



First Larne Presbyterian Church

Bridge News

Worship God, Build His Kingdom, Share His Love

What will you do in 22?



Read the Bible more?



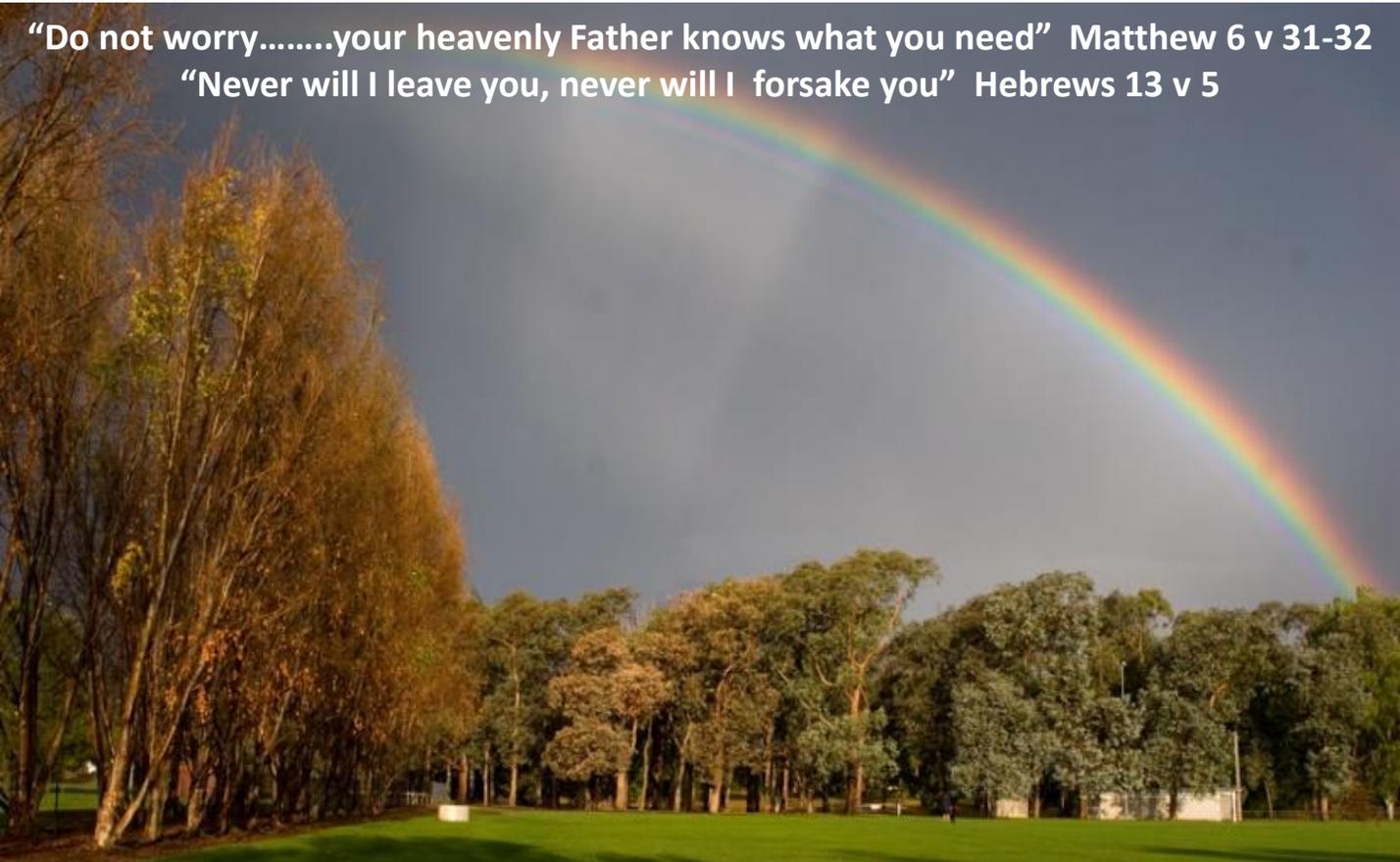
Help someone you do not know?



Learn an instrument?

“Do not worry.....your heavenly Father knows what you need” Matthew 6 v 31-32

“Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you” Hebrews 13 v 5



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Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104895)



SAFE CHURCH



COLIN'S COLUMN

2022 – QUESTION TIME?

Most of us believe that the Bible is full of answers – and it is. However, it is also packed with good, searching and indispensable questions.

The central characters thrust into the Christmas story pose some understandable questions. When Zechariah, the elderly priest husband of elderly Elizabeth, is confronted with an angel informing him that they are to give birth to a son named John he asks, “How can I be sure of this?”

When Elizabeth’s young unmarried cousin Mary is also taken by surprise by an angel, informing her that she will be having a son, the “Son of the Most High”, you can forgive her for being somewhat curious. Whatever her standard of education she would have known enough biology to know a thing or two about making babies. “How will this be?” was a fair question from a girl in her position.

