

The
WAY

**HAZELBANK
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

www.hazelbank-church.co.uk

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*"...I was thirsty and
you gave me something to drink..."*

Matthew 25:35

MINISTER'S LETTER

The Manse

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‘Tis the season to
be Mary’

Up and down the the land children are getting ready to perform the annual carol service / nativity play. Sadly nowadays the nativity play appears to be in decline for various reasons...

Once upon a time your minister was a child and he loved Christmas and all things to do with Christmas until one year when all that changed. I was in P6 at the time and part of a very small class with only nine pupils in it. The year above was obviously P7 and it was an even smaller class, in fact all three classes from P5 to P7 were in the same room and shared the same teacher. Anyway, each year at Christmas time we had a nativity play in the school and the P7's got the opportunity of actually acting out the main characters in the play. Only this year in particular there was a problem -the girl who acted Mary was sick and there were no other girls prepared to either do it or available and so I was asked just for this one year to be Mary in the school nativity play. Never liking to see anyone stuck, I agreed to do it, only on the condition that the following year I was allowed to be Joseph!

So, why am I telling you this? Well it's not because my parents have threatened to release the photos to the press or because my therapist has urged me to do this for real healing to take place - nothing like that. I tell you this because, recently, I have become aware that the

teaching of Jesus, during what we have come to call the Sermon on the Mount, has been about how we are to treat others. How sometimes we are asked to go the extra mile for someone, or to forgive someone in the same way as we would like to be forgiven ourselves. For Jesus, life was not about doing what he wanted to do, it wasn't about him pleasing himself in and doing things his own way. This is evident in John 6: 38, when Jesus made it clear that his time on earth was God's plan for him, "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me." Jesus demonstrated to us in his life that he was obedient to his Heavenly Father. The fact that he chose to leave glory and be born into poverty is like, as C.S. Lewis puts it, us becoming a slug!

But Jesus did it for us because there was no other way. Sometimes you have to step out of your comfort zone to be for other people what they need you to be.

Sometimes God says to you, forget about yourself and think about others.

You can be sure that Mary wasn't completely happy about being found pregnant out of wedlock, or that she would have the responsibility of rearing the Christ-child, but she did it.

Or that Joseph was over the moon about what Mary was telling him and the implications this would have on him, but he did it. All the way through Scripture we read of people who had to do things they were not happy with, but because they knew it was the right thing to do they did it anyway.

Sometimes we hear God speaking to us and because we would rather be a Joseph than a Mary in the nativity play, we say "no". Sometimes the thing God is asking of us is not that strenuous or taxing or embarrassing and we still say "no."

Perhaps God is simply asking us to have more patience, more faith, less doubt, less fear, more trust or openness to the needs of others than our own perceived needs...and we are unwilling.

I am beginning to realise that if I had said "no" to my teacher those many years ago the play would still, most likely, have gone on and someone else would have had to act Mary.

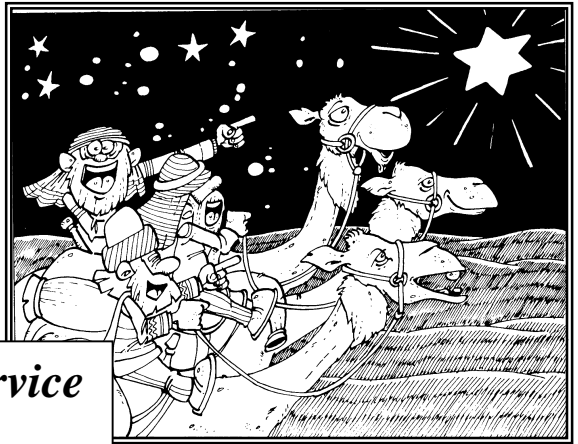
Perhaps I gave in too quickly! But it made me think that the first

Christmas would never have taken place had the main “players” said no to God, our Salvation would still be on hold and we would still be lost in our sin. But because Jesus and Mary and Joseph all said yes, we too, can face this Christmas and say “yes” to others and to God, when perhaps deep down inside us we selfishly want to say “no.”

Can I, on behalf of the Manse family, wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year, God Bless

Your Friend

Alan Johnston



Christmas Day Service
10:00 am
See you there!

A note from the Editorial Team

Welcome to the latest edition of our church magazine, **The Way**. The magazine is now available on-line from the church website at www.hazelbank-church.co.uk and is best viewed with a broadband connection.

