

The Light

Issue 189: June 2010

Back to church:
A challenge for
September...

Find out inside

1st Issue:
New look
magazine!

There's More...

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outreach and community
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local preachers

A JOURNEY

The circuit welcomes Dr Peter
Mercer and his wife, Helen
and we hear some of their story...

Zoe's Story

Paul and Kirsty Rainey share about
life with their daughter Zoe

CIRCUIT UPDATES

Seymour St, Trinity
Broomhedge
Magheragall
Priesthill & Dromore

Editor's Letter

Seeing the Light...

With the publication of this new format magazine we hope that you will see the Lisburn and Dromore Circuit in a new Light! Even if the humour has not improved we hope you will find that both the content and the presentation of The Light make you want to read on!

What we are trying to achieve in The Light is to give you not just news of what is happening across our Circuit, but an insight into what lies behind our worship, organizations and activities, and to introduce you to the real-life stories of our people as they face up to the issues of the modern world. Through the Light we hope that you will feel closer to the other Churches of our Circuit, and also the family of the Methodist Church in Ireland. We also hope that the articles will encourage and deepen your faith.

Our thanks go to Isobel Law, Adrian Nesbitt and the others who put so much into the previous editions of The Light. As did the former team, we have tried to include something for everyone in the new Light and we welcome your feedback on what you would like to see in future issues. If you have suggestions or material for The Light send a message to our email address: thelight@seymourstreet.org,

Wishing you good reading!



Lindsay Easson, Editor

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If you have articles or images for the next edition of 'The Light' please send them to the address above or give them to your church representative by Sunday 3rd September 2010.

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(Cover image by Janine Mayes)

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Church Services during July and August:

Seymour Street - 10.30am,
Trinity 10.00 am,
Magheragall 11.00 am,
Broomhedge 11.30 am,
Priesthill 11.00 am,
Dromore 11.00 am.

Evening Services - rota of Lisburn City Centre Churches at 8pm as announced

Methodist News

Methodist conference

This year's Conference, which is being held in Belfast from 10th to 13th June, is making history in two ways. The new President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, Rev Paul Kingston, is presiding over Conference, a role always previously carried out by the President of the Methodist Church in Great Britain. The Church has also appointed its first Lay Leader of Conference, Mrs. Gillian Kingston, who will hold this position for three years. The Conference theme is 'Our Calling to Fulfil'. During his year as President, as well as undertaking a wide range of duties and visits across the connexion, the Rev. Kingston will visit the Methodist Church in Ghana visiting local congregations, some projects and attending the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ghana.



MWI Fellowship Weekend

The Methodist Women in Ireland Fellowship Weekend is being held from 17-19th September 2010 in Glenada Conference Centre, Newcastle. For further information phone 028 90774571 or email Helena Ewing at helena.ewing@btinternet.com.

Walk in the Word

Part-time course in Edgemoor College, Wednesday mornings, 10.30 am to 1 pm. Starting 29th September 2010.

"Streams in the Wasteland" A journey through the Book of Isaiah. This study fellowship encourages participants to step into the world of Isaiah to understand what his message meant for the culture of its time, and to look further to see what God, through His Holy Spirit, has to say to His people.

Castlewellan Holiday Week 2010 31st July to 7th August 2010

This year's themes is 'Close Encounters of the God Kind' 31st July - 7th August and the main speaker, Steven Cave (National Director for the Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland). The youth speaker is Brian Heasley. For up to date booking information check the website at www.castlewellanholidayweek.org.

Around the Circuit

JUST 10

Both Trinity and Seymour Street will be using the book 'Just 10', a look at the 10 Commandments in the 21st Century, by J John as the basis for House Group Bible studies and Services in the Autumn.

Be REFRESHED

REFRESH is a new Holiday Club at Seymour Street, Tuesday 24th to Thursday 26th August. Mornings, 10.30 to 12.30 and Afternoons 3pm to 4pm are for Primary School children and evenings from 7pm to Secondary kids only, finishing with a family BBQ.

Seymour St Church weekend in Sept 2011

It may seem a long way ahead, but bookings are coming in already for the Seymour Street Weekend being held at the Lodge Hotel Travelstop, 9th to 11th September 2011. With full use of the conference facilities and en-suite accommodation, with rooms for families, couples and singles, the weekend will cost £99 per person sharing, with rates of £39 and £29 for young people and children.

Serving at home and abroad this summer

Hannah Stewart will be working with children in Moldova through Exodus. Anna Jones will be working with children in Portugal through DYCW in conjunction with 'Christians in Action'

David McCrossan will be working on a building project and with Young People's Work in Romania with Exodus & Drumbo Presbyterian Church. James and Angela Nelson - Will be serving on the Castlerock Scripture Union Mission.

