

Christmas Presents Presence

Christmas Services

“Immanuel—God with us”

Coming into His Presence, Resting in His Presence, Fully in His Presence

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT:

27th November 10.00 am & 11.30 am Dave Gray
11.45 am #CaféChurch Rev. Andy Galbraith
6.30 pm Rev. Charles McMullen

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT:

4th December 10.00 am & 11.30 am Rev. Charles McMullen
11.45 am #CaféChurch Rev. Andy Galbraith
3.00 pm Girls' Brigade Enrolment Rev. Charles McMullen
with Guest Speaker Richard Spratt, Fields of Life Chief Executive
6.30 pm Dave Gray

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT:

11th December 10.00 am & 11.30 am Rev. Andy Galbraith
11.45 am #CaféChurch Rev. Charles McMullen
6.30 pm Andy Heron

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT:

18th December 10.00 am & 11.30 am Dave Gray
11.45 am #CaféChurch
6.30 pm Service of Lessons and Carols

24th December at 11.15 pm

Christmas Eve Communion Rev. Charles McMullen

25th December at 10.00 am

Christmas Day Service (World Development Appeal Offering)

No Evening Service

1st January

10.00 am & 11.30 am 'Communion' Rev. Charles McMullen

#CaféChurch will join with 11.30 am Service

No Evening Service



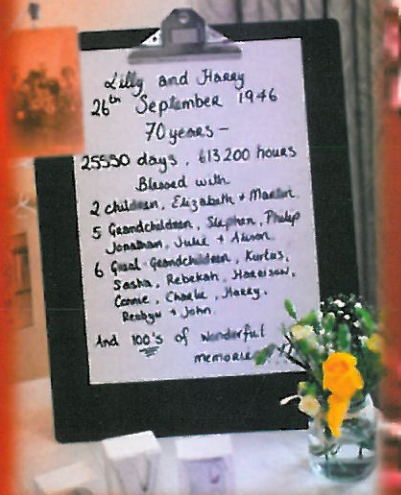
YOUR WINTER EDITION OF

WEST LIFE

ISSUE No.10, NOV/DEC 2016

WEST CHURCH, BANGOR PUBLICATION

HARRY & LILY DONLEY CELEBRATE THEIR 70TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY





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West Church, Bangor — Welcome, directory and contents

WELCOME TO YOUR WINTER WEST LIFE

Welcome to the Christmas edition of our magazine! In a season of rush, take time to enjoy some rest as you read Lindsay Conway's article. There are greetings from David and Rhoda Bailie, who remain full of enthusiasm and encouragement for God's work. We receive welcome reports as well from Mike and Lorraine Cahoon in Canada, updates from Michael & Christine Stenning's recent trip to Peru and we learn about ongoing progress in our Tearfund Connect project with churches in India to prevent the horrors of human trafficking. Incidentally, staying for a moment on the darker side of life, we look forward to holocaust commemorations at the end of January and the visit of Werner Oder, the son of a former Nazi SS Officer. A little nearer home again now and Maureen Bennett brings us up-to-date with some restructuring we've

being doing to make church life flow a little more smoothly.

Dave Gray challenges us to join home groups and there are photos from various organisations.

It's wonderful to share the seventieth Wedding Anniversary celebrations with Harry & Lily Donley.

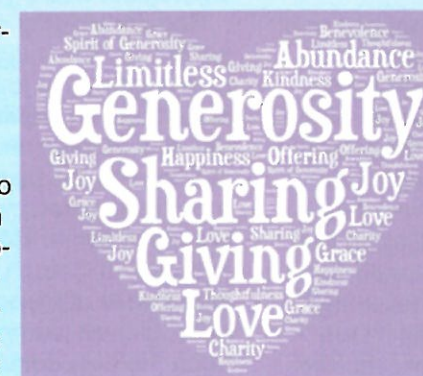
Throughout the magazine there are articles reminding us of the importance of Generosity—from the Abba Trust and World Development Appeals to the offering of ourselves in the service of Christ.

As I mention generosity, we are deeply indebted to those who continue to advertise and we encourage you to support them.

My personal thanks to Cheryl for all her hard work in editing the magazine!

ENJOY!

Charles



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Rev Charles McMullen
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Youth & Children's Worker:

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Church Co-ordinator:

Stephen Cully

Church Secretaries:

Elaine Ward & Cheryl Miller

Church Officers:

Ken Macartney
Martin Yardley

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

Only God's Spirit can be an eavesdropper

Rev. Charles McMullen

A friend recently reminded me of the following piece sent by a disgruntled member of a congregation to the editor of a newspaper, in which he complained that it made no sense to go to Church every Sunday.



He wrote: "I've gone for 30 years now, and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time, and the ministers are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

It was obviously true that he had never attended West Church (!), but he did stir ongoing controversy which ran over a number of weeks in the "Letters to the Editor" column. Finally this response was published, which brought to an end any further discussion:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

At Christmas, many of us will soon be enjoying all kinds of indulgences that bring good cheer to this dark time of the year. At the risk of excess calories adding to the already embattled waistline, there's everything from seasonal cake and puddings, Heroes and Celebrations, chutney and cranberry to turkey and ham.

But there's also the importance of spiritual nourishment. Sitting in Church, we might go through dry periods when nothing seems particularly relevant. On the other hand, one Sunday quite recently when Dave was leading, it seemed as if the words of every reading, prayer, hymn and chorus were totally for me personally. Sometimes in my preaching I might wonder if I am hitting the mark and then I receive an email, phone call, letter or a comment at the door along the lines that the message was so spot on or appropriate. Only God's Spirit

can be such an eavesdropper into our private worlds and it's incredible whenever this happens!

Just as we cannot neglect our physical bodies, we must not neglect our spiritual nourishment. Our stomachs soon remind us if we go without food, and over time our souls begin to languish and wither if we neglect God's Word.

Regular reading of the Scriptures equips us with nuggets of wisdom, challenges us to forgive as we have been forgiven, comforts us in sorrow and in need, enables us to live our lives by the power of the Spirit at a higher level and reminds us of the life to come. Meeting together regularly at Church underlines the importance of friendship, togetherness, shared journey and experience. Nothing compares to the relationships built at that deeper level.



Just as God provides for our bodies, so this Christmas season we are reminded that He meets our deepest needs: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Manse family wishes you all the blessings of Christmas and assures you of our prayers for 2017! May you not only be physically refreshed this Christmas, but also spiritually renewed! And let's continue to take the challenge seriously throughout the New Year that our spiritual life is vitally important and needs constant attention! The grace and truth of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

Agape!

Charles McMullen



The most normal person I know is...

Before I can answer who the most normal person I know is, I have to answer, "What is normal?"

To me normal is doing long haul flights two times a year, having no TV and watching movies as a family, going back to Bangor every summer, having my Granny's bed everywhere I go and eating pizza on Friday nights.

More normal things are moving country every 2-3 years, meeting people from different cultures and countries, eating as a family every night, face-timing my older brothers every week, trying weird foods, living away from my home country, always decorating the Christmas cake every year, doing swimming every day and going to the beach nearly every weekend.

Normal is what you think it is. Your normal is different to my normal, but I know who the most normal person I know is. It's me.

By: Lulu Hopkinson, age 11



SERVING CHRIST : SERVING OTHERS

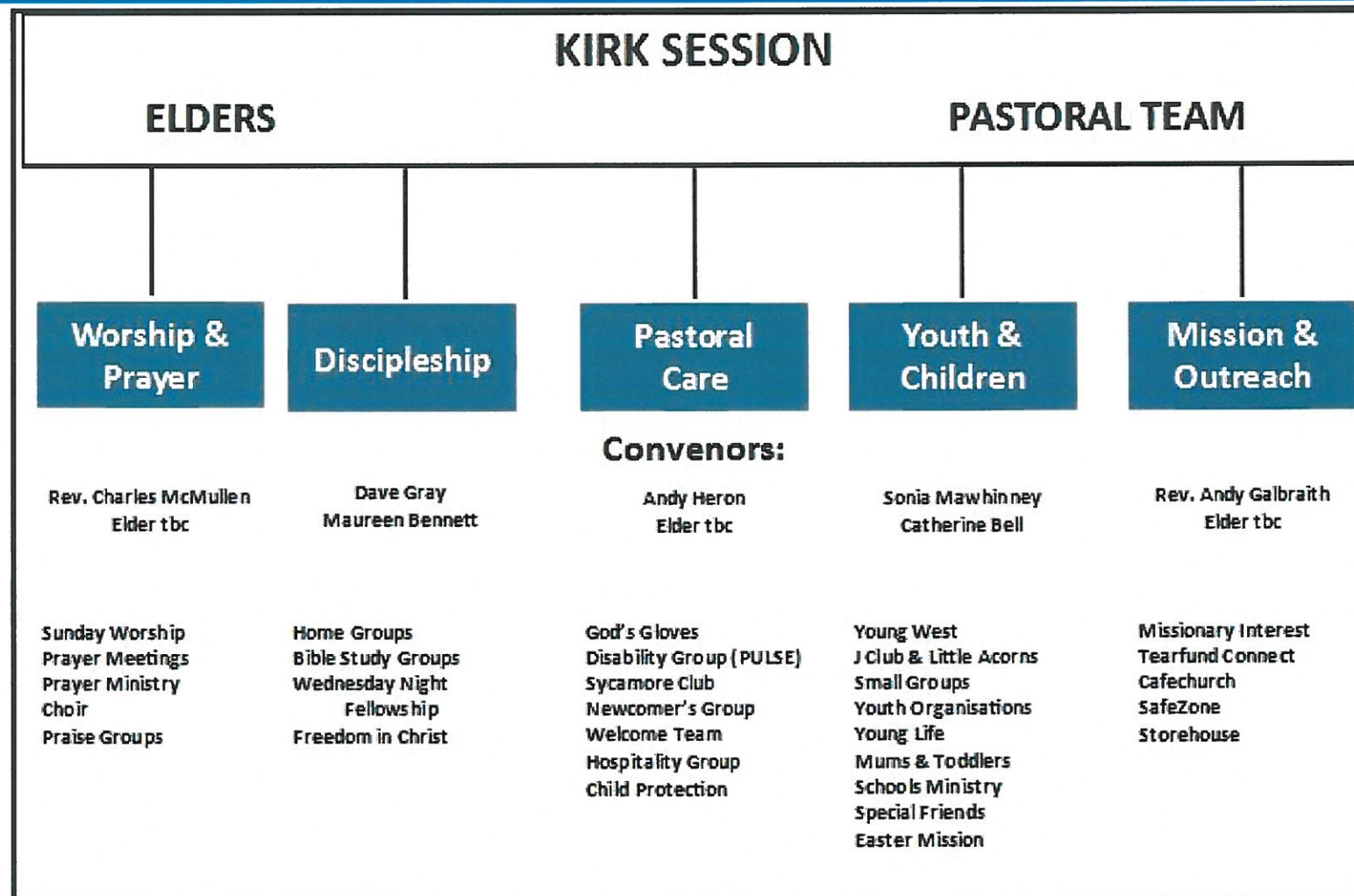
by Maureen Bennett, Deputy Clerk of Session

One of the outcomes from the Jubilee group suggested that the governance and leadership in West had not kept sufficient pace with the growth of the church—or to put it another way, the trellis for the vine needs to be strengthened. At a recent workshop on discipleship some of us were asked to think of the church as a mixture of trellis and vine¹. The basic work of any Christian ministry, we were told, is to preach the good news of Jesus in the power of God's Spirit, to see people begin a new relationship with God and to grow in maturity in that relationship. That's the work of planting, watering, fertilising and tending the vine. However just as some sort of framework is needed to help a vine grow, so Christian ministries need some structure and support. As the ministry grows, the trellis also needs attention.



¹Marshall C; Payne T (2009) *The Trellis and The Vine* : Matthias Media

Over the last few months we have been considering what sort of trellis we need to support the Vine. The diagram to the right helps to explain some of what we have put in place so far:



Each member of the Pastoral Team will head up one area of church life, and along with an elder, co-convene an action team to develop the work in that area. These action teams will be made up of elders and others, have terms of reference and meet bi-monthly with Kirk Session meeting on the alternate months. Each action team will work under the authority of the Kirk Session, set itself a number of goals or areas for development which will be designed to meet the overall purpose of the church set out in our value statements and summed up in the strap-line 'Serving Christ Serving Others'.

This structure builds on the best of what was already in place but also has the advantage of:

- Stronger co-ordination of West's programme through the greater involvement of the Pastoral team;
- Wider participation from across the congregation;
- The development of sub-groups, as necessary, within action teams;
- The eventual linking of each organisation or group within the church to one of the five action teams.

Some definition of each group might be helpful in explaining 'the trellis' a little better and how it relates to our purpose and values.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER : we wish to see God honoured in all our worship

Worship is experiencing the presence of God through His Spirit and expressing our adoration, reverence and devotion through praise and prayer - both collectively and individually. Listening and talking with God in prayer is central to all that we do.

DISCIPLESHIP : Jesus Christ changes lives - we encourage God's people to discover and use their gifts

Discipleship is about learning to live confidently as Jesus would. It means growing deeper in faith so that our lives led by the Holy Spirit radiate the love of Jesus and reflect His values and attributes.

MISSION AND OUTREACH : we reach out in love and service.

At West we want to be obedient to Jesus' command to go beyond our church family to be advertisements for Him both in our local community and beyond.

PASTORAL CARE : we aim to welcome and care for everyone

Pastoral care is central to church life; the care that the early Christians had for one another encouraged others to join them. Jesus' command to love one another reminds us of our calling to care for one another emotionally, physically and spiritually.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE : developing the next generation

Our children and young people are the next generation. We reach out to our children and young people to share the good news of Jesus, to nurture them in their faith through strong support groups, mentorship and friendships, equipping them to live out Jesus wherever they find themselves.

West exists to be a Word-centred and spirit-led caring community radiating God's love and reaching out to make disciples of all.

We want all of our members to be linked in to the vine of Christ and to be part of the trellis that supports our stated intention of
Serving Christ : Serving Others



We want to invite each of you to take on the responsibilities as **members** of Christ's family in Bangor West so that together we can grow and **mature** in our faith, support and **minister** to one another and reach out with a **mission** to share the hope and love of Jesus with the local community and the world beyond.

So please do not wait to be invited; If you feel prompted to become involved, please speak to one of the convenors.

HOSPITAL & PASTORAL VISITATION



If you have a family member in hospital, please do not hesitate to contact Rev Charles McMullen (91454338). 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

REST IN CHRIST

by Lindsay Conway, Clerk of Session

How rested and relaxed are you as you sit down to read this article? Have you made a cup of coffee, with a wee tray bake or scone? Attending church should be one of the most relaxing times of the week - we are in God's House, a familiar place, familiar faces: people who know and care for us. A place we find true rest, a complete contrast to the rest of our week, where many of us find ourselves in a daily spin, about a whole host of things. There is that expectation that everything is immediate, we refer to real time, we Twitter or Facebook it - we must respond now. No longer taking time to reflect, to decide what is the best option, or of a considered response.

We Presbyterians sometimes have a reputation for not enjoying ourselves, of being long faced, of never relaxing, always working? We like nothing more than boasting of working a 16 hour day, been involved in something every night of the week and busying ourselves in all sorts of activities? God did not intend us to be that busy and the eleventh commandment, "is not to knock your pan in", whatever the cost. Stress levels are at an all time high, now being experienced by all ages - we are even advised that our pets are stressed. This year I took nearly three weeks off, the longest leave I have taken at one time for a very long time - and I have to say I felt the benefit of it and the Presbyterian Council for Social Witness survived very well without me! Even within the church so many are experiencing stresses and strains, which in turn impacts on many aspects of their lives. Sometimes we need to

talk about the home, church balance in the same way we talk about the home, work balance? We push ourselves so hard; we join every group, sign up for every seminar? The modern phrase of 24 / 7 sums up the level of pressure we are all under in the 21st Century, put that together with the internet, the mobile phone / smart phone and 24 hour - 7 day a week shopping. The pressure builds up and something snaps.

I have to confess on being a bit of an early bird, up early and out with our Golden Retriever Poppy. I try and protect these times and miss them when I am unable to get out. This is when I feel closest to God, to simply walk, sit and pray in that great outdoor cathedral. Some of us of a certain age will remember the half day Wednesday and Saturdays in the shops. When Saturday afternoon was for family, when every local football team had their loyal following, when many played badminton in the churches league.

So often as a church and as Christian People we react to significant events in social policy, and proposed changes in legislation and social issues - when we should be responding in a more reflective manner based on sound Biblical principles. Keeping the Sabbath is a good example - Generations reacting to a changing trend, without extolling the real benefits of time off and benefits of rest. What was locking up the swings and eating ice cream on a Sunday, to do with a real Sabbath? We should have been promoting the benefits of rest and relaxation, of time with family. The objections to shopping should have been about the impact on workers and



on family life and the demands on workers. We now know that it has gone too far and the impact on Family Life, Communities and Church Attendance, has been catastrophic, now risking both our physical and mental health, of distorting normal life.

