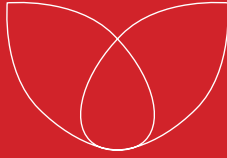


DIOCESE OF DOWN & DROMORE



Church Planting News

AUTUMN 2025

MIKE DARBANDI
A NEW LEADER FOR
BALLYMACARRETT

WARRENPOINT
PIONEERING
MINISTRY BEGINS

Keith writes...



Dear Friends,

A recent blog by Travis Shelton, an American financial coach, asked whether readers were receivers, givers, neitherers or eithers. 'Neitherers' hold the view that people should be self-reliant. Receivers recognise their need for help and seek it. Givers recognise that they have been blessed with resources and share them with others. 'Eithers' are humbly aware that they should be generous and open to receiving generosity from others.

"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God". John 1:12

The way to salvation, which is open to all, requires us to be receivers – to actively welcome Jesus into our lives by believing in his name. But we are not just to be receivers of God's amazing grace, we are to be givers also – sharing the good news of the gospel with others:

"And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?" Romans 10:14-15

Thank you for standing with us as we seek to be 'Eithers' – humbly receiving God's gift of adoption into his family and sharing that opportunity with those who have little or no church connection.

Inside this edition, you will find a host of exciting developments. A new outreach has begun in Warrenpoint led by the husband-and-wife team of Nevin and Lorraine Anderson, pioneer ministers-in-training. Revd Mike Darbandi has been appointed by Bishop David as the new leader of the Resource Church in Ballymacarrett. A shop unit on Main Street, Castlewella has been leased for two years as a welcoming community hub for The Well. The Grove, the new worshipping community planted by the Newry Centre of



Mission, has painted and carpeted their new base on John Mitchel Place while awaiting planning approval as a place of worship. Arthurage Abureni, who recently completed two years as a PAIS intern in Tullycarnet Church, starts his new role in Tullycarnet as Pastoral Assistant.

There are encouraging updates from The Suitcase Project outreach to asylum seekers and refugees, The Gathering and Killough Kids and Youth Outreach. We extend our heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation to Billy Fyffe for his faithful leadership of the Killough Youth and Kids Outreach over the past two and half years. We pray that God will richly bless him as he begins his new role as Ministry Assistant in Shankill Parish, Lurgan while continuing his training for ordained ministry. We are delighted that John and Hannah McGrath will be taking over leadership of this outreach as it becomes part of the Lecale Area Mission Partnership.

Every blessing,

Keith Gardiner
Fundraising Officer for Church Growth
kgardiner@downandconnerdiocese.org

REMINDER The annual church planting supporters evening will be held on Tuesday 7 October commencing at 7.30pm in the T3 Conference Centre, House of Vic-Ryn, Moira Road, Lisburn.

Pioneer ministry begins in Warrenpoint



We are so excited about what God is doing in this beautiful coastal town of Warrenpoint where we have been called as pioneer ministers. Although already in training, it has taken a year to sell our business and for Lorraine to be released from her counselling work in addiction and trauma.

On 1st July we began our pioneer ministry by asking a local café owner if we could use his premises for our first meetings. He was delighted as we shook hands on what we felt was a real God initiative. The owner is very supportive, and God has supplied our needs each week. 20 people came to the first meeting and from the second week people were praying at the tables with each other and for their friends and communities. On week three we reached out with a few posters and leaflets. People were open and 31 adults with 7 children turned up to this Community Outreach. We had food and live music and lots of chat together as we explained more about our roles as pioneer ministers in Warrenpoint. We have had many conversations about mental health and addiction and the opportunity to pray with people about these issues.

Our small but growing faith community is calling this special meeting space "Church Yard". People love the freedom of meeting outside in this quaint covered yard to explore more about faith, hear testimonies and pray together. We will continue with this and every six to eight weeks will concentrate on a more focused community outreach into Warrenpoint for the people who have little or no connection to church as this will always be the heart of what we are doing. As we move forward, we will discern what God wants next and what the community's needs are and how we can best serve them.

We are grateful for the welcome we have received, for the support of our home parish of Magheralin and for the special team that God already has working alongside us.

