

YOUR WINTER EDITION OF

WEST LIFE

ISSUE No.13, DECEMBER 2017

WEST CHURCH, BANGOR PUBLICATION

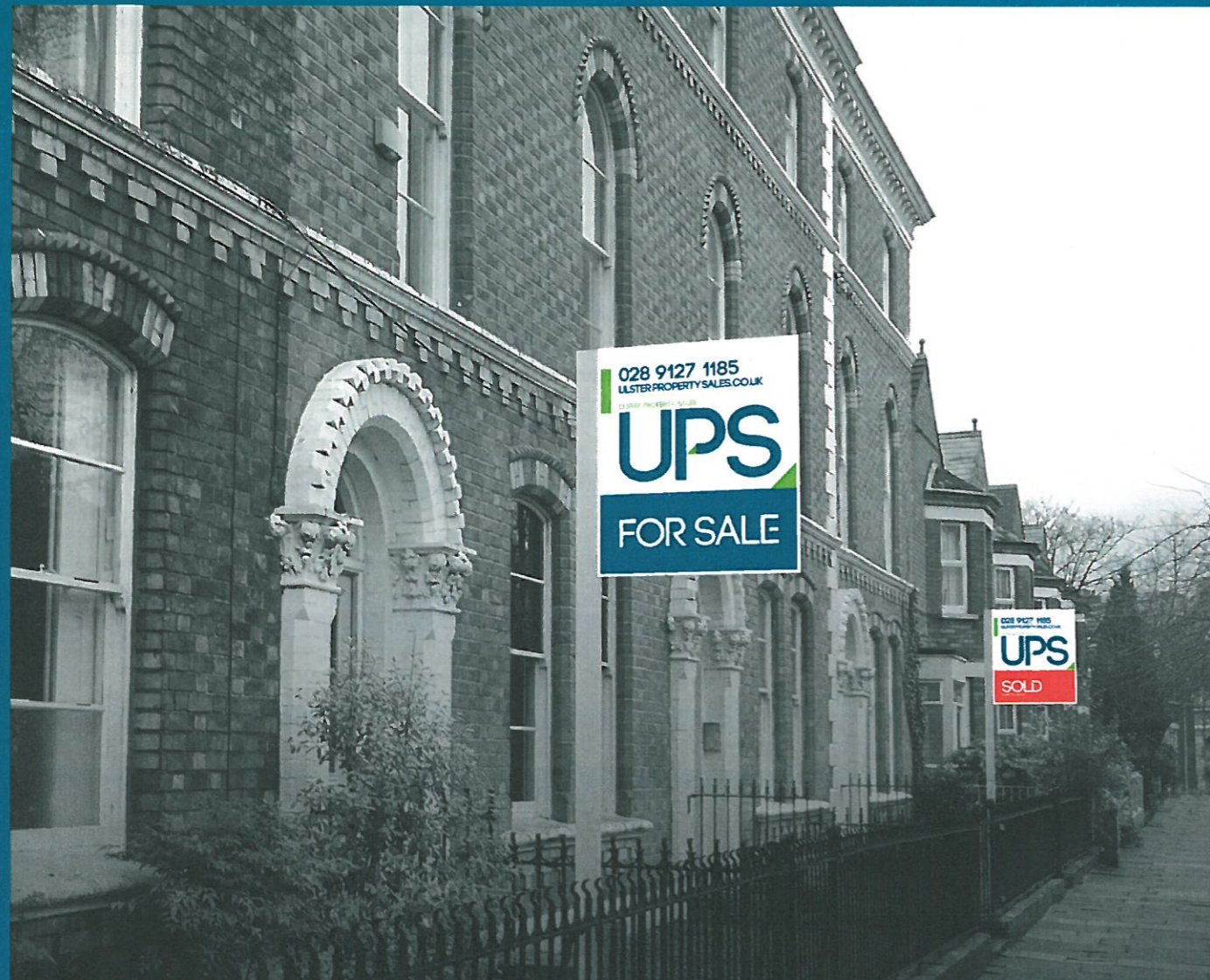
LOVE

Came Down



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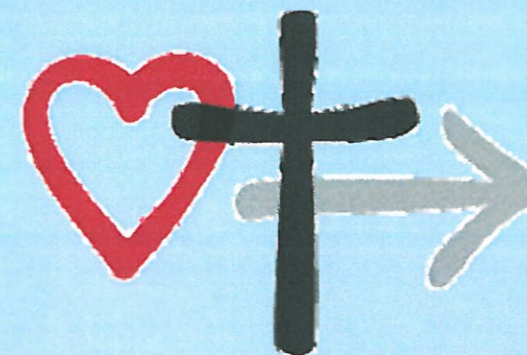
WELCOME TO YOUR WINTER WEST LIFE

Welcome to the Christmas edition our church magazine— Love came Down! And there is ample evidence in these pages of that Love being shared! Eileen Kelly and Gill Fleming share the Good News of Jesus Christ as part of an Medic Assist International Team in South Africa. Reports take us to India and Canada and Congo. We see how the love of God is being shared in various organisations here in West and in the reports of various action teams. World Development and The Abba Trust

illustration how we reach out in love to others at Christmas and beyond. There is Love shared in departures, as we think of Dave Gray and Elaine Ward, and Love shared in arrivals, as we welcome Victoria Croft. From the youngest to the oldest, may that Love of Christ abide in all of us this Christmas and overflow to others.

My thanks to Cheryl Miller for her tireless energy in editing and producing the magazine and to all our sponsors for their incredible support!

Rev. Charles McMullen



THE LOVE OF CHRIST COMPELS US

2 corinthians 5:14

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Minister:
Rev Charles McMullen
37 Kensington Park, Bangor
Telephone: 028 9145 4338

Associate Minister:
Rev. Andy Galbraith

Minister Emeritus:
Rev David Baillie

Pastoral Associate:
Andy Heron

Pastoral Assistant:
Rev. Jim Hagan

Directory/Contact Details

**West Presbyterian Church,
Rathmore Road, Bangor, BT19 1DF
Telephone: 02891 459688**

Youth & Children's Associate:
Sonia Mawhinney

Youth & Children's Worker:
Andrew McClelland

Children's Worker:
Victoria Croft

Director or Worship:
Gillian Caughey

Church Co-ordinator:
Stephen Cully

Church Secretaries:
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Church Officers:
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Sunday Service Times:

10.00 am Traditional Service
10.00 am Young West
11.30 am Contemporary /
Family Service (Crèche provided)
Children leave for Sunday School at 11.45 am
11.45 am #Café church
6.30 pm Evening Service
8.00 pm Deeper

'O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM'

by Rev. Charles McMullen

It is several weeks ago already since we were warned to prepare ourselves for the onslaught of Ophelia. I went as far as stowing our three bins in the garage, the first time I had taken such draconian action in over eighteen years of living in Bangor! As it transpired, the full effects were experienced over southern parts of Ireland with the tragic loss of at least three lives. There were dramatic scenes of a school roof being lifted off in one piece and blown away. Crazy to see one or two individuals venturing into the swelling seas in Galway Bay for a swim, putting not only themselves but also the emergency services at risk. Even though there were gusts of over 70mph around Orlock and Donaghadee, we seemed to get off a bit more lightly.

Both Irish jurisdictions heeded the warning and decided to take no risks. Most of the island was on shut-down with offices, businesses and shops closing early. I checked the night before just before we went to sleep only to discover the breaking news that all schools were to remain closed. There were scenes of elation here in the manse, which became even more marked when this unexpected holiday was extended to a second day. Even the most conscientious teachers deserve an extra break, or was my wife simply glad to be at home with me? Anyhow, the bonus time was used to put several Christmas cakes in the oven and to make tray bakes for immediate gratification.

That morning I headed out along the seashore for a good long walk, taking me as far as Crawfordsburn, uphill through the country park and then along the main road towards home. A bracing ninety minutes altogether, with gusts of wind and rain driving against me only as I came past West Church. There was an eerie calm across the sea, the far



shore of Belfast Lough was lost in a deep grey mist and there was such a brooding presence as the wind shook branches, bringing hundreds of autumn leaves tumbling down.

I then heeded several police warnings only to make absolutely necessary trips and decided to stay at home. We lit the fire and filled a flask in case of a power cut, which never happened. As I settled into the sofa, I enjoyed staying put in the one spot for several hours, reading, catching up on TV and sleeping! It was as if the rest had been given as a gift and something to be enjoyed. It's not to detract from those who suffered damage, but I found myself wishing that every Monday could be just like this! For us, here at home it had a strange, peaceful Christmas Day presence when you simply want to relax and enjoy all your home comforts.

Two thousand years ago we remember that God sent His one and only Son into the world. I've been looking at the words of the Christmas carol "O little town of Bethlehem", which presents an idyllic picture of stillness and quietness on a

beautiful, calm, starlit night as the Christ-child appears on the scene of time:

*How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive
Him, still
The dear Christ enters in."*

So tranquil with not even a storm cloud in sight. As I sat snug and warm in the family den that Monday afternoon several weeks ago and had that early Christmas feeling, my thoughts were slightly different: Christ who keeps me and holds me even in the eye of the storm. His gift of peace in every season of life, this Christmas and always.

May you and yours enjoy the blessing of Jesus in your hearts over Christmas and throughout the New Year to come. As always, Barbara, Lydia, Samuel and David join me in wishing you all that is good in Christ this Christmas and always!
Agape!

Charles McMullen

LOVE CAME DOWN Advent and Christmas in West

3rd December First Sunday in Advent

10.00 am, 11.30 am & Cafechurch
6.30—8.30 pm

"Love anticipated"
Prayer Weekend

10th December Second Sunday in Advent

10.00 am, 11.30 am & Cafechurch
6.30pm

"Love proclaimed"
Evening Service

17th December Third Sunday in Advent

10.00 am, 11.30 am & Cafechurch
(Presents brought to Christmas Tree)

6.30 pm

"Love incarnate"
Nine Lessons and Carols

24th December Fourth Sunday in Advent

10.00 am, 11.30 am & Cafechurch

No evening service at 6.30 pm

11.15 pm Christmas Eve Communion

"Love overcomes"

25th December

10.00 am CHRISTMAS DAY CELEBRATION

31st December

10.00 am, 11.30 am & Cafechurch

No evening service at 6.30 pm

"The old and the new"

No evening service at 6.30 pm

7th January 2018

10.00 am, 11.30 am & Cafechurch
6.30 pm

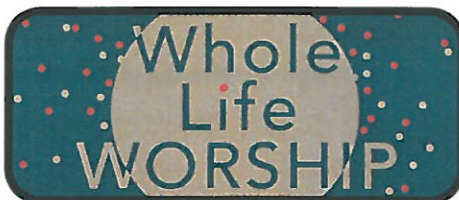
New Year Communion
Launch of 18.30 Service

KIRK SESSION ACTION TEAMS UPDATES

Worship Action Team

Charles McMullen writes:

This autumn as a Kirk Session team we have been looking at ways in which we can work more closely and effectively as we prepare for Sunday services. I presented a paper which highlighted the importance of strong leadership and greater shared responsibility. We are presently working through these details. Some reflections now follow in general and on our autumn Sunday preaching series, 'Whole life Worship'.



Coming to Terms

It is good to be reminded of the privileges and joys of worshipping God because of our total confidence in Jesus Christ. The Shorter Catechism reminds us that "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever."

Worship involves offering every part of our being to the Lord Jesus Christ in praise and adoration. For me, one of the most enduring definitions of our subject was given by a former Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple: "Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of mind with His truth; the purifying of imagination by His beauty; the opening of the heart to His love; the surrender of will to His purpose - and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin."

This is a powerful quotation, stressing surrender and submission - and thereby, in some measure assimilating the very fullness of God

which Paul prays for the Ephesians. It also highlights the importance of personal engagement with God at every level of our being, and as we sense increasingly His presence in our lives, we are inspired, challenged and strengthened by His Spirit for what lies ahead. Archbishop Temple writes on a personal, individual or private level, but worship is surely enhanced when we come together as the people of God. His definition is wordy and difficult to take on board in its entirety, and so it is good to be reminded of the amazing simplicity of Jesus, who spoke of loving the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves.

We take note as well of Paul's instructions to the Romans: "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you. Take your everyday, ordinary life - your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life - and place it before God as an offering (12:1, The Message). There is much more to worship than reading the Scriptures, preaching the Word and leading the praise on a Sunday, since it must relate to every moment of every day of our lives.



Whole Life Worship

This autumn we are following a series on "Whole Life Worship", based on a book by Sam and Sara Hargreaves written for the London Institute of Contemporary Theology. No distinction is drawn between worshipping as the gathered community of God's people on a Sunday, and in our places of work, rest and play during the week. They subscribe to the New Testament idea, as we have already seen, that worship is a comprehensive category describing the Christian's total existence.

Miroslav Volf is quoted: "There is no space in which worship should not take place, no time when it should not occur, and no activity through which it should not happen. All dimensions of human life are the 'temples' in which Christians should honour their God." (1)

The challenging comment is made that churches need to hold both gathered and scattered worship as equally vital. We meet together on a Sunday to refocus our lives on God, to remember His great story of redemption in Christ and to receive His empowerment to go back out into the world, so that we can live His life of love (Ephesians 5:1). Our Sundays should also validate our many opportunities to serve Him during the week. As The Hargreaves write: "To allow our worship in church to draw from our experiences of glorifying God on our frontlines. And for our gathered worship to inspire and equip us to be sent out far richer, more fruitful scattered lives of praise" (2)

The fundamental point is that Church on a Sunday should not pull up the drawbridge and detach itself from the everyday realities of life in its joys and sorrows, health and suffering, confident faith and searching questions. It is so easy to retreat into the victorious language of Zion in our preaching, but fail to validate people on their daily journey with God as

they relate to one another in their places of industry and commerce, discuss politics and contemporary issues. The Psalmist often hurled questions at God from the deepest places of sheer brokenness and unanswered prayer. What will our Sunday songs and message look like to the recently made redundant businessman, the wife grieving her husband's loss, the middle aged man crippled by loneliness, or the elderly lady longing for the familiarity of a traditional hymn because in a world of change those childhood memories are important? That said, in our gathered worship we want to bring people beyond their emotions and painful personal circumstances to find their hope, trust, confidence and rest in God alone.

"Whole Life Worship" provides an objective standard by which we can evaluate our own worship here in West. Different models are presented that are helpful and challenging. It looks at the Presbyterian or Reformed tradition with its emphasis on teaching and expository preaching as an illustration of worshipping with our minds. Pentecostal or charismatic worship with its singing, prayer ministry, exercise of the gifts and spontaneous response has more to do with the soul and emotions. Preaching, altar calls and word based hymns belong to the Methodist, Baptist and Evangelical tradition and are seen as heart worship. It was Wesley, after all, who spoke of his heart being warmed. Strength is associated with mainstream Orthodox, Catholics and Anglicans and their powerful liturgies based on the Eucharist. Given the rich diversity in our congregation between those who enjoy reciting the creed and those who love waving flags, we are in a unique position to facilitate all these different expressions of strength, heart, soul and mind.

Another model comes from the Vineyard tradition and its liturgy as people gather for worship. An invitation to sing brings people in from the cold to the place where they

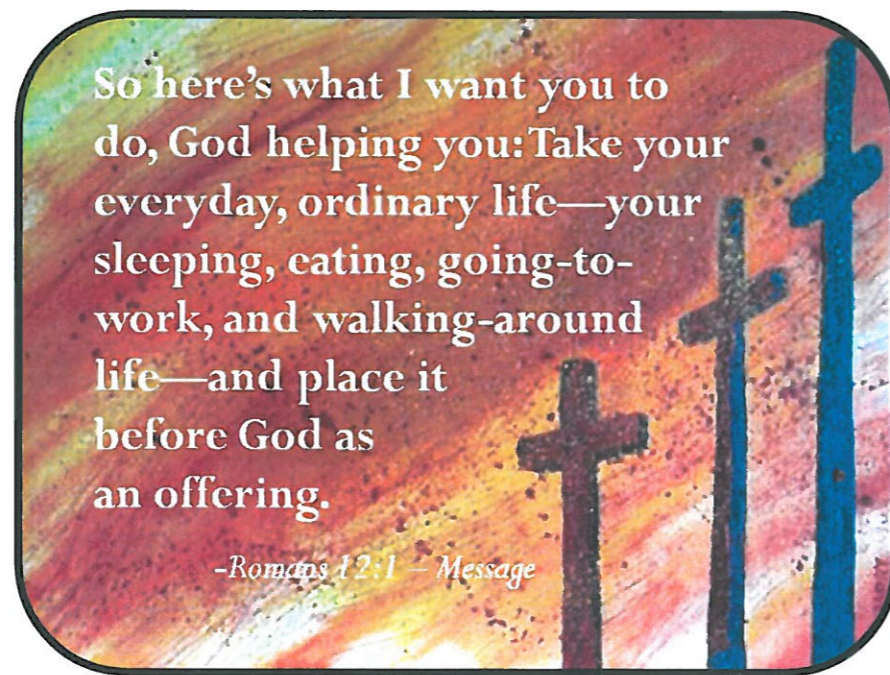
begin engaging with the great truths of God's Word. That's what lifts them to exalt and adore Him, as by his Spirit God brings His people to that place of joyful intimacy where they are now receptive to hearing the Word of God being spoken and preached. Again it is good to tease out some of the implications. The picture comes to mind of friends arriving at our home, having been invited for a meal. As the evening develops, conversation becomes more open and mellow, as we unwind and relax, listening and responding to each other. On the other hand, it would be folly and totally stifling to greet guests at the door and plunge straight in at the deep end of conversation without the necessary preliminaries. We can ask ourselves if our songs or overall order of service reflect some kind of progression.

Every model has its strengths and limitations. If the desire for intimacy in the Vineyard runs the risk of becoming a private love song between the individual and God without any interaction with those standing around, then something of the fullness of worship is undoubtedly lost. And is there more to worship than singing?

In an attempt to hold together different directions of travel, Sam and Sara Hargreaves devote a considerable section of their book to what they describe as 3-D worship - the vertical dimension which is our relationship with God, the horizontal which underlines the corporate or body aspect of being Church together and a third dimension which is about relating to the world all around.

The vertical aspect invites us to the mountaintop where we can survey the greatness and power of God all around. If our songs have a narrow focus on "I" or "me" and Jesus dying for me, then we run the risk of being drawn more and more into ourselves. We need to be lifted out of ourselves and in the process engage not only with God, but also those around us. As we share life more fully together, we become ever more fully 'present'.

cont'd



In the third dimension we engage with those spheres outside the church doors, including work, education and social issues, to name but a few.

