

# CONNOR

## connections

Clergy  
Conference  
in Co Cavan  
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After 20 years as Connor Diocesan Curate, the Rev Canon Ken Ruddock has retired. The 88-year-old is now considering doing another degree!

Canon Ruddock ensured all Connor churches had cover during vacancies, holidays and sickness. He is succeeded by Dean John Bond, former Dean of Connor.

Canon Ruddock is recovering from a broken neck after falling before conducting a service in Glenarm last September. Afterwards he underwent an MRI scan. "I never prayed so hard in all my life. Those 15 minutes seemed so long and uncomfortable. I told my wife Kathleen that I would never make her listen to a sermon longer than 15 minutes again!" he joked.

"I was very lucky. If the vertebrae had broken inwards I would have been paralysed, but they fell outwards."

Canon Ruddock was born in Carlow Parish, Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, in 1930. He was a middle child of 10. His father died young. "He had been gassed in World War One," Canon Ruddock said, the pain of the memory etched in his face.

He and his siblings benefited from an educational endowment, and the five boys attended King's Hospital School, Dublin. "The school chapel was very important and I believe that my vocation to the ministry came from services in the chapel," Canon Ruddock said.

He went on to obtain a BA from Trinity College, and worked during this period as a Junior Master in Prior School, Lifford, Co Donegal. He returned to Dublin to attend Divinity School (now the CITI). "The Prayer Book was instilled in us. We were each given an interleaved Prayer Book and were able to write notes on the blank pages. I still have one," Canon Ruddock said.

Two years later, in Coronation year 1953, he was ordained as curate in St Patrick's, Ballymena, where he met Kathleen. They married in 1956, the year Canon Ruddock moved to St Thomas's, Belfast.

Four years later, he became rector of TomRegan Parish Church in the border town of Ballyconnell, where the couple stayed for seven years before moving with their three children – Philip, Ruth and Michael – to Lower Falls Parish, Belfast.

They arrived in 1968. Soon after Canon Ruddock had to take the difficult decision to close St Mathias's due to the shift in population and fall in numbers. In recent years, St Luke's Church has also closed.



Archdeacon George Davison, Commissary for the Bishop of Connor, presents Canon Ken Ruddock with a thank you gift on behalf of the diocese.

## Diocesan Curate retires after 20 years

Canon Ruddock describes his years ministering in this part of Belfast at the height of the Troubles as 'a very difficult time.' He was injured during a Protestant riot in the Shankill Road in 1969. Along with other clergy, he had been trying to calm the situation when he sustained a serious head injury. The trauma impacted his family.

Canon Ruddock remained in Lower Falls until 1980. "I had only been there a short time when I was injured," he said. "It would have been disrespectful to run away."

The movement of people out of Belfast continued. "When I arrived at St Luke's, the parish list had 1,100 families. When I left in 1980 it had around 150," he said.

"I do wonder if I could have been better at stemming the tide, but at times I helped to move people out myself. They often lacked money and were very afraid."

After 12 years he moved to Whitehead and Islandmagee, where he stayed until retirement in 1996. A year later he was asked by Diocesan Curate, Archdeacon Jack Rolston, to help out in Craig's Parish, and was appointed Diocesan Curate by Bishop Jim Moore in 1998.

"It has been very interesting. I have been in nearly every church in the diocese, organising cover for all the vacancies and taking services every Sunday. I have found retired clergy like myself are very willing to help out, as are Lay Readers. During a vacancy people can become quite downhearted."

He said he was often taken aback by the kindness of parishes in the diocese, who appreciate his help at a difficult time.

Canon Ruddock's garden is bursting with snowdrops and these have a story to tell. Every year, a former parishioner gives him a bunch of planted snowdrops from her garden, and Canon Ruddock uses these to illustrate a sermon before planting them.

He was also once gifted a hive of bees. Sadly, due to his lack of experience, the bees met a sticky end!

He has strong views on what makes a good sermon. "The Canon of St Thomas's, RA Deane, was a great preacher. He held people spellbound. Today there can be a lack of illustrations in sermons and some clergy even use the internet and don't write their own stuff," he stated.

Canon Ruddock paid tribute to Kathleen for her support. "Kathleen has been invaluable," he said. "She gets a lot of the phone calls and she was my driver. She went to nearly all the services, I could not have done without her."

For a number of years Canon Ruddock was a member of the Liturgical Commission in Dublin, looking at the revision of the Prayer Book.

His hobbies include cricket, and in his youth he was a keen swimmer, winning the 1.5 mile Liffey Swim in Dublin in 1947!

We wish him and Kathleen all the best in retirement – and future studies!

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## Cover photo:

'He shall reign for ever and ever.'  
Stained glass window in Christ Church, Lisburn, dedicated in memory of Norman Semples, gifted by his wife Ella (June 1982). Photo: Karen Bushby



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

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# A message from Archdeacon Davision

Dear Friends, I'm glad to write a few words to introduce the latest edition of Connor Connections. Within its covers you will find articles which give a flavour of some of the wide variety of activities which take place across the diocese.

Amongst the articles is an interview with Canon Ken Ruddock who has recently retired as our Diocesan Curate.

In that role, over many years, Ken has given wonderful service to parishes the length and breadth of the diocese through his meticulous organisation of service cover in all manner of situations. We owe him a great debt of gratitude and wish him a well-deserved and restful retirement.

We are also delighted to welcome Dean John Bond as his successor in the role and

thank John for his willingness to help the diocese in this important task.

I know that all of us have been remembering Bishop Alan in our prayers as he has been receiving medical treatment over the last few months.

Those prayers have meant a great deal to the bishop and he has appreciated the many messages of love and support that he has received from around the diocese.

It has been good to hear that his treatments are progressing well and we look forward to having him back at the helm of the diocese once his recovery is complete. Please continue to pray in the meantime.

Yours in Jesus, George



At the service of institution in St Columba's are, back row from left: Canon William Taggart, Registrar; The Ven Paul Dundas, Archdeacon of Dalriada; the Rev John Rutter, Rural Dean. Front row from left: The Ven Dr Stephen McBride, Bishop's Commissary, and the Rev James Boyd, new rector of Derryvolgie.

## Rev James Boyd instituted in Derryvolgie

St Columba's, Derryvolgie, was packed on November 13 for the institution of the Rev James Boyd by the Bishop of Connor's Commissary, the Ven Dr Stephen McBride. The preacher was the Rev Barry Forde, Chaplain at Queen's University.

James is married to Shirley and they have two daughters. He is a past pupil of Ballymena Academy and has a degree in computer programming from Ulster University.

James worked with the Church of Ireland Year Out team in 1998-99, helping in 26 different churches across Ireland, before his

appointment as Youth Ministry Co-ordinator in Moira.

After ordination, he was curate in the parish of Magheralin with Dollingstown, Diocese of Down and Dromore, for four years before his appointment as rector of Holy Trinity, Dromore, Diocese of Clogher.

James moved to Willowfield Parish, Belfast, as Vicar, in 2015.

James said: "We feel a real sense of God's call. Derryvolgie is a parish which has been in our hearts for a long time. We see a lot of opportunity in this place."



## Ruth and Brexit are focus of Lent series

Belfast Cathedral invites the public, politicians, business people, students and anyone with an interest in public theology, to a series of five lunchtime events focused on Brexit during Lent.

Wednesdays in Lent is a collaboration between the Cathedral and the Corrymeela Community. The programme will be entitled 'Theology in the City – Brexit, Borders and the Book of Ruth.'

Beginning on March 13, and continuing on March 20 and 27 and April 3 and 10, each session will run from 12 noon until 2.30pm and will include a short service, lunch, talk and discussion.

This series is facilitated by Glenn Jordan from Corrymeela. For further information, visit [www.belfastcathedral.org](http://www.belfastcathedral.org).

