

CONNOR

connections

Everest
Marathon
Sexton in training
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60th anniversary of St Andrew's, Colin

A service to celebrate the 60th anniversary of St Andrew's Church, Colin, Derriagh Parish, was held on June 25.

It was conducted by the rector, the Rev Canon John Budd, and the guest preacher was the Rev Canon George Graham.

St Andrew's Church was built to serve the Colin and Castlerobin areas of the parish. It was opened and dedicated on Friday June 21 1957.

Praise at the 60th anniversary service was led by the joint choirs of St Andrew's and Christ Church, Derriagh.



The Rev Canon John Budd, rector of Derriagh, and the Rev Canon George Graham, guest preacher, chat with Mrs Ada Kirkwood who has been organist in St Andrew's for most of the past six decades.

Pentecost Service in north Belfast RD

On June 4 St Katharine's Parish Church hosted the annual North Belfast Rural Deanery Pentecost Service.

The rector of St Katharine's, the Rev Canon William Taggart, said the service was very well supported. "The singing was truly uplifting on the evening," he added.

The offering was for the work of the South American Mission Society (SAMS) in Lote Uno, a village supported by St Katharine's, and the Diocese of Northern Argentina.

Historic Cairncastle tree up for award

An historic tree growing in the ancient graveyard of St Patrick's Parish Church, Cairncastle, is a contender for Northern Ireland's Tree of the Year Award.

The Spanish chestnut tree is said to have grown where a shipwrecked Spanish sailor was buried at the time of the Armada.

The Cairncastle tree is one of six shortlisted by the Woodland Trust for Tree of the Year 2017, and members of the public were asked to vote for their favourite of the six by October 8. Watch this space!



The Connor Big Sing in Lisburn Cathedral. Photo: Matthew Cairns.

Raising the roof at the Connor Big Sing

Participants in the Connor Big Sing on September 17 did their best to raise the roof of Lisburn Cathedral with some fantastic contemporary music!

The afternoon training and evening praise service was hosted by the Dean and Chapter of Lisburn Cathedral. More than 80 people attended the workshops and there were 240 at the Praise Service.

Training was facilitated by the Cathedral's Director of Music, Stephen McLoughlin, and the leader of the Lisburn Community Choir and Children's Choir, Julie Harper.

Stephen worked with musicians helping them to approach new contemporary songs and to coordinate music groups, while Julie trained the singers (sopranos and altos). Mark Tilley, co-leader of the Lisburn Community Choir, trained the tenors and basses.

Julie also covered vocal training exercises, posture and communication. It was hoped that each group would feel better equipped to go back to their parish with the confidence to use much more varied musical material.

The afternoon session taught contemporary songs, some of which were included in the Praise Service.

Dean Sam Wright said the initiative had been inspired by the most recent installation services for the Dean and Canons in Lisburn Cathedral which had included a number of contemporary worship songs. "These songs received favourable comments from members of the congregations present - it was as a result of this feedback that the Chapter



In fine tune at the Connor Big Sing. Photo: Matthew Cairns.

members felt that we could contribute to the worshipping life of the diocese by providing this training day in contemporary Christian music followed by an Evening Praise Service."

The Connor Big Sing will be back next year on Sunday September 16 at 3pm.

Love for Life helps tell a Better Story

Love for Life is running a series of meetings aimed at helping people to understand, appreciate and share the better story of God's model for relationships.

'A Better Story' will run over four Wednesday nights in Belfast Bible College on October 11 and 25 and November 8 and 22. To book your place for these seminars, visit: www.abetterstory.eventbrite.co.uk.

Autumn 2017

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Patricia McKinley Hutchinson and Archdeacon Stephen Forde at the medieval herb garden at St Cedma's Church, Larne, which was planted for European Heritage Open Days. Full story on page 15.




Please contact us if you would like to contribute to the next issue of Connor Connections.

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Peace and justice in a troubled world

Watching the news is difficult because of the suffering and pain of so many, whether because of famine, war, earthquake, terrorist attacks or conflict.

There are so many people struggling to make sense of what it is to be human. In recent correspondence from Bishop Hilary in Yei, South Sudan, it is so sad to read of the continuing violence and conflict in the region which has devastated local communities.

The discussions about Brexit continue, but it is difficult to understand what will happen. In Northern Ireland we are struggling find a way of restoring the local legislative assembly.

Our response to all of these issues is to

find ways of offering support to the many who are suffering. It is also important that we pray for all who can help make decisions to bring about peace and justice in a confused and troubled world.

It is critical we do not lose hope despite the chaos and that we continue to live lives that are based on hope and compassion made known to us in Jesus. We are called to be salt and light and to be peacemakers.

Grace and peace to you all,

+ Alan Connor

Connor MU joins choir for celebrations

As part of the 130th anniversary celebrations of Mothers' Union in Ireland, a choir of 120 led 1,000 people in praise, singing favourite hymns at the National Concert Hall, Dublin on September 9.

Bishop Ken Clarke led the event, Mark Armstrong was the conductor, Peter Barley was the organist and Ann-Marie O'Farrell

played two pieces on the Irish Harp. Guests included Worldwide President, Lynne Temby and her husband.

On Sunday September 10, Connor Diocesan President Valerie Ash attended a recording of a Mothers' Union service at RTE in Dublin, and this was broadcast on Sunday September 24.



The 19 MU members from Connor who were in the 120 strong choir at the 130th anniversary celebrations.

Quiet Morning with Bishop McDowell

A Clergy Quiet Morning organised by the Bishop of Connor was held on June 15.

Guest speaker at the event in Jordanstown Parish Centre was the Rt Rev John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher (pictured with Bishop Alan).

Bishop McDowell gave a detailed biography of 19th century Anglican Theologian William Archer Butler.

The Bishop is President of the Irish Council of Churches.





Bishop Alan, left, joined the Connor Streetreach team in Glenavy for morning worship on Thursday July 6.

Mission on streets of Glenavy and Crumlin

Streetreach 2017 brought mission to life in the communities of Glenavy and Crumlin over three days from July 5-7.

This year, the diocesan youth council, Engage Connor Youth, partnered with Glenavy Parish and the Streetreach hub was the parish hall of St Aidan's, Glenavy.

The Connor Streetreach team was joined by a group of 27 young Americans and their leaders from Christ In Youth. Based in Missouri, most of the young people had travelled from Arkansas.

The young people spent the mornings at St Aidan's Halls, where after breakfast they were involved in worship, prayer and teaching. The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, joined them on the Thursday morning.

Afternoon activities over the three days included running a kids' club, handing out flyers, a litter pick, car wash, and spreading blessings, while evening activities included youth outreach, a mini carnival, a lads' and dads' night and a barbecue.

No wonder the young people were well tired out by time they were debriefed and retired for the night!

Streetreach finished with a service of praise and a chance to share stories on the Friday evening as the young people thanked God for all He had done.

There were hugs and tears as the Connor young people said goodbye their American partners, who had also joined the Connor youth team at Summer Madness.

Well done to diocesan youth officer Christina Baillie and her team of amazing leaders for providing and organising this fantastic opportunity for our young people.

And if anyone fancies taking part next year – Streetreach 2018 will run from July 3-6. Pop it in your diary!

Fantastic time at Summer Madness

A fantastic time was had by all the Connor young people who attended the Summer Madness youth camp at Glenarm from June 30-July 4.

The Connor group comprised young people from St Colman's Gateway, Carrickfergus; St Stephen's, St Luke's & St Michael's, Belfast; Derryvolgie Parish; Lisburn Cathedral; Church of the Resurrection; St Patrick's, Coleraine; Lambeg Parish; Ballymena Parish; Broughshane Parish; Ballyclare Parish; St Paul's, Lisburn; Glenavy Parish; St Brigid's, Glengormley; and St Nicholas', Carrickfergus.



