



“LET HIS LIGHT SHINE”



Psalm 19:1 " The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands"

Photo by Bill McAskie

Autumn 2023

SPECIAL SERVICES IN SEPTEMBER

Sunday 3rd September at 7pm - 9pm A Service of Thanksgiving & Prayer in the Welcome Area.

We will have an evening of prayer to focus on the work of our church throughout the year. Please plan to come along for part or all of the service as we take the opportunity to pray for God's blessing and guidance for all of our organisations at the start of the new church year.

Sunday 10th September at 7pm Ards Presbytery Service in Strean lead by the Moderator, Right Reverend Dr Sam Mawhinney.

Friday 15th September at 7pm Service of Ordination and Installation of Elders.

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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 email them to Rosemary Black (Editor) rosemaryblack@gmail.com, or alternatively give them to Barbara McCartney in the church office.

Reflections from the Manse

Resting In God

As you start to read this magazine, I wonder where you are? Perhaps you are sitting in your lounge with a cup of tea; or maybe you are in the garden with a pair of sunglasses on and a nice cold glass of water. You might even be sitting in a different country as you flick through the pages and see who you know in the photographs. I am writing this as I look out on a wet day, listening to the rain hitting the window. Regardless of where you are or what you are doing, in reading the magazine you are, no doubt, sitting down, relaxing, and taking this opportunity to catch up on anything you have missed.



We often forget how precious moments like this are. There is a temptation to always be busy, to fill our days so that we don't get bored or feel that we have wasted a minute of our time. Yes, it is good to be productive and we all have tasks and responsibilities that need to be completed each day. However, we also need to be able to stop, reflect and be refreshed. I wonder if you can picture a field of cows, lying down as they chew some grass; or how about a dog after a long walk, coming in and sleeping in front of the fire. They have the sense to rest, something we often lack. Maybe that is why Psalm 23 opens with these words "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul."

The Shepherd is wise and knows the sheep better than they know themselves. He knows when they need nourishment and when they need to rest. It is not an accident of translation that verse 2 says "He makes me lie down", a sense that can sometimes be lost in translation. It is a decision by the Shepherd to make the sheep rest. We talk about how the summer months are a time for rest in church and a time to be refreshed. Is that how your summer has been for you?

What does it mean to rest and be refreshed spiritually? It is partly about stopping, not running about and physically resting. But refreshment is so much more; it is about spending time with our Shepherd, God. It is about soaking again in His word so that we can give out again to others. It is about exploring and studying what He continues to teach us each day, so we are better equipped to walk with others.

This refreshment is not just about the summer, it is also about how we continually refresh during the year. Our prayer meetings and times of Bible study in small groups are such times. Spending time with friends either from within the Streat family or outside of it, in prayer and study, is another way to be refreshed. Or walking with a person young in their faith as they explore what it means to them to follow God, and allowing yourself to be challenged as you walk with that person.

God is not limited by how we think we need to be or should be refreshed. God wants us to rest in Him every single day, to put His Heavenly Father arms around us and hold us tight to reassure us after we have had a difficult day. God wants to encourage us every day and, when necessary, be the Father who tells us when we have done wrong so that we can say sorry.

Resting in God is an everyday action that we need to practice. It is a habit that we need to grasp with both hands and do in a very intentional way.

Will you allow yourself to rest in God today?

***Psalm 23:2-3 (NIV) "He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters, ³ he refreshes my soul."***

Jeff

2023 SEPTEMBER START DATES

Weekly activities (unless indicated otherwise)

G.B. - Monday 4th September @ 6.45pm

B.B. - Tuesday 5th September @ 6.30pm

Midweek Prayer - Wednesday 6th September @ 7.30 pm (1st & 3rd Wed of the month)

Badminton - Thursday 7th September @ 7.30pm

P.W. - Thursday 7th September @ 7.30pm (1st Thursday of the month)

Youth Club - Saturday 9th September @ 6.45pm (alternate Saturdays)

Discovery Kids Sunday School - Sunday 10th September @ 11am

Craft Class - Monday 11th September @10am

Tots 'n' Toddlers - Tuesday 12th September @ 10.15am

Small Groups - Wednesday 13th @ 7.30pm/ Friday 15th September @ 12.30pm (week of 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month)

Football & Fellowship - Wednesday 13th September @ 8pm

Youth Fellowship - Sunday 17th September @ 7-8pm

Men's Fellowship - Thursday 21st September @ 7.45pm (3rd Thursday of the Month)

Men's Monthly Breakfast - the 4th Thursday of the month at 10.30am @ Clandeboye Golf Club, continues throughout the year

