

## DATES FOR THE DIARY SUNDAY SERVICES & MORE

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### DECEMBER

- 3RD FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT
- 9TH WINTER WONDER WALK
- 17TH 11:00 SERVICE WITH CHILDREN'S NATIVITY  
19:00 EVENING SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS
- 25TH CHRISTMAS MORNING WORSHIP 10:30

### JANUARY

- 7TH NEW YEAR COMMUNION - NOT REGISTERED; EVENING  
PRAYER MINISTRY HEALING SERVICE
- 21ST LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS - HELPING IN GRIEF:  
TIME TO BE CONFIRMED
- 29TH EASTER HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB PLANNING  
MEETING

### MARCH

- 24TH PALM SUNDAY
- 29TH GOOD FRIDAY
- 31ST RESURRECTION SUNDAY

### MORE:

FEBRUARY (DATE TBC) MEMBERSHIP CLASSES  
IF YOU ARE INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT GRAEME

CONNECT

NO.2



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# HARBOUR

In our last edition of The Connect I introduced the idea that the Church can be like a Harbour. I won't go over too much of that detail now, simply to remind us that any harbour is a place of refuge, of repair, of preparation for a life in the storms and high seas of the world around us.

This time I would like to say a little bit about WORSHIP. This is a word that has caused some confusion, some conflict and yet a lot of comfort. So let's try to unpack it a little and see what a wonder it can be and why it is vital to find in our Harbour.



## **Worship**

When you hear the word WORSHIP what comes to mind? Hymns? Praise choruses? Music? Yes, all these are involved in worship, but there is more. So much more.

We know that hymns, psalms and spiritual songs are used in Christian gatherings. Yet within the Old Testament worship is often connected with an act of sacrifice, whether at a personal level or a corporate gathering. So what should we be doing today? I don't think we will be introducing animals for sacrifice at our next service of worship, don't worry!

However, the idea of sacrifice in worship should always be in our mind. When it comes to music we will always have songs we like and styles we don't, hymns that excite us and praise that bores us. We are entitled to our own personal opinions, but can we respond to our brothers and sisters in Christ in the same way? But, as I said above, worship is more than music. Prayer is also worship, giving is also worship, leadership is also worship...really, anything that lifts the name of Jesus, anything that is a sacrifice of self to His glory is an act of worship.

# WORSHIP



But why is it an important aspect for Christians today? Is it just because we are commanded to it? How is it part of our repair/healing/preparation for life?

Well, as someone who didn't grow up in the Church and was never taught the Shorter Catechism, I can only come back to the primary question: What is the chief aim of man? To which everyone answers....

The chief aim of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

This is worship - to glorify God and why it is so important for us in the world - this is our purpose. To worship and enjoy Him is to be exactly who we should be.

Would you ever consider exploring different ways of engaging in worship? How about reading Psalms on a regular basis in your own quiet time? Ever tried writing your own? What about your prayer time? Do you find prayer in your own life a time of asking for things, but no more than that?

I see at Shore Street we are always in a sacrifice of praise when it comes to worship - especially music. We are made up of those who would want to have the most contemporary songs used in worship every week, and they stand beside those who would be happy with traditional hymns and maybe even the psalms from the psalter. Throw into the mix those who don't really enjoy music or can't sing a note in their head and we have a lovely picture of the diversity of the congregation. So we try to blend our music with a little something for everyone.



I'm not saying we shouldn't ask, but if that is all we are doing I would say our relationship with God is becoming very one-sided.

I enjoy worship in Shore Street. We have two Sunday services, each with their own flavour, we have times during the week for learning and discipleship. There are times of people meeting in prayer - worship, adoration and intercession. I wonder what Shore Street would look like if we had specific times of worship during the week as well? Maybe, that's an idea to think about...

# ON PRAYER...



What is it good for? Huh?  
Absolutely everything...

When you hear "prayer" what do you think?  
Is it Scary?  
Or does it bring Comfort?  
Duty drives into it?  
Or Pleasure is the experience gained?

Different people will have different answers for this, some falling on the negative, but hopefully more onto the positive.

What prayer do we have in our church?  
Watchmen. Youth Prayer meeting. Midweek Bible Study has taken more time to study in the trust that people are praying on their own.

