



Wellington Record

December 2018

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CONNECTIONS

A Christmas multi-media special | Sunday 16th Dec 11.00am

The Christmas story is a life-changing experience and using drama, singing and visual displays we will explore one of the greatest stories ever told / No church experience required!

The CAROL SERVICE

Sunday 23rd Dec 6.30pm

It's good that some things never change. Our traditional candle light service will take you down memory lane as you relive the best songs of the festive season. Why not take a break from the fever pitch of Christmas shopping and rediscover the importance of the festive season.

Christmas MORNING

Tuesday 25th Dec 10.30am

Everyone is invited to this relaxed, fun filled service. Designed for all age groups we will celebrate the true meaning of Christmas before we all indulge in too much turkey and stuffing.

All events held at Wellington Presbyterian Church

Please plan to join us for our Christmas Services. Why not invite someone you know who may not be a regular church attender and bring them along with you?

Church website
www.wellingtonpc.co.uk



Get the message on-line at
www.wellingtonpc.co.uk

iTunes podcast - search for
'Wellington Presbyterian Church'

Want a DVD or CD of a SERVICE?

- contact the church weekdays
between 10am and 12 noon
telephone: 2564 7185
- ask your District Elder
- ask a member of the
Ministry Team

Thanks to David Milligan for the photo on the front cover

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Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. Charity No. 105536

Welcome to the Christmas edition of our church magazine.

Over the past weeks I have been impressed by the skill and dedication of those who work in the medical profession. Having witnessed the workings of an Emergency Department, a Fractures Clinic, X-ray Departments, a Day Surgery Unit, an Operating Theatre (I don't remember a lot about it!) and finally a Wrist Clinic. I was overwhelmed by the concern, care and attention I received. These workers spend long hours, meeting patients with conditions that range from fairly minor to those that are life changing and life threatening. But they always manage to act professionally, treating everyone with respect, dignity and even a degree of sympathy.

As I considered the dedication each had shown to their chosen profession and then started, rather painfully at times, to put together this magazine I was struck by the dedication and devotion of so many of our members in Wellington as they serve God. People who put Jesus first in their lives and themselves second.

I believe you will be challenged as you read these pages and I wonder will you consider where Jesus is in your life. Nigel Whann on page 23 says, 'The challenge each of us should consider is are we content to be merely consumers or are we willing to step forward and help'.

Are you a consumer or a helper??

May the peace and joy of Christmas live in your heart all year long.

Mervyn Orr, Editor



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A Reason to be Joyful

Rev Alistair Bates



I hope you look forward to Christmas? I know I do. As I write this article Halloween is just over and already the shops are sparkling with Christmas merchandise. Soon, late night shopping will welcome throngs of prospective customers each will part with well-earned cash with the hoping of finding a suitable bargain.

Music will filter through the air not as white noise to be ignored, like our domestic washing machines. Rather, the familiar tones of Christmas hits and carols will reassure us that the season has arrived. Of course, those living in Ballymena will tune their ears to our local pride, Radio Cracker. A long established tradition in Ballymena, where charity giving and Christmas cheer combine, to remind us of the real reason for the season.

Behind closed doors in the evening tinder sticks are strategically placed over firelighters. With the evening meal appropriately digested we nestle in soft seats and are comforted by the warm glow of wood-burner or open fire. Twinkling in the background fairy lights dance to tune of our expectations that Christmas will be a time of fun, relaxation and appropriate celebration. With the prospect of a

few days off work and children daydreaming of a white Christmas countdowns begin.

A daily treat of a chocolate extracted from our advent calendar reminds us that only a few days remain to the most anticipated celebration of all, that Christmas has come. Yet, unless sufficiently reminded, the buzz, inherited expectations and preparation rituals can do little to adequately prepare us for the arrival of our Messiah.

The stark reality of Mary and Joseph's preparation are a long way from our contemporary equivalents. Their journey was altogether more difficult and certainly more life changing than our own.

It began with an unexpected revelation. Essentially just getting on with their lives they were making entirely different preparations. As a couple they were preparing for their forthcoming marriage and probably, like everyone else, had dreams of a nice, ordinary life. Yet, God's plans for them were different. Chosen by God she would bear His only begotten Son. She did not invite God to consider her for this role. It was given to her by God, presumably because He knew she had the tenacity and courage to

bear it. At such a tender age she was not entirely ready for it but by the grace of God would grow into it.

The journey to Bethlehem was not by the comfort of first class carriage and no options on the Internet to avail of luxury accommodation. Donkey travel is somewhat uncomfortable at the best of times, but negotiating it when heavily pregnant, might be considered unadvisable. I am sure the prospective of appropriate travel insurance had been negated by the terms and conditions appended to the policy.

If only they could have booked in advance their stay would have been altogether more comfortable. A stable is a long way from a deluxe or even standard room. In our contemporary equivalent, just tick the box and not only will we receive the customary towels and toiletries, but breakfast and evening meal could be thrown in for good measure.

A stable rather than a delivery suite, a husband rather than a midwife was Mary's only option, and poor Joseph, he knew nothing about birthing plans or pre-natal classes. All things considered this is hardly the best preparation for the birth of our Messiah.

Added to the discomfort and uncertainty, Mary and Joseph are oblivious to the political attention and associated risk that such a birth will attract. Herod was not the kindest Monarch that had ever reigned. Not even the courtesy of a congratulations card. He sent his own death squad to neutralize the threat of this little contender. Not only was Jesus at risk but his earthly parents too. So much so, that the donkey transport they had arrived on would need to find a few extra gears on their departure.

As I reflect upon my preparations for Christmas they seem a world apart from those of Jesus' parents. Mary and Joseph's travail under pressure should not lead us to inappropriate sadness

or quilt. Rather, faced with the blessings of the Messiah, we should celebrate with immense gratitude that they showed tenacity in the face of significant pressure.

On that first Christmas morning, the greatest of all children was borne – the Son of God. There was and never can be another child like him. The one who was fully divine had added to his essential nature perfect manhood. God had truly become a man. The mystery and wonder of this should dazzle us until He comes again and then we will be able to celebrate it properly without the distractions of this earthly life. Let us begin our celebrations early this year, or at least make a concerted effort to

begin before anyone else next year.

No chart hit, log fire, or string of Christmas lights can compare with the songs of angels and the light of the world. The birth of the Messiah borne into humble surroundings coupled to the courage and tenacity of his first parents is a reminder that not only did God believe this was a message worth hearing, but so did they. Now all those years later we have an opportunity to tell it too. That all those years ago it was declared in Luke 2 v 11,

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."



Maud's 109th Birthday

On 3 July this year our oldest member reached the amazing age of 109!

Maud Nicholl, who still lives in her own house, was born on 3 July 1909, some 5 years before the start of the First World War.

Maud is pictured holding the 10th card she has received from the queen.

Among those who visited Maud on her birthday were the Rt Rev Dr Charles McMullen, Moderator of the General Assembly, and Rev Alistair Bates.

Congratulations Maud!

11 November 2018



Wreaths of Remembrance were laid in the church during the Remembrance Service. Daniel Hickey laid the wreath on behalf of the GB and BB accompanied by GB members Sarah and Aileen Macfarlane, and Constable Geoff Semple on behalf of the PSNI.



Members of the Anchor Boys made poppies and created a special banner denoting the Centenary of the 1918 Armistice that brought the First World War to an end.

Welcome to Wellington Women

Eleanor Drysdale

Who have been some of the most influential women in your life?

For me it has been my grandmother, a teacher in secondary school called Jean Kyle, Kathleen Barr in my home congregation of Stormont, Sue Gilmore at Bible College, Kathleen Lindsay in Holywood church... to name but a few who have encouraged and challenged me along the way, in how I live my life and live out my faith.

Nancy Demoss Wolgemuth in her book *Adorned* writes:

Imagine older women investing themselves in the lives of younger women, blessing whole families and churches. Imagine younger women widening their circle to include women who've walked further down the road. Imagine women of all ages and seasons being transformed by the gospel, displaying its beauty and making it believable to those around them.

It was about 2 years ago that I listened to Pauline Kennedy speak at Female Focus, challenging us to think about Women's ministry, what it was, and what it would look like in our church. The women were invited in groups to write out their responses to a variety of questions. This quote by Nancy Demoss Wolgemuth probably covered many of the things written by the women that night. It showed a hunger for a deeper relationship with other women and particularly with the older women in our congregation.

Last year Eileen McClintock, who had been leading Presbyterian Women in Wellington, indicated that she felt the time was right to step down, and the committee of Female Focus was at the stage of stepping down also. Having talked and met with both committees, we felt that the time was right to bring the two groups together, and hence Wellington Women was formed.



A new committee was formed with women from both groups, under the leadership of Anne Backus and Lorna Stephens, with Marie Montgomery as secretary, Ruth Wilson as treasurer, and Marilyn Mairs as prayer secretary. The committee is made up of Hazel Bates, Avril Chapman, Deborah Fullerton, Jennifer Graham, Heather Marshall, Eileen McClintock, Nichola McClelland and Eleanor Drysdale.

The launch of the new group took place on Saturday 29 September, with guests Pauline Kennedy and Karen Craig, home vice president of Presbyterian Women. Pauline shared on her work with women and the vision for the work throughout the Presbyterian Church, and Karen shared on the projects that we are supporting through Presbyterian Women this year - International Justice Mission and Trinity House Care Home in Garvagh.

The hall looked terrific on the night. The back drop to the stage was created by Paula Whyte, made up with flowers which had the names of women and girls from the congregation written on each petal, making a beautiful picture.

As always when a group of women get together there was food involved. Thank you to all who gave of their time to prepare the meal and to the men of Men Aloud who came to serve the meal - they did a brilliant job.

One of the most special parts of the night for me was near the end, when we invited women to get up from their seats and go speak with an older woman. Whilst it started slowly, gradually women were moving all around the hall and sharing.

It is only a start, but we meet on alternate Tuesday nights at 7:45pm in Aroma. We want to make it a place where women will come and share, not just with their usual group, but will get to know other women in the church, and for that to then flow from a Tuesday night to a Sunday, and into every time we meet together, in or out of church.

