

SHORE STREET
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

CCNI 105199



DECEMBER '24

14TH	CHRISTMAS CAMPFIRE	17:00
15TH	CHILDREN'S NATIVITY	11:00
	SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS	19:00
25TH	CHRISTMAS MORNING WORSHIP	10:30

JANUARY '25

5TH	COMMUNION	
19TH	LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS	
27TH	NEWCOMERS NIGHT	
30TH	NOMAD - BACK TO BASICS (PART 1)	

FEBRUARY '25

8TH	GIFT RETREAT	
	HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB PLANNING (DATE TBC)	

MARCH '25

16TH	COMMUNION	
22ND	GB PARENTS AFTERNOON	

APRIL '25

13TH	PALM SUNDAY (INC. BRUNCH)	
14TH - 16TH	HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB	
18TH	GOOD FRIDAY, WITH COMMUNION	
19TH	12 HOURS OF PRAYER	
20TH	RESURRECTION SUNDAY SERVICES	

MORE: MEMBERSHIP CLASSES AND NOMAD SHORT COURSES WILL RUN THROUGH THIS PERIOD. LOOK OUT FOR DETAILS NEARER THE TIME.

CONNECT

NO.5



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A CHRISTMAS TIME MESSAGE

WHAT DOES 2025 HOLD?

As we approach the end of yet another year it is only natural to take some time to dream and imagine what the future may hold for us in our lives. Do you have any big things happening in the months to come? Birthdays? Anniversaries and the like? But, what can we look forward to in the New Year in the life of the congregation?



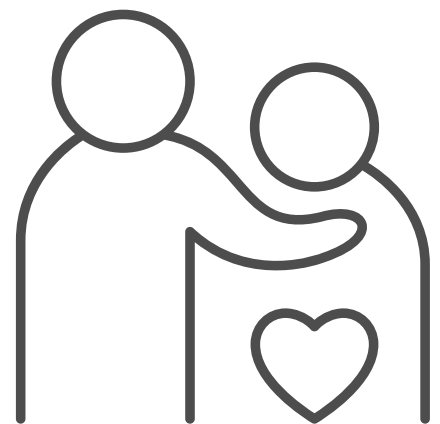
Let's address the big issue first. The Building.

Hopefully by the time you are reading this you will have had the opportunity to look at the options of what the church building refurbishment will look like. We have asked you to respond using the consultation paper slips found in the church, with 8th December being the last date for this. There is still a long way to go before a final design is set, but we do have some work that we can be getting on with now. Our Treasurer will mention this below. If you would like to have a copy of the consultation options you can contact Stephen accounts@shorestreet.org. The Committee will assess the responses and make a final decision on the direction of travel for the project soon, and we will report back in the New Year.

Besides this big financial issue we do have some potentially meaningful and some exciting prospects on the horizon.

Grief Support:

It is not a secret that we have a number of funeral services through the church every year. It is such a privilege to be able to minister to families in the midst of one of the hardest times of life. As people of faith and grace we know that the hope of Jesus and the assurance of His promises is there; however, grief still hurts. It is hoped that the New Year will see a Grief Support group run here, with Sonya spearheading this ministry.



We understand that not everyone will be ready to face their time of mourning just yet, but maybe you are looking for extra help, someone to talk to and share your burden with. Look out for some of the promotional material in the future, it may not be for you directly, but could be someone you know who is struggling in their own grief.

NOMAD:

From the end of January we will be giving the Thursday night slots over to a Basics School of our own making to help people live and grow in their faith of our Lord Jesus. It is really encouraging to hear people from all ages and stages ask about learning more about the Bible and how to read it for themselves.



So we aim to help with that. But not only handling the Bible, what about an increased and enriched prayer life? And there is the tricky issue of Apologetics...if we even know what that means?? Therefore we will take 4 week slots on Thursday evenings to provide training and even some resources to help everyone in these fields. If you are interested in any or all of these please make sure you are tuned into the regular Sunday announcements to hear when they are happening. It is hoped that the relevant times and dates will be made available on our Facebook page.



Youth Services and Praise:

We have been greatly encouraged to see the growth numerically of our Youth Group, but more importantly how much they have grown in their faith. Already, in 2024, they led worship at a couple of services and even had full reign of a morning worship service. Everyone was uplifted by these times together. So look out for these again. We have as much to learn from the next generation as they do from previous generations.

Membership Classes:

Over the past couple of years we have seen a number of people wishing to become official members of the church family. We are so encouraged to see people of all ages wanting to step forward and proclaim their faith in God, Father Son and Holy Spirit and commit themselves to life in this community of faith. However, there are still many out there who are just too shy to ask about this or maybe are not that clear on what it means.