God commands us, and Christ teaches us why and how we should rest, that we have a duty to take time out, to change our routine and do something different. We know that Christ enjoyed walking by the seashore and the hills. He enjoyed social gathering, having meals, of visiting friends and even going to the odd wedding. **Genesis 2: 2-3** clearly states, "And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation."

AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD ENDED HIS WORK WHICH HE HAD DONE AND HE RESTED

Genesis 2:2
LifeHopeandTruth.com

Then **Exodus 20:8-11 (The Message)** ⁸⁻¹¹ Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Work six days and do everything you need to do. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to GOD, your God. Don't do any work—not you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your servant, nor your maid, nor your animals, not even the foreign guest visiting in your town. For in six days GOD made Heaven, Earth, and sea, and everything in them; he rested on the seventh day. Therefore GOD blessed the Sabbath day; he set it apart as a holy day.

In his essay "The Paradox of Our Time," **Bob Morehouse** wrote, **The paradox of our time in history is that we:**

- * have taller buildings, but shorter tempers
- * have wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints
- * spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less
- * have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences but less time
- * have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge but less judgment, more experts yet more problems, more medicine but less wellness
- * get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much and pray too seldom
- * have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values
- * talk too much, love too seldom and hate too often
- * have learned how to make a living but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years

*have been all the way to the moon and back but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbour
* conquered outer space but not inner peace

John Ortberg, writing about: Fighting Soul-Fatigue, states that the Bible uses the word easy only once. It came from Jesus. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened...and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." **'Easy' is a soul word, not a circumstance word.** The soul was not made for an easy life. The soul was made for an easy yoke. And yet our souls seem to suffer fatigue. **Ortberg goes on:** "There is a kind of *fatigue that attacks the body*. When we stay up too late and rise too early; when we try to fuel ourselves for the day with coffee and a donut in the morning and Red Bull in the afternoon; when we refuse to take the time to exercise and eat foods that clog our brains and arteries; when we constantly try to guess which line at the grocery store will move faster and which parking space is closest to the mall, our bodies grow weary. There is a kind of *fatigue that attacks the mind*. When we are bombarded by information all day at work... When multiple screens are always clamouring for our attention... When we carry around mental lists of errands not yet done and bills not yet paid and e-mails not yet replied to... When we try to push unpleasant emotions under the surface like holding beach balls under the water at a swimming pool... our minds grow weary."

In so many ways we have never had it so good, many of us having witnessed at first hand those great changes in technology, in our standard of living, in education, travel and the list goes on, but with a cost? In this self-inflicted busyness we sometimes feel separated from God and struggle to find Him. We know that God wants us to enjoy our everyday lives. John 10 verse 10 - I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than ever dreamed" (The Message)

Ecclesiastes 3 verses 9 to 14 (NIV) "A Time for Everything", provides us with this very comprehensive and useful summary - ⁹What do workers gain from their toil? ¹⁰I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. ¹¹He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. ¹²I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. ¹³That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. ¹⁴I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.



"**Matthew 11:28-29**, the most familiar verses of all - "Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." We all know that rest is good for us. Rest is not sleep, it is finding that place or that activity that lets us relax and break our daily routine. Don't see rest as always about putting our feet up and doing nothing - it's about a different routine, of resting from the normal - the Sabbatical, the Retreat, the Time-out, our very own personal "Holy Days" - doing something really different, of venturing outside our comfort zone. The Bible speaks highly of rest and is a repeated theme throughout Scripture, **Leviticus 25:4** "God is very serious about rest." God desires it for us because we don't do it naturally?

Also it is in Christ that we find that ultimate rest. Our greatest challenge, is to be honest with ourselves.

I turn to John Ortberg in conclusion "Fighting the Soul – Fatigue" – *"My greatest challenge is the man in the mirror. When I say that the human heart is unruly, I'm not talking about yours. I'm talking about mine. What we are on the inside matters more than what happens on the outside.* That's where the little book of James becomes incredibly relevant. This epistle, written 2000 years ago to beleaguered, scattered, oppressed Jewish believers who were just barely hanging on to their faith, speaks with amazing clarity to life in the 21st-century. James wants us to discover the freedom that comes when we respond the right way to the pressures of life. **The soul craves rest.** Our wills sometimes rejoice in striving; our bodies were made to (at least sometimes) know the exhilaration of tremendous challenge; our minds get stretched when they must focus even when tired. But the soul craves rest. The soul knows only borrowed strength. The

soul was made to rest in God the way a tree rests in soil. One of the challenges of soul-fatigue is that it does not have the same obvious signs as physical fatigue. If you've run a marathon, your body lets you know it's finished. Our souls were not made to run on empty. But the soul doesn't come with a gauge. The indicators of soul-fatigue are more subtle."

To Rest in God, is our fully comprehensive assurance that we as Christians, can cope with the modern pressures of everyday life. It is vital that we find our way of finding and sustaining that routine that keeps us calm. Since I preached on this subject I have been told by members of the congregation, that they had been challenged and helped, simple proof – if needed that the hand of God is in everything that we do.

Now pour another cup of tea, butter another scone and read **Psalm 23, (The Message)** as if **you have never read it before, resting in God – with God.**

¹⁻³ GOD, my shepherd!

I don't need a thing.

You have bedded me down in lush meadows;

you find me quiet pools to drink from.

True to your word,

you let me catch my breath

and send me in the right direction.

⁴ Even when the way goes through Death Valley,

I'm not afraid

when you walk at my side.

Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure.

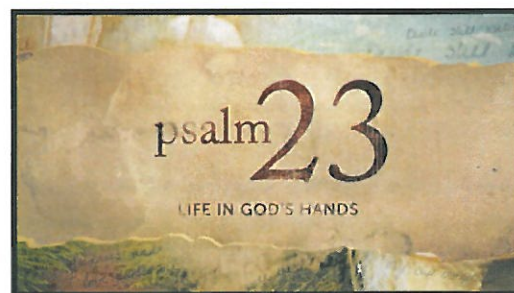
⁵ You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies.

You revive my drooping head; my cup brims with blessing.

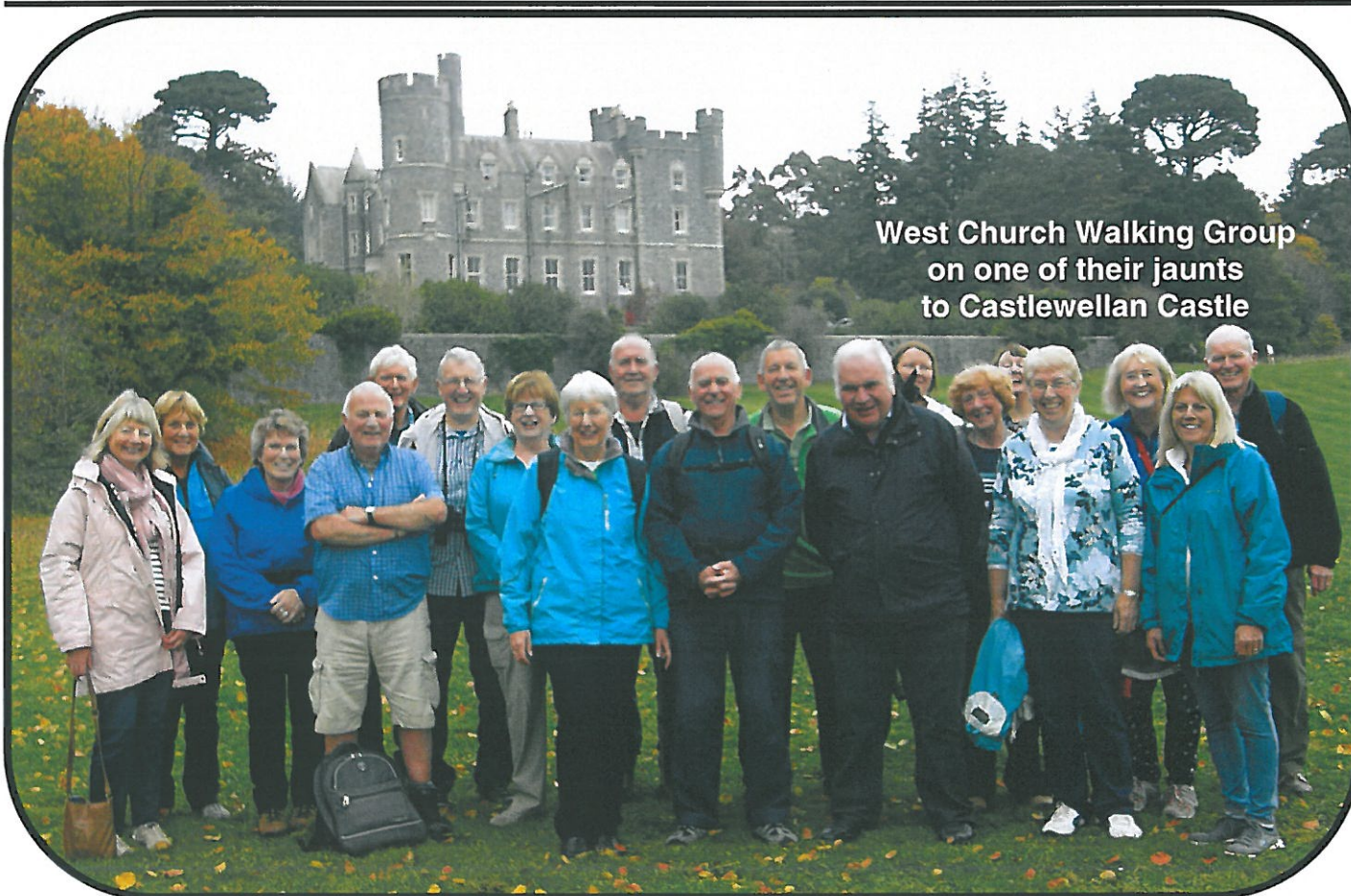
⁶ Your beauty and love chase after me

every day of my life.

I'm back home in the house of GOD for the rest of my life.



West Church Walking Group on one of their jaunts to Castlewellan Castle

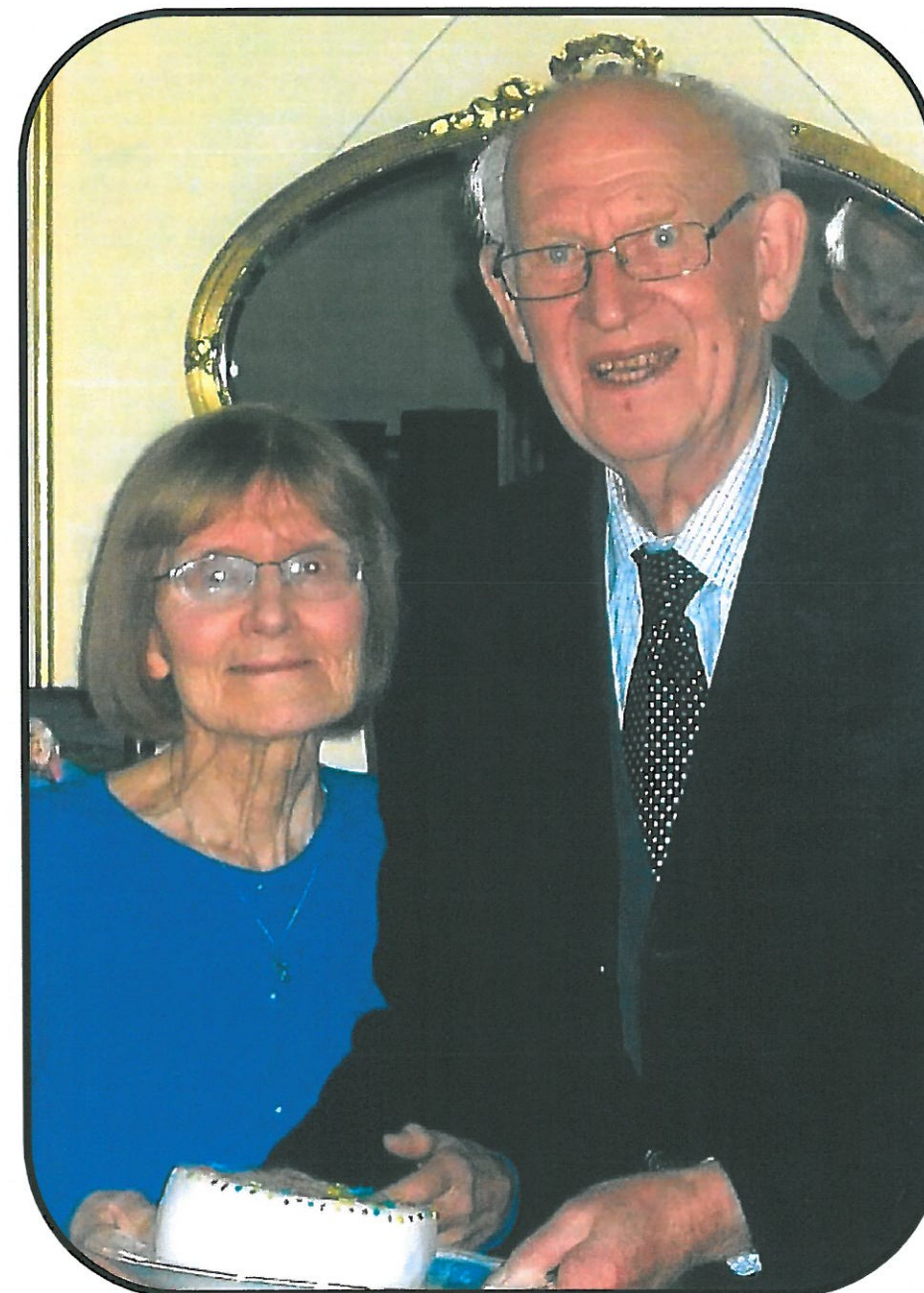


CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM DAVID & RHODA

It is a happy privilege, once a year, to touch base with folk in West! Just occasionally I myself dip into "West Church Journey" and again find myself among you all, friends and fellow-workers of yesteryear, when we laboured together in upbuilding our church. And it refreshes Rhoda and me, when just occasionally we look in to a service at West, and find you still are! It brings us joy also to see all the 'new' fold!, and to read of the remarkable growth of the congregation in its many aspects and departments! It thrilled us, for example, during a Holy Week service in the Methodist Church, to witness a sudden influx of young people from West, so numerous that all vacant seats were filled, and quite a number had to sit on the floor! Success in terms of numbers, and witnessing redemptive transformation in the lives of many through the gracious power of the Holy Spirit, greatly refreshes our spirits in an era when secularism has largely emptied many churches and disheartened many believers.

So it is good to immerse ourselves in stories of places where the Church is growing and lives are transformed and a gracious impact made upon society. To read, for example, the stories of blessings outpoured in Ffald Y Brennin in Wales brings encouragement and challenge! Yet it is only when we ourselves manage to replicate this that the full benefit is gained. Recently a book by Mark Marx was placed in to my hands entitled "Stepping in to the Impossible". It tells an amazing story of healings on the streets of Coleraine. Amazing indeed! But more glorious still to learn that this has already been replicated in 700 churches in 17 countries!

I now look back over more than sixty years of ordained ministry, and of marriage, and though stamina is not what it used to be, we are still totally enthusiastic about the things of the Kingdom and believe we still



can have a part in replicating the good things of which we have been speaking.

Our children and our grandchildren keep close and visit us regularly. They are very solicitous of their aging parents—occasionally we may think over-solicitous! But their love is constant and tender! They will be with us over Christmas: Elizabeth and David, with Christopher, Patrick and Lucy; Andrew with Denise, and Sara; Mary

With Geoff and Rebecca, Katherine and Sarah.

Rhoda and I send loving greetings to you all, whether in Ireland or in India; we continue to value your love at Christmas.

For any of our more recent members, copies of Rev. David Bailie's 'West Church Journey' are available from the office—a great read for anyone interested in the formation and growth of our church.

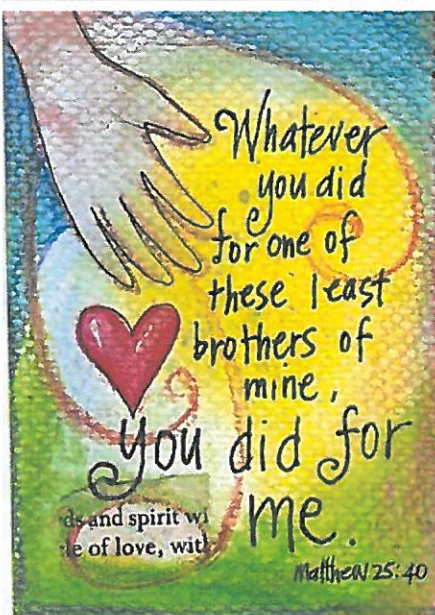
SHARING THE LOVE OF CHRIST

As I write this, it is only 8 weeks to Christmas and decorations are already in the shops. Soon we will be bombarded with adverts for all the latest gadgets and toys. Imagine the stress of having to try to provide a good Christmas for your children, if the wage-earner has no job or if you are a single parent with two or three children who each have a wish list as long as your arm. Where will the money come from for food, never mind presents? We are very aware of the poverty and great need in our town. This Christmas more than ever we need your help both in providing toys and food for those less fortunate than ourselves. Please help us to show the love of Christ at this time.

