



Living Hope Community



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Jesus says in Mark 12:30–31: “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.”

In St James' in 1919, we wanted to make connections with our community of

Ballymoney and so we began a community project that we named 'Living Hope Community', because 'A living God, gives a living hope'. It has three strands.

The first is 'Tracey's Trolley'. The food items that are donated by the congregation every Sunday are delivered to Ballymoney Foodbank. In 2021, Ballymoney Foodbank supported 4,117 children and adults with food and toiletries. Last year, that increased to 5,883 individuals and families seeking help, just to feed themselves.

The second strand is school uniforms, where we collect items of school uniform from schools, that have kindly been donated by parents/guardians who no longer need them. These items are still in good condition for another child to wear and so we give them away when we open our church hall five days during the year. We have also seen an increase in families coming on these days for school uniform and sports kit. In 2021, we had 102 families come to us, but that rose last year to 156 families. We have been able to connect with people in our community of Ballymoney, build up good relationships with the schools and by God's grace pray with people and just listen as they tell us the difficulties and problems they face.

The third strand is Christmas toys. We had collected toys and baby items and in November 2020 we decided to give them away to those who needed them. We advertised the toys on the Facebook page and we had nearly 70 families come seeking help

with toys that year. Many told us of their difficulties. One woman told us that she couldn't take many toys as she and her children would be homeless soon. We thank God

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that we get to hear these stories and help where we can and pray for these situations. We thought the toy giveaway would happen once but what we didn't expect was the kindness of strangers. Our own congregation and people who saw it advertised on Facebook began donating toys and so we have continued it every year since.

We have been blessed in so many ways by the people we have met, the conversations we have had and the friendships we have struck up. The more food, school uniforms and toys we give away, the more we have received.

Please pray:

- Please pray for those who come seeking help, that they will find Jesus Christ and his salvation.
- Give thanks for this opportunity to help our community in these ways