



“LET HIS LIGHT SHINE”

Winter 2023



Matthew 2vs2

“Where is the new born King of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose and we have come to worship Him.”

SPECIAL SERVICES IN DECEMBER & JANUARY

Sunday 3rd December	11am: Christmas Tree Service
Sunday 17th December	11am: All-age Service with Discovery Kids 6.30pm: “Candlelit” Carol Service
Monday 25th December	10.30am: Christmas Day Service
Sunday 7th January	11am: Communion

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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.

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We live in times of constant change. Twice a year we change the settings on our watches and clocks. The extra hour that we gain in bed on the Sunday that the clocks “fall back”, is traded off against darker mornings and evenings. Some people don’t enjoy the lack of daylight, our bodies miss the sunlight as they are unable to make the same amount of vitamin D. Others enjoy pulling the curtains, switching on the lights, and lighting the stove. We are all different.



Some changes are for the best, others we worry about. We are concerned about how the world around us appears to be moving further away from God. Churches are struggling to get people to gather together on a Sunday for a time of corporate worship. And yet we have more opportunities to share the good news about God because of the internet and the streaming of services.

Perhaps we are troubled by the fact that we are different from others. We compare ourselves to those who are around us, wishing that we were more like that person we look up to. We allow these thoughts to occupy our time and we start to distance ourselves from those who are around us.

If you are feeling this way or if you are troubled by the changes that you see around you, then I would ask you to stop and to think about this.

We are fast approaching Christmas, the shops are full of decorations, and I am sure that some people have already started to stock the freezer with food. But Christmas is not about food, decorations, and gifts. Christmas is about change and being different.

Jesus left the glory of heaven to be born in a dirty, smelly stable. Jesus left his position at the right hand of God to become the adopted son of a carpenter. When he started his time of ministry Jesus became homeless, being reliant upon the hospitality of others. And then Jesus went from being the person who was followed by thousands to being the person who was nailed to a cross, not because he had done something wrong, but because of our sin.

Jesus accepted and embraced God’s plan for his life and all the changes it would bring. He did this because of the great love that both God and Jesus have for you. He did this so that you could be called a child of God. So, it poses the question, are you willing to accept and embrace change? You need to realise the need for God in your life and that His presence will change your life. Suddenly the differences that you see when you compare yourself to others become the unique way that God created you for His glory. Now being different has meaning and purpose; everything starts to make sense.

That first Christmas I am sure the shepherds on the hillside didn’t grasp what was happening around them. But as they reflected later in life they understood. Perhaps this Christmas will be the first time you start to understand the reason for your uniqueness. Perhaps this Christmas you will start to see God guiding and directing you, moulding you into the person He wants you to be, a person who trusts that God has always had a place for you in His wonderful creation.

Matthew 2:11-12 “Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Jeff

CHURCH MEMBER RECORDS AUGUST - NOVEMBER 2023

BAPTISMS

8th October - Harry George Rory Swann

DEATHS

12th November - Mr Eddie Mills please pray for Eddie's wife Amy and the whole family circle at this sad and difficult time.



Lisa and Jonny Swann with their sons Harry, Sebastian and Jack as Harry (left) was brought for Baptism.

On Sunday evening 10th September, Streaton hosted an Ards Presbytery service when the moderator The Very Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney preached.

Pictured from left to right; The Very Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney, Rev Neil Stewart (Moderator of Presbytery), Rev Mairisine Stanfield, Rev Jeff McWatters and Rev John Flaherty (Clerk of Presbytery).

THANK YOU



■ Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to the **Blythwood Christmas Shoebox Appeal**. Special mention goes to the ladies of our ■ Crafts Class who work so hard knitting scarfs and hats every year for the boxes. This year they will ■ be distributed to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, ■ Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. ■ A total of 50 boxes were sent.

■ These gifts are going to people that have so little and many of the things we take for granted e.g. ■ soap, toothpaste a warm hat and scarf, will seem ■ like luxuries to people living in poverty.

ARDS PRESBYTERY INSTALLED AND ORDAINED EIGHT NEW ELDERS



Members of Ards Presbytery, joined with our Congregation, along with visitors and family members of our eight new elders on Friday 15th September at 7:00pm for a service of ordination and installation. Please pray for our new elders, Heather, Phil, Stephanie, Robin, Joanne, Morris, Graham and Rosemary as they take on this new role.



Phil Baron

I have been a member of Streaton for 50 years. Over those years I have seen many changes in church life, in particular from the more formal approach of the 70's and 80's to today's more relaxed, welcoming and open approach where all members of the church are truly a family. I feel blessed that members of our church family have placed their trust in me in becoming an Elder.

The challenges for Christians in our town and around God's creation remain huge. Focusing on present times Colossians 3 : 15 is most relevant, "And let the peace that comes from Christ rule your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace and always be thankful".