Our aim is to provide assistance to homes where there is hardship. We will buy each child a new item of clothing and also provide a toy for Christmas Day. This is where we again need your help. We would like the children in the congregation to bring to church on **Sunday 18th December** a new toy, which we can then pass on to these children. Parents and grandparents can help us by encouraging their children or grandchildren to enter into the true meaning of Christmas. Help them to be part of this effort which can make such a difference in many homes on Christmas Day. The toys should be wrapped and labelled with the age and sex of the child for whom it is suitable. The ages of the children we are helping are from birth to 16. The children will have an opportunity to leave their gift at the Christmas Tree. We endeavour to also put in a small gift for Mum.

Storehouse North Down will also be putting together around 300 hampers which will be distributed to needy families. West Church members have been very supportive of

The Abba Trust Christmas Appeal



Storehouse and this support is much appreciated. If you could perhaps bring along extra groceries in the run up to Christmas it would be most welcome.



Finally, it is quite a job sorting out everything we receive. We will be doing this on **Sunday 18th December at 2.00 pm** in the Rathmore Hall. If you would be willing to help please come along.

We are very aware of the many calls on you at Christmas time but we know that West Church has always supported The Abba Trust and we know that you will do so again this year. Many thanks for your support. **Margaret Bailie**

Our Lord said, "In as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my children you have done it unto me".



Find help and healing for the hurt of separation and divorce

DivorceCare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences. Don't go through separation or divorce alone.

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2 CORINTHIANS

We thank God for his grace by our giving

God uses our giving to bless us and others. The commentary on 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 which follows, was written by Nicky Gumble (Holy Trinity Brompton and Alpha) and is taken from the HTB Bible in one year App. It's reprinted by kind permission.

In this passage, Paul gives us at least ten reasons to giving generously:

(i) Giving is the best investment you can make.

Like the harvest, giving is planting seed. The farmer will reap far more than what was sown (v6): 'A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop' (v.6, MSG)

But this I say, He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

—2 Corinthians 9:6

This applies to everything in life. What you give to the Lord he multiplies—your time, gifts, ambitions and money.



(ii) Giving should be fun.

Giving should never be forced or grudging, but rather voluntary and cheerful 'for God loves (He takes pleasure in, prizes above all other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, prompt to do it) giver [whose heart is in his giving]' (v.7, AMP) The Greek word for cheerful is *hilaros*. We always quip at HTB that our giving should be *hilarious*! It should be fun to give.

(iii) Giving takes away the burden of financial worry.

Paul Writes, 'and God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that *in all things at all times*, having *all that you need*, you will abound in every good work' (v.8) Giving does not mean handing over financial responsibility to God—but it does mean handing over the worry and the burden of it.

(iv) Giving 'enriches' you.

When God invites us to give, he is pleading to our reason, not to our

Emotions: 'Thus you will be enriched in all things and in every way so that you can be generous' (v.11, AMP). Materially, we will have enough to give away generously (v.11). Our characters will be enriched (v.10). God will be praised (v.11).

(v) Giving transforms your character.

Paul speaks of 'the harvest of your righteousness' (v.10b). Giving purges the character from the constricting grip of materialism that destroys lives.

(vi) Giving inspires others.

'Your generosity will result in *thanks-giving to God*. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but it is also overflowing in the many expressions of *thanks to God*. Because of the service of which you approved yourselves, people will praise God' (vv.11b-13a).

(vii) Giving meets people's needs.

Generous giving blesses other people and supplies the needs of God's people—'helping meet the bare needs of poor Christians' (v.12, MSG)

(viii) Giving is evidence of real faith.

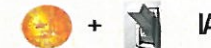
Generous giving is an act of obedience, which should accompany 'your confession of the gospel of Christ' (v.13). Giving is an act of trust—in doing it you are saying that it is God, not yourself or anyone

else, who ultimately provides for your needs.

(ix) Giving makes you a stakeholder in the church.

Paul speaks of 'your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else' (v.13b) The word Paul uses for sharing is *koinonia* which can also be translated 'fellowship'. In the same way as when you share a flat or apartment you share in the bills, as you share in the needs of the community you reap benefits of that community. For example, every time someone comes to know Christ through the community you share in the blessing.

Koinonia \koy-nohn-ee-ah\ A Greek word meaning to be drawn together by intimate participation. It is often used to describe the idealized state of fellowship, prayer and service within the early Christian church.

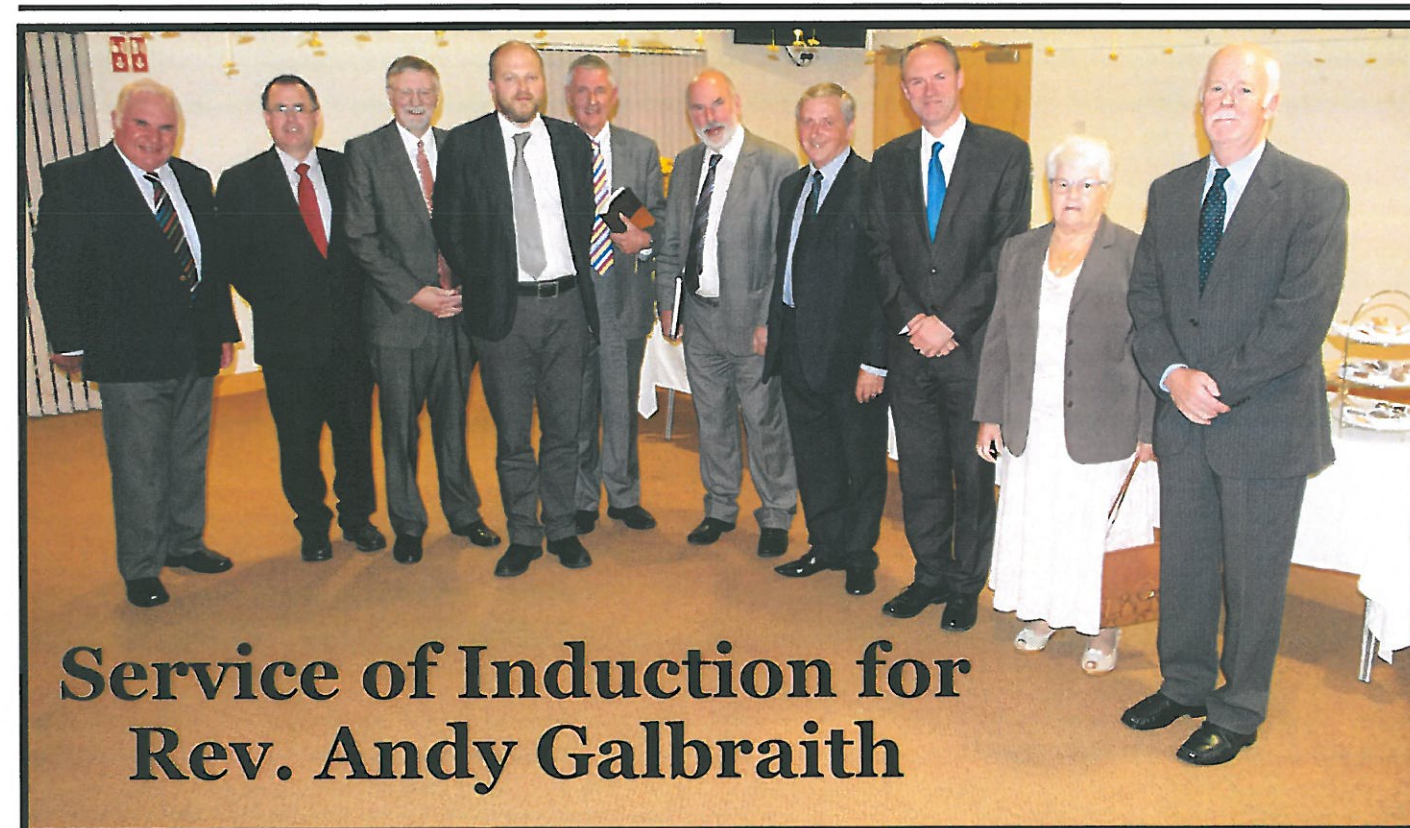
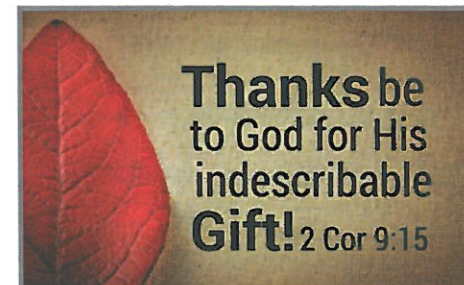


(x) Giving is a response to God's gift to you.

God so loved you that he gave his one and only Son so that you might have eternal life (John 3:16). Our giving is a response to God's amazing grace. His 'indescribable gift' (2 Corinthians 9:15) is the gift of his Son.

'Thank God for this gift, his gift. No language can praise it enough!' (v.15, MSG).

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Service of Induction for Rev. Andy Galbraith

Pictured above are the members of the Ards' Presbytery Commission

Rev. Andy Galbraith was inducted as our Associate Minister by a Commission of the Ards' Presbytery on 1 September 2016 at a special service.

The Service was conducted by Rev. Peter Lyle (Moderator) and the charge was given to Andy and the congregation by Very Rev. Dr. Patton, minister of Ballygilbert which is Andy's home congregation.

After some brief speeches everyone enjoyed a wonderful supper prepared by Linda Cummings and

her Catering Team

Andy is already proving to be a wonderful support to Charles and other members of the Pastoral Team. He has specific responsibilities for the development of the Mission and Outreach here in West. He is leading Cafechurch and is just completing his first Alpha Course, which has been attended by over forty people.

We all warmly welcome back Andy, Jo, Jordan, Lauren and Calvin to West and wish them as a family God's richest blessing.



RECLAIMING HOPE

World Development Appeal 2016

World Development Appeal : Christmas Day Offering

Central and South American projects are the focus of 'Reclaiming Hope', the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's World Development Appeal for 2016

Launched in the autumn of each year, the **World Development Appeal (WDA)** aims to raise £500,000, or more, for sustainable development projects overseas. All proceeds will be channelled through PCI's aid agency partners, Christian Aid and Tearfund and this year two of the projects that will benefit are based in El Salvador and Brazil.

"The WDA began in 1980 in support of sustainable development work in some of the world's poorest communities. Today the Appeal represents a long-term and generous commitment on the part of PCI members and congregations across Ireland to this work," said Rev. Dr. Katherine Meyer, Convener of the Church's World Development Committee.

"The theme of this year's Appeal is 'Reclaiming Hope', a feeling that resonated with those we met in El Salvador and Brazil. This year highlights the additional challenges created for sustainable development in post-conflict situations. At the same time, we continue to focus on all the ways in which the effects of climate change continue to make

themselves felt in almost every aspect of sustainable community development," Dr. Meyer said.

Talking about each of the projects, the Minister of Christ Church Sandymount in Dublin said that almost 25 years after the formal end to the 12 year civil war in El Salvador, the country is still recovering:

"The high levels of poverty, which formed the background to the civil war, are still being played out in its aftermath. Our partner in the Central American nation is the Programme for Capacity-Building and Reconstruction in El Salvador, known as PROCARES, which has been one of Christian Aids' partners since 1998.

"PROCARES is working with returning refugees who were resettled in the Jiquilisco Bay region on the country's southern coast. In the face of severe climate volatility, ongoing coastal erosion, and ruined infrastructure, this new community began to reclaim the land. One way in which the community is building their own future is through a shrimp farming co-operative. This year's World Development Appeal will support

PROCARES and the El Zompopo Cooperative Society," Dr. Meyer said.

Launching 'Reclaiming Hope' in Assembly Buildings are (left to right) Derek Hall of Tearfund, Moderator Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar, Rev. Dr. Katherine Meyer and Florence Mutesasira of Christian Aid



The 2016 Appeal will also support ACEV (Evangelical Action) in Brazil, who are working with some of the country's most isolated populations in the semi-arid northeast of the country.

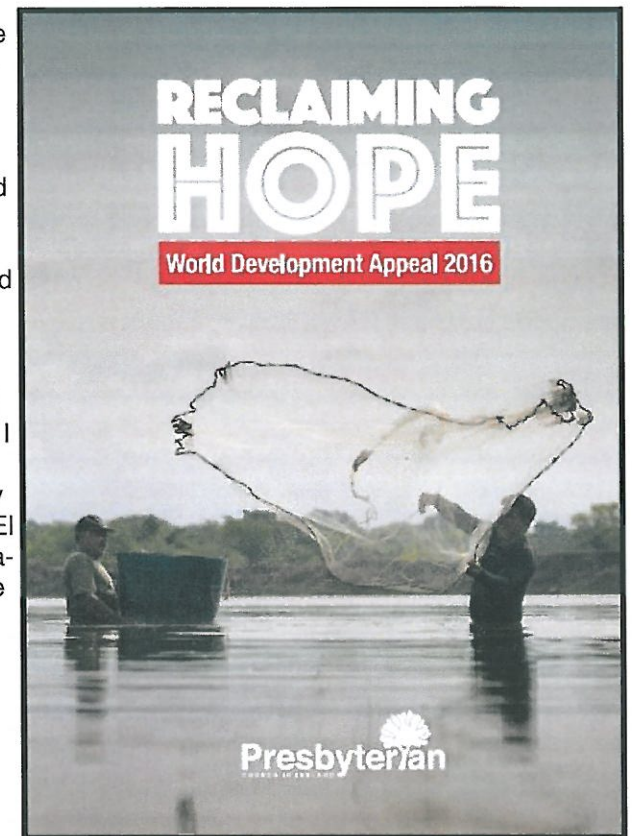
"This part of Brazil has seen few glimpses of the rapid economic growth experienced in other parts of this vast nation. Here the climate is semi-arid, and for people living in the region, access – or lack of access – to water shapes almost every other aspect of their lives," Dr. Meyer said.

"Working in partnership with Tearfund and local churches, the 2016 Appeal will help to support ACEV as it continues to focus on the provision of wells and their maintenance. Training in agriculture will also make the best use of the new water systems, as will the development of new planting and crops particularly suited to a dry climate. All this in partnership with churches whose own horizons are now expanding by moving out into the communities they serve."

Welcoming the launch of the 2016 Appeal, Presbyterian Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar said, "As those who belong to the Lord Jesus, we have a concern for His creation and

people and when we see a need at home or overseas, especially when it comes to the poorest and most marginalised, we should be faithful and true to respond.

"This is our 36th World Development Appeal and last year congregations across Ireland raised over £559,140 for projects in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, among others. I have no doubt that this same spirit of generosity will bless the people of El Salvador and Brazil, enabling them to reclaim the hope that we all seek."



A little glimpse of God—a good news story by Reg Bates

This true story concerns a little girl named Grace who lived in Groomsport a few years ago (perhaps about 2009 or 2010). She was, at the time, about six months old and a very sick little girl. She had a very serious heart condition requiring surgery but the surgeons were very reluctant to operate because of her lack of strength. "Perhaps, when she puts on a bit of weight", they said. There was sadness and disappointment all round! But her Grandmother wouldn't give up on her. So, she prayed to God for help and asked her best friend, Pam Law, to pray too. Pam did and she asked me for prayer support.

I was happy to do so and, that evening, in my bedroom, I began to pray for Grace. I prayed for the family. I prayed for the medics. And, I prayed for the young lady herself.

That was when I had a strange experience! While I was praying for her, I thought I saw little Grace. And it wasn't a dream! It was more like a vision of her. In my mind, there she was cuddled up in the arms of God. And, she looked as though she was back in her mother's womb being fed. **Only, it was God who was feeding her!** Or, so I believed!

What a lovely glimpse of God doing what God does: Just lavishing His children with love and understanding. Knowing and meeting all our needs!

Just lavishing His children? YES! The Bible, especially through the words of Jesus, clearly says that God wants to have a Father/Child relationship with us. But, He is so much more than our Father! He is, in fact, our Creator. "From the dust of the ground", He made us.

I do believe that God has a purpose for Grace. And, indeed, for all of us! So, my prayer to Almighty God for you right now is that He would with fatherly love, do whatever good and lovely thing He so wants to do for you. **So that you will be made completely whole and healthy in body, mind, and spirit. I pray also that He will prepare you for any, as yet, unfulfilled purpose He has for you. AMEN!**

Finally, as a footnote to this story, I received an e-mail in July 2016 saying: *Grace is doing well. Still lots of problems but is attending school.*

SURELY, GOD IS IN CONTROL !

**NO
CHILD
TAKEN**

TEARFUND

“We often feel overwhelmed working in anti-trafficking; there is so much brokenness it’s hard to see how we can make much difference”

The latest report we have from our partners in India begins with the words above, however, I hope you will see in the following report that although there are so many heart wrenching situations, there is also so much hope and encouragement.



Keeping Women Healthy

Our partners have been involved in lots of medical work these past few months. **Medical problems resulting from the sex trade can be overwhelming.** Sexually transmitted infections are rife, with women unable to protect themselves. In August our partners ran medical camps in the red light districts where women could come to receive vaccinations for Hepatitis B and take part in health classes. They followed up with visits to the women to encourage them to visit local doctors and where they come across emergency situations they take the women to hospital. 13 women were accompanied on hospital visits this quarter.

