

## Interfaith Memorial Service for Sierra Leone flood victims in Christ Church Cathedral



### Revd Sahr Yambasu leading prayer and reflection

Three tragic events in succession have befallen the people of Sierra Leone: civil war, ebola and flooding, the last accompanied by landslides of

mud sweeping all before them. Many people have not been found since the landslide and there is great sadness and trauma among the Sierra Leone community in Ireland. They have themselves lost loved ones at home who are among those never to be found.

In Sierra Leone it is customary to meet to mourn the dead forty days after their death. September 23rd 2017 was 39 days after The Flood. People from Sierra Leone together with members of the Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership met in Christ Church Cathedral on Saturday morning last (September 23) for an Inter Faith Memorial for Freetown Flood Victims to worship, to seek comfort and blessing and to comfort one another. They were joined by a wide range of members of the public including members of Irish Missionary Orders who had worked in Sierra Leone and wished to pay their respects in this tragedy.

The Mistress of Ceremonies for the Memorial was Ms Amy Bangura. The Archbishop of Dublin presided saying prayers at the beginning and at the end of the service and concluding with a blessing. Other participants included musicians and singers from Sierra Leone, Ms Elizabeth Smith, chairperson of The Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership ([you can read her contribution here](#)) and Alan Logan, Head of Chancery, representing

the Sierra Leone High Commissioner,  
Ambassador Edward Mohammed Turay.

The Revd Dr Sahr Yambasu, St Patrick's United Church, Waterford spoke on what brought the congregation together, memorably referring to the place of imagination in the face of tragedy. Fr Augustine Bangalie, chaplain of Rockwell College prayed and led the singing of psalm 129 responsorially. Sister Mary Coleman also led prayers. Imam Sheik Arsalan led prayers in the Islamic tradition. Among the guests was Bishop Robert Ellison of the Diocese of Banjul, The Gambia.

Towards the end of the Memorial, members of the Sierra Leonean community distributed pieces of commemorative Gara cloth to all participants in the Service. The Archbishop drew the attention of participants to the [icon for The World Meeting of Families 2018](#) which is in Christ Church Cathedral at this time and linked it to Genesis 28 where the Lord God says to Abraham: 'All the families of the earth will wish to be blessed as you and your descendants are blessed.' (Genesis 28.14). He concluded by using A Prayer of The Eastern Church from the Book of Common Prayer which contains the timeless lines: 'Succour all who are in tribulation, necessity, or distress ... For thou art the helper

of the helpless, the saviour of the lost, the refuge of the wanderer, the healer of the sick.'

## **Making Everyday Disciples highlighted in October's Presbyterian Herald**

The cover story in the October issue reflects the Church's theme for this year: Making Everyday Disciples. At the end of August, the fifth Special Assembly took place at Ulster University Coleraine with this same theme of discipleship and in his article, Alan Meban chatted to delegates who attended the Assembly.

In 'My story...Wings with God', Carolyn Armstrong, who is a member of Granshaw Presbyterian Church, reveals how her experience of having MS led her to write a book about suffering.

'Scrambled Eg' is this month's congregational story. Sam Scott, the men's and community worker at Eglinton Presbyterian Church, describes the congregation's efforts with outreach and engagement through its Messy Church programme.

"We have found Messy Church rewarding... especially when people we don't recognise

come to our church. But even amongst ourselves and our 'regulars', people have been really enjoying our Scrambled Eg Messy Church nights", said Sam.

The need for foodbanks in many of our towns and cities is very much a reality in society today. And while October can be the month for celebrating harvest in many of our congregations, in 'A future with foodbanks?' Ruth Sanderson travels to Downpatrick to visit a foodbank there and to discover the truth about food poverty.

The foodbank is found in the old choir room of Downpatrick Presbyterian Church, and was the idea of the local Methodist Church. The two churches work together with the Roman Catholic church and St. Vincent de Paul, responding to the Bible's call to feed the hungry. And in the past year they have done exactly that, with almost 5,000 people in the area coming to them due to food poverty.

Rev. Owen Patterson, minister of Downpatrick Presbyterian highlights the need. "Food poverty is just below the surface. It's invisible if you don't want to see it, but it's everywhere... Even I was surprised at how many accessed the foodbank

here. It's a part of life that many of us don't want to engage with – it's uncomfortable."

It is estimated that around the world millions of Christians are being persecuted, simply because of their faith. As part of Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention, Suzanne Hamilton had the opportunity to come to a greater understanding and gain a fresh perspective on this tragic situation. In 'Church on the move', she describes the experience of getting on a bus, along with fellow travellers, to gain insight into the life of a 'secret believer'.

