



First Larne Presbyterian Church

# Bridge News

Worship God, Build His Kingdom, Share His Love



SOAP BUILDS HOPE



KID'S CHURCH IS BACK



HELLO FROM UKRAINE



"...the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.....to bind-up the broken hearted.....to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.....to comfort all who mourn.....

to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes.....a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord". Isaiah 61 v 1-3



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# COLIN'S COLUMN

## COMFORT and JOY! Bah! Humbug!

A story is told of how Charles Dickens, one of the greatest storytellers, on a visit to Edinburgh in June 1841, was walking in the kirkyard of Canongate. His eyes fell on a particular tombstone, that of a certain Ebenezer Lennox Scroggie, with the brief epitaph "A Meal Man".



If you believe the story Dickens misread the inscription as "A Mean Man". As the headstone was lost in 1932 during renovations of Canongate Church of Scotland (the Queen's parish church in Scotland) we cannot judge if Dicken's error was reasonable. Nevertheless, in his notebook the great writer remarked about Scroggie, "To be remembered through eternity only for being mean seemed the greatest testament to a life wasted."

On that June day in Edinburgh was the seed planted for Dickens' creation who has ever since epitomised miserly hard-heartedness and who appeared in the 1843 novella "A Christmas Carol"—Ebenezer Scrooge "a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner"? Maybe.

If Dickens procured the name from that headstone he certainly did not model his Scrooge on Edinburgh's Scroggie. Scroggie was a leading figure in the Scottish capital's society, serving two years as Lord Provost. He was indeed a meal merchant, trading in corn as well as wine. His family's firm

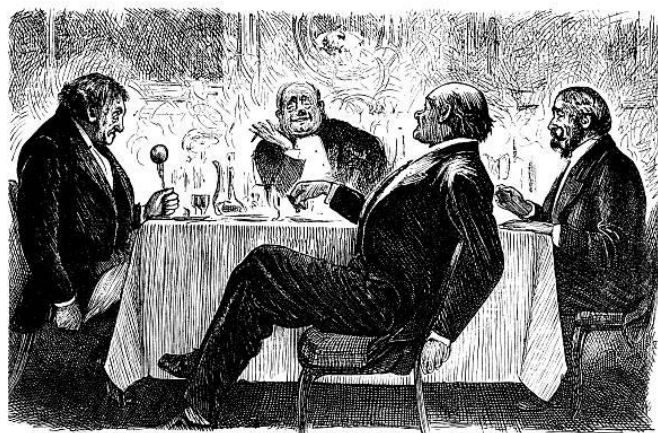
supplied Captain Cook's ship, *Endeavour*, as it charted the Pacific. He owned what today would be termed a catering business, having obtained the contract for entertaining King George IV on a visit to Edinburgh. As well



as royal patronage he was otherwise well connected, being a cousin of the renowned economist, Adam Smith. However, in character he was most unlike the imaginary Ebenezer, having acquired a reputation for licentious behaviour, lavish hospitality and parties, with the "jovial" character of a "scallywag". It has been recorded that he once interrupted the proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland by "goosing" Louisa Murray, the Countess of Mansfield (who had previously been Viscountess Stormont)!

Whether or not there is a connection between the factual Scroggie and the fictional Scrooge, before his ghostly visitors Scrooge could not be described as "jovial". In "A Christmas Carol" (a story that helped embed some enduring Victorian festive traditions) Dickens' Ebenezer reacts violently to a particular carol being sung: *"...at the first sound of 'God bless you, merry gentlemen! May nothing you dismay!' Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action that the singer fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost."*

Whilst my reaction to that particular carol would not be as animated or antagonistic, I have often wondered about the appropriateness of the opening line, usually sung as "God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay!" It conjures up in my mind an image of portly Victorian gentlemen indulging in a gout-inducing feast of food and wine in gluttonous quantities.



So I was somewhat surprised when the Church of England chose the familiar words of the chorus as the theme for their Advent and Christmas programme at the conclusion of this precarious year of pandemic tragedy, turmoil, unpredictability and uncertainty – “Comfort and Joy!”

