

# CONNOR

## connections

Poetry in  
motion

at Quiet Morning

page 17



## CMSI makes new appointments

CMS Ireland has appointed Jenny Smyth as Mission Director.

Jenny served as a CMS Mission Partner in Uganda and in Connor's partner diocese of Yei, South Sudan. She was a Trustee on the CMS Ireland Board for five years before joining the staff team in 2013 as a Partnership Co-ordinator.

The Rev Roger Thompson and Mrs Linda Abwa have both been appointed CMSI Partnership Co-ordinators. Roger has been rector of Kilwaughter and Cairncastle with All Saints', Craigyhill, since 2004, and is a former CMS Mission Partner.

Linda, a trained nurse and midwife, has spent the last 12 years working in Nigeria with Mission Africa.

The Rev Adrian Dorrian of St Mark's, Dundela, is the new Chair of the Board of Trustees and President of the Society.

## Christian Aid cycle

Congratulations to pedal pushers from St Patrick's, Jordanstown, and Whiteabbey Presbyterian who cycled 70 miles before church to mark the start of Christian Aid Week on May 10!

The cycle was organised by St Patrick's parishioner Alex McClenaghan, who said the idea behind the dawn start was to "create a bit of empathy with people who have to get up very early every day and do something that's a struggle - walking miles to collect firewood or water - just to survive."



Taking a brief stop in Carnlough are Joanne Cochrane, the Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth, Alex McClenaghan, Helen Brown, Alan Nesbitt and Ian Cochrane.

## Memorial gifts

A new Holy Table and Alter Cloths were presented to Culfeightrin Parish Church in memory of Graham and Margaret Gault.

The gifts were presented by Wendy Murphy and Julie Singleton, daughters of Graham and Margaret, who died in 2012 and 2013. Poignantly, the service also included the Baptism of their latest granddaughter Cara Margaret Eileen.



Connor Diocesan President Valerie Ash, third from left, with former Presidents, from left: Moira Thom, Sheila Hughes, Roberta McKelvey, Norma Bell, and Paddy Wallace.

# MU Festival Service celebrates 70 years

The Diocesan Festival Service of Connor Mothers' Union held in St Anne's Cathedral on March 22 marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MU in the diocese.

The Dioceses of Connor and of Down and Dromore separated in 1945, when Connor MU became a separate organisation in its own right.

Maintaining the link between past and present, the current Diocesan President Valerie Ash read the Old Testament lesson and Sheila Hughes, who was President from 1978-1983, read the New Testament lesson.

The intercessions were led by Rae Scott, North Connor Area Chair, and Roslyn Graham, Connor Young Members' Representative.

The preacher at the Festival Service was

the Very Rev Raymond Ferguson, MU All-Ireland Chaplain, who emphasised the importance of such a service in any diocese. It was, he said, 'an important rallying occasion ... important for diocesan structures and also for the branches which undergird those structures ... important for MU members who can be relied upon to rally to the banner and answer the call.'

Referring to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Dean Ferguson gave thanks for 'those who guided and shaped the changes 70 years ago ... the faithful, unsung members who have carried on the work in parishes right down to the present day [and] all who have handed the baton on to us.'

## Secretary to General Board of Education NI

Dr Peter Hamill, former Training Co-ordinator for the Diocese of Connor, has been appointed new Secretary to the Board of Education NI by the General Synod Board of Education.

Peter is a qualified teacher and vocational trainer with a PhD in the field of education. He has worked in the area of training and development for a number of organisations over the years, including Connor Diocese where he was Training Co-ordinator for eight years, and more recently the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action.

He graduated from the University of Warwick in 2013 with a PhD in Education and Religion. His thesis was based on research carried out with Children's and

Youth leaders in Connor Diocese and the wider Church of Ireland.

Welcoming Peter to his new role, the Chair of the General Synod Board of Education, the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, said: "The position of Secretary to the Board of Education NI is a key role for the Church of Ireland, and Dr Hamill will bring to the task a diverse experience of working both within the Church of Ireland and in wider educational roles."

Peter succeeds the Rev Ian Ellis who has taken up an incumbency in Rossorry Parish, Co Fermanagh.



Dr Peter Hamill.

# Summer 2015 Contents

Christ Church Parish visits school it built in Uganda	4-5
Unlocking young potential	7
Healing in Bolivia	8
Pioneer Evangelist at work in north Belfast	10
Bishop's Lent Seminars	11
Fantastic training event for children's leaders	13
Inspiring youth events	14
A big day for Ballymoney	16
Clergy Quiet Morning	17
The beautiful art of stained glass	18-19

## Cover photo:

The lion at the centre of a new stained glass window commissioned by St Mark's, Ballymacash.

Full story on page 8. Also see pages 18-19. Photo by Brian Kelly.



**Please contact us if you have any editorial comments or would like to contribute to the next issue of Connor Connections.**

Karen Bushby  
Connor Diocesan  
Communications Officer

Church of Ireland House  
61-67 Donegall Street  
Belfast BT1 2QH

Tel: 028 9082 8874

Mob: 0776610 3880

Email: dco@connor.anglican.org



# The green shoots of life in Connor Diocese

My small vegetable patch has been borrowed this year for growing wedding flowers. Certain craft items have also appeared in different parts of the house.

The energy and fun in planning and anticipating has helped cope with any frantic thoughts of what has to be done.

It has been a joy to see the green shoots appear above the soil as new life bursts forth. As to whether the flowers will bloom at the appropriate time is still uncertain, but hopefully there are enough planted at different intervals that some will be ready just at the right time.

We do not have long to wait for the answer but we certainly have had fun in the planning and in observing the shoots appearing. There may be a few sermons appearing from the experience at least.

As you read this edition of Connor Connections it is important to see the green shoots of life in the diocese. We have a huge task in facing many issues in church life and there are concerns as to how we reimagine church in the future.

Yet it is also important to recognise those

threads and shafts of encouragement.

This year's General Synod had a clear thread of mission running through the agenda. This came from a recognition that as a church we have to be involved in mission - we cannot stay where we are and there are issues to be tackled as we seek to incarnate the presence of Jesus in our communities.

It is possible to be daunted by the task we are called to, but those stories of hope and potential can encourage us as we move forward. Encouragement is one of the most beautiful gifts we give to one another, particularly in a culture that finds complaining and blaming relatively easy.

May we encourage one another with our stories and our prayers.

Grace and peace,

+ Adrian Connor



The Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh, with the rector of St Patrick's, Broughshane, the Very Rev JFA Bond, Dean of Connor; the Rev Adrian Halligan, curate; members of the Select Vestry, and Mrs H Boddy (people's churchwarden), Mrs M Nelson (hon secretary) and Mr Winston Byers (rector's churchwarden).

## 250th anniversary service in Broughshane

A service to celebrate the 250th anniversary of St Patrick's, Broughshane, on March 1 was conducted by the Rev Adrian Halligan, curate, and the rector, the Very Rev JFA Bond, Dean of Connor.

