

AUTUMN 2026

DIOCESE OF DOWN & DROMORE

PIONEER NEWS



Holiday Bible Club in Dundrum

**INSIDE
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GOD AT WORK Summer in our Church Plants
A NEW CHAPTER Introducing Stormont Community Church



Keith writes...

Dear Friends,

Throughout Scripture, we see that God has always been the one to take the initiative in seeking and saving the lost. God called Abraham out from his own people and country, met Jacob at Bethel as he was on the run from Esau, spoke to Moses from the burning bush in the wilderness, and brought salvation to the Samaritan woman at the well, Zacchaeus, and Paul on the Damascus road.

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Luke 19:10

As his followers, we now share in that mission. We go where he sends us, welcome those he brings to us, and point them to the saving grace we have received.

That same missionary impulse shapes this newsletter: not only church planting, but also the beginnings, relationships and acts of welcome through which God is drawing people to himself across Down and Dromore.

You may have noticed a new name on this edition. **Church Planting News** is becoming **Pioneer News**.

This change reflects the growing breadth of pioneering ministry in Down and Dromore. Planting new churches remains central, but pioneering often begins earlier, as we reach communities not currently connected with church and share the good news of Jesus.

Some outreaches may become new churches or worshipping communities; others may take a different form. We want to celebrate them all.

Pioneer News will share stories from across the Diocese: new church plants, missional initiatives, pioneering within existing churches, and developments such as our new Diocesan Resource Church.



Our hope is that these stories will encourage us to pray, inspire us to participate, and help us discover new ways of sharing the good news of Jesus.

This edition shares a transition in our Tullycarnet outreach: a new name, Stormont Community Church; a new location, St Molua's Church; and a new leadership team of Laurence, Millie and Arthurage. We are grateful to Matthew and Kirsty Gault, who planted this worshipping community five years ago, and pray God's blessing on them in the next season.

There is also news of a new worshipping community in Waringstown (Mill Hill); progress towards the new Diocesan Resource Church, Six:Eight; Pioneer Minister training for Elaine Jones as Moneyreagh Community Church prepares for expanded outreach in Ballygowan; and summer mission updates from East Belfast, Dundrum, Moneyreagh, Newry and Warrenpoint.

Please pray for these pioneering ministries, and consider supporting them financially, encouraging those involved, or volunteering where help is needed. Please especially pray for Tim Burns, Julie Brown and the Suitcase Project team as they welcome, serve and support the migrant community in East Belfast during challenging times.

Every blessing,

Keith Gardiner
Fundraising Officer for Church Growth
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Introducing Stormont Community Church

By God's grace and through the faithful commitment of many, the Tullycarnet Church Plant has entered a significant new chapter in its journey.

After five years of ministry and worship at the Tullycarnet Bowling Club Pavilion, the congregation has relocated to St. Molua's Church on the Upper Newtownards Road and has adopted the new name **Stormont Community Church (SCC)**.

Planted under the leadership of Matthew and Kirsty Gault, the church plant has grown into a worshipping community of around forty people. As the congregation has grown, the need for a more permanent and suitable space has become increasingly apparent. The move to St. Molua's provides the space and resources needed to support the existing church family while creating greater opportunity for continued ministry, discipleship, and witness.

The first service of Stormont Community Church in its new home took place on Sunday 6 September, marking an important moment in the life of the congregation. This new chapter also represents a partnership within Stormont Parish, as the congregation now gathers each Sunday at 12 noon as the afternoon congregation of the parish.



This transition also brings a change in leadership. We give thanks for the faithful ministry of Matthew and Kirsty Gault, whose vision, dedication, and service have been instrumental in establishing the congregation and laying strong foundations for the future. Having faithfully led the church plant through its formative years, they have now handed over leadership responsibility as they move into a new season of life and ministry.

