ANNUAL REPORTS 2024

Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Presented at the Annual Presbytery Day Conference on 10th May 2025

Charity Number: 100252

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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PRESBYTERY ARRAGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Rev John Roger (Moderator), Rev Robert Johnston, Rev Andrew Lucas, Mervyn Langtry (Clerk).

Composition and Meetings

Presbytery had a total of 29 members at on 31 December 2024. There were 7 meetings with an average attendance of 20.

Annual Presbytery Day Conference

The Conference was held on 11 May 2024 at Crumlin EPC. Approximately 120 members and friends attended. Pastor Geoff Thomas (Aberystwyth) was the guest speaker, with his talks focussed on the theme “Watch and Pray”.

Rev Robert Johnston, the outgoing Moderator, provided an apt review of the year. After this the new Moderator, Rev John Roger, was installed. His Moderatorial address, based on Isaiah 40: 9-11 and entitled “Behold Your God”, was both challenging and heart-warming.

Moderatorial Duties

The Moderator presided at Presbytery meetings and the Presbytery Arrangements Committee. He represented the denomination at the General Assemblies of the Free Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) and the 2024 Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Rev Ballantine represented the EPC at the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (USA) 90th General Assembly in Seattle in June 2024.

Commissions of Presbytery

A regular visitation commission consisting of Rev M Johnston (Convenor), Mr A Lucas and Mr M Kelly completed a visitation in the Knock congregation. PAC acted as a Commission of Presbytery over the summer and winter recess periods. In July, a Commission consisting of Rev Burke, Mr Langtry and Mr Kelly oversaw the installation of Angus MacLeod as an elder in the Groomsport congreagation.

Committees

All Standing and Special Committees met as required by the Code or business at hand. In February, Presbytery appointed a new Committee tasked with the remit of planning for the denomination’s centenary in 2027.

Other

It was with heartfelt sadness that Presbytery marked the passing of one of its members, John Gowan, on 27 February 2024. We are grateful for every remembrance of him and commend his family circle and the Erne West congregation to your ongoing prayers. At Presbytery’s behest, Revs R Johnston

and A Lucas visited Nigeria in May to convey greetings, thanks and best wishes to Mrs Pamela Gaiya for her outstanding missionary service. A most encouraging Officebearers Half Day of Prayer took place in November. Also in November, Presbytery had the pleasure of ordaining and installing Ethan McCarter as minister in the Crosscollyer St congregation to conclude a long vacancy. Sadly, Rev Burke's long and much appreciated service in the pastoral ministry concluded on 17 November with his retirement and Presbytery wishes Rev and Mrs Burke every blessing at this new juncture in their lives. Presbytery agreed in April to cease publication of the "Evangelical Presbyterian" magazine and to refresh and increase the denomination's on-line presence.

Congregational Statistics

Membership	BC	CC	CR	EW	FN	GP	KN	OM	ST		Total
Jan 2024	43	15	42	15	17	38	47	31	94		342
Dec 2024	43	15	47	14	17	41	54	33	95		359
New Members	1	0	9	0	0	3	6	3	3		25
Deaths	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0		6
Disjunctions/Resignations	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2		5
Baptisms	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2		6
Sun AM Attendance	58	20	57	16	20	48	39	50	133		441
Sun PM Attendance	44	17	41	15	15	34	32	26	93		317
Communion Attendance	33	15	42	15	18	40	29	29	80		301
BibleStudy/Prayer Meeting	17	10	21	8	11	13	12	17	30		139
Sunday School	18	0	8	0	0	14	18	12	35		105
Other Children's Work/Youth Work	36	15	12	0	0	48	37	25	45		218
Parent Toddler Group	15	0	15	0	0	22	0	3	31		86
Marriages	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1		3

Recommendations

1. That Presbytery give thanks to God for His gracious provision to enable our congregations to continue in the work of the Gospel during 2024.
2. That Presbytery thank the Moderator for his diligence in attending to all the duties of his office throughout the year.
3. That Presbytery thank all those who have represented it at various events during the past year.
4. That Presbytery remembers in prayer all those across our congregations touched by bereavement in 2024.
5. That Presbytery thanks all Interim Moderators, Assessor Elders, Commission and Committee members for their diligence and commitment throughout 2024.
6. That Presbytery call on the church to pray that we, as a denomination, might know much blessing and encouragement in the days ahead.

