



First Dromara  
Presbyterian Church

# The Link

September 2019



*“The work of the church is not survival. She exists  
to fulfil the Great Commission.”*

*Brother Andrew (20th century missionary and  
founder of Open Doors)*



# SHOWSTOPPERS!

Taking our lead from Psalm 78:4 “we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done”, the theme of this year’s Summer Bible Club was “SHOWSTOPPERS!”

So what stories should we choose to pass on? Helpfully, Scripture Union have carried out research into which Bible stories people considered to be the most iconic and have compiled a list of the ten “Must Know Stories”. Showstoppers Summer Bible Club explored five of these stories, which when put together reveal God’s Plan for His world.

- Monday: God creates a perfect world, but we rebel and spoil it

- Tuesday: Through David and Goliath we learn that if we trust God, He can do amazing things through us.
- Wednesday: The story of Daniel teaches us that God hears us when we call out to Him.
- Thursday: The birth of Jesus was the next part of God’s plan for the world.
- Friday: Jesus death and resurrection was the ultimate part of God’s plan to bring people into a relationship with Him.

Weeks of preparation led up to the Holiday Bible Club with teams of volunteers of all ages taking on the various responsibilities, including storytelling, memory verses, crafts, drama, games, catering and traffic management.

An extensive leaflet drop was completed in the local area, and visits were made to the local schools to talk to the children about club and to distribute invites. Most importantly, prayer was central in all that took place, as the leaders brought everything to God, asking for His guidance and blessing on the week of activities.

The club was well attended each evening with over 160 children attending on at least one evening and with Tuesday being the busiest with 135 children in attendance

Each night took on the same format. The children were greeted and shown into the meeting house where they enjoyed a time of praise with some energetic actions. These were thoroughly enjoyed by both children and adults alike.





After praise time some of the leaders put their drama skills on display, performing a short sketch introducing the key theme for the bible lesson each night. The children then dispersed to their various rooms where they heard the 'Showstopping' story for the night and enjoyed all the other activities of the club.

At the end of each night, when the children were safely handed over to parents the helpers all enjoyed coffee and a time of fellowship and prayer.

On Friday evening the children received a goody bag of treats including a frisbee printed with the words of

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whosoever believes in Him will not die but have eternal life." It is the prayer of all the leaders that the children at the club would understand this Gospel truth and accept Jesus as their Saviour.

As the week drew to a close all the leaders were tired but also encouraged, challenged and uplifted at how the children responded to what they were taught from God's word.

The club would not have been possible without a large team of willing volunteers, and that, we certainly had. It has

been our privilege to lead such a talented, co-operative and hardworking team, and we thank each and every one for the part they played.

Thanks also to those who gave donations, those who encouraged the leaders, those who encouraged children to come and those who prayed for the club.

If anyone else would like to be involved you will be made most welcome, and will certainly enjoy working with the children and the fellowship with the other leaders.

**David & Gillian Spiers**



# PW—Equipping women to become disciples of Christ

By Andrea Wilson

# restore

‘He restores my soul’

PSALM 23:3 ESV

Presbyterian  
Women  
Living for Jesus

Presbyterian  
Church of Ireland

**P**resbyterian Women is an organisation within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland that enables, encourages and equips women to become disciples of Christ.

## Mission Statement

Presbyterian Women encourages women to become disciples of Christ.

Presbyterian Women aims to highlight the need for:

- Love and unity
- Obedience to God
- Christian living and spiritual maturity
- Service using gifts, time and money
- Local and global mission

Presbyterian Women is to be a Christ centred organisation. In the logo the circle around the cross represents

women whose lives are centred on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their motto is “Living for Jesus”.

First Dromara’s PW group is called “Inspire”. We meet on the third Monday of each month.

We encourage women of all ages and stages of life to come together to grow in their faith through bible study, prayer, teaching and through growing in community together.

The committee, comprising Leader Andrea Wilson, Deputy Leader Rosemary McCullagh, Secretary Karen Walker, Treasurer Ruth Copes, Hospitality Karen Keown and Lorna Moore, have met and prayed for guidance as we put together this year’s programme.

We are very excited this year as our theme is RESTORE, at the heart of a well know Psalm, number 23, we are given the assurance that the LORD....”restores my soul”. We are

delighted to open our programme this year with an invitation to a personal retreat morning.

Presbyterian Women supports the development of ministry among women in PCI through the creation of group resources, running women’s conferences and facilitating training events.

We support the work of the Council of Mission in Ireland by helping to fund deaconess training and the outreach of South Belfast Friendship House into Sandy Row.

We also support the Council for Global Mission as they send out and fund global mission workers in countries across the globe.

Each year, Presbyterian Women also select special projects, both at home and overseas, through donations made to our Mission Fund.

All ladies are welcome to PW.

# An invitation to a personal retreat

We've never needed it more. We run from one place to the next—from meetings and appointments to our children's football/hockey/music practice, from class to work, from the grocery shop to home -and then drop into bed later than we hoped, exhausted and dreading the morning.

We want to slow down but don't know how and don't really believe that we can. What in the world would we do with an hour, a morning of retreat with God? But what is the cost of our frantic pace? What are we missing by not slowing down for reflection and meditation on Scripture?

What kind of toll does our anxious running take on those around us - and, even more deeply, on our own soul?

On Saturday 14 September, at Hill House, 10 Mullaghdrin Road, Dromara Valerie Murphy will guide us as we reflect on Psalm 23 - rest, a place of true rest, restoration, and trust in our loving, gentle Shepherd. Please join us as we learn to allow Jesus to guide, comfort and restore us.

The morning will start with sharing breakfast (tea/coffee/croissants) together and will end with a soup lunch. To help with catering purposes, please let Andrea Wilson know, or any of the Inspire Committee, if you'd like to attend. To cover expenses, there will be a small charge of £5.

Please do come along!

You'll be very welcome!

**Presbyterian**  
**Women**   
Living for Jesus



Leader Andrea Wilson, Deputy Leader Rosemary McCullagh, Secretary Karen Walker, Treasurer Ruth Copes, Hospitality Karen Keown and Lorna Moore.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, 26th October 2019 2-4pm at First Dromara Presbyterian Church

Inspire ladies would like to invite the congregation and their friends to afternoon tea with special guests Mrs Sylvia Burnside and Mr Jonathan Rea from New Irish Arts who will be performing for us.

Monday, 18th November - Mr Stanley Kyle;  
A.W.M. Arab World Mission 8pm Minor Hall

Monday, 9th December - Christmas Dinner



## A privilege to teach our young people

**W**hat a privilege it is to welcome the P1 to P7 children to Sunday School in the main hall and classrooms from 10.30am to 11.20am each Lord's Day morning. We know that foundations laid at an early age will be with them throughout their lives.

For our first Sunday back last September the P1s to P7s had a fun morning of games, with a short epilogue followed by juice and biscuits.

The teachers renewed their vows at the Teachers' Dedication Service. The Rev Kenny Hanna conducted the service and gave an appropriate address. The scripture lesson was read by Jonathan Rodgers.

Prize Day was held in October and the prizes for attendance at Sunday School were presented by the Rev Scott Moore.

The mission boxes, into which we put coins every Sunday, were opened via our treasurer

Mr. Ivan Jardine and donations were forwarded to the Sunday School Project, Leprosy Work India, children's work - Malawi and the Pringle Home in Jamaica.

For our annual Harvest Service the children planted snowdrops in colourful pots which they decorated with stickers. The children placed their pots in church along with the fruit, vegetables, tins and biscuits they had also brought along.

The Christmas party on Saturday, 1st December again took place a little later in the afternoon with burgers, hotdogs and ice-cream the order of the day. All the activities took place in the main hall with games organised by Mr Marty Redmond assisted by Mr Ivan Jardine and Mr David Copes. Thanks to everyone who helped out in anyway.

On Sunday 9th December the Sunday School children led the morning service with the Nativity play. The congregation joined in throughout singing carols

*“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old,  
he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6*

with our children.