Stuart Townend wrote these words:

**“Jesus, this is my devotion:
All my life to know You,
Every day to walk with You.
Saviour, You’re my deepest long-
ing,
You’re the One I live for,
Teach me, Lord, to walk with
You.”**

He makes this observation: “We seem to have lots of songs that focus on the experience of worshipping – ‘Here I am Lord in Your presence’ type songs. So in recent years I’ve tried to create songs that will be relevant to the other 6 days and 22 hours of our week!...It’s a reminder to be ‘God-aware’ in all the different parts of our lives –from morning to evening and night, in my thought-life, in the things I say, in the good things...and in our most desperate moments’ (3)

- (1) Miroslav Volf, ‘Worship as Adoration and Action: Reflections on a Christian Way of Being in the World, quoted in “Whole Life Worship”, p15
- (2) Sam & Sara Hargreaves, “Whole Life Worship”, p21
- (3) Stuart Townend, quoted in “Whole Life worship”, p38-39

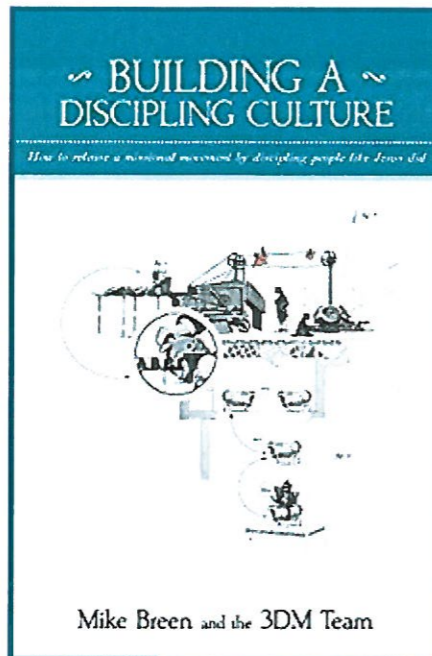
Discipleship Action Team

Here is a statement worth thinking about :

If you make disciples, you always get the church. But if you make a church you rarely make disciples.

Mike Breen in his book, “Building a Discipling Culture : how to release a mission movement for discipling people like Jesus did” goes on to say:

Most of us have become quite good at the church thing. And yet, disciples are the only thing that Jesus cares about, and it’s the only number that Jesus is counting. Not our attendance or budget or buildings. He wants to know if we are “making disciples”. Many of us serve in or lead churches where we have hundreds or even thousands of



people showing up on Sunday. But we have to honestly answer this question...**Are we just good at getting people together once a week and maybe into a small group, or are we actually good at producing the types of people we read about in the New Testament?** Have we shifted our criteria for a good disciple as someone who shows up to our stuff, gives money and occasionally feeds poor people? Effective discipleship builds the church, not the other way round.

The Discipleship team works under the leadership of Dave Gray and includes Clare Smith, Ian Gilkeson, John Hutcheson, Keith Morrison, Marc Harding, Maureen Bennett, and Richard Good. As a team we are hugely grateful for Dave’s leadership for the encouraging growth we have seen in house groups (there are now about 24) and the resources he has provided. We have also been encouraged by the model demonstrated by one home group, which integrated into a recent Alpha and subsequently provided a small group for new believers at the end of the course. Our challenge is to keep up the momentum that Dave has generated and to implement the development plan we have agreed.

Definition of Discipleship

Discipleship is about learning to live confidently as Jesus would.

It means growing deeper in faith so that our lives led by the Holy Spirit radiate the love of Jesus and reflect His values and attributes.

Main Responsibilities

- (i) to support the members of West develop through from Membership, to Maturity, Ministry and Mission and to underline the importance of doing so;
- (ii) to develop a strategy (and development plan) for Discipleship within West Church;
- (iii) to provide training and teaching with external support as required;
- (iv) to review and evaluate how Discipleship is being carried out within the church and set the priorities for the next year; and
- (v) to provide as far as possible, the resources to enable members to grow as disciples.

Home Groups

We see small or home groups as the key pillar and aim to raise profile and increase numbers by

- (i) continuing Dave Gray’s approach of starter groups
- (ii) developing pathways for graduates from Young West, for Alpha, for Caféchurch members, for Safezone for 20-30 year olds and for new members.

(iii) developing special interest groups

We plan also to

- (i) harness and develop the leadership of small groups by quarterly meetings;
- (ii) develop a strong communication network with the groups through regular prayer topics, church news and ‘situations vacant’;
- (iii) encourage up-in-out dimensions to each group, that is our relationship with God and one another but also how we reach out beyond West church in acts of mission and ministry;
- (iv) encourage members to use their gifts; and
- (v) provide resources for each group

Faith Academy

The Group has also proposed the concept of a Faith Academy to run on some Sunday evenings - possibly

for 4 consecutive Sundays at some point in the year or a number of Sundays throughout the year. Each evening would begin with corporate worship followed by a programme with around four options looking at the application of faith to hot topics of the day such as issues of sexual identity, pain and suffering, why I believe in God or mental health. We also see value in hearing the personal stories of individual disciples in West, living out Jesus as professionals in the work place, as parents, as carers or as neighbours!

Mentorship

A number of West Church members have benefited from being mentored or from mentoring others in for example, Young West or as a result of the Freedom in Christ or Alpha courses or through participation in the C.S Lewis discipleship programme. In addition ‘mentoring’ was the theme at our central Church’s special assembly and is also critical to the work of the Cairn movement which has been a helpful source of teaching for a number of elders (see references below). The group intends to explore these ideas further under the leadership of Keith Morrison.

Conferences and courses

In addition the strategy also involves the provision of conferences and courses under the direction of the staff team and a church family weekend. Rick Scott has encouraged us to put together a day conference with speakers who have provided input to the CS Lewis Discipleship programme.

ASK NOT
what your church can do for you,
ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO
FOR YOUR CHURCH

If you are interested in any of the above or would like to help to take forward some of these ideas, please do have a conversation with a member of the action team. Below are a number of references which readers might find helpful.

References

www.presbyterianireland.org

Follow the links to

‘Essentials’ and ‘Everyday Disciples’

The speakers at the special assembly - Randy Pope and Ray Ortland - each have a wealth of material posted on the internet.

www.cslewisinstitute.org

Pastoral Care Action Team

The scope of pastoral care in a church setting is vast and varied, especially in a church the size of West. We have sub-groups of people dealing with different areas of needs, including senior care, disability issues, welcoming

newcomers to the church, meeting and greeting at church services, bereavement support, divorce care, and catering. Our dedicated and committed volunteers are serving God by ministering to many people through these efforts. But there is always room for more volunteers to become involved.

As followers of Christ, we are called to care for one another, but some Christians have a particular gift from God for offering pastoral care to others. Especially if you are quite new to church, and wondering what you might do to serve God as part of our community, please consider whether God would like you to be involved in the care of others. If you believe God would have you become a caring partner in one or more of the pastoral ministries of our church, please have a chat with Andy Heron, our Pastoral Associate, about the opportunities available. Contact Andy directly on 07419 585894 or via the church office on 028 9145 9688.

In January 2018, Andy will be helping to present a pastoral care course of the Association of Christian Counsellors at Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church. This is a ten week course for those already part of or wishing to join a pastoral care team. It provides foundational training in the area of caring for others in a Christian context. Ask Andy for more information about this course if you are interested.

And let us always bear in mind this pastoral care-by-word, adapted from a quote by a famous American President:

my fellow Christians, ask not ‘what your Church can do for you; ask what you can do for your church!’

Andy Heron

mentoring
mentor creative transformative
advice support trust
invaluable expert benefits
growth

Youth & Children's Action Team

Within our Youth and Children's Ministries we use the 4 letters of WEST to remind ourselves and keep focused on our desire to see our children and young people Worship God, be Equipped to Serve and Tell others about the good news of Jesus.



Encouragements: At our last meeting we encouraged one another by sharing stories of where we had witnessed our children, young people and leaders worship God, be equipped, serve and tell others. This ranged from families stating they felt 'so welcome' in our mums and tots on a Tuesday morning to our J Club children displaying a real depth of knowledge in their recap quiz on our latest teaching series on The King, the Snake and the Promise. We also celebrated nine of our Year 14s stepping into leadership roles in WyldLife and YoungLife on a Saturday evening. We welcomed several new J Club leaders to our team and it has been a joy seeing them settle in and use their gifts in teaching and leading our children. Fifteen of our Year 13s are almost half way through completing their OCN Level 1 in Practical Youth Ministry Skills and we are keen to see many of these come through into junior leadership positions. Since September we have had the opportunity to lead school assemblies in Rathmore Primary, Grange Park, Crawfordsburn Primary, Central Primary, Clifton Special School and Killard School. We have also had the opportunity to be in with the SU group in Bangor Grammar and to lead four consecutive weeks in Glenlola Senior SU on the theme of 'Love Walked Among Us'. It is a huge privilege to be invited into schools to share God's message

As half term approached, staff, interns and leaders were very busy with preparations for our Young West weekend away. Our younger leaders took a lead role in planning and running our weekend programme and did an absolutely wonderful job. There was a real sense of community amongst the 108 teenagers and 18 leaders who were away together. There was a lot of laughter and a wonderful time of teaching and worship. On 30 October we celebrated our Bright and Light family event. Even though we had set out to cater for 180 people we almost ran out of space and food as many, many more kept arriving! It was certainly noisy, colourful and a lot of fun and a wonderful way for our children to celebrate Jesus as the light in our world. Finally, after a time of planning, recruiting and interviewing we were delighted to appoint Vic Croft as our new part-time Children's Worker. Vic started with us on 6 November and we are excited about her new role and what she will bring to ministry amongst our children in West. Please remember to pray for her and her family. Whilst we have much to celebrate and be thankful for, there are key areas which need prayer, direction and planning.

Starting Well and Ending Strong: Starting strong in crèche and ending well in Young West will be a priority for our Youth and Children's ministry team over the forthcoming months. Compared to a few years ago we have fewer babies and toddlers coming to our crèche on a Sunday morning. Part of Vic's role will be to engage with parents and encourage them to either leave their wee ones in crèche or come into crèche and get to know the leaders and other parents. In the New Year we plan to have our parent and baby room up and running to offer a quiet space for parents who need to feed their baby or put their little one to sleep. The health and growth of our children's and youth ministry is reliant upon a strong start with our parents, babies and toddlers and so we will be giving this a special focus over the next few months. We have a wonderful group of

Year 14s who are currently entering their last few terms with us in Young West. Whilst some will move on to university across the water, others will study at home, others may start employment and others will take a gap year. Whatever their next adventure, we want to ensure that as a church family we support and encourage them to continue to grow in their faith as they move out of Young West into adult ministry. One of the greatest strengths in West is that our young people can meet and worship together, invite their friends and be equipped and encouraged and grow in their faith in Young West. One of our greatest weaknesses is many of our young people who come through Young West have little to no contact with church members from the other services. This makes it especially difficult when they finish school and leave Young West. In looking at the figures from those who have finished their time in Young West over the past few years, many are still growing in their faith and are actively involved in service. However, too many sit on the periphery of West, have drifted away, are no longer attending church or have moved to attend other churches. Whatever their situation or whatever the reasons, our priority must be to focus on this time of transition and to prepare our young people better as they move into this new stage of life. Please pray that as a church we would have a passion and a clear sense of direction for embracing our young adults into the full life of our church and that we can work together to see them finishing strong in Young West and starting strong in other services and areas of ministry in our wider church family.

Sonia Mawhinney



REJOICE IN THE UNSPEAKABLE LOVE

by Rev. David Bailie, Minister Emeritus

Cheryl, in West Church office, reminds us that it is time for our annual Christmas letter, through which we touch base with folk of yesteryear! And we become aware that we now measure that time, back to yesteryear, almost in decades! And, for the folks and links with India, even longer! Still, those links with India yet retain vitality!

Just recently we met up with the Rev. John Glasgow Faris, retired minister of Cork and Aghada, now resident in Carnalea. He had recently returned from a visit to India, where he was a delegate of our Church at a meeting in Delhi, also spending a week in Gujarat. He wanted to convey greetings to us, and to deliver, a shirt! It was good to receive warm greetings and news of people in the Theological College in Ahmedbad, from retired Bishop Vinod Malavia and from others. And the shirt? The name on the shirt was, "Glasgow—Kerr, Rajkot". It had been manufactured in one of the old Mission Buildings in Rajkot, the town where the first two missionaries of the Irish Presbyterian Church settled. Shirt manufacturing is a new commercial venture, one of several inspired by the new bishop, Bishop Silvans.

The first two missionaries, sent out by our church in 1840 were the Rev. James Glasgow and the Rev. Alexander Kerr. The Rev. Kerr took ill and died within a few months, while the Rev. Glasgow had a long, groundbreaking, pioneering and illustrious missionary career.

John Faris has Glasgow in his name because he is the great, great grandson of our pioneering missionary to Gujarat. Anyone from the Irish Presbyterian Church visiting Gujarat today is greeted with much honour because they say their forbearers, who were nobodies, received life and came to be honoured as God's chosen people through Jesus Christ! But you will readily understand that there has been a very special welcome for John Faris, direct descendent of the pioneering Irish Presbyterian missionary! And maybe why I'll wear a Glasgow-Kerr shirt with some reciprocal pleasure, aware that my first years as a minister were spent in Gujarat! And our first child Elizabeth was born there.

Now earlier members of West, may recall, that after her college graduation at York, her first 'work' was to go to India and send home wonderful letters that ensured that "West Church News" was avidly read! And by some quirky coincidence, perhaps, to know that having just now retired as a teacher, her first celebration has been to go to India for a holiday and as I write this she is having a fabulous time there!

Our whole family are well, Elizabeth, Andrew and Mary and our grandchildren. We tend to stay put in Bangor, with our family very solicitous of their aging parents, visiting us assiduously. A new and recent development is that our grandchildren have taken to visiting us on their own initiative, of significance, since all our seven grandchildren live in England! For example, this past week we have had welcome visits from Elizabeth's son Patrick who teaches in London and Mary's daughter Rebecca, teaching in Birmingham - half-term flying visits!

In terms of our yesteryears, of course this largely means West Church, almost 37 years from its inception to our departure. In mind and heart that means satisfaction, joy and gratitude. Together we learned to serve and rejoice in Christ our Lord and Saviour!

We were mutually blessed in all the years we shared and since we left you, we have had the happiness of seeing the congregation grow, develop and prosper spiritually under my successor Charles McMullen.

May you have a good and glorious Christmas, rejoicing in the unspeakable love and grace of God, through the Spirit, drawing upon the inexhaustible resources of wisdom of the eternal Christ.

Rhoda fully, wholeheartedly joins me in sending our love.

Rev. David Bailie



FLOWERY SHIRTS, GENEROUS SPIRIT AND WONDERFUL HOSPITALITY

by Rev. Charles McMullen

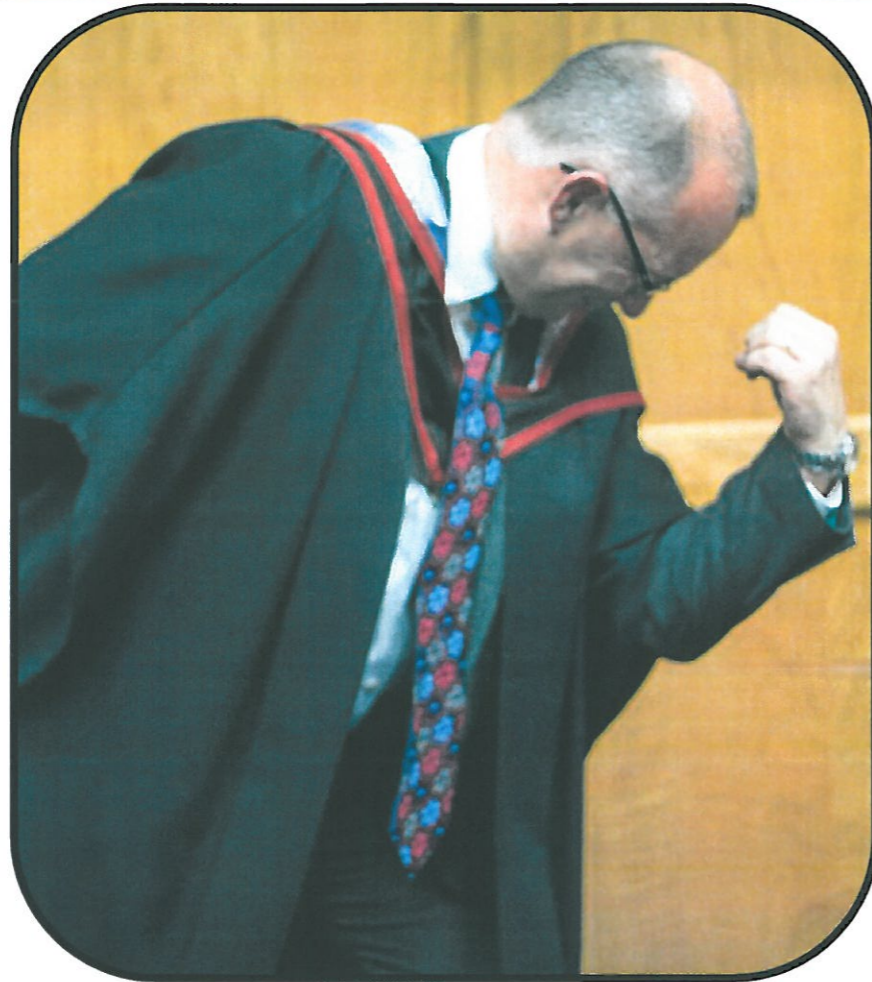
Congratulations to Dave Gray, our Assistant Minister since 2014, who has been called to become Presbyterian Chaplain at The Queen's University of Belfast. He took up his new post at the beginning of November and will be ordained and installed at a special service conducted by the Presbytery of South Belfast in Windsor Presbyterian Church on Sunday 26 November.

During his time here in West I have come to appreciate Dave very much as a good colleague and friend. At team time we have all benefited from his warmth, good humour and encouragement as well as the endless food supplies he has brought for morning coffee and lunch. Some of us almost welcome his departure, as we feel we will immediately lose several pounds in weight! Profits from a certain bakery in East Belfast will undoubtedly plummet!

It has been great to watch him grow in confidence in the pulpit and develop his own unique style. Very much at the centre of his preaching is God's grace, sufficiency and enabling power. He has the gift of making the Bible accessible and available for everyday life and living. I have come to admire the craftsmanship of his sermons and, in particular, the beating heart of his pulpit prayers. Recently I complimented him that there were shades of Eugene Peterson in his presentation — a high accolade indeed!

Dave has enjoyed being alongside people and has provided genuine pastoral care. His warmth and cheerfulness, as well as his relaxed style, have been like a breath of fresh air in many homes. He has been particularly good at staying alongside various people in need and a good friend to all.

Undoubtedly his outstanding contribution to the life of West has been



his sustained focus on home groups. He started several new ones in his time and each time maintained a high level of commitment and involvement, nurturing and encouraging as he modelled life, giving overall shape and direction, developing leadership gifts and potential until the group had completely gelled together and was firmly established. He has been alongside all our existing groups, giving them a gentle but firm steer, gradually enabling them to travel in the same direction. Given the often disparate nature of our congregation, this has not been an easy task. Dave has provided excellent resources based on our Sunday preaching programme and this has been demanding and time consuming in itself.

