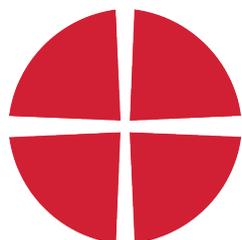


From: North Eastern District Office karen.nicholson@irishmethodist.org
Subject: North Eastern District Newsletter
Date: 5 February 2020 at 12:43
To: john.steen@irishmethodist.org

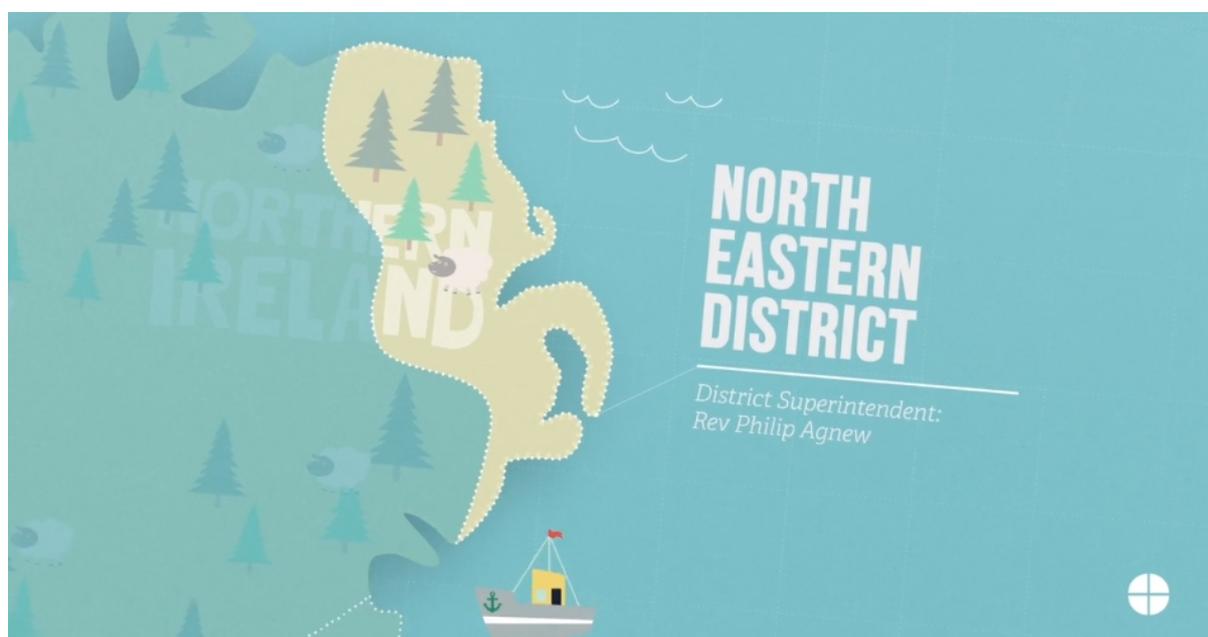
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This Message originated outside your organization.



The Methodist Church In Ireland

Welcome to the North Eastern District Newsletter!



The North Eastern District Newsletter will be circulated every two months and we would like to include news from around the District. You can send your news and stories to karen.nicholson@irishmethodist.org

and stories to karen.mcnorison@msm.methodist.org.

Please share this newsletter and spread the word!



As I write this, I have now visited about 80% of this new District. I am heartened to see that nearly everywhere I go there is a real desire to grow the kingdom of God. In some places there are great stories to tell of God at work and lives being transformed. Other churches, with mainly an older congregation, are talking about what legacy can they pass on to the next generation.

However, when asked, 'if nothing changes, where do you see your church in 5 years?', about 20% of churches say, 'we will be closed'. That may be depressing, but it is also a statement for the need to embrace God's will for mission and discipleship; to let Jesus build His church! This will require change!

In the world of psychology, it is a known reality that human beings are 80% hotwired towards fear and protecting the familiar. This may help us realise that when we talk about change in church life, the default position of many in a congregation is to react negatively. No, we cannot change our service time; no, we will not remove pews! Many want to protect the familiar, even if the familiar is not working. The result is a form of church groundhog days; replicating what

we always have done. As Albert Einstein once said, 'insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome.'

Numbers 13 is an illustration of fear paralysing a community. When the 12 spies came back from scouting the Promised Land, 10 of them only say the problems and feared going forward. In contrast Caleb was consumed with God's purpose, 'Let us go at once to take the land. We can certainly conquer it.' Sadly, the people of Israel listened to their fears and turned their back on the Promised Land. The result was 40 years of wandering in the desert. A salutary lesson. By God's grace, 40 years later, Joshua led a new generation who faced their fears, trusted God, and took the land.

