

Magheramason Presbyterian Church Newsletter December 2015



The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

The popular Christmas song by Andy Williams suggests that Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. In this song he tells us of “Kids jingle belling and everyone telling you ‘Be of good cheer’, it's the happiest season of all!” Is this so?

The reality for many is that Christmas is a busy, stressful time that can lead to nothing but a sore head and an empty pocket! There are an endless number of ‘things to do’. The Christmas tree must be brought down from the attic to be erected, cards need to be sent, shopping in busy town centres must to be faced in pursuit of perfect presents. Then there is the office party, cooking the Christmas turkey, meeting up with friends and family the list goes on.....! Leaving numerous people far from ‘full of good cheer’. Many are lonely and sad, perhaps due to the loss of a loved one through the year or because they feel they just cannot cope with all the pressures the world seeks to impose at this season.

Christmas Worship

Sunday 20 December 2015

11.30 a.m.: Christmas Family Service. Boys and Girls from Sunday School will be taking part in this special Christmas Service

6.30 p.m.: Candlelight' Community Carol Service. Special praise by the Choir and we will also be joined by Bready Jubilee Primary School choir. Supper after the service.

Friday 25 December 2015

10.30 a.m. : Christmas Day Service - Children are welcome to bring along toys/gifts received as we celebrate the Birth of Christ together.

Think of “Black Friday”, estimates predict sales of over 1 Billion pounds. Last year there were scenes of shoppers fighting over large screen TVs and other electrical items depicting consumerism gone mad in the run up to “The Big Day.” With the internet people are free to shop on line 24/7. Shops are open 7 days a week and it is all in the name of “Christmas.” What is it all about? The nation pauses for one day on the 25th December and then its all go go go again for many the very next day as “The Sales” begin!

With high expectations from retail employers many are having to work longer hours, leaving less time to spend with the family. For those looking for the latest deals, many will spend, spend, spend and fall into debilitating debt that will take years to pay off. Some become disillusioned even feel suicidal seeing no way out. Is this really what Christmas is all about?

Just over 2,000 years ago on the First Christmas, there was a very different scene. The first news of the birth of a Saviour came to shepherds on a hillside outside the little town of Bethlehem. In HIS birth came a ray of light and the hope to all the nations. Another Christmas song states “O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie, above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by, yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting Light, the hopes and fears of all the years, are met in thee tonight!”

“Behold I bring you GOOD tidings of GREAT joy which shall be to ALL people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord”. Skies were filled with the heavenly host as they sang the majestic praise; “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” The shepherds’ response? They hurried down to Bethlehem, where they bowed down and worshipped the baby Jesus, this is “God come in the flesh!” When these men leave the stable they are changed. They go glorifying and praising God, sharing the good news of the Saviour’s birth.

May we all stop and take stock of the ONE this time of the year is really all about. Jesus is the reason for the Season! He was born to face a “Black Friday” of much weightier significance than of those labelled in recent years. On that Black Friday the perfect Son of God died taking the full wrath of God the Father on the cross, for a hurting and hopeless world. This is the GOOD news the angels sang about all those years ago. Those who turn to him in repentance, trusting in Him will be saved from sin and find true meaning and fulfilment in life. With Jesus at the centre of our lives.....Christmas really becomes the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

Please plan to join us at church over the Christmas period as we celebrate the birth of the Saviour. I earnestly pray that each family connected with Magheramason will know God’s blessing and peace in coming to Christ as I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Spiritually Prosperous New Year.

Graeme Orr

KIRK SESSION

The past few months have been a very busy time in our Congregation, with all the organisations getting started and into their programme of activities for another year. We had special prayer meetings each evening during the first week of September, praying for the congregation and those in need, and seeking God's blessing on the year ahead. A new congregational committee was elected in September, and in addition we had a number of Special Services and other events. Magheramason P.W. held a Coffee Morning on Saturday 19 September and Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday 11 October, Communion Services on Sunday 28 October, and the Girls Brigade and Boys Brigade Enrolment Service on Sunday 8 November.