Dave's passion is everyday discipleship, making new followers of Christ and equipping them for the journey. This is something he has very much inherited from his membership of Kirkpatrick Presbyterian Church in East Belfast under the ministry of Rev Christoph Ebbinghaus. He has convened our Discipleship Action Team under the auspices of our Kirk Session and is flowing over with good ideas about how to take this work forward.

Many of our members will also be deeply indebted to him for organising two congregational weekends at Castlewellan Castle. This was simply invaluable for those who participated, establishing new connections and friendships. He even managed to organise the sun to split the stones earlier this year!

Apart from his flowery shirts, I will remember Dave for his generosity of spirit and wonderful hospitality. I will also dearly miss his wife Jane who is an absolute gem and such a willing accomplice. Their children Elliot and Amelie have been very much at the centre of congregational life. We rejoiced with Elliot on his trip with World Vision to Africa and Amelie as one of her designs for a competition was selected for the front cover of the Presbyterian Herald!

We are grateful to God for Dave and Jane, Elliot and Amelie. They go with our love and blessing, but will be sadly missed here in West!

Charles McMullen

THE CHALLENGE OF BEING SALT & LIGHT AT QUB by Dave Gray

Our nation's capital is changing. Belfast is currently home to over 60000 students, but this is increasing. As you cross the M3 Lagan bridge you can view the gleaming new University of Ulster buildings and the vibrant Titanic Campus for the Met. Some 7500 student beds are currently at various stages of development across Belfast. There is life returning to the city streets. The questions and challenges that this poses for people who love Jesus and believe He is the light of the whole world are massive.

How do we as a church engage with these young people, many of who have an ambivalent and increasingly antagonistic perception of orthodox Christianity?

How do we support, equip and envision those students who are seeking to be disciples?

The Presbyterian Church and many other Christian denominations and organisations have invested in the spiritual life of these young people over many years- recognising that there are distinctive hopes and dreams, struggles and challenges, talents and diversity, faith discovery and questioning for students.

Part of our church's strategy is to invest in Chaplaincy and in the provision of a residence for Presbyterian young people, with 88 places in Derryvolgie Halls.

After three wonderful years at West Church as student assistant and then assistant Minister I have been given the role of acting as Chaplain for Queen's University, Union and Stranmillis Colleges. I began my new job on 1st November and family Gray will move to live in the Chaplaincy house at Derryvolgie in December.

My job will be diverse and intensely relational, but key areas include;

- Working to promote discipleship among the students who live in Derryvolgie and helping them to engage in Christian worship, and service, with the aim of loving God with their hearts, strength, soul, and mind, and their neighbours as themselves.
- Seeking to build bridges for students into the wider church and help to empower them for a lifetime of participation in the Church, including their call to corporate ministry and reconciliation.
- Serving as a witness to the transforming and reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to the wider community of staff and students and encouraging them in their missions.
- Participating in the life of the university and encouraging a holistic Christian faith worldview to be brought into

conversations at all levels.

If that all seems a bit of waffle, my job is basically to drink a lot of coffee

and chat to young people and those involved in teaching them about Jesus. And that's a pretty cool job!

We will miss the Christian family at West, and as a family want to say thank you to so many of you who have befriended and encouraged Elliot and Amelie and made church exciting, also to so many of you who have prayed for us and been interested and encouraging as well as gracious and patient. The Lord bless you and keep you following Him boldly and courageously.

Dave Gray



THE BISHOP'S WIFE

by Charles McMullen

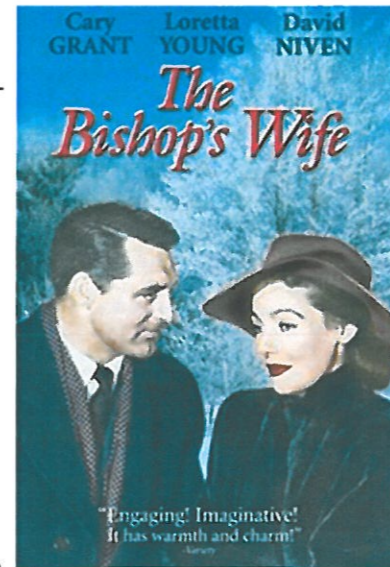
Each Christmas Barbara makes me watch *The Bishop's Wife*, the tale of a beautiful, vivacious lady and her surly, grumpy, overworked husband, the Bishop. Is there more than a passing resemblance to the present manse couple? The film is the story of a guardian angel (Cary Grant) who is sent to help the stressed out bishop (David Niven) finance development plans for a new church. By the end of the film Grant has helped Niven secure the necessary finance and patched up the shaky marriage (!) between the bishop and his wife (Loretta Young).

It's a beautiful parable of what happens when the Holy Spirit turns up in Church, repairing broken relationships and bringing a new joy and zeal for life.

I mentioned this in a sermon illustration last Christmas. Barbara and I have decided to book the Comber Tudor Cinema for our own showing of the film on **Wednesday 6 December at 7.30pm**. Ice cream and Quality Street will be on offer.....as long as others eat the toffees!

The first seventy to sign up at the office and all donations will go towards the United Appeal!

A wonderful way to start Christmas!



Charles McMullen

Coming in 2018 DV an online magazine especially for Christian women in Northern Ireland

NI Christian Woman Today.

Equipping Christian women to renew their minds, serve the church, and create culture to the glory of God.

Being a Christian in today's is challenging. Issues that didn't affect us just a few short years ago, are now part and parcel of everyday living.

We are currently looking for women who feel they can contribute to society, with maybe sharing an experience, book review, or maybe write devotionals. (Everyday a Journey)

We believe that God has a purpose for everyone, and the experiences should not be lost but shared. If you feel you would like to be part of this new venture, contact me, Ann King, on Ann@familiesfirstni.com. I would love to hear from you.

As women, we are the mainstay of the family. We need Christ's help every day.

Families and society are today in desperate need of truth, goodness and beauty. NI Christian Woman aims to strengthen the church by richly communicating the breadth of the true, good and beautiful Gospel.

Learn more at BeautifulOrthodoxy.com

PRAYER WEEKEND

by Rev. Charles McMullen

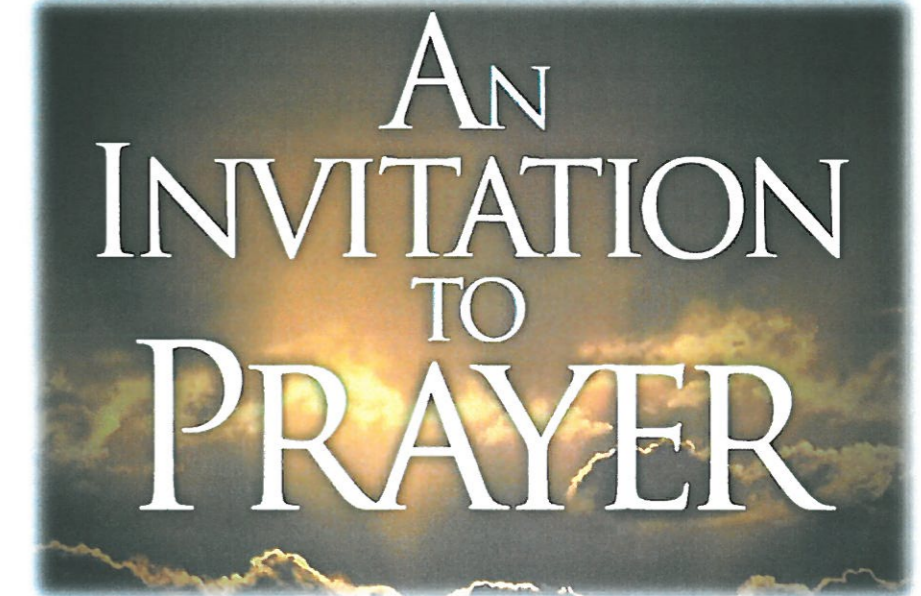
In West we have received many blessings throughout the years and have experienced ongoing seasons of spiritual growth and development. The elders have been praying about overall direction for the Church and what the next stages should be. During the first weekend of December, we are calling everyone to pray and seek God's face for the way ahead.

Friday 1 December, 7.00 - 9.00pm (Conference Room)

Worship, Teaching on Prayer and Praying Together

Saturday 2 December, 10.00am - 4.00pm (Conference Room)

Half hourly slots which will be led by team members and visiting ministers, focusing on worship, discipleship, pastoral care, the wider community, outreach and evangelism. There will be input from the front and times of silence with occasional praise. You are warmly welcome to come and go at any time.



7.00-9.00pm (Prayer Room)

Time of listening and sharing. Again everyone is warmly welcome to come and spend some time or be with us the entire time.

Sunday 3 December, Evening Service - 6.30pm

Praise and Prayer Celebration.

The weekend coincides with the beginning of Advent and in a busy season it is good for us to find the priority of stillness and waiting on the Lord. So why not make some time and come and join us?

*Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas –
Star and angels gave the sign.*

GRIEF SHARE®

SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

GriefShare : Surviving the Holidays is a helpful, encouraging seminar for people facing Christmas after a loved one's death.

At this two hour event a 40 minute video is shown featuring helpful advice and reassurance from people who have experienced bereavement themselves.

You will hear insights from respected Christian counsellors, pastors and psychologists and also receive a Holiday Survival Guide with practical strategies, encouraging words and simple exercises to help you get through this difficult time of the year.

The seminar may also be of interest to those who are supporting a family member or friend who has been bereaved.

If you are interested in attending or want more information, please contact Lorna Milway or Anne Burrows through the Church office.

Friday, 8th December at 7.30 pm in West Church (Meeting Room) - refreshments provided

REFORMATION ANNIVERSARY

We have recently celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Rev Norman McAuley wrote the following piece for the Evangelical Alliance, which he has kindly given us permission to use. Norman is minister of Greenwell Presbyterian church, Newtownards.



Martin Luther

Martin Luther had entered the monastic life out of fear for his life. On July 2, 1505 on the way home from law school, he was caught in a thunderstorm and hurled to the ground by lightning. "Help me, St. Anne; I will become a monk!" He feared for his soul and did not know how to find safety in the gospel. So he took the next best thing, the monastery. He spent many years struggling with his guilt and how it might be cleared. But for him, the righteousness that scripture spoke of only served to condemn him further until that is,

"At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "In it righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." There I began to understand [that] the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which [the] merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. Here a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me."

On 31 October 1517 he nailed his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg wanting to challenge the abuses of the Roman Catholic church and call it back to the scriptures. However, the church was not for changing. In 1521 Luther was

[convinced] by the Scriptures to which I have appealed, and my conscience is taken captive by God's word, I cannot and will not recant anything, for to act against our conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us. On this I take my stand. I can do no other. God help me

It was his emphasis on scripture alone that brought about the other emphases concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ.

summoned before the Diet of Worms where he thought he would be discussing his writings. Instead it was a heresy trial and he was called upon to renounce what he had written on penalty of excommunication. His words have been well inscribed in the minds of many a Christian believer since,

Unless I am convicted [convinced] of error by the testimony of Scripture or (since I put no trust in the unsupported authority of Pope or councils, since it is plain that they have often erred and often contradicted themselves) by manifest reasoning, I stand convicted

The Five Solas

The five *solas* are five Latin phrases that were popularised during the Protestant Reformation emphasising the distinctions between what the early Reformers believed the scripture to teach and what the Roman Catholic Church was declaring. The word *sola* is the Latin word for "only" and was used in relation to five key teachings that defined the biblical emphasis of Protestants. Each of these *solas* arose as a corrective to the errors of the Roman Catholic Church but, at the same time, were to be positive biblical declarations that marked the essence of the Reformation.



baptism, were seen as required for salvation. *Sola fide* stated that salvation is a free gift to all who accept it by faith. Salvation is not based on human effort or good deeds.

3. *Sola gratia* emphasizes grace as the cause of our salvation. In other words, salvation comes from what God has done rather than what we do. "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

4. *Solus Christus*, "through Christ alone," emphasizes the role of Jesus in salvation. The Roman Catholic tradition had placed church leaders such as priests in the role of intercessor between the laity and God. Reformers emphasized Jesus' role as our "high priest" who intercedes on our behalf before the Father. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize in every respect has been tempted

with our weaknesses, but one who as we are, yet without sin." Jesus is the One who offers access to God, not a human spiritual leader.

5. *Soli Deo gloria* emphasizes the glory of God as the goal of life. Rather than striving to please church leaders, keep a list of rules, or guard our own interests, our goal is to glorify the Lord. The principle of *soli Deo gloria* is found in "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Here is the very purpose in our living.

The five *solas* of the Protestant Reformation offered a strong corrective to the faulty practices and beliefs of the time, but, more importantly, they remain relevant today. Here is the gospel of Jesus Christ by which we must be saved. Here is the only way whereby we can know peace with God and the hope of life, blessed and everlasting, hereafter.

Where do you stand?



The Crowne Plaza, Belfast
24 March & 2 June 2018

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GRANDPARENT OF THE YEAR. CHILD MINDER OF THE YEAR**

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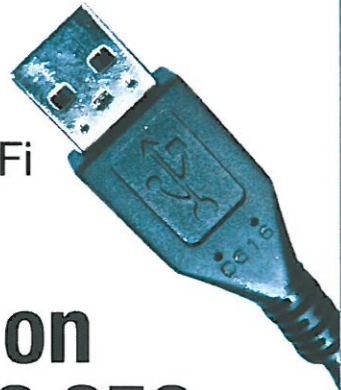
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“GOOD MORNING, WEST CHURCH”

Rev. Charles McMullen

“**G**ood morning, West Church, Bangor.” For twenty years Elaine Ward has been the voice and the heart of the congregation, the person who answers the phone or comes to the counter whenever we contact the office.

Elaine was one of the first people I met when I was called to become the new minister in 1999 and has been simply invaluable to me during my time here. Personally I have appreciated her hard work and her efficient manner. Nothing has ever been too much, or too little, particularly on those many occasions when I am sure I have been too demanding or pushed the boundaries! I have appreciated her good wisdom and practical advice, her constant loyalty, willing support and wonderful encouragement, the sense of her being a steady and calming presence at the wheel as well as a consistent team player. There is no doubt that Elaine has always gone the extra mile and made herself available outside normal office hours. She has a wonderful sense of humour and there has been much fun and banter along the way. I have come to love and respect Elaine and her husband Albert as good friends. Above all, I thank God for her obvious and very deep Christian faith. Elaine is the first person to shy away from compliments and the last to seek the limelight, but it goes without saying that she has such a modest, gentle, beautiful and generous spirit.

Back in 1999, Elaine was ensconced in 91 Crawfordsburn Road, the bungalow which was subsequently replaced by the present Welcome-Reception area and adjoining rooms. Before arriving in her present office, Elaine has been located in other parts of the building, not always in the most satisfactory of

working conditions, but under every circumstance she has always been so willing and helpful.

Over the years she has accumulated an encyclopaedic knowledge of the congregation, its districts and families, and all of this has again proved invaluable. I would not have a clue when it comes to describing everything in which she has been involved over the years. Some aspects of the job spec are visible and apparent, always carried out cheerfully and diligently. So much more is done quietly behind the scenes which I shall never know, and all of that in an office which has become increasingly busy over the years. The term multitasking comes readily to mind and Elaine has been instrumental in turning our office into a warm and welcoming hub. Whether answering enquiries or being available to someone who has popped over the threshold for a conversation or even prayer, while at the same time preparing for Sunday services, updating the church directory or sorting out the Sunday flower rota, Elaine never seems to be fazed and maintains such a reassuring



presence and always has a word in season.

As a congregation we are so indebted to her. I am really sad that she is stepping down as one of “Charlie’s Angels” and since she has been there from my beginning, it will be very difficult to imagine the office without her! Alongside Elaine has always been Albert, who has been such a tower of strength and a willing helper not only in the office but also in the audio visual room. Albert is one of our elders and leads the Thursday morning Bible Study group.

I know my sentiments will be shared by Stephen Cully and Cheryl Miller in the office, as well as many others who have worked alongside Elaine over these past few years.

I know that Albert and Elaine want to enjoy more free time together, either in the caravan or being with family, but they will never be too far away from West and always willing to serve. We want to wish them both every Blessing and we give God thanks for everything that Elaine has meant to so many people over the years, including me!



VISION STATEMENT

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”
Colossians 3:15-16

How to love our lives in society in 2018 and beyond.

The 2016 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland welcomed and adopted the Vision for Society Statement, which seeks to continue to place peacebuilding firmly at the heart of Christian discipleship and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. At the time, the convener of the Council for Church in Society, Very Rev. Dr. Norman Hamilton said, “This is a symbol of our desire that this statement will both be a stimulus for our engagement with wider society, as well as a powerful symbol that this is a calling of the whole Church to a highly important aspect of Christian and biblical witness.”

The text of the Statement adopted by the General Assembly is as follows:

In PCI's 500-plus congregations across Ireland, peacebuilding will look different. Different in Belfast, Dublin and again in Galway, or Cork; but its centrality to Christian discipleship remains the same wherever God has placed us.



WE, MEMBERS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND, saved by grace and called by God to grace-filled relationships, in the power of the Holy Spirit as ambassadors of Christ's Kingdom in a broken and divided world; **BELIEVE** that the Good News of Jesus Christ challenges and equips us to develop radically new attitudes and relationships with our neighbours throughout the whole of Ireland. **WE CONFESS** our failure to live as Biblically faithful Christian peacebuilders and to promote the counter culture of Jesus in a society where cultures clash. **ACCORDINGLY, WE AFFIRM** Christian peacebuilding to be part of Christian discipleship and reassert the Church's calling to pursue a peaceful and just society in our day. **WE SEEK** a more reconciled community at peace with each other, where friend and foe, working together for the common good, can experience healing and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.



BBC RADIO



Thought for the Day Wednesday 1st November

On a week in which Lonely Planets designated Belfast and The Giant's Causeway as top tourist designations for 2018, let me take you to another absolute gem we discovered at the end of September. On arrival, as happens increasingly these days, we were politely reminded of concession rates for seniors, but insisted on paying the full price in proud defence of our actual age over looks. The staff were brilliant, so helpful and accommodating, while the café was a wonderful place to relax afterwards. I'm referring to HomePlace in Bellaghy, the exhibition dedicated to the memory of Seamus Heaney.

It's a journey through the Nobel poet's life and as you pause to study photographs and accompanying explanations, there is the opportunity to listen on a handset to the great man himself reading relevant verse. I was deeply moved by the poet's constant references to family and farming, his native soil and rural surroundings. There is the sheer brilliance of often simple, local language and his penetrating powers of observation and honest reflection. He captures the raw intensity of life without darkness or brooding. His

inspiration transported me to deep places far beyond my wildest imaginings.

