

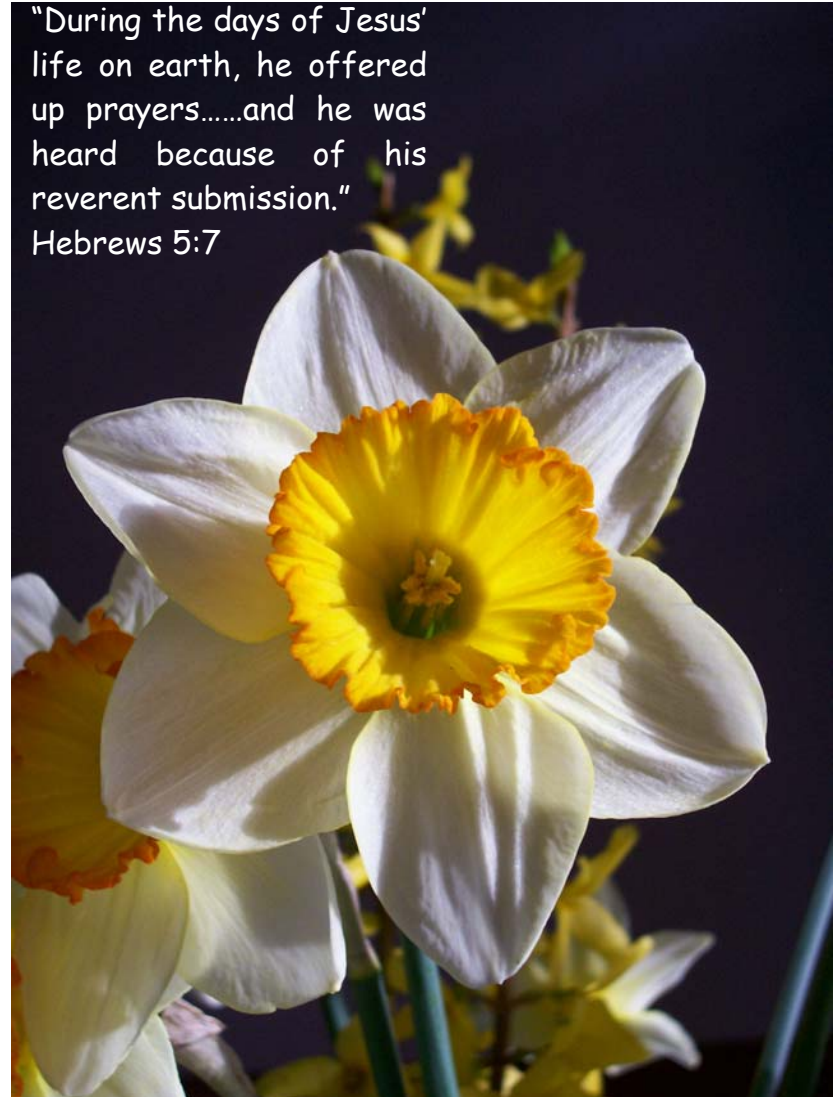
The
WAY

**HAZELBANK
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

www.hazelbank-church.co.uk

**Volume 33 No. 1
Spring Edition 2009**

"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers.....and he was heard because of his reverent submission."
Hebrews 5:7



MINISTER'S LETTER
The Manse
4 Knocklayde Park
Castlerock Road
Coleraine
028 7035 2891



“ ‘Spring Has
Come...”

*Spring is sprung, the grass is ris.
I wonders where the birdies is.
They say the birds is on the wing.
Ain't that absurd?
I always thought the wing was on the bird.*

Some of you will, upon reading this ditty, wonder if I was in control of my senses when I wrote this or if my spell / grammar checker was working properly.

Others will actually recognize it and smile as you read it remembering the person who introduced it to you.

Although this is a work nonsense often attributed to Ogden Nash the author is actually unknown.

I can understand why whoever wrote this wanted to remain anonymous. It is not the greatest piece of English literature I have ever read but yet we must bear in mind that it was never meant to be. It is in its own way the work of a genius rather than the work of a madman.

Yet to be able to understand the laws of grammar enough to be able to poke fun at them, shows a degree of intelligence and command of the English language.

