

LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

'The unexpected Christmas'

A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Isaiah 40 verses 3-5

What a year it has been, I'm sure that none of us back in November 2019 could have thought that the words, Lockdown, Social Distancing, and the 'R' number would be playing such a big part of our normal lives here in Movilla. One of the things that has amazed me the most is how these strange times can so quickly become the norm for us. We have had to adapt and change the way we do many aspects of our lives including Church. Some of these things will be good and positive, while with others it will be good to get back to the way things were.

As we think about our lives as Christians, throughout this year we have developed different ways to worship and have fellowship together. We have learnt about YouTube, WhatsApp groups, Zoom meetings and I could go on and on. However one of the things that should not feel normal to us, is the lack of opportunities to meet together for worship and fellowship. Sadly as we face another lockdown period this is something that will have to happen again for a small amount of time (hopefully!). I find it is not until you have the chance to meet with someone face to face, that you find out really what is happening in their lives. It is where we have the opportunity to really share in one another's lives. It is my prayer that one of the lessons that we receive from this period is the value and importance of being able to meet together and share.

The other aspect of this period is to know that God is aware of our situations. He is not affected by Covid restrictions and because of the limitations on our lives, we have been able to see His power and glory in many different ways. One of the tag lines that has been going through my mind since we have first been faced with lockdown restrictions is *'The Church building may be closed, but this just means the Church has moved into everyone's home.'* Many have been able to tune into the online services and podcasts weekly, who in the past weren't able to do this. Many have been able to share the link to others showing them what church is. In each of these examples we can see God's power and glory at work.

At present we are faced with headlines - *"Leaders in a rush against time to save Christmas!"* We are told that the current restrictions are being put in place in order for us to be able to celebrate the Christmas period. While I know what these headlines are trying to get across, as we turn to God's Word, we can see that it is not possible for us to 'save Christmas', for Christmas is the very thing that has saved us! As we look at the words from the Prophet Isaiah, we see how our loving God put the process in place that His glory would be seen here on earth. The baby born in Bethlehem is the one who is able to save us, not from the temporary restrictions of this year, but on the eternal restriction of our relationship with God. In Jesus we are never socially distanced from our Heavenly Father, instead we can know an intimate relationship that will continue on forever.

May you all know of the Blessing of Jesus this Christmas.

Yours in Christ

Robert

Finance Update

We would like to thank all those members who have responded so generously to our request to move contributions to e-banking or standing orders. As a result we have been able to meet our salary costs and all required payments to PCI along with insurance, electricity and gas bills.



We have made contributions to local and international charities and paid for the installation of the electronic equipment which has allowed us to live stream services and record weekly podcasts.

We currently have a bank balance of £13000

Updated Dates for your dairy

Sunday 6th December - Morning Worship Service (*Online Only*)

Sunday 13th December - Morning Service (Communion), 11am (*Church Building open*)

Sunday 20th December
- Morning Nativity Service (*Online only*)
Evening Carol Service (*Church building open*)

Christmas Morning Service - Worship Service, 10.30am (*Church building open*)

Sunday 27th December - Morning Worship Service, 11am (*Online only*)

Wednesday 30th December - Last Worship service of the year, 7pm (*Church building open*)

Sunday 3rd January 2021 - Morning Service (Communion), 11am (*Church Building open*)

All of these services, will be broadcasted from our YouTube channel

www.youtube.com/c/movillapresbyterianchurch





Movilla Presbyterian Church
87 Movilla Road, Newtownards, BT23 8RQ



Tuesday 8th December – Friday 11th December 2020
Come along in person (or virtually) to see all the fun learning experiences that we can offer your child in our Playgroup.

We welcome all children aged 2 Years 10 Months up to school age.

To enquire or book an appointment phone Alison on 07854268145 or contact us via:

 [littlerainbowsplaygroup-newtownards](https://www.facebook.com/littlerainbowsplaygroup-newtownards)
 littlerainbowsnewtownards@gmail.com

Free Will Envelopes

This years envelopes are now available. If you have been giving by ebanking we will hold your envelopes until the pandemic has been resolved.

If not your envelopes will be delivered by the church elders

If you have filled envelopes you have not been able to deliver as you are shielding and have not been coming to church we will be opening church on Wednesday 16th December from 10-11am so that you or a family member or friend can deliver these to the church for inclusion in the 2020 accounts.

Unfortunately due to Covid and PCI guidance we cannot call with you to collect your offerings.

Church Worship/Prayer/ Communication

Let me highlight how you can access our current online services;

Every Sunday morning at 11am a new Church service premieres on our church YouTube channel, at www.youtube.com/c/movillapresbyterianchurch

Every Tuesday evening at 7pm a new episode of our midweek worship becomes available, this can be found at the following

[www. Movillapresbyterian.org.uk/podcast](http://www.Movillapresbyterian.org.uk/podcast)

However you can also access our podcast on most podcast services. Again if you subscribe on your podcast provider you will automatically receive the new episode.

