

Bangor churches aim to feed the hungry

Two dozen Bangor churches have teamed up to launch a new initiative with the aim of making sure that no-one in the area ever goes hungry again.

Helen Sloan, General Manager of Storehouse North Down, said: "Having plenty of food in the cupboards is something we take for granted. But what



would happen if your salary stopped? You might last a few weeks or even a few months, but then where would you turn?"

"Hundreds of families in North Down live close to or at the edge of their finances. For many, simply getting by is a struggle, so when personal crisis hits – like redundancy, illness, homelessness or separation – finding the next meal can be almost impossible.

Now, Storehouse North Down, based in Bangor is somewhere where people in need can turn for help.



Set up in Summer 2012, Storehouse North Down is a new charity set up to be a real answer for those families and individuals throughout North Down who have no safety net.

North Down Green MLA, Steven Agnew, said: "I commend this new initiative for helping to put food on the table of families struggling with their finances.

"North Down is often perceived as a very affluent area but there are many people living in this Borough, as with all other areas in Northern Ireland, finding it difficult to cover the costs of even their basic needs. This can be linked to the rising costs of food and fuel, the systematic undermining of welfare and support, redundancy and pay freezes. Storehouse is providing a safety net for families at a very difficult time and I would urge anyone who needs help, and just as importantly anyone who can offer help, to get in touch with them so that we can make sure that no one in this Borough goes hungry."

Storehouse was formed when over 25 churches from the Bangor area came together to fight poverty in Jesus' name. Based in a large warehouse in Bangor, Storehouse in North Down is managed and staffed by volunteers. Food is supplied on an on-going basis by churches, schools and other bodies is sorted and packaged ready for distribution to individuals and families who need it.



How it works

In the first four weeks, Storehouse has already distributed almost 50 food packages to people in the North Down area.

Storehouse North

Down brings together charities, statutory and voluntary agencies, churches, community groups, businesses and individuals to fight food poverty throughout the North Down area.

Storehouse partners with established and skilled agencies, charities and churches, who are working on a daily basis with families and individuals in the area in difficult situations. Through these partnerships Storehouse operates on a referral basis and connects with those most genuinely in need. The charity aims to break the cycle of poverty that many, through no fault of their own, find themselves in by providing emergency food packages.

Each package provides everything that the family or individual will need for 3 days including food and essential toiletries, and Storehouse can provide one off requests to continued support over a longer period.

Helen added: "By partnering with established and skilled charities and bodies Storehouse North Down is able to provide opportunities to see lives changed by long term solutions and not just short term aid. We work closely with our partners to help people move away from the need for support and to prevent dependency. With help from people in the local community, together we can ensure that no one in North Down has to go hungry and we would appeal for people to donate food, give financially or volunteer with our packing teams."

Storehouse North Down is open to receive donations on Monday and Thursday afternoons from 2-4pm and the first

Tuesday of every month from 7.30pm to 9pm.

Further information on how you can help or be helped is available on

www.facebook.com/storehousenorthdown

and Storehouse North Down can be contacted on 07526 541168

or by email on

info@storehousenorthdown.com

Storehouse North Down is affiliated with Storehouse Belfast and is a registered charity – funded, staffed and run completely on a voluntary basis.

Christmas Tree Festivals

The newly restored St Colman's church in Dervock, Derrykeighan Parish, is running a Christmas Tree Festival on December 7 and 8.

The festival will give people the opportunity to come in and admire the beauty of the restored church. All the trees will link together with a theme 'The Life of Jesus.'

Come and visit our Forest of Faith

Christmas Tree Festival

**St Colman's Parish Church
Dervock**

Sat 7th December 1.00pm – 7.00pm
Sun 8th December 1.00pm – 5.00pm

Carols in the Forest
Sun 8th December at 6.00pm



Teas, refreshments, gifts & homebaking

St Colman's (Derrykeighan Parish Church)
Castlecarr Road
Dervock
BT53 8BP

*Proceeds towards our new extension
and renovation project*

Admission to the church is free and donations will be very welcome. The ladies of the parish are serving tea and coffee in the Allen & Adair hall for any visitors who come on Saturday and Sunday afternoon. The opening hours are 1–7pm on the Saturday and 1–5pm on Sunday with 'Carols in the Forest' concluding the weekend celebrations in the church at 6pm.

