

For nearly 20 years Presbytery has benefited from the circulation of its newsletter 'Link Up', most recently with Val Fitzgerald as editor, who is to be congratulated and thanked for her patience and efficiency. With her retirement, a new direction is being taken, in recognition of the large numbers in each congregation who are now on-line.

It is hoped that information may be gathered by e-mail, edited, and circulated periodically (initially three times a year) via a PDF which can be printed locally by each congregation to meet their own requirements. Printed copies would continue to be sent to those on the mailing list such as 'some who live outside the Presbytery area and like to be in touch who do not have internet access. We hope in this way to cut down waste and expense in printing and delivering copies which go unread.

# LINKUP

Autumn / Fómhar 2009



## Abbey Dublin

*“The Session and Committee held a special meeting in May to talk over where we are at and where we are going.”*

The Session and Committee held a special meeting in May to talk over where we are at and where we are going. This resulted in two decisions:

1. That we agree in principle to the idea of a congregation sabbatical year.

2. That we organise this year’s Autumn Weekend at Ovoca Manor, Co. Wicklow to explore together our common life and witness.

### **Alan Boal writes...**

Sabbath-keeping is not an end in itself; we are invited to rest, renewal, reflection, prayer and playfulness. It is hoped that our proposed Sabbath Year will be all of these things for us as individuals and as a community. We may be surprised at just how hard it is for us to set down some things and lay aside some routines - not realising how much we derive our value from them. We may also be surprised by what God chooses to do in and through us during the year. Some of you may not notice much difference in the year, others may experience a profound, and we hope, liberating difference. Everyone will become aware of the suspension of certain events in our calendar, but let me list some of them for you: harvest (there will be no decoration of the church or distribution of fruit and flowers); Christmas (we will have no special events outside our scheduled services); Cell Groups (will not meet); Christian Aid Lunch (we will only have a special collection at the service); Bible-studies/ discipleship/ leadership courses (will cease); Easter (no special events outside the scheduled services). Instead, we will supply a guide to suggest meditation and prayer; we will hold a day of prayer and fasting every seven weeks, and we will dedicate every seventh Sunday to some aspect of the Sabbath in Scripture. During the year we hope to reconnect with God in a fresh way, and we wish to discern His leading for the future nature and mission of Abbey congregation. Please pray and participate to that end.’

### **Robert Poynton reports -**

In June we received notification of a grant for €37,500 under the

‘Civic Structures Conservation Grants Scheme 2009’ towards our restoration works. This, combined with an earlier grant of €10,000 and a gift of €5,000, bought the total of contributions to €52,500.

Now in August I am pleased to confirm that we have also been successful in receiving a commitment of a grant of €60,000 under the ‘Significant Places of Worship Grant Scheme’ which is managed by the Heritage Council. Early in June we were delighted to hear from Rev David Bruce, Executive Director, Board of Mission in Ireland, PCI, that he had been told that money was available. We established that we met the basic criteria to allow us to apply - we had a Conservation Report in place, we had already engaged an Architect (Sean Harrington, Architects) to advise us, we would be able to meet at least 20% of the expected costs, and we would be able to proceed to use any grant before November 2009. We hastily drew up an application document and submitted it in mid June.

We have now received formal notification that the above sum of €60,000 has been earmarked for Abbey. This is timely since we will shortly receive that Architect’s report outlining the steps we need to undertake to make our building safe and to commence some restoration work. Taken together, the total of these grants and gift now equals €112,500. Undoubtedly we face significant cost challenges ahead but it is encouraging that we have had such a good start to our fund-raising.

### **Mark Gorman reports...**

Four days, 500 people, 17 bands, 160 red chairs, one express yourself station and lots and lots of coffee. Xpresso Arts Festival was and is about entertainment. To entertain means to enter into conversation and to meet the other. Through the mediums of art and music Xpresso brought people together. To reflect our desire to bring people together we had musicians from almost every genre: hip hop, gospel, jazz,

rock, pop and folk. It was fascinating to see such diversity on one stage and to see people of every race and age enjoying themselves. The festival was well received and many people came back on successive nights. Many thanks must be said to all the organisers and volunteers who went to great lengths to royally entertain every single person who crossed our doors. We hope that Xpresso will, in both small and big ways, have contributed to God’s great work of reconciliation.’

### **Alan Boal writes...**

We can finally announce that Abbey will have a full time youth worker. After three years of trying, many disappointments and near misses and a huge amount of time and effort, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry has issued a work permit to Matt Moorman. A huge thank you should go to Matt already for his incredible patience and commitment to serving with us. Matt, for those of you who don’t know, has a great deal of youth experience (especially amongst young people who have little or no connection with church); he is big into music; and he recently served a volunteer year with Lucan Presbyterian Church, so he has a fair idea of the Irish context. I would ask you to pray for him as he and we, prepare for his arrival. We have assured him that he will not be expected to do the ministry on his own — that would be crazy; nor will he be judged on the number of young people he places in the pews. Instead we will work together to make Christ known amongst the youth of the congregation and the community. Officially Matt will be our ‘Church Youth Outreach Worker.’ That title is quite important for it indicates that he will have responsibilities for both the youth in Abbey (currently 70 of our 200 members are under 18) as well as developing relationships with young people in the local community’

## Adelaide Road

The Korean Church continues to meet after our morning service under the leadership of the Rev. Yong Nam Park.

Our Youth Worker Andrew Gill leads our young folk, age 11-15 meet every Saturday and 16+ age group also meet on a Sunday after church for lunch, bible study, prayer and fellowship. Andrew will also lead a Youth Service on the second Sunday evening of each month.

Our Welcome committee had a Family Fun Day at Greenan Maze & Farm in Wicklow in May and a BBQ at the Manse in August when we had the Briercrest Ireland Tour from Canada who were over to coach Basketball.

