

Dublin & Munster Presbytery

LINKUP

Winter / Geimhreadh 2011 - 2012



In compiling these reports of the life and work of some of the congregations in our Presbytery I have enjoyed reading about the diverse and interesting nature of our Presbytery. I hope that as you read it you feel inspired to pray for our Presbytery and give thanks to God for the work that goes on within its bounds. My only regret is that there are not more stories from the many other churches that could have contributed.

William Hayes - Editor

Adelaide Road

Psalm 85:6 Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?

The psalmists response is, "I will listen to what God the Lord will say" and his hope "he promises peace to his people his saints"v8 "the Lord will indeed give what is good" v12

"Change is happening and nowhere more so than in Dolebusters which due to the withdrawal of government funding has to close."

As we welcome the new church term we will be listening to God speak through the letter the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Galatia. This church was tempted to desert the gospel and return to following the law (rules) as a way of being good Christians. Paul is astonished and very keen to usher them back to the true gospel, a way of freedom, of grace and of the Holy Spirit. Our prayer is that this would be an encouraging and exciting study which will help us explore the wonder of God's grace. Trevor Morrow calls Galatians, "A manifesto for Christian freedom", and it would be wonderful if we found it to be so.

Change is happening and nowhere more so than in Dolebusters which due to the withdrawal of government funding has to close. We are grateful for all that has been achieved in the lives of those who have come into our church building. We thank the Board for their work over the years and especially to David Boyd who did so much in the office and for the staff. So what does the future hold? Let us be prayerful as we explore new possibilities of outreach.

Remember the new children in Sunflower Crèche and the staff and ask the Lord to bless and give opportunities to speak about him.

We welcome our new Youth Worker, Eric Hughes, and our prayers are with him as he settles into life in ARPC.

A big thanks to all who serve in the Church in many, many ways, we appreciate everything you do, and may we together find that our chief aim is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Please continue to pray for Karen Morgan who is in Chile with YWAM (Youth with a Mission).

Congratulations & Every Blessing to:

Stuart Ferguson on his appointment as Clerk of the Dublin & Munster Presbytery on the 3rd May.

Ronan Plant & Denise Carroll who got married on Saturday 4th June.
to Gerard and Hayley McGrath on the Baptism of their son Roan on 18th September.

to Peter & Karen Thompson on the Baptism of their second son Dylan on 25th September.

To Abba & Neka Kalu on the Baptism of their son David on 16th October.
Our Sympathy & Prayers to Winnie on the sudden passing of her husband Clive Wilmot on 22nd September.

Every year thousands of International Students come to Dublin to study English or to complete degree level education. Our aim is to befriend these students and to share the good news of Jesus Christ with them in the hope that they will come to know the Lord and return home as his witnesses. To do this, we have an International Student Cafe each Friday

evening until Christmas. At the cafe we have a meal together, enjoy an activity, and share our lives and our faith around the table.

We look forward to a visit from the Moderator at our Sunday evening service on 30th October @ 7pm.

Our Webpage is www.adelaideroadchurch.ie

Stuart Ferguson

Aghada & Trinity Cork

We were shocked and saddened to hear the news on 4 July of the death of Bobby Jeffery who had been a long time resident in Stewart's Palmerstown. Our thanks to Rev Trevor Morrow and the care staff there who held a prayer service prior to his funeral in Aghada. Our deep sympathy to his sister Jean, brother Brian and sister and brother in law Irene and Gordon with their daughters Emma and Lauren. The offering at our Harvest Thanksgiving service on Sunday 23 October will be donated to Stewart's in memory of Bobby who will be much missed both in Palmerstown and by family and friends around Aghada. It is hoped to have a missionary theme at this service with contributions from local Presbyterians who have involvement with overseas mission.

For the first time in a quarter of a century an elder was ordained in Aghada on Sunday 25th September. We congratulate Helen Barrett, the first woman elder in the congregation and were delighted also that her mother Mrs Steenson, an elder from Mountmellick, was able to attend. A team from Maghera Presbyterian Church led by their minister Rev Gareth Stewart visited in early July. We are grateful for their joyful, hard work both in a holiday bible club in Aghada and in practical work in the church interior at Trinity.

