



Making connections

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Joining An Tionólann, the core team of the West Belfast Special Project in September 2023, as a community outreach worker with refugees and asylum seekers, meant starting afresh; meeting new people and trying to build relationships were part of settling into this developing ministry.

Looking back over the past eight months, it is evident that God has graciously opened doors for connections to be made. Shopping locally has led to catch-ups with ladies of various nationalities and visits to homes nearby. Meeting friends for a cuppa in neighbouring coffee shops creates opportunities to chat with those serving there about local activities and have led to generous offers of food for refugee friends. A visit to the new halal food shop resulted in a lovely conversation about how friendly the local community has been and led to an invitation to chat further. Whether it's conversations in English classes, discussions over dinner or laughing with a coffee before the Bible study, as a core team, we are really encouraged by the warmth of the relationships developing within the community.

The past few months have seen a number of events which have led to more new connections. The 'So Much a Part of Us' history exhibition, which ran in St Mary's University College in November and again in St Comgall's in February, gave opportunities for local people to find out more about the history of Albert Street Presbyterian Church.

An Tionólann's weekly Bible studies have been a source of encouragement as we continue to read Mark's gospel on a Thursday evening. With each passing week, conversations about Jesus' life and ministry develop, connections are made and we

continue to pray that the seed sown will produce a rich harvest.

A Palm Sunday service was held with around 50 people attending from the local community and further afield. Mark's gospels were made available and there was interest shown in reading God's Word at home. As we look forward to the third service of the year on Sunday 26 May (Trinity Sunday), we ask

that you would pray for more connections and invitations to be issued.

In September, Rev David Moore shared with us Matthew 13:31–32: "He told them

another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.'" As we look back over this year, we can see God's hand providing all these connections and pray that the seed sown through these developing relationships may lead to a flourishing tree giving shelter to all.

More details can be found on our website www.antonolann.com/ or by following the ministry on Facebook or Instagram.

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Please pray:

- Praise God for his provision every day as we interact with people in the local community and pray that relationships would continue to develop and point to Jesus.
- Pray we would know the Lord's clear guidance for future plans in the area.