Peter & Karen Thompson led our Morning Service telling us of their time in Bolivia as Missionaries illustrated by PowerPoint Slides. Mervyn & Raing McCullagh are due to speak to us about their time in Sumba, Indonesia.

ARD Sunflower Creche, our community childcare service, in accordance with our Christian ethos, seeks to show love and compassion of Jesus to all we serve in the

Community.

Dolebusters also continues to serve the Community. Staff training schedules are kept up and those leaving the scheme are well prepared for work. English language classes for foreigners are still in demand as are Computer classes, especially with the new equipment. In the present economic climate, there is a need for our services. We set up Dolebusters to acknowledge God's goodness to us and to show our concern, in God's name for the Community where we function, for its physical and spiritual needs.

CAMEO exists to encourage the development of creative talents in all aspects of congregational life at Adelaide Road. We also run a Discipleship course which is ongoing.

Sympathies: Muriel Godden on Tuesday 9th June, to her Sister Aileen and her wider family circle we send our love and prayers at this time.

William Thompson on 1st July, to his Wife Edith, Son Norman and Brother Jack we also extend our love and

prayers.

Baptism of Lucas James Strong on 25th January & twins Kenneth & Calvin Kalu 17th May.

Membership: on Sunday 10th May, we received nine into membership.

Congratulations to Matthew Mitchell who represented Ireland in Skiing at the Junior Olympics in Poland.

During the summer we did a series on the book of Habakkuk which tells us very clearly that God is sovereign over the affairs of nations and that we are called to live a life of faith. In the Autumn we will continue to focus on the gospel of Luke and further explore the life of Jesus and his disciples. Our Home Groups have the opportunity to discuss these topics. They meet on a Wednesday and Thursday night at different homes. During the Summer we studied "The life you've always wanted" a book by John Ortberg.

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## Arklow

We give praise and thanks to God for the continued success of our youth work in Arklow. The Wednesday and Friday Bible Clubs are still very popular with the local children and the numbers attending are increasing. We were very encouraged that the clubs under the leadership of Philip and Susan Whelton won the club of the year

award in the Arklow Mayoral People of the Year Awards in May. They were presented with the prize by newscaster Ann Doyle in a presentation evening in the Arklow Bay Hotel. Well done to all involved!

The summer Holiday Bible Club with a theme of "Take the Plunge" was again a great success with about 200 chil-

dren from all religious backgrounds in the local community attending. The evening youth event for the teenagers becomes more popular and well attended each year. Philip in his mission work in the town is building on the contacts made and is visiting and encouraging the children, teenagers and their families.

## LINKUP

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## Arklow

Following on from a very well attended dawn ‘Sonrise’ ecumenical service on the sea-front on Easter Sunday (over 500 people got up at 5.30am to worship together), Michael Anderson and the local church leaders are hosting a Christianity Explored course in the Parish Hall. Studying the Gospel of Mark using a DVD presentation and discussion time is proving very popular with many of the local Christians and is an encouragement to the building of fellowship among the different denominations.

Our fundraising this year has been fun with a very successful BBQ in Edna and Tommy Crammond’s home in May. Despite a rather wet start to the evening we had a great time and raised a lot of money towards our redevelopment fund. Our annual fete became a carnival this year with lots of children’s activities and moved from October to August. It proved to be a great success and a fun time for the children. The local papers carried some good coverage and many photos of the event.

Due to the current economic difficulties we are at present revising our redevelopment plans to something more modest and affordable. We as a congregation appreciate your continued prayers for this endeavour as we really do need a bigger premises, as the youth clubs need more space and our Sunday attendance continues to grow.

## Aghada & Trinity, Cork

We regret to report the death this August in Dresden of Mrs Irmgard Graeme-Cook, widow of our former minister. Irmgard met Brian when he was minister in Waterford and shared with him in ministry in Strabane and then in Cork and Aghada. We remember her love of music and her pastoral concern. It was her great joy to see her native country reunited in 1989 and a few years later she was able to return to live in the family home in Dresden.

The OM ship Logos Hope visited Cork in early July, her last port of call in Europe before heading to the Caribbean. We were impressed with the facilities on this new ship and are

pleased to report that more visited the ship in Cork than did in Dublin. (Forgive this outbreak of second city complex.)

A team from Trinity Bangor visited again in early August and ran a Holiday Bible Club and teens outreach in the Ardfallen Methodist Church.

The Harvest Thanksgiving at Aghada is to be recorded by RTE radio on Sunday 20 September to be broadcast on Sunday 4 October at 1045 am.

Plans are afoot to start a language conversational class as part of our outreach to asylum seekers and language school students around Trinity.

Looking further ahead, we are meeting monthly to pray

specifically for ‘Trinity 150’ the 150th anniversary of our church building in 2011. Our vision is that we go beyond a historical commemoration to find ways of saying to the wider community in the 21st century that we exist to serve them with the gospel. We would be glad to have contact with former members.

One lovely example is Mr Derek Hatton who visited us recently from England. He was very confident of his date of baptism, since it was the day after the burning of Cork by the Black and Tans and his parents had told him of bumping his pram across the fire hoses outside the City hall as they made their way to church.

## Athy

At the beginning of the summer it was agreed by the Union Commission to dissolve the union between Athy and Naas congregations and to create a new union of Athy and Carlow. Rev. Colin Gamble remains the minister in Naas and Athy is now vacant along with Carlow. Rev. Stephen Rea is the vacancy convener for both

congregations, but it was agreed that Colin would continue to minister in Athy until a new minister is installed.

Contact details etc: Athy Presbyterian Church is on the Dublin Road in Athy, opposite the Model School. The Sunday service begins at 10.30 am. A prayer meeting is held at 9.30

am on Sundays. The congregation is currently vacant though Rev. Colin Gamble (Naas Presbyterian Church) takes the services each Sunday. He can be contacted here: 045 898 522 or [gamblec@gmail.com](mailto:gamblec@gmail.com).

