

# 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 2025  
Presented by Session to the  
Annual General Meeting  
Tuesday 10 March 2026

## Session Report

*What manner of man is this that even the winds and sea  
obey Him? (Matthew 8:27)*



As I prepared this report for the year 2025, I did so as it were “in the midst of a storm”! Storm Chandra has been an unwelcome visitor over the past number of hours and is causing much damage and destruction throughout the province. We see fallen trees, buildings destroyed beyond repair, electrical failures to many homes, hospital appointments cancelled, over three hundred and fifty schools closed!

Thankfully, as I write, I have not heard of any deaths or serious injuries to any person, and for this we thank our God for His love and protective care at this time. As I pondered the present situation I was reminded of God’s care towards us all through the many storms of life that we are called throughout our lifetime to face. I began to think, and to recall the incident that is recorded for us in Matthew’s gospel noted above! The disciples found themselves in this fearful situation but when the problem was laid before the Lord then the calm came.

Perhaps, at present, you are facing a seemingly relentless storm in your own life, either mentally, physically or spiritually, and you cannot see a way out. Have no fear the Saviour knows all about it. He cares, and through this ‘happening’ on the lake, we can be assured that He will soon, in His own time, settle our storm with a relief far beyond our greatest expectations. Remember these words:

The Lord will provide

It may not be my way  
It may not be thy way  
Yet in His own way  
The Lord will provide.  
Let’s leave it with Him!

Our church, still being in the ‘vacancy’ regarding a full-time minister of our own, cannot thank the Rev Hambleton enough for all that he does on our behalf as he fulfils the role of interim moderator. We appreciate the amount of extra work that falls upon his shoulders as he keeps the pulpits of Crumlin and Ballyclare filled at every meeting with very godly and acceptable speakers. On this note, while we usually name the speakers at each meeting in our report we decided this time, because of the number involved, we would thank all collectively who gave of their services so willingly. This number would include ministers (past and retired), members of other denominations, and also all those from our own congregation. If we are to name one person in particular it must surely be our friend and brother Rev Gareth Burke, who helped us so many times and in so many ways that we are so thankful beyond words. Thanks again Gareth!

Our membership at present stands at forty-four souls when in the month of June we welcomed into our number for baptism and membership Aaron and Carolyn Houston; we're glad to have them. However, in the month of October, we, with heavy hearts noted the passing of our brother Mr R.B. McKenzie being 102 years of age. R.B., until his move to Portrush in excess of twenty years ago, for family reasons, was a very highly respected and loved member and elder in the church for many years. A man who could be depended upon to help in any situation in the church either spiritually or physically, some seen but many unseen.

Although living so far away, some of us would visit him from time to time and he was always glad to see us, bringing him up to date with things at the church and also to read the Word and pray with him. Yes, we will miss him but we always must remember that our parting is only for a season and we are assured, on the authority of God's Word, that we will meet again in that home where death has no place.

As we consider this past year of 2025 and many things that cannot be recalled, only by memory, we do think of special events that did occur throughout the year in the church or with church involvement and we note them here month by month:

<u>January</u>	Special meetings with Rev Gareth Burke
<u>February</u>	Special meetings with Rev Gareth Burke Travelling by minibus to Stranmillis for the installation of the Rev John Roger
<u>March</u>	Junior Camp Reunion & Inters Camp Reunion Testimony Mr Andrew Woodside, Mrs Delwyn Schmidt, Mr Shaun McFall, Mrs Claire Heaney
<u>April</u>	Special visit of our moderator, Rev John Roger Easter celebration with Rev Ethan McCarter Visit of Bogi Kozma (I.M.J.P) who gave a demonstration of the Passover. We were delighted to welcome our friends from Crumlin to join us on that occasion.
<u>May</u>	Election and installation of Deacons Trustee Training Tract distribution at Ballyclare May Fair
<u>June</u>	Sunday School Outing Baptism of Aaron and Carolyn Houston, and entering into membership Junior Camp (28 <sup>th</sup> June – 5 <sup>th</sup> July), Inters Camp (27 <sup>th</sup> June – 4 <sup>th</sup> July) Stew Day Session meeting with leaders of young peoples work Church work day
<u>July</u>	Missionary meeting, with Ben Smyth, and Crumlin folk attended. Senior Camp (7 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> July)
<u>August</u>	Visit of Moderator Rev Robert Beckett Holiday Bible Club Team on outreach - visit to Casa Mea, Moldova Church workday
<u>September</u>	Harvest supper & Harvest services with Rev Gareth Burke & harvest choir Missionary Meeting (E.M.F) with Diego Lopes.
<u>October</u>	Mission boxes reintroduced with Mrs Allison McDowell attending to same
<u>November</u>	Funeral service for Mr R.B McKenzie Minibus preparation by Messrs. Victor Aiken and Stephen Logan Denomination half day of prayer
<u>December</u>	Carol service with Rev Ethan McCarter Christmas morning service with the Session Combined service with our friends from the Reformed Presbyterian Church

As is the usual case, there are many other activities that have taken place and are not recorded in this report and apologies for any unintentional omissions.