In these days of political impasse and deep mistrust we all need to be lifted beyond ourselves and brought to a new place of understanding. President Clinton famously quoted Heaney in this way: “When History says, don't hope, On this side of the grave. But then, once a lifetime the longed-for tidal wave Of justice can rise up, And hope and history rhyme”.

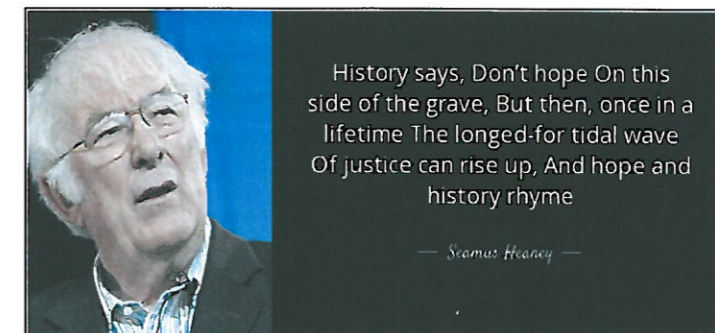
That day in Bellaghy I came on a Heaney quote that, quite simply, captivated me. He writes, “What I had taken as a matter of fact in childhood became a matter of wonder in memory.” Here's his tribute as an older man to those who had worked so hard to provide for him in

his formative years.

Today is All Saints' Day when many in the Christian tradition pause to remember the unconditional love and sacrificial care of those who in Christ have entered their eternal rest. In the remembering there is wonder, but let there also be Christian hope. The Methodist hymn writer Charles Wesley expresses triumphant hope in this way: “**changed from glory into glory till in heaven we take our place, till we lay our crowns before (Christ), lost in wonder, love and praise.**” Note again the wonder!

Whether we are paying full price or have concessionary rates today, let's not forget the wonder and the hope as we travel!

Rev. Charles McMullen



Recently a small group from West, involved in catering, attended a Level 2 Food Hygiene course in SERC, Newtownards Campus and successfully achieved this qualification.

As a result, we would like to make some general guidelines known to all groups and organisations as well as volunteers within the congregation who are involved with food preparation and

servicing tea & coffee on a Sunday morning.

There is nothing different to how you would prepare food in your home but it is important that we, as a church are seen to working to guidelines and procedures as noted below.

- 1) Hands must be washed every time you enter the kitchen or Coffee Bar.
- 2) No-one under the age of 16 should be behind the Coffee Bar or in the kitchen without adult supervision.
- 3) West is a nut-free zone and as such nuts should not be brought onto the premises. This is also important for coffee mornings when people may be baking for these events.

4) All cups, plates & cutlery should be placed in the dishwasher for washing and it would be appreciated if these are not left in the sinks for others to wash up.

- 5) We have an allergen policy—please make the office or catering team aware if necessary
- 6) We are trying to recycle as much as possible—please use the blue recycling bin in the Coffee Bar as well as the green food caddies for teabags and coffee filters etc.
- 7) Please ensure that all bin bags are emptied before you leave the premises
- 8) If you are last to leave in the evening, please ensure that the dishwasher is drained and coffee machines turned off.

Thank you for your co-operation

UCB
UNITED
CHRISTIAN
BROADCASTERS

Coffee Morning

Saturday 27th January 2018

10.00 am—12.30 pm

Everyone welcome to raise funds for the work of United Christian Broadcasters
Craft items and homemade cakes/jams will also be available along with a great range of good quality (second hand) Christian books, CDs & DVDs.

UCS are funded solely by listeners and viewers of their radio and television stations, and readers of their daily devotional 'The Word for Today/Word 4u 2day'.



A LIFETIME OF LOVE

by Rev. Charles McMullen

Lyla was ordained to the eldership of our Church in March 1972 and after forty-five years of outstanding service decided to step down from the active role earlier this year. Brought up in North Belfast, Lyla attended Woodvale Presbyterian Church. She trained as a shorthand typist and bookkeeper at Miss Elliott's before taking up employment as a secretary in the firm of James Mackie and Sons. Having met the love of her life, at the age of 21 Lyla married Harry Graham and the two of them set up home on the Crawfordsburn Road. The couple were blessed with two sons, Stephen and Peter.

Lyla was invited along to the first service in West in 1961 and said that "everyone was introduced to everyone else....I had never felt such warmth and love." She continues: "Some time afterwards, we had a visit from Rev. Tom Smail – never to be forgotten. Soon afterwards about a dozen of us attended a meeting in the Manse. After a time of being taught about the love of Jesus, we were encouraged to confess our sins to God and to accept from Him the forgiveness He so freely bestows on ALL who repent. I knew that something was happening to me, but could it be emotion? Later, however, I knew that something special was happening in my life. After being prayed with, I was healed of migraine attacks from which I had suffered periodically for 21 years. In 1972 the Lord called me to be an elder in West. This entails home visits and more recently residential homes for the elderly. The love, warmth and welcoming smiles one receives are a joy to behold." There is scarcely an aspect of congregational life in which the redoubtable Lyla has not been involved. From the front row of the Choir to popular Cabin Boy Leader and a founder member of the

Wednesday Night Fellowship, to present membership of our catering team, Lyla has been literally everywhere. Whether to our eldership or prayer ministry team, Lyla has brought the warmth of her personality, faithful commitment, transparent graciousness, gentle charm, wonderful humility and a delightful sense of fun and good humour.

The present Manse family has particularly fond memories of her coming to baby sit on a summer evening and being taken outside to play football. Lyla was the goalkeeper!

Here's how Rev. David Bailie described her in West Church Journey: "Lyla has been a wonderful elder with a tender heart for all her people, and the love she receives is on account of the very great love and care she gives....She exudes the love and grace of God wherever she goes."

In fact, one cannot but be impressed by her endless energy, freshness of outlook and youthful zeal. At an age when many of her contemporaries are critical of change, Lyla continues to rejoice in the ongoing growth and development of the congregation.

There were times when her sons joked about their vain efforts to contact her at home when they knew she would have been on the church premises at yet another prayer meeting, special event or helping out in an organisation. It is difficult to know how she found time to be elsewhere, but Lyla is, of course, a good golfer and after sixty-six years has been made an honorary member of Carnalea Golf Club.

I can remember her proudly showing me a photo of her late husband, which adorns the upstairs restaurant wall of the golf club. Days before he died in 1989, Harry sent my predecessor a letter about his own spiritual pilgrimage. As I read his words, I can sense that Harry and Lyla were a very close couple and kindred spirits: "I can



see God in the people around me. He appears with every single thought and kindness expressed to me; with the genuine smile from a friend, each and every offer of help, every thought and consideration, every embrace or clasp of hands."

Paul wrote these words to the Ephesians: "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." It is easy to associate Lyla with these words and it is indeed noticeable how many times she refers to love in her conversation, constantly counting her blessings and giving God thanks for a wonderful life. There is her evident love for her two sons, their wives and her five grandchildren. Her love of friends and her love of Church shine through her conversation. And her faith is like lovely sunshine, radiating the warmth and goodness of her Lord.

Lyla said to me in conversation

that she didn't know what her life would have been like, had West Church never existed. We can't imagine what this congregation would have been like without her, as she has enriched the lives of countless others by her loving-kindness. Our English word "enthusiasm" comes from the Greek idea of being "in God" and Lyla personifies the joy of being totally at home in her Saviour and Lord. We want to thank her for her time as a member of Kirk Session and pray God's health and strength for years still to come.



Thought for the Day Wednesday 18th October

One of my favourite church groups in Bangor West where I minister is The Sycamore Club, which is for adults who have special or additional needs. It's named after the tree which the diminutive Zacchaeus climbed in order to catch a better view of Jesus as He passed through Jericho.

Every other Tuesday, about sixty people gather from all over Bangor to sing praise as they bang their tambourines, share practical, everyday prayers and, after a short talk, they enjoy doing some craft together. To all intents and purposes, it's a bit like a normal Sunday morning service, but with a bit more life thrown in and you always need to be prepared for the unexpected!

One Easter, I spent considerable time preparing a talk which involved a makeshift cross and two heavy suitcases. I made a dramatic entrance, carried the cases across the room and set them down at the foot of the cross. Then I threw my arms in the air as if to say Christ had taken away all that was sad and bad from my life and given me a new beginning. I felt a slight swelling of satisfaction that all had gone well, but the message obviously hadn't been totally clear to everyone. On seeing the suitcases, one of the members asked me: "Charles, where are you going on your holidays?"

But that's exactly what I like about our Sycamore Club. It is disarmingly honest and totally unpretentious, simple and uncomplicated. There are no hidden agendas and no pious facades. It cuts through the nonsense and red tape of so much of our lives. The unconditional love of the leaders is in itself touching, moving and inspiring. I look at the flip-chart at the front of the room and I see that the list of thank you prayers is invariably longer than the please requests. And one of my favourite Sunday evenings is when The Sycamore Club conducts the service, because there is sheer, uninhibited joy – something I would do well to emulate in my own worship.

And, of course, they love the story of Zacchaeus, noticed by Jesus through the crowd and for the first time in his life finding meaning and purpose, significance and security. "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today....For (I have come) to seek and to save what was lost."

That day Zacchaeus left behind his personal suitcases and, full of uninhibited joy, went on the journey of a lifetime!

Charles McMullen



HOSPITAL & PASTORAL VISITATION

If you have a family member unwell or in hospital, please do not hesitate to contact Rev Charles McMullen (028 9145 4338) or the Church Office (028 9145 9688). Although there is a good chaplaincy service in all the major hospitals in Belfast, there are many gaps in the system. Nowadays there is such a quick turnover of beds, it very easy to miss somebody. The same applies to general visitation. Members of the pastoral team are more than happy to call. If they can be of any help, please do not hesitate to be in touch with them.

The Pastoral Team

MEDIC ASSIST INTERNATIONAL



By Eileen Kelly & Gill Fleming

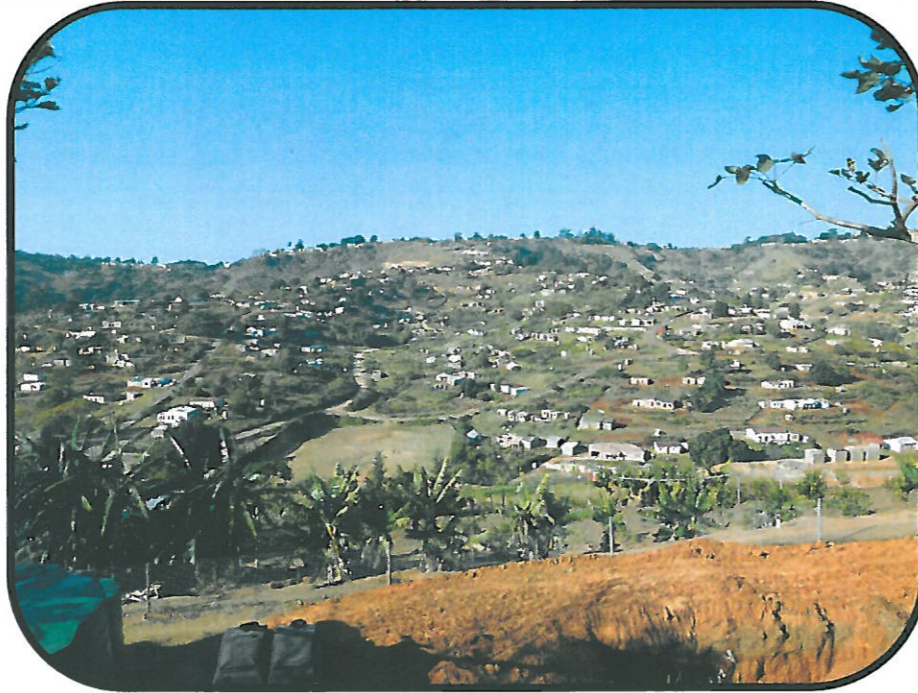
July 2017 saw Gill Fleming and Eileen Kelly flying to Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa to join a Medic Assist International (MAI) team to work alongside Pastor Leonard Gcabashe in Embo Community Church.

Pastor Leonard had spoken at West Church three years ago and both Gill and Eileen were very challenged to go to Embo one day. This trip came about very quickly. Gill had been asked to go so she contacted Eileen and everything fell into place smoothly. Clearly God was calling both of them to go.

The lesson: when God calls, be obedient and He will take care of the details.

Pastor Leonard and his wife Gladys both come from Embo. After school, Leonard went to Johannesburg and worked as a chemical blender and then a warehouse manager—he is also a good ballroom dancer! He joined Maranatha Church “and then had a desire to return to Embo to serve in his community” so the church trained him for the ministry. He started with a house church of six people and now there is a church with a congregation of 800 people. Embo Community Church serves the community through a community caregivers’ team, a health clinic, a crèche of 150 children and a children’s home.

When Leonard first started the church in Embo, people began



Embo, a sprawling rural black community of an estimated 37,000 people in the Valley of a Thousand Hills and has the highest incident of HIV in South African alongside problems of TB, alcoholism, drugs and unemployment.

bringing orphans to him, so he took them into his own house and cared for them. Then the Maranatha church in Johannesburg said they would build a children’s home for them. They purchased more land for the chief of Embo and Philakahle Children’s Home was built (see photo right). There is room for 24 children up to the age of 17 years. Many of the children are HIV+ as a result of being raped by family members. The witch doctors still tell men with HIV that the way to cure it is to rape a virgin as young as possible.

At present they have 16 children from 4-17 years old. One of the boys at the age of three was tied to the railway line as his mother could no longer look after him. Thankfully somebody from the community saw him and rescued him before the train came along and he was brought to the children’s



home.

We spent most afternoons with the children playing football, skipping or doing other activities. Eileen became particularly close to eleven year old Joshua. (Pictured top right) He had watched both his parents die of AIDS and was left alone in a mud hut to fend for himself. Just one of many stories that broke your heart. On our last day it was so hard to say goodbye and we both cried outside as we left. They so need our love and support.

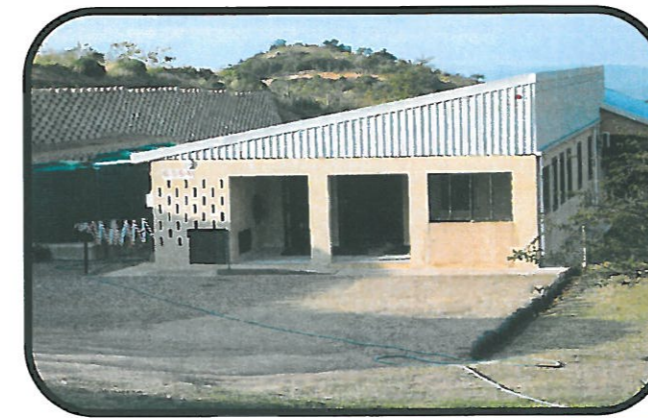
In 2008 Pastor Leonard started the Community Caregivers’ Team



Eileen, pictured with Joshua

trained and overseen by Sister Joyce. A team of ten caregivers provide Palliative Care to HIV/AIDS patients by going into people’s houses and giving basic nursing care, advice, encouragement and prayer. They visit 112 patients during the month with each patient receiving twelve visits. MAI supports this work every month at a cost of £2000 and word has just come through that funding will cease at the end of this year.

In 2014 Embo Clinic was built with funds raised by MAI (see photo below). It costs nothing to run as the local health authority agreed to pay for the staff and medicines. Before the clinic was built the nearest one was two bus journeys away. To get onto the HIV programme you have to attend three consecutive appointments but often people were either too poor to pay for the transport or too ill to go so they were put off the



programme. Since starting the clinic, the mortality rate in Embo has dropped as the HIV patients are now able to get their anti-retroviral drugs locally and comply with the medication programme. The clinic sees about 3,200 patients each month including 270 childhood immunisations which would not have been done in the past. At present, due to government requirements, a separate entrance and treatment area is being built for TB patients.

On our first day in Embo we were both out with Sister Joyce in the community and visited seven patients. The first patient we visited was Thabisle, a terminally ill young woman aged 21 with HIV and abdominal TB (pictured right). She had a five year old daughter and all were looked after by the granny as both her parents died of AIDS. Her mouth was in a terrible state, dry with mouth ulcers and very painful. We were able to show the granny how to look after it and then prayed with her. The next time Eileen saw her, the mouth ulcers had gone and she was much brighter. We saw her another few times and then unfortunately she deteriorated, was admitted to hospital and has since died. We will never forget her and what a privilege to be able to meet and care for her in a small way, pray with her and to show her the love of Jesus. All this is due to Pastor Leonard’s love and compassion for his community.

Another morning Gill spent two hours emptying her suitcase and restocking the shelves in the clinic dispensary with paracetamol, ibuprofen, wound dressings etc. and then sat in with the nurse as she diagnosed and treated patients.



Meanwhile Eileen was in the crèche with sixty very loud and boisterous African children from babies up to eight years of age.

On the Thursday we had a very busy day with the Grannies’ lunch for 180 people. Half the team got the tables and room ready while the other half prepared the vegetables for the church members to do the cooking. Africans can really dance so before and after the meal, we joined them and enjoyed grooving to the beat! We walked miles backwards and forwards to the kitchen serving a three course meal to each person. Many of them had brought bags with them to take some food home to their families or for their next day’s meal. During the meal they had a talk on how to deal with some health emergencies and the team shared a testimony and some singing. It was a brilliant day!

Cont’d on page 26

On Saturday we took the children out from the home to a nature trail park and had a wonderful day. We organised a treasure hunt and made card boomerangs for them to play with and take home. Eileen did a great 'Geordy' Best impression which Gill got on camera! Lunch was a Brai (South African BBQ) or boerwurst (spicy beef sausage) in a roll, pork chops, steaks, salad, baked beans, boiled potatoes and coke. We both had one sausage and some salad in a roll as whatever was left over went back with the kids for their tea. They had a great time and it was so good to get them out of their compound.

On the Sunday, the team took Sunday School for about 100 kids. Eileen and I leading the songs was a comedy act in itself!



Church was four hours long and very loud. Members of the team took part in the service by sharing a testimony, singing and preaching the sermon. We especially loved the African harmonies and joining in with the dancing and felt very at home.

On our last day what a day we had. We went out on prayer ministry and visited three homes with Pastor

Leonard. The first one was a hike down a snake infested hillside into a hut in the valley below to a very poor family with no food. We had our arms full with spinach, cabbages, onions, a chicken, bones with meat and potatoes (see photo below left). Often they go to bed hungry and last Christmas had no food. Tembi (57, pictured right), the mother, looks after three children and five grandchildren. Her daughter was in her thirties and mentally disabled. She couldn't believe that we had walked all that way down the hill without falling and were the first white people to ever be in her house. We shared scripture with her and prayed for her and her family. She then asked Pastor Leonard how she could become a Christian so Eileen led her in a prayer which Leonard translated and she repeated. What a joy. Her son Bheki had been working in a supermarket in Hillcrest (white area) but was moved to another branch and the buses to get there cost too much so he had to give up the job. He attends the clinic for his HIV treatments. Pastor Leonard had invited him to come to church the Sunday we were there so he came, enjoyed it and said he will go again. We prayed with him to find work.

