



The Greeting

CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE OF MAY STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BELFAST

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NINE-A-DAY

We have all heard of the government's health promotion programme called "Five-A-Day". We are encouraged to eat five portions of fruit or vegetables a day in order to keep us physically healthy. In the New Year, the London-based Langham Partnership, an organisation founded by John Stott in 1974, is launching a spiritual health initiative called Nine-A-Day.

Each day, as part of his daily devotions, John Stott would pray a prayer which included the following request: "Holy Spirit, this day fill me with yourself and cause your fruit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control—to ripen in my life."

The Langham Partnership's Nine-A-Day initiative involves asking every Christian in the United Kingdom to pray this prayer so that the nine flavours of the Fruit of the Spirit would ripen in our lives. The Langham Partnership believes that if each Christian in our nation prayed this

prayer for themselves and for other Christians, the spiritual health of the church would improve beyond recognition and that the gospel would begin to have an impact on our decaying culture for God's glory.

The Nine-A-Day Prayer is printed here. Why not pause now and pray it for yourself and others?

DR RODGER CROOKS
Vacancy Convener

THE 'NINE-A-DAY' PRAYER

Father, this day may I live a life that is worthy of you and which pleases you in every way.

Lord Jesus, this day may I deny myself, take up my cross and follow you.

Holy Spirit, this day fill me with yourself and cause your fruit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control—to ripen in my life.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit—the God of my salvation—hear my prayer because I pray in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

KIRK SESSION

The May Street Kirk Session is due to meet with the Vacancy Commission on Thursday November 1 in Belvoir Presbyterian Church.

TUESDAY CIRCLE

On Tuesday September 25 the ladies of the May Street Tuesday Circle assembled at Dundonald Ice Bowl for the opening of the autumn season. Two rinks had been booked and we quickly organised ourselves into two teams to start the competition. Everyone was keen and ready for action, there was much laughter and banter and as the scores were shown on the screens it quickly became apparent that one lady was in a different league from the rest of us her scores were very high.

No matter how hard I tried I did not manage to achieve one strike all evening (to the uninitiated, that means knocking all the pins down with one bowl). At the end of the session it was revealed that Betty McKeown was once again the May Street champion – and that she had also been the champion in 2010. Congratulations to Betty. Much fun was had by all and the evening finished with a welcome cup of tea and biscuits.

In October Jim O'Hagan will give a talk on the history of the May Street area, this should be of great interest to us all and perhaps bring back a lot of memories for some.

The November meeting will welcome David Hull who will speak to us on his battle against and victory over alcoholism.

December of course will bring the Christmas celebrations when we will hopefully have a home cooked meal by our own committee members and some fun and games afterwards.

During the summer break we received the sad news that one of our members, Peggy Farley, had passed away. Peggy was a member for many

years and came each month with her friend Joan Gillespie. She died in hospital in Enniskillen where her son lives. Her funeral service was held in St Donard's Church of Ireland church at Bloomfield and the Tuesday Circle was represented by several of our members. She is survived by her husband, son and grandchildren and we send them our sincere sympathy.

Our meetings, on the fourth Tuesday of each month, are always well attended and we hope this will continue as our programme is varied and mostly light hearted. New members will always be given a warm Tuesday Circle welcome.

ENA KIRKPATRICK
Secretary

THE CHOIR

The summer has flown by and the choir is now preparing for the annual May Street Harvest service which will be held on Sunday October 14.



Happy Anniversary: Derek and Evelyn Gourley, who celebrated their 52nd Wedding Anniversary on July 22. Pic: Valerie Morton.

During the holiday period we were again pleased to welcome honorary choir member. Philomena Nally, back into our ranks. Philomena and her husband Pat are members of Mullingar Presbyterian Church. They visit Belfast on several weekends throughout the year and include our Sunday morning service as part of their programme. Pat enjoys being part of the congregation while Philomena prefers to join us as her home congregation does not have a choir. She is a semi-professional singer and along with John Donohoue, she co-writes some music. She has also made several CDs, her latest release being

On behalf of Urban Soul Café
May Street, Belfast
FUEL EVENTS present



BRIAN HOUSTON

Supported by
The Emerald Armada + Calum Stewart

Wed 31st October // Doors 7:30 pm (8pm start)
May St Church, Belfast
Tickets from, www.musicglue.com/fuevents

www.fuevents.com

The Wind in My Sail in April 2012. Philomena and Pat, we are always delighted to have you.

We offer our congratulations to choir member Evelyn Gourley and her husband Derek who celebrated their 52nd Wedding Anniversary on July 22. They are well on their way to their Diamond Anniversary!

Another choir member, Ruby Fannin, features in the Around the Church section of the October 2012 Presbyterian Herald. Ruby has compiled a pamphlet outlining the history of May Street church. All the information which she has gathered together proved to be an excellent resource for visitors who came to May Street during a European Heritage Open day event on September 9. Many visitors commented that not only had they enjoyed seeing inside our church but also that they had learned so much about our history. Well done Ruby!