## Presidential honour for Larne curate

The Rev Dr Ian Mills, curate in the Parishes of Larne and Inver with Glynn and Raloo (pictured right), is the new President of the Ulster Society of Organists and Choirmasters.



Before ordination in 2017, Ian worked as Organist and Master of the Choristers in Derry Cathedral. He served his Deacon Internship in Agherton Parish.

Ian said the Society is aware of the challenges facing church musicians, and is enthused at the opportunities which lie ahead. "I look forward to continuing the Society's outreach to new players, especially those of young age, and seeking opportunities for further collaboration with friends in like-spirited organisations," he said.

## Jimmy's thank you

A coffee morning held by Magheragall Parish at the request of parishioner Jimmy Skelton, aged 90, raised £3,000 for the Friends of the Cancer Centre.

In a letter thanking the parish, Jimmy's family wrote: "Friends of the Cancer Centre is very close to Dad's heart as is the Parish of Magheragall, and he was overwhelmed by the support he received from organisers and those who donated to the charity."



Patricia Beattie, Larne Parish, and Paul Connolly from Smartvideo with the DVD featuring St Cedma's Church.

# Story of St Cedma's is captured on film

Patricia Beattie, who in 2017 published a book on the history of St Cedma's, Larne, has now produced a high quality video telling the story of the parish.

Patricia had written a history of the church in time for the parish's participation in European Heritage Open Days in September 2017, before going to to tell the story in film.

She engaged the skills of Paul Connolly of Smartvideo. "Our church is a church for all denominations and none. I wanted to produce a video that could be used in schools or at meetings in the diocese to tell people about the history of St Cedma's, which is the second oldest church in the diocese," Patricia said.

The video was filmed on two fair weather days last August. Patricia narrated from inside the church and the cameramen took some stunning pictures outside, making use of drone technology for aerial shots.

Producer Paul said Patricia had made his task easy. "Patricia has an encyclopaedic knowledge and could deliver the words in such a way that allowed the story to flow.

She is full of information. We recorded the narrative in just one take."

Patricia has been a member of the St Cedma's Choir since the age of three (her late father is a former organist). She is hoping sales of the DVD will raise funds for the new Parish Hall, currently under construction. Production of the video itself is Patricia's gift to the church, and she has 250 copies for sale at £10 each.

We believe St Cedma's has now become the first in Ireland to offer an online 3D visual tour of the inside of the Church.

The 3D tour was gifted to the church by Paul Connolly who took the 3D images when making Patricia's video.

Rector, the Rev David Lockhart said: "We as a parish are very grateful for this gift and excited to be in the unique position of being the first church in Ireland to offer this type of visual tour."

## Footprints Lent resource from Christian Aid

Christian Aid Ireland recently launched its Lenten resources which include a daily email reflection series called Footprints.

Each day during Lent, participants receive an email, consisting of a prayer and a short reflection based on one of the Bible readings from the Revised Common Lectionary.

The reflections are written by an exciting line-up of Christian leaders, theologians, academics, thinkers and practitioners from Ireland and around the world.

David Thomas, Church and Community Manager at Christian Aid,



said: "Our hope is, as participants journey with us through Lent, that they will consider their metaphorical 'footprint' - the legacy they leave behind, and the impact of their lifestyle on people and planet." Footprints is free to receive. Visit [caid.ie/lent](http://caid.ie/lent) for more information.





Dr George Lings was one of the inspirational guest speakers.



The Rev Kevin Graham, the Rev Jason Kernohan and the Rev Canon Mark Taylor.



Conference speaker Dr Janet Unsworth.



The Rev Canon Mark McConnell, the Rev Canon James Carson and Archdeacon George Davison.



Connor staff Elaine Wright, Lorraine Ogilby and Audra Irvine are set for dinner at the Slieve Russell.



Some of those who attended Clergy Conference along with the speakers Dr George Lings and Dr Janet Unsworth.

## A time for teaching, fellowship, relaxation

Connor Clergy Conference returned to the Slieve Russell Hotel in Co Cavan for the fourth time from November 7-9.

More than 70 clergy, along with Connor staff and members of the diocesan development team, attended the conference and enjoyed three days of fellowship, teaching and relaxation.

Guest speakers were Dr George Lings of Church Army and Dr Janet Unsworth from Edgehill College, Belfast.

As well as inspirational talks, there was worship each day, beginning with Eucharist on Wednesday afternoon, and including late evening office (Wednesday), Morning Prayer (Thursday), Compline (Thursday evening) and closing prayers.

Jonny Campbell-Smyth, Ian Mills and Jason Kernohan provided musical accompaniment to worship.

On Thursday evening, members of the Connor team gave an update on their work. Communications Officer Karen Bushby gave an overview of the benefits

and pitfalls of social media and encouraged all clergy to support the diocesan magazine 'Connor Connections' by contributing news items and ideas, and helping to distribute the magazine.

Youth Officer Christina Baillie spoke about 'Journey,' a resource which is unique in that it has been written by young people for young people and has been published by Connor Youth Forum. (See page 15).

The session was concluded by Children's Project Development Officer Jill Hamilton, who introduced a new Sunday School resource produced by Jill and the Children's Council called 'All Aboard.' This is currently being piloted in some parishes across the diocese.

Over the three days, everyone enjoyed the comforts of the hotel, including lovely rooms, fabulous food, the gorgeous grounds, the spa and, for some, a round of golf.



The opening Eucharist on the first day of Clergy Conference.



## Pets raise the Cathedral woof!

Worshippers really raised the woof at Choral Evensong in Belfast Cathedral on September 30!

Dozens of doggies and a sprinkling of cats padded into St Anne's for the Cathedral's second annual Pet's Service.

The animals were all very well behaved, some joined in heartily with the hymns and anthems, others listened intently to the prayers and readings as they cuddled in their owners' arms, and some just wanted to strut their stuff down the aisle!

Dean Stephen Forde and Master of the Choristers David Stevens had selected appropriate readings, music and anthems for the service. David's dog Xin help him conduct the choir, while Organ Scholar Jack Wilson's dog Ted sat beside him at the organ all through the service!

The sermon was preached by Dean Forde, with reference to that well-known animal linguist Dr Doolittle!

At the end of the service, pets were invited to be individually blessed by members of the clergy, with the Dean, the Rev Janice Elsdon, the Rev Ron Elsdon, the Rev Canon Mark Taylor and the Rev Paul Twomey doing the blessings.

It was a friendly, fun-filled service, and many of those who attended expressed thanks to the Cathedral for organising it. Comments included: "It's so nice to see our beloved companions being recognised," and "Thank you for the opportunity to have our four legged friends acknowledged and blessed."

Dean Forde said: "The blessing of pets gives us a wonderful opportunity to thank God for the gift of animals, and for us to ask God's blessing on all that he has made."



Laura with pet Rosie outside Belfast Cathedral after the Pets' Service.

# Parishes rise to Baby Basics' challenge



The Rev Andrew Campbell and Broughshane Guides hand over their Baby Basics' donations to Connor Children's Officer Jill Hamilton, second from left.

St Patrick's Parish, Broughshane, took part in the Baby Basics Belfast four-week challenge in October/November.

The challenge was launched at a women's breakfast on October 6 when Jill Hamilton, Connor Children's Project Development Officer, spoke about Baby Basics and how it is helping families in need in the diocese.

Geraldine Linford, who leads the Girl Guides in Broughshane, suggested the Guides get involved as part of their annual Good Turn project.

Jill visited on November 15 to tell them all about Baby Basics, and show them a sample of the packs given to families; a large hamper of essential items for mum and baby made up in a Moses basket.

Jill said: "The girls asked lots of questions and were very keen to go home and explain everything to their families and bring items in to help.

