

Talking Point Magazine - Spring 2022

COOKE CHURCH

Reaching Out | Engaging | Growing

**Rejoice always,
pray continually,
give thanks in all
circumstances; for
this is God's will for
you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5 v16-17.**

COOKE FOOD STORE

Demand for Foodstore assistance continues to rise. We are grateful for the continued generosity of our congregation and those of our partner churches Good Shepherd, St John's Newtownbreda and Ballynafeigh Methodist. Our own Little Cookes provided wonderful food baskets at Christmas to boost our stocks and we are very grateful to Ormeau Credit Union for their monetary donation, which has enabled us to continue to provide fresh food items with our food packs. Since 1st January 2022 we have distributed a further 50 hampers. Our clients include Women's Aid, International Meeting Point, Starling Collective, Belfast Community Development Association and a number of individuals from the local community.

This work represents the Ormeau church community working together for the good of others. We would like to thank everyone who has donated food or financial assistance to Foodstore and would seek your continued support in the difficult months ahead.

GREETINGS FROM IVAN

I cannot believe I have been associated with Cooke for 1 year. It has been a privilege to get to know some of the people and to work alongside the Eldership. A special thanks must go to Elaine who has been amazing and somehow managed to keep me organised - a task few others have managed. I would also like to thank Jim Campbell who continues to support our congregation and his willingness to serve has been an inspiration to me.

As the 1 year of the vacancy approaches on 1st March, we will be looking forward to welcoming Rev David Gray to preach for the vacancy. This is the congregation's opportunity to add their vote and support to this important moment. Please make every effort to engage with the service on the 13th of March. Your support and encouragement going forward will make all the difference.

MINISTERIAL VACANCY

Rev David Gray has been recommended by the Kirk Session to preach to the congregation as the sole nominee for the vacancy. He will conduct worship in Cooke on Sunday 13th March at 11.00am. All members of the congregation are encouraged to be present.

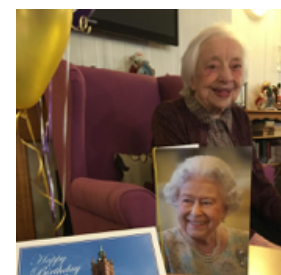
David Gray, aged 55, is one of the three fulltime Chaplains at Queen's University Belfast and lives with his family at the Presbyterian Halls on Derryvolgie Ave. He is married to Jane and has a son, Elliot, aged 16. and a daughter, Amelie, aged 13.

He was a biology teacher for 23 years before receiving a call to ministry in 2012. After completing a Master of Divinity degree and a licensed assistantship in West Church, Bangor, he was installed as a chaplain in 2017.

He was recently Convenor of the vacancy at Fisherwick Presbytery Church and relishes the possibility of ministering and serving in a parish.



100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



Congratulations to Mary Bell who celebrated her 100th birthday on 17th December 2021. The Moderator, Rev Jim Campbell and some members of Cooke joined in the celebrations.

Mary is a very faithful member of the congregation and still attends Cooke every Sunday.

THE PERIOD OF LENT

Ash Wednesday 2nd March 2022 - Easter Sunday April 17th 2022.

Many people decide to give up something that they enjoy for the 6 weeks of Lent – perhaps it is chocolate, coffee, sweets or something else that could be considered a “treat”, and yet around the world, and also closer to home, people are living without the basic necessities that they need to live, not through choice, but because of circumstances.

This Lent, could we use these 6 weeks as an opportunity to help them? Could we deprive ourselves of a luxury item for the 6 weeks, set aside the money that we would have spent, and bring it on Easter Sunday as a gift to those who are vulnerable? Many congregations use this Lenten period as an opportunity to support local or overseas missions. This year could we do that as well?

Could we financially support Cooke Food Store or PCI Missions through the United Appeal, or the work of Patton Taylor or Jim Campbell in Nigeria and Malawi, or any other agency who is working to help those most in need like Tearfund or Christian Aid?

Anything that you commit to do over these next 6 weeks, do it joyfully, pray that your gift will make a difference.

Foodstore envelopes are included with your magazine, but please feel free to support the work of any agency you prefer. Donate to them directly, or bring it to Cooke in an envelope clearly marked with the Agency you wish to support and we will ensure that it is transferred to them. If you are a UK Tax payer you may wish to donate directly to other agencies so that they benefit from any Gift Aid that can be claimed.

As we prepare ourselves for the Joy of Easter Day, let's make it a day when we share our Joy.

And if you want to take up a challenge, could we read Luke's gospel during Lent – 24 chapters in 46 days! That's do-able!

