

# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF BALLYCLARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday 21st March 2010

## Agenda

- 1 Opening remarks – Chairman
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of AGM – Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2009 - 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 2010-2011
- 6 Any other business
- 7 Close of Meeting and Benediction.

# Secretary's Report for the Year 2009

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It seems such a short time since I compiled my first secretarial report and yet it was 2002. Time seems to pass so quickly and it is easy to question what we have achieved. Yet over that time and in particular in the last year, in a world where the church overall can find it increasingly difficult to attract and keep members, our congregation is increasing, slowly but surely and our members attend not only services but increasing numbers of social events too.

## Baptisms

- 31.05.09      Robbie Allen Smith  
                    Son of Linda and Gavin
- 27.09.09      Samantha Zoe Buchanan  
                    Daughter of Sarah and Mark
- 06.12.09      Meighan Deborah Lyn Walker  
                    Daughter of Heather and Neill  
                    (grand-daughter of Rev Colin Campbell)

## Marriages

No marriages were celebrated during 2009.

## Deaths

- 26.06.09      Mrs Eileen Nicholson

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

## Special Services and Events

### Ordination of Elders

On Sunday 25th January a special service was held for the ordination of 3 new elders to Ballyclare - Trevor Forsythe, Jeanette McKendry and Evelyn Meharg. The service was very special particularly to those involved and was conducted by Rev John Nelson, Rev Paul Reid and Rev Colin Campbell. We were delighted to welcome visiting elders from within the denomination. Lessons were read by Rev Reid and Rev Nelson who also gave an exposition of the Presbyterian Church Order and read the Code of Discipline. The Ordination and installation then proceeded and this sincere and moving service was completed with hymns particularly fitting to the occasion. Tea and refreshments were served afterwards in the Sunday School room.

I know I speak for all 3 of us when I say that the unstinting effort made by the ladies in providing such a wonderful spread was so thoughtful and along with the advice and preparation given to us by the Rev Campbell made this such a special occasion.

### **Praise Service**

A praise service with Ballyclare Male Voice Choir on Sunday 22nd February was held at 7:00 pm and Rev Dr Scott Peddie conducted the service. The Male Voice Choir, in fine voice, was conducted by Phyllis Boyd. The accompanist was Rosemary Basher and the organist was Ethel Logan. Rev Dr Peddie gave us much to think about during his sermon and expressed his pleasure at the invitation to preach and at the presence of the male voice choir.

The Male Voice Choir sang a lovely selection of songs during the service and to our delight, in an informal gathering after refreshments had been served, sang some more for us, before we left for home. Our thanks to the ladies of the Church for the wonderful supper they provided.

### **Favourite Hymns Service**

Favourite Hymns Day was held on Sunday 15th March and there was a very good attendance. Rev Colin Campbell gave a background on the hymns or the writer which had been chosen by both adults and children. The accompaniment by Ethel Logan on piano and Wilson Forsythe at the organ were much appreciated.

### **Easter Service**

The Easter Service was conducted by Rev Colin Campbell, on Sunday 12 April 2009.

### **Communion Services**

Holy Communion was celebrated during May and November.

This was a chance for the new elders to undertake the duties involved in this service.

### **Children's Day**

Children's Day was held on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June and was led by Sarah McIlrath. All the children took part with some enthusiastic singing and the Rev Colin Campbell presented the prizes after another successful year in the Sunday School competitions. Vanessa Surgeneor and Sarah McIlrath were each presented with a Bible to commemorate the completion of their Sunday school careers.

### **Harvest Thanksgiving**

The Harvest Service was held on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October and we were delighted that the moderator the Rt Rev Robert McKee could join us. The Church looked very welcoming having been decorated by the ladies. The reds, golds and varying hues of the flower and fruit arrangements reflected on the polished gleam of the old wood of the pews and it was a lovely place to be. The Choir sang, the introit, "praise oh

praise the Lord of Harvest”, and the Scottish Psalter 1615 (psalm 23) and “I have a shepherd”, the soloist performing beautifully was Mrs Kathleen Campbell.