"The Guides listened with real interest to some stories of families who have been helped by Baby Basics, and some of the circumstances behind why families find themselves in financial difficulty and need our support in the short term."

Jill collected their donations on December 6. "Not only did we fill two Moses baskets, but they also gave me 13 bags full of clothing, nappies, toiletries etc," Jill said.

## Great support from St Paul's Parish

St Paul's, Lisburn, supported Baby Basics during Harvest. Sister Karen Webb from Connect Base visited to talk about the project, and lots of groups got involved.

Diocesan Children's Officer Jill Hamilton visited the Girls' Brigade and explained the Baby Basics Belfast story to two different age groups.

Jill thanked Alison Stevenson, GB Captain, and all the leaders for encouraging and supporting the girls.

Heather Marsden, who oversees the toddler group 'Lots of Tots' helped to co-ordinate the whole church collection, sorted out all the donations, and organised a van to transport everything to the Base.

Jill said: "We are hugely grateful to all the organisations and the members of the church congregation in St Paul's.

Their donations gave us a huge, much

needed boost as our stock of donations had been almost completely depleted."

## St Patrick is coming to Lisburn!

The fantastic Patrick's Mysterious Adventure exhibition and interactive story trail is coming to Christ Church Parish, Lisburn, from March 13-17!

Local schools and families are invited to discover the adventurous life story of St Patrick from his kidnap by Irish pirates to his return to serve the people of Ireland that he loved so well.

This event is free, and features live actors, Jumping Clay workshop, ceramic model painting workshop, Irish dancing, talking reptiles, a café and much more. Further information available soon!





At the service of thanksgiving for Jim Neill's 40 years as a Diocesan Lay Reader are, from left: The Rev Jonathan Cockerill, Canon Bro David Jardine, Dean John Bond, the Rev Arthur Young, Mr Jim Neill, Archdeacon Paul Dundas and the Rev Eddie Coulter. Photo: Norman Briggs

# Jim marks 40 years as a Diocesan Reader

A special service of thanksgiving in St Paul's Parish, Lisburn, on December 9 celebrated Jim Neill's 40 years of service as a Diocesan Lay Reader in Connor.

Reflecting on his ministry, Jim said he had come to faith at the King's Hall, Belfast, in April 1962 when he was inspired by visiting Evangelist Jack Shuler.

Jim, who worked insurance, considered full-time ministry, but opted instead to train as a Diocesan Reader. He was commissioned on December 13 1978.

He remembers his tutors well. Dean Richard Adams taught him church history, doctrine and liturgy. Canon Ernest Shepherd tutored him in Biblical Studies, and the Rev Edward Darling (later Bishop Darling) took him for preaching practice.

"At the end I had to preach a sermon on creation in St John's Malone in front of him," Jim recalls.

He was attached to his own Parish of Upper Falls, where Canon Haughton was about to retire.

"Over the years I have taken many services in 60 different parishes in Connor Diocese, covering holidays, vacancies, sick duty," Jim said.

When Jim moved from Upper Falls to St Paul's, Lisburn, in January 2009, he identified that over the previous 30 years he had taken 1,004 services and preached 761 sermons in Upper Falls alone!

Jim has also been a dedicated pastoral visitor. "My insurance experience meant I felt at ease going into a strange house to visit someone. I would have a general conversation with them. I would then ask them if they would like me to read a Psalm or say a prayer. There is a healing prayer which I found has a real affect."



Mr Jim Neill.

A native of Dunmurry, Jim is a former pupil of Upper Falls Public Elementary School and Lisburn Technical College.

He worked in the insurance business and was with Pearl Assurance for 25 years. Now aged 77, Jim took early retirement on the day before his 61st birthday.

He has held many church offices - Select Vestry, Parochial Nominator, Treasurer, Secretary, Rector's Churchwarden, People's Glebeward, and Freewill Offering Secretary, among others. He served Connor Diocesan Council on the Finance Committee, the former Training Council and the Permanent Commission for Connor and Belfast.

Jim said he has served under seven rectors in Upper Falls and in St Paul's, and seven Bishops!

Jim has been involved with the

interdenominational Divine Healing Ministries for the past 20 years, and assists with the weekly communion service and prayer ministry in St George's, High Street.

"I enjoy expounding God's Word through preaching. In my younger days I was a Sunday School teacher, Bible Club leader and Boys' Brigade leader," Jim said.

"I love the liturgy of the church. I have been privileged by God to serve in this ministry over so many years. I hope that through my ministry people have been helped spiritually."

Jim is a fan of Linfield FC, Manchester United and Rangers. He is also a member of Lisburn Cricket Club.

He was closely involved in the Suffolk / Lenadon Interface group at a difficult time in the peace process in 2004/5, and was also a Director of the Stewartstown Road Regeneration Scheme in 2000/01. This scheme aimed to provide employment for people in the area, with all proceeds split 50:50 between the Protestant and Catholic communities.

He was also involved in a Northern Ireland-wide cross community inter-church group.

The preacher at the service of thanksgiving for his 40 years as a Lay Reader on December 9 was Jim's former rector at Upper Falls, the Rev Eddie Coulter, now rector of Lambeg Parish. The service was led by the Rev Arthur Young, rector of St Paul's. Canon Kevin Graham, Connor Warden of Readers, and Diocesan Reader Mark Jamison, read the lessons.

The Ven Paul Dundas, Archdeacon of Dalriada, represented Bishop Abernethy. Prayers were said by the Rev Jonathan Cockerill, Deacon Intern at St Paul's, and the Rev Paul Redfern, Senior Minister.

Jim said: "I thank Almighty God who called me to the office of Diocesan Reader. It has been a privilege to expound the world of God to so many people both young and old in the diocese, and my prayer is that many have been challenged."





The Lord Mayor of Lisburn, Councillor Uel Mackin, and his wife Jennifer attended the special service for Rainbows and Brownies at Eglantine. They are pictured with the Rev Jason Kernohan and Sarah Crawford.

## Busy programme of events in Eglantine!

The weekend leading from November into December was a busy one for the Parish of Eglantine with a Ceilidh on Friday evening, November 30, a service for Rainbows and Brownies the following Sunday morning, and a concert on the Sunday evening.

The Ceilidh was organised to celebrate the feast of St Andrew. The Alastair Scott Ceilidh Band provided the music, and the evening raised £1,200 for parish funds.

The special service for the Rainbows and Brownies was attended by the Lord Mayor of Lisburn, Councillor Uel Mackin, his wife Jennifer and Mrs Anne Cochrane, County Commissioner for South Down Girlguiding.

On Sunday evening, in celebration of the first Sunday of Advent, the choir 'Cantare' led the service. Lessons were read by members of the Parish as well as the Parish Priest of Blaris, Father Dermot McCaughan, and Mrs Anne Haire from the Moravian Church in Kilwarlin.



Christian Aid has opened a charity shop named The Changing Room in Cullybackey. The Rev Adrian Halligan (left), curate-in-charge, Craigs, Killagan and Dunaghy, attended the opening along with church warden Francis Neilly (right), on December 7.

## Clive West Lecture

The annual Clive West Memorial Lecture, delivered by Phillip Jensen, former Dean of Sydney, at All Saints' Church, University Street, Belfast, on November 27, drew a crowd of almost 300 people. The lecture was entitled 'The Death of Evangelism.'

# RIR 'family' pays tribute to its fallen

The Royal Irish Regiment 'family' gathered in Belfast Cathedral for an annual Service of Remembrance on November 4.

In attendance were all ranks of the Regiment and a large number of veterans and bereaved families.

Special guests included Brigadier Colin Weir DSO MBE, the Colonel of the Regiment, and Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for the City of Belfast, Mrs Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle.

The service of Choral Evensong was led by the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, and featured the Cathedral Choir. There was also music from the Band of The Royal Irish Regiment.