We had a wonderful turnout and a big thank you goes to everyone who came along to support the children.

Our annual Sunday School outing took place on Saturday, 8th June to Mullartown House, Annalong and was open to everyone in the congregations. I am sure that those who came along will agree that the venue was ideal and the day a resounding success.

Thanks to David Copes and Brian Copes for cooking the food and everyone who helped in any way. We hope to return again to Annalong for next year's trip on June 6th.

For our Sunday School Children's Day Service on June 9th the emphasis of the day was very much Bible focused with the children reciting the Ten Commandments, The Lord's Prayer, some verses they had learned in class and the names of the Twelve Disciples. The Rev Scott Moore presented the



P7s with a one year devotions book for kids.

We want to express sincere thanks

to everyone who contributed to the Children's Day service. We would also like to thank the Rev Moore for all his help, encouragement and advice. To all the Sunday School teachers, sincere thanks for all your support, dedication and enthusiasm to all aspects of Sunday School work and to the members of our congregation for their prayerful and financial support.

Finally, we are sorry to say farewell to Nathan Redmond, who will not be returning to teach at Sunday School this year due to other commitments. We thank him for his help during the year and wish him well in his studies during the year ahead.

Sunday School will recommence on Sunday, 8th September 2019.

**Jackie Copes and Ruth Rodgers**

**Bible class takes place in the coffee lounge every Sunday morning from 10.30am to 11.20am and is open to all young people in Year 8 upwards.**

**Last year we were encouraged by the large numbers of young people who came along each Lord's Day to study the bible and enjoy some fellowship together.**

**For those who have never been to Bible Class, a normal session involves some food, an ice-breaker game followed by a study through God's word.**

**Last year's session began with a look at the life of Joseph and how it teaches us that God has a plan for our lives, even though we sometimes can't see a purpose to some of the challenges we face.**

**In February, Nathan Redmond led the Bible class with assistance from Lorna Moore and Matthew Reain. His studies focused on the 'Fruits of the Spirit'.**

**We would like to thank all the young people for coming along to Bible Class and to the parents for faithfully sending them along each week.**

**Thanks also to all those who have helped in any way and to those who have been remembering the work in prayer.**

**Nathan Redmond now steps down from Bible Class and we would like to thank him for all his hard work and efforts during the past year.**

**Jonathan Rodgers will be moving from Sunday School to take over the Bible Class for the new term, which commences on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> September.**

**All welcome!**





# Boys' Brigade

By Ian McCullagh, Company Captain

It continues to be a privilege and a challenge to present the good news of the Gospel to around 100 boys and young men on a regular weekly basis throughout the winter programme.

To be given the task of teaching our members from God's Word and trying to apply that teaching to their everyday lives is an onerous task, but also very rewarding. When staff get feedback from boys and parents it is most encouraging. To see boys coming to saving faith and seeing that faith grow is reward indeed.

Throughout the autumn and winter the three sections met and followed their various programmes. These programmes are devised to give enjoyment and challenge for boys in the different age groups.

Rev. Captain Colin Taylor was our senior chaplain for the year 2018/19 and he led the Enrolment Service in November. He also led the Company Section Bible Class each week and received very good attention from our seniors. This reflected well in the very good answering in the examination in February. We thank Rev Taylor for all his work throughout the session.

Each section had various special nights throughout the session but, as always, the big highlight of the year is our Annual Inspection and Display. On Friday, 22 March we

welcomed Mr Martin McMullan from the Mourne Mountain Rescue Team. It was a great pleasure to hear a little about the work of the team and show our appreciation for the work the team of volunteers does in the Mourne Mountains area. The company presented a cheque for £500 for the work of the team.

On Saturday, 23 March we welcomed the Mayor of Lisburn and Castlereagh, Councillor Uel Mackin and the Lady Mayoress, Mrs Jennifer Mackin. They took great interest

in the work of the company as the Mayor is an active Boys' Brigade officer himself. The company presented the Mayor with a cheque for £100 for his designated charity, the Cancer Fund for Children.

We congratulate all our members who achieved various badges and awards throughout the year and especially those who were presented with trophies at the Display. However it was indeed a very



Philip Copes is congratulated by the Mayor and Lady Mayoress on achieving the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award

special occasion for the company as we presented two President's Badges to Jamie Copes and Jonathan Reain, a Queen's Badge to Peter Jordan, two Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Awards to Jamie Copes and Ethan Somerville and six Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards to Jamie Adair, Philip



Attending the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award Certificate presentation at Buckingham Palace

Copes, Jonathan Gamble, David Peters, James Peters and Robert Shaw. We congratulate these members on gaining these high awards.

It was the greatest privilege for me to attend the Gold Award Certificate presentation ceremony at Buckingham Palace on 13 May with five of the recipients. Unfortunately, Robert Shaw was unable to attend because of exam commitments but the others, together with their parents, greatly enjoyed the occasion. The award winners met with Princess Beatrice and then received their certificates from the Gold Medal Olympic rower Heather Stanning OBE. It was indeed a most memorable occasion for us all.

Once again this report would not be complete without mentioning the untiring work of the company staff. Officers and helpers make the company what it is and I want to express my appreciation of all the work that is carried out throughout the session. It does not go unnoticed. May God continue to bless us as a company in the year ahead.



Above: Jonathan Gamble receiving his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award Certificate from Heather Stanning OBE at Buckingham Palace

# Standing tall

Wonder how you would respond to the news that you have incurable cancer?

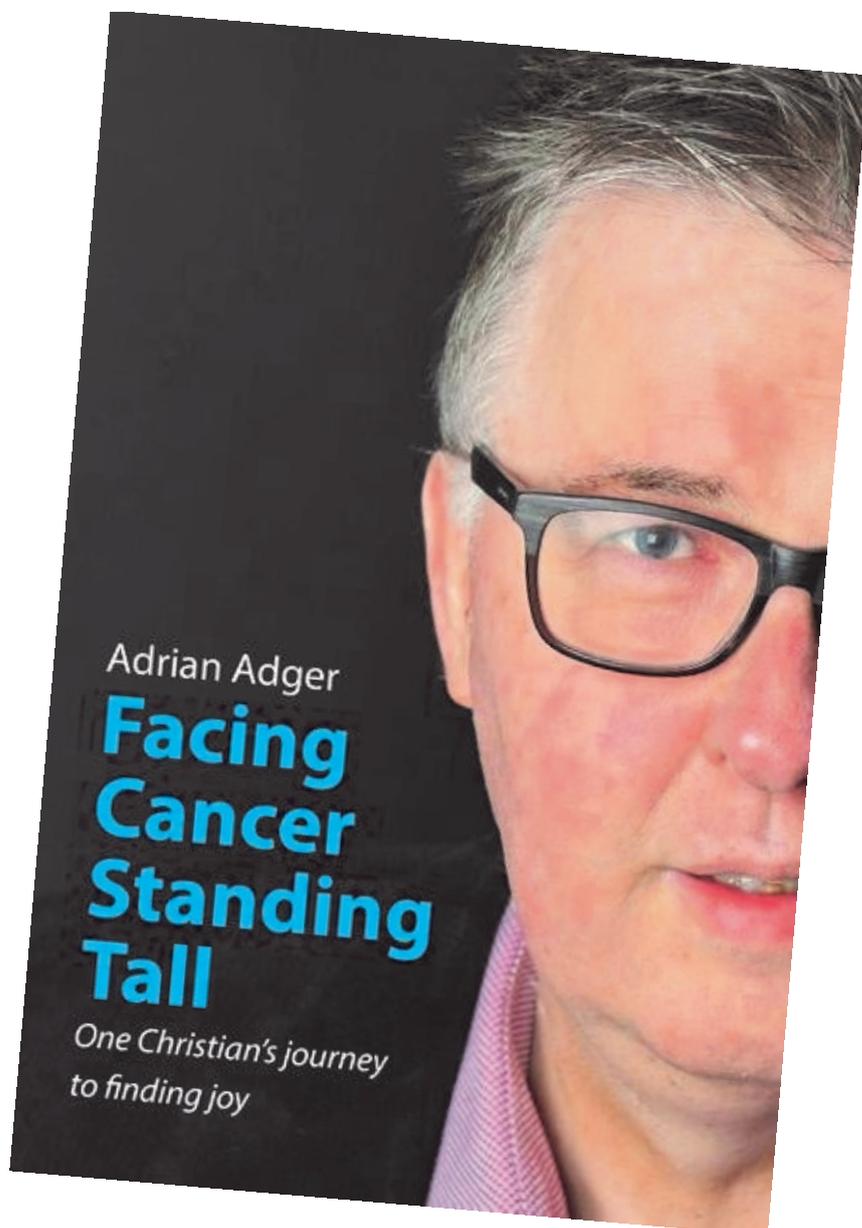
Perhaps, this is something a doctor has told you, perhaps you've watched a loved one with this plight, perhaps it's your greatest fear or perhaps there is something similar going on in your life?