Read on in the Gospels and discover Jesus is full of questions. Even as a boy He was found among the scholars in the temple “listening to them and asking them questions” (Luke 2 v.46) – and they were amazed at the answers He gave (v.47). Someone calculated that Jesus asked 307 questions in the Gospels and only answered 3 of the 183 questions He was asked. There was even one question He did not have the answer to. “No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Mark 13 v.32)

Jesus deals in questions of all sorts. Some are easily answered: “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?” (Matthew 5 v.13)

Some seem to have no obvious answer: “‘Why do you call me good?’ Jesus answered. ‘No one is good – except God alone.’”

Jesus even answers questions with questions of His own, sometimes to get His audience thinking, sometimes to drive home a point, “‘Two people owed money to a certain money-lender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?’” (Luke 7 v.42)

Or sometimes Jesus’ answers expose hypocrisy and duplicity, “They came to him and said, ‘Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the poll-tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn’t we?’ (Mark 12 v.14-15). “ Jesus, knowing they are determined to trip Him up, deflects this testing questioning with another of His questions. He holds up a coin and asks, ‘Whose likeness and inscription is this?’ Instead of backing Him into a corner Jesus’ response challenges them to get their priorities right – “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

You can observe Jesus asking questions to confer dignity on a person – people otherwise despised, ostracised and marginalised like the Samaritan woman at the well or the well-off little tax collector, Zacchaeus.

As I write this piece in early November we are hoping this Christmas and New Year will have the opportunities for gatherings of family and friends we so missed last year. When we do come together the hospitality and food we share usually means some of us spending a lot of time in the kitchen. However, the organising and preparation has been somewhat eased by the presence of the ubiquitous microwave oven.



Thank Isidor Isaac Rabi for that – at least in part. This American physicist won the Nobel Prize in 1944 for his discovery of nuclear magnetic resonance, used in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).



How valuable a tool are MRI scans in our doctors' diagnostic armoury? In association with others Isidor Rabi's work contributed to the domestication of the science that eventually produced the microwave oven.



Rabi was once asked by a friend how he became a scientist. Rabi replied that every day after school his mother would be interested in how his day went. However, she was not so much interested in what he had learned that day, but she always

enquired, "Did you ask a good question today?" "Asking good questions made me become a scientist," claimed Rabi.

As we warily, and perhaps wearily, approach Christmas 2021 and anticipate New Year 2022, we know from recent arduous experience that we do not have all the answers. Indeed, we still face a series of challenging and searching questions presented by, amongst others, the pandemic, Brexit and the climate crisis. The future would seem to promise more that is very disruptive and unsettling.

So maybe this is the time for us to take the initiative and ask some good questions!

If we refer to the Bible hoping to find some answers and some direction we quickly are confronted with

episode after episode of God's people facing into big challenges, big disruptions and consequently, big questions. We are not the first generation wondering and wandering for answers!

To keep our sermons and Bible studies focused we may incline to look at specific chapters and chunks of salvation history – but follow the thread right through the Biblical narrative.

From Exodus through exile even to that first Christmas, when the lives of the characters involved were turned upside down and their world was never the same again, to the experience of the early Church, there was so much that was scary, unexpected and uncomfortable. Whatever our era we prefer the soothing comfort of predictability and the familiar; that gives us a sense of control. Unpredictability induces stress – physical and spiritual – and may cause us to breakdown or breakout in panic.

So maybe this is the time to keep faith and to keep asking questions.

If Scripture is full of God's people facing up to the challenges of big questions it is also littered with cautionary reminders that when His people restrict their religion to what is seen and understood, to what is predictable and cosily familiar, they can so easily miss or complacently ignore the reality of God at work around them. They stop believing, stop looking and stop asking. That is what so obviously happened to the religious leaders at the time of the Incarnation, the first Christmas and the 33 years or so that followed. The long-promised Messiah was right there in front of them and they could not see Him!

When Mary asked her question, "How will this be?" she got a partial answer and part of it was, "**For nothing is impossible with God.**" (Luke 1 v.37)

So, what was her answer to the angel's answer? v.38 "**I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said.**"

In a world so full of big questions what is our answer?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colin D McClure".

Rev. Colin McClure

Climate Crisis – what can we do?

The recent COP 26 Climate conference provided a timely reminder of the inter-connectedness and interdependence of all God has created both in the natural world and in people.

Sharing the produce of our garden and the bounty of the hedgerows with neighbours has brought opportunities again this year to chat and support one another, strengthen our community, and encourage the return to more usual activities and in person worship.

Over the Autumn, we celebrated and gave thanks for the harvest God has provided. In addition, on Climate Sunday we looked seriously at climate issues and how we can respond.

Let us not forget that as followers of Christ, we are blessed to bring blessing and called to share God's love in word and deed with a needy world. As we think of all that took place at the COP 26 conference, may we renew our focus both in prayer and on what we can do personally and in our church to respond to the climate crisis. There are many good resources from Christian organisations available to help us on our journey, a few of which are below.