Lessons were read by Brigadier Weir and Lieutenant Colonel PJ Walkley, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment.

The Rev Dr I Thompson, Honorary Chaplain to the Regiment, led an Act of Remembrance which included the laying of wreaths by a representative of each of



Dean Stephen Forde greets Brigadier Colin Weir DSO MBE, the Colonel of the Regiment.

the antecedent and foundation Regiments which form the Royal Irish Regiment family. A wreath was also laid by the Colonel of the Regiment.

Following a tribute by a piper, Colonel HK McAllister, Honorary Colonel, 2nd Battalion, recited the Ode of Remembrance.

Taking his theme for his sermon from the regimental motto – 'Clear the Way/Fág an Bealach,' Archbishop Richard Clarke spoke of human dignity in the context of remembrance and the reality of hope and peace through following and experiencing the presence of Jesus Christ.

## Hawthorne brothers honoured

Remembrance Sunday 2018 was particularly poignant for Magheragall parishioner Cyril Hawthorne who laid a wreath in memory of his grandfather Thomas and great uncle Albert.

The Hawthorne brothers have been remembered in the parish church since 1918, but their names were absent from the city war memorial.

One hundred years after the end of the conflict, the names of the two brothers were added to the War Memorial by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, and Cyril received an invitation to lay a wreath in their memory.

Thirteen members of the Hawthorne family served during the Great War. Thomas and Albert did not come home but their six brothers, four cousins and brother-in-law all returned to Lisburn. Cyril, himself an old soldier, was joined at the memorial by many members of his family.

The service to mark the 100th anniversary of the Armistice was organised by the Royal British Legion Lisburn Branch,



Mr Cyril Hawthorne.

supported by the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.

The first wreath was laid by the Lord Lieutenant of County Antrim Mrs Joan Christie CVO, a parishioner of St John the Baptist Parish Church, Agherton.

Magheragall rector, the Rev Nicholas Dark, Hon Chaplain to the Lisburn Branch of the Royal British Legion, gave the address.





HRH The Duke of York arriving at Belfast Cathedral for the Centenary Service. Picture Press Eye / Darren Kidd

# Poignant centenary of WW1 Armistice

They came together in Belfast Cathedral, as they did around the world, to remember those who died for peace and freedom 100 years to the day after the Armistice of World War One.

Relatives of those who were killed or maimed in the 1914-1918 conflict gathered with others from all over Ireland for a service broadcast live on BBC TV and radio on the afternoon of November 11.

Guests included His Royal Highness The Duke of York KG; Secretary of State Karen Bradley; Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for the City of Belfast, Mrs Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle; Irish Government Minister Damien English; City Councillors and politicians.

Also in the congregation were Josh and

Will De Wind from New York, descendants of Second Lieutenant Edmund De Wind who was awarded a Victoria Cross for bravery at the second Battle of the Somme at which he died in 1918. His name is carved on a pillar at Belfast Cathedral.

The special guests were welcomed by the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, and Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP, Chairman of the Northern Ireland First World War Centenary Committee.

The preacher was the Most Rev Eamon



The Most Rev Eamon Martin, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, left, preached at the service. The Blessing was given by the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Church of Ireland Primate.

Martin, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland. The Blessing was given by the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Church of Ireland Primate and Archbishop of Armagh. The two have been on a shared journey since the commemoration of the outbreak of the war in 1914, a journey referred to by Archbishop Martin in his sermon.

Lessons were read by The Duke of York and Sir Jeffrey Donaldson.

The service in Belfast coincided with services in Dublin, Glasgow and Cardiff, ahead of the national service at Westminster Abbey that evening.

The Choral Evensong was led by the Cathedral Choir and members of the Ulster Orchestra, under the direction of the Choirmaster David Stevens. Acting Organist was Mark McGrath. Cantor was the Rev Julie Bell.

The emphasis of the service was on remembrance and reconciliation, with poet Michael Longley reading his acclaimed work 'Ceasefire.' To coincide with the service, a new collection of poetry written for the Armistice by local man Paul Gilmore was published.

A choral anthem specially commissioned for the service was sung by the Cathedral Choir. The music was by Irish composer Eoghan Desmond and the words were drawn from a poem written in 1915 by Lisburn poet Katharine Tynan, entitled 'Flower of Youth.'

The service featured a moment of reflection rather than an act of remembrance. Several volumes of Ireland's Memorial Records, held in St Anne's, were laid at a field altar. The books were borne by people who had a family member killed in the war and named in the memorial records.

As the sun set and a lantern was carried outside the Cathedral, those gathered inside, watching on television, or listening on radio, remembered all the fallen.

In his address, Archbishop Martin focused on peace and reconciliation. The Archbishop told the congregation: "The brave people we are remembering are calling us to recognise their shared suffering by building a better future where difference is accepted and respected."

He stated: "Peace is not merely 'ceasefire' or the absence of violence and war. Peace is an ongoing work of reconciliation, justice and hope: It means coming out of our own trenches; building bridges, not parapets; 'beating swords into ploughshares, spears into pruning hooks.'"





Enjoying their coffee break at Synod are Mr Roy Totten MBE and the Rev Campbell Dixon MBE.

## Focus on outreach at Connor Synod

Clergy and lay members attended Diocesan Synod in Ballymena Elim Centre on October 3, following a Service of Holy Communion in St Patrick's Church.

In his Presidential Address, the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, spoke about Brexit and the 'tragic' absence of a Northern Ireland Assembly, the need to pray for a way forward and to find ways of dealing with the past.

The Bishop described his four-month sabbatical as a 'gift' which gave him time to 'recover from the constant demands of

ministry and leadership.'

Bishop Abernethy spoke about the 'real potential' for Ordained Local Ministry and described his membership of the World Council of Churches Central Committee as 'challenging and stimulating.'

He said it was critical that the Church is aware of how it engages with its own local

culture, adding that he was encouraged to see the number of parishes trying new and innovative ways to engage with their local communities.

In his wide-ranging address Bishop Abernethy also spoke about his Lent Seminars, parish issues, the growth of the Diocesan Learning Agreement, and the 'disturbing' news from Connor's link diocese of Yei in South Sudan.

Synod was divided into two sessions. The afternoon session included the President's Address, reports from Diocesan Council and Associated Notices of Motion.

The Report of Diocesan Council was proposed by Mr Ken Gibson, Lisburn Cathedral, and seconded by the Rev Danielle McCullagh, Lisburn Cathedral.

### TRIBUTES

Tributes were paid to members of the Connor Development Team for the work they are doing in the diocese.

In his report to Synod, Diocesan Development Officer Trevor Douglas said he had assisted several parishes to develop strategic three-year plans. He said he was impressed by the number who had progressed their outreach work.

Mr Douglas said he had secured additional funding for both children's and youth ministry, and seed funding for a leadership training programme for clergy and lay, designed to enable leaders to explore new forms of mission and ministry at parish level.

His report also highlighted work he has done with the Bishop to develop relationships with a range of community leaders and activists.

The Rev Andrew Campbell, Skerry, Rathcavan and Newtowncrommelin, paid tribute to Children's Officer Jill Hamilton, Church Army Evangelist Karen Webb and Connor Children's Council for bringing Patrick's Mysterious Adventure to Broughshane for four days in March.

Mrs Webb updated Synod on the success of the TLG (Transforming Lives for Good) programme initiated by the Centre of Mission in Shankill Road. She said this project, which supports primary school children who might be at risk of being excluded from school, now has nine new coaches, making a total of 15, and was making a difference in the lives of the children being coached.

"This could happen in any parish in the diocese," Mrs Webb said.

