

YOUR SPRING EDITION OF

# WEST LIFE

ISSUE No.11, MARCH/APRIL 2017

WEST CHURCH, BANGOR PUBLICATION

## 'Caring in God's world' Amelie Gray wins the Moderator's Art Competition





# SING! *New Life* CHOIR LIVE ON TOUR

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# WELCOME TO YOUR SPRING WEST LIFE

Welcome to the spring edition of our congregational magazine. Inside you will find the usual wide range of articles, including some heart-warming testimonies from recent Alpha courses. Catriona Ritchie has an amazing piece describing her spiritual journey and Robert Sinclair tells the traumatic story of his recent illness, a time during which he felt greatly upheld by the prayers and practical support of so many in West.

Photos of our youth activities will remind you of how vibrant this scene currently is. Connections are made with our ongoing Tearfund project in India as well as Dave Gray's forthcoming trip to Tanzania with his son Elliot under the aegis of Compassion. Talking of travel, as we head towards the summer, you might want to consider a holiday with Spring Harvest in France or why not settle for details of our church weekend in Castlewellan Castle in June?



In the more immediate future, there are glimpses of Easter Mission, Holy Week services and of course, this is the season during which we remember the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Happy Easter to your all!

Our thanks to all, as usual, who have provided generous sponsorship. Again Cheryl Miller has been tireless in chasing up and compiling articles! Enjoy!

*Charles McMullen*

## CONTENTS

4	First Word
5	Holy Week
6-9	Jubilee Update
10-11	Alpha
13	Well done Amelie
14	Street by Street
17-18	Committee Report
19	Catering Team
20-23	Tearfund
24	Tanzania
25	Accommodation
26	Prayer Ministry
28-30	Testimony
30-31	Family Weekend
32-33	United Appeal 2017
36-37	Testimony
38-46	Youth & Children
48	Testimony
49	University Focus
51	Directory
52-53	Travel
54	Men's Fellowship

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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



# #RUNREVRUN

by Rev. Charles McMullen

**Y**ou have to be very careful what you say, particularly in an age of political spin and alternative facts. It all began in a sermon aside one Sunday morning at the 11.30 service when I mentioned that on the gym treadmill I can run 5k in a time of 22 minutes 19 seconds!

The immediate response was a round of applause and gasps of amazement. I could sense that some of you were truly amazed, given that the combined age of my legs has now reached well over a hundred. There was also a potential crisis of belief with it now being called into question if everything said at the front of West Church was, strictly speaking, true.

Helen Byers decided to put it all to the test on Facebook by challenging me to register for the Bangor park run and have my 5k officially timed. Well, panic is beginning to set in! You see, it's all very easy in an air-conditioned gym, enjoying my own company and following a familiar routine, but what if I were to be overcome by the drama of the moment, have a nasty fall or be mauled by the park ducks? Would there need to be a cardiac ambulance on stand-by? Or would the sight of the minister's legs be too much for some?

A petition has been gathering apace, accompanied by all kinds of helpful(!) comments. Here are some of my favourites:

#runrevrun;

"I'm backing Charles all the way, especially if he says no! LOL - I'm feeling the pressure!"

"C'mon Charles McMullen. Show them what you are made of. Get Barbara to do it too!"

"You're wayyy too old. Maybe 5k in 92 mins 3 seconds"

"You have the challenge, Charles McMullen – 4.8k on 20 minutes, treadmill allowed"

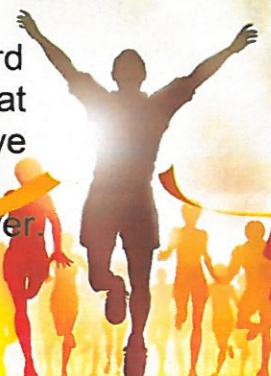
"Lace up those trainers"

You know that many runners enter a race, and only one of them wins the prize.

**So run to win!**

Athletes work hard to win a crown that cannot last, but we do it for a crown that will last forever.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 CEV



It's this next comment, however, that has really pressed all the right psychological buttons and somehow got under my skin: "There's coffee and buns after park run, Charles! You know you want to! It's all about community...and leadership." Not only is an appeal being made here to the weakness of my sweet tooth, but also to my sense of duty and responsibility.....

Paul wrote these



Rev. Charles McMullen with Helen's son, James

encouraging words to the Corinthians: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever" (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)

Who better to quote than Eric Liddell, the famous Scottish missionary of "Chariots of Fire" fame, who participated in the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris? The sacrifice for him was declining to run in the 100m heats, because they were held on a Sunday. Instead he went on to win gold in the 400metres.

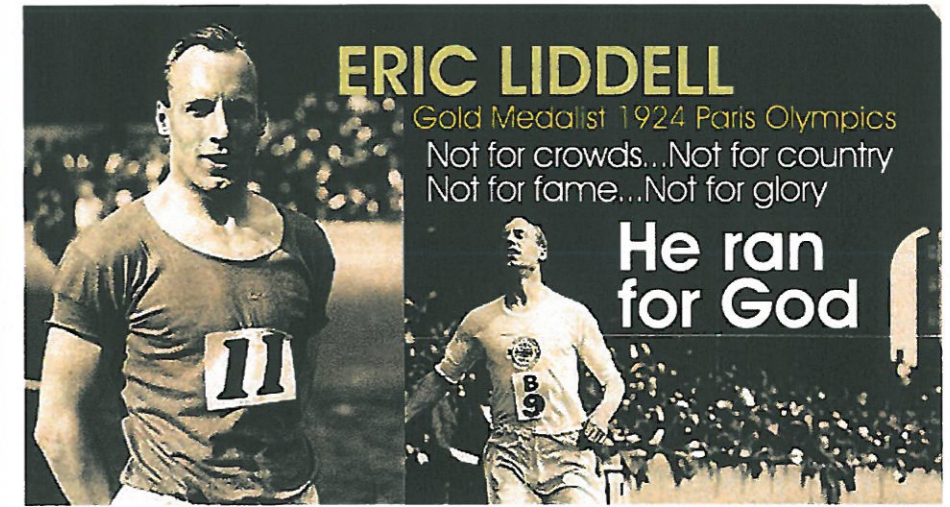
He said four things that are noteworthy:

(i) "Many of us are missing something important in life because we are after the second best"

(ii) It has been a wonderful experience to compete in the Olympic games and to bring home a gold medal. But since I have been a young lad, I have had my eyes on a different prize. You see, each one of us is in a greater race than any I have run in Paris, and this race ends when God gives out the medals."

(iii) "You will know as much of God, and only as much of God, as you are willing to put into practice."

(iv) God made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure."



Whether there will be chariots of fire or the sense of running for pleasure in the Bangor park run I do not know, but Liddell reminds me of the incredible joys and challenges of the Christian life.

Agape!  
Charles McMullen

## HOLY WEEK 2017

### Jesus' Journey



We are delighted to be uniting again with our friends at St Gall's Church of Ireland and Carnalea Methodist for a week of services. Our speaker, Stephen Connolly, has been an Anglian Diocesan Reader in the Church of Ireland Diocese of Down and Dromore since 1995 and is a parishioner of St. John's Church, Helen's Bay. He was a teacher in Belfast and then, for 12 years, Headmaster of Bangor Grammar School, retiring in December 2013. (He is now the Chief Executive of AQE, the company which supplies one of the transfer tests for admission to grammar schools.) In his talks during Holy Week, he will follow Jesus's journey from place to place: along the road to Jerusalem and Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus; from the olive grove in the Kidron Valley to the Governor's palace; and from there, inevitably, to Golgotha. Along that path, in each place, he will focus on a question asked in the story, questions which shock, provoke and inspire.

Prayer Ministry teams are invited to meet for prayer at 6.30 pm each evening in the respective Churches

Join us each evening at 7.00 pm as detailed below:

Monday – West Presbyterian  
Tuesday & Wednesday - Carnalea Methodist  
Maundy Thursday Communion – West Presbyterian  
Good Friday – St. Gall's





# JUBILEE REPORT UPDATE

**I**n the Winter edition of West Life, you will have read how Kirk Session are putting measures in place on the back of the Jubilee Report to ensure our Christian ministries have structure and support. You may recall one phrase "As the ministry grows, the trellis also needs attention".

With our action teams meeting every other month as break out groups from the main Kirk Session meeting, the team leaders have provided you with a short update on how their particular team is moving forward.

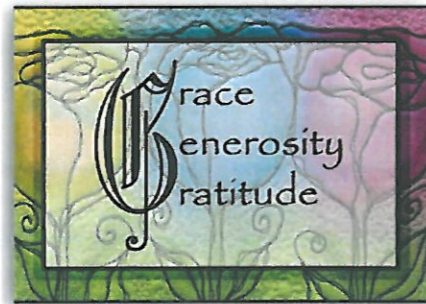
## Worship

One of the finest definitions of worship was given in the last century by William Temple, former Archbishop of Canterbury, who said: "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God."

We might also want to quote the Shorter Catechism of our Presbyterian Church: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever".

Worship involves not only every aspect of our services as we gather together on Sundays, but also the daily offering of our lives. As Paul writes: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."

In West we have a wide variety of people and worship styles. There is the informality and intimacy of



CafeChurch as well as traditional and contemporary styles of praise. There is the importance of our prayer life as well as our response to the preaching of God's Word and prayer ministry. Silence can be just as meaningful as the clashing of cymbals. Familiar liturgy offers stability and continuity in a sea of change so characteristic of the frenzied pace of modern life. How can we also be creative and innovative in our worship, responding to the leading and prompting of the Spirit of God? Creating space for orchestras (Psalm 150) as well as following spontaneously as we sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Colossians 3) - how amazing it is that God should give us the gift and privilege of worship. Grace, generosity and gratitude are so central to our worship. Above all, we want to bring Jesus Christ to the centre of everything!

Atmospherics can affect our worship experience—the warmth of the welcome we receive when we arrive or the way we reach out to those sitting around us; the quality of the sound and projection of voices; the temperature of the room; the various experiences we bring to Church as well as our personal attitudes and preferences.

The Worship Action team has gathered representatives from the praise teams, choir, sound and technical departments. As a group our desire is to listen to each other, to bless and affirm one another, as we look to God to help us plan for the future.

Rev. Charles McMullen

## Discipleship

Our team of nine meets every other month. Two members have attended a series of discipleship workshops run by PCI while another two are completing a course on discipleship run by the CS Lewis Institute.

Our key responsibilities are:

- (i) to support the members of West develop through from Membership, 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 the set of priorities for the next year; and
- (v) to provide as far as possible, the resources to enable members to grow as disciples.

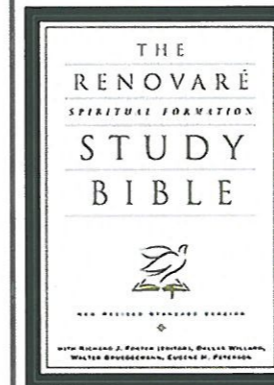
In other words, we are tasked to assist our church in walking more closely in the footsteps of Jesus, listening to His voice and allowing His spirit to shape our thinking and our actions.

When Paul wrote his second letter to Christian people in Corinth, he told them, 'You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.' (2 Cor. 3:2-3)

Do you see yourself as a letter from Jesus to others, known and read by everyone? This is the reality and the calling of all disciples. So how do we do this? Paul goes on to talk about competence, or the ability to follow through on our calling. Our **character** must be matched by God given and spirit-shaped **competence**. This is when we start to 'grow and flourish' as disciples and

become the attractive and authentic letter that Paul is talking about.

Our action team is working on both of these key aspects.



Christian character formation determined by our heart's desire being shaped by God's word. We have encouraged this growth and illustrated how it takes place through the SOAP (Study, Observe [i.e. ponder its meaning], Apply and Pray) approach to reading our Bibles (check it out in the 'Resources' on our new fabulous West website). Sunday evenings have consequently taken a different shape over the past three months when we have introduced 'SOAP' and grappled together in small groups with the associated teaching from the pulpit. Participants have really enjoyed the sessions and appreciated talking with and listening to others who, like them, are seeking to follow Jesus closely. It is only when we spend time with other Christians that the possibility of being shaped and mentored by one another starts to become a reality.

Our team is also working to equip our Home or Small Groups with resources that are designed to build on the Sunday sermons and challenge us to make our response more specific and active. These studies are also available on the Church website.

Our team would love to see more of West's members, of whatever age, linking with a small group. In these groups, we are inspired when we share our own stories of how it is to follow Jesus in the office, or car-pool, or business, or classroom, or wherever we love out our calling to be disciples and imitators of Christ.

Bible teaching and praying together helps us to grow. We would also love to see each group identify some areas of mission or service to which the members could contribute together.

At another level, the Action Team is considering how mentoring (a more mature Christian meeting with a younger Christian group of Christians) can take shape in our church family. We are looking at practical resources such as 'Just for Starters' from the Good Book Company and Transforming Discipleship by Greg Ogden. We feel that these various steps need to be tailored appropriately to encourage for example, those who have recently come to faith through Alpha or through CafeChurch or those who are transitioning from Young West or those who are simply keen to grow in their faith.



Look out for updates in <http://westchurchbangor.org.uk> and be encouraged to keep putting on the armour of God and 'fighting the good fight'.

Maureen Bennett & Dave Gray

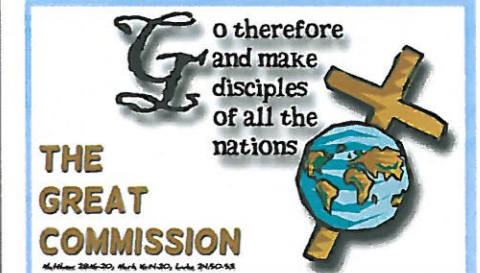
## Mission and Outreach

I wonder if you have ever stopped and asked yourself the question: "Why do I attend church?" or maybe "What's all this really about?". Those are big questions that we could all wrestle with. And maybe we could all bring slightly different answers to the table if we were to answer those questions honestly. But imagine for a moment if we were to put those questions directly to Jesus. What purpose would he give for us meeting together? What would he tell us church was 'all about'?

I co-convene the Mission and Outreach session sub-group at West Church, and we believe our mandate springs from Jesus' heart for the church. We see on the pages of the New Testament clear evidence that Jesus wants the church to exist not for the benefit of its members but for the benefit of non-members.

After Jesus had risen from the grave that first Easter he met with his followers and famously gave them a bold mission that we call "The Great Commission". And of course we all know that the great commission commands us to "go into all the earth and make church members". Wait a minute. Did I get that right? Maybe it was "Go into all the world and start church organisations and ministries?" Does that sound right?

Hang on. It turns out neither of those are right. Jesus' singular mission statement for His church was that they were to "go into all the world and make disciples".



So Jesus' vision for the church is all about mission. We are to be disciples who are actively involved in making other disciples. That's so much more than just being church attendees! In fact, when you think about it like that, it's quite a challenging and uncomfortable thought!

So the Mission and Outreach Team are determined to mobilise the congregation of West Church Bangor to engage in God's mission. We want to champion the cause of mission and outreach and facilitate members of the congregation in connecting with missional opportunities.

Cont'd page 8



## MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

We define Outreach as missional work we do within our own congregational setting, such as the Alpha Course or the Easter Mission and we define Mission as any missional work done outside of our own setting that people are 'sent out' from the congregation to engage in. This can be both overseas or at home here in the province.

