

CALENDAR

Downpatrick, Ballee & Clough

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Churches

February and March 2013

From the Minister:

In his letter to the Galatians Paul says:

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

These things are about the practical effects of the Christian life, and one of the important things is joy.

Jesus was someone who exhibited joy in his life. He wasn't afraid to enjoy fellowship with all sorts of people, some of whom were condemned by the orthodox religious attitudes of his day. He liked dining with his friends, he wasn't afraid to use humour in his teaching. He enjoyed the beauties of nature. St Paul showed the same spirit. Looking back on his ministry, he acknowledges the many times of deep unhappiness, but the joy outweighed them all. From his own experience he could speak of joy as the gift of the Spirit. It followed on that when the church came into being joy was one of the characteristics of Christianity which led to the rapid extension of the church. Even in the time of persecution the enemies of the Christian church had to acknowledge that there was a quality of happiness about the early Christians which aroused curiosity and won converts. In all the difficulties that they faced they were supported by their faith which gave them joy in believing and joy in life.

Today we live in much easier times in many ways. But we still should go in search of finding and expressing a sense of joy in our lives. There are

many ways in which we find joy in living. For instance we could obviously think of our homes and families, maybe our work or our fellowship with others or anything that gives us satisfaction. There are different types of activities which make some demand upon us and offer, by return, a kind of fulfilment. They also have about them a quality of permanence which distinguishes them from the things which simply give us pleasure. If we work hard at things, concentrate on them, we gradually become more and more proficient.

Concentration is actually very close, in some ways, to the practice of prayer. It is about settling ourselves and centring our attention. Simone Weil, the French mystical writer and philosopher wrote that "Prayer is the orientation of all the attention of which the soul is capable towards God". This means that all our work and indeed our leisure can be transformed. Simone Weil goes on to say that there is something akin to prayer in study, for instance. "To study for the sake of truth," she says "is likewise and in the very same effort of attention to pray." She adds too that such prayer is answered for "every time a human being succeeds in making an effort of attention with the sole idea of increasing his grasp of truth, he acquires a greater aptitude for grasping it."

David Steers

	Downpatrick	Ballee	Clough
3 rd February	11:15 am Rev Dr David Steers	9:45 am Rev Dr David Steers	11:15 am Very Rev William McMillan
10 th February	11:15 am Rev Dr David Steers	9:45 am Sue Steers	9:45 am Rev Dr David Steers
17 th February	11:15 am Rev William Haslett	9:45 am Rev Dr David Steers	11:15 am Rev Dr David Steers
24 th February	11:15 am Rev Dr David Steers	9:45 am Rev Dr David Steers	9:45 am Very Rev William McMillan
3 rd March	11:15 am Very Rev William McMillan	9:45 am Rev Dr David Steers	11:15 am Rev Dr David Steers
10 th March	11:15 am Rev Dr David Steers	9:45 am Very Rev William McMillan	9:45 am Rev Dr David Steers
17 th March	11:15 am Rev Dr David Steers	9:45 am Rev Dr David Steers	11:15 am Rev Dr William Patterson
24 th March	11.15 am Rev Dr David Steers	9:45 am Very Rev William McMillan	9.45 am Rev Dr David Steers
31st March	11.15 am Joint Service Downpatrick Rev Dr David Steers	<i>11.15 am</i> <i>Joint Service</i> <i>Downpatrick</i>	<i>11.15 am</i> <i>Joint Service</i> <i>Downpatrick</i>

*In the busyness of this day
grant me a stillness of seeing, O God.
In the conflicting voices of my heart
grant me a calmness of hearing.
Let my seeing and hearing
my words and my actions
be rooted in a silent certainty of your presence.
Let my passions for life
and the longings for justice that stir within me
be grounded in the experience of your stillness.
Let my life be rooted in the ground of your peace, O God,
let me be rooted in the depths of your peace.*

Around the Fellowship

Our prayers and best wishes are with all those members who have been in hospital recently, including Annie Stevenson, Doreen Hodges and Jack Hutton as well as all those who are undergoing treatment at the moment.