Rather than having a choir outing during the summer, we have decided to ring the changes and are looking forward to having a meal and enjoying each others company on a evening out sometime before Christmas.

VALERIE MORTON
Secretary

CHRISTMAS GIFT DAY

Advance notice of the May Street Gift Sunday which this year will take place on December 9. Please bring your gifts to put round the Christmas tree so that these can be given to the Thorndale Family Centre in north Belfast. The centre is run by the Salvation Army and is very much in need of support. We hope to have a representative from the Thorndale Family centre present to receive our toys and gifts and tell us a little more about the work of the centre.

JENNY WILSON

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

Members of our fellow city centre congregation of Berry Street joined us for the Harvest Thanksgiving service which took place in May Street on Sunday October 14. It was lovely to have our numbers augmented.

Berry Street have kindly invited May Street members to join them on Sunday November 18 for their annual Missionary Service, which starts at 11.30am. There will be no Sunday service in May Street on that date.

URBAN SOUL

From flooding to funding, the summer provided us with quite a few challenges at Urban Soul Cafe, the outreach project in the basement of May Street Church. We have managed to rise to the various challenges, but it has meant a lot of changes and doing things differently.

The future of the open door at Urban Soul looked rather uncertain without the support of previous funding arrangements. So we asked for Friends of Urban Soul to commit £10 a month, looked for volunteers, changed the opening hours to 8am until 2.30pm and amended the menu. We have been truly blessed by the volunteers. Kat Kirk has fitted in like she belongs and has taken over the food preparation in the cafe. Martin from the Ivory Coast is a treasure and keeps the kitchen running smoothly, George from Nigeria brings a smile and you should hear him playing the piano over lunchtimes at the end of the week.

Thanks must also go to those who have generously become friends of Urban Soul and for your ongoing encouragements. Lots of thanks to Kyle, Rosemary and Chris, our customers, who have donated their time and skills to launch www.UrbanSoulCafe.co.uk and connecting that to Facebook and Twitter. It's the way to communicate these days. Check it out and join in.

The flooding, resulting from a summer deluge, caused considerable damage to the flooring in the cafe and schoolroom and Eugene our joiner descended like an angel to sort it all out. We cannot say enough about how he has helped restore the good looks of the cafe.

So what else has been happening? We hosted a birthday party for a couple of 18 year olds and that motivated us to get the floor ready for action again for the beginning of the MT4uth weekend Academy.

Looking ahead, the Irish Ladies Convention is

using the church for a seminar on Saturday October 20 and the organisers have booked elevenses of scones and coffee, followed later by lunch. It will be all hands on deck because this means catering for 410 people in terms of scones and tea and coffee, and some 100 for lunch. Thanks to all the members of May Street who have offered to come down and lend a hand – the more the merrier.

At the end of October we have been contracted to provide catering for our friends at Music Theatre for Youth. As part of the Belfast Festival they are staging a performance of Little House of Horrors in the sanctuary on the evenings of October 29 and 30. Urban Soul will provide catering for the cast during rehearsals and on performance days, as well as looking after the needs of the audiences at the production. We will have a team selling refreshments during the intervals.

Then on October 31 we expect the sanctuary to be packed to the doors for a concert with singer Brian Houston and a full supporting act of bands. The concert is being organised by our friend Paul McNeilly of Fuel Events as a fundraiser for Urban Soul. As well as raising badly needed funds, this event will help raise the profile of Urban Soul to a new audience.

More details in the cafe.

Looking ahead to November, we are planning a Mexican night on Saturday November 3, from 7.30pm. A quiz will be organised and we will provide appropriate food for this themed evening.

We are still in conversation with councillors at Belfast City Hall regarding the funding of an upgrade of the schoolroom, next door to Urban Soul in the basement.

All in all, Urban Soul is looking to the future with more confidence now. Please continue to remember the work of the cafe and its outreach in your prayers.

URBAN SOUL COMMITTEE

URBAN SENIORS

Our 50+ Interest Group at Urban Soul is on hold at present while work on the ramp in the

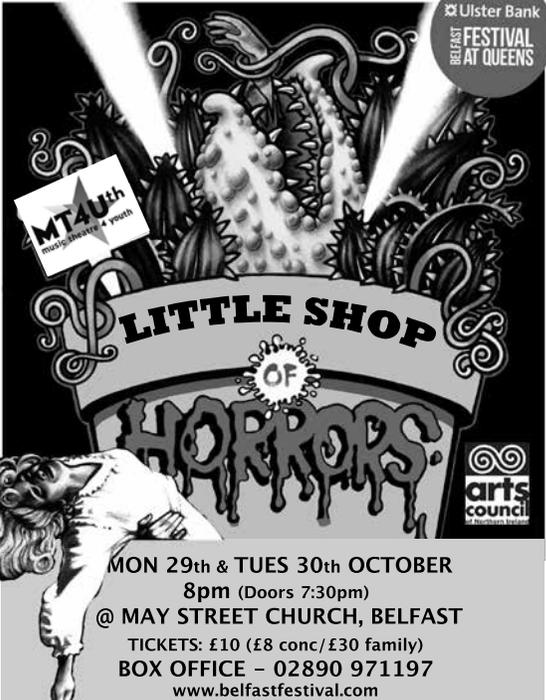
schoolroom is being undertaken. We are also investigating a possible link-up with the University of the Third Age. But watch this space, we will be back in action soon.

