adam Robert Nugent and Rachel Cairns

Tribute to Alex Steel - A life serving God

Samuel Alexander Steel (Alex) was born on the 16th October 1943 in Glasgow. Following the birth of his sister Jean and brother Gordon, the family moved to Millerston where Alex lived until moving to Northern Ireland to marry Joan.

Growing up Alex attended Millerston United Free Church. In May 1962 at the age of 18, he was ordained as a Deacon. In Millerston Church Alex had put his trust in God and he very much wanted to live his life for God and serve Him. But as he would often tell us he didn't want to draw attention to himself, it was all about doing God's work quietly. He lived very much by this verse - Galatians 6:14 "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Alex and Joan settled in Great Victoria Street Presbyterian where in 1972 Alex was ordained and installed as an elder. In his role as an elder Alex served as Property Convener, overseeing the refurbishment of Great Victoria Street when they turned the pews and pulpit through 90 degrees – a vision for church architecture ahead of its time. Alex and Joan were blessed with a daughter Jacquelyn, son-in-law Paul and grandchildren Calum and Imogen – all of whom Alex held in his heart with great pride.

When Alex and Joan moved to Newtownards they settled in Streatan and on 28th September 2003 Alex was installed as elder. Alex served faithfully as an elder, also taking on other roles including serving as Church Secretary, Clerk of Session, editor of the church magazine and website, leader of a small group and a member of the choir.

After a short illness in recent months Alex was called home to be with his Lord on Friday 4th October 2019. As his church family we know that Alex's Scottish heritage and resilience as well as his strong faith remained solid throughout his life. As his minister I am thankful to have known Alex – and to have seen the many people that he guided, encouraged and supported.

Jeff

RECENT EVENTS IN STREAN



David and Sara McClimond with their daughter of Maisy Eliza at her baptism on 15th September.



Rachel Cairns one of our GB officers married Adam Robert Nugent on 26th August 2016. GB girls formed a guard of honour for Rachel and Adam.



The Rev Jeff Mc Watters conducted a Wedding blessing for Betty Dempster's daughter and son-in-law, and Diana and Terry Day, on Sunday 20th October in Strean - the couple were married 3 months ago in England. Diane and Terry are at the far right of the photo.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

On Sunday 10th November the Crafts class displayed an example of their creative skills, through this display on the communion table. Over many months the poppies were crocheted and then arranged on the cross and around two wreaths, as a symbol of remembrance.



CHRISTMAS AT STREAN

When we think about Christmas at Strean there are a number of images that come to mind.

Bearing Gifts

Our Christmas Tree service on the first Sunday in December. At this, the toys and gifts that our children and families donate are brought forward and go to Belfast City Mission – from there they are distributed to children and families in need, who would otherwise struggle to provide a present on Christmas morning. This connection has been in place over 50 years. And over the last 10 years or so we have participated in the Blythwood Shoebox Appeal – sending nearly 1,000 shoeboxes over this timescale to children and adults in Eastern Europe. Giving gifts reminds us of the Wise Men, who brought gifts from afar to mark the Christ child's coming.



Bringing light

Our Christmas tree is selected and collected each year by Ross Workman from Jim Noble on the Donaghadee Road. On asking a number of our longer established members the conclusion is that this tradition – of putting up a large Christmas tree in our church sanctuary each December – started in the early to mid-1960s. The tradition of the Christmas tree originated in Germany in the 16th Century, when trees were brought into homes to be decorated. The Christmas tree then became popular in England in 1841 when Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, brought a Christmas tree over from Germany and put it in Windsor Castle. In Strean the tree is put up and decorated each year by our BB and GB officers and young people. The lights and decorations serve to symbolise Christ's light in the world, and the evergreen foliage shows everlasting life.



The Story of Christmas

Again traditionally in Strean, like many other churches, we celebrate the story of Christmas on the Sunday before Christmas Day. Known as a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, the use of song and Bible readings serves to tell us the story of Christ coming to earth – from the proclamation of the angel, through to the journey to Bethlehem, the birth of Christ,

the arrival of the wise men, the shepherds in the fields - a story of great rejoicing.

Up until very recent years two planks of wood were placed in the middle of the church, candles placed on top and lit. With the coming of 'health & safety', and recognising the potential fire hazard, our lighting arrangement has changed – with candles housed within lanterns and fairy lights providing the sparkle and effect. And the symbol – of Christ being the Light of the World – remains.