Do you feel capable of discussing your faith with the well-prepared missionaries of other faiths? Would you even go so far as to avoid this opportunity? In 'When a Muslim calls', Stephen Graham considers the challenge of knowing the basics of our faith, so that we can practice effective evangelism with others of all faiths and none.

He reminds us, "When we refuse to engage those of other faiths, we simply reinforce their stereotyped image that Christians don't really grasp what they believe and why."

Mission Connect for October offers mission news from Graeme Orr, chaplain at Ulster University Magee campus; Steve Anderson,

global mission worker in Spain; and Stephen and Angelina Cowan serving in Kenya. We also hear from Sandra Nixon, care assistant at Lawnfield House in Newcastle; Rev. David Conkey, minister in Enniscorthy and Wexford; and Rev. Danny Rankin, minister of Strand Presbyterian. A daily prayer diary, covering various aspects of the work of the Church, is also provided as a prayer guide for the month.

In this month's Talking Point entitled 'Floods', Norman Hamilton challenges our commitment to generous hospitality. He reminds us of the clear guidance in the Scriptures, that hospitality in our homes is to be regarded as absolutely normal.

'The same difference' is the title of Peter McDowell's article, in which he reflects on a recent trip to Myanmar to visit one of PCI's partner churches – the Presbyterian Church in Myanmar (PCM). While there he discovered that PCI and PCM are facing many similar issues, so sharing experiences and perspectives that are alike.

"Being with the Church in Myanmar... made me more appreciative of the importance of partnership in mission... Sharing in partnership brings encouragement and provides support", said Peter.

The *Herald* also brings our regular and popular columns: 'As I see it...' with Eleanor Petrie, who is on PCI's Republic of Ireland Panel of the Council for Public Affairs, and 'Life Lessons' with Rev. Joe Mooney, retired minister and author. We also have Betsy Cameron's reflection in 'Worship' and 'Living now and then' by Arthur Clarke.

The letters, news and 'Life in PCI' pages are also there to be enjoyed, and for some reading and listening suggestions, why not turn to the reviews pages?

Don't miss out on October's *Herald*; you can [download this edition here](#) or to see how you can [subscribe](#) visit this page.

Single copies may be purchased at the reception desk in Assembly Buildings, Fisherwick Place, Belfast.

## **Autumn issue of *Search* continues reformation themes**

Reflection on the legacy of the Reformation continues in this autumn's *Search* (out October 9) with articles by Kevin Conroy and Steven Ellis respectively on the diaconate as an "inviolable" order of ministry and on how Morning Prayer





### **Revd Lesley Carroll**

came to be the favoured Sunday morning service in Church of Ireland parishes.

The way we respond to developments in the world around us is another aspect of “reformation”, and articles in this area include key contributions on the challenge of GAFCON from Philip Groves, and on communal loyalty, identity and the danger of toxicity in a wide variety of settings from Lesley Carroll.

How to manage community identity in response to historical and sociological upheavals is a theme which Prof Andrew Mayes takes back to Old Testament times, showing how Israelite self-

identity developed from tribal brotherhood, to monarchy, and finally to dispersed People of God, each being an essential shift in response to historical and sociological change.

Finally, looking once again to the future of the Church, Jacqui Wilkinson shares the fruits of her recent Cork-based research into primary school children's attitudes to Christianity, arguing that encouragement to prayer must be a prime value for teachers and Christian parents alike. The issue concludes with its customary book reviews.

For further information visit: <http://searchjournal.ireland.anglican.org/>

## **Pizza, Praise and Prayer event for commissioning of Dublin Youth Ministry coordinator**

The Dublin & Glendalough Youth Ministry Coordinator, Susie Keegan, will be commissioned on Sunday October 1 in Christ Church Cathedral. There will be a special Pizza, Praise and Prayer event in the cathedral from 5.30pm to 7pm to celebrate and all youth groups and those involved in youth ministry in the dioceses are invited.

There is some financial support available if you want to gather people to travel together on a minibus, email Susie at [dgye.office@gmail.com](mailto:dgye.office@gmail.com).

RSVP to [dgye.office@gmail.com](mailto:dgye.office@gmail.com) and let the organisers know if there are any dietary requirements that need to be noted.

## **Church Army Board visits Belfast**

Church Army Chief Executive, Mark Russell, Deputy Chief Executive, Des Scott, (who are both from Northern Ireland), Board and evangelists visited Belfast on September 22-23.

Members enjoyed a tour of Belfast Cathedral, conducted by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, a member of the Church Army Board.

After holding a meeting at Church of Ireland House, the entire group visited the North Belfast Centre of Mission's Connect Base in Shankill Road to see the work of evangelists Karen Webb and Stephen Whitten first-hand. Connect Base opened last year, in partnership with the Diocese of Connor, as a way of engaging with the local community.