We continue to be part of Presbyterian Women and support the mission projects. But there are some new things; we currently have three women representing three different generations who pray together for , and we are also looking at how we can support and encourage the work of Girls' Brigade. So, if you are free why not join with us? We would love to see you!





Stephanie Houston

A year in Wellington!



Stephanie has embarked on a one-year placement in Wellington as part of the PCI Intern Scheme.

To find out a little more about Stephanie and the Intern Scheme, we posed her some questions.

Introduce yourself to our readers?

I'm Stephanie and I'm the youth intern for the year here in Wellington. I'm from Antrim and still live at home with my Mum, Dad, little sister (Kerry) and, most importantly, my little Westie, Oscar. I've got a History and International Politics degree from Queen's, which, as much as I enjoyed it, I am thankful is over. I'm a lover of a good Netflix series, music, cooking, travelling, everything Christmassy and a nice wee coffee shop!

The one thing that defines me the most is my relationship with Jesus. I gave my life to God when I was 14. I went to Gb from the age of 3 and started going to Youth fellowship when I was 11 but it wasn't until I was 14 that I truly saw and believed that God loved me and sent His Son to save me so that I could have a relationship with Him and I knew that I had to give my life to Him.

Tell us something about yourself that not many folk know?

This is a hard one. Not many people know that I have a strange fear of tomatoes, especially tomato sauce, it completely freaks me out. I don't think many people know

that I was an Irish Dancer for 8 or 9 years either.

Tell us a little about your home congregation?

My home congregation is Muckamore Presbyterian down in Dunadry, where the wonderful Peter Dickinson is the minister. It's quite a rural church with many a farmer, but from the second I walked into Muckamore I was greeted into such a loving and caring fellowship which has come to be like an extended family to me.

What were you involved in there?

I was involved in so much within Muckamore and really loved serving there in different ways. I led the youth fellowship, I'm an officer in GB for the explorer and brigader sections, I have various roles within the Holiday Bible club each year and in children's church as well as being part of the worship team and choir. In June just past I was part of an all age mission team that headed out to Koprivnica in Croatia. I was the youngest in the team and the oldest was 80, it definitely was one of the greatest experiences I've had and I learnt so much through it.

What are you doing in Wellington?

I'm the youth intern so most of my focus is within some of the youth organisations. I'm involved with Collective on Sundays and in The Net on Saturday nights. I've also been helping in tots zone on a Sunday Morning, which has been probably the area where I'm being pushed right out my comfort zone, but I am learning something new there each week.

As well as this, I've been working to start a mentoring scheme called one to one that allows young people to be individually discipled by someone in our congregation who older than them. It's a chance for both of them to read the Bible with someone, pray with each other and learn from each other.

Tell us about the Presbyterian Intern scheme?

It's a programme that is focused on developing young leaders while placing them within a local congregational setting to contribute to the ministry there from September to August. We get training through a ministry-related course, so for me that's a Children's Ministry course in Union College,

and a monthly training day alongside other interns. This year there are 8 other interns working in a range of congregations across Northern Ireland.

The scheme seeks to invest in, equip and release young leaders into our church and culture with the hope to develop “fresh and future leaders within our denomination, and secondly to resource the work of congregations at a local level.”

Why did you apply?

Finishing Uni is very scary when everything you thought you wanted to do becomes everything you have no desire to do at all, for me that was teaching. The whole way through Uni I was convinced this was my next step, but when it came to applying for PGCE courses I quickly discovered that I had no motivation to apply or desire to teach history whatsoever. After a good few months of praying I had a chat with one of my close friends who advised me to do what I love, and the only thing I could think of was serving within the church, so my initial reaction was to apply for a Theology Masters, but when my offer came through it was like an anti-climax and I could not see myself in education for another year, the thought of going back to Uni started to make me really anxious so I knew that was not where God was calling me to be, but I had no idea where that was.

I had met Rick Hill for coffee one morning to vent about all of this and about all my frustrations

and fears about setting foot into a season of my life where everything was so unclear and unknown and talked to him about the things I felt God was stirring my heart about. He mentioned about the PCI Intern Scheme and, after making many excuses as to why I was not cut out for the scheme, I looked into it, thought about it and prayed about it. The more I did this the more excited I got about it and the more I felt God drawing me to it- and here I am!

What were your thoughts when you were told you were coming to Wellington?

When I applied for the scheme the one thing that I was adamant about was that I was not going to a big church, I just felt that I would not be cut out for that and I am definitely not used to a large congregation so a smaller church was more my comfort zone, but God had other plans. I was really happy that I was placed here, I had met Geoff and Peter at the selection day and just felt so at ease talking to them so Wellington was my first choice and thankfully this is where I've been placed.

What do you most/least like about your internship so far?

I can't think of anything I least like! If I am honest, everything that I've been involved with I've really enjoyed. I've really enjoyed getting to know everyone, it's been a busy two months with loads of new faces and names to learn but what I have most enjoyed is getting to know our

young people. It's been so great spending time with them, praying with and for them and learning more about God with them. I'm very excited to see how God works in and through them throughout this year.

What's it like working with Peter, our Youth and Community worker?

When he isn't winding me up, Peter is great to work alongside. His heart for young people and for the community is something that has really encouraged and challenged me and I really am learning a lot from him. I'll stop there because if I don't I'll never hear the end of it in the office!

Are you kept busy?

I am kept busy! But busy in a good way. Working in a ministry context is a lot more time consuming than people often think and has many more elements to it than I had even realised, but I truly am enjoying it and loving having so many opportunities to serve in different ways.

Where do you hope to be in 5 years time?

In 5 years time I will be coming 27 which in itself is a scary thought (even if 27 isn't that old). I guess I hope that I am in a place where I feel like I am following God's will for my life and that I am still following Jesus and seeking to grow in Him and share Him with the people who God places in my path.

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2 vs 10-12

We look back at some of the people and

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise
For the Lord is good and His love endures forever;



2008
The Hunters

What an incredible decade! It has been such a privilege to have navigated life with God in control combined with the love and support of our family and friends at Wellington. We thank God for blessing us with our three boys, Austin, Lewis and Rhys and for His faithfulness to us individually and as a family especially through periods of redundancy and ill-health.

There were times when nothing made sense and we had to take our eyes off our situation and look to God, relying on Him to answer in His time. Some of our prayers remain unanswered but we know God is in control.

We continue to pray for patience and wisdom to discern God's will for our lives and that of our church family in the coming years.

2018



2008
Hannah Houston

In the last 10 years I have finished school, graduated from university, started a job, and got married!

My experience of church life has also changed. I was a girl in the Girls' Brigade in 2008 and now I am an officer, teaching and striving to set an example to the girls. I am still involved in the praise band and choir and have gone from being in youth Bible studies to leading them with today's young people.

Life changes for good or bad, but God is faithful through it all and has been over the past 10 years of my life.

2018



2008
The Cousleys

In 2008 the family had been living in Tanzania for 4 years.. Glenn was working for Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) in its vehicle workshop in Dodoma improving the standard of work, training staff and improving the facility. Joshua. (6) and Benjamin (4) attended Canon Andrea Mwaka primary school in Dodoma and Esther was just 1 year old.

They moved to Uganda in 2009. setting up home in Kampala. Glenn worked in Health and Safety for MAF, and during their 3½ years there he visited many different MAF programmes delivering training on the transportation of Dangerous Goods. All 3 children attended Rainbow International Primary School, where Julie Anne taught.

In 2018 they have been in Australia for almost 4 years, still working for MAF.

2018



places that featured in the 2008 magazine!

with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.
His faithfulness continues through all generations.

Psalm 100 vs 4-5



2008

William Richmond

Ordained as an Elder by the congregation of Wellington Street 10 years ago, I still feel as challenged by and inadequate for the role as I did back then. It has been a privilege to serve with and learn from my fellow members of session and a truly humbling experience to be warmly accepted into the homes and lives of the members of my district.

There have been many experiences, some good, some not so good and some, where I have felt completely out of my comfort zone. However as time passes I have come to realise more and more the true meaning of the words of Philippians 4 v 19:

"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus"

2018



2008

Adeline McCartney

In the winter of 2008 I was in Ecuador working with HCJB (now Reach Beyond) on rural water projects in the mountains.

In the intervening ten years I have attended Bible college, served overseas in West Africa with Reach Beyond and worked as a civil engineer in England and, then, here in Ballymena.

I am grateful to God for how He has provided for me and guided me through the processes of applying, going and returning from my various endeavours. I still know His help every day as I try to work for His glory in the concrete industry (!) and serve in Girls' Brigade at Wellington.

2018



2008

Wellington Church

Wow! What a transformation. This time ten years ago our church was bare and cold (though full of exciting potential). It soon was fitted out to become a place of colour and warmth, and bustling with people.

God's presence has been tangible. There are lives which have taken a new direction. Of course some who were a part of us have passed on, having played their part to the full.

Isn't it encouraging to see our church so well used? Isn't it inspiring to be here among other Christians? Isn't it humbling to meet with God's Spirit here week after week and to know that this is so much more than just a building?

Thank you, Lord, for the past 10 years.

2018





Clare Crabbe

Our new GB Captain

Clare has taken on the role of GB Captain since September and here we find a little about Clare, her family and her desire to serve her Lord and Master in this demanding but very rewarding role.

Hi everyone! My name is Clare Crabbe, and I live in Cullybackey with my husband, Philip, and our 3 children - Connor (13), Adam (11) and Caitlyn (8).

Wellington Church has been our spiritual home for nearly 5 years, and although that is a relatively short period of time, it feels like we've belonged here all of our lives. During this time, we have been entirely blessed to meet new brothers and sisters in Christ (of all generations) and to build great friendships with them, to go through life's challenges in the comfort and reassurance of each other's prayers and support.

Although our move to Wellington is recent, we have both been communicant members of other Presbyterian Churches in Ballymena since our teens, and have always been actively involved in serving God.

