

CREATING COMMUNITY



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

September, 2011

Newsletter No 26

Walking and Worshipping Together Round Enniskillen Churches

About 60 folk enjoyed a very friendly visit to four churches in Enniskillen on a pleasant June Sunday afternoon. We were greeted, informed and led in worship by the clergy of the churches. David Cupples drew from the encounter of Moses with God in Exodus to highlight the burning bush symbol used by Presbyterianism and some of the denomination's central themes. Kenneth Hall and Peter O'Reilly drew all our denomination members into sharing in liturgical worship.



Sam McGuffin recalled how John Wesley attempted to reform the Church of England, but this led to the founding of the Methodist church. In all four churches we were able to join together in hymns to God, sung to familiar tunes. And then the Methodist ladies kindly provided us with refreshments that gave us the encouragement to make new and deepen existing friendships.

A warm welcome from Rev. Sam McGuffin to the Methodist church



Gathering in the Presbyterian church



Dean Kenneth Hall in St Macartan's



Enjoying refreshments & friendship in Darling Street Methodist church halls.



Approaching St Macartan's Cathedral



Rising from shared worship in St Michael's parish church

Snapshots from the walk round the churches on Sunday, 19th June, 2011

For Your Diary

Faith and Friendship: Lisnaskea in the Enterprise Centre, Wednesday, 14.9.11, at 4 p.m.

Enniskillen in the Presbyterian church hall, Wednesday, 21.9.11, 12.30 pm.

Prof. Lawrence Kirkpatrick on the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, 8 pm in Fermanagh House, Wednesday 21.9.11.

November meeting to be arranged.

AGM Wednesday, 7.12.11 in Fermanagh House 8 pm. Guest speaker, David Bolton.

Lenten Reflections

In Lent, lunch time reflections were held in the four Enniskillen island churches.

Ronnie writes: On 6th April we met in the Methodist Church Assembly Room where we were inspirationally led by Zelda Kingston. The theme for the day was based on Isaiah's Commission in chapter 6, verse 8. 'Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send Me!"' This was and remains a constant challenge to us all. As was appropriate we ended by singing one of Charles Wesley's great hymns, 'O Thou who camest from above'.

Iona study visit

Maureen writes: In May, 29 from Cookstown Churches Forum, the organizing group, 2 from FCF and 19 others went on a 5 day residential study visit to Iona island and Glasgow. We had 6 evening discussions with role plays, led by facilitators from the Meath Peace group and others, with a final evaluation over coffee and scones in Cookstown Methodist hall the morning after our return. Themes discussed over the 5 days included Columba and Iona, Scottish connections with Northern Ireland, whether the queen's visit shows the peace process has succeeded, and sectarianism. In St Mungo's cathedral, Glasgow, we learned about its history and the Reformation in Scotland. In Glasgow museum of Religion and Artefacts we had workshops on sharing/dialogue around sectarianism, inter-culture and inter-faith and we visited the Celtic stadium and 20 of our group met with the Old Firm Alliance, set up by Celtic and Rangers clubs to try to combat religious bigotry and prejudice. I found this 'pilgrimage' a very enjoyable, valuable learning experience. Cookstown did a great job of organization. Discussions were limited but went further than in the past, and we all decided that for the future serious attention must be given to the needs of the young people living in segregated estates and people who have been directly affected by atrocities.

Faith and Friendship



Ruth Paterson and Anne Gibson in Omagh

Anne writes: The Omagh group warmly welcomed all to the joint Faith and Friendship meeting on 21st May. All groups were represented and it was great to see two from the new Irvinestown group which began meeting in the springtime. It was a very wet day but the hospitality from Omagh in the Methodist church more than compensated for the rain. Next year Belfast will be our hosts.

Shared Education

Tanya writes: "Creating community, celebrating diversity" is FCF's motto, but as Kate Doherty, FCF co-chair, pointed out on the evening of Tuesday 24th May, it could equally well apply to the Fermanagh Trust's Shared Education Programme. Kate was welcoming an enthusiastic audience to the Clinton Centre for an evening celebrating the Shared Education Programme, hosted by FCF in partnership with the Fermanagh Trust as part of Community Relations Week.

