



news

from Railway Street Presbyterian Church

Challenging times

It is a year since we rededicated the refurbished church building. What a joy it has been to worship in such a beautiful setting, to Sunday by Sunday take our eyes off the financial and political problems our world faces and remember that we are loved by a caring heavenly Father and by our family and friends.

It has been an encouraging time. We are very excited by the arrival of Andrew and Dana Masters into our congregation. Andrew has joined the staff as our Youth and Family Work Co-ordinator to build on and develop the good work done by Deepak Samson. The Kirk Session has responded very positively to the suggestions of the Dromore Presbytery Consultation Team who visit each congregation in turn. Thomas McConaghie has returned home from spending a year with YWAM in Australia, while others are

planning to go on similar training and mission programmes. It is wonderful to see young men and woman so keen to discover God's calling upon their lives.

We are grateful to the Fund-raising Team for all their hard work and creativity. We still have a considerable over-draft and will be seeking your help to pay it off as soon as possible. We look forward to celebrating the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Boys' Brigade later this year and plans are being put in place to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the congregation.

We live in challenging times, but God does not change. Isaiah wrote: 'Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.' May that be our intent and experience as we seek to serve our Lord here in Lisburn.

Brian Gibson

New member of staff

On January 1 this year Andrew Masters joined our staff team as our Director of Youth and Family Work. Andrew grew up in Dromore where he and his family attended Banbridge Road Presbyterian Church. He was a pupil at Banbridge Academy. After finishing his schooling he began to work with Youth for Christ. For most of the three years with YFC he was involved with the Dromore Centre.

In 2006 Andrew headed off to Los Angeles where he studied for a Masters Degree in Entrepreneurial Leadership and Theology and at the same time was employed as a Religious Life Director at the University of California. This involved Andrew in reaching out to students, supporting them in their spiritual development and encouraging them to share their faith.

In 2008 Andrew returned to Northern Ireland, but not by himself. He brought with him a very beautiful and talented young woman, his new wife Dana. We are delighted to welcome them both into our church family and are thrilled at how quickly they have settled among us. We feel that Andrew has not only won the hearts of the youth in our church, but also the affection of our more senior members. He, of course, does have a historic link with our congregation, as his great grandfather was Mayor James Howard.

Do remember to pray for Andrew and his ministry among us.



Sabbatical or not

Brian Gibson's Sabbatical plans did not quite go to plan. The outward journey was hard work thanks to catching flu just before setting out for Australia. Having recovered and started researching the life of St. Matthew's Parish Congregation, Manly, he had to return home after two weeks due to the death of Jean's mother. However, he feels it was helpful to see a little of the life of another congregation.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



July & August:

8.00pm each Sunday
United Epilogue
Services

Communion Services 2009:

Morning: Sept 27 and Nov 29
Evening: Oct 25 at 6.30pm

Harvest Services – Sun 11 Oct

Youth Commissioning Service –
Sun 4 Oct at 10.30am

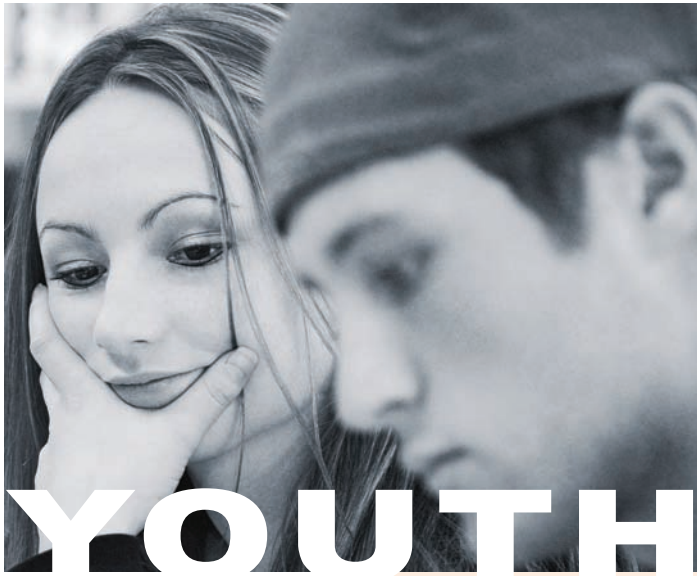
Remembrance Day – Sun 8 Nov

Christmas Tree Service – Sun 6 Dec at 10.30am

100th Anniversary of formation of Boys' Brigade – Sun
13 Dec at 10.30am

Carols & Lessons by Candlelight – Sun 20 Dec at 6.30pm

Launch of 150th Anniversary Celebrations with the
Moderator of the General Assembly Dr Stafford Carson –
Sun 24 Jan 2010 at 10.30am



