



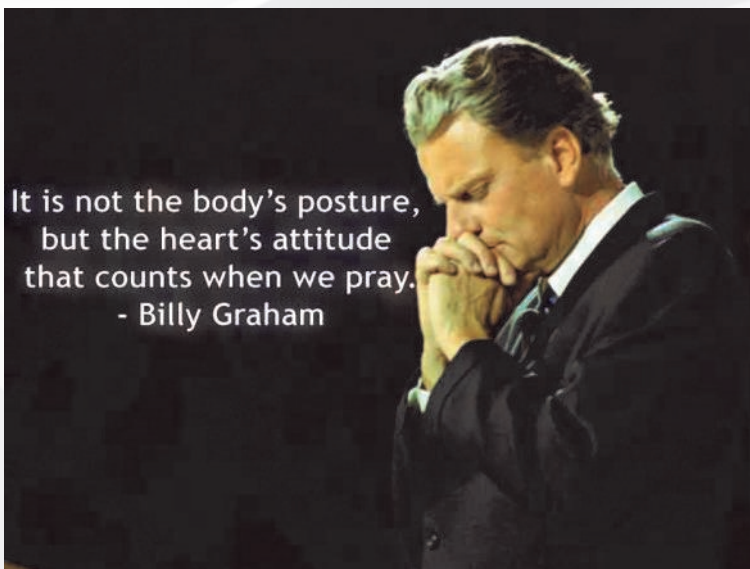
He is Risen

Wellington Record

March 2018

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It is not the body's posture,
 but the heart's attitude
 that counts when we pray.
 - Billy Graham

Prayer is a Conversation

Prayer is a two-way conversation; it is our talking to God, and His talking to us. As a Christian, you have a heavenly Father who hears and answers prayer. Jesus said, "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Every man or woman whose life has counted for the church and the Kingdom of God has been a person of prayer. You cannot afford to be too busy to pray. A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. Jesus Christ spent many hours in prayer. Sometimes He spent the night on a mountaintop in solitary communion with God the Father. If He felt that He had to pray, how much more do we need to pray!

If you believe, you will receive whatever
 you ask for in prayer. Matthew 21 v 22 (NIV)

(Source: Billy Graham Evangelistic Assoc. UK - Daily Devotionals by Billy Graham)

Church website

www.wellingtonpc.co.uk



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 - ask a member of the
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Welcome to the Spring edition of our church magazine.

The Greek word 'ekklesia' means an 'assembly' or as we call it 'church'. The word is not linked to a specific place but indicates that we are part of the whole body of Christian believers, wherever they may be. **'And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him head over everything for the church...'** Ephesians 1 v 22.

Many of our people in Wellington are involved in short and long term Christian service - not just in Ballymena but right across the globe. We also have the privilege of supporting others where, in years gone by, links have been established.

Have a look at the world map on the centre pages and be amazed where our people, and those we support, are working. Learn of the difficult and challenging conditions Sergey and Yulia face in Ukraine and how Metka and Goran are spreading the Gospel in Slovenia. Rachelle recently spent time in the slums of Delhi while others are working much closer to home. Each is our brother or sister in Christ.

'And pray for us too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ...'

Colossians 4 v 3

We have recently been considering the topic of prayer in Wellington. Let each of us resolve to put into practice these words from Colossians 4 and uphold in prayer those involved in building His Kingdom, wherever in the world they may be!

Mervyn Orr, Editor



mervmeta@outlook.com

Call to Action

Part 2 of 3

Part 1 was included in the December 2017 Edition

Part 3 will be included in the June 2018 Edition



Rev Alistair Bates

The Source of our Strength

Ephesians 3 v 16 is a critical verse, and failing to understand its significance renders the armour ineffective. Human pride overestimates its own strength, and is an impoverished resource in battle. While we must make every effort to engage our adversary, only an imparted strength will be sufficient. As a consequence human pride must be eliminated from our armoury.

Christ's ability must become ours, and this can only be received as a gift. Welcomed by the weak and shunned by the proud, this strength will be appropriated. We are most receptive when God alone is the only one we can turn too. Battered and bruised, we may be tempted to think the only option is to surrender. But, take heart, as the battle is not over and everything is not lost. We will be able to stand; yet standing will require an infusion of His strength to avoid collapse. He promises that out of His 'glorious riches,' such strength will be available.

When does this wonderful gift arrive? That's the whole secret of our dependence upon Him. The fact is, we never know *when* He will impart it to us. If we did perhaps, we would stop making dependence a facet of our

discipleship. However, we must be willing to receive it when it does arrive. To be willing to open up our lives to His strength reveals Christian maturity, and faith.

Simply saying "I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with His power..." is not sufficient. (*Ref: 1*) This is not a magic spell, and it is not your power to invoke in this way. Rather, it is His power that equips you for battle, and thankfully victory. His power makes it possible, through His Spirit in your inner being. You receive strength sufficient to walk into battle and fight, even when the heat of battle is intense. Only He can equip you to do this.

The Church cannot do it for you. Only God can provide it. No amount of prayer services will attain it; and no Bible reading will manufacture it; it is a disposition sent from God. We must leave ourselves entirely open to receiving His power and strength.

Stand Strong

The word "stand" in Ephesians 6 v 10 is similar to the one used in 2 Samuel 23 vs 11-12. (*Ref: 2*) In the Septuagint, this word has the Greek middle voice. The Greek middle voice shows that the action is *our* responsibility. We

have a burden of response. While the passive voice describes what God did for us, we are given the obligation of action. We are not abandoned to ourselves, however, and in Ephesians 6 v 10, we are reminded to be strong and stand firm.

In the Greek usage, 'stand firm' evokes images of the military defending a place under attack. In 2 Samuel, for example, where the battle was raging between David's men and the Philistines, Shammah *stood firm* despite the strength of his enemies. He stood firm in the fight, with his strength coming from knowing that he had a responsibility to do as God had instructed him. In spiritual warfare, we can detect the action of God and the believer working in tandem. God is asking us to be strong. Shammah fought the battle, and he stood strong, but the Lord gave the victory.

Paul's commandment in Ephesians, to finally be strong in the Lord, challenges us take our stand for God. *We* oppose the Enemy, but God endues us with power and *His* sustaining strength. It requires this bolster to stand up and resist the Devil. As you stand firm, the Devil flees. As Dr. Tony Evans argues in his book *Victory in Spiritual Warfare*, "You are not fighting for victory - you are

fighting from victory. This battle has already been won!" (Ref: 3) We already know that the Lord is King. If we attempted to wrestle with the Devil in our own strength, he remains unimpressed. Yet, when we resist him in God's strength, he retreats. He is under the Lordship of Christ. Therefore, when we are strong in the Lord, the Devil cowers. He cannot go nose-to-nose with God. We know from Job that the Devil requests to enter God's presence. When God sets limits on what the Devil can do, he has to obey.

We are called to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. That is a description of His sovereignty and his Lordship. We not only come to Him because of the strength He provides, but we come to Him because He is Sovereign and Lord of Hosts. It is impossible to match God's power and strength, and our eternal victory is assured. However, our Enemy cannot live with this truth. He finds the sovereignty of God unpalatable, and His redemptive plan disturbing. The prospect of our adoption into God's divine family exasperates his distress and the prospect of us spending eternity with God confirms his alienation from the Father. That you will receive what he has been forbidden is the sickening reality of his fall, and because he hates God, he hates you. Do not underestimate the Devil; he is hell-bent on your destruction. Yet, he can only operate within his limits, and God is the Lord of all creation. For our action, we are instructed to push ourselves away from the Devil and towards God. Ephesians 6 v 11 tells us, "Put on the full armour of God so you can take your stand against the Devil's schemes."

God will not grant you victory with His armour when you refuse to stand and fight. (Ref: 4) We

have no confidence that He will protect us if we are reluctant to resist the Devil. He has instructed you to be strong, but by your reticence you are disobeying God. If, out of fear, you refuse to engage the Enemy, you might avoid his attacks, but you will also lose the joy of hearing your Father commend 'well done, good and faithful servant.' (Ref: 5) I have been tempted at times to disengage with the Enemy, particularly during the heat of battle. It is understandable when you stand to lose everything on Earth. However, if we fail to stand, we will lose out on everything precious in our relationship with Jesus. In my opinion, that is too high a price to pay.

The armour serves no purpose if you do not stand. Yet I am convinced that you want to wear it. If not you would have simply stopped reading this article. Against what are you to stand? You must stand against the Devil's schemes. If you are unaware of what those schemes are, the armour will be deficient. How will you fight against someone you cannot perceive, detect, or comprehend?

If you are aware of his schemes, you will be able to use the armour skillfully. The armour is of no benefit if you do not believe you have an Enemy. It will be of no use if you do not know how he is attacking you. Yet, we can take heart knowing when you take your stand for God, He will prepare you to engage the Enemy in battle. The Lord will equip you with His glorious riches, by providing the armour as your safeguard.

Deception

We must look at what it means to take our stand against the Devil's 'schemes' or 'wiles.' What does this term mean? The Greek

word is "deceiver." This word refers to his fraudulence, his strategies, his planning, or his manipulative means of asserting his will over God's. It gives the impression of a magician doing tricks, causing certain deceptions. (Ref: 6) Consider the deceptions presented to us in the Occult. When the Devil begins to get a foothold in those deceptions, we are vulnerable to his schemes and trickery. How does he deceive those who have been involved in these things? What about those who have tried to connect with the dead? Why do people get involved in such practices?

When we are not prepared to acquaint ourselves with God's Word, we sometimes do not realize that we are transgressing, dangerously wandering into activities that God has forbidden. If we have lost a loved one, it is only natural that we miss them. However, we must be careful not to let our distress lead us into Satan's arena of trickery. He may use our loneliness, or guilt, to predispose us to try to contact the departed. We may wish to speak to them, or be forgiven by them. The Devil may use our vulnerability to deceive us. Using the image or illusion of regaining contact with a loved one opens us up to a whole new realm of spiritual danger.

Living with uncertainty about future events can cause anxiety. We may spend sleepless nights worrying about our health or finances. We may be consumed by a desire to predict our success or failure. Perturbed, perhaps, by a fear of loneliness we are curious to know if we will meet someone special. It is not unreasonable to suggest that, vexed by uncertainties, we contemplate various options to relieve our angst. The abundance of fortune-tellers indicates our unease at being able to predict the future.

You may think this an innocuous activity. After all, what's the problem with a peek at my horoscope? Yet, this too may be symptomatic of the Devil's trickery and deception. By engaging a fortune-teller we are seeking knowledge that God has chosen to withhold. Remember the sin of Adam and Eve. They were forbidden to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, yet they ignored His command, resulting in cosmic chaos. The sin of our predecessors was motivated by a desire to access knowledge that was forbidden. Transgressing the parameters God set always provides social and personal calamity.

God is the fount of all knowledge. He is the master of our destinies. The concealment of our future is there to protect us. It is to encourage trust, as Proverbs 3 vs 5-6 maintains; "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct thy paths." Not inquiring after our future

demonstrates our trust in God. To seek out that knowledge not only demonstrates a lack of trust, but disobedience as well.

Furthermore, availing of a fortune-teller can delude some participants into thinking that their future is now inescapable. The Enemy can therefore fill their heart with fear, locking them into a psychological fate detrimental to their spiritual and emotional health. The Devil may leverage such anxiety and delude them in the process.

The dark side of the occult is a sinister addition to human brokenness. In my book: *'Halloween, Happy Holiday or Dangerous Deception?'* I have demonstrated the dangers of worshipping Satan, even if some practitioners do not believe in a personal Devil. However diverse the beliefs and practices of Satanists may be, there are those who have no reservations in setting themselves up in opposition to Christ and His Church. Such adherents genuinely

believe they possess the power to destroy the Church. They think they have the power to destroy our lives, and they may choose to act with this power.

The Enemy deceives them. They are living in a world of delusion, but it is a very real world, full of danger and darkness. With sinister intent, Satan manipulates them into defying God and seeks to eradicate the Church. The armour of God is required to deflect their advances, and now that we are aware of these things, we should flee from any activity that would give the Devil a foothold. We should renounce the occult in the name of Christ. The Kingdom of Light must not have fellowship with the kingdom of darkness. If we have opened the door for Satan, we must confront and renounce him. We must turn from those activities. If we've engaged in anything which compromises our relationship with Christ, even in the past, we need to repent of it, and move on. Otherwise, it will impede any advancement in God's kingdom. (Ref: 7)

References.

