



# First Larne Presbyterian Church Bridge News

Worship God, Build His Kingdom, Share His Love



Platinum Jubilee Service

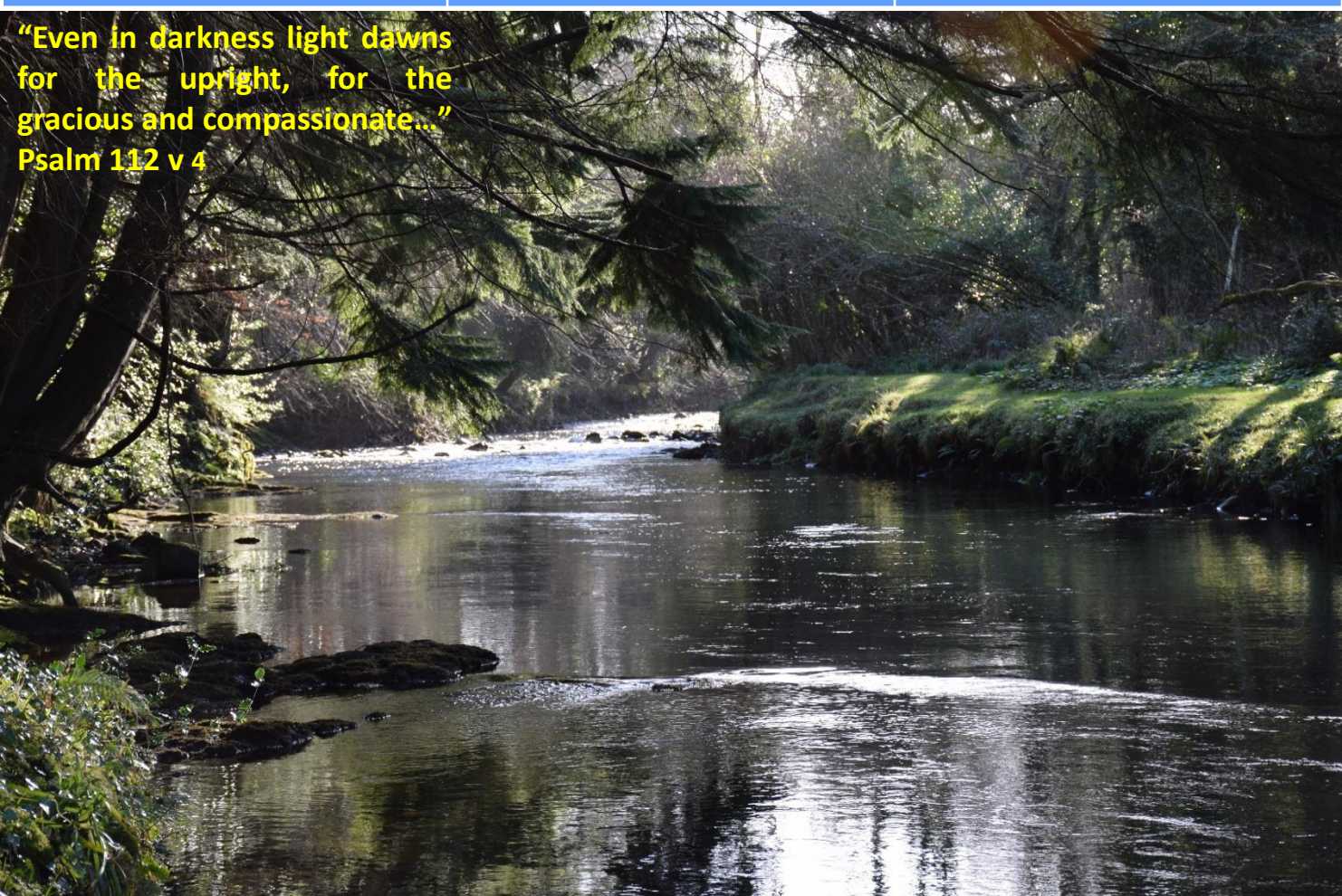


Prayers and Aid for Ukraine



Happy Retirement William

"Even in darkness light dawns  
for the upright, for the  
gracious and compassionate..."  
Psalm 112 v 4



## Spring Edition 2022 No. 415

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## COLIN'S COLUMN

### **SURVIVING AND THRIVING IN A WORLD OF KNOWN UNKNOWNNS**

For most years since 1993 the Plain English Campaign has presented the “Foot in Mouth Award” for the most “baffling comment by a public figure.” It may not surprise you that the person with the most awards to date is a certain British politician by the name of Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson. He is the recipient of three “Foot in Mouth Awards.” His most recent accolades were both related to Brexit and came in 2016 and 2019. His 2016 utterance has certain Belfast connections: “Brexit means Brexit and we’re going to make a Titanic success of it.” However, his first award was in 2004 when, in an appearance on the satirical current affairs panel game “Have I Got News For You” he bamboozled fellow contestants and the audience with “I could not fail to disagree with you less.”

A year before Boris’ first award-winning line the honour was bestowed on Donald Rumsfeld, the US Secretary for Defense, for a reply he gave to a journalist’s question at a news briefing on 12<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2002



“.....there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the latter category that tends to be the difficult ones.”

He was talking about connecting the government of Iraq with the supply of weapons of mass destruction and, even though ridiculed for his turn of phrase, he was actually using scientifically respectable terminology familiar to experts at NASA. Rumsfeld

was well aware of the reaction evoked and paid wry homage to the moment when he entitled his 2011 autobiography “Known and Unknown: A Memoir”.

If ever there was a time of known unknowns and unknown unknowns we are surely living through it.

