

YOUR WINTER EDITION OF

WEST LIFE

ISSUE No. 16, DECEMBER 2018

WEST CHURCH, BANGOR PUBLICATION

HOPE

THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS

ONLY INSIDE YOUR WEST LIFE / ADVENT & CHRISTMAS / MODERATORIAL MUSINGS / WORLD DEVELOPMENT / YOUTH & CHILDREN / MISSION UPDATES



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WELCOME TO YOUR WINTER WEST LIFE

Come on in, pull up a chair by the fire and welcome to the winter edition of West Life!

As the wind howls around the rooftops and the temperature plummets, I hope your heart will be warmed as you read through this special edition, I hope it inspires you. May it build your hope and deepen your faith. I pray it helps you see how God is moving in our midst, and as you read I hope it enables you to consider how God may be moving in each of our lives.

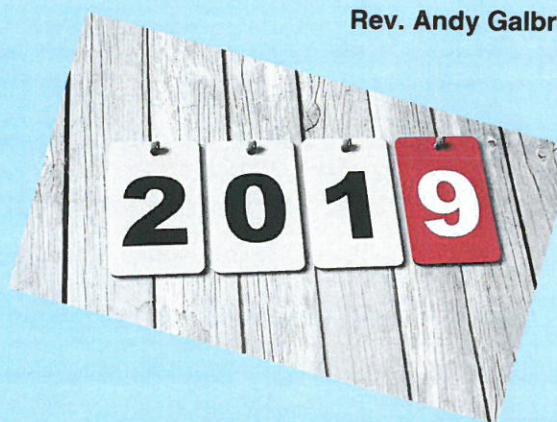
I'd like to think that this magazine is unique compared with every other magazine you might lift off the shelves of your

local newsagents. What other magazine comes with the offer to be part of a membership that changes lives forever and connects people across the planet and across the centuries regardless of race or gender or nationality?

I think that's pretty special. So dig in, and be blessed!

And as we step into a new year together: let's allow God to draw us deeper into the action!

Rev. Andy Galbraith



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Sunday Service Times:

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

Pastoral Mobile: 07543 198391



THE LIST...

I love this time of year. There's no avoiding the reality that the season is changing! The autumn winds have stripped the leaves from the trees, the temperature is plummeting and all of a sudden we need to wrap up warm when venturing outside.

However, it's not just in the great outdoors that we feel the change of the season. Now, on the other side of half term, there is a perceptible change in atmosphere in the shops with shelves now stocked with Christmas un-missables. There's a level of busyness as the anticipation of all that is needed for Christmas begins to grip our minds.

Maybe you are already prepared or just thinking about Christmas stresses you out a little. Maybe you haven't thought about it yet, and now that I've mentioned this the panic has just set in. Sorry!

Now that I have your attention, isn't it true that Christmas is such a busy time? A time that can be hard to navigate through without a list of some sort. Even for those of us who aren't natural list-makers, Christmas time demands a list!

Maybe it's a list of tasks which includes putting up the tree and hanging twinkly lights from the gutters; or maybe it's a list of presents you need to buy for family and friends. Maybe your list contains the ingredients for that perfect Christmas cake or dinner or it's a social list of all the people you have to visit or functions to attend, or maybe it's a list of Christmas TV viewing.

Christmas is a time that offers many of us joy with family and friends but for some it can be a painful reminder of loss and grief, a time to add further pressure to an already stretched household budget or be a painful reality of difficult family dynamics. I'm sure many of us could start a new list on the challenges Christmas can bring.

Do you remember those care-free days when your list simply meant

all the toys you wanted on Christmas morning after spending hours going through the Argos catalogue? My must have items were Action Man Tank, Airfix X Wing Fighter, a racing bicycle and a Sinclair Spectrum Computer—not all in the same year I hasten to add!

However, in all the hustle and bustle and "merry stress-mas", we want you to consider that there may be many things missing from our Christmas List that indeed matter most?

This December at West, as we journey through advent together, we will be focussing on the theme of "The Christmas List":

Hope ~ is your Christmas infused with hope because a Saviour has been born to us?

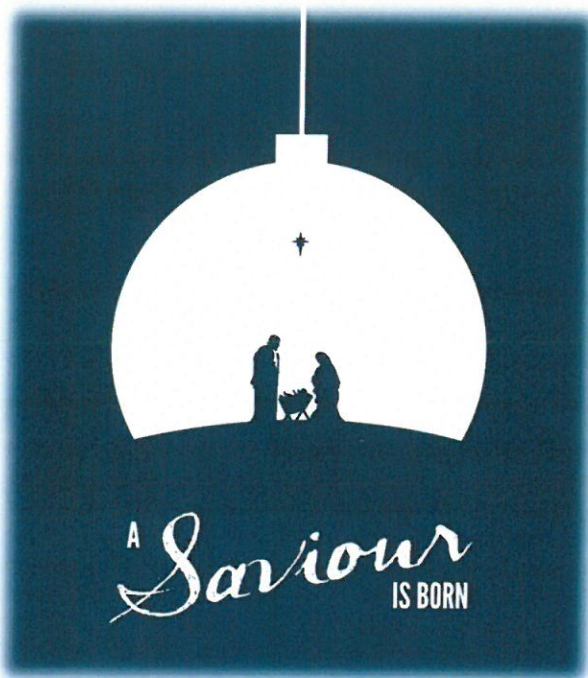
Peace ~ Does Christmas bring a deep sense of peace into your situation because it reminds you of how you have encountered God's favour through Jesus His son?

Joy ~ Does Christmas give you a deep joy that bubbles up in your heart when you consider the extraordinary extent of God's love for you?

Presence ~ Maybe in the midst of challenging health conditions Christmas means the world to you because it reminds you that you are never alone: God is with you in the midst of your struggles!

Rest ~ Alongside a much needed break from the daily routine, does Christmas allow you the opportunity to simply rest in what your heavenly Father has done for you? Is His unmerited grace poured into your life?

I hope you can journey with us this advent as we chart a course



towards Christmas. I pray that it builds your faith and makes an impact on your own personal Christmas list in a positive way!

Before I let you get back to those lists, can I take this opportunity on behalf of Jo and myself to wish you all a very Merry Christmas. May the reason for the season find a place at the top of your list!

Andy Galbraith



Advent & Christmas Services

2nd December (1st in Advent)

10.00 am, 11.30 am & Cafechurch
18:30

"The Christmas List: Hope Fulfilled"
Rev. Andrew Gill

9th December (2nd in Advent)

10.00 am, 11.30 am & Cafechurch
18:30

"The Christmas List: A Gathered Hope"
Rick Hill

16th December (3rd in Advent)

10.00 am, 11.30 am & Cafechurch
(Presents brought to the Christmas Tree for Abba Trust)
18:30

"The Christmas List: Hope for Rest"
Nine Lessons and Carols

23rd December (4th in Advent)

10.00 am, 11.30 am & Cafechurch
18:30

"The Christmas List: Hope for celebration"

24th December

Christmas Eve Communion 11.15 pm

25th December

Christmas Day 10.00 am "Celebrating Hope"

30th December

10.00 am, 11.30 am & Cafechurch
18:30

"The Christmas List: Hope for the future"
NO SERVICE

6th January

New Year Communion at all Services

ABBA TRUST CHRISTMAS APPEAL

by Margaret Bailie

Each year Christmas seems to come around more quickly. Halloween is no sooner over when Christmas decorations are in the shops. Soon we will be bombarded with adverts for all the latest gadgets and toys. With the changes in benefits system more people are struggling to put food on the table never mind buy presents. 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 long wish list. 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. **On Abba Trust Sunday, 16th December**, we would like the children in the congregation to bring to church 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 toy should be wrapped and labeled 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 endeavor also to put in a small gift for mum.



Storehouse North Down will also be putting together around 500 hampers to be distributed to needy families during the week beginning 10th December. **We would ask that Christmas treats be left in the trollies in the Vestibule before 10th December.** West Church members have been very supportive of Storehouse and this is very much appreciated. If you could perhaps bring along extra groceries in the run up to Christmas it would be most welcome. Any contribution, no matter how small, would be greatly appreciated.

Finally it is quite a job sorting out everything we receive. We will be doing this on Sunday 16th. 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 continued support.

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"

Matthew
25:40

"CHRISTMAS FEST" FRIDAY 21st DECEMBER



6.00 pm ~ All age activities including games, crafts and drumming workshops as well hot seasonal food, live music and a photo booth.

7.15 pm ~ Carol Singing around the Christmas tree on the lawn followed a short devotional message and seasonal refreshments in the Welcome Area.

**Invite your family, friends & neighbours.
Everyone welcome.**

MODERATORIAL MUSINGS

by Rt. Rev. Dr. Charles McMullen

By the time you are reading this piece, I will have already completed half my term of office and names will be mentioned at the December meetings of our Presbyteries as possible successors. I am actually writing in mid-October during what has been an exceptionally busy and varied period.

We found our emotions stretched to the limits as we attended the final service of Fortwilliam Park in North Belfast (see photograph below). Although unfamiliar with the building, I was caught with a lump in my throat as we arrived and had to fight back the tears several times during the service. Barbara also found the event so moving. The magnificent sanctuary was designed in the late Victoria era by an architect from Newtownards aptly called Chappell and, although it overshot its budget by sixty percent, was opened and dedicated in 1885 for the sum of £8,000.

In its heyday several hundred children attended Sunday School, but the congregation has dwindled to barely three dozen regulars mainly due to changing demographics. Here we were for one final service as the diaspora returned home. I acknowledged the grief and the pain, but pointed to the hope of

Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church.

I know that the Church is not about buildings, but I do believe in the concept of sacred space or sanctuary. It's a place where we share memories, build authentic community, erect epitaphs and have that overriding sense of God's faithfulness throughout the generations. I recalled all those evenings in West after the service and when everyone has gone home, simply sitting at the front of the church and being so conscious of God's

presence in our midst as His worshipping Christian family. And it occurred to me, if only I could relocate this fine building from North Belfast to Bangor West.

We spent a week touring the Presbytery of Templepatrick, taking in Antrim and Randalstown. Here we were encouraged by the sense of life and vibrancy in different congregations. It all began in Muckamore where I felt very much as if I were coming home, even though I hadn't been in the place before. During my childhood years, my minister was Rev Harry Pinkerton, who had been called to Omagh after Muckamore which is set in the townland of Shanoguestown or "Wee Johnny". This was the character I heard about in weekly children's addresses, who taught me to love Jesus. My testimony is as simple as that!

Templepatrick lined up an outstanding week for us which took us to Crumlin Integrated Primary School, Crumlin Integrated Collect and Riverside Special School. Barbara, although enjoying her retirement from school, was very much in her element as she toured various classrooms and came alongside teachers and pupils.

We had an afternoon at Belfast International Airport, were given an overview of its emergency procedures, and had the opportunity to ride in the fire engine dousing imaginary flames with high pressured foam and water. Those looking after us who gave so generously of their time told me that they wanted to express their appreciation to our two Presbyterian chaplains for the contribution they make to the life of the airport!

Everywhere we went, we were warmly received, royally treated and well fed. Highlights also included a morning spent in Antrim Area Hospital, where I had the opportunity to encourage the dedicated staff of the Macmillan Unit. We were also at Greenmount College and Randox, where committed members of local congregations are involved in lecturing and management. I was blessed to experience at first hand the servant-heartedness of folk I had seen in the pews exercising their faith in their place of work. It reminded me of so many of you.

It was also good to spend time visiting the police station in Antrim to bless those who serve our community and to be received by the Mayor

and Deputy Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. I was interested to discover how Council is developing the economic and tourist potential of the area.

In the wake of the fallout from our General Assembly this year, any fears I had about being well received in the wider community were quickly allayed. There is still a very strong welcome for the Church throughout the community and many of its members are making such a profound contribution for the greater good.

It also came home to me, as we carried out such an extensive tour of the area, how many good news stories there are that seem not really to be reported. Greenmount is literally a world leader in many aspects of the agricultural sector and Randox is also setting the pace in diagnostics. I wonder increasingly why the media have to bombard us with such constant negativity when there is so much that is good!

As Moderator, I have been attempting to set a gentle and positive tone in all my dealings in the public sphere. The five main church leaders invited the leaders of the five political parties to a meeting in Assembly buildings at the end of September, the first time our politicians had been together at this level since February. I was given the privilege of chairing the meeting and began by quoting a paraphrase of Psalm 23 which spoke about enemies feasting around the one table. It was not a time for recrimination but to encourage politics for the common good and the building of relationships. The morning was surprisingly positive and encouraging.

Later that day, as I read the report on the BBC website, which included good feedback in tweets from Michelle O'Neill and Arlene Foster, I decided to look at the comments

they in turn had received. I felt sullied by the level of abuse levelled at the politicians, the ugliness of the language and the sheer bile. It's an indication of polarisation in our community, but also of the harmful effects of unguarded social media.



Charles chairing the meeting in Assembly Buildings with the five main church leaders and the five political parties in September



Pictured below, Presbytery reps with staff and students at Geenmount College

Again for me, it is a question of setting the tone and bearing in mind those wonderful positives of our Christian faith – grace, truth, mercy, forgiveness, peace and reconciliation, to name but a few!

I had the pleasure of speaking at the meeting of the C S Lewis institute, attended by some Bangor Westies, whom it was such a joy to see. I was given the theme of "Walking in the Holy Spirit" and felt such incredible liberty as I went on for seventy-five minutes!

I was also the guest speaker at the V C Commemorative Service in Assembly Buildings to remember those from Ireland who received such recognition for their bravery during the First World War. I had the pleasure of meeting the Tanaiste Simon Coveney who had flown in from New York and was travelling home to Cork later that evening. Earlier that day, I spoke at the National Police Memorial Service in the Waterfront attended by the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State. Again a moving experience, which stretched the emotions. I spoke on the good Samaritan:

The parable speaks of holy, unconditional, sacrificial love of the kind to which we cannot aspire, humanly speaking. On the other hand, as we acknowledge our shortcomings and open our lives to Jesus Christ, He comes to dwell in us and fill us to the measure of His love in all its wonderful dimensions - how wide and long; high and deep. According



Charles pictured with Stuart Horner, C S Lewis Institute Programme Coordinator

to the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, perfect love is patient and kind; it is not easily angered, it keeps no records or wrongs. "Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

Can you imagine how transformed society would be, if we all followed in the footsteps of this divine love in Christ, a love that changes us from the inside out and makes us more like Him? I imagine we would be able to give many in law and justice part-time jobs and our courageous police officers early retirement on full pensions. We might even be able to give our Home Secretary some much needed time to relax!