YOUTH ZONE

WITH ANDY MASTERS

Greetings! Well what a great few months it has been. Since I joined you in the new year I have been kept busy trying to meet and get to know all of you. My apologies to those I have not yet reached! The highlight of my weeks so far is most definitely Friday nights: from 6.30 – 8.30pm we have our junior youth club of 60-80 young people from P4 – Year 8 and from 8.30 – 10.00pm our senior youth club of up to 30 young people from Year 8 – 12! With tuck shop orders in the region of ‘one hundred fizzy cola bottles please’ you can imagine the mayhem. With laughter, tears, friendships and drama all squeezed into three and a half hours on a Friday night, I am yet to leave youth club anything other than exhausted. However my thanks must go out to all of the faithful volunteers who make Friday evenings possible. I know it means so much to the young people.

We have a really exciting summer programme on the way, here are some dates for your diaries:

Krazy Kamp (junior youth club)

5 – 7 June

Greenhill YMCA

Senior Youth Club weekend

5 – 7 June

Rostrevor Resource Centre

Adventure Youth Camp

(all young people in secondary school)

Sat 18 – Fri 24 July

Ganaway Activity Centre

Summer mission trip (15+)

to Taughmonagh Estate

Monday 17 – Sun 23 August

If you require more information on the above or any other youth related activities please do not hesitate to contact me on 07545018261 or by email at arjmasters@gmail.com

Love and God Bless,
Andy



GET IN ON THE ACTION THIS SUMMER!



Popcorn prayer at KIDS Church

Andy asked me to give an update on KIDS Church and my first thoughts were how privileged I am to be involved. Each Sunday morning the children are so excited and full of energy it is a joy to be part of God's work in this way. During our lesson we invite the children to come forward to pray. On Andy's suggestion, we have introduced 'popcorn prayer' where the children remain in their seats and each one gets a chance to pray aloud in rotation. When they have finished they gently tap the

person next to them and if they wish to pray they can do so or, just touch the person next to them and so on. We have also given each child prayer diaries where they can record their prayers and requests throughout the week and bring them along to KIDS Church. This is an exciting time for us all and we acknowledge and thank all the prayer warriors in the congregation for their intercessory prayers on our behalf. Your prayers have certainly been answered!

Hazel Wales

fun for young and old at our

SUMMER FAIR

Saturday 30 May from 10am – 2pm

See you there!

To the ends of the earth

Two of our young adults will be spending five months doing a 'Discipleship Training School' run by 'Youth with a Mission' This will involve them in three months of study and reflection and weekly outreaches to the locals, followed by two months of outreach at a different location. Laura Bittle will fly to Perth, Australia in July while Louise Clarke will begin her course in Worcester, South Africa in September. Laura is not yet aware of where her outreach will be based.

Louise will probably be working in Zimbabwe for two months with needy children.



Laura Bittle



Louise Clarke with a friend

Finance really matters

By now you should have received your copy of the Annual Report for 2008 and, although that will give you a good overview of the state of our finances, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the aspects that are not immediately obvious from the printed accounts.

I will concentrate on the two most important accounts – the Congregational Account and the Property Account.

Firstly, the Congregational Account. The credit balance at the end of the year appears healthy, especially when we see that it is greater than the opening balance; however 2008 was a year when our salary expense was unusually low for various reasons and, in effect, as far as this account is concerned we were living

beyond our means. This came about because of two reasons: our FWO giving was down on 2007's amount by well over 3%, and we spent nearly £4,000 more on the general running of our church than we did in 2007. Of course we must not allow this situation to continue and the way to tackle the problem is obvious. In 2009 your committee is determined to keep a tight rein on expenditure but if we are to be able to pay our essential bills then FWO must go up. You will recall that I suggested, in a recent bulletin, that an increase of at least 5% was necessary.

In relation to FWO giving, an analysis of contributions received in 2008 revealed that 12.8% (1 contributor in 8) gave less than £1 per week and 80% (8 out of every 10)

gave less than £1 per day!

Also, in a recent bulletin I reported that we gave £13,605 towards United Appeal and that this was £470 short of the target set for us by Presbytery. 2008 was the first year for a long time that direct giving did not match or exceed the target, so we need to ensure that we address this in 2009. The United Appeal Scheme is the major charitable outreach of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and money given through it contributes in many ways to helping those in need.

