

CONNOR

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connections



It's all go in Coleraine

Daybreak

A new Sunday family service introduced a year ago in St Patrick's, Coleraine, is going from strength to strength.

Daybreak gets underway in the parish hall at 10am, but before that worshippers share breakfast in a relaxed family atmosphere with activities for the children to enjoy.

The fun continues at the beginning of the service with a children's talk and song before they go to Sunday School.

The rector, the Rev Roger Cooke, said: "Daybreak has been a huge success. It is very simple and informal and we now have up to 250 people coming along."

More traditional services continue to take place in St Patrick's Church on Sundays at 11am and 6pm.

Parish Weekend

Nearly 150 parishioners of all ages from both St Patrick's and St Andrew's, Ballysally, took part in a Parish Weekend at Castlewellan Castle.

Guests, veteran evangelist Michael Green, 80, and his wife Rosemary spoke on the theme of 'Warming our hearts to love,' sharing stories from a lifetime of ministry worldwide.

Bishop Ken Clarke and his wife Helen addressed the theme of 'Warming our hearts to love each other,' before celebrating Communion, and later feedback and testimony.

A fast moving Youth Programme was led by a team from Alliance Youth Work, Bill Boyce and a squad of volunteers from Killeel Parish Church, and afterwards it was agreed that it had been one of the best Parish Weekends for years.

Holiday Club

The summer holidays will be anything but boring for children in Coleraine with St Patrick's planning a three-week long Holiday Club.



Young parishioners from St Patrick's and St Andrew's enjoying the Parish Weekend at Castlewellan Castle Conference Centre. Photo: James McDowell.



Demonstrating that Daybreak really is an all-age service are John and Phyllis Logan and a young visitor. Photo: James McDowell.

The club will run from 10am to 3pm from Monday to Friday for the first three weeks in August, and will be open to all children aged 4-13 whether local or on holiday. The theme is 'Stop, Luke and Listen.' As well as worship and Bible study, the children will be able to enjoy activities including games, arts and crafts, cookery and sport.

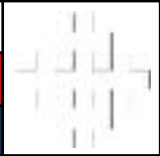
Young people can come for just a day or for the entire three weeks. Youth leader Alice McAlary said the club has been planned following consultation with families. Older teenagers will be welcome to volunteer to help run the club.

Alice added: "This is a pilot and I would like to see it happen in every town in Northern Ireland because there is a definite need for it." A parent and toddler group will run from 10am to 12 noon each day during the Holiday Club.

Lunchtime recitals

From June to September a series of lunchtime recitals will be held in St Patrick's when a variety of both local and national talent will perform in a series of free concerts. Starting on June 30, these recitals will feature Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, the Lisaire String Quartet, and a visit from Derby Cathedral Choir.

Another musical event to look forward to is the visit on September 18 of Stuart Townend as part of his Northern Ireland Tour. Stuart is one of today's leading worship songwriters, with hymns such as 'In Christ alone' and 'How deep the Father's love' being sung worldwide.



Major work at All Saints'

Major renovations have taken place at All Saints' Parish Church, Craigyhill, Larne.

The church hall has had a facelift and the building is now accessible to all, with a new toilet and access ramp for disabled users or children's pushchairs. The interior has been repainted and the kitchen enlarged.

The Rev Roger Thompson, rector, said: "We are delighted with our new look hall and look forward to seeing it being used by groups from all sections of our community. This development is a turning point for us as we strive to support local residents and hopefully draw in new members."

Appointments

The Rev Canon John Mann has been appointed Dean of Belfast, the Rev John Budd, Derriagh, has been installed Prebendary of Raskarkin in the Chapter of St Saviour, and the Rev Robin Moore, Ballysillan, is the new Rural Dean of Mid Belfast.

A wonderful way for me to come back



The visit to the Holy Land was more than a trip to a complex and beautiful place. It was a pilgrimage, an experience that

brought laughter and tears. A rollercoaster of emotion and so much to reflect upon.

There are still questions that remain unanswered but there is no doubt my heart and soul were strangely warmed by being in the place where God in human form walked among humanity and changed the history of the world forever.

There were many sites to visit and many places to see, but it was the times we paused to read and pray that were particularly helpful, giving space amidst the activity to reflect and listen to the still small voice.

There was much laughter among the pilgrims. We managed to mix the wonder of being in a special place with the great gift of humour. The joy of being able to break bread together at different sites on our way was something that will live with me forever. It was a wonderful way for me to come back to the diocese after such a

difficult time of ill health.

The boat trip on the Sea of Galilee was breathtaking. Unlike many of the sites we visited it is much as it was when Jesus was there, even if it is not as deep as it used to be.

Jerusalem was a reminder of the painful history it has experienced. There is a scarred beauty as it still reflects the deep divisions of religion and nationhood. The mess of our broken humanity is still present and perhaps that is something that has inspired me. Jesus came to our mess and in the redemption of the world He didn't fix the chaos but calls those who follow Him to continue to live in the mess and bring His presence and hope to it.

I would encourage anyone to go on a pilgrimage. It has inspired me and strengthened faith and hope. Thanks to Canon John Mann for his quiet, thoughtful and prayerful leadership. He enabled us all not just to visit the Holy Land but to experience it.

My thanks for your prayers and many acts of kindness to me as I recovered. It is a joy to be with you again in the diocese. Grace and peace to you all,

+Alan

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Website: www.connor.anglican.org




COVER PHOTOGRAPH: THE ALTAR BY THE SHORES OF THE SEA OF GALILEE AT TAGHBA, NEAR THE CHURCH OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES, WHERE BISHOP ALAN AND THE CONNOR PILGRIMS CELEBRATED HOLY COMMUNION

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		FEATURE



Billy Moore in the prayer room at the Lighthouse in Hillhall.

What a witness

Hunted by his past, Billy Moore feared that despite being a Christian he was not good enough to carry out a ministry.

But knowing God accepted him, Billy gave in and accepted himself. The result is a vibrant ministry to a community in one of Lisburn's most deprived estates.

Billy is now a Commissioned Lay Minister. The 59-year-old left school without any qualifications, and worked as a cabinet maker. But he was also involved in more sinister activities. "I was in the paramilitaries in the early 70s during the Ulster Workers' Strike. Most people were involved in the paramilitaries as they were protecting their communities," he recalled.