Again it's the importance of setting the tone! Thank you for all your prayers and support. I continue to miss you. Please continue to follow news releases on the Presbyterian website and my Twitter account @PCIModerator!

AMAZING REVIVALS

by Rev. David Bailie, Minister Emeritus



@ gently repeated reminder from Cheryl that yet another year has slipped by and the Christmas letter is due! How time flies! How the DECADES pass!

Two full decades have passed since I demitted my charge in West. Almost 37 years with you has created a treasure trove of memories and relationships that will remain strong and vibrant as long as we have heart and breath and memory. Yet we here must confess that memory is not as sharp as it once was! Ah well! Ah well! Yet the reality of the life we shared in Christ ensured and the gracious work of the Holy Spirit quite awesome to recall. We do recall with gratitude and afresh invoke blessings in Jesus' Name upon you all, and upon my successor Charles who has led you so well, and who currently has the role of giving leadership to our whole Church, with strength, gentleness and wisdom.

We must be aware that in our whole land, and continent the Church in the West is facing strong head winds and widespread opposition that questions, undermines and undervalues.

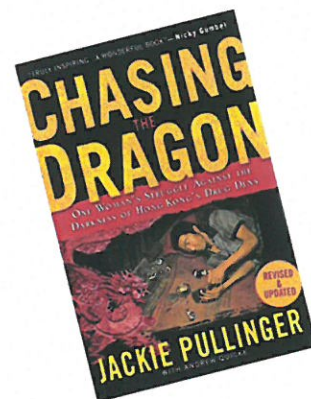
In this context, it may be right for me to encourage you to gain a global picture of what God is currently doing in various parts of the world. There have been amazing revivals in Korea, in Latin America and in many parts of the world. Here is a small sample of books you may read that will excite, bless and inform:

- "Chasing the Dragon" ~ Jackie Pullinger tells of the Church in Korea.
- "The Rising Revival" ~ Peter Wagner tells us about the incredible Argentine revival.
- "Soul Survivor" ~ Philip Yancey and "The Coming Chinese Church" ~ Paul Golf with Pastor Lee tells how a Church of 80,000 in 1949, through severe persecution has become a church of 800 million!

When we ponder such things strong faith rises within us and we are fortified for gospel ministry.

As a family we are much encouraged. Elizabeth, our eldest daughter is now retired and has recently received a Master's degree in creative writing. Andrew still living and working in Belfast, like his sisters, keeps a close eye on his aging parents. Mary, with husband Geoff and their 3 daughters still live in Birmingham. We are blessed by a lively family who uphold and encourage us.

Another year has passed! Rhoda ardently joins with me in sending you our love and blessing you in the Name of Jesus!



The UCB (United Christian Broadcasters) Prayerline service was set up over 22 years ago to enable people to reach out and connect more deeply with UCB regarding their spiritual and emotional welfare.

Since 2004 UCB Prayerline has received 850,000 calls, and in 2017 was contacted 84,736 times through telephone, email, or letter by people wanting prayer. There are cries for help, often in times of anguish and despair, revealing a need across our nation for accessible and Biblical prayer support.

As the increasing demand for UCB Prayerline exceeds their resources, every month more than 1,300 calls remain unanswered. At present this service depends on the equivalent of three full time staff members (based at UCB's Operation Centre), more than 300 volunteers and 24 churches that offer physical space and oversight for the satellite teams into which these crucial volunteers are gathered and anchored.

If you sense God calling you into this ministry please contact Dorothy Campbell on 07845 231815 for more information.

As we minister on Prayerline, the great news is we can reignite and fuel the hope within callers lives, by bringing the light of Scripture into their darkness and by the power of the Holy Spirit impart God's assurance of His Love, and Peace within their situations.

UCB Prayerline: Stronger Service, Wider Reach.

Matthew 9:35-38

UCBPRAYERLINE

THANK YOU ISOBEL



After 40 years of dedicated service to the West Church Cradle Roll, we said a massive thank you to Isobel Coburn who so diligently looked after our Baptismal records.

Each child baptised here in West has received a Baptismal Certificate and Isobel, as part of her ministry, has kept track of over 1500 baptisms ensuring each child receives a birthday card in the following couple of years.

Pictured left, Lindsay Conway (l), our Clerk of Session making a presentation to Isobel with her husband George

KIRK SESSION ACTION TEAMS UPDATES

Our five Action Teams, within Kirk Session, continue to meet every other month and provide you with the following updates:

Pastoral Care

Andy Heron writes: On Saturday, 20th October 2018, over 20 people gathered at West Church for a seminar entitled PORNOGRAPHY, A DANGEROUS OBSESSION: FOSTERING A BIBLICAL RESPONSE'.

Our guest speakers, Chris and Susan Cordner, committed Christian counsellors with years of experience in helping people who struggle with this issue, gave us an excellent introduction to the subject. Avoiding the use of professional jargon, they aimed their presentation at the 'layman' interested in finding out more about how much havoc this affliction causes. We were made aware how widespread a problem pornography is in society, including its use among professing Christians. It was most encouraging to learn that there is help available for people whose lives are being wrecked, and especially reassuring to know that God is able to make a difference in the lives of addicted people who seek his help.

It is already well-documented how widely pornography is used by teenagers and adults—what was alarming was to discover that it is accessed on internet (via smartphones, tablets and computers) by children as young as primary school age. Chris and Susan reminded us how

difficult it is for our young ones growing up in such a sexualised culture as ours. This represents a huge challenge for Christian parents, and urges us to consider how we can, as a church, better inform parents as well as volunteers working in children's and youth ministry of the great danger pornography poses.

Youth & Children's

Catherine Bell writes: It is wonderful to have such a vibrant and large youth and children's ministry. God has truly blessed us with the number of children and young people who attend regularly each week.

But this growth and responsibility puts a lot of strain on the team. Although we have not yet been successful in appointing a new Youth & Children's Coordinator, Andrew McClelland has ably stepped up and taken full responsibility for the work. Kirk Session appreciates this very much and has given approval for him to act in the Coordinator role until the end of June 2019. At the same time, Harry McBride has been temporarily appointed to support Andrew with the teenagers. Victoria Croft is looking after the children's work and Heidi Mulholland has fitted in well to the team

as an intern. (You will read and get to know more about Heidi later in the magazine.)

It has been a very busy term. JClub, Young West and Deeper go from strength to strength with the Discipleship groups continuing for our teenagers. The local schools



appreciate the work of the team as they take assemblies and lead classes. This is a wonderful opportunity to present Jesus to many children who have no church connection. Many find their way through this connection to the Friday afternoon Coffee Bar, WyldLife on Saturday evening and then into Young West.

A very profitable Young West weekend has just taken place as an alternative to Halloween, with over 100 teenagers and leaders in Castlewellan. All enjoyed fellowship, teaching and fun although all came home exhausted. The weekend was followed by a very successful 'Glow in the Dark' event for our JClub children and their friends. It was great to see so many children, parents and friends enjoying the event, celebrating Jesus who brings light. For the first time the children were separated into two groups according to age, although this required two distinct programmes and additional work for Andrew and Vic, it was extremely successful. This was a heroic effort for our team coming so soon after the weekend.

As well as acknowledging the work of the team, Kirk Session recognises and appreciates greatly the work of so many volunteers. Our youth and children's work would be much the poorer without you.

Please pray for the children and youth work. Pray that our children will come to know Jesus early in their lives and that, as they grow, they will grow in Him and become dedicated disciples. Pray especially

for Andrew as he leads this work and for the rest of the team who support him.

Discipleship

Maureen Bennett writes: Key question...Are you living out the good news of Jesus with confidence in your community in an intentional way?

West is affiliated to one of the Cairn Learning Communities (www.cairnmovement.com). Cairn has previously challenged us to develop our discipleship programmes in order to help us follow the example of Jesus in taking the good news to people where they are, by living out the love of Christ. Some of our Elders attended the latest conference on 19-20 October and we have been further challenged to think of our church programmes in one of four quadrants: **A missional church community exists for people who don't fit into church. The challenge is to move as much as possible of what we do into the top right hand quadrant (see below).**

Building relationships	
Community (consumerism)	Missional Community (King honouring & kingdom building)
Encouraging belonging	Transformed lives
Activity (busyness)	Social Justice (good works)
Invitation	

For this to happen, we need to be informed about Jesus, to imitate Him and to put His teaching into practice. We want West to be a community that reaches out to those who are unlikely to come to us; we want to be more than 'Sunday-Only Consumer Christians'. Much of our youth and children's programme exhibits these principles and increasingly we want to see them integrated through the rest of the Church.

Our **Triads and Quads** are part of that vision—they are focused on 'building up one another' in an understanding of our faith, in our confidence to talk about it and live it out whenever and wherever we 'rub up against life'. We have ten groups up and running, of three or four, using the course book 'Discipleship Essentials' to delve into scripture and to support and encourage one another to grow deeper in faith. There are people of all ages involved; groups tend to be of mixed age and are single gender. You can join the programme at any time—just invite two or three others to join you to work through the programme. Let us know and we will point you in the right direction. Triads and Quads also provide a useful next step for those who have completed Alpha. The intention is that once you have participated in the course, you will then facilitate a new group by inviting two or three others to join you. On Tuesday 4th December the facilitators of the groups are coming together to evaluate how the groups have found the materials and how they are developing.

Home groups or small groups continue to develop. We now have around 25 meeting regularly. The

Discipleship Action Team drew up a list of study resources tailored to the differ-

ing needs of the groups as expressed by their leaders last spring. We are looking forward to getting some feedback at a meeting planned for Monday 3rd December. The groups meet for fellowship, prayer, study and encouragement. Some have adopted a more missional aim, for example, to facilitate the Alpha course, but we would like all home groups to have an outward focus. Our groups tend to be populated mainly, but not exclusively, by over 55 year olds. We would love to see many more younger people participate. If you are reading this and are prompted to get involved or to offer to lead a group, please get in touch. Our intention is to birth another small group in church in the new year but we need leaders.

As part of **our understanding of our faith**, our home group leaders asked us to provide support in thinking through a Biblical response to some of the current issues of today, for example, abortion, euthanasia, gender fluidity, nationalism, challenges from atheism and from other religions and cultures. These are challenging, real life issues and we do want, as Christians, to be able to respond positively and sensitively to them. The Pastoral Action Team (as you will have read as part of this article) has recently provided a seminar on understanding pornography from a Biblical perspective and how to help those who might be addicted to pornography; in the past couple of years we have also held seminars on mental health issues. During this year, we hope to address some of these other issues, beginning with abortion, so stay tuned. It will, quite possibly be on a Sunday morning in January with a follow-up question and answer at some other point.



Worship

Andy Galbraith writes: The Worship Action Team has been continuing its important function of envisioning the ongoing development of worship and prayer within our congregation at West.

One of our big aims is to see each member of the congregating experiencing a great degree of freedom within our worship services. We want to see people participating in worship with a vibrant enthusiasm.

We also want to build on all the incredible opportunities for prayer that already exist within West, and see the prayer life of our congregation continue to deepen and develop. We are exploring how, as a congregation, we can make better use of the prayer room, particularly on Sundays. We are exploring how we can maximise the impact of "gathered prayer" in the context of a busy church calendar.

We are already looking forward to exploring developments as we head into 2019 that can move us forward in prayer and worship.

Please take note of Heather Thompson's article on pages 16-17 on some of the ways you can become more involved in the prayer life at West.

Pictured below, Alpha at the Bryansburn Inn.



Mission & Outreach

Rev. Andrew Gill writes: We are currently half way through our autumn Alpha course, and so far it has been full of encouragements.

Every Wednesday evening we meet at the Bryansburn Inn to explore the big questions of life, faith, and meaning. Each evening begins with a time of chatting as guests and hosts catch up with the events of their week. Then we have some food together and enjoy the now legendary chicken goujons. After the meal we gather to watch a video that presents one of the key beliefs of Christianity. Topics we've looked at so far include; 'Who is Jesus?' 'Why did Jesus die?', 'How and why should we read the Bible?', 'How does God guide us?'. After the video we split into small groups to discuss what we think about

what we have seen and heard.

People come to Alpha for lots of different reasons. Some people are sceptics, some are new believers, and others have been going to church their whole lives. But everyone has questions and Alpha provides a safe and inviting place to ask those questions and listen to others share what they think. We started the journey of Alpha a number of weeks ago mostly as strangers but it has been wonderful to see how friendships have been formed and a sense of community has grown.

The most encouraging part though has been seeing people find some of the answers to the questions they are asking. Week by week you can see a change happening in peoples minds and hearts. God is clearly at work in the lives of many of the people that are coming and it is exciting to see what is going to happen over the rest of the course.



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LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

by Heather Thompson

This promise is for you, for you who want something more

For you who know that you have a thirst that has not yet been satisfied

For you who have heard of water that refreshes beyond compare

For you who feel burdened, who feel that you have reached the depths and want to rise

For you who are on top of the world, but who know that the world does not have enough

For you who are full of fears and anxieties, for you who feel hardened and closed

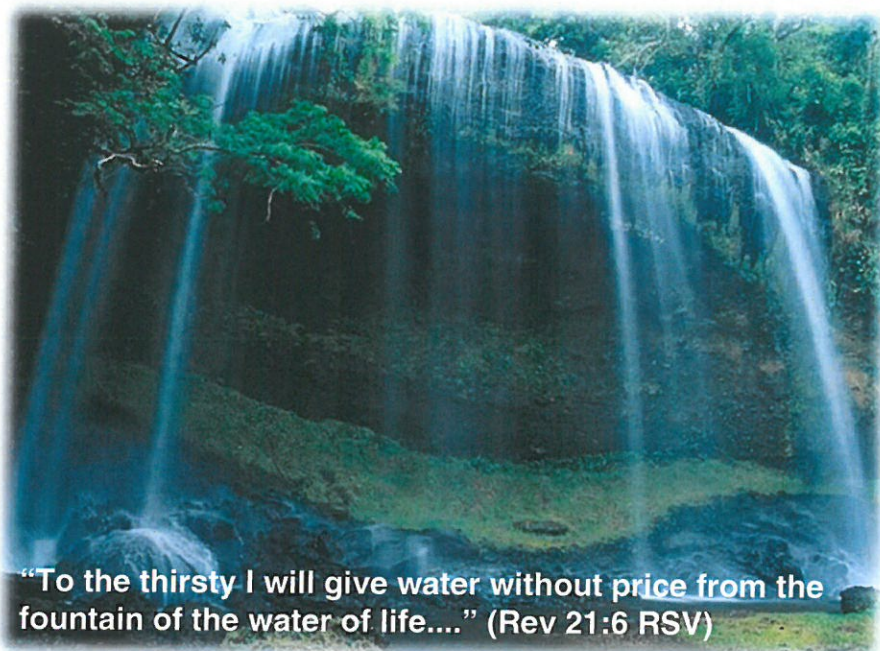
For you who are full of eagerness and enthusiasm, for you who want everything a human being can have

For all, there is a promise, a promise made by your God, by the One who made you.