Harvest Services

Harvest Thanksgiving services were held on Sunday 11 October when the Church was beautifully and tastefully decorated for the occasion. There was a good attendance at the morning service which was conducted by the Rev Graeme Orr who preached on the theme of the 'Final Harvest', and also a good attendance at the evening service which was conducted by the Rev. David Hillen (Minister Emeritus) who preached on the theme 'Reaping what you Sow'. Magheramason Church choir led the harvest praise at both services including the special anthems 'Before You I Kneel', 'The Call for Reapers' and 'You'll Reap Whatsoever You Sow'. A very enjoyable supper was served after the evening service, when members of the congregation enjoyed renewing fellowship with the Rev. David Hillen and his wife Anne. We thank all who provided gifts of flowers, fruit, vegetables and other produce, and to the ladies who applied their artistic skills in decorating the Church, and also to the boys and girls from the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade for their contributions to the Harvest Displays. Thanks also to Elizabeth Davis and the Choir for leading the praise and rendering special anthems, and for all the extra work which they put in, in preparing for these services, and also to Stuart Smith for training the choir.

Congregational Committee

A new congregational committee was elected by ballot in September/October and ratified by the congregation on Sunday 18 October. We express our sincere thanks to all who served on the previous committee and assure them that their work and contribution to the committee has been very much appreciated. In particular we express our sincere thanks to Mrs Doreen Lowry who served on the congregational committee for the past 40 years. Doreen was a faithful member of committee, always present at meetings and had a genuine and sincere interest in the work of the committee and the congregation in relation to property and finance. We assure Doreen that her outstanding service, commitment and contribution to the committee

for the past 40 years, has been very much appreciated not only by the committee, but also by the congregation and all concerned. We extend our best wishes to Doreen and her family.

On behalf of the congregation, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, the Rt. Rev. Dr. McNie, who was the special guest at the evening service on Sunday 29 November, congratulated and presented an inscribed Bible to Doreen in recognition of 40 years service as a member of the Congregational Committee.

Kindfund

On Sunday evening 27 September David & Sally Thompson shared with the congregation friends and visitors, of their recent visit to KindFund homes in Kenya. We were also pleased to welcome the other members of the team who were with David and Sally on this trip. David and Sally gave a very comprehensive account of their experience, of knowing God's blessing on their travels and during their time in Kenya, and how they found the Kenya culture and the different situations there and the great encouragement they experienced by the exuberant praise and worship of the children in the KindFund homes. Life in that part of Kenya can be unpredictable at times, so we continue to pray for God's blessing on Ken and Pam Dobbins from Kesh in Co Fermanagh who run the children's homes and for the boys and girls and those who work in the homes.

Remembrance Service

The Remembrance Day Service was on Sunday 8 November at 11.30 a.m. when the service was conducted by the Rev Graeme Orr. The Congregation observed a two-minute silence in memory of those who had made the supreme sacrifice in World Wars and other conflicts. Mr John Kincaid laid the wreath at the War Memorial in the Vestibule of the Church, the Last Post and Reveille were sounded on the piano by Stuart Smith, and the offering which was in aid of the Earl Haig fund was taken up by Bob Boreland, John Kincaid, Jack Campbell, Ivan Rutherford, Karl Rankin, Colin Kennedy, Lily Doherty and Liz Kennedy.

GB/BB Enrolment Service

The annual Girls Brigade and Boys Brigade enrolment service was held on Sunday 8 November at 6.30 p.m., when there was a large turnout of officers and members of both companies, and also of parents and friends as well. The service was conducted by the Rev. Graeme Orr who enrolled the Captains and Officers and helpers of the Brigades and the members of the Companies and thanked the Leaders for their dedication to the work of these important organisations. Mr Richard McNeely the captain of the Boys' Brigade congratulated Jack Colhoun on gaining the Queen's Award (the highest award in the Boys' Brigade), and presented him with his certificate and badge which was pinned on his arm band by his mother Gillian. The Rev Graeme Orr gave an appropriate and interactive address to the

congregation, which was enjoyed by all the boys and girls and also by the whole congregation. Scripture passages were read by Sam Gibson from the BB Company and Gillian Dunne from the GB Company.

