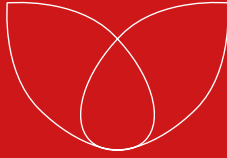


DIOCESE OF DOWN & DROMORE



Church Planting News

SUMMER 2025

NEWRY
NEW BELIEVERS, NEW NAME,
NEW SPACE

CASTLEWELLAN
NEW SUNDAY EVENING
GATHERING

Keith writes...



Dear Friends,

What do you have? is a repeated theme in the Bible.

When Moses was concerned that Pharaoh would not listen to him and release the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, God asked him "What's in your hand?" It was a staff which God used as an instrument to work miracles that demonstrated God's power – through plagues, parting the Red Sea and bringing water out of a rock. When the widow of a prophet was in debt and had no means of paying up, she cried out to Elisha for help – Elisha replied, "What do you have in your house?" Her small quantity of oil filled all the jars that she could find so that she was able to sell the oil and clear her debts. When Jesus was faced with the challenge of feeding 5000 people, he asked the disciples what they had – and a boy's 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish provided more than enough food for all the people.

We are so thankful to God for what he has placed in our hands to support church planting and missional initiatives in Down and Dromore. In the first quarter of this year, we received £2,180 from diocesan churches, £5,248 from individual donors, £11,806 from Church of Ireland organisations and £39,009 from Christian charities.

What has God done with the resources he has put in our hands? In this edition, you will have the opportunity to learn about what God is doing in seven of the diocese's church plants and missional initiatives. In Newry, we can rejoice in new believers, a new name (The Grove) and a new space (city centre shop unit). In Castlewellan, Trev and Lorraine have started Sunday evening gatherings in the Hillyard House Hotel (The Well) in addition to a Tuesday afternoon drop-in for children and youth based at The Lodge. You can read about kids and



youth work in Braniel and Killough, new support groups pioneered by the Suitcase Project and the wide range of ministries in Glen Community Church, Newtownards. We are delighted that Revd Colin Morris will be staying on as leader of St Donard's Community Church, Dundrum during his curacy over the next 3 years. We also wish to express out heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Revd Jim Fleming who has led Killicomaine Community Church since September 2019. We ask that God will bless him in his new role as pastoral assistant in east Belfast.

If you agree that what we are doing is having real impact, would you consider committing to a monthly gift? As a partner with us in planting new churches, you will be a member of an amazing community.

Every blessing,

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

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

The Grove: A place where no one grows alone



Exciting things are on the horizon! At last, we have secured a building which will become home to *The Grove*, a new worshipping community in Newry.

Why The Grove?

A grove is a cluster of fruit trees—strong, rooted, and growing together. In Scripture, trees planted by water symbolise people who are deeply rooted in God, nourished by His Word, and flourishing even in difficult seasons. At The Grove, we desire to cultivate a community where people are becoming deeply rooted in God's love, growing in relationship with God and others and reaching out and living fruitful lives for God's glory.

It's a powerful image of what we hope this space will become: not just a building, but a living, growing community of faith, grounded in God's Word and empowered by the Holy Spirit, for all that God calls us to. A place where 'no one grows alone.'

There's still a lot of work to be done – painting walls, replacing carpet, getting furniture, and making sure every detail reflects the heart of our mission. But even in this season of preparation,



we're already seeing signs of what's to come. Conversations are deepening, prayers are being answered, and people are beginning to explore faith in new and meaningful ways.

One of the most encouraging developments has been seeing individuals take steps toward Jesus. In the past couple of weeks, we have rejoiced as four adults have come to faith and three have taken the step of being baptised. Whether through kids' and youth work, healing services, praying for people on the street, or one-on-one conversations, the Holy Spirit is at work, and it is a joy to partner with Him in it all.

This building is more than a project—it's a promise. A promise that God is moving, and that something beautiful is being built, both physically and spiritually.

We can't wait to welcome you to *The Grove*. Until then, we invite you to pray with us, consider partnering with or serving alongside us, and dream with us about God's big plan for the city of Newry.