The Meaning of Christmas

For many of us looking back at Christmas past reminds us of a long stocking left at the end of the bed. Of the delight of finding an apple and an orange and hopefully some money in this the next morning. As we step through the decades, others remember flicking through the catalogue pages, in an era before the internet. Others remember their Mother or Father visiting a local store in the run-up to Christmas – putting an amount of money on a particular toy or bicycle each week – in order to secure it for the big day. With this in mind we asked our some of our young people – in Sunday School and Youth Fellowship – what Christmas means to them. This is what they said:



Youth Fellowship meets from 7 – 8.30pm on alternate Sundays in the Welcome Area from 7 – 8.30pm. All welcome from Year 8 upwards – for fun and games, Bible study and discussion. YF are currently doing Youth Alpha.

REFLECTIONS OF MY TRIP TO UGANDA SEPTEMBER 2019

What prompted you to be interested in going on a mission trip with Abaana?

I knew this was something I wanted to do from a young age, when I was in primary 7, I went along to a mission meeting in Streaton and instantly I knew God had plans for me. Growing up I always wanted to be a missionary but I never knew what that truly looked like for me.

When a married couple from Thriving Life Church (TLC) announced that they were going over to Uganda in 2019, and they were looking for a team to join them, I realised I was ready to take the step. The decision to go to Uganda was because that is where Abaana work from and TLC had fundraised a year or two prior to the trip, to build a primary school in a village called Gulu.



What were the requirements placed on you to be part of the team?

There was a financial commitment involved. I had to raise £1,700, a substantial amount of this was raised through the generosity of the people in Streaton. It was also important to be aware of how challenging and intense the trip would be at times.

What were the main objectives once you arrived in Uganda? .

When we arrived we spent our first week in Kampala, the capital city and we stayed in the Abaana guest house. In our first week we spent time with the street children. These are children who live on the streets and have absolutely nothing. They have either left home or their parents have left them. We got to give them food and teach them some children's songs in English and they absolutely loved it. Then towards the end of the first week we went to the *New Life Homes* which is a place where some street children get to go and live to have a better chance at life. People sponsor these children and that money gets to put them through school

and it also pays for their basic needs. The second week we travelled 6 hours North to Gulu where we stayed in a hotel and spent each day at the Primary school that was built by TLC. This was a very different experience to Kampala as the children were a little scared of us and we were used to being greeted by children running towards us, where as these children were almost running away, although by the end of the week they were very upset to see us leave. We got to play games and teach them some English which was a great experience and took everybody out of their comfort zones.



What impact has the trip had on you and what impact did the work have on the community you were placed in?

This trip has completely changed my life. I have seen things that completely broke me but made me realise how privileged and blessed I am. The community were so grateful and said we had a huge impact on them. They learnt new things and they got to experience life in a completely different way. Some of the new life homes boys cried when we left and that just speaks for itself.

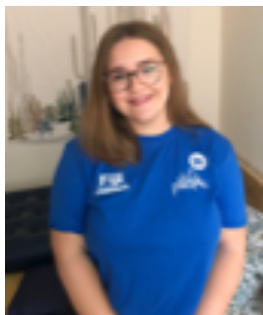


Is there any advice that you would give to someone who was considering doing something similar?

I would tell absolutely everybody to do it if they get the chance to!!! Advice I would give to anybody going to do something similar would be to just go and enjoy it. Make the most of it. Be prepared for some of the hardest goodbyes you will ever have to say. And yes, I would definitely do it again.

Heather Orr

FUTURE MISSION TRIPS PLANNED BY TWO OF YOUNG PEOPLE



I am currently studying English at Dundee University but in May - June 2020 I'm heading to Fiji to volunteer for a month. With the charity Think Pacific I will be working with

children and young adults to increase awareness of mental health and diet through group work and after school activities.

This humanitarian project works hand in hand with the Fijian government. I will be learning of the Fijian culture through living with a Fijian family; living in a tin house, with one bedroom. After teaching in the community from 9-4.30 I will return home to my family - playing with the children, helping the mother to cook dinner and learning more about their culture through going to church with them every Sunday.

As part of this project, I am raising money for the trip that will go towards the families, resources and the communities needs.

I am running a coffee morning and car wash on Thursday 2nd of January 2020 from 10am-12.30pm and would be grateful of your support.

Kathryn Boyle



I go to Urban Saints youth club (previously known as Crusaders) held in Greenwell Street Presbyterian.

Urban Saints run a number of overseas trips

each year and this year 6 of our group decided to take part in the ReBuild South Africa project from 28th July - 7th August 2020. ReBuild South Africa is designed to help some of the poorest families in a township near Johannesburg and the main project is to build a simple structure house for a family.

We will also be increasing our knowledge about apartheid and the divide this has caused – trying to understand God's heart for justice and showing his love through our work.

I am really looking forward to getting a better understanding of another culture, working as part of a team to achieve the end result and seeing the amazing sights of Johannesburg.

I would really appreciate your support in prayer that as a team we can raise the money needed for the project, that our trip will be safe and that we will be able to share God's love with the people we meet.

