

## SESSION REPORT 2023

### Public Worship

The congregation met for public worship each Sabbath, both morning and evening, throughout the year with the exception of two Sabbath evenings in the summer when no one meeting the criteria laid down by Synod was available to lead the services.

Public worship services continue to be broadcast live on the congregation's YouTube channel to facilitate those unable to be present on the Lord's Day. We are grateful to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] for their work in this particular ministry and, especially so, to [REDACTED] who edits the services on YouTube each week to remove the announcements and the portion of the online recording which begins prior to the service starting.

We thank [REDACTED] for his work as our interim moderator in arranging supplies, moderating at our session meetings and undertaking some pastoral visitation amongst the members of the congregation.

In June Presbytery granted the congregation permission to make out a call. In November an exercise was undertaken to see if there was any consensus among the members regarding a potential new pastor. Unfortunately there was none. We would urge all members to pray earnestly that God would guide us to the man of His choosing, with gifts suitable for the needs of our congregation, so that a call can be made out in the near future.

We continue to be greatly blessed with the number of precenters willing to lead the singing at our services. We thank [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who shared the responsibilities throughout the year.

The average attendance at our morning services was 64 and at our evening services 40. This represents an increase of 2 at the morning service whilst the average attendance at the evening service is identical to last year.

## **Midweeks**

Midweeks were held throughout the year. We had visiting speakers from Barnabas, The Christian Institute and The Leprosy Mission. [REDACTED] spoke on the work that had been undertaken by the Go Relief Team in Nantes and [REDACTED] updated us on her ongoing work in George Royal Academy, South Africa.

At the beginning of the year midweeks were arranged in homes on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and we completed studies on the book of Galatians and Philippians using the 'A-B-C-D' basis of Bible Study.

Towards the end of the year we reverted to joint midweek meetings in the hall where we watched videos and had discussion times based on a series entitled 'The Fear of God' by Michael Reeves.

The Men's Fellowship met on a number of occasions and studied several chapters from the Elder's Manual.

Prayer meetings continue to be held on Sabbath mornings to coincide with the Sabbath School and before the evening services. Session continues to encourage every family to seek to have at least one member present at a prayer meeting each Sabbath day and, where possible, in attendance at a midweek meeting.

## **Session**

Session was constituted on 9 occasions during the year and was represented at the Presbytery and Synod meetings.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed on three occasions, in January, May and September. The attendance was 45 in January, 47 in May and 46 in September.

The congregation records with sadness the death of two of its retired elders. In February [REDACTED] [REDACTED] passed into his eternal rest and in December [REDACTED] [REDACTED] joined him in

heaven. We thank God for the life and witness of these two men and the part they each played in the work of Christ's kingdom in the congregation over many years until overtaken by bodily frailty brought about by advancing years. We extend our sympathies to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and the family circles.

The sacrament of baptism was observed on one occasion. In March, [REDACTED] presented their son [REDACTED] to be baptised. We are acutely aware of the increasing and unashamed wickedness in society and we commit all the children in the congregation to the Lord trusting that He will protect them from the snares of the world, lead them in paths of righteousness and that the vows taken at baptism will find fulfilment in their lives.

The congregation has agreed to host the 2024 Synod meetings.

### **Evangelistic Efforts**

The Friendship Group had 7 meetings throughout the year which were well attended. Most of the members are from outside the congregation and thoroughly enjoy the speakers and refreshments that are provided.

The new 'Songs and Scones' ministry started in January and largely followed the school calendar. There were 23 well attended meetings over the course of the year with many commenting upon the warm and friendly atmosphere. There were opportunities to engage not only with the children but also with the adults who accompanied them.

The congregation has continued to provide financial support for the E3 Schools Project and Schools Ministry in the North West. The new full-time SU worker for the North West is now [REDACTED] and we would encourage you to remember his work in prayer and [REDACTED] as she represents the congregation on the local committee.

The congregation continues to provide support for [REDACTED], for the work that she is undertaking in George Royal Academy.

Financial Support has also been provided for Royal Academy George, Scripture Union, Relief Fund (Earthquake appeal), European Mission Fellowship, Hope and Light, Barnabas, Mission Aviation Fellowship, Wycliffe Bible Translators, the Christian Institute, AsiaLink, Enniskillen RP Church, Ladies Fellowship, Roe Valley Christian Radio and Daily Bread as well as for the students undergoing training at the Theological College.

A limited distribution of the book entitled 'What's the Story' which is based on the gospel of John was distributed in the Shanreagh Park area of the town along with the Welcome Leaflet that had been published the previous year.

### **Congregational Activities**

The Sabbath School continued to meet during the year and we are grateful to the teachers for the important work that they do in teaching the young. We thank [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] for agreeing to join [REDACTED] as teachers in the Sabbath School and to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] for their willingness to step in to help out when need arises. We would also thank [REDACTED], who has now stepped down as a teacher, who for many years taught the beginners class. We also thank [REDACTED] who also stepped down as a teacher following her marriage to [REDACTED] in September. It is a delight to now have 9 children on the Sabbath School roll.

The Women's Fellowship had four formal meetings during the year and also a number of more social activities including walks at Benone and Ballykelly Sea Wall, an evening in [REDACTED] home and a meal at Solo Restaurant just outside Eglinton.

The 'CY Minis' continued throughout 2023 and is greatly enjoyed each month by the children in the congregation.

A CY for some of the older children began in November. The aim of the group is to provide opportunities for fun and friendship with more age appropriate learning and activities to develop faith and to encourage participation in Presbytery Youth events. We thank [REDACTED] for taking this initiative.

A congregational lunch was held on 4<sup>th</sup> June and there was also the traditional family night on 1<sup>st</sup> September to start the autumn programme.

### **General**

The Food/Baby Bank was continued throughout the year with donations being collected on a monthly basis and left at LCDI for distribution. We thank [REDACTED] for her work in overseeing this ministry.

Disjunction Certificates were issued to [REDACTED] following their move to Dervock in 2022.

A photographic prayer sheet was prepared by [REDACTED] and circulated during the year for use alongside the congregational prayer list to help children visualise the people being prayed for each day. [REDACTED] also provided a prayer focus sheet for congregational activities.

We thank the Deacons for the work they did throughout the year, including the ongoing work in the manse and [REDACTED] for his work as treasurer.

We thank the members of the congregation for their generous contribution to the congregation's finances.

We thank [REDACTED] for her floral arrangements and for organising the rota.

We would thank all those who have served the Lord in the congregation during the year in whatever capacity or role. We would urge all members to "Serve wholeheartedly as serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do....." (Ephesians 6 v 7 & 8).

Respectfully submitted,

[REDACTED] (Interim Moderator)

██████████ (Clerk of Session)