

TheLight

Issue 203: December 2013

*Trinity
moves into
fashion*

BB & GB Celebrate 90 years

The Editor talks to...

Clifford Mayes, Consultant in the Royal Maternity Hospital

Home Missions on the Circuit

Autumn Soul 2013

Finding your place

with the Rev Colin Gracie

Priesthill explores the names of God

My Exodus experience

Rebecca Hawkins & Ciara Boyd



THE MAGAZINE OF THE LISBURN AND DROMORE METHODIST CIRCUIT

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Seymour Street BB Anchor Boys

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If you have material or photos for the next edition of The Light please send them to the address above or give them to your church representative by Sunday 2nd February 2014

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Trinity moves into fashion

Finding your place

Rev Colin Gracie



Recently, my daughter Eleanor came home from school with a project to search her family ancestry. She was required to find out which relatives were alive at the time of the 1911 census. This led to not a few phone calls and e-mails to the wider family circle to try and pin down a few names on both sides of the Irish Sea. It wasn't long before other relatives were embarking on their own search back through the generations! The idea of "where does my family come from" is fascinating for all of us. We like the idea of belonging and finding our place within the generations.

Only Luke and Matthew record the birth of Jesus in the Gospels. Not only do they give us the familiar story of the Nativity but they are the only Gospels to give us a list of Jesus' ancestors. Just like a family history project, they are showing us where Jesus "fits in". Look down the list and you will see some names familiar (Kings David and Solomon) and not so familiar (Arphaxad and Elmadam!). There were patriarchs and scoundrels, Jews and Gentiles and Matthew's list includes a few women with fascinating back-stories.

Even though these lists give the appearance that Jesus is just another name to be added on the list, the writers make it clear that he was anything but that. The circumstances of his birth were unusual enough but at each stage it was God who decided what would happen. Fulfilling the words of prophets centuries earlier, God

arranges the location, timing and cast of this drama that places his Son into human history.

If that's how Jesus gets to be in the Nativity story, where does he fit in your Christmas? It is easy to let so many other things crowd him out and I don't just mean shopping either. Family traditions and media spin send us on an exhaustive quest to achieve "the perfect Christmas". Having the right food and abundant quantities or making sure that everyone is marched off to visit distant relatives are recipes for more stress and frustration than a season of goodwill. We can even find our churches being drawn into the same dizzying whirlpool of "Christmas festivities" so that our services become a list of to-do's rather than a chance to stop and let our minds return to the wonderful message of incarnation.

Indeed it is a wonderful message. We don't need to have everything perfectly arranged and wrapped in order to enjoy it. After all it is because we are flawed people that we need to hear that Jesus was sent to be Saviour of the World.

Yes, have a Merry Christmas...have a Holy one too. Take the time to stop and think. Read those words again and ponder the truth that God made the arrangements for his Son to walk this earth. Our heavenly Father loves us so much that his Son takes on human flesh so that we can find our place in his family. ■

Around the Circuit



Circuit Book Club

The Circuit Book Club discussed Pete Greig's book "GOD ON MUTE" and we all gave it a "thumbs up." This does not always happen when the group meets and on another occasion a book received a general "thumbs down!" We discussed the book for one hour but could easily have continued longer.

There are not many books on the subject of unanswered prayers. Greig wrote this from personal experience of his wife's illness from a brain tumour and her subsequent continuing epilepsy. We found its honesty refreshing. Many of our prayers seem to go unanswered, or do they? Sometimes God answers prayers with a "Yes", or "No" or "Not Yet." Other unanswered prayers may not be without effect in that they draw us into a deeper relationship with the Sovereign God and they may contribute to the overall battle against the evils of the world in a way that will one day be revealed. The book is clearly written, biblically-based and uses stories of ordinary people while making accessible helpful quotes from theologians.

The author uses the framework of the Easter story. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane that God

would spare his suffering. On the cross of Calvary Jesus prayed a cry of dereliction "My God, why have you abandoned me?" On Holy Saturday (Easter Eve) there was only unanswering silence. Easter Sunday is the source of all our hopes and comfort. God is not absent in our agonising, our pains, our silences. God's plans proceed to an Easter rising.

Pete Greig is Director of Prayer at Holy Trinity Brompton, a founder of the 24/7 Prayer Movement and this year addressed the Irish Methodist Conference.

The next meeting of the book club is planned for Thursday 6th February at 8 p.m. in Trinity Methodist Church. You will be welcome. The meeting is open to all. Please read the book "ANGELS" by Dr Billy Graham. The cheapest book we have found, currently on sale, incorporates two of Billy Graham's books in one volume – you need only read "Angels." If you have any queries, please contact Ken Todd or Shirley Carrington. ■

Open Schools Worldwide has new Executive Director

Alan McIlhenny of Trinity has now retired from his post in Open Schools World Wide and handed over his leadership to Phil Peters, the new Executive Director. During a recent 3 week visit to South Africa Alan was very encouraged to see Phil engage with some of the amazing volunteers and meet just a few of the children OSWW serves. Alan believes the future of OSWW is in good hands. Please pray for Phil as he is now carries the full responsibility of leading OSWW into the future.