A young member of Lisburn Cathedral's Mettle youth group arm wrestles with an American visitor on a lunchbreak in Glenavy Parish Hall during Streetreach.



Keeping young people entertained in the sunshine during Streetreach.



All set for the Streetreach clean-up in Crumlin Glen.



Hard at work at the free car wash in Glenavy parish car park during Streetreach.

They were joined by a group of 27 young Americans and their leaders from Christ In Youth, based in Missouri.

They took part in all the usual Summer Madness activities and enjoyed meals at sub camp, provided by head chef Canon Mark Taylor, who supervised more than 230 meals at the Bishop's Barbecue on the Sunday of the festival.

Thankfully he was assisted by a team including the Bishop of Connor himself, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy. Bishop Alan took to the main stage on Sunday evening at Summer Madness to introduce communion.



The Connor young people outside Castlewellan Castle on the annual youth residential weekend.

Encountering God at the castle

More than 100 young people and leaders took part in the annual Connor takes the Castle weekend in Castlewellan Castle from September 8-10.

This year Play It By Ear, the Christian drama group, led sessions guiding the young people through what it means to encounter God, encouraging them to think about personal prayer, exploring the Bible and living in community with other believers as young Anglicans.

Chris Neilands and Ross Jonas who make up Play It By Ear enthusiastically performed some dramas as well as teaching God's truth from their own experiences. The young people had opportunities to discuss issues in their groups and ask questions.

Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie said: "We were led in our singing by the

band Wildfire for most of the weekend and Lee Boal and friends for the Friday night, with great opportunities to sing praise to God throughout."

Christina said young people had been involved in lots of aspects of the weekend, from Matthew running all visuals and audio, to Sara, Giselle and Sophie hosting an hour as a Connor Youth Forum takeover!

There were also young people leading prayers, reading the Bible and much more.

On Saturday afternoon the young people took part in a massive maze challenge, overcoming the 'camouflaged confictors'



Peter from Broughshane won the massive maze challenge!

to take victory! Earlier in the day they prepared their own dramas for the Connor's Got Talent event and finished off the evening raving in the cellar with Billy Fyfe DJ-ing until late.

Christina said: "Connor Youth Council would like to thank all the groups for coming and making the weekend so special.

"To all the young people, thank you! To all the leaders, thank you! To all the vestries and clergy who supported the groups coming, thank you!"

Diary date

Christmas Cracker and Giveaway at St Patrick's, Ballymena - December 2.



Returning to the Connor sub camp for dinner at Summer Madness.

Back to the Abbey!



The St Polycarp's choir in Westminster Abbey with Simon Neill, conductor, and Rev Louise Stewart, rector of Finaghy and Upper Malone. (Photo: Nigel Harris)

The choir of St Polycarp's, Finaghy, returned to sing Choral Evensong in Westminster Abbey for a third time!

The choir sang in the Abbey on August 7 and 8. They also sang Choral Evensong here in August 2013 and 2014 and were invited back by the Dean and chapter.

The choir is conducted by St Polycarp's Director of Music, Simon Neill. The organist over the two days was Matthew Jorysz, Assistant Organist of Westminster Abbey and former Organ Scholar of Clare College, Cambridge.

More than 600 people attended the service each evening. Simon said that for both for himself and the choir it had been an honour to return to Westminster Abbey.

"In St Polycarp's, we have a strong sense of family and friendship and I am indebted to the hard work and commitment of members to both choir and parish."

New Parish Readers



The Rev Brian Lacey, rector, St Peter's, left, and the Rev Kevin Graham, diocesan Warden of Readers, right, with the three new Parish Readers.

Three members of the congregation of St Peter's Parish Church, Antrim Road, Belfast, have received their licenses as Parish Readers.

David Cromie, Forde Patterson, and Tony Swan are now authorised to assist the rector and to officiate at some services of worship in St Peter's.

They were commissioned by the Rev Kevin Graham, diocesan Warden of Readers, at a service on July 3.



At the Farewell Choral Evensong for the Very Rev John Mann and Mrs Helen Mann are, from left: Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Belfast, Mrs Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle, Dean John Mann, and Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Nuala McAllister.

Belfast bids farewell to Dean John Mann

The community of St Anne's Cathedral and the city of Belfast said farewell to Dean John Mann and his wife Helen at Choral Evensong on September 6.

Warm tributes were paid to the Dean and Helen, who have moved to the Diocese of Salisbury where Dean Mann is team rector of Swanage with Studland.

He was Dean of Belfast for six years. Mrs Gillian McGaughey, honorary secretary of the Cathedral Board, said: "John has left a mark which will be truly indelible."

"His legacy is all around us. We are grateful for the development of the choirs including young people from the city and those who have joined us from other religious denominations and none. If we can bring them to experience this building and the fellowship of being a member of the church we will have achieved a great deal."

Dean's Vicar, Canon Mark Niblock, spoke of the Dean's 'profound spirituality and humility.' "As a colleague I appreciated the quiet, reflective, generous nature of carefulness that is your ministry," Canon Niblock said. "Your heartbeat of prayer in this centre has been a gift. You have touched and blessed us in this congregation and in the city."

The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Alliance Councillor Nuala McAllister, told the Dean: "I thank you for being yourself, for being true, for coming to Belfast and putting yourself forward and for opening this place to the whole of Belfast."

Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Belfast, Mrs Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle, spoke of the



Dean John and Mrs Helen Mann prepare to cut the farewell cake at a reception after Choral Evensong.

Dean's 'considerable dignity and gentle but firm authority.' "As the representative of Her Majesty the Queen I have been honoured and privileged to be here at services John has presided over," she said

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, said Dean Mann has 'a deep pastoral heart which has touched lives at their most difficult moments.'

Dean Mann said it had been 'very humbling' to work in a great building and a great city. "I first came here in 1973," he said. "The city has changed but there was still a sense that Belfast at its heart was a city that wanted to work together. There is so much here and we just pray it goes from strength to strength."

Prosecco and ducks raise bucks in Antrim

All Saints' Antrim parishioners had their fourth joint wine tasting evening with Father Sean Emerson and parishioners from St Comgall's last May.

Father Emerson and Archdeacon Stephen McBride, vicar of All Saints, first worked together in 1990 when both were in Belfast parishes - Holy Family and St Peter's respectively.

On this occasion the wines were selected by the clergy and everyone seemed to enjoy their choices of prosecco, three whites and three reds!

Drew Taggart, a volunteer with Lough Neagh Rescue, gave a short presentation on the work of this team which provides 24/7 rescue cover for anyone who gets into trouble on the Lough or in the rivers which flow into it. As well as having a great evening, after expenses the parish raised almost £300 for Lough Neagh Rescue.

Another fundraising event took place on June 23 when parishioners gathered at the Shakey Bridge on the Six Mile Water for the annual duck race and barbecue. The evening raised £800 for parish funds.



Father Sean Emerson and Archdeacon Stephen McBride with representatives of Lough Neagh Rescue.

Thy Kingdom Come

Hundreds gathered in St Anne's Cathedral on June 3 for 'Thy Kingdom Come,' a global prayer event involving 34 cathedrals and thousands of churches in 85 countries.

'Thy Kingdom Come,' was a response to the Archbishop of Canterbury's invitation to Christians to pray that people might know Jesus Christ during a focused time between Ascension and Pentecost.

Agherton Lecture

The second annual Agherton Lecture took place in the Church of St John the Baptist, Agherton Parish, Portstewart, on June 27.

Speaker was the Ven Gary Hastings, Archdeacon of Tuam and rector of St Nicholas Collegiate Church, Galway. Gary, who was a student reader in Agherton Parish in the early 1990s, is also an author and a traditional flute player. His talk was entitled 'A Third Way.'



Ahead of the service of rededication and thanksgiving at St Colman's, Dunmurry, are, from left: Bishop Alan Abernethy; the Rev Clifford Skillen, Bishop's Chaplain; Mr John Williams, Diocesan Lay Reader and Hon Secretary of Dunmurry Parish, who preached; and the Rev Adrian McLaughlin, rector, St Colman's.

