

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF BALLYCLARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday 13th April 2008

Agenda

- 1 Opening remarks – Chairman
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of AGM – Sunday 25th March 2007 - Adoption and Signature
- 4 Presentation of Reports -
 - a) Secretary's Report – E Meharg
 - b) Treasurer's Report – T Forsythe
 - c) Sunday School Report – J Crooks
 - d) Womens Group, Financial Report – D Forsythe
- 5 Declaration of offices vacant and elections 2008-2009
- 6 Any other business
- 7 Close of Meeting and Benediction.

Secretary's Report for the Year 2007

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2007 has been a very positive one in the Church where the Committee and Congregation have worked hard to update and modernise our Church. We have had, as you will hear, a great many services and events and numbers in the Sunday school and congregation have increased. A sense of family and community is very strong and church members are very quick to give sympathy and support when others are in need.

Baptisms

- 01.04.07 James Joseph McCoy
 son of Sarah and Paul McCoy
- 22.04.07 Emily Sophia Warnock
 daughter of Cathy (nee Blair) and Jim Warnock
- 22.04.07 Rebecca Lindsay Smith
 daughter of Linda and Gavin Smith

Marriages

- 18th August Stephen Harson to Victoria O'Rourke
- 24th December John Shannon to Clare Gaw

Deaths

- 15.06.07 Lillian Moore

The prayers and sympathy of the committee go to those who have suffered bereavement during the past year.

Special Services and Events

Favourite Hymns Service

This was held on 18th February 2007 and the hymns were picked by both children and adults. Most of the hymns were chosen from the RED hymn book and it was decided to use this book again for our morning worship. The service was followed by a coffee morning which raised money for the Moderator's Appeal.

Ballyclare Male Voice Choir Praise Service

This Service was held on Sunday 4th February at 7.00 pm. The Rev Nigel Playfair led the worship and the Male Voice Choir was conducted by Brian Agus, with accompanist Rosemary Basher and organist Ethel Logan. This was a wonderful evening with congregational hymns “Love Divine, all loves excelling”, “What a friend we have in Jesus” and “Amazing grace” providing a great opportunity for everyone to raise their voices in praise and that is just what they did! The male Choir sang nine pieces in all, in arrangements of three. Whilst the first three “With a voice of singing, Non Nobis Domine and Rachie” were lovely the second three were superb, the voices deep and rich rendering “Dear Lord and Father, Just a closer walk with thee and Let there be peace on earth”. The last set “God’s Choir, Just as I am and Battle Hymn of the Republic” were up beat and uplifting.

During the service we heard from the Marie Curie Foundation on the progress of the Living Rooms Appeal and Rev Playfair spoke in his address of how we live our lives, and how we could live our lives if we awakened to how God wants us and created us to.

Afterwards everyone stayed for supper and the choir were persuaded to sing a few more songs before going home.

Easter Service

The Easter Service was taken by Rev Colin Campbell, on Sunday 8th April 2007. It followed the theme of “Here is the Man” pondering on how Jesus, despite his early death, inspired a massive following which has continued to grow. Vanessa Surgeneor read 2 readings and the Rev Campbell sang and played the guitar. This rather more informal service was very enjoyable.

Communion Services

Holy Communion was celebrated during May and November. Anyone who would like to partake in this service but is unable to attend through ill-health, the Rev Campbell is happy to visit in their home.

Children’s Day

Children’s Day took place on Sunday 17th June 2007 and the Rev Campbell attended and presented the prizes. The service was led by Shane Meharg on the theme of “Talking about God and Jesus”. Jack Forsythe began with “It’s great to know” and Sarah McIlrath read Psalm 95 v 1-7.

Prayers were led by Vanessa Surgeneor and the children’s choir sang “Our God is a great big God”, “Talking about Jesus” and “The best gift”. Finn Devlin, Georgia McCann, Adam Surgeneor and Ewan Forsythe took up the offering while Matthew McIlrath and Jacob McCann read “Just for today” and “For Dad” as it was also Father’s Day. Rebecca Smith read “The Question” and gave the congregation a thought to ponder on.

Many thanks go to Jacqueline Crooks – Sunday School Superintendent; Mrs Mary Surgeneor – who helps with the younger children; Mrs Janette McKendry – who helps the children’s creative abilities and Mrs Ethel Logan – who looks after all the musical and choir work.

Harvest Thanksgiving

The Harvest Service was held on Sunday 14th October 2007 and the Rev. John Herron led the worship amid a beautiful array of flowers, vegetables and fruit. The Church was beautifully decorated by the ladies on the previous day and we thank all concerned for their efforts.

The adult choir led the service with some lovely pieces and the Sunday school joined in with “Fill your hearts with joy”.

Afterwards flowers were distributed around church members unable to attend so that they would know they were in our thoughts.

The Festive Season

A coffee morning, window display and sale were held on Saturday 15th December and were well supported. Mrs Logan and Mrs McKendry excelled themselves on the decoration of windows.

The sale raised over £370 and the doll provided by Adeline McClay was won by Georgia McCann. The ladies were able to give £200 to the Air Ambulance Fund and £50 to Vanessa Surgeoner towards her trip to India in summer 2008. The help and enthusiasm of all who attended was very much appreciated.

Children’s Christmas Service

The Christmas Service was held on Sunday 16th December and the Sunday school performed a play entitled “The Three Trees” which was narrated by Sarah McIlrath. Matthew McIlrath, Shane Meharg and Jack Forsythe played the three trees, Ryan Andrews was a shepherd/Jesus, Finn Devlin was Mary, Adam Surgeneor played Joseph while Jacob McCann, Jack and Ewan Forsythe played wise men. Jacob, Ewan and Adam also played woodcutters while Sarah McIlrath and Georgia McCann made beautiful angels. Members of the congregation added to the service with four readings and both the adult and children’s choirs contributed to a thoroughly enjoyable service. The adult choir sang “Calypso Carol” and “Who is He?” while the play was interspersed with the children’s carols. Christmas gifts were left under the tree for the Salvation Army to distribute.