OPEN SCHOOLS
WORLDWIDE

SERVING AT-RISK CHILDREN

As Phil and Alan travelled in South Africa, they were privileged to be guided by Dorian Slingers, the Southern Africa Director. Dorian was brought up during Apartheid in a difficult "coloured" area of Cape Town. His transformation from a "child at risk" to a Christian leader is a remarkable story of God's grace. Dorian, and his wife Claudine, are coming to Ireland for a few weeks before Christmas. ■

Trinity Harvest

David Twyble

In most of our churches the annual celebration of God's goodness in the harvest is eagerly anticipated and much enjoyed, but for our Trinity congregation the harvest services this year, held on the last Sunday in September, brought the added pleasure of a visit from the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, Rev. Dr. Heather Morris.

At our morning worship, a large congregation was both inspired and challenged as Dr Morris preached from Exodus 16 and John 6, on the theme 'the bread of life'.

Our evening service was planned for the unusual time of 5.00 pm with the aim of enabling more of our families with young children to attend. An encouraging number took up this opportunity and as the boys and girls enjoyed their own programme of activities, the grown ups relaxed and enjoyed their time of worship and teaching lead by Dr Morris. We were extremely grateful to Jonny Hill and Leanne Anderson who willingly undertook the challenging task of planning and leading the children's programme.

After both services there was an enjoyable opportunity for all to share fellowship together and for as many as possible to meet and greet our President. In the evening the cup of tea or coffee was complemented by a lovely supper provided by a number of ladies from our congregation.

Of course harvest would not be complete without bringing into church



symbols of God's goodness and in Trinity we are blessed with a number of very talented flower arrangers who had sensitively decorated our foyer and pulpit area with beautiful floral arrangements. However, as has been our practice for a number of years, every member of our congregation was invited to add to the decorations, their personal gifts of non perishable foods and groceries. The response this year was both generous and abundant and after our harvest we were very pleased to organise the transport to Storehouse Ministries of a small van load of food for distribution to needy families.



EXODUS 2013

Rebecca Hawkins and Ciara Boyd

What had started with a visiting speaker from Exodus to Priesthill GB one Wednesday night led to Rebecca Hawkins and Ciara Boyd putting their names forward for a 10 day trip to Romania that would be an eye-opener for 12 young people and a chance for to help the lives of some of Europe's poorest people. In the weeks prior to leaving, the team met each Friday to prepare both spiritually and materially for the trip. Ciara and Rebecca had also received fundraising support by organising a car wash and coffee morning at Priesthill.

From their rendezvous outside the Europa Hotel on Wednesday, July 3rd, a 10 hour journey followed that took the team to Sutor, the Romanian headquarters for Exodus and the location of their "Bush Camp". Here, they built shelters to sleep in and lived on \$1 a day. This gave the girls an insight into the lifestyle of a refugee. "It wasn't too bad because I was able to sleep at night but some of the others found it hard", said Rebecca. The camp leaders gave them tasks such as selling paper bags – to simulate the ways in which people try to scrape a living, or being blindfolded – to simulate being a blind refugee. To add to the realism, the leaders pretended to be rude or aggressive, just as many refugees experience. "They even tore up the paper bags in our faces."

From Sutor, the team travelled to a small village near the Hungarian border where they stayed as guests of the pastor, in a church hall. Sundays saw them participate in the church services with small congregation there but the weekdays were given over to a Kids Club for about 50 children



from the village. "Although the children didn't speak any English it was not as hard as I feared... you don't need to talk to play with them". Games, songs, crafts and Bible stories filled the mornings. In the afternoons it was time to roll up the sleeves as the team re-plastered the church wall. In the evenings, another change of scene as the team studied the Alpha course some nights and on others split up to visit the homes of the poorest and bring parcels of food. "It was shocking to see the poverty" said Rebecca. "People weren't poor like in Africa, they could be rich in some things and poor in others. Their priorities were so



different". One house that Ciara visited had only plastic sheeting for the walls and yet the little girl was the proud owner of a new pair of rollerblades.

Such a busy week meant that the girls were glad for some time off on Saturday to go shopping! Sunday was a chance to share in the church service again and a time for rest before the long journey home the following day.

Would she do it again? Yes, Rebecca would love to return to the village and see the children and the people of the church congregation. Through them she had learnt that poverty didn't mean sitting around but for many people it was often long hours of hard work but getting little for it. "I realise how lucky I am....I'm so glad I did it." ■



Autumn Soul

Sian Porter Trinity



It had been five years since the last time I'd been to Autumn Soul, when as a fifteen year old didn't know what to expect. This time, however I was buzzing with the prospect of late night banter, awesome worship and encouraging fellowship.

The weekend started with the twelve of us, headed up by Richard, Natalie and Claire, meeting at the Trinity car park early Friday evening. We headed to Bangor, and after signing in went to Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church for few hours of praise and worship. We met with 600 other young people who had travelled from as far as Cork to be at Autumn Soul. We sang praises, prayed, watched dramas and learnt about the amazing unconditional love God has for us from speaker Andy Flanagan.