As a child, I was taken to Sunday School and GB every week, and at the age of 11, became a Christian during a school SU weekend. I gave up GB, but continued through Sunday School and Bible Class, and became a Sunday School teacher when I was 15. Around the same time, I also

became a member of the Church Choir, which I not only loved from the point of view of the music, but in hindsight – I was very much blessed by the influence of older faithful Christians.

Over the years, I have been involved in leading Youth Club, Youth Fellowship, Holiday Bible Clubs and co-ordinating Children's Church. Shortly after Philip and I met, I was attending his BB display one evening, where the Captain made an appeal for new helpers. I decided to get involved, and after a few years, I became Officer in Charge of the Anchor Boys' section, which I continued to do until my own boys were born. As Philip was still also an officer at that time, and it was no longer feasible for us both to go out in the evenings, I reluctantly stepped down.

Once Caitlyn was old enough to go to GB, I took the opportunity to go with her and, once again, get involved. When we moved to Wellington and Caitlyn joined the GB here, the natural thing for me was to go too.

Year after year, I have become more deeply involved and committed to the work of GB, and

I believe that God has given me a burden for girls - not just the children but the adults too.

Although I have painted a picture above of someone who became a Christian at an early age and has lived what seems like a 'good' life, I am far from perfect. As a human being, I struggle with the same challenges, the same weaknesses, the same insecurities, and the same spiritual warfare as everyone else, but I believe that if we seek Jesus in every situation, we are not only freed from our struggles, but guided and protected along the way.

When I was first approached about taking on the role of Captain, I was naturally flattered, but a little voice inside me was saying "Why is he asking me?". I openly admitted this, but acknowledged that God had brought the Personnel Committee to a place where they saw it appropriate to ask me, and in the same way, He had brought me to a place where I should consider accepting. I took it very seriously, and asked for some time to prayerfully consider the prospect of taking on this commitment, in addition to an already busy life.

I spent the next few weeks praying and looking for signs as answers, to how I should respond. In everything, it seemed, little verses popped up, that might not have been significant to others, but that spoke clearly to me. With every one, I asked for another sign that would speak more loudly and definitely than the one before. Every time - God replied, and every time - He left me in no doubt. He also promised to equip me. Philippians 4 v 13 kept appearing to encourage me ... 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'

As I step into the role of Captain of Wellington GB, I do so with excitement and enthusiasm. I am very conscious of the large number

of girls we are responsible for, and all the potential challenges that brings. With the full assurance that God has called me to the role, I will go forward entirely in His strength, and not my own.

I believe that God is using my own life experiences to burden me - that whatever circumstances our girls face at school or elsewhere during the week, they know that GB will provide a 'safe place' on Monday evenings. I pray that the girls will experience God's love and grace through GB, and that they will recognise GB as somewhere different - where nothing less than mutual respect will be tolerated, where they are always welcome, loved, and never judged. I also pray that the families of girls with

no other church connection will get this sense of belonging, and feel encouraged to approach us during more difficult times.

I firmly believe that the GB family is not only about the girls and their families. It is also about the very capable and committed set of officers and leaders who give themselves, week after week, to leading girls to Christ. We all have lives and circumstances outside of church, and I pray that we will continue to build a support network to encourage each other, not just at GB, but in our personal lives and faith journeys too. What a privilege it is to journey together, supporting one another as we endeavour to "Seek, Serve and Follow Christ".

Wellington's link with Lebanon



It was so good to have a visit from Veronica and Ghassan Haber, with Nour, Jeremy and Cristina. Our link with Veronica goes back to 2003 when we helped support her through Bible College. She felt called to work with Muslim women in Lebanon and that is where she met Ghassan.

They are actively involved in the Resurrection Church Beirut, where Ghassan helps lead worship - he is also on their leadership and part of their prison ministry. Veronica helps in the children's and youth work, as she looks after their 3 children. The influx of refugee children from Syria and Iraq provides a great opportunity as well as a massive challenge to a church with limited material resources.

Wellington's link with Asha, India



We were delighted, on Sunday 18 November, to be visited by Mr Freddy Martin of Asha in Delhi. Accompanying Freddy was Abhishak, a young man who grew up in one of Delhi's slum communities and is now studying for a degree in Commerce.

Lisa Compton (pictured with baby Asher) and Carol Williams met Abhishek in 2017 when they ran a Kid's Club in that slum community. Also pictured is Robin Lindsey, Robin Keys and Gareth Williams, just 3 of our members who have volunteered with Asha several times since 2002



Presbyterian Church in
Ireland Outreach Team

Rachelle Mitchell joined a team at Whitehouse in Newtownabbey this summer

Each of you should use whatever
gift you have received to serve
others as faithful stewards of
God's grace in its various forms.
1 Peter 4 v 10



During the summer 2018 I was part of a Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) Outreach Team. I, along with other team members, were based in Newtownabbey at Whitehouse Presbyterian Church.

All the team members were new to me and I was quite nervous, not really knowing what to expect. Whitehouse Church has a small congregation with very few children and young people attending. Our team activities for the 9 days were, therefore, planned around outreach to the community aiming at engaging with children and young people from the surrounding housing estates. Our intention was to build relationships between the church and the community and so provide a welcoming environment to anyone who attended. We were encouraged by the congregation who had a real zeal for outreach and a great desire to be involved during our time there, even in the smallest of tasks. Without their help many of our team events would not have been possible. Their enthusiasm for evangelism within the community that surrounded them was amazing. We were so inspired to witness their support during our time there, with many even opening up their homes to provide very tasty and plentiful meals. The team members use the Church Halls for

accommodation and even the local Leisure Centre allowed us to use their shower facilities.

The team worked well together and organized numerous events for all the age groups. One of our main events was the Holiday Bible Club which ran each morning from Monday to Friday. Our focus was on teaching the Gospel message through five topics, namely created, crime, cost, changes and commitment. It was amazing to see the numbers attending grow each day as we engaged with the children through songs, crafts, memory verses, stories and quizzes. During the week many children made a commitment to God. They couldn't wait to tell their school friends and to bring them along the next day. This was such a humbling experience as we saw God touch these young lives. After the story each day we made a conscious effort to discuss it with the children and then develop and explain the stories through worksheets and craftwork.

We organized Street parties as an outreach into the community. On each of 3 days we went into different surrounding estates and held a 'party' for the kids, encouraging parents to come along as well. There were bouncy castles and face painting and snacks were provided to

encourage residents to come out and chat with us, giving us opportunities to talk about God and issue invitations to other events throughout the week. Many children then started coming along to the Holiday Bible Club to learn more about God. Their energy was infectious, their minds were open to what we were saying and it was so rewarding to be part of. One lesson I learned from the street parties is that effective outreach is not just a matter of sitting back and expecting people to come to us; we must go and meet the people where they're at.

The lack of young people in the church at Whitehouse was a big concern and so we ran a teen event to encourage those from the surrounding community to join us playing bubble football in the church. This proved to be an even greater challenge as they were closer to my own age and not very open to ideas about God and Church. It was a massive step for many of them even to come into a church and chat with us.

As well as wanting the children and young people to come to know God, we also had concerns that their parents might come to know God's love as well. We took time to chat to parents when they were leaving off or picking up those at events as well taking



Illuminate 2018

opportunities to build relationships with them through the street parties and our Friday evening barbeque. A lot of energy was put into working with older members of the congregation. We visited those who couldn't attend on a Sunday and held a Tea Dance where they could bring their friends. This was well received and proved to be very uplifting. It was great to see the enjoyment and fun they experienced and we hope it may be something the congregation will continue.

Over our 9 days in Whitehouse we placed an incredible emphasis on prayer. No matter whether we were worried or thankful, we turned to God in prayer. To have the opportunity to spend this time in fellowship with Christians from all over NI helping to spread God's Word was both a very challenging yet very rewarding experience. We were able to refocus our lives to glorifying God and to develop our relationship with Him, no matter what we are doing.

Thank you for your prayer support. It was greatly appreciated and I know it helped us in all we attempted to do. I enjoyed my time in Whitehouse so much that I hope to take part in another PCI team in the future. It is amazing what God can do when we have willing hearts and prayer support.

This summer, Lyndsey and I were leaders at a Baptist youth camp called Illuminate 2018. This camp is a week in the Armagh royal school for ages 14-18 which focuses on teaching youth from the bible about topics that are relevant to them at school and in life.

This year we were studying the book of Daniel a book that without context and deep study, is extremely confusing for younger audiences due to its metaphoric and prophetic nature. We spent a week looking at the first 6 chapters, learning how to apply it to our daily lives through personal studies, seminars and sermons. We got

to form friendships with all the youth through daily activities- such as water slides, man hunt, Hawaiian parties, barn dances and so much more - which at the end of it all allowed us to get into deep conversations about struggles in their lives.

We ask you to keep the youth of the Illuminate camp (and in fact, all the youth in our church as well) in your prayers as they settle back into school and university and they can learn how to use what they learn from Gods word to shape their lives to show Gods love to all around them.





Roger and Elizabeth Green

visit Julie Anne, Glenn and the children in Cairns, Australia

We were privileged to spend almost 6 weeks with our daughter and her family in Australia during September and the first 11 days of October.