CHRIS HEWITT

LITTLE HOUSE OF HORRORS

Music Theatre 4 Youth, the performing arts education charity which is based at May Street Church, is set to stage one of its highest profile productions to date – a 50 strong cast of 16 to 25 year olds from all over Ireland will be performing a workshop production of Little Shop of Horrors, in May Street Church as part of The Belfast Festival at Queen's.

Award winning performing arts charity Music Theatre 4 Youth present an amateur production in association with Josef Weinberger Ltd



Ulster Bank
BELFAST FESTIVAL
AT QUEEN'S

MT4 Youth
music theatre 4 youth

**LITTLE SHOP
OF
HORRORS**

arts council
Northern Ireland

MON 29th & TUES 30th OCTOBER
8pm (Doors 7:30pm)
@ MAY STREET CHURCH, BELFAST
TICKETS: £10 (£8 conc/£30 family)
BOX OFFICE - 02890 971197
www.belfastfestival.com

Pinsett Masons

Arts & Business
Northern Ireland
www.mt4youth.com

GOLDBLATT
McGUIGAN

Little Shop of Horrors features Seymour Krelborn, a poor young man working at a run-down flower shop when he encounters a 'miracle'. He discovers an alien plant, takes it home and soon gains fame, fortune, and love. The only problem is that the plant feeds on blood, human blood. Seymour makes a deal - if the plant continues to bring him good fortune, he will in turn continue to feed the plant human flesh!

Music Theatre 4 Youth (MT4Uth) is delighted to present this fun, comedy rock musical which is sure to entertain all music theatre fans. The cast will have just five days working intensively with a top-level artistic team to put this production together from start to finish. Set in the beautiful and atmospheric surroundings of May Street Church nestled in Belfast city centre the production will be brought to life with puppet wizardry from Northern Ireland-based carnival and event producers The Beat Initiative.

For the occasion, special staging will be erected in May Street Church, and we are grateful to the congregational committee for facilitating this. We also acknowledge the contribution made by Mark Huffam who has involved HBO's Game of Thrones construction manager, Tom Martin from Acapple, in the construction of what promises to be a fabulous set and stage which will ensure that all members of the audience have an excellent view.

MT4Uth CEO Jenny Cooke said May Street Church would provide an excellent site specific venue for this "ground-breaking and mind-blowing" musical production. The charity has been working closely with May Street Church to make the venue a real asset to Belfast's cultural landscape.

Arthur Acheson, Clerk of Session at May Street, commented: "Belfast city centre is a fast moving environment, even in these economic times that are making some people nervous. May Street Congregation has a long tradition of encouraging people, business, arts and culture in the city centre.

"With MT4Uth now working out of the extensive church premises there is a growing sense of purposeful co-operation with the city centre's cultural and artistic life - the new life that continues to keep the spotlight on Belfast as one of the world's best places to come and enjoy. The links between the church and the youth theatre group become stronger with each activity - from meetings and chat in Urban Soul cafe in May Street's basement through auditions, rehearsals, showcases and the forthcoming major Festival production.

"It's hard work in difficult times but the tingle in the spine is there with every new initiative of MT4Uth in the heritage church building which has

been around since 1829. We look forward to Little Shop of Horrors in October which promises to be one of the biggest, brightest and loudest events in the church - ever!"

Mrs Cooke said they were confident that Little Shop of Horrors would be a production that would delight an audience of all ages.

She added: "We are also thrilled with the development of our new Weekend Academy based here at May Street Church. The academy will provide the youth of Northern Ireland with the ongoing training needed in the individual skills of singing, dance and drama from a team of international professionals."

ERIKA REID
Project Manager, Music Theatre 4 Youth

THANKS TO NIALL

Sincere thanks are expressed to the Rev Niall Bayly, who has been assisting very effectively with pastoral care at May Street for several years. Mr Bayly is stepping back, and Dr Rodger Crooks, our vacancy convenor, will take overall responsibility for this important aspect of congregational life.

Mr Bayly said he had greatly valued and cherished his association with May Street and said its congregation was an example of the finest Christian fellowship. He said he had been enriched by being a part of the congregation.

CLEANER KAT

Thanks to Kat Kirk for agreeing to undertake the role of church cleaner at May Street. Kat is one of the volunteers at Urban Soul and we are delighted that she has been able to take on this additional duty.

THE UNDERGROUND

Young people wishing to explore Christianity are invited to try out The Underground, a new Sunday evening venture at Urban Soul. The Rev Lee Eagleson, who set up the initiative, asks for everyone's prayerful support.

Mr Eagleson himself has been off in the US since mid-September. In New York he attended the Redeemer Presbyterian Church's City to City training course. Then he was off to meet supporters in Ohio and Virginia, but he is due back in Belfast on October 25.