That moment on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 when Boris Johnston made his “stay at home” speech, inaugurating the first pandemic lockdown, is seared into our personal and collective consciousness. But do you also remember what he predicted a few days previously, on 19<sup>th</sup> March? “The UK will turn the tide of coronavirus in 12 weeks.”

Politicians should know that, faced with known and unknown unknowns, any predictions will leave them hostages to fortune. With the benefit of hindsight we know very well that two years ago there were just too many unknowns. However, from the outset of the pandemic it was clear we were moving into unprecedented territory. It was difficult to avoid the “unprecedented” adjective because, however excessive its use became, it was accurate. None of us had lived through such a pandemic. Even now, as we begin to emerge from mitigations, we are well aware of the abiding impact on work patterns, social interactions, methods of communication, holiday arrangements, family celebrations and so much more besides. As the medical crisis subsides we are now contemplating a previously unexperienced lethal cocktail including Brexit, climate crisis, food security and industrial supply-chain disruptions. The implications accompanying the conflict focused on Ukraine are only exacerbating the economic ills as evidenced in huge price rises for fuel and food.

I will not dare make any detailed predictions as to how we will be faring on the global scene and in localised circumstances by the time you read this in Bridge News. Nevertheless, I can unfortunately predict with unwelcomed confidence that it will not be good. We are now bracing ourselves for economic, social and political realities that will launch us into another unprecedented sequence of interrelated demands.

For example, a few weeks ago a leading energy supplier announced a 39 per cent increase in gas prices. Northern Ireland’s Consumer Council estimates that move will impact just under 190,000 customers at a cost of around £240 a year.

Statistics available for Northern Ireland from the UK’s Trussell Trust (an umbrella group representing many foodbanks) draw our attention to the huge rise in food

parcels distributed in our province from just over 37,000 in 2018/2019 to the nearly 80,000 food parcels distributed in the 2020/2021 season.

Whatever way we stack them up, the knowns and unknowns present us with unprecedented crises and challenges. That much we do know. However, what we have still to determine is our response. Faced as we are with so much that is distressing and perplexing, let me tentatively commend a cautious yet courageous, a dedicated and defiant stance.

In the face of inevitable evil we do not become passive or paralysed, but must be faithful. We are each made in the image of God and are made for the peace (shalom) which is God's intention for us. That peace is worth fighting for. So we continue to be faithful by following the way of Christ, and not being moulded or distorted by our response to evil.

We should not be surprised by the reality of evil and turmoil in our world – but neither should our overwhelming response be that of fear. As we celebrate Easter we claim the victory! Jesus said: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16 v.33

Moreover, our God is just and will ultimately ensure that right prevails. You will recall God's response to Cain after he had murdered his brother Abel: "The LORD said, 'What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.'"

As those who are still free to do what is right and not just what is safe, we can respond with courage rather than cowardice. That may require us to step out of our comfort zones and raise our voices for, or reach out towards those who are the most vulnerable in our society and our world. In the immediate aftermath our governments can respond with direct support and we can answer appeals for humanitarian assistance. Have we considered what we will do if refugees have to

come to live among us? Is there anything else we can be doing to assist our neighbours in need?

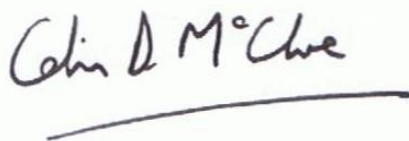
Faced with evil and suffering we need not fear – but we can be sad. There is no place for a false piety, no spiritual "stiff upper lip", that ignores our pain and distress. Over these last few years of pandemic restrictions our public mourning has been curtailed, but our private grief remains.

The Bible is full of laments, not least from the psalmist. For instance, read Psalm 6 and Psalm 130. Notice how the psalmist begins and ends the lament showing that we can weep and be brave at the same time.

Perhaps the most radical response as we face up to the unnerving knowns and unknowns is to pray. Prayer is part of our armour: "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." Ephesians 6 v.18

Whatever I know or do not know, I have never known a time of such potentially momentous, unsettling and threatening change. Could it be that we are now in that place and that moment when our unchanging God can work out His changeless purpose through us?

**"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. <sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."** 2 Corinthians 12 v 9-10



Rev. Colin McClure

## Can you spare some time?

As church slowly moves back towards normality, there are organisations which are now short of leaders and events which need some extra help. With our caretaker, William, retiring at the end of March and our office administrator, Sheila, retiring at the end of May, there will be tasks which will need attention before any successors take up post.

Could you sometimes spare a wee bit of time to offer some help? Even if this was only for a few weeks, it would be very much appreciated.

If you can help, please contact the church office (028 2826 9968).

# Platinum Jubilee Civic Service - HM Queen Elizabeth II

On Sunday evening 6th February 2022 a socially distanced congregation gathered in First Larne Presbyterian Meeting House for "A Service of Thanksgiving to Celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Accession to the Throne of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her Life of Faithful Service".

In the Call to Worship and welcome to the special guests the Rev. McClure said: "We gather for this service to worship and praise God giving thanks as we mark the Platinum Jubilee of The Queen's reign. We mark seventy years of her sovereignty and service; we celebrate 70 years of faith and service. Whatever our feelings toward the monarchy and nobility, we can all look to Queen Elizabeth with respect and gratitude for her life of faithful service."

The Queen sent her "warm good wishes" for the service and was represented by Mr. David McCorkell KStJ, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for County Antrim. The guest preacher was the Most Rev. John McDowell, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland. Scripture lessons were read by the Salvation Army's most senior officer in these islands, Commissioner Anthony Cotterill (Territorial Commander for the Salvation Army United Kingdom and Ireland), Councillor William McCaughey (Mayor of Mid & East Antrim Borough Council) and Mr. David McCorkell KStJ.