Nevin & Lorraine Anderson

PRAY that God will continue to guide Nevin and Lorraine as they pioneer in Warrenpoint.

News & Updates..

The Well, Castlewellan

We're excited to share that on 1st July we got the keys to our new building here in Castlewellan! Renovations are now in full swing as we prepare for our big opening on 25th September - a milestone we're eagerly looking forward to.

Our vision for this space, called **The Well**, is to become a welcoming community hub - a place where people can feel at home, experience love, and be introduced to Jesus. We believe this building will help us live out that vision in tangible, everyday ways.

Our Place Teen Drop-In will continue to run a few times a week, offering young people a safe, fun space to connect and belong; a **café** will provide a space for the wider community to gather, chat, and find a seat at the table and our **Sunday**

evening worship gatherings will continue, offering an accessible and heartfelt expression of church life and faith.

We're excited for what God is doing here, and we're deeply grateful to be part of His ongoing story in Castlewellan.

Trevor & Lorraine Brimage

PRAY for the provision of all that's needed to kit out *The Well* - tables, chairs, sofas, and everything else that will help to create a warm and welcoming space.



Tullycarnet Church

It has been a really encouraging and fruitful summer of mission and ministry in Tullycarnet Church. With our small groups and courses taking a break, summer was an opportunity for our members to connect with various Christian conferences for refreshment. We were also able to run our biggest summer scheme to date with a fantastic Sunday Funday to end the week.

We are especially grateful to God that we have been able to appoint Arthurance



Abureni as a Pastoral Assistant. Originally from Zimbabwe, Arthurance has served in our church on a voluntary basis for two years as part of a Pais team of interns. He carries a real love for people and the study of the Scriptures and excels as a Bible teacher. We eagerly look forward to all that God is going to do through Arthurance's ministry among us.

As we move towards Autumn, we're looking forward to relaunching our small groups, Alpha courses, door-to-door outreaches, and kid's club. We also hope to pioneer new and exciting evangelistic curry nights and youth outreaches.

Matthew Gault

PRAY for Arthurance as he settles into his new role in Tullycarnet and for the planned new initiatives.

The Gathering



Summer ministries at The Gathering Church have been heavily impacted by the political tensions and anti-social behaviour being played out on the streets in the area.

However, our close connections with neighbouring churches and local community groups helped secure vital funding for diversionary work to take place. Organised fishing trips, laser tag in the local park, colour runs on the grass around the bonfire and much more

helped keep the disruption to a minimum.

A new ministry called Church Flute Band Belfast was introduced to engage with the local band scene. Its aim is to sow the seed of the Gospel in the lives of those connected with band culture across the city.

Teams from America continued to support our outreach ministries in July and August with the **Extreme Tour Team** visiting and living in our church halls for four days. All this as we continue to press into what we feel God has been calling us into through Psalm 40:3 in this latest season of ministry.

Ross Munro

PRAY that the seeds sown this summer will grow and bear the fruit of faith and changed lives.

Killough Youth & Children's Outreach

We've just wrapped up an amazing summer in Killough, and we couldn't be more thankful! Over 50 kids came along to our Summer Blast programme, and the energy, fun, and joy throughout the week were incredible. It was so encouraging to see families engaging and getting excited about the idea of starting a new worshipping community right here in the village.

A massive shoutout to the brilliant teams from Ireland4Jesus and The Crossing (Lima, Illinois). You were such a blessing and a huge support to our local team - we honestly couldn't have done it without you.

I'll be stepping down from my role in Killough at the end of August to take up a new post at Shankill Parish in Lurgan. It's been such a privilege to serve here, and I'm really thankful for all the memories and moments we've shared.



John and Hannah McGrath from Downpatrick will lead this next season of outreach in Killough. There's so much to build on from this summer, and we're excited to see all that God has in store!

Billy Fyffe

PRAY for John and Hannah McGrath as they take over leadership of the Killough outreach under Dean Henry Blair.

Leader appointed to St Patrick's, Ballymacarrett



Bishop David is delighted to announce the appointment of Revd Mike Darbandi as the leader of the new Diocesan Resource Church which will be established in St Patrick's, Ballymacarrett in 2026.

