

Ballyclare Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Session: Andy Hambleton, Interim Moderator, Ken McDonald, Alistair Logan, David Watson
Deacons: Axel Schmidt, Shaun McFall, Stephen Logan, Dave Roger, Stephen McCartney,

Church Reports for 2024
Presented by Session to the
Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 11 March 2025

Session Report

The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few
Luke 10 vs 2



As we say goodbye to the year 2024 and enter this new year of 2025, there are many things that we can reflect upon over the past year, some good and some not so good! Nevertheless, they were true happenings and cannot be recalled and all we can do is accept them and keep striving to do all things better in the days that lie ahead!

With the pulpit still in the vacancy, much strain has been put upon our interim moderator, Rev Hambleton, in that, not only has he the Crumlin church to look after, but yet he is always seeking to attend to all of our requirements here in Ballyclare. This is no easy task, very time consuming, and arranging men to speak at all of our services week by week, no doubt, is a large part of his concerns and we do thank him for all that he has done and continues to do for us while we wait for the Lord to provide us with a full-time minister of our own.

Since the Rev Roger's retirement Session has worked very closely with the Rev Hambleton, exploring many avenues and speaking with a number of men from our own denomination and also some from England, Scotland and USA who the Lord in His grace may show us to be the man chosen for the ministry here in Ballyclare. We still pray and continue to seek on, knowing that the Lord will move in His own time. Someone recently sent me this little text: *David waited 15 years, Joseph waited 22 years, Sarah waited 10 years, Moses waited 40 years.* If you are waiting for something right now, God's time is the best. Let's leave it with Him!

Over the last year Session was of the opinion, for several reasons, that our number should be increased and so we agreed to have an election and ask for another two men who would be suitable to fulfil this role. As required by our code, a list of all male members was posted in the hall for the specified time. After the Rev Hambleton approached all the men individually to ask if they would be prepared to let their names go forward for election, only a few were agreeable to it and so we deemed that this was not the right time and thought it best to postpone the election for the present.

Membership at the end of last year numbered 43. In the month of March, we were saddened when the Lord took home our sister Mrs. Evangeline Dodds. Evangeline attended our church all her life and was a very valued member contributing much to our fellowship in so many ways. She is greatly missed but much better to be with the Lord. The Lord never leaves Himself without a witness and also in that same month we were delighted when he moved in the heart of Mr. Eddie Drew to put his hand on the plough and do whatever he could to help in the furtherance of the gospel in this corner of the Lord's vineyard and so Eddie requested membership, was interviewed by Session and is now a much appreciated member.

Perhaps recently the Lord has been speaking to you about joining and coming into full membership of the church. It has never been our policy to officially approach anyone about membership, being content to leave that with the individual and the Lord. If you feel the Lord is leading you in this way, then we advise you to consider the whole thing prayerfully and carefully. Membership brings with it many blessings and privileges but also many commitments, responsibilities and obligations, which undoubtedly calls for, while bodily capable, attendance at all Lord's Day Services (morning and evening), mid-week Bible study and prayer meeting as basics. There is a very helpful little 'Banner of Truth' leaflet on the hall table entitled "Should I join a church?" Please take a copy and read it carefully and if you agree with it and still feel you should pursue church membership then speak to the Rev Hambleton or a member of Session and we will be glad to meet with you.

The Lord tells us in the verse noted at the head of this report, from Luke 10, that the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few. Are you prepared to labour in this harvest as God gives you ability, whatever that task may amount to? The past year has been very busy for us all and we have had many friends from within and outside the denomination to address us at the various meetings week by week. Very often this includes our own membership and so we acknowledge all and thank them for their help and dedication.

We do not include our own members in the list below but trust that we have not overlooked any of our friends who helped us so much and so often and they are as follows, and not in alphabetical order!

Reverends: Ian McClean, Gareth Burke, John Roger, Stephen Roger, Jeff Ballentine, Andrew Lucas, Robert Becket, Paul Levy, Andrew Quinn, Robert Johnston, and of course, the Rev Hambleton!

