
BPC

YEAR BOOK

2015



Bloomfield
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

TO KNOW JESUS AND SHARE HIS LOVE

BPC Core Values

Bloomfield is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and a part of the universal Church. We seek to know Jesus Christ and to share his love.

We seek to know Jesus Christ by being a:

- ❖ vibrant and inclusive worshipping community
- ❖ prayerful and obedient people
- ❖ congregation who take the Bible seriously as a trustworthy guide for believing and living.

We seek to share Jesus' love by:

- ❖ building loving relationships with each other and ministering to each other
- ❖ reaching out in mission to our neighbourhood and beyond
- ❖ living as a generous, welcoming community that is easy to become.

To these ends, we want every member of our covenant family to grow as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ whose life is based on the Bible, whose ambitions are centred in Christ and whose heart is passionate about people.



ORGANISATION REPORTS

Kirk Session

On occasions, *the church*, Kirk Session, BPC members speak in generalities. We are perhaps not (usually) saying false things; maybe just not digging deep enough to see what makes true advice true. “Give it over to God” may be wise counsel, but what does that mean? “Believe in the promises of God”. Yes, that’s true, but which promises? And how do these promises help all of us in BPC do the right thing now?

It's possible to be completely biblical and still less than helpful, especially when it comes to holiness.

In his book, *The Hole In our Holiness*, Kevin Deyoung Senior Pastor at University Reformed Church in East Lansing, Michigan, USA, says that generally we don't seem to care much about holiness. Or, at the very least, we don't understand it.

In the busyness and business of our church life, maybe the pursuit of holiness seems legalistic, or one more thing to worry about in our already overwhelming lives. Maybe the emphasis on effort in our Christian lives appears unspiritual, trying really hard to be holy and it's just not working. Whatever the case, the problem is clear: too few of us who claim to serve Christ, look like Christ and too many of us don't seem all that concerned about it.

Despite our seriousness or lack of it during 2015, in our work and witness as a congregation, (on every occasion when sought after), Christ always gave us the grace that produces holiness.

Walkway Sundays: The Kirk Session enthusiastically approved the vision, plans and ideas which Mandy Lee presented to session with regard to a children's outreach activity at the Walkway Community Centre on Sunday mornings. In February “Walkway Sundays” commenced, meeting for one hour. Although numbers have been small Mandy and the team are encouraged at the attendance of some Polish and un-churched children. Please continue to pray for this vital kid's ministry in our community.

Youth worker: The appointment in September, of Reuben Johnston as our new Youth Worker has already proved to be an excellent decision. Ruben has brought with him a wealth of experience, skills and knowledge, gained in many different roles and responsibilities working with young people over many years and especially his immediate recent past service among young people in South Africa.

Student for the Ministry: A service of Licensing to preach the Gospel was conducted by a commission of East Belfast Presbytery for Alan Dickey on Sunday evening 31st May. Alan has been assigned to Knock Presbyterian as Student Assistant Minister. We wish him, his wife Ruth and their children Joel and Rebecca God's Blessings in this next sphere of service.

New elders: Four new elders (Paul Gregg, Ken Groves, Karen Jardine & Jill Simpson), were Ordained and Installed to the Eldership on Sunday evening 14th June.

Toddler group: After ten wonderful and productive years of service as the Leader-in-charge, Karen Bowers relinquished her responsibilities. We are deeply grateful for all that was achieved through her ministry

in BPC toddler group over those years. We are delighted that Honor Kernahan has accepted the Leadership role. We wish Honor and the toddler group committee every blessing.

Christians in Sport: After a time of reflection and prayer, Russell Bowers commenced a new ministry in September with Christians in Sport. Russell served with Athletes in Action UK for eleven years; with passion, he exercised an imaginative and effective ministry among men, studying the Bible on a one to one basis and with various sporting clubs and organisations.

Moldova visit: At the beginning of May, Dr. Bill Addley and John McKibbin undertook a five day pastoral visit to Moldova. The purpose of the visit was to encourage and develop stronger links with our Brothers and Sisters in Golgotha Baptist Church, Chisinau.

Holy week services: In continued partnership with St. Donard's Church of Ireland and Bloomfield Methodist the holy week services were conducted by the Reverend David Cupples from Enniskillen Presbyterian Church.

Week of prayer: During the first week of September members of the six Action Teams organised our week of prayer. Sincere thanks to all who were involved.

New parish Districts: A small working group of Elders reorganised and recommended the implementation of a thirty three district model. We trust that with smaller districts the Elders will have the opportunity to develop more meaningful pastoral care and personal relationships among our members.

The passing of our dear Brother Elders Alf Shilliday and Robin McCullough brought a deep sense of sadness. We miss these two Godly, wise and gracious

Christian gentlemen. Tributes to their lives of service have been inserted in the Kirk Session minute book. We continue to remember both family circles in our thoughts and prayers.

The helpful and informative Action Team reports which follow on from this one remind and enlighten us of the energy exerted, time and commitment given by so many people in BPC who are Based on the Bible – Passionate about People and Centred in Christ.

Holiness: How does God work in us as we work out holiness in our lives? How can we serve in God's strength and not our own? Or more to the point, what does it mean that our effort toward holiness should be "Spirit-powered, gospel-driven, and faith-fuelled?" Its one thing to suggest that holiness comes when we "let the Spirit work in us" or by "letting the gospel grip our hearts" or by "fighting to believe the good news of God's grace" or by "running to Jesus"-but how does any of this actually work? How does God use the Spirit, the gospel, and faith to make the possibility of holiness?

A reality?

R. John McKibbin, Clerk of Session

Discipleship action team

The author John Ortberg writes: "Too often people think about their "spiritual lives" as just one more aspect of their existence, alongside and largely separate from their "financial lives" or their "vocational lives"... The truth is that the term spiritual life is simply a way of referring to one's life... Another way of saying it is this: God is not interested in your 'spiritual life'. God is just interested in your life." (The Life You've Always Wanted, 2002)

With this in mind, throughout 2015, the Discipleship Action Team has sought to offer opportunities for members of Bloomfield to ensure that they are as equipped in their faith for life outside of church, as they are when they attend Sunday worship, home groups or any activities.

The main focus of this has been the Lifebuilders programme which takes place immediately following the morning service. Having considered all the feedback on Lifebuilders that we received at the end of 2014, the programme kicked off in January 2015 with BPC members sharing how they spend time with God in prayer and Bible study, both personally and within families. Adam Smyth helped us think through some of the issues and implications of the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, whilst Andrew McCracken joined us as we thought about the question The poor will always be with us... so why do we keep giving to charity?

Lifebuilders provided an opportunity for those who served at home and overseas over the summer to report back on what God had been doing through them, and it was a pleasure to have Helen Lyttle back with us to share about her work in Japan and her plans for her time back in Belfast. Sandra Martin continued to curate the church library and with her suggestions for summer holiday books, along with resources to aid us in our devotional times, encouraged us to read more!

Other highlights included Philip Orr discussing the ‘Decade of Centenaries’; hearing more about the work of No More Traffik, Innovista and the Big House; listening first-hand to the experience of Christians in Nigeria; and the focus on Ability Sunday when Karen and Hugh Hamilton encouraged us to think about who we engage and interact with people who have learning disabilities. Through Lifebuilders we were also able to

find out more about the parallel project in Rwanda. Our thanks go to all those within the congregation, and our external visitors, who contributed to the Lifebuilders programme in 2015.

In June DAT facilitated a one-day pre-marriage course delivered by Christian Guidelines, and the previous evening invited couples connected with Bloomfield due to be married for an informal dinner. Hosted by Colin and Jenefer Maguire, the couples were also joined by Peter and Christine Knox, with Drew Gibson providing some food for thought alongside the meal which had been prepared. We do continue to pray God’s blessing on those who have already embarked on their married lives, and those who are still planning their big day.

The big focus for DAT in 2015 was the ‘Big Questions’ event held on Saturday 14 November. Recognising that sometimes there just isn’t enough time on a Sunday morning to tackle some of the big issues, a Saturday morning event was organised to look at three big questions involving the Bible, suffering and sexuality. Around 80 people attended to hear from Professor Gordon Campbell, Dr Jill Harshaw and Rev Bobby Liddle with Drew Gibson providing some introductory and concluding comments. By the end of the morning I think all were agreed that there are often more questions than answers! DAT is carefully contemplating the feedback from the morning and considering how this format could be used for other topics in the future.

My thanks goes to the Discipleship Action Team (Jeff Blue, Drew Gibson, Alastair Greer, Martin Gregg, Sandra Martin, Heather McKibbin and Kirk Shilliday) for all their hard work, support and encouragement for 2015. For 2016 DAT is looking forward to the next Lifebuilders term and hopes to facilitate a Network

Course in the spring. For more information on this, or to pass on any ideas for the Lifebuilders programme please speak to Karen Jardine or email bpcdiscipleship@gmail.com.

