

Dublin & Munster Presbytery

LINKUP

Winter / Geimhreadh 2009 - 2010



Busy Bees Parent & Toddler Group, Tullamore

I commend to you this wide variety of life and work in our Presbytery, particularly the reports on Abbey's sabbatical year (which is about life and rest presumably) and the introduction from Andy Carroll recently ordained for church planting work in Donabate. He is to be joined soon as a new minister in Presbytery by William Montgomery (see Fermoy and Cahir notes). We were delighted last spring when the Union Commission the body charged with setting terms for new ministries, gave leave to call for three ministries in our Presbytery. Two of these, Donabate and Fermoy with Cahir, are now filled. Let's renew prayer that Carlow and Athy may also soon receive a minister. John Faris - Editor

Abbey

Restoration project

Robert Poynton reports, in the Abbey Magazine, on the action of the church committee in conserving the fabric of the building. A survey, undertaken by Sean Harrington Architects, has looked at all of the external stonework and produced a very detailed report. In simple terms the report identified

1. Critical works - areas where immediate attention is required to prevent the collapse of key features, with consequent danger to people;
2. Important works areas where there are signs of considerable erosion which should be restored, but not currently dangerous;
3. Other works - areas where restoration would be desirable and would improve the appearance of the building - but these areas are generally not in bad condition.

The Congregational Committee reviewed the report carefully and sought Grant support from various Heritage bodies. Thankfully we obtained a total of €107,500 in grant commitments and our Trustees provided further funds well in excess of this amount to allow us to focus on the critical works without delay. We are very grateful that the Trustees had been the recipients for many years of bequests from members of Abbey. These special funds had been carefully managed and had escaped the impact of recent financial disasters! We are very thankful that so many people made personal sacrifices and commitments to protect Abbey's future.

Work on side roof pinnacles; Scaffolding was erected on North Frederick Street to provide access to the three pinnacles at roof level — these having been deemed the most dangerous items. The pinnacles had originally been constructed of Portland stone and assembled with iron dowels. Close examination showed that significant erosion had taken place, water had reached the iron dowels causing them to expand and to split the essential supporting columns.

The pinnacles were dismantled and many elements were replaced with new Portland stonework, using stainless steel dowels to prevent future expansion and cracking. This work has been completed in early December.

Work on spire stone pinnacles; The survey also identified some critical items on the Spire, especially the stonework on the pinnacle on the northwest side. Additional scaffolding has been erected at this level and work is in progress to make these items safe - again restoring stonework and replacing iron dowels with stainless steel. The urgent items have been addressed in 2009 and some additional work on these pinnacles will take place in 2010.

“The school in Lindsay Road is celebrating its Centenary this year and we are hoping to gather together memories and history of its one hundred years.”

We will apply for more Heritage funding in 2010 and we will need to engage in other fund-raising. The work will again be focussed on items which, though not dangerous now, need attention to prevent them deteriorating and becoming a danger. We would like to have a plan in place to continue the restoration work in the coming years as funds become available. It would be nice to have this work completed before we celebrate our 150 years in 2014!

Lindsay Road School 1910-2010

Yvonne Deegan and the Principal, Jennifer Fulton write- 'The school in Lindsay Road is celebrating its Centenary this year and we are hoping to gather together memories and history of its one hundred years.

Around the year 1900, four Dublin City Presbyterian churches - Abbey, Scots, Ormond Quay and Union Chapel - bought land in Glasnevin from Alexander Strain, a builder renowned for the quality of his work and with connections to Abbey. Another builder, Thomas Farquharson, won the contract to build Lindsay Road National School. Abbey Church was already running a school in Hardwicke Street and moved the school out to the new purpose-built premises- a school with electric light, heating by 'hot water apparatus' and offering classes in cookery and science. The foundation stone was laid on 25th June 1910 and the first pupils enrolled on 17th January 1911. Over the years other schools amalgamated with Lindsay Road School. The Methodist National School on Clonliffe Road joined in 1945 and brought their teacher, Miss Martha Reid.

Many Abbey families attended Lindsay Road School and we hope they may be able to find photographs and memorabilia from their time there, or that they may be able to spread the net wider and contact others who were there. Please get in contact with us but do not send us any original photographs or documents at this stage as we are anxious to take great care of anything we receive. We welcome photocopies and will be able to scan originals later. We look forward to building up a picture of one hundred years of activity in the school.'

