



Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace



Dear Friends

Snow, Stars and a Sleigh:

I can't remember where I first saw the original "snow, stars and a sleigh" Christmas card that made me realize how rarely the "straw, stable and the Son of God" cards now never seem to 'run out' in shops or online. Perhaps the enduring appeal of the former lies in the Christmassy magic they evoke of our nostalgic memories of childhood dreams. We remember what it was like to hopefully gaze up at snowflakes floating gently down on Christmas Eve, to wonder at stars sparkling coldly in the night sky, or even imagining a sleigh, "Ho Ho Hoing" across the heavens. 'Looking up' to see the magic made our childhood Christmas exciting, real and perfect.

Yet, as enchanting as these images were and still are, focusing only on "looking up" can cause us to neglect "looking down" into the Christmas miracle given to us lying in the humble 'straw, stable, and the Son of God.' The prophet Isaiah spoke of this when he declared, **"For unto us a child is born, a son is given."** These words tell of a far greater gift than just our wishful magic: they promise a child born in the humblest of settings, destined to transform the hearts and lives of those who truly seek him. And so...this is the choice we face every Christmas:

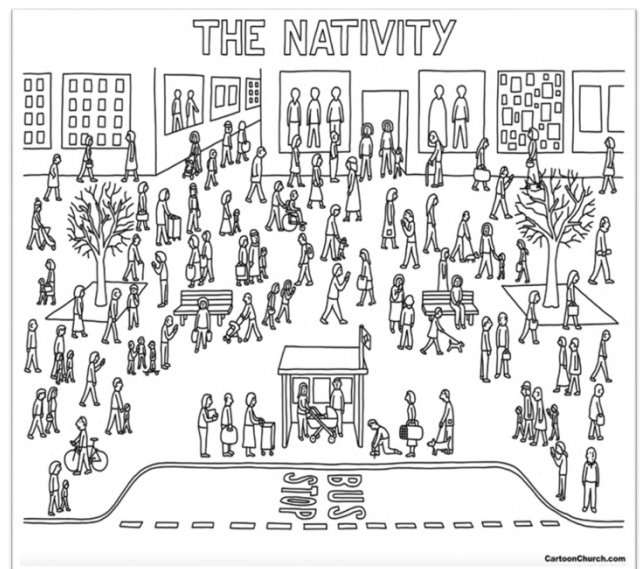
Will we only 'look up' to be captivated by the snow, the twinkling stars, and festive sleighs? Or will we pause to "look down" to really discover the Son of God given for us? The shepherds knew where the miracle of God's gift was to be seen. Wakened up by the Angels' proclamation, they travelled beyond their fields and horizons to "look down" at the unwrapped gift of Jesus.

They arrived and 'looked down' into a stable open to all, at a baby, the miracle of Jesus come as the fulfilment of God's promise: **"For unto us a Son is given."** This Son was not a gift only to be seen, but to be seen in them as their Saviour, hope, and peace not just for that Christmas moment, but for their whole lives and beyond.

Likewise, we are to be Christmas shepherds who choose to step out beyond our familiar fields and horizons to arrive and "look down" into the humility of the stable. The Holy Spirit urges us to find true hope, peace and joy this Christmas not through the magic of what is above in 'snow, starry skies and sleighs' but in the miracle King who chose to meet us in our brokenness. The King who looks up at us in God's love. The King born for us, born to give the miracle gift of his life for all.

So, this Christmas, ignore "looking up," needing "snow, stars, and sleighs' to be the magic and instead "look down" to the miracle in the straw and stable where the greatest gift awaits. May we receive the unchanging truth of a Saviour born for us—not only for the manger, but also for the Cross and the Empty Tomb and the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Let us turn our hearts toward Bethlehem and "look down" with wonder at the Saviour born there. Seek Him, this Redeemer, this King, our King not just for Christmas but for all life. And in 'looking down' may His deep joy fill our hearts this Christmas and always. Chris



Have a blessed and peace filled
Christmas

Chris & Wenda
Beth, Lucy & Harry



Dec Sunday 1st Advent Sunday

8.30am Holy Communion (Trad)
 10.00am Family Communion
 Unwrapping love: Mary

Dec Sunday 8th Advent 2

8.30am Holy Communion (Trad)
 10.00am Morning Worship
Rev Sam Bostock 1st S'field
 Unwrapping Joy: Elizabeth
 11.00am REFRESH Advent

4.00pm Blue Sunday Service

A time to have some time to ask for God's light when everything seems dark.