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Rev Gareth Burke (Convenor), Rev Mark Johnston, Rev Andrew Lucas, Paul Watson, Mervyn Langtry

With the closure of the Foyle Bible Study this past year has been a quieter one for the Church Development Committee with our attention being taken up principally with two issues – Mission to the World and Publications.

Mission to the World

MTW is the mission agency of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Our presbytery signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding' with MTW and, as such, they have been sharing with us details of gospel workers who may be interested in serving in Ireland. Keith Knowlton, the UK Director of MTW, is in regular contact with the Convenor and has developed a good understanding of our needs and ethos. To date one session has made enquiries about the possibility of having a specific MTW family working in their congregation.

Publications

This project has turned in to something of a marathon but the committee is confident that the finishing tape is in sight! We hope to produce before the end of this year four attractively presented pamphlets on the following subjects: What are the means of grace? How should we worship? Where did we come from? (EPC History) Why join the church? (membership) These pamphlets would be suitable for display in church foyers and would be a useful resource to pass on to visitors attending our services.

Recommendations

1. CDC would encourage the wider church to remember those who faithfully attended the Foyle Bible Study over a period of six years and would express thanks to Rev Andrew Lucas for his ongoing concern for these brothers and sisters.
2. CDC expresses thanks to Mission to the World for their interest in our work and witness and would encourage sessions to develop greater contact with them.
3. CDC would ask for prayer for the proposed publication programme.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Rev Marcus Hobson (Convenor), Rev Andrew Lucas, Rev John Roger

As a denomination it is a privilege to be involved in the work of worldwide mission. We desire God's name to be glorified in all the earth; Psalm 117 *'Praise the LORD all nations! Extol him, all peoples!'* And the Lord has given His church the commission to make disciples of all the nations (Matt. 28 v. 19-20).

The EPC throughout its history has been glad to support the work of missions overseas. Some congregations have members who are serving the Lord on the mission field, and we are glad to support them in prayer and financially. Most of our congregations have different mission organisations which they take an interest in and regularly support.

During 2024 we were especially glad to recognise the 30 years that Mrs. Pamela Gaiya has spent in missionary service, firstly with Mission Africa in Belfast, and then for over 20 years assigned by Mission Africa to work with ACTS in Nigeria. Presbytery sent Revs. Robert Johnston and Andrew Lucas to go and visit the Gaiyas on the field and that brought much mutual encouragement. We continue to remember the work there in prayer.

In 2023 the denomination received a substantial legacy from the estate of the late Mrs. Noelle Williamson to support the work of International Missions. Funds have been dispersed to support ACTS, International Mission to Jewish People, and works supported by the Free Church of Scotland in Peru, India and South Africa. We also now have a Williamson Fund to give practical support to EPC members serving on or training for the mission field.

Our regular denominational giving to International Missions currently goes to the work of the Free Church of Scotland in Peru, India, and South Africa.

Recommendations

4. Give thanks for missionaries from the EPC serving overseas, and pray for the Lord to uphold them and use them for the furtherance of His kingdom.
5. For a continued interest and vision for the work of God's kingdom around the world.
6. That the Lord would raise up missionaries in the EPC.

PUBLIC MORALS COMMITTEE

Rev Robert Johnston (Convenor), Wallace Thompson, Harold Gibson

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

As we write this report, it is probably an understatement to say that the world is in its most perilous state for many years. Nations, it seems, are preparing for war. Apart from the alarming potential of the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East to develop into something much wider, so many other tensions and dangers across the globe also contain similar potential. Alongside this geopolitical turbulence, and in the face of such deep uncertainties, the western world continues to discard the certainties and security of its rich Judeo-Christian heritage.