Hymns were chosen to recall significant royal services associated with Her Majesty. "Praise, my soul, the King of heaven" and "The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want" were sung at the Queen's wedding to Prince Philip on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1947.

At the Queen's Coronation on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1953 "All People that on Earth do Dwell" was sung, using a special arrangement by Ralph Vaughan Williams of the tune "Old Hundreth", as a congregational hymn at her Majesty's specific instruction. Previously congregational hymns had not been included in such ceremonies. It was thought appropriate that the Larne service should conclude with a hymn with ancient Irish roots – "Be Thou my Vision". It is perhaps noteworthy that the first three hymns are paraphrased psalms – Psalm 103, Psalm 23 and Psalm 100.

It was a particular honour and delight to have special music provided by "The Priests" who in 2020 had travelled to Buckingham Palace to be presented with their MBEs by Prince Charles.

Whilst the national Platinum Jubilee celebrations are scheduled for June, the civic service in Larne marked the actual 70th anniversary of the Queen's Accession to the throne on 6th February 1952, consequent on the death of her father, King George VI.

The Larne Civic Service was hosted by the Larne Clergy Group, representing a range of denominations including Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Salvation Army, Elim and Church of the Nazarene. This group has hosted several services marking significant milestones in Queen Elizabeth's life and reign including her Diamond Jubilee in 2012 and her 90th birthday in 2016. On 9th September 2015 she became Britain's longest reigning monarch and in 2017 the first to celebrate a Sapphire Jubilee.



"Hello" ....Covid style!



Rev Colin McClure welcomes David McCorkell, Lord Lieutenant of Co. Antrim





The Participants (1): Rev. Chris Skillen, Rev. Philip Benson, Commissioners Anthony and Gillian Cotterill, Rev. Dr. Colin McClure, Mr David McCorkell, Most Rev. John McDowell, Councillor William McCaughey, Rev. Dr. Paul Reid, Captains Philip and Annemarie Cole, Very Rev. Francis O'Brien, Rev. Dr. John Nelson



The Participants (2)  
The Priests and the Salvation Army  
Capt. Annemarie Cole, Fr. Eugene O'Hagan, Capt. Philip Cole, Fr Martin O'Hagan, Commissioner Gillian Cotterill, Fr David Delargy, Commissioner Anthony Cotterill.

## Order of Service

Introit : **"Praise the Lord of all ye Nations"**  
Welcome & Call to Worship  
Hymn : **"Praise my Soul the King of Heaven"**  
Lesson : **1 Kings 1 v 37-40**

Prayer of Adoration

Lesson : **1 Timothy 2 v 1-4**

Hymn : **"The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want"**  
Lesson : **Mark 10 v 35-45**  
Praise : **"King of Kings"**  
Prayers of Intercession

Prayer of Thanksgiving for Queen Elizabeth

Hymn : **All People that on Earth do Dwell"**  
Sermon  
of  
Praise : **"How Great Thou Art"**  
Offering on behalf of The Queen's Commonwealth Trust and the Platinum Jubilee Fund for Young Leaders  
Offertory Prayer  
Hymn : **"Be Thou my Vision"**  
Benediction  
**National Anthem**

The Priests  
Rev. Dr. Colin McClure, *First Larne Presbyterian Church*  
  
Commissioner Anthony Cotterill, *Territorial Commander for the Salvation Army*  
Rev. Dr. Paul Reid, *Old Presbyterian Church of Larne & Kilwaughter*  
Councillor William McCaughey, *Mayor of Mid & East Antrim Borough Council*  
  
Mr David McCorkell K St J, *HM Lord Lieutenant for Co. Antrim*  
The Priests  
Rev. Philip Benson, *Kilwaughter & Cairncastle with All Saints*  
Very Rev. Francis O'Brien, *Parish Priest, Larne*  
Captain Annemarie Coyle, *Salvation Army, Larne Corps*  
Rev. Chris Skillen, *Superintendent Minister, Larne Methodist Circuit*  
  
Most Rev. John McDowell, *Archbishop of Armagh & Primate All Ireland*  
The Priests  
Rev. Dr. Colin McClure





Most Rev. John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh, delivers the sermon.



Praising God : Fr Eugene O'Hagan, Fr Martin O'Hagan and Fr David Delargy.....The Priests MBE.

Enjoying the supper.....





# Christian Aid Week 15-21 May 2022

Our planet is changing, Weather extremes are now more frequent and more intense. For the first time in a generation, global poverty is rising. Covid-19, conflict and climate crisis are pushing more of our global neighbours into a struggle for survival.

In rural Zimbabwe, 70% of women rely on farming to earn a living and provide for their families. But intense droughts have left their land barren so people can't grow enough food and struggle to provide for their children. In times of drought, many families can only afford to eat one bowl of porridge a day. Women often skip meals to share with their children what little food they have. "We are at the mercy of climate change and hunger" Jessica Mwedzi.

Jessica toils on her farm, but no food can grow on her ash dry land. "One year, we had no rain. The sun burnt my crops just as they were about to bloom. It was so painful and disheartening. My children crave a good meal, but I can't provide. We often go to bed on an empty stomach. It pains me to send them to bed hungry."



Jessica watches her sons and daughters play outside as the sun fades across the sky. They hold hands, dance and sing. She finds a ray of hope that she will overcome this tough time. One day, Jessica will be able to provide her children with good food, and a full life, free from hunger.