Perhaps you know Him and wonder if there should not be more. Perhaps you have only dimly heard of Him and wish you could find Him.

Now He speaks to you. Now He offers you a promise, a free gift of new life - without price. He offers it to you freely, just as He created you freely, because He loves you.

“To the thirsty I will give water without price from the fountain of the water of life....” (Rev 21:6 RSV) (Excerpt from ‘Finding New Life in the Spirit’: Servant Books)



“To the thirsty I will give water without price from the fountain of the water of life....” (Rev 21:6 RSV)

Over the past fifty years the Life in the Spirit seminars have made a significant contribution to the DNA of West Church. All who have attended one (or more!) have entered more deeply into abundant life in Jesus: knowing experientially that they are deeply loved by God; confident of their faith in Jesus and in their salvation; walking in the fullness of all the Holy Spirit imparts to them each day. Talk to anyone who has previously come to a seminar and they will be encouraging you to ‘go and see’.

I am also happy to chat to anyone who wants to find out more about what we do and how.

The purpose of the seminar is to encourage one another to enter in to all that God wants to pour out upon us through His Holy Spirit and, so, to enable this, we take a leisurely and relaxed approach, answering questions as they arise and exploring what this ‘New Life in the Spirit’ is all about.

The course starts on the 22nd January and continues until Easter, meeting on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm in the Prayer Room. Please sign up on the designated sheet on the notice board in the Welcome Area as it will be helpful to know how many would like to come.

If you have a family member unwell or in hospital, please do not hesitate to contact Rev Andy Galbraith or the Church Office (028 9145 9688). Although there is a good chaplaincy service in all the major hospitals in Belfast, there are many gaps in the system. Nowadays there is such a quick turnover of beds, it can be very easy to miss someone.

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.

In a Pastoral emergency outside of normal office hours please contact the church mobile, 07543 198391 and a member of the Pastoral Team will be available to help.



THE PRAYER ROOM

by Heather Thompson

West has an abundance of faithful pray-ers, whether it be at home alone, or with a few others, or in small groups or church gatherings in the building. Often people are seen praying for one another. This ethos of prayer is at the heart of who we are as God’s children, living in constant communication with the Father who loves us.

There are times when a person comes up to the Prayer Room to sit in the quiet and pray, to collect their thoughts and receive peace. Unfortunately, on some occasions, this has not been possible as the room has already been in use. Sometimes this is unavoidable as there can be a shortage of rooms but at other times an alternative arrangement can be made. Our desire is that the Prayer Room be available as consistently as possible for prayer and prayer related gatherings.

Over the past year we have allocated an hour and a half at 1.30 pm on the fourth Friday of the month for anyone to come and enjoy the peace and quiet of time spent in silence with God. Having somewhere in the church that is set aside for this

purpose is important as it is like having a safe place, a haven, to go to and be refreshed and restored. For this reason we will call this time ‘Prayer Haven’ to distinguish it from the designated times that we already have for groups of people praying together. Our desire is that anyone can feel free to come up to the Prayer Room for such a purpose any time it is available.

The following times show when the Prayer Room is allocated for a specific purpose. Outside of these times the room will be available for personal use or for group prayer if booked through the office.

Prayer Meetings:

**First Monday in the month at 7.30 pm
Prayer for Israel**

**Fourth Monday in the month at 7.30 pm
Samuel Hub**

**Wednesdays at 8.00 pm
Mid week Prayer**

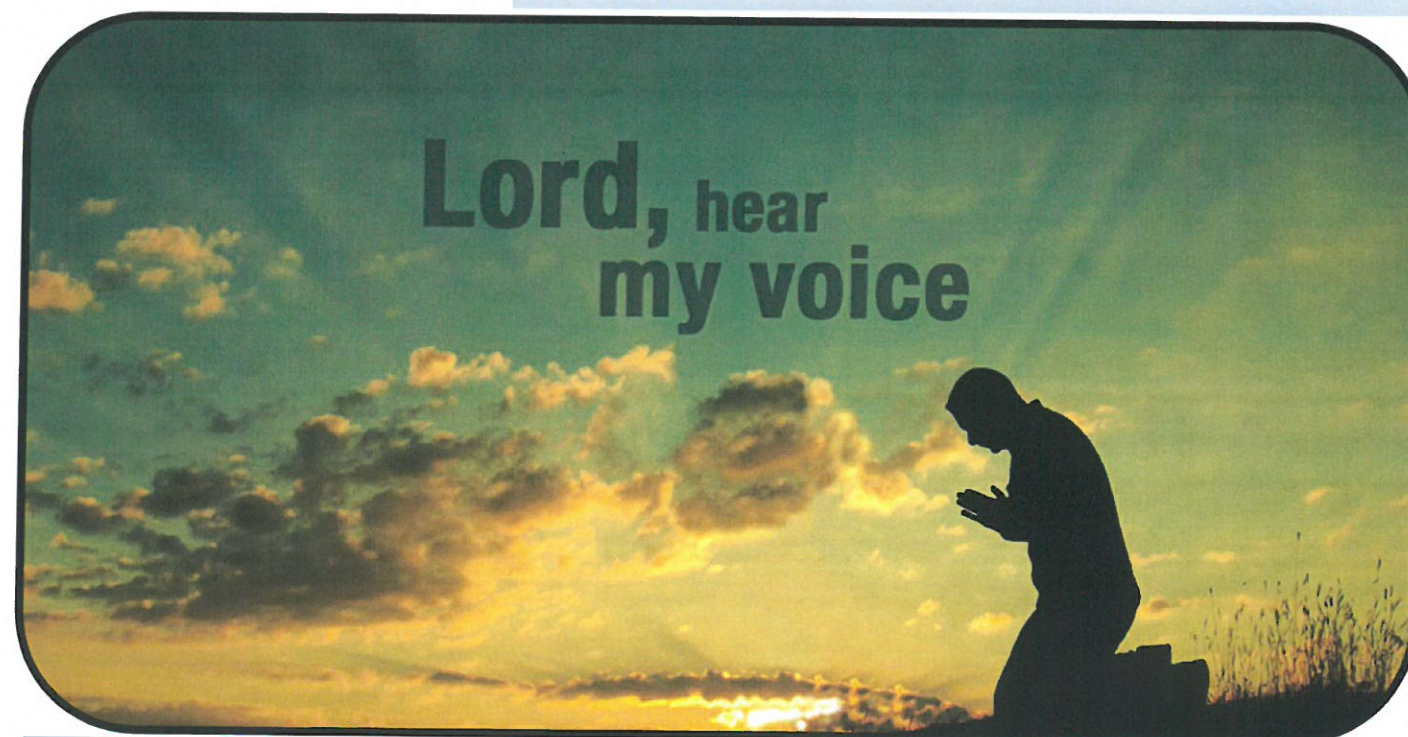
**Thursdays, 7.00 - 8.00 am, 2.00 - 3.00 pm & 8.00 - 9.00 pm
United Prayer**

Other Meetings:

Wednesday 10.00 am—1.00 pm - Team Prayer

Wednesdays 7.00 - 8.00 pm - GB Bible Study

**Tuesdays 7.30 - 9.30 pm, January to April
Life in the Spirit Seminar**



WORLD DEVELOPMENT APPEAL 2018

SEEKING SAFETY

World Development Appeal 2018

Through the World Development Appeal, we have the opportunity to express our solidarity with the 'rightness' of such work and with communities embarking on journeys towards discovering for themselves new ways to be in their relationships, with one another and with society around them. We have the opportunity to draw on and to learn from the valuable experience of our development partners, and importantly, their partner organisations on the ground. And, above all, we have the opportunity to partner with God in the work of, little-by-little, pulling back this world towards the 'goodness' of his creation until the day when Christ will make all things new. Not only this, the World Development Appeal holds out a challenge to each of us on our respective faith journeys: it can be, for us too, a place of transformation as we grapple afresh with what the Lord requires of us, namely "... to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with [our] God." (Micah 6:8)

The 2017 World Development Appeal introduced a new approach to the remit of the WDA, linking together, in our ongoing partnership with Christian Aid and Tearfund, the 2017/18 Appeal with those of the following three years under a

The annual World Development Appeal of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland seeks to highlight, to inform about, and to support some of the vital and valuable work of sustainable development currently undertaken by our development partners, Christian Aid and Tearfund. And this is work that is challenging: it is work that does not readily call forth easy answers to the issues that it seeks to address; it is work that cannot impose a solution; it is work that, to be sustained and to develop, cannot offer a 'quick fix'. Rather, this is work, that in the name of Christ, seeks to hold out the potential of a transformed and transformative reality, for some of the world's poorest communities and which seeks to build the capacity, beginning from within such communities, that will allow both men and women to flourish and to know the dignity that is theirs as bearers of the divine image.

The work of sustainable development is not simple. It is hard work. It encounters obstacles as it is worked out 'on the ground'. It is most often long-term work as it seeks to build, within communities, a shared vision for a future different to that which tradition or cultural norms, which economic or social injustice, might dictate and to release every member of the community – men, women and children – to have a voice in the development process that will move them, together, towards that vision. It is a work of faith and courage, of endurance and of hope.

common, overarching theme – the challenges of sustainable justice in fragile states with a particular focus on gender justice and the prevention of gender-based violence. The aim is, in adopting this approach, to return in years three and four of the cycle, to the partners highlighted in years one and two in order to learn from them how the work they are engaged in has developed and might continue to develop in the longer term and also to deepen our understanding of the challenges they have encountered. It is the hope that, through such an approach, the World Development Committee will be able to give a deeper insight into what contributions to the Appeal achieve and also equip congregations with a better understanding of the pace and of the often hard and long-term nature of sustainable development work.

The 2018 Appeal invites you to learn about and to support Christian Aid's partner, the National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil (CONIC), in the work being done to address gender-based violence, and in particular the work of the Casa Noeli dos Santos safe house in the city of Ariquemes.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is particularly pervasive in Brazil. Recent research has shown that every 24 seconds a woman is beaten by a partner or ex-partner and in a 2017 nationwide survey almost a third of girls and women said that during the previous year they had suffered violence. Despite improvements in

public policy and law, the reality is that gender-based violence is firmly rooted in a certain kind of machismo culture. The city of Ariquemes has a population of a little over 100,000 people and is situated in the Jamari Valley in north-western Brazil, just across the border from Bolivia. The city depends economically on mining, fishing, and logging, with open mining, in particular, seen as the root of much of the violence and inequality in the region which was flooded with workers from out of state. By mid-2010 Ariquemes was facing a serious problem with violence against women and a public meeting was held in which the mayor made a call to see if there was any interest in opening a safe house for women experiencing gender-based violence.

The church community in Ariquemes responded and within 15 days the Casa Noeli became a reality. An institution was set up to run the house administratively and by 2014 the development service of the National Anglican Episcopal Church had established the partnership with Christian Aid which has allowed for the rental of a better house, the



Safe House : The 2018 Appeal invites us to learn about the work being done to address gender-based violence, and, in particular, the work of the Casa Noeli dos Santos safe house in the city of Ariquemes in Brazil.

purchase of furniture for the house, improved infrastructure, and improvements in the work undertaken with the women themselves... but there is much more still to do.

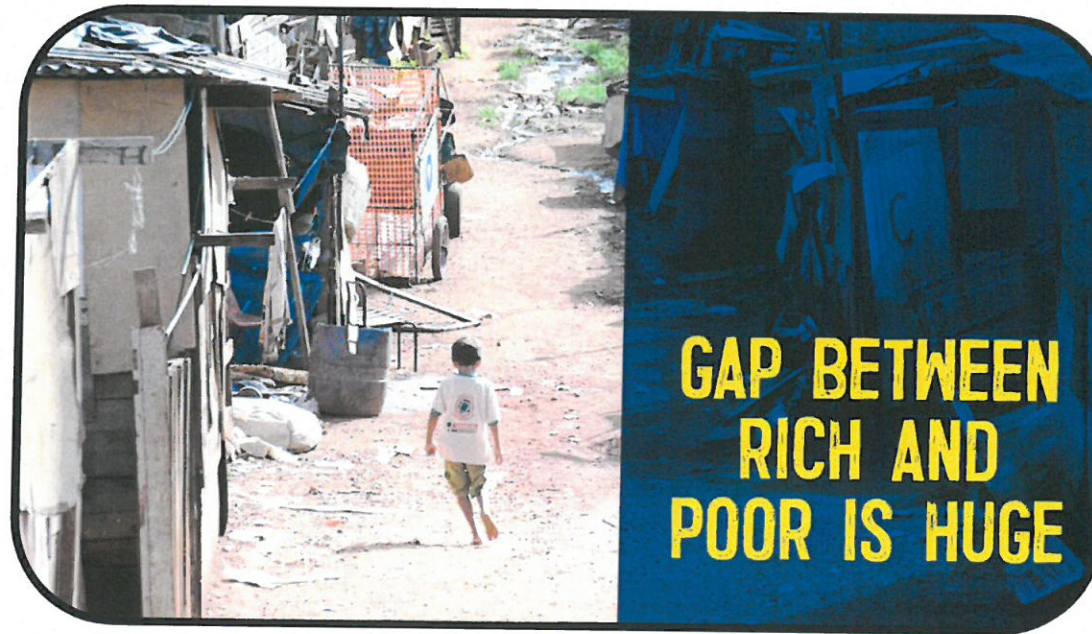
The safe house is where a woman can come after she enters a formal complaint, about GBV, in a police station. The existence of such a house means that the woman does not have to return home to a violent partner or to rely on the support of family members who may well side with her partner. Women stay at Casa Noeli for different lengths of time but the maximum length of stay is usually three months within which time they receive support to work through their needs and to be able to move on with their lives. The house acts as a gateway for women to access services related to health, education, employment, and legal support and becomes a reference point and source of advice for the women who pass through it – women numbering some 1500 over the past six years.

