

STAFF STORY



The setting: Castlewellan Castle

The date: 6 – 8 January 2012

The why: Camps and Missions Leaders' weekend

For me, it was my very first Leaders' weekend, and to be honest – I didn't quite know what to expect. The first weekend in January – still feeling slightly podgy from Christmas – I had to ask myself the question, what am I doing? Is it wise going to Castlewellan Castle to eat even more food? Little did I know that learning would range from handling the growing weight of pastoral leadership to the specifics surrounding how to make a bowl of cereal! Let's be honest...it's something we all need to know. Thanks to Kyle Alexander for enlightening us...

But yes, the leader's weekend was incredibly special. The whole

experience felt a big Scripture Union family – a family passionate about bringing the good news alive for children and young people! We were blessed to have Alain Emerson with us for the weekend, sharing teaching on Ephesians 3:14 – 20; we were challenged on our perspective, our time spent in God's presence, and the realisation that His power works through us in all that we do. Leaders also looked at how to create space for children who don't connect in the usual way, and discussed what to do when volunteers don't know their Bible. It was a weekend of sharing, supporting and celebrating – and a weekend that has strengthened me for the year ahead.

Now to Him who is able...in 2012

Julie Mehaffy

Volunteer Development Officer

Scripture Union Northern Ireland
157 Albertbridge Road
Belfast BT5 4PS

PRAYER FOCUS

February 2012

Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30

New Living Translation (NLT)

Rebuilding walls can be tiring. In Nehemiah's time so many people collaborated together and saw God restore Jerusalem.

For us today working across SU, our churches and ministries the challenge may prove tiring but our confidence is in Jesus. He invites us to put on his yoke. This word-picture has particular significance given his background in carpentry. In his time ox-yokes were made of wood: each carefully handcrafted to the individual to be a perfect fit.

As we build together God has a task for each of us. Wearing his yoke, which is 'easy' (in Greek chrestos can mean well-fitting), we can be sure that He will steer and the work will get done

Anita Conkey

Schools' Development Manager

PRAYER FOCUS

February 2012

Wed 1 Feb

At the beginning of a new month lets give thanks for January - we started the year with much activity and it has been a great start to a new year. We want to take time today to simply say thank you to God for His goodness.

Thur 2 Feb

This month sees the start of our Leadership Development Course - designed for volunteers going into specific leadership roles in Summer 2012. Please pray for David Dunlop as he shares about Guarding our Hearts, and for Christoph Ebbinghaus as he speaks on Listening to God.

Fri 3 Feb

Give thanks for Paul's recovery and return to work after a minor heart attack at the end of Nov. Pray that he will get used to some necessary lifestyle changes and be back to full strength again by the end of this month.

Sat 4 Feb

Please remember Jen today as she works in the Resource Centre, as she continues to help staff, volunteers and customers find the material they need.

Sun 5 Feb

The SU Group in Ballymoney High kicks off this term, meeting every other Wednesday. Give thanks for the teachers who are heading this group up, pray that God will give them wisdom. And pray that pupils would

come, so that the group will be a real influence in the school.

Mon 6 Feb

Today is the first day for Phil Howe as our new Secondary School Worker. Pray for Phil's first month in SUNI as he gets to know staff and volunteers and as he meets up with a wide variety of SU groups from many different backgrounds and settings.

Tue 7 Feb

Please pray for Colin as he manages his changing role and oversees the seven E3 Districts and Schools' Workers. Pray for wisdom, discernment in decisions, energy and freshness with a busy schedule and for continued favour for all the projects that would produce much fruit

Wed 8 Feb

As this financial year comes to a close please remember Ian as he prepares for the end of one year and helps plan budgets for the year to come.

Thur 9 Feb

Tomorrow sees 'The Amazing Journey' (Baptist Youth) with help from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church being taken into Clondeboy Primary School, Bangor. Pray that children will listen and respond as Ken Carson leads them through the Old Testament with a dynamic and interactive presentation - including Bible characters telling their story, Bible food tasting and dressing up in

Bible costumes! Leanne is also planning to work alongside a few volunteers from the church to teach 'The Amazing Jesus' follow-up RE lessons in the school.

Fri 10 Feb

Tonight is the start of this year's North Coast Camp in Bushmills. We're very excited about what God will do through this weekend! Pray for the team of very gifted leaders as they plan and work with the pupils; please pray that many children will come to know Jesus through what they hear on this weekend.