The Epistle was read by the Mayor of Ballymena, Councillor Audrey Wales MBE, and the Gospel by Ernie Johnston. The

Intercessions were led by Megan Nelson, Sandy Wilson, Sophie Dennison, Pauline Armstrong and Richard Reade.

The celebrant and preacher was the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland, the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke.

The praise was led by Elizabeth Ferguson, organist, and the choir.



The choir of St Apollo School sing for the visitors from Christ Church, Lisburn.

# Reflections from Uganda - God is good - All the time

A team from Christ Church, Lisburn, travelled to Uganda in February to build staff accommodation at a school the parish funded in 2012.

St Apollo School in Kasizi, Luwero, was established in 2007, but had only one small building and held many classes under trees.

Christ Church parish raised £75,000 and in partnership with Fields of Life two new blocks of classrooms were built. A team visited in 2012 to work on the classrooms.

The parish continued to support the school and raised more than £24,000 for a staff residence which they helped complete on this recent trip.

Here, team members reflect on their time with the people and community of St Apollo School.

"Joy, hope, faith, peace and perseverance are words which describe the experience of being in the community around St Apollo School and the church for eight full days," said the rector, the **Rev Paul Dundas**.

"The overriding experience is that the Lord is building this community - words which are echoes of Psalm 127 which I used when we were welcomed on that amazing first Friday with songs, dancing and speeches.

"We saw a community growing in numbers, with new buildings, growing crops, so many children with school uniforms, receiving a meal each day, using English in classes, enjoying sport, good leadership in the school, an extended church building and the support of the Bishop."

Paul said the project was 'a beacon to the wider church and education authorities.' "The opening of the staff accommodation brings greater stability as it will allow eight teachers to live at the school," said Paul.

He thanked God for the team, for good health, and all that was achieved. This included practical work of building bookcases, RE lessons, the I AM Girl project, hand hygiene, women's work, sport, worship and the opening of the staff accommodation.

"I was privileged to have the honour of cutting the ribbon to open the staff accommodation, plant a mango tree along with Raymond and Beth and then speak on behalf of the parish and team at the celebration," Paul said. "We received many thanks and gifts which included a chicken!"

Paul also preached at the church at St



Johnston Boyle, Raymond Geddis and Gary Knowles building a bookcase.

Apollo, and led two Saturday seminars, the first with lay leaders in Kikychusa, 45 minutes away. "They had never had a 'white' person speak to them before," Paul said. He also visited a project for orphaned children. "I received a pineapple as a thank you. I was deeply touched by this gesture," he said.

The second seminar was held for clergy in Ndejje Archdeaconry with the Bishop elect, Canon Eridard attending. "The seminar was held entirely in 'Northern Ireland English.' The highlight came when we presented the group with "Lugandan" Bibles - such joy!" Paul said.

He explained that the team had chosen the words of 1 Corinthians 3:11 as a text for the plaques on the new buildings: 'For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

**Johnston Boyle** said it had been an 'emotional, spiritual and physical' journey.

"On arrival at the school, the sight of 300 children all in their green uniforms, lining each side of the track, singing, clapping and dancing to welcome us brought a lump to my throat," he said.



The full Christ Church team at St Apollo School, including the rector the Rev Paul Dundas and parishioners Beth Harris, Beverley Ringland, Roberta Thompson, Anita Evans, Jane Marks, Emma Jane Marks, Audrey Knowles, Jayne Logan, Johnston Boyle, Raymond Geddis, Patrick Logan, Colin Mitchell and Gary Knowles.

"To see the commitment to the Lord from these children, their teachers and parents sets an example we could all follow. Their praise, prayer, faith and worship were inspiring.

"At the end of our time there, I left with a feeling of achievement, of completion, of satisfaction, of fulfilment."

**Beverley Ringland** said the trip provided experiences she would never forget. "The welcome, the children's love for learning, and how God has become central to a community that was learning under a tree before Christ Church provided a school with God's help and guidance," she said.

She recalled how 40 women turned up for the health education programme with their girls, the children keen to learn verses and enjoy sports, crafts and worship, and a memorable sports day.

"My lasting memory is when we say 'God is good' to the children they reply 'All the time.' We say 'All the time' and they reply 'God is good and that is his nature.' Wow!" said Beverley.

Like Beverley, **Roberta Thompson** will not forget the children's words 'God is good' and their responses.

"I was privileged to experience the gratitude the teachers, children and mothers have for the people of Christ

Church and how much they appreciate and care for their school as it is the centre of the community," Beverley said, adding that St Apollo will always have a special place in her heart.

**Jayne Logan** recalls the words of the head girl at the celebration meal. "For God and my country, never lose hope."

"'Never Lose Hope' is the school motto and it is very clear that the pupils, staff and parents heed these words in their daily lives," Jayne said.

"The school and community have progressed immeasurably since the last team visit – and with the hope and faith which

they place in God, they will surely go from strength to strength.

"I believe that every day is a school day and I have returned home having learnt so much from the people I have had the pleasure of being with in Uganda. Never Lose Hope!"

**Raymond Geddis** reflected on how much St Apollo has developed since 2012. Then there were 65 pupils being taught under a tree. Health issues were evident, as was a lack of food.

"In 2015 we found some 300 pupils, in very good health being well fed in comparison to 2012, with generally enthusiastic teachers. Vegetable gardens at the school

and the old church land are being used to supplement the provision of food."

Raymond said a visit to Bethel Royal was an example of what can be done when the will is there. The school has 700 secondary pupils (520 boarding), and is self sufficient due to dairy, poultry and maize growing/milling operations. He related how one woman, abandoned by her husband to raise her 11 children in a mud house that had partially collapsed, received two pigs from the school principal and now has a successful pig unit, 10 cows and has built a brick home for her children.

**Beth Harris** thanked the people of Christ Church who had made the trip possible. "Words cannot express the great joy I experienced on my return to St Apollo. If only I could explain the miraculous changes to the lives of 300 children, families and the community. These wonderful people now have hope. The children appear healthier and the standard of hygiene has improved. The whole community takes so much pride in their excellent school," said Beth.



Beth Harris plants a mango tree.



The Rev Paul Dundas in Ndeje Archdeaconry with Canon Eridard and his wife Jane.



Karen Webb, Children's Ministry Co-ordinator with Lisburn Cathedral and newly appointed Pioneer Lead Evangelist for Connor Diocese.

# Our duty to teach the next generation

Karen Webb is a mother-of-two and a Church Army Sister based in Lisburn Cathedral. She also teaches in the Cathedral's Kidzone. In an interview with the *News Letter*, Karen talked about her role in Kidzone. We thank Karen for allowing us to share her story in **Connor Connections**.

I have very happy memories of Sunday School and of Scripture Union in my primary school. I came to faith as a young child and I know that my early influences in faith were from committed teachers who wanted to share their faith with me.