Recently we have also established a new service where if you don't have access to the internet you can listen to our midweek podcast through a landline number. This is a local number which is charged at standard rate, if you have a phone contract where you have free minutes this call will then be free. The phone number 028 9124 9409.

Also there is a church WhatsApp group By downloading Whatsapp you can receive prayer request, encouragements from others in the church family, and keep in touch with your friends . Zoom and podcast invitations and reminders also appear on the app.

Downloading the Zoom App allows members of the congregation to keep in touch with their Christian friends in church through this video and audio link. This App also provides a useful communication tool for particular church meetings and fortnightly church meetups.

To keep updated with everything that is happening, please continue to look at our Website - www.movillapresbyterian.org.uk or Facebook page and twitter account - @movillapres.

We thank Robert and Andrew Kane for the hours they put in to making these links happen

In relation to prayer this ministry has continue week by week with members invited to contact Ronnie (02891814613) or Ena (enavstanfield@yahoo.co.uk) if there is a situation in their lives that they wish prayer support for.

Points for Prayer

For the Minister, his wife and family.
For those in our congregation who are ill, have experienced bereavement or are going through difficult times that they may know the presence of Almighty God.

Give thanks to our God for the support, guidance and help He has given us throughout the current Covid 19 restrictions. He has given great gifts to scientists, researchers and medical companies who are now hopeful of gradually rolling out a vaccine to heal our world of this terrible virus. May we continue to remain patient.

For those in the UK Government and the devolved administrations as they continue at the present time to make difficult decisions concerning balancing the need to protect the wellbeing and health of all its citizens with supporting the economy, businesses and educational institutions.

For families throughout all nations that they can, within whatever restrictions that may still be in existence, celebrate Christmas and the birth of Jesus in a safe way.

For wisdom and guidance to be given to our Minister, elders, committee members and leaders of organisations as they continue to plan our church services, still provide pastoral care and use the latest technology whereby various groups can keep in contact with each other.

For those who are waiting for consultations and operations which have been delayed or postponed due the current pandemic.



COFFEE CLUB

Like most things the last few months it has proved impossible to keep the Coffee Club at Hillmount going. So now we have adapted to our restrictions by arranging socially distanced outdoor walks and coffee on the go when we can. We have a lovely wee country here and it is a blessing to be able to enjoy it all. Future outings will be notified on the Church What's App page and if anyone wants to join us you can contact me on 07751458601.
Elizabeth Fryers

MISSIONS

Thank you all for your continued support of mission. We have been able to give donations at this difficult time to Love Russia, JETS in Jordan and Colin/Marjorie, Abaana in Uganda, the Lebanon Crisis Appeal and to Romania. The Midweek had finance supporting the local Link and Vine project. God Bless you for your love and generosity. Jacqui McElhinney

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

This year at church, everything has changed tremendously. We were however able to send 104 filled shoe boxes and raise £410 in donations. I would like to thank our whole church family for their support for this worthwhile cause. This year, more than any other, the children will be in a great need for a present at Christmas. May our God bless you and your families this Christmas and the New Year.
Robert Wilson

Christian Aid Collection

This year our church's collection slot in the square is Saturday 19 December from 11am to 1pm. If you can help by joining the team please ring Margaret Garrett 07511653768 or Denise Turtle 07879631983

WOMENS FELLOWSHIP

Hi Ladies. Missing our meetings and seeing you all this session. We pray God will keep you safe and well until we can meet in fellowship again. Can we wish you all a very Happy Christmas and God's Richest Blessings for 2021.

June, Joan, Sally, Liz and Joan

HE IS HERE!

Psalm 91 v1-2 "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, My God in whom I trust".

Some of you will be aware, others maybe not, that I have been suffering for almost a year now with depression. This was made worse by Covid 19, deaths in quick succession and the inability to receive "normal" help at this time from hugs, kisses and physical contact, especially from family.

I worked all through this time and still do. I had days of nothingness, wasted time of simply existing BUT I always told myself God is here in the midst. Some days even getting out of bed was a tremendous effort. Lots of people do not understand or even have patience with people who are unfortunate to have mental health problems. I was first diagnosed at 15 although I had it long before this (a legacy from "the troubles").

Now the point I am making is that I never left sight of God although trying to deal with multiple bereavements was a precedent for me. When I lay in bed trying to still my racing thoughts, lack of sleep, sore head etc, I looked out through the window at the clouds.

"God's palette in the sky, the clouds are scudding by, beautiful hues of grey, white and blue, ever the same, yet ever near.

I must believe that this feeling will pass, I must believe that I will rejoice at last!

The bible holds this promise so I shall not fear, for my God, the great King, look around - He is here!"

Sharon Parr

Pastorale Care

We have now been implementing the support outlined in the letter distributed in March for a number of weeks.

Many of our more mature members and those shielding have enjoyed the support provided through phone calls.

If you or someone you know within the congregation could benefit from these services please contact me at 07557957857 or wbrianturtle@yahoo.co.uk.

If you require the services of Robert our minister he can be contacted at 028 91813973 or email movillapres@gmail.com aware of bereavement, illness or need in your area.

We would want to be there to provide God's comfort and our help in difficult times