In 2008, 59% of those who contributed to FWO did not give at all to United Appeal!

Secondly, the Property Account – on the positive side, the debit balance at this stage is not as large as we had once feared and the current interest rates are in our

favour; however by the time you are reading this the Northern Bank will have increased the rate we pay by 2.3% to 3.8% so it is incumbent on us all to bring the debit balance down as quickly as we can.

In 2008, 36% of those who contributed to FWO gave nothing to the Property Account! (Some of course had given generously before 2008.)

We are very fortunate to belong to a church (locally and nationally) that is striving to do God's work in the community and further afield in an exciting way. Many of its members give of their time and money unstintingly so let's make sure that we all do our fair share.

Maurice Gowdy, Treasurer

The Boys' Brigade

9 Dec 1909 – 9 Dec 2009

As I come to the end of ten years as Captain of the 1st Lisburn Company of the Boys' Brigade and 30 years as a BB officer, my first thought is 'Where did the time go?' It is said 'Time flies when you're enjoying yourself' and I thank God that I am a witness to the truth of that saying.

I think back over my time as a boy and Officer and remember the influence that Allan Donald, Ian Cochrane, John Irwin, Leslie Martin (13th Newtownabbey) and George Toombs had over me. I hope I have picked up the baton and continued the race as they did. George, who is now our BB Company President, is a dear friend and mentor and I can remember conversations with George, as he handed over to me, about our 100 year celebrations. I thought it was a long way off but we are on the home straight now for completing 100 years of 'Advancing Christ's Kingdom amongst Boys' at Railway Street Church.

Our Company was formed as the 23rd Belfast company on 9th December 1909, changing to 1st Lisburn Company in 1930. Such an occasion has to be acknowledged and celebrated and to that end we have a date set for our Enrolment and Youth Dedication Service on Sunday 4th October 2009 at 10.30am. On the same afternoon the Lisburn Group of the BB will have its Annual Church Parade and Services at our Church. On Sunday 13th December 2009 we will have our own day of celebration with both Services focusing on the Boys' Brigade. On Saturday 12th December 2009 there will be a dinner for all who have had connections with the BB over the past 100 years and it will be a time for young and old to come together and share memories, hopes and dreams.

We have also discussed other possibilities to take place between September 2009 and August 2010 which include an overseas mission trip, an Alpha course, 100 hours community service, a summer camp for underprivileged in our community, a Lisburn Group Event and a Company day out.

We hope to raise funds by abseiling down a 'big thing', 100m zip wire, 100 mile walk, a golf tournament and we hope to get 100 local businesses to support us.

One difficulty we have had in preparing for our celebrations is getting information on our Company history. We will be recording our events over the year but we would be very keen to have any old records, photos, stories and memorabilia that you may have as we can copy and return any items that we borrow. The hope is to try and put together a record, possibly in book form so it doesn't matter how insignificant you feel the stuff is, let us at least share in your experiences.

I know the influence the BB has had on my life therefore my prayer is that we will remain faithful to our object of advancing Christ's Kingdom amongst boys, and I know God will bless us.

*Geoffrey Baird
Captain*

Evening Service 'makeover'

One of the recommendations made by Dromore Presbytery Consultation Panel is that we should bring together the two 'groups' that meet separately on Sunday evening. Since the beginning of May, Brian Gibson and Andrew Masters have combined to create evening services to be as all-inclusive as possible, while being user-friendly for young people and those not so familiar with church traditions.

Membership course

During October of this year we will be running a membership class. This will be suitable for anyone wishing to become a communicant member of our congregation: to find out more about our congregation and denomination; to think about growing spiritually or wishing to explore their own gifting and how they might get involved in the work and ministry of our congregation.

BAPTISMS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

'We rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.'

BAPTISMS

23 Nov Lucas, son of David and Julie Kyle

DEATHS

21 Oct Elizabeth Greenlee
13 Dec Charles Hamilton
16 Dec Stella Blackstock
31 Dec James McKeown
2 Jan Thomas Lockhart
7 Jan Hugh Crombie
11 Jan Beryl Jones
3 Apr Winnie Sterrit
23 Apr Cyril Jones

HERE TO HELP

Rev Brian Gibson

If I can be of any help to you please contact me on:

028 9266 2149 (Manse)

028 9260 2766 (Church Office,
Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 12.30pm)

Rev Bob Lockhart

can be contacted on 028 9267 9500

Andy Masters

Youth and Family Work Co-ordinator
can be contacted on 07545018261
email: arjmasters@gmail.com