Ladies's Coffee Morning - the third Wednesday of the month at 10:30am, in Hillmount Garden Centre Newtownards, continues throughout the year

Thursday morning **Indoor Bowls** @10am continues throughout the year

* Thursday afternoon **Drop-in** - Session will be reviewing in the autumn, details to follow

CHURCH MEMBER RECORDS APRIL - AUGUST 2023

DEATHS

20th April – Mrs Nesta Hood

2nd May – Mrs Jennifer Crymble

3rd May – Mr Peter McGimpsey

16th May – Mr Douglas Harley

1st June – Mr David Wolff

5th June – Mr David Gilliland

12th August - Mrs Elma Caughey

As a church family we will continue to remember in prayer, the families of Nesta, Jennifer, Peter, Douglas, David Wolff, David Gilliland and Elma.

DATES OF SPECIAL SERVICES OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2023

- Sunday 1st October – Communion
- Sunday 8th October – Harvest Thanksgiving
- Sunday 15th October – B.B. Enrolment
- Sunday 12th November – Remembrance Day
- Sunday 19th November – G.B. Enrolment

Summer visitors at Streat



On Sunday 25th June we were delighted to welcome Margaret and David Gowdy, along with their son Stephen, daughter Catherine, her husband and two lovely grandchildren. The Gowdy family were on holiday visiting family.



Betty Boal from Australia, wife of the late Rev Bill Boal, visited us on Sunday 11th June. Bill and Betty did a pulpit exchange, with the Rev David & Carolyn Campbell in early 90's. Since the pulpit exchange, any time Bill & Betty were home to visit family in NI, they always came to worship in Streat.

Matthew Harris and Emma Smyth travelled to Kenya in July with Jengana.

What is 'Jengana'?

Matthew:

Jengana means 'building each other' in Swahili. Jengana is a Christian charity working in Kenya. It was set up in Northern Ireland by Fransuer Mukula, who is my Religious Studies teacher in school. He is Kenyan and grew up in poverty in Nairobi. He wants to 'give back' as charity helped him so much when he was growing up.

What prompted you to go on a mission trip?

Emma:

I'm aware I come from a privileged background, and this was an opportunity to understand a different perspective of life and culture. I was also very interested to see how the donated money was used, as although I've donated to other charities before, I've never had the opportunity to see it in action, and this trip would allow me to do just that.

Matthew:

I knew that I was fortunate to live in a safe place with enough food and access to a good education but that this was not the case for everyone in the world. I wanted to make a difference if I could, to try to prevent others suffering. I believe that God wants us to show his love to everyone. Mr Mukula would talk about Kenya sometimes in RS classes and I wanted to go and help there.

What were the team's main objectives in Kenya?



Emma:

We were involved in lots of different work. Jengana runs the Kipepeo Home for vulnerable children and we met with the children as soon as we arrived. We ran a 'kids club' (like our Holiday Bible Club in Streaton) with the children from Kipepeo and children in the local community. In the evenings we went into Nairobi and gave food to people living on the streets there.

Matthew:

We were also involved in building work there. We put up a fence in the boys' rehabilitation centre which is a home for boys who were previously living on the streets. We also helped to dig the foundations for a new canteen area in the Kipepeo home. We travelled to the Masai Mara area for a few days and our team built a traditional mud house for a widow living there, and helped with the construction of a new classroom for the rural school.





What impact has the trip had on you?

Matthew:

It made me realise that we take so much for granted. Lots of people in Kenya don't have enough food or access to education and yet they are so grateful and thankful for everything they do have. We would give food to people living on the streets and the first thing they would do would be to pray and thank God.

Emma:

Yes, it makes you very aware of the things that we have and take for granted. In the slum areas, the children's opportunities were so limited. One particular episode I found very difficult was a night we were in Nairobi, giving bread and milk to the people, and we ran out so quickly, we simply didn't have enough food. It was distressing to see people so in need and be unable to help them.



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



Emma:

Immerse yourself completely in the experience and join in with everything. Step out of your comfort zone and embrace every opportunity.

Matthew:

Go for it but be prepared to work hard and to encounter challenging sights. It will be an eye-opening experience, but it will give you a new perspective and memories that will stay with you for life.

OPEN DAY

Ards Child Contact Centre c/o Streatan Presbyterian, West St, Ards BT23 4EN

Would you be interested to hear more about the Child Contact Centre and maybe even consider volunteering.

You are invited along to the Welcome Area on Friday 22nd Sept @ 2:30pm

where you will have the opportunity to see around the centre, meet some of our team and the Chair of the NI Network, as well as hear a short presentation on how our centres in Ards and Bangor operate.

Please confirm your attendance through the church office see pg 12 for details.