Janet, a grandmother also from Zimbabwe has experienced how drought pushed her family into desperate hunger. "One year, there was so little food. Rains had not fallen. We ate things which we wouldn't eat in normal times. I made porridge and gave it to the children, then removed a portion and put it down for the dogs. The children picked up the dogs' share because they weren't full. When I saw this, I knew the situation had become unbearable. My heart was so painful thinking that my family would die. By God's grace we did not die. We soldiered on."

With faith, hope and love for her family, Janet brought her family through this painful time with the support of Christian Aid's BRAC programme, which helps the most at-risk communities in Zimbabwe prepare for and adapt to the changing climate. Working with local partners, Christian Aid's work empowers vulnerable

communities to grow drought-tolerant crops, teaches women like Janet how to grow food in dry seasons and helps families to build storerooms to preserve food so they have the resilience to bounce back from future droughts. Families learn to eat more healthy, nutritious food and gain new skills for alternative sources of income when agriculture fails.

By learning how to grow drought-resistant crops Janet was able to bring her family through a painful time and turn her barren land into a garden of plenty. Now, her farm is bursting with life, and she harvests enough surplus food to share with her neighbours while also storing enough to survive future droughts.



Janet is a survivor, a force of kindness and a hunger fighter able to provide food and hope for her whole family. Her joy is seeing her grandchildren's smiling faces as they relish the food she has grown. "My life is changing," Janet says. "This project is uplifting us. We are thankful." As she reflects on how her life has changed, Janet sings with joy. And we rejoice with her.

Could you make a donation this Christian Aid week?

- **£5** could buy **water taps** for a community garden
- **£15** could buy **drought-resistant seeds** like sorghum or millet to help **10 farmers** like Jessica to grow food
- **£60** could **train 50 women farmers** to adapt and grow food in the changing climate
- **£250** could help a family **build a storeroom**, and **provide seeds and fertilisers**

Members of First Larne will be helping to distribute the red Christian Aid week donation envelopes. As happened last year there will be designated locations, including First Larne, to which the envelopes can be returned. Alternatively, make a donation by phoning the Christian Aid Belfast office on **028 9064 8133** or online at [www.christianaid.ie/give-money/make-donation](http://www.christianaid.ie/give-money/make-donation) Your donations will help families facing poverty and injustice turning hunger into hope.

Thank you from Larne Christian Aid Action Group

# Prayers and Aid for Ukraine



In the Transcarpathian region people we have spent time with on our summer camps are very fearful and many have already left for other countries. They know friends and family in other parts of Ukraine caught up in the fighting. Able-bodied men including some of the students we shared with in summer camps have been called up for military service.

Pastor Atilla, who has visited here, has remained with his church and community in Fornos, although 60% of those living around him in the village have gone. For one Christian family we have been in touch with, the men of the family have had to go to other countries for work. Now the grandmother, a young mum with her baby and her sister in-law with 2 young children have sought safety in Hungary, not knowing when they might return. They deeply value our prayers.....

*"Father, today we pray for the escalating situation in Ukraine. We confess that it can be difficult to know how to pray. So we start with our praise and thanks to you, who remains steadfast and faithful, all-seeing and all-knowing. We re-orientate ourselves in you, your timescales, your ways and your purpose. We remind ourselves of your love for this earth you formed and those you created in your image.*

*We struggle to see clearly through confusion and misinformation, yet recognise an age-old lust for power, control and violence. We pray for those already mourning, those who are fleeing homes and livelihoods, for those who are fearful and vulnerable.*

*We pray for intermediaries on the ground and those seeking to defend life and liberty. Blessed are the peacemakers. Amidst the political posturing and frightening military action we pray for those involved in genuine diplomatic efforts to avert further bloodshed.*

*We remember how Jesus resisted being co-opted into the religious and political uprisings of competing empires. We remember how He spoke to heal the sick, calm the storm and raise the dead. We too pray that the name of God would not be invoked in destructive nationalistic ways. We pray for powerful words and miraculous actions – for de-escalation, peace and justice, repentance and restoration.*

*On earth as it is in heaven, and for our faithful witness until then,*

*Amen."*

*Evangelical Alliance NI*

PCI Moderator Rev. Dr Bruce has launched an appeal for Ukraine. PCI has released £60,000 to be distributed equally between Christian Aid (Ireland), Tearfund, and one of its partner churches, the Reformed Church in Hungary through its relief and development wing, Hungarian Reformed Church Aid.

Hungarian Reformed Church Aid was among the first organisations to provide immediate assistance by delivering food packages to the Ukraine-Hungary border on the morning of the invasion, and has already sent more than 10 tonnes of non-perishable food across the border. They have welcomed people fleeing the war at train stations and at the border distributing food, tea and drinking water. They have also provided translation assistance and transported people to nearby shelters, or public transport hubs. In conjunction with the Hungarian Reformed Church's Bethesda Hospital, they are providing medical assistance to people arriving in Hungary and also sending medical supplies to Transcarpathia in western Ukraine.

Christian Aid (Ireland) and Tearfund are working with partners in Hungary, Moldova and Slovakia to help the huge numbers of people fleeing the war by providing food, bedding and temporary accommodation. £30 could provide essential hygiene supplies for three people for one month, £50 could provide blankets for four families, while £100 could provide emergency food for two families for one month.

Dr Bruce encourages people here to continue to pray, asking God that the conflict would not spread further, that those who have lost loved ones would be comforted, and those who find themselves without homes would be led to places of welcome and shelter. Pray for the Christian Churches in Ukraine, for their endurance, protection and faithful witness in face of this time of trial. Pray especially that a way might be found to bring a peaceful end to this needless war.

Donations to the appeal can be returned to First Larne in an envelope marked Ukraine Appeal. If you can add to the donation by Gift Aid please also include your name, postcode and FWO number.

