

Contact

Carryduff Presbyterian Church Magazine

December 2023



CONTENTS

4 . MINISTERIAL REVIEW

A short message from the ministerial team

From - **Rev. Alistair Smyth**

8 . THE SOKO FAMILY

An update from and old friend of the congregation

From - **Maurice Patterson & Young Soko**

12 . 44TH G.B TURNS 75

A look back over the G.B.'s 2023 activities

16 . FOOTBALL MINISTRY

Carryduff P.C. starts a new outreach

From - **Johny Bell**

19 . BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT

A member of the congregation has a memorable day at the castle

6 . IMPACT WEEK

Find out about Carryduff Presbyterian Church's summer outreach activities

From - **Adam Murphy**

10 . DETECTIVES H.B.C

The Children from the congregation had a Mystery to solve this summer

From - **Daniel Lowe**

14 . BREAKFAST BIBLE CLUB

Are Bible clubs just for the summer?

From - **Daniel Lowe**

18 . CHOIR'S CHRISTMAS

A reflection on a Christmas Carol

From - **Sarah Shannon**

20 . STOREHOUSE 2023

How can we help in 2024?



Ministerial Report

Dear Friends,

Once again the Advent and Christmas seasons draw near. However, before I say anything about that I want to pause and look back. As many of you know, we had to cancel our summer holidays to Canada owing to a deterioration in Lesley's health. Things have improved a little since August but she still has some way to go. The medical professionals are tweaking her medication going forward until the end of January 2024. In Lesley's own words, "There's light at the end of the tunnel, but it's a bit of a long tunnel!" We would like to thank again, all who have helped us practically and spiritually over these past months.

On the 15th July 2023 a chapter in the history of Carryduff Presbyterian Church came to a close with the death of our Minister Emeritus, the Rev. John Magilton Maddock. John's active ministry in Carryduff from 1975 – 1995 was very impactful and was a time of notable growth in the congregation. He gave me every possible encouragement after I was installed as minister of Carryduff in June 1996. Please continue to pray for Mrs. Maddock and the family circle.

Since September 2022 I have greatly valued the help of our Pastoral Assistant, the Rev. John Noble. John's pastoral visitation (roughly 10 hours per week) has been very much appreciated. He has been able to come alongside people very quickly and identify with their situation. Likewise, his pulpit ministry, preaching on the parables of Jesus in the morning, and the Psalms in the evening has been very challenging and helpful.

Congregational life in Carryduff Presbyterian Church has been a mixed picture. The numbers of children in our Girls' Brigade and Boys' Brigade have improved since last year and they come from all kinds of backgrounds. The numbers attending Parents and Toddlers are encouraging and it is a similar picture for Connect. The attendances at Teentalk and Alive Youth remain steady. Pray that God may bless His Word that goes forth at each of these organisations.

However, attendances at public worship continue to fluctuate. It remains a matter of concern that there are so few children of primary school age attending our services. Please pray that God would bless those few children who do come and that He would bless them with salvation. Pray for the Big Breakfast Bible Club which meets at 10am on the second Sunday of each month. The children meet for Breakfast followed by an interactive time of Bible teaching. The aim of this time is to attract more children of primary school children and encourage them and their parents to come to church.

Now to Christmas! The world we live in is a particularly confused and broken place. The continuing conflict in Ukraine and the upsurge of violence in Israel and Gaza, to mention but two, remind us of the fallenness of our world. The world into which Jesus came was not a pretty place either. There wasn't much sympathy for a pregnant woman about to give birth to her child. There was no room at the inn so He was born in a stable. When Herod heard that a rival who would be known as "the King of the Jews" was born he ordered all baby boys of two years and under to be killed in the vicinity of Bethlehem, an incident that became known as "the slaughter of the innocents." When Joseph learned of this he whisked Jesus away to Egypt – so Jesus became a refugee. In the course of His ministry Jesus was misunderstood and mistreated. He didn't really have a home to call His own. He was nailed to a cross between two criminals, endured ghastly pain and died an ugly death.

