

Limerick Reformed Fellowship
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Dear saints
in the Protestant Reformed Churches,

This is my first newsletter as a married man: as all of you know, Larisa (DeJong) and I were married on April 6. We honeymooned in California (April 9-17), beginning in San Francisco and traveling southwards on Highway 1 to San Diego, and stopping for a few days to stay with Travis and Kayla Feenstra (Kayla is one of Larisa's cousins), during which time we spent a few days with the saints in Hope PRC (Redlands, CA). Married life is a great blessing for both of us and Larisa is settling well into life in Ireland: she has already learned to drive a manual ("stick shift") car, having mastered the clutch and the art of navigating roundabouts, for example; she is getting used to grocery shopping, cooking/baking with the metric system; and she is acclimatizing to doing laundry in a rainy country without a dryer. She also hopes to compensate for the lack of fresh Michigan fruit (raspberries, strawberries, and blueberries are expensive here) by growing her own. (We shall see how that goes in the Irish climate.) In addition, we have made good progress in our application with the Irish immigration service for permanent residency for Larisa in Ireland.



Rev. and Larisa McGeown cutting cake

Unusual for newly married couples is the number of wedding receptions (and cake-cutting ceremonies) that we have had: we cut

cake on April 6, then at a second reception for my Irish/Northern Irish relatives/friends in Cookstown on May 12, and then finally in Wales on May 24, when some of the women brought a cake for us after one of the speeches! As I always say, you can never have too much cake, especially if it is chocolate cake!

While I was in the USA for the wedding (with all the preparations that such things entail, including entertaining my family—my parents, siblings, brother-in-law, and three nieces—who were there for the occasion, and spending time with my American friends), Jonathan Langerak, now *pastor-elect* Langerak, was ably holding the fort: he and his grandparents, Harry and Evelyn Langerak, occupied my house during that time, and Jonathan preached, taught catechism, and led Bible study: the saints greatly enjoyed his ministry; our only regret is that he was not able to finish his sermon series on Jonah, for which he has an open invitation to come back.



Pastor-elect J. Langerak with Jimmy Hogan and Noel Kelly

My last newsletter was March 2, so I did not mention the kerfuffle we had on March 4: on that Sunday morning we arrived at the hall to discover that the access code had been changed and that the employees at the building did not know the new one. After some scrambling, we all managed to get to the Wattersons' house by about noon (about 30 minutes outside of Limerick city centre), but because one of our regulars had to pick up his wife at 1 P.M. we decided to

shorten the service and rearrange the order so that he could hear the preaching: I preached the sermon *at the beginning* of the service, prayed the congregational prayer *after* the sermon, and cut the number of psalms down to two. Thankfully, we were able to have the full service at the right time (although again at the Wattersons' house) that evening. Such flexibility is necessary on the mission field.

Recent sermons in Limerick have included a series on Romans 1:18-32 ("The Operation of God's Wrath in the World") from February 11 to March 18, a series on Romans 5:6-11 (from April 29 to May 20), and a series on Hebrews 12:12-17 on "Responses to Chastisement" (from June 3 to July 15). Yesterday, I finished the section of Christ's humiliation in the Heidelberg Catechism with "Our Saviour Descending into Hell," a sobering and comforting section of the great Reformation catechism. Catechism for the children finished in May: Sebastian Kuhs and Jason Watterson successfully completed *Old Testament History for Beginners* (Book 1), as did my two younger nieces, Lily and Hope, while my older niece, Anna, finished *Old Testament History for Juniors*. We look forward to resuming catechism in September, when Penelope Kuhs will be joining the class for *Old Testament History for Beginners* (Book 2).

My catechumens are very intelligent, which a few stories will illustrate. When asked: "What sign did Rahab put in her window to show the Israelites that it was her house?" Sebastian Kuhs (then aged 6) answered, "A sign that said, 'I love God.'" When I explained that it was more of a secret sign that the people of Jericho would not understand, namely a piece of scarlet rope, Sebastian referred to it as a "nothing sign," for it was a wordless sign! Moreover, when I asked how an army might conquer a walled city such as Jericho, Sebastian answered, "A trebuchet!" When I expressed surprise, Sebastian began to explain what a trebuchet is. "I know what a trebuchet is," I responded, "but how do you know the word *trebuchet*?" It is always a delight to teach children the Word of God. May the Lord bless His Word to their hearts and lives!

In addition, Colm and Irini have been taking an *Essentials of Reformed Doctrine* class on Saturday mornings. We have made very good progress, for both are very keen to learn.

We finished Lessons 1-7 on Theology proper. Irini is on vacation for a few weeks in Greece, but after she returns we hope to continue with Lesson 8 on Creation.

On May 25 the Irish electorate voted to remove the right to life of the unborn from the Irish Constitution. Around that time (May 16), I was interviewed on a radio station in Cork (Life FM) in connection with a lecture I gave on "The Bible and Abortion" in Limerick (May 19). I reported more fully on the referendum in the August 2018 issue of the *Standard Bearer*.

The British Reformed Conference (July 21-28) has just ended: it was such a wonderful, spiritually uplifting, and encouraging week: excellent speeches, delightful fellowship, enjoyable activities, and good food. The airlines managed to make the return journey from Wales to Ireland unpleasant, however: although we should have been back in Limerick on Saturday (July 28) at about 10:30 am, we arrived at 1 A.M. on Sunday morning (July 29)! Although we were tired, we had our two worship services and a congregational get-together with food in the afternoon. It was good to have many pre- and post-conference visitors: Joanna Koerner, Danae Overweg, Kristen Pawloski, Rose and Kate Doezema, Emily Feenstra, Rachel Buiters, and Dave and Linda Poortinga stayed at our home (not at the same time). The Pooringas left this morning—our next guests will be (this evening) Lidi Cecilio (from Brazil) and (on Friday) Joshua Harris (from Wales), DV. Others visited the LRF, but did not stay at our house: Ed Bos, Phil Harbach, Christine Wierenga, Hannah Bos, Marco Barone, Paula Kuiper, and Greg, Candace, Patrick, and Megan Duerr. Visitors are always welcome!

Pray for us, as we do for you,

In Christian love,
Rev. Martyn and Larisa McGeown