If you still require a printed copy please contact the church office on 028 70344266. We also have a new email address for future articles – the.way3@yahoo.co.uk

Thanks again to all who have contributed to this edition of the magazine. S & W & L

ZOMBA SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The Kirk Session has recently been reviewing our Zomba Support Programme and the following is an update of the current position.

Thanks to your continuing generosity as a congregation, the Harvest Offering this year has raised some £ 5500.00, including tax relief. This generosity will enable five new projects to be supported in Zomba and already some £9000 has been advanced to our partners in Malawi, Emmanuel International, to enable a start to be made on these initiatives.

This brings the total number of projects over these past two years of our partnership with Emmanuel International to nine, costing over £14 000, namely:

- 2 schemes to distribute mosquito nets to some 1700 at-risk families
- 6 village wells bringing clean water to over 2000 very poor people
- 1 scheme providing support to a 400 pupil primary school in a very poor area

You have already seen visual evidence of the difference these projects are making and further updates will be given at regular intervals.

The Kirk Session is committed to continuing this programme in the long term as one element of our Church's mission, and is greatly heartened by your continuing interest and practical generosity – we are in this together for the long haul.

A number of folk in the congregation have expressed interest in going to see some of the projects in Zomba at first hand, and to

that end, the Kirk Session has decided that it would facilitate such a group visit at an appropriate time in 2009, subject to interest. None of the funding allocated for the actual projects would be used for such a trip and those travelling would be responsible for personally raising the necessary funds to travel.

Planning for a 2009 trip will start before the end of 2008. Whether you wish to go to Zomba to see the work first hand or if you are happy to be regularly updated at home, please be assured that you are making a huge difference to the lives of the poor in Malawi in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DATES for YOUR DIARY



21 st December	Family service	11.30 am
	Carol service	6.30 pm
25 th December	Christmas Day service	10.00 am
31 st December	Watch night service (New Row)	11.15pm
4th January	Evening Communion Service at	6.30pm

DEATHS
*“O Death, where is your sting,
 O Grave, where is your victory?”*

Mr Roger Cauley
 Formerly of 24 Laurel Hill Road - 25th September 2008

Mrs Irene Stinson
 73 Greenmount Road - 16th October 2008

MEET NEIL STEWART

Neil Stewart is a first year student in Union College who will be doing an eight week placement with Rev. Johnston in the New year.

Hello, my name is Neil Stewart. I am a life-long member of Main Street Garvagh, Presbyterian Church. As a youth I was involved in all aspects of church life. But in my late teens, like so many, I drifted away.

I started attending church again regularly when I married my wife, Ruth in 1999. I gave my life fully to the Lord in September 2000 and Ruth and I now both live to serve God in all we do. We have two lively sons; Jack who's 7 and Archie, 16 months

In 2000 I became heavily involved in church life.... Praise Group, Boys Brigade, Youth Club, Catering Committee, Small Groups, Men's Fellowship..... and the list goes on! This participation felt very natural and when I went to BB Officer training in 2001 I felt God's call that He wanted something different from me, but I just didn't know what.

At this time I had started a business as an Electrical & Building Contractor which over the next few years seemed to grow and develop into a small but healthy business. I couldn't have done this if Ruth wasn't a dab hand at book-keeping and managing an office! However,



the sense of call never left me. Mandate 2005 was the occasion when God seemed to spell it out clearly.... He wanted me to apply for the ordained ministry.

After discussing and praying with Ruth about God's plan for us we decided to at least get the application forms and see what would happen

Fast-forward three years..... we closed the business and I commenced my studies in September this year. It has been a massive change in lifestyle but one we are adjusting to. This helps us know for sure that we are where God wants us to be.

We are humbled that God has called us into ordained ministry and we are thankful for the prayers which have been and continue to be offered up from our family and friends. We pray that we will be all that God requires of us as we seek to serve Him faithfully. We are looking forward to the next few years to see how God takes this ordinary family on a journey we didn't think we would have been on ten years ago!

Dear Lord, do not make us like porridge, which is difficult to stir and slow to serve. But more like Corn Flakes, crisp, fresh and ready to serve.