Further prayer resources can be found on our website [www.firstlarne.org](http://www.firstlarne.org)



# From Ukraine to the world - The story of “How Great Thou Art”

Our Presbyterian hymnbook notes that our version of “How Great Thou Art” was translated from Russian by a missionary called Stuart Hine. But the full story is a little bit more complicated than that.

It seems that the hymn originated in south east Sweden, with a preacher called Carl Boburg when, on a warm humid day, he got caught in a thunderstorm and had to hurry for shelter. The storm was soon over and the sky cleared. That evening Boburg wrote a hymn called “O Store Gud”, O Great God in English. His original lyrics referred to the storm

“When I hear the voice of thunder in the storm  
roaring  
And the blades of lightning run out of the sky  
When the cold fresh winds of the rain whistle  
And the bow of the promise shines for my sight

*Chorus* Then the soul bursts forth into praise,  
O great God, O great God (Repeat)”

The Swedish hymn also contains references to “the high wonders of heaven” – the stars of the first verse we know, and to the pine forests, birds singing and the summer winds, similar to the “woods and forest glades”, the “birds singing sweetly in the trees” and the “feel of the gentle breeze” from our familiar second verse.

Boburg’s lyrics were set to the music of an old Swedish folk tune and sung in public for the first known occasion in a Swedish church in 1888. The words and music were published in 1891 in a Swedish hymnbook. The hymn was subsequently translated into Russian and German, and later English by an American academic, Professor E. Gustav Johnson.

Stuart Hine was a missionary to the Carpathian mountain region of Ukraine in the early 1930’s. He toured the country by bicycle, with his wife Mercy, sharing the gospel and giving out Bibles. During their time in Ukraine they heard a Russian translation of Boburg’s hymn and he started work to rewrite and adapt it.



In many villages, Hine discovered that most of the people living in the Carpathians knew nothing of God’s gift of grace. He did however discover one Bible, in the home of a man called Dimitri and his wife, possibly called Lyudmila. It had been left behind by a Russian soldier in 1915 when the army had to beat a hasty retreat. Lyudmila had taught herself how to read by reading that Bible. Hine overheard Lyudmila reading from the gospel of John about the crucifixion of Christ, to a gathering we would probably call a house church. He couldn’t just barge in so he stayed outside and listened to their praise. Hine wrote down the phrases he heard the worshippers use, and it seems this became the third verse that we know today: “And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in.”

These were terrible times in the Ukraine. The forced collectivisation of the farms by the Bolsheviks and Stalin’s persecutions created a massive famine which killed millions. Christianity was also targeted and many churches were destroyed. The Hines’ had to leave Ukraine and settled in Somerset.

After the war the Hines’ ministered to some of the refugees pouring into the UK from Eastern Europe and Russia and together they published a Russian magazine called *Grace and Peace*, perhaps the best message for war-weary souls. In 1948 one man in a refugee camp told them how he had been separated from his wife near the end of the war, and had not seen her since. He desperately wanted to find his wife, but realised he would probably never see her on earth again. He found comfort in the thought that they would meet in heaven, and share eternal life there. These words became the basis of the fourth verse “When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart. Then shall I bow in humble adoration and there proclaim, My God How Great Thou Art!”

What an amazing story – a Swedish preacher caught in a thunderstorm, a Russian soldier fleeing for his life, a Ukrainian woman learning how to read from a forgotten Bible, a group of persecuted Christians worshipping at home, a lonely refugee and a missionary. Not the big names of the history of that period, just the largely unknown people, seemingly unimportant, trying to do what was best in their different, often very difficult, circumstances. But all connected to create one of the world’s greatest hymns. Maybe there’s a lesson for us all in that.



# KIDS church

EVERY SUNDAY MORNING DURING THE SERVICE

As we move through spring and towards summer, Kids' Church continues to welcome the return of its young members and encourage new ones.

Our pre-schoolers are becoming more confident as

Some of our mums and "grandmums" try pottery crafts.....

the year progresses and are enjoying the company of other "bigger" people. As leaders we recently enjoyed hosting some of our mums and 'Grandmums' to a special evening facilitated by 'Auntie Ps' pottery craft.

We have also felt inspired by webinars arranged by P.C.I. In these we were reminded that our parents hold the first responsibility for the spiritual growth and nurture of their children, and our role for the short time we have on a Sunday morning is to give parents support in this task. Support for parents is something we hope to develop over the coming months as we continue to encourage our First Larne kids to learn about Jesus' love for them.





# Thanks from Blythswood

Alan Kemp from Blythswood Care has written to First Larne to say a very big Thank you.

"We were overwhelmed with the amazing response to our Shoe Box appeal this winter. Thank you so much. **82,952** shoeboxes and bags were donated and sent off to Eastern Europe; **13,101** from Northern Ireland; **42** from members of First Larne.

Every gift in every shoebox makes a difference. Each gift lets someone in need know that they have been thought about, that they are valued, and that they are loved. That is a priceless gift to give and to receive. That is a precious gift that makes a lasting difference.



See <https://youtu.be/YtGIZ7jUxKM> for "shoebox stories".

We will soon be looking ahead to our Shoe Box Appeal 2022, helping vulnerable communities across Eastern Europe. We trust we will be able to deliver boxes to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine."

More information, including a checklist and posters, will appear in First Larne church, on our website and at [blythswood.org/shoeboxappeal/](http://blythswood.org/shoeboxappeal/) in the Autumn.



## Bibles for Babies

The Bible Society N.I. have launched a project to provide bibles for babies throughout Northern Ireland. Catherine Little, BSNI General Secretary explains.