Messrs: Wallace Thompson, Ethan McCarter, Cecil Andrews, Christian Palmer, Jonathan Reid, Henry Berry, Daniel Caballero, Aaron Houston, Colin Moore, Ernest Brown, Alan Baird, Alan Edgar, Phil Dunn, Mervyn Langtry, Peter Hutchinson, Joel Patterson, Matthew Winning, Peter Grier, Gavis Phillingham.

We had many special events and happenings throughout the year, and we remind you of some of them as they happened month by month. It's quite possible that we have missed some and if so please excuse!

January	28 th – Visit from our moderator – Rev Robert Johnston
February	24 th – Seniors' reunion; 27 th – Missionary night – Andrew Moody (Uganda update)
March	1 st – Seniors' visit to Iron Hall Belfast for Christian Institute Presentation; 2 nd – Juniors' Reunion; 5 th – Funeral service for Mrs Evangeline Dodds; 19 th – Visit from Bogi Kozma (IMJP – Budapest); 22 nd – Easter family celebration; 26 th – AGM – S McFall interviewed by D Watson about bookshop;
April	19 th – Seniors to Dundonald ice bowl; 21 st – Visit from Pastor A-Kumaur (India)
May	11 th – Presbytery day (Crumlin) – Speaker – Geoff Thomas; 17 th – Ignite meeting (Groomsport); 21 st – Tract Distribution (May Fair); 23 rd – HBC – Planning Meeting
June	1 st – Work Day at church; 7 th – BBQ Carnfunnock; 8 th – Sunday School excursion; 9 th – Visit from Florus Van Der Rhee (Delegate from Netherlands); 16 th – Stew Day; 20 th – Visit to Every Home Crusade premises (Dromore); 28 th – Inters leave for camp; 29 th – Juniors leave for camp
July	8 th – Seniors leave for camp; 30 th – Missionary meeting (ACTS) – Pamela Gaiya
August	11 th – 23 rd – Outreach Moldova; 19 th – 23 rd – Holiday Bible Club; 27 th – Missionary Meeting – David Gordon (ACTS); 30 th – Juniors and Seniors Reunion night
September	1 st – Baptism of Noah Samuel Timothy McCartney (infant son of Stephen & Helen), Conducted by Rev Roger; 3 rd – Fellowship evening – reports on summer outreach
October	16 th – 18 th Early morning prayer meetings for harvest; 19 th – Harvest supper; 20 th – Harvest services – AM – Rev Andrew Quinn, PM – Josh Patterson (Ballycraig Congregational); 29 th – Reps from Dumisani College (SA), Jack & Nancy Whytlock and Wilbert Chipenyu
November	9 th – Office Bearers half day of prayer; 20 th – Visit to Crumlin for ordination and installation of Ethan McCarter to Crosscollyer Street Church; 26 th – Missionary Meeting – Visit of Sam Cowan (SCFS); 29 th & 30 th – Shaun with pop-up bookstall
December	6 th – Seniors at Ignite Meeting in Crumlin; 20 th – Carol Service – Aaron Houston; 25 th – Christmas Day service – Rev Gareth Burke; 29 th – Combined service with Reformed Presbyterians in their church. Speaker Rev Gareth Burke

There were many other activities that took place throughout the year, and these will be recorded with the leaders' names in the separate reports by their leaders. We are very thankful for them all and what their involvement was such as Mums and Tots, Children's Meeting, Junior & Senior YPA, Sunday School and Bible Class, Ladies Missionary Prayer Meeting, Junior, Inters and Seniors Camps, and Holiday Bible Club.

It is always the case that there are many very willing helpers involved in many ways, carrying out very important tasks in the church yet receive very little acknowledgement for it! Be assured, we do appreciate what you do, and we do thank you and please continue to do what you do so well. We have listed, and in no particular order of importance, some who helped in their own special way. If you do not see your name here, please accept it as a genuine oversight and is in no way intentional.