After worship we chilled out at the Late Night Extra programme where some of us played pool, rode the surf simulator and chatted in the Surf Lounge, others danced the night away at the Glow in the Dark party, others got creative in the prayer space, and some drank coffee in the Fair Trade cafe. We headed to bed well into the small hours, raring to go for the next day!

Saturday morning worship we learnt more of how we love others and what that means for our lives. After we had a variety of seminars to choose from, so TYM attended 'walking on water' by the Surf Project, then ended with 'all you need is love' by Methodist President Heather Morris, feeling inspired and encouraged by both! We had a lovely picnic style lunch, then went on to Hamilton Road for 'The Big Sing'.

The late afternoon presented us with the opportunity to relax or head to one of the many workshops available. Some of us chilled in Bangor town shopping, while some others attended the Ceramics workshop, making beautiful sculptures.

After a quick dinner at McDonald's we headed back into town for the main worship event. We were awed and struck by God's incredible love for us as we sang, laughed, danced and listened that evening. A final Late Night Extra session followed where many a deep conversation were had, and we headed back to our halls where some games and singing with strangers occurred before falling into an exhausted sleep.

On Sunday morning after our last morning worship we headed to the Aurora Leisure Centre to watch a captivating movie about passion, grief and perseverance. After a quick snack lunch was the final worship session which we left feeling blessed, encouraged, inspired and excited to see how we would put into practice all we had learnt!

We arrived back in Lisburn in the late afternoon, ending with a short prayer time of thanks to God for an amazing weekend. Autumn Soul was an inspiring and encouraging weekend, and it was great to get to know some of the group better, to learn more deeply about God's love and to bond with the rest of the Methodist youth in Ireland. Praise God for another amazing weekend. Thanks to all leaders who gave up their time to attend. ■



Trinity Zone Big Family Breakfast Morning *By Reuben*

Bright and early one Sunday morning in October, many excited members of Trinity Zone arrived with their families to take part in its first Family Breakfast morning. As everyone gathered, the children burnt off some of their energy by playing games based on the theme of fish, like Fish, Fish, Shark and Swim fishy swim.

After this everyone joined together for a well-deserved breakfast of cereal, toast and fruit.

The theme of the morning was "Breakfast with Jesus" based on the passage from John 21, where the disciples had been out fishing all night and not caught anything. Then Jesus appeared to them and told them to throw their nets out on the other side. When they did this they caught a miraculous catch of fish and then Jesus fed them breakfast.

A short DVD of this story was shown to the children and then one of the leaders, Dawn Clarke, gave her testimony and shared how this passage had been very important in her coming to faith in Jesus. She



encouraged young and old to take on board the message of verse 19 and to follow Jesus.

The morning was rounded off with the children making fish badges. Everyone enjoyed chatting with each other and having breakfast together and the morning raised some money for the JMA project too!

Here's what some of our members had to say about the morning:

"I really enjoyed the Breakfast morning because of the craft, games and the food. Everyone enjoyed it." By Nathaniel

"I enjoyed the food, especially the buttered toast. I liked sitting with my friends to eat breakfast." By Leah

"I liked the food and making the fish badge to wear." By Chloe

"It was epic! The food was good, the crafts were fun and Dawn spoke very well. If there's another one, I'm definitely going back!" ■



As well as the Trinity 12 a large SNASS group from Seymour Street also enjoyed Autumn Soul

A traditional Christmas story.....

The Holy Night

by Selma Lagerlof



There was a man who went out in the dark night to borrow live coals to kindle a fire. He went from hut to hut and knocked. "Dear friends, help me!" said he. "My wife has just given birth to a child, and I must make a fire to warm her and the little one." But it was way in the night, and all the people were asleep. No one replied.

The man walked and walked. At last he saw the gleam of a fire a long way off. Then he went in that direction and saw that the fire was burning in the open. A lot of sheep were sleeping around the fire, and an old shepherd sat and watched over the flock. When the man who wanted to borrow fire came up to the sheep, he saw that three big dogs lay asleep at the shepherd's feet. All three awoke when the man approached and opened their great jaws, as though they wanted to bark; but not a sound was heard. The man noticed that the hair on their backs stood up and that their sharp, white teeth glistened in the firelight. They dashed toward him. He felt that one of them bit at his leg and one at this hand and that one clung to this throat. But their jaws and teeth wouldn't obey them, and the man didn't suffer the least harm.

Now the man wished to go farther, to get what he needed. But the sheep lay back to back and so close to one another that he couldn't pass them. Then the man stepped upon their backs and walked over them and up to the fire. And not one of the animals awoke or moved. When the man had almost reached the fire, the shepherd looked up. He was a surly old man, who was unfriendly and harsh toward human beings. And when he saw the strange man coming, he seized the long, spiked staff, which he always held in his hand when he tended his flock, and threw it at him. The staff came right toward the man, but, before it reached him, it turned off to one side and whizzed past him, far out in the meadow.