Dec Sunday 15th Advent 3

8.30am Holy Communion (Trad)
 10.00am SPACE Christmas (Hall)

Dec Sunday 22nd Advent 4

8.30am Holy Communion (Trad)
 10.00am Morning Worship
 Unwrapping Promises:
 Arriving in Bethlehem

7.00pm

Silver Band Candlelit Carol Service
 Wellington Memorial Silver

Christmas Eve

11.00pm Christmas Communion
 Unwrapping Silence:
 Coffee & Mince Pies (10.30pm)

Christmas Day

8.30am Holy Communion (Trad)

10.00am

**All Age Worship:
 Unwrapping Jesus**

Bring 1 Present unwrapped
 and if you have it, one still w



Dec 29th 10.00am Morning Worship

Jan Sunday 5th Christmas 2

8.30am Holy Communion (Trad)
 10.00am Family Communion
 1 Peter 1:1-5 Real Hope

Jan Sunday 12th Epiphany 1

8.30am Holy Communion (Trad)
 10.00am Morning Worship
 1 Peter 1:6-9 Different Hope
 11.00am REFRESH Joseph Dreams

Jan Sunday 19th Epiphany 2

8.30am Holy Communion (Trad)
 10.00am SPACE All Age Worship

Jan Sunday 26th Epiphany 3

8.30am Holy Communion (Trad)
 10.00am Morning Worship (Modern)
 1 Peter 1:13-21 Powerful Hope

11.00am REFRESH: Joseph Dreams /2

December Tea Coffee Rota

1st Carol, Jackie & Julie

6th Street Fair 6.30pm – 7.45 – 8.30pm
 Help needed

8th William & Joan Morris

15th Space Service food.

22nd 7.00pm Carol Service Help needed.

29th Not needed.

Flowers

1st In memory of Canon & Mrs Woodrow

8th Rachel Lowry & June Butler

15th None (SPACE)

22nd Tree of Remembrance

29th Tree of Remembrance

Prayer Diary For each day in December.



Sunday 1st December Advent Sunday

ALMIGHTY God,
give us grace that we may cast away the works of
darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in
the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus
Christ came to visit us in great humility;

that in the last day, when he shall come again in his
glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the
dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost,
now and ever. Amen.

Monday Dec 2nd

For the international abolition of slavery day.

Tuesday Dec 3rd For our Diocese

Bishop David and the staff team in Diocesan office
and the way they serve us.

Wednesday Dec 4th For our Schools

For governors in each School as they plan and recruit
staff. For all the Children as they approach Christmas.

Thursday Dec 5th For Care Homes as Chris visits
and leads worship in Residential Homes @ Silver
Birch and Tully West Manor. Pray for these moments
of sharing God's fellowship.

Friday Dec 6th For our Sit Out and Street Fair
people coming into the Parish Church this evening.

St Nichols' Day Prayer

Almighty Father, lover of souls,
who chose your servant Nicholas
to be a bishop in the Church,
that he might give freely out
of the treasures of your grace:
make us mindful of the needs of others
and, as we have received, so teach us also to give;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Saturday Dec 7th For our pulpit Swap tomorrow
Sam is coming to the Parish, John to 1st S'field
and Chris to 2nd S'field.

Sunday Dec 8th For our Saintfield Churches

For Sam Bostock and congregation in 1st Saintfield.
John Torrens and congregation in 2nd Saintfield.
Father Tony McHugh and congregation in RC Church.
For the Baptist Church and congregation to call a
pastor to come, lead them and teach God's Word.

For our 'Blue Christmas Service' at 4.00pm for anyone
who finds the season sad and difficult.

Monday Dec 9th

For our Christmas events in the Parish this week.

Tuesday Dec 10th For Human Rights Day.

That all may have respect and rights no matter who
they are.

Wednesday Dec 11th

For those we know in Hospital.

Thursday Dec 12th

For our 'Reason for Hope' Mission in that God will
nudge people towards.

Friday Dec 13th

For those who struggle with depression and mental
health challenges.

Saturday Dec 14th

For our Worship tomorrow and that as many families
will come to SPACE Christmas.

Sunday Dec 15th For our Worship today.

For our SPACE Christmas in hall and families all
together to join for faith and fun.

Monday Dec 16th

For those who are unemployed and who are trying to
make ends meet. May they find help and support.

Tuesday Dec 17th For those bereaved this year

Wednesday Dec 18th

For the SAMS Ireland Office in Lurgan, for Gillian and
Claire

Thursday Dec 19th

For Family members traveling home and for those
who are too far away to come home.

Friday Dec 20th

For families who have enjoyed new babies arriving this year and this is their first Christmas.