Karen Jardine, Convenor

Evangelism action team

In 2015, after prayer and a sense of God's prompting, the church was excited to join with Mandy Lee and the vision for a new evangelistic outreach - 'Sundays at Walkway' at our local community centre. This is an outreach to primary school children, building upon the work done at the homework clubs over the last number of years. Mandy and her team have made a good start to the work and there is much to be encouraged about, although learning some Polish and Russian wasn't what they had anticipated! The folks at the community centre have been most welcoming and helpful to the team, and it was great to finish the year with a carol service at the centre.

The youth organisations continue to be at the front line of evangelism to our community and some good work is being done to welcome and draw parents into church on top of the work with the young people. It has also been good to see some new people in our congregation and many of these have come through personal invitations to events designed to be easy to invite folks too.

On the evening of 8th November, Remembrance Sunday, it was a great opportunity as the church hosted the New Irish Choir and Orchestra and their presentation of 'Greater Love' – using stories, music and images of WW1 to share the good news of the greatest love shown by the Lord Jesus and the sacrifice He gave for the world.

In Autumn the home-groups studied a series entitled 'Fruitfulness on the Frontline' and it has provided an encouragement to each of us to share the God, whom we love and serve, in our everyday situations with people we meet on our frontlines. Let us also be faithful in prayer for all the activities based at BPC, as we are partners in the gospel that is being lived out & presented faithfully in Kidzone, Crèche, Parents & Tots, Walkway, Anchor boys, BB, Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Charis, Merge, Soup Club, PW, MIB & Bowling clubs. Together we plant and water in the sure knowledge that it is God alone who gives the increase, and so we rely on Him as we seek to know Jesus and share His love.

Andrew Shott, Convenor

Fellowship action team

We are very thankful to God for His hand upon us leading and guiding in the recent decisions which have been taken and the ongoing work of the team.

A Lifebuilder event was held before the summer to welcome new members and introduce them to Bloomfield and its varied ministries.

The Seniors' outings over the summer were well attended and enjoyed by all who went along. The Walking Group, in addition to its monthly walk, had a very enjoyable weekend in Donegal in October, even if the main walk turned out to be more adventurous than planned. Thankfully all were kept safe and the sun shone on the beach at Carrickfinn on the Sunday before they joined with the local community for morning worship. Geoff continued to represent us on the committee organising the Christmas Fair in December and that proved, despite the weather, to be a very worthwhile community involvement. With work

mainly from the fund raising Committee a very successful Ceilidh was held on New Years' Eve. Yes, raising some funds for our building project but more importantly being an opportunity to share fellowship across all ages and stages and especially for folk who might just have been sitting at home on their own on such an evening. Plans are also in hand in preparation for a Men's and a Ladies weekend in 2016 .The Ladies' one is now arranged for the 8 - 10 April once again at Dromantine.

The main responsibility over the summer was the re-organisation of the Home Groups, which fell to us as Convenors. We are grateful for all those who serve as Home Group Co-ordinators. The reshuffle gave opportunity however for some who have served in this capacity for a while to step down. We record our indebtedness to Martin and Jacqueline Gregg, Bill and Doreen Jenkinson, Malcolm McClure and Mark Keown, Jim and Linda Reynolds and Frank and Claire Sellar for serving in this way. We have just been amazed at how God has laid it on the hearts of others to offer to lead and we welcome Rachel Craig and Heather Wilson, Peter and Ruth Huey, Brian and Jenny McNarry, Kirk and Karen Shilliday, Brian Simons and Peter Rainey and Andrew and Emma Wallace, taking on this role.

The numbers wishing to belong to a Home Group increased significantly but there is still room for more to be involved. Please speak to us if you are interested. We are thankful for God's leading that the new groups seem happy with one another and already are bonding together to be a support and encouragement.

The study material from September "Fruitfulness on the Frontline" has proved to be challenging and thought provoking as well as practical in application.

The first nine chapters in First Corinthians will be the focus of our studies in the coming months. If you hear of any material being used in other places which looks appropriate please let us know.

Pastoral needs abound and many in the congregation show compassion and care in a myriad of ways. We are also conscious that the ministry team is on the frontline in respect of pastoral care and we commend them to your prayers, support and encouragement.

Christmas is a difficult time for many but especially for those grieving the loss of a loved one. So we ran the Griefshare seminar on "Surviving the Holidays" in December. It would be hoped to run a longer course in the coming months. Please let us know if you might find this helpful.

Highlighting the work of the Fellowship Action team during the Week of Prayer and having a Lifebuilder about Prayer Ministry has encouraged our work and the prayers of God's people. We are always open to suggestions as to how we better address the needs for fellowship within a large congregation so please share your ideas.

We would in this report also like to pay tribute to the valuable work on this team given by Jill Simpson over many years. With added responsibilities she feels she needs to step down from the group but we are hoping to keep her in an advisory capacity!

The bi-monthly Action Team Convenors' breakfast we appreciate as a valuable tool to help us all feel part of the wider picture which is Bloomfield Presbyterian Church.

Geoff Gordon and Susan Giffen

Mission action team

The Mission Action continues to stimulate missionary interest within the congregation, and to support serving missionaries, promote summer teams and assist students for ministry.

Serving Missionaries' Comings and Goings

We take a special interest in members of the congregation, and others, who are serving at home and overseas. We support them financially, distributing their prayer literature, and by regular contact.

Helen Lyttle returned home in the September 2015 for a year's home assignment. Her presence has enriched our fellowship with her presentations in public worship and some of our organisations, and by personal contact with church members at Home Group and in private conversation. To mark the 150th anniversary of the formation of the China Inland Mission we had an informative and inspiring dramatic presentation of the life of Hudson Taylor at an evening service. It is most encouraging that two MAT members are involved in the youth side of OMF activites in Ireland and another sits on the Irish Committee of SIMI. We trust they are able to encourage more of our young people to be actively involved in overseas mission.

It has been a very difficult year in Nepal. The population has suffered the effects of two disasters - a devastating earthquake and India imposing a strict embargo on the export of fuel, for cooking and transport, as well as other basic necessities. Amanda Christie has suffered with the rest of the populations. She is at present at home (early 2016) for health reasons and to write up her academic dissertation – she is unable to power up her laptop in Nepal!

James and Heather Cochrane continue church planting in Porto, Portugal. It was a great

disappointment when their Australian colleagues returned home for a year. Recently, however, they have been very encouraged by two local families coming to worship regularly with them.

Russell Bowers is almost completely back to full health. He is now associated with Christians in Sport and under its auspices is seeking to develop his work.

Chris Simons continues his work among students in Universities and colleges in the 'Potteries' area of England, ably supported by Jo and baby Joshua!

Felicity Orr cannot keep away from South Africa and spent a month there late in 2015.

Brian Simons, working in the Titanic Quarter, and Eddie Spence, working in the Ballygomartin area, were both supported through our United Appeal contributions, as was Rebekah McDonald, youth worker with Fortwilliam and Macrory Presbyterian Church.

Robert Bailie very effectively continues his work as Family Worker in Dundonald Presbyterian Church.

During the year Katherine Hand finished her internship in Liverpool and returned to full time study, and Rebecca Sellar moved on to local church work in Oxfordshire.

Students for Ministry: Alan Dickey is now the licentiate assistant in Knock Presbyterian. Philip Boyd has almost completed a year assisting Rev David Campbell in his congregation in Canberra, Australia. He hopes to return home in March 2016.

Summer Outreach Teams: We encourage young people to go on summer outreach teams, and were able to give modest grants to 15 unwaged volunteers last summer.

Moldova: A small team went to Moldova in July 2015 and worked with OM in village evangelism and relief work. We hope to strengthen contacts with Golgotha Church in Chisenau when Pastor Cornel with his wife Leila visit us in April 2016. We are also seeking to develop our links with Dr Mihail Malancea and Chisenau Bible School.

Bill Addley, Convenor

Worship action team

In Romans 12 v 11 the Apostle Paul writes “Never be lacking in zeal. Be aglow with the Spirit. Serve the Lord”. Worship Action Team continues to work hard during the year seeking to provide good quality support and provision of praise, music and technical backup for sound and visuals in church.

We express our deep appreciation to Brian McNarry our musical coordinator who pours untold time and energy into this vital work and to the team of volunteers who help with such grace week by week on the recording and audio visual desk.

Appreciation also to the talented musicians and singers who lead our services and to Mark Keown, Mark Mason, Karl Malcolm, Ian Simons, Andrea Harbinson and Karen Jardine who share evening service leadership. A big ‘thank you’ to all these marvellous people!