The Mission and Outreach team will also engage in the strategic planning of missional opportunities, and seek to coordinate making these happen. Please pray for the Mission and Outreach Team as we begin this journey. Let's pray that we all catch the vision of Jesus to be his disciples, and let's step together into this exciting calling to go out and make more disciples.

*Rev. Andy Galbraith*

### Pastoral Care

The various action teams mentioned in a previous West Life magazine are now operational, and for us on the Pastoral Care Action Team (PCAT for short), we are delighted to have the input of the additional elders who have joined the already existing structure. The PCAT encompasses such a wide variety of ministries that it would be impossible to mention everything in a short article like this, so let's look briefly at some aspects of this vital aspect of church life...

(i) This past year it has been a blessing to see the senior lunches develop and grow. These are for seniors who live alone with little or no family support. We've had to start small, but are happy to expand and include more people, and we are open to suggestions as to who could be invited in line with these criteria.



(ii) The Newcomers' Welcome Corner, led by Ronnie and Margaret Matthews, has increased to twice a month and plans are underway to make it every week. You've undoubtedly noticed the turquoise polo shirts that the team wear while on duty and the lovely cups reserved for the newcomers passing through! We have a new church handbook, "Welcome to West", filled with information about West Church that we will give to newcomers to help them learn about who and what West Church is. This ministry has led to a number of people becoming new church members, who are lovingly welcomed into membership by church elder Jane Richardson visiting them and presenting them with a nice plant.

(iii) The Senior Care Team, led by Carol Davis, has grown to include new visitors and new visitees. Our elderly folk who are unable to get to church easily are very important to us and deserve our loving care. Each time there is communion at church, our plan is to have a communion service for those for whom attendance on a Sunday is difficult. Communion is also available for those who request it at home.

(iv) DivorceCare and GriefShare continue under the able leadership of Dorothy Campbell and Anne Andrews respectively. Anne will soon be stepping down after decades of good and faithful service, to be replaced by other excellent leaders. Well done Anne! And thank you for such sterling work!

There are many other activities that come under the umbrella of pastoral care in the way that they provide wonderful opportunities for people to gather for fellowship and mutual support. All play their part in integrating individuals into the church family. Just have a look at the wave chart on the back wall of the welcome area, and you will see how many such activities exist!

At our most recent PCAT meeting in February, we were reminded how greatly blessed we are at West Church to have so many devoted, talented and faithful volunteers involved in such a diversity of ministries. There isn't enough room in this article to mention you all by name, but on behalf of the church's

pastoral staff, may I thank you most sincerely for all that you do in the service of others. We are so grateful too for the wonderful logistical support given by the West Church office staff and caretakers. Great stuff guys, thanks!



I think the words American President John F Kennedy spoke in his inaugural address are most appropriate here: 'Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.' Our many pastoral care volunteers have applied these words to their service within the church. But there is room for many more church members to be involved! Have you discovered yet what God is calling you to do?

*Andy Heron*

### Youth & Children's

In a ministry that is continuing to grow on Sundays and also with mid-week groups, organisations and activities, I felt it best to summarise some key areas that we are working on at present.

#### Interns

The Youth and Children's Action Team has been focused on recruiting 2 new part-time interns to replace our 4 current interns who leave at the end of the summer. Ashleigh has been with us for 3 years, Courtney for 2 years and Matthew and Bronte for 1 year. They have been amazing and it will be difficult to fill their shoes, BUT we are trusting God for the right people. Links for the job description are on

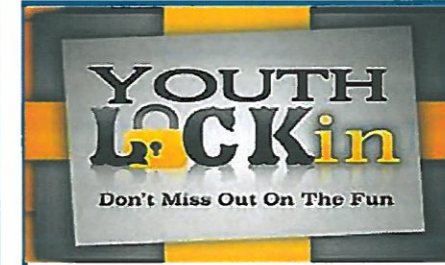


West Church web page. Please pass this on to anyone who might be interested in taking a year out to gain leadership and ministry experience with teenagers. Also, please pray for the right people to fill these 2 intern posts to enable ministry amongst our children and young people to grow and develop.

#### Schools Ministry

January and February have been exceptionally busy months for the team in our primary schools ministry. We have had the privilege of teaching P3, P4 and P6 Scripture Union lessons, leading school assemblies and a weekly SU after schools club. This provides a wonderful opportunity to make connections with children and teachers.

An overnight lock in has been planned at the end of June for the P7 children from our local primary schools to come into West and enjoy our Saturday night Wyldlife programme. This has been a great way in the past to develop links with children who have no connections with West Church.



#### J Club

Each week the children in J Club bring their collection and we give this to various missions and projects. In December we were excited to welcome Holly Eves in J Club and present her with a cheque for £520 for Meninadanca Brazil. Our next collection will go towards supporting Elliot Gray as he goes to Tanzania with Compassion UK.

We are also looking for two new adult leaders to help out in our preschool ministry on a Sunday morning. This involves being on a rota one month on, one month off. We want people who enjoy being with little ones, helping them settle into the class, playing with them during free time, encouraging them with

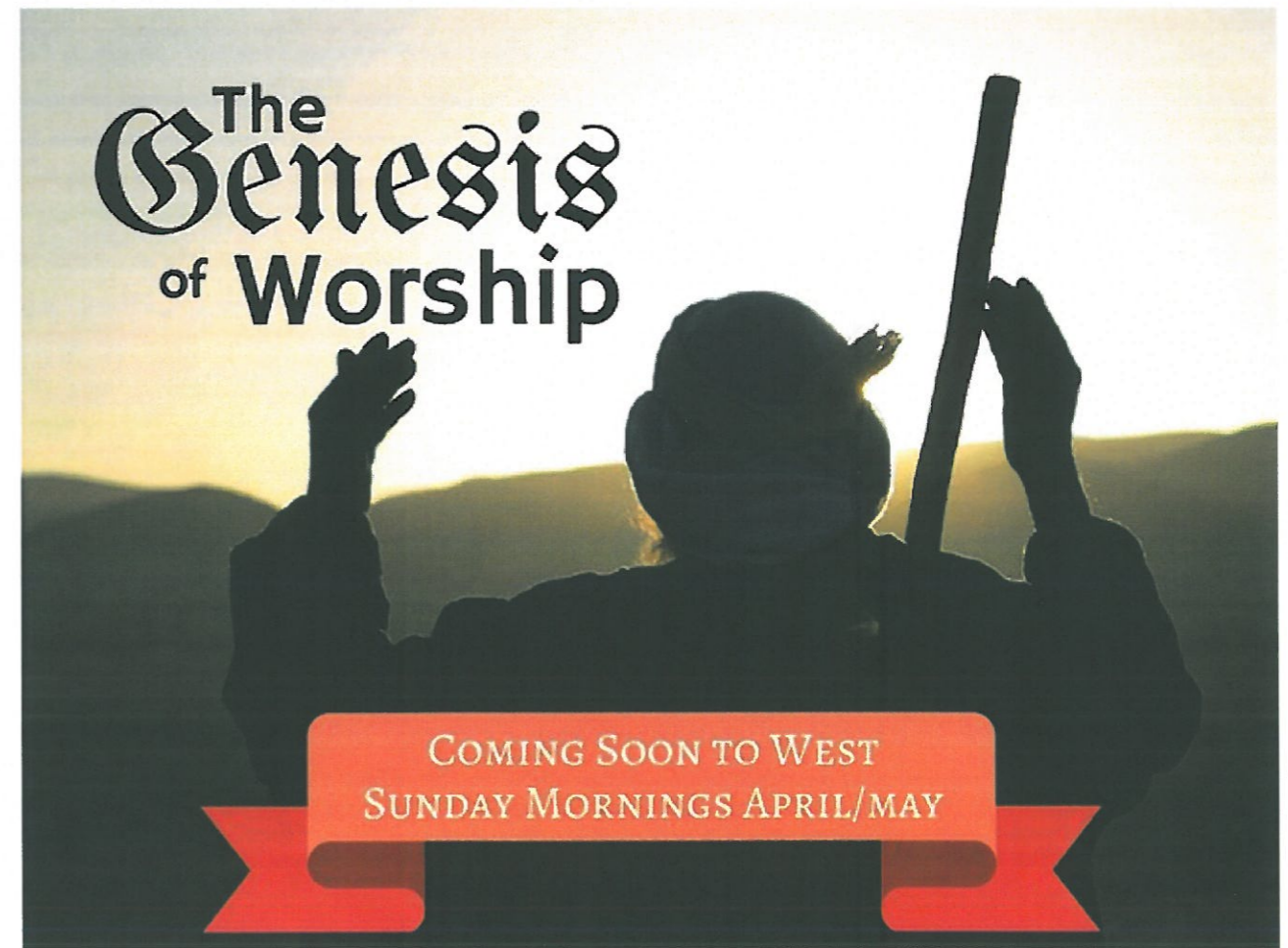
their singing and listening to a Bible story. If you would be interested in serving in this area, please speak to one of the leaders in Junior Beginners or to Sonia.

#### Easter Mission

Finally, Easter Mission is almost upon us! We have 250 primary school aged children registered for the week with another 40 on our reserve list. A team of 100+ teenagers will sleep over in the church building for the week, lead the children's programme and be involved in afternoon outreach activities. You can help out in various ways:

- (i) Pray for the week (see page 39)
- (ii) Help feed the team of teenagers and Young West adults by bringing fruit (no kiwis) or traybakes (no nuts) before the week starts or during the week (10th—14th April)
- (iii) Sign up to help us wash up after lunch any day or after our Parent's Night on Wednesday 12th

*Sonia Mawhinney*





# ALPHA AT WEST

by Rev. Andy Galbraith

**On the 13th September 2016 we began our preparations for running an Alpha course in West by participating in Alpha Prayer Live. This was an event that connected churches all over the UK who were preparing to run Alpha in a live-streamed prayer event over the internet.**

**We followed this up with team training, and then on Monday 26th September we kicked off an 11 week Alpha course meeting in the Welcome area at West Church.**

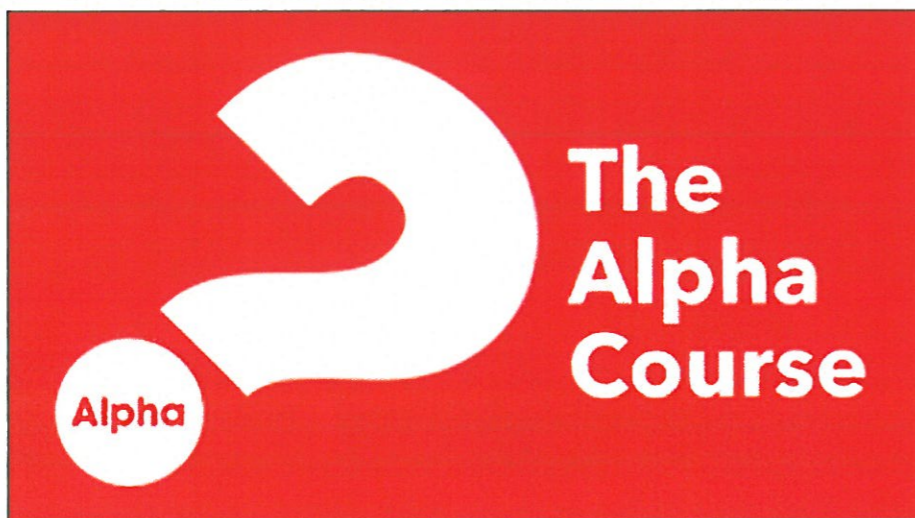
**The welcome area proved to be a great venue to host Alpha in, and we had four large discussion groups meeting, often watching episodes from the new Alpha Film Series not the big screen. Discussions were great, and many found the course to be a faith stimulating experience. Here are a few stories from participants.**

## “My heart is bursting with joy”... by Julie Scott

I had heard the Alpha course mentioned too many times not to be curious. I signed up but had no idea really what to expect.

Feeling defensive and a little nervous, I made my way to West Church for the first session. I had a lot of doubts and I was armed with a tonne of questions. As I stepped through the doors of the welcome area, I found myself met by the aroma of coffee and an abundance of chatter and friendliness. There were even a few familiar faces.

Each week we would watch a video and then split into groups for discussion. I was not a Christian and I was always determined to ask as many questions as possible. The group were attentive as we each shared our views and talked, nobody was judgemental.



After the third week, I found myself really looking forward to Alpha. I was learning so much about Jesus. When we reached the episode, “How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit,” my life changed completely. We had all watched some Alpha videos and enjoyed an amazing lunch together before gathering to listen to Rev. Charles McMullan. Afterwards there was an opportunity for prayer. Paul and Jane Simms asked if they could pray for me. They prayed that I would be filled with the Holy Spirit. It was a very emotional experience and when they had finished, Jane gave me what I can only describe as the warmest hug I have ever had. I went home and prayed. I thanked the Lord for all the amaz-

in my life and all that I have. I asked for my sins to be forgiven. In that moment, I realised that Jesus was with me and always had been. I felt so humbled.



Pictured is Julie, enjoying a day out in Belfast

In the weeks that followed, my life continued to change dramatically. Alpha continued and it was amazing! The eagerness to learn more about Jesus was overwhelming. I spent a lot of time thinking of and praying for others. I had a new appreciation for absolutely everything and everyone.

Before Alpha, I was living a, “functional,” life. Although I had so much to be grateful for, there was an empty space in my heart. I never really lived life to the full and worried about every little thing. Now, my heart is bursting with joy. All my anxieties have been replaced with calm. Jesus is in control and he answers my prayers.



Pictured above is Ian Wallace, enjoying a coffee in the Welcome Area

## “Our wee Alpha group”... by Ian Wallace

I was invited by a friend to attend an Alpha course at Frist Bangor Presbyterian in 2015. I was enjoying this very much until this was abruptly ended after four weeks due to me breaking my leg. I was then invited to join their new Alpha class and was about to accept, when I heard that Andy Galbraith was starting an Alpha here at West, in September 2016.

I joined this course and found myself blessed to be in what has become known as “our wee Alpha group”. Six months on and there is still a closeness between most of the group members.

We were equally blessed by the superb leader of our group, Brian Moorhead. Poor Brian suffered many stretched questions which he had the great patience to deal with and occasionally reminded us (me) that he was the one that should be asking the questions!

Since joining West back in 1970, I quickly discovered that Alpha was something I badly needed having been missing from most things religious for over 40 years. It was very educational to me, least I made it so, maybe more than others needed to. It wasn't all serious however as at time, Brian cleverly allowed tangents from the theme to occur. This lightened the more serious aspects and we quickly got back on track.

Most members, but not all, were already Christians and being around these folk did us no end of good in our thinking and outlook. I found myself looking forward to Monday evenings and sought more and increasing involvement at church as a result of Alpha.