DR TONY CAMPOLO EVENING



Coffee time: Avril Gracey, the Urban Soul manageress, serves coffee to Dr Tony Campolo (centre) and Paul McNeilly of Fuel Events before Dr Campolo's appearance at May Street on August 23. Pics: Robin Morton



Roaring trade: Ruby Hutchinson and Brian Gourley serve visitors with refreshments at the Urban Soul stand in the vestibule.



Revvng up: Rend Collective get the beat going at the Tony Campolo event in May Street sanctuary on August 23.



Top two: Dr Tony Campolo (right) and Shane Claiborne in debate during the presentation at May Street.

FULL HOUSE AT MAY STREET

May Street Church was rocking on the evening of Thursday August 23 for a special event – a Red Letter Revolution Tour evening with best selling authors Dr Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne. With worship music from the talented Rend Collective to get the evening going, it was a night to remember.

Some 600 people packed into the sanctuary – filling the downstairs and a good proportion of the balcony – and the enthusiastic audience covered all age-groups but was predominantly made up of young people. A low-level stage had been built in front of the organ, extending out some way from the choir stalls.

A great atmosphere was created by the very effective lighting and sound system, with a big screen up above the stage, showing the words of the praise songs being performed by Rend Collective, a Northern Ireland-based Christian rock band which kicked things off and later wrapped up the show.

The big attraction was Dr Tony Campolo, an American academic and evangelist, in conversation with hippy-type Shane Claiborne, formerly one of his students. Seated on high stools borrowed from Urban Soul they simply chatted to each other. A very effective TV-style means of communication, and they really held the attention of the audience.

Tony Campolo is leader of the Red Letter Christian movement and his focus was on the words of Jesus often shown in red text in some editions of the Bible. They are key phrases. The topics this raised were many and varied and the themes included evangelism, homelessness, poverty, third world aid, the material world, the relevance of Christianity to modern society, whether coming to faith was a moment or a movement. Big issues were effectively communicated and it was all a very challenging evening, giving everyone a lot of food for thought.

A charity called Compassion was an integral part of the night. It helps to feed, educate and evangelise children in third world countries. Those present were invited to agree to sponsor specific children at 70p per day, for a year. Some 150 agreed to sign forms, which the organisers viewed as a most encouraging response.

Although there was no interval, Urban Soul set up a soft drinks stall in the vestibule, which did good trade. And before the event started, Avril Gracey and her team in Urban Soul served a full dinner to around 20 of the backstage team.

Thanks to Ballymena-based Fuel Events, which organised the concert, for bringing such a prestigious event to May Street. It helped raise the profile of May Street Church and also of Urban Soul. And it served to show the flexibility of the sanctuary in that it was able to accommodate such a big event as this. Thanks to all those May Street members who helped in the run-up to the event and on the night.

ROBIN MORTON

A QUESTION OF FAITH

Greeting editor Robin Morton was invited by Belfast Telegraph Religion Correspondent Alf McCreary to contribute to his "Question of Faith" column in the Belfast Telegraph on July 7. This is how it went. Try answering the questions yourself – they are quite challenging.

1. Your idea of Heaven?

Taking a walk along Killahoey beach in

Dunfanaghy, Co Donegal, savouring the view over to Horn Head, marvelling at the blue sea and sky (on a good day!), breathing in the fresh air, listening to the roar of the ocean, and feeling the tug of the wind. The grandeur of God's kingdom is all around me and it's also a reminder that whatever crises may grip society, the tide still keeps ebbing and flowing day by day.

2. Eternity, would it not be boring?

I've never found life boring – even in early retirement - so if eternity is life in abundance, I reckon it augurs well. Let's hope there are no long sermons or tedious church committee meetings!

3. Could God be a woman?

Although we traditionally pray to our heavenly father, I rather suspect that God is a gender-free entity. To me, God's love and compassion are the most important elements. But if I'm wrong on the gender issue I trust I'll be able to handle it. I've worked with several female bosses in my time, so that might help!

4. Your finest moment of spiritual enlightenment?

When I started as a reporter on the Belfast Telegraph in the 1970s one of our tasks was to interview people who had been bereaved in the troubles. I am still struck by the Christ-like spirit of forgiveness I found among those who had most reason to hate. It made a profound impression on me and helped spark an interest in reconciliation which now manifests itself in my voluntary role as a



Question time: Robin Morton, editor of The Greeting.

board member of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council.

5. The person alive today you most admire and why?

Right now my vote has to go to my mother-in-law, who has recently been admitted to a nursing home following a stroke and a prolonged spell in hospital. Her warm smile, positive outlook, patient fortitude and contented attitude are an example to me. All of this stems from her quiet faith which has given her the strength she required to face the challenges of recent months.



Heavenly scene: Robin Morton's favourite beach – Killahoey in Co. Donegal.

6. If you had just one question to ask God face to face, what would it be?

So many questions but let's try this one: are there any other planets like earth in the universe – or in any other universe?