Adrian Adger, Minister of Clough and Seaforde Presbyterian Churches, Co. Down - less than five years into married life, less than five years into ordained ministry, was told just that - he had inoperable cancer. He has just filmed five videos explaining how he, through his faith, has been able to "stand tall" throughout this.

This is an invitation for you to join with us in First Dromara Presbyterian Church during the month of September for our evening services, where we will watch all five videos over five weeks and consider, from God's Word, the themes the videos convey. This is for you, your family, your friends and your neighbours.

- ◆ **Finding Forgiveness- 1st September**
- ◆ **Finding Guidance- 8th September**
- ◆ **Finding Love- 15th September**
- ◆ **Finding Hope- 22nd September**
- ◆ **Finding Home- 29th September**

We're also delighted that Adrian will join us on **Tuesday, 24th September at 8pm**. You will be able to buy his book, "*Facing cancer, standing tall*", chat with him and hear first-hand about how he has remained steadfast in his faith at this difficult time. As this is during the time of our usual weekly Prayer Meeting, you or your friends may want prayer for something specific. Please invite your friends and anyone who may be interested and come along. All welcome!



# Sing Belfast 2019!

By Gillian Spiers



**C**an you imagine being part of a 1000 voice choir, singing along with the Getty Band, Andrew Peterson, Matt Papa, Dana Masters and the New Irish Orchestra, leading a congregation of almost 15,000 in the SSE arena.

Well neither could we, but that was the experience some of us enjoyed as part of the Sing Belfast concert on the 15 June this year.

When invitations went out to join the choir Angela Cobb, Ruth Copes, Andrea Harper, Rosemary McCullagh, Gillian, Joy and Leah Spiers took the plunge and signed up.

Jonathan Rea, Director of new Irish Arts took on the mammoth task of getting us all into shape for the concert. We had three rehearsals prior to the event. At our first rehearsal in Lurgan we were given a file with sheet music for over 20 songs. Familiar songs included - The Lord is My Salvation, He Will Hold Me fast, In Christ alone, Psalm 23. Newer songs included – Is he worthy, His Mercy is More, Psalm 130 - I Will Wait For You, Magnificent Marvellous Matchless Love.

We thought we knew some of the songs quite well, but the arrangements were different to what we normally sang, so it was quite a task to learn them. We had two further rehearsals in Glenmachan. We were not sure what to expect at the rehearsals but Jonathan Rea led the rehearsals with grace and humour, and it was not long until we were thoroughly enjoying the experience and feeling very blessed to be a part of the choir.

On the day of the concert we headed down to the SSE early afternoon for sound checks with the Getty band and the



New Irish Orchestra. It was slightly alarming to reach our seats, upon which we found a full file page of changes to songs, order, verses we were to sing, where there was to be harmony etc. We spent the next half hour frantically re-marking our music with the corrections.

The concert was truly wonderful, and we all felt very privileged to have been a part of it. The praise, old and new, were sung with gusto and with feeling. It was like a little glimpse of heaven. Being part of the Choir was such an amazing experience and one we will all cherish for a long time.

The Gettys plan to return with Sing Belfast 2021. When they do, why not sign up to be part of the choir – you don't need to be a trained singer – none of us were – we just love to sing praise to our Lord and Saviour, and were truly blessed to have been part of Sing Belfast 2019.

# Why Mission?

By Rev Scott Moore

**A**s First Dromara Presbyterian Church, we often show you what we offer our local community and how we want to reach you with the Gospel.

However, we also want to take our place in God's great mission around the world. Members of our congregation have been involved in this great mission this summer. Why?

From start to finish, the Bible tells the story of God's relentless pursuit of people. The Triune God created humanity in His own image to show Himself to us, love us and be loved in return, and He will stop at nothing to bring people the world over into relationship with Himself. This became a reality when He came to live amongst us in the person of Jesus Christ.

Born as a baby in an obscure Middle Eastern village, He lived his adult life as a wandering teacher and healer, and was crucified by the Roman occupiers just outside Jerusalem. In Jesus, God certainly did come to *'seek and save the lost'*. This is certainly, Good News!

But the story of God's pursuit of people doesn't end with Jesus, His death, resurrection and ascension. It continues now through the church, (in our case, First Dromara Presbyterian Church) those who become 'His body', the people who are chosen to follow Him – you and me.

*'As the Father sent me, so I am sending you'* defines our identity and purpose. By nature, we are people on a mission, sent into this world with the same purpose as Jesus who was sent by His father to *seek and save the lost*.

Without a visible outworking of this core identity, *church is just not church*. The early Christian community recognised this – the book of Acts summarises the outward expansion of the church throughout the Roman Empire, as believers chose to risk all and take the amazing message of God's love in Jesus across boundaries and borders to other peoples.

We're no different today.



***“To know the will of God, we need an open bible and an open map.”***

**William Carey, 19th century missionary**

As God's people, we give expression to God's heart when we find creative means to bring Jesus to those who, as yet, don't know of His love for them.

Some of these people will be close to home, either from the same ethnic background as ourselves or from those who have come here in search of a better life. Others, despite our ever-shrinking, globalised world, will be further away – people of *'every race, tribe, nation and language'*, hidden in the deserts and valleys and cities of the world with precious few local Christians, if any.

This is who we are. This is church, the missionary church. There is no other.

Now, read on and see what we've been doing... and see how you might be involved. Are you prepared to *serve/go*?



## *Matthew Reain has returned from five weeks spent in the USA with sports based group Ambassadors Football*

**M**y journey began with a flight scheduled to leave Dublin airport on the 28th of June at 11.35am.

On arrival to the airport, before even being able to check in, my mum and I were welcomed by Aaron Anderson and his family who quickly introduced themselves before the both of us made our way to the terminal. Our flight was delayed slightly which was good as it meant that we had more time to chat with each other before stepping onto the plane. Having Aaron there was great as he helped me as often as he could to try and make our airport experience as enjoyable as possible. Upon setting foot on the plane and finding our seats we soon realised that we weren't going to be sitting beside each other on the way to JFK International airport. Even though it was a 10 ½ hour flight, a combination of sleeping and movies meant that time really did fly in. My first footsteps on American soil

were memorable for all the wrong reasons, as the flight from Dublin took a bit longer than expected meaning that Aaron and I only had 20 minutes to navigate our way from one terminal to the next terminal that would see us going to Cleveland. Thankfully, we made it to the plane and made our way to Cleveland International airport.

I remember saying to Aaron when we had just landed into Cleveland that our trip had gone surprisingly smoothly. But I had spoken too soon because our luggage had been left at JFK! What happens next? We were not too sure. As if it was an answer to my question, our names were called out through the speakers, telling us to go to the baggage office. After the confusion of not knowing where our luggage was, it was all cleared up as we would receive our luggage in the next couple of days.

Shortly after finding out about our luggage we were collected by one of the full-time Ambassadors missionaries who was a Scottish man called Dave.