New Member

Mrs Karen Killen was received into membership of the congregation of Magheramason by transfer certificate from the congregation of Faughanvale Presbyterian Church on 29 September 2015. We welcome Karen to our congregation and trust that she will know God's blessing as she joins with us for worship and fellowship in Magheramason.

Congratulations

The Kirk Session extend their best wishes to Richard and Jaci McNeely on their recent marriage and pray that they will know God's richest blessing in their lives now and in the future.

Moderator's Visit

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian McNie, was the special guest at the evening service in Magheramason Presbyterian Church on 29 November 2015. (See separate report elsewhere in Newsletter).

Week of Prayer

We are planning to start the year 2016 with a week of prayer from Monday 4th Jan. – Friday 8th Jan. meeting each morning from 7.00 a.m. – 8.30 a.m. We would encourage members of the congregation to come along to these prayer meetings; you don't have to stay for the whole time - although that would be good - you can drop in at any time and leave when it suits you. You will not be under any pressure to lead in prayer as your presence will be an encouragement and you will still be participating in the prayers which are offered to God in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Mission 2016

As we enter the new year we will be firming up plans for a special two-week Mission which we have planned for October 2016. Mr Trevor Matthews from the Faith Mission has agreed to conduct the mission and hopefully he will be available to attend a Men's Breakfast on Saturday 16 April 2016, and a Barbeque Fun Night on a suitable Saturday evening in June and speak at the service of worship on the following Sunday. We would ask members of the congregation to remember this Mission in their prayers, praying for God's blessing on Trevor Matthews as he preaches at the mission and the many people who are invited to come will attend. The congregation will be kept informed as plans are developed and finalised.

Organists

We are pleased that Mr Stuart Smith has agreed to play the organ on a Sunday morning and to have regular choir practices to train the choir and develop Church Worship. Stuart has been a great help in preparing the choir for the special services which we have had since September and we hope that he will still be available to continue in this role. The choir members are really enjoying his tuition and the challenge of singing the more difficult hymns and anthems. This has taken the pressure off Elizabeth Davis who has taken on the role of Sunday School Superintendent, but nevertheless we continue to be grateful to Elizabeth for playing the piano at the Sunday evening services, and we assure Stuart and Elizabeth that their help, contribution and service in this regard, are very much appreciated by all concerned.

Christmas Greetings

The Kirk Session would wish each family and member of our congregation a happy, blessed, and peaceful Christmas season, and as we look forward to another new year, let us all rededicate ourselves and commit ourselves to worshipping and serving God in our congregation through Jesus Christ and giving glory and honour to His name.

Walter Hoy, Clerk of Session

NEW YEAR WEEK OF PRAYER

Prayer meetings will be held from Mon. 4th – Fri. 8th
Jan.2016 meeting each morning at **7.00 a.m. – 8.30 a.m.**

If you are available and desire to seek God's blessing, for His Church and in your own life and the life of others, please join with us in these special times of prayer.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun 6 Dec. 2015

Tear Fund 'Soup and Cheese' lunch.

Mon 7 Dec. 2015

7.00pm - Magheramason Community Association: Christmas Tree Switch On and Carol Singing followed by tea in Church Hall.

Fri 18 Dec. 2015

7.00 – 9.00pm - Children's Christmas Club. All children are invited for a night of fun as we are reminded about the story of the First Christmas.

Sun 20 Dec. 2015

11.30am - Christmas Family Service.

6.30pm - 'Candlelight' Carol Service followed by supper

Fri 25 Dec. 2015

10.30am - Christmas Day Service of Worship.