Abbey's Sabbath Year

Sabbath is a gift from God!

Sabbath is about making space for God to move, to work, and to be in our lives.

Sabbath is about taking time to rest, to cease, to embrace, and to feast.

Sabbath is about establishing a rhythm in our life.

Sabbath is not expressed in the same way for everyone.

Sabbath is not something that you can contain or box up.

Sabbath is not something that can be deeply experienced without preparation.

Alan Boal writes in the Abbey Magazine..

'The Sabbath Year began at the Ovoca Weekend, September 2009, and

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“The focus of Worship in 2010 is Mission and Mission planning. Our elders have been charged with the task of writing a Mission Plan for the congregation covering the next five years”

it will run through until next September. To provide some framework and a little guidance, the Year has been divided into 7 by 7 week periods. Each of these begins with a Sunday morning service during which we re-dedicate ourselves to the Year and receive inspiration on the next theme for those weeks. Booklets have been prepared to help individual members to walk through the Sabbath Year together spiritually. There's a page for each day with a short Bible reading, a thought and a prayer.

Some things will keep going during the year (Nursery, Dolebusters & Job Club), whilst other things will cease to provide space and rest. Even though some of the services at Harvest, Christmas and Easter may be scaled down a little, they will still be marked as important parts of our church year.

Midway through a 7 week period, we will encourage people to set aside part or all of the appointed Wednesday for prayer and (for those who can) fasting. Our weekly Wednesday prayer gatherings will continue throughout the Year, but we will especially encourage people to participate on these special Wednesdays.

At the end of our 7 by 7 week periods, we will celebrate with some kind of Jubilee. It was appointed by God that Israel would, every 49/50 years have a whole year of Jubilee during which the people were restored to their lands, debts were cancelled and parties raged. We will not be working on quite that scale, but we do want to complete our Sabbath Year with a bang. Indeed, we're looking for ideas as to how we could do that! . The following resource may help <http://www.colornaucc.org/Sermonjilyl92009.html>

At the end of the Avoca weekend members were invited to make the following declaration;

We, the members of Abbey Presbyterian Church, solemnly commit ourselves:

- To embrace Your Sabbath gift with joy
- To dedicate this year as a Sabbath Year unto You; setting aside those things that normally preoccupy or even distract us from knowing You more intimately and serving You more effectively
- To learn what it means to be a Sabbath-people; resting in Your finished work; relying on Your adequate provision; rejoicing in Your inextinguishable glory
- To hold one another accountable; not out of selfrighteousness, judgmentalism, or deathly legalism, but in accordance with Scripture; out of genuine love for each other's welfare and the welfare of all creation; and for Your honour
- To return, God willing, to this place next year to celebrate the Jubilee and to re-enter the harvest mission as You direct; refreshed, renewed and reacquainted

So help us God. Amen. ‘

John Leeson

Adelaide Road

Sunday Worship

led by the Rev. Sam Mawhinney

The focus of Worship in 2010 is Mission and Mission planning. Our elders have been charged with the task of writing a Mission Plan for the congregation covering the next five years. We have appointed a core group to guide us through this process using a programme called Discovery which we will all hear much more of as the year progresses. The last Sunday morning of each month will be set aside for us all to participate in this Discovery of Mission. The contexts for our Mission are the south inner city of Dublin and for each of us where we live, work and socialise. The Mission is to bring the Lordship of Jesus Christ to the hearts of people. We realise the importance of starting with people where they are and intentionally moving towards a direct explanation of the gospel. Mission does include meeting the needs that people feel and it must also address the one they do not feel, their sin, and as such Mission must include declaring the Word and the name of Christ Jesus, the call to Repentance, Faith and Obedience. (John 6:68 "To whom shall we go? You have the words of Eternal life").

Dovetailing with this will be our ongoing look at the account Luke wrote in his gospel about the life and ministry of Jesus. The next section from Ch 10 deals with the last year of Jesus life and is about Discipleship and Mission. Over Lent we will give everyone a copy of Luke's Gospel for their own use and to share with others.

We are excited about this because we have a willing group of committed people who will guide us through this process, a superb building and location to use for Mission, a Welcoming and gifted people and ultimately we have the promise of God's help as we engage in Mission. (Matt Ch 28:20)

In November we had the Rev. John Dixon speak to us from Acts entitled "Spirit filled Life & Witness"

Our Advent Carol Service took place on Sunday 6th December with guest speaker Rev. Chris Kennedy of Dunlaoghaire Presbyterian Church. On the Sunday 13th December our Children's Carol Service and Play organised by the Children of Sunday Special.

