



The Greeting

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YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE

'They shall bear the burden...with you...' Numbers 11:17

You may be a great visionary, but you will not succeed until you learn to inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them. Now, while the ability to communicate is important in transferring your vision to others, it takes more than that. You must have credibility and conviction. People will only buy into your vision if you are sold out to it.

Convincing others of the significance of your vision can happen only if you are convinced of its significance. That requires the right message, spoken by the right messenger, to the right people, at the right time, and in the right way.

Psychologist and author Dr Larry Crabb describes this convergence, saying: 'A vision we give to others of who and what they could become, has power when it echoes what the spirit

has already spoken into their souls.' That power can convince people to join you in the pursuit of your vision, and greatly enhances your chances of success.

There is an interesting mathematical dynamic in the Bible which states that one person can put a thousand others to flight, but two people can put ten thousand others to flight (Deuteronomy 32:30). Yes, the Scriptures teach the power of synergy. When you get the right people involved, plus the blessing of the Lord, you'll accomplish more than you ever dreamed possible.

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PROPOSED MAY STREET UPGRADE

This is the text of a press release which was issued by May Street Church in May. It follows the submission of a response by May Street to



Have a relaxing Summer



a consultation process launched by Belfast City Council.

May Street Presbyterian Church has unveiled proposals for a £1m upgrade which would enable it to restore the historic building and develop an alcohol-free basement night club.

The blueprint was outlined in a submission from the church to a consultation convened by Belfast City Council as part of its recently launched £25m City Investment Fund.

Arthur Acheson, the clerk of session at May Street said: "Our church opened in 1829 and our strategy over the years has been to minister to the needs of the city centre and its people.

"Our objective is to refurbish and adapt our building so that it can serve as a Christian resource centre now and in the future."

Among key elements of the May Street document are:

- Opening an alcohol-free basement night club for young people, offering dance, music and entertainment. The church has already run a very successful pilot version
- Developing a Hope and History interpretative centre to bring the historic church into a stronger focus as a tourist destination in the city centre as well as a centre for worship, friendship and outreach.
- Upgrading and adapting the existing listed building to make it more fit for purpose.

Mr Acheson said: "Although we are small in numerical terms, the May Street congregation has a big heart and we wish to contribute to the life of the city with a building that is fit for purpose for the next 100 years.

"Too many buildings in Belfast, particularly churches, have been allowed to become disused and eventually lie derelict. We are strategically placed, adjacent to the City Hall, and believe we have an expanding role to play in the heart of the city."

May Street Church already operates a basement cafe called Urban Soul that opens Monday through Saturday. Recently, with the backing of the UnLtd social enterprise charity, the church has launched two new initiatives – an Urban Seniors

Club for the over-50s, and a training course in stage management and lighting for young people.

May Street provides a base for the Street Pastors organisation which helps to keep young people safe on the streets of the city at night.

It is also the headquarters of Music Theatre for Youth, a charity which seeks to develop musical, artistic and dance talents among young people.

CITY HALL SUBMISSION

This is an extract from the illustrated response made by May Street Church to the consultation organised by Belfast City Council on its City Investment Fund. The full document can be accessed on the May Street website, www.maystreetchurch.com.

As you will be aware, May Street Church is located just 200 yards from Belfast City Hall. We are a slightly more venerable building than City Hall, dating from 1829, and we cherish our city centre location. Our strategy over the years has been to look outwards and to seek to minister to the needs of the city centre and its people. This challenge is no different today than it was almost 200 years ago.

We believe that our vision for our outreach and for the greater use of our building fits well with your draft programme. We hope that the project outlined below, to refurbish and adapt our building so that it can serve as a Christian resource centre for the city centre, will find a place within the final version of your programme.

For some years now we have been developing our range of outreach activities, well beyond our congregational programme of worship with our traditional Sunday morning and Thursday lunch time services.

Our Urban Soul cafe, located in the basement of our church, opens from 10am to 3pm Monday to Saturday. We believe the cafe offers refreshment in every sense of the word, providing a tranquil oasis in the heart of the busy city centre. We provide tea and coffee and lunch but we also offer a welcoming smile and a listening ear. It is open to people of all ages.