Billy did not want to talk openly about his activities during this period of his

life. "God knows everything that Billy Moore has done and I have to accept that," he said. "When I became a Christian and people asked me to do prayer groups, I would be thinking 'if these people really knew me how can I sit here and lead them in prayer?' It was on one of these occasions I was hit by the sudden realisation 'who's telling you you are not good enough to be a Christian?'

"Lots of people carry guilt because of things they have done in this life, and that stops them from becoming a Christian because they think they have to stand up in front of a church and say 'that's how bad I was. This is how good I am now.'

"I remember lying in bed during a power strike looking out at the stars, knowing I was going on a job the next day, and thinking that I might not come back from this one. I was not thinking

about God or theology. I was not a bad person but the circumstances enveloped me as they did thousands of people and still do to this day."

Billy continued: "I still carry a lot of guilt. But that does not make me any less a Christian because God knows me 100 per cent and if he asks me to follow him that's good enough for me."

Billy now prays for others involved in paramilitary or criminal activity. "I pray that they come to know what I know. I pray that they will know what peace is, what contentment is and what wanting to serve God means."

He left the paramilitaries after the workers' strike. "We had really put ourselves on the line.

We were trying to keep Ulster British but we were facing down British soldiers which was a contradiction,” he said.



Disillusioned, he joined the Labour Party and was chairman of the Lisburn branch in the mid 1970s. He maintains an association with the Labour Party today.

Billy married Lynda in 1977 and they have one daughter. In 1982 he got a job as a woodwork instructor at a new social care centre in Belfast. “I took it because of the job security. I had no inkling of what mental health was. I just thought it was mad people, people with no control,” Billy admits.

The irony of this is that Billy himself had suffered anxiety and depression, a condition he now recognises as a mental health illness. “It came to the stage where I lost interest in everything and I had made up my mind to kill myself. There was no great thought put into it. I just wanted to escape this life,” Billy recalls.

But before acting on this impulse Billy started to feel better. Gradually he returned to ‘normal’ activities. “One thing that happens with a mental health illness is you lose your confidence and self esteem. It’s a black hole of depression, but having come out of it after 18 months, I would say it has made me a better, stronger person, and it gave me a lot more compassion and empathy with other people. It is strange how the Lord builds you up,” said Billy.

He remains at the social care centre as a deputy manager today.

It was through Canon John McCammon at Lisburn Cathedral that Billy was drawn to faith. He began to go to church. “One night I knelt by the bed and said ‘Lord, I don’t know what you are going to do with me but I am going to give you my life, I need a brother to walk with me.’”

I still carry a lot of guilt. But that does not make me any less a Christian

The Lord accepts everybody who accepts him

Billy was later asked to come to the Lighthouse Church on Lisburn’s Hillhall Estate to help out. On his drive to work he passed the local Co Down Arms pub, a place he frequented in his younger days. “I had a real feeling that I should be in there doing my Christian work,” Billy said. “I ran from that for two years.” Twice he called in but on both occasions he failed to speak to the owner.

Then tragedy struck when the owner died.

Billy was asked to visit the family to offer comfort and when he spoke to the widowed landlady, Jennifer McNeice, he told his story. Jennifer invited him to come into the pub as a Christian.

“Jennifer has become the backbone of this Church. What a witness that is,” said Billy.



Billy called into the pub a couple of times a week. Once every three weeks he held a formal service in the bar. He put up a banner, and people were invited to hang a prayer ribbon on it. The praise band from Lisburn Cathedral supported the services.

Services are now held only in the Lighthouse, where there are also fellowship meetings, teaching, meditation, prayer and quiet times. It is hoped that a CAP (Christians Against Poverty) project will also be housed in the Lighthouse in the near future, and two Church Army workers are helping families in the area.

“The people who come here, the alcoholics and the drug addicts, are all looking for ways to give their lives to the Lord,” Billy said.

Four years ago Billy was made a Commissioned Lay Minister. “I feel I have a whole new family and the acceptance of the church means so much to me,” he said.

Looking back on his past, Billy added: “The Lord accepts everybody who accepts him.”





The Open Hands group based at St Luke's Church, Northumberland Street, Belfast, unveiled an anti-racism mural created by young adults from both the Falls and the Shankill on May 27.

The event was co-ordinated by Marion Weir, community relations officer with Open Hands. The charity was established when St Luke's closed for worship in 2006 and parishioners joined with St Stephen's, Millfield. It aims to re-open St Luke's as a cross-community centre.

The Rev Edith Quirey, rector of St Luke's and St Stephen's (pictured with Marion), said: "This is the first of many projects we hope to put on to bring the communities back together in shared space."

100-years-young!

Congratulations to Newtownabbey lady Florence Grattan who turned 100 on Thursday May 5. Florence was delighted when the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, called to see her at home on her big day. With him were the Rev Bill Boyce, Florence's rector at St Brigid's, Mallusk, and fellow parishioner June Edens.

What a challenge!

Parishioners from St Colmanell's, Ahoghill, and Portglenone took part in an Adventure Challenge held in the church hall and adjoining field.

Coordinated by staff from Mobile Team Adventure (MTA), the main aim of the day was to have fun and grasp the need for team work, but it also raised funds for the church and Compassion UK child sponsorship.

The Adventure Challenge featured six zones to stimulate physical and mental prowess, including a rope course, archery test and 30 feet high climbing wall. The rector, the Rev Mark Loney, said: "It was good to see such a large number of the church's young people so enthused by the activities and the competitive spirit. Several locals passing by came in to have a look, one or two even had a go. The church is blessed with being set in such large grounds suited to the occasion."

Lunch was provided by Beth Colvin, coordinator of the Portglenone Parish lunches for the elderly programme. Mr Loney thanked the MTA and Jo Loney and Carol Leggett for planning and promoting the programme.

At the end of the all-age service in St Colmanell's the following day, the congregation was given a brief slideshow of events. Mr Loney said: "This was a reminder that as in the field of physical challenge, the church is a body, a team, dependent on its constituent parts to function in ministry and to work together in the building of fellowship and oneness of purpose."

Success for Connor communications entries

Connor entries enjoyed success in the annual Church of Ireland Communications Competition.

St Patrick's Parish, Coleraine, was awarded first prize in the parish magazine/newsletter category; the Diocese of Connor website was joint first in the diocesan websites section; Connor Connections was joint runner up in the diocesan magazines category, while Connor Mothers' Union was first in the other organisations printed publications category for its In Touch magazine.

The competition was independently judged by external media professionals who praised St Patrick's magazine for both its polished design

and its thoughtful, well written content and use of images.

