

LISBURN CATHEDRAL - Dean's Report on the year 2021-22.

Installation of Bishop. We love those moments in worship when our breath is taken away by God moving through his Holy Spirit, one such moment was during the service of installation for Bishop George Davison on 20th February 2022 as Connor diocese youth members posted prayers of encouragement and blessing to the screens in the Cathedral for our Bishop. This service was a wonderful time of engaging the youth in Connor, with our Bishop receiving challenges and then responding to those challenges. The service was planned and led by Connor Youth including Issac, Maddie, Lucas, Naomi, Faith, Alex, Emma, Lauren and Ella,. Thank you to the Cathedral's Youth worship group for leading our praise, to Christina Bailie (Connor Diocesan Youth Officer) and our Vicar Danielle for making all the plans with Connor Youth Forum and to all youth from across our diocese who made this such a memorable time of worship, praise and blessings. At the beginning of the service I also had the privilege and joy of inviting the Bishop into his Cathedral and installing him in his Bishops' seat. The Lisburn Cathedral Chapter members were delighted to be invited to this service and to also attend the Bishops installation in Belfast Cathedral on 13th March. The Chapter also met on 3rd March to discuss their future plans including the 400th anniversary preparations for 2023 in Lisburn Cathedral.

Institution of Vicar: Rev Danielle McCullagh began a new phase of ministry and service when she was instituted as Vicar of Lisburn Cathedral on Tuesday 1st June 2021. Our former parishioner, the Rev Lucy Burden (who was subsequently appointed to Mount Merrion Parish) shared her experience of knowing Danielle for the past eight years by saying three things were true about her: her heart for God's word, her heart for other people and her heart for God. In her inspiring sermon, Lucy taught from Acts 20:19-32 that three things were essential for ministry. First. Sharing God's Word. Second. Investing in other people. Third. Commitment to God as disciples of Christ. Bishop George Davison prayed for the Holy Spirit to equip Danielle for the sacred duties entrusted to her. After an enthusiastic round of applause to welcome her as Vicar, Danielle prayed for the growth of God's kingdom and for his will to be done. At the end of our worship, it was brought me great joy to welcome Danielle as our new Vicar and to say how her resourcefulness, hope filled, Spirit filled and life giving service for the next three years will be a blessing to the whole church family.

Danielle has been leading services, home group, guiding our leaders of organisations, mentoring youth and young adults, preaching and taking on leadership particularly when I have had to devote significant time to other matters, throughout this year of constant challenges and changes she has inspired us all. I am very grateful to have her as my right hand woman as Vicar.

Select Vestry - have had important decisions to deal with on keeping all who use or premises safe with opening and closing buildings, risk assessments, social distancing etc. I am grateful to all our members for their dedicated service to this and to our longer term planning in terms of staffing, finance and building repairs. After three years as People's churchwarden, Joanne Irwin proposed the nomination of Philip McConnell as the new People's churchwarden in April 2021. Our church wardens, Philip and Michael McCune have been amazing, looking after everyone coming to church, taking on additional responsibilities with social distancing and hand sanitising and giving everyone coming to worship a warm welcome and then guiding them out at the end of our time together. After three years as Rector's Church warden, Michael McCune will be standing down at this Annual General Vestry 2022, we are very grateful to Michael for his service to all our parishioners. Heather Gibson (who I nominated as my Rector's Glebewarden in April 2021) and Steve Martin (Glebewarden) have been particularly busy with Glebes teams carrying out many minor works, looking after the the sale of the Hillhall House, and keeping the heating system operational has been an ongoing challenge this year. Thank you to them for their service.

Richard Thompson (Honorary Treasurer) has provided regular "Finance Updates" in the magazine and with his team of advisors and counters has kept us in good financial health despite the pandemic. He has also made us aware of the financial demands of the planned major repairs and upgrading of the church hall and the employment of a Children's Worker. He has requested us to consider three things: 1. Standing Order donations enable our financial planning and are the safest way to donate. 2. Gift Aid by those who pay tax is very beneficial to the church. 3. Increased Giving by even £4 per month by every contributor would greatly assist us in covering costs, salaries and repairs.

Denis Fullerton (Honorary Secretary) has carried out this role of keeping minutes and administration diligently and attended to many associated matters on our behalf. Thank you to these key office holders and to all who have served on our Select Vestry.