Now the man came up to the shepherd and said to him: "Good man, help me, and lend me a little fire! My wife has just given birth to a child, and I must make a fire to warm her and the little one." The shepherd would rather have said no, but when he pondered that the dogs couldn't hurt the man, and the sheep had not run from him, and that the staff had not wished to strike him, he was a little afraid, and dared not deny the man that which he asked.

"Take as much as you need!" he said to the man. But then the fire was nearly burnt out. There were no logs or branches left, only a big heap of live coals, and the stranger had neither spade nor shovel wherein he could carry the red-hot coals.

When the shepherd saw this, he said again: "Take as much as you need!" And he was glad that the man wouldn't be able to take away any coals. But the man stopped and picked coals from the ashes with his bare hands, and laid them in his mantle. And he didn't burn his hands when he touched them, nor did the coals

scorch his mantle; but he carried them away as if they had been nuts or apples.

And when the shepherd, who was such a cruel and hardhearted man, saw all this, he began to wonder to himself. What kind of a night is this, when the dogs do not bite, the sheep are not scared, the staff does not kill, or the fire scorch? He called the stranger back and said to him: "What kind of a night is this? And how does it happen that all things show you compassion?" Then said the man: "I cannot tell you if you yourself do not see it." And he wished to go his way, that he might soon make a fire and warm his wife and child. But the shepherd did not wish to lose sight of the man before he had found out what all this might portend. He got up and followed the man till they came to the place where he lived. Then the shepherd saw the man didn't have so much as a hut to dwell in, but that his wife and babe were lying in a mountain grotto, where there was nothing except the cold and naked stone walls.

But the shepherd thought that perhaps the poor innocent child might freeze to death there in the grotto; and, although he was a hard man, he was touched, and thought he would like to help it. And he loosened the knapsack from his shoulder, took from it a soft white sheepskin, gave it to the strange man, and said that he should let the child sleep on it.

But just as soon as he showed that he, too, could be merciful, his eyes were opened, and he saw what he had not been able to see before, and heard what he could not have heard before. He saw that all around him stood a ring of little silver-winged angels, and each held a stringed instrument, and all sang in loud tones that tonight the Saviour was born who should redeem the world from its sins.

Then he understood how all things were so happy this night that they didn't want to do anything wrong. And it was not only around the shepherd that there were angels, but he saw them everywhere. They sat inside the grotto, they sat outside on the mountain, and they flew under the heavens. They came marching in great companies, and, as they passed, they paused and cast a glance at the child. There was such jubilation and such gladness and songs and play! And all this he saw in the dark night whereas before he could not have made out anything. He was so happy because his eyes had been opened that he fell upon his knees and thanked God.

What that shepherd saw, we might also see, for the angels fly down from heaven every Christmas Eve, if we could only see them. You must remember this, for it is as true, as true as that I see you and you see me. It is not revealed by the light of lamps or candles, and it does not depend upon sun and moon; but that which is needful is that we have such eyes as can see God's glory. ■

Home Missions Sunday

The familiar face of Rev Ken Wilson graced the pulpit of Seymour Street for the recent Home Missions morning service, in which his wife Ruth gave the Children's address. Ken challenged us all to see that we must be ready to step out of our 'Comfort Zone' if we are to engage in effective mission. Drawing on the wide range of experiences throughout his own Ministry Ken pointed out that some congregations have abandoned cherished traditions and buildings to allow more effective new outreach projects to flourish. He shared stories of various ways in which Home Missions is supporting Fresh Expressions of Church, encouraging churches to assess their priorities through training and circuit consultations and providing grants to innovative projects



Ruth & Ken Wilson

help all the members of her family are recovering well and know that they have been truly blessed.

Trinity. During her studies at Belfast Bible College Sarah Crawford took up a part time job in the Pond Park Pharmacy. Shortly after starting her job there was a robbery at the Pharmacy that really shook the staff. Throughout this ordeal Sarah knew the strength of the Lord keeping her calm. I was amazing for her to feel that God was keeping hold of her! As a result of this she has been given the opportunity to share her faith much more openly with the other staff and they have become interested in her studies at Bible College.



Revs Peter Mercer, Colin Gracie and David Turtle

Sharing how God is moving across the Circuit

The Evening Service of Home Mission Sunday at Magheragall was an opportunity to hear from each of the six churches across the Circuit.