The visit was followed by a dinner at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, where the Church Army



## **Bishop Alan Abernethy with Church Army Board and Evangelists at Parliament Buildings, Stormont**

team was hosted by Ulster Unionist Party politician and member of the Legislative Assembly, Robbie Butler. The dinner was attended by all Church Army evangelists based in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, as well members of the wider Church Army team.

Mark Russell said: “It was such a privilege to meet with our Board and local team in Belfast and I’m grateful for the time of fun and

fellowship we had together. A huge thank you to Robbie Butler for hosting us.”

The last two years have seen a significant growth in Church Army’s work in the Celtic regions. The North Belfast Centre of Mission was launched in September 2015, followed by the opening of the first-ever Church Army Centre of Mission in the Republic of Ireland (the Tuam Centre of Mission in Ballina, County Mayo) last year and the Drumcliffe Centre of Mission last month.

## **Sensory garden opened at PCI’s Sunnyside House, Bangor**

Sunnyside House, a purpose-built residential care home in Bangor, earlier this month opened its own sensory garden – the second for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI).

Sunnyside House, which opened in October 2004 as a joint project by Radius Housing and PCI through its Council for Social Witness, provides single rooms for 45 older people. The home caters for those who are frail or elderly, but also those who have early stage dementia.

Anna McCaffrey, Home Manager said, “Over the past number of years I have seen an increase in



the number of residents presenting with early stage dementia. So for some time we have considered the development of a sensory/ dementia garden within the home grounds, where the residents can enjoy a safe and secure area.”

Work on the development and design of the garden began back in January 2017, with all of the groundwork and planting completed in March this year. The finished garden contains a variety of features, including meandering pathways, fragrant and colourful plants that provide sensory stimulation, and raised beds which mean that the residents can get involved in the gardening too.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Noble McNeely, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, was invited to participate in the opening of the sensory garden.

Dr. McNeely said, “It is a special accolade for me to be participating in the opening of the sensory garden at Sunnyside House, which will provide a safe and pleasing facility where the residents can rest and relax.

“I can see the potential for residents to recall memories of their past and their enjoyment of gardens. It may encourage some to sow seeds and exercise their time attending to plants. Sunnyside House enjoys a Christian ethos and it is special for me to be leading worship on this significant day and to be given the privilege of cutting the ribbon to demonstrate the official opening of the sensory garden.”

Kim Smyth, Deputy Manager of the home, expressed particular thanks to all those who made the creation of the sensory garden possible.

“I would like to highlight my gratitude to Wilson Shaw and his team at Beechill Landscapes at Carryduff for their dedication and hard work in making this very special garden possible. I must also mention and give thanks to the “friends of Sunnyside” and the Local support Committee

who carried out a range of fundraising events, such as musical evenings.

“We have had so much support for our garden, with donations of money, furniture and ornamental features freely given to help make the sensory garden as beautiful as it is. The garden is such a welcoming place, and will be a blessing to our residents as it promotes well-being of mind and body.”

The opening of the sensory garden is the second significant event for Sunnyside House recently. On Tuesday (19th September), the home was runner-up in the Northern Ireland Amenity Council’s 2017 Best Kept Health and Social Care Facility Awards for the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust region.

These two special events are linked as Anna McCaffrey mentioned, “A big thanks to Margaret Liggott, Carolyn Blair, Maureen Richmond and Michael Gillespie for their green fingers and knowledge of gardening which has helped us to obtain runner-up in this year’s South Eastern area ‘Best Kept Health and Social Care Awards’.”

Like all PCI homes, Sunnyside House welcomes residents from all denominations and seeks to provide care in a specifically Christian ethos and



environment. Residents can attend regular worship services and fellowship times held within the home and a conscious effort is made to ensure residents are offered spiritual support and encouragement when requested.

## **Diocesan Reader commissioned in Clogher Diocese**

The Commissioning of Mr. Alan Hill as Diocesan Reader by the Bishop of Clogher, Right Revd John McDowell, took place at a service in St. Fin Barr's Parish Church, Carrickmacross, on Sunday, 24th September 2017. Alan has served the Group Parishes of Carrickmacross as a Parish Reader for the past five years.

He undertook the training as a Diocesan Reader under Canon David Skuce and was guided by Revd Neal Phair of Castleblayney Parish during the vacancy in Carrickmacross.

Alan is an active member of parish life in St Fin Barr's. He is a member of the Select Vestry, a Diocesan Synod member and helps with the sound system as well as being involved in many other events around the parish.



As well as his busy life as a family man and farmer, Alan is a keen runner and is preparing to take part in this year's Dublin Marathon at the end of October. Alan was joined at the service by his wife Rachel, daughters Amy, Faith and Hannah as well as family members, friends and parishioners.

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