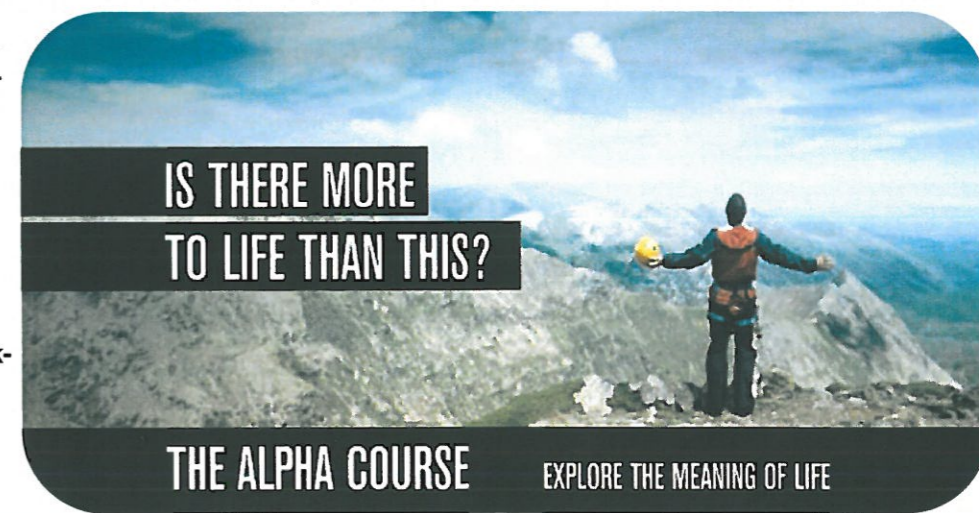
Now the time factor reappears in my life—whilst in business I had no time for church and religion, NOW, I have little time for anything other than church and ways in which I can continue to seek to learn. I have to be truthful and confess that somehow I have managed to steal (surely not) a little time for my musical interest (playing jazz trumpet) and of course, being a near life long supporter of Liverpool Football Club, I manage to stay abreast of hopefully their successes. Now, church always comes first.

As I write this, I am reflecting how much more I am actually getting out of attending Alpha now that the course is over—I have become involved with the Senior's lunches, Wednesday Night Praise & Fellowship and Thursday Bible Study—Alpha is as much about the people as it is the course and I would encourage you to sign up for the next course if you have not already attended Alpha!

In the New Year we were given the green light by the Mission and Outreach Session Sub-team to take the Alpha course out of the church building and experiment with running it in a local pub. So on Wednesday 1st February we kicked off a new Alpha experience in the basement room of the Bryansburn Inn. This has been a fantastic venue for creating a relaxed informal atmosphere to welcome in folks who are unfamiliar with church. We have over forty people meeting in five discussion groups following a showing of the relevant episode of the Alpha Film Series.

Discussions have been lively, the questions have been heartfelt, and relationships have been forming between guests and team alike.

Maybe you know somebody who you would love to see taking part in the next Alpha course at West. Start praying for them now, and let's ask God to make it happen!





# MILESTONES IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES

by Sonia Mawhinney

**S**unday 8<sup>th</sup> January was a day of real celebration in West Church when we formally welcomed 14 of our young people and youth leaders into our church family as they came forward to take communion.

Two of our elders, Rick Scott and Ron McAvoy met with the young people on two occasions to facilitate teaching and discussion on the significance of the coming forward for communion and becoming full members of the West Church family. In thinking about making this decision to come forward to take communion Anna McDowell said she realised what an important part of the Christian faith communion is. She said 'I felt that it was the right time to come forward and publicly make a commitment to Jesus.'

The young people were encouraged to pray about and ask an adult to be their mentor - someone older who would take on the role of encouraging, praying for and supporting them in their Christian walk. Molly Flowers asked one of our Young West leaders, Courtney Thompson, to be her mentor. Molly said: "Having a mentor has really helped me cope with situations I wouldn't have been able to deal with. If I am worried, upset, confused or angry I can just ask Courtney and she will help me with it."

To mark this occasion as a 'milestone' in their Christian lives, the young people were encouraged to invite their family members to the church service. After the service the young people, members from their family and mentors celebrated a family lunch together in the Welcome Area. Jordan Galbraith, one of the Young West leaders talked about the importance of church



**Pictured left—right (back) Rev. Charles McMullen, Jordan Galbraith, David Edge, Harry McBride & Rick Scott, (middle) Courtney Thompson, Kerry McAvoy, Ellen Robinson, Katie Robinson and Phoebe Mann (front), Megan Smith, Molly Flowers, Sarah McIvor and Sonia Mawhinney, our Youth & Chil-**

family when thinking about coming forward for communion. He said "I've been coming to West for over 7 years now and over that time I've been so blessed to be a part of such a great congregation which has really helped my faith grow over that time. Whilst I've felt like part of this church family for a long time, I came forward for communion as I wanted to step up and actually join the congregation, whilst also getting to understand the importance and significance of communion in a much more deep and real way than I ever understood it before".

For Katie McFall the decision to

come forward for communion was in direct response to the growth in her faith. She said 'I've been growing deeper in my faith these past few years and felt ready to become a full, committed member of West Church.

Please continue to pray for all our young people and leaders at West Church that they would come to know Jesus, that they would grow deeper in their faith as they love Him and serve others. It is our prayer that they each know they are deeply loved and celebrated as part of our West Church family.

# EIGHT-YEAR-OLD AMELIE WINS THE MODERATOR'S ART COMPETITION: 'CARING IN GOD'S WORLD'

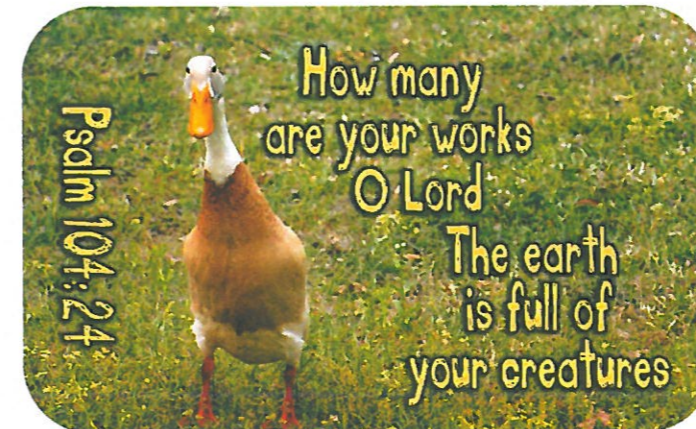
Taken from the recent edition of the Presbyterian Herald

**I** love to draw and when I get a chance I love to paint. When my dad showed me the advert to take part in the Art competition run by the Moderator, I loved the title "Caring in God's World" and I thought I would like to give it a go.

Mum got me a canvas from the Bargain Book shop in Connswater and I hunted out the paints from the big box in the front room.

My teacher was on strike one Wednesday and I came to work at West Church with my dad and set up my studio on Charles' desk (don't tell him!).

I got the idea of using a Celtic cross like the one in the Ulster Museum—only making it really colourful. I decided to use a collage around the shape because it would be really interesting and arty and would allow me to use lots of pictures of the world. I used a map of the world as the centre of the cross and wrote Psalm 104:24 around it. (How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.)



**Pictured above is Amelie receiving her prize from the Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar along with Rev. Charles McMullen.**

Sonia helped me look up this verse—the whole Psalm is all about God's creation. I then used ideas about caring for people here at home and in poor countries and the No Child Taken campaign for Tearfund. I loved looking for ideas about caring for creation and used a famous painting of a tiger in a jungle that I had seen in London—I loved this painting.

I tried to make my painting fun as well with lots of colourful hands and a chicken crossing the road.

It seemed like a long wait after I sent my painting in for judging but I was really surprised when I won a prize, I loved that and I love my camera that was the prize, thank you. I have enjoyed taking lots of pictures.

I hope you like my painting,  
Love Amelia

Amelia's winning entry is pictured on the front cover of this magazine.



# Taking Prayer to the Streets

Rev. Andy Galbraith

A commissioning service was held in Carnalea Methodist Church on Wednesday 10th January 2017 to launch an exciting new initiative agreed by local churches. The congregations of St. Galls, Carnalea Methodist and West have embarked upon a community prayer strategy called "Street by Street".

Street by Street aims to reach out to the community around our churches, showing love and pastoral concern in Jesus' name. Seymour Street Methodist Church in Lisburn have pioneered this new expression of community prayer, and in Lisburn it has been hugely instrumental in connecting the needs of the broken and the hurting in the community with a God who has compassion for those in crisis as well as serving to reconnect the local churches.

## STREET MINISTRY

Our friends at Carnalea Methodist have taken the lead in implementing this initiative into our immediate community here in Bangor West, with West and St Gall's coming on board to share in the experience.

### So what exactly is it going to look like?

Every fortnight a specific street in our community will become the focus of a combined prayer initiative across all three congregations. Our services will announce the street we are focusing on, and it will be highlighted in our order of services as well.

After a fortnight of focused prayer, a group of seven people, made up from all three participating churches, will meet up at one of the churches. After a brief prayer, three of the group will stay behind in the host church to pray for the exercise, while the other four proceed to the chosen street to go from door to door. They will knock on doors and explain to the residents that local churches are praying for their street and ask if there is anything they would like prayer for. These prayer requests will be collected, in a way that protects the anonymity of the resident, and brought back to the church, where the group will pray for all the requests.

Please pray for this initiative as it progresses 'street by street' across our community. We would love you all to take note of the chosen street each fortnight and remember it in your prayers. Please pray for the residents to experience God's love amidst whatever challenges they are facing. We'd also appreciate your prayers for the team as they seek to reach out, in Jesus name, to the people in our community—and should you find the team knocking on your front door, please encourage them in their work!

If you would like to be involved with this initiative, please contact the Church Office or speak to Andy Galbraith.

Pictured left are some members of the 'Street by Street' team.



# Ordination & Installation of Jeff McWatters

Our congratulations to the Rev. Jeff McWatters, who was ordained and installed as the minister of Streaton Presbyterian Church, Newtownards, by a Commission of the Ards' Presbytery on Friday 3rd February, 2017.

Pictured (L-R) with his son Luke,

wife Ann-Marie and daughter Anna, Jeff's new congregation has approximately 300 families.

At the reception afterward, various speakers mentioned his considerable gifts of heart and mind. Speaking on behalf of his home congregation at West Church, Rev. Charles McMullen joked that with

Jeff's background in pharmacy, he would be able to diagnose members as well as pray for them.

We wish the McWatters every Blessing in Christ.

Rev. Charles McMullen





# RECOGNITION AWARDS 2016



Pictured above with the Moderator, Rev. Frank Sellar, is Ann Darrah and Norma Conway representing 3C's Tuesday evening group.

Pictured below with the Moderator, Rev. Frank Sellar, is Gavin Fry, Beulah Shields and Pete McAvoy, part of the Safe Zone team.

**The Partnership Award** this year was awarded to "Safe Zone" nominated by Rev. Charles McMullen.

Safe Zone is a group of Christian volunteers who want to show the people of Bangor the love of Jesus in a practical way.

Safe Zone aims to provide a visible presence on weekend evenings and is accessible to all the pubs, clubs and members of the community regardless of religion, race, gender, age or sexual orientation. They provide a resource to reduce and, when possible, prevent violent alcohol or drug influenced crime. Safe Zone is building a shared vision for a safer and more secure town centre. They also offer a 'point of need' pastoral support and advice for the public. They also provide first aid and help to create a safer, more friendly environment for the community to enjoy.



Every two years, the Council of Social Witness within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland run a Recognition Award scheme to highlight the work social witness within the church and wider community. This year West Church won 2 of the awards, as follows:

**Congregation Team of the Year** was awarded to our 3Cs group which meets on a Tuesday evening led by Norma Conway and on a Wednesday afternoon, led by Ethel Anderson. This team was nominated by Rev. Charles McMullen and Denise Keegan (a member on the Council of Social Witness Board).

3Cs, over the years have knitted 100s of teddy bears who are being played with worldwide. The groups have also knitted 100s of hats which again have travelled worldwide on sailors. West has formed a close link with the Seamen's Mission through this particular project. Their most recent claim to fame has been the "Twiddlemuff" - a knitted hand muff with buttons, ribbons and charms sewn on for residents and patients with dementia. Twiddlemuffs can be found in Residential Homes, the A&E department and in Ward 21 & 25 of the Ulster Hospital.

# CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

by Garth Hall, Congregational Church Secretary

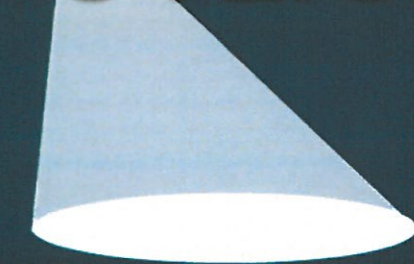
Our Congregational Church Committee meets every second month on the third Monday and it is in place to administer the temporal affairs of the congregation, as well as administering all funds belonging to the congregation, administering Church property, regulating how the Church premises, halls and rooms are used, providing the interested of the Central Funds and Mission of the Church, co-ordinating communications, complying with Health & Safety, assisting with Personnel and Staffing issues and organising Hospitality.

If you ask a Committee Chair they may well say as the joke goes, "Any Committee that is in the slightest way useful is composed of people who are too busy to want to sit on it for a second longer than they have to". That is perhaps a little harsh and I know from personal experience in West, serving on an effectively run Committee can be rewarding and there are potential riches to be gained from the array of experience, expertise and insights around the table.

To steal another quote, "A Committee is a group of people who can do nothing but as a group decide that nothing can be done". Many a true word has been said in jest but bearing in mind our growing congregation and the pressure on available space and resources, we must not let this be said of us at West. With this in mind, and to encourage forward thinking and a proactive ethos, we have in recent years successfully structured our Committee into 4 key areas.

- 1) Finance
- 2) Property/Health & Safety
- 3) Hospitality and Catering
- 4) Communications

## COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT



The purpose of these groups is to provide a more accountable, integrated and cohesive structure, designed to achieve agreed objectives.

Our Treasurer Victor Stephens, along with John Poole, our Gift Aid Convener, have continued their time consuming collation of our financial records and their excellent attention to detail is fundamental in ensuring the proper functioning and planning for the congregational needs. Typically Victor gives an overview of our accounts at the opening of each Committee meeting and provides a comparison of their standing to the previous year. As a Committee we are conscious of living within our means and we have always strived to ensure that we demonstrate proper stewardship of our finances. The overseeing of Church Finances is often onerous and carries with it not a little responsibility and with this in mind it is always good to look at the lighter side of this crucial area.

Three boys are in the school yard bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, "my Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem and they give him £25.00".

The second boy says, "that's nothing, my Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song and they give him £200.00".

The third boy says, "I got you both beat. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon and it takes four people to collect all the money!"

The Finance Sub-Group, under the guidance of Jeremy Eves, further enhances the prudent management of our finances. In 2016 they diligently dealt with such issues as ongoing expenditure



cont'd on page 18



to our bungalow (93 Crawfordsburn Road), the Manse, the escalation of the congregation's use of Standing Orders/Direct Debits, not to mention overseeing the increase of income for operational issues.



**Properties and Buildings**

The area of property is very comprehensive and we are blessed to rely on the expertise of Brian McVeigh who heads up this team. Each month this sub-committee evaluates the many requests for accommodation from external groups and balances the requests for hall and room allocations against the many and varied internal groups and organisations. In 2016, the sub-committee was heavily engaged in supplementary building works at '93' and over and beyond this addressed general church building issues such as water ingress, carpet cleaning, repainting, floor varnishing, furniture repair and damaged windows.



The Property sub-committee is closely flanked and complimented by the Health & Safety sub-committee, a specialised team headed up by Stephen Cully.

**Question: How many Health & Safety Officers does it take to change a light bulb?**

**Answer: One, and the rest of the world to pander around him. Only joking Stephen!**

I am delighted that this is not our experience here in West where the sub-committee provides informed advice and guidance and helps harness this complex area with the aid

of specialised guest speakers, assessments, training and the implementation of compliance and standards. Moreover, the area of Fire Risk Assessment, evacuations and the introduction and training of Fire Wardens is always ongoing.