LITTLE COOKES

We love having our Little Cookes back with us during Sunday Worship. Below is our programme up to Easter. All children of Primary School age are most welcome.

- 6th March** - *“Running Away”* - The story of the lost son.
- 13th March** - *“Washed with Tears”* - A sinful woman anoints Jesus.
- 20th March** - *“The Servant King”* - The Last Supper.
- 27th March** - *“A dark night in the garden”* - The garden of Gethsemane.
- 3rd April** - *“The sun stops shining”* - The crucifixion.
- 10th April** - *“God's Wonderful Surprise”* - The resurrection.



WELCOME TEAM FOR MARCH

Reception

Lisa Gaylor // Harvey Glenn // Janice Glenn // Patricia Emerson

WELCOME TEAM FOR APRIL

Reception

Karen Curran // Ruby Rankin // Stephen Campbell // Karen Hetherington

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

A congregational meeting will be held on Monday 14th March at 7:30pm to enable Voting members of the congregation to ascertain, by a vote, whether they desire that a call be issued to Rev Gray.

EDMUND ARUOFOR



An answer to prayer.

Two days after attending Cooke on Sunday 10th October 2021 to tell us about his work in the LifeHub NI food parcel charity, Edmund was taken into hospital with Covid 19. He spent 35 days on a ventilator in an induced coma in intensive care. His health took a further turn for the worst in November and he had to be resuscitated.

In an article in the Belfast Telegraph, he says that he was scared of dying but not of death. He was more scared that he was being taken too soon before he could fulfil what God had put him on earth to do. We know that many in Cooke were praying for his recovery and we were delighted that he came back to Cooke in January to let us know that he was well on the way back to full health. We thank God for answered prayer.

THE CAMPBELL'S WORK IN MALAWI

A collection was taken at the Christmas Carol by Candlelight service to support the ongoing work of Jim & Ruth Campbell in Malawi. We were overwhelmed by your generous support and money continued to be received into the start of January 2022. The following letter, thanking you for your generosity has been received from Jim & Ruth.

“Ruth and I would like to thank you for your generous donation at Christmas to our fund for helping needy people in northern Malawi. The various groups we help are related to the work we were involved in when we went back to work in Malawi for a period after we retired from Cooke.



As you probably know Ruth worked in the hospital at Ekwendeni, mostly in the Children's Ward and with the Palliative Care in the Community programme. Sadly, there are many mothers who are HIV Positive and who sometimes die in childbirth or shortly afterwards. Their babies are then generally cared for by relatives. However, they can only survive if they receive formula milk for the first 6 months of life. Most poor rural people are unable to pay for this as it is very expensive, We try to supply this until the babies are weaned on to high protein porridge which is manufactured at Ekwendeni Hospital and is much less expensive and which we also purchase for them.

We also pay the school fees for some older orphans who are selected for secondary school – there is no free schooling for post-primary children and many just drop out of school at this stage.

Ruth has long been involved with palliate care nursing here in Ireland and when we were at Ekwendeni she would go out with local staff into the rural villages to help terminally ill patients living in very poor conditions in simple peasant homes. We continue to help fund this service.

Then most years there are usually one or two emergencies caused by extremes of weather or due to some child needing special hospital treatment and there nothing is free so try to help out in such situations.

We know and have worked with the local people with whom we cooperate in these projects and have confidence that our support reaches the people who really need it.

Thank you for your generosity that enables this work to continue.

Jim Campbell

”

PW UPDATE

The ladies of the PW (Presbyterian Women) continue to meet monthly on the 2nd Tuesday afternoon of each month in the Church Reception area. Everyone enjoyed the recent visit by Rev Marlene Taylor who showed slides of her visit to Nigeria. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 8th March 2022. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy this time of prayer and fellowship together. The final meeting of the season will be during Holy week, on Tuesday 12th April 2022. One of the joys of PW is to pray for the work of the Deaconesses and this year in particular we have prayed for Cathy Smith who has been accepted for Deaconess training. Below is an update from Cathy of the work that she has been doing in her 1st year placement in Whiteabbey Presbyterian Church.



“I can't believe this is my second semester in my first year of training. The time is going so fast, although I am still enjoying everything so much. I still feel so privileged to be called to serve God.

This semester consists of twelve weeks ending 8th April, each week I will have 2 days in Union, on Tuesday during morning worship I may be asked to read or participate with a prayer and in the afternoon we will study Christian Ethics.

On Thursday my prayer group meet together in Union. I have a few day courses to attend as well in Union.

