

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF BALLYCLARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday 25th March 2007

Agenda

- 1 Opening remarks – Chairman
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of AGM Sunday 2nd April 2006 – Adoption and Signature
- 4 Presentation of Reports -
 - a) Secretary's Report – E Meharg
 - b) Treasurer's Report – R Laird
 - c) Sunday School Report – J Crooks
 - d) Womens Group, Financial Report – D Forsythe
- 5 Declaration of offices vacant and elections 2007-2008
- 6 Any other business
- 7 Close of Meeting and Benediction.

Secretary's Report for the Year 2006

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The past year has been busy and successful. We have had, as you will hear, a great many services and events and numbers in the Sunday school and congregation have increased. The Rt Rev Colin Campbell's appeal as Moderator, for the "Marie Currie's Living rooms" has been well supported and most importantly a sense of community within the Church seems to strengthen year on year.

Baptisms

- 25.06.06 Langdon Frost Peoples
 Son of Jeanette and Dena Peoples
- 19.11.06 Lauren Deborah Buchanan
 Daughter of Sarah (nee Jenkins) and Mark Buchanan

Deaths

No deaths were registered during 2006

Marriages

- 9th August 2006 Mayella Forsythe to Peter Walker
- 7th September 2006 Irene Rennie (nee Fears) to Jackie Campbell

Special Services and Events

Favourite Hymns Service

This was held on 19th February 2006 with both Mrs Logan and Mr Forsythe accompanying. The Right Reverend Colin Campbell gave an interesting background to the various writers and an insight into the hymns.

This was followed by coffee and shortbread in the school-room afterwards.

Easter Service

The Right Rev Colin Campbell took the Easter Service, on Sunday 16th April 2006.

Communion Services

Holy Communion was celebrated during May and November and for those wishing to partake in this service but unable to attend, the Rt Rev Colin Campbell visited them in their homes.

Meeting of Synod

Despite the great deal of preparation and hard work that went into the organisation of this event it was undoubtedly a great pleasure for Ballyclare to host Synod whilst our Minister was Moderator. Certainly no one on the Committee could remember ever hosting it before and the ladies excelled themselves in organising the event. Synod was held over two days, 13th and 14th June, which included the Synod Communion service, the main Synod service and the meeting of Synod and ended in a social gathering. Although outside caterers were engaged for the main meals the ladies provided a great deal in the way of refreshments throughout the two days.

Thanks must go to everyone involved especially Mrs Ethel Logan and Mrs Doreen Blair and the members of the Committee.

An occasion such as this necessitates everyone giving that little bit extra of their time and skills but it is lovely to welcome everyone in the denomination to our church and we hope time spent with us was enjoyable.

Children's Day

Children's Day on 18th June 2006 was based on the family and gave an emphasis on fathers, as it was also coincidentally Father's Day.

Vanessa Surgeonor led the service and the Rt Rev Campbell gave the Children's Sermon and presented the many prizes to our children.

We would wish to thank all those who help in our Sunday School especially our Superintendent Mrs Jacqueline Crooks who teaches by example in her kindness and giving and sharing of her time and wisdom. Also Mrs Ethel Logan who brings out the best of the children's musical talents.

Although the numbers in the Sunday school are small, we teachers appreciate that they are the Church's future and it is wonderful to see the children returning each September, perhaps bringing friends or younger family members with them and feeling that they belong here.

Harvest Thanksgiving

The Harvest Service was held on Sunday 8 October 2006 and the Rt Rev. Campbell led the worship amid a beautiful array of flowers, vegetables and fruit. The colour and scents were wonderful and gave testimony to the hard work and commitment of the ladies of the congregation. The adult choir began the service with a lovely piece "Take my life and let it be" and their renditions of "Lord, bless and pity us" and "Labour on" were no less inspiring. The children's choir sang "Thank you Father" complete with sun and rainbows and were delightful. 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 9th December and were well supported. The beautiful displays in the windows were on the theme "The Church throughout the Year" and Mrs Logan and Mrs McKendry had worked extremely hard to create these.

Over £550.00 was raised for the Moderators Appeal through the sale of toys, books, dvd's, bric-a-brac and the coffee morning.

Children's Christmas Service – 17th December

The Christmas Service took place on 17 December 2006 and was introduced by Ryan Andrews who read "Gifts for the Child". The Choir sang "To us in Bethlehem City", "Jacob's Ladder", and a lovely rendition of "Keep Christ in Christmas".

Valerie Green, Sam Harson and Kathleen Campbell each did a reading and the Sunday School, led by Shane Meharg performed a "sound" story and a choral verse "Don't Forget" to keep Christ in Christmas. Sarah McIlrath and Vanessa Surgeoner sang a duet their sweet voices reminding us of the beauty and hope of the Christmas season.