AROCHA <https://www.arocha.org/en/raise-a-voice-for-the-climate/christian-response-to-climate-change/>

Lausanne Creation Care Network
<https://www.weacreationcare.org/>

ECO Congregation Ireland
<https://www.ecocongregationireland.com/2021>

Operation Noah A Christian response to climate change <https://operationnoah.org>

TEARFUND
<https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/christianity-and-climate-change>

Christian Aid
<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/climate>



Climate Sunday

Tip 1: Reduce your consumption! Do you really need that extra item of clothing? Do you need to make that journey? Are you going to use all that food? Consider buying less, goods that are not wrapped in excessive plastic and utilise refill shops.

Tip 2: Buy Local! Check the label! Where does your food come from? How many air-miles are involved? Try to buy groceries, especially fruit, vegetables and meat products that are produced locally, particularly in the UK and Ireland.

Tip 3: Switch off appliances and lights! We tend to leave things on standby, or leave on lights we don't need. We can save energy consumption by switching off appliances and lights that we're not using.

Tip 4: Turn down the heat and wear another layer of clothes! Do you need all that heat? Putting on an extra layer, a jumper or a fleece can allow you to save electricity, oil or gas and so reduce your carbon footprint.

Tip 5: Use sustainable energy sources! Can you walk, cycle, or use public transport rather than make another car journey? Consider a move to electric or hybrid vehicles. Could you move to wind or solar produced energy?

Tip 6: Reuse plastic! Do you really need another plastic bag? Avoid single-use plastic where at all possible. Carry your own supply of plastic bags when you go shopping. Reutilise plastic containers around the home and in the garden.

Tip 7: Recycle as much as possible! Try to avoid sending anything more than necessary to landfill. A wide range of items can be recycled and most council areas will facilitate this, through collection and amenity sites. It may take extra effort but it's an important habit to develop.

Tip 8: Buy recycled goods! Consider buying items made from recycled plastic, paper, wood and textiles. Perhaps you could do this for your birthday or Christmas gifts?

Tip 9: Avoid excessive chemical usage! We tend to overuse potentially harmful chemicals in the home and garden. Avoid chemicals which can harm wildlife; including bees and butterflies, fish and birds. There are many less-toxic alternatives available. Perhaps you could research these?

Tip 10: Enjoy Creation! God has given us this wonderful world to care for and enjoy. Get out and about and revel in the beauty and diversity of nature, and thank God for His gift!

Weathering the Storm – World Development Appeal 2021

For many communities the combination of the Covid-19 pandemic and the increased uncertainty and extreme weather events caused by climate change, create a perfect storm. Millions of people are struggling to sustain even the most basic of livelihoods. This year the World Development Appeal focuses on two such affected countries.

Ethiopia is the second most populated country in Africa, with around 115 million people, and one of the poorest. Many millions of people have been affected by climate change-induced drought, which has caused failed harvests and loss of livestock. In recent months there has been a rapid increase in Covid-19 cases. Near famine conditions have been compounded by conflict in some areas.

Christian Aid Ireland working with their local partner the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) will provide support to farmers in the communities of Demboya, Lemo, Soro, Mida-Kegn, Berehe and Ambo. There is a shortage of farmland so EECMY works with farmers to best utilise their small plots with the right crops (root veg, cereal crops), and to better manage the soil and water.

On Saturday 14 August 2021, a deadly earthquake struck the southwest peninsula of Haiti in the Caribbean, leaving more than 2,000 people dead and destroyed or damaged more than 70,000 homes. Within the first 10 days after the earthquake Tearfund reached 2,500 people with a food and hygiene kit and 5,250 people benefited from an immediate cash transfer of \$50.



The Haiti project aims to support churches and schools in the departments of Nippes and Artibonite to reduce vulnerability to poverty. This will be achieved through the planting of gardens and trees which can be both a source of income and protect the local environment.



They learn about organic farming, drought resistant crops, managing the land and raising poultry, goats and cows.

Tigest Melese tells her story: “I joined this project two years ago. The training gave me a good understanding of agriculture, ensuring food security. We have been given a variety of root crops including potatoes, sweet potatoes, coffee seeds and avocado. We are growing vegetables and fattening goats, then we sell them. Our greatest achievement is that we can provide healthy food for our children. They are healthy and safe.”



This year please follow Jesus’ advice and support some of the poorest of the poor for whom life is a struggle to meet even their most basic needs.



Weathering the storm

World Development Appeal 2021

International Justice Mission 'IJM' and Modern Slavery

Ben McMechan from IJM was welcomed by Rev Dr Colin McClure to First Larne on 26th September. Ben, the NI Manager of IJM, the world's largest anti-slavery organisation, spoke powerfully in our morning service of modern slavery and our response as Christians.



IJM is a Christian organisation inspired by God's call to love all people and to seek justice for the oppressed. Their work is carried out without regard to religion or any other factor, working alongside all people of goodwill.