However, all of this was in God's plan. Jesus endured all of this for sinners like us. He was the "light of the world" coming into our darkness in order to scatter it. Jesus said, "I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark" (John 12: 46 NLT)

As you read this Christmas letter ask yourself, "Am I in the dark or in the light?" If you are in the dark, ask the Lord to shine the light of the Gospel into your heart. If you have already received the light ask Him to illumine your life more and more. Ask the Lord to help you share that light with others. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Every Blessing for Christmas and 2024.

Yours sincerely,
Alistair Smyth.

IMPACT WEEK



The goal of IMPACT is to go into Carryduff and share the Gospel with the whole of Carryduff.

This summer, a residential team of over 20 young people based in our church spent a week running localised 'satellite' Bible clubs, a sports club, and "Summer Alive". We also ran a family BBQ at the end of the week. IMPACT allowed us to get to know our community better and deepen our roots of contact in the local area. Best of all, we were able to share the Gospel with the local people, friends, and family of all ages and stages.

The LORD has blessed this work as we have seen the numbers of children in Alive, GB, and BB increase, at least in part from contacts made in the summer at IMPACT. Please pray for an increase in fruit from the seeds that have planted these last summers.

Adam Murphy







THE SOKO FAMILY, MALAWI

Our congregation has had a link with the Soko family since the first visit by a work party in the summer of 2004. At that time, Young Soko was Director of Primary Health Care at the David Gordon Memorial Hospital, Livingstonia, Northern Malawi, and Young liaised with that and subsequent work parties on numerous projects in and around Livingstonia. Those projects included improving facilities at the Hospital, the pre-school, primary and secondary schools and local churches. Since his retirement, Young and family have moved to Mzuzu and established the Good Samaritan Charity Trust which helps poor and vulnerable families with basic food items and access to health and educational facilities. Over the years the Soko family (Young, his wife Josephine, and children) have been part of our adopted missionaries and the youngest in the family, Faith, has been helped with education fees at secondary school and university.

Below is a Report from Young on what the family is currently doing.

At Home

Since retirement we have joined subsistence farming whereby we grow maize on a small scale. When we harvest, we share it with those in need such as widows, orphans and people with disabilities.

Church activities

We are participating in church activities such as:-

- I am the Youth Advisor and my role is to bring all youths together to learn and grow spiritually, mentally and physically through various activities.
- I am the chairperson of the Infrastructure development committee, overseer of all church projects. Currently we are building a church. After completion it will have a space for 2,000 people.
- Josephine is the secretary of the Fundraising committee and advisor to all church choirs.

In the Community

When we arrived in Mzuzu after my retirement, we saw many problems that we have tried to address in a very small scale through the Good Samaritan Charity Trust helping, on a voluntary basis, needy people. This work has included the following:-

- Care and support for orphans and other vulnerable people

On a small scale, we provide food during food shortages. At times we provide agriculture inputs, construct houses (we have managed to build two houses for the needy) and undertake provision of basic needs such as soap and salt. We have assisted some people with disabilities to have surgery in Blantyre. In times of disaster we are often the first to arrive with support before anybody else comes with help.

- Education

We support needy students in secondary school and some in tertiary education. As of July 2023, over 50 have finished secondary education and 10 finished tertiary education (subjects include theology, nursing, teaching, agriculture, administration and electrical installation).

In conclusion, the challenges we face are that demands are higher than the resources we receive and due to the terrain we have to travel over – the wear and tear on transport.

Update on the family

God has blessed us with three children, two boys and one girl. Our youngest, Faith, is studying Finance and Banking at university in Uganda. She is in her final semester finishing later this year following which she hopes to get a job in banking or finance related companies. The eldest, Kondwani, who studied law, is a volunteer with the High Court in Blantyre and is waiting to be employed there. Abel, our middle child, studied Economics and he is a volunteer in the District Planning Office for Rumphi District and is also waiting to be employed.