Andrew Gill continues to lead our monthly Evening service and CAMEO, our Church Drama Group took part at our December service.

Please pray for Mervyn & Raing McCullagh who are home from Indonesia and considering options of further service with the Board of Mission Overseas.

Committee elections were held in November and 8 people received the requisite number of votes to serve on Committee which met for the first time on Tuesday 8th December. Thanks were expressed to the outgoing Committee for all their hard work especially in the Redevelopment of the Church.

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The Korean Church continues to meet after our morning service under the leadership of the Rev. Yong Nam Park. Some of their numbers are depleting and going back to Korean due to our economic climate.

Our Welcome committee had a Church Breakfast on Sunday 17th January before Morning Worship.

ARD Sunflower Creche, our community childcare service, in accordance with our Christian ethos, seeks to show love and compassion of Jesus to all we serve in the Community.

“Thanks to the hard work of Ken McIlreavy in particular, and a generous grant from the Board of Mission in Ireland, we are now more snug with roof insulation and a new quartz ray heating system.”

Dolebusters also continues to serve the Community. Staff training schedules are kept up and those leaving the scheme are well prepared for work. English language classes for foreigners are still in demand as are Computer classes, especially with the new equipment. In the present economic climate, there is a need for our services. We set up Dolebusters to acknowledge God’s goodness to us and to show our concern, in God’s name for the Community where we function, for its physical and spiritual needs.

CAMEO exists to encourage the development of creative talents in all aspects of congregational life at Adelaide Road. We also run a Discipleship course which is ongoing.

Baptism We look forward to the baptism of Scott Matthew Thompson son of Peter & Karen Thompson who were Missionaries in Bolivia.

Stuart Ferguson
Our Webpage: www.adelaideroadchurch.org

Aghada

Thanks to the hard work of Ken McIlreavy in particular, and a generous grant from the Board of Mission in Ireland, we are now more snug with roof insulation and a new quartz ray heating system. The extreme frost and ice at the turn of the year meant that we had to cancel the service on Sunday 3 January and we celebrated New Year Communion on 31 January.

Our prayers are with Edna Tait and her family as she has been in hospital for a long time after a fall.

John Faris

Athy

We have been delighted to welcome Honor McCulloch and Angelique Erasmus to the congregation in Athy. Honor, who has family connections in Athy, moved here last year from England and very soon began attend-

ing the church. Angelique and her son, Aidan, are from South Africa and also joined us last year. It's great to have them in our congregation.

William Workman continues to work hard to make known the gospel of Jesus Christ in Athy through his ministry to children and teenagers and also to adults. Every Tuesday he has a stall in the local market which gives him the opportunity to sell Bibles and Christian literature and to meet new people. William also organised a mission in one of Athy's hotels at the end of October with Mr David Bennett from the Faith Mission as the main speaker.

Please remember to pray for the members of Athy during the vacancy with Carlow. Pray that a new minister will be appointed very soon.

Colin Gamble

Cork, Trinity

Many readers of Linkup may have come across Billy and May Hull in different parts of the Presbytery area. Billy, evangelist and Christian gentleman, died on 19 January. Born in Tralee, Billy grew up in Lurgan and after an apprenticeship as a draper he studied at bible college in Birkenhead and started several decades of service with the Irish Mission. He endured patiently and cheerfully the difficult years of bible distribution in the 1940s and 1950s and rejoiced in the greater openness of the following decades. With his beloved wife May he combined faithful membership of Abbey, Adelaide Road, Greystones and Clontarf Churches and latterly of Trinity Church Cork, with enthusiastic support of the work of the gospel of Christ in a wide variety of churches and groupings across Ireland, most notably the Faith Mission. Illness and weakness in recent years was borne without complaint and he found great comfort in a remarkable memory for scripture and well loved hymns. Those who knew him give thanks for his sincere walk with Jesus as evidenced in his gracious humility, his gentleness and courage, and the constant twinkle in his eye. We pray for May, for continuing courage, wisdom and comfort at difficult time.

We are thankful to Chris Southgate and his team of heritage architects and consultants for getting us grant aid even in these times of cut backs. Cornerstone Construction have battled valiantly in extremes of weather to renovate the church roof. Now for the next project, very likely the renovation of the back rooms and the creation of a wheel chair entrance.