Among recently launched initiatives are The Underground, a Sunday evening gathering for

young adults, and our Urban Seniors Club for over 50s seeking activities and companionship in the city centre. Urban Seniors Club has received sponsorship from the social enterprise charity UnLtd, which has also provided a grant for an Urban Soul youth training programme in stage management and lighting.

The church provides a centrally located base for Street Pastors, a voluntary organisation which helps to keep our young people safe on the streets of the city centre at weekends.

The building also serves as the headquarters of Music Theatre for Youth – in text speak that's MT4Uth! It is a charity which helps to develop musical, artistic and dance talents among young people. This gives us an important place in the arts infrastructure of the city.

In recent years we have been actively seeking to make more use of our premises at times when they are not required by the congregation. To this end, we have hosted a number of concerts, in partnership with various promoters including Music Theatre for Youth. We regularly provide a venue for concerts run by the Belfast Festival and the Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival. Nanci Griffith has been a regular performer in May Street for many years and also visits and performs with children in local schools when she comes here.

At Christmas 2011, May Street ran a cross-community Celebrate Christmas programme of concerts which involved choirs from around 20 schools and youth organisations from across the province. Tina Campbell from UTV acted as compere. Proceeds were shared between the Children's Hospice and Urban Soul.

As Belfast starts to shine as a tourist destination, May Street has been playing its part in making the city centre appealing to visitors. We open our doors on Wednesdays and Thursdays for passing tourists, and often find international visitors among our congregation on a Sunday morning. The church has an interesting history in its own right, being built in 1829 for the famous preacher Dr Henry Cooke (The Black Man). May Street is proud to be one of the few remaining Georgian buildings in Belfast still being used for its original purpose. Our proximity to the newly opened Titanic Memorial Garden in the City Hall grounds makes our location even more relevant.

Another claim to fame for May Street is that it

houses a pipe organ of national if not international importance. Our Binns Organ was installed in 1914 at a cost of £822 and it is one of the few Binns Organs in these islands which survives in its original, unaltered state. The congregation has maintained the organ in good condition for almost 100 years.

For all that, we recognise that the premises of May Street Church are not at present being used to their full potential. Although the congregation is small, we are keen to expand our outreach in conjunction with other organisations. We are however constrained by a shortage of finance to develop plans to further utilise our basement.

We carried out a pilot project in September 2008, involving a trial run of the "Halo" Night Club in our basement. This took the form of an alcohol-free night-time venue offering music, dance and entertainment for young people in their 20s and 30s. We feel strongly there is a need for such a night club, but we need to bring the basement up to modern standards in terms of heating, lighting, and disabled access. This in turn would help us to secure an entertainments licence.

We have drawn up an outline programme of works, and we estimate that the project will call for an investment in the region of £1m. It sounds like a lot of money, but we believe the scheme would produce a major dividend for Belfast and its young people. The redevelopment could be taken forward relatively quickly as a first phase of capital improvements to the building. This proposed first phase sits within our wider vision, which would include full-scale upgrading and refurbishment of the May Street facade and roof. This would enable us to secure the building for the future and to adapt the interior to provide more flexible space for performances, displays and interpretation.

In particular, we have plans to develop a "Hope and History" centre, a cultural and educational interactive venue which will provide a new tourism destination in the city centre. The focus would be on the role the Christian churches have played in the history of Belfast and Northern Ireland and to show how they offer a message of hope for the province's future.

Hope and History will build on a previous cross-community history project involving May Street and our neighbouring Catholic church of St Malachy's. The travelling exhibition, "A Tale of

Two Churches”, was backed by the Department of Regional Development and the

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and majored on the shared history of our two churches and congregations.

A project of the scale of this historic building has the potential to contribute significantly to the regeneration of this part of the city centre, linking the retail and office core to St George’s Market and to Laganside.

May Street Church lies within the boundary of the Inner South Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal Area. The 2011 – 2015 Action Plan states: *“The Neighbourhood Partnership needs to develop greater connectivity and stronger relationships within communities, across communities, with the City Centre and the surrounding areas.”*

Our project is essentially a contributor to the social economy, and as such aligns with many of Belfast City Council’s stated priorities, including tourism, the arts and conserving a strategically placed building which otherwise will most likely fall into a state of dereliction. It is potentially sustainable, as our cafe and proposed alcohol-free night club would produce revenue.