If you have read the previous article on Worship you may already be thinking, "How is prayer worship?" Let's think about that and think about how we can increase our prayer as individuals, but more importantly as a congregation

How is prayer worship? You may be familiar with the acrostic ACTS for helping people in prayer..? Modelled on Jesus' teaching to his disciples to pray it goes something like this:

A - adoration  
C - confession  
T - thanksgiving  
S - supplication (a fancy word for asking for things)

Well if we apply this then it is obvious that prayer SHOULD be worship. Adoration is right at the start. Saying praise to God, lifting the name of Jesus, calling on the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Simply taking time to speak the glory of God.

We follow with confession - not only of our sins but also that Jesus is the only one who can deal with them - and move through to giving thanks. We find ourselves three quarters of the way through our prayers and we have hardly asked for anything! Wouldn't it be amazing if we could balance our prayers this way? I know I wish I could do it better.

So maybe we should try as individuals to do something like this? But what about us as a congregation, as a community of faith, as a family of believers? We already have some people meeting weekly, on a Tuesday morning at 7.00am to pray for youth and children across D'dee. Would you join them? What about our Watchmen team? Yes, it is a specific team dedicated to praying, but do you send them your requests? How about our Prayer Ministry Healing Service? Have you ever thought about coming along? Or are these things a bit scary, weird and "not for me"? Let me tell you how much more they could be for you! These Sunday evenings are a very special time to gather, sing, listen to God's Word, and be in His presence as people pray over one another. Still too much? What about once a month or once a term time of gathering some evening to pray?! Can we pray for prayer then?

More prayer = more power

Less prayer = less power

No prayer = well, you can see where that is going.



# SPOTLIGHT

## PCI

At Shore Street we are one congregation that is part of many. We are part of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. I'm not saying this to teach us, just to remind ourselves that we are part of something bigger. This comes with a few drawbacks but also a huge amount of benefit. I'm not going into these right now, but what I do want to highlight is as a result of something that came through the General Assembly this year.



It is plain to see that the Church on this island is in decline - any by this I mean not just the Presbyterian Church - and we are at something of a loss as to what to do about it. Ultimately this is the Lord's Church and He will do what He pleases with it, however when we are still here we should be doing our best to fulfill the Missio Dei (God's Mission).

At the General Assembly back in June a motion was passed to start a Reconfiguration of Ministry. This could mean how Ministers are trained, whether congregations will get a leave to call, and realigning Presbytery bounds. What this means is one word: Change. There will be a change within PCI which has not been witnessed for generations.

These ideas and more are being discussed at a Presbytery level. We are having some very open and frank conversations about congregations remaining open or closing, about how many full-time Ministers any particular Presbytery would need (no matter how many congregations there are within). These conversations will have a far-reaching impact in our Church as a whole.

If Ministers are limited in number how do we expect to be able to do the ministry we are called to do? In simple terms, we will need to have more people in part-time roles, or bi-vocational ministry posts; we will require more people to step into voluntary posts (here voluntary implies non-stipendiary, or unpaid) to support congregations in pastoral care, evangelism and other day-to-day ministry.

Needless to say, there is a lot to take on board here! Please be assured that these conversations are being taken seriously, but they are also being taken in time. Whether it is a blessing or a curse, the final decisions will not be able to be taken for a couple of years yet. They are coming though. We will be putting out a call to pray for the church through these times, but I know as Shore Street we don't need to wait for a call to come for us to pray for our Church. Pray for the Church as a whole, pray for those involved in making some big and difficult decisions; ultimately pray for REVIVAL!

# UPDATES

## FINANCE

With this edition of The Connect we would like to draw your attention to some changes in how we report finance and where some further developments may take place.

### **Givings to Church report**

You may have been expecting a personalised letter with this magazine distribution, about how much you have given to FWO and other church funds during 2023. Due to the massive workload of this, the Committee took the decision to no longer provide everyone with a report as a matter of course. Instead, your own report can be produced at any time upon request. It can be transmitted digitally or as a print out if so desired. Please contact Caroline McGrogan, our Gift Aid Treasurer at [giftaid@shorestreet.org](mailto:giftaid@shorestreet.org) or 07810 158069.