Rescue and restore victims

IJM and partners finds the children and families who are victims of violence, forced labour, or sex trafficking. They support local police in rescue operations and help meet the victims' urgent needs, like safe housing, food, medical care, counselling, and education. IJM then walks alongside survivors until they are fully restored.

1st LARNE OLD BOYS' SILVER BAND – 60th ANNIVERSARY

In the new year 1st Larne Old Boys' Silver Band will be celebrating 60 years in existence. The band started life as part of the 1st Larne Boys' Brigade Company and now functions as a band open to all, both male and female.

In its early days the band had a somewhat nomadic existence. Starting out in the back room of a house at Barnhill in 1962. Rehearsals during the first 15 – 20 years were also held in First Larne Guild Room, St Cedma's Parochial Hall, Larne Methodist Church Hall, Rathmore House Boys' Brigade Training Centre and the McGeagh Hall on Victoria Road. When the new First Larne Presbyterian Church was opened the band moved to its present home in the basement of the church.



Bring criminals to justice

IJM and partners makes sure criminals cannot continue to harm vulnerable children, women, and men. They do this by working with local law enforcement in investigating, arresting, and charging slave owners with crimes. Then IJM lawyers and partners continue to fight in courtrooms until those slave owners are put behind bars.

Strengthen justice systems

Slavery still exists because traffickers and abusers can freely exploit people living in poverty. This is possible because police, judges and other officials are not equipped to enforce the laws. IJM provides training, mentoring and support to local law enforcement and other community leaders to slow down and stop the cycle of violence.

Having worked with IJM in Kenya in 2015, I know the value of what IJM do. Ben has left some leaflets about IJM for you to pick up when you come to First Larne. Visit www.ijmuk.org for lots more information and details of how to support their work.



Robin Tweed

As we move towards our 60th year the band would be keen to welcome new members who can play an instrument, for example a trumpet, trombone, tuba, horn or oboe, or who would be willing to learn.

We meet every Monday night at 8pm with a learners' class starting at 7:30 pm.

Anybody wishing to join (including children aged 8 years old and above) would be made most welcome.

Tuition and the use of instruments and sheet music are provided free of charge.

Bill Clements
Chairperson

Women's Circle 60th Anniversary

The Women's Circle celebrated their 60th birthday with a dinner at the Curran Court Hotel on 26th October. With all the Covid-19 issues in the last couple of years this provided a chance for a catch up as well as lots of memories, reminiscences and of course a cake!

Ina Ross



Remembrance 2021



Our neighbours Larne Football Club held their commemoration before the Larne v Crusaders match on 5th November. Taking part were Rev. Ian Cahoon of Alexandra Presbyterian (foreground), Gareth Clements, Chairman of Larne FC and Rev. McClure.

Wreaths were laid on behalf of both clubs and their supporters clubs. Also pictured is William Hollinger who provided the musical accompaniment for the service.



Lest we forget

Time Well Spent in 2022?

If someone observed an average day in your life, how would they see you spend your time? How much of your time is given to TV, Facebook, YouTube, podcasts, hobbies, and housework?

How much time do you devote to Bible reading?

A recent survey of over 11,000 readers established the average amount of time it takes to read various portions of Scripture. The results are shown in the table below. From a couple of minutes to read the second letter of John, 15 minutes to read the Old Testament book of Ruth or Paul's letter to the Philippians, an hour and a half the Gospel of Mark to almost 5 hours to read all the Psalms (OK, maybe you would have to do that over a few days).

So this new year do you have a spare 15 minutes in your day? If you took just 12 minutes per day, you could read the whole Bible in a year. Does that still feel a bit ambitious? In just 6 minutes per day, you could read the entire New Testament over the course of 6 months.

Whatever your pace, the point is to make daily Bible reading a habit. You'll be surprised by how much you can read and how much you can learn over the course of a relatively short period of time!



Time taken to read the book	Old Testament Book	New Testament Book
Less than 5 minutes	Obadiah	Philemon, 2 nd John, 3 rd John, Jude
Up to 15 minutes	Ruth, Joel, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi	Philippians, Colossians, 1 st Thessalonians, 2 nd Thessalonians, 1 st Timothy, 2 nd Timothy, Titus, James, 1 st Peter, 2 nd Peter, 1 st John
15-30 minutes	Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Amos, Micah	Galatians, Ephesians
30-60 minutes	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Hosea, Zechariah	Romans, 1 st Corinthians 2 nd Corinthians, Hebrews
1-2 hours	Joshua, Judges, 2 nd Samuel, Job, Proverbs, Daniel	Mark, John, Revelation
2-3 hours	Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 1 st Samuel, 1 st Kings, 2 nd Kings, 1 st Chronicles, 2 nd Chronicles	Matthew, Luke, Acts
3-4 hours	Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.	
Over 4 hours	Psalms	

We all love the story of the Gingerbread man, and how he comes to life after being baked in the oven, and then has great fun, out running everyone he meets. His downfall however, is trusting the crafty old fox who tricks him! The lesson here is to be careful who you place your trust in! Thankfully we can place our trust in Jesus, our Lord and Saviour to guide and love us every day! Children will have great fun baking their own little gingerbread men this Christmas, and using their imagination, let them get creative by decorating them with little eyes, smiles, buttons and bows

Arlene

Gingerbread men

Makes 15-20 (small ginger bread people)

90g dark muscovado sugar

85g golden syrup

50g butter

175g plain flour, plus extra for rolling

½ teaspoons bicarbonate of soda

2 heaped teaspoons ground ginger

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ egg beaten to decorate

Ready-made writing icing silver balls or coloured mini sweets.



