

Church Planting News

AUTUMN 2024

ST PATRICK'S
A NEW VISION FOR
BALLYMACARRETT

REMEMBER THE
NEWCOMER A MESSAGE
FROM TIM BURNS

Keith writes...



Dear Friends,

This is the form of address that John used in the fourth chapter of his first epistle as he urges us to love one another since God has loved us:

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God 1 John 4:7

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another 1 John 4:11

We are so privileged as believers to have the Bible, which shows us how to love others, through the teaching and example of Jesus. Jesus didn't just imagine what it would be like to walk in our shoes, he came down among us and wore them.

In my life in the health service, I spent a lot of time in operating theatres. In these areas, health staff change into scrub suits and theatre shoes. However, my theatre shoes would often go missing, and I would literally need to walk in another's shoes. Wearing another's shoes could be an uncomfortable experience - if the shoes were too short, my heel would sit awkwardly over the edge of the shoes, and if too long, I was at risk of tripping. There was also the danger that I might catch some foot infection from someone else's shoes. Some colleagues tried to dissuade others from borrowing their shoes by advertising on their theatre shoes that they suffered from athlete's foot.

Jesus paused with and listened to people that others avoided, understanding what it was like to walk in their shoes before responding with compassion and care. We are called to do the same with people who are outsiders or are hurting, amongst whom God has placed us. This can be an uncomfortable and even risky experience. We may be touched by their pain, drawn into their struggles and



Keith Gardiner

challenged to be generous with our time and resources.

In this edition of Church Planting News, Tim Burns (leader of the Suitcase Project) challenges us to actively support asylum seekers and refugees who, as newcomers in our midst, have been suffering aggression and violence. Read on to receive updates from Braniel and Killicomaine Community Churches, Tullycarnet Church, the Ards Connect outreach and Newry Centre of Mission. We also share Bishop David's plan to breathe new life into the lower Newtownards Road area of Belfast through a church plant into St Patrick's, Ballymacarrett in partnership with Holy Trinity Brompton.

Every blessing,

Keith Gardiner

Fundraising Officer for Church Growth
kgardiner@downdromorediocese.org

DIARY DATES - Church Planting

Supporters' evening: 7.30pm on Wednesday 9 October in the T3 Conference Centre, House of Vic-Ryn, Lisburn.

Commissioning of Natalie Trainer and Tim Burns as Church of Ireland Pioneer

Ministers: 7.30pm on Tuesday 12 November in the Canal Court Hotel, Newry.



Remember the newcomer



Tim Burns, leader of The Suitcase Project, writes:

During the recent rioting and unrest, I had the sad task of messaging the newcomers who have engaged with the Suitcase Project to tell them to stay at home because we were unsure what might happen. I know many colleagues in similar work did the same. That is a message I hoped would never be necessary, but I am glad I sent it.

Although the immediate threat of aggression and violence has subsided for now, it has revealed an underlying tension within our society. It is important that we recognise that for those new to NI there will be lasting scars of fear and unease.

In Leviticus 19: 33 & 34 it says:

³³ *“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them.*

³⁴ *The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”*

Other translations speak of the ‘stranger’. Many people that have moved here are no longer strangers, they are friends and know Northern Ireland as their

home. They are embedded in our society and have become our neighbours, our colleagues, business owners, classmates, our friends and more. Those people seeking asylum or who have refugee status are first and foremost people, created in the image of God, loved by him so much that he would die for them. They have made difficult decisions to leave homes and family where they do not feel safe to seek safety, shelter and care in NI.

We must continue to show the love of Christ through our love and commitment to welcoming and supporting them. The tension has not gone away, and it is important that we continue to speak peace into this area and create spaces that will help foster understanding and be the voice of Jesus for everyone, no matter their viewpoint.

Tim Burns

PRAY *That newcomers in our society would be met with the love of Christ, compassion and practical help. That those who are afraid may regain the confidence to live freely in our society. That unrest would not flare up again and that the underlying issues and tensions would be addressed.*





Updates...

Newry Centre of Mission



Holiday Bible Club in Newry

From 29 July to 2 August, Newry Centre of Mission, along with some other local churches came together for a week of mission. Our purpose was to spread the message of the hope, love, and freedom found in Jesus with the local community here in Newry. Through various prayer and evangelistic initiatives, we reached out to those in the community with little or no connection to church.

A team of local volunteers was joined by a small team of teenagers from Shore Street Presbyterian Church,

Donaghadee. Together we delivered a Holiday Bible Club, distributed resources, and engaged in street evangelism. We had many opportunities for meaningful conversations which led to opportunities to pray and invite the Holy Spirit to move in people's lives.

What an encouragement to see the Lord's hand at work, bringing healing and drawing people into relationship with Himself. We celebrated as we saw 3 adults and one child begin their journey of following Jesus. A lady also experienced healing after suffering in pain for a long time. Thank you Lord! The week was a powerful reminder of our calling to be the hands and feet of Christ, bringing light to the world. Please pray for us as we follow up all that God has done amongst us.