Saturday Dec 21st

For our partner Church in La Paz, Bolivia, Church of the Redeemer. For Pastor David and the whole congregation.

Sunday Dec 22nd

For our Worship today and especially our Silver Band Candlelit Carol Service.

Monday Dec 23rd

For Sally as our Office Administrator, Ian as Sexton, William as Graveyard Convenor and Chris as Vicar. That they can enjoy a well-deserved break after Christmas.

Christmas Eve Prayer for Children to use

Dear God,
on this Christmas Eve, we want to think about the real reason for this happy season: Jesus' birth. We'll give and receive gifts to say how much we love each other, just like the three kings brought gifts to Jesus.

But instead of thinking about what we might get for Christmas, help us to focus on what we can give to You. We want our hearts to be ready so we can truly enjoy celebrating Jesus' birthday and the peace and joy He came to give us. We want to give You a happy heart that wants to obey You, God—one that loves You and others.

Tonight
we think about that special night long ago when a big, bright star shone in the sky along with an angel that frightened shepherds. And the good news given to those shepherds was for us, too: "Don't be afraid. Tonight in Bethlehem a Saviour has been born. This is the Messiah, the Son of God. He is the very best gift You will ever give us. Tonight, we just want to thank You again for how much You love us, just as we are. Thank You for the way You care for us and will never leave us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Christmas Day

We greet your coming, God, with wonder: You come to be with us; yet you remain far greater than we can imagine. You are near; and your wisdom sets you apart from us. You appear among us; yet we cannot describe your glory.

We greet your coming, God, with repentance: We are more or less satisfied with ourselves; but your presence exposes our sin and failure. We are self-confident; but you challenge our confidence in ourselves. We are proud of our understanding; but you show us that we do not know everything.

We greet your coming, God, with joy: We had no true idea of what you are like; but you have shown us yourself in Jesus Christ. We felt our human life could be of no importance to you; but you have shown its value by appearing among us as a man. We are aware of the gulf between us and you; but you have bridged it with love. God, we greet your coming in Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen

For those who work today looking after our Hospitals, Roads, Safety and welfare.

Boxing Day

For all who found Christmas hard and sad.

Friday Dec 27th

For time to relax

Saturday Dec 28th

For Thomas & Yen on their Wedding Day.

Sunday Dec 29th

For our Worship at 10.00am, the last of the year.

Monday Dec 30th

For World peace and hope in countries divided by war, hate and violence.

Tuesday Dec 31st Last day of 2024.

As the dawn breaks on a new year, let us give thanks for all we hold dear: our health, our family and our friends.

Let us release our grudges, our anger and our pains, for these are nothing but binding chains. Let us live each day in the most loving ways, the God-conscious way. Let us serve all who are in need, regardless of race, colour or creed.

Let us keep God of our own understanding in our hearts and to chant God's name each day. Let us lead the world from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth and from wrong to right.

Let us remember that we are all one, embracing all, discriminating against none.

May your year be filled with peace, prosperity and love. May God's blessings shower upon you and bestow upon each of you a bright, healthy and peaceful new year. Amen

Weekly Schedule:

Parish Centre

Here is a guide to what happens during each week in the Parish Hall and when it is on.

Mondays

9.30am Pitter Patter (Main Hall) Mums & Tots

Closed Monday Dec 23rd 30th Open 6th Jan

10.30am Craft & Chatter (Upper Area)

Closed Monday Dec 23rd 30th Open 6th Jan

6.30pm Rainbows / Brownies / Guides
(Woodrow Room Upper Area, Main Hall)

Closed Monday Dec 23rd 30th Jan 6th

Tuesdays

10.00am Traditional Yoga (Main Hall)

Closed Tuesday Dec 24th 31st Jan 7th Open 14th

6.45pm Pause & Restore

(Yoga specific for menopause) (Upper Area)

Closed Tuesday Dec 24th 31st J Open Jan 7th

7.30pm Indoor Bowling (Main Hall)

Closed All December Open Jan 7th

Mother's Union Tuesday 3RD December Stormont Trip

Wednesdays

8.00am - 8.30am Slimming World Weigh In

9.00am Class Note Tuesdays Dec 24th /31st

Each Wednesday normal

10.00am Holy Communion

Closed Dec 25th Jan 1st

10.30am Wednesday Welcome (Upper Area)

Every 2 weeks: Dec 4th, 18th Then Jan 15th, 29th

7.00pm Broadway Boogie Fitness

(Main Hall) Closed Dec 25th Jan 1st open Jan 8th

8.00pm Badminton (Main Hall)