The parish which supports the safe house, which serves nine other cities in the region besides Ariquemes, also serves the community of Sao Paulo San Pedro, supporting this financially poor rural settlement pastorally and in securing land rights. Work amongst the women of the community, carried out with a Christian ethos, deals with topics such as self-care and self-esteem, allowing for the introduction of discussion regarding violence against women in a more subtle way. The hope is that in the future the men in this community will also be engaged in discussion which empowers them to see that there are other options available to them as to how they treat women over and against those presented by their education or the way they were raised.

This year's video, which can be viewed at the following link, <https://vimeo.com/295835490>, highlights the importance of the work of the Casa Noeli dos Santos safe house, hearing from Fabiola, who herself has used the services provided there, and also from the driving force behind the work of the safe house, Rev Elineide Ferreira, who shares some of its story as one telling the everyday truth of what it is to provide sanctuary in a dangerous world.

Each year, the bulk of Appeal funds received are divided equally between partners and projects supported by Christian Aid and Tearfund, with 5% going to the Council for Global Mission's partner church relief and development initiatives.

Cont'd over



Brazil Riots / poverty : Government unrest is part of Brazilian life. From 1964 to 1985, Brazil was under a military dictatorship. Over the past few years progress has been made to provide stability and to raise many out of poverty, but unfortunately the gap between rich and poor remains very wide.

These partners and projects are selected by the World Development Committee from a number of proposals submitted by CA and TF on a theme agreed by the WDC, and full accounting is available 18 months after the launch of each annual Appeal. The funding supports our development partners' projects, as well as monitoring and ongoing evaluation to ensure your money is being put to the best possible use and is securing the sorts of sustainable development outcomes, in the long-term, highlighted in the Appeal materials.

The funds raised through the 2018 World Development Appeal will support a number of our partners' projects with a focus on promoting positive masculinities for boys and young men and enhancing opportunities for girls and young women, encouraging both to become active citizens and promote social wellbeing, thus benefiting not just participants but the wider community. Within the new four-year model, Tearfund will continue to use some of the funds channelled to it to support its development partners in the Democratic Republic of Congo as they seek to raise the status of women in society and affirm their dignity and worth as bearers of the divine image through ongoing programmes of education and training which, over the long-term, deliver sustainable development at its best as these women return to their communities and become agents of transformation for them and indeed for their country.

The World Development Committee express their grateful thanks for your engagement with this year's appeal and prayerfully commend it to you. It is our hope that, both as individuals and as corporate body, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland will be enriched through such engagement and through an increased understanding of the challenging work of sustainable development that holds at its heart a vision for righteous and joyful justice among humankind, one in which men and women may flourish and live in peace with one another, having rediscovered the truly human identity for which they were created. Engaging with such work is, as Rev Elineide puts it, "... putting into practice what the gospel says, putting into action what we hear every Sunday or any day that we are involved with the Word of God."



Rural Community : Sustainable development work is challenging : it is work that cannot impose a 'quick-fix' solution. Rather over time, it seeks to witness the potential of a transformed and transformative reality—for some of the world's poorest communities. It is work which seeks to build the capacity from within such communities that will allow both men and women to flourish.

In a 2017 survey in Brazil, almost a third of girls and women said that during the previous year they had suffered violence, from threats and beatings to attempted murder. Since 1985, over 100,000 women have lost their lives, often at the hands of a husband, partner or family member.

Unfortunately, gender-based violence is not unique to Brazil. A product of inequality and an abuse of power and privilege, it is prevalent in many countries around the world.

Following years of government instability and uncontrolled development, Brazil is still struggling to deal with the issue. "Violence against women is still a huge, huge problem," says Jose Maria, Police Commissioner in Ariquemes.

In just one example of abuse experience, a former resident of the safe house says: "When I got pregnant the aggression started being more violent, more often, and many times I thought that I would lose the child. He wanted me to take medicine to have an abortion."

The World Development Appeal 2018 aims to help some of these women as they seek safety and to escape the cycle of violence that has embedded itself in parts of Brazilian life.

Pictured above, Rev. Elineide Ferreira, the driving force behind the safe house.



REV ELINEIDE FERREIRA

In 2010 the local government of Ariquemes recognised that it had a problem. Violence against women had reached epidemic levels, it was out of control. A meeting was called by the mayor, and local civic leaders, churches and others came together to seek a way to stop this evolving tragedy. It was the local church that took the lead, and with the help of the surrounding community, 15 days later the Casa Noeli safe house opened its doors.

Eight years on and the Casa Noeli dos Santos safe house has now taken in over 1500 abused women. Few have the resources or family support to help themselves or their children and many are poorly educated.

When former resident, Fabiola (33), was in the safe house, her mother moved Fabiola's abusive ex-husband in with her. "She was the type of women who thought that once I had gotten married then I should stay married, because I had children...even though he assaulted me," Fabiola says. Fabiola suffered abuse for over five years, her ex-husband even burnt her clothes and

belongings. But Fabiola found something different at Casa Noeli: "I felt safe here and I knew that my children would be safe too." Although Fabiola has had to deal with so much trauma, her faith has remained secure: God won't let us down, he never does. Faith is everything, so we need to keep on trusting."

Today, the driving force behind the safe house is Rev. Elineide Ferreira (pictured left). Elineide's family has their own story of violence to tell. Her sister Eliane was stabbed seven times by her ex-husband nearly 20 years ago. Thankfully, Eliane survived and now works alongside Elineide in the safe house.

When a woman goes to the police to seek help, Elineide (32) is usually the first to get called—anytime, night or day, she can be contacted to go and pick up a victim, more often than not, with children. The safe house also acts as a gateway to other services, working closely with the local legal system and educational authorities to help those staying there. "Sometimes their stay can be very short, for some just one night. In some more complex cases, they

can stay for up to three months," explains Elineide.

The Christian Council of Churches in Brazil (CONIC) has been supporting the safe house since 2011. Stressing the need for outside support, a CONIC representative says, "the safe house is very important, and the support of people like you is fundamental for the work to continue. I've seen the joy of the women there and also of Elineide herself. This work can be very lonely and working with violence can be very hard. Your support is fundamental, please do support the safe house."

Background on Brazil: Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world covering 3.2 million square miles spread over 3 time zones with a population of over 208m. Brazil is the number 1 coffee producer in the world with the largest economy in South America, but it also has its challenges.

Fragile democracy is part of Brazilian life. From 1954 to 1985 Brazil was under a military

Dictatorship. Since then only two elected presidents have completed their terms of office. Over the past few years progress has been made to provide stability and to raise many out of poverty, but unfortunately the gap between rich and poor remains very wide.

Brazil is one of the world's most important environmental powers. It contains almost 70% of the Amazon rainforest, along with a huge amount of natural resources. Its influence is crucial to discussions and decisions regarding climate change.

'Predatory development' is the cause of many problems. The mass exploitation of the rainforest, as well as extensive mining and uncontrolled land grabbing, has led to unsustainable development in many areas.

The building of new cities, like Ariquemes (pop. 100k) in the north-west of Brazil, was to accommodate workers and their families. Unfortunately, these new, quickly populated cities created societies without normal community and family structures. This has led to higher than average levels of violence and crime, particularly against women.

How can you help?

LEARN : Please use the resources provided by World Development, available online at www.presbyterianireland.org/world-development. Find out more and learn how beautiful it is when women and men work together to bring the hopes they share for their community to fruition, and how the voices of women who have suffered the most can turn that suffering to greater dignity for all.

PRAY : Prayer is a vital activity in the communities where Christian Aid and Tearfund work and partner. Use the information available through this appeal to pray knowledgeably for their work and the people involved.

GIVE : The 2018 World Development Appeal highlights partner communities in Ariquemes, Brazil. The emphasis is on the long-term challenges and practical action needed for good and sustainable support in dangerous places, with a particular focus on the importance of gender justice. **Our special WDA offering will be held on Christmas Day.**

A GOD-GIVEN LOVE FOR GHANA

by
Liz Clayton

At one stage I did not think I would be giving another report about my Mission Trips to Ghana. For four years I was unable to go due to health issues and then in 2016 I got the all-clear for as I thought "one more visit" after surgery.

My hosts had moved to a new town, Ksoa, about 2 1/2 hours drive from Acra. Gifty, who was hosting me along with husband, had been our hotel receptionist way back in 2001 when I first visited with a team from my previous church. Over the years Gifty has been a real blessing and encouragement—always willing to help in whatever way she can. She is now married with 4 children. I'll tell you more about one of them later...

In 2016 I visited the village where the Children's Bible Club had started and met with the children the church have now. We also went to the countryside orphanage. Sadly the Papa had died and it was the week-end of his funeral. It was good to spend a day with the Mama, helpers and many of the children.

The children in Ghana are amazing and so open to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As I have said before, they are just like little sponges. I have also had the privilege to have many Muslim children at the meetings and they have gone home with



Pictured above, Liz, with some of the Sunday School children and below left, Liz with Gifty's daughter, Laudya

one of the Gospels of John I have had with me. Even some of the parents have come as well - Praise God!

Child Evangelism Fellowship has been a great source of teaching materials and the visual aids are invaluable, especially the wordless book. I have left many of those with leaders in schools, churches and Sunday schools. I will be paying them another visit shortly. (C.E.F.)

I was back AGAIN (another last visit!!!) last November. Gifty has a 10 year

old daughter who is severely disabled with Cerebral Palsy. Sadly in Ghana disabled children are stigmatised by ancient cultic belief systems and it is extremely difficult for the families. I attended a meeting in Acra with a group of parents and professionals who are wanting to raise awareness (Cerebral Palsy Ghana).

One of the things I did was arrange to take Gifty's daughter (Laudya) to a specialist to have her condition assessed and as a result, 8 weeks of therapy 3 times a week was planned to try and help her upper body. This was paid before I left directly to the hospital and when I

got home, another 8 weeks was funded. Laudya now has exercises done regularly at home. She is a pet and although she cannot speak, she really communicates with her eyes and her smile. Through it all Gifty and George's faith does not waiver.

Last year we had 2 great children's meetings in the local Presbyterian church, thirty children the first week and sixty children the next. The church is very near where I will be staying and we are having a week of meetings this time for the children.

Another church I plan to visit while away is Gifty's brother. He is the assistant Pastor and I met with the children there last year. They loved

the songs, Bible stories and quizzes. I hope to meet with the ladies either there or at Gifty's church. It is a bit like West on a Sunday morning—children and teenagers everywhere. I would like to bring the teenagers New Testaments or daily reading notes. They have around 20-30 teenagers.

The orphanage is now just too far for me to travel to but I still keep in touch with those from the villages.

We will be going to a place called Tema. Joni Eareckson Tada who has been serving disabled people all over the world for more than 35 years, has an amazing charity called "Wheels for the World".

Laudya was fitted for one of their wheelchairs some years ago and she is really too big for it now so we will go and see about a new one. They supply the wheelchairs and fit them accordingly.

Well, I am going back in January for nearly a month. My love for the Ghanaian people has never waned. It is a God-given love and I appreciate the love and prayers and support I have from family, friends and church.



I may not be part of a large organisation in what I do but in a way I am - I am doing what the Lord has laid in my heart and I thank and praise Him that He has guided and directed me over the years and that He has given me the strength to carry on.

He even blesses me with the heat (I have fibromyalgia and the heat is lovely—no aches and pains).

Our God is a Great Big God and He holds us in His Hands.

Liz Clayton

Pictured left is Laudya being assessed at hospital with a specialist, a therapist, her mum Gifty and Liz.

Liz would be delighted to chat further about her mission trip to Ghana and the work with which she is involved. Further information on Wheels for the World can be found at

<https://www.throughtheroof.org/international-mission/wheels-for-the-world/>



¿Hablas español? Do you speak Spanish?

As many of our friends in West know, following our marriage in October 2013, we made our first trip to Peru in March 2014, along with Beverly Bryans and the team from West. It was an amazing experience and we fell in love with the country and the lovely people of Peru. Since then we have been back there five times and the last three trips have been a full month each. We have travelled to many parts of Peru, both north and south.

This coming January we will be heading back to Peru again and this will be an even longer trip (from 15th January to 1st May 2019). In many parts of Peru not very many people speak English, although this is changing gradually. We can carry on a basic conversation in Spanish, but earlier this year we both felt that the Lord was leading us to spend a longer time in Peru, just focussing on learning the language. God has given us a heart and deep love for people both at home and in Peru. We really want to communicate at a deeper level with the local people there, building relationships with them by showing and sharing the love of Jesus.

For that reason we have decided to sign into a Spanish language school in Huanuco for 3 months. This school is being run by a dear Peruvian friend Betty Varte who has been heading up an English teaching Institute for a number of years. Betty has had it on her heart to start what she is calling "Ready for the Harvest Spanish School" to teach Spanish to people just like us. Her dream is now starting to become reality with her first students beginning language study a few months ago. In addition, Betty and her husband Edgardo are working with Pioneers Mission Agency to teach English to Peruvians who want to go overseas as missionaries. We have offered to help with some conversational English with her students. For ourselves we will be



A Peruvian adventure in the planning for Mike & Christine Stenning

studying Spanish 3 hours per day, 5 days per week so it will be a challenge to be back at school!

We will live at the Wycliffe Bible Translators base in Huánuco where we have stayed many times and will be able to cook for ourselves there. We are sure it will be an interesting experience going to the markets and doing our shopping. Huánuco is where we know quite a number of people already, so we will be able to spend time with our friends there and also be able to visit the children at Casa Hogar children's home once they return from their annual visits to their extended families back in their own communities. We would like to be able to teach some English to the children there too.

At weekends we may be able to visit some of the shanty towns with the Sunday school teachers and Christine hopes to be able to visit the women in the prison in Huánuco once again. We also want to spend time with two lovely young men (David 22 and Daniel 20) who

lost their Mum Violetta to cancer recently – she was only 36.

During our last 2 weeks in Peru we plan to visit Moyobamba in the north of Peru which is where St Luke's clinic is. As well as continuing to support the work of the cleft lip and palate clinic we also plan to get involved with a programme to help the elderly folk in Moyobamba become more mobile. We have already gathered up a number of walking sticks to take with us, as well as some musical instruments for the Youth Chamber orchestra also set up by St. Luke's clinic. A number of the young people in the orchestra have been through the cleft lip and palate programme and it has done so much for their self esteem to be involved in this.