The problem however is that we can often get so caught up in the “rights and wrongs” that we miss the point being communicated.

In this case it is the fact that Spring has arrived! If you look outside you can see the daffodils and crocuses out in bloom.

The snowdrops are all but gone and there are buds on the trees promising leaves in the month ahead.

It's the same with God's word, the Bible. Sometimes we can be so concerned with the ins and outs, why's and wherefore's that we almost miss what God is saying to us.

The story is told that some years ago at a social function in England, a great actor was asked to recite something for the pleasure of his fellow guests. He consented. He asked if there was anything special which his audience would like to hear. An aged minister who was present arose and said, "Could you, sir, recite the 23rd Psalm?"

The great actor replied, "I can, and I will if you, my friend, after I have finished, will do the same." The minister reluctantly consented. Impressively, the great actor recited the Psalm. His voice was perfect. His intonation was flawless. The audience was spellbound? As he finished, the guests applauded.

Then, the aged minister arose and began to recite the Psalm. His voice was not remarkable. His intonation was not faultless. When he finished, there was no applause. There was silence. There was not a dry eye in the room. Many heads were bowed in reverence.

The great actor again arose to his feet and, with great emotion, he said. "My friends, I have reached your eyes and ears. But the minister has reached your hearts. The difference is this: I know the 23rd Psalm, but he knows the Shepherd!"

My friend, do you know the Shepherd? The Lord Jesus is the Good, the Great, the Chief Shepherd. It is one thing to know about Him and be able to talk using all the correct phrases and catch phrases. It is another thing to know Him. The Lord Jesus said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63b)

Don't let the Bible be just lovely words. Read it lovingly. Believe it completely. Obey it willingly. Let it become a part of your life. Let it be your life.

I hope you have a lovely Easter and enjoy the evidence of new life all around in you in the Spring that has sprung!

God Bless.

Your Friend
Alan Johnston

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 7034 4266. 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

DATES for YOUR DIARY

12 th April	Easter Sunday: 6.30pm	Praise Service
19 th April	11.30am	Pre-Communion service
26 th April	11.30am	Communion
	6.30pm	Communion Thanksgiving

April 26th – June 7th 40 days of community

Easter Sunday



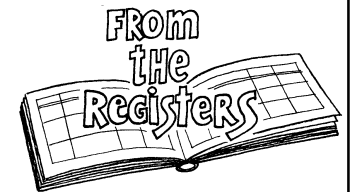
Good Friday Communion	8:00 p.m
Easter Prayer Breakfast	8:00 a.m
Easter Morning Worship	11:30 a.m
Easter Praise Service	6:30 p.m

Baptisms:

Tom Welsh 21st December 2008

Dedications:

Jack Campbell 22nd February 2009



Cover photo: www.christianphotos.net

40 *days of community*

In our last campaign, the **40 Days of Purpose**, we as a church learned about God's five purposes for our lives. These purposes were designed to answer the question, "What on earth am **I** here for?"

We'll get ready to start another campaign. Starting on **Sunday 26th April** we begin **40 Days of Community**, a 7 week journey that is designed to answer the question, "What on earth are **WE** here for?" Together, our entire church family (even our children) will expand outwardly on God's five purposes to focus on Jesus' power to change us, our church and our community. This campaign is a great opportunity to serve our community – to make a life changing impact! Let's show others in our community our faith in God by what we do.

During the 40 day campaign we will

- **Hear 7 Sunday messages**
- **Read 40 daily devotions from the workbook**
- **Join a 40 days of Community small group Bible Study**

Will you commit 40 days of your life to participate
in this spiritual journey?

Imagine the impact if we deepened the community within our church and served the community around our church.

Watch out for the various announcements from the pulpit and the news sheet over the next few weeks and plan to be part of the campaign.



Secret Sisters



- ❖ Would you like to know that another woman is praying for you on a regular basis?
- ❖ Do you think you could pray for a woman in our church community and be a source of blessing and encouragement in her life?
- ❖ If so, then God may be calling you to become a Secret Sister.