Our Tuesday home group followed through on the Tearfund course 'Just People' by delivering 130 plus Christmas gifts to the local asylum seekers' hostel.

Some dates in our calendar are getting established, with another candle lit carol service on the Sunday before Christmas and a pancake evening to mark Shrove Tuesday.

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“Please pray that God will continue to grow these relationships and give us opportunities to intentionally speak of the hope we have in Jesus. These are exciting times and I feel so privileged to have been called to Gospel ministry in North County Dublin.”

A number of Brazilian people are among those who bless us in our multinational fellowship. We now have a gathering looking at ‘Christianity Explored’ in Robson & Emma’s home, attended mainly but not exclusively by Brazilians. This is going well except that the Saturday afternoon schedule conflicts with the Six Nations campaign, but that’s just the minister’s problem, Brazilians are more interested in soccer.

It was a delight to baptise Aaron Felix Bolster-Rodriguez recently with the help of Rev Ruth Jackson of Carrigrohane Union of Parishes. I am also looking forward to travelling with the family to Brazil in April to see something of the mission project they are planning and to preach in some churches, (illustrations about rugby to be replaced by soccer references).

2011 will mark the 150th anniversary of Trinity Church building. We are seeking to plan now to observe this in some significant way that does not stretch our small resources and ‘faithful few’ over much. One approach is to distribute in December 2010 a celebratory calendar for 2011 which will contain the special events and also highlight different aspects of our life and witness.

John Faris

Donabate

I was appointed to the post of Church Planter in Donabate in November and started in late January. My wife, Victoria, and I moved to Dublin then and have settled well here. Though I was assistant in Greenisland, near Carrickfergus, for three years, Donabate is not a great cultural shock to me - I grew up and lived about ten miles away in Glasnevin before I moved to Belfast to train to be a Presbyterian minister.

In these early days in Donabate, I’m spending my time slowly and unspectacularly getting to know the people here. I’m keen that a new church community in Donabate will be relevant and have real integrity with local people. There are a group of Christians already here who attend Malahide Presbyterian Church who share this vision for Donabate. Victoria and I have been blessed with new friendships and we have found a real openness to and interest in the development of this new church. Please pray that God will continue to grow these relationships and give us opportunities to intentionally speak of the hope we have in Jesus. These are exciting times and I feel so privileged to have been called to gospel-ministry in North County Dublin.

Andy Carroll

Drogheda

By the time these notes are read, the fresh new buds of spring will be appearing and the darkness and depression of winter will be gone. 2009 was a dismal year for many of us, bringing financial loss, job loss, loss of

homes and emigration of family. However, we should remember that our troubles are only relative. Our country is not at war, our loved ones are safe and few are hungry. With God's help we can pick up the pieces and continue His work.

On Sunday evenings throughout the winter many attended a series of talks entitled "the Spreading Flame." Covering the history of the Christian Church from the birth of Christ to the present day. Expertly narrated by Rev John Woodside, it was most informative and was enjoyed by all.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Out of the usual special services which are run every year, two deserve a special mention.

On the 15th of November, the Sunday service was led by the Indian members of our Church, contributing readings and praise items. The most interesting part was a short address by Stephen Gill, Telling us about the Christian Church in India. It was astounding to hear, that out of a population of one billion, just 2.5% were Christian but this amounted to 25 million people.

The Sunday before Christmas was the Nativity Service. The increase in numbers attending the Sunday School has meant an increase in the talent available and everyone agreed it was the best ever. We must thank all involved in the preparation and especially Jennifer Elliot, who pulled it all together and appeared fearless throughout.

BAPTISM.

Sunday the 20th of September.

Amarchi Kosisochukwu Ikegbunam infant Daughter of Benjamin and Ifoma.

GOODBYES

To the Rev. James Brogan and family, who will be greatly missed. James was a great help to our Church in recent years, conducting services and filling in when required. We wish him, Olive and the boys peace and good health and hope they will come to visit often.

Robert Moffett

Fermoy with Cahir

After a two year vacancy, we are looking forward to the ordination of William Montgomery on Saturday 20 March in Cahir at 230 pm. (another Six Nations sacrifice for the minister of Cork). I pay tribute to the hard work, patience, cheerfulness and prayerfulness of those who attend Fermoy and Cahir. Please join with them in thanksgiving for those who have travelled from near and far to preach each Sunday and in prayer for William and Sharon as they begin an exciting and challenging new phase in their lives.