**Communication**

When considering the signage on our extension building, "Serving Christ Serving Others", the role of our Communication's Sub-committee becomes all the more vital. Indeed the whole area of communication is key to our witness and we want to ensure that we are portraying the correct message.

*The story goes that some weeks ago, Cheryl Miller from our office, was carrying out some administration and found a local tile shop signed for by someone called Christian. Pretty sure that nobody had ordered or purchased tiles, Cheryl called the shop to point out the mistake. "I'm sorry", she told the manager, "but there are no Christians here at West Church". Under the guidance of Stephen Cully, in 2016, the Sub-committee has continued to harness our West Life magazine which Cheryl Miller marvellously oversees. Fundamentally however, most of the year was spent researching and investigating how best to modernise our Church website. I am glad to say that with the help of some external professional advice, the website has been completely rewritten and is now up to date with a strong photographic content professionally provided by one of our Young West members, Curtis Irvine, and importantly gives a good platform for the future. It was launched just prior to Christmas and any feedback is welcome. (see page 34)*

In conclusion, the sub-group, towards the end of the year, began to concentrate on a complete re-brand of literature to compliment our Church logo and as directed by Kirk Session, consideration of how to best make the Values of the church more prominent and visible are presently being expedited.

## HOSPITALITY TEAM

Equally important, a much expanding ministry and pastoral tool here in West is that of Hospitality and over the past 22 years we have been blessed with the services of Linda Cummings and her team in this area.

Our sub-committee creates expense plans for Church functions and manage catering requests from within West and from external groups. These functions are wide and varied and can range from weddings to funerals to Meal Ministry to Elder Away Days. Moreover, the group has been successful in the past year in recruiting catering volunteers and has implemented the new Environmental Health & Hygiene standards in a practical manner which included the training of at least 2 volunteers from within all our groups & organisations to ensure safe food hygiene practice.

It is however a bitter sweet moment when we recently learnt of Linda's decision to step down from her role in June 2017 along with her colleague Joan D'Arcy. As many of you will already know, Linda has recently become engaged to Stephen Thompson and we of course are thrilled about this news and wish them God's richest blessing in their future marriage and life together.

What an outstanding contribution Linda has made over the last two decades in this fundamental area of witness and we would very much value your prayers as the team set about trying to find a suitable individual or individuals to help fill this huge void!



As a Committee, we are immensely indebted to our Minister, who despite many other demands continues to involve himself and support the work of the Committee. To all of those members of the congregation who continue to give of their time and effort carrying out God's work in West Church we want to say a sincere thank you. Each contribution so freely given in whatever aspect of our Church life is so important in developing and expressing our witness.

I trust this short report gives some insight into the ongoing work of West Church Committee and its related Sub-Groups.

Garth Hall  
Congregational Church Secretary



# team catering



## is looking for volunteers

Have you any spare time?  
Would you like to become more involved in Church Life?  
We would welcome volunteers to become part of our Catering Team—and the good thing is you don't need to be a great cook!

- You could help by setting out the Welcome Area or Halls with tables & chairs
- You could help with preparing and serving food
- You could help in the kitchen by clearing up after an event

What events do we cater for?

At the minute we provide hospitality for Funerals, Senior's lunches, Elder's Away Days, PW groups, Youth & Children's Events, Christmas Services and other requests that may come in.

You don't need to be available for all of these—all we need is your name and contact number and the area in which you feel you could help and when an event comes up we will give you a call to see if you are available. Please contact the church office on 028 9145 9688 or call up to the office to find out more.





# TEARFUND CONNECT UPDATE

**H**appy New Year to our dear friends at West Church, Bangor, from all in India! As we enter this new year we are hopeful, excited and busy. Thank you for your financial support—we could not do this work without you.

## Empowerment from the ground up

As you know, relationships are central to the work we do. We work hard to ensure we know the name and story of each person we meet, reminding ourselves that 'the poor' are humans too. It is our friendships here that mean we get to build the trust necessary to speak into people's lives.

Our efforts have been rewarded recently with the privilege of seeing community here really growing. One of our favourite moments happened a few weeks ago. We asked one of the women we met at our Bhiwandi centre in the Mumbai slums if she would host one of our community support meetings in her home. Over 10 people came and were cared for excellently by their host. The lady was overwhelmed—she felt she was

not worthy to host such things and did not think anybody would attend. Seeing her empowered enough to care for her neighbours so compassionately was beautiful. It was a very emotional evening for all who attended!

Our regular field visits have also seen a rise in the number of people coming to our community centre to meet with our staff. We are so overwhelmed with visitors that we are looking for a new, bigger building in Bhiwandi.

## Milk Producers Group

Back in July we wrote about our Milk Producers Group (MPG). Since they were established they have gone from strength to strength. We recently managed to organise and facilitate a meeting between the MPG and Dairy Officials for the district to discuss potential partnership options. On the back of this, the Dairy Office has agreed to provide loans for the MPG which allows them to expand even further. The partnership also gives more scope for increasing sales with the Dairy Office having lots of connections. As the MPG expands it means more people are able to bring in



Income generation from the Milk Producers Group



Tearfund Partners help to combat Human Trafficking

more income for their family, helping alleviate some of the suffering in our villages.

## What else have we been up to?

As we said earlier, we have been busy! We ran Hindi lessons, writing classes and drawing sessions for local children which were very busy. We also ran pizza making sessions, weekly youth clubs and hand washing workshops to teach young people about good hygiene practices. We are also carrying on with beautician and tailoring courses and have supported some women to start making bags to sell in the local market. We also helped another woman who was great at making snacks for her neighbours to get a job in a local restaurant!

In both Turbhe and Bhiwandi we are carrying on with our community building activities at our centres: paper flower making with 71 women and decorative butterfly making with another 27. In total, 131 women attended community support groups in December!

We also ran an anti-trafficking prevention workshop for 30 couples in local churches. We taught them about the dangers of trafficking and how to care for their children so that they were protected. This went really well and we are looking to arrange a follow up session in the coming months.

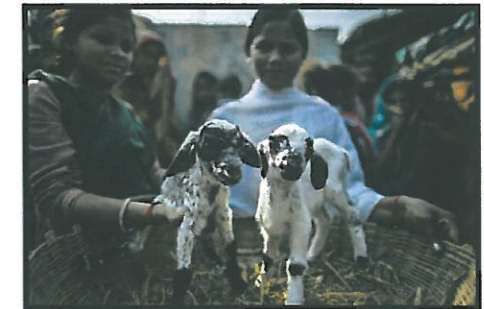
One of the young girls who we work with recently turned 16 and was being pushed into an arranged marriage with a much older man. With our support she is still attending school and hopes to attend college after passing her exams.

Finally, goats are having a big impact on our communities as of late! Members of one self help group have started raising goats together to use for milk and then sell at market, and we recently supplied a family we assessed as being in the category of greatest need

with 5 goats for them to do the same. It's a joy to be able to empower people to be the answer to their own problems using their own resources and also meet the direct needs of people on the edge of survival.



Paper flower making in our community centres



Raising and selling goats at market to generate income for the family.

Thanks to your financial support all these projects are being made possible. Families are now able to stay together and lives are being transformed!

## Thriving in the slums of Mumbai

At Sahaara, we know that children are the future and so believe providing them with a good education, giving them the best start to life, is the key to a better world.

Iqbal (his name has been changed to protect his identity) is 11 and lives with his parents and two year old sister in the Mumbai slums. His father, Mohan (again, his name has been changed to protect his identity), is a security guard earning below the minimum wage, and his mother is a sex worker trying to make ends meet in any way possible.

We met Iqbal and his family during one of our visits to the slum a couple of years ago. Whilst talking to his parents, they told us he struggles in school. His chaotic home-life meant he struggled to complete homework

cont'd page 22



Thriving in the slums of Mumbai



and his parents rarely had time to help him. Combined with lack of food leading to low energy levels, this intelligent child was struggling. One of the things we do is run classes in the slum to coach children through school. Iqbal was invited along and was assigned a personal tutor. As is often the case with the children that come to our classes, Iqbal was clearly intelligent but just lacked confidence. Over the next few classes we worked on improving his self-belief and began to see him thrive! He is now also a regular attendee at our weekly youth club, and with his new confidence has made lots of new friends. Late last year we enrolled Iqbal into English classes at a local academy which is a very big opportunity for him. We know he has a very bright future ahead of him—he currently wants to be a community police officer. Iqbal is one of the many children we work with on a daily basis.

To date, West, as a Connected Church, has raised over £40,000 to support Tearfund partners in the Bihar region and Mumbai, India. Thank you for your continued support!

Robert Sinclair & friends



**SOUP, BREAD & CHEESE LUNCH**

Around 120 people joined together for the Tearfund Lunch at the beginning of March when an amazing £2210 was donated to Tearfund. Not only will this support the team of young people heading off to India in April, but it will also support projects on the ground. Thank you also to Christine Davidson for donating the proceeds of her cards which raised a further £200 for our Tearfund partners.

Meet the 5 young adults from West Church and Conor from Ballygilbert who are travelling to India in April to work with Tearfund and their partners and see first hand how the money we have raised so far is making a difference.

Hi, my name is Courtney and I am 21 years old. For the past two years I have been the Youth and Children's Intern at West Church. I have a real passion for working with children and young people. I have travelled before with Tearfund and love all that they stand for, so this time round I'm super excited to see a new culture and see God work in the new challenges that we are undoubtedly going to face while in India.

My name is Rebecca and I am 24 years old. I work as a business consultant which is a job I really enjoy because it means that I get to meet and build relationships with a huge variety of people on a day-to-day basis. I also have a passion for working with young people—especially those with special needs or learning difficulties. I wanted to go on this trip as I have never been on an international mission before and I feel like it is something that everyone should look to experience if they have the opportunity. I am really looking forward to experiencing a new culture and seeing how God is working in the lives of the people that we are going to meet.

"My name is Lydia, I'm 22 and I work in the Ulster Hospital as a Nurse. When I'm not in work I love being outside and going for walks on the beach, meeting my friends for coffee and spending time with my family. I am really excited about this trip as I have heard so much about my dad's time in India last year and loved hearing and being a part of this project as a church family. I can't wait to get to India and finding out more about the projects and meeting the partners."



My name is Ashleigh and I am 21 years old and live in Donaghadee. I am in my third and final year of University studying 'Youth and community work with practical theology'. Alongside my degree I am interning at West Church and I work part time in an ice cream shop called 'The Cabin'. This will be my first overseas mission trip. I am excited to see the work that God is doing outside of Northern Ireland and I cannot wait to play a small part in this.



Team India—(lf-rt) Conor Patton, Ashleigh O'Sullivan, Naomi Flood-Coleman, Courtney Thompson & Rebecca Lennie, inset Lydia McMullen

My name is Conor. I am 21 years old and currently working as a Youth & Family intern in Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church in Bangor. I am so blessed to have been given this opportunity to travel to India with Tearfund. I have such a heart for overseas mission, and I'm really excited to see how God will use us in India! Since a trip to Uganda in 2014, I have had such a heart to help people. Whether practically, financially or spiritually, I love being able to have an impact on peoples lives. I'm really excited to meet those who have benefited from Tearfund's projects, and to report back to my church the positive, life changing impact our help & God's grace is having in India.

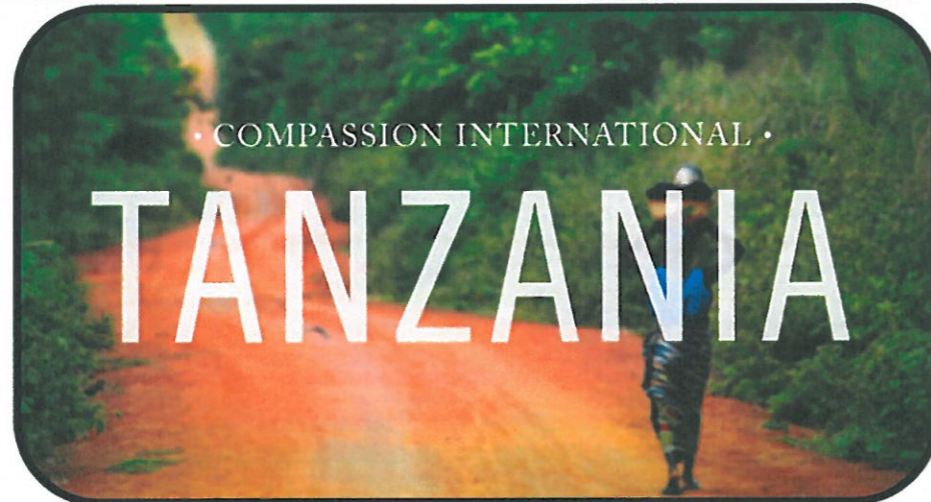
My name is Naomi, I am 21 and I work in a pre-school nursery. I have always had a heart for helping to stop human trafficking. I am excited to experience a new culture and meet Tearfund partners. I have always felt like it was God's plan for me to go to India so I am looking forward to see how God will use us.



# COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL

by Dave Gray

Compassion is a charity that invests itself in the practical transformation of the lives of children in the developing world. The inspiration for their work is the Great Commission that Jesus gave to his followers. Compassion exists as an advocate for children, to release them from their spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty and enable them to become responsible and fulfilled Christian adults. This is primarily achieved through a creative and practical program of child and community sponsorship.



This winter, my son Elliot, was invited to take part in a promotional video being produced by UCB media promoting the work of Compassion, who they are partnering with over the next two years. This has involved filming what his life here in Ireland looks like in contrast to the lives of children in a new project being launched in Tanzania.

attempted to be on our best behaviour, meanwhile granny and other 'wanna be' film stars tried to gate-crash the movie making! By 5pm it was a 'wrap' until the next morning when they followed us to West Church for Sunday worship, filming in the service and at P7 J Club. They returned to our home the next morning at 7am to capture the chaos of breakfast and the exit for school before videoing a typical day in Elliot's class at Strandtown Primary.

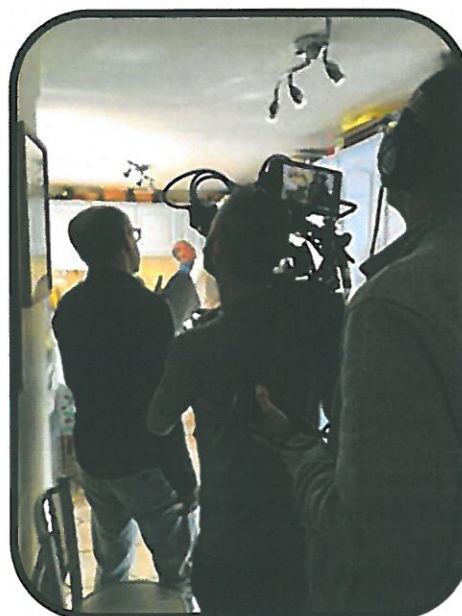
Elliot and I are currently spending a lot of quality time being jabbed with needles at the vaccination clinic in preparation for the second part of the video production. At the start of April we are being flown out to Arusha in Tanzania where Elliot will be filmed visiting a project and experiencing the realities of what life looks like for kids of his age in a poor rural community in Africa.

The hope of the video is that it

will clearly show the impact that sponsoring a child through Compassion can make to a young person as they grow up. The transformation that can be brought for individuals, families and communities when the body of Christ here practically cares for and invests in the body of Christ in other parts of the world.