It was supposed to be Spring but the temperature rose during our time there from 26° - 36°, and the humidity was increasing daily. The sign below, appears on the way in to Mareeba where the family lives. (Photo 1)

We flew from Belfast to London, London to Hong Kong, and then to Cairns in Far North Queensland. After an hour's drive up the escarpment we arrived in Mareeba. We saw lots of rainforest vegetation on the way to the Tablelands where Julie Anne, Glenn, and the children live. We had a boat trip to see some

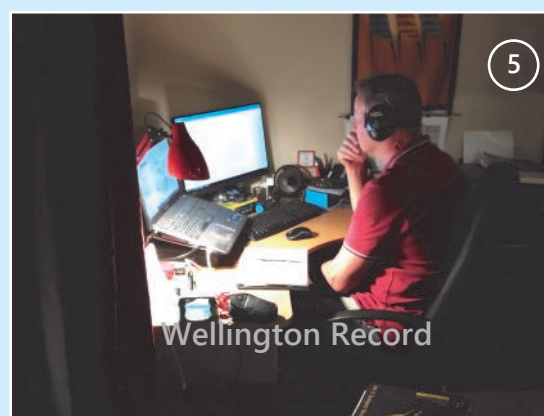
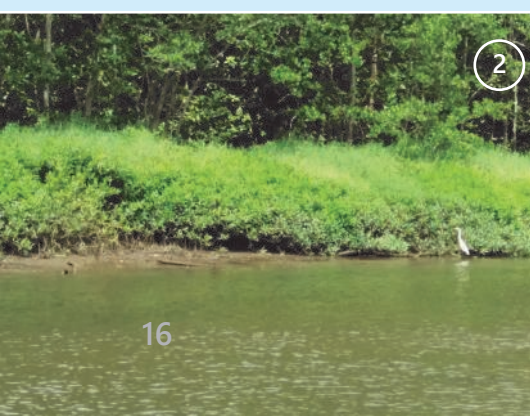
crocodiles on the Daintree River, and celebrated a 50th birthday with a church member at Lake Eachem. Joshua went to an SU camp as a junior leader, and we saw more of this beautiful part of God's world when we picked him up from Lake Tinaroo. (Photo 2)

Two days before we returned home we travelled by boat to the Great Barrier Reef (Photo 3). I remember learning about this in Geography in primary school, and never imagined that some day I would be there. Roger and Julie Anne enjoyed snorkelling, and we all enjoyed seeing the coral and lots more coloured fish from a glass-bottomed boat. What an amazing world we live in, and what an amazing God we have to create it and then entrust it to our care.

The Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) hangar (Photo 4) is a very busy place in Mareeba, servicing planes from Arnhem land in the far north of the country where the Aboriginal people live, from Papua New Guinea, and from East Timor. The engineers are kept busy and, when smaller problems arise with the aircraft, they have to travel to do minor repairs. Glenn had the opportunity to go to East Timor to work on a plane there.

As well as the practical work on the planes, Glenn has continued to study for his International licence. He spends many hours on the computer in the corner of the living room with earphones on, while the family carry on with family life (Photo 5). There is a rota for making lunches, and everyone has to take their turn!!

The children ride bicycles to school 3 days a week, and Julie Anne drives them the other days. They swim in the town swimming pool 3 days a week, and Joshua and Benjamin are currently preparing to do a triathlon! Esther plays soccer for school, and Joshua plays for Mareeba under 16s. Recently Benjamin had a role in the school play.



The churches in Mareeba united one Saturday morning during our visit, to do a prayer walk round the secondary school which Joshua and Benjamin attend. The distance round was about 1 kilometre, and the fittest walkers completed 7 circuits, praying as they went. Some of us only did one but, along with others, sat at the front gates praying and encouraging the others as they passed by. It was a privilege to be part of it and to know that so much prayer was being offered up to God for the pupils.

Glenn and Julie Anne greatly appreciate the prayerful and financial support they receive from Wellington. They need prayer for their future as there are uncertainties ahead. They can get a visa for only 2 more years as they are too old now to be granted permanent residency. The children would not therefore be able to pursue 3rd level education in Australia. Having worked for MAF for almost 14 years, they are reluctant to leave and are seeking God's guidance and His will for their lives.

Thank you for your prayers.



December 2018

One life.

What's it all about?

Christianity EXPLORED in Wellington

What will we do? We will explore who Jesus is, why He came and how important and meaningful this is for each one of us.

How will we do this? We will spend an hour each week studying of the Gospel of Mark, using videos, discussion and teaching in a welcoming environment.

When does it start? It starts on Wednesday 27th February 2019 at 7:00 pm and then weekly for the next 7 weeks.

Where will we meet? Cafe Aroma at Wellington.

Come along, learn more about Jesus, enjoy a coffee, have a chat and make new friends.

You will be made most welcome!

More information?

Ring Ronnie - 07761 715540 or James - 07808 360636

Jesus.

Who, why... so what?





Spark 2018

Ben Kennedy
Reports

Spark Ballymena seeks to bring the Gospel to the town of Ballymena through providing communities with practical help and Kids' Clubs; taking this as an opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The chance to co-ordinate the Tullygarley team for spark 2018 was brought to us through our youth and community worker Peter McClelland. With prayerful consideration both Julie and I decided it was a great leadership opportunity; one we could really get our teeth into. Though daunting at first, the Lord gave us strength by His Spirit to focus on the task of spreading the Gospel to the community of Tullygarley alongside our team of 25 volunteers and leaders.

A leaflet drop was done prior to the week to provide the area with details of the events we would be running. Tullygarley is an area with plenty of children and therefore our main focus of the week was the Holiday Bible Club which ran daily.

Our Daily Routine

10am: All Spark teams attended a morning service at Wellington to provide a focus for the day ahead.

12pm: Lunch in the Church Hall.

1pm: Teams split off into their respective areas with the Tullygarley team migrating to the choir room and spending time as a team in small groups. We took this as an opportunity to look at God's Word together and spend some time in prayer for the day ahead. Our main focus of study for the week was the book of Ephesians. So much to study and not enough time! Therefore, we tried to focus on the reality of our salvation in Christ across each of the chapters.

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth."

Ephesians 1 vs 7-10 ESV

1:45pm: The team made their way down to the Busy Bean café for some milkshakes and team bonding before getting started.

2pm: Set up began for the 3pm Club at Tullygarley Community Centre. A relaxed hour of games

and activities for local children providing their parents with a much-needed rest and allowing our team to get acquainted.

3pm: The Club began and activities ran for the hour manned by our volunteers and involved: Nail painting, bowling, colouring, Xbox and the very popular face painting. Alongside the 3pm Club we ran football training for the boys and girls who were less interested in having their nails done! This was greatly enjoyed by the kids and was well attended daily. (In the evening a few of our volunteers played football with some of the older teens.)

5pm: After cleaning up the team headed back to the church for some quiet time before dinner was served at 5:30pm.

6:30 - 8pm: The Holiday Bible Club began. The theme was 'The Jungle' and Julie and I thought it best to fit the Gospel across four stories which each had a connection to an animal. As we had such a brilliant platform to spread the Gospel we wanted to use the week to explain our need for a Saviour in a child friendly way whilst holding on to the truth.

All Animals: The Creation story as told in Genesis 1-2 v 3. Julie

showed the children that our God created the universe and all within it.

The Serpent: The Fall: From Genesis 3 Lyndsey showed us the fallen nature of mankind and our need for a Saviour.

The dove: Noah and the Ark in Genesis 6-8. Ben showed us God's promise not to flood the earth and the promise to send a son.

The Lion and The Lamb: Christ's death and resurrection: Matthew 28. I spoke on the price Christ paid on the cross for the sins of us all and how He conquered the grave, leaving those who put their faith in Him blameless before God. On the night we chose to share this the Lord blessed us with 44 kids who heard about Jesus.

As well as the stories, which everyone listened really well to, we had songs, quizzes and memory verses that the kids were very enthusiastic about. On the Friday we wrapped the week up by renting some bouncy castles, having a barbeque and a 'messy' quiz.

9pm – Team bonding, games and prayer.

As well as children's ministry we cleaned windows and picked up litter, allowing us to show that in our faith we follow the example of Christ by serving others.

Thank you for the prayers and support that we really needed. The team bonded so well; both Julie and I were able to see many of our volunteers grow in their walk with the Lord. By the grace of God, we were able to witness to the children and parents of the Tullygarley area. We pray that God will continue to soften the hearts of those who heard His Gospel so they too may know salvation.

"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person - though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die - but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5 vs 6-8 ESV



Spark Leaders Julie Kernohan and Ben Kennedy (after face painting by Tullygarley kids!



Time for worship



Sarah Macfarlane

"Spark, wow! Tears come to my eyes thinking about Spark and my absolutely amazing walk with God throughout that week, as well as all the friendships I've made because of it. Spark wasn't something I would usually want to do and before the week started I was so nervous as I'd never been involved before. But I now know why I was at Spark; God had called me to go to Tullygarley Community Centre and help bring the God's Word to the children of the Rosses and Tullygarley."

Spark 2018 was an amazing week where Christians from all around Ballymena, all different denominations and backgrounds, joined together for a time of local mission. Every morning we met together in the church and had a time to focus ourselves for the day ahead through prayer, praise and reading from His word.

The Tullygarley team, which Ben and I were leading, consisted of around 25 young people, all fuelled with a passion to spread the love of God around our community. In our team we did lots of practical work- we hosted a football club, kids activity clubs, got involved in gardening for those around the community who could not do it themselves and some litter picking. We hosted a Holiday Bible Club that resulted in around 40 kids hearing the gospel each night and listening to different stories from the Bible.

Although the week was full of fun, including 'jungle discos', a big barbeque night and general team building 'banter' we were so encouraged by the response from the community and the interest that they had on why we would become involved with Spark. We ask you to keep the community of Tullygarley in your prayers - a people who live just next door to our church but with many who live in such spiritual depravity! Pray that God will stir up a revival and that our week of Spark was only be the beginning.

Julie Kernohan



Totszone



Totszone (moving up)



P1



P2



P3



P4



P5



Images from the Well Awards that were presented on Sunday 3 June.

Above: Anne Eagleson presented the Awards
Below: Hazel Young & Leanne Russell, Well leaders



P6



P7



(Above) Children's Day Choir and (below) some who took part 10 June





Gordon McNair
Personnel Committee

We are all very fortunate to be part of a flourishing church community in Wellington. Each Sunday morning we have around 700 people meeting together under a vibrant worship and Biblical ministry. During the week we have multiple ministries such as Life Groups, children and youth organisations, men's and women's groups, and various ongoing practical ministries. They have the same goal: to spread the Good News of Jesus and develop the believers within Wellington.

These ministries all require committed staff and volunteers to enable them to operate. With the increased numbers attending the church and its organisations, we have a constant need for leaders and helpers to enable everything to function effectively. The Session Personnel Subgroup of 5 Elders, Geoff Marshall, Roy McClelland, David Keys, John Marshall and myself, link in with Rev Bates and the Session to seek out potential staff, leaders, helpers and practical volunteers.