Mike will be arriving in Belfast in April 2026 from Gas Street Church in Birmingham, a church planted by Holy Trinity Brompton, where he has been overseeing Discipleship and Leadership Development.

Mike is married to Caroline, and together they have three young children. He grew up in Leeds and studied Business Management at the University of Sheffield before spending several years running popular cocktail bars and restaurants.

Mike became a Christian in his early 20s after asking a friend some questions about faith. Responding to a call to full-time ministry, he has since served on the senior teams of three large churches in England, with responsibilities spanning social justice, operations, young adults, and



discipleship. He also oversaw the youth programme for New Wine England and helps lead The SEND.

He is passionate about communicating the gospel in a relevant and engaging way and longs to see more people come to faith in Jesus and step into all they are called to be and do. Mike is humbled and excited by the opportunity to revitalise St Patrick's and is prayerfully expectant that a young and thriving church community will soon emerge.

The aim of developing St Patrick's into a Resource Church is to accelerate evangelism in the diocese by reaching those with little or no church connection, providing resources for mission, training leaders, planting new churches and revitalising existing churches.

PRAY for Mike and his family as they prepare for their move to Belfast.



Updates.. The Suitcase Project

The Suitcase Project exists to help those that are new to Northern Ireland and support parishes throughout the diocese to do the same.

Together with Glenside Community Farm we have been developing a sensory garden. This has been a brilliant way for people to reconnect with a pastime they have had to leave behind and to develop a new love for gardening. We have had a lot of kids coming along, particularly in the summer.

We also enjoyed an incredible day in Mount Stewart with families we support. We explored the grounds, picnicked together, and played football on the lawn. The Mount Stewart staff were so helpful and made the day run very smoothly.



In September we are starting a weekly prayer gathering to support those that are Christians or are exploring the Christian faith. This project is something that God has drawn us towards, and it is exciting to see how this may grow and develop.

From September we also hope to provide a monthly meal for those we support and others, along with restarting our work with Nettlefield Primary.

Tim Burns

PRAY for the weekly prayer gathering and monthly meal planned to begin in September.

The Grove



We're delighted to celebrate the opening of our new premises. More than a building, however, The Grove is a living expression of our commitment to serve, connect, and uplift the community of Newry through the love and compassion of Christ.

At The Grove, faith and fellowship go hand in hand. It's a place where people from all walks of life can gather, share stories, build faith, and meaningful relationships.

This summer, we saw that vision come to life. Bands and artists from around the

world joined us for **The Extreme Tour**, creating moments of joy and unity that brought our community together and opened doors to share the gospel. The following week, a team from Church on the Rock, Texarkana, Texas, partnered with us to host a vibrant holiday Bible club, women's events, and evenings of worship and prayer. We were thrilled to see people responding to Jesus, especially among the children.

The Grove will continue to be a launchpad for programmes that respond to real, felt needs. It will also become home to our new community of faith in the city.

Natalie Trainor

PRAY that The Grove would promptly be granted planning approval to use the premises as a place of worship.



Church Plant	Contact
Braniel Community Church	Revd James Crockett Email: james.branielcc@gmail.com
Glen Community Church	Revd Stephen Doherty Email: stephen.stmarks@btinternet.com
Moneyreagh Community Church	Revd Rory Blake-Knox Email: rory@moneyreaghchurch.com
St Donard's Community Church	Revd Colin Morris Email: stdonardsdundrum@gmail.com
The Gathering	Revd Ross Munro Email: ross@thegatheringbelfast.com
The Suitcase Project	Mr Tim Burns Email: tim@thesuitcaseproject.org.uk
Tullycarnet Church	Mr Matthew Gault Email: tullycarnetchurch@icloud.com
The Grove, Newry	Ms Natalie Trainor Email: natalie.trainor@churcharmy.org
The Well, Castlewellan	Trevor & Lorraine Brimage Email: trevorbrimage@gmail.com
Warrenpoint Outreach	Nevin & Lorraine Anderson Email: lorraineganderson7@gmail.com
West Winds Community Church	Revd Stephen Doherty Email: stephen.stmarks@btinternet.com



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