

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF BALLYCLARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday 29th March 2009

Agenda

- 1 Opening remarks – Chairman
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of AGM – Sunday 13th April 2008 - 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 2009-2010
- 6 Any other business
- 7 Close of Meeting and Benediction.

Secretary's Report for the Year 2008

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2008 has been yet another positive one for our church as we have worked in harmony and continue to ensure the soundness of both the building and the spiritual welfare of our congregation. We have looked to the future in that our Sunday School is well supported practically and financially and we have also sought to increase the number of elders by looking to ordain 3 more. The number of social events and services have increased too and this has helped our sense of Community.

Baptisms

16.11.08 Cassie Alexandra Montgomery
 daughter of David and Lauren

Marriages

27.07.08 Valerie Smith (formerly Peoples) to Richard Elderfield

25.09.08 Caroline Stewart to Alan Laird

Deaths

21.06.08 Andrina (Rina) Abigail McClean

20.03.08 Rev Robin Williamson

It was with deep regret that we learned of the passing of our former minister Rev Robin Williamson in Antrim Area Hospital. He was 73 years old. Rev Williamson was minister in charge at Ballyclare from 1963-65 and returned again in 1978. He remained minister in charge until he retired in 2001. The Rev Williamson was twice elected to the highest position of the denomination as Moderator. Although often controversial, he was held in high esteem and worked unceasingly for the good of the church. His encouragement to the congregation, during the building project to underpin the Church foundations in the early 1980's, was hugely supportive. He will be remembered for his enthusiasm, wit and his ability to enthral with his stories and anecdotes.

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

The annual Favourite Hymn Service was held on February 10th 2008. Ethel Logan and Wilson Forsythe accompanied the specially chosen hymns on the piano and organ.

Easter Service

The Easter Service was conducted by Rev Colin Campbell, on Sunday 23 March 2008. It followed the theme of “Kings have long arms” and was an inspiring service in the spring of the year.

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

This was held on Sunday 22 June and was led by Jacob McCann. The theme was “All things bright and beautiful” and the children’s choir, though somewhat smaller in numbers, nevertheless sang beautifully, “In every house the Lord must be”, “Jesus’ love is very wonderful” and “A little peace”. Rebecca Smith read the introduction, Sarah McIlrath led us in prayer and readings were completed by Shane Meharg, Jack Forsythe, Matthew McIlrath, Ryan Andrews, Adam Surgeneor and Ewan Forsythe. Rev Colin Campbell gave the children’s address and the collection was taken up by our youngest members – Christina Warnock, Finn Devlin, Georgia McCann and Ewan Forsythe. This was followed by the prize distribution. Our thanks to all those who help out in the Sunday School, although it must be admitted that the children are hard working, enthusiastic and a pleasure to teach.

Harvest Thanksgiving

The Harvest Service was held on Sunday 12 October and the congregation were welcomed by the youngest members of the Sunday School offering small tokens of the harvest.

Rev Robert Bell, minister of Ballyclare Presbyterian Church conducted the service. In his address Rev Bell pondered on the thought that as a nation “we want as much as possible for as little as possible” and reminded us that in the midst of the credit crunch it would be easy to forget that there are people whose lives would not be touched by this, as it is far outside their experience. He urged us to remember that the needy are always among us and that “our ultimate security is not from financial security – it is from God. A very thought provoking address.

The choir sang the introit "How shall I sing that majesty?" and continued throughout the service with "O for a closer walk with God", "Harvest fields are waiting" and "The Lord's Prayer" and the Sunday School gave a reading with a play on the words to remind us how we might make the most of what we produce.

The church itself was beautifully decorated and it was lovely to give thanks in this wonderful setting with the age old hymns of harvest. Afterwards flowers and fruit were distributed among members of the congregation unable to attend.

Our thanks to everyone who helped and contributed towards this service.

Special Service

Sunday 7th December 2008 was a different service from the usual. In place of the regular sermon by the Rev Colin Campbell, an illustrated talk was given by Vanessa Surgeneor.

Vanessa had been selected from the Guides to go to India during the summer. Her talk explained some of the problems of poverty in North Eastern India and also showed how the girls helped improve the local facilities. After the church service a social half-hour with coffee and scones was held. During this event the Rev Campbell made two important presentations on behalf of the Ladies Group. Two of our regular attendees at church were celebrating their 90th birthdays.

Mrs Renee Peoples was 90 on 6th December and Mr Hubert Scott also reached 90 on 15th December. Both of these life-long members of the congregation still seldom miss the regular Sunday service. Mr Henry Turkington also celebrated his 65th birthday.

Christmas Service

The annual Christmas service was held on Sunday 21st December 2008 and had a very good attendance. The adult choir and the children's choir, trained by Mrs Ethel Logan, joined together to sing "Mary had a baby" and "Little Donkey" and the adult choir sang "Bring a torch Jeanette, Isabella" and "Mary, sweet as bright rose". The congregation joined in the singing of several carols and the Sunday School children recited "The twelve leftovers of Christmas".

Sam Harson led us in prayer and Adam Surgeneor, Jack Forsythe, Rev Campbell, Linda Smith and Valerie Green read passages reflective of Christmas. Rebecca Smith read a wistful "I really would like to be Mary" while Wilson Logan transported us to "Saturday night at the Bethlehem Arms".

Presents, for the Salvation Army Appeal, were left under the Christmas Tree, beautifully decorated by Kathleen Campbell. Ethel Logan and Jeanette McKendry had once again tastefully decorated the church windows'.