1. In his book *The War Room: Prayer Is A Powerful Weapon*, Chris Fabry discusses exactly this when he talks about turning to the Word for strength and recognising that it was God who was the source of all strength. "Then I started really studying what the Scriptures say, and God showed me that it wasn't my job to do the heavy lifting. No. That was something that only He could do. It was my job to seek Him, to trust Him, and to stand on His Word." (page 33)
2. 2 Samuel 23 vs 11-12. "Next to him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel's troops fled from them. But Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the Lord brought about a great victory."
3. *Victory in Spiritual Warfare*, Tony Evans, page 11
4. Dr Tony Evans describes this in *Victory in Spiritual Warfare* when he says, "'If you don't know the truth, or if you don't act on the truth, the shield of faith is impotent. In order to have faith, you have to know and respond to truth. And as we saw earlier, truth is fundamentally God's viewpoint on a matter.'" (page 21)
5. Matthew 25 v 23.
6. We are called to stand against the "wiles of the devil." The Greek word for "wiles" is equivocal to our word "methods". Consider how we interpret methodical action, particularly violent or despicable ones. The Devil's "methods" can be defined as, "the well-thought-out, methodical art of leading astray." We might also call them deceptions, ways, or simply his 'machinations.' (Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, Translated and edited by James D. Ernest, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994, Volume 2, page 462)
7. As part of his deception, the Devil will try to tempt us to dismiss the vitality of salvation. He does not want us to imagine salvation as something which comes, which approaches and is imminent, but rather, he wants us to put it behind us and forget about it. However, Paul implores us to remember salvation here and now. We are saved by the grace of God, we were saved by the grace of God, and we are being saved by the grace of God still. Furthermore, we must remain in it this Grace (Romans 5 vs 1-2). If, at any time, we rely on our own merit, we are actively severing ourselves from Christ. (Galatians 5 v 4; cf. 1 John. 1 vs 7-9).

'Releasing Captives From Slavery'



Lauren Agnew presented Rev Alistair Bates with a little wooden boat during the service on 11 February 2018.

Lauren said,
"The boat will serve as a small visible reminder of the role Wellington Presbyterian Church has played in the fight to end slavery."

The inscription on the boat reads:
*Wellington Presbyterian Church.
Donation to IJM to rent a rescue boat, to help end slavery in Ghana. January 2018*

Thanks from Lauren Agnew

On Freedom Sunday we heard about IJM's work on Lake Volta, Ghana, rescuing young boys from slavery in the fishing industry. The Coffee Morning/Book Launch that followed was intended to be an opportunity for people to respond and become involved with supporting this work. I could never have imagined how the Church would respond! I am delighted to tell you that the money raised from the coffee morning, the sale of Alistair's books and donations from organisations within the church amounted to over £4350. Thank you!

I'm also delighted to tell you that we were able to use a large amount of that money to rent a boat for a rescue operation in Ghana. The rescue of children from slavery in the fishing industry on Lake Volta requires boats with communication and safety equipment, as well as space for authorities, social workers and rescued children. We, as a church, have been able to help operations run efficiently by providing a boat for the rescue teams.

As individuals continued to donate long after the Coffee Morning, we began to realise, not only did we have sufficient funds to rent a boat for a rescue operation, but that the amount raised actually exceeded the cost of the boat! We have also been able to cover the cost of trial fees, so a survivor's case can be heard in court, and fund the building of 3 homes for families to live in after rescue. A communications antenna was also purchased to help

investigators as they gather evidence, track down criminals, and find children and families waiting for rescue.

I hope this encourages you as much as it has encouraged me!

I've had the privilege of being involved with International Justice Mission (IJM) and this type of work for a number of years. Looking back, I could never have anticipated how God would work



A life-changing gift has been made in your honour.

in the hearts of individuals within my home Church. Yet He has, and continues to exceed my expectations! I can't tell you how much your support for this work means to me personally, nor can I put into words the effect it has had on my own personal journey of faith.

The little wooden boat in the picture, handcrafted by a friend in Church, was presented to Wellington to serve as a small visible reminder of the role which Wellington Presbyterian Church has played in the fight to end slavery. It is intended to act as an encouragement and a reminder, every time you walk past it, that the end of slavery really does begin with God's people. It begins with each of us.

I want to say a massive thank you to each and every person reading this who has supported this work and helped fund this work.

You are all part of the movement to end slavery.

There are more slaves today than at any other point in history, and yet the magnitude of slavery no longer overwhelms or paralyses me. Instead, the power of God to end slavery motivates and inspires me.

I'm **excited** about the children who are being rescued from slavery on the lake...

I'm **encouraged** by our Church rising up in response to injustice...

I'm **inspired** by the lives that are being changed...

I'm **hopeful** for a world where children are free to be children...

I'm **expectant** for what God is yet to do .

I hope you are too!

Rev Alistair Bates

"I think for some time I have been disturbed by the relative ease and comfort of living in western affluence. That does not mean we do not have problems, because, as a pastor, I know all too well how difficult and tragic life can become. Nevertheless, when we see and hear the stories of children caught up in human trafficking, my heart is exceptionally heavy.

When we decided to hold a coffee morning at Wellington, I dared not imagine that we could raise enough money to fund a boat rescue of enslaved children. At least, for now, my heart is a little lighter today. God loves us mind, body, and soul, and we have helped some children today and I hope, soon, their journey will lead them to Jesus.

Someone in the congregation skilfully, thoughtfully and creatively built us a small boat to remind us of the day that children were released from humanities greed and exploration. It is only their first steps to full freedom, but its a start.

A few years ago I felt led by God to begin writing but at the very outset I wanted others not only to spiritually benefit from what they would read but literally benefit too. That is why as much as £3 from each book I sell is donated to facilitate the release of captives - to release them spiritually, mentally and physically."

Gideon



Gideon's story is typical of many!

Gideon's grandparents sent him to a man who promised to take care of him and help him go to school. Instead, the man enslaved Gideon in a fishing boat on Lake Volta in Ghana.

Gideon's grandfather was not wealthy enough to file charges against the slave owner, but early last year we were able to rescue Gideon and bring him home.

Slavery

45 million! There are 45 million slaves in the world today,

Those poor children get no pay.

There are more slaves than ever before,

Many of them as young as four.

Many slaves are between 4 and 12 years old,

The majority of them have already been sold.

Over 34 thousand victims of slavery have been saved,

Although their childhood would be waived.

Slaves often have to work through dangerous conditions,

And many of them may wonder, who put them in that position?

They are usually beaten black and blue,

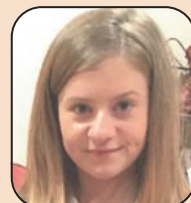
For why they have no clue.

There are 45 million slaves in the world today,

Those poor children get no pay.

The poem above was written by Louise McMullan.

Louise, aged 14, is a member of the Seniors Section of GB.





The Journey of Outsideln

"You're the first person to speak to me today."

In 2014, that was the line that I heard somebody who was homeless say on one of the busiest streets of Edinburgh. It has fuelled my passion to eradicate homelessness ever since.

My name is David Johnston and I am the founder of Outsideln, a social enterprise and clothing brand aiming to end homelessness for good. This is a huge dream that I recognise as humanly impossible, but I once read that if you can achieve your dream on your own, then it's not a God dream. I'm dependent on His strength every step of the way.

The idea for Outsideln came about during my time at University in Scotland. I attended the University of Stirling studying Business Management. Business has always been something I have loved, whether it was selling sweets in school or critiquing already established businesses and how my 14 year old self could exponentially increase their revenue with a few tweaks. As a result, going to university was, for me, just breathing space to work out how I was going dream of coming up with a new business venture.

I was asked by a friend in my second year of studying to help him create a social media page called 'Humans of Edinburgh', similar to 'Humans of New York' that told stories of people on the streets - sharing their ambitions, regrets and funny tales. It was great because I could choose whoever I wanted to speak to in the city. The openness of many of these people amazed me. Often within 10 minutes of having a conversation with a person I had just met, I could have heard their whole life story just by starting with a hello and showing an interest in their life.

The page grew rapidly and within 2 years we had over 60,000 followers online who were passionate, engaging with each story. That, for me, was the realisation of the power of a story and irrespective of where we are from or what our background is, we can all relate to people from around the world.

Then something happened that I could never have predicted. One day whilst walking through Edinburgh, we realised that there were so many people actually living on the streets who we had never taken the time to stop with and hear their story. The homeless were often ignored, or left out, which just didn't sit right with us.

We decided to stop and show an interest in their lives, and those first few stories we listened to really changed it all for me. These were real people that I had ignored. They had incredible stories that deserved to be heard.

I was blown away by how easy it was to become homeless. Factors ranged from relationship breakdown, job loss, gambling addiction, abuse at home, or death of loved ones. I had always been the sceptical type who created a preconception as to why they were on the street. God really broke my heart for them. After all, they were His people.

I then knew that whatever I did was going to be something that helped end homelessness. With their permission, we told some of these stories on our page and that's when I realised that society wants to help, they just don't know how. We had so many of our followers asking to donate money, offer their skills free of charge or housing etc. It was incredible to see the page we had created being used to do good. I saw it as a time were I could not only hear these stories, but also share my faith with some of the most vulnerable people I had ever met, showing that there is hope in the midst of darkness.

When I left university in 2016, I asked God what was next. That summer I travelled to South Africa and France. No matter what city I found myself in I could see how homelessness was a huge issue. I knew whatever God was wanting me to start would be something that would impact the world, not just Scotland or Northern Ireland.

I remember one individual on the train in Paris who was homeless and very drunk. So many people on that train laughed at him, took videos on their phone and even refused to sit anywhere near him. I was filled with righteous anger. How, in 2016, was society more willing to mock than to help someone in need?

I came home to Northern Ireland with a vision and a desire to do something, still not knowing how it was going to look. I met up with an individual, who sets up social enterprise businesses in Northern Ireland, to get more of an idea how I could use business to give back and make a difference in our society. Having been inspired and challenged with what I wanted to achieve, I replied that my main problem was that people don't understand homelessness and there was so many negative social perceptions surrounding the topic. I wanted to create a model that encouraged people to stop, interact, say hello and hear the story of someone who was without a home. I believed that way would change their perspective and hopefully, through networking, provide opportunities for them to successfully get off the street.

I have always been blown away with the talent, skill and hope that I find on the streets and I wanted to see them have a second chance. I was inspired by TOMS shoes "One for One" model, where a pair of shoes is donated to a child in need with every purchase.

After much prayer, advice and brainstorming, I came up with the "Wear One, Share One" model. This means that with every product purchased the consumer is provided with the free, additional product to give to someone who is homeless. I was told this was a crazy concept. People often asked: How do you know people will actually do it? What will you give out? How is it going to end homelessness? It did sound crazy - empowering society to collectively end homelessness and placing a lot of trust in our customers to do it. But for me, although it was risky, it carried so much potential to globally tackle the problem.

Whatever product we came up with, it was never going to end homelessness. The focus has always been the opportunity for social interactions our products provide. Whenever you have a clothing product in your hand to give to someone, it empowers you to intentionally stop on the street, initiate a conversation, hear their story, and give them hope. It is, of course, also a prime opportunity to tell them how much Jesus loves them, which is my favourite part.

That was an opportunity worth taking. We decided to start with beanie hats, something practical that most people wear, and our feedback from those who were homeless was that warm headgear was needed all year round. We wanted to make products that had a benefit to the homeless in mind.

Now, we are a year and a few months into this adventure, and it has been one crazy journey full of God moments that I could fill a book with. His provision throughout has been evident, whether in providing the right people to help, in times of financial stress or struggling to cope in opportunities that where

so big that we never imagined possible. We have partnered with numerous homeless charities across the UK, working as a team to eradicate homelessness together in a variety of ways, from clothing donations to providing job opportunities.

In our first year, we were able to donate 10,000 beanies, t-shirts and wash bags across the UK. We have had countless emails from people who have given out their additional products in New York, Cape Town, Paris and even as far as New Zealand. I can only be but excited for what God has in store for us both locally and globally.