All reports and notices of motions were



The Rev Canon Derek Kerr and Lorraine Leecocke from Drummaul, Duneane and Ballyscullion Parishes at the pre-Synod service of Holy Communion in St Patrick's Parish Church.



passed. At the end of the first session, Dean Sam Wright presented Bishop Abernethy with a gift for his baby grandson, and extended the thanks of the clergy for the support the Bishop has given them over the year.

Mr Tom Lyttle thanked the Bishop on behalf of the laity for all his 'openness and honesty.'

Following dinner in St Patrick's Parish Hall, the evening session of Synod got underway with stories of outreach work in four Connor parishes.

The focus of the stories was an Alpha course in Ardoyne; Messy Church and more in St Aidan's, Sandy Row; Filling Station (contemporary worship) in Ballymoney and the African Child Ministries Shop in Greenisland.

Synod members then met representatives of a number of organisations, namely Messy Church, the North Belfast Centre of Mission, Xplore, Youth Forum, Streetreach, University Chaplaincy, CAP (Christians Against Poverty) and the African Child Ministries.

The final part of the evening was a keynote address by Bishop Abernethy, in which he reflected on how his sabbatical helped him rediscover the 'wonder of Jesus.'

### **'DISCONNECTION'**

The Bishop also looked at issues facing the church today, including buildings, finance, and the dependence on clergy. He spoke about how, after the initial confusion, bewilderment and excitement of being appointed Bishop of Connor in 2007, he began to see a lot of 'disconnection.'

That led to the diocesan Vision Strategy with its focus on 'engaging culture, empowering ministry, effecting change.' This vision, he said, needed a team to drive it, and that resulted in the appointment of the Development Team.

This team's work has led to new networks with youth council, children's council and a Centre of Mission building links with the local community and parishes throughout the diocese. There is recognition from civil society that the Church can be entrusted to be channels of help, Bishop Abernethy said.

He said the Inter Diocesan Learning Project had helped him see things that were happening in the diocese – equipping new leaders, discipling young people, new ministries emerging from the Centre of Mission, new parish ventures, university chaplaincies growing, and Belfast Cathedral addressing its mission in the heart of the city.



Bishop Alan Abernethy delivers his Presidential Address at Connor Synod in Ballymena in October.



Listening to the Bishop's Presidential Address.





Mr David Alexander, who has retired as head verger at Belfast Cathedral after almost 20 years.

# David retires after 18 years of verging

After almost two decades on the verging team of Belfast Cathedral, Mr David Alexander retired on December 30.

He has served as a steward, crucifer, tenor lay clerk, verger, Synod member, parochial nominator and Board member.

David's love for St Anne's Cathedral began almost 70 years ago when, as a boy chorister, he enjoyed the formality and the high standard of liturgy and music.

He experienced the talents of all the Masters of Choristers / Organists who have worked in St Anne's since the Cathedral was built, and witnessed the work and mission of seven Deans.

Born in Banbridge in 1941, David's career took him to sea, first as a cadet and then as an officer for 18 years. His main naval qualifications were achieved at John Moore's University in Liverpool. Soon after obtaining his Master's / Captain's

Certificate, David was appointed as a Marine Pilot for Belfast and other local ports, a position he held for 26 years until his retirement.

In 1969 David featured in a BBC documentary as the 2nd Officer / Navigator on the ship SS Carrigan Head which won the annual race to Chicago in the Great Lakes after the winter freeze-up.

David married Helen in 1968. They have a son David and daughter Suzanne, and three grandchildren.

Dean Houston McKelvey asked for volunteers to help out on the verging team in 2001. David offered his services, and that 'helping out' soon became permanent.

"The verger has so many little things to

check on, the colours (liturgical), lighting, heating etc, preparing for different types of services, leading the choir procession and the clergy," David explained. "I like the dignity of the role, and I like trying to do everything right. I have verged for Prince Andrew, the Earl of Wessex, senior clergymen including the Archbishop of Canterbury, and senior politicians."

A dedicated family man, David's hobbies include painting, and the Anglican Church, particularly its liturgy and tradition of organ and choral music. David and Helen still sing in a local choir. He is also known to fly light aircraft and gliders!

David said he felt the time was right to retire as he would like to spend more time with the family and enjoy his grandchildren.

"I would like to thank the clergy, congregation and sextons for their help and encouragement over the years, especially those who helped with linen laundry, coffee cups, candles etc," David said. "A special thanks to the team of volunteer vergers who supported me throughout and willingly turned out for services when requested."

Expressing his gratitude to his wife Helen, David said his duties in the Cathedral were only possible because of her support and help. "Helen herself worked carefully and quietly in the background so a special thank you to Helen," he said.

The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, said: "David has almost 20 years of experience behind him as a Cathedral verger, but each service has always been prepared for with meticulous detail. He has also been a team leader, organising and guiding the other vergers, acolytes and crucifers in their weekly duties.

"I will miss David for his accumulated wisdom and his gentle kindness. He has been to me, as to previous Deans, a real support to ensure the smooth working of many Cathedral services."

## Black Santa raises £168,000 for charities

The 2018 Black Santa Sit-out at Belfast Cathedral raised £168,000.

"Your generosity means we can help support vital work charities across Northern Ireland are doing with children, elderly people, the homeless, those who are sick or those who are living with a disability," said Dean Stephen Forde.

The Sit-out ran from December 17 until Christmas Eve, with Dean Forde joined

on the steps by a band of helpers including Canons of the Cathedral and other clergy.

Memorable incidents included two envelopes handed in anonymously, one containing more than £31,000 and the other more than £10,000. "We could not believe it!" Dean Forde said.

The funds raised were distributed to 220 charities at the annual Good Samaritans Service on February 3.



Black Santa Dean Stephen Forde with the Rev Ian Mills and Xena on the steps of Belfast Cathedral.



## Institution of Andy Heber in Carnmoney

The Rev Andy Heber was instituted as incumbent of the Parish of Carnmoney at a service in The Church of the

Holy Evangelists on October 18 by the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, Bishop of Connor. The preacher was the Rev



The Rev Andy Heber, front right, with the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, front left, at the Service of Institution on October 18. Back row, from left: The Rev Canon William Taggart, Registrar; the Rev John McClure, Bishop's Chaplain; the Rev Brian Lacey, North Belfast Rural Dean; the Rev Alan Barr, preacher; and the Ven George Davison, Archdeacon of Belfast.

Alan Barr, rector of Sixmilecross and Termonmaguirke, Diocese of Armagh.

Andy is married to Lynne, and they have four grown-up children.

Before starting training for ordination in 1997, he worked in Liverpool as a Diocesan Social Worker in the South Liverpool Deanery for eight years.

He trained at Trinity College in Bristol before returning to Liverpool Diocese to serve a curacy at St Peter's Parr, St Helens.

From there, Andy moved in 2003 to Kirkby where he was team vicar of St Andrew's Tower Hill, and also had responsibility for Pastoral Care within the team ministry in Kirkby.

In May 2012, Andy and his family moved to Co Tyrone where he was rector of Clogherry Parish, near Omagh in the Diocese of Armagh.

## Kilbride buries time capsule until 2068!

Parishioners of Kilbride in 2068 will learn all about life in the parish in 2018 when they open a time capsule buried at St Bride's Church as part of the parish's 150th anniversary celebrations!

The specially crafted capsule was stowed underground on October 21. Around 100 people watched as it was put into the ground, below a marble plaque bearing the words from Hebrews 13: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever."

During the 150th anniversary year, Kilbride Parish has organised several events to mark this milestone, including a celebration service at which the Primate, the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, preached.

The rector of Kilbride, the Rev Canon David Humphries, said: "One of the things which we thought would help the children to get involved was to bury a time capsule in the church grounds, to be brought up in 50 years' time - the year of the 200th anniversary of the consecration!"

"The kids got involved in a big way, both as individuals and through their organisations. Paintings and other 'arty' works were included, as well as details of the uniformed organisations, their badges, etc."