Laurence (*above*) and Millie Bellew have now assumed leadership of SCC, alongside Arthurance Abureni (*above*). Together, they will seek to build on the work already begun, continuing to encourage discipleship, strengthen community, and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

PRAY with thanks for God's faithfulness throughout the journey of the church plant and for Matthew and Kirsty's ministry. Pray for God's blessing in their next season. Pray for Laurence, Millie and Arthurance as they lead and serve and that SCC will continue to be a faithful witness to Christ within Stormont Parish and the wider community.



God at work this Summer



The Summer Season at **The Gathering Belfast** is a wonderful reminder of what can happen when a community comes together with compassion, generosity and a shared desire to make a difference.

Through our mission partners, YWAM, and their team from South America, alongside the Glentoran Social Partnership, we were delighted to support children and families across East Belfast through The Gathering Summer Scheme at Pitt Park.

With around 30–40 children taking part, the scheme provided a safe, welcoming environment where young people could enjoy activities, spend time with friends and make positive summer memories. Free lunches were provided across two days, offering practical support to families during the school holidays when financial pressures can often increase.

The generosity continued with Glentoran first-team player Liam Burt (*pictured*), who not only helped serve lunch but returned with toys and gifts he had personally purchased for the children. Gourmet Burgers, the Club's official hot food vendor, also generously provided burgers and baps for the end-of-week barbecue.

This is The Gathering Belfast at its best: faith expressed through action, partnerships strengthening communities, and generosity creating hope.

Ross Munro

These past months, **St Donard's Community Church** has been blessed by God bringing new faces to join us in worship. Some from mission teams joining us in outreach in Dundrum, and others seeking a community marked by Jesus.

This summer we ran a Holiday Bible Club for almost 50 children, followed by a Family Fun Night. We also hosted the Bethlehem Baptist Choir, which nearly filled the building, before taking our place in the Dundrum Festival. It has been wonderful to hear of the growing reputation our church family is gaining in the village, but our prayer is that the fame of Jesus would increase.

We are excited to see our kids' ministry return this term and overjoyed to finally launch our Youth Group, with God providing the leaders we had prayed for. We also commissioned Sam as our new Parish Reader.

We continually remind ourselves of the name Ebenezer, which means, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." We are deeply grateful for his faithful provision and continue to pray for more as we seek to increase our space and facilities for a growing ministry in Dundrum.

Colin Morris





Our Summer mission week was one of the most encouraging moments of our year at **The Grove**. With the support of our friends from Church on the Rock, Texarkana, we stepped into a rhythm of ministry that brought fresh energy and widened our reach across the city of Newry.

At the heart of the week was our Holiday Bible Club. Each morning the building was alive with children's laughter, crafts, songs, and Bible stories. Families we had never met before came through the doors, leading to new connections and conversations.

A particular blessing was the way our team served alongside theirs, and it was especially impactful for our teenagers. They watched older leaders model humility, joy, and prayerfulness, and in turn discovered new confidence and gifts of their own.

Our men's and women's events drew people well beyond our usual reach. Some of them are now joining us on Sunday mornings, others signing up for our Alpha Course beginning at the end of September.

Our week of mission strengthened our community, expanded our connections, and reminded us that God is gently growing The Grove in ways we couldn't orchestrate ourselves.

Natalie Trainor



Bridgeway has had a busy and encouraging summer. During Warrenpoint's "Waking the Giants" festival, a visiting team from America joined us for a weekend of mission.

Together we hosted an outreach event in Hall4All, with Christian music, coffee, tea and traybakes, and welcomed more than 150 people. It was a joy to meet people, pray with those who asked and later connect with young teenagers at a youth barbecue.

Another highlight took place at Church Lane Café in Warrenpoint, where more than 40 people came to hear Claire Mothersdale share her testimony. Claire is serving with us as part of her Church Army training and spoke about her journey from addiction to freedom in Christ. Again, we had opportunities for prayer.

One woman, who had asked for prayer about her estrangement from one of her children, returned the next evening to say her child had phoned the following morning. She gave her life to Jesus. Another woman received prayer for anxiety and later shared that her symptoms had gone; she too gave her life to Jesus. We are amazed and thankful for what God is doing through Bridgeway.