Christianity EXPLORED

Christianity Explored is a course that takes you back to the basics of Christian faith. Through a gentle study of the Gospel of Mark, it explores the identity of Jesus, why he died on the cross for us, God's grace and why Jesus asks us to follow him. The course in Streatan ran for seven weeks on a Sunday evening with a cuppa & biscuit from 6.30pm, finishing at 8pm (on the dot!). It was led by Jim Campbell who 'set the scene' each week for group discussion of passages of Mark's gospel, alongside a light study guide. We then watched a short video presented by course founder Rico Tice and returned to our groups for a further brief chat.

There were around thirty-four people on the course split into three groups. Group members were friendly and encouraging so discussion was open and exploratory. It was a forum where people felt comfortable. You could either sit quietly just listening or talk lots asking many questions. There were no questions that you couldn't ask and often, answers were given by the response and knowledge of others and the word of God in the bible. It was a very enjoyable and successful course. The resounding message for me was from Mark's gospel, chapter 12, verse 30: "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength."

Catherine Burns



**Our P.W. meetings will resume on Thursday 7th September at 7.30 p.m
We would like to encourage ladies of the congregation, of all ages, to join us.**

Our theme this year is "**Being Transformed**" and we will consider, as followers of Christ, how we can become more like him in everything we do.

The Programme for this year's is:

- 7th September - Getting to know you and a quiz
- 5th October - Life of an Artist with Jackie Fleming
- 2nd November - Beauty and Bling with Charmaine and Julie
- 7th December - Christmas Craft with Mandy Graham
- 11th January - Ladies Dinner - Clandeboye Golf Club
- 1st February - Pudding and Praise with Karen Glass
- 7th March - Story of Bags with Olive Turkington
- 11th April. - Scammers with P.S.N.I. (open to everyone)

Other dates for your diary:

- 28th January - P.W. Lunch
- 25th February - P.W. Service
- 27th April - P.W. Outing

Jennifer Wallace

BOYS BRIGADE NEWS



Our BB company will re-start on Tuesday 5th September. Anchor Boys (for boys in P1 to P4) starts at 6.30pm each week for one hour, and Junior Section (for boys in P5 to P7) runs from 7.15 to 8.30pm each evening. Company & Senior Sections (for boys in Years 8 to 14) run from 7.30 to 9.00pm approx. each week.

We run challenging and dynamic programmes for each age grouping, and are as ever keen to welcome new members, even with almost 50 boys in the ranks last year. So we would appeal to everyone reading this article to try to identify any boys who you think might like to try BB. Please pass on their details to myself or any of our staff team. We are very thankful to all our Officers and leaders – for those with long and dedicated service, and to a number of younger leaders who have brought new energy into our staff team.

As you read this article you may recall some press articles over the past year about The Boys' Brigade in Northern Ireland (BBNI), and its historic decision to split from the rest of Brigade in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. This has been something which BBNI, which makes up 40% of BB membership throughout the UK and RoI, has contemplated for a number of years, particularly for faith, financial and programming reasons.

At the recent BBNI AGM, the vote in favour of endorsing the decision to split from the rest of Brigade was 95%. The negotiation team of David Blevins (BBNI President), Lisa Keys (BBNI Director) and Stephen Gowdy (BBNI solicitor) deserves tremendous credit for their patience and skill in conducting all their dealings with Brigade in such a Christian and principled manner.

And part of the split from Brigade has also involved a major re-organisation of governance structures here, with a new charity called The Northern Ireland Boys' Brigade already established and currently completing registration with The Charity Commission NI. The new organisation comprises five trustees, each with specific skills sets, and I was delighted to be selected as one of these new trustees who will guide BBNI as it starts a completely new existence from 1st September 2023. Please pray for me in this new role.

For our members and leaders, this significant change will have little impact day to day initially, but gradually, the financial benefits and greater staff support from BBNI HQ will become clear. So I would ask for your prayers for Boys' Brigade in Northern Ireland in the coming weeks and months, for careful decision making and ensuring that we bring all our companies and members with us on this new journey.

Sure and Steadfast in His Love

Stephen Boyle
(Captain)

PROPERTY UPDATE 2023

Strean's Property team continues to upkeep our church, halls and grounds, and we wanted to highlight three specific projects completed since the start of 2023.

Rose bed outside Prayer Room

As you enter the main car park, directly ahead of you is a planted bed which was created in 2010 as part of the Welcome Project, and which contained a number of ground-cover shrubs. We recognised that this area was ready for an overhaul and, when the late Shirley Taylor left a bequest to Strean, it gave us an opportunity. Shirley was a member of the Dickson family, famed for its rose growing business, and so we decided to convert the planted bed into a small rose garden in Shirley's memory, using part of the bequest for that purpose. Shirley had a great love of flowers and was skilled in floral arranging, serving on our Flower committee for many years.