While we remain thankful that remnants of that heritage continue to manifest themselves to some extent in public life in Northern Ireland, the trajectory of travel remains very clear. We are determined, it seems, to be a secular people.

And yet, we must not become despondent. God reigns. He is – and always has been – sovereign in world events. We see it repeatedly in Bible times and in subsequent church history. So, we encourage you to prayerfully reflect upon the words of Jesus as quoted above from His discourse to His disciples in John 14. This world is not left to its own random devices, and we must not let our hearts be troubled or afraid. As God's people we have been offered a peace that this world can never offer. Meanwhile, we must seek to be like the children of Isaachar, who "were men that had understanding of the times" (1 Chron 12:32).

As a committee of two, we struggled with the complexity and volume of the issues confronting us in 2024, and we were therefore delighted to welcome Harold Gibson on board in June. We have also been greatly assisted by Wallace's role as chair of the Caleb Foundation, and by Rev Robert Beckett's membership of Caleb's Council of Reference.

There were big changes at Stormont and Westminster in 2024.

NI Assembly

The NI Assembly and Executive were restored after a two year suspension in February, but a Programme for Government was not published until a year later. The electoral balance of the Assembly is such that those in favour of a so-called "progressive", human rights and equality agenda, which has encouraged and facilitated much of the LGBT and Trans agenda, are in a majority. In the work of some of the Committees, some MLAs have shown a worrying degree of intolerance and

bullying towards any who would challenge that agenda. We are grateful to Christian MLAs across the parties who have taken a stand against the promotion of wokeism.

The Assembly Education Committee conducted a mini consultation into the controversial RSE curriculum. RSE was imposed on secondary schools in NI by Westminster, but the outworking of a public consultation led to some sensible controls, including the rights of parents to withdraw their children from all or part of lessons. However, in September, the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission claimed that the parental 'right of withdrawal' from classes on abortion is an unhelpful 'barrier' to sex education. She told the Assembly's Education Committee that children have a right to this teaching, which should override parents right to have their religious or philosophical views respected. Opinions within the Education Committee were divided, but the Human Rights Commission position has considerable support.

Westminster

In July 2024, the UK faced a General Election which resulted, as predicted, in a heavy defeat for the Conservative Party and the election of a Labour Government led by Sir Keir Starmer. We had many concerns about the weaknesses of the Conservative Government, but Labour seems even more committed to promoting secularism.

One specific Westminster concern is the Private Members assisted dying bill, known officially as the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill. The majority in favour of the bill at its introduction at second reading in December was a huge disappointment. It was a watershed moment and a further illustration of how far the UK has departed from its Christian heritage. But all is not lost. As the Bill proceeds it will be subject to further amendments in both Commons and Lords and may well be radically amended or even defeated. Importantly for us, it only applies to England and Wales. That said, it opens a pandora's box, and lobbying for a change in NI is almost inevitable. As a church, we are mindful of the 6th commandment "Thou shalt not kill". We are also mindful of the grim reality of death for those who do not have saving faith in Christ alone. That Gospel message needs to be heard more than ever in these days.

BBC

Engagement between BBCNI and the Caleb Foundation has led to improvements in areas such as Thought for the Day (TFTD) on Radio Ulster. Rev Gareth Burke has made a welcome return to that slot along with other evangelicals.

The Lord's Day

Sunday sport continues to be a blight on the sanctity of the Lord's Day. Once again there has been meaningful engagement with football bodies such as NIFL and IFA and we want to encourage all those Christians in sport who have taken a stand.