St Colman's Church rises from the ashes

St Colman's Parish Church, Dunmurry, was packed on September 10 for a service of rededication and thanksgiving following a fire which caused major damage in January last year.

The rector, the Rev Adrian McLaughlin, was alerted to the fire when he went looking for the rectory cat Tilly, and Tilly is commemorated in a new stained glass window in the refurbished church.

Representatives of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service attended the service. The preacher was Mr John Williams, Diocesan Lay Reader and Hon Secretary of Dunmurry Parish, and the church was rededicated by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy.

The fire, which was accidental, took hold in the early hours of January 11 2016. The church building dates to 1908 and the flames quickly took hold in the roof. The zinc pipes in the organ melted, the stonework and the arches were burned, the organs and a chandelier were destroyed, along with the furniture in the choir stalls, the keyboards and the lectern. Anything that wasn't damaged by fire was smoke, tar and water damaged.

The congregation has now moved back into a transformed building. The tiled floor decorated with the St Colman's cross catches the eye, first visible through the glass partition enclosing a new carpeted meet-and-greet area.

Other additions include a gallery above the organ pipes, the chancel has been brought forward and has new marble steps, the



Inside St Colman's on the day of the rededication and thanksgiving service.

font has been moved, and a new side chapel has been created, housing the stained glass window commemorating the fire with images of flame, water and Tilly.

There is a new side entrance for disabled access, and a lift. A temporary organ was in use for the service of rededication and thanksgiving – a new organ and pipes are currently being built.

Music at the service was by the Grosvenor Chorale conducted by Edward Craig.

Bishop Alan said he had been 'profoundly saddened' by the fire. "For me, the day of the rededication was a real contrast, seeing the church restored in a way that brings out the very best in the building and makes it even more beautiful," he said.

"The congregation was devastated by the fire, and it was a particular joy to see them recover their own sense of joy and purpose."



At a special Eucharist to mark 50 years since the ordination of the 'Class of '67' from the Divinity College are, from left: The Rev Canon William Bell, the Rev Canon Brother David Jardine, the Rev Canon Robin Lavery, the Rev Alan Parkill and Dean John Bond.

Class of '67 reunion

The Very Rev John Bond, former Dean of Connor, was the preacher at a special Eucharist in St Anne's Cathedral on June 25 celebrating 50 years since the ordination of the 'Class of 67.'

Of the 18 ordinations from the Divinity College in 1967, six were ordained in St Anne's on June 25 that year by the Rt Rev Cyril Elliott, the then Bishop of Connor, including Dean Bond who organised the special service.

Joining him to mark this 50-year milestone were the Rev Canon Robin Lavery, the Rev Canon William Bell, the Rev Alan Parkhill, and the Rev Canon Brother David Jardine. A former Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Houston McKelvey, was also ordained in St Anne's in June 1967, but could not attend as he was in Canada.

Happy 101st Dorrie!



Bishop Alan wishes Dorrie a happy birthday.

Congratulations to Dorothy McArthur, a lifelong member of the Parish of St Stephen and St Luke, who recently celebrated her 101st birthday!

Dorothy, or Dorrie as she is known to her friends, was a regular attender at church until she was 97. She has a large and supportive family and still lives on her own.

Dorrie was delighted when the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, turned up to wish her happy birthday, along with the Rev Canon James Carson, Minister-in-Charge of the Church of Ireland Lower Shankill Group, and Mrs Janet Spence, Lay-associate.

Ken Tate, Sexton at St George's Parish Church, Belfast, will revisit the Himalayas to take part in his second Everest Marathon this November.

Ken took up running in his forties, and did his first marathon in Belfast on his 50th birthday. Since then, he has participated in city marathons, adventure races and ultra-marathons around the world.

Now, despite admitting his toughest challenge ever was the Everest Marathon he completed 10 years ago, Ken is all set to do it again!

There have been 16 Everest Marathons since the first one was held in 1987. Starting at Gorak Shep at 5184m, close to Everest Base Camp, and finishing in the Sherpa 'capital' of Namche Bazaar at 3446m, this is considered the world's most spectacular race.

Participants can expect snow and ice, boulders, grass, sandy scree, stone staircases, and exposed paths on the mountain sides along the 26.2 mile course. Additional hazards include narrow suspension bridges and yak trains.

In order to acclimatise naturally to the high altitude, each competitor takes part in a 15 day trek in the Everest area which allows time for high altitude training under medical supervision.

CHARITY

Ken will be raising funds for the charity which organises this unique race – the UK-based Everest Marathon Fund. The Fund supports charities in Nepal, one of the poorest countries in South Asia. The people continue to battle the effects of the devastating earthquakes of April and May 2015. Since 1987, the Fund has raised more than £630,000.



Ken Tate in camp before his last Everest Marathon in 2007.

Evidence of the poverty people in Nepal live in was all around him when he was last there, and Ken said the situation had been made worse by the 2015 earthquakes.

Ken's application to take part had to be supported by doctors' certificates and evidence that he will in fact be fit enough to compete in this challenge. All competitors have to commit to 26 days in the region.

The number of runners is limited to 75 non-Nepalese with up to 20 Nepalese runners accompanied by medical staff, Sherpa porters and guides.

RISKS

The challenge has many risks – particularly Acute Mountain Sickness which can be fatal. "Our medics will have a portable hyperbaric chamber which can provide life-saving emergency treatment to those suffering from the most serious forms of Acute Mountain Sickness," Ken said.

After completing the 2007 Everest Marathon he said he would never do it again. "To me it was a once in a lifetime experience, but then the opportunity came up again this year and as it is the last chance I will have to take part [there is an upper age limit] I decided to apply. I also felt that this would give me the opportunity to contribute something to Nepal, particularly after the earthquakes."

He anticipates the 42km will take him at least twice as long as a normal marathon. "It is a long, long race along terrain that goes up and down, up and down. I think it will take me around eight hours," he said. "In '07 I was running with a broken shoulder and this slowed me down a little. This summer I've stayed well away from motorcycles, push bikes and skis!"

The race itself is the easy part, according to Ken. "The difficult part of the whole endeavour is getting to the start line in good health. That is why we spend so much time trekking in. It is critically important that we are properly acclimatised.

LUNATIC

"This time round I have a good idea of what's involved which makes what I am attempting to do even more lunatic!"

Ken, however, is no stranger to running in extreme conditions. In Mongolia, for example, the Sunrise to Sunset ultra-marathon covered 100km in one day. An adventure race in Mali, west Africa, was run over six stages on varying terrain, while a Sahara run had different challenges.



Ken Tate outside St George's, Belfast, where he works as Sexton. Ken is in training for his second Everest Marathon in November.

St George's Sexton Ken gets set for latest Everest challenge

"We had to run in deep sand on a couple of stages, while other parts were quite mountainous," Ken explained.

A 140km Madagascar run in 2014 took in the second highest peak in Madagascar and Ken was the only English speaking competitor, both of which presented him with a challenge!

The day before his last Everest Marathon there was a blizzard at the campsite, and the senior Sherpa had to decide if the race would go ahead.

Ken is anticipating snow and ice in the early stages, but things will warm up as the runners descend. "Last time it was -5 degrees when we started at 6.30am but was up to 25 degrees when we got down to the finish," he said.

His training is well underway. "Before I go I will be aiming to be doing around 100km a week with a weekly long run of 30km," he said. "I do most of my running in places like Black Mountain and Cave Hill and other

off road paths. I avoid running on the road. It puts a lot of strain on the skeleton and I don't enjoy it."

On race day, Ken will set out running in his warm down jacket, and will discard clothing at the first aid stations as he descends and as the temperatures rise. The rules state he must carry his own safety equipment for the entire race.