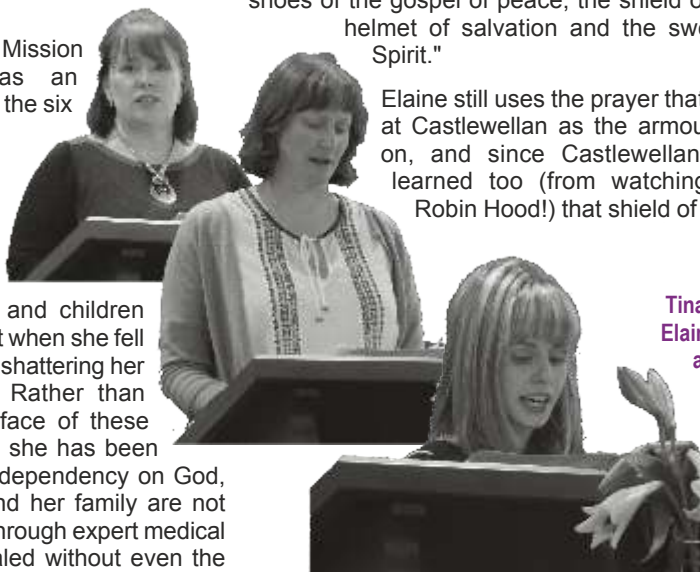
Priesthill.

Tina

Watson related how a series of life threatening illnesses, car accidents and serious sports injuries affecting her husband and children was compounded by an accident when she fell out of the roof-space last March, shattering her pelvis among other injuries! Rather than becoming discouraged in the face of these adversities Tina has found that she has been brought much closer to a total dependency on God, and the knowledge that she and her family are not facing these difficulties alone. Through expert medical care her own injuries have healed without even the use of pins, plates and screws, and with the Lord's

"The belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit."

Elaine still uses the prayer that was used at Castlewellan as the armour was put on, and since Castlewellan she has learned too (from watching the film Robin Hood!) that shield of faith is not

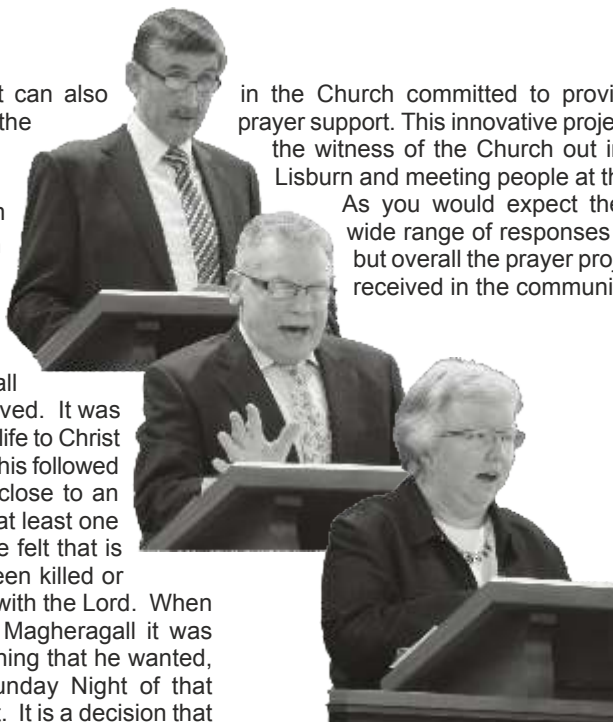


Tina Watson,
Elaine Fairley
and Sarah
Crawford

just for standing in defence, but can also enable you to advance towards the enemy!

Magheragall.

Clem Gilbert shared that he has been attending Magheragall Methodist Church for 37 years, and has been Society Steward for the last 14 years! There is hardly an aspect of the work of Magheragall in which Clem has not been involved. It was in March 1987 that Clem gave his life to Christ during a Lay Witness weekend. This followed an experience in which he was close to an IRA bomb in Belfast which killed at least one person. This shook Clem and he felt that it was a miracle that he had not been killed or injured, but that he was not right with the Lord. When the Lay Witness team came to Magheragall it was clear to him that they had something that he wanted, and needed, and so on the Sunday Night of that weekend he gave his life to Christ. It is a decision that he has never regretted, and he concluded by saying 'I thoroughly recommend the Christian Life!'



Clem Gilbert,
Terry Lilly and
Shirley
Carrington

Broomhedge.

There is no one with a greater passion for Broomhedge than Terry Lilly! About 10 years ago Broomhedge was under the threat of closure. Terry spoke about how God has turned things round since then with a weekly Bible Study, a well attended service each week and a Youth Club attracting young people from far and near! For the first time recently a Youth Service was held. A group of ladies also meet regularly in a craft club. The congregation is supported by their two ministers Rev Drs Peter Mercer and Edmund Mawhinney who carry out regular visits to members of the congregation, which Terry feels is a vital role. All this would not have been achieved without much prayer, and Terry enlisted us all to support the Broomhedge Society as it vows to continue to develop its work.

Seymour Street.

Shirley Carrington brought news of a new development in the life of Seymour Street this autumn, the **Prayer Project**. A team of volunteers has been brought together who week by week are calling at each home in the streets around the Church. As a small group call and ask if there is anything each family would like prayed for others back at the church are supporting them in prayer. Prayer topics can be written on a pre-printed card which can be returned at the door or into Prayer Card Boxes conveniently located at the Church. Each street is being visited over a two week period and prayer topics raised are passed on to specific groups

in the Church committed to provide the promised prayer support. This innovative project is clearly taking the witness of the Church out into the streets of Lisburn and meeting people at their point of need.