A team from Trinity Bangor came again at the end of July and conducted children's and teenage outreach in the Church of Ireland Hall in Douglas. We appreciate how the team took responsibility for the services on Sunday 24 July in the absence of the minister whose mother had recently died. Thanks are also due to Revs Colin Milligan and Geraldine Gracie of Cork Methodist Church who acted in a similar way when the his father died in late February.

Trinity has been celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. We were honoured to have this launched by a visit from the President of Ireland and Dr Martin McAleese on 26th November 2010, who was presented with the first copy of our anniversary booklet. The Moderator of the General Assembly Dr Norman Hamilton preached at a live radio broadcast on 3rd April and on Monday 4th after speaking about intercessory prayer to a group of church leaders visited Cork University Hospital and Cork Airport to express thanks to the emergency services for their efficient and compassionate reaction to the air crash of 10th February.

Some of the dead and wounded had Presbyterian connexions in the North. One airport official commented that although the loss of six lives

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was deeply sad, it was remarkable that another six were rescued from a crashed and burning aircraft.

Our anniversary events continued with a concert by Scottish singer Ian White on 2nd July. We also welcomed people to the church as part of Heritage Day in August and enjoyed putting on a light hearted contribution to ‘Cork Culture Night’ on 23rd September with a short pageant featuring the church’s history. The Irish Georgian Society are to visit us in October and the East Cork Choir will finish the year with Handel’s Messiah on 26th November.

Richard Patton’s time with us as a volunteer intern seemed to flash past from September 2010 to the end of June 2011. He combined a passion for coffee with other more spiritual talents such as interacting with students and other young adults. We are grateful for the sign painting and the puppets also. We wish him well in an assignment in Ballykeel Ballymena as well as study with the Cornhill Training Course.

Our leadership structures have been enhanced with the election of a new church committee and the appointment of an ‘outreach action group’ to help supervise the work of Harry Moreland who has been assigned as full time Irish Mission worker to Cork and to give focus to all our outreach activities.

Our small groups are hoping to look at parts of the book of Numbers. We now have three points of fellowship, Sunday afternoon young adults, Tuesday evening and Wednesday lunchtime. Another encouraging development is the formation of two ‘praise teams’ to share in the leadership of singing.

Lucan

Holy Land Tour

The Rev Dr Trevor Morrow will be leading a tour to Israel/Palestine from the 19th to the 28th of March 2012. This will be his third visit. These are his thoughts:

‘What makes a visit to this land so memorable is that so much of what we read in the scriptures comes alive as we see the historical and archaeological sites and we walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Whether you are exploring old Jerusalem or crossing the sea of Galilee or celebrating communion in the Garden tomb, you cannot but be inspired and informed by the context of where much of the bible was written.

It is important that we also visit the ‘living stones’ when we are there. We will be meeting with our brothers and sisters both Palestinian and Jewish who are kingdom building in this polarised society. Part of our time will be at the Bethlehem Bible College which trains mostly Palestinian believers but also spearheads creative ways of peace making with their Jewish neighbours.’

There are still a few places available and if you want to join him please contact the Lucan Presbyterian Church at office@lpc.ie for details.

Christ Church Sandymount



In the year since our last report for Link-Up the life of the congregation at Sandymount has continued with its well-established round of activities. The central focus is of course the regular worship of God and thanksgiving for all His blessings to us, but the fellowship of the congregation is strengthened through regular events such as the annual Christmas Fair, congregational lunches at significant points of the year such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest, and intermittent car boot/craft sales and coffee mornings which help to raise funds for worthy causes both local and international. The past year has seen all of these activities flourish.

Rev. Dr. Katherine P. Meyer

We offer our congratulations to our minister, Rev. Katherine Meyer, on completing her Ph.D at the Irish School of Ecumenics (part of Trinity College Dublin) earlier this year. Study at this level is never easy, but to combine it with work as a full-time minister requires real dedication and discipline.

Norman Behennah

At the end of 2010 Norman Behennah retired after many years of service as Hall Manager. Norman supervised the hall with great charm and efficiency throughout his time in charge, and was greatly appreciated by the many groups who used its facilities whether on a regular or occasional basis. The congregation had an opportunity to express its gratitude for all his work at the Christmas lunch held (appropriately) in the hall after the carol service on 12th December. We are very grateful to Nuala Dillon who has very capably taken up the position as Hall Manager.