Stephanie Baron

I have been a member of Streaton all my life and there has been a long family connection with it for over 100 years. My husband Phil and I were married there in 1973 and he also then became a member. I sang in the choir for many years and was involved in the Girls Brigade as a Lieutenant and then Captain. I am involved in P.W. and Tots & Toddlers.

On a Sunday I help lead the praise alongside Morris. I feel blessed to belong to such a warm and welcoming church and I am honoured to have been called to the Eldership. I pray with God's help I will be equipped to serve the congregation of Streaton and the wider community. Philippians 4 V13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.



Robin Kennedy

I have been attending Strean since 2010 after a recommendation from my neighbour and dear friend Maud Kells. On entering the church, I was given a very warm welcome by Audrey Moorehead and instantly I felt a connection to Strean. My wife, Ann and I became members of the church and were married by Jeff in 2018. I have been involved with youth club and the community drop in and look forward to the new challenges ahead.

I was extremely humbled when Jeff told me I had received votes to become an elder. Although I had doubts as to whether I was good enough for this role I feel privileged and blessed to be given the opportunity to serve God and the Strean family.

One of my favourite verses in the Bible is 1 Peter 4vs10 *“Each of you should use whatever gift you receive, you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of Gods grace in its various forms”*.



Morris McAllister

I am married to Margaret for 52 years and we have 2 grown up children, Stuart and Louise. I returned to Strean after an absence of some years and was immediately taken with the warmth of the genuine welcome I received. I was also greatly impressed with Strean's spiritual energy and the unity of purpose amongst the church leadership. After enthusiastic encouragement from an old friend and long term member, I felt led to make Strean my spiritual home. I have not for one moment regretted that decision. I have served on Committee, am active in the Friday Small Group Bible Study and help with worship at church services.

When, following the election, Jeff asked me if I would be prepared to serve as an elder, I was taken aback, much surprised and truly humbled. When I had time to assimilate what he had told me, reality of the size of the task sunk in, I told him that I was fast-approaching the ripe old age of 75 and doubted that I had the energy needed. Jeff reminded me that Moses was

80 when God called him to take on the immense task of leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt. That put the proposition into its proper perspective.

I realise that the role presents a huge responsibility and I have no doubt that there will be many difficult challenges ahead. I freely admit that I cannot possibly fulfil this role on my own. But as Jeff so rightly pointed out, *Whom God calls He also equips*. So, I will hold fast to this promise and will commit myself to continually seeking God's help and constantly praying for his strength and guidance to enable me to faithfully serve the Strean family who have so graciously put their trust in me.



Joanne Harris

Our family joined Strean 9 years ago. We were looking for a family orientated church and we couldn't have received a warmer welcome from our very first week here. We quickly settled and became involved in church life. We're called to use our gifts and talents to serve God and, as a primary school teacher, I've always felt led to volunteer in children's work. I started teaching in the Sunday School just after we joined Strean and took on the role of superintendent a couple of years later. I've also been involved with Holiday Bible Club for the past 8 years and look forward to being part of the team each summer.

I felt humbled and a little daunted when Jeff first spoke to me about becoming an elder but I know that if God has called us, he will equip us. I'm looking forward to working alongside Session.

My favourite Bible verses since my young teenage years have been Romans 8:38&39, where we are reminded that absolutely nothing could ever stop God from loving us.

Heather Faloon (Installed)



I joined Strean church about 15 years ago with my husband Stuart and 2 small children, Alexandra and Andrew. We were immediately welcomed as a family and felt that this was a place where we could grow in our faith. In 2012 I became ill and I really saw faith in action with so many in the congregation praying for me and helping out practically. When I gave up work 6 years ago, I knew I wanted to give more to the church and I currently lead tots and toddlers and help out at Summer Blitz. Although I was previously an elder in another church I felt God was calling me to take on this role again- a new chapter on my faith journey. The words of Isaiah 43:1-3 have kept me going over the years, especially v1 *'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you, I have summoned you by name; you are mine'*.

Rosemary Black



I joined Strean about 48 years ago with my husband John, when our eldest daughter was a baby. Over the years we have been blessed with three grown-up daughters Johanne, Janice and Julia, as well as three wonderful grandchildren Lewis, Sara and Ezra.

Growing up in a Christian family I was always aware of the importance of using my gifts and talents to serve God and the first group that I joined was the Young Womens' Group (YWG). I will always remember the friendliness of the ladies and especially the radiant smile on Esme Moore's face as she welcomed me on my first night. Over the years I have been involved with YWG, PW, BB, Tots & Toddlers, Sunday School, Creche, Pastoral Care Team, served on Committee and currently am Newsletter Editor. However, when Jeff spoke to me about becoming an Elder I was humbled and also hesitant questioning "Was I good enough?", "Am I spiritual enough?" "I'm too old?". Through reflection on Jeff's sermons leading up to and following the election of Elders, reading God's word and praying I felt reassured to take the next steps.

