

OUR COMMUNITY, OUR FUTURE

CHALLENGING PERCEPTIONS

A partnership series of events and conversations facilitated by The Link Family and Community Centre and Thrive Ireland.

Thank you to everyone who participated in last year's successful "Stronger Together" Programme. This year's "Our Community, Our Future" is seeking to enable individuals and groups within our local community to explore how we might better work together for the benefit of the Ards and North Down Community. So, if you are a member of a local church or community group or represent a statutory agency or local voluntary organisation, then you are invited to participate.

Many are keen to make a difference in their local community, but they don't know where to begin. Statutory agencies may not always be fully aware of the services and support churches and faith-based organisations provide, and equally churches don't always know what other support and initiatives are available locally within the Statutory and Community and Voluntary sector. Understanding each other's role and activities enables us all to work together to build a better community.

The "Our Community, Our Future" Programme is open to everyone and provides an opportunity to build relationships, find out what each person and organisation does to support our local community, and make it a better place to live. With increased knowledge, better understanding and growing relationships, we can begin to understand how we can support each other and work together for the benefit of the wider community.

"Our Community, Our Future" Conference

Building Relationships, understanding our community.

Friday 21st October 2022

Venue: House Church, 18C Crawfordsburn Road, Newtownards BT23 4EA.

Time: 9.30am - 1pm

Registration essential.



"Our Community, Our Future" Round table event.

Mental Health Challenges - Invisible Trafficking.

Friday 25th November 2022

Venue: Streatan Presbyterian Church, West Street, Newtownards, BT23 4EN

Time: 9.30am - 1pm

Registration essential.

"Our Community, Our Future" Round table event. Mental Health Challenges - Young people and mental health.

Friday 24th February 2023

Venue: Scrabo Hall Church, 143 - 153 Mill Street, Newtownards BT23 4LN

Time: 9.30am - 1pm

Registration essential.

In Conversation with....

Storytelling events from across the Borough

Dispelling the myths - Welcoming the Stranger

Tuesday 18th October 2022

Time: 7.30pm

Venue: The Glen Community Centre, 33 Glenard Road, Newtownards BT23 4HS

Elizabeth Black from The Link's English class will help us understand some of the realities of life for those who seek sanctuary and a new life in our local community. We will also meet and hear some personal stories.

Bridging the Religious Divide - Meet the local churches and find out what we have in common

Tuesday 8th November 2022

Time: 7pm

Venue: This is an online event. Please register for a zoom link.

Church leaders from across the denominations in Newtownards will help develop understanding of what each believes and there will be an opportunity for questions from participants.

From Africa to Ireland - Peacebuilding in Kenya.

Wednesday 16th November 2022

Time: 7.30pm

Venue: Movilla Presbyterian Church, 87 Movilla Road, Newtownards, BT23 8RQ

Allan Waihumbu from the organisation Way of Peace will share about the conflict situation in Kenya and his journey in peace building. We will reflect on the similarities with our own conflict in N. Ireland and see how we can learn from his experiences.

St Vincent de Paul - Supporting the community in Newtownards.

Wednesday 30th November 2022

Time: 7.30pm

Venue: St Patrick's Church, 12 - 24 Upper North Street, Newtownards BT23 7AD

This is an opportunity to learn about the history and work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul which is an international voluntary organisation in the Catholic Church. The vital local support it offers to the community in Ards and North Down is a story of cross community partnerships and love and care to people of all faiths and none.

Crossing Borders....

A series of three interactive seminars aimed at church members. These seminars are seeking to stimulate reflection on how we relate our faith to the community around us.

We have hope that, because of Jesus' death and resurrection, God's Kingdom is present today. We can experience the power of God's kingdom in our lives, our circumstances, our communities and through our ministries in helping people flourish. There is a risk in this period of transition that we expect too little from God. With many prayers as yet unanswered, it can be easy to give up. But the more we try to faithfully pursue God's will on the earth and pray for his Kingdom to come, the more we will experience it.

"We are called to produce, in a thousand different ways, signs of God's new world within the apparently unpromising landscape of the old one." N.T Wright.

Lessons from Rwanda - A series of three seminars.

Venue for all: Streatan Presbyterian Church, West Street, Newtownards, BT23 4EN

1) A trip to Rwanda - the story and learning.

In August 2022, Thrive Ireland hosted members of the South East Fermanagh Foundation, a cross-community victims/survivors group from Northern Ireland on a visit to Rwanda to meet and learn from victims/survivors of the 1994 Genocide there. Kenny Donaldson and others who travelled with Diane Holt from Thrive Ireland will share about the trip and their learning from it.

Wednesday 25th January 2023 at 7.30pm

2) Confession and repentance - The Muzanze Declaration.

"Though there have been individual acts of repentance, asking for forgiveness and speaking against the genocide by some churches, the church as the body of Christ has yet to stand together to self-evaluate and consider her role in the history of Rwanda and make a unified decision regarding the way forward."

This seminar will give participants an opportunity to examine 'The Muzanze Declaration', jointly made by the churches in Rwanda in 2014 and reflect on what it has to say to the Church in N. Ireland.

Wednesday 1st February 2022 at 7.30pm

3) Open to Change - Personal Reflections.

An opportunity to unpack the learning from the previous two evenings and consider our own response. In light of this, how can we make a difference in our own local community both individually and corporately as churches?

How do we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

A series of three interactive seminars.

Venue for all: Movilla Abbey Church, 63 Movilla Road, Newtownards, BT23 8EZ

With a backdrop of declining numbers, a society who are turning their back on Christian faith and the church, what does fidelity look like? How do we witness in a disbelieving world? How do we create community in an age of loneliness?

1) The church as relational.

Wednesday 1st March 2023 at 7.30pm

2) The church as relevant.

Wednesday 8th March at 7.30pm

3) The church as antidote.

Wednesday 15th March 2023 at 7.30pm

For all of these events please contact yvonne@thelinkcentre.org or call Yvonne on 028 91821124 to register or receive a zoom link.