The judges stated that the MU's In Touch packed in a lot of information, describing it as 'a lively publication.'

Connor's diocesan website (www.connor.anglican.org) shared first place with the Diocese of Down and Dromore. It was described as fresh looking and easily navigated and filled with lots of information, stories and photographs.

Connor Connections was second in the diocesan magazine category. It was described as 'dramatic and eye-catching' with features 'of a high journalistic standard.'



On retreat on the Isle of Cumbrae

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, left, was speaker at the annual Continuing Education in Ministry Retreat which took place on the beautiful Scottish Isle of Cumbrae during May. With the Bishop are curates, tutors and archdeacons. Photo courtesy of the Rev Ken Houston.

Fifty people attended talks by retiring CMS Ireland mission associates John and Poppy Spens. The couple lived in Connor's link Diocese of Yei, Southern Sudan, for five years.

David Gough of CMSI, said: "I have a great respect for this couple, for what they have achieved and the impact they have had."

Poppy, who managed the Martha Clinic, and oversaw the introduction of

Farewell Yei

a mobile clinic, paediatric and eye wards, and staff training, described her time in Sudan as 'fantastic.' She said she had felt inadequate for the huge task that faced her, but there had been many blessings, not least the Sudanese people. "Their faith and joy is incredibly infectious despite huge difficulties," Poppy said.

John said the Episcopal Church of Sudan was undergoing a revival. He also talked about the building of 10 schools. The school in Mongo village was funded by Connor Diocese.

John said the churches had played a major role in the peaceful referendum on independence in Southern Sudan. He said he and Poppy would continue to be involved in Southern Sudan for many years in whatever way God wanted them.



The Connor MU team celebrates at the end of the 2011 Belfast Marathon Walk. Back, from left: Moria Thom, Liz Wallace, Rena Lindsay, Roslyn Graham, Jean McDonald. Front: Kathleen Rodgers.

Ballymacash history appeal

St Mark's Parish Church, Ballymacash, is hosting a Flower Festival and historical exhibition next October.

The organising committee is asking anyone with connections to St Mark's to search for historical information relating to the parish. Contact Sandra Vanner on 028 9267 1250 or email sandravanner@aol.com.

Derek's delight at Royal wedding!

Royal fan the Rev Derek Kerr, rector of Drummaul, Duneane and Ballyscullion, was one of the thousands who camped out overnight to get ringside seats for the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton.

The discomfort of a night in the outdoors was soon overcome by the joy of the occasion. "The atmosphere on the Mall was wonderful. It was brilliant to be able to shout and cheer and nobody minded," said Derek.

"Catherine was looking really lovely. She was just full of it, she is a delightful girl. She seemed to appreciate that everyone was there to see her and she gave people attention which is what they wanted."

The service was relayed to the crowds on the Mall by loud speakers, and Derek later witnessed all the Royals return to the Palace as well as that iconic kiss on the balcony!

He is now planning to return to London for the Queen's jubilee, perhaps taking a group of parishioners with him!

22 years in Eglantine

The Rev Canon William Bell, rector of All Saints Parish, Eglantine, retired on March 31, exactly 22 years to the day after he was instituted as rector there.

Morning Prayer on Sunday March 27 was followed by a parish lunch and Evening Prayer marked the final service in almost 44 years of Canon Bell's active ministry.

Canon Bell was born and educated in Kells, Co Meath, and later attended Trinity College Dublin and the Church of Ireland Theological College. After ordination in 1967, he served in St Mark's Parish, Newtownards, and later

the Parish of Larne and Inver.

He was in charge of a church extension project, St Columba's, Dunclug, Ballymena, before becoming rector of Ardoyne Parish, Belfast, where he also served as Rural Dean of Mid Belfast.

Canon Bell was instituted as rector of All Saints' Eglantine on March 31 1989. He was appointed a Canon of Lisburn Cathedral Chapter in 2005. During his ministry a new parish hall was built in 1995 and major refurbishment of the church was undertaken in 2009. Canon Bell is married to Norma and they have two

sons and two grandsons.

He has been Secretary of Churches Together in Lisburn, and has been very involved in education, serving on the management committees of a number of local schools.

Not only will Canon Bell's pastoral and community work be greatly missed, so too will that of his wife Norma who was organist and choir mistress at All Saints' Eglantine for a number of years. Norma has supported her husband in parish life and was leader of the Parish branch of Mothers' Union, Connor Diocesan President and is an All Ireland Vice President.



Pictured at a presentation to mark the retirement of the Rev Canon William Bell are, from left: Peter Pratt, Rector's Warden, Maureen Campbell, People's Warden, Canon Bell, Norma Bell, David Kingan, Select Vestry, and Dan McCormick, Men's Fellowship. With them is Caroline Simpson who presented flowers to Mrs Bell. Photo by John Kelly.

End of an era at St Anne's Cathedral

The full time stipendiary ministry of the Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey, OBE, as Dean of Belfast ended on Thursday March 31.

He has been Dean since June 2001 and is well known as the city's Black Santa.

Dean McKelvey was ordained in 1967. For 19 years he was adviser on education policy in Northern Ireland to the Church of Ireland General Synod Board. He serves on the Belfast local education authority and on the boards of governors of local schools.

A former Territorial Army Chaplain with 29 years service to the Ulster and

Scottish Gunners, Dean McKelvey was the first chaplain to be awarded the Queen's Volunteer Reserve Medal.

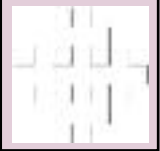
He is a former member of the Police Authority for Northern Ireland, serves as a county chaplain for scouts, and is a former editor of The Church of Ireland Gazette. In January 2010 he was awarded an OBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours list for services to community.

Dean McKelvey was educated at Muckamore Primary School, the Royal Belfast Academical Institution; Queen's University, Belfast; Trinity College, Dublin, and the Methodist seminary at

North-Western University, Illinois.

During his time as Dean, the Spire of Hope was erected, the positions of ecumenical canons were established and the partnership with St Peter's Cathedral strengthened.

Paying tribute to Dean McKelvey, the Archdeacon of Connor, the Ven Dr Stephen McBride said: "The Dean has contributed with energy and drive across many areas of Church life and beyond, in the fields of education, communication and ecumenism. He has always shown a robust approach to life and a capacity for getting across his views in a forthright manner."



Looking back on a journey of faith



A mosaic in the Church of All Nations at the Garden of Gethsemane.