We remember, as always, all the leaders and helpers involved in many ways for the good of the witness of the church and we read of their contributions in their individual reports, which includes: Mums & Tots, Children's Meeting, YPA, Sunday School and Bible Class, Ladies' Missionary prayer meetings, camps, and Holiday Bible Club. The Senior YPA met until the summer break, and we thank the leaders, especially Axel, for taking charge. In the autumn, with most of the YPA moving on, the work did not re-commence. However, with a good group coming through from Junior YPA it is intended to re-commence in autumn 2026.

As recorded every year there are those who labour week after week with little or no recognition and even though it is not always known it is surely appreciated, and we thank you for your continued help.

To all our musicians under the rota, by Helen McCartney and those who help her by playing at all our meetings and those are: John Watson, Emma Watson, Stephen McCartney and Deborah Logan.

We thank the 'Tech Team' under the leadership of Roger McMullan, who appreciates the help of Daniel McMullan, Joshua Schmidt and David Roger. We also thank John Watson for his dedication as 'choir leader', for Paul Tulloch for auditing the accounts and for Stephen Logan who maintains the minibuss and organises the BBQ with David Roger.

At special times in the church there is always a very beautiful display of flowers and for these we thank June Tulloch who attends this in a very professional fashion. We thank Mrs Heather McFall and her team for catering at the many suppers and meals throughout the year. We thank the Deacons and cleaners who attend to many items throughout the year. Once again, as I say each year, if at any time or place I have omitted mentioning you please accept it as unintentional and a genuine oversight and we really do appreciate your involvement and please continue in your very appreciated involvement.

Let us always remember that in spite of the many storms that we may be called upon to face in this forthcoming year, the One who said to a very stormy sea "Peace be still" and there followed a great calm. That same God is the One who cares for us and will calm our storms. Let us always call upon Him for He says: "I am God and there is none else". Let us always put our dependance upon Him.  
Isaiah 45:22

**Ken McDonald, Clerk of Session**

## **Deacons Report**

The Diaconate met 7 times in 2025 to consider church finance and the maintenance of our church buildings. The following items were considered and addressed:

- Pianos tuned
- Defibrillator purchased and installed in the rear hall to enhance emergency readiness
- New digital notice board purchased and installed for announcements and communication
- Boiler serviced and oil purchased
- Church roof cleaned of moss and treated to prevent further growth
- Broadband upgraded to fibre optic

At each meeting we consider the state of our finances, and the accounts indicate another year of solid giving.

Our financial target to Presbytery was achieved. We thank everyone for giving generously as to the Lord – every need has been met.

We had one workday on 30th August, and we would like to thank all those who helped and provided the breakfast. We would like to thank Mrs. June Tulloch for providing floral arrangements for the church and for decorating the church for harvest. Thanks to all who faithfully clean the church and to those who play the organ and piano week by week. We also would like to thank Mrs. Heather McFall and her team for coordinating the catering – we have been well provided for throughout the year.

The Diaconate would like to express thanks to anyone who has helped out in any way with the running of the church; it is greatly appreciated. Once again, we acknowledge the Lord's goodness to us throughout the year.

*"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*

Philippians 4:19

**Stephen Logan**

## **Sunday School Report**

The Sunday School continues to play a significant role in the life of our congregation, and I hope that this report will help the church family stay informed and pray meaningfully for this ministry. We deeply value and depend upon the prayers of the church as we seek the Lord's blessing on this work, that it may grow and bear fruit to the glory of our Saviour.

Since the COVID period, many churches have faced challenges in encouraging children to attend Sunday School, and we have experienced similar difficulties. This past year has brought several changes. With the departure of one family and some of our teenagers moving on, our current attendance stands at eleven children. We continue to run two Sunday School classes along with a Bible class.

Our format remains unchanged. We are using the Go Teach curriculum and the children's catechism, alongside the memorisation of Scripture. This year the children learned Matthew 11:28–30, Psalm 18:1–3, and Romans 10:9.

Classes are arranged broadly by age, which brings both opportunities and challenges. It is important that each child is taught at a level appropriate to them and remains engaged throughout. We would value continued prayer for wisdom in this area. Approximately 25% of our children come from outside the church family, and we are greatly encouraged by this. We would love to see even more children join us.

Our teaching team consists of Heather, Delwyn, and Adrian. We are also grateful for the support of Axel, Aaron, Carolyn, and Heather, who step in to assist whenever needed. Their willingness and faithfulness are a real blessing.