(Boys' Brigade, camp grace)

SHALLOW WELLS REPORT

Many families in Zomba District do not have adequate access to clean, potable water in their villages because there is no reliable water point (borehole or well). This is a burden that particularly affects women and girls as they must walk long distances to collect water from neighbouring villages. Water is often collected from unprotected sources like streams and puddles, putting people at risk of cholera, dysentery, diarrhoea, and other forms of water-borne illnesses, which at times even lead to death.

In May 2008, Hazelbank Presbyterian Church and Emmanuel International Malawi committed to constructing three hand-dug shallow wells in the Zomba District to provide safe drinking water to communities that did not have this basic need.



IMPLEMENTATION: In consultation with the District Commissioner, three villages were prioritized for needing access to safe drinking water using shallow wells: Adamu Village, Magomba Village, and Mambo Village (1,120 direct beneficiaries). In each village, a water committee was formed and sensitized on the construction of the well. Community members dug the wells by hand and lined the shafts with bricks that were made in the village and river sand supplied by the community. With the financial assistance of Hazelbank Presbyterian Church, EIM provided cement for the brickwork and the surface structure,

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installation of the pump, and technical assistance throughout the construction process. Finally, the water committees were trained on pump maintenance and the wells were handed over to the communities to ensure that the villages take ownership of their wells.

SUCCESSSES: All three of the shallow wells were completed and handed over to the communities during the dry season, before the arrival of the rains. These communities now have access to safe drinking water within the village, which will have tremendous impact on the families living in these communities. Access to safe drinking water means that they will suffer less from water-borne illnesses like cholera, dysentery, and diarrhoea and fewer children and elderly people will die from such preventable illnesses. Women and young girls will not have to walk long distances to carry buckets of water to their homes, allowing them more time to attend to other duties, which for girls means increased opportunity to attend school.



CHALLENGES: Although these three villages now have access to safe drinking water, there are many others that still don't have access to this very basic necessity of life. It is a fact that these wells will benefit many more people than just those families living in Adamu Village, Magomba Village, and Mambo Village, although they may have to walk long distances to access clean drinking water. Wells are often overused, which leads to increased need for maintenance, and at times overcrowding at water points even leads to conflict. Members of Magomba

Village have been strongly advocating for neighbouring villages, emphasizing their need for safe water as well.

CONCLUSION : This shallow well project funded by Hazelbank Presbyterian Church has ensured that 1,120 people in three communities have access to safe drinking water in close proximity to their homes, not including the large number of indirect beneficiaries from surrounding communities that will walk long distances to access water that is safe for them to drink.



REFLECTIONS on ROMANIA

Between the 15th and 29th August a team of fifteen (fourteen men and one woman) visited Romania. Approximately £18 000 in funds had been raised for the visit including £5000 through support from Hazelbank, for which Ken and Trevor would again like to express their thanks to the congregation and to Curtis Magee.



The village of Valea has a population of around 500. There are two churches – a Baptist and a Pentecostal. The women of the village work at home while the men work in nearby mines, travelling to Spain for the olive picking season from September to April.



There were three aspects of ministry involved in the trip: building work, children's outreach and testimony. The first stage of the building work was completed and it is hoped that new teams will go out there in April and August 2009 to further the ministry work underway there.

MAD WEEKEND

For most young people Halloween means dressing up and trick or treating but for YF it means only one thing - MAD weekend. At the start of every Halloween break around 400+ young people aged 11-18 gather at the university here in Coleraine. This year was special as it was MAD 10 and a big birthday party for all. Some had been to all 10 but this was Hazelbank's 4th year with 17 of the youth going. Once again we were promised a packed programme of worship, talks, seminars, activities and of course the sleepover at the church.

On Friday evening we gathered at the church before making our way to the university. After icebreakers and introductions to the MAD crew the band took to the stage. This year the band was Alistair Bennett and the band. The band got the crowd going with Sweet Home Alabama before introducing worship songs such as Awesome God. The speaker was Michael Wylie, the youth associate in Carnmoney Presbyterian Church.

After the talk it was McStockers Social. This turned out to be a traditional Scottish band. The young and not so young took to the floor and learnt dances such as Strip the Willow and The Gay Gordons. Fortunately major collisions were avoided and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it and worked up a sweat. I could tell you that after that it was back to the church and then to bed but I would be a liar. There was supper first, and then a chill out time.



Scottish Dancing – MAD style!

The next morning and the 7:30am alarm call was quickly upon us. Morning at the university consisted of two sets of seminars. The first set were a choice called 'How to..'.