Christmas Service – 24th December

This was the first of two services held on Christmas Eve. It commenced at the usual time of 10.15 am and the Rt Rev Campbell based the service on the theme of "Hope, Joy and Peace".

Candlelit Service

The second service was the traditional Candlelit Service, which, for me and a great many others, is a wonderful experience. Everyone gathers, shopping completed, preparations made, fuss and bustle over, to enjoy the beauty and wonder, peace and hope in the true meaning of Christmas. Carols were sung, traditional readings appreciated, new stories unfolded, in a church decorated with love and care. Then, relaxed and mindful of what it really is all about, we retired to the school room to share food and drink and return home refreshed in mind, body and soul.

Social Events

Table Quiz

A table quiz was held on Friday 23rd February at 7.30 pm. The quizmaster was the Rt Rev Colin Campbell who was assisted by Irene Rennie as the scorekeeper. This was a very enjoyable evening with a lot of banter and fun.

Snacks and drinks were provided and there were lots of prizes with the monies collected going to help finance the Romanian Trip.

Many thanks to everyone who provided prizes and supper.

Women's World Day of Prayer

The Women's World Day of Prayer was held on Friday 3rd March in Ballylinney Presbyterian Church. The theme, by the women of South Africa was "Signs of the Times". Jennifer Forsythe represented our Church by reading from scriptures and we were also represented in the choir. This was a lovely service - the ideas, hymns and readings flowing one from another. Afterwards there was a splendid supper in the church hall.

Congregational Outing

The outing this year was a mystery tour where everyone followed the car in front to drive round some beautiful scenic parts of the countryside on a warm sunny evening. And it was such a successful mystery tour that the Minister got lost.

Afterwards everyone went back to Ethel and Wilson Logan's house for warm hospitality and wonderful food.

A very enjoyable and relaxed evening and we thank Ethel and Wilson for such a lovely time.

Treasure Hunt

This was held on 30th June and was great fun although 30 clues took some considerable time to go round. The clues were set by Jackie Campbell and Irene Rennie in aid of the Romanian trip. There was a good turnout with 16 cars and afterwards plenty of prizes and a lovely supper. Again the ladies excelled themselves in the time and effort involved. Many thanks to all those who helped.

Romanian Trip

This year, in July, some of the younger members of the denomination again headed to Romania to assist in the orphanage at Barolt. The Rt Rev Colin Campbell was again leading the group and one of our former members of the Sunday School, John Campbell, joined the trip. Like the previous Sunday School members John found this both a humbling and enlightening experience and enjoyed his time there very much.

Women's Group

The Women's group continue to meet on the last Monday of the month. Various invitations to join other groups for social events have proved most enjoyable. During the winter months the meetings are often held in the afternoon so that there is no travelling in the dark evenings and this has proved to be a popular move.

A party was held at Halloween, which was a great success, and various events have been held to raise money for the Moderators Appeal.

Although the Women's Group generally keep a low profile it should be noted that during the course of the year a considerable amount of money is raised for charity which is quietly and effectively distributed. To each one a sincere thanks for their work and effort.

Property and Investments

Routine maintenance and repairs are regularly reviewed and organised by the Church Committee.

During the past year much consideration has been given to replacing the current spiral staircase and re-designing or enlarging the kitchen and downstairs area. Whilst originally ideas included a large and expensive extension it was decided that given the cost compared to the use-age, re-designing would be a more viable option.

It is now planned that work will commence within a very short time to install a new staircase, re-position the dumb-waiter, re-design the kitchen and provide a Minister's room within the existing layout.

Ballyclare Area

The Rt Rev Colin Campbell attends regular meetings for the Ministers of the Ballyclare area which have resulted in increased awareness of our neighbouring churches. Also, at Christmas approximately twenty-two of these ministers, including Rt Rev Colin Campbell, sat out for the "Black Santa Appeal" in Belfast.

Thanks

May I, on behalf of the congregation, sincerely thank the Rt Rev Colin Campbell for his help and support. He has been a tower of strength, an inspiration and a blessing to the Congregation, and his enthusiasm motivates us to give of our best.

May I also give special thanks to our treasurer Richard Laird. The job of treasurer can be arduous and time consuming and Richard has been meticulous in carrying out his duties for yet another year. At present a rota is being organised to count the weekly stipend and this may make the treasurer's job slightly less daunting. Thanks to Mrs Jacqueline Crooks, our Sunday School superintendent; to our organists Mrs Ethel Logan and Mr Wilson Forsythe; 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 attend regular meetings and assist in so many different ways to ensure the upkeep of the Church and its surroundings, and in particular to Mr Wilson Forsythe and Mr Wilson Logan. 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.

Sometimes we may take the facilities and services of our church for granted. So may I take this opportunity to thank all those who selflessly give up their time to help make the church a Community as much as a building.

That Mr Chairman concludes the Secretary's report.