Maddie Bell

HOW YOU CAN HELP TO SUPPORT THE GIRLS:

Thursday 2nd Jan 2020 - 10am-12.30pm - Coffee Morning & Car Wash - Kathryn

Saturday 15th Feb 2020 - 10am-12noon - Coffee morning - Maddie



Remember to pray for Kathryn and Maddie, as they continue with the plans for these trips.



Discovery Sunday School



Discovery Sunday School meets every Sunday during the church service, for our children and young people from preschool age up to Year 10.

They spend time listening to stories, learning memory verses, playing games, completing crafts and discussing God's word with their teachers. We have around 30 children attending and it is always a noisy, busy and fun-filled morning!



Discovery Sunday School supports the PCI Youth and Children's Project each year.

This year the project is called 'Creceer Juntos' (meaning 'growing together') and it aims to help support discipleship among children, young people and their families through the work guided by Derek and Jane French (PCI global mission workers) in the evangelical church of Spain.



In Sunday School the children will think about things that grow and how we can grow as Jesus' followers. Funds raised through the project will be used for the translation and publication of good Christian Bible teaching resources, help with family devotions, Sunday School and youth group material, individual devotionals for teens and parenting books.

Discovery Sunday School will be holding a coffee morning on Saturday 18th January 2020, with all proceeds going towards the Creceer Juntos project and it would be lovely to see you all there.

Joanne Harris

STEPHEN WILSON

Cycle CR2 from Whitehaven to Newcastle - 21-23 September 2019



What is it and why do it?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies."*

C2C is one of the UK's best known cycle routes. It's 145 miles with 4,000 metres of ups and downs and a popular challenge for cyclists. I have long wanted to follow the route and decided this was the year to do it. I used the opportunity to support Marie Curie. Many thanks to everyone who helped raise £1,000.

How long did it take?

Many cycle the route in two days or even a single day. They are a lot fitter than I am. My plan was to fly to Newcastle, catch a train to Whitehaven, renting a bicycle, get luggage panniers packed and be ready to go Saturday morning. My Saturday target was cycling 55 miles across the Lake District to Penrith. Sunday's target was 45 miles from Penrith over the highest point to the Cross Keys Inn just outside Stanhope. Monday was 46 miles, a stiff climb out Stanhope and a final push to drop the bike off at the Rock of Gibraltar Inn, Tynemouth.

How did it go?

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."



Plenty of long steep hills! The route started at a slipway in Whitehaven where I dipped my back wheel in the Irish sea. I was soon cycling on old railway lines (converted to cycle paths) towards the marquee climb of the Lake District, Whinlatter Pass. I quickly learned that this was



not going to be easy and a bit like life there is always another hill to climb! Saturday was fantastic sunshine and a headwind was like cycling towards a hair dryer. At Penrith, after a long day going up hills, there was a climb up several flights of stairs to my teeny room on the top floor of the B&B. Sunday was wet and cold, I now

know about rain like stair-rods. I was frozen climbing Hartside Pass, the longest climb, and no café at top, it burned down last year. In the afternoon the rain continued. I crossed the highest point, 620m, just outside Nenthead. It is open moorland as far as you can see and low flying grouse are a hazard. When the occasional car passed it was quite disheartening to watch it zig zag upwards, past snow poles lining the road, towards the horizon. I was so glad to discover my room for the night in Cross Keys, had a bath and it served fantastic roast dinner!



The last day, Monday, started with the very steep Crawleyside Bank. I passed 2 defibrillators but thankfully didn't need them! The weather was good for cycling and I really enjoyed a downhill stretch on the Waskerly way before following the river Tyne to the finish in Tynemouth. Sadly there is no slipway at Tynemouth so dipping the front wheel in the North Sea was not possible.

What were the highlights?

Reaching the highest point and knowing the worst section was over.

Thank you again to supporters who together gave £1000 for Marie Curie.



We have had a brilliant start to our season making mana jars, hearing about the work Ethel Murdoch and the BB teams are doing in Uganda and last month we had the ladies from A Wee Bird Sings sharing their stories, songs and artwork.

It's so encouraging to see ladies of all ages come together to share in fellowship and friendship. We have some fantastic nights to come and it would be lovely to see more ladies coming along

9th January Soul Restoration - Daphne Caldwell

6th February The Restoring Power of the Gospel - Rev William Harkness

5th March The Restoring Touch of Jesus - Diane McCracken

2nd April Real Restoration - Vees Bees

NEWS FROM CHURCH GROUPS

“STREAN BB BOYS ARE ARDS BATTALION CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONS”



On a very wet Saturday at the end of September, our BB entered 8 boys in the Annual Ards Battalion Cross Country championships which were held this year in the grounds of Movilla Abbey church because the usual Comber venue was waterlogged. Despite the conditions, 90 boys took part. The event comprised a series of age-specific individual races over different distances, with the most coveted prize being the Best Team Trophy. Our boys, running in their distinctive

yellow football tops, were determined to go one place better this time.

