

CARING, LOVING, HELPING OUR COMMUNITY

# CONNECT

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE, MOURNE ROAD, LURGAN

## SUMMARY OF EVENTS

### FRIDAY

Jesus of Nazareth is crucified, confirmed dead and buried in a tomb.

Pilate orders the tomb to be sealed and guarded.

### SUNDAY

Women visiting the tomb find the stone rolled away.

Mary Magdalene sees Jesus.

After leaving the tomb a group of women meet Jesus.

Jesus walks with two people who were on their way to Emmaus.

Jesus meets with Simon Peter.

Jesus appears to ten of His disciples.

# ALIVE!

**It's the number one news story of all time. It affects every person in every generation. So what exactly happened, and why does it matter today?**

On what we call 'Good Friday', Jesus – God Himself – was condemned, though innocent, then beaten, whipped, and crucified. This is the part where your name is written into the story because Jesus bore your sin on the cross – not just the sin of the world in general, but that of every single person. We can't hide in a crowd and think our own personal sin doesn't matter. It does. God sees it, and Jesus bore it. Whether you know it or not, Jesus paid the price for your sin. The price was death. Jesus died for you.

But this is not the end of the story, for if it

ends with the death of Jesus, then we are left in the grave too. Here is the greatest piece of news ever reported. It was announced by angels to a group of women who were grieving at the tomb of Jesus ... "He is not here, for He has risen!"

Why is that so amazingly good? And why does it matter today? Jesus died for us, and now, because He lives, we can live too! So many stories hit the headlines reporting events that are terrible, but this one is about something really good. It is about the forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with the God who loves us.

The resurrection of Jesus means that the story that began with sin can have a happy ending – no longer death, but life. "For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16.

*Because  
He lives,  
we can  
live too!*



**If the technology had existed 2,000 years ago the Sunday Paper may have appeared something like this**

# JERUSALEM POST

**SUNDAY**

**Special Late Edition**

## Events Rock Jerusalem

Government officials have today launched an investigation into the whereabouts of the crucified body of the prophet Jesus of Nazareth amid sensational claims that He is alive, despite having been buried in a sealed tomb on Friday. The claims are being made by His followers and also by two people who state that Jesus travelled with them as they walked the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus.



Palace sources say governor Pontius Pilate is troubled over his decision to crucify Jesus of Nazareth given that he had found Him to be 'not guilty' of breaking any laws.

The acclaimed King of the Jews and prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, was crucified with two thieves on Friday just outside Jerusalem. Leading astrologers can offer no explanation for the three hours of darkness which swept across the land during the middle of the day as the prophet died.

After the crucifixion, the body of Jesus of Nazareth was handed over to Joseph from Arimathea and Nicodemus, two of His followers. They wrapped the body in linen, and put it in a tomb cut from the rock. Roman soldiers rolled a large stone across the entrance, sealed it with Pilate's official seal, and posted a guard.

This leaves one big question for all our readers. If the authorities cannot give an explanation, or better still, produce the body, then how can we doubt the eyewitnesses?

However, this morning, when women went to visit the tomb they found the massive stone had been rolled to one side and the body was gone. The tomb was empty.

'The Post' understands the women were confronted by two men in gleaming clothes who said, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, He has risen."

Furthermore, 'The Post' has received reports that Jesus of Nazareth has appeared to His followers on an additional four occasions today.



Sources close to these disciples say they are convinced that Jesus is alive and a new era has begun. One follower told 'The Post': "The things He told us concerning Himself have now become clear to us. We were puzzled when He said, 'Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.' Now it all makes sense; it is three days since His crucifixion and He has been raised!

"There is no doubt in our minds that He is alive. On five separate occasions today, He has revealed Himself to some of His friends and also to His disciples. What has happened is nothing short of a miracle and one which was foretold. No trace has been found of the body. We know Jesus is alive."

Government officials and military advisers remain tight-lipped but 'The Post' understands that they have no rational explanation for what has happened. One civil servant commented: "It simply defies belief that His followers would make this sort of thing up; they would have nothing to gain from a false rumour."

Advisers close to Pilate are already beginning to accept that something incredible has happened in Jerusalem today. While they are understandably nervous about saying so, it does look as if this Jesus is alive.

# Journalist Investigates Christianity

Lee Strobel was an award-winning journalist at the Chicago Tribune and a spiritual sceptic until 1981. An avowed atheist, he began a quest to prove the claims of Christianity were not true. Using his journalistic and legal training, he spent over two years in meticulous research. Lee writes in his book, 'The Case for Christ'...



