

# Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

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18 March, 2022

Dear saints in the  
Protestant Reformed Churches,

## Church Visitation

Due to Covid-19 and its regulations, the CPRC did not have church visitation by a delegation from the PRC for the last two years. Thus it was especially good to welcome back Prof. Barry Gritters and Elder Sid Miedema (5-14 January). Like all arriving in the UK in January, the two men had to quarantine on arrival until they got back a negative Covid test on day two. We had planned to have our congregational dinner at a local restaurant while our American visitors were here but, sadly, we had to cancel it because of the hassle with Covid rules for large group dining.



Prof. Gritters brought the Word of God at both the Sunday services on 9 January, led a Bible study on Exodus 19 (cf. Heb. 12:18-29) on the Tuesday morning and gave a lecture on “Being the Hand of God: Godly Parenting in an Ungodly World” on the Wednesday night. His excellent instruction was much appreciated by the congregation.

Advertising for the speech on child-rearing included an article written by Julian Kennedy which was published in the *Ballymena Guardian*. We were very pleased with the attendance, and the parents in the church found the lecture especially helpful ([www.cprc.co.uk/sermons/being-the-hand-of-god-godly-parenting-in-an-ungodly-world](http://www.cprc.co.uk/sermons/being-the-hand-of-god-godly-parenting-in-an-ungodly-world)).

Prof. Gritters and Sid Miedema visited a number of families in the congregation. Mary and I took them for some lovely coastal walks in the north of County Antrim and forest walks in the south of County Down, where there was snow on the mountains.

## Church Activities

Alfonso and Salome Mansona and their two adult sons, Chester and Dale, were gladly received as confessing members on 21 November. Jeremy Watterson, the fifth covenant child of Sam and Anga, was baptized on 23 January.

Charlotte Higgs arrived in Northern Ireland from Brisbane, Queensland in the middle of February and is staying in our province for a few months. She is a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia, and a daughter of Pastor David and Sue Higgs. Charlotte has settled into the life of our congregation very well.



We were finally able to have our church dinner at the Ross Park Hotel on Friday, 11 March. William Graham, our organizer and quizmaster, booked the venue soon after all the Covid regulations for such events were removed. This left us short of time to contact friends outside our own congregation and get together all the orders for the three courses. Thus we decided simply to invite members and attendees with their spouses, etc. It was a very enjoyable evening of fellowship.

Michelle Lou-Hing, a niece of Marie Kennedy, and her son, Liam, were able to make it to Northern Ireland for the congregational dinner, since Michelle and her husband are buying a house in Broughshane. It is great to have them back in our midst again.

Besides the Lord's Day preaching of the Word, the four Monday evening catechism classes, and the Tuesday morning Bible study on "Saving Faith: A Biblical and Theological Analysis," we have a Wednesday night doctrine class on the Belgic Confession. We are currently on Article 37, which deals with the end times. We have covered Scripture's own eschatological time periods: the two ages ("this age" and "the age to come"), "the last days," the 1,000 years (Rev. 20), and the 1,260 days, 42 months or 3½ times (Rev. 11-13).

In our Wednesday classes, we recently concluded a series of 9 studies on "The Nearness of Christ's Coming," explaining the 7 major ways in which the Bible teaches that our Lord comes (3 in the past, 3 ongoing, and 1 climactic), the things which must happen before His glorious bodily return, and Scripture's full testimony to both its "soonness" and its "delay." All these doctrinal audios are not only available in CD box sets ([www.cprc.co.uk/product-category/cdsdvds/belgic-confession](http://www.cprc.co.uk/product-category/cdsdvds/belgic-confession)) but can be listened to free on-line ([www.cprc.co.uk/belgic-confession-class](http://www.cprc.co.uk/belgic-confession-class)).

Currently, there are 3 families and 3 individuals in 3 membership classes. During the week, I meet with Billy and Anne, Grace and Kerryann Gould in Antrim; Joe and Lisa McCaughern in Portglenone; and Ivan Ortu and Colm Ring at the manse in Kells. We go through (the positive articles of) the Canons of Dordt, and then various dis-

tinutive Reformed doctrines and practices, so that new members join the church with a solid grasp of the truth, a good conscience, and joy.