As you would expect there have been a wide range of responses on the doorsteps but overall the prayer project has been well received in the community.

Rev Austin Hassard celebrates 60 years in the Methodist Ministry

The Circuit Steward Tom Millar congratulated Austin on serving for 60 years in the ordained Ministry, during which time he was stationed twice at Magheragall. Tom pointed out that others had described the many gifts that Austin had in his ministry and so he would not take time to speak of his... passion for pastoral care, meticulous preparation for worship, interesting sermon illustrations drawn from his rural upbringing in Fermanagh, knowledge and understanding of the people in his congregations. Asked if he was still preaching, Austin replied - 'It beats listening!' As a preacher he was always succinct and stopped when he had finished, which is a wonderful quality! Tom thanked Austin for his unique contribution to the life of the Circuit and passed on a gift from the Circuit. ■

Rev Austin Hassard & Tom Millar



The Editor talks to Dr CLIFFORD MAYES

Consultant in Neonatology at Royal
Maternity Hospital



From the age of five if you had asked Clifford what he wanted to be he would always have said 'A doctor!' Not that it was in the family, as in fact he was the first generation to receive a university education. Brought up in Portadown, he went to Portadown College and went on to study medicine at Queen's University, but it was not until he studied paediatrics in his final year before qualifying that he felt that he had found his 'niche'. He started as a Paediatrician in Craigavon in 1993, but then came the long haul to pass the qualifications that would allow him to become a Registrar and subsequently Consultant!

It took several attempts for Clifford to pass the stiff two part membership exams, which was both mentally and financially taxing! Through this difficult time he kept being assured through his faith that this was the right path for him to follow, and the Lord, and Christian friends and colleagues, supported him along the way until he succeeded. On one occasion after another fail the resit fell shortly after returning from a holiday in the USA. Having worked hard before the holiday he took no books with him. Just before the exam Clifford and Janine were at the Church summer barbeque and Ken Wilson's epilogue was about Jesus telling the disciples, who had fished all day, caught nothing and wanted to give up, to put their nets out on the other side of the boat. Clifford felt that the message was just for him, and on this occasion when he 'cast his net in the water' he did pass! From about 2000 he started to specialise in the care of newborn babies (Neonatology) and was appointed Consultant in the Royal Maternity Hospital in 2005.



Being brought up in a Christian home he attended Edenderry Methodist Church, Portadown, when Winston Good was minister and made a commitment to Christ when he was a teenager. In June 1992 he married Janine who was from a Reformed Presbyterian background. They made their home in Lisburn which was initially their base as Clifford's work took him to hospitals in various parts of Northern Ireland. After spending some time 'trying out' various churches in Lisburn they put down their roots in Seymour Street as that was where they had received the warmest welcome.

Clifford's work puts him at the forefront of talking to the parents of newborn children, breaking the news to them that their children are seriously ill, may be facing lifelong disability or may even be unlikely to live very long. It seems to me that Clifford's calm and reassuring approach, and ability to listen and empathise are wonderful gifts to have in this situation. Clifford speaks highly of the team of staff who work with him. While the doctor may be able to move on from one situation to the next it is the nurses who have to stay for long periods beside infants struggling for their life as parents and relatives visit, perhaps not knowing if that may be their last opportunity to be with their child. His work brings both highs, such as being part of the team that

looked after the first recorded births of sextuplets in Ireland in 2009, and lows when, as is inevitable in such a unit, infants who the staff have fought to save, die.

For Clifford, however, it is not the clinical decisions that are the most challenging, but it is supporting and guiding parents facing difficult decisions, and giving them the time and the space to come to terms with the reality. Without his faith and sense



team, medical, nursing and managerial will ensure that the highest standard of care is provided for infants in the Royal Maternity Hospital.



Through all the ups and downs of his career in paediatrics Clifford has been supported by his wife Janine who has pursued a very different path into handmade jewellery and maintaining a blogging site on the Internet which has many followers from across the world. Both Clifford and Janine have an interest in photography, in which Clifford is trying to catch up with the skills of his wife with an SLR! Their teenage daughters Sarah and Jane are studying at Wallace High School while their son Sam is in P5 at Pond Park Primary School.

of being where God wants him to be Clifford would find it very difficult to carry on, and although he cannot share his faith directly with those in his care, he does turn to friends who will pray with him for the work he is doing. While he knows he cannot explain why God allows suffering he still has to grapple with the ethical issue - "When is it appropriate to turn off a life support system?" Thankfully such decisions are never taken alone, but with the whole team of caring staff along with the parents.

During this Christmas season when our families draw closer and we remember the birth of the infant Jesus in very humble surroundings perhaps we should all remember in our prayers the families whose infants are not in a stable, but in an incubator and for whom the gift of life is most treasured, but may be only fleeting. ■

As we all know the Royal Group of Hospitals is undergoing a period of rapid change much of which will impinge directly on Clifford's areas of work. A new Maternity Unit is being built and a new Children's Hospital is to be constructed on the Royal site. However it may be that children's heart surgery may not be carried out in Belfast in the future. Whether Clifford's role remains the same or changes in the future there is no doubt the



Some of the staff team providing Neonatal care

Damask Developments



The Parent and Toddler Group which provides weekly fun and friendship for around 40 pre-school children and their parents and carers, were delighted to receive a grant recently from the NIE Charity Committee which enabled the purchase of tables and soft flooring.