We note also the Council’s proposal that Belfast should become a city of festivals. We share your enthusiasm for this concept, having had some experience, not least from our “Grace and Truth” flower festival at May Street, which the then Lord Mayor officially opened in May 2011. We have also hosted very innovative events that combine Gospel Choirs with cutting edge rock musicians, bringing audiences to their feet in approval as the talents come together to improvise a grand finale that happens just once. A great example of this was Urban Hymns organised by Belfast’s Oh Yeah! music centre.

Too many buildings in Belfast, particularly church buildings, have been allowed to become disused and eventually lie derelict. The May Street Congregation, although small in terms of numbers, has a big heart and we wish to continue to contribute to the life of the city with a building that is fit for purpose for the next 100 years.

We are investigating the prospect of establishing a charitable company limited by guarantee to run the premises for us. This new company would have representation from the different users to

continue the work sustainably into the future. We look forward to making our contribution to the development and use of the city’s shared cultural space. We should be happy to develop this proposal, in consultation with the Council, and to prepare a detailed feasibility study.

ARTHUR ACHESON
Clerk of Session

ACCOUNTS ADOPTED

The May Street annual accounts for the year ended December 31, 2011, which were held over at the Annual Business Meeting, were adopted by the congregational committee at its meeting on April 26. The decision was communicated to the congregation on April 29.

URBAN SOUL

The spring is always a busy time at Urban Soul Cafe and this year has been no exception. We have had a lot of visitors, including some tourists who had come to Belfast on foot of the Titanic commemoration.

A number of group bookings have been facilitated. To take one example, on Saturday May 26, we hosted no fewer than four parties. First up was a group of 30 ladies from Trinity Bangor PW, who partook of morning coffee and scones. Then at lunchtime we laid on a soup and sandwich lunch for 25 members of an historical group up from Dublin.

At teatime the tables were set for 28 members of Ballyclare Presbyterian who were up in Belfast for the day. Just to give you an example of what we can do, the menu offered a choice of chicken & broccoli or beef casserole, all with mixed vegetables, followed by a gateau or apple tart, and then tea and coffee. And as if that was not enough, we then served a supper of tea/coffee and traybakes to a prayer group from south Belfast, who included among their number several visitors from South Korea.

All came away singing the praises of Urban Soul and that’s the best form of publicity we can get. None of this would have been possible, of course, without the unstinting assistance of a number of members of May Street congregation. They are already working on a rota during the week to help

the cafe maintain its high standard of service, and in addition have been willing to work with us at special events such as the group bookings. Sincere thanks to one and all.

The assistance of the May Street members was particularly valuable during late April and early May when Avril Gracey, the cafe manageress, was off work following a road traffic accident. It was a traumatic episode and we all remembered Avril in our prayers as she made her recovery. In Avril's absence, core staff member Matthew Baird pulled out all the stops and the result was that normal opening hours were maintained. We are very grateful to Matt for all his hard work and for giving leadership at this difficult time.

And thanks indeed to the May Street ladies who gave much needed back-up to Matt. It was hard work but the team found that they got a lot out of the experience as well – a chance to connect with members of the public and show them that May Street and Urban Soul were playing a key role. Providentially, we were also able to count on the support of Californian couple Carlos and Andi Fernandez who were over in Northern Ireland working with Saintfield Presbyterian Church. It so happened they were able to give a hand in Urban Soul and their involvement at this critical time was vital. They have now gone back to the US to pray about a further mission overseas, and we ask for God's blessing on them.

As ever, keeping the show on the road was a team effort, but we're delighted to see Avril back in action again, both front of house and looking after all the admin side.

Finance is a continuing concern at Urban Soul and we ask for your prayers for our success. Urban Soul has never been financially viable in hard commercial terms, and has always relied on grant aid from outside bodies, primarily the Board of Mission in Ireland and the TBF Thompson Trust, to whom we are grateful. At the same time, Urban Soul has been cutting its costs – primarily by reducing staff numbers and avoiding waste – and increasing its income, both by attracting more custom during the week and by opening the cafe up to special groups. We appreciate the backing of May Street congregation, both in terms of individual giving and in terms of having rent-free accommodation and free electricity.