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Michael Jones

As part of his training for Methodist ministry at Edgehill Theological College, Michael Jones has been on a placement with the congregation of Christ Church Sandymount during 2011. Michael is a bassoonist in the RTE National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, and had previously visited Sandymount on several occasions as a Methodist local preacher. He has contributed to the life of the congregation in various ways, leading a bible study group during Lent and conducting services from time to time.

Church Council elections

The triennial elections to the Church Council were held in advance of the congregation’s AGM in February. Those elected were Emily Anderson, James Bailie, June Brookes, Leslie Buttimer, Nuala Dillon, Sean Hogan, Katy Lumsden, Joe McCarthy, Roy Stanley, and Peg Weir. They join the elders Marjorie Donaghy, Gay Hogan and Steven Smyrl who, along with the minister, are ex officio members of the council.

Farewell

In recent months we were very sad to say farewell to two families who have moved away from Sandymount because of career changes. James and Charlotte Helm and their sons Joseph, Patrick and Charlie had been active members of the congregation since James became Dublin correspondent for the BBC in 2002. Last year he was appointed Director of Communications at the UK Department for International Development, so reluctantly the family decided to relocate to the UK.

Ian and Natasha Robinson and their young daughters Lucy and Jessica were with us for a shorter time, but this summer made a decision to move back to Natasha’s native New Zealand. We wish the Helms and the Robinsons all God’s blessings for the future.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Birth

Congratulations to Joe McCarthy and Katy Lumsden on the birth of their daughter Beatrix Nona Lumsden McCarthy, born on 24th September 2011. We look forward to welcoming Beatrix into the family of the church at her baptism.

Baptism

On 6th February 2011 we welcomed a large congregation for the baptism of Zora Gatei and her children Sinead and Ethan Kanza. Zora, Sinead and Ethan have been regular worshippers at Sandymount for several years, and are now attached to the Methodist congregation nearer their home in Blanchardstown.

Death

Vivienne Weir – 14th November 2010

Vivienne St Clair Weir was a lifelong and faithful member of Sandymount Presbyterian congregation (which later united with the local Methodist congregation to form Christ Church, Sandymount, an alternating ministry charge). Born in 1920, Vivienne was the eldest child of James St. Clair Dallas and Eileen Sullivan (nee Dewar). The Dallas family were natives of Co. Tyrone and the Dewars hailed from Scotland. In April 1946 Vivienne married James Edward Weir and two years later her sister Peg married Jimmy's older brother, Harold. Vivienne and Jimmy had two children, both daughters; Hilary St. Clair (now deceased) and Carol Dianne, who resides in South Africa.

Alongside Peg, Vivienne served the congregation and the local community for very many years until illness confined her to Leopardstown hospital after the death of Jimmy in June 2005. Vivienne's commitment to others and to the wider community was always shown in a quiet and most unassuming way. She was regularly re-elected to the church council; she took part in the porch duty rota, welcoming people to church on Sunday mornings; she baked for events and sales of work. With Peg she gave many years to Meals-on-Wheels, often delivering meals to folk much younger than herself! Vivienne's life was a wonderful example of the maxim "others before self". Vivienne died on the 14th November 2010. She is greatly missed.

Steven Smyrl & Roy Stanley

Mountmellick

This has been a difficult year for the congregation with a mixture of short term illnesses and long term health problems for many. We have had some encouragement even in the midst of all this and I am always impressed by the spirit of resilience and perseverance within the congregation. Congratulations to Helen Barrett on her ordination to the eldership in Aghada. A small group from Mountmellick travelled down for the ordination and enjoyed mixing with the Aghada folk.

We bid farewell this Autumn to Heather Terrill who has been a blessing to the congregation in so many ways. Her strong voice led the singing on a Sunday and throughout the week her shop was a great meeting point for members of the congregation.. She was particularly good at keeping an eye out for members who might be unwell or feeling a bit down. She will be badly missed but our loss is Wembley Park's gain and we pray that she will settle back well into life in London.