Next we visited a church member who had recently lost her mother, shared scripture, sang and prayed with the extended family. The last home we visited was Pastor Leonard's mother-in-law Beslina. She looks after four adults and four grandchildren on 100SAR (£7) pension per week. She asked for prayer



for a stomach problem. Eileen put her hand on her abdomen and we prayed for healing of abdominal pain. As we prayed Beslina started to laugh and told us she had seen a vision of a man in a white robe and long white hair walking past and that she was healed.

Throughout the trip there was a lot of sickness in the team (chest infections, colds, coughs) and by the end of the trip we were the only two who were still healthy. That in itself was another miracle so thank you for your prayers for us.

In summary, it was a privilege to go to Embo and we both had an amazing time meeting such beautiful people.

If you would like to hear more, Eileen and Gill would love to come and share at your Home Group or any other meetings. Also if you have been moved by what we have written and would like to support the work in Embo, please speak to either of us or the church office as every contribution, no matter how small would be such a help and blessing.

Gill Fleming & Eileen Kelly



A SILENT MINISTRY

by Glynis Rickard

If you have never paused to look at the banners in our church and its environs, then may I invite you to do so. Take a closer look at the colours and textures and how the illustration reflects the meaning of the text. You can also encourage children to use their observation skills to find a little creature in each of the eight "I am" banners on the sanctuary walls.



Some members of West's Banner Group—pictured (L-R) Beth, Ingeborg, Olive, Margaret, Glynis, Valerie, Roberta & Margaret

I have been a member of West for thirty years and having an interest in sewing, always wanted to be a part of this beautiful ministry. I received a warm welcome when I joined eight years ago and was interested to learn that the Banner Group began in 1976 with a few ladies meeting together in a kitchen!

Since then, the group has produced a variety of banners not only for our own church, but for charities and other churches both near and far. We have just delivered our 100th banner (which took a year to complete) to Orangefield Presbyterian Church where we hope it will serve as a focal point for their prayer ministry.



Pictured above is Barbara & right, Margaret beginning work on the next project

Although the group members have changed over the years, our objectives remain the same: to have fun, fellowship and use our creative talents to serve God and enrich the lives of others.

We are always happy to receive new members who feel they can contribute with ideas, sewing or designing skills. A special mention must be made here and thanks given, to Roberta Hagan, our team leader and to our design team Barbara and Alan Stewart, who are currently working on our new projects.

We meet on Wednesday mornings between 10.30 am to 12.30 pm in the Committee Room. Feel free to call in and pay us a visit or get more information from the office staff.

Glynis Rickard



Use your GOD-GIVEN GIFTS to serve others.

1 PETER 4:10



LET US DO THIS IN JESUS NAME

by Margaret Bailie

At this time of year it seems that we have been thinking and talking about Christmas for months, with decorations in the shops way before Hallowe'en.

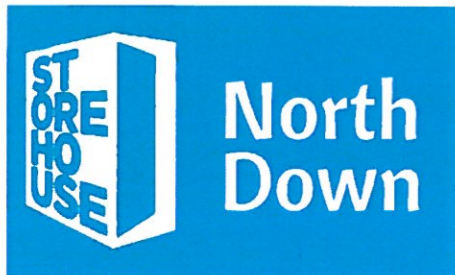
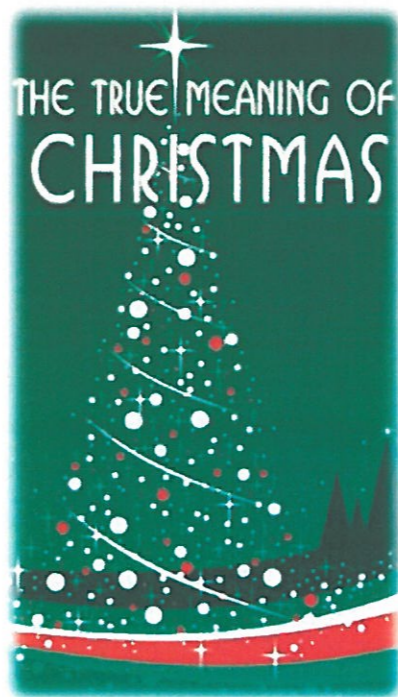
This year again the **Abba Trust** will be providing presents for children in our community, who are having a tough time at the moment. Many parents are really stressed out and can hardly put food on the table never mind buy toys for their children. This is where we again need your help.



We would like the children in the congregation to bring to church on **Sunday 17th December**, a toy which we can pass on to a less fortunate child. Parents and grandparents can help us by encouraging their children or grandchildren to enter into the true meaning of Christmas. Help them to be part

of this effort which can make such a difference in many homes on Christmas Day.

The toy should be wrapped and labelled with the age and sex of the child for whom it is suitable. The ages of the children we are helping are from birth to 16. The children will have an opportunity to leave their gift at the Christmas tree on 17th December. If you are free on that afternoon at 2.00 pm, why not come along to the church and help us sort and deliver the presents?



Storehouse North Down will again be giving out Christmas Hampers. Last year, at Christmas, we supplied in the region of 400 and from the beginning of the year we have given out 1500 hampers. This year we will be making up our hampers during the week beginning 11th December and it would help us if you could bring your Christmas groceries and treats on **4th December**. Please support us by leaving groceries in the trolleys in the vestibule.

Our preaching series over the past few months has been looking at worship and we have seen that our worship can be demonstrated

throughout the week by serving others. We know that God has called us to be His hands on this earth, to feed the hungry and look after the poor. Let us do this in Jesus name.

West Church folk have always been very supportive both to The Abba Trust and Storehouse North Down and we thank you for that support.



Carolfest

Friday 22nd December
at 7.00 pm

Do you love Christmas time?

The food, the decorations, the gifts: it's an incredible time of year. It is also a time when the wider community is more open than usual to hear the hope that we share as a community of faith. This means that Christmas gives us a unique window of opportunity to communicate the reason for our celebration hope at Christmas time.

The Kirk Session at West Church has given the Mission and Outreach Team a mandate for developing fresh ways of interacting with the community for the sake of the Gospel and this team has gathered together an action group brimming with Christmas ideas and put them to work.

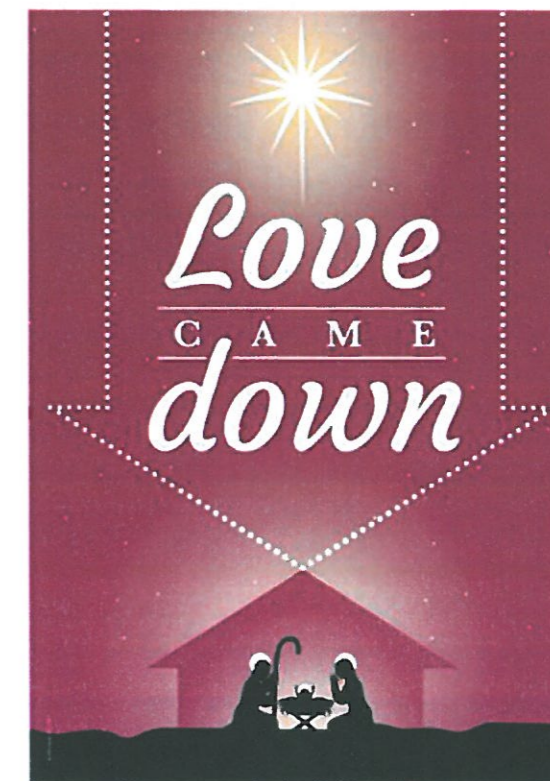
The result is a two pronged initiative that is aimed at communicating our Christmas hope to the community around us.

Firstly, in partnership with our neighbouring churches, we plan to send a Christmas cards to every home in the immediate community with a Christmas greeting from the ministers of the participating churches. This card will also include a breakdown of all the special Christmas services at the participating churches. We are hoping members of

these congregations will get on-board delivering the cards in time for Christmas.

Secondly, we plan to hold a Christmas 'Carolfest' event on **Friday 22nd December at West** when we will sing carols sung around an outdoor tree followed by some carols in the sanctuary with mince pies in the Welcome Area afterwards.

Further information will be announced in the coming weeks.





TEARFUND INDIA ANTI-TRAFFICKING REPORT

As you read through this latest update from India, may you be both challenged and encouraged

From the darkness, light!

One of the things Tearfund does is healthcare promotion. This means anything from workshops on hand-washing to reproductive health clinics, to giving out toothbrushes. Tearfund is also trying to empower the women they work with to access healthcare. Often they are too scared to go alone as they are likely to be treated with disrespect and denied the care they need.

When women get ill in the slum, it can become life threatening very quickly. Tearfund will step in and if possible, take the women to hospital. Tearfund has been able to accompany two women to hospital during October, enabling them to make a good recovery.



Flooding in Bihar

The flooding that has destroyed many parts of Asia has affected 1000 families in the Bihar region where Tearfund has a presence. The rain has destroyed their homes, land and livelihoods. Tearfund was able to use their resources to help those affected by setting up health camps and giving out dry rations, but there is still much to be done.

Advocating for children's rights

In September Tearfund organised training with community leaders to educate them on their rights and responsibilities regarding caring for the children in their communities.

Children are often not treated with respect in India. Instead they are expected to obey their elders unquestionably and are not allowed to speak up.

Child sexual abuse is also a huge issue with 80% of girls and 60% of boys facing some form of abuse by the time they reach the age of twelve. Since the perpetrators are often close family members, the

family honour is held high and these issues are pushed under the carpet. There is a culture of shame which leads to silence even in the face of severe adversity caused by abuse.

Tearfund India recognises that children are created in the image of God with dignity and a special purpose. They work with communities, leaders, teachers and children to help them understand the value of being created in God's image, with purpose and dignity.

The training went really well and they are looking forward to working with leaders long-term to ensure children's rights are respected.

Love your neighbour

Tearfund ask that we

- (i) should care for our neighbours, just as we would for ourselves,
- (ii) offer practical care for our neighbours and not only the spiritual so that people have enough money or food, or access to financial services, education, healthcare or other social services

That's why we celebrate when Tearfund are able to help people in this way. In recent weeks Tearfund has been able to help eight women open a bank account and start saving money. They have also helped two women access identification documents which are needed for them to access many of India's social services.

Stories of transformation

A brighter future

The content of this story is sensitive and not appropriate for children

It is true that many of us probably felt betrayed and maybe even a bit lost at some point during our teenage years. Figuring out who we are can be hard, and during that growing-up season of life everything can feel just a little bit more painful.

For girls like Anju* though, this pain was an everyday reality. Trafficked at the age of 15, Anju found herself snatched from her home and her family in a small village near Jaina, Maharashtra, and taken into a nightmare.

She was forced into prostitution, tied up with rope and left in a dark room for months. Her only company was different men who would come to physically and sexually abuse her.

Cont'd on page 32



Working with children in the Communities (faces have been adjusted to protect their identities)

After enduring this for such a long time, and as so many girls do, Anju became desensitised. Her traffickers made her believe she had no other option and so she started working in the sex trade voluntarily. Here she met a man who became a regular client. After a while she moved in with him whilst continuing her work.

Tearfund met Anju in 2012 by which point she had two young daughters. Her life was in chaos - her children were not cared for properly, her house was dirty and she would regularly get into fights with other people in the area.

Tearfund began to visit her regularly and suggested she should send her children to school. They talked to her about the importance of maintaining good hygiene.

In 2013 she started bringing her children to Tearfund's education centre where she took part in community support groups and things began to change.

Her aggressive and argumentative personality became more subdued. She started fewer arguments and was much more patient with her children. She had another daughter in 2015 and then in 2016 was vaccinated against HIV at one of Tearfund's clinics.

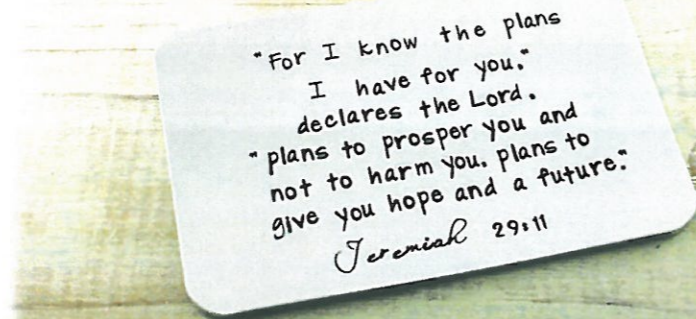
She also started to work two days a week in a local milk factory. However, this employment only lasted a couple of months as she was not used to the reality of a full time job and was still unmotivated, with low self-esteem. But it was a start.

Tearfund continued to encourage her that life outside of the sex trade would mean a brighter future for her and her children. In September past, she moved into a rehabilitation home with her children and is working towards leaving the trade for good!

Anju has never cared about the future, but now she is planning and hoping for the best. She can see a way out and is working hard to make it happen. She hopes her daughters can become lawyers!

Tearfund is thankful for the chance to work with Anju, bringing hope where there is none.

**Names in this story and in the next have been changed to protect identities*



Freedom to dream

Violet* lives in Narthua Musari Hamlet with her mother and two sisters. A poor, rural village, there are very few opportunities for people to earn enough money to live. Violet's father used to travel to Delhi or Punjab to work as a labourer, sending money back to the family.

Two years ago her father passed away unexpectedly. Dealing with the grief was hard enough, but Violet's mother soon realised she needed to get a job. She found some work as a maid, working in a neighbouring village.

This situation made Violet and her sisters very vulnerable. Left at home alone all day, traffickers could easily prey on them. There was not enough money, and Violet had to drop out of school after 8th grade—her mother could not afford for her to go into 9th grade. She could also not afford the uniform or textbooks that she needed to study.

Violet loved learning and was heartbroken at not being able to continue her studies but she had to start working with her mother to earn an income.

EHA (Tearfund's partner in India) heard of her situation and wanted to help. They referred her to the local Village Child Protection Committee who worked with EHA to collect money for her. They managed to raise enough for her admission fees, uniform and textbooks too!

Violet is now going to school with her friends and loving every moment:

I always dreamed of being able to study so that I can one day get a job that pays enough money to provide for my family. Thank you EHA for letting me follow my dreams"



Pray with Tearfund: We would like to expand our work so we can help more women in the slums. Please pray that we would be able to meet many more new women, and also strengthen our relationships with those we already know.

It has been really hard to try and get birth certificates for the children in our educational centres. It is important we get these to help them enrol in schools. Please pray for us to get these soon. Finding alternative jobs for the women, particularly in Bhiwandi, is proving really difficult due to low salaries, being too far away or the women are unsuccessful when they apply. Please pray for jobs and for confidence for these women who keep getting knocked back.

MUSIC LESSONS

Have fun enjoying to learn how to play piano, guitar, drums or keyboard at your own pace.

ABRSM/TCL Rockscool Grades 1-8 optional.

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Contact Robert Sinclair for all enquiries on 07821733452.



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A BEAUTIFUL IDEA: WOMEN'S VOICES IN FRAGILE STATES

A beautiful idea

**WOMEN'S VOICES IN
FRAGILE STATES**
World Development Appeal 2017

World Development: Our traditional Christmas Day Appeal. Envelopes included with this magazine

The theme of this year's Appeal is *A beautiful Idea: Women's voices in fragile states*.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of the world's most fragile states. Since 1999, six million people have died as a direct or indirect result of the ongoing civil conflict.

The extreme insecurity experienced by families and communities on a continuing basis leads to displacement, hunger, and the breakdown of basic health services.

The reality of good sustainable development work is that it is long-term, and the forces ranged against you can seem overwhelming. Over the next four years, you are invited, through the World Development Appeal, to travel this hard road in solidarity with our partners in fragile states like the DRC.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The 2017 World Development Appeal highlights the work of Tearfund partner, **Action Entraide**, in the DRC, one of the most difficult places in the world to be poor. Action Entraide are committed to breaking the cycle of violence, despair and fear. Committed to reducing poverty in the DRC, Action Entraide work in a number of focused areas, which include raising awareness of gender and child protection issues; promoting small business schemes and helping people save money; peace-building and encouraging Christian young people in development and reconciliation.

Action Entraide also work to enable some of the women who have been deeply scarred by violence to speak out, and to participate fully in the building of a new and more safe and stable society.

Zimbabwe

The second project being supported by the 2017 Appeal is **Pa-dare Enkundleni**, a faith based men's forum for gender issues in Zimbabwe, and a Christian Aid partner. The particular project we are supporting will increase the capacity of faith leaders to address issues of gender inequality gender-based violence (GBV) through church policies and programmes. One of its aims is also to engage men in working to end the practice of GBV in their own communities.

Theological Reflections

'Poverty has a woman's face.'

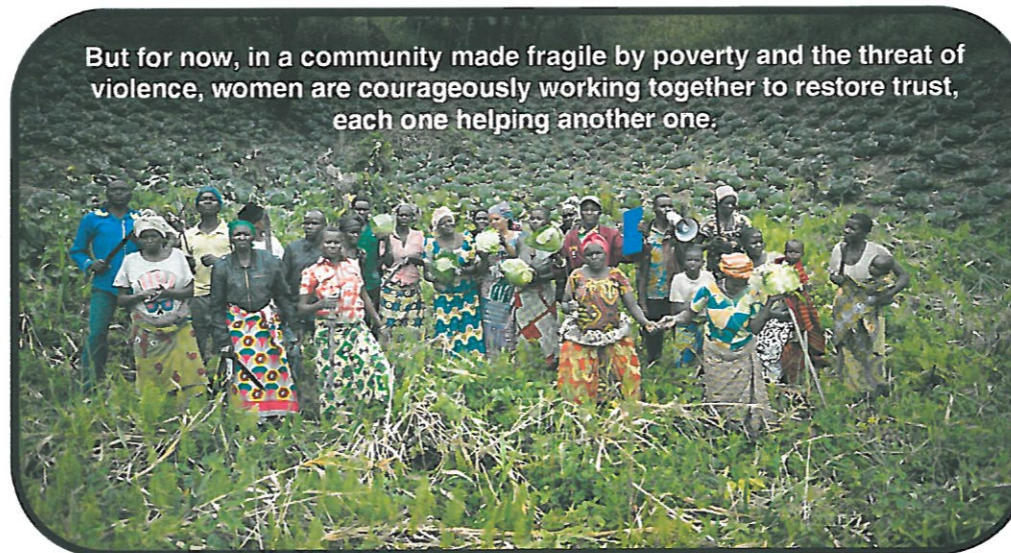
Slogans never tell the whole story, but they often tell an important part of the story. And one of the stark truths we need to grasp when we listen to the experience of our partners around the world is that if you are a woman, you are more likely to be poor.

The causes of poverty are many: poor access to clean water, the effects of climate change on weather and agricultural practices, HIV infection and other preventable illnesses, and land dispossession among many others. But because of the way most societies are structured, their most sustained impact is on the lives of women.

