

CONTACT

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The Rector's Christmas Message

Why do they always turn up at Christmas? We manage to avoid them all year and suddenly there they are on your plate! Have you guessed yet what I am getting at? Oh yes, it's Brussel sprouts! Isn't it true that Christmas can be a bit like that, full of the same old routines? Somehow it leaves you thinking that something is missing.

Yes, Christmas is coming. How could you miss not knowing.? All the signs are there that Christmas is getting closer and closer. It can't be far away now...can it?

Christmas, like some foodstuffs we know, isn't to everyone's taste. To some, Christmas is everything good about life – giving, having fun and good food.. For others, it's a nightmare – stress, debt, arguments and often loneliness. Maybe that's because our version of a 21st century Christmas has left God out and all we're left with are the wrappings and trappings.

Christians celebrate Christmas because we believe it pinpoints a life-changing point in the history of this world – that God came to planet Earth and was born as a vulnerable, tiny baby. A baby that grew into a man whose life, death and resurrection changed life as we know it forever. His teachings have changed millions of lives. His death and resurrection mean forgiveness for the past, strength to live in the present and a real, solid hope for the future.

But what about the coming of Jesus? I mean His coming again at the end of the world to wrap up world history as we know it and to call us to give account of our lives to His Father.

Look around you at what is happening in our world – floods, earthquakes, famines and disasters. Our world is in chaos and all the signs are there if we really want to look. They are all spoken about clearly in the Bible. As these things increase in pace, it is a clear warning to us that the end is getting nearer and the coming of Jesus is getting closer than ever. Let us not get so wrapped in the hustle and bustle of everyday life and living for the here and now. Make room in your hearts this Christmas to ask the really important question? What is this life all about anyway?

Rediscover Jesus this Christmas, the one who is the prince of Peace and the King of Kings.

This Christmas, may you all know the peace and presence of the Living Jesus.

Warmly yours,

Arthur

Christmas and New Year Services

Sunday 18th December

11.30 a.m. Family Service led by The Sunday School

6.30 p.m. Nine Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve 24th December

11.15 p.m. Holy Communion

Christmas Day 25th December

10.30 a.m. Family Service

New Year's Eve 31st December

11.30 p.m. United Watchnight Service in St Paul's Church, Gilford

New Year's Day 1st January

11.30 a.m. Holy Communion

Divine Healing Services

8th January 2006 – The Rev Pat Mollan Churches Ministry of Healing

5th February 2006 – The Rev Alvin Little Shore Street Pres. Church, Donaghadee

5th March 2006 - The Rev Thomas Allen Waringstown Parish Church

All of these services will commence at 6.30pm.

We would encourage more people to come along and experience the healing and strengthening mercies of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, God
help us rightly to remember
the birth of Jesus,
that we may share
in the songs of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and the worship of the Wise Men.

May Christmas morning
make us happy to be your children.
Amen

Christmas Memories

Christmas is a time for memories,
a time for recalling the scenes and happenings
that are treasured always in our hearts.
It is also a time for love and generosity of spirit
a time for renewing family ties and
friendships,
and for exchanging the thoughts, events,
kind deeds and observances that have added
to the true meaning and happiness of life.

Author Unknown

Time to Serve

CMS Ireland have a range of short term opportunities which will enable people to become active in mission.

STEPS (Short Term Experience Placements) give people the chance to offer themselves for overseas service for periods from 1 month to 1 year.

Following training here in Ireland, individuals are placed in one of our partner projects with a work programme tailored to their specific gifts and abilities. Each of these placements is unique, set up to match particular talents, needs and callings. Anything from accounting to youth work, computers to nursing, teaching to building skills, can be put to use.

If you would like to learn more about these opportunities to be in mission with CMS Ireland why not complete the TELL ME MORE CARD which can be found on the table at the back of the church or contact **Isabel Whiteside**.

The Men's Fellowship

The new season of the Fellowship commenced on Tuesday 15 **September** for a joint meeting with the Women's Fellowship when the guest speaker was Baroness May Blood.

Baroness Blood gave an interesting, informative and often very amusing talk on life in the Shankhill area of Belfast. She painted a very vivid picture of the difficulties experienced there when "the troubles" were at their height. It was also interesting to hear her describe her life's journey which has taken her from the Shankhill Road to the House of Lords.

October saw our members back on the road again when they travelled to Ballywalter to play with boys' toys – quad racing. It is very true that men never grow up. Some excellent racing skills were revealed by some of our group. Jonathan Walker displayed great natural skill in somersaulting not once but twice off the track. The jury is still out on whether this was due to the failing light or the dirty tricks of a member of the bowling club.