Laughter from Dorothy Dean and Alice Baker during their visit to the Garden of the Tomb.



Prayers and readings in the grounds of the Church of Pater Noster (Our Father) in Jerusalem.



Christine Jones from Greenisland Parish touches the place where the cross on which Jesus was crucified stood at Calvary, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem.



Bishop Alan prepares to celebrate Holy Communion on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, at Tabgha, beside the Church of the Loaves and Fishes.



Sunrise over the Sea of Galilee. Photo by Robert Kay.



Dawn-Marie Allen, Fern Turner and their mum Mary Hanna call home during a lunchtime stop in a convent.



Floating in the Dead Sea.

Pilgrims walk in the

Inspirational, divine, amazing, fun – just some of the words used by pilgrims from Connor who joined the first diocesan pilgrimage to the Holy Land in March.

Their journey of faith took them from the bustling lanes of the Via Dolorosa to the calm of the Galilean lakeshore, via churches retelling the story of Christ, ruins from ancient days, and sites where miracles occurred. All 85 can now say: 'I have walked where Jesus walked.'

The trip, organised by McCabe Pilgrimages, got underway on March 22, sadly without joint leader the Rev David Humphries. David took ill on St Patrick's Day and was in the thoughts and prayers of the group.

The Rev Jonathan Carmyllie of the Diocese of Manchester, a friend of pilgrimage leader Canon John Mann, proved an inspirational replacement and by the end of the pilgrimage was a good friend to all.

An early start on their first day saw the pilgrims at the Mount of Olives. The weather was surprisingly chilly and wet, but this did not dampen spirits. The pilgrims visited the Paster Noster Church where the words of the Lord's Prayer are displayed in 163 languages. Guides Raffi and Samer gave informative talks along the way. From the top of the Mount of Olives, the group walked down a steep road to the Dominus Fleuit Chapel, and on to the Garden of Gethsemane where olive trees reputed to be 2,500 years old still bear fruit. The group celebrated Communion inside the beautiful Church of All Nations.

At the Israel Museum the group saw a model of ancient

Jerusalem and some of the Dead Sea Scrolls housed in the Shrine of the Book. Lunch was enjoyed outside the village of Ein Karem at the peaceful Sisters of Sion Convent, before a walk through the village to the Church of John the Baptist ended the day.

On their second day the pilgrims climbed the narrow Via Dolorosa, the route Christ followed as he carried his cross to his crucifixion, today lined with market stalls, to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Here they recalled Jesus's death at Calvary and stood in the place where his body was laid.

Undeterred by the cold and rain, the pilgrims visited the Wailing Wall, the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount, prayed by the Pool of Bethesda, and stopped in the beautiful Garden of the Tomb where they were able to enter the tomb from which Jesus may have risen.

A highlight of the day was hymn singing in the Church of St Anne with its fantastic acoustics. Guide Samer also sang for the pilgrims in Arabic.

On day three the pilgrims left Jerusalem at 7.30am to drive to Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. A cable car took them up to Masada, home to the ruins of Herod's magnificent desert fortress. The Lot Hotel on the shores of the Dead Sea hosted the pilgrims for lunch and a bathe in the therapeutic waters of the sea.

Then it was on into Palestinian Jericho, where a 1,000-year-old sycamore tree marks the place Zacchaeus climbed to see Jesus. They witnessed the place



Dr Roger Cromey and John Logan reading during a brief moment of reflection at the Church of Abu Guosh.



Rain does not deter the singing and spirits of musicians leading the Bar Mitzvahs to the Wailing Wall.



Olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, reputed to be more than 2,500 years old.



Jim and Rosemary Patterson and Carol and Robert Kay enjoy the view from the Mount of Olives.



Guide Samer finishes singing in Arabic in the church of St Anne, Jerusalem, which has marvellous acoustics.



A re-enactment of daily life in the days of Jesus in the Nazareth Village complex.

footsteps of Jesus

where Jesus remained for 40 days and nights, and some of the group experienced their first camel ride. The last stop was at Wadi Qelt where there was an amazing view of the Judean Wilderness, and as the sun was dropping in the sky there was a wonderful sense of peace, calm and beauty.

That evening there were high spirits as the pilgrims were treated to a Sultan's Feast in the Golden Walls Hotel. Dawn Marie Allen was the Sultanness and chose fellow Ballymoney parishioner Colin Loughead as her Sultan.

The group visited Bethlehem on the next day. They started on Mount Zion and the Church of St Peter in Galllicantu, possibly the site of the High Priest's house, where they recalled Jesus being condemned to death and Peter's denials in the courtyard outside.

From there the buses passed into Palestinian territory to Bethlehem, a town full of noise, colour and bustle. But the Church of the Angels, and the Field of the Shepherds provided a peaceful haven, and the pilgrims celebrated Holy Communion in the Field of the Shepherds. There was some time for shopping in the local Christian co-operative and lunch before the group moved on to Manger Square, where they visited the Basilica and Grotto of the Nativity and St Jerome's caves. Few will forget touching the place where Jesus was born.

Connor pilgrims joined with members of the local Christian community for Sunday morning worship in St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, at 9.30am on Sunday March 27. Bishop Alan and Canon Mann took part in the service, and the sermon was delivered, in both languages, by priest-in-

charge, the Rev Canon Hosam Naoum. Hymns were sung in both languages simultaneously.

Earlier, 22 of the pilgrims rose before light to attend dawn worship at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where they experienced a variety of liturgies. For those who left the hotel at 5am, the walk up the Via Dolorosa was a very different experience to the walk they completed three days before. At dawn the cobbled lanes were silent and peaceful.

In the afternoon some went to Bethany to see the Lazarus Church and Tomb, and to visit the Jeel al-Amal Boys' Home. Others went to the moving Yad Vashem Memorial to the Holocaust.

On the Monday, the pilgrims moved from Jerusalem to Tiberias. En route they visited the church at Abu Guosh, site of Emmaus, before heading to the Mediterranean coast to the Roman capital of Caesarea, with its ruins, restored amphitheatre and aqueduct.

After lunch in Haifa, the group called into the port of Acre, the Crusader capital, where they walked through underground tunnels and visited the large Pasha al-Jezzar Mosque.

In Galilee, the pilgrims ascended Mount Tabor by taxi to visit the Basilica of the Transfiguration. This was a place of peace and serenity, with magnificent views over the plain of Armageddon. A visit to Cana, scene of Jesus's first miracle, was also on the itinerary. The pilgrims visited Nazareth

Continued on page 19



Enjoying lunch in an Armenian restaurant during a second day touring in Jerusalem.