We know that funding is not always easy to

come by, particularly at this time of recession, but we pray for continued support from our various backers. While pounds and pence can be measured, no price can ever be put on the contribution made by Urban Soul to the lives of those who have come into the cafe a time of personal difficulty or challenge and found a welcoming smile, a warm welcome and a friendly word. Urban Soul continues to act as a witness for May Street and the wider church in the city centre, and we feel that the value of this role cannot be under-stated.

URBAN SOUL COMMITTEE

URBAN SENIORS

The Urban Seniors club, which meets every Thursday morning over a cup of coffee in Urban Soul, got off to a flying start on April 19, when Clifford Smyth gave an entertaining and informative talk about Titanic Tartans to an audience of 30. Facilitators in succeeding weeks have included Terry Madill (Titanic Tours), Charlotte Murtagh (Family Archives), Jim O'Hagan (Smithfield Market) and Charles Maginnes (May

Urban Soul Cafe

Seniors 50+ Interest Group

Every Thursday 11.00 a.m. - 12.00 noon
(Cafe open from 10.00 a.m.)

Fun and Friendship Free

Programme

24 May 2012	Smithfield Market by Jim O'Hagan
31 May 2012	The May Street Binns Organ by Charles Maginnes
7 June 2012	Carlisle House Substance Abuse Centre
14 June 2012	Ulster and the Somme by Charles Bennett

Bun with Tea or Coffee £2.00

Urban Soul Cafe
May Street Church
Belfast
BT1 4NU
(Bus stop at door of Urban Soul Cafe)
urbansoulcafe@live.com
Telephone 9032 5554

Street's Binns Organ). Our thanks to all those who have agreed to speak at the meetings.

Up and coming on June 7 is a presentation by David McAuley, chairman of the Urban Soul committee, and chairman of the Presbyterian Church's Board of Social Witness's Advisory Panel for Carlisle House. Central to the presentation will be a DVD made by a group of people who have passed through the Carlisle House programme and it makes a powerful statement about the nature and effects of addiction.

On June 14, the speaker will be Charles Bennet, whose subject will be "Ulster and the Somme".

Urban Seniors is open to anyone aged 50 plus, and the gatherings run from 10am to 12 midday, with the talk taking place at 11am. The emphasis is on fun, friendship and fellowship, so please come along and give it a go. Our thanks to the UnLtd charity for its financial support for this venture.

CHRISSIE HEWITT
Urban Seniors

STREET PASTORS

Street Pastors is developing! We have new volunteers being trained and a number are from May Street congregation which is great! Currently we go out either on a Friday or Saturday evening, but our aim is to develop so that we can send four teams out every Friday and Saturday night, with each volunteer committing to once a month. Something potential volunteers can do is come out as an observer. One such is Brian Gourley, a May Street committee member, and this is his report not just on Street Pastors but on his visit to Dublin at Easter.

TREVOR BETTS
Interim Co-ordinator

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

One Friday evening in March I went out as an observer with Street Pastors, the Christian group which helps to keep our young people safe at weekends in Belfast. The volunteers come from different churches and meet for some prayer and preparation in May Street's Urban Soul Cafe on a Friday or Saturday evening. We headed for the Odyssey Arena, but other areas that Street

Pastors visit are Shaftesbury Square and Bradbury Place. The policy is to go out in two's and three's into the highways and byways, basically to care and to keep people safe, to offer help/assistance, and to keep people away from danger. The team works closely with the PSNI but does not deal with incidents nor does it arrest people. Its role is just to be a peacemaker and to be friendly with people.

Every observer wears a high visibility jacket and carries a panic/emergency alarm. It is very important to stay together and to communicate during the evening with the other team members. It is like being salt and light in the world, as we read in Matthew's gospel. The Christian's intention is to make a difference and if appropriate, to share the good news of the gospel with people we meet. At the end of the evening, usually around 2am, we headed back to May Street to chat about the contacts we made and to remember in prayer the individuals we had met.

During the Easter weekend I was in Dublin with an organisation called Young Life to evangelise and to take part in evening meetings on grace and bible fellowship. There were about 40 of us on the team, splitting into two groups to target the main areas of the city centre where it is busy with shoppers. It was an opportunity to meet people from all over the world.