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Naas

Joanna and Sylvia, both from Poland but who have been attending Naas for several years, both had a child at the end of 2009. Sylvia, married to Tadius, gave birth to Michael while Joanna, married to Marek, gave birth to Philip. Warmest congratulations to both couples.

“As a church community, we felt it important to respond to the needs of the congregation at this difficult time of recession.”

We began to hold an evening service in Naas at the end of last year. So far it has been working out well and several times visitors who were passing the church have dropped in to join us. We have been studying the Apostles' Creed together and the service is held early enough in the evening for children to attend.

A while ago, Helen Freeburn, a candidate for the ministry from Lucan Church, joined us in Naas for several weeks to gain experience of congregational life. Reuben McCormick, another candidate for the ministry from Lucan Church, is due to do the same in the early part of 2010. Reuben will be attending the services for eight weeks and will help to lead the congregation in our worship. He will then be with us for one session during the week for seven weeks to see what the Kirk Session and Committee do, to find out what it's like to conduct a pastoral visit and so on.

We recently heard from former members of the congregation who have moved to Australia. It is good to keep in touch with old friends. Several new people have been attending the services in Naas recently and we pray that the Lord will continue to build his church here.

Colin Gamble

Lucan

As a church community, we felt it important to respond to the needs of the congregation at this difficult time of recession. We held a focus group last September, comprising of those who are committed to seeing our vision of 'family' realised. A number of key action points were decided upon which we hope will meet both socio-economic and emotional needs during this time of uncertainty.

A number of measures were agreed upon, including the creation of a skills database to utilise the skills and services within the church whilst providing practical help where required; the creation of a confidential 'needs' box to facilitate the communication of needs in a sensitive manner; the delivery of information workshops targeting those who have become unemployed or feel they may do so, in addition to financial information provided by a qualified financial advisor. Moreover, we intend to 'recycle' goods within our community, to meet the more practical needs where possible. We endeavour to be a radical community of faith, demonstrating our love and concern for each other as recipients of God's immeasurable love and grace.

In recent years, we have been delighted to see the rapid growth of our children's ministry with a significant increase in the number of children attending Sunday school. An event which highlighted such growth was the children's nativity play with its 65 participants! We also face challenges resulting from such demographics in relation to a shortage of space and the number of volunteers needed.

Overseas mission is underway as one of our elders Keith Talbot is currently in Uganda helping out at the Carol Adams Project to Aids Orphans. Trevor will shortly be departing for Nepal to minister to Christian leaders and facilitate a retreat of the United Mission to Nepal.

Liz Cleves

Christ Church Sandymount

HARVEST FESTIVAL WEEKEND

Harvest thanksgiving is always one of the most joyful occasions of the church calendar, and especially in a year of economic uncertainty it was good to be reminded of God's constant generosity to us all. Our harvest services took place on Sunday 27th September. Children were especially welcomed at the morning service, led by our minister Rev. Katherine Meyer. Those who attended the evening service were privileged to hear the writer and broadcaster Aidan Mathews deliver an address full of deep, poetic insight. A special choir drawn from the congregation for the occasion and directed by Alison Young sang at both services, and refreshments were served in the church hall afterwards.

The previous day, Saturday 26th September, a craft fair and car boot sale was held in the church hall and grounds. Participants were invited to spend some time in the church, which had been magnificently decorated for the harvest festivities by James Bailie and a team of helpers. Information on practical responses to climate change was available in the church porch, as well as prayer cards to guide reflection. Church proceeds from the weekend were donated to Christian Aid.

AUTUMN STUDY SERIES

On five Wednesday evenings from 21st October to 18th November a discussion group led by Rev. Katherine Meyer met in the church hall. The theme of the series was Talking ourselves into the Church: the spiritual practice of conversation. Using a number of stories from the Gospels, the sessions explored how we talk about faith, with each other and with those we meet, and how our everyday conversations can become a way of nurturing faith in ourselves and others.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Advent 2009 was a particularly busy period at Christ Church Sandymount. The season began as usual with our annual Christmas Fair and

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Coffee Morning, held in the church hall on Saturday 28th November. All the stalls reported brisk trade, with cakes, Christmas gifts and household goods selling particularly well. In spite of the economic downturn proceeds were about equal to previous years. This was only part of the story, however, as the event is above all an opportunity for members and friends of the congregation to meet and chat over a cup of coffee. Our thanks to all who worked so hard to make it a success.