## Athy-Sandra Workman

It was with the deepest sorrow that we learned of the death of Mrs Sandra Workman on Sunday 9 August after many years of illness. Sandra is survived by her husband, William, who is the Irish Mission Worker in

Athy. The funeral service was held in Athy on Tuesday 11 August. Rev. Colin Gamble conducted the service. Rev. Ian McNie (Minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Ballymoney) read the Bible lesson and Rev. Andrew Lucas

(Minister of Omagh Evangelical Presbyterian Church) preached. Mrs Breda Sunderland from Athy also took part in the service. William gave a fitting tribute to Sandra.

## Saint Andrews, Blackrock

### Visit to Arklow

On 20th September twenty members of St. Andrew's travelled south by coach to join with the congregation of Arklow Presbyterian Church at morning worship. Rev. Michael Anderson welcomed us warmly and we enjoyed fellowship with the congregation over coffee after the service. We later paid a visit to Avondale House and gardens.

### Anniversary Service

We were joined by St. Andrew's, Bray for our Anniversary Service on 27th September. The guest preacher was Professor Ruth Whelan of Maynooth whose subject was "Remembering Calvin", an appropriate theme for this year in which we celebrate Calvin's 500th anniversary. Afterwards lunch with a French flavour was served for everyone in the Church Hall.

### Minister's Wives Remembered

The ministry of Rev. Desmond Black is fondly remembered in St. Andrew's. On 1st November (All Saints' Day) plaques will be dedicated in memory of Mrs. Joan Black who died in 1959 and Mrs. Marion Black who died in 2002. Desmond's sons, Gordon and Philip have agreed to take part in the service to honour these

women who gave so much to our congregation.

### Remembrance Sunday

Our guest preacher on Remembrance Sunday 8th November will be Rev. Carson Nicholson, a former military chaplain, who is Methodist minister in Dun Laoghaire.

### Baptism

21st June - Jody Corry son of Keith and Lara Stevenson of Holmwood, Cabinteely.

### Uganda Visits

Jennifer Lowrie was part of a trip to Uganda organised for pupils of St. Andrew's College. The young people visited a school, a hospital and an orphanage in the Jinja area, all of which are supported by St. Andrew's College. Jennifer's brother Scott along with his friend Frank Ryan, both members of our Boys' Brigade company, teamed up with the charity "Madventure" to coach football also in Jinja. Scott and Frank played with street children during the day and in the evenings coached the adult team, even turning out for them in matches despite the heat.

### New Clerk of Session

After the AGM in March Merle White agreed to take over as Clerk of Session. We wish Merle God's blessing in her new role. We are grateful to Denis Poynton for his dedication and diligence over

the past nineteen years.

### Heritage Week

St. Andrew's took part in Heritage Week during the last week of August. We are grateful to all who acted as hosts when we opened the church to visitors. Many of our neighbours took the opportunity to visit us for the first time.

### Indonesian Adventures

Mark Henderson continues to enjoy his duties as a hospital administrator with Voluntary Service Overseas in the town of Maumere on the Indonesian island of Flores. He has quickly mastered the language and is fascinated by the land, the people and the culture. Those who read Mark's regular blogs are enabled to share in the excitement and the frustrations of life in the developing world.

### College Life Begun

Our best wishes and prayers are with Laura Stone-Wigg who is beginning university life in Budapest, Stuart Loughrey who is now at Loughborough and Craig Lowrie now studying at Trinity and his brother Scott now in the Scottish town of Hamilton

### New Neighbour

We are glad to welcome Rev. Chris Kennedy who was recently installed as minister of Dun Laoghaire. We pray that God will bless him, his family and his ministry.

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## Saint Andrews, Bray

### At Rest

4th March - Kathleen Symmonds formerly of “Rockbrae”, Foxrock.

15th April - Doreen Collier of “Whiteways”, Dublin Road, Bray.

10th June and 10th August - Nat and Gwen McKillen of Glencourt Dell, Killarney Road, Bray.

We were deeply moved by the loss of Kathleen, a lifelong member and able pianist, organist and friend of all. We will miss Doreen, who made a huge contribution to catering and all social functions. We mourn the passing of Nat and Gwen who were loyal members and regular attenders.

### Baptism

18th January - Cameron Michael, son of Padraigh and Christine O’Toole of Boghall Road, Bray.

### “Haste ye back.”

In the spring Kathleen Souter and her husband Moray moved back to Scotland to reside near their native Aberdeen. We are most grateful to Kathleen for her huge contri-

bution to the life of St. Andrew’s and the life of the town. We were thrilled that Kathleen returned especially for the Flower Festival.

### Flower Festival

The last weekend in June was fine for our Flower Festival. On the Friday morning the ladies of Bray Flower Club descended on St. Andrew’s and by lunchtime had transformed it into a floral paradise with the theme “Celebration”. Their floral art interpreted each of our stained glass windows. The decorated church was included in Bray Garden Walkabout, a scheme which enabled people to visit several gardens in and around the town. All proceeds when to the Martin Codyre Trust Fund to help a Bray man who suffered a severe spinal cord injury and is now paralysed from the chest down. We are grateful to all the members who worked hard to provide teas and to Joan Gregg who co-ordinated the event. On Sunday 28th June in a church decked with flowers Mr. Campbell preached on the text “Consider the lilies...”

### New Elders

Permission has been obtained from Presbytery for the election of two new elders. We look forward to an ordination later in the year.

### St. Andrew’s National School

The school re-opened in September to the great delight of both pupils and teachers. Our new extension is now complete. It includes extra classrooms, new offices, an entrance hall, an extended assembly hall and many other facilities.