Continuing Support for Ghana

Following their project at Lake Bosomtwe Methodist Clinic in Ghana in 2008 the team from our Circuit have supplied material for a Container which was sent to Ghana within the last few weeks by the Container Ministry.

Summer Opportunities 2010 Through Trinity Youth Ministries (TYM)

It is hard to believe the summer months are almost upon us again. If this summer you are looking for an activity to get involved in TYM may have just what you are looking for!

Transform Exchange - 13-20 July 2010

TYM will be taking a group of young people aged 14 - 25 years to be part of a Summer Exchange programme in the Republic of Ireland. We will be joining a group from Urban Junction, a Christian community project based in Dublin, and also with a group of Methodist young people from Germany. Over the week you will be involved in cultural awareness, team building, community action and much more. This exchange is partly funded by a European Union grant and we estimate an approximate cost of £65 per person for the remainder (this includes travel, food and accommodation).

Castlewellan Holiday Week - 31 July - 7 August

TYM are taking a small group to Castlewellan and we will be staying off-site in the 'Old Post House' near to Castlewellan Forest Park. The cost for the week will be approximately £140 - this will include conference fees accommodation, food and travel for the week. The theme is 'Close Encounters: Of the God Kind' and the Youth Speaker is Brian Heasley who leads 24-7 Ibiza. Check out www.castlewellanholidayweek.org for the full programme.

Camp Son:Rise - 16 - 20 August

Our annual Holiday Bible Club for primary aged children meeting at Trinity 10am - 12pm. There will be drama, music, stories, craft, games and much more. Registration forms for this week will be available from the TYM website site from the beginning of June. Volunteer helpers must be 16 years or above and should contact Glenn for an application form. glenn@trinitylisburn.com

The 16th is an important date for Trinity!

It so happens Trinity has organized events on the 16th of August, September and October!

16th to 20th August - Holiday Bible Club.

16th September - Table Quiz at 8pm.

16th October - Grand Auction / Pledge Auction / Fun day and BBQ. Viewing from 10am. Auction from 11am. Events for all the family.

Dromore's new hall...



Photo: John Kelly

The new hall of Dromore Methodist Church was opened and dedicated by the President, the Rev Donald Ker on Saturday 28 November 2009. The photograph shows Mrs Sally Forsythe and Eleanor Gracie presenting gifts to the Rev Donald Ker (President of the Methodist Church in Ireland) and his wife Sandra after the ceremony. Looking on is the Rev Colin Gracie, minister of Dromore and Priesthill. The new facilities have brought a new lease of life to organisations such as the Youth Club as you can read in this article.

THE YOUTH CLUB IN DROMORE RE-OPENS:

Friday 8 January 2010 was to be a momentous night for us - the reopening of Dromore Methodist Youth Club after a full year without premises. The shiny new hall was ready, the leaders were raring to go and the programme was sorted. Then that heavy snow fell, roads were blocked, paths became perilous adventures in their own right and our opening night had to be cancelled for health and safety reasons. Disappointing, but out of our hands.

Fortunately the snow departed and our official re-launch in the new hall took place the following Friday night. Despite our year of absence we found that many of our regulars came back, bringing new friends with them. Activities included football, the Lego building competition, computer games and the always popular arts and crafts (a ticketing system may be required for next season given the queues of members that formed whilst waiting to take part).

Once that section of the night ended the young people members took part in singing, memory verses and the occasional quiz, before listening to a Bible story or object lesson.

With the new facilities to work out of, the Lord has blessed the Club in the short time it's been running again. It has proved to be a very good start to things, with junior members numbering above 50 per night with over 100 on the register. Whilst our senior club is much smaller there has proven to be a good fellowship among them, with plenty of opportunity for chat, coffee and crisps! Many of our seniors also help during the junior club and have recently completed a leadership course ran through the local youth and education department.

"The support of the leaders, seniors and parents has been invaluable during this time & a big thanks to them all. The greatest thanks must go to the Lord for providing us with a new hall, enthusiastic leaders and a great bunch of young people to work for and with."

We ask that you remember the work of the Club in your prayers and ask God for continued safety for the young people during the summer break and that they will come to know Christ as their Friend and Saviour.

Leaders of the Youth Club, Dromore.

local preachers

Local Preachers 'on trial' in the Lisburn & Dromore Circuit

Richard Wright

I work as an imaging doctor (Radiologist) in the Children's Hospital and RVH in Belfast, but probably better known as the organist in Seymour Street and as husband of Jackie and dad to Andrew, Nadia, and Emilia. Through the local preacher training I hope to be able to play a fuller part in leading services around the circuit. The Edgehill classes, which about 24 people are attending, are enjoyable but challenging. Many of the people attending are not planning to go on to be local preachers, but I would commend the course even if you simply want to enjoy the fellowship and the learning experience.