If Charles Dickens can misread a headstone perhaps I can be excused for overlooking the placing of a little comma, but a comma that makes all the difference. Notice that the comma comes between “merry” and “gentlemen”. In my mind I have always heard and sung this carol without the comma! I was singing a carol that seemed to be celebrating and commending “merry gentlemen” – and that’s what tainted my estimation of this traditional English carol, indeed one of the oldest surviving examples, with a pedigree prior to the sixteenth century. Have I been too hasty in my judgement of the carol and the Church of England for adopting it in this particular year? Maybe.

When the carol was first printed in 1760 the opening line “God rest you merry, gentlemen...” conveyed a substantially different message to the one I was giving it. The comma was where it should have been and it was definitely “you” not “ye”, as the latter would have been grammatically incorrect (but that is another story). We should respect the sixteenth or seventeenth century meanings of key words and not impose a twenty-first century spin. In particular (and this is a game-changer!) “rest” is not an instruction to merry men that they should grasp the opportunity to sleep, take it easy, be lazy or otherwise profligate. It is actually something God grants. In this carol “rest” means “to keep, cause to continue, to remain.” The Oxford English Dictionary gives the meaning of “God rest you merry..” as “may God grant you peace and happiness...”

I was wrong, the Church of England was right; this oldest of carols does convey a truth for our time! This Christmas we do need comfort and joy.

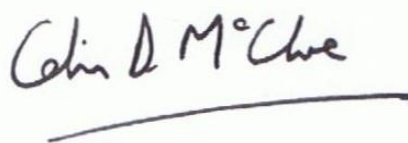
As your minister – pastor and preacher – I do not need to cite statistics to know that this has been a year devoid of peace and happiness for many of us. I

have seen it in your face, heard it in your voice and felt from your heart as we have shared challenges together. In the recent Remembrance Services I was struck by just how exceptional this year has been, living as we are in enemy-occupied territory. An invisible virus has robbed us of loved ones, friends and neighbours, and has curtailed, if not removed, so much of the freedom and liberty to do the familiar routine and be with the people who matter to us.

And yet, as your minister, I have also been encouraged by the resilience of so many who have determined to faithfully stride forward, to keep going, until we emerge to more fully rebuild on a firm foundation.

When I sing this carol in 2020 and beyond I am no longer forming a mental picture of those rotund Victorians carousing and gorging. I am now raising a blessing to the people I am with who need to hear the comfort of Immanuel in a year which has been tragic and trying for so many and who need to know the joy of Immanuel, which is the assurance of His certain presence with us at a time of continuing uncertainty.

May God grant you “rest”, that is “peace and happiness”, this Christmas-time and into 2021 as we, like the shepherds featured in this carol, journey on and discover Immanuel, God with us, in ways never thought possible. Let us, even in this extraordinary season of our history, rejoice in the tidings of comfort and joy which have sustained our forebearers, are sustaining us now and will energise us to where God guides.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Colin D McClure". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. Below the signature is a single horizontal line.

**Rev. Colin McClure**

# Message from Transcarpathia !

We are pleased to include this encouraging message from Rev Gyuri Szanyi, a friend of First Larne who has hosted many of the Ukraine teams in which we have participated. He has led youth ministry for the Hungarian Reformed Churches in the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine, where he has been serving both as a teacher and minister of a church. He has recently moved across the border to continue his ministry in Hungary.

Gyuri visited First Larne and shared in one of our services around 2 years ago while on sabbatical in Northern Ireland. English is his 3rd or 4th language. His message earlier this year was written originally for Whitehead Presbyterian magazine. Do remember Rev Gyuri in your prayers as he and his congregation seek to remain faithful to God amidst many challenges.

**Robin Tweed**

I hope you are well my dear friends in Northern Ireland! In this difficult time it is very important to encourage each other. Thank you for your interest and your prayer.

We are all well and healthy although we haven't been all together lately. My oldest daughter and my mother remained in Budapest as the borders closed in the middle of March. It means that we stayed home strictly, we went out just to buy food once a week. Starting from that time the church meetings were also forbidden. We started to live our church life on the internet. It was the same with the schools. Our daughters stayed at home, and continued their studies online. The schools organised home schooling very well. I have been teaching my students the same way. In the beginning I found online teaching or preaching difficult due to my poor technological knowledge or sometimes incomplete equipment.