Recommendations

1. Please make public morals issues a matter for sustained prayer. We would suggest the following –
    - Pray for all our politicians in local government, in the restored Assembly/Executive and in Westminster.
    - Pray that our Christian politicians, especially those who hold office as Ministers in the NI Executive or as members of Assembly Committees, will be given much grace, wisdom and courage.
    - Pray for all who are involved in lobbying on moral issues, and particularly the Caleb Foundation, the Christian Institute, CARE and Affinity. The Caleb Foundation has specific contact with local politicians and the media, and the Christian Institute provides a wealth of material on a wide range of issues.
    - Pray for Christians who are under increasing pressure in their careers and businesses.
    - Pray for ongoing liaison and dialogue with BBCNI.
    - Pray for Christians in sport, including managers, chaplains and players.
    - Pray for teachers and school children who are being exposed to the transgender and associated agendas.
    - Pray against all efforts to denigrate the Lord's Day.
    - Pray for the Public Morals Committee as it deals with difficult and often contentious and complex issues.

2. We encourage all our members to contact the Committee to offer advice, expertise or views on any issue they feel relevant. We also encourage our members and Sessions to write to newspapers on public morals issues where they feel it appropriate, and to respond to public consultations.

TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY & ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

Rev Andy Hambleton (Convenor), Rev Jeff Ballantine,
Rev Mark Johnston, David Gordon, Colin Moore

As we look back over the past year as a committee, sadly another year has gone by without any men from our denomination applying to train for the ministry. Nor did any ministers from other denominations apply for EPC ministry throughout the course of 2024 (though Ethan McCarter, whose license was transferred into the EPC in 2023, was ordained and installed as minister of Crosscollyer Street congregation in November 2024).

Given the circumstances of our denomination and our need for more ministers in the near future, this is an urgent matter, and must be something that as a denomination we commit to praying about. We remind ourselves once again of the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 9:37-38:

> *"The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."*

In light of this need, in the latter part of 2024 the TOMA committee began formulating plans for two initiatives that would take place in early 2025:

1. ***Day of Prayer***: Presbytery designated that the first Lord's Day of 2025 (5th January) should be set aside as a special day of prayer in all of our congregations, with preaching focused upon the call to the ministry, and times of congregational prayer organised.

2. ***Preachers' Training Course***: A training course was organised for the early part of 2025, for men in the EPC displaying gifts in teaching and preaching God's word. The course, to be taught by a number of EPC ministers, would cover topics such as the theology of preaching, the character and call of the preacher, and how to study for, construct and deliver a sermon. It is the hope that this course will help to develop further those with teaching gifts, and spur some on towards training for pastoral ministry.

It should also be noted that, during 2024, Mr Mervyn Langtry stepped aside from the committee, and we thank him for his many years of helpful involvement in the work of TOMA. We welcome Mr David Gordon to the committee, and are thankful for the insight he brings.

Recommendations

1. Pray for that the Lord would raise up in our churches those who are called to the ministry. Pray that they, their sessions and the TOMA committee would have great wisdom as they explore this.
2. Pray that the Preachers' Training Course will be of great benefit to many as they explore and cultivate gifts in teaching God's word.
3. Pray for and encourage donations to the TOMA fund.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

Rev Robert Johnston (Convenor), Rev John Roger, Alison McClure,
Julie Johnston, Peter McCullough, Andrew Johnston

Youth Committee exists to assist camps, denominational youth outreach teams, Ignite, the Sunday School project and training of those who work with children and young people.

Junior Camp (8-11 years old)

Junior Camp had the privilege to taking 49 young campers to Regent House Grammar School in Newtownards. This new venue continues to meet our needs and we look forward to returning to it again in 2025 DV. A team of 20 leaders and cooks enjoyed close fellowship and unity throughout the week. We are thankful for the devotion and commitment of every leader and helper.

This year we went to N'Ards Reformed Presbyterian Church on the Sunday morning, where we received a tremendous welcome and good ministry which was applied to our campers in a very accessible way. Our own ministry for the week centred on the theme of prayer. Morning talks looked at several prayers from the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. Evening talks opened up the Lord's Prayer. The missionary lessons were on "Operation Aucca" and the children listened intently. This year we also had a "prayer space" set aside in the main assembly hall, which dorms took their turn to visit. Singing was again lively and the memory verse (Ps130) was learned enthusiastically. Quiet Times and dorm group discussions were both profitable and encouraging.

