

Meet the elder

Name: David Copes

Age: 52

Occupation: Electrical Design Engineer

Tell me about your family?

I was third in a family of six – three brothers and two sisters. I am married to Ruth and am blessed to have three lovely children; Peter, 18, studying at Dromore High School and now driving!!, Lucy, 15, studying at Banbridge Academy and enjoys playing hockey and then there's Ruby, 8, who is at Fairhill, plays a little hockey and is just enjoying life.

Hobbies/interests?

Generally, I enjoy most sports. In younger days I raced Moto-Cross (Scramblers) for 12-15 years – A variation of 125cc 2 stroke machines from Suzuki, to Kawasaki, to Yamaha then finishing off with a 250cc Honda. I kept fit at Squash but recently have slowed the pace with a little golf. Of course, not to feel outdone by the latest cycling craze – I have been known to explore the beauty of the local countryside even if it means a bit of pain. I wouldn't call myself a gardener but I don't mind getting out into the fresh air to cut the lawn and take my mind off the day's goings on – Ruby may even join me for a spin around.

Tell us something we might not know about you?

Whilst serving my time as an electrician in Harland & Wolff, I won a Queens Silver Medal and £500 for 'Apprentice of the Year' for the UK in 1988 from the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights where Prince Philip was the Permanent Master. My parents and myself were taken over to London to receive the award.

How long have you been coming to First Dromara?

Ruth and I joined First Dromara after we got married in September 1998. Ruth belonged to the more traditional Church of Ireland at the Church of the Ascension, Annahilt, whereas I went along to the more evangelical Elim church at Moneyslane. So I guess we met somewhere in the middle.

On joining First Dromara, I enjoyed seeing Christian people enjoying themselves and being able to have a laugh – not the 'square headed' people that can be portrayed. The

men's group was good for me at that stage.

How long have you been an Elder: Almost 10 years.

When and how did you come to faith?

I was brought up in a Christian home attending church every Sunday and attending Sunday School at the former Gransha Primary School. During primary and secondary school, I regularly went along to Gospel missions taken by many different evangelists and pilgrims. I clearly heard from a young age that I needed to be saved. Particularly as I went through my secondary school years I was spoken to by God as I heard the speakers proclaim the gospel message, but I was stubborn and did not submit to his call.

On leaving school I went the way of the world and into sinful living and not in a way which would be pleasing to God.

During this time, whilst living at home, I continued to go along to church and some missions but still resisted God's calling. I was aware that God might not always keep calling me and I might miss my opportunity to be saved. The verse from the Bible in Genesis 6:3 'And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive man' would have made me fearful.

Ruth recommitted herself to God and was a good influence in keeping me involved in church life. I joined the Youth Club as a helper at this stage.

By now both of my sisters, Judith and Pauline, were saved and then in October 2002, my brother Brian had a serious accident which ultimately led to him coming to faith in Jesus.

I was pleased that he had taken this step and wondered what it was going to take for me – an accident or illness? After hearing of Brian's news on Saturday evening, I was at a business meeting on the Saturday night. My mind was not on the events of the night but rather that I needed to act.

Arriving home in the wee small hours of the morning I asked Ruth if she had heard Brian's news whereupon she prompted what about me?

After running all these things around in my mind for a short time, I then decided I needed to ACT, I proceeded to the spare bedroom, got down on my knees, and praying,

asked God to forgive me for my sins and asked Jesus to come into my life as my personal Saviour and friend on 20th October 2002.

Almost at once I broke down with deep uncontrollable and heartfelt crying – this however was not a weeping of sadness but rather a weeping of joy and relief.

I had the joy of sharing my news with Ruth, my family and indeed, with the next day being Sunday, I was very happy to tell everyone at church that I had got saved.

The verse in Romans 10:9 'That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved' sums this up. I realize that I am saved from eternal separation from God in a lost eternity. Can I encourage anyone who has not yet put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to seek out Jesus – to read God's Word, lift a tract or speak to someone you know who follows Jesus. 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near' Isaiah 55:6.

What difference has it made in your life?

From coming to faith some 17 years, I have had no regrets. I have had a real desire to find out more about Jesus, to have fellowship with other believers and to serve Him where possible.

In this service I have been involved in many different ways such as Youth Club leader, Sunday School teacher, Committee member and also act as a Transferor Representative for both Fairhill Primary School and Dromore High School which keeps me busy.

Ultimately being a Christian gives me a real peace and contentment knowing that Jesus is with me in this life and I am



assured of a home in Heaven when I leave this earth.

Favourite hymn or song?

I can't really say that I am one for favourites, however I do like both traditional hymns and also more modern songs so 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross' and 'Boldly I Approach' from Rend Collective.

Favourite verse or passage?

I think most of my favourite verses are those you would see around telephone poles and street evangelists – really Gospel-centred verses. However one verse that is good to dwell on is Proverbs 3 v 5:6 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths'.