Runners spread out as the race progresses. "Our numbers are checked as we pass different points to ensure everyone is accounted for," Ken said. "There have been no fatalities since this race began, there is such a strong medical team."

IMPACT

Race organisers are mindful of the environmental impact on this busy Everest base camp site. All supplies are carried by foot or hoof. Helicopters can pass over, but this is a dangerous business. The wreckage of a Russian helicopter close to the start of the race is a testament to the

dangers of flying in these mountains.

During the acclimatisation period, the competitors and their team will be well fed by Sherpas who will carry their tents and other equipment.

It is important that the competitors eat well. "Because of the conditions and the cold you don't want your body fat percentage to be too low," said Ken. "We are fed plenty of nutritious but monotonous food, no meat, but lots of tinned fish and spam!"

He recalls that at the end of the last Everest Marathon he could not wait to tuck into a yak steak!

Looking forward to the marathon, Ken said: "I feel very grateful for the privilege of being given the chance to once again set foot in a unique and sacred place - the Tibetans call it Chomolungma, Goddess Mother of Mountains."

You can sponsor Ken online by visiting www.virginmoneygiving.com/kentate or make a donation at St George's Church.

God is calling and using young people - Danielle McCullagh

The Rev Danielle McCullagh, a Carnmoney parishioner, was ordained a priest for the Parish of Lisburn Cathedral on August 27.

The 27-year-old has a BA in Childhood Studies and Professional Practice Studies and before training for ordination worked as a Classroom Assistant with children with special needs.

"People used to joke even when I was a teenager that I would end up working in the Church in some capacity," Danielle said. But when Bishop Alan first raised it with her she was certain it was not for her.

"During the next year, God pursued me. I started a journal of all the occasions when I felt God was nudging or prompting me, or when other people were saying things, or sharing verses of scripture which made me start to realise that God was calling me to ordained ministry. When God speaks like that it's very difficult to ignore it."

Danielle admitted she was worried about the academic demands. "When you believe that God has called you to something, you have to learn to trust that He will equip you with whatever you need to do it."

For the first two years of her full time course, Danielle drove to Dublin on Sunday evening and stayed until Friday lunchtime.

She had four assignments each term

Course very beneficial - Richard Cotter

Richard Cotter is Finance and Administration Manager for Connor Diocese. He and his wife Andrea are both fully immersed in this year's Foundation Access Course.

"Andrea is considering ordination and I decided to do the course too to give her a bit of encouragement," Richard said. "For me, the foundation course is a good way to become a Diocesan Lay Reader.

Both Richard and Andrea are parishioners at St Patrick's, Ballymena. He admits sacrifices have to be made. "Two to three hours study in the evening is not always enough time as the course does involve a lot of reading to prepare for assignments. We have found that as much as we didn't want to do it, we have had to give up some of our church activities."

But Richard is well used to study. After university he did accountancy at night classes followed by a Technology BSc, an

and two practical placements in first year. Danielle did her first placement in St Brigid's, Glengormley, for eight Sundays and her second in Madi West Nile Diocese, in Arua, Uganda, a three week placement organised by CMSI. In her second year she spent 10 Fridays and Sundays in St John's, Malone, leading services and preaching and doing pastoral visiting.

Danielle did her deacon internship in St Brigid's, Glengormley, for three weeks of each month and the other week was spent in college, writing her dissertation.

Danielle said: "There were moments when I wondered why I was putting myself through the rigor of a Masters. There are times when the academic exercises are tough, so it's good to be reminded of the purpose and the end goal of it all."

She is now delighted to be curate of Lisburn Cathedral working alongside Dean Sam Wright.

Danielle encouraged anyone thinking of ordination not to let their age hold them back. "What the Church needs is wise and godly leaders and so often we assume that you can't be either of those things if you're young. Interestingly when I began training there were 10 people in my year and five of us were under 30. It seems to me that God is still calling and using young people!"



Richard and Andrea Cotter are both doing the Foundation Access course.

AS Level in psychology and through home study has Level 5 and Level 7 qualifications with the Chartered Managers' Institute!

"I have found the course very beneficial in how I look at and study the Bible. If anyone is interested in ordination or being a lay reader I would highly recommend it."



Pictured following the ordination of the Rev Danielle McCullagh on August 27 are, from left: The Rev Clifford Skillen, Bishop's Chaplain, and the Archdeacon.

Considering

Every year, people from different backgrounds – all have one thing in common, a deep Church of Ireland faith – are called through ordained ministry.

But the path to ordination can be challenging as well as rewarding. No one knows better than Canon Will Murphy who has been Diocesan Director of Ordinands for 25 years.

Will's own ministry has not been parochial. He has run a specialist ministry for deaf people for 38 years. He was a Chaplain in the Maze Prison for almost 20 years, and a TA chaplain for 10 years. Not all ministries are the same.

For some, the journey towards ordination may take a detour, or go in a totally different direction. Some may find their ministry is not as an ordained member of the clergy. A Foundation Access Course, now in its ninth year, is designed to not only prepare people for ordination training in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, but to help them make an informed choice.

This 14 month part-time course with three major modules is the biggest change in ordination training since Will became Director of Ordinands. He says it is excellent.

"It is intensive and is a great sifting process because a number will leave when they see what is involved, and it is better to take an informed decision at this stage than starting college and finding out half way through that this is not what you want to do," Will said.

The course is divided into groups of 10-11 students. Of those students currently doing the course, six are from Connor Diocese.



McCullagh as a priest for the Parish of Lisburn Cathedral on Sunday. From left to right: Archdeacon Stephen McBride; the Rev Danielle McCullagh; Canon Stephen Forde; Bishop Alan Abernethy and Dean Sam Wright.

ordination?

hundreds will come forward seeking ordination. Christian faith and a desire to share that faith

Students begin with a weekend at CITI, followed by two full Saturdays in June and November. Most of the work has to be undertaken at home and online.

"It is hard work for them. You can come home from your job knowing you have to have those modules submitted. Deadlines are taken very seriously. It encourages self-discipline and is a very good foundation for the MTh," Will said.

The cost of the course is split three ways between the diocese, the Church of Ireland and the student. Students currently contribute 700 Euro.

The initial training may have changed, but the way in which potential ordinands are recruited has not. Anyone interested must be referred to the Director of Ordinands by their rector, and it is the role of the Director of Ordinands to recommend them for the foundation course.

The Bishops' Selection Conference is held in April each year, a month or so before students finish their course. Students can either be accepted for ordination; their application can be deferred for a year and they may be asked to revisit a specific area, such as experiencing a different type of parish or doing further study; or they may not be accepted.

Will was keen to stress this does not mean a student has failed. "It is hard for them, but everybody has a ministry. They may be encouraged to consider being a diocesan

Biggest failure would have been not to trust His call - Peter Blake

Peter Blake, 44, is a music tutor. He is married to Denise and has a 10-year-old daughter Lauren. Peter is currently doing the part-time ordination training at CITI.

"I had long felt the urge to preach and teach but felt really unsure about whether I would be up to meeting the academic requirements and the demands of ministry," he said. "It was Bishop Alan who encouraged me to consider a role in church leadership. I remember getting incredibly emotional when he suggested it. I'm so glad that he did. I feel very privileged to be at this stage of training."

Peter had to overcome his lack of confidence about his academic ability before taking the decision to go for

or parish reader. This takes away their negativity and says you do have a ministry. Not everyone has to wear a collar."

Even those students who pass their foundation course may not be accepted for training. "There are different reasons why a person is not suitable for ministry," Will said.

Anyone signing up for the course needs to be aware this is more than academic. It is a vocation. "It requires discipline, time. There is sacrifice, things like family time and leisure time."

But Will said the selection process was so thorough that most people who do the foundation course will go forward into ministry. That means two years training at CITI to do the course full-time, or four years for part-time (this has just been reduced from six years). These schedules include a year as a deacon intern.

"At the back of it all is the call of God," said Will. "Are you to be obedient to it?"