Mettle Youth Group - Laura Kilpatrick (who was our youth intern) joined our staff team in September as Youth Worker and she provides us with an insight into our Mettle Youth Group activities as they adapted to the challenges of lockdowns, social distancing and outdoor gatherings. - Mettle continued on their 4 weekly programme of mentoring, small groups, a youth service and a social week. Memorable events included a Big Challenge Night, where young people got a box of challenges to complete on zoom delivered to their houses. We also had a Bake-Off Night, a quiz night, a murder mystery night, games nights, an escape rooms night and a highlight was Mettle Madness in August 2021. This was a summer scheme programme organised to engage our young people again with Mettle through many different activities. This included paddle-boarding in Castlewellan, surfing in Portrush and a sports day run by Salt Factory, the programme was very successful and these in-person events engaged a lot of young people who were new to Mettle. We also did Mettle Madness (Take 2) which was a youth conference for 3 evenings in August 2021 with different speakers and bands each evening. This was a great event and having this "Summer Madness-style" event really drew in our young people and a many reconnected to God or connected to God for the first time. We also did an Exodus team during July working with a local church for ten days in Downpatrick.

In September with eased restrictions, we were able to resume Mettle Saturdays, our weekly youth club and fellowship gathering. We also brought back our weekly after-school drop-in café, began mentoring and small groups in coffee shops again and resumed our youth services. This has been fantastic and much-needed after a long time with restricted socialising which is essential for our young people. We resumed Bible Class on Sunday mornings and had Confirmation Class. As part of Confirmation Class, we went on a weekend to the Exodus Centre in Coleraine.

The Mettle Christmas Ball, was a masked ball with added negative lateral flow tests before entering to ensure safety. At the beginning of 2022, with tighter restrictions Mettle Sundays met outdoors after our church service to have lunch and play some games and then in February our regular pattern of activities was allowed to return. 'Connor Takes the Castle' moved outdoors to Antrim on a Saturday in January and all involved enjoyed the event (even if it was a chilly day). In February 'Made for More' led three evenings on how to look after our own and others mental health. On the last Sunday in February the evening service was a youth only time with 'Made for More' to focus on our mental health.

Administrator - Garvin Jess made a huge contribution to the Cathedral over eleven years in the Cathedral Office he moved to work in the Diocesan Office in November. His replacement in Angela Montgomery who moved from City Centre Management in December and has settled well in our office working three mornings each week. I am also grateful to Garvin, Denis Fullerton and Paula Wright for their service as diocesan readers in the Cathedral

Ordained Local Minister. Also new to our staff team is Rev Peter Meenagh who was ordained in Lisburn Cathedral on 8th September 2021 as ordained local minister, he is working part time as leader of the South Lisburn Community Church. His ordination was a joyful occasion for his family and friends and we are delighted to have Pete join our staff.

Staff Retreat. The Archdeacon of Belfast, Barry Forde led us in reflections and discussions about our vision for the Cathedral. On 15th May 2022 he will be the speaker at our morning services and we will follow up on this with a Vision Evening on Wednesday 15th June.

The South Lisburn Community Church meets each Sunday at 3pm in the Robert Watson Memorial Hall on the Hillhall Road. They already have a committed team of people who are dedicated to the area of South Lisburn. We are grateful for the support funding received from Church of Ireland Children's and Orphans Society and from the Priorities Funds towards our outreach activities. These activities include:

'Transforming Lives for Good' in Largymore Primary School working with six children each week, 'Chit Chat Cafe' engaging with people in the estate each Wednesday, warm packs for local residents, helping with a community summer scheme, the mums group, 'Who let the Dads Out', a Children's Sunday Club, a special 'Messy Church' called 'All In Sunday', summer holiday Children's bible weeks, and we are looking forward to the return of 'Big Church Serve' to Hillhall during Holy Week 2022. Pete and his dedicated team are passionate to see the church grow and are dedicated to being in this area and helping people to encounter Jesus Christ and seeing lives transformed by Him. We are at present working with local councillors and the Resurgam Trust, to secure funding for a new hall for church & community use.

I was invited to speak on "Cathedral ministry during times of COVID" for an online 'Continuing Ministry Education' seminar on 12th January 2022. I invited Pete to join with me to share with the Curates from across Ireland on our church planting in South Lisburn as well as our ministry through the Cathedral. Our

time of sharing with these people setting out on ordained ministry was a wonderful opportunity to talk how the Lord Jesus has been guiding us and to encourage them on their journeys in serving Christ.

Curate-assistants & Deacon-interns. Rev Sarah Parkinson, was appointed Curate-assistant in St Mark's Parish, Armagh, (serving with another former Parishioner, the Rev Malcolm Kingston) and Rev Nathan Ervine was appointed Curate-assistant in St Nicholas' Parish, Carrickfergus. Gareth Campbell and Lee Boal will begin their Deacon-intern year in the autumn of 2022. The call to serve in the ordained ministry is fulfilling and joyful, it also requires steadfastness, sacrifices and a willingness to seek first his Kingdom. Pete, Sarah, Nathan, Gareth, and Lee would value your ongoing prayers and encouragement as they discover new areas of service.