By now we have restarted the church life like it was before. We have had communion on Pentecost. It was good for me, because I have had experiences from your communion. You know we have big cups on Lord's Supper and everybody drinks from the same cup. Everybody comes around the Lord's Table, and the pastor gives first the bread, and secondly the wine from the cup. The new situation made it impossible to organise it like it was in previous occasions. We had Lord's Supper like you have in

your church with small glasses, everybody sitting on their chair. We were very grateful to have communion. We used to have communion 6 times a year on the big holidays. We missed it on Easter. It was so good to have it on Pentecost.

We still encounter difficult times. The borders are still closed and we don't know when they will be opened. Lots of old people are afraid, and a lot of people have lost their job. The church life also changed. We don't know what kind of influence will the pandemic and restrictions have on our life in the future, everything is uncertain, but we know that „**in all things God works for the good of those who love him**” Rom 8, 28; This situation of pandemic will work for our good as well. These things seem bad to us, they are uncomfortable, dangerous, uncertain, but He is with us in all this trouble. I know that in N. Ireland the church buildings are closed, and the members don't have the opportunity to meet and pray together. Also the whole word is trembling, but we know that everything is in our favour, and God will bring from this situation the best for us. We don't see how or when, or what kind of good things, but we can grab on to this verse from the bible, and trust in God. This is our hope.

**“And hope does not disappoint us, because God poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” Rom Ch 5 v 5**

God bless you and your family, and be patient, because our God is working for us.

Gyuri Szanyi





# The Hope in Christmas

<sup>1</sup> *Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen one in whom I delight;  
I will put my Spirit on him, and he  
will bring justice to the nations.*  
<sup>2</sup> *He will not shout or cry out,  
or raise his voice in the streets.*  
<sup>3</sup> *A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;*  
<sup>4</sup> *He will not falter or be discouraged  
till he establishes justice on earth.  
In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”*  
<sup>5</sup> *This is what God the Lord says— Creator of  
the heavens, who stretches them out, who  
spreads out the earth with all that springs from it,  
who gives breath to its people, and life to those  
who walk on it:*  
<sup>6</sup> *“I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness;  
I will take hold of your hand.  
I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant  
for the people and a light for the Gentiles,  
<sup>7</sup> to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from  
prison and to release from the dungeon those who  
sit in darkness.*  
<sup>8</sup> *“I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not yield  
my glory to another or my praise to idols.*  
<sup>9</sup> *See, the former things have taken place, and new  
things I declare; before they spring into being  
I announce them to you.”*

**Isaiah 42 v 1-9**

When we look for God to step in and do something in our circumstances what do we imagine that will look like? Of course, God reveals himself in Scripture in a whole variety of ways. Sometimes in pillar of cloud and fire, flood and storm, stranger in a fiery furnace, miraculous sign. But what if God was actively at work in our circumstances and we didn't notice because we were looking for the wrong kind of evidence of his presence?

## Now there's a thought...

In 1942, in the midst of war, the famous Belfast Christian author C.S. Lewis wrote.....

**Satan:** "I will cause anxiety, fear and panic. I will shut down businesses, schools, places of worship and sports events. I will cause economical turmoil".

In these verses, God paints a picture of what his coming to his people in their hour of need will look like. He comes as a servant and without a lot of noise. He doesn't trample over the weak or snuff out the small and insignificant as he rushes by. Yet, he is unfaltering in his faithfulness, reaches out to take us by the hand, and in the process gives us new sight and frees us from darkness.

This is our God's natural temperament and way of working. It becomes so evident in how he chooses to reveal himself in Jesus.

Maybe sometimes we can't see God in our situation because we are expecting him to act in a different character altogether. Bold, brash, bullying, berating, bursting in like a bull in a china shop. If you are needing to find hope in God, it might be worth another look to see if he has drawn alongside to bring it, but you have not recognised him because his chosen ways of working aren't what you thought they would be.

Quieten your heart for a moment.

Reread these verses and ask yourself, 'when might God have drawn near to me in recent days as described here, but I didn't recognise his presence?'

Give thanks for our God, the servant king.

*This thought was originally published in the PCI TIDES daily devotional series and was written by David Thompson, Secretary of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and a member of Eglinton congregation.*

**Jesus:** "I will bring together neighbours, restore the family unit. I will bring dinner back to the table.

I will help people slow down their lives and appreciate what really matters.