Canon John Mann prepares for Holy Communion in the Church of All Nations in the Garden of Gethsemane.



Kay Campbell and May Herbinson in the beautiful gardens at the Sisters of Sion Convent in Ein Karem.



Agnes Young, Janet Spence and the Rev Edith Quirey, having a fine time at the Sultan's Feast!



Preparing for prayers and readings at Abu Guosh, the site of Emmaus.



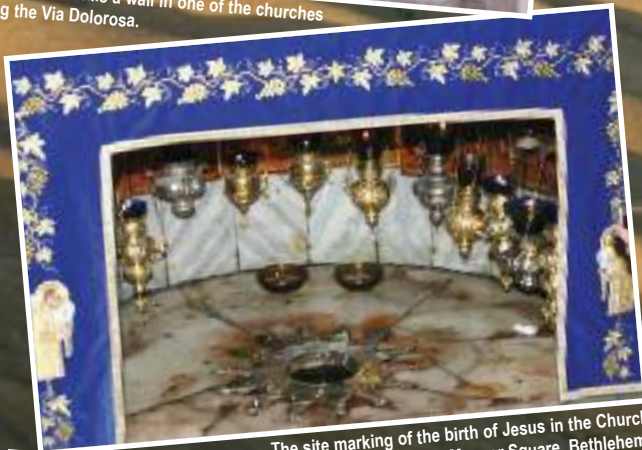
A scene which fills a wall in one of the churches along the Via Dolorosa.



Orthodox Jews interceding at the Wailing Wall. Photograph by Reg Haslett.



Tim Haslett at Masada



The site marking the birth of Jesus in the Church of the Nativity, Manger Square, Bethlehem.



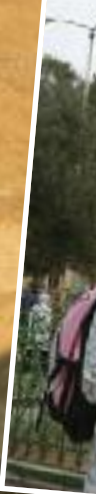
Dawn-Marie Allen from Ballymoney (above) was a delightful Sultness at the Sultan's Feast in the Golden Walls Hotel, Jerusalem.



Connor pilgrims taking photographs of a model of ancient Jerusalem at the Israel Museum.



A scene of tranquility. Two boats on the Sea of Galilee. Photo by Reg Haslett.



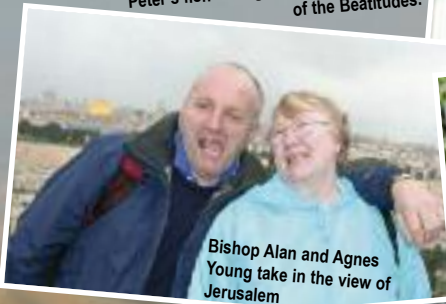
The Rev John at the Dome of the Rock



Archdeacon Jack Patterson tucks into his St Peter's fish during lunch at the Convent of the Beatitudes.



Inside the torture chamber at the Church of St Peter in Gallicantu.



Bishop Alan and Agnes Young take in the view of Jerusalem



Memorial to Oskar Schindler at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum (above).



Ancient paintings inside the Church at Abu Guosh (left).



Liz Abernethy shows she is a natural at camel riding, with the evening sun on the wilderness providing a spectacular backdrop.



Defying the rain at the Wailing Wall are Diana Hall, Liz Hanlon and Kay Campbell.



McClure and his wife Margot outside the Rock, Jerusalem.



Pilgrimage leaders the Rev Jonathan Carmyllie and Canon John Mann with the Judean Wilderness spread out behind them.



Pilgrims reflect as they prepare for final prayers of the pilgrimage at the Church of Mensa Christi.

Bishop Alan and his wife Liz on the edge of the Wilderness.



Pray for this special place

Before I came I hoped that I would meet Jesus here – I have experienced him in a deep way.

We have seen the contrasts in nature and the diversity of cultures. There is tangible pain in the community but also reality that Jesus is here with us. Faith refreshed, I must go home and share his love in action as well as word, and pray for this special place and its people.

Liz Abernethy



Joy Hickinson, Muriel Carleton and Rita and Jimmy McShane ready to visit Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered.



Rev Tracey McRoberts, Diana Hall, Catherine Burns and Robert Kay waiting their turn to enter the Tomb in which Jesus is believed to have been laid.



Pilgrims soak up the atmosphere in the sunshine at the restored amphitheatre in the Roman capital of Caesarea.



Agherton pilgrims on top of Mount Tabor, scene of the Transfiguration. From left: Diana Hall, Kay Campbell, Liz Hanlon, Robert Kay, Frances Patterson, Carol Kay and Archdeacon Jack Patterson.



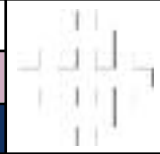
The Rev Jonathan Carmyllie, pilgrimage leader, prepares to celebrate Holy Communion in the Field of the Shepherds.



Kay Campbell and Margot McClure eye up sweet delights outside the Pasha-al-Jezzar Mosque in Acre.



Inside the Church of the Loaves and Fishes.



Waiting for a talk on arrival at the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem.



Guide Raffi gives the pilgrims some information before they walk through the beautiful reserve at Banias.



The face says it all! Agnes Young experiences her first camel ride.

I thought of Jesus

Many times I thought of Jesus, of the times he took to a quiet place, just to pray. I was able to do that in the evenings while in Tiberias where five of us could come together and speak openly with each other, to pray for each other and for others.



Kathleen McCullough (on her 18th pilgrimage to the Holy Land)

On board the Jesus Boat (below) a guide demonstrates how they fished on the Sea of Galilee in Jesus's day.



A carpenter's simple tools on show in Nazareth Village (right).

A deep sense of peace

Travelling from Ballycastle we have journeyed with our fellow pilgrims in the Holy Land. Sharing in prayer, Bible readings and worship, we have trod in Christ's footsteps. Walking the way of Palm Sunday, Christ's steps to betrayal and trial, standing in his dungeon of imprisonment and following his torturous path to the crucifixion, we were humbled by his suffering.

Celebrating the resurrection and his appearance to Peter and the Disciples we were aware of the beginning of His Church worldwide.

Our final communion service, led by Bishop Alan on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, gave us a deep sense of peace. Finally renewing our baptismal vows in Caesarea Phillipi brought our pilgrimage to a close, renewing us with



The Ballycastle pilgrims with Bishop Alan.

the spirit of God and knowing our faith is built on the rock of Christ.