In addition to regular services, we have hosted a number of significant events this past year notably ‘Greater Love’ on Remembrance Sunday 8th Nov pm. A full church in fellowship with our neighbouring congregations, St Donard’s and Bloomfield Methodist, were moved by the powerful presentation by New Irish Arts of the stories of Irish men and women whose lives were deeply affected by the First World War.

It was our privilege to participate in two broadcast services: a TV service from RTE during the summer, which through dvd still illicit responses from individuals who found it helpful, and a radio recording of Carols by Candlelight which went out on Premier Christian Radio on Christmas Day.

In April WAT hosted an evening of encouragement for everyone involved in greeting people at church so that BPC may be as welcoming a place for visitors as possible. We continue to upgrade equipment as necessary and encourage leaders to avail of in-service training and worship conferences as well as meeting together as regularly as possible to coordinate new songs which become part of the church’s repertoire.

In addition, the convenor of WAT meets periodically with the convenors of all the other action team leaders over breakfast for fellowship, coordination and prayer.

Please remember the work of this action team in your prayers, remembering that according to Paul the Apostle, worship is not merely singing with our lips but the offering of our whole lives as living sacrifices to him- this is our spiritual act of worship. (Romans 12 v1)

Rev Frank Sellar

Youth action team

Near the end of last year’s Youth Action Team (YAT) report, the following paragraph appeared:

Philip Boyd’s imminent departure underlines our need of a dedicated Youth Worker. Much of the Youth Action Team’s time this year has been devoted to refining the job description and personal qualities for the prospective post and we hope to advertise early in 2015.

The groundwork completed by the YAT in 2014 enabled the advertising process for a full-time youth

worker to begin as planned, early in 2015. Applications soon came into the church office. At that stage, the members of the short-listing panel considered the applications carefully, but didn't feel that God was directing us to interview any of the initial applicants. After prayerful consideration, the team felt that it was the right time to re-advertise. From the second set of applicants, four strong candidates emerged and all were interviewed for the post. Reuben Johnston was appointed in July.

Not only had the process taken much longer than expected, but it had also involved numerous meetings and a great deal of unseen work. Since the start of September, the priority for the YAT has been to support Reuben as he makes connections with the BB and Guiding leaders in their on-going engagement with our young people and extends the work of Merge, especially in appealing to boys. He has made a very effective start in both key areas of his ministry and we pray that God will continue to guide him, give him wisdom in every situation, extend his influence among our young people and draw them to Jesus.

Reuben himself has written a more detailed report on Merge. You will also be able to read, in the Yearbook, fuller reports of the very active Boys' Brigade Company and Guiding groups which play a crucial role in attracting young people from beyond the immediate church family. We appreciate greatly the dedication and energy of these leaders in reaching out to and building relationships with all those who attend regularly on Monday and Tuesday evenings.

Our Friday night youth club for children aged between 8 and 12, re-named 'Sub-Merge' to align it more closely with the teenage work, continues to bring in high numbers of children. Centre Spot, the slot for focusing on Jesus and the Good News, is central to

every meeting. Our thanks go to James Gordon and his team for their commitment and relentless enthusiasm. One great aspect of Sub-Merge is that it gives opportunities for our teenagers to join a team and develop their gifts in service.

In KidzZone this year the children have benefited from a range of innovative teaching programmes. They were Secret Agents, investigating the amazing life and impact of Jesus. In Building Blocks, Biblical lessons were connected with the church's own building project and the children learnt about God being our foundation, Jesus, the cornerstone, as well as light and power coming from the Holy Spirit. I Need a Hero focused on the great heroes of the Old and New Testaments – for example, Moses, Abraham, Deborah and Rahab, among others. Over the summer, children and leaders alike enjoyed the Torchlighters series, focusing on modern heroes of the faith such as Eric Liddell and William Booth. The special KidzZone services are greatly appreciated by the congregation because they reflect the fundamental values of James Cousley and his team of dedicated leaders: that is, the truth of the Gospel.

God has been very good to us in all aspects of our work with children and young people in 2015. We give thanks for God's faithfulness and for the privilege of sharing in his Kingdom work.

Malcolm McClure and Mark Keown

Parallel project of the building fund

In October 2015, four members of the congregation, Ken Groves, Graham Simpson, Karen Jardine and Bill Addley, visited Rwanda. With the assistance of Tear Fund they visited 3 local churches. On their return they recommended to Kirk Session that Bloomfield Church

should partner with Gilgal Evangelical Church, Kigali under Tear Fund's Connected Church scheme. This was explained to the congregation through a LifeBuilders session and an article in the church magazine. A larger committee has been set up to develop further our partnership with Gilgal Church.

Congregational committee

At the end of last year's report I stated 2014 had been a very positive year for the work of the Congregational Committee and I think that 2015 has been equally positive, with significant progress in the proposed building project which has again dominated the proceedings of the meetings.

The potential redevelopment gathered significant momentum both in terms of the fundraising and property aspects. In the early part of the year, Mr George McCambley helped us access £15,000 from the All Churches Fund whilst the details of the project were discussed at a number of meetings early in the year. In April, the architects made a further presentation, taking into account various concerns that had been raised. At the May meeting, the development group presented further updated plans and the new proposals were unanimously agreed.

During this period, significant work was undertaken by Mr. Ken Groves and I would like to thank him for his perseverance and commitment to ensuring that the final proposals were acceptable to everyone and ambitious for the future of the congregation. The fact that the proposals were unanimously agreed illustrates how willing Ken was to ensure that the views of everyone were taken on-board.

At the meeting it was further agreed that planning permission would now be sought and, following a

consultation meeting with residents in June, after which further refinements to the plans were made, the application was submitted in July. In June, a further issue was raised when the Department of the Environment gave advance notice of an intention to list the building and, after seeking advice from the architects, the Committee stated that we had no objection to this. By the end of the year, we had engaged a planning consultant to assist us and hope to receive a decision on the application in 2016. Obviously this decision will have major implications for the future of the project and the Committee would ask for your prayers that the decision will allow us to serve our local community better.

In November, Dr. Bill Addley outlined the parallel project in Rwanda, under the auspices of TEARFund, for which we would provide financial support.

On the fundraising side, there was also significant progress. At the end of November 2014 there was £525,000 in the account but by the same period in 2015 the figure had risen to over £715,000. This was raised by ongoing regular giving supplemented by fundraising events and thanks are due to the Convenor, Mr. Malcolm McClure, for all of his efforts as well as to Mr. George McCambley, who has been progressing sources of external funding.

In addition to this very positive news, there have unfortunately also been some very difficult times as two of our esteemed committee members were called home this year, Mr Robin McCullough and Mr Alf Shilliday. Robin was a diligent and thoughtful contributor to the Committee over many years as well as his leading role in the Kirk Session. Alf also made a huge contribution in the Committee, Session and in the wider Congregation. We would again extend our thoughts and prayers to Norma and the family circle, as well as the Shilliday family circle, at this time.

As has already been alluded to, 2015 has proved to be a positive year from a financial point of view with the amount donated through FWO rising to the start of November, in addition to the large increase in the value of the building fund. Many thanks are again due to the work undertaken by Mrs. Jenny McNarry, our Treasurer, and Mrs. Jill Simpson, the Gift Aid Secretary, who spend so much time ensuring that the Congregation is on a firm financial footing.

No new Property Convenor was found so Prof. Adrian Long has continued to fill-in during the increasingly long interim. During 2015, a number of projects were completed. including the provision of additional storage on the Frackleton Hall, repair of the Sanctuary smoke alarm, replacement of manhole covers, renovations to the Manse, including external tiles and repainting the outside, and repairing and repainting the Church railings. Thanks are again due to the Convenor and his team for their on-going work.

It was a busy year for the Social sub-Committee, led by Mrs. Joyce Manson, and the work of the volunteers is much appreciated by us all.

A number of other items were addressed during the year, including upgrading the PA system and reviewing the minibus service, which has resulted in the purchase of a new vehicle with improved access and the introduction of a new rota to deal with security concerns.

We also had a great opportunity to be involved in the development of our local community with the decision of Van Morrison to play two concerts outside our buildings on Cyprus Avenue to celebrate his 70th Birthday. The Congregation played a full role on the day in an event which really helped to promote the positive side of East Belfast around the world. Thanks are due to the group who were involved in helping to

coordinate our activities and who liaised with Eastside Arts, with special thanks due to Mr. Bill Manson and Mr Mark Keown.

At this point, I would like to express particular thanks for the contribution of our Chairman, Tom Reid, who has again served with great energy and enthusiasm in that role, along with the additional duties of co-ordinating issues under Administration and Accommodation, as well as Reception matters along with Jennifer Morrow. After the final meeting of the year, we were all shocked to learn that Tom required emergency heart surgery and we are delighted that, after the surgery, he is now well on the road to recovery. Over many years it has been a real privilege to work alongside him and I have been so impressed with the time and effort that he has put into this role. At this time, our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Tom, Elizabeth and the family.