This is a movement to see lives radically transformed out of homelessness, and to see negative perceptions be changed to compassion and care for those in desperate need. It's about people seeing a need, stepping out of their comfort zone and moving into action to make a change.

It's about speaking hope into those who think they will never leave the streets, and loving them back to life. A life of fullness and eternal hope that Christ died for them to have.

We can't wait to see what God has in store for Outsides in 2018 and beyond.



David Johnston (DJ) attended Wellington before going to University in Scotland. He now attends the Village Church in Belfast.

Want to purchase Oi products?
Or learn more about Oi?
Then visit the Oi website:

www.weareoi.com



Our Life and Work in Ukraine

*Sergey and Yulia Perevyshko look back on time spent in Belfast Bible College and Ballymena and share something of their life in Ukraine where Sergey works as a Pastoral Teacher in Irpen Bible Church.
(Photo l-r: Sergey, Sophia, Kostantin and Yulia)*

There two big challenges we face: the military threat from Russia and the economic crisis. Russia has accumulated a massive military potential around the Ukrainian border and we live under the constant threat of a bigger war with Russia. Last year they carried out a military drill with 13,000 troops in Belorussia. Some are believed to be still there. In 2008, after similar so called military training, Russia occupied Georgia, taking just three days to reach the capital Kiev, which is almost 500km from the Russian border. This threat of war affects our lives in every single way. But our trust is in the Lord and we hope for better times ahead.

The economic crisis is another challenge. Our Ukrainian national currency, the Hryvnia, has lost three and a half times its value. Before the war we could get 8



hryvnias to the dollar but now it is 29! In addition inflation is running at 15-20% each year. So while prices have gone up so much, income has dramatically reduced. Sometimes I have to work from 6am in the morning until 9pm in the evening just to survive and cover our daily expenses.

Our son, Konstantin, starts school this year and it is a big change for us all. The population of our town has been growing so fast and, in just 5 years, has

doubled due to many refugees from the east. However the number of schools remains the same and each class is packed with up to 40 kids each. We decided to send Konstantin to a private school. Yulia teaches a music class in English every Wednesday just to reduce the cost of 200 dollars per month by half. This is such a challenge for her because there is no programme and she has to compose it herself, adding a lot to her already busy schedule running the house and teaching English. Sophia, our older daughter, has started online school this month. While not as expensive as Konstantin's, it still costs 50 dollars per month.

We thank Wellington for the financial support given to us and I hope this explains why it is so meaningful to us.



Irpen Bible Church - What We Do!

Sunday service - we warmly welcome everyone searching for a relationship or encounter with God. Each Sunday morning we have three similar services at nine, eleven and one p.m. and our meeting hall is overcrowded with people, but we just love serving people.

Baptism - We usually have baptism twice a year. These are very special times as we can see disciples becoming more like Christ. They want to know Him as their Saviour and keep His commandments. Over the past three years we have baptized 56 people, many from non-Christian backgrounds. Everyone who joins Irpen Bible Church (IBC) belongs to a Small Group. Here people can experience love and care in a friendly atmosphere, have fellowship and study the Bible together. In return they learn to help others. Currently IBC has about 50 Small Groups that meet regularly each week.

Café - In a separate building, called 'Mark's Home', on the church premises is a café. The young ladies who serve there take great care to make it cozy place, providing tasty sandwiches, cakes, biscuits, tea and coffee after the Sunday services and at other special occasions. Coffee time is a wonderful opportunity to have fellowship with friends and a chance to make new friends.

Family ministry - Twice a month our Family Ministry Team has special meetings called 'Family Club'. We are delighted that non-congregational people can become acquainted with Biblical principles to help develop strong family relationships. This is a powerful ministry, rescuing families from breaking up and divorce and a great tool to reach them with the Gospel. For some couples Family Club is not only first step to church but also to God.

Football - We have two open outdoor sport complexes and one indoor. Kids enjoy the football training sessions and our church Soccer ministry now has 11 teams, 7 preschool kids teams and 4 primary school. Every training session is useful for both physical development and spiritual growth. Bible stories retold by a coach teach the truth and build the kids up. Through the Soccer ministry about a hundred boys, from non-Christian families become acquainted with Bible stories and the truth of the Gospel.

Missionary trips - following the Irpen Sport Fest, that takes place every summer on the church premises, inspired young people go to little towns and villages to share the Gospel and help local churches in practical ways to organize youth and kids' ministry. Each team prepares a flexible

program for 7-10 days and cooperates closely with a receiving local church. In this way we share our experience with other churches and bring good news to local people.

Youth ministry - our Youth movement has a symbolic name - Light. This emphasises the most important task of modern Christianity, enlightening both yourself and those around you with the Gospel to rescue them from the darkness of this sinful world. The young people of our church meet every week to worship and learn more about God. We do everything what we can so that young people make knowing the Lord their purpose in life from the early age would.

Irpen Christian School - a Christian School was founded in IBC on 1st September 2016 with the mission to develop intellectually, physically and spiritually every child on the Biblical world view. Currently we have four classes (2 first grade and 2 second grade) plus one online class. There are 9 teachers and 2 supervisors who take care of the children and make sure that they have an interest in learning and developing their potential to become professional in whatever sphere of life they choose. Most of all we hope that they will strive for spiritual values and a foundation of knowing and loving Christ.

Fond Memories of Wellington



These photos, now more than 16 years old, bring back fond memories of our time in Northern Ireland. When, in 1999 my wife and I were going to study in Britain, we were ready for challenge and change. I was only 25 and Yulia was 22. We felt open to new culture and were ready to learn. But I would never imagine that 2 years with Wellington Presbyterian Church could change us so much and affect the rest of our lives. While I learnt a lot in Belfast Bible College, it was not the

college that changed, challenged, shaped and formed us but it was the ordinary people from the church who had the most impact on us. Yulia and I had wonderful opportunity to stay with some amazing families over the weekends, having lunches or dinners after church. The friendly conversations and love and care which we experienced changed us forever. Someone says that it is so difficult to make a British friend but if you make a friend - it is a friend for life.

So many years have passed since our studies but most of you keep it touch, support our ministry and send us Christmas cards and gifts. It is very moving, not only because of the gifts and presents but because of the relationships and love you have shared. In many ways your church became an example for me. I keep saying my Irish friends do things this way or I learned that from my Irish friends.

I praise the Lord for you and love you. We miss you so much.

Rev. Sergey Perevyshko, 19 apartment 4b, Av. Antonova St., t. Irpen, Kiev region, Ukrain
Tel: +38 063 780 9258 Email: yulia.sergey@me.com Website: www.biblechurch.com.ua



Sergey's testimony



My secular education was in a chemistry technical college that I attended from 1989 to 1993 where I gained a Diploma. My Christian education started with a Bachelor in Pastoral Ministry Degree at Irpen Bible Seminary, where I studied from 1993 to 1997. After seminary I served as a youth pastor and continued to make radio programs for Trans World Radio, where I had started working while a student in second year in the seminary. From December 1997 I became the director of Bible College in Lugansk region, Ukraine and in 1999 I ministered as a pastor in a new Church called "Way of Salvation". I studied in Belfast Bible College from 1999 to 2001 and finished with a Diploma. From 2002 I attended Irpen Bible Seminary again and received a Master of Divinity degree with distinction in 2005. In 2008 I started teaching and studying for Master of Theology in European Bible Training Centre (EBTC) in Berlin. At the moment I serve as a pastor-teacher in Irpen Bible Church.

I was born in Ukraine, which was a part of former USSR, in 1974. I was an unbeliever, like my parents and a lot of Ukrainian people now. I started to think about my goals in life when I was 15 years old but I didn't have any and life was very difficult for me. Although I had many different experiences in my life such as alcohol, fighting, sport and girl friends, all the time I felt I had a big gap in my heart. I did not have any joy in my life.

I finally thought that maybe religion would give me some hope. I took some icons from my grandmother and put them in the corners in my home and I waited for a result, but it did not come. I had one last hope. Maybe reading the Bible will help me I thought. So I started looking for a Bible but could not get one. This was 1991. I met a man once at the train station who had a Children's Bible. I asked him to let me just see it. It turned out he was a pastor of a Baptist Church and he gave me a New Testament. Reading this New Testament made me understand that I needed Christ in my life. I repented on the 19th of January 1992 and was baptised on the 5th of June 1992.

In Ukraine we have a great lack of good educated teachers. I had been fortunate to experience many different kinds of Christian ministry including evangelism, mission work, youth ministry, children's work, pastoral care, administration, teaching and leadership. Over time I found that God was leading me into a teaching ministry. I didn't suddenly arrive at this opinion but found it developed over a period of time, through prayer and testing of my practical experiences.

Yulia's testimony



I'm Yulia Perevishko. I'm Ukrainian and I'm 40 years old. I was born into a Christian family but at that time Christians were being persecuted. My parents weren't allowed to take me to Sunday School but they always took me to Sunday services where the children from the Church had Sunday school lessons in secret. In 1988 our freedom to worship was restored and since then Christians have not been disturbed.

A children's ministry was started in our Church. I was baptized when I was sixteen, having accepted Jesus into my heart some four years earlier. Since becoming a Christian I have felt that the Lord has kept me in His strong hands. I see how I'm getting closer and closer to Him and I praise Him for His work in my life. The Lord continues to make my personality better and better and I'm so glad to see these changes and I believe that He will continue His work in me, because my desire is to be like Jesus.

I started learning to play the piano when I was 5 years old. Since the age of 16 I started serving God in Church as a musician playing the piano for the Church choir. I was married in 1995 and a year later started to study music in seminary. I didn't finish as God had His own plan for me and he gave me the opportunity to learn English and do some Christian courses at Belfast Bible College. My desire is to follow Jesus and serve Him in the way He has prepared for me.

I trust my Lord with all my heart and know that He will lead me until the last day of my life.



Timeja is here!

Metka and Goran celebrate the birth of their daughter in Slovenia

We are on the beautiful journey and all we can say is that God is a God of miracles and that His plan for our life is beautiful.

After we got married we were sure we wanted to have children and we started to look forward to become pregnant. Sadly that didn't happen right away and after a year it started to worry us a little bit. We got a doctors appointment where they gave us unexpected news - neither of you is able to have children. They gave us different reasons but our ears just couldn't listen any more. "Why us?" was the first thought we started to ask ourselves. We both love children ... how that can be taken from us. The doctor continued with solutions for us and started explaining about the artificial insemination. Our thoughts were so far from all of that. We got home and started talking. We weren't ready for any procedure. Our hearts and minds went straight to the Lord and He definitely heard many cries and saw many tears. Reading through the Bible, God was keeping showing us how He is the one who opens the womb and that

gave us some confidence and strength. We started looking into adoption and fostering but we couldn't afford any of it. So we let it go...we were waiting on God and that process seemed very long.

One day Goran came out of the room and said: "I think God just told me you are pregnant!" "That can't be...." was my first thought. We both had a deep desire to have a child so maybe that desire influenced his mind. I didn't want to react to that news because I had done some tests in the past and they were all negative. But Goran was sure in what he heard so next day he brought me the test. Let's do it again! Not really believing, I did the test and we waited. You should see the shock

on our faces (especially on Metka's) when the test was positive. What!!!! How can that be.... But they said..... God you did it..... That is a miracle..... What a joy in our hearts. We were so thankful, crying, laughing... That day we will remember forever. We wanted to tell everyone right away and at the same time we knew we need to have doctor's appointment to confirm it. But why... God had already confirmed it. We couldn't be quiet. That was the best news ever. Our hearts were filled with joy and thankfulness – God did a miracle in our lives.

God gave us a beautiful daughter. She brings so much joy in our lives every day (also sleepless nights but that is in the package, right?). She is a gift from the Lord and we are reminded about that every time we look at her. When the doctor looked at us He didn't give us any hope, but God on the other hand gave us a miracle. We have an almighty and all powerful God who is in control of our life. He is our loving Father who knows best what we need. He gave us our beautiful Timeja .





Thank you for Your Prayers

Metka and Goran's work with CEF continues to grow!

Have a wonderful year in 2018 and may God bless you with His wisdom, His power and a deeper understanding of His love. We pray that 2018 will be special for you all as Jesus' continues to work in your lives.