Before heading away to America, I didn't really know what to expect; I had never travelled outside of Europe and had never been on a mission trip abroad, so this was all new to me which meant that I was both nervous and excited at the prospects of this trip. The trip was five weeks long and involved travelling around different parts of the country, staying with host families, experiencing the culture of each location and ultimately telling kids more about God whilst coaching them football skills too.

For the first week I stayed in Cleveland, Ohio where we got to meet all the different coaches who were in the same situation as me - travelling away from home to come and serve God in America. Ambassadors are active in 26 countries across the world spanning from countries like South Africa, Brazil, Holland and Mexico, meaning that I got to meet loads of different coaches from all over the world who had one thing in

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common - a love for God and wanting to share his love through football ministry.

They all spoke English as well which was great as I know next to no other languages!!

In Cleveland, I spent the week getting to know all of the coaches and getting trained to be able to equip me with the necessary skills and techniques to be able to interact with children and help them extend their knowledge about football and God. Each morning, beginning on the first Monday that I was in America, all of the coaches met up at Christ Community Chapel in Hudson for the training that was called TREC which stands for Training Resourcing Equipping Coaches.

The normal day would start with praise/worship at approximately 8.30am, then we would be taught about different things associated with kids ministry which would start at around 9.30am and then we would have our lunch which was prepared for us at around 1pm, before heading to the Ambassadors football centre where we would learn all the football drills that we can use throughout the four weeks of football camps.

During the week of TREC I stayed with the Woodhams family who lived in Mentor. The Woodhams family consisted of dad Paul, mum Danielle and children Gavin and Ava. Additionally, there were two other members of the family for the week—Joao who is 16 and lives in Brazil and Joaquin who is 17 and lives in Peru. Each day after TREC I got home at around 4pm which meant I was able to enjoy spending time with the host family.

During my week in Cleveland I got to enjoy lots of things in the evenings which included swimming, eight ball pool and bowling. The highlight of my time in Cleveland had to be my first 'American' 4th of July. On the 4th I was treated to an action-packed day, where I stayed at the host family's friend's house where we enjoyed loads of things like



Aaron Anderson and ILC Derek Livingston, both from NI



fireworks, basketball and spike ball. My first experience of the American version of the 4th of July was one that I'll not forget in a hurry.

It was a great first week- getting to meet a lot of amazing people and making loads of friends that I otherwise would have never got to meet any other summer. There were so many people from so many different backgrounds and languages spoken but the one thing that we all had in common was that we were here to serve and worship the same God!

After the week I spent in Cleveland, it was time to put what I had learnt at TREC into practice as the next four weeks were going to be four football

camps in four different locations. The tour that I went on was called the Mid-Atlantic Tour. The Mid-Atlantic Tour team consisted of seven or eight other coaches and me.

For the second week I was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Our week of football camp started on the Monday and ended on the Friday. This camp was like nothing that I have experienced before because unlike the other football camps in the remainder of the four weeks of camps, this camp wasn't connected to a church as such, but it was connected with Ambassadors Football Pittsburgh. Another reason why this camp was different was because the behaviour of the majority of the campers was very poor and most of the kids were born in different countries across the world and migrated to America at a very young age. During the week I stayed with Aaron Anderson at the Van Haitsma's house which included mum Yvonne, dad Doug, sisters Maya and Marie and brother Will. After camps we returned to our host family's house and got to enjoy their company and we also got to play a football match, see downtown Pittsburgh and enjoy the local cuisine. The team that I coached for the week were called the Brazilian Mango Dogs and there were eight players on my team and they included Gabriel, Saidi, Grace, Isabella, Juan Carlos, Silas, Daniel and Mearveille. For the only time in the four weeks, my team were World Cup champions!

For the third week I was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This week the football camp started on the Tuesday and finished on the Saturday. The camp was linked to a local church called Bucks County Community Church (BCCC).

Throughout the week I had the pleasure of staying with the Leininger family which consisted of the dad Jason, mum Janelle and son Tobias. I stayed with fellow coach Mason Maddox. My team for the week were the New Zealand Pepper Cheetahs which had these guys on the team- Liliana, Kenny, Verda, Maya,



The kids at this camp were very well behaved although because it was so hot this particular week it meant that the kids had to always be kept hydrated and be in the shade as often as possible which interrupted the football quite regularly.

For the fourth week I stayed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This week started on the Monday and finished on the Friday. The church associated with this week of camp was COTS- Church Of The Saviour. During this week of camp, I stayed with the Lucot family, consisting of Dad Brian, Mum Stephanie and brothers Drew (10) and Owen (7). I had the privilege of coaching the Mexican Mango Falcons which consisted of Brooklyn, Zoe, Olivia, Sanaya, Simon, Joshua, Derek, John, Camden and Bradley. After camp each day the coaches usually enjoyed some down time after which would include going into Philadelphia city, swimming in the pool, going to a concert and going to the beach. This was probably the largest camp during the four week spell and probably the best behaved one too so it was my most memorable week of camps.

For the fifth and final week of camps I spent it in Annapolis in association with the local church called Mid Atlantic Community Church (MACC). For this week I stayed with the Holler family which consisted of Mum Steffy, Dad Dan and brothers Daniel and Matthew. I stayed with fellow coach Aaron Anderson. This week of camp started on Tuesday and ended on Saturday. Additionally, this camp was different than the other weeks as there were only around 30 kids who

went to the camp in total. The team I coached for the week was called the Argentinian Starburst Mango Peppers which consisted of Ivan, Norianna, JP, Izzy and Chase.

For all of the camps that we did we had the same template that we replicated for each camp. We divided our days into skill specific sessions, for example each day would focus on one of the following skills- foot skills, dribbling, shooting, passing or goalkeeping. At the end of each day the kids would compete in a practice world cup scenario and would be able to use the skills that they had learnt throughout the day in the matches. In the middle of the day the kids would participate in the assembly as well as taking part in bible time. This year the bible time was looking at the story of Jonah. The main teaching points that we tried to focus on was about how God knows what is best for our lives, how that no matter how far away you are away from God, He will always love you and want you to be a part of His family and lastly, that God loves you so much that He sent His son to die for you on the cross so that you don't get what your sins deserve. After bible time, but before the practice for world cup, the kids had their lunch. The reason why Ambassadors do week long camps is so that us (the coaches) can spend lots of time with the kids and be able to build relationships with them, try to show God's love through our words and actions and then we try to point them to God as often as possible. Lastly, on the final day of camp, it was world cup day where the kids got to compete against the other teams in

their age division to try and win the ultimate goal- the world cup! There were also individual competitions to try and win which was the PK competition, six second shootout and the dribbling competition. At the end of the world cup and individual competitions there was an award ceremony where all the trophies and medals were distributed and the final award of the week was the best sportsmanship award. This award went to the person who encouraged their teammates, could say the memory verse (Psalm Ch40 V1-4) and was respectful to their coaches.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to everyone who could make this mission trip possible, to everyone who supported me both prayerfully and financially and to those who took the time to contact me during my trip to ask how things were going. This was probably the best thing I have done in my life as I got to meet lots of brothers and sisters in Christ from all over the world and I got to experience how God has changed the lives of the kids that we worked with. This was my first time on a mission trip serving God and if you're a Christian and you haven't been able to go on a mission trip before then I would encourage you to think about it, as it's a truly life changing experience- one you'll never forget.

*[Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age— Matthew Ch28 V19-20](#)*

# Romania, 26<sup>th</sup> June- 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019

By Rev Scott Moore



**C**saba and Ilona Veres are PCI Missionaries supported by this congregation through the United Appeal.

They live and work in the city of Cluj, Romania and every summer, they run a children's evangelistic English camp. The campsite is situated around two hours from Cluj, in the grounds of two former churches; one a round church dating back to medieval times, and a Reformed building that is no longer used for Lord's Day worship. The site is now a camp facility owned by IKE, the youth department of the Hungarian Reformed Church. The Boys' Brigade were involved last year in fundraising for some renovations around this site. This might mean in future years they'll be able to cater for more campers who would like to come.