Secret Sister is essentially a **prayer ministry** where you are asked to pray for one other woman in our church over a year. It is 'secret' in that she won't know who you are! You will also be given a secret sister who will be praying for and encouraging you, though of course you won't know whom she is. Many of you probably feel too busy for anything extra but the wonderful thing about this ministry is that you can pray for your sister just whenever, and wherever, suits you. God may prompt you to pray for her as you get up in the morning, as you wash the dishes, as you sit at your desk, or maybe as you catch sight of her in church... You are not asked to come to meetings and pray in front of others for your sister, and you are not expected to buy her expensive gifts. However, it is great if you can drop your sister a card once a month just to remind her that you are still praying for her. Are you interested? If so, please come along to our supper on **Saturday 6th June** where you can find out more and get a sister for the coming year. We can promise you an informal, fun evening with a lot of chat, laughter, and delicious food. More details will follow in May, but in the meantime if you have a question please feel free to approach anyone on the committee:

Carolyn Pauley: 70326279
Tracey Johnston: 70352891
Rosie Cochrane: 70351212

Rachelle Hughes:
Judith Quigley: 70342371
Mary Stewart: 7034

Just a Thought

Friendship is one of the most important parts of life. It has often been said “a friend in time of need is a friend indeed.”

Friendship must be nurtured and built upon, by personal contact, by sharing and caring for one another. This is true no matter where you are: at home, at school, in your place of work or where ever you may be. In reality friendship is a personal relationship.

The first line of a well- known hymn that is often repeated is:
“ What a friend we have in Jesus”

A friendship with Jesus also requires a personal contact, seeking His help and guidance continually.

The following will prayerfully be a helpful guide:

- *Begin the day with God*, kneel down to Him in prayer;
- *Open the book of God* and read a portion there
- *Go through the day with God*, whatever you may do;
- *Converse in mind with God*, turn your thoughts to God
- *End the day with God*, acknowledge your need and praise His name;
- *Lie down at night with God*, who gives His servants sleep.

Try to spend some time with God each day.



The Sermon on the A- Mount

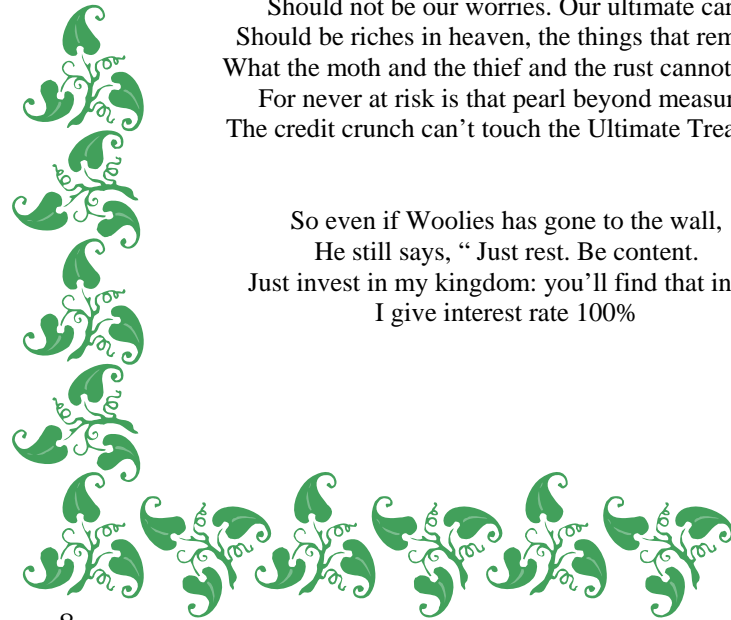
With countries gone bankrupt and banks all run dry,
With streets full of houses that no one can buy;
Recession, depression and homes repossessed,
With businesses closing and savings gone west,
With weekly bills rising and shares falling fast,
We cannot but wonder, "How long will this last?"

Yet the credit crunch still squeezes daily more tightly
No longer so carelessly, freely and lightly
Do we shop till we drop or just thoughtlessly spend
But more carefully budget, or make do and mend.
With redundancies growing and jobs on the line,
It's more bread than cake; it's more water than wine.

With financial freefall wherever we turn,
With money in meltdown, what lessons to learn?