Sun 3 Jan. 2016

11.30am. - Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

**N.B. There will be no Sunday School or Evening Services on
Sun. 27 December 2015 or Sun. 3 January 2016**

Mon 28th, Tue 29th, Wed 30th Dec.2015

Magheramason Bowling Tournament

Mon 4th & Tue 5th Jan. 2016:

7.30pm - Magheramason Bowling Tournament

Thur 31st Dec. 2015 at 8.00 p.m.

New Year's Eve – Family Evening of Games, Fun,
Fellowship and Praise.

Mon 4th Jan. – Fri 8th Jan. 2016

Week of Morning Prayer 7.00 – 8.30 a.m

Fri 8th Jan. - Sun 10th

Jan 2016 - Londonderry Young Peoples Convention
Lisneal College (Crescent link) 8.00 p.m.
Speaker: Dr. Steve Brady

Sun 21st Feb. 2016

11.30am - Presbyterian Women's Service
Speaker: Mrs Catherine Campbell
(Author of several Christian Books)

Fri 11th Mar. 2016

7.30pm - Boys' Brigade Display

Sat 21 Mar. 2016

9.00am - OMF Breakfast in the White Horse Hotel

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT.

As the Christmas season approaches the Congregational Committee would take this opportunity of wishing all the members of the Church a happy and holy Christmas.

Our newly elected Committee is now in place and the on-going work in relation to maintenance of Church property continues apace. Members will have noticed the work to upgrade our rear car park which commenced recently and will be completed in the very near future. This car park will be named the “David Scott Car Park” in memory of Mr David Scott who left a considerable legacy to the Church in the recent past.

We would also like to thank all previous members of the former Congregational Committee for their service to the congregation over the past number of years.

A special thank you to Mrs Doreen Lowry for her 40 years service on the Congregational Committee, which will be acknowledged by a presentation by the Moderator on behalf of the congregation at the evening service on Sunday 29 November 2015. Doreen has served the Church faithfully in her role on the Property Committee and her wise counsel at committee meetings will be sadly missed by the Congregational Committee. We wish her well for the future and thank her for a job well done.

The Congregational Committee would also like to thank all members of the congregation for their financial support this year and look forward to this continuity throughout 2016.

Sam McPherson (Congregational Secretary)

NEW COMMITTEE

The following were elected by ballot to serve on the Congregational Committee, and ratified by the congregation at a meeting on 18 October 2015.

Leslie Hamilton	Audrey Robinson	Doris Thompson
Frances Henderson	Roberta Shannon	Sally Thompson
Liz Kennedy	Witherow Shannon	Joan Turnbull
Roger McCorkell	Alan Smyth	Helen Walker
Sam McPherson	Iris Smyth	Jean Walker

MODERATOR'S VISIT

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian McNie, was the special guest at the evening service in Magheramason Presbyterian Church on 29 November 2015.

The Rev Graeme Orr led the service and welcomed the Moderator and his wife Anne to Magheramason and also the Rev. Mark Shaw and Dr. Robert Buick moderator and clerk respectively of the Derry and Donegal Presbytery, and friends and visitors from other congregations. The Rev. Orr led the congregation in prayer following the opening hymn of praise.

The choir sang the anthem 'By Faith we see the Hand of God' after which Dr McNie, on behalf of the congregation of Magheramason, congratulated and presented an inscribed Bible to Mrs Doreen Lowry in recognition of 40 years service as a member of the Congregational Committee.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Buick read a passage of scripture taken from Mark chapter 4 verses 1-9 on the 'Parable of the Sower'. Amy Gardiner sang a beautiful solo and the Rev. Mark Shaw led the congregation in prayers of intercession, after which the choir sang their second anthem 'Jesus my Blood and Righteousness'.

The Moderator, Dr McNie, thanked the choir for leading the praise and worship, and the congregation for the invitation to visit Magheramason and conveyed greetings from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. In his address to the congregation Dr McNie used the Parable of the Sower to show the relevance of God's Word to the great problems of society today.