We also plan to visit a local Presbyterian Church in Moyobamba which we spotted on our last visit in February 2018 and we would love if some connections could be made there – perhaps initially even with West Church. We are taking Charles' theme of Building

Relationships very much to heart and we recently met with Rev. Uel Marris, Secretary to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Council for Global Mission in Assembly Buildings in Belfast. He was able to give us some good advice on how to begin to make those connections.

As we prepare to head off for this next trip in January we would really appreciate your prayers for good health and protection throughout our stay, for our families back at home and for a clear sense of God's continued leading step by step. In addition to our part-time employment we have held a number of car boot sales over the summer to raise funds to take with us to bless and support some of the projects we've mentioned above.

We really hope that many will come along to the coffee morning and table sale we are holding on Saturday 1st December in Ryan and Suzi Gourley's home. We are delighted to be hosting this event along with Liz Clayton who heads off to Ghana once again, as you will have previously read, just two days after us in January.

We would sincerely like to thank everyone in West for all your interest and wonderful encouragement and for your prayers for us on this exciting adventure and journey which God has led us on.

Pictured above right are Betty & Edgardo, our dear Peruvian friends with whom we'll be staying and pictured bottom right is Michael at one of the many car boots sales we have attended.



You're invited to a



**Christmas
Coffee Morning
and table sale**

in aid of projects
in Ghana & Peru

**Saturday 1st December
10.00 am—1.00 pm**

**at Ryan & Suzi Gourley's,
37 Bryansglen Park, Bangor**

Contact:

**Liz Clayton (Ghana Projects)
07821 323301**

**Michael & Christine Stenning
(Peru Projects)
07702 884900 or 07761 122767**



BLOWN AWAY BY YOUR GENEROSITY

by Jane Richardson

Bangor West Connected Church Project with Tearfund's Partners in Mumbai and Bihar in India

As a Church we undertook this project 3 years ago to support Tearfund's Partners working to help those women who have been trafficked into the sex trade and to seek to prevent the further trafficking of women and children.

Over the 3 years, we contracted to raise £30000 towards this work. I have been absolutely blown away by the generosity of the people in West Church. **You have really got behind this project through prayer and giving**, so much so that we have more than doubled that



commitment and have sent £65000 to Tearfund partners for the amazing work they are doing. The following article from Tearfund highlights some of the very encouraging things that have been achieved through our support. This contribution by so many of you over the last 3 years has helped to make such a difference to so many lives.

Our engagement with this particular project is now at an end. However, although it will no longer be our major focus, we will continue to support the very valuable work that Tearfund does in many countries around the world. Individuals and groups can still contribute to Tearfund through our number 7 Missionary Account and through mission events. You can keep informed through the Mission and Tearfund Prayer Groups, and of course, the internet. In this way, we will be able to react to any disasters that might occur and be more spontaneous in our giving by having an immediate collection in church if Tearfund themselves issue an appeal for any particular situation.

I just want to say, as the Tearfund Representative here in West, how much I have valued the tremendous support you have shown for the work of Tearfund and I hope that this will continue. **I feel that they do a tremendous amount of work not only dealing with the physical needs of so many but they also look after the spiritual needs too, thus treating the person as a whole.**

Jane Richardson

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If you would be interested in reading this update please contact the Church Office.



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Find help and healing for the hurt of separation and divorce

DivorceCare is a support group for people who are experiencing the pain of separation and divorce, and its purpose is that those who come to find help for their hurts, discover hope for the future, and experience God's healing through it all. Many are struggling alone (yes even those in churches!) and often feel stigmatised or even rejected within. Father forgive us, and help us reach out to all who are hurting with your great Love, and Mercy, and Grace, that you have extended to us, your children.

The DivorceCare programme

DIVORCE Care®

takes a Biblical approach to separation and divorce and related issues, such as reconciliation, remarriage, forgiveness, and the effects on children and families. The DC4K (DivorceCare for Kids) programme which started here recently in West Church, will be of great help and healing for the children related.

The next DivorceCare course starts on **Thursday 3rd January 2019 at 7.30 pm** here in West Church, and details of the course will be on the church website shortly. Please contact the office if you would like to come along, and for further information please go to the website <http://www.divorcecare.org>

Please don't go through the pain of separation or divorce alone.

John 13:34...Jesus said, "A new commandment I give you..."love one another as I have loved you".



We continue to share another week of the Tides devotional entitled 'Seasons: Celebration #2' this time written by Laura McClelland from West. Laura, in her devotion, describes herself as "stay-at-home mum, Trainee Counsellor, Youth Worker's Wife, Drinker of Tea, Amateur Crocheter, Baker of Cupcakes. But most importantly, Disciple of Jesus".

If you haven't yet signed up to receive this daily devotional from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, visit the PCI website at <https://www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/Prayer/TIDES.aspx>

Celebration

Make a list of your 'treasure' - who God is, what He has done for you and the blessings in your life. Thank Him for a treasure that cannot be exaggerated!

Celebration #2

Matthew 13: 44-46

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Reflect: Pearls are the only gemstones that are of worth before any human even touches them. Diamonds, sapphires, emeralds etc. require mining, polishing and cutting. Pearls are formed by nature. No human can claim any part in adding to their value. Their only role is to discover it.

Our salvation is no work of ours. We cannot add to it or take away from its value. Nothing we do can earn it or disqualify us from it. It is of the highest value, just waiting to be discovered. God planned it, Christ finished it and the Spirit completes it in us daily.

Our salvation does not rely on our goodness, but on Him. Our freedom is not a result of our

works, but His. Our pearl does not cost lives, but His. What peace in our hearts when we grasp this. What liberty. What pure, unadulterated joy.

Respond: The most expensive pearl ever discovered weighs 75lbs and is valued at \$100 million! The man who discovered it took it to his home in the Philippines and hid it under his bed. His tiny home was destroyed in a fire, but the pearl survived (see photo below).

Are you hiding your pearl under your bed? You have found a great treasure, incredible freedom, undeserved forgiveness, complete salvation, yet are you keeping it to yourself?

Consider if you find sharing the 'good news' difficult. Have you stopped believing the news is truly good? How can you recapture the essence of the good news? How can you share the love of God with others so they can see its value?

Celebration #3

Psalm 126: 1-3

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.



of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.

Reflect: Seasons. Ups and downs. Rollercoaster. However you describe life, it is full of highs and lows and some of those lows can floor us. So how can we celebrate when everything around us is falling apart or when tragedy strikes? 'Fake it 'til you make it', plastering on a smile, grinning and bearing it won't work.

Joy is not happiness. It is deeper than our circumstances. Joy is the realisation that no matter what happens; God has you in His hands. It is the eternal perspective that gives hope when hope seems lost.

When we sow in tears, we do not ignore our feelings or pretend everything's fine. We do what we need to do, despite our sorrow, trusting that God is in control.

We don't give up. We have faith in the unseen. Even when it makes no sense to us. God is bigger. He is more than enough.

Respond: Think of someone you know who is struggling, perhaps through bereavement, family breakup, illness or redundancy.

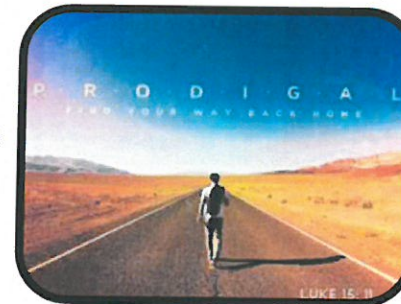
Can you be an agent of joy to this person? Think of something practical you could do. Make them a meal. Cut their grass. Run errands. Babysit their kids. Sit with them and allow them to be honest about their feelings. Anything you can think of to take some weight off their shoulders. Remind them they are not alone and that God understands, loves and weeps with them.

Reflect: "We were like those who dreamed."

When God intervenes, it seems too good to be true, dream-like. God rescues again and again. His people are unfaithful, get themselves in a mess, enslaved and miserable, but God never forgets them, never gives up and never stops loving them. He reaches down and lovingly brings His people back to where they should be.

We are all guilty at times of taking our eyes off the Lord, wandering off, doing our own thing. Yet, there is hope, rescue, open arms when we return. He embraces when others would reject. He forgives when others would hold a grudge. He reaches out when others would withdraw. If we could truly grasp the gravity of all God has done for us, of all He continues to do, our mouths would truly be "filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy!"

Respond: Spend time in prayer repenting of the ways in which you take your eyes off God. Imagine Him, not as an angry boss wanting you to grovel, but a welcoming Father who has His arms open wide before you even think to run to them. Consider the Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32). We all have prodigal hearts at times but our Father runs to us delighted when we return. Return to Him today with your whole heart and celebrate all He has done for you and in you.



Celebration #4

Psalm 126: 4-6

Restore our fortunes, Lord, like streams in the Negev. Those who sow with tears will reap with songs

Celebration #5

Matthew 13:44

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a

man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

Psalm 126:1-2

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy.

Reflect: "Joy is not necessarily the absence of suffering, it is the presence of God." Sam Storms.

When faced with struggles (and it is when, not if), we may feel powerless and alone. The truth is, we have a choice. We choose to lean into God, have faith and celebrate amidst the sorrow, or we choose to

focus on circumstances, to look inward, to despair.

I implore you, choose joy. Choose to count your treasures, even if they feel outweighed by catastrophe. Choose to see God's goodness, even when surrounded by the world's brokenness.

Choose hope even when your situation seems hopeless.

Allow difficult seasons to deepen your faith, not destroy it. Anyone can celebrate in the good times. The hard part is holding on to the truths you learned in the light to sustain you in the dark. Take heart from those early Christians, and even more recent believers, who dies for their faith, often in horrific ways, but sang praise to God all throughout. Know with all you have that God is not the author of tragedy, but is the Redeemer of it! Choose to see His hand at work. Choose to acknowledge that every good gift is from Him (James 1:17). Choose eternal perspective. Choose hope. Choose joy!

Respond: Nehemiah 8:10 reminds us that the joy of the Lord is our strength. Reflect on the incredible power of the words: "In the darkness I'll dance, in the shadows I'll sing, the joy of the Lord is my strength." Write this verse out and put it somewhere you will see it every day as a reminder to choose joy in every circumstance.

JOY
/joi / noun

1. darkness dispelled.
2. the light of everlasting life lit up in the soul.

Celebration #1

Matthew 13: 44-46

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Reflect: When I had my daughter, I decided to search for my childhood treasure, a beautiful corduroy (it was the 80s) rocking horse that I had loved as a little one until it was banished to the attic. My parent's attic is a glorious mixture of chaos and disorder, but amidst the clutter, I found it. My pride and joy. Once out of the darkness though, the horse revealed its hideousness. The eyes were terrifying, the face horrific! We decided to return it to its long-term home, lest we scar our child for life.

Often our 'treasures' are like the rocking horse. Disappointing, not what we expected and not how we remembered it. But the Kingdom of Heaven is different. It is beyond our wildest dreams. Worth more than it would ever cost us. We cannot exaggerate its worth. Truly a cause for celebration!

Respond: *Isn't it a comfort to worship a God we can't exaggerate?"* Francis Chan



Pictured above left, Maya Cull with her parents and brother Reuben at her Baptism. Above right, Lillie Gourley on her Dedication day, pictured left, Ben Harrison & his bride Christine Lowe on their wedding at West on 1st September and pictured below, Ellen Warwick with her husband Roger McCracken following their wedding at West on 10th August.



Changes in Districts : New address

District

505 John & Sarah Graham & family
604 Rosemary Killops

1101 Bobby & Maureen Blackmore
1204 Milford Montgomery

WELCOME to the following new members: District

502 Gillian Lindsay

505 Dave Majury, Michelle Paden & Joshua

The following children were brought for Baptism or Dedication

30/09/18 Lillie Mable Gracie Gourley

07/10/18 Maya Cull

REMOVE the following who have transferred congregations: District

504 Peter Hanson

601 Peter McAvoy

504 Warren & Julie Malcomson

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

04/10/18 Mrs Vera Tweedie

26/10/18 Mr Maurice McCullough

07/10/18 Mr Norman Legge

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Tuesday 9.30 am, 5.30 & 7.30 pm

Carnalea Methodist Church
Saturday 9.00 am

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slimmingworld.co.uk
0344 897 8000



INTRODUCING OUR NEW INTERN, HEIDI

Hello everyone, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to those that I have yet to meet. My name is Heidi Mulholland and I am a typical seventeen year old girl, unsure of what my future path is but I know with God by my side, it will be challenging but enjoyable.

I am a member of West Church and I have been attending the Girls' Brigade since the age of three (that makes me feel so old haha), I am now a Bub Officer and I'm hoping to progress further.

So I'm going to talk about how I ended up being an intern this year in West working alongside Vic, Harry and Andrew. What a team we are!

When I turned fourteen, I was away on an activity weekend with church. I arrived home complaining of a sore back but we put it down to a pulled muscle. A few weeks later I was still in a lot of pain so my mum and I headed to the doctor. After an examination he sent me for an X-ray which diagnosed me with teenage scoliosis - I had a double curvature in my spine. I was in a lot of pain with bad spasms and it did mean I had to give up my hip hop dancing and other activities. A few months down the line I was fitted with the most horrible, cumbersome Boston Brace that I had to wear twenty-three hours a day. Being fifteen at this stage, it was definitely not a look I wanted, not on trend. I would say I was eighty-five percent good at wearing the brace but after nearly two years, X-rays showed the curve was getting worse and I needed a major operation to straighten my spine to prevent any of my organs getting crushed and to stop the pain.

Fast forward a year. I had just completed my GCSE's and continued on to lower sixth at Bangor Academy when I got my date for surgery, 20th March 2018 in Edinburgh.

This is when the struggle started as I was going to have to do two



years in lower sixth, my friends would all be moving on and I felt lost and unsure of my future. I prayed and spoke with my parents and grandparents. We decided I would make the move and go to SERC and complete a CACHE Level 3 in Child Care as I know my passion is to work with children. So after three weeks I left school and took a deep breath and headed off to SERC (South Eastern Regional College) where I was the youngest in the class. I knew no one but I knew I had God with me and I found great comfort knowing He had plans for me.

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

March came and my family and I headed to Edinburgh for my operation. We didn't worry too much about what was in front of us, we just put our trust in God that everything would go well and the operation would be a success. Ten days later I was back in my comfy bed. It was a very difficult time. I was in a lot of pain and learning to walk and become independent again took a lot of hard work, physio and most of all patience.