Lisburn Cathedral is also hosting a Christmas Tree Festival with the theme 'Journey to Bethlehem' from December 5–10, with the aspiration of opening up the Cathedral to people from near and far.

You will be warmly welcomed to **St John's Parish Church, Rathfriland** from Thursday 5 December to Sunday 8 December 2013 for their Christmas Tree Festival.

There will be a magical atmosphere



courtesy of the small forest of trees (approximately 50), generously donated and decorated by many of the church groups, schools, organisations and

businesses from Rathfriland and surrounding areas.

The trees will emphasise the Good News of God's plan for each of us from creation to crucifixion; concentrating mainly on the Christmas story in the books of Matthew and Luke.

The Festival will open with a Christmas tree lighting service with Bishop Harold Miller on the Thursday at 7.00 pm and the church will be open until 10.00 pm that night.

On Friday and Saturday the church will open from 10.00 am to 10.00 pm and on Sunday 2.00 pm–6.00 pm, with refreshments available in the church hall.

The Festival will conclude with a service of Carols among the Trees at 7.00 pm with Rathfriland Silver Band on the Sunday evening. A real treat for everyone!

CMS work on West Nile in spotlight at Clogher

The annual CMS Ireland Clogher Diocesan evening took place earlier this month.

The team was led by Jenny Smyth, former Mission Partner, and now Partnership Co-ordinator with CMS Ireland, responsible for DR Congo, Egypt, South Sudan and Zambia. Her role is also to facilitate and develop links between Church of Ireland parishes and Global Partners.

The Revd Brian Harper, Chairperson of RSG, welcomed all present and opened the meeting with a reading from Micah ch. 4 and a prayer.. There were 24 persons present representing 7 parishes.

Jenny also mentioned 2014 as the 200th Anniversary of CMS Ireland. A programme of events was available and a special Anniversary Calendar 2014. She then

introduced the special guests for the evening, Ann and Pearl. These ladies were part of a MU Team from the Derry & Raphoe Diocese who went on a META trip to Madi West Nile, Uganda.

They told of their experiences visiting schools, Sunday Schools, the Hospital and industrial workshop.

They were impressed with the commitment and devotion of the leaders despite so many difficulties, and those people were so full of happiness and joy as they praised the Lord. Both ladies felt it was a wonderful experience and often found their faith tested being out of their 'comfort zone'.

Supper was served by the RSG Committee and there was also a chance to browse around and purchase from the Marketplace stall.

The next event is a Prayer evening focusing on the 200th anniversary taking place on 11th December 2013 in St Macartin's Cathedral Hall, Enniskillen at 4.00pm.

Going Green Christmas Fair

The Going Green Christmas Fair will take place at the East Belfast Mission, Skainos Square, Belfast on Sat 30th November from 10am.

Admission is free and table rental is £10 for those wanting to sell or exhibit. The theme for the Fair is Reduce, reuse, recycle and there will be a variety of stands selling homemade crafts. If anyone



Skainos Square, Belfast

would like to donate any unwanted bric a brac, old Christmas decorations or Jams and chutneys please label for the Fair and leave at Hosford for Going Green. All proceeds from the table rentals and Going Green Tables will go to Going Green to maintain the Green Spaces at Skainos.

Venue: East Belfast Mission, Skainos Square, Belfast Email: info@ebm.org.uk

Carol concerts in St Patrick's Dublin

The Peter McVerry Trust Christmas Carol Concert, will be on 7th December, 19.30

Featuring; Mary Black, Gardiner Street Gospel Choir and Ossia Youth Choir
Hosted by Mr. Pat Kenny with guest Speaker: Fr. Peter McVerry SJ
Concert 19:30pm, Doors open 19.00

Tickets 30euro and 25euro (concession)
Unreserved seating – some restricted views. For tickets please contact Peter McVerry Trust on 01 823 0776 or

fundraising@pmvtrust.ie

Gloria Concert, 13th December, 20.00

You are invited to join Dublin's Lesbian and Gay Choir on December 13th for their enormously popular annual concert.