I first became a Sunday School teacher when I was 15 and wanted to share my faith with children and to see them grow and learn more about the Christian faith. I have always worked with children and currently am the Children's Ministry Co-ordinator for Lisburn Cathedral.

Kidzone is for children aged 4-11. We have around 50 children. Kidzone happens during our 11am Sunday service - the children leave at around 11.20am. We have the following outline:

- Opening prayer
- Sharing news time
- Praise time - songs with actions
- Introduce the day's theme/Bible story

- Game time
- Video or Bible reading
- Talk using visual aids
- Split into age appropriate groups to do a worksheet, craft or discussion
- Prayer time
- Closing song/prayer/recap

We meet together at the beginning of each new term to pray and to outline the term's themes. Sometimes if it is suitable we will follow the same teaching programme as the sermon series in church. This gives the families the opportunity to discuss the topic at home. We have four main leaders who take it in turns to lead each week.

The most enjoyable aspect is the privilege of seeing the children grow in their faith and I love to hear them pray each week for their families and friends.

The most challenging is being able to keep the attention of all the children at once -

we try to keep everything in soundbites, that is, all activities are kept short and the theme emphasised throughout.

My role is vital and one which many churches don't emphasise. I feel as a children's leader I am called to share my faith and teach the faith to the next generation. It says in Deuteronomy 11:19

Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

I believe the following Bible texts emphasise the importance of Sunday School Teachers in shaping young lives:

Proverbs 22:6 - Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Psalms 8:2 - Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

The praises of children and babies silence the devil - how can we possibly ignore them or their need to know God and it is our duty and job to teach the next generation about their faith - not to exercise their faith when they are older but to exercise their faith now. Jesus saw children as very important - we should too.

- Since this article was written Karen has been appointed Pioneer Lead Evangelist for Connor Diocese. She takes up her new post in September.



## Window dedicated in Ballymacash

On April 26 the highlight of the 11am Patronal Festival Service at St Mark's, Ballymacash, was the dedication of a new stained glass window in memory of Sammy and Peggy Bryson.

The window, which measures approximately 6ftX3ft, was designed by David Esler, Proprietor of Leadlines and David Esler, Donegore.

The window depicts the winged lion, the symbol of St Mark's Gospel, and also contains a picture of a sword, representing the Word of God. (See front cover).

The stained glass panel is the centrepiece of a design which, when completed, will cover most of the high-level glass screen created in St Mark's as part of the major renovation and redesign of the church carried out in 2010.

In his address the rector, the Rev Canon George Irwin, made reference to the significance of the winged lion both as a symbol of St Mark the Evangelist and as an ancient symbol of the resurrection. He also recalled the sterling service of Sammy and Peggy Bryson who were foundation members of the Parish in 1967.

## Contribution to WW1 is celebrated

The Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade commemorated those from within its ranks who fought during the Great War over the weekend of March 20-22.

At a book launch hosted by the Mayor of Lisburn, prizes were presented to the winners of a Commemorative War Badge Design Competition. They included two lads from Ballinderry - Calvin Patterson and Ward Patterson. Calvin's entry was the overall winner and his design has been made into a woven badge that will be worn on uniforms until 2018.

A new book, 'Ready and Willing - Irish Church Lads in the Great War,' written by Johnny Conn, a former Captain of the Carnmoney Parish Company, was presented to the Mayor. The book is a permanent record of the contribution made to the Great War by Irish Church Lads.

The weekend also included an anniversary dinner at which the Archbishop of Armagh was Guest of Honour, and the Annual Parade to Seagoe Parish Church where a new War Memorial Banner was dedicated by the Archbishop.

# Bolivia 'testing but spiritually satisfying'

Eric Lewis, a parishioner of St Hilda's, Kilmakee, travelled to Bolivia in March with a team from Divine Healing Ministries.

Led by the Director, Brother David Jardine, the team of four was hosted in La Paz by Pastor Hendrick Hoere. Eric has been on many trips with Divine Healing Ministries in the last 25 years, including Nigeria, the Arctic, Jamaica, Brooklyn and Colombia, but this was his first time in Bolivia.

"La Paz is 12,000 ft above sea level," said Eric. "It was very cold and the breath caught in your chest. Pastor Hendrick gave us tablets and assured us that if we became very ill there was an oxygen chamber we could use!"

The team was to carry out a ministry of healing in churches in La Paz and in the town of Potosi, a 10 hour bus ride away. In La Paz they stayed with a family who cleared their living room to put up four beds for the visitors.

"Their home was also the church, and the lady was a very good cook, and sold lunches to make a living," Eric said.

The team often split in two to visit different churches, such as the demand for their ministry. They spoke at services in El Alto, a spectacular cable car ride away before travelling to Potosi, once one of the biggest cities in South America, now a mining city where the inhabitants still cling to old Indian

ways.

"The city has the worst record in the world for mining fatalities, there are no health and safety regulations, and there are big social problems," said Eric.

While there, they were asked to pray over the foundations of a new house, asking that no satanic influence could befall it. They also found called upon for deliverance at a number of services.

"I prayed for a young person who heard voices in his head. Pastor Hendrick got him to repeat Jesus' name and he got rid of the voices. His whole face completely changed," Eric said.

"The people are very open. They are depending on God, there is no back up, no National Health Service or anything."

Back in Northern Ireland, the team is now considering how it can continue to support Pastor Hendrick's ministry in Bolivia.

Eric said the altitude had made this mission trip particularly testing. "Spiritually it was very satisfying. We met lovely, lovely people. They would praise for an hour before we arrived for our teaching and healing ministry. They were very open and hungry for the Word."



Pastor Roger, Pastor Hendrick and Kilmakee parishioner Eric Lewis catch their breath during a climb up one of the steep streets of the high altitude city of La Paz, Bolivia.



Agherton parishioner Dr Frank Dobbs with James Malish, Clinical Officer at the Martha Clinic in Yei.

# Frank takes medical expertise back to Yei

Agherton GP Dr Frank Dobbs returned to Yei Diocese in South Sudan in January to build relationships and run training programmes for medical staff.

Frank travelled with Jenny Smyth from CMS Ireland, and the Rev Arthur Young and youth worker Naomi Kumar, both from Kill 'O The Grange Parish, Dublin.

Connor Diocese has been in partnership with Yei Diocese since 2007. A team visit to Yei has been postponed due to civil unrest in parts of South Sudan.

Frank said many refugees were still living in a UN camp outside Yei. The Church had also been targeted. "Two weeks before we arrived Bishop Hilary's 4X4 was stolen from his house. The Bishop and his family were held at gunpoint in a bedroom," he said.

"It is believed the jeep was stolen by gangs made up of soldiers who were selling the 4X4s to the rebels." The jeep was recovered although the perpetrators escaped. "There was a big outcry from local people because Bishop Hilary is very highly regarded," added Frank.

In Entebbe, Uganda, Frank visited the Africa Renewal University where some of the pastors in Yei may come to train. "Most of the pastors in South Sudan have no training at all," he said. "They were chosen because they were the only one in the village who had a Bible and could read."