Thank you for partnering with us in previous years - God has been doing great things in Slovenia. Last year, at Christmas, we were able to be involved in many different activities where children, teens and their parents were able to hear the Christmas story and learn of Jesus' unconditional act of love.

The Teen club in Kamnik decided to record a video showing the true meaning of Christmas and then invited their parents to church to see it. For most of the parents this would have been their first time in a church.

We held Christmas Good News clubs in Ljubljana, Radovljica and Cerklje, a new town we have been

visiting since September. There is only one Christian family there and the mum is very enthusiastic about having Good News Clubs in the town. She goes around inviting every child to come - and many did.

We had Christmas shows in Kobarid and Ljubljana. The children loved to perform and the parents loved to watch their children. We used the opportunity to invite parents and to share the real meaning of Christmas. We were privileged that the national television came to Ljubljana and recorded the programme so that all Slovenia was able to view it.

Christmas Teen clubs were also held in Koper and Ljubljana and in Ljubljana we opened a new Teen club in November. There are 6 teens coming now. We continue to pray for more.

We are invited each year by the Social Service to hold a Christmas party for teens who are in foster

homes. This is a special privilege because we get to know them and share something about Jesus' love for us and for them.

We have many stories. Our favourite is about 3 Roma children who come to the Good News Club (GNC) every week. It takes Goran an hour each week just to pick them up and it is a privilege to see God's work in their lives. They had never heard anything about Jesus before coming to the GNC but in the last 2 months they have started loving Jesus. When Nejo sees Goran he always asks him to read the Bible for him. Thank you Jesus.

There have been many events in December and we want to say thank you for your prayers. Although life can be very tiring, we know there are so many prayer warriors all around the world praying for us. This makes a huge difference to our work.

Goran, Metka & Timeja

Roma children Nejo, Lana and Dineja



Teen Club Koper



Foster Teens





Worship

Recently I have been asking myself some questions about a topic which I love to think about and discuss. A topic that drives a passion in me that no earthly thing could create. I was really happy when I was asked to write an article on it and I hope and pray that what I have committed to paper will cause you to think more about why we, as believers, do what we do. This topic is massive. It is worship.

We each have our own view, or interpretation, of the definition of worship. Some use the word 'worship' to describe a particular style of music and praise, while others describe our few hours together on a Sunday as 'worship', and still others extend it to a lifestyle of doing everything to the glory of God. I totally agree that the worship of God refers to the highest privilege given to human beings and I would say that true worship 'in spirit and in truth' can only come from a heart that pursues God and treasures Him above all else, acknowledging that we need His Spirit to guide us in every part of our existence.

When thinking about this, and the position that God has placed me in here in Wellington to lead our music ministry, I had to explore where singing comes in as

an expression of our worship and does it really matter if we do or do not engage in it as we meet together? I sometimes hear people say things like "I am not a singer", or "I come to church solely to hear the Word of God preached, as I can't really sing". It is my prayer that as we read this and explore some of these thoughts we will want to be a church that sing so beautifully, whether tuneful or not, so that a sweet aroma rises to Heaven from the hearts of those who treasure Jesus above all else.

So why do we sing?

Growing up, although I was so used to being in church, I still found the idea of singing in church a peculiar thing... everyone standing singing together, the same words, the same melody line. As I grew up I came to realise that this was a wonderfully designed idea by God to not only allow us declare the wonders and Majesty of Him, but to do so together in a unified way. Something happens to mould us as a diverse community who are brought together by praising His worthy name. This is why we do everything we can to protect the unity within the church, and value it as one of the most important teachings of the Bible. But is there more than one reason why we

should sing as an expression of worship? Of course there is!

Let's look at what the Bible says about singing... probably the most quoted verse is Ephesians 5 vs 18-19. **'Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart'**. I love this verse as it speaks of the necessity of being filled with the Holy Spirit to fully engage with God in the act of worship. It speaks of a posture of the heart where our words come not just from our mouths but from a heart full of gratitude, trust, submission and an eagerness to declare the greatness of our Creator. Plus, it also mentions 'one another' which really shows me that it is also a means by which we preach and affirm what we believe to each other! Quite often after God's Word has been preached it is the songs we sing in response that reinforce it to ourselves and to one another, and often it is the words of the songs along with the message that resonates in our hearts and speaks into our circumstances in our daily lives. John Piper writes, "Worship in a corporate setting is not just singing, not just response, but the idea that a congregation learns its theology and takes it down into

the crevices of their soul, by the songs that they sing, not just by the preaching they hear". This is why it is so important that we value the times when we sing together, and why it is so vital that the songs we sing are steeped in the truth of Scripture.

Another great example of the importance that Jesus Himself placed on singing praise to His Father is found in Mark 14 v 26, **"When they had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives"**. How amazing to think that one of the last things that Jesus did with all of His disciples was to sing a hymn. I cannot wait to ask him what that hymn was!

So we know that singing praise to God as an expression of worship is so vital in declaring the truths in scripture, is vital in uniting us under Him, is a beautiful and powerful way to respond to the Word, and it is vital that we are filled with the Spirit to experience true engagement with God through our singing. No mention of being a marvellous vocalist!

However, perhaps the least talked about aspect of worship is what happens in the spiritual realm when we sing to God. We know that in Acts 16 Paul and Silas, whilst in prison, prayed and sang hymns to God (notice how the two are closely linked). It was then that an earthquake occurred, loosening their chains and resulting in the jailer and his entire family coming to believe in the risen Jesus. It is such an example of God accepting an offering of praise from hearts that, although faced a desperate set of circumstances, were still treasuring God above all, and He used it as an occasion to demonstrate His power.

Thinking about this idea of spiritual warfare being carried out in realms that we cannot see while

we sing praise to God led me to a passage in 2 Chronicles 20. I urge you to read this passage! King Jehoshaphat was informed that not one but three vast armies were on their way to attack all of Judah. The first thing he did was proclaim a fast for the whole land as they sought the Lord about how to deal with this. Jehoshaphat stood in front of everyone and prayed. He thanked God for past victories and faithfulness and then he says these amazing words about their present situation, **'For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.'** The Lord spoke through Jahaziel. He told the people not to be discouraged for **'the battle is not yours, but God's. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions. Stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you'**.

You might be wondering what on earth this has to do with singing. Then in verse 18 we read, **'Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground and all the people fell down in worship before the Lord.'** While they did this something very different happened, **'Some Levites stood up and praised the Lord with a very loud voice'**. Now the Levites were a specific group of people mentioned back in 1 Chronicles 6 v 31 who were put in charge of the service of song in the house of the Lord. They were the choir of Israel!! SO while everyone bowed low in worship they led the people in praising God for His promised victory! The next day they rose early to head into battle. Jehoshaphat commands them to trust God's promise and appoints his frontline troops. Surprisingly they weren't strong chariots or brave swordsmen but SINGERS! As they stood on the frontline of the battlefield they repeatedly sang **'Give thanks to the Lord for His**

love endures forever'. This is when the Lord showed his matchless power by setting two of the three armies against each other, and once they were destroyed the third army turned on themselves and were destroyed. The chapter ends by saying, **'And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side'**.

It is amazing to see that the enemy cannot stand our genuine worship of the one true God and is sent into a state of confusion and powerlessness, inevitably having to flee. John Piper writes, *'The fullness of the Holy Spirit is experienced as a heart filled with singing. So if we fight Satan by the fullness of His Spirit, we can fight him with song.'*

To finish up, I want you to know that our enemy does His best to keep a church from being one that sings praise to God. And I urge you to get close to this Almighty, gracious, loving Saviour so that we can be filled daily with His Spirit and that the overflow of our hearts may be a sweet and honest song to Him. I want to leave you with this quote from Martin Luther, *'Music is a fair and lovely gift of God which has often wakened and moved me to the joy of preaching... Music drives away the devil and makes people joyful... Next after theology I give to music the highest place and the greatest honour. I would not change what little I know of music for something great. Experience proves that next to the Word of God only music deserves to be extolled as the governess of the feeling of the human heart.'*

I am so thankful to God that I get to be part of a singing church.

Erin McBride
Musical Director



Rachelle in the slums of Delhi with Ballymena Academy team



Rachelle - one of the 15 pupils!

In October, I visited New Delhi, India as part of the Ballymena Academy team working through Asha. Our team consisted of fifteen pupils and three teachers. Asha gave us an opportunity to work within the Tigri slum, helping the disadvantaged children and students who attend the centre. The work of Asha is not possible without funding and we offer our thanks to all those who attended or participated in our coffee mornings, fireside quizzes and marathons. Through these activities the team was able to raise over £15,000 to aid Asha in its incredible work.

Before leaving home I was worried about how I would cope

with the tasks we would have to do. I had never been on a mission trip before and I wasn't quite sure what to expect. A verse that really encouraged me before and during the trip was Deuteronomy 31 v 6:

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you."

Going to India was a massive cultural shock. I have lived a very sheltered life and to witness such poverty was astonishing. We were amazed that the youth in the slum had no complaints. They were so content and happy with the very little they had. They viewed what they were as a person as being of more value than money. The time

they had been given by God on earth was what made them rich, and they cherished it. This is a completely different mind-set to young people at home where procrastination seems to control many of our lives!

Although we had time off to see some of India's beautiful sites, they didn't come close to the satisfaction we received when working in Tigri. We spent some of the time in Tigri brightening up the walls of the centre with murals of 'Toy Story' and 'Finding Nemo'. We presented English lessons on animals, Northern Ireland, space, Christmas and the beach to the children and students. They were so eager to learn that the room fell silent when we started to talk as they held onto your every word.



All they wanted to do was further their education. This really stood out to me as we tend to take our education for granted and view it as a right. We really should strive to be as driven as they are because our education is as much a privilege.

We also had time to talk to many of the students and help them improve their already very competent English and interview skills. They were studying with the aim of achieving well paid careers, but, unlike us, it wasn't for the money or recognition but rather to give back to their community. Many had ambitions to become teachers or doctors so they could follow in Dr Kiran Martin's footsteps and freely offer their skill set to those less fortunate.

Although our aim was to teach the children and give them added depth to their knowledge, it's safe to say these children and students taught us much more than we could have ever taught them.

The dedicated staff who work within Asha and in the Tigri slum always wore their brightest smile. Sweeta, one of the ladies who guided us through our journey at Tigri said, "We feel the joy here all the time." And from my experience that really is the case.

Rachelle Mitchell

Toni - one of the 3 teachers

Returning to Tigri for the fourth time it was really encouraging to see the improvement in slum conditions. Local people were so thankful and proud to show the water pipes carrying clean water throughout the slum and an enormous new toilet block that is giving residents their dignity back.

It is always a pleasure to see the children and Tigri's community workers but the atmosphere felt different this year as there were only around a quarter of the children attending the centre each day. At first we, as teachers, were very disappointed but chatting to staff it soon became apparent that the centre had been closed for some months and the children's work had all but stopped. Sunita, who has been working in Tigri for many years, welcomed us with tears in her eyes. Due to severe monsoon rains last year, the centre had been flooded with thick mud and water up to level of the door handles, buckling all the doors. The centre was closed as there was no money to replace the doors, remove the mud, buy new computers or clean the surfaces.

When the Ballymena Academy team had agreed to come back to visit Tigri, bringing much needed funding, the centre was able to be

restored. It was a great joy to see the start of a new wave of outreach into the local community that the money raised by the 2017 Ballymena Academy Asha team should be able to facilitate for the next two years.

God is still at work in the slums of New Delhi and putting hope (Asha) into the lives of the children and adults of Tigri. God also has plans to give 'Asha' and a future to the young people of Ballymena. God brought hope in Jeremiah's day and it our desire, as teachers, that He would be everyone's 'Asha' too.