The summer of 2021 saw a change in our interns, with Jayne Martin, Zoe McLoughlin and Ryan McGucken moving on, we are very grateful for their outstanding contributions of service during their year long internships. Ross Dickson joined us as Worship Leader intern.

The opening of South Lisburn Community Church meant that after three years as our Children's Worker, Donna Meenagh moved to support Pete in opening this new church. Donna brought great energy and inventiveness to this role and has blessed the lives of many children and their families. We are very grateful for all she has given to the Cathedral family and pray God's blessing upon her and Pete. The Lighthouse building in Hillhall was sold early in the new year and we are currently engaging in a feasibility study on the provision of a new hall for use by the Hillhall Community and the South Lisburn Community Church.

Kidzone - Donna and the Kidzone team held an action packed Holiday Bible Club which included afternoon events for families from 29th-31st July. Kidzone has been adapting to the constant changes and demands of the pandemic by providing a wide range of resources and activities of children and their families. Our first family service of the new term was on 5th September with Victoria Jackson as our speaker, this was followed by a Picnic in Castle Gardens. Sarah, Andrea and Vivienne and a team of helpers have been leading Kidzone since September 2021. They have been incredibly resourceful and imaginative in the activities, crafts and special events provided for our children.

Mums and Tots. This group are now up and running again every Wednesday under the leadership of Marty Kennedy, Margaret Fullerton and Margaret Quigley, it is great to have the mums and their young children gathering again in the church hall.

Summer Social BBQ's in June and August provided evenings for fellowship and catching up with church members. These social gatherings were a great way to meet outdoors after being apart due to lockdowns.

Harvest Thanksgiving Services began on Friday 8th October with Ross Monroe from The Gathering as our speaker and the Lisburn Fusilier's Flute Band helping to lead. On Sunday 10th October, Rev Andrew Sweeney from Ballymoney spoke about their community garden initiative and Lawrence Bellew from the Church Army joined our music group to play guitar and sing, as well as sharing how Newry Centre of Mission are reaching out to schools and community with the good news of Jesus.

A Service to Remember those who died. On the evening of Remembrance Sunday we held a service to remember all who had died during the previous two years. Many families hadn't had the opportunity to gather in worship at the time of their bereavement so this service was a time of personal recollection, shared grief and mutual support in a moving service of worship. In this time together we asked the Lord Jesus to comfort and bless every family represented.

Confirmation Service - In a joyful service on 21st November fifteen people in their teens and twenties were confirmed by Bishop George and three were also baptised.

Christmas - Our Christmas celebrations got underway with God's Handiwork Puppets, Lisburn Community Orchestra and Lisburn Community Children's Choir presenting a Christmas Rhapsody in Market Square on the 4th of December. This was followed on 18th December with a Christmas Panto Trail with Play it by Ear, Victoria Jackson and Church Army.

Mettle Youth members led our Contemporary Carol Service on the evening of the 12th December and the following Sunday was the Kidzone Nativity and services of Lessons and Carols. It brought great joy to

celebrate Christmas in church with so many people joining us to worship for these services as well as the Christmas weekend times of worship and praise.

Music Group and Choir - Stephen McLoughlin (musical director) and members of the music group have provided a wonderful lead for our worship in church, online and in the South Lisburn community church. The audiovisual team have also adapted to the many challenges of the pandemic. Since September 2021 with the reopening of our 9.30am Andrew Skelly (Organist) and the choir have brought great joy to our worshippers as they lead and encourage us in singing praise to the Lord.

20s & 30s Group met regularly for a mixture of social nights out, worship & teaching in the Cathedral. Mentoring is now underway, with 15 people in 20s and 30s paired with a mentor. They meet monthly for encouragement in faith and accountability in discipleship

An Alpha Group began meeting together to explore the meaning of faith In Jesus during January 2022, this course included a day away in Hillsborough Parish.

Home Groups are back meeting in person and have been following the themes taught on Sunday's including: 'Love your Church' and 'Devoted - 12 habits to deepen your relationship with God.' We are very grateful to Bill & Karen Welsh and all our leaders as Home Groups have been such an important aspect for fellowship and connection for all who attend and for those who have recently joined the Cathedral.

CAMEO Club. The heart of the Club is for our senior citizens to "Come And Meet Each Other." During the summer CAMEO received afternoon tea in a box and in December Christmas Dinner in a box was also delivered to their homes. The Cameo Lockdown News Letters have been a great encouragement to all our members. However after 18 months apart CAMEO began meetings in person from September and they have a full and varied programme of speakers and events. After twenty years of leading CAMEO John and Margaret Quigley have now handed the leadership on to Michael and Evelyn McCune. Words cannot adequately express our gratitude to John and Margaret for their leadership and service for CAMEO over all these years.