**Shaun, Adrian, Delwyn and Heather**

## **Children's Meeting Report**

We've had another encouraging year in Children's Meeting, where God has blessed us with a consistent number of children attending, having an average of 11 each week. The group ranges from P1-P6, where we had a few younger ones who have started to come along which has been really encouraging, with

more than half the children coming from outside the church, giving an opportunity to bring God's word to them. Our theme for this year was "God is always with us", and so we have looked at stories both from the Bible and through missionaries of how this has rung true when trusting in God. We went through the story of Joseph, along with a missionary series on Joni Eareckson Tada, and more recently through some stories from the book of Acts, where the children listened really well. This year instead of our usual memory verse, we went through the different books of the Bible, something that the children learnt really well and we pray that this will stick with them in their young age. The children greatly enjoyed the occasional games, craft and fun nights which we held, and we had Laura McCarter and family as our guest speaker for the year. Please continue to pray for the young ones and that God would speak to them through His word, along with remembering the P6s who will be leaving us this year, and that they would settle well into Junior YPA this following year.

We were delighted to have Sarah McMullan join us as a helper and we appreciate her faithfulness each week. We also want to thank Stephen Logan and Andrew Woodside in driving the minibus each week, along with all those who have helped with lifts throughout the year, we thank God for his kindness in the safety of this week by week.

**Dave, Deborah, Helen, Jayne, Sarah, Stephen.**

### **Junior YPA Report**

Once again, we give thanks to God for His continued grace to us in the work of Junior YPA. It has been an encouraging year, marked by growth, enthusiasm, and—at times—new challenges as our numbers increased.

We began with a series of missionary talks on *The Burnhams*, which were well received, followed by a series on *Parables Jesus Told*. After the summer break, our reunion night on 29th August was a lively evening with a bungee run and slushie machine. We were pleased to welcome **Sam Parke** from our Stranmillis church as guest speaker, and it was encouraging to see many young people return the following week.

In the first term we studied the life of **Jacob**, and in the second term **Joseph**, giving us many opportunities to discuss God's faithfulness through both ordinary days and difficult circumstances.

With increased numbers, we have also faced some behavioural challenges, and there have been evenings that required extra patience and wisdom. We are thankful for the unity of the leaders and the willingness of everyone to support one another as we navigate these moments. We would especially value prayer for these situations—that we would handle them with grace, firmness, and love, and that the young people would grow in respect, attentiveness, and understanding as they settle into the group.

Our meetings continue to follow the familiar pattern of singing, prayer, a memory verse, a talk or small group discussion, and a quiz. The enthusiasm for the quiz remains a highlight and reassures us that the young people are listening. Above all, we pray that they would take these truths to heart and come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

We are grateful to all who have helped us throughout the year—often at short notice. Your support has been invaluable.

Finally, we thank our Heavenly Father for His steadfast love and mercy. Please continue to pray for the young people, both those who do not yet know Christ and those who are growing in their faith, and for the leaders as we serve each week.

**Stephen, Ian, Andrew, Diane, Aaron, Carolyn and Eddie**

## **Mums & Tots Report**

The work of Tots continued on in 2025 and we give thanks for God's goodness and encouragement.

There were a good number of mums and grannies coming from January to June.

The usual routine of playing, tidying up, refreshments, singing choruses and story time was followed each week. Our talks included The Wordless Book, The Lost Sheep, The Good Shepherd and object lessons which the Tots always enjoy.

Choruses are a favourite, all seem keen to learn the actions and lately, have given themselves a round of applause at the end of each chorus. 'My God is so big' is climbing the charts of choruses!

From September on, the number of Tots coming has been lower as a large group left for Nursery after the summer. We still see encouragements as those coming remain regular. A mum has asked for a Bible, wanting to know answers to her questions - we continue to pray that God will break into her heart and the hearts of others who come.

We want to thank Eddie (for his enthusiasm), Bill (who came out of retirement for a while) and Violet. Also, thanks to Diane Logan who has been so ready to step in and help whenever we are short of leaders - and to Alastair who came one week. Then a big thank you to Dave Roger who so diligently and faithfully sets up the hall for us each week.

Do please continue to pray for this work that we will see God's hand in it.

**Chris, Stephen, Eddie and Violet**

## **Ladies' Missionary Prayer Meeting**

We are very thankful for those who have answered God's call to 'Go... and make disciples of all the nations.' We praise Him who promises to build His church and who gave the apostle John the vision of 'a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations tribes, peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.' But we must be part of the work too as we pray for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done.