Around 45 children (aged from 9-14) come from all over Transylvania to attend this camp. Our team was made up of **Peter Copes, Christopher Gamble, Scott Moore, Jona-**

**than Rodgers and Joel Lowe** (Carryduff Presbyterian). We joined four other Hungarian young people (Agnes, Reka, Szabi and Peter) as well as Csaba, Ilona and another camp veteran, Arpi, who acted as our translators. Most of the children come from an ethnic Hungarian background, but some come from other parts, including local Roma communities that Csaba and Ilona have a connection with.

Children are expected to have a basic grasp of English before coming to camp (which for some is their fourth language), and during their time they teach us the odd Hungarian phrase, or two.

Every morning we had staff devotions (focusing on the one an-

other passages we read in the New Testament) from 7.30am, followed by morning exercises, breakfast, quiet time and morning program which included bible stories and memory verses in English. English classes happened before lunch, then afternoon activities such as craft, volleyball, table-tennis and dinner. The evening program had



testimonies and singing, and the night was finished off with evening activities, which we organised consisting of a Disney movie and banquet night, a campfire and talent show. We finished each evening with a time of prayer and debrief, and usually, weren't in bed until around 1am. Then we got up and did it all again the next day, in the 40oC heat!

As well as working with the young people from Sunday-Saturday, we also had the opportunity to visit the Hungarian capital, Budapest; exploring, site-seeing, swimming and sampling local ice cream and coffee and visiting a similar English camp run by OMS missionaries.

On a personal note, I would like to say how proud I am of the lads who travelled out to Romania. Each one of them shared stories from the life of Joseph, shared their testimony (via a translator) and some of them had never done this before. I hope the lads will return next year, along with some more from First Dromara.

We hope to have a Romania feed-back service in the Autumn where we'll share about our work. Thank you for your prayers and support. Many of you came to our coffee morning and prayed for us, for that we are thankful. Please do continue to remember Csaba and Ilona and their vital work in your prayers.

Remember - ***"I always pray with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will continue to perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."***



# Cork CYIA 2019

In June Jonny Rodgers travelled south with 16 other young people to serve on a CYIA team in Cork

**R**omans 10 v 13-15 says, “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.”

It is with this challenge in mind that on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June myself and 16 other young people from as near as Dromore and as far as Canada set off to a small town on the outskirts of Cork called Bandon where for the next week we would serve God together with the united desire to see people both young and old won for the Saviour. We wanted many to hear of the Lord Jesus, so that they might believe in Him and call on His name.

You see, statistically, Ireland is a place in desperate need of the Gospel. Although 91.4% of the 4,830,000 people in Ireland profess to be Christian, only 1.56% of those are evangelical Christians who believe in the bible as having final authority and in salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This makes Ireland the most unreached country in the whole of the English speaking world, and it's right on our doorstep.

As we made the four to five hour car journey down to Cork, we really didn't know what to expect. Cork itself is the second largest city in Ireland, with a population of nearly 220,000 people, with just under 50,000 of these being children. Clearly, this week in Cork was a wonderful opportunity to plant the seed of God's word. The team was organised through CEF, and we were



there to assist the regional workers, Matt and Adele Corke, (that really is their surname!) by running five day Bible clubs throughout housing developments across the Cork area.

On the Sunday afternoon when we arrived our first task was to make people aware of the clubs which would be happening. We met at Mahon point shopping centre and from there went to the various housing estates to distribute invitations to the clubs. It must be said we were pleasantly surprised by the largely warm reception we received at the doors, with no real opposition to the work being encountered.

Having distributed the invites, we headed back to the Faith Mission centre, where we were staying, for dinner and an evening of fellowship and team bonding ahead of a busy week.

Each morning before we headed out, we were blessed to have Branden Treu, children's pastor at Calvary Cork church, with us who led a bible study with the team so that we would be spiritually filled up and equipped for each day's service. We then had time to finish up preparation, had lunch, then set off. With the people who came, we were able to form three teams, who each were able to run two clubs each afternoon in urban Cork and one club each evening in the more rural outskirts. These clubs consisted of games, bible lessons, memory verses, bible songs and quizzes to test the children on what they learnt throughout the week. The lessons themselves were



packed with biblical truths, beginning with looking at the birth of Jesus, then at the healing of the paralysed man.

As the week went on, children were able to learn about the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and of His imminent return and their need to be ready for it. We were incredibly blessed to have many kids at each club, each day, and God blessed us with dry, sunny weather which meant kids were around in the housing estates and so came to the clubs. The children were largely enthusiastic to participate and learn about God from His word. The fields truly were white and ready for harvest. Not only were children reached, but the various teams were able to have really fruitful conversations with parents around the area who had an interest in the work.

Many young people and parents were intrigued as to why we would travel from Northern Ireland to their estate to tell them about Jesus, which itself was a witness to the importance of the message. While in Cork, we met many children from many backgrounds, and one memory in particular stands out for me. It was the Thursday in our first club of the afternoon which was Liffey park. It was an area where not many churches worked because of the difficult social background of many people living there.

The first few days went without event really, with a few lovely friendly children who were enthusiastic and excited for club each day. But on this particular day, the children from the previous days weren't there. Instead we had two new children to begin with. Then children from the travelling community came to the club. We were glad to see them and were hopeful that they would



be able to learn about God. They certainly sat well through parts of the club and amazingly were able to answer many of the questions about the Bible story.

However, we soon discovered that one of the boys had fireworks in his bag when he threatened to set it off next to a girl's head when she said she believed in Jesus. Thankfully we were safe but the club got a little more interesting when at the end the boys refused to allow us to leave. As we got into the car, they tried to steal the box with all our resources, and when me and another guy said that they couldn't the boy threatened to fight us.

Eventually we were able to get into the car with everyone reasonably calm, but then the little boy called John lay down on the road in front of our car and wouldn't move for a considerable amount of time. Eventually we persuad-

ed them to let us leave, but it was a real eye opener.

As much as we were shaken and surprised, more than anything our hearts were broken for them. These boys were all younger than 11, and they obviously hadn't had an easy childhood, with one boy in particular having a large visible scar across his face. These boys knew nothing else outside this lifestyle, and they needed the Gospel. Interestingly, one of the boys' friends, called Tiffany, came to club the following day late, and so missed the Bible story. She was so keen to learn about Jesus that she walked half a mile up the road to meet us at our next club so she could hear the Bible story. We were able to provide her with a bible and some child friendly activity books based upon that week's Bible stories. Pray that Tiffany would be a light in a dark situation.

Overall, the team was a blessing to be a part of. Each evening it warmed my

heart to hear about how God was at work in each of the clubs which took place, and we were able to worship God together too through song before bed. I learnt about God's faithfulness in a deeper way in Cork, and can't wait to go back, God willing.

Can I encourage you, if you are reading this, to take a real interest in God's work in the South of Ireland? May that be financially, practically or prayerfully, I wonder if we as a church can do more to bring the light of the Gospel to people who desperately need God's salvation.

Also, it should be said that I am hugely thankful for those of you who supported me prayerfully during my time away. Take encouragement in the fact that God certainly heard and answered your prayers. It has been a comfort to me to know throughout the summer that I go to serve God with the prayers of the people of 1<sup>st</sup> Dromara.

# Portballintrae CSSM

By Laura Stewart



**K**ate (Duffy) and I had the great pleasure of once again serving on the Portballintrae (PBT) CSSM team.

PBT CSSM is a beach mission, run by Scripture Union NI, which welcomes 4-18 year olds every morning, afternoon and evening for two weeks in July. The majority of those who come along are either holiday makers or travel in from the surrounding area, primarily Bushmills.

Every morning from 11:15-12:15am we have a family beach service in which we all join together to sing, perform or watch some hilarious dramas, and to hear from God's word.

This year our mission statement was 'Jesus is the King of Kings'.

Every day we got to study the stories of Daniel and King Solomon in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. We saw how these stories in the Old Testament continuously pointed to the true, unexpected, gracious, forgiving, obedient, powerful, perfect, servant, victorious and returning King, Jesus in the New testament, and how He could be the King over our lives.