I will teach my children to rely on me and not their money or material resources".



**SCHOOLS**  
Scripture Union  
Northern Ireland

## WHAT CAN WE PRAY FOR OUR SCHOOLS?

### **Principals and SMTs**

- Wisdom and peace in leadership

### **Teachers and Support Staff**

- Protection against burnout

### **Pupils**

- Adjusting to new normal
- Physical and mental wellbeing

### **Christian Influence**

- God will speak despite lack of visits from churches and Christian organisations
- God will work through Christian staff and pupils



## 3 SAFE AND EASY WAYS A CHURCH CAN SUPPORT THEIR LOCAL SCHOOL



**Pray for them** - contact the school by phone or e-mail and ask what specifically you can be praying for. Follow up every few weeks and let the school know you're supporting them in prayer. Alternatively, gather a small group to walk around the gates of the local school and pray over the staff and pupils.



**Show your appreciation** - arrange with your local school to drop off some individually packaged treats to be left in the staff room for teachers and support staff. A small thank you will help brighten their day and make them feel valued.



**Be practical** - find out if the school needs extra supplies as pupils return to class. You could donate disposable bags, gloves or hand sanitiser. Perhaps you have a sewing group that could make and donate face coverings for staff and pupils.



# KIDS church

EVERY SUNDAY MORNING DURING THE SERVICE

Kid's Church was back with a socially distanced picnic theme before the new Covid-19 restrictions came into force at the end of November.

**We'll be back again on 13<sup>th</sup> December!** (if we're allowed to)

Children will be met at the "Link" door before the service and can be collected afterwards when parents will be called to collect them.







# At Home for Christmas?

## MODERATOR'S CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2020

At this time of year we would normally be supporting Christian Aid and Tear Fund projects through the World Development Appeal. Covid-19 has made 2020 very different and the Moderator has launched a Christmas Appeal in response to the pandemic. In Northern Ireland, no matter what difficulties we may have, we are blessed with government financial support schemes, steady supply chains, and the NHS with its dedicated frontline medical staff.

But around the world there are millions in desperate need due to poverty, climate change, conflict, and natural disasters. Scripture reminds us that **"If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it..."** (1 Corinthians 12:26). They are our global neighbours in countries where there aren't enough doctors, ventilators, or ICU beds. Neighbours facing the choice between obeying restrictions and having no income to feed their family. Neighbours with no job and no government safety net. Families who have fled violence, conflict, and hunger in the place they knew as 'home' are particularly vulnerable. Many are living in crowded refugee camps with little access to medical care, clean water, or enough food. The virus is likely to exact a devastating toll on those who have already lost so much.

South Sudan is one such place, riven by civil war first within Sudan and internally since independence in 2011. A peace deal holds precariously at present but the conflict has left 1.6 million people internally displaced. The country has been hit by crisis after crisis – conflict, Covid-19, and most recently floods, which have destroyed crops and livestock and swept away homes, water and sanitation facilities, leading to the displacement of a further 700,000 people. Severe food insecurity has been made worse by the locust swarms which have emerged all over east Africa. Half the population of 12 million is food insecure, with nearly 300,000 children having acute malnutrition. Covid-19 has decimated supply chains leading to escalating prices for staple foods and basic commodities.

Funds raised by the Appeal will support information campaigns on Covid-19 and help provide improved

sanitation. Christian Aid partner, CARD, will provide education on good hygiene practices, and repair or provide new washing facilities and soap in marketplaces, churches, prisons, and schools. Tear Fund partner, ALARM, is also involved in raising awareness, combating disinformation about the virus, and provision of sanitation and PPE.



Funds raised through the Appeal will also be channelled to PCI's partner church the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan.

Similar work will also be carried out by Christian Aid and Tear Fund partners in the DR Congo and with the Rohingya refugees at Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh.

One third of the funds raised will be used to support hygiene, sanitation and food security projects run by PCI partner churches in Nepal, Malawi, Indonesia, Romania and Lebanon.