In the Anchor Boys race for P3 & P4 boys, Daniel Finlay gained a fantastic 1st place. In the Junior Section race, in which 23 boys took part, we had 3 runners. Ben Scandrett 2nd, Matthew Wilson 4th and Thomas Finlay 5th.

In the Company Section race for boys in school Years 8 to 10, we again had 3 runners out of a field of 20 boys. Harry Scandrett gained 1st place, Matthew Harris 3rd place, and Josh Finlay 5th place. In the final race, for Senior boys, Conor Finlay (not to be outdone by his three younger brothers) came in an excellent 2nd place.

As the individual prizes were awarded for the top 3 finishers for each race, it was clear that our yellow tops were to the fore. And when 1st Comber were announced as the runners up for the team prize, it was clear that our boys had done it. They had kept their focus on the goal and achieved top prize! The photograph shows our winning team with their various medals and trophies on the day. Well done boys!!

“SUCCESSION PLANNING”

By the time you are reading this article, our BB Enrolment Service will have taken place. Ten BB officers will have been enrolled and, I am delighted to say, five of the ten were all Seniors in our BB only a few years ago. All five young men came right through the ranks of 6th Ards from Anchor Boys, and all five achieved the



Queen's Badge. They were part of an exceptional group of boys who represented our BB in various Battalion competitions and became “Ardnabannon veterans” – a reference to our great outdoor pursuits weekends. So who are these five? Lieut **Paul Moore** is now into his third year of service in our Anchor Boys alongside Janet Johnston, Lieuts **Matthew Dickson** and **Curt Douglas** are well established as Junior Section leaders alongside Julie Wolff, and Warrant

Officers **Aaron Bailie** and **Christiaan Fegan** have just come into Company Section with Carl Harris and myself. This is indeed an answer to prayer, and we want to support these young men as they now develop as Christian leaders in BB.

Interestingly the BB NI District President David Blevins has just launched his theme for this session and titled it “Following On”. It is aimed at encouraging as many of our talented senior boys and Queen’s Men into adult leadership within BB, and with prompting older leaders to “pass on the baton” to the next generation. Within our own company, hopefully that process has now begun? Let’s pray for these five young men in their service in BB.

Stephen Boyle BB Captain

FOOTBALL & FELLOWSHIP

Strean Football & Fellowship group is now in it’s 12th year. This organisation has reached out to the local community, providing a platform for young men to get a flavour of Church life. It has been an absolute pleasure for me to be a part of the leadership team over the years, to see young men grow and mature. Many prayers have been answered and epilogues shared.



We are blessed to have great facilities with the welcome area proving an excellent space for the guys to relax after football and enjoy tea/juice and fellowship.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY – On 29th March 2020 at 4pm we have planned to hold an informal service in the Welcome area.



The guest speaker will be former professional footballer Stuart Elliott, from One Goal Ministries. Stuart played for Glentoran, Motherwell and Hull City and has 39 Northern Ireland caps. He will be giving his testimony and sharing what it was like to be a Christian and a professional footballer. This service is for everyone so invite your friends along. Please continue to pray for our group. Our Bible verse is John 3:16.

John Scott

2020 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SUNDAY EVENTS & SERVICES

5th Jan - Communion Service
19th Jan - PW Soup Lunch (after the service)
23rd Feb - P.W. Service
29th Mar - Communion Service
29th Mar - Football & Fellowship
Service at 4pm
"If anyone needs a lift to any service or church events, please speak to your elder or contact the church office."

SATURDAY COFFEE MORNINGS 10:00am - 12:00 noon

21st Dec - Youth Fellowship
4th Jan - Homestart
18th Jan - SS PCI Youth & Children's Project
1st Feb - The Link
8th Feb - G.B. Breakfast 8am - 11am
15th Feb - Maddie Bell
7th Mar - Freda Algie Memorial Fund
21st Mar - Hope House



CHRISTMAS SALE

**SATURDAY 7th DECEMBER 2019
10 AM - 12 NOON**



Stalls will include:

- **Crafts - Hand created gifts**
- **Cakes & Traybakes; Jams & Preserves**
- **Food Hampers & Food /Gift Sets**
- **Books; Toiletries;**
- **Bric-a-brac; Stone Art**
- **Elizabeth Willow Creative**
(Wood burning craft & Christmas decorations)
- **The Body Shop**
- **Neal's Yard**
- **Tropicskincare**
- **Tea/Coffee/scones/Traybakes**



**Admission: Adults £1
Children free**

Food hampers can be pre-ordered contact the church office for details.