Being able to proclaim and shout this truth outside on the beach in Portballintrae is something special, and gives us the opportunity not only to witness to the children and young people who attend our mission but also to many passers-by.

This year both Kate and I got to be a part of leading the 15-18 year old section of CSSM, otherwise known as the 'Carriers'. Every afternoon and even-

ing we had a dedicated group of roughly 25 older teens come along consistently throughout the two weeks.

A typical afternoon in the life of a carrier involves heading to the beach to play games and to hear from one of the leaders on team; topics addressed included: being a Christian in Sport, and the Christian response to anxiety and stress.

The evenings were filled with a range of activities; we had a campfire, a Ceilidh, a photo challenge and a trip to Barry's. More importantly, however, this time was also used to study and explore some of the 'Big Questions' Christians face. Topics covered included things like: Can we trust the Bible? Was Jesus who he said he was? What about science?



In small groups the carriers were able to discuss these challenging areas of faith and had the opportunity to seek answers to any queries or doubts or uncertainties they had. We found this to be a really encouraging time. At the end of the fortnight we got to hear the testimonies of some 'willing' volun-

teers, which was so special and reminded us as leaders about how important the work of CSSM is in raising up children and young people to follow God.

Please pray for CSSM and for all of the camps and missions that happen over

the summer time – that the truths taught at each of them would resonate all year round with every child and young person who hears them and that through camps and missions God would be creating disciples to further His kingdom into the next generation.





# Scripture Union summer 2019

By Nathan Redmond



**T**his summer I lead at four different scripture union camps and missions.

They included Mixed Outdoor Pursuits (MOP), Portavogie and Cloughey CSSM, Senior Mixed Adventure Camp (SMAC) and New Horizon, which was also attended by Claire Hanna. Each week that I lead at was so different, but I have decided to focus on my first camp, Mixed Outdoor Pursuits.

MOP is a camp that is based at Greenhill YMCA, an outdoor activity centre at the bottom of Slieve Donard. The campers that attended were going into first year right up to going into lower sixth (a big age gap I know, but it works so well!) This was my second year doing MOP as a leader, and I loved every second of it.

A typical day was all the usual meals, two activities like paddle boarding, adventure walks, bouldering and high initiatives just to name a few and then each evening we would have our evening



meetings and quiet times.

The evening meeting would consist of worship, a drama (surprise I was part of that!) and a talk. I just loved the evening meetings so much, even though we were all tired I loved getting to see all those young people praise God through song and engage with the evening talks. It was incredible!

My favourite part of the camp was the small groups in the evening. I lead a small group by myself with four very different boys from very

different backgrounds and what a privilege that was, getting to know more about them and getting to learn more about their walk with God and also getting to see them build friendships with each other.

I loved how honest these young men were. They were so raw about everything and that was special. They shared so much about their lives and their relationship with God and the struggles that they faced on a day to day basis, may it be with relationships, swearing, standing up for God or reading

their bible and praying. I am so thankful that God had placed me with them. I am so thankful that I got the opportunity to help guide them in the right direction.

I also want to take this opportunity to ask for prayer for all these young people who were at summer camps and missions within Northern Ireland. Camp is an amazing place to get on track with God but sometimes when we leave camp the bubble bursts and we aren't as strong in our faith. Please pray that all these young people can stand firm for God, pray that they can connect with God daily.

I would also ask for prayer for them within school and the temptations that they may face due to peer pressure or trying to fit in. The world is becoming a harder place each day, but I pray that they can stay strong and glorify God in all that they do.

Thank you all for your continued support and for all your prayers and messages that I have received this summer. God has been so good to me.



# Training Week: 28<sup>th</sup> June – 5<sup>th</sup> July

Throughout the summer Joy and Leah Spiers served with CEF, the New Irish Youth Choir and Mourne CYIA.



**C**EF's Summer Outreach Training Course is held during the first week of July every year in Seaview in Kilkeel.

It is aimed at equipping young people to teach children effectively at camps, five-day clubs and within their own churches.

Each day started with a bible study based on the Psalms led by one of our leaders, and a prayer time, which then led into our lessons for the day. In our lessons we learnt how to teach a Bible story and memory verse, lead a five day club, conduct a quiz and counsel a child.

We also had classes on 'What is the Gospel,' where we studied the key parts of the gospel message and know how to convey it to children, as well as 'Seeing Through Their Eyes,'



where we learnt how to effectively teach children from Roman Catholic backgrounds. Our days finished with a time of praise, which was normally at Kilkeel Harbour.

On Monday afternoon, we had an assessment on memory verses, where we taught our memory verse in front of a leader who gave us feedback, and on

Thursday morning we were also assessed on our bible lesson. The camp concluded on Friday evening with a commissioning service, where we were presented with certificates and family could come and hear about what we had been learning throughout the week.

SOTC was a really amazing week of fellowship and teaching, We met a lot of wonderful people, played a lot of volleyball and learnt more about our faith and how to serve God in children's ministry and especially five day clubs.

Anyone aged 16 or older can attend training week and we would really recommend it to anyone who is involved in children's work; we left feeling better equipped and excited to get more involved in children's ministry.





## New Irish Youth Choir: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> July



**O**ur second camp of the summer was the New Irish Youth Choir Residential at Ganaway in Ballywalter. Katie Annett and ourselves attended this camp.

New Irish Youth Choir “provides residential workshops for singers and gives young people the chance to perform. As well as being a great opportunity to make friends, it is a great chance to develop your musical skills and expand your knowledge and love of God, deepening your worship of Him and living out the Christian life.” The Youth choir usually has around 100 singers, girls can attend from P7 until age 18, and boys from P6 up.

Each day started with bible study and small groups, where we discussed the ‘therefores’ of being a Christian. The first two days were mainly rehearsals as we prepared to record a Christmas CD. Wednesday, the warmest day of the week, was recording day. It was a bit bizarre singing ‘In the Bleak Mid-Winter’ in sweltering heat whilst swatting wasps away. Recording the 13 tracks for the CD took from

10.00am to about 8.00pm. It was a tiring but enjoyable day and we are looking forward to hearing the finished product when it is released in August.

Thursday, saw us hit the road as we took a bus for a day trip to Portrush and then held a concert in Portstewart Presbyterian Church. It was brilliant to see the church well filled and enjoying the praise.

Friday was just surreal. We woke up to our leaders singing Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer dressed in Christmas jumpers. Running with the Christmas theme, all of Ganaway was decorated with Christmas trees and tinsel. We had a visit from “Santa,” Christmas themed crazy games, a Christmas party and a full Christmas dinner – it was all

great craic. Our residential finished on Saturday night with a concert in The Church of God Glenmahan in Belfast.

New Irish Youth Choir takes part in various events throughout the year with the highlight being singing with the full New Irish Choir and Orchestra in the Waterfront Hall at the “Ireland in Christmas Praise” concert.

This year the concert is on the 20th and 21st December and we would recommend it to everyone as a great way to start Christmas, singing praise to our Lord and Saviour.



# Mourne CYIA: 28<sup>th</sup> July – 2<sup>nd</sup> August

**W**ith less than 24 hours to repack our bags we headed off to Mourne CYIA, Christian Youth in Action along with Nadine Hamilton and Jonathan Rodgers.

Mourne CYIA, ran by CEF and based out of Rathfriland High School, seeks to deliver five days clubs across the Mourne area.

Along with 40 other young people, we were divided into nine teams, which each held four five-day clubs around the Newry, Banbridge, Rathfriland area. A five-day club is held on a green area in an estate for five consecutive days where children, who have often never heard the gospel before and are often from Roman Catholic backgrounds, are taught the gospel through memory verses and Bible lessons, along with songs, games and quizzes. We taught CEFs 'Saviour For You,' programme, which included lessons on the birth of Jesus, the Paralysed Man, the Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus, the Resurrection and the Great King.

Our days started with a bible study lead by Marcus Somerville, and then a prayer time in our teams of four or five when we prayed for our specific clubs and children.

