

# **Ballymoney Reformed Presbyterian Church**

**Charity Number 106390**

**Address: - Charlotte Street, Ballymoney County Antrim**

## **Charity Trustees (Session) Report for January - December 2018**

Trustees (Elders on the Session)

Rev. Edward McCollum, Mr Thomas Brewster, Mr Hugh McCluggage, Mr James Pinkerton, Mr Frank Stewart, Mr Martin Wilson, Mr Raymond Wilson.

Session met in ten constituted meetings, two non-constituted meetings, and met with fellow elders from the Northern Presbytery at the monthly Elders Fellowship meetings held in Cloughmills RPC.

We are thankful for the smooth running of the Congregation during the year. Rev Edward McCollum undertook the faithful weekly preaching of the word with the morning average attendance dropping by 1%, and evening service attendance increasing by 2%. We benefited from pulpit supplies when our Minister was not present, and express our thanks to visiting preachers for the messages they brought from God's Word. A mission worker preparing for work in Spain spoke at the Women's Fellowship service in October. The leader of Hope for Youth Ministries spoke at the Children's Focus Service in November, and Mr Frank Stewart spoke at Tearfund Service in April. The Elders led a Praise and Thanksgiving Service in March and a Psalm Praise Service in December. We are pleased that many of the congregation participate in the reading of God's word as we systematically are reading through the Book of Psalms each Lord's Day morning.

We held three Communion seasons during the year. In January 36 souls came to the Lord's Table when the meditations were on 'Verily, Verily, The Sayings of the Truth'; in May the theme was 'Jesus the Light of the World', and attendance at the Table was 44; at the September communion the study focused on 'The Day of Atonement', when 46 souls came to the table.

We record with sadness the passing of two of our senior members in August 2018. We extend our sympathy and assure their loved ones of our continued

prayerful support at this time. We were delighted when parents presented their infant son for baptism on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019. We pass on our congratulations to a couple who were married on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

We are mindful of the increasing number of our congregation who are in declining health. Our prayers are with those that are concerned about their health or the health of their loved ones and who are passing through anxious times. We frequently commit these dear people to God in prayer, bringing them before the Throne of Grace and placing them in the hands of the master healer, who is the great physician, for we know our times are in His hands and according to His will.

Session expresses thanks to the Committee for their work in maintaining the church property over the year. Apart from day to day maintenance, many jobs were undertaken including refurbishment and painting of the graveyard gates, painting of the Minor Hall toilets and provision of a ramp at the front door of the Hall. These areas of work are much appreciated and of benefit to the congregation and those who use the property. Session acknowledges the support of the congregation for the Building Fund and the generosity of giving. We look forward (DV) to the contract commencing for the extension and improvements to the Holmes Memorial Hall in 2019.

This year we were once again able to meet in full the Mission and Ministry Targets set by Synod. It is a matter of thanksgiving that all other demands on the finances of the Congregation were met and that the closing balance at the end of the year was slightly up on the opening balance.

Session appreciates the work and service of all who undertake the activities which constitute the ministry of the Church. We seek God's blessing for those teaching in the Sabbath School, for those who are Officers of the Girls Brigade, the leaders in the Kids Club, and those who organise the Women's Fellowship, the Senior Fellowship and the Cottage Meetings. We also thank those who undertake leading the weekly praise and the tape ministry. We pray for God's blessing on these organisations and activities of the congregation praying that in your witness you may be used to God's Glory.

The work and witness of the Congregation continued through the book stall at the Ballymoney Agriculture Show on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> and Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June. Many

people visited the stall, some bought books, many were given free gospel tracts, some opened discussion on spiritual matters, and a few asked for prayer for loved ones. Our thanks are expressed to those from the congregation who manned the stall, and we encourage any especially our younger members who are considering supporting this outreach work to take the opportunity to do so in 2019.

As a session and a congregation we were saddened when 2<sup>nd</sup> Ballymoney Boy's Brigade ceased to function in September 2018 after 50 years of service since its formation on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1968. We appreciate the legacy of the founder Captain and his first team of officers, and know that the 'advancement of Christ's Kingdom' will continue on through the many hundreds of enthusiastic boys who passed through the Company under faithful leaders and whose Christian influence is now in many parts of our nation and the world.

There was a good turnout for the Annual Business Meeting and Social evening on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018. After the Business Meeting we enjoyed a congregational meal of Irish Stew followed by deserts. We especially thank the ladies who provided, made and served the food. The children sang some courses and afterwards were presented with their Sabbath School prizes. A short adult programme was enjoyed by all.

On 26<sup>th</sup> May the coach was packed as the congregation went on their annual outing. The itinerary began with morning coffee at Hillmount Garden Centre, followed by a visit to Aunt Sandra's Sweetie Factory, the Continental Market, a tour of City Hall Belfast and dinner at Tullyglass Hotel. Our thanks are expressed to those who organised these events.

We don't know what 2019 will hold for our congregation or our nation, but we do know God holds the future and He is the same yesterday, today and forever. In Old Testament history people experienced uncertainty, more recently in 1934 when there was global uncertainty, and many individuals feared for the future, Laurence E Brooks looked to Psalm 40 for his comfort and penned these words. "He lifted me out of the deep miry clay, and settled my feet on the Rock there to stay. He gave me a new song to sing to my God, and many will hear it and trust in the Lord. Let all those who seek Him, have a heart filled with song, and knowing Salvation, say their sins are all gone; Let all that rejoice continually shout, He is my great God, for He lifted me out."

That is our prayer for the congregation and our nation in the year ahead that many will trust in the Lord, and will be able to sing He is my great God for He lifted me out of the miry clay.

Respectfully submitted

Martin Wilson (Clerk of Session)