### Open Church

The practice of opening the church for visitors on Fridays during July and August continues to be a success. Visitors from abroad are especially interested in our beautiful building and we also welcome local people, many of whom are delighted to see the interior of the church for the first time.

## Drogheda

The economic recession and the uncertainties it brings continues to affect us in Drogheda. Plans to construct a new church building, have been severely hit by the loss of anticipated funding from the Board of Mission, the closure of the Presbyterian Mutual Society and the unfavourable climate for the sale of our present church buildings. All of these things could be discouraging but it is in fact a time of many encouragements and so much cause to praise God. Numbers at worship continue to grow, with the gallery often full and an ever growing number of children attending Sunday school.

We elected our first new church elders for many years and Theo Douglas, Arturas Rakauskas, Trevor Elliot and Simon Lockwood were duly

ordained on the 7th of June. We have seen great progress in the youth work under the leadership of Johnny Porter and the Kambuie and Upper Room projects continue to bring blessings to many both here and in Kenya. The work of outreach led by Billy Patterson continues to be blessed, with significant numbers attending the hotel bible studies and church services. Added to that, is the new ministry of Arturas and Daiva Rakauskas to the Lithuanian community, which is also so significant.

### DISCIPLESHIP EXPLORED

This was a well attended course on Sunday evenings, with numbers ranging from 40 -60 and consisted of a study of Paul’s Letter to the Philippians assisted by a DVD. Many came and enjoyed afternoon tea beforehand and we thank

Freda Stewart for arranging the catering and all who provided and served the food

### SPECIAL SERVICES.

This year as part of a drive to increase productivities, RTE asked us to produce two services back to back. One to go out live on the 3rd of May and one recorded to be broadcast on a later date. This required the congregation to attend on Saturday evening to record one service and rehearse the one for the following Sunday. The whole project took over three hours and we must admire patience and commitment of all taking part, not to mention the stamina of the Rev. Woodside. Our thanks to the moderator the Rev. Donald Patton, who came and spoke on the live broadcast about the credit crunch, using as his text the story of the rich fool.

## Drogheda

### KAMBUIE PROJECT.

This is something which we started about three years ago to help a group of disabled children in a remote area of Kenya. Mainly by assisting them finically and when possible a group from the church travels out there and carries out works to improve their living conditions. It is particularly satisfying to know that all money raised is spent here it is needed and we must thank Trevor Elliot and Wangira Kihara for their work heading up the project. A party from the church paid a visit there this year, the following is Trevor's report on the trip. After two years preparation and prayer, eighteen people of all age groups set off for Kambuie for about tree weeks [ 22nd June to 9th July]. It was a most fulfilling time and it was very encouraging to see the progress in the children and to meet again the ladies who run the home. It was also very challenging to see the

needs of some of the children and made us realise that care of the handicapped takes on an entirely new dimension in Kenya. We were able to finish off a new home for a grandmother and her two grandchildren and paint three classrooms at the local primary school which the children attend. We visited two secondary schools with about seven hundred girls in each, a school for the deaf with three hundred students and the hospital in Nairobi where the children have their medical needs treated. We praise God that the financial resources needed were raised through a golf classic, mini-marathon and the generosity of many donors and we pray for wisdom to meet future needs.

### SPECIAL EVENTS.

On the 12th of July a small group from the church were invited to a reception in Aras an Uchtaran. We were most

graciously received and made welcome by President Mary McAleese and Dr. Martin McAleese and spent a pleasant evening being entertained by the Pipes and Drums of the P.S.N.I., the Band of An Garda Siochana and Kintra [ a cross-community traditional group ]

### CONGRATULATIONS.

To Tracy Elliot and Addis Rakauskas on their engagement and for winning a competition in the local paper for the most romantic proposal, well done Addis.

### GOODBYE

To Johnny Porter on his departure in late July to take up a new position with the youth or OC. Presbyterian Church Randalstown. He will be greatly missed but his work continues in the capable hands of Jennifer Elliot and her band of helpers.

London as he continues in the path towards ministry in PCI. We are now looking forward to help kindly offered by Rev Will Ackles from USA who will be with us in October.

*“It was also very challenging to see the needs of some of the children and made us realise that care of the handicapped takes on an entirely new dimension in Kenya.”*

## Cahir & Fermoy

We are very thankful that the Union Commission has granted leave to call for a minister (with five year review) and are now praying that a minister may soon be appointed. Remedial work on the manse is to be done with the help of a BMI grant. Groups from Bloomfield

Church visited in early July and it is good to see this outreach continuing in the second summer of the vacancy. We were greatly helped by the summer ministry of Damien Burke and wish him, Sarah, Hannah and Roisin every blessing at Ok Hill College in

London as he continues in the path towards ministry in PCI. We are now looking forward to help kindly offered by Rev Will Ackles from USA who will be with us in October.

## Galway

On the weekend of their National Conference in Galway a Gideon came and spoke in church about their work distributing Bibles and encouraged us with stories of lives being transformed miraculously as a result. Up to that most of our congregation did not know that one of our members, Michael Mee, is a Gideon. So too is Jimmy Lavin who has been moving back to America.

During the May Bank Holiday weekend our children and young people were very blessed by the coming of the Team on Misssion, a Methodist group of young people. They led a praise party on the Sat. afternoon and the Sunday morning service.

We thank God that the end of our work of renovating our building is in sight and look forward to celebrating. Rev. Dudley Cooney has been writing a history of Methodism and Presbyterianism in Galway which will shortly be published.