We have been blessed with two new families, one from nearby and one from far away. Paul and Caroline Granger moved to us from Tullamore Church around the time of their wedding (more on that in Tullamore's section below) and Ethelda Erasmus joined us from South Africa, soon to be followed (God willing) by her husband Rassie.

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Tullamore

Paul and Caroline Granger were married in Tullamore Church on 10th September of this year. It was a great family occasion shared by ourselves and our sister church Mountmellick. It even made it's way into the national newspapers due to the uncoventional dress code at the wedding (see above). This was the first wedding in the church building since 1997.

It is with great regret that we note the deaths of Mrs Kathleen Field and Mrs Elizabeth Lucey. Their deaths mark the passing of a generation who held Tullamore Presbyterian, Clara Presbyterian (Mrs Field) and Birr Presbyterian (Mrs Lucey) Churches together through difficult times. It must have taken great strength to continue to uphold the values of Presbyterianism in a time when churches were closing around you at a frightening rate. We pray that some of that strength and resilience would remain within us their spiritual descendants.

This Winter will be a time of physical change within the building in Tullamore as we finally get to replace the old kitchen which has performed good service for at least forty years with a new one. We hope that the new kitchen facilities will be of good service not just to the various community groups who use our building but be used as a resource by the church to further its witness to Christ in the area around us.

Drogheda

Sunday worship

It was a privilege to have fraternal visits at morning worship in September from members of the Blackrock and Legacurry congregations. Our theme for autumn was 'The Book of Books' celebrating 400 years of the Bible in English. The series was launched in October by the visit of Presbyterian actor Geoffrey Darling from the U.S. who presented the Sermon on the Mount (KJV) in the morning and Mark's Gospel in a modern version in the evening. (one hour with a short interval!).

Missionary Sunday was conducted by Mr Stephen Cowan, PCI missionary in N Kenya and Developing World Sunday by Cliona Murphy of Tear Fund(Ireland) who updated us on the situation in East Africa and presented a challenging message from the book of Ruth. On Sunday evenings we used Christianity Explored, a DVD series which explores the message of Mark's Gospel. Each presentation is preceded by a light tea and followed by discussion groups. Harvest thanksgiving was conducted by Rev Stephen Lockington (Mullingar) preached at the Harvest Thanksgiving and civic leaders took part in a packed Advent Carol service.

Weddings and baptisms

Two more weddings took place between members of our youth leadership team Jennifer Elliot to Radek Novak (August) and Andrius Rakauskas to Colette Corr (in Clontarf church kindly granted). Jennifer and Radek moved to the Czech republic but we are glad to have Colette and Andrius still in local leadership.

We also had the baptisms of Kamsiyo Ikegbunam, Lynn Nti, Emmanuel Nti, Lebsia Nti, Zvikomborero Charai, Farai Charai and Glory Sinead Charai.

Pastoral

We are glad to report that five members who were quite ill during 2011 have completed their chemotherapy treatments and are progressing well. Our oldest surviving elder Donald Reid celebrated his 94th birthday in a nursing home in Belfast and one of our greatly valued younger members Gerard Clinton has been approved by Presbytery to be presented as a candidate for fulltime ministry. The number of home groups has multiplied to six; members are studying Paul's Letter to the Galatians.

New church building

Construction has progressed rapidly and indications are that the building should be complete in the spring. A choral evening led by the Ballyclare Male Voice Choir was the highlight of recent fundraising events which have also included several car boot sales, an auction of promises, Table

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Linkup

Quiz and sale of cookbooks. We are very grateful to other congregations and friends of Drogheda church who have been very generous towards us. We value prayer for the architect Mr Nigel Jones who was taken seriously ill and is now recovering.

And finally...

A great big thank you to everyone who made the visit of the Moderator of the General Assembly such a success. Speaking personally it was great for Mountmellick and Tullamore to have the opportunity to host Ivan and Maureen Paterson and in doing so consolidate some of that, all too elusive, "Presbyterian Identity" which can be hard to maintain in a Presbytery as far flung as our own.

It was good as part of this to worship together in Adelaide Road and while numbers were low due to the time of year it is an idea well worth re-visiting the next time an excuse presents itself to bring the people of our Presbytery together to worship Jesus and celebrate all that he has done in and through us.

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