"We have no students from Connor for next year's course yet, but I am sure there are going to be some come forward. God is not going to leave us adrift!

"Across the diocese we need rectors to be more aware of people looking for the call of ministry. Sometimes people will go and talk to their rector, but their rector needs to be looking out for people too."

Anyone who is interested in applying for the foundation course starting in February 2018 needs to speak to their rector before the end of this year.



Peter Blake with his wife Denise and daughter Lauren.

ordination. "I dropped out of school at 18 and was worried that I might not make the grade. It was much easier to stay where I was rather than put myself forward and face the possibility of failing," he said.

"I now realise that the biggest failure would have been not to trust His call."

Peter meets other part-time ordinands in Dublin one weekend a month for the residential part of training. "The part-time weekends are a great place to be. It's flat out but the craic and food are mighty. I've made many wonderful friends and learned a great deal about myself and God," he said.

"Fitting everything in is certainly a challenge but when I first put that collar on it will be one of the greatest moments of my life."

Peter has particularly enjoyed being out on placement. "When the essay deadlines come I just remember how wonderful it is to preach, serve and administer the sacraments to God's people," he said.

He encouraged anyone considering being ordained to follow their heart.

"The greatest lesson I have learned during training has been to trust that this is God's work and not mine. To know that He is with me and that through the Holy Spirit He will equip me for every challenge," Peter said

"I was nervous about stepping out in faith too. But if you feel the call you must answer. The Church needs leaders who love Christ above all else and have a pastoral heart for His people. Training at CITI will help you with the practical and theological skills you need to live out that calling."

Baby Basics makes a difference in lives of young Belfast families

Baby Basics Belfast, an initiative launched by Connor children's officer Jill Hamilton and Sister Karen Webb of the North Belfast Centre of Mission, is already impacting the lives of families in need.

The project helps those struggling to meet the financial and practical needs of looking after a new baby. Glenavy Parish was the first to partner this venture in March, and the project has gone from strength to strength.

During August, Baby Basics sent out eight starter packs full of essential items for a new baby. Jill visited the Family Nurse Partnership team which works with teenage mums, supporting them for the first two years of the child's life.

Jill said: "I met all the staff and showed them the Baby Basics pack. Everyone was really impressed with Baby Basics and thought it would be very beneficial for many of their clients."

Jill also had the opportunity to visit the



Belfast Trust Health Visiting teams at their joint staff meeting. "It was great to be able to show the Moses basket starter pack to everyone as seeing it for themselves and hearing exactly how to make a referral is the best way to understand the project," Jill said. "I had some really positive responses from the team."

In September, the project continued to receive a steady stream of referrals and is now linked with a social worker from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust along with its other partnering agencies.

Jill said: "We support many young mums still in their teenage years, the vast majority of them having no partner. We support families who are struggling financially due to relationship breakups, changes of circumstances leading to benefits being stopped temporarily, illness and even

tragically a dad committing suicide.

"As well as all the practical items in the Baby Basics pack we include a card which says, 'You are beautiful, for you are wonderfully and fearfully made' from Psalm 139. We pray that little card will be the voice of God speaking into difficult situations and letting people know they are loved."

Three more Connor parishes have signed up to the Baby Basics' Four Week Challenge. Lambeg (September), Greenisland (October) and Christ Church, Lisburn, (November).

‘ I was visiting J recently who had her baby boy and she kept the little card that was in the pack with the passage from the book of Psalms, it was placed on her display cabinet in her living room, she was obviously touched by this. Sinead - Family Nurse Partnership ’

‘ The mum just couldn't believe it and was so, so happy. She kept saying she couldn't believe she now had new stuff for baby M. She put the blanket on M straight away and she has been using all the clothes etc. She was incredibly touched and is so thankful. Lynne - Prison Fellowship. ’

The parish is asked to highlight the Baby Basics project for a month and appeal to the congregation to donate items. "Karen Webb and I are looking forward to visiting the parishes during the autumn at their morning service and sharing information about Baby Basics," Jill said.



Alana Irwin, Victoria Vallely, Jemma Morrison, Abbie Hearne, Lucy Duckworth and Lucy Nettleship were among the young people confirmed at St Paul's, Lisburn, on September 10. Photo: Norman Briggs.

Ballyclare church community reaches out to families

The United Parish of Ballynure & Ballyeaston (Ballyclare) hosted community social outreach events on June 25 and 26.

On the Saturday, there was a fry-up followed by the chance to watch the Lions vs the All Blacks rugby. On Sunday the Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth hosted a barbecue for 70 people at the Rectory.

Jonny said: "It was a great weekend in which the church community reached out to families. It was exhausting bringing it all together, yet the rewards in building relationships are so important. My thanks go to the many parishioners who made this weekend so special."

'A real sense of God's call'

The institution of the Rev Peter Jones as rector of Mossley Parish took place in the Church of the Holy Spirit on Wednesday August 23.

Peter was curate assistant in Drumglass Parish, Armagh Diocese, before his appointment to Mossley.

Aged, 35, Peter is married to Kim and they have two children, Timothy and Hannah.

Originally from Tobermore, Peter is a former pupil of Rainey Endowed School in Magherafelt, and read History at the University of Ulster in Coleraine.

After graduating, he did a PGCE and

taught history for eight years at Lisneal College in the Waterside, Londonderry. He was involved in administration and pastoral care and was a Year Head. He was also a Principal Examiner in GCSE History.

Peter trained at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and was ordained a deacon in 2013. He served an internship in Maghera Parish and after being ordained a priest in 2014 was curate assistant in Drumglass.

Peter said he and Kim were looking forward to getting to know the people in Mossley and ministering to them. "We felt a real strong sense of God's call," he said.

Peter was instituted as rector by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy. Preacher at the service was the Ven Andrew Forster, rector of Drumglass and Archdeacon of Ardboe.

30 take part in Fit4Life Ballymena

More than 30 walkers took part in the second Fit4Life programme run by Anne and Debbie Crawford at St Patrick's, Ballymena.

They had the opportunity to not only walk, but to talk and enjoy healthy nibbles.

This year there were three speakers. Jen Christie, wife of Ballymena's curate the Rev Dennis Christie, talked about anxiety associated with Mental Health; Sonia Kernahan spoke on drugs, drink and abuse, while 'Shrink for Life' Coach Estelle Wallace talked about healthy eating.

The final night's walk was followed by a relaxing Sing Song accompanied by Cheryl Sinclair on guitar.



Fit4Life walkers in Ballymena. Photo: Loraine Watt.

Quilts for Advent

The Parish Piecemakers of St Cedma's, Larne, will run their Quilts for Advent exhibition again this year.

The exhibition will be open from 2pm-4pm on Saturday and Sunday 2nd & 3rd and 9th & 10th December 2017.



Pictured at the institution of the Rev Peter Jones as rector of Mossley Parish are, from left: George Madden, People's Churchwarden; the Rev Clifford Skillen, Bishop's Chaplain; the Rev Peter Jones; the Ven George Davison, Archdeacon of Belfast; the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy; Canon William Taggart, Registrar; the Ven Andrew Forster, Archdeacon of Ardboe, preacher; Loraine Jackson, Rector's Churchwarden, and the Rev David Lockhart, Rural Dean.

Institution of the Rev John McClure

St Jude's Parish Church, Muckamore, was packed on June 29 for the institution of the Rev John McClure as rector of the Grouped Parishes of Muckamore, Killead and Gartree.

The preacher was the Very Rev John Bond, former Dean of Connor.

John is married to Margot and they have two daughters, Stephanie and Rachel.

He was ordained in the Non-Stipendary Ministry in 2007, and served curacies in the Parish of Skerry, Rathcavan and Newtowncrommelin (Broughshane) and the Parish of St Michael, Belfast, before switching to Stipendary Ministry and moving to Ballymena Parish three years ago.