The Bishop Allison Theological College, which moved to Uganda during the civil wars, is being relocated in Yei, but the Africa Renewal College offers another affordable option for training pastors. Trainees are taught sustainable farming methods as even after they return to their

villages, they may still have to make a living from the land.

In Yei, Frank attended Sunday services in Emmanuel Cathedral, and met CMS England mission partners Derek and Jane Wardell.

Most of his time was spent at the Martha Clinic Children's Ward, run by the Diocese of Yei. "Agherton Parish had raised £3,000 to train a midwife. It is hoped that once qualified she will work in Martha Clinic, offering ante natal care as well as training Traditional Birth Attendants," Frank said.

He observed daily surgeries and ran training sessions in the clinic, looking at topics including the management of intravenous fluids and diabetes.

Martha Clinic has two Clinical Officers and one Intern Clinical Officer. Ninety five per cent of the patients can be treated at Martha Clinic, but some may have to

transfer to Yei Hospital or to the Harvesters Private Hospital outside Yei.

"I went to visit and it was very, very busy, which is an indication that the economy is growing and people can afford to pay for private treatment," said Frank.

During the trip to Yei, Jenny, Arthur and Naomi led education sessions at a Youth Conference for more than 350 young people. Jenny was also focusing on the new diocesan secondary school which has opened in temporary accommodation, and the relocation of the Bishop Allison College.

The team also visited Payawa School and Mongo Primary School, built with donations from Connor Diocese.

"Mongo school now has six trained staff and eight untrained staff who teach 450 children," Frank said. "All three teachers whose training was sponsored by parishes in Connor (Lisburn Cathedral, Larne and Agherton) are still working at the school and one is now the principal."

He said there was a real need for further funding for training teachers in Mongo, as well as sponsorship of pastors to train at the Bishop Allison Theological College.

"The people in Yei were very glad to see us," Frank added. "They have had few visits from partners in the last year because of the trouble in South Sudan."



A mum and child in the new children's ward at the Martha Clinic.



The team meets staff at Mongo Primary School.

# Stephen's pioneer role in north Belfast

Pioneer Evangelist Stephen Whitten has been engaged in establishing links with the community in north Belfast since taking up his post earlier this year.

Stephen's appointment, by the Diocese of Connor and the Church Army, was the first step towards the Bishop of Connor's aspiration to create a centre of mission for the diocese which will have a particular focus in north Belfast.

The second step came with the recent appointment of Karen Webb as Pioneer Lead Evangelist. She will take up her post in the autumn.

Both trained in pioneer ministry, Karen and Stephen will focus on establishing new communities of faith, and will also seek to train and equip parishes and people across the diocese in what this might mean for each and every context.

Stephen grew up in east Belfast and lives in Dundonald. After doing a Foundation Degree in Rural and Countryside Management Stephen did a Church Army Internship in Bangor, Co Down.



Stephen Whitten.

The first two months of his internship were spent in Romania with the charity Networks Romania. Stephen later worked with the Primacy Church and was involved in street outreach, running children's clubs, Messy Church, and establishing a new church plant.

He did a two-year degree in Environmental Science, maintaining his links to Church Army. After graduating, Stephen went to Bolivia for three months with Tear Fund, and it was when he was in Bolivia he heard about the Connor post in north Belfast.

"I have always been passionate about evangelism and outreach, especially with people who would not be interested in Church," Stephen said. "I have done a lot of evangelism on the streets and with strangers, ministry to the homeless, and getting to know people within a community. I love doing it and I also love being part of a team."

Since taking up his post, which is based in and around Whiterock and Glencairn parishes, Stephen has been getting to know the area and local people in the churches and by knocking on doors.

"The vast majority of people have been welcoming and very accommodating. Many say they pray and believe God looks out for them but that they have never been church goers. The main challenge is to come up with a form of community that is going to be suitable for these people and meet their needs," said Stephen.



Enjoying their tea break are, from left Archdeacon Jack Patterson, Agherton Parish, and Brian Dillon and John Nicholl, both Ramoan Parish.



Dorothy Jackson from Lambeg and Helen Ferguson from All Saints, Antrim, enjoy a chat at the first Christ Church, Lisburn, seminar.



Bishop Alan speaks at the first Lent Seminar in Jordanstown on February 17.



The Rev Raymond Moore, St Simon's; Tom Stevenson, Lisburn Cathedral, and Canon Will Murphy, Diocesan Director of Ordinands, catch up during the tea break in Christ Church Parish Hall, Lisburn.



Enjoying the tea break are these ladies from Lambeg.

## Hub students 'sleep out' for Uganda

A team from the Hub at Queen's University had a taste of what life is like for Ugandan street children when they took part in a sponsored 'Sleep on the Street' on May 1.

The team spent 24 hours on the streets of Belfast to help them understand what it is like every day for the homeless young people living in Uganda.

In June, 17 team members will travel to Uganda for two weeks to work on projects set up by two local charities

– Abaana and Waakisa Ministries.

Abaana has raised more than £1,500,000 to build schools, to provide clean water, medical care and education. It has also built six 'New Life Homes' for children at risk.

The Waakisa Centre supports girls who are pregnant and alone and delivers health education programmes.

The team will be supporting both projects through practical and manual tasks.



The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, addresses his first seminar at Christ Church, Lisburn.

# Lent seminars look at Effecting Change

Hundreds of people from all corners of Connor Diocese attended the Bishop of Connor's annual Lenten Talks series which took place over six sessions.

The Rt Rev Alan Abernethy delivered two talks on the topic of Effecting Change, one of the strands of the Diocesan Vision Strategy, in St Patrick's Jordanstown, Christ Church, Lisburn and Dunluce Parish Centre, Bushmills.

There were great attendances at every seminar, with the first talk in Bushmills drawing a crowd of 140, and 150 at the second seminar in Jordanstown.

The Bishop's first talk focused on the theology of change. Change, Bishop Alan stated, is at the heart of human life and it is also part of any faith journey as individuals and community.

In his second seminar Bishop Alan spoke about learning from others, about resisting change, both appropriately and inappropriately, about openness, respect, wisdom and about leading gently.

The Gospel, Bishop Alan stated, not only enables change, but is the root and key to all change. He reflected on managing change in the church, and looked at some of the issues facing church today.

There was time for fellowship and refreshment at each seminar, some lively discussions during the question and answer sessions, and an opportunity to browse at the Book Well stall.



Ted and Margaret Hartin, Dunluce Parish, at the Bushmills seminar.



Listening in to Bishop Alan in Jordanstown.



Jim Reid, Whitehead and Islandmagee, and Deborah Millar and Molly Simpson, Church of the Good Shepherd, Monkstown, at the first Jordanstown seminar.



The second seminar gets underway in the Dunluce Centre, Bushmills.



Bishop Alan chats to Dunseverick parishioners Hilary and Ivor Rammage at Bushmills.