David said the capsule also contained a project on Sterling Currency as it is used today; the original key of the church door,

and many photos of parish events, Select Vestry meetings, and more.

Finally, a letter from the rector today to the rector at the time of the 200th anniversary was included.

"We found that we had to think very hard about what parish life might be like in 50 years' time, and whether or not the people would understand everything that we put into the box," David said.

"Also, in the light of some rather famous disasters with time capsules, we made as sure as we could that the box and its contents would survive 50 years underground.

"We created a waterproof chamber and we sealed the box professionally so that everything would remain intact. We have placed a notice in the vestry informing people of the existence of the box, and when it should be brought up."

The box is now secure under its concrete plaque, and perhaps some of the children who contributed to its contents will be involved in its excavation in 50 years' time!

## Tea's up in Ramoan



The young people with some of the 10,000 teabags!

The youth fellowship of the Parish of Ramoan decided that as part of the church's Harvest Services they would ask parishioners to donate teabags for the local foodbank in Ballycastle.

The young people set themselves a target of 10,000 teabags! In return they served refreshments after the Harvest Service.

## St Paul's video is an internet hit!

A video by St Paul's Parish Church, Lisburn, starring the entire church community singing along to Rend Collective's 'My Lighthouse,' has become something of an internet sensation!

The video, which features all those who play a role in the church or attend its different clubs and societies, had reached more than 30k views on Facebook at time of going to print!



# I want to give back to community - MBE

Congratulations to Mrs Jacqueline Weir who received an MBE for services to the community in north Belfast in the Queen's New Year Honours.

A lifelong member of St Matthew's Parish Church, Shankill Road, Belfast, Jacqueline is a member of Connor Diocesan Council, Connor Synod and General Synod.

In her parish she is Glebewarden, Freewill Offering Secretary and has been a member of the Select Vestry for more than 40 years.

Jacqueline has been a leader in St Matthew's Guides since the age of 18. She also sits on the Board of Governors of three north Belfast schools.

Jacqueline, 64, and has lived in north Belfast all her life. She graduated from Queen's University with a Degree in Computer Sciences in 1975. She worked in computing in Shorts for around 20 years before moving to Queen's to work in IT. She retired from Queen's three years ago.

Speaking of her long commitment to Guiding, Jacqueline said: "Guiding is a superb organisation and has given me opportunities I would not have had otherwise," she said. "Over the years I have held all sorts of roles, including Deputy Chief Commissioner for Ulster. I am currently Training Co-ordinator for Ulster.



Mrs Jacqueline Weir MBE.

"Through Guiding, young women get to build confidence and resilience. They also learn to be good citizens and play a role in their community as they grow up."

Jacqueline is a transferor and Chair of the Board of Governors of Glenwood Primary School; Chair and a transferor on the Board of Belfast Girls' Model School and she is also a member of the Board of Governors of Belfast Royal Academy.

She has been involved in school

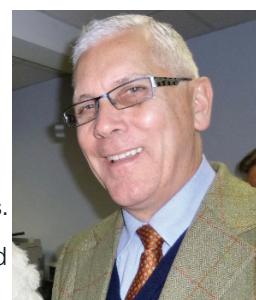
governorship since the mid-70s.

"I feel it is very important to help young people to achieve their potential. I also enjoy it because it was something different to my own professional life," she said.

"I want to give back to a community that has suffered a lot over the years. Many of my contemporaries moved away through the height of the Troubles and I feel it is incumbent on me to give something back."

## Honour for former St Anne's Cathedral chorister

Belfast Cathedral parishioner and former chorister Alan Boyd was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours.



Mr Alan Boyd MBE.

Alan was honoured for services to the community in Belfast. A former teacher, he was Deputy Principal of Glinahirk Primary School for 22 years before retiring early in 2010.

From 2005-2010, Alan was seconded to the role of Director of the Pushkin Trust, working with children and young people largely in the areas of creative writing and environmental projects.

Alan joined the Belfast Cathedral Choir as a boy chorister in 1964 and was in the choir was a total of 25 years. Alan was also a member of the Cathedral Board for more than 10 years.

He worked on establishing a Cathedral Archive for more than three decades.

Alan was chair of the North Belfast Historical Society during the 1980s and has been on the Board of the Ulster Youth Orchestra since 2011.

Since retiring, he has spent four years as a conservation volunteer with the National Trust at Mount Stewart, and currently volunteers with Historic Royal Palaces at Hillsborough Castle.

He stood down as Secretary of the Ulster History Circle last May, having played an instrumental role in having a Blue Plaque erected outside St Anne's Cathedral in memory of Black Santa founder, Dean Sammy Crooks.

"I choose to be busy," he said. "To retire and sit in a corner and read the newspaper every day is not fun."

## Readers commissioned in separate services



New Parish Readers Mr David Holmes (left) and Mr Michael Ogilby (right). Centre, from left, are: The Rev Canon David Humphries, rector, Kilbride; the Rev Kevin Graham, Diocesan Warden of Readers, and the Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth, rector of Ballynure and Ballyeaston.

The Rev Kevin Graham, Diocesan Warden of Readers, commissioned three new Parish Readers for parishes in Connor Diocese at two separate services on Sunday October 28.

Mr Michael Ogilby was commissioned for the Parish of Ballynure and Ballyeaston and Mr David Holmes for



Mr Richard Cotter, Connor Diocese Finance and Administration Manager, was commissioned a Parish Reader at a service in Ballymena. He is pictured with his wife Andrea.

the Parish of Kilbride during Evening Prayer at St Bride's Church, Kilbride Parish.

Later that evening, Mr Richard Cotter was commissioned to serve in the Parish of Ballymena (Kilconriola) and Ballyclug during a service in St Patrick's, Ballymena.





Members of Connor Youth Forum at the launch of 'Journey,' along with Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie.

# Resource to support our young people

Young people from Connor Youth Forum launched a ground-breaking resource entitled 'Journey' at Lisburn Cathedral on November 23.

'Journey' has been written entirely by young people for young people, and at the launch the authors spoke about how the project had come about from its inception to the publication of the 48-page book.

One of the 13 young authors told guests: "Tonight I feel really proud of myself. This is a great achievement." Another commented: "I can't believe how far we have come in eight months."

The 13 young people came together from parishes across the diocese as Connor Youth Forum to develop a discipleship resource to be used by small groups.

The title 'Journey' conveys that young people can use it to explore faith together

as they grow in their discipleship.

Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie facilitated the group. Christina said: "I have loved seeing the ambition of the young people involved to do something which we believe has never been done before, creating a small group discipleship resource entirely written by young people.

"Seeing our young people write from the perspective of what would benefit others like them has been very helpful. They have grappled with themes which have been important in their own discipleship and we are excited to share it with young people across the diocese and beyond."

The authors hope 'Journey' will be easy

## Affirm will help those in difficulty

Affirm, a new project for young people going through difficulty, has been launched in Connor Diocese.

The project will develop greater access to support for young people and provide training for leaders within local parishes.

It will make use of local expertise through different established organisations, specifically The Big House, who seek to support young people experiencing difficulties with a Christian perspective.

The project will incorporate

residential, youth sessions in parishes, training for leaders, and a resource developed by The Big House and Connor Youth Officer, Christina Baillie.

Christina said: "Young people across the diocese experience such a range of difficult issues as they grow and develop, and we want to assure them that the church is a safe place to be heard and belong."

The project has received funding from the Church of Ireland Priorities Fund.

For more information email Christina on [christinabaillie@connordiocese.org](mailto:christinabaillie@connordiocese.org).

to understand as it is written in a way that young people will connect well with.

Initially the resource will be available for free in Connor Diocese, with the aim of eventually distributing it more widely across the UK. The resource has been funded by the Church Of Ireland Orphans' And Children Society.