Whilst we are uncertain as to how restrictions will affect services in First Larne in the run up to Christmas, it is preferable to channel your support through the church as the amount donated can be boosted by reclaiming tax through Gift Aid. We would ask people to put their donation in an envelope marked Moderator's Appeal and brought to church - either to a service, put through the secure letterbox at the "link" door or posted to First Larne Presbyterian Church, 2 Inver Road, Larne BT40 3BW. It would be helpful to also mark the envelope "Gift Aid" if you are eligible.

If you cannot attend church you can still support the appeal online at

[www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/Congregational-Life/At-Home-for-Christmas/Moderators-Christmas-Appeal-2020.aspx](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/Congregational-Life/At-Home-for-Christmas/Moderators-Christmas-Appeal-2020.aspx)

Further details of the supported projects can also be found at this web address



## Soap Builds Hope

Christian Aid have launched an emergency appeal to bring help to people who do not have the clean water, sanitation and health service with which we are blessed in N Ireland - soap builds hope! Aside from the need for washing due to the coronavirus pandemic, soap is building resilience in different ways. In Ethiopia where the climate crisis is hitting hard, soap is changing the life of mother-of three Kumana Kurasho (26) who has



been trained in soap-making by Christian Aid using the drought-resistant aloe vera plant native to the area and which thrives where other crops fail. So why not.....

- Hang a bar of soap on your Christmas tree as a talking point and gesture of support
- Train a soap-maker for just £15 with a Charity Gift at [charity-gifts.christianaid.org.uk](http://charity-gifts.christianaid.org.uk)
- Share a picture on social media with the hashtag #SoapBringsHope and challenge friends to do the same

You can be a life-changer and a life saver!

**People Like Us** The annual Presbyterian Children's Society collection will take place in the weeks before Christmas. Especially at this difficult time with so many people working reduced hours or losing their jobs, your donations are needed more than ever. If no one calls with you please put your donation in an envelope marked Children's Society Appeal and bring to church - either to a service, put through the secure letterbox at the "link" door or posted to First Larne Presbyterian Church, 2 Inver Road, Larne BT40 3BW. Further information about the work of the society and an alternative way of making a donation can be found online at [www.presbyterianchildrenssociety.org](http://www.presbyterianchildrenssociety.org).



Blythwood says a BIG THANK YOU for over 50 shoeboxes, cash donations and other items received from members of First Larne. In addition, In Stitches group members sent hand knitted items which are much appreciated. These will be delivered with love to needy children and older people to help make Christmas special for them.



**ABAANA**

It is 6000 miles from Northern Ireland to Uganda, so in the autumn our friends in Abaana launched a fundraiser encouraging supporters to get out and exercise during the Covid-19 pandemic. The idea was to have supporters travel a combined 6000 miles by walking, running or cycling, whilst raising funds to help street children during the current crisis and for the new school build at Atukubui. Some people from First Larne have been taking part.

So far Abaana has been able to donate 50,000 meals to families in Uganda, but hunger is still a huge problem. The total raised from the fundraising efforts is not yet known but the really good news is that they are making plans to commence the building of the school in the next few months.

It had been hoped to bring the New Life Choir to the UK in 2021 but this had to be postponed until 2022 due to the pandemic.

Look out for news of progress on the Atukubui school build or make a donation at [www.abaana.org](http://www.abaana.org)



**CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREETS  
ARE EXTREMELY VULNERABLE DURING LOCK-DOWN**

# CHURCH REGISTER

## DEATHS

Joan Megarry	13 Hillmount Gardens	3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2020
Robert McClure	2 Rowan Avenue	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
William John ("Jackie") Burns	21 Old Glenarm Road	14 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
Ellen Rainey Magill	23 Wellington Avenue	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Margaret Watt Sharples	112 Old Glenarm Road	7 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Ellen May McClure	48 Loughview Bungalows	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Ivy Noreen Hanley	2 McGarel Bungalows, Gloucester Park	14 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
George Mervyn Hugh Adrain	14 Carmond Drive	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Michael George Manning	45 Walnut Park	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Irene Murray	10 Pound Green Court	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2020
Robert Gordon Kerr	6 Kernox Gardens	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Thomas John Hylands	29 Albert Street	2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2020
Marianne Goodall	78 Circular Road	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2020

## Staff News

Sadly Amy Hunter, our Youth and Family Worker left the church at the end of November, although we are pleased that she continues to work in a supportive role in one of our local schools. A collection for Amy is taking place. If you wish to contribute, please bring your donation to church when we reopen on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December. Alternatively put a sealed envelope with your donation through the secure letterbox at the "link" door or post it to First Larne Presbyterian Church, 2 Inver Road, Larne BT40 3BW.