The Sunday School performed a short play entitled “We are the greatest” – involving an argument between various vegetables about their superiority. However as was pointed out – they were all grown because of their differences. They complimented one another so none was greater than the other – which is how God views us.

The Rt Rev McKee spoke to us of Time and how difficult times can be. He advised 3 things:

- to pray and keep praying;
- to savour the message of simplicity and ask what are the values I want to live by;
- To live in the seed time of hope.
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He quoted William Booth who advised we can’t predict the future so we need to hold onto hope no matter how bleak the times.

The Service ended with a delightful hymn “We plough the fields and scatter”.

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.

## **Christmas Service**

The Church was decorated for Christmas by Jeanette McKendry. Each window was enhanced by simple, tasteful scenes, reminiscent of Christmases past and everywhere there were candles to be lit on Christmas Eve. Each Sunday of advent another candle was lit by the children during the children’s address.

The Christmas service was held on 20 December, the morning of the first heavy snows, but not one single child was absent and the service went ahead as beautiful as we hoped it would be.

He introduction “He had no royal palace” was read by Adam Surgeneor while Linda Smith, Wilson Logan, Evelyn Meharg, Trevor Forsythe and Kathleen Campbell all read stories, poems and legends and Vanessa Surgeneor led the congregation in prayer.

The Sunday school children performed a lovely nativity play helped in their singing by the adult choir. The choir also invited us to “Come and sing the Christmas story”, told us of the little donkey as “Mary and Joseph”, Rhianna Logan and Ewan Forsythe, made their way to Bethlehem and sang a beautiful song as the shepherds (Jed and Jacob McCann and Adam Surgeneor) snuggled around their camp fire before Christina Warnock appeared as the angel Gabriel before them. As the three kings – Laura Buchanan, Finn Devlin and Georgia McCann laid their gifts before the newborn baby the adult choir sang “Mary had a baby” and the children joined them in the chorus.

Our thanks go to Mrs Ethel Logan for all her work with the adult and children's choirs, also to Rev Colin Campbell and the Sunday school teachers for the preparations and costumes which added so much to the lovely service.

Presents, for the Salvation Army Appeal, were once again left under the Christmas Tree.

## **Candlelit Service**

The Christmas Eve Candlelit service was informal and well attended. In the picturesque church flickering candles added to the atmosphere, while outside was a winter wonderland of white. The Rev Campbell welcomed everyone and from the first hymn "While shepherds watched" through "See amid the winter's snow", "Hark the Herald angels sing" and "Silent Night" the scene was set and the magic of Christmas had begun.

"The Innkeeper's Tale" was told by Vanessa Surgeneor and it was easy to believe we were there with the troubled innkeeper on that night so long ago.

Matthew McIlrath told us of "God's Shepherd" and another view of that night was imagined while Wilson Logan and Jeanette McKendry read familiar bible passages of the miracle of Christmas.

Heather Walker sang two wonderful solos, her clear voice a joy to hear and afterwards we retired to the school room to savour mulled wine, shortbread and friendship.

## **Social Events**

### **Table Quiz**

A table quiz was held on Thursday 12 February with a number of teams in attendance. It was another evening of fun and craic and while there were some complaints about the level of difficulty, this did not seem to prevent high scoring by many of the teams. Prizes were available for all those competing and this proved yet another successful social evening.

A second table was held on 18<sup>th</sup> September, organised by Irene Campbell, which raised £106 for the Romania appeal. The evening was great fun and with plenty of prizes, everyone was a winner.

## **Women's World Day of Prayer**

This was on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2009 and the speaker this year was Heather Cooke and was hosted at St John's Church. The theme was "In Christ there are many members yet one body" and was prepared by the Christian Women Papua New Guinea. The independent state of Papua New Guinea has a population of 5.8 million, 4 official languages, over 800 other languages spoken and is rich in natural resources – gold,

silver, copper ore, natural oil and gas. It has over 1,000 cultural groups and gender inequality raises concern.