Furthermore, women's lives, as well as those of men, are made more difficult again when the civil society around them is fragile. Life becomes more chaotic and unpredictable. The basic structures people rely on as they go about their daily lives are simply not there. And in this stressful situation, women often suffer yet again, as the incidence of sexual and gender based violence increases, putting both women and children at risk.

The term 'gender justice' refers to

But for now, in a community made fragile by poverty and the threat of violence, women are courageously working together to restore trust, each one helping another one.



the work of building relationships between women and men which are justly structured, that is, in which both are equally valued, both are empowered to effect change for themselves and on behalf of others, and both are able to seek and to embrace the human rights and civic responsibilities to which they are entitled. It is part of the work of sustainable development to which we are committed through the World Development Appeal. And yet as our Tearfund and Christian Aid partners remind us each year, gender justice is a work in progress, even close to home.

Those of us who approach the work of sustainable development from a Christian perspective are sadly aware that churches have sometimes remained silent in the face of women's suffering. Christian voices have also not infrequently added to that suffering by belittling it, or by seeking to limit the hearing of women's voices, or by teaching acceptance of the status quo.

And yet we also know that we have strong foundations for the work of gender justice in this same biblical tradition. The sheer

exuberance of the creation stories in the Book of Genesis implies among many other things that the diversity found among women and men in community should function as a source of celebration and delight, and not as a source of fear or a means of oppression, whether for women or for men.

The word for the 'helper' (NRSV, NIV) or 'companion' (NET Bible) made by the Lord God for the first human being (Genesis 2.18) is the same Hebrew word which often refers to God our 'help' (see Exodus 18.4, for example). So there can hardly be a connotation of secondary status. The description of this companion as 'fitting' or 'corresponding', however, removes the description from the realm of the inferior/superior and roots it in a sense of equality and mutuality. The isolation of the first human being is addressed through the creation of this companion, with whom a human identity is shared. Furthermore, up until this moment, every living thing that the Lord God has created has been formed from the earth. Now, however, the Lord God literally builds what is taken

from the side of one human being into another human being, a woman. And the man's first response is to recognise not their difference but their kinship and equality. She is "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2.23), he exclaims.

They are two living human creatures, but they are one flesh, which suggests solidarity, mutuality, equality. The focus is not on what is 'opposite', but on the companionable distinction of the two, who nevertheless experience a unity which is first of all an equality of bone and flesh.

The 2017 Appeal turns its focus to partners working in the dangerous and difficult context of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Here they are addressing issues of gender justice as an important foundation for the peacebuilding and community development initiatives needed at every level of their troubled and fragile society.



In the village of Zombe, women came together with a common task: to reduce infant mortality rates and save the lives of mothers. As one woman said, it was a beautiful idea.



The need was urgent, as basic equipment and supplies for women giving birth were severely limited.



And so a beautiful idea formed: a self-help group to which each woman paid a small weekly amount. Tearfund partner Action Entraide then helped the women increase their income by starting a market garden, and the whole community became involved.



The pharmacy in the health centre was poorly stocked.



But the biggest challenge was access to hospital care for women who developed complications late in their pregnancy.



The only transport to hospital was by motorcycle taxi, a journey which took three hours for a pregnant woman, travelling slowly on rough roads. Sometimes she didn't make it to the hospital in time.



The women have set their sights on a properly equipped health centre in Zumbe, providing health education for the whole community.



In the meantime, however, when a pregnant woman needs to go to hospital, the taxi is booked and paid for out of group funds, so the woman can arrive on time.



As we work together, God will give us more than a motorcycle, the women say!

The main film produced for the Appeal tells the story of a women's self-help initiative, focused on maternal and neonatal health. The women of Zumbe have set up a travel fund which now provides for transport to hospital when a pregnant woman approaching her due date experiences complications. Like the midwives of the Hebrew people in Exodus 1, these women became tired of seeing the lives of mothers, and those of their babies, being placed at risk, and took their own initiative in defiance of the status quo. The market garden which they now cultivate (pictured on the previous page), thanks to additional help they have received from Tearfund through local partner Action Entraide, ensures that the travel fund is able to meet their needs in full.

In the second file, for adults only, Hope tells her story of being kidnapped and gang raped, and then recounts something of the hard yet life-affirming journey she has made in the ten years since. Like the Samaritan women, in the presence of the living Christ she finds a way to turn her own particular circumstances into a source of theological

reflection, and comes to recognise that the telling of her story, and the sharing of her continuing reflections upon it, is now her calling.

The 2017 Appeal lifts up the voices of Hope and the women of Zumbe in order to highlight the need to put gender justice at the heart of sustainable development. We do so in response to our

biblical calling, which is to do justice but also to live in profound awareness that for all our created diversity, we are one in Christ, and share the one flesh of humanity which was also his.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

visit www.presbyterianireland.org/resources (World Development Appeal)

HOME GROUPS AT WEST

by Dave Gray

Over the Autumn our morning teaching series has explored and shaped our practice of worship, not restricting our consideration to Sunday gatherings, rather emphasising how our worshipping directs and shapes the other 164 hours of our weekly lives.

Some of us spend many hours being surrounded by spiritually encouraging voices (#blessed!). Most of us however, battle through from Sunday to Sunday on our own trying our best to remember and keep our eyes on Jesus, and some weeks we are far less successful in our race than we would love to be! That is why I love being part of a Home Group. My fortnightly gathering of fellow 'runners' is a place where I am known and loved. We explore the scriptures and go deeper and wider in the themes that are presented in gathered worship. We share stories of how faith can be worked out in our



families, neighbourhoods, workplaces and areas of influence. We imagine how we can use our collective talents and resources for kingdom building and best of all we hold each other up in prayer. And it doesn't stop there, over the week I get reminders and verses and encouragements texted to me and prayed over me. It's the body of Christ limbering up and coaching and running together- its wonderful! We have two new Home Groups that have launched this term- this is the very special Tuesday evening group, but we also have a Wednesday evening group who are equally wonderful! Please contact the office if you're wanting to join or even to lead a group and someone from the discipleship action team will ring you for a chat.



Once again we would like to thank the congregation for your support in helping us to almost reach our 2017 United Appeal target of £34,010.

We would like to encourage our members to support the United Appeal by way of monthly Standing Order from the beginning of 2018 - if you feel you would like to commit to regular giving to the work of the United Appeal, please contact the Church Office and we can provide you with the relevant forms.

JUST AN ORDINARY TAX COLLECTOR

by Reg Bates

A Testimonial statement based on Luke 5:27-32 & Luke 19:1-10

Hello everyone! My name is Zacchaeus and I am a tax collector. I live and work in Jericho in the province of Judea. My colleagues call me Zack. Actually, very few of us are the nasty money grabbers that people make us out to be. We just do our job. **But I seem to have very few friends!**

We all know one another quite well even though we live and work in different regions. And news spread quite fast! Even so, it was some weeks after the event when I was told about my friend Levi. I couldn't believe it when the news came through that Levi had just quit his job and left his office in Capernaum to follow that teacher they called Jesus!

I am sure there must have been more to it than this, but it seems that Jesus was passing by Levi's office and simply said to him: "Follow me!" And Levi did! He stopped work, stood up, and followed Jesus!

Later on, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to a meal in his house. And he invited some of his own friends too! It seems that they were mostly tax collectors and a few other undesirables because, when the Pharisees asked the disciples why Jesus ate with such people, Jesus himself quickly put them in their place. "People who are well do not need a doctor; only those who are sick!" he told them. And then he said, "I have not come to call respectable people; but outcasts!"

I am telling you the story just as I heard it. At the time, I was amazed by it. I was amazed that Levi had given up his career. I was amazed that he threw a party and invited his friends. I was **not** amazed that they came—it was a free meal! But I became more and more curious about this man called Jesus who lived and taught in Galilee, I wanted



to know more about him.

I wanted to know more about Jesus and, a few months later, I got that chance. Jesus had come to Jericho. Now, as you can see, I am not very big... "good tax collectors come small Zacks," I always say!

So, when Jesus arrived with the great crowd of followers, I couldn't see a thing. But I wanted to see this man. And maybe Levi would be there too! So, I climbed up a tree to get a good look at him. It seemed a good idea at the time because I could see without being seen.

But it wasn't to be like that!

When Jesus came close, without hesitation, he looked straight up at me and He knew my name. "Zacchaeus, come on down!" he shouted. "For I am going to your house." Well you could have knocked me down with a money bag.

What could I say? What did I say? I said yes!

In my house, Jesus talked a lot of good sense. And it wasn't just what he said! It was **how** he said it. He

had such knowledge! And spoke with such authority! Now I can understand why people are flocking after Jesus and listen to his teaching. Now I can understand why Levi gave up his job to follow him. I was almost tempted to do the same.

Can I tell you what I did do?

I promised to give half of my wealth, half of everything I own, to the poor. I promise you I will do that...and I will do more than that! I promise that, to anyone I have cheated, I will repay them four times as much.

Why am I doing this? It is simply because I want to. Jesus explained things and taught me so much about the important things in life! He showed me love and friendship such that I have never experienced before.

Now I want to reach out, in love, to other people, to reach out to you! I want to tell you about Jesus. **So, Listen!** Jesus is no ordinary man. Jesus is God's own Son, The Messiah! Our Saviour! And I love him so much. **How about you?**



The recent marriage of Lynne Farr and Geordie Hackworth, conducted by Rev. Jim Hagan in West in June

Pictured above right, Darcey Elizabeth Laird, a daughter for Graeme & Deborah and a sister for Ted, at her Baptism in October



Pictured above, at their recent wedding in West, Rob Montgomery and Becky Frankham, with the service conducted by Rev. Charles McMullen



Pictured right, at their recent wedding, Alison Blayne and Delukshan Srikantharajah, conducted by Rev. Charles McMullen in Montalto, Ballynahinch in August

HELLO FROM CANADA

by Mike & Lorraine Cahoon

@ lot has happened since we wrote our last article in which we described our encounters with the black bears on our trip to Thunder Bay. We have just said goodbye to our dear friend Carole, who came to visit us for a few days of refreshment and fun, after a very busy year on the streets of Thunder Bay for her and the team. She is so thankful for all your prayers, especially in relation to the new team members. Those two new members are blending in perfectly, and their unity of spirit is producing good fruit! The Pastor of the Finnish Church which Carole attends has asked the Command Post team to share what God is doing in the streets of Thunder Bay. Other people in their church have recently been very challenged to start reaching out for salvations whenever there was a murder in the city. It is about fighting for the city and being in unity with other Christians, for as Carole writes:

...the murders are affecting everyone and the city is beginning to respond in fear. They haven't been solved and as I prayed that we shouldn't wait for another murder to happen but to visit and pray in previous areas. I felt a cleansing was required and that we should be praying for the families and the resolution of these horrific crimes. But also knowing that this is not to be taken lightly and not to go out in small numbers".

A big treat for Carole was to be able to have a face to face conversation with Gill Fleming and Heather Kyle, two of the Missions' Group who are faithful intercessors. Lots of good things were shared, as well as lots of laughs, and Carole was very blessed by the call. She was also very encouraged by donations which have come in from individuals in Thunder Bay and also by a very generous donation from someone

in Bangor. This means that all the Command Post winter supplies of food and clothing are now covered in advance!

While Carole was staying with us, we had a surprise visit from our friends Erick and Lisa Hanson.. They were the couple who initially introduced us to the work in Thunder Bay and our first visit was with them. They are now missionaries in Scandinavia, based in the YWAM base in Denmark. They had flown home to Canada to attend a wedding, and we had an amazing Thunder Bay reunion.

Our annual RTF Conference is due to take place in Toronto as we are writing this. We always look forward to it so much, as it is crucial for us to be able to share fellowship with like-minded people, who are involved in the same ministry. We always spur each other on and create a safe place together to allow us to share our challenges, whether in our personal lives or within the ministry, and we pray and support each other. It's also a good

opportunity to receive teaching, and be updated on the issues which are affecting society today, and which eventually end up in the ministry room. It is essential that we keep current in our understanding of these issues, how they affect our mindset and actions, and how they can end up causing us, and others, a lot of pain.

For about 18 months we have been travelling for about an hour to Church in order to help a new campus of Catch The Fire get established in Kitchener. However, in the summer we felt the Lord was drawing us back to fellowship in Stratford again, and it has been wonderful to renew our membership at Jubilee Church. This is the church we attended when we first came to train for FTF ministry back in 2009! It has been great to reconnect with many old friends, and to make new cell group connections, especially over the famous "pot bless" meals.

This past week we have taken part in a five day Bible Reading Marathon organised by a wonderful

in the church who are on fire for the public declaration of God's Word. We could volunteer for as many 15 minute slots as we wanted and it took 5 days, from 7.00 am until midnight, to complete the entire Bible. It really was a wonderful experience as we felt the love and power of the Lord come on us as we began to read. Our first session was from 1 Chronicles...yes, that's the one with all those names...but then we did get the blessing of being able to declare the prayer of Jabez out loud as part of that!

The leaders at Jubilee are very keen in actively pursuing city-wide church unity, especially through worship. So once again there is a Festival of Praise coming up next week when lots of different styles and venues for worship and praise are celebrated throughout Stratford. There is a full weekend planned to embrace the wide variety of church experience here in the city. On another date closer to Christmas, the leaders of Jubilee and St. Joseph's Catholic Church have a special night of praise, during which Gregorian chants, redemption hymns and recent worship songs will be sung.

Although this edition of West Life will be delivered closer to December, we are writing this article while still enjoying the Fall, so no white stuff has fallen...yet! This is also the week that Hurricane Ophelia touched down in Ireland, and we must be on one end of it, because a tornado came through our local neighbourhood a few days ago. We were visiting friends at the other end of town at the time, and we didn't experience anything except wind and heavy rain. When we got home at around 5.00 pm a lot of trees had been felled by the storm. Thankfully the road wasn't blocked and we wondered about our home as we turned the corner, but other than loads of branches down and all the garden furniture upended, there was thankfully no other damage. The roof has been blown off an apartment block



Enjoying catch up time with Carole

Nearby, and the power had gone off as well, but as soon as we arrived back in the house it came on again, so were totally oblivious to the whole afternoon's action!

We have come to know more and more that above all else, we can do nothing without the Lord, for He gives us every resource we need, and we continue to depend on Him alone. We can't imagine life without knowing His love, receiving the love, and allowing it to heal and transform our hearts, our minds and out lives.

We're reminded of that beautiful hymn:
"All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above, so thank the Lord, yes thank the Lord for ALL HIS LOVE!"

With our love and blessings to all of you,

Mike and Lorraine



Our reunion with Erick and Lisa Hanson along with Carole



Daryl & Lynne, our friends & trainers from RTF

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MEET THE INTERNS

by Sonia Mawhinney

I'm sure many of you have spoken with our Interns already, but if not, please take a few moments to read a little about them and find out how they are part of the Youth & Children's team here in West.

Courtney Thompson

Courtney has completed 2 years as an intern in West and has started a Centre for Youth Ministry degree course. She studies two days per week in YouthLink NI and spends 14 hours in West as her degree placement. Courtney is involved in leading in Coffee Bar, Girls' Brigade, YoungLife, Young West and a mid-week girls discipleship group.

Sophie Oliver

Sophie has been part of the West Church family for the past 2 years. She completed a year at QUB studying engineering and decided it wasn't for her! She is planning to apply for primary school teaching and so is really keen to gain as much experience with children over this next year in West. Sophie has come on board as a volunteer intern and so is not tied to completing a set number of hours per week—however, she is kept really busy leading school assemblies, JClub P1, Wyldlife, Young West and a mid-week girls discipleship group.

Harry McBride

Harry has been a Young West leader for the past few years and last year completed an internship with Abanna. Harry is a qualified youth worker and is keen to gain more experience in planning and leading youth ministry during this year at West. Harry is based in West for 20 hours per week and is involved in leading in school assemblies, Coffee Bar, Young West and a boys mid-week discipleship group.



Interns pictured left to right, Courtney Thompson, Sophie Oliver, Harry McBride & Aaron Fry

Aaron Fry

Aaron has been a member of our church since he was a child and has come up through the children's and youth ministries.. He has just finished school and is taking a gap year. Aaron helps lead in JClub with P5/6 and P7s, Beavers, Coffee Bar, Wyldlife and Young West. He is also involved in leading assemblies in our local primary schools.

The team meets briefly each Tuesday morning to review the weekend past and to pray for, plan and prioritise for the week ahead. Friday mornings are given over to a more detailed planning meeting. At some of these meetings, time is set aside to watch a leadership DVD, have training on a specific topic or focus on personal spiritual formation.

We have a number of elders who come during the year and share their expertise with the team including preparing and leading Bible studies (Albert Ward), communication skills (Maureen Bennett) and leadership and management (Catherine Bell). The interns are also part of the TOGETHER interns training initiative where they attend 3 training days set up specifically for the 60+ interns who are serving in churches and youth organisations across NI. Please continue to pray for the team as they get to know one another and work together, as they develop and use their gifts in leadership and as they minister to our children and young people in West and in our local community. Pray they would be stretched, blessed and encouraged through this year of serving as interns.



TIME TO BE CAREFREE

by Alison Easlea & Wendy Somers



For young children, entering a pre-school environment filled with unfamiliar adults and children can sometimes generate two reactions: anxiety and anticipation. Nonetheless, it never ceases to amaze our staff at Bangor West Nursery Playgroup (BWNP) just how quickly children adapt to their new environment, by making friends and by getting to know the 'new' adults in their lives.

It's hard to believe we are already a third of the way through the pre-school year and this year, somewhat uniquely, we welcomed three sets of twins as part of a lovely group of twenty-six children. Having this number of twins in pre-school is certainly a rare and charming occurrence, but in the group (generally) we are already beginning to see the emergence of the unique characteristics and abilities that allow children to express themselves and their individuality in social environments.



The Class of 2017/18

They may only be 'little people', but every year in pre-school, our staff are consistently reminded of the things we can learn from the honest way in which children express themselves. They are positive, enthusiastic and energetic. They make friends easily, are enthusiastic learners and are ready to grapple with the challenges and opportunities that develop through daily play experiences.

Although staff at BWNP have many years' experience as early years' practitioners, 'learning' from our children is part of what makes pre-school life so special. In no way therefore is the sharing of knowledge a one-way exchange, from adult

to child. As pre-school educators we feel very privileged to be able to spend important time with an emerging, inquisitive generation, in the hope that we can help set them on the right path for life, both in an educational sense and pastorally.

Some of the most significant and delightful attributes pre-school children bring are:

Honesty - young children are very truthful. We encourage our children to be respectful but it's equally important they feel comfortable in their own thoughts and opinions whilst valuing the feelings of others.



The significance of the human touch - there is nothing like the feeling of a child's little hand taking your hand and the appreciative smile on his/her face as they look up at you. This powerful combination and non-verbal communication makes adults feel very special, but it reminds us also about the impact of the human touch for children and others.