### **United Appeal**

At the time of writing our United Appeal Target for 2023 is set at £16,263 and we currently have raised £13,071. This means we have done really well in raising what we have to date and just need a little push to get us to where we need to be. For more information on what United Appeal is about please go to: <https://www.presbyterianireland.org/Mission/United-Appeal.aspx>

### **World Development Appeal**

Within this magazine you may have received an envelope marked World Development Appeal. This is something for those who have given on a regular basis before, so if you have received one and you believe you shouldn't have, please let us know. Likewise, if you were expecting one and didn't receive it please get in touch and we can remedy that. You can call into the office and we will sort it out. Please follow this link for more information and a video on what the appeal is aiming for this year. <https://www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/World-Development/2023-World-Development-Materials.aspx>

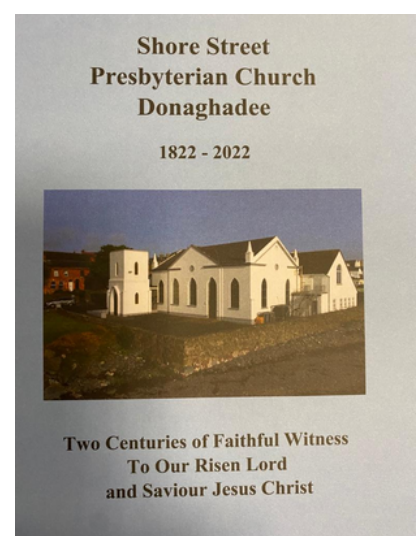
### **Do you give through the FWO scheme?**

Not everyone who gives does so through the FWO scheme. For those that do, some give via church envelopes, while others have a standing order set up with their bank or give via a bank transfer directly to the church bank account. Maybe you haven't got something like this set up but would like to. And then there is the question over Gift Aid. If you are still a taxpayer you can allow the church to claim from the government an additional 25% on top of your giving at no additional cost to you. There is a bit more to it than that, so please ask one of the Finance team for more information. Also if you are no longer a taxpayer please let one of our Finance team know.

## **200TH ANNIVERSARY**

It seems like so long ago now, but September was our time to celebrate two-hundred years of Shore Street. We had a really fun party with plenty of cakes - did you see the pictures in the paper? And the exhibition was really well received. Let's not forget the wonderful praise time we had at the Sunday service too!

If you still haven't had a chance to buy one of the books (only £5) please talk to Maurice McAuley



# FOODBANK

At this time of year when we look forward to celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ we give thanks to those who live by His instructions to 'love thy neighbour'. Our foodbank has been operating since 2017 and we continue to be overwhelmed by the generosity of our church family, community and local businesses who regularly support our work. We also could not function without the dedication of our loyal volunteers who work tirelessly to provide for those in need. This year we have distributed 102 food parcels and following this year's Christmas hampers we will have reached nearly 1000 since formation. We continue to thank and praise God for His faithfulness. The foodbank is normally contacted by PM to the SST FOODBANK DONAGHADEE FaceBook page. If not through referral agent.



I love Advent! Yes, it can be very busy. Yes, it can be really cold and dark. Yes, it can be extremely stressful... So why do I love Advent?

Advent is the time to remind ourselves that, instead of busy, we know the Prince of peace; instead of cold and dark, we know the Light of the World; instead of stress, we know peace, joy, and goodwill to all mankind!

What are your plans for this Advent Season? Can I encourage you to take a special effort to find a good book to read through this time? Or how about taking a chapter of Luke a day to take you through the life of Jesus? Do you have any traditions that make your Christmas season special? Something to remember the birth of our Lord and Saviour, that little thing to bring us to that point of wonder of God taking on Flesh through Jesus to be the light into the darkness of the world?

Besides the traditions and nostalgia of Christmas, which I do enjoy, I am constantly reminding myself that Jesus has come, and He will come again. This is the power of Advent! As shepherds waiting in fields, as Magi packing for travel, as a young couple bed down in a stable, we are waiting on something wonderful!

As we frantically run around getting ready for Christmas, filling our cupboards with food, hiding gifts away from peeking eyes, and asking ourselves if we have everything ready... can we take a moment to get ready for what is really important? Are we ready for the coming of Jesus? Will He know you? (Matt 7:21) Will we have oil in our lamps? (Matt 15:1-13) So let's be filled with the bread of life, the fire of the Spirit and let's look forward to the second Advent and awaiting the coming of the Lord.