Josephine is still working as a Nurse – now in the more specialised area of Community/Public Health (that is the health of children and of child bearing aged women).

Maurice Patterson & Young Soko

Detectives H.B.C



We all love to watch a good detective in action: sniffing out the clues, interviewing the characters, and putting the pieces of the puzzle together. Holiday Bible Club for 2023 was detective-themed - and hosted by our very own (somewhat clumsy) detectives, Bobby and Spark.

Their task was to get to the bottom of perhaps the greatest question ever: **WHO IS JESUS?**

So, as you might expect, they began to snoop around Galilee for clues. They came across some of the people who had met Jesus throughout his life, including some of the ones who knew him best - like his Mother, Mary. Mary revealed some startling information about the things that took place around the time her son was born. There were unexpected visitors, announcements from angels, and instructions that his name would mean 'Saviour'.

After such a promising start, the Detectives figured out where they needed to go next - the town where Jesus had lived after growing up - Capernaum. For some unknown reason, Bobby and Spark decided to look in a local rubbish bin for clues. Bobby even fell into it! But they did find some things inside. A lame man's mat? A blind person's walking stick? A thermometer for taking your temperature? Why would all of those things be thrown into the bin in Capernaum?! It was almost as if the people who had used them didn't have need of them anymore. Interesting...

Day Three. Time for a trip to Jericho and an encounter with a little guy called Zaccheus. He collected people's taxes. The Detectives actually met him twice that day - but he didn't seem the same the second time, he was so different. After some further detective work, it turned out that something had happened that day that totally transformed Zaccheus's life: he had met Jesus.





Day four started happy, and finished sad. The detectives watched on as Jesus called the fishermen to follow him. Peter, Andrew, James and John all left their nets to follow. Later on, Jesus said 'follow me' to a rich young ruler. He didn't, he walked away sad that day, because he loved other things too much to give them up for Jesus.

Day five - the final chance to piece together the evidence and decide who Jesus really was. Time to meet a scary Roman soldier, one who was there when Jesus died on a cross. Even though he was in charge of his crucifixion, he had decided that Jesus was 'the Son of God'. The final characters to be interviewed were some women who had been the first to visit Jesus' tomb after his death. They had found the tombstone rolled back, and angels waiting to meet them. And they insisted that, as they ran home, Jesus himself had met them - he had risen from the dead!

What a week, and what an answer to the big question of who Jesus is. According to the witnesses, who had their testimony recorded in the gospel records, he is the Saviour of the world, who healed the sick, can forgive sins, transforms lives from the inside out, calls us all to follow him, died in our place, and rose from the dead to live as Lord and King forever!

We were delighted to have 102 children at our Bible Club over the course of the week. A very big 'thank you' to everyone who made it happen by preparing, praying, and putting on a great programme of stretches, songs, skits, scripture, sports and snacks for all the boys and girls. We pray that they, and you, would be able to answer the great question 'Who is Jesus?' with the words of Thomas the disciple: "My Lord and my God!"

Daniel Lowe on behalf of the HBC Team





44th Carryduff Girls Brigade

This year we have celebrated 75 years of 44th Carryduff Presbyterian Girls Brigade. We are so privileged the company is still going strong and has even grown in numbers this year too. We have had lots of new Explorers join the company along with some new Juniors too. (There is still room for more though – all girls aged 3-18 are more than welcome to join us).

All of our groups have been learning about God's promises and have been delving into the bible each week to find examples. Tuesday nights are jam packed with activities and the time always flies by.

Our Explorers have been learning sign language this year with Emmy's mum Jill. This has been a lot of fun and the girls were able to show off their new skills at our Enrolment service. Games are a must every week as the girls have lots of energy to burn off. They are all looking forward to their visit from the Guide Dogs next week.