Highlights in terms of activities included the beach at Groomsport, Belfast zoo, Bake-Off, St John's ambulance visit, swimming and an afternoon at the shops. The talent show was enjoyed by all, and once again judged by our cooks. The various competitions and challenges ran well throughout the week, and the camp bookstall was well depleted come Friday, as was the tuck shop.

We are thankful to the Lord for suitable weather throughout the week. On Sunday we were able to have a picnic tea in Killynether wood, just after we had walked to Scrabo from the school. We also held our evening meeting outside in the walled garden.

We are also most thankful for the way in which the team of leaders and helpers engaged so well with every camper. It is encouraging to have leaders from different congregations gelling so well together with one another, but heart-warming to see them interact with the campers. Camp continues to be a week of spiritual blessing, with boys and girls nurtured in the faith, lovingly presented with Christ in the Gospel and challenged by missionary endeavour.

We continue to rely on the prayerful support of the wider EPC family. We are thankful for the interest seen in different folk requesting prayer news throughout the week and the numbers receiving the daily

updates on WhatsApp. Our hope continues to be in the LORD, for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption.

Inters Camp (11-15 years old)

Inters Camp returned for another fantastic week in July 2024. We were blessed to have the opportunity to welcome 42 young people to camp this year. Moyallon Centre was at maximum capacity! Campers and leaders alike were challenged and encouraged by our morning and evening meetings, and discussion groups.

We enjoyed great weather this year, which allowed our activities to run as planned, including the much-anticipated day trip to Newcastle. The campers thoroughly enjoyed a competitive week of team games, involving volleyball, tag rugby, ultimate frisbee, and rounders. We also had activities such as rollerblading, inflatables, water sports, battle bows, mountain biking, climbing wall, hunt the leader, crystal maze and more. We finished with the Inters Social on the final night.

This year David Burke brought us an excellent series of talks on People Jesus Met, explaining the truth of God's Word contained in the Gospel. David explained the stories of Nicodemus, The Samaritan Women, The Ten Lepers, Zacchaeus, and The Dying Thief, challenging the campers to consider their own relationship with Christ.

In the evenings we enjoyed the missionary story of Jim and Elisabeth Elliot which was enthusiastically told by Bethany Gillespie and Julia Killen, teasing the story out on a series of cliffhangers. The sacrifice and commitment demonstrated by these missionaries really resonated with the campers.

Rev Andy Hambleton delivered a hard-hitting talk on identity. He emphasised that Christians should find their identity in Christ in a world where others are swept along by the latest crazes and trends. The talks were inspiring and thought provoking for all.

Discussions in dorm groups used questions from the talks to prompt meaningful discussions and searching questions. We were overjoyed and encouraged that three campers made professions of faith during the week.

Please continue to pray for these young people as they press on in their Christian walk and that they would grow in the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit as they face the challenges this world presents along the way.

Many preparations were made to ensure that every camper had a safe and enjoyable week at camp. We are thankful to God for each individual and were delighted to see campers returning from previous years. Of particular note were two campers with complex needs and we are grateful for the dedicated care and attention given to these children by the leaders throughout the week. We must also thank the

other campers who were encouraging and welcoming to each other - we have a great Inters Camp community.

This year we had a strong team of 19 leaders and 4 cooks. Our new leaders were made very welcome and brought fresh enthusiasm and talent to the team. We are thankful to God for our leaders' individual gifts. Special thanks to the leaders for their hard work and for giving up their valuable time to serve at Inters.

We greatly appreciate all the prayers and support that our church family provides, both leading up to and during the week. God has blessed the work at Camp again this year and we pray that the lessons and truths learned would grow and flourish in the years to come. Please speak with our campers and leaders in our churches, and encourage them in their spiritual growth. We look forward to another great camp next year.