The best news is that two of the women who the team have been working with have been able to leave the red light district completely! Women leaving is rare, as the cycle of trafficking and prostitution is difficult to break.

Awareness raising sessions for Hepatitis B & C with the sex workers



Facing Challenges

Although there is often much joy in the work our partners do, the work remains risky and hard.

The staff have been facing increasing threats and mockery from local men in the area. This makes it incredibly difficult to work well, and can make staff more likely to leave. Staff can also become discouraged by the lack of motivation we see from the women towards their children’s education.

To end this heartbreaking cycle of poverty, children need a different upbringing. But the parents are struggling to understand this and so more and more children drop out of school.

As part of our Connected Church relationship with Tearfund, our aim was to raise £10,000 each year for the 3 year duration. On 30th October we were delighted to present our 2nd cheque for £10,000 to Derek Hall, Northern Ireland Representative from Tearfund.

Learning to Smile

The Director of Church Relationships at Tearfund recently spent time visiting our partners anti-trafficking work in India. He shares one of his most moving experiences.

A young woman enters the room. She lights it up with her smile. Neetu, is in her early twenties. She’s cheerful, confident, beautiful. Neetu lives in Mumbai in India. She grew up a long way away on the India/Pakistan border. Her father died when she was only five. Unsurprisingly, his death led to her mum finding it difficult to cope. She had some kind of a breakdown. In a society where so often the family name is more important than the family members, this emotional collapse brought shame - her mum was killed, by her uncle. The same uncle sold Neetu and her sister to a local politician, putting an end to her dreams. She was forced to work as a slave in the home.

‘I would get beaten if I stopped working’ she said. ‘The abuse didn’t end there. The man used to physically touch me everywhere.’ After several years Neetu was taken to Mumbai. There she was sold again, at the age of 13, to a brothel owner. ‘My life became very bad’ she said. She was kept with many other children, all of them suffering the same daily fate of abuse and rape.

Then, one day, Neetu was able to escape. She left with no possessions when no one was looking. She managed to get police help. After three months in a Government home she was given into the care of a Tearfund partner, expert at helping survivors of trafficking. When she first arrived she was severely traumatised. ‘Whenever I shared any of my story, I’d cry,’ she said. There would be no respite at night either, when vivid nightmares would awake her. Neetu though, was supported by our Tearfund partner. She received counselling and an opportunity to discover her gifts and talents. She learnt basic life skills like cooking, and how to travel safely. She discovered a love of making jewellery.

Our partner has an incredible success rate of rehabilitating those it serves. Some 90 percent never return to the brothels. ‘Each has to learn to forgive, and when it’s their own mothers, fathers, husbands or other family members that have sold them, that takes years. For each of them the journey is so long.’

Today Neetu is heading towards the end of that journey; her confidence and happiness are a sign that she has survived. Her love of jewellery-making has led to plans to open a small business.

Her story is inspirational. But this isn’t just a story, it’s a life. For every Neetu there are many who never get past the nightmare. Globally, every thirty seconds a child is trafficked.



Jewellery Making training

Stopping the Trafficking at the source

Neetu’s story reminds us that the best way to combat trafficking is to carry out the preventative work to stop it ever happening.

The communities our partners work in are targeted by traffickers because poverty has made them vulnerable. No job prospects, means little income, means families go to bed hungry: with the odds stacked against them, they fall victim to traffickers.

One of the most crucial things our partners do is helping families to find ways of bringing in more income. Often this is done through agricultural projects. In the last quarter a two day training session for 60 farmers from vulnerable communities was run by our partners.

The training focused on a new, cost-effective technology to help with growing rice. Since the

Cont’d on page 20

training they have trialed the methods on seven farmer's fields, and are seeing excellent results. Raising awareness and educating people about trafficking lays the foundations for fighting this crime. In September past, two one-day workshops were organised.

The first was in a high school and they talked to over 70 children about trafficking, many of them were hearing about it for the first time. The methods traffickers might use to trick them were explained, and the reality of child labour made clear to them.

The second workshop was organised for staff and volunteers alongside people from other organisations doing similar projects, to educate them on the legal considerations of this work. We talked about the formal process for reporting trafficking, and relationships with governmental bodies and the police.

In Ramesh's story below you can read about how these two approaches - education and agricultural training - work together to make a big difference.

Just how it should be

In much of India, people with a disability are subject to exclusion and prejudice. There is little chance of securing a job, or even accessing mainstream education.

Ramesh Rishidev was born with a physical disability which means he is unable to move very easily. Unable to go to school, he married young and now lives with his wife and three children in a rural village. His wife Rambha brings in the sole income for the family. She spends long days labouring in the fields, and yet the money she earns is rarely enough. With no other options, the couple had to send their eldest son to work in a hotel.

At just eight years old he was made to clean dishes from early morning until late at night, for meagre, inconsistent pay. Our partners were alerted to this situation during one of our Child Protection Committee Meetings with the village. It became apparent that the family simply did not know that child labour was happening, or how they could stop it.

The staff who work for our partners visited the family in their home and explained to them that it was illegal



Pictured above left, Ramesh with his wife Rambha and 2 of his children and above right, Ramesh with his chickens

and encouraged them to rescue their son, which they did. The reason the son had been sent away was because the family was struggling to survive, and if they simply rescued him, the reality was he would be forced to find work elsewhere.

So our partners supported the family to start a chicken farm. The chickens were easy enough to manage that Ramesh could help out, and also would provide direct food for the family. Initially we gave the family 250 chicks, and after caring for them until they were old enough to sell, the family have earned 10,000 rupees profit (about £120). Ramesh says: 'We are very happy with our chickens. It is my favourite thing to care for them each morning and evening as it gets me out of the house. And now we have enough money to eat, and can stay together as a family- just how it should be.'



Some of the money has been used to enrol the children in school: perhaps the first step in breaking the cycle of poverty for this family. The next step is to open a bank account and start saving!

I hope this has given some flavour of the work our Tearfund partners in India are involved in. Thank you all so much for your continued support of this work. It has been really encouraging!

I started this report with the statement "We often feel overwhelmed working in anti-trafficking; there is so much brokenness it's hard to see how we can make much difference."

But I hope you have found this report disturbing enough to pray and to give but encouraging enough to feel that this project we are involved in is very worthwhile and that it does change lives for the better.



A girl in a village in Bahir

Jenny Barthow/Tearfund

HOW ARE YOU GROWING?

Dave Gray writes

When we read about Jesus' disciples they are very familiar to us. It's because they are people like us. Men and women who had big issues with their former lives impacting their ability to follow faithfully. They often were full of doubts and consumed by anger or ambition or jealousy. So how did they grow in passion for God's work in and through them? How did they keep going despite disappointments and hostility aimed against them? How did they become so committed to his mission that they were willing to die for it, years after Jesus had ascended back to heaven?

I think it is because they never stopped growing. Growing in their love of Jesus and into the fullness of life that he promised them.

This is what the Lord continues to want for all of us modern disciples. Growth requires intentionality and doesn't happen overnight. Jesus loved a bit of Biology in His stories, and describes good soil (the space we carve into our routines to be with God), the grace and power his Spirit works in our hearts (like sunshine and heat) and the photosynthetic growth and fruitfulness that happens: in us, around us, in others we interact with. The minerals that create healthy plants are like the fellowship and encouragement we experience as we meet together in Home Groups and prayer triplets and in our fellowships. And the atmosphere is transformed, (Carbon dioxide is converted to oxygen) so others flourish around us in our service, hope, faith and love. It's transformation that lasts. **So how are you growing? Are you stuck in autumn or even in winter?**

My encouragement to you is to pursue new growth. Find a good place to grow, where you can hear the words of Jesus, where you will be challenged to respond actively. A place where you can debrief and interpret what the Word of God means and how it needs to take shape in your life. In short, look to be disciples and then start discipling others. Join a Home Group (new groups starting in January) or find others to read the Bible with, chat with and pray with (ask Dave or the pastoral team for aids on this).



Rather, pursue the promise of fruitfulness and get growing!

Don't settle for your spiritual feeling like this!



Service Opportunity! For all you actual horticulturists and keen gardeners (individuals and Home Groups), Aaron House in Dundonald (residential and day care facility for people with physical disabilities) has a sensory garden in need of 'TLC' and maintenance. If you would love to help with an ongoing program of gardening, please contact Dave or the Church Office.

Important DATE!

Date for your Diary! Our second 'West Church Family' weekend (for all members of our church family, age 0-100) is scheduled for 16th-18th June 2017. **Venue: Castlewellan Castle** **Agenda: Keep us Growing Together!**

This time of year sees the arrival of your 2017 Weekly Offering envelopes for the General Account (No 1) & Development Account (No 5). If you don't receive envelopes and would like to give to the Church funds, please contact the Church Office and we can organise this for you.

Alternatively, if you would prefer to make your Church Giving by Standing Order, again please contact the Church Office and we will provide you with the appropriate form for our General, Development or Mission Account.

If you are a UK taxpayer, please don't forget to GIFT AID your givings - your givings can be enhanced by 25%. Gift Aid forms are available from the Church Office.

Weekly Offering

In April past, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland launched 'Tides', a digital prayer resource that kick-started a brand new rhythm of devotions across the Church.

Spearheaded by the Church's Council for Congregational Life and Witness, Tides has sought to help individuals discover afresh what regular engagement with God and His Word can mean for their lives. Nearly 2,000 people are receiving daily inputs, helping to fuel a life of devotion.

Rick Hill, PCI's Discipleship Development Officer says "as each person received Tides into their inbox each morning, they are part of a wider community of people from right across the Church and event further afield. This is a community of people who are hungry to read God's Word, reflect on what He is saying and respond in their daily lives".

Laura McClelland (Andrew, our Youth & Children's Worker's wife) has kindly given us permission to publish her weekly devotional.

Day 1: READ: Luke 6 : 1-5

One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

REFLECT: The Sabbath. The Seventh Day. Sunday. Whatever we call it, it's a day set apart, different from all the others. A day of rest.

We live in a world that values productivity over recreation and contribution over character. Choosing rest can be a challenge. But here is a revolutionary idea from Jesus: the Sabbath was created to bless us, not restrict us. It has a spiritual, not just practical meaning. For the Pharisees, the rules had become the focus, not relationship. Jesus says—I'm interested in your heart, not your performance.

The Sabbath declares a freedom to celebrate all God is and all He has done. Our worship is not ritual, but an act of gratitude. We are not slaves to the Sabbath, but we serve the One who is the Lord of the Sabbath.

RESPOND: Finding a rhythm of

work and rest can be a struggle unless we plan it. The word 'recreation' unsurprisingly comes from the Latin verb meaning 'to create something anew'.

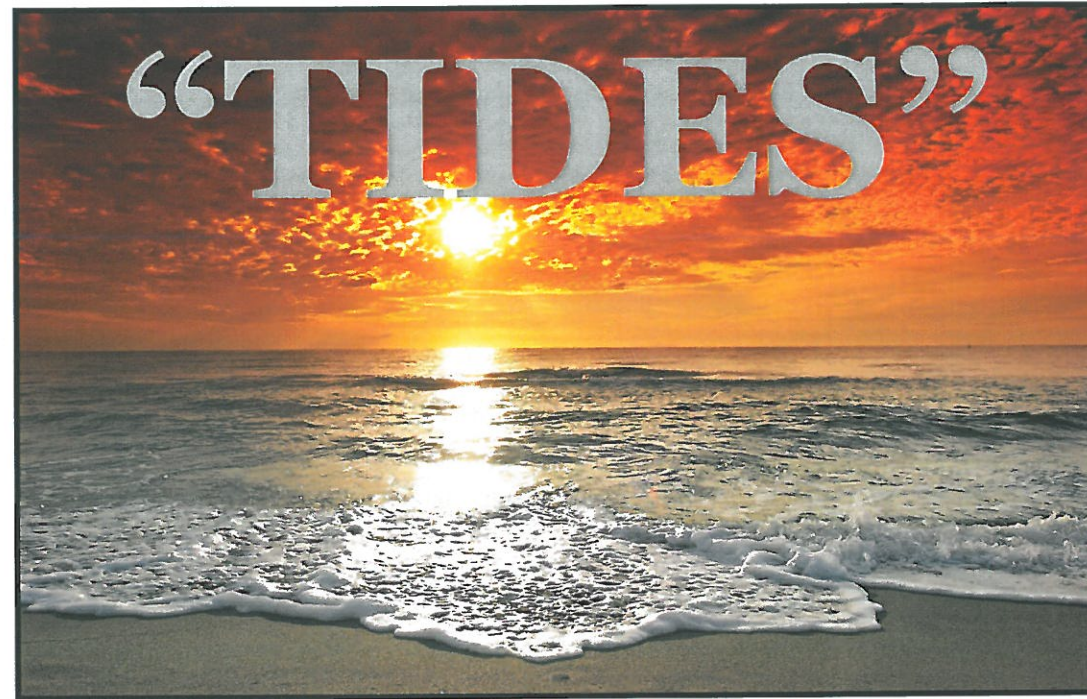
Reflect on how you spend your time and how you can purposely build a Sabbath mind-set in your life—time devoted to resting in Jesus, time to be recreated anew.

Day 2: READ: Luke 6 : 6-8

On another Sabbath He went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shrivelled. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to excuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shrivelled hand, "Get up and stand in front of everyone." So he got up and stood there.

REFLECT: The Pharisees were 'looking for a reason to accuse Jesus.' They weren't there to learn or because they were curious. Their purpose and aims are entirely negative and secretive. Sneaky! Jesus on the other hand, is an open book. He doesn't shy away from the controversial situation. He confronts it head on and a hush falls on the crowd as they wait to see what He will do...

So often what puts people of Christianity is that they see a list of 'don'ts'. But Christ came to set us free! How powerful it would be for those around us to see our lives as free and positive, rather than a list



"JESUS MINISTERS"

of restrictions?

RESPOND: Think of someone in your life that doesn't yet know Jesus. Now think of three positive, life-giving ways you could show them the love of Jesus and freedom He offers. Pray that God would help you share His love. **Go do it!**

Day 3: READ: Luke 6 : 9-11

Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?"

He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

REFLECT: Another revolutionary moment. Jesus goes against the expected. Need is more important than ritual. Compassion trumps rules.

Jesus loves. He loves so intently that he cannot leave this man even one more day in his suffering. Yet the man has a part to play. His obedience to Jesus' command leads to healing. He took action, accepting what Jesus had for him.

Maybe there's a 'withering' in your life, whether physical, emotional or

spiritual. Don't look to those who, like Pharisees, want to hold you back from Jesus and focus us on the wrong things. Instead, look to our God who heals. Our faith and obedience draw us to Him who is full of life and love, grace and compassion. Stretch out your hand to Him.

Respond: A Prayer... Lord, You are healer, restorer, all-powerful God. I stretch out my life to you. I commit to you afresh, giving you everything. Restore my soul, my mind, my body. For you are gracious and compassionate. I love you, Lord. Amen.

Day 4: READ: Luke 6 : 12-16

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them; whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

REFLECT: Fisherman. A tax collector. An anarchist. What an eclectic bunch. Nothing in common. Except Jesus.

Have you ever served on a

a diverse team? Maybe it has been cultural differences, or personality clashes or maybe you just have no shared interests. No connection. Except for the only one that matters. Jesus.

The beauty of the Christian church is unity amongst diversity. It takes all sorts to make up the body of Christ. Different giftings, personalities, intellects, cultures. We are called to unity, not uniformity. Together we are stronger. Our unity screams 'LOVE' to a world in such need of it. We do not always agree, but we disagree graciously. We love the people around us more than we love being right.

This is the church.

RESPOND: "...that which holds the church together is more important than that which divides the church." Robert Webber.

Ephesians 4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 'Individually we are one drop. Together we are an ocean.' Ryunosuke Satoro.

Prayerfully consider how you can live in a radical, Jesus-centred community with those around you. Think of those you disagree with or have less in common with. Consider their heavenly worth and how they can contribute to the body of Christ in a way you never could. Pray for them. Reach out to them. Love them. Unite with them.

Day 5: READ: Luke 6 : 17-19

He went down with them and stood on a level place, A large crowd of his disciples were there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

REFLECT: While your colleagues, friends and family may not have a face to face with Jesus, they do have a face to face with you—His representative here on earth. His work in us transforms us and others see Him reflected in us. But what does that reflection look like? Jesus loved. He cared. He showed

compassion and He took time. Even when facing opposition. Even when caring got Him in trouble.

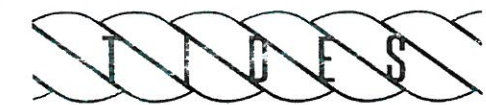
In today's reading there's a small phrase: 'healing them all.' WOW! He made time for each individual, each need. His heart for restoration, wholeness and life drew people in. After this passage He goes on to teach the people. But He showed them compassion first. He didn't just care for those who agreed with Him. He loved first. I wonder how that affected how people heard what He had to say. This was no longer a distant character they had heard about from others. This is someone who had cared for them, touched them and made them whole. It's like that Roosevelt quote: 'Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.' His genuine compassion added weight to His words.