## LINKUP

*“We are encouraged as we look back on our first year and a half. We have seen several people come to faith and a good rise in regular attendance at worship.”*

## Greystones

We are encouraged as we look back on our first year and a half. We have seen several people come to faith and a good rise in regular attendance at worship. An outreach event in March on the issue of suffering, held in the local theatre, drew in a

number of outsiders; and two children's clubs at Easter and in August were very well attended. This coming year we are concentrating on Leadership Development through the CPAS Growing Leaders Course and a weekend away in Ovoca. We hope to repeat

a very successful Community Carol Service and Buffet Tea for the local traders this Christmas.. News on recent events along with sermon downloads can be accessed via our website [www.greystonespc.org](http://www.greystonespc.org)

## Kilkenny

After a busy summer during which we welcomed our first PCI Summer Team to help with the Arts Week Outreach in August, and our first Mission to the World Summer Team during June and July who helped us enjoy very positive weeks working in Castlecomer, the Soccer Camp and Arts Week too, we are now looking forward to the new term beginning.

Please pray for Christianity Explored beginning on 17th September for nine weeks at 8pm each evening in the Club House Hotel in Patrick Street,

Kilkenny. Especially remember in your prayers Tom Dowling, Irish Mission who is leading this.

We are also looking forward to welcoming Ms Anna Bruce among us at the end of September who comes from the Presbyterian Youth and Children's Board as our SWIM (Servants Working In Mission) volunteer for 2009/2010. Anna was born in Dublin, but grew up in Lisburn, Co. Antrim. We hope that she quickly feels at home among us. Do also pray for Heather Stewart, our Ministry Training

Scheme Intern, not only in her own work, but as she helps Anna settle in.

Harvest Sunday will be 4th October. As in recent years we will be decorating the church more simply and inviting members of the congregation to bring gifts of food for which they wish to thank God. After the service these will be given to the Good Shepherd Centre. We are looking forward to welcoming Rev Stephen Lockington (Mullingar) as our guest preacher at the evening service.

## Lucan

Recently the elders in Lucan went on an overnight retreat to look again at what mission looks like for our congregation, using material from the excellent "Tell it again" congregational mission plan toolkit. It was a valuable time, and a great start.

The sermons at LPC are now available to listen or download at [www.lpc.ie](http://www.lpc.ie). We have been looking at the book of Luke, and people can now catch up on addresses that they missed. Also, we have started The Second Service. This is at 5pm each Sunday, and is quieter and more relaxed than the morning service can be. As well as being available for those who can't come in the morning, people are encouraged to invite friends and neighbours, and it is also helpful for those who want to concentrate on worship and the Word with less

distractions. Like us, it is a work in progress.

Summerfest, our annual summer kids' club, has been running now for 22 years. We have always had a PCI Summer Team, but this year it was recognised that their resources were needed more elsewhere, so we ran it ourselves. As a result it was like a brand new event, and it meant all hands on board at the Lucan Centre. For the team, and 130+ children, it was a lot of fun! One decision made in response to the current economic climate was that it would be a free event, and this was much appreciated in the local community. Roll on Summerfest 23.

In June a team of 10 went to the Madziabango district of Malawi, where Maurice & Helen Kennedy are working through PCI with local

churches. The team helped with a school refurbishment project, and in children's ministry. It was an unforgettable experience, and links established that we will keep. In August Dave and Helen Freeburn left us to move north, as Helen has begun studying for the ministry at Union Theological College. We miss them greatly, but are delighted that Helen is following the call of God into ordained ministry.

In September we welcomed 30 new members into our church from 9 different countries. They publicly professed their faith and expressed the desire to make LPC their spiritual home. The "Tell it again" toolkit shows how to access the 2006 census results for your local area. We were surprised at what it showed us, but excited about the challenge it presents.

## Maynooth

We are delighted to announce that the elders have appointed Ms. Lorraine Wylie to the role of Youth and Student Worker. Lorraine has spent the last five years working with IFES Ireland with students all over Dublin. She brings with her an extensive experience with both students and teens, a passion for how

church can actually be a positive phenomenon and a brilliant understanding of mission in Ireland.

Lorraine will start work with us in October and her job will focus on developing the wider youth and student ministry capabilities of the church and will be in partnership with YoungLife Ireland.

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## Mullingar & Corboy

During July Mullingar hosted "Jungle Jamboree" Summer Camp, with approximately 230 National School children attending the two daily sessions during the week. We were encouraged by the 25 teenagers who came along to the "I'm a Celebrity" evenings. One of the P.C.I. Summer Teams ably assisted the congregation. We anticipate continuing to build on this work through Oodles & Doodles, Rock Club and Solid in the months ahead. Over the second weekend in September we descended on

Ovoca Manor for a church weekend, Rev. David Montgomery our guest speaker. The congregation continues to meet each Sunday in St. Mary's CBS National School.

Mullingar and Corboy congregations united for the summer barbecue in July – not as much rain as in previous years! During November both congregations will think about their congregational mission plans through "Tell It Again" focus evenings.

Corboy look forward in anticipation to the Harvest Thanksgiving Service on 27th September when Rev. Colin Gamble will be the guest preacher. The first Sunday each month has been the setting for two new initiatives in congregational life – refreshments after the morning service and a Sunday School – welcomed and valued by all.

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## Naas

As mentioned in the report for Athy, the Union Commission agreed during the summer to dissolve the union of Athy and Naas and to create a new union of Athy and Carlow. This, of course, means that Naas is now a single-point charge, though Rev. Colin Gamble will continue to minister in Athy until a new minister is installed in Athy and Carlow. It is hoped that once Colin's duties are completed in Athy, there will be opportunities to

develop the work of the church in Naas on Sundays as well as throughout the week.

It was good over the summer to catch up with some friends who used to worship with us in Naas. Elise from France and Yvonne from Kilkenny, but now working in the USA, visited Naas and were with us one Sunday. Charles from the USA was also in Naas over the summer on his way back to the USA from Poland.

