



Church Planting News

WINTER 2025

CASTLEWELLAN
COMMUNITY EVANGELISTS

SHARING
LIVES, FOOD AND THE GOSPEL

Keith writes...



Dear Friends,

In 2024, nearly half of the world's population in over 100 countries including our own participated in elections. In most cases those in government were voted out as the electorates expressed their frustration with inflation and creaking public services. In recent weeks, there has been turmoil in the leadership of France and South Korea and a cruel dictator in Syria has been unexpectedly overturned by an uprising.

In contrast to the transient and sometimes unstable leadership of earthly nations, Isaiah foresaw a kingdom that would forever expand and a king who would reign eternally.

Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever. Isaiah 9:7

We are so encouraged by your partnership with us in God's mission of extending his kingdom in Down and Dromore during 2024. In this edition, you will read how, due to your support, we are seeking to connect with communities who are underrepresented in our churches. A golden thread running through these updates is the way these missional initiatives are reaching out and engaging their neighbours with God's love, hope and a warm welcome – sharing their lives, food and the good news of how Jesus transforms the lives of ordinary people. This involves intentionally investing in supporting leaders who can relate to and befriend people beyond our church walls as well as being able to communicate the truth of the Gospel in ways that resonate with their local culture.

We are delighted to introduce to you Trevor and Lorraine Brimage who began work as Community Evangelists in Castlewellan in November 2023. Over the past year, with the



Keith Gardiner

support of Revd Pat Kerr, Trevor and Lorraine have been building relationships with local communities through community events, youth drop-ins, leading school assemblies, worship evenings and Bible studies. In 2025, they will begin a new weekly worship service in Castlewellan seeking to reach local people not connected with church.

Since our last edition, the Suitcase Project outreach to asylum seekers, refugees and other newcomers was officially launched on Monday 5 November in its base in the Emmanuel Centre, Roslyn Street, Belfast and four new Pioneers were commissioned by Bishop David on Tuesday evening 12 November in Windsor Hill Primary School, Newry. We also want to acknowledge and sincerely thank Raymond McClure for setting up and leading the Ards Connect outreach to young people and young adults over the last 18 months. We pray that God will bless Raymond as he takes up a new role as Ministry Associate in Seapatrick Parish Church in January 2025. Work continues behind the scenes in planning and preparing, with the support of Holy Trinity Brompton, to reinvigorate St Patrick's, Ballymacarrett.

Every blessing,

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



Community Evangelism in Castlewellan and Bryansford

In early November 2023, Trevor and Lorraine Brimage moved with their three children from Monaghan to Castlewellan to take up a new job-share role as Community Evangelists. They arrived with a vision to introduce people with little or no connection with church to God their creator - the only one who can bring them true joy and peace.

Rev'd Pat Kerr is Minister-in-Charge of the Parish of Castlewellan and Kilcoo and over the last 12 months Trevor and Lorraine have helped Pat to lead worship and teach in the parish churches. They have also been intentionally building relationships with leaders in different churches and reaching out to the local community.

They have organised fun days, barbecues, concerts, after-school youth drop-ins, and archery and pizza. They have led Messy Church, worship and praise nights, Bible study series, and a girls' youth Bible study (Girls Hideaway). Trevor, Lorraine and Pat have all been leading school assemblies monthly in Newcastle Primary, Drumadonnell Primary and Knockevin Special School.



Christmas Praise in St Paul's Castlewellan



Rev'd Pat Kerr, Lorraine and Trevor

These outreach events and ministry programmes have given each of them the opportunity to engage, build relationships, share the Gospel and pray with local people.

Christmas and New Year

There was a full programme of Christmas events in December 2024 – Christmas lights switch-on in Bryansford, a darts evening, drive-in movie in Castlewellan and Messy Christmas, as well as carol services, Christmas Tractor Run, Santa Saturday, a Christmas Praise Party for children and a Christmas Day celebration service.

In 2025, with support from Rev'd Pat Kerr, Trev and Lorraine will begin a new weekly service on Sundays, mainly focused on reaching local people not connected with local churches.