His touch changed lives. People knew. They had heard of healings and miracles everywhere Jesus went. They were hungry for change, for something more. And they knew where to find it so people flocked to Him and in coming to Him they found life.

RESPOND: In 2 Corinthians 5:20 we are called 'Christ's ambassadors' - His representative here on earth. We are called to live as Jesus would in our shoes. Have a think about these questions with other Christians and consider how Jesus can be reflected more in your life.

Do we make time for others as Jesus did? Do we care for each individual? What's our priority—to tell people about God's love, or to show it? Which is more effective? Why?

'Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary use words.' St. Francis of Assisi. Does this mean we never use words to explain our faith? Why or why not? Do our lives cause people to flock to Jesus?



To sign up for your weekday devotional email, visit:
<http://www.presbyterianireland.org/tides>

“This year is going to be a hoot”



The month of October was a significant time for pre-school leaders 'Miss' Alison and 'Miss' Wendy, as they attended an Open University (OU) degree award ceremony to mark their graduation in the qualification BA Early Years. Now in its 43rd year, Bangor West Nursery Playgroup has a graduate-led, fully qualified, early year's workforce, in keeping with the group's future

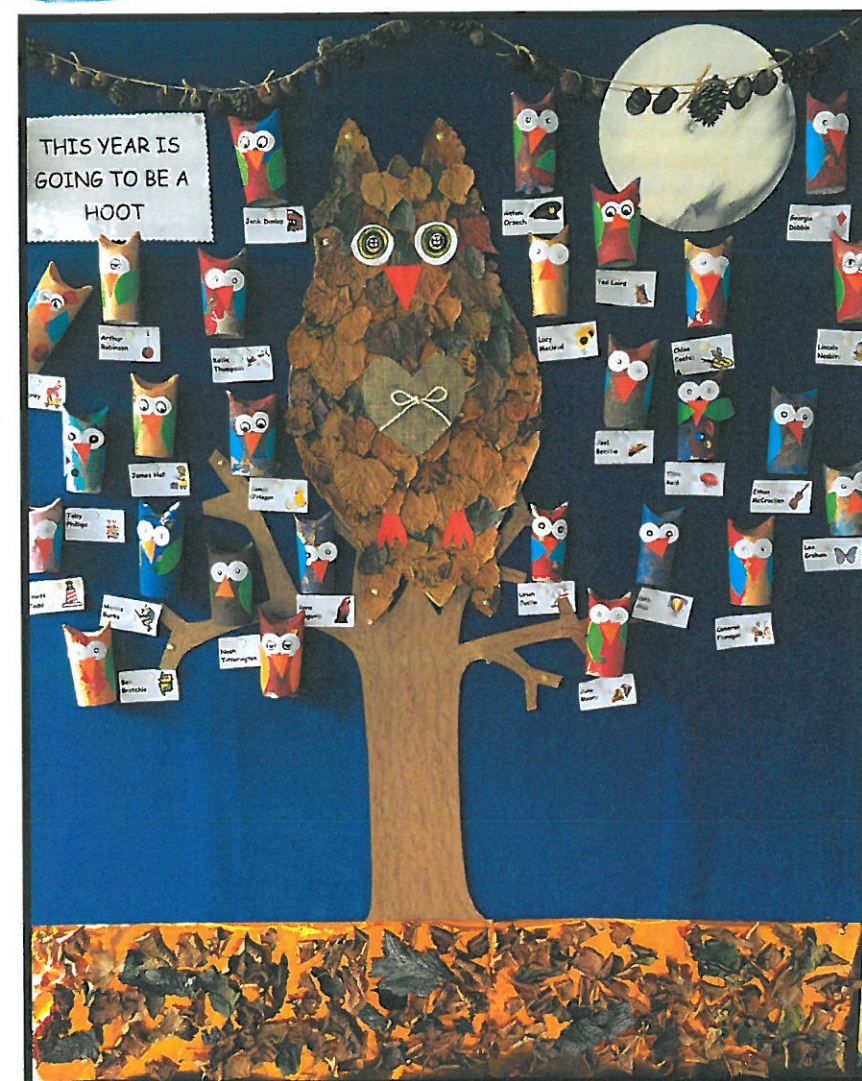
vision and also the developing expectations outlined for early year's practitioners by central government. All staff at the pre-school recognise that continual professional development builds upon their existing knowledge and skills. Consequently, they attend regular training in order to improve their practice, with a view to enhancing the learning opportunities and experiences they offer to young children as part of the

pre-school curriculum.

The pre-school is open from 9am – 12noon each weekday. The team consists of Alison, Wendy, Amanda, Denise, Michelle and Kim (all 'Misses'!)

For further information, contact Alison or Wendy on 02891 470664 or email at playgroup@westchurchbangor.org

The class of 2016



During the month of October, early morning visitors to the Welcome area may have been intrigued by the presence of a unique and colourful display of Owls, which the children and 'Miss' Kim of Bangor West Nursery Playgroup created. Bringing a season to 'life' in this way provided the pre-school children with an opportunity to show their parents just how creative they can be as they collected leaves and conkers from the natural environment to create an autumnal scene. Many parents took the opportunity to photograph their proud children beside this wonderful collage.

Bangor West Nursery Playgroup OPEN DAY

Monday 5th December 2016
11.30 am - 12.30 pm

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

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

playgroup@westchurchbangor.org

We look forward to meeting you



A big congratulations to 'Miss' Alison & 'Miss' Wendy at their recent Open University Graduation Ceremony.

I SMILED SO BIG MY CHEEKS HURT

Testimony by Katie Glenn

As you read this short account on what God has been doing in my life and the journey he has taken me on, I will be at home, in Kenya again (or possibly on my way there), spending my first Christmas in the dirty, dusty town of Isiolo. Many things have happened throughout my twenty three years of life that brought me to this work and each year God has given me another piece of the jigsaw.

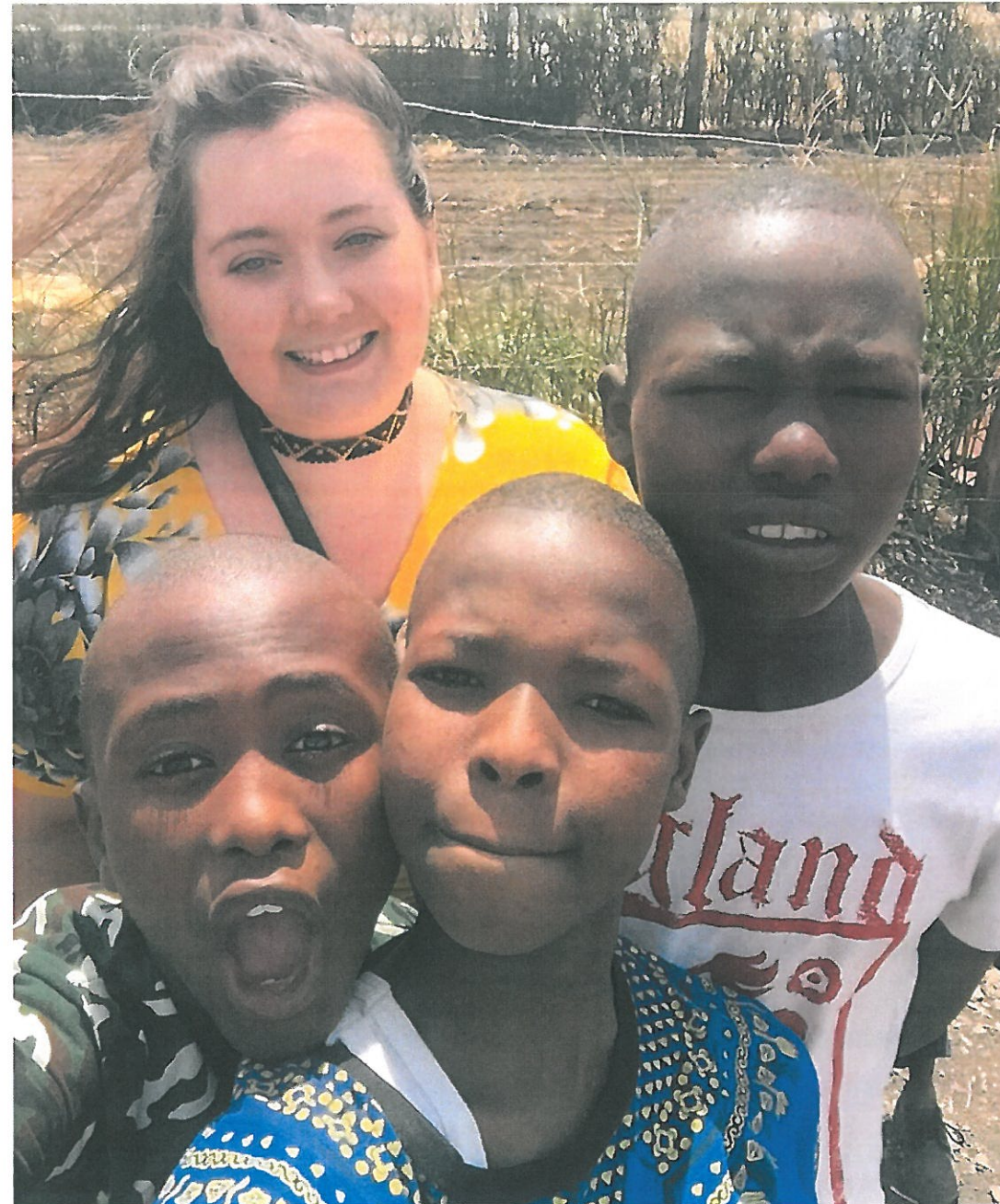


On my first mission trip to Kenya I went with my mum and stayed with Kindfund for around three weeks. I completely fell in love with the children and the staff. Something that stood out in my mind from this trip was a little boy in the market in Isiolo town, covered in dust, wondering around with no shoes and collecting rubbish. We had gone into town with Ken Dobbin (Kindfund founder) and sat in the car while he picked up water. All I could look at was this little rough, angry looking kid as he walked barefoot in the mud through the market stalls to go to some unknown place behind them. I wondered where he was going. Later that night in my room at Kindfund I cried to God to help him and to send someone to take him to school. If he could go to school he could get food and he'd need a uniform so someone would need to buy him clean clothes and shoes, I thought. At the time I didn't know he was a street-boy.

I now know that boy by name. He is called Wafula. I now know where he was going. Many but not all of the street-boys come from the dark, hidden place behind the market that is home to illegal breweries, brothels and drug dens. It's the place no-body wants to go. But Jesus, He wants to go there! This summer as I sat teaching English to some street-boys I got to know, I noticed a new one that hadn't been there the other times I taught the boys. It was

Wafula. It took me a long time before I noticed but then one day it hit me, "God, it's the boy I saw on my first trip to Kenya! He was collecting rubbish in the market!" I thanked God for answering the prayer that I'd prayed so long ago. He's here, Jesus, you found him and he's not at a proper school, I mean it's just me, but he's learning and he's getting food today! I walked around the rest of that day smiling so big my cheeks hurt! This little one still sleeps outside and has many struggles but it's the start of Jesus creating something beautiful in Him.

The second time I went to Kindfund, I went on my own and stayed for just over six weeks. I taught in the Primary school at Wamba, and enjoyed fellowship with the children I'd grown to love so much. This time though, I met a young boy named Ali. He was from Isiolo town and was a street-boy brought in to Kindfund. I became close with him, He told me about where he came from and what it was like in Isiolo for him and his friends. Many times he kept repeating that his friends were still in town. I couldn't stop thinking about them and knew God was trying to tell me to go and speak to the other street-boys. I began going into Isiolo town with one of the staff members and the mechanic from Kindfund. Each time I went in, the mechanic would see the car, the staff would do the food



Left to right, Katie with Ian, Emmanuel & Jeffery, street-boys from Isiolo

orders for the Kindfund homes and then we would meet more and more of the street-boys. One smaller boy in particular, Aaron, would run towards me from the top of the street shouting to the other boys, "Kate!! Rafiki yangu (Our friend)! It's Kate!! Kate ni apa (is here)!!" I felt so guilty leaving them but I knew my guilt and even my love wouldn't help them.

They need Jesus and He loves them more than me!

I returned home in mid-August and prayed continually that God would send someone to them. "I can't go yet Lord. I need to finish university because you're saying it's part of your plan. Keep them safe. Send someone to buy them food, show them love and tell them more about

you and when you tell me it's time, I will go," I'd cry. And guess what... he did! In September, two weeks after I came home God sent Brooklyn, a twenty-one year old girl from America! She had gone out to Kenya for the first time and was to work with International House of Prayer and within days of arriving God's plan changed and she was obedient to his call. Brooklyn now rents a house in town and has fifteen street-boys living with her. She loves God and she loves these boys. When Brooklyn told me the story of how God changed her path within days of arriving in Kenya, I was overwhelmed. I knew God answered prayer but now I know God answers prayer; He gives immeasurably more than we ever expect!

This year I went to Kenya again for the third time and stayed for nearly three months. The focus of this trip was spent going into town to just be with the street-boys and listen to what God told me to do. I stayed in Gilgil for a few days with a charity working with street-children before coming up to stay in Kindfund and teach at their school while travelling into town via matatu (Kenyan public taxi) to see the boys. After this I rented a room alone in Isiolo town and stayed there for a while. Taking the boys for food, having fun with them, sharing the gospel and getting to know their hearts better was how I spent my mornings and weekends. In the afternoons I went to my friend Brooklyn's house to teach English to the fifteen street-boys she has taken in often bringing some of the survivors I got to know in town along too. The boys strongly dislike being called 'street-boys', partly because they have had to grow up so quickly and so they see themselves as big men who don't need pity or help. On the outside they look like dangerous, dirty, rough little kids as they sit in the dirt clutching bottles of glue and

gambling, but when they let you inside their hearts they are so much more than this. So many of the addictions and issues they have, I struggled with myself before re-committing my life to Jesus just four months before my first trip to Kenya. This really helped me understand the boys better and know how to help them as they begin to come off drugs and alcohol. But 'Jesus did not come to condemn the world, but to save the world.' (John 3:17) God has had this planned. It's not my work it's His work and it's so exciting to think who He may have sent to pray for these kids and others like them long before He sent me.

I am so excited for what God is doing in these 'survivors' and I am so blessed to be part of their 'team', their family. My fiancé Francis, who God has blessed me with on this journey, who loves God and loves these boys sums this mission up perfectly. He said, "It's important to love the weak and broken and treat them as special because they are. Jesus came to save these vulnerable boys and it's up to us to empower them with his word and light the way to Jesus." I can't wait to spend my first Christmas in town with my family, lighting the way to Jesus and celebrating His coming into the world together! Please pray for the boys and for Francis and me as we embark on this new venture.

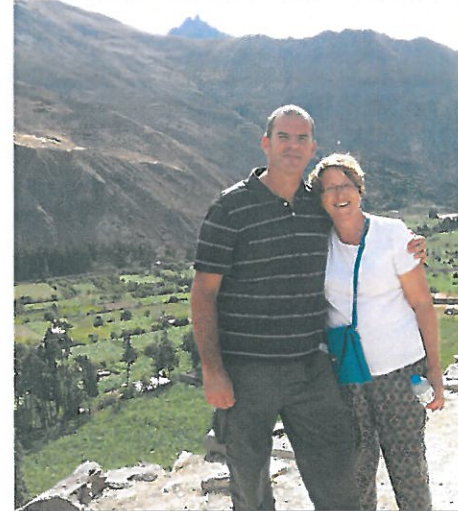
Pictured is Katie with Francis



AN AMAZING TIME!

Recent visit to Peru of Mike & Christine Stenning

This was our second trip to Peru this year and our fourth time to visit the country since 2014. We were there for a month and spent the first two weeks at Casa Hogar, the children's home in central Peru. When we were there in March the 12 children were all still grieving the loss of Segundo, their beloved housefather who died from cancer in February at the age of 54. Now, seven months on it was wonderful to see the children enjoying life once more and the home is a much happier place for them. Obviously dear Miriam the housemother is still missing her husband and it is not an easy task looking after the 12 children, but she trusts deeply in God to comfort and supply all her needs. Her faith is so real and she tells the children during the daily devotional time how blessed they are – saying "Children, we have light, we have food, we have clothing, we are so blessed!" and she really means it. The children all take turns to say grace before meals and they are all very thankful to God for what they have.

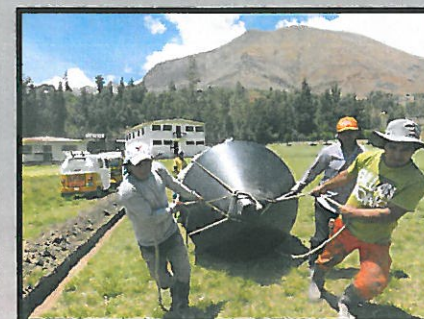


Michael & Christine in Peru

One of our main tasks this time was to purchase a new 3000 litre septic tank for the home. The current septic tank had been on the verge of collapsing for some time, which would have caused major environmental damage to a nearby river system and the local authorities had already been out to examine it. They said that there was also a risk of the mosquito-borne disease called dengue fever which could have had serious health consequences for the children. On our previous visit we had done quite a lot of research and it was clear that a South American designed system called a bio digester was going to be the best solution. The waste is broken down by micro-organisms to produce material that can be used after a period of time as fertilizer on the land. It will give a long term solution for the home, even if numbers should increase in the future.

