

CALENDAR

Downpatrick, Ballee & Clough

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Churches

December 2012 and January 2013

From the Minister:

Christmas is now almost upon us and we will be celebrating in a number of special services all mentioned in this Calendar. This year the joint Candlelight Carol Service will be at Clough on Wednesday, 12th December and each church will have its own carol service too. We will also have joint services on Christmas Day at Downpatrick and on the last Sunday of the year at Ballee. I hope everyone will make every effort to support each service.

One of the things we tend to do a lot at Christmas is sing carols. Ian Bradley, a contemporary expert on hymns, tells us that:

“The derivation of the word ‘carol’ has been the subject of much speculation. It probably goes back through the old French ‘caroler’ and the Latin ‘choraula’ to the Greek ‘choros’, a circling dance often accompanied by singing and associated with dramatic performances, religious festivities and fertility rites. The song of classical times was a major element in popular celebrations to mark the passing of the winter solstice and the promise of spring.”

For many centuries the church was very critical of the singing of carols but from the 12th century onwards they were taken up as what Ian Bradley calls “Christian folksongs”. From that time onwards they have played a rich part in our celebrations, as he also

says: “Christmas Carols are not just for antiquarians and scholars, however. They belong to a living tradition which is constantly being added to with new material,” and he quotes Percy Dearmer's definition of carols as:

“... songs with a religious impulse that are simple, hilarious, popular and modern ... set in such language as shall express the manner in which the ordinary man at his best understands the ideas of his age.”

So as we sing our carols we take part in an age-old tradition that brightens up the darkest days of winter. And at their heart is the hope, as one carol expresses it, that:

*For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world send back the
song
Which now the angels sing.*

David Steers

Forthcoming Dates:

Wednesday, 12th December visit of Down County Museums world religions course to Downpatrick at 2.45 pm.

Wednesday, 12th December Joint Candlelight Carol Service at Clough at 7.30 pm.

Tuesday, 25th December Joint Service for Christmas Day at Downpatrick at 10.30am

Sunday, 30th December Joint End of Year Service at Ballee at 11.15 am.

	Downpatrick	Ballee	Clough
2 nd December	11.15 am Rev Dr David Steers	9.45 am Rev Dr David Steers	11.15 am Rev William Haslett
9 th December	11.15 am Rev Dr David Steers	9.45 am Rev William Haslett	9.45 am Rev Dr David Steers
16th December	11.15 am Rev William Haslett	9.45 am Rev Dr David Steers	11.15 am Rev Dr David Steers Carol Service
23rd December	11.15 am Rev Dr David Steers Carol Service	9.45 am Rev Dr David Steers Carol Service	9.45 am Rev William Haslett
30th December	<i>11.15 am Joint Service</i>	11.15 am End of Year Joint Service Ballee	<i>11.15 am Joint Service</i>
6th January	11:15 am Rev Dr William Patterson	9:45 am Rev Dr David Steers	11:15 am Rev Dr David Steers
13th January	11:15 am Rev Dr David Steers	9:45 am Rev Dr David Steers	9:45 am Very Rev William McMillan
20th January	11:15 am Sue Steers	9:45 am Rev Dr David Steers	11:15 am Rev Dr David Steers
27th January	11:15 am Rev Dr David Steers	9:45 am Rev Dr William Patterson	9:45 am Rev Dr David Steers

How beautiful upon the mountains
 are the feet of him who brings good tidings,
 who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good,
 who publishes salvation,
 who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."
 Isaiah ch.52 v.7

Special Christmas Services

Clough, Ballee & Downpatrick, Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Churches

Carols by Candlelight

An evening of favourite Christmas carols and readings

*On Wednesday, 12th December
at 7.30 pm*

In Clough Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church

Everyone Welcome

Joint Service for Christmas Morning

Christmas Day

10.30 am

at Downpatrick

All Welcome

Joint End of Year Service

Sunday, 30th December

11.15 am

at Ballee

All Welcome

Stipend

All stipend payers are encouraged to see that all their payments are with the treasurer/stipend clerk before the end of the year so the books can be finalised.

Harvest Thanksgiving Services

These were all very successful events attracting large congregations. At Downpatrick the special preacher was Rev Rosalind Taggart with special music contributed by Alana Spence accompanied by Stephen Condy; at Ballee the guest preacher was Rev Brian Cockroft with music provided by the Bailliesmills Accordion Band; at Clough the visiting preacher was the Very Rev William McMillan with singing by Mrs Doris

Hutton and Mrs Lorna Hanna. Additional thanks goes to our organists – Betty Taylor, John Strain and Alfie McClelland for all their preparation and work on the day and to everyone who decorated the churches and helped to distribute the produce afterwards as well to those who helped with the refreshments which were much enjoyed by everyone. Our own minister was honoured to accept an invitation to preach at the harvest service at Bright Parish Church. We also send our best wishes to the Rev John and Rebekah Ewart who will be leaving our local group of parishes next year to take up work in China. We wish them every blessing in their new work.

Downpatrick Table Quiz

The Lakeside Inn was filled to capacity on Saturday, 24th November for the annual Downpatrick table quiz, indeed demand for places was so great that those who did not book well in advance were unable to get a place! Our thanks goes to Arthur Gibson for his testing questions, to Margaret and Geoffrey Ferguson for hosting the night in what is such an ideal venue, to everyone who donated prizes for the ballot, to everyone who provided food for the supper and to all who helped in serving it and, indeed, to everyone who helped. It was a wonderful night which also resulted in raising £825 clear profit for church funds. Well done to everyone.

Christian Aid

Christian Aid Christmas Gift Catalogues are available in all three churches if anyone would like to support this work.

Ballee Website

Ballee website is being updated and expanded. It can be seen at <http://www.balleensp.org.uk/>. One new feature it is hoped will be Twitter, so stay tuned for that innovation. Many thanks goes to Lee-Anne Ringland for all her hard work on this.

Communion

Autumn communion services were held at Ballee and Downpatrick on 4th November and Clough on 18th November. In addition communion has been taken to some of our members at home. If you know anyone who would appreciate receiving communion at home please tell the minister. Following Communion Class at Downpatrick five new members were admitted to Communion at Downpatrick and presented with membership certificates. Well done to Robyn Nixon, Eileen Neill, Jennifer Cleland, Adam Moffett and Robert Neill.

Funeral

Hazel Kelly died suddenly on Sunday, 4th November. A life-long member and elder of Ballee she will be greatly missed. Hazel was one of the founders of Mainstay DRP which provides such a useful service for local people with disabilities and was a keen bowler and past president of Ballee Bowling Club. The church was packed for her funeral on Wednesday, 7th November which was conducted by Rev Dr David Steers with readings given by two of her grandchildren, Nicola Broome and Emma McBride. The service was followed by burial in the church grave yard. All our deepest sympathy is with her children – Jack, Joy, Ruth, Valerie, Jim, Roy and Gordon as well as her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, her sister Avril, and the whole family circle.