At the launch, the young people outlined how they imagine 'Journey' being used across the diocese. In a Q&A session, representatives of youth groups spoke about how they will benefit from the resource.

The authors of the resource are: Lucy Duckworth, St Paul's, Lisburn; Sophie Miskimmin, St Michael's, Belfast; Sarah Adams, St Peter's, Belfast; Ryan McGucken, Lisburn Cathedral; Alex Murphy, St Paul's, Lisburn; Giselle Coulter, St Stephen's and St Luke's; Lauren Adams, St Peter's, Belfast; Rachael Martin, Lisburn Cathedral; Matthew Cairns, Lisburn Cathedral; Sophie McLean, St Patrick's, Ballymena; Louise Andrews, St Patrick's, Ballymena; Catherine Forde, Church of the Resurrection / The Hub, Belfast; Ciaran Campton, Church of the Resurrection / The Hub, Belfast.

## Applications open for Streetreach 2019

Applications are now open for Streetreach 2019 which will partner with Mossley Parish.

Streetreach is a residential, local missional experience for young people, practically serving in a parish context, offering them an opportunity to grow in their faith, and consider how to share their experience of God.

For details of how to apply contact Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie on [christinabaillie@connordiocese.org](mailto:christinabaillie@connordiocese.org) or 07753 312405

## Sharing festive joy!

Young people gathered in Broughshane on December 1. During the afternoon, teams went door-to-door with information about local Christmas services, giving out sweets and carolling. That evening, the young people competed in various Christmas task based games, ending the evening with doughnuts and a hot chocolate bar.

Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie said: "We had a great reception for the outreach endeavours and it was very encouraging to see young people praying for people or encouraging them."



The Rev Amanda Adams, rector of the parish of Ballyrashane and Kildollagh, accompanied by parishioner Olivia Clarke and Diocesan Lay Reader Allan Bond, were in Uganda last October to further their CMSI partnership with Ibba Diocese, South Sudan.

The parish established a partnership with Ibba more than seven years ago and has provided bicycles for the Diocese and Mothers' Union, paid for the training of a teacher, and helped fund work on the new Cathedral. In 2014 the parishes hosted the Rt Rev Wilson Kamani, Bishop of Ibba.

Due to insecurity in South Sudan the team could not visit Ibba, but joined a 13 strong group which travelled with CMSI to Arua, northern Uganda, to meet CMSI partner bishops and representatives from South Sudan for a two-week Peace and Reconciliation Conference.

This was a follow up to the 'Crossing Bridges' event which CMSI held in Stormont last year, and an extension of the visit to Yei Diocese in exile in Arua last April.

The team arrived in Arua on October 17 in time for the opening ceremony of the conference. Their luggage didn't arrive until October 19, just before a seminar being led by Amanda on Child Protection and the church's responsibility towards children. All Amanda's seminar materials were in the suitcase!

The conference was opened by Bishop Hilary of Yei, a familiar face in Connor as the Diocese of Yei and the Diocese of Connor have been in partnership for more than 10 years. Bishop Hilary based his opening address on Corinthians 6 vs 3-10, referencing the suffering and trauma that the people of South Sudan are living with.

Bishop Hilary said that the church's role in the midst of all the violence and terror has been in 'communicating Jesus in the midst of suffering.' When people have been denied the right to life, experienced the violation of their human rights and have been dehumanised, the level of resistance of the people has been achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit, he told the conference.

Allen said the address was: "A powerful and poignant introduction to our conference in Arua."

Devotions on the Thursday morning were opened by Archbishop Justin, whose blessing described the situation in South Sudan and how the church is responding.



Rhino refugee camp is a temporary home for these ladies from South Sudan.

# Building bridges for Ibba & South Sudan

Facilitated discussions were held on the Church's response to peace building, the theology of peace and reconciliation and the theology of forgiveness, led by Amanda. "This resulted in powerful, focused discussion based on harrowing accounts and traumatic life experiences," the team said.

Bishop Kamani led opening devotions on the Friday. The Bishop was very appreciative of the team's training material, story bags and pictures which he said were 'exactly what he needed.'

On Saturday, representatives from Albany Diocese, USA, led a seminar on the importance of personal healing, followed by a facilitated discussion on forgiveness with Amanda, Dean Geoff Wilson from Down and Dromore Cathedral, Archbishop Justin and the bishops of South Sudan.

Archbishop Justin described how his mother had been killed by a bomb when he was younger and yet he was ignored by local soldiers and told to return as if nothing had happened. Not only are the people of South Sudan suffering the effects of conflict and trauma but so too are their church leaders, the team said.

Linda Abwa, CMSI Partnership Coordinator, concluded the day with a presentation on the role of CMS Ireland in equipping the global church.

On Sunday October 21 the team travelled over rough roads to the Rhino refugee camp, 90 minutes away.



The Arua team from Ballyrashane and Kildollagh - Allan Bond, Olivia Clarke and the Rev Amanda Adams.

"The settlement at Rhino hosts over 100,000 refugees and many are South Sudanese. Life in the camp is very difficult and yet the moment the door of our vehicle opens, the atmosphere is ecstatic. There are Presidents who haven't received a welcome like this," the team said.

Allan read the lesson and Amanda's sermon, translated line by line, was very well received. The children and youth groups celebrated in song and dance. The service lasted more than three and a half hours and the church has no walls – only UN tarpaulin sheets that trap heat from the scorching midday sun.

After the service, Amanda and the Bishop headed off to pray in homes, while Olivia and Allen made friends with the children in Sunday School.

The CMSI Peace and Reconciliation Conference closed on October 22. In Bishop Hilary's closing reflections, he thanked the visitors from Albany Diocese,



Connor Diocese and Down and Dromore Diocese for their preparation, support and commitment to the people of South Sudan. Bishop Hilary thanked God for the conference, saying it had “encouraged the church of South Sudan in their hour of need.”

“We have learned a lot and go back richer than when we came,” the Bishop said.

Reflecting on the plight of the people of South Sudan, the team wrote: “Hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese refugees have fled conflict and violence in their home country for the safety of camps in northern Uganda. More than 107,000 now live in Rhino camp, a sprawling expanse of tukal huts and tents scattered across dusty scrubland approximately one hour from Arua.

“We thank God for the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) who are working to provide essential food, water and shelter for hundreds of thousands of refugees from DR Congo and South Sudan.

“Although most refugees receive shelter upon arrival, many families have been split up and live apart at the camps. It is not easy to move around the camp as it is spread over many miles with limited transportation.

“Since arriving at the camps over two years ago, families are missing relatives and many do not know if their loved ones are safe. Men, women and children are all victims of this conflict, with graphic accounts of murder, violence, assault, destruction of their property and looting of their possessions.



Children of South Sudan living in exile in Arua, northern Uganda, photographed by the team from Ballyrashane and Killdollahg.

“Not only are families traumatised but so too are their community and church leaders who are on the ground trying to help.”

Summing up the team blog, Allen wrote: “I cannot begin to write words that reflect just how important this visit has been. We leave with new friendships and partnerships renewed with Ibba and all of the dioceses of South Sudan.

“We have built bridges, joined hands and stood with the people of South Sudan as they have recalled some of their darkest moments. We have met face-to-face with many of the people behind our prayers. But most of all we have worked together to support, encourage and advance God’s kingdom.

“In the words of Archbishop Justin, ‘You have come at the right time and God has brought you...’”

The team concluded: “We continue to stand with the people of Ibba and South Sudan as they face many challenges in the months ahead and will continue praying for them and for the work of CMS Ireland.”



The Rev Amanda Adams at work during the conference in Arua.



Bishop Hilary of Yei addresses the CMSI Peace and Reconciliation Conference in Arua in October.