We are passionate about ensuring God's Word is available to everyone in a way that they can access and understand. When considering how we could best serve and bless our community, we decided we wanted to encourage whole family engagement with the Bible. Through this, as well as talks with other Bible Societies about their family engagement programmes, we developed **Bibles for Babies!**

We want to give every baby born in Northern Ireland in 2021 a free Toddler Bible on their 1<sup>st</sup> birthday, and then a free Children's Storybook Bible when they turn 5. The aim of this project is to get families and young children engaging with the Bible from a young age, developing healthy habits of daily reading, as well as reading together as a family.

So far, we have had over 1,500 babies registered for this project. Thanks to the support of our Bible-a-

Month club and an army of volunteers, we have been able to send out nearly 300 free Toddler Bibles to babies who celebrated their 1<sup>st</sup> birthday in January & February 2022. We hope to send out another 130 Toddler Bibles to babies turning 1 this month!

This project will run for 3 years Initially, giving babies born in 2021-23 a Toddler Bible. We are very excited about how this project will grow over the next two years, and the impact it will have on so many little lives, as well as the wider impact on their families.

[You can register a baby at](https://biblesocietyni.co.uk/resources/bibles-for-babies/)

<https://biblesocietyni.co.uk/resources/bibles-for-babies/>

*Children must be registered with the permission of the parent or guardian to receive a Toddler Bible*



Sharing is Caring! We all love our family traditions and celebrations at Easter, and enjoy passing them on to our children and grand children. Maybe you celebrate with a family dinner and an Easter egg hunt in the garden, or a day out with a picnic or even a BBQ, if the weather permits. As we make our plans and preparations, we all look forward to sharing the day with those we love. Jesus too, knew the importance of sharing a special celebration with the people He loved. On that first Easter, Passover arrangements were made for a special "last supper" that would never be forgotten by all who loved Him, and is still remembered to this day!

Arlene

## Skewered lamb sharing plate

4 lean Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured lamb leg steaks, or lamb rump steaks cut into thick strips

### For the marinade

The juice of ½ lemon  
2 teaspoons olive oil  
1 tablespoon honey  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
A tiny pinch of chilli flakes  
2 garlic cloves, crushed

### To serve

250g pack halloumi cheese  
1 teaspoon olive oil  
100g red pepper humous  
4 small soft wholemeal pitta breads  
½ cucumber, cut into sticks  
150g cherry tomatoes, halved  
60g black olives, pitted  
60g radishes, trimmed and sliced  
The leaves of a little gem lettuce



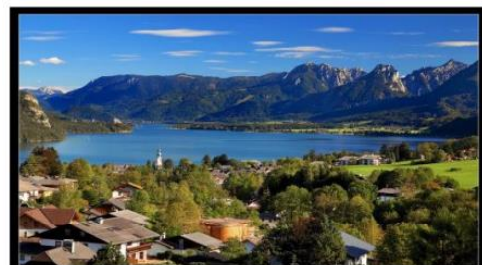
- 1 To make the marinade, simply combine the marinade ingredients in a bowl before adding the strips of lamb, mix well ensuring all of the meat is coated. Cover the bowl with cling film and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or overnight if you have time.
- 2 Heat a char-grill over a moderately high heat. Thread the lamb strips onto skewers and grill for 2 - 3 minutes on both sides.
- 3 Cut the halloumi into 8 slices, brush with a little olive oil and grill quickly on both sides for 2 minutes until lightly browned.
- 4 Arrange the grilled lamb and halloumi onto a serving platter along with the humous, warm pitta breads, tomatoes, olives, radishes and lettuce leaves before serving.

  
**Bellahill**  
Cookery | Campervan Weddings

## Oberammergau 2022

This historic once in a decade event had to be postponed due to the Covid 19 pandemic. But the holiday tour to Austria including the Oberammergau Passion Play is now on this year – travelling from 10-17th August 2022.

There are a limited number of places available and if you are interested please contact Rev. McClure for further details, but as soon as possible. As travel opens up the prime seats and accommodation in the village of Oberammergau will come under pressure.





# First Larne Bowlers - Keeping going during Covid

Like many other organizations a halt to normal social and competitive bowling came in February 2020 as we neared the end of the 2019-20 season. Thoughts were turning to seeking a venue for our end of season dinner, a chance to formally "wind down". Little did we know how long that "wind down" would last.

In September 2020 after a lot of hard work formulating a plan to get restarted we made tentative steps in that direction. And it did work - for 2 weeks. But unfortunately stricter NI Executive guidelines meant we had to close down again.

However, during July 2021 we enjoyed a two week period of fun bowls as we made plans to start again. By this time the Irish Indoor Bowling Association had produced a very strict set of protocols but, with the help of our club committee and Kirk Session we reopened in September of 2021. This time there were no "stop - starts". With everyone double and triple jabbed, following the protocols and wearing masks we will, by the end of March have completed the 2021-22 season.

But, a very different season it has been. No competitive bowling, we remained in our own little bubble. Has this dampened enthusiasm? Not a bit of it, everyone has enjoyed the new experience. Whilst there were no competitive league matches our internal games went successfully and were keenly contested as always. We are very pleased to have encountered no Covid related issues.

God willing, we look forward with cautious optimism to resuming our activities in September. If anyone is interested in playing bowls please speak with Rodney or any member of the club for further details.



Club Pairs Finalists - Tommy Close, Rodney Moore, Brian McKay and Stuart Smith ....& winners Tommy and Rodney receiving their trophy from competitions secretary Eamonn.



The Todd Trophy finalists - Eamonn McFerran & Brian McKay. After a thrilling final which went to a tie-end, Eamonn came out the winner and received the trophy from Robert Burch.