The Tempo joint schools band, provided a rousing start and wonderful demonstration of shared education in action. Lauri McCusker of the Fermanagh Trust then outlined the Shared Education programme which grew out of the Trust's work in supporting cross-community playgroups. In just two school years it has involved over 2,700 pupils in schools across the county and has met with enormous success and positive feedback, sending out strong signals to the wider community.

Two primary school principals, Eileen McKenzie of Killyhommon school in Boho and Joan Cathcart of Derrygonnelly, told of close links forged among their staff, children and parents and illustrated this with film of a joint arts and music show involving many people from the local community. The programme's work with clusters of secondary schools was portrayed by two students, Kay Johnston of Devenish College and Alana Williamson of the Collegiate Grammar School, who spoke of their enjoyment and broadened horizons.

Members of the audience then discussed the programme, with more good news stories of partnerships and friendships. In a time of falling rolls at many schools, their vital importance at the heart of rural communities was emphasised, and the need for close and proactive cooperation in order to sustain these. The vision of those involved is that the example set here will spread outwards, involving more students and boards of governors. Many people hoped that the new Minister for Education would note what has been achieved here and see the beneficial impact it has had throughout Fermanagh.

CONNECT

Francis writes: At a Stormont meeting of 60 Northern Ireland church members on May 25th. Eileen Gallagher, Thomas Maguire and Rev. Francis Gilbride represented FCF.

This meeting was under CONNECT, a body of church groups, supported by the Irish School of Ecumenics and the Community Relations Council.

Mr Alban McGuinness MLA welcomed us and said how important we were in community growth. Rev. Dr Johnston McMaster spoke of community growth in the Bible. Most Rev. Dr Noel Traynor spoke of community growth worldwide. He showed a surprising knowledge of Japanese writers and as a new bishop showed he is friendly and modern. Discussions raised the usual things: why Catholic schools? Why Londonderry is called Derry? Why the PSNI had 50/50 religious engagement? Such meetings spread friendship, the tonic of community.

Pentecost on Devenish Island



Bishop McDaid and Rev. Kenneth Hall

Tanya writes: The past few years, the Pentecost ecumenical prayer service, held in sites of historic and spiritual significance, was blessed with radiant sunshine, but this year we were showered by torrential rain. We were amidst the ancient monastic ruins of Devenish Island. Despite the rain, a good turn-out came for the afternoon, the M.V. Kestrel waterbus taking the damp worshippers to the island from the Round O park and Trory jetty. Fortunately we could crowd in close fellowship in the one roofed building, where we were welcomed by Rev Canon Glen West. At previous services Bishop Joseph Duffy, now retired, gave learned, interesting introductions to each site and its history, and this year Very Rev Michael McGourty kindly read his introduction to Devenish, founded in the 6th century by St Molaise and through the Middle Ages a parish church and Augustinian priory. He emphasised that, though to us the island seems remote; in past ages with easy access by boat it functioned as a vibrant and important centre. We also had a text from bishop the Most Rev Michael Jackson, now Archbishop of Dublin, involved in past Pentecost services.

The present Catholic Bishop of Clogher, the Most Rev Liam MacDaid and the Dean of St Macartan's Church of Ireland Cathedral, the Very Rev Kenneth Hall, spoke to us of Pentecost and its significance for us, a theme brought out in the Old Testament reading in which Moses says 'I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!' As in previous years, two young people from the local area also shared their own responses to the Scripture readings, speaking movingly of what it means to live out the Spirit of Pentecost in our contemporary world. The service was concluded with music and refreshments served on the Kestrel. In the words of our closing prayer, we were inspired by the afternoon's worship to love the Lord steadfastly, to build up the church of believers and to proclaim the gospel of reconciliation and peace.



The Monaghan sisters provided music before the service