On the following two Saturdays, 5th and 12th December, the church hall was again the venue for a craft fair and car boot sale, organised with great flair by James Bailie and Gay Hogan. Donations from the proceeds were made to the Iris Charles Foundation, Barnardos, and the Red Cross Flood Relief Appeal.

On Tuesday 8th December a service of ‘Advent Hope’ organised by Christian Aid was held in Christ Church. The service highlighted the work done by Christian Aid partners in HIV prevention and care.

Our Congregational Carol Service took place on Sunday 13th December. The sequence of Advent scripture readings and familiar carols was enhanced through participation by the congregation as they brought forward coloured strips of cloth to lay in a rough ‘manger’ in preparation for the birth of the Saviour at Christmas: beige, the colour of the desert through which Abraham and Sarah travelled (Genesis 12); green, the colour of new life, which Ruth and Naomi gave to each other (Ruth 1); yellow, the colour of crocuses, a sign of hope when they blossom in the desert (Isaiah 35); dark blue, the colour of the night sky, the colour of hope for what is not yet seen (Psalm 130). These strips were later sewn together by June Brookes to form a colourful quilt. Gifts left under the Christmas tree were given to Barnardos for distribution to families in need.

Immediately after this service the large congregation was invited to a Christmas buffet lunch in the church hall. This proved to be a most convivial occasion, and marked a fitting end to a year of increased congregational involvement and activity. Once again our thanks are due to the Hospitality Committee and in particular to James Bailie who organised the team of caterers.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Stella Edmondson – 3rd October, 2009

Evelyn Stella Hanstock was born in north Co. Dublin in 1918 and she married her husband Frank Edmondson in 1948. In retirement, she and Frank lived in Ailt an Oir in Glenageary, but had previously lived in Gorey, Co. Wicklow, where they were members of Gorey Methodist Church. For the last few years of her life Stella had been resident in Mount Tabor Care Home, Sandymount. We extend our sympathies to her husband Frank, her children John, Philip, Carol and Peter, and to all her relatives and friends.

Ruby Porter – 13th October 2009

Ruby Porter lived for many years in the Dublin suburb of Ranelagh before coming to live in Sandymount at Mount Tabor Care Home. During her years in Sandymount she worshipped with us on a very regular basis

until curtailed by poor health. Florence Ruby Porter was born on the south side of Dublin in 1917, eldest daughter of the late Albert Porter and Florence (nee Holden). The Porter family hailed from Co. Cavan but had moved to Dublin at the close of the nineteenth century where Albert's father became a draper. In her younger years Ruby took up office work and in the 1940s was employed by the Royal Insurance Co. In 1949 her typing skills won her the 'TORC' prize for typing with speed and accuracy.

CONGREGATIONAL MISSION PLAN

In common with all other congregations of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery, Christ Church Sandymount has begun work on formulating its Congregational Mission Plan. A working group has been established, comprising members of the Church Council and of the general congregation. Intensive work on the plan will take place in the coming months, keeping in view the deadline for submission at the end of May.

DUBLIN DISSENT

Many members of the congregation attended the launch of Dictionary of Dublin Dissent – Dublin's Protestant Dissenting Meeting Houses 1660-1920 by Steven Smyrl (an elder at Christ Church Sandymount). Steven has spent many years searching out and cataloguing the surviving records for dissent in Dublin and this book represents the fruits of that research. The author reconstructs the congregational histories of Dublin's Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Moravians, Huguenots, and others, and lists the surviving records of each congregation. The book was launched by Prof. Raymond Gillespie (NUI Maynooth) on 1st December who said "As a work of reference this book is one which readers will find themselves returning to again, and again, and again. It represents many years of painstaking enquiry and will prove invaluable to those involved in historical research. As such it joins the classic work of H.A. Wheeler and Maurice Craig, 'The Dublin city churches of the Church of Ireland' in enlarging our understanding of the geography and role of religion in the evolution of the modern city. The book is more than just a work of reference, however. It could just as easily be described as a 'Companion', and many readers will enjoy dipping into its pages to learn more about the history of Dublin's dissenting congregations and their places of worship."