Natalie Trainor

PRAY for continuing provision for *The Grove*, and for wisdom in sharing the gospel effectively with the people of Newry.

Updates...

Making an impact in local schools



At Branziel Community Church we have had a season of great work within the schools in our area. In conjunction with our intern team from Pais UK and in partnership with other local churches we have held Scripture Union in both Branziel Primary and Gilnahirk Primary Schools.

Between both schools we have had upwards of 70 pupils come weekly to these classes where they have heard about

Jesus, enjoyed craft activities and sung some Christian songs together.

We were also able to give out over 300 *Speak Jesus* booklets to the pupils plus invitations to our Kids' Club.

We look forward this term to continuing our partnership with the other local churches as we take *It's Your Move* classes with the P7 pupils in Branziel and Gilnahirk. This is a Scripture Union resource which helps children to navigate the adventure of moving schools.

James Crockett

PRAY for the continued fruitfulness of our work in schools.

Building on the Bible in Killough

It's been an exciting season for Killough Youth & Children's Outreach. Over the past few months, 129 Bibles have been given out to kids and families across Lecale, helping more people explore God's Word at home.

Our kids' programme has been going strong, with around 50 children joining us each week and over 90 signed up altogether. We've been focusing on reading the Bible together, learning what it means, and having a lot of fun along the way. It's been amazing to see so many young people getting involved and growing in their faith.

And now, we're gearing up for a big summer! In July, we'll be welcoming a team from Illinois, USA who are coming over to serve with us through *Ireland*

4 Jesus. They'll be helping with events, games, and sharing the good news with kids and families in our community.

We're so thankful for everyone who's been part of the journey so far - whether you've come along, prayed, or helped out. There's a lot to look forward to, and we can't wait to see what God does next in Lecale.

Billy Fyffe

PRAY that over the summer, the Lord would continue His work among the young people being reached in Killough.



A birthday approaches!



As we approach autumn 2025, *St Donard's Community Church, Dundrum*, will celebrate its 5th Birthday! Although still young, we have much to celebrate, including a recent church weekend away. However, as a church family, we are looking ahead to what is to come.

Our birthday celebrations will coincide with the diocesan *Speak Jesus* initiative, and we hope to host a community fun day so that the whole village can join us to celebrate. This will follow a summer of outreach, where partnership is the key word. We will host a mission team from the USA to run a Holiday Bible Club, partner with R.I.O.T. in working with young people, and play our part in the Dundrum Village Festival.

Shortly after our birthday celebrations, we will be holding a week of mission



alongside Maghera and Kilmegan Parishes as we seek to *Speak Jesus* in the wider area.

On a personal note, our family is very happy that Colin will continue to serve as church leader throughout his curacy.

Colin Morris

PRAY for us as we invest in our young people and put necessary church structures in place to enable gospel growth in Dundrum.

A busy season for Glen Community Church



We recently moved back into Londonderry Primary School for Sunday morning worship and Sunday evening Bible study. With the extra space our Kids Group (P4-P6) has more than doubled in size. This year we have also started a monthly drop-in for those in Y11+ where we have used *VOX* (Christianity Explored for youth).

We continue with our women's group, a senior's group and a community lunch club on Tuesdays. Our Men's Shed works in partnership with the community association to provide a safe space for men to come along, put the world to rights and learn

some new skills. They really are a great bunch of guys and continue to be a blessing to the local community, taking the lead in making planters, and garden benches for the new residents in Quarry Heights and recently doing some work at St Finian's Primary.

We had a wonderful *Speak Jesus* campaign leading up to Easter with a Palm Sunday family service followed by a movie night (*The Case For Christ*), an open evening with BBQ at our Men's Shed and Community Garden, Service of the Nails and Easter Day celebration.

We have recently done door to door evangelism training with George Newell in preparation for our second Mission Week in August when we will celebrate our 11th birthday.

PRAY especially for a fruitful week of mission in August.

Community Evangelism in Castlewellan and Bryansford



Alongside Revd Pat Kerr we have continued to build relationships and hold community events, all with the aim of inviting people to hear the Gospel and join a community of faith.