Closed all December Open Jan 8th

8.00pm Life Group commences Jan 13th

RE:FRAME Bible Course (Upper Area)

Thursdays

9.45am Happy Hatchlings

(Baby Massage in Woodrow Room)

Closed Dec 26th Jan 2nd Open Jan 9th

2.00 - 4.00pm Ladies Hen's Shed (Upper Area)

Closed Dec 26th Jan 2nd Open Jan 9th

6.45 Beavers, Cubs, Scouts (Parish Hall)

Closed Dec 26th Jan 2nd Open Jan 9th

Fridays

6.00pm Inspire Dance Company (Main Hall)

Closed Dec 27th Jan 3rd Open Jan 10th

Sit Out Friday 6th Dec



9.00am - 9.00pm Please Support us to raise money for this Charity.

STREET FAIR Church 6.30pm - 8.30pm





REFRESH NOV 10TH



Thank you to everyone who took part on Remembrance Sunday and to Ian, Graham & William for setting up the church. We collected £530 for British Legion and RUC Benevolent Fund.

Thank you for your generosity!!

Congratulations to John Hill and Megan on their recent engagement.



HOW TO TELL WHO HAS DECORATED A CHRISTMAS TREE



Saintfield Parish Church
Main Street



Kerygma Choir

A night of inspirational
Christian Music

Musical Director
Lorna Palmer

Free Entrance

Friday 31st January 2025 7.30pm

As part of our Warmup nights for our

'Reason for Hope' Mission.

We have the great privilege of hosting the marvellous
Kerygma Choir.

They will be offering us a range of inspirational Christian Music and we will be blessed with what they will bring into the Parish Church.

This is a free event.

We will set up an Eventbrite link just so people can tell us they are coming and how many will be with us.

We are providing some light refreshments during the event and these will be given out in the Church.

There will be a donation box if people wish to give.

Ballynahinch Foodbank

To The Congregation of Saintfield Parish Church

Ballynahinch Foodbank extends our heartfelt thanks for the generous donation following your recent Harvest Festival. Your contribution will make a significant impact on our ability to provide essential support to those in need within our community, enabling us in our efforts in combatting food poverty and providing vital assistance to individuals and families facing challenging circumstances. Your commitment to supporting the Foodbank is deeply appreciated.

We value the partnership we have with your congregation and look forward to continuing our shared mission of alleviating hunger. Once again, thank you for your support. Your generosity has made a meaningful difference in the lives of those served.

Sincerely

Rosemary Logan Co-ordinator Ballynahinch Foodbank



LIST OF CHRISTMAS FAYRE ITEMS 2024

Sunday Dec 8th please.

Tins of Ham

Tinned Vegetables

Cranberry Sauce

Gravy Granules

Tomato Ketchup

Brown Sauce

Mustard

Stock Cubes

Cooking Oil

Christmas Puddings

Mince Pies

Tinned Custard

Rice Pudding

Tinned Fruit

Jelly

Soft Drinks, eg: Shloer, Coca Cola, 7Up etc, Dilutable Juice

Shortbread

Tins of biscuits

Sugar

UHT Milk

Boxes of Chocolates

Crisps

Nuts & Kitchen Rolls



PRAYER PARTNER PROFILE PASTOR DAVID ANTEZANA

Here are some more pictures of our Partner Church in Church of the Redeemer La Pax, Bolivia.

We are beginning to establish more contact with our friends in La Paz and have been supporting them especially in the repairs to their Church which were unexpected.

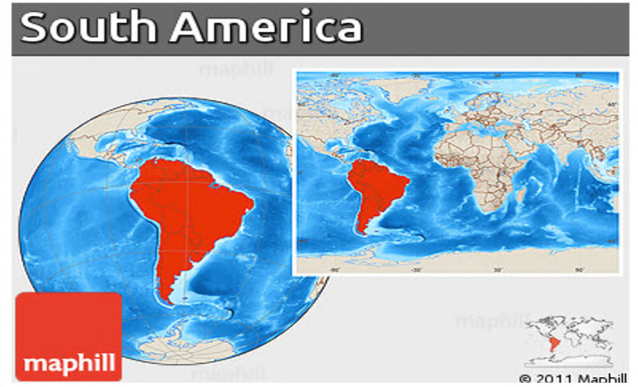
I am hoping to have a Zoom Meeting with Claire Holmes in SAMS Ireland and with Pastor David. This might help us see how best to move forward next year and make sure we are talking with each other regularly.

Some ideas we have relate to 2026 and our 250th Celebrations. We may be able to visit La Paz, or maybe a team from La Paz could come here. I am also enquiring of SAMS if there was a possibility we could sponsor an Intern for a year as they study in Belfast Theological College. This would be an exciting opportunity for us and that person, but it has to fit into the bigger vision of SAMS Ireland.