Contact details etc: Naas Presbyterian Church is on the Main Street in Naas near the taxi ranks. The Sunday service begins at 12 noon. Soup and sandwiches are served after the service on the second Sunday of every month. Children's Church is held during the service for primary school children. The minister of the congregation is Rev. Colin Gamble who can be contacted here: 045 898 522 or [gamblec@gmail.com](mailto:gamblec@gmail.com).

## Sandymount - Christchurch

Following refurbishment of the new manse around the turn of the year, Rev. Katherine Meyer was finally able to move in during March 2009. We are delighted that she is now living close to the church and amongst her congregation, and no longer

has to endure a daily commute. Once she had settled in Katherine invited the congregation, neighbours and friends to an 'open house' to celebrate this milestone. Some came for coffee in the morning, whilst others dropped by after work for

some welcoming refreshments and chat. We wish Katherine every joy and blessing in her new home.

“As is traditional, the church building will be decorated for Harvest. This year it will be open on both days, so we hope visitors will wander in and look around.”

## Sandymount - Christchurch

### HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

For many years the Ladies Committee led by Peg Weir has done sterling work in catering for many church and social events in the church hall with great efficiency and lack of fuss. In recent years a number of men have also helped with the catering, so at the congregation's AGM in February it was decided to rename the group as the Hospitality Committee. Several men were promptly elected to join its ranks!

### LENT ON THE GREEN

Our neighbourhood ecumenical series of Lenten meditations, *Lent on the Green*, continued this year with the theme: *Full of Years - Full of Faith?* The speakers who took part reflected on the ways in which our faith is often re-shaped in our older years, with the result that it is lived or expressed differently. Participants talked about living with the sense of a full life to uphold you, about learning to see things come to fruition at a time and in a place not of your choosing, and about hallowing, or making holy, our limitations.

After the reflections, and a brief meditative prayer, we gathered in the room next door for a simple lunch of soup and rolls, in which one of the newly elected male members of the Hospitality Committee served soup and exchanged recipes with great flair!

### CAR BOOT AND CRAFT FAIRS

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May a Car Boot sale and Craft Fair was held in the church hall and grounds. The event was organised by James Bailie, and attracted a large and lively group of buyers and sellers from the local area. Members of the Hospitality Committee were on hand to serve coffee, and altogether it made for a very convivial day. The church

building was open throughout the event and a good number of visitors came inside for a few quiet moments. A donation from the day's proceeds was made to the Iris Charles Centre for Older People, Sandymount. By popular demand a similar event was held on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June, and another is planned for our Harvest Festival Weekend on 26<sup>th</sup> September.

### FROM THE REGISTERS:

#### Baptisms

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2009 Sebastian David and Caspar Nicholas, twin sons of David Cooper and Caroline McKenna, were baptised during Sunday morning service. Caroline grew up in Sandymount, and the family has recently returned from the UK to take up residence in the area once again. We are delighted to welcome them into our congregation.

#### Marriages

On 15<sup>th</sup> August 2009 the marriage of Mary Elizabeth McDowell and Conor James O'Brien took place. The ceremony was conducted by Rev. Katherine Meyer, and Fr. Fergus McGlynn also participated. Mary is the daughter of the late Rev. Dr. William McDowell, Minister of Sandymount for many years, and grew up in the former manse. We wish Mary and Conor a long and happy life together.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

#### Harvest Festival Weekend

We look forward to welcoming friends and neighbours to our Harvest Festival Weekend on 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> September. On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> a craft fair and café will be held in the church hall from 10.00am to 2.00pm, with a car boot sale outside. On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> there will be two Harvest thanksgiving services, at 11.00am and

7.00pm, with refreshments after both services. The guest preacher at the evening service will be the writer and broadcaster Aidan Mathews (RTE). As is traditional, the church building will be decorated for Harvest. This year it will be open on both days, so we hope visitors will wander in and look around. Prayer cards will be available to guide reflection, and there will be information in the church porch on 'creation care' and practical responses to climate change. Church proceeds from the weekend will be donated to Christian Aid.

#### Annual Christmas Fair and Coffee Morning

Our annual Christmas Fair and Coffee morning will take place this year on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November. Doors open at 10.30am, and we look forward to greeting our regular supporters and friends. There will be lots to buy – cakes, Christmas gifts and decorations, books, household and bric-a-brac – and plenty of opportunity for chat over coffee and cakes. All are most welcome, so please make a note in your diary and tell all your friends!

## Waterford

On the 25th October the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, Donald Ker, and the executive secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Mission Ireland, David Bruce, will attend the harvest thanksgiving service at 10.30am in St. Patrick's United Church. David will formally hand over responsibility for the care of the Waterford Congregation from the Presbyterian Church to the Methodist Church. The church will continue to have people from a wide variety of national and denominational backgrounds but from now on links will be with the Methodist Church and the 'Alternating Ministry Scheme' will cease in Waterford. It is hoped to give continuing recognition to the variety and diversity of the congregation, for example by retaining the Methodist and Presbyterian formats for the celebration of Communion in alternate months. Transfer of ownership of St. Patrick's Church and the Manse to the Methodist church was agreed at the annual Presbyterian Assembly and Methodist Conference this year.

The change to Methodist supervision comes at a time when the St. Patrick's congregation are hoping to renew the 300 year old former Anglican Church as a Community Centre with the

Church at its heart. We hope that a Community Trust will be formed that will lease the premises from the Methodist Church. The vision is to renovate the existing church as a multipurpose community hall, build new rooms, including toilet and kitchen facilities and to landscape part of the grave yard as outdoor community space. This is a bold plan in the current economic climate but the congregation want to make the site available for wider community use as part of the mission of Christ to the inner city of Waterford. If the vision is right we trust that resources will be found. It is envisaged that the Community Centre will be used by community groups, for church activities, for youth and children's work and for music and drama. Social functions and celebrations might also take place in the new centre.