7. Your favourite book?

You'll forgive me if I go for a book called Highland Inspiration by the Rev Jim Lamont, a compilation of some of the former Dunfanaghy minister's Thought for the Day broadcasts on Highland Radio. I was involved in a committee which came together to organise sponsorship and publication of the book, which raised quite a few thousand euro for Donegal Hospice. Any time I pick up the book, or its sequel Highland Reflections which is still in print, I find a piece which seems to be speaking to me because the message is so relevant.

CHRIS AT CITY HALL



All smiles: May Street committee member Christine Hewitt meets the Lord Mayor, Alderman Gavin Robinson, during a reception organised by the Volunteer Now organisation at Belfast City Hall on September 12. Volunteer Now, formerly known as VSB, was launching its new good practice guidelines. Chris, a committee member of Volunteer Now, took the opportunity to invite the Lord Mayor to May Street and arrangements are now being set in place. Pic: Charlotte Murtagh

EUROPEAN HERITAGE

Numbers visiting May Street for the European Heritage Open Day programme were up this year. Around 175 visitors toured our historic Belfast city centre church over the two-day event, which took place over the weekend of September 8/9. This compares with 140 visitors in 2011, and this is very encouraging.



Warm welcome: Ruby Fannin from May Street (centre) explains a little of the history of the church to tourists Rita and Leo Chick from San Francisco during the European Heritage Open Day event on September 9. Pics: Robin Morton

This year those who signed the visitors included tourists from San Francisco, Paris, Austria, England and the Republic. In addition,

we welcomed many locals, some students, quite a few people who had walked past May Street Church but had never been inside. One group of students from Malaysia/China, who were over for the weekend from their college in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, painstakingly inscribed their names in Chinese script in our visitors book – which must be a first for May Street.



In tune: Ann and Leslie Jackson from Ballymena watch as May Street Presbyterian Church organist Colin Johnston put the church's 1914-built Binns organ through its paces at the European Heritage Open Day event.

There were some people with connections way back to May Street, and others who were taking a look at May Street along with other city centre churches which were open for the event, such as St Malachy's, St George's and Rosemary Street. They were all very interested in what May Street had to offer, and many took the opportunity for a visit to the pulpit, which gives such a commanding view of the sanctuary.

Some lovely comments were written in the visitors' book: "A hidden beauty", "church in lovely condition", "amazing", "so peaceful", "beautiful church and music, and helpful and interesting information", "such a beautiful oasis in a busy city", "always wanted to visit", "interesting, made very welcome", "really enjoyed the organ music", "wonderful woodwork" "thank you for letting us look round", "to stand in the pulpit was awesome", "nice building, especially the Calvin stained glass window and warm welcome", "keep going", and "first visit - impressed".

From a May Street point of view, it was a great chance to engage with visitors and to publicise

the work of Urban Soul and the plans for May Street, such as the development of an alcohol-free nightclub for young people in our basement. Church members fielded a lot of questions about the church, its history, its present-day congregation and its outreach.

Thanks to Ruby Fannin for preparing folders with easy to read information about May Street and thanks to all who have been acting as stewards/guides. And special thanks to our organists Colin Johnston and Charles Maginnes whose organ playing really brought the place to life.

ROBIN MORTON

COVENANT CONNECTION

May Street Church featured in a UTV programme about the Ulster Covenant which was broadcast on Monday September 24. Presenter Paul Clark was filmed at the church examining records which showed that his grandfather, who was a member of May Street, was among those who had signed the Covenant at May Street. Our thanks to U105 presenter Paul Boyd, a regular supporter of Urban Soul, for making the arrangements. It was all valuable promotion.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



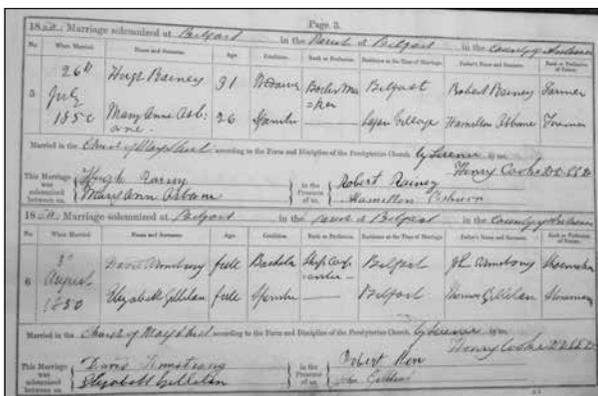
Many happy returns: Long standing May Street member Winifred Connor celebrated a special birthday with a party in the lecture hall after church on Sunday July 22. May Street elder Barry Bell congratulated Miss Connor as she prepared to cut the cake with her three nephews in attendance. The three, who flew across from England for the occasion, are (from left) Richard, Brian and John Connor. The cake was decorated with a photograph of May Street Church. Pic: Kathleen Rea



Cake's cut: May Street members and guests sample the special birthday cake prepared for Winifred Connor's birthday party. Pic: Robin Morton