The service however showed how women had come together to help forge a future for their country through Christian teachings and beliefs.

A very enjoyable supper was provided afterwards.

### **Christian Aid Week**

This year again a tea and coffee morning was held in aid of this cause. Although the amount raised was a little reduced on previous years it still amounted to £7,690.00 for the Ballyclare area.

### **Congregational Outing**

The Congregational Outing was held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June with a visit to Drumalis, Lame. Following an excellent meal, the congregation was shown round this conference and retreat centre, where there was much to be admired. The architecture, wood panelling and stained glass married well with the modern extension. The fabrics and colours complimented the ambience of the building beautifully. Overall there was a wonderful sense of peace.

Many of us took pleasure in strolling around the magnificently kept gardens.

Mrs Ethel Logan had surpassed herself with this social event.

### **Romanian Trip**

This summer the Rev Colin Campbell again returned to Romania with a young group from the denomination. Despite various travel problems and delays it was again another successful trip giving both financial and practical support.

### **Sing-A-Long / Fund Raising**

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December was a very enjoyable evening of Community carol singing with Sheelagh Greer.

With some forward planning Jeanette McKendry produced Calendars of Ballyclare, with her own original paintings of the local area. These lovely calendars were well received and in aid of the Children's Hospice and Church Funds.

### **Women's Group**

The Women's Group continue to meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month – not only for friendship and social activities but to raise money for charity.

In September the Women's Group met at "The Manse" with everyone bringing along a recipe. It proved to be entertaining and the recipes were shared around.

The second meeting of the group was held in October in the schoolroom. Childhood memories were shared and plenty of laughter heard.

On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November a Sunday lunch was held following the morning service. The food was beautifully prepared and presented and was a credit to all those who participated.

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

## **Property and Investments**

The upkeep and maintenance of the Church and its attendant buildings remain a priority.

With the session house vacant a working party was formed to clear the premises. There is a need for considerable repair, refurbishment or restoration before the session house can be brought back into active use. A select group within the Committee are currently investigating the financial considerations and best way forward for this property.

## **Future Agenda**

Plans are currently being considered for the Annual Church outing in June.

## **Thanks**

May I, on behalf of the Congregation, sincerely thank the Rev Colin Campbell for his unfailing help and support. The Rev Campbell educates, motivates, inspires and leads us with his ever present cheerfulness and continues to increase activities within the Church.

May I also give thanks to Trevor Forsythe. The work of treasurer is constant and most of us would find it extremely daunting especially in having to compile the Financial Report. The Church is extremely lucky to have Trevor's help.

Mrs Jacqueline Crooks is also hugely beneficial to the future of our Church in providing patience, care and leadership – not only to the children of the Sunday School but also to the teachers.

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 and for the many other duties you take on so willingly. Many thanks to our representative Elder, Mr Pat Blair, who despite his own health concerns has attended many meetings, within the denomination, on our behalf. Many thanks also to Mrs Jeanette McKendry, our meetings' secretary.

My thanks also to the Women's Group who consistently help with the catering arrangements and give their continued support to the Church.

May I also mention Mrs Mary Surgeneor for her care in the upkeep of the Church. I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the elders and members of the Church Committee for their continued commitment and dedication.

Most people who have worked within a Committee, be that for Church, work or sport find that invariably there are factions, little groups of self interest and general

arguments which inevitably bring a lack of cohesion and often lead to de-motivation, breakdown in communication or even breakdown of the group. The Church Session and Committee however, work unfailing together, helping each other and giving much of their time and support. For me it is a privilege to work as an elder within the group. It is this spirit of caring and concern which builds the feeling of Community within the Church.

That Mr Chairman concludes the Secretary's report.