Natalie Trainor

Tullycarnet Church

Over the summer, Tullycarnet Church took a small mission team to serve in a project in the east of Romania that works with the Turkish travelling community; some of the poorest and most marginalised people in Europe. The team met weekly over the course of the year for discipleship, studying scripture and praying together. Each person also committed to weekly attendance of Church. We had a team of seven, a significant proportion of whom were relatively new Christians.

The team was involved in delivering a summer camp for street children, English classes, devotionals, Bible studies, sharing testimony, carrying out house visits, offering prayer ministry, and speaking in the local churches. As the leader of the church community, it was deeply encouraging to



Tullycarnet Church Mission Team

see this group of young adults meeting each week to grow. Moreover, it was amazing to see this group released to lead in teaching the Bible, ministering to children, and growing in confidence.

By way of local outreach, we delivered our annual summer scheme. This is a fantastic community outreach for our church. We are hoping, with new and larger premises, that we will be able to invite children, parents and guardians to participate in worship and a new Sunday school commencing Autumn 2024.

Matthew Gault





Braniel Community Church

At Braniel Community Church we had a vision to reach nearly 5000 people with the good news of Jesus over a two-year period. Through our partnership with PaisUK and working with other local churches we have managed to send invitations, both personally and in letter format to every house within the Braniel area along with a copy of John's Gospel.

Seeds have been planted and now we turn

Ards Connect

Some may mistake life in the Ards Peninsula as slow, peaceful, and uneventful, but Ards Connect has been fast, a little bit frantic, and so full of events that it's been difficult to keep up with the pace!

Over the last number of weeks, we have been working tirelessly to gather leaders and volunteers who will support the events being launched in September. These will focus on discipleship and evangelism. We are also planning a beach mission over the next few weeks, weather permitting, and we have been meeting up with some young people who are passionate about using their giftings in Digital Media for the kingdom of God. This has been growing over the last few months, so much that we are working on creating a space and platform where these young creatives can express their heart through media.

Our aim over the last number of months has been to forge meaningful relationships with young people and young adults and even through the summer we have had some great success. As we meet and plan for the future, we don't take for granted the opportunity we have to make a meaningful impact in the lives of the young people on the Ards Peninsula.

Raymond McClure



to physically planting with the beginning of our community garden – a place for the community to come and grow relationships with each other and the church, that will also provide food to that community.

Our strategy for the next season is that we are a people "Simply Following Jesus" as His disciples, wherever we go.

James Crockett

Killicomaine Community Church

Earlier in the year Helena Elliott, part of the of Killicomaine Community Church leadership team, pioneered our first 'Mental Health Peer Support Group'. This looked at mental illness around subjects such as anxiety and depression and how we can find help in these areas through a relationship with God. In September, we plan to start our next instalment of the Support Group which will take the form of the 'Bereavement Journey' course. We know there are so many in our community who are struggling with poor mental health due to the loss of a significant loved one.

The course runs over seven weeks and covers the following topics: attachment, separation and loss; the impact and pain of bereavement; anger and guilt; coping with others' reactions; adjusting to change; delayed and suppressed grief; moving forward healthily and finally, faith questions. We will also be restarting our Women's' Club and our Discipleship Group for new Christians while our weekly Men's Club and Sunday evening gatherings run all year through.

Jim Fleming

PRAY for the leaders and volunteers in our church plants and outreaches and for a fruitful autumn term.



New vision for St Patrick's Ballymacarrett



St Patrick's, Ballymacarrett

At the Diocesan Synod on Thursday 20 June 2024, Bishop David McClay announced a bold and exciting initiative to breathe new life into the worshipping community of St Patrick's, Ballymacarrett.

With the support of Holy Trinity Brompton, Bishop David aims to establish a vibrant, Spirit-filled worshipping community on the lower Newtownards Road which will serve the local community as well as seeking to have a wide impact across East Belfast. Holy Trinity Brompton, as a national resource church in the Church of England, has successfully planted new churches in England, Wales and Scotland. The experience, wisdom and hospitality of the existing congregation will also play a vital role in this new chapter by welcoming new members and integrating new initiatives.

The parish of Ballymacarrett was

created in 1825 and its first church, Christ Church, was consecrated in 1827. As industrialisation in Belfast spread to the east of the Lagan, there was a rapid increase in the population in Ballymacarrett during the mid-19th century. A much larger new church was built in 1891 to accommodate a congregation of 1,500 parishioners and dedicated to St Patrick. Although this 1891 church building was severely damaged during the Belfast Blitz of 1941, the church was reconstructed after the war and rededicated in 1952. Population shifts associated with the Troubles led to a considerable decline in the size of the worshipping community.

Bishop David's new vision for ministry and outreach in Ballymacarrett will see refurbishing and reordering work being carried out in the church and a new staff team appointed with the plan of opening a new chapter in St Patrick's ministry and outreach in September 2025.



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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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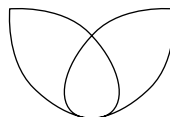
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