Over the Easter period, we took part in the Castlewellan walk of witness as well as organising a scavenger hunt for families and a Messy Easter event. In May, we held a ladies' evening at The Lodge which included a painting class and Elise Turner (worship leader at New Wine Worship Rooms) sharing her testimony.

Wednesday worship evenings are held monthly in the Ark Community Centre in Newcastle and there are weekly prayer walks around Castlewellan on Wednesday mornings.

Since our last update we have begun a weekly after school drop-in (Our Place) and a weekly Sunday evening contemporary worship gathering (The Well).



Our Place is targeted at children and youth and is based at The Lodge, Castlewellan on Tuesday afternoons. The programme consists of food, crafts, games, worship, and a short devotion and has proved popular.

The Well is currently hosted in the mezzanine of Hillyard House Hotel, Castlewellan. It's a relaxed, informal time of food and chat, with worship and a Bible-based devotion. Our hope is that this will offer a space for people to explore faith and deepen their faith.

We are looking at the possibility of leasing a shop unit in Castlewellan as a home for the new outreach but, as is often the case, there are a few issues to sort before signing on the dotted line. We're trusting God for what lies ahead.

Trevor and Lorraine Brimage

PRAY for The Well and that God would literally open the door to new premises.

Gardening, food and keeping fit!



The Suitcase Project exists to help those that are new to Northern Ireland and assist parishes throughout the diocese to do the same. At its heart our work is about building relationships, deepening connections, and offering support.

Thanks to an incredible team of volunteers, we have been able to run our Monday morning Conversation Cafe for over a year now. We also teach English to a small group of parents in Nettlefield Primary School, run a Wednesday evening men's group and an English and Exercise group. We have a health and fitness instructor who wants to develop his English, so this helps him, and he helps us get fit!

We are partnering with Glenside Community Farm to help them develop and plant a sensory garden. This will provide space for those who were keen gardeners in their home countries and connect them with another group.

Recently we had a meal in the Emmanuel Centre for those we have



connected with and their families. Over 40 people came along, ate well, and had a great evening of conversations, food and fun.

Coming up, we are partnering with People First to develop a women's group on Wednesdays. Here, they will be taught English and develop their own initiatives. They will receive support around employability and through our volunteers connect with people that can offer ongoing support.

We will be starting a weekly prayer gathering to support those that are Christians or are exploring faith, and to raise the spiritual bar within the project. I am excited to see where this may lead us.

Tim Burns

PRAY for these new initiatives and the mobilisation of volunteers and funds.



Church Plant	Contact
Braniel Community Church	Revd James Crockett <i>Email: james.branielcc@gmail.com</i>
Glen Community Church	Revd Stephen Doherty <i>Email: stephen.stmarks@btinternet.com</i>
Killough Kids & Youth Outreach	Mr Billy Fyffe <i>Email: billy@lampyc.co.uk</i>
Moneyreagh Community Church	Revd Rory Blake-Knox <i>Email: rory@moneyreaghchurch.com</i>
St Donard's Community Church	Revd Colin Morris <i>Email: stdonardsdunrum@gmail.com</i>
The Gathering	Revd Ross Munro <i>Email: ross@thegatheringbelfast.com</i>
The Suitcase Project	Mr Tim Burns <i>Email: tim@thesuitcaseproject.org.uk</i>
Tullycarnet Church	Mr Matthew Gault <i>Email: tullycarnetchurch@icloud.com</i>
The Grove, Newry	Ms Natalie Trainor <i>Email: natalie.trainor@churcharmy.org</i>
The Well, Castlewellan	Mr Trevor Brimage <i>Email: trevorbrimage@gmail.com</i>
West Winds Community Church	Revd Stephen Doherty <i>Email: stephen.stmarks@btinternet.com</i>



Donate...



If you would like to support an individual church plant or give to the General Church Planting fund, please scan the QR code below to download a Standing Order Form and Gift Aid Declaration.

Cheques should be made payable to Down and Dromore Church Planting Fund and sent to:

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Diocese of Down & Dromore
Unit 1
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Belfast
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