The Junior section have been busy learning to knit this term. I'm not sure everyone will be receiving a hat or scarf for Christmas just yet but the girls have been really enthusiastic and enjoyed every minute of it.

Seniors and Brigaders have been busy developing their badminton skills and were able to enter a competition in November. Unfortunately, they didn't win but they came extremely close and all the leaders are very proud of them. With Christmas coming the girls are keen to get baking at any opportunity.

If you have any skills or talents that you would like to share with us ,please get in touch with Rosemary. We are always on the lookout for new skills to teach the girls.

Please continue to keep the girls and the officers in your prayers.





Breakfast Bible Club

The only downside of Holiday Bible Club is that it only happens in the Summer, right? Wrong!

Breakfast Bible Club happens on the second Sunday of each month - it's like a slice of summer every four weeks!

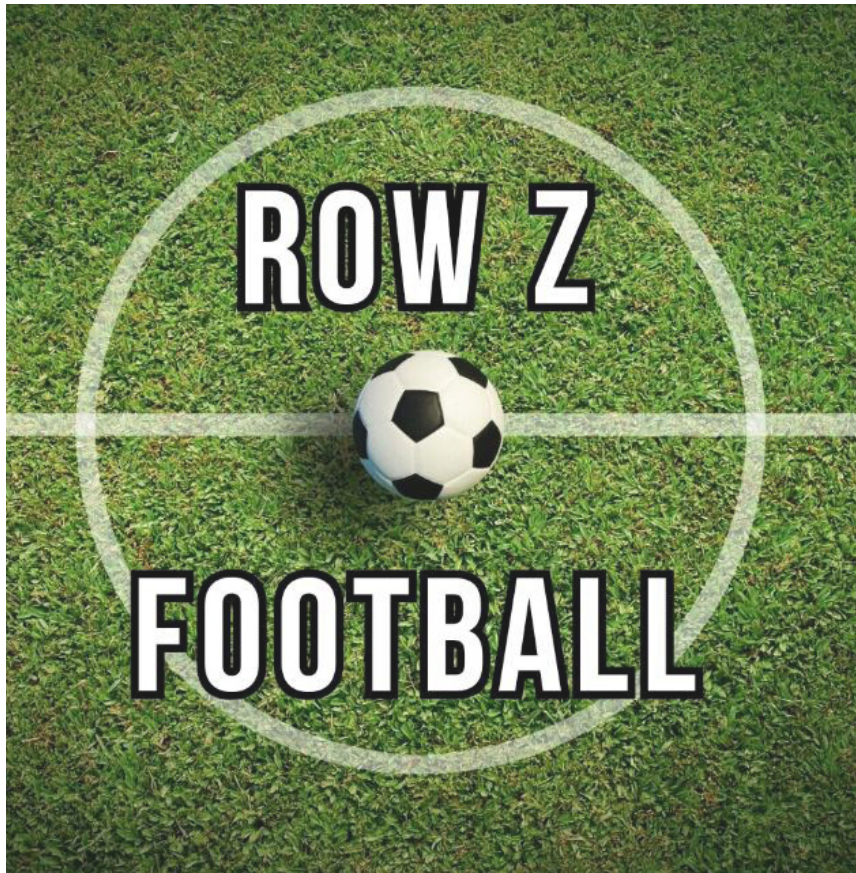
As you might imagine, we love breakfast at the Breakfast Bible Club, and anything remotely related to breakfast. We have a cereal, sorry serial story each month: "Lost in la France", featuring some characters trying to make their way home to Carryduff. We have even discovered 'Breakfasts in the Bible'. From the Garden of Eden, to the Flood in the days of Noah, to Abraham's visitors - who knew there were so many breakfasts in the best book?!