Candlelit Service

The Candlelit service was held on December 24th at 7.30pm and was very well attended. This is an exceptionally lovely service - relaxing, informal and peaceful with dozens of flickering candles adding a glow and atmosphere to the beautifully decorated church.

The wonder of the Christmas story was read by Gillian Rennie in “The baby in a manger”, while Evelyn Meharg told the story of the shepherds of Bethlehem. Jeanette McKendry read “The Christmas Tree” and Irene Campbell spoke of the miracles which we may meet in our own lives and of the accidents which had affected her and more recently her daughter Gillian, from which they had both remarkably recovered.

The service was further enhanced by Sheelagh Greer who sang two solos and Michael Alexander who played a beautiful “Holy Night” on the flute.

The Rev Colin Campbell led the prayers and said the Benediction.

Afterwards everyone gathered in the school room for mulled wine, shortbread and a chat.

Social Events

Table Quiz

After a quiet January, the first social event of the year, a table quiz, was held on 7th February 2008. The quizmaster was the Rev Colin Campbell who was assisted by Jacqueline Crooks and Irene Campbell. This was a very enjoyable evening, the proceeds of which were in aid of Vanessa Surgeoner’s Guide trip to India 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 7th March Ballyeaston hosted the Women’s World Day of Prayer with the theme “God’s wisdom provides new understanding” and was prepared by the Christian Women of Guyana. This was a most thought provoking service. 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 and a lovely supper was provided afterwards.

Christian Aid Week

As part of Christian Aid week tea and coffee were served on 18 May and donations were given towards this cause. In the Ballyclare area £9780.00 was raised by the various denominations.

Congregational Outing

On a fine Monday evening on June 16th we went to Hoy’s Ice Cream parlour at Hoy’s farm near Donegore. It was most interesting to see the prize Holstein dairy herd which produces the milk from which this luxury ice cream is made and to have the process explained and the equipment demonstrated. Most interesting of all was the tasting session and the availability of almost any flavour one could think of. (Farm

shop open each Saturday). This was followed by a lovely supper provided by the ladies of Kilbride Parish church in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere and a great time was had by all. Our thanks go to Mrs Ethel Logan for all her organisation.

Romanian Trip

In August the Rev Colin Campbell returned to the town of Barolt with a group of young people from the denomination. Our Minister has now been in Romania, in aid missions, on more than 20 occasions since 1992, bringing both financial and practical support.

Video, Talks & Sing-A-Long's

On the 15th and 29th September the Rev Campbell showed videos and gave talks on the beginnings of Christianity.

The "Sound of Music" sing-a-long was held on 20 Oct with popcorn and sweeties provided.

On the 4th December we had an evening of singing hymns with Sheelagh Greer.

Each event was an enlightening experience and holds its own memories.

Women's Group

At the first meeting of the new season the women joined the Rev Campbell for the showing of the 2nd of his slides on the early Church.

During the year the ladies have supported their chosen charity – Alzheimer's. In October they held a "soup and dessert" lunch and a total of £320 was raised.

They have continued to meet on the 3rd Monday of each month, either afternoon or evening, strengthening the bonds of friendship as they host various social events.

The ladies have provided tea, coffee and refreshments after morning service on the last Sunday of each month, which we all greatly appreciate.

We would extend our sincere thanks to the Women's Group who are always willing and helpful in every event. These ladies consistently provide help and are a power of strength in our church community.

Property and Investments

Maintenance of the Church and its attendant buildings remains a priority with the church committee. The painting of the exterior of the building was an inspired decision and while some may have been doubtful about the wisdom of such a move the results plainly show it was the proper way forward.

Following the extensive renovations over the last few years the church is currently in a sound, healthy and welcoming condition.

Modernisation of the Church has not stopped at the fabric of the building. A web site, designed by Jackie Campbell, (Web Working 4 U), is now up and running. For anyone who has not already browsed the Internet this site is very informative, user-friendly and is constantly updated with our news, event and calendars.
www.ballyclareoldpresbyterian.co.uk

Future Agenda

Plans are currently being finalised for the Annual Church outing in June. In the coming months work will be undertaken to renovate the session house. The Church grounds are also under discussion.

Thanks

May I, on behalf of the Congregation, sincerely thank the Rev Colin Campbell for his unfailing help and support. The Rev Campbell continues to inspire us as he introduces new ideas for social events, building a strong feeling of family within the congregation. We have been truly blessed by his installation as our Minister.

May I also give thanks to Trevor Forsythe for all his hard work as our treasurer, especially in the last few weeks compiling his financial report.

Thanks to Mrs Jacqueline Crooks, our Sunday School superintendent, who helps both children and teachers alike in the Sunday School with her leadership skills and her caring attitude.

To our organists, Mrs Ethel Logan and Mr Wilson Forsythe, I would like to thank you, not only for your playing each week but also for the many special services that you make so enjoyable.

Many thanks to our representative Elder, Mr Pat Blair, who attends many meetings, within the denomination, on our behalf. Many thanks also to Mrs Jeanette McKendry, our meetings' secretary.

I would especially like to mention the elders and members of the Church committee for their continued commitment and dedication. The members work especially well together and regularly give much of their time.

Lets us not forget the Women's Group who help so often with the catering arrangements and their continued support to the Church.

Although he is not present it would be remiss of me not to extend the sincere thanks of the congregation to our caretaker of many years, Mr Bertie McFerran, who retired at the end of 2008, to Ballyclare Nursing Home. He will be much missed.

We have achieved much within the last few years. Sometimes we need to take stock and count our blessings, in doing so we may well feel we have been truly blessed and have much to build on.

That Mr Chairman concludes the Secretary's report.