During the year, we also saw the resignation of Mrs Geraldine Ruddock who had volunteered in the Church office for many years alongside Mrs. Dorothy Wright and I would like to thank them both for the way that they have quietly and diligently served our congregation and would continue to seek guidance on how we can provide assistance to Dorothy in the coming years.

As I conclude, it is interesting to read of the record of quiet, ongoing work that has been undertaken by a range of those who have served and continue to serve as we strive to live up to our motto of Sharing Jesus and his Love. We have been blessed that so many people have continued to help spread the Gospel in our community. It is therefore timely, to thank all of those who have served on the Congregational Committee over the past four years as we approach another election in 2016. I would like to thank all for

their contribution in this past term and look forward to the opportunity to work alongside those in the new Committee who will follow on in the Bloomfield tradition of service.

Michael Long, Honorary Secretary



I honestly can't remember a period in Boys Brigade work where the 'esprit de corps' has been as evident or as affirming as we conclude 2015. The spirit of oneness and of purpose, in and throughout all sections is a real joy as we meet week by week. Indeed as we shared our Christmas Hot Dogs on our last night I was compelled to share these views with the boys. We do not take this for granted and give thanks to the Lord for His continuing blessings.

The basis of a really positive culture is leadership and again I want to pay tribute to all of the leadership team for their efforts and desire to serve Him first and foremost, which translates through to all of our boys and families too. We believe in leadership at all levels and I want to congratulate the senior boys and those who work in other sections for their involvement in all of our activities. I also want to pay tribute to Jeffrey Blue for his work in the Anchor Boys and to Reuben Johnston who has recently come on board and thrown himself into company life.

We have again sought to meet together as 'One Company' throughout the year and the inspection,

youth service, family BBQ, drum head service, enrolment and carols and mince pies have helped to underpin this, both with boys and parents alike.

Perhaps one of the highlights for us was to see Ross Currie and Scott McNary achieve The Queen's Badge, the highest award in Boys' Brigade. Congratulations to both lads and let's hope their achievement will spur others on as well.

On behalf of all our boys and staff, I would particularly express our sincere thanks to the person or persons who made an anonymous donation of £1,000 to 'help the work of the 24th BB'. The donation was overwhelming, but perhaps more valuable, is the affirmation this gift provided that the work is considered to be so worthwhile. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the family of the late Nan Creighton for their donation from her estate. Again, a great supporter and prayer warrior for us.

The following reports will provide more detail of what happens in each section and as you read these I trust you like us will have a sense of continuing need of prayerful support as we seek to 'Advance Christ's Kingdom Amongst Boys'.

24 BB Anchor Boys

As I think about what has been bringing me down Cyprus Avenue every Monday night over the last 20 years or so it is simply one thing - the privilege of being given the opportunity to share in and influence the lives of the youngest members in the FAMILY of the 24th. I have often said in these reports that nothing brightens up a Monday more than seeing the smiles on the faces of the Anchor Boys and hearing the many stories they have to tell. If ever you find yourself needing cheering up on a Monday night the Megaw Hall is definitely the place to be as long as you can cope with lots of noise!

When boys join the FAMILY of the 24th they are the next generation of young men with whom we aim to advance Christ's kingdom. FAMILIES in our area entrust us with their sons each week and our desire is to see them join the FAMILY of God. As a BB staff we really appreciate those from our church FAMILY who help with Hebrews each week. Engaging with our BB FAMILIES over a simple cup of tea really plays a part in building the FAMILY relationship and is helping to others to "know Jesus as we share his love". Thank you to Stephen McDonald for organising Hebrews as well as all the encouragement he gives us.

Last year the Anchor Boy FAMILY continued to grow with around 25 boys each Monday night. Craft work, news time, games and bible stories are all fairly standard for a Monday night and as we approached the display the competition to gain squad points became all the important! The theme for the display was TV and we enlisted help from the boys as we looked for ideas - the boys certainly know their stuff but we had to settle for something we had heard of too! Clone wars and Shaun the sheep were agreed and we all had great fun putting routines together (thanks to Ross and Donovan) as well as making our own sheep masks! This year we promoted 10 boys to another part of the FAMILY and we know they are having a great time in Junior Section.

Other highlights throughout the year have included getting up close with a snake and chinchilla to name 2 of the animals who visited, Anchor Boys have got Talent, rugby coaching with former ulster player Neil McComb, a visit from the Lifeboats and of course our Christmas party. We've used technology to keep in touch with Ross in Galway and Felicity while in South Africa and we wrote letters to Philip in Australia. We've joined the rest of our BB FAMILY for events like the display, our church FAMILY for the youth service in

May, brought all our FAMILIES together for our end of session BBQ and our celebration of Christmas and we pray that God's FAMILY will grow as a result.

The officer FAMILY has changed over this year. Philip Boyd left us (temporarily!) when he went to work in Australia and Ross is now studying in Galway. David Currie is no longer able to be with us but we thank him for his time on the team. Donovan and Scott are two of the "big brothers" from company section who help us out and that is much appreciated. To the other officers - Gayle, Joanne, Felicity and Jeff - I want to say a personal thank you as it is their commitment, enthusiasm, time and effort that continues to support all that happens in the 24th.

Continue to pray for the Anchor Boy FAMILY, that we lay a solid foundation so that all boys want to remain part of our 24th FAMILY praying that every FAMILY represented may know what it means to be "sure and steadfast".

Karen Reid, OIC Anchor Boys

24 BB Junior Section

We have had another great year with a great group of boys. Of the 22 boys we have more than half of them are from families that are not connected to our church and it is encouraging that the BB continues to have this involvement with the local community. In addition to the usual programme activities which include games, sporting activities, craft, quizzes, cookery, marching/drill and our bible time we have had a really busy year with a lot of events

Our outings have included - ten-pin bowling, Company outing of about 60 boys, officers and parents to the NCAA Friendship Four hockey tournament at the SSE Arena, A trip to the premises of Lagan Search and Rescue where the boys learnt a bit about what they do

and also got to try on and try out some of their equipment.

Monday night visitors have included - four Campbell College boys who played some games with the boys, shared a bit about their summer trip to Africa and delivered a bible message to the boys, Party Animals NI (the nice and fluffy chinchilla to the not so nice a fluffy giant centipede), Bloomfield PC men's bowling (it was great to see the positive interaction between the generations) and Jordan Spence who ran an evening of team building exercises including African drums.

Involvement in East Belfast Group, Belfast Battalion & NI District Events included - Potted Sports Night at Tullycarnett, Junior Section Swimming Gala, Orienteering at Stormont. The boys also had some sporting success in a couple of sporting competitions organised by the South & East Belfast Group and the Belfast Battalion. In the indoor five aside football competition they were runners up and in the mini cross-country their joint efforts resulted in the 24th retaining the Mini-cross Group Shield for the third consecutive year

A new first for us this year was our first overnight trip away. We all enjoyed some time at Ganaway Activity Centre, Millisle where the boys were able to have go at zip lining and caving.

Instead of what has become our annual sponsored walk we decided this year to fund raise by taking a stall at the Christmas Fair. The boys spent a couple of weeks making items to sell on the stall and as a result of their efforts they were able to hand over a cheque for £200 to local charity The Children's Heartbeat Trust.

Thanks to the boys for participating so enthusiastically in all we do and to the parents who take the time to

not only bring them along every Monday evening but to also bring them to the various events. As a section we are blessed with a dedicated team of officers Gavin Dunn, Anna Simpson, Gareth McKibbin, Brian Gaffney and John Ballantine. This year we also had the welcome addition of Katie Gibson to the team.

We thank you all for your continued support and prayers as we our work with the boys endeavouring to advance Christ's Kingdom among the boys.

Nicola Elwood, OIC Junior Section

24th Company Section

The year has been peppered with a number of highlights notably the two boys Ross Currie and Scott McNarry achieving their Queens Badge. It has been quite a number of years since we have reached this level of achievement with the exception of Stephen Simpson a few years ago. Our weekend in Shepherds Lodge was again well attended and a great success and we had the pleasure of having some dads & lads participate in the Sunderland trip. It was one of the worst nights of weather in 2015 but for Liverpool supporters the trip was worth it!

Our normal badge programme goes on without too much fuss and our approach of weaving the activities in to our weekly schedule continues to pay dividends as we see boys progress. We have been able to add to our sports equipment which allows us to have a broader range of physical interests. Being able to include the Tear Fund Lunch and NI Disabled Collections helps us to appreciate what we can do for others. Nights to the cinema, the Moon Walk and to Vertigo also add to the variety in our programme. I estimate that we have now passed £100,000 raised for Tear Fund across all of the years we have been involved which started in the Tom Reid era.