They were How to: share your faith, pray, overcome, read the Bible, serve and stay on track. After this there were the Top Tips seminars, split into boys and girls.

In the afternoon there was the dance zone. This involved around 100 young people learning a hip-hop dance at one time. Next was a choice of five activities ranging from touch rugby to a pamper parlour and quizzes.

We then returned to the church for a couple of hours rest before returning for the Saturday night programme. After a bite to eat it was time again for worship led by the band and a talk by Michael. After this was a series of juggling and performance acts before the band returned for a last blast.

Sunday brought everyone together at the church having spent the night in their own bed and an extra hour's sleep, thanks to the clocks going back. The youth service at the university was the calm after the storm of the previous two days. The service brings the weekend together with the band doing the worship, a final talk from Michael, Bible readings and a short drama. Then it was time for home in time for lunch and another MAD weekend was over.

A big thank you to all the parents, especially those who provided lifts and stayed over.

JUST A MOMENT

Sometimes when reading the Bible, daily Bible reading notes or some other similar material, you can come across a portion of Scripture – even a verse, of which you can say, “That was really meant for me” – the portion or verse, by the Grace of God, has helped you regarding a particular need at that moment. Isaiah 41:40 has been helpful to many:

So do not fear, for I am with you:
Do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my right hand.

This verse has been rewritten, and each part taken to remember for each day of the week.

Do not fear...	Sunday
For I am with you...	Monday
Do not be dismayed...	Tuesday
For I am your God...	Wednesday
I will strengthen you...	Thursday
I will help you ...	Friday
I will uphold you with My right hand...	Saturday

May the Lord bless you and watch over you always

MONEY MATTERS

We are living in challenging times and it is against this backdrop that the financial position of the church may be summarised as at 31st October 2008 :-

- The amount given by way of Free Will Offering has increased this year by approximately 4%.
- Our level of giving to United Appeal Is on a par with last year and we are on course to achieve our target for 2008.
- Contributions to our Property Fund during 2008 currently stand at £24,847 which is again on a par with 2007.
- Giving to the Ministry Fund so far this year amounts to £12,939.
- Total giving to the end of October 2008 amounts to £132,401.81.
- Running costs are down 6.2% on 2007.
- Expenditure through Property Account is down £31,159 on 2007.
- Expenditure through Ministry Extension Fund is down £8,715.00 on 2007.

Taking all these factors into consideration I feel our finances are in a healthy state as we approach our year end.

Dates for your Diary :

Please remember to support our annual Tear Fund Lunch on Sunday 7th December 2008. & our annual World Development Appeal over the Christmas period.

Gordon Smyth
Hon. Treasurer

JUST FOR FUN



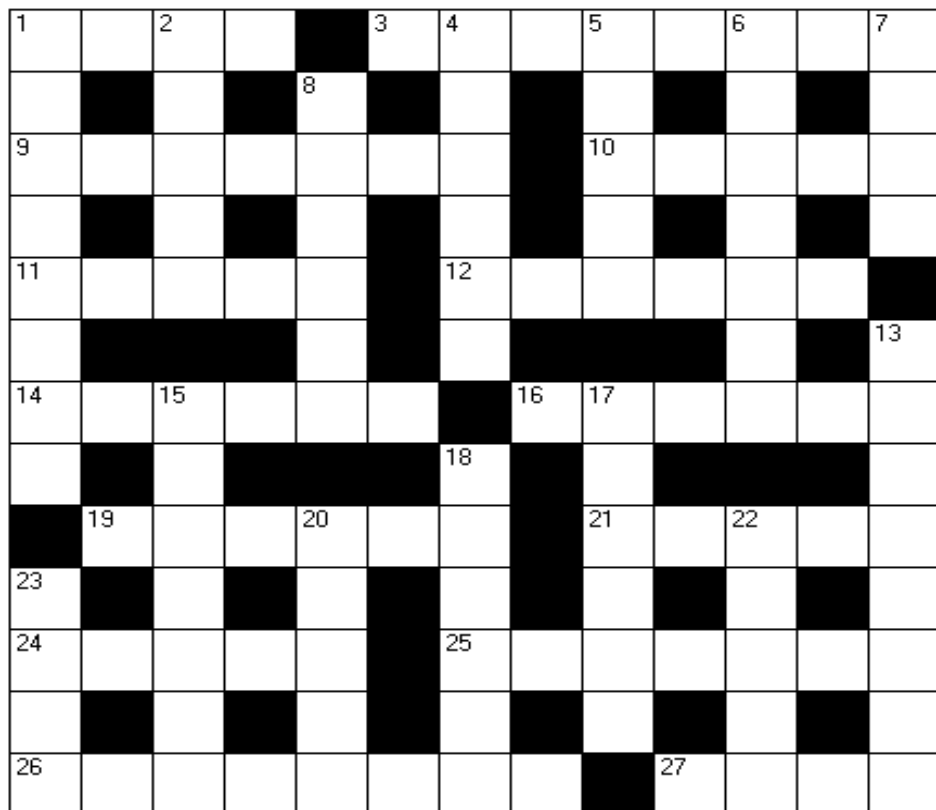
...firstly, thank you whoever it was who put two buttons in the collection plate last week - they turned out to be early Victorian, and I've just sold them on 'ebay' for £800 each!

