

Magheramason Presbyterian Church Newsletter December 2016

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105376)



The Greatest Expedition?

Throughout history remarkable expeditions have been organised by different men and women in different places for different purposes. Which is the greatest? Was it the maritime explorer Christopher Columbus and his opening up of the Americas to Europeans at the end of the 15th Century? In more recent history you may think of Irishman Earnest Shackleton and his ill fated journey to the Antarctic and heroic rescue of the endangered crew of 'Endurance' that became encased with ice in 1915. Or perhaps Edmund Hilary and Tensing Norgay come to mind as they became the first men to climb Mount Everest on 29th May 1953? Is the greatest expedition outside the world itself? How about Neil Armstrong as the first man that stepped onto the moon on 21st July 1969?

By far the greatest expedition ever undertaken originated with the Lord God. It was the coming of the very Son of God from heaven to this sin blighted world! As Christmas comes upon us for another year the gospel writer Dr. Luke retells much

Christmas Worship

Sunday 18th December 2016

- 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 with Mr Trevor Matthews. Special praise by the Choir and we will also be joined by Bready Jubilee Primary School Choir. Supper after the service.

Sunday 25th December 2016

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

about the birth narrative of Jesus. It is not until much later in his account that he states clearly why Jesus actually came. In Chapter 19 V 10 Jesus himself said “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save the lost!” Left to himself mankind is LOST! What a thought! What a tragedy!

On the first Christmas the angels first came to humble shepherds to announce the ‘good news of great joy that would be for all people.’ That one from heaven came to earth on an immense rescue mission for the souls of men - Jesus ‘the Saviour who is Christ the Lord.’

He came to seek and he still seeks. In former times when a child was lost in a British city, a “Crier” used to go through the streets, ringing a bell, and calling out words such as “Lost, lost, a lost child, five years of age, blue eyes, blonde hair, lost child!” May we be thankful to God, the great Seeker from heaven has come to the streets of our towns and villages, ringing the bell of the best tidings which ever resounded on human ears.

He comes seeking the lost ones because he loves them! He comes seeking them with an eager intensity outmatching any human expedition. He seeks with a tender compassion even than that of anxious parents seeking a lost child. It was the knowledge of what it means for a soul to be eternally lost which brought the Son of God from heaven’s glories to that stark, brutal, ugly, yet glorious Cross on Calvary.

He came to “save” and he still saves! We have known that touch from God recently as He reached down from Heaven in salvation to precious souls during our time of mission. The next time Jesus comes, it will be as King and Judge, but now in this age of grace, He is still the seeking Saviour!

When Napoleon envisaged a military campaign in Italy, his generals pronounced any attempt to cross the Alps as suicidal. Napoleon exclaimed. “There shall be no Alps!” - and the great road was built through Simplon Pass. So as Christmas approaches may we consider again the greatest expedition. Jesus the great seeker from heaven broke through all obstacles to save us - to save us from sins mountainous as the Alps, numberless as the stars and black as night.

As a Manse family we pray each and every one of you will experience God’s richest blessing at this time of year as we wish you a Happy Christmas and a Spiritually Prosperous New Year! A Warm Welcome at church awaits you and your family as we celebrate the birth of the Saviour together!

Graeme, Mandy, Reuben, Benjamin, Samuel and Jonathan.

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. In addition we had a special two-week congregational outreach Mission in October with a number of special prayer meetings being held in September and October praying particularly for the Mission. A 'back to school' service was held on Sunday 11 September and a John Deere tractor evening on Friday 30 September. Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday 8 October, Communion Services on Sunday 6 November, and the Girls Brigade and Boys Brigade Enrolment Service on Sunday 13 November.

ASIA Link Soup Lunch

Members of the congregation enjoyed a soup lunch following the service on Sunday 25 September with the proceeds, which amounted to £540, going to support the work of Asia Link Mission. Mr Gordon Stewart from Asia Link spoke at the Church service highlighting the work of Asia Link in the vast country of China and gave an intriguing account of the phenomenal demand for Bibles from the new converts and the growing Christian Church there.

John Deere Evening.

There was a good attendance at the John Deere evening on Friday 30 September when Mr George Conn from the Faith Mission gave a very interesting and enjoyable presentation on the life of John Deere from a historical, farming, engineering and Christian perspective, and the development of the John Deere tractor. Several John Deere tractors were on display outside the Church and we express our appreciation to those who provided these, as this generated and heightened interest in the presentation.

Everyone enjoyed a cup of tea following the meeting and an opportunity to talk further with George Conn.