After the close of the service the congregation retired to the Church Hall for supper, prepared and served by the ladies of the congregation. The Rev. John Hanna on behalf of all present thanked the ladies for a lovely, hearty and enjoyable supper. Dr McNie gave a brief and interesting account, to the congregation, about his life and work and travels as Moderator of The Presbyterian Church, before the Rev. Graeme Orr closed the evening in prayer.

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Recent special offerings in the congregation of Magheramason realised the following amounts:

Easter Offering	£ 2,019.00
Mesceleni Children's Home	£ 550.00
ASIA Link	£ 267.00
KindFund	£ 195.60
Harvest Offering	£ 3,042.00
Earl Haig Fund (Remembrance Day)	£ 223.00
Stephen & Angelina Cowan	£ 620.00
Stephen Pearson (Mission to Thailand)	£ 115.00
EXEDUS	£ 140.00
Stephen Cowan	£ 155.00
MECO	£ 180.00

We express our sincere thanks to everyone for their support and generous contributions.

PW COFFEE MORNING.

Members of Magheramason P.W. organised and held a Coffee morning on Saturday 19 September. A total of £550 was raised for the benefit of MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) thanks to all who supported and helped with this event.

Mrs Jan Corry from MAF was the guest speaker at the P.W. service on 15 February and shared with the congregation about the important work of Mission Aviation Fellowship, a Christian based organisation working in many countries around the world, flying light aircraft to help people living in remote areas and who are in need of urgent medical attention to get to hospital to receive, in many cases, life saving treatment.

Mission Boxes

Thanks to all who took and filled the PW Mission Boxes; the amount collected this year was £1,880.60, a very commendable amount.

P.W. Service on Sunday 21st February 2016 at 11.30 a.m.

Guest Speaker - Mrs Catherine Campbell
(Author of several Christian books)

Helen Walker (Secretary)

New Year's Eve

**Family Evening of Fun, Games, Fellowship, Worship & Praise
in**

Magheramason Church Hall

on

Wednesday 31st December 2015 at 8.00 p.m.

EVERYONE WELCOME

Magheramason Church Website

If anyone would have old photographs, news articles or funny stories in relation to Magheramason church which you would feel are suitable to go on our website please let me know. We try to keep the website updated as regular as possible, so do visit the site at www.magheramasonpci.org.uk and keep in touch with what is happening in your church.

There is the opportunity to listen to the Sunday sermon, catch up on the weekly announcement sheet or view photographs of recent events or happenings in the church.

For those who use facebook there is the opportunity to follow us there by logging into www.facebook.com/magheramasonpresbyterianchurch

Leslie Hamilton

Weekly Freewill Offering Contributions

REMINDER/APPEAL

The Church Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all members for their regular weekly contributions and for their support in the past, especially when responding to appeals for an increase in contributions, to ensure that the congregation was able to meet its financial commitments. This has indeed been very much appreciated. The Weekly Freewill Offering is the means by which the regular ongoing work of the congregation is financed.

However the Church's financial needs will just be as great in the year 2016, and so we would again appeal for each and every member **to endeavour to maintain (and increase if possible) their Weekly Freewill Offering contributions, and to remember that your contributions are important and vital to the work of the Church.** It is only through the weekly offerings that the work of the Church can continue, unhindered by lack of finance.

We also appeal to all non-contributing members that the Church needs your support and to seriously consider making a weekly contribution to your Church.

The Birth of Jesus announced to the Shepherds

And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests."

Luke 2: 8-14

BAPTISMS

'Suffer the little children to come unto me.'

29 November 2015 - Joe Fletcher, infant son of Mr & Mrs Stuart Thompson.

DEATHS

'Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.'