Toni Bassett



"Asha" means "hope" in Hindi. We give people living in slum areas hope by allowing them to realise their potential, regardless of their background, caste or religious beliefs. Around 700,000 people in more than 91 slum colonies of Delhi benefit from our work.

www.asha-india.org



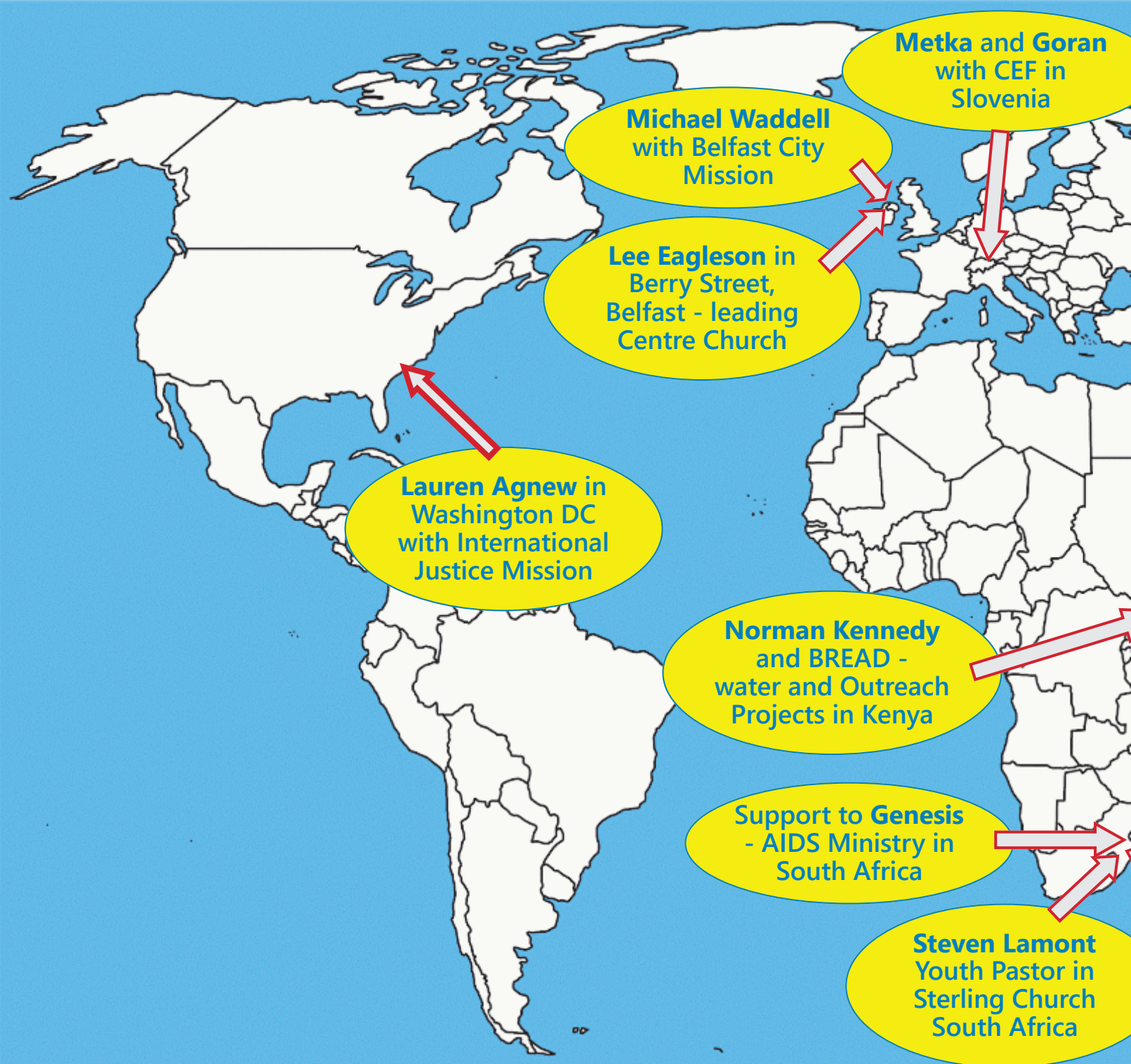
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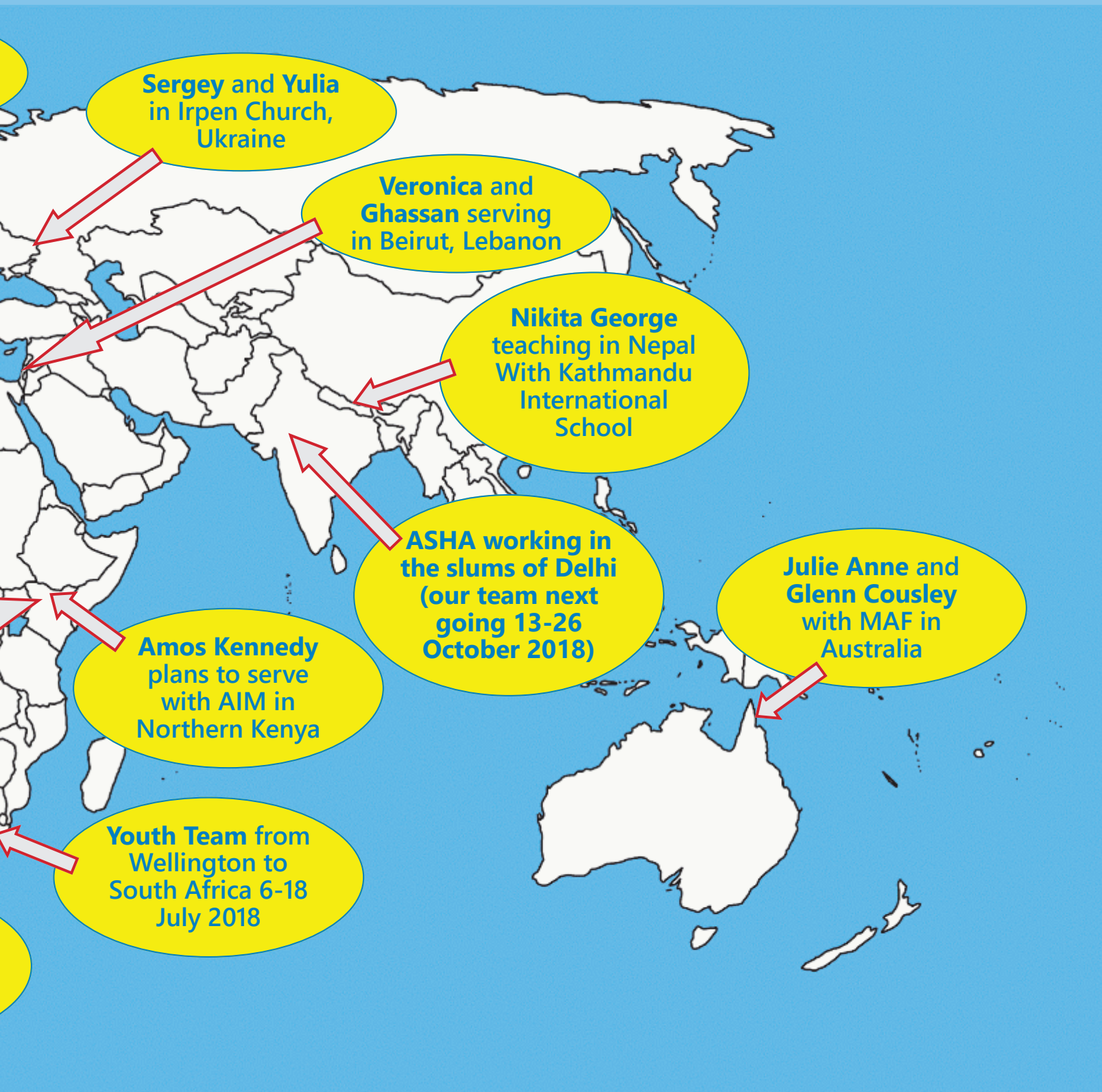
Pray

for those we support



Why not pull out this page and

Port through our Mission Ministry



and put it on your notice board!

OUR JOURNEY WITH

tearfund

Some of you may recall the images of the famine in Biafra many years ago – that was in 1968. From that disaster TearFund arose. Now, 50 years on, we reflect on Wellington's partnership with TearFund, as we've sought to serve the poor in Jesus' name.

1973 Just 5 years after TearFund was formed the Young Adults group in Wellington St. formed a prayer support group. Under the leadership of our then assistant Alistair Kennedy the group met monthly in Alex Boyd's home.

1979 One of the group members, Graham Fairbairn, becomes Northern Ireland's regional director for TearFund

1981 Two of the group members, Roger and Elizabeth Green, leave to serve through TearFund in Tanzania for 3 years

1982 Graham moves to join the senior staff in London

1990 The local TearFund sponsored walk is birthed by Andrew Jordan

The sponsored walk continues annually and has now raised £435,000!

The prayer support group continues to meet every month.
- contact Gareth or Carol Williams if you want to become involved in either

WE WON'T STOP UNTIL POVERTY STOPS

50 YEARS of

•relieving suffering in the name of Christ • praying for peace
• working for justice • responding to disasters • freeing those enslaved • caring for material and spiritual needs • going to the ends of the earth • offering hope • proclaiming good news to the poor • being part of a miracle •

Thank you for being part of it.





Visiting our large congregation

Do you know how many families see Wellington as their church? It's about 760 – that's about 1600 individual people. So, can we really care for this many people? Is it possible to visit all of you in your homes? Do you even want a visit?!

Sharing in each other's lives, and supporting one another especially through sickness or crises, is what God requires of us. But it is also a great privilege. So how do we try to manage that in our large church? At the time of writing (Jan 18) the staff who visit are Alistair, Eleanor, Jonathan, Peter and Ken – between them they make over 50 visits every week. For example, if we are informed that a member is in hospital one of the staff will visit (most weeks we have 4 or 5 people in the various hospitals); there are about 70 members who are visited by our staff every month (mostly elderly with poor health), we have another 150 people who are visited bi-monthly, 6 monthly or annually, and of course there are times of bereavement or crisis when we want to be there with you.

Our staff team has enlisted about 15 volunteer visitors from our church to help. But, of course, every one of us is given the privilege and responsibility to care for each other in the "body of Christ" here in Wellington. This takes many and varied forms; within study/prayer groups and organisations, by elders in their districts and informally between members in the congregation. Sometimes it is a spontaneous single act – on other occasions it leads to much caring over a long period. We greatly value this pastoral care which occurs member to member. One or two people cannot care for our large church - we are doing it together.

Good information is vital; please fill in the CONTACT card at the end of the pews in church if you know that someone is ill or going into hospital, or if you change your address.



CONTACT US

- If you would like to get more involved
- If we need to know of an illness or a pastoral matter
- If you have changed address
- Or any other matter that's important to you

Name _____ Date _____

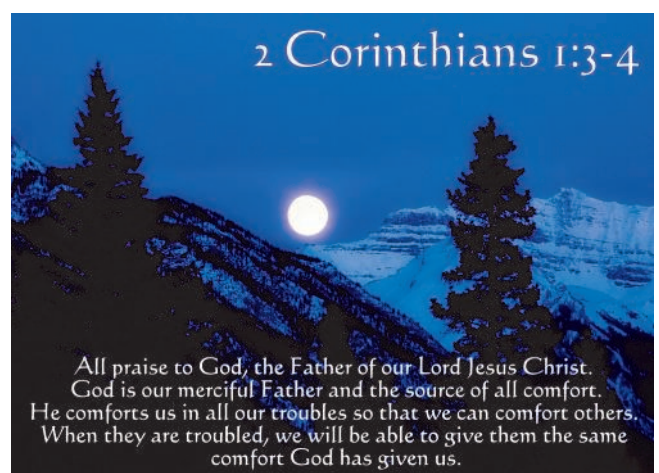
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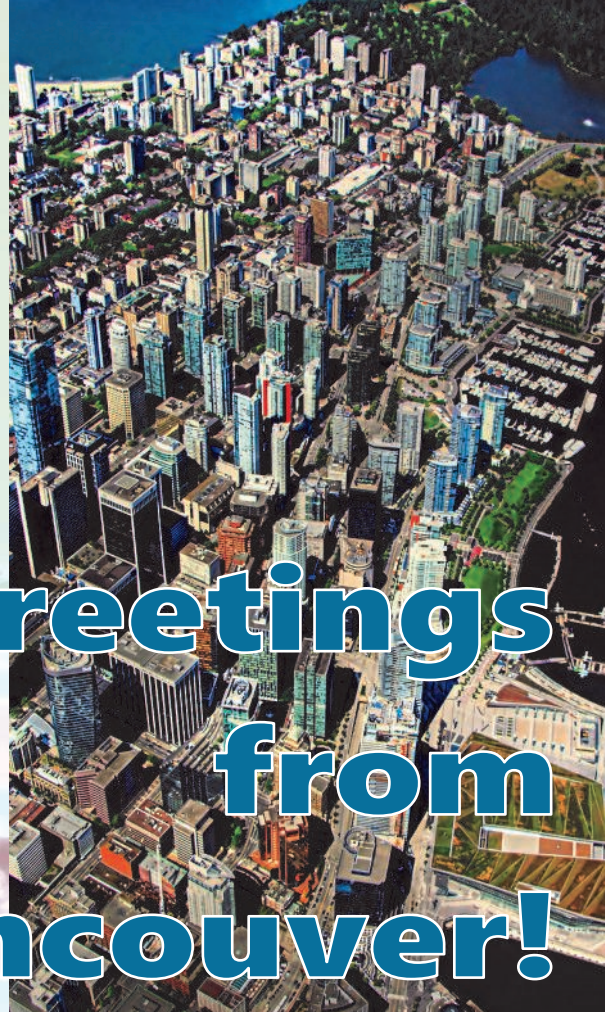
Email _____

Telephone _____

Please turn over

connect www.wellingtoncc.co.uk 020 7654 7155
26 Grouse Road Ballymena BT42 2NB





Greetings from Vancouver!