Nevin & Lorraine Anderson



PRAY for everyone impacted through summer outreach in the communities above. May the seeds of faith sown take root and bear fruit to the glory of God.

Encouragement from Moneyreagh

It has been an encouraging season at **Moneyreagh Community Church** as we continue seeking to love Jesus, serve our community and create spaces where people can encounter Him.

HOST Community & Coffee remains an important part of our everyday ministry, providing a place for friendship, conversation and connection throughout the week. HOST Run Club has also continued to grow, helping us build new relationships in the community.

Our summer Connect Week was a highlight, with a team from John Brown University in Arkansas serving alongside us. Around 100 children joined us each day for sports



camp, alongside Crafternoon Tea, youth worship night, trips to Portrush, leaflet drops and a community pizza night.

We have also been hugely encouraged by what God is doing among our young people. In May, six teenagers were baptised and others will be confirmed in September.

Looking ahead, Elaine Jones begins training as a Pioneer Minister this autumn. Alongside her training, we will be praying and discerning fresh ways to connect with and serve the wider parish, particularly Ballygowan as we look to expand ministry within our parish.

Rory Blake-Knox

New worshipping community in Waringstown

Mill Hill Community Church began with a simple vision: to be a welcoming Christian fellowship where people of all ages and backgrounds in Waringstown could gather to worship and grow together. The Mill Hill, starting at 10.00am in the church halls, is an informal expression of church life, rooted in community, friendship, and the sharing of the Gospel.

Although still small, the church has become a warm and encouraging place for those who attend. Each Sunday



morning we gather for worship, Bible teaching, prayer, and fellowship, grateful for the parish's support. Openness and encouragement are growing as relationships deepen and new connections are made. We have witnessed God's grace through the enthusiastic response.

One of the joys has been seeing people come along who may not have been involved or connected to a church family. We are learning that small beginnings can still bear fruit, and we continue to pray that God will guide and strengthen the work in the months and years ahead.

Mark Lennox

PRAY for the Community Churches in Moneyreagh and Mill Hill as they discern how best to connect with and serve their locality. Pray for Elaine Jones as she begins her training.



Suitcase Project offers hope & practical care

As a result of the June riots, people we serve were subjected to horrendous levels of fear and intimidation. It emphasised the importance of a faith presence working to love, serve and support those who are arriving from other nations. Through *The Suitcase Project* we have that privilege.

The riots led to new levels of concern and practical support from many individuals and churches. This ensured that people who needed them had places to stay, people were visited and supported, and we were able to provide food and supplies for many others. We are very grateful for all the support we received.

Through the summer we continued our classes and planted a new box garden at the centre in partnership with Glenside Farm and Sow Grateful. We partnered with The Big House to take around 40 people away for a wonderful day at their centre



in Limavady and thanks to EBCDA, we had a tour of the City Hall, where we met with the Lord Mayor. Also, in partnership with EBCDA, we have planned a large community meal for 22 September.

Finally, we're delighted to have been awarded funding through James Brown & Son's Community Awards for the purpose of establishing an intercultural men's space.

Tim Burns

PRAY for Tim, Julie and the volunteers, for the community meal and the establishment of the men's space.

Six:Eight vision takes shape

Six:Eight is the new Diocesan Resource Church in Ballymacarrett Parish and we are encouraged to see the vision now taking shape. We hope to become a church that not only serves East Belfast, but also resources and encourages churches and mission across the city and beyond.

Over recent months we have started to gather a core community for Six:Eight, which has grown to around 30 people. One of the first ways we have begun serving the wider Church is through Presence & Purpose, a monthly evening of worship and prayer for Christians from



across Belfast. More than 160 people from across Northern Ireland joined us at our most recent gathering as we worshipped Jesus, sought His presence and prayed to be equipped for His purposes.

Alongside this, we continue to build the Six:Eight staff team, while plans are progressing for the refurbishment of the church building as a centre for worship, discipleship, mission and training.

Mike Darbandi

PRAY for God's protection and provision, for the right people to join the team, for breakthrough where we face obstacles, and for many people across Belfast and our nation to come to know Jesus.

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