The St. Patrick's site has a rich history. It is located just inside the medieval city wall, beside the old barracks and goal. There was a twelfth century pre-Reformation church on the site. A 'low church' Anglican parish used the Georgian building but eventually this parish died out. In 1966 the small Presbyterian congregation moved into the church following the damage done to the Lady Lane Presbyterian Church

Waterford by an exploding boiler. Subsequently the Methodist Congregation joined the Presbyterians on the site. In the past ten years or so the congregation has grown to reflect the changing face of the new Ireland. There are people from Ireland, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, South Africa, Ghana and Sri Lanka and this list is by no means exhaustive. The current plan is just one more step along the road.

A famous son of Waterford, Captain William Hobson, was baptised in St. Patrick's Church. He went on to become the first Governor General of New Zealand. In the Treaty of Waitangi he tried to promote reconciliation between Maori and Settler interests and to enshrine the principle of respect between peoples of different origins. If the new St. Patrick's Community Centre can become a place of reconciliation and encounter between people of different ethnic origin and social class in the mosaic of modern Ireland then the Gospel of Christ will be well served in this new phase of life for St. Patrick's church. We hope that Dublin and Munster Presbytery will continue to take a lively interest in developments at St. Patrick's United Church Waterford.

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## Tullamore & Mountmellick

Sunday services take place at 12 noon in Tullamore and 10am in Mountmellick.

Mountmellick continues to meet in the building of the local Methodist church at the junction of the Portlaoise Road.

Tullamore church is situated at the top of High Street, at the main southern entry into the town.

Following the summer break, Sunday school has resumed, when a small, but lively group of children retire to the hall after the children's talk.

Busy Bees Parent and Toddler Group has been a great success, meeting on Tuesday mornings from 1000-1200. It has rapidly become one of the largest Parent & Toddler groups in Offaly.

On Thursday afternoons the 'Thursday Club' meet at 3.30 in the Church for children of

National School age. Bible stories are presented in fun, interactive and multisensory ways

Another Alpha Course has begun, running for 11 weeks. This is the fourth course to take place in Tullamore and is again run in one of the local pubs, Loughrey's, on High Street.. Participants have been very open this year and lots of big questions are being asked (and hopefully answered!)

## LINKUP

*“1859 was a very significant year for the Dublin district of Rathgar; the local landscape changed considerably as several new churches were under construction.”*

## Tullamore & Mountmellick

Over the summer two major events took place in Tullamore: the Phoenix festival in Mid July and the Fleadh Cheoil Na hÉireann in August. Events took place in our church for both these festivals. These attracted large numbers into the building especially during the Fleadh. A Food and Craft fair was held, highlighting local produce. Wonderful music provided by the group 'Albanagh' was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

As part of our mission planning activities both churches took part in Tear Fund's "Just People" course over the summer. This allowed us to look at the area around us and the towns that God has placed us in and then ask, "What difference can we make in these towns that will proclaim the love of Christ in a practical and tangible way?"

We look forward to a team of three people from OM coming to work with our churches from October 2009 to June 2010.

## Christchurch - Rathgar

1859 was a very significant year for the Dublin district of Rathgar; the local landscape changed considerably as several new churches were under construction. 150 years later, one of these, Christ Church Rathgar, is celebrating an important birthday! The minister, Mary Hunter, and the congregation hope that this year, 2009, will be just as significant, for them and also for their neighbourhood and the wider community, though possibly not changing the physical environs quite so much this time. CCR is planning a varied and inspiring programme of events to mark their sesquicentenary, and celebrations were launched on Sunday 1 February, 2009, when the Very Rev. Ken Newell from Fitzroy in Belfast, was the guest speaker. Connections between Fitzroy and CCR go back to the very beginning; the founding minis-

ter in Rathgar, William Fleming Stevenson, had been an assistant in Fitzroy.

The next event was a Bible Study weekend 1-3 April, when the Rev Dr Carol M Bechtel from Western Theological Seminary lead us through "The Bible and Brahms Requiem". The week end finished with a special music events "Sing the Easter Story" when the St Cecelia Singers under the direction of Sandra Ganley led us through some of the great masterpieces of Easter music.

A concert by Ballyclare Male Voice Choir will be held on 26 September and Eric Sweeney will be returning to CCR to give an organ recital on Friday 9th October as part of our Harvest Festival celebrations.

In November (13 & 15th) we will be focusing on history

with a lecture and exhibition.

A Celebration of the Creative Arts will bring the opportunity to see and purchase during the weekend of the 4th, 5th and 6th of December.

The church website at <http://www.christchurchrathgar.org/150.htm#Events> has full details, and the congregation hope that many people, especially those now worshipping elsewhere, but with personal or family connections to the 150 year old church, will join them to celebrate in this landmark year.

A centenary history of the congregation, published in 1959, has been updated to cover the eventful years since then, and a handsomely illustrated volume is on sale at all events throughout the year.

## Clontarf and Scots

The start of the new school term, end of summer, approach of autumn - all put me in mind of the many other changes that are rushing in on us as a congregation. We are hoping to develop a crèche room. A specific programme for the tweenagers. We will be chatting about and voting on taking on a building project. We hope to have a SWIM (a youth volunteer project) worker, help us with some of these programmes.

An evening small group in September and an additional Carol Service in December. And those are only some adventures we would like to try out! I know it is a cliché to say change is never easy, but there is a real element of truth. Some of these adventures will lead onto others, and some will not. Which puts into my mind the verse in Proverb 19.21 "Many are the plans in man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." And this is to

me the greatest comfort in times of such change. We are given this wonderful freedom to try out different programmes and ideas, trusting that the Lord will show us which way we are to go. Enjoying the pleasure of knowing that in all of life's many twists and turns, He remains Lord and has the power "to make everything beautiful in His time"

Ecclesiastes 3.11.

