

Report on Installation of Rev. Thomas Murray

New Minister Installed in Comber

The town of Comber nestles in a hollow near the estuary of the Comber River, which flows into the north-west corner of Strangford Lough. Just five miles from Newtownards and less than ten miles from Belfast, it is the homeplace of Thomas Andrews, the man who designed the Titanic. The town is surrounded by a number of small villages and has a population of around 10,000.

Lord's Day services commenced here under the auspices of the Free Presbyterian Church in the Orange hall on 6th April 1986. Three years later Rev. Samuel Murray was ordained and installed as the congregation's first minister. Accepting a call to Tandragee in September 2004 a call was then extended to the Rev. Thomas Murray to be their minister. Accepting the call at the April Presbytery his Installation was arranged for Friday 29th April in Comber Free Presbyterian Church.

The service was conducted by Rev. Stanley Barnes, Deputy Moderator, who acted as Interim Moderator in Comber during the vacancy. Rev. Philip Kyle, recently installed as minister of Coragarry congregation in County Monaghan, preached the Installation sermon. Speaking from Isaiah 27:3 he referred to the Lord's vineyard



setting forth its privileges, provision, protection and its prosperity. He reminded the congregation that God's care for his church will never cease and as a vineyard the church has a responsibility to bring forth fruit.

The prescribed questions were then put to the Minister elect by Rev. Ian Brown (Londonderry). The Rev. Murray subscribing to the Westminster Confession and Standards of the Church Dr. Paisley then led in the installation prayer.

Bringing the charge to the congregation and the newly installed minister the Moderator spoke with great liberty and power on the partings at the cross. Referring to the parting of the Saviour's raiment he urged the newly installed minister to stand at the cross. He stated, "If he learns to preach under the shadow of the cross he will really preach. If he gets the power of the cross it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth". In closing he added "May God make this pulpit a sounding board of the Saviour's love and may no man ever leave this building thinking he is lost because Christ cannot save him. May they go out knowing he can save to the uttermost".

Other ministers taking part in the proceedings were Rev. Austin Allan, Rev. Leslie Curran and Rev. Fred Greenfield. In addressing the meeting following the



Installation Rev. Murray testified to his conversion to Christ. He said, "I owe all that I have and am to the grace of God. It was on 22nd September 1974 that I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as my own and personal Saviour". He also thanked the Comber congregation for expressing their confidence in him to be their minister and said that he was looking forward to taking up his responsibilities and getting to know the people.

The Clerk of Session, Mr. Jackie Allister, welcomed Rev. Murray and his family to Comber. Mrs. Barnes and Mrs. Murray were both presented with bouquets of flowers, and Rev Barnes also received a token of gratitude for his time spent overseeing the work during the vacancy.

At the end of the service everyone enjoyed the supper provided by the ladies of the Comber congregation.