I spoke to a man from Romania in a coffee shop and we were able to share knowledge about the different religions. However in Christianity it is about having a relationship with God not trying to do your best but instead having faith and trust and a hope in God for all he has done for us. We trust in his death and resurrection and his coming again. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead is what makes Christianity unique. We would tell people that in other religions their founder is dead yet in Christianity Jesus is alive.

We used a sketchboard in open air presentations to illustrate gospel talks, One of them was on the Titanic as we remembered the 100th Anniversary of its sinking. We also offered face painting for the children, all to create a fun and safe environment.

Finally, we would appreciate your prayers for the Belfast Street Pastors and indeed for the gospel going across Ireland as we look to extend God's Kingdom. Pray thy Kingdom come!

BRIAN GOURLEY

DOUBLE DELIGHT



Seeing double: *Following their baptism at May Street on Easter Day, April 8, are Bethanie Erin Jayne and Isabelle Elizabeth Kate Acheson with mum and dad Melanie and Graham Acheson and big brother Elliot, from Edinburgh. The ceremony was conducted by the vacancy convenor, Dr Rodger Crooks and after the service all present were invited to the lecture hall where a baptismal cake was cut and served along with tea and coffee. A special day for the Acheson family – including proud grandparents Arthur Acheson and his wife Elizabeth – and for the May Street congregation.*

TUESDAY CIRCLE

The Tuesday Circle is now enjoying a summer break and I hope the weather continues as it is as I am writing, to be glorious, sunny and warm.

Our season of meetings finished in March with a short floral art demonstration and the annual general meeting. It was decided not to elect a president just now but to invite different members to open our meetings with prayer each month. The committee was willing to continue and also the office bearers, with Kathleen Rea keeping on the task as treasurer and Ena Kirkpatrick as secretary. Everyone agreed to this so it was passed unanimously.

A varied programme has been tentatively arranged for the new season 2012-2013. As has become the practice we are starting in September with the annual bowling session at Dundonald ice bowl, so ladies, get some practice in as the competition will be very strong!

In October we hope to have a speaker who will tell us some of the history of the general area around our church, the May Street and Markets district. In November we will hear some more of the story of the Titanic.

At Christmas we will of course be having some lovely food, but it is hard to think of December in the lovely month of May.

In January we have pencilled in a talk about clocks, very appropriate at the turn of the year. This programme still has to be confirmed so there may be changes.

We were saddened to hear of the death in May of former Tuesday Circle member Carole Gregg. Carole frequently helped with the Thursday lunches when the ladies of the church prepared them. She is fondly remembered, and we all wish to extend our sympathy to her two sisters Valerie Condy and Jennifer Wilson, and to the entire family circle.

Always remembered in our prayers is Vera Lemon, who cannot attend our meetings any more. We also look forward to welcoming back Paddy Ferris after a spell in hospital. Hopefully she is fully restored to good health as she too was missed.

May I wish all readers a pleasant summer season and our meetings will resume on the fourth Tuesday of each month and new members will be made most welcome.

ENA KIRKPATRICK
Secretary

CAROLE GREGG

Former May Street member Carole Victoria Gregg died on May after a period of illness. In this article, Moira Burns reflects on her mother's life and her connections with May Street.

Mum was born in Belfast in December 1941, hence she was given the festive name of Carole, Dodo (her mother) was not to know then that her youngest daughter Jennifer was to be born on Christmas Day! Granny named her Carole with an E due to there being a dictator at that time named King Carol. I was always ever vigilant with doctors and nurses years later to have the spelling correct!

Mum took her first tottering steps at RAF Hucknall, but she spent most of her formative years growing up in leafy Cyprus Avenue in Belfast as part of the extended family. Granny had her hands full with three young daughters - Carole, Valerie and Jenny as well as a very exuberant springer spaniel named Peter whom the children doted on. Auntie Ailsa (Granny's sister) also lived there and later she and Granny took Mum on her first trip to London which was perhaps what inspired the many happy holidays Mum and I later had in London, mostly to see the Royal Ballet and other companies perform. Ballet was Mum's passion.



Happy memories: Former May Street member Carole Gregg who died on May 5. A service of thanksgiving for her life was held at First Broughshane Presbyterian Church on May 8.