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 based his address on Psalm 65 praising God for the harvest, His power and providence, and for His salvation. The Magheramason Church Choir led the harvest praise and rendered the special anthems 'Creation Sings' and 'Indescribable'. There was a good attendance at the evening service which coincided with the start of our two-week Mission. The Church choir again led the praise including the anthems 'Fairest Lord Jesus' and 'Creation Sings', and Mr Trevor Matthews from the Faith Mission based his address on the parable of the 'Wheat and the Tares'. A very

enjoyable supper was served after the evening service, when members of the congregation enjoyed fellowship with one another and with Trevor Matthews. 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 various Church organisations for their contributions to the Harvest Displays. Thanks also to Stuart Smith 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.

Mission '16 Magheramason

We continue to give thanks and praise to God for the time of Mission in October and for the wonderful sense of His presence in the meetings over that particular two week period. The meetings were very well attended with the hall being well-filled on most nights and on many occasions packed to capacity. Everyone was challenged by the clear preaching and teaching of the Gospel by Mr Trevor Matthews, those who ministered in praise, or gave testimony as to how God had changed their lives. We continue to pray for each and every person who came to any of the meetings – those in our own congregation, those in the local and wider community and those from other congregations – it was so good to meet so many people. We praise God for those who were converted and came to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, those who were restored and revived in their faith and all who were challenged in their relationship with the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. A thanksgiving and praise night was held on the Wednesday evening following the close of the Mission, and it was so encouraging to hear so many people testifying as to how they had been converted or restored or encouraged by the Mission; and we continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to minister into each and every heart.

Christianity Explored Course

As a follow-up to the Mission a Christianity Explored course started on Monday 7 November. Paul Darragh is organising and leading the course which is based on Mark's gospel, and is presented in a very interesting attractive and easy to follow format. We pray that those attending the course will find it beneficial and that it will help them to grow in their grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The course lasts for approximately 6 weeks.

Remembrance Service

The Remembrance Day Service was on Sunday 13 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. Mrs Elizabeth Kennedy laid the wreath at the War Memorial in the Vestibule of the Church, The Rev Graeme Orr gave the remembrance citation, the Last Post was sounded, followed by the silence, and

ending with Reveille. The offering which was in aid of the Earl Haig fund was taken up by Bob Boreland, John Kincaid, Jack Campbell, Harry Spence, Karl Rankin, Colin Kennedy, Lily Doherty and Liz Kennedy. Thanks to Gordon Turnbull for providing an interesting display of WW1 and WW2 memorabilia.

GB/BB Enrolment Service

The annual Girls Brigade and Boys Brigade enrolment service was held on Sunday 13 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 paid tribute to Mr John Hamilton, Mr Richard Kincaid and Mrs Audrey Kincaid who had retired as officers/leaders in the Boys Brigade having faithfully and conscientiously served the Company and Junior Sections of the Brigade for the past 20 years, 10 years and 3 years respectively. Their contribution in this regard had been very much appreciated by the officers, boys, parents and all concerned. The Rev. Graeme Orr presented John, Richard and Audrey with gifts to mark the occasion and as a token of appreciation. Jill McCorkell's contribution as an officer/helper in the Girls' Brigade for the past number of years was also acknowledged. The Rev Graeme Orr gave the address to the congregation, which was based on Saul/Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. Scripture passages were read by Matthew Rutherford from the BB Company and Lauren Murphy from the GB Company.

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)

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT.

As we enter the Christmas period Congregational Committee would take this opportunity of wishing all the members of the Church a happy and holy Christmas.

Most of the major work around the Church has been completed and the committee would like to express their thanks to the Property Convenor, Mr Gordon Turnbull, for overseeing this work ensuring that it was completed satisfactorily.

The Committee are presently investigating woodworm infestation in the ceiling of the church with a view to eradicating this problem in order to ensure that it does not become a serious matter in future years. It is anticipated that the cost of this remedial work will be approximately £2000.

A new Sound System will be installed in the Church in the very near future , hopefully before Christmas or early in the New Year.

Sam McPherson (Congregational Secretary)

NEW YEAR WEEK OF PRAYER

Prayer meetings will be held from Mon. 2nd – Fri. 6th Jan.2017
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 do join with us in these special times of prayer.

WEDNESDAY DROP IN CLUB

The Wednesday Club meets each week from 1.30 – 3.30 p.m. providing people in the community with the opportunity of enjoying fellowship, games over a cup of tea/coffee and eats.

On Wednesday 23 November, Ruth Olphert gave a very interesting talk about the history of Magheramason. Other speakers are planned for future meetings.

Please do come along on a Wednesday and bring your friends.

Everyone welcome.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon. 5 Dec. 2016 / 7.00 p.m.

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

Fri. 16 Dec. 2016 / 6.30 – 8.30 pm.

Children's Christmas Club. All children(P1 –P7) are invited for a night of fun.