Mark Colligan

I've been a management consultant for about 10 years, and am now working to help bring about modernisation in the Civil Service. My interest in becoming a Local Preacher started through wanting more understanding of God, and where he is in my life. Brian suggested I start the programme with no pressure to complete it, but having started it, I felt it was something I should become more serious about. We can all be used by God to bring others to Him. I think we are too content to leave evangelising to others, but even how we speak and behave day to day, can make others curious about what why we are different, as I have experienced recently in a number of unexpected situations. Through my services, I would like to help people have a sense that we all have a talent for bringing others to God, even through simply living our life in a positive Christ-like way.



Ivan Barr

I work as a Software Engineer for BT, and Lynne and I started coming to Trinity when we married eight years ago. We have two boys, Reuben and Nathaniel. I especially enjoy taking the Shell Club there. Last year I became Society Steward which makes for a busy time! I don't really have much opportunity for hobbies but have recently enjoyed researching my family tree contacting relatives across the world. I had the opportunity to preach in my previous church, though without any formal training. Whilst it is a bit daunting I have always considered it a great privilege and responsibility to rightly present the Word of God. Training to become a Local Preacher is a great opportunity to learn, improve on my many shortcomings and get feedback from experienced preachers in the church. 2 Cor 5 v20 is an important verse to me and sums up what I hope I can be - an ambassador for Christ.



Louise Monroe

Im currently a student but not for much longer as I have just completed a Theology degree at Queen's through Edgehill College, and hope to graduate in July. As a Christian I believe I have a living faith through which God leads and directs and slowly reveals the path He wants us to follow as and when we can handle it. So I believe that is what He was doing as He called me to become a Local Preacher. Leading worship and preaching is an awesome responsibility and a wonderful privilege and it is my desire to help in bringing people to a place in which they can meet with and experience our amazing God and find, develop or fulfil that living relationship with Him which is so important.



Richard Dougherty from Trinity, has also applied to be accepted as a Local Preacher on Trial.

Church, life and other ramblings...

Janine is married to Clifford and has 3 kids: Sarah (12), Jane (10) and Sam (5). She loves taking photographs, writing on her blog, making jewellery & digital scrapbooking. She became a Christian when she was just 8 years old and was brought up a Covenantor (Reformed Presbyterian Church). She joined Seymour St 15 yrs ago.



Janine Mayes - Seymour Street

Do you feel connected in your congregation? Do you feel part of the church family? Despite so much "going on" on Sunday mornings and during the week, being in the middle of things can still be isolating. I know this is something I personally have struggled with at times and I am not alone in this.

It's easy to keep on a mask and say "I'm fine" when inside we know we really aren't.

Through our SAP (Share and Prayer) group I feel much more connected and part of the church family. Meeting with a small group on a regular basis to discuss and share our faith has really helped me. I realise that these type of small groups or when they meet might not be suitable for everyone, or maybe not at this particular stage of your life. So how else can we connect and share?

During the "There's More" events, Brian sent a nightly email, sharing news and points for prayer, and it helped us feel united and involved, even for the events we were not attending ourselves. I hope this is something we can use more and more, embracing the technology now available.

Another way to connect is through FaceBook and other online social media tools! Yes! It is not just for the young or technically-minded, and when used safely and responsibly it can be a great tool for keep in touch and connecting with each other. Facebook (www.facebook.com) is a free Web site where members can post photos, link to sites of interest, post status updates, send e-mails and do instant messaging. The idea: to connect with other people.

"After continued rapid growth, Facebook now has 400 million members. This represents 1 in 3 of all web users (if you exclude China where Facebook is banned). By comparing Facebook users with country populations, it is the third largest 'country' in the world." (quote from www.ourchurch.com)

When members of the church have been away we could all check on their "status", see photos and even "chat" with them online. Whether members are in Canada, Zambia, Ghana or London it was possible to share what was happening back here, and encourage them too. Facebook can help us connect with fellow Christians irrespective of our location, age or even what time zone we're in!

Be careful of setting "Privacy Settings" to restrict what information you share. You might rediscover and reconnect with old friends, colleagues and members of your congregation who you have lost touch with.

We can also use FaceBook to live out our lives and faith openly and transparently. "It is obviously no substitute for sharing your faith in person,

"(facebook) allows you to create a profile that reflects your faith and to share this with your other friends."

(quote from www.churchblogger.wordpress.com)

facebook

facebook allows members post photos, link to sites of interest, send emails and connect with other people. To sign up visit www.facebook.com

You can find Janine on Facebook JanMary Janine Mayes or read her blog at www.janmary.com.

THERE'S MORE...

and more....
and more!

