

Dear Church Family,

Warm greetings from across town! It has been a long time since I last wrote a newsletter. In fact, I felt I even had to come up with a new title and so for the time being it will be 'Henry's Happenings'. Not very original but it will let you know what is happening, and in fact quite a lot is happening!

So where to start? The last edition of the former 'Bell Banter' came out in 2017 and after that we kept news coming through the church bulletins with news of Nancy's treatment and care. It is hard to believe that May 2nd 2021 marked the 2nd anniversary of Nancy's passing. It is also hard to believe that these last few years here in Portadown mark the longest period I have ever lived here. A lot has happened over the last four years for which I have much to thank you all for; meals and visits, notes and prayers, and for walking with me through this period.

I am now settled in Clendinning close to a few others from 1st Portadown. I was able to move into 13 Clendinning Drive in June last year and was soon settled. I have been made very welcome by the community here. If you are passing through this side of town, please call in. The doorbell does work but it takes me a minute to get down from the 'office' above the front door – where all the zooming and correspondence takes place.



So, what I am doing? I continue with WEC Int'l and picked up my ministry again in January 2020. I have a responsibility in the training, development and support of our WEC leaders around the world. We have about 72 official branches with around 140 leaders overseeing these branches, with over 1900 members. We run in-house courses for members and leaders which, with the onset of Covid-19 restrictions, have had to be put online. I now have a team of about 32 preparing and presenting training topics for these courses. In addition, I have zoom administrators, break-out room hosts and coaches lined up to facilitate the online training and then follow up with the learners. One course is running and another will start in September. I am also presenting some of the course topics. I am very thankful for all these co-workers who have agreed to take this on in addition to their ongoing ministries. The feedback from the learners in the current course is very encouraging. We use the 'flipped classroom' approach for the online learning. I value your prayers for me as I prepare, present and coordinate these training programs. Thank you.

I am also involved in setting up an agricultural project in a closed country where we hope to grow vegetables on a commercial scale and do so in a way that honours Christ and brings His light and love to the community. Covid brought a halt to the project but we are still hoping that we will be able to get going next year. We have a team of 6 ready to start but still need one more member who would have experience with hydroponics to complete the team. Let me know if you know someone for this post!

Finally in July I am hoping to be able to travel to Greece where I meet with a group of Arab and Western theologians to help put together Bible and leadership training for the many new Muslim-background pastors who are seeking to care for their flocks. We praise the Lord for the great spiritual harvest during this season of great suffering and war in the ME, but these new communities of faith need help, training and encouragement.

I am not sure if I should continue to update you on news of the kids! They are all grown up and working in their respective professions. However, if you will forgive this proud father, let me do so one last time!



Lena is still teaching at the Brno International School in Czech Republic. The country was badly affected by the second wave of Covid and for most of this year the country has been in strict lockdown. Lena needed a permit to go further than her area of town, and of course schools were closed. She has been teaching from home but last month they returned to classroom again. She will be heading to Canada at the end of the month for a break, her first for a long time but hopes to return in August and continue teaching there. Here is a 'masked picture' of her with some of the class on an outing to a museum.

Miriam and Craig are doing well and the grandkids growing. Silas is now 8, Levi 7, Abbey 5 and Isabelle 3 this month. They have had a lot of school disruption this year in Canada and so home-schooling has been the norm. However, as a family they have adjusted to this and really enjoy it, in fact they may choose to continue this even if schools open again in the new school year. Miriam continues as a nurse in the A&E department, and Craig while helping a lot at home now, including home-schooling, is increasingly involved in their church.



Hannah is in nursing also at the same A&E. She and Mark (a paramedic) announced their plan to marry earlier this year and the date is set for October 9th. They both love the Algonquin national park (canoeing, climbing, hiking) and so the wedding will be at a venue there. Hannah's latest adventure has been getting a puppy aptly named 'Quin' who is growing fast and under Hannah's strict training is becoming a very obedient hound! He just got his 'Scholars with Collars' level 1 certificate! I would ask you to pray that we can all attend the wedding! With different Covid travel rules etc it may be impossible for Lena and Daniel to attend.

Daniel has just successfully completed his medical training and starts as a new doctor in July at the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital with a two-year contract. He has sorted out a place to live near the hospital but will be over here in NI for a few weeks before he starts working. Again, I want to say a sincere thank you to this church community who adopted and cared for him when he moved over here 10 years ago and have prayed for him through these years of medical school. He saw this sign when he was out cycling, and it now rings true.



I read this in a leadership book by Steven Brown, 'Jesus Centred': "When you fix your eyes on Jesus, you never lose your wonder of Him. When you focus with a fresh wonder of Jesus, you will be drawn closer to Him. When you are drawn closer to Jesus, you will be transformed by Him. When you are transformed by Jesus you will draw others to Him."

Pressing on by faith, and in Christ,

Henry

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