At the bicentenary service in St Patrick's, Cairncastle, on May 10 are, from left: Bill Rainey, Canon Bill McNee, Rev Malcolm Ferry, Bishop Alan Abernethy, Canon Robert Jones, Archbishop Richard Clarke, Tom Irwin, Rev Roger Thompson (rector), Rev Brian Cockcroft, William Orr.

# Memorable day for Cairncastle

May 10 was a memorable day in the 200 year history of St Patrick's Church, Cairncastle, when the church was full for a bicentenary celebration service.

The communion service was led by the Rev Roger Thompson, rector of Kilwaughter & Cairncastle with All Saints', Craigyhill. The preacher was the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh, and celebrant was the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, Bishop of Connor.

Other special guests included newly re-elected MP Sammy Wilson, Cllr Billy

Ashe, Mayor of Mid and East Antrim Borough, former rectors of the parish and representatives from other local churches.

The rousing worship was led by organist Derick Jenkins with an anthem and other pieces provided by a choir specially recruited for the occasion. Lessons were read by Lay Reader Mr Tom Irwin and former rector Canon Bill McNee, before

Archbishop Clarke spoke on the theme of 'Where have you come from, where are you now and where are you going?'

After the service the festivities continued with a meal at the Halfway House Hotel, where Roger presented the visiting clergy with limited edition prints of the church from a painting by local artist Rosalind Fair. He also spoke of his forthcoming move to a new job with Mission and Development Agency CMS Ireland, thanking the parish for all its support over the last 11 years.

## Archbishop of Wales preaches

The Archbishop of Wales, the Most Rev Barry Morgan, was guest preacher in St Anne's Cathedral on February 22.

The Archbishop visited the Cathedral at the invitation of the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy. He spoke on a subject close to his heart, the work of the Welsh poet and priest RS Thomas.

Bishop Alan said: "There are very close links between the Church of Ireland and the Church of Wales. I invited Archbishop Morgan to preach in St Anne's as a dear friend, and also as an expert on the subject of RS Thomas."

## 'Talented' parishioners of St Cedma's raise nearly £9,000!

St Cedma's, Larne, made a profit of almost £9,000 when it put Jesus' Parable of the Talents to work in the congregation!

Last November, rector Archdeacon Stephen Forde and parish treasurer Tommy Lyttle gave away 60 £10 notes to parishioners, hoping each would use his or her £10 to raise as much as possible for the parish building fund towards a new church hall. Needless to say the sermon was on the Parable of the Talents!

The 'talents' were returned on April 19. "What a talented and ingenious lot St Cedma's folk turned out to be!" Tommy

said. "We had everything from home baking, jam making, fudge making, flower and plant arranging, home-made sweets to car washing, babysitting, vintage tea parties, coffee afternoons, painting and selling watercolours, making walking sticks, knitting, sewing, a St Patrick's Irish stew night, a fireside quiz, delivering Christmas cards and rugby coaching.

"Many talents came together to make this possible. But one special talent devised what seemed like a crackpot idea and also enthused the parish to enter fully into the spirit of talent making - our rector the 'talented' Archdeacon Stephen Forde!"



Enjoying Ballymena Parish's first Messy Church.

## Great response to new Messy Church!

St Patrick's, Ballymena, held its first Messy Church family service in the Church Hall on April 19, with 104 people coming along.

In preparation, members of the Youth Committee attended a one day workshop in Bangor on Messy Church and the Building Blocks conference last November 2014.

Lucy McLoughlan, one of Ballymena Parish's part time Children's and Youth workers, visited Messy Church in Ahoghill Parish and organised a Messy Church taster evening for leaders and volunteers led by Jill Hamilton, Children's Project Development Officer for Connor Diocese and Messy Church regional co-ordinator for Northern Ireland.

The team carried out a leaflet drop in local housing estates to encourage people to come along to the first Messy Church, which had the theme 'Eating and Drinking together.'

Lucy said: "We were happy to see some newcomers and some faces that hadn't been with us for a while. It all went very well and we received very good feedback. We now hope to take it to St Columba's, our sister church, and also hold another one in October at St Patrick's."

## St Peter's hosts a fashion fundraiser

St Peter's Parish Church, Antrim Road, Belfast, raised £1,420 at a fashion show in aid of the rebuilding of the Northern Ireland Hospice and church funds.

The show was organised and compered by parishioner Daphne McClements who is a Hospice volunteer.

# 'Fantastic' training in children's ministry

Relevant, informative, useful, engaging and fantastic – just some of the words used to describe the Equipped Training Day organised by Connor Children's Ministry Project Officer Jill Hamilton.

Almost 70 children's ministry leaders took part in the event held in All Saints' Parish Hall, Belfast, on Saturday May 16.

Jill said: "We began all together with some child friendly worship – a chance to focus on God and praise him together but also introduce some resources which could be helpful in All Age or children's ministry settings. The dance number 'Shackles' from the Go Fish guys with the karate high kicks had everyone up and moving and we learned some sign language to accompany 'You need not Fear' from the BIG Ministries Unstoppable album."

Participants then split into groups for workshops on Storytelling and Drama, Messy Church, Puppets and Creative Prayer. Brunch was served mid morning.

"As important as the training is a chance to have a morning with your team and get chatting to leaders from other churches about what is going on in their groups and how they organise things," Jill said.

"It's a chance for us all to realise that there is a Connor family to be connected to. We want leaders to feel part of that family and receive support and encouragement from us in the Diocesan and Children's council team as well as from each other. There is so much expertise in one place when we all come together."

Jill extended thanks to workshop leaders,

Karen and Amy Webb (puppets); Andrew Neill and Chris Neilands (Storytelling and Drama); and Aimee Jess (Creative Prayer).

Feedback on the Equipped Training Day was very positive:

"Really enjoyed the training today! Found it relevant and informative and am excited to apply everything to our setting."

"Thank you for a great and useful day".

"The ideas were so useful and relevant. The trainers were well prepared and engaging."

"The workshops were great and I have left with lots of ideas! A very enjoyable and well organised day."

"When you give us ideas that are realistic, that is very helpful. Today was FANTASTIC!"

Some of the ideas which came out of the training were put to good use immediately. Cathy Sweeney said a group of nine people attended from Ballymoney Parish.

"We were all so impressed and what was amazing about it was that we were able to take the ideas and use them immediately," she said. "I was taking Sunday School the next day and was able to use two of the new ideas during the lesson." She added that some a couple of people were already planning to buy puppets for use in their children's ministry.



Some of those who attended the Equipped Training Day joined in the Puppet workshop!

# 'Inspired space' for young people

Lisburn Cathedral joined churches across Ireland to host a Day of Prayer for young people on February 17.

Sharon Hamill, co-chair of Engage Connor Youth, said: "This was a wonderful invitation to engage prayerfully with God, reflecting on the diverse needs of young people of various ages and the challenges they experience in life and faith.