KEEP IT SIMPLE!

How often do we make things more complicated than they really need to be? The Canadians wanted to find a writing implement that could be used in space. It took 200 engineers and they spent over \$2 billion to invent the space pen. This pen could write in zero gravity and the ink would still flow. The Canadians proudly announced their success and congratulations flowed in from all over the world. In a short note to the Canadians, NASA congratulated them, but said that they too had found a solution at a fraction of the cost. They remarked, “We use a pencil.”

J. John & M. Stibbe *A Box of Delights* Monarch Books

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE



Across

- 1 Eglon was its king in Judges ch. 3 (4)
- 3 Cried out, like the betrothed girl in Deuteronomy ch. 22 (8)
- 9 ..let his hair be _____ (Lev 13.45) (7)
- 10 ..yet does not keep a _____ rein (Jas 1.26)
- 11 Belonging to them (5)
- 12 Pace (6)
- 14 Receptacle found on office desk (2,4)
- 16 ..to attain your goal by human _____ Gal 3.3) (6)
- 19 Nazirites must abstain from these fruits, says Numbers ch. 6 (6)
- 21 Muslim faith (5)
- 24 Play (5)
- 25 Son of Nethaniah in Jeremiah ch. 41 (7)
- 26 Job ch. 41 compares the sea to a pot of this (8)
- 27 Second hand (4)

Down

- 1 eg Horeb in Exodus ch. 3 (8)
- 2 The finery in Isaiah ch. 3 includes chains for this body part (5)
- 4 Most pleasingly pretty (6)
- 5 Go in (5)
- 6 Ahaziah died here in 2 Kings ch. 9 (7)
- 7 One of the fruits of which a cake was made in 1 Chronicles ch. 16 (4)
- 8 Part of Revelation ch. 2 is addressed to the Church here (6)
- 13 Tripped, like the oxen in 2 Samuel ch. 6 (8)
- 15 The surface features of an area of land (7)
- 17 Series of stairs by which the portico was reached in Ezekiel ch. 40 (6)
- 18 .._____ him a place with the unbelievers (Luke 12.46) (6)
- 20 Sacred song (5)
- 22 Jumps, like Elihu's heart in Job ch. 37 (5)
- 23 Zechariah was his descendant according to Ezra ch. 5 (4)

INSTALLATION OF NEW PROJECTOR

Now you see it, now you don't! Once there was a projector attached to the side wall at the front of the church, now there is a bigger and brighter one attached from the roof and centrally positioned to the screen. The wiring and control of the projector has now been moved into the new Projection Room that can be seen high up through the back wall of the church. Planning for this room was initiated as part of the recent development to provide disabled access to our upstairs suite of rooms, via the lift.

The Sound and Vision Sub-committee was appointed by the Church Committee to oversee the upgrading of the current system. None of the work could have taken place without their time and expertise for which we are most grateful.

The sound desk at the back of the church is now much less cluttered. Sound mixing now only takes place downstairs with all our video operations shifted upstairs. We are endeavouring to keep pace with changing technology and, as cassette recording fades out, we are hoping to produce other ways of capturing audio files of the services and are exploring the possibility of DVD recording. All the work done to date with cabling, etc. will allow for easy add-ons in the future.

We are greatly indebted to those who are involved in providing projection and sound every Sunday and would like to take this opportunity to thank them and ask for other volunteers to join the team.

Sound and Vision Sub-Committee