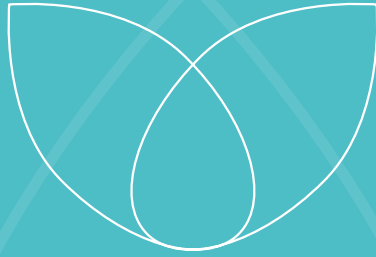




AUTUMN 2022



DIOCESE OF DOWN & DROMORE

# Church Planting News

# Keith writes...



Dear Friends,

**There are many messages in contemporary society that compete with or attempt to contradict the good news of Jesus. Those we seek to reach with the gospel need to know that we truly care about them and their well-being before they will be open to Christ's message. This requires those reaching out to a local community to demonstrate genuine interest in the lives of people within the community and a willingness to accompany them in their joys and sorrows.**

*We were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us (1 Thessalonians 2 v 7-8).*

It is often only after a trusting relationship has been established with another person, that they may become curious and ask questions about faith and God. Courses such as Alpha or Christianity Explored provide the space for individuals to satisfy their curiosity by engaging with Christians and openly asking questions. Showing Christ's love in our communities and creating points of entry to a journey of belief are two of the aims of Bishop David's 10-year vision <https://bit.ly/3zPmBGx>

This edition of Church Plant News will focus on how our church plants are seeking to show Christ's love in their communities and to act as entry points on journeys of discipleship.

Over the summer Bishop David has been planning the autumn Ministry Leadership Days for leaders of church plants and pioneer ministers when we look forward to sessions with Patrick Regan (Kintsugi Hope), Stephen Bloomfield (leadership) and Andrew Brannigan (safeguarding).



Keith Gardiner

It has been a great pleasure for me to join some of the Open Days for our church plants over the summer and witness first-hand the amazing work that God is doing through these new worshipping communities in inner-city Belfast as well as in towns and villages in Down and Dromore. Please do take the opportunity to visit our church plants, connecting with and encouraging their leaders.

We continue to give thanks for the people and organisations that God has called to financially support these pioneering ministries. Since the last newsletter, we have received £8k from the Church of Ireland Orphans and Children's Society, £3.9k from parishes in Down and Dromore, £2.3k from regular donors, £6k in one-off donations and £2.5k from charities. We pray that through their generosity, these individuals and communities will experience the joy and fulfilment of seeing lives transformed.

**Every blessing,**

**Keith Gardiner**  
**Fundraising Officer for Church Growth**



# Tullycarnet – “We can really see God at work”



Our Church Plant launched at the end of January, and we have been keen to embed mission firmly in our DNA as a Church. We desire to form people who have a contagious desire to share Jesus and bring his Kingdom impact to wherever God may lead them.

In terms of missional engagement, we have been carrying out the slow and steady work of door-to-door evangelism, offering prayer in the community and joining local community groups such as the gym, community forums and other activities that build authentic friendships and relationships. It has been amazing to see God at work in these new friendships and to begin to see individuals attending some of our events and Church itself.

We have now established a close relationship with the Ardcarne Local Residents Group and regularly help at and attend community meetings and events. Our most recent engagement was over the Jubilee celebrations.

In terms of set programmes, running the Alpha course in a neutral venue in the community has worked well for us.



Tullycarnet homegroup



Sunday gathering

This has provided people with a safe space to ask questions about Jesus in an environment they are comfortable in.

Over the summer we ran summer schemes for primary school aged children, litter picks and a community fun day. We hope that this will encourage children and young families to engage with our Church community.

On the whole, progress has been remarkable, and we can really see God at work. We have seen our little community grow from 2 people (me and my wife) to around 20 people. This is especially encouraging as we have been able to attract a strong base of local people who are in turn passing on the Good News to their friends and family. We also have some relatively new Christians along with people who aren't yet followers of Jesus coming to our Church.

We are expectant that in the future we will be able to develop youth and children's ministries, outreach to parents, as well as compassion ministries, evangelistic projects and pathways that contribute to the long-term discipleship of others.

**Matthew Gault**



# Young people step up in the Braniel



Braniel Youth Alpha

At Braniel Community Church we have a vision to share the gospel with the 4989 people who live in the area within the next two years and have concentrated our efforts on reaching into the community with various events and ministries.

Our Youth Alpha saw 10 teenagers go through the course with 3 speaking of their experience at our celebration service at the end of June. One of those girls was a new believer, while the others spoke of their renewed and strengthened faith through the course.

The Community Fun Day attracted around 100 local people. Our Pais interns and young people took on all the tasks, and shared the love of Jesus by various means. One of these was to ask the miracle question "If God could do a miracle in your life today, what would that be?" and then offer to pray for that miracle. It was a real encouragement to see these young people step into the call of evangelism and to share Jesus so amazingly well with our community.

**James Crockett**

# A commitment that changes everything

As we become even more intentional as a community for Jesus and reveal lives lived out of gratitude for the grace poured out for us at the cross, our heart is to continue to help those worshipping at The Gathering to see Jesus, not just as their Saviour, but as Lord over every part of their lives.

In late July we had our Community BBQ at the church and this was followed a week later by our Church Picnic when we took two minibuses of locals to Carnfunnock Country Park. We had two fabulous days with glorious weather but for me the highlight of the summer was a new believer from our latest Alpha Course declaring her commitment to Jesus before friends and family at our picnic.



The Gathering Church Picnic

August saw us run a Holiday Bible Club in partnership with St Patrick's, as well as our '3 Days That Changed Everything' summer scheme in partnership with East Belfast Mission. Finally, we finished our summer activities with a Community Drop-In Road Trip for our pensioners.