"It was encouraging to see clergy, young people, youth leaders, youth workers and volunteers from across Connor Diocese taking part."

A creative team from Connor Youth Council crafted an inspired space for people to kneel, sit, contemplate and pray with a variety of prayer points, where young people could bring their specific needs and prayers for others to Christ.

"It was truly an inspired space. God's spirit was among those who gathered to pray and to worship," said Sharon.

Rebekah, 12, from Belfast said she had really enjoyed the Day of Prayer. "One station that really struck me was the one with stories of young people in other parts of the world who are having hard times because of what they believe. It made me appreciate the freedom we have here to be Christian and made me want to pray for them more," Rebekah said.

Catherine, 13, from Belfast, said: "I had an amazing time at the Lisburn Cathedral Prayer Space. There were lots of different prayer stations to pray at and reflect. It was nice to have a time of relaxation and prayer with God with no distractions."

Engage Connor Youth expressed thanks to the creative teams from Lisburn Cathedral and Muckamore Parish for their willingness and creative input.



Day of Prayer in Lisburn Cathedral.



Beachballs and prayer at the Spring EVENT.

## Discovering possibilities at the Spring EVENT

St Patrick's Ballymena was the venue for Engage Connor Youth's Spring EVENT on March 21 for young people from across the diocese.

As youth groups poured in they were greeted with popcorn, a warm welcome and a challenging game of Ninjas. Aaron Boyce, aka Ed Sheeran, led worship which was celebratory and engaging.

The evening saw the launch of the Engage Connor Youth Streetreach Project, which will take place in Belfast from June 30 to July 3.

The theme of the evening was 'Discovering the possibilities when we pray' with speaker Tash Creaney from 24/7. Gillian Millar, Ahoghill and Portglenone, said: "We were challenged, we were loved, we were encouraged and reminded that God is interested in every area of our lives."

Tash encourage the young people to pray and gave them simple tools to help every day in their own prayer life. "As a youth leader it was humbling to see all those groups huddled around beach balls and writing on their prayer topics. Then finally to see young people truly engaged in the prayer stations dotted around the room and responding to God! Wonderful!" said Gillian.

"It's great to be reminded that we are all part of a bigger picture and not just solitary youth groups working away in our own locality."



Young people enjoying the fun at the Spring EVENT in Ballymena.

## Lots of events coming up!

**June 20:** Day of Prayer with Divine Healing Ministries in St Anne's Cathedral – 10.30am-3.30pm. Including the commissioning of Connor's Street Reach Team.

**June 30 – July 3:** Connor Street Reach in the City.

**July 3-7:** Connor Camp Out @ Summer Madness in Glenarm.

**Connor Summer of Mission:** Various locations across the diocese connected in prayer online.

**September 4-6:** Youth Weekend @ Castlewellan Castle.

**October 3:** REVEAL @ Muckamore.

**December 12:** The EVENT in Antrim Parish Hall @7pm.



The joint choir made up from choirs in the North Belfast Rural Deanery.

# United praise in North Belfast

More than 200 people from parishes in North Belfast Rural Deanery gathered at St Ninian's on May 24 for a joint worship service to celebrate Pentecost.

The evening service was led by the rector of St Ninian's, the Rev Elaine O'Brien, and a combined choir from the various parishes led the singing and performed the anthem, Holy Spirit Living Breath of God.

The Music Group from Greenisland Church, including organist Marjorie

McClung, pianist Dr Norman Close and choir master for the night Maurice Carson also helped to lead the worship, along with the Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth, St Patrick's, Jordanstown.

During the service three people spoke of their journey in the Christian life. Prayers

were led by the Rev Mercia Malcolm, Carnmoney Parish, and Rev Brian Lacey, St Peter and St James, delivered a very encouraging Epilogue. After the service a time of fellowship and supper was held in the Church Hall.

## Anniversary of Queen's Chaplaincy

The 58th Annual Church of Ireland Theological Lecture at Queen's University, Belfast took place on February 16.

Marking the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Chaplaincy Centre at Queen's, the event heard from leading figures from the Church of Ireland, the Methodist, the Presbyterian and the Roman Catholic Churches in Ireland.

Their topic was 'The Mission of the Church in Northern Ireland in 2015: Obstacles and Opportunities.'

In a pre-lecture reception, Canon Edgar Turner, who inaugurated the Theological Lectures at Queen's, said a few words.

## Service of institution

A Service of the Institution of the Rev Stephen McElhinney as incumbent of Derryvolgie Parish took place at St Columba's, Derryvolgie, on February 25.

Stephen has been Priest-in-Charge of Derryvolgie under the licence of the Bishop of Connor since September 2011. After a change in the status of the Parish and subsequent Board of Nomination, Stephen was appointed and instituted as rector.

## New face in Eglantine

The Rev Jason Kernohan, Curate Assistant in the Parish of Drumachose, Diocese of Derry, has been appointed rector of Eglantine Parish.

Jason, formerly a full time musician who fronted his own band, grew up in Ballymena. His institution will be on July 9.



P5/6 pupils from Cairncastle Primary School visited St Patrick's in the village on St Patrick's Day to help celebrate the church's 200th birthday. The children heard about the history of the church, took part in a special service and spent time exploring as they filled in a quiz. Corey, Jazmin and Katie are pictured at the gravestone of local woman Margaret Bailie, who died in 1881 at the amazing age of 111!

## Lisburn Cathedral's Big Church Serve

A squad of 150 people from Lisburn Cathedral took to the streets from April 1-4, bringing colour and love to their community through a range of family activities.

Big Church Serve activities in Hillhall included mural painting, flower planting, door-to-door giveaways, kids' clubs, pamper zones, car washing and a barbecue with family fun day.

On the streets of Lisburn City Centre there

was a fun photo booth, football cage, balloons, chocolate lollies and an Easter egg hunt, while the site of the Cathedral visitors flocked to an all day 'Frozen' Party. A beautiful dawn service at 7am on Easter Sunday was followed by the 'Ice Cream Sundae' Family Service at 11am.

The Grace café was open each day from 10am – 4pm providing visitors with a place to chat and let the kids play.



I declare this building open! Bishop Alan Abernethy, right, and the Rev Andrew Sweeney, rector. Reflected in the glass is curate, the Rev Brian Howe. Photo: Colin Loughhead.

## Significant day for Ballymoney Parish

The United Parish of Ballymoney, Finvoy and Rasharkin has officially opened the newly restored Old School House in the grounds of St Patricks Church.

It was a significant day in the history of the parish and a nostalgic day too for many who remembered happy times spent there as they grew up.

The dream of a few good men in the church, not least among them the late Billy Hunter, ensured the survival of the derelict building for such a time as this.

It is commendable that within one year the church gathered together the £700,000 required to commence and complete the project.

This was an amazing effort, made possible through the generosity of grants from funding organisations, direct giving from the church family and many fund raising events.