I am now nearly seven months post operation and I am proud to say that I still achieved my CACHE Level 3 while recovering.

Come September this year I had another decision to make. Should I go back to SERC or should I head out to part-time work? My body was healing and I prayed constantly for

God to direct me in the right path. Every day I fought with my inner feelings, SERC, work, gap year? None of these felt right.

I decided to go back to SERC and was to start on the Monday but I came home from church on the Sunday evening and told my mum that I felt I was making the wrong decision. Someone had told me about an internship that night and I knew this is where God wanted me, doing his work while using my passion with children.

My mind was made up and now several months later I love what I am doing in the church, preparing for JClub and then teaching the children on a Sunday morning about God and how much He loves them. Twice a month I volunteer at Special Friends which is a club run on a Saturday morning for children with special needs and I get so much enjoyment and a lot of love in return from the children. On a Tuesday morning I help out at Mums and Tots where we sing songs, have story time and do lots of activities to help with their developmental and social skills.

I am also a leader at Younglife which I thoroughly enjoy as I work



alongside children from Year 10 and above. I really enjoy my time at Younglife, as I feel at this age it is important that children have a place that they can feel comfortable and know they have somewhere and someone they can trust and talk to.

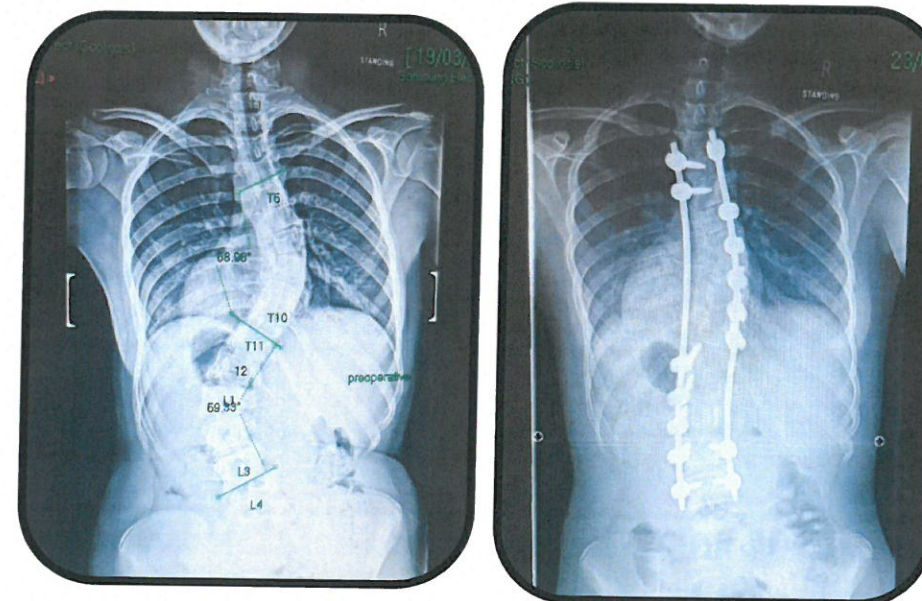
I have recently passed my driving test and I am enjoying the independence and freedom, so I ask for you to pray for my safe driving, continued healing in my health and that I continue to grow strong working for God and his children. As for my future I am still unsure what path I will take but I know with God by my side He will direct and guide me and I am excited for this.

If you see me in church say hello as I am known to love a wee chat.

Love Heidi x

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you & not to harm you, plans to give you hope & a future"

Jeremiah 29:11

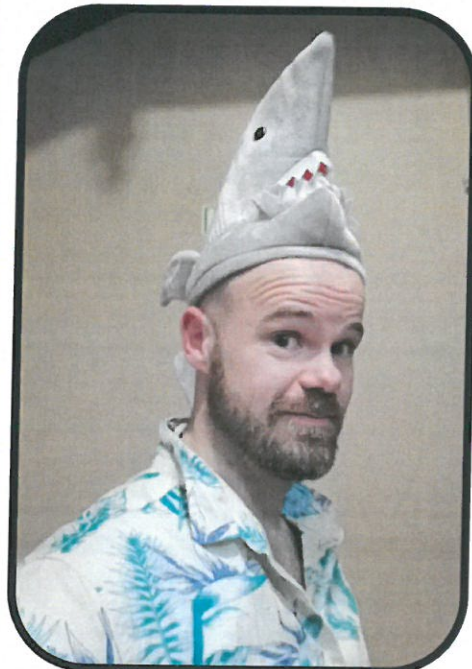


Pictured above are my pre & post surgery X-rays

YEAR TWELVE + YOUNG WEST LOCK-IN

FRIDAY 30TH NOV TO
SAT 1ST DEC

SIGN UP IN YOUNG WEST



The beginning of the half-term break saw over 100 of our teenagers and leaders head off to Castlewellan for our Young West weekend. This year's theme was 'The Comeback—it's not too late and you're never too far gone'. We enjoyed worship, teaching, small group time, slip'n'slide, a campfire, maze competitions, hunt the leader and much more. We hope you're all looking forward to next year already!

MOONLIGHT MISSION
2018
SATURDAY 22ND DECEMBER
TICKETS (£10) ON SALE
2ND DECEMBER
ALL PROCEEDS GO TOWARD 2019
YW SUMMER MISSION
OPEN TO YR 8 - YR 14

STILL 'OUTSTANDING' FORTY-FIVE YEARS ON!

by Miss Alison & Miss Wendy

For those of you old enough to remember, here's a reminder of some classic television sitcoms from the year 1973. *Last of the Summer Wine*, *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em* and *Are You Being Served?* In the music world in 1973 Slade topped the Christmas pop chart with *Merry Christmas Everybody* and David Bowie released the classic *Life on Mars* single. Frightening, is it not, just how quickly forty-five years can disappear?

In West Presbyterian Church, however, something of major significance was also occurring in 1973, namely, the beginning of Bangor West Nursery Playgroup (BWNP) under the wise guidance and inspiration of Ethel Anderson and Edna Jamieson. Since those early days of 'setting up' every day in the Intermediate Hall at West Church, the pre-school has gone from strength to strength. It is now in its own purpose built accommodation and marking its forty fifth year of delivering a pre-school service to three and four year olds.

Much has changed in pre-education in the intervening years, however. Although there is no such thing as a 'typical' pre-school day at BWNP, there is a statutory requirement for the children's learning (through play) to be structured in line with a carefully designed pre-school syllabus involving the Arts, Language Development, Early Mathematical Experiences, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Movement and the World Around Us. And that syllabus and all other aspects of the pre-school's practice are subject to a variety of statutory inspection regimes, involving Social Services and the Education and Training Inspectorate, bodies that quality assure welfare and pre-school learning provision in Northern



The Bangor West Nursery Playgroup class of 2018

Ireland.

In April 2018, early years practitioners at BWNP prepared for and underwent inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). The Inspection team considered carefully the quality of service offered by the pre-school in relation to 'Outcomes for Learners', 'Provision for Learning' and the 'Leadership and Management' of the setting. At the end of that inspection process, the leaders and practitioners were thrilled when the Inspectors recognised their pre-school as 'Outstanding' in these three areas.

Alison Easlea and Wendy Somers, the graduate leaders of the team at the pre-school noted:

"This Inspection Report is particularly pleasing for us because this is such an important year for our pre-school. We've been deeply embedded in our community for forty-five years, but this kind of recognition, from experts in the field of pre-school provision, is a fitting reward for our team."

Denise, Michelle, Amanda and Kim work so hard on behalf of the children, daily. They provide us (as leaders) with incredible support to our twenty-six children. We're very fortunate at West to have such a good adult/child ratio. One parent recently commented, 'Walking into West Church in the morning is like getting a warm hug!' This Inspection Report <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov/files/publications/preschool-inspection-bangor-west-nursery-playgroup-bangor-county-down-4ab-0164.pdf> and the solid support we have from our Management Committee provides a really strong foundation for the future of pre-school education here at West."

Anyone interested in enrolling their child for pre-school at BWNP or have any questions about entry criteria, please call us on 028 9147 0664 or email us at playgroup@westchurchbangor.org

Bangor West Nursery Playgroup OPEN DAY

Thursday 3rd January 2018
10.30 am - 11.30 pm

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



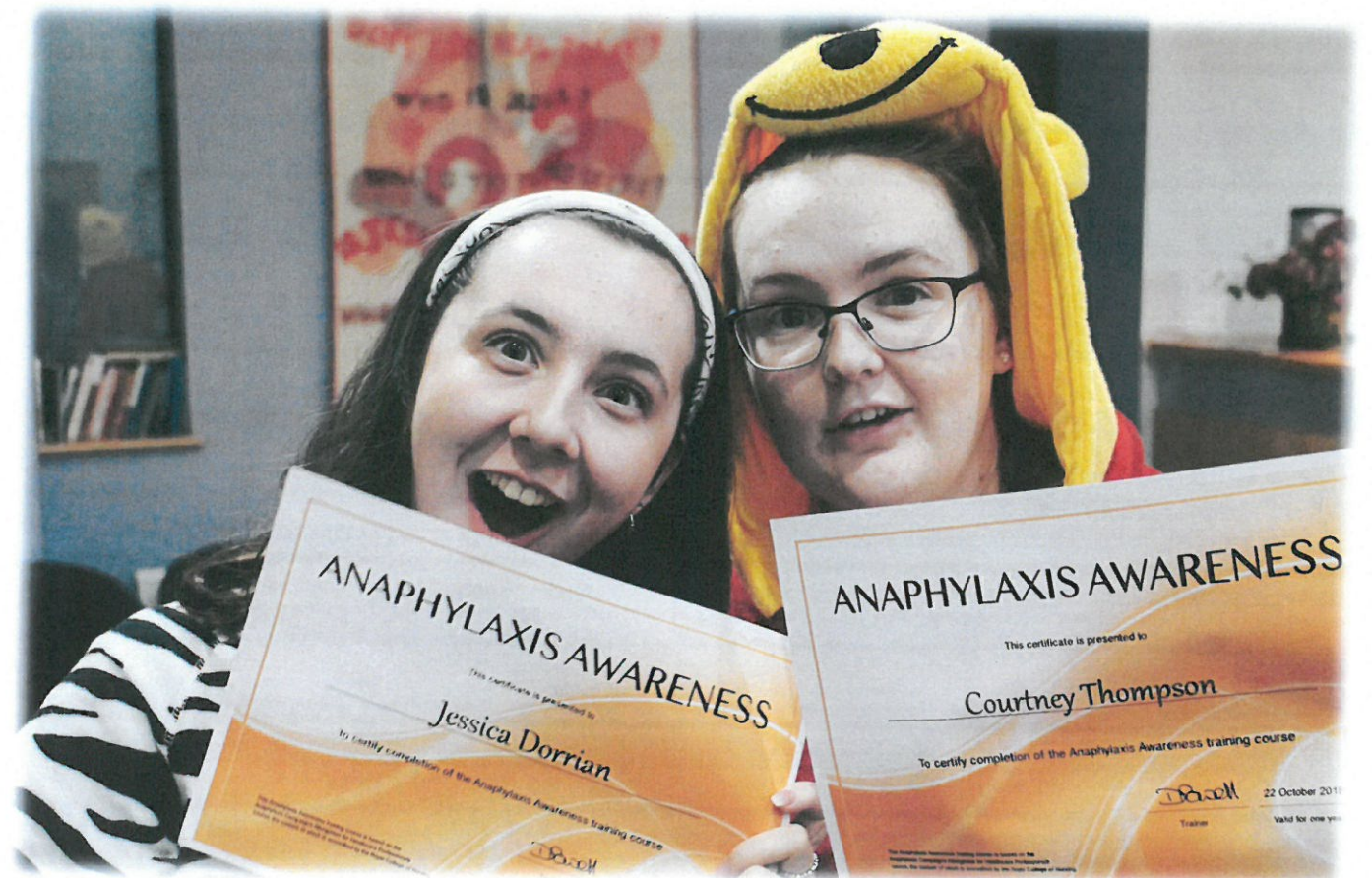
If you require any further information please contact Alison or Wendy on 028 9147 0664 playgroup@westchurchbangor.org

We look forward to meeting you

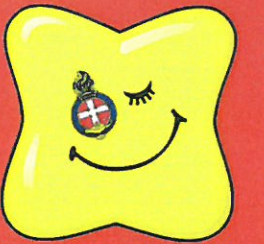
Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death. It typically causes more than one of the following: an itchy rash, throat or tongue swelling, shortness of breath, vomiting, light-headedness, and low blood pressure. These symptoms typically come on over minutes to hours.

In October Denise Powell, one of our members and a recognised trainer, held an Anaphylaxis Awareness & EpiPen training evening and such was the interest a further training evening has been arranged. Denise is keen for as many people as possible to attend these evenings so we will continue to run these in the New Year. If you would be interested in attending one of the sessions, please contact the office.

(Pictured below are Jess & Courtney with their certificates)



GIRLS' BRIGADE NEWS



by Cheryl Miller

As we celebrate our 40th Anniversary, we also celebrate 125 years of Girls' Brigade in Northern Ireland. At the end of September we attended a District Service in 1st Ards Presbyterian Church, (all Districts held a service at the same time on the same day) to celebrate this anniversary. We had a great turnout of girls and leaders, past and present (see photograph right).

As you will see from this photo gallery we have had a really busy session so far, activities including Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions (with some feathered friends), a 'Fabulous, Fit & 40' night for all girls and their families when we went out on a fund-raising GB walk. Our Junior section was joined by Lydia McMullen who spoke to the girls about her forthcoming trip to the Ekwendeni Hospital in Malawi and the girls have undertaken, as part of their badgework (Acts of Kindness), to put together small care packages for the new mums in the hospital.

We have had bugs join our Explorer Section and the Brigaders headed out for the night to try the new High Ropes Centre in Bangor as well as undertaking some flower arranging.

Hard work is now underway for various competitions that the girls will take place in over the coming weeks.