## A message from Amy Hunter

It's not nice to lose your job, at any time. The BN caught up with Amy by e-mail.....

Amy, how do you feel about the situation?

It's not an easy position to be put in especially as Christmas fast approaches, but equally I know that God has always provided before and that isn't going to change now!

What next?

I'm currently helping out in Larne High School, which has been God providing in the here and now, as I push doors to see where He wants me next! I know that God put me in First Larne and so I remain thankful for His guidance and the hope that I can have because of Jesus!

What memories do you take with you?

My favourite memory has to be having the opportunity to lead 6 young people to Christ one

Jacqueline Murphy (McCallum) who is employed by Latin Link, will be with us for 10 hours a week (beginning on 1st December) over the period of furlough.

The roles of Sheila Doran and William Rainey are in the government's furlough scheme at present. We hope that Sheila can return to the Church Office for limited hours from January and are keeping the date for William's return under review.

night at FLY! There is nothing that can compare to knowing God has used me at that time for Him to shine through!

Do you have a message for the Kids and Youth?

Please keep going!! You guys are not the church of the future but rather this is your church family NOW! It's up to you guys to help shape it and future proof it - not the church as the building but instead the church as a body of believers!!

**Keep looking Heavenward.**

**Amy**

This Christmas please consider taking a little time to pray for all those who are struggling due to the current economic situation.

Ed.



# A very important message from our hospitals



A new ‘Phone First’ service is being rolled out to cover Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department and the Minor Injuries Unit in Mid Ulster Hospital, with effect from 10 am on Tuesday 1 December 2020.

The service is designed for patients, including children, who are feeling unwell and considering travelling to an Emergency Department or Minor Injuries Unit with an injury or illness which requires urgent treatment but is not immediately life threatening.

When you call the ‘Phone First’ service your condition, or that of the person you are calling on behalf of, will be clinically assessed and arrangements made for you to access the most appropriate service to your needs. This may mean offering you an appointment at the Emergency Department or Minor Injuries Unit, organising further investigations or redirecting you to your local GP or GP Out of Hours.

The Phone First service will improve patient safety in terms of preventing overcrowding and reducing long waits in our Emergency Departments. It will also help reduce the risk of Covid-19 infection and transmission.

The services operates on a 24/7 basis and is available by calling **0300 123 1 123** or using the Interpreter Now App.

If the situation is critical or life threatening please always ring **999** immediately.



## “In Search of Christmas” .....

is a Covid-safe outdoor Christmas treasure hunt, designed by Scripture Union.

Starting at the front door of the meeting house, the treasure hunt involves QR Codes and using your smart phone to access a series of video clips. It is for families and households to do in their “bubbles” and in their own time. Follow the trail for a short walk of discovery around the Inver and Tullygarley area!

## Scary Ghosts !

Third Larne Guides have been holding meetings on Zoom this term, including just before Halloween when they attempted to make origami ghosts!

They have also done various scavenger hunts around their houses, and a chocolate tasting - surprisingly some preferred the taste of what turned out to be the cheaper chocolate!

The Guides plan to join Larne Guide district in December for an online pantomime, and we shall see what the new year brings!



We all love "The Big "Christmas Tree switch on" which marks the beginning of the festive celebrations. One of the many symbolic reasons for having a Christmas tree is that the triangular shaped evergreen tree may represent the Holy Trinity and eternal life. Whatever the origins, we all enjoy the excitement in our homes and communities when we turn on those twinkling lights and admire the beauty of the tree. Have a go at these melt in the mouth Christmas tree brownies, for some extra festive cheer. Also great as a homemade Christmas gift. Happy Christmas everyone.