'Oh ye of little faith' is the traditional rebuke to those who never believed it would happen. It's a trap we all fall into, not believing that God can transform the ordinary, the secular and the routine into the extraordinary, the spiritual and the unique. When Seymour Street Methodist Church, Lisburn, embarked on planning for a week of 'outreach' for January 2010 to be honest most people hedged their bets and thought, it's a good idea but probably it won't achieve very much. It's hard to move a church in which the pews are almost full most Sundays, and the week is full of busy activities.



Youth drama at the community concert

Then it happened... we stepped outside the walls of the Church:

a Kid's Party in the Glenmore Activity Centre, a Pub Quiz in the Hilden Brewery, a Lazer Combat game in the middle of local housing, 5-a-side football at the Leisureplex, a Community Concert in the Island Centre Theatre (pictured above and opposite), a Chocolate Fondue night out and much more.

36 events over 10 days, each packed with laughter and fun – with a simple offer to find that there's more to life with Jesus.



Football at the Kids Party, Glenmore

Each event saw a ready response from some to start in a new direction for their lives, to enquire, to be renewed in their faith, to have their eyes opened to new possibilities.

Our Missioners Rev Paul Hoey of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, Roger Murphy of Through Faith Missions, and Paul Woodman an illusionist and Church Pastor, took time with school assemblies, RE classes and visited local Folds as well as giving a short message as all the There's More events.

Not that all this happened without a lot of hard work, prayer and commitment. Plans were laid nearly a year ahead. Organisations and groups across the church were mobilised to build a special event into their programme during the week. The Sunday School planned a 'Breakfast Café' for parents,

The BB a 'Big Boys' Toys' night and the GB and Craft night for mums, the MWI laid on 'School Run Breakfasts' for local pupils and the Luncheon Club was transformed into a Health Fair with the help of the local Health Trust, Age Concern, the Benefits Agency and many others. In fact the week started to be known as 'There's More Food'!

A glossy brochure of the week's activities was distributed personally to every family with links to the church through all our organisations.

“When we look back I think we will find that Seymour Street has been changed too.”

As we prayed the Spirit moved, and as the Spirit moved lives were changed and healed both physically and spiritually. But when we look back at There's More I think we will find that Seymour Street has been changed too.

The mustard seed of faith that led us to organise a load of community events for a week has grown into a tree in which more from our community are now seeking to build their nests of faith. It's a new confidence that the Lord can use even us, if we just step outside the walls, and that it may not be so hard as we'd imagined to take that step of faith. We need to rediscover that God can use ordinary people doing what they feel are ordinary things to achieve His extraordinary purposes.

That there is more is at the heart of what we have discovered. Whatever comfortable pew we have settled into, dull routine we have come to accept or predictable worship we have become confined to we have a God of surprises. While as Christians we may be content to operate within our 'comfort zone',

“be sure of this, there is more of God to discover...”

more of his power to realise, more of his love to experience and more of his Spirit to guide us on to the next level. He has so much more for us in his treasure chest. We at Seymour Street were privileged to receive some of these treasures during 'There's More' and perhaps if more of our churches were to step outside their walls in faith they too would discover... there's more!

Lindsay Easson, Seymour St

IMAGES:

Leaders at the There's More Kids' Party, with Paul Woodman, (front) and Roger Murphy, (2nd from left) and Rev Brian Anderson (Left).

Brain Trainor and Simon Pyper at the community concert.

Local fire service at the family fun day.





Zoe's Story...

Paul Rainey shares the story of how Zoe has become such a special member of their family...

"We are so lucky as a family to have her, and thankful for the skill of all the medical staff at the Royal Victoria Hospital for Sick Children, and fantastic support of all our family, friends and Seymour Street."

Zoe is a happy, active 17 month old who happens to have Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus.

We were given the diagnosis of Spina Bifida at our 20 week scan. The news was totally unexpected and my wife Kirsty and I were stunned; a referral was quickly made to the RVH where we were told about the severity of our baby's Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

I remember going to that first appointment at the Royal with the positive expectation of finding out how we would deal with this situation which we were living in, and that had taken over every waking thought. What we were confronted with however was an agonising decision to continue or terminate the pregnancy, which pulled our emotions in many different directions. Although none of the medical consultants could say with certainty what level of impairments Zoe would have, the prognosis was bleak. Zoe had a rare thoracic Spina Bifida extending to her bottom. In spite of the seriousness of Zoe's condition,

we made the decision to continue with the pregnancy & give our baby every chance... and prayed hard.

On the 29th December 2008 our second baby girl was born and we named her Zoe, which means 'Life'.

The birth was by Caesarean section with a specialist delivery team of eight due to the risk of Meningitis and Septicaemia. A few hours later Zoe underwent her first surgery for five and half hours to close her spine, and to have a shunt inserted into her brain to drain her Cerebral Spinal Fluid (CSF) and manage her Hydrocephalus. Zoe was recovering

well but two days later on New Years Eve morning I walked into the ICU to see a hive of activity around Zoe's incubator - Zoe had crashed and was now on life support. We had her baptized as her life was still in the balance. She improved over the next week and was able to come off life support; on day 9 we were able to have our first cuddle, and two months later we were able to bring her home. After two great weeks at home Zoe became ill vomiting with a temperature above 40oC.