The new tables are child-sized making them safer and more comfortable for the children to use during their craft activities and snack

times. The soft flooring makes the play area much warmer and safer for the children, especially for the babies at the crawling stage.



The **Youth Programme** is developing well with the provision of **After School Drop-ins** on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons and **Engage** youth drop-in on Friday nights. Between 12 and 15 young people attend each session of the after school drop-ins and in total over 30 young people have taken part to date.

Some of the young people use the drop-in as a time to do homework whilst others enjoy a range of activities including X-Box, Play Station table tennis, football and board games. Some just enjoy chatting and enjoying a snack.

The Friday night drop-in, **Engage**, has developed quickly from its start in October with around 18 young people at each session. The programme has included a Laser Tag night, cage football and sports workshops. The group have also enjoyed visits from a singer/songwriter and Youth For Christ.



Damask was delighted to receive start up grants from Lisburn Policing and Community Safety Partnership and Peace 111 Youth Resources which were used to purchase computer

games and equipment, sports equipment and to resource some of the activities. Damask has also benefited from advice and support given by the lead partner, Youth Initiatives.

Youth and Community worker, Pete Waugh and his team of very willing volunteers, have done a great job in getting the youth programme up and running, and in planning more exciting and innovative activities and events for 2014.

The **Damask Advice Service** continues to provide free confidential help and advice on benefits and tax credits and related issues as well as signposting the help available from local agencies and organisations. An average of 8 clients visit the twice weekly advice drop-ins in the average week, and in addition Damask advisers have recently begun stage 2 of the social security benefit uptake programme with referral being made through Advice NI, one of our partner organisations. Between April and September the service saw 168 clients and dealt with 198 queries. Thanks to funding from Comic Relief and Lloyds TSB Foundation for Northern Ireland the service has been able to employ a part-time adviser, Jenna Brady, for the drop-in sessions. Jenna and the team of 4 volunteer advisers provide a caring and effective service and the volunteer receptionists give everyone a warm welcome and a cup of tea or coffee if they have to wait to see an adviser. ■



What's in a name?

A report from
The Priesthill Church Weekend

When 43 members of Priesthill arrived at the Rostrevor Renewal Centre for a Church Weekend away they were given badges which explained the meaning of their names! This was the work of Rev Colin Gracie who over the weekend went on to explore the meanings of the many names for God to be found in the Bible. Some are to be found frequently, and others only once but each name helps us to understand another facet of the nature of God. Sadly the English language lacks the range of names for God to be found in the original Hebrew scriptures, so it takes careful study to appreciate what the Bible can teach us about God.



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appreciate what the Bible can teach us about God.

Over the weekend craft materials and information prepared by Linda Fullerton could be used at any time to make bookmarks as gifts and mementoes on the theme of people's names and on the Sunday morning in the last session of the weekend there were group discussions on how what had been learned over the weekend could be put into practice in church.

As well as the valuable study sessions for the adults there was a separate children's programme. Saturday afternoon saw a division



between the adventurous ones who went mountain biking and the those who preferred a more leisurely walk up to the Rock in Rostrevor Forest Park. The Saturday evening programme started with a campfire singsong and the fun of toasting marshmallows on a stick and finished with an entertaining Quiz.



The great weather and the beautiful setting in Rostrevor both contributed to make his a very enjoyable, but also worthwhile weekend in which the fellowship of the church members was strengthened and their understanding of their faith deepened. ■



Celebrating 90 years of BB and GB with Chris and Karen Allen



Chris & Karen Allen must go down as one of the most amazing and talented double acts, as they have been captains of the Seymour Street Companies of the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade respectively continuously for the last 20 years, and in the case of Karen for two years before that!

First Minister, and also bringing up their own family.

At least with two Captains in the same family Chris and Karen can each appreciate exactly what the other is having to cope with and therefore they are able to support each other very effectively.

Chris and Karen who have been members of Seymour Street all their lives, joined the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade at the youngest possible ages and having worked their way up through the ranks each has become Captain. While Chris and Karen seem to take this in their stride, any of us who have been in leadership in any youth organisation will know that this must reflect a remarkable level of commitment and dedication to their roles, and to their Christian faith which underlies all that they do in BB and GB. They continue as Captains while holding down responsible jobs, Karen as Sister in Charge of the RVH Children's Theatre, and Chris coordinating Emergency Planning in the Office of the First and Deputy

Chris was brought up on the Low Road and joined the Anchor Boys in 1955 at the age of 4. There are strong family ties with the BB and many of the boys who are currently members of the company are 2nd generation children of those who joined about the same time as Chris. The BB has helped many young people develop personal skills of discipline and hard work, along with instilling in all its members Christian values and often too, a personal faith. Young people who may have seemed to have been very 'challenging' in their attitudes and behaviour have been changed, or at least have recognised in later life how much they gained from their time in the Boy's Brigade.