Arlene

### Christmas tree chocolate brownies

(gluten free)

Makes 12

225g good quality dark chocolate, broken into small pieces

2 teaspoons vanilla essence

3 eggs beaten

200g dark chocolate chips

225g butter

200g caster sugar

150g ground almonds

To decorate

75g icing sugar, sieved

2 teaspoons egg white, lightly beaten

gold and silver sprinkles

12 chocolate finger biscuits



1. Preheat oven to 170 C and line a 24cm round tin with greaseproof paper.
2. Place the butter in a large saucepan and stir continually until melted, over a very low heat. Remove from the heat and add the broken chocolate and continue stirring until well mixed with the butter. Set aside to cool a little.
3. Add the remaining ingredients, mixing well to combine, and pour into the lined tin.
4. Bake in the preheated oven for 40-45 minutes. Leave in the tin to cool down before carefully turning out on a wire tray to cool completely.
5. Cut the cooled brownie cake into 12 triangular tree-shaped wedges – you can slice off the rounded bottoms to give a straight edge, if you like.
6. Mix the icing sugar with 2 teaspoons of egg white, adding a drop or two more if needed to make a thick but runny icing. Drizzle or pipe over the brownie triangles in a zigzag pattern. Scatter with the star sprinkles and insert a chocolate finger to create a tree trunk. Leave the icing to set before serving.

**COOKS' TIPS:** Place in the fridge for 30 minutes before slicing to prevent crumbly edges. These brownies can be baked in a 24 cm square tin and cut into squares, sprinkled with icing sugar to serve.

**Bellahill**  
Cookery | Campervan Weddings

## Christmas Gifts for children

Our tradition of collecting Christmas gifts for children will continue this year. Gifts can be left under the Christmas tree at the service on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December. The presents will be distributed in conjunction with the Salvation Army. If wrapped please indicate on the outside the age and sex of the child for which the gift would be suitable.







## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Christmas Services this year will, like all others, be affected by Covid 19. Subject to any further restrictions, we intend to re-open for worship on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December with a service based on Luke 2 v 1-8 and a sacrament of infant baptism – the first we have been able to hold since the pandemic began.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> December Kid's Church will lead a Nativity Service in the morning followed by a Service of Lessons and Carols in the evening.

We will hold our traditional morning service at 10:30am on Christmas Day.

Look out too for a very special joint service on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> at 7pm - Larne Lessons and Carols, a first-ever streamed carol service from First Larne led by representatives from local churches. There will be no congregation – but the service will be available on Facebook, YouTube and on the First Larne website

FIRST LARNE

# CHRISTMAS 2020

6TH DEC | 11 AM |  
MARY & JOSEPH  
ONLINE SERVICE STREAMED ON  
FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE

13TH DEC | 11 AM |  
SHEPHERDS  
ONLINE & ONSITE SERVICE | BOOKING AVAILABLE

20TH DEC | 11 AM |  
KIDS CHURCH CHRISTMAS NATIVITY SERVICE  
ONLINE & ONSITE SERVICE | BOOKING AVAILABLE

20TH DEC | 7PM |  
HOPE UP CLOSE  
SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS  
ONLINE & ONSITE SERVICE | BOOKING AVAILABLE

25TH DEC | 10:30 AM |  
JESUS  
ALL AGE CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE  
ONLINE & ONSITE SERVICE | BOOKING AVAILABLE

27TH DEC | 11 AM |  
WISE MEN  
ONLINE & ONSITE SERVICE | BOOKING AVAILABLE

EVERYONE WELCOME!

 At Home for Christmas?



## AND FINALLY.....

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a bit of a groan at some awful jokes.....

Q : Who is never hungry at Christmas?

A : The turkey – he's always stuffed.

Q : What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

A : Frostbite.

Q : Why was Santa's little helper depressed?

A : Because he had low elf esteem.

Q : What do snowmen eat for breakfast?

A : Ice Crispies

Q : What goes oh! oh! oh?

A : Father Christmas walking backwards.

Q : What do you call a snowman in the summer?

A : Puddle

Q: What do you get if you cross Father Christmas with a detective?

A: Santa Clues

Q : Why does Santa go through the chimney?

A : Because it soots him.

Q : Who delivers Christmas presents to cats & dogs?

A : Santa Paws

Q : What do you get when you cross a duck with Santa?

A : A Christmas quacker.

Q : What did the stamp say to the Christmas card?

A : Stick with me and we'll go places.

Q : What did one snowman say to the other snowman?

A : Do you smell carrots?

And finally, finally .....Last year's Christmas pudding was so awful I threw it in the ocean. That's probably why the sea is full of currants.



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