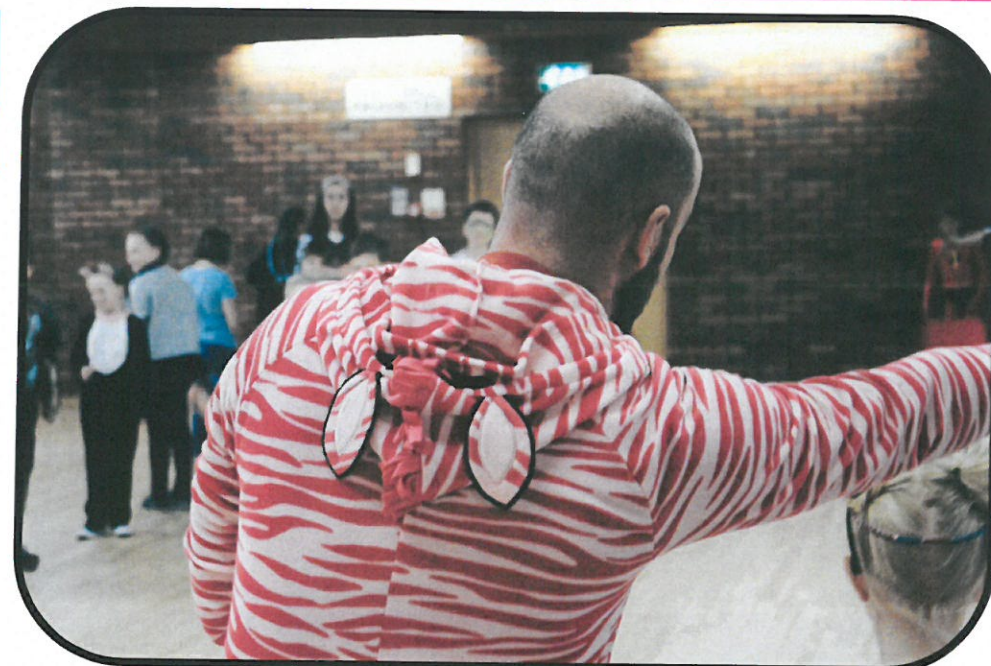
Our annual Enrolment Service will take place on Sunday 2nd December led by Rev. Andy Galbraith with Marc Harding as our guest speaker.

As always, we appreciate the support, prayers and encouragement from the congregation over the session, especially in this a very special year.
Cheryl



GLOW IN THE DARK 2018

Monday 29th October saw over 200 children, young people and parents join together to "Celebrate ~ Jesus Light of the World". There were games, story telling and cupcake decorating, all in fancy dress with parents and grandparents enjoying tea/coffee and traybakes.



SPECIAL FRIENDS

A gathering of families with children who have special needs

1st & 3rd Saturday of the month
10-12 West Church Bangor
siblings welcome

sensory play, healthy snack and jolly good fun
ENQUIRIES 02891459688

Lights of Love

Monday 3 December 2018 - 7.30 pm

An evening of traditional carols and readings

Join us in remembering those babies and loved ones who are no longer with us.

Venue
West Church
91 Crawfordsburn Road
Bangor BT19 1BG

Contact
Victoria Croft / Cara Parker
t: 02891 459688
e: office@westchurchbangor.org
e: caraparkerni84@icloud.com

sands.org.uk/lightsoflove

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bible study notes

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Tel: 028 9146 1883

(Please make cheques payable to Margaret Webb)



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Inspiring Women		£17.60	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Every Day	2 monthly	£17.60	<input type="checkbox"/>
Topz (Age 7-11 years)	2 monthly	£17.60	<input type="checkbox"/>
YP (Age 11-14 years)	2 monthly	£17.60	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mettle (age 15-18 years)	2 monthly	£8.80	<input type="checkbox"/>

DAILY BREAD

Contact: Margaret Webb

Tel: 028 9146 1883

£18.00

PRESBYTERIAN HERALD

Contact Pauline Martin

Tel: c/o Church Office £15.00

WIDER WORLD

Contact: Linda Wilson Tel: 028 9145 8727

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

£5.00

UCB

UNITED CHRISTIAN BROADCASTERS

Coffee Morning
Saturday 26th January 2019
10.00 am—12.30 pm

Everyone welcome to raise funds for the work of United Christian Broadcasters. Craft items and homemade cakes/jams will also be available along with a great range of good quality (second hand) Christian books, CDs & DVDs. UCB are funded solely by listeners and viewers of their radio and television stations, and readers of their daily devotional 'The Word for Today/Word 4u 2day'.



'TIS THE SEASON TO SING!

JClub Christmas Choir

PRACTICE AFTER JCLUB 25/11, 2/12, 9/12, 16/12
PERFORMANCE 23/12 10AM & 1130AM

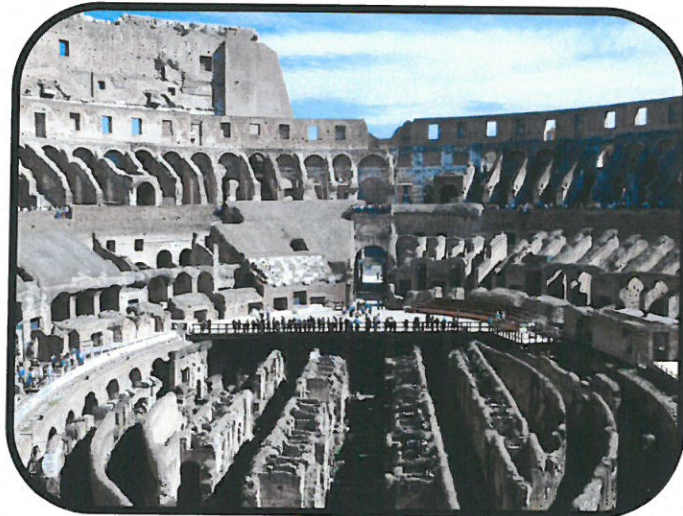
SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF ROME

by Heather Kyle & Gill Fleming

In September Gill, Diane and Heather had a brief visit to Rome. Blue skies, warm temperatures, good food and company made for a super few days. Here are a few highlights.

Colosseum

The 50,000 seat Colosseum is one of Rome's most thrilling ancient sights. It was here that Gladiators met in combat and where condemned prisoners fought wild beasts in front of bloodthirsty crowds. Might there have been some Christians among the prisoners?



St Peter's Basilica

Italy's richest and most spectacular cathedral. The height from the ground to the top of the dome is the equivalent of a ten storey building and the lettering around the inside of the dome is nine feet tall, awesome. Apart from all the gold it contains some brilliant works of art.



Vatican Museums

This was an unforgettable experience. The highlight was the Michelangelo decorated Sistine Chapel. With some 7km of exhibitions and so many masterpieces there's enough art on display to keep you busy for years - if you can push your way through the crowds! Although the Pope's official residence unfortunately we didn't get to see him.

Trevi Fountain

Although work taking place at the fountain meant there was no water in it which spoilt its effect we still managed to toss a coin over our shoulder thus ensuring a return to the Eternal City. (Sure why not!).



Family catch-up

We had a lovely meet-up with Gill's cousins from Canada who were in Rome at the start of a tour of Italy. The 'craic' was great and lovely to see them. Family blessings!



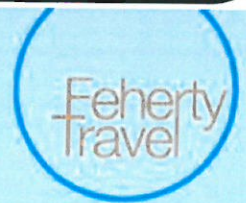
Tourists doing what tourists do!

Photographs and more photographs! Well worth a visit to Rome - the Eternal city, not to mention the delicious pizzas and gelato.



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A FRUITFUL MISSION TRIP TO PERU

By Beverley Bryans

Dear friends, what can I really say? Words almost fail me to tell of God's absolutely amazing grace and provision on the trip in every way and to thank you adequately for your generosity financially and in prayer for the recent Peru mission trip during September and October.

My heart is truly filled with so much praise and thankfulness for an awesome trip, of which you were part through your prayers, interest, or financial gifts.

The period away was a very packed schedule, and as I had prayerfully asked, a fruitful time. There is so much to be truly thankful for and I have tried to briefly itemise these along with providing you some photographs of my trip:



Beverley with a family waiting surgery for their little boy this year

Much Praise to God for -

- Safety in travel and health throughout 9 flights with no delays or baggage problems, and a very special gift, courtesy of KLM airlines, of a free upgrade on the return journey (a prayer partner has since told me she had specifically prayed that I would get this rarity!).
- Aversion of a potentially fatal accident with a bus in Lima on my final day—someone was definitely praying!
- The joy of reunion with the wonderful and most dedicated St. Luke's team, including Dr Apollos, founder of the work. Included in the visit were two days of community, visiting pre and post operative children in their shanty town homes, and in addition, having the great privilege of visiting and praying with four elderly and vulnerable patients, another aspect of the work—truly humbling and life changing (for further photos, please visit the FCS Peru Facebook page).
- God's presence and undertaking in visiting precious Axel's grave and being able to lay flowers in his beautiful memory.
- Seeing the speech and psychological therapists at work and giving hope and confidence to the children.
- Being able to stand on about an acre of ground donated to St. Luke's Clinic totally unexpectedly to enable future building of a regional centre for further expansion of the "Help Them to Smile" project (current premises are rented).
- An amazing evening celebration of the very talented youth orchestra including 10 previous cleft lip palate teenagers and the presentation of a plaque thanking West Church in particular for its generous support. I know now why the staff gave me a surprise and welcome manicure late that afternoon!



Tribute to Axel Never forgotten



Mario, Director of St Luke's greets West Church from newly donated ground

Continued praise for -

- Ongoing confidence, emotional healing and development in the precious children with the joy of seeing this in action on a one to one basis and through amazing performances of Peruvian culture in the home/school.
- Special time with the two dedicated Christian teachers who, along with dear Miriam (who teaches 3rd grade), diligently help the children achieve their primary education to secondary school at 12 years or later if little or no prior schooling was in place.
- The flourishing of Lily's garden created in memory of the dear mother of a generous donor from West Church to the school, and the healthy hens providing food, eggs and caring responsibilities for the children (very kindly donated by a home group from West).
- Emotional strength to meet with dear Violetta's lovely sons and the privilege of laying flowers on her grave with the sure knowledge that this beautiful lady if "absent from the body is present with Jesus".
- Continued praise for Eliazer's progress and a wonderful time of prayer with him and his family. Also to learn of his ongoing plans to become a lawyer and use his shoemaking business to supplement his studies. God truly heard his cry in the darkness 8 years ago, giving him a hope and a future.
- Wonderful reunion time with a number of the first Casa Hogar children, now mature adults in meaningful employment, with continued gratitude in their hearts to Casa Hogar, Miriam, Secundo and West Church.
- Praise for Miriam's faithfulness and Secundo's legacy out of so little, giving so much.

And so, I could continue...There is so much to praise God for. Words are, as said previously, really inadequate. **The Lord has done great things for us for which we are filled with joy (NIV). Psalm 126:3** With much love and gratitude for your partnership in God's work to God's family in Peru.



The boys enjoying their new cars (above) and pictured left is Miriam, the Casa Hogar children and Joseph, one of the first children, saying Muchas Gracias to West Church



Meeting Maria, 95 years. She says, 'I have no problems, I am just blind'.



Previous cleft lip and palate patients now part of a Youth Orchestra



Rocia, 9 years, develops daily in confidence



REACHING FORWARD INTO THE NEW YEAR

by Mike & Lorraine Cahoon

So much of our life here in Canada has a wonderful routine to it ... like the seasons which come and go without fail. As we type this article we're looking out at a Fall season which is well underway, and by the time you read this we (i.e. Mike) will be clearing snow from the driveway in preparation for life in the freezer for the next few months ...

But for now, we've just returned from Calgary, where we were celebrating Thanksgiving with Claire and David. They had an unexpected dump of snow (60 cm) a couple of days before we arrived, so it was more like Christmas than Fall when we were there! But nothing could hold us back from getting out and about, and we had all our winter layers on. Our only delay was when we were travelling back to Ontario and we sat on the runway for a couple of hours until the plane was de-iced. But the beauty of God's creation at any time of year is a huge blessing to us. Claire and David's church held a Feast on Thanksgiving Sunday, to which everyone brought a dish, and as Calgary is very multi-cultural, we tasted food from Ghana, Nepal and even some home made soda bread!

While the routine of seasonal life can often give us a sense of security, we also love it when the Lord plans surprises, and things come into our lives from left field. This morning we both took part in a city-wide reading of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Usually, this "Bible Marathon" takes place only within our own church at this time of year. Recently there has been an increase in the desire for all of us as believers in Stratford to be united in the core things that matter ... in our love of Jesus and his Word. So this week will be a joint declaration of the Word of God over the city by individuals representing six churches, each taking 15 minute slots of reading from 7am until 11pm.

The marathon culminates next weekend when we meet together for our Festival of Praise, when worship

Calgary in early Autumn!



services of all types will take place throughout the city, and all believers can attend. A special treat for us on the first Saturday in December will be the performance of Messiah in St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Stratford, which will be the perfect entrance into the Christmas season.

Our annual Restoring The Foundations Conference takes place in 2 weeks' time in Hamilton, Ontario, so we've only a couple of hours' travelling to it. It's an ideal time for us to get together with some of our colleagues in the ministry. We'll hear some new teaching, and have much valued fellowship together. We usually take a deeper look at some of the issues facing us as we minister, and this year we'll look at the effects of deep trauma in a person's life. As we know, many people experience trauma on a wide scale of severity, so it's really helpful to know more about it from those who have studied it in depth. Some of the meetings are open to the public, and we've been asked to lead worship and give some introductory words of encouragement in one of those meetings, and we're

really looking forward to that.

Typically we do not work a "9 to 5" schedule, as we need to keep our time available for personal ministry appointments. This year we've had some very full weeks of personal ministry, which takes place in our home. Currently we are in a quieter period, and have been spending time updating our learning, both with RTF teachings, and with Mike's divinity studies.

We have seen an increase in friends staying with us who are either in ministry themselves, or are missionaries. Carole and Patty (from Thunder Bay) were with us for a week in the summer, and Iain, our son-in-law David's brother, was here from long term mission in Peru, along with his Peruvian "family". Our friends Erick and Lisa who have been missionaries to Scandinavia with YWAM (Youth With A Mission) have reached the end of their 3 year visa, and will be coming back to stay with us just about the time you're reading this. They were the couple who first introduced us to Thunder Bay, to Carole, and to the various ministries we have been connected to there.