1. Melt the butter in a small saucepan, stir in the muscovado sugar and then the syrup, until well combined, and allow to bubble for a few seconds. Set aside to cool for about 10 minutes.
2. Sieve the flour, bicarbonate of soda and spices into a large bowl. Add the slightly warm syrup mixture and the beaten egg. Stir together until it starts to come together then turn out onto a lightly floured board and gently knead until it forms a smooth streak free dough. Do not over knead. Wrap and chill for 30 mins.
3. Heat the oven to 190 c / Fan 170C / Gas 5 and line two baking trays with baking parchment.
4. Remove the dough from the fridge and allow to come back to room temperature. Roll out until 0.5 cm thick and cut out gingerbread people with a cutter. Re-roll the excess dough and keep cutting until it is all used up.
5. Carefully place the biscuits onto the trays and bake for 8-10 minutes, swapping the trays halfway through cooking. (Do not over bake- they should still feel soft, but will crisp up as they cool.) Cool for 5 minutes on their trays before carefully transferring to a wire cooling tray.
6. Use the ready made icing to decorate the biscuits as you wish and stick on the sweets for buttons. Allow the icing to dry for 1-2 hours



Jax McCallum-Murphy was back in First Larne on 21st November to tell us about the Scripture Union E3 project in East Antrim. Using Psalm 78 v 4 "...we will tell the next generation.." as a text Jax explained how the project seeks to Engage with children and staff in schools to Equip and Empower them to learn and teach the good news about Jesus. You can help SU by

- Praying – SU provide prayers by e-mail or text.
- Connecting – SU welcome volunteers to help in schools and some people from First Larne already do.
- Giving – It costs £33k per year to run each SU project so any gifts are very welcome.

For more details please get in touch by e-mail to Jax@suni.co.uk or mobile 07435 963157. Or check out facebook.com/E3EastAntrim.

The visit also gave First Larne a chance to thank Jax for her 5 years service with us and make a small presentation.



Kirk Session and Committee Report for 2020

Worshipping God, building up His church and sharing His love"

Much energy and commitment over 2020 was given to responding to the effects of the COVID19 pandemic. However, the work and witness of First Larne congregation continued, as we sought in the words of the apostle Paul to: "be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer" (Romans 12:12 NIV).

Let's recall the faithfulness of God over the year despite its many challenges:

- A group of First Larne members and friends led by Rev Dr Colin McClure visited the Holy Land early in 2020. Walking in the footsteps of Jesus was an amazing experience for all who took part.
- The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rev Dr William Henry, led our worship in First Larne on Sunday 9th February as part of his tour of the historic Carrickfergus Presbytery, of which we are a part.
- With the assistance of a generous grant from All Churches Trust to install additional equipment, and the dedication of our Minister and AV team, we streamed services of worship around our congregation, our community and around the world. So valuable when it was not possible to meet physically for worship.
- While our Holiday Bible Club and Community Night were unable to happen in August due to Covid19, our youth and children ministry leaders managed to keep in contact with and support many of our children and families over lockdown.
- First Larne Indoor Bowling Club marked their 60th anniversary.
- Amazing teamwork made the resumption of physical worship services possible. We thank our minister, stewards, AV team members, readers, leaders, volunteers and members who make it possible for worship services to continue week by week. We are also grateful to MEABC for assistance with the cost of sanitising equipment to help keep safe those meeting on our premises.
- Our Staffing Task Group was able to manage staffing matters over the year including the furloughing of staff under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.
- We supported Larne Foodbank as they coped with extra demands for emergency food over the pandemic.

from First Larne members, developed new ways of supporting those in need including the ROC Larne tele-mentoring initiative.

