

Newsletter No 5 12th May 2013

As noted in the last Newsletter, we will answer the questions arising from the Information Evening in this Newsletter, there will also be a short article from Irene.

Q. Is the ground floor of the new church building sloping?

A. No, it is all at the one level throughout. This level is the same as the top of the three external steps to the gallery.

Q. Is the gallery floor the same as it is at present?

A. Yes, there will be a level area around the pews but the pews themselves will be on a slope as they are at present.

Q. We were advised the mortar in the walls is "dead", does this not mean a continuing problem with the façade which is staying?

A. No, the existing façade will be stripped of all the old plaster and then the dead mortar between the stone will be racked out until sound mortar is found. The stone will then be re-pointed with new mortar. If no sound mortar is found, specialist material will be used to bond the joints between the stones. When all dead mortar has been removed the façade will be re-plastered to a high specification. Inside walls of the façade will be insulated and dry lined.

Q. There are probably little foundations to the façade, what will be done to ensure it stays up?

A. Prior to detailed design there will be a full structural survey carried out which will include trial holes to check the extent of the foundations. Detailed design will be based on the results of these surveys and will most likely require some form of underpinning the existing walls.

Q. Will the façade stay up when the other walls are demolished?

A. That's the plan! the contractor will be required to construct a temporary frame to hold the façade prior to demolition and at a later stage the façade will be structurally tied into the new steel frame for the building.

Thanks for these questions, keep them coming and we will answer them as we continue on our Journey of Faith. Don't forget to keep this Newsletter in your personal folder.

It took some considerable time for the Rev McClay to persuade the members of his parish that they could trust in God to provide the funding needed to refurbish their church. He hosted the entire congregation, small group by small group, giving them a meal and sharing his vision to encourage them to be bold and join him in this venture of faith. The refurbishment was going to cost £400,000. This was to remove the pews and purchase suitable seating, rewire, deal with damp, provide disability access and repaint. In due course the congregation caught the vision and realised that if they wanted to be salt and light in the community they needed to modify their building.

Only once the builders had begun their work did they discover that the entire wooded structure supporting the roof was unsafe and would have to be replaced. The cost jumped from £400,000 to £1 million! Rev McClay was at a loss as to what to do. It had taken so long and so much work to get the congregation to believe God could provide £400,000, how was he ever going to persuade them that God could provide £1 million? He would have to face the Vestry that evening and tell them the news. He turned to God in prayer and placed the matter in His hands.

That afternoon Rev McClay received a phone call from a stranger: would he have time to meet him today, he was passing through Belfast and wished to speak with him. Arrangements were made and the two men met for coffee. The stranger had heard that the congregation were about to embark on a building project and he wanted to contribute to it. The stranger handed Rev McClay a cheque for £70,000!

Rev McClay saw this as a first instalment towards the payment of the new building and with renewed faith and confidence approached the Vestry. This unexpected donation was enough to remind the Vestry, and the congregation, that God was able to provide from sources unexpected for unanticipated expense and that they could trust him for the rest to provide the rest of the funding.

It took five more years before the building was completed. They added a café and drop in centre and have a multipurpose building to welcome those from the surrounding community. That building is now used every day and they now have six services on a Sunday