Senior Camp (15+ years old)

Camp 2024 seems like a distant, but fond, memory. Twenty-five teenagers set off on Monday 8th July for the sunnier climes of Portadown to stay in the Faith Mission Centre for four nights and five action-packed days. The team consisted of five male leaders, three female leaders and two cooks and two bus drivers.

We were delighted to have Pastor Gordon Walker from Carryduff Baptist join us for the morning teaching sessions, where he took us through five big ideas of the Bible. We considered creation, the fall, redemption, incarnation and new creation. These talks were very in depth and gave the campers much food for thought.

In the evening sessions we enjoyed visits from a variety of local speakers (Christian Palmer, Ethan McCarter and Matthew Winning) and David Gordon gave a very informative talk on the ACTS mission organisation on one night.

The teenagers were a fantastic bunch, and everyone (hopefully) had a great week away! Despite the poor weather, we were able to get out and about to enjoy activities such as paddleboarding, the dry ski slope, Splash waterpark and a golf driving range. There were also a few trips to Rushmere shopping centre to stock up on sweets and energy drinks!

There were plenty of good conversations throughout the week and it was encouraging to see the spiritual growth in many of the teenagers since the previous year. Four of the older male campers took it in turns to lead us in morning devotions. It was wonderful on the last evening when one of the leaders had the privilege of leading a male camper to the Lord. He said he had come to camp for the craic but had been under increasing conviction as the week progressed.

We are so thankful as a team for the support camp receives from Presbytery and each individual church. Camp could not run without the volunteers provided by the churches as well as financial support, not to mention practical support like the provision of minibuses and food donations.

As we move forward into planning for 2025, we are looking to the Lord to provide all that is needed. God willing, we are planning to have a reunion in February (Friday-Saturday). We need more leaders for camp for next summer, and beyond. We particularly need female leaders of any age from mid-twenties up. As camp numbers grow, I would love to see a bigger team to share the load between the leaders and also to allow for emergencies and sicknesses. Please join with Senior Camp in praying for volunteers and if anyone knows of someone who would be a potential, please pass their name on! We are looking for the Lord to establish the work of Senior Camp.

Ignite

At Ignite we seek to bring together our teenage young people from across the denomination. Thanks to all of the Ignite committee members for their hard work and dedication to ignite, Peter McCullough (Knock), Jenny Watson (Knock), Laura Frost (Stranmillis), Stephen Kelly (Stranmillis), Carolyn Houston (Ballyclare), Mark Ballantine (Groomsport).

Ignite had six gatherings in 2024:

- On 15th March we met at Stranmillis and enjoyed games in the hall. We headed upstairs for our meeting and interviewed two of our young people on their time at Inters and Senior Camp. We then had a Bible study given by Robert Johnston, followed by some supper together.
- On 21st April we visited Crosscollyer for the evening service. One of our young people read a passage from God's Word, we enjoyed hearing Ethan McCarter preach and had a supper and time of fellowship at the end of the service.
- On 17th May we had our Social at Groomsport. We were blessed with beautiful weather and enjoyed a walk and games on the beach. We returned to the church for a BBQ which Richard Beattie and Scott Goodrich had made for us. Mark Johnston spoke to us on growing up in the Christian faith.
- On 4th October we met at Stranmillis and enjoyed games and a Bible Study from Tim Woodrow followed by some supper together.
- On 24th November we visited Finaghy for the Sunday evening service. Stephen Kelly gave the congregation an update on what we had been doing at Ignite. We enjoyed hearing from Marcus and had a supper and time of fellowship afterwards.
- On 6th December we had our Christmas Social in Crumlin. It was a great night of fun and fellowship. Ian Wright kindly returned to run a Traditional Scottish Ceilidh for us. We later sang some carols and heard God's word from Ethan McCarter.

All of these events were very well attended by our young folk. A special thank you must go to our youth leaders, speakers and to the congregations who very kindly hosted us.