### On-Line Witness

Our main website ([www.cprc.co.uk](http://www.cprc.co.uk)) is doing very well. Around 17 November, 2021, its number of daily page hits suddenly tripled. Things continued around this level for a few weeks before growing by 50%. Thus we are now receiving about 4.5 times as many page hits on our main website as we were at the time of my last letter (5 November, 2021).

We recently created an "Election and Reprobation Resources" webpage, containing links to audios and/or videos of doctrine classes, sermon series and lectures, as well as articles, pamphlets, books, etc. ([www.cprc.co.uk/election-and-reprobation-resources](http://www.cprc.co.uk/election-and-reprobation-resources)). This is our 35<sup>th</sup> handy resource page ([www.cprc.co.uk/topical-resources](http://www.cprc.co.uk/topical-resources)).

Since my last letter about 4 ½ months ago, we have added 112 translations to our website. Thus, we have been receiving about 6 translations per week—a good rate! Many of these are short pieces, such as *Covenant Reformed News* articles ([www.cprc.co.uk/covenant-reformed-news](http://www.cprc.co.uk/covenant-reformed-news)) or chapters from *Doctrine According to Godliness* by Rev. Ron Hanks. We now have some 3,368 articles and creeds in more than 200 foreign tongues (from Afrikaans to Zulu) on our website ([www.cprc.co.uk/languages](http://www.cprc.co.uk/languages)).

Thanks to Nic, a Reformed elder in S. Africa, Afrikaans has grown most, increasing by 35 to 175 translations. Polish has seen 33 additions through the work of Marcin in Norway, Sebastian in Poland, and Robert in the Republic of Ireland. For our Polish translations, now totalling 88, Mary has created a specific Polish webpage ([www.cprc.co.uk/languages/polish](http://www.cprc.co.uk/languages/polish)), to add to the other nine individual language webpages (Afrikaans, Burmese, German, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish).

We also received a good number of translations in Hungarian (13 by Balint) and Russian (12 by Viktor). The others are 6 Spanish (by Jorge in Peru), 5 Portuguese (including 2 pamphlets on drama by Revs. Dale Kuiper and Richard Smit), 4

Swahili (the last 3 of which were by Lilian, a new translator from Nairobi, Kenya), 3 Dutch (by Gerben in the Netherlands), and 1 Latin (the Belgic Confession, so that we now have all 4 of our ecumenical creeds and all 3 of our Reformed creeds in this language).

In the last month or so, Sam Watterson has been placing paid ads on Facebook on behalf of the CPRC, targeting people within 30 miles of Ballymena. So far, he has advertised the video debate on Calvinism ([www. Youtube.com/watch?v=G5B\\_UknPtFM](http://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=G5B_UknPtFM)) and an article on the *real* healing miracles in the Bible ([www.cprc.co.uk/articles/healings](http://www.cprc.co.uk/articles/healings)). We have been receiving positive feedback and intend continuing this means of advertising.

### **British Reformed Fellowship (BRF)**

The first *British Reformed Journal* with Sam Watterson as editor was sent to subscribers and BRF members in January. These are the titles of its five articles: “New Editor!” “Editorial: It’s Too Complicated,” “The Destructive Teaching of Hypo-Calvinism in Common Grace Scripturally Exposed,” “Two Men from Trier: Karl Marx (and Communism) and Caspar Olevianus (and the *Heidelberg Catechism*)” and “Doctrinal Doublespeak.” The cost is just £10 (or \$20US) for 4 issues and new subscribers are very welcome ([www.britishreformed.org/journal/subscribe](http://www.britishreformed.org/journal/subscribe)).



At this summer’s BRF Family Conference in Castlewellan Castle, County Down, Northern Ireland (9-16 July), Profs. David Engelsma and Brian Huizinga will unfold the glorious truth of our “Union with Christ” ([www.cprc.co.uk/articles/brfconference2020](http://www.cprc.co.uk/articles/brfconference2020)). The booking forms for the conference (including its low prices) and the con-

tact details for the booking secretaries are available on-line ([www.brfconference.weebly.com/booking.html](http://www.brfconference.weebly.com/booking.html)). We hope that many of you will be able to join us for a wonderful week of Reformed teaching and fellowship!

As of today, the UK has ended its Covid travel rules. This means that people arriving in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales no longer need to get tested or write a passenger locator form. This is good news for people flying in for July’s BRF conference or those wanting to visit the CPRC in Ballymena!

May the Lord bless and keep you all,

*Rev. & Mary Stewart*