When I have finished my first round of visits throughout the district, I will try and identify the areas of church life where change may be necessary. In general, I am already seeing a trend towards a lack of strategy to grow mission and discipleship. Without vision the people perish, without strategy vision never gets realised! So let us together seek to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches.

Philip



CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION, THE HUB BELFAST
7.30PM, MON 10TH FEB 2020

SONG OF SONGS is a creative Bible Study event focussing on our response to God's gift of sexuality. Scripture, art, music and discussion will help participants enter into the first chapters of Song of Songs. The North Eastern District event will take place in the Church of the Resurrection, The Hub Belfast on Monday 10th February 2020 at 7.30pm. All welcome!

NO MAN IS AN (IRISH) ISLAND

A play about refugees and the power of welcome

Mountmellick Methodist: 12th of Feb
Belfast Central Mission: 13th of Feb

"Humorous and thought-provoking"

"This play was beautiful, it made me cry"

Irish Methodist World Mission Partnership & Council on Social Responsibility are very pleased to sponsor this acclaimed production. This play toured in Germany and Denmark last year and Ross and Chris of 'Play It By Ear' along with Barry Sloan are bringing it to Ireland. A highly relevant, as well as humorous, production dealing with the issues around immigration. The play will be performed in Belfast Central Mission on 13th February, 7.30pm. Suggested donation of £5.



Ecumenical Ash Wednesday Service
26th February 2020
St. Mary's Church, Chapel Lane, Belfast, BT1
5.30pm

Ash Wednesday

There will no celebration of the Eucharist,
but simply a time of humble penitence and prayer.
There will be the Imposition of Ashes for those who wish to receive it.
The preacher will be the Rev Ken Newell.
Everyone is very welcome.

All are very welcome to attend this Ecumenical Ash Wednesday Service.
For more information contact Rev Robin Waugh on
robin.waugh@irishmethodist.org

Dundrum-Newcastle-Downpatrick



Downpatrick Methodist Church will be open on St Patrick's Day from 10.30am to 5.00pm and will be serving tea/coffee and cakes. Everyone is welcome, especially those on the walk from Saul church to Down Cathedral.

BCM Supported Housing Homelessness Awareness Day 2020

Support

Thought-leadership

Opportunities

Best Practice

BCM has four supported housing projects throughout Northern Ireland for young people who have been through the care system or homelessness.

This coming March, BCM is hosting an event in partnership with the Housing Executive for relevant stakeholders, organisations, charities and associations to come together to help beat homelessness across N.I.

Members of the public are welcome to attend.

There will be stands and stalls with plenty of opportunity to learn more and network with key organisations working in this sector.

Thursday 12th March 2020

10am—1pm

Grosvenor House, Glengall St, Belfast, BT12 5AD



For more information or to register for a stall,
please call Richard on 02879634842
or rdougherty@belfastcentralmission.org

BCM is registered with the Charity Commission for N. Ireland
NIC 101271



All welcome to this Homelessness Awareness Day at Belfast Central Mission!



On the 27th December The Surf Project headed to Senegal in West Africa to provide a surf camp to the children of missionaries working in the country. The camp ran for six days and provided worship and teaching on the theme of David and of course there were some surf lessons thrown in as well; a total of 22 young people of various nationalities living in Senegal and 4 who came with the Project from Northern Ireland took part. The 18 locals included 5 Americans, 2 Canadians, 2 French, 1 Senegalese French, 4 Swiss and 4 from a Northern Irish background. These third culture young people, many of whom are home schooled, live in an environment where there is so little to do in comparison to our western lifestyle and where their only christian input, in this Muslim country, comes from their parents. For many the camp was the highlight of their year and an opportunity to live life to the full!





Does your church have spare word copies of Mission Praise books that they no longer need? They don't need to be the most up-to-date version! Rev Derek Johnston needs approx 20 copies for use in hospital services. Music copies would be a bonus. If you can help out, please contact Rev Derek Johnston on derek.johnston@irishmethodist.org. Thank you!

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AGAPE
LECTURES

Agape Lecture
AGAPE CENTRE, LISBURN ROAD
TRUTH, LIES AND THE
MESSENGER: DOES
JOURNALISM HAVE A
FUTURE?



The 11th Agape Lecture will take place on Wednesday 25th March 2020 at 7.30pm in the in the Agape Centre, 238 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 6GF. The title is *Truth, Lies and the Messenger: Does Journalism have a Future?* by Sam McBride, Political Editor of the Newsletter and author of *Burned*. All Welcome. Tea and coffee available after the lecture to facilitate further discussion.



Peter Rollins, Ballymoney Society Steward reports on a now annual event which took place in Ballymoney in December and that the local Methodist Church was once again delighted to be part of.