John's first job was with Michelin Tyres in Mallusk where he worked for 11 years and he later spent 15 years with the Police at Belfast International Airport.

Before ordination, John was Deputation Secretary with Irish Church Missions, and in this role focused on helping people with social issues including drugs and alcohol dependency. He supported families who had lost a loved one through suicide and



The Rev John McClure at his institution service with the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy.

set up groups in Northern Ireland to deal with suicide related issues.

John was a member of the former Connor Training Council and currently serves on Connor Diocesan Council.

A memorable day at the Palace for Valerie

Valerie Ash, President of Connor Mothers' Union, was one of five Diocesan Presidents from across the UK and Ireland invited to a Garden Party hosted by Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace on June 1.



Diocesan President Valerie Ash at Buckingham Palace.

The Queen is patron of MU. Valerie was accompanied by the Diocesan Presidents from Sodor and Man, Bristol, Manchester, Southwell and Robert Dawes from Mary Sumner House.

The MU group accessed the grounds via the Courtyard and the Palace, descending the steps the Queen would later use herself to walk into the magnificent gardens. The sun shone and guests were entertained by two bands.

"We walked in the gardens and around the beautiful lake, surveying the attire of the 8,000 guests and feeling very posh in our own carefully chosen outfits, including the

fascinators!" Valerie said.

"We discovered the identity of the 36 men wearing red cassocks. They are the Chaplains to the Queen and we had a most interesting conversation with one from Wigton.

"It was hard to believe that on the other side of the garden wall the hustle and bustle of London life continued!"

Valerie enjoyed the afternoon tea, but the highlight of the afternoon was the arrival of the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh. Later, as they left, Valerie was lucky to be close enough to get a photo of them.

"So many things made that day special," added Valerie. "The Beefeaters, the Queen's Personal Guard parading around, the men in their top hats and tails, being addressed as 'Madam' by the very attentive staff and the beautiful weather all made this a day to remember!

"Thank you Mothers' Union for this opportunity to attend the Queen's Garden Party!"

Muckamore branch celebrates 100 years

Members of Muckamore Mothers' Union celebrated their 100th anniversary at a service in St Jude's Church on June 18, conducted by the Rev Canon Derek Kerr.

Guest speaker was Mrs Paddy Wallace, former All Ireland President. Lord Mayor Paul Hamill attended, as well as Trustee/Executive members Mrs Joyce Bond, Mrs Norma Bell and Mrs Wendy Halligian and Connor Diocesan President, Mrs Valerie Ash, who read the five Objects of the Mothers' Union during the service.

Sylvia Beacom, branch chair, welcomed everyone. The MU Banner was carried by

Lillian Nesbitt, readings were by Ann Moore and Joan Currie, and prayers by Heather Booth and Irene Paget. £400 was collected for Worldwide Funds.

At an afternoon tea following the service, Eileen Carson and Jean Scott, two long service members, assisted with cutting the celebration cake.

Muckamore branch was founded in October 1917 by Mrs E Thompson of Muckamore Abbey and Mrs Bannon, the then rector's wife. Mr Richard Thompson, a grandson of Mrs Thompson's, attended the celebration.



At the Muckamore MU 100th anniversary service are, from left: Paddy Wallace (guest speaker), Valerie Ash (Connor Diocesan President), Eileen Carson, Sylvia Beacom, Lord Mayor Paul Hamill, Irene Paget and Joan Currie.

Ramoan is the oldest branch in Connor

Congratulations to Ramoan, the oldest branch of Mothers' Union in Connor Diocese, which was founded 125 years ago, just five years after Mothers' Union began in Ireland!

The branch was formed in 1892 by Mrs McNeill, and meetings were held in her home in Quay Road. In 1969 Ramoan joined with its sister church Culfeightrin. The rector's wife Mrs Perrin was Diocesan Overseas rep for 12 years. During that time two Overseas Workers from Korea and Sudan stayed in the Rectory.

Ramoan and Culfeightrin hosted the diocesan celebration for the Mothers' Union Way in Ballycastle, in May, when the Worldwide President, Lynne Tembey and All Ireland President Phyllis Grothier visited the diocese as part of the 130 year celebrations. The celebrations included a Prayer Walk and a church service.

At the service of thanksgiving for 125 years of Mothers' Union in Ballycastle, conducted by the rector, the Rev David Ferguson, the oldest member, Mrs Gina Wisner, cut the cake.

Away from it All

This year one family enjoyed a holiday they could not have had otherwise thanks to Connor MU's Away from it All project.

Medieval cures at St Cedma's herb garden

Got an ailment and need a natural cure? Look no further than St Cedma's Parish, Larne, which has its own medieval garden with remedies for ailments including jaundice, arthritis and even flatulence!

The herbs in the garden were planted by parishioner Patricia McKinley Hutchinson who has also produced a guide book on the History of Larne and St Cedma's, and a brochure on the church grounds and graveyard (both published under her maiden name of Beattie).

The garden and the books were ready for European Heritage Open Days (EHOD) in September when visitors enjoyed guided tours and teas, with more than £500 raised for the new parish hall.

For Patricia, who did most of her writing when she was on honeymoon in Cyprus last year, this was a labour of love – she came to St Cedma's at the age of three and is now in her 70s.

A former catering advisor and facilities management consultant, she produced a guide to the church grounds for a flower festival in 1974 and has been gathering up bits and pieces of information ever since.

Cedma, a Pictish warrior, was the father of St Comgall who was born in 517 AD in nearby Magheramorne.

The church site was occupied by Augustinian Friars in the 6th century, and the 3rd Order of Franciscans in the 15th century, laymen and women engaged in hospital work and teaching. Their work inspired Patricia's herb garden.

'Use of local herbs for healing is an example of how the church supported the community in which it was located.'

The new guide to the church contains gems of information - two windows from the late 1920s were designed by Wilhelmina Geddes, for example, while the chancel encaustic tiles are attributed to Victorian architect Samuel P Close.

The ancient graveyard was used by all, irrespective of conviction, until closure in 1870. The oldest named gravestone, that of James Murdoch, dates from 1677.

Other notable graves include that of James McHenry, author of 'O'Halloran, and of



Patricia McKinley Hutchinson puts the finishing touches to her medieval herb garden in preparation for European Heritage Open Day on September 10.

the McGarel family. Charles McGarel made a fortune from sugar plantations in Demerara, South America, and funded the building of Larne Town Hall.

Patricia had her herbs neatly planted for EHOD on Sunday September 10. The bed included some of the local herbs and plants that would have been used to treat the sick and ailing during the 15th century by the Franciscans.

The rector of St Cedma's, Archdeacon Stephen Forde said: "The theme of EHOD was gardens and we were able to work that in with the original medieval graves to recreate the herb garden. It brought together Patricia's love of gardening and the church to create something unique.

"The Franciscan community's use of local herbs for healing is an example of how the church supported the community in which it was located, just as we try and do today."

Anyone wishing to visit St Cedma's should call at the parish office (mornings only).

And for those whose interest has been piqued – the best herb for flatulence is Thyme!



The Rev Trevor Kelly manning a stopwatch as his wife Aurelia prepared for the Causeway Coast Walk.

Husband inspires Aurelia to stride out

Aurelia Kelly, wife of the Rev Trevor Kelly, took part in the Causeway Coast Half Marathon Walk on September 23 and in five weeks raised £1412.25 including Gift Aid for Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke.

Trevor, who is curate in the Parishes of Drummaul, Duneane and Ballyscullion, suffered a number of strokes and TIAs three years ago. After four separate hospital admissions he was diagnosed with 'Antiphospholipid Syndrome' which causes an increased risk of blood clots.

"With God's grace, the power of prayer and the wonderful drug warfarin he was able to resume his job as a teacher and his role as a curate," Aurelia said.

She said the walk had been challenging, 'more of an army assault course,' but the scenery en route was breathtaking.