Mum had a very happy childhood with her beloved mother and two younger sisters. May Street Church was a great part of their lives and Mum had many great friends there. She was a grand-daughter of Dr Alexander Wylie Blue, the famous and well-loved past minister of May Street.

May Street was also a cornerstone in family life for me, my brothers Alan and Kenny and also for my cousins Stephen and Julie Wilson. The Tuesday Circle and then the PWA were major interests for her. She particularly enjoyed her

time spent at May Street Ladies' Bowling Club where Granny was also a member (and a much better player than Mum!). I remember her active involvement in former minister of May Street the Rev Kenneth Weir's reviews when I was a young teenager. Most importantly though, the annual weekend trips to Kilkeel were Mum's major joy where along with Uncle Terry (Wilson) she provided emotional support for Jenny who organised such a much loved event. Many thanks to Joanne Sims and Janet Booker for reminding me of the fun we all had, as well as spiritual guidance. Mum was very much a part of this with her own childlike fun approach to life.

Senior Minister the Rev Jim Barnes was a great source of support for Mum throughout his active ministry at May Street. I cannot speak highly enough of how he helped her and also Alan and Kenny and me during difficult days. During this time, Mum gave up her nursing. She had graduated in 1960 from the Royal Victoria Hospital. It was truly during the last year of her life that I appreciated what a challenging, demanding and difficult job that is. At one time, after studying occupational psychology at university, I worked as a care assistant in the same nursing home where Mum was an RGN. I quickly realised that she was a natural.

Mum went on to marry a second time and her life shifted to the Broughshane area. She maintained contact with May Street by occasionally attending Urban Soul where she admired the work that was being done in outreach, and particularly that of Chrissie Hewitt. Her contact though, was largely maintained by her sisters, Valerie and Jenny, regularly keeping her in touch with all that was happening with people Mum had probably known for a lifetime, many of them family.

In the last year Mum had faced a lot of fear and worries but her faith remained strong. She was content that her husband David would be well looked after by his large family, that her sisters were happy as were her three children with their respective partners and her two grandchildren. David showed Mum a lot of care during her illness.

The legacy Mum leaves behind is that of a true lady, intelligent, gentle and kind. As a mother she had been ever non-judgmental about my actions in life but always offered wise guidance. I fully believe Alan and Kenny would say the same thing. I only hope I can try to have the same humble

sense of humour and show people the same kindness that she showed me and everybody else she ever met in life.

MOIRA BURNS

THE CHOIR



Time for tea: The Rev Jimmy Johnstone, senior minister of Craigy Hill Church in Larne, chats over a cup of Thompson's Titanic Tea with Arthur Acheson (left), clerk of session at May Street Presbyterian Church and the May Street organist Colin Johnstone. Mr Johnstone conducted a special Titanic commemoration service at May Street on April 22, precisely 100 years after a memorial service was held in the church.



Great get-together: May Street members chat over a cuppa in the lecture hall following the special Titanic commemoration service on April 22.

It has been another busy period for the choir, what with Easter Day and our Titanic commemoration service. We were pleased that May Street was able to link in with the various events being organised in Belfast to mark the centenary of the loss of the liner. Our service on Sunday April 22, almost precisely 100 years after May Street held a memorial service for the victims of the disaster, was both timely and fitting.

Thanks to the Rev Jimmy Johnstone from Larne for conducting the service and for putting such thought into his sermon.

Thanks as ever to our organist, Colin Johnstone, for keeping us in tune Sunday by Sunday. Colin liaises with the various visiting ministers and between them they select the hymns and psalms for the Sunday service. The Binns Organ, due to celebrate its own centenary in 2014, sounds as if it is in fine fettle.

As we begin to wind down for the summer holidays – Ruby Fannin has already had her break in Interlaken in Switzerland – we all look forward to some time of relaxation. May I wish my colleagues in the choir and all the members of the congregation a restorative summer holiday.

VALERIE MORTON
Secretary

SQUASH CHAMPS



Victorious veterans: Ulster was represented in the over 65 age group by (from left) John McBride, Clive Gilmour and Harry Cullen at the annual Interprovincial Squash Championships.

May Street elder Clive Gilmour has been captaining Ulster and representing Ireland in the 65 plus age group at the annual Interprovincial and Home Nations Squash Championships. In this short article he tells how it all went.