After lunch we headed out in our teams and held three clubs in the afternoon and after a quick dinner at Rathfriland High School, we left again for our fourth club of the day. Once everyone had returned from their clubs we had a team debrief followed by a time of prayer, praise, supper and volleyball.

Throughout the week, 455 children attended clubs and many were given Bibles and books whilst others signed up to receive regular literature from CEF.

We both found the week really encouraging. It was amazing to see children so excited for club each day and starting to grasp the gospel message, as well as seeing clear answer to prayer throughout the week and learning to rely on God for each club.

## Joy and Leah





# First Dromara Presbyterian Church Harvest Services 2019

*“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9*

## **Café Connect, Harvest Special - Saturday 5th October 7.30pm**

Pastor Eric Ngala Mutumbi- Kenya

His burden is to see pastors working in rural areas equipped both theologically and practically to enable them to serve the Lord faithfully and effectively. Pastor Eric leads Africa Inland Church (AIC) Bumala in Western Kenya. He is also the founder of the Reformed Theological Seminary in Bumala. In addition, he leads the ‘Farming God’s Way’ (FGW) Programme, which helps groups of pastors learn simple methods of producing crops and livestock to support their families.

## **Harvest Sunday - Lord’s Day 6th October 11.30am**

Rev. Scott Moore - Minister, along with special Harvest music led by the members of the choir.

## **Harvest Sunday - Lord’s Day 6th October 7.00pm**

Rev. Frank McKeown- Former Minister (1982-1987) - since being called from First Dromara, Frank has served the congregations of Second Newtownards Presbyterian and Rathcoole. Now retired, he and his wife Liz live in Bangor and attend Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church.

Please see this as your invitation to join us, as we give thanks to the Lord of the harvest. All welcome!

# Seeing God's creation through a lens

By Howard Bull

**T**his time of year brings many types of animal life out into the our lives, gardens and the countryside in general.

To a keen photographer like me, this is a season of rich visual diversity and opportunity. Of course, it's not only the animals that flourish in the warmth of the mid-summer sun but plants and flowers that burst into new life just a few months ago, now mature and giving forth their nectar to a multitude of fascinating insects and animals.

To most people, for example, a house fly is nothing but an unhygienic nuisance. My hobby however, has revealed it to be part of a world of miraculous flying mechanisms, delicately balanced and constructed with incredible intricacy and truly amazing in their innovation and engineered beauty.

You could perhaps describe such insects as God's micro-machines, fully autonomous, self-sustaining and packed with genetic information. OK, yes, they're still a nuisance but nevertheless, impressive feats of God's infinite creative skills and the closer you look, the more awesome they seem.

The hobby of macro photography allows an ultra-close view of a world that is often hidden from view. A macro photograph reveals the genius work of a creator whose ability is unlimited and the longer you look at the photos of our micro world,



the more implausible the claim of 'life by accident' becomes.

The point of my article is how our incredibly clever and generous God has given us a paradise world filled with things that sustain us, not just physically, but spiritually and intellectually also. God has made sure that not only the words of scripture lead us towards Him but, if any proof is needed, (or if you can't read!), the intricacy of nature illustrates and reveals without doubt, God's presence. One line of scripture sums this up:

Romans 1:20 - "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

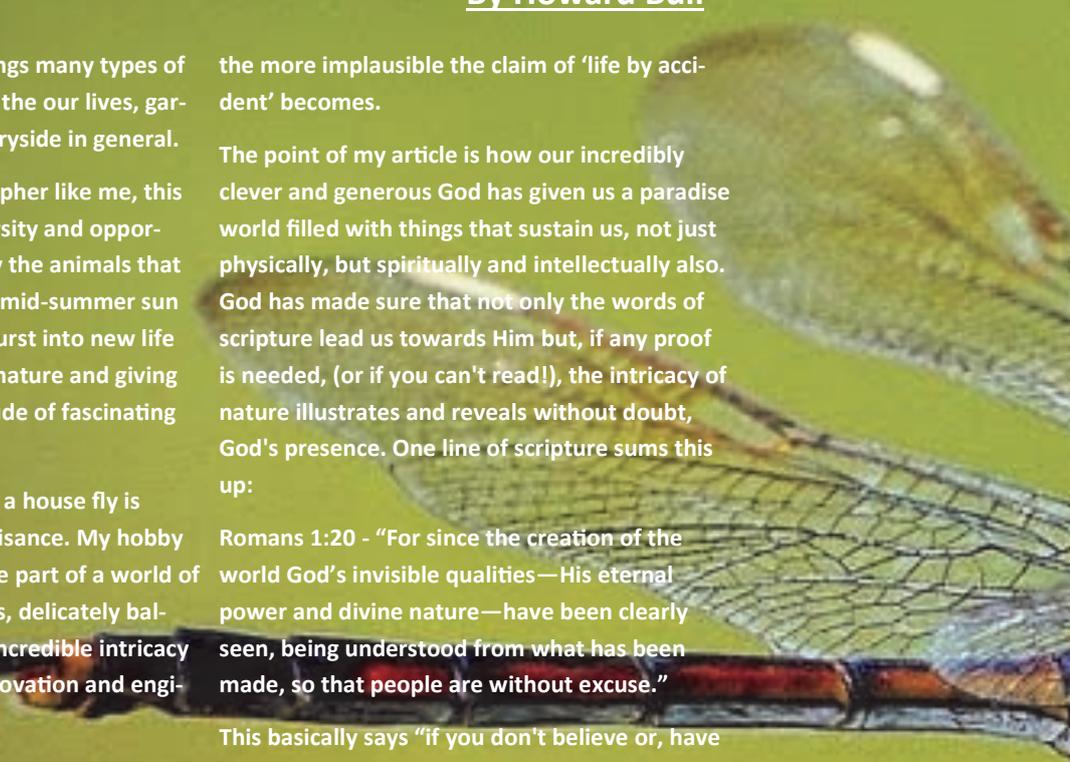
This basically says "if you don't believe or, have not understood what's been written, just open your eyes and take a good look around you and then try to tell me there is no creator!" Another line of scripture speaks the same message;

Job 12:7 "Ask the wild animals, and they'll teach you; the birds of the sky will tell you."

This prompts us to look at nature and let God show you His existence through it.

Of course, there is a great deal more to creation than a few bugs. Nature itself however, is a great platform to illustrate the sheer improbability of our accidental existence without a creator. What possible universal force other than a creator's hand, could cause random chemicals and rocks floating around the vacuum of space to form into the wing of a dragonfly, the nose of a dog or the leaf of a flower? A couple of photographs that I have taken have spoken to me as in Romans 1:20.

The wing of a dragonfly is a composite nanostructure comprising veins and membranes and capable of sustaining flight, glide and hover in all directions. It is just 0.075mm thin which is



the thickness of a substantial human hair. Each eye is made up of 30,000 individual segments. A dragonfly holds the record for long distance insect flight at 4,400 miles non-stop.

The pattern on a dog's nose is as complex as a fingerprint on a human. They have up to 300 million olfactory receptors in their noses as opposed to only about six million for humans. The part of their brain dedicated to interpreting scent signals is about 40 times larger than that of a human. As in humans, a combination of nose and iris pattern creates an animal that is absolutely and totally unique in the world.

Plants range from the smallest (*Wolffia globosa*) at just the size of a grain of rice to the giant Eucalyptus of which

one was measured at four hundred and thirty-five feet high. Plants work with the rest of God's creation to provide food, shelter, warmth and many other things that complete the whole ecosystem. God created His world like a jigsaw puzzle where all the parts fit perfectly and all play their part.

In Matthew 10:29 we read; "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care." This tells us that everything is important to the God of creation. We have been gifted the guardianship of his world and, as many people have heard, we should take nothing but photographs and leave nothing but footprints.

How miraculous and impossible is our existence where we find ourselves living on a rock in the vacuum of space. The rock is just the right distance from its star. Too far away and it would be too cold. Any closer to the sun and life would be boiled away. It spins at just the right speed that provides a life supporting temperature all over its surface. If it spun too slowly, the slowly alternating cold and heat would not support meaningful life.