After the racing we all enjoyed an excellent supper supplied by Mr & Mrs Victor Harrison in Ballywalter Masonic Hall.

The guest speaker for the **November** meeting was the Reverend Ian Gamble, Rector of Donaghadee Parish who spoke to us on his service in Afghanistan as a Chaplain in the T.A. He illustrated his talk with slides and highlighted the poor living conditions. He also outlined the problems faced by those who try to practise the Christian faith in a Muslim country.

The Reverend Gamble spoke not only of his work with members of the British Army but also with other coalition forces. He told of his ministry to the Spanish Army Chaplain when he lost 85 men in a plane crash as they prepared to return home after a tour of duty.

Our next meeting is the Christmas dinner on 13 **December** in the Bannville Hotel. The after dinner speaker will be Tyrone Howe, former Ulster and Ireland Rugby player and Banbridge District Councillor. If you would like to attend please contact William Robinson, Billy Aughey or Sam Walker.

Our **January** meeting will be on Tuesday, 17 January 2006 when Canon George Little will speak on Christianity and the Loyal Orders.

Sam Walker – Secretary

The Women's Fellowship

The **September** Meeting was jointly held with the Men's Fellowship when the guest speaker was Baroness May Blood. Baroness Blood talked to us about her Belfast background and the procedure which was involved in taking her seat in the House of Lords.

In **October** the ladies enjoyed a lovely evening with each member bringing along an article to be auctioned and also reading out a verse of scripture relevant to the article. We had a large variety of items ranging from pots of herbs to jars of honey and candles. Our auctioneer for the evening was Betty Jones who used her gavel to good effect.

The Reverend Neil Cutcliffe was our guest speaker in **November**. He spoke on his collection of bottles and jars and illustrated his talk with some of his collection of 9,000 bottles.

He had bottles of varying sizes, shapes and colours. Some of these had been dug up in the most unlikely places. In sharing his interest in bottles he also spoke to us about Faith, Prayer, Sharing and Anger.

On 8th **December** we hope to go to Ella's Barn in Caledon for a meal followed by a cookery demonstration.

Our **January** meeting is entitled 'Healthy Eating' when Jacky Murphy from Chapman's Farm Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Store will be along to enlighten us.

All ladies in the Parish are warmly invited to come along to our meetings. We would love to see you and promise to make you most welcome.

Heather Hanna – Secretary

N.B. For those going to Ella's Barn, please note that the bus will leave from Tullylish Church at 6.00 p.m.

Also, please note that the visit to the Pantomime in Portadown will be on Thursday 26th January 2006 and NOT 19th January as was originally planned.

A Thank You Letter from South Africa

In June of this year we held a very enjoyable evening of Midsummer Music to raise funds for The Murchison Hospital in South Africa where Jane Glass had spent some time as part of her Final Year Medical Studies. The amount raised was almost £,500. (5646-50 South African Rand)

Below is part of the letter which Jane recently received acknowledging receipt of this gift.

Murchison Hospital
Port Shepstone
4240
13 October 2005

Dear Jane,

Thanks for the magnificent cheque for R5646-50. That is incredibly generous of you and those who raised and gave the money. A "midsummer coffee and music evening" sounds absolutely great. The better you played, the more they gave? But perhaps it doesn't work like that. Anyway, please say a very big Thank You to everyone who had a hand in it, on behalf of the many disadvantaged and vulnerable young and old people who will benefit from it.

We will discuss together how it should be used, but my first thought would be to use it towards the support of a small struggling organisation called Ntokozweni, some 20 kms up inland from here. It looks after orphaned children, and also a number of rejected old people. I have a lot of time for the organisation, and admire the tenacity and dedication of those in charge. I hope that will be OK. Ntokozweni works together with ourselves in the hospital as we refer patients to it, and I have full confidence that the money would be well used.

Life here is as busy as ever. Maternity numbers especially, have increased dramatically as we have increased the size of our drainage area. Now the doctors are squealing about too much night work! Familiar? Next year we are getting two extra Community Service Doctors, so that should ease the burden a bit.

Thanks again for your generosity and thoughtfulness.

With all our Murchison love!
Terry Gilpin.

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."
And he replied, "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!"
So I went forth and finding the Hand of God, trod safely into the night.

M. Louise Haskins (1875-1957)

M. Louise Haskins (1875-1957)

Winter

If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant.
If we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.

Ann Bradstreet