The finished video will be launched on the UCB media and Compassion websites in May, followed by the Oscars in February 2018! (it's a long-shot I know- but we are people of faith!!)



At the start of February the film crew arrived, they spent Saturday recording family life. The dog and I



# ACCOMMODATION ISSUES IN WEST

by Stephen Cully, Convener of Development Group

As you will be well aware, we are blessed to be members of a thriving and growing congregation.

This has many benefits to the members, but one of the issues it brings is the constant requirement for more and more space. This can be for many different activities, our ever expanding youth activities and organisations, the growth on Sunday mornings at our services and Sunday School or the growth in our mid-week activities, such as courses and discipleship groups.

Kirk Session have been aware of these issues for some time and have been working to look for possible ways of dealing with the growth. A team has been assigned to look at the issues and have been prayerfully considering the different options. They have used the recent Jubilee Report as a source of information along with feedback from various members of the congregation and the staff team.

As a short term solution the Church purchased the bungalow and land at 93 Crawfordsburn Road. This has been invaluable as it has provided additional office space and a number of meeting rooms. However, even with this extra space we are unable to meet all requests for rooms.

We are now at the stage where we are proposing to pass some basic requirements to a number of architects to see how they could provide a solution which would deal with the current issues and allow for further expansion.

As this process progresses, regular updates will be provided to the congregation to get their opinions on any proposals.

West is blessed to be a thriving and growing congregation



## HOSPITAL & PASTORAL VISITATION



If you have a family member in hospital, please do not hesitate to contact Rev Charles McMullen (028 9145 4338). 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 hospital beds, making 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. Please do not assume that members of the pastoral team may have already heard of a particular situation of need. It is always much better for us to be told several times than not at all!

The Pastoral Team



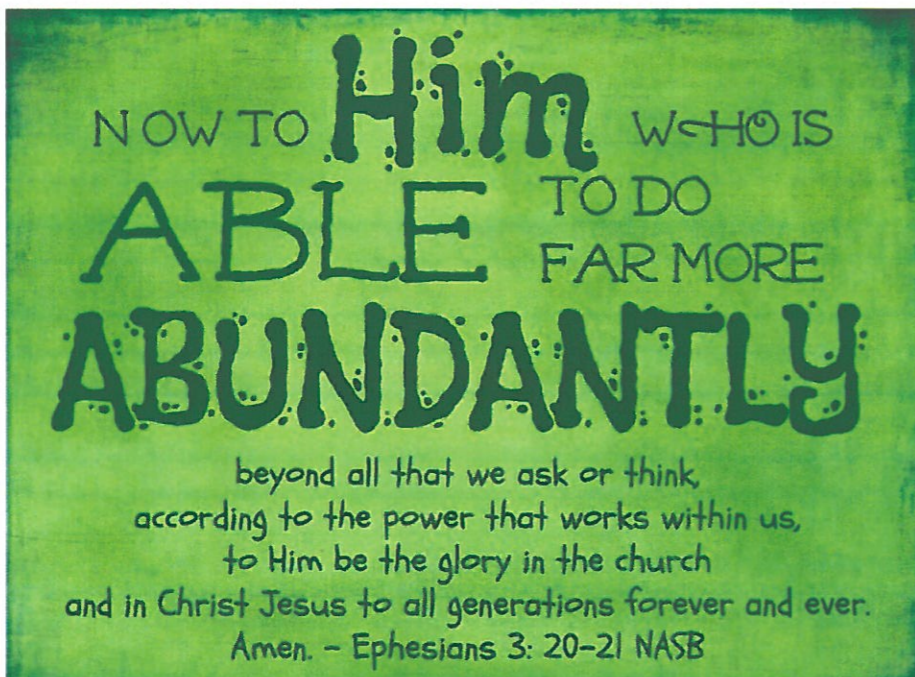
# Course in Prayer Ministry/ Divine Healing

by Heather Thompson

**T**his seminar will be held over two consecutive Saturdays, 13th and 20th May 2017, from 10.00 am until approximately 4.00 pm.

The aim of the seminar is twofold: 1) to encourage one another in receiving healing in Jesus' Name in body, soul and spirit, both for ourselves and for others; 2) to explore what the Word of God teaches us about some of the processes towards the healing that Jesus offers.

Jesus, through His death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father has made a way for us to be released from the imprisonment of griefs, sorrows, transgressions, wounds and sicknesses: from sin, fear, guilt, pain, unforgiveness, resentment and bitterness, physical infirmities etc. whether in body, mind and heart, or spirit. Through our relationship with Jesus and through knowing and understanding what is taught in the scriptures, we are enabled to receive healing for ourselves and to be instruments of healing in God's hands for others.



There will be opportunities given to minister to each other for healing, and space given to reflect on what we are discussing.

Everyone is welcome to come and explore this aspect of the ministry of Jesus.

In the past, when such courses have taken place, the participants

have been greatly blessed by being together and receiving from God, and in finding that God uses them in amazing ways to help others.

There is nothing more wonderful and exciting than witnessing God work in love and compassion through you to those who are hurting or struggling in some way. As we spend time together our vision of God expands and deepens. *'Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.'* Ephesians 3: 20-21.

For further information and to enrol please contact the office (91459688).

We will be exploring the following topics:

- Who we are in Christ, our position in Christ in the heavenly places, and how that impacts how we pray;
- The promises that are held out to us in scripture;
- The importance of waiting on the Holy Spirit for empowerment before ministering, and of listening for guidance and following through on it;
- Some of the processes towards healing: repentance and forgiveness; release from oppression; healing through laying on of hands and anointing with oil in the Name of Jesus; thanksgiving.



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# BOUNDARIES OF UNDERSTANDING

by Catriona Ritchie

*Yet still you walk with me  
“ Each step a revelation of your  
love*

*A gentle leading on to boundaries  
of understanding*

*I've not yet crossed”*

(Eddie Askew, Cross Purposes)

Chris and I met as undergraduates in Law at Queen's. He noticed that I ate a solitary dinner before attending choir practice, so he offered to join me one evening after our circle of friends had gone home and we met on Tuesdays for the next two years to eat sausage, beans and chips and to talk.

Our discussions included our faith in God. Chris' mother had led him to Christ when he was little. His family moved from the Baptist Church to West when he was a young teenager; his parents later worked there as pastoral assistants. He had volunteered at Capernwray Bible College and spent a gap year in Israel with Operation Mobilisation; he was a member of the C.U. Wearing a beard and a Middle Eastern scarf he shocked me: only the essentials of faith seemed to matter to him and he said that if he parachuted into a strange city he would find the nearest church, disregarding denomination. He comprehensively knew his large leather bound bible and explained scripture engagingly. I was intrigued.

I had just finished fourteen years of Catholic education. I cannot remember not knowing God. My parents presented me for baptism. Daddy knelt with us at bedtime to pray; Mummy taught us harmonies to hymns. I recognised the importance of repentance early after reading a little book mummy used to prepare communicants. We never missed Mass even on holiday, Daddy asking

“iglesia?” until strangers showed him the way. At 7, I received my First Communion. I could hardly wait for Confirmation at 11. The story of Pentecost was attractive—how wonderful that I could receive the Holy Spirit by faith and the fruit would ripen in my life. I studied articles by theologians in the religious magazines at my grandmother's house. I was surrounded by people who had real faith in God.

However as Chris and I talked we were becoming defensive. Sacraments: two or seven? Communion: daily, weekly or quarterly? Infant or believer's baptism? Confession? Any real faith without evidence of Works? Liturgy: meaningful, empty?

At a concert where people seemed to be responding to an unseen cue, standing up and down and waving their hands, I tried to copy what I thought were just actions. I was used to reverential silence in church, wore ashes on my forehead at the start of Lent, took retreats, sometimes fasting and barefoot. He went on “weekends”, sermons were remembered by alliteration; everyone had notebooks, pens, “quiet times”.

After two years of cowboy suppers there was an unintended consequence - we discovered we were not just friends anymore! Theology, as it turned out, had not been the only attraction! We did not know how to proceed. But God always provides - we joined Christians Together at Queen's. It was nearly our first date. A very small group of students, Protestant and Catholic, praying together and singing the most beautiful songs in worship. It was appealing. Christians involved in reconciliation encouraged us to stand in the gap (Ezekiel 22) in the no man's land between the churches, and to learn the other church's language so that we could act as interpreters. May God bless those who invested in our little bunch.



Catriona with her boys.....Shay, Conn, Catriona, Chris, Cal & Finn

We learned that some distinctions are matters of emphasis or even of style. Even serious doctrinal disagreements will not divide us in heaven.

***Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4).***

The Creed, common to both the Protestant and Catholic churches, was the foundation. We caught the vision.

All of this seems a long time ago. Over the years, the distinctions have been absorbed into our one flesh relationship, a little picture of Ephesians 2:14: ***“for he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh***

**How did this occur? And what contribution did unity make to our faith journey?**

In Acts 18:24: Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos, who was already accurately teaching the things concerning Jesus, competent in the Scriptures, fervent in Spirit and instructed in the way of the Lord, and they ***“explained to him the way of God more accurately”***.

Therefore partly the differences receded as one of us explained more accurately to the other the way of God (although there was often dispute as to precisely who was Apollos in any given situation!).

However mostly the sense of difference has disappeared as quite unconsciously we each started to experience God as the other does. Scripture reading has become hugely important to me as a means of hearing God's voice: I am now the one with several translations and a concordance on my side of the bed. My sons tease me about my charismatic two step and I need plenty of room to wave my hands.

Meanwhile, Chris has found the Eucharist a very significant means of receiving grace. He listens to Sacred Space, an app prepared by the Jesuits to promote meditation and contemplation of Scripture accompanied by gentle music. He finds the liturgy rich and appreciates the symbolism of the candles the incense, the beautiful interior, the silence and the peace. He has the Book of Common Prayer on his side of the bed.

The irony is not lost on us! It was not a

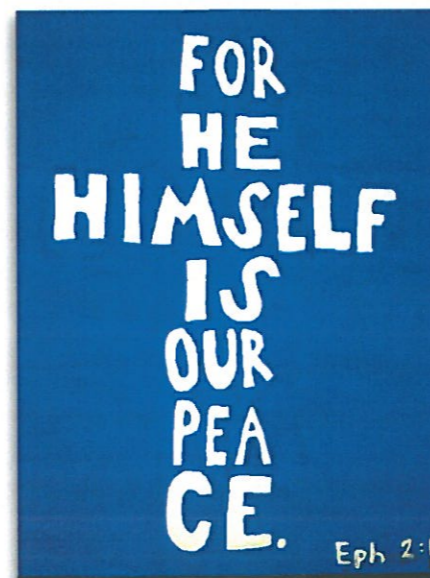
deliberate decision to take over the other person's habits. Simply we found God hiding in new places in times of need and distress. We wonder sometimes why He did it this way? Well, it stretched us. And it has made us laugh; we think He is laughing too.

Chris, having read the religion novels by Susan Howatch, started to attend Anglican services during the working week. Later, the Lord in His mercy made him desperate and those services together with Freedom in Christ were God's provision for him. Any time I was rocked by bad news, I desired to hear God speak in the midst of uncertain circumstances. His provision came through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Word.

God wants to speak to us and uses many and any people, places, methods. We are so thankful for everything we have received from Him. And for West Church, our home. A magnanimous place, varied and full of love.

The Lord has added to what Chris and I started with; we have been enriched, not diminished.

***How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life for evermore (Psalm 133).***



***the dividing wall of hostility...that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.”***

How good and pleasant it is  
when God's people live together in unity!

-Psalm 133:1





# CHURCH FAMILY WEEKEND

## June 16th—18th

**A weekend together for ALL the West Church family**

**H**ow do we invest in growing our personal spiritual life and experience as well as that of our friends and our family (whatever that looks like)?

We often consider this as a personal pursuit, we take action for ourselves and seek to move forward. This can be essential and effective. There is however a really important dynamic that we sometimes overlook- we are not individuals who follow Jesus- rather we are a church- a group of people- a family- the body of Christ. There is something amazing that happens when we share our lives together, we discover the stories of faith and life that shape the identities of one another and we grow in love and connection as we spend the time it requires to get to know each other. Some of us have grown up in West or maybe have been coming on Sundays for decades, the challenge this poses is to connect to new members, the challenge for new members is to feel they have been adopted and included into our family. There is a challenge for all of us to embrace the generations above or below us and be enriched by their wisdom and perspective.

This is the reason behind the Church family weekend. We break

free from the other demands of life to enjoy life together (in a grand old Castle!). From the time we arrive on Friday evening there is a relaxed programme of fun, relaxation, learning together and in focused ways, indoor activities, outdoor opportunities in the beautiful Castlewellan parkland, late night events or early nights with a good book and cuppa- it's a weekend for all ages from 1-100! And by the end of Sunday lunch you will have built memories with the people you love, the new people in your life and with the Lord, what's not to love?! Our theme this year is 'The Heart of the Matter'.



Check out what last year's weekenders had to say in the speech bubbles!

**So pick up your information and booking form from the office or download it from the website and look forward to seeing**



Church Family weekend 2016

it was brill! (Austin)

We didn't want to go home! (Holly 8)

It was brilliant for families of all ages! (Roisin)

Class fun! (Oliver 11)

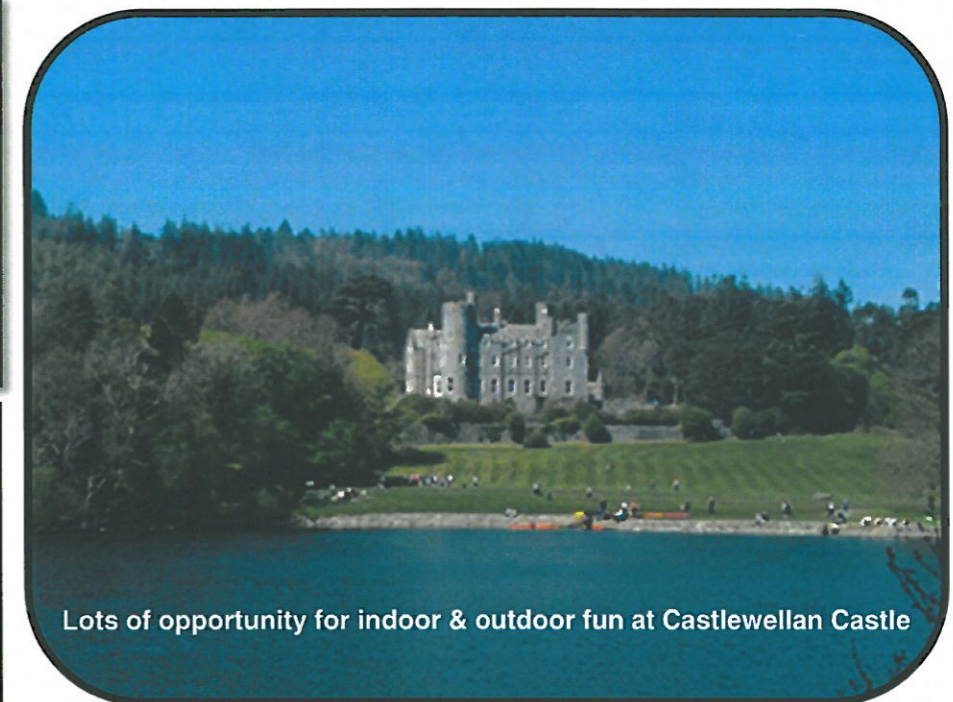
Awesome! (Patrick)

An amazing weekend surrounded by great people. Wonderful friendships were born; such a blessing to be in with our Church family (Clare)

You couldn't beat the fun! (Maureen)

**Costs—for Food & Accommodation:**

Adult	£80.00	Teens	£58.00
Child (8-11 years)	£48.00	Child (4-7 years)	£31.00
Child (0-3 years)	FREE		



Lots of opportunity for indoor & outdoor fun at Castlewellan Castle



All the kids up to mischief..... during the 2016 weekend

For further information on the Church Weekend, contact Dave Gray, our Assistant Minister either through the Church Office, 028 9145 9688 or on 07812 915428



# UNITED APPEAL FOR MISSION

## “BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF GLOBAL CONCERN”

### Together we can do more than we could ever do on our own!

**T**he United Appeal for Mission is at the very heart of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. As a Church we are making big differences here in Ireland and all over the world.