Doherty Cup finalists - Derek Craig Jnr and Rodney Moore, with Rodney receiving the trophy from William Marks.

Triples Finalists - Moira Swann, Tommy Close, Arthur Stewart, Derek Craig Jnr, Josie Burch and June Moore.....and Tommy, Josie and Derek receiving their trophy from Eamonn.

# CHURCH REGISTER

## BAPTISMS

Frederick Nicholas Gordon  
Murray-Zmijewski

17 Dean Park Avenue, Edinburgh

27<sup>th</sup> February 2022

## DEATHS

Alan Andrew Girvin  
Neill Samuel Burns  
John Hood Tennant  
Noel Lowe  
Trevor Watson Beggs  
John ("Jack") Darragh  
Mary Ferguson  
James Wilson  
Margaret Neill McConnell  
Clemence Marcus  
Stanley Graham  
James Brennan  
Robert Wharry Hull  
Robert Campbell

4 Porter Green Place  
47 Hampton Crescent  
28 Bay Road  
4 Argyll Avenue  
14 Gardenmore Place (formerly 15 Bay Park)  
21 Heatherdale Park  
Clanrye PNH (formerly 4 Ferris Avenue)  
43A Belfast Road  
3 Tower Road  
40A Carrickfergus Road  
43 Kitchener's Avenue  
39 Carson Street  
40 McNeill Court  
8 St. John's Place East

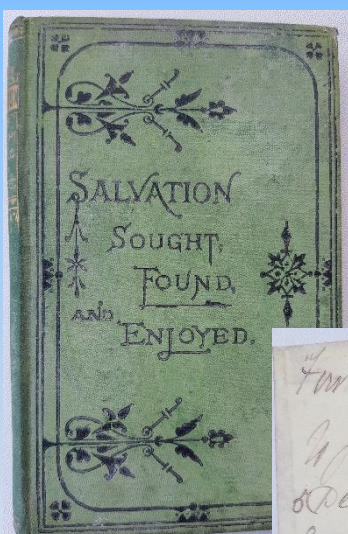
25<sup>th</sup> November 2021  
5<sup>th</sup> December 2021  
5<sup>th</sup> December 2021  
9<sup>th</sup> December 2021  
11<sup>th</sup> December 2021  
18<sup>th</sup> January 2022  
21<sup>st</sup> January 2022  
27<sup>th</sup> January 2022  
28<sup>th</sup> January 2022  
4<sup>th</sup> February 2022  
22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022  
24<sup>th</sup> February 2022  
2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022  
4<sup>th</sup> March 2022

## First Larne Sunday School Mystery.....

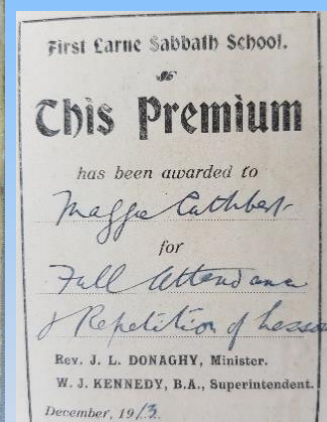
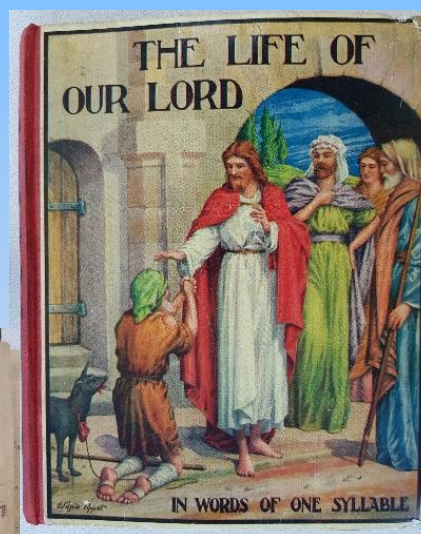
Can you help solve a mystery?

While clearing out the attic of an old barn, several First Larne Sunday School prizes were discovered hiding in a barrel. The book "Salvation Sought, Found and Enjoyed" had an inscription to Jane Getty. But this may indicate a sad tale as it reads ... "to Jane Getty who died 5 December 1874 for repeating quarter lessons 27 Sept". The inscription is dated 27<sup>th</sup> Decem 1874. So did this young girl die tragically early? Could she have been connected to the Getty Mission on Mission Lane (behind Dormans)? In those days the Sunday School served many outside First Larne church so the girls may not have been members of our congregation.

The book entitled "The Life of Our Lord" is inscribed as being awarded to Maggie Cuthbert. Can you tell us more about her? One of our older members remembers Maggie living in a cottage beside the water pump at the foot of Casements Brae. Comments please to the church office!



*First Premium  
to Jane Getty in the street  
8 Decemr 1874 for repeating quarter  
lessons 27 Sept  
Lorne from Sabbath  
School 27 Decem 1874  
J. G. Thomson*



Awarded to  
Maggie Cuthbert for full  
attendance and repetition of  
lessons. December 1913



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### APRIL & EASTER SERVICES

#### **Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> :**

11am "Who is King?" Luke 19 v.1-10

#### **Sun 10<sup>th</sup> : PALM SUNDAY**

11am "Gathering a Team" Matthew 21 v.1-11

#### **Fri 15<sup>th</sup> : GOOD FRIDAY**

10am Salvation Army, Main Street

A service led by Salvation Army cadets.

11am Silent March of Witness from the Salvation

Army centre. You are welcome to both.

8pm Communion "Launching the agape revolution"

Isaiah 53 v.1-12

#### **Sun 17<sup>th</sup> : EASTER SUNDAY**

6.30am Dawn Service "The New Normal!"