Pastoral Visitors. This team have been keeping in touch with those who have been ill, isolated or on their own. They have been faithful in praying and regularly phoning those on their visiting lists. Their role in passing on information to the clergy has been a vital link to keep in touch with our more senior or vulnerable parishioners. The Pastoral Visitors had a in person time together for a catch up and lunch in December.

The Mother's Union members have resumed meeting together for their monthly meeting on the third Monday of each month at their new earlier time of 2.30pm. They have had a variety of speakers and took part in the Connor Mother's Union Festival Service in Belfast Cathedral.

Nimble Fingers Group continued to meet online or in person twice monthly.

The Book Club also met when it was permitted, last summer, for a club meeting and then they had a very enjoyable garden afternoon tea party.

GEM - God Enriched Moments Group have been reading and discussing Richard Foster's book, 'A Celebration of Discipline'. a ministry for ladies

CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY LISBURN offers hope and a solution to people in debt through its top quality in depth service. This ministry is working with approximately fifteen clients. The aim of this ministry is to see people set free from debt and to receive Christ as their Lord. We are thankful to God for those who have received freedom in both ways through CAP Lisburn and to the wonderful CAP team who meet with clients. Paul Bailie from the Cathedral is the CAP Lisburn manager. Call 0800 3280006 to book an appointment.

North Belfast Centre of Mission - has become the regional hub (NI) for Baby Basics with Karen Webb & Stephen Witten. They have been receiving around 40 referrals a month, triple last years. With 'Baking Buddies' and other online initiatives they have continued serving the community. Other initiatives we are involved with on an ongoing basis include Lisburn Foodbank and the Simon Community.

CMSI - In Yei Diocese South Sudan, Bishop Levi has succeeded Bishop Hilary. Recently Jenny and Billy Smyth returned to Yei Vocational Training Centre. They sent this report of the work going on there: Here is a place of opportunity. A place that offers those on the margins a chance to learn new skills, a chance to hear the good news of Him who came to seek and to save. Bustling with activity, young people are busy in every corner of the compound. Electrical students wiring circuits, smiles all round when the bulbs light up; builders laying bricks to practice corners and wall joints, plumb lines and trowels in hand; hairdressers combing and plaiting on freaky looking model heads, gentle chatter as they work; mechanics elbow-deep in grease, delving into the mysteries of an old internal combustion engine; tailors snipping around seams in bright kitenge, treadle machines whizzing at full speed; a hive of constructive, hopeful activity. Transforming and creating, preparing to rebuild a shattered nation.

Even the physical structures of this place reflect redemption and new beginnings. The workshops, built by the pioneering staff and students, were constructed using what could be salvaged from old army lorries and scrap abandoned in the compound. Reimagined to new use through careful cutting, welding and remaking, the discarded scrap metal now holds up the workshop roof: a workspace, a place of hope for so many.

“They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord Almighty has spoken.” Micah 3:4.

We are looking forward to a visit from Bishop Levi this summer.

ABAANA - has continued working with their 16 school communities during the pandemic by delivering essential food parcels to sponsor children and their families. At home Study Packs were provided with their teachers marking the completed homework. From January there was great happiness that schools could open again. The rescue work with street children is changing the lives of these children by providing food, education and care in the New Life Homes. Two new classroom blocks were completed at Atukubui Primary School. God willing, we hope that the New Life Choir will be able to come on tour in 2024.

SAMS - the online interviews and reports from South America have been very informative during a time when travel has been very restricted. Also the prayer resources have enabled us to uphold the church in South America.

The Bishops Appeal, the Church's World Aid and Development Programme provided opportunities to support education and bring relief during Advent and then in response to the tragic humanitarian crisis brought about by war in Ukraine in March 2022 to support the work of Habitat for Humanity and Christian Aid.

We were also able to support a church community in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees in Poland when Sam and Silvana Shaw travelled to those countries just after the war started in March 2022. Thank you to all who responded to these ways of helping the people of Ukraine whose lives have been totally devastated by this evil and tragic war.

Tearfund and Friends in Action have also provided information on world mission, water drilling, sharing the gospel, prayer points, online events and opportunities to support mission and ways to respond to climate change crisis.

This report covers a brief period in time yet we have risen to the challenges of our day, trusting in our ever faithful Lord Jesus, we have adapted at short notice to changing situations brought about by the effects of an unpredictable pandemic. Over the past 400 years through many times of trials and challenges, joy and celebrations worship has been given to Almighty God in Lisburn Cathedral. We will celebrate this Quadrcentennial in 2023 with a wide range of events for all friends of the Cathedral. We hope many people will join us in the Cathedral for this momentous anniversary and we look forward to seeing old friends and new ones as we honour and worship Christ for his guidance and love throughout these 400 years.

Yours in His service,
Sam Wright (Dean of Connor.)

30th March 2022.