It is not easy to be involved in many activities outside of a Monday night as the boys are under great pressure from school and extra-curricula activities. That said we were very pleased to have a number of boys gain representative honours playing for the Belfast Battalion Football Team (Keelan Power and Euan McKibbin seniors and Andrew Hagan and Clement Odengare in the juniors). Andrew Hagan won his section in the cross country and the Junior Team were well placed in Cross Country.

We now look forward to 2016 with confidence and excitement – always relying on the Lords provision for us as we seek to ‘advance His kingdom’.

Billy Manson, Captain

Badminton club

The club meets every Friday night in the Frackleton Hall. We have a small but enthusiastic membership, enjoying not only playing the game but also having good fun and fellowship together. We had our annual outing to Rockmount Golf Club at the end of last season which was very much enjoyed by all.

We are keen to encourage other players of all standards, so if you want some exercise or just a bit of craic, come along and join us on a Friday night at 8.00pm.

Dawn Simons, Secretary

Bloomfield mens bowling club

2015 was a very enjoyable year for the Mens Bowling Club, weekly attendance was very good with around 23 members each Thursday night.

At the AGM the following members were elected into office.

Chairman	Ken Munn
Treasurer	Stanley Cobain
Secretary	Gordon Bowers
Committee	Bert Young, George McCambley, John Corry, John Maxwell

Trophy	Winner
<i>Samuel Woods Trophy</i>	Euan McKibbin
<i>Eric Vint Memorial Trophy</i>	John Maxwell
<i>Hugh McRoberts Trophy</i>	Gordon Bowers John Maxwell

It was with deep sadness that we learned of the passing in 2015 of two of our faithful members: Robin McCullough and Jim Erwin they will be sadly missed. To Norma and Arlene we send our deepest sympathy.

Again in June 2015 we had our annual outing to Portrush it was a great day out, the weather could have been a little kinder but it didn't stop us playing bowls. Some of the men played golf and then afterwards the coach took us all to the hotel for a wonderful meal.

On behalf of all the members of the Bowling Club I wish to say a special thanks to George McCambley who procured the funds to help with the cost of the annual outing. Once again we give a very warm welcome to all men to come along on Thursday nights from 7pm – 9pm to join us for a good nights bowling and fellowship.

Gordon Bowers, Secretary

Bloomfield ladies bowling club

We are now in our sixth season, and, as our club continues to grow and enjoy success, we have much to thank God for. We enjoy great fellowship together and the ladies have greatly improved their bowling skills.

Our competitions ran as usual throughout the year. At Halloween, our Target Bowls competition was won by Etta McCoy, with runners-up Edith Pearce and Eleanor McAllister. Our second Target Bowls Competition in the spring was won again by Etta McCoy, with runners-up Roberta McCracken & Elaine Long.

The pairs competition, which runs from January to May, was won by Marie Sands and Ann Johnston. The runners-up were Belle Heaney & Winnie Stewart.

Our Rinks Shield is awarded to the member with the highest number of points at the end of the season. This year it was won by Etta McCoy and the joint runners-up were Jean Kirk and Margaret Hughes. On our last bowling day we enjoyed a buffet lunch together with our elder Elizabeth Lewis, who kindly agreed to present all the prizes to our winners.

Throughout the season we try to plan several social events. This year we benefitted from a grant from Belfast City Council. This helped to keep the costs down for our events. In November we went to the Opera House to see a performance of Oklahoma, which was excellent and enjoyed by all. At the beginning of January we held our annual Christmas dinner in the Park Avenue hotel. Our meal, as usual, was excellent and afterwards we were entertained by Richard Parkinson, a magician, and by a singing group 'Little Soul'. Both these items were really enjoyable.

In March we went on our two-day theatre trip to Dublin to see the musical 'The Jersey Boys'. Many ladies made use of the hotel swimming pool and spa. Others enjoyed a trip to the Kildare outlet, or shopped in Dublin, and some went on a bus tour of the city. Everyone agreed it was a great trip.

For our day out in July, we decided to go to Enniskillen. We visited the Linen Green in Dungannon

on the way for coffee and a little shopping. In Enniskillen, we took a boat trip to Devenish Island, which was great fun, then had an excellent meal in the Killyhevlin Hotel, before returning home.

Every week this season again, Maureen has successfully run a book stall and sales table, with all proceeds going to the church building fund, and Eleanor has continued to run the Avon agency, with all proceeds again going to the building fund. Both these ladies are to be commended for all their hard work and we give thanks for the wonderful effort they have made, supported by our very generous members, for our new halls.

Towards the end of the season one of our members, Ellie Simpson, sadly died after a short illness. Ellie was a much loved member of our club, always happy, she loved life and you always saw her with a smile on her face. She will be sadly missed by everyone in the club.

As always, we are indebted to the members of the men's bowling club who put the mats down for us each week and ensure we have everything we need.

Pat Patterson, Secretary

Charis

Think for a moment about the last time you saw someone with significant disabilities. Did it occur to you that he or she might just have a blessing for you, a blessing that God uniquely assigned to him or her just for you? That he or she might somehow want to say, "Please let me help you too."

One of our volunteers in Charis recently expressed to me how in awe she was of all the people with special needs that have touched her life. She travels a round trip of 60 miles to help out in our club and has built up

a very special relationship with a young girl with Downs' syndrome. She said recently: "I have never encountered such a strong assurance of where God wants me to place me as when I am in Charis. I feel like I'm 'coming home' every time I walk through the door. My failures and inadequacies are discarded and replaced with a clear perspective of how God wants us to love one another. It has been a very humbling experience."

Over the past eight years those involved with our Charis Special Needs Club have developed deep bonds with boys and girls, who may be unable to speak with words, but whom God has mysteriously used to show us his love and grace.

Charis starts at 1.45pm for the under 16's. In this group every child has a 1 to 1 buddy. They enjoy our soft play area, ball pool, tunnels and rockers as well as relaxing in our peaceful sensory room. Crafts, snack time and birthday cake usually finish the afternoon.

The over 16s then arrive for 3.30pm and finish at 5pm. The young folk help to prepare snacks and then we have a bit of craic as we eat and catch up round the table. Parents and helpers join in with a variety of crafts and activities. These include walks, treasure hunts, cookery, obstacle courses, parachute games, planting bulbs and musical games. Our Christmas party was a fantastic afternoon with smiles on everyone's faces as Mickey, Minnie, Buzz Lightyear, Buddy the Clown and Santa came to visit.

At Charis, we believe that everyone deserves an equal opportunity to worship, learn and serve in our church, regardless of their abilities. We regard special needs as different abilities rather than disabilities. It is our desire to welcome and integrate children and families with special needs in to the life of the church body. This ministry is everybody's ministry, and everyone, big or

small, can make a difference. Thank you for partnering with us in prayer and for gifts given. Our prayer for the future is that we may increasingly provide a welcoming and inviting space for all to experience the love of God and fellowship with others in Bloomfield and that those with special needs will feel cherished within our church community.

I commend this report to you with thanks to the congregation for your continued prayers.

There are many opportunities to serve within Charis! Whether you are looking for a one-time volunteer opportunity or an ongoing commitment, we could have a place for you!

Karen Hamilton, Charis Leader

On behalf of the committee: Deirdre Bowden, Geoff Gordon, Mandy Lee, Jenny McNarry, Joyce Manson

Crèche

Crèche Register: Crèche offers childcare for the babies and toddlers (under 3's) of our congregation during the Sunday church service and thereafter for Life builders. Facilities operate from 10:55am until 1pm. Crèche leaders and volunteers begin the set -up of crèche from 10:30-10:45am. There are 20 babies and toddlers who regularly attend and who are on the crèche register. Numbers vary week to week. We are also pleased to the care for the small children of visitors to the Sunday morning service.

During 2015 a number of our babies and toddlers progressed to Kidzone 'Blue Group' including Lucy, Sam, Ethan, Charlotte, Catherine, Molly, Joshua, James, Reuben, Felix, Sam, Bobby and Vincent. We wish them all God's blessings as they move onwards in our church family.

Staffing: We have a dedicated team of 8 crèche leaders who setup, organise and facilitate crèche on a weekly basis, assisted by a list of approximately 45+ volunteers. We thank them all for their dedication, enthusiasm and support. Each year we must say a sad farewell to some long serving volunteers - some moving on to pastures new and others who are diverting their attentions to serve the Lord in other ways. We have secured some replacement volunteers following a recent announcement in church and we thank you all for your help. We very much welcome their addition to the volunteer team. We are ever mindful of the child protection ratios for proper supervision of our young babies and children and are always keen to secure additional volunteers. It is a great privilege to spend time with the little children of our congregation and to afford their parents the opportunity to attend a full church service.