A spokesperson for Gloria said, "Christmas is a stressful time, so why not relax and unwind by listening to our dulcet tones in



the suitably hallowed surroundings of St. Patrick's Cathedral. We love singing in St Patrick's Cathedral and we hope you will come and join us there on **Friday 13th December at 8pm**. We will have all your traditional *yuletide* favourites, as well as other songs from our eclectic repertoire, which encompasses everything from the classical to the camp. This is a true winter warmer. Get your Christmas season off to a *Glórious* start!

"This year we are taking the hassle out of getting tickets for our Christmas concert by selling our tickets online. This will allow us cover our costs for putting on a concert like this in such a wonderful venue . *Friends of Glória* will receive tickets according to their membership scheme entitlement."

Churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Tickets through -

<http://www.gloria.ie/event/christmas>

Revamp of Ulsterville Presbyterian church site nearing completion

A revamp of a piece of Belfast's Christian heritage is now nearing completion.

News Letter - It is approaching 90 years since Ulsterville Presbyterian Church first opened, and ahead of this landmark date a project to turn the whole site into a home for luxury food and furnishings is almost finished.

The church building itself has been running as a kind of high-end furniture showroom for about a year, displaying decor which sometimes runs into five figures.

Now a restaurant and boutique are being built at the back where the hall had previously been, marking the end of the redevelopment of the site.

It is suggested that such restorations could become more common as churches change the way they worship and older buildings fall out of use.

The [business](#) venture is the brainchild of Kris Turnbull.

The 33-year-old, originally from Moira, said when he approached it in about 2010/11, it had been unused for about two years.

"It was in OK condition – until you stripped it back and realised how much love it needed," he said.

He bought it off the Presbyterian church, but only after consulting with their elders over how to bring it back to life.

The old organ at the Lisburn Road church has been given back, but other key elements of its past remain.

For example, stained-glass figures still stare down from the windows, and at its entrance is a plaque commemorating those killed in World War One.

Directly beneath the memorial plaque were two black decorative orbs called Armadillo Spheres. They were retailing at more than £1,000, each, while inside everything from chandeliers to translucent curtains are on display.

The home furnishing and design side of the [business](#) is simply called Kris Turnbull Studios.

And now the second and final phase of the redevelopment is about to take place.

The main building is Grade B listed, but a hall was added at the back in the 1960s.

"It was one of those Sixties disasters that didn't work and wouldn't work," he said, so they demolished and rebuilt it.

And on November 28, Saphyre restaurant will open with an invitation-only party, alongside the new boutique.

Mr Turnbull, who had formerly been part of the youth council of the Church of Ireland, said: "We had elders of the church in for coffee, and they were delighted, because it's been restored as opposed to being wrecked..."

Churchnewsireland@gmail.com



"What's happening in Belfast is a lot of beautiful old buildings are being knocked down, because people don't really know what to do with them."

Stephen Lynas, spokesman for the Presbyterian Church, said the building had been in use since 1924.

Mr Turnbull, who had formerly been a member of the youth council of the Church of Ireland, said: "We had elders of the church in for coffee, and they were delighted, because it's been restored as opposed to being wrecked..."

As demographic change takes place many old churches may find themselves less needed, he said, and

churches built in the 1800s or 1900s do not always serve the needs of modern worship anymore.

He said it was not a good idea for any church to neglect what he called "the architectural heritage they are part of", but added the main point of any church is ultimately to "serve the community and promote the Gospel".

The old congregation at Ulsterville later merged with the one at Windsor.

Mr Turnbull said in cities like Manchester and Liverpool, "they've restored many of the old buildings – churches and different

places – and have made them into retail spaces, made them into office spaces.

“The biggest thing is churches recognising that it needs to be more community-orientated.

“So they’re actually building new churches which are much more community-orientated, rather than these big, scary, formal places that they used to be”.

He added the question is then “what do they do with these big old buildings that are 100 years old?”

Asked if he sees any conflict between the building’s old use (when it was a spiritual haven) and its current use (selling expensive decor), he said that “the first line in the Bible is ‘In the beginning God created’. The concept of being a creative [industry](#) and creating things is an awesome parallel to have with an old church.

“And that’s what we’re doing. I’m very, very comfortable and really pleased with that parallel.”