New pulpit rails

A set of rails has been added to the steps leading to the pulpit in St Anne's Cathedral in response to concerns that someone with mobility difficulties would struggle to get up the steps with no support on either side.

The rails were crafted in oak by Willis Corder, and funded by a parishioner.



The Rev David Lockhart and his wife Beverly, who with other members of Cloughfern Parish handed out free refreshments to people watching the Co Antrim District Twelfth Parade on the Doagh Road.



At the Choral Festival Service are, from left: The Rev Canon John Budd, Rural Dean, Derriaghy; Prof Alan Hibbert MBE, Director; Mr David Wheavil, organist; the Rev John Rutter, Glenavy Parish; the Rev Rev Nicholas Dark, Rural Dean, Lisburn, and Mrs Gina Hibbert.

Goodbyes at Choral Festival Service

On the evening of the second Sunday in June the combined choirs of Lisburn and Derriaghy Rural Deaneries have for many years pooled their resources for a Choral Festival Service.

This year the service was hosted by Glenavy Parish in St Aidan's Church, and marked the close of a long association between Professor Alan Hibbert MBE, his wife Gina and the combined parishes of Lisburn and Derriaghy. Alan, formerly a parishioner of St Colman's, Dunmurry, has for many years been the Director of the Choral Festival, and he and Gina are retiring to England.

At the supper after the service, Alan reflected that he had had oversight of the service for 25 years!

The Rural Dean of Derriaghy, the Rev Canon John Budd, thanked Alan for his commitment to the Choral Festival Service, and also referenced Alan and Gina's involvement in other aspects of Connor Diocese, in particular his work at the Chaplaincy at Queen's and Gina's as a Diocesan Lay Reader.

Canon Budd wished Alan and Gina God's Blessing in retirement.

St Brigid's team planing Nepal trip

A team from St Brigid's, Glengormley, will travel to Kathmandu, Nepal, with CMS Ireland from November 9-25.

They will be visiting and helping out at a number of local churches and community projects, and will be hosted by SD Church – a Nepali-led organisation which has a special ministry reaching out to people with disabilities.

This visit forms part of a long-term partnership between St Brigid's and SD Church.

Situation in South Sudan deteriorates

The situation in South Sudan continues to deteriorate, with one million refugees having fled to Uganda since war broke out two years ago.

Many people, however, remain trapped in Connor's partner Diocese of Yei. Bishop Hilary of Yei recently returned home from the diocese's temporary office in Arua, Uganda, to support his people.

In a message to Church Mission Society Ireland (CMSI), the Bishop stated that 'thousands of people are still trapped in Yei,' where over the summer clergy were attacked, injured and killed.

Bishop Hilary stated: "The church has been the only trusted and effective tool standing on behalf of the masses. It presented the suffering of the people like no other organisation would do. Its spiritual, moral and ethical role is to encourage the people with the word of God and to work to reduce the stressful experiences our people have been subjected to by masters of the war machinery."

He went on: "It's a very serious sacrifice made by the church leaders to remain in Yei at a time when security per se had broken down and our members were being killed at ease. The church leadership together with the priests has taken the risk beyond the call of duty.

"For them (bishops, moderators) and our

committed and courageous priests, it has been a matter of accepting the eventual worse to come their way. The mediating role of the church and the work for advocacy for peace is being undermined by such acts of atrocities."

Reflecting on Bishop Hilary's decision to return to Yei, CMSI stated: "For us it seemed like a difficult decision for Bishop Hilary, but in fact it was straightforward for him, and his mind and heart were set. Funds from the South Sudan emergency appeal assisted him in making the journey back to Yei. Mama Joyce remains in Arua, please pray for them both."

Yei Teacher Training College has had to close, but Bishop Hilary said the diocese has started in-service training in two satellite locations, one in Juba and another in Awiel, and has a class of 62 and 90 students respectively in the two locations.

The Bishop Allison Theological College has been relocated to a rented property in Arua, and the college now has three new voluntary staff.

Following an appeal by Bishop Hilary earlier this year, people in Connor have donated more than £11,000 to CMSI's Yei Fund.

Ringer Ivan calls it a day after 55 years!



Mr Ivan Stacey, pictured, who has been a bellringer at St Patrick's Parish Church, Ballymena, for 55 years, has decided to call it a day! To mark the occasion, and thank Ivan for his many decades of service, members of the Ballymena Hon Society of Bellringers organised a night out for Ivan and his wife Rosemary who also used to ring. The dinner was attended by Tower Captain Colin Watt, and ringers past and present. Photo: Loraine Watt



Mrs Margaret Brown, organist with the parishes of Ramoan and Culfeightrin, is congratulated by the Rev David Ferguson and the Choir after she was named in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Margaret was awarded a BEM for her Services to Music. She is still involved with a number of choirs in the North Antrim area.

MBE for Glenavy parishioner Roy

Mr Roy Totten, a member of Glenavy Parish, was awarded an MBE for services to the Community in Northern Ireland in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Roy, who was managing director of an engineering company before retirement, has worked with many voluntary and community organisations over the years.

He was involved in youth work in his parish and ran youth camps for many years. He served on the Church of Ireland Youth Council and was chairman of the Summer Madness youth festival for 10 years.

Roy's desire to help others led to his involvement in the counselling organisation Christian Guidelines, where he was a board member and eventually chairman.

He has served on the General Synod and Standing Committee of the Church of Ireland for many years and is a member of the Governing Council of the Church of Ireland Training College and Chairman of the Priorities Fund.

Roy is a member of Connor Diocesan Council and serves on St Anne's Cathedral Board where he chairs the Outreach and Charitable Work sub-committee.

He was chairman of Church Army UK and Ireland for 10 years. "My chairmanship of Church Army was a time of challenge and a time of great reward," Roy said.

Roy also chaired the Church Army International Council for three years and is now an honorary Vice-President of Church Army.



Mr Roy Totten MBE.

He has a great love of sailing, is a past Vice-Commodore of Carrickfergus Sailing Club and is now a director of the Royal Yachting Association Northern Ireland.

Commenting on his award, Roy said: "It is a privilege to be able to help and encourage others and I would like to thank all those who work alongside me in doing this. It is a great honour to receive an MBE."

'Very proud to come from Ballymena'

Congratulations to Jim Perry, St Patrick's, Ballymena, a Connor Diocesan Lay Reader, who received an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Jim was awarded his Honour for Services to the Community in Ballymena.

He is Chair of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and Chair of Ulster Supported Employment Ltd, providing and supporting employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Jim is an active member of Ballymena Rotary Club. "Rotary's motto is 'service above self' and I try to apply that motto to everything I have been involved in over the years," Jim said.

He has also served on the Board of Governors of five local schools, including 10 years as Chairman of the Board of Governors at Ballymena Academy.

With his wife Patricia, Jim has been involved in the 'Ahoghill in Bloom' team since its foundation 10 years ago, and the village was last year awarded the Champion of Champions title in the small towns' category of the prestigious Britain in Bloom competition for the UK and Ireland.

Jim is vice chairman of the Board of Ballymena Business Centre, and was recently appointed to the JTI Gallaher Trust, a £5 million legacy fund set up by the tobacco manufacturer in the wake of the closure of its Ballymena plant to support re-employment opportunities in the area.

Last year, he was appointed Her Majesty's High Sheriff for the County of Antrim by the Secretary of State. This prestigious role



Mr Jim Perry MBE.

meant he attended many events over the course of the year, and greeted the Queen and Prince Philip when they visited Co Antrim. He also met other royals including Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex.

Jim has been appointed Clerk to the Lieutenancy of Co Antrim.

A lifelong member of St Patrick's, Jim was a bellringer for a number of years until he was appointed a Diocesan Lay Reader in 1985. Since then, he has conducted more than 1,000 services across the diocese. Jim also sits on the Permanent Commission for the Archdeaconry of Dalriada.