Roger and Daniel McMullan and David Roger for Film and Sound Management
All our musicians – Helen McCartney, John Watson, Emma Watson, Deborah Logan, Rob Evans
Heather McFall and her very willing team attending to our catering needs
Stephen Logan, who maintains the minibus, and organizes with David Roger the BBQ
June Tulloch, ably assisted by Jessica Montgomery, for all the beautiful floral displays as and when required
David Watson for the monthly newssheet and SS Project children's talks
Paul Tulloch and all the auditing the accounts – no mean task!
All the Deacons, all the Cleaners, the church treasurers

Our church continues to be in great need for many things. Harvest is a seasonal time but the spiritual harvest is continual and to be reaped in every season, and is year after year, long involvement; but sadly the labourers are few. Let us then, continue in our prayers and labours for the Lord of the harvest that He will send more labourers into the surrounding fields that He has appointed us to care for and importantly a Pastor for the leadership here in the work in Ballyclare. Then when all the sheaves are gathered in, when the things of time have passed away forever, we may hear the Master's commendation, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant* Matthew 25 vs 21.

Ken McDonald, Clerk of Session

Deacons Report

The Diaconate met four times in 2024 to consider church finance and the maintenance of our church buildings. The following items were considered and addressed:

- Boiler repair, servicing, and purchase of oil
- Annual Inspection of the gas Stoves and Fire Extinguishers
- Acquisition of a new Lectern for prayer meeting room
- Minibus servicing, repairs and MOT preparation – thanks to Victor Aiken
- Purchase of equipment so the words of the Psalms and Hymns appear in the live stream
- Purchase and installation of two large screen TVs to act as projector screens
- Repair of the gas cabinet

We had one workday in June, and we would like to thank all those who helped and provided the breakfast. Thanks to all who helped make possible our BBQ to Carnfunnock in June, fun was had by all. We would like to thank Mrs. June Tulloch for providing floral arrangements for church and for decorating the church for harvest. Thanks to all who faithfully clean the church and those who play the organ and piano week by week. We also would like to thank Mrs. Heather McFall and her team coordinating the catering, we have been well provided for throughout the year. We also wish to thank Mr Roger McMullan for advising us and installing the new sound desk at the rear of the church. Also, for his faithfulness in producing the power points with the Psalms, Hymns and Bible readings week by week.

At each meeting we consider the state of our finances, the accounts indicate another year of solid giving. Our financial target to Presbytery of £46300 was achieved. We thank everyone for giving generously as to the Lord – every need has been met.

The Diaconate would like to express thanks to anyone who has helped in any way to the running of the church it is greatly appreciated.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
Hebrews 4 v 16

Stephen Logan, Secretary to the Deacons

Finances

We have again experienced the faithfulness of God in providing for all our financial needs. Our finances remain *stable and steady*. We remain a viable congregation in that we can fully support a minister. In the attached Statement, the following items may be of interest:

- Our direct giving was up by £3000 on 2023 (0.5%). Our overall income was up PP£9000 (1.15% increase)
- Gift Aid and Bank Interest (£16,000) are crucial to our total income (16% of income)
- The Central Fund cost to support a minister for the coming year is likely to be about £46,500
- Missionary Giving remains about 10% of our giving
- Missionary giving to Dumisani Seminary (South Africa) was augmented by gifts from Crumlin & Knock

We sincerely thank all who give in this practical way. Please consider using Gift Aid to improve your gift – see how important it is to the overall figure. Either Dave Roger or I can talk to you about this.

Paul Tulloch is again thanked for his careful auditing of the books, which is appreciated. Dave Roger has agreed to take over the treasurer-ship - a gradual handover is now taking place. We thank Dave for this undertaking.

David

Ballyclare EPC Accumulated Funds 31 December 2024 (for Charity Commissioners NI purposes)

Main Account	£143,730.92
Barbecue Account	£195.82
Mums & Tots Account	£172.31
Buildings	£800,000
Contents	£50,000
Minibus	£2,000.00
TOTAL	£996,099.05

2024 Year End Summary

Signed: [Signature] Date: 17/2/25