Praise God for His provision of sufficient donations to be able to buy the bio digester and sincere thanks to all those who contributed towards this in recent times. Before we left we were able to discuss the installation with local experts and at the time of writing the work is well underway to get the new system ready for use.

Story of the Septic Tank



We had great times with the children – following the success of go-cart Mark I in March, Michael built go-cart Mark II and after having tested it himself for health and safety purposes(!!) the children finally were allowed to have it and hours of fun ensued. We brought a roadway play mat and had picked up some little cars at a car boot sale and were able to give the boys two each to play with. What really impressed us was when the children finished playing with their toys they put everything carefully away until the next time.

We brought an outdoor sports kit with plastic eggs and spoons, sacks, bean bags and ankle ties for the three legged race. Again we spent a fun afternoon with lots of laughter and everyone joined in with great enthusiasm. At the end everyone got a medal – Kelvin (7) loved his so much he wore it in bed that night and to school the next day.

Olga is the cook and housekeeper at Casa Hogar and is a very good friend of Miriam's. She comes from a city many hours from Huánuco and arrived at the home in March. She gets up at 5 am every morning and works very hard to provide nutritious meals for the children and do all the laundry. She loves the children very much and has been a great asset to the home. Please pray for Olga as she works hard and often has pains in her joints.

We had the privilege of going to a wedding this time. Margarita (the sister of Miriam) was married to Tom from Poland. They met at the start of the year and had been in touch via skype on a daily basis in the intervening months. Finally the big day arrived – we were told the night before to be at the wedding venue for a 10 am start. We travelled with the Pastor from Lima who was conducting the ceremony and we wanted to make sure we arrived in good time. The band were still rehearsing and preparations were far from complete! The groom arrived around 11.00 am (just one hour late!) and Margarita the bride arrived just before 12.00 pm (two hours late!) Throughout the service guests were still arriving – some just in time for the meal!



We also paid a visit to Eliazer, the young man who was paralysed in an accident a number of years ago. We were able to take him a nutritious supplement to help build him up as he had been ill a few months ago.

Pictured left is Eliazer

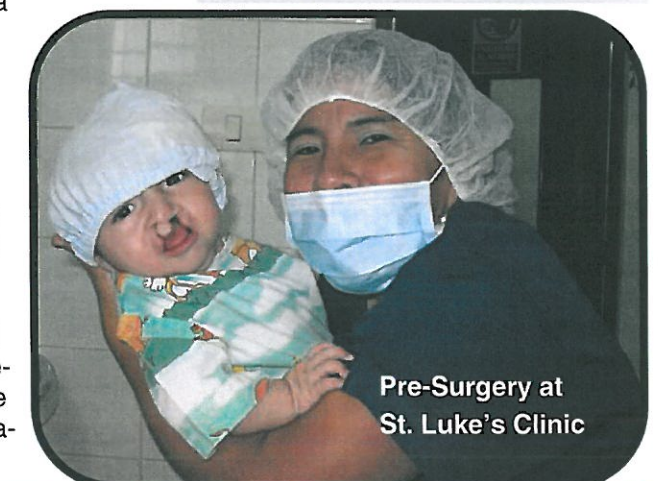
We made a brief visit up to St. Luke's Clinic in Moyobamba where they operate on children with cleft lip and palate. From financial donations received before we went, we were able to take lots of vitamins for babies and

The boys with their go-kart

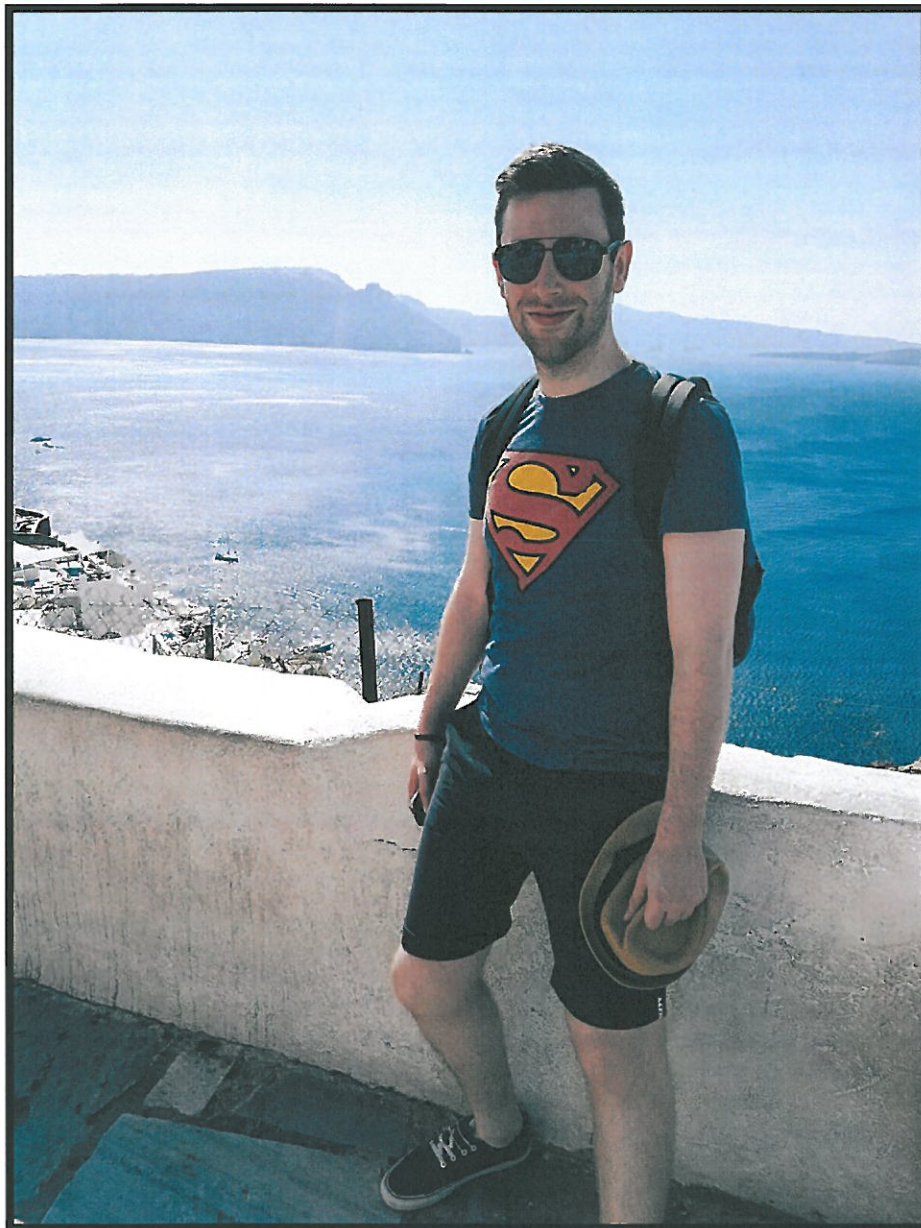


children, clearing the shelves of our local chemist! We also purchased 12 recorders which will be used for music classes for the children and helps strengthen facial muscles.

Thank you for your continued support both prayerfully and financially with the work in Peru. Please do not hesitate to speak with Beverley, Michael or Christine, through the Church Office, if you would like more information.



Welcome to our new Interns



graduating in June 2016. On hearing about an opportunity to Intern at West I applied and following interview, by God's grace, I was given the opportunity to Intern at West for the year.

In terms of plans for the future I am leaving that up to God. I do feel however a leading into the pastoral side of ministry, whether that is as a Pastor of a church or Pastoring young people in a Youth Worker role and will wait to see where God leads which I must admit is both exciting and scary. However, for this year I am very thankful for the opportunity given to me and I want to serve in West to the best of my ability and continue to grow deeper in my relationship with God.

My name is Brontë Cromie, I am 18 years old and I am doing a voluntary internship this year at West. I am the eldest of 3 siblings, and live with my family in Groomsport. My favourite things include spending time with family and friends, musicals and Christmas dinner (of course).

I attended Glenlola Collegiate and finished in May 2016 after studying Maths, Biology and Chemistry for A-Levels. The whole way through school, I dreamed of becoming a doctor until my final year when God began to change my heart. I am now taking a gap year before I head off to study Theology, although I'm not too sure where yet! As well as my internship, I have a job in a coffee shop and am tutoring Maths from GCSE standard and below, which I am thoroughly enjoying.

I am also taking this year as an opportunity to travel. After visiting Uganda in the summer on a mission trip, I can't wait to go away again

trip, I can't wait to go away again and learn more about God. I have been accepted to go to a school during the month of January in Rio De Janeiro which will teach me fundamentals about mission in both developing and developed countries.

West Church has given me countless opportunities to go away on mission, and I am so thankful for that, but being able to take this internship has taught me a lot about the importance of mission in my everyday life. Being able to work along side Sonia, Andrew and the other interns has been such a blessing and has given me an insight into the fruitfulness that comes when all work, no matter how mundane, is done unto the Lord. I have been going to Young West for the past 5 years and I see this internship as an opportunity to give back to the church that has supported and been home to me during this time. I am so grateful to have this opportunity to serve at West Church.



My name is Matthew Gaw and I am 24 years old. I have lived all my life in Newtownabbey, Co Antrim, enjoy playing football which includes supporting my favourite team; Wigan Athletic (F.A Cup winners 2013).

I grew up in a Christian home, so have always been aware of the gospel and of my need for Jesus. I attended Glengormley High School and from there went on to complete an apprenticeship in Engineering. I spent 5 years as an engineer and it was during this period that I fully dedicated my life to the Lord and at the age of 22 I felt the urge/calling to head to Belfast Bible College where I subsequently spent 3 years at Belfast Bible College to pursue a life in the ministry,



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TELL YOUR CHILDREN

by Ivor McClinton

I was privileged to attend the first ever Christian Leadership Seminar, 10-17 April 2010, at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem in the International School for Shoah Studies. 'Shoah' means a disaster, an utter catastrophe whereas 'holocaust' means a whole burnt offering. The slaughter of eleven million people, including six million Jews, was clearly not a 'whole burnt offering'.

Twenty-three Christian leaders participated in this week of specialised education seminars and attended Youm HaShoah (Day of the Shoah, the day when Israel remembers the Shoah). Eight countries, including Finland, Germany, Canada and the USA, were represented with myself as the sole Northern Ireland rep. The course involved lectures, dialogue with respected scholars, personal testimonies from Shoah survivors and learning about anti-Semitism and contemporary Israel. We also learnt about Christian responses to the Shoah and to anti-Semitism.

The daily classroom sessions began at 8.30 am. The schedule was very full—18 talks/lectures, each lasting 90 minutes and covering a broad spectrum of Shoah topics including God, the Jews, and History, the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism in Europe, The Final Solution and its Implementation. The excellent resources of Yad Vashem meant that we were able to view historical background information, literature, film and testimony. Where Christianity fits in to all this and how Christians should respond were topics ably dealt with by various lecturers. Remember, the rebirth of Israel as a nation was on 14th May 1948, fulfilling Isaiah 66:8. We had a workshop on confronting the phenomenon of 'holocaust denial'. What makes the Shoah unprecedented is



Lighting of torches in memory of those murdered in the Shoah

the aim it had of wiping out a complete people group, the Jews.

The Opening Ceremony of the Shoah Martyrs and Heroes' Remembrance Day was attended by President Peres and PM Netanyahu. Six torches were lit by survivors, one torch for each of the six million who were murdered in the Shoah.

Next day was 27 Nisan, when, each year, Israel comes to a standstill at 10.00 am. The memorial siren sounds across the country commemorating the Shoah. Everything stops; people stop their cars, get out and stand in tribute to the dead.

Besides all this we had some tours with excellent guides during the week, including the City of David, the Western Wall, Tunnels at night, the Valley of the Communities at Yad Bashem, Masada, Qumran and Christian Holy sites in the Galilee.

One of the survivors we met was Hanna Pick from Germany and later Holland. She came to Holland

via England because Unilever sacked her father when he refused to work on the Shabbat. While in Holland she became friends with Anne Frank and her family. We visited the grave of Oskar Schindler and met a couple who had worked in Schindler's factory. They met in there, married after the war was over and, in January 2010, had celebrated 60 years of marriage. Genya still wears the nickel ring Nachum made for her while in Schindler's factory. It is reckoned Oskar Schindler saved around 1200 Jews but when you add in their children and grandchildren it could be 15,000 lives he saved.

On the final Friday evening we attended the Shabbat Evening Service (Orthodox) at the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem. It is a magnificent building. After the service we returned for a communal Shabbat meal with Yad Vashem staff. A guided tour of the New Shoah History Museum of Yad Vashem was a highlight, I have yet to meet anyone who has not been profoundly moved by

HAS THE LIKE OF THIS HAPPENED IN YOUR DAYS OR IN THE DAYS OF YOUR FATHERS? TELL YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT IT, AND LET YOUR CHILDREN TELL THEIRS, AND THEIR CHILDREN THE NEXT GENERATION!
(1 JOEL, 2:3)

the Children's Memorial—of the six million Jews who were murdered, 1.5 million were children.

Not all of those who were murdered in the Shoah died in the death camps. From June 1941 to the summer of 1942 four million Jews died, 2.5 million died in the death camps and 1.5 million died in killing operations, often being shot in the back of the head while lying face down on the ground. We watched an interview with Dina Baitler (you can view it on YouTube). Dina was lined up with other women and girls, ten at a time, to be shot beside a trench. By the time her turn came the trench was quite full. She was not fatally wounded and she fell on the edge of the trench on top of other bodies. When it was dark she managed to get away to a nearby cottage. She was seven years old when this happened. Dina was unable to speak of

the horrors of that mass execution and what happened to her for 50 years!

At the end of this session no one in the class said anything. Silence. We had seen innocent men shot dead, heard the testimony of what happened to a seven year old girl and seen what Schindler had done to save Jews. It was the kind of silence when someone gives you bad news—you cannot say anything and neither do you want conversation.



important to all of us, Jew and Gentile alike.

I pray that this has given you something to contemplate prior to Holocaust Memorial Day

Pictured left are gas canisters that were dropped into the 'showers'



Holocaust Memorial Weekend at West Church Sunday 29th & Monday 30th January 2017 Guest Speaker - Pastor Werner Oder, Tuckton Christian Fellowship, Bournemouth

Werner Oder is an Austrian-born pastor and Bible teacher, inspiring and empowering people to received hope through learning the lessons from history. He has been Senior Pastor of Tuckton Christian Centre for over 30 years.

Given some of his earliest memories, it's hard to believe Werner Oder is a Christian pastor today, much less one who loves the Jews and Israel. Werner had been born into a family infested with an obsessive anti-Semitism. His maternal grandfather worked for the German Ambassador Hans Ludin in Bratislava who deported 22,000 Slovak Jews to the death camps. He was later arrested by the Americans and hanged for

Werner's father was Wilhelm Oder, a notorious SS officer who trained Einsatzgruppen (death squads) in the most efficient methods of executing Jews. After WWII, he managed to elude capture for a while before being jailed in his hometown of Linz, Austria.

It was upon his release that a young Werner got to know his father for a brief period - an encounter that haunted him for decades. Werner was only three, but he remembers it clearly. "When he came home, he brought all his demons with him. I was totally traumatized!

Werner has now visited Israel several times and developed warm relations with the Jewish community in England. "Because of my love for Israel, which has grown over the years, God gave me a lot of

Opportunities to share my love with the Jewish people. They are generally friendly and they respect me for my belief in Jesus as the Messiah."

*This article was adapted from the May 2009 issue of The Jerusalem Post. Copyright © 2016 Jpost Inc. All rights reserved.

Pastor Oder will speak, DV at our West Church Sunday morning services on 29th January 2017, and at our annual Holocaust Memorial Event on Monday evening, 30th January 2017. Please pray for this special weekend, plan to attend and invite others. May it be a richly blessed occasion when believers will be drawn closer to God and non-believers awakened to their need of Him.

Don't Lose Heart

“...to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart” Luke 18:1

[To lose heart means: to lose one's motivation to accomplish some valid goal - 'to become discouraged, to lose heart, to give up.']

Charles McMullen writes:

Prayer has sometimes been described as the Cinderella meeting of the Church. It's an area where many of us feel inadequate, retreating into nervous introspection rather than running the risk of hearing ourselves speak out loud. Sometimes it seems as if our requests hit a wall and others mumble as they speak, making it difficult to hear! Five minutes of stillness can seem like a very long time when you prefer being an activist. All kinds of negative dynamics are at work, and sometimes I experience the danger of shutting my eyes to concentrate a little more..... A few minutes later I can wake with quite a start.

Ivor McClinton, who leads the monthly prayer meeting for Israel, included me in an email which had the following contribution from Ofer

Amitai on the subject of prayer in general. It comes from the Holy Land itself and its contents resonated with me. Prayer can be a battle, but it's well worth persevering. We are encouraging prayer in our home groups and various organisations, but let's not forget our Thursday get-togethers in the Prayer Room: 8.00-9.00 am, 2.00-3.00 and 8.00-9.00 pm. Prayer is like sowing a seed that can bring about an incredible harvest away beyond our asking.