Proverbs 3vs 5&6 have always been a constant through out my Christian journey, *'Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight'*.

Graham Scandrett



After meeting Deborah, my introduction to Strean was through the badminton club and not long afterwards attending church on the odd Sunday. Whether it was Thursday night, Sunday morning or even running a leg of the Belfast marathon in the Strean Relay Team, I was always made very welcome.

I joined Strean shortly after Deborah and I married in 2003, we have two boys, Harry and Ben, both enjoy Strean's organisations including the BB and Youth Club. Between 2008 and 2018, as a family we ventured overseas, living in both Georgia, USA where we were invited by neighbours to join McDonough Presbyterian Church who also provided early years pre-schooling for our boys. We moved back to Newtownards for 2 years before moving again, this time to Dubai, UAE.

After returning home to Ards, both Deborah and I began helping out with YC, I joined the Audio-Visual Team, became involved in the AV and Property sub-committees and found myself engaging more in church life. I was very humbled when my name was put forward as the role of elder and had thinking to do. A verse I came upon which I connected with was: *Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB 2023 - 'DISCOVERY ZONE'



Holiday Bible Club was back with a bang this year, quite literally! We entered the "Discovery Zone" Science lab, greeted each day by Professor Drew and his merry band of Scientists. Throughout the week we explored some of the big science questions, the wonder of colour, the wonder of discovery, and could robots exist. We had lots of fun with 80 boys and girls each morning, with stories, dramas, games and crafts. We learned from the stories of the Parable of the Lost Son, Jesus healing a blind man and delved into some of the Psalms. A lot of great times were had every day during the sessions.

As a team, our church really came together.



A massive thank you is needed for all those who helped in so many different ways. From providing juice and biscuits for daily snacks, to welcoming the children and their families each morning, from praying for the sessions as they took place to telling the stories or leading the games. Team Stream really swung into action and we had the best week of fellowship and serving together. We would love you to prayerfully consider jumping on board with us next summer!
(Week beginning 5th August 2024)



Kirsty Patton

SUMMER BLITZ 2023



The following is a reflection on 3 brilliant days in late July for 40 of Streat's young people, as they took part in our third Summer Blitz programme.

A few of our leaders along with 12 of the young people conducted an "ideas workshop" as part of a grant funding application and this generated two great activities to add to our programme this year. Summer Blitz is a 3-day, high intensity outdoor activity programme for young people who are all connected to Streat through BB, GB, Youth Club and Youth Fellowship. The purpose of Blitz is to re-connect our young people, to stretch and challenge them through a variety of experiences, to get alongside them, and to share God's Word and Love with them over the 3 days.

DAY ONE found us in sunny Bangor, using the halls of First Bangor Presbyterian as our base. Our group were kitted out with bright green Blitz t-shirts, and no matter where you were in the town on 24th July you were sure to spot some of our group. We split into Junior and Senior groups. The Juniors enjoyed our best ever paddle boarding experience in Bangor Marina with the multi-talented instructors from Active Adventure NI, whilst the Seniors undertook the dry land activities of Urban Orienteering and the Grub Crawl Challenge.

Following a tasty lunch, during which Joy Scott's baking talents were discovered by the young people, the two groups swapped activities for the afternoon. Jeff led the devotions based on aspects of Jesus' life, and a very happy group headed for home after an excellent first day.

DAY TWO was an early start. Jeff took our "thought for the day devotion" before we boarded a hired coach and headed to a sunny Castlewellan Forest Park for a day in the very capable hands of LIFE Adventure. Our group enjoyed kayaking on the lake, archery and mountain biking in equal measure, and we were mightily impressed with the quality of the equipment provided for us and also the standard of the tuition. We ate an enormous quantity of food at lunchtime as we soaked up the sunshine and rested some weary bodies. As our day drew to an end we ventured into the magnificent Maze, and all managed to get completely lost within its high hedges. Suddenly the heavens opened and the ensuing downpour saw us all rushing to the shelter of the coach.

We would have loved to have bottled up some of the 'craic' on the journey back, as the young people swapped stories of their day!



DAY THREE was an afternoon programme, all based in Streen. We laid on a freestyle footballing Irish champion no less, who taught some of the group some of his tricks. We also brought back our boxing coaching friends from Kings ABC who put the whole group through a tough session, helping the group discover personal abilities which some had perhaps not appreciated before. As ever, the lead coach Mark delivered a powerful devotion about commitment and personal faith.