I'll admit it: I was ambushed by the amount and quality of the evidence that Jesus is the unique Son of God. As I sat at my desk that Sunday afternoon, I shook my head in amazement. I had seen defendants carted off to the death chamber on much less convincing proof! The cumulative facts and data pointed unmistakably toward a conclusion that I wasn't entirely comfortable in reaching.

In light of the convincing facts I had learned during my investigation, in the face of this overwhelming avalanche of evidence in the case for Christ, the great irony was this: it would require much more faith for me to maintain my atheism than to trust in Jesus of Nazareth!

The atheism I had embraced for so long buckled under the weight of historical truth. It was a stunning and radical outcome, certainly not what I had anticipated when I embarked on this investigative process. But it was, in my opinion, a decision compelled by the facts.

All of which led me to the "So what?" question. If this is true, what difference does it make? There were several obvious implications.

- If Jesus is the Son of God, his teachings are more than just good ideas from a wise teacher; they are divine insights on which I can confidently build my life.
- If Jesus did rise from the dead, he's still alive today and available for me to encounter on a personal basis.
- If Jesus conquered death, he can open the door of eternal life for me, too.
- If Jesus is who he claims to be (and remember, no leader of any other major religion has even pretended to be God), as my Creator he rightfully deserves my allegiance, obedience, and worship.

So on November 8, 1981, I talked with God in a heartfelt and unedited prayer, admitting and turning from my wrongdoing, and receiving the gift of forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus. I told him that with his help I wanted to follow him and his ways from here on out.

Maybe that sounds mystical to you; I don't know. Not so long ago it would have to me. But it's very real to me now and to those around me. In fact, so radical was the difference in my life that a few months after I became a follower of Jesus, our five-year-old daughter Alison went up to my wife and said, "Mommy, I want God to do for me what he's done for Daddy."

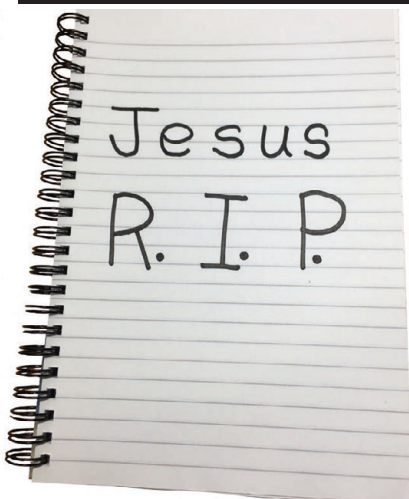
## MOVIE TIME!

**THE CASE FOR CHRIST,** released in cinemas in 2017, tells Lee Strobel's story. If you would like to borrow a copy of this DVD to view in your own home, phone Pastor Jim on 07740 877354.



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## BILLY AND THE BOYS

Billy made his decision to become a Christian when he was nine years old. During his early teenage years, he was often taunted and ridiculed for his faith, especially at school.

On one occasion, some boys in his class devised a plan to make fun of him. They wrote "Jesus R.I.P." on a sheet of paper and put it inside his book.

In his next class, Billy opened his book and read their note, "Jesus R.I.P." The boys burst out laughing, but Billy sat smiling. Then he said, "Whoever wrote this note must believe the same as me. Jesus R.I.P. Risen In Power. My Jesus is alive!"





## A LIFE CHANGED Keith (Bubbles) Girvan

### TROUBLES

Growing up in a mixed area of Albert Street, I was easily singled out by my school uniform in the mainly Nationalist area. This was at the height of the Troubles and I would be attacked and beaten often. As a young boy, I decided I would hit them back. This led me into trouble with the police and at 14 years old, I got my first taste of being locked up. This was the start of my young life being imprisoned in Her Majesty's establishments for rioting and serious assaults.

At age 16 I got a flat in the Mourneview Estate and became a Loyalist. I abused alcohol and drugs for many years and had many relationships, but out of it all, I had a son called Ryan, born in 1995. Two years later, I was back in prison again. My relationship with Ryan's mother broke up and they moved to Scotland. When I got out of prison, I became the town's tattooist, a job I did for twenty years.

### DARK DAYS

I was always close to my boy, Ryan. When he was 14,

he came to live in my sister's house and by the time he was 20, he had a house just down the street from me, which was great! Then, one day in August 2014, I found him dead in his bedroom. He had taken sleeping tablets after breaking up with his girlfriend. That was the worst time in my life. I fell into a black hole. I didn't care if I killed someone or if I killed myself. To me, my life at this stage was black and was going to hell anyway for I had done many sinful acts in my life.