Over the last three years the church has appointed a number of new staff members. Peter McClelland is our first Youth and Community Worker. Raymond McLarnin has just started in our pastoral team. We also have an intern, Stephanie Houston, and are in the process of appointing our first paid office administrator. This has been a significant amount of work for the personnel team.

In addition Session has appointed leaders in many organisations. Examples are: Clare Crabbe as GB captain, Ashley Shaw in The Net, and Jack and Jessica Fleming for Sunday evening Collective. Numerous helpers and volunteers have also been appointed in many of the organisations and practical teams.

We all know the story of the good Samaritan. Three people came across a man in need and the first two, a priest and a Levite, choose to walk past, while the third, a Samaritan, stopped to help. Dr Martin Luther King, in his "I've Been to the Mountain Top" speech the day before he was killed, referred to this parable and said the Samaritan decided "not to be compassionate by proxy" but to stop and help the man in need. He went on to say the first question the priest and the Levite asked was: "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But the good Samaritan reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"

Sandy Millar, retired minister of Holy Trinity Brompton, writing

about serving within the church, referred to the parable of feeding the five thousand said that at every stage of this parable two things were operating. Firstly, Jesus graciously and wonderfully was inviting the disciples to co-operate with Him in His ministry if they wanted to. Secondly, He was also helping them to see that without Him they would fall flat on their faces. Jesus was basically saying "let's feed the people together." What an opportunity for the disciples.

Serving and ministry is all about cooperation with Jesus, coupled with the clear understanding that without Him we can do nothing. Currently we have an urgent need for leaders and helpers in the BB, Tots Zone, and the Well, and we are always seeking volunteers in practical ministries such as gardening, security and count teams. If you would like to serve in any area within the church, we would love to hear from you. Speak to one of the personnel team, or you can contact me by email: jgmcnair@gmail.com

It is our aim to meet with all new church members, as we believe that God has a role for each person within Wellington and we want to learn about what gifts our new members have.

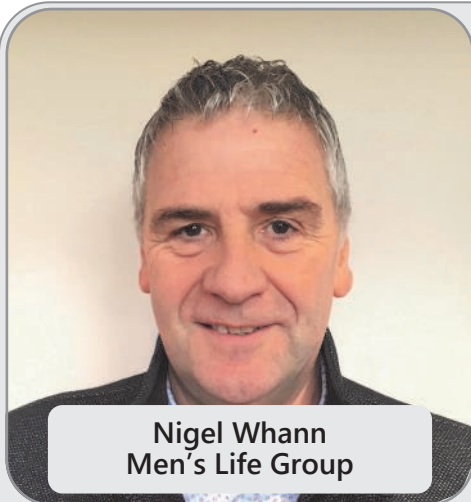
Please pray for the Personnel Team as we carry on with our work, and give thanks for those who have come forward to serve within Wellington. Also take a little time to say thank you to those serving amongst us.

Your attitude must be like my own, for I, the Messiah, did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my life as a ransom for others.

Matthew 20 v 28 (The Living Bible)

Ask not what God can do for you, but rather ask what you can do for God!

We hope you will be challenged by the stories of God leading ordinary men into leadership roles within our congregation. What role does God have for you, whether male or female, in our Church?



Nigel Whann
Men's Life Group

We have four Men's Life Groups in our church that meet once a fortnight. These groups bring together between thirty to forty of our men to study the Bible together.

The aim of each group is to promote an environment where men can meet together, enjoy each others company, share life experiences, both good and bad, and have some 'manly' banter.

However the core of what we do is the study of God's Word. We encourage each other to ask the unaskable and share the unthinkable, all without judgement and always with a desire to learn. It is so vital, in a culture increasingly hostile to our Christian values, that we are grounded deep in our faith and sure of what God's Word is teaching us. Only it can truly guide us in how we should live our daily lives. Psalm 119 v 105 reminds us that God's Word is a lamp for our feet a light on our path.

As we become more like Christ our love for each other and our desire to serve others increases as we yearn to become a part of what God is doing. Our desire as life group leaders is that we and the men in our groups not only enjoy our evenings but also are changed by what takes place. This should lead us to be better fathers, better husbands and better friends.

People who are more willing to serve God, wherever or in whatever capacity He may call us.

It is encouraging to see our church grow numerically, but it is vital that we, the members of the church, grow spiritually along with it. Being part of a Life Group can be a valuable part of that journey.

We are encouraged to see many Life Group members take up vital roles in the church. As our church grows so does the needs. The challenge each of us should consider is are we content to be merely consumers or are we willing to step forward and help. The need is great but the reward is greater.

If there are any men out there who would like to join with us, please ask - you will be very welcome.



David McKean
Leaders-in-charge
BB Anchor Boys
Stephen Russell

This is our second year as joint leaders of our Boys' Brigade Anchor Boys. We have certainly faced many challenges along the way, not least those that arise from the considerable energy levels of 4 to 8 year old boys!! But it is so rewarding to see the large number of boys attending each week and to observe the enjoyment they get from taking part in the various activities.

When approached about helping at Anchor Boys, we were both hesitant and thought, "What can we bring to the Anchor Boys that might benefit the boys who attend?" We took time to consider and prayed for God's guidance, which is so essential when contemplating serving in our church. We were both taken back to our time as BB boys in our respective companies and definitely felt it had given us a good grounding in church, in the Bible and in our knowledge of God. It was only later in life that we can both honestly reflect on how much influence BB leaders had on our trusting in God.

We are both fathers of boys who attend the Boys' Brigade in Wellington. As Christian men we feel a strong desire to ensure our boys experience that same grounding we had received and that it is good for the boys to see their parents helping out in BB. One thing every Christian parent wants for their child is for them to come to know and love our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that the children's ministry in our church, both on a Sunday and during the week, is vital to both the children and to the spiritual health of those who help in these organisations.

We are certainly no more capable of contributing to the Christian well-being of the boys who attend our Anchor Boys' than many of the other men and women in our church. We probably also never thought we would be leading the Anchor Boys'. However, when you ask God about these things, He will always guide you to whatever it is He has planned for you within our church.



SMMR FEST



In the third week of August this year, with summer winding down and term time looming, Wellington threw its doors open to over 200 teenagers for the second annual SMMRfest. The product of months of prayer, planning and preparation SMMRfest is a week-long youth event organised by a core group of youth workers and volunteers from Ballymena and beyond. Resources are pooled to put on an event that can go beyond what any single church could do on their own. The end result: a jam-packed week full of fun, food and fellowship to cater for youth from all backgrounds and degrees of familiarity with the Church and Gospel.

To keep such a diverse group of young people entertained, the week was filled with activities. There were inflatables - everything from an assault course to a laser tag arena and even a bucking bronco! The sports hall twice became a combat archery arena (imagine dodgeball but with a bow and arrow!), and in the evenings everyone had a chance to show off their best moves at a social and a laser disco. We had football, badminton, table tennis, pool, and a wide selection of board games, not to mention a PS4, Xbox One and Wii, with a little extra help from the GodmodeX bus (a bus full of videogames - where was that when I was going to school?!) All of that activity requires fuel, and the tuck shop was emptied with such voracity that it required a complete restock every day. We also had waffles provided daily on site by Born and Raised.

The real focus of the event was, of course, to reach and engage

young people with the gospel and to help equip them with tools and knowledge to develop in their walk with God. In the afternoons we ran two Bible study streams: a Youth Alpha course supported by Scripture Union materials, designed for those who had little to no knowledge of the Gospel or who were new believers, and a discipleship stream supported by Exodus, for those looking to go further. What a wonderful privilege it is to open up scripture and share the Gospel with someone for the first time. What an encouragement to see youth who have grown before our eyes grow in their faith into young men and women of God.

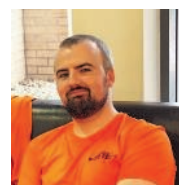
But the true distilled essence of SMMRfest was in our evening activities. As more and more young people came through the doors, we quickly realised there were more than we ever expected, finding seats for all of them became a problem, *but what a blessed problem to have!* The evening would be kicked off by our traditional warm-up routine of "The Monkey", a 'dance' which honestly defies description beyond *rhythmic limb flailing*, before a sing-off between the two sides of the room, with an often contentious winner. With all that youthful extra energy dispensed with, and with voices warmed up, our immensely talented praise band led us in worship, before our speakers - Mitch, Ste and Laura from the always excellent Crown Jesus Ministries - brought the message for the night.

To many, SMMRfest was the highlight of their summer, to

others, the highlight of their year. To some, SMMRfest represented a fresh start, to others, a push, and to yet others, a wake-up call. Over the course of the week we witnessed 13 young people commit their lives to Christ, yet we pray and believe that seed will have been planted in many hearts to bear fruit in years to come, with the hope of more souls to be won. There is a belief among this younger generation, living though they are in an increasingly secular and hostile world, that something special is happening. One girl in her late teens spoke of a stirring amongst the youth, like the forming of a wave in the sea. Pray that we see such a vision delivered!

To all those who volunteered their time or helped support the mission, we offer a sincere thank you. The mission was a behemoth of logistics and planning, and it took many hands to see it successfully delivered, both in service and clasped in prayer. But while the mission may be over the work is not yet done, and our young people need the church, their leaders, their friends and family, to continue to love, minister and disciple them. They need us to teach, nurture and encourage them, to help them grow in faith. We want to see their passion and energy multiplied in our schools, our universities and our communities. Planning will soon begin for next summer and SMMRfest 2019. But the task at hand, for our youth, is one for all of us.

Ian Montgomery





WHITE CHOCOLATE RASPBERRY CHEESECAKE

For the base:

150 g sponge finger biscuits

For the Filling:

300 g white chocolate, broken into chunks

600 g Philadelphia Original (room temp.)

