

DIOCESE OF DOWN & DROMORE



Church Planting News

SPRING 2024

PRAYER

CREATING A
CULTURE OF PRAYER

CONNECTIONS

CONNECTING
COMMUNITIES WITH CHRIST

Keith writes...



Dear Friends,

As a medical professional by background, temperature, heart rate, blood pressure and rate of breathing are the universally recognised vital signs of a person's health which measure the body's most basic functions.

When it comes to a church, Acts 2 verses 42-47, reveal the vital signs of a church's health to be Biblical teaching, prayer, worship, breaking of bread, community and generosity:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to breaking of bread and to prayer.
Acts 2:42

This edition of Church Planting News is focused on one of these vital signs – the prayer life of our church plants. Please read on to find out how our churches are promoting a culture of prayer in Christian homes and kids' clubs, during services and for the wider community. Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest* wrote: "We tend to use prayer as a last resort, but God wants it to be our first line of defense." Understanding that the success of our church plants and new missional initiatives are completely dependent on God drives us to pray and to ask you to join us in praying for these outreaches and their leaders.

We also have updates on the two newest outreaches – Ards Connect, led by Raymond McClure and The Suitcase Project, led by Tim Burns. Raymond and Tim include specific ways that you can pray for the work among young people on the Ards Peninsula and the Suitcase Project as it seeks to serve and welcome asylum seekers and refugees in East Belfast.



Keith Gardiner

We are very thankful for the churches, Christian Trusts, business friends and individuals who faithfully support these new missional initiatives in Down and Dromore. In the first 4 months of 2024, we have received donations of £7,178 from diocesan churches £11,500 from Church of Ireland bodies, £86,000 from charitable trusts and grant giving bodies and £18,586 from business friends, individuals and mission agencies.

If you would like to partner with us in this work financially, you can either get in touch with me directly or complete a standing order form which is found at the back of this booklet.

Every blessing,

Keith Gardiner

Fundraising Officer for Church Growth
kgardiner@downdromorediocese.org

DIARY DATE – Supporter's Evening

Please note that the 2024 Church Planting Annual Supporters' Evening will be held on Wednesday 9 October at 7.30pm at the T3 Conference Centre, House of Vic-Ryn, Moira Road, Lisburn. At this evening, we will feature snapshot presentations from church plant leaders, panel discussions and the opportunity to ask questions over light refreshments.

News from our newest projects



Conversation Café

The Suitcase Project is underway in Emmanuel Hall on Roslyn Street. We have created a Conversational English Café which sees local volunteers sitting with newcomer individuals and families, talking with them, and helping them build their English language usage. We have had 14 countries represented. This has been a great stepping off point for the project.

I have just completed a Teaching English as a Foreign Language course and training on navigating Universal Credit. These areas will be important as the project moves forward and we look to support asylum seekers and refugees in various areas of life.

Throughout the diocese there are newcomers being moved into most of the areas that we have churches. I would love to visit you and share how we might connect to best support these newcomers.

Tim Burns

PRAY That we would continue to build connections so that we can best serve newcomers and that God would mobilise volunteers across the diocese; for opportunities to meet with newcomers and the heart to listen and serve them; for those we have already met, that we would be able support and care for them at their point of need; for those who live in a new fear created by the Rwanda Bill; pray that God would guide my steps as we develop the work of the Suitcase Project.



Ards Connect Tech Training

At Ards Connect we've been busy engaging with Youth Groups throughout the Ards Peninsula, running engagement events, and talking about our work in schools.

Our last event was a Technology Information Night with 10 young people attending. We wanted to show them how their passion for all things creative could benefit their church and how we could help them to serve. We will be working out individual plans for each young person to learn some exciting new skills - live sound, podcast production, photography and video, and social media management.

In April, we ran a Student Night of Prayer and Praise. At this time of exams and deadlines, we wanted to encourage them and show them that God cares about their education. We gave students an opportunity to receive prayer if they were stressed or worried and we preached the gospel into those situations, praying that the Holy Spirit would bring peace and comfort.

We also teamed up with a local youth group to run a stress management workshop with a Christian counsellor. This was a perfect balance of prayer and practical help for those sitting exams and managing deadlines.

Raymond McClure

PRAY For more opportunities to partner with youth organisations and reach more young people and that our new Young Evangelists' course will be well attended. Pray that God would bless the young people of the peninsula as they go through exams and deadlines.





Creating a culture of prayer



Drumming activity in Killough

At Killough Youth & Children's Outreach, prayer is always central to every session that we deliver. Romans 12:12 says, "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer," and this verse has become foundational for us as a team.

Our Kids Club nights look different each week but at the beginning and end our team prays together. We ask God to move in the lives of the children and young people attending, blessing them and their families in the love and hope that the Gospel brings. We pray that the Bible

stories they hear will be brought to their families and that the Gospel message of love and hope will spread to their home, friendships and relatives.

The children and young people are engaging with prayer more and more. We offer a space at the end of every night for prayer requests and use creative ways to pray for whatever is on their minds. It is so encouraging to see how they are open to share and pray for each other.

We are encouraged by our culture of prayer and it's one that we look to build on as the outreach develops and grows. Please continue to pray for us as we seek to develop and define what the outreach will look like from September 2024 as we will have opportunities to expand our reach in the Lecale area.