The church would like to record special thanks to The Heritage Lottery Fund, Ulster Garden Villages, Garfield and Weston Trust, All Churches Trust and The Pilgrims Trust. They all believed in the church's vision, 'to build bridges of hope into the community'.

Robinson Associates along with the main contractors, Martin and Hamilton, deserve much credit for completing such a magnificent restoration on time.

The Rev Andrew Sweeney, rector of the United Parish said: "In many ways the easy bit is done! Painting on this blank canvas will require endeavour and commitment to fulfil our vision to 'build bridges of hope into

our community.'

"The church is whole-heartedly committed to using the building to reach out to the most vulnerable, isolated and marginalised people in our communities. We want to collaborate with organisations that do just that."

Ballymoney Parish's debt counselling service, Christians Against Poverty, will now operate out of the Old School House and The Caring Association has been set up to ensure the parish vision becomes a reality.

The Parish Office, relocated to the Old School House, will welcome the local community through its doors so they can learn more about their local heritage and shared history.

Andrew said "It has been a wonderful journey of faith for all of us in the United Parish of Ballymoney, Finvoy and Rasharkin."

The project was co-ordinated and managed by parish administrator George Field on behalf of the church, and the official opening took place on March 17.

"St Patrick's Day was such an appropriate day for The Bishop of Connor, The Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, to dedicate the building. We pray that the saint who took a message of love and hope into communities around the north of Ireland will encourage us to do the same," Andrew said.

## Eglantine MU marks 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Eglantine Mothers Union celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a special church service on January 25 conducted by a former rector of Eglantine, Canon William Bell.

Norma Bell, a former branch leader, was the guest speaker, and after the service, guests from branches in the Lisburn area joined Eglantine MU for afternoon tea.

Mrs Margaret Adams, a founder member, was presented with a long service certificate marking 70 years, and several others received certificates for 30+ years.

The branch donated large print hymn books to the church to mark the occasion.



A presentation to Margaret Adams for 70 years service as Eglantine MU celebrates its 70th anniversary.

## 70 attend evening on pastoral visiting

An evening on pastoral visiting organised by Connor Diocesan Lay Council and held in All Saints', Antrim, on April 22 attracted more than 70 people.

Guest speaker the Rev Don Gamble offered advice to people considering pastoral visiting to discern whether their ideas are just a whim or God's calling to action.

Don currently serves as the Lead Chaplain of the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust. He spoke on 'Pastoral visiting, what's it all about' and took questions from the floor following his talk.

At the end of the evening, many of those who attended registered an interest in taking part in a six week course on pastoral visiting.

## Crosslinks' Leader

New Crosslinks Ireland team leader is the Rev David Luckman, who took up his post on February 2.

Since his ordination in June 2000, David has served in churches in counties Fermanagh, Armagh and the Diocese of Down and Dromore.

## Bishop spends Holy Week in Ballymena

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, spent this year's Holy Week in the parish of Ballymena (Kilconriola) and Ballyclug.

He attended all the Holy Week evening services which were in a variety of styles including Choral Evensong, a Living Faith Service, and the washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday.

On Good Friday there was a family service at 10.30am followed by a Walk of Witness around the town carrying a cross, and that night St Patrick's held an atmospheric Tenebrae Service.

Bishop Alan visited many older parishioners who receive Holy Communion in their homes, enjoyed lunches and a special dinner for those who participated in Ballymena's Lenten Course 'Discipleship Explored.'

Among the many parishioners Bishop Alan got to know were Sam and Patricia Letters who were married 60 years ago in St Patrick's on the March 23 1955. It was the first occasion the bells of St Patrick's had sounded for a wedding.

## Diocesan Reader commissioned



Diocesan Reader Steve Ames pictured at his commissioning with his rector, the Rev Mike McCann.

A new Diocesan Reader was commissioned by the Bishop of Connor at Evensong in St Anne's Cathedral on Wednesday May 13.

Steve Ames of Kilroot Parish was licensed by the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy.

## Band off to Paraguay

Members of the Muckamore Parish based Flute Band Church are preparing for a mission visit to Paraguay in July.

The musicians, and band leader the Rev William Orr, fly out on July 16 for the trip facilitated by SAMS. The team will be commissioned by Bishop Ken Clarke, mission director of SAMS on July 5.



Archbishop Richard Clarke addresses the Quiet Morning.

## Poetic reflections at clergy Quiet Morning

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, hosted a Quiet Morning for clergy of the diocese in St Aidan's Parish Church, Glenavy, on March 5.

Almost 70 clergy attended the event, at which the guest speaker was the Archbishop of Armagh and All Ireland Primate, the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke.

Welcoming everyone, Bishop Alan said: "I am conscious of the busyness and relentlessness of parish life, and I thank you for coming here today."

Introducing Archbishop Clarke, he said that throughout his ministry he had enjoyed the Archbishop's agile mind, compassion, warm heart and joyous nature.

The Quiet Morning began with refreshments, followed by a service of Morning Prayer, led by the rector of

Glenavy, the Rev John Rutter.

Archbishop Clarke delivered two talks about two poets – both Welsh, both Anglican clergy in country parishes, whose births were separated by three centuries. He spoke first about George Herbert, author of *The Country Parson*, a poet of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and his second talk was on the 20<sup>th</sup> century poet RS Thomas.

Archbishop Clarke was thanked for his insight into these two poets by the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann.

An enjoyable lunch was served in the parish hall of St John's, Crumlin, as the hall at St Aidan's is being renovated.



Catching up on the chat at the Quiet Morning.



Archbishop Richard Clarke with Archbishop Alan and the Rev John Rutter, Glenavy Parish.



Lunch was served in St John's Parish Hall, Crumlin.



Stained glass artist David Esler working in his studio in Donegore on a large window for St Mark's Parish Church, Tandragee.

# A master in the art of stained glass

Art comes in many shapes and forms, and in a church no work of art is more striking than stained glass windows.

Ballyclare man David Esler is an artist in stained glass. From his studio in Donegore he creates breathtaking works. A stunning window with the lion of St Mark at its heart, unveiled in Ballymacash in April, is a testament to the quality and creativity of David's craft.

What leads someone into a career as a stained glass artist? For David it began in the schoolroom.

"I always had an interest in colour and the juxtaposition of colour. I grew to love the Impressionists, such as Monet, Van Gough and Matisse," David said.

"One of the key influences on me was a teacher who encouraged us to create collages of colour, cutting shapes from

card and filling them with texture and colour using material like a Raspberry Ruffle wrapper. When you held this up against the light it looked like a stained glass window. That gave me the inspiration to work with colour and glass."

David grew up in the Presbyterian Church, and sees his work in glass as a demonstration of his faith. As much of his work is with churches, the Bible is the source of many stories which form the basis of his artistic work.

"I never wanted to create static figures or something that was just a 'pretty piece,'" he said. "I always wanted to build depth into the story."

David left school at 16 and did a five year

apprenticeship at Caldermac stained glass window studio in Belfast's Springfield Road, and an A Level in Fine Art. He remained with Caldermac for 25 years.