John 20 v.1-9

11am "Skin in the Game!" 2 Corinthians 5 v.16-21

#### **Sun 24<sup>th</sup> :**

11am Resurrection People - "Emoji People"

John 20 v.1-8

### MAY SERVICES

#### **Sun 1<sup>st</sup> :**

11am "Resurrect your Imagination" 2 Cor. 4 v.7-18

#### **Sun 8<sup>th</sup> :**

11am "Body Language" Luke 24 v.36-49

#### **Sun 15<sup>th</sup> :**

11am "Doubt your Doubts!" John 20 v.19-31

7pm Service of Praise

#### **Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> :**

11am "Work Matters" John 21 v.1-14

#### **Sun 29<sup>th</sup> :**

11am Ascension Sunday

"Good to Go!" Hebrews 4 v.14-16

### JUNE SERVICES

#### **Sun 5<sup>th</sup> :**

11am Platinum Jubilee weekend - The Mission Continues - The Spirit empowers ordinary people. Acts 1 v.1-11

#### **Sun 12<sup>th</sup> :**

11am Communion - The Spirit fires up the fearful: Becoming who you were made to be. Acts 2 v.14-21



### **Explore the BIG story! ...with Small Groups in First Larne**

We are about to enter a new phase in the journey! Why don't you take the opportunity to jump on board a new series designed for everyone – whether you have been reading the Bible for a life-time or are just starting. **THERE IS A SMALL GROUP NEAR YOU!**

Tuesday Group – from Tuesday 22nd March. For further information speak to Bev Moore.

Wednesday Group - Email Sandy Lindsay: [sandy30654@gmail.com](mailto:sandy30654@gmail.com)

Women's Group – Wednesdays at 7.30pm Email Rev. McClure: [cmclure@presbyterianireland.org](mailto:cmclure@presbyterianireland.org)

**Summer's coming!** 1st Larne Old Boys' Silver Band will be playing at the following events in Larne; Sunday 26th June - Carnfunnock - 1.30pm, Sunday 28th August - Dixon Park, Larne - 3pm. Rehearsals at 8pm on Mondays evenings in the basement, with a learners class at 7.30pm. Contact Celine Duff on [07817270751](tel:07817270751)

## **Financial Update for 2021**

In another difficult year we give thanks for the generosity of our congregation whose financial support has allowed us to meet all our commitments. We exceeded our 2021 "Target of Honour" for United Appeal by almost £2,000. Our Maintenance Account had a healthy balance of £22,700, ensuring that we can continue to maintain our property in good order.

Our staff were furloughed for most of the year, and the money we received from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme meant we had no further job losses in addition to Amy Hunter, although Jax McCallum left for SU East Antrim. Reduced staff and energy costs (when the church was closed) contributed to an unexpected surplus of £44,332 at the end of the year.

However, our energy costs are rising fast, and as groups and organisations return, we must plan for significantly higher bills. We also need a replacement staff member to support our ministry. **We cannot afford to be complacent about our finances.**

During the pandemic, many of our congregation set up new standing orders for which we are very grateful. Gift Aid also continues to be a good source of income for First Larne, so if you can, please sign up.

As your Treasury Team, we thank you for your excellent financial support.

**Eamonn McFerran, Shirley Torbitt and Judith Evans.**

## First Larne Baptism

"Whoever welcomes one of these children in my name welcomes me" Mark 9 v 37



Frederick Nicholas Gordon Murray-Zmijewski was baptised on 27<sup>th</sup> February. Freddie is pictured with mum Rachel, dad Lewis is holding Isla, who was baptised in September 2019.

### Now There's a Thought

No life can surpass that of a man who quietly continues to serve God in the place where providence has placed him.

(Charles Spurgeon)

## Happy Retirement William

William Rainey, our very hard-working caretaker, has decided to retire from this vital role on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, although Friday 25<sup>th</sup> will be his final day. William worked for First Larne for more than 9 years and his meticulous daily routine has made our church complex a place in which we can have great pride.

He has thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work in this role and it is with some regret that he has tendered his resignation. He said that he will miss the many friends that he has made during his time with First Larne.



William also enjoyed the opportunity to join with Men's Fellowship on a Wednesday evening for a game of snooker because "The craic was always great." We hope that William will continue to join us on a Wednesday evening and this invitation is also extended to any other men who are available for a bit of fun, a chat and a cup of tea.

### AND FINALLY.....

Mrs. Jones rarely missed a service despite being almost 90. So when she wasn't there one Sunday the minister decided to drop by her house on his way home.

He knocked on her door and was welcomed in. "We missed you this morning and I just wanted to make sure you were OK" he explained.

"Oh...I'm fine really. I just had a bit of a cold the last day or two and with the rain this morning I thought I would stay in. But I'm getting better".

Just then the phone rang and she excused herself to get it. The minister was sat beside a table with a few old magazines and a bowl of peanuts. It was past lunch time now and he heard his stomach grumble. The phone call was clearly dragging on, but he didn't

want to get up and leave. He picked up a magazine and started to read. Absent-mindedly he reached out for a peanut, then another...and another. After about half an hour, he realized that he had eaten all of the peanuts.

Just then Mrs. Jones returned and said, "I'm sorry, that was my sister from England. She only calls once a month so when she does we have to catch up on everything."

The minister feeling a little embarrassed said "I must apologize too, for while you were gone I got hungry and ate all the peanuts in your little bowl there. Please, forgive me" he said.

Mrs. Jones replied, "Oh that's ok. I bought them by mistake, I thought they were toffees. But I don't like peanuts so I just sucked the chocolate off of them".

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