Going forward: Our new text reminder service for volunteers has been well received. We are distributing our rota by email. This greatly assists the administration of crèche and is better for the environment. For those who do not have or wish to use email, hard copies will continue to be distributed. If any crèche volunteer has not provided mobile or email details we would welcome these details, which please provide to any of the crèche leaders.

The Creche Leadership Team: Catherine, Rhonda, Kerry, Melanie, Alison, Ruth, Susan and Angela

Dads and toddlers group

The dads and toddlers group continues to meet between 10.00 and 11.30am on the second Saturday of each month. We have been deeply encouraged by the continued large numbers of dads who attend from outside of Bloomfield Presbyterian Church.

With the kids having fun in the main hall with the dressing up, slides, sand pit, scooters and bikes, the dads have an opportunity to retire to the lounge area and sample the culinary delights of a hot breakfast, washed down with tea or coffee. The kids are not forgotten and are also treated to toast, sausages, fruit and juice.

Once again a big thank you this year to Billy Manson, Stephen MacDonald, John Elwood, Richard Irons and Drew Gibson for their unfailing, regular support and help each month. Most importantly, a big thank-you to all the dads, who support us regularly on these Saturday mornings.

The December meeting was especially memorable for the kids as once again a passing visit was made by Santa Claus distributing gifts and obtaining final updates on Christmas 'wish' lists. The dads also enjoyed a special sit down Christmas Ulster fry courtesy of our in-house executive chef.

We look forward to 2016 with optimism and we continue to encourage and welcome any new dads with children from new born to P1 age to join us on our Saturday morning for some craic and good food.

Vernon Taylor, Co-ordinator

Guides in Bloomfield



Girlguiding Ulster
girls in the lead

Rainbow Guides

2015 has been a great year for the Rainbows, with 13 girls moving up to Brownies in September and with a few new girls joining us we now have 25 coming along every Tuesday evening. Following the four sections of our Rainbow jigsaw, Look, Learn, Laugh and Love, our programme has remained varied and fun-filled. With the usual games, stories, craft, prayer time and Rainbow chat, this year our girls also completed their Roundabout Rainbow badge after preparing for and taking part in the Girl Guide open night which took place in May.

In the lead up to this the girls rehearsed a song encompassing the values Rainbows seeks to instil in them and also prepared a short acrostic poem highlighting what Rainbows means to them. They were very clear that the game duck duck goose is still a firm favourite! It has been encouraging to see the friendships formed between the girls as they come along week by week and knowing that those relationships will continue to grow in the years to come as they move up through the Girl Guides. The girls' desire to learn, have great fun and also think of others is always a great encouragement to us.

Along with our annual trip to Indianaland, the Lorne Walk and treasure hunts around the church grounds, a particular recent highlight for the girls was the 'Rainbows Movie night' where we transformed our halls into a cinema and watched the Disney Pixar film Inside Out on the big screen while kept cosy by blankets, slippers and pillows. Popcorn included.

I would like to thank the dedicated team that help with Rainbows, to Jennifer, Stephanie, Hannah, Olivia, Erin and Eve for their help and support over the last year. From everyone at Rainbows, we would like to say a big thank you to all who have helped organise some of our

activities, and those who continue to encourage and support us.

Deborah Simpson, Rainbow Guider

Brownies

2015 was another encouraging year for the Brownies – numbers had increased to 45 and that brought its own problem at the start of the year. Suzy McDougall had left to go to University (thank you to her for all her help over the years) but that left us with only 4 leaders. It is hard getting leaders who are committed to coming every week but God answered my prayers and there is now eight of us. He doubled my numbers – hallelujah!

Our Tuesday nights have been fun filled with plenty of noise added in. Girls have made new friends and memories and also heard about God's love every week. Our highlights this year have been 'Brownies have Talent' and 'The Great British Brownie Bake Off'. The girl's enthusiasm and participation in these 2 events was amazing. We also had a visit from Spud Bears. Brownies were able to donate any teddy bears they had to this worthy cause. Joyce Manson and Janet Hamilton came along in December to help the girls make Advent wreaths. The results were fabulous

Twice a year the girls have a chance to work for interest badges from entertainer to collector. We thank everyone from the congregation who came along to test on these badge nights.

In closing I would like to thank my dedicated leaders – Janessa, Kathryn, Amy, Hannah G, Eloise, Anna and Hannah C.

Please pray that we, as a team, would show God's love to all the girls and parents in a way that they will remember in years to come.

Dawn Simons, Brownie Guide

69th Belfast Guides

Where does the year go? It must be my age that makes it go quicker! Another year another report, let's make it a little different -

- B** BP Awards, the highest award a girl can get in the Guide section. Congratulations to Olivia, Anna and Abigail.
- L** Eadership, what a team, Jessica, Sarah, Grace and Emily. I thank God for these young women willing to serve in this way.
- O** Open night, our last night before Christmas when some parents and friends joined us and Jeffery shared the Christmas message of Christ's birth.
- O** Owls, a visit from World of Owls - fantastic, with snakes, cockroaches and an owl from the Harry Potter films.
- M** Modern that is what we have to be to continue to encourage girls into Guiding. I learnt about knots, sewing etc. now we need to look at IT, fashion etc.
- F** Friendship. I have friends I made in guides 40 years ago who I still see!
- I** IOM - Venture Centre, our trip in the summer for 4 days full of great activities and awful weather!
- E** Enthusiasm you just have to have it or it's not worth it!
- L** Lights, Camera, Action, one of the many Go-For-It challenges the girls completed.
- D** Devotions, please continue to pray for us every Tuesday night that we will be able to show God's love to our girls and their need of a Saviour.

G God Spot. Each week we take time out to share God's message with the guides.

U Understanding, we use various activities and games to help the girls to show what it is like to have a disability and how everyone is equal in God's eyes. We had a volunteer come in and show us how to sign the Promise.

I Indianaland, where we had a fun night and 4 girls made their Promise at the top of the Freefall!

D Division. As part of East Belfast Division we take part in events arranged. One of these was the Captain ball tournament, defeated this year at County Semi-Finals.

E Environment Go for It Green!

S Share the Fun, an activity pack which we completed with the whole Unit. Activities included Bring a Friend night, Design a poster advertising Guides (for Walkway) and making friendship bracelets.

It is great to meet with these girls every week and have fun and learn some skills for the future. Thank you again for your continued support in many ways and may 2016 be a year when we continue to give girls opportunities through Girlguiding and help them to 'know Jesus and share his love'.

Fay McMullan, Guide Leader

Kidzone

The Kidzone year kicked off with a the children donning their shades and being secret agents, along with our top spies Hugo Havalook and Lou King, as

they delved into the puzzling and intriguing lives of the disciples and their mysterious leader – Jesus.

Between Easter and July we looked at God as the master builder. Each week, with the help of Mr Pickle the teacher and his ever-studious pupils Mark and Spencer, we studied a different aspect of the building process and revealed a characteristic or truth about God. This theme enabled us to raise awareness with the children of the church building project and we encouraged the children to give a small amount weekly towards the building fund. We raised approximately £100 and the children are still continuing to bring in weekly donations.

During the summer months we explored the lives of 4 famous Christians – Eric Liddell, William Tyndale, Jim Elliot and William Booth.

In September we put on our capes, eye masks and spandex and leapt into superhero mode! The children were invaluable sidekicks to our resident heroes Captain Clumsy and Tin Foil Man as they met heroes of faith mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11. Each week they added their Bible Heroes to the Kidzone Bible Hero Hall of Fame and discovered that they can also be heroes of faith.

We continued the hero theme for our Kidzone Christmas All-Age Service, reminding us all that Jesus was born to be the ultimate hero, our hero and the hero of the whole world.

In our new theme the children will ask the question 'Who is Jesus?' with the help of an intrepid newspaper reporter, Phil Pages and his photographer, Paul O'Roid, as they search for breaking news and headlines about Jesus.

Our Kidzone Blue Group runs separate to main Kidzone and they are charged with helping our

sizeable band of 3 and 4 year olds to explore the Bible and God's love in a meaningful and engaging way. Over the year they have looked at themes including, Friends of God, the Easter Story, People who knew Jesus, All about me and Jesus loves me.

Kidzone relies on a huge amount of hard work, talent and dedication from a large group of people. It also relies on the enthusiasm, openness and energy of the children. And, most of all, it is fully dependent on God's guidance, inspiration and wisdom, helping us to give the children space to think, spiritual food to chew on and a secure knowledge that they are loved, accepted and valued by God and us. As leaders, we are constantly reminded of the need to rely on God's provision and not resting in our own strength.