A time to be carefree - pre-school is a time when children can be carefree. We understand that

Bangor West Nursery Playgroup OPEN DAY

Monday 4th December 2017
11.30 am - 12.30 pm

Interested parents and their children are welcome to view our purpose built facilities and meet staff.

If you require any further information please contact Alison or Wendy on 028 9147 0664

playgroup@westchurchbangor.org

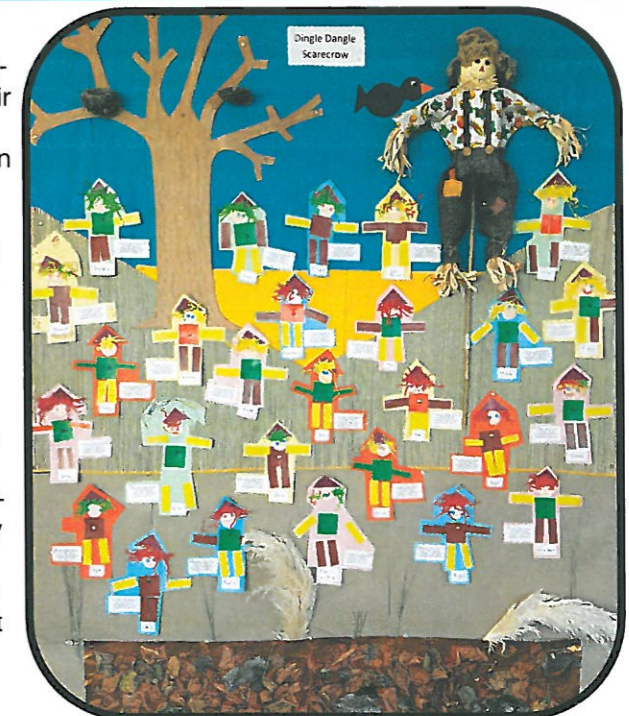
We look forward to meeting you



that children may encounter positive and negative experiences as their lives unfold. However, when we see our children eagerly rush in through the doors each morning and immediately engage in play, they make it clear to us that they are comfortable in their play based learning environment.

For all our staff, it continues to be a privilege and joy to be amongst 3-4 year old children every day, as they begin to make sense of the complicated social world that surrounds them.

Miss Alison & Miss Wendy



This year our pre-schoolers whilst learning about autumn and harvest, made scarecrows and produced a fantastic colourful display outside the nursery.

When you pass nursery during the week please take time to view any of their displays as a lot of time and effort is put into creating these.



MEET OUR NEW CHILDREN'S WORKER

This is a new position 20 hours per week with the focus of the post on our pre-school and primary school aged children. There will also be involvement in Mums and Toddlers, Crèche, J Club and ministry in primary schools. We will be developing new ways of reaching out to kids and families in our community. I will be part of the Youth and Children's Team alongside Sonia, Andrew and our interns. I'm excited about this new development within West.

Tell us a little bit about what life is like in the Croft household?

There's always a pile of blankets to snuggle under. Kettle and oven seems to be perpetually on. Bowls of cereal and mucky shoes.

Always midway through a DIY project (kitchen currently).

Snack and mealtimes are endless (I love to feed our family).

Usually complex negotiations over whose turn it is to control the TV remote/Xbox.

Even more sophisticated discussions with children who need showered but don't want to be and children who need bathed but don't need to be!

Stacks of books, tiny toys, Barbies, Play-Doh, Top Trumps, art work.

Laundry to be folded, homework to be checked, lost gum shields to be found and a pouncing kitten.

Football skills in the lounge, football cards and crumbs down the side of the sofa.

Sharpies appear in the most random of places.

Musical beds and urgent calls for "MMMMUUUMMMM!!"

Liverpool FC on the telly with joyful noise and cheers.

Refereeing between squabbles.

Prayers.

Dusty precious vinyl and history lessons.

Visitors popping in, wee cousins and friends arriving.

It's full on fantastic, fabulous and fierce.

Filled with love, affection, funny rituals, even funnier smells, in jokes and wacky names.

My heart bursts with a crocadillion rainbow sprinkles when I'm near Roo, (Richard) Tobes Rafa (Toby), Hens Albs (Henry), Lady Rose (Tia) and Piggy (Ziggy Stardust the kitten).

What prompted you to apply for this post in West?

I had a real gut response to the advertisement.

It took my breath away because it sounded so familiar.

I have always watched Sonia Mawhinney from afar thinking wow, just wow at her Spirit filled outpourings and love for children and their families.

I checked my response out with lots of people, those who know me well and strangers.

Everyone without exception concluded that it was "right up your street", "perfect for you", a "great fit".

Richard thought it was a great opportunity to step out into Children's work. He has had to live with my crazy doodles, ever growing family of puppets and wacky songs. A setting where my talents were celebrated and accepted seemed worth a nudge on the door.



Vic, with her husband Richard, daughter Tia and sons Toby & Henry

Naturally stepping away from full-time OT position in the health service sounds a bit radical but it made more and more sense.

Following a chat with Richard Good, I got chatting to Catherine Bell and I had such a rush of emotion. It was as if my experiences had led me to this point.

Both Anne Glenn and Heather Thompson prayed fervently with me.

Lots of my friends were praying in the background.

A lovely meeting with Charles gave me the confidence to talk more openly about visions and prophecy.

Catch the Fire (Luke Richards and Suelan Chong Kit) gave me the prophecy in February 2015 that I would be involved in Children's Evangelism and specifically writing a book for Children from broken families.

Of course in my own self sufficient way I had tried to make this work in my professional life without my joy or energy.

God clearly had other plans for me.

I'm so excited to be stepping out for the Lord.

What are you looking forward to in your new role as Children's Worker in West?

I am looking forward to getting to know everyone in the church family.

I love that Church is a place where you can run to in all your brokenness, messiness, warts and all.

God knows us and loves us.

Having worked in adult Mental Health since 2002 I have a passion for people.

I simply want to be a vessel and let the Lord work His will through me.

I'm excited to be meeting all the dedicated volunteers in Crèche and Mums and Toddlers group.

I can't wait to be under the gentle and strategic leadership here at West.

It seems like a minor thing, but my commute will be a five minute dander up Innisfayle. That makes me so happy!

This job means so much to me.

It's like finally finding my wings and knowing how to use them.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I love getting a few hours alone with Richard.

We love a good rummage around charity shops and eating in places where they don't sell chicken nuggets!

I love getting time alone with one child at a time. It's so precious.

Library with Tia, Strickland's Glen with Henry and Starbucks with Tobes.

I adore drinking coffee! Seems like I will fit in well at West.

I love jumble sales, collecting trinkets off the beach and Women's Hour.

I want to spend more time going to the theatre.

Talking to people or just people watching is something I could spend hours doing.

I am so blessed to have my parents, Rik's parents and our families who have been supporting us in the application and will continue to help us and love us as I take up the post.

I feel like I am constantly praying and in conversation with God.

I love to sing and can't wait to develop this interest further.

I do Bible in a Year and Daily reading by Joyce Meyer.

If you could have a superpower, what would it be?

I would love to be able to sprinkle hope to people in desperate situations. Like a literal rainbow coloured Hope and Happiness power! Like Princess Popular from Trolls.

Soaking people in glitter and joy.

But on a typical day like today I would love to have Pinterest home decor power. We constantly have a project in the house. Pinterest power would transform my life!!

What can we be praying for you and your family?

Please pray for our family.

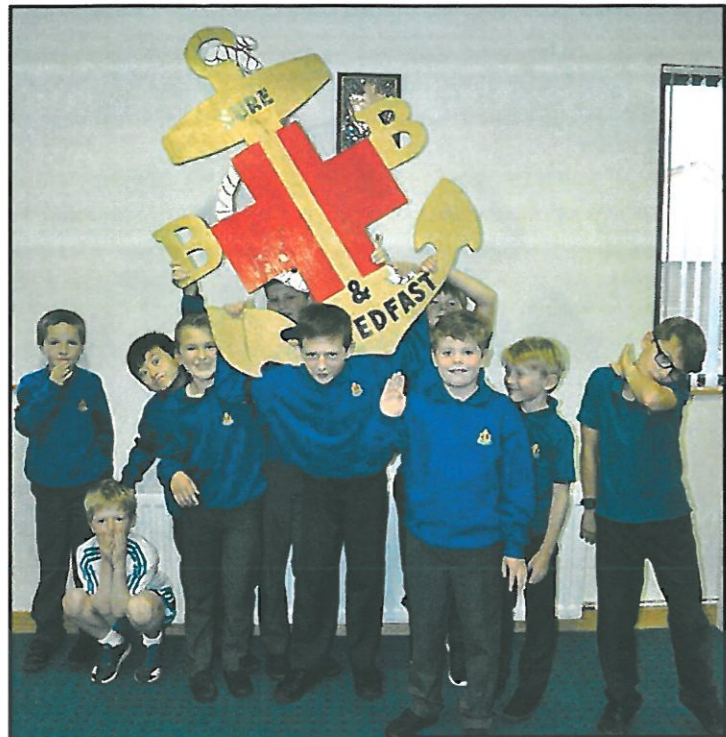
Tia's full adoption into the Croft family.

For Toby and Henry to cope with adjusting to the new routine.

For the smooth running of our home.

For Richard's full time role as Accountant in the SSE ARENA.





Competitions to date: above left & centre, Brigader Touch Rugby (L-R back) Jodie, Megan, Molly, Emily, (L-R front) Anna, Sarah & Lauren and above right, Junior Team Challenge Games (L-R) Eva-Rose, Hannah, Holly, Emma & Kelly)

This year our Explorer & Junior Sections Scripture course is following Moses & God's Rescue Plan. The girls are loving the stories and all the crafts



Some of our Junior Section girls weaving baskets linking with Moses in the bulrushes—maybe there'll be a little treat to put in the baskets when finished?

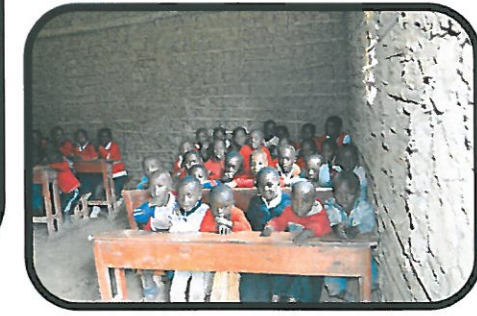
Our Annual Enrolment Service will be held on Sunday 3rd December at 3.00 pm in the Church. All girls are asked to attend this special service which will be led by Rev. Charles McMullen with Sonia Mawhinney & Andrew Shields our special speakers. Parents and friends are very welcome to the service and to join us afterwards for seasonal refreshments.



Pictured above is Rosa with her cress head - another Bible story craft linked to Moses in the bulrushes



Tilli & Thea proudly wearing their Egyptian necklaces after learning about Moses, Pharaoh & the 10 plagues

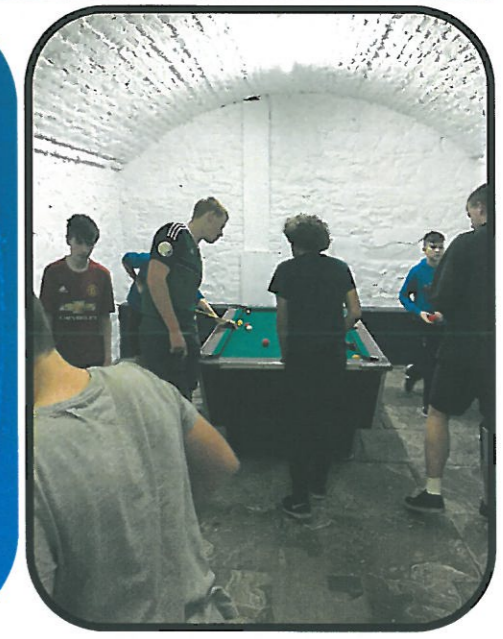


Girls' Brigade N.I. as part of its 125th Anniversary celebrations, is supporting the building of a new school in southern Uganda in association with Fields of Life. Aiming to raise £125,000 you can see from the photos above the current school (above right, built from mud walls, held together with canes), the new school (above, which now has the roof in place) and the children who attend the school. We are collecting 20ps in Smarties tubes to support this work.

CASTLEWELLAN 2017



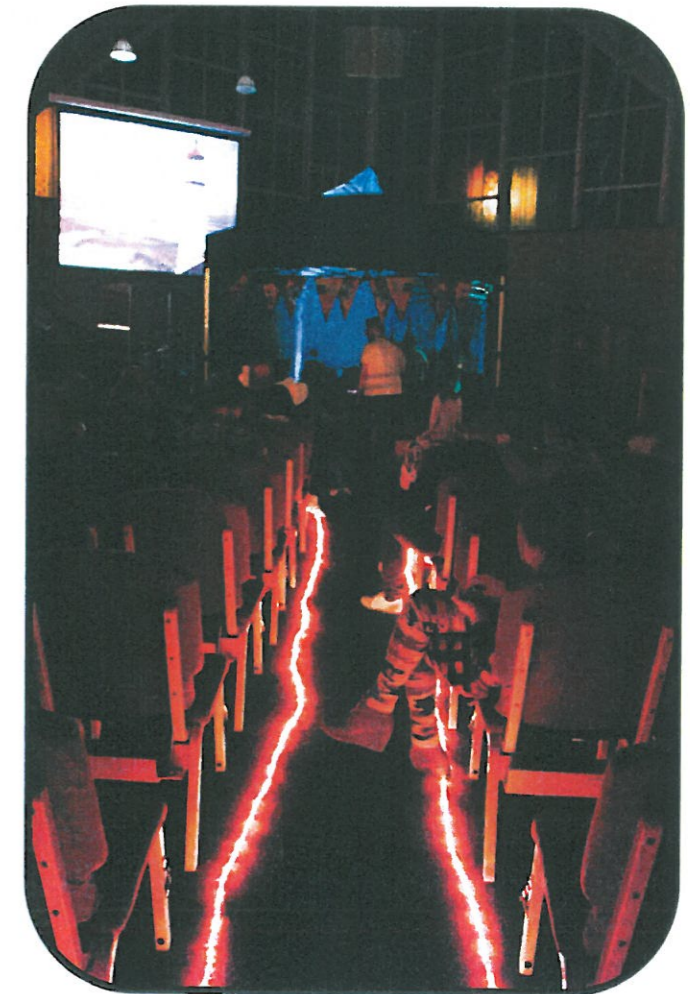
'DIFFERENT' (based on 1 Peter) was the theme for our weekend away in Castlewellan at the end of October, when around 125 teenagers and leaders joined together for fun, fellowship, games and activities, hearing how it is to be different in today's world.



BRIGHT & LIGHT 2017 PHOTO GALLERY



Monday 30th October saw West Church packed with kids, teenagers, parents & grandparents for our annual Bright & Light evening. Enjoy the photos below and also on pages 60-61 of the magazine. The costumes were amazing as was the atmosphere and the joy visible on the children's faces in these photo galleries clearly show they were celebrating 'THE LIGHT!'





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STARlight "Follow the Star!"

Thursday 21st December at 6.00 pm in West Church

Join us as we follow the Star to Bethlehem and experience the Christmas story through drama, songs, crafts and snacks.

Don't forget to wear something Christmassy!

A fun night for the whole family

RENEW

SHOP | CAFE | CRAFTS | BEAUTY

Around 6 years ago we felt God give us a vision to open a place where people could have a cuppa and chat whatever their circumstances or financial situation.

Through our own experience of mental health we know how isolated, scared, alone and frightened you can feel if you have no-one to talk to, no-one to share a coffee with or no-one to understand how horrible the dark days can be...so we took the plunge in January 2017 and decided to go for it.

We signed a lease to rent out EMD -Dawsons music shop and opened our doors on 1st May. With the help of volunteers we are now open Monday-Wednesday from 9.30 am to 2.00 pm.

We have a Beauty Studio and Counselling Services on site as well as weekly activities to help encourage our customers to learn a new skill, build friendships and be part of Renew.

God is doing amazing things in Renew but as you can imagine this wouldn't be possible without the support from others.

We belong to Kings Church Bangor and we are very much supported by our family church, however we would love to come to groups in other churches and share more about who we are and what we are doing.

Please also pop along some morning for a cuppa with your friends - a very warm welcome will await you.

Darren & Emily Waddle
Renew Honesty Café,
EMS, 12 Balloo Avenue
Bangor, BT19 7QT

<https://www.facebook.com/RenewBangor/>



The Derrytrasna Pastoral Care Awards 2018

The Department of Education, in partnership with the Public Health Agency, is seeking examples of outstanding pastoral care in schools.

Launched in 2014, the Awards recognise school communities that have demonstrated exceptional co-operative effort in supporting the pastoral care of pupils and their families in the past 18 months.

Schools cannot self-nominate but parents or others in the wider school community can nominate a school that has provided exceptional pastoral care.