"I learned new skills and had the opportunity to work in different places, repairing, restoring and being creative in my own right. Because of the Troubles we were repairing a lot of glass. We did work in Belfast City Hall, the Opera House and other places that had been damaged, and it could be frustrating as we wanted to be doing new work.

"People wanted things put back the way they were, and even if new work was commissioned it was often a very basic, simplistic design.

"But I learned so much through that time. It was the worst of times, but it was a creative time as well. I was part of a mixed work force who always focused on their work. I think the world was enriched rather than diminished by that experience."

When David married Eileen who had her own stained glass studio – Leadlines – they went into business together, using both



the Leadlines and David Esler names. After 20 years in Belfast they moved to the picturesque Donegore five years ago.

At one time the company employed eight staff, and did a lot of work with builders and private estates, but since the recession it is now very much a family business with daughters Suzanne and Emma helping out.

"I think the work with the builders will come back," David said. "People want to have a unique feature or focal point in their home. Stained glass as we know it dates back to 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, there were difficult periods during the Victorian times, and during the Art Deco and Art Nouveau times, but stained glass has survived all of these periods and in terms of modern glass there are lots of opportunities now."

David's glass is hand blown and coloured. He buys it from abroad in coloured sheets. "It has bubbles, texture and variations which give it great quality," he said.

David likened making a stained glass window to doing a jigsaw puzzle. Once the work is sketched, he makes a 'cartoon,' or full sized drawing that shows the detail. The coloured shapes are cut out using a diamond cutter and where needed are hand painted, with the paint fired in a kiln. The face of the lion in the Ballymacash window is an example of painting the detail onto the glass. (See front cover).

His work can also be seen in St Mary's Church in Comber, where a transept was built to house a window 20ft X 20ft and in Belleek where, reflecting on the history of



pottery in the area, the theme is of God moulding a person.

David is currently working on a 15ft X 4ft memorial window for St Mark's Parish Church in Tandragee. "A window can be a narrative of a person's life," David said. "I am normally given a free hand, but I like to research the person's life or biblical context and explore their story and be creative with the narrative."

"When I am doing the design I like there to be something of me in it. That's what links my work from one project to another."

David's favourite piece is the window he created for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in Stormont. He said it has a particular poignancy for him because he was part of that mixed workforce during the Troubles.

The window was crafted in 2000. "To have the opportunity to express yourself in that context and the fact that that window in Stormont Castle is about the people of Northern Ireland, their culture and diversity, it is the highlight of my career so far," he said.

In the course of his work David has had many very different commissions, some more unusual than others. The oddest, he reflects, was a landing window for a devoted John Wayne fan featuring, of course, the Duke himself!

For anyone interested in learning more about the art of stained glass design, Leadlines & David Esler run workshops on the last Saturday of every month. For more information visit the website at [www.leadlines.co.uk](http://www.leadlines.co.uk).

## Andrew's Ballyclare shot is a winner!

Parishioners of St John's Parish Church, Ballyclare, found themselves the 'focus' of attention when a photo of them 'snapped' up a prize in the Church of Ireland's Central Communications Board photography competition.

The picture was entered by parishioner Andrew Brannigan. The competition aimed to highlight church life in action.

Andrew's picture of parishioners attending morning service at St John's picked up third prize, and will feature on the Church of Ireland website as it is redeveloped.

The judges said of Andrew's picture: "This is an exuberant photo of a worshipping congregation, with a good balance of people and place – showing the vaulted ceiling of the church and the organ pipes to good advantage. The photographer has really taken command, with everyone looking into the camera – with lots of smiles and people enjoying a happy moment – despite the fact that most people hate being photographed! We love the piggy-backers at the door, creating an informal atmosphere."



Andrew Brannigan's prize winning shot.

## Clergy Wives' outing and presentation

North Connor Clergy Wives Fellowship organised an outing and a presentation to Margaret McCammon.

Margaret has been Chairperson of the Fellowship for the last five years, and has done an amazing job looking after all the ladies in the North Connor area.



Enjoying a chat over coffee at General Synod are Diocesan Lay Secretary Mr Jim Tweedie, who after 46 years is one of the longest serving members of General Synod, and Mr Ken Dunne.

# Looking back at General Synod 2015

The Annual meeting of the Church of Ireland General Synod took place in Armagh from May 7-9.

The General Synod is the Church of Ireland's legislative and oversight body and has 648 members elected by the 12 dioceses plus 12 bishops. Connor has 32 clergy and 64 lay places. As this is the first year of the current three year terms a number of new faces were present following the 2014 elections.

In a change to the timetable, the Synod started with a communion service on the Thursday morning, rather than evening, and the change seems to have been well received. The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, was the preacher this year. During the service members had their first chance to try some of the hymns which will appear in a forthcoming supplement to the Church of Ireland Hymn Book.

A short time of devotion is held at the start of business each day, led this year by the recently appointed Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe, Ken Kearon.

Most of the business of Synod is to do with reviewing investment returns, looking at how the clergy pension scheme is working and discussing reports from various committees, boards and working groups.

Some of the highlights included:-

- Proposed changes to the process for electing bishops to allow more time for in depth consideration, meaning prospective candidates could be 'interviewed' and can learn more about the needs of that diocese. It is hoped the proposals will become law in 2016

- A discussion document on possible changes to diocesan boundaries, particularly in the Republic of Ireland. Connor has 74 parishes, Down and Dromore 75 out of a total of 449. Between them, they cover some 40 per cent of the worshipping Church of Ireland population. Some other dioceses cover much larger geographic areas but have far fewer parishes - eg in the west of Ireland Tuam has nine parishes while Limerick has 17. The proposed changes would set 30 parishes as an indicative minimum for a diocese and reduce the number of bishops to nine.
- New arrangements for the ill health retirement of clergy will now cover all types of ill health. This measure is one of a number of 'modernising' actions underway. Others include adopting, as many secular organisations have done, formal policies on bullying and harassment.
- Considerable debate on the need to radically scale up the emphasis on mission, at home as well as abroad. Several examples of recent successes were described.

This last debate was towards the end of the three days, and most members went away in a very positive frame of mind.

The General Synod will meet again in May 2016 in Dun Laoghaire.

**Ken Gibson, Diocesan Lay Secretary**



At General Synod are, from left: The Rev John McClure, St Patrick's, Ballymena; Connor Development Officer Trevor Douglas; the Rev Janice Elsdon, Belfast Cathedral; Lay Secretary Ken Gibson and the Rev David Ferguson, Ramoan and Culfeightrin.



Mrs Kathleen Rodgers, Connor Mothers' Union, and His Honour Judge Derek Rodgers, Chancellor of Connor Diocese.



Synod members Mrs Rosemary Macartney and the Rev Louise Stewart, Finaghy and Upper Malone.



Now in his 95th year, Canon Edgar Turner, Principal Registrar of Connor Diocese, hard at work at General Synod 2015.