Ofer Amitai was born in Tel-Aviv in 1951, to a mother whose family had been in the land for several generations, and a father who had arrived as a child from Poland in 1935. He belonged to a secular Zionist family, but after fighting in the Yom Kippur War in 1973 found himself searching ever more intently for the Truth. It was

was ironically while pursuing yoga and eastern religions in India that Ofer encountered the God of his fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Having received Christ as Saviour, Ofer returned to Israel and then travelled to the USA to train for Christian ministry. There he met his wife Chris and after fourteen years serving at the Zion Faith Homes near Chicago, they returned to Israel. Since 1997 they have been ministering at Kehilat El-Roi in Jerusalem, where they also lead The Israel Prayer and Training Centre. Ofer travels internationally and has a passion to encourage prayer for Israel as well as seeing the restoration of God's chosen people.

Here is a link to the website on which the blog appears - www.israelprayercenter.com Our thanks to Ofer for giving permission for this article to be used.

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray
AND NOT LOSE HEART.

Luke 18:1

More prayer for deeper needs

Recently, we added another prayer meeting to our congregation's schedule.

It seemed our people were in great need. Our people looked harassed and preoccupied. Some were attending the meetings sporadically. Some of the young people had slipped back into the world, other people were struggling with job issues, another desperately needed to find housing. Still others need healing, and to top it all, our congregation needed to find a new home.

So we called on the people to come and pray together, and added another prayer meeting to our schedule. After all, we have a Father, do we not? We have a Great God, who is compassionate and gracious and merciful. Our God can do all things; nothing is too hard for the Lord.

So we gathered just outside of Jerusalem, in the Biblical Garden of Yad HaShmona, a messianic village, situated in the Judean Hills, and we began to pray.



Biblical Garden of Yad HaShmona

Why is the Prayer Meeting the most contested meeting?

At first, many came to the meeting, but as time has gone by, the numbers have diminished.

Why does this happen? Why is the prayer meeting the most contested gathering of the congregation? Why is it so challenging for people to consistently come together to pray? Why do people lose heart?

It has to do with feedback

You don't necessarily get feedback and assurance right away in praying, as you would with other things. We come to a prayer meeting, we lift up our voices to God, we read and pray scriptures, but there is not necessarily feedback as far as an outward sign, sound or light, or change in the atmosphere, or a

voice to assure you that you have been heard. You can pray and pray and pray, and come week after week to a prayer meeting and not feel anything.

I think this is why sometimes we try to make the prayer meeting itself exciting, emotional, moving. Of course, there are times we are moved by the Spirit when we pray; there are times we feel great emotion during a prayer meeting. But those don't necessarily make God hear us better. Nor are those times more effective than other times, when we have prayed and felt nothing.

We can be blind to the answers

Another reason we lose heart is that we don't necessarily connect what is happening, with our prayers. In other words, we are blind to the answers. Many times the answers are not what we were expecting, or perhaps we are waiting for God to answer in a certain way, and are blind to the way He is answering.

God is answering our prayers

God has been answering our prayers in a most wonderful way. Just recently, the Lord intervened in a powerful way in the life of one of the young people who backslid. People saw it as a negative thing and did not recognize the favour of the Lord in doing what He did. Things have begun to move in the business of one whom we have been praying for, nothing dramatic, but with great potential. Woe to us if we despise the day of small things.

Naaman would have missed his healing had he insisted on drama instead of being willing to descend in the way of humility. We have seen some sweet healings, some blessed providential, protective



Ofer Amitai

Interventions. We have also seen some small answers to our cry for revival in the congregation.

We have seen breakthroughs in the lives of people, and we have also seen some crises that have brought people to a place of decision. Not all of this is pleasant, but we recognize that the Lord is working out the answers to our prayers, in His own way.

We have even found a temporary place, in the nick of time, to tide us over as we keep searching for a place for the congregation.

We must not give up watching and praying

The parable we quoted above, ends with this verse:

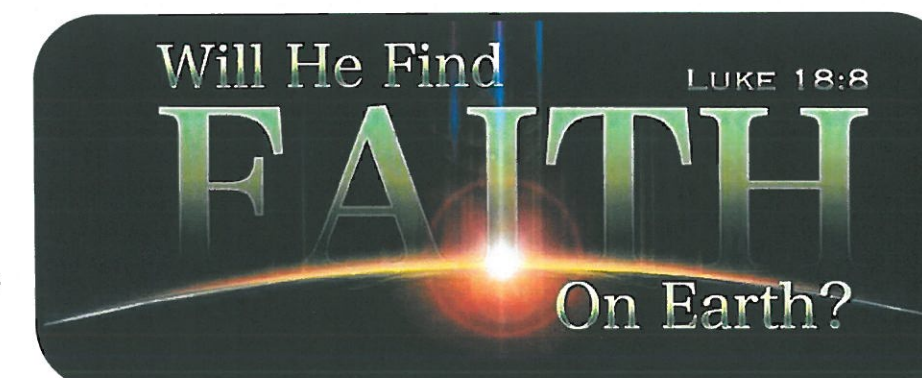
"I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8

What a startling thought: Yeshua will come with the answers, for sure, but it is not certain that His elect will be there!

Thank God that He has told us not to lose heart. He is coming with the answers.

Keep praying, keep believing, and don't lose heart...

Blessings from Jerusalem



CASTLEWELLAN v 'MAD'

YOUTH WEEKEND



Halt Term welcomed the most anticipated Young West weekend—over 80 of our teenagers (year 10+) and leaders headed off to Castlewellaan for a weekend of fun and fellowship. The photos show all the fun that was had on and off the lake.



2016 theme - 'Plugged IN'
Plugged into Jesus, Plugged into Church & Plugged into my world.



The MAD Weekend 'Making a Difference' saw over 40 of our Year 8's & 9's (along with leaders) head to the North Coast to grow in their relationship with Jesus. Outside of learning, there was lots of time for fun, including drama workshops, computer gaming and inflatable fun.

GIRLS' BRIGADE NEWS



Pictured left is our Brigader Touch Rugby Team who recently took part in the GB NI competition, coached by Johnny Mawhinney. (Back l-r, Johnny, Katie, Jessica, Jessica & Eve. Front l-r, Ana, Beth, Heidi & Faye)



Weekly adventures of 'Rosie' GB Bear:

Each week one of our P1 girls brings "Rosie", GB Bear home. Rosie has some amazing adventures during her time with the girls.

Pictured left, 'Rosie' is with Hannah who took her to the Park, Ballet and here she is enjoying the garden.

Pictured right is Molly, who took 'Rosie' on an adventure to the Countryside.



P3's Exploring at the North Down Museum:

As part of the Explorer badgework programme, our P3 Section visited the North Down Museum and learnt all about local Viking history. Pictured below, l-r is Rachel, Safia & Ellie.

Annual Enrolment Service
Sunday 4th December
at 3.00 pm

followed by tea/coffee & mince pies & shortbread

All girls are encouraged to attend this special Service

Guest Speaker: Richard Spratt
from 'Fields of Life',
GB NI's nominated charity



Duke of Edinburgh's Award Diamond Jubilee Challenge

Chloe, pictured right, has recently completed her Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award, along with 5 other girls in the Company.

Chloe decided she would like to challenge herself to climb Slieve Donard, so on Sunday 30th October, off she set with her family and friends to make the climb. She signed up to the DofE Diamond Challenge and set up a Just Giving page—her reason why? She wants to help change the lives of young people!

A big Congratulations to Chloe, who through this challenge, at the time of writing this article, has raised 175% of her personal fundraising target!

As part of their Junior Circle, the girls are learning more about the work of Kindfund in Kenya from Jonathan Dobbin. They heard about what daily life is like for girls the same age (9 - 11 years) as well as learning to count and sing in Swahili.



SCOUTS NEWS



Pictured with Cub Leader, Colin Lorimor, is the Cubs 1st year Investiture



and Fun Day

**Saturday 10th December
10.00 am to 12.30 pm**

**As well as our Tea Room,
we will have stalls and play
areas for children.**

Everyone welcome!



7th Bangor Scout Section 2016

WE'VE COME A LONG WAY by Sheila Ferguson

The Children's Cancer Unit at Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children is a registered charity formed and run by local people.

Now in its third decade, the Unit continues to be the centre of excellence for our children to be treated by dedicated medical and nursing staff.

The charity has come a long way since a wintery 1984 morning when members of West Church were fundamentally at the very foundations of the Unit.

West Church very kindly took a stall at Bangor Market, and with the excellent home baking from the West Church ladies, our first fund raising event was undertaken. We had the wonderful support of our Elders in the guise of Mr John Logan, who made sure the money was collected was kept safe. This contribution at Bangor Market began the epic adventure in which the whole of Northern Ireland was fundraising to achieve this very special goal.

And to use the analogy of the 'mustard seed', it is remarkable that just 36 months after the concept of the Cancer Unit, it had been built to an incredible standard and was fully operational.

The charity exists solely to support the work of the Children's Cancer and Haematology Unit at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children and the families. As with all charities, we continue to depend on donations from the public and as we are currently upgrading the Unit, it means further expenditure.

All the donations from supporters ensure that we are able to care for children in the Province who suffer with all forms of childhood cancers and selected benign Haematology conditions.

The Fund's mission is to support the work of the existing Unit and with the expansion of the Unit, it will of course complement the amazing work carried out by the medical and nursing staff.

The funding of new equipment and resources is made available for continuous staff training and research. In the longer term we hope to achieve a dedicated Haematology and Oncology Unit for children in the new children's hospital, planned once again with the next 10 to 15 years.

The Fund is led by a Board of Trustees and I am delighted and proud to be part of this Board and also to be a founder member.

Please also visit our website www.childrenscancerunit.com to find out more about us and if you can fund raise on our behalf that would just be amazing.

Sheila Ferguson



Pictured above are staff from the Children's Cancer & Haematology Unit at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

'As the family goes, so goes the future of the church. Religious life in the home is more influential than the Church' (taken from Building Faith at Home. Mark Holmen) Sonia Mawhinney, our Youth & Children's Associate writes:

If there is truth in this statement then it is important for us to ask some questions, such as shouldn't we focus more of our time, energy and resources on what takes place at home rather than at church? Or, what role can West Church play in equipping, encouraging and supporting families to pass on the faith to their children, step-children, adopted children, foster children, grandchildren...

We may think that our children and young people are getting enough good teaching in Church, J Club, GB and BB scripture class, Easter Mission, Young West and mid-week discipleship groups without it being necessary for parents to teach them about God at home as well. While each of these has an effective place in passing on the faith, when we look at both Biblical teaching and research, we see that faith passed on at home plays a central role.

Through both the Old and New Testament teaching we see that God expects parents to be proactive and intentional about passing on their faith to their children within their own homes. Right after Moses called together the Israelites to instruct them in how to live as followers of God we read these verses:

'Write these commandments that I've given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night.' (Deut 6:6-9. THE MESSAGE).

In Ephesians we read: 'Children, do what your parents tell you. This is only right. "Honour your father and mother" is the first commandment that has a promise attached to it, namely, "so you will live well and have a long life". Fathers, don't exasperate your children by coming



down hard on them. Take them by the hand and lead them in the way of the Master.' (THE MESSAGE).

When Christian teenagers were surveyed and asked to identify the things that influenced them to become and remain Christians, the top influence turned out to be their mum, closely followed by their dad - with ministers, youth leaders and Sunday school teachers much further down the list. In fact, mum and dad were 2 to 3 times more influential than any person at Church or any Church programme they had been involved in.

Now we do not want to throw the baby out with the bathwater and get rid of our Youth and Children's programmes within the Church! Research and experience shows how effective and critical these programmes and the relationships built up within them can be when it comes to passing on faith to our children and young people. Rather, in addition to relevant programmes within our Church family we also want to focus our attention on equipping the nuclear family to be the primary place where faith is nurtured.

One way in which we can do this is to pass on some resources other families have been using and have found to be helpful in raising faith discussions with their children.

Child Training Bible

www.childtrainingbible.com

The Child Training Bible (CTB) is a tool that allows parents and children to go directly to specific pages of the Bible to find biblical instruction in 20 key areas (e.g. fear, fighting, jealousy, discouragement, pride, the gospel).

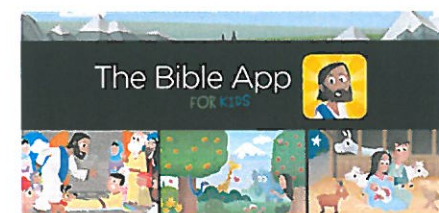
These areas correspond to color-coded tabs and highlighted text. Paula McKelvey has been using the CTB with her two sons Archie and Toby and this is what she has to say.

"My husband and I have two boys, 8 and 9 years old and have been using the Child Training Bible for about a year. After the tedious task of tabbing and highlighting the Bible, I am so glad I have these scriptures on hand to go to quickly in whatever situations arise with my boys' behaviour.



For example, if they are arguing, I can reach for the Bible and go straight to the verses relating to quarrelling. I'll read one or two or sometimes go through all of them, so that God takes the lead in helping them deal with their emotions and the situation. Hopefully they can be guided in their responses and develop the habit of going to the Word of God as they grow older and venture out on their own."

2 Timothy 3:16 'All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness'.



The Bible App for Kids (pictured left)

This is an animated storybook app from YouVersion for smartphones and tablets. It helps kids to learn, play, and grow in God's Word. Most suitable for 2 - 5 year olds.

Guardians of Ancora.

www.scriptureunion.org.uk/3706117.id



This is a new digital game which has been produced by Scripture Union. It is a free adventure game App aimed at kids aged 8-11yrs where Bible stories come alive. Ancora is a mythical city of light but the light has been stolen and the player's job is to restore light to the city. In the process the player plays through various Bible stories. On all loading screens there are bible facts which are great at extending kid's bible knowledge in small chunks.

The Fighter Verses from Children Desiring God

<http://www.childrendesiringgod.org/resources/resourceGroup.php?productPageId=1>

The Fighter Verses Bible App was created as a tool to help encourage Bible memory. Designed for children through to adults, this system allows individuals, groups, or churches to memorize and review Bible verses at their own pace.



The Foundation Verses are strategically chosen Bible verses for children. The pack includes 76 short verses with picture prompts to help non-readers remember the passage. The vision of this set is to lay a firm foundation of basic biblical truth that will pave the way for faith response, and to establish the habit of hiding God's Word in the heart. Children have the option of listening to the verse in song, spoken word or record themselves reciting the verse.

Seeds Family Worship CD or YouTube Worship Songs

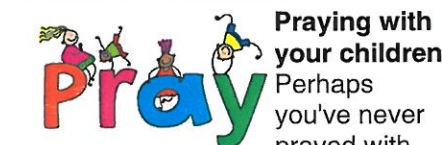
www.seedsfamilyworship.com/
Seeds music and videos make it fun



and easy for kids and families to learn and memorize the Bible. They have now over 58 portions of Scripture

set to contemporary music. If you want to give it a trial run before the CD, they have a channel on YouTube where you can listen to their music. Playing the CD in the car is a great way to get Bible verses firmly lodged into our hearts and brains!

<https://www.youtube.com/user/seedsfamilyworship>



Perhaps you've never prayed with your children. But no matter how old they are, it's never too late to start. It helps to remember that prayer is simply a conversation with God. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Sentence Prayer. You can help your children pray aloud by giving them a sentence to complete, such as:

"Lord, I thank you for ..."
"Lord, forgive me for ..."
"Lord, help my friend ..."
"Lord, help me be more ..."
"Lord, give me the courage to ..."
"Lord, one of the fears I need help with is ..."

Highs and Lows Prayer. Ask your children what their "highs" were from the day, and then ask them about their "lows" from the day. Share your highs and lows as well, and then pray for them together.

Teaspoon Prayer. TSP, the first letters of Thank you, Sorry, Please, remind us of the recipe book abbreviation for teaspoon. It can be helpful to give younger children a plastic teaspoon to remind them of these three basic categories for prayer. Encourage everyone to say thank you to God for something or someone, to sorry for something they have done wrong and to ask God for help for something or someone.

Prayer Paper Chain Give each member of the family a strip of coloured paper and encourage them to write a one-line thank you prayer. Fasten all the strips together to make a festive paper chain that you can hang across your room as part of your Christmas decorations!

We hope you find these resources helpful as you make a start or continue to find ways to pass on the faith to your children. If you have anything you find particularly helpful in your home, please let us know so we can pass these ideas and resources on to others. In our next edition of West Life we will identify a number of resources which may be helpful to parents of teenagers.



Lots of fun with being had at our Family Bright & Light evening that took place over the recent half term break.



You're in good hands

In this day and age we could all use an extra pair of hands.

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- De cluttering
- Shopping
- Gardening
- Cooking

Interior

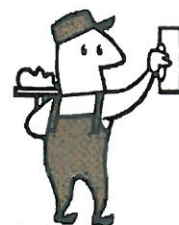
- Interior Styling
- Decluttering / organising
- Upstyling Furniture

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Your Winter West Life — TWIDDLEMUFF UPDATE



Twiddlemuff is a new word that we have been introduced to over the past few months.