Our missionary prayer meetings last one hour and follow a pattern: a brief thought from the Bible, followed by missionary news focusing on that month's selected people and places; then we pray together, usually dividing the prayer topics into two or three prayer times. Some pray audibly; others share silently. Everyone takes away a news sheet which, we hope, helps us to pray at home.

In a world of digital communication and social media it is not difficult to keep informed about the work across the world, whether in Europe, the middle east, southeast Asia or Africa—and a few other places too. This is a great blessing. We have grown to love and care for God's servants and the people they serve as we pray for them.

I am thankful to the faithful band of ladies who attend. Sometimes we are well packed into the minister's room where we meet, but we can always make room for newcomers if this is something you'd be interested in.

**Heather**

## 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 audited financial statement, the following items may be of interest:

- Total movement for year: increase of £1,518.43 (compared to 2024)
- Income: £8,781 increase this year (12% rise) (2025: £74k; 2024: £66k)
- Giving: increase c. £9.5k (19% up compared to 2024)
- Gift Aid: increase by 8% to £11,145.31 (2024: £10,330)
- Danske Interest: c. £4k (2024: 5.7k). Fall due to lower interest rate this year
- Missionary giving remains about 10% of overall giving
- Congregational spend: up by c. £10k on last year (this year's spend incl. defibrillator, roof clean, new noticeboard)

We sincerely thank all who give in this practical way. Please consider using Gift Aid to improve your gift, as it is important to the overall figure. If interested, please speak to me about this.

Paul Tulloch is again thanked for his careful auditing of the books, which is greatly appreciated.

**Dave Roger**

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### Barbecue Account 2025

Income		Expenditure	
Opening balance 1 January 2025	£195.82	Cash in Hand	£5.82
		Funds in Church Accounts	£190.00
TOTAL	£195.82	TOTAL	£195.82

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### Mums & Tots Account 2025

Income		Expenditure	
Opening balance 1 January 2025	£172.31	Provisions	£308.44
Contributions	£268.39	Books	£24.46
		Funds in Church Accounts	£50.00
		Cash in Hand	£57.80
TOTAL	£440.70	TOTAL	£440.70

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### Ballyclare EPC Accumulated Funds 31 December 2025 (for Charity Commissioners NI purposes)

Main Account	£145,249.35
Barbecue Account	£195.82
Mums & Tots Account	£107.80
Buildings	£900,000
Contents	£50,000
Minibus	£3,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,098,552.97</b>



## 2025 Year End Summary

## EXPENDITURE

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	
<b>Utilities</b>			
Heat & Light	£3,179.10		
Insurance	£916.42		
Talk Talk	£358.10		
Telephone			
Water & Bins	£468.76		
<b>Denominational Funds</b>	£4,922.38		£4,922.38
Central Fund	£40,395.00	£1,605.00	
Home & Foreign Missions			
Peter & Neus Grier (Frontiers)	£29.00	£471.00	
<b>Congregational Activities</b>	£40,424.00	£2,076.00	£42,500.00
Evangelical Bookshop	£332.65		
Repairs & Renewals	£6,756.55		
Sundries	£897.42		
BBO			
Pulpit supply	£4,590.00		
Outreach General	£48.97		
Harvest			
Minibus	£2,050.21	£500.00	
Bank/legal Fees	£258.81		
YPA Calendars	£285.81	£185.81	
Suspense			
YPA	£429.37		
<b>Other Missions and Societies</b>	£15,220.42	£1,115.18	£16,335.60
EMF	£235.00	£165.00	
EMF Relief			
Pamela MA	£400.00		
MERF		£1,400.00	
SCFS	£400.00		
ACTS	£400.00	£200.00	
Barnabas Fund			
Christian Institute	£400.00		
Ben & Esther Smith		£3,900.00	
Christoph & Jackie Theide	£400.00		
Andrew Moody	£250.00		
100 Fold		£110.00	
IMFP	£1,250.00		
	£2,485.00	£7,025.00	£9,510.00
Total Expenditure			£73,267.98
Total Income	#		£218,517.33
Balance Carried Forward			£145,249.35

**Location of Funds at 31 December 2025**

£11,785.41

£130,258.63

£3,205.31

**£145,249.35**

## £178.00

£177.00

£159.59

£350.00

£50.00

£190.00

## £44,505.25

## £451.00

£49.00

£250.00

£2330.22

£350.00

£50.00

£190.00

£43,400.66

EPC, Ballyclare, First Trust Bank, Wellington Street, Ballymena

Account No 06414268

UK tax-payers can obtain a Gift Aid Declaration Form which means

we can reclaim 25 p. from Inland Revenue for each £1 donated

Please speak to the treasurer about increasing the value of your contributions.

Paul Tulloch – I have examined the books & records for Ballyclare EPC

for the year ending 31/12/2025 and can confirm the receipts and payment accounts are in accordance therewith.

Date: 24/1/20