It's now been six months since I left Northern Ireland and I have to say I miss it. It was a blessing being part of Wellington Presbyterian's family/fellowship during my studies at Belfast Bible College. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the leadership and the congregation of Wellington for your support during my time there and words alone cannot be enough to express my gratitude, may God bless you. Thanks to Gary and Claire Hunter and their three boys for accommodating me during my first year and helping me settle in Northern Ireland. Thank you Ann and Robin Rossborough for accommodating me for the last 2 years, the list is long but I would like to thank everyone for your kindness, and the love you showed me as a congregation.

Life and Studies in Vancouver

For the many that I did not have the chance to say goodbye to in person or update on the next steps after studying at Belfast Bible College, here is a wee update of

that: I moved to Vancouver, Canada to study towards a Master's in Theological Studies at Regent College. So far, it has been an exciting journey with a lot of reading and information but I am enjoying the process and the learning experience. Alongside my studies, I have been working part-time and this has allowed me to interact with people who are not Christians, a chance to share what I am studying and it has, in most cases, triggered conversation about God.

So far, one of my favourite modules has been "Christian Thought and Culture". This has really challenged me to think on the kind of a disciple that I am in a modern/post-modern culture. When I say "Jesus is Lord" in my life, what does it mean to me, today, and how can I be missional in expressing and living that claim in a liberal culture? A great encouragement, as I grapple with these questions, is to know that I'm called to be "in" this world but not "of" this world. It is living in

this tension and knowing of the eschatological hope that Christ will come again and His work still goes on today, my call is to be in participation with the triune God in his work of restoration in the world.

Beside my studies, I have had the opportunity to take part in the services of Joy Fellowship, an afternoon worship service that meets in a Baptist church where most of its members are people with intellectual disabilities. One thing that has stood out for me in these meetings at Joy Fellowship is how God has called us to come before him as we are. Despite these members' intellectual disabilities they worship God with all that they are, with speech and sign language, and their disabilities are not a hindrance in the way they express themselves to God. This has made me reflect on how willing I am to be open, fully, when I come to God's presence and not let my disabled heart become a hindrance in the way I worship.

Future Plans

One of my desires has been to see people with intellectual and physical disabilities being integrated and included in the life of church worship. I hope to return to Kenya and work with people who have intellectual disabilities and their families, working with local churches on integration and inclusion in the life of the church. The plan at the moment is to go to Kenya sometime next year to do some initial preparations. I would kindly ask for your prayers for God's guidance as I prepare. Disability in most places in Kenya is still stigmatized and largely misunderstood. I desire to see a society that does not only accept people with disabilities but one that understands that we are all made in the image of God.

More Exciting Future Plans

It has just been great living in the same city as my fiancée, Carrie. We were engaged on the 26th of December 2017 here in Vancouver. I have had the chance to meet

Carrie's parents in February of this year when they visited for the Chinese New Year celebration. They are lovely people and it's been a joy getting to know them. Carrie and I are planning to get married in May next year and we ask for your prayers as we plan for the wedding and as we look forward to the future.

As I write this article, while we are in the Christian calendar's season of Lent, I am reminded of this quote by Walter Brueggemann: "when we remember that we are dust, we are made freshly aware that along with our remembering, God is remembering and regarding". We serve a God who loves and is kind and while we were lost in our own ways "God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners" (Romans 5 v 8). It is God who has remembered and regarded us as His own and has sent His son to die on the cross for our sins. May God bless you all



and despite the hardships we may encounter on this journey as we serve and live for God, may we know we are not forgotten but that we serve a remembering God who empowers, restores and is not limited by time or space.

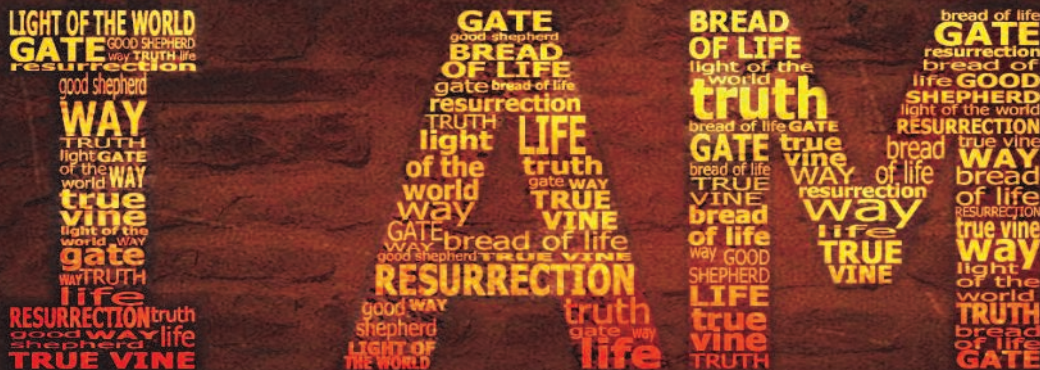
Praise be to the name of our God who lives forever.

Obadiah Kariuki

Remembrance Sunday 12 November 2017



Lois Davison, representing the Girls' Brigade and Constable Geoff Semple, PSNI, laid wreaths during the Act of Remembrance during our service on 12 November. Included are Noah (l) and Isaac McClintock (r) representing the Boys' Brigade



SEVEN THINGS JESUS SAYS ABOUT HIMSELF

I have just seen another advert for the new iPhone X. The 18th variation of Apple's smartphone is the latest since their introduction back in 2007. This new phone allows for greater ability to surf the Internet, stream media and socialize with the world. Whether it is Apple or another brand our world, for over a decade, has been filled with technology that boasts of greater access to information, freedom to interact and fulfilment in the spheres of either business or entertainment.



We now have at least one generation who feel more at home swiping their fingers across a 'tablet' than flicking through the TV Times, who are more interested in YouTube channels than TV channels and who can't fathom a place that doesn't have either Wi-Fi or mobile data. Psychologists and sociologists now refer to people born since about 1995 as the iGeneration.

You don't go far in our world without seeing teenagers, or even tots, glued to a screen. According to Dr Larry Rosen in 2010 "the typical teenager sends and receives 3,146 text messages PER MONTH... equating to sending and receiving 10 text messages per waking, non-school hour! To them a phone is not a phone, it is a portable computer they use to

tweet, Facebook, and, of course, "text, text, text" In short, the youth of today live their lives very much through their phones. They socialise on social media, count steps or play silly games to pass the time. The iGeneration is tied to their devices. Parents and youth leaders will readily admit it is a battle getting the iGeneration away from the screens and into the real world. Older generations aren't immune either as the relentless ping of emails and necessity to respond to WhatsApp or text messages is not solely a younger fad.

So what does God say to this iGeneration? Well, God's declaration is simply what he said to Moses in Exodus 3 v 14, "**I Am who I Am**". Technology companies may market themselves as the solution to our every need, making life easier, more luxurious and better. God's promise through Jesus Christ is this, "**I came that they may have life and have it abundantly**" (John 10 v 10). The plethora of smart technology corporations are not overly interested in our wellbeing as they create technology. They are driven by profit and consumerism.



To the iGeneration Jesus says, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never

thirst" (John 6 v 35); to those seeking enlightenment in the Internet Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8 v 12). And while Alexa, Siri or Google can offer a life of rest and ease, Christ makes clear, "I am the way, the truth and the Life no one comes to the father except through me." No technology can ever bridge the divide between God and man, only Jesus can. Revolutionary or advanced gadgets can never save you or me from our deepest problem, sin.

How should we, as Christians, respond to an ever-increasing technological world? Firstly we need to acknowledge that sometimes technology can help us pursue our walk with God. There are Podcasts of sermons, worship songs on YouTube and many Bible Apps, some that can even read to you. Technology for accessing God's word and encouraging Godliness can be helpful.

Michael Horton in his book, Ordinary, states "There are two easy responses to technological innovation: embrace it or reject it. As evangelicals, we have a tendency to embrace popular culture.. Ironically, while we jazz up our worship spaces with gadgets and glitz, it is often the specialists of technology and culture who caution greater reflection." We must think about what we watch, read and let influence our lives.

We are urged to, "test everything, and hold fast to what is good" in 1 Thessalonians 5 v 21. If that applies to prophecies or preaching then how much more should it apply to our Technology. Horton helpfully adds, "New Technologies can't be all that bad but they can't be all that good either. That's where wisdom comes in. Wisdom discerns not just between good and bad but between better and best." Let us develop wisdom in our use of Technology.

Technology is a tool and not the be all and end all in itself. It can become an idol in our heart. John Calvin famously wrote, "the heart is a perpetual idol factory". Anything we have can be turned into something we worship instead of God.

Maybe we should give our gadgets a break from time to time. An occasional fasting from them, perhaps, or a day in the week when we don't use them. Taking a break from the busy, noisy, techy world we live in may help us in our walk with God. After all the great I Am is the one who often speaks, not in loudness. but with a 'still small voice' (2 Kings 19 vs 11-13). Let us make space to listen to the Spirit's promptings and hear God speaking to us through His word.

Whether we are part of, or live with, the iGeneration let us yearn to be a discerning, wise generation who seek to let God, and not technology, dictate our lives. Use our technology wisely and live our lives to honour Jesus, who will be infinitely more fulfilling than all technology can offer. Can we aim to be the IAmGeneration instead of the iGeneration! Technology taking its proper place as a tool and the great I Am ruling over our use of technology.

#IAmGeneration

Jonathan Boyd



Sound within the Church

I would like to take this opportunity to update the congregation regarding the sound issues within the church. In the last edition of the Wellington Record the problems experienced over the last number of years were outlined together with the steps taken by the Church Committee in appointing an independent company to identify the issues and make recommendations to improve the listening experience.

To implement these recommendations, significant work took place within the church some weeks ago that included the replacement, repair and upgrade of some of the sound equipment, along with ongoing training for the sound team. Since this work was completed the quality and clarity of the speech and instruments has vastly improved as is evident during the Sunday services. We have received many very positive comments from members of the congregation, musicians and vocalists.

While some minor work remains to be carried out, the majority of the issues identified to improve the sound system have now been addressed. Although it can prove difficult to have the sound at a level which pleases everyone, we believe there have been very significant improvements to the listening experience. We are also very aware of the need to sustain this high standard over the coming weeks and months.

I believe the operation of the sound desk is an important ministry within the church and we are very supportive of the sound operators and very much appreciate their continued dedication and commitment as they seek to serve the Lord in this way. I would ask that if anyone has any issues with the sound in the church that they raise these directly with myself, rather than with members of the sound team.