Charles in appealing for wool for the Twiddlemuffs, wasn't sure what he was announcing!

This hand-muff like product is designed to stimulate people with dementia. The Twiddlemuff does what it says it does, give people something to twiddle with, something to do with their hands. Everyone is different and can be distinctive, having familiar items sewed onto the muff,

buttons, beads, materials of different textures make it special to the individual.

At the beginning of October, Linda Wray and Denise Keegan from the Council for Social Witness, came along to say a big thank you for the many Twiddlemuffs they had been given. The Twiddlemuffs were distributed to all of their homes and the Council had received many emails about how helpful residents with dementia had found them. It was felt that older people living on their own could

also benefit from having a Twiddlemuff and we are now fulfilling this request. The CSW gave us a donation to continue this work along with labels which are sewn on each item so that the recipients know they have been made by the 3Cs at West. 3Cs are very grateful for all the donations of wool and money that has been received with the money being used to buy wool which enables us to keep knitting Twiddlemuffs on Tuesday evenings and Wednesday afternoons.

Norma Conway

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@ jo.galbraith@btinternet.com

www.homesafepets.co.uk

f Home safe pets



Pictured above is Rachel Moore with her husband Jonathan McKee

Pictured above left is Elise Belle Moore & Emilia Felice Moore,
daughters of Alison & Philip

Pictures below left is Thomas David Faulkner, son of Richard & Ruth
and brother of Hannah & Harry

Pictured above right is Melissa Billie Jackson, daughter of William & Donna
and sister of Gavin, Aaron & Aimee (recorded in the last edition's directory)

Pictured below right is Emma Kathleen Seeds, daughter of George & Kerry
and sister of Adam (recorded in the last edition's directory)

HELLO FROM CANADA!

Mike & Lorraine Cahoon

It seems to have been a while since we've written an article for West Life, but we have been in touch with the Ministry Team and with the Missionary Interest Committee, who are all so supportive and keep us well supported in love and prayer!

We saw many of you back in June this year when we were back in Northern Ireland, spending time with family, supporting Lorraine's Mum after her knee surgery, and also enjoying our niece's wedding in Dundee. Everything went miraculously well in terms of Mum's op and recovery, and the entire trip was very special in terms of re-connecting with those who we love.

As we write this (in October) we're just back from spending Canadian Thanksgiving with Claire & David in Calgary, and as you can see from the photo, the snow had already arrived! There was great excitement when we went on a forest walk to a place called Bragg Creek, and found that the area was under a "cougar alert". So when we saw no other cars in the car park we didn't stay long and headed back into the nearest town for a coffee!

Both our daughters have moved into new houses this past summer and are loving their new places and working away. Abigail keeps very busy with her PhD and part time work, Claire loves her work with vulnerable women in downtown Calgary, and David works part time with the church (Catch The Fire Calgary) and is also doing theology at Alberta Bible College.

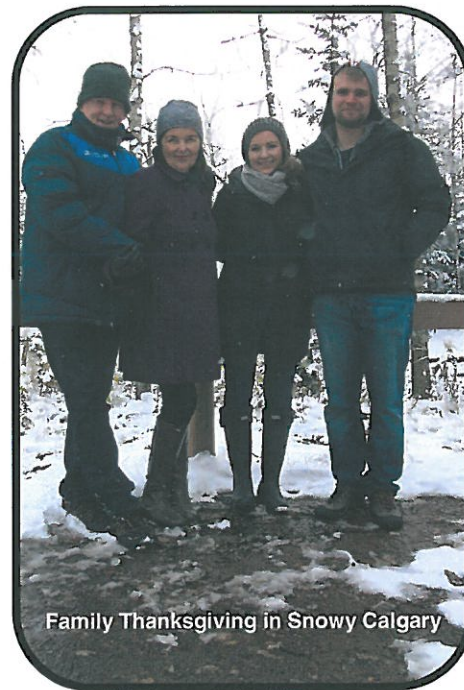
RTF Canada, as an organisation, has been going through many changes. Our new international directors, Lee & Cindi Whitman, from Hendersonville, North Carolina, came to lead the Canadian ministers on a retreat this past week as we write this article (in October). This

was incredibly valuable as we sought the way forward. You'll see from the photo that most of us are in that age group of having walked a pretty lengthy distance in our life's journey! We had so much fun together, but also dealt with issues that might be holding us back as individuals and as an organisation within this nation. This was so helpful, and Lee & Cindi are very relational, easy to talk to, and open to discussing any and every issue which has been hindering us in any way. It was important to be able to share honestly and openly in a safe atmosphere, and the ministry sessions helped us to remain committed to walking out our personal healing journeys, as well as encouraging others to do the same!



RTF Canadian Team on retreat

Our pastoral support to the Thunder Bay outreach team continues. They have had many ongoing pressures of illness within the team members themselves. Carole also reported how tough the streets are getting. Increasing numbers of people drink mouthwash or hand sanitizer and become uncontrollable. Violence is common and more gangs have moved into Thunder Bay, bringing bigger guns and more trouble. Carole and the team are always amazed when we tell them of the support of West Church, so far across the ocean! They are blessed and aware of every prayer!



Family Thanksgiving in Snowy Calgary

We give thanks for the continued practical support that Carole and the team receive in terms of financial resources, but Carole has also told us the sad news of the street deaths of three people who the team had been connecting with over these past months.

Our home continues to be a blessing to us and others, and we have had many people to stay with us since the Spring. Some have been pastors and leaders who we've ministered to in the past. They have needed some "retreat" space and fellowship, and we have been able to provide this. We have continued to work at the house and garden in terms of improving access for those with mobility issues. We have completed the downstairs access and bathroom, and now have two rooms that we can set aside for ministry, one on each floor of the house. Already two people have needed and appreciated this access.

There are always opportunities for "ad hoc" ministry, prayer support and encouragement for those who the Lord brings our way. As we have been invited to travel and minister to quite a few individuals this past summer, we have seen that we have driven in every direction of the compass, and been reminded of our call to the whole of this huge nation of Canada! Sometimes we look on the map at a journey we have just completed, and see that it is really quite minuscule in relation to the size of this entire country!

We look forward to more travelling, and have shared with many of you in West about the amazing God-encounters we've had with people along the way. We've had very open conversations about the things of the Kingdom, and recognise a deep hunger in people for personal spiritual encounters, especially with those who would not call themselves Christian, or who follow different religions and alternative lifestyles.

It is still in our vision to be part of the establishment of a Retreat Centre, with holistic healing of the whole person ... body, mind and spirit. We have had some experience of this when we have ministered at Singing Waters Retreat Centre, and that has taught us so much.

We have been involved in city-wide worship nights, both here in Stratford and in London, Ontario (about an hour's drive away). These are very significant meetings, because we know that God loves it when His people unite in worship together, and we believe He brings a huge blessing to any town or city which lifts up His Name. There are many strands of worship in the Festival Of Praise in Stratford, where all expressions are honoured, from traditional hymns, singing, Mennonite songs,



Fall in Stratford

instrumental and contemporary worship.

We have been asked to speak at our church here, where the pastors are very open to inner healing ministry and what we carry. We have also been developing a teaching programme that can be taken with us when and where we are invited to go, and hopefully this teaching aspect of the ministry will increase.

So many of you take time to keep in touch, and every email, card and prayer is welcome and appreciated.

We love our West family and look forward to the next time we come home again!

For anyone wishing to contact Mike & Lorraine, their contact details are as follows:

mikeandlorraine7@gmail.com

Mike & Lorraine Cahoon
126 Kemp Crescent
Stratford, Ontario
N5A5C4
Canada

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CELEBRATING WITH FAMILY & FRIENDS

Lily & Harry Donley with their great-grandchildren, celebrating their 70th Anniversary with family and friends at the Crawfordsburn Inn. They were married on 26th September 1946, by the Rev. J.W. Johnston at Townsend Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

"As a family we are just in awe of them both, such a wonderful couple."



Friday Morning Men's Fellowship

As part of our programme for the year two events were organised which allowed the men to socialise and develop friendships as we travelled to venues of mutual interest.

Our first outing was to Mount Stewart house in May where we heard and saw the extensive refurbishment that has been carried out. For some of our members this was their first time to visit this National Trust

property. Afterwards we were suitably refreshed by dinner in Harrison's of Greyabbey.

On Saturday 17th September a full day programme was planned with a bus tour along the Antrim coast to Portstewart with two stops at Carnlough and Ballycastle. Our coach driver excelled all expectations by taking us to scenic viewpoints above the main route. In Carnlough we learnt about Paddy the carrier pigeon from Carnlough

which was used by the US army on the D Day Normandy landing. Paddy was awarded the Dicken Medal for bravery. As we negotiated the tricky winding road overlooking Cushendall from Torr Head we were treated to spectacular views of not only the Glens of Antrim but Scotland which is a mere twenty miles across the sea. Onward to Loughareema only to discover it had vanished. Perhaps if we come back on a wet day it will reappear.

Our next stop was Ballycastle where some men had the opportunity to purchase Yellow Man which I am told is made in Belfast !! Our journey then took us on to Portstewart by-passing Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge and the Giants Causeway. Members enjoyed free time to explore before departing for Ballymena where we all enjoyed a superb carvery dinner.

Returning back to West Church everyone was delighted that not only did we enjoy a lovely sunny day but everything went smoothly along the way. Already the men are asking about the next outing.

Men's Fellowship meets on Friday mornings from 10.30 am in the Welcome Area. Please do come along, a warm welcome awaits you.



Changes in Districts : New address

District

Move 104	Mr Johnny Mawhinney	Move 604	Mr Charlie & Mrs Mavis McAllister
Move 201	Mrs Bessie McKee	Move 604	Mr Michael & Mrs Janet Carson & family
Move 404	Mrs May Weir	Move 701	Miss Beverley Bryans
Move 503	Mr Neil & Mrs Liezl McCreadie	Move 701	Mr Paul & Mrs Jane Simms & family
Move 504	Mr Richard & Mrs Janeen Best & family	Move 703	Miss Joanne & Miss Abigail Butler
Move 504	Mr Rick & Mrs Julie-Ann Hunter & family	Move 902	Mr Gordon & Mrs Barbara Cunningham
Move 601	Mrs Kathleen Cameron	Move 1004	Mr Noel & Mrs Irene Perver

Changes in Districts : Remove

101	Rev. Colin & Mrs Debra Anderson	604	Mr Arthur & Mrs Dorothy Jardine
404	Mr Simon & Mrs Jillian Liggett	1002	Mr Ossie & Mrs Jessica Daniels & family
601	Mr Adrian Beattie	1303	Mr Harry & Mr Thomas Blemings
604	Mr John & Mrs Carol Mottram		

WELCOME to the following new members: District

304	Mr Eric & Mrs Elizabeth Lisk	404	Mrs Rebecca Skinner & Christian
402	Dr Jonathan & Mrs Anna Browne	504	Mr Richard & Mrs Kay Phillips
403	Mr George & Mrs Norah Dines		

The following children were brought for Baptism or Dedication:

07/08/16	Rose Margaret Kendall	28/08/16	Thomas David Faulkner
07/08/16	Elizabeth Marie Schon	11/09/16	Elsie Belle & Emilia Felice Moore

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

28/07/16	Baby Eli Gourley	15/09/16	Mrs Margaret Wilson
13/08/16	Mrs Lily Trimble	20/09/16	Mr Michael Whitford
26/08/16	Mr Roy Young		



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,

MUST SEE DESTINATION—DUBAI

the following article has been kindly provided by Feherty Travel

As the coach left from Belfast for Dublin Airport I still couldn't quite believe I was going to Dubai. The trip was organised by one of our luxury operators If Only alongside Emirates Airlines who offer two flights daily direct from Dublin to Dubai one leaving lunchtime and the other leaving late evening. As we were booked on the overnight flight we were delighted to find we were travelling the 7.5-hour flight in Business class.

Having flown with Emirates many years ago and being very impressed with their economy seats I was blown away with Business Class. This was a treat. After a beautiful meal and finally picking something to watch from over 2,500 channels of movies, TV shows, music and games I reclined my chair back into a bed to get some sleep before arriving in Dubai.

Arriving refreshed we made our way through the airport to be met by our local guide who transferred us to our first hotel The JA Oceanview.

We spent one night at the 4* JA Oceanview and it did not disappoint. The hotel is contemporary in design offering very spacious rooms and fantastic views over the Arabian Gulf. Only a 30-minute drive from the airport and boasting a wonderful location. The hotel is situated On the Walk, the City's famous seaside promenade which has an array of restaurants, shops and fair ground attractions as well as the beautiful beach. A short stroll from the hotel will also take you down to the Marina which we got to see in the evening and it was just beautiful. You can also explore the waterways of Dubai Marina on a sightseeing dinner cruise. The Dhow Cruise Dinner has become one of the most popular tourist attractions in the city. Enjoy a buffet dinner with five salads, seven main-course dishes, a seafood soup and four dessert options, plus entertainment and a spectacular view of



Enjoying Dubai by night

the city skyline from the water.

Day two after a wonderful breakfast we checked out of the hotel and began a City Tour with a highly informative local guide. Our first stop was Dubai Mall which is one of the largest in the UAE with your high-end designer shops to our local high street favorites. This mall also offers so much more than shopping, you have the ice rink, Aquarium, Cinema, Kidzania which is a children's sized city, The Dubai Fountain's daily performances, a dance show of water reaching up to 140 metres high, accompanied by syncing lights and music and of course the tallest building in the world, The Burj Khalifa At soaring heights on levels 148 and 125 of the world's tallest building, experience the breath-taking 360-degree views of Dubai on the observation deck and immerse yourself in the region's young yet rich history.

Our next stop was Jumeirah Mosque, the only Mosque that is open to the public and certainly worth a visit. We didn't have time to visit the Museum on this occasion however it would be worth a visit, housed in the Al Fahidi Fort which was built in 1787, the oldest building in the city—you'll encounter exhibits

depicting everyday life in the days before the discovery of oil.

On our way to the Souks we passed The Mall of Emirates which is one of the largest malls in the world, however what is special about this is that it houses Dubai Ski, yes skiing in Dubai! This 22,500 square metre ski resort which offers Ski School, Penguin Encounter and Ski Bullet and certainly worth a trip to.

After taking the water taxi on the small wooden Dow boat across the creek we arrived to the bustle of the Souks. The aroma of the spice souks was fantastic. They sell a variety of fragrances and spices from frankincense and shisha to many herbs used for cooking. We then came to the Gold Souk and this is just amazing. Offering a huge selection of jewelry made from Gold, Silver and Diamonds. Whether you just want to window shop or you are thinking of buying something special this is the place to go.

It was now time to head to our next hotel for our two night stay in the 5* JA Palm Tree Court. The hotel is in the Jebel Ali area of Dubai, overlooking the Arabian Golf and short drive from Dubai Marina. The



Burj Khalifa



Enjoying the bustle of the Souks

hotel is set within Dubai's award-winning JA Jebel Ali Golf Resort.

The resort is set within tropical gardens and just steps from the private beach offering Catamaran Sailings, Donut rides and Banana boat rides. Our stunning junior suites were very spacious, elegantly decorated with a beautiful balcony.

We enjoyed two fabulous evening meals in two of the resorts' 15 restaurants. Our first night we indulged

in a beautiful Italian meal in La Traviata Restaurant and the second evening was then spent in the White Orchid Restaurant offering a fusion menu combining Chinese, Japanese and Thai specialities along with a traditional Teppanyaki table.

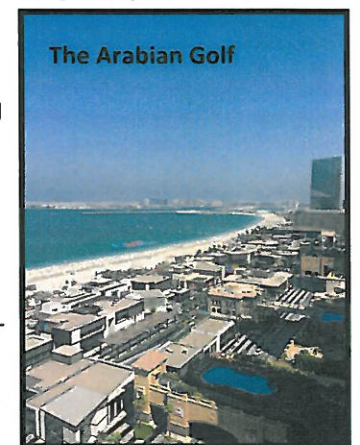
On our final day, we got to enjoy everything the hotel had to offer, with the ladies on the trip sampling the Spa with a 30-minute back massage and the gentlemen on the trip enjoying a round of golf on the 9 hole championship course.

This resort also offers the choice of relaxing by the pool, horse or camel riding on the beach, cycling, tennis, kid's archery and so much more.

It was now time to head home and after another relaxing flight with Emirates we arrived back to the cool, wet evening in Dublin

and said our goodbyes.

This really was an amazing trip from start to finish and Dubai is a must-see destination offering something to suit everyone and with fantastic weather, wonderful culture and friendly people.



The Arabian Golf

****If you require any assistance in planning your next trip to Dubai or indeed any of the Emirates please give us a call in Feherty Travel****

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Don't Miss Our



Chandra Rowan
Senior Travel Consultant
& member of the congregation
in attendance at our show

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STARlight "Follow the Star!"

**Wednesday 21st December
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**Join us as we follow the Star to Bethlehem
and experience the Christmas story
through drama, songs, crafts and snacks.**

A fun night for the whole family