Our rock has an iron core that provides the Van Allen belt that protects us from the deadly radiation of the sun. Our rock has a moon that stirs and agitates the oceans and stabilises the planet. There are some that say life as we know it may not exist without its influence. Our existence is precarious but, nevertheless, here we are. The rock has a life giving veneer of atmosphere that hasn't been burned off like that of Mars which, in fact, is further away from the Sun.

Upon the rock, there are trillions of lifeforms all working in synchronisation, living and dying, taking their place in the line of existence. My little dragonfly, my dog's nose and the little plant are just a snapshot in time of a miraculous creation that was created for us by our God and maintained by His sustaining hand. There is so little we understand of the mind of God and his true capability but the evidence of nature gives us a clue as to the vast expanse of our creator's ability.

The next time you swat a fly (and we all will!), take a moment to ponder what it is you're about to destroy. It's something that most of us completely overlook and undervalue and yet, that little beast is way beyond the capability of man to create!

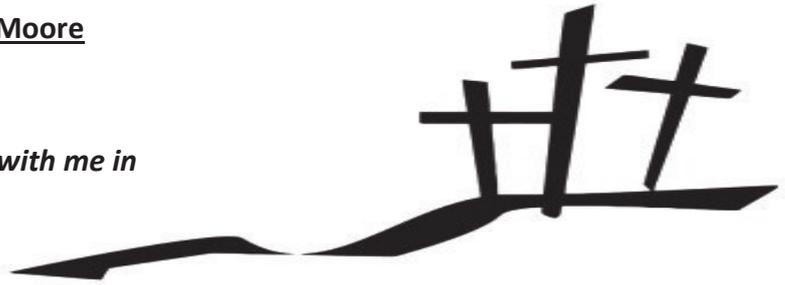
Why not try to photograph it instead and wonder at its delicate construction and its compound eyes looking with ultraviolet vision at YOU, the greatest of God's wondrous creations!



# Cries from Calvary

Seven studies by Rev. Scott Moore

*"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise!" Luke 23:43*



Dying words are poignant and significant. In our last study we opened up the theme of sacrifice. As we carry on with our magazine series, 'Cries from Calvary', we once again consider the dying words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Once again, we find ourselves at a first century place called Golgotha, the place of the skull and as we look towards the heavens, we see three silhouetted crosses. On the centre cross hangs the second person of the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ, with two common criminals on either side.

The first cry uttered was a prayer, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing!" As we consider this second cry, we'll see this time it's a promise and we have to consider it in the context of the conversation the Lord Jesus had with the criminals who hung beside Him. One criminal is adding his slanderous tuppence worth alongside the jeering bystanders, Luke 23:39 says, "if you are the Christ, save yourself and us!"

However, the conversation between the Lord Jesus and the other criminal is very different, he says "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!" God, in His sovereignty, has obviously been working an act of grace in this criminal's heart. Our gaze is more returned as we listen to the answer that protrudes from the parched lips of the suffering Son of God. Remember, as He hangs, He bares the physical pain of the nails nailing Him to the Roman Cross and the searing pain of the crown of thorns through His brow, but also the spiritual and emotional pain of bearing the punishment for the sins of every elect person.

Amidst the anguish and the pain, we consider this second cry from the Lord Jesus, "**I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise!**" **Luke 23:43**. What wonderful words! What comforting words! Who would have thought, when our Lord Jesus returned to Heaven He would walk in side by side with a common criminal?

Let's unpack these wonderful words of Salvation:

## Salvation is simple

Let's not lose sight of who this person is that our Lord Jesus is speaking to. Our bibles say he is a thief, but the Greek language of the New Testament tells us much more. It tells us he was a murderer, he murdered to get what he wanted. This was not a nice man! However, in his hopelessness he looks to Christ. The answer our Lord Jesus gives to this criminal explains that there isn't anything much simpler than the process of salvation, "**today you will be with me in paradise!**"

There are many, perhaps some reading this article, who believe that we must do a list of things to earn our salvation, by trying hard at being a better person. That's what every other religion in the world teaches. However, the Lord Jesus never taught that. Here is a criminal, recognising Jesus for who He is, and the Lord Jesus makes the promise of salvation-it's simple! This man was never baptised, this man never did a mission team, this man never had the opportunity of evangelising to his work colleagues, but he is in Heaven. Not our way, but through the simple and graceful way of the Lord Jesus. Salvation, it's simple!

### Salvation is instant

“Today” is the day! The Lord Jesus says, the minute you take your last breath you will be in Heaven. What is the one thing we like about the modern world, it’s the fact that everything is instant. Emails, telephone calls, text messages, skype, photographs, coffee... this has developed over time. Salvation was always instant. This is basic Christian teaching, once a believer dies, his or her body is transported immediately to Heaven and the earthly shell, the body remains. These are comforting and encouraging words when a Christian friend or loved one dies for, we know they are immediately in Heaven. If you’re grieving from the loss of a Christian loved one, these should be comforting words. If you’re a Christian it will be the same for you, no period of waiting or no time of limbo, but you will pass immediately into the presence of God. Today is the only day we’re sure of. We don’t know if tomorrow will come. This is the only deathbed conversion we read in the New Testament; this is not the normal way to come to the Lord. Come today! Salvation, it’s instant!

### Salvation is glorious

Have you ever been the recipient of a postcard? I remember when I went inter-railing with four friends, we visited Dublin, Madrid, Barcelona, Paris, Amsterdam, Zurich, Vienna and Rome. I sent my mother a postcard from every place. I’m sure she was possibly fed up with them by the time the last one came. The postcard normally has a very enticing picture on the front, of historic buildings, verdant meadows, flowing rivers, majestic mountain ranges or golden sand on the seashore and you wish you were there! The places look exciting, breath-taking and beautiful.

Heaven is a place that will be all those things; in fact, it’s so glorious you wish you were there. There is no disappointment, no suffering, no tears, no distress, no envy and no greed. This Heaven shows us that Salvation is glorious. This is great comfort for the dying criminal. Perhaps in his mind he thought I don’t believe you; this is why Jesus says, **“I tell you the truth.”**

What a day for this criminal, he woke up in the morning in a prison cell, he hung on a cross outside the city

walls at lunchtime, by night-time he will be in Heaven. Jesus speaks to us of a glorious paradise that awaits His people. Saved person, as you read this, does it not thrill your soul; there is a place where the glory of the Triune God perpetually shines. Let these words, **“I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise”** remind you that Heaven is a reality and it reminds us that Salvation, it’s glorious!

### Salvation is Christ

**“I tell you the truth, today you will be with ME in paradise!”** What is it that makes Heaven wonderful? It’s a place without tears or pain! It’s a place where we will be reunited with friends, family and loved ones in the Lord! It’s a place of glory, beauty and festal array! These things are wonderful facts about Heaven, but let’s remember that Heaven without the Lord Jesus Christ is not Heaven. In this 2<sup>nd</sup> saying from the cross, the word Paradise is not the most important word, but the word Me! Jesus wants the dying criminal to know that he will be by His side.

Does the fact that Christ will be in Heaven make you long for Heaven? It should. If you could go to Heaven and have peace, tranquillity, loved ones and safety without Christ, would that be ok? I fear that is the case for many. Do you have a desire to be with your Saviour? Saved person, do you work day by day at your intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you spend time with Him in prayer and in His word? Don’t go through life looking forward to Heaven without the one who makes Heaven Heaven.

Perhaps as we unpack this second saying, **“I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise”** you realise you’re not a Christian. As we see the first criminal ushered into Heaven’s splendour with the Lord Jesus Christ, don’t forget there was a second criminal. He heard and saw the same things as the first criminal. He had the same opportunity, but from what we know, as he left the scene of time and entered eternity, he was unrepentant and died lost. Both criminals represent the whole human race.

Which criminal are you? Paradise bound or will you in Hell be found?