### THE INVITATION

Paul, a friend of mine, was a Christian and often asked me to come to hear him give his testimony. After many years, I agreed and went with him to a wee church in Templepatrick. That was 28th May 2018. I sat in the back row, hiding from view. The pastor spoke for a while, then Paul gave his testimony. All of a sudden, I felt my whole body shaking. It felt like a fireman's water hose hitting me in the chest. I knew then and there that the Holy Spirit had come into my heart. I felt every bit of anger and hatred go out of me.

*"I didn't care if I killed someone or if I killed myself."*

*"I was back in prison again."*



### THE RESPONSE

The pastor asked if anyone would like to be saved and I didn't hesitate. I threw my arm up and wept like a baby! It was the greatest feeling I've ever experienced. All I felt was love, peace, and joy. I couldn't wait to tell my lovely lady, family, and friends the GOOD NEWS and they couldn't believe it. But I knew I was changed.

*"I'm in the best place in my life."*

### NEW LIFE

I now have a new job. Thanks to the Lord and I praise Him every day. I love my pastor, Jim Fugard and the Nazarene Church. I'm in the best place in my life. Thank You, Jesus. Please, would you read Psalm 116 ... Jesus can do for you what He has done for me.

## FROM FEAR TO PEACE Brenda Mercer



A Lurgan girl growing up in Sloan Street, Brenda knew about Jesus from a young age. At the early age of 14, Brenda started work in Thompson Rodgers factory in nearby Mark Street. She married John when she was 25 and they were blessed with two sons and a daughter, who sadly died at sixteen weeks old. Tragically, Brenda's dad died two days after her little girl.

Some years later, Brenda was in a meeting where Bobby Andrews was speaking on the 23rd Psalm, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Brenda says, "I can assure you, I really did fear the evil. On my way home that night I gave my life to the Lord walking along the Mourne Road. That was on 18 August 1980. Praise God."

I came into the house that night and John my husband knew something good had happened and I told him I had got saved. I thought John would get saved too, so I started to go to prayer meetings to pray for

John and our sons. I prayed for John's salvation for over thirty years, and he gave his life to the Lord.

*"The Lord helped me through."*

But life did not always run smoothly after Brenda became a Christian. She shares, "John had a drink problem and the Lord carried me through that. John was a good man. It is an illness. When John suffered multiple strokes, I cared for him for nearly six years until he had to go into nursing care. Again, the Lord helped me through. Praise Him, I have a peace now that passes all understanding."

*Give Brenda a wave the next time you see her – you'll be sure of a smile and a big hello in return from a lovely lady.*

## TROUBLED TEEN TO CHURCH PASTOR Jim Fugard

I was born in 1958 in 121 Union Street, opposite the legendary bicycle builder, Mr Tommy Donaldson.

As I entered my teen years, I became aware that my father had an alcohol problem that was making home life miserable. Domestic violence became a part of life, particularly at weekends. My early years shaped me into a very angry person, and, with the Troubles in full swing, I vented my anger in many ways.

Home life became unbearable and when I was fifteen, I went to live with my grandparents. I was under no parental control and did whatever I wanted. The things I got up to were not good.

For almost a year, I had little contact with my parents until tragedy struck. My father had been admitted to ETU in Craigavon hospital for his alcohol problem and during this period, my mother took her own life, leaving behind a daughter aged seven, and two sons aged eleven and sixteen.

It was a disaster, but sometimes good comes from tragic situations. That day in 1975 at the graveside, I will never forget the voice of God in my head as my mother's coffin was being lowered into the ground. The challenge was simply this: If that was me in the coffin, was I in a right relationship

*"My early years shaped me into a very angry person."*

*"It was a disaster, but sometimes good comes from tragic situations."*

with God and prepared to meet Him? I knew the answer was 'no'. A few days later, in my parents' house in Trasna Way, my father's brother Tom showed me how I could become a Christian.

That decision to give my life to Jesus completely transformed my life. I often ask myself, how did I get to where I am now, bearing in mind I left school an angry, broken, uneducated boy? The answer is simple. God took hold of my angry, broken heart, and filled it with His love.

God has given me a wonderful family. He has also placed me in the position of pastor of the church I joined at sixteen. It is my profound privilege to serve my church and this community. I know there are hurting people all around us and however we can help people, that is our mission.

**We are a small, family-oriented church that seeks to serve a great big God who has a heart of love and compassion. We want our community to know that we are here to serve and support in whatever way we can, and that Jesus is able to change and transform lives.**

**Pastor Jim.**

*Lurgan church of the Nazarene.*



# NAZARENE

Published by: **Church of the Nazarene**  
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**Sunday 11.30am and 6.30pm**

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