We currently run four teams of leaders who lead Kidzone on a rotation system and we have four age groups ranging from 3 to 11 with nearly 100 children on our register. Alongside the innumerable blessings, there are continual challenges and changes and we thank the church congregation and Ministry team for their continued support and prayer over the past year.

James Cousley

Merge

As Merge began in 2015 we had no idea the changes; new faces and excitement that it would bring.

In January we began the new year with a theme called "Soul"; working through the gospel of Mark. We thought about what Christians believe; the bible's answers to life's big questions and explored what Christianity is really all about.

At the end of February we had to say a sad farewell to Philip Boyd as he headed off to spend a year working

in St. Andrews Presbyterian in Canberra, Australia. We were sorry to see Philip leave, he had been such an invaluable part of Merge and a friend to all of the leaders and young people but we were excited to see how God was going to use him as he headed "down under".

After Easter we spent time looking at what it means to live a distinctive life as a Christian. We considered what the bible has to say in terms of how we should live, think , act and speak in a way which shows that we are God's people. It provided a great opportunity for the young people to share about their challenges and encouragements being a Christian and as often is the case, we learnt as much from them as they do from us.

The Merge at Home Bible Study group enjoyed continuing to meet together at the home of David and Anita Conkey. With the pressures of exams and university applications it provided a much needed refuge for the young people. This was an opportunity to discuss and share and then, as we studied the bible, to be reminded of who God is; what it means to follow Him and the security and strength of knowing we are His and He has a plan and purpose for each one of us.

The term finished with our annual BBQ at Crawfordsburn and marked the end of our regular meetings for the summer. The summer provided an opportunity for many of our young people to serve and be involved in clubs, teams and outreach both at home and overseas.

As a new term of MERGE began in September we were pleased to welcome some new Year 8's and a new leader, with Katie Gibson joining the team. It was also a great joy to welcome our new youth worker, Reuben Johnston.

We started this term off with a group trip to the PCI Mad weekend in Coleraine. This was an excellent time spent listening to talks, praising God, playing games and showing off our best dance moves at the closing party!

During this term we looked closely at the characteristics of God as we continued to try and get a better grasp of who we see God to be throughout the scriptures.

Now, in the early stages of 2016, we look ahead to a very exciting year for Merge. We are excited to welcome onboard a few new leaders (with more to come), and also to see new young people arriving each week at Merge.

A decision was made over the Christmas holidays to move Merge from a Saturday night to a Friday night as a trial in an effort to allow for a wider age range of both young people and leaders being represented.

This year we plan to look at a few series such as, "Identity", "Mission" and "Gifts of God".

Merge would not run without a great team of leaders and throughout 2015 all of these people have sought to serve God and our young people; David and Anita Conkey; Gayle Logan; Katie Gibson; Malcolm McClure; Mark and Bea Keown; Peter and Ruth Huey; Philip Boyd; Reuben Johnston; Sarah McClure and Keith Hooks; Sophie Gordon and Matthew Armstrong.

2015 brought many changes for Merge; we said hello to some people and goodbye to others but through it all and as we look back it has been wonderful to see how God has been leading, guiding, shaping, directing and in the midst of it all. Please continue to pray for Merge, for the young people and the leaders and that God would continue to use Merge in a mighty way for His glory.

Presbyterian women

The ladies of PW have enjoyed another year of great fellowship. Our meetings are held on a Thursday evening in the Megaw Hall once a month. We have a varied programme centred around the PW theme for the year, which this year was 'So I am sending you'.

We enjoyed a very interesting programme with various speakers telling us news of how God is working in other parts of the world and also here in Ireland. Two of the highlights had to be The Singing Chef (Raymond Crooks) who shared his testimony in word and song as he demonstrated how to make the perfect pavlova! We also had a wonderful Teddy Bears tea party when each member brought a teddy which was then sent via Spud Bear Ministries to children in Africa and the Philippines.

The theme for PW this session has been 'Here is Love' reminding us that we love because He First Loved Us (1John 4:19).

In November we hosted a ladies breakfast with Dr Lena Morrow as our guest speaker. Lena spoke about the Great Banquet invitation from Jesus (Luke ch 14 vv 15-24) encouraging us to invite people to church, PW, home groups, etc and to spread into the country regions, if need be, in order for people to hear and accept the best invitation ever from Jesus to them.

May I take this opportunity to once again express our sincere thanks to the chefs who provided a superb breakfast for us. We have been encouraged this year with good numbers attending; perhaps a move to a bigger hall will soon be needed! It has been a joy to welcome new ladies to our group and an invitation is extended to every lady from BPC and beyond.

Come and enjoy the fellowship, fun, laughter and friendship whenever you can. A welcome awaits you

and it has been reported as being a great way to spend a Thursday evening!

In closing we would like to thank David for helping with setting up the hall for us and to the office staff for their assistance in all the administrative tasks asked of them. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Jean Brown, Secretary

The Tuesday soup club

On Tuesday the 20th of October the Tuesday Soup Club opened its doors for business. A reincarnation of the lunch club, a merry band of 8 ladies gathered to prepare two tasty home made soups and apple crumbles to serve up for lunch and to set up the Megall hall to welcome hungry folk.

We were delighted with the response and have continued to meet on the third Tuesday of each month. Those attending have enjoyed the food and some fun and fellowship, especially at the Christmas party in December. Encouraged by the blessings of a great team of ladies and the numbers attending the lunches we feel God is blessing this work and are looking forward to continuing our endeavours into 2016.

Team: Lynn Currie, Alison Bester, Karen Shilliday, Heather McKibbin, Wendy Stevenson, Jean Brown, Joan Elwood, Renee Irons, Rosemary Orr

Sub-merge (youth club)

Last year, we decided to give Youth Club a new and fresh name to replace the previous K4C Youth Club name. The new name we gave it was Sub-Merge which was given to try and create a stronger link for those children leaving Sub-Merge at the end of Year 7 to go onto Merge for Year 8.

Since then, Sub-Merge has grown from strength to strength. The number of children coming along is usually around 25-35 children each night. A lot of the children who come along to Sub-Merge do not belong to the Church which is very encouraging.

Sub-Merge meets on Friday nights from 7.15pm-8.30pm for children in P4 – P7 in the outside halls. We have three teams of dedicated leaders who help week by week and try to build stronger relationships with the children who come along. At Sub-Merge, there are various activities on offer such as football, craft, tuck, table football, air hockey and the most popular of all, the Xbox One – particularly the “Just Dance” and “Fifa” football games. Towards the end of the night, we then have our weekly “Centre Spot” which is a time when the leaders share a passage from the Bible in an interesting and interactive way with the children.

In March 2015, we took the children to watch a Belfast Giants Ice Hockey Match at the Odyssey Arena. This was a big hit with the children who thoroughly enjoyed the evening and the opportunity to be able to make lots of noise while cheering on their team!

In October, we took the children to “Clip N Climb” at Dundonald Ice Bowl. This again was a popular choice with the children as they were able to climb lots of different walls with varying ascent and difficulty. After the children had used up all of their energy, we then all went to McDonalds for some refreshments.

I would like to thank all members of the congregation for your continued support of Sub-Merge, both practically by bringing your children along and also in prayer. I would also like to thank all of the leaders who so willingly give of their time on Friday nights to engage and care for the children who come along.

May God continue to provide for both our practical and spiritual needs in the year ahead!

James Gordon, Sub-Merge Leader-in-Charge

Taking care

As the Designated Person for Child Protection in Bloomfield Presbyterian church I am encouraged and thankful for the number of people who are keen to be involved in serving God through our children and youth organisations.

We often hear “children are our leaders of tomorrow” so it is important that they are taught and mentored in the best way possible. We believe it is important, through all our organisations, to do this in a God-guided and Bible-based manner and in a safe and caring environment.

We try to achieve this by following the guidelines of Taking Care, the Child Protection facility within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, with vetting taking place of new leaders through Access NI, referencing, informal chats and training.

Last year we held our first Refresher training, which were beneficial as they were both informal and interactive which gave us an opportunity to discuss topics which were relative to us in our situation.

There are so many changes which take place and it is good to be up-dated, especially in the world of online technology as we hear about all the dreadful things which can and have taken place(unfortunately churches are not exempt from these dangers). Refresher training will be available this Spring also for those previously trained in 2011.

We continue to welcome new leaders, with some of our own children coming of age (18) and are now wishing to become leaders –this is wonderful! Let us remember all those who have become involved for the first time either as a new member to our congregation or as a ‘fledgling’. Pray that they may settle into their roles and feel very much part of the team.

Inevitably some leaders resign and our students leave to continue their studies elsewhere leaving a shortfall of leaders / helpers within the organisations. Can I encourage you to pray about how God might be directing you to become involved in Bloomfield. If you feel gifted to help out in the numerous youth activities I encourage you to speak to the leaders and myself and then proceed with the necessary Access NI check and PCI vetting procedure. The application is now completed on line with copies being shown to myself in order that I can obtain the required references and signatures from Kirk Session and /or ministerial team.