- We compiled another bible verse calendar for senior members including beautiful photographs taken by members and friends of our congregation.
 - The generosity of our Congregation, especially toward the end of the year, enabled First Larne to pull back from a substantial deficit to a positive year end balance as well as meet our United Appeal target of honour for the wider work and witness of PCI.
 - The Charity Commission Report for First Larne Congregation, registered charity number NIC 104895, was submitted to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on time. The report contains both practical and financial information, including our latest accounts, and may be viewed at www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/charity-details/?regid=104895&subid=0 Whilst the report extends to 20 pages, we can print off copies on request.
 - Even though work on the following DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES for our congregation had to be put on hold, valuable preparatory work has been done by our Development Group led by Property Convenor Stephen Ross. We are grateful to Mark Campbell for providing architecture services and expert guidance on regulations and design. This preparatory work should be really helpful when it becomes possible to take these priorities forward:
 - ❖ Basement redesign and refurbishment.
 - ❖ Updating our Meeting House to include a more open area to the front, better access for all, improvements to seating and upgraded heating.
 - ❖ Redesign and refurbishment of toilet areas on the main floor of our complex.
 - ❖ Upgrades to the kitchen areas.
- First Larne People**
- Our partnership with Latin Link enabled Jacqueline McCallum to serve our church and community as a Community Support worker. We were delighted to congratulate Jax on her wedding to Paul Murphy in July 2020.
 - We welcomed Thomas McCauley as a Communicant Member wishing him God's richest blessing as he shares in the life and work of our congregation.

- A service of thanksgiving recognised the faithful work and witness of Elder Emeritus Bertie Johnston who died on 4th July 2020. A founder member of Men's Fellowship, Bertie was active in Property Committee using his electrical skills to maintain and upgrade our electrical facilities over many years. Ordained an Elder in 1992, Bertie helped to lead the work and witness of our busy congregation for around 25 years until ill health prevented his active involvement.
- We gave thanks for the life and work of Victor McDowell who died on 19th July 2020 having faithfully served our congregation from 1992 to 2020 as an Elder. Warm tributes were paid for his lifetime engagement in First Larne congregation including his involvement with our Church choir for almost 60 years.
- Gordon Kerr was ordained an Elder in 2002 having already served as a member of Congregational Committee. He used his electrical skill to benefit the congregation over many years including in the installation of our AV system. Much loved in both congregation and community, Gordon also brought care and sensitivity to his role as a 'Designated Person for Child Protection and Safeguarding' within First Larne. Many of our organisational leaders remember his great patience when providing training in First Aid and defibrillation. Gordon died unexpectedly on 28th November 2020. At his thanksgiving service, a guard of honour was given by St John Ambulance with whom he served. As we paid tribute to Gordon we gave thanks for his life well lived among us.
- The sympathy and prayers of our congregation are with each of the bereaved families and all those who mourn the loss of loved ones at this time.
- Early in 2020 Eamonn McFerran commenced his work as Treasurer of our Congregation, ably assisted by Shirley Torbitt and Judith Evans. We thank them for their work managing church finances and pay tribute to Jenny McKay, our retiring treasurer and her team for their faithful service up to that time.
- We gave thanks for the gifts in wills of £18,425 from the Estate of Ella Strain and £2,431 from the Estate of James Nesbitt which enable our congregation to achieve so much more than we would otherwise be able to do.
- If you might consider making a gift to First Larne in a will, you are welcome to chat to the writer or to our Minister in confidence, so that we can suggest a suitable wording for you to consider.

- We express thanks to our Pastoral Associate Rev Maynard Cathcart who decided to step down from this role at the beginning of lockdown. His pastoral support especially for senior members has been deeply appreciated and we record our gratitude to Maynard for all his work in our Congregation.
- We said goodbye to our Coordinator of Children's and Family Ministries, Amy Hunter, in October 2020. Amy brought great experience and enthusiasm to this role as well as a wonderful heart for ministry to our children, young people and wider community. We have expressed our heartfelt thanks to her, wishing her well for her future, and are delighted to note her recent appointment as Children's, Youth & Family worker in Dundonald Presbyterian Church.

Throughout this difficult year, our minister Rev Dr Colin D. McClure or 'Colin' as he is known to so many, has continued to provide wonderful pastoral support especially to hurting and bereaved members and families. He has led our congregation and community in innovative ways, including using Zoom, telephone calls and livestreaming when face to face meetings and worship were not possible. To him and to all our leaders, volunteers and members, we owe an enormous debt of gratitude as together we go forward in worship and service.

Despite all the difficulties of the year, we have so much to be thankful for and we give God the glory. A blessing from 2nd Corinthians chapter 13 from The Message version:

"The amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you."

Robin Tweed, Clerk of Session
Sandy Lindsay, Committee Secretary.