Tests confirmed Septicaemia and the next hours were crucial; Zoe fought hard throughout the day...

Zoe's shunt had blocked and pressure was increasing within her skull. Over the next few days several emergency operations had to be carried out and Zoe's life was in the balance. Choices had to be made between continuing to work on the shunt or carry out a more serious operation to address the coma that Zoe was now in. After long and supportive discussions with the Neurosurgeons on the Friday we agreed to consider over the weekend whether to go ahead with the decompression surgery for her Chiari Malformation. The hospital staff were very sensitive and arranged to allow Zoe's sister Cara, and her grandparents to see her on the Sunday afternoon, in effect to say their 'Goodbyes'.



Prayer works! Out of blue, Zoe began to wake up that Sunday morning. The decision was taken

on Monday morning to hold off on the decompression surgery, and to do the originally scheduled operation on the shunt and after two further operations this was replaced with a digital programmable shunt where the CSF drainage pressure levels can be adjusted. Over the next few weeks Zoe steadily improved and began to gain weight. After a couple of months in hospital again we were allowed to bring Zoe back home.

Zoe has been back in hospital twice, thankfully for only a week each time, and like many babies she is happy, eats, sleeps and keeps Pampers in business. She has made great progress physically and based on this a decision on a spinal fusion surgery has been deferred. Her daily routine differs a bit however from our experience with her older sister at the same age as she requires medication, catheterisation day & night, and daily physiotherapy. She loves working with her Occupational Therapist Sabina and is showing positive improvement.

Looking ahead a small operation to protect her kidneys, and some orthopaedic treatment are planned, but she never stops smiling. I often look at Zoe's daily challenges, effort and determination to do her exercises when at Physiotherapy, and it puts my sometimes less than positive attitude about my own sport injury rehabilitation in perspective. Spina Bifida however is not an injury, children born with this condition have no choice; it is a neural tube defect that occurs within the first 2 weeks of conception. How different would any of our childhood activities have been if we were in a wheelchair? - just a thought.

Edited version of article from www.thewaddle.co.uk/why.html. Used with permission.

Paul and Kirsty Rainey share their experiences with the editor...

Why did you decide to continue with the pregnancy when medical staff gave your baby such a bleak prognosis and the likelihood of severe handicap?

Paul: Naively perhaps, on referral to the Royal at 22 weeks, we expected the consultants to focus on Kirsty and the baby's ongoing care. The reality was stark in comparison with one doctor stepping outside of guidelines giving us 'Directive Counselling' saying "No viability, no hope, terminate." Searching for answers, at 23 weeks with ASBAH's (Association of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus) help we had a foetal MRI Scan in Sheffield. Weighing up the severity of the physical and neurological prognosis, our worry about the baby suffering, 'quality of life', and the impact on our 2 year old daughter Cara, we really struggled to make the decision the doctors wanted before 24 weeks. Ultimately with that decision occupying every waking thought and much prayer, our choice came down to a

deeper personal belief that while there was life, we should give our baby every chance to live.

How did your faith help you individually and as a couple during the pregnancy and the first days of Zoe's life?

Kirsty: On finally making the decision to continue with the pregnancy we had such peace with our choice that we knew we were being looked after by God. Throughout the remaining weeks of pregnancy we had a lot of information to process and decisions to make. The worry and stress about the uncertain future took its toll on us physically and emotionally in different ways. However I don't think we ever asked "Why is this happening to us?", just- "How do we deal with this, what do we do?" Taking things a step at a time, knowing that you are never given more than you can cope with got us through. Also the support of our family, prayers and texts of so many other people played a huge part.

What have been the greatest 'lows' and 'highs'?

LOWS:

Paul: New Years Eve, watching Zoe 'crash' with septicaemia and the agonising wait to see if she would pull through. Difficult work versus family decisions & having depression last Year.



Best friends: Zoe and big sister Cara

Kirsty: Rushing Zoe back to hospital after having been home for only two weeks, and the 5 emergency operations she would have in that next 2 weeks. Particularly the week when Zoe didn't wake up between the third and fourth surgeries were we faced the prospect of decompression surgery for her Chiari Malformation with its extremely low survival rate.

HIGHS:

Hearing Zoe's first cry as she was delivered and knowing that she could breathe by herself. We had made it through the first step, where there is life there is hope. Getting to hold Zoe for first time when she was eight days old. Seeing the progress Zoe has made; reaching milestones we were never sure we would see. The bond that Cara and Zoe share, hearing the way they laugh together.