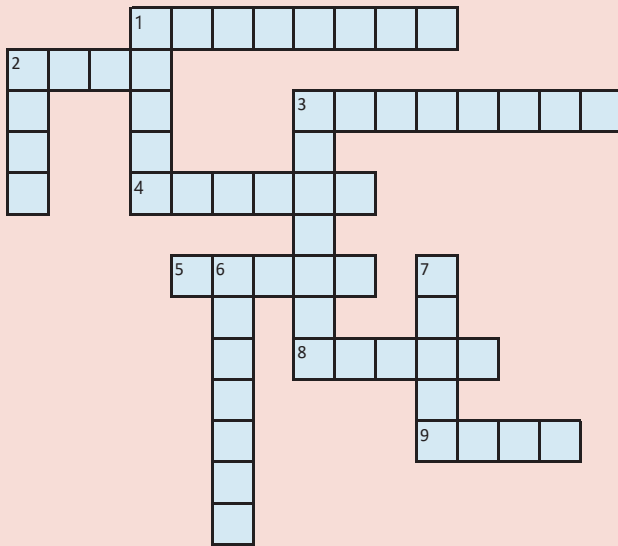
Finally I would like to thank you, the congregation, for your continued patience as we have worked through these difficult issues. We have sought God's guidance and leading throughout this process and pray that the improvements achieved will help bring Glory to God as we worship and witness together in this place.

David Keys, Church Secretary

For our younger readers

(And those a bit older with some spare time!)

CROSSWORD - Key words for Christians



Across

- One of the fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5 vs 22-23)
- I am the way, the truth and the _____. (John 14 v 6)
- The Bible says if we are in Christ we are a new _____. (2 Corinthians 5 v 17)
- What does Peter say they must do to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? (Acts 2 v 38)
- How many thousand were baptised? (Acts 2 v 41)
- We all fall _____ of the glory of God. (Romans 3 v 23)
- What will be blotted out? (Acts 3 v 19)

Down

- Who was the speaker? (Acts 2 v 38)
- This is one of the fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5 v 22-23)
- What must we do with our mouth? Romans 10 vs 9-10)
- Faith comes from what? (Romans 10 v 17)
- The Bible states God will do this for us? (1 Peter 5 v 7)

Word search - find the words listed in the grid!

T H O R N S W Y S M L A P N G
K R I S E N Y C E N O T S E C
R E T S O O R D R K H O T V R
B E L I E V E S E O N H B I U
Y T P M E Z D X S Y S O C G C
E C I F I R C A S E A S D R I
E V I L A L N B M O T R B O F
S I N U I N N A I L S C T F Y
W V G F A E N P I L A T E E S
B R E A D E Y A R P D I E D B

ALIVE	BELIEVE	BETRAYED	BREAD
CROSS	CRUCIFY	DIED	DONKEY
EMPTY	FORGIVEN	GETHSEMANE	GUARDS
HOSANNA	LIFE	NAILS	PALMS
PILATE	PRAYED	RISEN	ROOSTER
SACRIFICE	SIN	SON	STONE
	THORNS	TOMB	

CRYPTOGRAM

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
8	5	1	3	9	18	22	20	21	2	11	23	26	13	24	17	15	19	16	25	14	4	10	7	6	12

21 8 26 25 20 9 19 9 16 14 19 19 9 1 25 21 24 13 8 13 3

25 20 9 23 21 18 9

This puzzle is called a Cryptogram! The Key at the top lists the letters from A to Z with a corresponding number below. The bottom part contains a well known phrase related to Easter. Fill in the letters that correspond to the numbers below the blanks to reveal the phrase.



March 2018



Creative Christmas Decorations in the Church at Christmas
 Thanks to Joan Graham and Sarah Goodrich for the decoration in the foyer (below left)
 and the Choir members for the one at the front of the church (below right)





Tots & Co Christmas Party!



March 2018

A Spirit Inspired Homeless Box!

My six week stint as a Well leader with the brilliant P3 and P4's was coming to an end. Our last story together was of Jesus' compassion toward the leper who was homeless outside the city walls. As we reflected on the story considering how we, as followers of Jesus, should be more like Him, a small voice in my head suggested putting together a box for a homeless person. A cardboard box was found and the Well kids were so enthusiastic as they suggested what we might fill it with. I came away from Church that Sunday encouraged and determined that I would put our thoughts into action. Truth be told I had no idea of the practicalities or how the process would work!

Throughout the following week our box was gradually filled - hat, scarf, food, hot water bottle, umbrella, toothbrush, toothpaste and many more invaluable items - some of which were purchased by one P4 boy's own pocket money! We also included a Christmas card telling the recipient our story and, in the midst of whatever they were going through, that God loved them.

Yet the delivery of the box, and to whom, still eluded me!

That Thursday a patient called Robbie (Brennan) came into our dental surgery for his routine check-up. The Spirit was about to move unexpectedly and powerfully. In the midst of general chatter I asked what he did at Christmas, which was fast approaching. 'Oh, for the last three years I've cooked dinner for the homeless, for an organisation in Belfast, and I run wood turning workshops for them too'. There in front of me was the answer to my prayers - Robbie took the box, gave great practical advice, and reported back fully on what had been the end result.

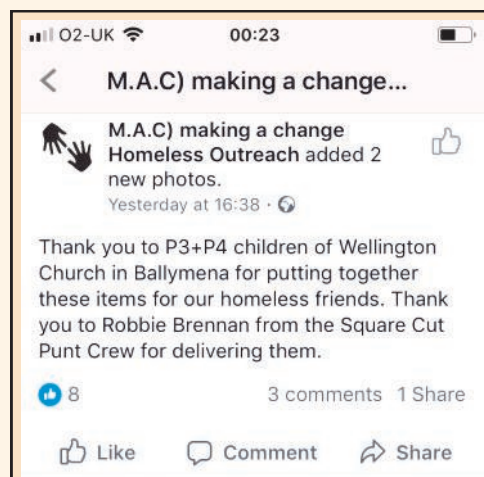
The Spirit then acted further the following Sunday as I retold our story of what had happened during the Children's Address. Thank you so much to all of you who offered further boxes, gave generous donations and generally enquired as to how they could get involved. This was way beyond anything I could ever have orchestrated. It was all of the Father's making and none of mine.

The work that started in such a small way goes on. Feel free to ask me for information at any time as I look forward to seeing how this Spirit inspired mission continues to grow!

Andrea Currie



Andrea hands over the first box to Robbie Brennan



M.A.C) Facebook page thanking both the Wellington kids and Robbie with picture showing contents of box





Roy Walker

INTRODUCING MEN TO JESUS ... AND THE CHURCH TO MEN

Can you believe it? Well it depends on the source. That is the title of our new teaching series to men across the country. There are so many opinions which must yield to the authority of scripture. Why? Because of the words of John 17 v 17, **"Thy word is truth."**

We are in the 5th year of going deeper into God's word for the serious men of faith who want to understand the challenges facing us in these difficult times and, like the men of Issachar, know what to do (1 Chronicles 12 v 32). Rather than read books on this and that, the only way to be truly satisfied as a man of God and be filled with the spirit of God is as clearly stated in Matthew 5 v 6 to ... **"hunger and thirst after righteousness"**.

I am so encouraged as we unpack Biblical truth that cut across denominational lines. The Bible is, after all, a book for all believers. Many different fellowships are represented and those faithful saints are prepared to examine afresh sound doctrine. In an age where anything goes, even in some churches, the sons of God must be led by the spirit of God and not by **'itching ears'** preaching (2 Timothy 4 v 3), which is unbalanced, not biblical and one dimensional. We encourage the men to read what only can be believed - **SCRIPTURE** - and to be careful what version you uphold. The word must be read as follows: **TEXT** i.e. what does it say;

CONTEXT i.e. to whom is it written and **CO-TEXT** i.e. another verse or passage from the Word that confirms the text. This has been eye opening for guys who are seeing so much more as the Holy Spirit leads into all truth.

Our Men's Conference this year at the Stormont hotel saw the auditorium jam packed with men from all over the country, some from as far away as Scotland. Thirty men decided to follow Christ while other guys wanting a deeper walk with their Master after realising they had just been going through the motions. Plans are to continue with the Conference, hopefully for years to come. Many of our Men's Groups are having outreach events such as cycling, mountain walks, BBQs and trips to sporting events. Unserved men are invited to do life with those who have a desire to fulfil the great commission and take the message of Christ's love and grace into all the world. For us that's Ireland. When you consider that as little as 3% of the adult male population are regular in church attendance across the United Kingdom we have a massive job of work to do.

Let me encourage you to be intentional in your evangelism and determined to not only pray for the lost but to be practical and generous with your time and resources. Many years ago I had a word from the Lord that was from Revelation 3 v 8 to the faithful

church at Philadelphia (the Church of brotherly love) ... **"behold I have set before you an open door and no man can shut it..."**. Whether it's for CVM or invitations to speak on a Saturday or Sunday, I have been so blessed to serve on average 2-3 times a week in most denominations across our land.

The greatest joy remains when people say 'yes' to following Jesus. When the word goes forth with the anointing of God, lives continue to be transformed. It's still true that if you get the man you get the family. So all of you men get busy, get connected, and get ready for God to use **YOU** as you step out in faith. If you're reading this and you believe in God that's good, but it's not enough. You must be born again and you must know Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. Why not ask Him into your heart and receive the forgiveness He alone offers. Freedom is through knowing the truth (John 8 v 32). Everyone who is willing is invited into a relationship with Christ Jesus. In Revelation 22 v 17 we read,

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

God invites you through His word ... now it's over to you!!



Eliphas Gitonga

BREAD for KENYA

I first met Gitonga when he was a young boy growing up in his Tharakan village of Kajampau. Like most boys his age, Gitonga worked hard to help support his family, who lived in a traditional mud hut. Herding the cattle and goats was his main job. His day started before dawn and he had to walk many miles in the blazing sun to graze the animals.

Gitonga worked hard at school and his determination to study and pass his primary school exams enabled him to get a place at Secondary School.

Life in Tharaka is tough and many families struggle with poverty, disease, unemployment and, at times, famine. It is often the case that young boys and girls don't get the opportunity to complete their education for lack of funding. Gitonga's family were not exempt from such difficulties.

During the course of his education Gitonga faced the heartache of not being allowed back to school because his family couldn't pay his fees. Thankfully, through BREAD's Education Project, Gitonga's school fees were paid and he continued to excel. He went on to University to gain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, an MA in Physiology, an MA in Public Health and a PhD in Reproductive Health!!

It would be understandable to think that with all his acquired academic success, and the new opportunities and job offers this brought for Gitonga, that he would choose to forget the place where he grew up. But Gitonga is a young man after God's own heart and has deep compassion and love for his people. He longs to help them physically and focused his PhD Thesis on the "Utilization of mobile phone messages to enhance uptake of focused antenatal care in Tharaka, Kenya."

Gitonga also longs to help his people spiritually by doing all that he can to reach them with the Gospel and love of Christ. Gitonga started a church in Tharaka called GAN (Gospel Across the Nations). This small church has about fifty attending and Gitonga preaches there regularly. He also organises Evangelistic Outreach Teams each year, visiting homes throughout Tharaka. In June 2017, together with three members of the BREAD Committee, I had the privilege of joining Gitonga and his team of

thirty evangelists. We visited Tharaka homes to talk about Jesus. We were challenged by the team's passion and determination to walk miles in the heat to share the Good News of Jesus. Sixty eight Tharaka people gave their lives to Christ!

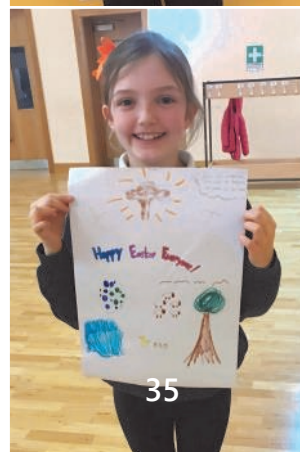
In discussion with Gitonga and some friends I asked them if they would like BREAD to reopen a Housing Scheme initiated some years ago when I lived and worked in Tharaka. It used a simple but effective idea, blocks made from cement and subsoil, pressed in an iron box and then baked in the sun. It took one thousand of these blocks to build a small house 20ft by 12ft. The Tharaka people loved their new homes, which were affordable and mortgage free! To my surprise they all said 'No! Please give us more help with educating our young people.'

BREAD continues to help Tharaka students finance their education at Secondary School and College or University through the Education Project. As a committee we would like to thank all those in Wellington who have donated to BREAD over the years, enabling students, like Gitonga, to fulfil their potential, not just academically but spiritually as well.

As BREAD celebrates 20 years of work in Kenya, we would ask that you continue to partner with us in prayer, asking God to enable BREAD to share His love.

Norman Kennedy





Thanks to the P6 GB girls!