Harry and Doreen Grivan, Susan McMaster and Helen McKeown, Ballycastle



Lorna McIlwaine reads in the torture chamber at the Church of St Peter In Gallicantu.



Taking in the sights and sounds of the Via Dolorosa.



Ready for prayers and readings inside the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem.



Lady Eleanor Brown reads during the Service of Holy Communion beside the Sea of Galilee.

Liz and Elmer Wallace.

A wonderful experience



Elmer and I had such a wonderful experience. We laughed, we cried, we prayed and we praised! We had so many mixed emotions and especially on the day we heard about Mercia's dear friend Mary so tragically killed in the Jerusalem bombing. When Rev Jonathan told us as we journeyed back to our hotel there was a prayerful silence throughout the bus, everyone thinking collectively about Mercia and also Mary's family back in the UK.

Many sites left impressions on us like the boys' home, the Wailing Wall and the Garden Tomb, but above all, celebration of the Eucharist on the shores of the Lake with Bishop Alan. We felt so privileged to be with him sharing in that very special service.

We will always remember the fun and fellowship we felt throughout the trip and we thank God for all who were involved in the organisation of it all.

Liz Wallace

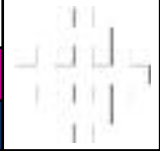
A land full of steps

I ventured on the Connor Pilgrimage with some trepidation since I have impaired mobility due to a muscle disorder. It was helpful that I was travelling with my mother, who is a very fit lady.

The Holy Land appears to be full of steps, big steps, maybe not so noticeable to the able-bodied, however very obvious, not just to me but to anybody with a bad back or creaky knees. At numerous points a helping arm appeared at my side to aid me up a step or down a slope. In particular, I must thank the clergy. The Rev Paul Jack literally pushed me uphill and up ramps from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem. The Rev Derek Kerr was also very helpful. The Rev Edith Quirey literally hauled me up the steps from the Jesus boat in Tiberias. Numerous people (and please forgive me if I have not named you all) were very helpful and kind without being patronising.

In summary, I completed most of the pilgrimage with the occasional opt-out for a coffee break - in fact we nearly got left behind in Nazareth! I hope that I did not hold people back too much and I, for one, returned home energised both physically and spiritually.

Lady Eleanor Brown



The rain-soaked lanes of the Via Dolorosa, Jerusalem.



The Rev John Cunningham, Helen Mann and other pilgrims prepare for Holy Communion in the Field of the Shepherds.



Enjoying the Mediterranean during a stop on the road to Acre, the Crusader capital, are Emily Turkington, Bobby Fryer and Barbara Turkington.



Smiles as the sun comes out (briefly) at the start of the walk up the Via Dolorosa.

Journey of faith was a privilege to lead

This journey of faith was one of the most exciting of things to be part of, as all the pilgrims shared together in readings and prayers and Holy Communion, but also in plenty of affectionate banter. Everyone seemed to get the balance just right between the intense concentration of following the way of Christ and relaxing in each other's company as we prepared for the next new experience.

The pilgrimage was not without its health concerns and sadness, but there was a important sense of healing and support too, as we walked the way together.

For all of us, to hear the Bishop articulate that he is back with us, as members of the Diocese of Connor, at the final Eucharist, was a moment of great joy - a return to health with renewed energy, and an answer to our prayers.

Helen and I find it hard to put into words the experience that this pilgrimage has been - a huge privilege to lead, with many unforgettable moments of shared singing, reading, prayer and relaxation in the land where Jesus walked.

Canon John Mann

So many highlights

I think we really gelled very well as a group and it was lovely to meet people from all over our diocese, some great characters and friendship and fellowship we will hold dear. There were so many highlights of the trip but one has to be singing in The Church of St Anne. Hearing our guide sing in Arabic was so moving, there were a lot of tears shed there.

Barbara Turkington

My pilgrimage highlights were walking where Jesus walked in Galilee and Holy Communion with Bishop Alan on the lake shore.

Muriel Carleton

A divine experience. Every step was history and gave a visible meaning to the Bible and the New Testament in particular.

Joan Thompson



Rev Derek Kerr with Lorraine Leecocke and Derek's mum Jean Kerr on the shore at Caesarea.

I loved going into Nazareth where, as our guide put it, we saw the hills that saw Jesus play and enjoy his childhood.

The Rev Derek Kerr

Refreshed in faith

The pilgrimage to the Holy Land was an amazing experience. Some of the things that stand out are - the noise, busyness and tensions of Jerusalem and the quieter, slower and more peaceful pace of the Sea of Galilee; the hard realities of life for Arabs and Israelis in this divided and tense country; the church of St Peter in Gallicantu and the Garden Tomb where the pain and suffering of Jesus was so real and evident, the Mount of Beatitudes, the Church of the Multiplication and Capernaum where Jesus lived, walked and taught and His presence was still so real. And finally Mensa Christi where the risen Jesus met with the disciples on the lake shores - a very special place.

It was a privilege to be part of this pilgrimage, so well organised and led - including the meaningful prayers and Bible readings for each site. Everyone was friendly and got on so well. Overall, it has been a very meaningful experience for me - at times disturbing, at times peaceful and reflective and at other times really joyful; and I have returned home feeling challenged, reinvigorated and refreshed in my faith.

Rosemary Taylor

Enjoying the view from the Golan Heights are Reg Haslett, Rosemary Taylor and Janet Kirkpatrick.



Am I really here?

There were many moments I'll never forget. One was when we stopped at our first sight of Jerusalem and read Psalm 122 - it was one of many 'am I really here' moments!

Another special time was singing hymns in St George's Cathedral - 'Tell me the stories of Jesus' told of our visit as we walked in His footsteps, and 'The Church's one foundation' with the line 'Elect from every nation, yet one over all the earth,' was particularly special as we sang it together in two languages in a city of many races and peoples.

Janet Kirkpatrick



Dorothy Adair and Mary Lewis in the garden at the Convent of the Beatitudes.



The Convent of the Beatitudes.



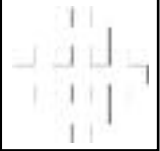
Trekking across the reserve at Banias.



Bishop Alan and Canon John Mann along with local clergy greet churchgoers following Sunday morning worship in St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem.



The Bishop of Connor and the Archdeacon of Connor were among those pilgrims to brave a 6.30am dip in the Sea of Galilee at Tiberias!