PRAY for God's favour to rest on Pat, Trev and Lorraine as they commence this new worship service; for volunteers to support them and that local people would engage and hear the good news of the Gospel.





Updates...

The Gathering Belfast



Our vision for *The Gathering Belfast* carries three core ingredients which are, **Worship, Community and Witness.**

Sandwiched between our two W's is Community and this is key. How this is modelled is paramount to what we believe God has called us to be. The Jesus model laid out for us is one full of grace and truth and therefore how we model grace - the love of the Father - to the community around us is vital for community engagement. When done

right, this should open the door to opportunities to speak of God's truth.

In our desire to be inclusive and show grace this Christmas, we invited our local pre-school McArthur Nursery to join us for our All-In Christmas Party. Armed with two Christmas classics to sing, 17 children under the age of four and their families joined our congregation for worship, food and a Christmas quiz.

With numbers in excess of 200 attending the event, the sense of that community we long to foster was clear to see. It's our hope this new relationship with the local pre-school in the area around St Martin's Church will only grow from strength to strength in the years to come.

Ross Munro

St Donard's Community Church Dundrum

Psalm 103.v2 says "*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.*" In 2024 we had much to praise God for in *St Donard's Community Church Dundrum.*

We were blessed to host Hannah from North Carolina as our first ministry intern from June to December. She played her part in helping us get our youth ministry up and running. To date, we have around 10 young people meeting before church to breakfast together and chat through the Bible reading and sermon for the day. It's a great way to help our young people properly engage with our service and we have also held several social events.

December was a very busy period with many blessings. Our Kid's Space held their first ever Nativity Service the day after our Follow the Star Nativity trail and our

Living Stories Christmas special saw over 50 packed into the hall for music, treats and to hear how our extraordinary God has been working in the life of an ordinary person. Our major highlight was a candlelit carol service which was standing room only.

We are grateful to God for new faces in our church family as we continue to see numerical growth, and we pray for spiritual growth following our recent Christianity Explored course.

Colin Morris





Moneyreagh Community Church

Moneyreagh Community Church celebrated its 10th birthday in October 2023 by officially opening HOST / Community & Coffee - our very own not-for-profit coffee shop in Moneyreagh. It is run by Gary, our barista evangelist.

As we do not have access to our own permanent Church building, our desire was to create a space to meet local people that would allow us to share the hope we have in Jesus.

HOST is more than a coffee shop. It's a place where lives are shared. We run Alpha, Hope Explored and LIFE groups, but also community events, coffee tasting and board game nights.

Over the last year, there have been new connections and relationships built as people have shared the deepest parts of their lives with each other as well as with Gary, Luke and our volunteers.

Most importantly we have seen a significant increase in those coming to Church on Sunday mornings through connections made in HOST with staff and our Church members, as they share their lives and their hope with those around them.

Many have encountered God for the first time, or in a new way and we are asking God to continue this work among us and thankful for His faithfulness to build His church.

Rory Blake-Knox



Tullycarnet Church

Tullycarnet Church has continued to grow, making new disciples, and attracting new members through our outreach activities such as Alpha, children's outreach, door-to-door, and giveaways.

We have also had a fruitful season of discipleship within the Church through running the Romans course. What has been particularly encouraging has been the make-up of those attending our Church. We have been especially successful in attracting and discipling those in their 20s-30s.

An issue for some time in the life of our Church has been access to reliable premises within the community. We recently saw two of our prayers answered, firstly through acquiring a suite of offices, and secondly by becoming keyholders

at our worship venue. The new office has enabled me to have a space to work in, along with our "Pais" ministry apprentices, moreover, the space is suited for pastoral meetings. It is our hope that we will be able to use the offices to host small groups, CAP courses and Alpha.

Approaching 2025, we plan to launch more small groups and to release the leadership responsibility of these to more of our members. Furthermore, we are exploring how to become more attractive to families with children and young people.

Matthew Gault

PRAY for the leaders and volunteers in our church plants and outreaches and for a fruitful 2025.





Four Pioneers commissioned

We had a wonderful evening of worship and celebration in Newry on Tuesday 12 November 2024 as Bishop David licensed and commissioned four Pioneer Ministers to serve in the diocese.

