

# Alastair & Elise Donaldson

April 2026



*Happy family on a wet St Patrick's Day!*

## ***'So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.'* (John 8:36)**

'I never thought of myself as Barabbas before.' These were words from one of our Bible study group on Wednesday of Holy Week. We had gathered at our house in a break of routine from our usual community centre location. Elise led a short devotion from John 18 while our children played with one of our cohort's toddlers. It was a simple statement yet profound for someone young in the faith. It hit the bullseye. 'When Christ was made sin for us, we were made the righteousness of God in him. When he died, then we lived. And so, as he was bound, we are set free.' (The Risen King', 40 C.H Spurgeon Devotions for Easter) Hallelujah!

Many reading this will identify, but the month of March and the run up to Easter has seemed so busy – not just for us but everyone. As a result, our little Bible study group has struggled to meet full complement these past few weeks. Everybody is still there or thereabouts, but please pray for wisdom in how we keep in contact with people when they're less available. Our little group come from a mixture of backgrounds and are all at different stages of faith development which is both exciting and complex. Thankfully the Lord knows what he's doing. Please pray that our group would have courage to be witnesses of Christ in Gort.



*Old friends...and new!*

The children have two weeks' holiday at Easter and, because Elise works in after-school, so does she. We have enjoyed the downtime immensely. Our celebration of the resurrection this year followed hot on the heels of St Patrick's Day celebrations. We caught up with some old friends in Dublin plus their new baby girl. A couple of trips to Supermac's have been possible, and Josiah and I continue our park run adventures. Elise and the children went up to my mum and dad's farm during the second week with me joining them for the weekend. We're glad they can have little breaks like this. We appreciate that many mission partners don't have such easy access to restful opportunities and so we thank God for them. Up in Northern Ireland there are two more young cousins to spend time with also. And lots of cattle and fields to run around in.

As mentioned in our last letter, we were recently able to welcome a youth outreach team from a Christian school in California who braved the chilly spring weather of Gort to share the gospel with 500 homes in Gort. This team was one of a few organised around St Patrick's Day by Operation Mobilisation (OM), whose Irish headquarters are in nearby Roscommon. They were a lovely bunch of guys. While many people weren't at home on a midweek morning, some conversations were

achieved with only a handful of negative reactions. At the time of writing, one or two people have reached out to us in response, and we'll see if relationships might ensue by God's grace. We also plan to conduct some further outreach in May, so we value your prayers for that.

The summer holidays are approaching fast and every two years since Elise and I married we have tried to go to Canada. This has become ever more important since Josiah and Edith were born. This year's trip will be very special and emotional. Elise's father Les has driven a road maintenance vehicle (grader) for 40 years and plans to retire in June. For that reason, and because he is turning 65, we're having a party for him with the whole community invited. Josiah has signed himself up as DJ and is currently compiling an American country and western song list he knows his grandad will approve of. It will also be a time for the children to keep up with their cousins and spend some time with Grandma Brenda. The local church (where Elise was nurtured in her faith) have invited us to speak at their children's Bible week, when each year they have a missions focus on a different country. This year, surprise surprise, it is Ireland which hopefully we should know a little about. Interestingly, another church in the United States has asked us to help remotely with the same programme during the last week of June before we leave for Canada. So please join with us in thanking the Lord for opportunities like these to serve his people in various places. And also, for Elise and I being able to serve at a children's camp in England (with the children) in August.

Thank you all again for your partnership and encouragement. We are so thankful to God for every one of you. We thank God also for Calvary Church Loughrea who have provided fellowship and a spiritual home to our family these past two years. Our time with this congregation is nearing an end and we will be leaving with sadness but much gratitude in our hearts. I was delighted to have had the opportunity to preach the last Sunday in March on the rich man and Lazarus from Luke 16. Elise was also scheduled to help lead the Sunday School that day, but some unforeseen family circumstances prevented that. She is so thankful, however, to have played a part in this ministry and the children's faith and lives over our time here. On Easter Sunday, we witnessed the baptism of two ladies from the church, and it was lovely to hear their stories of faith and how the Lord has been at work in their lives.



*An Easter baptism*

In Christ,  
Alastair, Elise, Josiah, Edith Donaldson

*A reminder of a couple of opportunities to join with us in prayer coming up:*

Thursday 30 April, 8:30pm (Dublin) – Galway prayer Zoom:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72161537571?pwd=fPZSEszdhCNNaPrwN73lx7Aq2amfep.1>

Meeting ID: 721 6153 7571

Passcode: 9BgqtK

Monday 11 May, 7:30pm (Belfast) – Crosslinks in Ireland prayer meeting:

Email [ireland@crosslinks.org](mailto:ireland@crosslinks.org) for the Zoom details

Itinerary: Alastair will share a short devotion, and Elise will share a little about the work in Galway.

There will also be time for Q&A, as well as hearing from the Crosslinks in Ireland leadership about other missional news.

**Alastair and Elise Donaldson** Gort, County Galway, Ireland