Sunday School Project (Eric Liddell & Saint Patrick)

We had 21 entries for the Sunday School project. Completed reports on Eric Lidell and Saint Patrick were submitted by children from Ballyclare, Crumlin, Knock and Stranmillis EPCs. Winners were selected from the following age categories: Ages 3-5, 6-8 and 9+. YC is thankful to our teachers throughout the denomination and for the willingness of parents in helping their children to complete it. YC is also grateful to Julia Grier for her diligent marking of the projects and her encouraging notes on each entry.

Training Events

Youth Committee ran an EPC wide training event on 21st June 2024 in Knock EPC. We covered the following topics: The child in the Bible, teaching songs and quizzes, teaching a memory verse, and the Wordless Book. About 25 attended and found the day profitable and practical in terms of usefulness in helping out in children's ministry.

We aim to run our next training day in September 2025, where we will teach our leaders to better teach the Bible to children. Publicity will be made available once the details are finalised; but our main titles are:

- Session 1: Preparing the Bible lesson.
- Session 2: Presenting the Bible lesson.
- Session 3: Connecting the Bible lesson.

The day should run from 9:45am to 3pm, with coffee and lunch included.

Recommendations

1. Pray for spiritual life and growth to be seen in all our children and young people throughout the denomination.
2. Pray for the work of camps, for some of our campers it is the main spiritual input in their young lives, pray that the Lord would help and encourage them even at home, and pray that key people in each congregation would be able to keep meaningful contact with them.
3. Pray in particular for a new leader-in-charge for Senior Camp.
4. Pray for Ignite committee as it seeks to bring our young people from different congregations together for their spiritual good.
5. Pray that the Sunday School Project continues to be a blessing and a sign post to direct the hearts of our children towards ministry and mission.

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Rev Andrew Lucas (Convenor), Rev Dr Robert Beckett, Rev Stephen Roger

Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.
Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.
God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.
Psalm 67:5-7

The work of Inter-Church relations has continued during 2024.

European Reformed Colloqium

In April Rev. Neil Beatson attended the European Reformed Colloquium in Budapest, Hungary, as an observer on behalf of the EPC. The purpose of this gathering was to encourage connections and fellowship amongst the Reformed community in Europe, and over 80 ministers from 17 different countries attended.

Free Church of Scotland, Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland

Our relations with these three denominations are longstanding and deep, and in May our Moderator attended the General Assemblies of our Scottish brethren, and then in June he attended the Synod of the RPs. At all three gatherings our Moderator brought our fraternal greetings.

Orthodox Presbyterian Church in America

The EPC has also enjoyed a long and warm relationship with the OPC, and in June the Rev. Jeff Ballantine represented us at their General Assembly in Washington. Rev. Ballantine reminded the brethren of the friendship between W. J. Grier and Gresham Machen, and the similar histories of our two denominations.

Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands

Also in June the Rev. Florus van Der Rhee from CRC in the Netherlands visited us. He preached in two of our congregations on the Lord's Day, and during his time with us, he also met with representatives of the Inter-Church Relations and Church Development committees.

European Conference of Reformed Churches (EUCRC)

In September the European conference of the EUCRC took place at Yarnfield Park in Staffordshire. There were over 40 delegates, and the EPC was represented by our Moderator Rev. John Roger, and the Revs. Stephen Roger and Andrew J. Lucas. The theme for the conference was preaching, and Rev. Stephen Roger gave a helpful paper on 'Preaching from the Heart.'

Recommendations

1. That we give thanks for our sister-churches around the world and for the contact that we have had with them during 2024.
2. That we give thanks particularly for the EUCRC conference and the European Colloquium, and the fellowship that took place at these gatherings. Pray in particular for a new leader-in-charge for Senior Camp.
3. That we pray for our sister-churches and kingdom around the world. for the increase of Christ's kingdom around the world.

“Give thanks to the LORD,
for He is good,
for His steadfast love
endures forever”
Psalm 136:1

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