Billy Fyffe

'Seek the welfare of the city'

Jeremiah 29.7 says "But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."

Dundrum is certainly no place of exile, but it is a place where God has called and gathered His people as He does in townlands, towns and cities across this land. As His people in St Donard's Community Church, we are committed to praying for our village and the surrounding district. Each month, we gather with others in a youth centre to bring the needs of our place before God. Not everyone belongs to our church family as people come from various backgrounds, but we have one aim which is to seek the welfare of our village.



Dundrum Village

This has been an important part of the month, and it reminds us afresh to lift our gaze from beyond ourselves in order to seek the good of people and the glory of God. We have also been encouraging our families to develop prayer at home and will be gifting families some 'prayer dice', which is a fun way to help guide all ages in their prayers along the themes of Sorry, Thank You, Other, Please and Praise.

Colin Morris





Praying faithfully



Testimony event, Tullycarnet Church

For a long time, we have really wanted to develop intercessory prayer at Tullycarnet Church. We recently appointed a coordinator for this and now host monthly prayer gatherings where we intercede for our Church, the local community, the nation, and the nations. Prayer at these gatherings is often creative and like a 24-7 Prayer Room.

Prayer ministry is valued highly in our Church Plant and is offered at the end of every service. It has been hugely encouraging to see prayer answered in the lives of our members through this ministry.

At the moment, we are also expanding our small group discipleship environments. We have developed two "Growth Groups". One group is focusing on the spiritual disciplines whilst another is preparing for a cross-cultural mission trip to Romania this summer.

In addition to this, we have launched a regular "Kid's Club" in the community. It is flourishing and is very well attended. We hope that this will allow us to build relationships with local parents and families, leading to Gospel conversations and relationship with Jesus.

On Sundays, we typically welcome 25-30 people for worship in our community. We had a really encouraging Holy Week period with a testimony evening, as well as Good Friday and Easter Sunday Services. Thank you for joining us in praying for Tullycarnet Church. It really does make a difference.

Matthew Gault

Prayerful discernment

It's all change at The Gathering this Spring. We have added new members to our vestry, with a real enthusiasm to recover ground for God's Kingdom. We also welcome a fresh new face to our team. Miss Olivia Turner joins us from the USA as a youth intern for the summer months. We feel so blessed and excited to have her with us.

On a windswept morning on Cave Hill after an incredible Easter Series, Andrew and I spent time praying through what might be achievable for our church plant this summer. Out of this we discerned the Lord calling us into a time of witness and proclamation. In response, with Olivia's help we will rekindle our Street Work Team on the lower Newtownards Road for another summer. With the newly developed park

almost complete and the marching season almost upon us, the aim will be to journey with young people, being a continued presence in their lives to share the grace and love that Jesus has for them.



Ross and Andrew on Cave Hill

Olivia will also be involved in both the Youth Alpha and Adult Alpha running on Sunday evenings in St Martin's from 12 May. Our young people will head to Summer Madness as part of the Holy Spirit Weekend on the course. Olivia will also be part of the youth team at New Wine Sligo, before heading back to Florida in late July.





Pioneer Ministry Training

We are delighted that Tim Burns (Leader, Suitcase Project) and Natalie Trainor (Pioneer Evangelist, Newry Centre of Mission) have been selected for the new 3-year Church of Ireland Pioneer Ministry Training Programme being delivered jointly by Church Army and the Church of Ireland Theological Institute.

The training involves 6 residential weekends per year. The autumn term includes induction to the programme and weekends on *The Wealth of the Cross*, *Mission and Evangelism*, and *Church History*.

Please pray for Tim and Natalie as they begin this new training journey towards a Certificate of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission.



Natalie Trainor



Tim Burns

Newry Centre of Mission



Prayer and healing service in the Canal Court Hotel

In preparation for establishing a new worshipping community in the city of Newry in partnership with the ministry of St Mary's and St Patrick's parish churches,

Revd Capt Scott McDonald and Natalie Trainor have begun monthly prayer and healing services on Sunday evenings.

These evenings include worship, corporate prayer, preaching of the Word and prayer ministry and have brought encouragement, blessing and healing. Thirty-six people participated on Sunday evening 12 May filling the hired room in the Canal Court Hotel. A larger venue will be needed for June's gathering!

Please pray for Natalie and Scott as they reach out to the local community through these prayer and healing evenings, a bereavement café, and 1-to-1 Bible studies.



Church Plant	Contact
Ards Connect	Mr Raymond McClure Email: ardsconnect@gmail.com
Branie Community Church	Revd James Crockett Email: james.braniecc@gmail.com
Glen Community Church	Revd Stephen Doherty Email: stephen.stmarks@btinternet.com
Killicomaine Community Church	Revd Jim Fleming Email: jim@seagoe.co.uk
Killough Kids & Youth Outreach	Mr Billy Fyffe Email: billy@lampyc.co.uk
Moneyreagh Community Church	Revd Rory Blake-Knox Email: rory@moneyreaghchurch.com
St Donard's Community Church	Mr 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
West Winds Community Church	Revd Stephen Doherty Email: stephen.stmarks@btinternet.com

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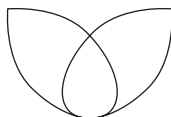
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