You really don't know what to expect at Breakfast Bible Club, one month you might find yourself in the middle of Abraham's beautiful tent, another you could be discovering the true lift to heaven. Keep an eye on the church Facebook page - sometimes there is a competition to bring something (like the very biggest spoon you can find) or wear something (like a dressing gown). But whatever you do, don't stay at home under the covers and be miserable, come every second Sunday and bring your friends and siblings. We start at 10.00am with a three-course breakfast to fuel up for 50 minutes of non-stop Bible Club action from 10.30am! There are memory challenges, favourite songs, and boys vs girls quizzes- you don't want to miss it!

All pre-teens welcome, and Teen Talk-age young people are involved in running the show each month. Parents are welcome to stay and have a coffee too.

Daniel Lowe





Football Ministry

A new adventure to bring people together using football started in April this year. Row Z Football takes place once a month at Saintfield Community Centre Indoor 3G pitch from 8-9pm. It has provided the opportunity for many football enthusiasts to meet together, play, grow friendships and enjoy fellowship.

It has been amazing to see the numbers increase every month. In the first couple of months it was great to have 10 to 12 players attending, however, this meant plenty of running to cover the space on the pitch. Thankfully the numbers are now 14 to 16 which means those with older legs do not have to run as much!! We also have a Premier League Fantasy League set-up which provides some competitiveness off the field.

A main part of every night is the pre-match prayer and short thought. It is great to bring glory to God in all circumstances and we never know who is in need of encouragement in their faith or even is considering coming to faith in Jesus Christ. It has been fantastic to see a few attending that do not have a church connection or a Christian faith. Our prayer is that Row Z Football can continue to be place of enjoyment and Christian influence in our community.

If you would like to get involved in Row Z Football, please get in touch with Jonny Bell or Adam Crawford and you can be added to the WhatsApp group.

Jonny Bell





Carols By Lamplight

Carryduff Presbyterian Church

Sunday 18th December 2022

6:30 p.m.

It's mine and the church choir's favourite (although busiest!) time of the year. We're really enjoying rehearsals for the annual Carols by Lamplight service, and look forward to seeing you there. You can expect a program of special Christmas choir anthems, as well as join us in singing some favourite carols.

One of our favourite anthems this year is a new one to us - "Sing We the Song of Emmanuel", by Matt Boswell, Matt Papa, Keith Getty and Stuart Townend.

"Verse three of "Sing We the Song of Emmanuel" embodies all that we really want to communicate with this song." – Matt Papa

Go spread the news of Emmanuel
Joy and peace for the weary heart
Lift up your heads for your King has come
Sing for the light overwhelms the dark
Glory shining for all to see
Hope alive let the gospel ring
God has made a way
He will have the praise
Tell the world his name is Jesus"

2023 has been another difficult year for many. There is so much hurt and suffering - both world-wide and right here in our church family and community. It can be overwhelming. But the words of this song remind us that the good news of Jesus Christ can bring "joy and peace for the weary heart". He is the light that "overwhelms the dark". The Christmas message is one of hope.

Let the words of this song, the truth of Scripture, and the joy and peace of 'God With Us' dwell in your heart this Christmas.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth"
(John 1:14)

Come and join us at the Carol Service, at 5.00pm on 24th December 2023. Come in from the cold and darkness outside into the warm glow of the lamplight, as we sing together the songs of Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.



By Royal Appointment

Our church elder Frank Dempsey attended an investiture recently at Hillsborough Castle where he was presented with his Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) by Dame Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle DBE, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for the County Borough of Belfast. Frank was awarded the MBE by Her Majesty the Queen in the June 2022 Birthday Honour list for his Volunteering with the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross and for voluntary and charitable services to policing and the community in Northern Ireland. Frank was also honoured to be present at the state funeral for Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Frank has been a member of Carryduff Presbyterian Church since 1978 and a church elder for 45 years.