These classes are there to help you understand so much about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in our church. We look at basic Gospel beliefs, living our faith out day by day, we even take time to try to grasp what the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is all about and what makes it different to all the others. Maybe you want to go deeper in your faith, maybe you want to know more about how the church works, or maybe you are just curious... well come along to these courses when they are announced and have your questions answered. And there is no compulsion to make the professions of faith at the end of the time if that's not what you want to do or you feel you are not ready for this commitment.

HIGHLIGHTS REEL

What have been your highlights of the life and Ministry of Shore Street over the last 12 months? Can you even remember that much?? I know I can't recall everything, so let's make do with some of the best bits to remember:

Welcoming new members into the congregation, some on transfer but so many on confession of their own faith. Alongside this we also had a number of adult baptisms in the year, and let's not forget our infant baptism and thanksgiving times for a number of our littlest ones. Give thanks for what the Lord is doing.

Holiday Bible Club. March saw our Perilous Pirates on the high seas, we covered this in a previous edition of our magazine.

Church Gardens: As we write this the team have produced another great display in the car park here. What a lovely way of being present in our community of Donaghadee.

Youth Service and *Culchie Night*: To watch our young people grow in their faith, confidence and life has been a real blessing to the whole church.

Uniformed Anniversaries: This past month has witnessed our BB celebrate 125 years and back in February the GB planted a tree to celebrate 80 years of girls ministry.

It has been another year of Mission presence. Nicola & Ezekiel and the children were able to spend time over the summer with us; we commissioned Esther Teggart into her new mission role and our young people had opportunity to be with Natalie in Newry.

There are a number of other ministries and ventures which will be personal highlights to you, but the one thing they all have in common is prayer. Each one was covered in prayer and each one was followed up in prayer.

We have seen another year of prayers given and prayers answered. Come Lord Jesus!

FINANCE UPDATE

Givings to Church Report

You may have been expecting a personalised letter about how much you have given to FWO and other church funds during 2024. Due to the massive workload of this the Committee took a decision to no longer provide these to everyone. However, your own report can of course be produced at any time upon request. Please contact Caroline McGrogan, our Gift Aid Treasurer at giftaid@shoresatreet.org or 07810 158069.

United Appeal

At the time of writing our United Appeal target for 2024 is set at £16,730 and we currently have raised £12,171. This means we have done well in raising what we have to date and just need a little push to reach our target. For more information on what United Appeal is about please visit United Appeal - Presbyterian Church Ireland

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, others have a standing order set up, while others give via bank transfer. Maybe you haven't got something like this set up but would like to. Also there is the question over Gift Aid. If you are a tax payer you can allow the church to claim from the government an extra 25% on all your donations at no additional cost to you with the simple completion of a gift aid declaration. On the other hand, if you are no longer a taxpayer but still have a gift aid declaration in place please let us know asap. If any of this is of relevance to you, please contact Caroline McGrogan or Stephen Jamison (07709 824798) from our Finance team for further information.

Church Redevelopment Project

Hopefully by now you will have seen the Church's future plans for either a refurbishment or redevelopment of the main church sanctuary area. Just a reminder that the congregational consultation on the plans closes on Sunday 8th December 2024. We are keen to hear your views so if you haven't already done so, please return your feedback forms by 8th December to one of the boxes located in church or to your committee member/elder if you can't make it to church before then. If you would like to view an electronic copy of the plans please send an email to accounts@shorestreet.org. If you need any further information on this, please contact one of the Property team or your Elder/Committee member.

A CHRISTMAS TIME MESSAGE

*A time for living, a time for believing
A time for trusting, not deceiving
Love and laughter and joy ever after
Ours for the taking, just follow the master*

What is this Christmas time all about? I suppose it is what you want it to be... do you want it to be about family and feasting? Or what about presents and parties? For some it can be tinged with sadness of the loved and the lost. This is what we can make of Christmas time, but what should we as the Church make Christmas to be?

Maybe you are reading the above prose and thinking if that is the verse from Ecclesiastes 3, that book of wisdom and philosophy written nearly 3000 years ago. It's not. Written over 35 years ago, this is a verse from the Cliff Richard Christmas No.1 "Mistletoe and Wine". Nevertheless, his call to 'just follow the Master' has always been a truth when we realise that Jesus is the only Master.



This time of year has become something other than what our forefathers intended it to be. Not all of the changes have been bad, but maybe we are forgetting some of the more important aspects of this season. Yes, Jesus is the Reason for the Season, but maybe not in the way we primarily think. Advent isn't about the journey to the birth of Christ, it is the waiting of His return. Christmas isn't just about the baby laid down in the manger, but about the Light stepping down into Darkness. The Kingdom of God has come near.

Christmas time should be that reminder that God loves us, now and always. His Gift of Grace is ours to share in today. His promise of dwelling with Him in glory for all eternity holds fast this very moment to the time either He returns or He calls us home. There is still a waiting aspect to Christmas, amidst all the wrapping and presents, but there is also the immediate presence of God as Holy Spirit. This is for us now.

Christmas time: it is, and always has been, about the now and the not yet.