What are your aims for Zoe and yourselves over the next year?

Making plans for home adaptations required for Zoe, or a house move for ground floor accessibility. A spinal fusion surgery and bladder operation has been deferred based on Zoe making good progress to date. The next year will tell us more about her cognitive development and what impact her previous seizures and pressure on

the brain will have had. Most of all – to have a quiet year, and that Zoe is healthy and happy.

What has Zoe brought to your family?

Grey hair, sleepless nights, and the ability to sound like an actor on Casualty..... And lots of joy!

Has the experience of Zoe coming into your family changed your faith, or your understanding of what it is to be a Christian?

I think we are always learning what it is to be a Christian, but our experiences with Zoe though tough at times have strengthened our faith, and we know God has been with us on the journey. We have seen the power of prayer and felt the peace of knowing that God is in control. We feel very blessed to have Cara & Zoe, and are very thankful for all the positives.



Paul recently took part in 'The Waddle'; a walk and paddle for 100 miles of the river Bann, from source to sea. This was a fundraising event

for RVH for Sick Children and AFSBH (opposite). To find out more about the AFSBH or make a donation you can visit their website at www.asbah.org or 0845 450775.



At the hospital: Kirsty and Paul with Cara and Zoe



Chris Dillon - Priesthill

Chris is a postman, part time massage therapist and member of Zion Methodist Church, Priesthill. He is married to Carole and has a baby daughter, Joy, who was recently baptised.

Words, words, words... what do you say?

Jamie called and put fear into my heart when he asked me to write about what is happening in my life at present - in two hundred words!

When I think of what has happened in my life over the last few months I remember the fun, enjoyment and excitement we had when looking through baby name books for boy and girl names and their meanings for our expected baby. When she came into this world she brought great JOY along with her name.

As Christians we need to consider our words in relation to what we say and how we say it.

A misplaced word or a careless whisper, a failed opportunity to witness or to encourage and that moment passes forever.

Life moves so fast, one day merges into another - so make that phone call, speak to encourage others and take time on Sunday after Church to chat to someone new. I enjoy getting to know everyone in our Church family and have received many words of encouragement from them all.

Recently two close family members have 'got saved', but the words 'got saved' are only the beginning of the Christian journey. I ask you all to pray for our new believers and allow ourselves to be channels so that the Lord can speak his words through us.

Witnessing to Others Requires Dedicated Servants.

Witnessing Others Requires Dedicated Servants

Back to church sunday...

ARE YOU A GOOD HOST?

Are you a guest or a host when you come to Church? You may think this is a very strange question, but it was one I had to think about at a recent seminar. The speaker was trying to establish how friendly churches are, and how that depends on how many people regard themselves as hosts in a Church congregation. When you come into your church service is your attitude "I am a guest here, how will they treat me?", or are you being a host, looking out for new faces or old faces returning, to welcome them back. It is hard to think of anyone being a guest who has been attending a church for decades!

How many times have we heard stories of someone coming for the first time to a Church receiving a limp welcome, taking a pew - hoping that no-one will say "You are sitting in my seat." - Then sit through the service and leave with no-one having spoken to them. By contrast the same person visiting a Church where the welcome is warm and sincere, they are genuinely spoken to. Well I know which one I would return to. The importance of welcome cannot be overstated, and all hosts have a roll to play.

Marion was invited back to her local church by Jane. Marion for a variety of reasons had got out of the way of coming to church. They were old schoolmates who kept their friendship up through a local sports club. Jane prayed hard and over a cup of coffee plucked up the courage to invite Marion. Marion initially said, "Why would I want to do that?" but Jane left that question unanswered and had the courage to ask a second time on a different occasion. Shocked, Marion said yes and Jane arranged to collect her, bring her to church, and sit with her in a different place from her normal seat. Marion is now a regular worshipper.

How the worship in your church is arranged for 26 September will be up to your leadership but I would be encouraging you to start thinking and praying now about whom you could invite. You know the worst thing that could happen to you is that the person says no but let's be more positive in the hope that some will say 'Yes!'

Rev Brian Anderson

On Sunday 26 September it is hoped that our Circuit will engage in 'Back to Church Sunday'. This is now the largest single Church invitational initiative in the world. It is based on the simplest and shortest step in evangelism; that we should invite someone we already know to something we love; invite a friend to church.

26.09.10
is BACK TO CHURCH
SUNDAY



If you have not been able to get to church for a while and would appreciate help with transport please get in touch with any of the Circuit staff listed on page 2 or email thelight@seymourstreet.org.