The religious radicalism of the Cromwellian period encouraged numerous Protestant dissenting sects to establish themselves for the first time in Dublin. Conviction, tenacity and skill (with occasional politic conformity) enabled many of these dissenting congregations to survive and flourish through the succeeding centuries. This book, by carefully reconstructing the congregational histories of Dublin's Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Moravians, Huguenots, and others, highlights the important role (all too often under estimated) played by dissenters in the life of Ireland's capital. In addition the author lists the surviving records of each congregation, the extent of which will surprise academics and genealogists alike.

Steven Smyrl is an elder of the united Presbyterian and Methodist congregation at Sandymount in Dublin. He has worked as a professional

“Conviction, tenacity and skill (with occasional politic conformity) enabled many of these dissenting congregations to survive and flourish through the succeeding centuries.”

genealogist for twenty years. Although he specialises in providing legal genealogy services to solicitors, his academic interest is focused on the history of Dublin's Protestant dissenters and their congregations. He has spent many years searching out and cataloguing the surviving records for dissent in Dublin and this book represents the fruits of that research.

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(The book is available directly from the publisher, post free)

Roy Stanley and Steven Smyrl

“Sunday numbers remain low in both congregations but we are confident that with the number of people that we are seeing coming to faith and being disciplined in our weekly Bible studies that sooner rather than later there will be a positive impact upon the Sunday numbers.”

Tullamore & Mountmellick

This has been a busy few months for our churches. We have had the blessing of having an international team of four volunteers from OM (Operation Mobilisation) working with us and that has enabled us to get involved with a number of activities that we previously could not do due to our small numbers. Through the team Mountmellick church runs a parent and toddler group in the Montague Asylum Centre just down the road from us in Emo. This provides a little bit of normal family fun for children who are ordinarily cooped up in their small rooms day by day.

In Tullamore we have started “Bible for Beginners” a daytime Bible Study group with a crèche facility. Numbers are small but growing. Our School Alpha Course based in Tullamore College has now finished for this year and was well attended, with the young people who came really engaging with the course and asking lots of hard questions! On the final day we asked which parts of the course had affected them most and the answers from these normally very “cool” teenagers were very moving as they spoke of the effect that the various talks had on them.

Tullamore's parent and toddler group, Busy Bees, is going from strength with an average of 35-40 children every Tuesday. The group is clearly meeting a need in the town and has given us the opportunity to open our building to dozens of families who might not have known that we are here. There has been some cross-over from this to the weekday “Bible for Beginners” please pray that this will continue.

Sunday numbers remain low in both congregations but we are quietly confident that with the number of people that we are seeing coming to faith and being disciplined in our weekly Bible studies that sooner rather than later there will be a positive impact upon the Sunday numbers.

And finally...

Greetings from Rev. Robin Boyd who as director of the Irish School of Ecumenics (1980-87) was a member of the Dublin & Munster Presbytery, and Moderator towards the end of that period; he is now living in retirement in Edinburgh.

From 1954-74 he was an "IP" (Irish Presbyterian) missionary in Gujarat, India; and for the final seven years of his active ministry he was parish minister of Wesley Uniting Church in downtown Melbourne, retiring in 1995. He is still a minister of the Uniting Church in Australia, formed when the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches united in 1977. The first national president of the Uniting Church was Davis McCaughey, older brother of Terence McCaughey: a later president was James Haire, son of Prof Jimmie Haire of Belfast, well known and beloved in Irish ecumenical circles; and the current president (who holds office for three years) is Robin's son-in-law Alistair Macrae, who was a student at the Irish School of Ecumenics in the 1980s.

Robin's first wife, Frances Paton of Australia, was a cousin of Mrs Andrew Gibson, the wife of a well known minister of Trinity Church, Cork. So Robin is just one of many links in the chain which connects the Irish Presbyterian Church with the Uniting Church in Australia.

Frances died in 1998, and Robin later married Anne Booth-Clibborn of Edinburgh, widow of Stanley Booth-Clibborn, formerly Anglican bishop of Manchester. In retirement Robin wrote *The Witness of the Student Christian Movement: Church ahead of the Church* (SPCK, 2007).

In their latest e mail Robin writes that the various centenaries happening around now have meant that we have attended a plethora of lectures on Calvin, Knox, the Enlightenment, the Disruption and the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910. He has managed to examine a doctoral thesis, and write a few book reviews and articles – obviously an active retirement!