The event known as the Town Walk Around Carol Service started in the local Catholic Church of Our Lady and Saint Patrick with an estimated 750 people in attendance and then moved to the Methodist Church which can seat around 120 people comfortably. You can now see the size of the challenge!!

With all the seats being taken up in a matter of seconds the upstairs of the church was completely filled with hundreds of people standing and the basement hall was also filled to capacity along with the pathway leading to the church. The assembled crowd then moved on to First Ballymoney Presbyterian Church and finally to the Church of Ireland where after the final carols and Bible reading, refreshments of tea/coffee, mince pies and shortbread were served.

The event which now attracts people from outside the Ballymoney area is widely recognised as the start of the Christmas celebrations in Ballymoney and the really warm welcome shown by all the four congregations to those attending has enhanced the inter church relationships within the town.



The photo above shows the delivery of items to James Jennings, Acting Manager of the Methodist City Mission's Men's Hostel in Derry/Londonderry before Christmas, by Valerie and Liam Bray, who run the Coleraine Methodist Community Drop In, and by David Kelly and Charlie Irwin, members of the Coleraine Men's Group, formed to help men from all walks of life, any religion (or none) to meet, talk and share.

Valerie and Liam talked to James to see what was required and then, instead of using donations to pay for ingredients, biscuits, etc as is usually the case, they saved up the money over many weeks and bought £250 worth of toiletries, bedding, towels etc. These were taken up just before Christmas and James was delighted to receive them.

.James explained that there are currently 47 men resident there in the main

James explained that there are currently 17 men resident there, in the main hostel and in the self-contained flats adjacent to it. There is also a Drop In centre in the basement of Carlisle Road Methodist, specifically for residents and ex-residents of the Hostel. The men coming to the hostel present with a range of problems: poor mental health, addictions, relationship breakdowns, behavioural problems. The hostel takes men from the age of 18 upwards and finds many problems with young people coming out of care, who are institutionalised and are dependent on receiving money, care and food. They also have a lot of social needs. James would welcome your support and prayers for their continuing vital work.



From 28th November - 1st December Newtownabbey Methodist Mission held its Christmas Tree Festival where 35 trees were sponsored by individuals, families, organisations, churches, business and community groups. Each tree portrayed various aspects of the Christmas Biblical message. Each year the Newtownabbey Methodist Mission also has a Christmas Toy and Voucher Appeal to help those in genuine need in the Greater Newtownabbey area over, what is for many families, the most trying time of the year.

In October the Mission appeals to all Societies in Northern Ireland for donations of toys and money. Many congregations hold a special 'Toy Sunday' when members bring toys to church. These are then delivered to the Mission, sorted by age and gender, and packed by volunteers for delivery by the various agencies in good time for Christmas. Volunteers know from feedback received that the toys make a huge difference to the children who may have no other

gifts at Christmas and to the parents who are relieved of at least some of the seasonal stress. Over the 2019 season, 226 children across 103 families received bags of toys. Christmas Vouchers are also issued upon the referrals from Social Workers and these vouchers can be exchanged at the EuroSpar in Rathcoole for food, electricity and gas. In December 2019, 142 adults and 221 children across 119 families benefited from Christmas vouchers. The General Voucher Scheme also operates throughout the year and during 2019 General Vouchers were issued to 155 families. Well done to all!



A reflection from Carnalea Methodist Church on 'Follow the Star' 2019 from Jane Grant: Following a successful 2018 version of 'Follow the Star' in conjunction with the TOM team and IMYC, Carnalea Methodist, encouraged by Rev Fiona McCrea and with the blessing of the Youth and Children's Department, decided to go it alone in 2019. We assessed the options. We had a hall, a 'stable', some fairy lights, a costume-maker, scenery painters and some very willing congregation members who will say 'yes' to almost any challenge – from setting-up to acting, and baking to making!

We performed our 'Follow the Star' to over 200 children from local schools, special schools, G.B. and B.B. members, and Sunday School members from Glastry Methodist. Their response was amazing as eyes lit-up and faces were aglow when in turn an angel, a scary king, a very wise man, some silly

shepherds, and Mary and Joseph told the story of the First Christmas.

And was it a success? The answer has to be a definite yes as word fed back to us of conversations held in local school playgrounds and school staffrooms of the impact of our telling the Story on both children and accompanying adults. A mission, to reach out to the hearts of children and their families.

Personal highlights were the faces and reactions of the children as they watched, mesmerised, as the story of Jesus' birth unfolded, followed by our interactions with them as we completed craft items together. Additionally, observing the faces of our 'actors' as they delivered their lines and their realisation of how the children were captivated by their words and actions.



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