Three days each week, or six sessions, I will be working in Whiteabbey Presbyterian Church. The deaconess Rachel Cubitt is a blessing and lovely to work with. I am very blessed Whiteabbey are safely opening various activities, I am very busy in the Church.

On Sunday, I sometimes participate with a reading, I will be encouraged to help more with Sunday morning worship in the near future. At the moment there is no evening service for me to attend.

Thank you so much for all your prayers. I do miss all my Cooke family.

God bless Cathy xx”

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COVID UPDATE

PCI have provided guidance on revised Covid mitigations and measures that may be considered by Kirk Sessions from 1st March 2022 onwards. The safety and protection of everyone who attends a worship service, or any other meeting on church property will continue to remain a priority as these measures are reviewed.

PROF PATTON TAYLOR IN NIGERIA

We were pleased to have helped the Little Cookes raise £350 to give to Patton to support families in Nigeria to pay for medical care. Tommy Heasley presented Patton with the money on Sunday 12th December prior to his trip in January.

Prayer Letter - 2200 hrs on Monday 24th January 2022

After a Covid-imposed gap of almost two and a half years, I am once again on board a BA flight waiting to take off for Abuja. After several postponements in the date, the pre-flight online Covid and immigration requirements almost defeated me again this morning - but finally I have made it! I would like to thank you very much for continuing support over these last few years which has helped to make this current trip possible. Over the two years I have been keeping closely in touch with the two Theological Colleges where I act as visiting Professor; and have developed a significant online mentoring role not only with college staff but also with students, former students, and other young people with leadership potential for the future of the Nigerian Church. Many of these young people and their families have suffered increased hardship owing to the rapid inflation and the exponential increase in prices caused by the effects of Covid on the economy – and I have greatly appreciated those who have helped me to give significant financial help to many in need (not least with basic medical costs for children).

This trip is planned to last almost seven weeks. The first week will largely be spent in the city of Jos, isolating in the home of one of the full-time missionaries until receiving the (hopefully negative) result of the compulsory post-arrival PCR test.

Then there will be two weeks of intensive teaching in each of the two United Evangelical Church (UEC) Colleges in which I have been privileged to be a regular visitor across the last seven years or so. This involves not just lectures and seminars, and participation in College community outreach activities, but also a lot of time given to mentoring individual members of staff and students.

Then, after a few days in the southern city of Uyo (where the Church HQ is based), it is back to Jos for supervision sessions with doctoral and PG students in one of the bigger Colleges there, together with visiting a number of folk who have become close friends over the years. That will bring me to the beginning of March – with a return date scheduled for March 8th.

I ask for your prayers for the strength and stamina (at age 70) for an intensive teaching programme, for the heat (often over 35 degrees), and for several arduous journeys; for wisdom and insight both in the classroom and in one-to-one conversations; for immunity from covid, malaria, and other health hazards; and for safety not just from unrest or terrorism but (most of all) from danger on the roads!

I'll write again in a couple of weeks and let you know what I have been up to. Once again, many thanks for your ongoing support and encouragement, which I greatly appreciate in what I believe to be a worthwhile project. I hope you and yours are all "staying safe". God bless for whatever 2022 may bring.

Best regards,
Patton

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for God's Spirit of peace on Rev David Gray as he prepares to lead worship in Cooke on Sunday 13th March 2022.
- Pray for wisdom and discernment for the voting members of the congregation as they consider whether Rev David Gray should be called to be our new minister in Cooke
- Pray for our Convenor, Rev Ivan Steen, and the congregation of Windsor Presbyterian Church who have moved to their new location in Great Victoria Street church.
- Pray for Prof Patton Taylor to have the strength and stamina for an intensive teaching programme, that he can cope with the heat, for several arduous journeys, for wisdom and insight both in the classroom and in one-to-one conversations, for immunity from covid and other health hazards, and for safety from unrest, terrorism and particularly danger on the roads.
- With the nomination of Rev John Kirkpatrick as Moderator Designate, pray for him as he prepares to take up office in June. Pray for the remaining months in office for David Bruce as he prepares to hand over.
- Pray that our political leaders in N Ireland and London will find a solution to the present political crisis in Stormont.
- Pray for the people of Afghanistan, especially those struggling to afford enough food and other basic necessities.
- Pray for the situation in the Ukraine, that world leaders would have the wisdom to respond to the escalating tensions and attacks on Ukrainian cities, for the safety of civilians and military personnel from Russian attacks on Ukrainian military targets and for protection for those who are having to flee their homes to find places of safety.
- Pray for those recently bereaved, those suffering from Covid, and those who are ill at home or in hospital.