Sat 11 Feb

The work of Scripture Union in Northern Ireland extends over hundred years but today marks the 65th Anniversary of the first meeting of the CSSM Northern Ireland Advisory Committee (the beginnings of Scripture Union Northern Ireland). Take time today to thank God for those people throughout the years who gave of their time to work for SU and with God's help, the effect they had on the children and young people of Northern Ireland. Please remember the current volunteers not only those helping with camps and missions but also the ones who sit on our different committees. (Council, ExCo, District Management Teams and departmental committees) The work of SUNI simply would not happen without them.

Sun 12 Feb

Give thanks for the opportunity Rachel (E3 Ballymena) & local church youth workers had to take the Life of Jesus RE lessons with two year 9 classes in Ballee Community High School at the beginning of the month. Pray that through these lessons they would want to know more about a life with Jesus.

Mon 13 Feb

Remember Jonathan today as he continues to support Helen and other staff daily in the office.

Tue 14 Feb

On a day when the world focuses on "Love" may we remember God's love for us. " This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." 1 John 4:10 (NIV)

Wed 15 Feb

Give thanks for the SU group in Bangor Academy and the opportunity for Leanne to help set up a new group for senior pupils. Pray for good relationships to be built and wisdom in helping Christian pupils to go deeper in their faith.

Thur 16 Feb

Pray for wisdom and vision as the Schools' Staff make key decisions about national events such as Making Your Mark, the SU pupil leadership training weekend, & Re:Source the teacher conference in the next few weeks.

Fri 17 Feb

Please remember Terry (E3 South East Antrim) today as he continues to work with local schools. Thank God for the opportunities he has had to speak to children and young people over the last few months and may those opportunities grow as relationships are strengthened between Terry & school staff.

Sat 18 Feb

As we start equipping our Volunteers for the summer. Please pray for the training sessions that we will put together between now & the summer to help our camp and mission leaders.

Sun 19 Feb

Give thanks for an excellent team of leaders who are involved in X:site - a Bible based celebration for children from across Belfast now taking place every other month. Pray that more and more churches will catch the vision, and that more and more children will attend and bring their friends.

Mon 20 Feb

Give thanks, with Jenny (North Coast E3) for the opportunities she had to take Amazing Jesus lessons last term in Millburn and Bushmills Primaries, & Luke with Luke lessons in William Pinkerton and Ballysally Primaries. Give thanks for Andrew & Mabel, our new volunteers! Pray that God will make grow the seeds planted in children's lives.

Tue 21 Feb

Please pray for the SU at Dundonald High School which is called the 'QuAC' club. This term they are following Youth Alpha. The group meets Tuesday lunch times 1.30 -1.50pm

Wed 22 Feb

The busyness of the summer season is approaching, which means many Access NI forms, online applications & insurance forms! Please pray for Jonathan, Ashleigh and Julie as they help to answer queries, support leaders and ensure that forms are processed.

Thur 23 Feb

Today Mark (E3 Antrim) is returning to do a second assembly in Ballycraig Primary School,

pray that good relationships will continue to grow between him and the staff in the school.

Fri 24 Feb

Pray for Helen today. Pray for wisdom as she works with Staff & Council. Pray for the big things - direction and strategy and also pray for the small things - the emails, telephone calls, the letters that need written and the conversations that happen daily.

Sat 25 Feb

Please pray for the East Belfast Church Link Breakfast happening today and give thanks for all the Church Link Persons throughout the E3 Districts in Northern Ireland.

Sun 26 Feb

Paul will be taking a sabbatical over the next 3 months. Please pray this would be a time of refreshing, a time to enjoy a different rhythm and pace - to read, think and pray.

Mon 27 Feb

Please remember Ashleigh today as she continues to support staff and volunteers in the office and customers in the Resource Centre.

Tue 28 Feb

Churches and schools will by now have received publicity on our camps and missions this summer. Please pray that many will feel excited about the summer months - all potential volunteers, children and young people who will attend our teams. Pray also for our leaders as they prepare their programmes.

Wed 29 Feb

As Jeff (E3 Fermanagh) continues to make new connections in his district, pray for him today as he takes his first assembly in Portora Royal, Enniskillen.