ON THE RECORD

The records of May Street Presbyterian Church in Belfast have gone digital – thanks to a helping hand from the North of Ireland Family History Society. Members of the Society have diligently deciphered and transcribed many hundreds of pages of handwritten documents, contents, putting them in alphabetical order. This painstaking task involved going through the records for baptisms and marriages from 1835 to 1930. Although May Street opened in 1829 the earliest registers date from 1835. The reason for the absence of records between 1829 and 1834 is not clear, but there is evidence from an earlier congregation in which he served that the first minister, Dr Henry Cooke, had a somewhat cavalier attitude towards record-keeping. In total, the registers contained details of 3,375 baptisms and some 4,348 marriages,



Historic documents: An example of the pages of May Street records which were deciphered and transcribed by the Family History Society. This is the record of the marriage of Hugh Rainey and Mary Anne Osborne, which was conducted by Dr Henry Cooke in May Street on July 26, 1850.

creating a vast archive of the life and times of May Street Church over a 100-year period.

The records include poignant details of the 40 May Street members who were killed in action during World War One and the Family History Society has traced their stories to the war graves where their sacrifice is commemorated. Included are references to two May Street members who died at the Battle of the Somme in 1916 and one soldier who lost his life on the front line in France on November 8, 1918, just days before the Armistice.

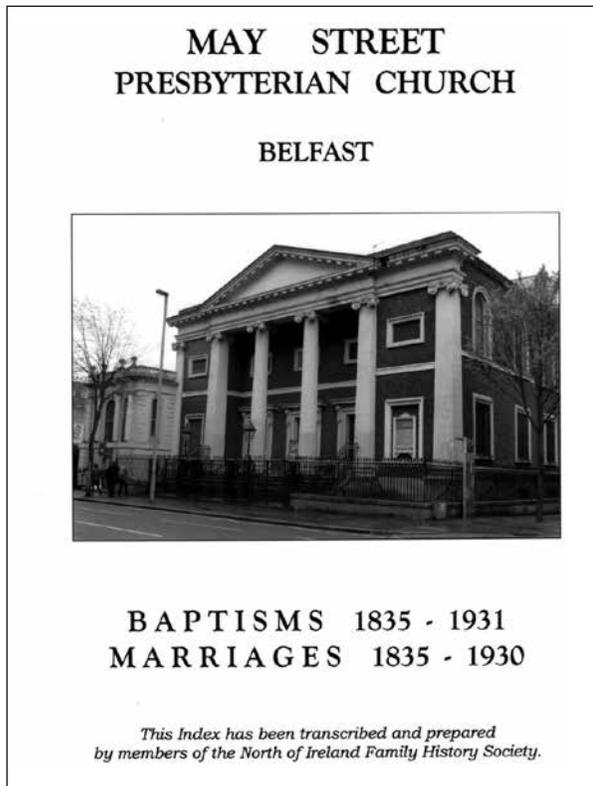


Going digital: Charlotte Murtagh (left) and Edith Tucky from the North of Ireland Family History Society present elder Kathleen Rea (centre) with a printed copy of the register of baptisms and marriages at May Street Presbyterian Church from 1835 to 1930. Also present at the ceremony are May Street committee members Chris Hewitt (left) and Valerie Condy.

Registers can be used not only for family history but can often provide a picture of what life was like in the past. The marriages registers, for example, will record the occupations of the two people getting married and of the fathers of the

DATE	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	RESIDENCE	CHURCH	FATHER'S NAME	CHURCH	WIFE'S NAME	FATHER'S RESIDENCE (if different to above)
1835	James, John	Belmont	21	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	18	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	John, John	Belmont	15	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	15	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	John, John	Belmont	12	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	12	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	John, John	Belmont	9	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	9	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	John, John	Belmont	6	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	6	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	John, John	Belmont	3	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	3	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	John, John	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	John, John	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	John, John	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	John, John	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	John, John	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	John, John	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
1835	Mary, Mary	Belmont	0	Belmont	St. Andrew's	James, John	St. Andrew's	Elizabeth, Elizabeth	Belmont
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bride and groom. In the case of May Street, the preponderance of farmers in the mid-1800s is noticeable. In later days the occupations range from shipwright to carpenter, from butler to land steward, from attorney to gentleman, and from flax dresser to riveter.



Front cover: *The folder containing all May Street's records from 1835 to 1930. It is now available for members of the congregation to consult.*

Charlotte Murtagh, a member of the Belfast Branch of the North of Ireland Family History Society who was responsible for the project along with Society members Edith Tucky and Doreen Walker, said they were very pleased to have been given access to the May Street records.

"This is a most valuable record of what was one of the leading Presbyterian congregations of its day, taking us through a period of enormous social change," she said. "Belfast was evolving from a village to a major industrial city. Street names were changing – for example, in the records we found a reference to Hercules Street, which is now Royal Avenue. In the 19th century, May Street was drawing people in from the nearby countryside and among the addresses recorded by those who were being married were Drumbeg, Killynure, Drumaness, Ballykeel, and Donaghadee."