He said he was delighted to receive this Honour. "It is in recognition of services to my home town. I am very proud to come from Ballymena, it is a great place."

Rector's gift for friend in Burundi

The Rev Louise Stewart, rector of Finaghy and Upper Malone Parish, hand stitched several clerical robes which were delivered to the Rev Aime Joseph Kimararungu, Diocesan Secretary of Gitega Diocese, Burundi, by CMS Ireland.

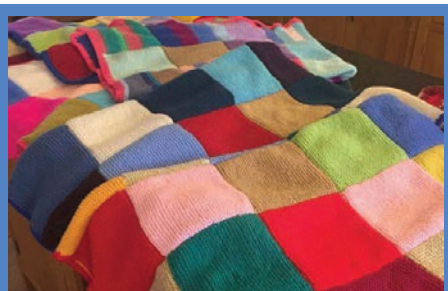
Louise and her parish hosted Rev Aime in 2014 during the CMSI 200th anniversary. They have remained in contact since, and when Louise heard that Rev Aime was to be appointed Bishop Coadjutor for Gitega Diocese she wanted to do something to mark this special occasion.

With some dressmaking skills and a flair with fabric, she set about making Rev Aime his own set of clerical robes.

Jenny Smyth, CMSI Mission Director, said: "For Louise to take such time and effort to mark this significant occasion for Rev Aime and the Diocese of Gitega speaks volumes about the impact of face to face contact and personal connections."



The Rev Louise Stewart gives the hand stitched robes, destined for Burundi, to Jenny Smyth, CMSI Mission Director.



What lovely work! The squares of these nine colourful blankets were knitted by a 102-year-old friend of Ballymoney, Finvoy and Rasharkin parishioner Olive Archibald. The squares were sewn together by Olive and sent to Gambia to bring comfort to those less fortunate. This was part of a larger contribution by the St Patrick's, Ballymoney, 'Pins and Needles' group.



The team from Holy Trinity, Woodburn, before setting out for Uganda in July.

The worship is over, the service begins...

A 16-strong team from Holy Trinity, Woodburn, Carrickfergus, spent two weeks in Uganda in July with the charity Fields of Life.

The team was led by Carol and Davey Mulligan. Their tasks included the completion of a kitchen for a new village school, Bible Clubs and training in health and hygiene, sports and crafts. They also commissioned three wells.

One member of the team was Elaine Wright, who works in administration for Connor Diocese. It was Elaine's first time in Africa and she took strength from the parish motto:

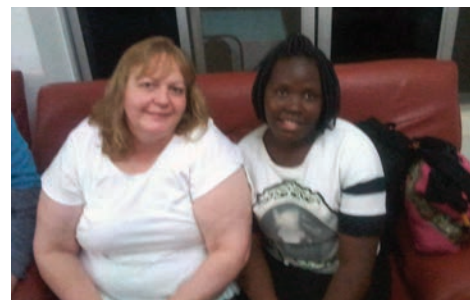
**'A Bible in your hand
A Saviour in your heart
A purpose for your life'**

"I am quite a shy person and was really out of my comfort zone," Elaine said. "I was anxious about the heat, the travelling through airports, the insects, and just not knowing what lay ahead."

"But the whole time I was there I felt safe. God was watching over us. We had done all the preparation with our team leaders, got all our vaccinations - which weren't cheap - and our insurance and visa applications. I did stress a bit about the visa as I really didn't want to be refused entry, but everything was fine."

Elaine had a very special reason for going to Uganda. Ten years ago she hosted two girls in her home for 10 days. Maggie and Ruth were members of the first ever Fields of Life Celebration Choir. A decade on, Ruth is a social worker in the slums of Kampala, and Maggie is the brains behind the I am Girl project, which the Holy Trinity team was involved in.

Elaine met up with the two girls twice



Elaine Wright with former Fields of Life Celebration Choir Member Ruth who stayed with Elaine 10 years ago and is now a social worker.

during her visit. "It was amazing to see how they have grown up, spiritually and physically, and how being sponsored has impacted on their lives," she said.

Woodburn Parish was invited by Fields of Life to send a team to Uganda after it raised funds for the kitchen at the school in Gulu. The group was divided into teams, and it fell to the Painting and Maintenance Team to clear the rubble from the kitchen and paint it, as well as refurbishing a children's playground with equipment supplied by Holy Trinity, much to the delight of the children.

HAND WASHING

The Health and Hygiene Team used puppets and music to promote hand washing and teeth cleaning, very important when the children eat so much sugar cane.

Elaine said the school had a long drop toilet and the team encouraged the children to keep the facilities clean. "We gave them liquid soap, disinfectant, brushes, and water barrels."

"During the end-of-week celebration a cow wandered into the school area, had a good

drink and then knocked over a barrel. Later I saw one of the children put everything back in place again."

The team gifted the village three sewing machines and material to make reusable sanitary towels - a key focus of I am Girl. "This will allow the girls to stay in school rather than having to be off for a few days every month," Elaine said.

"The teachers and the women of the village set to work straight away, and will teach the young women how to make these products too. They said they loved this and were very thankful to God."

The team had provided netball posts and balls, volleyball posts, cones and beanbags and the children enjoyed all the activities organised by the Games Team.

The Bible Stories Team focused on Noah's Ark and other stories the children were already familiar with and taught lots of songs. There was fun for the children with the Craft Team too, as they learned how to make pompoms in the shape of ducks and rabbits which oddly they made to miaow like a cat!

UNIFORMS

"We taught them how to stitch and sew on a button, which meant that anyone with a rip or hole could repair their uniform or replace a lost button," said Elaine. "It was lovely to see that the next day they had fixed their own uniforms and later in the week made needle and thread cases to keep their needles etc safe.

"I think Geoffrey, one of the older students, will be a designer as he was coming up



Adam Fittis, on behalf of the Fittis family, helped to commission a well in Uganda in memory of his grandad Tommy.



The school children test out the new play equipment provided and installed by Holy Trinity, Woodburn.

with his own ideas and picking things like the seven strand braiding really quickly!"

Some of the children in Gulu were a little unnerved by this group from Carrickfergus appearing in their village!

"When we arrived at the school it seemed to be quite regimented and the children were fearful of us white people, but by the end of the week they were laughing and playing safely on the equipment," Elaine said. "On the last day we had a big celebration of about 600 people which included the village clergy, dignitaries, parents, aunts and uncles and of course the children from the school.

"We supplied the food which was beef, potatoes, rice and lemonade, and we left the children gifts of underwear, soap, toothbrushes, pencils, sharpeners, erasers and sweets. There were gifts for the teachers too.

"The children and teachers did some celebration songs and dances for us and the clergymen blessed the kitchen."

COMMISSION

The team said farewell to the people of Gulu and set off to commission three bore wells. The first was the Holy Trinity Well, and the second was the Fittis Family Well in memory of Tommy Fittis. Tommy's grandson Adam was with the team, and played his bagpipes at the commissioning. "He did his family proud," said Elaine.

The third well was being drilled when the team arrived. "Such a welcome the villagers gave us," Elaine said. "This well was commissioned in memory of Jim



Elaine Wright is reunited with Maggie, who Elaine hosted in Carrickfergus during the Fields of Life Celebration Choir tour 10 years ago. Maggie founded the I am Girl project in Uganda.

Simple and is called the Semple Harrison Well.

"At each of these wells there was a celebration of thanks to us, but especially to God for the gift of clean water. We were always seated in the shade, we sang and prayed with and for each other, and each village gave us a gift which was very humbling."

Gifts included chickens, maize and brushes. Each village had to form a committee to raise money for the repair and maintenance of the well, and the team was introduced to the members.

"We taught eight classes a day in the first week and travelled more than 2,000 kilometres around Uganda so by the time the trip was ending we were exhausted," said Elaine. "A sign in our church says: 'The worship is over, the service begins...' I have come home from Uganda with so many memories and hope to go back in the future."



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