Those commissioned were Tim Burns who leads The Suitcase Project, Natalie Trainor, the pioneer evangelist at Newry Centre of Mission, and Nevin and Lorraine Anderson, recently appointed jointly as pioneers to lead a new missional outreach and church plant in Warrenpoint.

The hall was full of supporters, family and friends and we were joined by the National Director of Pioneer Ministry, Revd Rob Jones, and Archdeacon Barry Forde, the Pioneer Ministry Operations Lead. Revd Simon Genoe, Rector of Magheralin Parish and leader of New Wine Ireland, gave the address.



Prayers for Tim, Natalie, Lorraine and Nevin

Pioneer Ministers are, by definition, those charged with reaching the unchurched, and Bishop David said he believed that as they cast their nets on the other side of the boat – in our communities – God would bless their ministries.

In being formally commissioned, Tim, Natalie, Lorraine and Nevin committed themselves to Jesus Christ, to pioneering, to service and to learning and worship – all with God's help.

Support and relationship building

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

We have been running a Conversational English Café on Monday mornings. Through this, and with the help of brilliant volunteers, we have met about 60 different people, representing about 15 nationalities. People are referred to us through social services and Barnardos, by word of mouth and by other agencies and individuals doing similar work. This has been a great way to begin to develop relationships with people and offer areas of support. We are also part of the Welcome Churches Network.

Support has included helping people with documentation, bringing people to hospital appointments, connection to employability schemes and work experience, CV and interview support and help sourcing

furniture. Along with this we have made pastoral visits and enjoyed the hospitality of many of those we seek to support.

In November we had our launch event and in 2025 we hope to begin new areas of work. This includes teaching English in Nettlefield School to parents of children who attend, and alongside we hope to launch an advice drop-in that will operate during the day and hopefully a weekly social evening.

On the last Monday evening of each month, we have a prayer gathering, to which you are warmly invited.

Tim Burns

PRAY for Tim, Natalie, Nevin and Lorraine, that God would remove the obstacles and release the resources to enable their pioneering work to flourish.

Church Plant	Contact
Braniel Community Church	Revd James Crockett Email: james.branielcc@gmail.com
Castlewellan	Revd Pat Kerr, Trevor and Lorraine Brimage Email: revdpkerr@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
Newry Centre of Mission	Canon Scott McDonald Email: scott.mcdonald@churcharmy.org
St Donard's Community Church	Revd Colin Morris Email: stdonardsdunrum@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

Standing Order Form

To: (name and address of your bank)

.....

Sort Code: / / Account Number:

Account Name:

Please pay a regular gift of: £10 £25 £100 £ Other

to **Down and Dromore Church Planting Fund** each month. Please also state the amount in words:

.....

Please start on and from then on each month until further notice.

Signature: Date: / /

Your details

Title: (Mr/Mrs/Rev/Dr etc) Full name:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Email:

Phone:

By completing this form, you are giving us permission to process your personal information solely for the purposes of the Church Planting Fund. We will keep your data secure and retain it only for as long as is necessary.

Bank details for Down and Dromore Church Planting Fund:

AlB, University Road, Belfast, BT7 1ND

Sort Code: 93-80-92 Account No.: 17028762



Make your gift go further with Gift Aid

Declaration

I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and would like the Diocese of Down and Dromore (Church Planting Fund), to reclaim tax on my donation of £ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past four years.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand that the Diocese of Down & Dromore will reclaim 25p on every £1 that I have given.

Title: (Mr/Mrs/Rev/Dr etc) Full name:

Address:

..... Postcode:

(Please insert Post Code as claim cannot be made without this)

Signature:

Date:

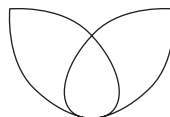
I will notify the Diocese of Down and Dromore if:

- I want to cancel this declaration;
- I change my name or home address;
- I no longer pay sufficient tax on my income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please send your completed form to:

Finance Team
Diocese of Down & Dromore
Unit 1
21 Old Channel Road
Belfast
BT3 9DE



DIOCESE OF DOWN & DROMORE

**Church
Planting Fund**