First Larne – Officers, Kirk Session and Congregational Committee 2022

<p>Minister : Rev. Dr. Colin D. McClure, 5 Whitla's Brae, Larne BT40 3BY,</p> <p>Clerk of Session: Robin Tweed,</p> <p>Secretary: Sandy Lindsay</p> <p>Property Convenor: Stephen Ross</p> <p>Treasurer : Eamonn McFerran</p> <p>Assistant Treasurer: Shirley Torbitt</p> <p>FWO Secretary: Robert Garrett</p> <p>Gift Aid Secretary: Derick Jenkins</p> <p>League of Church Loyalty: Alistair Carmichael</p> <p>Catering Officer: Lorna Swann</p> <p>Church Administrator: Sheila Doran</p> <p>Caretaker: William Rainey</p> <p>Auditors: MBS Chartered Accountants</p> <p>Kirk Session :</p> <p>Elders : Maurice Adams, Jay Alexander, Glynis Alexander, Joan Arnold, June Bryson, Alistair Carmichael, Norman Carmichael, Roy Craig, Robert Garrett, Sharon Hollinger, William Hollinger, Brian</p>	<p>028-28272441</p> <p>028-28278374</p> <p>07801284663</p> <p>07854497778</p> <p>07956565667</p> <p>07771502450</p> <p>07789208812</p> <p>07840048827</p> <p>07788715039</p> <p>028-28277949</p> <p>028-28269968</p> <p>07513412418</p>	<p>Hunter, Derick Jenkins, Sandy Lindsay, Margaret Lindsay, Gregory Lorimer, Norman McAuley, Jeff McClure, George McKinley, Ken McKinley, Wesley Magill, John Millar, Bev Moore, Nat Moore, Rodney Moore, Neill Murray, Joe O'Neill, Stephen Reid, Stephen Ross, David Simms, Lorna Swann, William Swann, Janet Tweed, Tommy Torbitt.</p> <p>Elders Emeritus: Doreen Irwin, Alexander Meban, Ivan Moore.</p> <p>Congregational Committee :</p> <p>Beth Alexander, Shirley Begley, Margaret Boyle, Kathryn Boyle, Amber Bryson, Angus Cameron, Margaret Carter, Deborah Dines, Judith Evans, Jackie Gibson, Grace Henry, Tanya Henry, Lynda Hill, Robert Howell, Debbie McCluggage, James McCluggage, Jane McClure, Brian J. McKay, J. Brian McKay, Jan McKay, Derek McKinley, Fiona McKinley, Mary Magill, William Marks, June Moore, Heather Murray, Anne O'Neill, Louise Robinson, Ina Ross, Philip Ross, Trevor Ross, Kathryn Swann, Jackie Tennant, Bertie Wilson.</p>
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CHURCH REGISTER

BAPTISMS

Ada Evelyn Margaret Smith	50 The Beeches	19 th September 2021
Coby Laine Fergie	12 Hampton Close	19 th September 2021
Abbie Nelson	44 Carryview, Coagh	10 th October 2021
Rhea Louise Ann Todd	24 Regents Park	17 th October 2021
Caleb James Gregg Murray	1 Parkmount Gardens	24 th October 2021
Juliette Rose Duncan	1 Cuillin Heights	24 th October 2021

MARRIAGES

Rachel Hannah Marks & Andrew William Wharry	20 th August 2021
Zara Jayde McKay & Rory Edward McAvoy	3 rd September 2021

DEATHS

William Magee	10 Kiln Grove	28 th July 2021
John Crawford Magill	4 Bryan Street	3 rd August 2021
Martha Violet McMurray	3 Drummond Court	10 th August 2021
Ramsey Dawson Ewart	17 Wheatfield Heights	14 th August 2021
John McClenaghan O'Neill	4 Dunboyne Gardens	19 th August 2021
Rosena ("Rhoda") McDowell Davison	Drummaul House Care Home	22 nd August 2021
Agnes ("Nance") Baillie	14 The Roddens	20 th September 2021
Thomas Baxter	7D Sallagh Park	17 th October 2021
Samuel Edward Drummond	74 Greenland Crescent	23 rd October 2021

A partridge in a pear tree?



You probably know at least some of the words of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" but have you ever sat and wondered what those rather strange lyrics of the carol are about?

The song is thought to be French originally and came to the UK in the eighteenth century. Each of the 12 days is intended to remind us of something.

The partridge in a pear tree - Jesus Christ.

Two turtle doves - the Old and New Testaments.

Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love (1 Cor 13).

The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.

The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit: Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.

The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit : Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self control

Those ten lords-a-leaping refer to the ten commandments.

The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.

The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

Blythswood Shoebox Appeal

An amazing 2,296,905 shoeboxes have been sent to eastern Europe since Blythswood began in 1993!

THANK YOU to all those in First Larne who again this year gathered, filled, wrapped and delivered more than fifty shoeboxes for transport and distribution to girls and boys, mums, dads, older people and families in need, mostly in Eastern Europe.

Over recent years, shoeboxes have travelled as far as Albania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Kosovo and Ukraine.

Lord we pray that you would make a way for each and every shoe box to bring love and joy to those in greatest need.

Lord, enable these shoeboxes and the local Christian workers who deliver them, in some small way, to be able to make a difference in the lives of people in desperate need this Christmas.

Thank you, Lord, that even in times of need, despair and brokenness you are there. Lord help us to be your hands and feet to secure justice for the poor and to uphold the cause of the needy.

We pray this trusting and believing in you. Amen.