GB Company Section & Officers

Celebrating 90 years of BB and GB

Chris has been greatly encouraged over the years not so much by anything big, but by the little things that show the BB has had a positive effect and is appreciated. That is what keeps him going when he has to call with parents to sort out problems or spend long hours in administration, planning and preparation.

For Karen the team of Officers in the GB are like an extended family, and they meet together each month during the GB 'season' to plan ahead, and also over the summer to enjoy more social events together. Out of the 23 officers in the company 18 have grown up through the Company since about the age of three! What has been said about the impact of BB on the lives of young people can also be said of GB and when the number of young



**90th Birthday cake with former Captains
Sheila Millar and Raymond Brown**

they are still effective organisations. In fact when formed in 1923 they were the Seymour Street Boys' Life Brigade Company, only the 2nd to be formed in Ireland, and the Girls' Life Brigade company. Within a few years The Boys Life Brigade was amalgamated with the Boys' Brigade and became the 2nd Lisburn Company, and similarly in 1965 the



BB Anchor Boys



BB Anchor Boys

people who have passed through BB and GB in the last 90 years is considered there is no doubt that their positive effect within the wider community will have been substantial.

Of course BB and GB have been changing and developing over time and that is part of the reason

Girls' Life Brigade became the 3rd Northern Ireland Company of the Girls' Brigade.

One of the biggest changes in recent years has been in the uniforms which are now more adaptable to suit the wide range of activities taking place, and modern tastes! However, having a uniform is still an important part of the identity of the organisations and instils a sense of pride in those wearing it. The range



GB Explorers



BB Cabin Boys

and types of activities and 'badge work' is also regularly updated. Chris & Karen also point out that the redevelopment of the Seymour Street Halls made a huge difference to the BB and GB, allowing them to develop the activities of the different sections to a much greater extent and attracting new members into the companies.

While some companies may pay a lot of stress in entering national competitions Karen and Chris do not see this as the top priority and are more concerned to ensure that the members of their company thoroughly enjoy the Company activities. The GB Display is still partly a showcase of the girls activities, but also a lot of fun, while the BB hold a lower key Parents' Night at the end of the year in which the boys participate with some of their 'normal' activities. In BB company members are encouraged to achieve the prestigious awards, the Presidents' and Queen's Badges. Chris was himself the first boy the Company to achieve the

President's Badge. In GB many of the girls progress from the Company Section into Sub-officer and Officer training and thus play a continuing role in the life of the Company.

The Christian values of BB and GB are still very much part of their fabric. In GB the scripture material prepared by the HQ is followed each week but in BB the teaching is less formal than in the past, often being in the form of a 'Thought for the Day' in which current events are put in the context of a Christian perspective.

When the chairs are stacked away and the floor swept after the GB display and the BB Parents' Night, it is time for Chris and Karen to take the Caravan out of winter storage and enjoy a more peaceful lifestyle for a few months. Their ideal holiday is spent in their Caravan on the North Coast enjoying the sea air and going for long walks - on their own! ■



BB Junior & Company Sections and Officers

From the registers..

Seymour Street

BAPTISMS

Anna Marie, daughter of Neil and Kirsti Porter

WEDDINGS

Alastair Gilmore and Gillian Ruth Best

DEATHS

Mr Jim Perry

Mrs Julia Dickson

Mrs Louise Crawford

3a The Pines, Hillsborough

3 Roseville Gardens

26 Dalboyne Park

Walter Gamble

Sam Megarry

Trinity

DEATHS

Mrs Irene Bourton, 37 The Paddock, Lisburn

Mr George Lyttle, 7 Hertford Square, Lisburn

Broomhedge

DEATHS

Isobel Boyes

WEDDINGS

Christopher Ross & Norma Campbell

Richard Lemon & Pauline Weir

Seymour Street Snapshots

Dec 2013 18



Damask volunteers are hosted by the Mayor at the Council Chambers



Hugo Duncan & Guests with Shirley



Audience at Hugo Duncan Concert



Fallfest 5 badgemakers



Fallfest 5



Steven McCrea provides mature leadership at the BB



Fallfest 5



Former Captains behaving badly!



Fallfest 5



Stepping out in style at Trinity

On Wednesday 23rd October a team of models from Trinity BB, GB and the church congregation strutted their stuff at a fashion show which was attended by around 350 people. Leading fashion store Menarys Tempest supplied the style as our own models from age 4 to 21+++ took to the catwalk in an evening of fun, food and fashion. Mrs Joan Loughlin was compere for the night while Mrs Anna Gallagher organised the outfit changes. The whole event was a great success, with lots of positive comments from those attending. In addition, well over £2,000 was raised for the Trinity Development Fund. Thanks are due to the huge number of people who worked incredibly hard to produce such a great evening.