Fundraising for this Church must be a priority for us. We are exploring how best to do this in a way that will both enthuse people as well as allow us to tell more of La Paz's Christian story. So keep your ears open to hear what we will plan.

If you need any more info, there is a SAMS booklet in the Church Porch, and I can send one by email. Chris

Prayer Night Tuesday Jan 21st 7.30pm Church



Refresh/Space

Advent is often represented through the lighting of an Advent Wreath, which features four candles. Each candle holds a special meaning, Hope, love, joy and peace. The central candle is a white candle and is known as the Christ candle and is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, signifying the arrival of the Light of the world.



Follow the links below each week and find out more about the Christmas wreath and the candles with Navigator Nate.

Week 1 hope <https://youtu.be/QoYRjE2dGbw>

Week 2 peace <https://youtu.be/QT51bYAQUKU>

Week 3 joy <https://youtu.be/ZCpKFL-XHg>

Week 4 love <https://youtu.be/uf3y1TxwhhI>

A Christmas Prayer

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father,
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing
which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven,
for Jesus' sake.
Amen.



Quiz Time

From where did Mary and Joseph start their journey?

Haifa, Nazareth, Jerusalem, Jericho

Pictures of Mary and Joseph show Mary riding on an animal. What animal of the following might it have been?

Tiger, moose, polar bear, donkey

Where did Mary and Joseph end up spending the night?

Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Canna.

Why did Mary and Joseph spend the night in a stable?

They liked animals, They had no money for the inn, it was warmer, there was no room in the inn.

To whom did a host of angels announce the birth?

Shepherds, carpenters, Kings, farmers

What led the Wise Men to the place where Jesus was?

a guide, road map, sign posts, a star

How many wise men are there considered to be?

5, 3, 2, 7,

When Jesus was about two years old an angel appeared to Joseph and told him to take Mary and the Child to a certain country. Which country?

Persia, Nazareth, Egypt, Jerusalem



Mothers' Union – November 2024



Around 20 members came together for their regular meeting on the first Tuesday of November; the guest speaker was Alison Kernohan, Church Relations Developer with the charity "Open Doors".



Most of us knew nothing about the work of "Open Doors" until Chris had shown a video in church on previous Sundays. We then realised how fortunate we were to be Christians living in a country where our beliefs were honoured and – usually – respected.

Alison told us about how the founder of OD had smuggled bibles, seventy years ago, into countries where Christianity was forbidden and how the charity had been founded to support our brothers and sisters in those lands. She asked us to think how we in civilised Northern Ireland might fare if we felt in danger every time we prayed, every time we left home to attend church or if we couldn't speak about our faith to friends, family or work colleagues.

She said that it was estimated that 365 million people around the world were in this perilous position, and she went on to tell us the stories of two ladies from Iraq and North Korea who had been persecuted at the hands of extremists from other religions. She also explained that OD had a "World Watch List" of ten countries where Christians were most likely to be persecuted. We all left that evening agreeing to pray for the Christians in all these countries and giving thanks to God for our own faith freedom.

The second big event of the month was the Big Hymn Sing held in St Patrick's Parish Church, Ballymena on 16 November. Ten of us, and Chris, travelled there, the majority on a coach with MU friends from Carryduff, Ballywalter, St Finnian's and Knockbreda branches. It was a wonderful uplifting afternoon – to quote one of my friends:

"It was a memorable afternoon full of joy, praise and fellowship. What a fitting end to the Big Hymn Sings for Mums In May. The Clare Chorale were outstanding"

Altogether over 300 members came from across the island of Ireland - together we sang eight hymns and the Chorale a further six religious pieces. There was an address by the Archbishop of Armagh and a time of prayer too, but the emphasis was on the hymns – all taken from the "top ten" of members' favourites when they voted earlier this year. With the volume of singing, the rector of St Patrick's, Canon Mark McConnell, said 'he feared the roof of the church would be in danger!'

As this was my final major service as All Ireland President, having completed six years in that role, I was permitted to introduce my own favourite hymn and I chose "Guide me Oh Thou Great Jehovah" and explained how important it is to me, as it has become a personal prayer.

This was a very special way to end my term of office, singing favourite hymns, surrounded by my MU friends. All the Saintfield "team" certainly found the service enjoyable as well as uplifting.



June Butler

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Tuesday - Friday
9.00am - 2.00pm
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**Material for February to be with Leonard by January 24th 2025
Thank you.**

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