DEATHS

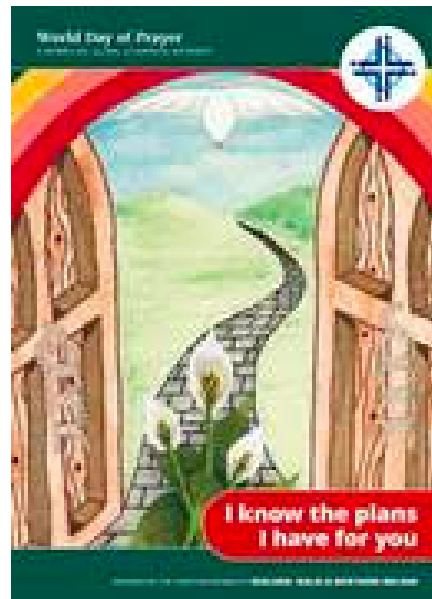
Stewart Clarke	12th October 2021
Chris Patton	28th October 2021
Margaret Patterson	25th November 2021
James Shaw	23rd December 2021
Helen Gilmour	10th February 2022

BAPTISMS

Penny Laine Rogan	5th September 2021
Joshua James Riddel	26th September 2021
Harrison Stacey	5th December 2021

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Friday 4th March 2022



This year the World Day of Prayer has been prepared by the women of England, Wales & N Ireland.

The theme for the service is God's promise found in Jeremiah 29 : 11. "I know the plans I have for you".

The service reflects that over the years the British Isles has welcomed people from all corners of the Earth, some who have chosen to come and others who are refugees fleeing from persecution in their own lands. Today we are a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-faith society.

This year there will not be a lunchtime service in May Street Presbyterian Church. Organisers hope to hold a service on the evening of Friday 4th March in a church in South Belfast, however details are not yet available.

CHURCH GARDEN

The shrubbery beside the North Parade railings has been removed following concerns of drug dealer activity which were received from the PSNI & Community Safety Team. It is intended to do some further work to this area of the grounds in Spring 2022.



TOY SUNDAY

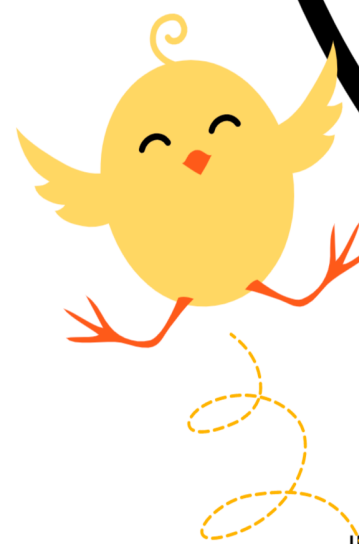
Toys from our Toy Sunday Appeal were dropped off to Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid before Christmas.

Pictured is Paula who received our donations on behalf of the organisation.

Many thanks to everyone for donating so generously.

EASTER WORD SEARCH

Y T L
Y P H S H Y
H S S A R G E
Y R Y I H I R H Y
H H D R E T S A E H Q
U N S P R I N G I R H
B N I A A L D L A S I R B
C T S L C H I C K A S I C
J E L L Y B E A N L A S F
R E W O L F B F N R L U A
R S T F E A M T E R R N J
U A E P P B A S K E T D U
T R N B B L L S B P F A O
B U N N Y U S A L E P Y Z
P U O G S A A R S E B O P
T B N A R P K A P L B
B S E E K E G G S S L
A T Y U E T K R
Y D N A C U
T B S M



BUNNY
EGGS
CHICK
JELLYBEAN

BASKET
SPRING
FLOWER
EASTER

GRASS
CANDY
HUNT
DYE

BONNET
SUNDAY
PEEPS
LAMB



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Worship in March and April

Date	Time	Service
6th March	11:00am	Dr S J Campbell
13th March	11:00am	Rev David Gray preaching as sole nominee for vacancy
14th March	7:30pm	Congregational Meeting
20th March	11:00am	Rev Ivan Steen
27th March	11:00am	Prof. Patton Taylor
3rd April	11:00am	Communion - Dr S J Campbell
10th April	11:00am	Palm Sunday - <i>Speaker To Be Confirmed</i>
17th April	11:00am	Easter Sunday - <i>Speaker To Be Confirmed</i>
24th April	11:00am	<i>Speaker To Be Confirmed</i>

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable If anything is excellent or praiseworthy. Think about such things.

Philippians 4:8

POINTS OF CONTACT

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