29 September 2015 - **Mr Stephen Doherty**, Victoria Road, Bready.

29 October 2015 - **Mrs June Taylor**, Blackstone Park, Magheramason.

30 November 2015 - **Mr Richard (Reggie) Campbell**,
Dunalong Road, Bready

CHILDRENS CHRISTMAS CLUB

Friday 18 December 2015 7.00 – 9.00 pm

**All children invited for a night of fun as we are
reminded about the First Christmas.**

Londonderry Young Peoples Convention

on

Fri. 8 Jan. - Sun. 10 Jan. 2016

at

8.00 p.m. each evening

in

Lisneal College - Crescent Link

Speaker: Dr. Steve Brady (Principal of Moorlands Bible College
Fri. - Sat. 9.20 -10.30 p.m. : The Source (12 years of age +) - Lisneal
Ladies Coffee Morning : Sat. 9 Jan. 10.30 a.m. White Horse Hotel

IN LIEU OF FLOWERS.

Mr Stephen Doherty

Mrs Violet McConnell.....4 Brookfield Magheramason, Londonderry BT47 2RT
Geoffrey & Wendy McConnell.....5 Ramin Park, Drumahoe, BT47 3RX
Mrs Ruby Lowry.....Bready Cricket Club, Mason Road, Magheramason,
Roberta & Witherow Shannon.....Dunalong Rd., Bready, Co Tyrone

Mrs June Taylor

Dorothy, Marcus & Sylvia Stewart.14 Roe Gardens, Waterside, BT47 2HT
Kathleen Doherty10 Brookfield, Magheramason, BT47 2RT
Doris Carruthers102 Primity Crescent, Newbuildings, BT47 2RB
Russell & Julie Doherty.....Moffatt Lodge, Gobnascale, Convoy, Co Donegal
Paul & Carol McMinn.....23 Stoneypath, Newbuildings, BT47 2AF
Joe & Lily Doherty.....41 Primity Crescent, Newbuildings, BT47 2RQ
Mrs Violet McConnell.....4 Brookfield, Magheramason, BT47 2RT
Noel & May McCrea.....31 Dunalong RD., Magheramason BT47 2RU
Billy & May Doherty.....165 Victoria Rd., Bready, BT82 0DZ
Mr & Mrs Noel Lynch.....8 Blackstone Park, Magheramason
Mr & Mrs Sidney Nixon.....34 Northland Drive, Londonderry BT48
Wm & Florence Bradley.....1 Cherryburn Gdns, Woodburn, BT47 5PX
Mr & Mrs Robin Bruce.....271 Victoria Rd., Bready
Joe & Pamela Rutherford.....94 Stoneypath, Newbuildings
Bready Cricket Club.....Mason Road, Magheramason.
Lorna McNeely.....Victoria Road, Magheramason
Former Staff & Governors of Bready P.S.12 Cloghboy Road, Bready
Jean Malcolm.....2 Mason Road, Magheramason
Jackie & Mary Taylor.....32 Lapwing Way, Waterside, Londonderry
Ken & Janette Connor.....27 Blackstone Park, Magheramason
The Connor Family56 Dunalong Rd., Bready Co Tyrone.

IN MEMORY:

Mr Sam McConnell

Lovingly remembered by Geoff & Wendy McConnell, Ramin Park, Drumahoe.

Mr Jim Charles Robb – Died 17th December 2012

In Loving Memory of Jim Robb

Always remembered by Margaret, Heather, Jennifer, Joanne, Lynda and their families. Nearer My God to Thee.

In Loving Memory of Jim Robb, A Dearly Loved Brother, Brother in Law and Uncle
Remembered always by Catherine, John & family

CHRISTMAS NATIVITY TO COLOUR IN





The Prophecy of the Birth of Jesus

*For to us a child is born,
To us a son is given,
And the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and peace
There will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and for ever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.*

Isaiah 9:6-7



C H R I S T M A S

**Celebrate Jesus' birthday with
Hearts that are all aglow,
Remembering that first Christmas many years ago.
In a Bethlehem stable bare
Sent from Heaven above
That special Christmas gift to us. God's eternal love.
May we keep on during Christmas,
And New Year Twenty Sixteen,
Seeking and serving daily, our Saviour, Friend 'Supreme'.**

May Doherty

