

Carrickfergus Reformed Presbyterian Church. Session Report for Year 2023.

"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth" Psalm 46:10.

In the midst of a changing world, we are comforted and assured by the fact that our God is unchanging. His Word is sure and steadfast and feeds our deepest needs when our spirits are troubled by the waywardness of our nation. It also leads us to praise when we reflect on His great mercy in giving us His own Son to be our Saviour and His Spirit to direct and inspire us in serving Him.

Preaching Ministry. Being still without a settled pastor we have been led in worship and have had God's Word skillfully ministered to us by 25 different men. We made out 2 calls during the year, both were declined.

Sacraments The Lord's Supper was observed 3 times with an average attendance of 15. In February, Prof. Peel led us in studies from Matthew ch 5 entitled "Christ's eight steps to happiness". In May we were encouraged to come the Table through studies from John ch 6 on "Jesus, the Bread of life". In November Rev. Hawthorne took as the Communion theme "The Lamb" from Revelation ch 14.

Prayer life of the congregation. There is a good spirit of prayer within the congregation supported by good attendances at the prayer times. We continue to have a period of prayer before the evening service when the service is prayed for together with the needs of members and friends, local outreach and mission. There are also periods of prayer after the mid-week Bible study and within the meetings of both Women's and Men's Fellowship.

Session Meetings. Session met formally on 11 occasions to oversee the work of the congregation and to serve at the Lord's Table. Meetings open with devotions and a period of corporate prayer followed by constitution of the court, apologies, agenda agreed, minutes, business of the meeting, next meeting arranged, closing prayer and dissolution of the court.

Changes in the roll. We have a membership of 21 from 16 family units, 8 covenant children and 6 adherents. One disjunction certificate was issued and one covenant child born during the year.

Average attendances. Morning service 23, evening service 18, prayer meeting 10 and mid-week 9.

Evangelism. Preaching to those attending worship, personal conversation with those frequenting the refreshment stall at the town market and also the coffee morning at the church. Members have one to one spiritual conversations with friends and colleagues.

Matters of pastoral concern. Nothing unusual at this time.

Assessment of spiritual life of congregation. The congregation is in good spiritual health with good open interaction among the people. We have regular visitors, especially at the evening service, and they are welcomed and made to feel included in the meeting.

Encouragements. The willingness of members to be involved in the different aspects of the work of the congregation. The appreciation shown by visitors for the ministry of the Word and the friendship and fellowship of the congregation.

Challenges. We are a small congregation, top heavy with senior citizens and a lack of younger persons to carry the congregation forward, especially men to train for ordained office. While we greatly appreciate the ministry of visiting preachers and the work of the Interim Moderator, we feel the lack of continuity and the need of a settled pastor to lead the congregation forward and better utilize the potential of evangelizing in the community.

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart, since as members of one body you were called to peace, and be thankful" Col 3:15.

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