Talking of Thunder Bay, Carole is also facing major change in her Command Post team. For the past few months, since our visit there in the late Spring, the team has been beset with illnesses and challenges which have prevented a full team being available for some of the weekends on the streets. But just recently Carole has had a very nice surprise herself! She talks about Tamar, who is a First Nations pastor, living on the reserve, who has her own Christian radio ministry. Her husband is currently battling cancer, and she was one of those who attended the conference we did in Thunder Bay back in the Spring. Carole writes:

"I was discouraged tonight, but then Tamar connected and it all worked out last minute for some older people from Evangel Church's youth group to come out, with almost as many chaperones. They brought extra soup and we stayed around city hall so they were all safe. They asked me to come speak to their youth group too, as many parents were too scared to let their kids come.

Supplies went quickly. The weather is already cold. The kids were cold, and mitts and hats were taken out of the bags to dress them too. The youth pastor said it impacted them that others were so under dressed and sleeping outside. One young girl said that it was really sad to give someone a pair of socks and watch him sit down to put them on, because when he took off his shoes she saw that he had none.

I asked if any of them were musical and the leader said almost all of them. So in the spring/summer they would also like to come back and help me with an outdoor worship service. I was thrilled. (One of those things I've had on my heart for the circle area on Simpson Street bend.) So from almost no team tonight to this ... 16 of us! God cares. :)"

Pictured right, Thanksgiving Feast in Epic Vineyard Church



Celebrating with our Peruvian family

We hope that this update is an encouragement to you all as our family in West. God can change any situation in an instant, and with Him ALL things are possible. Often we have to keep pressing in and never lose hope, knowing that His ways are so much higher than ours! We know that He is always moving on our behalf, when we ask for His Kingdom to come. Prayer is the oxygen that keeps the fires lit, and we never get tired of saying thank you for your faithfulness in remembering us in your prayers. We constantly get praise reports from those who we are linked with in this ministry here in Canada. Often those whom we minister to, are overwhelmed that people who do not even know them are standing with them in prayer, and lifting up their arms, especially in challenging times.

Blessing you with love, joy and peace as we move together into everything that the Lord has for us in this upcoming season ... **Mike and Lorraine**

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CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO PERSECUTION

(summarised from an article in the July Barnabas magazine)

The Bible and Christian experience show us a variety of ways believers respond to persecution.

There are many instances of men and women throughout history who have paid the ultimate price in martyrdom for their faith.

William Tyndale, to give one example, was burnt at the stake in 1536 for his desire that everyone in England should be able to read the Bible for themselves.

There are many Christians in our world today who are suffering for their faith. Some who have converted from another faith might choose to keep their faith secret as they could be killed if their families were to find out. Others face being disowned by their families or put out of their jobs or tortured.

In 1215 the leading Barons of England forced King John to sign a document that has become famous throughout the world.

The Magna Carta

Its aim was to guarantee the rights of individuals. One of the clauses which still remains today is that “**The English Church shall be free**” and it is still part of the law of the country. But there are examples in this country where that seems to be being eroded.

In 2016 two Christian men were arrested in a Bristol shopping area because of the content of their preaching and were found guilty of a religiously aggravated offence. Yet everything they said was expressed respectfully and consistent with Biblical Christianity. They were later acquitted but they should never have been arrested as their freedom to read the Bible in public should never have been challenged.

The rising tide of persecution in the West has been likened to waves breaking on the shore. The waves breaking on the shore sometimes reach higher, sometimes lower. If you watch for 5 minutes there seems to be no pattern but if you watch for



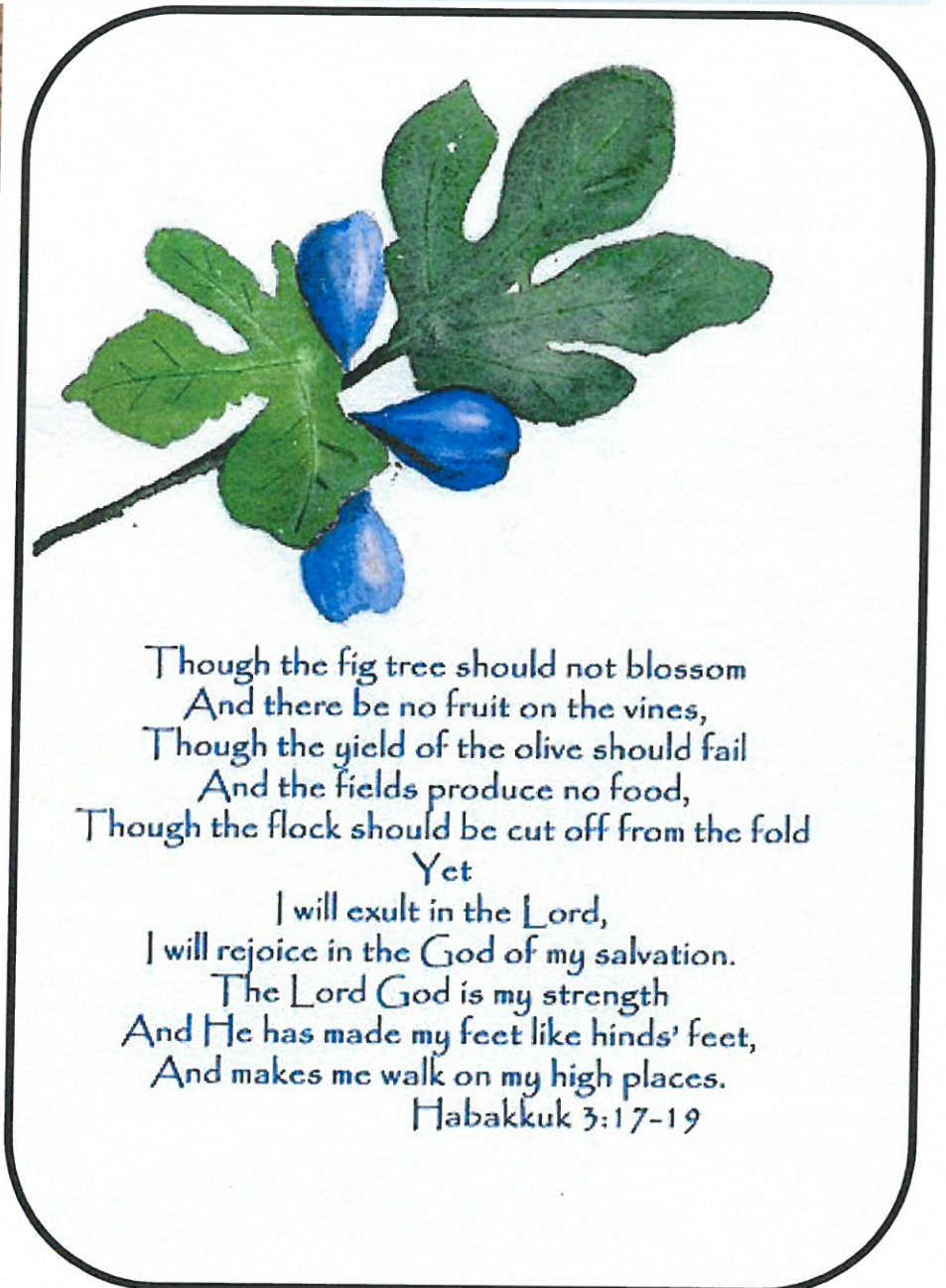
5 hours you realise the tide is coming in. Both high and low waves are wetting the beach further up than before. The sand that was being gently lapped is now well under water.

This is the situation for freedom of religion in the West as laws designed to protect religious freedom are being put to the test.

Maybe it is time to reclaim the heritage of religious freedom. There is a need for a new act of parliament to affirm all seven foundational aspects of religious freedom.

Seven aspects of religion freedom

1. Freedom to worship
2. Freedom to read the scriptures in public
3. Freedom to interpret scripture without government interference
4. Freedom to choose or change your religion or belief
5. Freedom to preach and try to convince others of the truth of your belief.
6. Freedom to establish places of worship
7. Freedom from being required to affirm a particular set of beliefs in order to attend university, work in teaching, healthcare, hold a public sector job (except where there is a genuine occupational requirement), stand for election or give parental care to a child.



Though the fig tree should not blossom
And there be no fruit on the vines,
Though the yield of the olive should fail
And the fields produce no food,
Though the flock should be cut off from the fold

Yet

I will exult in the Lord,
I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.
The Lord God is my strength
And He has made my feet like hinds' feet,
And makes me walk on my high places.
Habakkuk 3:17-19

Earlier generations established these 7 aspects of religious freedom by their determination, commitment and refusal to compromise. Some went to prison and some were executed. These men and women won freedom for us all, Christian and non-Christian alike. We must not allow the tide of secular humanism wash away those freedoms which were dearly achieved.

However in face of all this we need to remember that God is ultimately in control and perhaps the verses at the end of the book of Habakkuk will give us encouragement.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like feet of deer, He enables me to tread on the heights.

Let us pray that the Lord will guide each one of us how to respond to these changes and take positive action where we can.

Jane Richardson would like to thank everyone who supported her Tearfund Coffee Day on Friday 2nd November. An amazing £2150 was raised to support the Tearfund Connect Project with a further £1150 raised from Traidcraft products. Many thanks also to Noel Maitland who took some photographs of the day and we have shared of these with you.



Volunteers Needed!



We would love members of our congregation to get involved with 'Christmas fest' on Friday 21st December. We need lots of volunteers to make this evening a success.

Our aim is to reach to our community and welcome everyone into our Church this Christmas.

You can help in so many ways...deliver flyers within our area, sign up to help with the activities, sign up to help with the catering or sign up to help with setting up and tidying up. In keeping with our Christmas theme, let's make this a Christmas of HOPE.

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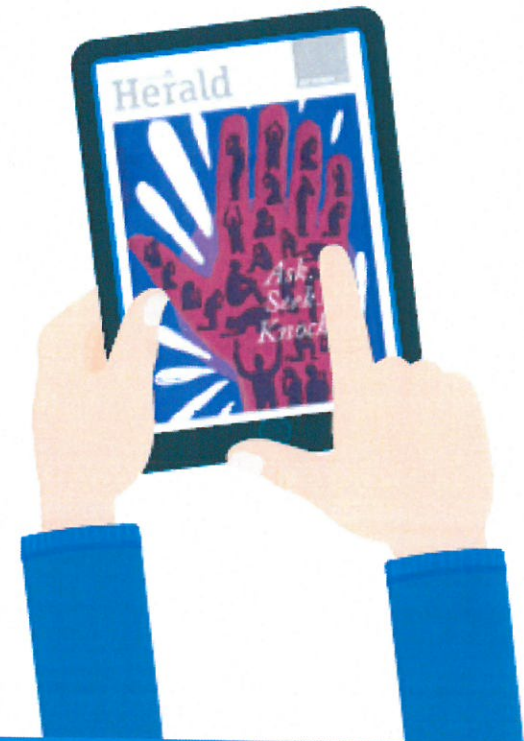
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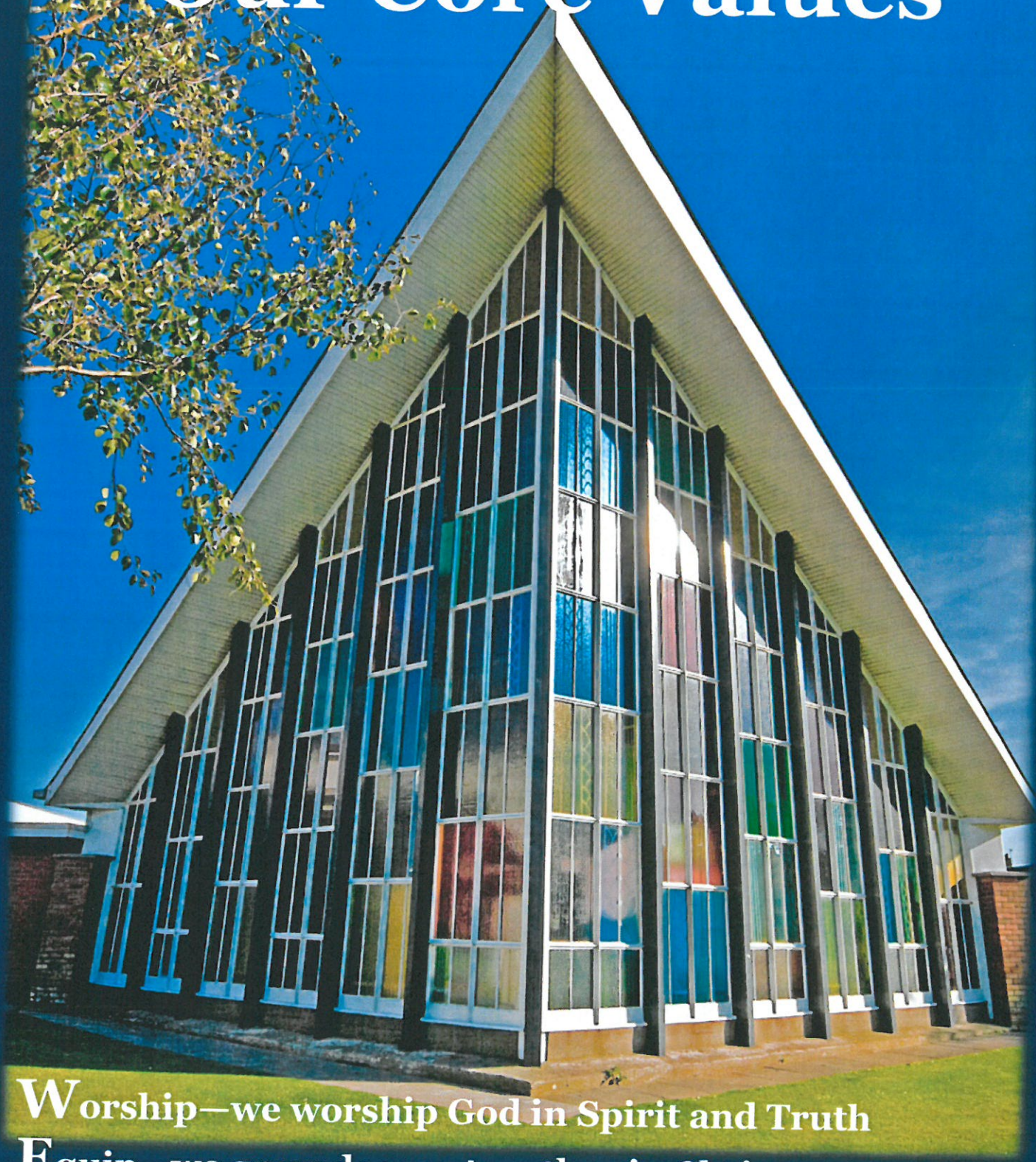
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