Last night in Tiberias

A group photograph taken in the Ron Beach Hotel, Tiberias, on the last night of the pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Tragedy impacts on time of great joy

Continued from page 11

Village, a reconstruction of first century Galilean life, and also called at the impressive St Gabriel's Church and the Basilica of the Annunciation where the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary.

On their penultimate day in the Holy Land some were up early to watch the sun rise over the Sea of Galilee, and many, including Bishop Alan and Archdeacon Stephen McBride, took the opportunity for a pre-breakfast dip in its waters.

The buses drove north to the ruins of Capernaum, Jesus's Galilean base, and on to the Mount of Beatitudes where the church commemorating the Sermon on the Mount is set amidst beautiful gardens.

Bishop Alan celebrated Holy Communion on the lakeshore at Tabgha, close to the Church of the Loaves and Fishes, a stunning and peaceful location for a very moving service.

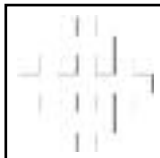
The group lunched at the Convent of the Beatitudes, where they each enjoyed a St Peter's fish. The Sea of Galilee remained calm as the group sailed back to Tiberias on a replica of the Jesus Boat, an hour long sailing which gave time for readings, prayers, private contemplation, and even a bit of music which prompted some interesting dance moves on deck!

On the final day in the Holy Land the group visited the Golan Heights where the borders of Israel, Syria and Lebanon meet and where the snow still lies on Mount Hebron. They stopped at Baniyas, once biblical Caesarea Philippi, where they viewed the ruins and trekked across this national reserve, alongside streams flowing fast with the melted snows of Mount Hebron.

They lunched at the guest house at the Kibbutz Kfar Blum before heading back to Galilee, stopping off for final readings and prayer at the Mensa Christi Church, where Christ appeared to his disciples after his resurrection.

As the buses drew into the hotel, the pilgrims thanked their guides Samer and Raffi, who were a mine of information and good humour, and the bus drivers who had taken them safely through the crowded streets of Jerusalem and round the hairpin bends of Nazareth.

While each day of the pilgrimage brought many joys, the Connor group's time in the Holy Land was also visited by tragedy. The lady who died in a bomb at the bus station in Jerusalem on Wednesday March 23 was Mary Gardner from Scotland, a close friend of one of the Connor pilgrims, the Rev Mercia Malcolm. Mary was making her way to the Connor group's hotel to join the pilgrims for dinner when she was killed. Mercia, Mary, and Mary's family were very much in the thoughts and prayers of all the pilgrims.



Winners unveiled at Good Samaritans' Service

The winners of the inaugural Spire of Hope Awards, launched by the former Dean of Belfast Cathedral, the Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey, were announced at the annual Good Samaritans Service in February.

The Awards were presented by Dame Mary Peters to Belfast couple Stanley and Noreen McIlroy, the Hope Centre in Ballymena, and Rotary International

Entry to the awards was open to groups, individuals and charities working in the voluntary sector in Northern Ireland.

Launching the awards last October, Dean McKelvey said: "The Spire of Hope Awards will endeavour to affirm those who are making a most worthwhile contribution to this society, and who are doing it without any monetary reward."

The awardees received a cheque for £1,000 for a charity of their choice.

Affirmation



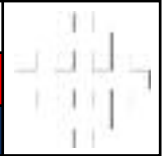
Dedicated fundraisers Stanley and Noreen McIlroy received a Spire of Hope Award.

Dean saw Shelter Boxes in use

The third Spire of Hope Award went to Rotary International throughout Ireland in recognition of the charity's Shelter Box scheme.

"Shelter boxes contain the basic necessities of life. I saw them in use in Sri Lanka after the major Boxing Day tsunami," Dean Houston McKelvey said.

Last year the charity faced some of its biggest challenges, deploying more than 40,000 Shelter Boxes in response to 21 disasters, including the Haiti earthquake in January, the Pakistan floods in August and the tsunami in Indonesia. The Award was received on behalf of Rotary International by Rotarian Ernest Lawson of the Portadown Branch.



of good works



When Stanley McIlroy faced a hospital consultant late one night, he received the devastating news that his father had cancer and might only have six months to live.

It was a burden Stanley would have to bear alone, for a decision was taken not to tell his father. Yet Stanley's father lived another 12 years, unaware that he had ever had cancer.

Stanley believes his father's life was extended because of an operation he had undergone at the Royal Victoria Hospital. For this reason Stanley and his wife Noreen have worked tirelessly and selflessly for decades raising more than £1 million for charities, with the lion's share of that going to Cancer Research UK.

In January their efforts were recognised when they received the inaugural Spire of Hope Award, presented by Dame Mary Peters, First Minister Peter Robinson and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness at a service in St Anne's Cathedral.

The award was particularly fitting as the couple have worshipped in the Cathedral for more than 54 years, and Stanley was a Board member for 33 years. The couple, who live in Knock, married in the Cathedral 54 years ago and have one daughter Susan, an IT consultant in Switzerland.

Although they had been doing charity work for many years, it was 1987 before the couple became officially involved with Cancer Research, joining the local branch committee. Stanley later became chairman, and when the committee dissolved, he and Noreen continued to fundraise for Cancer Research.

They arranged for collection boxes to be placed in shops and businesses, organised flag days and balls, persuaded

volunteers to do a variety of challenges including parachute jumps, marathon runs, a cycle along the Great Wall of China, and even immersion in a tank of sharks!

"Most of our money has been raised through the working class people in east Belfast," said Stanley. "We find that in this day and age there are few people who do not have a family member touched by cancer."

He believes his father lived all those years beyond his diagnosis because medical research had made the life saving operation possible. The couple say Cancer Research UK funds research worldwide in the hope that a breakthrough in the cure for cancer will make a difference to all sufferers.

Over the years, Noreen, a retired nutrition and hygiene lecturer, and Stanley, who was manager of Yardley cosmetics for 25 years, have raised £800,000 for Cancer Research and more than £200,000 for other charities including the Widows and Orphans, the Heart Foundation and Bryson House.

Stanley, now 87, says he has no intention of easing up on the fundraising as it keeps his brain active. "Three years ago I suffered a heart attack. I now have a pacemaker and stents. Through research I am alive today. I can't just sit and do nothing."

He was honoured to be made a Fellow of Cancer Research UK. Another great honour was winning the inaugural Spire of Hope Award.