**Ross Munro**



# Learning together in West Winds



After starting our regular Sunday services in a football field, West Winds Community Church moved into the Community Centre last September and around 30 come along on a weekly basis. We discovered there was a real hunger and appetite for understanding God's Word, and we wanted to help people connect it to their daily lives.

The obvious next step was to start a Bible study, but we knew it would have to be very accessible, so we turned to the Immerse resource. It removes a lot of the barriers which make Bible reading difficult and offers a different kind of community interaction. It's less like a Bible study and more like a book club and has worked really well in our context.

We have two groups running - one with 14 people following Immerse and another small group DEEPER which is currently studying Hebrews, both groups meeting on a Thursday night. We don't 'keep with the programme' and take it at the group's pace, stopping to answer questions and occasionally taking a left turn into the issues of the day, but that's okay!

The group is a safe place where people can speak openly and honestly without judgement. There are no taboo areas and no such thing as a stupid question.



Outdoor worship in the summer



HenShed ladies visit Ballywalter

## WORK AMONG WOMEN AND GIRLS

We launched the Hen Shed in October 2021 as a space where women from the estate would be comfortable and could improve their self-esteem and mental health. We focus on sharing skills and learning new ones such as crochet, knitting, art and woodwork. It's been a great success and each week we host 25-30 women aged from 20-70, in the council's Community Centre. Our vision is to increase capacity to 100 women per week by offering 3 sessions, each with a different focus.

In response to a lack of opportunities for young girls, a Girl's Group started in November 2021. This group meets weekly in a small youth facility and is at capacity with 12 young girls. (Years 7-10). We build relationships by providing a meal, activities (craft, beauty and games), and conversation. A highlight was when the girls engaged with a local graffiti artist to discuss how they felt about their community and to create and design their very own graffiti boards. Later this year, we plan to move the Girl's Group to the Community Centre to increase capacity and expand the range of activities that we can offer.

**Revd Stephen Doherty**



# Down and Dromore Church Plants

Church Plant	Location	Contact
<b>Braniel Community Church</b>	St Brigid's Hall, Lower Braniel Road, Belfast BT5 7JQ	Mr James Crockett James.branielcc@gmail.com
<b>Glen Community Church</b>	Glen Community Centre, 33 Glenard Road, Newtownards BT23 4HS	Revd Stephen Doherty stephen.stmarks@btinternet.com
<b>Killicomaine Community Church</b>	Killicomaine Community Centre, 32 Festival Road, Portadown, Craigavon BT63 5HE	Revd Jim Fleming jim@seagoe.co.uk
<b>Killough Outreach to Children and Youth</b>	St Anne's Parish Hall, 4 Palatine Row, Killough, Downpatrick BT30 7QG	Sarah Irwin sarah@killoughchurch.co.uk
<b>Moneyreagh Community Church</b>	Moneyreagh Community Centre, 36A Church Road, Castlereagh, Moneyreagh, Belfast BT23 6BB	Revd Rory Blake-Knox rory@moneyreaghchurch.com
<b>St Donard's Community Church</b>	St Donard's Church, 183 Main Street, Dundrum BT33 0LY	Mr Colin Morris stdonardsdundrum@gmail.com
<b>The Gathering</b>	St Martin's Church, 88 Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 1GW	Mr Ross Munro ross@thegatheringbelfast.com
<b>Tullycarnet</b>	Tullycarnet Bowling Club, 26 Kingswood Road, Belfast BT5 7EZ	Mr Matthew Gault tullycarnetchurch@icloud.com
<b>West Winds Community Church</b>	West Winds Community Centre, Dakota Avenue, Newtownards BT23 4QT	Revd Stephen Doherty stephen.stmarks@btinternet.com

## Church Plant Partnership Evening

We have invited each church in the diocese to send three representatives to a **Church Plant Partnership evening at the T3 Conference Centre, House of Vic-Ryn, Lisburn, on Tuesday 27 September 2022.**

The aim is to connect people with the pioneers who are undertaking outreach

in hard-to-reach communities in the diocese. There will be short presentations from church leaders, a panel discussion and the opportunity to speak to church plant leaders individually.

For more information contact Keith Gardiner [kgardiner@downdromorediocese.org](mailto:kgardiner@downdromorediocese.org)

## PRAY

For **Tullycarnet Church**, giving thanks for numerical growth on Sundays. Pray for the new Christians who are attending, that their faith will grow stronger and put down deep roots. Pray that more children and young families will engage with the church.

Give thanks for the success of Youth Alpha in **Braniel Community Church**, for the PAIS Team and the young people who shared their faith so boldly at the Community Fun Day. Pray that as the Gospel is shared with local residents, more and more people will say 'yes' to Jesus.

For the team at **The Gathering**, for wisdom and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as they seek to nurture a whole life faith in their congregation. May the church grow in its understanding of being a Christian – a commitment that changes everything.

For **West Winds Community Church** and the Immerse Bible reading groups. Ask the Holy Spirit to give each person a life-changing encounter with the Word of God. Give thanks for the work being done among women and girls of the estate and pray that it would flourish.



## OUTREACH TO ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES



In the next year we plan to launch a new pioneering ministry to asylum seekers and refugees who are living within Down and Dromore.

If you are interested partnering in this outreach or one of our existing church plants, please contact:

**Andrew Brannigan** [andrew@downanddromore.org](mailto:andrew@downanddromore.org)  
**Keith Gardiner** [kgardiner@downdromorediocese.org](mailto:kgardiner@downdromorediocese.org)

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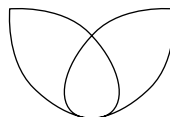
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