The GB Junior Section P6 girls were asked to design a front cover for our magazine with an Easter Theme. Derek McKinstry and Honor Hall, from the Paint Pot, judged the entries and decided that Olivia Moody's design should be used for the March edition!

The main picture shows Olivia with her design which reminds us of Easter's message of hope through Jesus, our Saviour, who rose again from the dead. **He is Risen! Hallelujah!**

The other P6 girls are pictured with their designs.



to the communal as Christians need each other to grow in maturity. God spoke to me - "You could use those syringe driver bags to engage women from all walks of life - both Christian and non-Christian. I want you to do this."

Over the next 2 weeks I was reminded of that appeal on Facebook through various events in my own life - a young woman I knew was going through treatment for breast cancer and I had a scare myself. I thought, "OK God, how is this going to happen? - I'm not fantastic at stitching but show me the people that you want me to speak to about this and lead me on."

SewCrafty has been meeting fortnightly since October and is currently led by Amanda Butler, Helen Lewis, Lynda Willighan and myself, Claire Hunter.

How did it all come about, who is involved and what do we do?

Last summer I noticed a post on Facebook from Marie Curie asking for people to make syringe driver bags. Syringe drivers, commonly used by cancer patients, are small portable battery-powered machines, the size of a pencil case, to administer continuous doses of pain relief or other medication. A brightly coloured washable bag to hold the driver allows patients to move about more freely, as well as covering the driver itself.

"Oh, some women in our church could make those!" I said, pushing it out of my mind. God, however, had other plans!

At the beginning of September, some ladies from the church attended the "Alive" conference in Assembly Buildings, Belfast (see report in the December 2017 edition of the Wellington Record). The speaker was Cindy Bennett Brown, a lecturer at Belfast Bible College. During that event I felt that the Holy Spirit was speaking to me, particularly when Pauline Kennedy challenged us to "start the conversation" about women's ministry in our congregations, not just what it is but why we do it, in whatever form it takes. We need to shift our thinking about being alive in Christ from the purely personal

Following the morning service on Sunday 17 September, I felt the Holy Spirit prompt me to share my thoughts regarding the Syringe driver bags with Lynda Willighan (a great seamstress and generally able to design anything). Lynda was very enthusiastic and, as we chatted, Helen Lewis (the Crafter!) walked past - the chances of that happening at that time was rare - and again I felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to include Helen in the conversation. I explained to her that I felt I was being led to start a group to make these syringe driver bags at our church and that the group should be open to other



Completed syringe driver bags



Selection of fidget blankets
Wellington Record

people in the local area. Perhaps this was a way of bringing people from our local community into the church as many are affected, either directly or indirectly, by cancer. Maybe we could share our faith in informal surroundings with them while supporting this worthwhile cause. Why not combine a craft element within the group? Helen's eyes lit up at that point. Amanda Butler and her had been burdened about starting a craft group for years, but the timing never seemed quite right. This group would hopefully appeal to women of all backgrounds and ages.

The four of us arranged to meet and pray and plan how the group might take shape. Our thoughts were that we wanted the group to take on other projects after the syringe driver bags. Our emphasis would be on making things for others and any money we raised could be used to support other worthwhile causes.

When I approached Geoff Marshall, the Clerk of Session, he was really encouraging and soon afterwards the Session gave their approval for "SewCrafty" to go ahead. Everything came together very quickly after that. Toni Bassett informed us that the council has a Sew Efficiency programme and can lend up to 20 sewing machines and kits (thread, scissors, material

etc.) to charity/non-profit groups. They were duly contacted and we borrowed 10 machines for a month, which was later extended - and we still have them!

A poster, designed by Naomi Willighan, was placed in the local Spar and we prayed that others would come along, not just those from Wellington. Our first night was 6 October and, although numbers were small, we were not discouraged as God was clearly in the whole venture. He had been slowly moving things into place for years, before finally bringing us together. We firmly believe this is what God wants us to do. We started by making a mixture of syringe driver bags for children and adults and gave these to Lorna Stephens who passed them onto the Cancer ward at the Royal Victoria Hospital (Marie Curie had enough by then!) They were greatly appreciated.

In November we spent an evening making Remembrance Day tags and in December we knitted stockings for Anita Baird to give to 'Charis', an additional needs group that she volunteers with in Belfast. The stockings were filled with sweets and distributed to her group and to the 'Crocus' group at Galgorm. Some were also given to Syrian families in Belfast that Toni Bassett is involved with.

The evening before Christmas we made an embossed and gilded picture and had a special supper. Since January our emphasis has been on producing fidget blankets and muffs for those suffering from dementia. These provide sensory tactile stimulation that has a great calming effect and reduces anxiety in sufferers. These were completed in record time, mainly because Joy McKeown made 5 in one go! They were presented to Kate Russell from the Royal who came to our meeting on 9th February. Kate was delighted with our efforts and thanked the group for their kindness.

Our numbers have increased since that first night - Thank you God! The Wellington Room now buzzes on alternative Friday evenings as new friendships are formed, new skills learned and life, fun and fellowship are shared together. From the photos you can see that all ages (and abilities!) are involved in SewCrafty. You don't need to be an expert as we can all learn from each other - and in more ways than one!

If you are free after Easter please come along and join with us - and also let us know if you have a project that SewCrafty could help with.

Claire Hunter



Remembrance Day tags
March 2018



Sew Crafty members hard at work



Recipe!

We're trying a new recipe page! Here's one to start with! Why not share your favourites with the other members of the congregation - send them to the editor!

Chocolate Chip Hot Cross Buns



Ingredients:

1 (7g sachet) fast action bread yeast
180ml warm milk
500g plain flour
80g butter or Stork margarine
pinch of salt
60g caster sugar
2 teaspoons mixed spice
1 teaspoon cinnamon
4 tablespoons candied mixed peel
1 egg, beaten
1(100g bar) dark chocolate, broken up
extra flour for dusting

For the crosses

75g plain flour
75ml water
few drops of almond extract

For the sugar glaze

80g caster sugar
3 tablespoons water

Method: (Preparation: 30min - Cook: 30min - Extra time: 2hr proofing - Ready in: 3hr)

1. Add the dried yeast and warm milk to a large bowl. Cover and set aside for 5 to 10 minutes, until it looks frothy.
2. Sift the flour into another bowl and use your fingers to rub in the margarine, until it looks like bread-crumbs. Add salt, sugar, spices and candied mixed peel. Pour in the yeast-milk mixture, and add beaten egg and chocolate pieces. Mix to form a dough (it will be sticky).
3. On a lightly floured surface, knead the dough for 5 - 10 minutes.
4. Rub some cooking oil around the surface of a large mixing bowl and place the dough into it. Cover with a clean tea towel and leave to rise in a warm place for about 1 to 2 hours, or until doubled in size.
5. Knead again for a few minutes, then cut into 12 even sized buns. Place in a deep-sided, lightly greased or lined 23cm (9 inch) baking tin. Cover with tea towel and leave in a warm place to rise again (about 30 to 40 minutes this time). Preheat the oven to 200 degrees C/Gas mark 6.
6. For the crosses: mix the flour and water together to form a soft paste. Flavour with almond extract (optional). Spoon into a clear plastic sandwich bag. Seal and snip off one of the corners, then pipe crosses onto each bun.
7. Bake for 30 minutes, until golden brown.
8. For the sugar glaze: dissolve 80g sugar in a small pan with 3 tablespoons water. Brush the buns with the glaze while they are still hot. Cool on a wire rack until the glaze has set.

Eat warm, cold or toasted with butter.

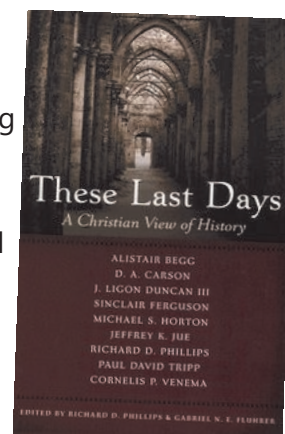
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P&R Publishing, 2011

ISBN 9781596382510

For many of us as we observe the world and its brokenness, we respond by saying that the Lord's return must be soon. Certainly, the whole field of Christian eschatology (the Study of the Last days) has thrilled and intrigued Christians for many years. However, it is an area of much confusion and hypothesis because many pastors, preachers and theologians have taken John's famous vision, the book of Revelation, and used it as a template to chart world events or to predict when "the End" will come.

Yet, the biblical picture is much more complex. Christ even states; "concerning that Day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the sun, but the Father only" (Matthew 24 v 36). So what are we to make of it all? It is impossible to deal with the plethora of questions about the end times in a short article. However, I can point you to a book that I have found useful.



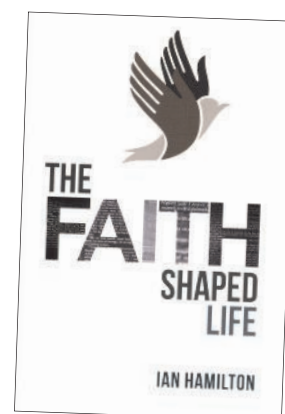
'These Last Days' seeks to address many of these questions from a Biblical perspective, being based on the thirty-sixth meeting of the Philadelphia Conference of Reformed Theology in 2010. Richard Philips highlights, "Reformed Christians have often shunned the field of eschatology, surrendering end-times doctrine to more popular (but less Biblical) schemes." The book seeks to address specific concerns regarding the Last Days from a Biblical perspective, analysing the full council of scripture regarding "These Last Days." It addresses questions not only specifically about aspects of the book of Revelation but also about resurrection, pastoral concerns about death and how to interact regarding differing Eschatological views. It is a worthwhile read if you have an interest in any aspect of The End Times!

A Faith Shaped Life... by Ian Hamilton

(The Banner of Truth Trust, 2013 ISBN 9781848712492)

Ian Hamilton's "A Faith Shaped Life" states, "The life of Faith is not easy. The Christian is engaged in an unrelenting warfare with the world, the flesh and the devil. Every step forward will be contested. The one thing that will keep the believer on track and pressing on is moment by moment trust in God, in His word, in the goodness and perfection of His purposes, and in His exceedingly great and precious promises. 'This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith' (1 John 5 v 4)".

This short but ultimately very fruitful devotional book has been a blessing to my own walk with God. Hamilton takes several topics about Christian life, infusing them with a loving manner and good theology, and pointing the believer to important roles that faith plays in Christian living. Each of the book's 43 chapters is only a few short pages of captivating and practical points and you can dip in and out of it or enjoy it daily. A Faith Shaped Life is a beautiful, thoughtful and genuinely inspiring read for any Christian. I heartily recommend this book and, as Hamilton states, "my hope is that [this] will provide an encouragement to your own daily walk of faith with the Lord."



Deaths 2017/2018

25 Nov	George Barr	Carniny Road	Interred in Ballymena Cemetery
30 Nov	Elizabeth Smyth	Carniny Road	Interred in 2nd Broughshane Cemetery
9 Dec	Winifred (Winnie) Telford	Woodtown Road	Interred in Ballymena Cemetery
10 Dec	Raymond Ardis	Old Galgorm Dale	Interred in Carnmoney Cemetery
5 Jan	David McClean	Cloughwater Road	Interred in Buckna New Cemetery
25 Jan	Helen McGill	Toome Road	Funeral private
4 Feb	John Smith	Tullymore Park	Interred in Cullybackey Reformed Presbyterian Church Burying Ground
6 Feb	Sarah (Sadie) Murphy	Old Park Avenue	Funeral Private
17 Feb	James Lamont	Wakehurst Road	Interred in Ballee Cemetery
18 Feb	Isobel McCartney	Waveney Fold	Interred in Ballymena Cemetery

Marriages



7th September 2017

Jason Aaron York and Celena Holmes

27th July 2017

Nicola McNair and George Cadogan

If you would like a photograph of a wedding included in the magazine please forward to the Editor



2nd Ballymena Company of the Boys' Brigade

(Back Row l-r) Philip Tweed, Ross Crawford, Michael Simpson, Derek Murdock, Edgar Mairs, Desmond Knowles, David Clarke, John Wilson

(Front row l-r) Samuel Moore, Norman Clarke, Ernest McKeown, Robin Clarke, Sandy Mairs (Captain), Dennis Leith, David Ewart

Thanks to David Ewart for sharing this photo which was taken in the early 1960s by Liam Glass