

CREATING COMMUNITY



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

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Newsletter No 22



Rev. Isobel Nixon prepares to lead the fourth Lenten Reflection

Lenten Reflections

Kate writes: When you see a copy of the leaflet about Fermanagh Churches Forum, the words above the logo read as follows: *“Creating Community – Celebrating Diversity.”* This was what we sought to do through the four Lenten Lunches organised during February and March. A pleasing number of people joined with us for an informal meal and good conversation at the four church venues and we thank all who provided that welcome hospitality. The first reflection, taken by Sheila Phillips in the Presbyterian hall, focused on Isaiah 58. We reflected together on how God views fasting. We need to move from an empty emphasis on giving up to one that stresses giving out to the poor and needy. Maureen Hoy led the reflection at St Michael’s Parish Centre. The Scripture passage she read was Ezekiel 37 v 4-5, and this was followed by a time of silent meditation. For many this was

a new experience but one that was very meaningful. In the Methodist Wesley Hall, Patricia Donald took us through a Litany of Repentance which gave each of us an opportunity to offer to God our own prayers of repentance and intercession. The litany was made available to us in written form so that we could use it as a basis for further reflection. Finally we were happy to meet in St Macartin’s Cathedral Hall where Rev Isobel Nixon focused on the crucial part played by Simon of Cyrene in the crucifixion story and gave us valuable background to this part of the Holy Week narrative. We express our sincere thanks to the four ladies who prepared and led these reflections and to all those who came to join us. We would appreciate your feedback on these events as this would help us so much in planning for next year. From the offerings at the four lunchtime reflections, we sent donations of £210 each to Christian Aid and Trocaire.

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Visit our website www.fermanaghchurchesforum.org for news, links & events. Feel free to contribute & make suggestions.

Christian Unity Service



Cheerful participant with the speaker, Rev. Noel Mills and Rev. Ken Robinson, after the service.

John writes: We returned to the Methodist church in Darling Street, Enniskillen, for our service in the week of prayer for Christian unity. Some 85 of us joined in a very meaningful liturgy adapted locally by FCF committee members from the service, entitled “**You Are Witnesses**,” prepared by the Scottish churches to commemorate 100 years since the famous 1910 missionary conference in Edinburgh. The readings and theme were drawn from the story of the two disciples who encountered Jesus in His risen person on the walk to Emmaus. Our preacher, Rev. Noel Mills, appropriately took a closer look at the unlikely people that Jesus chose to be his witnesses to the world – the 11 faithful disciples, whom he likened to a football team, and inspired us to think how we enter into that role. After the service we continued our fellowship in the church hall over refreshments kindly provided by the Methodist ladies. The offering of £371.68 was equally divided between Christian Aid and Trocaire, as in previous years, helping to express our Christian concern for others in need.

Copenhagen Cop Out



Dave Thomas of Christian Aid addressing us

Tanya writes: As many will remember, in 2009 we held an event 'Countdown to Copenhagen' in the Clinton Centre, including films and discussion about the Christian response to climate change. We felt a follow-up after the Copenhagen talks would be valuable, so we met again in the Clinton Centre on Friday March 19th. This evening, entitled 'Cop Out at Copenhagen? Where next for the climate change campaign?' was introduced by Jane Russell of FCF. Jane spoke about her own, inspiring but distinctly spartan, trip to Copenhagen with Christian Aid while the talks were taking place, and of what it meant to her to be part of such a dynamic and crucial movement.

The next speaker, Dave Thomas of Christian Aid, reminded us of why we should be especially concerned about climate change and its effects upon the poorest in our world. He spoke

about the talks in Copenhagen, about why so little had been achieved and how vitally important it is that we continue to campaign for a binding and effective international agreement. Elaine Smith of Trocaire told of her involvement in the climate change movement, campaigning in Dublin as well as travelling to Copenhagen. Maeve McLynn, also from Trocaire, had visited Bolivia and had first hand experience of how climate change effects on water, food and weather patterns are already leading to devastating suffering for the people she met there.

Have you asked your parliamentary candidates how they will limit global warming?

After the talks we had the opportunity for brief discussion in smaller groups. We considered how vital it is that we get the message about climate change through to our churches, especially as they have so much influence on the people of Northern Ireland and in many cases are still not engaging with the issue. We identified practical, personal actions as being one way of highlighting the urgency of the situation and of motivating others and emphasised the value of grassroots lay influence rather than waiting for hierarchies and leaders to act. We also discussed schools, which are generally more aware of climate change, and the importance of maintaining young children's instincts for justice and compassion in the face of social pressures as they grow older.

Finally we considered what action on climate change we are seeking from politicians and how the issue might affect how we vote or campaign in the forthcoming elections. It was agreed that we would seek opportunities to question candidates about the issue, scrutinising their real commitment to change rather than mere 'greenwash' and seeking to look beyond the parochial concerns that often characterise politics in Northern Ireland.



Group Discussion in the Clinton Centre

Operation Noah is a Christian response to the threat of climatic catastrophe endangering God's creation. An Enniskillen group is forming - contact Tanya for details.

For Your Diary

Faith & Friendship

The **Joint Northern Ireland Meeting** is being hosted this year by the Lisnaskea group on Saturday, 22 May at 2.15 p.m. in St Ronan's Parish Centre in Lisnaskea, past Lidl and just before Monaghan's Ford garage.

Pentecost Sunday Service

The Pentecost service this year will be at 3 p.m. on Sunday, 23 May, in the Round Tower cemetery, Clones. The speaker will be Bishop Noel Treanor.

Walking Together Round Churches in Lisbellaw

Meet at the Methodist church, Lisbellaw on Sunday, 6 June, at 2.30 p.m. Parking is at the C of I Parish Centre or nearby Methodist church hall, where there will be tea at the end.