I would like to thank everyone involved in caring for our children and young people (0-18yrs). May we support our leaders and pray for their involvement in their weekly preparations and activities. Let us also remember the children who come along, many from outside our congregation or church life.

Pauline Simons, Designated Person, BPC

Toddler group

On one hand we could say that 2015 brought significant changes to Bloomfield Toddler Group and on the other we could say that nothing changed at all.

At Eastertime Karen Bowers gave notice of her intention to ‘move on’. Karen had led the Toddler group for 10 years and many thanks are due to her for her long dedicated service.

At the same time Angela Bowers and Pat Alcock , who had performed a valuable service in preparing, serving and clearing up a snack for the children and refreshments for the adults, also decided it was time to ‘hang up their aprons’ , saying their good-byes at the last meeting in June.

Over the years Angela and her team had served too many cups of juice/coffee to be counted and I just want to publically acknowledge and thank them for all they did to make the group function so smoothly.

So, appeals for new volunteers brought together a team of ladies – none wishing to come weekly but all agreeing to come monthly, on a rota basis to perform the refreshment duties. This has been a blessing – to all concerned. Edna agreed to join Heather, Elizabeth and Alfie as group helpers and I agreed to take responsibility for pulling things together. And so we continue to meet on Wednesday mornings from 10 until 11.30am with very little change at all!

The Mums (and it is mostly Mums although everyone caring for young children are welcome) who come on Wednesday morning are mostly living locally, with preschool children and simply appreciate a safe, relaxing, friendly, secure space to let the children have fun. The opportunity for them to have a sit down, a chat with other Mums, a coffee and something nice handed to them to eat is an added bonus!

More helpers to set up/clear up and to just simply ‘share time’ with the Mums will of course always be appreciated. The old saying “many hands make light work” always applies!

Please join with us in praying for good fellowship, safety, lasting friendships and opportunity “to share the love of Jesus” with those who don’t yet know Him.

Honor Kernahan, Secretary

Bloomfield walking group

The walking group is an informal gathering of people who meet on the last Saturday of each month to explore the wonderful Northern Ireland countryside. The group caters for all levels of abilities from easy flat walks to high level mountain walks with distances ranging from 4 - 10 miles. The group also enjoys the participation of people of all ages from 30 to 70 years.

Walks during 2015 included Slieve Donard, St Patrick's Trail, Banagher Glen, The Fairy Glen, Woodburn Forest, Slieve Bernagh and Mill Race. We always end with a trip to the local town or village for coffee or ice cream before returning home. The limbs may be tired but there are always smiles and lots of banter.

This year saw the first BPC walking weekend take place in October, with over thirty walkers descending upon the Gweedore Court Hotel for two nights. We enjoyed full day walks in the Poison Glen area and on Carrickfinn beach followed by a church service at St Andrews, Carrickfinn.

We look forward to 2016 which will include new walks to Leitrim Lodge, Adder's Loanen, Camlough Mountain, ending in June with a fundraiser walk for the Building Fund from Comber Town Square to BPC via the Comber Greenway.

The walking group is a great place to meet new friends, gain exercise and to enjoy the wonderful scenery and fresh air that Northern Ireland has to offer whether it be coastal or mountain based.

The group continues to meet at 9.00am on the last Saturday of each month outside Bloomfield, with the exception of July, August and December. We look forward to welcoming new walkers of any age during 2016.

Vernon Taylor, Group Co-ordinator

Wednesday club

At 2.30pm on alternate Wednesday afternoons we can be found in the Megaw Hall having tea and looking forward to hearing our speaker.

Varied programmes where an informative talk from Sean Brannigan about the Greenway. Philip Boyd visited us and told us about his forthcoming trip to Australia. Vet Simon Doherty enlightened us about the work of Send a Cow working with people in Ethiopia.

Daphne Caldwell made desserts, delicious but not good for the figure.

Brian Simons spoke of the important outreach work of Nightlight. To end our Spring programmes we had an enjoyable afternoon with Esther Drennan.

We had a grand day out in May to Tudor Cinema where we saw 'On Moonlight Bay' followed by tea at The Old Post Office.

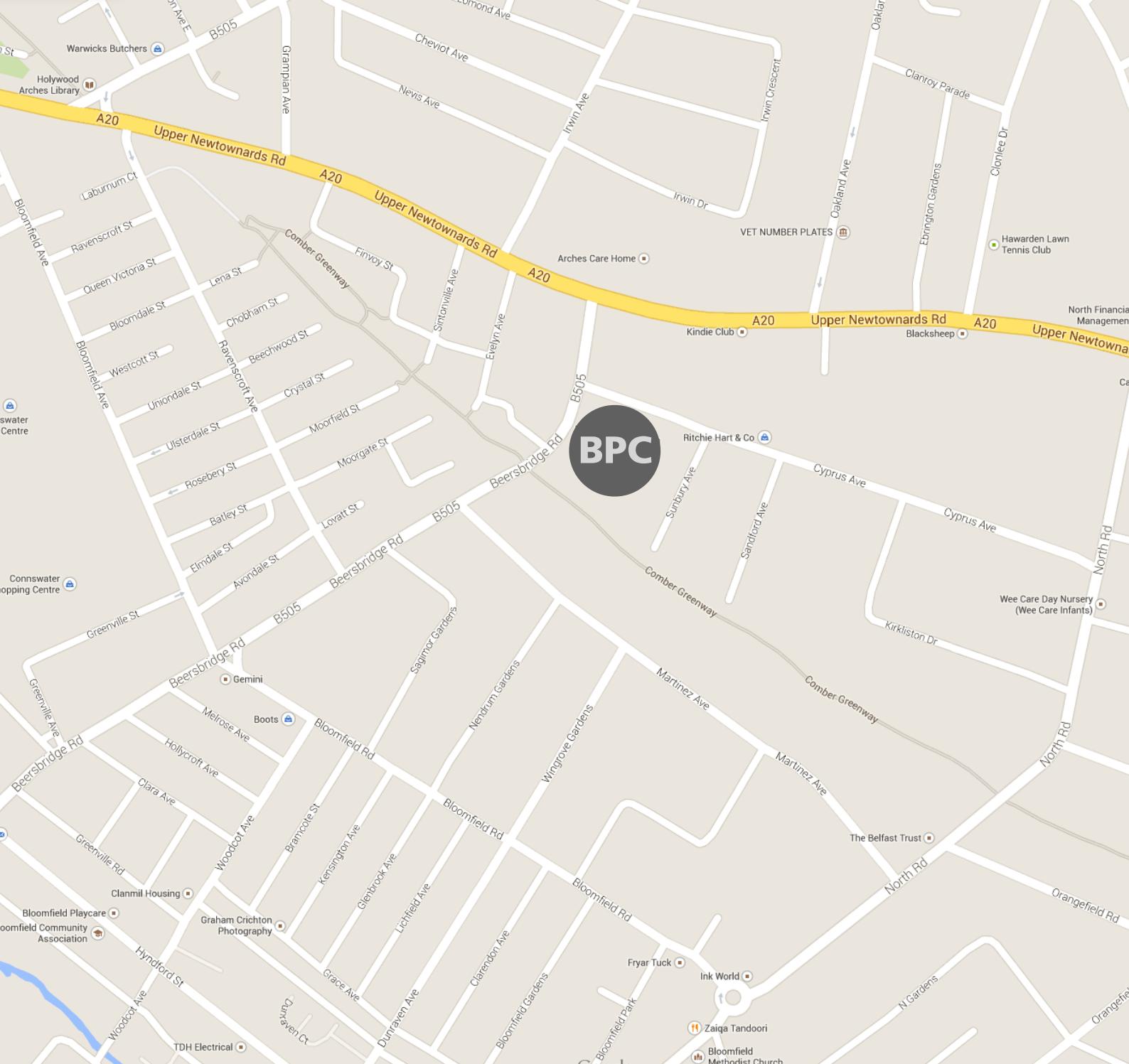
Autumn programmes again were varied Jeffrey Blue told us about his time in Moldova, A Home Safety talk, Advice about keeping food, John McCandless informed about his work as a Community Worker. Matt Heaney took us 'Down Memory Lane.'

At Knock Golf Club we had an excellent Christmas December. Thanks to Elizabeth Reid for making arrangements with the catering staff.

We give thanks to God for all His Blessings to us and seek His guidance in the year ahead.

Thanks to all who provide transport also to David for help setting up tables and chairs each meeting. If you are free on a Wednesday afternoon do come along, you will be assured of a warm welcome.

Jean Corry



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