The registers record two names of special interest - Samuel Gibson Getty, who served as Mayor of Belfast from 1856 until 1857 had his children baptised in May Street; and John Workman and his son Robert who played a leading part in the affairs of the congregation during its early years. Robert Workman was the father of 13 children, the youngest of whom was Frank Workman, one of the founders of Workman & Clark, a famous shipbuilding business on the Lagan.

Charlotte Murtagh added: "There is a growing interest in family history and now the information will be readily to hand for the members of May Street and the members of the public. Going through the registers was not easy and involved our team in a lot of detailed work. Because some of the records are so old and the writing, in places, almost illegible, we had to employ a bit of detective work. Often there are variable spellings of names, and many names are phonetic and spelt in unexpected ways. We must transcribe exactly what is recorded which is why it takes longer to identify the person you are searching for. It was dependent on the Minister writing the name according to the way he thought it should be spelt and in marriage records an 'x' can be found when the bride or groom was unable to write."

As part of the project pen pictures of the 11 ministers who have occupied the May Street pulpit since 1829 have been compiled, including the family tree of Dr Cooke, right down to his great-great-great-granddaughters, Iris Palmer and Muriel Morrow from Belfast, who visited May Street last year as part of their own researches.

Charlotte Murtagh said: "Church records are invaluable particularly when they pre-date civil registration, which started in 1864 for baptisms, 1845 for Protestant marriages, and 1864 for Roman Catholic marriages."

Kathleen Rea, an elder at May Street, said: "This has been an enormous project involving countless hours of time by Charlotte Murtagh and her colleagues at the North of Ireland Family History Society and we are indebted to them. The database which they have presented us with will make it much easier for us to help people

who contact us seeking information about their forebears. Because the information is now on disk it means it will be safeguarded for future generations. This archive also gives an absorbing insight into the life and times of the May Street congregation when it was at its height in the late 19th and early 20th century.”

Valerie Adams, librarian at the Belfast-based Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland, which collects and preserves historical material relating to Presbyterianism in Ireland said:

“Congregations should ensure that their records are kept in a safe place of custody and are always in the possession of the church as over the years so many records have either been mislaid or, even worse, lost as a result of fire or flood. Particularly in older congregations, church records are a unique source of information for the growing numbers of people who are tracing their roots and for those who want to write a history of their congregation and to explore the history of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

“Registers of baptisms and marriages are important, particularly those that pre-date civil registration of births and marriages, but so too are Kirk Session and Committee minutes, stipend books, Sunday School rolls and communion rolls. We would encourage congregations to have their records copied so that if any of the original records are lost or destroyed at least the information is secure.

“If congregations would like preservation or copying advice we at the Presbyterian Historical Society would be happy to talk to you. We would also encourage congregations to organise volunteers within their congregations to have their earliest registers of baptisms and marriages indexed and to lodge a copy of the indexes in the Society’s library which will relieve congregations of the need to handle enquiries concerning their records and save on the wear and tear of the original registers.

“Should you wish to do this yourselves or to have an organisation do it for you but don’t know where to start we would be only too pleased to give advice on how this should be done. We owe it

to future generations to make sure that our records are kept safe and secure while at the same time ensuring that the information can be made easily accessible.”

DEADLINE

The deadline for all contributions to the next issue of The Greeting is Sunday January 27.

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Deaths

October 5: Sheila Barr, Broughton Gardens, Belfast 6.

Blessed are those that die in the Lord

SYMPATHY

Sympathy is expressed to May Street member Elizabeth Doran on the death of her brother Jim who died on September 4.

FILM LOCATION

May Street Church is due to be used as one of the sets for a documentary about the history of Presbyterianism which is being made for the BBC. A camera crew from BelowTheRadar, a local film production company which has been commissioned to shoot the four part programme, was due to carry out filming in the sanctuary on October 17.

IRISH WOMEN’S CONVENTION

May Street Church is being used as the venue for a seminar which is to take place on Saturday October 20 as part of the Irish Womens Convention. The main conference is taking place at Assembly Building but around 100 delegates are due to visit May Street for the seminar, plus refreshments before and after in Urban Soul.

PEACE AGENT

St Malachy's has kindly invited May Street to be represented at two upcoming events – a candlelit prayer service on Friday October 19 and then to an inter-church group meeting on Friday October 26. Please contact me if you wish to attend either event.

ARTHUR ACHESON

COLLECTORS

- Oct:** Gordon Kirkpatrick, Brian Gourley, Valerie Condy, Clive Gilmour.
- Nov:** Kathleen Rea, Alan McCrum, Barry Bell, Robin Hewitt.
- Dec:** Kathleen Rea, Robin Morton, Jenny Wilson, Arthur Fannin.

BELFAST COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHOIR



Making music: The renowned Belfast Community Gospel Choir is now using May Street lecture hall as the location for its fortnightly rehearsals. Under conductor Marie Lacey, the 80-strong choir meets to practise numbers before various performances. May Street is delighted to be able to facilitate this talented choir. Pic: Robin Morton

COMMUNION SERVICE

A Communion service will take place on Sunday October 21 (11am).