50 g caster sugar

250 ml double cream, lightly whipped

200 g raspberries

3 tbsp raspberry jam

To decorate:

100 g white chocolate, broken into shards

3 tbsp raspberry dessert sauce or coulis

Method:

1. Arrange the sponge finger biscuits into the bottom of a 22 cm springform tin, breaking them as needed to fill any gaps.
2. Microwave the white chocolate in 30-second intervals, stirring between each, until smooth.
3. Beat the Philadelphia cream cheese and sugar, then fold in the whipped cream and melted white chocolate until combined.
4. Combine the raspberries and jam in a small bowl, then gently fold into the Philadelphia cream cheese mixture to create light swirls.
5. Spread the mixture into the tin and refrigerate for at least four hours or until set.
6. Carefully remove the cheesecake from the tin, then decorate the top with white chocolate shards and a drizzle of raspberry dessert sauce to serve



PREP TIME
30'



TOTAL TIME
4h 30min



PORTIONS
12

ENJOY!!



I grew up in Wellington Street church and have some great memories, but in my mid teens I went away from the church. For years I was living in the world, and going to church never entered my mind.

In my early 30s, the church was just where my son went to BB. By my mid 30s God was speaking to me and I was in contact with the church, but I ended up pushing away even harder. I can see now that I was on what would have been a very destructive path as I searched for something to fill the void. I was at a church service – a rare occurrence - on 31 August 2014, and on that day God spoke to me through the sermon, but I left the church without doing anything about it. I was in that place again - knowing what I should do but not knowing at the same time. I ended up talking to an old friend, Lee Eagleson, the next day, as I was in bits. After a long discussion that Monday, I was saved. I was in a place that only God could lift me from, and so all glory must go to Him! My life changed around from then.

God's plan for me is clear to see now. I was saved the week before Rendezvous youth club started, and I began to help out there. The numbers of young

people coming to the youth club were high, and there were some who were intent on causing issues. It was difficult to talk to the young people in any meaningful manner. It was a struggle. The leaders in charge were in a tough position, and difficult decisions had to be made. The youth club stopped at that point.

It started up again successfully as The Net in September 2016, thanks to great time and effort from the leaders in charge. That was an enjoyable year and things were more settled than before. However in the summer of 2017, we were told that the leaders in charge were stepping down, so we waited to see what direction the youth club would take after that.

On Sunday 10 Sept 2017, Geoff Marshall asked if Barbara and I could consider taking over as leaders in charge. I had just recently been made redundant and so replied that there was no way I could consider it, with the uncertainty at the time. I talk to God a lot when I am driving, and on that Sunday evening, on my way home, I asked Him how could I do this and why was I being asked as I felt I would not be able. God spoke to me that night and made me see clearly that this was His plan for me.

The Net started again in October 2017 with around 15 young people each night. This went to 25/30 by Christmas.

Before we started, I felt that I was not able to talk in front of people, so I was panicking! Philippians 4:13 gave me a constant reminder that I had to rely on God alone:

"I can do all this through Him who gives me strength."

I struggled talking to the 10 or 15 at the start, and although I am not a great speaker God has given me the strength to now stand up in front of 120 young people and talk! This also bring glory to God, as again this is something I could not do without His strength and wisdom to guide me.

With the many things we organise for youth club there is often uncertainty as to how it will work, but God has always provided a way and things have always worked out. We need to keep faith that if everything we do is led by God and is for his glory, things will always work to His will.

When we started back after Christmas, the number of young people increased over a few weeks to 40 then 60 and to around an



average of 80 per week. By starting small and growing, I believe God gave us the time to learn as we went along and to adjust to the new role. We were getting the training we needed to deal with things ahead.

We had a great final youth club night in June with inflatables and a BBQ. We had 100 kids along that night, which was fantastic to see. We also had a Saturday day trip followed by a sleepover at the church in July, which really helped us as leaders to get to know the young people better and has helped greatly since. We also were able to give each child a Bible.

We got some great feedback from parents after the weekend:

"Hi, my daughter had a brilliant time, both during the mini weekend and the Saturday nights at The Net. Thank you to yourself and the rest of your team for all your hard work and dedication to the young people. Have a good summer break. My daughter is looking forward to more fun and learning about God in September. Thanks again."

"Thank you so much my son had a blast slept from 3-7pm had tea and I'd say it'll not be long till he is back to bed! But his words 'mum the best day ever'. Thanks for the Bible see you in September."

"Thanks very much my daughter really enjoyed the trip. She loved going to the youth club

every week so thanks to all the leaders for the hard work and enjoy the well-deserved break."

"Thank you so much for having them all. My son had a great time."

"Thank you for all your hard work during the year I know it can be exhausting at times but as a parent I appreciate every weekend you all have given up to lead and guide our children. You're all a blessing to our youth."

"Thank you and I wish you all a fantastic summer."

When we started again in September after the summer break, we had around 150 attending. We did not have enough leaders each night to accommodate this number. We were calling in everyone we could to give us the cover we needed. This was the most tiring and stressful time I have had in youth club. The decision was made to close registration so that only members could attend. This led to having to turn children away, which was a horrible situation, but it had to be done as we simply did not have enough leaders to cope. We are continually looking for people to help, once a month or every other week, as we are still stretched.

We do not have any major behavioural issues; it's just a group of young people who want to hang out with their friends in a safe environment. For the

majority of the 120 kids we have attending each night, this is the only time in the week they get to hear about Jesus. Please pray for these young people, that what they hear each week will challenge them, and that what they hear and their experiences at youth club will get back to their families. These young people are part of our church, and I hope and pray that God will be in their lives. I pray that the time they spend at youth club might play a part in bringing them to God at some point, as happened for me.

Barbara and I want to say a massive thank you to all the leaders at youth club as they have been so supportive. I know they all share our enthusiasm for these young people, and we all care for every one of them. We use the hashtags #youthclubfamily #churchfamily on the membership card, as a reminder to these kids that they are our family and we care for each one of them.

God is always working in our lives - on the evening I sent this article to the editor of the magazine, Barbara was saved! We will now work together leading the Net, with the one focus of serving God together!



**Ashley and Barbara Shaw,
Leaders of the Net**





Lindsay Murray

Building houses in Malawi



This summer, I went to Malawi as part of a team, some Year 14 students from my friend's school and four leaders, working for Habitat for Humanity. We set off on Saturday 30 June, flying from Dublin to Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) then to Blantyre (Malawi). We were met there by our local Habitat worker, Faith, who went with us to our accommodation. The trip took 26 hours in total so we arrived rather weary on Sunday afternoon, just in time for dinner. The next morning was our first day on site and we travelled 45 minutes to a small village at the foot of Mount Mulanje.

We were greeted by all the people of the village. They came to meet our little minibus and proceeded to sing and dance in front of the bus for the short trip to the site. This was our first experience of the community we were building for, and what a greeting it was! The children ran alongside our bus (which they did every day), waving and smiling at us. Once the bus stopped we were promptly

encouraged to dance too. It turns out that dancing is not my forte! Such an incredible welcome from the whole community! We were introduced to the families for whom we would be building - two grandmothers looking after their grandchildren, whose parents had died as a result of HIV/AIDS.

We were immediately set to work and our induction into building involved the foreman showing us how to lay one row of bricks, and then we began. Definitely a case of training on the job! Thankfully Habitat had employed local skilled workers for each of the two houses. Faith explained that the money raised by our team not only bought materials for the houses, but also paid these men from the local community. There were 3 skilled workers on the house I worked on: Mr Edwin, Mr Simon and Mr Dyson (so named because he was a machine!). It is safe to say we would not have managed quite so well had it not been for the patience and kindness shown by these men.

Our days followed a similar pattern. We left our accommodation at 8am every morning and headed to the site. We had a 15 minute break in the morning and afternoon, and lunch at midday. We left the site around 4.30pm and headed back for a shower and dinner before a team meeting in the evening and then bed. We worked every day except for Sunday. The weather was good for building, not too hot and mostly dry.

Each time we had a break, children from the local community would come over and wait to see if we were going to play with them. This was an incredible part of our time in Mulanje. These children were so full of joy. It will be my residing memory of my time there - how much joy this entire community had, despite the difficulty of their circumstances. We played games and football and Frisbee with them, we sang with them, and even when we were tired from the build, they still managed to persuade us into yet another



round of duck duck goose! When we were taking photos, we realised that these children had never seen a picture of themselves. A few of us were taking selfies with them, and on a number of occasions we had to point out that it was a photo of them. They were so excited by this.

One of the greatest things about this trip was the sense of community we witnessed. Everyone was living under challenging circumstances, yet they came out to help us in any way they could. One lady carried bricks over to the two houses, quite a few of the woman carried water for mixing the mud/cement and some helped shovel sand. They were so happy for each other and so willing to do anything they could to help. When we asked Faith about this she said that not all communities are the same, but in this particular one, everyone came out to support the two families who were getting new homes.

As we approached the end of the build, we visited the homes where the families were currently living. This was one of the most difficult days of the trip. We were building beside these houses every day but this was the first time we were invited in. Firstly, only two of us could go in at any one time, since they were so small. The size of the entire home was approximate to a small bathroom here. There was nothing inside. No chair or table. They may have had one blanket between four or five and most were using the government-issued mosquito nets as mats to lie on. The roof was made of what looked like bin liners covered in straw. Daylight shone through which meant that when it rained, the house flooded. Some of the families we spoke to said that when it rained at night, they would be unable to sleep and would have

to stand until the rain subsided. Sometimes this meant standing all night. And again, despite these really desperate circumstances, these people were full of joy. They so often told us how they thanked God for us and for the work of Habitat, but I believe that God was teaching us about true joy and about loving one another. This small community was a real example of *loving thy neighbour* and the *joy of the Lord*.

On the last day, we handed over the houses, and this was a real celebration. The village chief came to oversee a ceremony, and again there was singing and dancing. Speeches were made, and the families and skilled workers were given a traditional, warm meal. We could see how much this meant to them. It was really difficult leaving the community, particularly the children, as we had formed such a close bond with them. But we knew that we were leaving them with two new homes, and we were taking so much away from our time with them. God had really blessed this trip in so many ways.

Thanks to those who supported me through the Coffee Morning, through prayer, and through their words of encouragement. It really meant so much in the lead up to, and during, my time in Malawi. I will leave you with two verses that have stayed with me since.