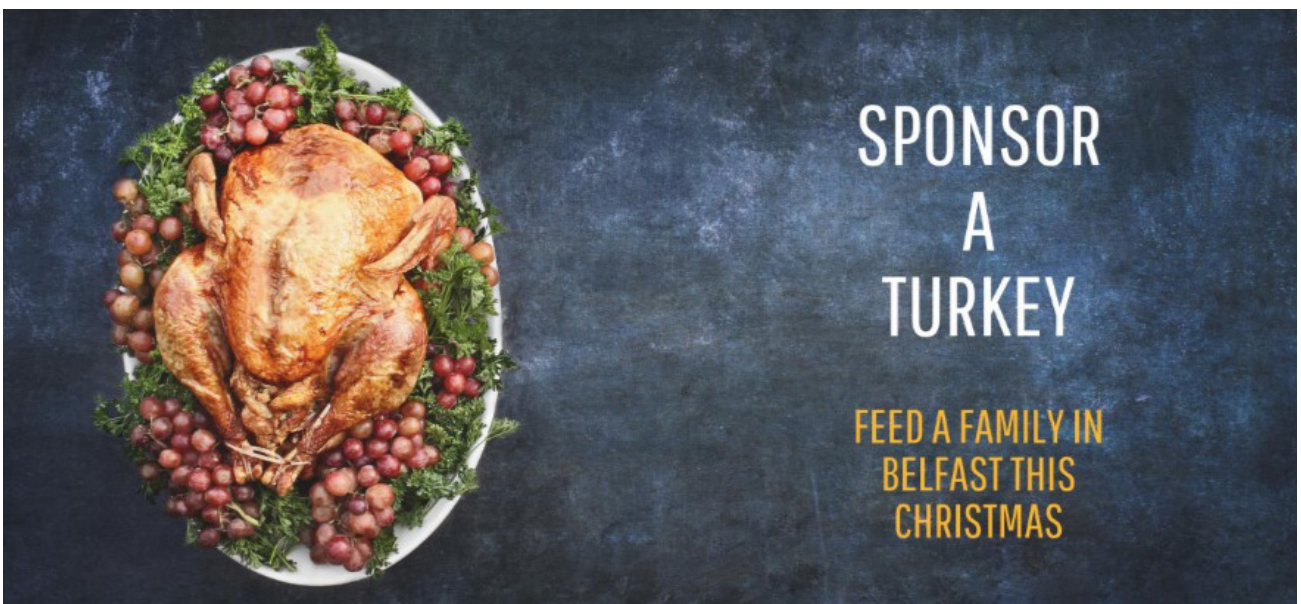
Storehouse Christmas 2023



There will be an increasing number of families in our local community this year who will have to make the difficult choice between eating and heating. The current cost of living crisis is biting hard. Can you help those struggling?

Everyone's budget is stretched more than usual this winter. But if you're able, please consider donating provisions to the storehouse trolley in our church foyer. Just one or two items extra in your grocery shop will make a difference.

Thank you to everyone who has donated to Storehouse during 2023. Your generosity has made a real difference in the lives of those in need.



THE SHOPPING LIST

Biscuits
Cereal (including variety packs)
Crisps
Long Life Milk
Pasta
Pasta Sauce
Tea bags
Tinned Dessert
Tinned Fish
Tinned Fruit
Tinned Meals
Tinned Meat
Tinned Vegetables



Dates for your Diary

December

Friday 15th	6.00pm	Carol Singing at Brackenvale Service station with distribution of Christmas literature.
Saturday 17th	7.30pm	You are invited to watch the Christmas Classic "Scrooge", followed by Refreshments and a short Epilogue.
Sunday 24th	11.30am 5.00pm	Christmas Family Service. Carols by Lamplight followed by tea/ coffee and seasonal treats in the Church Hall. (PLEASE NOTE TIME)
Monday 25th	10.00am	Christmas Family Service
Sunday 31st	11.30am 6.30pm	Final Services of 2023

January

Sunday 7th	11.30am 6.30pm	New Year Service New Year Communion Service
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*"FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOUR, WHO IS CHRIST THE LORD."
(LUKE CHAPTER 2, VERSE 11)*