Sun. 18 Dec. 2016 / 11.30 a.m.

Christmas Family Service.

6.30 p.m. 'Candlelight' Carol Service followed by supper with Trevor Matthews and Bready P.S. choir.

Sun. 25 Dec. 2016 / 10.30 a.m.

Christmas Day Service of Worship (boys and girls are invited to bring a gift received to Church as we celebrate the birth of Christ together)

Sat. 31 Dec. 2016 / 8.00 pm.

New Year's Eve - Family evening of Fun, Games and Praise.

Sun. 1 Jan 2017 / 11.30 a.m. Rev. Jonathan Campbell

Sun. 8 Jan. 2017 / 11.30 a.m. Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

N.B. There will be no Sunday School or Evening Services on Sun. 25 December 2016 or Sun. 1 January 2017

Tue. 27th - Fri 30th Dec.2016 / 7.30 p.m.

Magheramason Bowling Tournament

Mon. 2nd Jan 2017 / 7.30 p.m.

Magheramason Bowling Tournament

Sat 31st Dec. 2016 / 8.00 p.m.

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

Mon. 2nd Jan. – Fri. 6th Jan. 2017 / 7.00 – 8.30 a.m

Week of Morning Prayer

Fri. 6th Jan - Sun 8th Jan 2017 / 8.00 p.m.

Londonderry Young Peoples Convention Lisneal College (Crescent link)

Speaker: Rev. John Woodside

Sun. 19th Feb. 2017 / 11.30 a.m.

Presbyterian Women's Service. Speaker: Mrs Roisin Somerville

Sat. 11th Mar. 2017 / 9.00 a.m.

OMF Breakfast – White Horse Hotel

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 2017, 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.

FWO Envelope Review

The cost of printing FWO envelopes for Church members is increasing every year and in order to cut back on this expense, the Committee is looking into the possibility of no longer providing envelopes for anyone who has not made any contribution to Church funds in the previous three years. We will be providing envelopes for 2017 as normal but plan to proceed with the review for 2018. If you have not made any contributions for three years but still wish to receive envelopes as usual, please let the Treasurer or FWO Secretary know.

An alternative method of making monthly payments to the Church is through a bank standing order. Please contact the Treasurer or FWO Secretary for more details

New Year's Eve

Family Evening of Fun, Games, Fellowship, Worship & Praise
in Magheramason Church Hall

on Saturday 31st December 2016 at 8.00 p.m.

EVERYONE WELCOME

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

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

Easter Offering	£ 2,154.50
ASIA Link (soup lunch)	£ 555.50
John Deere Tractor Evening	£ 200.00
Harvest Offering	£ 3,250.70
RBL Poppy Appeal (Remembrance Day)	£ 308.50
Logos Ministries	£ 92.00
CEF Donegal	£ 152.00

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

PRAYER HANDBOOKS 2016/17

Thank you to all who availed themselves of the 2016/2017 prayer handbooks and trust you are now praying for and reading of the ministries of our Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Anyone who did not get a copy and would like one, they are still available at £2.00 each from Church House and if contacted I will arrange to collect the handbooks from Belfast. Our church has been publishing these handbooks for prayer for some years; this year congregations have purchased more hand books than in previous years.

Elma Mitchell

Mission Boxes

Thanks to all who took and filled the PW Mission Boxes; the amount collected this year was £1,626.48, a very commendable amount.

P.W. Service on Sunday 19th February 2017 at 11.30 a.m.

Guest Speaker - Mrs Roisin Somerville

Helen Walker (Secretary)

Presbyterian 
Women

IN LIEU OF FLOWERS

Mrs Evelyn Campbell

Magheramason PW

IN MEMORY

Mr Jim Charles Robb – Died 17th December 2012

In Loving Memory of Mr Jim Robb

Always remembered by his wife Margaret, daughters Heather, Jennifer, Joanne,
Lynda and their families.

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

DEATHS

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

24 November 2016

Mrs Anna Doherty, Victoria Road, Bready.

MARRIAGES

'To have and to hold from this day forth'

15 October 2016

Tracy Throne to Joshua McCallum

Londonderry Young Peoples Convention

on Fri. 6 Jan. - Sun. 8 Jan. 2017

at 8.00 p.m. each evening

in Lisneal College - Crescent Link

Speaker: Rev John Woodside

Fri. - Sat. 9.20 -10.30 p.m. : The Source (12 years of age +) - Lisneal

Ladies Coffee Morning

Sat. 7 Jan. 10.30 a.m. White Horse Hotel

Childrens Christmas Club

Friday 16 December 2016 6.30pm - 8.30pm

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

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

Magheramason Church Website

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

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 Seventeen,
Seeking and serving daily, our Saviour, Friend 'Supreme'.

May Doherty



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