***'For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command:
"Love your neighbour as yourself."
Galatians 5 v 4***

***'Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."
Nehemiah 8 v 10***





Back in January of this year Matthew McKeown, Hannah Bates and I began praying about and planning a trip which would take us, along with 11 young people from our church, over 8000 miles across the world to spend two weeks in East London in South Africa, serving alongside Steven Lamont.

In January, Steven began working with Stirling Presbyterian Church, and they invited us to come and help them reach out and minister to their local

community. We naturally accepted the opportunity and brought together a group of young people who were passionate about taking time out of their summer to serve God, to share His Good News and to love others. With the logistics coming together, a team in place, dates set and fundraisers complete the adventure began on 5th July.

We left the church at 9am to drive to Belfast and so begin our 33 hour journey. One bus ride, three flights, a few delays and a car journey later we arrived at Stirling

Presbyterian Church around 6:30pm on Friday 6th July. On arrival we were greeted with a welcome Braai (a South African BBQ) hosted by the families that were providing us with accommodation as well as some of the Elders in the church. I must say the South Africans put on the best BBQ's ever! We stuffed our faces and then it was off to bed to get recharged and refreshed, ready to serve in Stirling. Over the two weeks our focus revolved around reaching out to kids in the local community, through a Holiday



Bible Club and helping practically in a local orphanage called 'Greensleeves'.

On the first Monday, after spending a couple of days preparing, the Holiday Bible Club began. This took a very similar format to what we do in Wellington, with the exception that it lasts a lot longer! Most days the kids would arrive around 7:30am and would be with us until at least 12:30pm. This was a bit of shock for most of us as the start time was supposed to be 9am. The team had to be at the church for 7am each morning - this proved to be a bit of a shock to the system for most of the teenagers. However it has to be said that every member of the team managed it just fine. The mornings began at 7am with some breakfast and a team prayer time before the kids arrived.

Everyday we were blessed to have around 90 kids from several parts of the community coming along to join in the fun and listen to stories from the Bible. We broke each morning up into several sections - registration, games, songs, craft, Bible stories and lunch. The team were split into groups and given specific tasks such as running certain parts of the morning or leading different age groups. It was through this that Matthew, Hannah and I began

to see the real leadership potential in all our young people in the team. Some took charge of groups for the first time, some displayed their organisational skills and each was willing to step out of their comfort zone at some stage during the Holiday Bible Club.

The club gave us incredible opportunities to minister into the lives of so many kids as they sang praise to God, learned about the Good News of Jesus Christ and generally had so much fun. What struck me and other team members was the joy brought to so many of the kids just by us being willing to spend some time with them. The simple act of playing, or even giving a piggyback, would bring ear to ear grins on their faces, as you can see from some of the photographs.

Many of the kids came from poor homes and we were very intentional in making sure every child was provided with lunch before they went home. We knew that, for some of them, the harsh reality was it may have been the only decent meal that they would receive that day. We were so blessed that the expenses for all of these meals were covered by members of Steven's Church.

The Holiday Bible Club gave both ourselves and Steven an

incredible opportunity to share the Gospel with so many kids. It is our hope and prayer that a seed will have been planted in their lives and that, one day, they will come to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

While the Holiday Bible Club occupied most of our mornings, during the afternoons our focus changed on serving practically those in the local community, and specifically with a group called 'Greensleeves'. This exists to provide a home for some of South Africa's abandoned, abused and orphaned children. Their motto is, 'A Home, A Family, A Future'. Greensleeves is run by some incredible Christian people whose heart is to not only provide shelter, love and education for the children placed into their care, but, more importantly, to point them to the love and their need of Christ. Upon arrival we were stunned by the joy and the welcome we received from all the staff and kids. As the photographs show, many of the kids sleep in what we would see as rough accommodation. But, for so many of them, this is so much better than where they were before. What impacted the team most was their joy and contentment. They showed real appreciation for everything they had. This really made us evaluate and reflect on our own thankfulness for what we have.



At times it can be difficult for Greensleeves to bring in sufficient funds to provide the best care, home and future for the children. When it comes to food they like to grow as much as they can. We embarked on two main projects. Over the last year their vegetable tunnel had become over grown and somewhat ruined. Some of the team made it their aim to restore the tunnel so the kids and staff could begin to plant vegetables again. This entailed a lot of hard work - weeding, raking and digging - quite often in very warm conditions, but the team members never complained. Instead they buckled down and within a few days the tunnel was ready for fertilizer and sowing out. We have received some photos of vegetables beginning to grow in the tunnel since we came home.

Our second project was one that pushed many of us well outside our comfort zones. At the care home there was the shell of an old shed that had formally been home to some of the kids. As the number of children coming into the home was increasing, we wanted to help rebuild this shed as a means of providing some extra accommodation. During our time there, right up to our last day, we tore down the old shell, built a new frame, erected new wooden walls, painted the walls and even attempted to put in a window. We

were thankful that we were able to leave a significant amount of money to help finish the project.

While it was such a privilege in carrying out practical tasks at Greensleeves, our greatest joy was had from spending time playing, building relationships and showing love to the kids. We all have so many incredible stories we could share of the relationships, the bonds built, the opportunities to share about Jesus and the privilege of praying with the kids at times. Greensleeves had a huge impact on us all. While we went there to serve, share and teach the kids about Jesus, in the hope of impacting their lives, I don't believe any of us expected the huge impact the kids at Greensleeves and the Holiday Bible Club would have on our lives and our faith. If you would like to know more about Greensleeves or even how you may support them financially and prayerfully can I request you go to their website at:

www.greensleeveessa.com

I speak for each team member when I say that the mission trip to South Africa was an incredible opportunity, not only to share the Gospel with others but to experience life changing events in our own lives. To close, we would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who contributed

financially to the work we did and to everyone who continually prayed for us from the start of this journey to the end. We would say a special thank you to Girvan Darragh, John McClintock, Heather Marshall, Geoff Marshall and John Marshall, who helped with the running of a Quiz and Curry fundraiser attended by over 200 people. We thank the PW for their generous donation which helped purchase materials for the building work at Greensleeves and we thank the Sew Crafty ladies for making hats for the kids at Greensleeves. Finally Matthew, Hannah and I would like to thank our incredible team - Lucy, Charlotte, Morgan, Anna, Rebecca, Rachel, Aimee, Ben, Jack, John and Andrew. It was not only a joy to lead you but a privilege to serve God alongside you.

After two amazing weeks serving God in East London, we may have returned home. However the work in that community, in Greensleeves and the church in Stirling continues. Continue to keep them, and Steven, our representative in their midst, in your prayers as they continue to seek opportunities to share the Gospel and minister into the lives of the not only the incredible kids we met on our journey, but so many more.

Peter McClelland



"Under the Starry Skies"

IJM Coffee Morning and launch of a new children's book by Shirley Ballantine, a member of our congregation.

On Saturday, 17th November, Wellington held a coffee morning in aid of International Justice Mission. It was organised by Lauren Agnew, a young solicitor in our congregation who represents IJM in this area. She is passionate about the work of releasing captives, especially children, from modern-day slavery, as is Rev. Bates. A group of dedicated, caring and charming ladies gave their time and talent to provide and serve delicious scones, cakes and coffee which everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

The other two participants in the fundraiser were the author and illustrator of a new book, an adaptation of the Christmas story. "Under The Starry Skies" is the Christmas story presented through the eyes of David, Rachel, Matthew and a cute little donkey called Sheba. The superb illustrations by talented artist, Naomi Reid, depict highlights of the stories written by Shirley Ballantine, stories which are suitable for children up to about 10 years old. The book was published under the expert direction of Rev Alistair Bates, who kindly made it a feature of the fundraiser, with a percentage of the proceeds going to IJM. In addition, those who supported the coffee morning were generous with their donations, and this will greatly benefit and bless children who are trafficked and enslaved throughout the world.

The book is available from Timeless Publications, Amazon, and various shops, priced £5.99. Perfect for Christmas gifts!



Pictured below at the Coffee Morning and Book Launch (l-r): Lauren Agnew (IJM), Shirley Ballantine (author), Rev Alistair Bates and Naomi Reid (Illustrator)



Rev Raymond McLarnin

Rev Alistair Bates welcomed Rev Raymond McLarnin during the morning service on Sunday 18 November.

Raymond is joining the Ministry Team in a part-time role as a Pastoral Assistant. His main duties will be to visit members of the congregation.

We wish Raymond, his wife, and his family God's richest blessing as he commences in this new role within our church family.



1.



2.

GB Enrolment Service Sunday 7 October 2018 (am)



3.



4.



5.

Wellington Record

6.



BB Enrolment Service Sunday 7 October 2018 (pm)

1. GB Explorers Choir

2. GB Company Section girls who achieved their Duke of Edinburgh's Silver Award pictured with mums (and 1 dad) : Katie Surgenor, Rebecca Hamilton, Emma Hunter, Sarah Carroll, Laura Graham

3. GB Colour Party (back Rachelle Mitchell, Amy Chapman; (front) Grace Davison, Beth Cruickshank, Erin Campbell, Caitlin Crabbe

4. Clare Crabbe - our new GB Captain

5. GB Company Section girls who took part in the Enrolment Service - Alesha Logan, Sophie Kennedy, Sarah Jackson

6. BB Colour Party - Simon Penny, Joshua Shaw, Josh Mark, Adam McKendry, Matthew Jackson, & Luke Kennedy

7. Anchor Boys Officers-in-charge Stephen Russell and David McKean, Captain Steven Bell, Officer-in-charge Junior Section Heather Bell & Officer-in-charge Company Section Geoff Eagleson

8. New BB Anchor Boy Recruits: Ben McCullough, Theo Andrew, Harrison Chambers, Will Connaughty, Ben Steenson

7.