Over the weekend of April 20-21 the Interprovincial Championships took place at Ballyearl, Newtownabbey. This involved three

men's categories – over 45, over 55 and over 65- and two ladies categories, over 40 and over 50. I was captain of the over 65 men's team which won this section with wins over Munster and Leinster, both by a margin of 2-1.

The following weekend, I was in Cardiff representing Ireland in the Home Internationals, being the sole Ulster representative. At both competitions one meets the same old suspects!

CLIVE GILMOUR

SALVATION ARMY VISIT



Eyes up: Gathered around the organ at May Street on the evening of May 28 are members of the Salvation Army from Sydenham who were visiting the church with Martin Corder, the captain. The visit was arranged by May Street elder Alan Gourley and included a conducted tour of the church, an organ recital by Charles Maginnes and supper in Urban Soul.

MUSIC THEATRE FOR YOUTH

Music Theatre 4 Youth is continuing to have a busy but successful 2012. We continue with our Weekend Academy based at May Street with an end of term showcase on July 7. This showcase will be a time for the students of the weekend academy to show off their skills learned on the 10 week course. The combination of hard work and talent will cumulate in the 4 groups performing extracts from musicals including; Bugsy Malone, Guys and Dolls, Pal Joey and Chicago.

The next core project will be a production of Les Misérables with a cast of 50 young people from across Ireland put together in six days with our internationally acclaimed artistic team from

London's West End. The performances will take place on August 3 and 4 at the MAC, Belfast's brand new arts venue.

Currently, we are running our Aim High outreach and Development programme with Foyleview Special School, which specialising in the education of children with special educational needs. This project will result in a performance for the build-up to Derry/Londonderry City of Culture 2013.



Royal occasion: Members of Music Theatre for Youth's Titanic group meet the Duchess of Gloucester at Belfast City Hall in May.

We will also be running another Aim High project in The Spectrum Centre in the Shankill area of Belfast with a showcase on Sunday June 17 at 6pm. We will also be performing our piece specially created for the Titanic Festival of Creative Arts, based on life in the shipyards of Belfast. We were honoured to be asked to perform this special piece for The Duchess of Gloucester at Hope 4 Youth's charity ball in City Hall on May 19.

ERIKA REID
Communications Manager

DEADLINE

The deadline for all contributions to the next issue of The Greeting is Sunday September 30.

EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS

May Street Church will be taking part once again in the European Heritage Open Days in September. The church will be open to visitors on Saturday September 8 (10am to 5pm) and Sunday September 9 (12noon to 5pm). Please spread

the word and please, if you are free, offer your services. A rota form will be placed in the vestibule nearer to the time. It's a great opportunity to show off our church and let people see in behind the doors.

COLLECTORS

June: Kathleen Rea, Robin Morton, Jenny Wilson, Arthur Fannin.

July: Gordon Kirkpatrick, Brian Gourley, Valerie Condy, Clive Gilmour.

Aug: Kathleen Rea, Alan McCrum, Barry Bell, Robin Hewitt.

ULSTER COVENANT

The next event to be marked in the current Decade of Anniversaries will be the signing of the Ulster Covenant in September, 1912. Saturday September 28 was designated Ulster Day and people who were opposed to Home Rule signed on the dotted line. The "Solemn League and Covenant" was signed by 237,368 men while the Declaration, a sister document open only to women, attracted 234,046 signatures. An alternative and more moderate document, drawn up by Ballymoney minister the Rev JB Armour, was signed by around 30,000 people.

Although the main point in Belfast city centre for signing the Covenant was Belfast City Hall, May Street played its part in rallying support for the Covenant. According to contemporary newspaper files, the church was one of many which organised a special Ulster Day service. The 11am Saturday morning service in May Street was conducted by the minister, the Rev William Patterson, whose subject was advertised as being "The Romish Yoke".

THE UNDERGROUND

The Underground, a fellowship aimed at the 20-40 age group, meets every Sunday evening in Urban Soul at May Street Church. The Rev Lee Eagleson, who hosts the gathering, says things are going well.