Dean Houston McKelvey said of Stanley and Noreen: "They are a fantastic team who throughout their marriage have made an immeasurable contribution in their service to this Cathedral, Cancer Research, and several other charities."

Giving hope in Ballymena

The second inaugural Spire of Hope Award was presented to The Hope Centre in Ballymena, a community-wide organisation aiming to raise awareness among all age groups of the dangers of addictions.

The initiative was established originally by families who were struggling with addictions themselves. It is now based in a three storey building in the centre

of Ballymena and is run by 11 staff along with volunteers. Board member May Anderson said up to 50 clients with addictions and their families pass through the centre every day. The Hope Centre offers courses in drug awareness as well as counselling, alternative therapies and a youth club.

May said the Award had been a boost. "It was good to receive it. It takes so

much to run the place, and we always struggle for funding," she said.

The Dean of Belfast said tackling addiction was a challenge worldwide. "Here is an example of good practice over 10 years assisting churches, community groups, schools, families and individuals," he said. The award was presented to Billy Morgan and Trish Cathcart of the Hope Centre.



The Rev Alan Lorimer and the Rev Arlene Moore lead the opening prayers outside the church at the Dedication Service. Also pictured are, from left: Archdeacon Barry Dodds, Rev W A Davison (Circuit Superintendent), the Rev Nigel Baylor (Rural Dean) and the Rev W Bryan Fletcher, (NE District Superintendent).



Mrs Renee Brown meets some of the animals from the Ark Farm at the Community Open Day.



The archery and camping activities at the Open Day manned by Derek Goodfellow - Development Officer for the Northern Ireland Scout Council (NISC), Gail McKirgan - Assistant Cub Scout Leader 1st Monkstown) and John Campbell - Assistant Scout Leader 1st Monkstown.



The woven paper heart baskets, symbol of the new Heartspace at the church.

A week of celebrations has cemented the unity between the Church of Ireland and Methodist denominations at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Monkstown.

In 2003, when an historic Covenant agreement was signed between the two denominations, the Church of the Good Shepherd was the first in Ireland to take up the challenge of uniting completely in terms of people, finance, resources and worship.

Three years later, this arrangement was formalised when the two denominational congregations in Monkstown entered into an official Single Covenant Partnership.

On the Sunday closest to St Patrick's Day 2011, this unity was made concrete in the hallowing of a new 'heartspace' link area between previously separate buildings: the Methodist owned halls and Church of Ireland owned church sanctuary.

Monkstown

During a week of celebrations the congregation gave thanks for eight years of unity, renewed their covenant commitment with one another and dedicated the new premises to the glory of God and for unity and mission.

The celebrations began with 24 hours of prayer beginning at noon on Friday March 11. At noon the following day, the church hosted a fun open day. Many prayer requests were received from young and old alike who had called in to view the new buildings. Five hundred free burgers and hot dogs vanished in less than an hour, as did 200 children's party bags.

The new link area was packed as people circulated around the many activities and organisation stalls; and the ladies in the new heartspace cafe worked flat out. The church was alive with the buzz of conversation; children's laughter; the occasional bleat from the animals of the Ark farm on display and the whoosh of arrows as they thudded into the archery targets the Scouts had raised in the Main hall.

That evening a Live Praise night was led by Alan McCreedy and his band, 'North'. Both ministers, the Rev Alan Lorimer and the Rev Arlene Moore were interviewed as part of the evening, as were different members of the congregation. All spoke of the journey of faith they had been on, and how they were moved by the response of the community and the provision made possible by the sacrificial giving of so many people, and shared their hopes and vision for the future.

The praise and thanksgiving continued on Sunday when 300 people and invited guests gathered for the official

service. The Archdeacon of Belfast, the Ven Barry Dodds, led the act of dedication and the NE District Superintendent, the Rev Bryan Fletcher preached on one of the congregation's foundational texts, Jn 17:21 'I pray that they may be one.....so that the world might believe.'

Local politicians, the contractor and architect and representatives and friends from other parishes and churches attended the service and lunch afterwards.

During the week other events furthered the atmosphere of thanksgiving and celebration and the sense of community spirit. A team of 28 young people from YWAM Boston, USA, performed their acclaimed drama 'The Encounter,' which parishioner Paula Lough had been involved in last summer in the USA as part of the Joshua Generation Outreach programme.

celebrates

On St Patrick's Day the clergy of the Rural Deanery gathered to hear a short presentation on the history and vision of the Church of the Good Shepherd following the usual Holy Communion service. Although entitled 'The Magic of Monkstown' and accompanied by the entertaining skills of the Rev Bryan Kerr (Clogher Diocese) who is also a performing magician, they were reminded that the unity which the Church of the Good Shepherd enjoys and embodies does not happen by magic: rather it represents a journey of faith that has taken years and difficult times as well as good.

The week of celebrations concluded that evening with a Ready Steady Cook event and Irish dancing with Lois Edwards and Olivia Donaldson.

The new extension is not the only evidence of growth at the Church of the Good Shepherd. The congregation have committed themselves to growing in discipleship and gifting as part of their vision statement. A new Scout pack began earlier in the year, and the Church of the Good Shepherd Kidz Club currently attracts 150 children weekly, with 290 in total on the books!

Before Easter work with older children was expanded and a new Youth Club began. Some of the leaders are also currently developing parallel outreach to unchurched youth on a Sunday evening.

There have been other fresh initiatives as well: some members of the congregation are forming themselves into 'Threes' for intentional accountable discipleship.

And in June the Church of the Good Shepherd will hold a Church Weekend at Glenada Christian Conference Centre.



Archdeacon Barry Dodds leads the act of re-hallowing.



The congregation at the Dedication service at the Church of the Good Shepherd.



Canon John Budd (a previous curate) with Mrs Denise Anderson at the Dedication Service.



Large numbers from the community came into the buildings to visit the various rooms, organisation stands and activities at the Open Day.

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Congratulations to DJ Macken, Amy Rolston and Niamh Williams who received their awards at the RIAM annual ceremony 2011.

The Royal Irish Academy of Music established their Higher Achiever Awards in 2000 to recognise outstanding talent, and this year 300 students received these awards out

of 40,000 students examined countrywide. Top quality music and drama facilities and tuition at KH are an integral part of life at the school and part of the wide academic and extra curricular opportunities available to all pupils.

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Trinity College

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Eamonn Fahey
Melanie Lang-Osini
Rachel Potterton

NUI, Maynooth

Laurence Kelly



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