

Let His Light Shine



DECEMBER 2021 UPDATE

If you have any specific requests for prayer, please contact our Minister, Jeff McWatters, on 07799552804. In addition, if there are any situations that arise for which you need practical support, please contact Jeff or our Clerk of Session, Fiona, on 07974180321, or your elder.

Send your e-mail address to office@strean.org to receive a weekly e-mail which will include prayer points and announcements.

For the most up-to-date information check our Facebook page or phone the church office.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MANSE

It is hard to believe that Christmas is nearly upon us! It is lovely to see the Christmas tree in church and to be singing Christmas Carols. I like the tradition of having an Advent wreath in church and lighting the candles each Sunday.

The four candles around the outside represent hope, joy, peace, and love; the candle in the centre represents the birth of Jesus. This year, more than ever, it is so important to remember the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. When the angels appeared to the shepherds, they brought this message "Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" Luke 2 v 11. This message is personal as Jesus has been born for you. Again, this Christmas so many of us are struggling to have hope as we see all that is happening in the world around us. But when we realise that Jesus was born for us, then we know that God is on our side; no matter what comes our way, God is with us.

Often we use the word hope nearly as a last attempt that all will go well. Hope in God is completely different. Hope in God is a guarantee from the promises in His word that we can always trust Him. God doesn't break His promises, He never lets us down. God promised us a Saviour, His son Jesus. That is what Christmas is all about. This Christmas I pray that you would know joy, love, and peace from God and that you would have hope in Jesus.

Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Jeff

DROP-OFF DAYS

Thank you for your ongoing support. We plan to continue our monthly drop-off mornings next year. As well as church envelopes, you have continued to provide many items for the Foodbank and, in addition, there were special collections in November:

Smarties tubes filled with 20p coins to sponsor Heidi:

Tots & Toddlers have been sponsoring Heidi for the last 11 years, through Compassion, and the annual cost is £300. We have been able to more than cover this annual amount from the special Smarties tube collection. Please return your Smarties tubes as soon as possible, even if they are only partially filled, either in the collection plate, at the next drop-off morning or to the church office.



Blythswood Christmas Shoebox Appeal:

66 filled shoeboxes were sent at the beginning of November, for distribution in Eastern Europe.

Belfast City Mission Christmas Gift Appeal:

once again, your generosity will make a huge difference to many families this Christmas.

The next drop-off is on **Thursday 16th December** from 10am-12noon and we are supporting:
Presbyterian Children's Society
Presbyterian World Development Appeal
Newtownards Food Bank



GENERAL INFORMATION

At the end of November, in response to the developing situation with the covid-19 pandemic, Session made several changes to keep everyone safe.

1. In line with government policy masks must be worn while inside the building, throughout any service or organisation activity, unless medically exempt and children under the age of 13.
2. Tea and coffee is not served after our services.
3. The church office will be available only by appointment on Tuesday to Thursday. Normal office hours are 9.15am-12.45pm on Monday to Friday, but please phone rather than call in if possible. The office will be closed from Thursday 23rd December to Monday 3rd January 2022 inclusive.
4. All organisations finished meeting by Friday 10th December. Leaders will be contacting members with their re-start date sometime in the new year.

Session will review the situation again in January. Updates will be announced at the start of Sunday morning worship and will be available on the church website and Facebook.

UPCOMING SERVICES

Sunday 19th December @11am: Family Carol Service

Saturday 25th December @10.30am: Informal Christmas Day Service

There will be no in-person service on Sunday 26th December; a pre-recorded message will be available on Facebook from 10am onwards.

Sunday 2nd January 2022 @11am: Rev. Jim Campbell

Sunday 9th January 2022 @11am: communion



TOTS & TODDLERS

On a very wet and blustery day, thanks to Storm Barra, it was lovely to be able to have our Christmas party. As well as festive snacks, carols and a short Christmas message, the children were given a present by our special visitor.