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.

Sunday services (11am):

October 2012

October 21 (Communion): Rev Ian McClean

October 28: Dr Godfrey Brown

November 2012

November 4: Rev Lee Eagleson

November 11: Dr Rodger Crooks

November 18: Service in Berry St (11.30am)

November 25: Rev Alistair Kennedy

December 2012

December 2: Rev Lee Eagleson

December 9 (Gift Day): Dr Rodger Crooks

December 16: Rev Alistair Kennedy

December 23: Dr Harry Uprichard

December 30: Dr Rodger Crooks



City slickers: Students at Music Theatre for Youth's Weekend Academy, which is held in May Street Church, celebrate the news that Translink is supporting the initiative. In return, the aspiring stars are promoting Translink's new youth smartcard, which is available to all 16-23 year olds and which provides a third off all bus and rail travel.

TRUST

If Thou but suffer God to guide thee,
And hope in Him through all thy ways,
He'll give thee strength whate'er betide thee,
And bear thee through the evil days:
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on the rock that naught can move.

What can these anxious cares avail thee,
These never-ceasing fears and sighs ?
What can it help, if thou bewail thee
O'er each dark moment as it flies ?
Our cross and trials do but press
The heavier for our bitterness.

Only be still, and wait His leisure
In cheerful hope, with heart content
To take whate'er thy Father's pleasure,
His all-discerning love has sent.
Nor doubt our inmost wants are known
To Him who chose us for His own.

Sing, pray, and keep His ways unswerving;
So do thine own part faithfully,
And trust His word: though undeserving,
Thou yet shall find it true for thee:
God never yet forsook at need
The soul that trusted Him indeed.

THE AWAKENING

This mortal dies –
But, in the moment when the light fails here
The darkness opens, and the vision clear
Breaks on his eyes.
The veil is rent –
On his enraptured gaze heaven's glory breaks,
He was asleep ...
And in that moment ... Wakes.

LIFE

What is life?
'Tis but a sigh
Between two mysteries that lie
Dark and remote
Beyond all knowing,
Our way of coming -
Our way of going.

• • •

“God gave you a gift of
86,400 seconds today.
Have you used one to say
Thank You ? “

• • •

“O God of second chances
and new beginnings.
Here I am again.”

• • •

Dont say you don't have enough time.
You have exactly the same number
of hours per day that were given
to Helen Keller, Leonardo Da Vinci,
Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.

• • •

“Fall seven times.
Stand up eight.”

• • •

“There are thoughts which
are prayers. There are moments
when, whatever the posture of
the body, the soul is on its knees.”

• • •

Download your worries.
Get online with God.

JUST A PRAYER AWAY

No matter what your troubles are,
No difference large or small.
Each upset that comes your way,
Each time you slightly fall.
The smallest fear you've ever had,
Is always known by God.
Each step you've walked, he's counted
On every road you've trod.
So, never feel that you're alone
When shadows cloud your day.
But speak his name and you will see
He's just a prayer away.

THE HEART REMEMBERS

The heart remembers everything although
the mind forgets.
The raptures and the agonies, the hopes
and the regrets.
The heart remembers April when the snows
of winter fall,
Hearing on the bitter wind the sweetest
song of all.

When youth has had its shining hour and
love its golden day
Time may fade the colours and the glory
turn to grey,
But something of the magic lingers - never
to depart,
Deep down in the secret places of the quiet heart.

You think you have forgotten but the heart
remembers all.
Suddenly, some strange and lovely thing it
will recall,
Something that was buried long ago and far away,
A kiss, a smile, a melody, a dream of yesterday.

NEVER

Never let your trials and troubles fill you with
dismay
There's a purpose in them all as you will find
some day
Often the calamities are blessings in disguise.
The things that make us humble are the things
that make us wise.

LITTLE WORLDS

A bird lived in a painted cage beside a
windowpane -
Knowing nothing of the wind, the sunlight,
and the rain.
Poor little bird ! It was as well he did not realise
That his tiny wings were meant to beat
against the skies.

A man lived in a world of ready-made ideas -
A cramping cage of prejudices and of doubts
and fears.
He did not know that out beyond the ranges
of his thought
Lay a strange and lovely world where
miracles are wrought.

Year by year he lived content behind his
prison bars -
Never looking up to seek for god amongst
the stars.
In many forms the Lord appeared and yet he
could not see.
Poor little man ! He lived and died in his captivity.

ALL THAT'S NEEDED

Sometimes all that's needed is a touch of
sympathy
To warm a hurting heart and make it glow ...
Sometimes all that's wanted is a little bit of praise.
It often acts like sunshine on the snow.

When a quarrel casts its shadow on a
one time happy pair,
When silence separates and love grows chill.
Sometimes all that's needed is for one of
them to make
A gesture of good nature and goodwill.

CONTENTMENT

Contentment is not possessing everything but
giving thanks for everything you possess.

Poems contributed by Elizabeth Doran