That eating and drinking and what we will wear
Should not be our worries. Our ultimate care
Should be riches in heaven, the things that remain,
What the moth and the thief and the rust cannot gain.
For never at risk is that pearl beyond measure;
The credit crunch can't touch the Ultimate Treasure.

So even if Woolies has gone to the wall,
He still says, "Just rest. Be content.
Just invest in my kingdom: you'll find that in all
I give interest rate 100%





The GAP Project

For some time now, we have felt the call of the Lord to impact and serve the local community around our church in a more tangible way. We have been consulting with an organisation called Churches' Community Work Alliance, which works in partnership with Tearfund, and has much expertise in assisting churches in this way.

We have been praying that God might lead us to finding a suitable property within the Heights from where we can listen to the community's needs and meet people where they are. We now want to tell the congregation that we have been offered 1 Pate's Lane (formerly Molloy's Chip Shop) on a rent-free basis, for 6 months, to use as a centre for this purpose.

A Steering Group has been set up to plan the way forward. Initially, we hope to offer free tea/coffee and a biscuit in a relaxed atmosphere, where people can share their problems and we can listen to their needs, sharing Christ's love with them.

Of course, none of this can happen without church volunteers offering their help.

As a start-up project, we would like to open each morning, Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 12.00 noon but this will depend entirely on the size of the volunteer team.

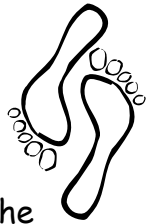
We need people who will be available and commit to being responsible for a particular day each week.

If you feel you can help in any way please speak to Rev. Johnston or Robert Blair as soon as possible.

Please also pray into this new venture, that we may know the Lord's leading in each step of the development.

Shockwaves

From 6th - 8th March the young people from Hazelbank Youth Fellowship organised prayer for the persecuted church under the theme of "Walking in their Shoes" in conjunction with the Youth & Student ministry of Open Doors. An appeal was made from the pulpit for members of the congregation to sign up for one hour slots so that the Prayer Room would be occupied throughout the weekend.



Perhaps you are one of those people who thinks, "I couldn't pray for a whole hour!" or "I'm not a spiritual enough person, that's someone else's gift" I too have felt like this in the past and have participated in prayer times that have seemed very long and, dare I say it, tedious at times. However, the Shockwaves experience was very different indeed. The organisers had put a lot of thought into the preparations and provided a wealth of material to inform our prayers. There was a suggested list of activities from which to choose and pray-ers were free to choose any of these or none in order to help

them pray in a meaningful way for real people in real situations across the world.

There were flowers made from card with prayer requests printed on them. One took a card, prayed for the situation and planted the flower in the Prayer Garden.



Details of the 20 countries where persecution is at its worst were displayed around the walls so that we could pray in an informed way for the countries and their leaders.

Various types of footwear were sitting around the floor with prayer requests for real people in them.



A Poverty & Justice Bible was in a quiet corner for people to refer to as a reminder of our responsibilities to speak up for those who have no voice of their own.

However, these are just a few of the ideas suggested and there were many more to pick from.

Speaking for myself, I found that the time flew by and I felt as if I had connected with at least some of my brothers and sisters around the world. I also came away with a huge sense of responsibility to continue to pray for those who are persecuted for their faith. One person, who initially signed up for a one-hour slot, was delighted that no one was due in after her and she stayed for 3 hours in the end! We are so fortunate to live in a country where we are largely free from persecution and yet we take it for granted. We need to pray for the persecuted church but we also should pray for our Christian politicians, that they would not be afraid to stand up for their Christian beliefs and fight to protect our Christian heritage.

Open Doors exists to serve the persecuted church worldwide. Their motto is “ Strengthen that which remains and is at the point of death” Brother Andrew, the founder, made his first trip behind the Iron Curtain in 1955, taking bibles to persecuted Christians. Now Open Doors continues to go where faith costs the most, to equip and encourage Christians who are suffering for their faith.

If you would like to learn more about the work of Open Doors you can log on to their website at: www.opendoorsuk.org or you can speak to William & Ruth Wilkinson who are our church representatives for Open Doors.