## Bishop Hilary expresses thanks from Yei Diocese

Last October, Connor sent funding to Bishop Hilary of Yei via the Rev Amanda Adams and her team from Ballyrashane and Killdollahg, who attended the CMSI Peace and Reconciliation Conference in Arua, Uganda.

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, has received a letter from Bishop Hilary, expressing his ‘profound appreciation’ to the Bishop and the Diocesan Council for the generous gift.

Bishop Hilary explained that some of the money had been used immediately to support hundreds of displaced families recently arrived in Arua. Some of the funds were also earmarked for the Bishop Allison Theological College.

“We are grateful that now we are able to offset some of the urgent needs of my ministry, key among this is relief response to the needy,” Bishop Hilary said.

He added that the conference had been a great success. “The bishops under partnership with CMS Ireland went back to South Sudan very encouraged and changed,” Bishop Hilary said.

“The team was a great blessing. From Connor Diocese, Rev Amanda was an effective individual at the conference.

“Together with the rest, their facilitation had a tremendous impact in supporting us in our search for how to deal with a complex war situation.”

## Billy back at VTC

At time of going to print, CMSI Mission Partner Billy Smyth had returned to Yei Diocese at the request of Bishop Hilary to look at the possibility of reopening the Vocational Training Centre (VTC) which he established in 2003. We will report on Billy’s experiences in our next issue.





Members of the Chapter of St Saviour, Lisburn Cathedral, who were present for the installation of their newest Canon, the Rev Mark McConnell, rector of Ballymena (Kilconriola) and Ballyclug, on December 4. From left: The Rev Canon Peter Galbraith, the Rev Canon William Taggart, the Dean of Connor, the Very Rev Sam Wright (rector of Lisburn Cathedral), the Rev Canon Mark McConnell, the Rev Canon James Carson, the Ven Paul Dundas, Archdeacon of Dalriada, and the Rev Canon Derek Kerr.



All Saints', Antrim, held a Beetle Drive and Pudding night in the Parish Centre on November 30, attracting almost 100 parishioners of all ages. The evening included the sale of Christmas crafts by parish's Holy Knitters. The event raised more than £400.



On January 13, the Rev Kevin Graham, Warden of Readers, commissioned Ryan Wilson as a Parish Reader for St Matthew's, Belfast. Pictured are, from left the Rev Don Gamble, the Rev Kevin Graham, Ryan Wilson, the Rev Tracey McRoberts, and Myrtle McKay.



Many happy returns to Ruth Topping, a parishioner of St Brigid's Parish, Mallusk, who has celebrated her 100th birthday! Ruth drove an ambulance in London during the Blitz!



The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, baptised his grandson Patrick in the Parish of St Peter and St Paul's in Hambledon, Hampshire, on December 9. Bishop Alan is pictured with his son Peter, daughter-in-law Rosanna and Patrick.



The reredos from the former St James' Church, Antrim Road, has been relocated from the chancel in St James' to the north side aisle of St Peter's Church. The beautiful reredos had been at serious risk of water damage if it remained in the former church.



Happy 100th birthday to Christ Church, Lisburn, parishioner Sally Marshall, pictured with her daughter Margaret and the Ven Paul Dundas, Archdeacon of Dalriada, who called to visit on her birthday, January 3.



Sunday November 25 was a day to celebrate in the Rural Deanery of Mid Belfast, as several of the parishes came together for a joint confirmation service in St Mark's, Ballysillan. The candidates from St Mark's; St Andrew's, Glencairn; Holy Trinity with Immanuel; St Matthew's and St Columba's, Whiterock, were confirmed by Bishop Alan Harper, former Bishop of Connor and former Archbishop of Armagh.



Glencairn candidates confirmed.



Holy Trinity Immanuel confirmation.



Candidates from St Matthew's.



Whiterock confirmation.





Attending the Reception and Vigil in Belfast City Hall are, from left: Cathy Doig, Connor MU; Valerie Ash, Diocesan President; Michele Marken, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Belfast; Archdeacon George Davison; Jacqui Armstrong, speaker; Joyce Bond, Connor MU; and Phyllis Grothier, All Ireland President.

# Raising awareness of gender violence

The issue of abuse against women at home and around the world was highlighted at a Vigil hosted by Connor Mothers' Union in Belfast City Hall on November 26.

The Vigil and Reception, attended by Deputy Lieutenant of Belfast, Mrs Michele Marken OBE, was organised to raise the profile of the Mothers' Union's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign.

Guest speaker was Jacqui Armstrong, All Ireland Faith and Policy Co-ordinator. Other high profile attendees included Phyllis Grothier, All-Ireland Mothers' Union President; the Archdeacon of Belfast, the Ven George Davison; and Heather Flanagan of the Christian Police Association.

Representatives of branches across Connor Diocese were among the 75 guests.

The international 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign takes place each year from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) until December 10 (International Human Rights Day).

Throughout the campaign, Mothers' Union joins many others globally in calling for an end to gender-based violence in all forms and in all societies.

The Connor Vigil began with refreshments. Guests were welcomed by Valerie Ash, outgoing Diocesan President, who played a video on the work of Mothers' Union.



Mrs Sally Cotter, left, who took up the role of Connor Mothers' Union Diocesan President in January, with guests at the Vigil.

All-Ireland President Phyllis Grothier highlighted the importance of the 16 Days of Activism. "This campaign is at the core of what Mothers' Union is all about as we reach out to families who don't enjoy all that should be in a family relationship," she said. "We seek to stand with people who are in trouble and let them know that we care, to let them know that there is another life out there."

In her address, Jacqui Armstrong said that when she began working on this campaign in 2014, she had no idea of the extent of gender based violence, particularly against women.

"Gender based violence is a new term and means violence against women and men, but our 16 Days campaign focuses on women due to the disproportionate

number of women affected," Jacqui said.

One in three or one in four women will be affected, and the statistics are the same in every continent, she said. In Northern Ireland five people a year are killed by their partner, and the victims are predominantly women.

The campaign aims to explore the root causes of gender based violence, to highlight the issue of abuse and to seek to end it.

Jacqui said that during the 16 days, Mothers' Union members would be lighting candles, tweeting daily, writing to politicians and undertaking other activities to highlight the issue.

She spoke about how the Mother's Union was also tackling gender based violence overseas, using as an example the Democratic Republic of Congo where, thanks to intervention by the Mothers' Union Prison Programme, prison authorities had agreed to house women and children in separate sections of a prison to men.

Jacqui concluded quoting the words: "Let us not love with words or speech, but with actions and in truth."

As the Vigil ended, Connor MU Social Policy Contact, Cathy Doig, lit a candle, and following a pause for reflection, prayers were read by Mothers' Union members Jean, Evelyn, Cathy and Joyce.

Before leaving, guests were invited to view the exhibition 'Souls of our Shoes,' which uses footwear to tell stories of survivors of gender based violence.

## Contact Centre boost



Irene Graham and Mavis Speers, centre volunteers, presenting the Playstation 4 to Margaret Yarr of the Central Belfast Contact Centre.

**East Connor Mothers' Union held a Prayer Breakfast which raised funds for a Playstation 4 for the Central Belfast Child Contact Centre.**

**Around 30 Connor members volunteer at the centre, which offers a safe, neutral space for separated families and children to meet.**



# 'All mums should live'

Jebbeh Konneh,  
eight months pregnant

Jebbeh's own sister  
lost her life giving birth  
in Sierra Leone.

As her baby grows,  
Jebbeh fears she  
could be next.

With every  
envelope, every  
click, every  
Big Brekkie.  
Every one of  
us can help  
save lives.

christian  
**aid**  
week

12-18 MAY

Find out how your church can get  
involved this Christian Aid Week at  
[caweek.org](http://caweek.org)