

## Drimbolg RP Church – Trustees Report 2019

Trustees: Mr Leslie McClean  
Rev Norris Wilson  
Mr Stanley Lytle  
Mr Wilmor Kelso  
Mr Mervyn Kelso

The major event of 2019 for the Christian population of Northern Ireland was undoubtedly the surreptitious amendment to a Westminster Bill which resulted by default in the introduction of abortion and its evil companion same sex marriage to the statute books of our laws on the twenty first of October. We applaud those who objected and those who protested about these governmental decisions albeit to no avail. The words of the prophet Isaiah will surely ring true in our nation “ woe to those who call evil good and good evil.” Isaiah 5 verse 20.

The main event of the year within our congregation was surely the celebration of Professor Wilson’s completion of 40 years in the gospel ministry. The Theological College recognised this milestone in June with a celebratory dinner and Presbytery did likewise in early October. Following on from this Drimbolg ladies organised a congregational dinner on the 18th of October using outside caterers . A special cake, suitably decorated for the occasion ,was the centrepiece for an excellent meal. At the event the Clerk of Session paid tribute to Professor Wilson’s contribution to the life of the congregation over the past 15 years and Professor Wilson graciously replied expressing his appreciation of the warmth of affection shown by the congregation. A token of appreciation ,not only for his service to Drimbolg but also in recognition of his service to the wider denomination,was presented to Professor Wilson by the Clerk on behalf of the congregation.

Topics for Sabbath services this year saw the conclusion of studies on Peter, a series on the Holy Spirit and more recently on the Book of Esther ,along with the regular expositions of the Psalms. Our Sabbath evening Bible study group, where the elders continue to chair the discussion points, completed the series on 2 Samuel and has recently commenced a series on Titus and Philemon . An attendance of 10 to 12 members is typical at these evening studies. Midweeks have continued as usual with Professor Wilson dealing with a range of topics. Attendance remains at around 8 to 10 despite frequent appeals on Sabbath mornings for better support. The prayer times at midweek meetings remain a cornerstone of the congregation’s spiritual life and provide uplift for all present. As usual we were joined by our Churchtown neighbours in March when Rev XXXXXX gave us an update on the Kids 4 School project and explained the opportunity available to take up sponsorship of a Tanzanian child . In November we met in the Churchtown premises when Mr XXXXXXXX provided us with an insight into the work of Asia -link in the country of Laos. Both speakers gave outstanding presentations which were much commented upon and would have justified a much greater attendance on both occasions.

Our Sabbath School continued as usual this year but we were sorry to lose our teacher and Superintendent Mr XXXXXXXX as he left to have a year long stay in Australia. We wish XXXXXX every blessing on his time there and thank him for his service in the Sabbath School . We are grateful that Miss XXXXXXXX has agreed to take on the role of teacher and as yet no Superintendent has been appointed. Miss XXXXXX continues to teach the beginners and an extended age range now attends the senior Bible Class which continues to be led by MrXXXXXXXX.

CY has continued under the oversight of Professor Wilson and a new committee was elected at the beginning of the year. Our Holiday Bible Club was held in June and the arrangements for the collection of children from the Upperlands area was helped again by the provision of a minibus. The shortage of helpers continues to be a difficulty and we were again indebted to our neighbours in Ballylagan when we benefited from the assistance of Miss XXXXXXXX. We thank her for her help and Ballylagan session for facilitating this. In addition ,we would once again thank all those who helped with the Holiday Bible Club in organising the talks ,supplying food items or in any other way.

The uniformed organisations in the local district have continued to make use of the facilities in Drimbolg for their activities and we were pleased to host their annual enrolment service on 24th of November ,when Professor Wilson gave an appropriate and challenging address to the young people.

The Men’s Group met on some occasions during the year and also joined with the Churchtown Men’s Group at a number of their events. The most notable meeting was the Cyrus McCormick event when Mr XXXXXX from the Faith Mission gave a most interesting talk on how the reaper inventor ,with connections to County Tyrone, used his resources in the service of God as well as man. This was a well attended and most informative event with the evangelical theme that Mr XXXXXXXX is always careful to include. In November members visited the collection of antiquities housed at the XXXXXX farm near Upperlands and enjoyed hospitality from XXXXXX and family. The visit concluded with Mr XXXXXX giving an illustrated talk on his experiences with the relief team that carried out renovations on a dilapidated church property in Serbia during the month of August . It has been encouraging to note that members of our congregation have been involved in such projects. XXXXXXXX took part in a Christian outreach team to Kenya during the summer, an adventure which included a visit to jail there (on a

voluntary basis of course!). XXXXXX gave an interesting talk to the congregation during a morning service on her experiences and encouraged others to think of joining such teams . On the following Sabbath XXXXXX spoke of her participation in the Cloughmills Go Team and of her experience in attending Theological Foundations for Youth training event at Knockbracken R .P.Church . We congratulate and commend both young ladies on their efforts.

We record with sadness that two members of the congregation passed away this autumn. Mrs XXXXXX had been a faithful attender and participant in congregational life for many years until failing eyesight and health restricted her involvement . We express our sincere condolences to the family circle at this time. Mr XXXXXXXXXX had been a member for more than 60 years and had given long and valued service as a member of committee and also as a trustee. A faithful attender and helper in times of voluntary work he will be greatly missed in the church and in the family home . We extend our sympathy to all the family circle. We would also extend our sympathies to the XXXXX family circle, especially XXXXXX, on the passing of XXXXXXXX in July this year.

Session was constituted on fewer occasions this year but represented the congregation at all Presbytery meetings and also at Synod. Session oversaw the communion season on three occasions with an average attendance of 35 communicants. In addition members of session have served on Presbytery committees dealing with other matters. We in session continue to be available to the congregation at all times and are currently engaging in pastoral visits with Professor Wilson as schedules permit. Family lists have been posted on the vestibule notice board and families are free to contact their own or indeed any of the elders to express concerns or seek advice.

With regard to activities among the ladies of the congregation session is pleased to record their appreciation for the work and witness of the Tuesday Together group and the Women's Fellowship . Tuesday Together continues to provide an excellent opportunity for ladies from Drimbolg and others from neighbouring churches to meet for fellowship and excellent teaching during the months from October to May. We are indebted to XXXXXX for continuing to provide her home as a venue for the meetings with the accompanying hospitality. The Women's Fellowship meetings also proved to be beneficial with much blessing and as usual we are deeply indebted to our ladies for providing catering and hospitality at a number of congregational events .

Financial matters continue to be a challenge for the congregation . However we are please pleased to report that in 2019 our contribution reached 73% of the targets for ministry and mission set by Synod's Financial Advisory Committee. This is an increase of 23% on the figure of 50% which has been consistently achieved in the past years . Contrary to the view of many in Presbytery, session considers that the retention of separate monthly envelopes for Mission and Synodical funds is the most appropriate mechanism to highlight the ongoing financial needs of the various funds and outreach activities of the denomination. With an ageing membership and fewer contributors to the increasing monetary demands faced by the congregation from year to year, session continues to have concerns as to how the future financial challenges will be met. We look forward to the visitation of Presbytery in the coming year when these and other aspects of our Congregational life will come under scrutiny. We have a collective wish to see our congregation grow in number and in spiritual strength so that the faithful witness of Drimbolg may continue to shine in this part of Gods vineyard.