You can also contact them by post at:

P.O. Box 6
Witney
Oxon
OX29 6WG

Hazelbank Youth Club

The doors of our current youth club first opened on 04/11/05. At first membership was mainly young people from within the church but after a leaflet drop in the Heights, others began to attend.

At first these young people were defensive and suspicious, always pushing the boundaries to test if we were genuine. It was a difficult time but we persevered and gradually more and more young people from the local area began to come along. At present we have 110 registered with an average attendance of about 35 per night.

We tried various organised activities but through trial and error we discovered that they just wanted a place to hang out, maybe kick football, or play electronic games. We also opened a tuck shop and introduced a 5-minute gospel talk. Thankfully Cherie has stepped into this post and does an incredible job. Ann Bannister runs the tuck shop and my wife Linda does the register. Lyle, Trevor and I, just stand around talking and drinking coffee. Not to forget Ron Hill who very kindly treated us all to Haggis, knaps, and tattys in celebration of Burns night in January.

There are others who we can call upon to help out occasionally and to whom we are very grateful.

Over time a rapport has developed with the young people. By the end of year 2007/2008 we felt able to host a day trip. On 5th April 2008 we went to Watertop farm Ballycastle for a day of adventure activities including games, archery, low ropes course, abseiling, and raft building.

At the end of June I got a phone call from N.E.E.L.B to say that there was funding to run trips away during July and August, if we organised them. It would have been very easy to justify walking away but after talking to Trevor we signed up.

We ran three trips away:

1. Belfast Adventure and Learning Park .
2. Go-karting in Ballymena followed by a Mc Donalds.

3. Dunseverick on the North Antrim coast for an activity called coastering followed by a meal at Burger King.

On the way home on the bus, I was thinking that this is all very well but what does this do to further Gods kingdom? I got my answer several minutes later. We drove into the Heights area to be confronted with a potential riot situation. Groups of surly looking men stood convenient to a smouldering bonfire, glaring at each other across police lines. The air was just crackling with sectarian tension. I looked around the bus. We had thirty young people mainly from the heights area. They are a mixed group; probably fifty- fifty across our religious political divide. And what was this next generation doing? They were all singing together. (Not quite hymns and choruses, but singing none the less). They had no interest at all in the situation around them. They were all tired and contented.

I realised that Christian community involvement can truly act like the preserving action of salt; slowly, and almost imperceptibly. I also believe that the light of the gospel can radically change hearts, minds, attitudes, and the actions of the individual. Couple those two together and you have something incredibly powerful. We are conduits of that power, but as Jesus said in Matthew 5v13 +14. ***“What good is salt if it loses its saltiness? What good is light if you hide it away?”*** God calls us to action; and through running the youth club, I have seen that whatever God calls us to do he will provide. I have also seen that he will move in people’s hearts and minds if we move to meet their needs.

I thank God for the many people here who pray for us behind the scenes. Their prayers are the powerhouse behind all we do. I would ask that you pray for;

1. The wisdom to know God’s will for the youth club.
2. The courage to do it.
3. Delivery from the evil one. (Satan has, and will attempt to disrupt)

To God be all the Glory Amen



Just for a laugh

What did the bunny say when he only had thistles to eat?

Thistle have to do



What is the difference between a crazy bunny and a counterfeit banknote?

One is bad money and the other is a mad bunny!



What did the rabbit say to the Carrot?

Its been nice gnawing you!



Where does Valentines Day come after Easter?

In the dictionary



How do bunnies stay healthy?

Eggercise



And finally...

When you are the *neediest*, He is the **most sufficient**.

When you are *completely helpless*, He is the **most helpful**.

When you feel *totally dependent*, He is **absolutely dependable**.

When you are the *weakest*, He is the **most able**.

When you are the *most alone*, He is **intimately present**.

When you feel *you are the least*, **He is the greatest!**

When you feel the *most useless*, He is **preparing you**.

When it is *darkest*, He is the **only Light** you need.

When you feel the *least secure*, He is your **Rock and
Fortress**.

When you are the *most humble*, He is **most gracious**.

When you say that *you cannot*, remember that **He can!**-

- Author Unknown