He said: "We have a good small core, and we have interesting people coming, some of whom

aren't Christians. We also are at the stage of podcasting and we have had nearly five times more people listening to those than actually attend. You can keep up with our developments at www.facebook.com/undergroundbelfast. Our talks are at iTunes under the undergroundbelfast or you can get them at podbean at <http://theundergroundbelfast.podbean.com/>

WELCOME BACK

Dr Rodger Crooks, vacancy convenor at May Street, visited Nigeria in May, returning to the community in which his father worked as a missionary some years ago. Dr Crooks carried out some lecturing duties during his two-week trip.

SUNDAY SERVICES

During the vacancy at May Street, the now familiar rotation of visiting preachers for Sunday services week by week has been established and is working well. Details are printed below. The Sunday morning service runs from 11am until 12pm.

Dr Rodger Crooks, convenor of the vacancy, is continuing to handle the Thursday services, which run week by week from 1.05pm to 1.30pm. The Thursday services will be taking a break during July and August.

Sunday services (11am):

June 10: Dr Rodger Crooks

June 17: The Rev David Conkey

June 24: Dr Godfrey Brown

July 1: Rev Lee Eagleson

July 8: Dr Rodger Crooks

July 15: Dr Harry Uprichard

July 22: Rev Alistair Kennedy

July 30: Rev John Keefe

August 5: Rev Lee Eagleson

August 12: Dr Rodger Crooks

August 19: Rev Alistair Kennedy

August 26: Rev John Keefe

HOPE'S SONG

I hear it singing, singing sweetly,
Softly in an undertone,
Singing as if God had taught it,
"It is better farther on!"
Night and day it sings the same song,
Sings it while I sit alone,
Sings so that the heart may hear it,
"It is better farther on!"
Sits upon the grave and sings it,
Sings it when the heart would groan,
Sings it when the shadows darken,
"It is better farther on!"
Farther on ? Oh, how much farther ?
Count the milestones one by one -
No, not counting, only trusting,
"It is better farther on!"

THE STAIRWAY TO THE STARS

There's a stairway leading upward~which
The weariest may climb
Far above the highest mountain
To an altitude sublime,
Where a comforter awaits us,
For the Father's home is there,
And the way to mount that stairway
Is the simple way of prayer.
There's a stairway leading upward -
Though the distance may be far,
Though the lowest step's a valley,
And the highest step's a star,
'Tis the measure of an instant,
Lowly vale to starry height -
Just a little prayer will lift us
From the darkness to the light.

GOD'S FRIEND

When God had made the earth and sky,
The flowers and the trees.
He then made all the animals,
And the birds and bees.
And when the work was finished,
Not one was quite the same.
He said, "I'll walk this earth of mine
And give each one a name."
And so he travelled earth and sea,
And everywhere he went
A little creature followed him,
Until his strength was spent.
When all were named upon the earth,
And in the sky and sea,

The little creature said "Dear Lord,
There's not one left for me."
The father smiled, and softly said
"I've left you to the end,
I've turned my own name back to front
And called you 'dog' My friend.

A prayer:

Lord, make me the kind of person my dog
thinks I am.

EMMAUS

His eyes had altered since he'd looked on death
And the mysterious secret death disclosed.
His voice had changed after that last hard breath;
It's tones were in a different key transposed.
Nothing He spoke of made the two suspect
They walked with one they loved along the way,
But it was late, the supper table decked,
And they must urge the stranger to stay.
Something about the way He held the bread
Made them remember someone's outstretched palm
That once poured healing on the nearly dead,
And on the raging sea spilled a great calm.
Suddenly, amazed that such a joy could be,
They knew His hands, and saw that it was He.

A BURDENED AWAKENING

My thoughts had said:
Lord, I am weary of the way;
I am afraid to face another day -
Frustrated, limited,
Guarded, confined wherever I would go
By close-set "cannots," that like hedges grow
About me now. And then our dear Lord said,
"I am about thy bed. "

BE THOU THEIR VISION

Oh Lord, we bring Thee these for whom we pray.
Be Thou their strength, their courage, and their
stay,
And should their faith flag as they run the race,
Show them again the vision of Thy face.
Be Thou their vision, Lord of Calvary.
Hold them to follow; hold them fast by Thee.
Oh Thou who art more near to us than air,
Let them not miss Thee ever, anywhere.

Poems contributed by Elizabeth Doran