

DROMARA SESSION REPORT 2023

Another year has passed and as a session we thank God for his help and guidance throughout the year.

The session was constituted 6 times through the year. Twice for communion and four times for normal business. Communion was on the usual dates in May and November. Session was represented at both presbytery and synod. Mr Gareth Kerr took on the role of clerk of presbytery in February. We wish him well in this office and pray that God would help him as he keeps the records for presbytery.

The annual congregational meeting was held on Friday 10th of February. Reports that had previously been published and distributed to the congregation were passed. Another treasure hunt was held at the beginning of May. An enjoyable night was had by all as we travelled around the local roads finding the answers to the clues that had been set. The closing lecture of the theological college was held in our church in April. A tent mission had been arranged by the connect group in Dromara and involved the local congregations. Each congregation took it in turn to lead the meeting each night and to provide singers or someone to give their testimony, also men to help with car parking. Our congregation led on two nights with the choir singing 2 psalms each night. Gareth led on the first night and Kenny Stevenson led on the second. Rev Allen was unable to attend as his father was gravely ill at the time. A congregational outing was held on Saturday 24th of June. We went to Kilbroney forest park, had a barbecue, followed by a scavenger hunt and some games. It was a good afternoon and was enjoyed by all who attended. There was a holiday Bible club held on Wednesday – Friday mornings the 9th to 11th of August. It was disappointing that more children didn't come along. Those who did enjoyed themselves and we had an opportunity to teach bible stories and share the Gospel. There will be no holiday bible club this year, but the 5 alive are to arrange something for children during the summer. This year we had a congregational dinner held in the Halfway House. After an excellent meal Gordon Bond put some questions to Mr John Wilkinson, former principal of Dromore high school. We found out John has had a full and interesting life and still keeps very busy in his retirement. Our annual family night was held on the first Friday in December. A lovely meal was provided by the ladies followed by the distribution of sabbath school prizes. The children were then able to pick books from the book stall, provided by the bookshop. The evening finished off with games and a visit from a seasonal character. There was no mission this year as 2024 is our 150th anniversary year and meetings to mark this occasion are to be held in February.

This year we had Mr Kenny Stevenson, a student for the ministry, with us during May and June. Kenny worked with Rev Allen doing some visitation and sharing the preaching. Kenny had a bit of extra work at this time due to fact that Rev Allen's father was seriously ill and subsequently died during his time. Kenny fitted in well with the congregation and got to know the congregation in his time with us. A presentation was given to Kenny and his wife Charlene at the end of his time with us to show our appreciation for all that he done while with us.

There was one death during the year. Mrs E Bell. Mr Nathan Hawthorne conducted the funeral as the Rev Allen was unavailable because of sickness. Mrs Bell was the oldest member of our congregation and served the congregation well as she joined when she married Bailie many years ago. As a congregation we extend our deepest sympathy to the Bell family and pray that God would uphold you in your sorrow.

The Rev Allen lost both his parents this year. His father died in June and his mother died in October. We offer Rev Allen our deepest sympathy and pray that God would be with him and his family as they deal with bereavement.

Miss Naomi Coghill joined the congregation this year on disjunction certificate from Scalpay free church of Scotland. We pray that Naomi would enjoy her fellowship with us for years to come.

A ladies Bible study group was formed in October led by Mrs Debbie Kerr. A good number of ladies have already attended and there is still room for more. The session would encourage you to attend these meetings as they are arranged.

The work of the sabbath school continues as usual. We commend this work for your prayers as this is a vital work of our congregation. A joint CY continues to meet in Dromore, Lisburn, and Dromara, about 6 of our young people attend this. The 5alive, led by Zoe Campbell, meets on a monthly basis, again this is a vital work amongst our children and worthy of our prayers.

Gareth has arranged a 2 day tour to the reformation sites in Scotland in June. See Gareth for details.

Session would like to thank you for your ongoing support for the congregation. We are aware that we have an ageing congregation and many have ongoing health issues. We thank you all, and especially to our office bearers who do a wonderful and thorough job.. Please continue to attend both sabbath services. The session is particularly encouraged that the young families of the congregation attend the sabbath evening service regularly. Please continue to pray for each other as individuals Also remember our prayer meetings on Sabbath morning at 11:15 am and Tuesday evenings at 8pm where we pray together for each other.

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Eph 3: 20-21

Submitted on behalf of session.

Gordon Bond (clerk)