The third activity on offer, and which proved to be very popular, was a contemporary craft session in the Children's Room. This was planned and led by Heather and her sister Anne, who re-arranged holiday time to come over from Scotland, bringing

with her a vast array of craft materials and items. The concentration in that room all afternoon was something else!! (and the end products were pretty good too!!)

The day ended with our (now) traditional Barbeque, with the meats all cooked to perfection by Warren Boal and Graham Scandrett. The group had bonded so well that they pleaded with us for a DAY FOUR and to keep the momentum going as long as it could.

A few special memories

- Those green t-shirts swarming all over Bangor
- The group of younger boys who solved one of the Urban Adventure challenges (pose beside a posh car) by going into Sammy Mellon's car showroom and asking the salesman to let them pose next to the most expensive car on display.
- Dawne and Kirsty completing the Tour de Castlewellan on their mountain bikes
- Conor's mum contacting us a few days later to ask for Joy's recipe for caramel squares
- The constant rain on Day Three, when we had already planned to be indoors anyway. We barely noticed that it was raining!!

Thanks

To our fantastic leadership team of Heather, Kirsty, Lauren, Joy, Dawne, Jeff and Carl – who all gave unselfishly of their time to help deliver what we all agreed was our best Blitz yet!

To Sandra, Deborah, Alison, Warren, Graham and a few others who kept us so well fed and watered over the three days

To our Bowling Club and Craft Class for their very generous financial donations which helped cover the costs for Day 1 of Blitz

And to our exceptional young people who developed a new strapline for Streen – Let His Light Smile!!!

Finally, to Christ, for so many blessings and answers to prayer both in the lead up to Blitz and during our 3 days. One example of this relates to Day 2. We had a booking in place from August 2022 to spend Day 2 with Clearsky Adventure at Castleward. Then, with one week to go, the lead instructor from Clearsky contacted me to explain that he was seriously ill and that they were going to have to cancel our booking. Within 24 hours, following a lot of interaction between our leaders and a lot of prayer, we had managed to book a full day of great activities with Life Adventure in Castlewellan Forest Park. It was the only availability which they had in that entire week. That got us back on track. An answer to prayer!!



REFLECTION OF MY TRIP TO TANZANIA - ALEX FALOON

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

I had always wanted to do something like this at some point in my life. When I heard about Go MAD and what I would be doing, I knew I would love doing everything they described.



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

The two main ones were having two references from teachers, places where you volunteered etc. and to raise some money. The money would be used for all of the different work Go MAD do while out there, such as the tree planting projects, menstruation packs, building projects and medical work.



What were the main objectives once you arrived in Musoma?

The main objective was to build goat sheds and water tanks, as well as helping with other projects that they were currently and continuously working on such as a dam, a hospital and kids club & leprosy community visits. The work that I did while I was there was building a goat shed for a family, building a water tank for a community who had raised money to build a hospital with Go MAD's help which was almost finished. Finish the building of a dam, visit the kids club & nursery in a local village and visit a leprosy community where due to the disease, families are exiled into communities where everyone lives together. Most of these places very remote only accessed via rough dirt roads, other than the people who live there no one else comes due to the rough terrain, the land rovers we were in often struggled with some of the roads as well.

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

The trip has shown me that people can be happy with so little compared to people here in the west who complain about such meaningless things, I always saw people smiling and waving at us. Some of the work we did also impacted the community for example when it was built the water tank provides them with much cleaner water during the dry season which means that people do not have to drink the dirty water that I saw others drinking. The goat shed also helps because with the goat shed we built, they also get 'Irish' goats, which produce more milk compared to the Tanzanian goats this provides the families with a continuous income from the goat's milk.



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

Absolutely do it you will not regret it; I have made so many new friends from the trip that I didn't know and probably wouldn't have met any other way than doing this. It also was a great way to just relax and not worry because there was no phone service, everyone talked to each other and played games rather than just sitting on their phones not interacting with each other.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NEW EVENT ON TUESDAY AFTERNOONS

The welcome Area will be open on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays 2-4pm, every month for Coffee, Cake and fellowship.

All Church members are warmly invited, to come along with their friends and family.



DECEMBER 2023

Men's Fellowship Dinner Thursday 7th December at 7pm, Clandeboye Golf Club

PW Christmas Craft Thursday 7th December at 7.30pm in the Adgey Hall

Ladies Coffee in the Welcome Area on Wednesday 13th December at 10.30am

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2024

Ladies Dinner Thursday 11th January at 7.30, Clandeboye Golf Club

PW Lunch Sunday 28th January, after the morning service

PW Service Sunday 25th February at 11am

G.B. Breakfast Saturday 10th February 8-11am

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

20th January – Discovery Sunday School

3rd February – The Link Family Centre

16th March – Craft Class

6th April – Marie Curie Cancer Care