Peter and Hazel Mercer: A journey

When visiting someone for the first time I am often asked "Where do you come from?" And it's not that easy to give a simple answer. I was born, the son of a Presbyterian minister, in Liverpool, but we moved back to Ireland when I was six and I grew up in a manse in Coagh, near Cookstown in Co. Tyrone. So, I grew up as a Presbyterian and became a full member of the church in my teens and would have considered myself to be a Christian for most of my life. However, as a teenager, the last thing I wanted to be was follow my father and be a minister! It was a time of great scientific change and I wanted to be part of it. I wanted to be a research scientist and set off to Dublin, to Trinity College, where I graduated with a degree in Botany, and a fiancée in the form of Hazel. It was in London, when studying for a Ph.D. at Imperial College, that

We got mixed up with the people called Methodists and began to stray from the straight and narrow.

My aunt Mollie and her husband John (a staunch Methodist) attended Westminster Central Hall and they invited us along. It was a tremendous experience.



Peter: relaxing in Donegal

The preaching of the Rev. Maurice Barnett & the singing of the great Methodist hymns had us captivated & we were married there nearly 42yrs ago.

While in London I became involved with the politics of Overseas Aid and spent a lot of time lobbying MPs & going on marches demanding fairer trade. I remember going to lobby a rather old Conservative MP in the Houses of Parliament; he took one look at me and said, "Young man, you know absolutely nothing about it. You have never been there!" I thought, "Fair enough, but I'll show him. I'll go." So in September 1970 Hazel and I set off for Malawi in Central Africa where I was to be a research scientist, working on peanut diseases and Hazel a Science teacher in a Catholic Mission School. In Malawi we experienced first hand what it was like to be a member of the developing world. To be rich there meant to have a tin roof on your hut, a bicycle and a transistor radio.

Five years later we returned home with a one-year old Emma and I started work with the Forestry Commission in Southern England. I wanted to get back into active church life again and through my new boss we were invited to a small Methodist Chapel. We went and were most taken by the Fellowship. Everyone looked out for everyone else – the old class system operated properly with home groups. If you were missing on a Sunday there was always a phone call asking if you were OK.

It really was the love of God in action; we were deeply moved by it and it was there that I began to feel a call to some form of ministry.

However, it wasn't till we returned to Ireland in the early 80s with another member of the family, Patrick, who was soon to be followed by Kate, and began to attend Ballynafeigh Methodist that I became a local preacher. Just as I became accredited we had a Lay Witness Weekend in the church and during that time both Hazel and I received a strong reconfirmation of our faith, which in my case was eventually lead to the non-stipendiary ministry. Hazel wasn't initially all that enthusiastic about my calling - she was looking forward to a quiet retirement following many years



Hazel: With niece Josie in new Zealand

working for the Parents Advice Centre, walking the hills of Donegal and definitely not running a church. However, while attending an Alpha Course at Ballynafeigh, the Holy Spirit spoke to her and since then she has been my most enthusiastic, hard-working and loyal supporter.

Three years after candidating, we were sent to Mossley. I was apprehensive at being put in charge of my own church, thinking I would be assisting another minister. However, just before starting at Mossley, we went to the Holy Land.

One morning on the shores of the Sea of Galilee we had communion and the words of Jesus to Peter were read, "Feed my sheep"...

That really spoke to me and, all my time in Mossley, then Greencastle and now Magheragall and Broomhedge, I have had those words before me and I thank the Lord for them.

So to go back to the question, "Where do I come from?" the answer has to be several places, but I think I would prefer to think of my life as a journey with a number of stopping places, places where



Photo: John Kelly. Rev Dr Peter Mercer pictured with the congregation of Magheragall Methodist Church at his first service as their new minister on Sunday 2nd August 2009.

God has placed his hand on my shoulder and urged me on, saying, "Peter, I am not finished with you yet". And it really has been such a privilege to have been able to serve as a Methodist minister for the last twelve years and I hope and pray that I can continue to serve God in whatever role he has for me until the end of my life. However, it's not all church - Hazel and I do manage to get the occasional walk in the hills of Donegal, and we also spend much time visiting and being visited by our extended family, stretching from New Zealand to South Africa to Switzerland to France and Ballyclare. And we've recently become grandparents – what a wonderful status for anyone!



Extended family: 4 generations

An extension to the Magheragall church Hall has recently been completed and was dedicated by Rev. Peter Mercer on 18th April 2010. The extension provides extra storage space and new toilet facilities including disabled access. The opportunity was also taken to replace all the hall lights and heaters.

Trinity Koinonians

The Koinonians ladies group started in September with an enjoyable pot luck supper. Trinity Boys Brigade united with the ladies in October hosting a fashion show by Ginger Jay and some of the ladies enjoyed modelling the fashions. In November we had a party light demonstration of candles in all shapes and sizes, this was our last activity of 2009.

Unfortunately due to the snow in January our progressive supper had to be postponed. Our first event in 2010 was in February when we had Linda Brown who brought a very colourful collection of jewellery & ceramics which she had made.