Your shoeboxes, filled with gifts and essentials have been delivered to Blythswood's Northern Ireland collection centre, depot and shop at Ballyclare. The generosity of all those who filled shoeboxes with love and care and gave donations towards transport is deeply valued and appreciated.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER SERVICES

Sun 5th :

11am World Development Sunday
"Weathering the Storm"

Sun 12th :

11am "Hope-Filled Expectation"
Matthew 11 v.2-11

7pm Service of Lessons & Carols: "Awe-struck
Anticipation" Luke 1 v.26-38, 46-55

Sun 19th :

11am "The Impossible Promise"
Nativity and Cradle Roll Service

Sat 25th :

10:30am Christmas Day Family Celebration

Sun 26th :

11am A Special Service for Boxing Day"

JANUARY SERVICES

Sun 2nd :

11am A Service as the New Year begins

Sun 9th :

11am & 7pm Communion

OTHER DECEMBER EVENTS

Mon 13th Larne Community Lessons & Carols Trail Begins at 7pm in Larne Methodist Church, then St. MacNissi's, Salvation Army and concluding at the Town Hall

Wed 15th Larne & Inver PS Carols Services
11:15am P4/5 1:15pm P6/7

Thu 16th Larne Grammar School Carol Service
(Time to be confirmed)



Presents beneath the tree

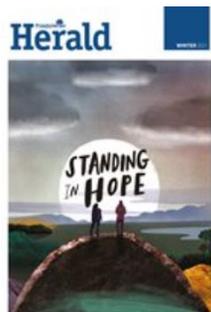
The Salvation Army Family appeal celebrates its 40th year. Last year over 40,000 presents were delivered to needy families in N Ireland. Gifts of toys can be left below the Christmas tree at the front of the church up to Sunday 12th December. Toys should be new and unwrapped.



Presbyterian Herald

Orders are now being taken for the 2022 Presbyterian Herald. The 2022 subscription is £15 for 10 issues.

Please contact Sheila in the church office (2826 9968) to place your order.



Presbyterian Children's Society

The annual collection in aid of the Presbyterian Children's Society will take place in the weeks leading up to Christmas. If no-one calls at your home you can still make a contribution by bringing your donation in a marked envelope to church on Sundays. Alternatively you can donate directly to the society online at presbyterianchildrenssociety.org



First Larne Indoor Bowling Club Adult Beginners Class

Wednesdays 6.30pm - 7.15pm

All equipment supplied No experience needed

Just flat shoes need to be worn

Full tuition will be provided



For more information please contact
Rodney Moore

028 28583866 or 07843 118362

Monday Bowls

The Monday afternoon bowling has resumed from 2-4pm. As many bowling clubs have not yet reopened we are opening our doors to all bowlers from any club to join us on a Monday. Please contact **Mary Magill** on 07999 687307.

First Larne Weddings and Baptisms



Rachel Hannah Marks & Andrew William Wharry married on 20th August.



Zara Jayde McKay and Rory Edward McAvoy were married on 3rd September by Rev McClure (at Glennan Presbyterian Church)



On 19th September Rev McClure baptised cousins Coby Fergie and Ada Smith. Coby is the child of Steven and Karen Fergie and Ada is the child of Lindsey (sister of Karen) and Sean Smith.

L to R: Steven Fergie with Coby, Charlie, Maisey and Karen, Rev. McClure, Lindsey, Harry and Sean Smith with Ada.

Abbie Nelson pictured with dad Richard, big sister Evie and mum Hannah, was baptised on 10th October



Rhea Louise Ann Todd was baptised on 17th October. L to R Rev. McClure, Richard, Gillian, Charlie and Rhea.



Caleb James Gregg Murray, the son of Neill and Heather Murray, was baptised on 24th October

Toddlers Group are back!

First Larne Toddler Group made a welcome return in September. More people have been keen to come than we have spaces for, so there is a scramble on Eventbrite each Tuesday morning to claim a place! Hopefully restrictions will ease before long and we will be able to welcome all without the need of a booking system.



Now There's a Thought – The Perfect Church

“If you can find a perfect church without a fault or smear,

**For goodness sake don't join that church,
you'll spoil the atmosphere,**

**So since no perfect church exists where
people do not sin,**

**Cease looking for that perfect church and love
the one we're in.**

AND FINALLY.....

A Presbyterian minister, an Evangelical pastor and a Hindu pujari were discussing prayer one day, socially distanced of course in a park.

“In a quiet room and kneeling with my hands clasped together in supplication is the best way to pray” said the minister. “No I disagree”, said the pastor “I find that standing with my hands outstretched to Heaven is definitely the best way”. The Hindu smiled and said “My friends, you need to be humble, so lie face down on the floor”.

Unnoticed by the three, perhaps because he was above them on a ladder, was one of those repair men who fix damaged electricity lines. He had overheard the conversation whilst working and couldn't contain himself. Climbing down the ladder he stopped.

“Excuse me gents I couldn't help but overhear what you were saying and you're all wrong. The best praying I ever did was hanging upside down 40 feet up a pylon”.

First Larne Presbyterian Church, Inver Road, Larne Tel 028 28269968

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