

Cookstown RP Cookstown Session Report

2022

The year 2022 was joyous one. The Lord on Saturday 9th July graciously saved David Young and Catherine Boyd! From 29th May this young couple had been attending worship each Lord's Day. Marvellously they are now members having been baptised and added to the number on 13th November of this year. The joyous year continued seeing them married in the church building on 14th December and it was our Pastor's great joy taking them through the Christianity Explored course, membership classes and Marriage classes! We as a church family are delighted to see them married and settled in their new home which in the wonderful providence of the Lord is right beside our meeting house. We praise the Lord too for sustaining David and Catherine during these exceptionally busy months and we pray the Lord now would give them time this year to settle into married life.

"We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers [and sisters] loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction." 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5

In a year where we thought the election of our own elder(s) was the plan, the Lord had better plans for us the like of which we could not have imagined. May this remind us to trust him, when things don't go 'our way,' knowing that his plans are always best, for our good and for his glory. It was on 22nd June that the Cookstown church plant was established as a congregation by the Eastern Presbytery, and on 4th December, a unanimous call was issued to Pastor Paul Wright, signed by 10 members and 9 covenant children. The call was presented at a meeting of the Eastern Presbytery on 12th January, which was graciously accepted by Pastor Wright that same evening. A service of installation is planned for Thursday 23rd March 2023.

The interim session of Cookstown church family met 8 times in the year and a Commission comprising of 2 members of session, met on 3 occasions to celebrate the Lord's Supper (numbering 10, 14 and 14 respectively). On 27th November we met to renew covenant with the Lord. There were 11 signatures recorded, plus the 2 visiting elders and the names of the 9 covenant children present were also recorded. We pray that by God's grace we will be faithful to our vows we have made and that it will spur us on in our service of our ever-faithful Saviour. A commission of session also met on a further 2 occasions to baptise David and Catherine and to baptise baby Eden Iris Wright. We praise the Lord for the safe arrival of Eden on 15th April and we pray soon that it will be true of her that ...

*"From babies' and young children's mouths
you have established praise,
that enemies and vengeful men
may all be made to cease." Psalm 8:2*

On the Lord's Day in January and February we continued and completed our studies in 1 Timothy, our series title being 'Church Life'. Our next sermon series 'Heard by God' (beginning at the end of February) came from the book of 1st Samuel and in August we began our studies on 'The Unsearchable Riches of Christ' Ephesians. We praise God our Father for how he graciously speaks to his people in the reading and

preaching of the very words of his Son and this by the power of the Holy Spirit within us. May the Lord continue to teach us, reprove us, correct us and train us in righteousness so that we may be complete and equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

As is our normal practice, at our Wednesday mid-week meeting, we continued to study together one of the previous Sabbath's sermons and have a prayer time together. We are also continuing our practice of praying for the lost on the final Wednesday evening of each month. Our distribution of John's Gospel continued on the first Saturday morning of each month and it was decided in the middle of the year to now begin to give out Matthew's Gospel. We pray the Lord will be gracious to our fellow townsmen, women, boys and girls and show them their sin against him and the hope and light of Christ.

Men's and Women's Fellowships continued, with the men reading the RPCI's "A Manual for Elders" and the women studying JC Ryle's book on "Holiness". After this both groups began reading Stephen Smallman's book, 'The Walk.' We pray the Lord will continue to use and bless these times mightily.

In the Session report for 2021 the church family was encouraged, where possible, to gather together for prayer and Bible study. To the delight of Session this largely happened and we do pray the Lord would continue to develop in us a desire to prayer and study his precious life giving word together.

The REACH project (a collaborative outreach effort by some of the evangelical churches in Cookstown) has continued in 2022 with several joint events, including again some tract tables in town and a Light Fantastic Party in October for school children. REACH also this year have started a food bank for families in need and have advertised this at morning Assemblies in the schools in town. Paul has continued the weekly street preaching on Friday afternoons and having been approached by Paul Flynn to preach in Dungannon and in Magherafelt this has happened on several Friday afternoons during the year. Session once again thank Henry Greer for his weekly enthusiasm to come and offer Gospels to passers-by and to try to speak to them about his Lord and Saviour. Paul has continued to have opportunities to take school assemblies at Coagh Primary school, and Cookstown Primary and High School. He also had opportunity to speak at Cookstown High School and Magee University's Christians Unions. We continue to pray that the Lord for his glory would be pleased to bless the preaching of his Word in these areas.

We were saddened by the death of Mr Stanley Bell on 17th November. Stanley was an adherent of the church, attending regularly until affected by deteriorating health. To his attentive and loving wife, Hazel, we extend our sympathies.

*You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11*

Respectfully Submitted

Marcus McCollum (Prepared by Paul Wright)