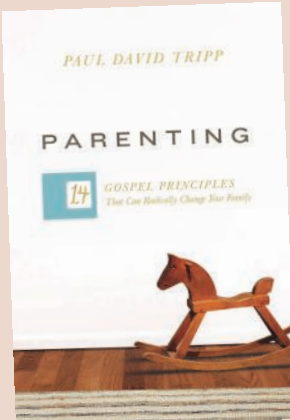
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Jonathan Boyd
Assistant Minister

"Parenting" by Paul David Tripp



Being a Christian father is not always easy. We can often stumble and become discouraged. So I would recommend this book as it helps put the whole "parenting thing" into perspective.

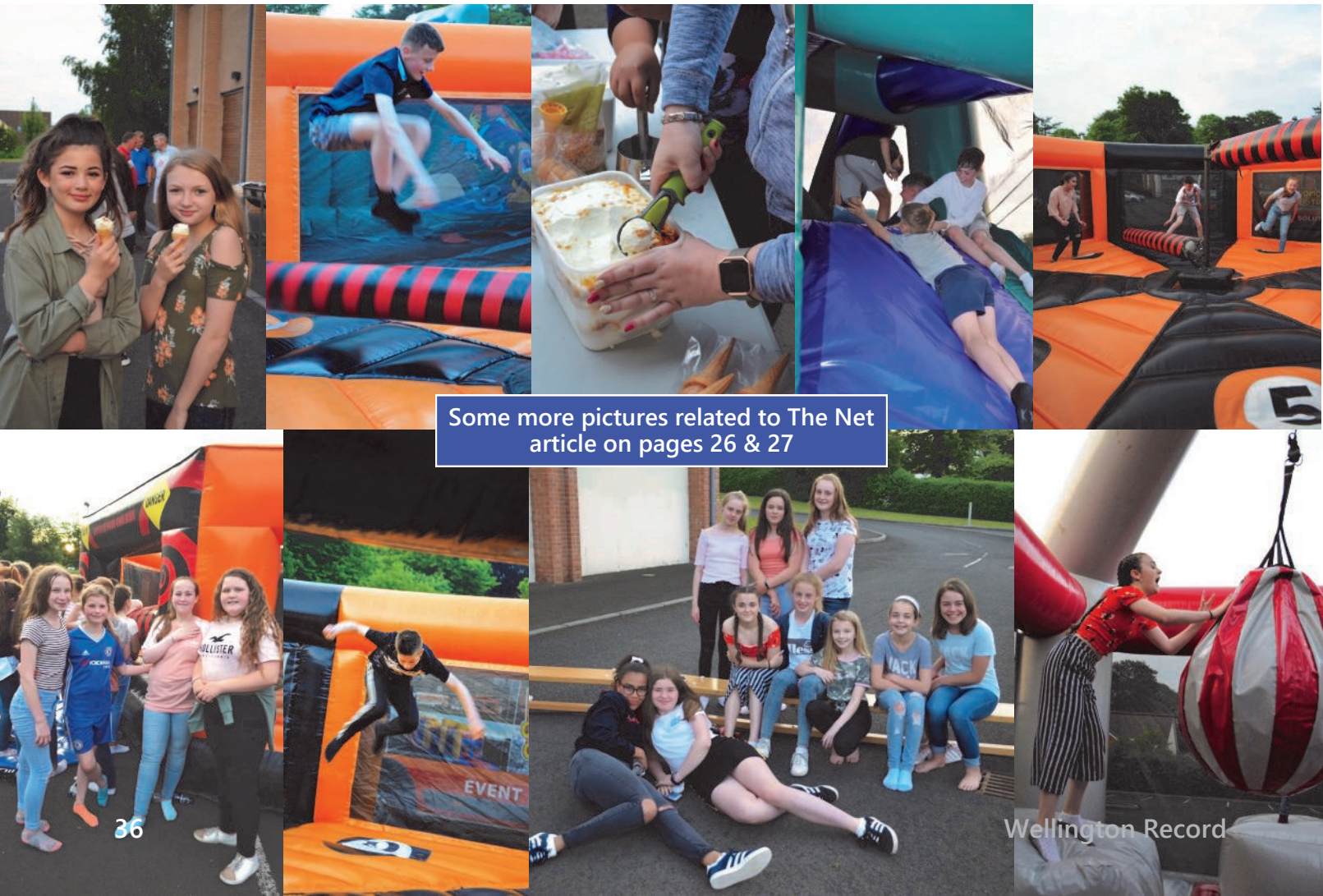
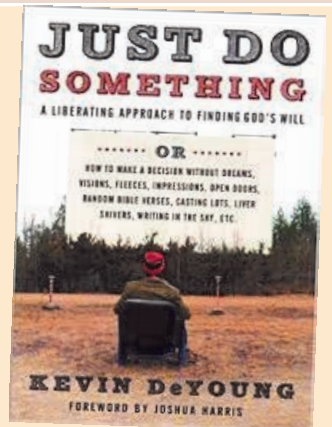
Tripp himself explains the aim of the book when he says, "This book will not provide practical steps for dealing with the kinds of things every parent faces. This book is meant to be a reorienting book ... It is meant to give you vision, motivation, renewed strength, and the rest of heart that every parent needs."

Francis Chan explains, "This is the most meaningful book I have read all year. It is both theological and practical, a rare combination in a parenting book."

"Just do something" by Kevin De Young

I wonder have you ever asked, "What is God's will for my life?" It is a good question. However, in a world of ever growing choice, many Christians struggle to know what to do and identify God's will when faced with decisions where there is no obviously sinful choice. This can cause real angst, struggle and even paralyse faith.

Kevin De Young, in this book, wrestles with and addresses some of the common Christian clichés that paralyse us from actually going out and living for the Lord. It is a thoroughly interesting short book that I would encourage all believers and especially young people to read.



New Communicant Members

We welcome these new members to our Church Fellowship. Each attended the New Members Course and affirmed their faith at our Communion Service on 4 November 2018



Daniel & Lynn Brown, Loughview Cottages, Portglenone; **James & Julie Elliot**, Cockhill Road, Ballymena;
John & Helen Kinnier, Highgrove Drive, Ballyclare; **Robert & Karen Melville**, Thornbrooke, Ahoghill;
Stanley and Margaret Murdock, Carncome Road, Connor; **Paul & Sharon Rodgers**, Fendale Park, Cullybackey;
Gareth & Jill Thompson, Parkmount Crescent, Ballymena



Aimee Chapman & Anita McQuade, Glenview Road, Carnalbanagh; **Linda Kilpatrick**, Rosssdale, Ballymena;
Sarah McNeill, Mounthill, Cloughmills; **Karen Fleck**, Old Portglenone Road, Portglenone;
Eleanor McBride, Thorncroft, Ahoghill; **Sandra Burns**, Bally Road, Ballymena;
Laura Kane, Ballycregagh Road, Cloughmills; **Anne Boyd**, Lisnevenagh Road, Antrim;
Derek Martin, Browndod Road, Doagh.
 Not included in photograph: **Victoria Law**, Glebe Manor, Ahoghill.

Deaths 2018

3 July	Lal Khanna	Grange Road	Private funeral
16 July	Mary Robinson	Prospect Nursing Home	Interred in Ballymena Cemetery
5 Aug	Cecil Scullion	Glenravel Park	Interred in Ballee Cemetery
7 Aug	Ida Wilson	Racavan, Broughshane	Interred in Ballee Cemetery
8 Aug	Garvin Murdock	Rosses Lane	Interred in Ballee Cemetery
20 Aug	Hazel Smyth	Old Grange Avenue	Interred in Ballymena Cemetery
11 Sept	Harold Crooks	Brigadie Avenue	Private family interment



This year 2nd Ballymena Boys' Brigade has undertaken to reinstate the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. This has been made possible by kind donations from 2nd Ballymena and District Old Boys' Association and from Mid and East Antrim Borough Council through their Grant Support Scheme. This has enabled the Boys' Brigade to purchase the camping equipment required for the expedition section of the award.

Ten boys have commenced their Bronze Award and two, having completed their Bronze with their schools, have commenced their Silver Award.

The DofE has a positive impact on young people's lives, in terms of their personal development and employability, and on wider society, from charities gaining active and engaged volunteers to businesses hiring work-ready recruits. These are attributes held by the Boys Brigade as we are committed to seeing lives enriched by supporting young people to reach their full potential by providing opportunities to meet together and engage in a range of developmental activities and experiences.

Participants in the award have to complete 3 sections, namely Skill, Physical and Volunteering. These help participants build confidence, make friends and take responsibility. Each boy is encouraged to make a real difference within their communities by sharing the values of the scheme, as well the values of our church, with the children and young people in our local community. Thanks to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and the Old Boys Association for making this possible.



Representatives of the BB Old Boys' Association pictured with Geoff Eagleson, Officer-in-charge of Company Section and some of the boys taking part in the DofE Award Scheme



Ben Alexander, son of Gareth and Karen McGregor, Crea Road, Randalstown.
 17 June 2018



Isla Hanna, daughter of Alistair and Amanda McWhirter, Knockan Road, Broughshane.
 22 July 2018



Joel Samuel, son of Andrew and Leanne McCaughan, Killane Manor, Gracehill.
 16 September 2018

Baptisms

Charlotte Anne, daughter of Mark and Susan McKeown, Ballyconnelly Road, Ballymena. Included (l-r) are sisters Kathryn and Robyn and brother Cameron 8 July 2018

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 19 v 14 (ESV)



And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

Genesis 17 v 7 (ESV)

Erin Isabella, daughter of David and Andrea Currie, Byrestown Road, Kells. Included is brother Daniel 23 September 2018

Toban Samuel, son of John and Linda McClintock, Craigdoo Road, Ballymena. Included is sister Grace 18 November 2018

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22 v 6 (ESV)



Connie, daughter of Samuel and Alison Woodrow, Garvaghy Road, Portglenone. 30 September 2018



Marriages



**Lauren McNair &
Robert Spence**
7 July 2018



**Jessica McAfee &
Jonathan McClelland**
28 July 2018



**Sarah Mitchell &
Andrew Lennox**
10 August 2018



**Megan Montgomery &
Ryan Welsh**
12 September 2018



**Alexandra Wilson &
Jonathan McKeown**
27 September 2018



**Rebecca Fleming &
Michael Kernohan**
10 November 2018

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