Every aspect of our Church's mission depends to some extent on United Appeal. Hundreds of projects and programmes at home and overseas are helping to advance God's Kingdom, showing God's love in action to hundreds of thousands of people.



Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church in Dublin provide an International Café

**One project that is supported by the United Appeal for Mission is the International Café run by Adelaide Road Presbyterian in Dublin.**

David Boyd is an Irish mission worker in Dublin—the only Irish mission worker in a city with a population that is greater than the whole of Northern Ireland. In Dublin there are many opportunities to reach out to people, however, it can be a challenge to overcome the secularisation that has settled in people's minds.

David has been working at Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church for 20 years and in that time he has seen the demographic of the city change dramatically, with an increasing cosmopolitan make-up that is reflected in his congregation.

Through an International Café, David and other members of the congregation have the opportunity to welcome and befriend those from other countries living in Dublin. David runs a Bible Study beforehand to allow an opportunity for discussion on spiritual issues. He shares, "I've had people coming who had never seen a Bible in their lives. Starting from scratch and explaining everything is not so easy at times, especially with people who don't have good English. It has been very rewarding though—it's great to see people grow from week to week as they get to grips with the claims of the gospel."

David's job as an Irish mission worker is only made possible through United Appeal. He says, "Here in the South many congregations are very small and it's only thanks to United Appeal that myself and other Irish mission workers can be funded."

**Irish mission workers work as evangelists alongside ministers and congregations across Ireland. The work is fully supported by the United Appeal for Mission.**



**Together**, we support 74 Home Mission Congregations, 21 in the North of Ireland and 53 in the South.

We support 8 Community Outreach Workers, 5 Irish Mission Workers, 20 Deaconesses (with 2 in training) in hospitals and local communities and also provide support for over 70 Chaplains in Hospitals, Universities, Prisons and The Forces.

We have 473 Bed Places, some Residential, Nursing, Sheltered Housing, Supported House and also Student Accommodation.

We have had over 2100 people attend Youth & Children's events, over 750 people train for the eldership, Youth & Children's work, Preaching, Disciple Making Leadership. We have 27 Ministry Students with 42 Assistants, over 530 people have completed "Handling the Word" and there are 152 Accredited Preachers with 13 people in training.

33 Missionaries in 10 countries



United Appeal for Mission has provided support to train 50 people for short term mission and 160 volunteers for IGNITE teams

Each year, PCI sponsors a number of Leaders in Training from overseas partner churches while they undertake further study aimed at helping them in the personal development for future ministry and leadership within their own country and context, made possible through United Appeal giving.

**West has been set a United Appeal Target of £34000 for 2017 which is a big undertaking however if all our families donated to this appeal it would make this undertaking much more achievable. There will be a special United Appeal Offering on Easter Sunday, 16th April and it is possible to make a donation at any stage during the year. Please give generously and play your part in showing God's love.**





# LAUNCH OF OUR NEW WEBSITE

by Cheryl Miller

Just prior to Christmas West Church launched quietly, its new designed website. As you will have read in the Committee Report on page 16 & 17, the Communication Sub Group of the Congregational Committee, Stephen Cully, Glenn Hall, Garth Hall, Lianne Goldring and Cheryl Miller, had been meeting over a number of months to discuss the way forward with how the church communicates with both members and non-members alike.



[www.westchurchbangor.org](http://www.westchurchbangor.org)

Our key objective for 2016 was to look at making our website more informative, easy to read, easy to navigate and ensure it reflects the life and spirit of our church, from the youngest baby to the more mature of our members and most importantly, welcoming to non-members who are maybe keen to find out a little bit of what goes on in our church. We believe that we have achieved this and would invite you to take time to have a look around the new website.

### So what's different?

The Home Page is now visually split into 6 key areas—Discipleship, Mission & Outreach, Pastoral Care, Praise & Worship and Youth & Children, in line with the 5 Action Teams

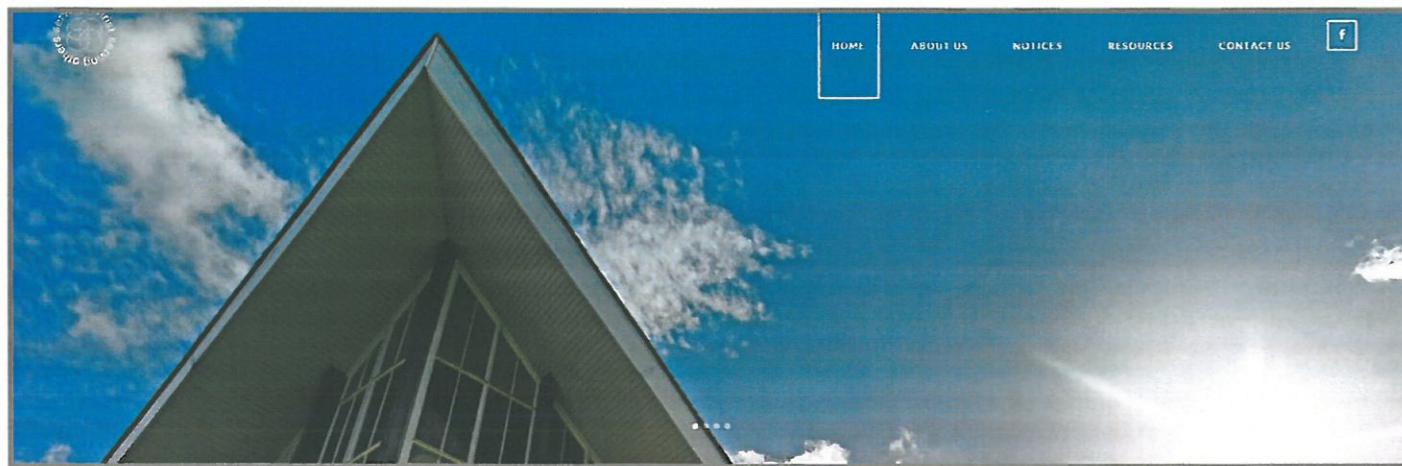
of Session and we then have a 'Get Involved' area as well. Clicking on any of these pictures will direct you to the groups and organisations that fall under these key categories.

The various pages all have key information: **ABOUT** (general information on the group, **WHEN** it meets and **WHO** you contact to find our more. The Get Involved area details all the various areas in which you could volunteer within and around West—there are lots of opportunities for everyone to serve in their own way! Our Service times are clearly visible on the Home Page. You will also find our main events on this page.

Along the top of the Home Page

you will find drop down icons for About Us (a welcome from Charles and a little bit about the Staff Team), Notices, Resources, which is where you can access Standing Order and Gift Aid forms, Home Group Study notes, past Sermons including Friday Men's Fellowship speakers, Daily Bible Reading notes and past editions of West Life. There is also an Order Form where you can request past Services or order a copy of the Presbyterian Herald or Bible Reading Notes.

We hope you enjoy the new website and would welcome your feedback—please don't be shy, let us know what you think.



# ANY QUESTIONS

by Rev. Charles McMullen

The flagship BBC Radio Four programme, Any Questions, will be broadcast live throughout the United Kingdom on Friday 26 May 2017, immediately after the 8.00 pm news bulletin, from West Church. Every week the programme, which was first aired in October 1948, visits a different part of the country with a panel of four speakers who answer questions from the audience. The opportunity is provided for people to challenge politicians, policy makers, writers and thinkers. Its presenter, Jonathan Dimbleby, is pictured right.

Announcements will be made in Church soon about the availability of tickets.





# TRUSTING IN GOD FOR THE NEXT ROAD

by Robert Sinclair

**S**ome time late in 2014 / early 2015, I went to the doctor several times over several months complaining that I couldn't raise my voice and that my throat was feeling narrower. Several rounds of medication later I was eventually sent to Bangor Hospital for an endoscopy test to see what my vocal chords were doing. As only one seemed to be working, it was decided that I should do speech therapy. Several months passed by and although, as a trained singer, I made good use of the speech therapy and understood how they were helping, this made the situation worse and I found myself back at the Ulster for more endoscopy tests.

So now into 2016 after more tests and waiting, in June I got an appointment at the Royal Victoria Hospital for a biopsy on my vocal chord cyst or whatever is holding my voice back. In September I got an appointment to see my Consultant for the results - I was ready to hear the words tumour, remove and hospital. I was preparing myself by being calm and spiritually dependant on God for what I may have to go through, supposedly ready for what my Consultant could say to me.

Well, I was ready for the tumour bit and got some good news that no cancer had been found at that stage. However, I was not in any way ready to hear that I would have to get my voice box out or that I would have a stoma in my neck which would become my only airway or have a vastly different voice. I had lovely support at the hospital by the Macmillan team after my news. However, as I do, I was praying on the drive home and the tears started (there's only so many tears allowed when driving which is a good thing!).

I told my brother and sisters and then Michael, Christopher and eventually Liam. As I spoke to Liam, being the clever boy he is, he realised that I wouldn't be able to make his



teddies speak in different voices. He was devastated, and that set me off again! (My fault for bringing his teddies to life.) As it was a week day, Liam was soon back at his mum's and I had time to myself. This tumour and the idea of losing my voice box was against absolutely everything I had become and ever believed in. At the time it felt against everything God made me to be too. There was nothing in this that was remotely God-driven. This tumour was out to destroy me. That night in bed I wanted to curl up into the smallest ball possible or run away from myself. I felt like I was just imploding—some kind of escape but I knew I had to find another way of coping with this. So, in the morning, now that my family knew, I started telling people, starting with my Home Group. That's when the prayers started and the peace came. It didn't take long for me to realise I had to do everything possible to fight this. And I did! I absolutely love the many friends I have, through West Church and beyond and indeed on Facebook. For the next 6 weeks or so I went many times to Healing on the Streets in Bangor and Coleraine for prayer. I went to other Services at West, CFC and basically got every

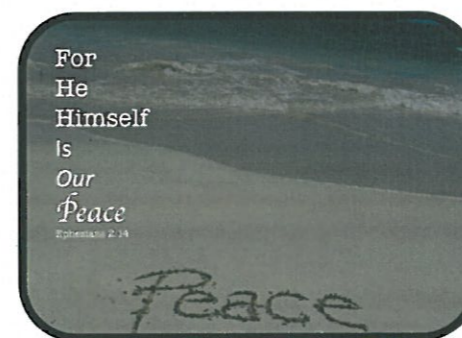
prayer I could from everywhere I could. My family came together so much too and I felt so strengthened with none of that fear from the first night near me. Along this journey I was taken to Eat Well in Belfast and heard some very interesting views I can't argue with on food as a healer—more about this again!

I got a date for my operation and on the Thursday the week before, something miraculous happened—I don't know if you know, but if you only have one vocal chord there's only so much range and strength and if you are trained in any way, you will know how to bring them together to work. At around 7.00 am, I woke myself up...humming as I breathed out but not a higher hum. A louder, low hum. Something only possible with 2 vocal chords! It took me a while to realise that the sound was me! Not wanting to wake Michael, I went out into the car, drove around and made as much noise as I could! I even phoned my sister Jayne and she thought it was my brother!

Over the next few days, the vocal chords varied from weak to strong but to this day, I have many witnesses that heard a louder voice and that I could really shout! (Ask the boys!!) This was a healing process -

a real miracle in progress! Into the next week I could feel it was now easier to breathe. But you know what? I could not see any doctor or get any quick test to see what was happening to my vocal chords. Even though when I phoned the Speech Therapist (mine had retired after seeing me for months—could you blame her!) she couldn't comment on why my vocal chords were working. However, a few days before my operation date, I had a new peace. I had done more than everything I could. If I was to wake up with a stoma that was God's will. There's nothing more I could do and it was now time to trust God for the next road.

As you now know, I did wake up with a stoma but I also woke up with minimal pain and no fear whatsoever. Just that peace I was now very familiar with. You can't beat that peace.



It's fair to say that I had incredible support from my family, Home Group, West Church, Silverstream, CFC, Shore Street, even churches in France and America all praying for me and with continuous love, kindness and friendship on Facebook, not to mention the many visits from my brother and 2 sisters and many friends, I was never alone. And that's just who I knew outside the hospital. The Doctors, Consultants and all the staff on Ward 29 at the Royal are just like a big family. I spent 5 weeks there and it really did start to feel like my second home.

Progress was quite slow at times

but I just did one day at a time. There was only one very, very bad experience when a blood vessel burst and I was bleeding dangerously from my stoma. Within 15 seconds, 10-15 nurses and staff were round my bed trying to stabilise me and help me to breathe. I just prayed for God to help them do their job, and He did. Very soon things had calmed down. Thankfully no more drama followed and after 5 weeks of being in hospital I was gradually allowed to come home to stay.

As I write this, it's now February and there is one thing about Christianity I truly love—love never gives up—or could that be translated in some case to what you love, you will never give up on? With the same kind, loving support, I am back to teaching several pupils at home, at Jenny Boggs and at Glastery College and Millisle Primary School. There isn't a full schedule yet but it's what I'm happy with as I build up my strength. I've also played at 3 weddings. At West, as you know, I'm doing what I can at J Club and help plan the programmes. I've even started Puppet Ministry and of course, back to doing what my gift clearly is—playing the piano. As for my social life, I've changed from coffee to tea but even with some challenging background noise at times, I still get out to chat with friends often. Financially and otherwise, I have been amazingly blessed and made some good decisions to try and stable things out. Thank you so much indeed—I can't put into words how grateful I am for every single act of kindness and what prayers have led to.

There is just one thing to add and that many people already know. I did have cancer. It was in my voice box and I only got this news at the start of the year. It's a journey I didn't really know I was having and I feel very blessed that I didn't have to go through what I know many



Robert doing what he does best, playing and composing!

friends have gone through or are going through right now. I have huge respect for all those people, I really do.

All those prayers to save my voice box were answered indeed but not in the way I expected. It was really above saving me but I always say, I trust God so much. I don't understand Him and I've no idea what He's doing, but I trust Him! And I love Him as my Father who loves me. I am grateful that I am still here and generally doing the things I did. He always knows what I need in the same way He knows what you need. Wouldn't life make more sense the other way round—start old and wise and make amazing decisions back to childhood? And how rich would we be in many ways, but no, life is a journey on a road to eternal life. Done right, it's narrow indeed or at least can be for what these days seem a lot of the time. In God's purpose we find peace knowing we are on the right road and part of His huge plan for His world.

Even in sunny, small Northern Ireland, every single person has the ability, through faith, to make a huge difference. Let God determine that difference within His vast jigsaw puzzle of life. There's nowhere else I'd rather be.