## Dun Laoghaire

We are a church of two congregations. Our Saturday@5 congregation meets (surprise! surprise!) every Saturday at 5 p.m. This congregation was launched in September 2006

with the intention of providing a safe place for anyone to explore the big questions of life and faith. Our Sunday congregation meets at 11 a.m. and is a gathering for worship

and learning, with the congregation made up of people from different social, religious and ethnic backgrounds and of all ages.

*"Burning pyres, nuns*

*on the run, stirring*

*courage, comic*

*relief: the story of*

*the Reformation is a*

*gripping tale,*

*packed with drama"*

## Arklow

Putting Parenting to Bed – week 2 of our course in common-sense parenting on Thursday at 8pm in the church in Malahide - welcome even if you missed week 1

LadZone (for 3rd - 6th Class boys) on Friday at 2.45pm in the hall

Mums & Tots on Friday at 10.15am in the hall

GirlZone (for 3rd - 6th class girls) starts on Monday 14th at 2.45pm in the hall

Ignite – for Teenagers 3rd to 6th years on Friday 8.30pm to 10pm in Marty's house. (Contact Marty 0852882829 for details)

Traditional Communion - Tuesday 15th September at 10.30am in Malahide Church,

followed by Coffee in 10 Ard na Mara

Congregational Committee meeting - Monday 21st September 8pm in Malahide

Christianity Explored - our next course starts on 1st October in the church in Malahide. Invitations available at the back.

### DISCIPLESHIP EXPLORED

We are encouraging every member of the church family to take part in this new 8 week course, which starts at the end of the month. We want to make sure that everyone has the chance to be part of a course at a time that works for them and their families, so please do fill in the 'grid' and leave it on the table at the back. This is a great,

one-off opportunity to go over the basics of following Jesus, to grow together and to get to know one another - so please don't miss out!

Book of the month for September - 'The Unquenchable Flame' (€10) 'Burning pyres, nuns on the run, stirring courage, comic relief: the story of the Reformation is a gripping tale, packed with drama...'

That's what it says on the back, and this fantastic read is a brilliant introduction to some of the colourful characters of church history which shows why what they said is hugely and personally relevant to people like us in the 21st Century. If you only ever read one history book make it this one! – Copies available in church €10

# John Calvin

Around the world, and in Geneva in particular, events are taking place this summer to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin, who was born at Noyon, Picardy, on the 10th July 1509. Here are a couple of Dublin & Munster reflections.

Yvonne Deegan of Abbey summarises Calvin's legacy...

'What positive aspects of his life and work can we celebrate 500 years after his birth? My Presbyterian friends suggested the following:

His great strength was his ability to challenge accepted thought and behaviour - very courageous in a man who described himself as 'bashful and timid'. He challenged the institutions of which he was part.

He was a godly man — immersed in the Scriptures so as to encounter the Divine. To read the Institutes or delve into the commentaries (he wrote on every book bar Revelation) is a humbling and exhilarating experience. He was also a deeply gentle man distraught over the death of his wife and daughter and hurt by Geneva's rejection of him.

His legacy is the Reformed Church — the most international of all the Protestant Churches — 75 million members, Confessions are still being drawn up by reformed churches and in Accra 2004 a wider confession of faith for all the reformed churches was agreed.

His great gift was that he was an outstandingly creative person. The Reformation involved stepping outside of the only church that existed and creating a whole new church structure and way of life. He was the right person at the right time; having studied theology and law, loving the ancient texts and literature and gifted at languages.'

John Faris responded with a letter to the editor to an article in the Irish Examiner by Stephen King on 19 August <http://www.irishexaminer.com/archives/2009/0819/opinion/love-him-or-loathe-him-calvin-helped-shaped-the-world-we-live-in-98956.html#mon#ixzz0OjDpuSFF>

Allow me as the local Presbyterian minister in Cork to make some comments on Stephen King's stimulating account of John Calvin. Calvin may have been argumentative but he was also self effacing. By his instruction he was buried in an unmarked grave. In highlighting the difficult issues of the execution of Servetus and of predestination King does not make it completely clear that Roman Catholic authorities would also have regarded Servetus as a heretic and treated him in the same way. There is also a Catholic aspect to predestination; it was not invented by Calvin; he drew on the thought of Augustine.

I would dispute that most Protestant denominations reject the notion of predestination. As well as teaching the sovereign electing power of God the Bible also makes it clear that the gospel is to be preached to all nations. A truly Biblical perspective reminds us that God chooses people from every sort of race and grouping, often those despised and marginalised in society. Another important aspect to predestination is its purpose: people are chosen in Christ not to be smug and elitist but to be a holy people, saved to serve. That any are chosen by God is not of their deserving, it is all because of God's mercy and for his glory. The New Dictionary of Theology comments that Calvin 'made predestination an integral element of Christian experience, insisting that believers should be assured that they are elect because they are in Christ. Since they are elect their lives should be characterised by a joyous, confident service of God and others. For Calvin, predestination was a doctrine of comfort and assurance and should liberate the Christian from morbid introspection or debilitating insecurity.'

King rightly highlights Calvin's severe communal regulations as unpalatable in our time. There are obvious dangers in being a 'brother's keeper' - self righteousness, selective condemnation of some sins (usually sexual) over others, and trying to impose Christian standards on those who make no claim to be Christian. But in our 'anything goes' age we need to consider if we have lost something in the other direction. Our society's pursuit of 'fun' is not very Calvinistic but it is not very joyful either.

Yes, Calvin Klein is more well known in this century but I suggest that in another 500 years, unless the Lord returns, it shall be John Calvin who shall have had the greater impact.

There is an open invitation to readers to visit any of the Presbyterian churches around the country to see how we seek to live out Calvin's principles. Do let us know if we deserve the popular caricature.