Having secured the agreement of Shirley's sons, we took advice from Mr Colin Dickson, MBE, on suitable roses to plant. Shirley's favourite rose was "It's a Wonderful Life" and so five rose bushes of this variety were planted, along with four of the NI Centenary Rose and four of the Secret Smile Rose. We are delighted that the bushes have taken so well and provided constant colour throughout the summer. Many thanks to Sam Young for his work in converting this bed so tastefully.

***Isaiah 35 verse 1 The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,
And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.***



Water damage in Gallery

Some of you will recall the water damage stain which had been on one wall in the Gallery for a number of years. The water damage occurred on New Year's Eve in 2012 when a storm ripped slates off the church roof next to the clock tower, letting a lot of rainwater in. Once the damaged roof area was properly repaired, we patiently allowed the wall to dry out while monitoring the amount of cracking in the plaster on the internal surfaces affected. Patience is a key word in many property matters!

Rolling on 10 years, in 2022, we engaged the Presbytery architect, Mr Brian Knox, to assess the wall surfaces and recommend a treatment to rectify the affected area. Brian's conclusion was that the wall had dried perfectly, meaning that we would not have to hack off all the existing plaster before recovering the wall areas in question. We were also pleased to learn that the structural timber trusses and wall plates in this area were sound, and not subject to rot. And, we were able to dry-line the two panels of wall, repair the damaged plaster cornicing above the two panels, and repaint to match existing surfaces.



The works were undertaken in less than one week back in March by Martin and Raymond Ellison. We are delighted with the end result, as was Brian Knox when he called back to inspect. Cost for this job was £2,700.

Adgey Hall Roof

The Adgey Hall roof coverings had been the original felt from when the halls were built in the early 1970s; hard to believe that was more than 50 years ago! The roof coverings had started to show evidence of cracking and wearing out over the past 18 months, and so it was decided to seek estimates from three experienced roofing contractors for the re-covering of the 360m² roof area.

The contractor appointed by Committee was GBS Roofing Ltd from Antrim, and they did a superb job – not only in terms of how they undertook the physical works but also in terms of their paperwork and management of the project. Mr Colin Pegg from GBS deserves special praise in this respect. We decided not to strip the existing roof but, instead, to overlay with 2 layers of a top-quality roofing felt system by IKO. We also paid for a proprietary edge trim to help produce a sharp appearance to the roof from ground level.

The roofing system carries a 20 Year Guarantee on both the materials and also the workmanship, something which we had requested in order to ensure good stewardship and some peace of mind for Committee for the foreseeable future.

The approved cost for these works was £26,200, and the project was completed in three weeks on time and within budget.

Property Account

These projects were only made possible through the generous giving of you, Streat's members, to the Property Account. Our property team demonstrate good stewardship by striving to achieve good value for money solutions but we also recognise the significant rise in construction-related costs over the past 3 years.

We all benefit week in / week out from excellent, well-maintained facilities in Streat but the expenditure of the past 7 months has made a significant dent in the Property Account and we would therefore appeal to you to continue to remember the ongoing demands of our premises in your generous giving, as we seek to ensure that our church, halls and grounds are structurally safe and up to standard, and enjoyable for all to use.

As ever we would also welcome your support through your skills and knowledge of property matters; do let us know if you have this background and would like to be part of Streat's Property team. We are grateful for the ongoing leadership of Stephen Wilson (Convenor), Sam Young, Michael Brown, Graham Scandrett, Andy Gillespie and Chris Irvine.

Stephen Boyle (Elder)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Antiques and Collectables Fair

On Saturday 28th October 2023

From 10am - 4pm

Refreshments will be available to purchase

Proceeds are in aid of church funds and missions



Saturday Coffee Mornings 10:00am – 12:00noon

- 2nd September - Thrive Ireland
- 16th September - Youth Fellowship
- 7th October - Friends of Ards Hospital
- 21st October - PanC NI (Eileen Bell)
- 4th November - Diabetes UK (Martin & Alison Conroy)
- 18th November - G.B.
- 2nd December - Christmas Sale

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Minister: Rev. Jeff McWatters 077 9955 2804 or 9181 3374

E-mail: jmcwatters@presbyterianireland.org

Clerk of Session: Mr Wallace McKee 07985 085527

Church Co-ordinator: Barbara McCartney office@strean.org

Church Office: Tel No 9181 6225 9.00am - 12.45pm Monday - Friday

Website: www.strean.org

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