Robert Sinclair



# Summer Events

## YOUTH

### Summer Camps

Summer Madness	30th June—4th July
Glenarm, Co. Antrim (tickets available from <a href="http://www.summermadness.co.uk/festival">www.summermadness.co.uk/festival</a> )	
Younglife Camp	22nd July—28th July
Cairn Brae, Scotland	
Wyldlife Camp	11th—15th August
Carin Brae, Scotland	
"Cave Quest" Mission	29th July—4th August
Keady, Co. Armagh	

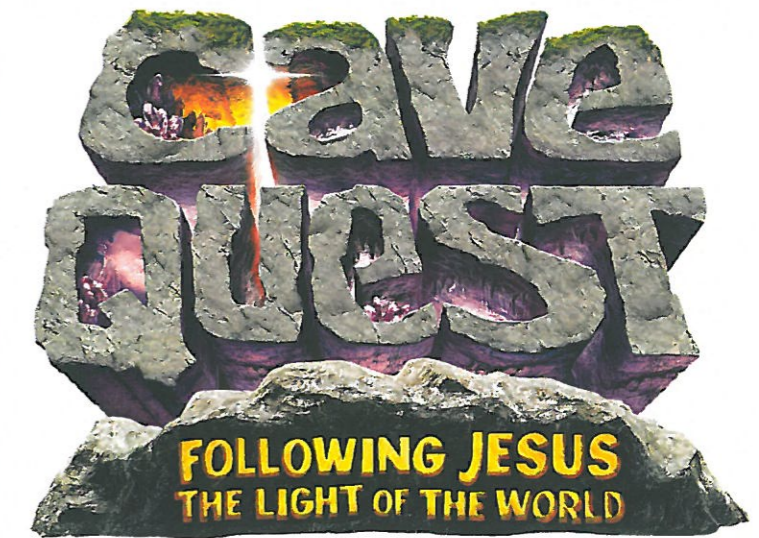
Detailed left are the Summer Camps that our young people will be involved in:

Please remember to pray for safe travel to and from these camps and that they will come to know God deeper. Pray also that lives will be touched at the Keady Mission as our young people lead "Cave Quest".



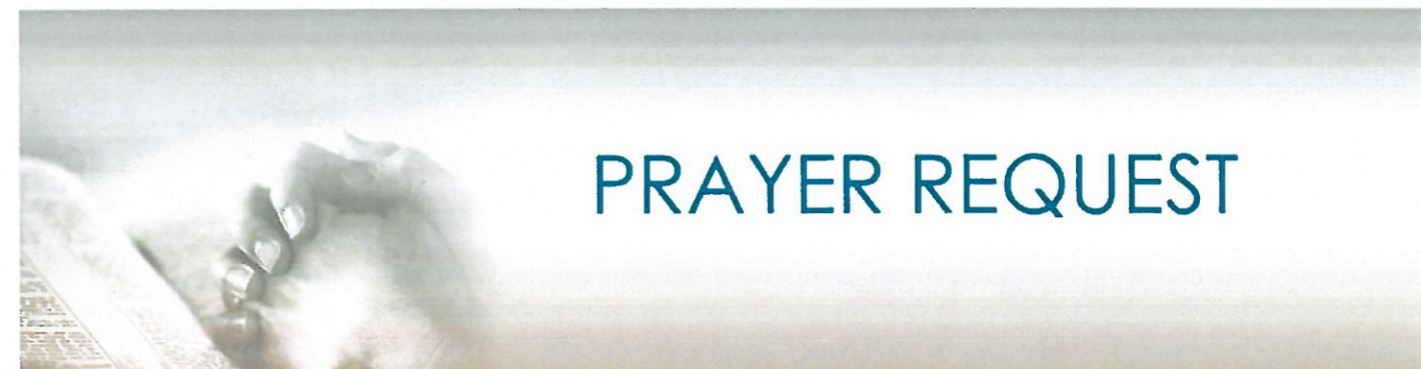
While summer is still a bit of a distance off there will be plenty of activities happening around West Church for those in Year 8 and above including a Water Fight, Sunday Picnic lunches, Back to School BBQ, Beach Campfire, Pancake Dinners and a few outings for specific year groups. A full organised programme for the summer will be available in June—keep an eye out on the Church Facebook pages and Sunday Orders of Service for further information.

# EASTER MISSION PRAYER REQUESTS



### Pray:

- for safety as 250 children plus 120+ teenagers and adults travel around the church and halls every day.
- for children to have open hearts to hear that 'Jesus is the light of the world' and He wants each of them to follow Him.
- for teenagers to grow deeper in their faith as they have time set aside each morning for their own personal Bible study, for team devotions, worship and time in the Prayer Room.
- for deepening of relationships between the young people and their leaders.
- for an abundance of patience and graciousness for everyone on the team and that it is characterised by unity and purpose.
- that the message of Jesus' love will be taken outside the walls of the church into our neighbourhood as the teenagers are involved in litter picking, handing out Easter eggs, prayer walks and visiting nursing homes.
- for energy for our teenagers and leaders as they lead the morning programme, take part in afternoon outreach activities and have various evening activities and sleep over in the church building each night. It is a very long week with little sleep!
- that the name of Jesus will be lifted high and for nothing to detract from this one focus and one purpose.



## PRAYER REQUEST



# WORLD BOOK DAY FIRES PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN'S IMAGINATION

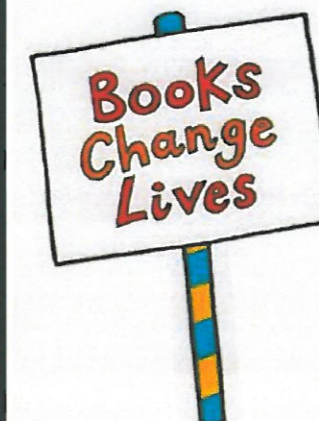
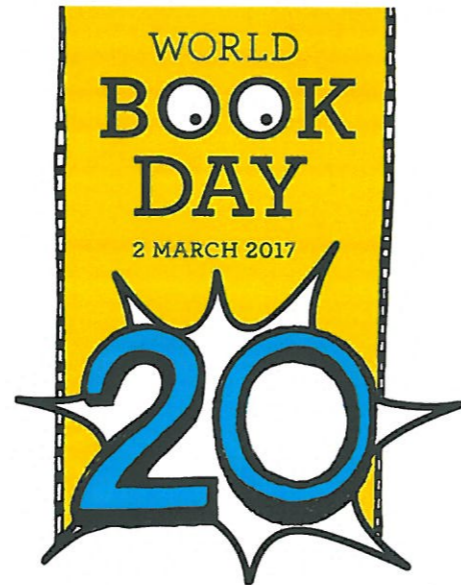
by 'Miss' Alison & 'Miss' Wendy

**O**ver the past few weeks, staff and children at Bangor West Nursery Playgroup were talking about, and keenly anticipating, World Book Day which was on Thursday, 2nd March.

In an era when information technology seems to be at the forefront of children's thinking and education, World Book Day enables us to celebrate the joy and value of books and reading. Reading stories to young children develops language and imagination; it helps build on their interests and indeed create new ones.

In order to celebrate World Book Day, the children were invited to come to pre-school dressed as their favourite character inspired by stories that have been read to them. Some of the children told staff that they would dress as a prince or princess. The discussion then led to the children being asked to think about where princes/princesses would live and how we could create a castle for our pre-school.

You can imagine the children's excitement and surprise when they arrived at pre-school on World Book Day and their ideas had been brought to life in the shape of Bangor West Castle, complete with flags and our very own Coat of Arms!



Pictured are some of the children of Bangor West Nursery Playgroup who dressed up for World Book Day. Also pictured is the a close up photograph of our very own Coat of Arms!



# A TIME FOR EVERY PURPOSE UNDER HEAVEN

Greetings from Canada by Mike & Lorraine Cahoon

As you know, the Lord called us to minister in the nation of Canada many years ago. Early in 2013 we made plans to make our home here, having been back and forth on many mission and training trips since 1998. Now we're approaching our fourth year as residents of Canada, and the Lord has been impressing on us the importance of His timing in everything.

When we first arrived in Toronto in 2013, we lived right in the downtown area of the city. For those of you familiar with the university area we were right in the heart of it, and had many opportunities to connect with every nation of the world, and that was just on the subway!

Something we noticed when we first arrived in the city were the squirrels .... yes, we kid you not. On approaching our apartment for the first time we noticed that our outdoor black bins all had holes in the lids. This mystery was soon solved when Mike opened the lid to discard some rubbish and a squirrel leaped out at him, in definite warrior mode! This creature was like a ninja, in battle mode and ready for action. These urban warriors kept us highly amused with their antics. So determined was one little guy that he lifted an entire wedge of pizza from the bin and climbed up the tree to devour it. He was in a fight for survival and was determined to guard his territory.

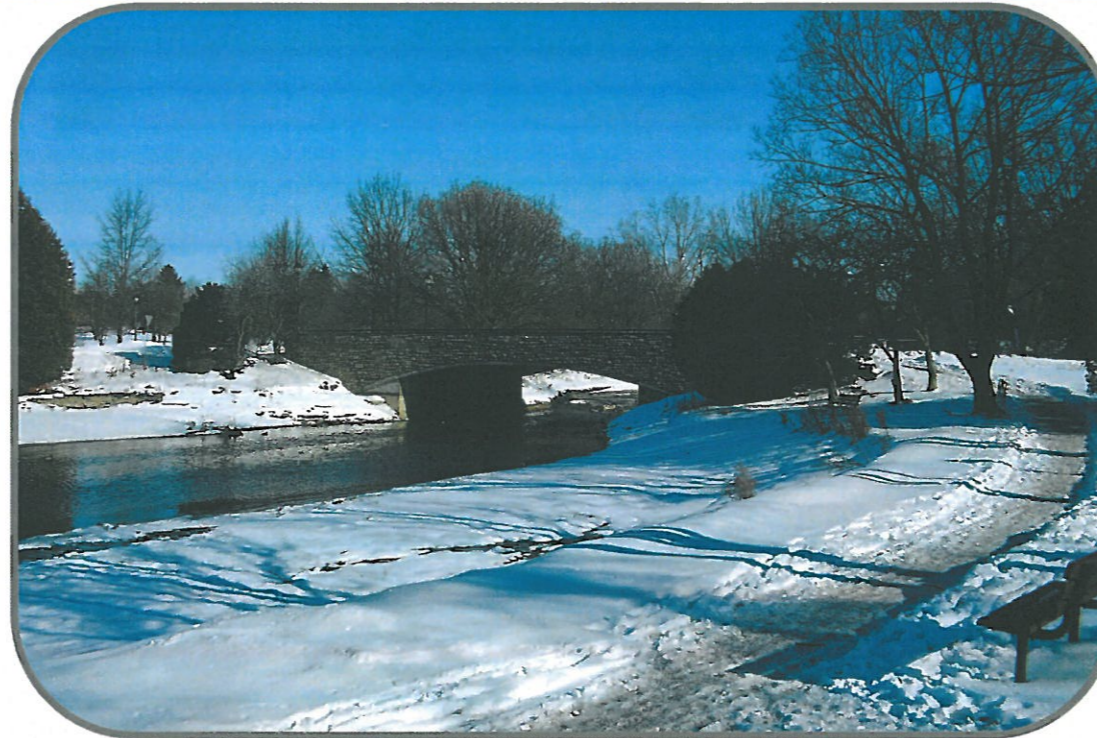


After fifteen months in the city, with lots of adventures and ministry opportunities which we have already told you about in previous articles, we felt a call back to the city of Stratford. In 2009 we had come for a year of training for Restoring The Foundations inner healing ministry. When we returned to live in Stratford we noticed something different about our little squirrel friends compared to those back in the big city. First of all they had a different look about them. They were smaller and extremely laid back. Not for them the fighting (and hissing!) of their city cousins... these squirrels were ready for fun, gentle, playful and would sit still, looking up at us and taking time to look around them and enjoy life.

We strongly believe that God can speak to us through any means He chooses, and He often speaks through nature. Our observations of those little squirrels whose behaviour was so much of a contrast, being both war-like and peaceful, reminded us of that well known passage in Ecclesiastes 3 verses 1-11 and especially the last couple of verses:

**"For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven... a time for war and a time for peace... God has made everything beautiful for its own time... planting eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end".**

When the writer talks about there being "a time for war and a time for peace" we know from our own lives that we face times of battle and times when we just need to rest. There are times when we need to press in with prayer, worship and



Spring melt at Victoria Lake, Stratford

our spiritual weapons, and times when we need simply to rest in His presence, be like children and allow ourselves to play and look up into our Father's face.

We have an amazing team of intercessors - prayer warriors - from West Church and from various parts of the world, who faithfully pray for us when we are in the ministry room.

When someone who wants the Lord to heal their heart comes into our home, we know that the atmosphere is already filled with the Lord's presence. Amazingly we can enter His rest, and at the same time be doing battle with the enemy, because we rely on the Cross and everything that Jesus did to bring freedom,

healing and restoration to all of us! The battle does belong to the Lord, but we get to be participants, while depending on Him alone for peace and rest in that battle.

We live in a country with very distinctive seasons. This wash of creation reflects in our hearts and emotions, and each season has its own special beauty, if you look for it.

Here's what's been happening with us lately, a few prayer pointers if you ever feel like supporting us in that way:

1. Thank the Lord for the flow of those coming for ministry. Many nations have been represented from all over the world and some people are returning to their homelands with newly found freedom. Many of these people are in leadership positions in their churches.
2. We have had an enquiry from someone based in Thunder Bay (totally unconnected from our friend Carole) who works specifically with addictions in the Whitesand First Nations people in the very far north. She is hoping that she can arrange through her pastor for us to lead a conference in her area, so please pray for God to open doors as He desires.
3. Our home continues to welcome

many who are hurt and broken by life and we try to maintain a haven of peace for those who visit. Pray for those who will come, especially missionaries, and those who are convalescing from illness in all its forms. 4. On a personal note we do miss our family and friends in the UK, and we ask the Lord to maintain those deep connections in all our relationships. God has blessed us with wonderful family, friends and neighbours here in Canada, and sometimes travel distances mean that we need to be really intentional about all our precious relationships. 5. Carole continues to update us with the Command Post. New members have come on the team, as four of the foundation team currently have health issues. Regular supplies of food and clothes continue to come from various groups and businesses in Thunder Bay, so we give thanks for God's provision and for the way He moves in people's hearts to support this ministry in practical ways.

We send our love to you all, and hope these photos give a taste of the seasons of our life here (currently "in the freezer" as we are writing this in February!!)

**Many blessings, Mike & Lorraine**

Summer - at Port Perry



Autumn - with NI friends at our home



Winter - frozen waters of Lake Huron



# GIRLS' BRIGADE NEWS



**O**ur 38th Annual Display will take place on Saturday 22nd April at 7.00 pm in Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College.



Some of our Seniors recently took part in the GBNI heats of 5-a-side football at Ganaway—pictured (back row), Molly, Lauren, Megan, Bethyn and Anna, (middle row) Leah, Sarah & Amy, (front row) Emma & Ruth



As part of the Under 5's Scripture course, the girls heard the story of Jesus feeding the 5000. Pictured above is Lee, making popcorn with some of our Pre-School girls to help them understand the story.



Duke of Edinburgh's Award girls receiving their Bronze certificates at a recent presentation in 2nd Dromara Presbyterian Church. Pictured with Officer Andrea Hall (back row) Meredith, Beth, Katie and (front) Chloe, Alanna and Eve



Pictured above with Officer Nichola Boyd, are our Junior Marching teams who recently took part in the Ards District competition. Both teams performed fantastically!