If you feel you would like to nominate our Nursery Playgroup, please visit www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/derrytrasna-award-pastoral-care Applications should be made no later than 15th December 2017



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Changes in Districts : New address

District

103 Miss Clare Watton	504 Mr Ryan & Mrs Katrina Dorrian & family
204 Mr Les & Mrs Barbara Carnew	602 Mrs Jennifer Adamson & Ashley
404 Miss Beverley Bryans	604 Mr Simon Pearson
404 Mr Grenville & Mrs Georgie Hopkinson & family	604 Mr Andrew & Mrs Elizabeth Russell & family
501 Mrs Roberta Hagan	1101 Mrs Neisha White & family
504 Mr John & Mrs Judith Latimer & family	

Changes in Districts : Remove

104 Mr Arthur & Mrs Alison Park & family	901 Mr Jonathan & Mrs Kiera Dobbin & Thomas
304 Mrs Beatrice Gyle	

WELCOME to the following new members: District

304 Mr Harry & Mrs Ann Adams	504 Mr Sam & Mrs Dorothy Irwin
402 Prof Nial & Mrs Christine Cairns	601 Mrs Anne McEwan
404 Mr Lee & Mrs Kelly Magreehan, Jacob & Oliver	1101 Mr Jim & Mrs Iris Neill

The following children were brought for Baptism

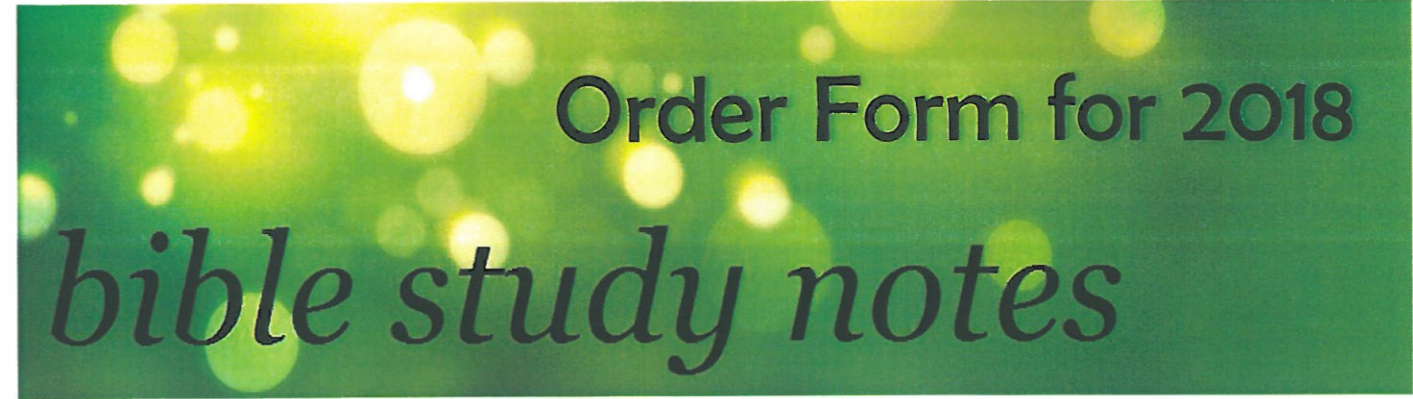
15/10/17 Miss Darcey Elizabeth Laird

We regret to announce the following deaths and extend our love and prayers to the families concerned:

28/07/17 Miss Sharon McKervey	01/11/17 Mrs Elizabeth Thompson
26/08/17 Mrs Nessie McQueen	02/11/17 Mrs Ellen Lowry
27/08/17 Mrs Rae Hogg	05/11/17 Mrs Florence Beggs
31/08/17 Mr Alwyn Wallwin	08/11/17 Mrs Mary S Russell
24/09/17 Mrs Edith Sloan	

Greetings from Pat McNutt ~ November 2017

Dear Friends,
 I thought I should send a short letter to let you all know how I am getting on in Birmingham.
 I came over with my son, David on May 22nd 2016. We attended a Catalyst Conference at the Agricultural Conference Centre. It was for the New Frontiers Church. Most of the delegates were camping. I went every day with David. It was a good introduction to The New Frontiers Church, which I have joined with the family.
 In August we all, together with my daughter, Jane went to Australia to spend time with our family in Melbourne. I stayed with my sister-in-law, while the others travelled around to see more of Australia. It proved to be right as Heather was diagnosed with bowel cancer. She has come through the operation and is now back in her own house. It is thirty minutes drive from her daughter Lynne and husband John and their three children.
 Birmingham is very different from Bangor but it has become my home. I have a large south facing room with its own bathroom. It is my bedroom and also living room. I have my own bed from Bangor and other furniture from Bangor in the house.
 My activities since coming here have been connected with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I am under the care of Dr Justice, a consultant Rheumatologist. She has given me a medical MOT. I see her twice a year and also her Nursing Specialist. It has meant that I have an increase in my medications however they keep me active.
 While the family are away during the day I have the company of our 11 months old dog, Oscar. I also am on duty for cooking tea.
 We have visited Andrew and Jane in Scotland and are going there for Christmas. Andrew and Hilary have moved house and are in the process of getting finished.
 I hope to be over for a longer time next year to catch up with friends, Yours in Christ, Pat



EVERY DAY WITH JESUS

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(Please make cheques payable to Margaret Webb)

Every Day with Jesus	2 monthly	£17.55	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every Day with Jesus	2 monthly (large print)	£17.55	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspiring Women		£17.55	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lucas on Life Everyday	2 monthly	£17.55	<input type="checkbox"/>
Topz (Age 7-11 years)	2 monthly	£17.55	<input type="checkbox"/>
YP (Age 11-15 years)	2 monthly	£17.55	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mettle (age 14-18 years)	2 monthly	£17.55	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cover to Cover		£17.55	<input type="checkbox"/>

DAILY BREAD

Contact: Margaret Webb Tel: 028 9146 1883 £16.20

PRESBYTERIAN HERALD

Contact Clare Smith Tel: c/o Church Office £10.00

WIDER WORLD

Contact: Isabelle Ross Tel: 028 9146 1954

A quarterly magazine produced by Presbyterian Women which highlights all the outreach and missionary work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. £5.00

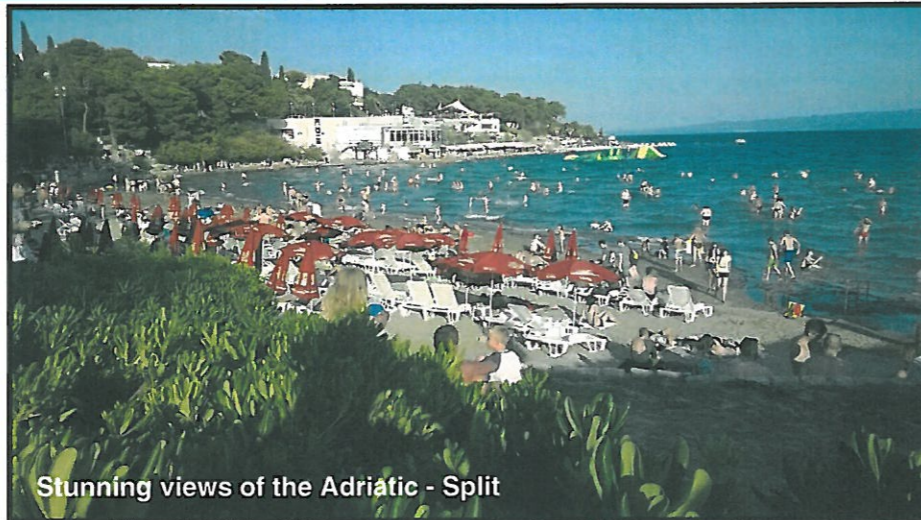
PCI "POINTS FOR PRAYER" Contact: Maureen Bennett
 PCI booklet about home and overseas work of the Presbyterian Church £2.50
 for the booklet. **Weekly updates via PrayerLine**
 (available to order in August)

“TRES AMIGOS” IN CROATIA

by Robert Harding



Recall in the "Distant Past" when one flicked through a travel brochure there was a single page about Croatia and an illustration of Dubrovnik and the old walled city, and if memory serves me correctly the Island Brac or Hvar and a few hotels in the area. It held an intrigue because of the history which dates back to Roman times but was not easily accessed because there were no direct flights from Ireland. How things have changed - easyJet now fly from Belfast to Split and Aer Lingus from Dublin to Dubrovnik.



Stunning views of the Adriatic - Split

The interest was re-kindled when our nephew David [Glynis's son] had met through University fellow students from Zagreb and he had visited them several times and on one of those visits he went to Split and raved about it, so the "TRES AMIGOS" decided to check it out.

It was decided we would spend a week in Split and just short of a week in Dubrovnik. We opted for apartment accommodation and as this was August [2015] and we were due to travel in mid September we had fewer choices. There is a system in place where owners have an agent who deals with lettings and for a small sum will collect you from the airport and transport you to your apartment. To our surprise and delight, we had a modern spacious two/three apartment with a beautiful view of the Adriatic and the agent had provided some basic provisions, which was very thoughtful.

We were a good 25 minute walk from the centre of Split but although there was however a regular bus service but we decided on the "healthy option". Our Apartment was less than a 100 yards from the Beach and accessed by a series of steps. Most days a swim before breakfast was enjoyed.

Split, Croatia's second largest city, is thriving with cruise ships arriving daily and the Diocletian's Palace (UNESCO world heritage site) is the

main attraction. It is living history and Roman-era occupation is much in evidence and at times you could be forgiven for thinking you have wandered on to a film set not least because Roman Centurions with full regalia patrol at various times of the day. There has been a Jewish presence since Roman times and a Synagogue, the third oldest in Europe, dates back to the 16th Century. Within the Palace complex there are Museums and Shops and in the evening there are classical recitals and lots of live music. There are two main markets (permanent) supplying superb fruit and veg and a general market where lace is widely sold.

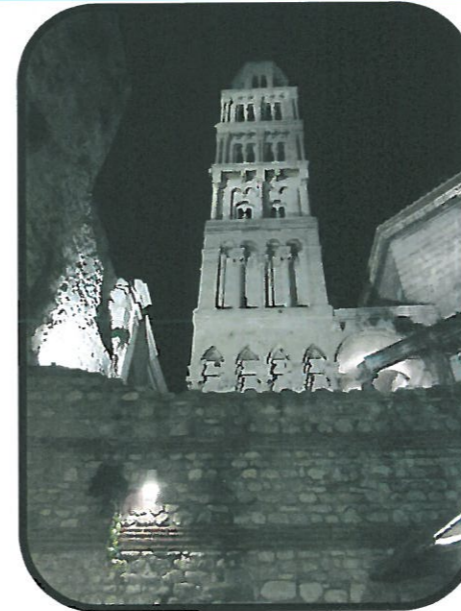


Diocletian's Palace with Roman

The nearby islands have, for the most part, daily crossings so we went on a day trip to the enchanting Brac and had lunch in a restaurant close to the sea. Studying the Menu, I asked the owner "other than pizza or salad" what could he offer Monica (a Vegetarian) and after speaking to the chef he produced a lovely risotto - no trouble at all!

The next day we boarded the bus for Dubrovnik and got to see a bit of the countryside. Near Dubrovnik you cross into Bosnia where there is a border crossing. An armed guard boards the bus and there is a passport check. For a moment it had a slightly sinister feel, but then we were on our way and arrived mid afternoon. Our Apartment this time was even larger but not so modern, about 20 minutes from the sea and about 15 minutes by bus to the centre (15 min service).

I had occasion to try and exchange Northern Ireland currency for Kunas but several Banks in Split would not take them. Finally, the Bank of Zagreb did so and on arrival in Dubrovnik I saw a branch near the entrance to the walled city. The Bank was closed for business so we went for a tour of the old City. We noticed a number of areas cordoned off, similar to what you experience at the check-in areas of most airports. We had a leisurely walk around and checked out restaurants, walking



Pictured above one of the amazing architectural buildings in Split and right is one of the main markets

tours etc. with a view to how we would spend the next few days. The next morning I was up early and on the bus to go to the bank and when I got off the bus I couldn't believe my eyes - hundreds of people queuing in the cordoned off areas waiting to begin their respective tours with just about every nationality you could think of represented, including Mongolian.

Of the two destinations, we preferred Split and this year in June we returned staying in an older colonial type apartment which had been renovated and had a balcony overlooking a sandy cove. Some of the locals, because of the heat, were swimming as late as midnight. A visit to Trogir is a must (we went by bus and returned by sea) founded by Greeks in the third century BC (another UNESCO world heritage site) and the

Romanesque influence is much in evidence.

When asked by friends to describe, apart from the obvious attractions, Croatia's appeal, we were collectively at a loss to explain. Suffice to say the people are helpful and friendly and there is a strange sense of belonging and God willing we hope to return.

Monica, Glynis & Robert



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Don't Miss Our

ANNUAL TRAVEL SHOW

Monday 8th January 2018 ~ 7.00-10.00 pm

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Chandra Rowan
N Ireland Travel Consultant
of the Year 2017

& member of the congregation
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- ★ Grand Free Draw—Many Great Prizes!



Thought for the Day

Wednesday 8th November

Coming out of the cinema, I was fighting back the tears and found myself speechless for a good bit of the journey home. We had been to see "Goodbye Christopher Robin", in my opinion much better than its rather mediocre reviews, although at least one advised packing your hankies.

It's the story of A A Milne, who returned from the horrors of The Somme suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. His violent reactions were triggered by bright lights, loud noises, the buzzing of bees or even sudden movements while playing with his son. The effects of war and conflict continue far beyond any Armistice dates we choose to remember.

Milne wrote a book in which he spoke out against war, but became famous for his stories about Winnie the Pooh, Eeyore, Tigger and, of course, his own son Christopher Robin.

Sadly, over time the character became more important than the son and his parents did not hesitate to throw Christopher Robin into all kinds of sponsorship deals and advertising opportunities, photo shoots and interviews. If every other boy in the land wanted to be Christopher Robin, then the boy himself was not happy in his own skin. The real son says to his father: "All I wanted, Dad, was you."

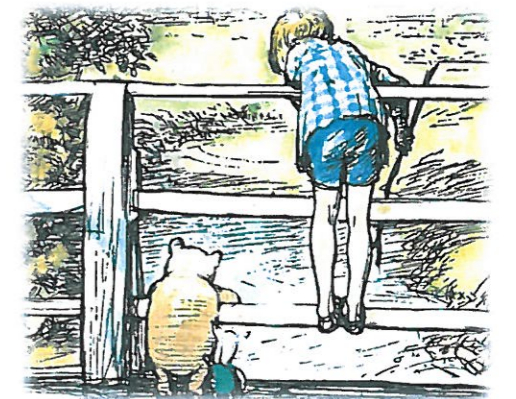
The tears I shed are perhaps for so many dysfunctional situations reflecting hurt and misunderstanding, brokenness and pain, war and violence. The Bible has a wonderful phrase about the hearts of the fathers being turned towards their children. In Colossians it speaks of "all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe — people and things, animals and atoms — (getting)

properly fixed and (fitting) together in vibrant harmonies", all because of Christ.

From war and enmity to peace, forgiveness, reconciliation and hope!

I began in tears. I end with a smile. During the film a family holiday came to mind near Ashdown Forest, or Hundred Acre Wood, where we had such fun together playing Pooh sticks.

"We'll be Friends Forever, won't we, Pooh?" asked Piglet. "Even longer," Pooh answered, "...even if we're apart....I'll always be with you." Pain has its day, but Love lasts forever!



A Cold Welcome

In the Charente
Churches stand empty and cold
Crafted by skilled hands to glorify God
And man
Their people have gone

I am a stranger
In this ancient church
Where murals fade and flake
Where wood decays and crumbles

Yet, at the feet of saints
Floors have been swept
Fresh flowers and linen
Placed on the altar

Signs of devotion
Within this holy place
Where we still come
To seek God's grace

A stranger
In a foreign land
I kneel
And He still holds my hand

Isabelle Smyth 2016 ©

Celebration

O let this Christmas be
truly a time to forgive
and forget that which so
often besets us

To be ever thankful, at
peace with mankind; to
offer loving kindness
unconditionally.

As another year
approaches, by the
Grace, Mercy and
Wonder of a Holy God

Say it in Hebrew, Greek
and Latin;
rejoice in
what we celebrate...

The Son of God
The Saviour of the world
The Christmas story

James Sherman



Please remember to contact the Church Office if you:

- have moved house
- have changed your phone number
- have a new email address
- you or a family member are unwell
- would like Free Will Offering envelopes, Standing Orders or Gift Aid forms
- would like information on groups, courses or organisations



Join us on
Saturday 9th December
10.00 am to 12.30 pm
For our Christmas Coffee & Fun Morning
As well as our Tea Room, we will have
stalls and play areas for children.

Everyone welcome!

Gift Aid Reminder—if you have signed a
Gift Aid declaration and your tax status has re-
cently changed i.e. you are no longer a tax payer,
please remember to let the office know.

John Poole

BBC
RADIO



Thought for the Day Wednesday 25th October

In our house my wife is always more than half-bottle full, whereas I tend to be half empty. You'll know exactly what I mean. For example, if the sun is splitting the stones and there isn't a single cloud in the sky, I'll be the one surely to say, "It isn't a bad day."

The two of us would undoubtedly agree that attitude can make such a huge difference. As a minister, I am constantly alongside people suffering all kinds of physical and emotional pain. In those moments I am sometimes inclined to wonder why, but more often than not I am humbled by the deep sense of trust and peace so many find in Jesus Christ even in the darkest night.

I've often said in a more general way that if we come to Church to praise on a Sunday morning, we will find lots to praise. If, on the other hand, we come wanting to be critical, then we will be quick to discover many faults. Perhaps it's true of society as a whole that we specialise in complaint, but have lost the gift of expressing gratitude and appreciation. So much can indeed depend on our attitude.

When Jesus saw the crowds following him, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. What followed was a powerful



series of what have become known as beatitudes. I like to refer to them as "beautiful attitudes", helping us in Christ to live lives full of peace and contentment.

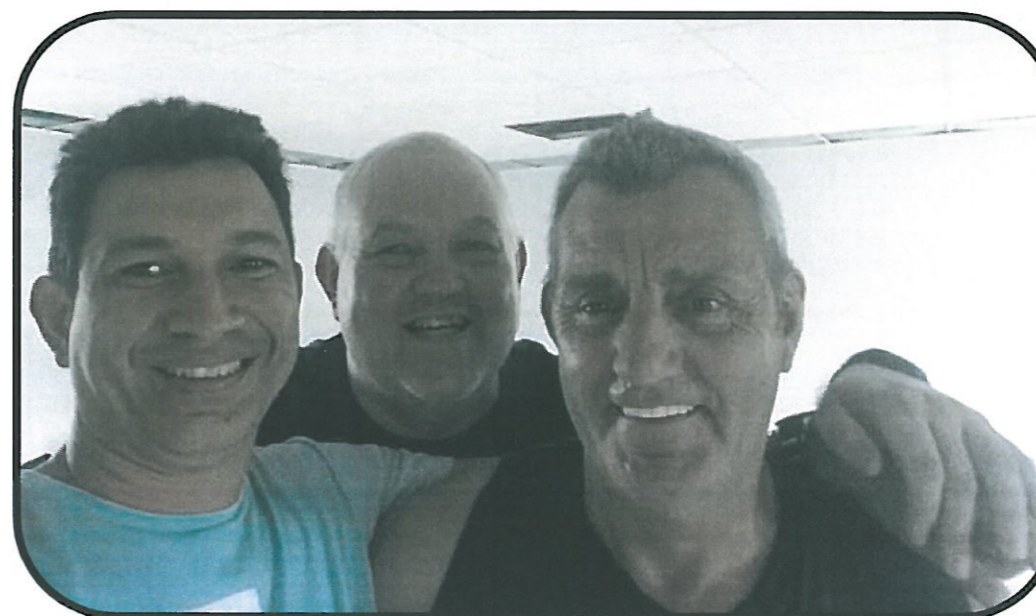
He begins by blessing "the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The Message paraphrase puts it like this: "You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule."

Another way of describing it is to say that we are like dry, empty reservoirs needing to be filled by the love and goodness of God. If you're running on empty into another day and feel that you have very little to give, then pause for a moment. God makes the incredible resources of His Holy Spirit available to us, if we are only willing to receive His love, joy and peace.

And here we're not talking about half empty or even half full. Instead there are extravagant measures. Bottles and cups, jugs and jars—and any other receptacles you can find—are flowing over. In fact, it's like a cool and refreshing drink on a cloudless day when the sun is splitting the stones.

Which reminds me that after I come out of the studio, my wife will text me and say, "That went really well this morning", to which I will reply, "It wasn't that bad."

Rev. Charles McMullen



Cali, Columbia

At the time of this magazine going to print, a few of our members are putting the finishing touches to a major building project to El Abrigo Foundation in Cali, Columbia.

In the next edition of West Life we will hear from Thanney & Johnny about their recent trip, the work they were doing whilst there, the purpose of this building and how it will serve God in the future.

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