Christmas Service – 23rd December

This was a family service of traditional carols and readings and was conducted by the Rev Campbell.

Candlelit Service

The Candlelit service was held on December 24th at 7.30pm and was well attended. This is an exceptionally lovely service - relaxing, informal and peaceful in the tranquil setting of the church lit with dozens of flickering candles adding a glow and atmosphere to the beautifully decorated church. Afterwards everyone gathered in the school room for mulled wine and shortbread, chat and season's greetings.

Social Events

Table Quiz

A table quiz was held in January and got the year off to a positive start. The quizmaster was the Rt Rev Colin Campbell who was assisted by Jacqueline Crooks and Irene Campbell. This was a very enjoyable evening with a lot of banter and fun. Snacks and drinks were provided and there were lots of prizes for the participants. Many thanks to everyone who provided prizes and supper.

Women's World Day of Prayer

On March 2nd Ballyclare hosted the Women's World Day of Prayer with the theme "United Under God's Tent" and was prepared by the Christian Women of Paraguay. This was a truly inspiring evening. Each church in the area was represented in the congregation and with readers for the service. The service itself flowed beautifully throughout the readings, hymns and prayers but what brought it together so wonderfully for everyone was the address given by Mrs Heather Walker, during which one could, quite literally, have heard a pin drop – as Heather discussed the cloak of God's love and what his love can do for us. The ladies excelled themselves with a lovely supper afterwards.

Congregational Outing

The Congregational Outing took place on Monday 24th June to the private museum in Islandmagee of Mr & Mrs Marsden. This proved to be very entertaining and educational as Mrs Marsden introduced us to implements of a bygone age and we viewed Mr Marsden's collection of vintage cars and memorabilia. We then proceeded on to Ballycarry Old Presbyterian church for a fantastic supper and chat. We were made extremely welcome both by the Marsden family and by the members of Ballycarry Church and I think we began to wonder why we didn't have outings more often.

Romanian Trip

The Rev Colin Campbell once again visited Romania where a lot of work was undertaken by younger members of our denomination.

Women's Group

The Women's group continue to meet regularly during the winter months and held a hospitality night on 14th December 2007. Representatives attended from approximately 10 local churches and the speaker was Mr Christopher Wilson from Limavady. Without any notes Mr Wilson spoke enthusiastically for 1 ¼ hours on the Wesley Brothers and Methodism. – This was a very successful evening.

An afternoon tea-party and call-my-bluff was held on Monday 29th October in the school room. Susan, Lorna and Jeanette were the winners, closely followed by Edna, Jeannie and Doris. The ladies then enjoyed a Halloween tea.

A team of ladies provided soup and scones on Black Santa Day, 21st December, for the Ministers who were collecting money for charity outside the Ulster Bank.

Representatives of our Group visited other Churches during the course of the year, namely St John's, 1st Ballyeaston, Templepatrick, Glenarm and also Salvation Army.

We would extend our sincere thanks to the Women's Group who are always willing and helpful in every event.

Property and Investments

One of the main jobs of the Church Committee is to ensure the buildings and grounds are maintained in good repair. This year however, as you will be aware, a modernisation programme commenced to enlarge the kitchen and redesign the downstairs area. The spiral staircase, which caused health and safety concerns, has been replaced and the kitchen has been totally refurbished so that it is now a light, airy and inviting working area. A new Minister's room has been a most welcome and useful addition. I think all of us would agree that we are most fortunate to have the funding necessary and the good sense to keep within realistic guidelines.

We have also replaced the bell with a bronze turret bell made by John Warner & Son of Cripplegate, London – 1888. Members of the Congregation generously paid for this bell and we thank them for their generosity.

Future Agenda

We are looking forward to the annual Church outing which will be held at 7pm, on Monday 16th June, at Hoy's Ice Cream Farm with supper afterwards at Kilbride Parish Church.

Thanks

May I, on behalf of the Congregation, sincerely thank the Rev Colin Campbell for his help and support. The Rev Campbell continues to lead the Committee and Congregation by his example and his unfailing enthusiasm. He does a great deal of work within the Church and his Charity work benefits a great many others. On a personal note I cannot stress how much his commitment, prayers and presence helped

the members of my family during the long weeks when Gillian was in hospital especially when both he and Mrs Campbell visited on Christmas Day.

May I also give special thanks to our treasurer Trevor Forsythe, who during his first year has worked extremely hard in this position. Thanks also to Richard Laird who has helped and guided him during the transition.

Thanks to Mrs Jacqueline Crooks, our Sunday School superintendent for her caring support of the children and her organisation within the Sunday School; to our organists Mrs Ethel Logan and Mr Wilson Forsythe who help make all our services special; our Representative Elder Mr Pat Blair along with Mrs Jeanette McKendry meetings' secretary. I would especially like to mention the elders and members of the Church committee who, over the last year, have worked really hard to keep the refurbishment and expenditure on track.

Could I also thank the Women's Group who help so often in the catering arrangements and to Mr McClay the Vestibule Steward and our caretaker Mr McFerran.

The last year has been very positive and productive; we have refurbished our facilities, strengthened our sense of community and increased our membership and I sincerely hope that we continue to build on the strengths that we have.

That Mr Chairman concludes the Secretary's report.