Also in February we had a farewell dinner for Shirley Carrington, who was leaving us to become Lay Pastoral Assistant in Seymour Street. This event was well attended and enjoyed by all. March saw Wilma Anderson take on the leadership of the Koinonians from Thelma Maze, during our March meeting we had Claire Kelly showing us her patchwork quilts.

In April we were inspired when we had a visit from Mission Aviation Fellowship...

We rounded off our year on 21st May with our postponed Progressive Supper which started in the home of Wilma Anderson, then moving to Julie Dougherty's home for main course before finishing the evening off with desserts in the Manse.

Wilma Anderson, Trinity

From the registers...

Seymour Street:

BAPTISMS

Caleb Jonathan, son of Alan and Helen Lewis
Noah Alan, son of Alan and Jennifer Ferris
Matt Thomas Kilpatrick, son of Gavin and Jennifer Laurenson
William John Edward, son of Edward and Sarah Hanna

WEDDING

Michael Geoffrey Colligan and Paula White

DEATHS

Mrs Margaret Laverty
Mrs Amy Graham
Mr Alex Hanna
Billy & Vera Walker
Mr Trevor Hall
Mrs Joan Irvine
Mrs Agnes Ervine
Mrs Marie Bullock
Mrs May Payne

Dromore:

BAPTISM

Naomi Kathleen Slaughter (Stephen & Tanya)

WEDDING

Heather Watson to Philip McKinney

DEATHS

Cis Morrisson
Amy Brown
Cyril Kennedy

Broomhedge:

BAPTISM

Casey James Leatham

WEDDING

Adam George Wood and Amy Louise Cupples

DEATH

May McKinstry

Trinity:

BAPTISM

Joshua Ben, son of Richard and Julie Dougherty

DEATH

David Wright, Kingsway Nursing Home, Dunmurry.

Magheragall:

BAPTISM

Kaitlyn Elizabeth Hanna

DEATH

Roberta (Bobbie) Wadsworth - Eileen Allen

Priesthill:

BAPTISM

Joy Elizabeth Dillon (Chris & Carole)

DEATH

Desmond McKeown

INSIGHT
Youth | events, study & culture

INTRO

As this is the first issue I feel an introduction is needed. Welcome to the insight page! This page is dedicated to the youth of the church filling you in on whats on, reviews of recent christian music, events, interviews and much more. It is also important that you get involved, let me know of any events coming up or anything you would like me to include weather it be music, politics, stories or anything else that you wish to share! There is alot on this summer so I have tried to include most of the big events here. There are many more you can find on the interweb but hopefully these can help entertain you on the long summer months ahead!

WHATS ON?



SUMMER

Jamie

MADNESS

The theme they have chosen this year is 'dare to share.' Reflecting

on this year's festival theme they have decided to develop some new opportunities to help us all to engage with the whole business of: 'faith sharing' - particularly in a world of new communication opportunities and challenges. If last year's festival was anything to go by then this year sounds unmissable and should definitely be a date for us all to slot into are calenders.

details: www.summermadness.co.uk

LOL!

A Minister was walking down the street when he came upon a group of young boys. The group had surrounded a dog. Concerned the boys were hurting the dog, he went over and asked "What are you doing with that dog?" One of the boys replied, "This dog is just an old neighbourhood stray. We all want him, but only one of us can take him home. So we've decided that whichever one of us can tell the biggest lie will get to keep the dog." Of course, the reverend was taken aback. "You boys shouldn't be having

fuel
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Fuel is all about the best Christian music coming to Northern Ireland. The Fuel team is dedicated to offering a weekend of the finest and most exciting musical talent out there whilst impacting our culture. This year is no different they have a great line up with bands such as New World Son and Brenton Brown the fact that Switchfoot are headlining is just the cherry on the top! If you are free on June 11th-13th you should definitely try and get down for this action-packed weekend! details: www.fuelevents.com

there is much more happening, these are just two events I would recommend attending as they should both be great events but you can check out more for yourself at: www.christianfestivals.co.uk

Acts 4:31

“

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

”

DEVOTIONAL

The Holy Spirit was given to reveal who Jesus is, that's what he does. We see in this scripture, that they were filled with the Spirit while they were in prayer and the result was they then proclaimed the word of God boldly. Spend time in prayer today asking to be filled with the Spirit. Be encouraged to spend time studying the word so you will know it and can proclaim it boldly. Staying connected with other believers and praying with them will also strengthen you in the ways of God.

a contest telling lies!" he exclaimed. He then launched into a ten minute sermon against lying, beginning, "Don't you boys know it's a sin to lie," and ending with, "Why, when I was your age, I never told a lie." There was dead silence for about a minute. Just as the reverend was beginning to think he'd gotten through to them, the smallest boy gave a deep sigh and said, "All right, give him the dog."