'Rosie's' (GB Bear) adventures continue with Rosa with a wee treat to the Slieve Donard Hotel



On 8th & 15th February we held a "Bring a lady you love" night when our Junior & Explorer section girls brought along their mum, nanny or auntie for a fun night at GB—here are some of the photos.....



Pictured (right), Anya with her mum Pamela, (far right) Anna with her mum Sara, (bottom right) Kasey with her nana Glenda and (bottom far right) Tilli with her mum Debbie and nana Margaret.

The girls and their ladies took part in crafts, biscuit decorating, team games and everyone gathered together for a short devotional - a lovely way to spend an evening of quality time with their daughters & granddaughters.





# SPECIAL FRIENDS ACTIVITY GROUP

**H**ello and welcome to Special Friends activity group here at West Church. We are a special needs group that meets on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month, including all holidays, where we cater for children between 5yrs-11yrs encompassing all types of disabilities...

The group was set up 3 years ago due to the lack of facilities or clubs able to accommodate our children's needs and has been a regular comfort for those families who perhaps find a daily day trip challenging (things that most people take for granted).

It can also be a short but well deserved rest for the overlooked parents/guardians, where they get a chance to rest and chat over a nice cup of tea, sharing similar stories and concerns and for some an opportunity to break a cycle of isolation.

We, as a group, do enjoy our day trips out together to such fun places as the farm, the beach or the cinema, etc. and we also love it when guests visit us with their unique talents and services like the petting zoo, children's entertainers and the odd bouncy castle.



John & Leigh-Anne McGilton with Karen Henderson and some of the children who attend Special Friends.

As you can imagine, the running of such a group and the complex needs of our wee ones can be challenging, but as friendships are formed, the amount of fulfilment grows for each volunteer, parent, and child alike.

Like all youth organisations, we are self-funding, so we rely heavily on any kind donations that we may receive. But more importantly, we are always eager to enlist the help of enthusiastic, caring and dedicated people. Experience is not essential, just the willingness to make a child smile and feel special.


If you feel that this is something you may be interested in, please contact the church office for further information. A special thank you to those who have supported us over the years.


John & Leigh-Anne McGilton

Pictured below is Ben




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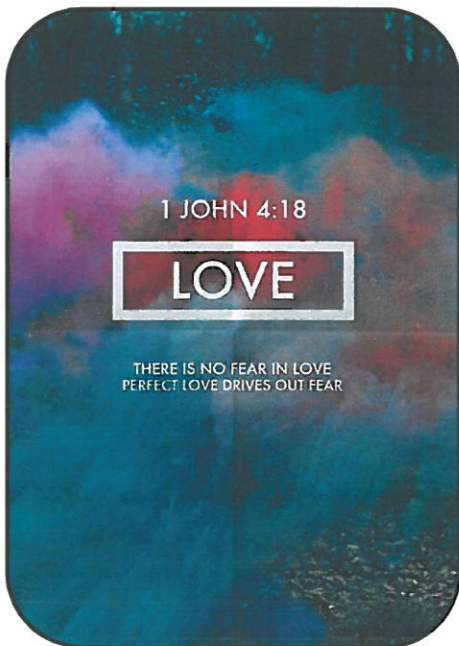


# A LEAP OF FAITH

*Naomi Flood-Coleman shares her experiences of her first Mission trip*

**I**n July 2016 I went away with Kindfund for three weeks to Kenya as part of a team to work with children in 3 orphanages. This was a big leap of faith for me as I had many fears about going away from home without family to a totally different Country and Culture, which was totally out of my comfort zone. However I strongly felt God's call on my life for this mission trip and knew I was meant to go and that it would ultimately change my life for ever. As a result I did feel a lot of spiritual attack. Thankfully I had a lot of support and prayer and I chose to keep my eyes on God and put my faith in his promises.

God is so faithful and when it came to leaving for Kenya, I felt a strong presence of God's love and considering I was so afraid, I felt such peace like it was all under control and that I had nothing to fear. I truly experienced God's promise that "perfect love drives out all fear". (1 John, 4:18)



During the trip I really grew as a person I got really close to the children and the staff that worked for Kindfund. My eyes were opened to how little people have and how much I have. I became more thankful for all the blessings I had received from God and the home comforts I thought I would miss became insignificant. I felt so comfortable in Kenya that it was difficult for me to leave when the time came for coming home.

In Kenya, God taught me to trust and rely on him, particularly in the tough times. I was able to deal with it so well and all I can say is there is no way in my own strength I could have coped. God really did help me deal with my fears and anxieties. I know that God is with me always and trust he has a good plan and purpose for my life and that 'I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength'. (Phil 4:13) In April I will be going to India

with Tearfund as part of a team with Connect Church and although I may have some fears, I am no longer controlled by fear and realise the freedom of faith, obedience and trusting in God's will.



**Pictured above is Naomi with some of the children & staff from Kindfund.**

# UNIVERSITY FOCUS

*by Luke McWatters*

**H**ey! My name is Luke, I'm nineteen and I have been going to West Church since I was nine years old. I originally went to the Boys' Brigade in West which I was a member of for 14 years and also attended Cubs before my family moved to West Church when I was nine. I started Young West when I was twelve and now attend CaféChurch and am a Young Life leader on a Saturday night.

In September of this year I had the biggest change in my life to date as I left my comfort zone in Bangor, County Down and set off for Scotland for university. I am currently in my first year of studying at the University of St Andrews where I read Modern History and International Relations.

Since moving to Uni I have tried to get as involved in St Andrews as I can in terms of student ministry. The main ones I am involved with are Solid Rock, Just Love and the Christian Union.

Firstly, Solid Rock is an organisation that provides free lunch bars on a Thursday and students who come get to hear someone's testimony each week and how God has worked and is working in their life. We also run acoustic café nights, ceilidhs (because we need to fulfil the Scottish stereotype) and other events throughout the year. For 2017 I am now the Event's Manager for Solid Rock so will be taking on a lot of responsibility in this role.

Also, Just Love is a ministry that exists to inspire and release every Christian student to pursue the Biblical call to social justice. I was invited along to Just Love in fresher's week and soon realised just how important social justice is in Christian life. Around 6% of the Bible is about social justice which is such a broad theme. It can mean buying Fairtrade food to ensure fairer wages, eating

locally sourced food to reduce your carbon footprint, writing to your MP to maintain a level of accountability in local politics or doing a sleep-out to raise awareness for homelessness- all things we have done this year so far.

Finally, I am involved with the Christian Union. I am a worship leader at our regular meetings on a Tuesday night and at our 7.30am prayer meetings twice a week. Just a matter of weeks ago we ran a missions week called STORY where students were invited to come along, hear others' stories, engage and share their own. There were plenty of events from Wine and Cheese nights to a Hog Roast and each day had a free lunch bar as well. For this week we rented a marquee and at night it had to be guarded so I spent two cold, windy January nights in a marquee on the coast of the North Sea! Probably not the best idea but it was a good laugh!

Micah 6 v 8 says, "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, love mercy and walk humbly



Since moving to University I have felt very compelled to consider how the way I'm living has an impact on the world and others around me. I feel God has been teaching me to live in a way that reflects His love for the world. As a historian, another thing that has made an impact for me is the verse in Acts 1 v 8 to go to the ends of the Earth proclaiming the word and that was in a Roman Empire context. In Britain, St Andrews is as roughly far north as the Romans ever got and so this wee town was the end of the earth as they knew it. For me it is so important to be proclaiming the Gospel here and beyond where we know people are now and that is something that really encourages me!

Finally (for anyone who has got this far) thanks very much for reading this, please be praying for the various ministries mentioned above and

God bless,  
Luke



University  
of  
St Andrews



**Changes in Districts : New address**

**District**

Move 505 Mr Hugh & Mrs Patricia Matier	Move 604 Mrs Sonya McGhee & family
Move 603 Mr Harry & Mr Peter Sames	Move 902 Miss Heather Kyle

**Changes in Districts : Remove**

104 Mrs Lois McManus	504 Mr Rob & Mrs Caroline Stevenson & family
104 Mr Stephen & Mrs Amy Bogle & family	802 Mr Jonathan & Mrs Sheena Black
403 Mrs Mary Adams	1004 Mr Alan & Mrs Betty Green

**WELCOME to the following new members: District**

103 Mr David & Mrs Rona Montgomery & family	503 Mr Simon Harper
104 Mr Stephen & Mrs Emma Van Houten & family	504 Mrs Pauline Brown
104 Mr Robin & Mrs Heather McLaughlin & family	505 Mrs Ann King
304 Miss Karen McConnell	505 Mr Raymond Bready & family
404 Miss Clare Watton	1101 Mr Matthew & Mrs Rachel Strutt & family
501 Mrs Debbie Ruddock-Suresh & Tilli	1103 Mrs Kerry Moffat & Joshua

**The following children & young people were brought for Baptism or Dedication:**

06/11/16 Louie Richard Bryans	08/01/17 Phoebe Mann
27/11/16 Sophia Isabella Hunter	26/02/17 Jack Scott Johnston
08/01/17 Nicole Duncan	05/03/17 Quinn Grace Bradley

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

10/11/16 Mrs Joan Wilson	05/01/17 Miss Muriel Ross
15/11/16 Mr Billy Wells	17/01/17 Mr Adrian Coulter
25/11/16 Mrs Betty Leathem	23/01/17 Mr Cyril Crooks
30/11/16 Miss Rhoda Watson	01/02/17 Mrs Eileen Knox
10/12/16 Mr Hugo Simpson	18/02/17 Baby Harry George Samuel Elliott
31/12/16 Mr Ian Brow	24/02/17 Mrs Sally Scott
04/01/17 Mr Alex Taylor	24/02/17 Mr Bob Gill
05/01/17 Mrs Bessie McKee	16/03/17 Mr Robert Hyndman

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,



**Psalm 29:2 & 11**

*“Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness. The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.”*

This photograph has been kindly provided by Pamela Brow





# SPRING HARVEST

by Dave Gray

What do you imagine when you think about a perfect summer holiday?

I dream of relaxation, of adventure of great food, of sunshine and swimming, of reading and hiking, of canoeing and great conversations, of scenery and fun with the kids, of refreshing body, soul and mind, of beach walks and card games on balmy nights under the Milky Way. It's a tall order, and my list is not necessarily transferable, but I'm sure that some of my wish list would be found on yours too. If it's tricky to find a destination for yourself, try throwing a significant other and kids of diverse interests into the mix!

One holiday that we as a family have found to be splendid is the



Saint Giles Croix de Vie

**Le Pas Opton (LPO) Spring Harvest** campsite in the Vendee region of France. It is a set up site (like a Eurocamp site) with a full range of accommodation options, from 'bring

your own' tent to, to mobile homes, to deluxe villas. It is located beside a charming seaside town called Saint Giles Croix de Vie (what a great name!), and has a picturesque



Pictured above and below are activities that are available at the Le Pas Opton Spring Harvest Campsite

riverside situation.

In many respects it is like any well equipped European campsite; great pool complex, restaurants and café, and organised activities, markets, and outings. But here is the unique and wonderful part of what LPO offers—spiritual refreshment for the whole family. It is a place set aside for God, a place to slow down, spend time with friends or family, unwind, and enjoy his presence.

Every day there is an optional but inspirational spiritual programme, with informal morning Bible study, uplifting evening celebration, and Sunday morning gathering. Jane and I really loved the morning studies (in English) and the speakers were super, some mornings we opted in, others we opted out and read by the pool. The great thing that made it possible was the kids and young people's programme that ran in tandem with the sessions. Our kids had an absolute blast and the teenagers they were with made amazing friends and they loved the life and focussed activities available.

Lydia and David McMullen have both worked as couriers and if you decide to go this summer, David, Kerry McAvoy and Amanda McVeigh will be working with, and shaping the growth of young campers- here's what Lydia says: "I can't talk highly enough of my 2 seasons working at LPO, 2 summers in a blue t-shirt (the courier uniform), working on the campsite with fantastic team mates from all over the UK, eating a ridiculous amount of croissants and ice-cream and exploring the local area by bike on our days off with a distant memory of GCSE French to help!

There is something for all the family at LPO, whether that be staying on site to use the swimming pool, go to the kids/teen clubs or to enjoy the entertainments run by the couriers, or explore the local town and hit the beach! And for all you romantics there's nothing better to do than watch the LPO sunset over the river at night! Enjoy a great holiday in a high quality setting in which you can be refreshed

and renewed: spiritually, mentally and physically. There's no better family holiday!"

### Getting there

We drove to France using 'landbridge' connections via Holyhead and Portsmouth, but many of our friends have flown to Nantes from Dublin and hired a car for the 2 hour drive to LPO.

### Great day trips

The Ile de Noirmoutier is a wonderful day trip, as is a visit to the last Huguenot stronghold and beautiful port city of La Rochelle.

The Puy du Fou is an amazing historical theme park with jaw dropping re-enactments of great battles and dramas.

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# SHARING GOOD NEWS

by Ben Forde

In the early 1990's, Rev. David Bailie, our Minister Emeritus, approached the late Walter McAllister about the possibility of starting a men's fellowship in the congregation. Walter stood down as Chairman in December 2010 and was replaced by Derick Riddell.

In the ensuing years, David's vision has borne much fruit. The Fellowship, which began on 21st January 1993, still has an average attendance of over 100 men from various denominations and backgrounds.



Men's Fellowship Committee

Back in 2009 our Committee agreed that we commence the recording of our weekly Friday meeting and it was left with me to pursue the idea. After consultation with Stephen Cully, our Church Co-ordinator and Bill Johnston, who heads up our AV Room, I was able to suggest three options and decide the best approach to start this recording



Friday morning in the Conference Room, just after coffee & scones—the men catching up ahead of their meeting beginning

ministry. We asked Ivan Seifert and Tom Davidson to record the meetings, both agreed and the rest is now history. Both Ivan and Tom took up the task and have done an excellent job. Both have to be commended for their personal commitment and faithfulness to the task entrusted to them.

This recording ministry can also be found on our website which in turn has led to a worldwide outreach.

<http://www.westchurchbangor.org.uk/resources/sermons/>

In November past, along with Milford Montgomery, I shared the idea with Derick Riddell of our intention to formulate a CD library. Stephen Cully encouraged us to pursue this and to seek his and Cheryl's help and assistance as this idea developed.

To date, we have retained several hundred copies of past recordings and we now had to work out how best to use these.

Ivan, Tom, Milford and I met at the Rambling Rose Café to discuss the following: **What to do for the best with these copies to share God's word with as many as possible?** This could be by any of the following:

- 1) Reaching many who were unable to attend on Fridays
- 2) Discuss the likelihood of a CD/DVD Library for the use of those attending to share with friends
- 3) Consider members to avail and make use of the West Church Library.
- 4) Share them with Seamen's missions

We agreed at this stage to take the CD/DVD library forward and we now have an alphabetical listing available for our congregation. CD/DVD's are available to collect on a Friday morning between 10.00 am and 12 noon when Men's Fellowship meets. We also have a list of recordings available at the book library in the Welcome Area and you can contact the Church Office to request a copy and they can organise a copy for you.

CDs & DVDs can either be returned when you have finished listening or watching them so that another person can benefit of this ministry or they can be kept to share with others.

Take a few minutes and have a look at the recordings we have available and "Share the Good News" we have heard with others.

Ben Forde

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