Christmas Services

We held a number of very special and well-attended services over the Christmas period including our service of Carols by Candlelight at Clough on 12th December, a service for Christmas morning at Downpatrick and a joint service to mark the end of the year at Ballee on 30th December. In addition we had successful carol services at Clough, Ballee and Downpatrick in turn. We are grateful to everyone who supported these services, especially to those who took part in different ways.

Christmas events

On Saturday, 22nd December Ballee Sunday School organised a great day out for nearly forty members and friends which began at the Dundonald Ice Bowl and finished at Downpatrick Cricket Club for dinner. It was a most enjoyable day and a big thank you goes to Doreen Chambers, Donna Lightbody and Lee-Anne Ringland for organising it all. On the same day Downpatrick held their Sunday School party in the church hall. This was also well-attended and included a much appreciated visit from Santa! Thank you to Annabel Cleland and Marion Moffett for organising the day. At Clough the Sunday School members were all presented with gifts at the carol service on 16th December. On Sunday, 23rd December Ross Kelly, on behalf of Ballee Sunday School presented a cheque to Joy McBride for £140 for the charity Riding for the Disabled, raised at the monthly refreshments served over the year.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was this year held at Down Parish Church on Sunday, 20th January. This year St Mary's High School, Downpatrick is also holding a service to mark this with representatives of all the local churches and local schools on Friday, 1st February at 11.15 am.

Women's League

The Women's League this year is raising money for the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Ballot tickets, price £1 each or £5 for a book of five, are available in the churches if you would like to support this appeal.

Advance Notice – Bowling Club

Ballee Outdoor Bowling Club will reopen for the new season on Saturday, 13th April. New members are very welcome.

Peace III Visit to Downpatrick

On Wednesday, 12th December Downpatrick welcomed a large group to the church from the Peace III Project co-ordinated by the Down County Museum. They were shown around the church and took part in a question and answer session with the minister.

Ballee Community Group

The Ballee Community Group has a very full winter programme planned. Full details are available on a separate sheet.

**The Kelly family (Ballyalton) Jack, Joy, Valerie, Ruth, Jim, Roy and Gordon
would like to invite you to a:**

Coffee Morning

**In memory of their mother Hazel Kelly who was a founder member of DRP -
now known as Mainstay DRP - A charity that works with adults with learning
disabilities**

Date: Saturday 23rd February 2013

Time: 10am-12pm

Place: Ballee Non-Subscribing Presbyterian church hall

All funds go towards:
The Building Fund
Mainstay DRP

Anyone interested in baking or donating prizes for the tombola please contact Isabel
Kelly: 07719132508

Your generosity is greatly appreciated

Forthcoming Dates:

Tuesday, 26th February meeting of the Presbytery of Bangor at Clough at 7.30 pm.

Thursday, 4th April meeting of the Presbytery of Antrim ay Glenarm at 7.30pm.

Church Addresses

Minister, Ballee, Clough & Downpatrick:

Rev Dr David Steers, 223 Upper Lisburn Road, Belfast BT10 0LL. Tel: 028 90
947850.

First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church, Downpatrick

Secretary: Miss M. Stewart, 9A Buckshead Road, Downpatrick, BT30 8JB. Tel: 028
44 612309. *Treasurer:* Mrs M. McBride, 5 Orchard Road, Rathmullen, Downpatrick,
BT30 8TA. Tel: 028 44 851515.

Ballee Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church

Secretary: Miss J. Caven, 16 Milltown Road, Downpatrick, BT30 7EE. Tel: 028 44
842053. *Treasurer:* Mr A. Chambers, 29 Downpatrick Road, Clough, Downpatrick,
BT30 8NL. Tel: 028 44 812008.

Clough Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church

Secretary: Mrs P. Shaw, "Carnreagh", 5 Marguerite Heights, Newcastle, BT33 0SN.
Tel: 028 43 726339. *Treasurer:* Mr G. Hay, 2a Knocksticken Road, Clough,
Downpatrick, BT30 8RE. 028 43 751235.

